From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 21:41:02 +0000
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV â€“ Daily Operations

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:39:01 +0000
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Coen Jr, Michael;Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan;Deal, Timothy
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but current estimates range from 1500-2000 protesters. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday Aug. 19, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 15:44:26 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Awareness.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
  -
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

Editor's note: As part of the Journal's ongoing coverage of the massive Dakota Access Pipeline protest in North Dakota, staff writer Mike Anderson has been camping in a tent near the protest site. He filed this dispatch from the scene on Saturday.

CANNON BALL, N.D. | A peaceful protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline ended in the arrests of 83 people in North Dakota on Saturday morning amid a chaotic scene in which police in riot gear used pepper spray to break up and subdue a group of 200 to 300 protesters.

It is the highest number of people arrested in a single day in North Dakota during the last several months of protest actions against the oil pipeline, bringing the total number of arrests up to 222.

Though the protesters behaved non-violently and cooperated with the police, North Dakota law enforcement officials described Saturday's events as a riot. Police have offered conflicting reports alleging that one protester either verbally threatened an officer, or tried to physically grab away a can of pepper spray, resulting in the protester and the officer both being pepper sprayed in the face.

Most, if not all, of those arrested after the 5-hour ordeal on Saturday will be charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor, according to Morton County Sheriff spokesperson Rob Keller. Other charges included assault on a peace officer, reckless endangerment, engaging in a riot, resisting arrest, and fleeing an officer on foot.

"It's an unlawful activity," Keller said during phone interview on Saturday afternoon. "The bottom line is it's on private property. It's posted, 'No Criminal Trespass'. It's like you're invading someone's home. Consequently, there were arrests that were made."

The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

A police statement said the four were arrested after they were found, "attached to the vehicle; two attached to the outside of the vehicle, one attached to the steering wheel and another whose body was outside the vehicle with his arm fed through a hole in the door and his hand was in a bucket of hardened concrete."

The call to action went through the main resistance camp around 5:20 a.m. while it was still dark and freezing cold. A man walked through the camp speaking through a megaphone.

"Wake up relatives," he said. "Wake up water protectors. Wake up land defenders. Time to wake up. Time to send our boys to the universe. Time to send our boys to the rising sun."

A convoy of vehicles formed in the camp, a prayer was held, and the assembled were instructed to behave peacefully and respectfully if they encountered police.

“I know it’s hard on the front line,” the prayer leader said in the dark. “But do not cuss, do not holler. If you see someone getting out of hand, tell them to calm down.”

Then the convoy moved out. Parking their vehicles along the highway, the protesters began hiking into the field as the sun rose a little before 8 a.m. Their path took them along a craggy dirt road near the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline on land that tribal members of the Hunkpapa Sioux of Standing Rock said is filled with sacred burial sites.

Some of the protesters remained behind as several hundred others carrying signs and banners began marching into the field, singing, praying, and burning bundles of ceremonial sage as they went.

They walked two to three miles inward when they encountered a line of more than 50 officers from multiple law enforcement agencies. Most of the officers wore riot gear, most held wooden truncheons, and some had shotguns, canisters of pepper spray, and tear gas grenade launchers in their hands. Two armored personnel carriers arrived later while a helicopter circled low overhead.

The protesters and police lines met in the middle of an open field. The protesters remained calm, playing drums and offering prayers in English and Lakota to the officers, who remained stone-faced and uncommunicative.

When the police line began to advance on the protesters, the leaders of the group instructed everyone to fall back and cooperate with the police. They were dispersing when an officer spoke over a loud-speaker from the turret of an armored vehicle.

His only words — and the only words police spoke to the protesters all morning — were, “You’re all under arrest for trespassing.”

The police continued to advance on the fleeing protesters, snatching some of the stragglers, throwing them behind their lines, and pepper-spraying several others in the face as they trod silently forward.

The police eventually surrounded the group, repeating that every one of the 200 to 300 people present would be placed under arrest. The protesters linked arms and tied bandanas to their faces as the officers pressed in, splitting the group and pressing many to the ground. Most, if not all of the men and women taken into custody, did not resist arrest.

A small group managed to retreat over the hill, a few pouring water into the eyes of friends who had been stung by pepper spray and guiding them by hand up the dirt road as they made their way back to camp.

“It was all peaceful. And then the cops showed up," said Harmony Restoule, a young Ojibwe woman from Northern Ontario, Canada. “It was really scary when the police kicked into action.”

Restoule went to the demonstration with her cousin Paige, both of whom participated in mass protests during the Idle No More movement, a grassroots campaign organized in 2012 by the indigenous peoples of Canada against perceived legislative violations of their treaty rights.

“The Canadian police never showed up in riot gear,” Paige Restoule said.

A young man from California who identified himself only as Ahkua said his friend was among the people arrested, and that the police took him after he knelt to the ground to help someone else up.

“There were a few officers who were excessively aggressive and got the others riled up,” he said. “Most cops are pretty chill.”

Saturday’s protest was one of several high profile demonstrations in the Cannon Ball area against the Dakota Access Pipeline in recent months. Police arrested celebrity Shailene Woodley along with more than 20 others on Oct. 10 along the route of the pipeline near St. Anthony, N.D. Police referred to the event as a riot and charged many people with either inciting or engaging in a riot. At the time, it was the highest total number of arrests made in a single day.

The protesters, who now number in the thousands at a main camp near Cannon Ball, want to stop the ongoing construction of the pipeline that will transport oil from the Bakken and Three Forks formations of North Dakota, through South Dakota and Iowa, into southern Illinois. The pipeline would carry 450,000 barrels per day initially and could reach 570,000 barrels a day. The total length of the pipeline across the four states would be 1,134 miles, with 271 miles in South Dakota. The company's estimated cost for the South Dakota segment is $820 million.

On Sept. 3, police and private security forces used pepper spray and dogs to drive protesters away from construction equipment.

"Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful," Kirchmeier said in a press-release about Saturday's events. "This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities. I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protesters. This is about the rule of law."

The protesters may have been peacefully dispersing on Saturday morning, Keller said, but that doesn't change the fact that they broke the law.

"That's the whole purpose of having a police line, to protect the (pipeline) property and their right to commerce," Keller said. "We are protecting the protesters too, and the ranchers as well."

When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, "No."

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 5 Oct 2016 17:09:49 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Subject: FW: Update on Dakota Access protest from Bismarck Tribune

Spoke too soon. Has been quiet...

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2016 9:33:42 PM
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan; Stephenson, James R; Garcia, Carol
Subject: Update on Dakota Access protest from Bismarck Tribune

http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/protesters-diverted-from-st-anthony/article_5bd63f0e-4eaf-5aea-b08a-0b8a7617ca9b.html

Action at St. Anthony.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: 15 Sep 2016 12:41:57 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy;Hudson, Lamont
Subject: FW: ND Protests

Nancy…follow-up from ESF-13 on our conversation this morning.

Lee

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

FEMA

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Page 0008

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of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Depalo, Lee
To: R8 Division Directors
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:25:01 AM

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

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Page 0010

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of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 0011

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of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 14:09:54 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Pipeline update

Pipeline update:

Yesterday was a big day, Jessy Jackson arrived on site and talks between the protestors and law enforcement broke down.

- There was an article today from the Associated Press Regarding WY sending law enforcement to North Dakota: http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming-sends-troopers-to-north-dakota-pipeline-protest/article_2972e493-0b71-5cab-9c7d-3c27fb67542e.html (full article pasted below). Pre the article both tribes in WY are opposed to sending the law enforced support.
- There was a media report yesterday that Indiana is sending law enforcement to support ND. The article references FEMA paying for the support. We have reached out to Region IV for awareness and to let them know that FEMA is not paying for any law enforcement. The article is likely referencing EMAC. http://www.theindychannel.com/news/call-6-investigators/call-6-dozens-of-indiana-officers-deployed-to-north-dakota-pipeline-dispute-but-whos-paying (full article below).
- I am hearing a lot about treaty rights on social media, this morning on NPR the Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux talked about this land belonging to the tribes based on treaties (NPR and other media sources).
- A new encampment (the 1851 Treaty Camp) has been set up directly on the pipeline path, which is private property (KILI Radio).
- On Wed. Jessy Jackson arrived on site to speak out about the many human and civil rights violations being perpetrated by local police (Indian Country Today).
- Actor Mark Ruffalo was at Standing Rock yesterday showing his support and Leonardo DiCaprio announced today he is on his way (Indian Country Today).
- Everyone is still calling for peaceful protests (multiple media outlets).
- It is being reported there have been between 260 and 300 arrests since the protests began with most of them happening last Saturday and pepper spray being used by law enforcement (multiple media sources).
- FAA has issued temporary flight restrictions over the protest camps. Only response aircraft in support of law enforcement activity are authorized in the airspace (Bismarck Tribune).
- Negotiations broke down between protestors and law enforcement yesterday (Bismarck Tribune).
- This inforum link is to a video that shows clear frustration by law enforcement and that they do not want a confrontation. http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction (InForum)

This is a particularly good story about law enforcement and what happened yesterday.

http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4146041-new-roadblock-emerges-highway-1806-confrontation-between-protesters-law

New roadblock emerges on Highway 1806 as confrontation between protesters, law enforcement looms

By Amy Dalrymple and Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 10:22 a.m.

Dawn breaks over the Oceti Sakowin Camp Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor1 / 2

ⓘ A roadblock manned by North Dakota National Guard troops blocks North Dakota Hwy. 1806 before sunrise Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor2 / 2

MORTON COUNTY, N.D. — One day after negotiations between Dakota Access Pipeline protesters and law enforcement broke down, the mood was tense but quiet Thursday, Oct. 27, as the sun rose above the resistance camps.

Above, in restricted airspace, a North Dakota Highway Patrol aircraft circled.

Cecily Fong, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Emergency Services, said medical staffing is in place should any injuries occur at the protest sites.

She said law enforcement will likely issue a warning to protesters congregating at a camp along State Highway 1806, where pipeline opponents have set up teepees and staged hay bales, logs and barbed wire to block the road, if necessary.

However, Fong said she didn't know the timing of any law enforcement action planned, and officers want protesters to leave the northern camp, which is on private property recently purchased by the pipeline's developer, Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

Protesters will be encouraged to return to the southern camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.

By Thursday morning, protesters set up an additional "halfway" roadblock on Highway 1806 — between their main barricade and the frontline camp where they've promised to hold their ground.

At the halfway roadblock, pipeline opponents staged tires, plywood, sheet metal and logs — all ready to move onto the highway should law enforcement approach. The additional roadblock provides more time for those at the main camp to leave or join the protesters at the frontline camp.

Sam Wounded Knee, from Crow Creek Nation in South Dakota, spent the night at the "halfway" roadblock.

He said a plane flew overhead through the night, and it appeared two people were in the surrounding hills to the west and using flashlights to signal back and forth with the plane.

Asked if he expects violence in a confrontation, “from the police, yeah, definitely,” he said.

“All we’re trying to do is protect our people,” Wounded Knee said, adding that women and children were asked to leave the frontline camp Wednesday night. About 200 people are at the frontline camp.

With the new roadblock established by protesters, Highway 1806 has numerous staging areas, camps and road blocks stretched out over several miles, starting with an equipment staging area set up by law enforcement about a mile south of Fort Rice.

Traveling south on 1806, in succession, there is a law enforcement barricade, followed by the protesters’ main barricade, halfway roadblock, frontline camp and main camp.

On Wednesday, negotiations between pipeline opponents and law enforcement officials broke down, setting up a possible clash as hundreds of protesters vowed to hold their ground at a the frontline camp directly in the path of the four-state oil pipeline.

A contingent of law enforcement and National Guard officials met with camp representatives on Highway 1806.

Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney of Fargo, who is helping Morton County coordinate the law enforcement response, made one last plea for protesters to remove their roadblock on 1806 and abandon the roughly 200-person “frontline” camp, where teepees and tents continued to pop up on land where the pipeline is planned

“We’re here telling you this is private property and you have to leave,” Laney told camp coordinator Mekasi Camp-Horinek on Wednesday. “We don’t want a confrontation. Please stand your people down and go back to the main camp.”

Mekasi pointed at the road – “our no surrender line,” he said – and then back at the frontline camp standing in the way of the four-state, $3.8 billion oil pipeline – their “no retreat” line.

“That’s your final word?” Laney asked.

“That’s my final word,” Camp-Horinek said, walking away.

“Good day, gentleman,” Laney said, turning toward the staging area about five miles away near Fort Rice, where a mass of law enforcement and military forces has gathered.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said authorities will continue to do everything they can to resolve the situation peacefully, but he said discussions with camp leaders Wednesday reached an “impasse.”

Kirchmeier emphasized that “the last thing we want to do is do it forcefully.”

“If we have the chance for open dialog, that’s what we want to continue,” he said.

Pipeline opponents say they’ve reclaimed land under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, noting the Sioux never ceded that territory.

But Kirchmeier said Morton County authorities have to enforce existing laws and treaty issues would need to be resolved by the federal government. He added that currently the protesters are infringing on other residents’ rights by blocking the highway.

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

- AP

Protesters set up tepees and tents Monday in southern North Dakota on property owned by the pipeline company.

CHEYENNE — Wyoming has sent six highway patrol troopers to North Dakota to help authorities deal with Indian protesters demonstrating against the construction of an oil pipeline, prompting objections Tuesday from some Wyoming Indian leaders.

Sending the troopers merely extends emergency help to another state and does not signal that Wyoming has taken a position on the pipeline controversy, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said.

But Dean Goggles, chairman of Northern Arapaho Business Council, called on Mead to recall the troopers immediately.

“The North Dakota tribes and tribal members from around the nation are attempting to protect both the environment and sites which have ceremonial, religious and cultural significance to the tribes,” Goggles said.

More than 100 protesters were arrested last weekend in Morton County, North Dakota, in the faceoff between protesters and Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, developer of the four-state Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The $3.8 billion pipeline, most of which has been completed, crosses through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois. Opponents worry about potential effects on drinking water on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s reservation as well as harm to cultural sites.

Col. Kebin Haller of the Wyoming Highway Patrol said six troopers were sent to North Dakota on Saturday and are expected to remain there until Nov. 8.

The troopers volunteered after the governor of North Dakota declared an emergency and asked other states for law enforcement assistance, Haller said.

The six are members of the patrol's Special Services Squad who have additional training and equipment to address large crowds and civil unrest, he said. North Dakota will pay their salaries and the costs they incur while at the protest.

Mead said the decision to send Wyoming troopers happened because "a neighbor state asked for help and Wyoming answered the call."

"North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded," Mead said.

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in Wyoming have expressed formal support for the protesters.

Jason Baldes, a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and staff member at the Wind River Native Advocacy Center, accused Wyoming officials of supporting the pipeline by sending law enforcement officers to face off against protesters.

"It kind of sheds light on really who's running the show here," Baldes said. "The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets."

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

"The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue," he said.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including

emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
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From: Dragani, Nancy
To: Wilz, Greg M.
Cc: Hufford, Bradford; Deal, Timothy(b)(6)@usdoj.gov
Subject: RE: ESF13 info and contact info
Date: Thursday, September 15, 2016 4:20:00 PM

Greg

Understand about SHSP/LETPP. I asked Brad to check with his peers to see if other states' had reprogrammed grants to cover these types of events. Unfortunately, it sounds like even if reprogramming is possible, the pool of available funds will limit this option.

I was pleased to see the potential options regarding JAG grants and/or emergency JAG grants. I hope that proves a solution, even if a partial one.

We'll keep looking around here but to date, no other feasible solutions are coming to the fore.

Take care and stay in touch,

Regards, Nancy

From: Wilz, Greg M. [mailto:(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2016 12:46 PM
To: (b)(6)@usdoj.gov; Gerhart, Col. Michael T. (b)(6)@nd.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@usdoj.gov; Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>; Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: ESF13 info and contact info

Thanks Alan for the info. As far as the SHGP grants are concerned, we are a marty minimum state so we don't receive much. Unless there is chance of new or additional/supplemental funding we would be robbing Peter to pay Paul and both are already on the front line of response. Reprograming does not get us much relief.

Greg

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From: Appenrodt, Kathleen
To: Graff, Shawn
Subject: RE: Still Here
Date: Thursday, October 13, 2016 12:40:00 PM

Glad you are still alive and kicking. Heads up, Nancy is probably going to call you soon to give you a broad update on the North Dakota Access Pipeline protests.

From: Graff, Shawn
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 12:15 PM
To: Appenrodt, Kathleen <kathleen.appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Still Here

Hey Katie,

Been a little while since I made it over to FEMA R8. Just wanted you all to know I am still here. Went on leave for a week and will be in DC all next week, hope all is well with you!

v/r
Shawn

Shawn Graff
Regional Director, Region 8
Office of Infrastructure Protection
Department of Homeland Security
(b)(6)
Hometown Security | Homeland Security

From: Appenrodt, Kathleen
To: Greff, Stacie; Dick, Jennifer
Subject: RE: Boston - potentially relevant info
Date: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 11:48:41 AM

Thanks, I'll stop by this afternoon. It's always fun to hear about political maneuvering.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 11:43:33 AM
To: Dick, Jennifer; Appenrodt, Kathleen
Subject: RE: Boston - potentially relevant info

Thanks, Jen. Also, Katie, happy to fill you in if you are interested in what just came down…

From: Dick, Jennifer
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 11:41 AM
To: Appenrodt, Kathleen <kathleen.appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Boston - potentially relevant info

Interesting article on what unfolded as far as Maryland civil unrest—to include declaration denial and then MD looking for funding through other federal avenues: http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-sun-investigates-fema-disaster-denial-20150801-story.html

Jennifer Dick
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From: Dick, Jennifer
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 11:11 AM
To: Appenrodt, Kathleen <kathleen.appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Boston - potentially relevant info

just FYI--I heard from HQ OCC declarations attorney that Emergency Declaration for protest activity is unlikely as a request from MD for the civil unrest was denied.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Appenrodt, Kathleen
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 1:02:11 PM
To: Dick, Jennifer; Greff, Stacie
Subject: Boston - potentially relevant info

I pulled this from a Serino speech in Boston. I found bullet #3 interesting.

Immediate Aftermath and Recovery

- Two days after the bombing, President Obama issued an Emergency Declaration for Massachusetts to "alleviate the hardship and suffering caused by the emergency on the local population, and to provide appropriate assistance for required emergency measures, authorized under Title V of the Stafford Act, to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, and to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in the counties of Middlesex, Norfolk, and Suffolk."

- This declaration authorized FEMA to identify, mobilize and provide equipment and resources necessary to alleviate the impacts of the emergency. FEMA was authorized to provide Category B emergency protective measures to include items such as police personnel, search and rescue, and removal of health and safety hazards. FEMA also provided Public Assistance to include funding for shelters and emergency care for Norfolk and Suffolk counties, which was primarily used for residents whose homes had been impacted during the blast or could benefit from crisis counseling. That assistance was provided with 75 percent federal funding.

- Additionally, FEMA authorized state and local agencies in Massachusetts to use existing preparedness grant funding to support law enforcement and first responder overtime costs resulting from investigation support activities or heightened security measures, from April 15, 2013 through May 5, 2013. FEMA granted a similar authorization for state and local agencies hosting major special events scheduled during this timeframe.

Katie Appenrodt
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From: Dragani, Nancy
To: Graff, Shawn
Cc: Appenrodt, Kathleen; Deal, Timothy
Subject: RE: Invitation to Download a File
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2016 8:50:37 AM

Shawn

Thanks for sending us the analysis of long-term impacts to disruption of pipelines. We'll reach out if there are any additional questions or concerns.

Regards, Nancy

-----Original Message-----
From: Graff, Shawn
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2016 8:16 AM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Appenrodt, Kathleen <kathleen.appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov>; Graff, Shawn <(b)(6)@hq.dhs.gov>; Deal, Timothy <Timothy.Deal@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Invitation to Download a File

Good Morning Nancy,
In response to a Request for Information (RFI) from the NPPD Chief of Staff asking about potential impacts and private sector coordination related to the recent pipeline incidents, our Office of Cyber and Infrastructure Analysis provided the response below. That has been combined with a brief summary of some of the outreach our Protective Security Advisors in the area have done. I am in DC this week, but both Scott Behunin and I are available via email and phone should you or your team need anything from us.

Thank you,
Shawn

Subject: RFI - Potential Long-Term Impacts to Disruption of Pipelines

The Office of Cyber and Infrastructure Analysis (OCIA) assesses that there will be minimal short-term and no long-term damages and/or impacts to the Oil and Natural Gas Subsector stemming from the recent incidents in which activists closed a mainline valve on the Express Pipeline in Eagle Butte, MT and other valves on pipelines which belong to Enbridge in Minnesota and Trans-Canada in North Dakota. SCADA systems belonging to these pipelines notify operators about interruptions which results in a timely dispatch of crews to restore the flow thus mitigating any significant delay in the delivery of product. Further security personnel will likely be dispatched to the site to further deter any more actions by the part of activists. All of the targeted pipelines are fully operational.

DOT regulations require operators to have protection in place to prevent tampering with chain link fences and locks. DOT PHMSA is drafting a Safety Advisory Bulletin to publish for pipeline operators.

An RFI was produced by OCIA and pushed out to the North Dakota State and Local Intelligence Center by the ND PSA. The PSA has been in contact with utility companies (Montana Dakota Utilities; MinnKota; and Otter Tail) to help maintain their awareness of the ongoing situation. Contact information has been gathered for all the major energy stakeholders in the state for communications purposes.

-----Original Message-----
From: Dragani, Nancy

Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 11:05 AM
To: Graff, Shawn <(b)(6)@hq.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Shawn

I'm sharing with you a power point provided by ND Emergency Management Director, Greg Wilz. He asked me to facilitate a conference call with the other R8 state directors to discuss potential EMAC requests. In preparation for the meeting, he provided this update; it is a large file and took approximately 10 minutes to download. You may already know much or all of this but I thought it was a nice rollup.

He has asked to keep distribution to FOUO.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator Office – 303-235-4840 Cell – 202-702-1991 Denver Federal Center, Building 710 Lakewood, CO 80225

-----Original Message-----
From: Wilz, Greg M. [mailto:(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 6:33 AM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6)@wyo.gov>;(b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.sd.us>;(b)(6)@utah.gov>; (b)(6)@mt.gov>;(b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.co.us>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc(b)(6)@state.co.us>
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Region 8 Directors,

I am hoping this all work. Below is a link to a state of North Dakota secure file transfer site. The file is about 190 meg so it was too large to send regular email. It is a briefing that will help explain what is going on in North Dakota. We are providing it all states that have inquired about what is the risk of sending LEO to North Dakota based on our EMAC.

The complete situation here on the ground is very complex almost unbelievable unless you have been here since the beginning. What has started as peaceful protest by concerned citizens and Tribal members has grown to situation that is at times out of control with recent actions bordering on terrorism with state, national , and international implications.

I look forward to talking to you all this morning. If the file transfer works and you get a chance to look at it before the conference call that would be great.

Greg

You can download the file using the following link: https://apps.nd.gov/itd/filetransfer/downloadByInvitation.htm?id=1-cc8f91f7036cb333c3fdef74e22b47ff.

****

For security reasons, please do not forward this email to other persons. Doing so may allow unauthorized persons the ability to download the file as well.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 12:07:25 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Re: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Also...only contact with state really not correct as we have been talking at operational level. Question calling out ARA/state director so directly in here. Needed? At a mimimum...soften and pull out direct references to ara/state director

---

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:04 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Brian - there are a few typos in below but I'm having problem with BB copying and I'm in meetings. Please just do a quick edit.

Megan -
*Add in that powwow upcoming (ARA requested add)
*send a note to Ron, HHS. He is in SLC at event
*no need to add any fbi info. Do what we have been doing, strictly info gathering and monitoring

---

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 08:26 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Let me know what you think. This is essentially media monitoring, and HIS could pick that up, they also have people on the ground who should be able to provide them with some visibility. A bit concerning they are coming to us.

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA would engage in, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. The only direct contact we have had with the State has been a call from the State's director of Homeland Security, letting our Acting Regional Administrator know he would not be attending a conference because of the protest. All of our awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.

- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the XL Pipeline, this the Keystone Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the intel could be incorrect. We have not reached out to the tribe or had additional conversations with the State, as this is not a FEMA related issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 – Desk
(303) 945-6367 – Cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:48 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I"ll take a quick look at it. And will let nancy know in am.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Hi Stacie -

Got a call from Milo this evening. Apparently, high level people at IHS are looking for Intel on standing rock protests. We have a reputation for knowing what is generally going on so they called Milo. Milo asked me to respond to the email below with what I may be hearing. I told him I would but I would site my sources and make sure that it is clear we have not been in contact with the tribe and this is not our issue.

Milo is concerned if we don't address it at this level, Fugate might get asked and it come down to Nancy.

I plan on writing my response first thing. I'll send it to you for review, unless you just want to be copied. I am going to try and get it out as early as possible.

Once that is out I'll write the tribal policy summary.

Thanks
M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 3:22:09 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; (b)(6) @ihs.gov'
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the
Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:08:46 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I'm good with the Powwow bullet.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:07 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Brian, if you could look at the last bullet that I added.

Stacie – I could add that there are no current or anticipated requests for HHS/Federal ESF8 assistance – per Ron's report.

Other than that I would be ready to send to Milo and Rocky and then send to Ron for awareness.

I am going to engage in OST shortly and would like to get this out the door before that happens.

Thanks

Megan

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:39 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

This looks good to me, with the addition of the Powwow bullet that is with Brian for proof reading.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:29 AM

To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

How is this?

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).

- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Zimmerman, Elizabeth
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 17:46:44 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: RE: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Thank you

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 5:41:02 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth; Gruber, Corey; Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont; R8 Division Directors; Floyd, Megan; Fisher, Dennis
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations, the situation is significant enough for the State EM director and the Adjutant General to cancel their planned participation in the TAG/NORTHCOM seminar August 17-18.

I have spoken with Greg Wilz and we are monitoring the situation. I do not anticipate any role for FEMA; this BLUF is for situational awareness only.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991

Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Zimmerman, Elizabeth
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:43:43 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Coen Jr, Michael;Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan;Deal, Timothy
Subject: RE: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Thank you

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:39:01 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth; Coen Jr, Michael; Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan; Deal, Timothy
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but current estimates range from 1500-2000 protesters. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday Aug. 19, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement. North Dakota Highway 1806, which runs adjacent to the protest, is closed to through traffic, with detours established. Work at the site is currently halted as legal proceedings initiated by both the Standing Rock and the Dakota Access owners now work their way through the legal system.

On Sept. 9-11 the Annual United Tribes International Powwow is scheduled in Bismarck, approximately 60 miles from the protest site. The powwow normally sees about 5000 visitors, but there is speculation that that number could swell significantly in light of the protest, which is being supported by other tribes around the country.

I still do not anticipate any formal role for FEMA, but Region VIII will continue to monitor the situation via traditional and social media, and continue ongoing communication with the state.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 13:38:40 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

I'd be happy to join you for the "shot updates." That sounds like super fun!

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:33 AM
To: Welch, Randy <Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

Thanks!

I have been doing shot updates for Stacie every morning. This will be a great resource for the update….. you guys are great.

It is interesting looking at these stories and the other stories that I pick up from native news networks and the different story they are telling.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:25 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

“I feel like I just got shot down,” said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe’s emergency response coordinator. “It’s very hurtful.”

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe’s request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

“People are getting overheated now already,” Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline’s river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe’s request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don’t have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, “I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well.”

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

“At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit,” which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

“We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably,” she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

"He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena," he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

“You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they’re camped across the river from each other,” said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin’s Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the “peaceful” side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

“My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it’s life-threatening or not,” he said. “This is our land, our people.”

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming’s Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children’s safety at the campsite. But she added, “I believe there’s strength in prayer,” and said it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Our water is sacred,” she said. “I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too.”

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes’ chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock’s opposition.

“We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives,” Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe’s reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe’s water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It's estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it's the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead 'solidarity' rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

Standing Rock tribal leaders represented by former U.S. attorney (Billings Gazette)

- By AMY DALRYMPLE Forum News Service
- 20 hrs ago
-

BISMARCK – Former North Dakota U.S. Attorney Tim Purdon will represent the Standing Rock Sioux tribal leaders who have been sued by Dakota Access LLC for protesting the pipeline construction.

Chairman Dave Archambault II and council member Dana Yellow Fat are among several defendants named in a civil case filed last week in federal court in Bismarck by Dakota Access. The lawsuit alleges that the defendants are interfering with pipeline construction north of the reservation.

Purdon said he worked closely with Archambault while serving as U.S. attorney and he was asked to represent the tribal leaders.

"This case is about the parameters of the First Amendment in terms of tribal officials protesting here in North Dakota," Purdon said.

The complaint claims that Archambault, Yellow Fat and others tried to block Dakota Access employees from entering and exiting the construction site. The complaint also claims that Archambault excused all tribal employees from work on Aug. 12 and encouraged them to protest.

About 4,000 people were estimated to be at the protest site on Monday. Pipeline construction has been halted in that area since last week.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland granted a temporary restraining order against the tribal leaders and other defendants that prevents them from unlawfully protesting the pipeline construction.

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Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 13:34:40 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Welch, Randy;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: RE: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

Yeah. Hard to know where the truth is, although the pilot thing is scary. That doesn't feel like something you would just make up. But with thousands of people it's almost certain to have some bad apples.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:33 AM
To: Welch, Randy <Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
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As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

"We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably," she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

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A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

"He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena," he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

“You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they’re camped across the river from each other,” said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin’s Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the “peaceful” side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

“My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it’s life-threatening or not,” he said. “This is our land, our people.”

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming’s Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children’s safety at the campsite. But she added, “I believe there’s strength in prayer,” and said it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Our water is sacred,” she said. “I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too.”

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes’ chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock’s opposition.

“We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives,” Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe’s reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe’s water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It’s estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it’s the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

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Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

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"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead ‘solidarity’ rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

Standing Rock tribal leaders represented by former U.S. attorney (Billings Gazette)

- By AMY DALRYMPLE Forum News Service
- 20 hrs ago
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"This case is about the parameters of the First Amendment in terms of tribal officials protesting here in North Dakota," Purdon said.

The complaint claims that Archambault, Yellow Fat and others tried to block Dakota Access employees from entering and exiting the construction site. The complaint also claims that Archambault excused all tribal employees from work on Aug. 12 and encouraged them to protest.

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303-235-4619

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Sent: 23 Aug 2016 17:39:49 +0000
To: Welch, Randy;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

You know what I mean.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:39 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
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I'd be happy to join you for the "shot updates." That sounds like super fun!

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:25 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

“We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably,” she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff’s Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

“I’ve been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it’s continuing to grow,” he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff’s Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

“He’d like to keep this in the law enforcement arena,” he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there’s an element of “outside agitators” responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – “hundreds of criminal acts.”

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

"My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not," he said. "This is our land, our people."

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, "I believe there's strength in prayer," and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Our water is sacred," she said. "I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too."

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes' chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock's opposition.

"We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives," Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe's reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe's water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It's estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it's the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead 'solidarity' rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

Standing Rock tribal leaders represented by former U.S. attorney (Billings Gazette)

- By AMY DALRYMPLE Forum News Service
- 20 hrs ago
-

BISMARCK – Former North Dakota U.S. Attorney Tim Purdon will represent the Standing Rock Sioux tribal leaders who have been sued by Dakota Access LLC for protesting the pipeline construction.

Chairman Dave Archambault II and council member Dana Yellow Fat are among several defendants named in a civil case filed last week in federal court in Bismarck by Dakota Access. The lawsuit alleges that the defendants are interfering with pipeline construction north of the reservation.

Purdon said he worked closely with Archambault while serving as U.S. attorney and he was asked to represent the tribal leaders.

“This case is about the parameters of the First Amendment in terms of tribal officials protesting here in North Dakota,” Purdon said.

The complaint claims that Archambault, Yellow Fat and others tried to block Dakota Access employees from entering and exiting the construction site. The complaint also claims that Archambault excused all tribal employees from work on Aug. 12 and encouraged them to protest.

About 4,000 people were estimated to be at the protest site on Monday. Pipeline construction has been halted in that area since last week.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland granted a temporary restraining order against the tribal leaders and other defendants that prevents them from unlawfully protesting the pipeline construction.

A hearing was set for Thursday in the case, but has been postponed because Archambault plans to travel to Washington, D.C., for a hearing on Wednesday in the tribe’s lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Purdon said.

The Bismarck hearing is now set for Sept. 8 to determine if a preliminary injunction should be issued. The temporary restraining order has been extended until Sept. 8, though Hovland wrote in his order that the parties are “strongly encouraged to meet and confer in good faith in an attempt to resolve this dispute prior to the hearing.”

Archambault and Yellow Fat are among 29 people who have been arrested during the protest. Each faces a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct in Morton County.

Purdon resigned as U.S. attorney for the district of North Dakota last year. He now works in private practice in Bismarck for national law firm Robins Kaplan, where he is co-chairman of the American Indian Law and Policy Practice Group.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 14:39:40 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Clip: More ND tribal

Construction stops, traffic restricted due to Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune
- 16 hrs ago
-

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier says all work on the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan has been stopped indefinitely.

Construction is being stopped on the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannonball Ranch and law enforcement is routing traffic away from the protest area as safety concerns mount.

“As of this moment, the Dakota Access Pipeline Project is being discontinued for the time being,” Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said Wednesday. “No work is going to be done there for an undetermined amount of time."

Kirchmeier said the protest has become unlawful as a result of criminal activity. He said his officers have been threatened and heard gunshots. The agency has gotten reports of pipe bombs, assaults on private security personnel, fireworks and vandalism.

In the interest of public safety, North Dakota Department of Transportation and Highway Patrol has established a traffic control point on Highway 1806 south of the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery. Only emergency vehicles and local traffic will be allowed through. Other vehicles will be detoured to Highway 6.

Kirchmeier said officers will safeguard workers and equipment as they leave the area. It is not clear whether the equipment will be removed.

Currently, there are no officers on the protest site. They are stationed at the highway barrier.

Kirchmeier said the state national guard has not been asked to intervene.

The sheriff's department will not be providing supplies such as Dumpsters and water to the protesters.

"I don't know if we need to provide them supplies when it has turned into an unlawful protest," Kirchmeier said. "We are just going to make sure that it remains safe."

The plan resulted from discussions with Energy Transfer Partners, the governor's office and tribal leadership, according to Kirchmeier.

About 1,500 to 2,000 people are camping in the area south of Mandan, Kirchmeier said. Twenty-eight people have been arrested in the past week.

Officers from around the state, including Mercer County, Cass County and Mandan, as well as Game and Fish, Highway Patrol and parole and probation, have assisted in policing the area.

During the closure, the Fort Rice boat ramp and campground, Eckroth Bottoms fishing area, Little Heart boat ramp, Little Heart Rifle Range and Graner Park will be closed to the public.

Reach Caroline Grueskin at 701-250-8225 or at caroline.grueskin@bismarcktribune.com

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Regulators sound off on pipeline protests

- NICK SMITH Bismarck Tribune
  Nick Smith
  -

North Dakota regulators on Wednesday defended their permit approval for the Dakota Access Pipeline, saying they hope tensions between protesters and law enforcement at a site near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation will cool off in the days ahead.

“I really regret that there’s this much conflict,” said Julie Fedorchak, chairwoman of the North Dakota Public Service Commission. “They have a right to disagree. They don’t have the right to threaten. They don’t have the right to obstruct.”

Hundreds of activists, as well as protesters from various tribes, have descended on the site in Morton County. Construction workers had begun ground work near where a section of the pipeline is intended to go. It will be bored under the Missouri River less than a mile from the tribe’s reservation boundary.

Since last week, at least 28 arrests have been made during the protests for disorderly conduct and criminal trespass.

Work has ceased indefinitely as of Wednesday.

Protesters' concerns include potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture, as well as the disturbance of cultural sites along the route.

After a rumor of human remains being found at the construction site spread, State Historical Society of North Dakota officials inspected the site on Friday but found no evidence of any cultural site or remains.

The Standing Rock tribe has filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the permits issued for the project.

Dakota Access LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, countered on Monday by filing a lawsuit against Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault II and several others, citing threats to the safety of construction workers and law enforcement. Archambault was arrested Friday.

Archambault told reporters on Monday he was simply doing what others were doing during the protest when arrested. Several arrests were made when protesters pushed back against a police line when an attempt was made to block workers from leaving the site.

“The Dakota Access Pipeline project is harmful. It will not just be harmful to my people, but its intent and construction will harm the water of the Missouri River,” Archambault said Monday when urging others to join them.

Fedorchak said the 1,172-mile, 30-inch-wide pipeline project was reviewed over a 13-month period, with hearings in Mandan, Killdeer and Williston last year.

“This was very carefully reviewed by the PSC,” Fedorchak said.

Dakota Access began work on the nearly $3.8 billion project this spring following permit approval by the PSC and regulators in other states along the route. The pipeline is to begin in western North Dakota near Stanley and end near Patoka, Ill. It would transport as many as 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude when finished, with a future capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

“They have a right to build this project,” said Fedorchak, adding that the company went through the proper permitting process and was granted approval.

Commissioner Brian Kalk agreed.

“These groups didn’t come to our hearings,” said Kalk, expressing disappointment that tribal leaders didn't appear at that time to voice their concerns.

Commissioner Randy Christmann said a large portion of North Dakota oil is transported by rail, and accidents can result from that mode of transport as well.

(Reach Nick Smith at 701-250-8255 or 701-223-8482 or at nick.smith@bismarcktribune.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 8:34 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Sioux tribe leader wants political help to halt oil pipeline

- By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press
- Updated 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A tribal leader Wednesday said he contacted the White House and met with North Dakota's senators in an effort to halt construction of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline that crosses the Missouri River near an American Indian reservation in southern North Dakota.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II, in a teleconference with reporters, stressed that the he and the tribe are working to ensure peace among those protesting the Dakota Access pipeline.

"There is no place for threats, violence or criminal activity," Archambault said.

North Dakota transportation officials, meanwhile, closed a several-mile stretch of Highway 1806 on Wednesday because of the protest along the road.

The 1,172-mile pipeline planned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is passing through the Dakotas and Iowa on its way to Illinois. Construction crews with armed private security guards arrived last week just north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where native Americans have been staging a protest for months at a "spirit camp."

Archambault and more than two dozen others have been arrested in the past week for interfering with construction of the project.

On Monday, developers of the project sued in federal court to stop protesters — including Archambault — from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Hovland granted the developer's motion for a temporary restraining order Tuesday.

Archambault said he met Wednesday with North Dakota Sens. John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp to "express concerns" about the pipeline.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Archambault told reporters he also has urged President Barack Obama to step in. The president and First Lady Michelle Obama traveled to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2014 to get a firsthand look at the impoverished living conditions on the reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Archambault said he asked nothing of the president then but is doing so now.

"I believe both he and Michelle Obama were touched," Archambault said. "So now if there's any way he can intervene and move this pipeline off our treaty lands, I'm asking him."

The White House did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 15:56:27 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

WOW!

IT is hard for me to believe the Chairman would have said what he did about violence. On the other hand, things are escalating. I had heard they were slowing down. Of course my sources are social media where tribal members are still talking about peaceful protests and prayer.

If they are looking to move FBI agents into the area, that will change everything, a lot like the National Guard would have changed things. The Powwow is coming up, they do have reason to be concerned.

My email differs from the information in this email. I do not want to contradict a federal partner, however, I will say the FBI is known for not being tribal friendly in Sioux country.

Also – as a side note they are not referring to the tribe or the Chairman. They are the Standing Rock Sioux, which is part of the grater Sioux Nation.

This is tricky. It also occurred to me if IHS is asking us for information we probably need to let Ron P. over at HHS know since he is my POC or HHS which over sees IHS.

I also looked up the person Milo referenced as looking for the information. Her name is Mary Smith and she is the Principal Deputy Director if Indian Health Services.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:59 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

I haven't read this yet, just passing for visibility, not use. I'll look at your IHS note. On NICCL, and heading to 915

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:25 AM
To: R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Page 0070

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 0071

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 18:29:29 +0000
To: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Subject: RE: Elliott Ward

Thanks!

I was on the call as well and we are going to have Ricky reach out to Elliott.

From: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 12:23 PM
To: Roscoe, Scott <scott.roscoe@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Elliott Ward

Hello-

Today I listened in to the first half of the Tribal Policy Listening Session during which Elliott spoke on concerns for PDM grants and the potential pipeline.

Am not sure who else was able to make the call so wanted to share the information for follow-up with him.

Thanks!

Courtnee-Evan Spino
PA Tribal Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
267-319-6335

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 18:30:11 +0000
To: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Subject: RE: Elliott Ward

Does it look like you might be heading out the door for Matthew?

From: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 12:23 PM
To: Roscoe, Scott <scott.roscoe@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Elliott Ward

Hello-

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Courtnee-Evan Spino
PA Tribal Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
267-319-6335

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 20:30:13 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Subject: RE: Elliott Ward comments on Webinar

Thank you!

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 2:28 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Elliott Ward comments on Webinar

Oh totally, I was just letting you know where we were on everything. I'll give him a call.

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 2:25 PM
To: Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Elliott Ward comments on Webinar

Understand. Could you reach out to him just to follow-up and make sure we know exactly what he is looking for?

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 1:38 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Elliott Ward comments on Webinar

I have not talked to Elliott in some time, so unless mitigation has spoken to him I don't know about a conversation about the pipeline and PDM grants. I know that back when they were trying to work with the 404 funds that it was said by mitigation that cultural items where not approved mitigation projects, or at least the ones they were mentioning at the time, like using the grant to identify cultural sites.

As to the Regional EM call that we have been doing prior to OST deployment I was planning on doing one next month, but now with Matthew here and me potentially going to have to leave, I figured I would wait a couple weeks to before continuing with the planning.

Thanks,

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 12:01 PM
To: Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Roscoe, Scott <scott.roscoe@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

Hi All –

(b)(6) (Standing Rock) is on the National Tribal Policy consultation webinar right now. He has asked Milo about using PDM to plan for the braking of the pipeline. He said that FEMA has said they can't help since it is off reservation, even though it was part of the Sioux Nation. He also asked about working with tribes on culturally sensitive areas but when they ask for PDM grants won't cover that so the wording in the PDM grant is wrong. This is of particular concern because of the use of water.

I am going to assume we talked to him at some point on this issue. He will likely be calling or emailing Milo at HQ.

He also asked about doing a National Tribal Emergency Association. Milo told him to look at what tribal associations are doing. ITEMA was used as an example, intertribal recovery foundation, National Congress of American Indians. He may be open to pushing something in our region.

Ricky, do you want to reach out to (b)(6) on this one?

M.

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 16:27:58 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

Oh totally, I was just letting you know where we were on everything. I'll give him a call.

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 2:25 PM
To: Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

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From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 1:38 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

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Thanks,

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 12:01 PM
To: Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Roscoe, Scott <scott.roscoe@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

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Ricky, do you want to reach out to Elliott on this one?

M.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 20:25:11 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

Understand. Could you reach out to him just to follow-up and make sure we know exactly what he is looking for?

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 1:38 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

I have not talked to (b)(6) in some time, so unless mitigation has spoken to him I don't know about a conversation about the pipeline and PDM grants. I know that back when they were trying to work with the 404 funds that it was said by mitigation that cultural items where not approved mitigation projects, or at least the ones they were mentioning at the time, like using the grant to identify cultural sites.

As to the Regional EM call that we have been doing prior to OST deployment I was planning on doing one next month, but now with Matthew here and me potentially going to have to leave, I figured I would wait a couple weeks to before continuing with the planning.

Thanks,

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 12:01 PM
To: Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Roscoe, Scott <scott.roscoe@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

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M.

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Sent: 6 Oct 2016 15:38:10 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

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M.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 20:30:49 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

When you have a moment give me a call.

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 2:28 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

Oh totally, I was just letting you know where we were on everything. I'll give him a call.

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 2:25 PM
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Ricky, do you want to reach out to (b)(6) on this one?

M.

From: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Sent: 7 Oct 2016 09:46:47 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: (b)(6)

Not that I've been told… however I was deployed to Iowa or Missouri last night (I declined). What about you?

I'd really like the opportunity to work some more Tribal decs/subgrantees even if they are out of R8.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 12:30 PM
To: Spino, Courtnee-Evan <Courtnee-Evan.Spino@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: (b)(6)

Does it look like you might be heading out the door for Matthew?

From: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 12:23 PM
To: Roscoe, Scott <scott.roscoe@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: (b)(6)

Hello-

Today I listened in to the first half of the Tribal Policy Listening Session during which (b)(6) spoke on concerns for PDM grants and the potential pipeline.

Am not sure who else was able to make the call so wanted to share the information for follow-up with him.

Thanks!

Courtnee-Evan Spino
PA Tribal Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
267-319-6335

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 15:54:44 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 9 am notes

- Red Flag warning in Utah from noon to midnight.
- Expecting rain on Thursday and Friday in the Dakotas and MT. They are expected to have strong winds with possible hail and tornado activity.
- Region VIII has lost the three FEMA Corps teams that were scheduled to arrive in September. They have been re-routed to LA.
- Lee mentioned that Response is looking for Divisions Supervisors for LA.
- Our IMAT team is working in the hardest hit area in LA.
- Dashboard input is due by COB tomorrow.
- EA Reported that Stacie is with the ARA this morning and teleworking this afternoon. EA was asked for and provided and update on the protests at Standing Rock (work stopped yesterday on the pipeline because of safety concerns, a lawsuit was filed and granted for Dakota Pipeline to keep protestors from coming onto the construction site, 500 to 600 people estimated yesterday with more coming today. The tribe is working with the country and state to keep people safe and the protests peaceful).

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:56:19 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: 14 was it... all done

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 14 Oct 2016 12:00:58 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 915 notes

ND level 2 partial activation, pipeline

MT. Level 3 No flooding currently. Monitoring

Some red flag today until evening.

R 10 dumped on. Storm system in NW. Potential flooding

SWAT. Not sure if it will happen this weekend. Note from Martin coming in update.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 19 Oct 2016 13:23:48 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 915 notes.

CO (fire) and ND (pipeline) both at level 2
No major weather across R8
Monthly NORTHCOMM brief. Staff are welcome to attend for education purposes. Invite will come to me, which I can share.
State dashboards due tomorrow. *Megan to get tribal policy into bullet to Katie.
Wisconsin and Minnesota declarations are both pending.
RA met with Ron Pinera, HHS yesterday

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 12:00:58 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 915 notes

Darrin Ricketts will be heading to R5 toward end of Oct. Same job. Closer to family
FCO/FDRC meeting next week for those not deployed
Planning in case… Essential personnel list to be reviewed by DDs today. Note: Except CR to go through currently.
Interest from Sen. Hoeven in exploring federal funds (all agencies) for ND to support needed OT on law enforcement related to pipeline
ARA returns late tonight.

Reminder: I leave at about 4:15 today.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 20:17:51 +0000
To: Booth, Milo;Valteau, Margeau
Subject: a few things

Hi Milo and Margeau –

I wanted to touch base on three things….

1) Are we still looking at tomorrow as the start for consultation for the Tribal Policy? And will we get to see the changes before it goes out?
2) There are significant protests going on just north of the Standing Rock Reservation (southwestern SD) regarding the XL Pipeline. Media is anticipating large busloads of people from other reservations arriving today. We are tracking from here. We haven't gotten any questions on it, but depending on how long it goes on, it could impact some of our travel plans and the availability of tribal EMs and Council as well as their interest in FEMA. The protests have all been peaceful and are expected to stay that way.

Hope you are both doing well!

Megan

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:38:06 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

I can have Brian do a quick new draft of this for Nancy to push unless you want to draft it for some reason. We'd vet past you once written.

Key points I think we need to hit:
Information is mixed and doesn't fully jive from sources.
Stop of work.
Upcoming powwow.
Again, no FEMA role at this time.
Anything else?

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 3:41 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth <elizabeth.zimmerman@fema.dhs.gov>; Gruber, Corey <Corey.Gruber@fema.dhs.gov>; Coen Jr, Michael <Michael.CoenJr@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>; R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations, the situation is significant enough for the State EM director and the Adjutant General to cancel their planned participation in the TAG/NORTHCOM seminar August 17-18.

I have spoken with Greg Wilz and we are monitoring the situation. I do not anticipate any role for FEMA; this BLUF is for situational awareness only.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:46:43 -0400
To: Hvinden, Brian
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Brian – Nancy and I spoke this morning. She'd like to send another BLUF up to Beth Z on the situation, it should be pretty tight, just a quick update. Below is what she sent previously. **Given what we know, would you do a quick draft that Megan can then review as she is at OST and heading into a meeting?**

Key items that need to be included for sure (I'm open to other):
**Information is mixed and doesn't fully jive from sources.
**Stop of work.
**Upcoming powwow.
**Ongoing monitoring of media/social media, and communication with the state.
**Again, no FEMA role at this time.

Anything else?

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 3:41 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth <elizabeth.zimmerman@fema.dhs.gov>; Gruber, Corey <Corey.Gruber@fema.dhs.gov>; Coen Jr, Michael <Michael.CoenJr@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>; R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>
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Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 12:04:48 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Brian - there are a few typos in below but I'm having problem with BB copying and I'm in meetings. Please just do a quick edit.

Megan -
*Add in that powwow upcoming (ARA requested add)
*send a note to Ron, HHS. He is in SLC at event
*no need to add any fbi info. Do what we have been doing, strictly info gathering and monitoring

---

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 08:26 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Let me know what you think. This is essentially media monitoring, and HIS could pick that up, they also have people on the ground who should be able to provide them with some visibility. A bit concerning they are coming to us.

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA would engage in, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. The only direct contact we have had with the State has been a call from the State's director of Homeland Security, letting our Acting Regional Administrator know he would not be attending a conference because of the protest. All of our awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the XL Pipeline, this the Keystone Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.

- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the intel could be incorrect. We have not reached out to the tribe or had additional conversations with the State, as this is not a FEMA related issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 – Desk
(303) 945-6367 – Cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:48 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I"ll take a quick look at it. And will let nancy know in am.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Hi Stacie -

Got a call from Milo this evening. Apparently, high level people at IHS are looking for Intel on standing rock protests. We have a reputation for knowing what is generally going on so they called Milo. Milo asked me to respond to the email below with what I may be hearing. I told

him I would but I would site my sources and make sure that it is clear we have not been in contact with the tribe and this is not our issue.

Milo is concerned if we don't address it at this level, Fugate might get asked and it come down to Nancy.

I plan on writing my response first thing. I'll send it to you for review, unless you just want to be copied. I am going to try and get it out as early as possible.

Once that is out I'll write the tribal policy summary.

Thanks
M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 3:22:09 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; (b)(6)@ihs.gov'
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the
Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 17:38:06 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

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Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 18:10:57 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Another DAPL Update

Pipeline protests: The fight goes on against project that could jeopardize Native lands in the Midwest

The pipeline will cross hundreds of rivers, creeks and tributaries, potentially compromising water supplies VIDEO

Alli Joseph
Monday, Aug 29, 2016

MNi WICONi
Respect & Protect our WATER of LiFE
I CAN Live Without OIL
I CAN NOT Live Without WATER
PIPELINE FIGHTER

Members of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota participate in a rally to protect water and land from the Dakota Access Pipeline, August 24, 2016 in Washington, DC. (Credit: Getty/Alex Wong)

Kayla Lookinghorse-Smith set out from New York to Washington, D.C. late Tuesday night, driving six hours to attend her first protest on the East Coast against the looming Dakota Access Pipeline, a $3.78 billion, 1,100-mile oil project being built by a group of firms led by Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

Her two young sons, 19 months and 5 years old, slept in the backseat.

“I didn’t know what to expect,” she said, as she drove into the early morning hours. “I just knew that I have to support my tribe, because they are taking a stand for water, an essential to life, in this world.”

The pipeline — already facing immense criticism — will cross hundreds of rivers, creeks and tributaries. And, part of it will run directly under the Missouri River, the only source of water for Lookinghorse-Smith’s tribe, the Standing Rock Sioux. Any leaks could compromise the entire water supply, and tribe members are concerned that sacred sites like burial grounds will be destroyed. DAPL would be the first to transport over 470,000 gallons of fracked, crude Bakken shale per day from North Dakota directly to refineries in the U.S. Gulf Coast, notably Illinois.

Lookinghorse-Smith is a full-blood Hunkpapa Lakota. Her family and thousands of other supportive people from around the world (including members of my tribe, the Shinnecock Nation of New York) have offered support or camped out across from the DAPL construction site near Cannon Ball, North Dakota, since April 1. They are locked in a tense, politicized, very personal yet peaceful struggle against officers of the law and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has overseen the project.

Many people close to the protest camp, like Lookinghorse-Smith, are upset by media reports of violence against police by Native people.

“This peaceful protesting is happening every day in North Dakota,” she said. “Our drum beats are not gunshots, our canupas (peace pipes) are not bombs, and our war cries are not criminal activity — as mainstream news media clearly misleads the public to believe.” Lookinghorse-Smith says the only loaded guns brought to the protest are those carried by the heavy police presence surrounding the area. Instead of weapons, Native protestors are using their voices, and our violent and oppressed collective history as a guide. They are broadcasting radio from a makeshift station at Sacred Stones (Standing Rock Spirit Resistance Radio @ 87.9 FM), and social media is flush with petitions, commentary and live videos from around the world in support of Standing Rock.

Violence and dangerous racist rhetoric is brewing nearby, however, in Bismarck Mandan, North Dakota.

“Tension is high, and the people of Standing Rock are starting to feel uncomfortable going into Bismarck to get supplies … because there are a tremendous number of threats and KKK mentality. People are talking about killing Indians now,” Lookinghorse-Smith said.

Actress Shailene Woodley (who also traveled to the Washington protest on Wednesday) joined the camp at Standing Rock two-and-a-half weeks ago, and has been sitting on the front lines. “If I thought my life was at risk,” she mused in a recent on-site interview, “do you think I would be sitting here like this?” Woodley paused. “The only thing that is happening are messages of love and peace … and unity. I love how mainstream media can spin a story however they want.”

Outside U.S. District Court in Washington on Wednesday, things were also calm. Several hundred supporters gathered, including Susan Sarandon and Standing Rock Tribal Chairman

David Archimbault II. Inside, Judge James Boasberg considered the case of the Standing Rock Sioux, who have filed to halt pipeline production and are asking the US to honor long-ago enacted treaties protecting Native lands and water.

And, for Native people, there is a spiritual element to water that goes far beyond the fear of pollution. Besides being a physical necessity for life, in traditional Native American circles water is the "first medicine" in a complex and environmentally respectful belief system that refers to the earth as the mother of all things.

Randy Ross of the Ponca/Oto tribe in South Dakota, which the pipeline will also cross, recalls a prophecy revealed by his late Cheyenne River Sioux tribal Elder Sidney Keith.

"There are many elements of healing brought by Creator, but water is essential to life, it is sacred," he explained. "Oil, as we discovered after the Gulf Coast BP Oil spill, destroyed so much, and Mother Earth will shake herself to cleanse. Many believe that time is upon us. We see fires, floods, tornados of unheard of frequency and power, earthquakes in greater frequency and power."

As protesters wait for the judge's promised ruling Sept. 9, Lookinghorse-Smith worries for her relatives and the others standing firm in the way of development. "It's starting to get cold in North Dakota right now, and cold weather gear and other essentials are much needed. The camp will sustain as long as they can."

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
Emergency Liasion
605-440-0993
Glenda.redfeather@fema.dhs.gov

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 17:01:31 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: Archambault's opinion piece

It was in the clips, but I wanted to make sure you saw it.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

From: Garcia, Carol
Sent: 14 Sep 2016 12:16:49 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs;Bello, Charles;Americanos, Christopher;Fisher, Dennis;Garcia, Carol;Gelston, Timothy;Betz, George;Taylor, James;Dick, Jennifer;Phillips, Leigh andrea;Liska, Robert;Floyd, Megan;Hillenburg, Mike;Gray, Patricia;Bakersky, Pete;Rivera, Luisa (b)(6) (b)(6) (DCE Army);Roscoe, Scott;Spino, Courtnee-Evan;Stephenson, James R;Torres, Mariano;Valora, Emily;Vasco, MaryBeth
Subject: Articles related to Tribal activity in R8
Attachments: energytransferpartners091316.pdf

For your awareness: **(attached is memo from Energy Partners)**

Ute Tribe: Utah Republican pushes modern day Indian land grab

Wednesday, September 14, 2016

The following is a statement from the Ute Tribe on H.R.5780, the Utah Public Lands Initiative Act. A hearing on the controversial bill takes place on September 14, 2016.

In the next few weeks Congressman Rob Bishop will attempt to push through the U.S. House of Representatives the first Indian land grab in over 100 years. H.R. 5780, the Utah Public Lands Initiative, proposes to rollback federal policy to the late 1800's when Indian lands and resources where taken for the benefit of others. In a startling lack of transparency, Congressman Bishop plans only one hearing on this 215-page bill with about 129 other land management proposals in the obscure Subcommittee on Federal Lands.

The Ute Indian Tribe strongly opposes H.R. 5780, the devastating effect it would have on our Uintah and Ouray Reservation and precedent that the bill sets for federal Indian policy. The bill is promoted as a local solution to difficult federal land management issues in eastern Utah. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, much of H.R. 5780 was built on the back of the Ute Indian Tribe and our 4.5 million acre Uintah and Ouray Reservation without our knowledge or consent.
The Tribe was shocked to learn that the bill proposes to take more than 100,000 acres of our Reservation lands for the State of Utah. After 4 years and, apparently, more than 1,200 meetings with stakeholders, the Tribe first learned of this proposal when a discussion draft of the bill was released on January 20, 2016. Over these 4 years, the Congressmen never invited the Tribe to a meeting or came to our Reservation to discuss their proposal to take our lands.

This modern day Indian land grab cannot be allowed to stand. The Federal government rejected these devastating policies long ago as tribes prospered under policies of tribal self-determination and restoring and protecting tribal homelands.

H.R. 5780 also proposes to alter the management of another 200,000 acres within our Reservation and without our consent. Among other things, the bill proposes a "Utility Corridor," "Special Management Areas," "Wildernesses," "Wild and Scenic Rivers" and "Recreation Areas" within our Reservation. These changes would directly affect our ability to exercise tribal self-determination, utilize our water rights and manage our Reservation lands for the benefit of our members.

The Ute Indian Tribe is a major economic engine in northeastern Utah. We are currently working with State and local governments to address long-standing issues related to jurisdiction, air quality, preservation of cultural and environmental resources, and responsible energy development. H.R. 5780 threatens to undermine these relationships.

The Congressmen's election year maneuver to rush H.R. 5780 through the House of Representatives will die in the Senate and 4 years of meetings will be wasted. It did not have to be this way. If the Congressmen had accepted the Ute Indian Tribe as a full partner, we could have developed a Utah Public Lands Initiative capable of passing Congress. With these disastrous proposals off the table, we need a Utah Public Lands Initiative that benefits all of Utah including the State's oldest residents—the Ute Indian Tribe.

Hundreds rally at White House to block Dakota Access Pipeline

Tuesday, September 13, 2016

Several hundred people rallied in front of the White House on Tuesday to pressure the Obama administration to cancel the $3.8 billion Dakota Access Pipeline.

A key portion of the controversial project is on hold pending further review of issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. But opponents called on President Barack Obama to put an end to the project altogether.

"This pipeline, it's poison. It's poison and it's going to kill us," said Jasilyn Charger, a young member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe who has been at the forefront of the #NoDAPL and ReZpect Our Water movements.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont), who was the first national political figure to oppose the pipeline, echoed the sentiments. He said a "full environmental and cultural impact analysis" will show the true dangers of the project.

Jasilyn Charger, a young member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, speaks at a #NoDAPL rally in front of the White House on September 13, 2016. Photo by Indianz.Com

"We've got to change the federal government's relationship with Native people," Sanders, a former candidate for president, said to applause.
"They've been lied to. They've been exploited," he said. "This has got to change."

The rally came as Energy Transfer Partners, the parent company of Dakota Access, broke four days of silence on the controversy. A memo from chairman and chief executive Kelcy Warren vowed to complete the pipeline despite new obstacles.

"We – like all Americans – value and respect cultural diversity and the significant role that Native American culture plays in our nation's history and its future and hope to be able to strengthen our relationship with the Native American communities as we move forward with this project," Warren wrote.

At the same time, Warren rejected all of the arguments that the tribe and #NoDAPL resisters have raised. He said the pipeline will not harm sacred sites or impact water resources despite its proposed path under the Missouri River at Lake Oahe.
"I am confident that as long as the government ultimately decides the fate of the project based on science and engineering, the Dakota Access Pipeline will become operational bringing a safer means of transportation to a much needed supply of oil to communities across the country," Warren said.

Warren promised meetings with "officials in Washington" but otherwise did not explain how Dakota Access will convince the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to approve work at Lake Oahe. Without that easement -- which is on hold as a result of the Obama administration's extraordinary action -- the pipeline cannot transport oil along its current path in North Dakota.

The memo was also noticeably silent on the lawsuit that prompted the administration's intervention. Dakota Access has not filed any papers in court since Friday, when a judge ruled against the tribe's motion for a preliminary injunction against the Army Corps.

"Energy Transfer Partners has demonstrated time and time again that the bottom line for them is money," Chairman Dave Archambault II said in a statement on Tuesday. "The bottom line for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is and will always be protecting our lands, people, water, and sacred sites from the devastation of this pipeline."

The tribe already filed a notice of appeal and asked Judge James Boasberg for an injunction that would have forced Dakota Access to stop all work pending resolution of that appeal. But the request -- which was joined by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe -- was rejected on Monday.
Additionally, Boasberg struck a new filing by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe from the record. A short order noted that the tribe, although it has been allowed to enter the case as a plaintiff, is "not entitled to its own separate complaint."

Key House Democrats call for hearing on Dakota Access Pipeline
Wednesday, September 14, 2016

Two leading Democrats in the House are calling for a hearing on the Dakota Access Pipeline as Republicans continue to maintain silence on the controversy.

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Arizona), the top Democrat on the House Committee on Natural Resources, and Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-California), the top Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, both visited the

#NoDAPL encampment in North Dakota over the weekend. After seeing the struggle first-hand, they want Congress to investigate whether federal agencies properly consulted the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe before approving the pipeline.
"We are very concerned about potential impacts both to sacred sites along the selected route for the pipeline, as well as to the tribe's water source," the lawmakers said in a letter to their Republican counterparts on Tuesday. "Furthermore, we are disheartened to learn that meaningful consultation with the tribe concerning sacred sites and proposed mitigation plans has still not occurred."
The request is not likely to go far despite widespread and growing support for the #NoDAPL movement. The House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs has all but gone missing in action in the past few months -- Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), the chairman of the panel, has convened just six hearings on Indian issues since the start of 2016.

In comparison, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs holds hearings and meetings just about every week when Congress is in session. Since the beginning of the year, the panel has advanced about two dozen bills, with several becoming law.

The subject matter of the #NoDAPL controversy also poses conflicts for Republicans, whose agenda embraces energy development. No GOP lawmakers sided with Indian Country during the battle over the Keystone XL Pipeline and few are willing to speak about Dakota Access without fear of seeming too pro-tribal.

"It is incumbent upon all parties to move forward peacefully and expeditiously, within the law, to come to a resolution that honors the rights of lawful commerce," Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-North Dakota) said in a statement on Friday, after the Obama administration took the extraordinary step of putting a hold on a key portion of the project.
The hands-off approach to Dakota Access stands in contrast to the GOP's treatment of the Gold King Mine disaster that polluted the waters on three reservations in the Southwest. Republican leaders convened a slew of hearings Navajo Nation, whose leaders have repeatedly expressed solidarity with the #NoDAPL movement and have gone to North Dakota to emphasize their support.

"The position the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is taking to halt the pipeline is one that is common to every Native American tribe. We all must consistently work to protect our land, our natural resources and especially our water," Navajo President Russell Begaye said in a statement on Friday.

Carol A. García
Tribal Affairs – Region VIII
FEMA
Denver Federal Center, Bldg 710
Denver, CO 80225
(303) 202-8959
(720) 415-4816 Cell

ENERGY TRANSFER

Memorandum

To: All Partnership Employees
From: Kelcy Warren, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2016
Re: Dakota Access Pipeline Project Update

I want to provide the entire Energy Transfer family with an update on the Dakota Access Pipeline project. Recent events in North Dakota and Washington, DC have brought the project to the forefront of national media attention. I recognize that many of you are receiving questions about our work and I want to be the first to share with you our commitment to the project, what we know, and where I am focused.

First, I am proud of our work on Dakota Access. As one of the largest U.S. infrastructure companies, our experience in designing, constructing, and operating natural gas, crude oil, and refined products pipelines is extensive. We have designed the state-of-the-art Dakota Access pipeline as a safer and more efficient method of transporting crude oil than the alternatives being used today, namely rail and truck. Today the 1,172 mile project is nearly 60 percent complete, employs more than 8,000 highly trained skilled labor workers who are safely constructing it, and we have spent just over $1.6 billion on equipment, materials and the workforce to date. Once operational, the project will safely move American oil to American markets. It will reduce our dependence on oil from unstable regions of the world and drive down the cost of petroleum products for American industry and consumers.

We are committed to completing construction and safely operating the Dakota Access Pipeline within the confines of the law. On Friday, a federal judge reaffirmed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' previous decision to permit construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Despite the judge's ruling that the project is in compliance with U.S. rules and regulations, the Department of Justice, Department of the Army and Department of Interior later announced that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is determining "whether it will need to reconsider any of its previous decisions" and called on the company to voluntarily halt construction. We intend to meet with officials in Washington to understand their position and reiterate our commitment to bring the Dakota Access Pipeline into operation.

Second, our corporate mindset has long been to keep our head down and do our work. It has not been my preference to engage in a media/PR battle. However, misinformation has dominated the news, so we will work to communicate with the government and media more clearly in the days to come.

In the meantime, I want to share with you information about our work on the Dakota Access Pipeline.

- The right of way for the entire pipeline has been obtained. All four states the pipeline traverses – North Dakota, South Dakota, Illinois, and Iowa – have issued favorable certificates, permits and approvals for construction.
- Nearly the entire Dakota Access pipeline route is across private land. In addition, neither the land abutting nor Lake Oahe itself is subject to Native American control or ownership. Despite this, we worked to meet with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe leaders on multiple occasions in the

past two years and gave the U.S. Army Corps data for their 389 meetings with more than 55 tribes across the project, including nine with The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe at Lake Oahe. We – like all Americans – value and respect cultural diversity and the significant role that Native American culture plays in our nation's history and its future and hope to be able to strengthen our relationship with the Native American communities as we move forward with this project.

- Nearly the entire pipeline route in North Dakota – and the entire portion the protestors are focused on – is located immediately adjacent to an existing natural gas pipeline built in 1982. The route also parallels a high voltage electric transmission line. This land has been studied, surveyed, and constructed upon – at least twice before – over the past several decades.
- Multiple archaeological studies conducted with state historic preservation offices found no sacred items along the route. State archeologists issued a 'no significant sites affected' determination in February on the North Dakota segment of the pipeline. If any potentially sacred objects were to be found, archaeologists, environmental inspectors, or trained construction staff are on site throughout construction to ensure their proper care and that proper notifications are made.
- Concerns about the pipeline's impact on the local water supply are unfounded. Multiple pipelines, railways, and highways cross the Missouri River today, carrying hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil. Dakota Access was designed with tremendous safety factors and redundancies, including compliance with and exceeding all safety and environmental regulations. The pipeline crosses 90 to 115 feet below Lake Oahe with heavy wall pipe and, as we all know, the pipe is inspected, tested and re-tested prior to being placed into service to ensure its long-term integrity.

Third, we respect the constitutional right of all assembled in North Dakota to voice their opinions for or against projects like ours. However, threats and attacks on our employees, their families and our contractors as well as the destruction of equipment and encroachment on private property must not be tolerated.

We appreciate the work of local sheriffs and law enforcement to date. I have directed our team to work closely with local, state and federal officials to ensure the safety and protection of our construction contractors and employees, contractors' equipment, private land and those whose right it is to peacefully protest. Together we must promote a peaceful discourse and path forward. We are committed to protecting and respecting the welfare of all workers, the Native American community, local communities where we operate, and the long-term integrity of the land and waters in the region.

Finally, many of you have asked what you can do. Here are a few ways you can support Dakota Access:

1. Continue to do your jobs in a thoughtful and professional manner. Your conduct and commitment demonstrates to the world that we are playing by the rules and are committed to completing this important infrastructure project.
2. Help explain to your friends and neighbors the facts about the work that you are doing. There has been an enormous amount of misinformation out there and you are our best ambassadors to the public.
3. Contact your elected representatives – all of them – to tell them how important this project is to your livelihood. Remind them that the company fully complied with the regulatory process and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a nationwide permit and other essential permits for our work.

I am confident that as long as the Government ultimately decides the fate of the project based on science and engineering, the Dakota Access Pipeline will become operational bringing a safer means of transportation to a much needed supply of oil to communities across the country. So we will continue to obey the rules and trust the process.

As the situation warrants, I will continue to communicate directly with you so that you can be fully informed of what’s going on and what you can do to help.

Thank you again for all that you do.

Kelcy

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 4 Sep 2016 15:24:46 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Automatic reply: Update: pipeline situation

I am out of the office until Sept. 6 and will only be checking email sporadically. For immediate assistance, please contact the region 8 news desk at 303 235 4908.
Thank you!

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 19:01:15 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Awareness: protests

I did not push the email that ARA sent, but I did send the below, which I felt covered it. You can let Milo know that I provided the heads up or forward my note if you'd like.

From: Tennyson, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 3:03 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Batkin, Joshua <joshua.batkin@fema.dhs.gov>; Nadeau, Robert <Robert.Nadeau@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Awareness: protests

Yes – a friend posted online on this. On nontribal land they found a Sioux cultural site while working on the pipeline.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 5:00 PM
To: Batkin, Joshua <joshua.batkin@fema.dhs.gov>; Tennyson, Stephanie <stephanie.tennyson@fema.dhs.gov>; Nadeau, Robert <Robert.Nadeau@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Awareness: protests

Megan gave a heads up to Milo yesterday, but I wanted you to have awareness too as our ARA is sending a note to Beth Z, just for awareness. We have no action.

There are significant protests going on just north of the Standing Rock Reservation (southwestern SD) regarding the XL Pipeline. Media is anticipating large busloads of people from other reservations arriving today. We are tracking from here. We haven't gotten any questions on it, but depending on how long it goes on, it could impact some of our travel plans and the availability of tribal EMs and Council as well as their interest in FEMA. So far, the protests have all been peaceful.

Stacie Greff, External Affairs Director
FEMA Region VIII
Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov
303-235-4774 desk
303-941-8668 cell

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 7 Sep 2016 18:56:55 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: Ben Affleck video in support of Dakota Access protest

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TSItZl9C4Q

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 17:41:02 -0400
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations, the situation is significant enough for the State EM director and the Adjutant General to cancel their planned participation in the TAG/NORTHCOM seminar August 17-18.

I have spoken with Greg Wilz and we are monitoring the situation. I do not anticipate any role for FEMA; this BLUF is for situational awareness only.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 17:41:02 -0400
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
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Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 23:02:16 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

FYSA

From: Zimmerman, Elizabeth
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:44 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>; Coen Jr, Michael <Michael.CoenJr@fema.dhs.gov>; Gruber, Corey <Corey.Gruber@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Deal, Timothy <Timothy.Deal@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Thank you

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:39:01 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth; Coen Jr, Michael; Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan; Deal, Timothy
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but current estimates range from 1500-2000 protesters. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday Aug. 19, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement. North Dakota Highway 1806, which runs adjacent to the protest, is closed to through traffic, with detours established. Work at the site is currently halted as legal proceedings initiated by both the Standing Rock and the Dakota Access owners now work their way through the legal system.

On Sept. 9-11 the Annual United Tribes International Powwow is scheduled in Bismarck, approximately 60 miles from the protest site. The powwow normally sees about 5000 visitors, but there is speculation that that number could swell significantly in light of the protest, which is being supported by other tribes around the country.

I still do not anticipate any formal role for FEMA, but Region VIII will continue to monitor the situation via traditional and social media, and continue ongoing communication with the state.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:39:01 -0400
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Coen Jr, Michael;Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan;Deal, Timothy
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but current estimates range from 1500-2000 protesters. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday Aug. 19, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement. North Dakota Highway 1806, which runs adjacent to the protest, is closed to through traffic, with detours established. Work at the site is currently halted as legal proceedings initiated by both the Standing Rock and the Dakota Access owners now work their way through the legal system.

On Sept. 9-11 the Annual United Tribes International Powwow is scheduled in Bismarck, approximately 60 miles from the protest site. The powwow normally sees about 5000 visitors, but there is speculation that that number could swell significantly in light of the protest, which is being supported by other tribes around the country.

I still do not anticipate any formal role for FEMA, but Region VIII will continue to monitor the situation via traditional and social media, and continue ongoing communication with the state.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 13:25:17 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

"We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably," she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

"He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena," he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

"My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not," he said. "This is our land, our people."

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, "I believe there's strength in prayer," and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Our water is sacred," she said. "I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too."

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes' chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock's opposition.

"We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives," Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe's reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe's water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It's estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it's the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead 'solidarity' rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

Standing Rock tribal leaders represented by former U.S. attorney (Billings Gazette)

- By AMY DALRYMPLE Forum News Service
- 20 hrs ago
-

BISMARCK – Former North Dakota U.S. Attorney Tim Purdon will represent the Standing Rock Sioux tribal leaders who have been sued by Dakota Access LLC for protesting the pipeline construction.

Chairman Dave Archambault II and council member Dana Yellow Fat are among several defendants named in a civil case filed last week in federal court in Bismarck by Dakota Access. The lawsuit alleges that the defendants are interfering with pipeline construction north of the reservation.

Purdon said he worked closely with Archambault while serving as U.S. attorney and he was asked to represent the tribal leaders.

"This case is about the parameters of the First Amendment in terms of tribal officials protesting here in North Dakota," Purdon said.

The complaint claims that Archambault, Yellow Fat and others tried to block Dakota Access employees from entering and exiting the construction site. The complaint also claims that Archambault excused all tribal employees from work on Aug. 12 and encouraged them to protest.

About 4,000 people were estimated to be at the protest site on Monday. Pipeline construction has been halted in that area since last week.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland granted a temporary restraining order against the tribal leaders and other defendants that prevents them from unlawfully protesting the pipeline construction.

A hearing was set for Thursday in the case, but has been postponed because Archambault plans to travel to Washington, D.C., for a hearing on Wednesday in the tribe's lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Purdon said.

The Bismarck hearing is now set for Sept. 8 to determine if a preliminary injunction should be issued. The temporary restraining order has been extended until Sept. 8, though Hovland wrote in his order that the parties are "strongly encouraged to meet and confer in good faith in an attempt to resolve this dispute prior to the hearing."

Archambault and Yellow Fat are among 29 people who have been arrested during the protest. Each faces a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct in Morton County.

Purdon resigned as U.S. attorney for the district of North Dakota last year. He now works in private practice in Bismarck for national law firm Robins Kaplan, where he is co-chairman of the American Indian Law and Policy Practice Group.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 15:44:26 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Awareness.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
-
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

Editor's note: As part of the Journal's ongoing coverage of the massive Dakota Access Pipeline protest in North Dakota, staff writer Mike Anderson has been camping in a tent near the protest site. He filed this dispatch from the scene on Saturday.

CANNON BALL, N.D. | A peaceful protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline ended in the arrests of 83 people in North Dakota on Saturday morning amid a chaotic scene in which police in riot gear used pepper spray to break up and subdue a group of 200 to 300 protesters.

It is the highest number of people arrested in a single day in North Dakota during the last several months of protest actions against the oil pipeline, bringing the total number of arrests up to 222.

Though the protesters behaved non-violently and cooperated with the police, North Dakota law enforcement officials described Saturday's events as a riot. Police have offered conflicting reports alleging that one protester either verbally threatened an officer, or tried to physically grab away a can of pepper spray, resulting in the protester and the officer both being pepper sprayed in the face.

Most, if not all, of those arrested after the 5-hour ordeal on Saturday will be charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor, according to Morton County Sheriff spokesperson Rob Keller. Other charges included assault on a peace officer, reckless endangerment, engaging in a riot, resisting arrest, and fleeing an officer on foot.

"It's an unlawful activity," Keller said during phone interview on Saturday afternoon. "The bottom line is it's on private property. It's posted, 'No Criminal Trespass'. It's like you're invading someone's home. Consequently, there were arrests that were made."

The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

A police statement said the four were arrested after they were found, "attached to the vehicle; two attached to the outside of the vehicle, one attached to the steering wheel and another whose body was outside the vehicle with his arm fed through a hole in the door and his hand was in a bucket of hardened concrete."

The call to action went through the main resistance camp around 5:20 a.m. while it was still dark and freezing cold. A man walked through the camp speaking through a megaphone.

"Wake up relatives," he said. "Wake up water protectors. Wake up land defenders. Time to wake up. Time to send our boys to the universe. Time to send our boys to the rising sun."

A convoy of vehicles formed in the camp, a prayer was held, and the assembled were instructed to behave peacefully and respectfully if they encountered police.

“I know it’s hard on the front line,” the prayer leader said in the dark. “But do not cuss, do not holler. If you see someone getting out of hand, tell them to calm down.”

Then the convoy moved out. Parking their vehicles along the highway, the protesters began hiking into the field as the sun rose a little before 8 a.m. Their path took them along a craggy dirt road near the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline on land that tribal members of the Hunkpapa Sioux of Standing Rock said is filled with sacred burial sites.

Some of the protesters remained behind as several hundred others carrying signs and banners began marching into the field, singing, praying, and burning bundles of ceremonial sage as they went.

They walked two to three miles inward when they encountered a line of more than 50 officers from multiple law enforcement agencies. Most of the officers wore riot gear, most held wooden truncheons, and some had shotguns, canisters of pepper spray, and tear gas grenade launchers in their hands. Two armored personnel carriers arrived later while a helicopter circled low overhead.

The protesters and police lines met in the middle of an open field. The protesters remained calm, playing drums and offering prayers in English and Lakota to the officers, who remained stone-faced and uncommunicative.

When the police line began to advance on the protesters, the leaders of the group instructed everyone to fall back and cooperate with the police. They were dispersing when an officer spoke over a loud-speaker from the turret of an armored vehicle.

His only words — and the only words police spoke to the protesters all morning — were, “You’re all under arrest for trespassing.”

The police continued to advance on the fleeing protesters, snatching some of the stragglers, throwing them behind their lines, and pepper-spraying several others in the face as they trod silently forward.

The police eventually surrounded the group, repeating that every one of the 200 to 300 people present would be placed under arrest. The protesters linked arms and tied bandanas to their faces as the officers pressed in, splitting the group and pressing many to the ground. Most, if not all of the men and women taken into custody, did not resist arrest.

A small group managed to retreat over the hill, a few pouring water into the eyes of friends who had been stung by pepper spray and guiding them by hand up the dirt road as they made their way back to camp.

“It was all peaceful. And then the cops showed up," said Harmony Restoule, a young Ojibwe woman from Northern Ontario, Canada. “It was really scary when the police kicked into action.”

Restoule went to the demonstration with her cousin Paige, both of whom participated in mass protests during the Idle No More movement, a grassroots campaign organized in 2012 by the indigenous peoples of Canada against perceived legislative violations of their treaty rights.

“The Canadian police never showed up in riot gear,” Paige Restoule said.

A young man from California who identified himself only as Ahkua said his friend was among the people arrested, and that the police took him after he knelt to the ground to help someone else up.

“There were a few officers who were excessively aggressive and got the others riled up,” he said. “Most cops are pretty chill.”

Saturday’s protest was one of several high profile demonstrations in the Cannon Ball area against the Dakota Access Pipeline in recent months. Police arrested celebrity Shailene Woodley along with more than 20 others on Oct. 10 along the route of the pipeline near St. Anthony, N.D. Police referred to the event as a riot and charged many people with either inciting or engaging in a riot. At the time, it was the highest total number of arrests made in a single day.

The protesters, who now number in the thousands at a main camp near Cannon Ball, want to stop the ongoing construction of the pipeline that will transport oil from the Bakken and Three Forks formations of North Dakota, through South Dakota and Iowa, into southern Illinois. The pipeline would carry 450,000 barrels per day initially and could reach 570,000 barrels a day. The total length of the pipeline across the four states would be 1,134 miles, with 271 miles in South Dakota. The company's estimated cost for the South Dakota segment is $820 million.

On Sept. 3, police and private security forces used pepper spray and dogs to drive protesters away from construction equipment.

"Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful," Kirchmeier said in a press-release about Saturday's events. "This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities. I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protesters. This is about the rule of law."

The protesters may have been peacefully dispersing on Saturday morning, Keller said, but that doesn't change the fact that they broke the law.

"That's the whole purpose of having a police line, to protect the (pipeline) property and their right to commerce," Keller said. "We are protecting the protesters too, and the ranchers as well."

When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, "No."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 10:49:16 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

FYI—Rob Keller is the PIO for Morton County Sherriff Department.

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- Mike Anderson Journal staff
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- Updated Oct 23, 2016

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 13:31:21 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Cc: Hunter, Cynthia;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Panel votes to borrow $6M for costs associated with pipeline protests, blasts feds inaction

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 12:18 p.m.

NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
HONOR THE EARTH
UTION

ⓘ Demonstrators against the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan, N.D., gather in opposition early this month. File photo.

BISMARCK — The state Emergency Commission voted Wednesday, Sept. 21, to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to support law enforcement efforts related to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, but not before members blasted the lack of federal support to deal with protesters camped out on federal land.

"I know we have to do it, but it's not right, and the lack of federal involvement is disgusting," said House Majority Leader Al Carlson, R-Fargo. "And we need to protect our North Dakota people, but this is just plain wrong that they're ignoring this issue."

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, said the state has spent $1.88 million on protest-related costs so far, the bulk of it personnel costs for

assistance from the National Guard and law enforcement agencies from across the state. Morton County estimated last week it had spent about $400,000 on top of that.

The $6 million line of credit from the Bank of North Dakota will fund future efforts as authorized by Gov. Jack Dalrymple's emergency declaration Aug. 19. The Legislature will have to make a deficiency appropriation from the state's general fund to pay back the bank after lawmakers convene in regular session in January, Budget Director Pam Sharp said.

Authorities have responded to multiple protests at pipeline construction sites and in Bismarck-Mandan since protests began to ramp up in mid-August. They've also created a traffic checkpoint and increased patrols in Morton County, which they say are necessary for the safety of local residents, farmers and ranchers and the thousands of protesters camped out on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Last Friday, the Corps of Engineers issued a special use permit for protesters to use Corps land south of the Cannonball River but not the land north of the river where the majority of them are camping, because that land is subject to an existing grazing lease.

Carlson said it bothers him that it's "a federal problem that they've ignored" and the Legislature will have to cover the costs at a time of budget shortfalls. Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, agreed.

"The taxpayers shouldn't have to be paying for this," he said.

Dalrymple said he's been in contact with the White House, U.S. Department of Justice, Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior and the state's congressional delegation but is still waiting to hear if they're going to help financially or with in-kind services.

"The problem that we have, of course, is that these public safety needs are imminent every day," Dalrymple said. "We really have no choice but to protect the public with law enforcement. Recovering funds from the federal government is definitely a top priority, but it undoubtedly will take some time."

The commission's other members are Secretary of State Al Jaeger, Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, Sen. Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, and Sen. Ray Holmberg, R-Grand Forks.

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 7 Sep 2016 10:45:10 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Interesting piece…

Treaty issues underlie Dakota Access protests

John Hult, jhult@argusleader.com 9:02 a.m. CDT September 7, 2016

People protesting the construction on a four-state oil pipeline at a site in southern North Dakota gather at campground near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation on Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016. About 300 people were at the campsite where protesters from across the country and members of 60 tribes have gathered in opposition to the $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline that will pass through Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota and South Dakota.(Photo: James MacPherson, AP)

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Protests in Cannonball, North Dakota took an ugly turn over the weekend, when a Dakota Access pipeline security team used pepper spray and dogs to ward off protesters who'd crossed a fence to stop construction work.

By that point, the Sacred Stone Camp's weeks-long protest had grown to historic proportions, as tribes from across the U.S. joined the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in solidarity with its opposition to the 1,200-mile, $3.8 billion pipeline.

Organizers at the North Dakota camp near the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers say the protests represent the largest gathering of tribes since the days of Sitting Bull.

The opposition is concerned about potential oil spill in the Missouri River, which Dakota Access would cross, as well the possibility of damage to historic and cultural sites.

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ARGUS LEADER
Judge grants short stop on 4-state oil pipeline construction

Pipeline supporters maintain that the project was properly vetted and permitted, that tribes had the opportunity to comment, and that Dakota Access will move the U.S. and its oil-consuming population closer to energy independence.

But there's something larger than the pipeline behind the pipeline protests.

The land on which the clash occurred is privately owned and permitted for construction, but it falls within a swath of the Great Plains that once belonged to the tribes. It also lies along the Missouri River, whose bottom lands were subject to a further erosion of tribal territory during the 20th Century.

“Part of the frustration you’re seeing play out at Cannonball are voices that didn’t get heard,” said lawyer and author Peter Capossela. “These are voices that haven’t been heard for a long time, and now they’re insisting that they be heard.”

Capossela has worked for several Native American tribes as a lawyer and wrote a book called "The Land Along the River" about the Missouri River treaties.

Much of what is now South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska and Wyoming was once part of the Great Sioux Reservation, created through the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. That treaty was altered multiple times, shrinking to encompass half of South Dakota in 1868, then pushing the reservation west of the Black Hills in 1877, tightening further in 1889 to create six smaller reservations.

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ARGUS LEADER
Oil pipeline protest turns violent in southern North Dakota

Some of that land was opened to homesteaders in 1915.

Then, after Missouri River flooding in the 1940s, bottom lands were taken by the Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Pick-Sloan plan to dam the river.

Jurisdiction over those bottom lands in South Dakota – which the tribes had hoped to reclaim in the 1990s – was given to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks through the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

Capossela sees a clear line between the treaties of the mid-1800s, failure to honor those treaties and the handling of the pipeline project by state and federal regulators.

Beyond physical boundaries are issues of cultural sites. Even when land is privately held, Capossela said, tribes have the “right of repatriation” for human remains and cultural artifacts found on private land.

That has played out in hearings on the pipeline at the state level, and continues to be one focal point of a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a lawsuit against the Corps of Engineers in late July, alleging that the agency failed to reach out to or adequately consult tribes during the planning process.

- ARGUS LEADER
  12 people arrested at Dakota Access Pipeline demonstration

“DAPL claims to have completed cultural resource surveys along the entire pipeline length,” the tribe’s complaint said. “However, the out-of-state, non-Tribal consultants hired by DAPL to do cultural surveys are unable to assess the potential cultural significance of sites in this area to the Tribes.”

The lawsuit says the tribe “participated extensively” during the Corps’ public comment process.

Dakota Access and its supporters disagree. If there’s been a lack of consultation, they say, it’s not for lack of trying.

Dakota Access filed affidavits saying its representatives reached out to Standing Rock officials to ask about tribal surveys on numerous occasions, but that most tribes refused to participate.

“The only response or comments we received from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe were to stop the project categorically avoid the entire western Great Plains Region as that is considered the Greater Sioux Nation’s ‘historical range,’ which is an impossible request to accommodate,” wrote Joey Mahmoud, VP of Dakota Access.

Joel Ames, Tribal Liaison for the Corps of Engineers Omaha District, wrote in the Corps’ response that he first attempted to consult with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in September of 2014. He wrote that a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer named Waste’ Win Young did not attend scheduled meetings and later declined to consult with the Corps, telling Ames in February of 2015 that she intended to work directly with Dakota Access.

- ARGUS LEADER
  Judge orders protesters not to interfere with Dakota Access oil pipeline

Ames wrote that he continued trying to work with Standing Rock throughout 2015, but that tribal officials cancelled meetings, failed to return phone calls or sent responses that accused the Corps of trying to circumvent the consultation process.

The Corps presented tribes with a draft environmental assessment in December of 2015. Tribal officials from Standing Rock requested a full environmental impact statement and continued to request a full consultation with tribes to create one until the project was permitted by the Corps in late July.

Such back-and-forth over consultation is a mark of disputes between the federal government and tribes, Capossela said.

“The extent of consultation is something that always gets disputed,” Capossela said.

By April, people had begun to gather at the Cannonball camps. By August, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple had declared a state of emergency, saying the protests constituted a “significant public safety concern.”

The weekend represented the most violent incident. A tribal spokesman said six people were bitten by dogs, including a child, and that at least 30 people were pepper-sprayed. Law enforcement said protesters injured four security guards and two dogs.

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ARGUS LEADER
Native American teens run to protest pipeline

After the clashes, the Corps filed a motion saying it did not oppose a temporary restraining order in the interest of "preserving peace" until a final decision on the Standing Rock lawsuit is reached.

The judge granted a temporary order on Tuesday, but only to stop work on State Highway 1806 and 20 miles east of Lake Oahe in North Dakota. Work on the west side can continue.

"We are disappointed that the U.S. District Court's decision does not prevent DAPL from destroying our sacred sites as we await a ruling on our original motion to stop construction of the pipeline," Standing Rock Chairman David Archambault II said in a statement.

Judge James Boasberg said he intends to issue a decision on the legality of the Corps' permit by Friday.

If history is any indication, however, the decision will not put an end to the opposition.

John Hult is the Reader's Watchdog reporter for Argus Leader Media. Contact him with questions and concerns at 605-331-2301, 605-370-8617. You can tweet him @ArgusJHultor find him on Facebook at Facebook.com/ArgusReadersWatchdog

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 6 Sep 2016 10:35:48 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Protester says take pipeline fight to 'Obama's doorstep'

By Nick Smith / Bismarck Tribune on Sep 5, 2016 at 9:20 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D.—Despite a clash on Saturday between opponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline project and private security officers hired for protection along the construction route, protesters say they're still optimistic the project can be stopped by continued opposition and through the courts.

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Hundreds milled around the protest camps near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation on a cool Monday, contrasting the gloomy weather with continued prayers, mingling with each other and enjoying donated food being cooked.

With the weather beginning to change and a ruling coming by Friday on an injunction sought by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., pipeline opponents see their actions as just beginning.

"I think this has essentially become ground zero for the climate (change) fight," Bill Kitchen of Johnstown, N.Y., said. "What happens if the courts rule in the company's favor? You've got all these people that aren't ready to give up and get out."

Kitchen, who works part-time for the Portland, Maine-based Biodiversity Research Institute and also participates in environmental activism, said the growing visibility of the protests will only help the cause.

If completed on schedule before the end of the year, the Dakota Access Pipeline would transport up to 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude with a future maximum capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

The project originates in North Dakota and ends in Illinois. The pipeline has an overall cost of $3.78 billion.

A section of the pipeline will be bored under the Missouri River and run less than a mile from the tribe's reservation boundary.

Tribal leaders and groups have been staging protests over the pipeline for more than a month, citing concerns over potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture. Concerns over disturbing cultural sites have also loomed large.

Kitchen said the protest is an extension of the Keystone XL fight; the pipeline took years of review and required a State Department review because it would have crossed the U.S. and Canadian border. The project was eventually shelved.

"They need to take this right to Obama's doorstep," Kitchen said, adding he's optimistic the pipeline won't be completely built.

He believes Saturday's clash between approximately 300 protesters and 14 private security officers at a work site shouldn't be a stain on the protest effort.

Tribal officials said cultural sites had been recently discovered in an area where Dakota Access, LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, had begun work on Saturday.

This prompted a march by protesters, who confronted and assaulted several security officers, according to a Morton County Sheriff's Department release. Three security officers were injured. No arrests have yet been made but the incident is under investigation.

"To go plowing through those sites ... it's not going to look good for the company," Kitchen said.

Tonya Hertel, of Mobridge, S.D., agreed.

"I feel that the federal judge made the right decision by waiting," Hertel said, adding that it allowed both sides to be fairly heard before weighing in. "We feel we're going to win this."

Hertel had arrived to visit the camp and drop off donations to the protesters including clothing. She says she's tried to visit at least once a week to provide whatever might be useful for the hundreds that are camping out from dozens of tribes from across the country as they settle in for the long haul.

She declined to speculate on whether or not the court will rule in their favor this week and how protesters might react.

"I think the tribes are doing a great job," Hertel said. "I feel people are hearing us."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 10:48:32 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian;Hunter, Cynthia;Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

NORTH DAKOTA LT. GOV. DREW WRIGLEY Q&A: 'An unlawful protest'

By Tom Dennis on Aug 28, 2016 at 12:09 a.m.

On Tuesday, North Dakota Lt. Gov. Drew Wrigley visited the Herald to talk about the protest near Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline project. The following is a transcript, edited for clarity and length.

Do you agree with the protest against Dakota Access pipeline?

No
Yes
Not sure

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Q. Tell us why you're here.

The evolving situation with Standing Rock is obviously very serious, and I don't know that publicly it's been discussed as broadly as it's going to be. The governor went on the radio, and we'll be talking much more about what is actually transpiring there.

We're dealing with a very significant and challenging law enforcement issue.

It's an important story, it's an evolving story, and there's frankly a lot of misinformation going out.

It's also a complicated situation. It started off as a peaceful protest, although it was being conducted in part on land on which they did not have any permits to go. They were on the Army Corps of Engineers land, and that's where the main encampment is.

But it has become an unlawful protest. And there is no way to peacefully and lawfully participate in an unlawful protest.

I liken it to conspiracy law. When you're involved in an illegal enterprise of some kind, everyone is involved in what's taking place. When someone says, "Well, I've been lawfully standing here on the Corps land the whole time, I've been peaceful, and my intentions are peaceful," that person still is part of an unlawful protest.

Vernon Red Owl, a member of the Siseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe in South Dakota, raises his arm. 8-23-2016

And when you have a situation in which hundreds of people are walking down a state highway, then off in the ditches standing there—and a lot of the people out there at least initially were very young children. That is both a complicated and an extremely dangerous situation.

A chief concern was that the traveling public comes in there, somebody gets spooked, they're going through a crowd—who knows what their reaction is going to be. Very, very concerning.

So the governor had the Highway Patrol and Department of Transportation put that barrier across State Highway 1806, except for people who live there and emergency personnel and law enforcement. Everyone else has to be diverted around and detoured.

And that was purely about public safety and being able to maintain the law enforcement effort, which is now required in view of the unlawful protest.

Q. Why is it being termed an unlawful protest?

There have been hundreds of criminal acts, violating a variety of state and federal laws. They include two substantiated cases of lasers being pointed into the cockpits of aircraft coming over. Those are life-threatening federal crimes, and they're being investigated right now.

There has been talk of weapons that were taken off two of the protesters early on. Also early on, there was a substantiated case of people believed to be members of the protest traveling to Bismarck, going to the home of a member of the North Dakota Highway Patrol, walking around that property, then going back to their vehicle and leaving. Almost like a recon.

Aerial photograph taken Aug. 20, 2016 over protest camp on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. (Tom Stromme/Bismarck Tribune)

Trespasses have been documented. Threats on law enforcement, both on social media and in person.

Crimes committed by people riding horses into a police line. I've spoken with the people who were on that line. They were beyond threatened. You can call what happened a lot of things, but you can look at that situation and say, "That is an assault with a deadly weapon. That horse is no different than a car going into a line of people." Law enforcement retreated at that point.

Q. How many protesters are local?

We've not been able to go through and take a census, of course. But people talk of the Seven Sioux Tribes; they haven't been together and "sharing their campfires," some say, for over 100 years.

But I think it's clear that the tribes are not united down there, and that there is not a united leadership front. There are factions within this illegal protest. And numbers vary on how many members are from the Standing Rock reservation. We just don't know.

I think it could be helpful to the situation if the leadership of the various tribes that are represented recognize that their people are not only involved in an illegal protest action, they are also endangering themselves, the public and law enforcement.

Q. Where do you see this headed?

Tribal veterans stand Aug. 24, at the opposition site near suspended pipeline construction. (Michael Vosburg/Forum News Service)

I don't have a prediction, because it would be easier to predict if it had unified leadership. Then you could size the person or persons up and assess what's been done in the past and what you can expect up ahead.

That's a very complicated thing to do, though, when there are many groups with many leaders involved.

Q. How many people are we talking about?

It varies. There are reports that it could swell to as many as 3,000; I heard rumors that we're already at 2,500 out there. But it varies, because it's not hard to go back to the Standing Rock reservation. Others have further to travel.

Q. What's happening with water and other services?

There were questions recently about some of the items that the state Health Department had provided for what initially was a lawful protest. The governor now has made clear that it has morphed into an unlawful protest, and there will not be the provision of water and other items of comfort out there. There still are ambulance and other services out there for everyone's protection.

There were some reports that people were concerned about there being water. There's plenty of water; it's just not at the protest site. There's plenty of water when people travel back to their homes and access it. So nobody's keeping them from whatever resources they need. But the state is not providing that.

Protesters of the Dakota Access pipeline and officers face off at a work site of the pipeline. (Michael Knudsen of Bismarck)

Q. What's next?

The governor's declaration was the beginning of establishing what the lawful boundaries are for peaceful protest. Meanwhile, every violation accumulates more and more support for our observation that it is an unlawful protest.

And that's why I say, people still have the opportunity to extract themselves.

Anyone who wants to be peaceful, who wants to be law-abiding, still has the opportunity to withdraw from these protests. They got themselves there, they have the capacity to leave. No one is going to stop them as they disperse.

Q. Is the National Guard coming in?

The governor made clear from his declaration the other day that it wasn't a National Guard callout. He has not made that callout. The National Guard is always there as a resource in North Dakota to deal with emergency situations, whatever they might be. But they weren't called out as part of the emergency declaration.

Q. Are there discussions about calling out the National Guard?

You talk about all different options, but there is not a decision to call out the National Guard.

Q. It sounds a little like the Black Lives Matter protests in Minneapolis, where the activists blocked Interstate 94 for a time.

I know people think about examples like that, but I think you're dealing with a different group dynamic. I don't think anybody involved in this would seriously question that a significant number of people went out there with peaceful, law-abiding intent. But now, anyone aware of the facts out there would agree that it is an unlawful protest.

And you can't lawfully participate in an unlawful protest.

Q. Some protesters might respond by saying, "If we lawfully protest, nothing will change, and the pipeline will be built." And their goal is to stop the pipeline. How would you respond?

There's always a lawful way in our society to push your perspective. There has been an extensive, long comment period, opportunity to weigh in, opportunity to be heard, to have your perspective be part of the formal record.

It's been documented out there, too, that those hearings had no representation from people who in many instances didn't have to travel very far to put that perspective out there. And that's not unimportant in this.

But even so, I'd be the last person to say, "Well, you didn't go, now you can't say anything." It's just that you've got to be lawful. And any time when things don't play out your way, it's not OK to resort to violence, threats and obstruction of lawful process.

That is not one of your options.

You can write letters. You can march peacefully. You can call your federal delegation. You can call your state legislator. You can call your community leadership. We have open and transparent and accessible leadership in this state.

But this is not an option: Unlawful, threatening, intimidating, dangerous protest.

Q. Does the fact that this involves Native American tribes make it harder? Given their history with the United States, their tribal leaders might not have much trust that the regular methods would work.

I wouldn't be the right person to ask about that. You'd have to ask them what their perspective is. But I can say that we in North Dakota state government interact with the tribes regularly on matters of central importance to them and us. We have strong relationships—not because we always agree, but because we're dealing with very, very important matters.

Look at the Three Affiliated Tribes. It's the absolute heart of oil country out there, and the tax agreements that were reached between the state and the tribe that led to private enterprise feeling comfortable in going out there and conducting very expensive business and investment—that takes a lot of trust.

That was an opportunity, and look what happened: Benefit to the tribes, benefit to everyone involved, benefit to commerce, job creation, opportunity.

We also interact with the tribes regularly on environmental and other matters. We have regular meetings, and we'll meet any time the tribal leadership wants to come in.

Q. What are the discussions like?

It's like any negotiation or discussion. It never ends in a way that's perfect for either side, but you reach accord.

Someone commented the other day, "Why isn't Sen. Heidi Heitkamp out there? She has good relationships." Why, because she's a Democrat? She does have good relationships with the tribes. And so do we.

We know these folks. Standing Rock Chairman Dave Archambault and the governor speak regularly and comfortably, and they have in this situation, especially early on. There's a friendship there, or a kinship out of understanding that they both represent important interests. So it's not for lack of opportunity to access.

Also, at every legislative session, the tribe comes in; they get their own opportunity to speak to a joint session. The governor gives the State of the State address; they give the State of the Relationship address.

No other other government leaders come in and get an opportunity like that. Sometimes our congressional delegation will address, but it's not the same thing as a joint session.

Also, the tribal leaders come in, there are days of meetings, they're there regularly petitioning the government to interact with them in this fashion or that, or adjust this agreement.

But that has not been accessed in all of this in ways that can be constructive.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 10:34:28 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Sioux tribe leader wants political help to halt oil pipeline

- By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press
- Updated 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A tribal leader Wednesday said he contacted the White House and met with North Dakota's senators in an effort to halt construction of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline that crosses the Missouri River near an American Indian reservation in southern North Dakota.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II, in a teleconference with reporters, stressed that the he and the tribe are working to ensure peace among those protesting the Dakota Access pipeline.

"There is no place for threats, violence or criminal activity," Archambault said.

North Dakota transportation officials, meanwhile, closed a several-mile stretch of Highway 1806 on Wednesday because of the protest along the road.

The 1,172-mile pipeline planned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is passing through the Dakotas and Iowa on its way to Illinois. Construction crews with armed private security guards arrived last week just north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where native Americans have been staging a protest for months at a "spirit camp."

Archambault and more than two dozen others have been arrested in the past week for interfering with construction of the project.

On Monday, developers of the project sued in federal court to stop protesters — including Archambault — from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Hovland granted the developer's motion for a temporary restraining order Tuesday.

Archambault said he met Wednesday with North Dakota Sens. John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp to "express concerns" about the pipeline.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Archambault told reporters he also has urged President Barack Obama to step in. The president and First Lady Michelle Obama traveled to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2014 to get a firsthand look at the impoverished living conditions on the reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Archambault said he asked nothing of the president then but is doing so now.

"I believe both he and Michelle Obama were touched," Archambault said. "So now if there's any way he can intervene and move this pipeline off our treaty lands, I'm asking him."

The White House did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 10:43:42 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: CLIP: ND TRIBAL

Work stops at Dakota Access Pipeline site

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

Lauren Donovan

- LAUREN DONOVAN, TRIBUNE

Arvol Looking Horse, a Sioux holy man from the Cheyenne River Reservation, leads hundreds out of a new protest camp set up near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation boundary to a site along Highway 1806 where the Dakota Access Pipeline has been under protest since late last week. The keeper of a sacred pipe led a long prayer session for peace and the safety of all late Tuesday morning. For a gallery of photos, go to bismarcktribune.com.

Tribal members protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline crossing of the Missouri River near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation move toward the empty pipeline construction site Tuesday to join in prayer and song for safety and peace.

The Dakota Access Pipeline construction site was abandoned Tuesday and protesters walked through the construction site down to the Missouri River, about a half-mile distant. Some walked, some rode horse, some elderly traveled in pickups, all of them intent on making contact with the water they hope to protect.

- LAUREN DONOVAN, TRIBUNE
  Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe chairman Harold Frazier, along with hundreds of his tribal members, joined the Dakota Access Pipeline protest Tuesday. Frazier said he thinks the pipeline should stop until the courts can sort out the matter. Meanwhile, he and Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault were working to ensure adequate shelter and safety for the hundreds of protesters now on location.

- LAUREN DONOVAN, TRIBUNE
  DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE – Work stopped Tuesday and possibly Wednesday at the site where hundreds of Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and supporters are protesting construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline near the reservation boundary.

The work stoppage gave law enforcement, tribal and state officials some time out to plan how to manage the protest, with numbers swelling by the hour with busloads of Sioux and others arriving to join the anti-pipeline movement and arrests occurring almost daily.

Workers were instructed to leave their equipment late Monday after youthful protesters walked onto the work site and surrounded the machinery. Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the mix of people around the machinery caused him to stop work until an improved plan for safety could be developed.

Kirchmeier said he didn't know whether work would resume Wednesday (today), because some options were still in flux Tuesday evening. One option was the private landowner allowing his fence to be moved back into his property to give protesters more room to assemble off the highway.

Kirchmeier met with Standing Rock Sioux officials in the morning and with state officials at the governor's office Tuesday afternoon, before returning to the department headquarters to brief patrol on how and when work will continue.

"Basically, what we talked about at the meeting was how to de-escalate tensions between the pipeline workers and the protesters, and us, I guess. One option is to give them more land and more comfort, room for tents, water, a dumpster, that kind of thing," the sheriff said. Ideally, there would be ample room to move the hundreds of cars, pickups and enforcement vehicles off the roadway, too, he said.

Some 28 people have been arrested since last week, including tribal chairman Dave Archambault, and charged with disorderly conduct for trying to block access to the work site. The tribal members are protesting the pipeline's crossing of the Missouri River near the reservation boundary for fear it will rupture and contaminate their water, water downstream and disrupt sacred historic sites.

The sheriff said a federal court judge, at the request of Dakota Access Pipeline, signed a restraining order against anyone arrested being at the pipeline location.

"We are pleased that the judge granted our request for a temporary restraining order, which will allow us to more safely carry out our construction activities at the site. We will continue to put the safety of our workers and those who live in the area as our top priority as we continue construction in all four states of this important energy infrastructure project," Granado Communications Group, a PR firm for Energy Transfer Partners, said in a statement.

In a situation of historical irony, after the work shutdown, law enforcement pulled back from the protest site on Highway 1806 to a communication command center set up at Fort Lincoln State Park. The park preserves the fort from which the cavalry and Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer left to never return after a fatal battle against the Sioux. A replica of Custer's captured flag was flying among others representing some of the 25 to 30 estimated tribes that have arrived to support Standing Rock since the protest started last week.

Another reason to pull back toward Mandan was to get into range of reliable cell phone service. Many at the protest scene believe cell towers are being purposely jammed to prevent communication, but North Dakota Highway Patrol Cap. Eric Pederson said that there is no truth to the rumor.

With the growing numbers of protesters -- now at least 500-600 -- a second protest camp was established late Monday night on low land just south of the Cannonball River and tents, buses and teepees were scattered around a central kitchen and check-in tent. An original spirit camp was set up months ago in protest.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Chairman Harold Frazier arrived with several busloads of his tribal members Tuesday afternoon and said it's the biggest such gathering of Native tribes he can recall, with representatives from tribes coast-to-coast and Canada.

“Things are going well, with the construction stopped. I think it should stay stopped and let the courts settle it,” Frazier said. “I believe we will stop it.”

Frazier said he and Archambault were cooperating to ensure there is adequate food and shelter for everyone arriving to support Standing Rock.

Dakota Access did not return calls and emails seeking comment on the work stoppage.

Back at the protest site closest to where the pipeline is being staged up for boring under the Missouri River, the scene was relatively quiet and peaceful throughout the day.

One of the Sioux' most holy men, Arvol Looking Horse, the 19th successive keeper of the sacred White Buffalo Calf pipe, led hundreds in prayer at the gated entrance to the pipeline route.

The prayers, burning sage and sounds of drumming were intended to restore a protest based on prayer and peaceful objection, amidst worries that not everyone can be controlled in such a large, fast-moving situation and as arrests continued to mount. Men, women and children sang the old language and turned as one to the four corners of the universe. Cameras were forbidden during the ceremony.

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After the prayers, the access gates were propped open and the protesters walked the construction route on private land down to the Missouri River below, a hot walk in nearly 85-degree temperatures. Many walked, some rode horse and others rode in the back of pickup trucks, intent of making contact with the water a half-mile away.

(Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 14:38:44 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Carol;Stephenson, James R
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal housing

Turtle Mountain gets housing funds

By Herald Staff Report on Sep 7, 2016 at 7:33 p.m.

Members of North Dakota's congressional delegation announced federal grants totaling $140,000 to help make housing more affordable to rural North Dakotans.

The Turtle Mountain Housing Authority will receive $70,000 of the funds.

The grants were made available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Housing Preservation Grants and will help modernize, repair and make homes more energy efficient.

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 14:43:39 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: CLIP: ND TRIBAL

Work stops at Dakota Access Pipeline site

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

Lauren Donovan

- LAUREN DONOVAN, TRIBUNE

Arvol Looking Horse, a Sioux holy man from the Cheyenne River Reservation, leads hundreds out of a new protest camp set up near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation boundary to a site along Highway 1806 where the Dakota Access Pipeline has been under protest since late last week. The keeper of a sacred pipe led a long prayer session for peace and the safety of all late Tuesday morning. For a gallery of photos, go to bismarcktribune.com.

Tribal members protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline crossing of the Missouri River near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation move toward the empty pipeline construction site Tuesday to join in prayer and song for safety and peace.

The Dakota Access Pipeline construction site was abandoned Tuesday and protesters walked through the construction site down to the Missouri River, about a half-mile distant. Some walked, some rode horse, some elderly traveled in pickups, all of them intent on making contact with the water they hope to protect.

- LAUREN DONOVAN, TRIBUNE
  Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe chairman Harold Frazier, along with hundreds of his tribal members, joined the Dakota Access Pipeline protest Tuesday. Frazier said he thinks the pipeline should stop until the courts can sort out the matter. Meanwhile, he and Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault were working to ensure adequate shelter and safety for the hundreds of protesters now on location.
- LAUREN DONOVAN, TRIBUNE
  DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE – Work stopped Tuesday and possibly Wednesday at the site where hundreds of Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and supporters are protesting construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline near the reservation boundary.

The work stoppage gave law enforcement, tribal and state officials some time out to plan how to manage the protest, with numbers swelling by the hour with busloads of Sioux and others arriving to join the anti-pipeline movement and arrests occurring almost daily.

Workers were instructed to leave their equipment late Monday after youthful protesters walked onto the work site and surrounded the machinery. Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the mix of people around the machinery caused him to stop work until an improved plan for safety could be developed.

Kirchmeier said he didn't know whether work would resume Wednesday (today), because some options were still in flux Tuesday evening. One option was the private landowner allowing his fence to be moved back into his property to give protesters more room to assemble off the highway.

Kirchmeier met with Standing Rock Sioux officials in the morning and with state officials at the governor's office Tuesday afternoon, before returning to the department headquarters to brief patrol on how and when work will continue.

"Basically, what we talked about at the meeting was how to de-escalate tensions between the pipeline workers and the protesters, and us, I guess. One option is to give them more land and more comfort, room for tents, water, a dumpster, that kind of thing," the sheriff said. Ideally, there would be ample room to move the hundreds of cars, pickups and enforcement vehicles off the roadway, too, he said.

Some 28 people have been arrested since last week, including tribal chairman Dave Archambault, and charged with disorderly conduct for trying to block access to the work site. The tribal members are protesting the pipeline's crossing of the Missouri River near the reservation boundary for fear it will rupture and contaminate their water, water downstream and disrupt sacred historic sites.

The sheriff said a federal court judge, at the request of Dakota Access Pipeline, signed a restraining order against anyone arrested being at the pipeline location.

"We are pleased that the judge granted our request for a temporary restraining order, which will allow us to more safely carry out our construction activities at the site. We will continue to put the safety of our workers and those who live in the area as our top priority as we continue construction in all four states of this important energy infrastructure project," Granado Communications Group, a PR firm for Energy Transfer Partners, said in a statement.

In a situation of historical irony, after the work shutdown, law enforcement pulled back from the protest site on Highway 1806 to a communication command center set up at Fort Lincoln State Park. The park preserves the fort from which the cavalry and Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer left to never return after a fatal battle against the Sioux. A replica of Custer's captured flag was flying among others representing some of the 25 to 30 estimated tribes that have arrived to support Standing Rock since the protest started last week.

Another reason to pull back toward Mandan was to get into range of reliable cell phone service. Many at the protest scene believe cell towers are being purposely jammed to prevent communication, but North Dakota Highway Patrol Cap. Eric Pederson said that there is no truth to the rumor.

With the growing numbers of protesters -- now at least 500-600 -- a second protest camp was established late Monday night on low land just south of the Cannonball River and tents, buses and teepees were scattered around a central kitchen and check-in tent. An original spirit camp was set up months ago in protest.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Chairman Harold Frazier arrived with several busloads of his tribal members Tuesday afternoon and said it's the biggest such gathering of Native tribes he can recall, with representatives from tribes coast-to-coast and Canada.

"Things are going well, with the construction stopped. I think it should stay stopped and let the courts settle it," Frazier said. "I believe we will stop it."

Frazier said he and Archambault were cooperating to ensure there is adequate food and shelter for everyone arriving to support Standing Rock.

Dakota Access did not return calls and emails seeking comment on the work stoppage.

Back at the protest site closest to where the pipeline is being staged up for boring under the Missouri River, the scene was relatively quiet and peaceful throughout the day.

One of the Sioux' most holy men, Arvol Looking Horse, the 19th successive keeper of the sacred White Buffalo Calf pipe, led hundreds in prayer at the gated entrance to the pipeline route.

The prayers, burning sage and sounds of drumming were intended to restore a protest based on prayer and peaceful objection, amidst worries that not everyone can be controlled in such a large, fast-moving situation and as arrests continued to mount. Men, women and children sang the old language and turned as one to the four corners of the universe. Cameras were forbidden during the ceremony.

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(Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 11:41:19 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: Standing Rock

This was in today's clips.

In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- Updated Aug 13, 2016

NEAR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX RESERVATION, N.D. (AP) — Opponents of a $3.8 billion Midwest oil pipeline are vowing to keep up the pressure after this week's arrests at a construction zone in North Dakota.

The Standing Rock Sioux had quietly opposed the Dakota Access pipeline for months at a "spirit camp" near their reservation, which straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Protesters' resistance heated up this week as at least 18 people were arrested, and a Hollywood actress joined their gathering.

Tribal members say the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and could affect drinking water on the reservation and for people downstream.

The four-state pipeline's path in North Dakota would cross beneath the Little Missouri River once and the Missouri River twice. The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 10:34:28 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Sioux tribe leader wants political help to halt oil pipeline

- By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press
- Updated 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A tribal leader Wednesday said he contacted the White House and met with North Dakota's senators in an effort to halt construction of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline that crosses the Missouri River near an American Indian reservation in southern North Dakota.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II, in a teleconference with reporters, stressed that the he and the tribe are working to ensure peace among those protesting the Dakota Access pipeline.

"There is no place for threats, violence or criminal activity," Archambault said.

North Dakota transportation officials, meanwhile, closed a several-mile stretch of Highway 1806 on Wednesday because of the protest along the road.

The 1,172-mile pipeline planned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is passing through the Dakotas and Iowa on its way to Illinois. Construction crews with armed private security guards arrived last week just north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where native Americans have been staging a protest for months at a "spirit camp."

Archambault and more than two dozen others have been arrested in the past week for interfering with construction of the project.

On Monday, developers of the project sued in federal court to stop protesters — including Archambault — from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Hovland granted the developer's motion for a temporary restraining order Tuesday.

Archambault said he met Wednesday with North Dakota Sens. John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp to "express concerns" about the pipeline.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Archambault told reporters he also has urged President Barack Obama to step in. The president and First Lady Michelle Obama traveled to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2014 to get a firsthand look at the impoverished living conditions on the reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Archambault said he asked nothing of the president then but is doing so now.

"I believe both he and Michelle Obama were touched," Archambault said. "So now if there's any way he can intervene and move this pipeline off our treaty lands, I'm asking him."

The White House did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 10:48:32 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian;Hunter, Cynthia;Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

NORTH DAKOTA LT. GOV. DREW WRIGLEY Q&A: 'An unlawful protest'

By Tom Dennis on Aug 28, 2016 at 12:09 a.m.

On Tuesday, North Dakota Lt. Gov. Drew Wrigley visited the Herald to talk about the protest near Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline project. The following is a transcript, edited for clarity and length.

Do you agree with the protest against Dakota Access pipeline?

No
Yes
Not sure

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Q. Tell us why you're here.

The evolving situation with Standing Rock is obviously very serious, and I don't know that publicly it's been discussed as broadly as it's going to be. The governor went on the radio, and we'll be talking much more about what is actually transpiring there.

We're dealing with a very significant and challenging law enforcement issue.

It's an important story, it's an evolving story, and there's frankly a lot of misinformation going out.

It's also a complicated situation. It started off as a peaceful protest, although it was being conducted in part on land on which they did not have any permits to go. They were on the Army Corps of Engineers land, and that's where the main encampment is.

But it has become an unlawful protest. And there is no way to peacefully and lawfully participate in an unlawful protest.

I liken it to conspiracy law. When you're involved in an illegal enterprise of some kind, everyone is involved in what's taking place. When someone says, "Well, I've been lawfully standing here on the Corps land the whole time, I've been peaceful, and my intentions are peaceful," that person still is part of an unlawful protest.

Vernon Red Owl, a member of the Siseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe in South Dakota, raises his arm. 8-23-2016

And when you have a situation in which hundreds of people are walking down a state highway, then off in the ditches standing there—and a lot of the people out there at least initially were very young children. That is both a complicated and an extremely dangerous situation.

A chief concern was that the traveling public comes in there, somebody gets spooked, they're going through a crowd—who knows what their reaction is going to be. Very, very concerning.

So the governor had the Highway Patrol and Department of Transportation put that barrier across State Highway 1806, except for people who live there and emergency personnel and law enforcement. Everyone else has to be diverted around and detoured.

And that was purely about public safety and being able to maintain the law enforcement effort, which is now required in view of the unlawful protest.

Q. Why is it being termed an unlawful protest?

There have been hundreds of criminal acts, violating a variety of state and federal laws. They include two substantiated cases of lasers being pointed into the cockpits of aircraft coming over. Those are life-threatening federal crimes, and they're being investigated right now.

There has been talk of weapons that were taken off two of the protesters early on. Also early on, there was a substantiated case of people believed to be members of the protest traveling to Bismarck, going to the home of a member of the North Dakota Highway Patrol, walking around that property, then going back to their vehicle and leaving. Almost like a recon.

Aerial photograph taken Aug. 20, 2016 over protest camp on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. (Tom Stromme/Bismarck Tribune)

Trespasses have been documented. Threats on law enforcement, both on social media and in person.

Crimes committed by people riding horses into a police line. I've spoken with the people who were on that line. They were beyond threatened. You can call what happened a lot of things, but you can look at that situation and say, "That is an assault with a deadly weapon. That horse is no different than a car going into a line of people." Law enforcement retreated at that point.

Q. How many protesters are local?

We've not been able to go through and take a census, of course. But people talk of the Seven Sioux Tribes; they haven't been together and "sharing their campfires," some say, for over 100 years.

But I think it's clear that the tribes are not united down there, and that there is not a united leadership front. There are factions within this illegal protest. And numbers vary on how many members are from the Standing Rock reservation. We just don't know.

I think it could be helpful to the situation if the leadership of the various tribes that are represented recognize that their people are not only involved in an illegal protest action, they are also endangering themselves, the public and law enforcement.

Q. Where do you see this headed?

Tribal veterans stand Aug. 24, at the opposition site near suspended pipeline construction. (Michael Vosburg/Forum News Service)

I don't have a prediction, because it would be easier to predict if it had unified leadership. Then you could size the person or persons up and assess what's been done in the past and what you can expect up ahead.

That's a very complicated thing to do, though, when there are many groups with many leaders involved.

Q. How many people are we talking about?

It varies. There are reports that it could swell to as many as 3,000; I heard rumors that we're already at 2,500 out there. But it varies, because it's not hard to go back to the Standing Rock reservation. Others have further to travel.

Q. What's happening with water and other services?

There were questions recently about some of the items that the state Health Department had provided for what initially was a lawful protest. The governor now has made clear that it has morphed into an unlawful protest, and there will not be the provision of water and other items of comfort out there. There still are ambulance and other services out there for everyone's protection.

There were some reports that people were concerned about there being water. There's plenty of water; it's just not at the protest site. There's plenty of water when people travel back to their homes and access it. So nobody's keeping them from whatever resources they need. But the state is not providing that.

Protesters of the Dakota Access pipeline and officers face off at a work site of the pipeline. (Michael Knudsen of Bismarck)

Q. What's next?

The governor's declaration was the beginning of establishing what the lawful boundaries are for peaceful protest. Meanwhile, every violation accumulates more and more support for our observation that it is an unlawful protest.

And that's why I say, people still have the opportunity to extract themselves.

Anyone who wants to be peaceful, who wants to be law-abiding, still has the opportunity to withdraw from these protests. They got themselves there, they have the capacity to leave. No one is going to stop them as they disperse.

Q. Is the National Guard coming in?

The governor made clear from his declaration the other day that it wasn't a National Guard callout. He has not made that callout. The National Guard is always there as a resource in North Dakota to deal with emergency situations, whatever they might be. But they weren't called out as part of the emergency declaration.

Q. Are there discussions about calling out the National Guard?

You talk about all different options, but there is not a decision to call out the National Guard.

Q. It sounds a little like the Black Lives Matter protests in Minneapolis, where the activists blocked Interstate 94 for a time.

I know people think about examples like that, but I think you're dealing with a different group dynamic. I don't think anybody involved in this would seriously question that a significant number of people went out there with peaceful, law-abiding intent. But now, anyone aware of the facts out there would agree that it is an unlawful protest.

And you can't lawfully participate in an unlawful protest.

Q. Some protesters might respond by saying, "If we lawfully protest, nothing will change, and the pipeline will be built." And their goal is to stop the pipeline. How would you respond?

There's always a lawful way in our society to push your perspective. There has been an extensive, long comment period, opportunity to weigh in, opportunity to be heard, to have your perspective be part of the formal record.

It's been documented out there, too, that those hearings had no representation from people who in many instances didn't have to travel very far to put that perspective out there. And that's not unimportant in this.

But even so, I'd be the last person to say, "Well, you didn't go, now you can't say anything." It's just that you've got to be lawful. And any time when things don't play out your way, it's not OK to resort to violence, threats and obstruction of lawful process.

That is not one of your options.

You can write letters. You can march peacefully. You can call your federal delegation. You can call your state legislator. You can call your community leadership. We have open and transparent and accessible leadership in this state.

But this is not an option: Unlawful, threatening, intimidating, dangerous protest.

Q. Does the fact that this involves Native American tribes make it harder? Given their history with the United States, their tribal leaders might not have much trust that the regular methods would work.

I wouldn't be the right person to ask about that. You'd have to ask them what their perspective is. But I can say that we in North Dakota state government interact with the tribes regularly on matters of central importance to them and us. We have strong relationships—not because we always agree, but because we're dealing with very, very important matters.

Look at the Three Affiliated Tribes. It's the absolute heart of oil country out there, and the tax agreements that were reached between the state and the tribe that led to private enterprise feeling comfortable in going out there and conducting very expensive business and investment—that takes a lot of trust.

That was an opportunity, and look what happened: Benefit to the tribes, benefit to everyone involved, benefit to commerce, job creation, opportunity.

We also interact with the tribes regularly on environmental and other matters. We have regular meetings, and we'll meet any time the tribal leadership wants to come in.

Q. What are the discussions like?

It's like any negotiation or discussion. It never ends in a way that's perfect for either side, but you reach accord.

Someone commented the other day, "Why isn't Sen. Heidi Heitkamp out there? She has good relationships." Why, because she's a Democrat? She does have good relationships with the tribes. And so do we.

We know these folks. Standing Rock Chairman Dave Archambault and the governor speak regularly and comfortably, and they have in this situation, especially early on. There's a friendship there, or a kinship out of understanding that they both represent important interests. So it's not for lack of opportunity to access.

Also, at every legislative session, the tribe comes in; they get their own opportunity to speak to a joint session. The governor gives the State of the State address; they give the State of the Relationship address.

No other other government leaders come in and get an opportunity like that. Sometimes our congressional delegation will address, but it's not the same thing as a joint session.

Also, the tribal leaders come in, there are days of meetings, they're there regularly petitioning the government to interact with them in this fashion or that, or adjust this agreement.

But that has not been accessed in all of this in ways that can be constructive.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 6 Sep 2016 10:35:48 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Protester says take pipeline fight to 'Obama's doorstep'

By Nick Smith / Bismarck Tribune on Sep 5, 2016 at 9:20 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D.—Despite a clash on Saturday between opponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline project and private security officers hired for protection along the construction route, protesters say they're still optimistic the project can be stopped by continued opposition and through the courts.

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Hundreds milled around the protest camps near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation on a cool Monday, contrasting the gloomy weather with continued prayers, mingling with each other and enjoying donated food being cooked.

With the weather beginning to change and a ruling coming by Friday on an injunction sought by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., pipeline opponents see their actions as just beginning.

"I think this has essentially become ground zero for the climate (change) fight," Bill Kitchen of Johnstown, N.Y., said. "What happens if the courts rule in the company's favor? You've got all these people that aren't ready to give up and get out."

Kitchen, who works part-time for the Portland, Maine-based Biodiversity Research Institute and also participates in environmental activism, said the growing visibility of the protests will only help the cause.

If completed on schedule before the end of the year, the Dakota Access Pipeline would transport up to 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude with a future maximum capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

The project originates in North Dakota and ends in Illinois. The pipeline has an overall cost of $3.78 billion.

A section of the pipeline will be bored under the Missouri River and run less than a mile from the tribe's reservation boundary.

Tribal leaders and groups have been staging protests over the pipeline for more than a month, citing concerns over potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture. Concerns over disturbing cultural sites have also loomed large.

Kitchen said the protest is an extension of the Keystone XL fight; the pipeline took years of review and required a State Department review because it would have crossed the U.S. and Canadian border. The project was eventually shelved.

"They need to take this right to Obama's doorstep," Kitchen said, adding he's optimistic the pipeline won't be completely built.

He believes Saturday's clash between approximately 300 protesters and 14 private security officers at a work site shouldn't be a stain on the protest effort.

Tribal officials said cultural sites had been recently discovered in an area where Dakota Access, LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, had begun work on Saturday.

This prompted a march by protesters, who confronted and assaulted several security officers, according to a Morton County Sheriff's Department release. Three security officers were injured. No arrests have yet been made but the incident is under investigation.

"To go plowing through those sites ... it's not going to look good for the company," Kitchen said.

Tonya Hertel, of Mobridge, S.D., agreed.

"I feel that the federal judge made the right decision by waiting," Hertel said, adding that it allowed both sides to be fairly heard before weighing in. "We feel we're going to win this."

Hertel had arrived to visit the camp and drop off donations to the protesters including clothing.

She says she's tried to visit at least once a week to provide whatever might be useful for the hundreds that are camping out from dozens of tribes from across the country as they settle in for the long haul.

She declined to speculate on whether or not the court will rule in their favor this week and how protesters might react.

"I think the tribes are doing a great job," Hertel said. "I feel people are hearing us."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 7 Sep 2016 10:45:10 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Interesting piece…

Treaty issues underlie Dakota Access protests

John Hult, jhult@argusleader.com 9:02 a.m. CDT September 7, 2016

People protesting the construction on a four-state oil pipeline at a site in southern North Dakota gather at campground near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation on Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016. About 300 people were at the campsite where protesters from across the country and members of 60 tribes have gathered in opposition to the $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline that will pass through Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota and South Dakota.(Photo: James MacPherson, AP)

20 CONNECTTWEETLINKEDIN 1 COMMENTEMAILMORE

Protests in Cannonball, North Dakota took an ugly turn over the weekend, when a Dakota Access pipeline security team used pepper spray and dogs to ward off protesters who'd crossed a fence to stop construction work.

By that point, the Sacred Stone Camp's weeks-long protest had grown to historic proportions, as tribes from across the U.S. joined the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in solidarity with its opposition to the 1,200-mile, $3.8 billion pipeline.

Organizers at the North Dakota camp near the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers say the protests represent the largest gathering of tribes since the days of Sitting Bull.

The opposition is concerned about potential oil spill in the Missouri River, which Dakota Access would cross, as well the possibility of damage to historic and cultural sites.

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ARGUS LEADER
Judge grants short stop on 4-state oil pipeline construction

Pipeline supporters maintain that the project was properly vetted and permitted, that tribes had the opportunity to comment, and that Dakota Access will move the U.S. and its oil-consuming population closer to energy independence.

But there's something larger than the pipeline behind the pipeline protests.

The land on which the clash occurred is privately owned and permitted for construction, but it falls within a swath of the Great Plains that once belonged to the tribes. It also lies along the Missouri River, whose bottom lands were subject to a further erosion of tribal territory during the 20th Century.

“Part of the frustration you’re seeing play out at Cannonball are voices that didn’t get heard,” said lawyer and author Peter Capossela. “These are voices that haven’t been heard for a long time, and now they’re insisting that they be heard.”

Capossela has worked for several Native American tribes as a lawyer and wrote a book called "The Land Along the River" about the Missouri River treaties.

Much of what is now South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska and Wyoming was once part of the Great Sioux Reservation, created through the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. That treaty was altered multiple times, shrinking to encompass half of South Dakota in 1868, then pushing the reservation west of the Black Hills in 1877, tightening further in 1889 to create six smaller reservations.

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ARGUS LEADER
Oil pipeline protest turns violent in southern North Dakota

Some of that land was opened to homesteaders in 1915.

Then, after Missouri River flooding in the 1940s, bottom lands were taken by the Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Pick-Sloan plan to dam the river.

Jurisdiction over those bottom lands in South Dakota – which the tribes had hoped to reclaim in the 1990s – was given to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks through the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

Capossela sees a clear line between the treaties of the mid-1800s, failure to honor those treaties and the handling of the pipeline project by state and federal regulators.

Beyond physical boundaries are issues of cultural sites. Even when land is privately held, Capossela said, tribes have the “right of repatriation” for human remains and cultural artifacts found on private land.

That has played out in hearings on the pipeline at the state level, and continues to be one focal point of a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a lawsuit against the Corps of Engineers in late July, alleging that the agency failed to reach out to or adequately consult tribes during the planning process.

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ARGUS LEADER
12 people arrested at Dakota Access Pipeline demonstration

“DAPL claims to have completed cultural resource surveys along the entire pipeline length,” the tribe’s complaint said. “However, the out-of-state, non-Tribal consultants hired by DAPL to do cultural surveys are unable to assess the potential cultural significance of sites in this area to the Tribes.”

The lawsuit says the tribe “participated extensively” during the Corps’ public comment process.

Dakota Access and its supporters disagree. If there’s been a lack of consultation, they say, it’s not for lack of trying.

Dakota Access filed affidavits saying its representatives reached out to Standing Rock officials to ask about tribal surveys on numerous occasions, but that most tribes refused to participate.

“The only response or comments we received from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe were to stop the project categorically avoid the entire western Great Plains Region as that is considered the Greater Sioux Nation’s ‘historical range,’ which is an impossible request to accommodate,” wrote Joey Mahmoud, VP of Dakota Access.

Joel Ames, Tribal Liaison for the Corps of Engineers Omaha District, wrote in the Corps’ response that he first attempted to consult with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in September of 2014. He wrote that a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer named Waste’ Win Young did not attend scheduled meetings and later declined to consult with the Corps, telling Ames in February of 2015 that she intended to work directly with Dakota Access.

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ARGUS LEADER
Judge orders protesters not to interfere with Dakota Access oil pipeline

Ames wrote that he continued trying to work with Standing Rock throughout 2015, but that tribal officials cancelled meetings, failed to return phone calls or sent responses that accused the Corps of trying to circumvent the consultation process.

The Corps presented tribes with a draft environmental assessment in December of 2015. Tribal officials from Standing Rock requested a full environmental impact statement and continued to request a full consultation with tribes to create one until the project was permitted by the Corps in late July.

Such back-and-forth over consultation is a mark of disputes between the federal government and tribes, Capossela said.

“The extent of consultation is something that always gets disputed,” Capossela said.

By April, people had begun to gather at the Cannonball camps. By August, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple had declared a state of emergency, saying the protests constituted a “significant public safety concern.”

The weekend represented the most violent incident. A tribal spokesman said six people were bitten by dogs, including a child, and that at least 30 people were pepper-sprayed. Law enforcement said protesters injured four security guards and two dogs.

-
ARGUS LEADER
Native American teens run to protest pipeline

After the clashes, the Corps filed a motion saying it did not oppose a temporary restraining order in the interest of "preserving peace" until a final decision on the Standing Rock lawsuit is reached.

The judge granted a temporary order on Tuesday, but only to stop work on State Highway 1806 and 20 miles east of Lake Oahe in North Dakota. Work on the west side can continue.

"We are disappointed that the U.S. District Court's decision does not prevent DAPL from destroying our sacred sites as we await a ruling on our original motion to stop construction of the pipeline," Standing Rock Chairman David Archambault II said in a statement.

Judge James Boasberg said he intends to issue a decision on the legality of the Corps' permit by Friday.

If history is any indication, however, the decision will not put an end to the opposition.

John Hult is the Reader's Watchdog reporter for Argus Leader Media. Contact him with questions and concerns at 605-331-2301, 605-370-8617. You can tweet him @ArgusJHultor find him on Facebook at Facebook.com/ArgusReadersWatchdog

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 19:43:24 +0000
To: R8 Division Directors
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Awareness.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
  -
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

Editor's note: As part of the Journal's ongoing coverage of the massive Dakota Access Pipeline protest in North Dakota, staff writer Mike Anderson has been camping in a tent near the protest site. He filed this dispatch from the scene on Saturday.

CANNON BALL, N.D. | A peaceful protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline ended in the arrests of 83 people in North Dakota on Saturday morning amid a chaotic scene in which police in riot gear used pepper spray to break up and subdue a group of 200 to 300 protesters.

It is the highest number of people arrested in a single day in North Dakota during the last several months of protest actions against the oil pipeline, bringing the total number of arrests up to 222.

Though the protesters behaved non-violently and cooperated with the police, North Dakota law enforcement officials described Saturday's events as a riot. Police have offered conflicting reports alleging that one protester either verbally threatened an officer, or tried to physically grab away a can of pepper spray, resulting in the protester and the officer both being pepper sprayed in the face.

Most, if not all, of those arrested after the 5-hour ordeal on Saturday will be charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor, according to Morton County Sheriff spokesperson Rob Keller. Other charges included assault on a peace officer, reckless endangerment, engaging in a riot, resisting arrest, and fleeing an officer on foot.

"It's an unlawful activity," Keller said during phone interview on Saturday afternoon. "The bottom line is it's on private property. It's posted, 'No Criminal Trespass'. It's like you're invading someone's home. Consequently, there were arrests that were made."

The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

A police statement said the four were arrested after they were found, "attached to the vehicle; two attached to the outside of the vehicle, one attached to the steering wheel and another whose body was outside the vehicle with his arm fed through a hole in the door and his hand was in a bucket of hardened concrete."

The call to action went through the main resistance camp around 5:20 a.m. while it was still dark and freezing cold. A man walked through the camp speaking through a megaphone.

"Wake up relatives," he said. "Wake up water protectors. Wake up land defenders. Time to wake up. Time to send our boys to the universe. Time to send our boys to the rising sun."

A convoy of vehicles formed in the camp, a prayer was held, and the assembled were instructed to behave peacefully and respectfully if they encountered police.

“I know it’s hard on the front line,” the prayer leader said in the dark. “But do not cuss, do not holler. If you see someone getting out of hand, tell them to calm down.”

Then the convoy moved out. Parking their vehicles along the highway, the protesters began hiking into the field as the sun rose a little before 8 a.m. Their path took them along a craggy dirt road near the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline on land that tribal members of the Hunkpapa Sioux of Standing Rock said is filled with sacred burial sites.

Some of the protesters remained behind as several hundred others carrying signs and banners began marching into the field, singing, praying, and burning bundles of ceremonial sage as they went.

They walked two to three miles inward when they encountered a line of more than 50 officers from multiple law enforcement agencies. Most of the officers wore riot gear, most held wooden truncheons, and some had shotguns, canisters of pepper spray, and tear gas grenade launchers in their hands. Two armored personnel carriers arrived later while a helicopter circled low overhead.

The protesters and police lines met in the middle of an open field. The protesters remained calm, playing drums and offering prayers in English and Lakota to the officers, who remained stone-faced and uncommunicative.

When the police line began to advance on the protesters, the leaders of the group instructed everyone to fall back and cooperate with the police. They were dispersing when an officer spoke over a loud-speaker from the turret of an armored vehicle.

His only words — and the only words police spoke to the protesters all morning — were, “You’re all under arrest for trespassing.”

The police continued to advance on the fleeing protesters, snatching some of the stragglers, throwing them behind their lines, and pepper-spraying several others in the face as they trod silently forward.

The police eventually surrounded the group, repeating that every one of the 200 to 300 people present would be placed under arrest. The protesters linked arms and tied bandanas to their faces as the officers pressed in, splitting the group and pressing many to the ground. Most, if not all of the men and women taken into custody, did not resist arrest.

A small group managed to retreat over the hill, a few pouring water into the eyes of friends who had been stung by pepper spray and guiding them by hand up the dirt road as they made their way back to camp.

“It was all peaceful. And then the cops showed up," said Harmony Restoule, a young Ojibwe woman from Northern Ontario, Canada. “It was really scary when the police kicked into action.”

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“The Canadian police never showed up in riot gear,” Paige Restoule said.

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“There were a few officers who were excessively aggressive and got the others riled up,” he said. “Most cops are pretty chill.”

Saturday’s protest was one of several high profile demonstrations in the Cannon Ball area against the Dakota Access Pipeline in recent months. Police arrested celebrity Shailene Woodley along with more than 20 others on Oct. 10 along the route of the pipeline near St. Anthony, N.D. Police referred to the event as a riot and charged many people with either inciting or engaging in a riot. At the time, it was the highest total number of arrests made in a single day.

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On Sept. 3, police and private security forces used pepper spray and dogs to drive protesters away from construction equipment.

"Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful," Kirchmeier said in a press-release about Saturday's events. "This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities. I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protesters. This is about the rule of law."

The protesters may have been peacefully dispersing on Saturday morning, Keller said, but that doesn't change the fact that they broke the law.

"That's the whole purpose of having a police line, to protect the (pipeline) property and their right to commerce," Keller said. "We are protecting the protesters too, and the ranchers as well."

When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, "No."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 13:31:21 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Cc: Hunter, Cynthia;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Panel votes to borrow $6M for costs associated with pipeline protests, blasts feds inaction

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 12:18 p.m.

NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
Native
HONOR THE EARTH
UTION

Demonstrators against the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan, N.D., gather in opposition early this month. File photo.

BISMARCK — The state Emergency Commission voted Wednesday, Sept. 21, to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to support law enforcement efforts related to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, but not before members blasted the lack of federal support to deal with protesters camped out on federal land.

"I know we have to do it, but it's not right, and the lack of federal involvement is disgusting," said House Majority Leader Al Carlson, R-Fargo. "And we need to protect our North Dakota people, but this is just plain wrong that they're ignoring this issue."

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, said the state has spent $1.88 million on protest-related costs so far, the bulk of it personnel costs for

assistance from the National Guard and law enforcement agencies from across the state. Morton County estimated last week it had spent about $400,000 on top of that.

The $6 million line of credit from the Bank of North Dakota will fund future efforts as authorized by Gov. Jack Dalrymple's emergency declaration Aug. 19. The Legislature will have to make a deficiency appropriation from the state's general fund to pay back the bank after lawmakers convene in regular session in January, Budget Director Pam Sharp said.

Authorities have responded to multiple protests at pipeline construction sites and in Bismarck-Mandan since protests began to ramp up in mid-August. They've also created a traffic checkpoint and increased patrols in Morton County, which they say are necessary for the safety of local residents, farmers and ranchers and the thousands of protesters camped out on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Last Friday, the Corps of Engineers issued a special use permit for protesters to use Corps land south of the Cannonball River but not the land north of the river where the majority of them are camping, because that land is subject to an existing grazing lease.

Carlson said it bothers him that it's "a federal problem that they've ignored" and the Legislature will have to cover the costs at a time of budget shortfalls. Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, agreed.

"The taxpayers shouldn't have to be paying for this," he said.

Dalrymple said he's been in contact with the White House, U.S. Department of Justice, Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior and the state's congressional delegation but is still waiting to hear if they're going to help financially or with in-kind services.

"The problem that we have, of course, is that these public safety needs are imminent every day," Dalrymple said. "We really have no choice but to protect the public with law enforcement. Recovering funds from the federal government is definitely a top priority, but it undoubtedly will take some time."

The commission's other members are Secretary of State Al Jaeger, Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, Sen. Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, and Sen. Ray Holmberg, R-Grand Forks.

Jerry DeFelice
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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 10:16:59 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Clip: ND Tribal

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

- AP

Protesters set up tepees and tents Monday in southern North Dakota on property owned by the pipeline company.

CHEYENNE — Wyoming has sent six highway patrol troopers to North Dakota to help authorities deal with Indian protesters demonstrating against the construction of an oil pipeline, prompting objections Tuesday from some Wyoming Indian leaders.

Sending the troopers merely extends emergency help to another state and does not signal that Wyoming has taken a position on the pipeline controversy, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said.

But Dean Goggles, chairman of Northern Arapaho Business Council, called on Mead to recall the troopers immediately.

“The North Dakota tribes and tribal members from around the nation are attempting to protect both the environment and sites which have ceremonial, religious and cultural significance to the tribes,” Goggles said.

More than 100 protesters were arrested last weekend in Morton County, North Dakota, in the faceoff between protesters and Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, developer of the four-state Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The $3.8 billion pipeline, most of which has been completed, crosses through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois. Opponents worry about potential effects on drinking water on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's reservation as well as harm to cultural sites.

Col. Kebin Haller of the Wyoming Highway Patrol said six troopers were sent to North Dakota on Saturday and are expected to remain there until Nov. 8.

The troopers volunteered after the governor of North Dakota declared an emergency and asked other states for law enforcement assistance, Haller said.

The six are members of the patrol's Special Services Squad who have additional training and equipment to address large crowds and civil unrest, he said. North Dakota will pay their salaries and the costs they incur while at the protest.

Mead said the decision to send Wyoming troopers happened because "a neighbor state asked for help and Wyoming answered the call."

"North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded," Mead said.

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in Wyoming have expressed formal support for the protesters.

Jason Baldes, a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and staff member at the Wind River Native Advocacy Center, accused Wyoming officials of supporting the pipeline by sending law enforcement officers to face off against protesters.

"It kind of sheds light on really who's running the show here," Baldes said. "The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets."

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

"The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue," he said.

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 10:49:16 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

FYI—Rob Keller is the PIO for Morton County Sherriff Department.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
    -
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

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The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

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When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, "No."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 11:41:19 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: Standing Rock

This was in today's clips.

In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- Updated Aug 13, 2016

NEAR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX RESERVATION, N.D. (AP) — Opponents of a $3.8 billion Midwest oil pipeline are vowing to keep up the pressure after this week's arrests at a construction zone in North Dakota.

The Standing Rock Sioux had quietly opposed the Dakota Access pipeline for months at a "spirit camp" near their reservation, which straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Protesters' resistance heated up this week as at least 18 people were arrested, and a Hollywood actress joined their gathering.

Tribal members say the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and could affect drinking water on the reservation and for people downstream.

The four-state pipeline's path in North Dakota would cross beneath the Little Missouri River once and the Missouri River twice. The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 11 Oct 2016 14:25:06 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan
Subject: CLIPS: Dakota Access Pipeline

Just wanted to highlight these two articles that were in today's clips. Milo Booth from HQ also called earlier today just to confirm he had current information as it was expected to be raised today at the Conference of American Indians. There are some listening sessions tonight.

Work to resume on Dakota Access Pipeline near Lake Oahe

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 9:34 a.m.

BISMARCK – The company building the Dakota Access Pipeline said Tuesday, Oct. 11, it looks forward to a "prompt resumption" of construction near Lake Oahe and hopes the federal government will assist local law enforcement officials dealing with protests of the pipeline.

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners released a statement saying it is pleased with a federal appeals court decision Sunday denying the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction to stop construction of the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline that will carry 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day from North Dakota to Illinois.

The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., also lifted a temporary suspension of construction activities within 20 miles east and west of Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River.

"In light of Sunday's court decision, Dakota Access looks forward to a prompt resumption of construction activities east and west of Lake Oahe on private land. We reiterate our commitment to protect cultural resources, the environment and public safety," the company said.

Company spokeswoman Vicki Granado declined to specify when the company will resume construction in the 20-mile area, which includes the area along Highway 1806 where protest activities to block pipeline construction began Aug. 10. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 American Indians and other pipeline opponents are encamped along the highway and have drawn international support.

The proposed construction area also includes a stretch west of Highway 1806 that was bulldozed on Sept. 3, the day after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed court documents identifying that part of the route as containing burial grounds and other sacred sites. Angry protesters clashed with the pipeline's private security that day, with both sides claiming injuries, and a joint law enforcement task force is investigating the incident.

Last week, state archeologists concluded that no sacred sites were destroyed, but the tribe disputes that conclusion because its historic preservation officer wasn't allowed to participate in the survey. The tribe's ongoing lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contends the agency didn't properly consult the tribe before granting permits for the project.

Energy Transfer Partners said the decisions by two separate federal courts show otherwise.

"The Army Corps and Dakota Access carefully considered the views of all potentially affected tribes that chose to participate in the consultative process prescribed by Congress, and fully complied with both the letter and the spirit of the National Historic Preservation Act," the company said. "Their careful and sensitive work has been reviewed and approved by highly qualified private and state-employed archeologists."

The pipeline was 87 percent completed in North Dakota at the end of September and is largely completed in South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois.

"We continue to believe that the Army Corps will soon issue the easement for approximately 1,100 feet necessary for the crossing beneath the Missouri River – the sole remaining authorization necessary for completion of the project," the company said.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it won't authorize pipeline construction on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The three agencies asked that the company voluntarily pause construction within 20 miles of the lake.

The company on Tuesday urged that any protests "be undertaken in a peaceful and law abiding manner." Authorities arrested 27 protesters at two construction sites Monday, including actress Shailene Woodley, bringing the total number of arrests to 123.

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By Mike Nowatzki on Oct 10, 2016 at 9:59 p.m.

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To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
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The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., also lifted a temporary suspension of construction activities within 20 miles east and west of Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River.

"In light of Sunday's court decision, Dakota Access looks forward to a prompt resumption of construction activities east and west of Lake Oahe on private land. We reiterate our commitment to protect cultural resources, the environment and public safety," the company said.

Company spokeswoman Vicki Granado declined to specify when the company will resume construction in the 20-mile area, which includes the area along Highway 1806 where protest activities to block pipeline construction began Aug. 10. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 American Indians and other pipeline opponents are encamped along the highway and have drawn international support.

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To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clips: ND tribal

Pipeline route moved south of Bismarck partly because of drinking water contamination concerns

By Amy Dalrymple Today at 7:16 a.m.

ⓘ Dakota Access Pipeline crews leave the work site on Monday, Aug. 15, 2016, north of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Reservation. Work has not yet resumed in that area due to safety concerns surrounding the protest. Amy Dalrymple/Forum News Service

BISMARCK — An early proposal for the Dakota Access Pipeline called for the project to cross the Missouri River north of Bismarck, but one reason that route was rejected was its potential threat to Bismarck's water supply, documents show.

Now a growing number of protesters are objecting to the oil pipeline's Missouri River crossing a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, which they argue could threaten the water supply for the tribe and other communities downstream.

Early in the planning process, Dakota Access considered but eliminated an alternative that would have crossed the Missouri River about 10 miles north of Bismarck instead of the route currently under construction.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers evaluated the Bismarck route and concluded it was not a viable option for many reasons. One reason mentioned in the agency's environmental assessment is the proximity to wellhead source water protection areas that are avoided to protect municipal water supply wells.

In addition, the Bismarck route would have been 11 miles longer with more road crossings and waterbody and wetland crossings. It also would have been difficult to stay 500 or more feet away from homes, as required by the North Dakota Public Service Commission, the Corps of Engineers states.

The Bismarck route also would have crossed an area considered by federal pipeline regulators as a "high consequence area," which is an area determined to have the most significant adverse consequences in the event of a pipeline spill.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe argues that consequences would be severe if the 30-inch pipeline carrying 450,000 barrels of oil per day were to leak near the reservation's water intake valves.

The tribe is suing the Corps of Engineers over its approval of the water crossing. A hearing is scheduled for next week in Washington, D.C.

"We are taking all necessary legal steps to curtail construction on the pipeline until our grievances are heard and resolved in court," Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II said Thursday.

State regulators did not evaluate the Bismarck route because Dakota Access had selected the current Missouri River crossing when it submitted its application in December 2014, said Public Service Commission Chairwoman Julie Fedorchak.

A map included in the Dakota Access application has a May 2014 date on the Bismarck route.

The proposed route was changed in September 2014 to cross the Missouri River near the Standing Rock reservation, according to dates on the PSC documents.

Dakota Access said in a statement that the company conducts extensive surveys of proposed pipeline routes to mitigate the pipeline's impact on the area and determine the safest route.

The corps, which issued a permit for the water crossing, said the pipeline will be installed 92 feet below the riverbed with horizontal directional drilling methods to minimize impacts. The Corps also noted safeguards that will be in place, including remote monitoring of the pipeline and emergency response plans.

"Given the engineering design, proposed installation methodology, quality of material selected, operations measures and response plans the risk of an inadvertent release in, or reaching, Lake Oahe is extremely low," the corps concluded.

Public Service Commissioners defended their approval of the pipeline project this week, saying it was thoroughly reviewed and considered risks to water bodies. The state regulators also said they held a 13-month review process but didn't hear these concerns from the tribe.

Standing Rock leaders have, however, repeatedly objected to the way the corps evaluated the route and now are asking a federal judge to intervene.

Pipeline construction is halted in the protest area until the Aug. 24 hearing on the tribe's court case, Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said Thursday.

Pipeline opponents also demonstrated late Thursday afternoon near the state Capitol, chanting, "We can't drink oil, keep it in the soil."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued his first public statement on the protest Thursday, emphasizing safety and stating that law enforcement and state agency directors would continue to closely monitor the situation.

"While we are concerned about some cases of unlawful activity, we are pleased that no one has been injured and it is our top priority to keep it that way," Dalrymple said.

Pipeline protesters rally in front of N.D. Capitol

By Nick Smith / Bismarck Tribune on Aug 18, 2016 at 8:42 p.m.

BISMARCK—Opponents of the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline project took to the streets Thursday evening for a peaceful protest in solidarity against a project they say could cause severe harm to Missouri River drinking water for tribal members and others.

"Even though the oil companies might have the money, they can't subdue the message," Cody Hall of Eagle Butte, S.D., spokesman for the Red Warrior Camp, said. "This is our stand. We all depend on water."

More than 200 protesters initially lined both sides of East Boulevard Avenue while about 60 members of state and local law enforcement looked on at the south entrance of the state Capitol. A city permit for 4 to 6 p.m. was granted for the protest.

East Boulevard Avenue was soon shut down between Fourth Street North and Seventh Street North to traffic, allowing participants to chant, dance and drum in the intersection in front of the Capitol.

"We will win this fight. We have to take a vigorous stance to fight for what's right," Hall said.

Holding signs with phrases including "No Dakota Access Pipeline" and "Rezpect our Water," participants chanted, cheered and were in high spirits.

"We can't drink oil, keep it in the soil," was a popular chant among the crowd.

As the protest wound down, participants invited members of law enforcement to join in the dancing, which a few obliged in doing briefly.

Afterward, protesters formed a line and walked the police line at the Capitol entrance, shaking hands and joking with officers.

Thursday's protest was an extension of the movement that's sprung up off of Highway 1806 near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. From 1,500 to 2,000 protesters are camping near a part of the project site in Morton County.

At the same time as the protest by the Capitol, about 20 people were at the now-closed work site along the Cannon Ball River, where protests have been staged over the past week. As no law enforcement or pipeline workers were there, the protesters walked around both sides of the barricade and up the path towards the construction site.

Construction workers recently had began ground work near where a section of the pipeline will go and a portion is planned to be bored under the Missouri River and run less than a mile from the tribe's reservation boundary.

This week, work temporarily ceased at the site. Oral arguments in a lawsuit filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over the permits issued for the project are set for Wednesday in U.S. district court in Washington, D.C.

Protesters' concerns include potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture as well as the disturbance of cultural sites along the route.

Dakota Access LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, countered the Standing Rock lawsuit earlier this week by filing a lawsuit against several protesters, alleging threats to the safety of construction workers and law enforcement.

At least 28 arrests had been made during the protests near the project site for disorderly conduct and criminal trespass.

Dallas Goldtooth, a member of the Lower Sioux Dakota Nation in Minnesota and of the Indigenous Environmental Network, said Thursday's effort helps put the issue in the spotlight. He said putting it closer to the public in an urban setting also builds momentum.

"It definitely helps to engage and bring this discussion into public spaces. Folks are committed for the long run," Goldtooth said.

Doris Anderson, who lives along East Boulevard Avenue a few doors down from the intersection, said she's neutral on the project but said she understood opponents' concerns.

"I think it's been pretty calm. Respectful and calm," Anderson said as she looked on from her front lawn. "And they've got a lot to say."

Anderson suggested that, if the company altered the design of the project slightly, it might alleviate concerns by opponents. She added she'd never seen a large protest in person before.

The 1,172-mile, 30-inch diameter pipeline when finished would originate in western North Dakota near Stanley and end near Patoka, Ill.

Dakota Access began work on the nearly $3.8 billion project this spring following permit approval by state and federal officials. It would transport up to 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude when finished this year with a future capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

Vicki Granado, a spokeswoman for Energy Transfer Partners, said in a statement the construction timeline remains unchanged.

"We are constructing this pipeline in accordance with applicable laws, and the local, state and federal permits and approvals we have received. This is an important energy infrastructure project that benefits all Americans and our national economy," she said

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BISMARCK — An early proposal for the Dakota Access Pipeline called for the project to cross the Missouri River north of Bismarck, but one reason that route was rejected was its potential threat to Bismarck's water supply, documents show.

Now a growing number of protesters are objecting to the oil pipeline's Missouri River crossing a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, which they argue could threaten the water supply for the tribe and other communities downstream.

Early in the planning process, Dakota Access considered but eliminated an alternative that would have crossed the Missouri River about 10 miles north of Bismarck instead of the route currently under construction.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers evaluated the Bismarck route and concluded it was not a viable option for many reasons. One reason mentioned in the agency's environmental assessment is the proximity to wellhead source water protection areas that are avoided to protect municipal water supply wells.

In addition, the Bismarck route would have been 11 miles longer with more road crossings and waterbody and wetland crossings. It also would have been difficult to stay 500 or more feet away from homes, as required by the North Dakota Public Service Commission, the Corps of Engineers states.

The Bismarck route also would have crossed an area considered by federal pipeline regulators as a "high consequence area," which is an area determined to have the most significant adverse consequences in the event of a pipeline spill.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe argues that consequences would be severe if the 30-inch pipeline carrying 450,000 barrels of oil per day were to leak near the reservation's water intake valves.

The tribe is suing the Corps of Engineers over its approval of the water crossing. A hearing is scheduled for next week in Washington, D.C.

"We are taking all necessary legal steps to curtail construction on the pipeline until our grievances are heard and resolved in court," Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II said Thursday.

State regulators did not evaluate the Bismarck route because Dakota Access had selected the current Missouri River crossing when it submitted its application in December 2014, said Public Service Commission Chairwoman Julie Fedorchak.

A map included in the Dakota Access application has a May 2014 date on the Bismarck route. The proposed route was changed in September 2014 to cross the Missouri River near the Standing Rock reservation, according to dates on the PSC documents.

Dakota Access said in a statement that the company conducts extensive surveys of proposed pipeline routes to mitigate the pipeline's impact on the area and determine the safest route.

The corps, which issued a permit for the water crossing, said the pipeline will be installed 92 feet below the riverbed with horizontal directional drilling methods to minimize impacts. The Corps also noted safeguards that will be in place, including remote monitoring of the pipeline and emergency response plans.

"Given the engineering design, proposed installation methodology, quality of material selected, operations measures and response plans the risk of an inadvertent release in, or reaching, Lake Oahe is extremely low," the corps concluded.

Public Service Commissioners defended their approval of the pipeline project this week, saying it was thoroughly reviewed and considered risks to water bodies. The state regulators also said they held a 13-month review process but didn't hear these concerns from the tribe.

Standing Rock leaders have, however, repeatedly objected to the way the corps evaluated the route and now are asking a federal judge to intervene.

Pipeline construction is halted in the protest area until the Aug. 24 hearing on the tribe's court case, Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said Thursday.

Pipeline opponents also demonstrated late Thursday afternoon near the state Capitol, chanting, "We can't drink oil, keep it in the soil."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued his first public statement on the protest Thursday, emphasizing safety and stating that law enforcement and state agency directors would continue to closely monitor the situation.

"While we are concerned about some cases of unlawful activity, we are pleased that no one has been injured and it is our top priority to keep it that way," Dalrymple said.

Pipeline protesters rally in front of N.D. Capitol

By Nick Smith / Bismarck Tribune on Aug 18, 2016 at 8:42 p.m.

BISMARCK—Opponents of the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline project took to the streets Thursday evening for a peaceful protest in solidarity against a project they say could cause severe harm to Missouri River drinking water for tribal members and others.

"Even though the oil companies might have the money, they can't subdue the message," Cody Hall of Eagle Butte, S.D., spokesman for the Red Warrior Camp, said. "This is our stand. We all depend on water."

More than 200 protesters initially lined both sides of East Boulevard Avenue while about 60 members of state and local law enforcement looked on at the south entrance of the state Capitol. A city permit for 4 to 6 p.m. was granted for the protest.

East Boulevard Avenue was soon shut down between Fourth Street North and Seventh Street North to traffic, allowing participants to chant, dance and drum in the intersection in front of the Capitol.

"We will win this fight. We have to take a vigorous stance to fight for what's right," Hall said.

Holding signs with phrases including "No Dakota Access Pipeline" and "Rezpect our Water," participants chanted, cheered and were in high spirits.

"We can't drink oil, keep it in the soil," was a popular chant among the crowd.

As the protest wound down, participants invited members of law enforcement to join in the dancing, which a few obliged in doing briefly.

Afterward, protesters formed a line and walked the police line at the Capitol entrance, shaking hands and joking with officers.

Thursday's protest was an extension of the movement that's sprung up off of Highway 1806 near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. From 1,500 to 2,000 protesters are camping near a part of the project site in Morton County.

At the same time as the protest by the Capitol, about 20 people were at the now-closed work site along the Cannon Ball River, where protests have been staged over the past week. As no law enforcement or pipeline workers were there, the protesters walked around both sides of the barricade and up the path towards the construction site.

Construction workers recently had began ground work near where a section of the pipeline will go and a portion is planned to be bored under the Missouri River and run less than a mile from the tribe's reservation boundary.

This week, work temporarily ceased at the site. Oral arguments in a lawsuit filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over the permits issued for the project are set for Wednesday in U.S. district court in Washington, D.C.

Protesters' concerns include potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture as well as the disturbance of cultural sites along the route.

Dakota Access LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, countered the Standing Rock lawsuit earlier this week by filing a lawsuit against several protesters, alleging threats to the safety of construction workers and law enforcement.

At least 28 arrests had been made during the protests near the project site for disorderly conduct and criminal trespass.

Dallas Goldtooth, a member of the Lower Sioux Dakota Nation in Minnesota and of the Indigenous Environmental Network, said Thursday's effort helps put the issue in the spotlight. He said putting it closer to the public in an urban setting also builds momentum.

"It definitely helps to engage and bring this discussion into public spaces. Folks are committed for the long run," Goldtooth said.

Doris Anderson, who lives along East Boulevard Avenue a few doors down from the intersection, said she's neutral on the project but said she understood opponents' concerns.

"I think it's been pretty calm. Respectful and calm," Anderson said as she looked on from her front lawn. "And they've got a lot to say."

Anderson suggested that, if the company altered the design of the project slightly, it might alleviate concerns by opponents. She added she'd never seen a large protest in person before.

The 1,172-mile, 30-inch diameter pipeline when finished would originate in western North Dakota near Stanley and end near Patoka, Ill.

Dakota Access began work on the nearly $3.8 billion project this spring following permit approval by state and federal officials. It would transport up to 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude when finished this year with a future capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

Vicki Granado, a spokeswoman for Energy Transfer Partners, said in a statement the construction timeline remains unchanged.

"We are constructing this pipeline in accordance with applicable laws, and the local, state and federal permits and approvals we have received. This is an important energy infrastructure project that benefits all Americans and our national economy," she said

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 4 Sep 2016 11:39:10 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

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Brian Hvinden
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Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 14:59:06 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

I haven't read this yet, just passing for visibility, not use. I'll look at your IHS note. On NICCL, and heading to 915

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:25 AM
To: R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Page 0207

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 0208

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

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Page 0210

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 0211

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 18:05:30 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Dakota Access Pipeline Update

American Indian tribes unite to protect Missouri River from pipeline

Unknown
Aug. 29, 2016
CAPJOURNAL-Pierre, SD

Standing Rock Reservation, tribal members continue strategic planning and prayers in their fight to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline from crossing the nearby Missouri River.

Different areas of the camp have specific designations, including an area where tribal members participate in sacred rituals, including a sweat lodge, where access is restricted to preserve the sanctity of the ceremonies.

Near the entrance of the campsite, different informational tents are set up to provide demonstrators with advice, supplies and other information prudent to continuing a nonviolent protest while keeping everyone involved safe.

With limited resources, the camp must rely on volunteers and the goodwill of others to provide supplies.

One man's job is to keep the fires burning with a steady feed of wood.

In another tent, hot food is prepared and given out to anyone who wants a meal.

A Standing Rock Sioux Tribe ambulance stands by in case a medical issue arises, especially since many of the demonstrators do not have access to daily medications in the remote, isolated area.

Despite the hardships, the spirit and will of protesters who want to keep the river safe is abundant.

Members from at least 200 tribes from across the U.S. have joined the protest in an effort to protect both the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's main water source and the rights of the American Indian people. They don't want the Dakota Access Pipeline to go beneath the river, fearing a leak will contaminate the river with crude oil. The 1,134-mile pipeline would carry as much as 450,000 gallons of crude oil per day from North Dakota's Bakken oil fields to Illinois.

American Indian Movement official Chief Harry Goodwolf Kindness said this is the first time in more than 150 years that so many members from so many tribes have joined together.

"First time since the Battle of Greasy Grass, so it's been a long time," Kindness said.

Known by most white people as the Battle of Little Big Horn, it was in June 1876. Lakota, Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes defeated U.S. Army forces led by George Custer.

"We refer to this pipeline as the black snake. This pipeline affects everybody, not just the Indian Nation. It's no different than somebody putting it right in downtown Los Angeles," he said.

Campsite stories

For Standing Rock Sioux Tribe member James Iron Eyes, the protest campsite resembles the tribal campsite stories his grandmother told him about when he was a child.

"My grandma told me a long time ago there were camps along the river near Mobridge, and it's kind of like that now," Iron Eyes said.

He has been involved with the protest since it started on Aug. 10.

“I came out here the first day and it felt good. You can just feel the power. It’s a great feeling,” he said.

Iron Eyes took a break from directing traffic at the campsite entrance to visit the nearby pipeline construction site, which workers abandoned on Aug. 15.

Flags from all the visiting tribes fly along the fence surrounding the construction site, exemplifying the solidarity of the Indian Nation in the fight to protect its rights and the water that sustains not only the lives of members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, but all who prosper from the Missouri River.

Land concerns

After working in the Bakken oil fields, Iron Eyes has seen firsthand the destruction crude oil can cause.

“It was a job, you know, but after seeing (the land) get torn up like that ...” Iron Eyes said, shaking his head.

“They can’t guarantee it’s not going to leak. The ground shifts. Why can’t they take (the oil) on railway cars in tanks or something? It’s slowed down up there so much now. The oil business is not as busy it was,” Iron Eyes said.

His frustration was amplified after a judge Wednesday delayed ruling on an injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to stop the pipeline from going under the river.

The lawsuit claims that the environmental assessment permit was approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers without adequate consultation from the tribe regarding the environmental impact and cultural historic preservation.

Dallas Goldtooth, Keep It in the Ground campaign organizer, said the camp is not going anywhere until there is no threat of the pipeline crossing the river.

“There is frustration with the lack of action by the federal judge. Obviously, we believe the arguments the tribe put forth are substantial,” Goldtooth said.

Attorney Michelle Cook, who works in the area of indigenous people’s law and policy in Tucson, Ariz., told demonstrators at the camp that the possibility of an injunction is not why construction stopped.

“The sheriff has said he will not allow them to do construction until it’s safe,” Cook said during a Thursday campsite meeting. “As long as this camp is sturdy and robust and in prayer, that pipeline is going to have a little trouble starting up again. Not because we are violent, but because we are present. We are present to protect the water,” Cook said.

Public safety

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said that from the first day of the protest the No. 1 concern has been public safety, regardless of beliefs.

“We wanted to make sure that it remained peaceful between the protesters, the workers who have the legal right to be there and the law enforcement officers. We have nothing to do with the pipeline. We don’t put in the pipeline. Like I’ve been saying, we’re not pro-pipeline, we’re not pro-protest, but we’re pro-law,” he said.

So far, there have been 29 arrests and 32 charges relating to the protest. All the charges have been misdemeanors, Kirchmeier said.

“They have the right to go there and the right to protest if they remain peaceful. There’s a difference between peaceful and nonviolent, also. They have the right to protest, but they don’t have the right to disrupt traffic, close a road, trespass on private property, disrupt law enforcement or legal activities, and some of those things obviously have been occurring. That is when the whole safety concern comes in that public safety is No. 1,” he said.

Budget impact

Kirchmeier's department's budget has taken a hit due to the overtime officers were required to work because of the protest.

"The numbers we've put together with the people we have now and the overtime, we're at about $100,000 per week," he said.

Kirchmeier said there are 34 sworn officers working in the department to cover Morton County, which has a population of just over 30,000 people.

The Morton County Commission chairman signed an emergency declaration resolution on Aug. 15 to tap outside law enforcement agencies.

Kirchmeier said the sheriff's department is working in cooperation with law enforcement from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Cass County Sheriff's Department, Fargo Police Department, North Dakota Highway Patrol, Stutsman County Sheriff's Department, Dunn County Sheriff's Department, McLean County Sheriff's Department, Grand Forks Police Department and Emmons County Sheriff's Department.

"We want to make sure we still have open communication with the Standing Rock tribal leaders and with the camp leaders. But I believe there are numerous people, the majority of people, who want to keep this protest peaceful. But there are some outside people that have come in that want to make this into a conflict. They want to get the protesters worked up, so there are professional agitators that are out there that want to make this more than, I think, just a pipeline issue," Kirchmeier said.

Other than a small toddler who wriggled in his father's arms, protesting nap time, there was no evidence of anything but peaceful demonstrators at the campsite Thursday.

"Everything is running pretty smoothly. Everybody is happy and visiting and getting to know people," Iron Eyes said.

Key information

- Energy Transfer Partners is building the $3.8 billion, 1,134-mile pipeline that would carry as much as 450,000 gallons of crude oil per day from North Dakota's Bakken oil fields to Illinois.
- Dakota Access is a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Partners.
- The pipeline construction site is less than a mile upstream from the Standing Rock Reservation boundaries on the Cannonball Buffalo Ranch.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a lawsuit seeking an injunction on construction where the line crosses the Missouri River, citing that the project violates the Clean Water Act and fails to assess the environmental and cultural impact on tribal lands. A federal judge delayed a decision on the injunction. A ruling is expected by Sept. 9.
- Opposition against the pipeline gained momentum on Aug. 10 when protesters prevented Michels Corp. workers from beginning construction at the river.
- On Aug. 11, private security hired by the company constructing the pipeline made a report to the Morton County Sheriff's Department of protesters inhibiting construction progress.
- On Aug. 15, Dakota Access moved equipment to the Missouri River crossing site. Demonstrators on horseback pushed back a law enforcement barricade. Work was halted, and pipeline workers evacuated area.
- On Aug. 17, the North Dakota Highway Patrol established a checkpoint on North Dakota Highway 1806 to direct southbound traffic to an alternative route around the protest site.
- On Aug. 19, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration.

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
Emergency Liasion
605-440-0993
Glenda.redfeather@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation
Date: Sunday, September 04, 2016 11:39:11 AM

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

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Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Draft BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests of Dakota Access Pipeline
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 2:14:00 PM

Here's an initial crack at the BLUF. -- Brian

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

(b)(5)

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Short update on OST
Date: Thursday, September 08, 2016 4:13:00 PM

KX has been facebook live at the news conferences. Maybe they will be out at the protest on the capital ground tomorrow.

https://www.facebook.com/kxnews/

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Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2016 1:53 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Short update on OST

This weekend could likely be a very continuous weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock area.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this is always happened before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline and the protest.
- **The Governor of ND has activated (although no a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling.**
- There are ongoing reports of violence on both sides,
- The chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan; Stephenson, James R
Subject: INFO: Pipeline protest now expanding to march in Bismarck-Mandan, DC offshoot
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 12:30:00 PM

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead 'solidarity' rally in D.C.

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

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From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: ND Clips
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:06:00 PM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Attached are the ND clips

Brian Hvinden
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From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: ND-protest clips
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 11:06:00 AM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Brian Hvinden
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701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Protest Update
Date: Wednesday, September 07, 2016 5:43:00 PM

This just got posted.
http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4110236-law-enforcement-beefing-presence-ahead-dakota-access-ruling-friday

Law enforcement beefing up presence ahead of Dakota Access ruling Friday

By Forum News Service Today at 4:25 p.m.

The Dakota Access Pipeline, pictured under construction on Friday, July 29, 2016, in northwest North Dakota, is expected to be complete by the end of 2016. Forum News Service file photo by Eric Hylden

BISMARCK—Authorities are beefing up their presence in the Bismarck-Mandan area in anticipation of a court decision expected Friday on the heavily protested Dakota Access Pipeline, a spokesman for North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple said Wednesday, Sept. 7.

Spokesman Jeff Zent said plans are under way for additional law enforcement officers in the Bismarck-Mandan area and enhanced patrols in Morton County, where hundreds of protesters are camped out near a pipeline construction site along Highway 1806 about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Zent said he didn't have any information on whether the North Dakota National Guard would be on standby, but said, "The governor has always said the National Guard is an option."

Thirty-seven people have been arrested on charges including preventing arrest, disorderly conduct and criminal trespass in connection with protests at pipeline construction sites in Morton County that began in mid-August.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg in Washington, D.C., has said he will rule on or before Friday on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction to halt construction of the pipeline, which will cross the Missouri River less than a mile north of the Standing Rock reservation. The tribe fears the pipeline will leak and contaminate its water supply and sacred sites, and its lawsuit claims the corps failed to consider the historical and cultural significance of that area.

A permitted protest is scheduled from 3 to 6 p.m. Friday on the south end of the state Capitol mall in Bismarck to coincide with the ruling. A Facebook page for the "Peace Rally Against the Pipeline" showed more than 350 people planning to attend and 1,200 interested.

Zent said the governor's office, state Highway Patrol and Morton County Sheriff's Department will continue to monitor the situation and re-evaluate the need for law enforcement to ensure public safety. A roadblock restricting southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to local traffic only remains in place.

Protesters have said they expect the ruling to be appealed regardless of which way it goes, and that they plan to continue protesting until the four-state pipeline project is rerouted or scrapped. The 1,172-mile, $3.8 billion pipeline will initially carry 450,000 barrels of oil per day from the Bakken oil fields to Patoka, Ill., with a capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

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From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:48:00 PM

I'll take a crack and get you something to review in a few minutes.

Brian Hvinden
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303 235-4712 (office)
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From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:47 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Brian – Nancy and I spoke this morning. She'd like to send another BLUF up to Beth Z on the situation, it should be pretty tight, just a quick update. Below is what she sent previously. **Given what we know, would you do a quick draft that Megan can then review as she is at OST and heading into a meeting?**

Key items that need to be included for sure (I'm open to other):
**Information is mixed and doesn't fully jive from sources.
**Stop of work.
**Upcoming powwow.
**Ongoing monitoring of media/social media, and communication with the state.
**Again, no FEMA role at this time.

Anything else?

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 3:41 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth <elizabeth.zimmerman@fema.dhs.gov>; Gruber, Corey <Corey.Gruber@fema.dhs.gov>; Coen Jr, Michael <Michael.CoenJr@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>; R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations, the situation is significant enough for the State EM director and the Adjutant General to cancel their planned participation in the TAG/NORTHCOM seminar August 17-18.

I have spoken with Greg Wilz and we are monitoring the situation. I do not anticipate any role for FEMA; this BLUF is for situational awareness only.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From:	Hvinden, Brian
To:	Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject:	RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock
Date:	Monday, August 22, 2016 12:11:00 PM

New intel – Cody Schulz from DES is also the Chairman of the Morton County Commission. Just for internal knowledge and not for this HHS product.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:07 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

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- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the XL Pipeline, this the Keystone Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

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- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
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FEMA Region VIII

(303) 235-4638 – Desk
(303) 945-6367 – Cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

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To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
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Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
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Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

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Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the
Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

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To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:11:00 PM

Got it.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:10 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

That is a megan call. For your awareness. This is for national indian health and we need to balance providing, but not being a source. Not ours and they have staff on ground

---

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:08 AM
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

OK. In this morning's clips there is a story from Bismarck Tribune that Morton County has declared a state of Emergency. Do you want that included?

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FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
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If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

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Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:29:00 PM

How is this?

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

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- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

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Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:08:00 PM

I'm good with the Powwow bullet.

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:07 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Brian, if you could look at the last bullet that I added.

Stacie – (b)(5) (b)(5) – per Ron's report.

Other than that I would be ready to send to Milo and Rocky and then send to Ron for awareness.

I am going to engage in OST shortly and would like to get this out the door before that happens.

Thanks

Megan

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:39 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

This looks good to me, with the addition of the Powwow bullet that is with Brian for proof reading.

From: Hvinden, Brian

Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:29 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

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(b)(5)

[redacted]

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Milo

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan; Welch, Randy; Stephenson, James R; Garcia, Carol
Subject: RE: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 1:34:00 PM

Yeah. Hard to know where the truth is, although the pilot thing is scary. That doesn't feel like something you would just make up. But with thousands of people it's almost certain to have some bad apples.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:33 AM
To: Welch, Randy <Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

Thanks!

I have been doing shot updates for Stacie every morning. This will be a great resource for the update….. you guys are great.

It is interesting looking at these stories and the other stories that I pick up from native news networks and the different story they are telling.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:25 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

“I feel like I just got shot down,” said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe’s emergency response coordinator. “It’s very hurtful.”

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe’s request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

“People are getting overheated now already,” Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline’s river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe’s request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don’t have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, “I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well.”

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

“At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit,” which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

“We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably,” she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff’s Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

“I’ve been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it’s continuing to grow,” he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

“He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena,” he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of “outside agitators” responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – “hundreds of criminal acts.”

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said “nothing bad is happening here.”

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

“You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other,” said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the “peaceful” side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

“My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not,” he said. “This is our land, our people.”

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, “I believe there's strength in prayer,” and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Our water is sacred,” she said. “I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too.”

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes' chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock's opposition.

"We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives," Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe's reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe's water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It's estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it's the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead 'solidarity' rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

Standing Rock tribal leaders represented by former U.S. attorney (Billings Gazette)

By AMY DALRYMPLE Forum News Service
20 hrs ago

BISMARCK – Former North Dakota U.S. Attorney Tim Purdon will represent the Standing Rock Sioux tribal leaders who have been sued by Dakota Access LLC for protesting the pipeline construction.

Chairman Dave Archambault II and council member Dana Yellow Fat are among several defendants named in a civil case filed last week in federal court in Bismarck by Dakota Access. The lawsuit alleges that the defendants are interfering with pipeline construction north of the reservation.

Purdon said he worked closely with Archambault while serving as U.S. attorney and he was asked to represent the tribal leaders.

“This case is about the parameters of the First Amendment in terms of tribal officials protesting here in North Dakota,” Purdon said.

The complaint claims that Archambault, Yellow Fat and others tried to block Dakota Access employees from entering and exiting the construction site. The complaint also claims that Archambault excused all tribal employees from work on Aug. 12 and encouraged them to protest.

About 4,000 people were estimated to be at the protest site on Monday. Pipeline construction has been halted in that area since last week.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland granted a temporary restraining order against the tribal leaders and other defendants that prevents them from unlawfully protesting the pipeline construction.

A hearing was set for Thursday in the case, but has been postponed because Archambault plans to travel to Washington, D.C., for a hearing on Wednesday in the tribe’s lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Purdon said.

The Bismarck hearing is now set for Sept. 8 to determine if a preliminary injunction should be issued. The temporary restraining order has been extended until Sept. 8, though Hovland wrote in his order that the parties are “strongly encouraged to meet and confer in good faith in an attempt to resolve this dispute prior to the hearing.”

Archambault and Yellow Fat are among 29 people who have been arrested during the protest. Each faces a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct in Morton County.

Purdon resigned as U.S. attorney for the district of North Dakota last year. He now works in private practice in Bismarck for national law firm Robins Kaplan, where he is co-chairman of the American Indian Law and Policy Practice Group.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: RE: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation
Date: Sunday, September 04, 2016 1:38:25 PM

Hurricane not looking good either. Think there will be several declarations

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 11:07:23 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Agree. Not good.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 9:39:10 AM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 2:57:00 PM

Hope nothing happens. Will stay in touch. If nothing else, we can take you for a starbucks after work. ☺

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6) [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:48 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday

Yes.

From: Hvinden, Brian [mailto:Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:46 PM
To: (b)(6)@nd.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday

Wow, is it still getting bigger?

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6) [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:45 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday

It's probably not going to work. We are up to our eyeballs with this pipeline protest. Sorry!

From: Hvinden, Brian [mailto:Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:25 PM
To: (b)(6)@nd.gov>
Subject: FEMA Visit next Monday

Hi (b)(6)

Cynthia Hunter and I will be in the state next week and were wondering if you would be available for a meeting next Monday around 3:30. We are doing a tour of the congressional offices in the state and will do a few other informal stops. The primary purpose is to just get her more familiar with North Dakota and issues in the state, as we are shifting some duties around in our office. Please let me know if you are available and can meet and if so, I will try to be quiet and (b)(6) (b)(6) ☺

Brian

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 2:46:00 PM

Wow, is it still getting bigger?

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6) [mailto:(b)(6) @nd.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:45 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday

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From: Hvinden, Brian [mailto:Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:25 PM
To: (b)(6) g@nd.gov>
Subject: FEMA Visit next Monday

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Brian

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Short update on OST
Date: Thursday, September 08, 2016 3:59:00 PM

Made a couple of small edits and one addition. Take a look.

This weekend could likely be a very contentious weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock areas.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this always happens before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline and the protest.
- **The Governor of ND has activated (although not a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling. Guard members will assist in providing security at traffic checkpoints on the state highway leading to the protest site, which is being reopened to traffic this afternoon.**
- There are ongoing reports of violence from both sides.
- The chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 3:00:00 PM
Attachments: 102516 Liaison Reports.pdf
102416 Liaison Reports.pdf

It's interesting. Still don't have a JFO yet, so everything is very disjointed. Hope things tighten up next week. People of pretty good. I'm the liaison manager. Here are our reports from the last couple of days.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 2:55 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

How are things going?

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:49 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest

http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 4:01:00 PM

Wow. He must be helping (b)(6)

Here is the latest from the Tribune http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/human-blockade-crosses-highway/article_ad910e20-06fc-52e3-91af-fae71d8e8685.html

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 3:54 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

Did you see that Rob Keller is spokesperson for the Morton County sherriff's office?

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:49 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest

http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 3:00:00 PM

Yeah. Mark Ruffalo is there too. I think it could really get big before the election.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 2:57 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

Jesse Jackson?!? I saw the picture and thought it looked like him, but thought I must be mistaken.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:49 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest

http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Update: pipeline situation
Date: Sunday, September 04, 2016 3:44:33 PM

I'm driving most of rest of today and tomorrow morning. Give me a call and I'll give more detail

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 1:24:46 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Update: pipeline situation

I got another request last night from Milo on behalf of IHS requesting any updates we have.

There is nothing to share outside of what the media is saying. Social media has blown up. There are so many different versions and accounts about the protests, it would take a full time person to track it all.

At some point soon I need to call up to Standing Rock. The tribe needs to make a few decisions about EMI training before the end of the month. I am thinking I'll call before the 9th.

I'll send Milo and IHS some clips and let them know that is all we have. No direct information. I'll copy you on the email.

M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 5:03:42 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy; Depalo, Lee; Floyd, Megan
Subject: Update: pipeline situation

Update on situation far below, then a blog post. It is worth noting that Cody Schultz is a Morton County Commissioner, but he works for ND DES

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 4:39:10 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan; DeFelice, Jerome; Stephenson, James R
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 2:48:00 PM

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http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest
Date: Sunday, September 04, 2016 12:51:30 AM

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https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: last one hopefully
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 12:28:00 PM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: nd clips - dakota access protest
Date: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 11:53:00 AM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: round 2
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:27:00 AM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Zent, Jeffrey L.
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 17:04:09 +0000
Subject: DALRYMPLE STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROTEST ACTIVITIES

State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor
Jack Dalrymple
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug.18, 2016

Contact: Jeff Zent or Jody Link
701.328.2200

DALRYMPLE STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROTEST ACTIVITIES

Gov. Jack Dalrymple today issued the following statement regarding recent pipeline protest activities and public safety:

"Public safety is paramount as we continue to closely monitor protest activities and coordinate our public safety efforts with law enforcement leaders and state agency directors.

Following reports of heavy pedestrian traffic and numerous vehicles parked along ND Highway 1806, we restricted travel six miles south of Mandan to local traffic and emergency response vehicles only. Alternate routes are available for through traffic. Additionally, we established a traffic control point at the intersection of ND Highway 6 and Morton County Road 138A to provide information regarding protest activities along the highway.

While we are concerned about some cases of unlawful activity, we are pleased that no one has been injured and it is our top priority to keep it that way."

-###-

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 15:33:16 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Document1
Attachments: Document1.docx

Dakota Access Pipeline Protest updates.

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
Emergency Liasion
605-440-0993
Glenda.redfeather@fema.dhs.gov

PROTECTOR CAMPS REMAIN PEACEFUL

By Brandon Ecoffey
Lakota Country Times
Aug. 25, 2016

EVERYONE
WElCOME
Sacred Stone
Camp!

Water protectors remain peaceful despite efforts to cast them in a different level light. PINE RIDGE—Despite efforts by the local North Dakota media and county officials water protectors and Standing Rock Sioux Tribal officials say that the message emanating through the camps is one of peaceful resistance.

Nearly 3,000 water protectors gathered peacefully this past weekend in Cannonball, ND., to speak out against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline that is set to be built near the Standing Rock Reservation and could possibly threaten drinking water for tribal citizens. The gathering has been peaceful as organizers have directed those in attendance to not engage in violent acts.

“There are no weapons within the camp,” said Cody Hall, who is the media spokesperson for the Red Warrior Camp. “We have security in the camp at all hours and when people arrive they are asked what they have in the car. Our security walks the camps at all hours to make sure nothing like that is happening,” said Hall.

Hall says that all entering the camp are made aware that weapons and alcohol are not allowed.

Additionally, LaDonna Allard, Director of the Camp of the Sacred Stone, addressed these same issues in a press release on Tuesday after the Governor of North Dakota declared a state of emergency.

“The gathering here remains 100% peaceful and ceremonial, as it has from day one. We are standing together in prayer. No firearms or weapons are allowed. Why is a gathering of Indians so inherently threatening and frightening to some people,” asked Allard.

Governor Dalrymple declared a State of Emergency last Friday to allow for additional state resources to be directed to the gatherings as he mentioned that he believed “outside agitators” were responsible for committing crime within the camps. The reports have remain unsubstantiated and irresponsible comments from local law enforcement about the possibility of the presence of pipe bombs have contributed to a false narrative about the activities of protectors.

A report from the Bismark Tribune on Tuesday, however, revealed a conflict of interest for Dalrymple as they reported that he owns stock in ExxonMobile. A spokesman for the governor told the Tribune that, “He is not going to discuss the details of his personal finances.”

Early efforts by the local media and the representatives from Morton County Law Enforcement to sensationalize “reports” of weapons including pipe bombs have been quickly dismissed by those present within the camps and several journalists including LCT’s Karin Eagle who spent time embedded in both camps over the weekend.

Sources inside of the office of Standing Rock Sioux President Dave Archambault Jr., have told LCT that from the start of the protest the goal of the administration is to keep the protests peaceful and prayerful. The nonviolent direct action taken by organizers of the camps has been partly credited with the overwhelming show of support from both tribalnations and non-Native allies who flocked to the camps in the thousands this past weekend.

“The growing support from tribal-nations and others for this movement has partly been brought about by the people’s willingness to remain unarmed and nonviolent.”

Crazy Horse Students Witness History

Brandon Ecoffey
Lakota Country Times
Aug. 25, 2016

#FTP
NO DAPL
MNI W

Crazy Horse School students travelled to ND last week to bear witness to history. Photo courtesy/Sunny Clifford WANBLEE—Nearly forty students from the Crazy Horse School travelled to Cannonball, ND., to witness living history as thousands of water protectors have gathered in the area to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

According to Sunny Clifford, a teacher at Crazy Horse High School, the students were joined by several staff members including Silas Blaine on the day long trip. The school says that the students did not go on the trip to join the protest but to observe this moment in history that will likely reverberate for decades across Indian Country.

The idea for the trip was first introduced by staff members on the school's cultural advisory board who felt that the experience would be beneficial to the students.

Joelle Red Willow, 17, is a senior at Crazy Horse School and had spent her last week of summer inside the protest camps near Cannonball, ND., that have been set up to halt the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline that was supposed to begin being built last week.

"It was an honor to be there and see all the council fires there working to try and find a better way."

Red Willow says that what she had seen in Cannonball was something she wanted to experience with her classmates as it it has motivated to use her voice to address injustices.

"It was an honor to stand with our people," said Red Willow. "When I saw all the elders crying, and to see them all their fighting for everyone it inspired me to speak out even more."

The pipeline is intended to move 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day to hubs further south but construction on the project has been halted after workers were told leave the job site by their employers due to the protests.

The pipeline that had been quietly ushered through the regulation process is set to be built right next to the Standing Rock Reservation and would run under the Missouri River. The route cuts right through lands included in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has opposed the construction due to the inherent risks that pipelines pose to groundwater. Over the past weekend nearly 3,000 from across the country joined the resistance that has swelled near Cannonball, ND.

Defender Camps 2,000 Strong

Judge Will Issue Opinion Sept. 9
Tom Crash
Lakota Country Times-Pine Ridge
Aug. 25, 2016

ALL NATIONS
#NODAPL

1,000 strong, defenders descended on the Veteran's Memorial bridge in Bismarck to stress their commitment to stop he pipeline; photo courtesy of Arlo Iron Cloud. BISMARK, ND– On Tuesday, close to 1,000 defenders traveled north to Bismarck to express their commitment against the Dakota Access Pipeline, banners were draped over the restraining walls of the Veteran's Memorial bridge, prayers were said, songs were shared and tobacco ties were placed. Another 1,000 defenders were back in the Sacred Stone Spiritual camp and the Spirit Camp near the Cannonball River.

Friday, Arvol Looking Horse and the Dakota 38 riders rode from the Spirit Camp to the protest site at the entrance to one of three construction sites while Deb White Plume of Owe Aku led a number of boats, canoes and kayaks on the Cannonball River this past weekend in preparation for possible protests on the Missouri.

There was a pipe ceremony scheduled first thing Wednesday morning followed by a walk at 11am from the Spirit Camp to the protest site. A wacipi was planned for Wednesday evening.

Arvol Looking Horse and Dakota 38 lead a horse ride from the Spirit Camp to the lprotest site on Friday; photo courtesy of Arlo Iron Cloud. Everyone was waiting for the Aug. 24 hearing in federal court in Washington DC, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe had filed a suit against the Dakota Access Pipeline, requesting an injunction to stop the pipeline construction. The Judges Opinion from that Hearing will be issued Sept. 9. Dave Archambault, SRST president, OST vice president Tom Poor Bear and council representative CJ Clifford along with a bus of supporters from Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and a number of additional tribal officials planned to be in DC for Wednesday's hearing.

A separate suit has been filed against the US Army Corps of Engineers for violating several treaties when they approved the Dakota Access Pipeline. The Corps has filed a suit against protectors.

Rumors were rampant that the road to Bismarck were blocked but it was law enforcement warning vehicles about events and activities going on throughout the area; photo courtesy of Arlo Iron Cloud. Tuesday, the OST council voted overwhelmingly to continue supporting the activities against the Dakota Access Pipeline and approved looking a filing a suit against South Dakota.

"The plan to cross he Missouri River in two different places puts tribal members in Lower Brule, Rosebud and Pine Ridge at risk, all of us use Missouri River water and a break in the line near the Missouri would damage water we all use," said John Yellow Bird Steele, OST president. "We have sent hundreds of tribal members to Cannonball and we will continue to fight the pipeline on every level."

Construction has halted at two of the sites but the construction on the east side of the Missouri, where preparations are being made to drill under the Missouri, not only continue but have been stepped up going 24 hours a day. Armed security had been added to the site and aerial patrols mark skies.

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: 26 Aug 2016 13:26:00 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Document1
Attachments: Document1.docx

The included attachment are the Dakota Access Pipeline Updates.

Enjoy!

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
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Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement

LAUREN DONOVAN
Bismarck Tribune

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.
Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

“They can’t build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe,” Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company’s decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any “Jane and John Doe” from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe’s request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

“Everybody thought they had it (easement),” said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. “This is really important information.”

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

“We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There’s nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court’s injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday’s news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

“The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she’ll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people,” Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

“It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making,” Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

“When this is done, if it’s ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Protesters, officers gird for pipeline ruling, but restarting construction may wait regardless

By Mike Nowatzki
Bismark Tribune
Aug 24, 2016

NEAR CANNON BALL -- Construction won’t immediately restart on a $3.8 billion pipeline if a judge rules against the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe after a court hearing Wednesday, Aug. 24.

Dakota Access LLC, which temporarily stopped construction last week amid growing tribal protests near the pipeline’s planned crossing of the Missouri River, will wait for law enforcement to determine it’s safe to resume construction, Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said Wednesday morning.

That call will depend on how protesters react to the ruling, if it’s favorable to Dakota Access, Kirchmeier said.

“We’ve done everything we possibly could to make sure this stays safe,” he said.

Law enforcement officers met with tribal leaders and protest organizers Wednesday morning and had a “positive dialogue,” the sheriff said. There are 40 officers on site near the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers, which has drawn 2,000-some protesters camped nearby, many from tribes across the region and the country. Fargo police officers and deputies from Cass and Grand Forks counties are among the agencies assisting Morton County deputies.

Standing Rock members oppose the river crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites. The tribe is represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice in the lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over permits issued for the pipeline, which would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the reservation and be the largest oil pipeline from the Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day to Patoka, Ill.

Dakota Access temporarily stopped construction near the river crossing site as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., will consider Wednesday the tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. A lawyer for the tribe said the judge has indicated he will rule from the bench or shortly after the hearing.

Vic Camp, a 41-year-old from South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation, said Tuesday that protesters will refrain from violence if the judge's ruling doesn't go their way.

"The only way violence will happen is if the cops provoke it and they attack us," he told Forum News Service, adding, "We have our women and we have our children. We have grandparents here."

When asked what will happen if the judge denies the injunction and Dakota Access tries to resume construction, Camp said, "Then we'll start blockading."

"We'll do what we can with our bodies to keep the machines from coming in," he said.

A checkpoint on State Highway 1806 about 6 miles south of Mandan has been restricting traffic to the protest area for days, but an additional blockade was added Wednesday. Due to concerns about the safety of protesters who may march from the campsites to the construction site, authorities set up a second checkpoint farther south near Fort Rice and were preventing any vehicles from passing through.

Dakota Access: Billy Mills Supports Water Protectors at Standing Rock Sioux Reservation

By Chelsey Luger & Thosh Collins
Indian Country Today
Aug. 23, 2016

Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota), 1964 Olympic Gold Medalist, expressed his support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in an interview on August 20, 2016 at the Cannon Ball Prayer Camp near the site of the proposed Bakken Oil Pipeline.

Billy Mills, a 1964 Olympic Gold Medalist and citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation, visited the Standing Rock Reservation over the weekend to show support for the youth, leadership and any others who stand with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in opposition to the Energy Transfer Company's Bakken Oil Pipeline, also called the Dakota Access pipeline.

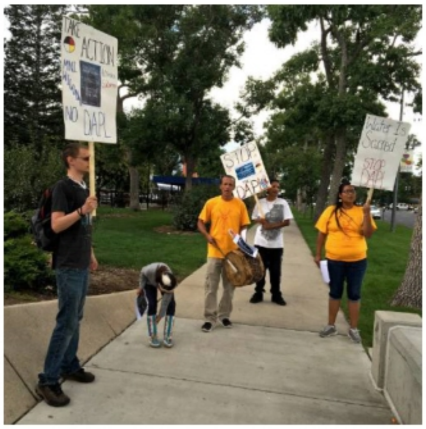
In his message to the people, Mills expresses his sincere respect and appreciation for the leadership of Standing Rock, including Chairman Dave Archambault II, Jodi Archambault-Gillette, and Dave Archambault Sr.

Mills then incorporates his interpretation of a broader historical context which has led to the situation at hand. He notes that due to the sweeping legacy of injustice brought forth through manifest destiny, broken treaties, and white privilege, the rights of Native American people have been undermined and devalued in the American legal system.

As a man of both Native American and white American descent, Mills says that he has both benefited from and been hurt by the invisible force of white privilege. With the gentle tone and spirit of camaraderie that Mills always puts forth, he expresses his wish for Native American children to be afforded the same opportunities as other Americans and to be empowered by information that most schools aren't teaching.

Peaceful pipeline protest held in Colorado Springs park

By: Billie Stanton Anleu
The Gazette-Colorado Springs,CO
August 25, 2016



Donald Little Thunder, a Rosebud Sioux Indian living in Colorado Springs, beats a drum and sings as he leads a group through downtown Acacia Park while protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Like hundreds if not thousands of Indians across the nation, Donald Little Thunder, friends and family members marched in protest Thursday against the controversial $3.7 billion Dakota Access Pipeline.

They chanted, sang and beat drums through downtown Colorado Springs' Acacia Park in an effort to raise awareness and support for the Standing Rock Sioux Nation and others protesting in North Dakota.

The underground pipeline is designed to stretch nearly 1,170 miles, carrying oil from the Bakken fields of western North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa to Illinois. It also is to travel beneath the Missouri River, the sole source of water for the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

"Our ancestors told us that in the seventh generation, the black snake will come through," Little Thunder said, noting that his 8-year-old daughter, Wi Wanbli Win, is from that seventh generation.

"We're just asking everybody to be aware of it and help in some way," Little Thunder said. "We are very spiritual people. This is the most peaceful protest in the U.S. We're sitting and praying and singing to stop the oil pipeline."

Marching with him were Lena Sun Bear, an Oglala and Rosebud Sioux; Donna Marshall, of the Rosebud Sioux Nation; and John Freyta, an Apache veteran of the Gulf War.

Energy Transfer Partners of Texas has said its pipeline will pump millions of dollars into the economy and reduce U.S. reliance on foreign oil.

But the Sioux and other tribes say a leak or break could wipe out water supplies. Iowa landowners have sued, too, to keep the pipeline off their properties.

Construction on the pipeline stopped Aug. 16 as protesters encircled the workers' machinery.

In Washington, D.C., U.S. District Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday to delay a decision until Sept. 9 on whether to grant an injunction stopping work on the project, the Bismarck Tribune reported.

The company argued that delays could cost it more than $100 million.

The tribe is suing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which issued the pipeline permits, saying it violated the National Historic Preservation Act and failed to adequately review environmental and archaeological concerns.

Attorneys for the Army Corps argued that no evidence indicates historic artifacts are in the pipeline's path, and the agency followed proper protocol in consulting with the tribes.

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who's Fighting and Why

By JACK HEALY
New York Times
AUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

Pipes being stacked for the Dakota Access oil pipeline last year at a staging site in Worthing, S.D. Credit Nati Harnik/Associated Press

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment. The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

MNi WiCONi
Unglunihanpi
Respect & Protect
our WATER
of LiFE
I CAN
Live without OIL
I CAN NOT
Live Without
WATER
PIPELINE FIGHTER

Omaka Nawicakinciji, 7, of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota, protested the Dakota Access pipeline with his mother, Heather Mendoza, in Washington on Wednesday. Credit Alex Wong/Getty Images

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota's governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country’s pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

DR-4237-OST Media Coverage

August 19, 2016

- **FEMA homes 'small part' of need on Pine Ridge-** Rapid City Journal
- **Gov. Daugaard: State won't fight renaming of Harney Peak-** Rapid City Journal
- **Q&A on North Dakota pipeline construction, protests-** Rapid City Journal
- **Dull Knife arrested resisting Dakota Access Pipeline-** Native Sun Weekly, Rapid City
- **My Voice: Black Elk Peak is right name-** Argus Leader, Sioux Falls

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FEMA homes 'small part' of need on Pine Ridge

Rapid City Journal
Mike Anderson Journal staff
Aug 18, 2016

Native Nations

In May 2015, Leroy Broken Nose's childhood home on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation was pummeled by hail the size of tennis balls.

The same storm caused extensive flooding and destroyed hundreds of homes on the reservation. President Barack Obama declared it a national disaster on Aug. 7, 2015, marking the first and only time a sovereign Native American tribe independently requested and received a formal disaster declaration from a president.

In the weeks that followed the storms, Broken Nose's battered roof leaked and rotted out, collapsing in certain sections.

Although it took almost 11 months, the 62-year-old disabled man now has a new home on a small plot of land south of Oglala Lake.

"It was a long waiting game," Broken Nose said Wednesday while sitting at his new kitchen table. "But it's here, so I'm happy."

Broken Nose's new roof was provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which has spent more than a year repairing and replacing households damaged during a series of storms in May 2015.

As FEMA finalizes that work, a larger undertaking by multiple federal agencies lies ahead: to continue improving the overall conditions on the reservation.

Since December, FEMA has installed 196 manufactured housing units like the one Broken Nose now occupies. The last was installed on July 11. FEMA has also repaired an additional 107 homes, and another 13 are scheduled to be repaired before FEMA closes its eight disaster recovery centers scattered across the reservation in mid-September. All of the repairs and replacements were provided for free by FEMA, or contractors hired by the agency.

An unfinished job

Having spent more than a year away from his wife, FEMA coordinating officer Gary Stanley is ready to return to his own home, but he harbors no illusions that the work on Pine Ridge is finished.

"What we did here in terms of disaster response is a very small part of what the need is on the reservation," Stanley said.

According to Stanley, FEMA determined there is a shortage of at least 4,000 livable homes on the reservation. "It was imperative that we come up with a solution because it's impacting a lot of young children and the elderly," he said.

The people impacted include Broken Nose, who suffered a stroke in 2004 and has been battling cancer and diabetes for many years.

“I beat one cancer,” Broken Nose said, “but I can’t beat leukemia.”

Broken Nose goes to Rapid City once a month for cancer treatment, but doesn't have a car so he takes a bus to the hospital. He gets a ride from his neighbors to Oglala, where the bus picks him up. It won’t make the drive to his home several miles south of town, he said, partially because the dirt road to his doorstep turns into an impassable trench of mud when it rains.

This is but one small example of how seriously the reservation’s road system is in need of upgrades. FEMA’s workers discovered this first-hand while trying to find certain homes, many of which are remote, like Broken Nose’s. Often, they don't have recorded addresses and are accessible only by barely maintained, dirt roads that haven't been inventoried.

FEMA may be leaving next month, but a disaster recovery team will stay behind to continue working with the tribe on various initiatives, with roads and housing designated as the primary focus areas. A FEMA coordinator — operating out of the Region 8 office in Denver — will be joined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and the Federal Highway Administration, according to a FEMA press release.

Making progress

Some progress has already been made under FEMA’s direction, with more than 460 miles of tribal roads assessed and inventoried. The results will be entered into a Geospatial Information System map. Similar efforts are also underway to better catalog the true extent of the housing needs on the reservation.

Broken Nose's original home was torn down after the storm, and he now lives in a manufactured housing unit provided by FEMA. It has a handicapped accessible ramp, three bedrooms, air conditioning, and is furnished with a couch, bed, and full array of standard kitchen appliances.

While it serves his needs well, Broken Nose worries the housing unit’s energy costs will be too high. He hasn’t received his first bill, but people living in other FEMA-provided units have complained of high electricity bills.

FEMA has heard these concerns as well, and as a result created a program to reduce energy expenses by teaching low-cost weatherization techniques. Other efforts are also underway to educate tribal officials on strategic planning and grant application processes for future infrastructure improvement initiatives.

“There’s a lot of need on Pine Ridge right now,” Stanley said. “I would like to think part of what we did was help focus folks on what those needs are.”

According to Stanley, the housing units are designed to last at least 20 years, provided they are well-maintained.

Broken Nose hopes his new home will be around for his grandson to live in someday, but he has already seen evidence that it might not.

Even though it's new, Broken Nose said, some of the siding has already begun to break off and blow away.

Gov. Daugaard: State won't fight renaming of Harney Peak

Rapid City Journal
Seth Tupper Journal Staff
August 19, 2016

Gov. Dennis Daugaard said the state will not fight the renaming of Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak, and will accept a decision from a federal board that formally changed the name of South Dakota's highest mountain.

In an exclusive interview with the Rapid City Journal, the governor said Thursday he will accept the federal renaming decision, even though South Dakota was under no legal pressure to accept the new name.

With his declaration, Daugaard removed a final obstacle to full implementation of the controversial name change.

“I don’t want the state to have one name and the feds another,” Daugaard said, “so we will make the change.”

His comments end a week of speculation about whether state government will honor the Aug. 11 decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to rename the 7,242-foot mountain, which is South Dakota's tallest and is often called the nation's highest point east of the Rockies.

The board said it made the change, which went against the recommendation of a South Dakota naming panel, because Harney Peak could be seen as insensitive to Native Americans.

Daugaard's statement also could end nearly two years of controversy that split South Dakotans, sometimes along racial lines.

William S. Harney, the peak’s former namesake, was an Army officer in the 1800s who was known as an “Indian fighter.” Nicholas Black Elk, the peak’s new namesake, was a Lakota Sioux holy man who was confined to reservation life around the turn of the 20th century.

Daugaard said he spent part of the past week conferring with members of the state congressional delegation about whether the federal board’s decision could be overturned.

While that is possible — congressional legislation could be sought to strike down the decision — Daugaard said neither he nor the state’s members of Congress are willing to prioritize that task over other work.

Daugaard said he will speak with his cabinet secretaries about how to implement the change on signs, maps, websites, tourism literature and any other state-produced references. That work is already under way within the federal government, which manages the peak as part of the Black Elk Wilderness area in the Black Hills National Forest.

Last year, the South Dakota Board on Geographic Names recommended no change to the mountain’s name. The recommendation went unheeded at the federal level, and Daugaard said he remains concerned about the “unilateral” power wielded by the federal board.

U.S. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., was also critical of the federal board and said this week in a Journal interview that he may recommend changes to reduce the board’s power. Those changes, if they happen, will be too late to influence the Harney Peak renaming.

That was welcome news for Lakota elder Basil Brave Heart, of Pine Ridge, who proposed the name change in a September, 2014 letter.

Brave Heart considers Harney's name to be offensive because Harney led deadly campaigns against Native Americans, and because the peak named for him is within the Black Hills, an area of spiritual significance to some tribes.

Modern Native American animosity toward Harney is focused mostly on the Battle of Ash Hollow in 1855 in present-day Nebraska, where he led troops who attacked and killed an estimated 86 Sioux people, including women and children. The attack was launched in retaliation for the so-called Grattan Fight of the previous year, when Sioux warriors killed 29 soldiers.

Black Elk is known worldwide as the subject of the book "Black Elk Speaks," author John Neihardt's 1932 account of stories and spiritual visions related to him by Black Elk. More than 900,000 copies of the book have been sold since its first printing, according to the University of Nebraska Press.

Brave Heart was not immediately available Thursday afternoon by phone, but he spoke to the Journal earlier in the week and said he and many other Native Americans hoped Daugaard would honor the federal board's decision.

"We don't want to be defined by a government that named a sacred Black Hills mountain after someone who committed an atrocity," Brave Heart said. "This could really lift some negative energy off our backs."

Daugaard did not attach the same degree of significance to the name change. In fact, he said, he thought the matter had concluded with the state board's recommendation. He was not aware it was under consideration by the federal board until a staffer informed him of the federal board's decision on the day it happened, Aug. 11.

"I have things that I think are more important to the state than what we name a place," he said.

When asked if he thinks the name change is symbolically important for Native Americans, Daugaard said, "only if they're knowledgeable about history."

The governor sidestepped a question about his personal preference of name for the mountain, but he allowed that "Black Elk Peak" is an acceptable choice.

"If the name had to be changed, I like 'Black Elk' just fine," he said.

Q&A on North Dakota pipeline construction, protests

Rapid City Journal
By JAMES MacPHERSON
August 18, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. | Developers of a four-state oil pipeline have agreed to halt construction of the project in southern North Dakota until a federal court hearing next week in Washington, D.C. The temporary construction shutdown comes amid growing protests and increased tension over the Dakota Access Pipeline that is intended to cross the Missouri River near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Some things to know about the pipeline and the protest:

WHAT IS THE DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE?

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners' Dakota Access Pipeline is a $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile project that would carry nearly a half-million barrels of crude oil daily from North

Dakota's oil fields through South Dakota and Iowa to an existing pipeline in Patoka, Illinois, where shippers can access Midwest and Gulf Coast markets.

WHY THE PROTEST?

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is suing federal regulators for approving the oil pipeline that would be the largest-capacity one carrying crude out of western North Dakota's oil patch. The tribes' lawsuit filed last month in federal court in Washington challenges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' decision to grant permits at more than 200 water crossings in four states for the pipeline. The tribe argues the pipeline that would be placed less than a mile upstream of the reservation could impact drinking water for the more than 8,000 tribal members and the millions who rely on it further downstream. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of the tribe by environmental group Earthjustice, said the project violates several federal laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act. The tribe worries the project will disturb ancient sacred sites outside of the 2.3-million acre reservation. The hearing on the tribe's request for a temporary injunction is slated for Wednesday.

WHO ARE THE PROTESTERS?

Mostly members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but they've been joined by other American Indians and non-Native Americans from across the country. "Divergent" actress Shailene Woodley was part of the protests last week.

ARRESTS

American Indians have for months been staging a nonviolent protest at a "spirit camp" at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers in the path of the pipeline. More than a dozen young people from the reservation also ran from North Dakota to Washington to deliver 140,000 petition signatures to the Corps to protest the pipeline. The protest took a turn last week when law enforcement was called to keep the peace between protesters and armed security guards hired by the company. Twenty-eight people have been arrested since then and charged with interfering with the pipeline construction, including Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II. Developers on Monday sued in federal court to stop protesters, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

IS THE PIPELINE SAFE?

The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment, and workers monitoring the pipeline remotely in Texas could close block valves on it within three minutes if a breach is detected.

WHY THE NEED?

Energy Transfer Partners announced the Dakota Access pipeline in 2014, a few days after North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple urged industry and government officials to build more pipelines to keep pace with the state's oil production, which is second only to Texas'. Supporters said the pipeline would create more markets for the state's oil and gas, and reduce truck and oil train traffic, the latter of which has been a growing concern after a spate of fiery derailments of trains carrying North Dakota crude, including one near Dalrymple's hometown of Casselton in 2013, and an explosion in Quebec that same year that killed 47 people.

Dull Knife arrested resisting Dakota Access Pipeline

Native Sun Weekly, Rapid City
By Natalie Hand
Lakota Media Project OWE AKU
August 17, 2016

GUY DULL KNIFECANNON BALL, N.D. — On August 24, 2016, a federal judge in Washington, DC will issue his ruling on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). Many water protectors and land defenders have gathered here to show love and respect for our first medicine, the sacred water.

On Monday, August 15 five people were arrested at the site where DAPL is building a road they will use to transport their equipment to the work site. Guy Dull Knife, Oglala Lakota elder of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation was one of the people arrested when he blocked the gate to the DAPL worksite. Many more people have given themselves to be arrested as the days move toward August 24. We have set up our Red Warrior Camp and are holding Non-Violent Direct Action trainings in camp and at the action site. We are entrenched and will protect the Mni Sosi River (Missouri) that we all belong to. Red Nations from all along the river are here. Many citizens of America are here to protect sacred water. This is our Treaty Territory, our Ancestral Homelands.

Our ancestors trusted us to continue to protect our first medicine. We do this in a good way, out of love. We do not bring hate here. We are a spiritual people and we will defend our relative, sacred water. Our Pte San Win (White Buffalo Calf Woman) brought us the sacred pipe, and She also handed us the bow and arrow. We follow Her teachings in this way.

Owe Aku has trained thousands of people through Moccasins on the Ground NVDA training camp held for four years when we were challenging TransCanada, Inc and the KXL Tarsands Pipeline. Communities and families are ready, they are here. This pipeline has the potential to contaminate water forever. This issue is a Human Rights Issue. It affects all of us. To support our NVDA work, please visit our website at www.oweakuinternational.org.

My Voice: Black Elk Peak is right name

Sioux Falls-Argus Leader
John YellowBird Steele
August 17, 2016

MDEWAKANTON

On Aug. 11, the Oceti Sakowin, or Seven Council Fires of the Great Sioux Nation, and the United States took a long stride forward towards justice in the Black Hills. At the request of our Lakota Oyate, the U.S. changed the name of Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak. We thank our Oglala Lakota tribal members, Basil Brave Heart — a lifelong educator — and Myron Pourier, Black Elk's great grandson, who brought this issue forward to the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council and the National Park Service.

Rising from the center of the Black Elk Wilderness, Black Elk Peak is the highest mountain in the Black Hills. The former name of Harney Peak was offensive to Native Americans, because General Harney and 600 U.S. Cavalry and Infantry soldiers massacred 86 Lakota men, women and children of Chief Little Thunder's village as they slept along Blue Water Creek on Sept. 3, 1855. Harney was sent out by the U.S. to "punish" our Lakota for the 1854 Grattan Affair, a U.S. Army attack to "avenge" the loss of a Mormon cow. When confronted by an angry Lt. Grattan ("Give me 20 men and I will ride through the whole Sioux Nation"), Chief Conquering Bear sought to maintain the peace under the 1851 Treaty by offering Grattan three horses to compensate the Mormon family for their lost cow (which had been left wandering on the prairie). Grattan, acting in violation of his orders, chose war. Lt. Grattan and his platoon were wiped out after Grattan ordered them to open fire on Conquering Bear's village and assassinated the Chief. Our Lakota Oyate acted in self-defense. Against this background, General Harney's massacre of our Lakota was pure genocide. The name Harney Peak was truly offensive to Lakota people.

In contrast, Black Elk, our Oglala Lakota Holy Man, is famous worldwide for his beautiful vision of Lakota culture and religion, which he told to Neihardt the Nebraska Poet Laureate in "Black Elk Speaks." Black Elk said: "You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round... . The Sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nest in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours... . Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves." Black Elk went to Black Elk Peak to receive his vision.

Now, the name of the sacred peak has come full circle to be named Black Elk Peak, which reflects a vision of beauty and the sacredness of life. Gov. Dennis Daugaard is confused by the name change. Perhaps upon reading "Black Elk Speaks," he will come to know the beauty, sacredness and unique Dakota perspective that the name Black Elk Peak represents. Black Elk Peak is the right name for the Mountain, which honors the true history of South Dakota and the sacred nature of the Black Hills. After all, we put the "Dakota" in South Dakota.

MY VOICE

John YellowBird Steele, Manderson, is president of Oglala Sioux Tribe. My Voice columns should be 500 to 700 words.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 14:14:52 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Draft BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests of Dakota Access Pipeline

Here's an initial crack at the BLUF. -- Brian

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but estimates ranging from 1500-2000 protesters and continuing to grow. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday afternoon, Aug. 19 North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended at a special commission meeting called for today at 4 pm CDT. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement. North Dakota Highway 1806, which runs adjacent to the protest signed is closed to through traffic, with detours established. Work at the site is currently halted as legal proceedings initiated by both the Standing Rock and the Dakota Access owners now work their way through the legal system.

On Sept. 9-11 the Annual United Tribes International Powwow is scheduled in Bismarck, approximately 60 miles from the protest site. The powwow normally sees about 5000 visitors, but there is speculation that that number could swell in light of the protest, which is being supported by other tribes around the country.

I still do not anticipate any formal role for FEMA, but Region VIII will continue to monitor the situation via traditional and social media and in communications with the state. (and/or tribe)? This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

From: Jones, Susan K
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 14:27:49 -0400
To: Fisher, Dennis;Floyd, Megan;Hudson, Lamont
Subject: DRAFT ND LNO Report
Attachments: ND LNO Report Standing Rock Protests.pptx

Susan K. Jones
FEMA Region VIII
Response Division
Denver, CO
O: 303.235.4605
C: 303.263.5415

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 18:01:02 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Cc: Roscoe, Scott
Subject: Elliott Ward comments on Webinar

Hi All –

Elliott Ward (Standing Rock) is on the National Tribal Policy consultation webinar right now. He has asked Milo about using PDM to plan for the braking of the pipeline. He said that FEMA has said they can't help since it is off reservation, even though it was part of the Sioux Nation. He also asked about working with tribes on culturally sensitive areas but when they ask for PDM grants won't cover that so the wording in the PDM grant is wrong. This is of particular concern because of the use of water.

I am going to assume we talked to him at some point on this issue. He will likely be calling or emailing Milo at HQ.

He also asked about doing a National Tribal Emergency Association. Milo told him to look at what tribal associations are doing. ITEMA was used as an example, intertribal recovery foundation, National Congress of American Indians. He may be open to pushing something in our region.

Ricky, do you want to reach out to Elliott on this one?

M.

From: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 14:23:25 -0400
To: Roscoe, Scott
Cc: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R
Subject: Elliott Ward

Hello-

Today I listened in to the first half of the Tribal Policy Listening Session during which Elliott spoke on concerns for PDM grants and the potential pipeline.

Am not sure who else was able to make the call so wanted to share the information for follow-up with him.

Thanks!

Courtnee-Evan Spino
PA Tribal Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
267-319-6335

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:49:22 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: emails coming re Dakota Pipeline
Attachments: NEMA input from Region 8 September 2016 DRAFT.docx

Megan,

I am about to send you a bunch of emails that are mostly clips about Dakota Pipeline that were singled out to send one another, perhaps with a comment.

Also I have attached the comments we sent in for the NEMA briefing packet, which includes one sentence describing the pipeline standoff.

Otherwise, everything I saw related to the pipeline was in our daily clips or the MOC reports.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Frank,

This Region 8 input for the NEMA briefing memo has been reviewed and approved by:

Nancy Dragani, Region 8 Acting Regional Administrator
Dragani, Nancy nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov
(303) 235-4840
Jennifer Dick, Regional Counsel
Dick, Jennifer Jennifer.Dick@fema.dhs.gov
(303) 235-4840
Stacie Greff, Region 8 External Affairs Officer
Greff, Stacie Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov
(303) 235-4840

Region VIII NEMA input for NEMA briefing memo

Colorado:

- Mitigation recently determined that two Boulder County properties were ineligible for buy-out based upon FEMA's policy on the "Limits on Subsurface Uses" associated with hydraulic fracturing and horizontal directional drilling. The properties were deemed ineligible because under Colorado law they would remain subject to potential forced pooling and subsurface activity following acquisition. Throughout Colorado and many other states, mineral rights are often owned separately from surface rights. A further complication is that many states, including Colorado and all Region VIII states, have statutory or forced pooling laws, allowing subsurface activity without owner consent. The Region anticipates an appeal from Boulder County and continues to engage HQ FIMA on the implications of the policy, not only to Colorado and Region VIII, but other states.

- Landslides present acute and/or long-term threats to some 20-80 homes in Colorado Springs. There appeared to be money available from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for earlier disasters as well as perhaps other federal funds to cope with the short-term threat, though the process was seen as slow and the problem could worsen. FEMA's current policy on the "Limits of Subsurface Uses" and its application may also affect eligibility for these landslide acquisitions.

Oglala Sioux DR 4237: This event was the first direct Individual Assistance declaration to an Indian Tribe.

- To address the severe housing challenges faced by the tribe, the Permanent Housing Construction Program was implemented for the first time within the Lower 48 United States. Through September 1, a total of 196 damaged residences had been replaced with manufactured homes and 100 of the planned 107 homes were repaired by FEMA contractors. All repairs are expected to be completed by September 9, 2016.
- This is one of the largest housing missions ever accomplished on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Non-Stafford Act issues: Several non-FEMA issues are of particular concern now to Region VIII state emergency managers.

- In North Dakota, protests by the Standing Rock Sioux and perhaps 90 other tribes against an oil pipeline currently under construction have gained national and international attention.
- In Montana, parasites have killed a large number of fish, prompting the shutdown of 180 miles of the Yellowstone River and causing economic distress to the tourism industry there.

- In Utah, two of this desert region’s water sources have come under threat, one from an extraordinary algae bloom and another from an accidental spread of toxic mine waste from a reservoir.

# # #

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Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 13:45:38 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@mail.mil';'(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@utah.gov'(b)(6)@wy
(b)(6)@nd.gov'(b)(6)@state.sd.us'(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov'(b)(6)@us
ace.army.mil';(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley,
Robert(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@state.mn.us'(b)(6)
(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@sb
a.gov(b)(6)@sba.gov'(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard,
Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;'(b)(6)@state.co.us';Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock,
Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA news clips for Wednesday 8-24
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-24-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 24, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A rechanneling project through the Garden of the Gods is expected to remove 100 properties from the floodplain… The Colorado Springs Independent interviewed the three colleges in the area about their plans for dealing with disasters, including an active shooter…. Bridges on a county road near the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar were taken out by flooding… The *Denver Post* explains why Colorado mosquitos are not likely to carry the Zika virus.
- **Montana:** An extraordinary outbreak of a parasite killing whitefish caused the state to shut down 180 miles of the Yellowstone River to all recreational uses.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest, including one in the *NY Times*: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz explains the decision to withdraw state-owned resources was because the situation is not an emergency, the protestors are not on state-owned land, plus reports of criminal activity. Water has been supplied by the tribe’s road department. Protestors marched over a bridge peacefully and staying on walkways. About 30 people attended a meeting of the Mandan county commissioners; all those who spoke opposed the pipeline, and many spoke against the traffic barrier set up by law enforcement, saying it hurts local businesses and farmers, is humiliating, and prevents people from seeing the protest. Commissioners said the decision was by law enforcement and is not theirs to overturn. The tribe says a leak at the pipeline could contaminate its water supply and sacred sites. The company says construction has only stopped at this one mile of the 1,172 mile pipeline, which would be the largest source for moving Bakken crude oil. Four unions wrote to Governor Dalrymple asking that he make it safe for construction workers to do their jobs. A federal judge is expected to rule today on a request for an injunction to halt the project. Tribal leaders say they will remain peaceful, but will blockade if the ruling goes against them. So far, there have been 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct.

- **South Dakota:** A $1 million FEMA SAFER g rant will pay for nine new firefighters in Rapid City for two years… A new wildfire broke out near Angostura Reservoir.
- **Utah:** An attempt to upgrade the Tibble Fork Dam has resulted in lake sediments being released over the weekend that have contaminated the American Fork River, apparently with toxic mine waste. Environmentalists fear an ecological disaster. The presence of toxic sediments had led to an earlier decision to upgrade the dam rather than dredge the lake – but draining the lake to work on the dam appears to have done the damage.
- **Wyoming:** Several fires were burning in the area of Yellowstone National Park, though all roads within the park remained open. One fire south of the park blocked access to that entrance. The fires were caused naturally and were not being actively suppressed.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: *USA Today* reports on possible hurricanes developing in the Atlantic. … *Inside Radio* says the Louisiana floods show the need to activate FM radio chips in cellphones, which do not work when cell towers are down.

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Flood project through Garden of the Gods will reroute Colorado Springs floodplain **(**The Gazette, Colorado Springs)

Colleges and universities put emphasis on planning for disasters, including active shooters: Planning for the worst (Colorado Springs Independent)

County Road 40 bridges washed out by flash floods (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

Why Colorado's Mosquitoes Are Not Likely To Spread Zika (Denver Post)

MONTANA:

Yellowstone fish-killing parasite is so prolific it's 'shocking' fish to death (Missoulian)

NORTH DAKOTA:

Occupying the Prairie: Tensions Rise as Tribes Move to Block a Pipeline (NY Times)

Emergency services recalled from Dakota Access Pipeline protest site (KFYR-TV Bismarck)

People concerned with Highway 1806 barricade ask Morton County Commissioners for answers (KFYR-TV Bismarck)

Pipeline foes take fight to Bismarck, Washington D.C. (Forum News Service)

Standing Rock Protestors Find New Resources After State Withdraws Support (KXMB-TV Bismarck)

Protesters attend Morton County Commission meeting (Bismarck Tribune)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city (Rapid City Journal)
New fire burning near Angostura Reservoir (KBHB radio)

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UTAH:

American Fork fish could contain toxic mine waste (Salt Lake Tribune)

WYOMING:

Wildfires close Yellowstone's south entrance, burn near west entrance (Billings Gazette)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

Tropical System Eyes Florida, Southeast US, May Develop Into Hurricane (USA Today)

Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

STORIES

COLORADO

Flood project through Garden of the Gods will reroute Colorado Springs floodplain (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Matt Steiner

Two years after city officials teamed with residents of a West Side Colorado Springs neighborhood to plan flood mitigation and reconstruction of Camp Creek, a project to remove more than 100 properties from the floodplain is about to begin.

On Monday, crews could begin the first phase of the more than $30 million project rebuilding about 5,100 feet of channel through Garden of the Gods Park and the Rock Ledge Ranch.

The work could be potentially lifesaving for residents of the Pleasant Valley neighborhood when heavy rains pound the Waldo Canyon fire burn area in the mountains to the west.

"As a community, we can't let our guard down," said Colorado Springs Emergency Manager Bret Waters. "Even though we're seeing some growth, it doesn't mean the risk will go away."

The Camp Creek mitigation project discussed in the spring of 2014 attracted more than 100 residents who helped choose project priorities. The result was a total rebuild of the deteriorating concrete channel through Pleasant Valley, meaning the creek along 31st Street will be refurbished with grass, shrubs, rocks and a relocated bike path.

But first, the work upstream must be done.

"Reducing the flows (through Garden of the Gods) will allow us to build the rest of the project," said project engineer Mike Chaves.

Construction crews will first install a series of rock steps in the creek, reshape banks and plant vegetation near the channel through the ranch and the park. The cross vanes, Chaves said, are intended to slow water and debris. Erosion has been accelerating each year because of floodwaters pouring off the Waldo Canyon burn scar.

The channel stabilization will cost $1.1 million, said city spokeswoman Kim Melchor. Almost $800,000 of that comes from a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant with the rest of the money coming from the city.

That work will likely be followed by construction of a large sediment detention pond at the north end of the park in early 2017, Chaves said.

That phase will cost almost $8 million, Melchor said. It will include a large berm stretching from 30th Street to the hills in the park that can dam floodwaters.

When the entire project is complete, more than 200 Pleasant Valley residents will no longer be in the floodplain.

"The whole intent is to protect the park, protect Rock Ledge Ranch and the downstream communities," Melchor said.

Colleges and universities put emphasis on planning for disasters, including active shooters: Planning for the worst (Colorado Springs Independent)

By J. Adrian Stanley @JAdrianStanley1

On April 16, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho, a senior at Virginia Tech, killed 32 people and wounded another 17 in two separate shootings.

Until June of this year, when Omar Mateen killed 49 people and wounded 53 others in Orlando's Pulse nightclub, the Virginia Tech shooting was the deadliest by a single perpetrator in U.S. history.

Virginia Tech held sway over the country, leading to widespread grief and fear, changing gun laws, prompting deeper discussions on mental illness and leading many colleges and universities to take a second look at their emergency plans.

Back in 2007, institutions of higher education tended to have procedures for protecting their campus communities from natural disasters like fires, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes, and often some man-made accidents as well, like chemical spills. But most had dedicated less — or no — energy to drafting plans to deal with an active shooter rampaging through the campus.

That changed after Virginia Tech. Just as "duck and cover" was a part of common school instruction during the Cold War, in today's age of mass shootings, students now learn to "run, hide, fight."

What Cho did was an eyeopener for school leaders. The gunman, who had known mental health issues, fatally shot two students in a residence hall, walked away, changed his clothes, and ran errands, then calmly entered an academic hall. At some point, he chained shut the exits.

Police were dealing with the first shooting while Cho entered Norris Hall. The university, suspecting the first shooting was of a personal nature, hadn't instructed students, faculty and staff to prepare for an active shooter. In fact, students in Norris reported being simply curious when Cho peeked his head inside their classroom doors before beginning his massacre.

Once the shooting was underway, Cho's victims were largely at a loss to stop his killing spree. Some died trying to hold classroom doors closed, including Professor Liviu Librescu, an Israeli Holocaust survivor, whose body was riddled with bullets as he held his classroom door shut, allowing his students to climb out windows. All but one of the students in Room 204 survived due to his heroism.

Nevertheless, 30 people died in Norris Hall. Cho shot himself before police located him.

"A lot of the [college and university] emergency plans really stepped up after 9/11," UCCS Police Lt. Marc Pino says. "Using common terminology, working on regional resources, things like that — that sort of were identified as issues after 9/11 for responding to emergencies — I would say around that time is when we really stepped things up."

But asked when UCCS began preparing for an active-shooter scenario, Pino says, "Virginia Tech would be when we really started doing emphasis on active shooter, and also our campus developed a student response team as a response.

"Numerous people at Virginia Tech had dealings with the shooter, and no one was really talking together to find out that some larger issues were going on. So, the [UCCS] student response team was [formed] — very shortly after Virginia Tech — [and it] comprises the dean of students office, the chief of police and the head of the counseling center. We sort of field reports from faculty, staff, students, anybody that has a concern about a student. We can sort of reach them before it gets to a critical level."

The *Independent* spoke to representatives at UCCS, Colorado College and Pikes Peak Community College about their emergency plans. While plans and strategies differ, each campus has a plan, along with one or more employees in charge of preparing for emergencies.

Of the three schools, Colorado College, which has about 2,000 students, is the only one without its own police force. John Lauer, co-chair of CC's emergency preparedness group and the college's associate vice president for student life, explains that the school does have a single Colorado Springs police officer assigned to the campus, as well as a campus safety department.

The safety officers — who carry no weapons — walk the campus and look for anything unusual. If a situation warrants it, they call police, with whom the college works closely. Campus safety officers can also take anonymous tips.

The campus does have an emergency plan, last updated in 2012, and a director of campus safety and emergency preparedness — Maggie Santos, a former Colorado Springs Police lieutenant. The plan will be updated soon.

"We're always focused on continuous improvement," Lauer says.

But, he adds, the college stresses that every person has to take responsibility for knowing how to respond, saying, "We're as prepared as every individual is prepared."

CC performs regular fire drills and has started doing active-shooter trainings with resident advisors, as well as sessions open to anyone, or upon request. Lauer says it's important not to drill too often because it can desensitize people in a real emergency.

The campus does contract with a company that sends emergency texts, emails and phone calls when needed to students, staff and faculty, as well as anyone else who wants to be notified.

While not every classroom has a locking door, placards by doors give instructions on what to do in an emergency — such as barricade the door for an active shooter or go to the nearest marked shelter in case of tornado.

CC has cameras throughout campus and a loudspeaker on Palmer Hall. Lauer says the campus is considering replacing that speaker, as well as placing speakers on campus security cars for use in an emergency. Staff in residence halls also have megaphones.

Jim Barrentine is chief of police at PPCC, where he says he was hired five years ago to develop an emergency preparedness plan.

That plan is now the template for the state's community colleges.

At first, Barrentine says most folks at PPCC didn't know how to perform basic safety tasks, like using a fire extinguisher or helping a person in a wheelchair down stairs. He's focused on giving trainings and providing instructional videos for different emergency skills. The school also does lockdown drills for an active-shooter situation, as well as special training, and four or five tabletop exercises meant to mimic a real emergency.

Interestingly, of the three schools, PPCC is the only one with locks on all classroom doors. The college encourages locking those doors during class hours.

With three campuses and 20,000 students, PPCC faces unique challenges. The 18-person police department is distributed among the campuses, where they patrol during business hours.

Barrentine has set up a system so that the campus community will be notified of an emergency immediately through texts, emails, landlines and a speaker system throughout the campus. Barrentine wants to add light boards for the deaf and buzzers for the blind, to ensure they are notified, and he's working on implementing a buddy system to ensure people with disabilities are cared for in an emergency.

He also has hotlines for anonymous tips.

Barrentine says the statewide system of community colleges is working to improve emergency preparedness. But he says PPCC is lucky because unlike many other schools, police are on the scene here.

"In an active shooter [situation]," he says, "security's going to run like everyone else."
Back in 2012, UCCS' emergency plans were tested. The Waldo Canyon Fire was raging nearby, and the campus suddenly became an unofficial evacuation site.

"We had the Air Force Academy cadets here in 2012, we also housed several hundred evacuees in our campus residence halls," UCCS spokesperson Tom Hutton says. "And then in 2013 [during the Black Forest Fire], we were an official Red Cross evacuation site and I think we had half a dozen people here, so we had more when we were an unofficial evacuation site."

Since UCCS is located on a wildland-urban interface, it not only has the normal risks of a university with around 11,300 students, but it also must be prepared for wildfire. Because of that, the university has done mitigation along its borders and, in summer months, UCCS police carry fire extinguishers with water in them, better for fighting wildfires. They also patrol the campus borders on off-road motorcycles.

Like the others, UCCS has an emergency notification system that hooks up to cell phones and landlines in classrooms. The university does not have a loudspeaker system or locks on every door, but emergency instructions near doors show how to barricade a door in emergencies and find marked tornado shelters. UCCS conducts general evacuation drills.

The UCCS police department, which has 21 officers and patrols the campus 24/7, has an intergovernmental agreement with Colorado Springs police to help each other in emergencies with set enforcement boundaries. Many will remember that UCCS Officer Garrett Swasey was killed last November when he responded to a mass shooting at Planned Parenthood. Just as he responded, CSPD would provide backup to UCCS officers in case of an active shooter on campus.

UCCS police do take tips (though anonymous tips must be made online) and say students are vigilant about filing reports of anything suspicious. Police Lt. Pino says he'll often get several calls within a few minutes about an unattended backpack, for instance. That's important, because it means students spot unusual circumstances and take them seriously.

"The reason why we have a very safe campus," he says, "is because we get those reports."

UCCS has emergency phones throughout campus, and police offer free escorts — no questions asked — to anyone requesting them. UCCS staff say they plan for any emergencies, and the university has an emergency manager and several offices that deal with emergency planning, including conducting regular tabletop exercises.

"I think we have a culture of working together as a university," Dean of Students Steve Linhart says, "whatever the situation."

County Road 40 bridges washed out by flash floods (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

Updated: Aug 23, 2016 10:00 PM MDT
FREMONT COUNTY - County Road 40 is closed after flash flooding in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar, according to Fremont County Sheriff's Office.

The dam on County Road 40 is holding, but Butter Creek and Little Cottonwood Creek are flowing heavy with debris. All homes are intact and all residents in the area are safe.

A reverse 911 notification was sent to residents in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar for a flash flood warning Tuesday evening. The warning was in effect until 9:45 p.m.

Bridges on County Road 40 were washed out by flood water. Fremont Search and Rescue and Fremont Incident Management Team responded as a precaution.

Why Colorado's Mosquitoes Are Not Likely To Spread Zika (Denver Post)

By John Ingold
Denver Post, August 23, 2016

It was an experiment that was part "Outbreak" and part "Trading Places," but researchers at Colorado State University hoped it might answer one of the more pressing public health questions facing the state: Could the Zika virus spread here?

The conventional wisdom was that it couldn't, at least not widely, because the disease's primary vector — a ninja of a mosquito called Aedes aegypti — had no established population in the state. But no one had proved that conventional wisdom true. What if it was wrong? What if the local mosquitoes — particularly those in the Culex genus that already carry the West Nile virus — were also able to transmit Zika?

The mosquito experts at CSU's Arthropod-borne and Infectious Diseases Laboratory decided to put the conventional wisdom to the test. In their lab, they infected Culex mosquitoes with Zika. And then, for a week as the virus incubated inside their study subjects, they held their breath.

Finally, the results:

“We could not get that virus to replicate in the mosquito,” CSU professor Brian Foy said of the experiment, the topic of a soon-to-be-published article.

Whew.

When it comes to being disease-carrying menaces, not all mosquitoes are created equal, and that explains why Zika is a public health crisis in Miami and a relative public health trifle in Milliken. There are 54 species of mosquitoes commonly found in Colorado, but none of them are known to be able to transmit Zika — even if they can, like the Culex mosquitoes, transmit other diseases.

“It’s still kind of a mystery,” Foy said. “There’s a very fine-tuning match of virus and mosquito.”

The reason is that a mosquito’s transmission of a disease is not as simple as taking infected blood in from one person and then backwashing it into another. Instead, the virus must be capable of reproducing inside the mosquito and then making its way into the mosquito’s saliva — the real source of contamination since mosquitoes digest the blood they consume as food.

“When a mosquito bites a person, it spits into the bite,” Foy said.

With the local-born bugs apparently incapable of carrying Zika, then, the only chance of a mosquito-spread outbreak in Colorado comes from a moonshot: the one-in-a-billion possibility that a Zika-capable mosquito that hitchhiked to the state from elsewhere bites into a Zika-infected person who picked up the virus out of state.

So far, only 21 people in Colorado have tested positive for Zika, and all of them contracted the virus somewhere else.

The only instance of a wayward Aedes aegypti being found in the state came in 2010, in Pueblo County. Another species of mosquito possibly capable of transmitting Zika, Aedes albopictus, has been found sporadically in Weld County, most recently in 2011 and most likely was brought to the state in waste tires disposed of here. But those species are just summer tourists; they can’t survive the winter.

“Remember we’re in Colorado; we’re not in the tropics,” said Michael “Doc” Weissmann, the chief entomologist at Colorado Mosquito Control, which does monitoring and eradication for local governments.

Weissmann said none of his company’s traps have snagged worrisome Aedes mosquitoes this year.

“It’s just the same old, same old,” he said.

Eric Aakko of the Weld County Health Department said the county’s surveillance efforts have found higher-than-normal levels of West Nile-carrying mosquitoes but no Zika concerns.

That leaves only one other prominent way that the virus can spread within Colorado, and it’s one Foy knows a little too well. While conducting research in the African nation of Senegal, Foy contracted Zika in 2008. He then came home and accidentally gave it to his wife, which led to a research article hypothesizing — correctly, it turns out — that Zika can spread through sex.

The experience, though, didn’t change his mind about the dangers of Zika in Colorado.

“The risk of all of a sudden having a massive outbreak in Denver is, I would say, infinitesimally small,” he said. “From mosquitoes, I can’t see it happening.”

MONTANA

Yellowstone fish-killing parasite is so prolific it's 'shocking' fish to death

(Missoulian)

By BRETT FRENCH Billings Gazette

PARADISE VALLEY — A previously unidentified strain of parasite has grown so prolific in the Yellowstone River that it is overwhelming whitefish, killing thousands and prompting the state last week to close more than 180 miles of the river to all recreation.

“The sheer parasite loading itself is almost shocking the fish, that that’s what’s killing them,” said Eileen Ryce, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks’ hatchery section chief, during a Tuesday press conference along the banks of the Yellowstone River south of Livingston.

Scientists like Ryce believe that the parasite bloom may be so large and unprecedented in part because the Yellowstone River is experiencing near-record low flows and high water temperatures.

“We could see varying responses (of the parasite) depending on which river it gets into,” said Travis Horton, Region 3 fisheries manager in Bozeman.

The nearby Madison River, where flows are dam controlled, may be more resilient to the parasite since the water’s temperature is cooler, coming from the bottom of Hebgen Lake, and the flows can be maintained at a steadier rate. Likewise, outbreaks of similar parasites in Idaho that killed whitefish in 2011 and 2012 may have been more limited because some of the streams are dam controlled, Horton said.

The FWP officials spoke to a crowd of about 50 people — anglers, local lawmakers, the media and business owners — at a fishing access site where the stench of dead whitefish rotting on the riverbank wafted through the air.

Media, business owners, anglers and others gather for a press conference on the banks of the Yellowstone River. CASEY PAGE, Gazette Staff

Acknowledging the effect of the river’s closure to anglers, floaters and on all of the many businesses that service such recreationists, Gov. Steve Bullock said “the impact goes far beyond the water’s edge.” Yet he said “science needs to guide this.”

“We need to make sure we are not only protecting this watershed and this water but indeed our entire state,” he said, noting that the outdoor recreation industry creates about 64,000 jobs and $6 billion in consumer spending annually in Montana.

When Rep. Alan Redfield, R-Livingston, asked why certain portions of the river couldn't be open to fishing to ease some of the impact on local businesses, Horton said FWP hopes to contain the parasite outbreak to the Yellowstone and make its duration short-lived.

"We want to try to minimize this," Horton said. "We don't want to make this situation worse by rushing ahead."

Horton added that when the Yellowstone River's peak water temperatures drop below 55 degrees and stay there, FWP would consider lifting the river closure.

"We're not looking at it being a permanent closure," said Jeff Hagener, FWP director.

He noted the rule to enforce the closure is a temporary emergency closure good for 120 days. After that time the department is forced to re-examine the issue to decide whether the closure should be extended.

The fish kill has been documented by FWP crews from the Yellowstone National Park boundary about 100 miles downstream to just west of the town of Big Timber, Horton said. Other public reports of dead whitefish and suckers downstream from Big Timber to Laurel have not been confirmed by FWP.

The microscopic parasite that infects the fish needs two hosts to complete its life cycle, Ryce explained. It starts in a Bryozoan, a moss animal similar to a freshwater sponge. The Bryozoan releases the parasite that fish absorb through their gills. Similar parasites have caused internal bleeding and kidney failure in whitefish in other outbreaks, such as the ones in Idaho.

But the Yellowstone outbreak is different, Ryce said. There are so many spores being found inside the fish that the scientists are calling it a naive reaction.

"What we mean by that is that the immune response that the fish are expressing would suggest that they have not been exposed to this parasite previously," she said. "That has concerned us since it would suggest it's a new infection. At least we haven't seen anything on this scale previously."

"The other thing that's concerning is from the histology results there were high numbers of parasites seen in multiple tissues. That suggests to us that the infective load that's currently out in the river is very high. Why that's a concern is that the sheer volume of parasites that's out there makes it very easy for the parasite to be spread to other waters."

That's the reason FWP took the unusual step to close down much of the upper river to recreation, Horton said, calling it a "very dramatic step that we took." It's also why the agency is stressing that the best way to fight the spread of the parasite, along with other aquatic invasive species, is to clean, drain and dry all boats and fishing equipment.

FWP crews will continue to search for dead and dying fish in the Yellowstone River and its tributaries like the Stillwater and Boulder rivers to try to determine the extent of the outbreak.

"I hope we can continue to work together, recognizing that the long-term objective is to protect this valley and the river," Gov. Bullock said.

Yet Ryce noted that FWP staff doesn't expect the parasite to disappear, even with colder water temperatures and higher river flows. However, if the fish are given time to adapt they may build up some immunity to the parasite and recover.

NORTH DAKOTA

Occupying the Prairie: Tensions Rise as Tribes Move to Block a Pipeline (NY Times)

By JACK HEALY

August 23, 2016

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. — Horseback riders, their faces streaked in yellow and black paint, led the procession out of their tepee-dotted camp. Two hundred people followed, making their daily walk a mile up a rural highway to a patch of prairie grass and excavated dirt that has become a new kind of battlefield, between a pipeline and American Indians who say it will threaten water supplies and sacred lands.

The Texas-based company building the Dakota Access pipeline, Energy Transfer Partners, calls the project a major step toward the United States' weaning itself off foreign oil. The company says the nearly 1,170-mile buried pipeline will infuse millions of dollars into local economies and is safer than trucks and train cars that can topple and spill and crash and burn.

But the people who stood at the gates of a construction site where crews had been building an access road toward the pipeline viewed the project as a wounding intrusion onto lands where generations of their ancestors hunted bison, gathered water and were born and buried, long before treaties and fences stamped a different order onto the Plains.

People have been gathering since April, but as hundreds more poured in over the past two weeks, confrontations began rising among protesters, sheriff's officers and construction workers with the pipeline company. Local officials are struggling to handle hundreds of demonstrators filling the roads to protest and camp out in once-empty grassland about an hour south of Bismarck, the state capital.

More than 20 people have been arrested on charges including disorderly conduct and trespassing onto the construction site. The pipeline company says it was forced to shut down construction this month after protesters threatened its workers and threw bottles and rocks at contractors' vehicles.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier of Morton County, who has led the law enforcement response, said at a news conference that he had received reports of weapons and gunshots around the demonstration, and that protesters were getting ready to throw pipe bombs at a line of officers standing between a rally and the construction site.

Leaders from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's path, say the protests are peaceful. Weapons, drugs and alcohol are prohibited from the protest camp. Children march in the daily demonstrations. The leaders believed the reports of pipe bombs were a misinterpretation of their calls for demonstrators to get out their wooden chanupa pipes — which have deep spiritual importance — and pass them through the crowd.

The conflict may reach a crucial moment on Wednesday in a federal court hearing. The tribe has sued to block the pipeline and plans to ask a judge in Washington to effectively halt construction.

The pipeline runs overwhelmingly along private land, but where it crosses bodies of water, federal rules come into play and federal approvals are required.

The tribe says the pipeline's route under the Missouri River near here could threaten its water supplies if the pipeline leaks or breaks, and it says the United States Army Corps of Engineers failed to do proper cultural and historical reviews before granting federal approvals for the pipeline.

"This is our homeland," said Phyllis Young, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux. "We are Dakota. Dakota means friend or ally. Dakota Access has taken our name."

In legal filings, the corps rejects those claims. It says it consulted extensively with tribes, including the Standing Rock Sioux, and it says that tribe has failed to describe specific cultural sites that would be damaged by the pipeline. Energy Transfer Partners says it has the necessary state and federal permits and hopes to finish construction by the end of the year. The pipeline's route starts in the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota and ends in Illinois.

With the fate of the land here and this $3.7 billion project in the air, people here have decided to take action. They are occupying the prairie.

Echoing protests against the now-scuttled Keystone XL pipeline, environmental activists and other tribes from the Dakotas, the rest of the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest have been arriving to camp in the open fields and protest near the parcel where the pipeline company has secured an agreement with the landowner to build.

The protesters sleep in tents and tepees, cook food in open-air kitchens and share stories and strategies around evening campfires. There is even a day care. At morning meetings, speakers warn parents to keep their children away from the Missouri River at sunset, and remind one another they are camped out in prayer.

"It's a major movement in Indian country," said CJ Clifford, a member of the Oglala Lakota, who drove up from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He saw the protests as part of a historical continuum reaching to Little Bighorn. This battle, he said, was being waged peacefully.

For many, the effort was about reclaiming a stake in ancestral lands that had been whittled down since the 1800s, treaty by broken treaty.

"Lands were constantly getting reduced, shaken up," said Dave Archambault II, the tribal chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux. "I could give you a list of every wrongdoing this government did to our people. All of that is frustration pent up, and it's being recognized."

He added, “It’s a tipping point for our nations.”

This month, a line of sheriff’s officers retreated in the face of riders on horseback circling and yipping through the grass. (Tribal members said that the display was a Lakota gesture of introduction, and that they have no quarrel with law enforcement.)

There have been no moves so far to disband the camp or keep people from demonstrating. But Sheriff Kirchmeier told reporters that the demonstration had become an “unlawful protest,” and Gov. Jack Dalrymple, citing “public safety risks,” declared a state of emergency on Friday.

Local law enforcement officers set up a barricade on the main road leading to the pipeline site, and officials here in Morton County called a special meeting on Monday to talk about the traffic and how to handle a hundreds-strong protest that could linger for weeks or months.

At the sprawling campsite down the road from the protest site, there had been portable toilets, 500-gallon tanks of drinking water and an air-conditioned trailer with medical supplies provided by the state. But late Monday night, people at the camp said the medical trailer and water tanks had been removed, leaving them to scramble for a new water source for hundreds of people.

After a prayer ceremony at the construction site one recent afternoon, a few young men on horseback opened the gate and rode onto the land. A few days earlier they might have been arrested and accused of trespassing, but that day there were no officers to stop them.

The pipeline company said that it temporarily stopped work here this month while “law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests,” but that construction was continuing elsewhere.

Energy Transfer Partners has sued Mr. Archambault and six other people over the protests. In a federal lawsuit filed last week, the company accused them and other protesters of blocking access to the construction site, threatening workers and trespassing onto private land.

Jon Eagle Sr., the historic preservation officer for the Standing Rock Sioux, watched from the side of the road as the young men rode into the grassy field, toward a construction floodlight and heaps of excavated dirt. He did not want the pipeline to breach this land. But he did not seem to approve of this either.

“They need to stay out,” he said. “They don’t know where the burials are. They don’t know where the sacred sites are. I’m trying my best to keep the peace.”

Emergency services recalled from Dakota Access Pipeline protest site (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Max Grossfeld |

Posted: Tue 4:19 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 6:24 PM, Aug 23, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. - Demonstrators protesting construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline had been using state resources at their camp until Monday, when the Department of Emergency Services decided to recall them.

Those resources included a mobile command trailer, a medical aid trailer and a water trailer.

A DES official says Tribal Emergency Management requested the resources, which were supposed to be used on tribal land. He says the services brought the trailers back when he heard the trailers were located on land owned by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Reports of unlawful behavior, he says, also influenced his decision.

"This isn't a flood, a fire, an icestorm. This is an event that originally needed some support for the responders dealing with it and at this stage in the game, the event's not an emergency," says Greg Wilz, Homeland Security Division director.

Wilz says all the equipment is back in Bismarck and ready to use in case of emergency.

People concerned with Highway 1806 barricade ask Morton County Commissioners for answers (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Megan Hahn |

Posted: Tue 9:43 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Wed 8:07 AM, Aug 24, 2016

MANDAN, N.D. - The Morton County Board of Commissioners heard public testimony regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline for nearly in an hour at Tuesday's meeting.

All those who chose to speak during the hearing were in opposition of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

County Commissioners say the purpose of the meeting was to give people the chance to weigh-in on the matter in a peaceful manner.

About a dozen people addressed Morton County Commissioners in front of a packed room Tuesday. The recurring frustration for many: removal of barriers along Highway 1806, which restrict access to areas south of Mandan including Cannon Ball and Fort Yates.

"I didn't appreciate it when they put up that block. I have granddaughters and daughters that work at Fort Yates and live in Bismarck. It's humiliating and intimidating when the cops come up to your car and look in your car like we are doing something wrong," said a speaker who addressed the Commission.

"I am embarrassed for the law enforcement officers that I meet on the road, blocking people from seeing this protest," said a woman who addressed the Morton County Commission.

Highway 1806 was blocked up last Tuesday past the veteran's cemetery because of public safety concerns, according to the Morton County Sheriff's department. Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier didn't speak at Tuesday's meeting.

While many spoke out against the traffic interception point, the Board of Commissioners deferred all questions regarding the barricade to law enforcement. The County Commission says they do not have the authority to remove the barricade.

"We thought it was very important to allow these individuals who are protesting to have a voice in a public forum. I think that's very important. As it relates to the traffic control point itself, that is a question that I'll have to refer back to county sheriff, our incident commander Kyle Kirchmeier," said Chairman Cody Schulz, Morton County Board of Commissioners.

Many of those present say they want answers from government officials.

"I don't want any part of it. I don't think that's right. And it's not fair. And that blockade, that should not be there. That's all I have to say," said another speaker.

The Board of Commissioners says they're working toward creating an open and peaceful dialogue with protesters.

Those who spoke against the blockade say not only does it affect commuters driving to work, but it's reduced business for local shops and reduced access to recreation areas.

Both the North Dakota Highway Patrol and North Dakota Department of Transportation have the authority under North Dakota Century Code to close a highway. This decision to temporarily close Highway 1806 was made by DOT and HP August 17.

Pipeline foes take fight to Bismarck, Washington D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 23, 2016 at 6:38 p.m.

BISMARCK – Waving the flags of their tribes and singing the songs of their ancestors, more than 200 protesters marched across a Missouri River bridge in Bismarck Tuesday ahead of a federal court hearing that will determine the fate of the Dakota Access oil pipeline's route in North Dakota.

“This water belongs to all of us,” Vic Camp, a 41-year-old from South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation, said as he rallied the crowd before the march. “We all know that tomorrow in Washington they're going to make a decision that affects every single one of us.”

The march across the 2,370-foot-long Veterans Memorial Bridge aimed to show solidarity with the 2,000-some protesters encamped about 50 miles south on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, near the pipeline construction site along State Highway 1806 north of Cannon Ball.

Indeed, many marchers were from the campsite, including 25-year-old Kin-sin-ta Joseph and her 16-year-old sister Kis-dya:n-te' Joseph, who got help from a portable PA system so their river song would carry over the wind and traffic noise. The members of northern California's Hoopa

Valley Tribe said their chairman urged members to assist Standing Rock, and about 25 made the trip.

While they've taken part in protests before, joining a blockade against logging companies just a few months ago, the older sister said it's never been this big, with so many tribes involved.

"This is really spectacular," she said. "We've been waiting for this kind of gathering."

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline. It would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the reservation and be the largest oil pipeline from the Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day to Patoka, Ill.

Standing Rock members oppose the river crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped construction at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct. But the protest hasn't impacted pipeline construction elsewhere along the four-state route, including in North Dakota, company spokeswoman Lisa Dillinger said via email.

"We have temporarily deferred grading activities across a short section of the right-of-way (less than 1 mile) while law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests in light of the fact that we have the necessary permits and approvals to work at this site," she said.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., will consider Wednesday the tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. A lawyer for the tribe said the judge has indicated he will rule from the bench or shortly after the hearing.

Film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside the courthouse in Washington, and actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the rally, according to a statement.

Protesters on Tuesday blocked traffic only briefly while crossing the street to get to the bridge's pedestrian walkway, and law enforcement reported no problems with the march. Dozens of passing drivers honked their horns in solidarity, though one yelled an expletive aimed at Native Americans.

Camp said protesters will refrain from violence if the judge's ruling doesn't go their way.

"The only way violence will happen is if the cops provoke it and they attack us," he told Forum News Service, adding, "We have our women and we have our children. We have grandparents here."

When asked what will happen if the judge denies the injunction and Dakota Access tries to resume construction, Camp said, "Then we'll start blockading."

"We'll do what we can with our bodies to keep the machines from coming in," he said.

Four labor unions sent Gov. Jack Dalrymple a letter strongly encouraging him to use the power of his office to keep workers safe and ensure protesters are “following the letter of the law.”

The general presidents of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and United Association (UA), said the actions of protesters endanger not only themselves but construction workers and equipment, as well as local law enforcement who’ve bolstered their local presence.

They said the pipeline has created about 4,000 construction jobs in North Dakota along 346 miles of pipeline.

“While they may have a right to protest, we also have a right to do our jobs in a safe environment,” they said.

Protesters, insisting their actions are peaceful, appealed to the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and churches to send observers to the site. They also continued to rail against what they contend is an unnecessarily heavy law enforcement presence, including a checkpoint about six miles south of Mandan that restricts southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to emergency response vehicles and local traffic such as farmers, ranchers and homeowners.

Standing Rock Protestors Find New Resources After State Withdraws Support (KXMB TV, Bismarck)

Published 08/23 2016 04:04PM

Updated 08/23 2016 07:03PM

Protestors of the Dakota Access Pipeline are finding ways to sustain their effort after state officials pulled relief resources from their camp near Cannonball.

Ben Smith has the story.

For nearly a week.

Several state-owned trailers provided water, shelter, and a place to help those sick or hurt.

Monday morning, news came that these resources would soon be gone.

"It was shocking, it was shocking. I didn't expect that,"

"It's a little different now because everything is going to be outdoors where we had the convenience of having everything indoors in case of the rain, weather wind. Resources got taken away from us quick but we got them back," says Joenelle Leingang

As fast as they disappeared, new support came in.

Standing Rock Paramedics erected a tent in which to treat people.

The tribes road department also pitched in, delivering a giant tank of water.

"They keep this full to fill our buffalo tanks with water. We have two, three more possibly coming in from the Cheyenne River who had donated theirs so water supply is going to be back on track again," says Leingang

(Ben Smith, KX News) Not all state-resources have gone. There is one ambulance that is still here, to provide a backup for standing rock paramedics,

"They left the ambulance as an extra resource for us. Because like I said, we still provide services to all the reservation so of course our number of ambulances is limited," says DeAnn Werre, Standing Rock Paramedic

She says it's not your typical day as a Standing Rock paramedic.

"We've been able to bring in extra staff to be able to provide services,"

"We've pulled together and got our resources together and are able to provide the same services for people,"

It seems to be the theme of the effort, pulling together under one cause.

It's very overwhelming, it's great, phone calls, where can I bring it to...

I just would like the public to see for themselves. There is nothing negative going on here at all,

She says for now, this area near the Cannonball river has become a second home.

Protesters attend Morton County Commission meeting (Bismarck Tribune)

CAROLINE GRUESKIN and LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

15 hrs ago

The Dakota Access Pipeline protests returned to the Bismarck-Mandan area Tuesday, as protesters walked across the Memorial Bridge and testified before the Morton County Commission.

Several speakers asked the commissioners to remove a roadblock that prevents drivers from traveling south on Highway 1806 from Mandan to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, though commission chairman Cody Schulz said after the meeting the commission does not have authority to remove the block.

Speakers told the commissioners and the approximately 30 people who attended the meeting that the block impedes travel, punishes the tribe's economy and can be humiliating to cross.

The highway has been blocked since Aug. 17, when Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the protest had become unlawful and the road unsafe, points the protesters have contested throughout the week.

Marilyn Kary, who works in Fort Yates, said the roadblock makes it difficult for teachers on the reservation who commute.

Chase Iron Eyes, the Democratic candidate for North Dakota's lone U.S. House seat, said the roadblock was intended to punish the tribe and has disadvantaged businesses in the region.

He said Native Americans and white North Dakotans tend to live in separate worlds.

"Interactions should be encouraged," he said, suggesting the block did the opposite by preventing commerce.

Cody Hall of Eagle Butte, S.D., spokesman for the Red Warrior Camp, said the blockade simply sets the wrong tone.

"It felt like what black people felt in the South," he told commissioners, adding that he was questioned at the blockade, while a white friend was not.

Clyde Bellecourt, co-founder of the American Indian Movement, asked members of the Morton County Commission to consider what future generations would think if the water were contaminated.

"I'm 80 years old. I've lived my life. I don't want my grandchildren to ever question," he said. "Grandpa, why didn't you say nothing?"

He encouraged the commissioners to visit the protest camps.

"You have nothing to be afraid of," he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, about 200 protesters took their cause to the Memorial Bridge, staging a peaceful march from Bismarck to Mandan.

Banners, bright regalia and flags of many Native American nations were presented as smart phones and a drone documented the latest chapter in the protest.

At the staging area, multiple speakers encouraged songs and prayers from participants. Drums pounded in support of discontinuing pipeline construction.

Many protesters held up bottled water mixed with oil to represent the contamination they believe the pipeline would cause to their drinking water, reminding everyone present the water had to be safe for future generations.

Shouts of "save our water" could be heard by protesters as they ascended the bridge.

There was little presence of law enforcement for most of the demonstration except for when North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and local police briefly blocked traffic as marchers crossed to Front Avenue to reach the pedestrian portion of the bridge. The protesters kept to the walkway and held up their signs as motorists honked their horns.

Those gathered Tuesday insisted their message has been a peaceful one.

"I am here because of the water, because of the grandchildren," said Nora Old Man, who held up a water bottle and sang with her grandsons.

Sunny Red Bear, of Eagle Butte, S.D., said she was participating in the march for her 7-year-old son who joined her Tuesday.

"This is about our future. This is about thinking generationally. This is about everyone it affects, community after community. They are choosing oil, wealth and money over our future. I want to protect that the best I can and to show my son to stand up for what's right."

SOUTH DAKOTA

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city

(Rapid City Journal)

Mike Anderson Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 24, 2016

Rapid City will soon hire 15 new firefighters, thanks in large part to a $1 million federal grant awarded to the city fire department last week.

The new hires will fill a staffing shortage that Fire Chief Mike Maltaverne has urged the city council to address since 2014.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant, or SAFER, administered through the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will pay the salaries and benefits of nine new firefighters for the next two years. The other six out of 15 new positions will be paid for out of the city's budget.

"In 2014, we started to identify that, with the way our demands for service were increasing, our resources were starting to spread thin," Maltaverne said on Tuesday. "Our firefighters were going on more and more calls and the staff increases weren't keeping up with the demand for our services."

In a memo to Mayor Steve Allender earlier this year, Maltaverne said that in 1995, the city's fire department had 81 operational firefighters with an annual call volume of 3,600, or 44 calls per firefighter. Rapid City has grown significantly in population and geographical area since the 90s, and with that growth has come more fires.

The department's annual call volumes have grown an average of 7.6 percent since then, Maltaverne said, putting last year's total call volume for the department at 17,012 for its 117 firefighters, or about 145 calls per firefighter.

Maltaverne knew it would require some extra funding to get 15 new firefighters on board to fill the service gap and ease the pressure on existing personnel. So he asked the Rapid City Council to pay for six employees if he could find a grant to pay for nine more.

"We thought that would be more realistic, that the city would be able to fund that," Maltaverne said.

The City Council has already agreed to fund three positions, and the mayor has included another three in next year's proposed budget which will be the subject of a public discussion at 6:30 p.m. today in the city council chamber.

"We clearly articulated the need for additional staffing and our elected officials along with FEMA responded, and for that we are grateful," Maltaverne said.

Though the SAFER grant will only pay the other nine new firefighters through two years of service, Maltaverne is confident that will be plenty of time for the council to figure out how to keep funding those positions indefinitely.

"What would be the point of hiring firefighters for two years and then having the city lay them off?" Maltaverne said. "That doesn't solve the long-term problem."

The grant calls for the new hires to be made within 180 days, a deadline Maltaverne has no worries about meeting. This spring, the Rapid City Fire Department went through a hiring process and compiled a selection of suitable candidates.

"We reviewed that and we feel there are a sufficient number of qualified candidates to fill those positions," he said. "We've got a really good deep list of potential employees."

Maltaverne hopes to have all 15 slots filled by Jan. 1, 2017, which is when the SAFER grant funds will be awarded to the city.

Applying for the grant was a comprehensive and competitive process, Maltaverne said, adding that he sees FEMA's decision to award the funds as a form of validation.

"Getting this grant clearly confirms that the need was there," he said.

New fire burning near Angostura Reservoir (KBHB radio)

Gary Matthews

KBHB Radio
August 23, 2016

HOT SPRINGS, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire Dispatch says federal, state and volunteer fire crews are battling a wildfire in the southern black hills.

The Maitland CA fire is located approximately 6.5 miles southwest of Angostura Reservoir.

Dispatch says the fire had reached 34.5 acres as of Tuesday afternoon.

They list the fire as human caused.

There is no word on any structures being threatened.

UTAH

American Fork fish could contain toxic mine waste (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 23 2016 05:30PM • Updated 57 minutes ago

Some of the sediments that have turned American Fork River's normally clear waters into a black soup could be loaded with arsenic, lead and other toxic metals associated with historical mining operations at the scenic canyon's headwaters.

Officials from several local, federal and state agencies gathered at Tibble Fork Dam on Tuesday to figure out what to do about the sediment releases, which commenced sometime after the 10-acre lake began draining Saturday as part of $7.3 million project to upgrade the aging earthen structure.

The incident shocked conservationists who fear an ecological catastrophe is unfolding in one of Utah's most popular natural areas, located in the Wasatch Mountains just outside Provo.

"I think it's a $20 million cleanup and it will take years," said Mark Allen, founder of the group Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District sponsored the project with federal matching dollars in an effort to make the dam seismically safe and extend its life for another 50 years. The lake bed is coated with 5 to 10 feet of fine-grained black sediments that have accumulated behind the dam and impaired its ability to store water, though the lake has remained a popular, well-stocked trout fishery.

A sediment release "was not unexpected, given this was a rehabilitation project," said the district's lawyer, John Jacobs. "There may have been a bit more than was anticipated. This is a 60-year-old dam, and it has a lot of sediments behind it."

During the review process, federal officials had considered dredging the lake bed as a way to restore the dam's usefulness, but testing indicated that levels of arsenic and lead exceeded safety standards and made these sediments too dangerous to move, according to the environmental assessment conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The metals contaminating Tibble Fork originated in Live Yankee, Globe and other abandoned gold and silver mines that perforate the head of American Fork Canyon's northern branch, according to Allen. He says the state is doing too little to hold landowners accountable for these environmental "time bombs." Many of these old mines are located on land now owned by Snowbird Ski Resort in and around its Mineral Basin.

The cost of extracting and disposing of the material accumulated in the Tibble Fork lake bed would be $8.4 million, so the option was abandoned in favor of raising the dam by 9 feet. The environmental assessment insisted the contractor use "best management practices" to ensure the toxic sediments were not pushed downstream.

The measures are detailed in a construction permit issued this year by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which would not immediately provide a copy of the permit. It did send personnel to the dam Tuesday to determine whether the project was in compliance with the permit.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also sent emergency-response personnel to the site.

"It was so damning that they didn't want to touch the sediment," Allen said. "Your project is only as good as your most stupid backhoe operator. It said it was too toxic to remove it, but now it's in the river. How are you going to clean up 10 miles of trout streams?"

The water district hired Provo-based RB&G Engineering to design the project and Whitaker Construction, of Brigham City, to build it. RB&G's project leader, Brad Price, did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

Allen and members of Trout Unlimited spent Monday in the canyon, photographing the sludge pouring down the river channel, which smelled of gunpowder and rotting fish.

"In the main canyon, the water looks like Mississippi mud," said Grant Bench, an officer with a Utah County Trout Unlimited chapter. "I don't know how a cold-water fish is supposed to survive in that."

But federal and state officials were not ready to declare a disaster Tuesday.

"We are taking samples above [the dam] and below to establish baseline and impact below in the water column," said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

Division of Wildlife Resources aquatics biologist Mike Slater zapped the creek in various places with electroshock equipment Tuesday in search of breathing fish.

WYOMING

Wildfires close Yellowstone's south entrance, burn near west entrance

(Billings Gazette)

By JORDON NIEDERMEIER jniedermeier@billingsgazette.com

All roads were open in Yellowstone National Park Tuesday despite several fires growing in the area including a blaze blocking access to the Park’s south entrance.

The West Entrance remained open. But, the Maple fire has burned more than 27,000 acres about five miles northeast of West Yellowstone and reached within a tenth-mile of the roadway to the west entrance. The fire grew more than 4,600 acres on Monday and is mostly growing on the north side of the burn area. It is not expected to cross the road to the west entrance. If fire activity or smoke increases, pilot cars will be used to guide cars through the area, said a National Park Service news release.

The release said fire activity closed a stretch of U.S. Highway 89 in Grand Teton National Park between Leeks Marina and north to Flaggs Ranch. The closure affects travelers planning to use Yellowstone National Park’s south entrance. The road closure is expected to stay in effect until Wednesday. Lizard Creek Campground has also been evacuated.

About 100 people are monitoring the Maple fire. Resources including firefighting aircraft and engines are in the area. However, the fire is not being actively suppressed as it was determined to be caused by a lightning strike and wildfires are an integral part of the Yellowstone ecosystem, said Barbara Dougan, NPS fire information officer.

Dougan said firefighters will work to keep the blaze north of the roadway and east of the Madison River, away from the town of West Yellowstone.

“At this time the fire is doing very well on that side and doing the job of reducing downed debris that’s on the ground,” she said.

Dougan said officials are still working to determine the cause of the nearby 190 acre Boundary fire but it is believed to have been caused by human activity. Firefighters worked to suppress that wildfire and it was about 85 percent contained as of Tuesday morning.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Tropical System Eyes Florida, Southeast US, May Develop Into Hurricane (USA Today)

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, August 23, 2016

What’s now just a disorganized mass of thunderstorms 1,600 miles from Miami could develop into the first hurricane to hit Florida in nearly 11 years late this weekend, forecasters warn.

There’s a 60% chance the storm system, known for now only as “99L,” could develop into a tropical depression in the Atlantic Ocean later this week. If it swirls into a tropical storm, it will be named Hermine (Her-MEEN).

The system then could rapidly intensify into a large, potentially dangerous major hurricane that would target the Southeast U.S. coast Sunday or Monday, Weather Underground meteorologist Jeff Masters said.

However, as meteorologist John Morales of NBC-6 in Miami notes, “tropical weather forecasting is a very inexact science.”

Overall, 6- or 7-day forecasts of tropical cyclone location and intensity are “generally not very good,” according to Penn State University meteorologist Jon Nese.

But whether or not the system becomes a tropical storm or hurricane, gusty winds, heavy rains, and possible flash floods and mudslides could occur over the islands of the northeastern Caribbean Sea and the Bahamas, the National Hurricane Center said.

By Sunday, the system could bring deteriorating weather and sea conditions to the east coast of Florida, AccuWeather said.

Most of the computer models meteorologists use to forecast tropical weather show the system hitting the Southeast U.S. between Florida and South Carolina sometime Sunday or later, Masters said.

One computer model, the European, shows the storm crossing Florida and emerging as a major hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico by next week, according to WeatherBell meteorologist Ryan Maue. But the American model, the GFS, does not show that movement.

The most recent hurricane to strike Florida was Wilma in October 2005, AccuWeather said.

A separate system, Tropical Storm Gaston, is projected continue spinning in the central Atlantic. It could become a hurricane later this week, weather officials say. That storm however, is expected to remain over the open Atlantic, though it could stir up strong surf along the eastern shores of Florida, said Scott Spratt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla.

Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

Inside Radio, August 24, 2016

Each natural disaster presents its own challenges, and the floods that have inundated portions of Southern Louisiana are presenting wireless companies and federal regulators with a now-familiar picture. FM radio stepped in to fill a void left by cellphones rendered useless during an emergency.

"I just cannot thank you guys enough for getting the message out," Denham Springs, LA mayor Gerard Landry said in an appearance on Guaranty Broadcasting's "Talk 107.3" WBRP, Baton Rouge. "I haven't seen a newspaper or watched TV for eight or nine days but everybody has a radio—thank goodness for that," he added.

His comments illustrate the emergency role radio plays during natural disasters, one that broadcasters have repeatedly used as an incentive to wireless companies reluctant to activate FM chips already installed in most cellphones. It's been a tough sell.

"We had stations on the air 24/7 giving out information—this has been horrific and I guess people who are not living here don't understand," Louisiana Association of Broadcasters president Polly Prince Johnson said. "Some of these places didn't have electricity and if the FM chip was on their phones they could have been listening to our local broadcasters who were giving lifesaving information."

Helping to strengthen radio's case was the fact that AT&T suffered a massive outage across the region, leaving a large number of residents and the Louisiana State Police with phones that didn't work. Guaranty Media's Baton Rouge market manager Gordy Rush says when flooding closed a 55-mile stretch of Interstate 12 it left thousands of people stranded on the highway for more than 28 hours with radio as a lifeline after his stations jerry-rigged a connection to the state police to relay critical information to drivers stuck miles from any exit ramp. "This all played out on the radio," Rush said.

Johnson says it wasn't just stuck motorists who were impacted by the cellular outage. It was also families trying to reconnect. "People couldn't make phone calls for three or four days and then it was sporadic at best—so loved ones were calling the radio stations trying to get the information out," he explained.

While the wireless industry points out that the new Emergency Alert System sends alerts to cellphones on a localized basis, last week in Louisiana it seems the messages were having the opposite effect as intended. With frequent alerts around the clock, many people whose phones did work became annoyed and switched them off to preserve battery life. "It was a nuisance," Rush said.

More than a dozen people lost their lives during the Louisiana flooding and while industry lobbyists are likely to tread carefully so as not to appear to be capitalizing on Louisiana's suffering, those high stakes are what many broadcasters say proves the need for radio on smartphones. "If the FM chip was turned on, people are able to tell them that the water is rising and they should get their stuff and get out," Johnson said. "It's in times of disaster when it is so important and it can save lives."

Added Rush, "This is a matter of life or death."

After briefly flirting with the idea of lobbying for a federally imposed chip mandate in 2010, the National Association of Broadcasters quickly backed away from the idea. For the past six years, the NAB has instead pushed the telecom industry to activate FM chips on its own. In the ensuing period, Sprint embraced the NextRadio app—which activates the FM chip—three years ago, and by the end of this year, AT&T and T-Mobile will follow Sprint's lead. The exception is any customer that uses an iPhone since Apple doesn't include FM radio technology inside its handsets.

“NAB continues to support voluntary activation of FM chips by the carriers,” spokesman Dennis Wharton said. “This is a no-brainer from a public safety perspective, as FEMA’s [administrator] Craig Fugate has noted. We hope all the carriers—along with Apple—will look at the Baton Rouge tragedy as an opportunity to do the right thing and voluntarily light up the chips.”

Back in Louisiana, more than 100,000 households remain without power, but some things are beginning to return to normal. Rush is back at his desk after he jumped from market manager to air personality, spending 32 hours on the air from Friday until Tuesday as some staffers were coping with flooded homes.

Guaranty Media began simulcasting “Talk 107” WBRP on its 100,000-watt classic rock sister “Eagle 98.1” WDGL throughout the storm while country “100.7 The Tiger” WTGE relayed WAFB-TV with station cut-ins. Rush says for a time it looked as though WBRP may have been under threat as its transmitter building was six inches from taking on water after drainage canals backed up and overflowed into its industrial part tower site. Fortunately, the water eventually receded.

Rush, who made it through Hurricane Katrina a decade ago, says the two disasters have left him with an unmistakable conclusion. “Twice now, cellular phones have not been dependable; they’ve failed,” he said, adding, “Radio is a lifeline through this stuff.”

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 24, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A rechanneling project through the Garden of the Gods is expected to remove 100 properties from the floodplain… The Colorado Springs Independent interviewed the three colleges in the area about their plans for dealing with disasters, including an active shooter…. Bridges on a county road near the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar were taken out by flooding… The *Denver Post* explains why Colorado mosquitos are not likely to carry the Zika virus.
- **Montana:** An extraordinary outbreak of a parasite killing whitefish caused the state to shut down 180 miles of the Yellowstone River to all recreational uses.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest, including one in the *NY Times*: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz explains the decision to withdraw state-owned resources was because the situation is not an emergency, the protestors are not on state-owned land, plus reports of criminal activity. Water has been supplied by the tribe's road department. Protestors marched over a bridge peacefully and staying on walkways. About 30 people attended a meeting of the Mandan county commissioners; all those who spoke opposed the pipeline, and many spoke against the traffic barrier set up by law enforcement, saying it hurts local businesses and farmers, is humiliating, and prevents people from seeing the protest. Commissioners said the decision was by law enforcement and is not theirs to overturn. The tribe says a leak at the pipeline could contaminate its water supply and sacred sites. The company says construction has only stopped at this one mile of the 1,172 mile pipeline, which would be the largest source for moving Bakken crude oil. Four unions wrote to Governor Dalrymple asking that he make it safe for construction workers to do their jobs. A federal judge is expected to rule today on a request for an injunction to halt the project. Tribal leaders say they will remain peaceful, but will blockade if the ruling goes against them. So far, there have been 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct.
- **South Dakota:** A $1 million FEMA SAFER g rant will pay for nine new firefighters in Rapid City for two years… A new wildfire broke out near Angostura Reservoir.
- **Utah:** An attempt to upgrade the Tibble Fork Dam has resulted in lake sediments being released over the weekend that have contaminated the American Fork River, apparently with toxic mine waste. Environmentalists fear an ecological disaster. The presence of toxic sediments had led to an earlier decision to upgrade the dam rather than dredge the lake – but draining the lake to work on the dam appears to have done the damage.
- **Wyoming:** Several fires were burning in the area of Yellowstone National Park, though all roads within the park remained open. One fire south of the park blocked access to that entrance. The fires were caused naturally and were not being actively suppressed.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: *USA Today* reports on possible hurricanes developing in the Atlantic. … *Inside Radio* says the Louisiana floods show the need to activate FM radio chips in cellphones, which do not work when cell towers are down.

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Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

STORIES

COLORADO

Flood project through Garden of the Gods will reroute Colorado Springs floodplain (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Matt Steiner

Two years after city officials teamed with residents of a West Side Colorado Springs neighborhood to plan flood mitigation and reconstruction of Camp Creek, a project to remove more than 100 properties from the floodplain is about to begin.

On Monday, crews could begin the first phase of the more than $30 million project rebuilding about 5,100 feet of channel through Garden of the Gods Park and the Rock Ledge Ranch.

The work could be potentially lifesaving for residents of the Pleasant Valley neighborhood when heavy rains pound the Waldo Canyon fire burn area in the mountains to the west.

"As a community, we can't let our guard down," said Colorado Springs Emergency Manager Bret Waters. "Even though we're seeing some growth, it doesn't mean the risk will go away."

The Camp Creek mitigation project discussed in the spring of 2014 attracted more than 100 residents who helped choose project priorities. The result was a total rebuild of the deteriorating concrete channel through Pleasant Valley, meaning the creek along 31st Street will be refurbished with grass, shrubs, rocks and a relocated bike path.

But first, the work upstream must be done.

"Reducing the flows (through Garden of the Gods) will allow us to build the rest of the project," said project engineer Mike Chaves.

Construction crews will first install a series of rock steps in the creek, reshape banks and plant vegetation near the channel through the ranch and the park. The cross vanes, Chaves said, are intended to slow water and debris. Erosion has been accelerating each year because of floodwaters pouring off the Waldo Canyon burn scar.

The channel stabilization will cost $1.1 million, said city spokeswoman Kim Melchor. Almost $800,000 of that comes from a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant with the rest of the money coming from the city.

That work will likely be followed by construction of a large sediment detention pond at the north end of the park in early 2017, Chaves said.

That phase will cost almost $8 million, Melchor said. It will include a large berm stretching from 30th Street to the hills in the park that can dam floodwaters.

When the entire project is complete, more than 200 Pleasant Valley residents will no longer be in the floodplain.

"The whole intent is to protect the park, protect Rock Ledge Ranch and the downstream communities," Melchor said.

Colleges and universities put emphasis on planning for disasters, including active shooters: Planning for the worst (Colorado Springs Independent)

By J. Adrian Stanley @JAdrianStanley1

On April 16, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho, a senior at Virginia Tech, killed 32 people and wounded another 17 in two separate shootings.

Until June of this year, when Omar Mateen killed 49 people and wounded 53 others in Orlando's Pulse nightclub, the Virginia Tech shooting was the deadliest by a single perpetrator in U.S. history.

Virginia Tech held sway over the country, leading to widespread grief and fear, changing gun laws, prompting deeper discussions on mental illness and leading many colleges and universities to take a second look at their emergency plans.

Back in 2007, institutions of higher education tended to have procedures for protecting their campus communities from natural disasters like fires, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes, and often some man-made accidents as well, like chemical spills. But most had dedicated less — or no — energy to drafting plans to deal with an active shooter rampaging through the campus.

That changed after Virginia Tech. Just as "duck and cover" was a part of common school instruction during the Cold War, in today's age of mass shootings, students now learn to "run, hide, fight."

What Cho did was an eyeopener for school leaders. The gunman, who had known mental health issues, fatally shot two students in a residence hall, walked away, changed his clothes, and ran errands, then calmly entered an academic hall. At some point, he chained shut the exits.

Police were dealing with the first shooting while Cho entered Norris Hall. The university, suspecting the first shooting was of a personal nature, hadn't instructed students, faculty and staff to prepare for an active shooter. In fact, students in Norris reported being simply curious when Cho peeked his head inside their classroom doors before beginning his massacre.

Once the shooting was underway, Cho's victims were largely at a loss to stop his killing spree. Some died trying to hold classroom doors closed, including Professor Liviu Librescu, an Israeli Holocaust survivor, whose body was riddled with bullets as he held his classroom door shut, allowing his students to climb out windows. All but one of the students in Room 204 survived due to his heroism.

Nevertheless, 30 people died in Norris Hall. Cho shot himself before police located him.

"A lot of the [college and university] emergency plans really stepped up after 9/11," UCCS Police Lt. Marc Pino says. "Using common terminology, working on regional resources, things like that — that sort of were identified as issues after 9/11 for responding to emergencies — I would say around that time is when we really stepped things up."

But asked when UCCS began preparing for an active-shooter scenario, Pino says, "Virginia Tech would be when we really started doing emphasis on active shooter, and also our campus developed a student response team as a response.

"Numerous people at Virginia Tech had dealings with the shooter, and no one was really talking together to find out that some larger issues were going on. So, the [UCCS] student response team was [formed] — very shortly after Virginia Tech — [and it] comprises the dean of students office, the chief of police and the head of the counseling center. We sort of field reports from faculty, staff, students, anybody that has a concern about a student. We can sort of reach them before it gets to a critical level."

The *Independent* spoke to representatives at UCCS, Colorado College and Pikes Peak Community College about their emergency plans. While plans and strategies differ, each campus has a plan, along with one or more employees in charge of preparing for emergencies.

Of the three schools, Colorado College, which has about 2,000 students, is the only one without its own police force. John Lauer, co-chair of CC's emergency preparedness group and the college's associate vice president for student life, explains that the school does have a single Colorado Springs police officer assigned to the campus, as well as a campus safety department.

The safety officers — who carry no weapons — walk the campus and look for anything unusual. If a situation warrants it, they call police, with whom the college works closely. Campus safety officers can also take anonymous tips.

The campus does have an emergency plan, last updated in 2012, and a director of campus safety and emergency preparedness — Maggie Santos, a former Colorado Springs Police lieutenant. The plan will be updated soon.

"We're always focused on continuous improvement," Lauer says.

But, he adds, the college stresses that every person has to take responsibility for knowing how to respond, saying, "We're as prepared as every individual is prepared."

CC performs regular fire drills and has started doing active-shooter trainings with resident advisors, as well as sessions open to anyone, or upon request. Lauer says it's important not to drill too often because it can desensitize people in a real emergency.

The campus does contract with a company that sends emergency texts, emails and phone calls when needed to students, staff and faculty, as well as anyone else who wants to be notified.

While not every classroom has a locking door, placards by doors give instructions on what to do in an emergency — such as barricade the door for an active shooter or go to the nearest marked shelter in case of tornado.

CC has cameras throughout campus and a loudspeaker on Palmer Hall. Lauer says the campus is considering replacing that speaker, as well as placing speakers on campus security cars for use in an emergency. Staff in residence halls also have megaphones.

Jim Barrentine is chief of police at PPCC, where he says he was hired five years ago to develop an emergency preparedness plan.

That plan is now the template for the state's community colleges.

At first, Barrentine says most folks at PPCC didn't know how to perform basic safety tasks, like using a fire extinguisher or helping a person in a wheelchair down stairs. He's focused on giving trainings and providing instructional videos for different emergency skills. The school also does lockdown drills for an active-shooter situation, as well as special training, and four or five tabletop exercises meant to mimic a real emergency.

Interestingly, of the three schools, PPCC is the only one with locks on all classroom doors. The college encourages locking those doors during class hours.

With three campuses and 20,000 students, PPCC faces unique challenges. The 18-person police department is distributed among the campuses, where they patrol during business hours.

Barrentine has set up a system so that the campus community will be notified of an emergency immediately through texts, emails, landlines and a speaker system throughout the campus. Barrentine wants to add light boards for the deaf and buzzers for the blind, to ensure they are notified, and he's working on implementing a buddy system to ensure people with disabilities are cared for in an emergency.

He also has hotlines for anonymous tips.

Barrentine says the statewide system of community colleges is working to improve emergency preparedness. But he says PPCC is lucky because unlike many other schools, police are on the scene here.

"In an active shooter [situation]," he says, "security's going to run like everyone else."
Back in 2012, UCCS' emergency plans were tested. The Waldo Canyon Fire was raging nearby, and the campus suddenly became an unofficial evacuation site.

"We had the Air Force Academy cadets here in 2012, we also housed several hundred evacuees in our campus residence halls," UCCS spokesperson Tom Hutton says. "And then in 2013 [during the Black Forest Fire], we were an official Red Cross evacuation site and I think we had half a dozen people here, so we had more when we were an unofficial evacuation site."

Since UCCS is located on a wildland-urban interface, it not only has the normal risks of a university with around 11,300 students, but it also must be prepared for wildfire. Because of that, the university has done mitigation along its borders and, in summer months, UCCS police carry fire extinguishers with water in them, better for fighting wildfires. They also patrol the campus borders on off-road motorcycles.

Like the others, UCCS has an emergency notification system that hooks up to cell phones and landlines in classrooms. The university does not have a loudspeaker system or locks on every door, but emergency instructions near doors show how to barricade a door in emergencies and find marked tornado shelters. UCCS conducts general evacuation drills.

The UCCS police department, which has 21 officers and patrols the campus 24/7, has an intergovernmental agreement with Colorado Springs police to help each other in emergencies with set enforcement boundaries. Many will remember that UCCS Officer Garrett Swasey was killed last November when he responded to a mass shooting at Planned Parenthood. Just as he responded, CSPD would provide backup to UCCS officers in case of an active shooter on campus.

UCCS police do take tips (though anonymous tips must be made online) and say students are vigilant about filing reports of anything suspicious. Police Lt. Pino says he'll often get several calls within a few minutes about an unattended backpack, for instance. That's important, because it means students spot unusual circumstances and take them seriously.

"The reason why we have a very safe campus," he says, "is because we get those reports."

UCCS has emergency phones throughout campus, and police offer free escorts — no questions asked — to anyone requesting them. UCCS staff say they plan for any emergencies, and the university has an emergency manager and several offices that deal with emergency planning, including conducting regular tabletop exercises.

"I think we have a culture of working together as a university," Dean of Students Steve Linhart says, "whatever the situation."

County Road 40 bridges washed out by flash floods (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

Updated: Aug 23, 2016 10:00 PM MDT
FREMONT COUNTY - County Road 40 is closed after flash flooding in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar, according to Fremont County Sheriff's Office.

The dam on County Road 40 is holding, but Butter Creek and Little Cottonwood Creek are flowing heavy with debris. All homes are intact and all residents in the area are safe.

A reverse 911 notification was sent to residents in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar for a flash flood warning Tuesday evening. The warning was in effect until 9:45 p.m.

Bridges on County Road 40 were washed out by flood water. Fremont Search and Rescue and Fremont Incident Management Team responded as a precaution.

Why Colorado's Mosquitoes Are Not Likely To Spread Zika (Denver Post)

By John Ingold

Denver Post, August 23, 2016

It was an experiment that was part "Outbreak" and part "Trading Places," but researchers at Colorado State University hoped it might answer one of the more pressing public health questions facing the state: Could the Zika virus spread here?

The conventional wisdom was that it couldn't, at least not widely, because the disease's primary vector — a ninja of a mosquito called Aedes aegypti — had no established population in the state. But no one had proved that conventional wisdom true. What if it was wrong? What if the local mosquitoes — particularly those in the Culex genus that already carry the West Nile virus — were also able to transmit Zika?

The mosquito experts at CSU's Arthropod-borne and Infectious Diseases Laboratory decided to put the conventional wisdom to the test. In their lab, they infected Culex mosquitoes with Zika. And then, for a week as the virus incubated inside their study subjects, they held their breath.

Finally, the results:

"We could not get that virus to replicate in the mosquito," CSU professor Brian Foy said of the experiment, the topic of a soon-to-be-published article.

Whew.

When it comes to being disease-carrying menaces, not all mosquitoes are created equal, and that explains why Zika is a public health crisis in Miami and a relative public health trifle in Milliken. There are 54 species of mosquitoes commonly found in Colorado, but none of them are known to be able to transmit Zika — even if they can, like the Culex mosquitoes, transmit other diseases.

"It's still kind of a mystery," Foy said. "There's a very fine-tuning match of virus and mosquito."

The reason is that a mosquito's transmission of a disease is not as simple as taking infected blood in from one person and then backwashing it into another. Instead, the virus must be capable of reproducing inside the mosquito and then making its way into the mosquito's saliva — the real source of contamination since mosquitoes digest the blood they consume as food.

"When a mosquito bites a person, it spits into the bite," Foy said.

With the local-born bugs apparently incapable of carrying Zika, then, the only chance of a mosquito-spread outbreak in Colorado comes from a moonshot: the one-in-a-billion possibility that a Zika-capable mosquito that hitchhiked to the state from elsewhere bites into a Zika-infected person who picked up the virus out of state.

So far, only 21 people in Colorado have tested positive for Zika, and all of them contracted the virus somewhere else.

The only instance of a wayward Aedes aegypti being found in the state came in 2010, in Pueblo County. Another species of mosquito possibly capable of transmitting Zika, Aedes albopictus, has been found sporadically in Weld County, most recently in 2011 and most likely was brought to the state in waste tires disposed of here. But those species are just summer tourists; they can't survive the winter.

"Remember we're in Colorado; we're not in the tropics," said Michael "Doc" Weissmann, the chief entomologist at Colorado Mosquito Control, which does monitoring and eradication for local governments.

Weissmann said none of his company's traps have snagged worrisome Aedes mosquitoes this year.

"It's just the same old, same old," he said.

Eric Aakko of the Weld County Health Department said the county's surveillance efforts have found higher-than-normal levels of West Nile-carrying mosquitoes but no Zika concerns.

That leaves only one other prominent way that the virus can spread within Colorado, and it's one Foy knows a little too well. While conducting research in the African nation of Senegal, Foy contracted Zika in 2008. He then came home and accidentally gave it to his wife, which led to a research article hypothesizing — correctly, it turns out — that Zika can spread through sex.

The experience, though, didn't change his mind about the dangers of Zika in Colorado.

"The risk of all of a sudden having a massive outbreak in Denver is, I would say, infinitesimally small," he said. "From mosquitoes, I can't see it happening."

MONTANA

Yellowstone fish-killing parasite is so prolific it's 'shocking' fish to death (Missoulian)

By BRETT FRENCH Billings Gazette

PARADISE VALLEY — A previously unidentified strain of parasite has grown so prolific in the Yellowstone River that it is overwhelming whitefish, killing thousands and prompting the state last week to close more than 180 miles of the river to all recreation.

"The sheer parasite loading itself is almost shocking the fish, that that's what's killing them," said Eileen Ryce, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' hatchery section chief, during a Tuesday press conference along the banks of the Yellowstone River south of Livingston.

Scientists like Ryce believe that the parasite bloom may be so large and unprecedented in part because the Yellowstone River is experiencing near-record low flows and high water temperatures.

"We could see varying responses (of the parasite) depending on which river it gets into," said Travis Horton, Region 3 fisheries manager in Bozeman.

The nearby Madison River, where flows are dam controlled, may be more resilient to the parasite since the water's temperature is cooler, coming from the bottom of Hebgen Lake, and the flows can be maintained at a steadier rate. Likewise, outbreaks of similar parasites in Idaho that killed

whitefish in 2011 and 2012 may have been more limited because some of the streams are dam controlled, Horton said.

The FWP officials spoke to a crowd of about 50 people — anglers, local lawmakers, the media and business owners — at a fishing access site where the stench of dead whitefish rotting on the riverbank wafted through the air.

Media, business owners, anglers and others gather for a press conference on the banks of the Yellowstone River. CASEY PAGE, Gazette Staff

Acknowledging the effect of the river's closure to anglers, floaters and on all of the many businesses that service such recreationists, Gov. Steve Bullock said "the impact goes far beyond the water's edge." Yet he said "science needs to guide this."

"We need to make sure we are not only protecting this watershed and this water but indeed our entire state," he said, noting that the outdoor recreation industry creates about 64,000 jobs and $6 billion in consumer spending annually in Montana.

When Rep. Alan Redfield, R-Livingston, asked why certain portions of the river couldn't be open to fishing to ease some of the impact on local businesses, Horton said FWP hopes to contain the parasite outbreak to the Yellowstone and make its duration short-lived.

"We want to try to minimize this," Horton said. "We don't want to make this situation worse by rushing ahead."

Horton added that when the Yellowstone River's peak water temperatures drop below 55 degrees and stay there, FWP would consider lifting the river closure.

"We're not looking at it being a permanent closure," said Jeff Hagener, FWP director.

He noted the rule to enforce the closure is a temporary emergency closure good for 120 days. After that time the department is forced to re-examine the issue to decide whether the closure should be extended.

The fish kill has been documented by FWP crews from the Yellowstone National Park boundary about 100 miles downstream to just west of the town of Big Timber, Horton said. Other public reports of dead whitefish and suckers downstream from Big Timber to Laurel have not been confirmed by FWP.

The microscopic parasite that infects the fish needs two hosts to complete its life cycle, Ryce explained. It starts in a Bryozoan, a moss animal similar to a freshwater sponge. The Bryozoan releases the parasite that fish absorb through their gills. Similar parasites have caused internal bleeding and kidney failure in whitefish in other outbreaks, such as the ones in Idaho.

But the Yellowstone outbreak is different, Ryce said. There are so many spores being found inside the fish that the scientists are calling it a naive reaction.

"What we mean by that is that the immune response that the fish are expressing would suggest that they have not been exposed to this parasite previously," she said. "That has concerned us since it would suggest it's a new infection. At least we haven't seen anything on this scale previously."

"The other thing that's concerning is from the histology results there were high numbers of parasites seen in multiple tissues. That suggests to us that the infective load that's currently out in the river is very high. Why that's a concern is that the sheer volume of parasites that's out there makes it very easy for the parasite to be spread to other waters."

That's the reason FWP took the unusual step to close down much of the upper river to recreation, Horton said, calling it a "very dramatic step that we took." It's also why the agency is stressing that the best way to fight the spread of the parasite, along with other aquatic invasive species, is to clean, drain and dry all boats and fishing equipment.

FWP crews will continue to search for dead and dying fish in the Yellowstone River and its tributaries like the Stillwater and Boulder rivers to try to determine the extent of the outbreak.

"I hope we can continue to work together, recognizing that the long-term objective is to protect this valley and the river," Gov. Bullock said.

Yet Ryce noted that FWP staff doesn't expect the parasite to disappear, even with colder water temperatures and higher river flows. However, if the fish are given time to adapt they may build up some immunity to the parasite and recover.

NORTH DAKOTA

Occupying the Prairie: Tensions Rise as Tribes Move to Block a Pipeline (NY Times)

By JACK HEALY

August 23, 2016

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. — Horseback riders, their faces streaked in yellow and black paint, led the procession out of their tepee-dotted camp. Two hundred people followed, making their daily walk a mile up a rural highway to a patch of prairie grass and excavated dirt that has become a new kind of battlefield, between a pipeline and American Indians who say it will threaten water supplies and sacred lands.

The Texas-based company building the Dakota Access pipeline, Energy Transfer Partners, calls the project a major step toward the United States' weaning itself off foreign oil. The company says the nearly 1,170-mile buried pipeline will infuse millions of dollars into local economies and is safer than trucks and train cars that can topple and spill and crash and burn.

But the people who stood at the gates of a construction site where crews had been building an access road toward the pipeline viewed the project as a wounding intrusion onto lands where generations of their ancestors hunted bison, gathered water and were born and buried, long before treaties and fences stamped a different order onto the Plains.

People have been gathering since April, but as hundreds more poured in over the past two weeks, confrontations began rising among protesters, sheriff's officers and construction workers with the pipeline company. Local officials are struggling to handle hundreds of demonstrators filling the roads to protest and camp out in once-empty grassland about an hour south of Bismarck, the state capital.

More than 20 people have been arrested on charges including disorderly conduct and trespassing onto the construction site. The pipeline company says it was forced to shut down construction this month after protesters threatened its workers and threw bottles and rocks at contractors' vehicles.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier of Morton County, who has led the law enforcement response, said at a news conference that he had received reports of weapons and gunshots around the demonstration, and that protesters were getting ready to throw pipe bombs at a line of officers standing between a rally and the construction site.

Leaders from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's path, say the protests are peaceful. Weapons, drugs and alcohol are prohibited from the protest

camp. Children march in the daily demonstrations. The leaders believed the reports of pipe bombs were a misinterpretation of their calls for demonstrators to get out their wooden chanupa pipes — which have deep spiritual importance — and pass them through the crowd.

The conflict may reach a crucial moment on Wednesday in a federal court hearing. The tribe has sued to block the pipeline and plans to ask a judge in Washington to effectively halt construction.

The pipeline runs overwhelmingly along private land, but where it crosses bodies of water, federal rules come into play and federal approvals are required.

The tribe says the pipeline's route under the Missouri River near here could threaten its water supplies if the pipeline leaks or breaks, and it says the United States Army Corps of Engineers failed to do proper cultural and historical reviews before granting federal approvals for the pipeline.

"This is our homeland," said Phyllis Young, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux. "We are Dakota. Dakota means friend or ally. Dakota Access has taken our name."

In legal filings, the corps rejects those claims. It says it consulted extensively with tribes, including the Standing Rock Sioux, and it says that tribe has failed to describe specific cultural sites that would be damaged by the pipeline. Energy Transfer Partners says it has the necessary state and federal permits and hopes to finish construction by the end of the year. The pipeline's route starts in the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota and ends in Illinois.

With the fate of the land here and this $3.7 billion project in the air, people here have decided to take action. They are occupying the prairie.

Echoing protests against the now-scuttled Keystone XL pipeline, environmental activists and other tribes from the Dakotas, the rest of the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest have been arriving to camp in the open fields and protest near the parcel where the pipeline company has secured an agreement with the landowner to build.

The protesters sleep in tents and tepees, cook food in open-air kitchens and share stories and strategies around evening campfires. There is even a day care. At morning meetings, speakers warn parents to keep their children away from the Missouri River at sunset, and remind one another they are camped out in prayer.

"It's a major movement in Indian country," said CJ Clifford, a member of the Oglala Lakota, who drove up from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He saw the protests as part of a historical continuum reaching to Little Bighorn. This battle, he said, was being waged peacefully.

For many, the effort was about reclaiming a stake in ancestral lands that had been whittled down since the 1800s, treaty by broken treaty.

“Lands were constantly getting reduced, shaken up,” said Dave Archambault II, the tribal chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux. “I could give you a list of every wrongdoing this government did to our people. All of that is frustration pent up, and it’s being recognized.”

He added, “It’s a tipping point for our nations.”

This month, a line of sheriff’s officers retreated in the face of riders on horseback circling and yipping through the grass. (Tribal members said that the display was a Lakota gesture of introduction, and that they have no quarrel with law enforcement.)

There have been no moves so far to disband the camp or keep people from demonstrating. But Sheriff Kirchmeier told reporters that the demonstration had become an “unlawful protest,” and Gov. Jack Dalrymple, citing “public safety risks,” declared a state of emergency on Friday.

Local law enforcement officers set up a barricade on the main road leading to the pipeline site, and officials here in Morton County called a special meeting on Monday to talk about the traffic and how to handle a hundreds-strong protest that could linger for weeks or months.

At the sprawling campsite down the road from the protest site, there had been portable toilets, 500-gallon tanks of drinking water and an air-conditioned trailer with medical supplies provided by the state. But late Monday night, people at the camp said the medical trailer and water tanks had been removed, leaving them to scramble for a new water source for hundreds of people.

After a prayer ceremony at the construction site one recent afternoon, a few young men on horseback opened the gate and rode onto the land. A few days earlier they might have been arrested and accused of trespassing, but that day there were no officers to stop them.

The pipeline company said that it temporarily stopped work here this month while “law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests,” but that construction was continuing elsewhere.

Energy Transfer Partners has sued Mr. Archambault and six other people over the protests. In a federal lawsuit filed last week, the company accused them and other protesters of blocking access to the construction site, threatening workers and trespassing onto private land.

Jon Eagle Sr., the historic preservation officer for the Standing Rock Sioux, watched from the side of the road as the young men rode into the grassy field, toward a construction floodlight and heaps of excavated dirt. He did not want the pipeline to breach this land. But he did not seem to approve of this either.

“They need to stay out,” he said. “They don’t know where the burials are. They don’t know where the sacred sites are. I’m trying my best to keep the peace.”

Emergency services recalled from Dakota Access Pipeline protest site (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Max Grossfeld |

Posted: Tue 4:19 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 6:24 PM, Aug 23, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. - Demonstrators protesting construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline had been using state resources at their camp until Monday, when the Department of Emergency Services decided to recall them.

Those resources included a mobile command trailer, a medical aid trailer and a water trailer.

A DES official says Tribal Emergency Management requested the resources, which were supposed to be used on tribal land. He says the services brought the trailers back when he heard the trailers were located on land owned by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Reports of unlawful behavior, he says, also influenced his decision.

"This isn't a flood, a fire, an icestorm. This is an event that originally needed some support for the responders dealing with it and at this stage in the game, the event's not an emergency," says Greg Wilz, Homeland Security Division director.

Wilz says all the equipment is back in Bismarck and ready to use in case of emergency.

People concerned with Highway 1806 barricade ask Morton County Commissioners for answers (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Megan Hahn |

Posted: Tue 9:43 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Wed 8:07 AM, Aug 24, 2016

MANDAN, N.D. - The Morton County Board of Commissioners heard public testimony regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline for nearly in an hour at Tuesday's meeting.

All those who chose to speak during the hearing were in opposition of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

County Commissioners say the purpose of the meeting was to give people the chance to weigh-in on the matter in a peaceful manner.

About a dozen people addressed Morton County Commissioners in front of a packed room Tuesday. The recurring frustration for many: removal of barriers along Highway 1806, which restrict access to areas south of Mandan including Cannon Ball and Fort Yates.

"I didn't appreciate it when they put up that block. I have granddaughters and daughters that work at Fort Yates and live in Bismarck. It's humiliating and intimidating when the cops come

up to your car and look in your car like we are doing something wrong," said a speaker who addressed the Commission.

"I am embarrassed for the law enforcement officers that I meet on the road, blocking people from seeing this protest," said a woman who addressed the Morton County Commission.

Highway 1806 was blocked up last Tuesday past the veteran's cemetery because of public safety concerns, according to the Morton County Sheriff's department. Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier didn't speak at Tuesday's meeting.

While many spoke out against the traffic interception point, the Board of Commissioners deferred all questions regarding the barricade to law enforcement. The County Commission says they do not have the authority to remove the barricade.

"We thought it was very important to allow these individuals who are protesting to have a voice in a public forum. I think that's very important. As it relates to the traffic control point itself, that is a question that I'll have to refer back to county sheriff, our incident commander Kyle Kirchmeier," said Chairman Cody Schulz, Morton County Board of Commissioners.

Many of those present say they want answers from government officials.

"I don't want any part of it. I don't think that's right. And it's not fair. And that blockade, that should not be there. That's all I have to say," said another speaker.

The Board of Commissioners says they're working toward creating an open and peaceful dialogue with protesters.

Those who spoke against the blockade say not only does it affect commuters driving to work, but it's reduced business for local shops and reduced access to recreation areas.

Both the North Dakota Highway Patrol and North Dakota Department of Transportation have the authority under North Dakota Century Code to close a highway. This decision to temporarily close Highway 1806 was made by DOT and HP August 17.

Pipeline foes take fight to Bismarck, Washington D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 23, 2016 at 6:38 p.m.

BISMARCK – Waving the flags of their tribes and singing the songs of their ancestors, more than 200 protesters marched across a Missouri River bridge in Bismarck Tuesday ahead of a federal court hearing that will determine the fate of the Dakota Access oil pipeline’s route in North Dakota.

“This water belongs to all of us,” Vic Camp, a 41-year-old from South Dakota’s Pine Ridge Reservation, said as he rallied the crowd before the march. “We all know that tomorrow in Washington they’re going to make a decision that affects every single one of us.”

The march across the 2,370-foot-long Veterans Memorial Bridge aimed to show solidarity with the 2,000-some protesters encamped about 50 miles south on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, near the pipeline construction site along State Highway 1806 north of Cannon Ball.

Indeed, many marchers were from the campsite, including 25-year-old Kin-sin-ta Joseph and her 16-year-old sister Kis-dya:n-te' Joseph, who got help from a portable PA system so their river song would carry over the wind and traffic noise. The members of northern California's Hoopa Valley Tribe said their chairman urged members to assist Standing Rock, and about 25 made the trip.

While they've taken part in protests before, joining a blockade against logging companies just a few months ago, the older sister said it's never been this big, with so many tribes involved.

"This is really spectacular," she said. "We've been waiting for this kind of gathering."

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline. It would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the reservation and be the largest oil pipeline from the Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day to Patoka, Ill.

Standing Rock members oppose the river crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped construction at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct. But the protest hasn't impacted pipeline construction elsewhere along the four-state route, including in North Dakota, company spokeswoman Lisa Dillinger said via email.

"We have temporarily deferred grading activities across a short section of the right-of-way (less than 1 mile) while law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests in light of the fact that we have the necessary permits and approvals to work at this site," she said.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., will consider Wednesday the tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. A lawyer for the tribe said the judge has indicated he will rule from the bench or shortly after the hearing.

Film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside the courthouse in Washington, and actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the rally, according to a statement.

Protesters on Tuesday blocked traffic only briefly while crossing the street to get to the bridge's pedestrian walkway, and law enforcement reported no problems with the march. Dozens of passing drivers honked their horns in solidarity, though one yelled an expletive aimed at Native Americans.

Camp said protesters will refrain from violence if the judge's ruling doesn't go their way.

“The only way violence will happen is if the cops provoke it and they attack us,” he told Forum News Service, adding, “We have our women and we have our children. We have grandparents here.”

When asked what will happen if the judge denies the injunction and Dakota Access tries to resume construction, Camp said, “Then we’ll start blockading.”

“We’ll do what we can with our bodies to keep the machines from coming in,” he said.

Four labor unions sent Gov. Jack Dalrymple a letter strongly encouraging him to use the power of his office to keep workers safe and ensure protesters are “following the letter of the law.”

The general presidents of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and United Association (UA), said the actions of protesters endanger not only themselves but construction workers and equipment, as well as local law enforcement who’ve bolstered their local presence.

They said the pipeline has created about 4,000 construction jobs in North Dakota along 346 miles of pipeline.

“While they may have a right to protest, we also have a right to do our jobs in a safe environment,” they said.

Protesters, insisting their actions are peaceful, appealed to the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and churches to send observers to the site. They also continued to rail against what they contend is an unnecessarily heavy law enforcement presence, including a checkpoint about six miles south of Mandan that restricts southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to emergency response vehicles and local traffic such as farmers, ranchers and homeowners.

Standing Rock Protestors Find New Resources After State Withdraws Support (KXMB TV, Bismarck)

Published 08/23 2016 04:04PM

Updated 08/23 2016 07:03PM

Protestors of the Dakota Access Pipeline are finding ways to sustain their effort after state officials pulled relief resources from their camp near Cannonball.

Ben Smith has the story.

For nearly a week.

Several state-owned trailers provided water, shelter, and a place to help those sick or hurt.

Monday morning, news came that these resources would soon be gone.

"It was shocking, it was shocking. I didn't expect that,"

"It's a little different now because everything is going to be outdoors where we had the convenience of having everything indoors in case of the rain, weather wind. Resources got taken away from us quick but we got them back," says Joenelle Leingang

As fast as they disappeared, new support came in.

Standing Rock Paramedics erected a tent in which to treat people.

The tribes road department also pitched in, delivering a giant tank of water.

"They keep this full to fill our buffalo tanks with water. We have two, three more possibly coming in from the Cheyenne River who had donated theirs so water supply is going to be back on track again," says Leingang

(Ben Smith, KX News) Not all state-resources have gone. There is one ambulance that is still here, to provide a backup for standing rock paramedics,

"They left the ambulance as an extra resource for us. Because like I said, we still provide services to all the reservation so of course our number of ambulances is limited," says DeAnn Werre, Standing Rock Paramedic

She says it's not your typical day as a Standing Rock paramedic.

"We've been able to bring in extra staff to be able to provide services,"

"We've pulled together and got our resources together and are able to provide the same services for people,"

It seems to be the theme of the effort, pulling together under one cause.

It's very overwhelming, it's great, phone calls, where can I bring it to...

I just would like the public to see for themselves. There is nothing negative going on here at all,

She says for now, this area near the Cannonball river has become a second home.

Protesters attend Morton County Commission meeting (Bismarck Tribune)

CAROLINE GRUESKIN and LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

15 hrs ago

The Dakota Access Pipeline protests returned to the Bismarck-Mandan area Tuesday, as protesters walked across the Memorial Bridge and testified before the Morton County Commission.

Several speakers asked the commissioners to remove a roadblock that prevents drivers from traveling south on Highway 1806 from Mandan to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, though

commission chairman Cody Schulz said after the meeting the commission does not have authority to remove the block.

Speakers told the commissioners and the approximately 30 people who attended the meeting that the block impedes travel, punishes the tribe's economy and can be humiliating to cross.

The highway has been blocked since Aug. 17, when Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the protest had become unlawful and the road unsafe, points the protesters have contested throughout the week.

Marilyn Kary, who works in Fort Yates, said the roadblock makes it difficult for teachers on the reservation who commute.

Chase Iron Eyes, the Democratic candidate for North Dakota's lone U.S. House seat, said the roadblock was intended to punish the tribe and has disadvantaged businesses in the region.

He said Native Americans and white North Dakotans tend to live in separate worlds.

"Interactions should be encouraged," he said, suggesting the block did the opposite by preventing commerce.

Cody Hall of Eagle Butte, S.D., spokesman for the Red Warrior Camp, said the blockade simply sets the wrong tone.

"It felt like what black people felt in the South," he told commissioners, adding that he was questioned at the blockade, while a white friend was not.

Clyde Bellecourt, co-founder of the American Indian Movement, asked members of the Morton County Commission to consider what future generations would think if the water were contaminated.

"I'm 80 years old. I've lived my life. I don't want my grandchildren to ever question," he said. "Grandpa, why didn't you say nothing?"

He encouraged the commissioners to visit the protest camps.

"You have nothing to be afraid of," he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, about 200 protesters took their cause to the Memorial Bridge, staging a peaceful march from Bismarck to Mandan.

Banners, bright regalia and flags of many Native American nations were presented as smart phones and a drone documented the latest chapter in the protest.

At the staging area, multiple speakers encouraged songs and prayers from participants. Drums pounded in support of discontinuing pipeline construction.

Many protesters held up bottled water mixed with oil to represent the contamination they believe the pipeline would cause to their drinking water, reminding everyone present the water had to be safe for future generations.

Shouts of "save our water" could be heard by protesters as they ascended the bridge.

There was little presence of law enforcement for most of the demonstration except for when North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and local police briefly blocked traffic as marchers crossed to Front Avenue to reach the pedestrian portion of the bridge. The protesters kept to the walkway and held up their signs as motorists honked their horns.

Those gathered Tuesday insisted their message has been a peaceful one.

"I am here because of the water, because of the grandchildren," said Nora Old Man, who held up a water bottle and sang with her grandsons.

Sunny Red Bear, of Eagle Butte, S.D., said she was participating in the march for her 7-year-old son who joined her Tuesday.

"This is about our future. This is about thinking generationally. This is about everyone it affects, community after community. They are choosing oil, wealth and money over our future. I want to protect that the best I can and to show my son to stand up for what's right."

SOUTH DAKOTA

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city (Rapid City Journal)

Mike Anderson Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 24, 2016

Rapid City will soon hire 15 new firefighters, thanks in large part to a $1 million federal grant awarded to the city fire department last week.

The new hires will fill a staffing shortage that Fire Chief Mike Maltaverne has urged the city council to address since 2014.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant, or SAFER, administered through the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will pay the salaries and benefits of nine new firefighters for the next two years. The other six out of 15 new positions will be paid for out of the city’s budget.

“In 2014, we started to identify that, with the way our demands for service were increasing, our resources were starting to spread thin,” Maltaverne said on Tuesday. "Our firefighters were going on more and more calls and the staff increases weren’t keeping up with the demand for our services.”

In a memo to Mayor Steve Allender earlier this year, Maltaverne said that in 1995, the city’s fire department had 81 operational firefighters with an annual call volume of 3,600, or 44 calls per

firefighter. Rapid City has grown significantly in population and geographical area since the 90s, and with that growth has come more fires.

The department's annual call volumes have grown an average of 7.6 percent since then, Maltaverne said, putting last year's total call volume for the department at 17,012 for its 117 firefighters, or about 145 calls per firefighter.

Maltaverne knew it would require some extra funding to get 15 new firefighters on board to fill the service gap and ease the pressure on existing personnel. So he asked the Rapid City Council to pay for six employees if he could find a grant to pay for nine more.

"We thought that would be more realistic, that the city would be able to fund that," Maltaverne said.

The City Council has already agreed to fund three positions, and the mayor has included another three in next year's proposed budget which will be the subject of a public discussion at 6:30 p.m. today in the city council chamber.

"We clearly articulated the need for additional staffing and our elected officials along with FEMA responded, and for that we are grateful," Maltaverne said.

Though the SAFER grant will only pay the other nine new firefighters through two years of service, Maltaverne is confident that will be plenty of time for the council to figure out how to keep funding those positions indefinitely.

"What would be the point of hiring firefighters for two years and then having the city lay them off?" Maltaverne said. "That doesn't solve the long-term problem."

The grant calls for the new hires to be made within 180 days, a deadline Maltaverne has no worries about meeting. This spring, the Rapid City Fire Department went through a hiring process and compiled a selection of suitable candidates.

"We reviewed that and we feel there are a sufficient number of qualified candidates to fill those positions," he said. "We've got a really good deep list of potential employees."

Maltaverne hopes to have all 15 slots filled by Jan. 1, 2017, which is when the SAFER grant funds will be awarded to the city.

Applying for the grant was a comprehensive and competitive process, Maltaverne said, adding that he sees FEMA's decision to award the funds as a form of validation.

"Getting this grant clearly confirms that the need was there," he said.

New fire burning near Angostura Reservoir (KBHB radio)

Gary Matthews

KBHB Radio
August 23, 2016

HOT SPRINGS, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire Dispatch says federal, state and volunteer fire crews are battling a wildfire in the southern black hills.

The Maitland CA fire is located approximately 6.5 miles southwest of Angostura Reservoir.

Dispatch says the fire had reached 34.5 acres as of Tuesday afternoon.

They list the fire as human caused.

There is no word on any structures being threatened.

UTAH

American Fork fish could contain toxic mine waste (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 23 2016 05:30PM • Updated 57 minutes ago

Some of the sediments that have turned American Fork River's normally clear waters into a black soup could be loaded with arsenic, lead and other toxic metals associated with historical mining operations at the scenic canyon's headwaters.

Officials from several local, federal and state agencies gathered at Tibble Fork Dam on Tuesday to figure out what to do about the sediment releases, which commenced sometime after the 10-acre lake began draining Saturday as part of $7.3 million project to upgrade the aging earthen structure.

The incident shocked conservationists who fear an ecological catastrophe is unfolding in one of Utah's most popular natural areas, located in the Wasatch Mountains just outside Provo.

"I think it's a $20 million cleanup and it will take years," said Mark Allen, founder of the group Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District sponsored the project with federal matching dollars in an effort to make the dam seismically safe and extend its life for another 50 years. The lake bed is coated with 5 to 10 feet of fine-grained black sediments that have accumulated behind the dam and impaired its ability to store water, though the lake has remained a popular, well-stocked trout fishery.

A sediment release "was not unexpected, given this was a rehabilitation project," said the district's lawyer, John Jacobs. "There may have been a bit more than was anticipated. This is a 60-year-old dam, and it has a lot of sediments behind it."

During the review process, federal officials had considered dredging the lake bed as a way to restore the dam's usefulness, but testing indicated that levels of arsenic and lead exceeded safety

standards and made these sediments too dangerous to move, according to the environmental assessment conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The metals contaminating Tibble Fork originated in Live Yankee, Globe and other abandoned gold and silver mines that perforate the head of American Fork Canyon's northern branch, according to Allen. He says the state is doing too little to hold landowners accountable for these environmental "time bombs." Many of these old mines are located on land now owned by Snowbird Ski Resort in and around its Mineral Basin.

The cost of extracting and disposing of the material accumulated in the Tibble Fork lake bed would be $8.4 million, so the option was abandoned in favor of raising the dam by 9 feet. The environmental assessment insisted the contractor use "best management practices" to ensure the toxic sediments were not pushed downstream.

The measures are detailed in a construction permit issued this year by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which would not immediately provide a copy of the permit. It did send personnel to the dam Tuesday to determine whether the project was in compliance with the permit.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also sent emergency-response personnel to the site.

"It was so damning that they didn't want to touch the sediment," Allen said. "Your project is only as good as your most stupid backhoe operator. It said it was too toxic to remove it, but now it's in the river. How are you going to clean up 10 miles of trout streams?"

The water district hired Provo-based RB&G Engineering to design the project and Whitaker Construction, of Brigham City, to build it. RB&G's project leader, Brad Price, did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

Allen and members of Trout Unlimited spent Monday in the canyon, photographing the sludge pouring down the river channel, which smelled of gunpowder and rotting fish.

"In the main canyon, the water looks like Mississippi mud," said Grant Bench, an officer with a Utah County Trout Unlimited chapter. "I don't know how a cold-water fish is supposed to survive in that."

But federal and state officials were not ready to declare a disaster Tuesday.

"We are taking samples above [the dam] and below to establish baseline and impact below in the water column," said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

Division of Wildlife Resources aquatics biologist Mike Slater zapped the creek in various places with electroshock equipment Tuesday in search of breathing fish.

WYOMING

Wildfires close Yellowstone's south entrance, burn near west entrance (Billings Gazette)

By JORDON NIEDERMEIER jniedermeier@billingsgazette.com

All roads were open in Yellowstone National Park Tuesday despite several fires growing in the area including a blaze blocking access to the Park's south entrance.

The West Entrance remained open. But, the Maple fire has burned more than 27,000 acres about five miles northeast of West Yellowstone and reached within a tenth-mile of the roadway to the west entrance. The fire grew more than 4,600 acres on Monday and is mostly growing on the north side of the burn area. It is not expected to cross the road to the west entrance. If fire activity or smoke increases, pilot cars will be used to guide cars through the area, said a National Park Service news release.

The release said fire activity closed a stretch of U.S. Highway 89 in Grand Teton National Park between Leeks Marina and north to Flaggs Ranch. The closure affects travelers planning to use Yellowstone National Park's south entrance. The road closure is expected to stay in effect until Wednesday. Lizard Creek Campground has also been evacuated.

About 100 people are monitoring the Maple fire. Resources including firefighting aircraft and engines are in the area. However, the fire is not being actively suppressed as it was determined to be caused by a lightning strike and wildfires are an integral part of the Yellowstone ecosystem, said Barbara Dougan, NPS fire information officer.

Dougan said firefighters will work to keep the blaze north of the roadway and east of the Madison River, away from the town of West Yellowstone.

"At this time the fire is doing very well on that side and doing the job of reducing downed debris that's on the ground," she said.

Dougan said officials are still working to determine the cause of the nearby 190 acre Boundary fire but it is believed to have been caused by human activity. Firefighters worked to suppress that wildfire and it was about 85 percent contained as of Tuesday morning.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Tropical System Eyes Florida, Southeast US, May Develop Into Hurricane (USA Today)

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, August 23, 2016

What's now just a disorganized mass of thunderstorms 1,600 miles from Miami could develop into the first hurricane to hit Florida in nearly 11 years late this weekend, forecasters warn.

There's a 60% chance the storm system, known for now only as "99L," could develop into a tropical depression in the Atlantic Ocean later this week. If it swirls into a tropical storm, it will be named Hermine (Her-MEEN).

The system then could rapidly intensify into a large, potentially dangerous major hurricane that would target the Southeast U.S. coast Sunday or Monday, Weather Underground meteorologist Jeff Masters said.

However, as meteorologist John Morales of NBC-6 in Miami notes, "tropical weather forecasting is a very inexact science."

Overall, 6- or 7-day forecasts of tropical cyclone location and intensity are "generally not very good," according to Penn State University meteorologist Jon Nese.

But whether or not the system becomes a tropical storm or hurricane, gusty winds, heavy rains, and possible flash floods and mudslides could occur over the islands of the northeastern Caribbean Sea and the Bahamas, the National Hurricane Center said.

By Sunday, the system could bring deteriorating weather and sea conditions to the east coast of Florida, AccuWeather said.

Most of the computer models meteorologists use to forecast tropical weather show the system hitting the Southeast U.S. between Florida and South Carolina sometime Sunday or later, Masters said.

One computer model, the European, shows the storm crossing Florida and emerging as a major hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico by next week, according to WeatherBell meteorologist Ryan Maue. But the American model, the GFS, does not show that movement.

The most recent hurricane to strike Florida was Wilma in October 2005, AccuWeather said.

A separate system, Tropical Storm Gaston, is projected continue spinning in the central Atlantic. It could become a hurricane later this week, weather officials say. That storm however, is expected to remain over the open Atlantic, though it could stir up strong surf along the eastern shores of Florida, said Scott Spratt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla.

Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

Inside Radio, August 24, 2016

Each natural disaster presents its own challenges, and the floods that have inundated portions of Southern Louisiana are presenting wireless companies and federal regulators with a now-familiar picture. FM radio stepped in to fill a void left by cellphones rendered useless during an emergency.

"I just cannot thank you guys enough for getting the message out," Denham Springs, LA mayor Gerard Landry said in an appearance on Guaranty Broadcasting's "Talk 107.3" WBRP, Baton Rouge. "I haven't seen a newspaper or watched TV for eight or nine days but everybody has a radio—thank goodness for that," he added.

His comments illustrate the emergency role radio plays during natural disasters, one that broadcasters have repeatedly used as an incentive to wireless companies reluctant to activate FM chips already installed in most cellphones. It's been a tough sell.

"We had stations on the air 24/7 giving out information—this has been horrific and I guess people who are not living here don't understand," Louisiana Association of Broadcasters president Polly Prince Johnson said. "Some of these places didn't have electricity and if the FM chip was on their phones they could have been listening to our local broadcasters who were giving lifesaving information."

Helping to strengthen radio's case was the fact that AT&T suffered a massive outage across the region, leaving a large number of residents and the Louisiana State Police with phones that didn't work. Guaranty Media's Baton Rouge market manager Gordy Rush says when flooding closed a 55-mile stretch of Interstate 12 it left thousands of people stranded on the highway for more than 28 hours with radio as

a lifeline after his stations jerry-rigged a connection to the state police to relay critical information to drivers stuck miles from any exit ramp. "This all played out on the radio," Rush said.

Johnson says it wasn't just stuck motorists who were impacted by the cellular outage. It was also families trying to reconnect. "People couldn't make phone calls for three or four days and then it was sporadic at best—so loved ones were calling the radio stations trying to get the information out," he explained.

While the wireless industry points out that the new Emergency Alert System sends alerts to cellphones on a localized basis, last week in Louisiana it seems the messages were having the opposite effect as intended. With frequent alerts around the clock, many people whose phones did work became annoyed and switched them off to preserve battery life. "It was a nuisance," Rush said.

More than a dozen people lost their lives during the Louisiana flooding and while industry lobbyists are likely to tread carefully so as not to appear to be capitalizing on Louisiana's suffering, those high stakes are what many broadcasters say proves the need for radio on smartphones. "If the FM chip was turned on, people are able to tell them that the water is rising and they should get their stuff and get out," Johnson said. "It's in times of disaster when it is so important and it can save lives."

Added Rush, "This is a matter of life or death."

After briefly flirting with the idea of lobbying for a federally imposed chip mandate in 2010, the National Association of Broadcasters quickly backed away from the idea. For the past six years, the NAB has instead pushed the telecom industry to activate FM chips on its own. In the ensuing period, Sprint embraced the NextRadio app—which activates the FM chip—three years ago, and by the end of this year, AT&T and T-Mobile will follow Sprint's lead. The exception is any customer that uses an iPhone since Apple doesn't include FM radio technology inside its handsets.

"NAB continues to support voluntary activation of FM chips by the carriers," spokesman Dennis Wharton said. "This is a no-brainer from a public safety perspective, as FEMA's [administrator] Craig Fugate has noted. We hope all the carriers—along with Apple—will look at the Baton Rouge tragedy as an opportunity to do the right thing and voluntarily light up the chips."

Back in Louisiana, more than 100,000 households remain without power, but some things are beginning to return to normal. Rush is back at his desk after he jumped from market manager to air personality, spending 32 hours on the air from Friday until Tuesday as some staffers were coping with flooded homes.

Guaranty Media began simulcasting "Talk 107" WBRP on its 100,000-watt classic rock sister "Eagle 98.1" WDGL throughout the storm while country "100.7 The Tiger" WTGE relayed WAFB-TV with station cut-ins. Rush says for a time it looked as though WBRP may have been under threat as its transmitter building was six inches from taking on water after drainage canals backed up and overflowed into its industrial part tower site. Fortunately, the water eventually receded.

Rush, who made it through Hurricane Katrina a decade ago, says the two disasters have left him with an unmistakable conclusion. "Twice now, cellular phones have not been dependable; they've failed," he said, adding, "Radio is a lifeline through this stuff."

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 26 Aug 2016 14:01:54 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)
(b)(@utah.gov';(b)(6)@wyo.gov';(b)(6)@nd.gov';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';'(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA clips for Friday 8-26-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-26-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Friday, August 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A "National Cybersecurity Center" in Colorado Springs will hire a CEO next month and host a national conference in November.
- **Montana:** Nine counties are in severe drought status.
- **North Dakota:** More pipeline protest stories: the NY Times details who wants what; the Bismarck Tribune reports the builders do not yet have a written easement from the Corps, though they do have permission to get the easement; the Tribune also reports on camp life among the protesters; National Public Radio did an overview piece. Snopes.com refuted social media reports that the state had cut off water to the protesters.
- **South Dakota:** The Sioux Falls Argus Leader looks back at the flood a year ago.
- **Utah:** Toxic sediments continue to flow into the American Fork River. It is hoped that by today a diversion will have been built around the lake to allow water to continue to flow down the river without continuing contamination. Health officials have not yet finished analyzing the water or issued guidelines as to how to respond.
- **Wyoming:** Maps show where the Yellowstone Park fires stood earlier this week…. *The Billings Gazette* reports that both fire and ice hampered the park yesterday.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: An environmental column in Politico.com today includes several items of interest: environmentalists trying to recreate the coalition that stopped the Keystone pipeline to fight the Dakota Access pipeline; a comment by a judge in the pipeline case that may show he leans toward an injunction; affordable flood insurance becoming an issue in the Louisiana Senate race; a GAO study that supports FEMA's position saying community-based flood insurance won't work; an old Florida dike that may be vulnerable to the approaching storm… Yahoo news reports on competing hurricane forecasts.

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Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

UTAH:

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

WYOMING:

Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

STORIES

COLORADO

Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs to hire CEO and host national conference (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman

The National Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs plans to hire a CEO next month and will host officials from across the country at a three-day conference in November at The Broadmoor.

A four-person search committee from among the center's 12 directors will conduct interviews and make a recommendation to the board, which plans to select the CEO by mid- to late September, said Eric Hopfenbeck, the center's deputy executive director. Hopfenbeck was speaking at a panel discussion Wednesday about the facility held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. The board began the nationwide search process in early July with help from Heidrick & Struggles International Inc., a Chicago-based executive search firm. The company helped create a job description and determine pay and other details about the position.

"The budget, staff and management structure (of the center) will be determined after the CEO is hired," Hopfenbeck said. "We are still in the development stage, so we are collecting contact information from consultants, partners and subject-matter experts who want to support the NCC."

The center's three-person staff is headed by retired Army Lt. Gen. Ed Anderson, who serves as interim executive director and also is executive director of strategic, military, science, space and security initiatives for University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak.

The panel discussion was part of a two-day cybersecurity training and technology forum hosted by the Colorado Springs chapter of the Information Systems Security Association that also included a keynote address by Mark Weatherford, a NCC board member who also is a former deputy undersecretary for cybersecurity of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The newly hired CEO will have a major role in organizing a three-day National Cybersecurity Institute the center will host Nov. 13-15 at The Broadmoor for invited guests that include governors and attorneys general of all 50 states plus an undisclosed number of mayors and county commissioners, Hopfenbeck said. The event will bring real-time information on the latest cyber trends, security, best practices and education resources to the elected officials to help them better protect government computer systems, networks and critical public assets.

The conference will be the center's public launch. A Rapid Response Center to help small- to mid-sized businesses, nonprofits and government agencies combat and recover from cyber attacks, and a Cyber Research, Education and Training Center that will conduct research on cybersecurity threats and develop a cybersecurity workforce through education programs at UCCS and other schools around the state and nation, are expected to begin operations by next summer. UCCS is meeting with other colleges and universities to develop a cybersecurity curriculum, Hopfenbeck said.

The center also will work with the Western Cyber Exchange and Air Force CyberWorx. The exchange is a 5-year-old group started to strengthen local cybersecurity measures, attract more workers to the industry and share information about cyber attacks and how to prevent and defend against them. The exchange also operates the nation's only Information Sharing and Analysis Organization focused on the private sector. CyberWorx, formerly the Air Force Cyber Innovation Center, does research and testing of cyber security issues and technology at the Air Force Academy.

The center has received three proposals from contractors for renovations to a former TRW manufacturing plant at 3650 N. Nevada Ave. Renovations will be funded by nearly $8 million included in legislation signed into law by Gov. John Hickenlooper in May. A contractor is expected to be selected by mid-September. The building is owned by UCCS and will become the center's permanent home when renovations are complete. The center is operating from temporary offices at 1867 Austin Bluffs Parkway, Suite 200, across from the east end of the UCCS campus.

MONTANA

Lewis and Clark among 9 Montana counties in severe drought, 11 more under alert (Helena Independent Record)

TOM KUGLIN Independent Record

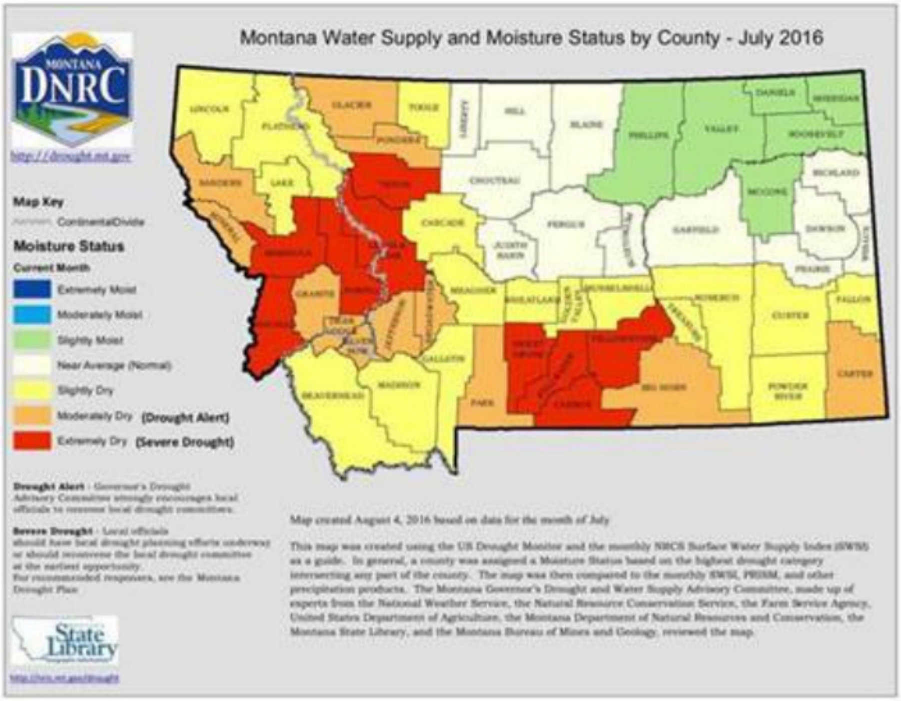
State officials say Lewis and Clark County is among nine in Montana that reached “severe drought” status Thursday, while another 11 counties have hit “drought alert.”

Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney is chairman of the Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee. He says the region has had two years of low snowpack, early runoff and little moisture under the soil.

The alert and severe designation are intended "to give high visibility to the continuing impacts of drought in affected areas, to prompt communication among stakeholders, and to direct state agencies to take the steps identified in the Montana Drought Response Plan to mitigate the impacts of drought," Cooney wrote in a letter to county commissioners.

The counties in severe drought are Lewis and Clark, Powell, Teton, Missoula, Sweet Grass, Stillwater, Carbon and Yellowstone.

The seven counties put on alert status Thursday are Broadwater, Jefferson, Silver Bow, Granite, Mineral, Park and Big Horn. Glacier, Pondera, Carter and Sanders counties were previously on drought alert.


Montana Water Supply and Moisture Status by County - July 2016
MONTANA DNRC
http://drought.mt.gov
Map Key
ContinentalDivide
Moisture Status
Current Month
Extremely Moist
Moderately Moist
Slightly Moist
Near Average (Normal)
Slightly Dry
Moderately Dry (Drought Alert)
Extremely Dry (Severe Drought)
State Library
http://nris.mt.gov/drought

Drought Alert - Governor's Drought Advisory Committee strongly encourages local officials to reconvene local drought committees.

Severe Drought - Local officials should have local drought planning efforts underway or should reconvene the local drought committee at the earliest opportunity.
For recommended responses, see the Montana Drought Plan

Map created August 4, 2016 based on data for the month of July

This map was created using the US Drought Monitor and the monthly NRCS Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) as a guide. In general, a county was assigned a Moisture Status based on the highest drought category intersecting any part of the county. The map was then compared to the monthly SWSI, PRISM, and other precipitation products. The Montana Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee, made up of experts from the National Weather Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana State Library, and the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, reviewed the map.

DNRC

Neither the alert nor the severe designations carry any official status with respect to state or federal disaster assistance programs.

The severe designation prompts county commissioners and disaster and emergency services coordinators to document any economic, health and safety emergencies that warrant either state or federal dollars, according to DNRC drought coordinator Ada Montague.

The alert status prompts local officials to document crop or livestock loss or impacts that could then trigger federal disaster assistance, she added.

"At the local level, certain watersheds have voluntarily developed local drought response plans, namely the Blackfoot, the Big Hole and the Jefferson," Montague wrote in an email. "This is where water right holders have worked together to determine proper triggers and response mechanisms for individual water bodies."

Montana's drought plan was written in 1995 and the state is currently in the process of updating it, she said.

Lewis and Clark County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Paul Spengler says the driest portions of the county are in the north and along the Rocky Mountain Front. The Helena Valley is also seeing about a 2-inch shortfall on precipitation this year, he said.

The drought does affect irrigators that tap creeks or streams and dry-land farmers, but those on the Helena Valley Irrigation District drawing from the Missouri River are not limited, said Jim Foster with the district.

Irrigators depending on the Sun River, suffering from particularly low snow pack, have seen their water usage cut early this year.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who's Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment.

The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota's governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-

mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country's pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

For breaking news and in-depth reporting, follow @NYTNational on Twitter.

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

-

Lauren Donovan

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

“They can’t build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe,” Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company’s decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any “Jane and John Doe” from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe's request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

"Everybody thought they had it (easement)," said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. "This is really important information."

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

"We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There's nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court's injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday's news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

"The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she'll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people," Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

"It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making," Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

"When this is done, if it's ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It's a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

"It's been a long time since we all camped together," said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. "It feels natural."

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

"We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties," said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman's executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. "That's essential."

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered
Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:

A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.

MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Michael Klinski
Arugs Leader- Sioux Falls
Aug. 26, 2016

More than half a foot of rain fell on parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, sending flash floods ripping across roadways and pouring into basements. No one was hurt, but the waist-deep waters stranded scores of motorists and left hundreds mopping up wet basements.
Rainfall: More than half a foot of rain fell in parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, but the downpours were extremely localized. The National Weather Service recorded 2.61 inches at the airport, while Hartford had less than a quarter inch.
Vehicles: Scores of drivers were retrieving water-logged vehicles Friday morning. The phones were ringing off the hook at local towing companies. AAA reported 138 tows between 9 p.m. and 10 a.m.
Buildings: Home and business owners were mopping up after the storm. Hardware stores saw a run on sump pump and ShopVacs. HyVee on South Louise Avenue had two inches of water throughout the store.
No injuries reported. Sioux Falls Fire Rescue said Thursday night that it had no reports of injuries from the storm.
11:06 a.m. via reporter Mark Walker: A spokeswoman for the Empire Mall says rumors about a partial roof collapse are false. All but three stores were open for business. Yonkers was expected to reopen by 11:30 a.m.
11:04 a.m. via reporter Jill Callison: People with peaked roofs generally will come through a rainstorm like Thursday's with good shape, although the torrents of water may saturate the ground and flood the basement.

Homes and business with flat roofs, however, may experience damage since the water had no place to go, said Laura Woods of Woods Roofing of Canton.

"With flat roofs, it just fills up and can't get off fast enough," she said.

However, her company had received few phone calls as of Friday morning. In large part, in a catastrophic situation, it takes a few days before a situation is assessed thoroughly, Woods said.

UTAH

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork
(Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 25 2016 07:30PM • Updated 13 minutes ago

Although "best management practices" were to be used to keep Tibble Fork Reservoir's sediments out of the American Fork River, the Utah water district that is rehabilitating the dam drained the reservoir last weekend in a manner that allowed the river to incise a deep channel through 12 feet of potentially toxic muck and push the filth down one of Utah's favorite trout streams. While the water has since cleared somewhat, the sediment releases have continued virtually unabated because water officials cannot shut off releases without dewatering the river.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District's contractor is now digging a channel and laying pipe to divert the river's flow around 10-acre lake bed, contaminated from a legacy of gold and silver mining in the canyon's headwaters.

"They are working around the clock to do it. We said it would be within four days, and we will beat that schedule," said Brad Price of Provo-based RB&G Engineering, which designed the dam-rehab project. The river's flow should be moving around the lake by the pipe sometime Friday, he said, putting an end to the release of pollution that has been killing fish and fouling the popular canyon outside Provo for nearly a week.

Meanwhile, test results from water samples taken Monday and Tuesday had trickled back, but officials were still analyzing them late Thursday. The Utah Division of Water Quality planned to post the results once analysis was complete. Officials also are awaiting results from sediment and fish samples.

These results are crucial for advising northern Utah County water users how to respond to the crisis. The American Fork River feeds farms and secondary water systems in Highland and surrounding communities where residents were unsure whether they should keep the water off their lawns and gardens. There was enough uncertainty Wednesday that the U.S. Forest Service advised canyon visitors to stay out of the river as a matter of "common sense."

"I chased some kids out of the river [Wednesday] on my way home from work," said Jim Ireland, superintendent of Timpanogos Cave National Monument, which covers about a mile of stream in the lower reaches of the canyon. Monument personnel took water samples Monday that came back showing elevated levels of several metals, according to Ireland.

"We are concerned," he said. "We have a mission to preserve the resources of the monument and this is obviously an impact."

As of Thursday, however, the Utah County Health Department had refrained from advising residents against using the water for irrigating their yards.

Jonny Torrence, an angler who lives in American Fork, is believed to be the first to notice the fouled water when he entered the canyon Sunday evening to take his 3-year-old daughter fishing.

He had fished the canyon three days earlier and pulled 20 brown trout from the river's clear waters. But on Sunday, something was clearly wrong.

"I walked to the river and saw that it was absolutely brown," said Torrence, who snapped photos and alerted a local Trout Unlimited chapter that night. "I walked upriver and saw dead fish everywhere. It was flowing like pudding, it was so thick. By the time I got back to the road, it had gone down 3 or 4 inches because you could see the [deposited sediment] up on the banks that you couldn't see before.

"I was shocked. That's where my dad taught me to fly fish," he continued. "I would have thought it would be managed closer and they would take extreme precautions to prevent something like this."

Officials from the water district and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which helped fund the dam project, say precautions were taken and that it was expected that the reservoir draw-down would release some sediment.

However, the environmental assessment on the project indicated that no sediments should have escaped down the river. This is because levels of toxic heavy metals, such as arsenic and lead, are so elevated in the lake bed that the material could not be used as fill on the dam, whose crest will be raised 15 feet.

"The top layer of soil containing heavy metals would be tested, and any locations that exceed screening levels would not be disturbed," states the document, which the NRCS prepared. "These contaminated soils are not expected to be transported downstream and would therefore not affect the surrounding environment. Proper use of BMPs" — best management practices — "and timing of construction would almost eliminate contaminated soils from moving downstream during earth-disturbing activities."

Critics believe the heavy sediment releases would have been avoidable had the reservoir draw-down been better managed. Water flows into the reservoir at a rate of 12 cubic feet per second (cfs) from American Fork River and another 4 cfs from a side stream called Deer Creek, just a few hundred feet upstream of the dam. The plan was to release water at 40 cfs.

The actual rate of release remains a matter of dispute. But whatever the rate, it was apparently too fast, according to Brian Wimmer, president of the Trout Unlimited chapter that has been monitoring the spill and its aftermath.

A properly controlled release would have slowed the water flowing across the sediment bed once the reservoir emptied.

WYOMING

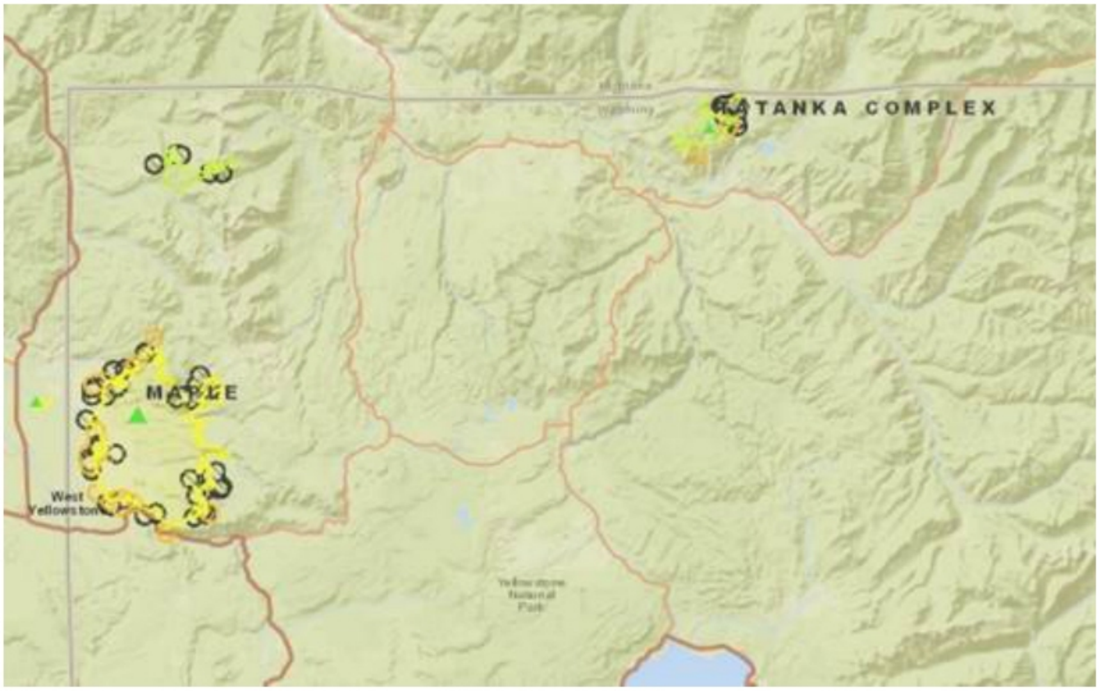
Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

By **Glenn Minnis** (**staff@latinpost.com**)

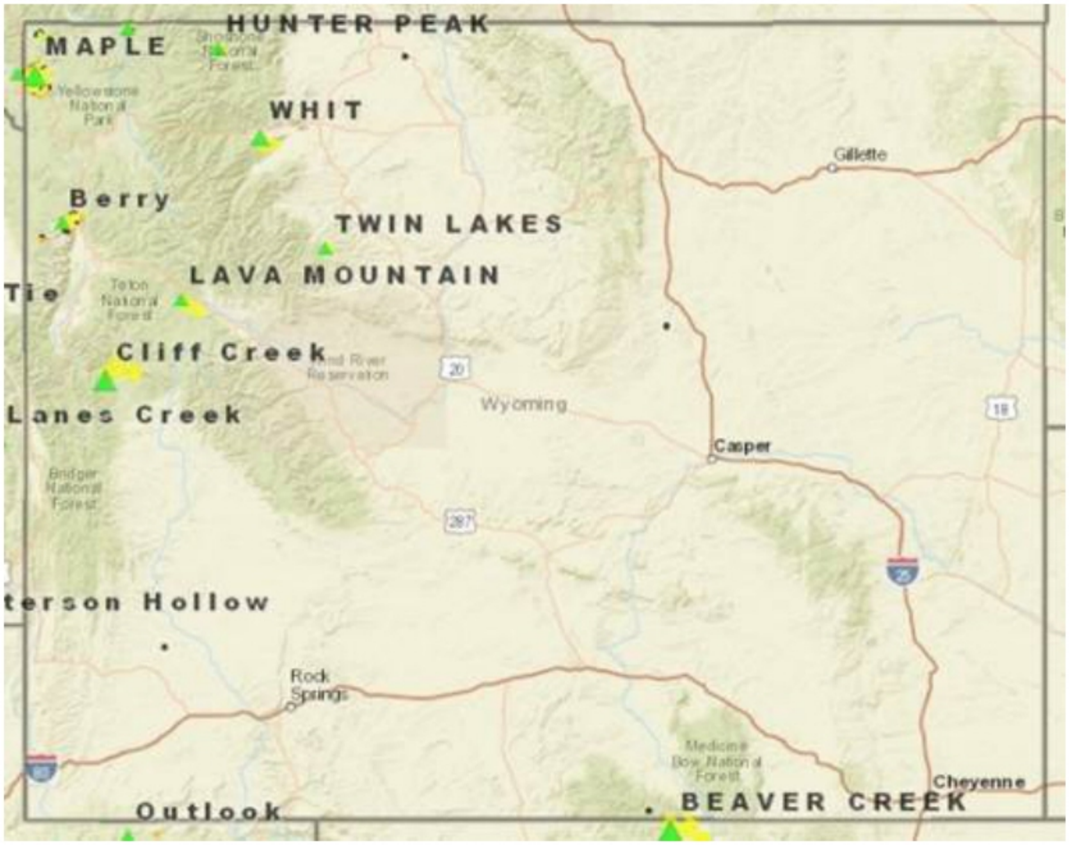
First Posted: Aug 25, 2016 06:45 AM EDT

The largest of four wildfires now simultaneously burning in Yellowstone Park (Maple, Buffalo, Fawn, Boundary fires) has Wyoming fire officials scrambling in a desperate effort to keep it from spreading to areas housing some of the park's tourist attractions.

As of Monday, all of the park's main tourist facilities remained open, even though the **Maple fire** (the biggest blaze among the four fires) is reported to have grown by nearly 10 square miles in a span of a few hours, prompting authorities to order more firefighters to the area. As authorities keep a vigilant eye on the nearby Madison Junction area of the park reserved for hiking, fishing and other activities, firemen are now working around the clock to contain the blaze. A 10-mile stretch of road leading to Yellowstone's South entrance has already been shuttered.



(Photo : Geomac.gov)


MAPLE
HUNTER PEAK
Shoshone National Forest
Yellowstone National Park
WHIT
Gillette
Berry
TWIN LAKES
LAVA MOUNTAIN
Tie
Teton National Forest
Cliff Creek
Wind River Reservation
20
Wyoming
18
Lanes Creek
Casper
Bridger National Forest
287
25
terson Hollow
Rock Springs
Medicine Bow National Forest
Cheyenne
BEAVER CREEK
Outlook

(Photo : Maple fire and Buffalo fire in Yellowstone National Park - Aug 2016)

Conditions Hampering Firefighters

Thus far, warm and windy weather has hampered efforts to contain the flames, which have charred approximately 35 square miles of primarily remote forest land. The proximity of the fire is reported to be between West Yellowstone, Montana, a town of about 1,300 situated just outside the park's western boundaries, and Madison Junction, a recreational area that sits within the park's confines.

Containment Essential

"As it's pushing off to the north and east, there's not a lot of values at risk as far as infrastructure goes," said Mike Johnson, a spokesman with the National Park Service. "We're going to keep the fire to the north of the West Entrance Road, and we have plans in place that if the fire were to move to the west toward West Yellowstone."

Madison Junction is also home to a campground, some visitor facilities and staff housing. It's described as where West Entrance Road intersects with the park's Grand Loop Road, linking such major tourist attractions as Old Faithful and Yellowstone Lake.

Johnson added firefighters are also busy battling the three smaller fires that have swept across the area.

As of early in the week, the Maple fire remained confined to about three miles away from Madison Junction and about four miles from the West Yellowstone Entrance station. On Sunday, the blaze spread several thousand more acres to now consume roughly 27,000 acres in total.

Meanwhile, authorities are now monitoring the two-week old, lightening caused Fawn fire by both ground and air with the acerage of the blaze currentlyb at around 1,800 acres.

The Buffalo fire in Tatanka Complex about 3 miles northeast of Tower Junction has simmered a bit and is now being managed via monitoring and so-called point-protection strategies.

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Both fire and ice briefly hindered travel into Yellowstone National Park on the National Park Service's centennial anniversary.

Authorities closed a portion of the Beartooth Highway Wednesday night due to snow and ice from a summer snowstorm. Crews cleared the roadway and reopened it Thursday morning.

The popular two-lane mountain highway runs from Red Lodge, Montana, over the Beartooth Pass to Yellowstone's Northeast Entrance.

At the other end of the park, a wildfire has closed a portion of the road leading to Yellowstone's South Entrance since Monday.

Visitors heading to Thursday's celebration and concert in Yellowstone from the south face an hour-long detour into Idaho.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

…

FLOOD INSURANCE POLITICS IN LOUISIANA SENATE RACE: With the residents of Baton Rouge desperately trying to recover from flood waters, flood insurance has become a major feature of the state's senate race to replace retiring Sen. David Vitter. Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon endorsed Republican Rep. Charles Boustany for Senate, arguing that he is "the only candidate I trust to fight for affordable flood insurance." Congress faces a September 2017 deadline to reauthorize the government-run National Flood Insurance Program. "I look forward to working with Commissioner Donelon to write common-sense flood insurance policy as Louisiana’s next United States Senator when Congress begins work on reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program in 2017," Boustany said in a statement.

…

NO ONE WANTS COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD INSURANCE: The Government Accountability Office on Wednesday backed FEMA's conclusion that community-based flood insurance isn't workable. As Finance Pro's Victoria Guida reports, FEMA was considering the option, under which communities could band together to buy flood insurance plans, but an analysis it released in March found the challenges too great to overcome. Now the GAO is supporting FEMA's conclusion. "The challenges outlined in the study outweigh any potential benefit when considered against limited community interest," GAO wrote. The National Flood insurance Program faces numerous challenges, not least its $23 billion in debt.

DECREPIT FLORIDA DIKE VULNERABLE TO LOOMING STORM: A potential tropical storm or hurricane developing in the Caribbean may be headed for Florida in the coming days, based on last night’s outlooks from the National Hurricane Center — posing exactly the scenario the Army Corps of Engineers has feared as it struggles with excessively high water levels in Lake Okeechobee. Earlier this summer, the agency reduced flows from the large inland lake amid pressure from residents and GOP Gov. Rick Scott to stem the flow of nutrient-choked runoff that fed toxic algae along the Treasure Coast. But that means lake levels remain higher than usual going into the busiest part of hurricane season — increasing the pressure on the leaky, decades-old dike that protects the lives of tens of thousands of residents.

Even a weak storm could cause big problems if it dumps tons of rain. As of Wednesday, lake levels were at 14.67 feet above sea level, while 17.5 feet is the level at which the corps believes the dike becomes unstable. The lake is the site of one of the deadliest disasters in U.S. history, a 1928 hurricane that killed more than 2,500 people.

Too little, too late: Today the corps will announce its management plans for the week ahead, but by the time you can see a storm coming it's too late to do much. "We just can't release water that fast," said John Campbell with the corps' Jacksonville district. In fact, a few days out the corps has to stop making releases from the lake so they don't flood communities downstream when the storm comes.

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

By Andrew Freedman

Yahoo! News, August 25, 2016

For days, a war has been raging between two of the premiere computer models used to help predict the weather. On the one side, there's the National Weather Service's Global Forecast System, or GFS, which has maintained that a tropical wave moving across Puerto Rico and Hispaniola will not intensify into a hurricane and strike Florida this weekend.

But other models have consistently outshone the GFS in both routine and high impact, high risk forecast situations.

On the other side of the battle is the European, or Euro model, which is run by the European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasting in England.

The Euro, which gained notoriety by catching on to Hurricane Sandy's unprecedented and catastrophic left hook into New Jersey a week in advance, has rattled Florida with its depiction of an intense tropical storm or hurricane hitting the southern part of the state this weekend.

Run after run, the Euro had stuck to its guns for the past three days, insisting that the area of inclement weather designated as "Invest 99L" would soon become Hurricane Hermine, potentially going on to menace Gulf Coastal states as a major hurricane of Category 3 intensity or greater.

The battlefield may have just changed significantly, though. It's unclear if a peace treaty has been signed, or if this is just a temporary lull in the fighting, but the afternoon run of the Euro model trended toward the GFS solution of a weaker storm.

In other words, it is no longer showing an intense storm hitting Florida on Sunday, and then intensifying over the unusually warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

This news is being met with cautious relief on social media. For example, Miami NBC-TV meteorologist John Morales welcomed the new computer model trend.

Weather Channel meteorologist Justin Abraham comically celebrated what he sees as a potential GFS victory over the top-seeded European model.

However, Floridians shouldn't let down their guard yet, since the swirling cloud mass located north of Haiti could still persevere despite two main challenges.

Invest 99L has been contending with layers of dry air that have stifled the development of thunderstorms near the center of the storm. Such thunderstorms are needed in order for the weather system to form a closed area of low pressure at the surface and intensify.

The wind shear is forecast to diminish starting in about 24 to 36 hours, at which point it's possible both the Euro and GFS will be wrong, and the storm will intensify rapidly.

"Although upper-level winds are not conducive for significant development during the next day or so, they could become a little more favorable over the weekend or early next week when the wave is expected to approach southern Florida or the southeastern Gulf of Mexico," the National Hurricane Center said in a 2 p.m. ET statement on the weather system.

The Hurricane Center lowered Invest 99L's chances of developing into a tropical depression, tropical storm or hurricane to 70 percent through 5 days, down from 80 percent earlier in the day.

For now, Invest 99L looks like a poor excuse for a tropical weather system that is inspiring trepidation in a coastal state like Florida. Its center is exposed and comprised only of low-level clouds, and the largest thunderstorms are displaced several hundred miles away from the center.

In short, it looks like garbage, from a tropical meteorology perspective.

Whether it turns into something more impressive remains to be seen, but for now, it’s encouraging that the great model war of August 2016 may be coming to an end.

Region VIII Clips

Friday, August 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A "National Cybersecurity Center" in Colorado Springs will hire a CEO next month and host a national conference in November.
- **Montana:** Nine counties are in severe drought status.
- **North Dakota:** More pipeline protest stories: the NY Times details who wants what; the Bismarck Tribune reports the builders do not yet have a written easement from the Corps, though they do have permission to get the easement; the Tribune also reports on camp life among the protesters; National Public Radio did an overview piece. Snopes.com refuted social media reports that the state had cut off water to the protesters.
- **South Dakota:** The Sioux Falls Argus Leader looks back at the flood a year ago.
- **Utah:** Toxic sediments continue to flow into the American Fork River. It is hoped that by today a diversion will have been built around the lake to allow water to continue to flow down the river without continuing contamination. Health officials have not yet finished analyzing the water or issued guidelines as to how to respond.
- **Wyoming:** Maps show where the Yellowstone Park fires stood earlier this week…. *The Billings Gazette* reports that both fire and ice hampered the park yesterday.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: An environmental column in Politico.com today includes several items of interest: environmentalists trying to recreate the coalition that stopped the Keystone pipeline to fight the Dakota Access pipeline; a comment by a judge in the pipeline case that may show he leans toward an injunction; affordable flood insurance becoming an issue in the Louisiana Senate race; a GAO study that supports FEMA's position saying community-based flood insurance won't work; an old Florida dike that may be vulnerable to the approaching storm… Yahoo news reports on competing hurricane forecasts.

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North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who's Fighting and Why (NY Times)

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

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Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

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Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

STORIES

COLORADO

Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs to hire CEO and host national conference (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman

The National Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs plans to hire a CEO next month and will host officials from across the country at a three-day conference in November at The Broadmoor.

A four-person search committee from among the center's 12 directors will conduct interviews and make a recommendation to the board, which plans to select the CEO by mid- to late September, said Eric Hopfenbeck, the center's deputy executive director. Hopfenbeck was speaking at a panel discussion Wednesday about the facility held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. The board began the nationwide search process in early July with help from Heidrick & Struggles International Inc., a Chicago-based executive search firm. The company helped create a job description and determine pay and other details about the position.

"The budget, staff and management structure (of the center) will be determined after the CEO is hired," Hopfenbeck said. "We are still in the development stage, so we are collecting contact information from consultants, partners and subject-matter experts who want to support the NCC."

The center's three-person staff is headed by retired Army Lt. Gen. Ed Anderson, who serves as interim executive director and also is executive director of strategic, military, science, space and security initiatives for University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak.

The panel discussion was part of a two-day cybersecurity training and technology forum hosted by the Colorado Springs chapter of the Information Systems Security Association that also included a keynote address by Mark Weatherford, a NCC board member who also is a former deputy undersecretary for cybersecurity of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The newly hired CEO will have a major role in organizing a three-day National Cybersecurity Institute the center will host Nov. 13-15 at The Broadmoor for invited guests that include governors and attorneys general of all 50 states plus an undisclosed number of mayors and county commissioners, Hopfenbeck said. The event will bring real-time information on the latest cyber trends, security, best practices and education resources to the elected officials to help them better protect government computer systems, networks and critical public assets.

The conference will be the center's public launch. A Rapid Response Center to help small- to mid-sized businesses, nonprofits and government agencies combat and recover from cyber attacks, and a Cyber Research, Education and Training Center that will conduct research on cybersecurity threats and develop a cybersecurity workforce through education programs at UCCS and other schools around the state and nation, are expected to begin operations by next summer. UCCS is meeting with other colleges and universities to develop a cybersecurity curriculum, Hopfenbeck said.

The center also will work with the Western Cyber Exchange and Air Force CyberWorx. The exchange is a 5-year-old group started to strengthen local cybersecurity measures, attract more workers to the industry and share information about cyber attacks and how to prevent and defend against them. The exchange also operates the nation's only Information Sharing and Analysis Organization focused on the private sector. CyberWorx, formerly the Air Force Cyber Innovation Center, does research and testing of cyber security issues and technology at the Air Force Academy.

The center has received three proposals from contractors for renovations to a former TRW manufacturing plant at 3650 N. Nevada Ave. Renovations will be funded by nearly $8 million included in legislation signed into law by Gov. John Hickenlooper in May. A contractor is expected to be selected by mid-September. The building is owned by UCCS and will become the center's permanent home when renovations are complete. The center is operating from temporary offices at 1867 Austin Bluffs Parkway, Suite 200, across from the east end of the UCCS campus.

MONTANA

Lewis and Clark among 9 Montana counties in severe drought, 11 more under alert (Helena Independent Record)

TOM KUGLIN Independent Record

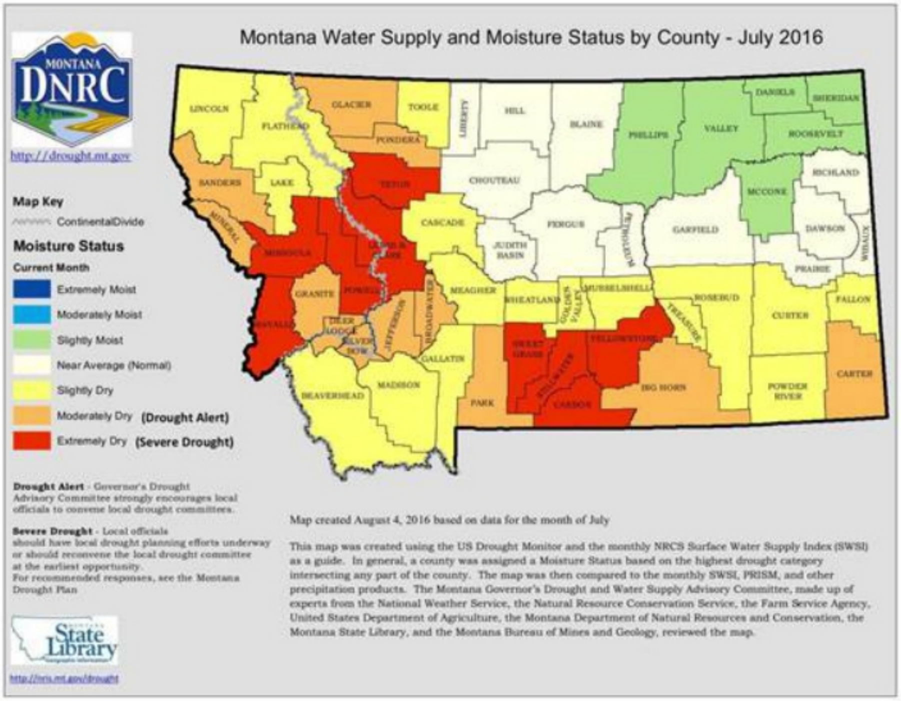
State officials say Lewis and Clark County is among nine in Montana that reached “severe drought” status Thursday, while another 11 counties have hit “drought alert.”

Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney is chairman of the Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee. He says the region has had two years of low snowpack, early runoff and little moisture under the soil.

The alert and severe designation are intended “to give high visibility to the continuing impacts of drought in affected areas, to prompt communication among stakeholders, and to direct state agencies to take the steps identified in the Montana Drought Response Plan to mitigate the impacts of drought,” Cooney wrote in a letter to county commissioners.

The counties in severe drought are Lewis and Clark, Powell, Teton, Missoula, Sweet Grass, Stillwater, Carbon and Yellowstone.

The seven counties put on alert status Thursday are Broadwater, Jefferson, Silver Bow, Granite, Mineral, Park and Big Horn. Glacier, Pondera, Carter and Sanders counties were previously on drought alert.



Montana Water Supply and Moisture Status by County - July 2016

http://drought.mt.gov
Map Key
ContinentalDivide
Moisture Status
Current Month
Extremely Moist
Moderately Moist
Slightly Moist
Near Average (Normal)
Slightly Dry
Moderately Dry (Drought Alert)
Extremely Dry (Severe Drought)
LINCOLN
FLATHEAD
GLACIER
TOOLE
LIBERTY
HILL
BLAINE
PHILLIPS
VALLEY
DANIELS
SHERIDAN
ROOSEVELT
PONDERA
SANDERS
LAKE
TETON
CHOUTEAU
RICHLAND
MCCONE
MINERAL
MISSOULA
LEWIS & CLARK
CASCADE
JUDITH BASIN
FERGUS
PETROLEUM
GARFIELD
DAWSON
WIBAUX
PRAIRIE
RAVALLI
GRANITE
POWELL
DEER LODGE
SILVER BOW
JEFFERSON
BROADWATER
MEAGHER
WHEATLAND
GOLDEN VALLEY
MUSSELSHELL
ROSEBUD
CUSTER
FALLON
TREASURE
YELLOWSTONE
SWEET GRASS
STILLWATER
CARBON
BIG HORN
POWDER RIVER
CARTER
GALLATIN
PARK
MADISON
BEAVERHEAD
http://nris.mt.gov/drought

Drought Alert - Governor's Drought Advisory Committee strongly encourages local officials to convene local drought committees.

Severe Drought - Local officials should have local drought planning efforts underway or should reconvene the local drought committee at the earliest opportunity.
For recommended responses, see the Montana Drought Plan

Map created August 4, 2016 based on data for the month of July

This map was created using the US Drought Monitor and the monthly NRCS Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) as a guide. In general, a county was assigned a Moisture Status based on the highest drought category intersecting any part of the county. The map was then compared to the monthly SWSI, PRISM, and other precipitation products. The Montana Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee, made up of experts from the National Weather Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana State Library, and the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, reviewed the map.

DNRC

Neither the alert nor the severe designations carry any official status with respect to state or federal disaster assistance programs.

The severe designation prompts county commissioners and disaster and emergency services coordinators to document any economic, health and safety emergencies that warrant either state or federal dollars, according to DNRC drought coordinator Ada Montague.

The alert status prompts local officials to document crop or livestock loss or impacts that could then trigger federal disaster assistance, she added.

“At the local level, certain watersheds have voluntarily developed local drought response plans, namely the Blackfoot, the Big Hole and the Jefferson,” Montague wrote in an email. “This is where water right holders have worked together to determine proper triggers and response mechanisms for individual water bodies.”

Montana’s drought plan was written in 1995 and the state is currently in the process of updating it, she said.

Lewis and Clark County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Paul Spengler says the driest portions of the county are in the north and along the Rocky Mountain Front. The Helena Valley is also seeing about a 2-inch shortfall on precipitation this year, he said.

The drought does affect irrigators that tap creeks or streams and dry-land farmers, but those on the Helena Valley Irrigation District drawing from the Missouri River are not limited, said Jim Foster with the district.

Irrigators depending on the Sun River, suffering from particularly low snow pack, have seen their water usage cut early this year.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who’s Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline’s charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment. The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota’s governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country's pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

For breaking news and in-depth reporting, follow @NYTNational on Twitter.

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

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Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

"They can't build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe," Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company's decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any "Jane and John Doe" from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe's request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

"Everybody thought they had it (easement)," said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. "This is really important information."

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

"We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There's nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court's injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday's news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

"The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she'll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people," Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

"It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making," Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

“When this is done, if it’s ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered

Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:

A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.

MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

❌ mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Michael Klinski
Arugs Leader- Sioux Falls
Aug. 26, 2016

More than half a foot of rain fell on parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, sending flash floods ripping across roadways and pouring into basements. No one was hurt, but the waist-deep waters stranded scores of motorists and left hundreds mopping up wet basements.

Rainfall: More than half a foot of rain fell in parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, but the downpours were extremely localized. The National Weather Service recorded 2.61 inches at the airport, while Hartford had less than a quarter inch.

Vehicles: Scores of drivers were retrieving water-logged vehicles Friday morning. The phones were ringing off the hook at local towing companies. AAA reported 138 tows between 9 p.m. and 10 a.m.

Buildings: Home and business owners were mopping up after the storm. Hardware stores saw a run on sump pump and ShopVacs. HyVee on South Louise Avenue had two inches of water throughout the store.

No injuries reported. Sioux Falls Fire Rescue said Thursday night that it had no reports of injuries from the storm.

11:06 a.m. via reporter Mark Walker: A spokeswoman for the Empire Mall says rumors about a partial roof collapse are false. All but three stores were open for business. Yonkers was expected to reopen by 11:30 a.m.

11:04 a.m. via reporter Jill Callison: People with peaked roofs generally will come through a rainstorm like Thursday’s with good shape, although the torrents of water may saturate the ground and flood the basement.

Homes and business with flat roofs, however, may experience damage since the water had no place to go, said Laura Woods of Woods Roofing of Canton.

“With flat roofs, it just fills up and can’t get off fast enough,” she said.

However, her company had received few phone calls as of Friday morning. In large part, in a catastrophic situation, it takes a few days before a situation is assessed thoroughly, Woods said.

UTAH

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 25 2016 07:30PM • Updated 13 minutes ago

Although "best management practices" were to be used to keep Tibble Fork Reservoir's sediments out of the American Fork River, the Utah water district that is rehabilitating the dam drained the reservoir last weekend in a manner that allowed the river to incise a deep channel through 12 feet of potentially toxic muck and push the filth down one of Utah's favorite trout streams. While the water has since cleared somewhat, the sediment releases have continued virtually unabated because water officials cannot shut off releases without dewatering the river.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District's contractor is now digging a channel and laying pipe to divert the river's flow around 10-acre lake bed, contaminated from a legacy of gold and silver mining in the canyon's headwaters.

"They are working around the clock to do it. We said it would be within four days, and we will beat that schedule," said Brad Price of Provo-based RB&G Engineering, which designed the dam-rehab project. The river's flow should be moving around the lake by the pipe sometime Friday, he said, putting an end to the release of pollution that has been killing fish and fouling the popular canyon outside Provo for nearly a week.

Meanwhile, test results from water samples taken Monday and Tuesday had trickled back, but officials were still analyzing them late Thursday. The Utah Division of Water Quality planned to post the results once analysis was complete. Officials also are awaiting results from sediment and fish samples.

These results are crucial for advising northern Utah County water users how to respond to the crisis. The American Fork River feeds farms and secondary water systems in Highland and surrounding communities where residents were unsure whether they should keep the water off their lawns and gardens. There was enough uncertainty Wednesday that the U.S. Forest Service advised canyon visitors to stay out of the river as a matter of "common sense."

"I chased some kids out of the river [Wednesday] on my way home from work," said Jim Ireland, superintendent of Timpanogos Cave National Monument, which covers about a mile of stream in the lower reaches of the canyon. Monument personnel took water samples Monday that came back showing elevated levels of several metals, according to Ireland.

"We are concerned," he said. "We have a mission to preserve the resources of the monument and this is obviously an impact."

As of Thursday, however, the Utah County Health Department had refrained from advising residents against using the water for irrigating their yards.

Jonny Torrence, an angler who lives in American Fork, is believed to be the first to notice the fouled water when he entered the canyon Sunday evening to take his 3-year-old daughter fishing.

He had fished the canyon three days earlier and pulled 20 brown trout from the river's clear waters. But on Sunday, something was clearly wrong.

"I walked to the river and saw that it was absolutely brown," said Torrence, who snapped photos and alerted a local Trout Unlimited chapter that night. "I walked upriver and saw dead fish everywhere. It was flowing like pudding, it was so thick. By the time I got back to the road, it had gone down 3 or 4 inches because you could see the [deposited sediment] up on the banks that you couldn't see before.

"I was shocked. That's where my dad taught me to fly fish," he continued. "I would have thought it would be managed closer and they would take extreme precautions to prevent something like this."

Officials from the water district and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which helped fund the dam project, say precautions were taken and that it was expected that the reservoir draw-down would release some sediment.

However, the environmental assessment on the project indicated that no sediments should have escaped down the river. This is because levels of toxic heavy metals, such as arsenic and lead, are so elevated in the lake bed that the material could not be used as fill on the dam, whose crest will be raised 15 feet.

"The top layer of soil containing heavy metals would be tested, and any locations that exceed screening levels would not be disturbed," states the document, which the NRCS prepared. "These contaminated soils are not expected to be transported downstream and would therefore not affect the surrounding environment. Proper use of BMPs" — best management practices — "and timing of construction would almost eliminate contaminated soils from moving downstream during earth-disturbing activities."

Critics believe the heavy sediment releases would have been avoidable had the reservoir draw-down been better managed. Water flows into the reservoir at a rate of 12 cubic feet per second (cfs) from American Fork River and another 4 cfs from a side stream called Deer Creek, just a few hundred feet upstream of the dam. The plan was to release water at 40 cfs.

The actual rate of release remains a matter of dispute. But whatever the rate, it was apparently too fast, according to Brian Wimmer, president of the Trout Unlimited chapter that has been monitoring the spill and its aftermath.

A properly controlled release would have slowed the water flowing across the sediment bed once the reservoir emptied.

WYOMING

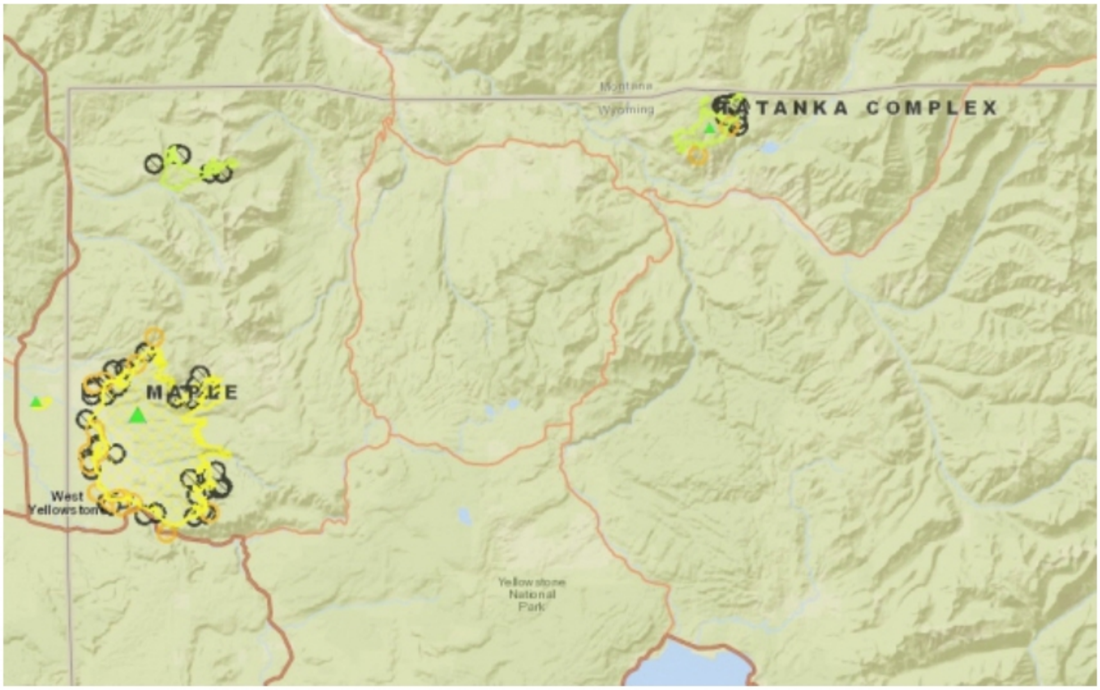
Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

By **Glenn Minnis** (**staff@latinpost.com**)

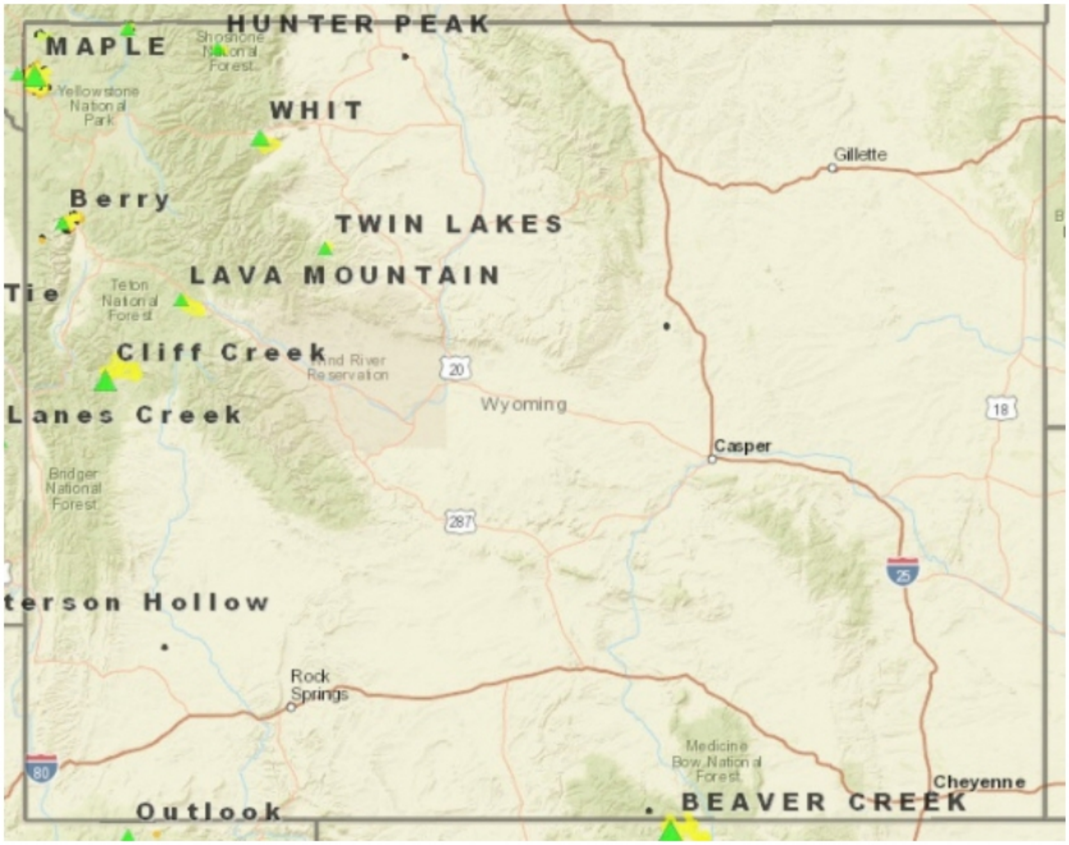
First Posted: Aug 25, 2016 06:45 AM EDT

The largest of four wildfires now simultaneously burning in Yellowstone Park (Maple, Buffalo, Fawn, Boundary fires) has Wyoming fire officials scrambling in a desperate effort to keep it from spreading to areas housing some of the park's tourist attractions.

As of Monday, all of the park's main tourist facilities remained open, even though the **Maple fire** (the biggest blaze among the four fires) is reported to have grown by nearly 10 square miles in a span of a few hours, prompting authorities to order more firefighters to the area. As authorities keep a vigilant eye on the nearby Madison Junction area of the park reserved for hiking, fishing and other activities, firemen are now working around the clock to contain the blaze. A 10-mile stretch of road leading to Yellowstone's South entrance has already been shuttered.



(Photo : Geomac.gov)


HUNTER PEAK
MAPLE
Shoshone National Forest
Yellowstone National Park
WHIT
Gillette
Berry
TWIN LAKES
LAVA MOUNTAIN
Tie
Teton National Forest
Cliff Creek
nd River Reservation
20
Wyoming
18
Lanes Creek
Casper
Bridger National Forest
287
25
terson Hollow
Rock Springs
80
Medicine Bow National Forest
Cheyenne
BEAVER CREEK
Outlook

(Photo : Maple fire and Buffalo fire in Yellowstone National Park - Aug 2016)

Conditions Hampering Firefighters

Thus far, warm and windy weather has hampered efforts to contain the flames, which have charred approximately 35 square miles of primarily remote forest land. The proximity of the fire is reported to be between West Yellowstone, Montana, a town of about 1,300 situated just outside the park's western boundaries, and Madison Junction, a recreational area that sits within the park's confines.

Containment Essential

"As it's pushing off to the north and east, there's not a lot of values at risk as far as infrastructure goes," said Mike Johnson, a spokesman with the National Park Service. "We're going to keep the fire to the north of the West Entrance Road, and we have plans in place that if the fire were to move to the west toward West Yellowstone."

Madison Junction is also home to a campground, some visitor facilities and staff housing. It's described as where West Entrance Road intersects with the park's Grand Loop Road, linking such major tourist attractions as Old Faithful and Yellowstone Lake.

Johnson added firefighters are also busy battling the three smaller fires that have swept across the area.

As of early in the week, the Maple fire remained confined to about three miles away from Madison Junction and about four miles from the West Yellowstone Entrance station. On Sunday, the blaze spread several thousand more acres to now consume roughly 27,000 acres in total.

Meanwhile, authorities are now monitoring the two-week old, lightening caused Fawn fire by both ground and air with the acerage of the blaze currentlyb at around 1,800 acres.

The Buffalo fire in Tatanka Complex about 3 miles northeast of Tower Junction has simmered a bit and is now being managed via monitoring and so-called point-protection strategies.

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Both fire and ice briefly hindered travel into Yellowstone National Park on the National Park Service's centennial anniversary.

Authorities closed a portion of the Beartooth Highway Wednesday night due to snow and ice from a summer snowstorm. Crews cleared the roadway and reopened it Thursday morning.

The popular two-lane mountain highway runs from Red Lodge, Montana, over the Beartooth Pass to Yellowstone's Northeast Entrance.

At the other end of the park, a wildfire has closed a portion of the road leading to Yellowstone's South Entrance since Monday.

Visitors heading to Thursday's celebration and concert in Yellowstone from the south face an hour-long detour into Idaho.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

…

FLOOD INSURANCE POLITICS IN LOUISIANA SENATE RACE: With the residents of Baton Rouge desperately trying to recover from flood waters, flood insurance has become a major feature of the state's senate race to replace retiring Sen. David Vitter. Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon endorsed Republican Rep. Charles Boustany for Senate, arguing that he is "the only candidate I trust to fight for affordable flood insurance." Congress faces a September 2017 deadline to reauthorize the government-run National Flood Insurance Program. "I look forward to working with Commissioner Donelon to write common-sense flood insurance policy as Louisiana’s next United States Senator when Congress begins work on reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program in 2017," Boustany said in a statement.

…

NO ONE WANTS COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD INSURANCE: The Government Accountability Office on Wednesday backed FEMA's conclusion that community-based flood insurance isn't workable. As Finance Pro's Victoria Guida reports, FEMA was considering the option, under which communities could band together to buy flood insurance plans, but an analysis it released in March found the challenges too great to overcome. Now the GAO is supporting FEMA's conclusion. "The challenges outlined in the study outweigh any potential benefit when considered against limited community interest," GAO wrote. The National Flood insurance Program faces numerous challenges, not least its $23 billion in debt.

DECREPIT FLORIDA DIKE VULNERABLE TO LOOMING STORM: A potential tropical storm or hurricane developing in the Caribbean may be headed for Florida in the coming days, based on last night’s outlooks from the National Hurricane Center — posing exactly the scenario the Army Corps of Engineers has feared as it struggles with excessively high water levels in Lake Okeechobee. Earlier this summer, the agency reduced flows from the large inland lake amid pressure from residents and GOP Gov. Rick Scott to stem the flow of nutrient-choked runoff that fed toxic algae along the Treasure Coast. But that means lake levels remain higher than usual going into the busiest part of hurricane season — increasing the pressure on the leaky, decades-old dike that protects the lives of tens of thousands of residents.

Even a weak storm could cause big problems if it dumps tons of rain. As of Wednesday, lake levels were at 14.67 feet above sea level, while 17.5 feet is the level at which the corps believes the dike becomes unstable. The lake is the site of one of the deadliest disasters in U.S. history, a 1928 hurricane that killed more than 2,500 people.

Too little, too late: Today the corps will announce its management plans for the week ahead, but by the time you can see a storm coming it's too late to do much. "We just can't release water that fast," said John Campbell with the corps' Jacksonville district. In fact, a few days out the corps has to stop making releases from the lake so they don't flood communities downstream when the storm comes.

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

By Andrew Freedman

Yahoo! News, August 25, 2016

For days, a war has been raging between two of the premiere computer models used to help predict the weather. On the one side, there's the National Weather Service's Global Forecast System, or GFS, which has maintained that a tropical wave moving across Puerto Rico and Hispaniola will not intensify into a hurricane and strike Florida this weekend.

But other models have consistently outshone the GFS in both routine and high impact, high risk forecast situations.

On the other side of the battle is the European, or Euro model, which is run by the European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasting in England.

The Euro, which gained notoriety by catching on to Hurricane Sandy's unprecedented and catastrophic left hook into New Jersey a week in advance, has rattled Florida with its depiction of an intense tropical storm or hurricane hitting the southern part of the state this weekend.

Run after run, the Euro had stuck to its guns for the past three days, insisting that the area of inclement weather designated as "Invest 99L" would soon become Hurricane Hermine, potentially going on to menace Gulf Coastal states as a major hurricane of Category 3 intensity or greater.

The battlefield may have just changed significantly, though. It's unclear if a peace treaty has been signed, or if this is just a temporary lull in the fighting, but the afternoon run of the Euro model trended toward the GFS solution of a weaker storm.

In other words, it is no longer showing an intense storm hitting Florida on Sunday, and then intensifying over the unusually warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

This news is being met with cautious relief on social media. For example, Miami NBC-TV meteorologist John Morales welcomed the new computer model trend.

Weather Channel meteorologist Justin Abraham comically celebrated what he sees as a potential GFS victory over the top-seeded European model.

However, Floridians shouldn't let down their guard yet, since the swirling cloud mass located north of Haiti could still persevere despite two main challenges.

Invest 99L has been contending with layers of dry air that have stifled the development of thunderstorms near the center of the storm. Such thunderstorms are needed in order for the weather system to form a closed area of low pressure at the surface and intensify.

The wind shear is forecast to diminish starting in about 24 to 36 hours, at which point it's possible both the Euro and GFS will be wrong, and the storm will intensify rapidly.

"Although upper-level winds are not conducive for significant development during the next day or so, they could become a little more favorable over the weekend or early next week when the wave is expected to approach southern Florida or the southeastern Gulf of Mexico," the National Hurricane Center said in a 2 p.m. ET statement on the weather system.

The Hurricane Center lowered Invest 99L's chances of developing into a tropical depression, tropical storm or hurricane to 70 percent through 5 days, down from 80 percent earlier in the day.

For now, Invest 99L looks like a poor excuse for a tropical weather system that is inspiring trepidation in a coastal state like Florida. Its center is exposed and comprised only of low-level clouds, and the largest thunderstorms are displaced several hundred miles away from the center.

In short, it looks like garbage, from a tropical meteorology perspective.

Whether it turns into something more impressive remains to be seen, but for now, it’s encouraging that the great model war of August 2016 may be coming to an end.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 31 Aug 2016 13:12:39 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6) ,
(b)(6) @state.co.us'(b)(6) @mail.mil'(b)(6) @state.sd.us';(b)(6) (b)(@utah.gov'(b)(6) @wyo.gov';(b)(6) @nd.gov'(b)(6) @state.sd.us'(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov'(b)(6) @usace.army.mil'(b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert(b)(6) @usace.army.mil'(b)(6) @state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6) @hhs.gov'(b)(6) @hhs.gov'(b)(6) @hhs.gov'(b)(6) @sba.gov'(b)(6) @sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6) @mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew(b)(6) @fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA clips for last day of August
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-31-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 31, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A story follows through on the damage from the recent hailstorm in Colorado Springs. Hail was as deep as three feet in some basements.
- **Montana:** A Bismarck reprint of a Billings Gazette article repeats the call for separate disaster funding for fighting wildfires… A TV story reports on attempts to help economically, including SBA loans, after the closure of the Yellowstone River…. Wildfires remained relatively stable.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from an environmental web site that cites objections to the pipeline from three federal agencies similar to what the tribe is protesting. Also, an Omaha TV station gives an overview of the situation. … Three tornadoes hit eastern North Dakota over the weekend.
- **South Dakota:** Lawrence County officials approved further investigation into whether to do a program to prevent damage from a previous wildfire. They expressed hesitation because of a previous experience with a cost-share with FEMA… A Yankton resident died from West Nile virus.
- **Utah:** State water officials are insisting on a plan to analyze the damage and what to do about the toxic sediment in the American Fork River. The memory of the Gold King Mine spill is a warning of further potential hazards.
- **Wyoming:** The southern entrance to Yellowstone National Park is open again.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, gives an overview of the stormy weather currently threatening parts of the U.S. … The CDC says sit will run out of money to fight the Zika virus in September.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

NBC: Severe Weather.

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

STORIES

COLORADO

Homeowners looking at major losses after hail and flooding in Colorado Springs (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

By Bill Folsom

The people living in areas of Colorado Springs inundated by hail and water on Monday, spent Tuesday cleaning up and assessing damage. "Literally found ourselves homeless overnight," said John Martin who lived in one of the damaged homes on Logan Avenue. Multiple residents on the street are facing so much damage their homes will be unlivable for some time.

Many homes end up with hail and water in their homes. The basements of several homes filled with hail as deep as three feet. Other rooms show water makes several feet up walls. Where water subsided it left behind a coating of mud.

Erma Medina rents out a home on Logan Avenue. It is one of the homes with hail filling the basement.

There has been flooding in the area before, but never like this. She carried FEMA flood insurance until about a year ago when she says several city storm water drains outside her property were upgraded. With this disaster she see the problem as hail, but she says her insurance company says it is flooding. Sitting on a retaining wall outside the house Medina points to the remaining kneed deep hail, "Look at that hail. You can see the hail in the basement. The windows were broken by hail and they say it was flood. I don't believe it was a flood, no. She will dispute the claim, but says insurance or no insurance help she will find a way to repair the damage.

MONTANA

Western fires take big toll on programs (Billings Gazette, reprinted in Bismarck Tribune)

The late August sun is a smoky red ball, reminding Montanans of the fires that have destroyed homes and curtailed business in the West this summer. It's so dry in parts of Montana, Wyoming, California and other Western states that big fires are likely to burn until autumn snow falls. If lightning storms and wind persist, the fires will be bigger and more numerous.

The destruction is costly, and so is the firefighting. One year ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on the rising cost of fire operations and how it affected the Forest Service's other work. The numbers indicate that the Forest Service ought to be called the "fire service" because that's how the agency spent most of its budget. The USDA summed up the problem of "the depletion of non-fire programs to pay for the ever-increasing costs of fire." This has resulted in:

- Less money for restoration work that would help prevent catastrophic fires.

- Less protection of watersheds and cultural resources.

- Reduced upkeep of programs and infrastructure that support thousands of recreation jobs and billions of dollars economic growth in rural communities.

- Reduced support for the range of multiple uses, benefits and ecosystem services.

- Less research and technical assistance.

Firefighting staff has increased from 5,700 in 1998 to more than 12,000 in 2015. Meanwhile, the non-firefighting forest workers have been reduced by 39 percent — from 18,000 employees in 1998 to fewer than 11,000 last year.

Every non-firefighting program has been slashed. Forest road-building has been reduced 46 percent. Deferred maintenance funding was cut 95 percent despite a backlog of more than $5.1 billion in dam repairs, roads, sewer and water system improvements.

Lack of funding for everything but fires has prevented the agency from doing things that would save money in the long term. Energy efficiency projects have been deferred. Funding hasn't been available for partnership programs that generate private matching funds.

The report concluded with the solution that Congress has been delaying for years: Change the way we pay for wildfire fighting. Treat wildfires as the natural disasters they are.

In June, Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., spoke on behalf of draft legislation called the Wildfire Budgeting, Response and Forest Management Act. The first thing it would do, according to a Daines news release, is "end the unsustainable practice of fire borrowing by enabling a transfer of limited funds to the Forest Service and the Department of Interior through a budget cap adjustment when all appropriated suppressions funding (100 percent of the 10-year average) has been exhausted."

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., reaffirmed his support for the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. Both he and Daines are co-sponsors of the act, which would "pay for catastrophic wildfires through separate emergency funding, allowing the Forest Service to devote more resources to proactive forest management like trail maintenance and timber harvest."

If S.235, which both of our U.S. senators are co-sponsoring, had been enacted and funded last year, the Forest Service would have $1.4 billion more to fight wildfires this year. But it didn't pass, so the Forest Service will again have to rob all its other operations to pay for the fiery disasters this year.

Montana's senators are in a good position to promote this bipartisan solution. Among many proposals for forest management involving timber harvest, recreation and conservation, nothing else is going to work well if the budget continues to be diverted to wildfire.

Lawmakers must stop the "fire borrowing" before another wildfire season begins. We call on Daines and Tester to work together to unite other Western senators and pass wildfire disaster legislation this year.
— Billings (Mont) Gazette

Efforts underway to help while portion of Yellowstone River is closed for businesses (KRTV, Great Falls)

By Morgan McKay - MTN News

LIVINGSTON - Governor Steve Bullock scheduled a Rapid Response Training meeting Monday for those affected by the closure of the Yellowstone River.

Many people like Chase Chapman have been left wondering how they will get through a Montana winter, since the closure of the Yellowstone has forced them to close their business.

"I don't need retraining, I'm very good at what I do," said Chapman, who is a fly fishing guide and teacher in Livingston. "When all these Congressman want to go catch a big fish, I go through Yellowstone Angler and we catch some big fish."

"So I came to this meeting today with some hope of maybe there's some grants available for a small business person, because if they opened up the river again tomorrow, I've now sold all my inventory," said Beth O'Neill, owner of SUP Montana.

Earlier today, Governor Bullock signed an executive order proclaiming an invasive species emergency to exist in the State of Montana. This order allows for different organizations to offer relief.

“We heard your concerns and taking a multi agency approach to addressing the immediate needs of workers who rely on the Yellowstone River for their livelihoods,” said Bullock.

Local and Park County government officials attended the meeting as well as representatives from agencies such as the Montana Chamber of Commerce and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

“We do everything from helping folks file their unemployment claims to assisting them to potentially go into training folks who may have been impacted by this or a similar event,” said Zack Medina, with Job Services.

“This isn't a handout, this isn't an entitlement program,” said Paul Martin, Bureau Chief of Unemployment Insurance. “It's a week to week eligibility program, it's funded by employers through payroll taxes.”

While unemployment insurance was one favorable option, other resources available were loans or a different temporary job placement.

“The last thing you want to do is get into debt, but there are economic injury loans, we can go up to two million (dollars),” said John Donovan, Small Business Administration.

Those businesses affected by the closure of the Yellowstone are encouraged to contact the Institute for Tourism and Recreation at the University of Montana, to help aid them in studying the full economic impact of the closure.

“Montanans I think, what makes us special, is to live here you have to learn to do several things,” said Chapman.

According to latest information released by FWP today, out of 30 trout tested in the upper Yellowstone, only two brown trout tested positive for the parasitic infection.

Officials say there is only evidence of the parasite, but not the disease. FWP also is saying there have been no trout mortalities documented from the disease.

Cloud cover keeps Copper King, Roaring Lion fires quiet (Missoulian)

- KIM BRIGGEMAN kbriggeman@missoulian.com

THOMPSON FALLS – Tuesday turned out to be a good day to fight fires in western Montana, though crews were keeping a lookout for a cool front blowing in from Oregon.

“There’s been a cloud cover over the fire this afternoon that’s kind of kept it subdued during the day,” spokesman Mike Cole said from the Copper King fire east of Thompson Falls.

A red flag warning issued for the afternoon and evening suggested dry thunderstorms might mix with temperatures in the 90s and relative humidity in the low to mid-teens and cause problems at both the Copper King and the Roaring Lion southwest of Hamilton, which turns a month old on Wednesday.

“I’m not sure if they’re actually going to produce over our area,” Lisa Keibler, public information officer at the Roaring Lion, said at 5:30 p.m. “We’ve got a lot of cloud cover and maybe some smoke from Idaho, but right now it’s pretty calm out actually.”

Neither fire is close to being out. An infrared flight in the middle of the night Monday raised the acreage of the Copper King to just under 26,000, up 1,000 acres from an estimate the evening before. It’s Montana’s largest active fire in 2016.

“Our biggest concern and kind of the linchpin of this thing is Munson Creek,” Cole said. “If we can keep this fire out of Munson Creek, that’s going to allow us to get a handle on this. But the weather has to cooperate and we have a lot of ground to cover and a lot of steep ground to try to get buttoned up.”

Munson Creek runs in a southerly direction to Highway 200 and the Clark Fork River 11 miles east of Thompson Falls and 13 miles west of Plains. Cole said crews were out until 2 a.m. Tuesday to complete a burnout operation on the north side of the fire.

During the day helicopters and an occasional fixed-wing aircraft were dropping water and retardant at the top of Munson Creek trying to keep the fire out of the deep canyon to prevent a possible run up the east side.

“We’ve been doing some structure protection work around the residences on Buffalo Bill Road,” Cole said. “If the fire did come down Munson Creek, those would be the first residences threatened, so we want to get ahead of the game.”

Some 220,000 gallons of water and 22,000 gallons of retardant were dropped on the fire Monday, when the fire west of Munson Creek burned back into the main fire toward the Big Hole Lookout. That resulted in a large column that was visible from Plains.

Tuesday’s red flag concern was rooted in an unstable air mass rated 6 on the Haines Index. The Haines Index has been used since 1988 to indicate the potential for wildfire growth. The index can range between 2 and 6, with a 6 being the driest and most unstable conditions in the lower atmosphere.

A total of 840 people are working the Copper King, which has cost an estimated $16.5 million to quell since it broke out on July 31.

Closures and evacuations remain in place. Forty-five homes have been evacuated and another 130 are on pre-evacuation notice. Log hauling is being permitted through the closure area from 4 to 6 a.m. daily.

Air quality in the Thompson Falls area climbed once again into the "very unhealthy" range Tuesday morning, spiking midway toward the top category of "hazardous" at 10 a.m. before dropping two levels to “unhealthy for sensitive groups” by 5 p.m.

"Very unhealthy" air means active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

Roughly 80 percent of hunting district 122 near Thompson Falls was closed indefinitely on Monday by the U.S. Forest Service.

Estimated containment date for the Copper King fire remains the end of October.

In Hamilton at the Roaring Lion fire, air quality remained good all day. Fifty-four people are on the fire, which was caused by unknown sources on July 31. Most of Tuesday’s action consisted of monitoring and checking the 8,533-acre fire with aerial resources to keep it within Ward Bowl, north of Camas Creek and south of Sawtooth Creek. Patrols were active on the ground to suppress spot fires over the fire line.

The Roaring Lion is expected to be contained by the end of September.

NORTH DAKOTA

Dakota Pipeline Was Approved by Army Corps Over Objections of Three Federal Agencies (Inside Climate News)

Sioux tribe's concerns were echoed in official reports by the EPA and two other agencies, but Army Corps of Engineers brushed them aside.

By Phil McKenna
Aug 30, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D.—Senior officials at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and two other federal agencies raised serious environmental and safety objections to the North Dakota section of the controversial Dakota Access oil pipeline, the same objections being voiced in a large protest by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe that has so far succeeded in halting construction.

But those concerns were dismissed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which relied on an environmental assessment prepared by the pipeline's developer, Dakota Access LLC, when it approved the project in July, according to public documents.

The 1,134-mile pipeline would carry approximately 500,000 barrels of crude per day from North Dakota to Illinois along a route that did not originally pass near the Standing Rock reservation, the documents show. After the company rerouted the pipeline to cross the Missouri River just a half-mile upstream of the reservation, the tribe complained that the Army Corps did not consider threats to its water supply and cultural heritage.

The EPA, the Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation echoed those concerns in public comments on the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment. Citing risks to water supplies, inadequate emergency preparedness, potential impacts to the Standing Rock reservation and insufficient environmental justice analysis, the agencies urged the Army Corps to issue a revised draft of their environmental assessment.

"Crossings of the Missouri River have the potential to affect the primary source of drinking water for much of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Tribal nations," Philip Strobel, National Environmental Policy Act regional compliance director for the EPA, wrote in a March 11 letter to the Army Corps.

The current route of the pipeline is 10 miles upstream of Fort Yates, the tribal headquarters of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and the county seat. The Standing Rock Sioux rely on the Missouri River for drinking water, irrigation, and fish.

The EPA shared its concerns and recommended that the Army Corps undertake a new draft environmental assessment and release it for public comment. In that process, the EPA asked the Army Corps to consider "other available routes or crossing locations that would have reduced potential to water resources, especially drinking water supplies," and to carry out a "more thorough" analysis of environmental justice concerns. The other agencies also asked for further assessments and consultation with the tribes.

The Army Corps instead published its final environmental assessment four months later, which constituted final approval of the project. In it, the Corps acknowledged the agencies' comments, but said "the anticipated environmental, economic, cultural, and social effects" of the project are "not injurious to the public interest."

The Army Corps, which has jurisdiction over domestic pipelines that cross major waterways, declined a request for comment, citing ongoing litigation. Energy Transfer, owner of Dakota Access LLC, did not respond to a request for comment. The company has previously said "we are constructing this pipeline in accordance with applicable laws, and the local, state and federal permits and approvals we have received."

Tribe Takes their Complaints Public

The tribe's growing protest has gathered in a camp near Cannon Ball, N.D., and has drawn support from Native Americans from around the country as well as environmental activists. An estimated 1,200 people are camping there and Sioux leaders say 90 tribes are represented among the protesters.

The protest blocked construction equipment two weeks ago and Energy Transfer halted construction on the section of pipeline closest to the Standing Rock reservation. A federal judge said last week he will rule by September 9 on whether to grant the Standing Rock Sioux a temporary injunction. That would bar construction on sections of the pipeline where the ground hasn't yet been disturbed until a suit calling for the Army Corps to redo its permitting process can be heard.

Demographics of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation
The Standing Rock reservation spans 3,600 square miles across North and South Dakota, where 41 percent of its 8,217 residents live below the poverty level, more than triple the national average, according to a 2012 economic development report prepared for the tribe. Nearly a quarter of its population is unemployed.

In its comments calling for a re-do, the EPA said the environmental justice analysis in the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment used county-by-county or state-by-state data when the preferred level of analysis is "census block groups or census tracts."

"A screening level analysis for EJ [environmental justice] indicates there are several census block groups with substantial minority and/or low income demographics that could be potentially impacted by the project," the EPA wrote. "In addition to analyzing potential EJ impacts, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (February 16, 1994) also requires public outreach to potentially affected EJ communities."

In its final environmental assessment, the Army Corps said its analysis "contains an Environmental Justice analysis that conforms with recognized practice."

The agency also said the pipeline does not cross tribal land. "In fact, tribal land was specifically avoided as a routing mitigation measure," it said. "The Project does not anticipate any impact to water supplies along its route, and to the extent a response action is required, federal regulation will be complied with."

Route Became a Moving Target

The original route for the proposed pipeline crossed the Missouri River further north, 10 miles upstream of Bismarck, the state capital. North Dakota Public Service Commission documents show the route upstream of Bismarck in a May 29, 2014 map by Energy Transfer.

The company later rejected this route, citing a number of factors, including more road and wetland crossings, a longer pipeline, and higher costs. Also listed as a concern was the close proximity to wellheads providing Bismarck's drinking water supply.

"They moved it down to Standing Rock, which is a very remote area, but people live at Standing Rock too. There is an environmental justice component here," said Jan Hasselman, an attorney with environmental advocacy organization EarthJustice, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Standing Rock Tribe against the Army Corps of Engineers.

In its public comments, the Department of the Interior, the government agency responsible for the administration and management of Native American lands, called for the Army Corps to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement, a more comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of the proposed pipeline.

"We believe the Corps did not adequately justify or otherwise support its conclusion that there would be no significant impacts upon the surrounding environment and community," Lawrence Roberts, acting assistant secretary of Indian affairs at the Depart of the Interior, wrote in a letter to the Army Corps in March.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), a federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of the nation's historic resources, also expressed concern over the Army Corps' assessment.

Federal law requires federal agencies to take into account the effect a proposed project will have on historic property. The Army Corps' assessment, however lacked adequate consultation with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and focused on a limited number of water crossings rather than on the pipeline's entire expanse, according to letters ACHP officials wrote to the Army Corps.

"Based on the inadequacies of the tribal consultation and the limited scope for identification of historic properties that may be affected, the ACHP questions the sufficiency of the Corps' identification effort, its determinations of eligibility, and assessments of effect," Reid Nelson, director of the office of federal agency programs for ACHP, wrote in a May 19 letter to the Army Corps.

In its final assessment, the Corps stated there is "no new significant information on environmental effects" as a result of comments from the EPA and others. "As such, neither a supplemental or revised EA [Environmental Assessment] for further public review nor additional NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] compliance actions was required."

"We're talking about a broad overarching and fundamental failure which is the decision to look very narrowly at environmental impacts at a few specific locations rather than the pipeline as a whole," Hasselman said of the Army Corps' assessment.

Having their concerns dismissed by the Corps, the tribe turned next to the courts. Their lawsuit calls for a halt to construction and full consideration of the pipeline's impact on tribal lands and water.

To obtain a preliminary or "emergency" injunction, however, attorneys representing the Standing Rock tribe will have to demonstrate imminent harm to historic sites if construction proceeds.

"To the extent that people are concerned about harm from oil spills, that is still a ways off," Hasselman said. "We can't really seek emergency relief on that front. That is something that we will be seeking in the course of the lawsuit."

5 things to know about the Dakota Access Pipeline (KETV, Omaha)

Native American tribe sued the federal government over project

UPDATED 7:33 AM CDT Aug 31, 2016

(CNN) —In what looks to be a possible sequel to the Keystone XL Pipeline dispute, another fight has begun over a proposed US oil route.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has sued the federal government, saying the Native American tribe was not properly consulted over the project to construct a 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline that extends over four states.

While proponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline tout its economic boost, opponents question its environmental impact.

The US Army Corps of Engineers approved the project, granting final permits in July, to the dismay of environmentalists and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

1. What is the pipeline project?

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois. The pipeline is also known as the Bakken Oil Pipeline, named for the oil-rich area in North Dakota. An estimated 7.4 billion barrels of undiscovered oil is believed to be in the US portion of the Bakken Formation, according to the US Geological Survey.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

2. Why is the pipeline being constructed?

The project developer, Dakota Access, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Crude Oil, says the pipeline would help the United States become less dependent on importing energy from unstable regions of the world. It says a pipeline is the safest, most cost-effective and environmentally responsible way to move crude oil, removing dependency on rails and trucks.

It also estimates the pipeline would bring an estimated $156 million in sales and income taxes to state and local governments as well as add 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs.

The proposal comes as a glut of cheap oil has devastated North Dakota's economy. The state had enjoyed a major boom, but after hitting highs in 2014, it suffered a major economic downturn.

The project developers say the $3.7 billion project will "bring significant economic benefits to the region that it transverses."

3. Who is protesting?

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a complaint in federal court alleging that "the construction and operation of the pipeline ... threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe."

There are also concerns that digging the pipeline under the Missouri River would affect the tribe's drinking water supply. The tribe, represented by Earthjustice, a nonprofit environmental law firm, has asked for an injunction.

Based in Fort Yates, North Dakota, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is a federally recognized Indian tribe, a successor to the Great Sioux Nation. Other Native American tribes and nations have joined its efforts.

"We have laws that require federal agencies to consider environmental risks and protection of Indian historic and sacred sites," Dave Archambault II, the elected chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, said in a statement.

"But the Army Corps has ignored all those laws and fast-tracked this massive project just to meet the pipeline's aggressive construction schedule."

Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota disputes the tribe's chief complaint that the Army Corps did not properly consult it.

"If there is some way for the corps to work to meet the concerns of the tribe, they should certainly do that. But (there) has been a consultation process. If the tribe doesn't feel that that has been sufficient, again, they can protest as long as they do it peacefully and safely, but ultimately their recourse is to the courts," the Republican senator told CNN affiliate KFYR-TV in Bismarck, North Dakota.

About 30 environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, signed a letter to President Barack Obama, slamming the Dakota Access Pipeline as "yet another example of an oil pipeline project being permitted without public engagement or sufficient environmental review."

They appealed to him to reject the project -- as he did with the Keystone XL pipeline.

Protests have been held in North Dakota and Washington.

Construction equipment involved in the pipeline project in Iowa was set ablaze in suspected arson fires, reports say.

4. Who's on which side?

Bernie Sanders spoke out against the pipeline in November 2015, but Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton has not addressed the issue. CNN reached out to the Clinton campaign for comment on the issue and has not yet received a response.

"If candidate Clinton does nothing to address this issue yet continues into November promising Native Americans that she is our champion, then her words will be nothing but false promises -- just more bombast, more white lies to Indians," Simon Moya-Smith, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation and culture editor at Indian Country Today, wrote recently in a CNN op-ed.

Celebrities such as Shailene Woodley, Susan Sarandon and Rosario Dawson have spoken out against the pipeline.

Leonardo DiCaprio tweeted that he was "inspired by the Standing Rock Sioux's efforts to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline."

5. What's next?

The tribe's actions may be the start of a lengthy, legal fight over the Dakota Access Pipeline. Meanwhile, construction work on the pipeline is ongoing.

US District Judge James Boasberg said he wants to absorb both sides of the argument before issuing a ruling, which is expected by September 9, KFYR reported.

Officials Rate 3 Weekend Tornadoes In Eastern North Dakota (AP)

Associated Press, August 30, 2016

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) – A weekend tornado that caused damage in the Hillsboro area had wind speeds up to 140 mph, according to the National Weather Service.

The agency rated the Saturday evening tornado in Traill County an EF-3 on the enhanced Fujita scale. An EF2 or higher rating is considered significant.

The tornado was as wide as three football fields are long and was on the ground for 8 minutes, according to a weather service report. It smashed bins at Rahr Malting Co.'s Taft grain elevator complex and spilled tons of barley onto the ground, destroyed a garage and uprooted trees on one area farmstead. It heavily damaged a home and a metal building at another farmstead.

No one was hurt. The town of 1,600 people was lucky that the tornado missed the heart of the community, said Connor Ulness with the storm damage restoration company Aspen Exteriors.

"The tornado came in just north of the center of town," he told WDAY-TV.

Severe storms in eastern North Dakota on Saturday spawned two weaker tornadoes in neighboring Grand Forks County, according to the weather service. One with wind speeds estimated at 70 mph and rated an EF-0 touched down in an open field near Arvilla. An EF-1 tornado with wind speeds up to 110 mph uprooted trees and demolished a barn in the Pleasant View Township area.

No injuries were reported in either of those tornadoes.

SOUTH DAKOTA

County To Explore Grant Possibilities For Areas Affected By Crow Peak Fire

(Black Hills Pioneer)

By Jaci Conrad

Black Hills Pioneer

August 30,2016

DEADWOOD — Disaster prevention due to devastation caused by the Crow Peak Fire is the impetus behind the Lawrence County Commission's recent decision to give the go-ahead to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide an initial assessment of the area.

"We might discover something very important that needs to be done," said Commission Chair Daryl Johnson.

The Emergency Watershed Protection program of the conservation service is designed to help prevent damage to life or property after a natural disasters, like the Crow Peak Fire. A cost-share program, the protection program pays 75 percent of the costs to install practices such as replacing culverts identified in the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) report completed after the fire. If it decides the assessment is worthy of pursuing, the county, upon entering a sponsorship of the emergency grant program, would be responsible for 25 percent of the costs.

Because the county would be responsible for the operation and maintenance of any culverts installed, for the life of the culvert, commissioners were hesitant to commit to the program, asking first for an initial assessment to be brought back and reviewed before a formal commitment is made.

"You understand, our apprehension comes from the fact that we still maintain snow-removal on two bridges because we were a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) sponsor of them at one time," Johnson said.

With a 60-day deadline following the fire, which was put out on July 4, an application letter must be submitted to the conservation service by Friday, starting the information gathering process, beginning with a damage survey report. This report will identify what problems are present, how to fix any concerns, and the cost of repairing the concerns. The application letter does not commit Lawrence County to a contract.

District Conservationist Justin Boerboom addressed the commission, explaining that the NRCS is federal agency with USDA funding and takes measures to help prevent catastrophe after a natural disaster through the Emergency Watershed Program.

"We need a local sponsor to apply for assistance," Boerboom said. "We've proposed the project. The next step is to go out and evaluate what the issues are, what to address, the costs, and come back with a proposal."

NRCS State Engineer Jay Cobb said that once they evaluate, the next determination is if they can mitigate issues to gain benefits greater than the actual cost of construction.

Threats that the protection program addresses are termed watershed impairments and include, for example: debris-clogged stream channels, undermined and unstable streambanks, jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures, wind-borne debris removal, and damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor, such as the county, if they decide to move forward with the program.

Boerboom also presented the critical values table from the BAER report, listing all the concerns on private land. Listed as a very high risk to human life and safety is the Crow Creek Road and the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout, and damage. The BAER team identified Crow Creek as an drainage of Crow Peak that would see an increase of about 50 percent over normal flows since the vegetation on the western slopes were burned.

Listed as a high threat to human life and safety are homes along Crow Creek Road; specifically, two cabins and the threat of flash flooding and debris flows.

Listed as a very high threat to property are: two road crossings with 18-inch culverts on Crow Creek Road; Crumm Driveway Crossing's 24-inch culvert; and Nicholas Cabin driveway, which crossing 24-inch culvert. The threat here is flash flooding with debris flows, debris blockage, possible failure of crossing structures, and road washout/damage.

Listed as a high threat to property are private road crossings along Higgins Gulch Road in the floodplain, with the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout/damage; and culverts under driveways alongside Higgins Gulch Road.

The BAER team determined the Higgins Gulch drainage would see increased flows of about 10 percent following the fire.

There are other threats that have been identified and listed in the intermediate to low threat categories.

Yankton Co. Resident Dies From West Nile Virus (KDLT News, Pierre)

Aug 29, 2016

KDLT News- Pierre, S.D.

The South Dakota Department of Health today reported a Yankton Co. resident died of West Nile virus associated causes. It is the state's first WNV related death this season. The individual was in the 80 to 89 age group.

To date this season, South Dakota has reported 74 cases of human WNV; 12 percent have had the most serious neruoinvasive disease while 88 percent have had WNV fever. Twenty-five percent of cases have been hospitalized. There has also been a WNV-positive horse in Butte County.

"This unfortunate death is a reminder for us all that while the Zika virus is grabbing headlines, West Nile is the mosquito-borne virus of concern here in South Dakota," said Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department. "We strongly encourage people to protect themselves and their families by using repellent and avoiding the outdoors when mosquitoes are most active."

Kightlinger said South Dakotans can reduce their risk with the following precautions:

- Apply mosquito repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535) to clothes and exposed skin. Limit exposure by wearing pants and long sleeves in the evening.

- Limit time outdoors from dusk to midnight when Culex mosquitoes, the primary carrier of WNV in South Dakota, are most active.
- Get rid of standing water that gives mosquitoes a place to breed. Regularly change water in bird baths, outside pet dishes, and drain water from flower pots and garden containers.
- Support local mosquito control efforts.

UTAH

Next step for American Fork River: Measure the risks with an eye toward spring (KSL TV, Salt Lake City)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue | Posted Aug 30th, 2016 @ 7:02pm

SALT LAKE CITY — State water quality officials will insist on an action plan to prevent further contamination of the American Fork River from lead-laden sediment that killed thousands of fish in a two-mile stretch.

That plan will be put together by the North Utah Water Conservancy District with an eye toward preventing sediment from being stirred up by rain or spring runoff, said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

He said the division also expects to get an estimate from project engineers on the amount of sediment that washed into the river as a result of the Tibble Fork Dam's $7.3 million rehabilitation and expansion project.

"We have moved sediment from point A to point B over a six-mile expanse," Baker said. "There needs to be an assessment of how bad it is and what steps need to be taken to remediate it."

It's the latest plan following completion by project engineers of a diversion channel that placed a 200-foot pipeline to reroute flows into the nearly empty Tibble Fork basin to prevent another sediment flush while work continues on the dam.

Baker said a lot of factors will come into play to mitigate the impacts of the sludge, especially given that high flows from spring runoff.

"Mother Nature is going to come with spring runoff regardless of any planning we do," he said. "We need to know what needs to be done."

Dave Brown, the Utah state conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, said an aerial drone flew over the site Monday to quantify the amount of material that washed into the river.

"There is a very clear mini-canyon that is exposed now," he said. "The engineer indicated they could use survey technology to calculate how much sediment was deposited."

Dam project

The NRCS is the federal agency on the Tibble Fork rehabilitation project, which rose as a priority after a 2004 assessment found that 1960s-era dam did not meet safety standards. Work began in June, with the NRCS advising downstream users that as the reservoir began draining around Aug. 19, people could expect to see elevated levels of sediment in the river.

Brown said continuing inflows into the basin released larger amounts of sediment than anticipated. The result was a two-mile section of the river just below the dam that lost all its fish populations due to suffocation.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources said historically, there are about 1,000 to 2,000 fish per mile in that section of the river.

While water samples taken by the state show metal concentrations within screening values for health, recreation and aquatic life downstream, the sediment showed high levels of lead that likely resulted from legacy mining operations in the Wasatch Mountains.

Several hundred abandoned mines dot the mountains, some experiencing acid mine drainage and an unknown number are within proximity of perennial stream flows.

Baker said his division has worked in partnership with the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, to craft a blueprint of where there may be water quality risks — a concern accentuated with the disastrous Gold King Mine spill of 2015.

In that incident, EPA-led contractors bungled efforts to open a mine portal and sent a 3-million gallon torrent of mustard-colored mine waste into the Animas River above Silverton, Colo. The breach contaminated water in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the Navajo Nation in an environmental catastrophe critics say was avoidable.

Baker said the Gold King mine disaster underscores the need for Utah officials to get a handle on potential problems, sooner rather than later.

"It ought to be enough of a concern that we do some investigation," he said. "My greatest concern is if there needs to be an action plan and if these are time bombs waiting to go off."

Abandoned mines

While state officials over abandoned mine reclamation have mapped the hundreds of mines and their owners — if available — with work done in the 1990s, Baker said it is not clear how many of them pose risks to waterways.

"If, in fact, they do have flows and there are responsible parties, we can issue a permit and get an idea of the water quality of the mines' drainage," he said. "We will be way ahead to know if we have a problem or not."

The mining division closes up abandoned mines if there is a public safety risk, and Baker's division can enforce the Clean Water Act if water is at risk, but there is no state regulatory oversight absent those factors.

"We really don't know the extent," said Steve Fluke, administrator over the state's abandoned mine reclamation program. "We are trying to figure out how many are discharging and may be an environmental issue in light of Gold King."

While there is funding in place to deal with the cleanup of abandoned coal mines, no funding exists for other mines.

"There is no such law for cleaning up hard rock mine sites," Fluke said.

Mark Allen of Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon sees the potential for another Gold King Mine spill in the Wasatch Mountains because he said no one is properly addressing the risks.

"The Wasatch Mountains have a bunch of ticking time bombs and no one wants to talk about them," he said.

Allen said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should step in and declare the Tibble Fork sediment release into American Fork River a Superfund site.

EPA had a response team in Utah County last week, but the federal agency has not disclosed what its employees determined about the Tibble Fork Dam release.

"We will continue to coordinate with Utah and federal agencies to evaluate data, information, and potential next steps related to the sediment release," said EPA spokesman Rich Mylott.

"We're certainly aware of concerns related to historic mining and metals impacts in the American Fork watershed and have worked with state and local partners on previous assessment and cleanup projects in the basin."

Allen is leading a tour to legacy mine sites mid-month that Baker and Fluke said they plan to attend.

"I have been barking pretty loud," he said. "We're taking everybody up there who has some stewardship and asking them to figure out what to do."

Baker and several members of his staff are touring the New Yankee Mine on Snowbird property Wednesday to assess any downstream impacts.

The division is also looking at the resort's expansion into Mary Ellen Gulch, an approval granted earlier this year that requires water quality monitoring for two years before any construction on ski lifts or other facilities begins.

WYOMING

Route To Yellowstone Reopens, But Fire Danger Remains High (Wyoming Public Radio)

By CAROLINE BALLARD • 16 HOURS AGO

Northwest Wyoming continues to struggle with high fire danger as eleven wild fires currently burn in that part of the state.

Bill Swartley, a public information officer for the Yellowstone fire team, said Phase 2 fire restrictions will likely go into effect in Yellowstone National Park on Wednesday. That means any kind of open flame may be banned in the park.

Swartley said preventing any human caused fires is their top priority.

“These fires are lightning caused and for that reason are being managed for ecological benefits to the park,” said Swartley. “However, human caused fires are a total different type of ignition.”

With temperatures reaching into the 80s and low relative humidity, weather conditions are prime for even more fire growth.

Some progress has been made, though. Highway 191/89/287 between Leek's Marina and Yellowstone's South Entrance was closed because of the Berry Fire but has now reopened. Highway pull outs along that stretch remain closed.

Swartley said there may be areas of light haze or smoke in the park that could make it hard to see.

"We're just recommending people adjust their speed and turn on their headlights, increase their visibility as they pass through those areas of smoke," said Swartley.
He added that people with respiratory sensitivity may want to check air quality at airnow.gov before heading into the park.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (8/30, lead story, 2:30, Guthrie, 16.61M) reported, "Make no mistake, we are in the fall throes of hurricane season now. And if you're a storm watcher at the weather service looking at the US map tonight, there's a lot to keep your eye on. Three big storms threatening the US coastline at this hour. Parts of Florida just placed under a hurricane watch, bracing for up to 10 inches of rain. A tropical storm warning for sections of North Carolina. And Hawaii gearing up for a possible one-two punch. The Big Island facing a hurricane warning at this hour. Gabe Gutierrez starts us off tonight in North Carolina storm zone." NBC (**Gutierrez**) added, "Tonight, the view from the International Space Station is stunning: massive hurricanes swirling across the globe. Hurricane Madeleine in the Pacific, threatening Hawaii. It's followed by Hurricane Lester. Churning in the Atlantic, Hurricane Gaston, not expected to affect the US but now the Carolina and Florida coasts are bracing for separate tropical systems." **Unidentified speaker**: "The storm is an uncertainty, but we are preparing for it." **Gutierrez**: "In Florida, tropical depression number nine is forecast to turn towards the Gulf Coast, bringing heavy rain and even isolated tornadoes over the next few days." **Rick Scott**, Florida Governor: "Everybody has to be careful. We don't want anybody to be injured. We don't want any loss of life." **Gutierrez**: "Another system, tropical depression number eight, is grazing North Carolina's Outer Banks, where a tropical storm warning is in effect. The concern here, rip currents – fast-moving water that moves away from shore. Swimmers are pulled out to sea and panic while trying to swim against current, back to the beach." **Drew Pearson**, NC Emergency Management: "Rip currents are dangerous. They've taken three lives here in the Outer Banks Just this past summer. There's a high threat of them right now." **Gutierrez**: "Young Payton Waller got caught up in one but managed to escape." **Payton Waller**, swimmer: "It's really rough and all these waves just crashing." **Gutierrez**: "Other tourists on this tail end of summer are taking the offshore storm in stride." **Unidentified speaker**: "I mean, one to three inches. Back home, this is what you call a thunderstorm." **Gutierrez**: "Though neither of the storms closest to the eastern US are expected to strengthen into major hurricanes, it has suddenly become a busy season in the tropics." **Rick Knabb**, National Hurricane Center: "Don't focus so much on the strength or the category, because the water hazards might end up being the most dangerous." **Gutierrez**: "As Florida prepares for flooding, here in North Carolina's Outer Banks, things may seem calm. But, there is rough surf and dangerous rip currents up and down the eastern seaboard as far north as New England, possibly extending into the holiday weekend."

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, August 30, 2016

The federal agency leading the public health response to the Zika virus in the United States will run out of funding to combat the mosquito-borne virus by late September, its director said Monday.

"The cupboard is bare," said Tom Frieden, who heads the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Basically, we're out of money, and we need Congress to act to allow us to respond effectively."

Of the $222 million that the CDC was allocated for domestic Zika response this year, about $200 million has been committed, Frieden said during a media roundtable in Washington. "The rest will be gone by the end of September."

The timing further raises the threat for high-risk states along the Gulf Coast, particularly if Congress again fails to act on the Obama administration's emergency funding request when lawmakers return to Washington next month.

"We're in peak mosquito season" – which typically lasts through the end of October in the United States – and if transmission starts occurring more broadly, CDC "might not have the resources" to respond and send teams to support local and state officials, Frieden said.

The CDC has already issued unprecedented travel advisories for two areas in Florida where mosquitoes are actively spreading the virus: a one-square-mile section of Miami's Wynwood neighborhood and a 1.5-square-mile zone in Miami Beach. Pregnant women are urged to stay out of both areas because of the danger Zika poses to a fetus.

Negotiations in Congress over a $1.9 billion Zika spending package fell apart in late June. Federal health officials have shifted money from elsewhere in the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the domestic response. That includes $38 million from fighting Ebola, $44 million from general public health emergency funds and, most recently, $81 million from programs at the National Institutes of Health and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

The money has gone to help states track the virus, provide assistance about birth defects caused by Zika and increase mosquito-control efforts. Within CDC itself, officials also have pulled resources from programs on immunization, disease infection and HIV outreach, including prevention treatment for people at risk of getting HIV, Frieden said.

Researchers continue to detail ever-graver consequences for babies born to mothers infected with Zika. A report from Brazil, published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine, described a newborn in Sao Paolo who had Zika virus in his blood for more than two months. While the baby had no obvious illness or visible birth defects at birth or when doctors examined him at about eight weeks, by six months he had developed severe Zika-related brain damage.

The first trimester of pregnancy is thought to be when Zika infection poses the greatest risk. In this case, however, the baby's mother was infected late in her second trimester.

At the same time, the virus continues to spread to the rest of the world. The latest outbreak is in Singapore, a Southeast Asia travel hub, which typically has 500 full-time inspectors working to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can breed. The fact that Zika is spreading there, with at least 56 cases now confirmed, shows how "it's going to be really tough" for other places to control, he said.

During the coming weeks in the United States, Frieden expects there will be more cases of infants born with Zika-related neurological problems. As of mid-August, 17 babies infected in utero had been diagnosed with microcephaly, a condition defined by an abnormally small head and often serious brain damage.

In hard-hit Puerto Rico, the CDC estimates that 6,000 to 10,000 pregnant women will become infected during this mosquito season and that at least 100 to 270 infants will be born with microcephaly.

Without additional funding, Frieden said, the CDC won't be able to undertake key projects to better understand and control the virus, including Zika's longterm impact on infants and diagnostics to identify if a person has been previously infected.

In Puerto Rico, the agency also won't be able to help the island establish its own vector control program. Without one, the island has not been able to conduct effective surveillance, mosquito control or public engagement, even though Puerto Rico is experiencing a Zika epidemic and has had a history of other vector-borne diseases.

Frieden said the few additional cases that have surfaced in other parts of South Florida are considered single cases that don't represent a greater spread of the virus.

The travel advisories will be lifted after 45 days with no new cases from local transmission – the equivalent of three mosquito incubation periods. The Wynwood area is about halfway through that period, he said, but Miami Beach is still experiencing new cases.

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 31, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A story follows through on the damage from the recent hailstorm in Colorado Springs. Hail was as deep as three feet in some basements.
- **Montana:** A Bismarck reprint of a Billings Gazette article repeats the call for separate disaster funding for fighting wildfires… A TV story reports on attempts to help economically, including SBA loans, after the closure of the Yellowstone River…. Wildfires remained relatively stable.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from an environmental web site that cites objections to the pipeline from three federal agencies similar to what the tribe is protesting. Also, an Omaha TV station gives an overview of the situation. … Three tornadoes hit eastern North Dakota over the weekend.
- **South Dakota:** Lawrence County officials approved further investigation into whether to do a program to prevent damage from a previous wildfire. They expressed hesitation because of a previous experience with a cost-share with FEMA… A Yankton resident died from West Nile virus.
- **Utah:** State water officials are insisting on a plan to analyze the damage and what to do about the toxic sediment in the American Fork River. The memory of the Gold King Mine spill is a warning of further potential hazards.
- **Wyoming:** The southern entrance to Yellowstone National Park is open again.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, gives an overview of the stormy weather currently threatening parts of the U.S. … The CDC says sit will run out of money to fight the Zika virus in September.

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Homeowners looking at major losses after hail and flooding in Colorado Springs (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

MONTANA:

Western fires take big toll on programs (Billings Gazette, reprinted in Bismarck Tribune)

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CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

STORIES

COLORADO

Homeowners looking at major losses after hail and flooding in Colorado Springs (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

By Bill Folsom

The people living in areas of Colorado Springs inundated by hail and water on Monday, spent Tuesday cleaning up and assessing damage. “Literally found ourselves homeless overnight,” said John Martin who lived in one of the damaged homes on Logan Avenue. Multiple residents on the street are facing so much damage their homes will be unlivable for some time.

Many homes end up with hail and water in their homes. The basements of several homes filled with hail as deep as three feet. Other rooms show water makes several feet up walls. Where water subsided it left behind a coating of mud.

Erma Medina rents out a home on Logan Avenue. It is one of the homes with hail filling the basement.

There has been flooding in the area before, but never like this. She carried FEMA flood insurance until about a year ago when she says several city storm water drains outside her property were upgraded. With this disaster she see the problem as hail, but she says her insurance company says it is flooding. Sitting on a retaining wall outside the house Medina points to the remaining kneed deep hail, "Look at that hail. You can see the hail in the basement. The windows were broken by hail and they say it was flood. I don't believe it was a flood, no. She will dispute the claim, but says insurance or no insurance help she will find a way to repair the damage.

MONTANA

Western fires take big toll on programs (Billings Gazette, reprinted in Bismarck Tribune)

The late August sun is a smoky red ball, reminding Montanans of the fires that have destroyed homes and curtailed business in the West this summer. It's so dry in parts of Montana, Wyoming, California and other Western states that big fires are likely to burn until autumn snow falls. If lightning storms and wind persist, the fires will be bigger and more numerous.

The destruction is costly, and so is the firefighting. One year ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on the rising cost of fire operations and how it affected the Forest Service's other work. The numbers indicate that the Forest Service ought to be called the "fire service" because that's how the agency spent most of its budget. The USDA summed up the problem of "the depletion of non-fire programs to pay for the ever-increasing costs of fire." This has resulted in:

- Less money for restoration work that would help prevent catastrophic fires.

- Less protection of watersheds and cultural resources.

- Reduced upkeep of programs and infrastructure that support thousands of recreation jobs and billions of dollars economic growth in rural communities.

- Reduced support for the range of multiple uses, benefits and ecosystem services.

- Less research and technical assistance.

Firefighting staff has increased from 5,700 in 1998 to more than 12,000 in 2015. Meanwhile, the non-firefighting forest workers have been reduced by 39 percent — from 18,000 employees in 1998 to fewer than 11,000 last year.

Every non-firefighting program has been slashed. Forest road-building has been reduced 46 percent. Deferred maintenance funding was cut 95 percent despite a backlog of more than $5.1 billion in dam repairs, roads, sewer and water system improvements.

Lack of funding for everything but fires has prevented the agency from doing things that would save money in the long term. Energy efficiency projects have been deferred. Funding hasn't been available for partnership programs that generate private matching funds.

The report concluded with the solution that Congress has been delaying for years: Change the way we pay for wildfire fighting. Treat wildfires as the natural disasters they are.

In June, Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., spoke on behalf of draft legislation called the Wildfire Budgeting, Response and Forest Management Act. The first thing it would do, according to a Daines news release, is "end the unsustainable practice of fire borrowing by enabling a transfer of limited funds to the Forest Service and the Department of Interior through a budget cap adjustment when all appropriated suppressions funding (100 percent of the 10-year average) has been exhausted."

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., reaffirmed his support for the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. Both he and Daines are co-sponsors of the act, which would "pay for catastrophic wildfires through separate

emergency funding, allowing the Forest Service to devote more resources to proactive forest management like trail maintenance and timber harvest."

If S.235, which both of our U.S. senators are co-sponsoring, had been enacted and funded last year, the Forest Service would have $1.4 billion more to fight wildfires this year. But it didn't pass, so the Forest Service will again have to rob all its other operations to pay for the fiery disasters this year.

Montana's senators are in a good position to promote this bipartisan solution. Among many proposals for forest management involving timber harvest, recreation and conservation, nothing else is going to work well if the budget continues to be diverted to wildfire.

Lawmakers must stop the "fire borrowing" before another wildfire season begins. We call on Daines and Tester to work together to unite other Western senators and pass wildfire disaster legislation this year.
— *Billings (Mont) Gazette*

Efforts underway to help while portion of Yellowstone River is closed for businesses (KRTV, Great Falls)

By Morgan McKay - MTN News

LIVINGSTON - Governor Steve Bullock scheduled a Rapid Response Training meeting Monday for those affected by the closure of the Yellowstone River.

Many people like Chase Chapman have been left wondering how they will get through a Montana winter, since the closure of the Yellowstone has forced them to close their business.

"I don't need retraining, I'm very good at what I do," said Chapman, who is a fly fishing guide and teacher in Livingston. "When all these Congressman want to go catch a big fish, I go through Yellowstone Angler and we catch some big fish."

"So I came to this meeting today with some hope of maybe there's some grants available for a small business person, because if they opened up the river again tomorrow, I've now sold all my inventory," said Beth O'Neill, owner of SUP Montana.

Earlier today, Governor Bullock signed an executive order proclaiming an invasive species emergency to exist in the State of Montana. This order allows for different organizations to offer relief.

"We heard your concerns and taking a multi agency approach to addressing the immediate needs of workers who rely on the Yellowstone River for their livelihoods," said Bullock.

Local and Park County government officials attended the meeting as well as representatives from agencies such as the Montana Chamber of Commerce and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

"We do everything from helping folks file their unemployment claims to assisting them to potentially go into training folks who may have been impacted by this or a similar event," said Zack Medina, with Job Services.

“This isn't a handout, this isn't an entitlement program,” said Paul Martin, Bureau Chief of Unemployment Insurance. “It's a week to week eligibility program, it's funded by employers through payroll taxes.”

While unemployment insurance was one favorable option, other resources available were loans or a different temporary job placement.

“The last thing you want to do is get into debt, but there are economic injury loans, we can go up to two million (dollars),” said John Donovan, Small Business Administration.

Those businesses affected by the closure of the Yellowstone are encouraged to contact the Institute for Tourism and Recreation at the University of Montana, to help aid them in studying the full economic impact of the closure.

“Montanans I think, what makes us special, is to live here you have to learn to do several things,” said Chapman.

According to latest information released by FWP today, out of 30 trout tested in the upper Yellowstone, only two brown trout tested positive for the parasitic infection.

Officials say there is only evidence of the parasite, but not the disease. FWP also is saying there have been no trout mortalities documented from the disease.

Cloud cover keeps Copper King, Roaring Lion fires quiet (Missoulian)

- KIM BRIGGEMAN kbriggeman@missoulian.com

THOMPSON FALLS – Tuesday turned out to be a good day to fight fires in western Montana, though crews were keeping a lookout for a cool front blowing in from Oregon.

“There’s been a cloud cover over the fire this afternoon that’s kind of kept it subdued during the day,” spokesman Mike Cole said from the Copper King fire east of Thompson Falls.

A red flag warning issued for the afternoon and evening suggested dry thunderstorms might mix with temperatures in the 90s and relative humidity in the low to mid-teens and cause problems at both the Copper King and the Roaring Lion southwest of Hamilton, which turns a month old on Wednesday.

“I’m not sure if they’re actually going to produce over our area,” Lisa Keibler, public information officer at the Roaring Lion, said at 5:30 p.m. “We’ve got a lot of cloud cover and maybe some smoke from Idaho, but right now it’s pretty calm out actually.”

Neither fire is close to being out. An infrared flight in the middle of the night Monday raised the acreage of the Copper King to just under 26,000, up 1,000 acres from an estimate the evening before. It’s Montana’s largest active fire in 2016.

“Our biggest concern and kind of the linchpin of this thing is Munson Creek,” Cole said. “If we can keep this fire out of Munson Creek, that’s going to allow us to get a handle on this. But the weather has to cooperate and we have a lot of ground to cover and a lot of steep ground to try to get buttoned up.”

Munson Creek runs in a southerly direction to Highway 200 and the Clark Fork River 11 miles east of Thompson Falls and 13 miles west of Plains. Cole said crews were out until 2 a.m. Tuesday to complete a burnout operation on the north side of the fire.

During the day helicopters and an occasional fixed-wing aircraft were dropping water and retardant at the top of Munson Creek trying to keep the fire out of the deep canyon to prevent a possible run up the east side.

“We’ve been doing some structure protection work around the residences on Buffalo Bill Road,” Cole said. “If the fire did come down Munson Creek, those would be the first residences threatened, so we want to get ahead of the game.”

Some 220,000 gallons of water and 22,000 gallons of retardant were dropped on the fire Monday, when the fire west of Munson Creek burned back into the main fire toward the Big Hole Lookout. That resulted in a large column that was visible from Plains.

Tuesday’s red flag concern was rooted in an unstable air mass rated 6 on the Haines Index. The Haines Index has been used since 1988 to indicate the potential for wildfire growth. The index can range between 2 and 6, with a 6 being the driest and most unstable conditions in the lower atmosphere.

A total of 840 people are working the Copper King, which has cost an estimated $16.5 million to quell since it broke out on July 31.

Closures and evacuations remain in place. Forty-five homes have been evacuated and another 130 are on pre-evacuation notice. Log hauling is being permitted through the closure area from 4 to 6 a.m. daily.

Air quality in the Thompson Falls area climbed once again into the "very unhealthy" range Tuesday morning, spiking midway toward the top category of "hazardous" at 10 a.m. before dropping two levels to “unhealthy for sensitive groups” by 5 p.m.

"Very unhealthy" air means active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

Roughly 80 percent of hunting district 122 near Thompson Falls was closed indefinitely on Monday by the U.S. Forest Service.

Estimated containment date for the Copper King fire remains the end of October.

In Hamilton at the Roaring Lion fire, air quality remained good all day. Fifty-four people are on the fire, which was caused by unknown sources on July 31. Most of Tuesday’s action consisted of monitoring and checking the 8,533-acre fire with aerial resources to keep it within Ward Bowl, north of Camas Creek and south of Sawtooth Creek. Patrols were active on the ground to suppress spot fires over the fire line.

The Roaring Lion is expected to be contained by the end of September.

NORTH DAKOTA

Dakota Pipeline Was Approved by Army Corps Over Objections of Three Federal Agencies (Inside Climate News)

Sioux tribe's concerns were echoed in official reports by the EPA and two other agencies, but Army Corps of Engineers brushed them aside.

By Phil McKenna

Aug 30, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D.—Senior officials at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and two other federal agencies raised serious environmental and safety objections to the North Dakota section of the controversial Dakota Access oil pipeline, the same objections being voiced in a large protest by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe that has so far succeeded in halting construction.

But those concerns were dismissed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which relied on an environmental assessment prepared by the pipeline's developer, Dakota Access LLC, when it approved the project in July, according to public documents.

The 1,134-mile pipeline would carry approximately 500,000 barrels of crude per day from North Dakota to Illinois along a route that did not originally pass near the Standing Rock reservation, the documents show. After the company rerouted the pipeline to cross the Missouri River just a half-mile upstream of the reservation, the tribe complained that the Army Corps did not consider threats to its water supply and cultural heritage.

The EPA, the Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation echoed those concerns in public comments on the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment. Citing risks to water supplies, inadequate emergency preparedness, potential impacts to the Standing Rock reservation and insufficient environmental justice analysis, the agencies urged the Army Corps to issue a revised draft of their environmental assessment.

"Crossings of the Missouri River have the potential to affect the primary source of drinking water for much of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Tribal nations," Philip Strobel, National Environmental Policy Act regional compliance director for the EPA, wrote in a March 11 letter to the Army Corps.

The current route of the pipeline is 10 miles upstream of Fort Yates, the tribal headquarters of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and the county seat. The Standing Rock Sioux rely on the Missouri River for drinking water, irrigation, and fish.

The EPA shared its concerns and recommended that the Army Corps undertake a new draft environmental assessment and release it for public comment. In that process, the EPA asked the Army Corps to consider "other available routes or crossing locations that would have reduced potential to water resources, especially drinking water supplies," and to carry out a "more thorough" analysis of environmental justice concerns. The other agencies also asked for further assessments and consultation with the tribes.

The Army Corps instead published its final environmental assessment four months later, which constituted final approval of the project. In it, the Corps acknowledged the agencies' comments, but said "the anticipated environmental, economic, cultural, and social effects" of the project are "not injurious to the public interest."

The Army Corps, which has jurisdiction over domestic pipelines that cross major waterways, declined a request for comment, citing ongoing litigation. Energy Transfer, owner of Dakota Access LLC, did not respond to a request for comment. The company has previously said "we are constructing this pipeline in accordance with applicable laws, and the local, state and federal permits and approvals we have received."

Tribe Takes their Complaints Public

The tribe's growing protest has gathered in a camp near Cannon Ball, N.D., and has drawn support from Native Americans from around the country as well as environmental activists. An estimated 1,200 people are camping there and Sioux leaders say 90 tribes are represented among the protesters.

The protest blocked construction equipment two weeks ago and Energy Transfer halted construction on the section of pipeline closest to the Standing Rock reservation. A federal judge said last week he will rule by September 9 on whether to grant the Standing Rock Sioux a temporary injunction. That would bar construction on sections of the pipeline where the ground hasn't yet been disturbed until a suit calling for the Army Corps to redo its permitting process can be heard.

Demographics of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation
The Standing Rock reservation spans 3,600 square miles across North and South Dakota, where 41 percent of its 8,217 residents live below the poverty level, more than triple the national average, according to a 2012 economic development report prepared for the tribe. Nearly a quarter of its population is unemployed.

In its comments calling for a re-do, the EPA said the environmental justice analysis in the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment used county-by-county or state-by-state data when the preferred level of analysis is "census block groups or census tracts."

"A screening level analysis for EJ [environmental justice] indicates there are several census block groups with substantial minority and/or low income demographics that could be potentially impacted by the project," the EPA wrote. "In addition to analyzing potential EJ impacts, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (February 16, 1994) also requires public outreach to potentially affected EJ communities."

In its final environmental assessment, the Army Corps said its analysis "contains an Environmental Justice analysis that conforms with recognized practice."

The agency also said the pipeline does not cross tribal land. "In fact, tribal land was specifically avoided as a routing mitigation measure," it said. "The Project does not anticipate any impact to water supplies along its route, and to the extent a response action is required, federal regulation will be complied with."

Route Became a Moving Target

The original route for the proposed pipeline crossed the Missouri River further north, 10 miles upstream of Bismarck, the state capital. North Dakota Public Service Commission documents show the route upstream of Bismarck in a May 29, 2014 map by Energy Transfer.

The company later rejected this route, citing a number of factors, including more road and wetland crossings, a longer pipeline, and higher costs. Also listed as a concern was the close proximity to wellheads providing Bismarck's drinking water supply.

"They moved it down to Standing Rock, which is a very remote area, but people live at Standing Rock too. There is an environmental justice component here," said Jan Hasselman, an attorney with environmental advocacy organization EarthJustice, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Standing Rock Tribe against the Army Corps of Engineers.

In its public comments, the Department of the Interior, the government agency responsible for the administration and management of Native American lands, called for the Army Corps to conduct an

Environmental Impact Statement, a more comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of the proposed pipeline.

"We believe the Corps did not adequately justify or otherwise support its conclusion that there would be no significant impacts upon the surrounding environment and community," Lawrence Roberts, acting assistant secretary of Indian affairs at the Depart of the Interior, wrote in a letter to the Army Corps in March.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), a federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of the nation's historic resources, also expressed concern over the Army Corps' assessment.

Federal law requires federal agencies to take into account the effect a proposed project will have on historic property. The Army Corps' assessment, however lacked adequate consultation with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and focused on a limited number of water crossings rather than on the pipeline's entire expanse, according to letters ACHP officials wrote to the Army Corps.

"Based on the inadequacies of the tribal consultation and the limited scope for identification of historic properties that may be affected, the ACHP questions the sufficiency of the Corps' identification effort, its determinations of eligibility, and assessments of effect," Reid Nelson, director of the office of federal agency programs for ACHP, wrote in a May 19 letter to the Army Corps.

In its final assessment, the Corps stated there is "no new significant information on environmental effects" as a result of comments from the EPA and others. "As such, neither a supplemental or revised EA [Environmental Assessment] for further public review nor additional NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] compliance actions was required."

"We're talking about a broad overarching and fundamental failure which is the decision to look very narrowly at environmental impacts at a few specific locations rather than the pipeline as a whole," Hasselman said of the Army Corps' assessment.

Having their concerns dismissed by the Corps, the tribe turned next to the courts. Their lawsuit calls for a halt to construction and full consideration of the pipeline's impact on tribal lands and water.

To obtain a preliminary or "emergency" injunction, however, attorneys representing the Standing Rock tribe will have to demonstrate imminent harm to historic sites if construction proceeds.

"To the extent that people are concerned about harm from oil spills, that is still a ways off," Hasselman said. "We can't really seek emergency relief on that front. That is something that we will be seeking in the course of the lawsuit."

5 things to know about the Dakota Access Pipeline (KETV, Omaha)

Native American tribe sued the federal government over project

UPDATED 7:33 AM CDT Aug 31, 2016

(CNN) —In what looks to be a possible sequel to the Keystone XL Pipeline dispute, another fight has begun over a proposed US oil route.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has sued the federal government, saying the Native American tribe was not properly consulted over the project to construct a 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline that extends over four states.

While proponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline tout its economic boost, opponents question its environmental impact.

The US Army Corps of Engineers approved the project, granting final permits in July, to the dismay of environmentalists and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

1. What is the pipeline project?

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois. The pipeline is also known as the Bakken Oil Pipeline, named for the oil-rich area in North Dakota. An estimated 7.4 billion barrels of undiscovered oil is believed to be in the US portion of the Bakken Formation, according to the US Geological Survey.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

2. Why is the pipeline being constructed?

The project developer, Dakota Access, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Crude Oil, says the pipeline would help the United States become less dependent on importing energy from unstable regions of the world. It says a pipeline is the safest, most cost-effective and environmentally responsible way to move crude oil, removing dependency on rails and trucks.

It also estimates the pipeline would bring an estimated $156 million in sales and income taxes to state and local governments as well as add 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs.

The proposal comes as a glut of cheap oil has devastated North Dakota's economy. The state had enjoyed a major boom, but after hitting highs in 2014, it suffered a major economic downturn.

The project developers say the $3.7 billion project will "bring significant economic benefits to the region that it transverses."

3. Who is protesting?

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a complaint in federal court alleging that "the construction and operation of the pipeline ... threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe."

There are also concerns that digging the pipeline under the Missouri River would affect the tribe's drinking water supply. The tribe, represented by Earthjustice, a nonprofit environmental law firm, has asked for an injunction.

Based in Fort Yates, North Dakota, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is a federally recognized Indian tribe, a successor to the Great Sioux Nation. Other Native American tribes and nations have joined its efforts.

"We have laws that require federal agencies to consider environmental risks and protection of Indian historic and sacred sites," Dave Archambault II, the elected chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, said in a statement.

"But the Army Corps has ignored all those laws and fast-tracked this massive project just to meet the pipeline's aggressive construction schedule."

Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota disputes the tribe's chief complaint that the Army Corps did not properly consult it.

"If there is some way for the corps to work to meet the concerns of the tribe, they should certainly do that. But (there) has been a consultation process. If the tribe doesn't feel that that has been sufficient, again, they can protest as long as they do it peacefully and safely, but ultimately their recourse is to the courts," the Republican senator told CNN affiliate KFYR-TV in Bismarck, North Dakota.

About 30 environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, signed a letter to President Barack Obama, slamming the Dakota Access Pipeline as "yet another example of an oil pipeline project being permitted without public engagement or sufficient environmental review."

They appealed to him to reject the project -- as he did with the Keystone XL pipeline.

Protests have been held in North Dakota and Washington.

Construction equipment involved in the pipeline project in Iowa was set ablaze in suspected arson fires, reports say.

4. Who's on which side?

Bernie Sanders spoke out against the pipeline in November 2015, but Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton has not addressed the issue. CNN reached out to the Clinton campaign for comment on the issue and has not yet received a response.

"If candidate Clinton does nothing to address this issue yet continues into November promising Native Americans that she is our champion, then her words will be nothing but false promises -- just more bombast, more white lies to Indians," Simon Moya-Smith, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation and culture editor at Indian Country Today, wrote recently in a CNN op-ed.

Celebrities such as Shailene Woodley, Susan Sarandon and Rosario Dawson have spoken out against the pipeline.

Leonardo DiCaprio tweeted that he was "inspired by the Standing Rock Sioux's efforts to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline."

5. What's next?

The tribe's actions may be the start of a lengthy, legal fight over the Dakota Access Pipeline. Meanwhile, construction work on the pipeline is ongoing.

US District Judge James Boasberg said he wants to absorb both sides of the argument before issuing a ruling, which is expected by September 9, KFYR reported.

Officials Rate 3 Weekend Tornadoes In Eastern North Dakota (AP)

Associated Press, August 30, 2016

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) – A weekend tornado that caused damage in the Hillsboro area had wind speeds up to 140 mph, according to the National Weather Service.

The agency rated the Saturday evening tornado in Traill County an EF-3 on the enhanced Fujita scale. An EF2 or higher rating is considered significant.

The tornado was as wide as three football fields are long and was on the ground for 8 minutes, according to a weather service report. It smashed bins at Rahr Malting Co.'s Taft grain elevator complex and spilled tons of barley onto the ground, destroyed a garage and uprooted trees on one area farmstead. It heavily damaged a home and a metal building at another farmstead.

No one was hurt. The town of 1,600 people was lucky that the tornado missed the heart of the community, said Connor Ulness with the storm damage restoration company Aspen Exteriors.

"The tornado came in just north of the center of town," he told WDAY-TV.

Severe storms in eastern North Dakota on Saturday spawned two weaker tornadoes in neighboring Grand Forks County, according to the weather service. One with wind speeds estimated at 70 mph and rated an EF-0 touched down in an open field near Arvilla. An EF-1 tornado with wind speeds up to 110 mph uprooted trees and demolished a barn in the Pleasant View Township area.

No injuries were reported in either of those tornadoes.

SOUTH DAKOTA

County To Explore Grant Possibilities For Areas Affected By Crow Peak Fire (Black Hills Pioneer)

By Jaci Conrad

Black Hills Pioneer

August 30,2016

DEADWOOD — Disaster prevention due to devastation caused by the Crow Peak Fire is the impetus behind the Lawrence County Commission's recent decision to give the go-ahead to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide an initial assessment of the area.

"We might discover something very important that needs to be done," said Commission Chair Daryl Johnson.

The Emergency Watershed Protection program of the conservation service is designed to help prevent damage to life or property after a natural disasters, like the Crow Peak Fire. A cost-share program, the protection program pays 75 percent of the costs to install practices such as replacing culverts identified in the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) report completed after the fire. If it decides the assessment is worthy of pursuing, the county, upon entering a sponsorship of the emergency grant program, would be responsible for 25 percent of the costs.

Because the county would be responsible for the operation and maintenance of any culverts installed, for the life of the culvert, commissioners were hesitant to commit to the program, asking first for an initial assessment to be brought back and reviewed before a formal commitment is made.

"You understand, our apprehension comes from the fact that we still maintain snow-removal on two bridges because we were a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) sponsor of them at one time," Johnson said.

With a 60-day deadline following the fire, which was put out on July 4, an application letter must be submitted to the conservation service by Friday, starting the information gathering process, beginning with a damage survey report. This report will identify what problems are present, how to fix any concerns, and the cost of repairing the concerns. The application letter does not commit Lawrence County to a contract.

District Conservationist Justin Boerboom addressed the commission, explaining that the NRCS is federal agency with USDA funding and takes measures to help prevent catastrophe after a natural disaster through the Emergency Watershed Program.

"We need a local sponsor to apply for assistance," Boerboom said. "We've proposed the project. The next step is to go out and evaluate what the issues are, what to address, the costs, and come back with a proposal."

NRCS State Engineer Jay Cobb said that once they evaluate, the next determination is if they can mitigate issues to gain benefits greater than the actual cost of construction.

Threats that the protection program addresses are termed watershed impairments and include, for example: debris-clogged stream channels, undermined and unstable streambanks, jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures, wind-borne debris removal, and damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor, such as the county, if they decide to move forward with the program.

Boerboom also presented the critical values table from the BAER report, listing all the concerns on private land. Listed as a very high risk to human life and safety is the Crow Creek Road and the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout, and damage. The BAER team identified Crow Creek as an drainage of Crow Peak that would see an increase of about 50 percent over normal flows since the vegetation on the western slopes were burned.

Listed as a high threat to human life and safety are homes along Crow Creek Road; specifically, two cabins and the threat of flash flooding and debris flows.

Listed as a very high threat to property are: two road crossings with 18-inch culverts on Crow Creek Road; Crumm Driveway Crossing's 24-inch culvert; and Nicholas Cabin driveway, which

crossing 24-inch culvert. The threat here is flash flooding with debris flows, debris blockage, possible failure of crossing structures, and road washout/damage.

Listed as a high threat to property are private road crossings along Higgins Gulch Road in the floodplain, with the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout/damage; and culverts under driveways alongside Higgins Gulch Road.

The BAER team determined the Higgins Gulch drainage would see increased flows of about 10 percent following the fire.

There are other threats that have been identified and listed in the intermediate to low threat categories.

Yankton Co. Resident Dies From West Nile Virus (KDLT News, Pierre)

Aug 29, 2016

KDLT News- Pierre, S.D.

The South Dakota Department of Health today reported a Yankton Co. resident died of West Nile virus associated causes. It is the state's first WNV related death this season. The individual was in the 80 to 89 age group.

To date this season, South Dakota has reported 74 cases of human WNV; 12 percent have had the most serious neruoinvasive disease while 88 percent have had WNV fever. Twenty-five percent of cases have been hospitalized. There has also been a WNV-positive horse in Butte County.

"This unfortunate death is a reminder for us all that while the Zika virus is grabbing headlines, West Nile is the mosquito-borne virus of concern here in South Dakota," said Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department. "We strongly encourage people to protect themselves and their families by using repellent and avoiding the outdoors when mosquitoes are most active."

Kightlinger said South Dakotans can reduce their risk with the following precautions:

- Apply mosquito repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535) to clothes and exposed skin. Limit exposure by wearing pants and long sleeves in the evening.

- Limit time outdoors from dusk to midnight when Culex mosquitoes, the primary carrier of WNV in South Dakota, are most active.

- Get rid of standing water that gives mosquitoes a place to breed. Regularly change water in bird baths, outside pet dishes, and drain water from flower pots and garden containers.

- Support local mosquito control efforts.

UTAH

Next step for American Fork River: Measure the risks with an eye toward spring (KSL TV, Salt Lake City)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue | Posted Aug 30th, 2016 @ 7:02pm

SALT LAKE CITY — State water quality officials will insist on an action plan to prevent further contamination of the American Fork River from lead-laden sediment that killed thousands of fish in a two-mile stretch.

That plan will be put together by the North Utah Water Conservancy District with an eye toward preventing sediment from being stirred up by rain or spring runoff, said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

He said the division also expects to get an estimate from project engineers on the amount of sediment that washed into the river as a result of the Tibble Fork Dam's $7.3 million rehabilitation and expansion project.

"We have moved sediment from point A to point B over a six-mile expanse," Baker said. "There needs to be an assessment of how bad it is and what steps need to be taken to remediate it."

It's the latest plan following completion by project engineers of a diversion channel that placed a 200-foot pipeline to reroute flows into the nearly empty Tibble Fork basin to prevent another sediment flush while work continues on the dam.

Baker said a lot of factors will come into play to mitigate the impacts of the sludge, especially given that high flows from spring runoff.

"Mother Nature is going to come with spring runoff regardless of any planning we do," he said. "We need to know what needs to be done."

Dave Brown, the Utah state conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, said an aerial drone flew over the site Monday to quantify the amount of material that washed into the river.

"There is a very clear mini-canyon that is exposed now," he said. "The engineer indicated they could use survey technology to calculate how much sediment was deposited."

Dam project

The NRCS is the federal agency on the Tibble Fork rehabilitation project, which rose as a priority after a 2004 assessment found that 1960s-era dam did not meet safety standards. Work began in June, with the NRCS advising downstream users that as the reservoir began draining around Aug. 19, people could expect to see elevated levels of sediment in the river.

Brown said continuing inflows into the basin released larger amounts of sediment than anticipated. The result was a two-mile section of the river just below the dam that lost all its fish populations due to suffocation.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources said historically, there are about 1,000 to 2,000 fish per mile in that section of the river.

While water samples taken by the state show metal concentrations within screening values for health, recreation and aquatic life downstream, the sediment showed high levels of lead that likely resulted from legacy mining operations in the Wasatch Mountains.

Several hundred abandoned mines dot the mountains, some experiencing acid mine drainage and an unknown number are within proximity of perennial stream flows.

Baker said his division has worked in partnership with the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, to craft a blueprint of where there may be water quality risks — a concern accentuated with the disastrous Gold King Mine spill of 2015.

In that incident, EPA-led contractors bungled efforts to open a mine portal and sent a 3-million gallon torrent of mustard-colored mine waste into the Animas River above Silverton, Colo. The breach contaminated water in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the Navajo Nation in an environmental catastrophe critics say was avoidable.

Baker said the Gold King mine disaster underscores the need for Utah officials to get a handle on potential problems, sooner rather than later.

"It ought to be enough of a concern that we do some investigation," he said. "My greatest concern is if there needs to be an action plan and if these are time bombs waiting to go off."

Abandoned mines

While state officials over abandoned mine reclamation have mapped the hundreds of mines and their owners — if available — with work done in the 1990s, Baker said it is not clear how many of them pose risks to waterways.

"If, in fact, they do have flows and there are responsible parties, we can issue a permit and get an idea of the water quality of the mines' drainage," he said. "We will be way ahead to know if we have a problem or not."

The mining division closes up abandoned mines if there is a public safety risk, and Baker's division can enforce the Clean Water Act if water is at risk, but there is no state regulatory oversight absent those factors.

"We really don't know the extent," said Steve Fluke, administrator over the state's abandoned mine reclamation program. "We are trying to figure out how many are discharging and may be an environmental issue in light of Gold King."

While there is funding in place to deal with the cleanup of abandoned coal mines, no funding exists for other mines.

"There is no such law for cleaning up hard rock mine sites," Fluke said.

Mark Allen of Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon sees the potential for another Gold King Mine spill in the Wasatch Mountains because he said no one is properly addressing the risks.

"The Wasatch Mountains have a bunch of ticking time bombs and no one wants to talk about them," he said.

Allen said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should step in and declare the Tibble Fork sediment release into American Fork River a Superfund site.

EPA had a response team in Utah County last week, but the federal agency has not disclosed what its employees determined about the Tibble Fork Dam release.

"We will continue to coordinate with Utah and federal agencies to evaluate data, information, and potential next steps related to the sediment release," said EPA spokesman Rich Mylott.

"We’re certainly aware of concerns related to historic mining and metals impacts in the American Fork watershed and have worked with state and local partners on previous assessment and cleanup projects in the basin."

Allen is leading a tour to legacy mine sites mid-month that Baker and Fluke said they plan to attend.

"I have been barking pretty loud," he said. "We're taking everybody up there who has some stewardship and asking them to figure out what to do."

Baker and several members of his staff are touring the New Yankee Mine on Snowbird property Wednesday to assess any downstream impacts.

The division is also looking at the resort's expansion into Mary Ellen Gulch, an approval granted earlier this year that requires water quality monitoring for two years before any construction on ski lifts or other facilities begins.

WYOMING

Route To Yellowstone Reopens, But Fire Danger Remains High (Wyoming Public Radio)

By CAROLINE BALLARD • 16 HOURS AGO

Northwest Wyoming continues to struggle with high fire danger as eleven wild fires currently burn in that part of the state.

Bill Swartley, a public information officer for the Yellowstone fire team, said Phase 2 fire restrictions will likely go into effect in Yellowstone National Park on Wednesday. That means any kind of open flame may be banned in the park.

Swartley said preventing any human caused fires is their top priority.

“These fires are lightning caused and for that reason are being managed for ecological benefits to the park,” said Swartley. “However, human caused fires are a total different type of ignition.” With temperatures reaching into the 80s and low relative humidity, weather conditions are prime for even more fire growth.

Some progress has been made, though. Highway 191/89/287 between Leek’s Marina and Yellowstone’s South Entrance was closed because of the Berry Fire but has now reopened. Highway pull outs along that stretch remain closed.

Swartley said there may be areas of light haze or smoke in the park that could make it hard to see.

“We’re just recommending people adjust their speed and turn on their headlights, increase their visibility as they pass through those areas of smoke,” said Swartley.

He added that people with respiratory sensitivity may want to check air quality at airnow.gov before heading into the park.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (8/30, lead story, 2:30, Guthrie, 16.61M) reported, "Make no mistake, we are in the fall throes of hurricane season now. And if you're a storm watcher at the weather service looking at the US map tonight, there's a lot to keep your eye on. Three big storms threatening the US coastline at this hour. Parts of Florida just placed under a hurricane watch, bracing for up to 10 inches of rain. A tropical storm warning for sections of North Carolina. And Hawaii gearing up for a possible one-two punch. The Big Island facing a hurricane warning at this hour. Gabe Gutierrez starts us off tonight in North Carolina storm zone." NBC (**Gutierrez**) added, "Tonight, the view from the International Space Station is stunning: massive hurricanes swirling across the globe. Hurricane Madeleine in the Pacific, threatening Hawaii. It's followed by Hurricane Lester. Churning in the Atlantic, Hurricane Gaston, not expected to affect the US but now the Carolina and Florida coasts are bracing for separate tropical systems." **Unidentified speaker**: "The storm is an uncertainty, but we are preparing for it." **Gutierrez**: "In Florida, tropical depression number nine is forecast to turn towards the Gulf Coast, bringing heavy rain and even isolated tornadoes over the next few days." **Rick Scott**, Florida Governor: "Everybody has to be careful. We don't want anybody to be injured. We don't want any loss of life." **Gutierrez**: "Another system, tropical depression number eight, is grazing North Carolina's Outer Banks, where a tropical storm warning is in effect. The concern here, rip currents – fast-moving water that moves away from shore. Swimmers are pulled out to sea and panic while trying to swim against current, back to the beach." **Drew Pearson**, NC Emergency Management: "Rip currents are dangerous. They've taken three lives here in the Outer Banks Just this past summer. There's a high threat of them right now." **Gutierrez**: "Young Payton Waller got caught up in one but managed to escape." **Payton Waller**, swimmer: "It's really rough and all these waves just crashing." **Gutierrez**: "Other tourists on this tail end of summer are taking the offshore storm in stride." **Unidentified speaker**: "I mean, one to three inches. Back home, this is what you call a thunderstorm." **Gutierrez**: "Though neither of the storms closest to the eastern US are expected to strengthen into major hurricanes, it has suddenly become a busy season in the tropics." **Rick Knabb**, National Hurricane Center: "Don't focus so much on the strength or the category, because the water hazards might end up being the most dangerous." **Gutierrez**: "As Florida prepares for flooding, here in North Carolina's Outer Banks, things may seem calm. But, there is rough surf and dangerous rip currents up and down the eastern seaboard as far north as New England, possibly extending into the holiday weekend."

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, August 30, 2016

The federal agency leading the public health response to the Zika virus in the United States will run out of funding to combat the mosquito-borne virus by late September, its director said Monday.

"The cupboard is bare," said Tom Frieden, who heads the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Basically, we're out of money, and we need Congress to act to allow us to respond effectively."

Of the $222 million that the CDC was allocated for domestic Zika response this year, about $200 million has been committed, Frieden said during a media roundtable in Washington. "The rest will be gone by the end of September."

The timing further raises the threat for high-risk states along the Gulf Coast, particularly if Congress again fails to act on the Obama administration's emergency funding request when lawmakers return to Washington next month.

"We're in peak mosquito season" – which typically lasts through the end of October in the United States – and if transmission starts occurring more broadly, CDC "might not have the resources" to respond and send teams to support local and state officials, Frieden said.

The CDC has already issued unprecedented travel advisories for two areas in Florida where mosquitoes are actively spreading the virus: a one-square-mile section of Miami's Wynwood neighborhood and a 1.5-square-mile zone in Miami Beach. Pregnant women are urged to stay out of both areas because of the danger Zika poses to a fetus.

Negotiations in Congress over a $1.9 billion Zika spending package fell apart in late June. Federal health officials have shifted money from elsewhere in the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the domestic response. That includes $38 million from fighting Ebola, $44 million from general public health emergency funds and, most recently, $81 million from programs at the National Institutes of Health and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

The money has gone to help states track the virus, provide assistance about birth defects caused by Zika and increase mosquito-control efforts. Within CDC itself, officials also have pulled resources from programs on immunization, disease infection and HIV outreach, including prevention treatment for people at risk of getting HIV, Frieden said.

Researchers continue to detail ever-graver consequences for babies born to mothers infected with Zika. A report from Brazil, published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine, described a newborn in Sao Paolo who had Zika virus in his blood for more than two months. While the baby had no obvious illness or visible birth defects at birth or when doctors examined him at about eight weeks, by six months he had developed severe Zika-related brain damage.

The first trimester of pregnancy is thought to be when Zika infection poses the greatest risk. In this case, however, the baby's mother was infected late in her second trimester.

At the same time, the virus continues to spread to the rest of the world. The latest outbreak is in Singapore, a Southeast Asia travel hub, which typically has 500 full-time inspectors working to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can breed. The fact that Zika is spreading there, with at least 56 cases now confirmed, shows how "it's going to be really tough" for other places to control, he said.

During the coming weeks in the United States, Frieden expects there will be more cases of infants born with Zika-related neurological problems. As of mid-August, 17 babies infected in utero had been diagnosed with microcephaly, a condition defined by an abnormally small head and often serious brain damage.

In hard-hit Puerto Rico, the CDC estimates that 6,000 to 10,000 pregnant women will become infected during this mosquito season and that at least 100 to 270 infants will be born with microcephaly.

Without additional funding, Frieden said, the CDC won't be able to undertake key projects to better understand and control the virus, including Zika's longterm impact on infants and diagnostics to identify if a person has been previously infected.

In Puerto Rico, the agency also won't be able to help the island establish its own vector control program. Without one, the island has not been able to conduct effective surveillance, mosquito control or public engagement, even though Puerto Rico is experiencing a Zika epidemic and has had a history of other vector-borne diseases.

Frieden said the few additional cases that have surfaced in other parts of South Florida are considered single cases that don’t represent a greater spread of the virus.

The travel advisories will be lifted after 45 days with no new cases from local transmission – the equivalent of three mosquito incubation periods. The Wynwood area is about halfway through that period, he said, but Miami Beach is still experiencing new cases.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:43:49 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us'(b)(6)@utah.gov'(b)(6)@wy(b)(6)@nd.gov'(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov'(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;'(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us';Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA clips for Monday 8-22-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-22-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Monday, August 22, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state received an FMAG reimbursement of more than $1 million… An HMGP grant is helping with reconstruction of the Manitou Incline… Fires in the state are now more under control.
- **Montana:** The *Fallon County Times* did another story on recent visits by DES and FEMA officials related to the Baker tornado recovery… The Copper King Fire almost doubled in size Sunday, with red flag conditions expected today.
- **North Dakota:** Three stories focus on the growing protest, led by Native American tribes, against construction of an oil pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security division of the North Dakota DES, estimates state law enforcement, health and transportation costs related to the protest may approach $1 million over the next few weeks. Approximately 1500-2000 protestors are at the site… An attempt to use eminent domain to take some land for the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Project was stalled by a judge who said it had not been properly done.
- **South Dakota:** KELO TV did a story on the flood in Sioux Falls one year ago and the community's response to it, and another story on the Atlas winter storm three years ago that killed many cattle in western South Dakota, and how that area has responded… The TV story on Sioux Falls mentioned local buyouts to prevent flooding issues, and an *Argus Leader* story focused just on the local buyout program in an area with poor drainage.
- **Utah:** Brothers in Pleasant Grove who were born and raised in Louisiana are doing a fundraiser and donations drive for flood survivors in their home state… Southern Utah University will be offering an online master's program in cybersecurity through a partnership with a Vietnamese telecommunications company.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The *Baton Rouge Advocate* says FEMA is improved, but additional federal aid may be needed… Several stories reported on FEMA suspending

$30 million in payments to Mississippi for problems with its program retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina; this story from the *Jackson Clarion Ledger* specifies the procedures and employee in question… *The New York Times* reported on a survey of public attitudes by Johns Hopkins University on what criteria should be used to determine who lives or who gets priority for emergency care when medical staff and equipment are overwhelmed in a catastrophic incident.

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The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

UTAH:

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

WYOMING:

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

STORIES

COLORADO

FEMA awards Colorado $1 million wildfire grant (Loveland Reporter-Herald)

By Dana Rieck
Reporter-Herald Staff Writer
Posted: 08/20/2016 05:25:56 PM MDT

Republican Sen. Cory Gardner's office announced this week that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is awarding $1,194,483.86 to the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Matthew Branch, the Northeast Regional Fire Management officer for the Colorado Department of Public Safety Division of Fire Prevention and Control, said the money is a reimbursement for costs associated with past fires.

It is called a fire management assistance grant, which is something states apply for after responding to large fires.

"Most of these costs are borne by the local fire department and the county," he wrote in an email. "These entities bill the state and we reimburse them out of the state budget. Several years later we get the money back from the federal government."

Once approved, according to Branch, the grants can pay for 75 percent of the costs associated with fighting those fires.

"I welcome more than $1 million from FEMA to assist with wildfire response efforts in Colorado," said Gardner in the news release. "I'm confident the state of Colorado will maximize the federal grant to both preempt and mitigate the destruction caused by wildfires. I'll continue to advocate at the federal level to ensure Colorado receives the resources it needs to keep our communities safe."

Dana Rieck: 970-635-3630, rieckd@reporter-herald.com or twitter.com/DanaRieckRH

Manitou Incline Closed for Construction (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)
8/22/16

COLORADO SPRINGS - The Manitou Incline is now closed as the cities of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs start phase 2 of improvements to the popular trail.

Construction is expected to last around 4 months with the main goals of: improving safety, enhancing the hiking experience, improving the long-term sustainability of the trail and increasing accessibility.

They will also clean up debris along the trail and add new drainage structures to protect the trail from eroding away.

Colorado Springs is responsible for the general oversight of the trail, and the improvements are being funded by a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant and Trail, Open Space and Parks Funding.

Beaver Creek fire evacuation order lifted; two Colorado wildfires 100 percent contained (Denver Post)

By Ellis Arnold | earnold@denverpost.com

August 21, 2016 at 4:36 pm

An evacuation order was lifted in the Beaver Creek fire area near Walden and the Wyoming state line yesterday, said John Abernathy, spokesman for the Denver Fire Department.

Some evacuees from 50 total residences have begun to return to their homes, Abernathy said, but low relative humidity and winds up to 25 mph are expected to create critical burn conditions Monday and Tuesday. The fire, which is 53 percent contained, started June 19. Total containment is expected Oct. 21.

Heavy beetle-killed timber in the area has been fueling the fire, which has required continued ground and air efforts. Recent cool, moist weather aided the fight, but warming is expected until Wednesday. Season-ending wet weather is likely the only factor that will put out the fire, Abernathy said.

The fire has burned 36,961 acres, and the cause of the fire is still under investigation. A total of 17 structures, including one residence, have been lost, Abernathy said.

The lightning-caused Spring Creek 2 fire south of Parachute burned 621 acres but was 100 percent contained as of Friday, according to federal agencies. There have been no injuries attributed to the fire, which started Aug. 12, and no primary residences were lost despite the fire moving within a few feet of several homes. Four buildings, three vehicles and three trailers were damaged or destroyed, and evacuation orders covering about 20 homes were lifted Aug. 14.

The Hayden Pass fire southeast of Salida was 60 percent contained as of Aug. 4, according to federal agencies, with recent monsoonal weather dropping moisture in the area. The 16,754-acre lightning-caused fire started July 8, and it may present a runoff issue because of the rain. All evacuations ended as of July 21 after people were ordered to clear out of 140 residences in the area. The fire is expected to be contained Oct. 1.

Fire crews contained the Blair fire 100 percent as of Aug. 1, said David Boyd, spokesman for the federal Bureau of Land Management. Lightning started the fire near Colorado 64 between Rangely and Meeker; about 1,140 acres have burned since June 29.

Crews focused on keeping the fire from moving north and east, where a power-line corridor, oil and gas pipeline and the highway would have been vulnerable. There were no injuries or evacuations, Boyd said, as the fire was in a remote area.

MONTANA

FEMA and Montana Disaster Emergency Services Visit Baker
(Fallon County Times)

SEVERE SUMMER WEATHER

Laurie Hassell and Kent Atwood display a weather map tracking severe weather storms throughout Montana.

Laurie Hassell, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), External Affairs Specialist; Kent Atwood, CFM, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services, Hazard Mitigation Officer and Tim Tennis, Recovery Bureau Chief, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services were in Baker on August 9.

By Sherry Vogel

They were conducting a briefing to Fallon County and City of Baker applicants as they proceed to set-up documentation to receive federal funding after Baker was designated to receive a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Atwood explained how the entire process works. Tennis expounded on how to apply for the funds. They both covered the scope of work for the Project Worksheet (PW) using the actual tornado documentation including cleanup and debris removal reports.

The preliminary final damage assessment is at $1.5 million. This amount surpasses the $1.4 million required for a Presidential Disaster Declaration. This final figure of the disaster damage could actually be more in the final analysis.

Whereas Hassell was in Baker to represent the Response and Recovery standpoint. Atwood was focused on the mitigation perspective of the disaster. **Mitigation meaning to identify and reduce the severity of the next natural disaster.

Officials estimate the Copper King Fire doubled in size Sunday afternoon (NBC TV, Helena)

By: KECI Staff
Updated: Aug 21, 2016 08:07 PM MDT

MISSOULA, Mont. - The Copper King Fire burning near Montana Highway 200 and Thompson River Road in Sanders County is now estimated to have burned over 6,000 acres. The fire had burned just over 3,400 acres as of Sunday morning.

Fire officials tell NBC Montana that the fire expanded to the northeast, chewing through around 3,000 acres. The explosive growth meant a cloud of thick smoke spread as far north as Creston and parts of the Swan Valley as of 8 p.m. on Sunday. The new growth is away from structures immediately threatened by the fire.

Officials with the Lolo National Forest say there is poor road access and firefighters and public safety remains the top priority. Fire crews are busy on the south and west sides of the fire near Highway 200 and Thompson River Road where structures are threatened.

The 297 people working to contain the fire will continue to focus on structure protection and keeping Highway 200 open to traffic. A Red Flag Warning is in effect for the fire on Monday afternoon, meaning more explosive growth is possible due to dry and windy weather.

NORTH DAKOTA

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

"It's been a long time since we all camped together," said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. "It feels natural."

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

"We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties," said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman's executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. "That's essential."

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Water district's eminent domain attempt for F-M diversion stalls, but case not dismissed

By Helmut Schmidt on Aug 19, 2016 at 2:52 p.m.

FARGO — An East Central District judge has ruled that the Cass County Joint Water Resource District, which is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement for 80 acres of farmland for the Fargo-Moorhead diversion, has not followed the proper procedures for eminent domain proceedings, court documents show.

At the same time, Judge John Irby denied a motion by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to dismiss the water district's attempt to use eminent domain for the Horace-area land, documents show.

According to court records:

The water resource district is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement on 79.34 acres owned by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to build a F-M diversion inlet.

The district extended a final offer of $476,040 for the land on May 18, 2016. That offer was rejected.

Irby ruled the water resource district failed to file a needed petition in the case, provide appropriate public notice and a hearing, allow interested parties to answer the petition, and have the court hear the case, allow the petition to be amended as needed and issue its findings and assess costs.

Irby said the district was also walking a line between taking right-of-way sufficient for its purposes while avoiding a purchase of the land, or fee simple, which is not eligible for "quick take" eminent domain.

Irby ruled that the district will have to amend its eminent domain complaint.

Cossette's attorney, Jonathan Garaas of the Garaas Law Firm in Fargo, said Friday, Aug. 19, that he does not comment on cases still being litigated.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Don Jorgensen
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 19, 2016

Sioux Falls, SD

One year ago, Sioux Falls was inundated by major flooding.

The hardest hit area was in the southwest part of the city where seven inches of rain fell in one hour. It was a night many of us won't soon forget.

The night was August 27th. The skies opened up over Sioux Falls and dumped more rain than the city had seen in recent memory.

Streets flooded quickly. Vehicles stalled out and many businesses flooded out, including the Signature Salon.

When we last met the owner, Jeff From, he was busy cleaning up what mother nature destroyed in minutes.

Today, From is back in business....

"It's hard to believe it's been a year," From said.

....but not without a lot of hard work along the way.

"It was a good eight months of solid; morning, noon and night trying to get things in place," From said.

The downpour and flooding that followed, caught many off guard.

The city had spent millions of dollars upgrading the drainage systems, but in some parts of town, seven inches of rain in a short amount of time was too much for it to handle.

"It was a large event", Public Works director Mark Cotter said.

Cotter says the drainage system worked as well as it could, but following the event, he knew more could be done.

"Probably the first thing and most important thing we did was take a rate case to the city council and they did support us to continually raise rates through 2019," Cotter said.

Cotter says those rate increases will help pay for more improvements; plus conduct more drainage studies.

"So when neighbors call and say 'this just doesn't drain right,' we set aside more dollars now to go out and do an updated hydro study, so we can understand what's happening and ultimately look at some alternatives to improve it," Cotter said.

Plus, the city began taking a closer look at drainage easements around town. It identified a few where the homeowners, over the years, had made improvements to those easements with landscaping, trees and bushes.

But in reality, those beautification improvements, became obstructions and didn't allow water to flow freely to designated detention ponds.

So, this past year, the city worked with the homeowners to remove those obstructions and regraded the land. That way during a heavy rain storm like last year, the water will go where it's supposed to go.

But in one area of town, around 35th and Duluth which always seems to have water problems during torrential rains, drainage improvements are hard to come by.

So, instead of investing millions of dollars in trying to upgrade the infrastructure, the city bought a number of the homes and is now in the process of tearing them down.

It's going to reclaim the land and turn it into green space with detention ponds.

And finally, the city implemented new building codes, so homeowners shouldn't have to worry about flooding if they live near one of those drainage easements.

Cotter shows us why using this handsketched diagram.

"If this is a drainage way in the backyard, we used to recommend that the water surface, we used to recommend that the lowest floor of the house be two feet above that water surface elevation, now we don't recommend, it's a standard," Cotter said.

Don: Builders know this now? That it's a standard,
Mark: Yes.
Don: They can't wiggle their way around it.
Mark: That's right,"

From has made his own improvements to his salon that he hopes will protect it if the city ever gets hit with another 100 year flood.

Using concrete, he added more height around his window wells and built up around his stairwell leading to his basement, where most of the water came in last year.

"Hopefully if that were to ever happen again, it wouldn't be able to," From said.

Only time will tell, but for now he's just glad to be back in business.

"I try not to even remember and think about it anymore, people ask me about it today and it's like something you want to forget," From said.

From's damages totaled in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He says very little of that was covered by flood insurance. He hasn't decided yet if he's going to sue the city to try recover some of his money.

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Kevin Woster
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

The Rancher Round-up in Union Center, S.D., is an annual celebration of ranch life. But it's also a testament to survival in a beautiful-but-harsh landscape.

Professional survival skills were tested in unprecedented ways almost three years ago when western South Dakota was hit by an early October blizzard that killed tens of thousands of cattle and other livestock.

Republican state Sen. Gary Cammack of Union Center, who also ranches and owns a ranch-supply store, had to bury more than 100 cattle in a hastily dug pit in his pasture after the storm. Other ranchers lost several times that many cattle.

"If there's anything akin to a gut punch for the whole cattle industry, that was it," Cammack says. "It was just an amazing hit. When the storm broke, within 35 miles there were 20,000 dead cattle. It was just beyond imagination."

Help came from the government, private relief funds, cattle donations from other ranchers and from higher market prices for remaining cattle.

“The generosity of cattlemen from all over the U.S. and neighboring states was overwhelming,” Cammack said. “The stories that will never be told of generosity cattleman to cattleman, just overwhelming.”

A South Dakota Rancher Relief Fund raised and distributed millions of dollars and avoided the kind of questions or controversy that sometimes can plague such efforts.

“That should be a blueprint for fundraising and helping in natural disasters,” Cammack said. “I never heard one bad thing about that. It was just run very smoothly, very fair, the way they put that thing together, and the generosity was overwhelming.”

With a perfect joining of forces and sources of assistance, the recovery came much faster than Cammack expected.

"With the generosity of the markets and some help from the federal government, I'd say, really, within about 24 months, most folks had enough of a boost that they were back and economically viable,” he said.

So the heavy rains in Union Center Friday didn't dampen enthusiasm for the annual rancher rodeo and fair at Cammack's store. They just made it all more complicated. But it was a tiny challenge compared to the big ones faced in ranch country.

Besides, they needed the moisture. They usually do.

Silvia Christen, executive director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, was at the celebration at Cammack’s. She said she continues to be amazed at the recovery effort and how ranchers responded after the big blizzard.

“Grit is really the word that describes most of it,” she said. “These ranch families at so at the mercy of the weather, and so at the mercy of the elements. And when you have a loss like we did with Winter Storm Atlas, many of them had a 50-percent loss overnight.

“And their faith and their commitment and their dedication and their trust that they can rebuild and then just get to work, that was a lot of it,” she said.

Almost three years after Winter Storm Atlas devastated the livestock industry here, the Ranch Round-UP celebrates the land, its people and the spirit of survival.

"There was so much great help that came in in the form of money and prayers and all that," Christen said. "But at the end of the day it came down to these families getting out and getting to work and putting it back together."

Cammack says he has mixed feelings now when he looks at the hilltop in his pasture where more than 100 cattle are buried.

“You can’t help but have some memories when you drive past that point,” he said. “But having said that, that nob we excavated and buried all those cattle on is recovered and starting to get the native grass back on there. And today when you and I went out there, there's cattle that came right up and they're grazing right on there -- the living standing above the dead. So the country can be cruel, but it heals faster than you think."

So do the ranchers.

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Joe Sneve
Argus Leader, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

City Hall hopes tearing down a group of flood-prone homes in central Sioux Falls will help other houses in the neighborhood stay dry the next time the city gets dumped on with torrential rains.

It’s not uncommon for homes in the area around Augustana University to have their basements flooded when Sioux Falls gets rain events. That’s despite thousands being spent in recent years to divert the run off into newly constructed holding ponds and other infrastructure upgrades.

So about five years ago, Sioux Falls Public Works set its sights on creating more green space along Covell Avenue between 28th and 33rd Streets. But that meant existing homes would need to come out.

“Based on how steep this particular watershed was, there wasn’t an alternative that was a better fit than just to go in and start asking for voluntary buy outs. … But they just weren’t ready.” said Mark Cotter, director of Public Works.

But after last August’s torrential rains, the phone started ringing and Public Works has since acquired nine properties along Covell Avenue, which were demolished last week.

Cotter said once razed, the foundations will be filled in with sand to allow for a more permeable and absorbent surface.

“Over time as we capture more homes that are willing to sell voluntarily, if it makes sense we’ll develop a detention pond so we can hold and slowly release (the storm drainage).”

Only time will tell if the program will be enough to dry up the neighborhood. Cotter said engineers will continue to buy more homes if necessary. For now, about 14 other homes on the west side of Covell Avenue have been targeted, with 10 homeowners entertaining the idea of selling.

They can’t all be bought at once, though, due to budgetary restriction. Andy Berg, storm water manager in Public Work’s environmental division, said about $1.2 million has been spent so far acquiring the nine homes that were demolished last week.

Because Public Works doesn’t specifically budget for the project – it’s difficult to know how many homeowners will be willing to sell in the following year when the City Council passes its budget – Berg couldn’t say how many more homes will come out next year. Instead, Public Works diverts savings from other expenses that come in under expected costs toward the program.

“We’ve identified three that we’re going to have the appraisal process done on. So if we have the dollars … we can do a closing on those.”

UTAH

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

by Heidi Hatch |

Friday, August 19th 2016

(KUTV) Today the Red Cross announces -the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana is the worst natural disaster to strike the United States since Hurricane Sandy.

Pleasant Grove’s Ben Moak grew up in the Louisiana neighborhoods hit hardest. He moved to Utah 20 years ago with his large family, he set down roots and now owns Firebird Pizza and Pasta on Main Street in the small town.

“I have a friend that posted on Facebook saying only thing he has is his job, his family, and his truck -- and eight feet of water in his house. He lost everything.”

The flooding of hurricane Katrina was hard to watch, and now this time, the flooding hits close to home again and that’s why he “wanted to do something 1500 miles away --to help our friends and family out.”

Some of the worst hit neighborhoods are streets he and his siblings know well.

“We grew up in Louisiana, ,Walker Denham Springs is where we were born and raised.”

The southern influence of his youth is evident in his kitchen, with a row of hot sauces and southern spices available to add kick to his Italian eatery.

He will start fundraising Tuesday night with a spaghetti dinner from 6 to 9 p.m. It will be $10 for a large plate of spaghetti , soda and breadsticks. “One hundred percent of the proceeds go to the people down there,” he said.

Just across the parking lot from Firebirds is Chubby's Cafe, owned by Moak’s brother who will be cooking up a little southern hospitality with a catfish fry next Saturday. The fry money will also go straight to the victims in Louisiana.

Jessica Erin is helping organize the event with the southern brothers and three other area restaurants including Cravings Cupcakes and Cravings Bistro.

“We got this huge trailer donated by Andrews Transportation and we are going to try and fill this baby up.”

All of the restaurants involved are accepting monetary donations, food, clothing, diapers --you name it -- for the flood victims. Donations will be accepted during business hours through Saturday Aug. 27 at 9 p.m.

“We are excited to get this thing filled up and take it down to Louisiana.”

All the business involved are just off Main Street in Pleasant Grove near the North Shore Shaved Ice shack, also giving a portion of their proceeds from Friday night to the cause. Lorri Jonas who worked at Chubby’s and now owns the ice shack said, “I want to help because my heart is full.”

Moak looks forward to community participation saying “the more the merrier, if you have to wait -wait, but the more the merrier.”

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

August 20, 2016

CEDAR CITY — Southern Utah University classes will soon be taught in Vietnam through an international partnership with FPT Corporation, the largest Vietnamese telecommunication company.

The university will make its Master of Science in cybersecurity and information assurance available to students attending FPT University and its online counterpart, Funix University.

FPT Corporation is to southeast Asia what Verizon Communications Inc. is to the United States.

With many smaller entities comprising the company, FPT University has shown a pioneering spirit and a proactive approach to online student education and an increased international presence.

“This partnership extends the reach of SUU and the CSIS Department into Vietnam,” said Dr. Robert Robertson, department chair and associate professor. “It will bring individuals into the program whose perspectives will enhance and benefit fellow students at an international level.”

As the first online educational opportunity offered in Vietnam, FPT University and Southern Utah University are promoting the process of international cooperation in education.

In May, FPT University leaders and dignitaries from Southern Utah University, including President Scott L. Wyatt, signed the agreement to help increase professional training opportunities available to FPT students. At the end of June, university representatives Dr. Rob Robertson, Dr. Roger LaMarca, director of online admissions, and Dr. Stephen Allen traveled to Vietnam to train FPT University on the structure and implementation of the master’s degree program.

An attractive facet of the program is the online component, allowing students to attend school while still living, learning and working in their country.

"Students will receive the same experience and personalized instruction as a traditional SUU classroom while preparing themselves for the rapidly growing field of cybersecurity," LaMarca said.

Cybersecurity professionals who battle cyberattacks that bleed companies and governments dry are in high demand. It costs an average $11.6 million per cybercrime incident, according to Info Security. Keeping these facts in mind, it's no surprise that 42 percent of organizations are actively seeking information technology positions in information security, more than any other job, according to a LinkedIn Talent Search.

"They will receive a wide variety of instruction and coursework from this program," LaMarca said, "including cybersecurity and IT policy; information, vulnerability and threat assessment; physical, personnel and operational security; and contingency, redundancy, emergency and disaster planning."

Online Vietnamese students will have access to all the resources and materials available to students in a traditional learning environment. Throughout the program, which will begin this fall, these students will have access to a library, tutor and lecturer. They will be educated by leading experts in the cybersecurity industry and will also have opportunities to study alongside American students at Southern Utah University.

FPT Corporation is a multinational information technology company based in Vietnam, branching out to 19 different countries. Smaller entities of the corporation include software outsourcing, telecommunication, property management, education and financial services.

The Vietnam National Technology Research Institute founded the Food Processing Technology Company – the original full name of FPT – in 1988. In 1990 the company switched its core business to information technology and changed the unabbreviated name to Corporation for Financing and Promoting Technology.

The cybersecurity program has been tailored to achieve the highest efficiency and educational quality available online. This new partnership will help further available education in Vietnam and will increase Southern Utah University's international presence.

With a comprehensive international environment and a wealth of knowledge taught by high profile cybersecurity professionals, including NUIX's Chris Pogue, Southern Utah University is helping to advance all of its students in this fast-growing career field. The university works hard to make it possible for nontraditional students and working professionals to earn a master's degree.

Those who are interested in this program can contact Southern Utah University's online admissions team at 435-865-8665 or onlineadmissions@suu.edu.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 21, 2016

In Louisiana, the emotional and physical impact of what may be a 1,000-year flood event is still being absorbed.

What our leaders cannot afford to do, though, is to let the future take care of itself.

As Gov. John Bel Edwards said Tuesday, the rescue and comfort of the displaced is the first priority. "Saving life is the most important priority we have," Edwards said Tuesday. "We will dedicate every resource to that effort until it is no longer needed."

But he also said he would take the opportunity to talk long-term recovery with Craig Fugate, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

That's smart.

FEMA is under different and we believe much improved management since the hapless Michael Brown at the time of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The high-profile impact of Hurricane Sandy in the northeast in 2012 also refocused attention on the Stafford Act, the federal law governing disaster aid.

Louisiana is better placed than in earlier disasters, but that doesn't mean it's easy sailing.

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, of Baton Rouge — whose district was the hardest-hit — was busy visiting shelters and seeing his constituents. But he said in a telephone interview Tuesday that Congress needs to assess whether existing law is enough to deal with an event of this magnitude.

Graves said he's already talking with U.S. House members of both parties about federal recovery assistance. "We're not going to get there without national attention," Graves said, in an echo of Fugate's comments that the American people generally have probably been more focused on the Olympics and the national election than the Louisiana flood.

Fugate said that FEMA would respond unhesitatingly whether the national media spotlight comes or goes.

That's encouraging, but we know from the struggles of a decade ago that bureaucratic tangles and the dueling political parties on Capitol Hill can get in the way of help that Louisiana needs.

The spirit of unity and generosity, including from people and institutions across Louisiana and the nation, remains critical in this time of trouble. Job one of the recovery, as Edwards emphasized, is for the affected households to register with disasterassistance.gov. Quantifying the damage is important to achieve appropriate federal response.

But leaders are right to worry about the future, and plan for it.

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

By Therese Apel And Geoff Pender

Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger, August 19, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has halted $29.9 million in reimbursements to the state of Mississippi for retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina, saying the state has failed to provide documentation, overspent and appears to have had lax oversight over the program.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General released a report that states that the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has not been able to provide documentation for around $30.5 million that was paid to contractors to retrofit 985 homes on the coast. The original program was approved to retrofit 2,000 homes for $29.9 million.

The OIG has recommended, and FEMA agreed, that the federal government "deobligate" the money until Mississippi can reconcile what it claims it spent. If Mississippi can't convince the feds its spending was proper, the state could be on the hook for all or part of the spending.

MEMA Director Lee Smithson released a statement Thursday after 6 p.m. stressing that he was not over the agency when the mismanagement occurred.

"We are confident that most of the money will be deemed eligible by FEMA and the remaining funds will be recovered by the state," he said.

Gov. Phil Bryant in a statement Thursday night said he agrees with Smithson the spending "will be eligible for reimbursement" and "the state will aggressively seek to recover the remainder of the funds."

"I appreciate director Smithson taking swift action upon discovering the issues outlined in the report," Bryant said. "It is important to note that the employees repsonsible for the retrofit program for the period OIG examined are no longer at MEMA.

The OIG report says that although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight of the program as early as December 2014, it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

Smithson said the money that was actually put toward the construction should end up being reimbursed by FEMA, and that the state will get the rest of the money out of ARA, the primary contractor on the jobs.

State guidelines and general accounting practices require that more than one person have oversight of similar programs. The state Department of Financial Administration gave oversight to one employee, who came with the program to MEMA when the program was moved over in 2012.

Then-MEMA Director Robert Latham said he was not comfortable with the program having no oversight.

"When the Coastal Retrofit program came to MEMA and I found out there wasn't any oversight, I said, "I want Horne involved in this, get them to start looking at all the invoices and processing it, and they were doing it as a courtesy because it wasn't in their contract. They agreed to start looking at it."

The report states that the employee who had oversight of the program, Deb Biggers, would not turn over some of the invoices to Horne CPA or to investigators.

Smithson said since he took office, Biggers has been terminated and he has hosted conference calls with Horne accountants and the Office of the Inspector General every week in order to keep them up to date with the progress of the audit.

"I don't want to speculate whether there was any graft or corruption on the part of Ms. Biggers or anyone else at MEMA," Smithson said, adding, "Deb Biggers should hace known that the payments that were made to ARA were improper. She modified the scope of work with the original contract with FEMA without getting FEMA permission and allowed ARA to inflate their program costs."

Latham said when he raised questions about the payments and the program, he was assured by his staff that everything was on the up-and-up.

"I'm concerned that if this is in fact true and it shakes out like it sounds, obviously I've got staff that let me down. When I consistently asked questions about these different things I was assured that FEMA was involved and that we were paying in accordance with a contract," he said.

Latham's Chief of Staff was Bill Brown, who he said he went to with any questions about the program.

"When issues would come up I'd get Bill to handle it, and if I thought I wasn't getting answers, I'd bring in Deb" and an employee who handled mitigation, Latham said.

OIG findings:

Some key findings of the OIG audit of Mississippi's spending on the Katrina retrofit program:

Mississippi allowed one employee complete authority over the program, which goes against basic accounting and oversight principles including Mississippi's own agency accounting rules.

The program was approved at $29.9 million to help retrofit an estimated 2,000 homes. The state claims to have spent $31.5 million on 945 homes.

The state has not provided documentation for $30.5 million it says it paid to contractors.

Although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight as early as December 2014, OIG says it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

While working for state DFA and MEMA, the employee in charge approved $31.5 million in payments, more than the amount of the grant, and did not allow a hired accounting firm to reconcile more than $30 million in invoices. "However, no one above the employee's authority questioned the situation," the report says.

Retrofitting 2,000 homes was estimated to cost $14,944 each, but Mississippi spent $33,308 on average, and MEMA "did not provide any substantial evidence to justify the increase in costs.

The employee over the program, the OIG said, would not allow federal or Mississippi officials access to more than $30 million worth of contractors' invoices. This led OIG to question MEMA, whose new director contacted the state attorney general's office.

MEMA contends it has completed work on 945 homes for $31.5 million, but has to date provided invoices for only 12 homes, at $958,000. DFA records as of May only show $20.4 million being spent on the program.

Of the $958,000 in invoices provided so far, only $640,000 represented actual work on homes, with $318,000 in temporary employee salaries and administrative costs.

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

By Sheri Fink

New York Times, August 21, 2016

BALTIMORE — In a church basement in a poor East Baltimore neighborhood, a Johns Hopkins doctor enlisted residents to help answer one of the most fraught questions in public health: When a surge of patients — from a disaster, disease outbreak or terrorist attack — overwhelms hospitals, how should you ration care? Whose lives should be saved first?

For the past several years, Dr. Lee Daugherty Biddison, a critical care physician at Johns Hopkins, and colleagues have led an unusual public debate around Maryland, from Zion Baptist Church in East Baltimore to a wellness center in wealthy Howard County to a hospital on the rural Eastern Shore. Preparing to make recommendations for state officials that could serve as a national model, the researchers heard hundreds of citizens discuss whether a doctor could remove one patient from lifesaving equipment, like a ventilator, to make way for another who might have a better chance of recovering, or take age into consideration in setting priorities.

At that first public forum in 2012 in East Baltimore, Cierra Brown, a former Johns Hopkins Hospital custodian, said she favored a random approach like a lottery. "I don't think any of us should choose whether a person should live or die," she said.

Alex Brecht, a youth program developer sitting across from her, said he thought children should be favored over adults. "Just looking at them, seeing their smiles, they have so much potential," he said.

"Who's going to raise them?" asked Tiffany Jackson, another participant.

The effort is among the first times, Dr. Daugherty Biddison said, that a state has gathered informed public opinion on these questions before devising policy on them. “I don’t want to be in a position of making these decisions without knowing what you think,” she told the residents. “We as providers,” she said, “don’t want to make those decisions in isolation.”

Rationing already occurs in delivering medical care in the United States, though some practices are little acknowledged. Committees struggle regularly over policies for allocating scarce organs for transplant.

During widespread drug shortages in recent years, doctors have sometimes chosen among cancer patients for proven chemotherapy regimens and among surgical patients for the most effective anesthetics. And doctors sometimes have to choose among patients who need treatment in intensive care units, which are often filled to capacity.

In emergencies, the choices can have immediate life-or-death consequences. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, doctors made ad hoc decisions about which groups of patients to evacuate from hospitals when floodwaters rose, the power failed and heat climbed. At one medical center, many of the sickest, chosen to go last, died. During the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009, thousands of young people developed severe respiratory distress. For some of the most critical cases, doctors tried treatment on heart-lung bypass machines. Rationing took place because the costly and resource-intensive therapy, which doctors were not sure would help, was available in only about 120 hospitals.

Similar scenarios have developed in other countries, wealthy and poor. After the 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, some patients at nearby hospitals, including babies, were selected for flights to safety, while others languished for days as medical supplies dwindled. At one hospital, dozens of older patients were apparently abandoned, according to a report in The Lancet, and many died.

And during the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, when doctors and nurses could spend only so many minutes inside hot biohazard suits, they struggled with impossible choices over which patients to give care.

Dr. Daugherty Biddison, a vice chairwoman in the department of medicine at Johns Hopkins, said she had first encountered scarce medical resources while doing missionary work overseas. She realized that even Johns Hopkins Hospital, a 1,145-bed facility anchoring the $7.7 billion Johns Hopkins Medicine enterprise, would fail to meet demand in a severe pandemic. When asked to help draw up a plan, she said, she felt uncomfortable with health professionals’ making life-or-death judgments without knowing the values of the broader public.

At least 18 states from New York to California, and numerous hospitals, including the 152 medical centers operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, have already developed protocols. Some efforts, including Maryland’s, have received funding from a federal program supporting hospital preparedness. But relatively few people know about the plans for allocating scarce resources, and fewer still have been consulted.

Some of these guidelines are nuanced and flexible to context. But others call for doctors to categorically refuse hospital admittance to older adults and those with certain existing medical conditions, such as kidney failure or advanced cancer, in a severe pandemic.

In Maryland, participants in the forums, designed with the help of Carnegie Mellon University’s program for deliberative democracy, tended to favor saving the most lives or years of life by prioritizing people who were expected to survive their current illness or live the longest after being treated. However, many also said that a lottery or first-come-first-served approach would be appropriate for patients who had roughly equal chances of benefiting.

“If you have one ventilator and five people who are good candidates, there’s going to have to be a random sort of chance aspect to it,” said Dr. Eric Toner, a senior associate at the UPMC Center for Health Security and one of the project’s leaders.

Unexpected questions emerged in the discussions: Should an undocumented immigrant be eligible to get a ventilator? What about a drug or alcohol abuser, or a prisoner? After being told by a facilitator that discrimination would not be allowed, one participant asked whether using age, one of the principles under discussion, would not also be a form of discrimination.

Taking ventilators from patients who did not appear to be improving was "the single most contentious issue," Dr. Toner said. Maryland's attorney general released an opinion in December that lifesaving medical technology, including ventilators, could be removed from patients during a catastrophic emergency and reassigned to others who could potentially benefit more from them. Dr. Toner said it would be hard for any system to work without reallocation.

But at the forums, many expressed reservations. One woman said that she had been in a coma, on a ventilator, and that her family had been encouraged to turn it off and let her die. "Health care providers are not God," another said. "I've seen it firsthand where they thought one thing and the outcome was different."

To avoid rationing, a woman proposed a "Susan G. Komen for disaster preparedness," a reference to the ubiquitous fund-raising movement for a breast cancer cure. Some said they would voluntarily refuse a ventilator to save the lives of other people, such as children or family members. A man questioned whether doctors would even have the time in an emergency to engage in formal rationing. Some with lower incomes said that health care rationing was already occurring based on the ability to pay.

Translating all these ideas into recommendations for the state, most likely in mid-2017, will be challenging. The organizers said that despite the complexity, they were now in a better position to provide the guidelines.

"We have a much fuller appreciation of what the community wants," said Howard Gwon, the director of the office of emergency management at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Charles Blattberg, a professor of political philosophy at the University of Montreal, said he worried that the effort could result in overly precise guidelines.

"The kind of judgment that's required to arrive at a good decision in these situations needs to be extremely sensitive to the context," he said. "It's not about just abandoning one lone doctor to their own devices to make it up on the spot, but we can't go the other extreme in thinking we have the solution to the puzzle already; just follow these instructions. That works for technical problems. These are moral, political problems."

Ruth Faden, the founder of Johns Hopkins's Berman Institute of Bioethics, which participated in the project, said she saw value in the exercise far beyond a pandemic.

"It's a novel and important attempt," she said, "to turn extremely complicated core ethical considerations into something people can make sense of and struggle with in ordinary language."

Region VIII Clips

Monday, August 22, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state received an FMAG reimbursement of more than $1 million… An HMGP grant is helping with reconstruction of the Manitou Incline… Fires in the state are now more under control.
- **Montana:** The *Fallon County Times* did another story on recent visits by DES and FEMA officials related to the Baker tornado recovery… The Copper King Fire almost doubled in size Sunday, with red flag conditions expected today.
- **North Dakota:** Three stories focus on the growing protest, led by Native American tribes, against construction of an oil pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security division of the North Dakota DES, estimates state law enforcement, health and transportation costs related to the protest may approach $1 million over the next few weeks. Approximately 1500-2000 protestors are at the site… An attempt to use eminent domain to take some land for the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Project was stalled by a judge who said it had not been properly done.
- **South Dakota:** KELO TV did a story on the flood in Sioux Falls one year ago and the community's response to it, and another story on the Atlas winter storm three years ago that killed many cattle in western South Dakota, and how that area has responded… The TV story on Sioux Falls mentioned local buyouts to prevent flooding issues, and an *Argus Leader* story focused just on the local buyout program in an area with poor drainage.
- **Utah:** Brothers in Pleasant Grove who were born and raised in Louisiana are doing a fundraiser and donations drive for flood survivors in their home state… Southern Utah University will be offering an online master's program in cybersecurity through a partnership with a Vietnamese telecommunications company.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The *Baton Rouge Advocate* says FEMA is improved, but additional federal aid may be needed… Several stories reported on FEMA suspending $30 million in payments to Mississippi for problems with its program retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina; this story from the *Jackson Clarion Ledger* specifies the procedures and employee in question… *The New York Times* reported on a survey of public attitudes by Johns Hopkins University on what criteria should be used to determine who lives or who gets priority for emergency care when medical staff and equipment are overwhelmed in a catastrophic incident.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

STORIES

COLORADO

FEMA awards Colorado $1 million wildfire grant (Loveland Reporter-Herald)

By Dana Rieck

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer
Posted: 08/20/2016 05:25:56 PM MDT

Republican Sen. Cory Gardner's office announced this week that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is awarding $1,194,483.86 to the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Matthew Branch, the Northeast Regional Fire Management officer for the Colorado Department of Public Safety Division of Fire Prevention and Control, said the money is a reimbursement for costs associated with past fires.

It is called a fire management assistance grant, which is something states apply for after responding to large fires.

"Most of these costs are borne by the local fire department and the county," he wrote in an email. "These entities bill the state and we reimburse them out of the state budget. Several years later we get the money back from the federal government."

Once approved, according to Branch, the grants can pay for 75 percent of the costs associated with fighting those fires.

"I welcome more than $1 million from FEMA to assist with wildfire response efforts in Colorado," said Gardner in the news release. "I'm confident the state of Colorado will maximize the federal grant to both preempt and mitigate the destruction caused by wildfires. I'll continue to advocate at the federal level to ensure Colorado receives the resources it needs to keep our communities safe."

Dana Rieck: 970-635-3630, rieckd@reporter-herald.com or twitter.com/DanaRieckRH

Manitou Incline Closed for Construction (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

8/22/16

COLORADO SPRINGS - The Manitou Incline is now closed as the cities of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs start phase 2 of improvements to the popular trail.

Construction is expected to last around 4 months with the main goals of: improving safety, enhancing the hiking experience, improving the long-term sustainability of the trail and increasing accessibility.

They will also clean up debris along the trail and add new drainage structures to protect the trail from eroding away.

Colorado Springs is responsible for the general oversight of the trail, and the improvements are being funded by a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant and Trail, Open Space and Parks Funding.

Beaver Creek fire evacuation order lifted; two Colorado wildfires 100 percent contained (Denver Post)

By Ellis Arnold | earnold@denverpost.com

August 21, 2016 at 4:36 pm

An evacuation order was lifted in the Beaver Creek fire area near Walden and the Wyoming state line yesterday, said John Abernathy, spokesman for the Denver Fire Department.

Some evacuees from 50 total residences have begun to return to their homes, Abernathy said, but low relative humidity and winds up to 25 mph are expected to create critical burn conditions Monday and Tuesday. The fire, which is 53 percent contained, started June 19. Total containment is expected Oct. 21.

Heavy beetle-killed timber in the area has been fueling the fire, which has required continued ground and air efforts. Recent cool, moist weather aided the fight, but warming is expected until Wednesday. Season-ending wet weather is likely the only factor that will put out the fire, Abernathy said.

The fire has burned 36,961 acres, and the cause of the fire is still under investigation. A total of 17 structures, including one residence, have been lost, Abernathy said.

The lightning-caused Spring Creek 2 fire south of Parachute burned 621 acres but was 100 percent contained as of Friday, according to federal agencies. There have been no injuries attributed to the fire, which started Aug. 12, and no primary residences were lost despite the fire moving within a few feet of several homes. Four buildings, three vehicles and three trailers were damaged or destroyed, and evacuation orders covering about 20 homes were lifted Aug. 14.

The Hayden Pass fire southeast of Salida was 60 percent contained as of Aug. 4, according to federal agencies, with recent monsoonal weather dropping moisture in the area. The 16,754-acre lightning-caused fire started July 8, and it may present a runoff issue because of the rain. All evacuations ended as of July 21 after people were ordered to clear out of 140 residences in the area. The fire is expected to be contained Oct. 1.

Fire crews contained the Blair fire 100 percent as of Aug. 1, said David Boyd, spokesman for the federal Bureau of Land Management. Lightning started the fire near Colorado 64 between Rangely and Meeker; about 1,140 acres have burned since June 29.

Crews focused on keeping the fire from moving north and east, where a power-line corridor, oil and gas pipeline and the highway would have been vulnerable. There were no injuries or evacuations, Boyd said, as the fire was in a remote area.

MONTANA

FEMA and Montana Disaster Emergency Services Visit Baker

(Fallon County Times)

SEVERE SUMMER WEATHER

Laurie Hassell and Kent Atwood display a weather map tracking severe weather storms throughout Montana.

Laurie Hassell, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), External Affairs Specialist; Kent Atwood, CFM, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services, Hazard Mitigation Officer and Tim Tennis, Recovery Bureau Chief, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services were in Baker on August 9.

By Sherry Vogel

They were conducting a briefing to Fallon County and City of Baker applicants as they proceed to set-up documentation to receive federal funding after Baker was designated to receive a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Atwood explained how the entire process works. Tennis expounded on how to apply for the funds. They both covered the scope of work for the Project Worksheet (PW) using the actual tornado documentation including cleanup and debris removal reports.

The preliminary final damage assessment is at $1.5 million. This amount surpasses the $1.4 million required for a Presidential Disaster Declaration. This final figure of the disaster damage could actually be more in the final analysis.

Whereas Hassell was in Baker to represent the Response and Recovery standpoint. Atwood was focused on the mitigation perspective of the disaster. **Mitigation meaning to identify and reduce the severity of the next natural disaster.

Officials estimate the Copper King Fire doubled in size Sunday afternoon (NBC TV, Helena)

By: KECI Staff
Updated: Aug 21, 2016 08:07 PM MDT

MISSOULA, Mont. - The Copper King Fire burning near Montana Highway 200 and Thompson River Road in Sanders County is now estimated to have burned over 6,000 acres. The fire had burned just over 3,400 acres as of Sunday morning.

Fire officials tell NBC Montana that the fire expanded to the northeast, chewing through around 3,000 acres. The explosive growth meant a cloud of thick smoke spread as far north as Creston and parts of the Swan Valley as of 8 p.m. on Sunday. The new growth is away from structures immediately threatened by the fire.

Officials with the Lolo National Forest say there is poor road access and firefighters and public safety remains the top priority. Fire crews are busy on the south and west sides of the fire near Highway 200 and Thompson River Road where structures are threatened.

The 297 people working to contain the fire will continue to focus on structure protection and keeping Highway 200 open to traffic. A Red Flag Warning is in effect for the fire on Monday afternoon, meaning more explosive growth is possible due to dry and windy weather.

NORTH DAKOTA

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It's been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Water district's eminent domain attempt for F-M diversion stalls, but case not dismissed

By Helmut Schmidt on Aug 19, 2016 at 2:52 p.m.

FARGO — An East Central District judge has ruled that the Cass County Joint Water Resource District, which is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement for 80 acres of farmland for the Fargo-Moorhead diversion, has not followed the proper procedures for eminent domain proceedings, court documents show.

At the same time, Judge John Irby denied a motion by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to dismiss the water district's attempt to use eminent domain for the Horace-area land, documents show.

According to court records:

The water resource district is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement on 79.34 acres owned by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to build a F-M diversion inlet.

The district extended a final offer of $476,040 for the land on May 18, 2016. That offer was rejected.

Irby ruled the water resource district failed to file a needed petition in the case, provide appropriate public notice and a hearing, allow interested parties to answer the petition, and have the court hear the case, allow the petition to be amended as needed and issue its findings and assess costs.

Irby said the district was also walking a line between taking right-of-way sufficient for its purposes while avoiding a purchase of the land, or fee simple, which is not eligible for "quick take" eminent domain.

Irby ruled that the district will have to amend its eminent domain complaint.

Cossette's attorney, Jonathan Garaas of the Garaas Law Firm in Fargo, said Friday, Aug. 19, that he does not comment on cases still being litigated.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Don Jorgensen
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 19, 2016

Sioux Falls, SD

One year ago, Sioux Falls was inundated by major flooding.

The hardest hit area was in the southwest part of the city where seven inches of rain fell in one hour. It was a night many of us won't soon forget.

The night was August 27th. The skies opened up over Sioux Falls and dumped more rain than the city had seen in recent memory.

Streets flooded quickly. Vehicles stalled out and many businesses flooded out, including the Signature Salon.

When we last met the owner, Jeff From, he was busy cleaning up what mother nature destroyed in minutes.

Today, From is back in business....

"It's hard to believe it's been a year," From said.

....but not without a lot of hard work along the way.

"It was a good eight months of solid; morning, noon and night trying to get things in place," From said.

The downpour and flooding that followed, caught many off guard.

The city had spent millions of dollars upgrading the drainage systems, but in some parts of town, seven inches of rain in a short amount of time was too much for it to handle.

"It was a large event", Public Works director Mark Cotter said.

Cotter says the drainage system worked as well as it could, but following the event, he knew more could be done.

"Probably the first thing and most important thing we did was take a rate case to the city council and they did support us to continually raise rates through 2019," Cotter said.

Cotter says those rate increases will help pay for more improvements; plus conduct more drainage studies.

"So when neighbors call and say 'this just doesn't drain right,' we set aside more dollars now to go out and do an updated hydro study, so we can understand what's happening and ultimately look at some alternatives to improve it," Cotter said.

Plus, the city began taking a closer look at drainage easements around town. It identified a few

where the homeowners, over the years, had made improvements to those easements with landscaping, trees and bushes.

But in reality, those beautification improvements, became obstructions and didn't allow water to flow freely to designated detention ponds.

So, this past year, the city worked with the homeowners to remove those obstructions and regraded the land. That way during a heavy rain storm like last year, the water will go where it's supposed to go.

But in one area of town, around 35th and Duluth which always seems to have water problems during torrential rains, drainage improvements are hard to come by.

So, instead of investing millions of dollars in trying to upgrade the infrastructure, the city bought a number of the homes and is now in the process of tearing them down.

It's going to reclaim the land and turn it into green space with detention ponds.

And finally, the city implemented new building codes, so homeowners shouldn't have to worry about flooding if they live near one of those drainage easements.

Cotter shows us why using this handsketched diagram.

"If this is a drainage way in the backyard, we used to recommend that the water surface, we used to recommend that the lowest floor of the house be two feet above that water surface elevation, now we don't recommend, it's a standard," Cotter said.

Don: Builders know this now? That it's a standard,
Mark: Yes.
Don: They can't wiggle their way around it.
Mark: That's right,"

From has made his own improvements to his salon that he hopes will protect it if the city ever gets hit with another 100 year flood.

Using concrete, he added more height around his window wells and built up around his stairwell leading to his basement, where most of the water came in last year.

"Hopefully if that were to ever happen again, it wouldn't be able to," From said.

Only time will tell, but for now he's just glad to be back in business.

"I try not to even remember and think about it anymore, people ask me about it today and it's like something you want to forget," From said.

From's damages totaled in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He says very little of that was

covered by flood insurance. He hasn't decided yet if he's going to sue the city to try recover some of his money.

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Kevin Woster
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

The Rancher Round-up in Union Center, S.D., is an annual celebration of ranch life. But it's also a testament to survival in a beautiful-but-harsh landscape.

Professional survival skills were tested in unprecedented ways almost three years ago when western South Dakota was hit by an early October blizzard that killed tens of thousands of cattle and other livestock.

Republican state Sen. Gary Cammack of Union Center, who also ranches and owns a ranch-supply store, had to bury more than 100 cattle in a hastily dug pit in his pasture after the storm. Other ranchers lost several times that many cattle.

"If there's anything akin to a gut punch for the whole cattle industry, that was it," Cammack says. "It was just an amazing hit. When the storm broke, within 35 miles there were 20,000 dead cattle. It was just beyond imagination."

Help came from the government, private relief funds, cattle donations from other ranchers and from higher market prices for remaining cattle.

“The generosity of cattlemen from all over the U.S. and neighboring states was overwhelming,” Cammack said. “The stories that will never be told of generosity cattleman to cattleman, just overwhelming.”

A South Dakota Rancher Relief Fund raised and distributed millions of dollars and avoided the kind of questions or controversy that sometimes can plague such efforts.

“That should be a blueprint for fundraising and helping in natural disasters,” Cammack said. “I never heard one bad thing about that. It was just run very smoothly, very fair, the way they put that thing together, and the generosity was overwhelming.”

With a perfect joining of forces and sources of assistance, the recovery came much faster than Cammack expected.

"With the generosity of the markets and some help from the federal government, I'd say, really, within about 24 months, most folks had enough of a boost that they were back and economically viable,” he said.

So the heavy rains in Union Center Friday didn't dampen enthusiasm for the annual rancher rodeo and fair at Cammack's store. They just made it all more complicated. But it was a tiny challenge compared to the big ones faced in ranch country.

Besides, they needed the moisture. They usually do.

Silvia Christen, executive director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, was at the celebration at Cammack's. She said she continues to be amazed at the recovery effort and how ranchers responded after the big blizzard.

"Grit is really the word that describes most of it," she said. "These ranch families at so at the mercy of the weather, and so at the mercy of the elements. And when you have a loss like we did with Winter Storm Atlas, many of them had a 50-percent loss overnight.

"And their faith and their commitment and their dedication and their trust that they can rebuild and then just get to work, that was a lot of it," she said.

Almost three years after Winter Storm Atlas devastated the livestock industry here, the Ranch Round-UP celebrates the land, its people and the spirit of survival.

"There was so much great help that came in in the form of money and prayers and all that," Christen said. "But at the end of the day it came down to these families getting out and getting to work and putting it back together."

Cammack says he has mixed feelings now when he looks at the hilltop in his pasture where more than 100 cattle are buried.

"You can't help but have some memories when you drive past that point," he said. "But having said that, that nob we excavated and buried all those cattle on is recovered and starting to get the native grass back on there. And today when you and I went out there, there's cattle that came right up and they're grazing right on there -- the living standing above the dead. So the country can be cruel, but it heals faster than you think."

So do the ranchers.

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Joe Sneve
Argus Leader, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

City Hall hopes tearing down a group of flood-prone homes in central Sioux Falls will help other houses in the neighborhood stay dry the next time the city gets dumped on with torrential rains.

It's not uncommon for homes in the area around Augustana University to have their basements flooded when Sioux Falls gets rain events. That's despite thousands being spent in recent years to divert the run off into newly constructed holding ponds and other infrastructure upgrades.

So about five years ago, Sioux Falls Public Works set its sights on creating more green space along Covell Avenue between 28th and 33rd Streets. But that meant existing homes would need to come out.

“Based on how steep this particular watershed was, there wasn’t an alternative that was a better fit than just to go in and start asking for voluntary buy outs. … But they just weren’t ready.” said Mark Cotter, director of Public Works.

But after last August’s torrential rains, the phone started ringing and Public Works has since acquired nine properties along Covell Avenue, which were demolished last week.

Cotter said once razed, the foundations will be filled in with sand to allow for a more permeable and absorbent surface.

“Over time as we capture more homes that are willing to sell voluntarily, if it makes sense we’ll develop a detention pond so we can hold and slowly release (the storm drainage).”

Only time will tell if the program will be enough to dry up the neighborhood. Cotter said engineers will continue to buy more homes if necessary. For now, about 14 other homes on the west side of Covell Avenue have been targeted, with 10 homeowners entertaining the idea of selling.

They can’t all be bought at once, though, due to budgetary restriction. Andy Berg, storm water manager in Public Work’s environmental division, said about $1.2 million has been spent so far acquiring the nine homes that were demolished last week.

Because Public Works doesn’t specifically budget for the project – it’s difficult to know how many homeowners will be willing to sell in the following year when the City Council passes its budget – Berg couldn’t say how many more homes will come out next year. Instead, Public Works diverts savings from other expenses that come in under expected costs toward the program.

“We’ve identified three that we’re going to have the appraisal process done on. So if we have the dollars … we can do a closing on those.”

UTAH

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

by Heidi Hatch |

Friday, August 19th 2016

(KUTV) Today the Red Cross announces -the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana is the worst natural disaster to strike the United States since Hurricane Sandy.

Pleasant Grove’s Ben Moak grew up in the Louisiana neighborhoods hit hardest. He moved to Utah 20 years ago with his large family, he set down roots and now owns Firebird Pizza and Pasta on Main Street in the small town.

“I have a friend that posted on Facebook saying only thing he has is his job, his family, and his truck -- and eight feet of water in his house. He lost everything.”

The flooding of hurricane Katrina was hard to watch, and now this time, the flooding hits close to home again and that's why he "wanted to do something 1500 miles away --to help our friends and family out."

Some of the worst hit neighborhoods are streets he and his siblings know well.

"We grew up in Louisiana, ,Walker Denham Springs is where we were born and raised."

The southern influence of his youth is evident in his kitchen, with a row of hot sauces and southern spices available to add kick to his Italian eatery.

He will start fundraising Tuesday night with a spaghetti dinner from 6 to 9 p.m. It will be $10 for a large plate of spaghetti , soda and breadsticks. "One hundred percent of the proceeds go to the people down there," he said.

Just across the parking lot from Firebirds is Chubby's Cafe, owned by Moak's brother who will be cooking up a little southern hospitality with a catfish fry next Saturday. The fry money will also go straight to the victims in Louisiana.

Jessica Erin is helping organize the event with the southern brothers and three other area restaurants including Cravings Cupcakes and Cravings Bistro.

"We got this huge trailer donated by Andrews Transportation and we are going to try and fill this baby up."

All of the restaurants involved are accepting monetary donations, food, clothing, diapers --you name it -- for the flood victims. Donations will be accepted during business hours through Saturday Aug. 27 at 9 p.m.

"We are excited to get this thing filled up and take it down to Louisiana."

All the business involved are just off Main Street in Pleasant Grove near the North Shore Shaved Ice shack, also giving a portion of their proceeds from Friday night to the cause. Lorri Jonas who worked at Chubby's and now owns the ice shack said, "I want to help because my heart is full."

Moak looks forward to community participation saying "the more the merrier, if you have to wait -wait, but the more the merrier."

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

August 20, 2016

CEDAR CITY — Southern Utah University classes will soon be taught in Vietnam through an international partnership with FPT Corporation, the largest Vietnamese telecommunication company.

The university will make its Master of Science in cybersecurity and information assurance available to students attending FPT University and its online counterpart, Funix University.

FPT Corporation is to southeast Asia what Verizon Communications Inc. is to the United States.

With many smaller entities comprising the company, FPT University has shown a pioneering spirit and a proactive approach to online student education and an increased international presence.

“This partnership extends the reach of SUU and the CSIS Department into Vietnam,” said Dr. Robert Robertson, department chair and associate professor. “It will bring individuals into the program whose perspectives will enhance and benefit fellow students at an international level.”

As the first online educational opportunity offered in Vietnam, FPT University and Southern Utah University are promoting the process of international cooperation in education.

In May, FPT University leaders and dignitaries from Southern Utah University, including President Scott L. Wyatt, signed the agreement to help increase professional training opportunities available to FPT students. At the end of June, university representatives Dr. Rob Robertson, Dr. Roger LaMarca, director of online admissions, and Dr. Stephen Allen traveled to Vietnam to train FPT University on the structure and implementation of the master’s degree program.

An attractive facet of the program is the online component, allowing students to attend school while still living, learning and working in their country.

“Students will receive the same experience and personalized instruction as a traditional SUU classroom while preparing themselves for the rapidly growing field of cybersecurity,” LaMarca said.

Cybersecurity professionals who battle cyberattacks that bleed companies and governments dry are in high demand. It costs an average $11.6 million per cybercrime incident, according to Info Security. Keeping these facts in mind, it’s no surprise that 42 percent of organizations are actively seeking information technology positions in information security, more than any other job, according to a LinkedIn Talent Search.

“They will receive a wide variety of instruction and coursework from this program,” LaMarca said, “including cybersecurity and IT policy; information, vulnerability and threat assessment; physical, personnel and operational security; and contingency, redundancy, emergency and disaster planning.”

Online Vietnamese students will have access to all the resources and materials available to students in a traditional learning environment. Throughout the program, which will begin this fall, these students will have access to a library, tutor and lecturer. They will be educated by leading experts in the cybersecurity industry and will also have opportunities to study alongside American students at Southern Utah University.

FPT Corporation is a multinational information technology company based in Vietnam, branching out to 19 different countries. Smaller entities of the corporation include software outsourcing, telecommunication, property management, education and financial services.

The Vietnam National Technology Research Institute founded the Food Processing Technology Company – the original full name of FPT – in 1988. In 1990 the company switched its core business to information technology and changed the unabbreviated name to Corporation for Financing and Promoting Technology.

The cybersecurity program has been tailored to achieve the highest efficiency and educational quality available online. This new partnership will help further available education in Vietnam and will increase Southern Utah University's international presence.

With a comprehensive international environment and a wealth of knowledge taught by high profile cybersecurity professionals, including NUIX's Chris Pogue, Southern Utah University is helping to advance all of its students in this fast-growing career field. The university works hard to make it possible for nontraditional students and working professionals to earn a master's degree.

Those who are interested in this program can contact Southern Utah University's online admissions team at 435-865-8665 or onlineadmissions@suu.edu.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 21, 2016

In Louisiana, the emotional and physical impact of what may be a 1,000-year flood event is still being absorbed.

What our leaders cannot afford to do, though, is to let the future take care of itself.

As Gov. John Bel Edwards said Tuesday, the rescue and comfort of the displaced is the first priority. "Saving life is the most important priority we have," Edwards said Tuesday. "We will dedicate every resource to that effort until it is no longer needed."

But he also said he would take the opportunity to talk long-term recovery with Craig Fugate, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

That's smart.

FEMA is under different and we believe much improved management since the hapless Michael Brown at the time of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The high-profile impact of Hurricane Sandy in the northeast in 2012 also refocused attention on the Stafford Act, the federal law governing disaster aid.

Louisiana is better placed than in earlier disasters, but that doesn't mean it's easy sailing.

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, of Baton Rouge — whose district was the hardest-hit — was busy visiting shelters and seeing his constituents. But he said in a telephone interview Tuesday that Congress needs to assess whether existing law is enough to deal with an event of this magnitude.

Graves said he's already talking with U.S. House members of both parties about federal recovery assistance. "We're not going to get there without national attention," Graves said, in an echo of Fugate's comments that the American people generally have probably been more focused on the Olympics and the national election than the Louisiana flood.

Fugate said that FEMA would respond unhesitatingly whether the national media spotlight comes or goes.

That's encouraging, but we know from the struggles of a decade ago that bureaucratic tangles and the dueling political parties on Capitol Hill can get in the way of help that Louisiana needs.

The spirit of unity and generosity, including from people and institutions across Louisiana and the nation, remains critical in this time of trouble. Job one of the recovery, as Edwards emphasized, is for the affected households to register with disasterassistance.gov. Quantifying the damage is important to achieve appropriate federal response.

But leaders are right to worry about the future, and plan for it.

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

By Therese Apel And Geoff Pender

Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger, August 19, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has halted $29.9 million in reimbursements to the state of Mississippi for retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina, saying the state has failed to provide documentation, overspent and appears to have had lax oversight over the program.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General released a report that states that the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has not been able to provide documentation for around $30.5 million that was paid to contractors to retrofit 985 homes on the coast. The original program was approved to retrofit 2,000 homes for $29.9 million.

The OIG has recommended, and FEMA agreed, that the federal government "deobligate" the money until Mississippi can reconcile what it claims it spent. If Mississippi can't convince the feds its spending was proper, the state could be on the hook for all or part of the spending.

MEMA Director Lee Smithson released a statement Thursday after 6 p.m. stressing that he was not over the agency when the mismanagement occurred.

"We are confident that most of the money will be deemed eligible by FEMA and the remaining funds will be recovered by the state," he said.

Gov. Phil Bryant in a statement Thursday night said he agrees with Smithson the spending "will be eligible for reimbursement" and "the state will aggressively seek to recover the remainder of the funds."

"I appreciate director Smithson taking swift action upon discovering the issues outlined in the report," Bryant said. "It is important to note that the employees repsonsible for the retrofit program for the period OIG examined are no longer at MEMA.

The OIG report says that although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight of the program as early as December 2014, it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

Smithson said the money that was actually put toward the construction should end up being reimbursed by FEMA, and that the state will get the rest of the money out of ARA, the primary contractor on the jobs.

State guidelines and general accounting practices require that more than one person have oversight of similar programs. The state Department of Financial Administration gave oversight to one employee, who came with the program to MEMA when the program was moved over in 2012.

Then-MEMA Director Robert Latham said he was not comfortable with the program having no oversight.

"When the Coastal Retrofit program came to MEMA and I found out there wasn't any oversight, I said, "I want Horne involved in this, get them to start looking at all the invoices and processing it, and they were doing it as a courtesy because it wasn't in their contract. They agreed to start looking at it."

The report states that the employee who had oversight of the program, Deb Biggers, would not turn over some of the invoices to Horne CPA or to investigators.

Smithson said since he took office, Biggers has been terminated and he has hosted conference calls with Horne accountants and the Office of the Inspector General every week in order to keep them up to date with the progress of the audit.

"I don't want to speculate whether there was any graft or corruption on the part of Ms. Biggers or anyone else at MEMA," Smithson said, adding, "Deb Biggers should hace known that the payments that were made to ARA were improper. She modified the scope of work with the original contract with FEMA without getting FEMA permission and allowed ARA to inflate their program costs."

Latham said when he raised questions about the payments and the program, he was assured by his staff that everything was on the up-and-up.

"I'm concerned that if this is in fact true and it shakes out like it sounds, obviously I've got staff that let me down. When I consistently asked questions about these different things I was assured that FEMA was involved and that we were paying in accordance with a contract," he said.

Latham's Chief of Staff was Bill Brown, who he said he went to with any questions about the program.

"When issues would come up I'd get Bill to handle it, and if I thought I wasn't getting answers, I'd bring in Deb" and an employee who handled mitigation, Latham said.

OIG findings:

Some key findings of the OIG audit of Mississippi's spending on the Katrina retrofit program:

Mississippi allowed one employee complete authority over the program, which goes against basic accounting and oversight principles including Mississippi's own agency accounting rules.

The program was approved at $29.9 million to help retrofit an estimated 2,000 homes. The state claims to have spent $31.5 million on 945 homes.

The state has not provided documentation for $30.5 million it says it paid to contractors.

Although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight as early as December 2014, OIG says it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

While working for state DFA and MEMA, the employee in charge approved $31.5 million in payments, more than the amount of the grant, and did not allow a hired accounting firm to reconcile more than $30 million in invoices. "However, no one above the employee's authority questioned the situation," the report says.

Retrofitting 2,000 homes was estimated to cost $14,944 each, but Mississippi spent $33,308 on average, and MEMA "did not provide any substantial evidence to justify the increase in costs.

The employee over the program, the OIG said, would not allow federal or Mississippi officials access to more than $30 million worth of contractors' invoices. This led OIG to question MEMA, whose new director contacted the state attorney general's office.

MEMA contends it has completed work on 945 homes for $31.5 million, but has to date provided invoices for only 12 homes, at $958,000. DFA records as of May only show $20.4 million being spent on the program.

Of the $958,000 in invoices provided so far, only $640,000 represented actual work on homes, with $318,000 in temporary employee salaries and administrative costs.

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

By Sheri Fink

New York Times, August 21, 2016

BALTIMORE — In a church basement in a poor East Baltimore neighborhood, a Johns Hopkins doctor enlisted residents to help answer one of the most fraught questions in public health: When a surge

of patients — from a disaster, disease outbreak or terrorist attack — overwhelms hospitals, how should you ration care? Whose lives should be saved first?

For the past several years, Dr. Lee Daugherty Biddison, a critical care physician at Johns Hopkins, and colleagues have led an unusual public debate around Maryland, from Zion Baptist Church in East Baltimore to a wellness center in wealthy Howard County to a hospital on the rural Eastern Shore. Preparing to make recommendations for state officials that could serve as a national model, the researchers heard hundreds of citizens discuss whether a doctor could remove one patient from lifesaving equipment, like a ventilator, to make way for another who might have a better chance of recovering, or take age into consideration in setting priorities.

At that first public forum in 2012 in East Baltimore, Cierra Brown, a former Johns Hopkins Hospital custodian, said she favored a random approach like a lottery. “I don’t think any of us should choose whether a person should live or die,” she said.

Alex Brecht, a youth program developer sitting across from her, said he thought children should be favored over adults. “Just looking at them, seeing their smiles, they have so much potential,” he said.

“Who’s going to raise them?” asked Tiffany Jackson, another participant.

The effort is among the first times, Dr. Daugherty Biddison said, that a state has gathered informed public opinion on these questions before devising policy on them. “I don’t want to be in a position of making these decisions without knowing what you think,” she told the residents. “We as providers,” she said, “don’t want to make those decisions in isolation.”

Rationing already occurs in delivering medical care in the United States, though some practices are little acknowledged. Committees struggle regularly over policies for allocating scarce organs for transplant.

During widespread drug shortages in recent years, doctors have sometimes chosen among cancer patients for proven chemotherapy regimens and among surgical patients for the most effective anesthetics. And doctors sometimes have to choose among patients who need treatment in intensive care units, which are often filled to capacity.

In emergencies, the choices can have immediate life-or-death consequences. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, doctors made ad hoc decisions about which groups of patients to evacuate from hospitals when floodwaters rose, the power failed and heat climbed. At one medical center, many of the sickest, chosen to go last, died. During the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009, thousands of young people developed severe respiratory distress. For some of the most critical cases, doctors tried treatment on heart-lung bypass machines. Rationing took place because the costly and resource-intensive therapy, which doctors were not sure would help, was available in only about 120 hospitals.

Similar scenarios have developed in other countries, wealthy and poor. After the 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, some patients at nearby hospitals, including babies, were selected for flights to safety, while others languished for days as medical supplies dwindled. At one hospital, dozens of older patients were apparently abandoned, according to a report in The Lancet, and many died.

And during the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, when doctors and nurses could spend only so many minutes inside hot biohazard suits, they struggled with impossible choices over which patients to give care.

Dr. Daugherty Biddison, a vice chairwoman in the department of medicine at Johns Hopkins, said she had first encountered scarce medical resources while doing missionary work overseas. She realized that even Johns Hopkins Hospital, a 1,145-bed facility anchoring the $7.7 billion Johns Hopkins Medicine enterprise, would fail to meet demand in a severe pandemic. When asked to help draw up a plan, she said, she felt uncomfortable with health professionals’ making life-or-death judgments without knowing the values of the broader public.

At least 18 states from New York to California, and numerous hospitals, including the 152 medical centers operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, have already developed protocols. Some efforts,

including Maryland's, have received funding from a federal program supporting hospital preparedness. But relatively few people know about the plans for allocating scarce resources, and fewer still have been consulted.

Some of these guidelines are nuanced and flexible to context. But others call for doctors to categorically refuse hospital admittance to older adults and those with certain existing medical conditions, such as kidney failure or advanced cancer, in a severe pandemic.

In Maryland, participants in the forums, designed with the help of Carnegie Mellon University's program for deliberative democracy, tended to favor saving the most lives or years of life by prioritizing people who were expected to survive their current illness or live the longest after being treated. However, many also said that a lottery or first-come-first-served approach would be appropriate for patients who had roughly equal chances of benefiting.

"If you have one ventilator and five people who are good candidates, there's going to have to be a random sort of chance aspect to it," said Dr. Eric Toner, a senior associate at the UPMC Center for Health Security and one of the project's leaders.

Unexpected questions emerged in the discussions: Should an undocumented immigrant be eligible to get a ventilator? What about a drug or alcohol abuser, or a prisoner? After being told by a facilitator that discrimination would not be allowed, one participant asked whether using age, one of the principles under discussion, would not also be a form of discrimination.

Taking ventilators from patients who did not appear to be improving was "the single most contentious issue," Dr. Toner said. Maryland's attorney general released an opinion in December that lifesaving medical technology, including ventilators, could be removed from patients during a catastrophic emergency and reassigned to others who could potentially benefit more from them. Dr. Toner said it would be hard for any system to work without reallocation.

But at the forums, many expressed reservations. One woman said that she had been in a coma, on a ventilator, and that her family had been encouraged to turn it off and let her die. "Health care providers are not God," another said. "I've seen it firsthand where they thought one thing and the outcome was different."

To avoid rationing, a woman proposed a "Susan G. Komen for disaster preparedness," a reference to the ubiquitous fund-raising movement for a breast cancer cure. Some said they would voluntarily refuse a ventilator to save the lives of other people, such as children or family members. A man questioned whether doctors would even have the time in an emergency to engage in formal rationing. Some with lower incomes said that health care rationing was already occurring based on the ability to pay.

Translating all these ideas into recommendations for the state, most likely in mid-2017, will be challenging. The organizers said that despite the complexity, they were now in a better position to provide the guidelines.

"We have a much fuller appreciation of what the community wants," said Howard Gwon, the director of the office of emergency management at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Charles Blattberg, a professor of political philosophy at the University of Montreal, said he worried that the effort could result in overly precise guidelines.

"The kind of judgment that's required to arrive at a good decision in these situations needs to be extremely sensitive to the context," he said. "It's not about just abandoning one lone doctor to their own devices to make it up on the spot, but we can't go the other extreme in thinking we have the solution to the puzzle already; just follow these instructions. That works for technical problems. These are moral, political problems."

Ruth Faden, the founder of Johns Hopkins's Berman Institute of Bioethics, which participated in the project, said she saw value in the exercise far beyond a pandemic.

"It's a novel and important attempt," she said, "to turn extremely complicated core ethical considerations into something people can make sense of and struggle with in ordinary language."

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 12:59:53 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us(b)(6)@utah.gov(b)(6)@wyo.gov';(b)(6)@nd.gov'(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil'(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)'@usace.army.mil'(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us';Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA clips for Thursday, 8-25-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-25-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.
- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe's stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. ("Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent.") Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.

- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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NORTH DAKOTA:

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

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$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

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The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

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Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve (Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here’s a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California’s central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire's Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

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IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

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MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana's largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire's perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

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UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

“The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations,” Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

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WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone’s South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it’s gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America’s prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.
David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn't consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

"The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites," Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. "The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline."

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

"The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux," said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company's attorney, William Leone, told the court, "This is not a cowboy process."

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday's hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday's hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

“We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters,” she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group's arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

"Our message remains the same," he said. "We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public."

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

"A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

"Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court," Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe's historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

"It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them," Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary

The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary

A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.

Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency's operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.

Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.

"Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah," said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job."

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016

SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):

11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are "not good in the near future" because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.
- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe's stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. ("Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent.") Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve

(Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here's a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California's central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire's Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

—–

IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

—–

MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana's largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire's perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

—–

UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

"The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations," Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

—–

WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe’s cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company’s assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small

construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see

that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn’t consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

“The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites,” Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. “The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline.”

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

“The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux,” said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company’s attorney, William Leone, told the court, “This is not a cowboy process.”

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday’s hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can’t begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn’t immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday’s hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

“We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters,” she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group’s arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

“Our message remains the same,” he said. “We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public.”

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

“A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million,” the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

“Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court,” Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe’s historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

“It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them,” Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary
The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary

A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.

Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency's operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.

Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.

"Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah," said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job."

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016

SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):

11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are “not good in the near future” because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

From: Bulletin Intelligence
Sent: 19 Aug 2016 08:44:37 -0400
To: FEMA@BulletinIntelligence.com
Subject: FEMA Clips Supplemental for Friday, August 19, 2016
Attachments: FEMABriefingSup160819.doc

This morning's FEMA Clips Supplemental are attached.

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

Fugate-Louisiana Flooding. CNN's New Day (8/19, 7:52 a.m. EST, 226K) reported, "The historic and catastrophic flooding in Louisiana, now being called the worst natural disaster since Superstorm Sandy. President Obama, under fire from some for not visiting the region because he is on vacation. Mike Pence will tour the damage. Joining us is FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. Thank you so much for being with me. It is incredibly, incredibly troubling when you look at 20,000 people rescued, 13 people died. Thirty-one inches of rainfall in a single day. We saw some of these incredible rescue operations from vehicles as they were sinking. Give us your assessment of the devastation now, as the floodwaters are receding, and also, Craig, if you think anything could have been done to prevent the magnitude of what has happened." **Administrator Fugate**: "Well, I think, you know, the response from the governor, the local parish officials and neighbors helping neighbors really kept the death toll down. Our big challenge, I think, for everybody, including the survivors is most people didn't have flood insurance. And we know that the FEMA programs won't make them whole, so the immediate issues are how do we get people somewhere to stay, and begin the process of recovery and understand this will require assistance and programs. This will be a long-term recovery. Nothing that will get fixed overnight." **CNN Anchor**: "Could anything have been done to prevent the level of flooding, the level of devastation? Anything with levies, et cetera, or was this just the fact that so much rain fell so fast and the ground was just full of water, and couldn't absorb more?" **Fugate**: "Yeah this is classic, when you get this much rain over this area any where in the country. It is going to be devastating. It is hard to build for events people are calling 700 year or one, 000 year flood events. We've seen this in too many places. But we do know that this is increasing in frequency. When we rebuild, we won't build back to the past, but to the future risk." **CNN Anchor**: "They'll be there to tour the area today, we'll see if a contribution is made, as Michael just mentioned. It should not just be a photo op. What can they do on this visit to help?" **Fugate**: "Well, I think one is draw attention to all of the volunteer agencies that are out there, again, FEMA has our role to play, but we have a lot of volunteers, Red Cross, Salvation Army and others, nationally, people need to support these organizations so they can help these survivors. So if anything, call attention to the great work what we call the voluntary organizations, faith based, get people to contribute generously to help out. This hasn't been on national news. Most people didn't know how bad it was. So I think these organizations can use that kind of support." **CNN Anchor**: "I know we were covering it starting on my show Saturday night. The magnitude was, you know, hard for people to wrap their heads around. It didn't come on with a bang like a hurricane. When was the last time you spoke with President Obama about this?" **Fugate**: "I talked to him Wednesday, and again, his direction to me was, you know, making sure we had everything moving that we needed to move and as we anticipated, challenges coming up, his encourage. If it is a 50/50 decision, don't hold back." **CNN Anchor**: "This is seen as the worst disaster since Superstorm sandy. Did you encourage the were he is to come tour the area and help out?" **Fugate**: "Well, again, I refer back to the governor, as he pointed out, we have response operations going on. We've had people working nonstop since this started." **CNN Anchor**: "But did you talk to the bless about it? Did he ask you should I come down?" **Fugate**: "No, he was wanting to make sure that we were doing everything on our part to get our resources moving in there. But again, it's one of those issues that to move the President into a disaster area, actually takes away sometimes from the response and focus on what we're trying to do to save people." **CNN Anchor**: "No question. First and foremost, you don't want the President and his extra security his visit might bring, but let me read you part of what was written in an editorial in a local paper, the advocate there. Peter Kovac wrote this. The optics of Obama golfing while people in floodwaters is striking. The passive federal response to the state's agony in 2005, a chapter of history no one should repeat, talking about former President Bush and Katrina. Should the President be there?" **Fugate**: "Well, again, I'll take issue with the term passive federal response. This has not been a passive federal response. We were on the ground when this incident started. The Coast Guard was doing thousands of rescues." **CNN Anchor**: "Just to be clear, the passive response is 2005 in the wake of Hurricane Katrina." **Fugate**: "Well, they're trying to draw the conclusion that it is about the response and the response is basically in support of the governor. So I would defer to others about that, but I want to keep focused on what we're doing to support the survivors and the fact that Governor Edwards and his team, this is an ongoing event. We have rivers that are crested, but haven't come back down. We still have an active response going on in the midst of all this." **CNN Anchor**: "The most important thing is the victims, aside from the politics. Its about the people, all those homes, just destroyed. As you said, almost all of those people do not have flood insurance. If you're watching and want to help the victims of the Louisiana flooding, go to CNN.Com/impact." This closed captioning transcript was provided by CNN.

FEMA Chief Craig Fugate Tours Louisiana Flooding

NPR, August 19, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is working to accommodate more than 6,000 people who have been forced out of their homes by flooding. Renee Montagne talks to FEMA administrator Craig Fugate.

Obama Criticized For Golfing While Louisiana Grapples With Deadly Flooding

Los Angeles Times, August 18, 2016

President Obama is facing a backlash for continuing his annual Martha's Vineyard vacation as widespread flooding has damaged tens of thousands of homes and killed at least 13 people in Louisiana.

A newspaper in the state editorialized that Obama ought to cut his vacation short to visit "the most anguished state in the union" and show "his solidarity with suffering Americans."

"We've seen this story before in Louisiana, and we don't deserve a sequel," the Advocate wrote Wednesday. "In 2005, a fly-over by a vacationing President George W. Bush became a symbol of official neglect for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The current president was among those making political hay out of Bush's aloofness."

Obama has received regular briefings on the storm, declared it a federal disaster earlier in the week, and dispatched Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson to the region.

But conservative voices juxtaposed pictures of the floodwaters with images of Obama golfing on Thursday. A Fox News headline read: "Bias alert: Media that ripped Bush on Katrina ignores Obama on La. flooding."

Some residents also said they would appreciate a presidential visit.

"It would be great if he could come, give us moral support," said Mary Green King, as she rested at a shelter south of Baton Rouge in flood-ravaged Ascension Parish. "He's been to disaster areas."

King, 67, had just been informed by her landlord that she had 48 hours to move her belongings from her home in the bedroom community of Gonzalez, La. But when Republican U.S. Rep. Bill Cassidy visited the shelter with some aides, King shared her problems with them and felt encouraged.

"He said they would see what they can do," she said from her cot in the shelter that's still housing 524 people.

GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump plans to visit the state Friday, and opened his Thursday evening rally by talking about the tragedy.

"Our prayers are with the families who have lost loved ones, and we send them our deepest condolences," he told supporters in Charlotte, N.C. "Though words cannot express the sadness one feels at times like this, I hope everyone in Louisiana knows that our country is praying for them and standing with them to help them in these difficult hours."

La. Newspaper Asks Obama To Cut Vacation Short As Floods Ravage State

By Rebecca Savransky

The Hill, August 18, 2016

A Louisiana newspaper is calling on President Obama to cut his vacation short and visit the state to address the devastation occurring as a result of severe flooding.

"A disaster this big begs for the personal presence of the President at ground zero," said an editorial published in The Advocate on Thursday.

"In coming here, the President can decisively demonstrate that Louisiana's recovery is a priority for his administration — and the United States of America."

Obama is vacationing at his Martha's Vineyard getaway. His vacation is scheduled to end on Sunday, but the paper called for the president to "pack his bags now."

"Pay a call on communities who need to know that in a national catastrophe, they are not alone," the editorial said.

"The President's presence is already late to this crisis, but it's better later than never."

The newspaper said the president continued his vacation at a "playground for the posh and well-connected" last week as the rain brought "death, destruction and misery" to the state of Louisiana.

"Sometimes, presidential visits can get in the way of emergency response, doing more harm than good," the editorial said.

"But we don't see that as a factor now that flood waters are subsiding, even if at an agonizing pace. It's past time for the president to pay a personal visit, showing his solidarity with suffering Americans."

Crises don't follow any calendar, the editorial said, noting this is what the president signed up for when he took the job.

"The optics of Obama golfing while Louisiana residents languished in flood waters was striking," the editorial said.

"It evoked the precedent of the passive federal response to the state's agony in 2005, a chapter of history no one should ever repeat," it added, referring to Hurricane Katrina, when President George W. Bush was criticized for responding too slowly to the devastation.

The editorial said the president acted "prudently" in declaring a disaster for the area. It said the state has been "heartened" by the involvement of Craig Fugate, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson is also planning to visit the site to "review the ongoing response," according to CNN.

But there have been no plans announced for the president to end his vacation and make a visit to the state.

Since the federal disaster was declared, more than 70,000 people have registered for individual assistance and more than 9,000 have filed flood insurance claims, according to CNN.

National Media Criticized Over Louisiana Flooding Coverage

By Frank Pallotta

CNN Money, August 18, 2016

Between August 8 and August 14, Louisiana was battered by roughly 6.9 trillion gallons of rain. As the flooding there continues, 40,000 homes have been damaged; 13 people are dead. And some observers are wondering when the national media is going to truly take notice.

One such critical voice was FEMA administrator Craig Fugate.

"You have the Olympics. You got the election. If you look at the national news, you're probably on the third or fourth page," Fugate said Tuesday. "FEMA understands this is a very large disaster impacting tens of of thousands of people. Irregardless of whether it is getting in the national coverage, we know this has had a significant impact in Louisiana."

People in Louisiana media have also been criticizing their counterparts at publications outside the state. Mike Scott, a movie critic for NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune, wrote in a column that did get national attention that the national media had "by and large, rendered the flood a secondary story at best."

"It's a matter of raising awareness," Scott told CNNMoney. "Even though this storm doesn't have a name, even though there's a lot going on out there as far as the Olympics and the circus that is our presidential election, this needs to be in front of everybody."

Mark Lorando, the editor and vice president of content for NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune, said that attention from the media could help with the recovery.

"The reality is that recovery purse strings are tied to America's heart strings," he said. "The recovery that occurred in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, for example, would not have been possible if viewers and readers and consumers of news across the country had not been completely and emotionally drawn into what was happening here. If people are not aware of what's happening in Louisiana and the scale of the devastation then donations to relief efforts don't flow."

He added that "Nobody here is complaining that no one is paying attention to them. People here are concerned that our recovery is going to be stunted by the lack of awareness of what's happening." National media outlets like the New York Times have been criticized for its coverage of the historic flooding taking place in Louisiana.

Some people might argue that the sad truth in 2016 is that an event in which only 13 people were killed and that does not involve a mass shooting or terror is not worthy of blanket coverage – and might point to other natural disasters, like tornadoes in the Midwest, that have also caused massive destruction and not gotten much attention. But according to meteorologists like Eric Holthaus, the storm and flooding is undoubtedly worthy of national news.

"It's equivalent to a major hurricane making landfall, it's equivalent to a forest fire burning down a city, it's on the same scale of some of these other weather stories that did make national and world news," Holthaus said. "I mean if there was a terrorist attack that leveled 40,000 homes in an American city that would obviously be front page news."

Some in the national media are looking inward and be critical of their own coverage. Liz Spayd, the public editor of one of the nation's biggest media outlets, the New York Times, devoted a recent column to The Times' delayed response to Louisiana.

"The Times is not the only news organization being criticized for doing too little too late on the floods," she wrote. "Even so, from my scanning of the media's reaction, The Times's performance seems particularly weak."

Asked by Spayd about the coverage, the Times' national editor, Marc Lacey, said that the paper could have done more and will do more.

"No doubt this is a busy news period, and the fact that it is August compounds the usual challenges of getting available staff to the site of the news," Spayd wrote. "But a news organization like The Times — rich with resources and eager to proclaim its national prominence — surely can find a way to cover a storm that has ravaged such a wide stretch of the country's Gulf Coast."

BIAS ALERT: Media That Ripped Bush On Katrina Ignores Obama On La. Flooding

Fox News, August 18, 2016

President George W. Bush was torn to shreds in 2005 by mainstream media commentators for his initial response to Hurricane Katrina – yet President Obama's detached response to the recent Louisiana floods has been met with resounding silence from those same outlets.

"George Bush doesn't care about black people" was the shocking charge by singer Kanye West about President Bush's response to Katrina. West's was a particularly blunt assessment, but echoed a growing narrative pushed by mainstream media outlets that Bush's response was out of touch, inept and most of all, he didn't care about people on the ground.

Much of the media coverage at the time not only criticized Bush for the difficulties the federal government faced in responding to the disaster, but also lambasted him for taking too long to return from vacation and to visit the site on the ground.

When he did return early from vacation, just two days after the disaster hit, he faced further criticism for flying over New Orleans on his way back to Washington D.C. before flying out to visit the victims of the tragedy.

Mainstream media condemned Bush's alleged lack of compassion, immediately predicting it would destroy his entire legacy. A USA Today article written at the time summarized it this way:

"President Bush has shown that he can be empathetic, sensitive and decisive. But those qualities eluded him for days after Hurricane Katrina, and the lapse could become a defining moment of his White House tenure," the analysis said.

The Washington Post would later go on to brand Bush's response the second worst moment of his entire presidency.

Such concerns have been almost entirely absent from media coverage of the Louisiana floods in recent days. At least 13 people have died, while at least 85,000 have registered for disaster aid.

While nowhere near as devastating as the hurricane, the floods have wrought significant destruction on the area. Meanwhile, Obama's response has been significantly more tepid than Bush's.

Obama has still not returned from his vacation at Martha's Vineyard, and the White House said Thursday Obama would spend the day golfing. While a White House spokeswoman said the president also spoke with FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate to get an update after Fugate's visit to the area, there are currently no confirmed plans for Obama to end his vacation early.

A local paper has been one of the few voices to criticize Obama's response, reflecting growing annoyance at his response on the ground. In particular, it took aim at Obama's decision to attend a Hillary Clinton fundraiser Monday.

"[I]f the president can interrupt his vacation for a swanky fundraiser for fellow Democrat Hillary Clinton, as he did on Monday, then surely he can make time to show up for a catastrophe that's displaced thousands," the editorial in The Advocate said.

"The optics of Obama golfing while Louisiana residents languished in flood waters was striking. It evoked the precedent of the passive federal response to the state's agony in 2005, a chapter of history no one should ever repeat," the paper wrote.

So far, there have been no mainstream media outlets criticizing Obama's apparent lack of response, nor have there been any celebrities claiming Obama doesn't care about the people on the ground.

Explained: Why The News Was Late To Louisiana

Houston Chronicle, August 18, 2016

As tens of thousands of people waded from swamped homes to flag down rescue boats in Louisiana this weekend, national newspapers and TV channels didn't give the wall-to-wall coverage typical of calamity. And people noticed.

The Houston Chronicle didn't put the Louisiana floods on its front page until Monday, with the headline "Thousands homeless in Louisiana flooding."

The Chronicle wasn't alone. The New York Times admitted in a web post Tuesday that "On Gulf

Coast flooding, the Times is late to the scene," and published input from a handful of readers who wondered why the unfolding catastrophe wasn't getting the attention it deserved.

"You have the Olympics. You got the election. If you look at the national news, (the flood is) probably on the third or fourth page," FEMA administrator Craig Fugate said Tuesday in Louisiana. "Just because the national media hasn't picked up on this—making it a headline—we think it is a national headline disaster."

Somehow, the Louisiana floods didn't turn to trending news as they happened. That was bad news for the victims, who depend on media publicity to spur federal and volunteer aid.

In an atmosphere so hostile to so-called "mainstream media," the episode highlighted the vital, irreplaceable role that professional journalists and publications play in covering disasters—even in the age of camera phones, Twitter and Facebook Live. The public loudly declared: the coverage was insufficient without the mainstream media on the ground.

"It's an interesting time where journalism is both vilified and craved," said Al Tompkins at the Poynter Institute. "In this day and time, when there are so many ways to get news, I think we're suggesting that it still matters whether or not the cameras and the reporters are there."

So why were the newsrooms so late to the scene? It's not became they didn't have warning. Forecasts for a monster storm emerged late in the week, while much of the national televised discourse focused on Donald Trump's false assertion that President Barack Obama "founded" the Islamic State.

The rain started Friday. Newsrooms use the same work schedule as the rest of the country: Monday through Friday, with scaled back crews on Saturday and Sunday. Mobilizing coverage of a widespread disaster is tough on the weekends—especially with print newsroom staff nationwide at less than 60 percent what it was in 2000. That trend has followed a decline in print revenue, prompted by the move of advertising to online and reader preference for free news.

It's been a strenuous summer for national news. Publications put up a lot of money to dispatch staff to big news events, like the two recent major political party conventions, aftermath of repeated shootings of black men and police, or the Olympics in Brazil.

"The fact of the matter is this stuff is really expensive to cover, I mean really expensive."

When disaster strikes, victims depend on national media to make the case that they need aid. Without publicity, help doesn't seem to arrive in quite the same vigorous way, whether from the federal government, volunteer groups or other charity funds.

Even with a slew of smart phone footage, photos and other information available online, Tompkins said, the public depends on professional journalists to package it, make sense of it, sort fact from fiction and say what it all means.

Our Views: Louisiana Deserves More From Obama – Not A Sequel To Bush's Neglect

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 19, 2016

After Hurricane Betsy ravaged Louisiana in 1965, President Lyndon Baines Johnson flew to New Orleans to comfort the victims. Standing in one evacuee shelter darkened by an electrical outage, LBJ shined a flashlight into his face so that his fellow Americans could see the leader of the free world who had come to bring them hope. Speaking into a megaphone, he offered encouragement to residents who had lost everything.

"My name is Lyndon Baines Johnson," he told weary listeners. "I am your president. I am here to make sure you have the help you need."

[Flashback, 1964: Listen to phone conversation between Sen. Russell Long and President Johnson as the senator begs for the president's help.]

Now that the flood waters ravaging Louisiana are receding, it's time for President Barack Obama to visit the most anguished state in the union.

Last week, as torrential rains brought death, destruction and misery to Louisiana, the president continued his vacation at Martha's Vineyard, a playground for the posh and well-connected.

We've seen this story before in Louisiana, and we don't deserve a sequel. In 2005, a fly-over by a vacationing President George W. Bush became a symbol of official neglect for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The current president was among those making political hay out of Bush's aloofness.

Johnson knew that presidents can powerfully demonstrate what they stand for by where they stand. In standing shoulder to shoulder with citizens who had borne the brunt of a terrible storm, he let them know that in their misery, they were not alone.

Johnson's megaphone moment is a case study in how presidents should answer the anguish of national tragedies, and it's a lesson that leaders ignore at their peril.

Alas, there has been no megaphone moment for President Barack Obama in his response to the catastrophe plaguing south Louisiana this week. In the wake of a storm that displaced thousands and flooded huge swaths of the region, Obama continued his vacation at Martha's Vineyard.

To his credit, the president declared a disaster for the affected areas, which should speed the flow of federal aid. He also dispatched important surrogates, FEMA director Craig Fugate and Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, to Louisiana to help.

He was right to do so, but like Johnson, Obama should recognize that leadership involves symbolism as well as substance. In times of profound need, people need to see their president up close. A president's presence can underscore the urgency of relief efforts, goading a sluggish federal bureaucracy into action. In disasters as in so much of life, the old proverb is true: Showing up is half the game.

Presidents don't always get these things right. President George W. Bush's reluctance to leave his Texas ranch after Hurricane Katrina is well known, but another instructive precedent was Calvin Coolidge's low profile after the Great Flood of 1927 submerged a large part Louisiana.

Silent Cal, so nicknamed for his reticence, should have showed up quickly back then and spoken louder.

Obama, for that matter, should have been here by now, too.

Presidential Briefings On Louisiana Flood Of 2016 Aren't Enough: Editorial

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 18, 2016

FEMA administrator Craig Fugate came to Louisiana Tuesday (Aug. 16) and promised that the federal government understands the magnitude of the disaster here. He then went back and briefed President Barack Obama on the historic flooding, according to the White House website.

"The President directed Administrator Fugate to utilize all resources available to assist in the response and recovery and asked to be regularly briefed on the ongoing response," the online update dated Aug. 17 says.

That should provide some comfort to the tens of thousands of people who have been driven from their homes by this epic storm.

But, no disrespect to Mr. Fugate, his promises and an online statement are not enough. As with the damage to New Orleans from Hurricane Katrina and the levee breaches in 2005, this disaster needs to be seen to be fully understood.

President Obama ought to make a trip to Louisiana himself.

Like Congress, the president in on vacation at the moment. But he should interrupt that holiday to spend some time with victims of the worst disaster this country has seen since Superstorm Sandy four years ago.

The raw numbers are startling: a "1,000-year" rainfall; 30,000 people rescued; 40,000 homes damaged, many severely; 75 percent of homes damaged in Livingston Parish alone. But a stat sheet cannot fully capture miles and miles of flood-ravaged homes, businesses, schools and churches or the heartbreak of thousands of Louisianians.

President Obama only has five months left in office and will turn the White House over to a new president in January.

But the next five months are crucial to the recovery here. The damage, which covers some entire parishes, is likely too vast for FEMA's typical resources to repair it. Most of the people whose homes were damaged didn't have flood insurance, many because they weren't considered to be in a danger zone.

Those homeowners and the state of Louisiana almost certainly will need extra help from the federal government. That will take a commitment from President Obama and from Congress.

Charitable giving also will be essential to recovery, as it was after Katrina. Some of the nation's private foundations are already pledging major contributions to help flood victims, and we are truly grateful for that.

But this storm has not captured the attention of America yet. "When you have a storm that is unnamed — it wasn't a hurricane, it wasn't a tropical event — people underestimate the impact that it would have," Gov. John Bel Edwards said Tuesday.

Mr. Fugate acknowledged the scant national coverage of the storm at a press conference with Gov. Edwards.

"You have the Olympics. You got the election. If you look at the national news, you're probably on the third or fourth page," Mr. Fugate said. "FEMA understands this is a very large disaster impacting tens of thousands of people." Regardless of whether it is getting sufficient national media coverage, "we know this has had a significant impact in Louisiana," he said.

The way to truly show that the White House understands the breadth of this disaster is for President Obama to get in a boat with the Cajun Navy to see the damage for himself.

The president can bring attention to this disaster as no one else can. He also can bring a level of comfort to people suffering here that his aides cannot.

Mr. President, Louisiana needs you here with us.

Louisiana Flooding: 10 Things You Need To Know On Thursday Night

By Julia O'Donoghue

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 18, 2016

Another round of federal officials visited the sites of the Louisiana Flood of 2016 on Thursday (Aug. 18).

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson was taken the Lamar Dixon Expo Center and some of the flooded areas in Ascension Parish. The Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator Craig Fugate came to Louisiana earlier this week.

Here's what you need to know about the disaster on Thursday night:

The flooding hasn't necessarily stopped.

It's been six days since the water started to rise in the Baton Rouge area, and while the flood has receded in several parts of the state, it is actually still getting worse in others.

The state is still dealing with rising water in southern Ascension Parish as well as St. James, Acadia, Jefferson Davis and potentially St. John the Baptist. The state is still having to deal with search and rescue missions, albeit on a smaller scale.

"As I've been saying for six days now, this is ongoing event," Gov. John Bel Edwards said at a press conference Thursday.

Over 4,000 people are still in shelters, but the number has been dropping.

At the highest point, around 11,000 people were staying in shelters. Just in the last 24 hours, the number of people staying in temporary shelters had fallen by half.

But that doesn't necessarily mean that people have been able to move back into their homes. More likely, they have gone to a hotel or are staying with friends or family.

Longer-term, temporary housing hasn't been sorted out yet.

Edwards said the state is still devising its longer-term solution to the housing crisis that has accompanied the flood. Around 75 percent of homes have been called a "total loss" in Livingston Parish alone.

Edwards said the state is still looking at all options for temporary housing. He said the plan will have to be complicated because the flood affected people of varying income levels across a large portion of the state. Also, some people have flood insurance and others don't, which will affect their ability to get back in their homes quickly.

"We can't get the right mix determined until we know more about the population that is affected," Edwards said. "When we have a better feel, we will know whether and how many manufactured housing units to order."

The governor said his staff and federal officials were working as quickly as possible to gather information about the people in need of housing. He hoped to have announcement about what housing options might be available on Friday.

"Housing will certainly be a major issue," Edwards said.

Some people should be getting money from FEMA in the next 48 hours.

Edwards said an initial group of people had already been approved for financial relief from FEMA, which means they should be getting some money over the next two days. The length of time to receive the money will depend on whether you can get your check through the mail or have to have it electronically transferred, according to the governor.

950 FEMA personnel are on the ground. 750 FEMA workers are coming.

Johnson, the head of Homeland Security, said even more staff could be deployed in the future. They are still evaluating what is needed.

Around 86,500 people have registered for flood relief with FEMA so far. The agency set up its first "small business center" in Livingston Thursday.

The Red Cross expects to spend $30 million on Louisiana Flood efforts.

Gail McGovern, head of the Red Cross, said her organization has already served 100,000 meals and snacks at the shelters it is running. By the end of their time in Louisiana, they believe a total of 1.2 million meals will be given out through the Red Cross.

The Red Cross says this is the biggest disaster since Superstorm Sandy.

It's not even close. The scope of the disaster and the range of the crisis makes it the biggest relief effort the Red Cross has had to run since Sandy, which was in 2012.

Disaster food assistance will be available on Monday, but not everywhere.

Edwards said the program will only launch in seven parishes next week, even though 20 parishes have been declared federal disaster areas. There was no word on when the benefits – call the disaster supplemental nutritional assistance program or DSNAP – will be available to everyone else.

52 people had been stuck in Livingston Parish homes during the flood.

Door-to-door checks on people started yesterday in Livingston Parish. Over 800 homes were inspected and in 30 residences, people who hadn't been able to get out during the flood and weren't accounted for were found.

The governor said the 52 people were primarily elderly and frail. The body of one person who had died already also was discovered. The door-to-door checks in Livingston Parish were almost over on Thursday night, but will continue in other parts of the state.

"It is critically important that we go door to door," he said.

The governor believes lack of media attention has lead to fewer donations.

Edwards thinks the Red Cross would have received more financial support if the national media had paid attention to the Louisiana Flood earlier.

"The only downside to not being prominently displayed in the news across the country as it relates to this event, is that perhaps the national attention isn't on it as it relates to donations," Edwards said.

Needed In Louisiana As Flood Waters Ebb: 40,000 New Homes

By Rowena Lindsay

Christian Science Monitor, August 18, 2016

As the flood water in Louisiana begins to recede, the true extend of the damage caused by rain storms that dumped more than two feet of water on Baton Rouge and Lafayette in just two days is becoming clear. With an estimated 40,000 homes damaged by the deluge, thousands of people have been displaced from their homes, staying in overflowing shelters, with relatives and friends, and in trailers.

Those with flood insurance will need places to stay while they rebuild. Those without flood insurance have the even greater challenge of relocating completely – a process the state hopes will go more smoothly than it did following Hurricane Katrina.

"Thousands of people in Louisiana have lost everything they own and need our help now," Brad Kieserman, the vice president of disaster services operations and logistics for the Red Cross, said in a statement.

Volunteers have rushed to pitch in, as have companies and celebrities: Airbnb has encouraged its hosts to offer rooms for free, and singer Taylor Swift announced a $1 million donation on Tuesday.

In addition to volunteer organizations like the Red Cross, President Barack Obama has called in The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which provides resources for housing, contacting loved ones, and filing flood relief claims. More that 9,000 claims have already been filed, according to FEMA, and 70,000 have registered for federal disaster assistance.

However, most homes in the areas hit the hardest by the flooding were not covered by flooding insurance. Only 12 percent of homes in Baton Rouge and 14 percent in Lafayette were insured against flooding, Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon told the Associated Press.

State officials are encouraging landlords to offer short term leases, and asking homeowners to rent out any space they can spare for people displaced by the flooding.

"If you have a unit that's an old mother-in-law suite and you can rent it out, let us know," said Keith Cunningham, who heads the Louisiana's housing agency.

Airbnb, the popular home-sharing vacation rental site, has provided a platform for hosts to offer their rental properties to victims of the flooding for free, as The Christian Science Monitor reported on Wednesday. So far more than 180 Airbnb hosts across the state are hosting people displaced by the flood.

This system actually began in 2012, after hurricane Sandy struck the Eastern seaboard. Since then, Airbnb has expanded the program to help victims of wildfires, floods, earthquakes, and terror attacks around the world, Airbnb spokesman Nick Shapiro told the Monitor.

Now, once a disaster hits, Airbnb waives its fees and emails hosts in the affected areas to let them know about the program.

"The generosity, compassion and caring, to take from their own income and welcome strangers into their property. There are just no words for that. There are no words," Kim Stewart, whose east Baton Rouge home was destroyed and who is now staying in an Airbnb home, told the Monitor. "I truly believe it's a Southern thing."

But all of these are temporary solutions.

"Nobody wants to do a long-term shelter," Terri Ricks, the deputy secretary for the Department of Children and Family Services, told the Associated Press. Ricks is helping organize long-term shelters at parishes where people can stay while they rebuild. "We want to get people in a more permanent situation."

This report includes material from Reuters and the Associated Press.

More Federal Agencies Reach Out To Louisiana Flood Victims

By Kellie Lunney

Government Executive, August 18, 2016

The Housing and Urban Development Department is expediting housing disaster relief aid to flood-ravaged Louisiana, including rebuilding grants, mortgage insurance for homeowners and assistance to low-income renters.

"Families who may have been forced from their homes need to know that help is available to begin the rebuilding process," said HUD Secretary Julian Castro on Wednesday. "Whether it's foreclosure relief for FHA-insured families or helping these counties to recover, HUD stands ready to help in any way we can."

The department said it was talking to state and local officials in Louisiana to see if they could streamline the Community Development Block Grant and HOME programs to speed the repair and replacement of damaged housing. The CDBG program in particular played a major role in helping to rebuild New Orleans and Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The federal grants are a favorite among state and local officials because they can be used for a variety of rebuilding and development projects.

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HUD also is granting storm victims a 90-day moratorium on foreclosures and forbearance on foreclosures for home mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration; providing FHA mortgage assistance to those who have lost their homes and have to rebuild; and offering federally-guaranteed loans to the state and local governments for housing rehab, economic development, and public infrastructure repair. The department also announced that it "will share information with FEMA and the state on housing providers that may have available units in the impacted counties," including public housing agencies.

The excessive rainfall that battered Louisiana and parts of southwest Mississippi between Aug. 11 and Aug. 14 has affected tens of thousands of people and homes in the Gulf Coast region, and has killed at least 13 people. More than 20 inches of rain fell within 72 hours in some parts of southeastern and south central Louisiana. Approximately 20,000 people have been rescued by first responders and agencies including the Coast Guard and the Louisiana National Guard; roughly 86,000 residents already have applied for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. President Obama has declared 20 Louisiana parishes in the Baton Rouge area major disasters, making them eligible for federal assistance.

FEMA Administrator W. Craig Fugate and Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards have been urging affected residents to apply for disaster assistance as soon as possible. FEMA is only one of several agencies that administer disaster assistance: At the federal level alone, there are dozens of programs that deal somehow with disaster relief and recovery stemming from natural disasters and terrorism, spanning at least 14 agencies, according to the website DisasterAssistance.gov.

The Agriculture Department also has released a fact sheet listing all the forms of disaster assistance it offers ranging from crop insurance to farm emergency loans and debris removal. And the Small Business Administration on Thursday opened a business recovery center in Walker, Louisiana, to help small businesses owners navigate the types of disaster assistance available from that agency.

"Consultants at the center will provide counseling on a wide variety of matters designed to help small business owners re-establish their operations, overcome the effects of the disaster and plan for their future," according to an SBA press release. "Services include assessing business economic injury, evaluating the business's strength, cash flow projections and most importantly, a review of all options to ensure each business makes decisions that are appropriate for its situation."

The Advocate, a Louisiana news outlet based in Baton Rouge, published an Aug. 17 editorial urging President Obama – who has been vacationing on Martha's Vineyard – to visit the disaster area. "Sometimes, presidential visits can get in the way of emergency response, doing more harm than good," the op-ed said. "But we don't see that as a factor now that flood waters are subsiding, even if at an agonizing pace."

Referring to Hurricane Katrina and the inattention the disaster received from government, politicians, and much of the country in the disaster's immediate aftermath, Advocate editors wrote: "We've seen this story before in Louisiana, and we don't deserve a sequel. In 2005, a fly-over by a vacationing President George W. Bush became a symbol of official neglect for the victims of Hurricane Katrina."

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson visited Baton Rouge on Thursday. For updates on federal disaster response and recovery efforts in Louisiana, click here.

86,500 Sign Up For FEMA Aid

WWL-TV New Orleans, August 18, 2016

More than 86,000 Louisiana flood victims had registered for individual federal assistance Wednesday, while the White House said Homeland Security Director Jeh Johnson will visit the state Thursday to survey the damage and the government's response in a disaster that has claimed 13 lives.

White House deputy Press Secretary Jen Friedman said Federal Emergency Management Craig Fugate briefed President Obama following Fugate's trip to Louisiana Tuesday.

"The president directed Administrator Fugate to utilize all resources available to assist in the response and recovery and asked to be regularly briefed on the ongoing response," Friedman said in an email statement.

The latest by the numbers: 3,332 people in shelters; more than 40,000 houses damaged or destroyed; 30,000 people rescued; 20 parishes included in the federal disaster declaration; 70,000 plus FEMA registrants; 115 state highways closed; and thousands of pets — dogs, cats, birds, a turtle and pigs — at shelters throughout southern Louisiana, among them Blackham Coliseum in Lafayette.

State offices will remain closed in 14 parishes Thursday, including Acadia, Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Lafayette, Livingston, St. Helena, St. James, St. John, St. Martin, Tangipahoa, Vermilion and West Feliciana.

"A decision on Friday closures will be made early Thursday," Commissioner of Administration Jay Dardenne said.

"I ask and encourage state employees without damage to assist their co-workers who sustained damage," Dardenne said.

Gov. John Bel Edwards also issued an executive order Wednesday imposing an emergency suspension of all deadlines for legal proceedings in state courts, administrative agencies and boards.

Edwards toured damage in Livingston and Ascension parishes Thursday afternoon, as well as visited the Lamar Dixon Expo Center.

(© 2016 WWL)

Trump, Pence To Tour Flood Damage In Louisiana

By Jesse Byrnes

The Hill, August 18, 2016

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump and his running mate Mike Pence are reportedly traveling to disaster-stricken Louisiana on Friday.

Trump and Pence will head to the flood-ravaged area of Baton Rouge, La., according to ABC News and CNN.

Trump opened his speech at a rally in Charlotte, N.C., on Thursday night by remarking on the "heartbreak and devastation in Louisiana," and offered his condolences.

"We are one nation. When one state hurts, we all hurt – and we must all work together to lift each other up. Working, building, restoring together," he said.

President Obama on Wednesday received a briefing from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on the deadly floods that washed over Louisiana.

About 40,000 homes had seen damage from the flooding and more than 70,000 people had registered for FEMA assistance, according to the White House.

The White House announced that Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson would visit the state on Thursday to review the scene after Obama on Sunday declared it a federal disaster.

Obama, who received his briefing by phone during his vacation to Martha's Vineyard, Mass., has received criticism for not visiting the site of the severe flooding and storms, which has left 13 people dead.

A Louisiana newspaper on Thursday called for Obama to cut his vacation short, saying, "A disaster this big begs for the personal presence of the President at ground zero."

Baton Rouge is also the site where three police officers were killed and three more wounded in a shooting last month in a city that had been in the spotlight over the police-involved shooting of a black man during a traffic stop.

In A Flooded Louisiana Parish, A 3-mile Journey Down The River To Answer The Question: Did Our House Survive?

By Molly Hennessy-Fiske

Los Angeles Times, August 18, 2016

The little blond girl in striped rubber rain boots and a bright pink shirt knew things could be bad at the house she shared with her grandparents. Floodwaters had consumed much of their Baton Rouge suburb, and some of her classmates' homes had water to the roofs.

"If my house has water in it, I'm pretty sure my room has water," said 11-year-old London Guidry as she clambered aboard a small motorboat to check the family ranch house with her grandfather and his friend and fellow riverboat pilot, Josh Boogaerts.

The sun was high, the air sultry as they set off Wednesday afternoon into the storm-swollen Amite River beneath a canopy of cypress and oak. Muddy eddies swirled around them.

"How bad is the current?" London asked, wide-eyed.

"Y'all are all gonna see firsthand in just a second," Boogaerts said as the aluminum boat cruised past a submerged street sign and thudded against something as he muttered, unfazed, "mailbox."

Similar scenes are playing out across the state's eight Florida Parishes, part of a former Spanish colony clustered to the east of the Mississippi River. Residents are returning to waterlogged neighborhoods wondering whether their house survived. London and her grandfather, Dugan Phillips, would get their answer after traveling three miles downriver.

Fatal flooding unleashed by record rains crept this week from Baton Rouge to suburbs like French Settlement in Livingston Parish. A dank tide of murky swamp water destroyed up to 80% of the homes of the parish's 140,000 residents and left others gutted, smelling of dead fish.

So far, 13 people have died. Two feet of rain fell in a 24-hour stretch, swelling the Amite beyond its banks and breaking a rainfall record set in 1962. More than 70,000 people have registered for Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance; more than 9,000 have filed flood insurance claims.

"This is biblical," Boogaerts said as he steered the boat, gesturing to the submerged home of a friend.

"He's burnt out. He's done. He just put in a new game room," Boogaerts said of the friend, whose Camaro also was flooded.

They passed two men in another small boat, and Phillips, recognizing a neighbor, waved and shouted, "Good luck to you guys!"

They soon floated toward Boogaerts' own house, two stories tall and pale pink. Water had swamped the first floor and a shed packed with equipment.

"The bottom of my floor joists are gone. It's unsellable," the 43-year-old father of two said, haggard and unshaven after days of these trips. He said he plans to leave: His wife can't stand the risk on the river.

"All she has to do is hear French Settlement and flooding in the same sentence, and she's gone. Last time, she left the dog on the chain," he said. "I just can't keep dumping money into it. But it's breaking my heart to leave here."

Floodwaters washed out nearby interstates, closed more than a dozen parish schools indefinitely, opened graves and cut off this and other bayou communities for days. Gas and other staples were scarce in the village that claims to be the region's capital for "sauce patate," Cajun potato stew. The governor deployed the National Guard, but sometimes even the guard's heavy equipment became mired in bayou muck.

Stranded locals summoned their own "Cajun navy" (T-shirts now available online) — hundreds of volunteer boaters like Boogaerts who aided law enforcement in rescuing more than 15,000, many from attics and rooftops. They also delivered donated sausage to a shelter at St. Joseph Catholic Church.

The makeshift donation center, soup kitchen and shelter refused to close its doors even when the electricity and air conditioning failed, with volunteers still serving up pastalaya (jambalaya with pasta), gumbo, red beans and rice. Father Jason Palermo, a police chaplain who carries his gun in an ankle holster, coordinated shipments of water and other supplies.

"Town hall is waist-deep," Mayor Toni Guitrau said as she stopped by the church to check on relief efforts after cleaning her own home, which flooded. She said her daughter, a sheriff's deputy, was on "looter patrol."

The village was settled in 1809 as part of a Spanish land grant, and sawmills soon sprouted to process local cypress. A descendant of those pioneers, 64-year-old Dale Aydell, was among those waiting to get back to his house on Goodtimes Road, once home to Goodtimes Sawmill. The water in his home was waist-deep — not much of a good time, he added. There once was a Hardtimes Sawmill here too.

"I can't get in until probably tomorrow," he said.

The village's volunteer fire chief said he expects to see more rescues later this week. Livingston Parish President Layton Ricks, whose home in Denham Springs flooded, had to be boated back to his house to pick up blood pressure medication.

Ricks has met with the governor and federal emergency management officials, who he said have started assessing damages.

FEMA is a concern here, where many feel the agency bungled the Hurricane Katrina response. So many resettled here after Katrina, a subdivision was nicknamed "St. Bernard" after their New Orleans-area parish, Ricks said.

Out on the river, London, Phillips and Boogaerts had almost ended their journey. London covered her eyes. She couldn't look.

Then, as the boat neared a white house with dark green shutters, the girl squealed.

"Our trampoline is still there!"

Phillips' heart also leaped. The water had reached only their porch.

"It's completely dry. Yes!" London shouted as she scaled the front railing.

"Well, not completely dry, baby. We'll see," said Phillips, 61, sounding tired as he added, "The wife was hoping to get a new floor out of this."

Phillips has flood insurance and plans to rebuild — and he'll make sure the house, already elevated 4 1/2 feet off the ground, is even higher. "It's going to get raised. I'm not going to live like this no more. It's too nerve-wracking," he said.

On the porch, London passed a "Welcome to Da River" sign, some American flags and a Confederate flag (nearly every house here has one, including Boogaerts') to check on her stranded black-and-white cat, Angel. They made sure he had food before setting off.

On the way back, they saw a snake in the water, and debated whether it looked venomous. London worried aloud about looters. Her grandfather reassured her: "There's no riffraff back here."

Soon after, the motor sputtered. Boogaerts wondered whether they had run out of gas.

"How are you going to get out of here? We're going to hit another mailbox!" London said.

"I'm not even sure that was a mailbox," he replied.

Then the motor caught and came back to life. London spent the rest of the trip pointing out displaced items in the water, which showed no signs of receding: a refrigerator, a washing machine, a gas tank.

She and her grandparents would spend the night at the nearby Pelican Inn. As Boogaerts pulled up to where they had left their trucks, a text arrived from London's grandmother.

She had wanted them to leave a note on the house asking officials not to break down the door like they did in New Orleans after the hurricane, when FEMA marked houses with an "X" — search codes noting what was found inside and symbols that became known as "Katrina crosses."

Phillips reassured his granddaughter that this time, they wouldn't have to do that. The damage was not as bad as he had feared, not as bad as the homes of others who waited anxiously along the road for Boogaerts to take them out just as soon as he found some more gas.

Taylor Swift Donates $1 Million To Louisiana Flood Victims

By Christie D'zurilla

Los Angeles Times, August 18, 2016

Taylor Swift has opened her wallet to the tune of $1 million to assist victims of severe flooding in Louisiana.

The "Shake It Off" singer played the first two dates of her current world tour in that state's Bossier City and Baton Rouge.

"We began the 1989 World Tour in Louisiana, and the wonderful fans there made us feel completely at home," Swift told the Associated Press in an exclusive statement Tuesday. "The fact that so many people in Louisiana have been forced out of their own homes this week is heartbreaking.

"I encourage those who can to help out and send your love and prayers their way during this devastating time."

Thirteen people have died and tens of thousands evacuated or have had to be rescued after more than 20 inches of rain fell in three days. The Red Cross said the flooding was likely the worst natural disaster in the U.S. since Superstorm Sandy hit the East Coast in 2012.

"We've been through Hurricane Gustav, Katrina, Isaac and Rita, but this without a doubt is the roughest we've ever had in this parish," Livingston Parish Sheriff Jason Ard told The Times.

Though recent headlines have focused on the "Shake It Off" singer's love life and feud with Kanye West, Swift has been known over the years to drop big bucks to help others. Among the assists: a $4-million pledge in 2013 to Nashville's Country Music Hall of Fame for a music education center, a $100,000 Red Cross donation for victims of the 2008 flooding in Iowa, $15,000 in 2015 to a Texas firefighter who wound up saving his own family when he responded to a car crash and $50,000 in 2015 to help the cancer-stricken nephew of one of her dancers.

Meanwhile, despite its severity, the flooding in Louisiana seems to be taking a back seat, news-wise, to other stories. "You have the Olympics, you got the election," said Craig Fugate, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, speaking to Louisianans. "If you look at the national news, you're probably on the third or fourth page. FEMA understands this is a very large disaster impacting tens of thousands of people. Regardless of what it may be getting in the national coverage, we know there has been a significant impact here in Louisiana."

Extreme Floods May Be The New Normal

Scientific American, August 18, 2016

Over the past year alone, catastrophic rain events characterized as once-in-500-year or even once-in-1,000-year events have flooded West Virginia, Texas, Oklahoma, South Carolina and now Louisiana, sweeping in billions of dollars of property damage and deaths along with the high waters.

These extreme weather events are forcing many communities to confront what could signal a new climate change normal. Now many are asking themselves: Are they doing enough to plan for and to adapt to large rain events that climate scientists predict will become more frequent and more intense as global temperatures continue to rise?

The answer in many communities is no, it's not enough.

They could be doing much, much more to adapt—not just people and how they respond to climate change, but homes, buildings, roads, and levees and other infrastructure, said Gavin Smith, director of the Department of Homeland Security's Coastal Resilience Center of Excellence and a research professor at the University of North Carolina's Department of City and Regional Planning.

One of the first shifts that must happen, many experts in hazard mitigation say, is to stop using the climate of the past to plan for the future.

"One of the great challenges is to recognize that a lot of communities, a lot of cities, a lot of human settlements in general were designed to reflect the climate of the past," said Smith, who also served as the director of the Mississippi Office of Recovery and Renewal after Hurricane Katrina.

"These issues, they are happening and they're going to become worse, and the changes are occurring within a context where we've designed cities to reflect a previous climate," he said.

The 39-hour rain event in Louisiana, which killed at least nine people and flooded upward of 40,000 homes, was a radical weather system that would have done plenty of damage, global warming or no. The same was true for a July 30 flash flood in Ellicott City, Md., which killed two people and swept a wave of destruction through the historic downtown when 6 inches of rain fell over several hours.

Yet climate change also likely played a role, if mostly to intensify the amount of rainfall because of an increased amount of water vapor in the atmosphere caused by higher temperatures. It's an emerging field of study, but climate scientists are working on models that could determine whether specific extreme weather events are caused by climate change (ClimateWire, June 14).

What climate scientists do know is that the intensity of extreme precipitation events is on the rise. With rising global temperatures, the 2014 National Climate Assessment predicts that many communities will see such extreme precipitation events more frequently.

More frequent events could defy traditional methods of planning for floods, like using 100- and 500-year floodplain maps to plan communities and develop flood insurance rates and who has to have it. It could also radically shift how engineers and architects design buildings. Coupled with sea-level rise in some places, such rain events could also affect how emergency response teams issue storm warnings or prepare people for weather events.

They're all factors that communities must consider as climate change creates uncertain weather patterns, said Susan Cutter, a geography professor and director of the Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute at the University of South Carolina.

"How many of those people have built infrastructures to withstand flooding? Are they building homes in the 100- and 500-year floodplains?" said Cutter, who has helped create a federal framework for measuring community resilience to climate change and other hazards. Today's 500-year floodplain, tomorrow's 100-year floodplain?

Some communities in Louisiana have already begun such adaptation, including requiring higher minimum elevation of new structures and requiring older ones to be raised higher to qualify for lower flood insurance rates. In some communities where Superstorm Sandy flooded homes and businesses, building codes now require construction of what's known as freeboard, the space between where 100-year flood levels are projected to rise to in major storms or floods and the start of the building.

Cities and counties thinking about development patterns could go even further, she said. By mitigating short-term hazards like the floods they know they'll have, they can develop the adaptive capacity for longer-term changes.

"The resilient approach would be to take the next step and say, 'OK, we know that there's some climate sensitivity to this. Why don't we develop strategies for that 500-year floodplain?'" she said. "Thinking that perhaps that 500-year floodplain today might be tomorrow's 100-year floodplain because of climate change."

This will require a major shift in thinking, said Richard Wright, who heads the American Society of Civil Engineers' climate adaptation committee. The society releases a report card every four years identifying old, outdated and deteriorated infrastructure across the United States. Engineers now must also think about change climate models.

"We do have our standards on minimum design loads for buildings and other structures, and our standards on flood resistance, which does look at providing adequate margins of safety," he said. "But the difficulty is that these are based on the historical records. And the thing that the climate and weather science community tells us is we can't expect the climate weather extremes of the future to be defined by those of the past.

"We say to them, 'That's a problem for us. Our design criteria are based on the historical records. What will the climate and weather extremes of the future be?' And the answer we get is: 'We don't know,'" he said. "This gives us a very challenging situation."

He calls for an adaptive risk management approach to make buildings and infrastructure strong enough for what science knows about climate change, and adaptable to what is unknown. Adaptive risk management, which he and other engineers once called "low-regret decisionmaking," gives local, state and federal governments more wiggle room to change things if they need to make additional adaptations to a changing climate.

"We need to work with the climate weather science community to get forecasts of what these extreme events will be over the 50- and 100-year service lives of our infrastructure," he said. "Because our design criteria, our load and resistance factors, are carefully calibrated to provide the intended level of safety. So what we need to do is understand: What will the 50- and 100-year flood be 50 and 100 years from now, not just today?"

A report issued earlier this summer by the Rand Corp. for the Department of Homeland Security urges U.S. policymakers to incorporate additional climate change risk assessment into infrastructure planning (ClimateWire, July 14).

Climate change could expose vast swaths of U.S. infrastructure to additional natural hazards that are likely to intensify as sea levels rise, temperatures increase and precipitation patterns shift, the report found. Power transmission lines, ports, refineries and wastewater treatment facilities across the country are vulnerable to climate change.

Communities do have several tools at their disposal to protect infrastructure and plan for more extreme weather, said UNC's Smith. One tool is what are known as hazard mitigation plans. States are required to submit the plans to the Federal Emergency Management Agency in order to qualify for federal money when disasters occur. The plans require communities to document areas of weakness and, when done well, help states figure out how to minimize damage from natural disasters.

The plans often address how to respond to flooding, whether it's by changing development patterns, making homes and businesses less vulnerable to floodwaters, or by moving people and homes out of harm's way with buyouts. Flooding is the most common and costly natural disaster in the United States, according to the Insurance Information Institute, and it is the most frequent reason for declaring a federal disaster.

Smith has studied the effectiveness of state hazard mitigation plans. He and his research partner found that even if communities identified their risks, there's not often action on policies and projects to reduce their risks.

Few addressed land-use planning as a tool, for example, he said.

"These plans could be and can be a powerful tool to think about where and how to build within relations to hazards and, also within reason, to try to limit development in areas that we know are flood-prone," he said. "These plans should be proactive, not reactive." When history is no longer a guide to the future

Last year, the Natural Resources Defense Council was among the organizations that successfully petitioned FEMA to require states to consider the effects of climate change when they update their hazard mitigation plans.

Until now, most states have looked at past disaster experiences and used that information as the basis of determining what their future disaster experiences are going to be, said Rebecca Hammer, a staff attorney at the NRDC's water program.

"And as we know, climate change is rendering that assumption completely void," she said. "So looking backward is not a good way to develop these plans anymore, because when you take future risk into account, the strategies that you're going to use are going to be different than if you were just planning for your past disasters."

The first state to submit a hazard mitigation plan with climate change factored into its response was Maryland. The recently submitted plan has not yet been made public—a weakness in the process, the NRDC says, since the public doesn't have a chance to weigh in.

Hazard mitigation plans could be effective tools for adapting communities to climate change, especially flooding that could be prevented. Congress often makes money available after a natural disaster, Hammer said, but it's "often less politically palatable in a lot of places nowadays to invest in pre-emptive resilience action."

That's unfortunate, Hammer said.

"We know it's more cost-effective to take these actions up front instead of just waiting for a disaster to strike," she said. "It's just a matter of political will and funding. That's why we don't see as much of this happening as we need to."

It's never easy for communities to tackle such issues, though, especially when people are still trying to stay safe from floodwaters, mourn the loss of loved ones, and to repair their homes and businesses so they can return to work or school.

"Addressing these really complex, sometimes contentious policy issues can take years to try to think through," Smith said. "Thinking through how to make these big policy choices when people are suffering is really difficult to achieve."

But it can be vital for communities to consider such questions if they want to thrive as they adapt to climate change, he said. As they confront a new normal, asking themselves the tough questions can lead to lasting societal change in the form of lower flood insurance rates and safer, more equitable and even greener communities.

"Oftentimes the metric of success in recovery is speed. How quickly can we get back to what we knew?" Smith said. "Well, getting back to what you knew, maybe it was high risk, inequitable, a degraded environment and a poor economy. Is that what you want to return to? Changing the status quo and changing it in the aftermath of a disaster is extremely difficult."

Resilient communities will have to look beyond the next election cycle and even the inertia of human nature to adapt to climate change, Cutter said.

"At the one level it's a political problem, it's a resource and economic problem, but it's also a cultural problem," she said. "We're not thinking about protecting these assets down the line. We don't think in the future, we think in the present."

– Erika Bolstad, ClimateWire

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Enlist The Market In The Climate-Change Fight

By Brian Deese And Jeff Zients

Wall Street Journal, August 18, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

FEMA Halts Katrina Payments In Mississippi Over Mismanagement Allegations

By Tony Pugh

McClatchy, August 18, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will suspend reimbursement of nearly $30 million to the state of Mississippi for disaster mitigation work because of lax state oversight and financial irregularities in a program to strengthen homes against wind damage following Hurricane Katrina.

An audit report by the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Homeland Security claims the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has been unable to provide documentation for $30.5 million in state funds that were supposedly paid to contractors for work on 945 homes in Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties as part of the state's Coastal Retrofit Program.

The contractor invoices are now being held by MEMA because Mississippi is investigating the program and looking for documents to validate the contractor payments.

Because the state could still seek nearly $30 million in federal reimbursement for the expenditures, the inspector general called on FEMA to put the brakes on further payments for program.

The program estimated that each of the retrofits would cost, on average, nearly $15,000. The actual cost to repair the 945 homes averaged more than $33,000 apiece.

"We recommend that FEMA deobligate or suspend the entire $29.9 million (in reimbursements) until Mississippi provides proper oversight of the program and reasonable assurance that federal funds can be properly accounted for and expended in accordance with federal regulations and FEMA guidelines," the report said.

In a July 14 response, a FEMA regional administrator, Gracia Szczech, said the agency will suspend payments until proper documentation is provided. The agency will also require Mississippi to verify that the contractors' work has been completed and complies with federal regulations. And FEMA will require Mississippi to explain cost overruns in the program.

In a statement, MEMA Executive Director Lee Smithson said "the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has ongoing audits of the entire Coastal Retrofit Mississippi Program. We cannot comment on the OIG report until those audits are complete."

After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, FEMA approved nearly $29.9 million for the program, which was designed to shore up 2,000 homes against wind damage from future disasters. The first home fix-ups began in February 2012.

The program estimated that each of the retrofits would cost, on average, nearly $15,000. The actual cost to repair the 945 homes averaged more than $33,000 apiece.

But despite state guidelines that call for more than one person to oversee the program in order to reduce fraud and error, the state department of finance – which oversaw the program for MEMA – gave one employee total control over the program, including the approval of contractors' work and authorization of payment, the audit said.

Made aware of the improper program oversight in December 2014, state officials didn't take action "to stop or mitigate the problem until February 2016 – after we initiated this audit," the report stated.

This lone employee, while working for MEMA and the state department of finance, "approved and influenced other state employees to process nearly $31.5 million in payments – more than the amount of the ($29.9 million) grant," the report said. Doing so "may have circumvented the state's accounting controls," the report found.

Even though the $31.5 million surpassed the amount that FEMA would reimburse, the money only repaired 945 of the estimated 2,000 homes slated for improvement.

In addition, MEMA claimed the work on the 945 homes was completed by May 2015. But state department of finance records through May 2016, show that MEMA had paid only $20.5 million for the program – not $31.5 million as was reported.

The state has sought FEMA reimbursement for only about $958,000 of the contractor payments, leaving some $30.5 million unaccounted for because the employee "did not allow a contracted accounting firm to reconcile payments of $30.5 million in invoices," the report said. "However, no one above the employee's authority questioned the situation."

The program estimated that each of the retrofits would cost, on average, nearly $15,000. The actual cost to repair the 945 homes averaged more than $33,000 apiece. The actual cost was about 123 percent more than estimated.

The report said MEMA provided no substantial evidence to support the cost increases and the employee who had complete control of the program "would not allow us or Mississippi officials access to the contractors' invoices totaling $30.5 million."

"The lack of access to documents prompted us to question MEMA and other Mississippi officials and led the newly appointed executive director of MEMA (Lee Smithson) to contact the Mississippi State Attorney General's Office," the report said.

Rachael Ring, a spokesman for State Attorney General Jim Hood, did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

In The Rockaways, Dancing By The Surf And Sand

By Melena Ryzik

New York Times, August 18, 2016

Anyone who has turned a cartwheel in the sand or sprinted along a shoreline can identify: Something about the beach feels invitingly kinetic.

That was part of the inspiration for the Beach Sessions Dance Series in Rockaway Beach, Queens.

"People running, playing sports, the waves moving and the sea gulls flying — there's a lot of movement," said Sasha Okshteyn, the founder and curator of the series, now in its second year. "That's a pretty perfect background for a dance performance."

On a stage set up on the sand near Beach 86th Street, she has invited several contemporary choreographers and young troupes to perform free for beachgoers this Saturday and next. "One of the missions of Beach Sessions is to show the creative capacity of the Rockaways," said Ms. Okshteyn, a Rockaway resident who spends her days as a digital marketing manager for the Stephen Petronio Company and a curator for her family's Bushwick gallery.

With a stage open on all sides and vast seating capacity, audience members can enjoy numerous vantage points — without putting on their shoes or giving up their umbrellas. Boardwalk spectators are encouraged. The informal setting gives viewers "more agency than people sitting in a theater seat, and the possibility of more empathy," said Kora Radella, the choreographer and a founder of the group Boomerang, which is on the bill for the first show.

Although the group's piece "Repercussion" was not commissioned for the site, the surf views have already seeped in. "It's an aesthetically liberating space, unsanctioned by right angles and buildings," said Matty Davis, a dancer and an artistic director of Boomerang. "It's a little bit of an oasis."

Boomerang's collaborators include Greg Saunier, the drummer for the indie band Deerhoof, who will accompany the group's beach set with live percussion, and perhaps get himself — or his instruments — involved with the dance, too. During a photo shoot for the show, "I was in the ocean, up to my neck, wielding the cymbal and seeing how it sticks in the sand," Mr. Davis said.

Also this Saturday, the choreographer Laurie Berg will present her work "The Mineralogy of Objects," whose star, the critic Brian Seibert wrote in a review in The New York Times last year, is "an inflatable sex doll named Tanya."

Ms. Berg and her fellow dancers "engage her in an absurdly acrobatic ballroom duet," Mr. Seibert wrote. "They roll with her on the ground as she deflates."

Fear not: Tanya is not left behind, nor, if the dancers have anything to do with it, is any other plastic. Performances end with an invitation for audience members to participate in a beach cleanup in partnership with the Surfrider Foundation. (They'll be rewarded with a drink ticket for a nearby brewery.) While Ms. Okshteyn financed the first dance series through Kickstarter, she has received support and funding from Queens arts organizations and the Parks Department for this installment, and she hopes that Beach Sessions will grow into a more formidable event locally.

Though the peninsula has lately welcomed a new surge of artists — Ms. Okshteyn moved there after Hurricane Sandy — it's not yet thought of as a place for dance-making. "Choreographers always go to residencies upstate, and in really rural areas, but I think it would be really interesting to have residency capabilities in the Rockaways," Ms. Okshteyn said, "where you can make dance inspired by this unique environment — it's a beach town but urban, really Irish, and hipster. I think that could inspire amazing work."

For Ms. Radella of Boomerang, it's already primed for dance. Part of their choreography, she said, "is deliberately having some rawness stay intact, and this environment really goes along with that. Bring your sunburn; go in the water; drink a beer. It's really natural, and it's fitting."

Wildfire Near Santa Barbara Burns 600 Acres, Prompting Evacuations

By Matt Hamilton

Los Angeles Times, August 18, 2016

A wildfire that erupted Thursday afternoon near a campground north of Santa Barbara quickly spread to 600 acres and threatened homes in the rugged area, authorities said.

The Rey fire was reported about 3:30 p.m. near the White Rock Campground off Paradise Road amid strong winds and temperatures in the 90s, said Mike Eliason, spokesman for the Santa Barbara County Fire Department.

Some mountain cabins and homes along Paradise Road were evacuated, but precise figures on evacuation numbers were not immediately available. Several motorists were trying to flee the area as the blaze quickly spread, Eliason said.

A portion of Highway 154 was briefly closed between Santa Barbara and Santa Ynez, but has since been reopened. Paradise Road remains closed.

The blaze was 20% contained as of 9 p.m.

The fire was burning in a remote, rugged area near the Santa Ynez River. Firefighters had difficulty reaching the burn area with engines, prompting a strong aerial attack that included two helicopters and four air tankers, according to a statement issued by county officials.

Firefighters were trying to dump retardant across the northern flank of the fire to slow the growth of the blaze, Eliason said.

Winds were pushing the fire toward the north and west, away from the more populated areas along the county's scenic coast and further into Los Padres National Forest, Eliason said.

The last massive wildfire to occur in the area was the Zaca fire in 2007, which charred more than 375 square miles and became one of the largest fires in California history.

In the Rey fire, no structures have been lost, but an unknown number of structures were threatened.

An evacuation center opened at Santa Ynez Valley Union High School. Residents who need help evacuating animals should call (805) 681-4332.

This story will be updated as more information becomes available.

This article was updated with additional details about the growth of the fire.

More Than 1,500 Firefighters Are Battling The Blue Cut Blaze

Los Angeles Times, August 18, 2016

More than 1,500 firefighters continue to battle the Blue Cut fire on Thursday as flames ripped through canyons and flatlands and reduced homes to ash and rubble.

Although crews made some progress against the blaze, which was 4% contained as of 6:30 a.m., a red flag warning is still in effect, meaning weather conditions are prime for a fast-moving, destructive wildfire.

"We Got Our Butts Kicked," Firefighters Say As Blue Cut Fire Defies Containment

By Angel Jennings, Bettina Boxall And Paloma Esquivel

Los Angeles Times, August 17, 2016

All the ingredients were there. Dry heat, gusting winds in a mountain pass cloaked in dead grass and drought-shriveled chaparral.

All it needed was a spark. It came at 10:36 Tuesday morning near Kenwood Avenue west of Interstate 15. The Blue Cut fire was born.

"It all aligned. The wind, the fuel and the topography," said Capt. Howard Deets of the Mill Creek hotshot crew based in the San Bernardino National Forest. "When that happens there's nothing you can do about it. You could throw the world's fire fighting resources at it and it's just going to keep going."

That's what the Blue Cut did, chewing through 25,626 acres by Wednesday night, forcing mass evacuations and shutting down one of the most heavily used routes through the mountains that form the untamed backdrop to the sprawl of the Los Angeles Basin.

The terrain near where the fire started is so rugged and steep that "it's like wadded up paper" said incident commander Michael Wakoski, a battalion chief with the San Bernardino County Fire Department. "It's almost impossible to move up and down the slopes. It makes containment of the fire very difficult.

When firefighters arrived Tuesday morning, a freight train stood idle on the tracks, abandoned by the engineer, who fled the fast-moving fire.

Gusts of 20 to 30 mph pushed the blaze north in the Cajon Pass, a natural wind tunnel, tossing embers a half-mile ahead of the flame front. The fire jumped the freeway.

Firefighting crews were left on the defense, struggling to protect homes as flames consumed chaparral, pine trees and yucca.

"We got our butts kicked," Wakoski said.

The firefighting effort is complicated by the patchwork of crucial infrastructure that runs through the pass: Electrical lines that provide power to the basin, rail lines, high-pressure gas lines, a fiber-optic network — even a pipeline that carries jet fuel.

The cause of the blaze is under investigation, but most wildfires in Southern California are caused by people, accidentally or intentionally. According to Caltrans, an average of 156,000 vehicles a day pass the Kenwood Avenue area — a endless source of sparking tail pipes, engine fires and discarded cigarette butts.

Richard Halsey, director of the California Chaparral Institute, drove through the pass earlier this summer.

"It was very stunning to me to see how much of that landscape through the Cajon Pass had been burned multiple times and was filled with invasive grasses."

Native chaparral shrubs can't survive repeated fires over a short time span. They yield to invasive grasses that ignite easily and burn quickly, increasing the fire threat.

"It's not how we fight the fires. It's how do we stop them from starting in the first place," argued Halsey, who thinks Caltrans should consider placing concrete K-rail barriers along the freeway in the pass to stop sparks from flying into roadside vegetation.

The Blue Cut fire is but the latest reminder that "we're living where it burns," said Char Miller, a Pomona College professor of environmental analysis. Noting the huge evacuations ordered for the fire — some 83,000 people have been told to leave their homes — he questioned the wisdom of allowing so much development at the edge of high-fire zones.

"We don't allow it in flood plains, we prevent earthquake damage, but we don't do it with fire," he added.

Five stubborn years of drought have made Southern California's naturally flammable landscape even more fire prone.

"We have an amazing amount of standing dead shrubs in addition to extraordinarily low live-fuel moisture," noted Marti Witter, a fire ecologist with the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

"I'm really, really concerned about what's going to happen" this fall if the region doesn't get early rains and it's a season of strong Santa Ana winds, she said. "We would be lined up for another firestorm year."

This article was updated with additional details on the size of the fire.

California Reopens Some Commercial Routes As Wildfire Rages

By Erica E. Phillips And Jennifer Calfas

Wall Street Journal, August 18, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Raging Blue Cut Fire Leaves Some Homes In Smoldering Ruins, But Scope Of Loss Still A Mystery

By Brittny Mejia, Angel Jennings, Ruben Vives And Corina Knoll

Los Angeles Times, August 18, 2016

The tiny stone home was little more than a blackened shell. The only hint of its former occupants: a metal bed frame, a shattered toilet seat, charred tin cans.

Nestled along Lone Pine Canyon Road, a narrow, twisting thoroughfare, it was a bleak symbol of all that has surrendered to the raging fire that continues to terrorize the Cajon Pass.

But for all the devastation that the Blue Cut fire has wreaked, officials have had difficulty determining the damage left by explosive flames that quickly overtook nearly 36,000 acres.

Damage assessors have been hindered from surveying the destruction because of erratic fire behavior and intense flames that broke through retardants dropped by air crews, Eric Sherwin, an incident-response spokesman with the San Bernardino County Fire Department, said Thursday.

Fire swept through numerous remote hillsides and canyons, burning some structures to the ground but sparing others nearby.

Officials continue to say only that “numerous” buildings have been lost but are unable to estimate how many of those are homes. They said among the hardest hit were in West Cajon Valley and Swarthout Canyon, where deputies arrested three people suspected of stealing a vehicle from a residence.

On Thursday, there was a chilling silence in some areas where the fire had marched. The earth around a section of Highway 138 was scorched, power poles blackened, their wood splintered. A gentle wind stirred up ash, sending it swirling along the ruins.

A pinwheel spun in a backyard, near the smoldering carcass of a home. Nearby, in a garden, a sign creaked, swaying gently in the breeze.

“The kiss of the sun for pardon
The song of the birds for mirth
One is nearer God’s heart in a garden
Than any place else on earth”

Crews are now focused on communities west of the fire, such as Lytle Creek and the mountain resort town of Wrightwood, which is dotted with apartments and small homes and has the highest housing density in the area.

Firefighters have centered efforts on Lone Pine Canyon Road, the back door into Wrightwood, in hopes of preventing the blaze from jumping over the ridge. Still, gusty winds, high temperatures and low humidity persist and could create the same challenges that have haunted crews since the fire broke out Tuesday.

Although the Blue Cut fire calmed slightly overnight and halted its march north and east, it spread more than 4,000 acres Thursday, measuring 35,969 acres. The fire is just 22% contained, and a red flag warning remains in effect.

Some signs of progress were evident Thursday. Mandatory evacuations were lifted in several communities, and Caltrans reopened the 15 Freeway, a key trucking and commuter route that runs from San Diego, through the Inland Empire and across the Mojave Desert into Nevada. Its two-day closure had contributed to massive congestion, creating nightmares for both travelers and those trying to evacuate.

Highway 138, another major roadway in the area, was expected to remain closed until further notice, according to the CHP.

Along Lytle Creek Road on Thursday, sunlight highlighted fire retardant-covered ridges and caution tape fluttered in a light breeze outside evacuated homes.

Resident Maria Hadaway, who chose to stay, likened the deserted stillness to an episode of “SpongeBob SquarePants” in which the eponymous cartoon character wakes up alone in his town.

“That’s me. I’m SpongeBob in Bikini Bottom,” she said. “I’m hoping they let everyone [back] up here, because I don’t like being alone.”

Still in her pajamas, the 62-year-old sat in front of her home with a neighbor.

Hadaway said she stayed because of her dogs. She’s been feeding neighbors’ dogs as well, she said.

When authorities arrived to ask residents to evacuate, Hadaway locked the door, closed the drapes and didn’t answer.

Those who evacuated find themselves mired in uncertainty.

“I don’t want to be blindsided again,” said Sheri Sladwick, 46, who lost a home to fire 13 years ago.

Now she hears conflicting reports about whether fire ran through her neighborhood in Lytle Creek and doesn’t know what to believe. She is frustrated that there have been few specifics about the damage.

Fire crews in the Cajon Pass have likely had difficulty determining the number of homes lost because of safety concerns and protocol that grants wildland firefighters the right of way over those damage assessors, according to fire experts.

“Engines have to get to the homes and other areas,” said Sam Lanier, a former fire captain who founded a site that offers real-time updates on wildfires throughout the country. "If multiple vehicles are there, it's hard to get out."

The standard guidelines say that life is prioritized first, followed by property conservation and environmental protection, Lanier said. When it comes to protecting specific areas, crews look at what will help mitigate the firefight, never at what is considered the most valuable.

"There is no pre-made map to say we're going to protect this area first. Firefighters are blind to the cost. The job is to go and save as much as possible."

The California wildfire season, once confined to autumn, has found itself stretched earlier and later, with hundreds of homes and eight people killed in wildfires already this year.

Fire agencies have been overworked, some of its firefighters working with no sleep while thrown into battles fueled by triple-digit temperatures, wind and desiccated tinder.

James Bailey, who has lived near the Cajon Pass for about 40 years, drove up to an area community center Thursday. He was relieved to find it still standing, although its surroundings had been singed.

"Everything around it is just like a moonscape," he later informed his wife.

The couple had stayed put in their trailer park mobile home having faith in its metal frame and concrete base, although took care to douse the property with water.

A day earlier, Bailey had marveled at the flames, smoke and fire coming from behind Mountain Lakes Resort.

"When it came over the hill, it had to have been 100 feet tall," Bailey said. "I can't believe how big the flames were. The whole mountain was red."

The activity taking place around them for the last two days has been unsettling.

Water drops from air tankers, sirens from fire engines, blades rotating on helicopters — all sounded eerily, they said, like war.

This article was updated with current statistics on the size and containment of the Blue Cut fire.

This article was updated throughout with additional details and editing.

This article was updated throughout with new information from fire officials and details from residents.

Northbound 15 Freeway Reopens Through Cajon Pass After Devastating Wildfire, CHP Says

Los Angeles Times, August 17, 2016

The northbound lanes of the 15 Freeway through the Cajon Pass reopened late Wednesday, according to the California Highway Patrol.

The freeway, a key trucking and commuter route that connects Southern California with Nevada, was closed after the 25,626-acre Blue Cut fire erupted Monday in San Bernardino County.

The CHP reopened the connector road between the northbound 15 Freeway and the 215 Freeway about 10:15 p.m. Shortly thereafter, the northbound 15 Freeway lanes were reopened.

Several off-ramps from the freeway remain closed, including Kenwood Avenue, Cleghorn Road, Highway 138 and Oak Hill Road, according to the state Department of Transportation.

The southbound lanes of the 15 Freeway, as well as Highway 138, another major roadway in the area, were expected to remain closed until further notice, according to the CHP.

Caltrans crews were working to repair guardrails and sections of the road damaged by the massive fire.

The freeway runs from San Diego, through the Inland Empire and across the Mojave Desert into Nevada. The reopening of the roadway will probably ease congestion prompted by the massive evacuation of residents around the Blue Cut fire's burn area.

Caltrans advised motorists to drive with a full tank of gas and to be prepared for delays.

Columns Of Smoke From The Blue Cut Fire Are Visible From Space

Los Angeles Times, August 18, 2016

A NASA satellite passed over Southern California just before noon on Wednesday, and it captured a bird's-eye view of the 25,600-acre wildfire in the mountains of San Bernardino County.

From high above, the Blue Cut fire appears as three plumes of smoke from the mountains east of Los Angeles. The urban sprawl of L.A. and its surrounding cities look like a stretch of gray abutting the deep blue ocean.

NASA said the cloud of smoke spreads northeastward over the eastern boundary of California and extends into Nevada.

The imaging tool used to capture the snapshot of the smoky blaze was built and is managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Cañada Flintridge. The satellite on which the imaging instrument is affixed is managed by a NASA office in Maryland.

Why So Many Refuse To Evacuate As Wildfires Approach

By Louis Sahagun, Ruben Vives And Joe Mozingo

Los Angeles Times, August 17, 2016

Trucks and SUVs hurtled out of the canyons in clouds of dust, loaded to the headliners with keepsakes and valuables, towing ATVs and old Jeeps.

As if there weren't enough smoke in the air, Leo Paguin took a drag from a cigarette and watched his neighbors flee.

"Those are the smart ones, I guess," he said.

Paguin, 66, with a deep-creased desert face and grizzled gray beard, watched the black smoke rise from the mountains a mile away from his little house in Pinon Hills.

All day Wednesday, unstable winds twisted flames into fiery tornadoes as the Blue Cut fire tore through 30,000 acres of dry foothill and desert vegetation. Officials kept Interstate 15 — a major artery into Southern California — closed for more than a day and ordered an estimated 80,000 people to evacuate.

But many, like Paguin, refused to go, much to fire officials' chagrin.

Lynne Tolmachoff, a spokeswoman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, warned that people misjudge how suddenly fires can be upon them, leaving no time or route to escape.

"The way the fires are moving in this drought-stricken state, they are more explosive, and they move much quicker through the dry vegetation. So the danger is increased," Tolmachoff said.

There is no doubt that residents who have ignored evacuation orders have saved homes, putting out smoldering embers with a garden hose or summoning firefighters to a burning house. But the risk is extreme. And firefighters may have to risk their lives to save those trapped in a conflagration.

Even the slightest hesitation with deciding whether to evacuate can mean the difference between life and death.

"People that evacuate late in a fire when the fire is reaching them are the most vulnerable to being killed," said Scott Stephens, a professor of fire science at UC Berkeley. "Most people underestimate the fury that comes."

People here in the high, wind-raked valleys cleaved by the San Andreas fault can be a stubborn, independent sort. And living in the scrublands, they have dealt with fire before.

They take into account what authorities tell them to do, but can smell a whiff of overcautiousness as much as other people smell the smoke.

Paguin, who stays at the house as a handyman, said he'd stay to put out any spot fires from wind-borne embers that can reach far beyond the flame front.

"There is no way I'm leaving this place without trying as hard as I can to save it — I'd feel guilty the rest of my life," he said. "I owe it to the property owner, who has personal treasures, collected over many years here. "

He held up a football-sized chunk of agate. "Things like this beautiful rock, pieces of petrified wood and a collection of old grammar school textbooks."

He said he'd leave only if the flames were roaring through his chain-link fence.

"When it gets that close, I'll fill a sack with my credit cards, my cold beers, some dog bones and a roll of toilet paper and start walking down Highway 138," Paguin said.

On the other side of the Cajon Pass in Lytle Creek, Cheryl Anaya, 67, pledged Tuesday to stay as long as possible to protect her two-story log cabin and other homes in the neighborhood.

On Wednesday afternoon, she had kept to that pledge, even as firefighters fought to protect homes just across the road.

"We're still holding our own," she said in a phone interview.

The night before, she said, it looked like the fire was calming down.

"We slept so good," she said. "Then we woke up to helicopters and planes because it broke out again."

Earlier in the afternoon, she said, she and others in the neighborhood stopped a man trying to steal a rifle and other items from a neighbor's house. They called 911, but weren't expecting deputies to come around.

"We're not even supposed to be here," she said. "We'll go when we have to."

In the mountain community of Wrightwood, Angela Adams, 48, was a bit more cautious. She warily watched the flames on Circle Mountain a mile east of her home.

"I don't like this view at all," she said.

But she planned to stay until the fire got closer. Her firefighter friends were updating her on the blaze. She wanted to make sure homes belonging to the families who left weren't broken into.

But her main reason to stay was more emotional. She did not want to leave the snowboards, skateboards, hats and clothes that belonged to her 17-year-old son, who died in a solo car accident in March. She said he swerved to avoid hitting a person who was crossing the highway at night.

"I just needed more time to pack," she said. "I just have to have his stuff."

On a hillside in Wild Horse Canyon, near the intersection of Highways 138 and 2, a group of neighbors watched as a large plume of smoke billowed nearby and discussed when they would leave.

Gilbert De Leon, his brother and several family members, including an 87-year-old grandmother, have lived in the area for several years, enough to have already survived a number of fires — including one that came dangerously close to his backyard several years ago.

That time, he said, he'd stuck around until firefighters arrived and set up to protect his home.

This time, the family was staying put, at least for the time being, on Wednesday afternoon.

"I'll leave when I see flames coming over that hill," De Leon said, pointing nearby.

He owns his home outright and doesn't have fire insurance, he said.

"I'm one of those guys," he said. "I should have got it a lot earlier."

Before he leaves, he wants to douse the home with a hose to protect it as much as possible. But he said he wasn't sticking around just to save his property.

"If it burns, it burns," he said.

His main reason for staying as the fire appeared ever closer was simple:

"Nobody wants to be displaced," he said. "Not until you have to."

Even though he's been through a number of fires, this one was different. "This is bad. It's one of the worst I've seen here," he said.

As he spoke, a neighbor who was driving down the hill stopped to offer a warning.

From his home near the top, the neighbor said, he could see flames coming over a ridge.

"You can see that thing glowing on the other side now," he said. "Just point your vehicles ready to go out."

Gigi Marek and her son were carrying groceries out of a Stater Bros. in Phelan on Wednesday morning. Pale brown smoke clouded the sky and ash trickled onto her hair and clothes.

They had evacuated their home in Wrightwood on Tuesday evening and come to Phelan to stay with Marek's mother-in-law.

But Marek's husband and adult daughter had chosen to stay behind, even after a sheriff's deputy knocked on their door at about 8 p.m. and told them they should go.

Marek's husband, a retired Los Angeles city firefighter, told her the wind wasn't blowing in the right direction to affect their home, but Marek was concerned.

"I'm worried for them," she said. "I think they should get out of there. But I trust his judgment."

But as she packed her groceries into her SUV, she said she really wanted them to go.

"The wind can change so fast," she said. "He's the one that's always telling me that."

Blue Cut Fire: Should California Evacuations Be Mandatory?

By Weston Williams

Christian Science Monitor, August 18, 2016

The Blue Cut fire raging in southern California burned nearly 50 square miles of land and forced the evacuation of 82,000 people.

But while many mandatory evacuation orders have been issued since the fire began burning out of control on Tuesday, many people are choosing to ignore them. In hopes of protecting their homes and their belongings, many residents have opted to take their chances at home. That's an impulse fire officials say they sympathize with but also caution could divert firefighters away from the front lines of the blaze if residents who stay behind later need to be rescued.

Despite the "mandatory" label, refusing to evacuate in the event of a conflagration such as the Blue Cut fire will likely bring little to no legal repercussions to those who refuse to leave. Each state has different laws about mandatory evacuation, but those laws tend to go unenforced more often than not.

According to an "Evacuation Tips" pamphlet published by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, refusal to comply with an order by police to leave an "area where a menace to public health or safety exists due to a calamity such as flood, storm, fire, earthquake, explosion, accident or other disaster" is a misdemeanor.

In California, a misdemeanor is punishable by fines up to $1,000, up to one year in jail, or both, according to the Superior Court of California's Santa Clara website.

In many states, however, punishments for refusing a mandatory evacuation are rarely carried out.

When Hurricane Sandy hit the East Coast in 2012, New York Mayor Bloomberg announced that those who refused the evacuation order would not face arrest, despite a law on the books carrying up to three months of jail time for those who chose to stay, according to Avvo, a legal services marketplace.

The reason mandatory evacuation punishments are rarely carried through is because of the nature of the misdemeanor. An article in the journal Health Affairs examining mandatory evacuation orders noted that mandatory evacuation certainly has the potential to save lives, particularly those of children or others not capable of making informed decisions to stay home in an evacuation situation. However, it also noted that most people who refuse are not causing harm to others, and many people view government interference at that level as overly paternalistic.

Glen Barley, Unit Chief at the fires Incident Command Post, would disagree. He said in an interview with NPR discussing the Blue Cut fire that "All too frequently we see people go and they look out the window and think, 'Oh, it's not too bad right now,' and then the condition changes so rapidly that when it's suddenly so bad it's too late." At that point, firefighters would have to put themselves in more danger in order to rescue anyone who refused to evacuate.

In spite of this, mandatory evacuations are still hard to enforce, and efforts to do so are compounded when large numbers of people refuse to leave.

In Wrightwood, Calif., the encroaching flames are doing little to keep a large portion of the town's 4,500 residents from staying, according to ABC7. Even Wrightwood's local sandwich shop and bakery remain open as the flames come ever closer to the town.

"We've had worse, and we've stayed through it." Sherri Hannon, a resident of Wrightwood, told ABC7. "I'm staying."

For some in Wrightwood, the decision to stay lies with the feeling that the risk is not yet high enough to be worth the effort and of evacuating. For Ms. Hannon, the decision is more personal.

"I don't want to leave the house. My parents built it in '89, and it's all I have left of them."

The decision to stay is risky. As of Thursday morning, the fire has only been 4 percent contained, according to a local fire tracker.

While many people might initially ignore evacuation orders for now, the size and ferocity of the fire will likely send many more packing before the fire is finally out.

FEMA HOUSING

Fact Sheet: How FEMA Rental Assistance Helps Louisiana Flood Survivors

Lafayette (LA) Daily Advertiser, August 18, 2016

What is the first step flood survivors must take to get FEMA assistance for a temporary place to stay?

Both homeowners and renters must first apply with FEMA to determine eligibility for temporary rental assistance. They can register online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling toll-free 800-621-3362 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Multilingual operators are available. Survivors who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Service may call 800-621-3362.

What can Louisiana flood survivors do if their residence is uninhabitable?

Some Louisiana flood survivors may receive temporary rental assistance from FEMA to pay for a place to stay. If they are unable to find a house or apartment for rent, FEMA may consider on a case-by-case basis reimbursing survivors for temporary stays at other lodging.

How do eligible applicants receive assistance to pay for a temporary place to stay?

Survivors have two ways to receive financial help to pay for temporary rental assistance. They can choose to have the funds electronically transferred to them or receive paper checks. If the postal service cannot deliver to an affected residence then it will hold the check at the post office for survivors to pick up.

It is important for survivors to keep banking and contact information current so they receive the grant funds. They can update information online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362.

How long does temporary rental assistance last?

The first installment of temporary rental assistance funds is for two months if a FEMA inspector determines the home is uninhabitable due to damage caused by the disaster.

If the home is uninhabitable due to a power outage or is inaccessible, they may be eligible for one month of rental assistance.

What must eligible applicants do if they need temporary rental assistance for more than two months?

Eligible applicants will receive a packet from FEMA about 15 days after receiving their first temporary rental assistance grant. The packet contains instructions on how applicants must demonstrate to FEMA their continued financial need for temporary housing assistance. FEMA will continue to send the packets if an applicant continues to receive temporary housing assistance.

It is important for survivors to keep their contact information current so they receive the packet. They can update their contact information online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362.

If survivors receive housing assistance through their insurance company, can they also receive temporary rental assistance from FEMA?

By federal law FEMA cannot duplicate housing benefits if the insurance company provides assistance. However, if a survivor exhausts housing assistance funds from their insurance company, FEMA may then be able to provide temporary rental assistance.

Do survivors need to keep receipts if they receive temporary rental assistance?

Yes. Survivors must keep receipts so they can prove the FEMA temporary rental assistance grant was used for its intended purpose.

How do eligible applicants locate available rental resources?

FEMA routinely updates an online housing portal that lists available rental resources. They can access the portal online at asd.fema.gov/inter/hportal/home.htm.

Applicants may also call 800-621-3362 or visit a disaster recovery center. They may locate their closest center by visiting asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm or by calling 800-621-3362.

Survivors can learn more about centers by watching a video at the following link: http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/videos/79681

Applicants can also locate housing on their own that is within the temporary rental assistance grant FEMA provides to them.

What if Louisiana flood survivors have housing needs FEMA cannot meet?

FEMA may refer survivors to charitable or volunteer groups to address unmet housing needs. Survivors who have registered with FEMA can discuss charitable or volunteer referrals by calling 800-621-3362 or visiting a disaster recovery center. They may locate their closest center by visiting asd.fema.gov/inter/locator/home.htm or by calling 800-621-3362.

How can Louisiana flood survivors locate charitable or volunteer groups on their own?

Louisiana211.org lists instructions how to obtain help and resources for parts of Louisiana. Survivors can also contact their local emergency management officials. They can get contact information for their local emergency management office online at gohsep.la.gov/about/parishpa.

Do survivors have to pay taxes on this assistance?

FEMA assistance is a grant and taxes do not need to be paid.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

ZIKA VIRUS

Volunteers Sought As Race To Develop A Zika Vaccine Heats Up

By Lauran Neergaard

Associated Press, August 18, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – Wanted: Volunteers willing to be infected with the Zika virus for science.

It may sound bizarre, but researchers are planning just such a study – this winter, when mosquitoes aren't biting – to help speed development of much-needed Zika vaccines.

The quest for a vaccine began less than a year ago as Brazil's massive outbreak revealed that Zika, once dismissed as a nuisance virus, can harm a fetus' brain if a woman is infected during pregnancy.

Now, researchers in the United States have begun safety testing of two vaccine candidates, and more experimental shots are poised to enter that preliminary testing soon. Any that seem promising will have to be tested in thousands of people in parts of Latin America and the Caribbean that are hard-hit by the mosquito-borne virus – the only way to prove if an experimental vaccine really protects.

Even if all goes well, a vaccine wouldn't be available for general use any time soon.

But a different kind of research also can offer clues for vaccine development. It's called a human challenge study, when healthy – and nonpregnant – people agree to be injected deliberately with a virus, mimicking natural infection while scientists track how their bodies react.

The first question is even more basic: How much of the virus does it take to infect someone?

If government regulators agree, researchers could find out by injecting paid volunteers with different amounts of lab-grown Zika virus as early as December in a Baltimore hospital. That information will help the researchers later, when they're ready to test an experimental Zika vaccine.

"We're looking at these human challenge protocols not only as an important step in vaccine development but as a means to learn more about Zika," said Dr. Anna Durbin of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, who is leading the work. "We can look at things that you just can't do in someone who's naturally infected."

Some questions and answers about the development of Zika vaccines:

Q: Which potential vaccines are first in line?

A: Two so-called DNA vaccines have begun preliminary safety testing, one made by the National Institutes of Health and the other by Pennsylvania-based Inovio Pharmaceuticals.

They mark a new kind of technology. Traditionally, vaccines are made using a dead or weakened virus to train the body's immune system to recognize that infection and fight it off. DNA vaccines may be easier to make. Scientists used a circular piece of DNA, called a "plasmid," to carry genes that prompt the body itself to produce certain Zika virus proteins, alerting the immune system.

That piece of trickery worked in animals. The phase 1 studies in dozens of people will check for safety, and whether the vaccinations rev up human immunity enough to justify further tests.

Q: What else is in the pipeline?

A: "We are right now in a race of time to get the best vaccine," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Multiple candidates are important as there's no way to predict which kind will work best. The DNA vaccines simply were ready for human testing first.

In October, safety tests are set to begin using the more traditional killed-virus vaccine, developed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

The NIH also is developing a vaccine using live-but-weakened virus, the type thought to trigger particularly long-lasting immune protection. That's the kind used to protect against rubella, which back in the 1960s caused an epidemic of birth defects.

Q: If the first candidates are safe, what happens next?

A: Fauci expects to open next-step studies in January, enrolling 2,400 to 5,000 people in areas where Zika still is spreading widely to test if the vaccinated are less likely than the unvaccinated to become infected.

Q: Are vaccines aimed at pregnant women?

A: Not at this point. It's hard to test new products during pregnancy. Plus, a fetus can be vulnerable to Zika even before a woman realizes she's pregnant.

The goal instead is to vaccinate women of childbearing age and their sexual partners – because Zika also can be transmitted through sex – well before pregnancy ever occurs.

Q: Where do the human challenge studies come in?

A: Jabbing someone with Zika is faster than waiting around for a mosquito to bite them to see if an experimental vaccine provides protection. But first Durbin must find what dose of Zika causes infection, to be sure she's giving a vaccine enough of a challenge.

That's what the study planned for December would do. Volunteers given different amounts of Zika would be kept in a Hopkins hospital unit for 12 days, to be sure the virus had cleared the bloodstream, and would have to agree to use condoms for a while afterward to avoid any possibility of sexual transmission. Because Zika usually causes few if any symptoms, those infected might expect a rash or low fever.

The second round of the research would recruit volunteers who'd received an experimental vaccine, trying to infect them with Zika six months after their shot.

The extra benefit: Tracking people from the moment they're exposed to Zika also could shed important new light on how the virus affects the body – such as how long it's infectious in blood, semen and other bodily fluids, and just how the immune system fights it off.

Q: Has this been done before?

A: Human challenge studies are rare because they're difficult to perform and expensive. But Durbin recently did just such research to test a potential vaccine against dengue, a dangerous cousin of Zika, and doesn't expect difficulty recruiting volunteers for the Zika study once regulators are satisfied it can be conducted safely.

Q: What about the fight over federal funding for Zika?

A: In February, the Obama administration requested $1.9 billion for the nation's fight against Zika, including vaccine development, but Congress hasn't approved any of it. With existing money running out, federal health officials are taking funds meant for other diseases to get by until the end of the year – but Fauci said NIH alone will need $196 million more in 2017 to avoid delays in the vaccine research.

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Rare Zika Complication Hits 30 In Puerto Rico; CDC Expects More

By Maggie Fox

NBC News, August 18, 2016

Thirty people have been diagnosed with a rare paralyzing condition caused by Zika virus infection in Puerto Rico, the territory's health department said Thursday.

And Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Dr. Thomas Frieden says he expects even more cases of Guillain-Barre syndrome in Puerto Rico because the virus is infecting so much of the population.

"We think there will be as many as 200 additional cases, given the overall number of infections there," Frieden told NBC News.

A flyer that reads, "Questions and answers: Zica virus infection during pregnancy" is seen posted outside a doctor's office, at a public hospital in San Juan, Puerto Rico, February 3, 2016. ?(C) Alvin Baez / Reuters / Reuters file

"We expect there will be a fair number of cases."

He said Guillain-Barre is usually seen in about every 5,000 to 10,000 infections like Zika.

Puerto Rico's health secretary, Ana Rius Armendariz, reported the 30 cases in an update to the territory's government Thursday.

Guillain-Barre is a rare complication of many different types of infections. It's a usually temporary paralysis that can become serious if people's breathing muscles become affected. With treatment, most patients recover. "We think there will be as many as 200 additional cases, given the overall number of infections there."

Zika's usually not serious but it can very rarely cause fatal complications – a Puerto Rico man died in April. The biggest risk is to pregnant women, whose fetuses can become infected if their mothers catch it.

ika's now known to cause profound birth defects and there is no cure for the fetus once affected. Babies can be born with microcephaly – a small head caused by the destruction of brain tissue. They can also die in the womb, or they can suffer other defects from malformed limbs to subtle brain damage.

The CDC has reported 529 pregnancies affected by Zika in the continental U.S. and another 691 in U.S. territories, mostly Puerto Rico.

In the U.S., 16 babies have been born with birth defects caused by Zika and five have died, miscarried or been aborted because of Zika damage.

The spread's so bad in Puerto Rico that the U.S. declared a state of emergency there last week.

But Clarisa Jimenez, the CEO of the Puerto Rico Hotel & Tourism Association, accused CDC of exaggerating the threat. "Unfortunately, when babies start to be born with microcephaly, that will change perceptions."

"From the very beginning the numbers that were given were based on projections. The reality is that as of today, less than half of 1 percent of the population has the virus," Jimenez told CNBC Thursday.

Frieden pushed back. "Unfortunately, when babies start to be born with microcephaly, that will change perceptions," he said.

"We projected, based on the chikungunya experience, that Zika might infect a quarter of the population in the first year and it is very much on track to do that," Frieden said.

Chikungunya is closely related to Zika and carried by the same Aedes mosquitoes. It's hardly ever deadly but extremely painful, so people remember getting it. Zika, on the other hand, doesn't cause symptoms in most people.

"People in Puerto Rico are saying Zika isn't like chikungunya," Frieden said. But he said it's just that people notice it less.

"There is a lot we don't know about Zika," Frieden added.

Armendariz said about a quarter of people infected in Puerto Rico are noticing Zika symptoms, including headache, rash, conjunctivitis and joint pain.

She's advising everyone to use mosquito repellent.

"I always say use it like perfume," she told NBC News. "Nothing replaces that."

"Wear light clothes, long sleeves, pants," she said, adding women should avoid sandals even though it's hot. She said pregnant women should make sure their partners use condoms. "You don't know if he has been bitten," she said. "If you are pregnant, protect yourself."

Will Zika Concerns Override American Fears Over GMOs?

By Lucy Schouten

Christian Science Monitor, August 18, 2016

A biotech company has modified the DNA of mosquitoes to combat the Zika virus in Florida, but cautious locals are not yet certain that concerns about Zika outweigh their mistrust of genetically engineered insects.

The British company Oxitec has spent years creating a means for combatting mosquito-borne viruses, receiving a Federal Drug Administration clearance on Aug. 5, but uproar from Floridians led local officials to send the issue to a nonbinding referendum in November, NPR reported.

The debate in Florida touches on two key fears that are prevalent in many American's minds: a still-evolving concern over Zika and a persistent resistance to genetic engineering. Both issues evoke strong emotional responses for many Americans. Despite scientific evidence that anxieties may be overblown, the unknown remains a potent source of fear.

"I think the American public in general ... get a lot of their genetic information from movies like 'Jurassic Park,' so they are frightened very easily by those kinds of things," Joe Conlon, a technical advisor for the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA), tells The Christian Science Monitor. "But the Oxitec way of doing things is very safe – it should be tried."

Although Zika cases only recently surfaced in Wynwood, Fla., this is not the first time that concerns about disease have forced scientists to confront the public mistrust of genetic tinkering. Oxitec started its bid to release disease-fighting mosquitoes in the Florida Keys nearly two years ago.

The idea is to release the genetically engineered mosquitoes into the wild, where they will breed with healthy females and produce offspring that die before reaching adulthood. In theory, only male mosquitoes, which don't bite humans, are released, and the company has successfully tested the model in Brazil and the Cayman Islands.

But protests on the ground – and a Change.org petition with more than 169,000 supporters – cite the chance of escaped females biting humans, the unexpected consequences of previous genetic experiments, and the fact, which Mr. Conlon acknowledged, that this is merely one part of a package to combat mosquito-borne disease.

"There are too many questions," Mara Daly, a salon owner and protest organizer told US News and World Report. "My biggest concern is that we don't know the unintended consequences of this trial."

Although Zika has inspired bipartisan unity from Florida politicians, the protests over a genetically engineered weapon against Zika finds a parallel in the Congressional inaction. Both stalemates have the same root cause: No one is worried enough. Too few Americans care enough about Zika to overcome the anxiety-inducing concessions required to combat it, as the Christian Science Monitor's Francine Kiefer wrote:

The answer to why Congress has failed to pass a funding measure reveals the typical roadblocks – partisan differences over spending and policy specifics. The frustration is over the urgency. The problem is not your average one. [Anthony Fauci, an infectious diseases specialist,] calls the Zika virus a 'pandemic in progress.'

But without a public outcry with potential electoral consequences, those differences could not be bridged.

Even Floridians living near "ground zero" of the fight against a highly transmittable disease are not ready for a "radical approach" to combat it.

"Personally, I'm not afraid of Zika," Megan Hall, who lives on Sugarloaf Key, told NPR. "I know it's a huge problem in a lot of places, and I don't discount it. I know it's terrible what's going on in Brazil and all these places – Puerto Rico. But this is not an emergency."

Although Mr. Conlon insists the scientists at Oxitec are well-aware of all the risks cited by protesters and have taken steps against them, for many locals the threat of Zika remains too nebulous and faraway to overcome fears of playing "guinea pig" to "mutant bugs."

Raiding Opioid Abuse Funding To Fight Zika Highlights Government Dysfunction

By Michael McAuliff

Huffington Post, August 18, 2016

WASHINGTON — The threat of Zika — and Congress' inability to respond to it — is shining new light on how little official Washington really cares about the nation's opioid crisis.

Lawmakers went on vacation in July without passing even part of the $1.9 billion in emergency Zika funding that the White House sought in February. So the administration of President Barack Obama has had to make do on its own.

It started by shifting $589 million away from efforts to keep Ebola contained. And last week, the administration rifled the drawers of the Department of Health and Human Services, shifting another $81 million to keep money flowing to time-sensitive Zika vaccine development.

That's where the official response to the opioid epidemic comes in. Some of that cash, $4.1 million, comes from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, which is at the forefront of dealing with addiction.

That fact was not lost on Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), whose state has been among the hardest hit by an addiction crisis that tallied up some 47,000 deaths nationally in 2014, including nearly 19,000 from prescription painkillers and more than 10,500 related to heroin.

"It's been 189 days since the administration has requested funding to respond to Zika, and now they are forced to resort to desperate measures which include taking funds from another underfunded health emergency, the opioid epidemic," said Shaheen in a statement. "Ignoring the immediate funding needs of these health emergencies is legislative negligence."

And it may actually be worse than that.

Just before Congress went on break, it did pass legislation to address the overdose crisis, in the form of a bill called the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. It was bipartisan and accompanied by a slew of press releases. The problem with CARA, according to people who support the legislation, is that it was not accompanied by funding.

"It's like someone giving you a Ferrari — with no gas," said Dr. R. Corey Waller, the senior medical director for education and policy at the Camden Coalition of Health Care Providers and the National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs. "It's just going to sit there. You look at it and you know that in theory if you just had gas you could drive 200 miles an hour, but we have no gas."

Now throw in the Zika crisis. In the grand scheme of things, taking $4.1 million from SAMHSA is tiny compared to the agency's $2.2 billion substance abuse treatment budget this year.

And a spokesman for the agency said in a statement it would cope, though he did not provide details of how, pointing only to the need of the Department of Health and Human Services to adjust to Zika.

"The funds will be used to protect pregnant women and developing fetuses from devastating birth defects caused by Zika," the statement said. "SAMHSA will continue to apply all available resources to its mission to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities."

Perhaps the agency will adjust, but its stance gives a very good idea of how much — or little — lawmakers and the administration actually value the addiction treatment efforts they've been touting, especially with passage of CARA. They are second-place to Zika.

"To take more money from addiction right after passing CARA is just so ridiculous," said Waller. "I mean, it's malpractice. If you look at it from a very standard way, in medicine we would call it malpractice."

Physicians would call it malpractice because the two dissimilar-appearing health threats of a virus and addiction actually have a lot in common in terms of potential impact, and should both be addressed with a response equal to the problem, Waller said, noting that the addiction epidemic is the top cause of injury-related death in the United States.

"We know that. It's been called a health care crisis, it's an epidemic. It meets all the criteria for that from the standpoint [of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention]," Waller said. "Zika has an absolute potential to do that. So let's pay for that. I don't think the American people would care about paying for those things.

"Sometimes you have to pay a little money to actually fix something, and they are not going to agree to even pay a little bit," Waller said of lawmakers. "And they start throwing around this little bit of money [to bolster the Zika response], but where they pull it from is out of the one budget that needs more in order to be able to do even an adequate job."

Shaheen and other Democrats have proposed a way to show Congress does care about opioids and Zika: come back from the seven-week vacation Congress is on to pass the funding for Zika, at least.

"I strongly urge Leader McConnell and Speaker Ryan to call Congress back into session to finally provide an adequate response to both the Zika virus and the opioid epidemic," Shaheen said in a statement.

Both McConnell and Ryan have ignored such requests.

There are 33 cases of locally transmitted Zika infections in the United States, all in Florida, according to the latest tally from the state. There are about 2,000 travelled-related cases in the United States and 6,500 more in the territories, with some 1,000 pregnant women affect, all told, according to the CDC.

The Mystery Of Zika's Path To The Placenta

By Adrienne LaFrance

The Atlantic, August 18, 2016

Among the many mysteries that have vexed scientists about the ongoing Zika epidemic is the question of how, in pregnant women, the virus manages to cross the maternal-fetal barrier.

A woman's body is usually quite good at protecting her growing baby. There are biological blockades to prevent the transmission of viruses to a fetus through the bloodstream, by way of the placenta; the same path for the nutrients and oxygen that sustain a developing baby. The placental membrane is similarly adept at keeping harmful agents out.

Zika, however, is a strange and troubling exception.

Not only does the virus move through the placenta and infiltrate the amniotic sac; it works its way into the fetal brain and can cause irreparable, even fatal, damage.

Now, scientists are beginning to understand what happens, on a cellular level, once Zika crosses the placental barrier. A new study, published Thursday in the Journal of Clinical Investigation, identifies key cells that enable the virus to replicate by examining how Zika behaved in the tissue of placentas from three women not infected by the virus.

First, researchers found that Zika thrives in special placental cells known as Hofbauer cells—which is surprising, since the cells' typical role is to keep pathogens out.

"These Hofbauer cells usually take a viral antigen and create an immune response," says Michael Simoni, an obstetrician and one of the study's authors. Instead, with Zika, Hofbauer cells are "physically housing" the virus. (This reinforces a similar finding from May.)

Additionally, Hofbauer cells may actually help disseminate Zika to the fetal brain.

Second, the researchers found that Zika is also able to replicate in fibroblast cells, the building blocks that make up the very structure of the placenta. "The fibroblasts ended up being a little bit of a surprise," Simoni told me. "When we found out they were replicating [Zika] just as well if not better as the Hofbauer cells, that was definitely interesting." Related Stories

Another intriguing finding was that three separate strains of Zika—one from Africa, one from the Americas, and one from a past outbreak in Cambodia—didn't seem to differ from one another in how infectious they were. That's despite the fact that congenital Zika, which causes babies to be born with abnormally small heads and other health problems, seems to have emerged only with more recent strains of the virus as it has evolved in recent years.

The findings raise a host of questions, the biggest of which is: How is Zika infiltrating the womb in the first place? "Next, we really want to get at the mechanism of how the virus is getting across the fetal-maternal barrier," says Kellie Ann Jurado, a virologist and the lead author of the study.

Scientists have several hypotheses. It's possible, for instance, that Zika is piggybacking its way across the placenta via otherwise helpful antibodies—basically taking advantage of a pathway meant to help keep a fetus healthy. Or, it may be that the virus is so tiny it can push its way through a membrane that keeps most other viruses out. "This super-tight layer that usually nothing expect for oxygen and nutrients can cross," Simoni says. "But, potentially, if Zika is small enough, it can just squeeze in between the cells."

Other researchers are focusing on how Zika affects the health of the placenta itself. A recent essay in the New England Journal of Medicine describes severe placental degradation among mice infected with Zika in the first and second trimesters of pregnancy. In humans, scientists still don't fully understand how risky Zika is in different stages of pregnancy. A better understanding of what Zika does to the placenta could be crucial for figuring it out.

Complicating these areas of Zika research is how little is understood about the placenta more broadly. "Given its vital role, shockingly little is known about the placenta," Denise Grady wrote for The New York Times in 2014. "Only recently, for instance, did scientists start to suspect that the placenta may not be sterile, as once thought, but may have a microbiome of its own—a population of micro-organisms—that may help shape the immune system of the fetus and affect its health much later in life."

As a virologist, Jurado told me she's "not always thinking about the placenta," but that she was stunned when she began to review placenta-related medical literature for her research into Zika. "Seeing all the missing pieces, I was shocked," she said. "I didn't understand why there hasn't been more basic research. It's definitely needed, especially in cases like this where the outbreak seems to be infecting the placenta."

Part of the difficulty in learning more about the placenta is the ethical sensitivity of potential research subjects—understandably, expectant mothers aren't necessarily jumping at the chance to participate in experiments that could yield unexpected outcomes for their unborn babies. But there's still plenty that can be gleaned from working with the organ shortly after delivery, when a baby no longer needs it, as this recent Zika study illustrates. Research initiatives like the Human Placenta Project, a $42 million NIH undertaking, are increasingly doing just that.

"The placenta is the least understood human organ but arguably one of the most important," the project's website reads. "It influences not just the health of a woman and her fetus during pregnancy, but also the lifelong health of both."

Zika Virus: Local Transmission Taking Place In Miami Beach, Florida

Miami Herald, August 18, 2016

A new area of ongoing Zika transmission has been identified in Miami Beach, according to sources familiar with discussions that Florida health officials held with local public officials Thursday to alert them.

State officials are expected to identify a specific geographic area for ongoing Zika transmission within Miami Beach this afternoon, sources said. The Florida Department of Health did not immediately respond to request for comment.

South Florida's hospitality industry has dreaded the possibility of Zika spreading to Miami Beach because the region's economy relies heavily on its $24 billion-a-year tourism industry. More than half of the hotel rooms in Miami-Dade are located in Miami Beach.

Starting early Thursday morning, Miami Beach public works officials and code compliance officers were dispatched to neighborhoods to inspect for mosquito breeding sites.

City Manager Jimmy Morales said in a written statement that the city is in constant communication with the health department regarding the most effective approach to mosquito control.

"Our strategy has been and will continue to be focusing on the elimination of potential breeding sites and educating our residents and businesses on what they need to do," Morales said in the statement. "We are also working with the county and they are also inspecting and as needed mitigating through techniques like clean ups, larvicides and fogging."

The first area in the continental United States with ongoing Zika transmission was identified by Gov. Rick Scott on July 29, when he announced that the virus was being spread by local mosquitoes within a one-square-mile zone north of downtown Miami in the Wynwood neighborhood.

At least seven new local cases of Zika have cropped up outside of that zone in Wynwood since then, however, including one in Southwest Miami-Dade.

On Wednesday, the health department reported three new local Zika infections in Miami-Dade, including one inside the Wynwood zone and two others outside of it.

A total of 557 people in Florida have contracted Zika this year, including 63 pregnant women. Of those, 33 are locally acquired cases, with all but seven traced to the Wynwood zone.

Epidemiologists continue to interview residents and collect blood and urine samples inside the designated zone, but they also have launched investigations into six Zika infections that occurred outside of that area. One is in Palm Beach, and the other five are in Miami-Dade. Health officials have not said whether they suspect any of the local cases were sexually transmitted.

Florida health officials have said repeatedly that one case does not mean active transmission is occurring in an area. Instead, health officials investigate each case by interview, and taking blood and urine samples from close contacts and neighbors around each person infected.

The Zika response plan published by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in June notes that "a starting point" for defining an area of local transmission is two or more infections (not related to travel or sex) among people who do not share the same household and which occurred inside a one-mile diameter within one month.

New Cluster Of Zika Cases Is Reported In Miami Beach

By Pam Belluck And Lizette Alvarez

New York Times, August 18, 2016

A cluster of Zika cases most likely transmitted by local mosquitoes has been identified in Miami Beach, a health official said Thursday. Health authorities are trying to decide whether to designate a section of the bustling tourist city as a zone of active Zika transmission, and whether to advise pregnant women to avoid the area.

The health official said Thursday that there are "a handful of cases" of likely local transmission that involve people who were in "close proximity to each other." The official insisted on anonymity, saying that the cases and the location are not likely to be officially announced until late Thursday or early Friday.

Neither the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention nor the Florida Department of Health had released official information on the cases or the location in Miami Beach.

To date, only one neighborhood in Miami, a one-square mile section of Wynwood, has been declared an active Zika transmission zone in the United States, and the C.D.C. has advised pregnant women to stay out of the area. As of Wednesday, Florida authorities had tied 25 of the 35 locally-transmitted Zika cases to a single area in that Wynwood zone.

Zika Now Suspected From Mosquitoes In Miami Beach

By Brady Dennis

Washington Post, August 18, 2016

Health officials in Florida have identified a possible new area of Zika transmission involving several cases in Miami Beach, said an official familiar with the situation who declined to speak on the record because of the ongoing investigation.

The development, first reported by The Miami Herald, would mean that the local virus outbreak no longer is contained to the Wynwood neighborhood north of downtown Miami, where more than two dozen people have been infected by Zika in recent weeks.

Earlier this month, federal health authorities urged pregnant women not to visit Wynwood in light of the situation unfolding there – the first time officials had warned against travel to part of the continental United States because of the outbreak of an infectious disease. They made the decision after “aggressive” efforts to combat Zika’s mosquito-borne spread proved insufficient. Tom Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, called it “a truly scary situation.”

If confirmed in Miami Beach, CDC officials likely would issue an updated travel advisory that includes the newly affected area. It was unclear Thursday where the boundaries of such a warning might be.

In a statement, Gov. Rick Scott insisted the outbreak remained confined to Wynwood. “We still believe local transmissions are only occurring in an area that is less than one square mile,” he said.

“As we continue to aggressively assess and test people for Zika, we will make every resource available to fight this virus,” Scott said.

The Herald reported that early Thursday, Miami Beach public works officials and code compliance officers were dispatched to neighborhoods to inspect for mosquito breeding sites.

The Zika virus, which has now spread to 70 countries, has been linked to a rare and severe birth defect known as microcephaly, which is characterized by an abnormally small head and often underdeveloped brain, as well as an array of other fetal abnormalities.

In rare cases, the virus also has been linked in adults to Guillain-Barre syndrome, an autoimmune disorder that can cause paralysis and even death.

Should officials confirm local Zika transmissions in Miami Beach, it could deal another blow to Miami’s vibrant tourism industry.

Scott seemed keenly aware of that Thursday, saying he had directed state officials to work closely with hotels, attractions and restaurants to help them with Zika prevention and education efforts. He also said affected businesses in Miami-Dade County would be offered mosquito spraying at no cost.

“Tourism is a driving force of Florida’s economy and this industry has the full support of our state in the fight against the Zika virus,” Scott said in his statement. “Additionally, our Department of Economic Opportunity is working with businesses that may have been impacted to ensure they have everything they need to remain successful. We will continue to work closely with our businesses and the tourism community to ensure their needs are met.”

As of Wednesday, the Florida Department of Health reported 461 travel-related cases of Zika and 33 locally acquired cases. Sixty-three of the state’s Zika cases involve pregnant women.

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

(SECOND EDITION – 8:30 AM EDT)

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NATIONAL NEWS

Tropical Depression Karl Forecast To Strengthen In Atlantic

Associated Press, September 22, 2016

MIAMI — Tropical Depression Karl is forecast to strengthen in the Atlantic.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center says the depression's maximum sustained winds early Thursday are near 35 mph (56 kph) with some strengthening forecast during the next two days.

As of 5 a.m. EDT Thursday, Karl was centered about 625 miles (1,006 kilometers) south-southeast of Bermuda and moving northwest near 16 mph (26 kph).

Farther east, Tropical Storm Lisa is expected to weaken. The storm's maximum sustained winds are near 45 mph (72 kph).

Lisa was centered about 710 miles (1,143 kilometers) west-northwest of the Cabo Verde Islands and is moving northwest near 14 mph (22 kph).

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At The Height Of Hurricane Season, The Tropical Atlantic Ocean Is Sleepy

By Brian McNoldy

Washington Post, September 21, 2016

The tropical Atlantic Ocean, usually buzzing with storms at this point in September, looks more like it should in June, when hurricane season is just starting.

Although there are two named storms active across the Atlantic, dry air and strong wind shear are dominating the basin in a pattern unfitting of the climatological peak of the season.

Reconnaissance aircraft have been flying into, over and around Karl to assess its intensity and structure, and they have found that is weakening. It was recently downgraded to a tropical depression, and it may even get downgraded again to an open wave later today given the trend. The circulation is centered about 900 miles south-southeast of Bermuda and tracking toward to the west at 14 mph.

Forecast models suggest that Karl will make a comeback by the end of the week. It is expected to turn toward Bermuda and intensify to a hurricane as it interacts with a mid-latitude trough and acquires characteristics of a non-tropical weather system. Bermuda can expect Karl's closest approach and worst weather on Saturday, though it may get spared hurricane conditions.

Bermuda averages one damaging hurricane encounter every six to seven years, but the tiny island has had some recent bad luck, with about six storms passing close enough to produce hurricane conditions in just the past decade. As of the latest forecast, there is still a slight chance that Bermuda could experience hurricane-force winds as Karl passes by this weekend (assuming it is able to regain some organization).

Tropical Storm Lisa is located about 1600 miles east of Karl and is faring slightly better while immersed in a hostile environment. Lisa began as Tropical Depression 13, which formed Monday afternoon, and is now approximately 600 miles west of the Cape Verde islands. It has strengthened recently, and sustained winds are up to 50 mph.

Models generally agree that Lisa will continue its track to the northwest and find itself in a very hostile environment this weekend, so it is forecast to weaken and dissipate in the central Atlantic.

The large-scale pattern across the Atlantic would suggest that a lull in tropical storm activity may last for a while.

The anomalous dry air and strong wind shear prevalent across the basin may well combine to either choke off development of storms that manage to form or to prohibit formation altogether.

The graphic below shows the extent of the anomalously dry air. While Karl and Lisa show up as moist pockets, the drier-than-normal mid-level air is lurking in the deep tropics and working its way into their circulations.

Another atmospheric featur,e known as the Madden-Julian Oscillation, or MJO, is in a phase that typically suppresses Atlantic tropical cyclone activity, and it may remain in that phase through early October.

While the number of named storms this hurricane season is impressively above average for this date, the Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) stands at about 70 percent of average because the storms that have formed have generally been weak and/or short-lived. One storm, Hurricane Gaston, contributed half of the season's ACE, while the other half came from the other 11 storms.

Thursday's Forecast: Wet West, Upper Midwest

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, September 21, 2016

The national weather forecast for Thursday, September 22nd calls for thunderstorms across the West and in the Northern Plains. The Southeast Coast also gets hit with showers.

The first day of autumn will feature soggy weather for parts of the West, Midwest and Southeast while heat and humidity continues in the South and East.

West: Rain will soak portions of the Rockies and Southwest on Thursday. Some flooding is possible from Utah to Montana.

North-central U.S.: Showers and thunderstorms are likely Thursday from the upper Great Lakes to parts of the northern Plains. Some of the heaviest rain is forecast in portions of Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Southeast: More cloudy, gloomy weather and below-normal temperatures are expected in coastal sections of the Carolinas and Virginia.

Weather history for Sept. 22: In 1913, Des Moines had its earliest freeze on record. In 1989, strong winds and driving rain from Hurricane Hugo continued to batter the Carolinas.

Photos: A Second Straight Stellar Sunset In DC Area

By Jason Samenow

Washington Post, September 21, 2016

Along the edge of a coastal storm is the place to be for spectacular sunsets.

In Tuesday's case, the D.C. area was on the fringe of the cloud deck from the remnants of one-time Tropical Storm Julia. Areas along and west of Interstate 95 were perfectly positioned to capture the beautiful scene as the sun sank and illuminated the layers of clouds to the east.

You may recall the region was treated to stunning sunsets when it was along the periphery of Tropical Storm Hermine as well.

Tuesday evening's magnificent sunset scene followed terrific views Monday evening when a front was pushing out of the region.

Below find some of the best submissions from Tuesday's sunset sent to us via social media …

5 West Virginia Counties Stay Under Flood State Of Emergency

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) – Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin is extending a state of emergency for five West Virginia counties devastated by floods in June.

Tomblin announced the extension until Oct. 21 for Clay, Greenbrier, Kanawha, Nicholas and Webster counties to ensure that state resources are provided to rebuild homes, businesses and communities. That includes demolition and stream cleanup efforts.

The declaration was scheduled to expire Wednesday, three months after floods killed 23 people and destroyed homes, businesses and infrastructure.

An emergency declaration expired Wednesday evening for Fayette, Roane and Summers counties.

At one point, 44 of West Virginia's 55 counties were under a state of emergency.

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Service Warns Of More Flooding In Northeast Iowa

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

LANSING, Iowa (AP) — Heavy rainfall has forced some streams out of their banks in northeast Iowa, and forecasters say there's more in store for the area.

Allamakee (al-uh-muh-KEE') County emergency services coordinator Corey Snitker said Wednesday that he's gotten reports of 3 and 4 inches of rain overnight. Snitker says the runoff accumulated in low-lying spots and ran over some streets in the northeast corner of the county, especially in Lansing.

The Lansing city clerk and the mayor didn't immediately return calls from The Associated Press.

Snitker says none of the major county roads is closed but also says more rain is expected.

The National Weather Service's flash flood watch says two-day totals of more than 7 inches could occur where new storms later Wednesday and overnight track the Tuesday-Wednesday storms.

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Flooding Follows Heavy Rainfall In Northeast Iowa

Associated Press, September 22, 2016

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Authorities say flash flooding is occurring across several counties in northeast Iowa, thanks to heavy rains.

The National Weather Service said Thursday that 1 to 2 inches an hour have fallen in spots, and more thunderstorms are expected to produce another 1 to 2 inches. The same storms also may also be capable of producing hail and strong winds.

The service says water is covering some streets in Hawkeye and says there's water over the pavement on U.S. Highway 18 west of Hawkeye.

The service also says at least three tornadoes were reported Wednesday evening in parts of southern Floyd County and northern Butler County. Two machine sheds were destroyed southeast of Marble Rock, and trees were knocked down in several areas.

It's unclear whether the storms caused any injuries.

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State Returns Nearly $70K In Unclaimed Funds To Flood Victim

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The Louisiana Department of the Treasury's Unclaimed Property program has returned nearly $70,000 to a resident affected by last month's flooding.

Treasurer John Kennedy, in a news release Wednesday, said a woman found $34,000 of her own money and another $35,000 in cash and stock from her late mother's estate.

In all, the department says it returned about $176,000 to Louisianians who stopped by Saturday's event at the Mall of Louisiana in Baton Rouge.

Unclaimed property includes old bank accounts, insurance proceeds, utility deposits and other lost money sources.

The program has returned more than $407 million to almost 630,000 residents since 1972.

Residents can search for missing money online at www.LATreasury.com or call the department's toll-free hotline at 1-888-925-4127 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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La. Guard To Open $13.5 Million Franklinton Readiness Center

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

FRANKLINTON, La. (AP) — The Louisiana National Guard is set to open its new $13.5 million Readiness Center in Franklinton.

A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held Thursday.

The National Guard said in a news release the Readiness Center will serve as headquarters for roughly 105 soldiers of the LANG's 843rd Horizontal Engineer Company, 205th Engineer Battalion. It is replacing the original center that was built in 1975 and sustained heavy damage from Hurricane Isaac in 2012.

The new state-of-the art center was completed July 15 and covers more than 30,000 square feet.

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USDA: Ag Disaster In 24 Louisiana Parishes, 2 Texas Counties

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has named 24 Louisiana parishes and two Texas counties agricultural disaster areas because of last month's storms and flooding.

Eleven parishes are primary disaster areas, and the others are adjacent to them, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry said in a news release Wednesday.

The primary disaster areas are Acadia, Ascension, Cameron, Evangeline, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, St. James, St. Landry, St. Martin and Vermilion parishes. Allen, Assumption, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Calcasieu, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Lafourche, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, St. John the Baptist and St. Mary parishes, and Jefferson and Orange counties in Texas are contiguous disaster areas.

Last week, the LSU AgCenter estimated that south Louisiana suffered $277 million in damage to crops, livestock, equipment and increased production costs. The worst damage was to soybean and rice crops, estimated at losses of $69 million each. Corn damage was pegged at $44 million, while cotton damage reached $26 million.

The Farm Service Agency has low-interest emergency loans for eligible farmers. Farmers have eight months to apply.

The agency considers the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

It also has other recovery programs.

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Online:

Farm Service Administration: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/index

Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry: http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/

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Gov. Edwards Going Back To Washington Seeking Disaster Aid

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Gov. John Bel Edwards is making his third trip to Washington in as many weeks, trying to build support for billions in federal disaster aid for Louisiana's flood recovery.

Edwards' office says the Democratic governor will travel to Washington on Wednesday and return home Friday. He'll be meeting again with members of Congress, making his pitch for a $2.8 billion recovery package.

The governor and Louisiana's congressional delegation are trying to get flood aid inserted into a spending bill that must pass to avoid a government shutdown next week. It's unclear if they will be successful or have to wait until after the November elections for another chance at the disaster relief.

The mid-August flooding killed 13 people and caused more than $8.7 billion in estimated damage.

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Trump Weighs In On Internet Fight In Stopgap Spending Bill

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump's campaign has inserted itself into already tricky negotiations on a temporary spending bill needed to avert a government shutdown, siding with Texas Sen. Ted Cruz in trying to block the government from ceding its limited role in overseeing some aspects of the internet.

"Donald J. Trump is committed to preserving Internet freedom for the American people and citizens all over the world. The U.S. should not turn control of the Internet over to the United Nations and the international community," senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller said in a statement.

Democratic and Republican administrations have both supported a transition of the U.S. Commerce Department's role in governing the internet's domain name addressing systems, transferring responsibility to such stakeholders as technical experts, businesses and other governments.

The temporary spending bill is the top item on the congressional agenda before lawmakers leave Washington for the fall campaign. It also provides more than $1 billion in long-delayed funding to battle the Zika virus. Lawmakers hope negotiations on the measure will be wrapped up this week, though the pace of talks has been slow and Wednesday produced no visible breakthroughs.

Many experts say Cruz and his allies are greatly overstating the Commerce Department's potential influence over internet content and spinning exaggerations and conspiracy theories. But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is pushing to use the stopgap spending bill to at least delay the transition. Democratic negotiators like Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada are strongly opposed to that effort.

Meanwhile, House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., came out Wednesday in favor of adding money to the measure to address catastrophic flooding in Louisiana.

President Barack Obama has heeded calls by Louisiana's governor and congressional delegation and requested $2.6 billion to help Louisiana rebuild from last month's devastating floods. Ryan didn't volunteer how much money he supports. But the Republican speaker is opposed to a key demand of Democratic negotiators: money to help Flint, Michigan, repair its lead-tainted water system.

The flood aid question is one of a handful of unresolved issues involving the stopgap funding bill, which would prevent a shutdown next week and keep the government running through Dec. 9.

Meanwhile, the Senate rejected a resolution to block the Obama administration from selling more than $1 billion worth of American-made weapons to Saudi Arabia, a key U.S. ally in the Middle East. Lawmakers backing the measure, including Rand Paul, R-Ky., are critical of the kingdom's role in Yemen's civil war, but Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., opposed the resolution, which was killed by a 71-27 vote.

"I think it's important to the United States to maintain as good a relationship with Saudi Arabia as possible," McConnell said Tuesday.

The other big item on the Capitol Hill pre-election to-do list is an override vote on President Barack Obama's anticipated veto of legislation that would allow the families of 9/11 victims to sue the government of Saudi Arabia. Ryan predicted that "the votes are there for the override." The vote is expected next week.

The Zika-fighting portion of the pre-election spending bill is nearly complete. Republicans have dropped language to block affiliates of Planned Parenthood in Puerto Rico from receiving funding for prevention and treatment of Zika in the territory. Zika, which can cause grave birth defects, is often transmitted by sexual contact, and women are being advised to delay getting pregnant if they live in an area where Zika is widespread.

Negotiators on the measure hope a deal might be reached Wednesday, but negotiators have blown through several earlier deadlines.

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Democrats See Stopgap Spending Bill As Best Chance To Get Funding For Flint Water Crisis

By Kelsey Snell

Washington Post, September 21, 2016

Democrats believe they have finally found the leverage they need to force Republicans to approve funding to address the water crisis in Flint, Mich.: historic flooding in Louisiana.

Democrats are pushing for a Senate-passed aid package for Flint to be linked to flood relief funds in a stop-gap spending bill that would prevent a government shutdown at the end of the month. Republicans say they want to give the House more time to consider passing funding for Flint, but Democrats have refused to sign off on the spending bill until the issue is resolved.

"We have been trying to fund Flint for I think it's eight months now," Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) told reporters Tuesday. "People in Flint are still drinking water out of bottles. They still have children who are sick with lead poisoning. And the Republicans have refused to do anything."

Flint aid has emerged as one of the final sticking points as negotiators continue to bicker over the remaining details of the stop-gap spending bill, which would keep the government funded through Dec. 9 and also provide more than $1 billion to combat the Zika virus. Party leaders also continue to clash over whether the United States should give up control of a non-profit that governs the internet domain system and make it easier for the Export-Import Bank to approve more deals. But the stand-off over aid for Flint is proving to be among the hardest issues to resolve.

There is broad bipartisan agreement that Congress needs to act quickly to approve federal disaster relief for the wide swath of Louisiana impacted by historic rainfall and flooding that killed 13 people in August. Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) has requested $2.8 billion to help rebuild the area where flooding has typically been rare and few residents were protected by flood insurance.

But Democrats are insisting Republicans also agree to include money to help Flint deal with a water supply that has been poisoned by lead contamination.

"You can't put Louisiana in unless you put Flint in, they both should be together," Senate Democratic Policy Committee Chairman Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) told reporters Thursday.

Democrats, led in the Senate by Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, have been working for months to pass funding for Flint to repair damage to the city's water pipes that caused lead to leach into the drinking water. The crisis began in 2014 when a state-appointed emergency manager switched the source of the city's drinking water to the nearby Flint River in an effort to save money. The corrosive river water caused damaged pipes and rendered the water undrinkable and in some cases unsuitable for bathing.

"Louisiana needs the money now, Flint needed the money last January and before," Peters said. "It is a living nightmare for the people of the city of Flint and they can't wait any longer."

Last week the Senate voted 95 to 3 to approve $100 million in federal money for Flint as part of a broader water resources bill, pending the drafting of a comprehensive plan for how the money would be spent. It also authorized at least $700 million in loans from the Environmental Protection agency for communities looking to upgrade their existing water system and $50 million for programs to address the health impacts of lead exposure.

[Congress Senate clears Flint aid package, but House action still in doubt]

The bipartisan Senate package falls short of Democrats' original request for $600 million in relief for Flint.

Senate Republicans say they have already approved the money once and Democrats just need to wait for the water bill to be approved in the House.

"I don't understand their thinking, obviously [the water bill] has Flint in it," Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) told reporters on Wednesday. "It's just a question of does it come 10 weeks from now."

House leaders have said they plan to take up the water bill sometime after the election in November but their legislation does not include any aid for Flint. Peters said House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.) has vowed to push for Flint to be addressed once the House and Senate meet to resolve differences in their two versions of the water bill. But Democrats don't want to wait to see if the funding survives those negotiations.

"Their bill may not have money for Flint in it," Schumer said.

House Republicans Slam New Obama Climate Review

By Devin Henry

The Hill, September 21, 2016

House Republicans on Wednesday hammered a new Obama administration request for federal agencies to consider climate change impacts in environmental reviews of proposed projects.

The guidance, finalized by the White House's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) in August, sets standards for how agencies can incorporate climate change into their permitting evaluations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Republicans oppose the change, saying the new guidance will slow down permitting for projects like oil and gas drilling and pipeline construction that already needs to go through NEPA reviews.

"For CEQ, it appears advancing a questionable agenda at all costs is more important than ensuring that the law and science and sound economic reasoning are going to be honored," House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) said during a Wednesday hearing.

Bishop tied the guidance to climate-related executive actions pursued by the Obama administration.

"This administration's concept that the end justifies the means, not going through Congress and finding other ways of accomplishing its goals, stretches the limits of the Constitution," he said.

Democrats and CEQ Managing Director Christy Goldfuss defended the guidance, saying it will help address climate change, which Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.) called the "mother of all environmental issues."

The guidance will help "merely understand the carbon impact of our federal decisions," said Grijalva, the committee's top Democrat.

"By counseling federal agencies on how to consider climate change in their NEPA reviews, our final guidance builds on the administration's efforts to address climate change and build a more resilient future," Goldfuss said.

Along with the CEQ's guidance, committee Republicans also took aim at climate science generally.

One member insisted there are more factors behind recent wildfire activity than higher temperatures. Another read a news article from the 1920s about warming seas to conclude, "global warming has been going on for a long time."

"As a holder of a degree in Agriculture, a Bachelor of Science, I'm glad to hear that we're concerned about the production of CO2. All the plants I've ever grown love CO2," Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-Calif.) said.

He asked Goldfuss: "What percentage of climate change or CO2 is caused by man-made actions?"

"We're going to have a difference of opinion on this," Goldfuss said. "We know, and what I know, is what our scientists tell us, which is that climate change is happening now and that humans are contributing."

LaMalfa asked, "which group of scientists?"

"The vast majority," Goldfuss replied.

Social Entrepreneurs Predict Flooding Risk In Vulnerable Communities

By Anne Field

Forbes, September 21, 2016

As climate change causes more potentially catastrophic flooding across the globe, the need to predict what areas are the most vulnerable becomes more urgent.

That's the issue Cloud to Street is addressing, combining big data analysis, crowd sourced information from people on the ground and satellite imagery to create what co-founder Bessie Schwarz calls a "living vulnerability assessment."

The startup recently took part in a pitch event at SOCAP2016 in San Francisco.

Basically, the startup creates maps that determine and displays flood risks for anywhere in the world, with an analysis of which communities are most vulnerable because of their underlying social conditions. For example, in one area, it might turn out there's a connection between having a large older population and higher risk of extreme damage from flooding. According to Schwarz, although roughly 16% of New Orleans residents were over 60 when Hurricane Katrina hit, 75% of deaths were from people in this age bracket.

But it takes a lot of leg work. Part of the data comes from satellite imagery, much of which was originally generated by NASA. But another chunk is from people on the ground–the communities that have experienced flooding.

"We need to now whether those pixels are of your street and if so, did it really flood there and what happened," she says.

In fact, the social conditions connected to flooding are as important as the satellite data, because they provide the most insights into what causes a community both to experience greater losses and be less likely to recover.

For example, a flood map of New York State in 2014 showed that major characteristics of at-risk

places included a preponderance of female head of households/ lower median house value and poverty.

Also, the characteristics of social conditions are different from one region or country to another. "The conditions that make communities more at risk in Senegal are not necessarily the same ones you find in the ninth ward of New Orleans," says Schwarz.

Schwarz and co-founder Beth Tellman got started when they were graduate students at Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies in 2013. There, they got involved with a project spurred on by Google Earth Outreach, which has a tool for processing satellite imagery. Tellman, a hydrologist who had previously worked on disaster relief in El Salvador, immediately remembered instances during which people didn't get the help they needed thanks to faulty maps. Schwarz had worked as a community organizer on climate change-related disaster relief in the U.S., and saw the need to gather input from those on the ground.

Then, according to Schwarz, they were approached by World Bank officials in 2014 trying to get a better understanding of what happened when disastrous flooding in the north Indian state of

Uttarakhand killed almost 6,000 people. But it wasn't until early 2015 that the founders decided, says Schwarz, "We need to make a company out of this."

Now, they're running pilots in Senegal and India, as well as part of the U.S. because, says Schwarz, "There's great data here." The target market is development banks that work with governments and NGOs.

Coastal Washington Tribe Wins Prize For Improving Health

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

TOKELAND, Wash. (AP) — A small tribe on the Washington coast has won a prestigious award for its efforts to improve community health.

The Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe located near Tokeland in Pacific County received the Culture of Health award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation last week.

The foundation honored the tribe for its work in opening a Wellness Center to provide medical, dental and mental health services for tribal members and others. Previously, tribal members had to drive 70 miles to see a doctor.

The tribe was also recognize for its efforts in engaging youth to participate in tribal government and for working to move the reservation, which located in a floodplain and tsunami zone, out of harm's way.

Gov. Jay Inslee was scheduled to visit the tribal council and tour the new Wellness Center on Wednesday.

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Gov. Scott Orders DEP Investigation Of St. Pete Sewer Crisis

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Gov. Rick Scott has ordered the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to investigate a sewage spill in St. Petersburg.

Heavy rain during Hurricane Hermine overloaded the city's sewer systems, sending millions of gallons of sewage to flow into streets and waterways.

In a news release Wednesday, Scott's office said the City of St. Petersburg dumped about 150 million gallons of raw and partially-treated sewage and wastewater into Tampa Bay and Boca Ciega Bay.

Also on Wednesday, St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman announced he was replacing two top city wastewater officials.

And U.S. Rep. David Jolly's has called for a federal environmental probe.

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Island County Settles Landslide Lawsuit For $1.5 Million

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

COUPEVILLE, Wash. (AP) — Island County commissioners have voted to settle two lawsuits connected to a massive 2013 landslide for $1.5 million.

The Daily Herald reports (http://bit.ly/2coHuAk) that more than 65 Central Whidbey homeowners affected by the slide will split the sum, which will be paid by the Washington Counties Risk Pool. Island County has also agreed to rebuild a portion of a road that was destroyed by the landslide.

As part of the settlement the county has admitted no liability or fault.

The Central Whidbey landslide on March 27, 2013 moved an estimated 5.3 million cubic feet of earth, a house and a small wooded area in a matter of moments. No one was injured in the slide but many properties were damaged.

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Information from: The Daily Herald, http://www.heraldnet.com

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2 More El Faro Families Settle With Sunken Ship's Owner

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Two more families of crew members who died on the freighter that sunk last year near the Bahamas during a hurricane have settled their wrongful-death lawsuits.

The families settled with Tote Services Inc. and Tote Maritime Puerto Rico, the owner and operator of El Faro, respectively, for $500,000 each plus an undisclosed sum for economic losses.

The 790-foot-long (240-meter-long) ship sank Oct. 1 after losing propulsion and getting caught in Hurricane Joaquin. All 33 aboard died, and all of their families filed claims. The number of settled cases now stands at 23.

The Florida Times-Union reports (http://bit.ly/2cDq1jU) the latest settlements are with the families of Theodore Quammie of Jacksonville and Steven Shultz of Roan Mountain, Tennessee.

Investigators are transcribing 26 hours of audio from the ship's bridge after crews recovered El Faro's data recorder.

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Information from: The (Jacksonville) Florida Times-Union, http://www.jacksonville.com

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Abandoned Katrina Hospital

Yahoo! News, September 21, 2016

Haunting pictures show what remains of a New Orleans hospital that was decimated by Hurricane Katrina and left to rot.

The eerie images show equipment and supplies that were left behind as people evacuated and fled in fear of the incoming hurricane in August 2005.

Other shots show the damage the hospital endured during the disaster and the subsequent flood, with paint left peeling from the walls.

American photographer Jeff Hagerman, from Atlanta, took the snaps at the Charity Hospital in New Orleans. (Caters News)

Wildfire Rehab In Idaho, Oregon Includes Fall Herbicide

By Keith Ridler

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The federal government's 5-year, $67 million rehabilitation effort following a 2015 rangeland wildfire in southwest Idaho and southeast Oregon is entering its second year with another round of herbicide applications combined with plantings of native species.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has started applying the herbicide Imazapic on federal lands to knock out invasive weeds in Oregon and will begin in Idaho in October, officials said this week.

The rehabilitation is part of the federal government's plan to develop new strategies to combat increasingly destructive rangeland wildfires, mainly in Great Basin states that contain significant habitat for greater sage grouse, a bird found in 11 Western states. About 200,000 to 500,000 remain, down from a peak population of about 16 million.

About 100 square miles of aerial spraying is taking place in Idaho and Oregon and visitors are asked to stay away from posted areas.

Other areas previously treated with herbicide will be re-planted with bluebunch wheatgrass, squirrel tail and Sandberg's wheatgrass, to name a few, said Cindy Fritz, a natural resource specialist with the Boise District of the BLM. It is hoped the native plants will keep out invasive species, particularly fire-prone cheatgrass.

The 2015 wildfire scorched about 436 square miles of sagebrush steppe that supports cattle grazing and some 350 species of wildlife, including sage grouse.

Federal officials chose not to list the ground-dwelling bird as endangered last year but that decision will be reviewed in about four years, and what happens with the wildfire rehabilitation in Idaho and Oregon could play a role.

"The sage grouse wasn't listed but it will be reviewed for listing soon enough, and some kind of evidence that you can recover habitat for the bird is an important habitat question that they're trying to get right," said John Freemuth, a Boise State University professor and public lands expert.

Part of the new strategy on the rehabilitation is extending the effort to five years rather than the typical three, as well as applying what scientists call adaptive management that allows changing plans if something doesn't appear to be working.

Fritz said the adaptive management is currently being used with about 8 square miles treated with herbicide last year that failed to eliminate invasive species.

Previously, Fritz said, with the shorter three-year timeline, "we would have walked away. The fact that we get to do multiple treatments is something very new to us."

Much is riding on the rehabilitation effort that is expected to produce proven strategies to help restore future rangeland wildfire areas with the goal of making them more resistant to fire and resilient if a fire moves through.

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell toured the area in May to get an update on the work that's a result of her order last year calling for a "science-based" approach to safeguard greater sage grouse while contending with fires that have been especially destructive in the Great Basin.

Freemuth said adaptive management has been talked about for a long time but is rarely used due to staffing levels and lack of resources.

"I think they needed a signal, as Jewell gave, to monitor things long term and change things if something doesn't work out," he said.

The BLM has partnered with the U.S. Geological Survey to quantify results with some 2,000 sample monitoring plots being tracked.

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Firefighter Dies, 1 Hurt As 1,000 Battle California Wildfire

By Christopher Weber

Associated Press, September 21, 2016

LOS ANGELES — A firefighter among those battling a central California wildfire died Wednesday and another was hurt when the water truck they were in overturned on a highway miles from the fire lines.

The accident happened as firefighting crews gained ground in their effort to contain the 19-square-mile fire on Vandenberg Air Force Base.

The truck crashed just before dawn at a roundabout on Highway 246 about two miles (3.2 kilometers) outside the city of Lompoc, Ventura County Fire Department spokesman Steve Swindle said.

Venture County firefighter Ryan Osler was killed, and Adam Price was injured. There were no other occupants in the truck.

Osler, 38, was a second-generation firefighter whose father worked for the same department. He was married with two children.

Gov. Jerry Brown said in a statement that Osler "dedicated his life to protecting his fellow Californians. This tragedy reminds us of the dangers firefighters face every day."

Osler's father-in-law, Leonard Yniguez, described him as "just the most perfect person. He was always there for everybody."

Osler married Yniguez's daughter, Jennifer, after they graduated from high school in Santa Clarita. He kept a memorial to his father at his home. It included his father's helmet, shoulder patches and a photo of him when he rescued a baby.

"It was in his hallway leading into this master bedroom," Yniguez told the Ventura County Star. "He would see it every night when he went to bed. Now, we have to do it for him."

The California Highway Patrol was investigating the cause of the crash.

Ventura County was among several departments that sent more than 1,000 firefighters to the fire, which was 45 percent contained.

Firefighters focused Wednesday on the blaze's southeast boundary. Voluntary evacuation orders were in place for about 400 residents of the San Miguelito Canyon area.

Officials said the fire did not pose an immediate threat to the base's launch complex that fires satellites into space. Its cause was under investigation.

Vandenberg encompasses nearly 100,000 acres along the Pacific Ocean. A wind-whipped fire in 1977 killed the base commander, the base fire chief, an assistant chief and a bulldozer operator.

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Ventura County Firefighter Is Killed While Driving To Canyon Fire At Vandenberg Air Force Base

By Veronica Rocha

Los Angeles Times, September 21, 2016

A Ventura County firefighter was killed and another was injured early Wednesday in a rollover crash near Lompoc as the pair were hauling water to the Canyon fire at Vandenberg Air Force Base.

The firefighters were assigned to a water tender by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and headed to the 12,353-acre wildfire about 6:20 a.m., when the rollover crash occurred on the westbound California 246, said Capt. Mike Lindbery, spokesman for the Ventura County Fire Department.

The water tender struck a curb within a roundabout at Purisima Road, causing the truck to overturn, according to the California Highway Patrol. The firefighters were wearing seat belts.

When CHP officers arrived, they found the firefighter trapped in the passenger seat inside the water tender.

The Ventura County Fire Department identified him as fire engineer Ryan Osler.

The second firefighter, who has not been identified, was taken to an area hospital, Lindbery said. He suffered minor injuries, authorities said.

The firefighters were among more than 1,000 personnel assigned to the massive blaze.

On Tuesday, Air Force officials said fire crews were making progress on the wildfire, but officials are concerned that increased winds later this week could rekindle flames.

The blaze has remained active along the northern portion, but cooler temperatures allowed firefighters to build lines around the fire, Air Force officials said in a statement Wednesday. The fire is 50% contained.

Using infrared heat detection, an aircraft was expected to fly over the Canyon fire overnight to determine whether firefighters had made significant gains, Air Force officials said.

The wildfire, which started Saturday in a remote canyon, has knocked out power to several buildings and has halted railway service through the sprawling base. Four firefighters suffered minor injuries while battling the blaze: two on Sunday and two on Monday, officials said.

Northwest winds Wednesday are expected to push the fire toward already-scorched areas, allowing crews to amp their firefighting efforts.

"Fire crews will concentrate their efforts from the northwest portion of the fire area in order to stem the fire's spread in that direction, and to provide additional protection for the base's space launch complexes," the Air Force said in a statement.

But increased winds Thursday could kick up flames, so Air Force officials said fire crews will be monitoring any hot spots.

Vandenberg Fire Department Assistant Chief Wayne Seda on Tuesday said crews have been making plans to defend its "critical assets," including the Atlas V rocket, which was scheduled to take off Sunday and carry a commercial satellite to space.

He said the rocket was not in danger, although "it's a concern."

This article was updated with information about the fire's acreage and containment.

This article was updated with additional details about the fatal crash.

This article was updated with additional details about the fire and with the name of the deceased firefighter.

This article was updated with information about a Ventura County firefighter killed in a rollover accident.

FEMA HOUSING

FEMA Homes Of Last Resort

By Lauren Langlois

Hammond (LA) Daily Star, September 22, 2016

A little more than 20 mobile homes being provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency are getting set up for flooded residents at a trailer park off Airport Road outside Hammond city limits, according Tangipahoa Parish President Robby Miller.

The parish is expected to need about 100 FEMA mobile homes, he said, and more should be trickling in. Currently, only a few are set up on flood victims' private properties in Tangipahoa Parish as those residents work on repairing their homes, he said.

Permits for mobile homes to be set up at trailer parks are still required by parish government, though the permits are free of charge. He said many residents are still staying with friends and families while others are using other forms of temporary housing.

"We have a long way to recover," he said.

Miller said the parish reached out to owners of trailer parks so they could provide information on how much space they have for the emergency mobile homes. The parish then provided the information to FEMA.

The federal agency considered trailer parks that had empty spaces available in parishes hit by devastating floods in August as possible sites for mobile homes, said Steven Solomon, FEMA media relations specialist.

Solomon said the agency conducted physical inspections of the trailers parks that included determining the parks' debris status and confirming that utilities were working. Sites have to be outside a flood plain, and lot sizes have to accommodate the manufactured housing units that are different from the FEMA trailers provided during Hurricane Katrina's aftermath.

Solomon said 47 units were being occupied by flood victims in the affected parishes as of Tuesday. The mobile homes are considered a last resort by FEMA, he said.

Flooded victims could also apply for temporary housing aid from FEMA to stay in a house, apartment, hotel/motel, recreational vehicle or other readily available rental place. More than 60,000 residents are being provided some form of temporary housing aid throughout parishes impacted by the August floods, he said.

Political Activists Claim East Feliciana Officials Treated Them With Disrespect

By James Minton

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 21, 2016

CLINTON — Two black political activists involved in housing debates over the years with East Feliciana Parish police jurors claimed Tuesday that parish Homeland Security Department officials treated them with disrespect during a meeting to discuss possible trailer park sites for flood victims.

Lula London told the jury she was "despondent over the treatment" given her and her associate, George Turner, during a meeting with parish Homeland Security Director Joseph Moreau and his assistant, Jim Parker, both of whom are white.

"I have never witnessed any treatment like that since the 1970s, and I've been on the road a lot," London said.

"It seemed as if a demon came out of that man," Turner said of Moreau, who had been reading a letter from him requesting that three pieces of property, including one owned by London and the other owned by the School Board, be submitted to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for possible trailer park sites.

The other site is on Turner Road in Ethel, but Moreau said he was not clear if George Turner owned the property.

Moreau did not address the pair's allegations during the meeting, but said later "none of that happened in that manner."

The meeting, held in the parish 911 center, was videotaped and witnessed by Emergency Communications Commission members who were waiting to begin a formal meeting, Moreau said.

Moreau, who has been working with FEMA to find a suitable site, said he told London and Turner they have no authority to submit school property to FEMA; only the School Board has that authority.

In the absence of School Superintendent Carlos Sam and jury President Louis Kent, Moreau said he told London and Turner the meeting was terminated, at which time he said London accused of him of being a racist.

Parker said he told London and Turner to leave when London made the comment to Moreau.

During the discussion, juror Chris Hall said a piece of parish-owned property in Clinton has been submitted to FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for consideration, possibly avoiding disputes among landowners interested in getting a trailer park and neighboring residents opposed to them.

Moreau also said FEMA has not decided a need exists for a trailer park for flood victims.

One possible kink in getting aid to flood victims is that FEMA has determined that no one can show proof of ownership for 198 homes that were "devastated" by the flood, Moreau added.

By Sept. 6, FEMA had approved six families for temporary mobile homes but the units were to be placed on the victims' property.

Three of the jury's eight members present Tuesday — Jason McCray, Ed Brooks and Michael Cheatham — apologized to London and Turner, with McCray saying, "Don't go away with a bitter taste in your mouths."

News Roundup: Edwards, Landry To Meet Over Latest Budget Disagreement … FEMA Awards Mississippi Business Contract To Supply Manufactured Homes For Louisiana Flood Victims … Oil And Gas Inventories Decline Greater Than Expected

Baton Rouge (LA) Business Report, September 21, 2016

Talking it out:

Gov. John Bel Edwards will sit down with Attorney General Jeff Landry next week to try to hash out their latest budget dispute. The Associated Press reports that representatives of Edwards and Landry say a Sept. 30 meeting has been scheduled to discuss Landry's budget requests that the Edwards administration stalled. The attorney general sought to boost spending in his budget on Medicaid fraud investigations and to take money from the health department to defend Louisiana abortion laws. The Edwards administration disagreed with both requests and refused to advance them to the Legislature's joint budget committee for consideration. Landry sought intervention from lawmakers, who suggested they were tired of the bickering and told the officials to work it out themselves. Edwards and Landry have clashed repeatedly since taking office.

Temporary housing:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has awarded a $6.76 million contract to a Mississippi business to supply temporary housing for Louisiana flood victims, The Associated Press reports. U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran says in a news release that Lexington Homes was awarded the fixed-price contract to construct and deliver 155 manufactured homes, which will be used to support flood disaster recovery efforts in Louisiana. Severe storms and flooding in August led to a federal emergency designation for 22 parishes. Lexington Homes is one of seven builders to compete successfully for this indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity contract, which includes four option years.

More than expected:

The nation's oil and gasoline stockpiles fell more than expected in the past week, bringing good news to the energy sector that the global glut of petroleum is continuing to shrink. FuelFix.com reports that commercial crude inventories fell by 6.2 million barrels for the third consecutive week. Gasoline stockpiles declined by 3.2 million barrels. Both, however, remain near historically high levels, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. The only sizable buildup came in distillate fuel oil—used for diesel and heating oils—which grew by 2.2 million barrels. Total petroleum stockpiles shrank by 6 million barrels when all products, including propane and other oils, were counted. The news quickly boosted U.S. oil prices up to about $45 a barrel, up nearly $1 for Wednesday morning. Read the full story

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Town Of Livingston Relaxes Trailer Ordinance In Wake Of "Great Flood"

By Jamie Webb

Livingston Parish News (LA), September 21, 2016

Livingston — The Livingston Board of Aldermen decided to follow in Denham Springs' footsteps and relax its trailer ordinance in light of the Great Flood of 2016.

"We need to find a way to ease our trailer ordinance for those people who flooded who want to put a trailer on their property while they rebuild," Mayor Derral Jones said.

"I called other municipalities, and we think the best way is the way Denham Springs did it. Rather than try to rewrite an ordinance or amend an ordinance, they simply agreed that it would not be enforced for those people whose houses were flooded who want to put a trailer on their property while they rebuild," he said.

"That will be allowed for a six-month period. If they're not done in six months, they can come here and apply for an additional extension of time. They must be tied in to city sewer," Jones stipulated, adding that the town will require a permit and inspection for those who want trailers.

He felt relaxing the ordinance was an important step to take to ease the burden of local residents because rewriting or amending the ordinance would require a 30-day notice.

Jones said he already had a handful of requests to place trailers last week but it was strictly against the ordinance.

"We had about 30 homes and businesses that got water in them here in town, which represents 6-7 percent of all the buildings in Livingston," Jones said. "God blessed us, when you compare that to the 85 percent of homes in Denham Springs that got water."

"Our engineering firm got flooded out," he added, noting the absence of the town's engineer at the meeting Sept. 8.

He also said some of the town's employees got water, and the day of the monthly meeting was the first time they had a full staff at Town Hall since the flood.

Jessie Glascock, who qualified as a town alderman in July, mentioned the future widening of Interstate 12 through the town and wondered if there was anything the town could do now to prevent potential flooding.

"We see the problems that [barrier] wall caused in Walker," Glascock said, suggesting more spaces between the wall partitions to allow water to flow more efficiently.

"That wall caused Walker some nightmares. I saw it with my own eyes," he said. "I was in a boat on this side of the wall, and you could drive on the other side of the road."

Jones said after this flood, the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) will probably adjust their future construction plans accordingly.

In other news, Jones said he has received a few requests for town services since the flood.

"We've been requested by the Sheriff's Office to try to provide water and sewer for a tract of land south of the town for some trailers for his employees. He said he has 73 employees whose homes flooded, and of course he can't work 73 people short, so he needs them here. They plan to put some trailers or cottages there for them," Jones said.

"We also were asked to provide water and sewer to about 200 FEMA cottages in Satsuma," he said, adding that the project might require a lift station.

In other news, Jones mentioned a meeting local officials had with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), who announced President Obama's decision to amend the Louisiana Flood Disaster Declaration to cover 90 percent of federal funding as opposed to 75 percent.

"That's a significant savings for us to only have to pay 10 percent rather than 25 percent," he said.

Jones expects the town will only have a small claim, falling under the threshold of $120,000 in damages.

Some of that included the town park and its concession stand, which had walk-in coolers and walk-in freezers that flooded. One of the baseball fields was damaged when the flood pushed all the dirt from the infield to the outfield.

Jones thanked the town's residents for helping travelers who were stranded on I-12 with food, medical care and more.

"I cannot begin to tell you how proud I am of our citizens of the Town of Livingston and how they stepped up to the plate to take care of their own and take care of others in need," Jones said.

"We at one time had hundreds of evacuees between Bethel Church's gym and the high school gymnasium – people who were stuck on I-12 when they shut I-12 down on the east side because the river overflowed," he said. "I don't know how many people told me, 'I've never been treated this way in my life. I don't want to go home – I want to stay here."

The mayor and aldermen also expressed their gratitude for the town's employees, law enforcement, fire department and volunteers who worked non-stop during and after the flood.

"They did a fantastic job and stepped up to the challenge," Alderman Joey Sibley said. "It was amazing to see the outreach."

"Most of the town employees and police officers do not get the credit for the job they do," Alderman David McCreary said.

In other business, Jones said he would look into getting a written right-of-way for the Red Oak Water Tower. The town has a verbal right-of-way for use of the paved road that leads to the tower, but Town Attorney Mike Lee said they need a written one.

When they met Aug. 11, the board handled water business and welcomed a visitor who had a water complaint.

Resident Ray Chidester said he owns a property on Montana Street that his sister's family lives in, but they had been experiencing more water than usual during regular (non-flood) rain events.

"Within the last couple of weeks, the property behind me on Tuscany was sold, and the new owner fenced it in and built up the land about 18 inches or two feet tall, and he hauled in yellow clay," Chidester said. "That water now drains onto my property, through my property, and because he built that land up, any water on Tuscany can't go by it, and it drains down the side of his property through my property."

Chidester said some of the water enters his carport and leaves a yellow slime over the ground that makes it slippery, and it must be hosed off daily.

Jones said he met with the neighbor and encouraged him to speak with the town's engineers about potential remedies to get the water directed to the ditches or sewers.

If he does not comply, Jones said Chidester could summon him to court to enforce the changes.

Jones said there are no permits required for a property owner to build up land for a pad, but "if you are flooding somebody, then we have a problem."

In other business, the board approved a contract extension with Waste Management as well as a final payment request to Phoenix Fabricators & Erectors, Inc. of $122,611.57 for the Red Oak Water Tower. This amount includes the retainage after receiving a clear lien certificate for the project.

Beyond this work, the mayor said the town is in desperate need of a new water well. Jones said in August he was looking into getting a $500,000 state grant to assist with building the well, but in September, after the Great Flood, he was all but certain the grant would not be available.

The town had already paid for engineering and sent out bids on the project, and they received a low bid of $760,000. Jones said he would look into other grants and funding for the well.

With less than a handful of meetings left before he retires as Mayor of the Town of Livingston, Jones reflected on some of the changes the town has faced over his long tenure as mayor. For example, when he first became mayor, the town was issuing about four building permits a year. One day this summer, the town issued eight in just one morning.

"We have several new businesses who are coming, including Shell with a new upscale service station and Burger King next door to Shell. Livingston is going to change, and it will be up to the next administration and the next Board of Aldermen to try to manage the growth so that we all still have a community that we love to live in. It's going to be a difficult chore to do that," Jones said.

In other business, the Council:

-Alderman David McCreary said for the month of July, the Fire Department handled 15 first aid calls, three motor vehicle accidents, one investigation, five fire alarms, one gas leak and two false/canceled alarms in town; 11 first aid, four motor vehicle accidents, two mutual aids and two grass/trash fires outside of town.

-For August, the Fire Department handled 25 first aid calls, one motor vehicle accident, one investigation, five fire alarms, one vehicle fire, one grass fire, one electrical line down, one false alarm call and one rescue from an elevator in town; and 16 first aid calls, four public assists, eight motor vehicle accidents, three mutual aids, two fire alarms and one electrical line down outside of town.

Residents Can File For Temporary Housing Aid Extension

By Kevin Dupuy

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 21, 2016

BATON ROUGE – Residents who need extended temporary housing assistance from FEMA must provide proper documents to make the request.

According to FEMA, residents that are eligible for the extension can use the temporary housing assistance to pay for a place to live.

To receive the extension, residents must demonstrate that they have a disaster related financial need, and complete the following paperwork:

Temporary housing assistance form. (Contact FEMA if you haven't received a form)

A copy of your lease

Receipts showing proper use of federal disaster housing assistance

Current household income status

Any household financial obligations

If you have questions, contact the FEMA helpline at 800-6211-3362.

Many FEMA Trailers Sit Empty Despite Desperate Need For Housing

By Rob Masson

WVUE-TV New Orleans, September 21, 2016

TANGIPAHOA PARISH, LA (WVUE) –

FEMA trailers are now pouring into sections of the state by the hundreds, and though the need is great in Tangipahoa Parish, many sit empty as the kinks are being worked out.

Her walls are open, her house is in disarray and her son wishes Jackie Mosby was somewhere else.

“I think she needs a trailer, but that’s life,” said Justin Johnson.

The problem is, Jackie Mosbey rents her home to own it one day, and she hasn’t qualified for a trailer.

“I didn’t know how to go about it how to do it,” she said.

Eighteen trailers are now being installed about 10 miles away outside of Hammond in a park that held 160 trailers after Katrina.

“The contractor’s out now, no later than next week we can get these people in here,” Said Tangipahoa Parish Planning Director Alyson Lapuma.

Parish officials say finding occupants for the trailers is an ongoing challenge, and they’re meeting with FEMA on a daily basis.

“The electricity was turned on for these 18 [trailers]. They had some minor situations regarding quality control,” said Lapuma.

Though Mosbey has gotten $4,700 in FEMA help, she said her son has been her greatest asset.

“If it wasn’t for him I don’t know what we would do,” she said.

She said the FEMA money will help her buy sheetrock, but without her family she doesn’t know if she could rebuild.

Parish officials said most residents are like the Mosbeys and will persevere and rebuild.

If you’ve received flood damage, they ask that you give them a call at (985) 748-9602.

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Mobile Homes Eligible For Shelter At Home Program

WWL-FM New Orleans, September 20, 2016

Homeowners who live in mobile homes are now eligible to apply for the Shelter At Home program. Deputy Chief of Staff for the Governor’s Office, Julie Baxter Payer says they wanted to get some clarification about who was eligible for the program.

“That was the reason for the request by letter last week to verify whether or not that was included because this is a FEMA funded program,” Payer said.

Payer says they have verified that manufactured and modular homes can be included in the program, whether or not they are on wheels or attached to the ground. She says, like with other homes in the program, inspections will be done on a case by case basis.

“They’re going to be measured by the same standard as every other house. In other words, if we spend $15,000 on this on this home, can we make a safe habitable space in the home,” Payer said.

Payer says they also got some clarification about what types of homes do not qualify for the program.

“An RV or a camper that’s more recreational in nature will not be eligible for Shelter At Home work,” Payer said.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Scituate Officials Outline Options For FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps

By Ruth Thompson

Scituate (MA) Mariner, September 21, 2016

The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps are not going away, even if the town does not adopt them at the October special Town Meeting.

“They are in place whether the town adopts them or not,” said David Ball, a member of the Scituate Coastal Coalition.

The coalition and the Town of Scituate hosted a public meeting Tuesday, Sept. 20 to discuss the importance of adopting the maps, and what the consequences would be if they were not adopted. Close to 100 people filled the Scituate Beach Association Clubhouse.

“If the maps are not adopted there would be a laundry list of issues,” Ball said. “There is no benefit at all to not accepting the maps, except financial ruin.”

The Flood Insurance Rate Maps, or FIRMs, where issued by FEMA in 2013 to help the federal agency keep record of data that includes storm tides, river flow and rainfall, among other statistical factors that outline flood risks.

That same year Scituate, Marshfield and Duxbury filed a joint appeal through the Woods Hole Group Inc., to fight the maps, which the towns felt were incorrect.

While Scituate continues to work through the Woods Hole Group to achieve changes it believes are needed to make the maps accurate, the town has a deadline to adopt the maps. The federal agency issued its letter of final determination in May, which triggered a six-month window for voters to adopt the maps.

The community would be suspended from the National Flood Insurance Program, or NFIP, if the maps are not adopted at the Oct. 19 special Town Meeting, according to Scituate Coastal Resource Officer Nancy Durfee.

In this event, the following sanctions would apply:

Property owners would not be able to purchase NFIP flood insurance policies, and existing policies would not be renewed;

Federal grants or loans for development would not be available in identified flood hazard areas under programs administered by federal agencies;

Federal disaster assistance would not be provided to repair insurable buildings located in identifiable flood hazard areas for damage caused by a flood; federal mortgage insurance or loan guarantees would not be provided in identified flood hazard areas.

Additionally, while federally-insured or regulated lending institutions, such as banks and credit unions, are allowed to make conventional loans for insurable buildings in flood hazard areas of non-participating communities, the lender must notify the applicants that the property is in a flood hazard area and that the property is not eligible for federal disaster assistance. Some lenders may choose not to make these loans.

"It's critical that this happens," Ball said of adopting the maps.

During the public meeting, Leslie Fields, a coastal geologist and marine environmental analyst with the Woods Hole Group, Inc., reviewed the appeals process and gave a brief history of the FIRM updates.

Many of those attending had questions about their property or neighborhoods, which Durfee, Ball and Fields attempted to answer during and after the meeting.

"Each one of you is very unique and different," Durfee said. "You need to know what's right for your property."

Ball stressed homeowners should talk to their insurance agents about coverage and the requirements for their property.

"A property does not have to be near the ocean to be in the flood zone," he pointed out.

Ball and Durfee stressed the importance of attending special Town Meeting and voting to adopt the maps, with Ball explaining the process of Town Meeting.

"If the flood maps are not adopted, property values will go down in flood zones," he said.

"So if you want to protect your property, go to Town Meeting."

Special Town Meeting begins at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 19 in the gymnasium at Scituate High School, 606 Chief Justice Cushing Highway (Route 3A).

Lessons Of '86: What Green Country Can Do To Prepare For Next Major Flood

By Travis Meyer

KOTV-TV Tulsa (OK), September 21, 2016

TULSA, Oklahoma –

One of the costliest floods in Tulsa history hit 30 years ago along the Arkansas River. Our community is still at risk, and the dangers to life and property are real.

The challenge is to be prepared for the next major flood by learning the lessons of '86.

In October, 1986, a devastating flood hit the Tulsa area when the Arkansas River raged out of its banks.

It was a true perfect storm: a stalled front combined with moisture from a hurricane dumped up to 20-plus inches of rain upstream into the Arkansas River basin. It forced record releases from the Keystone Dam.

From Sand Springs to Brookside to Jenks and Bixby, people evacuated. Water covered streets and flooded thousands of properties with more than $65 million in damage throughout Tulsa County.

Many areas now developed, like Katy Banning's new Bixby neighborhood, were under water in 1986. She had no idea her property was at risk

"We weren't told, but had we been told, we would have got a second opinion and checked with our insurance company to make sure it was safe and everything to move in," said Katy Banning.

INCOG – Tulsa County Floodplain Map

Now, when building in the Arkansas River floodplain, developers are only required to reveal if a property sits inside the 100-year floodplain which means there's a 1 percent yearly chance of flooding. The '86 flood is considered a once-in-200-year flood, and there is no disclosure requirement for that.

Gaylon Pinc is an expert on Arkansas River flood control and potential development.

"We learned a lot from that flood in that the 100-year protection in some areas may not be adequate," he said.

Since ‘86, levees built to handle a 100-year flood protect Tulsa, Sand Springs and Jenks, but bring their own problems.

“By building a levee in one area, you actually can exacerbate flooding downstream in another area,” Pinc said.

That leaves downstream communities more vulnerable.

Flying over Bixby, Jenks and Tulsa, you can see how much has been built in some areas that were once flooded. Many of these areas lie in the floodplain. Some of these places have taken extra steps though to protect for the next flood disaster like Margartitaville Resort and Hotel.

River Spirit Project Manager Randy Hull and his crew engineered a widened concrete drainage channel funneling storm runoff underneath the resort. The tributary into the river is built to handle more water than the ‘86 flood.

“All of our decisions were based on what happened in ‘86,” Hull said. “So, all of our decisions were based on ‘what are we going to do in the event of.’ or ‘how are we going to plan this building for what could happen.’”

The entire building was built to withstand a flood that would rise one foot *above* the ‘86 flood. Advances in technology give Hull less concern for a catastrophic event.

“I’m more confident than what happened in ‘86 because the information is a lot better, the monitoring is a lot better,” said River Spirit Project Manager Randy Hull.

“We have a lot more time to do something in the event of a major flood event, and our capacity is greater.”

But, not everyone is building above minimum standards.

An overview of what could be underwater if a 200- or even a 500-year river flood happened shows many new neighborhoods, businesses and planned developments flooded – hundreds of millions in damage.

“It’s going to be a man-made flood, if you will,” said flooding expert Gaylon Pinc. “It will be deliberate releases at these high flood levels, and we will have warning just like we did in ‘86 to get out of the way, which is the best solution.”

And knowing your risk is the first step to staying safe.

“Got to the FEMA website or go to your local floodplain manager. Ask to look at the maps to see what flood zone you are in,” Pinc said. “I wish more people did that. Everybody should do that whether you think you’re on high ground or not because there are certain localized floodplain issues you need to be aware of in certain watersheds.”

Experts say flood insurance is vital, even with the extra expense.

“We would look into it especially when the river gets high, but just by looking at it – the embankment looks pretty high,” said homeowner Katy Banning. “I don’t know how it would flood again, but I mean, if someone advised us to, we’d think about it.”

You have to know your history to best prepare for your future. Experts recommend building in flood-prone areas to the ‘86 flood level plus one foot.

“Nature can always outdo itself in doing harm to us that live in homes that are vulnerable,” Pinc said.

MITIGATION

After Delay, Ascension, FEMA Agree On Deal To Do Damage Assessments, Hire Inspectors

By David Mitchell

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 21, 2016

Within the next two weeks, FEMA will have 10 two-person teams of inspectors doing damage assessments of the 10,000 to 12,000 Ascension Parish homes and businesses inundated after last month’s historic flood, parish officials said Wednesday.

Parish government and Federal Emergency Management Agency officials reached an agreement on damage assessments this week after Parish Council members aired concerns late last week about the slow start to the process. The agreement calls for FEMA to pay for the contract inspectors but the inspectors will use a damage assessment method designed by the parish, not by FEMA’s. The assessment is expected to calculate damage on more favorable terms to parish residents.

Martin McConnell, spokesman for parish government, did not give an estimate on how long the assessments were expected to take, but the teams have been projected to assess 20 to 35 buildings per day. Based on that rate, the 10 teams could have the 10,000 to 12,000 buildings assessed in 29 to 60 days of work after they start.

Flooded homes or businesses in need of repairs that will cost more than 50 percent of their value, excluding land, will be deemed to have substantial damage. They will require elevation, removal or demolition, if that building is also within the 100-year floodplain and below FEMA's projected height requirement for a 100-year flood.

According to parish officials, 55 percent of East Ascension Parish, where the heaviest flooding occurred, is inside the 100-year floodplain, including swaths of St. Amant, Sorrento, Galvez and Prairieville.

Some council members, worried that residents were already well into renovation work more than a month since the floods occurred, suggested last week that the parish may even want to hire contractors to do the job.

But McConnell, the spokesman, said Wednesday FEMA contractors will be doing the work on the agency's dime.

Councilman Todd Lambert, whose barbell-shaped District 9 extends from the Gonzales area west of Airline Highway east to parts of hard-hit St. Amant, said Wednesday he would have liked to have seen the process start a little more quickly.

"People are ready to get back in their homes. They're all displaced," said Lambert, who has several family members who flooded.

FEMA contractors already started with damage assessment in some parishes, including the East Baton Rouge Parish, officials have said.

The parish administration's announcement Wednesday of the agreement it has with FEMA to hire the contract inspectors came one day after McConnell said the parish and the federal agency had agreed on using Ascension Parish's scoring method to calculate damage from flooding.

Jerome Fournier, parish planner, described for Parish Councilman Daniel "Doc" Satterlee last week the parish's efforts to negotiate with FEMA its damage assessment method.

He said the parish's method sets the cost to repair at $131 per square foot, but shifts some pre-set estimates of damage lower than what FEMA normally would, which could allow homeowners to avoid surpassing the 50 percent threshold of damage that would require elevation or demolition of the houses.

The parish's method, like FEMA's, assigns set percentages of damage to various parts of a building based on flood levels.

But, unlike FEMA's scoring method, Fournier said, foundation damage in many areas of the parish is likely to be close to zero because backwater flooding rose gradually. FEMA's standard, Fournier said, accounted for moving water along a river, which would cause foundation damage.

Without the foundation damage, many of those flooded homes aren't likely to cross the 50 percent threshold, Fournier said.

At the same time, some homes along the Amite River where the water was moving probably did have foundation damage and are likely to cross the 50 percent damage threshold.

"So we're dealing with two different scenarios and that's what we're trying to convince FEMA of right now," Fournier said of the negotiations. "We're dealing with different environments than what they've been dealing with in the past."

The parish apparently made its case because McConnell said Wednesday FEMA accepted the parish's assessment method.

McConnell did not say Wednesday how the parish would deal with assessments of homes where repair work has already started, though Fournier said last week inspectors would ask questions about flood heights and take other steps to make the assessments.

Repair Work Progressing On West Feliciana Roads, Bridges

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 21, 2016

ST. FRANCISVILLE — West Feliciana Public Works Director Jim Ferguson's list of projects needing attention is long, but progress has steadily been made since what he calls a "1,000-year storm" caused between $7 and $8 million in damage to the parish's infrastructure.

"This is the fifth emergency declaration I've been a part of, so I'm familiar with the process," said Ferguson, who in other jobs also dealt with hurricanes Katrina, Gustav and Ike and high water events along the Mississippi River and Red River.

Because of his experience, Ferguson said he knows the importance for a parish to get ahead of the paperwork required for a disaster to get the ball rolling for Requests for Public Assistance that are needed for reimbursement. He also has been meeting regularly with Federal Emergency Management Agency representatives. In a best-case scenario, West Feliciana can expect to recoup up to 90 percent of its costs from FEMA.

He said the storms that deluged South Louisiana with rain for three days in mid-August dropped between 22 and 24 inches on West Feliciana. He said most of the structures in the parish are built to withstand a 25-year event, not one of the magnitude of the August storms.

"We've never experienced rainfall like that, some of these structures weren't built to withstand that type of event," said Ferguson. "I'm surprised we didn't have more bridges blown out. We had culverts and roads under water. Relatively speaking, the infrastructure held up."

The two costliest projects are new bridges at Island Road over Williams Creek and the Polly Creek Bridge on Plettenberg Road, which is also known as the Cat Island Bridge. Ferguson said requests for quotations have been advertised for both projects. He said both could take up to 24 months to complete, with the Polly Creek Bridge costing $1.2 million and the new Island Road structure at $2 million.

The Burnett Road Bridge, a project being managed by St. Francisville, also requires complete replacement and will cost roughly $1 million.

Mayor Billy D'Aquilla recently met with Commissioner of Administration Jay Dardenne to get the project's capital outlay status moved from priority two to priority one in order to secure funding, and D'Aquilla said he's also working with FEMA. Because the damage is so extensive, the design work for the bridge will need to be revised somewhat, but D'Aquilla hopes work can begin soon and anticipates completion after the first of the year.

Work on Jacock Road bridge was completed shortly after the storm, at a cost of roughly $25,000. Repair work on Old Tunica Road, allowing for one lane, cost $45,000 and when other priority repairs are completed, a second lane will be added.

Debris at low-water bridges at Sligo Road and Solitude have been cleared and both bridges are open. The Scott Creek low-water bridge on Island Road is open and abutment repairs on Como Road have been completed.

As for La. 66, detours using Highland Road have caused substantial damage, and Ferguson said he understands the project should be completed by the end of October. He also said Mahoney and Mulberry roads require major repair work. Bains Road is being fortified where washouts occurred.

Ferguson said the parish has pretty much finished picking up debris, although he hasn't been able to put a cost on it yet. He said using parish workers is cheaper than contractors and will bring a higher percentage of FEMA reimbursement to the parish.

"We're starting to get back to repairing pot holes and cutting grass again," Ferguson said. He also cautions people not to remove cones or barricades because they're necessary for public safety.

During the Parish Council meeting Sept. 12, Parish President Kevin Couhig praised Ferguson and parish work crews saying they've saved the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Caldwell Water System Repairs Planned

By Tina Alvey

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, September 21, 2016

LEWISBURG — Plans are on the drawing board to repair Caldwell's severely damaged water delivery system before winter.

This summer's flood caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage in the unincorporated community, which is served by Lewisburg's regional water plant. Among the damages were breaks in water lines at three crucial points — the U.S. 60 Caldwell bridge, the W.Va. 63 tunnel (commonly referred to as the Monroe Draft) and the 2-inch pipe leading to a single household on Joe Bennett Road.

Chapman Technical Group engineer Greg Belcher advised Lewisburg City Council Tuesday night that he couldn't guarantee the Federal Emergency Management Agency would fund the repairs, but suggested putting the two larger projects out to bid immediately in order to give FEMA figures to ponder.

Belcher recommended that the $40,000 repair on Joe Bennett Road be bid, but not presented to FEMA, due to the likelihood that the agency would not provide any funding for that small fix.

He estimated that the total tab for all three projects would come in at around $285,000, if FEMA selects the most expensive option to replace the tunnel line, which would involve a directional drilling underneath the 450-foot length of the tunnel. Council was not enthusiastic about that option, primarily because once the line is threaded under the tunnel, it cannot be repaired if future problems arise.

Removing the Joe Bennett Road repair from the equation, repairing the bridge line and simply restoring the portion of the tunnel line that connects to pipe that is attached to the inside of the tunnel reduces the total cost for FEMA's consideration to around $150,000, Belcher said.

Allowing contractors to bid on either option will give FEMA some comparisons to weigh, he noted, but warned city officials that the agency will not make promises of funding in advance. That leaves the decision on which option to pursue in the hands of council.

"It's ultimately going to come right back to us," Belcher said.

Complicating the tunnel project is the interest of CSX Railroad in the structure.

"The railroad is going to claim some control over what happens to the tunnel," Belcher predicted.

Urging council to move forward with the process, lest the water lines not be restored before winter, Mayor John Manchester said a combination of state and federal funds will mean that the two major repairs — the bridge and the tunnel — will involve no city funding.

But with or without that outside funding, there are 100 water customers on the other side of the tunnel now dealing with low water pressure due to the undersized line that had to be used in a temporary work-around that was quickly put in place following the flood who are depending on the city to make these permanent repairs, he said.

Belcher pointed out that at some point the city's long-awaited major water project, which will increase the water plant's capacity and efficiency, will be put back on the front burner. And when the bond is floated for that multi-million dollar project, the relatively small cost of these repairs can be recouped, if state and federal funds don't immediately materialize.

Council unanimously authorized the bidding process for the repairs to commence.

Sinkhole-ravaged Block In Harrisburg Could Be Demolished, Transformed Into Green Space Next Year

Harrisburg (PA) Patriot-News, September 21, 2016

HARRISBURG—Residents in the worst sinkhole-affected area of South 14th Street in Harrisburg will get fair market values for their home and relocation costs paid through a federal disaster grant, city officials announced Wednesday night.

The $1.65 million award from the Federal Emergency Management Agency will pair with a $1 million county mitigation grant, allowing the city to buy out 25 homes at the center of the block, where a giant sinkhole erupted in March 2014.

The relief can't come soon enough for residents in the 1400 block of South 14th who have endured fear and limbo for more than two years. Some residents have had to remain in homes they consider dangerous, on top of shifting ground. Other residents moved out, but have been paying rent and mortgage payments along with taxes and double insurance costs.

The residents gathered at a neighborhood church Wednesday night to hear details of the recently-awarded grant and what it means for their future.

Mayor Eric Papenfuse explained to the packed room at Mt. Olive Church at 1331 South 14th that the federal money awarded so far only covers the first phase of the city's plan for the block, which has been plagued with a series of sinkholes. Engineers also have predicted a high likelihood of more sinkholes to come.

Because of the geology and fault lines under the block, it doesn't make sense to simply carve out homes in the center of the block, Papenfuse said, so the city is also pursuing a grant through the Commonwealth that could deliver up to $8.5 million— enough for the city to buy all 53 homes on the block, relocate residents and prepare the land for open green space.

"We don't want to leave a permanent, blighted eyesore," he said. "We'd like to leave green space safe enough for kids to play. We'd like to leave something that would contribute to the community when we're done."

City officials said they should know in a few weeks whether they win the larger grant of federal mitigation grant money allocated to the Commonwealth.

If the city gets the nod for the Commonwealth grant, and gets it fairly quickly, then the whole project could be completed next year, Papenfuse said.

City officials have already arranged to have most of the homes at the center of the block appraised for their pre-disaster fair-market value. Next, city officials say they will seek to have all homes on the block appraised.

If all goes according to plan, all residents will move out before any demolition begins, the mayor said. Property owners who live on the block will be eligible for relocation expenses and so will renters if the larger grant pans out, city officials said.

The demolition will be conducted carefully with seismic monitors, Papenfuse said, to avoid creating vibrations that could harm nearby homes on 13th Street.

The city is also seeking a grant from Impact Harrisburg, a nonprofit created to help the city's financial recovery, that could help with engineering and design costs that aren't covered by the other grants, Papenfuse said.

The biggest sinkhole that erupted in 2014 opened directly in front of Sheena Mosley's home. She had to evacuate immediately and live in a hotel for 26 weeks with her four children.

Mosley later found a townhouse for her family with four children, where she has had to pay more than $1,100 a month in rent for more than 18 months. But the new neighborhood is treacherous for different reasons than the home on 14th, she said.

"It's where all the shootings have been happening," Mosley said. "Me and my kids have been in the crossfire three or four times."

Mosley is looking to relocate, again, to a safer area, but she doesn't have the disaster money in hand yet, and she's facing deep waiting lists at the city's various housing authority developments.

She's thankful city officials have locked down money to buy her old home, but she thinks city officials should help her and other displaced residents get priority placement at housing authority developments.

Becky Cook, meanwhile, said she was concerned because the abandoned home attached to hers with gaping holes in its roof is damaging her kitchen ceiling, requiring four repairs in recent years. She doesn't want to throw good money after bad if the home is eventually going to be demolished.

"I really can't wait to get out of there," she said. "But still, I'm sad to be leaving. I've lived there for 17 years."

Jocelyn Harper said her 83-year-old uncle has lived in his home on South 14th for 43 years. He's thankful for the sinkhole assistance, but fearful about having to relocate and start anew in another home—assuming he can find one.

"It's stressful for him," Harper said. "All the senior centers have two-year waiting lists."

Maria Vargas, who has been fighting for sinkhole relief with Mosley and others from the beginning, said she thinks residents are "halfway there."

"I've got faith the Commonwealth's going to come through," she said. "I think this is good news. It is positive."

FIRE GRANTS

Thorsby Fire Department Receives $149,000 Grant

By Steven Calhoun

Clanton (AL) Advertiser, September 21, 2016

The Thorsby Fire Department has been awarded a $149,600 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to replace self-contained breathing apparatuses.

According to FEMA.org, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant is given by FEMA to "enhance the safety of the public and firefighters" by giving financial assistance "for critically needed resources to equip and train emergency personnel."

The TFD believed it was in need of a grant. It had been using the same masks for more than 13 years. According to TFD's fire chief, Lee Gunn, the masks only have a 15-year lifespan. The grant came just in time to save the city having to pay to replace all the masks, or SCBAs.

"This is the biggest grant we've ever received from FEMA for equipment," said Gunn. "There was a great team effort in preparing this grant."

The department only had to match 5 percent of the grant, a cost of $7,123.

Gunn stressed the importance of the soon-to-be-replaced masks and how much wear and tear they go through during training and emergency incidents. The department serviced them yearly, but still time took its toll on the old masks, he said.

Now, the department can begin the process of sending off bids and replacing the masks with new ones. The new masks will be up to the latest safety standards, unlike the old ones, which were grandfathered in under previous standards.

"This grant provides our members with the newest SCBA technology available to deliver superior service to our community," said Gunn. He estimated that the new masks would be purchased by the start of the new year, and hopes there is some money left over to buy additional equipment as well.

Fire Company Gets New Tanker Truck

By Justin Strawser

Sunbury (PA) Daily Item, September 21, 2016

SUNBURY – The new $300,000 Upper Augusta Township tanker truck is in service and ready to help the community.

Township Fire Chief Bill Brown said the 2016 Western Star is replacing the deteriorating 2,500-gallon 1988 Mac Tanker.

"It was on its last leg," Brown said. "The body was falling apart. We had significant issues with the unique transmission."

The new truck was paid for with a combination of a $236,000 federal Assistance to Firefighters Grants, $50,000 worth of township money and $14,000 worth of fire company money raised through multiple fundraisers.

"Without the grant, it would have been impossible," Brown said. "The township supervisors were also extremely helpful with the purchase. We couldn't have done it without them."

The new 31-foot-long truck was built by Midwest Fire Equipment & Repair Company out of Luverne, Mn.. It holds 3,000 gallons of water and can pump 1,000 gallons a minute. It also has a PTO pump on the truck instead of needing a portable pump, all the dump valves are electric operated from the cab and has a lot of compartment space.

"It's night and day," Brown said. "There's just no comparison to the old truck."

The tanker puts the township's fleet up to six vehicles, including an engine, a mini-pumper, a brush truck and two boats.

"We have a reliable apparatus that can function in multiple aspects," Brown said.

Township Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman Ed Markowski, who works as the township FEMA/PEMA coordinator and flood plan administrator, said he helped the fire company apply for the grant.

"It's important we have a fire company here in our township," he said. "We allow the fire company apparatus to go out to adjoining communities in times of need. We never turn down the fire company when they ask."

Markowski said $2,200 was also paid by the township to Sunbury Motors for equipment and an employee to drive the truck back to the township.

Upper Augusta has 30 active firefighters. The fire company is located at 2188 Mile Hill Road.

Broken Arrow To Hire 17 New Firefighters

KOTV-TV Tulsa (OK), September 21, 2016

TULSA, Oklahoma –

Broken Arrow is hiring more firefighters, thanks to a nearly one and a half million dollar grant from FEMA.

Broken Arrow has 156 firefighters now, with six open positions.

They want to hire a total of 17 new cadets and have them start next February.

Broken Arrow Fire Department Receives Grant To Hire 11 Firefighters

By Clayton Youngman

KTUL-TV Tulsa (OK), September 21, 2016

BROKEN ARROW, Okla. (KTUL) – The Broken Arrow Fire Department is getting closer to its goal of hiring 20 new firefighters.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded the fire department a $1.49 million grant to hire 11 new firefighters, according to a press release from the city. The money, called the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant, will cover the salaries and benefits of the 11 entry-level firefighters for two years.

"The Broken Arrow Fire Department made a promise to citizens, that if they passed the Vision 2025 sales tax renewal, we would increase our staffing level by 20 firefighters," said Fire Chief Jeremy Moore in a press release. "Because of this SAFER grant and the one we received last year, we're able to deliver on that promise three years earlier than anticipated."

Following the renewal of the Vision 2025 sales tax, the city will have the funding to retain the 11 firefighters hired with the SAFER grant after their two years are up, according to the press release.

The fire department, which currently has 156 members on staff, will also look to fill six additional firefighter vacancies in addition to the 11 cadets covered under the SAFER grant. The hiring process is currently underway, and the 17 new firefighters would start on Feb. 1.

The Tulsa Fire Department also received a SAFER grant last month. That money allowed the department to move toward hiring 27 new firefighters.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Andrew Gillum Responds To Rick Scott's Criticism About Hurricane Recovery

WTXL-TV Tallahassee (FL), September 21, 2016

TALLAHASSEE, FL (WTXL) – Mayor Andrew Gillum has responded to criticism about how Hurricane Hermine was handled by the City of Tallahassee.

Power outages in the city have led to open complaints from Governor Rick Scott about the speed of repairs and restoration following the storm.

Wednesday, Mayor Gillum spoke up about what happened after the storm, reflecting on what he thinks the city could have done differently.

"I do think that we probably would have communicated more consistently and more clearly to our customers, to the citizens here about what was the staging of the repair process. When you've got over 80 percent of your system impacted, what do you repair first, what should the customers and expect to see," said Mayor Gillum.

Gillum said that the city's response outpaced the response to Hurricane Sandy and the last three major storms that have hit the United States.

Despite that, however, he said that the disconnect between Governor Rick Scott and the city has not helped the recovery process.

"So, I now know that it is not just our example here in Tallahassee, there seems to be a pattern of behavior that instead of going to resolution and solution in these matters, there seems to be a kind of unhealthy I think blame game, which again at the end of the day does not help a single citizen," said Mayor Gillum.

He said governments on a local, state, and federal levels needed to evaluate who has what resources and the best ways those resources can be used to provide help when needed.

FLOODS

FEMA Help Comes In Many Languages

By Laura Gary

The Daily Iberian (LA), September 22, 2016

FEMA means help in any language, even unheard ones.

The Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) on Darnall Road is equipped to meet the communication needs of anyone who walks in. From handouts printed in multiple languages, to information in Braille, to American Sign Language interpreters, the center has people covered.

"Our role here is to provide support to different components of FEMA, to ensure access to people with disabilities" said Lisa Bothwell, FEMA Disability Integration Branch III Lead. "I think a lot of this job is problem-solving."

Bothwell said that assistive listening devices are available for the hearing impaired, in addition to the interpreters. The center also uses TTY communications and video interpretation services.

"It's always something different," Bothwell said.

The visually impaired have access to large print, magnifiers and material printed in Braille.

"We try to work hand-in-hand with them," said Peter Sessum, FEMA Media Relations.

In addition to having American Sign Language interpreters on hand, FEMA also has access to interpreters of various spoken languages.

DRC manager Angela Demerath said that most of the people she has encountered in Iberia Parish speak English, but she has dealt with a few who speak Spanish.

"We have products, benefits, and assistance available to everyone," Sessum said.

"I enjoy meeting all of the people from the state of Louisiana and being able to help them," Bothwell said.

28,000 Acadiana Households Registered With FEMA

By Claire Taylor

Lafayette (LA) Daily Advertiser, September 21, 2016

More than 28,000 Acadiana households that suffered flood losses in August flood have registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

As of close of business Monday, 28,494 households in eight Acadiana parishes had registered with FEMA, according to Sharon Karr, FEMA media relations specialist.

Household registrations by parish include:

Statewide, flood victims have been approved for more than $655 million through FEMA's Individual and Household Program. That includes $538 million for housing assistance and $117 million for other needs assistance.

Oct. 13 is the deadline for August flood victims to register for FEMA disaster assistance and for a Small Business Administration loan, Karr said.

Flood victims can visit the Disaster Recovery Center at 301 W. University Ave. to register for FEMA aid or an SBA loan.

They can register with FEMA online at https://www.disasterassistance.gov/ or by calling 1-800-621-3362.

95 Property Owners Appealing Reassessments

By Claire Taylor

Lafayette (LA) Daily Advertiser, September 21, 2016

A whopping 95 people are scheduled to appeal their property reassessments before the Lafayette City-Parish Council next week.

"First time ever," Lafayette Parish Assessor Conrad Comeaux said of the largest number of appeals he's seen in 16 years as assessor.

Council Clerk Veronica Williams said 95 people are on the Sept. 27 council agenda to address the council as part of the assessment appeals process. Usually, only one or two property owners appeal their assessments, she said.

Some of the 95 may withdraw their appeals before Tuesday, Comeaux said, as his office works through the list, reviewing each for errors and explaining to property owners why the reassessment is correct.

More than 700 people called and 1,100 visited the assessor's office in recent weeks asking why their property values increased so much since the last reassessment four years ago, he said.

Property owners complained about extreme increases in property values, some as much as 100 to 300 percent.

Comeaux said most of the large increases are because land was undervalued for many years.

“We did an extensive study on land values and land sales,” he said. “We had a few glitches but, for the most part our values were solid.”

With more than 110,000 accounts, Comeaux said a few errors can be expected. Some corrections have been made but for the most part, the reassessments are correct.

Property owner Jack Venable told the council Tuesday he waited for hours in line at the assessor’s office to inquire about having his property taxes decreased “because my house is basically worthless.”

Venable said he’s a disabled veteran who relies on rental income but that income is gone since his properties flooded in mid-August.

“I’m only asking to pay taxes on what the property’s worth,” he said.

Property owners can still call or visit the assessor’s office to inquire about their reassessments, although Comeaux asked them to wait until after the Sept. 27 council meeting. It’s too late to appeal the assessment to the council, but appeals can be made to the state tax commission, he said.

Homeowners whose properties were flooded also can still report their loss to the assessor’s office to have their assessed value and taxes reduced this year. Email proof of flooding, such as documents from FEMA or your flood insurance provider, to flood@lafayetteassessor.com.

Need To Restore Flood-damaged Items? Smithsonian Experts To Offer Help

Lafayette (LA) Daily Advertiser, September 21, 2016

Experts from the Smithsonian Institute will be in Lafayette Friday to demonstrate how to salvage valued possessions that got wet in flooding last month.

The experts will be available at the Federal Emergency Management Agency Disaster Recovery Center, located at 301 W. University Ave., from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday.

There, visitors will learn how to care for water-damaged photographs, quilts and other personal treasures, according to a press release from Kurt Pickering, public information officer for FEMA.

For more information, email the Heritage Emergency National Task Force at hentf@si.edu.

More Than Just The Haul: How Flood Debris Removal Can Amount To Millions Paid

By Maya Lau

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 21, 2016

Days into its operation, the temporary site for flood-related debris in south Baton Rouge looked nearly like a fully-fledged landfill this week, with remnants of people’s households already piled stories high as dump trucks rumbled into the expansive site.

The debris at the site, tucked away on a small street at 15400 Old Perkins Road West, will be compacted and eventually moved a second time to its final spot at Ronaldson Field, each chunk of it adding to the cost the city-parish is paying for its removal.

Though taxpayers won’t be footing most of the bill — 90 percent of the amount is set to be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency — the city-parish will still pay millions out of its rainy-day fund.

On Wednesday, the Metro Council will consider appropriating some $47 million for flood relief, most of which is expected to be reimbursed, but that’s only a preliminary estimate of the total needed because debris collection is still ongoing.

The various layers of contractors needed to do the work are part of why the amount is so high.

Debris contractor DRC Emergency Services, the company hired by the city-parish, is making about $14 million on the project so far, based on an estimate by Mark LeBlanc, assistant public works director for capital improvements in the city-parish. For every cubic yard hauled, DRC makes $13.98, plus $3.10 a cubic yard for processing at a temporary staging site, according to its contract.

DRC, in turn, has hired roughly 50 subcontractors to help with the operation, but paying those firms shouldn’t add to the bill to the city-parish, said DRC vice president Mark Stafford. For debris housed at a staging site, the company doesn’t make additional money for the second haul, to the landfill.

The firm hired to check on how DRC is hauling the debris — and making sure the process meets FEMA standards — will earn roughly 20 percent of what DRC charges, said Linda Hunt of the city-parish finance office. That means the monitoring company, Thompson Consulting Services, could get paid about $2.8 million just on the debris that’s been hauled so far.

A separate outfit, CSRS Inc., is to be paid $900,000 to handle the paperwork and accounting required so the city-parish can be reimbursed by FEMA, based on the proposal before the Metro Council.

About 1 million cubic yards of debris have been collected in Baton Rouge and unincorporated parts of the parish, putting this summer's flood somewhere between the level of a Category 1 and Category 2 hurricane in terms of damage generated, based on a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers model cited in DRC's contract. Hurricane Katrina was a Category 3 hurricane. One house's debris might total about 50 cubic yards, just on the first round.

In the small cities within East Baton Rouge Parish, debris collection is in various stages of completion, with Zachary nearing its finish. On Monday, that city, where some 450 homes were flooded, will begin its fourth and final pass of debris pickup using the contractor Ceres, said Chris Calbert, Zachary's chief administrative officer. He couldn't provide an estimate of how much money the city has spent on flood relief as of Tuesday.

In Baker, which dropped its initial contractor, Neighborhood Restoration of Baton Rouge LLC, after the first few days of pickup and hired DRC instead, has spent about $375,000 in debris cleanup so far, that city's administrative officer Julie McCulloch said. About 930 homes were affected, with about 14,000 cubic yards of debris picked up, said Herman Dungan IV, the operations manager for Debris Tech, the city's monitoring firm.

Over in Central, where possibly 80 to 90 percent of the city's 11,174 structures were affected in the floods, debris clearing has cost $2.5 million thus far, said Mayor Jr. Shelton. About 172,000 cubic yards have been picked up on the first pass, he said, which is about 10 days away from being completed. After that, clearing crews will work on their second and third rounds of hauling away the detritus, Shelton said.

Range, I-12 Area Businesses Still In Flux

By Tommy Comeaux

Livingston Parish News (LA), September 21, 2016

DENHAM SPRINGS — A drive down Range Avenue in Denham Springs would normally provide consumers with access to stores and shops offering almost any product or service they could want or need.

But that was before the Great Flood of 2016. Now, the vast majority of the businesses are shuttered, closed since mid-August when their buildings flooded.

Probably as many as 80 percent of the business establishments on Range Avenue remain closed, but some business owners – some lucky, some industrious – have reopened and are serving customers.

The southern portion of Range Avenue near its intersection with Interstate 12 took on the highest levels of flood waters and almost all of the businesses in that area remain closed – the McDonald's, the Burger King, two of the convenience stores and all of the shopping center at Range where it intersects Rushing Road are closed.

Only the pharmacy at Rite Aid is open, although there are signs of some businesses working to reopen. Representatives of the chain stores all along Range Avenue did not return phone calls made to their offices late last week.

The Super Stop convenience store was an exception to the rule in the area, as was the Waffle House restaurant. There was no one at the restaurant authorized to speak to the media but the son of the owner of the convenience store explained what they had to do to get open again.

"We put at least three weeks of hard work into it," said Sam Alkilini Jr. Flood water in the store was several feet deep and it was three days after the flood began Aug. 12 before Alkilini, his father and employees could reach the store.

The store reopened almost three weeks ago and is open from 6 a.m. to midnight, now that the curfew has been lifted. The store's Chevron gas pumps, though, remain inoperative, Alkilini said, while his father waits for a determination on whether they were infiltrated by flood water.

Not far from the store is Performance Tires, which was reopened just eight days after the flooding began.

"We took on four and a half to five feet of water in some places," said owner and CEO Tim Whittingston. "The whole flood was definitely a tragedy, that's for sure."

"We gutted the place as soon as we were allowed to come back in, pressure washed and cleaned it," he said, with the help of a crew of dedicated employees. "It was inspiring."

Whittington said they were grilling and serving free hamburgers for the first few days after the shop reopened and were repairing tires that had picked up nails from the debris for at least a week after.

Businesses on the north end of Range, beginning at Florida Avenue, were less likely to have been affected by the flood. Some did not take on any water at all while others worked hard and quickly to recover from the damage done by the flood.

The Shoe Department, for example, was only closed while the water was up, said a member of management who asked to remain anonymous.

"We closed because none of our employees could get to the store, either because of the high water or because they were dealing with flooding at their own homes," she said, adding the store was fortunate in regard to the Great Flood.

"We did not get any water in the store from the flood at all," she said. "We opened back up on the 17th and we've been rolling since then."

Bedding Plus, across the street from the shoe store and on the same higher elevation than the southern end of Range Avenue, also did not flood, said manager Louis Chevolleau.

"All of the businesses at this intersection (near Range and Florida) got no water because of how high this area is," he said. "We got absolutely no water."

There was water on the parking lot of the mattress store, Chevolleau said, enough for rescuers in boats to use it as a launch site. When he returned to check on the business when the water receded, he said there were three boats still sitting in his parking lot.

With so many people losing so much to floodwater, Bedding Plus has seen a surge in business, Chevelleau said.

"People are starting to get their money from FEMA and their insurance so business is picking up because of that," he said. Chevelleau added that at the rate sales have been going so far this month, September's sales will likely be four times higher than an average month.

Manager Chris Ferdinand at the AT&T Store said the business was flooded with about three feet of water in mid-August, but the company wasted no time getting the store cleaned and repaired and reopened Sept. 12, a month after the Great Flood demolished the city's business district.

Discount Muffler owner Brian Walls, one of the industrious business owners along Range Avenue, said his business was flooded to just over four feet, "right at 50 inches," he said, pointing at a water line at the back of the shop.

"We didn't do so well," Walls said, adding his sales room was hit hard and so was the shop, the floodwater destroying all of his inventory.

He said the flood left him with little alternative but to "buy new equipment and inventory then remodel and fix the shop" with the help of his crew.

"Business has been okay since we opened back up," Walls said. "I didn't think we would have as much business as we have but it's been much better than I expected."

Faces Of FEMA: Making Sure Representatives Are Legitimate

By Emily Giangreco

KLFY-TV Lafayette (LA), September 21, 2016

LAFAYETTE, La. (KLFY) – Knocking on doors, entering homes and comforting flood victims is one of the many job requirements for FEMA representatives.

To ensure residents safety they want to make sure that you know the faces of FEMA.""

Many are pretending to be FEMA representatives and taking advantage of flood victims.

FEMA Disaster Assistant Specialist, Glenn St. Pierre said there are ways to make sure the person knocking on your door is legitimate.

"The first thing we do is just introduce ourselves, show them our credentials to make sure that they actually know that we're with FEMA," said Pierre, "One of the main things is our badges, our credentials and our uniforms from FEMA."

Pierre served in the Coast Guard for 30 years, where he was first introduced to FEMA back in 2005.

"My first introduction to FEMA was when I was here wearing a Coast Guard uniform at Katrina, and really got to meet the people in Louisiana," said Pierre, "That's one reason why I still do this after I've retired from the Coast Guard is to get out to meet people and to try and help."

Ty Cobb was out of town when the flood waters entered his home.

His wife had to be rescued and they are currently living in a motor home until their home is livable again.

He said representatives like Pierre have made that process a lot easier on him and his family.

"The guy was extremely friendly, extremely helpful, extremely thorough," said Cobb, "He walked through, took measurements, took pictures, wrote up his report. And two days later FEMA had direct deposited money into my checking account. We were able to get started almost immediately."

According to FEMA representatives, they have met face to face with over 34,500 flood victims.

Tomblin Signs Flood Relief Bill

Fayette (WV) Tribune, September 22, 2016

CHARLESTON — Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin Tuesday signed legislation, House Bill 201, that he presented to the Legislature earlier this week in a special session to appropriate funds to cover West Virginia's share of costs associated with the June flooding. Gov. Tomblin signed the bill during a ceremony at Elkview Middle School, where students from Herbert Hoover High School are temporarily taking classes.

"Nearly three months ago, our state was hit by historic and destructive flooding. Twenty-three people lost their lives. Homes, businesses and communities were devastated. Schools were destroyed. But today, we celebrate new hope for a brighter future," Gov. Tomblin said. "This legislation, which I presented just days ago, represents continued progress — and I am grateful for the Legislature's quick approval. Recovering from this tragedy will take all of us coming together. But as we are seeing again today, that's what we do best in West Virginia."

Through Gov. Tomblin's bill, $85 million — $55 million of which comes from the Rainy Day Fund — is now available to cover the state's share of costs for individual and public damages, as well as long-term recovery efforts. This includes the state's estimated match of $130 million to rebuild five schools — Herbert Hoover High School, Clendenin Elementary School, Richwood High School, Richwood Middle School and Summersville Middle School.

The funding approved this week represents West Virginia's 25 percent share of flood-related costs. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently covering 75 percent of total costs. Should the state meet FEMA's designated threshold of $253 million in total expenses, the federal government could cover 90 percent, leaving the state responsible for 10 percent. If Gov. Tomblin's request to the White House for this higher level of cost-sharing is approved, it would kick in once funds are obligated, including funds for school construction.

Flood Damage Estimates For Coonskin Vary Widely

By Laura Haight

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 21, 2016

The cost of damages to Coonskin Park from the June 23 floods is still in question.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimated the cost at about $500,000, Kanawha Parks and Recreation Executive Director Jeff Hutchison told the Parks and Recreation Commission board Wednesday

However, an independent contracting company assessed just the damaged portion of the Elk River Trail Road, and gave the commission a quote of $2 million, four times the amount FEMA estimated in damages for the entire park.

"There's still some question about what the cost of that is," Hutchison said.

He said he was working to get the names of more contractors to see if the commission could get a lower quote.

Coonskin Park also saw damage to a parking lot, shelter area and to a water pump.

Elk River Trail Road won't be repaired until at least April, when the asphalt plants reopen.

Hutchison said he would like to secure a contractor by late winter or early spring. He said most contractors are currently focusing on main roads in Greenbrier County that were damaged.

The board also voted to renew its lease with Lake Erie Golf Co. for the next five years for new golf carts.

The park will receive new golf carts for the same price the park is currently paying. As long as the golf carts are under lease and warranty, the park doesn't have to pay anything if the carts need maintenance.

The company sends a mechanic out so the park doesn't have to hire one, which saves the commission around $40,000 annually, the board learned.

The golf carts will be updated from 2010 golf carts to 2017 golf carts with bag covers and other amenities.

Wilkinson Co. Flood Recovery Continues

Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger, September 21, 2016

After historic rainfall and subsequent flooding in August, recovery efforts continue in Wilkinson County.

Neighboring counties are assisting with debris removal, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency said Wednesday. They are as follows:

•Harrison County: Public Works Department is assisting in the county and the town of Crosby, removing debris from the mucked out homes and the roadways.

Sent debris removal equipment and personnel for four days to collect and remove debris, and transported that debris to a waste facility.

•Adams County: Public Works Department sent five large debris removal vehicles, along with personnel to operate the equipment.

•Franklin County: Public Works Department sent two large debris removal vehicles, along with personnel to operate the equipment.

"Every county in this state has needed assistance from another at one point, so it's our duty to be there for one another, especially when other assistance may not be available," said Harrison County Emergency Management Agency Director Rupert Lacy. "The old Civil Defense principals have carried over and we are all happy to help out through the State Mutual Aid Compact".

This week, the first $50,000 of a $250,000 grant from MEMA went to Wilkinson County to buy materials and supplies to repair flood-damaged homes. The work will be done by volunteer groups coordinated through the county's newly formed non-profit Community Based Recovery Committee (CBRC).

MEMA requested Joint Damage Assessments from FEMA to see if any southwest Mississippi counties could be eligible to receive public assistance grants to repair infrastructure. Mississippi's threshold for a public assistance declaration is $4.2 million in damage. The MEMA-FEMA assessments revealed $1.38 million dollars in damage, making the state ineligible for assistance.

Governor To Tour Flood-damaged Areas On Maui

KGMB-TV Honolulu, September 21, 2016

LAHAINA, MAUI (HawaiiNewsNow) –

The governor on Thursday will fly over and visit storm-damaged areas on Maui.

Gov. David Ige plans to take a two-hour aerial tour of flood-damaged areas, before visiting a storm-damaged community.

The tour follows initial damage assessments conducted by the Hawaii National Guard and FEMA over the weekend.

Iao Valley saw major damage from flooding last week, and Maui Mayor Alan Arakawa has issued an emergency proclamation to speed up clean-up efforts.

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Neighboring Counties Help Wilkinson County Residents With Debris Removal After Flooding

By Donesha Aldridge

WJTV-TV Jackson (MS), September 21, 2016

Recovery efforts are still underway in parts of Mississippi that were affected by historic rainfall and flooding last month.

According to the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, neighboring counties are helping out Wilkinson County residents with debris removal through mutual aid.

"Every county in this state has needed assistance from another at one point, so it's our duty to be there for one another, especially when other assistance may not be available," said Harrison County Emergency Management Agency Director Rupert Lacy. "The old Civil Defense principals have carried over, and we are all happy to help out through the State Mutual Aid Compact".

MEMA said the first $50,000 of a $250,000 grant from MEMA went to Wilkinson County to buy materials and supplies to repair flood-damaged homes this week. The work will be done by volunteer groups coordinated through the county's newly formed non-profit Community Based Recovery Committee.

Mississippi wasn't able to receive federal funds from FEMA after flooding because there was not enough damage to meet the federal standards to request a Presidential Declaration for Crosby. A Presidential Declaration allows federal funds to be made available to those affected by disasters.

Mississippi's threshold for a Public Assistance declaration is $4.2 million in damage. The results of the joint MEMA-FEMA assessments revealed $1.38 million dollars in damage, making the state ineligible for assistance.

Below is a list of counties helping Wilkinson County residents:

Harrison County:

Public Works Department is assisting in the county and the town of Crosby, removing debris from the mucked out homes and the roadways.

Sent debris removal equipment and personnel for four days to collect and remove debris, and transported that debris to a waste facility.

Adams County:

Public Works Department sent five large debris removal vehicles, along with personnel to operate the equipment.

Franklin County:

Public Works Department sent two large debris removal vehicles, along with personnel to operate the equipment.

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

Chatham Commission To Consider Termination Of Agreement On Live Oak Library System

By Kelly Quimby

Savannah (GA) Morning News, September 21, 2016

One of the biggest financial backers of the Live Oak Public Libraries is set to vote this week to end the agreement that outlines its support for the regional library system.

The Chatham County Commission on Friday will consider directing County Manager Lee Smith to send the library system a six-month notice of the board's intent to terminate its long-standing memorandum of understanding over the Live Oak Public Libraries and negotiate a new, more comprehensive agreement.

The county manager said Wednesday he is recommending the termination. The commission is the owner of the system's Chatham County library buildings, he said, and it pays nearly $7.4 million each year to assist in the library system's operations.

"The old contract, or MOU, is in my opinion pretty weak as far as financial transparency and accountability," Smith said. "Until recently, we've not received financial reports from the library in years. ... My commissioners appoint the majority of that (library) board, and I think — I know — we should be more privy to actions taken by that board and how it impacts the citizens and clients of the library."

The existing agreement with the library system has been in place since March 2004. It establishes a "fiduciary duty" on the part of the regional and Chatham County library boards "to provide top quality library services," to "operate in an efficient and effective manner and to be held responsible and accountable for the performance of the Regional Board and Chatham Board of the library system."

But the county alleges that many provisions of the agreement are outdated and have not been complied with. Smith said a new agreement could better ensure compliance and prevent some of the issues that have marred the library system in recent months.

Recent investigations of the library system's finances and human resources department have resulted in accusations of mismanagement, harassment and poor accounting practices.

A number of firings and resignations have followed suit, including the resignation Tuesday of Chatham-Savannah Public Schools Superintendent Thomas Lockamy, who was only recently appointed to the library board by the Chatham County Commission. Lockamy's appointment to the library board was seen as a conflict by some, because his cousin, Jim Stroud, had served as human resources director for the library system until he was fired earlier this month at the recommendation of independent investigators.

The county manager said his board will be filling the vacant board post — a task that is becoming increasingly difficult the more the controversy around the library system grows. He said the county will likely advertise the position among the county's business community. An ideal member has a financial background, he said, with an understanding of the library system. Once appointed, Smith added, new members should undergo some kind of orientation to make their role on the board clear.

Meanwhile, Smith said, he'll be working with his counterparts in Effingham and Liberty counties to devise a new contract with the library system.

"It's an outside agency ... and I think we need to place upon the library board the same requirements of any other outside agency — performance outcomes," Smith said. "If (the library board does) not meet the requirements, then funding will be held back until such time as those requirements are met. I think that is fair to taxpayers and citizens. That's transparency, accountability at its best."

Hermine debris update

In addition, Smith said the county will be bringing on contractors this week to assist with the clean up of debris from Tropical Storm Hermine. He said cleanup is now more than halfway complete, and urged residents in the unincorporated county to be patient while the work continues. The storm did not do enough damage to merit funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Smith said, and therefore it is up to the county to fund the cleanup itself.

"We're moving as fast as we can move, but we've only got so many crews," Smith said.

IF YOU GO

What: Chatham County Commission meeting

When: 9:30 a.m. Friday

Where: County Commission Chambers, 2nd floor, 124 Bull St., Savannah

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

ReadyErie App Designed For Preparedness

By Lucy Lopez

West Seneca (NY) Bee, September 22, 2016

The Erie County Local Emergency Planning Committee hosted its annual public information forum to discuss emergency preparedness and response in the county.

Tracy Fricano-Calmers of the Erie County Department of Health Emergency Preparedness gave a presentation on the new ReadyErie smartphone application.

"It is a collaborative effort with both the Health Department and Emergency Services," Fricano-Calmers said.

The goal of the app is to encourage members of the community to have a plan in place in case of emergency.

With the app, people will be able to share their status with selected contacts if they are in danger, get emergency alert notifications, locate Erie County emergency shelters and emergency services, get the latest county weather and news updates, and create a personal preparedness plan.

When creating the plan, users can enter how many people are in their household, if they have pets and who they want to notify. The app also gives a rundown of an emergency supply shopping list.

Once the plan is built, users can share it with other app users in their family to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

Another feature in Ready- Erie is the Need to Know section where there are guides verified by federal sources such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control on a variety of topics. Currently the app has information on things such as an active shooter response plan, floods and emerging infections like the Zika virus.

Surrounding counties also have apps, and eventually, the hope is that ReadyErie will be able to give users county to county updates by using the location service feature on smartphones.

Fricano-Calmers mentioned that this feature would be ideal for those who commute between counties.

“This app really fills the gap with community preparedness by making it accessible to phones. People take their phones everywhere,” she said.

Working with the mapping feature in the app, Fricano-Calmers said this is one of the functions that makes it good for immediate response.

If there was a fire or spill, administrators of the application would be able to go in and geofence an area by drawing a circle on the map of the areas that are being affected. Anyone in that area would be notified about the event, which would be handy if there were to be any evacuation protocols in place.

The app is free to users and available in both the Google Play store for Android and Apple iPhone app store.

FEMA CORPS

Americorps Visits Baton Rouge For Flood Recovery Efforts On National Day Of Service

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 21, 2016

AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps members honored the Sept. 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance by participating in service projects around East Baton Rouge Parish on Sept. 10-12.

In collaboration with the AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, AmeriCorps NCCC members assisted in the mucking and gutting of 23 homes that were devastated by the Louisiana floods, a news release said. These homes belonged to social workers, teachers, military veterans and neighbors of first responders. A total of 375 AmeriCorps members participated in the national day of service to improve the community and pay tribute through service, the release said.

Twenty-five AmeriCorps NCCC Southern Region Traditional and FEMA Corps Teams, consisting of eight to 12 members on each team, were part of the total number of AmeriCorps participants. During the day of service, AmeriCorps members were visited by state Sen. Regina Barrow, state Rep. Edmond Jordan, Congressman Garret Graves, Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser and AmeriCorps Director Bill Basl.

The National Day of Service and Remembrance for Sept. 11 was designated by Congress in 2009.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Daily Mail Editorial: Legislators Work Well Together In Crisis Mode

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 21, 2016

Legislation to provide $85 million for West Virginia’s share of $339 million in recovery costs from the June floods was signed by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin Monday after the Senate approved the bill 32-0. The House of Delegates passed the measure Sunday 92-1.

The supplemental appropriation, House Bill 201, includes $55 million from the state’s Rainy Day emergency reserve funds, $21 million in unappropriated state Lottery funds and $9 million that was not spent in the recently ended 2015-16 state budget year, the Gazette-Mail’s Phil Kabler reported.

That money will go into the Civil Contingency Fund, allowing Tomblin to pay the state’s match for Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster recovery funding.

Afterward, Tomblin thanked the Legislature for its prompt action, Kabler reported.

“The damages of this flooding were far-reaching, and the recovery process will take years,” Tomblin said in a statement. “By maximizing federal support and continuing to do our share, we can make that process much smoother for impacted communities, businesses and families.”

Prior to the vote Monday, senators from hard-hit counties spoke of the need for flood recovery funds.

"I can tell you this is a real challenge and a change for our area," said Sen. Ron Miller, D- Greenbrier, who said the region's key industry of tourism is down nearly 50 percent since the floods, later adding, "We still have people living in tents. We have people living in campers."

"This piece of legislation will allow us to rebuild and capture FEMA dollars that will allow us a brighter day," said Sen. Greg Boso, R-Nicholas, who said the hard-hit town of Richwood is "essentially a ghost town."

Lawmakers' quick work during this special session, and many other special sessions over the years when responding to a crisis, is commendable. It was helped with leadership from the governor, who, unlike the previous special session on the 2016-2017 budget, provided a clear and concise proposal for a solution.

Yet the fast and efficient work makes state residents wonder: if the executive and legislators can act so responsibly this time, why not regularly?

In fact, even absent the June 23 floods, the state has been facing a series of crises. Drug addiction is rampant, revenues and the economy are down, the jobless rate is high and too few able-bodied adults are in the workforce.

Surely, these problems can be fixed with clear solutions from executive and legislative leadership.

State residents now know what legislators can do in a crisis. It's incumbent upon legislators and the next governor to continue with this sense of urgency to lead the state out of its multiple crises.

McHugh David: "Shelter At Home" – Great Idea, Bad Execution

Livingston Parish News (LA), September 21, 2016

The 'Shelter At Home' program is a great idea for those who did not have the means to disassemble their homes and treat for mold following the 'Great Flood of 2016.'

However, that is where the scope of work should have stopped, and the program should have come into the spotlight much, much earlier than it did.

For reference, the 'Shelter at Home' program offers up to $15,000 to have your home gutted, treated for mold, and then re-built to a 'livable' standard. The reason for the re-construction process is to try and get residents back into their homes as temporary housing options in the Baton Rouge area disappeared very quickly.

The re-building portion either should not have been offered, or the payout should have been increased.

Rewind to the days, even the first few weeks following the flood. The main topic of discussion? No, it wasn't FEMA just yet – people wanted to know how to properly clean out their houses.

Frequently asked questions by residents included how much sheetrock should I cut out? What about the insulation? Do I need to remove my cabinets? How dry do my studs need to be? How do I treat for mold?

Many of those questions were answered by media outlets, friends, contractors (some good, some bad), religious groups... anyone who was out-and-about helping, or pretending to help. Armed with that information, many individuals were able to gut their homes many weeks ago.

Now, five weeks after the catastrophe, the fine print in the 'Shelter At Home' program still hasn't been ironed out – due in large part to questions about mobile homes.

Too little, too late for a lot of people considering many of the homes that were never gutted are now overtaken by mold and damage from post-flood issues.

Many don't need the first part of the service because, as mentioned, they already used the available information to clean their house.

Perhaps many people still need help gutting their home, and while the damage may be severe at this point, $15,000 is still a good payout for cleanup and mold remediation.

However, when getting into sheetrock work to make the home livable? That's another situation entirely.

Currently, FEMA is using $80 per square foot to determine the damage amount on homes. That figure includes things like flooring, cabinetry, and walls. Take a quarter of that, $20 per square foot, for wall-work.

$15,000, at $20 per square foot for wall work, comes out to 750 square feet – less than half the size of many homes in Livingston Parish which flooded and were not substantially damaged (over 18 inches, 50% or more damage to the value of the home).

Should it come at any surprise that pictures and videos of the 'Shelter at Home' finished product, complete with shoddy work, lack of caring on the 'state approved contractor,' and some passionate words from residents?

Note that the $15,000 estimate provided would be for a home that was already gutted and cleaned, showing only the cost of putting up new walls. The figure did not include any homes which also needed to be cleaned first. Keep in mind, as well, that a clean home isn't necessarily a 'dry' home – wood studs have to be dried first, before sheetrock can be floated.

The $15,000 figure was probably the low bidder, as is customary with any governmental bid situation these days. One wonders, however, if anyone involved in the process took a look at the $15,000 figure and said to themselves, 'That doesn't look right.'

Why is this a problem? Shouldn't people be happy that the government is at least willing to spend a few dollars to try and get their house put back together?

If the work was 'just good enough,' maybe that line of reasoning will work, however – if the reconstruction efforts have to be torn down and re-done since the work was so bad, why are they done at all?

The fact that some people may have been excluded from the program could be a blessing in disguise.

It will be some time before the final figures are tallied to see if the program was successful in its goal, or not, but this disaster was not Katrina – the water did not keep people out for long, and those folks got their homes clean as soon as possible.

What most citizens who were affected needed was proper work done on their home, at an appropriate price and skill, so that they could live at home. Some are able to move back in, but in most cases its due to the sweat from their own brow.

Don't take the money, either, if its offered but you don't plan to use it toward the program. The big thing governmental entities learned from Katrina? They audit, and then they come get their money back.

OUR VIEWPOINT: Insured Shouldn't Suffer Because Of It

The Brazosport (TX) Facts, September 22, 2016

Lake Jackson resident Bruce Howe has every right to be unhappy that he, his wife and 8-year-old daughter continue to live in a camper three months after being forced from their home by the Brazos River flood. He did all the right things as a homeowner and seems to have been penalized for it.

His situation demonstrates how backward things can be when the federal government is involved, and the unfairness of the help it provides in times of trouble.

Howe's situation is not unique, by any stretch. Thousands of people were affected by the historic flood and hundreds of homes suffered some type of damage, from minor to having to completely gut the structure. In his case, the home was damaged enough that it is uninhabitable.

The family did what it is supposed to do long before the floodwaters came and purchased flood insurance. Based on statistics provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, they were in the minority of affected Brazoria county property owners.

Since June 1, according to a report from FEMA, just 29 claims have been made by county residents under their National Flood Insurance Program policies. Of those, 16 claims have been paid or closed without payment and 13 cases remain open.

On the flip side, many homeowners who did not fork over the hundreds of dollars for a flood policy have the repairs to their homes well under way. They are beneficiaries of payouts from FEMA or loans through the Small Business Administration.

"I know people who were flooded and didn't have insurance who have moved back into their homes," Howe said. "Here I am still living in my camper with my wife and 8-year-old daughter because we don't have funds to get the house fixed."

Because the Howes and others had flood insurance, however, they are not eligible for that immediate relief. Whether they receive aid from those sources and how much is determined only after their insurance claim is settled.

That seems to us to be a very serious flaw in the system. At minimum, those with insurance should be able to receive aid immediately, then settle whatever financial differences might exist when the insurance check arrives.

It is almost certain there will be a difference, because the main benefit of the insurance will be the amount of money a policyholder receives versus someone who gets only FEMA disaster aid.

"Of the roughly 5,600 Texas households that FEMA approved for disaster assistance for the May-June floods, the average grant was about $6,800," FEMA spokesman David Mace said. "By comparison, Texans with flood insurance who filed claims in the last two years received an average settlement of about $57,000."

That light in the tunnel only goes so far in relieving the frustration of policyholders who still are waiting for their claim to be settled. Their gravy train should have come at the same time it did for everyone else, and the government needs to tweak its program so those who paid into the system aren't at a disadvantage.

This editorial was written by Michael Morris, managing editor of The Facts.

Updated Flood Insurance Needed For

Ohio, Nation: Collin O'Mara And Sara Calo (Opinion)

By Collin O'Mara And Sar Calo

Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 21, 2016

A surge of destructive flooding has made the need for flood insurance in Ohio greater than it has ever been. With each passing year, flooding takes its toll on local communities, destroying homes and wildlife habitats throughout the state. Amazingly, Ohio residents essentially have only one option for getting flood insurance coverage.

Throughout the state, a majority of home and business owners have been forced to rely on the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for their flood coverage because it has been the only option to meet mandatory purchase requirements.

In some states, however, private insurers are offering better coverage at lower rates than the NFIP because of statewide regulations to loosen restrictions on the marketplace. Since Ohio has not made such changes, private coverage can be purchased from out-of-state providers, but it is often not accepted by financial institutions issuing mortgages because it is not federally backed.

This system is long overdue for an update, so Congress must act to level the playing field and address outdated and arcane regulations so that people across the state and country can have equal access private coverage if they choose. The status quo is unsustainable. Since premiums remain heavily subsidized and haven't kept up with the risk of inflation, the NFIP's overall debt has reached approximately $23 billion.

The Flood Insurance Market Parity and Modernization Act (HR 2901), which unanimously passed the U.S. House of Representatives in April, would level the playing field for private insurers to enter the marketplace by clarifying that private policies can be used to meet the federal mandatory purchase requirements.

Now it is the U.S. Senate's turn to act on the House legislation.

View Cuyahoga County flood maps as updated in 2011

Competition is a vital part of any industry, and flood insurance is no exception. The presence of private insurers in the flood insurance marketplace will lead to more options, better prices and greater efficiencies for hundreds if not thousands of communities across the country. Ohio residents would finally be able to choose the flood coverage that works best for them instead of being restricted to the one-size-fits-all policies of the NFIP.

Private insurers would also have more flexibility than a government-run program to provide additional coverages and price policies more accurately based on a property's exposure to flooding. This would lead to lower rates for many policyholders as well as discourage risky development in regions that experience frequent floods. In fact, current insurers writing private flood coverage are already targeting high-risk zones to offer better coverage at a lower rate.

Just as importantly, HR 2901 would bring some desperately needed relief to the NFIP, which has struggled to remain solvent after major payouts from Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy. A 2015 GAO report found that at its current pace, the federal flood-insurance program, which is managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, would be unable to repay its debt within a reasonable time frame, if ever.

To avoid additional expensive taxpayer bailouts, it is necessary for the NFIP to reduce its exposure to risk by sharing some of the burden with other insurers. Reducing its risk would enable the NFIP to better serve policyholders and ensure that the program will still be around for future generations.

Ohio's leaders have recognized the state's susceptibility to flooding: Eighty-six of the state's 88 counties voluntarily participate in the NFIP to manage their floodplains.

According to FEMA, from October 2014 to September 2015, the NFIP paid out more than $7 million in claims to Ohio policyholders. Though that number is significant, states such as Florida, Texas and Alabama raked in $50 million to $115 million each.

The threat from floods will only get worse in the coming years, making it imperative to give Ohio consumers access to flood insurance – whether it's from the NFIP or the private market – so they can bounce back quickly in the wake of a storm.

The development of a private flood insurance marketplace is one of several reforms that would strengthen the NFIP and ensure its viability. In 2017, the program needs to be reauthorized and reformed, so Congress must act to avoid another series of short-term extensions and shutdowns that will only create uncertainty in real estate and related markets.

The federal government also needs to make resiliency and mitigation efforts a greater priority, both within and outside of the NFIP. Strengthening infrastructure and helping homeowners take preventative measures will minimize the damage when storms hit and reduce the costs of post-disaster recovery.

Communities can also invest in natural systems that restore the local ecology and help reduce flooding risks long-term. By restoring natural watersheds and other wildlife habitats that act as natural flood barriers, communities will have more of a buffer for future flooding and increased wildlife habitats nearby during the times of year when floods don't threaten Ohioans.

2012: Cleveland-area watershed restoration projects get $1.7 million in federal funding

Another mitigation measure that would give consumers a clear picture of their vulnerability to flooding is updating flood maps using modern technology. Accurate maps would also ensure that flood insurance rates reflect the true risk that a property faces and require fewer homeowners to file expensive appeals.

As the country braces for the rest of this year's hurricane season, the U.S. Senate needs to pass this common-sense and much-needed legislation to bring better flood coverage to Ohio residents and protect taxpayers from taking on the NFIP's crushing debt.

Collin O'Mara is president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation and a member of the SmarterSafer.org coalition. Sara Calo is president of the Ohio Association of REALTORS®.

A Building Moratorium Brings Unnecessary Clouds [Commentary]

Baltimore Sun, September 21, 2016

In the wake of the summer's Ellicott City flood, calling for a nine-month freeze on development in the area is a reflexive move that will do little to provide answers about the adequacy of Howard County's stormwater management policies and practices.

The idea of a moratorium in under consideration by the County Council. Proposed by Councilman Jon Weinstein, a cheerleader for rebuilding Ellicott City's Main Street, a halt to building could be ordered as soon as December for land that drains into the Tiber and Hudson streams and eventually into the Patapsco River.

At a hearing on the proposal this week, the public comments were boilerplate: Slow-growth advocates urged a more expansive review, beyond the Tiber-Hudson watershed, and supported a pause in building. Business advocates said a moratorium would be misguided.

Well before the July 30 flood, government-appointed groups were already examining how businesses manage stormwater and what can be done to minimize flood damages in the historic portions of Ellicott City, where a flour mill depended on water power.

Stopping development will not help or harm a review of whether a patchwork of regulations conflict with best practices to manage runoff.

One engineer who spoke at this week's hearing correctly observed that older Ellicott City developments didn't have sophisticated stormwater management protocols. Over time, advances in technology and engineering have brought systems such as retention ponds that allow rainwater to be more slowly released after a major storm and the use of paving materials that allow more water to seep into the earth rather than be swiftly swept into gutters, culverts and sewers.

Building almost anything in Howard County has never been a cake walk – there are layers of reviews, approvals and permits. To slap a moratorium in place could burnish an anti-development image that the county's doesn't need. Responsible efforts to study flooding issues are already underway. A halt to development, even in a limited area around Ellicott City for almost a year, would be an unnecessary overreach.

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

National Hurricane Center: Newton Is Now A Hurricane

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

MIAMI — The National Hurricane Center says Tropical Storm Newton has strengthened into a hurricane.

Newton formed off Mexico's Pacific coast and is headed toward Baja California.

Newton was located about 215 miles (350 km) southeast of Cabo San Lucas Monday evening. The storm was moving northwest at 16 mph (26 kph) with maximum sustained winds of 75 mph (120 kph).

Forecasters expect Newton to continue moving in the same general direction with an increase in forward speed into Tuesday. The center of Newton is expected to be near or over the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula Tuesday morning, by which time it could be near hurricane intensity.

The government of Mexico has issued a Hurricane Warning for the west coast of the Baja California Sur from north of Puerto Cortes to Cabo San Lazaro.

Coastal portions of five Mexican states could see 5 to 10 inches of rain, with isolated maximums of 15 inches.

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Hurricane Newton Bears Down On Mexico's Los Cabos Resorts

Reuters, September 6, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Hurricane Newton Heading For Mexico's Baja Peninsula

By Anthony Harrup

Wall Street Journal, September 5, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Hurricane Newton Hits Mexico With Threat Of Flash Floods

By Kelly Gilblom

Bloomberg News, September 6, 2016

Hurricane Newton made landfall Tuesday morning in northwest Mexico and will probably cause damage from heavy rain.

Cabo San Lucas, a popular tourist destination, will be hit by winds moving as fast as 90 miles (144 kilometers) an hour, according to the latest advisory note by the U.S. National Hurricane Center. Newton is expected to reach the mainland as a hurricane early Wednesday morning as it gradually weakens.

Associated rainfall of as much as 18 inches, could cause life-threatening flash floods and mud slides, especially in the areas of mountainous terrain. An advisory from the Mexican national weather service said the storm could be accompanied by hail, dust tornadoes and eddies, and warned against the risk of electric shock.

"A dangerous storm surge is expected to produce significant coastal flooding near and to the east of where the center makes landfall on both the southern Baja California peninsula and mainland Mexico," according to the update. "Near the coast, the surge will be accompanied by large and destructive waves."

Preparations to protect life and property should have been completed by now, NHC said. Baja California has seven ports, according to information compiled by Bloomberg. There's also an operational liquefied natural gas terminal that's outside the range of the hurricane's trajectory.

Countries including the U.K. and Canada warned against travel to Mexico amid dangerous weather. At least 38 people died in mudslides and floods caused by Tropical Storm Earl last month, the U.K. warning said.

Newton is the second hurricane within a week. Hermine became the first hurricane to strike Florida since 2005 on Friday. It damaged crops and property before weakening and moving up the U.S. East Coast.

Hurricane Newton Soaks Mexican Coast, Aims For Los Cabos

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

MEXICO CITY — Tropical Storm Newton strengthened into a hurricane Monday as it drenched parts of western Mexico, causing floods and landslides as it headed toward landfall near the Los Cabos resorts.

Forecasters said it was expected to come ashore Tuesday morning at or near the resort towns on the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula.

Rains associated with Newton prompted about 100 people to evacuate their homes and damaged residences in Uruapan in the Pacific coast state of Michoacan, the city government said. Some roads were blocked by flooding and mudslides in the neighboring state of Guerrero, where some people were evacuated by helicopter. No deaths were reported in either state.

Newton's maximum sustained winds increased to 75 mph (120 kph) by midafternoon Monday, the U.S. National Hurricane Center reported. The storm was centered about 215 miles (350 kilometers) southeast of Cabo San Lucas and was moving northwest at 16 mph (26 kph).

Forecasters said it was on a projected path to the southern tip of Baja, where the twin resorts of Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo are located. A hurricane warning was in effect for Cabo San Lucas and the nearby coastline.

Newton was expected to cross over the peninsula and enter the Gulf of California, also known as the Sea of Cortez, on Wednesday.

The hurricane center said the storm was likely to continue north into Arizona as a tropical depression later in the week.

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Record-tying Magnitude 5.6 Quake In Oklahoma Oil Country Rattles Midwest

By Molly Hennessy-Fiske

Los Angeles Times, September 3, 2016

Oklahoma regulators ordered more than three dozen oil and gas wastewater disposal wells to shut down after a magnitude 5.6 earthquake — matching the strongest ever to hit Oklahoma — struck Saturday morning and reverberated across the Great Plains, rattling even far-off Iowa.

People took to social media to report feeling the quake not just in Iowa but Missouri, Kansas, Texas, Arkansas and Nebraska. Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin declared a state of emergency in Pawnee County, epicenter of the quake.

Oklahomans have grown accustomed to quakes in recent years thanks to a flurry of seismic activity linked to underground disposal of wastewater from oil and natural gas production. But people quickly noticed this was no ordinary quake for the Sooner State.

Sarah Carpenter had just awoken and was sitting on the edge of her bed when the quake hit at 7:02 a.m., its epicenter not far from her home in the town of Pawnee.

"I heard the big boom and there were like two or three after that and I thought, 'This is not like any one we've ever had,' " said Carpenter, 64. "My house went back and forth and back and forth. I didn't think it would ever stop. I thought, 'I'm on a boat in an ocean.' I could hear stuff falling in my house.… I've been in a skyscraper in California when they had it and that's what it felt like. It was just rocking back and forth."

The last magnitude 5.6 quake to hit Oklahoma struck about 70 miles south in the town of Prague in November 2011, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

"This is the biggest one I've ever been around," said Pawnee County Sheriff Mike Waters. "It was felt all around us."

The epicenter of Saturday's quake was about nine miles northwest of the county seat, a town of about 2,000 in north-central Oklahoma where more than a dozen older limestone-and-brick buildings were damaged and one father had to get stitches after his mantelpiece toppled on his head as he shielded his son, Waters said.

About six buildings owned by the local Pawnee tribal authority also were damaged, as were more than a dozen houses in the rural county of 16,000, Waters said.

He said the quake seemed to last more than 30 seconds, longer than recent temblors, and "that's why we got so much more damage." The area was shaken by a 3.2 quake earlier in the week.

"Everybody's getting a little more used to them — but not to this magnitude," Waters said.

Waters was at home south of Pawnee when the ground starting moving. The shaking "knocked pictures off the wall, clocks off the wall, some fans off shelves — it was pretty bad. I haven't even got to go through my residence to see if I have any structural damage," he said.

Carpenter inspected her home and didn't see any damage, but worried about her pipes. When she went downtown to the antique store where she volunteers, see saw several older buildings cordoned off, their walls cracked and crumbling. The grocery store was closed. "All their food's on the floor," she said.

The antique store, Cornerpost, did not have any major damage, she said. Customers appeared Saturday and echoed Carpenter's memory of the quake: "They didn't think it was ever going to quit."

Fallin tweeted that state crews checking potential bridge and highway damage from the quake "found very minor issues."

"The city of Pawnee is working with insurance companies to inspect the buildings before reoccupying," she tweeted.

Fallin also announced that the state energy regulator, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, contacted operators of 37 disposal wells in a 725-

square-mile area near the epicenter "telling them to shut down" and that the order was "based on emergency authority — this is a mandatory directive."

"Everything within 5 miles of a 10-mile section of the fault in question is to shut down within 7 days. Everything else is to shut down within 10 days," she tweeted.

Matt Skinner, a spokesman for the commission, said it was an "indefinite shutdown."

"All the reductions we have done to date have been predicated on the research showing a link between Arbuckle wastewater disposal and earthquakes," Skinner said.

The formation has long been a favored spot for wastewater disposal because of its depth and ability to soak up water. It sits just above the basement rock where most active faults lie, and where researchers have warned injecting wastewater could cause earthquakes.

The commission released a statement saying the area of concern includes 211 square miles in Osage County outside its jurisdiction. The agency has contacted federal regulators at the Environmental Protection Agency, who will "determine what action to take in that area."

Parts of Oklahoma have become as earthquake-prone as California, experts said. Although the increase in earthquakes of magnitude 3 or greater in the state in recent years has been linked to the energy industry's wastewater disposal, experts cautioned that it was too early to say what caused Saturday's quake.

"For this particular one, we can't say until we study it more," said Jefferson Chang, interim state seismologist. "Oklahoma has had large earthquakes even before industry started up here.… It could be tectonic, it could be industry. You need more research to tell. It's a very hot topic."

Last year, the state-run Oklahoma Geological Survey said that it "considers it very likely" that oil and gas wastewater wells were causing the majority of the state's earthquakes.

"If it is industry, it's mainly wastewater disposal," Chang said, not the drilling itself or hydraulic fracturing, known as "fracking."

State regulators have asked Oklahoma producers to reduce wastewater disposal volumes in earthquake-prone regions of the state.

The area where the quake was centered is at the edge of a region covered by the Corporation Commission's spring "regional earthquake response plan," designed to reduce the number of earthquakes by decreasing wastewater injection volume by 40% compared with 2014.

Both Oklahoma and Kansas have imposed such volume limits after quakes increased in recent years, but Kansas officials acted more quickly and have seen a decrease in quakes of 2.7 or more — a 60% drop from 2014 to 2015. In Oklahoma, the frequency of quakes has continued to increase.

Carpenter was skeptical about connecting the quakes to drilling.

"I don't think they've been drilling round here lately, so I have a hard time believing it's related," she said, blaming natural forces. "We're on a fault line."

Waters said he'd like to see more research into possible connections between quakes and drilling, which fuels the local economy.

"We've had a lot of drilling around here but the past several months it's slowed down. As the drilling has slowed, the quakes have slowed," he said. "Our counties rely on that, our schools, our law enforcement. But if it's jeopardizing our citizens, we need to do something about it."

This article was updated to report that Gov. Mary Fallin declared a state of emergency in Pawnee County.

This article was updated with additional details and quotes from Sarah Carpenter and Mike Waters.

This article was updated with additional details.

This article was updated with information on the relationship between earthquake severity and property damage

This article was originally published at 5:40 a.m.

Earthquake Ties Record For Strongest In Oklahoma History

By Niraj Chokshi And Henry Fountain

New York Times, September 3, 2016

A 5.6-magnitude earthquake centered near the city of Pawnee rattled the state just after 8 a.m. Saturday, tying a record set in 2011 for the strongest such tremor in Oklahoma history, according to the National Weather Service.

Local officials reported moderate to severe damage and at least one nonlife-threatening injury.

"We are finding a lot of rural houses north, northwest of Pawnee that are seeing extensive damage," said Sheriff Mike Waters of Pawnee County.

Pawnee County Emergency Management posted photos on Facebook just before noon on Saturday of a pile of rubble, noting that three buildings sustained moderate damage, while several others had minor damage.

Rocks and bricks fell from some businesses in town, and items fell off grocery store shelves, Mr. Waters added.

Gov. Mary Fallin said on Twitter that she had dispatched state transportation crews to inspect area bridges for damage.

The United States Geological Survey recorded subsequent earthquakes of magnitudes 3.6, 3.4 and 2.9. The morning earthquake was felt as far away as Chicago and Austin, Tex.

Oklahoma has been hit in recent years by thousands of earthquakes. Most have been imperceptible, but the number that can be felt — generally of magnitude 3.0 and higher — has risen significantly. Only three earthquakes of that size or stronger were recorded in 2009. There were 109 in 2013 and 585 in 2014. Last year, the state had 907 such quakes. So far this year, there have been more than 400.

Seismologists say the quakes are caused by high-pressure injection of wastewater from oil and gas wells, both conventional ones and those that are hydraulically fractured, or fracked. As wastewater under pressure migrates into rock formations below ground, it alters stresses along old faults, allowing them to slip.

The United States Geological Survey acknowledged in a statement that oil and gas activity has set off many earthquakes in the states, but said it could not yet say the practice caused Saturday's quake.

"Without studying the specifics of the wastewater injection and oil and gas production in this area, the U.S.G.S. cannot currently conclude whether or not this particular earthquake was caused by industrial-related, human activities," it said.

Oklahoma has thousands of wastewater disposal wells across the state. Since mid-2015, the state has ordered operators of some disposal wells to reduce the volume of wastewater injected, in the hope of reducing the number of earthquakes.

The earthquake on Saturday is the largest in the state since a 5.6-magnitude quake struck near Prague, about 60 miles south of Pawnee, in November 2011. That quake injured two people and damaged more than a dozen homes, as well as a building at a local college.

Record-tying Oklahoma Earthquake Felt As Far Away As Arizona

By Ken Miller

Associated Press, September 3, 2016

OKLAHOMA CITY — A record-tying earthquake in the edge of Oklahoma's key energy-producing areas rattled the Midwest from Illinois to the southwest part of Texas on Saturday, and likely will bring fresh attention to the practice of disposing oil and gas field wastewater deep underground.

The United States Geological Survey said a 5.6 magnitude earthquake happened at 7:02 a.m. Saturday in north-central Oklahoma, on the fringe of an area where regulators had stepped in to limit wastewater disposal. That temblor matches a November 2011 quake in the same region.

An increase in magnitude 3.0 or greater earthquakes in Oklahoma has been linked to underground disposal of wastewater from oil and natural gas production.

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission, which since 2013 has asked wastewater-well owners to reduce disposal volumes in parts of the state, is requiring 37 wells in a 514 square mile area around the epicenter of the earthquake to shut down within seven to 10 days because of previous connections between the injection of wastewater and earthquakes.

"All of our actions have been based on the link that researchers have drawn between the Arbuckle disposal well operations and earthquakes in Oklahoma," spokesman Matt Skinner said Saturday. "We're trying to do this as quickly as possible, but we have to follow the recommendations of the seismologists, who tell us everything going off at once can cause an (earthquake)."

Skinner said the commission's "area of interest" includes another 211 square miles in Osage County, but doesn't know how many wells may be involved because the area is under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency, and that the commission is working with that agency.

"EPA decides on the wells in Osage County. We don't know anything about Osage County, legally we're not even allowed to ask," Skinner said.

People in Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri; Chicago; Gilbert, Arizona; Fayetteville and Little Rock, Arkansas; Des Moines, Iowa; Memphis, Tennessee; and Big Lake in southwest Texas, all reported feeling the earthquake. Dallas TV station WFAA tweeted that the quake shook their studios, too.

Pawnee County Emergency Management Director Mark Randell said no buildings collapsed in the town of 2,200 about nine miles southeast of the epicenter. "We've got buildings cracked," Randell said. "Most of it's brick and mortar, old buildings from the early 1900s."

Randell also said a man suffered a minor head injury when part of a fireplace fell on him as he protected a child. The man was treated and released.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin has declared a state of emergency for the county, allowing state agencies to make emergency purchases related to disaster relief and preparedness. The declaration is also the first step toward seeking federal aid should it be necessary

The damage is not as severe as the 2011 quake near Prague, Oklahoma, about 60 miles south of Pawnee, despite being the same magnitude and approximately the same depth. Saturday's was 3.7 miles deep, compared to 3.1 miles in 2011. Both are shallow quakes, during which shaking is more intense, like setting off "a bomb directly under a city," USGS seismologist Susan Hough has said.

However, hard bedrock beneath the surface in north-central Oklahoma is likely the reason for less damage, Oklahoma Geological Survey geophysicist Jefferson Chang said, adding that the subsurface around Prague is softer.

"It's pretty much comparable to the Prague event," Chang said. "But in harder rock, it won't shake as much."

Pawnee furniture store owner Lee Wills told The Associated Press that he first thought it was a thunderstorm.

"Then it just ... Everything went crazy after that. It just started shaking," said Wills, who lives about 2½ miles outside of town. "It rocked my house like a rubber band. Threw stuff off cabinets and out of cabinets, broke glasses."

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Associated Press writers Kelly P. Kissel in Little Rock, Arkansas, Erica Hunzinger in Chicago and Ben Thomas in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

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Midwest Earthquake Felt From Missouri To North Texas

By Elliot Smilowitz

The Hill, September 3, 2016

An earthquake shook the Midwest early Saturday morning, rattling Americans just waking up in Missouri, Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma.

The earthquake's magnitude was 5.6, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). It hit just after 7 a.m. Eastern.

It was felt in Kansas City, Mo.; Fayetteville, Ark.; Norman, Okla.; and Dallas, Texas, according to the Associated Press.

It's not yet clear whether the earthquake caused any injuries or damage.

Earthquakes hit Oklahoma frequently, but they are typically below 4.0 magnitude and rarely are felt in the northeast part of the state, according to Tulsa World.

Earthquake Rattles Oklahoma; One Of Strongest Recorded In State

NPR, September 3, 2016

An earthquake struck northern Oklahoma early Saturday morning, rattling houses and waking residents in the region around Pawnee, about 74 miles north of Oklahoma City. Preliminary measurements show the quake had a magnitude of 5.6 — believed to be one of the strongest in state history.

The quake was felt in five states, according to the U.S. Geological Survey: Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas and Texas. It struck just after 7 a.m. local time, at a depth of 6 kilometers (3.7 miles).

The epicenter was around 8 miles northwest of Pawnee, a town of less than 3,000 people. Shortly after the large quake hit, at least four additional temblors struck the same area, with the strongest having a magnitude of 3.6; all of them were shallower than the first quake.

According to the National Weather Service's Tulsa office, the earthquake ties the strongest quake in Oklahoma history at 5.6 magnitude. The previous record breaker hit on Nov. 5, 2011, the agency says.

Public Radio Tulsa — where the quake was strongly felt — describes the scene:

"Police in Pawnee report some windows were broken and homes sustained damage to the the outside facade. There have been no reports of injuries.

"The quake struck just after 7 a.m on Saturday morning. It was nearly four miles deep.

"Social media was alive with people feeling the quake from Dallas to Springfield, Missouri. The quake was so strong in Joplin, people there were worried it was the New Madrid Fault in far eastern Missouri, the site of the United State's strongest earthquake ever in 1812."

A number of smaller earthquakes have hit northern Oklahoma in the past week — including one that struck the same area as today's quake on Thursday, with a 3.2 magnitude. Since last Saturday, a string of similar quakes have hit an area west of Pawnee, including at least eight with a magnitude of 3 or higher.

In Oklahoma and other regions that are experiencing a spike in earthquakes, a consensus has emerged that they're linked to the underground injection of wastewater that's generated from fracking in oil and gas production, as Public Radio Tulsa recently reported.

The station says the Oklahoma Geological Survey is now working on a six-month study of injection wells to get a grip on how to cut the chances that operations "inadvertently induce a seismic event," as an oil industry representative said last month.

The U.S. Geological Survey says that Saturday's strong quake "occurred as the result of shallow strike-slip faulting."

More from the USGS:

"Locations across the central and eastern United States (CEUS) have been experiencing a rapid increase in the number of induced earthquakes over the past 7 years. Since 2009 rates in some areas, such as Oklahoma, have increased by more than an order of magnitude. Scientific studies have linked the majority of this increased activity to wastewater injection in deep disposal wells in several locations. However, other mechanisms such as fluid withdrawal, enhanced oil recovery, or hydraulic fracturing processes can also result in induced earthquakes."

State Of Emergency Declared In Oklahoma After Record Earthquake

By Michael Regan

PBS NewsHour, September 4, 2016

Oklahoma's governor on Saturday declared a state of emergency for Pawnee County located near the epicenter of one of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded in the state.

The 5.6-magnitude earthquake struck Saturday morning about 8 miles northwest of Pawnee City, damaging buildings, shaking food from shelves in local supermarkets and sending shock waves through several Midwestern states.

Gov. Mary Fallin said in a statement that no injuries were reported and damage was limited, though the state of emergency designation for Pawnee County would open up funding for disaster relief and emergency preparedness and could bring in federal aid.

Saturday's earthquake equaled another 5.6 earthquake recorded in 2011 in Oklahoma's Lincoln County, the largest ever documented in the state.

Oklahoma has seen a rapid rise in the number of earthquakes over the last six years, which scientists link to the use of wastewater by the oil and gas industry.

While the process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is often associated with the uptick in Oklahoma earthquakes, some studies show earthquakes may instead be caused by companies pulling gas and oil from water found underground, then back into the earth through disposal wells.

Historically, the state saw just two magnitude 3 earthquakes or higher per year prior to 2009, though that number surged to more than 900 in 2015 after domestic production of oil and gas increased along with the amount of wastewater.

Earlier this year, state regulators curbed the amount of wastewater that the oil and gas industry can inject thousands of feet into the Arbuckle formation, a sedimentary rock layer found under Oklahoma that rests above fault lines.

On Saturday, the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, which is in charge of regulating the state's oil and gas industry, began halting the use of 37 additional disposal wells across 725-square miles in the area surrounding the earthquake's epicenter.

Fallin said the state also will work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which has "sole jurisdiction" over disposal wells in another nearby county.

"Information on the earthquake is still being collected, and will be reviewed by my coordinating council on seismic activity," Fallin said

State Of Emergency In Oklahoma City Following Earthquake

By Jessie Hellmann

The Hill, September 4, 2016

Pawnee, Okla., is under a state of emergency after an earthquake hit the county Saturday morning, according to The Associated Press.

"The earthquake was felt in multiple states and was the strongest the state has experienced since November 2011 when a magnitude 5.6 earthquake occurred in Lincoln County," Gov. Mary Fallin said on Saturday night.

"This emergency declaration will start the process to help individuals, families and businesses impacted by the earthquakes and serves as a precursor to requesting any necessary assistance."

State regulators have also ordered oil and gas companies shut down 37 wastewater disposal wells in the area.

The earthquake has been linked to injection wells that oil and gas companies use as part of fracking.

Disposal Wells' Link To Oklahoma Earthquake Scrutinized

By Miguel Bustillo And Beckie Strum

Wall Street Journal, September 5, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Oklahoma Earthquake Felt In Several U.S. States, As Oil Wells Draw Scrutiny

By Miguel Bustillo And Beckie Strum

Wall Street Journal, September 3, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Shutdown Of Wastewater Wells Near Earthquake Epicenter Is Ordered: Oklahoma Officials

Associated Press, September 3, 2016

PAWNEE, Okla. (AP) — The Oklahoma Corporation Commission has directed dozens of wastewater disposal wells within an approximate 500-square-mile radius of the epicenter the Oklahoma earthquake to shut down.

The commission says about 35 wells are included in the directive, which was issued following the 5.6 magnitude earthquake that struck Saturday morning about nine miles northwest of Pawnee in north-central Oklahoma.

The number of magnitude 3.0 or greater earthquakes has skyrocketed in Oklahoma, from a few dozen in 2012 to more than 900 last year.

Commission spokesman Matt Skinner says the wells were directed to shut down due to scientific links that the increase to the underground disposal of wastewater from oil and gas production induces earthquakes. The commission has previously asked producers to reduce wastewater disposal volumes.

The earthquake ties the record for the strongest earthquake in recorded Oklahoma history. No major damage was reported, and there was one minor injury.

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Wells Closing After Oklahoma Quake Fraction Of State's Total

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) – The 37 wastewater disposal wells to be shut down in north-central Oklahoma, where a 5.6 magnitude earthquake struck this weekend, are just a fraction of the state's total number.

There are about 4,200 total wells across the state and about 700 in a 15,000-square-mile "Area of Interest" created by the commission to address earthquakes in the area that includes the epicenter of Saturday's temblor near Pawnee.

The earthquake tied a November 2011 quake as the strongest in recorded state history and was felt as far away as Nebraska, but no major damage was reported.

Not all of the state's wells operate simultaneously, Oklahoma Corporation Commission spokesman Matt Skinner said.

"We estimate that at any one time, there are about 3,200 active disposal wells," Skinner said.

An increase in magnitude 3.0 or greater earthquakes in Oklahoma has been linked to underground disposal of wastewater from oil and natural gas production, and since 2013, the commission has asked wastewater-well owners to reduce disposal volumes in parts of the state where the temblors have been most frequent.

The "area of interest" includes another 211 adjacent square miles that's under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Skinner said the commission doesn't know how many wells may be involved there.

Gov. Mary Fallin declared a state of emergency in Pawnee County because of the earthquake. State and local emergency management officials and officials from the U.S. Geological Survey assessed damage Sunday, according to Pawnee County Emergency Management Director Mark Randell.

"We're just trying to determine just how widespread" the damage is, Randell said. He described it as minor to moderate, with some collapsed chimneys and fallen sandstone facing off buildings; no buildings collapsed.

None of the utilities, pipelines or fuel infrastructure in the area had major damage, either, the commission said. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation inspected 180 state bridges within a 30-mile radius of the epicenter and reported minor cosmetic damage to two structures, but all are open and safe for travel.

ODOT said the inspections across six counties took about six hours to complete.

"We are pleased with the speed and efficiency of our crews in their response to this event and dedication to ensuring public safety," ODOT executive director Mike Patterson said.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is inspecting all dams within a 50-mile radius of the epicenter, including the Birch, Cleveland Levee, Heyburn, Kaw, Keystone, and Skiatook dams.

Key energy-producing areas in both Oklahoma and Kansas saw an uptick in quakes in the first half of this decade, but took different approaches. Kansas moved quickly to limit volume in wastewater disposal wells, while Oklahoma concentrated on the depth of the disposal. Kansas saw a 60 percent drop while the frequency of quakes in Oklahoma continued to climb.

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Food Assistance Continues; Experts Discuss "Exodus"

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Experts studying demographics and data following south Louisiana's great flood of 2016 tell a newspaper they don't expect a mass exodus of people from the area, such as the one that followed Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Allison Plyer, executive director of The Data Center in New Orleans, told The Advocate (http://bit.ly/2bSIwTj) that the flooding was patchy enough that it enabled victims to stay with unaffected neighbors nearby while they worked on homes.

Experts said the restoration of electricity and school reopenings were other factors that could prevent a mass exodus.

Tulane University geographer Richard Campanella told the newspaper that many residents in the flood footprint are homeowners. He said property ownership would make them less likely to leave than renters.

Renters are one group that is more likely to leave.

That was the case for Caroline and Kevin Farris, who were renting a home in Denham Springs with their 3-year-old daughter Isabella.

They were in North Carolina when the flood hit, visiting Caroline's family.

They returned to find that the house had flooded with 39 inches of water.

Kevin Farris' family in Watson also flooded, so the couple decided to head back to North Carolina and stay with Caroline Farris' family.

"We didn't have a choice," Caroline Farris said. "My husband called his job and said, 'Look, I'm really sorry, but we can't stay here,' and then I had to do the same."

Caroline Farris already has gotten a new job in her hometown, and the couple expects to move into their new rental next week.

Elliott Stonecipher, a north Louisiana demographics expert, told The Associated Press on Monday that another group to keep an eye on will be retiring baby boomers – people with discretionary income who might find the floods to be the last straw as they cope with other south Louisiana problems, including traffic congestion and crime in Baton Rouge.

Many in that group, especially with government aid for their flood losses, might flee to Florida or Texas, states without a personal income tax. Or, if they want to stay in state, they might head for central or north Louisiana spots where real estate costs are low.

The August floods damaged more than 150,000 homes and displaced thousands.

A state office said Monday that more than 109,000 people have received nearly $44 million worth of food benefits in the first two weeks of a nutritional assistance program helping south Louisiana flood victims.

It's called the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Progam. The state Department of Children and Family Services says in a news release that Saturday marked the completion of two weeks of D-SNAP operations in Acadia, Ascension, East Baton Rouge and Lafayette parishes.

The department opens its third week of operations Tuesday, through Saturday in parts of Evangeline, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, St. James, St. Martin, Washington, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana and St. Tammany parishes.

Residents are encouraged to preregister for DSNAP online at www.dcfs.la.gov/preregister or by phone at 1-888-LAHELP-U (1-888-524-3578) before visiting a DSNAP location.

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Information from: The Advocate, http://theadvocate.com

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Tens Of Thousands Of Vehicles Were Destroyed In Recent La. Floods

By Jesse Hardman

NPR, September 6, 2016

Most of the roads in South Louisiana are now open. Towing companies are going gangbusters because neighborhoods flooded by the recent rain storms are littered with damaged cars and trucks.

Flooded Cars Mean Longer OMV Hours

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — State police say there's an overwhelming demand for Office of Motor

Vehicle services following disastrous flooding in August.

In a news release, state police say office hours at the OMV Field Office on Independence Boulevard in Baton Rouge is extending office hours through next week.

Through Friday, the office hours will be 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The office will be open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday.

The office is processing up to 600 cancelled plates a day from flooded vehicles as well as duplicate drivers licenses and IDs.

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How Growth-Focused Politics Helped Build Vulnerability In Louisiana's Flood Zones

By Andrew Revkin

New York Times, September 2, 2016

Updated | As coastal communities from the Carolinas through New England track Tropical Storm Hermine, which struck Florida yesterday as that state's first hurricane since 2005 before weakening, it's worth looking back at the disastrous deluge in Louisiana for wider lessons. A good starting point is two photographs.

What's wrong with these pictures?

When the elegant plantation home was built in Baton Rouge, La., some two centuries ago, it was elevated a few feet aboveground — providing greatly boosted odds of limited damage in one of the Mississippi delta's frequent big floods (not to mention protection from termites and the like).

When the contemporary ranch was built in a development in Ascension Parish nearby, it was set on a concrete slab — deeply vulnerable to floodwaters like those that came in the state's astounding mega-rainfall in mid August. The photos were taken by Craig E. Colten, the Carl O. Sauer Professor of Geography at Louisiana State University and a longtime student of why communities expand in harm's way.

He wrote a compelling piece for The Conversation digging in on the growth-oriented policies and perverse incentives that added greatly to the losses in Louisiana's great flood of 2016.

You can read an excerpt below.

But I also recommend you read a deep dive into factors behind the scope of losses in the August flood, by Edward P. Richards, who directs the program in law, science and public health at Louisiana State's law school. That piece includes some helpful math and flood history explaining why "one in a thousand year" storm labels or the like can greatly overstate the rarity of extreme events.

Here's his prime point in a section under the heading "Who's to blame?":

From a land use perspective, the primary problem was that local planning and zoning commissions have known that the areas are prone to severe flooding for at least the 30-plus years since the 1983 flood. Homeowners and small businesses were not warned about the risk and were not advised to buy flood insurance if they were outside the FEMA 100-year flood zone. They relied on planning and zoning commissions to determine if developers were building in safe locations.

After surveying the situation in Louisiana's flood zone, Richards offers an all-too-familiar warning to growth-oriented municipalities in flood zones around the country:

This is a problem for every community in the United States that is subject to periodic flooding. There are many communities with millions of homes that have built themselves beyond the drainage capacity of their watersheds and face the same difficult choices about development and relocation as does the area currently flooded in Louisiana.

[Read John Schwartz's new exploration of tropical storms in a warming climate. And for a discussion of factors that fueled the massive rains in Louisiana, including the role of greenhouse-driven climate change, click back here and listen to the related Warm Regards podcast.*]

Read further on, if you dare, and you'll find a hair-raising nugget from Katherine Bagley's piece for Yale Environment 360 on a new study of "severe repetitive loss properties," rebuilt over and over and over and over again (actually many more times than that for some) thanks to subsidized federal flood insurance:

In Colten's piece, "Suburban sprawl and poor preparation worsened flood damage in Louisiana," the geographer describes some parallels with the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina:

In both cases, human decisions magnified the consequences of extreme natural events. Planning and permitting enabled development in areas that had experienced repeat floods, and agencies had failed to complete projects designed to mitigate flood damage before the storms hit.

This part of Louisiana, which is known as the Florida Parishes because it once was part of the

Spanish territory of Florida, is a natural laboratory for flood studies. A benchmark flood in 1983 caused some $344 million in damages. Additional dramatic floods occurred in 1990 and 1993. In 2001 Tropical Storm Allison dumped 19 inches of rain on Baton Rouge over the course of two days and unleashed extensive inundations. And just last March, 9 to 15 inches of rain inundated much of the same area.

In 1985 Rod Emmer, the long-time director of the Louisiana floodplain managers' association, gave a stunningly prescient presentation to a national gathering of floodplain managers in New Orleans. Emmer observed that the devastating 1983 flood along the Amite River was the fourth in an 11-year span, and that losses could have been reduced with sensible flood-reduction projects. He also pointed out that planners had repeatedly called for such action, and concluded that the problem was not a failure to plan, but a failure to follow through and complete projects.

After the 1983 flood, local officials began taking steps to improve flood protection systems and reduce risk. They included raising and modifying highway bridges that impeded the flow of river water, and upgrading levees and pumps to manage excess backwater flooding in the lower reaches of the river basins.

Baton Rouge, the state capital and largest city in the region, and Denham Springs modified their floodplain building standards to reduce risk. And public officials secured authorization in 1986 for the Corps of Engineers to build a diversion canal to redirect excess water from the upper Comite River basin to the Mississippi. Local voters even approved a tax to fund a portion of the project in 2000. By all appearances, it seemed that communities were responding to Emmer's appeal.

However, these efforts have not been sustained. Suburban sprawl has spilled onto floodplains and placed residents at risk. For example, the relatively new incorporated community of Central in East Baton Rouge Parish reports that 75 percent of its territory is in the 100-year floodplain. According to initial news reports, up to 90 percent of the town's houses sustained damage in this month's floods. Between 2000 and 2010, the population of Ascension Parish grew from 76,617 to 107,215, and Livingston Parish's population increased from 91,814 to 128,026. Developers have intensively built up areas along the Comite and Amite rivers and in the territory where the two rivers converge and back up into Bayou Manchac during floods….

There has been no effort to deflect development or require safe construction practices within the 500-year floodplain, even though the region's flood history suggests that broader flood mitigation efforts would be prudent.

Since Congress passed the Disaster Relief Act of 1950, the federal government has provided relief and recovery funds after large-scale floods and other disasters. These payments, along with federally funded levees and other flood control structures, have created a false sense of security in the face of risk.

As promised, if you have the strength, here's the main finding from the Natural Resources Defense Council report on repetitive flood losses — and bailouts — at the heart of Bagley's story (italics added by me):

2,100 properties across the U.S. enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program have flooded and been rebuilt more than 10 times since 1978, according to a new analysis of insurance data by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). One home in Batchelor, Louisiana has flooded 40 times over the past four decades, receiving $428,379 in insurance payments. More than 30,000 properties in the program, run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, have flooded multiple times over the years. Those homes, known as "severe repetitive loss properties," make up just 0.6 percent of federal flood insurance policies. But they account for 10.6 percent of the program's claims — totaling $5.5 billion in payments….

According to FEMA records, Louisiana homeowners with flood insurance have poor track records when it comes to preparing for the next storm. The state leads the nation in severe repetitive loss properties, with more than 7,200 of the NFIP's 30,000 multi-flood homes. Since 1978, these Louisiana houses have received $1.22 billion in flood insurance payments — 22 percent of all repetitive loss claims, according the NRDC.

"We need to change the emphasis of the NFIP from a rebuilding program to a risk mitigation program," said Moore. "It currently addresses people's short-term need to get their life back in order, not the long-term risk."

I can't end without noting how much Moore's plea echoes those I've been hearing from officials, economists and scientists in the West's crowding wildfire zones, where ballooning federal budgets for fighting fires are draining money from programs that could help communities build safer and get comfortable "living with wildfire."

Further reading | For a sobering reminder of just how normal massive flooding is along the Mississippi and its delta, explore the studies linked in another post by Richards at the L.S.U. law school:

"Mississippi River Flood History"

The record of Mississippi River floods goes back to the earliest explorers: High Flows and Flood History on the Lower Mississippi River Below Red River Landing, LA (1543- – Present) and the paleoclimate records show megafloods greatly exceeding even the 1927 flood: Brown, P., J. P. Kennett, and B. L. Ingram (1999), Marine evidence for episodic Holocene megafloods in North America and the northern Gulf of Mexico, Paleoceanography, 14(4), 498–510, doi:10.1029/1999PA900017; and Tripsanas, E.K. et al., 2013. Paleoenvironmental and paleoclimatic implications of enhanced Holocene discharge from the Mississippi River based on the sedimentology and geochemistry of a deep core (JPC-26) from the Gulf of Mexico. Palaios, 28(9), pp.623–636.

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* Inserted at 12:20 p.m. thanks to a Twitter comment by Adam Siegel.

Wildfire Prompts Evacuation Preparations In Wenatchee

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

WENATCHEE, Wash. (AP) — Officials are telling residents in Wenatchee neighborhoods to prepare to evacuate in case a wildfire comes closer.

Chelan County Emergency Management tells KIRO station that the fire was burning at about 10 acres near Horse Lake Road on Sunday.

Authorities say residents nearby should be ready to leave at a moment's notice.

Firefighters are battling winds of about 7 mph. Additional crews are being called in.

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Blaze Near Last Month's Huge California Wildfire Contained

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

DEVORE, California (AP) — A slow-moving wildfire burning in the San Bernardino National Forest near the site of a major wildfire last month has been contained.

The U.S. Forest Service says the 20-acre fire broke out Saturday night near Interstate 15 in Devore.

The fire led officials to close the interstate for a short time before reopening most lanes. The interstate is a major route for travelers and truckers between Southern California and Las Vegas.

In mid-August, a wildfire in the area burned with a ferocity never seen before by veteran California firefighters.

The blaze raced up and down canyons, instantly engulfing homes and forcing thousands to flee. It was contained at 57 square miles after seven days. Five years of drought have turned the state's wildlands into a tinder box.

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Idaho Wildfire Slowed By Cold Front, Rain

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

LOWMAN, Idaho (AP) – A fire burning in the rugged wilderness between Idaho City and Lowman since July 18 has been slowed by rain.

KIVI-TV reports (http://bit.ly/2c7FETd) that the so-called Pioneer Fire has burned about 283 square miles and was 55 percent contained by Monday.

Forest officials say an overnight cold front lowered temperatures into the 30s and 40s in the area on Monday.

Intermittent rainfall occurred Sunday night and early Monday morning, primarily south of highway 17.

Officials said firefighters are taking advantage of the cooler temperatures and higher humidity to engage the fire directly where it is safe to do so before warmer and drier conditions return later in the week.

Areas within the fire perimeter continue to burn, sending smoke to Garden Valley, Lowman, Stanley and surrounding areas.

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Information from: KTRV-TV, http://www.ktrv.com/desktopdefault.aspx

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California Wildfires Put Vegas Under Air Quality Warning

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Southern Nevada is spending Labor Day weekend under an air quality advisory thanks to wildfire smoke from California.

The Clark County Department of Air Quality on Sunday issued the warning for potentially elevated levels of ozone and smoke through Monday.

Several wildfires burning in central and southern California triggered the advisory, although officials said unhealthy levels of pollution aren't currently occurring in the Las Vegas area.

Young children, the elderly and those with respiratory problems or cardiac disease may become sensitive to any rising ozone or smoke levels.

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More Campgrounds And Hiking Trails Closed As Big Sur Fire Continues To Burn

By Harriet Ryan

Los Angeles Times, September 3, 2016

Popular campgrounds and hiking trails near Big Sur remained off-limits for the holiday weekend as fire crews continued their six-week battle against a blaze burning in the Los Padres National Forest.

Federal officials said Saturday morning that with the Soberanes fire only about 60% contained, they were expanding a closure order to cover a swath of the national forest in Monterey County from north of Big Sur to the San Luis Obispo County line.

The areas closed to the public includes the forest's Monterey Ranger District, a region known for scenic wilderness with coastal redwood groves, steep canyons and dramatic peaks.

The closures are designed to prevent injuries and reduce the potential for another accidental wildfire, officials said.

The Soberanes fire started July 22 with an illegal campfire in Garrapata State Park. The fire has consumed nearly 96,000 acres and 57 homes. A 35-year-old bulldozer operator working with Cal Fire died in a rollover accident while working to extinguish the fire in July.

Thirteen crews totaling more than a thousand people are using helicopters and controlled burns this weekend in an effort to get control of the blaze.

Despite the forest closures, many attractions in the coastal region are open. Businesses along Highway 1 are generally open as is Hearst Castle, Big Sur Lodge, Point Sur Light Station and portions of Julia Pfieffer Burns State Park.

Hurricane Season Is Heating Up. So Is The Planet. Coincidence?

By John Schwartz

New York Times, September 2, 2016

The 2016 hurricane season just shifted from sleepy to fierce.

Tropical Storm Hermine strengthened into a hurricane on Thursday, just in time to strike the coast of Florida — the first hurricane to hit that state in nearly 11 years.

As that storm moves up the Atlantic coast, two other storms had been threatening Hawaii, a state that rarely receives such visitors. And there are probably more to come before the season concludes at the end of November.

This is, in other words, the height of the season, that time of year when conditions are the most favorable for making cyclones — and for making coastal residents nervous. It is also the moment that puts on display much of what we know, and still do not know, about hurricanes, and what to expect as climate change progresses.

Much of this, so far, is normal. This season is shaping up within the forecasts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which predicted in May that, in the Atlantic, there was a 70 percent likelihood of as many as 16 named storms.

As many as eight of them, the agency said, could become hurricanes (that is to say, with winds of 74 miles per hour) and as many as four could be major hurricanes with winds of 111 miles per hour or higher.

So things are on track in the Atlantic. In the Pacific, however, there have been some unusually strong storms and busy seasons in recent years.

All of this activity comes after what some meteorologists and news reports have called a long hurricane drought, citing a nearly 10-year run without major hurricanes making landfall in the continental United States. While that is literally true by the definitions used by climate scientists, any discussion of a hurricane drought can seem insulting to people in the Northeast and along the Texas Gulf Coast, where the so-called Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Ike caused billions of dollars of damage.

The efforts to detect a lull involve arbitrary line-drawing exercises, Robert E. Hart of Florida State University wrote in a recent paper with Daniel R. Chavas of Princeton and Mark P. Guishard of the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences. A Category 3 hurricane at landfall is considered a major storm; Hurricane Ike, for all its destructiveness, missed that mark, and Sandy was not considered a hurricane by the time it struck but instead an extratropical storm.

Whether or not the definitions of hurricane drought should be changed, Dr. Hart said in an exchange of emails as he prepared for Hurricane Hermine to hit his home in Tallahassee, long periods without storms can foster dangerous complacency. "Memory fades about the prior events, and more people have never experienced one than before," he said. (His home came through the storm without damage.)

When it comes to hurricanes and climate change, scientists are still trying to figure out what warming is doing now and will do later. "It's a really tough problem," said Gabriel A. Vecchi, a climate researcher at NOAA's geophysical fluid dynamics laboratory in Princeton.

The issue might appear to be simple: Warmer oceans provide more energy for storms, so storms should get more numerous and mighty. But other factors have complicated the picture, he said, including atmospheric changes that can affect wind shear, a factor that keeps cyclones from forming.

Kerry A. Emanuel, a climate scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said the evidence suggested climate change would cause the strongest storms to grow even stronger, and to be more frequent. Unresolved questions surround the effect of warming on the weaker storms, but even those will dump more rain, leading over time to increased damage from flooding.

In the Pacific, and especially near Hawaii, there is some evidence that the tendency toward more storms and stronger storms is underway, Dr. Vecchi said.

Hiroyuki Murakami, an associate research scholar at the Princeton laboratory, said that the unusually active hurricane seasons for Hawaii were being caused mostly by subtropical warming that is part of the ocean's natural variability, but that human-caused climate change was also having an effect. His recent research, he said, suggests that active hurricane seasons in the Pacific will grow more frequent under the influence of warming, though natural variability will still play a role in the record for any individual year.

Finding the strong telltale "signal" of climate change in events is challenging, Dr. Emanuel said, because there are relatively few storms to draw data from. "If we have our numbers right," he said, "it will be very difficult to see a signal in the actual data for a long time."

Still, he said, prudent risk assessment calls for expecting these theories to be proved right over time, and to prepare.

The fuzziness about whether hurricane patterns are changing does not undercut the overwhelming scientific consensus about climate change in general, Dr. Vecchi said. "There is no conflict between uncertainty about what global warming is going to do to hurricanes, and the reality of global warming and human activity being one of the drivers of global warming," he said.

"Just because I don't know what you had for lunch," he added, "doesn't mean you don't eat."

Any storm can do tremendous damage where it hits, depending on the strength of its surge and winds and flooding. And overdevelopment along the nation's coastlines means that the cost of damage is bound to escalate.

A big part of preparing, Dr. Emanuel said, is overhauling the nation's flood insurance system, which currently does little to dissuade people from living in hazardous areas.

A recent report from the Natural Resources Defense Council showed that many homes are rebuilt over and over after storms with money from the National Flood Insurance Program.

The owners of one Louisiana home that has flooded 40 times have received $428,379 from the program over time. More than 2,100 homes flooded more than 10 times and received payments from the program. The 30,000 most-flooded homes make up less than 1 percent of the five million homes in the program, but have received more than 10 percent of the claims paid since 1978.

"Climate change just makes it worse," Dr. Emanuel said, and he predicted far greater property damage and rebuilding costs in years to come. The insurance problem, he said, "sets up for a string of Katrinas and Sandys as far as the eye can see."

Oysters Are Nearly Extinct In New York Waters. This Team Is Trying To Coax Them Back.

By Samantha Schmidt

New York Times, September 4, 2016

Torrential rain poured down on the team of scientists and conservationists on Jamaica Bay as their small boat slowly towed about 85 cages packed with 36,000 oysters, a species that once blanketed New York Harbor but is now nearly extinct there.

"We are quite the sight," Casey Stokes, an environmental scientist with HDR, an engineering firm, said on Thursday as he steered the boat to a spot off Kennedy International Airport, where they would leave the oysters to grow, and hopefully, to reproduce.

With the placement of an additional 12,000 oysters in the coming weeks, the team will have added nearly 50,000 adult oysters to the bay, making it the largest single installation of breeding oysters in New York City, according to the Environmental Protection Department.

The project, led by the department, is the city's latest and largest attempt to restore a self-sustaining oyster population in Jamaica Bay in the hope of improving water quality, protecting the shoreline from erosion and reviving habitats for fish and wildlife.

The project is funded by a $1 million grant from the United States Interior Department's Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program. The Environmental Protection Department, which is contributing $375,000, is working with the Billion Oyster Project, an ecosystem restoration and education project that is trying to restore one billion oysters to New York Harbor.

Since 2010, the department has conducted two smaller oyster restoration projects, in Dubos Point Wildlife Sanctuary in Queens, and in Gerritsen Creek in Brooklyn. Those projects succeeded in getting oysters to grow in the harbor and release eggs, but scientists have not been able to get them to reproduce and sustain new generations, said John McLaughlin, the director of the department's Office of Ecological Services.

"It's a needle in a haystack," Mr. McLaughlin said. "The odds are just tremendous."

In the 1800s, New York Harbor was covered in oysters, Mr. McLaughlin said, but because of overharvesting, dredging and pollution, they became functionally extinct there.

"It used to be known for its oysters," Pete Malinowski, a founder and the director of the Billion Oyster Project, said. "At one time, half of the world's oysters were harvested in the New York Harbor."

Without oysters, New York Harbor's ecosystem lacks a crucial element. Each adult oyster can filter dozens of gallons of water each day, and an oyster bed can reduce the force of waves on wetlands, protecting the coast from erosion. An oyster bed is also an important habitat for species of fish that live in the small spaces between the oysters, Mr. McLaughlin said. "Think of them as a condominium."

Previous attempts to restore the population have been too small, Mr. McLaughlin said. With thousands more oysters in this installation project, there is a higher likelihood that oyster larvae will latch on to shells and grow into adults.

The team's strategy for reintroducing oysters consists of many moving parts. Mr. McLaughlin said he anticipated that during spawning season next summer, the oysters in the cages would begin to reproduce and that the resulting fertilized eggs would float in the water for two to three weeks.

"Then it's a one-way trip down," Mr. McLaughlin said. With the changing tides, the oysters likely will float through the bay and attach themselves to parent oysters or to shells in one of four beds on the sea floor, where they will be able to grow.

This is where the project takes an unexpected twist: The four shell beds are made not only of clam and oyster shells but also of tiny pieces of porcelain that have been recycled from nearly 5,000 toilets from New York City's public schools.

Since 2013, the department has been installing environmentally efficient toilets in schools as part of a citywide effort to conserve water. Before this oyster restoration project, the department was simply disposing of the old toilets, said Ben Huff, the water demand management program manager for the department. Mr. McLaughlin suggested that the city use the leftover porcelain for the oyster beds because porcelain has been shown to be just as effective as shells for oyster growth.

On Thursday morning, staff members from the department and the Billion Oyster Project unloaded hundreds of bags of oysters from a truck onto the beach at Bayswater Point State Park in Queens. The bivalves, which were of the Island Creek variety of the eastern oyster species, had been shipped from Duxbury, Mass., the day before.

One by one, the oysters were moved to black plastic baskets, which each held five gallons of oysters and were stored underwater in floating metal cages.

Once all 85 cages were loaded and tied to one another along a 500-foot rope, the team pulled them to the site near the airport.

With the foggy Manhattan skyline in the distance and planes flying overhead, the scientists worked with team members on a larger vessel to attach the cages to four 400-pound anchors. On the small boat, Mr. Malinowski and three scientists pulled at the rope, attaching it to the final anchor.

"Nice work," said Mr. Malinowski, 33, his hands beginning to bleed slightly. "That's it. Piece of cake, right?"

For two years, the department will assess the water quality in the area and monitor the oyster beds for traces of spat — oyster larvae that have attached to a shell and hardened.

"And that's a home run," Mr. McLaughlin said.

The team also hopes to gather information for future oyster restoration, Mr. Malinowski said.

"We have a long way to go," he said. "This is just scratching the surface."

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

FLOODS

FEMA Is Hiring Temporary Workers For Flood Recovery

By Richard Sharkey

Alexandria (LA) Town Talk, September 5, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is hiring Louisiana residents for temporary work to help with the flood recovery process.

FEMA is advertising through the Louisiana Workforce Commission to fill open positions at its disaster recovery offices in Louisiana.

"These are full-time jobs, but of temporary duration, with benefits including health insurance, sick leave and holiday pay. Job duration varies, but some may last as long as FEMA is locally involved in the recovery. Benefits end when the job ends," a news release said.

To apply, visit www.laworks.net, the website for "Louisiana Workforce Commission — Helping Individuals Reach Employment."

Click in the "DISASTER RELIEF WORK" box at the top of the screen, and then click on a job description to open detailed requirements and a link to apply.

Once hired, applicants will receive appropriate on-the-job training.

Candidates must be U.S. citizens, 18 years or older and have a valid government identification card such as driver's license or military ID. Candidates will be subject to a complete background investigation.

Displaced Baton Rouge Teachers Return To Work As They Try To Rebuild Their Homes

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 5, 2016

As schools in the Baton Rouge area struggle to return to normal in the wake of historic flooding, some of the educators who run them are facing their own challenges.

Bruno Paquot returned to work Thursday. He'd been gone three weeks but it might as well have been a lifetime ago.

The native of Belgium had his life turned upside down when his two family cars and house flooded, forcing his family to live elsewhere. Twelve of his coworkers at the school where he teaches, Baton Rouge Foreign Language Academic Immersion Magnet, also known as BR FLAIM, have similar stories. That's nearly a third of the staff at this public foreign language immersion school located near downtown Baton Rouge.

Teachers throughout the Capital region are suffering.

The East Baton Rouge Parish school system reports that 817 teachers have been displaced by flooding — about 27 percent of its teaching staff — which is the second largest district in the state.

As he prepared for school to reopen Tuesday, Paquot was conflicted.

"I wish I was at the house detailing, getting the walls ready to be re-Sheetrocked," he said.

But he was also glad to be back at the school he's worked at for seven years and where he serves as a fifth-grade French language immersion teacher.

"It feels normal to be here," he said, "but in the back of my mind I keep that running checklist of everything that still has to be done."

April Fisher, a school counselor at BR FLAIM, is often mentally in two places at once these days. The house she was renting on Flannery Road was flooded, destroying most of her possessions, though she managed to save her car. She evacuated with her boyfriend and five-year-old daughter to her mom's Prairieville house, which escaped the flooding.

The stress and confusion was especially bad during the two days, Aug. 22 and 23, she returned to work when the East Baton Rouge Parish school system planned to reopen Aug. 24. At the last minute, though, officials postponed the restart of school 13 more days.

"I was here in body, but I wasn't here," Fisher said of those two days in August. "I was still on the phone trying to get things done, thinking what do I need to do, when can I get to the house, when is the process going to get started? OK, you need to apply for FEMA. What else do I need to do?"

Paquot took off work those two days; however, the school system has since said employees who took those days off do not to have to count them as vacation days.

Paquot said his daughter did get back to school that week, so he understands as a parent the value of school as a source of stability. But as a homeowner, he still had too much going on.

"I was washing the walls, washing the doors, washing the floors, getting everything prepped for my wife's boss to come and spray the disinfectant and mold killer," he said. "I could not have come (back to work). If I wanted to save my house, there was still work to be done."

Principal Cheryl Miller is the longtime principal of BR FLAIM. She said she has other staff members who have been through a lot but not all are ready to talk about it.

One of her fifth grade teachers was evacuated with her family from their flooded home and was devastated when she had to leave behind her three beloved dogs. A few days later the dogs were happily discovered alive and still at the flooded house. One of Miller's paraprofessionals was flooded and is sleeping on an air mattress on her mother's floor.

Miller said the stress is visible on their faces.

"You see this weight, this pressure that's sitting on their shoulders," she said.

One big stress reliever has been the support from BR FLAIM's parents, led by its parent-teacher organization. The PTO organized help for several teachers like Paquot as well as another 10 BR FLAIM families who suffered flooding. The parents spent two weeks gutting houses and plan to return when it's time to rebuild.

Paquot said the BR FLAIM members were at his house Aug. 16, the first day he was able to get back home. The PTO members and a range of other volunteers showed up that day and two days later, they had gutted the whole house.

"They were awesome," Paquot said. "I have been teaching 20 years and I've never been in a school where the PTO was this active."

Claire Pittman, PTO president, said she's not handy, but has a background in communications. She ended up helping to keep people informed about who needed what and directed traffic. Volunteers were working at two or three houses a day for two weeks, but parents also supplied meals and provided a wide range of help, she said.

"The response was very quick and it was very surprising," Pittman said. "I can't tell you how many times I cried because of people's selflessness."

BR FLAIM, which earned an A from the state, has a small but avid following in Baton Rouge. Schools that will allow children to become bilingual in Spanish, French or Mandarin Chinese are rare.

Pittman said the awareness of the value of what they have drove some of the school's quick response.

"We felt that it was a critical need to help people because most of our teachers are not from here so they don't have family here," Pittman said. "And we don't have many choices if they can't come back."

The Paquots are still trying to decide what they are going to do with their flooded house.

"We didn't have flood insurance," he said. "There are a few options ranking from terrible to not-so-bad."

The family has received some money already from FEMA as well as a range of other unsolicited help. A friend started a GoFundMe page for the Paquots that has raised nearly $18,000 so far. Another friend provided them with a house to stay in until they get back on their feet. A coworker loaned him a car she wasn't using.

"We've been lucky," he said. "The support of the community has just been fantastic."

Life, however, is still far from normal.

As a counselor, Fisher is trying to prepare herself for the trauma she will see in the children who show up Tuesday. She recalled being a mental health counselor in Baton Rouge after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and treating displaced children who had experienced the storm.

"Til this day they are afraid when it rains, when it's lightning, when a heavy wind comes," Fisher said.

Paquot can relate: "A few days ago it rained and the sound of the rain is making my stomach turn."

FEMA Teams Seek To Register Remaining Tangipahoa Flood Victims

By Heath Allen

WDSU-TV New Orleans, September 3, 2016

HAMMOND, La. – Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster survivor assistance teams were back on the ground in Tangipahoa Parish making sure every family affected by the recent flooding has the opportunity to register for assistance.

Updated technology has made the effort much more efficient than in recent years. Armed with laptop computers, the teams can follow the progress of residents who have already registered, and sign up those have not yet registered.

A disaster survivor assistance team returned Friday to check on Hammond flood victim Charles Stewart, for whom the memories of the flood are still vivid.

"(The floodwater) came from the river this way so fast, you could actually see it crawl up your leg. That's how fast it come in," Stewart said.

Water 2-feet-deep filled Stewart's home. He walked with FEMA representatives among the bare studs and floors in his Hammond home. After the flood, he almost left for good.

"Two days after it happened, I just wanted to leave. I just wanted to get that new camper and just hit the road and get out of here. It was so horrible," Stewart said.

Stewart's home was one of many visited by disaster survivor assistance teams. Crews carrying laptops knocked on doors, looking for anyone who may have been missed in earlier visits.

"They are so busy with the losses and the damage that sometimes they don't even think of FEMA." said team member Luis Delgado. "We encourage them to go through us because we may be able to help them, not only with our programs, but also with referrals."

Delgado urges all residents who may have been affected to register for assistance.

"Don't count yourself out. Register with FEMA and we'll take it from there," Delgado said.

While technology makes the FEMA effort more efficient, Delgado believes the one-on-one contact makes the difference.

"We understand that under their circumstances, they need all the help they can get, so we have to be clear about the message and the mission that we have out here," Delgado said.

For Charles Stewart, the visit from the disaster survivor assistance team made all of the difference.

"It was a sad situation three or four days ago. It was bad. It's better now," Stewart said.

FEMA urges everyone affected by the August flood to go online and register at www.DisasterAssistance.gov.

ZIKA VIRUS

Hurricane-damaged Wolfe's Pond Berm To Be Repaired

By Rachel Shapiro

Staten Island (NY) Live, September 5, 2016

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. – Four years after Hurricane Sandy hit Staten Island and after hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal funds were promised for repairs to the berm at Wolfe's Pond, the project is scheduled to begin.

Wolfe's Pond in the similarly-named park in Prince's Bay, is separated from Raritan Bay, which leads to the ocean, by a narrow beach and a berm.

The berm, a raised bank of soil and plantings, was breached both in Hurricane Irene in 2011 and Hurricane Sandy the following year.

Sand from the beach was deposited into the pond, decreasing the depth. Salt water mixed with the fresh-water pond, creating brackish water.

In summer 2012, Sen. Charles Schumer urged FEMA to speed up its funding process for the pond's repairs. With the funding secured, the ball was rolling on plans to repair the berm's damage from Irene.

But that fall, Hurricane Sandy hit, further damaging the berm and the pond itself.

While the project was fully funded for the Irene repairs, damage from Sandy had to be assessed and a plan put in place to repair it.

Asked why it has taken so long for the repairs to take place, the Parks Department said the new design had to be put out to bid that combined the expanded scope of work.

Working with FEMA to agree on the repairs extended the process, and extensive review and comment were required before the city was able to obtain work permits from the state Department of Environmental Conservation and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Mayoral funding and additional FEMA funding were combined with the original funding to plan for the repairs.

The Parks Department plans to dredge the southern portion of the pond where the depth was decreased from the sand.

With all approvals in place, the Parks Department anticipates construction to begin in late 2016/early 2017.

The project was put out to bid in late spring and final bid review is underway.

By restoring the berm, the Parks Department anticipates, fresh water will fill in the pond again, returning it to its pre-Irene condition.

People who used to fish there may appreciate the pond's return to a manageable depth and most would like to see the pond return to its pre-storms status.

NO DIRECT CONNECTION WITH MOSQUITOES

Environmentalist Seth Wollney, a doctoral biology student at the College of Staten Island who also teaches, is heading a study of seven freshwater ponds, including Wolfe's Pond, and notes that pond is not really different from other ponds on Staten Island.

The depth is more shallow than it typically is, like at other ponds, so there's less water movement, which makes it more stagnant.

Mosquitoes are attracted to stagnant water, and while the Health Department and Wollney see no evidence of there being more mosquitoes there this season than in previous years, neighbors have complained about the pests, as fears of spreading West Nile virus and Zika virus continue.

While the depth of the pond has changed, Wollney doesn't want to see it dredged — removing sediment from the pond floor to add depth — because doing so would disturb the things living there and possibly create an opportunity for invasive species to take root.

Larvicide has been applied at the pond, and the Health Department says mosquito breeding in the lake is well under control.

"The city regularly treats marshes and other non-residential areas with larvicide as part of its aggressive mosquito control program," a Health Department spokesman said. "We will continue to treat Wolfe's Pond Park throughout the mosquito season," including one treatment that took place Aug. 29.

Wollney and the Health Department noted there is plenty of fish in the pond, which feed on mosquito larvae, helping control the population.

Seth's father, Clay Wollney, is a science teacher at Staten Island Academy and a local naturalist who writes environmental columns for the Advance.

He noted that the algae on the pond is an indication that the pond isn't moving, and with stagnant water often comes breeding mosquitoes.

But given the fish population, they're keeping the pests at bay.

He said it's fairly typical of most ponds on the Island to have algae now — in the spring when there's rain, there's more water flowing and it's less stagnant.

"It's not really unusual, it's just just been a dry year so we have a lot of sitting water," he said.

But while the algae indicates stagnant water, Seth Wollney noted there's no proven connection between mosquitoes and algae.

Plus, there was algae there before the breach.

So does the berm breach have a direct correlation to mosquitoes breeding there?

"I think the breach has very little to do with the mosquitoes or anything," Seth Wollney said.

Regarding algae, the Parks Department will test the water there.

Like Clay Wollney, that department too noted that several lakes in the city experience algae blooms because of several factors, like warm weather, sunlight, stagnant or slow moving water, and excess nutrients.

The test will determine whether it's a harmful algal bloom and what caused it.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

"Don't Wait. Communicate" Is Message Of National Emergency Preparedness Month

By J. H. Osborne

Kingsport (TN) Times-News, September 4, 2016

KINGSPORT — "Don't Wait. Communicate."

If you have a cell phone, you likely received an alert on Thursday from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. In crowded public areas, it was noticeable that what seemed to be a majority of people were searching for their phones, which seemed to be emitting an unusual siren-ish "ring."

That was an example of the type of warning that will be issued in the case of an actual emergency. This notification, however, announced that September is National Emergency Preparedness Month.

The theme is, "Don't Wait. Communicate. Make your Emergency Plan Today." This year's events focus on youth, older adults, and those who are challenged with access and functional needs, according to a press release issued by the Kingsport Fire Department to promote the month-long public awareness campaign.

Glenda Bobalik, executive director of the American Red Cross of Northeast Tennesssee, said preparedness is something the agency tries to keep in the public eye year-round, but this joint, national effort aims to get people, basically, to do three things.

"First, to get informed about what the emergency or disasters are that can happen in your neighborhood and your community," Bobalik said Friday afternoon. "And second, then to make a plan so that when something happens ... plan how your family is going to get back together. Make a plan on what you are going to do. The third thing is to build a preparedness kit with the items you really need. We all need food and water. A lot of us are on prescription medications, and we need to make sure we have enough of that for three days. Just the steps we need to take and things we need to have so that we can make it through that emergency because the emergency responders cannot get to us all at exactly the same time."

It's a matter of just being aware of what can happen, Bobalik said.

"And this year, one part we're really wanting to focus on is having that plan of how they are going to get out of their house if it is on fire," Bobalik said. "Have a meeting spot outside so everyone will know if everyone had made it out. Try to figure two ways out of every room."

For larger community disasters, it is suggested that your family have a designated contact out of the immediate area who can coordinate messages in case you can't communicate directly with each other — and pick a place where your family will meet if you can't meet at home.

Being prepared doesn't help only when disaster strikes; it can also ease your recovery afterward, Bobalik said.

"We have found, along with all of our partners, that the people that have taken steps to be prepared ahead of time are the ones who recover more quickly," Bobalik said. "They're the ones who quickly get back to work, back to school. They just come through the whole process more easily. So we would just like everyone in our community to take some time, take some preparedness steps and be ready. Make sure you have a flashlight, a battery-operated radio, and the items you would need to be safe for a few days. It makes a tremendous difference in how fast we can recover. It just takes us all sitting down and thinking about it."

The KFD's release included the following tips:

- Follow the National Fire Protection Assocation, FEMA, NOAA, the American Red Cross and other national partners each week to learn more about what to do. Every week focuses on a different activity to help you prepare. Start by checking out www.ready.gov/september for resources to share and get the word out about National Preparedness Month. Follow the NFPA's Fire Break and Safety Source blogs this month for all the latest and greatest ideas for emergency preparedness.
- From September 4-10, the theme is "Preparing Family and Friends." You can create a family emergency communication plan, learn more about financial preparedness, and use NFPA's Get Ready Kit.
- Honor the memory of 9/11 during the next week by getting involved in your community and planning with neighbors. The NFPA's Firewise program and wildfire preparedness web pages can help you find great community-level activities.
- Individual preparedness is where it all begins.
- During the week of September 18-24, look for some great new tips and tools for youth, and make sure you are personally prepared. You can use FEMA's mobile app to get alerts, tips and more.
- The final week of September leads to America's PrepareAthon on September 30. It's a call to action at the end of the month, the goal of which is to leave members of the public more ready to face whatever lies ahead.

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NATIONAL NEWS

Louisiana Gov. Requests $2 Billion In Federal Funding For Flood Recovery

By Gretel Kauffman

Christian Science Monitor, September 12, 2016

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards appealed to Congress on Friday to approve $2 billion in federal funding for flood recovery efforts, telling lawmakers that the state “cannot recover without it.”

Speaking at a House subcommittee hearing on the federal response to the August flooding that displaced thousands and caused $8.7 billion in damage, Governor Edwards said the money was needed for housing, economic development, and public works. He also urged the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to speed up the delivery of manufactured housing units, part of efforts to shelter people who were living in the more than 55,000 homes now destroyed.

“While the response with manufactured housing units has been quicker than any other Louisiana disaster, it has not been fast enough for the families in Louisiana who have lost their homes and have no place to go,” Edwards said.

But while the governor praised the federal response to the flooding thus far, a number of local mayors who spoke said that it was not enough, and lamented a lack of communication between local and federal officials.

One mayor, Jr. Shelton of Central, La., said that he did not directly speak with FEMA for three weeks after the flooding.

“That debris that’s out there? That’s not debris, it’s people’s lives,” Mr. Shelton said. “We have suicides, we have mental breakdowns, we have families being torn apart.”

Some have argued that the slow federal response could be due, in part, to a lack of national media coverage of the disaster.

“It’s not just water that’s rising,” Mike Scott, of the New Orleans Times-Picayune, wrote on August 16. “So is the frustration level of many observers who can’t help but notice a key absence amid the tragedy: the national media.” And such complaints “aren’t trivial,” he said.

“As Louisiana well knows, the loosening of the recovery purse strings is directly commensurate to the number of people who are made aware of the scope of the devastation,” Mr. Scott wrote. “In this case, where national news coverage has been scarce, locals have every reason to worry that recovery funds will be just as scarce.”

While displaced residents wait for FEMA housing units to arrive, a number of local Airbnb hosts have offered to let flood victims stay in their homes for free, as Winston Ross reported for The Christian Science Monitor last month.

“The generosity, compassion and caring, to take from their own income and welcome strangers into their property. There are just no words for that,” Kim Stewart, a Baton Rouge resident staying in an Airbnb property while her home is repaired, told the Monitor. “There are no words. I truly believe it’s a Southern thing.”

This report contains material from the Associated Press.

WH Challenges Republicans On Aid For Louisiana, Flint

By Devin Henry

The Hill, September 12, 2016

The White House on Monday challenged congressional Republicans to provide new funding for the Flint, Mich., water crisis, as well as recovery efforts following severe flooding in Louisiana.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest defended the Obama administration’s response to Flint and Louisiana when asked whether funding for the crises will come up during budget meetings with Republicans.

He noted, for example, that 63,000 Louisiana families have received federal assistance and that there’s been $260 million in insurance payments there since last month’s flooding in and around Baton Rouge.

Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) last week asked federal officials for more than $2 billion to help further recovery efforts. Earnest said Congress would have to address that request.

“Theres a lot of moralizing about how the president should do his job,” he said during a press briefing Monday.

"Well he's done it. The question now is, are Republicans in Congress going to do their job? ... Are they going to do their job for the people of Louisiana? I think we're going to find out."

Earnest said the White House "would support congressional action to offer additional assistance" to Flint, which is suffering from elevated levels of lead in its drinking water.

Lawmakers have long tried to cut a deal on aid for Flint. Senators agreed over the summer to include $220 million in funding for Flint and cities with other drinking water problems in a water infrastructure bill, legislation that is set to receive a vote this week.

"It's clear that the problems in Flint are deeply entrenched and the administration would certainly be supportive of an effort in Congress to offer additional assistance," he said. "We'll just add it to the long list of things that Republicans in congress have failed to make progress in."

President Obama and congressional leaders will meet on Monday afternoon to discuss funding the government after the fiscal year ends on Sept 30.

Overnight Energy: Senate Advances Water Bill With Flint Aid

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 12, 2016

WATER BILL, FLINT AID MOVE FORWARD: The Senate inched closer on Monday to wrapping up work on $9.4 billion waterways bill that that provides emergency funding for lead-contaminated communities like Flint, Mich.

The Senate voted 90-1 to end debate on a substitute amendment to the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which authorizes dozens of waterways projects around the country.

Bill sponsors are putting together a package of bipartisan amendments for the bill, but they're likely to steer clear of any controversial provisions in an effort to swiftly advance the legislation this week.

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, said they considered around 35 provisions for the package and "hope to get consensus to adopt [the package] shortly after the cloture vote tonight."

The measure provides $220 million in emergency assistance to address drinking water crises in communities such as Flint, where water from the Flint River corroded the city's pipes, contaminating the water supply with lead.

"We are pleased that after months of working with Republicans and Democrats, our bipartisan agreement to help Flint and other communities is now before the Senate as part of the Water Resources Development Act," Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.) said in a statement.

"In the coming days, we will continue our effort in the Senate to finally pass this urgently-needed help for Flint families."

Read more here.

WHITE HOUSE PRESSURES CONGRESS ON AID: Hours before the Senate's waterways vote, the White House challenged congressional Republicans to do more for Flint and victims of last month's flooding in Louisiana.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest defended the Obama administration's response to Flint and Louisiana when asked whether funding for the crises will come up during budget meetings with Republicans.

In fact, he said, it was time for Republicans to do something the victims – whether it's the WRDA aid package for Flint or the $2 billion Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) wants to help recover from the flooding near Baton Rouge.

"There's a lot of moralizing about how the president should do his job," he said during a press briefing Monday.

"Well he's done it. The question now is, are Republicans in Congress going to do their job? ... Are they going to do their job for the people of Louisiana? I think we're going to find out."

He also knocked Congress for moving slowly on Flint.

"We'll just add it to the long list of things that Republicans in Congress have failed to make progress in," Earnest said.

Read more here.

WH: PIPELINE DECISION CAME FROM OTHERS: The White House on Monday downplayed its influence on an administration decision Friday to block construction on a pipeline project in North Dakota.

The Department of Interior and the Army Corps of Engineers decided Friday to halt construction on a crucial stretch of the Dakota Access Pipeline while it decides whether the project needs a new, tougher environmental review. The decision came moments after a federal court ruled Army Corps officials conducted a proper assessment of the pipeline project's impact on Native American cultural lands in North Dakota.

"I think they're trying to do the right thing here in terms of making sure that everybody's interests are

taken into consideration," Earnest said at his briefing. But he declined to say what role, if any, President Obama had on the decision from Interior and the Army Corps.

"This was a decision that they made." Earnest said.

"I can't speak to the discussions they may have had with the White House. This was ultimately their decision, and they made this decision to ensure that the interests and concerns of everybody who is affected by the construction of this project were properly taken into account."

FIGUERES DROPS OUT OF UN RACE: Christiana Figueres, who led the United Nations' efforts toward last year's Paris climate agreement, is ending her campaign to lead the UN.

Figueres sent a letter Monday to the UN's general assembly and Security Council notifying them, and tweeted it out.

"Out of loyalty to the United Nations and in order to facilitate the advance [sic] of the selection process I hereby inform you that today I withdraw my candidacy to the position of secretary-general," the Costa Rican diplomat wrote.

A poll of UN diplomats last week had Figueres in ninth place out of 10 candidates, according to the Associated Press.

Join The Hill on Wednesday, September 14 for "Preparing for the Next Disaster: A Policy Discussion on Community Resilience," featuring Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.), and Timothy W. Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness at FEMA. Topics of discussion include preparedness efforts to increase community resilience and the role of federal, state & local government in pre-disaster mitigation. RSVP here.

ON TAP TUESDAY I: Sen. Bernie Sanders and others hold a rally outside the White House, protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline. Sanders had asked the Obama administration to block the pipeline, and introduced an amendment in the Senate last week to slow down its construction. The protest is one of dozens around the country.

ON TAP TUESDAY II: A House Oversight Committee panel will host a hearing on conservation efforts.

Rest of Tuesday's agenda ...

The Senate Agriculture Committee will meet to discuss a forestry bill.

AROUND THE WEB:

A mining firm is suing the federal government over its decision to review its lease renewal request for precious metal mining in Minnesota, the Duluth News Tribune reports.

The Alaska Railroad will soon become the first railroad in North America to haul liquefied natural gas, the Alaska Dispatch News reports.

Enbridge, which last week delayed its planned Sandpiper pipeline, is still moving forward with a replacement for it's 1,097-mile Line 3 pipeline running from Alberta to Wisconsin, Forum News Service reports.

BONUS AROUND THE WEB: Web comic XKCD looks at historic deviations in Earth's temperature from the 20th century average. It's fun, until the end.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Check out stories from Monday and this weekend...

-Water bill with Flint aid moves ahead in Senate

-Feds to halt red wolf recovery program

-WH challenges Republicans on aid for Louisiana, Flint

-India challenges US renewable energy programs at WTO

-Brazil ratifies Paris climate deal

-Feds move to protect orchids

-Greens move to dismiss EPA lawsuit over airplane emissions

-Obama eyes big finish on climate

-Week ahead: Senate poised to pass $220M in Flint aid

Melanie Zanona contributed. Please send tips and comments to Timothy Cama, tcama@thehill.com; and Devin Henry, dhenry@thehill.com. Follow us on Twitter: @Timothy_Cama, @dhenry, @thehill

Overnight Finance: Obama, Leaders Huddle On Budget | McConnell Tees Up Short-term Spending Bill | Trump Says Yellen Trying To Help Obama

By Sylvan Lane

The Hill, September 12, 2016

Budget powwow at the White House: President Obama on Monday urged congressional leaders to avert a government shutdown ahead of the Oct. 1 deadline, with election politics looming large over the discussion.

Obama encouraged leaders to move forward on an emerging compromise to keep the government open through mid-December and provide more money to fight the Zika virus.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) attended the White House meeting in what has become a familiar ritual before a funding deadline.

But the dynamic of the meeting was different than in the past, when leaders often engaged in combative negotiations. The Hill's Jordan Fabian has the details: http://bit.ly/2cjOz19

McConnell tees up short-term spending bill: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is turning the Senate toward a short-term spending bill as lawmakers face an Oct. 1 deadline to avoid a government shutdown.

"I expect to move forward this week on a continuing resolution through Dec. 9 ... that includes funds for Zika control and for our veterans," the Senate Republican leader announced Monday on the Senate floor.

McConnell filed cloture on proceeding to a House legislative appropriations bill, which is expected to be the vehicle for the short-term continuing resolution (CR). The move sets up the Senate to take an initial procedural vote this week, once it wraps up work on a water infrastructure bill.

Wrapping up the CR ahead of the Oct. 1 deadline could allow McConnell to get his conference out of Washington and back on the campaign trail. The Hill's Jordain Carney has the latest: http://bit.ly/2cm7j1j.

Cruz throws cyber curveball: Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) is meeting with conservative lawmakers in both chambers to build support for a showdown with the White House over funding the government and power over the internet.

Cruz wants a stopgap measure to fund the government to include a rider that would block the administration from relinquishing the special oversight role the United States has had over the internet since its inception.

The prospect of Cruz leading rank-and-file House Republicans – including members of the House Freedom Caucus – into a last-minute fight with President Obama over a government funding resolution would be a rerun for the Texas senator, who was blamed by his colleagues for causing a 2013 government shutdown over an ObamaCare fight.

It's also a headache for Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who both want to avoid even the slightest chance of another government shutdown. The Hill's Alex Bolton tells us more: http://bit.ly/2cSjDGi.

Bill would extend foreign investor visa program: Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) said Monday that a short-term spending bill will include an extension of a visa program set to expire at the end of the month, even as negotiations remain deadlocked.

Asked if the EB-5 investor visa program would be a part of the government funding bill, the Senate's No. 2 Republican told reporters "I think that will be part of the [continuing resolution], yeah."

Cornyn's comments come as talks about how to reauthorize the program have stalled in Congress, with senators split on how to determine where money under the program is sent. Jordain Carney surveys the battlefield: http://bit.ly/2cEjXsQ.

Trump: Yellen's doing Obama's bidding: Donald Trump accused Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen on Monday of doing President Obama's bidding by keeping interest rates low.

In an interview with CNBC, the Republican presidential nominee charged that the Fed was no longer politically independent and instead was pursuing policies to boost Obama in his final months in office.

"She's obviously political, and she's doing what Obama wants her to do," he said in a phone interview. "As soon as [rates] go up, your stock market is going to go way down, most likely. Or possibly."

While Yellen was Obama's pick to lead the Fed, the central bank prizes itself as a politically independent institution and strongly rebuts any claims that outside politicians weigh on its efforts to steer the U.S. economy. Here's more on the madness from The Hill's Peter Schroeder: http://bit.ly/2czbmJP.

Fed official urges caution in raising rates: Lael Brainard, a member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, made the case Monday for the Fed holding off on rate increases, arguing that inflation remains lower than normal and there remain economic risks looming abroad. That combination of factors "counsels prudence in the removal of policy accommodation," she said.

Brainard's speech had been closely monitored by financial markets for any indications that the central bank could be preparing to raise interest rates again at its September meeting. The Fed has only raised rates once since the financial crisis, back in December, but Fed watchers are expecting another hike could be coming soon.

But Brainard's speech appeared to suggest such a hike could still be a ways off, as she contended that there was still more the Fed could do to boost the labor market while keeping rates low to protect the U.S.

economy from potential disruptions from foreign economies: http://bit.ly/2cqzQRx.

Happy Monday and welcome to Overnight Finance, where we're also feeling a bit better after this weekend, thank you for asking. I'm Sylvan Lane, and here's your nightly guide to everything affecting your bills, bank account and bottom line.

Tonight's highlights include more anger over the Iran settlement, congressional heat on Wells Fargo, more Fed rate hike delays and a vision for a new financial regulatory system.

See something I missed? Let me know at slane@thehill.com or tweet me @SylvanLane. And if you like your newsletter, you can subscribe to it here: http://bit.ly/1NxxW2N.

On tap tomorrow:

House Financial Services Committee: Markup of the Financial CHOICE Act of 2016, 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cA1i0l.

House Small Business Committee: Hearing entitled "The Cumulative Burden of President Obama's Executive Orders on Small Contractors," 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2c5X1pT.

House Ways and Means Committee: Hearing on tax-exempt college and university endowments, 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cLDuv1.

Senate Banking Committee: Hearing on National Flood Insurance Program mapping, 10:30 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cr3pq4.

House Judiciary Committee: Hearing on Oversight of the Patent and Trademark Office, 1 p.m. http://bit.ly/2czNymh.

Amplifying U.S.-Africa Trade, Investment, and Economic Relations: From Obama to the Next Administration, 2 p.m. http://bit.ly/2cSpvzs.

Chamber calls for overhaul of financial regulatory system: While Congress mulls how to replace Dodd-Frank financial regulation, the United States' largest business advocate is looking to reshape the system around it.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce on Monday called for a complete reboot of how the United States regulates financial institutions and banks, insisting that the current framework is outdated and cumbersome for businesses of all sizes.

Top Chamber officials panned the country's "1930s regulatory system," arguing it stifles economic growth and capital access with redundant, overbearing regulations.

The Chamber's Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness (CCMC) outlined potential fixes in a report released Monday that it said was meant to start an "honest debate" about the country's regulatory future.

The release comes a day before the House Financial Services Committee marks up the panel's sweeping overhaul of Dodd-Frank. I'll take you inside the Chamber's proposal here: http://bit.ly/2cHWw0v.

Senate Dems call for investigation into Wells Fargo's fake accounts: Five Senate Democrats are calling for hearings to investigate the actions of Wells Fargo employees who created millions of fake bank and credit card accounts to boost their sales.

Led by Sen. Robert Menendez (N.J.), the Democrats sent a letter on Monday to Senate Banking Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) urging him to hold immediate hearings to delve into what happened at one of the nation's largest banks and to determine whether more consumer protections are needed.

"The magnitude of this situation warrants thorough and comprehensive review," the senators wrote in the letter. The Hill's Vicki Needham explains: http://bit.ly/2cRJS3F.

Coalition urges SEC to require disclosure of more tax info: The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) should update its rules to require U.S. multinational corporations to disclose more tax information, a financial-transparency coalition argued in a report released Monday.

"As multinational corporations have increasingly relied upon complex, international tax strategies to affect their bottom lines, the SEC's disclosure framework has not kept pace," the Financial Accountability & Corporate Transparency Coalition wrote in the report. "It's time for the SEC's disclosure rules to catch up."

The report was issued shortly after the European Commission ruled last month that Apple owes Ireland $14.5 billion in back taxes because Irish authorities gave the company an unfair advantage over other businesses. The Hill's Naomi Jagoda breaks it down: http://bit.ly/2c6mL44.

Top Dem urges Labor Dept. to investigate Chipotle for wage theft: Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) is calling on the Labor Department to investigate allegations that Chipotle Mexican Grill is failing to pay employees overtime.

According to media reports, nearly 10,000 workers from the fast casual Mexican restaurant chain have joined a class action lawsuit against the company for allegedly forcing employees to work "off the clock" hours without compensation.

The workers claim in the suit that Chipotle uses timekeeping technology that automatically punches workers off the clock, even if they are required to continue to work

In a letter Monday to the David Weil, the director of the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division, DeLauro demanded an investigation into the corporation's labor practices and policies. The Hill's Lydia Wheeler has it all here: http://bit.ly/2cmb7Q5.

GOP lawmaker wants answers on Iran payment: A Republican congressman is asking the Treasury Department whether a recent cash payment to Iran could be used to fund terrorism, and how the department plans to keep that from happening.

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) said he's "gravely concerned with the nefarious possibilities" of what Iran could do with $1.7 billion in cash from the United States. He sent a letter sent Tuesday to the Treasury under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, outlining his fears.

At issue is a payment made to Iran by the U.S. earlier this year to settle part of a 1970s lawsuit between the countries. The payment, converted into European cash and airlifted to Iran, preceded a prisoner swap between Iran and the United States.

Republicans have since accused the Obama administration of paying ransom for American prisoners and funding Iran's terror sponsorship with untraceable money.

"By providing this regime with billions [sic] of dollars in untraceable foreign currency, the Administration is aiding the regime and criminals across the world in their perpetuation of financial crimes," wrote Wilson: http://bit.ly/2cjFsxn.

India challenges US renewable energy programs at WTO: India has filed a new dispute against the United States at the World Trade Organization (WTO) challenging domestic content requirements and subsidies in renewable energy programs across eight states.

The complaint, highlighted by the WTO on Monday, argues that renewable energy programs in Washington, California, Montana, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Michigan, Delaware and Minnesota are getting favorable treatment compared with imported products to the United States.

India's case charges that the energy program measures are inconsistent with WTO's rules "because they provide less favorable treatment to imported products than to like domestic products, and because the subsidies are contingent on the use of domestic over imported goods," the trade group said.

The new case comes a few days ahead of an expected WTO Appellate Body decision on a U.S. challenge to India's domestic content requirements for solar cells and solar modules under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission. Here's more from Vicki Needham: http://bit.ly/2cqBqDf.

Flood risk: SmarterSafer, A coalition of dozens of environmental, business and fiscal groups are urging Congress to act on flood insurance. The Hill has an exclusive excerpt of a letter to be sent to lawmakers tomorrow:

"Congress should invest in proven mitigation strategies--both at a community and property level--for those areas most at risk to future disasters. Mitigation should include multiple options including strengthening natural features that help buffer storms, buyouts and preservation of green space, and elevation and other property-level interventions. In addition to shifting to additional pre-disaster spending, Congress should make changes to disaster assistance including strengthening requirements for communities and states--those states and communities that plan for and mitigate risks would be 'rewarded' with the full share of federal disaster assistance, while those that do not plan for known risks, would get less in federal assistance. In addition, federal disaster assistance funds should only be spent on resilient projects--on building smarter and safer-- and not spent on construction that is not resilient and not safe. This will protect people, communities, and scarce federal resources.

Congress must also strengthen the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and reduce regulatory burdens to private sector competition. Too few people purchase flood insurance, even those at risk. While there are numerous reasons for this, many people do not trust NFIP, and many people mistakenly believe the federal government will step in and disaster assistance will make them whole. Given the average award of disaster assistance ($8,016 for Superstorm Sandy), without flood insurance, many families are unable to rebuild."

Join The Hill on Wednesday, September 14 for "Preparing for the Next Disaster: A Policy Discussion on Community Resilience," featuring Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.), and Timothy W. Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness at FEMA. Topics of discussion include preparedness efforts to increase community resilience and the role of federal, state & local government in pre-disaster mitigation. RSVP here.

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Weathering The Storm

By Scott Burns

U.S. News & World Report, September 12, 2016

Anna Johnson didn't have to go to church on Sunday, Aug. 14 to hear prophetic stories about the dead being raised from their graves. That morning, the Denham Springs, Louisiana native awoke to an eerie sight: a procession of coffins uprooted from a nearby cemetery by the rushing floodwaters steadily floating down her street. Her community was buried beneath six feet of floodwater. "We've never seen anything like it," she said.

What's most extraordinary about this story isn't the haunting imagery of the floating dead casually drifting through the streets or the enormous magnitude of the damage that resulted from what the Red Cross called "the worst natural disaster since Hurricane Sandy." It's what people like Johnson and her husband did next. Undeterred by the floating coffins and raging current, Johnson's husband immediately set out on his boat to help the local sheriff's department rescue those in jeopardy.

He was just one of thousands of Good Samaritans who risked their lives to save their neighbors. Louisianans affectionately refer to this armada of hunters, fisherman and ordinary citizens from all across the south who deployed their own motorized boats to rescue thousands of people and pets stranded by the flood as the "Cajun Navy."

Not everyone has been so supportive. Some state senators have tried to propose legislation that would require members of the Cajun Navy to receive formal training and certification from the government.

This precautionary impulse is not uncommon. Even in dire circumstances, many lawmakers are very hesitant to cede any authority over to private citizens. Their first instinct is to rely on the top-down efforts of formal authorities.

This proposal was immediately met a flood of backlash from members of the Cajun Navy. As Dustin Clouatre, a Cajun Navy member from St. Amant, Louisiana, said: "How can you regulate helping people?"

The heroic actions of these community members doesn't just capture the spirit and tenacity of the people of Louisiana, it also provides a vivid illustration of how the bottom-up efforts are at the heart of a community's revival after a disaster. The ordinary men and women who formed the Cajun Navy didn't wait for the National Guard or ask for permission from any top-down authority. Instead, they took the response into their own hands. Clouatre said it best: "These people are not going to wait for assistance. They're doers."

Many Louisianans learned this lesson the hard way over a decade ago during Hurricane Katrina when authorities tried to prevent private citizens from conducting rescue missions for safety reasons. More than 1,800 people lost their lives.

The death toll could've been much higher had it not been for the thousands of original Cajun Navy members who defied government edicts and launched their boats to rescue neighbors. Their courage provided a stark example of the how the power of civil society shined through despite rampant government failures.

As Mercatus Center scholars documented in their book "Community Revival in the Wake of Disaster," in many cases it was these private citizens and businesses that helped spur the post-Katrina recovery. Many local entrepreneurs, charitable and religious organizations also banded together to donate goods and keep their doors open through the recovery. Even large corporations like Wal-Mart and UPS were among the first on the scene delivering much-needed supplies.

Louisianans didn't wait for the government's permission this time around either. They jumped into action. As one member told ABC News, "We are a people that stick together. [We] take care of our own." As a result, thousands of lives were saved, and an entire community was able to unite around their courage and resilience.

This inspiring story provides an important lesson for policymakers. The first responsibility of federal and state authorities after a disaster should be to "do no harm" – removing barriers to recovery and allowing for, and even encouraging, private relief efforts in response to disaster. These bottom-up relief efforts are superior precisely because they empower local citizens to use their intimate knowledge of their area and its unique needs rather than top-down authorities whose actions are all-too-often bogged down by politics and red tape.

Some lawmakers might not fully appreciate the efforts of the thousands of volunteers who risked their lives to rescue their neighbors. But the people of Louisiana most certainly do. These local efforts, not the

action of governmental authorities, provide the bedrock of society that make communities like Louisiana so resilient in the wake of disaster.

Scott Burns is a Mercatus Center PhD fellow in economics at George Mason University, a graduate of the E.J. Ourso College of Business at LSU and a Baton Rouge native.

Woman In Viral Flood Rescue Video Meets Her Rescuer

By Michael Kunzelman

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

(DENHAM SPRINGS, La.) — Millions of people have seen and shared the video of a good Samaritan jumping off a boat to rescue Hailey Brouillette and her dog from a car sinking into south Louisiana floodwaters

last month. Brouillette isn't one of them, but she finally got to meet the man who saved her life.

Although she heard David Phung's voice during the rescue, Brouillette never saw her rescuer's face before their reunion Monday at a Denham Springs home where she is temporarily staying.

"I know I don't know you, but I love you," Brouillette, 53, said as she hugged and thanked the man she called her "angel" and "savior."

"It was nothing," Phung, 27, replied before Brouillete introduced him to Sassy, the poodle mix he also saved.

A Red Cross volunteer who befriended Brouillette at a shelter arranged Monday's meeting. Brouillette lost her trailer home and all of her belongings in the flooding

. Phung brought her a load of supplies, including dog food.

"It's just who we are in Louisiana. We help people in times of need," he said. "I was put in that place to help her out."

The Aug. 13 rescue video shot by WAFB-TV has millions of YouTube views. It shows floodwaters

swallowing Brouillette's red convertible as David Phung and two of his relatives arrive in a boat and urge her to get out of the car.

"I'm trying! I can't!" she replied. "Oh my God! I'm drowning!"

Phung tried to smash a car window from the boat, then jumped into the water and used his hands to rip open a hole on the top of the car. Phung grabbed Brouillette by her arms as the car disappeared in the murky waters. She remained submerged for several seconds before Phung finally pulled her out of the water.

"Get my dog!" she immediately shouted.

The poodle appeared to be underwater for at least 20 seconds before Phung took a deep breath, dipped below the surface and emerged with the dog cradled in his arms.

"I got your dog!" he yelled. "Swim to the boat."

Phung said he lost count of how many people that he helped save from the floodwaters, but none was more dramatic than Brouillette's.

"I didn't actually see the tape until two days later because I was working from sun up late into the night, just helping people," he said. "I was actually amazed at how calm and collected I was. I guess it was just the adrenaline took over."

Before getting caught in the floodwaters, Brouillette said she had been released from a hospital that morning after being treated for a kidney ailment. She was on her way to a pharmacy to get prescriptions filled when the car she borrowed from a friend was overcome by the water.

"It still seems like a dream," she said.

She believes "divine intervention" also played a part in her survival.

"He saved my life," she said. "I don't even know if I'm worth saving. I guess God said, 'Yeah.'"

Carolyn Perry, a Red Cross volunteer, said she watched the rescue video several times from her home in Kern County, California, before she was deployed to Louisiana.

"I was drawn to it," she said. "I just had this strange feeling I'm going to meet this woman."

Within three days of seeing the video, Perry recognized Brouillette at a Baton Rouge shelter that provided refuge to hundreds of flood victims. Perry said she hugged Brouillette and explained how the rescue had struck a chord with her.

"She was very, very humble, and we just struck up a friendship," Perry said. "For the next three days, we had a lot of heart-to-heart talks about life."

Before Perry returned home to California, Brouillette asked her new friend for help in connecting with the man who had saved her. Perry contacted an Associated Press reporter, who provided her with a telephone number for Phung. Perry called Phung and arranged for him to meet Brouilette and her dog.

At the end of their meeting, Brouillette gave Phung her phone number and embraced him one more time.

"And if I can ever do anything for you, let me know," she said.

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Senate Boosts Bill For Water Projects, $220M For Flint

By Matthew Daly

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Senate voted to move forward Monday on a $10 billion water projects bill that includes $220 million in emergency funding for Flint, Michigan, and other communities beset by lead-contaminated water.

Senators advanced the bill 90-1 on a procedural vote, with approval expected later this week.

The bipartisan measure would authorize 29 projects in 18 states for dredging, flood control and other projects overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The measure includes $100 million in grants and loans to replace lead-contaminated pipes in Flint and other cities with lead emergencies, as well as $70 million toward loans to improve water infrastructure across the country. It also includes $50 million to bolster lead-prevention programs and test water for lead in schools.

Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., said lawmakers finally "have a pathway to success" on Flint after months of effort. Senators have twice reached a bipartisan deal to help Flint but were blocked after Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah objected.

Flint's drinking water became tainted when the city switched from the Detroit water system and began drawing from the Flint River in April 2014 to save money. The impoverished city was under state control at the time.

Regulators failed to ensure the water was treated properly and lead from aging pipes leached into the water supply. Elevated lead levels have been found in at least 325 people, including 221 children. Lead contamination has been linked to learning disabilities and other problems.

Peters urged his colleagues to support the bill "to show the American people that we can continue to work together to address urgent needs across the country" and "deliver much-needed support to Flint families."

A spokesman said Lee remains opposed to the bill, which he said increases spending without offsetting budget cuts.

Several proposed amendments to the bill are still being negotiated, including one to resolve a dispute over dredging in Long Island Sound that pits Democrats in Connecticut and Rhode Island against Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y.

The issue involves dredging near a submarine base outside New London, Connecticut, to make room for the U.S. Navy's newest Virginia-class submarines. Gillibrand and other New York officials fear the project could violate the state's stringent water quality standards.

Gillibrand secured language in the water-projects bill aimed at blocking any disposal that violates water quality standards. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and other lawmakers are trying to block the provision or amend it to apply only to standards in the state where the disposal occurs.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., welcomed the Flint measure, but said it comes months too late.

"For the people of Flint, this has taken way too long," Stabenow said in an interview. City residents are still using bottled water nearly a year after officials declared a public health emergency.

Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, called the water-projects bill crucial, not just for Flint but for the rest of the nation.

The bill includes about $1.9 billion for projects to restore Florida's Everglades and combat algae blooms that have fouled the state's beaches and rivers. Inhofe said in a newspaper column last week that fellow Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida had convinced him to back the project after years of opposition.

Rubio's Democratic opponent, Rep. Patrick Murphy, has accused Rubio and Republican Gov. Rick Scott of not doing enough to find a long-term solution for algae blooms caused by polluted water flowing from Lake Okeechobee.

If approved by the Senate, the bill would go to the House.

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Follow Matthew Daly: https://twitter.com/MatthewDalyWDC

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WVU Alumnus Challenge Hits $1M In Flood Relief Donations

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia University says more than $1 million in donations will help West Virginia flood victims through a challenge

match from Arizona Diamondbacks owner Ken Kendrick.

Kendrick is a WVU alumnus. He had said after devastating floods in late June that he would match contributions to the WVU Foundation dollar-for-dollar up to $500,000.

The university says in a news release that more than 1,600 donors have given more than $502,000.

The floods killed 23 people in the state.

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Gulfport, USO To Help Those Affected By La. Flooding

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

GULFPORT, Miss. (AP) — The city of Gulfport is partnering with the United Services Organization, Gulfport businesses, military and the fire department to send donations to the areas of Louisiana affected worst by flooding.

The Sun Herald reports (http://bit.ly/2c7GQY5) it's the second trip for the city in less than a month.

On Aug. 17, the city sent two truckloads of supplies immediately after the flood waters started to recede.

Gulfport Chief Administrative Officer John Kelly said Monday the National Guard Armory in Hammond, Louisiana, set up a store specifically for military families.

The USO is a nonprofit that operates two locations in Gulfport and annually provides programs and services to more than 60,000 service members and their families in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana.

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Information from: The Sun Herald, http://www.sunherald.com

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$250K Grant To Help With Wilkinson County Flood Recovery

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) – State and federal officials say a $250,000 grant will help people in southwestern Mississippi repair homes damaged by flooding in mid-August.

Three homes were destroyed, 23 had major damage and 58 others had minor damage in Wilkinson County. Most were in the town of Crosby.

The damage fell short of the threshold for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper says in a news release Monday that the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is providing the grant to the new nonprofit Community Based Recovery Committee in Wilkinson County with money remaining from the Alternative Housing Pilot Program that FEMA awarded to Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina.

Wilkinson County borders Louisiana, and its floods were caused by the same storm system that deluged parts of that state.

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Cayce Officials To Rebuild Flood-damaged Landing

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

CAYCE, S.C. (AP) – Officials in Lexington County are preparing to rebuild a boat landing on the Congaree River that was destroyed in the flooding rains last October.

Officials in Cayce think it will cost about $180,000 to repair the landing, with most of the cost paid by the federal government, The State newspaper (http://bit.ly/2cR0R69) reported.

The 23-year-old landing was closed after its dock was damaged in floods that followed record rain last fall. It's unclear how long the project will take.

Fishing and floating trip guides are happy about the decision.

"It's way overdue," said Kevin Geddings, owner of Adventure Carolina in Cayce.

The most recent renovations to the landing were in 1993 by state natural resources officials to encourage outdoor recreation in the Midlands. It's the only landing on the riverfront in the city of nearly 13,000 residents.

One guide, Jason Bennett of Irmo, says the loss of the dock created congestion on the Richland County side of the river.

"That makes things a little more inconvenient," Bennett said.

The closing shortened float trips by nearly a mile and required longer treks to return boats and equipment to his shop, Geddings said.

"Not having it has been huge for us," he said.

The landing also benefits recreation on land, officials say. The parking lot is a gathering spot for bicyclists and hikers headed for nearby trails.

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Information from: The State, http://www.thestate.com

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Small Earthquake Widely Felt Across San Francisco Bay Area

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — A small earthquake rumbled beneath the San Francisco Bay area early Tuesday and was widely felt across the region.

The U.S. Geological Survey says the magnitude 3.5 temblor struck at 12:40 a.m. PDT and was centered just to the east of central Oakland.

Oakland police said they had no reports of problems associated with the quake, which was fairly shallow at around three miles in depth.

The USGS website recorded responses from people reporting they felt it in many Bay Area cities, including San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley.

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Little Change In Strength For Tropical Storm Ian

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Ian has seen little change in strength as it moves over the central Atlantic.

The storm's maximum sustained winds early Tuesday are near 45 mph (75 kph) with slight strengthening forecast over the next two days. Ian is centered about 980 miles (1,580 kilometers) east-southeast of Bermuda and is moving north-northwest near 9 mph (15 kph).

Meanwhile far out over the Pacific, Hurricane Orlene is expected to slow down. The Category 2 storm's maximum sustained winds are near 105 mph (165 kph). The U.S. National Hurricane Center says gradual weakening is expected during the next few days.

Orlene is centered about 635 miles (1,020 kilometers) west-southwest of the southern tip of Mexico's Baja California peninsula and is moving north near 5 mph (7 kph).

Neither storm currently poses a threat to land.

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Tuesday's Forecast: Rainy Southeast, Plains

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, September 12, 2016

The national weather forecast for Tuesday, September 13th calls for showers to hit from Chicago to Oklahoma City, along the Southeast and Gulf Coast and in the Rockies.

Showers and thunderstorms will make for a soggy day as a front stalls in the Plains while a tropical wave soaks Florida and the Southeast.

Central U.S.: Showers and thundershowers will drench the southern and central Plains as a front stalls across the region, contributing to the potential for heavy rainfall all the way from Texas to the Great Lakes.

Florida, Southeast: A tropical wave will cross Florida Tuesday, enhancing the chances of possibly heavy showers and thunderstorms.

West: The West Coast will be clear and dry. Rain and a few snow showers are possible in the Rockies.

Weather history for Sept. 13: In 2008, Hurricane Ike hit the Texas coast with 110 mph winds.

How To Prepare Your Home Before The Next Big Storm Hits

By Tom Hurd

Washington Post, September 12, 2016

We are just about at the halfway point of the hurricane season, which most forecasters have projected to be above average in intensity.

But aside from official start and end dates for a particular type of natural disaster, extreme weather is the new reality — and in all parts of the country, not just coastal regions. Now consider this frightening thought: It wasn't a "named" hurricane or tropical storm that resulted in an estimated 150,000 damaged properties in the Baton Rouge area and flooded nearly one-third of the state of Louisiana.

Prolonged rainfall was the culprit, and that ended up being the worst disaster in the United States since the devastation caused by Superstorm Sandy. The torrential downfall that very recently washed out a sizable portion of historic Ellicott City, Md., is another example of the uncompromising damage that storms not classified as hurricanes can do to communities.

Essentially, what used to be considered "100-year storms" are now happening approximately every five years. Another eye-opener is that only 65 percent of the U.S. population is covered by model building codes. And when disaster does strike, often times in the rush to rebuild, homes and buildings are not completed up to

local minimum building codes, and that in and of itself is a recipe for disaster.

The good news is that in recent years the design and construction industry has recognized that responding to these sets of natural challenges is a national imperative. In addition to advocating for effective land-use policies, modern building-code adoption and smarter infrastructure investment, we research materials and design techniques and construction procedures to make homes and buildings more resilient to these threats.

But what can you do as you consider the possibility of encountering a dangerous storm or disaster? Here are some tips to help prepare your home for the next one:

Document your home before disaster strikes: Take photos of the inside and outside of your property and share them with your insurance company to have in its files; list rare and special items separately. Put extremely valuable items in a fireproof and waterproof safe or box.

Familiarize yourself with your home's construction: Know the age of your home and what kind of framing it has. Know how recently the roof has been repaired or replaced. All this will help guide you on what design changes or updates should be made to reinforce your home.

Prioritize repair projects: Make easy and inexpensive fixes, and phase repairs, maintenance and retrofits so they are manageable. Use wind-resistant nailing patterns to secure roof sheathing. Consider what flying debris and storm water might do before reworking areas to minimize damage.

Communicate your building performance goals: Make your desire for storm-resistant and resilient design elements known to your architect or contractor from the outset of a project, and include site selection, program and building life cycle in your conversations. Make sure that you are comfortable with their expertise in this area before proceeding with work.

Designate a safe room in your home: This space can be used for certain hazards, including hurricanes, tornadoes and strong storms. Spaces that can be used for this purpose include a mud room, laundry room or even a powder room, and each can be strengthened. If you have a shelter in a low area, make sure you can get out in case of flooding. Consider multi-hazard possibilities, and ask your architect what you'd need to do to reinforce those spaces.

Upgrade your safety standards in your renovation plans: Building codes are a life safety standard that afford only the bare minimum for the protection of property. Hazardous conditions may not be up to date in local maps and regulations to reflect current realities and risk. Any reworked areas or additions can be built to higher-strength standards — often for just a little more money than your planned budget, giving you a better alternative in a storm.

If you are making any big-picture construction or renovation plans, the best advice I can offer is to work only with a licensed architect, engineer or contractor. These professionals should be well-versed in the best practices to prevent destruction with cost-effective mitigation features and advanced planning.

Hurricane Katrina winds caused $8 billion in damage, and stronger building codes would have reduced this by 80 percent. The expression that an ounce of preparation is worth a pound of cure is especially true when it comes to natural disasters. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, every dollar spent on disaster mitigation saves $4 in rebuilding costs.

Design and building material fortifications are your best line of defense to protect your home, but you would also be well served to have a conversation with your insurance carrier — particularly if you can participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. So far this year, thunderstorms and hailstorms have caused the greatest insured property losses — up to $7 billion in damages.

Finally, proper preparation may help change a disaster into just a short-term uncomfortable event. Now is a great time to see where your homeowner's insurance policy stands and to have your home evaluated with an overall risk assessment that an architect can provide, before the next time Mother Nature's unpredictable fury strikes.

Tom Hurd is the chair of the American Institute of Architects Disaster Assistance Committee.

PM Update: Beautiful This Evening, And Warming Up A Little Tuesday

By Ian Livingston

Washington Post, September 12, 2016

Today was classic September. The bluest skies, and low humidity, mixed with warm sunshine. I could go for this kind of weather every day. This bout is relatively short-lived as temperatures are on the way up tomorrow. Heat and humidity continue to build into Wednesday, but thankfully it won't last long. The remnants of summer are certainly on borrowed time.

Through Tonight: We should see a fairly quick fall in temperatures this evening, especially outside the city, thanks to low humidity. Through the night, dew

points rise toward and past 60, which means humidity becomes more noticeable and it helps slow those temperature falls later at night. Lows are mainly in a 60-68 degree range, coolest suburbs to downtown.

View the current weather conditions at The Washington Post.

Tomorrow (Tuesday): It's another day of abundant sunshine. Warmer than Monday, but not hot like last week. We'll save that for Wednesday. Highs are mostly in the mid-80s. It's still relatively comfortable, but warmer than it should be, and humidity is increasingly apparent. Winds are from the south around 5 to 10 mph.

See Jason Samenow's forecast through the weekend. And if you haven't already, join us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram. For related traffic news, check out Dr. Gridlock.

Pollen update: Mold spores, weed and grass pollens are MODERATE/HIGH. Tree pollen is LOW/MODERATE.

Want our 5 a.m. forecast delivered to your email in-box? Subscribe here.

Ian: For some of us (maybe only me), this has been a day we've been waiting on for years (literally, years). Tropical Storm Ian was named this morning. It's seemingly going to pose no real threat to anyone other than fish, and perhaps an errant ship. In fact, this might be about all you hear of Ian given it's not even currently anticipated to become a hurricane as it spins across the Atlantic. I'd be remiss not to at least mention it once here, though! Certainly no Meranti, which became a Category 5 in the Western Pacific today.

Until 2022 (when the name will be reused) …

August Was The Hottest Month Ever Recorded. Again.

By Dominique Mosbergen

Huffington Post, September 13, 2016

Surprise, surprise: Last month was the hottest August ever recorded, marking the 11th straight month that global heat records have been shattered, according to NASA data.

The agency broke the bad, though perhaps not entirely unexpected, news on Monday. August had a global average surface temperature of about 1.76 degrees Fahrenheit above average, NASA said. It also tied with July as the warmest month ever recorded since record-keeping began in 1880.

"We are well on our way to the warmest year recorded," the Union of Concerned Scientists wrote in an email to The Huffington Post this week.

If deemed the hottest year ever, 2016 will be the third year in a row to boast this unfortunate title.

But though every month — and each year — appears to bring the same news about "hottest" this and that, experts are warning against apathy and fatigue regarding record-breaking temperatures.

"While there may be a tendency to be complacent about the recurring record temperatures, with each month come more climate-related consequences that cannot be ignored," wrote UCS climate scientist Astrid Caldas in a blog post.

Climate change is not a future problem, but rather one that we are actively dealing with.

"We are feeling climate change impacts right here, right now," Caldas continued. "From wildfires and droughts to devastating floods, climate change fingerprint is all around us and does play a role in making events more extreme. An example are this summer's floods in Louisiana, caused by intense rains which were "at least 40 percent more likely to happen because of climate change," according to research.

Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, stressed this week that it's long-term trends, rather than monthly readings, that "are the most important for understanding the ongoing changes that are affecting our planet."

NASA data shows a clear upward trend in global temperatures since 1880. The average global temperature has risen about 1.4 degrees F since then.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

FEMA Remapping May Lead To Insurance Hikes

By Jake Abbott

Marysville (CA) Appeal-Democrat, September 12, 2016

Flood insurance is going to increase — probably by quite a bit for some, warn experts who are trying to do something about it.

With federal remapping of floodplains in the works for some counties, professionals working in the field met in Sacramento last week to discuss its effects on insurance rates and the agricultural industry.

Mike Inamine, executive director of the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency, moderated a panel discussion at the Floodplain Management Association 2016 Conference. The discussion was revolved around the impact of FEMA's remapping — Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) — for areas of high-flood risk on insurance rates for structures and businesses operating in floodplains in the Central Valley.

FIRMs are used to administer the National Flood Insurance Program throughout counties.

"The NFIP will result in flood insurance rates going up dramatically, it's quite an increase in flood insurance premiums," Inamine said.

FEMA originally mapped all counties throughout the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s. In 2001, the agency began to update FIRMs to show if a region's levees met requirements for 100-year certification criteria. If an area cannot be certified, it is classified as a special flood hazard area and subject to development regulations.

Denise Carter, a Colusa County supervisor, was a panelist in the discussion. She said people with federally-backed mortgages living or operating in deep floodplains will be hit the hardest by the hike in insurance rates if an area is designated as high-risk. "As a task force, we worked on the possibility of having private insurance come in to have more affordable insurance options," Carter said.

She said while some residents living in Sutter County have already felt the effects of remapping, FEMA is going through the process in Colusa County.

The panel also discussed FEMA's building regulations for rural areas in a deep floodplain.

Inamine said some of the current regulations have an adverse impact on farmers and the agricultural industry.

"If you are in a floodplain, you are required to floodproof structures so water can pass through it," Inamine said. "There are many examples where a building has to have holes in it. That's fine except that some of those buildings hold food and crops."

In terms of floodplain management, farming is regarded as a wise use of a flood zone because it prevents hazardous development — housing or urban development — from occurring in deep floodplains behind levees.

Carter said panelists discussed the possibility of amending certain requirements for floodproofing that accommodate structures that support an agriculture industry.

Inamine said FEMA has shown interest in supporting rural area economies and that it wants to work with farmers on specific methods of improving regulations on agriculture structures while also mitigating costs.

Carter said the discussion was an opportunity for the task force to hear different perspectives on ways to address the issue.

"It provided the possibility to maybe tweak some things with FEMA's regulations," Carter said. "They have all these technical bulletins, which provide guidance on what you can do, and there is a definition of agriculture structures. The discussion was whether or not we should change that definition of what an agriculture structure is."

Inamine said the five panelists provided different perspectives on the complex issue. The other panelists were Gregor Blackburn, Ceil Strauss, Maria Lorenzo-Lee and James Gallagher.

"It highlighted the issue of how important this is moving forward in the Sacramento Valley," Inamine said. "It was essentially how do we do the right thing in a floodplain, in terms of insurance, and still keep it affordable."

Carter said a task force she works on is taking some of the topics discussed at the panel and writing up a report that will be sent to FEMA with recommendations on how to accommodate agriculture businesses looking to develop or build in deep floodplains.

"It's not going to be easy, but we are trying to find some little things we can do that will have a big impact on being able to continue farming in floodplains," Carter said.

FEMA Town Hall In Youngsville Set For Sept. 14

KATC-TV Lafayette (LA), September 12, 2016

The City of Youngsville will host a town hall/informational meeting on FEMA individual assistance Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2016, at 6 p.m. at Ernest Gallet Elementary School, 2901 E. Milton Ave.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide the needed assistance to residents and businesses that were affected by the August flood event. At this meeting there will be representatives from: FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA), National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), Small Business Administration (SBA), Governor's Office of Homeland Security (GOHSEP) and FEMA Mitigation.

At this meeting, residents will be able to get help with the following:

Sign up for FEMA assistance
Check on your FEMA claim
If denied, get assistance to find out why
Meet with the National Flood Insurance Program
Meet with the Small Business Administration and fill out application
Get information on how to mitigate future damage

Youngsville To Hold Town Hall Meeting, Providing Info On FEMA Assistance.

KLFY-TV Lafayette (LA), September 12, 2016

YOUNGSVILLE, La. (KLFY)— The City of Youngsville to hold town hall meeting to provide information on individual FEMA assistance.

According to a news release, the meeting will take place September 14 at 6 p.m. at the Ernest Gallet Elementary School cafeteria. The school is located at 2901 E. Milton Avenue, Youngsville.

Mayor Ken Ritter said the purpose of the meeting is to provide the needed assistance to residents and businesses that were affected by the flood event of August 12.

At the meeting there will be representatives from the FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance, the National Flood Insurance Program, Small Business Administration, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and FEMA Mitigation, according to officials.

The news release also stated that at the meeting, residents will be able to get help with the following:

Sign up for FEMA assistance

Check on your FEMA claim

If denied, get assistance to find out why

Meet with the National Flood Insurance Program

Meet with the Small Business Administration and fill out application

Get information on how to mitigate future damage

The Mayor said he requested this meeting to help residents to get the information they need to continue with their recovery. Everyone that had damage due to the flooding is encouraged to attend.

Duxbury: FEMA Floodplain Map Update

By David Skill

WATD-FM Marshfield (MA), September 12, 2016

Duxbury Town Manager Rene Read says Town Meeting is just a week away, and an article on the warrant about those FEMA floodplain maps needs to pass by a two-thirds majority.

"We've been working very diligently with our consultant, the Woods Hole Group. Leslie Fields will be attending our meeting a week from tonight, and she'll be providing a wealth of information to the voters so they can have a better understanding of what we need to do and why we need to do it," said Read.

But what if it is shot down by voters?

"Without the properly approved flood insurance maps, people will be in a serious financial predicament by not being able to get their mortgages secured," said Read.

We asked Read if the floodplain maps that were recently updated by FEMA are completely accurate, and if he thinks the warrant article will pass at Town Meeting.

"We had some dispute, not acrimonious, but we did have some dispute and we've questioned that with FEMA and we're working to figure out a method for making the correction, but what we'll be doing the following day is filing something called a letter of map amendment, which will allow us amend the map as adopted. So we have to have the maps in place knowing full well that they're not perfect, but knowing also that we're going to achieve perfection somewhere down the road," said Read.

Duxbury selectmen will also get a "litigation tracker" update from the law firm Anderson and Krieger at tonight's meeting.

MITIGATION

FEMA Helps Brandon, Ripton Pay For Irene Damage

Addison County (VT) Independent, September 12, 2016

BRANDON/RIPTON — The Federal Emergency Management Agency in August awarded the state of Vermont's Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security more than half a million dollars to pay the federal share for projects tied to Tropical Storm Irene, which hit Vermont five years ago.

Among the six towns that won awards through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program were Brandon and Ripton.

Brandon received $123,750 to supplement $1,196,533 awarded in July for Phase II of a downtown overflow relief culvert project.

Ripton received $14,848 for an emergency generator at their community shelter.

Other awards were:

$329,923 to Charleston for culvert and ditching improvements along Hudson Road; $79,460 to Richmond for a structural elevation; $11,668 to Marshfield for an emergency generator; and $96,750 to Enosburg for a culvert upgrade on the Tyler Branch.

"This was the latest, but will not be the last project to benefit from federal assistance tied to Tropical Storm Irene," a press release announcing the money said.

The federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, or HMGP, provides assistance to communities to fix areas of repetitive damage and make trouble spots safer. Making those areas more flood resistant through elevation of a building or road, larger culverts, or stronger riverbanks also helps save towns, the state, and

the federal government money in repair costs over the long run.

Of the $34.5 million available for HMGP after Irene, approximately $20 million was allocated for acquisitions — buy-outs of homes and businesses damaged by Irene that were built in floodplains and vulnerable to flooding again. Of 194 HMGP applications submitted to FEMA, 141 were for buy-outs. To date, 133 of them have been approved by FEMA, and more than 100 are completely "closed-out." In Northfield, for example, a neighborhood of homes that had been flooded and were vulnerable to future flooding have been removed, and the land is now a beautiful town park along Water Street.

Vermont's Congressional delegation was essential in advocating for the State with FEMA. The State successfully negotiated with FEMA for extra time, beyond the usual one-year window for submitting HMGP grants and the "routine" 12-month-extension, for a third year, allowing for applications to be submitted right up until the third anniversary of Irene in 2014.

There is still more than $8-million of HMGP funding from Irene available, and more than $8-million in applications pending, many of them still under environmental and historic preservation review. Applications still pending with FEMA include 7 buy-outs (2 in Ludlow and 5 in Chelsea), and 20 infrastructure projects. Permalink

Calallen ISD Hosts New Dome Grand Opening

By Beatriz Alvarado

Corpus Christi (TX) Caller-Times, September 12, 2016

Calallen ISD officials opened the district's estimated $4.8 million gymnasium and Federal Emergency Management Agency safety shelter Monday.

The 20,289-square-foot dome took about a year to complete and was built on a 56-acre lot along Wildcat Drive.

"Thanks to the vision of past and present school leaders, school board trustees and a dedicated Northwest community, Calallen ISD has expanded its facilities to embrace the ever-evolving rich history of the Calallen Wildcats," said Calallen ISD's Superintendent Artie Almendarez. "The official opening of this FEMA dome and the multi-purpose covered practice facility are first class venues that visibly display a long standing tradition of Wildcat pride."

Calallen and Tuloso-Midway independent school districts, along with Del Mar College and the Corpus Christi International Airport, teamed with city officials in 2012 to seek federal grant funds through the Texas Safe Shelter Initiative for the construction of disaster shelters.

The facilities will be used by first responders for emergency operations during a natural disaster, such as a hurricane.

For daily operations, the school's dome can be used as a gymnasium, auditorium, training facility or instructional space.

Clendenin Library Future, Bridge Repair Timeline Uncertain

By Ryan Quinn

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 12, 2016

The Kanawha County Public Library system's director said Monday he's expecting a report this week on the level of flood damage to the Clendenin branch, and he still doesn't know when the bridge to Crossings Mall — where the nearby Elk Valley branch is located — will be repaired.

Alan Engelbert said the system received in the last few days $120,000 of a possible $600,000 in flood insurance coverage money for the contents and building of the Clendenin branch, which got 9 feet of water in the late June flooding. The floods spared the Elk Valley branch but swept away the culvert bridge leading into the shopping center where it and several businesses are located.

On July 26, the library reopened a space it used to occupy at 3636 Pennsylvania Ave., in Big Chimney, to serve both the Clendenin and Elkview areas until the bridge is replaced. The Mobile Library, the 33-foot-long "bookmobile bus" where patrons can check out items, also is stopping in Clendenin.

Kanawha County Deputy Planning Director James Young previously told the Gazette-Mail that the bridge was expected to be constructed off site, starting in early- to mid-August and continuing for six to eight weeks.

Engelbert said a contractor and the insurance company are continuing to assess damage to the Clendenin building and its contents to determine how much flood insurance money the system is owed. The Federal Emergency Management Agency may pitch in funds for whatever the future of the Clendenin branch is, though Engelbert said he is first awaiting the report on how the branch's damages compare to its appraised value.

Such reports have been done on flooded Kanawha schools — one showed the damages to Clendenin Elementary, for instance, equaled about 97 percent of the circa-1930 school's $3.7 million appraised value.

Any time a building is more than 50 percent damaged in such a situation, it has to be brought into compliance with national flood insurance policy, meaning there could be requirements to elevate the flooded structure above the floodplain or other measures.

Under its Public Assistance Program, FEMA can fund 75 percent, and perhaps more, of the cost to fix damage to public facilities, including the cost to build new facilities and establish temporary facilities. Engelbert said the system already expects about $18,000 in reimbursement for the costs to both set up and vacate the temporary branch serving Clendenin and Elkview.

Also at Monday's library system board meeting, Engelbert said the system will add Hoopla to its digital offerings starting Oct. 10. He said patrons will be able to go online and, using their library card information, access up to 10 "units" — such as songs and entire albums, movies and episodes of TV series — per month.

He said patrons will only be able to use such units for a limited amount of time. He said the library system has put $25,000 toward paying the fees Hoopla charges for each unit checked out.

The board also deferred action on a policy change that Engelbert said would pay part-time workers seven and a half hours worth of pay for the four and a half hours worth of work they do on Sundays only in the main Charleston branch of the system.

Engelbert said the change would cost about $5,600 annually in extra pay and benefits for the, on average, six workers who work each Sunday. He said full-time workers have received the benefit of being paid for extra hours each Sunday they work since 1974.

But, after some board members Monday questioned why the system would take the step and a reporter noted the item listed on the meeting agenda to legally allow the board to take the action Monday vaguely only said "Policy #104 Hours of Work," the board deferred action in a voice vote. The only nay heard was from Cheryl Crigger Morgan, the board's former president.

Corps Defends Valley Park Levee Height, Says It's Not Overbuilt

By Bryce Gray

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, September 13, 2016

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is defending its construction of the Valley Park levee system, disputing a recent report suggesting that parts of the system exceed height limits by as much as 8 feet.

Critics say an improperly high levee system would have worsened recent flooding in neighboring communities along the Meramec River, such as Eureka, Fenton and Arnold.

But the corps says the system's construction was based on sound analysis.

"It's our belief that we do not have a levee that was built beyond the authorized level," said John Boeckmann, a hydraulic engineer with the corps' St. Louis District.

Gauging the proper height of the levee comes down to defining the elevation of the 100-year flood level for the Meramec. Generally speaking, levees can be 3 feet higher than the 100-year flood stage for a given location.

But the corps and the levee system's critics disagree over which flood-level estimate is relevant in the dispute.

Corps representatives said the agency has congressional approval to rely on internal data, rather than Federal Emergency Management Agency data to determine flood levels. FEMA flood-level data would have called for the levee to reach a maximum elevation of 435 feet above sea level, based on the 100-year flood level.

A number of experts were under the impression that the 435-foot maximum applied to the levee. Some suspected the structure exceeded that level when it was not topped by catastrophic flooding of the Meramec in late December 2015.

"They appear to use the FEMA data, in which case it's improperly high," said David Stokes, the executive director of Great Rivers Habitat Alliance, an organization focused on river management issues. "If they didn't, they need to explain."

Questions about the levee's height ultimately led Great Rivers Habitat Alliance to commission an investigation by an outside group. The resulting report from St. Peters-based engineering firm Pickett, Ray & Silver Inc. was released in August and identified points of the levee reaching as high as 443 feet above sea level.

Though he could not confirm their accuracy, Boeckmann said many of the levee elevations listed in the report are "in the range of what's expected to be out there," based on the corps' design specifications.Differing estimates

The Valley Park levee system was authorized in 1982 and completed in 2005. Engineers for the corps said that the agency's design process used newer, better data than that provided by FEMA, which releases updated flood level data about once a decade.

"There's nothing in our regulations that requires us to take existing FEMA profiles and use them," said Don Duncan, another corps hydraulic engineer. "In this case, we knew there were floods and other events that happened since those profiles were developed."

The corps indicated by email that "this design procedure was not unique to the Valley Park project," stating that the agency always reserves the right to use flood data at its discretion unless specifically told otherwise.

Besides the use of different flood level data, Boeckmann offered a couple additional reasons the levee is higher than many expected.

Boeckmann said the levee was built slightly higher than authorized to account for anticipated settling as gravity takes its toll. Settling can typically alter levee height by 1 to 3 feet, he said.

Boeckmann also said some of the levee heights cited in the recent investigation may have been distorted by unrelated construction projects. For instance, he said that after the levee was completed, a utility crossing was installed at the spot measuring 443 feet in elevation, creating "an isolated high point."

Despite the counterargument, not everyone is convinced that the corps had reason to deviate from using FEMA flood level data. Critics say that the corps has been inconsistent over time, using FEMA data in various reports and now indicating that separate, internal data guided the levee's design.

"They make up some other number on the basis of their own arguments when it's convenient — they've not been consistent," said Bob Criss, a professor in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Washington University, and one of the first to call the levee's height into question following the recent record-level flooding of the Meramec.Seeking clarity

The levee's design drawings have not been fully disclosed, as Freedom of Information requests filed by those concerned with its height have been denied for national security reasons. Although the drawings were withheld, Boeckmann said the flood data itself went through a public review process in the 1990s and that the levee project was approved by FEMA, St. Louis County, and several cities along the Meramec River.

The corps has offered to meet with a number of interested parties later this week to clarify the design process.

"The gist of (the meeting) is that the Army corps wants to explain whatever process it used in determining the appropriate height of the levee," said Bruce Morrison, general counsel for the Great Rivers Environmental Law Center, one of the organizations that has sought information on the levee.

But critics feel that a different set of flood level data may not fully explain the 8-foot height disparity in the levee's design — a dramatic difference they argue could be hard to justify.

"That number has not changed significantly," said Criss, referring to the 100-year flood level the levee is intended to guard against.

Those pressing the corps for details want to hear an explanation of why FEMA's definition of a 100-year flood was tossed aside.

"If the Army corps deviates, is its modeling defensible? Is it rational?" asks Morrison. "There's a lot of stuff out there to try to lasso."

He says it's entirely possible that the corps felt more conservative flood precautions were necessary. But transparency and consistency, he said, are vital.

"It presents a misleading picture to the public if the Army corps switches to a different standard time and again," said Morrison.

Or, he said, if the corps doesn't have confidence in existing flood data, it may be time for flood maps to be redrawn entirely.

Corps representatives declined to speculate on the extent to which the levee may have influenced nearby flooding in late 2015 and early 2016, saying that "pointing the finger to one cause" would require performing a detailed hydraulic study.

"We can't comment or speculate on specific effects of the levee on neighboring communities," said Boeckmann. "It was really just a historic flood event that reached levels that had not been recorded at Valley Park, for instance."

Combined 'demo & Rebuild' Will Be Mitigation Option In Flood Communities

By Shauna Johnson

West Virginia MetroNews, September 12, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — For the first time, a combination of both structure demolition and rebuilding will be an option for West Virginia residents washed out of their homes and businesses in the June 23 flood and seeking assistance from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to prevent future flooding through reconstruction steps.

What's called "demo and rebuild," in the view of Al Lisko, director of mitigation/recovery for the state

Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, is a way to keep flooded communities intact — a concern that's been raised many times in the months since the flood.

With the number of destroyed structures in the Flood Zone, the idea behind "demo and rebuild" is for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to fund demolition of a building.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program would then step in with grant funding to build a new foundation and help place a modular home on that foundation in accordance with a community's floodplain ordinance,' according to Lisko.

"What it does is it puts the person into a safer situation, but it does not take it (the property) off the tax rolls. They would still live in the same area. They would still have community taxes and the community does not, in a sense, deteriorate its tax base," Lisko said.

It's only one option, he noted, "One of the things we don't know are how the people are going to feel about their options."

A series of public meetings on all the options, which also include stand-alone elevation of structures, relocation of structures to outside floodplains and full acquisition and demolition of properties, begins Tuesday night.

The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday night, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. at Clendenin City Hall in Kanawha County. The public meetings continue Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 6 p.m. at Elkview Middle School in Elkview and Thursday, Sept. 15 at 6 p.m. at Alderson City Hall.

Additional meeting times and locations are as follows:

Sept. 19
Roane County
Geary Elementary-Middle School, 9538 Clay Rd., Left Hand
6 p.m.
Sept. 27
Pocahontas County
Marlinton Town Hall, 709 2nd Ave
6 p.m.
Sept. 28
Richwood and Nicholas County
Alumni Hall, 103 East Main St., Richwood
6 p.m.
Oct. 3
Greenbrier County
Caldwell, White Sulphur Springs, Ronceverte
Location, Time TBD
Oct. 4
Greenbrier County
Charmco, Rupert, Rainelle
Location, Time TBD

Decisions on mitigation methods will be made at the local levels, with applications coming from incorporated areas or county levels for those in unincorporated locations using input from residents.

"The idea is that this is a program where each community has the opportunity to look at their options, to decide what they feel is best and to apply for the funding and then, hopefully, we'll have enough funding to cover everyone's desires and wishes," Lisko said.

"If not, then we have to do a prioritization process here at the state before submitting them to FEMA for final approval."

Lisko could only estimate the potential funding available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which is aimed at reducing future flooding, would amount to "several millions of dollars." The amount will be a percentage of total federal grants awarded for the June flood, and that number has not been finalized.

"They're going to have to look at their situation," Lisko said of the questions residents trying to rebuild will have to answer.

"For example, if you're a family and you were flooded and you're very frightened to live where you lived, would you accept a demolition and rebuild at the same location? Or would you simply say, 'No, I don't want to live there anymore?'"

FEMA Offers New Flood Relief Opportunities

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), September 13, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) – Homeowners who are rebuilding following the June flooding can meet with West Virginia and FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program advisers on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The meetings will focus on the HMGP process and the rebuilding efforts as well discussion of elevation and mitigation reconstruction.

Tips and information will be provided to help homeowners prevent future damage and disaster in the event of a flood.

On Tuesday, flood-affected homeowners in Clendenin can meet advisers at the Clendenin City Hall at 7:00 p.m.

Other flood victims in Kanawha County can meet Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. at Elkview Middle School.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

FLOODS

Gulfport, USO Team Up To Help Louisiana Flooding Victims

By Justin Vicory

Biloxi (MS) Sun Herald, September 12, 2016

If there's still a need, keep giving. That's the view of the city and the United Services Organization.

Monday, the city partnered with the USO, Gulfport businesses, military and the fire department to send donations to the areas of Louisiana affected worst by flooding.

"I found out there was still a need, and helping military families is what we're all about, so I contacted our national office and they approved us to do this," USO Director Felice Gillum said.

It's the second trip for the city in less than a month.

On Aug. 17, the city sent two truckloads of supplies immediately after the flood waters started to recede.

"We got a lot of help after Katrina," Gulfport Chief Administrative Officer John Kelly said. "And this is a military community. So, we all work together when we can."

Kelly said the National Guard Armory in Hammond set up a store specifically for military families. The supplies will be dropped off there. Military personnel and families from the surrounding area can come to shop.

Mississippi Power, Island View Casino, the National Guard, Keesler Air Force Base, Seabee Base in Gulfport, Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport donated Lowes, Home Depot and Wal-Mart gift cards, cleaning supplies, bedding and comforters, blankets and sheets, food, baby supplies, toiletries and bottled water.

Donations were taken to all five Gulfport fire stations and brought to the Central Station in downtown Gulfport for distribution.

John Fayard of John Fayard Moving donated his truck and an employee to help with the haul.

The USO is a nonprofit that operates two locations in Gulfport and annually provides programs and services to more than 60,000 service members and their families in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana.

FEMA To Start Contacting Applicants By Text

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 12, 2016

BATON ROUGE – FEMA announces that flood victims who applied for federal help may soon get a text from officials to let them know of their application status.

FEMA says it is using texts to connect with applicants in an effort to enhance communications as it allows to communicate quickly and easily with applicants.

The agency says that applicants may still be contacted through email or phone if they chose one of those as a preferred communication method when they first applied.

Applicants may then check their application's status by going online to disasterassistance.gov or downloading and using the FEMA app and then logging into their account. They may also call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362.

With the change, FEMA reminds applicants to never provide personal information such as Social Security or bank accounts numbers to anyone. FEMA only requests this information when applicants first apply for federal disaster assistance. FEMA inspectors only require verification or identity.

FEMA Reminds Residents To Check With Officials Before Rebuilding

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 12, 2016

BATON ROUGE – The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and FEMA are encouraging residents to check with local officials before starting to rebuild following last month's flood.

As more financial assistance reaches flood victims, more people are beginning to repair the damages they sustained to their homes and businesses.

Officials want to remind residents of the following:

Work that may require permits often includes plumbing, electrical system, foundation and structural repairs.

Local officials may have building code requirements on how and where flood victims can renovate or rebuild. Officials ask flood victims to find out how repairs or reconstruction can meet current standards and compliance.

Flood victims can contact their parish emergency management office to learn more about elevation and

other ways to make their homes or businesses safer and stronger.

For contact information, visit www.gohsep.la.gov/ABOUT/PARISHPA

As Flood Victims Struggle With Emotional Toll, Doctors Say Help

By Sabrina Wilson

WVUE-TV New Orleans, September 12, 2016

NEW ORLEANS, LA (WVUE) –

In Tangipahoa Parish, there is rebuilding from the recent flooding underway. But amid the painstaking recovery, for many flood victims there are inner feelings to be dealt with.

"I have a lot of faith in God but even with my faith there's moments when it gets overwhelming you wonder how long is this going to take?" said flood victim Sonia Landry who moved to Robert after a catastrophic storm 11 years ago. "This is the second time it's happened for me because I was in St. Bernard Parish for Hurricane Katrina."

Arshile Glaze's trailer barely escaped the spring flooding, but his good fortune ran out in August.

"I know my wife gets depressed about it and upset about it," said Glaze, whose home is uninhabitable right now. "[We're] living with my stepdaughter in Covington. There's no way we can live in here."

Glaze tries to keep his wife's spirits from sinking too low.

"We find different things in the trailer that we had forgot we had and it makes her smile," he said.

On Capitol Hill, some local leaders from flood-stricken areas told members of Congress about the emotional toll resulting from the flood.

"We have suicides, we have mental breakdowns, we have families being torn apart because honestly they don't know how they're going to get back on their feet," said Mayor Jr. Shelton, of Central, Louisiana.

"The most common symptoms are depression, also anxiety and post-traumatic stress," said Dr. Howard Osofsky, chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at LSU Health New Orleans.

Mental health professionals from LSU Health New Orleans are involved in the effort to help flood victims, as well as state workers, cope with the aftermath of the flooding.

"We have worked with all of the partnering agencies and groups responding to the flooding disaster to develop the screening both for adults and for children to try and help identify and respond to people having the greatest need at this time," Osofsky said.

A home can provide a sense of security and familiarity that people rely on.

"There are many people who are suffering a great deal. They've lost their homes, they're rebuilding," Osofsky said.

Often, there are telltale signs of being overwhelmed.

"If people are having a more difficult time getting going in the morning, if they're not sleeping well, if they're drinking more, if they're more irritable, If one can see that they are exhibiting signs that they are stressed out, it's important to not only reach out to them and be supportive but to let them know that help is available," Osofsky said.

He said it's important to return to some semblance of normalcy as soon as possible, and he suggested that parents should speak to their children about the flooding.

"As much as possible, normalize what you're doing, the same type of routine. Parents have to be aware that their children need to be able to talk about it, and to know that this is a very unlikely event and that parents are keeping them secure and the community is keeping them secure," Osofsky said.

State leaders have said the majority of the flood victims did not have flood insurance. A lot of people said adding to their stress is the suspense of how much assistance they will qualify for under FEMA.

"It breaks your heart, makes you wonder what's going on, because when Katrina came, everybody was there, you know, jump in, give you a hand. This time it's like you're out here by yourself," Glaze said.

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Assessment Of Flood-ravaged Library Branch Continues In Clendenin

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), September 12, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) – Kanawha County Public Library leaders say 35 to 40 people per day are using the mobile library set-up in Clendenin, following the June 23 flooding.

That location, along with the Elkview location in the Elkview Crossings Plaza, are both still closed because of flood damage.

The Clendenin location has been cleaned out after its contents were destroyed.

They are currently assessing the condition of the branch location to determine whether or not it will reopen.

The Elkview location did not sustain damage. However, it is not accessible because the bridge that

leads to the Elkview Crossings plaza has not yet been rebuilt. Leaders say they've not received an update on the status of the bridge repair.

To date the Kanawha County Public Library has received $120,000 in flood insurance to cover lost content.

Leaders say they will continue to work with FEMA to try and get more money to cover losses and the cost of temporary library locations in Elkview and Clendenin.

Monday night, the members of the library board voted to spend a nearly $11,000 grant from the West Virginia Library Commission to pay for costs of the Elk Valley Express Library Branch.

In other Kanawha County Library news, staff members have conducted an active shooter training at all of its facilities.

There will be a fire drill on Tuesday.

There was also discussion about updating the lighting at the branch location in Dunbar. In addition, board members heard about the possibility of doing a solar energy project at the St. Albans location.

ZIKA VIRUS

Obama Meets With Congressional Leaders To Hash Out Fall Agenda

By Gregory Korte And Erin Kelly

USA Today, September 12, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Obama will huddle with congressional leaders from both parties at the White House Monday in an effort to sketch out a bipartisan agenda for what remains of the election-year session.

On Obama's agenda: A spending bill to avoid a government shutdown in three weeks, more funding to combat the outbreak of the Zika virus, a Pacific trade deal, criminal justice reform and the confirmation of Merrick Garland to serve on the Supreme Court.

"It's hard to rank them in priority order, because so many of them are important. And the failure of Congress to act on some of these priorities would have significant negative consequences for the American people," said White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest. "These are priorities, each of them, where Congress has not fulfilled their responsibility to the American people."

It's the first opportunity the president has had to meet with congressional leaders since they returned from their summer recess last week. Obama returned from a nine-day Asia trip last Friday.

Congress must act soon to pass a stopgap spending bill, called a continuing resolution, funding the government until an annual appropriations bill can be passed later this year. Congressional leaders are anxious to reach a deal to prevent a government shutdown just weeks before the Nov. 8 election.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Monday that he hoped that funding for Zika and the Department of Veterans Affairs could be rolled into that short-term package. "Members on both sides have been working on an agreement to responsibly fund the government. We've made a lot of progress," he said.

But for that to happen, Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said, "Republicans need to get away from their vendetta on Planned Parenthood."

The nonprofit family planning and abortion provider have been a lightning rod in the Zika debate. The House-passed Zika bill provides funding to state and local health agencies, but omits any funding of Planned Parenthood. Democrats say the agency is a major provider of health services and should get a share of the $1.1 billion in proposed Zika funding.

"They need it more than ever more with this scourge that is sweeping our country — Zika," said Reid, a Nevada Democrat.

Obama has been calling on Congress since February to approve $1.9 billion to help eradicate the mosquitoes that spread the virus and to develop a vaccine, but the House and Senate have not been able to agree on a bill because of a threatened Democratic filibuster in the Senate over Planned Parenthood and other issues.

Also scheduled to attend the meeting in the Oval Office Monday are House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Obama is expected to talk to reporters after the meeting.

Obama Meets With Congressional Leaders Ahead Of Federal Funding Deadline

By Adam Edelman

New York Daily News, September 12, 2016

President Obama sat down Monday with congressional leaders to begin talks on a short-term spending bill that would avert a government shutdown on Oct. 1.

Lawmakers have returned to Washington for an abbreviated session in which they must pass a measure to keep the government funded.

More daunting, however, is the fate of a bill that

would provide money for the fight against the Zika virus.

And as recently as Monday afternoon, the talks seemed destined to go poorly.

Ahead of the closed-door meeting, the White House had choice words for Republican lawmakers.

"Unfortunately, they're stuck with Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan," White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said during his daily briefing, in a jab at Republican leadership

The talks comes as government scientists have stepped up their warnings about the spread of the Zika virus, which can cause devastating birth defects.

More than 670 pregnant women in the states and Washington, D.C., have the virus, leading to the birth of at least 17 babies with microcephaly so far.

Lawmakers left Washington seven weeks ago without resolving a dispute over money for Zika.

Obama asked Congress in February for $1.9 billion in emergency money, but legislation to partially pay for his proposal collapsed in July amid various fights, including over a Republican provision to deny money to Puerto Rican affiliates of Planned Parenthood.

With News Wire Services

Funding Planned Parenthood, Or Not, May Be Key To Keeping The Government Open

By Emmarie Huetteman

New York Times, September 12, 2016

WASHINGTON — Republican leaders looking to avoid a government shutdown one month before Election Day will have to jump a familiar hurdle: demands from some of their members to cut off funding for Planned Parenthood.

When Democrats balked once more last week at approving legislation to combat the Zika virus because the measure included limits on Planned Parenthood, some Republicans indicated a willingness to re-evaluate their position.

But the pressing question for Republicans who want to pass a stopgap spending bill to keep the government running after Sept. 30 is whether enough of their ranks are willing to leave Planned Parenthood out of the legislation.

After a meeting on Monday with congressional leaders at the White House, President Obama said he was hopeful of reaching a deal with Republicans to fund the government until after Election Day.

"Even though I know that we're in the midst of a political season and everybody is thinking about elections, there's still business to be done," Mr. Obama said.

Earlier, Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky and the majority leader, began procedural moves to pass a bill that would fund the government through Dec. 9 and include funds for Zika control and veterans programs.

Democrats have accused Republicans of inserting language targeting Planned Parenthood into the Zika funding legislation to bait them into blocking it. The measure would primarily withhold funding from two Planned Parenthood clinics in Puerto Rico that do not offer screening for the virus, but to Democrats, any limitation on Planned Parenthood sets a dangerous precedent that Republicans could exploit.

The measure is so vague that after multiple votes on the legislation, few from either party seem to clearly understand what the provision — which does not mention Planned Parenthood by name but places limitations almost exclusively on those two clinics — would do. Yet, in a demonstration of just how politicized Planned Parenthood has become, both sides have shown they are willing to wage war over it.

Efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, which performs abortions in addition to providing education, contraception and other forms of reproductive health care, have become such a contentious matter that there have been nine votes to cut off funding to the organization in the past two years alone, said Erica Sackin, a spokeswoman for the group.

After videos surfaced last year that critics said proved some Planned Parenthood clinics had been selling fetal tissue for a profit, a charge the organization denied, some outraged Republicans demanded the inclusion of a measure defunding it in last fall's stopgap spending measure. But Republican leaders redirected those calls into a separate measure, ultimately moving forward on the temporary spending bill.

This has been happening for years, said Senator Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington. She recounted receiving a call in 2010 from Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the Democratic leader, shortly after congressional leaders had come to a consensus on a deal, she said. A group of House Republicans wanted to include restrictions on Planned Parenthood. "Not on my watch," Ms. Murray recalled saying.

"That was my first realization that they were willing to use the funding of Planned Parenthood as a hostage in just about anything," she said.

In the Zika fight, limitations on Planned Parenthood offered Speaker Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin

what he needed: a way to pass the House version of the bill without Democrats. The bill passed during the late-night session gaveled in as Democrats staged their sit-in for gun restrictions in June, with the votes of some conservatives who are typically averse to increased spending.

In Florida, the only place so far in the continental United States where the disease is circulating, Zika has crept into its Senate race — which could help determine whether Republicans hold onto their majority — as Senator Marco Rubio is fending off attack ads over the proposed restrictions on Planned Parenthood.

Buried in the debate over the intersection between the Zika virus and Planned Parenthood is the murky reality of what the failed Zika bill, which could provide a framework for a temporary spending bill, would have done to the women's health organization.

The bill largely focused on funding for Profamilias, Planned Parenthood's partner in cash-strapped Puerto Rico. Because Puerto Rico has been the hardest hit by the virus, it would receive most of the money and thus be the most affected by the bill's restrictions.

Profamilias provides medical services almost entirely out of its two clinics in San Juan. They do not offer Zika testing, which tends to be done by more specialized facilities, said Marjorie Vázquez, a program director at Profamilias in San Juan, so much of their involvement in combating Zika centers on contraception distribution. Profamilias served about 7,000 patients in 2015, she said — not a particularly large number, given that about 390,000 people live in San Juan.

But because the vast majority of the clinic's clientele is poor and young, rerouting funding away from the group could have an outsize effect, some experts said.

Some House Republicans, particularly those from Florida, have at least hinted that they would be open to taking Planned Parenthood out of the ongoing Zika fight.

And Senator John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican, said on Thursday that he was optimistic they could move forward to pass Zika funding.

"We're just going to have to work out our differences on that," he told Morning Consult.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

CITIZEN CORPS

Florence County Hosting CERT Basic Training Course

Florence (SC) Morning News, September 12, 2016

FLORENCE, S.C. – Florence County Emergency Management will host its second Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) basic training course, starting Oct. 21.

The course is open to anyone older than 18 who wants to educate themselves about safety and protection during a man-made or natural disaster. The course is free to anyone interested, and no prior training is required before taking the course.

The course teaches Florence residents about disaster preparedness, search and rescue, medical response, utility controls and fire safety among others. The course will be instructed by members of Florence County Emergency Management, Florence County EMS, and the Howe Springs Fire Department.

According to Andrew Golden of Florence County Emergency Management, the course is a key component for those wishing to become an official CERT member in Florence County.

A CERT is a group of trained volunteers who come together during a disaster or crisis. The volunteers, according to Golden, will take care of their families and themselves while also helping neighbors, suppressing small fires, providing medical aid and conducting small search and rescue operations.

Florence County Emergency Management adopted the National CERT Program after recognizing a need for the Florence community to be better prepared in case of a disaster. The National CERT Program is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Department of Homeland Security.

Those interested in attending the CERT basic training course can register at fcemd.org. Space for the class is limited.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Citizens As Rescuers In Building Collapses

By Eric Holdeman

Emergency Management Magazine, September 12, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has established, in cooperation with local jurisdictions, Urban Search and Rescue Teams

These teams are scattered around the United States as shown in the link above. These are the teams that can help in building collapse situations like the Oklahoma City bombing. They are highly trained with specialized equipment and teams to deal with searching for, finding and attempting the rescue of people trapped in the rubble of a building.

Last week, at an after action review meeting from the June 2016 Cascadia Rising Earthquake Exercise, these figures were shared. I think they come from the Los Angeles Fire Department. It shows what percentages of people trapped and rescued are done at which level:

Search and Rescue

5% entombed, heavy rescue capability

15% void space non-structural, medium rescue capability

30% non-structural entrapment, light rescue capability

50% injured but not trapped, spontaneous program

The above points to the fact that the clear majority of people being rescued are not the results of urban search and rescue teams. The people performing rescues are co-workers; neighbors; passers-by on the street. ... Few if any have any training at all or likely no equipment other than those tools immediately at hand.

Here in the Puget Sound region I recall that light urban search and rescue trainings were offered to companies so that their internal staff would have the ability to extricate people who were trapped within a building. Some buildings have equipped floors with some specialized equipment, like crowbars, hydraulic jacks, blocking material, gloves, etc.

A little bit of forethought could be invaluable in having the tools necessary to provide meaningful help. A few hours of training could be all the difference in keeping people safe and giving them the basic instruction needed to make them much more effective.

Our Views: Big First Step In Federal Aid

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 12, 2016

While he's not physically bringing a check back home, Gov. John Bel Edwards and the state's delegation in Congress have achieved a significantly higher level of federal support to cover the costs of flood damages to public roads and buildings.

In a letter to Edwards, who was in Washington for two days for meetings on Capitol Hill, President Barack Obama agreed to increase the federal government's share of the costs for "public assistance" projects from 75 percent to 90 percent. State and local government agencies cover the balance for these projects, which includes debris removal and emergency response expenses.

The balance is going to be substantial, but the increase in the percentage that the U.S. government will cover makes a big difference to the state and to local governments — parishes, cities, school boards.

The dimensions of the August flooding made it likely all along that the 90 percent threshold would be reached, but until authorized by the president it was nevertheless at the top of Edwards' wish-list. Costs for mobilizing the National Guard and other responses to flooding would be covered by the higher match, as those bills come in.

The U.S. government has responded to Louisiana's plight: Obama's letter noted that the administration already has spent more than $660 million to help the state respond to the floods, including $200 million in direct assistance to flood victims.

Still, the costs to state government — already strapped because of a financial hangover left over by former Gov. Bobby Jindal's administration — makes a higher federal match rate important to the governor, as well as local leaders who face their own financial challenges. Debris removal alone is a huge task.

The governor and a bipartisan group of state leaders were in Washington to lobby for aid beyond the match rate. That decision was like getting to first base in terms of dealing with the impact of the floods, but with the governor we feel more is needed: Edwards told the president earlier that the state's infrastructure and families had sustained more than $8.7 billion in flood damage.

The governor is pitching a $2 billion package of aid that would be beyond that provided to families and agencies by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal sources.

The legislative calendar in an election year is difficult but we applaud efforts by the state's leaders to unite on behalf of more assistance to the struggling communities hit by this major national disaster.

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

(SECOND EDITION – 8:30 AM EDT)

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

California Blaze Burns Aggressively Across Steep Terrain

By Noah Berger And Kristin Bender

Associated Press, September 28, 2016

MORGAN HILL, Calif. — A blaze in a rugged area south of San Jose threatened hundreds of structures and destroyed at least one home as it burned aggressively, after charring more than 3 square miles of dry brush and timber.

A heat wave in parts of drought-stricken California worsened the wildfire that began Monday and forced hundreds of people from their homes in remote communities along the Santa Cruz Mountains.

It was 10 percent contained Tuesday night, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

One remote area where the fire burned is 30 minutes up a winding dirt road. Another is dotted with large-scale marijuana growing operations. A main route along the ridgetop is not accessible, even to firefighters, because of downed utility lines.

Flames lit up the mountainside above a roller coaster at Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, and a residence was reduced to rubble, though its hot tub still stood. The fire consumed a large home sitting on a hilltop plot and poured out thick, black smoke, while another house sat unscathed below.

The blaze broke out Monday during a statewide heat wave that brought witheringly low humidity and temperatures in the upper 90s.

The heat baked even coastal cities that normally benefit from the Pacific Ocean's cooling effect. But the high temperatures were expected to start easing late Tuesday.

"This fire is a good reminder that even though we are approaching October, this time of year is historically when we experience the largest and most damaging wildfires," Cal Fire spokesman Daniel Berlant said.

It threatened 300 buildings, though it's not clear if they were homes or smaller structures. The fire, which was partially under control, also burned close to television and radio towers. No injuries were reported.

Anthony Lopez returned to his home, which is still under evacuation orders, Tuesday. He was overjoyed to find his dozens of marijuana plants standing and his 1972 Buick Skylark uncharred.

Doreenann Bellamy packed her dog, photo albums and firearms into her pickup truck as she and her husband left their home.

"Everyone on the mountain has guns, and you've got to grab your guns first," she told The Mercury News in San Jose (http://bayareane.ws/2cH4hpE).

Danielle Mays anxiously waited for a neighbor to bring her Boston terrier, Layla, and her cat, Callie.

"That's it; that's what matters," Mays told the newspaper Monday. "I have fire insurance for the rest."

To the north, embers from eucalyptus trees engulfed in flames spread to 13 homes, destroying four houses in a Petaluma, California neighborhood of modest homes bordered by a major highway, authorities said.

Petaluma fire Battalion Chief Jeff Holden said damage in the other homes ranged from a scorched fence to burned backyard decks, sheds and windows.

One woman was injured and received burn blisters on the bottom of one foot.

The fire started in grass near an off ramp of Highway 101 and was blown by the wind into parched eucalyptus trees, Holden told the Press Democrat.

Authorities evacuated about 20 homes and shut down most of the freeway's northbound lanes for nearly two hours.

Dozens of firefighters from nearby cities joined Petaluma fire crews to fight the blazes. The last crew clearing the scene five hours after the fires started, Holden said.

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The Latest: Barriers Protect Cedar Rapids As River Crests

Associated Press, September 27, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — The Latest on flooding in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where the Cedar River is cresting Tuesday (all times local):

11:45 a.m.

Officials in Cedar Rapids say an elaborate system of temporary floodwalls is successfully protecting thousands of homes and businesses from floodwaters.

Iowa's second-largest city said its hastily-erected 9.8-mile system of Hesco barriers and earthen berms was largely holding back the Cedar River, which was cresting Tuesday at its second-highest level in history.

As of Tuesday morning, city officials said the barriers had prevented most damage but that some buildings and homes near the river will likely have water in their basements.

City workers and contractors worked through the night to pump out water that seeped through the barriers and that came up through the sewer system.

Firefighters and police also rescued a woman who was swept away Monday afternoon by the river.

___

9:10 a.m.

The National Weather Service has lowered its forecast for the Cedar River's crest in Cedar Rapids.

The river is now expected to crest in Iowa's second-largest city at just over 22 feet, rather than 23 feet.

That's 10 feet above flood stage and considered major flooding, but it's still 9 feet below the record crest in 2008 that caused devastating flooding in the city.

Forecasters said Tuesday morning that they expect the river to crest in the next few hours.

City spokeswoman Sara Baughman (BAHF--muhn) says officials are happy to see the new figure. She says the river is expected to stay at that crest for several hours.

She says city officials are "cautiously optimistic" the city's defenses will hold as the river begins to drop.

The weather service expects the river will be back below flood stage sometime Monday.

___

6:30 a.m.

A city spokeswoman says Cedar Rapids' temporary flood protection system is holding as the Cedar River rises toward its expected crest of 23 feet — 11 feet above flood stage.

At 6 a.m. Tuesday, the water was less than 15 inches from its projected peak, which would be more than 8 feet below the 2008 record that led to devastating flooding.

Spokeswoman Sara Baughman (BAHF'-muhn) says there is some minor roadway flooding early Tuesday from storm sewer backup just west of the river downtown, but that the water is being pumped back into the river. Baughman also says water has risen onto Riverfront Park on the south end of Mays Island, but that it didn't appear to have reached the Linn County Courthouse.

She says there have been no reports of looting inside the evacuation zone.

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12:10 a.m.

Residents of Cedar Rapids, Iowa's second-largest city, hope a temporary floodwall that is protecting thousands of homes and downtown buildings from the rain-swollen Cedar River will hold as the rain-swollen Cedar River crests.

The river is expected to reach its peak Tuesday morning at 23 feet before slowly falling through the week. Residents fear a devastating flood like the one that hit the eastern Iowa city of 130,000 in 2008.

City crews and residents have been stacking sandbags and building larger barriers for days in anticipation of the high water, which followed days of heavy rain in northern Iowa.

Schools have been cancelled through Thursday and the city's downtown and some neighborhoods are like ghost towns as resident abide by a request to evacuate.

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Cedar Rapids Is Happy With Its Flood Barriers As Cedar River Crests

Associated Press, September 27, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — An elaborate system of temporary flood walls largely protected Cedar Rapids homes and businesses on Tuesday as the river that runs through the city reached its second-highest peak ever.

City officials said the 9.8-mile system of Hesco barriers and earthen berms that contractors erected over the weekend was successfully holding back the rain-swollen Cedar River.

The city, Iowa's second largest, received good news as the river crested Tuesday morning at 22.1 feet, lower than predicted. That was 9 feet below the 2008 flood that destroyed thousands of homes and businesses in the worst natural disaster in Iowa history.

The barriers used to hold back the floodwaters consist of steel mesh panels, lined with a thick polypropylene material that can be quickly filled with sand or dirt, usually using a front-loader. They have also have been used extensively by the military.

City crews had worked through the night to patch any weaknesses in the protection system and pump out water that seeped through the barriers or came up through the saturated ground.

"City employees and contractors worked in really heroic ways to make sure the temporary system we put in place was fully functional," said city manager Jeff Pomeranz.

Their work continued Tuesday as the city turned its focus underground to its pressure-packed sewer system, which officials worried could send water shooting onto streets and create dangerous conditions for any bystanders.

"The enemy now is what we don't see," Pomeranz said.

Crews pumped water back into the river Tuesday in downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, which were largely abandoned as residents heeded the city's call to evacuate.

Nick Jelinek, 37, said the flood protection was working "great" as he pumped water out of the basement of a business building he owns in the usually bustling New Bo district. "This is as good as it could go," he said.

While the protection system was largely working, city officials said that many homes and businesses near the river will likely have water in their basements. They warned about the prospect of residential sewer backups and structural damage.

It will be a few more days before residents are allowed to return to their homes and businesses and key roads reopen. Public schools will remain closed today.

Firefighters rescued a woman Monday who had been swept away by the river north of downtown. She was able to cling to a tree until rescuers reached her.

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Barriers Used To Protect Soldiers Now Stopping Floodwaters

By Ryan Foley And Scott McFetridge

Associated Press, September 27, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Iowa's second-largest city has managed to keep flooding at bay largely because of barriers that were widely used to protect soldiers in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Crews in Cedar Rapids hastily erected Hesco barriers along nearly 10 miles of the Cedar River through neighborhoods and downtown. As of Tuesday morning, the sand-filled containers had protected thousands of properties, some up to 4 feet beneath the surging waterway.

The barriers are a key reason Cedar Rapids officials are hopeful they can largely avoid flooding, unlike in 2008 when higher river levels inundated 10 square miles of the city, causing billions of dollars in damage.

"In 2008, we felt defenseless," Mayor Ron Corbett said. "In 2016, we took action and mobilized."

The barriers were invented by British entrepreneur James Heselden, a former coal miner who used them to stop erosion on his property. After his invention received media attention, the United Kingdom's military realized the barriers could be used to replace sandbags that protected soldiers from blasts in Bosnia, said Aaron Ackley, Hesco's director of emergency response.

The U.S. military came to the same conclusion and began using the barriers extensively in Iraq and Afghanistan, eventually totaling more than 30,000 miles of the containers, said Ackley, who first saw the barriers when he served with the U.S. Army in Bosnia.

"There's an unbelievable amount deployed for military use," Ackley said. "Every air base, every forward-operating base, every fire base is surrounded by Hesco."

As they were used more extensively by the military, emergency planners around the U.S. and the Army Corps of Engineers realized their ability to quickly protect against flooding and they have grown in popularity.

New York City has installed a network of what it calls "geotextile" bags along Rockaway Beach, weighing a total of 50 million pounds, to help protect the shoreline after Hurricane Sandy, said Meghan Lalor, a spokeswoman for the city's parks department. Containers also have been used to prevent flooding recently in Monroe, Louisiana, along the Los Angeles River in Los Angeles and spots in New Mexico where wildfires destroyed plants and led to increased flooding risks.

The barriers are comprised of steel mesh panels, lined with a thick polypropylene material that can be quickly filled with sand or dirt, usually using a front-loader. The barriers keep water from seeping through to the other side, but allow moisture to drain out the bottom.

Cedar Rapids Assistant City Manager Sandi Fowler said the city bought 1½ miles of Hesco barriers in 2010 as part of its flood protection plan, but this marks the first time they have been deployed. Through Hesco, the city acquired the rest of its 9.8 miles from the University of Iowa, which had them in storage. The new Hescos cost $1.4 million, but with labor costs added, the entire temporary flood system totaled about $5 million.

Such selling and sharing of the barriers is common as new disasters arise. Fowler said the city has given its Hesco barriers to other communities facing flooding twice since 2010, and they have then been replenished by the company. They have been stored in different municipal buildings around the city.

"Ours haven't been sitting on the shelf for six years," Fowler said.

Fowler said the city hired contractors to install the barriers, which are then wrapped in plastic to repel water. Sandbags are used to hold the plastic onto the barriers.

During floods elsewhere, the city learned that Hesco barriers would tip over because the river undermines the ground beneath them, so Cedar Rapids placed them on concrete city streets and trails.

"We're feeling very good, very, very confident, that this temporary system that we built in less than two days will protect our city," City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said.

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Iowa City Flood Prevention System Holds Back Cedar River

Reuters, September 27, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Flood Protection In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Holds As River Crests

By Joe Barrett

Wall Street Journal, September 27, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Iowa Flood Is A Flop, And Thank God For That

USA Today, September 28, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — As with most sequels, #Flood2016 as seen from Iowa's second-largest city lacked the drama of the original blockbuster.

But we're in the Heartland, not Hollywood. So that's very good news.

When a natural disaster underperforms, that means lives are saved and more homes stay safe.

Also like a typical sequel, the plot of this flood has been more ponderous and procedural. And everybody saw it coming, with about five days to heave sandbags and brace for impact.

Tuesday was peak day, when the Cedar River here crested just below 22 feet — a foot lower than the most recent estimate, and at least a few feet below what had been feared last week when rains hit. And, of course, it was far less water than the record 31-foot crest eight years ago that swamped 10 square miles of the city.

"The other 3 feet would've made a huge difference around here," said Carol Ekstrand, standing just west of the river with friend Scott Pinter in front of his dry Cedar River Landing bar. "It bought a lot of people their homes and businesses."

Down the street, plant manager Rick Schmerbach oversaw the effort to pump about 6 inches of water from the basement of Johnson Gas Appliance. This flood turned out to be more a story of the unseen enemy of seepage into basements, with pressure from the swollen river forcing water to gurgle up from below.

As many neighborhoods emptied of some 10,000 voluntary evacuees, an eerie silence descended on parts of the city.

“My wife says it feels like an episode of The Walking Dead down here,” said Dylan Smith, walking his blue heeler-pit bull mix, Nahla, Tuesday morning in the trendy NewBo business district along the northeast riverbank near downtown. What the area lacked in bloodthirsty zombies it more than made up for in stoic sandbags and the drone of water pumps.

About 10 miles of temporary flood barriers — HESCO-brand sand-filled cubes of wire frame and fabric — were assembled along the river for $5 million to $6 million within a few days, as if some giant Lego project. The city also deployed 250,000 sandbags, many of which remained dry and can be recycled.

The drama had ebbed enough at Tuesday morning’s press conference that Mayor Ron Corbett took time to get philosophical about comparisons between the wait-and-see nervous tension of a flood crest day and Election Day. And the local Red Cross spokesman read from his journal to help encourage residents to write about their feelings on the flood.

The obvious horrible tragedy Tuesday had nothing to do with the flood, except perhaps a tangential connection that school had been canceled for the week: A 13-year-old girl was shot and killed on the southeast side of the city, a murder that had squad cars abandoning their flood patrols to swarm to the scene and swiftly arrest three young suspects.

Even in the last massive flood nobody died as a result of the disaster itself.

“It’s not time yet to go back to life as usual,” City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said Tuesday, “but we’re getting close.”

On the sand-swept vacant streets of the core downtown business district it was easy to spot metallic birds that have proliferated in the last eight years: drone cameras launched to survey the watery landscape by air.

We should remember that these are the early days of #Flood2016. The water isn’t expected to drop below major flood stage until the weekend. In the early days of any disaster, summaries and statistics can fluctuate as frequently and wildly as the forecast. The broader themes and lessons learned from this flood haven’t had time to jell.

But this much seems clear, or at least it’s a local consensus based on nearly everybody I talked to: Cedar Rapids deserves high marks for its preparedness and response. As a journalist I would add that the daily public city council meetings and press conferences, complete with a Facebook Live feed and a sign language interpreter for the hearing impaired, provided a model of open government in the face of disaster. Any reporter or citizen could walk into the Ice Arena, sit down, and listen in as the council received updates from local chiefs and department heads.

As part of the morning ritual, city officials tended to hammer on the abiding need for permanent flood protection that could cost 100 times as much as the HESCO barriers, about half-a-billion dollars.

As early as Sunday, Corbett touched on the city’s classic east-west divide: The rebuilt downtown business district on the east and the residential neighborhoods such as Time Check to the west that have been decimated by flood buyouts. He said the city couldn’t accept a solution that protects only the richer eastern side.

“We wanted to protect both sides of the river,” he said. “We didn’t turn to some bureaucratic formula to make that decision. … The downtown wasn’t more important than Time Check.”

City Councilwoman Ann Poe later made a case for her city: “We process the grain that comes from all over the state,” she said. “So protecting this city is economically the right thing to do for this state.”

By Tuesday, a resident stood up and asked the city manager, “Why can’t we just build (permanent flood protection) ourselves and quit this monkeying around?”

Pomeranz reiterated that it’s “great being on the list” for federal flood relief passed through Congress and signed by the president, he said, “(but) we need the dollars, and that comes through appropriation.”

State Sen. Rob Hogg of Cedar Rapids, who shouldered his share of sandbagging in recent days and also vacated his law office, remains upset that permanent flood protection hasn’t been built to “provide certainty and security.”

“The politically responsible people have ceded their authority to unelected bureaucrats,” he said.

Self-described “ecological restorationist” Rich Patterson of Cedar Rapids has a question for his neighbors: “How many floods is it going to take before it sinks in?”

Patterson is an aquatic biologist originally from New Jersey who retired a few years ago as the longtime executive director of the Indian Creek Nature Center. He has written decades of pro-environmental opinion pieces to implore his fellow Iowans to act, long feeling like a lonely voice in the wilderness, and not because he plants his yards in native prairie.

"I'm really kind of tired of the heroic stuff," he said of the way the city tends to focus on the human drama of floods. And he doesn't think any permanent levee can be built high enough if officials don't also take other measures.

"Why don't we just do the dull and boring stuff?" he asked.

– USA Today Network Kyle Munson, The Des Moines Register

Follow Kyle Munson on Twitter: @KyleMunson

Wednesday's Forecast: Rainy Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, September 28, 2016

A wet Wednesday is forecast for the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley. By the evening and into Thursday, drenching rain could lead to flooding in the Mid-Atlantic and Central Appalachians.

Midwest, East: A soggy day is on tap for the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley. By the evening and into Thursday, heavy rain will pelt the Mid-Atlantic and central Appalachians, where flooding is a concern.

West: The northern Rockies will be warm and dry Wednesday while temperatures stay cool over the Pacific Northwest. A few afternoon showers and thunderstorms are possible over portions of the Southwest and southern Rockies.

Weather history for Sept. 28: In 1917, a hurricane hit Pensacola, Fla., dropping the city's barometric pressure to an all-time low of 28.51 inches. In 1984, Washington, D.C., had its coolest September day on record, with a high of only 52 degrees.

P.M. Update: An Enticing Evening Gives Way To Growing Rain Chances Wednesday; Flash Flood Watch

By Ian Livingston

Washington Post, September 27, 2016

* Flash flood watch late Wednesday to Friday morning for 3 to 5 inches of rain and locally higher amounts *

Morning clouds gave way to brilliant sunshine this afternoon. It ended up quite nice overall as temperatures reached into the mid-70s in most spots. Conditions remain pleasant into and through the evening. Enjoy it while you can, because prolonged storminess is inbound.

Through tonight: We should stay rather clear through the evening and into the early overnight, with the exception of areas well south and east where it's a bit cloudier already. Clouds will be streaming back into the whole area late. It'll end up cloudy after midnight, and some patchy fog is possible as well. A few showers are possible as we get toward morning. It shouldn't be too widespread or heavy, though. Lows range from the mid-50s to the low-and-mid 60s.

Tomorrow (Wednesday): Showers are possible in the morning, and that risk continues off and on through the day. I don't think we'll see a lot of widespread heavy stuff just yet, but it's likely coming. But any showers that move through could be briefly moderate to heavy. Otherwise, skies are cloudy with winds out of the northeast around 10 mph. Highs should crack 70, but mid-70s might be pushing it if clouds are thick enough.

See Matt Rogers's forecast through the weekend. And if you haven't already, join us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram. For related traffic news, check out Dr. Gridlock.

Pollen update: Mold spores are MODERATE/HIGH. Weed and tree pollen is LOW/MODERATE. Grass pollen is LOW.

Want our 5 a.m. forecast delivered to your email in-box? Subscribe here.

Rain: It's coming. There's not much change from earlier. There's not much else going on out there to talk about today, either. So here's an updated rainfall forecast from the Weather Prediction Center.

D.C.-area Forecast: Heavy Rain Threat Today Into Friday; Some Potential For Flooding

By Dan Stillman

Washington Post, September 28, 2016

* Flash flood watch late Wednesday into Friday morning *

TODAY'S DAILY DIGIT

A somewhat subjective rating of the day's weather, on a scale of 0 to 10.

6/10: Can't downgrade clouds and potential showers too much, as we really need some rain.

EXPRESS FORECAST

Today: Mostly cloudy, occasional showers & storms. Highs: Low-to-mid 70s.

Tonight: Rain becoming likely. Lows: Mid-60s.

Tomorrow: Rain likely, heavy at times. Highs: Upper 60s to low 70s.

View the current weather conditions at The Washington Post headquarters.

FORECAST IN DETAIL

We need some rain, and it looks like we'll get a good dose of it over the next few days, with even some potential for localized flooding. As usual, it's not certain where the heaviest rains will set up, but the entire metro area is at risk for at least 1-3″ of rain, and totals upward of 4-5″ aren't out of the question. We'll trend nicer and brighter this weekend.

Today (Wednesday): Might see some patchy morning fog or mist, with occasional showers and storms through the course of the day. Highs should reach the low-to-mid 70s under mostly cloudy skies, with light winds from the east-southeast around 5-10 mph. Confidence: Medium-High

Tonight: A steadier rain is likely to develop during the evening or overnight, and should be heavy at times. A bit of lightning and thunder is possible as well. Winds increase from the east, to around 10-15 mph, as lows dip to the mid-60s. Confidence: Medium

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for the latest updates. For related traffic news, check out Dr. Gridlock. Keep reading for the forecast through the weekend…

Tomorrow (Thursday): Rain is likely during the much of the day. And again it should be heavy at times, with a bit of thunder still possible. The rain, overcast skies and a cool breeze from the east (around 10-15 mph) help hold highs to the upper 60s to low 70s. Flooding could become a concern as the day goes on and into the night. Confidence: Medium

Tomorrow night: Rain remains likely with localized flooding possible. Overcast skies continue to go nowhere fast as lows settle in the 60s. Confidence: Medium

A LOOK AHEAD

With the upper-level area of low pressure still spinning to our west, we hold on to the chance of occasional lighter showers Friday into Friday night. Mostly cloudy skies persist Friday as well, with highs in the upper 60s to mid-70s. Confidence: Low-Medium

The weekend features improving weather. Clouds and a shower chance may linger early Saturday, but skies should eventually turn partly sunny, with afternoon highs reaching the 70s. The upper-level low then finally lifts away to our north, leaving us a partly sunny Sunday, with highs still in the 70s and only a slight chance of a shower. Confidence: Medium

Potential For Heavy Rain In DC Region Wednesday To Friday, Flash Flood Watch Issued

By Jason Samenow

Washington Post, September 27, 2016

* Flash flood watch late Wednesday to Friday morning for 3 to 5 inches of rain and locally higher amounts *

Starting Wednesday, a long duration, heavy rain event is likely in the D.C. area and much of the Mid-Atlantic.

Several inches of rain and areas of flooding are possible in the hardest-hit areas, although amounts are likely to vary widely throughout the region.

The period of steadiest and heaviest rain is expected between Wednesday night and Thursday night. Intermittent and more widely scattered showers may start as early as Wednesday morning and linger into the weekend.

Several ingredients are in place for a significant event, but specific amounts will depend on exactly where the heaviest rain bands set up. Model forecasts range from one to eight inches of rain between Wednesday and Friday, but most concentrate around three inches.

As the D.C. region has been abnormally dry since August, a three-inch soaking over 24 to 48 hours would be beneficial. It would mostly erase the rainfall deficit that has built up.

However, if the heaviest model simulations are correct, and more than four inches of rain fall, then flooding would become a concern.

Some areas could get hit repeatedly by waves of torrential rainfall and embedded thunderstorms, in a process known as "training." This would cause streams to rise and overflow their banks, and poor drainage areas to be overcome. Remember to never attempt to drive through flooded roads.

The National Weather Service indicates there is a slight risk of "excessive rainfall" Wednesday night and a slight to moderate risk of excessive rainfall Thursday. Excessive rainfall is defined as the quantity of water that would trigger flash flooding.

The setup for this event shares the characteristics of those that have produced the most extreme rainfall at this time of year in historical records.

A strong area of low pressure at high altitudes is forecast to dive south from the Great Lakes on Wednesday into the Tennessee Valley by Thursday.

This area of low pressure will be cut off from atmospheric steering currents, meaning it will sit and spin for up to several days. The low pressure area's counterclockwise circulation will continuously draw very moist air from the Atlantic Ocean into the Mid-Atlantic.

"The set-up for this event basically is consistent with that of an East Coast atmospheric river given the long-fetch Atlantic trajectory that will be in place," writes the National Weather Service. "Atmospheric rivers," common along the West Coast, act like fire hoses, channeling streams of moisture in narrow swaths and then unloading a deluge.

Capital Weather Gang's Wes Junker, who has specialized knowledge of Mid-Atlantic flash flooding, thinks areas of flooding will be difficult to avoid somewhere between central Virginia and southern Pennsylvania.

"Upper-level low [pressure areas] west of the mountains that stall providing a prolonged period of low-level easterly flow tend to be big rainmakers, especially along the east slopes of the mountains," Junker said. "Usually the heaviest rainfall occurs west of the city, although it's hard to say exactly where the bulls-eye will set up."

Over the next day, determining how much rain falls, and where, emerges as the biggest forecast challenge. Some areas may receive only moderate amounts of rain, while record-challenging amounts could occur in others, which would lead to flooding.

We should have a better idea of how much rain will fall and where on Wednesday, although — even then — upper-level low-pressure systems and the distribution of rainfall they generate are notoriously difficult to forecast.

Stay tuned to our posts for the latest, and find rainfall simulations from several models below:

European model: 2.5-7 inches

GFS model: 2-6 inches

NAM model: 1-4 inches

Wes Junker, Ian Livingston and Jeff Halverson contributed to this post. This post, originally posted early Tuesday afternoon, was updated Tuesday evening.

Flood Damage Estimates Rise In Waseca

Associated Press, September 27, 2016

WASECA, Minn. (AP) – Estimates of flood damage are rising in Waseca.

Waseca County's emergency management director, Nancy Lageson, tells The Free Press of Mankato (http://bit.ly/2dzidUv) that the county's assessment has doubled since last week's heavy rain, with at least 75 percent of the homes in the area damaged by flooding.

A line nearly 200 yards long of trucks and cars filled with wet carpets, furniture and waterlogged TVs and appliances was lined up Monday at the city's debris dump site.

John McGuire was hauling a trailer with carpet and furniture and was making his fifth trip to the dump, with more to come. He said his family had 10 inches of water in their basement.

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Heavy Rains Leave Saturated Soil Across Wisconsin

Associated Press, September 27, 2016

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The heavy rains that have caused flooding and landslides in parts of Wisconsin have also saturated the soil at record levels around the state.

The Wisconsin State Journal reports (http://bit.ly/2d6AwgV) that surplus moisture was found in 40 percent of the state's topsoil last week and 35 percent of its subsoil. Those are the highest levels for September and could raise the risk of future flooding.

That's according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Two people died in Wisconsin and a train derailed last week after torrential rain in western and central counties. Flood warnings continue in Crawford, Grant, Juneau, La Crosse, Sauk and Vernon counties.

Despite the wet weather, the state's crops are OK with 87 percent of corn and 84 percent of soybeans rating good or excellent.

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Information from: Wisconsin State Journal, http://www.madison.com/wsj

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Several Utah Residents Still Can't Return Home After Tornado

Associated Press, September 27, 2016

WASHINGTON TERRACE, Utah (AP) – More than two dozen people in northern Utah are unable to return to their homes several days after a tornado tore through their neighborhood.

KUTV reports (http://bit.ly/2dds0x5) that a tornado ravaged the Washington Terrace community on Sept. 22, temporarily displacing several people and damaging one home beyond repair.

Gaelynn Sewell and her husband say the tornado ripped off half of their roof, meaning they will only be able to return to their house if it's rebuilt. She says they are waiting for information from insurance adjusters, who have to call experts to assess the damage because tornados rarely hit Utah.

City Manager Tom Hanson says the city has streamlined the building permit process and waived fees so families can return home as soon as possible.

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Information from: KUTV-TV, http://www.kutv.com/

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School's New Antenna Pings Weather Satellites For Public Use

Associated Press, September 28, 2016

HAMPTON, Va. — Virginia's Hampton Roads region now has one of the most advanced weather monitoring systems in the country.

Hampton University says it has installed a "direct broadcast antenna" that connects with weather satellites owned by NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The school says the antenna will rival most weather channels and meteorologists. The information it collects will be publicly available.

That means residents can get real-time data on the area's hurricanes, tornadoes and other severe weather before or at the same time as many forecasters.

NASA helped fund the $5 million device, which was manufactured by Orbital Systems. The school says it's one of just 10 such antennas in the country.

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More Mitigation Meetings On Tap In West Virginia Flood Areas

Associated Press, September 28, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) – Several more meetings are coming up to help homeowners get grants to reduce risks during future disasters in flood-ravaged areas.

The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management says a meeting about the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program will take place Wednesday evening at Alumni Hall in Richwood.

Two more evening meetings will follow – one on Oct. 3 at Workers United Local 863 in White Sulphur Springs, and a second on Oct. 4 at Rainelle Elementary.

The June 23 floods killed 23 and destroyed homes, businesses and infrastructure.

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How Big Is Louisiana's Deficit? Figure Expected Next Month

By Melinda Deslatte

Associated Press, September 27, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — A dollar figure for Louisiana's budget deficit will be released next month, after the state's financial analysts finish reconciling the accounting books.

Louisiana leaders expect the state spent more than it brought into the treasury in the budget year that ended June 30. Gov. John Bel Edwards' administration says the gap could range from $200 million up to $300 million.

But the closing of the books on a state government budget year, with billions in income and spending, is complex.

The Revenue Estimating Conference — the state's income forecasting panel — was told Tuesday the accounting work is still underway. A price tag for the deficit is expected to come at the Oct. 28 meeting of the joint House and Senate budget committee.

WHY THE DEFICIT?

Business tax collections are driving the deficit prediction, bringing in less than expected in the state's official forecast.

Louisiana has struggled through repeated budget shortfalls in the last nine years amid the national recession, the oil price slump and the continued use by former Gov. Bobby Jindal and lawmakers of short-term fixes to close holes. Lawmakers, at Edwards' urging, recently raised an estimated $1.5 billion in taxes to shrink cuts in this year's spending plan.

LSU economist Jim Richardson, who sits on the four-member Revenue Estimating Conference, warned of the expected deficit when lawmakers were meeting in a legislative session on taxes. But the House balked at further tax hikes to fill a gap that wasn't yet certain.

HOW CAN THE DEFICIT BE CLOSED?

Whatever gap exists has to be closed in the current 2016-17 budget year. Deficits can be closed with either new money or cuts.

Republican leaders in the House are hoping the tax hikes they recently passed will bring in more money than expected and could help offset last year's deficit. But Louisiana's share of response and recovery costs to the catastrophic mid-August flooding could heap new shortfalls on the state and erase gains that might show up in tax collections.

The Edwards administration asked agencies at the start of the current budget year on July 1 to lessen spending as a safeguard against likely cuts.

It also has renegotiated Jindal-era deals that privatized the services provided by the LSU charity hospitals and has identified a way to draw down more federal financing for the deals, which could help cut the state's costs and shrink the budget gap.

CAN THE RAINY DAY FUND BE USED?

Senate President John Alario, R-Westwego, said he's looking at whether Louisiana can tap into its "rainy day" fund, which contains $359 million. But he's not certain that the state will meet the constitutional triggers needed to be able to use up to $120 million of the fund.

"We're looking at everything, if it's constitutionally available to us," Alario said Tuesday. But he added: "I'm not anticipating that we will be able to get to it."

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Follow Melinda Deslatte on Twitter at http://twitter.com/melindadeslatte

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GOP: Edwards Shouldn't Have Been Fundraising In Washington

Associated Press, September 27, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The Republican Party is criticizing Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards for attending a fundraiser for his re-election campaign while on a Washington trip lobbying Congress for flood aid.

The fundraiser was held at a lobbying firm office, hosted by Democratic former U.S. Sens. John Breaux, J. Bennett Johnston and Mary Landrieu.

Jason Doré, state GOP executive director, said Tuesday the fundraiser "took precious time" away from a trip aimed at building support for disaster relief.

Edwards spokesman Richard Carbo said the Thursday evening fundraiser didn't disrupt any of the governor's meetings. The trip was originally planned for Edwards to speak at an education event, and the congressional talks were added after the flood.

Carbo says the Edwards campaign, not the state, paid for hotel rooms the night of the fundraiser.

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Elizabeth Warren Is "Past Sick And Tired" Of Republicans Who Only Help Their Own

Huffington Post, September 27, 2016

WASHINGTON — If Republicans don't want to help the constituents of Democratic lawmakers when they face catastrophe, why should Democrats rush to the aid of voters in GOP districts in their times of trouble?

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) had a simple answer to that Tuesday. Because it's the right thing to do, she said in a blistering floor speech that hammered Republicans for taking exactly the opposite approach.

"I am past sick and tired of Republican senators who come here to demand federal funding when their communities are hit by a crisis but who block help when other states need it," Warren said, referring specifically to the GOP's failure to act on the lead-pipe crisis in Flint, Michigan.

"Their philosophy screams, 'I want mine, but the rest of you are on your own,'" Warren said. "It's ugly, it's un-American and it's just plain wrong."

The Massachusetts senator named no names, but Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) had singled out Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) earlier in the day for telling NPR that aid for his flood-ravaged state should not be held "hostage because of other people's grief."

Cassidy complained that quick relief for Louisiana should not be held up by Democrats who have been trying for a year to get aid to some 100,000 residents of Flint, about half of whom are African-American.

Over the course of that year, Republicans have argued repeatedly that the Flint problem is a state issue and that any federal aid should be offset by cuts elsewhere. The $220 million Flint bill, which is now stalled in Congress, would be paid for by cutting a $250 million tax subsidy that helps the auto industry.

By contrast, Republicans have added some $500 million to a stopgap government funding bill in order to help flood victims in Louisiana and other Southern states. That provision has no offset and would add to the nation's debt.

"Like Flint, Louisiana received a federal disaster declaration to make the thousands of people who've lost their homes eligible for our help," Warren said. "Congressional Republicans, urged on by the two Republican senators from Louisiana, have decided to give Louisiana the support that it needs to recover from this disaster as part of the government funding bill."

Warren said it was "great" that Louisiana would get that help, but slammed the GOP for hypocrisy.

"The Republicans who control Congress say there will be nothing for Flint. This is raw politics," she said. "Two Republicans represent Louisiana and two Democrats represent Michigan. Congress is controlled by Republicans, so Louisiana gets immediate help, but after a year of waiting, Michigan gets told to pound sand. Is this what we've come to?"

Democrats may yet obtain aid for Flint by refusing to vote for the overall spending bill, which would fund the government into December, until the cash for the Michigan city is guaranteed, too. One way that may happen is if Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) pulls the Louisiana funding from the spending bill and links it to the Flint aid. He said Tuesday that he was considering such a step.

House Republicans To Allow Flint Vote

By Lindsey McPherson

Roll Call, September 28, 2016

House Republicans late Tuesday acquiesced to Democrats' demands to address the Flint, Michigan, water contamination crisis, when the Rules Committee voted to allow an amendment to a water resources measure that would authorize $170 million in assistance.

The move comes just one day after the Rules panel blocked a similar attempt to get a vote on Flint aid as the chamber took up the Water Resources Development Act. The change of heart signals interest in resolving a stalemate over Flint that has held up a must-pass stopgap spending bill to keep government agencies running into December.

An aide to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi told Roll Call that the amendment the Rules Committee made in order by voice vote represents a bipartisan agreement between the minority leader and Speaker Paul D. Ryan "to allow germane authorization language to be added to WRDA as an amendment that will, at the end of the day, provide the necessary funding Flint needs in the final WRDA conference report."

The amendment authorizes the federal government to provide $170 million to communities like Flint. The actual inclusion of the money is expected to come later as part of a House and Senate conference committee on the WRDA bill.

Earlier Tuesday, a procedural vote in the Senate on a continuing resolution failed to attract the 60 votes needed to advance the package, in part because Democrats objected to the way the GOP included aid for states affected by floods but didn't for Flint, which has been dealing with contaminated water for more than year.

The Senate had already authorized $220 million in similar aid, with an equal amount of offsets, as part of its version of the WRDA. However, Democrats have been pushing to attach the Flint package to the CR since it's a must-pass bill and there was no guarantee House Republicans would agree to take up the issue as part of the WRDA.

Ryan and House GOP leaders have said they see the WRDA as the proper place to debate Flint funding, not the CR. But until the Rules Committee decision Tuesday night, there was no plan to attach Flint aid to the WRDA on the House bill.

Democrats had been skeptical of GOP leaders' assurances that Flint aid would be addressed in a conference committee.

"There's no way I can imagine us leaving town and then taking sort of a promise that we will get to you later," Rep. Dan Kildee, a Michigan Democrat who represents Flint, told reporters Tuesday. "And I'll tell you why. Later is worse for Flint. … Time works against the city."

While the Rules Committee decision does not provide any guarantees that Flint aid will get to President Barack Obama's desk as part of the WRDA — the House still has to adopt the authorizing amendment and the conference committee will have to provide money for Flint aid in the final measure — it greatly increases the likelihood. Kildee has said he believes there are plenty of House Republicans who would join Democrats in supporting aid for Flint.

The mere scheduling of a House vote on Flint may be enough to get Senate Democrats to stop blocking the CR, since inclusion of money for the city was their main objection. But since the amendment does not provide any actual money, it's unclear whether it will be far enough. Since the deal has Pelosi's backing, if the Flint authorizing amendment is adopted as part of the WRDA, she will likely be able to convince House Democrats to pass the CR without Flint.

Democrats still object to some aspects of the Senate GOP's continuing resolution, including a provision to block the Securities and Exchange Commission from adopting a rule requiring corporations to disclose political donations. But with government funding set to expire after Sept. 30, those objections are unlikely to hold up the CR from moving forward.

Many House Republicans, including Ryan, have voiced concerns about providing funding to help Flint recover from its water crisis because they see it as a local government issue and worry that it sets a precedent for other local governments to seek help from the federal government for local issues. A vote on the authorizing language should test exactly how much opposition exists because of that concern.

House Paves The Way For Flint Aid In Water Bill

By Melanie Zanona

The Hill, September 27, 2016

House leaders have reached a deal to potentially include emergency funding for lead-contaminated communities like Flint, Mich., in a waterways bill in a move that is designed to stave off an election-year government shutdown later this week.

The agreement comes after Senate Democrats and a handful of Republicans blocked a stop-gap spending bill to fund the government past Sept. 30. Democrats opposed the legislation because it lacked Flint aid but included help for Louisiana flood victims.

The House Rules Committee agreed late Tuesday night to allow a floor vote on a bipartisan amendment from Reps. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.) and John Moolenar (R-Mich.) that would authorize up to $170 million for communities around the country that are facing a drinking water crisis.

The panel reversed course from a meeting on Monday, when committee lawmakers said they could not waive a budgetary point of order for a $220 million Flint amendment offered by Kildee to the water infrastructure bill.

Chairman Pete Sessions (R-Texas) praised lawmakers from both sides of the aisle on Tuesday for their “hard work over the past couple of hours” on the deal.

A Senate-passed version of the waterways bill included a $220 million Flint aid package, but the House version lacked the same drinking water provisions due to committee jurisdictional differences.

GOP leadership had assured lawmakers that the Flint issue could be dealt with in conference committee negotiations on the water bill, but Democrats wanted a stronger show of good faith from House Republicans.

The full House will now vote on the Flint amendment Wednesday, although it’s unclear just how much support it will garner. The upper and lower chambers also would still need to reconcile their two bills.

But the breakthrough could remove Democratic opposition to a continuing resolution that lacks Flint aid.

Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) said he looks forward to reading through the language and hopes that the compromise lives up to its promise of helping the children and residents of Flint.

Funding Bill Rejected As Shutdown Nears

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, September 27, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a short-term funding bill for the government over the water crisis in Flint, Mich., moving Congress one step closer to a shutdown in the midst of a presidential election.

Senators voted 45-55 on a GOP resolution that would fund the government through Dec. 9, but not provide financial aid for Flint. Sixty votes were needed to move forward with the bill.

Sens. Joe Donnelly (Ind.), Joe Manchin (W.Va.), Bill Nelson (Fla.) and Jon Tester (Mont.) were the only Democrats to support the continuing resolution (CR). Thirteen Republicans voted against the leadership-backed proposal.

Democrats are digging in on their demand that funding for Flint be included in the spending bill, which already includes emergency help for flood victims in Louisiana, Maryland and West Virginia.

Democrats, while stressing they don’t oppose the flood aid, argue any short-term funding bill shouldn’t include the flood money unless it also helps Flint.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) didn’t shut the door to dropping the flood money from the stopgap bill, saying, “that’s certainly an option.”

The government will shut down on Oct. 1 unless a funding measure is passed.

Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) shot down a question about whether Democrats would be satisfied with a promise from McConnell (R-Ky.) and Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) to pass the Flint aid in a lame-duck session after the election.

“No, if he wants to make that promise to Flint make him make the same promise to Louisiana,” Durbin said.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) added in a separate press conference that, “if the rational is that a water issue in Flint should be in [Water Resources Development Act], then a water issue in Louisiana should be in WRDA as well.”

Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) didn’t close the door to the Louisiana aid being moved to the water bill.

“It’s important to a number of states, including my state,” the Texas Republican said. “That’s what the bill has in it now, and we’ll see how the Democrats vote.”

Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.), noting he was opposed to removing the flood money, said he was aware of the Democratic objections.

“Why do you feel you have to punish people in Louisiana ... for Flint when there’s a pathway forward on Flint through the WRDA bill?” he said.

The stalemate over Flint comes after the Senate version of WRDA passed earlier this month included $220 million to address water infrastructure improvements in Flint.

But the House measure does not have Flint aid provisions, meaning the two chambers would have to resolve the issue in conference committee negotiations after the election.

Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) hinted that Democrats could accept a written agreement on Flint aid from Republican leadership.

"We need more than just vague promises," Boxer told reporters. "They can commit to us in writing that they can absolutely agree to our provisions. We don't have any of that."

But Democrats appeared split on what would need to be in such a deal.

Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.), while noting the CR isn't the only vehicle for the Flint aid, also set a high bar for an agreement: the president's signature.

"The writing would be the president signing the bill," he told reporters.

The White House on Tuesday backed up Democratic demands for the Flint funding to be added to the bill.

"The president has made clear for moths that Congress needs to act to provide resources to the community of Flint," White House press secretary Josh Earnest said.

Earnest noted the emergency funding in the Senate CR for Louisiana, Maryland and other states recovering from flooding.

"The president believes Congress should do the same thing for Flint and other communities dealing with those challenges."

GOP Sens. Ted Cruz (Texas), Steve Daines (Mont.), Lindsey Graham (S.C.), Dean Heller (Nev.), James Inhofe (Okla.), James Lankford (Okla.), Mike Lee (Utah), Mitch McConnell (Ky.), Rand Paul (Ky.), David Perdue (Ga.), Ben Sasse (Neb.), Tim Scott (S.C.) and Jeff Sessions (Ala.) voted against the bill.

McConnell's "no" vote allows him to bring it back up for another vote.

McConnell: Senate Could Drop Flood Money From Spending Bill

By Jordain Carney And Sarah Ferris

The Hill, September 27, 2016

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) signaled Tuesday that GOP leadership could drop emergency flood aid from a short-term spending bill as lawmakers look for a way forward on the stopgap measure.

"We keep hearing their position is 'no Flint, no floods.' Well, that's certainly an option worth discussing," he told reporters.

McConnell stressed that he was not considering adding aid for the lead-contamination crisis in Flint, Mich., to the continuing resolution (CR), which would fund the government through Dec. 9.

"We addressed the Flint issue in the [Water Resources Development Act] bill. It's paid for," the Senate Republican leader said. "We've done Flint in the Senate already, and the House is going to act on their version of WRDA today or tomorrow."

McConnell's remarks came shortly before a procedural vote on the spending bill fell short of the 60 votes needed to move forward.

Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) said he would support the spending bill even if it's stripped of flooding aid – some of which would go to his home state – because it could be addressed later in the year.

"We need to get the government funded," Cornyn told reporters minutes before the failed vote. "My hope is that the flood funds would come in the longer-term spending bill, and I believe that would happen, so I'd be willing to support that, even without that in there."

He accused Democrats of "killing" the flood relief funding "to get something they've basically already won," arguing that the House and Senate would likely agree to a water resources bill later this year that includes Flint money.

Democrats, who say they don't trust that the House will agree to fund Flint, say the GOP needs to include funding for both in the stopgap government spending bill.

Senate Democratic leaders said after the failed vote on Tuesday that they plan to keep pressing Republicans on Flint as they reopened talks ahead of Friday's deadline.

Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) suggested that the Democrats would have the upper hand, adding that McConnell got "pasted" in the vote with 13 members of his own party rejecting the bill.

"[McConnell] needs Democrats to pass this thing, so we need to talk to him about getting a few things done. I certainly think Flint is included, but including Louisiana makes it a must," Durbin said.

When asked if he could support a bill that includes neither Flint or flooding aid, Durbin declined to say, replying: "I'm going to defer to my senators from Michigan."

Democrats, while arguing they support flood money, say if it is going to be included in the CR, so should Flint aid.

Eight Democrats, led by Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), sent a letter to GOP leadership on Tuesday asking them to reopen negotiations.

Reid declined to say if dropping the flood money would be enough to win over Democrats, saying they would wait to see what McConnell offers.

Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.), who represents Flint, said Tuesday he wouldn't vote a spending bill that doesn't include Flint, even if it also excludes flooding relief.

"I have said, and I think all of my colleagues have said very clearly, we're in favor of helping the people of Louisiana as well as Flint," Peters told reporters. "We've always been about Louisiana and Flint. It's always been about both."

Dems Demand Flint Funding Promise "In Writing" From GOP

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, September 27, 2016

Senate Democrats say they plan to block a governing spending bill Tuesday because they don't trust Republicans to keep their promise to separately approve funding for the Flint, Mich., drinking water crisis.

Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), who is on the Environment and Public Works Committee, said at a press conference about two hours before the vote that Democrats are demanding a commitment to Flint aid in writing.

"We need more than just vague promises," Boxer told reporters. "They can commit to us in writing that they can absolutely agree to our provisions. We don't have any of that."

Democrats have opposed the GOP's bill to keep the government open through Dec. 9 because it ignores the lead-contaminated water system in Flint but includes $500 million to help relief efforts in Louisiana after this summer's floods.

GOP leaders in both chambers have said Flint funding should be part of a separate bill called the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which is going through the House this week.

While the Senate's version of that bill includes money for Flint, the House's version does not, and any agreement merging the two would likely come after the November elections.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) left open the possibility that Democrats could support a funding bill, or continuing resolution, that doesn't include Flint aid as long as they have assurances that money would come eventually.

When asked whether there are solutions other than putting it in the government spending bill, Stabenow said: "Yes, but I'm not going to negotiate that in public."

House Democrats who joined the press conference took a harder line on the Flint funding, threatening to shut down the government and blame the GOP over the issue.

"If the money is not provided before we leave this week, we're not leaving," said Rep. Sandy Levin (Mich.), the top Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee.

Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.), whose Flint amendment to the House's water bill was shut down Monday, said that commitment "needs to come in the form of a bill on the president's desk."

"The only thing we can trust is a commitment to put this language in the continuing resolution and get this to the president's desk," Kildee said.

"How can we trust the Republicans when they say they'll care of Flint in the WRDA bill?"

Dems Gain Upper Hand On Budget

By Jordain Carney And Sarah Ferris

The Hill, September 27, 2016

Congressional leaders are scrambling to avoid an election-year government shutdown after a funding bill went down to defeat in the Senate on Tuesday, leaving no clear path forward.

Senate Democrats believe they have seized the upper hand with less than 72 hours left to get a funding bill to President Obama's desk.

They feel emboldened because Republicans failed to secure a simple majority for Tuesday's proposal to fund the government; roughly a dozen Republicans voted against it, leaving Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) well short of the 60 votes needed to move forward.

Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) suggested Democrats were entering the final days of negotiations with an advantage because McConnell got "pasted" during Tuesday's procedural vote.

McConnell "needs Democrats to pass this thing, so we need to talk to him about getting a few things done," the Senate's No. 2 Democrat said.

Democrats are demanding that the continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government include emergency funding to help Flint, Mich., clean up its contaminated water supply.

Any spending bill will need Democratic votes to clear the upper chamber, giving the party leverage as lawmakers inch closer to a shutdown that had once seemed improbable.

"We don't need Republicans to again threaten a shutdown, and they've done it twice," Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) told reporters. "We should be able to find a path forward to fund the government and help the people of Flint."

Lawmakers must pass a funding measure by Saturday to prevent the federal government from shutting down.

The fight is playing out against the backdrop of a heated election campaign. McConnell had hoped for a quick, drama-free September session to get his members back to the campaign trail.

McConnell opened the door Tuesday to dropping emergency aid for Louisiana, Maryland and West Virginia to address Democratic criticism that the spending proposal includes help for flood victims but not for Flint. He could bring the CR up again for a vote as soon as Wednesday.

"We keep hearing their position is 'no Flint, no floods.' Well, that's certainly an option worth discussing," McConnell told reporters.

But the Kentucky Republican stressed he was not considering putting the Flint money into the CR.

Dropping the flood money, which was added after weeks of negotiations, from the bill would likely cost McConnell additional GOP support.

Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, who voted in favor of advancing the CR Tuesday, said that he was aware of the Democratic objections but warned against removing the flood funds.

"Why do you feel you have to punish people in Louisiana ... for Flint when there's a pathway forward on Flint?" the GOP senator asked.

Democrats, eager to not give ground, gave no indication they would advance the bill if the flood money were dropped.

"Let's see him do it. We'll discuss it when that happens," Reid said. "McConnell's gotten himself into this mess and he can do whatever he does and we will take a look at it."

In addition to the flood money, which Democrats say they support, Reid pointed to a fight over the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as another sticking point.

Democrats have expressed frustration that the bill wouldn't reverse a policy rider included in last year's omnibus appropriations package that blocks the SEC from requiring corporations to disclose political spending.

Republicans are quick to note that because the SEC language is current law, they would have to attach a rider to this year's otherwise "clean" funding measure to unwind it.

The fight over Flint aid has dragged on for months, and lawmakers are running out of time to get the funding passed this year. After next week, the House and Senate won't be in session again until mid--November.

The Senate passed a water infrastructure bill, the Water Resources Development Act, earlier this month that included $220 million to address improvements in Flint and other communities with water problems.

But a House measure does not have Flint aid provisions, meaning the two chambers would have to resolve differences in a conference committee after the elections.

Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), the majority whip, said Tuesday that the Flint money "can be and probably will be resolved" in that committee, but it would take more time.

"We just don't have enough time to do that between now and Friday," Cornyn said, arguing that any changes to the House's water bill "may jeopardize their ability to pass it there."

Democrats appeared skeptical Tuesday of commitments from GOP leadership to include the aid in a conference report.

"If Mr. [Pete] Sessions [R-Texas] thinks it's an earmark now he'll think it's an earmark when we fight to go to conference, and he'll fight to keep it out of the WRDA bill," Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) told reporters.

Sessions shot down an attempt to add Flint funding to the House WRDA on Monday night, but said he expects it to be included in the conference report over the objections of the bill's lead sponsor, Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.).

Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, told reporters Tuesday that he is confident Flint funding will pass before the end of the year.

"I'm convinced it's going to happen and I will be part of the effort to get that done," Upton said, adding that it will come either in the short-term or long-term government spending bill or the water resources bill.

Durbin, however, said Democrats wouldn't settle for a verbal promise, adding if Republicans want "to make that promise to Flint ... [they can] make the same promise to Louisiana."

A government shutdown would carry political risk for both sides, and particularly for incumbents in tough reelection races.

Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), one of a handful of GOP senators running for reelection in a purple state, said Tuesday that her colleagues should pass a CR instead of "dragging us to the brink of a government shutdown to score political points during an election year."

Liz Johnson, a spokeswoman for Ayotte's campaign, also sent a note to reporters Tuesday questioning whether Gov. Maggie Hassan, her Democratic opponent, will "support a government shutdown."

Overnight Energy: Judges Scrutinize Obama Climate Rule

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 27, 2016

CLIMATE RULE GOES TO COURT: Ten federal judges spent all day Tuesday scrutinizing numerous legal and constitutional aspects of President Obama's Clean Power Plan.

The judges of the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit seemed to split largely along party lines in the questions that they asked of the 16 lawyers supporting and opposing the rule.

And while the oral arguments in Washington didn't reveal much in the way of a consensus among the judges, it showed what main legal issues they're focusing on as they decide whether to uphold the main pillar of Obama's climate agenda.

The judges focused their questions largely on how the regulation fits under the Clean Air Act, whether the rule is too "transformative" to stand, whether Congress needs to have given the EPA a "clear statement" for it to enforce its rule, and how the court should apply differing legislative amendments that the House and Senate passed in 1990.

While a majority of the judges who engaged with the lawyers seemed at least somewhat supportive of the EPA's position, they nonetheless asked tough questions of all sides represented.

Judges like David Tatel, appointed by President Bill Clinton, repeatedly questioned the rule's challengers, led by West Virginia, and pushed back against their arguments.

Responding to West Virginia Solicitor General Elbert Lin's contention that the EPA is trying to implement "a new energy economy," leaving the energy landscape unrecognizable, Tatel disagreed.

"Explain to me why it's unrecognizable," Tatel said. "These new standards apply to sources that have been regulated for decades," he said, adding that the only "transformative" change is that the EPA is now regulating carbon dioxide, as the Supreme Court ruled in 2007 that it could do.

Judge Thomas Griffith, appointed by President George W. Bush, agreed.

"How is it transformative?" Griffith asked. He said coal's use would only be marginally different, and "that doesn't seem to me to be transformative."

Read more here.

TRUMP'S CLIMATE VIEWS TAKE CENTER STAGE: Donald Trump's rejection of the science behind climate change – and his one-time view that it may be a Chinese hoax – has emerged as one of the major stories from Monday night's presidential debate.

Hillary Clinton riled Trump during the debate, saying, "Donald Trump thinks that climate change is a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese," and pointing to a tweet he sent in 2012. The tweet went on to become the most retweeted of Monday's event.

Trump, falsely, replied to Clinton, saying, "I did not. I do not say that." And on Tuesday, his campaign looked to clarify his position.

Kellyanne Conway, his campaign manager, told CNN Trump doesn't think climate change is a hoax, only that he doesn't believe the broad scientific consensus that it's caused by human activity.

"He believes that global warming in naturally occurring," she said.

Running mate Mike Pence took it one step further, saying the tweet was "flippant and joking" on the Today Show.

"Donald Trump's position is the hoax is some bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., can change the climate of the Earth," Pence said.

Clinton believes in man-made climate change and has said the United States should invest in clean energy like solar power in the future. Trump disputes that view, saying clean energy investments aren't prudent and that he would help the fossil fuel industry as president.

Regardless of whether Trump believes climate change is a hoax or a naturally-occurring event, the practical implications are clear: he does not believe human activity is behind global warming and doesn't intend to address it if he's elected president in November.

Read more about the debate exchange here, and the Trump campaign's reaction to it here.

FLINT: Senators on Tuesday blocked a short-term funding bill for the government over the water crisis in Flint, Mich., moving Congress one step closer to a shutdown in the midst of a presidential election.

Senators voted 45-55 on a GOP resolution that would fund the government through Dec. 9, but not provide financial aid for Flint. Sixty votes were needed to move forward with the bill.

Sens. Joe Donnelly (Ind.), Joe Manchin (W.Va.), Bill Nelson (Fla.) and Jon Tester (Mont.) were the only Democrats to support the continuing resolution (CR). Thirteen Republicans voted against the leadership-backed proposal.

Democrats are digging in on their demand that funding for Flint be included in the spending bill, which already includes emergency help for flood victims in Louisiana, Maryland and West Virginia.

Democrats, while stressing they don't oppose the flood aid, argue any short-term funding bill shouldn't include the flood money unless it also helps Flint.

That raised the possibility that Republicans could pull the flood aid from the bill.

"We keep hearing their position is 'no Flint, no floods.' Well, that's certainly an option worth discussing," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) told reporters, saying he is not considering adding Flint to the bill because the Senate already approved aid for the city in a water infrastructure bill last week.

But some Democrats rejected that approach on Tuesday, with Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.), who represents Flint, calling it a "threat."

Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.), who also represents Flint, said Tuesday he wouldn't vote for a spending bill that doesn't include Flint, even if it also excludes flooding relief.

"I have said, and I think all of my colleagues have said very clearly, we're in favor of helping the people of Louisiana as well as Flint," Peters told reporters. "We've always been about Louisiana and Flint. It's always been about both."

Government funding expires on Friday. Both sides hope to avoid a messy government shutdown a little more than one month before the face voters in November.

Read more about the Senate vote here, and the rising specter of removing flooding aid here.

TOMORROW IN THE HILL: Tribes and their allies have cheered the Obama administration's approach to tribal issues.

But President Obama has one more key test on that front before he leaves office: the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Tribes are pushing Obama to reject the project, which has become a flashpoint for indigenous rights groups, not to mention anti-fossil fuel activists. And while he gets high marks on everything from Indian healthcare to tribal consultation, tribes say a strong decision against Dakota Access will cement his legacy on Native American affairs.

Read more, tomorrow in The Hill.

ON TAP WEDNESDAY: The Georgetown University Law School's climate center will host lawyers representing different sides in the Clean Power Plan case to discuss Tuesday's oral arguments.

AROUND THE WEB: Implementing the Paris climate deal will cost some Asian countries up to $300 billion a year, a new report concludes – but the economic return on decarbonizing their economy will bring in new cost savings, CNBC reports.

The World Health Organization says 92 percent of humans live in areas with unacceptably high air pollution levels, BBC News reports.

Stop us if you've heard this one: OPEC members have, once again, failed to set a limit on oil production, Reuters reports.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Check out Tuesday's stories ...

-McConnell: Senate could drop flood money from spending bill

-Pelosi dismisses GOP 'promise' of Flint funding, wants action now

-Lawmakers clash over race claims in Flint aid delay

-Funding bill rejected as shutdown nears

-Dems demand Flint funding promise 'in writing' from GOP

-Judges probe legality of Obama's climate rule

-Trump camp tries to clarify climate position

-Senate Dems: Add Flint aid to spending deal

-Trump's 2012 climate change tweet was debate's most retweeted

Please send tips and comments to Timothy Cama, tcama@thehill.com; and Devin Henry, dhenry@thehill.com. Follow us on Twitter: @Timothy_Cama, @dhenry, @thehill

We Just Might Have A Real Climate Debate In This Election. That's Bad News For Trump

By Chris Mooney

Washington Post, September 27, 2016

Those who closely follow the problem of climate change are used to being disappointed by U.S. political campaigns and elections. After all, here is this massive global problem that, it seems, continually fails to gain major traction. Much of the country still denies it, non-science journalists seem afraid of it, and candidates have often not wanted to touch it. It notoriously did not come up in any of the 2012 presidential debates.

Something seems to have happened with the Monday's 2016 presidential debate, however, that just might ignite the subject. And moreover, it could do so in a way that is potentially bad news for Donald Trump, whose habit is not only to deny the science of climate change, but to do so in a dismissive way that plays into the hands of a quite knowledgeable Hillary Clinton, and begs easy scrutiny from fact checkers.

Let's run back over what happened to trigger all of this. It starts with this infamous Trump tweet:

The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive.

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) November 6, 2012

Clinton dinged Trump on this quite early in the debate, leading him to bizarrely deny it. Here's the exchange:

CLINTON: Take clean energy. Some country is going to be the clean- energy superpower of the 21st century. Donald thinks that climate change is a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese. I think it's real.

TRUMP: I did not. I did not. I do not say that.

CLINTON: I think science is real.

TRUMP: I do not say that.

But the tweet is right there. Its own language implies a hoax, and in other cases, "hoax" is the actual word Trump used.

It was the contradicting of his own tweet that really dug Trump into a hole, because this meant that the political press, often hesitant to dig into this science-infused issue, could simply point out the blatant contradiction in a binary fact-check manner.

Accordingly, Trump's campaign manager Kellyanne Conway had to defend him on climate issues Tuesday morning on CNN, where she basically said that he denies widely accepted science. More specifically, Conway stated "he believes that global warming is naturally occurring," and when CNN's Alisyn Camerota clarified whether that meant it isn't caused by humans, she stated: "Correct."

There is an overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is mainly caused by humans – or as the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change put it in 2013: "It is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century."

There is also growing fear about just how fast change could come – a place where uncertainty still persists — and how bad it will be.

Trump's vice presidential pick, Mike Pence, was also entrained. Later on CNN, he appeared to diverge somewhat from Conway, arguing that "there's no question that the activities that take place in this country and in countries around the world have some impact on the environment and some impact on climate." "Some impact" isn't accurate either — as you can see above, human activities are the driving force — but Pence is here retreating to the more easily defended stance of a more practiced, but still skeptical, politician.

The point is that all this puts the issue on the radar, and it could potentially be bad news for Trump, especially if in a future debate they really get into the subject — where Clinton can be expected to show a policy mastery and where Trump seems to strangely link the issue to nuclear weapons (something he did later in the debate, and has done before).

"Ironically, Trump's absurd climate science denial has raised the issue's political profile, drawing attention also to repeated attempts by Republicans in Congress to undermine the climate protections Obama is pursuing and Clinton will continue," said Paul Bledsoe, who worked on the climate issue for Bill Clinton's White House. "And as climate impacts, like the Louisiana floods, keep getting worse, there's a sense that enough is enough — that the political kid gloves are finally off when it comes to climate change."

There is also reason to think that Clinton may have strategically brought the subject up last night because she and her advisers think it helps her politically — specifically, with the millennial voters that she needs to sway away from third party candidates in this election.

Billionaire Tom Steyer's NextGen Climate campaign, for instance, has been literally waiting for a debate moment like this because it believes that once millennials perceive the true difference between Clinton and Trump on this issue, they'll know how they want to vote.

"Hillary Clinton twice brought up climate change and clean energy in the early minutes of last night's debate, showing she knows it's a winning issue for her, particularly among millennials," said Jamison Foser, a senior adviser at NextGen Climate. "Donald Trump falsely denied his previous false claims that climate change is a hoax, showing he even understands that voters are looking for candidates with solutions–not someone who buries his head in the sand."

As I have written before, some polling evidence also suggests ways that the issue could favor Clinton over Trump — for instance, there are now quite high levels of public acceptance of climate change amid record high global temperatures. Moreover, there is reason to think it helps her reach those who worry most about the issue, whether millennials or Bernie Sanders supporters now flirting with voting for Green Party nominee Jill Stein.

But even more than that, the climate issue now seems to be feeding into something else: The sense that Trump just can't speak with factual accuracy. It's one thing for him to run away from what he actually tweeted. But it could be even more remarkable if he has to debate Clinton on the actual science and try to defend denying a powerful global scientific consensus, or abandoning a global agreement backed by the entire world, the Paris climate accord. Monday's debate seemed to prime that confrontation.

Granted, even though the issue has now been injected into prime time, it could easily fade again. It's still nowhere near a top concern of voters, compared with terrorism or the economy, and it's also a very tough subject to get the political press to care about. It's hard to fit into a horse race narrative and it rarely rises to the top of the agenda. It merely abides, continues, worsens, and threatens people who are young more than people who are old — Clinton's voters if she is to win.

Implement The Clean Power Plan

By Sen. Edward J. Markey (d-Mass.) And Rep. Jared Huffman (d-Calif.)

The Hill, September 27, 2016

Sometimes big problems require big solutions. One of the biggest problems this country has long faced is air pollution, which has had a devastating effect on the health of people and our planet. More than 45 years ago, recognizing the seriousness of the threat, Congress enacted a big solution: the Clean Air Act. It is one of our nation's most successful laws, helping to cut air pollution of all types even as the U.S. economy has grown.

Now the administration's effort to use the Clean Air Act to reduce a dangerous air pollutant is under attack in the courts. A legal challenge to the proposed Clean Power Plan (CPP) is counterproductive and counter to the clear authority of the law. The Clean Power Plan implementation is critical to protecting public health and welfare.

The Clean Air Act was designed to address air pollutants, and has been so successful, in part, because it gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the tools necessary to help achieve Congress' objectives. The EPA then used that authority to create the Clean Power Plan, which sets the first ever limits on power plant carbon pollution. This is a big deal. Power plants produce nearly half of U.S. carbon pollution, representing the single largest domestic source. Clean energy is the key to combatting climate change.

Carbon pollution not only degrades air quality, it damages the health of the American public, leads to coastal erosion that threatens entire communities, acidifies the ocean, and increases the risk of deadly weather such as the drought, flooding and violent storms.

If implemented, the Clean Power Plan will help ease those effects. Indeed, the plan is estimated to prevent 3,600 premature deaths, 90,000, asthma attacks in children and 300,000 missed work and school days by 2030. From both a public health and a climate protection standpoint, the estimated benefit of the Clean Power Plan is valued at $54 billion per year.

The coal industry and some Republican politicians sued the EPA in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Arguments are set to be heard on Sept. 27. As the court will see, the Clean Power Plan stands on a strong legal foundation. As members of Congress, we know lasting legislation often sets out broad goals, provides guidance on how to achieve them and then lets expert agencies fill in the details. That's exactly how Congress drafted the Clean Air Act. And that's why the King Coal and their allies are wrong when they claim the Clean Power Plan is executive overreach or that EPA acted only because Congress hasn't passed climate legislation.

Just because Congressional Republicans have successfully blocked a broader legislative response to the grave threat of climate change doesn't remove the authority that Congress already gave the EPA to place limits on carbon pollution. Taking away the EPA's authority to address carbon pollution wouldn't advance the intent of Congress, it would thwart it.

The Clean Power Plan builds on existing market trends and strategies that states and companies are already using to reduce their carbon pollution. That's why a number of energy companies filed an Amicus brief supporting the EPA, as did a broad coalition of legal experts, environmental groups, states and cities and more than 200 current and former members of Congress, whom we were honored to join.

The reason the Clean Power Plan enjoys such broad support is simple: It's legitimate, it's achievable and will help protect the health of our planet and its people.

The views expressed by authors are their own and not the views of The Hill.

FEMA HOUSING

Tents, Travel Trailers And A Tale Of Uneven Flood Recovery

New Orleans Times-Picayune, September 28, 2016

DENHAM SPRINGS – As the water crept into his backyard, Ferdie Genre, 62, settled into his favorite chair on the back porch and tried to stay calm. He snapped a quick picture and tapped a text message to his contractor friend, Darryl Jarreau.

"Hope it stops raining soon," he said. "Me, too" was the reply.

"If we get water, can we be first on your list to repair?"

"Yes."

"Thanks. It's getting too close for comfort."

Genre didn't like to raise undue fear, so he reassured his wife, Pat, 60, that all was fine. He knew that the Greystone Golf and Country Club community had never flooded. Besides that, when he had hired Jarreau 11 months earlier to build their dream home, a four-bedroom, three-bath house south of Denham Springs, he insisted on an extra foot of foundation for added peace of mind.

Now as the water surrounded their garden's sugar kettle, peace of mind was a fleeting memory.

Four miles to the north, Krysta Oliszewski, 41, and her son Conner, 20, watched the water rising around their timeworn, three-bedroom mobile home. She had often seen the streets flood in Magnolia Estates, a subdivision where a single mom can find cheap rent and security, provided the doors stay locked.

But flooding had never reached this high, or this quickly. When it washed over the mobile home's deck, she realized they were in trouble. When it seeped up through the floor, she realized they were going under. And she realized she had no plan. "I didn't know what to do," she said. "I was in a sheer panic."

She called her mother, who asked, "Can you get out?" Oliszewski wasn't sure.

"I gathered what I could," she said. "I wrapped my laptop in three layers of garbage bags and grabbed documents," and stepped into the cold, muddy water. She and her son slogged through ankle-, waist- and then chest-deep water for more than a mile before they found land. "When the water got to ankle-deep" again, she said, "I just dropped to my knees and started bawling. It was surreal."

. . . .

The Louisiana Flood of 2016 killed 13 people, displaced tens of thousands of others, caused an estimated $8.7 billion in damage and destroyed some 60,000 houses. But across the 22 parishes that were declared disaster areas, the damage and recovery have been far from uniform. For many, the difference came down to elevation, planning and resources.

With two feet of water in their house, Ferdie Genre, a retired accountant, and his wife were the last to be rescued from Greystone on Aug. 13. "Two good Cajuns from Morgan City took us out of here at 9:30 at night" in a boat, said Pat Genre, a retired social worker.

At midnight, they were mustered into a Walmart parking lot where they waited with a crowd of neighbors and strangers for 17 "miserable" hours. Some men grew impatient and sought to throw a brick through the window. Others stood up and talked them down.

Soon they were in a Humvee headed to a FEMA shelter in Sorrento, where they spent four days before being recognized by their son's girlfriend, who took them into her home.

Four days after they evacuated, their house had drained. By the next weekend they had met with their contractor, mucked the house with 17 of Ferdie's former coworkers and moved into a donated 40-foot travel trailer parked in their driveway. Friends, family, forethought and their means put them on the fast track toward recovery.

In Magnolia Estates, Oliszewski, who makes a living painting houses and doing odd jobs, made do at her mother's home in Baton Rouge for six weeks. Then she ran out of patience. "I love my mom," she said, "but I need my space." When a group of "church ladies" offered a tent, she headed back to her own trailer lot. "At least I have privacy," she said.

Setting up the tent was easy, and neighbor two doors down offered a working shower. A small air conditioner, a mattress and a few table lamps made it downright homey.

Not everyone in Magnolia Estates was as comfortable. On Oliszewski's block alone, 18 flooded mobile homes were supplanted by four small campers and 10 tents.

During a visit Sept. 21, more than five weeks after the flood, Raymond Merrow's front yard looked like a squatter's camp. After his own mobile home flooded, he offered his land to a mishmash of nomads with nowhere else to settle. Three tents and a dry-rotted camper were crammed together there. Debris littered the trampled mud. Seven steps over plywood and carpet remnants led to a garden-hose shower and open latrine, shielded by a green tarpaulin. Flies swarmed incessantly.

To the left, Alicia Chiasson, 30, coughed and hacked as she crawled from her 5-by-8-foot, four-person tent. She and her fiancé, Corey Dabadie, 25, were living in it with a ragged pile of clothes, a small air mattress and a corner filled with junk food. “That’s our dresser, our bedroom and our kitchen,” she said. “I just want to take a hot shower. I’ve had the same clothes on for five days.”

Crystal Rabalais, 34, felt traumatized sitting outside her tent, on what used to be her trailer’s front porch. She said she, her husband and their 7-year-old daughter survived a harrowing rescue through floodwater that was over their heads. “About 7 feet deep, like somebody stuck a plug in a bathtub,” she said. “I’ll have to take my little girl to counseling after what she went through.”

Oliszewski grew more frustrated as she tried to network through the FEMA help line. She finally lost her composure with a representative who told her that someone else, a stay-over friend, had claimed her renter’s assistance.

“Well, he has no proof that he was the primary,” she said, slamming her open palm onto the back of her old truck. “He doesn’t even get friggin’ mail here,” she pleaded. After an endless back and forth, she hung up.

“They’re telling me they still don’t have the documents in my file. That’s the problem. That’s what makes me mad. He has no proof, and they just hand him $2,000. That’s my rent, for my kids. He knew what he was doing all along,” she said.

. . . .

At Greystone, Pat Genre lifted a heavy suitcase from beside her bed in the travel trailer, which was comfortable although snug for the retired couple after four weeks of condensed living. She ran the zipper around the case and flipped open the cover. Atop their evacuation clothes and envelopes of financial records was a small plastic storage container. “This is what I saved,” she said as she lifted the top.

One by one, she laid out her small collection of treasured photographs. “Here’s my dad and my aunt. Here’s my grandmother,” she said. “And here’s one from our wedding I was able to save.” She fought back tears as she repacked her container.

Her big wedding album was trashed. “It was all brown. I just threw it away.”

There are so many things that money can’t replace, like her grandmother’s blanket chest filled with photos and home movies of family long gone. “Once you live a few years on this planet, you make those connections to those people ... .” She paused, took a deep breath as a tear swelled in her eye. But with stoic, Southern grace, she quickly wiped it away. “It’s not just pictures,” she said. “It’s your memories.”

The Genres know they have financial resources, friends, family and foresight. They hope to have their house back together by Christmas and get back to their retirement. Pat hopes to refashion her grandmother’s ruined blanket chest into something new, with an added story. “It’s going have warped sides, but that’s our brown badge of courage,” she said. “That’s experience.”

In Magnolia Estates, Oliszewski balanced on a sewer pipe and carefully crossed a bog to the back of her trashed trailer. There among the debris, she found her son’s cherished steel footlocker, fabricated by her brother years before.

She lifted the heavy lid and unpacked the few treasures remaining of her life. “It’s my high school memorabilia ... prom pictures and my yearbook.” She pointed to glamour shot of a young woman holding a baby. “That’s me and my oldest son, Conner. It was waterproofed,” she said. “I was so worried about it.”

After all her loss from the storm, Oliszewski also is saying farewell to Conner, who is moving to Missouri looking for opportunity. As he turned to leave, he bear-hugged her with such enthusiasm that he lifted her off the ground.

He drove away, leaving her with her thoughts. On her bed, she wrapped herself in one of her last remaining family heirlooms, a quilt made special for her by her grandmother. “I’m so glad this survived,” she said.

She’s looking forward to getting her FEMA renter’s assistance. And for now, at least, the tent’s not so bad. “It’s big enough for me,” she said, “and it’s temporary.”

“You make do,” she said. “I’m a survivor. I have no choice.”

Red Cross Shelter In Baker To Close By Friday

By Emily Beck Cogburn

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 27, 2016

BAKER — The Red Cross-run shelter in the Baker Municipal Building on Groom Road will be closing at noon on Friday, Mayor Darnelle Waites announced at Tuesday's City Council meeting.

About 30 people are living in the shelter, down from 200 a few weeks ago.

"What we are getting now are some people from Baton Rouge as the shelters close down there," he said.

City officials are working with the Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to find housing for those still in the shelter.

The council also unanimously approved an ordinance to allow manufactured homes within city limits for up to 18 months to house those displaced by the flood.

The city has further requested 150 FEMA modular homes to be placed in the vacant Renaissance Village lot off Groom Road near La. 964, the same location FEMA trailers were placed after Hurricane Katrina. More homes may be added in the future, depending on need.

Some other FEMA homes might be placed in lots outside the city limits, though locations are not yet determined, he said.

"We wanted to make sure that people who live in Baker will come to (the Renaissance Village) location. We don't want to try to take care of others' problems. We have to provide fire, police, and social services to the site. It's a huge undertaking," Waites said.

He couldn't immediately provide a timeline when the FEMA homes would become available, remarking that the federal agency moves slowly.

Most people in need of homes located at the Renaissance Village site would probably be renters who lost their houses or apartments.

"Most homeowners are trying to get back into their homes," he said.

FEMA will also provide the modular homes to homeowners to place on their properties provided that the homeowners have large enough lots, he said.

Debris pickup is also moving forward in the city, Waites told the council.

Within a few days of signing a debris removal contract with Neighborhood Restoration, it became clear the firm could not handle the amount of debris in Baker and the city contracted with DRC Emergency Services instead, he said.

Some streets in Baker, such as Groom Road and McHugh Road, are owned by East Baton Rouge Parish, and the parish is responsible for debris removal in those areas. Lavey Lane in Baker is owned by the state Department of Transportation and Development, which also takes it out of the city's responsibility.

Waites encouraged residents to call the city if they have debris on their property, rather than curbside, that needs to be removed.

"You have to come in and sign a ROE (Right of Entry) form or we can't go on your property," he said.

The Baker Fire Station on Groom Road, which flooded, has been gutted and is ready to be rebuilt. The city will begin accepting bids next week to renovate the building, which cost $4 million when it was built less than 20 years ago, Waites said.

The city did have flood insurance on the fire station and rebuilding costs should be covered.

Waites invited residents seeking more information to attend an open meeting concerning disaster relief scheduled 6 p.m. Oct. 4 at Redemptorist Life Church, 2400 Debra Drive.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

The Future Of Flooding

By Stephanie Alderton

Brush (CO) News-Tribune, September 27, 2016

Flood waters cover the entrance and roadway on Sept. 15, 2013, at the south end of Muir Springs recreation area northwest of Log Lane Village along Highway 144. This picture was taken during the latest major flood caused by overflowing rivers in Morgan County. (Jane Larsen / Courtesy Photo)

If the Federal Emergency Management Agency's latest floodplain maps go into effect in 2017, Morgan County's flood risks will look a little different.

As a part of the National Flood Insurance Program, Morgan County's highest flood risk areas are shown on maps created by FEMA, which help determine property values and insurance rates. For the first time in about 35 years, FEMA has released a new preliminary floodplain map for the county. It introduces several changes to the old map, making the floodplain smaller in some areas and bigger in others.

The map labels areas that are at low, moderate and high risk from flooding, based on the flow rates of nearby rivers. Properties in high-risk areas have higher flood insurance rates and more building restrictions. The last update to Morgan County's floodplain map was in 1989, while the maps for specific towns like Brush haven't been updated since 1981.

For some parts of Morgan County, the new flood map isn't big news. The city of Fort Morgan has always been too elevated to be greatly affected by the floodplain, and Bradley Curtis, the Engineering and Public Works director, said that hasn't changed.

"It has minimal effects," he said. "Not a whole lot of developments are affected apart from Riverview Park and the area down by Maverick's, which we knew about already."

Parts of Fort Morgan were flooded during the summer, but that was due to heavy rainfall rather than an overflowing river. The FEMA maps only take overflow from nearby rivers into account when predicting flood risks.

For other towns, the re-mapping is a bonus. Much of the town of Wiggins was in the floodplain under the old map, but now it's considered a low-risk area. Trustee JoAnne Rohn-Cook said she's delighted by the new map.

"Since the last survey was done, a dike was built west of the town, so I think that helped," she said.

She said the new mapping is especially fortunate considering the two new housing developments that are being built in Wiggins. Property values are usually lowered inside the floodplain, so the new houses will be more valuable now that they're in a low-risk area.

But some property owners are less than thrilled about the new map. In the town of Brush, a few developed areas that used to be outside the floodplain are now inside it. More significantly, much of the eastern side of town is now considered to be inside the "floodway," the estimated channel that Beaver Creek would take if it overflowed. Buildings and other "encroachments" inside the floodway will be more heavily regulated if they're predicted to increase water levels by more than half a foot.

These changes have a significant impact on Brush property owners, as evidenced by the large crowds that attended the town's floodplain mapping open house in July. Thuy Patton, the floodplain mapping coordinator for the Colorado Water Conservation Board, gave a presentation at that event and earlier at a Brush City Council meeting to explain the changes.

"You basically have to show a zero rise when you're doing any development in the floodway," she said during her presentation to the Council in June.

That assessment came as an unpleasant surprise to some property owners. Chuck Miller, who owns about 16 acres east of Morgan County Road 29 and south of the railroad tracks, said the new map will make it extremely difficult for him to repair or build anything new on his property in the future. When he wanted to build a house there in 1999, he laid the foundation five feet above the floodplain, after hiring an engineer to determine exactly where the base elevation. But the new map, he said, raised the floodplain six feet, which not only puts his property squarely inside the floodplain, it also places it in the floodway.

"I went through all this work and expense to raise my property above the floodplain for anything I wanted to build in the future, and they raised the elevation on me," Miller said. "Since the 1989 map, there have been zero floodwaters in Brush from Beaver Creek...this map is not based on factual information."

Miller said he plans to appeal his property's floodway status.

According to the FEMA website, changes to a floodplain map can be caused by a variety of things, such as new infrastructure and development, aging infrastructure, surface erosion and changing weather patterns. In Brush's case, Patton said the changes are partly attributable to five bridges across Beaver Creek that weren't included in the original map, as well as a more detailed analysis on the river's flow rate.

If the new floodplain mapping is approved by the county, it will most likely go into effect in the summer of 2017.

Officials Announce Residents Could See A Drop In Flood Insurance Rates

WWL-TV New Orleans, September 27, 2016

NEW ORLEANS – City leaders give many homeowners good news Tuesday, announcing potential reductions in the cost of flood insurance.

After Hurricane Katrina, not only were residents trying to fix their homes, but many faced high flood insurance prices.

Perry Treme moved to Lakeview from Mid-City after Katrina, but high insurance rates almost made it impossible.

"I had a hard time buying this house here because I couldn't get flood insurance, it was impossible to get flood insurance right after Katrina" explained Treme.

Tuesday, Mayor Mitch Landrieu announced that over 97 percent of the properties in New Orleans are going to see a potential reduction in the cost of flood insurance.

"A couple of years ago we were very fearful that without these investments, without looking at the hard things the city of New Orleans was going to be a very difficult place to live in because of the high cost of insurance," said Landrieu.

FEMA recently released new flood risk maps showing that 53 percent of properties will see a significant decrease. Rates will stay the same for 44 percent of homes, and for 3 percent, rates will increase.

The areas likely to see increases in Algiers. The reductions in the flood rates will be seen in New Orleans East, Gentilly, Lakeview, and Broadmoor.

The Landrieu administration explained the new flood maps are a result of the cities recent infrastructure investments.

"We started with hurricane protection system with the $14 billion for the outer layer of 200 miles of levee and floodwalls, said Cedric Grant, executive director of the Sewerage and Water Board.

The changes will potentially help protect the pockets of people like Treme.

"It would make quite a difference, still doing repairs on my house," said Treme.

These decreases are supposed to go into effect on September 30. The city will be eligible for an additional 15 percent reduction in flood insurance rates in 2017. WWL-TV was told homeowners will need to contact their individual insurance companies, who will be able to apply the new rates.

(© 2016 WWL)

FEMA Breaks Down SC Flooding By The Numbers

WRDW-TV Augusta (GA), September 27, 2016

SOUTH CAROLINA (WRDW/WAGT) – One year ago, record rainfall and river flooding overwhelmed South Carolina triggering a federal disaster declaration for thirty-five counties.

To date, assistance to residents and communities in South Carolina from the Federal Emergency Management Agency totals well over $164 million, according to FEMA.

South Carolina by-the-numbers (information from FEMA):

More than 28,000 survivors in twenty-four South Carolina counties received $89,548,894 for individual and housing assistance.

Of that amount, $77,714,396 was provided for temporary housing and repairs not covered by insurance and $11,834,498 for other needs such as medical bills, moving and storage expenses, and personal property.

Thirty-three counties and the state received $74,920,813 in Public Assistance. Of that amount, $38,264,692 was obligated for debris removal and emergency protective measures and $36,656,121 was obligated for permanent repairs to public infrastructure.

Seven counties received more than a million dollars each in Public Assistance for emergency measures or permanent repairs to public infrastructure such as roads and bridges, and public buildings and utilities.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) paid 3,866 claims for flood damages totaling $134,177,354, as of May 25, 2016. The NFIP has closed out 99 percent of the claims filed.

FIRE GRANTS

Modesto Getting 9 More Firefighters

Modesto (CA) Bee, September 27, 2016

The Modesto City Council accepted a $2.2 million grant Tuesday that will let the Fire Department hire nine firefighters for two years and put back into service an engine company that was eliminated in a 2011 budget reduction.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recently awarded Modesto the Staffing for Fire and Emergency Response grant. The council vote was 7-0 to accept the grant.

Modesto needs to recruit and hire the firefighters and put them through 12 weeks of training. Fire Chief Sean Slamon said he expects the firefighters to be on the job in April.

While the grant will pay for the salaries and benefits for the firefighters, Modesto also will have to spend some of its own money. Slamon estimates Modesto will incur nearly $421,000 in costs over the life of the grant. That includes hiring the firefighters, overtime and staffing an engine company.

While the grant covers the salary and benefits of nine firefighters, an engine company is staffed by three firefighters, three engineers and three captains. Engineers and captains earn more than firefighters, and Modesto will pick up the difference.

The SAFER grant will allow the Fire Department to add an engine company to Station No. 11, which is at Pelandale Avenue and Carver Road. The station has been staffed only by a ladder truck since 2011 because of budget cuts. The ladder truck will move to Station No. 5 at Briggsmore and McHenry avenues, the city's busiest station.

This is expected to improve response times in central and northeast Modesto.

Modesto is not required to keep the SAFER firefighters after the two years, but Slamon said he will look for ways to keep them, such as having them fill vacant positions, if there is not enough money in the budget.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Hope Academy Urged To Repay Millions In FEMA Disaster Aid

Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger, September 27, 2016

WASHINGTON — Hope Academy in D'Iberville should repay $3.4 million of the $3.5 million in federal disaster aid it received after Hurricane Katrina, a federal agency recommended.

Hope Academy officials failed to provide sufficient information, engaged in unethical business practices and didn't have policies to prevent conflicts of interest, according to a report released last week by the Department of Homeland Security inspector general.

The school was awarded disaster assistance funds by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for damages caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The report slams FEMA for not checking all the academy's claims, including the cost of items the school lost during Katrina and even the number of students it said was enrolled.

The report comes in the wake of FEMA stopping $29.9 million in payments to Mississippi for a program to retrofit homes after Katrina. An IG report in August found the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency wasn't able to provide documents for about $30.5 million paid to contractors to retrofit 985 homes.

Calls to the academy Tuesday said the number is not in service.

The IG report recommended FEMA "disallow'' $3.4 million in reimbursements in public assistance funding.

It also urged FEMA to do more to get ''credible evidence'' for eligibility from applicants and press MEMA to better check groups awarded funding. State emergency officials are responsible for making sure Hope and other awardees comply.

"We believe that the state and FEMA should have been more diligent before approving an applicant's eligibility,'' the report said.

MEMA officials said they are waiting for final responses from FEMA.

"We're going to reserve any comments until FEMA makes its determinations based on the recommendations,'' said Greg Flynn, a spokesman for MEMA. "It's kind of like the ball is in FEMA's court.''

FEMA officials said Tuesday they agree with the recommendations and said they have taken steps to improve eligibility requirements and document guidelines. The agency said it will also disallow any funding for the building or site work that exceeds requirements mandated by building codes and other standards.

"FEMA is carefully reviewing the audit findings and all information on this project to validate previous decisions regarding the eligibility of various costs for which Hope Academy received FEMA grant funding,'' said Alexa Lopez, a FEMA spokeswoman. "FEMA will take appropriate action if our review determines that Hope Academy received federal funds for ineligible costs.''

The report said FEMA failed to verify the number of students Hope said were enrolled. The academy serves students through 12th grade.The report said Hope lost a 5,770-square-foot building located on 0.66 acres of land, but FEMA eventually approved funding for a new 13,319 square-foot building on 15.9 acres "based almost completely on Hope's word that it serviced 90 students.''

Hope officials said the storm destroyed their records, according to the report.

The report also blasted Hope for not having a policy to protect against conflicts of interest. It said the school administrator had "unilateral authority'' to buy property and entered into a contract to buy 15.9 acres of land in Gulfport owned by the school board president for nearly $1.5 million.

The report said the cost to buy the land was "excessive'' compared to three other schools.

"Therefore, we question $1,468,206 for the improper procurement of land, which includes $968,706 ($1,468,206 minus $499,500) of unreasonable cost,'' the report said.

FEMA said it agreed the school didn't properly procure contracts.

"FEMA funded only the cost that it found to be reasonable and disallowed the excess cost,'' the agency said in a response included in the report.

The agency, however, said it will review the cost of the building contents, which Hope said was $491,673. It said it will respond by January.

– Deborah Barfield Berry, Clarion-Ledger Washington Bureau

FLOODS

Senate Dems Upend Government Funding Over Flint

By Todd Spangler

Detroit Free Press, September 27, 2016

WASHINGTON — Democrats in the U.S. Senate, including Michigan's two members, upended votes on a short-term measure funding the government past Oct. 1 on Tuesday, objecting that it contained help for flood victims in Louisiana but failed to provide assurances that money to replace old lead water pipes in Flint would be forthcoming as well.

The two roll calls on the floor of the Senate — one which saw the bill fail 45-55 and a second which saw it go down 40-59 — fell short of the 60 votes needed to move forward a short-term measure keeping the government open until Dec. 9 and included not only Democratic votes against the measure, but also no votes of at least a dozen Republicans.

Those votes increased the likelihood that whatever funding measure passes before Friday, if any, it may not include money for addressing the Flint water crisis or last month's flooding in Louisiana, though negotiations are certain to continue.

"We hope that important flood relief will be a part of it," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who had proposed the funding bill, including money to respond to flooding in Louisiana but without funding for Flint. He said both sides would continue to work on a deal to stave off a government shutdown on Friday.

Two weeks ago, the Senate overwhelmingly approved the Water Resources Development Act , which included at least $100 million and likely more for Flint, which has been struggling to find the funding necessary to replace lead pipes throughout the city for more than a year. Those pipes have been blamed in part for high levels of lead found in the city's tap water.

But Republican leaders in the U.S. House have so far — as expected and previously reported in the Free Press — declined to guarantee that they will agree to that funding in any final version of the WRDA bill. It was left out of that chamber's version of the WRDA legislation which was headed to the House floor, even as House and Senate leaders have said Flint funding could ultimately be worked out in a conference committee between the chambers.

With no guarantee on Flint funding forthcoming, however, Democratic senators last week began raising loud objections to the proposed continuing resolution to fund the federal government through Dec. 9, including $500 million to help flood victims in Louisiana, arguing that if that legislation could be expanded to help residents of one state, it could also be a legislative vehicle to help Flint.

The argument came to a head with Tuesday's votes.

"Today, we're going to have a vote and we're going to send it back to the drawing board to get this right," said U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow of Michigan at a news conference before the vote, explaining that while Democratic senators support the Louisiana money, they can't do so without also including Flint's. "If, in fact, the people of Flint have to wait again, then the people of Louisiana can join that wait with them til the end of the year."

Flint's well-documented public health crisis began in April 2014 when the city switched water sources, but the state Department of Environmental Quality did not require corrosion control treatments as it should have, a mistake which led to lead leaching from old water pipes into residents' taps. Now, more than a year after skyrocketing lead levels in some residences and high blood-lead levels among Flint children were detected, residents are still being told to drink filtered or bottled water.

Mayor Karen Weaver and others have said it could cost hundreds of millions to replace all the lead pipes in the city and make other infrastructure improvements which would restore confidence in the water system. Stabenow and others have estimated that the funding included in the Water Resources Development Act bill could ultimately cover about half of the cost; state government has committed about $27 million but is being pressed to increase that amount.

"It's fully paid for," U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, also of Michigan, said of the federal Flint funding, noting that unlike the $500 million for Louisiana, the Flint money is offset by a reduction in spending on a grant program for advanced technology vehicles. "This should be something that is very easy. And if we can't do something that is this easy, it's why people have such scorn for this body."

Stabenow, Peters and their House colleagues, including U.S. Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Flint Township, have been trying to secure funding for Flint for most of a year.

Much of the frustration over the Flint funding has been fueled by the mixed signals coming out of the House: On Monday, the House Rules Committee rejected an amendment offered by Kildee for the House version of WRDA that would have added the Flint funding to that legislation — and which also includes a sweeping package of port, harbor and navigation projects across the U.S.

Speaking to the Rules Committee, U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Pa., who chairs the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in charge of the WRDA bill, said while he thinks "It's a terrible thing that's happened to those folks" in Flint, he also believes it would set a bad precedent for the federal government to take the lead in funding pipe replacement. If it does so, he said, the federal government could be seen as being on the hook for pipe replacement across the U.S.

"This was caused at a state level," he said, adding, "I think the solution, the dollars ... have to be driven by the state."

But House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., said at a recent news conference that he believes the Flint funding belongs in the WRDA bill if anywhere — not the resolution to fund government — though he, too, said he considers the Flint situation "more of a local government issue." As for the Louisiana funding, Ryan said he believes the flooding there "does rise to the level of being dealt with as an emergency measure" in the funding resolution as a natural — not man-made — disaster.

But he, too, may in the end need the help of Democrats to pass that legislation to keep government open, meaning the Flint money — or at least the promise to consider it — may have to be dealt with in some way.

"We're going to use every tool we can to make sure they (the people of Flint) get the help they can," said Kildee. But again, noting that the funding is already paid for, he asked, "Why are they (Republicans) willing to take us up to the point of shutting down the government to prevent us from providing help for Flint? It makes no sense at all."

As the Free Press reported two weeks ago, however, it was clear that the Flint funding faced an uphill battle in the House and that if it were to be included in the WRDA bill, it would most likely be in the conference committee report issued after the two chambers settled differences in the bill — and that wouldn't come until sometime after the Nov. 8 election, if at all this year. Democrats in both chambers now say that assurance is not enough, however.

Now, there are questions whether Democratic objections to a WRDA bill without Flint funding could threaten that legislation's chances in the House — which in turn could result in no such bill passing, with or without Flint funding, this year. On Tuesday, U.S. Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., who spearheaded passage of the WRDA bill — and the Flint funding in the Senate — urged Democrats in the House to let that chamber's version of the bill pass even if it doesn't include money for Flint, saying he will fight for its inclusion at conference.

Stabenow stopped short Tuesday of saying Democrats would shut down government if Flint's money wasn't included in the continuing resolution but declined to say what paths of negotiation may still be open. However, it was clear that it was the funding for Louisiana in the budget bill — without similar consideration for Flint — that carried the sharpest sting.

Stabenow, Peters and Kildee were joined by other Democrats — including Sen. Barbara Boxer of California and Michigan U.S. House representatives John Conyers of Detroit, Debbie Dingell of Dearborn, Brenda Lawrence of Southfield and Sander Levin of Royal Oak — at a news conference on Tuesday morning outlining their plans.

"This is the one issue around which I would pray for some bipartisanship," said Conyers, the longest-serving active member of Congress. "If there were only one thing I could get, it would be around this issue. It would show that the common good triumphs over partisanship."

Howard Robotics Team Raises Funds For Ellicott City Flood Victims

Baltimore Sun, September 28, 2016

After watching videos of the July 30 Ellicott City flood, the Futuristic Engineers, a Howard County robotics team, immediately wanted to help.

"We saw a video on the news of the cars floating away in the flood, which is really devastating," said sixth-grader David Zheng. "That's why we wanted to raise money."

The group of 10 kids from various elementary and middle schools in the county came together to form their robotics team about a year ago at the Catonsville campus of the Howard County Chinese School, where they are students.

"We're in FLL. It stands for First Lego League, which we build with Legos. One part of it is core values, and one part of that is to help other people at all times," said David, who started the team the help of his mother, Mindy Liu. "So we try to fulfill the core values, to be the best FLL team that we can be."

After the flood, the team held a meeting to discuss how they could help, said sixth-grader Jeff Li, and to plan their next steps.

One student took notes to distribute in the form of a memo to each team member after the meeting.

The Futuristic Engineers had previously sold chocolate to raise money for their team, Jeff said, but had never fundraised for an outside cause.

The team decided to sell lemonade and cookies in front of the Miller Branch library during two nights in late August. They made posters and fliers and split up into two groups to cover each night.

"To make sure everyone came," David said.

Ultimately the team raised $98.05 to donate to victims of the Ellicott City flood.

"The hardest part of the sale was getting people to buy and donate," Jeff said. "Because we can't just scream out and force them to buy lemonade."

"Most people, they told us they would come out once they finished in the library," David said. "Which was very nice, and better than just waving us off."

Liu, the team's coach, said she was happy to see the team apply the skills they have picked up over the past year to plan their fundraiser.

"They really applied the way how they work as a team," she said. "How to share the workload, and how to attract people."

Learning these skills is more important than winning their robotics competitions, Liu said.

"The most important thing for them, that I really want to share, is how to work as a team," she said.

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

Earthquake Expert Lucy Jones: Salton Sea Swarms Occur

Palm Springs (CA) Desert Sun, September 27, 2016

It's been about eight years since the Salton Sea was the epicenter of a swarm of earthquakes, but the abundance of temblors doesn't necessarily indicate a larger one to come, a renowned seismologist says.

Lucy Jones, formerly with the United States Geological Survey, tweeted throughout Monday about the dozens of quakes centered near Bombay Beach. She said they were linked to a fault line that's about five miles south of where the San Andreas Fault ends and is known to produce clusters of temblors.

Previous: There was a cluster of earthquakes Monday

"Most likely, nothing more will happen," Jones said.

The last time there were swarms in the area were in 2001 and 2009 – periods separated by a stretch similar to the one separating 2009 from 2016. The 2009 swarm lasted for two days.

There were were more than 110 earthquakes in the same area since Monday morning, but they mostly included minuscule quakes that wouldn't have been felt.

At least two dozen earthquakes were magnitude 2.5 or larger. They included three earthquakes above magnitude 4.0.

The last earthquake happened about 10:45 p.m. Monday and was a magnitude 3.2, according to the USGS.

As is expected of such moderate-sized earthquakes, there have been no reports of damage.

ZIKA VIRUS

Senate Rejects Bill That Would Avert Government Shutdown And Fund The Fight Against Zika

By Lindsay Wise

McClatchy, September 27, 2016

The U.S. Senate on Tuesday rejected a stopgap funding bill proposed by Republicans that included funds to combat Zika, edging the federal government closer to a shutdown.

The federal government will shut down if Congress doesn't pass a bill to maintain current funding levels by Friday.

Democrats complained that the Republicans' bill provides money to flood victims in Louisiana and other states but nothing to help residents plagued by lead-tainted water in Flint, Michigan.

"It's outrageous that this funding bill would include money for some communities dealing with flooding but deny resources for families struggling with toxic drinking water in Flint, Michigan," said Democratic Sen. Claire McCaskill of Missouri, who voted against the bill.

Republicans in turn accused Democrats of moving the country toward a government shutdown in order to cast the GOP-led Congress as ineffective.

"Senate Democrats stooped to a new low today," said McCaskill's Republican colleague, Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri.

"It's almost as if a few Democratic leaders decided long ago that bringing our country to the brink would make for good election-year politics," Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said in a speech on the Senate floor.

In the end, however, some Republicans joined with Democrats on Tuesday to block two attempts to advance the bill that McConnell had offered to avert a shutdown, 45-55 and 40-59. The measure needed 60 votes to pass.

Democrats said they were holding out to add money to help residents affected by lead-tainted water in Flint.

The bill already includes $1.1 billion to fight Zika and millions to help flood victims in Louisiana, West Virginia and Maryland.

Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he hoped the defeat would force Republicans back to the negotiating table.

"I encourage my Republican colleagues to help us have some degree of certainty that the people of Flint will be helped," he said.

Earlier this month, senators passed a water resources bill by 95-3 that included about $220 million to help Flint. But the House of Representatives version of that bill doesn't have any Flint money in it.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, a Republican from Wisconsin, told reporters Tuesday that the House would bring its bill to the floor without Flint funding and lawmakers could work out the differences later on.

"I'm not going to negotiate in the media," Ryan said. He added that the proper place for the Flint money was in the water resources bill.

A handful of Democrats bucked their party to vote to advance the bill: Sens. Bill Nelson of Florida, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Jon Tester of Montana and Joe Donnelly of Indiana.

On the other side of the aisle, 12 Republicans joined the majority of Democrats in blocking the bill, including Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. Graham opposes the bill because it does not contain a fix for the Export-Import Bank. Cruz wanted the bill to include language that would stop Obama administration plans to turn over control of internet domain names to an international body on Oct. 1.

Senate Blocks Stopgap Bill To Prevent Shutdown This Weekend

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, September 27, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – The Senate on Tuesday stumbled over a must-do bill to prevent the government from shutting down this weekend and to fund the fight against the Zika virus. Democrats, demanding money so Flint, Michigan, can address its lead-contaminated water crisis, overwhelmingly opposed the measure, as did a dozen of the Senate's most conservative members.

The 45-55 vote stalls the stopgap funding bill – for now at least – and is exasperating top Republicans like Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who made several concessions to Democrats in weeks of negotiations over the measure.

The GOP defections left McConnell, R-Ky., short of a simple majority, much less the 60 votes needed to clear a filibuster hurdle.

Republican leaders are promising to address the Flint issue after the election in a separate water resources bill, but Democrats refuse to take them at their word.

"'Trust me we will consider Flint later' – that's like nothing to me," said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Democrats say that it's unfair that the water crisis in Flint has gone on for more than a year with no assistance, while Louisiana and other states are getting $500 million for floods that occurred just last month. Democrats have played a strong hand in the negotiations and know they have leverage because Republicans controlling the House and Senate are eager to avoid a politically harmful shutdown at midnight on Friday.

"Democrats have been clear that Congress should not leave Flint and other lead-tainted communities out of any (stopgap spending) negotiation that includes emergency disaster funding," said Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and other top Democrats in a Tuesday morning letter to McConnell.

McConnell characterized the Democratic position as "no Flint, no flood" and indicated he is considering dropping the flood aid.

The stopgap spending bill would keep the government running through Dec. 9 and provide $1.1 billion in long-delayed funding to fight the spread of the Zika virus and develop a vaccine and improved tests to detect it. Zika can cause can cause grave birth defects.

McConnell has made numerous concessions in weeks of negotiations on the measure, agreeing, for instance, to drop contentious provisions tied to Zika funding that led Democrats to filibuster prior Zika measures this summer and earlier this month. A provision to make Planned Parenthood ineligible for new anti-Zika funding for Puerto Rico was dropped, as was a provision to ease pesticide regulations under the Clean Water Act. A $400 million package of spending cuts added to the measure is no longer controversial.

The measure also includes a popular full-year spending bill that provides a 4 percent budget increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Can it really be that Democratic leaders have embraced dysfunction so thoroughly that they'd tank a noncontroversial, 10-week funding bill over – well, what exactly?" McConnell asked, as he opened the Senate on Tuesday. "It's almost as if a few Democratic leaders decided long ago that bringing our country to the brink would make for good election-year politics."

Republicans say the Flint issue will be handled in a separate measure to authorize water development projects. That measure – without Flint money – is set for a House floor debate Tuesday, but Republicans are telegraphing it will be included in any final measure handled in a postelection session. But GOP leaders on Monday night blocked Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Mich. – who represents Flint – from getting a vote on the Senate measure.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., on Tuesday said that the water development bill "is the better place to address this."

The White House, which has not transmitted an official request for Flint aid, poked at Ryan for excluding it from the water projects bill.

"The speaker of the House says he opposes adding funding for Flint to the continuing resolution and believes that it should be handled in the water resources bill. But it's not included in the water resources bill that's advancing through the House. And then he has the nerve to suggest that it's Democrats who are the ones causing problems," said White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest.

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Stop-gap Bill To Avoid Government Shutdown Fails Senate Procedural Vote

By David Morgan

Reuters, September 27, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Aid To Flint Stalls Spending Measure

By Kristina Peterson

Wall Street Journal, September 27, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Democrats Block GOP Plan To Fund Government Because It Doesn't Help Flint

By Erin Kelly

USA Today, September 27, 2016

WASHINGTON — Democratic senators blocked a vote Tuesday to advance a Republican bill to keep the government open past Friday, because it did not include federal aid to help clean up lead-contaminated drinking water in Flint, Mich.

Senators voted 45-55 to advance the legislation, falling 15 votes short of the 60 needed to move the bill forward. A dozen Republicans joined 40 Democrats and two independents in opposing the proposal.

Congress must act by midnight Friday to prevent a government shutdown on Oct. 1, when fiscal 2017 begins. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said senators would "continue working on this important matter" and hold another vote soon.

McConnell, R-Ky., unveiled a proposal last week that would fund the government at existing levels through Dec. 9 to give lawmakers time to negotiate a bigger agreement to fund federal agencies through September 2017. It also would have provided $1.1 billion to combat the Zika virus and $500 million in aid to the flood-ravaged states of Louisiana, Maryland and West Virginia.

Democrats support those measures, but they were upset that Republicans did not include $220 million to help pay for a new water system for Flint, Mich., where residents have been poisoned by lead-contaminated drinking water. Democrats argue that Flint residents are victims of a disaster and deserve emergency aid just like the people of Louisiana.

"The Republican (proposal) ignores a two and a half year crisis in Flint, Michigan," said Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. "Lead has poisoned all 100,000 people, almost 10,000 children, some of whom are babies. Lead is a killer for children. A child who ingests lead in any way... (it) will affect them the rest of their lives. They won't be as smart as they could be. They won't be as agile as they could be. It really hurts them."

McConnell complained that Democrats keep changing what they want in the funding deal. He said he is giving Democrats what they have been seeking for months: $1.1 billion to combat the Zika virus with no "poison pills" to prevent Planned Parenthood from receiving federal funding or to waive federal environmental laws governing the use of pesticides to kill mosquitoes. Zika is spread by mosquitoes and through sexual contact.

McConnell's proposal also included full 2017 funding for military construction and veterans programs and about $7 million over the next 10 weeks to begin paying for new federal programs approved by Congress to fight heroin addiction and prescription painkiller abuse.

"Can it really be that Democratic leaders have embraced dysfunction so thoroughly that they'd tank a noncontroversial, 10-week funding bill over — well, what exactly?" McConnell said. "It's almost as if a few Democratic leaders decided long ago that bringing our country to the brink would make for good election-year politics."

McConnell said the $220 million for Flint was already approved by the Senate as part of a sweeping water projects bill called the Water Resources Development Act. But the House has not yet passed the bill, and its version does not include money for Flint.

House leaders have indicated that they expect the Flint aid to be included in a final bill, but Democrats don't trust them. Democrats said their distrust was underscored Monday night when the House Rules Committee ruled against allowing a vote on an amendment by Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Mich., to add Flint aid to the water bill.

"Would it be asking too much for the Speaker of the House, the Republican leader of the Senate, to stand and say, we're going to get that thing done, we're going to pass it, we're going to make sure that the bill that passed overwhelmingly in the Senate is going to become law?" Reid said. "But they ignore that. They ignore the people of Flint."

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., said the aid for Flint would be paid for by rescinding a credit subsidy for automakers for loans issued after Oct. 1, 2020. That subsidy costs the government about $250 million.

"We took the extra step because of the urgency and the dire circumstances in the city of Flint," she said. "It costs nothing to do this."

Will Democrats Force A Government Shutdown Over Flint Relief Funds?

By Mike Debonis

Washington Post, September 27, 2016

The federal government will shut down at midnight Friday unless Congress acts, and Senate Democrats say they will not vote for any spending extension that does not include federal aid to address the drinking-water crisis in Flint, Mich.

Flint relief has emerged as the crucial sticking point in negotiations on the stopgap spending extension necessary to avert a shutdown. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) unveiled a bill last week that addressed several Democratic demands, including a deal on Zika response funding and the elimination of several contentious policy riders.

But it did not incorporate the $220 million Flint aid package that passed the Senate in separate legislation earlier this month. A senior Senate Democratic aide said Monday that Democrats will vote against the spending bill Tuesday, halting its progress and creating the potential for at a brief shutdown if all 100 senators do not agree to speed up procedural hurdles.

Top Senate Democrats asked McConnell in a Tuesday letter, sent ahead of the afternoon vote, to reopen negotiations to include Flint aid.

"We believe that the [spending bill] should include assistance for communities facing disasters across the country – and that Flint and communities like it should not be left behind," reads the letter, which is signed by eight Democrats, including Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (Nev.) and Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters of Michigan.

Republican leaders in both the House and Senate have countered by pointing out that Flint aid will probably pass as part of a separate water projects bill, which cleared the Senate on Sept. 15 on a 95-3 vote.

Instead, Senate GOP leaders said Tuesday, Democrats are trying to create a shutdown crisis for political reasons.

"It's almost as if a few Democratic leaders decided long ago that bringing our country to the brink would make for good election-year politics, and then they've just made up the rationale as they go along," McConnell said.

"Because they think it helps them somehow politically, our Democratic friends are marching this country closer and closer to a shutdown," said Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), the majority whip.

He pointed to a remark that Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), chairman of the Senate Democrats' campaign arm, recently gave to The Washington Post where he said candidates need to "show the fact that the Republicans really haven't done anything" in Congress.

"In order for them to win seats, they have to show that under Republican leadership, nothing has been done," Cornyn said. "Well, the facts would show otherwise."

Democrats, meanwhile, have sought federal relief money for the Flint crisis since January, and they are eager to get the funding passed into law. The issue has stirred resentments over the treatment of a majority-black city, and it has stayed near the top of Democrats' congressional agenda for months.

While the water bill that included Flint relief easily passed the Senate, the House version of the water bill, which is set to pass Tuesday, does not include the Flint funding

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) told reporters Monday that "we are going to deal with Flint," but later in the day, House Republicans moved to deny a vote on an amendment that would add Flint relief to the House bill. That has Democrats skeptical that their GOP counterparts are making a good-faith effort to pass the aid package.

"If I had any sense that the leadership in the House felt that Flint relief was appropriate, and the only question is which [bill] it should be placed in, that would be a different question," said Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.), who represents Flint. "But I hear from the Republican leadership a question as to whether they should help Flint at all. … The idea that we would wait and maybe hope and trust that these sort of vague insinuations that maybe [the water bill] is where Flint could be taken up … it's hard to rely on that."

The Flint crisis is now into its second year, with most households and businesses in the Rust Belt city still unable to use their lead-tainted tap water for drinking or cooking. A decision made by a state-appointed emergency manager to switch water sources led to the corrosion of water-supply pipes that now must be replaced at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars.

The federal aid package would fund a portion of those costs, while also helping Flint and other communities deal with the public health implications of lead exposure.

Democrats prefer the aid be attached to the stopgap spending bill, known as a continuing resolution or CR, because it is a must-pass bill that is guaranteed to become law. Even if the water-projects bill passes the House on Tuesday, the two chambers will have to resolve differences between the two bills, and there is no guarantee the final product — which might not emerge until November or December — will include Flint aid.

"Time does matter, the CR still by far is the preferable bill," Kildee said. "It's the bill that is going to the president's desk for sure."

The White House said Monday that "Congress should quickly pass targeted funding to support Flint, Michigan, whether in the Water Resources Development Act or another vehicle."

Also aggravating Democrats is McConnell's decision to include in the stopgap spending bill $500 million in disaster relief for flooding in areas largely represented by Republicans — mainly Louisiana and Texas.

"We are happy to help with the disaster that took place in Louisiana … but couldn't they help Flint?" Reid said on Tuesday. "The Republicans are essentially saying the disasters in our states are more important than the disasters in your state. It is unfair, and it is wrong."

Lawmakers Work To Avoid Shutdown As Stopgap Blocked Over Flint

By Billy House

Bloomberg Politics, September 27, 2016

Senate Democrats blocked Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's first effort to advance a stopgap spending measure Tuesday as McConnell and House Republicans explored separate options to avert a U.S. government shutdown.

Funding for the government expires at 11:59 p.m. Friday. The Senate failed to advance the measure on a 45-55 vote, with 60 required. Twelve Republicans opposed the bill.

Two House Republicans said Tuesday evening that discussions have begun on drafting an emergency seven-day spending measure that would give Congress more time for negotiations on stopgap measure that would last until December. The Republicans spoke on condition of anonymity.

Senate Democrats were angry that the measure included emergency flood aid but didn't address the lead-tainted water crisis in Flint, Michigan.

Congressional leaders still have time to reach a new deal, but the margin for error is growing thin. McConnell said he would consider offering a replacement version that would strip out flood aid, something that several Democrats said they would consider. But it wasn't clear whether he will follow through on that.

"We keep hearing their position is no Flint, no flood and that's certainly something to talk about," McConnell told reporters.

Republicans ripped Democrats for filibustering the bill's $1.1 billion in funding to fight the Zika virus, $500 million in flood relief and $37 million to address the opioid crisis. Republican leaders had also dropped House provisions on Planned Parenthood and other issues opposed by Democrats.

A seven-day stopgap would delay the risk of a shutdown, but it would also impinge on lawmakers' plans to return to the campaign trail.No Promises

Before the Senate vote on Tuesday, Democratic leaders had demanded guarantees from House Speaker Paul Ryan and McConnell that Flint would get funding to help fix its water lead-contamination crisis, but received none.

Many House Republicans say drinking water is an issue better left to states and localities to address. But the issue has taken on greater prominence with the presidential election, particularly after Republican nominee Donald Trump made a rocky visit to Flint earlier this month.

"Would it be asking too much for the speaker of the House, the leader of the Senate, the Republican leader of the Senate, to stand and say, 'We're going to get that thing done?'" said Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada.

Reid also objected to McConnell continuing a provision in current law that prohibits the Securities and Exchange Commission from requiring corporations to disclose their political spending.

"The Securities and Exchange Commission will be powerless to tell corporations that they have to disclose their campaign contributions," Reid said. "They have to disclose everything else to their shareholders, but not that."Water Funding

The Senate has passed a separate measure that includes $220 million for Flint and other communities affected by lead on a 95-3 vote, but McConnell omitted the funding when he introduced his own stopgap spending bill last week after bipartisan negotiations broke down. The measure would fund the government through Dec. 9.

Lawmakers could still take it right down to the deadline Friday night, flirting with a government shutdown. Given Senate rules, a single unhappy senator could take it over the brink.

"The clock is ticking. We've been very clear," Democratic Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland told reporters before the vote. "I think we can come to an agreement on the money, we now just have to get rid of the poison pill riders."

It will be hard for House Republicans to pass a stopgap spending measure, or continuing resolution, without Democratic votes given fractures in their conference.Holding Firm

House Democrats are holding firm for now.

"We're saying we're not going to do a CR if you don't do Flint," second-ranking House Democrat Steny Hoyer said, adding that he could support a bill without flood aid or Flint money.

Hoyer suggested Republicans could add the money to the separate water resources bill on the House floor, but Republican leaders on Monday night teed up more than two dozen amendments for the House floor while blocking Democrats from offering one on Flint.

Ryan told reporters Tuesday that the water bill is "the proper place" for the Flint funding, but added, "I'm not going to negotiate that in the media."

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Senate Blocks Republican Stopgap From Advancing

Roll Call, September 27, 2016

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., holds a copy of his opening remarks as he speaks to the press about the continuing resolution in the Ohio Clock Corridor following the Senate Republicans' weekly policy lunch in the Capitol on Tuesday. (Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call)

The Senate on Tuesday voted 45-55 not to cut off debate on a 10-week continuing resolution proposed by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to keep government agencies and programs funded into December.

In addition to the stopgap funds, the package would have provided $1.1 billion to combat the Zika virus outbreak and $82.5 billion in fiscal 2017 Military Construction-VA discretionary spending, as well as $500 million to help disaster-affected states including flood-ravaged Louisiana. Sixty votes were needed to invoke cloture.

Senate Democrats voted overwhelmingly against the legislation largely due to the lack of funding to help citizens in Flint, Michigan, who have been grappling with a lead-contaminated water supply. Democrats also objected to a continued block in the McConnell proposal on a Securities and Exchange Commission rule that would require publicly traded companies to disclose political spending.

Tuesday's vote marks the fourth time Democrats have blocked Zika aid from moving forward, but the first time they've blocked the aid as part of a stopgap measure to keep the government running past the end of fiscal 2016 at midnight Friday.

Senate Dems: Add Flint Aid To Spending Deal

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, September 27, 2016

Top Senate Democrats are pressing the GOP to renegotiate a short-term spending deal to include aid for the Flint, Mich., drinking water crisis days ahead of a looming government shutdown.

Eight senators — led by Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) — sent a letter Tuesday to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) saying the continuing resolution (CR) should "include emergency federal disaster funding for Flint, Michigan and other communities across the nation struggling with the scourge of toxic, lead-tainted water supplies."

"The CR is the only must-pass legislation remaining on the Congressional calendar, and Democrats have been clear that Congress should not leave Flint and other lead-tainted communities out of any CR negotiation that includes emergency disaster funding," the senators wrote.

Democratic Sens. Dick Durbin (Ill.), Charles Schumer (N.Y.), Patty Murray (Wash.), Barbara Mikulski (Md.), Barbara Boxer (Calif.), Debbie Stabenow (Mich.) and Gary Peters (Mich.) also signed the letter.

Senators are expected to take a procedural vote Tuesday afternoon on a short-term spending bill that would fund the government through Dec. 9. Democrats are threatening to withhold their support because the measure does not include aid for Flint.

Republicans are quick to note that the Senate passed a water infrastructures bill earlier this month that included help for the Michigan community.

But the House version of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) doesn't include the money, and Democrats warned Tuesday that the "path for that bill to reach the President's desk with aid for Flint and other communities intact remains unclear."

The showdown on the Senate floor comes after McConnell filed a CR last week that included Democrat-supported priorities, including funding to fight the Zika virus. But leadership quickly came out in opposition to the bill, noting they didn't sign off on the proposal.

The letter comes after McConnell pressured Democrats to back the bill from the Senate floor on Monday, questioning whether they want to remove flood aid for Louisiana, West Virginia and Maryland that is currently included in the bill.

Democrats said in the letter that Republicans should not consider removing the emergency flood funding but instead consider inserting aid for Flint and other communities.

House GOP leadership has pointed to the WRDA, and not the CR, as the vehicle for getting the Flint help to the president's desk.

Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) also pledged in a Huffington Post op-ed late last week that the final version of the legislation would include the drinking water aid.

How Two US Disasters Could Lead To A Third – Another Government Shutdown

By Eric Pianin

Fiscal Times, September 27, 2016

Much of southern Louisiana is still under flood water. Flint, Michigan residents still can't drink their city's lead-contaminated water. And members of Congress are so heavily conflicted over how and when to respond to those two disasters that they are risking a government shutdown by the end of the week.

Lawmakers at one time had high hopes of quickly tying up loose ends and then head for the door at the end of the week to return home to campaign. But Congress's legendary dysfunction was on full view on Tuesday, as Senate Republican leaders tried again and failed to pass a massive stop-gap spending bill to keep the government operating beyond the start of a new fiscal year October 1.

After wasting a good part of the summer out of town on an extended recess without having passed a single appropriations bill or addressing the year-long Zika virus crisis in Florida and Puerto Rico, lawmakers returned to work last week determined to make short order of all outstanding business.

Yet now they find themselves ensnared in another financial crisis of their own making. This one has to do with when and how to finally approve critically need federal assistance to Louisiana, which is reeling from the worst natural disaster since Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and Flint, the economically depressed and largely black city struggling to function with no potable water and the terrible knowledge that 6,000 or more young children may have incurred serious health problems by drinking the water.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) are in no mood for another government shutdown so close to the November 8 election – one that would likely anger constituents and be blamed on the GOP leadership.

But irate Democrats led by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, have vowed to continue to block passage of a continuing resolution necessary to keep the government afloat unless it contains $220 million in emergency assistance to Flint and other communities with problems of contaminated drinking water.

Republicans for months have dragged their feet on approving emergency funding for Flint for eight months, despite the national outrage over the EPA and Republican state officials' gross mishandling and cover-up of the contaminated water system. Michigan Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, both Democrats, fought to get the money including in the continuing resolution, along with $500 million of emergency relief for bedraggled Louisiana residents and businessmen.

But Republicans have insisted on treating the Flint funding differently by including it in the 2016 Water Resources Development Act recently approved by the Senate, but that still awaits action in the House. While McConnell backed inclusion of the Flint funds in the Senate-passed version, Ryan and House conservatives are balking at including the money in their version of the water resources bill.

The House conservatives' motivation in slow-walking emergency assistance for a Midwestern city poisoned by lead is anybody's guess.

But Senate and House Democratic leaders are determined to block action on the CR until they receive assurance that the Flint money will be approved this fall, one way or another. During a news conference on Tuesday, just prior to McConnell's latest failed effort to win cloture on a stop-gap spending measure, Stabenow, Peters and a handful of other Michigan lawmakers warned they would risk provoking a fiscal crisis to get the Flint money approved.

Stabenow said that Flint residents have been consigned to unspeakable health problems and inconvenience, and that Congress has been jerking them around for months until the Senate finally overwhelmingly approved the funding last week as part of the water resources legislation.

"At 95 to 3, we thought we were finally on our way, and the people of Flint were hopeful," she told reporters. The funding then ran into a brick wall in the House, she said. And at the same time, the disaster relief for Louisiana was added to the continuing resolution.

"Now I'm happy to support Louisiana," Stabenow said. "I've said that from the very beginning. I understand about flooding. We just ask that the Republicans in the House and the Senate understand lead poisoning in water – shutting down an entire city's water supply of 100,000 people who have waited too long . . .If in fact the people of Flint have to wait again, then the people of Louisiana can join them in that wait until the end of the year."

Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI), a veteran legislator, warned that "We're here to say, if the money is not provided before we leave this week, we're not leaving." Peters added that "The people of Flint need help."

McConnell is exploring a number of options to break the logjam in the Senate and House before Friday's deadline for a shutdown. One possibility is a Solomon-like maneuver of dropping both Flint and Louisiana from the continuing resolution through Dec. 9 and then trying to reach a final agreement on the emergency funding during the lame duck session after the election.

McConnell floated that idea at a news conference shortly before the latest procedural vote to bring up the continuing resolution failed, 45 to 55, according to Politico.

"We keep hearing that their position is no Flint, no floods," McConnell said. "That's certainly an option worth discussing." When told of McConnell's comment, Reid, the Democratic leader who retires at the end of this year, said he wanted to see precisely what McConnell would do – and again said he wanted to see relief approved for both Louisiana and Flint.

Budget Resolution Needs Passed

Elkins (WV) InterMountain, September 28, 2016

As many victims of severe flooding earlier this year have come to learn, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is limited in how much money it can dole out for relief and rebuilding work. A bill scheduled for a vote this afternoon in the U.S. Senate could provide additional help.

Senators are to vote on a continuing resolution providing money for a variety of government activities. Among them are battling the Zika virus and addressing the epidemic of opioid abuse in many states.

Last week, a $500 million addition was made to the bill. It would provide Community Development Block Grant funding for West Virginia, Louisiana, Maryland and other states hit hard by flooding this year.

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va., a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said members of the panel added the funding because they

"recognized the scope and scale of the damages incurred by my state" during the flooding in June.

"Getting these resources out to our communities quickly will help those families who are just beginning to rebuild get back on their feet," Capito added.

While initial coverage of devastating floods in our state and Louisiana was extensive, the national news media has moved on to other topics, including the race for president.

But in West Virginia, Louisiana and a few other states, tens of thousands of people have not been able to move on. Many flood victims simply do not know where to turn for help.

Providing federal aid in addition to FEMA funding is essential. The Senate should approve the budget resolution — with aid for flood victims included — to provide some hope where very little exists today.

Still A Problem, Two Areas Sprayed For Mosquitoes By Plane Tonight

By Trey Schmaltz

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 27, 2016

BATON ROUGE – Two areas of the parish will be sprayed for mosquitoes Monday night due to an increasing number of bugs.

Crews will fly over Sherwood Forest east of Sherwood Forest Blvd. to Centurion Place. Also, an area of Highland Road and Perkins from Bluebonnet to the Country Club of Louisiana.

Standing water still lingering following the flood in southern areas of East Baton Rouge and Ascension Parish is fueling an increase in mosquitoes, the EBR mosquito abatement division has said. The mosquitoes breeding in the water are southern house mosquitoes, which carry West Nile but not Zika.

In Livingston Parish, where voters denied funding for a mosquito control service during a recent election, Orleans Parish mosquito control is spraying with an airplane using donated spray and flight costs reimbursed by FEMA.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Flooding Possible Thursday With As Much As 6 Inches Of Rain Forecast

Baltimore Sun, September 27, 2016

As much as 4 to 6 inches of rain could fall on Central Maryland from Wednesday night through Thursday, prompting warnings of possible flooding.

A slow-moving low-pressure system is forecast to drop from the Great Lakes toward the mid-Atlantic. Meanwhile, winds laden with sub-tropical moisture are forecast to come in from the east.

“It could rain a lot,” said Andy Woodcock, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service’s Baltimore/Washington forecast office.

Though the ground is relatively dry – just three-quarters of an inch of precipitation has fallen at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport this month – flooding is still possible, he said.

“That should not allow us to get our guard down,” Woodcock said. “People should be prepared.”

Forecasters expect the heaviest rain to fall from Wednesday night through Thursday afternoon. A flash flood watch is in effect across Central Maryland from late Wednesday through early Friday morning.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Weather Prediction Center, the region has a 50 percent chance of at least 4 inches of rain and a 10 percent chance of 6 inches of rain or more.

Tropical Storm Matthew Likely To Develop, Forecasters Say

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 27, 2016

Showers and thunderstorms associated with a tropical wave located about 250 miles east of Barbados continued to show signs of organization Tuesday night, leading forecasters to estimate a 90 percent chance they would develop into Tropical Storm Matthew within 48 hours.

Be prepared: Tap here for the latest on this storm system

Data from weather buoys indicated winds at near tropical storm force at 8 p.m.

Conditions seemed favorable for the storm’s development, with the possibility it could become a tropical depression or tropical storm late Tuesday or today.

The storm was moving west to west-northwest at 15 to 20 mph, and was expected to pass over the Windward Islands this morning, moving over the southeastern Caribbean late today and Thursday.

Wave In Atlantic Likely To Become Tropical Storm

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 27, 2016

Showers and thunderstorms associated with a tropical wave located about 350 miles east of Barbados continued to show signs of organization Tuesday, leading forecasters to estimate a 90 percent chance they would develop into Tropical Storm Matthew within 48 hours. Data from weather buoys already indicated winds at near tropical storm force at 2 p.m., when an Air Force Reserve reconnaissance aircraft had just begun a flight into Invest 97L to look for a closed circulation. Conditions seemed favorable for the storm's development, with the possibility it could reach tropical storm status. The storm was moving westward to west-northwestward at 15 to 20 mph, and was expected to pass over the Windward Islands this morning, moving over the southeastern Caribbean late today and Thursday.

Newark, N.J.

Christie knew about bridge, witness says

Gov. Chris Christie was told about the epic 2013 traffic jam at the George Washington Bridge while it was underway, seemed happy about it and joked sarcastically that there was nothing political going on, a former loyalist testified Tuesday in the scandal that helped destroy Christie's White House ambitions. David Wildstein, a former executive at the agency that oversees New York-area bridges and tunnels, took the stand for the prosecution at the trial of two one-time Christie allies accused of engineering the four days of gridlock to punish a Democratic mayor for not endorsing Christie. Wildstein has pleaded guilty. Wildstein's account was the first testimony to suggest Christie knew about the scheme as it was unfolding. Christie has repeatedly denied that and has not been charged with a crime.

Charlotte, N.C.: The black man killed by Charlotte police had a restraining order filed against him a year ago when he threatened to kill his wife and her son with a gun, according to court documents obtained Tuesday. Keith Scott's wife filed the order last Oct. 5. Police have said Scott had a handgun when they approached him at an apartment complex last week. Scott's family has said that he was not armed. Videos released by police and the family are inconclusive.

United Nations: Women leaders from 38 countries urged U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon on Tuesday to fulfill a promise he made in 2007 to start a Korean peace process before his term ends Dec. 31. The Korean Peninsula remains in a technical state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

Haiti: Organizers of a cultural festival celebrating the Afro-Caribbean LGBTQ community said it has been called off due to numerous threats and a prohibition by a government commissioner.

Egypt: Rescue workers on Tuesday pulled dozens of bodies from the hold of an Egyptian fishing boat that sank last week in the Mediterranean carrying hundreds of migrants trying to reach Europe, bringing the toll to over 200 dead.

Purchases Of Earthquake Insurance Policies On Rise In California

Sacramento (CA) Bee, September 27, 2016

The Sacramento-based California Earthquake Authority, the not-for-profit provider of more than 75 percent of California's residential earthquake insurance policies, said Tuesday that it has seen a "significant increase" in the purchase of CEA policies to date in 2016.

CEA said it now has more than 908,000 policies in force, an increase of about 29,000 in the first eight months of this year, or nearly twice the number of new CEA policies purchased in all of 2015.

The group said the spike was likely helped by lower rates and expanded deductible choices introduced this year.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Time Is Running Out To Save The Salton Sea

By Sarah Friedman

Sacramento (CA) Bee, September 27, 2016

In the mid-1940s, the Salton Sea was a hotbed of activity, attracting Hollywood's most glamorous actors and musicians to its yacht clubs and campgrounds. Now, what was once the largest lake in California is disappearing before our eyes and endangering all its life.

We can still save it, but if we don't, we will have a massive public health, environmental and economic crisis that could cost as much as $70 billion.

The Salton Sea is a lake that was created most recently 112 years ago after canals and dikes failed along the Colorado River, opening the Imperial Valley to extreme flooding. This engineering mistake is now home to millions of birds and fish. But over the past few years, we have seen lake levels drop.

So how is a lake, three times larger than Owens Lake, nearly gone? An agricultural-to-urban water-transfer agreement between the Imperial Valley and urban San Diego and Coachella valleys is the main reason. This agreement contractually obligated the state to address the environmental impacts from the water transfer to the sea. But there has been little action over the past 10 years.

Meanwhile, the sea has been kept from collapse by water deliveries required under the agreement. This temporary plan was meant to buy time until the sea was restored and will end in 2017.

In about 15 years, however, 60 percent of the Salton Sea's volume will be gone and 100 square miles of lake bed will be exposed.

The less water, the more the salty underbelly of the lake is exposed, damaging crucial habitat in the water and on land. The dry lake bed releases toxic dust that is inhaled by 650,000 people who live nearby, causing respiratory illnesses.

The state recently created the Salton Sea Management Program, making money available for stakeholder-supported projects, including more than 1,000 acres of habitat and dust control projects. However, we need to do more – and now.

First we must restore some of the wetlands we've already lost or could lose as the sea recedes. The Salton Sea has become a resting place for half of the nation's birds as more than 90 percent of wetlands across California have been destroyed – the most in the nation. Wetlands restoration provides bird habitat and improves air quality.

Next, we must start working toward a smaller but sustainable sea that can still serve the needs of wildlife and the surrounding community. Through smart planning, we can maintain habitat for more than 400 species of migrating birds and the ever-disappearing fish species. Maintaining the Salton Sea will also reduce dust in the air and keep kids from the East Coachella and Imperial valleys out of the hospital for asthma attacks.

Lastly, the Salton Sea has a ton of geothermal potential. This energy resource is free of carbon pollution and won't add to climate change, which is driving a lot of problems affecting the lake.

This approach is the best path forward, but it won't be easy. We have seen incredible steps taken so far, including $80 million from the state and support from the Obama administration. But to truly stop both an ecological and environmental justice crisis, more resources and funding must be devoted to saving the Salton Sea.

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 12:50:55 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @mail.mil'(b)(6) @state.sd.us'(b)(6) @utah.gov'(b)(6) @wyo.gov';(b)(6) @nd.gov'(b)(6) @state.sd.us'(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov'(b)(6) @usace.army.mil';(b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert(b)(6) @usace.army.mil'(b)(6) @state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6) @hhs.gov'(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @hhs.gov'(b)(6) @sba.gov';(b)(6) @sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6) @mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;'(b)(6) @state.co.us';Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;'(b)(6) @fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA News clips for Tuesday 8-23-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-23-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 23, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state is proceeding with a proposal to buy out landslide properties in Colorado Springs as quickly as possible, Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Marilyn Gally told the Colorado Springs city council Monday. The city has proposed a resolution asking FEMA to "move as quickly as possible."… The Beaver Creek Fire that started in June is believed to have been human-caused… A July hailstorm in Colorado Springs is the sixth-most costly disaster in state history, according to the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association.
- **Montana:** Several stories report about fires in the state. One near Kalispell led to evacuations, one in Yellowstone has made national news, and the Copper King Fire remains dangerous.
- **North Dakota:** Stories appear to reflect more tension at the site of the pipeline protest: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz withdrew trailers and water tanks that had been supplied by the state after reports of criminal activity, including lasers being directed at pilots observing the protest; Governor Dalyrmple said numerous criminal acts had occurred and asked the Army Corps of Engineers to step in (as the protest is on its land, protesting its permit); and tribal officials acknowledged the campers had split into two factions, one pacifist and one that feels "something should be done."… Also: Three Affiliated Tribes approved a letter of support for the protest. About 60 tribes are believed to be represented at the campsite. A federal judge is to rule on a request for an injunction Wednesday. The Morton County sheriff estimates overtime costs for law enforcement may be $100,000 per week. Protesters plan a march at 2 p.m. today and to attend a Morton County Commissioners meeting at 5:30; two actresses will lead a protest outside the federal district court in Washington, D.C., today as well. Former *Grand Forks Herald* editor Mike Jacobs weighs in with an opinion piece on the protest … Xcel Energy is testing large drones that could be used to help identify power problems after a storm…

- **South Dakota:** The state has its first Zika case, a woman who had travelled to the Caribbean. (She is not pregnant.)
- **Utah:** Two new wildfires have broken out. Red flag warnings are out for the northern part of the state, and storms are expected in the south.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The Louisiana flooding, wildfires and the Zika virus continue to dominate national disaster news. No clips are included today.

CONTENTS

COLORADO:

On Unsolid Ground: State hustling to help Colorado Springs landslide victims (Colorado Springs Gazette)

Officials say Beaver Creek fire was caused by humans as crews continue to battle blaze (The Denver Post)

July hail storm in Colorado Springs sixth-most damaging in state history (The Gazette, Colorado Springs)

MONTANA:

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Crews battling new wildfires in northern, central Utah (Salt Lake Tribune)

Utah forecast: Midweek weather brings high fire danger north, storms in the south **(Salt Lake Tribune)**

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

On Unsolid Ground: State hustling to help Colorado Springs landslide victims (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Billie Stanton Anleu
August 22, 2016• Updated: August 22, 2016 at 6:23 pm

Colorado government is moving as quickly as it can to help Colorado Springs landslide victims, state Emergency Management Director Marilyn Galley assured the City Council during its work session Monday.

But Galley said her agency is completing buyouts of Boulder County homes from the 2013 floods, an indication of the two to three years needed to close out relief efforts after disasters.

"It is a tedious process," Galley said.

The state has submitted Colorado Springs' application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, she said.

Mayor John Suthers and Councilman Keith King are sponsoring a resolution urging FEMA to "proceed as quickly as possible" in moving forward on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application. The resolution promises the council, mayor and city staff members' "full and timely attention" in cooperating with FEMA and the state Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

The costs from the 2015 landslides are high, noted city Grants Manager Jen Vance.

When 27 homes were bought out in 2000 after landslides in Holland Park and on Regency Drive, the total project cost was $6.5 million.

But the 26 homes to be bought out because of last year's landslides have a projected cost of $16.2 million, because the cost of housing has increased, several of the houses are in Broadmoor neighborhoods and $1.9 million alone is attributed to a landslide lot owned by Judy Myklak in the Broadmoor Resort Community.

Meanwhile, Councilmen Don Knight and Tom Strand plan another workshop Monday with developers, builders, geologists and geotechnical engineers, among others, to resolve lingering questions on their proposed rewrite of the city's geological hazards ordinance.

Knight had noted holes in that safety net and wants more due diligence before homes are erected in landslide zones.

Planning and Development Director Peter Wysocki said questions to be resolved are:

- Who proposes and signs off on the geological hazard study?

- Is 14 days enough time for the Colorado Geological Survey to respond on how its recommendations have been implemented in development plans?

- Who verifies that those recommendations are addressed?

The original 1996 geohazards ordinance called for either a geologist or geotechnical engineer to write the studies, Knight noted, but both specialists are needed.

"The biggest issue," he said, "is who certifies that the house was built as designed. There's no guarantee your house isn't going to fall down into a landslide. All we're trying to do is make sure the house is built as designed."

Officials say Beaver Creek fire was caused by humans as crews continue to battle blaze (Denver Post)

The Denver Post
By Jesse Paul | jpaul@denverpost.com
August 23, 2016 at 9:03 am

WALDEN — Officials believe the Beaver Creek fire burning in northwest Colorado since June was caused by humans.

In an incident update Monday, commanders made the announcement, which they have been suggesting since the fire started on June 19. The U.S. Forest Service’s law enforcement division is investigating.

The fire, which has scorched more than 37,000 acres in Colorado and Wyoming, is listed as 53 percent contained. Nearly 250 firefighters were assigned to the firefight about 25 miles north of Walden as of Tuesday morning.

“Cooler weather later in the week is predicted to be even more favorable to suppression and containment efforts,” officials said in a Tuesday news release.

Total containment is expected Oct. 21. The fire has destroyed one cabin and a handful of outbuildings.

July hail storm in Colorado Springs sixth-most damaging in state history (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman
August 22, 2016 Updated: Today at 6:12 am

The July 28 hailstorm that smashed Colorado Springs was the sixth-most damaging event in Colorado history, triggering $352.8 million in claims for damage to homes and vehicles, an insurance industry trade group said Monday.

Described as an "absolute hail bomb" by Brian Bledsoe, chief meteorologist with Gazette news partner KKTV, the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association said the storm featuring up to tennis ball-sized hail resulted in 84,500 auto and homeowner insurance claims filed so far. That includes 51,300 auto insurance claims adding up to more than $164.6 million and 33,200 property insurance claims at more than $188.2 million.

"The difference between this storm and many of the other large storms that have hit Colorado is you typically see one storm travel across the state or along the Front Range causing damage over a wide area," said Carole Walker, the association's executive director. "This storm was concentrated in the Colorado Springs area and the size of the hail resulted in a very high percentage of claims that were total losses."

Renee Larson, a semi-retired homeowner near the Colorado Springs Airport, said the storm did about $60,000 damage to her family's three vehicles as well as the roof, six windows, skylights, chimney, siding, fence and shed on or near their home. The vehicles were total losses and she hopes repairs to her home will soon be approved by her mortgage company.

"Hopefully, they will get it done before the snow flies," Larson said. "You want to scream and throw your hands up, but it is Mother Nature, just like the floods in Louisiana. We are fortunate it is going as smoothly as it is. At least we are in the process of our claim. Some people I know might have to wait months to see an adjuster."

The estimated damage amount is preliminary and doesn't include any damage to commercial property such as vehicles of dealer lots or office buildings and hotels, or public property, including at least $500,000 in damage at the Colorado Springs Airport and about 40 Colorado Springs police cars as well as damages at Peterson Air Force Base. The total cost of the storm likely will increase as repairs are completed to roofs, siding and windows damaged by the storm that could take months to complete, Walker said.

"This is yet another reminder from Mother Nature of why Colorado is now ranked second in the nation for hail insurance claims," Walker said. "The size and amount of hail that battered Colorado Springs is, unfortunately, part of a pattern of catastrophic events the state has been experiencing during the past several years, so we need to be financially prepared for the unexpected."

The monetary damage of the storm ranks behind three hail storms, the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest fires, the association reported. The storms ahead of it are:

- A July 20, 2009, Denver area hail storm that caused $767.6 million in damages;

- A July 11, 1990, hail storm that caused $625 million in damages statewide;

- The June 2012 Waldo Canyon fire, which resulted in $453.7 million in claims;

- The June 2013 Black Forest fire, which resulted in $420.5 million in claims;

- A series of storms from June 6-15, 2009, in the Denver area with tornado and hail damage totaling $353.3 million.

When adjusted for inflation, the storm ranks as the eighth-worst in the state's history.

Colorado ranked behind Texas in hail claims from 2013-15 with 182,591 claims, according to a National Insurance Crime Bureau report in May. Nationwide, there were 5,412 major hail storms last year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Severe Storms database.

Claims related to wind and hail damage accounted for nearly 40 percent of all insured losses during the past five years, averaging about $15 billion annually, the association said. The July 28 storm was the first catastrophic loss of the year in Colorado, which the association defines as insured damage of $25 million or more (flood damage is not included because it isn't covered by most homeowner's insurance policies).

Many of the state's top insurers, including USAA and State Farm, opened mobile locations along Powers Boulevard and elsewhere in eastern Colorado Springs to handle the large number of vehicle claims. Some body shops reported backlogs of work through December and the wait for getting roof or siding work could be even longer.

MONTANA

Evacuations ordered after Montana fire doubles in size (Associated Press)

KALISPELL — Authorities say homes in a rural area east of Thompson Falls have been evacuated after a wildfire in northwestern Montana doubled in size in one day.
Fire officials say extreme fire behavior is also expected for the Copper King Fire on Monday, with wind gusts of up to 40 mph forecast to blow across the dry, hot terrain.
The Sanders County Sheriff's Office issued evacuation orders early Monday along Little Thompson River Road. Some 20 homes and structures are threatened, and other residents have been put on notice that the evacuation area may spread.
A shelter has been set up at Thompson Falls High School.
Some 317 firefighters are responding to the blaze, which grew 4 ½ square miles Sunday to nearly 11 square miles as of Monday morning.

Wildfire smoke streaming across Montana (KXLH – Great Falls)

By: Julianne Dellorso and David Sherman - MTN News

GREAT FALLS - Many people have noticed a lot of smoke in areas of western, central, and northern Montana.
We have received reports of heavy smoke from residents in and around Helena, Shelby, Heart Butte, and even the Sluice Boxes area of the Little Belt Mountains.

Toole County Sheriff Donna Whitt says from what she's heard, it is smoke from the fires in Western Montana and Idaho.

She says there are no fires or incidents involving smoke in Toole County reported to her office.

The East Glacier Volunteer Fire Department posted the following message on Facebook on Monday morning: "Very windy, smokey day in East Glacier Park. Conditions are ripe for wildfire - a red flag day. Be careful with cigarettes and avoid any outdoor burning or anything that might spark a fire, like driving your car in high, dry grass or using a chainsaw."

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality reports that wildfire smoke in the area is likely due to several large fires to the west:

- The Pioneer Fire near Boise, Idaho, is 87,818 acres and 50% contained with active fire behavior.
- The Copper King Fire in northwest Montana is 3,900 acres and 30% contained with active fire behavior. Satellite imagery indicates a plume coming off the fire this afternoon and heading to the northeast.
- The Buck Creek Fire in central Washington is 1,083 acres and 0% contained with active fire behavior and contributing to the light smoke over Montana.

West Yellowstone residents voice concerns over Tatanka Complex (KTVM – NBC Bozeman)

By: Judith Retana
Posted: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

Updated: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

BOZEMAN, Mont. - The half dozen fires burning in Yellowstone National Park are now called the Tatanka Complex.

Fire officials in West Yellowstone held a community meeting Monday night where residents voiced their concerns about the fire. As black smoke continues to rise from the fires, many residents are worried.

"Oh, I'm saying my prayers like crazy," said Duck Creek resident Jim Criner. He was one of more than 200 residents at a community meeting to learn more about the fire.

Officials presented maps showing people where the fire perimeter was and the direction it's heading.

Strong winds and dry weather have a Montana senator and firefighters on alert.

"We want to make sure we have all the resources to ensure the community stays safe, the road stays open and we can protect these very important assets here around West Yellowstone," said Sen. Steve Daines (R-Montana).

Officials handed out fact sheets and maps to help residents understand more about the fires. They even handed out fire action plans to help them plan for an emergency.

Sasha Jevtich is a seasonal resident who works closely with the fire community. He and others looked at maps of the fire after the meeting.

"We took a ride into the park just to check things out for ourselves. You know, as you look at the maps, it is kind of scary. It does looks like it's rather close to town," he said. As scary as it can look, he said having the fire eat away at what is fueling it now, is good for the future.

Even so, the fire still makes residents like Criner nervous. He was around for the 1988 fires and saw how close those got to his neighborhood.

"The area between where the fire is and where we are in Duck Creek, is nothing but high grass and willows. The fire would move across the area really fast if it reached us," he said.

Although many in West Yellowstone are used to Montana's fire season, seeing dark plumes just a few miles away is always a concern.

Residents who wish to receive emergency notifications about the fire or any other event in the area, can sign up at ready.gallatin.com.

NORTH DAKOTA

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

"We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably," she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

“He’d like to keep this in the law enforcement arena,” he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there’s an element of “outside agitators” responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – “hundreds of criminal acts.”

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said “nothing bad is happening here.”

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

“You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they’re camped across the river from each other,” said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin’s Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the “peaceful” side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

“My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it’s life-threatening or not,” he said. “This is our land, our people.”

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming’s Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children’s safety at the campsite. But she added, “I believe there’s strength in prayer,” and said it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Our water is sacred,” she said. “I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too.”

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes’ chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock’s opposition.

“We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives,” Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe’s reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe’s water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It’s estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it’s the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead ‘solidarity’ rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

MIKE JACOBS: Pipeline protest shows new dimension in North Dakota politics (Grand Forks Herald)

By Mike Jacobs Today at 6:00 a.m.

North Dakota still responds to an Indian scare. That's one thing we can say about last week's news.

On Friday, Gov. Jack Dalrymple declared a civil emergency in response to a protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The pipeline would cross the Missouri River less than a mile from the boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux nation.

Protests last week brought more than 1,000 people. Arrests were made.

Emergency declarations aren't all that uncommon in North Dakota, but almost all of them address natural disasters. North Dakota knows natural disaster. Hardly a year goes by without natural disaster. This place is flood prone, snow blasted and wind battered.

Civil disturbance is another thing.

The last civil emergency that comes to mind occurred in 1970, when Gov. William Guy sent the National Guard to an anti-war protest at the ABM missile site near Nekoma, N.D. A year before that, Guy called out the Guard when a bunch of college students descended on Zap, N.D., with the express purpose of getting drunk and having a good time. Some damage was done.

Dalrymple didn't send the Guard to the mouth of the Cannonball River. His emergency declaration is just in case local law enforcement needs help, he said.

Besides pointing out that this step is extremely rare, we can say some other things about it.

One is that Native opposition to pipeline projects is becoming a pattern. The Enbridge Company's Sandpiper line is stalled due to opposition from Minnesota's White Earth Band of Ojibway. Their spokeswoman is Winona LaDuke, who was Ralph Nader's running mate in 1996 and 2000 when he was the Green Party candidate for president.

The partnership between Native people and environmentalists is part of the pattern. We saw this in opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline, and it's evident at the mouth of the Cannonball. The protest there has drawn movie stars as well as environmental activists.

That pretty much makes it the current front line in the war on fossil fuels.

It's easy to suggest (as some bloggers have done) that the tribe is being used.

There are two problems with this. For one thing, it's condescending. For another, it overlooks the growing activism of North Dakota's Native people.

This activism is especially evident at Standing Rock.

Opposition from the elected Tribal Council at Standing Rock doomed UND's nickname and logo. The NCAA said using "Fighting Sioux" would be OK if both of the state's Sioux communities said so. Standing Rock refused.

Another thing to say is that David Archambault, Standing Rock's tribal chair, has warrior blood in his veins. He's been on the front lines at the protest. On the pipeline issue, he's led the tribe to federal court and to the United Nations.

This is no surprise. At the opening of the 2015 legislative session, Archambault delivered the "State of the Relationship" message, a cry from the heart in which he spoke truth to power about Native issues and state jurisdiction.

Then there's the political context.

North Dakota's November ballot has three Native candidates: Chase Iron Eyes for Congress, Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun for Public Service Commission and Ruth Buffalo for insurance commissioner. All are Democrats, and none has much of a chance.

But each of them stepped up to fill slots on a major party ticket.

This has two important implications. First, as major party candidates, they will have media access. Second, they've established that the Democratic Party in the state can't just count on Native voters; it must also promote Native candidates to the white population.

It's also the essence of political organizing, as Mark Trahant pointed out in his blog, at trahantreports.com. Trahant is the nation's best known native journalist, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and a member of the faculty at UND's Program in Communication.

None of this goes to the question of pipeline safety, much less to the future of fossil fuel development.

On these issues, everybody ought to be heard.

So there is one more thing, at least, to say about last week's developments.

Brian Kalk, one of three members of the Public Service Commission that approved a permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline, dismissed the protest. He told the Bismarck Tribune, "These groups didn't come to our hearings."

Well...

They could have been asked.

That's what "public service" means.

Disclaimers: Enbridge has right-of way on property that my partner Suezette and I own in Mountrail County, N.D. I was at Nekoma with the protesters. I was not at the so-called "Zip to Zap."

North Dakota Tests Drones To Be Used For Disaster Response (AP)

HILLSBORO, N.D. (AP) — A 20-foot-long drone that was brought to North Dakota to test precision agriculture methods is now part of a trial run to see if can help crews restore power to areas hit by natural disasters.

The Israeli-manufactured Elbit Systems Hermes 450 aircraft can cover 40,000 acres in an hour and fly up to 17 hours before refueling. Officials involved in the Xcel Energy test program say the larger drone's ability to cover more ground, collect more data and fly at night is expected to help the company move crews, materials and equipment quickly and safely.

"When you have a storm, when you have fires, getting crews on the ground to identify damage is flat-out dangerous," Raanan Horowitz, president and CEO of Elbit Systems of America, said Monday when the drone was shown off to public officials at an airport in Hillsboro, about 35 miles north of Fargo.

One of the tests involves a mock disaster using power poles placed in ditches in and around the nearby city of Mayville. Preliminary reports show that the drone is effective in quickly locating the downed poles both day and night, Xcel Energy Vice President Laura McCarten said.

"Apparently those wood poles stay warmer than the surroundings, so the infrared technology is able to spot them at night," she said.

Xcel Energy is headquartered in Minneapolis and serves customers in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Colorado, Michigan, Texas and New Mexico.

There are still key issues to be ironed out before the drones can be used on a widespread commercial basis, including Federal Aviation Administration approval to operate beyond line of sight, or without the use of a chase plane keeping tabs on the planes. North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said he hopes North Dakota will be flying drones without chase planes by the end of the year.

"You're covering such big distances. You're losing the utility of the unmanned aircraft if you have to have a chase plane," Hoeven said.

Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district borders North Dakota, said the FFA "didn't do too bad of a job" on regulations for small drones, but he expects a much stiffer challenge on rules for larger aircraft.

"The FAA is very slow moving bureaucracy, to say the least," Peterson said.

If larger unmanned aircraft are approved for beyond-line-of-sight operations, Horowitz said the quadcopters and drones that weigh less than 55 pounds would still be used in a complementary role.

"The bottom line is, when you look at the size and the areas that you are trying to cover, when you look at the resolution, when you look at using sensors that can yield data that is actually usable, this is the way to go," Horowitz said of the Hermes drone.

Elbit Systems and Xcel Energy have combined to contribute about $500,000 into flying the Hermes drone. McCarten said the agriculture test program that began in May provided a "ready-made platform" for the Xcel study.

North Dakota State University researcher John Nowatzki said the agriculture test has yielded impressive results on the drone's ability to capture images. Nowatzki has displayed pictures of a shelter belt taken from 4,000, 6,000 and 8,000 feet, with no discernable difference to the human eye.

"The key message here, maybe, is that we get high resolutions at all levels," he said.

Sarah Lovas, an area farmer and crop consultant, said some of her cohorts still want to find out how they can manage the data in an affordable way, but most have embraced the technology.

"There's just no such thing as a dumb farmer anymore," she said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota reports first Zika virus infection (Rapid City Journal)

Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 22, 2016

South Dakota has reported its first Zika virus infection, according to state health officials.

The infected person is a woman who traveled to a country in the Caribbean where Zika virus is transmitted. She later developed symptoms, the Department of Health said today in a press release. The infection was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“This is a good reminder for anyone who travels to Zika-affected areas that it’s important to protect themselves from mosquito bites,” Dr. Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department, said in the release.

Kightlinger said state officials are not disclosing where the woman infected is from in South Dakota, but did note that she is in her 30s and is not pregnant.

Zika is a tropical mosquito-borne infection. The virus is not known to be carried by the mosquitoes found in South Dakota.

Officials say there are no vaccines or treatment for the virus. To avoid infection, travelers to Zika-affected areas, particularly pregnant women, should follow strict mosquito control precautions — wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, use an EPA-registered insect repellent and ensure that windows and doors have intact screens.

According to the Department of Health, the infection is mild for most healthy adults. About one in five people who are infected will become ill.

The release says symptoms typically occur two to seven days after a bite and include fever, muscle or eye pain and a rash. Pregnant women who are infected run the added risk of having babies with the birth defect microcephaly. Microcephaly means the babies have heads smaller than expected and often have smaller brains that might not have developed properly, the department said.

UTAH

Crews battling new wildfires in northern, central Utah (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune

First Published 1 hour ago • Updated 1 hour ago

Two new wildfires had ground crews scrambling in Sevier and Cache counties on Tuesday, as fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft swarmed the flames from above.

The Sand Ledges Fire, first spotted on Saturday just west of Richfield along Highway 24, had blackened 3,022 acres and was 27 percent contained as of Tuesday, said Fire Information Officer Shayne Ward.

Believed human-caused, the blaze was consuming dry grass and sage brush, including valued sage grouse habitat, but no structures were threatened and no evacuations had been ordered.

In all, 70 firefighters were working to hem in the Sand Ledges Fire. It was a slow, often frustrating task with gusty winds periodically fanning the flames through the tinder-dry vegetation, Ward said.

Still, crews hoped to have the blaze 100 percent contained sometime Saturday.

What sparked the Peterson Hollow Fire Sunday afternoon was still under investigation, but it had scorched 150 acres on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest's Logan Ranger District as of Tuesday. Fire Information Officer MaryEllen Fitzgerald said it was 5 percent contained, with no estimated time for when crews will completely contain it.

The fire is 23 miles northeast of Logan and just north of the Beaver Mountain Ski Area.
"[The resort] is currently not imminently endangered, but is the most important focus at this time. Structure protection is in place and being ramped up as a precaution," Fitzgerald stated.
The Peterson Hollow Fire is one of five active blazes on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest; the other four are being allowed to burn as beneficial to clearing away accumulated undergrowth and dead timber.
About 160 firefighters were battling the blaze, aided by a fleet of air tankers and helicopters. Hot, dry and occasionally windy weather continue to challenge efforts to hem in the flames.

Utah forecast: Midweek weather brings high fire danger north, storms in the south (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
If Goldilocks grew up to be a meteorologist, she might say of the midweek forecast for the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys, "Ahhh, just right."

If the fabled cabin burglar walked into the forests of the northern Wasatch Front, however, she might toss her porridge and run: from the mountains above Logan stretching south through Salt Lake City and Provo to Nephi, the National Weather Service declared a Red Flag Warning for wildfire danger from noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday.

Potentially too hot, indeed, thanks to low humidity, rain-starved rangelands and forests, and gusty winds.

Southern Utah? Goldilocks might prefer the company of three offended bears, after all. The region expects a cycle of thunderstorms the next several days — and humid, hot weather. High temperatures were forecast to be in the low- to mid-90s Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

No, it will be the balmy weather due in the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys that is best for that post-porridge nap. Sunny to partly cloudy skies will reign through the midweek, with highs ranging from the mid- to upper-80s Tuesday through Thursday, and overnight temperatures in the upper-50s to low-60s making for sweet dreams.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 23, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state is proceeding with a proposal to buy out landslide properties in Colorado Springs as quickly as possible, Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Marilyn Gally told the Colorado Springs city council Monday. The city has proposed a resolution asking FEMA to "move as quickly as possible."… The Beaver Creek Fire that started in June is believed to have been human-caused… A July hailstorm in Colorado Springs is the sixth-most costly disaster in state history, according to the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association.
- **Montana:** Several stories report about fires in the state. One near Kalispell led to evacuations, one in Yellowstone has made national news, and the Copper King Fire remains dangerous.
- **North Dakota:** Stories appear to reflect more tension at the site of the pipeline protest: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz withdrew trailers and water tanks that had been supplied by the state after reports of criminal activity, including lasers being directed at pilots observing the protest; Governor Dalyrmple said numerous criminal acts had occurred and asked the Army Corps of Engineers to step in (as the protest is on its land, protesting its permit); and tribal officials acknowledged the campers had split into two factions, one pacifist and one that feels "something should be done."… Also: Three Affiliated Tribes approved a letter of support for the protest. About 60 tribes are believed to be represented at the campsite. A federal judge is to rule on a request for an injunction Wednesday. The Morton County sheriff estimates overtime costs for law enforcement may be $100,000 per week. Protesters plan a march at 2 p.m. today and to attend a Morton County Commissioners meeting at 5:30; two actresses will lead a protest outside the federal district court in Washington, D.C., today as well. Former *Grand Forks Herald* editor Mike Jacobs weighs in with an opinion piece on the protest … Xcel Energy is testing large drones that could be used to help identify power problems after a storm…
- **South Dakota:** The state has its first Zika case, a woman who had travelled to the Caribbean. (She is not pregnant.)
- **Utah:** Two new wildfires have broken out. Red flag warnings are out for the northern part of the state, and storms are expected in the south.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The Louisiana flooding, wildfires and the Zika virus continue to dominate national disaster news. No clips are included today.

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COLORADO

On Unsolid Ground: State hustling to help Colorado Springs landslide victims (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Billie Stanton Anleu
August 22, 2016• Updated: August 22, 2016 at 6:23 pm

Colorado government is moving as quickly as it can to help Colorado Springs landslide victims, state Emergency Management Director Marilyn Galley assured the City Council during its work session Monday.

But Galley said her agency is completing buyouts of Boulder County homes from the 2013 floods, an indication of the two to three years needed to close out relief efforts after disasters.

"It is a tedious process," Galley said.

The state has submitted Colorado Springs' application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, she said.

Mayor John Suthers and Councilman Keith King are sponsoring a resolution urging FEMA to "proceed as quickly as possible" in moving forward on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application. The resolution promises the council, mayor and city staff members' "full and timely attention" in cooperating with FEMA and the state Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

The costs from the 2015 landslides are high, noted city Grants Manager Jen Vance.

When 27 homes were bought out in 2000 after landslides in Holland Park and on Regency Drive, the total project cost was $6.5 million.

But the 26 homes to be bought out because of last year's landslides have a projected cost of $16.2 million, because the cost of housing has increased, several of the houses are in Broadmoor neighborhoods and $1.9 million alone is attributed to a landslide lot owned by Judy Myklak in the Broadmoor Resort Community.

Meanwhile, Councilmen Don Knight and Tom Strand plan another workshop Monday with developers, builders, geologists and geotechnical engineers, among others, to resolve lingering questions on their proposed rewrite of the city's geological hazards ordinance.

Knight had noted holes in that safety net and wants more due diligence before homes are erected in landslide zones.

Planning and Development Director Peter Wysocki said questions to be resolved are:

- Who proposes and signs off on the geological hazard study?

- Is 14 days enough time for the Colorado Geological Survey to respond on how its recommendations have been implemented in development plans?

- Who verifies that those recommendations are addressed?

The original 1996 geohazards ordinance called for either a geologist or geotechnical engineer to write the studies, Knight noted, but both specialists are needed.

"The biggest issue," he said, "is who certifies that the house was built as designed. There's no guarantee your house isn't going to fall down into a landslide. All we're trying to do is make sure the house is built as designed."

Officials say Beaver Creek fire was caused by humans as crews continue to battle blaze (Denver Post)

The Denver Post

By Jesse Paul | jpaul@denverpost.com
August 23, 2016 at 9:03 am

WALDEN — Officials believe the Beaver Creek fire burning in northwest Colorado since June was caused by humans.

In an incident update Monday, commanders made the announcement, which they have been suggesting since the fire started on June 19. The U.S. Forest Service's law enforcement division is investigating.

The fire, which has scorched more than 37,000 acres in Colorado and Wyoming, is listed as 53 percent contained. Nearly 250 firefighters were assigned to the firefight about 25 miles north of Walden as of Tuesday morning.

"Cooler weather later in the week is predicted to be even more favorable to suppression and containment efforts," officials said in a Tuesday news release.

Total containment is expected Oct. 21. The fire has destroyed one cabin and a handful of outbuildings.

July hail storm in Colorado Springs sixth-most damaging in state history (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman
August 22, 2016 Updated: Today at 6:12 am The July 28 hailstorm that smashed Colorado Springs was the sixth-most damaging event in Colorado history, triggering $352.8 million in claims for damage to homes and vehicles, an insurance industry trade group said Monday.

Described as an "absolute hail bomb" by Brian Bledsoe, chief meteorologist with Gazette news partner KKTV, the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association said the storm featuring up to tennis ball-sized hail resulted in 84,500 auto and homeowner insurance claims filed so far. That includes 51,300 auto insurance claims adding up to more than $164.6 million and 33,200 property insurance claims at more than $188.2 million.

"The difference between this storm and many of the other large storms that have hit Colorado is you typically see one storm travel across the state or along the Front Range causing damage over a wide area," said Carole Walker, the association's executive director. "This storm was concentrated in the Colorado Springs area and the size of the hail resulted in a very high percentage of claims that were total losses."

Renee Larson, a semi-retired homeowner near the Colorado Springs Airport, said the storm did about $60,000 damage to her family's three vehicles as well as the roof, six windows, skylights,

chimney, siding, fence and shed on or near their home. The vehicles were total losses and she hopes repairs to her home will soon be approved by her mortgage company.

"Hopefully, they will get it done before the snow flies," Larson said. "You want to scream and throw your hands up, but it is Mother Nature, just like the floods in Louisiana. We are fortunate it is going as smoothly as it is. At least we are in the process of our claim. Some people I know might have to wait months to see an adjuster."

The estimated damage amount is preliminary and doesn't include any damage to commercial property such as vehicles of dealer lots or office buildings and hotels, or public property, including at least $500,000 in damage at the Colorado Springs Airport and about 40 Colorado Springs police cars as well as damages at Peterson Air Force Base. The total cost of the storm likely will increase as repairs are completed to roofs, siding and windows damaged by the storm that could take months to complete, Walker said.

"This is yet another reminder from Mother Nature of why Colorado is now ranked second in the nation for hail insurance claims," Walker said. "The size and amount of hail that battered Colorado Springs is, unfortunately, part of a pattern of catastrophic events the state has been experiencing during the past several years, so we need to be financially prepared for the unexpected."

The monetary damage of the storm ranks behind three hail storms, the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest fires, the association reported. The storms ahead of it are:

- A July 20, 2009, Denver area hail storm that caused $767.6 million in damages;

- A July 11, 1990, hail storm that caused $625 million in damages statewide;

- The June 2012 Waldo Canyon fire, which resulted in $453.7 million in claims;

- The June 2013 Black Forest fire, which resulted in $420.5 million in claims;

- A series of storms from June 6-15, 2009, in the Denver area with tornado and hail damage totaling $353.3 million.

When adjusted for inflation, the storm ranks as the eighth-worst in the state's history.

Colorado ranked behind Texas in hail claims from 2013-15 with 182,591 claims, according to a National Insurance Crime Bureau report in May. Nationwide, there were 5,412 major hail storms last year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Severe Storms database.

Claims related to wind and hail damage accounted for nearly 40 percent of all insured losses during the past five years, averaging about $15 billion annually, the association said. The July 28 storm was the first catastrophic loss of the year in Colorado, which the association defines as insured damage of $25 million or more (flood damage is not included because it isn't covered by most homeowner's insurance policies).

Many of the state's top insurers, including USAA and State Farm, opened mobile locations along Powers Boulevard and elsewhere in eastern Colorado Springs to handle the large number of vehicle claims. Some body shops reported backlogs of work through December and the wait for getting roof or siding work could be even longer.

MONTANA

Evacuations ordered after Montana fire doubles in size (Associated Press)

KALISPELL — Authorities say homes in a rural area east of Thompson Falls have been evacuated after a wildfire in northwestern Montana doubled in size in one day.

Fire officials say extreme fire behavior is also expected for the Copper King Fire on Monday, with wind gusts of up to 40 mph forecast to blow across the dry, hot terrain.

The Sanders County Sheriff's Office issued evacuation orders early Monday along Little Thompson River Road. Some 20 homes and structures are threatened, and other residents have been put on notice that the evacuation area may spread.

A shelter has been set up at Thompson Falls High School.

Some 317 firefighters are responding to the blaze, which grew 4 ½ square miles Sunday to nearly 11 square miles as of Monday morning.

Wildfire smoke streaming across Montana (KXLH – Great Falls)

By: Julianne Dellorso and David Sherman - MTN News

GREAT FALLS - Many people have noticed a lot of smoke in areas of western, central, and northern Montana.
We have received reports of heavy smoke from residents in and around Helena, Shelby, Heart Butte, and even the Sluice Boxes area of the Little Belt Mountains.

Toole County Sheriff Donna Whitt says from what she’s heard, it is smoke from the fires in Western Montana and Idaho.

She says there are no fires or incidents involving smoke in Toole County reported to her office.

The East Glacier Volunteer Fire Department posted the following message on Facebook on Monday morning: "Very windy, smokey day in East Glacier Park. Conditions are ripe for wildfire - a red flag day. Be careful with cigarettes and avoid any outdoor burning or anything that might spark a fire, like driving your car in high, dry grass or using a chainsaw."

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality reports that wildfire smoke in the area is likely due to several large fires to the west:

- The Pioneer Fire near Boise, Idaho, is 87,818 acres and 50% contained with active fire behavior.
- The Copper King Fire in northwest Montana is 3,900 acres and 30% contained with active fire behavior. Satellite imagery indicates a plume coming off the fire this afternoon and heading to the northeast.
- The Buck Creek Fire in central Washington is 1,083 acres and 0% contained with active fire behavior and contributing to the light smoke over Montana.

West Yellowstone residents voice concerns over Tatanka Complex (KTVM – NBC Bozeman)

By: Judith Retana

Posted: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

Updated: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

BOZEMAN, Mont. - The half dozen fires burning in Yellowstone National Park are now called the Tatanka Complex.

Fire officials in West Yellowstone held a community meeting Monday night where residents voiced their concerns about the fire. As black smoke continues to rise from the fires, many residents are worried.

"Oh, I'm saying my prayers like crazy," said Duck Creek resident Jim Criner. He was one of more than 200 residents at a community meeting to learn more about the fire.

Officials presented maps showing people where the fire perimeter was and the direction it's heading.

Strong winds and dry weather have a Montana senator and firefighters on alert.

"We want to make sure we have all the resources to ensure the community stays safe, the road stays open and we can protect these very important assets here around West Yellowstone," said Sen. Steve Daines (R-Montana).

Officials handed out fact sheets and maps to help residents understand more about the fires. They even handed out fire action plans to help them plan for an emergency.

Sasha Jevtich is a seasonal resident who works closely with the fire community. He and others looked at maps of the fire after the meeting.

"We took a ride into the park just to check things out for ourselves. You know, as you look at the maps, it is kind of scary. It does looks like it's rather close to town," he said. As scary as it can look, he said having the fire eat away at what is fueling it now, is good for the future.

Even so, the fire still makes residents like Criner nervous. He was around for the 1988 fires and saw how close those got to his neighborhood.

"The area between where the fire is and where we are in Duck Creek, is nothing but high grass and willows. The fire would move across the area really fast if it reached us," he said.

Although many in West Yellowstone are used to Montana's fire season, seeing dark plumes just a few miles away is always a concern.

Residents who wish to receive emergency notifications about the fire or any other event in the area, can sign up at ready.gallatin.com.

NORTH DAKOTA

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

"We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably," she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

“He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena,” he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of “outside agitators” responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – “hundreds of criminal acts.”

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said “nothing bad is happening here.”

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

“You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other,” said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the “peaceful” side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

“My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not,” he said. “This is our land, our people.”

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, “I believe there's strength in prayer,” and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Our water is sacred,” she said. “I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too.”

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes’ chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock’s opposition.

“We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives,” Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe’s reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe’s water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It’s estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it’s the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead 'solidarity' rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court

in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

MIKE JACOBS: Pipeline protest shows new dimension in North Dakota politics (Grand Forks Herald)

By Mike Jacobs Today at 6:00 a.m.

North Dakota still responds to an Indian scare. That's one thing we can say about last week's news.

On Friday, Gov. Jack Dalrymple declared a civil emergency in response to a protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The pipeline would cross the Missouri River less than a mile from the boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux nation.

Protests last week brought more than 1,000 people. Arrests were made.

Emergency declarations aren't all that uncommon in North Dakota, but almost all of them address natural disasters. North Dakota knows natural disaster. Hardly a year goes by without natural disaster. This place is flood prone, snow blasted and wind battered.

Civil disturbance is another thing.

The last civil emergency that comes to mind occurred in 1970, when Gov. William Guy sent the National Guard to an anti-war protest at the ABM missile site near Nekoma, N.D. A year before that, Guy called out the Guard when a bunch of college students descended on Zap, N.D., with the express purpose of getting drunk and having a good time. Some damage was done.

Dalrymple didn't send the Guard to the mouth of the Cannonball River. His emergency declaration is just in case local law enforcement needs help, he said.

Besides pointing out that this step is extremely rare, we can say some other things about it.

One is that Native opposition to pipeline projects is becoming a pattern. The Enbridge Company's Sandpiper line is stalled due to opposition from Minnesota's White Earth Band of

Ojibway. Their spokeswoman is Winona LaDuke, who was Ralph Nader's running mate in 1996 and 2000 when he was the Green Party candidate for president.

The partnership between Native people and environmentalists is part of the pattern. We saw this in opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline, and it's evident at the mouth of the Cannonball. The protest there has drawn movie stars as well as environmental activists.

That pretty much makes it the current front line in the war on fossil fuels.

It's easy to suggest (as some bloggers have done) that the tribe is being used.

There are two problems with this. For one thing, it's condescending. For another, it overlooks the growing activism of North Dakota's Native people.

This activism is especially evident at Standing Rock.

Opposition from the elected Tribal Council at Standing Rock doomed UND's nickname and logo. The NCAA said using "Fighting Sioux" would be OK if both of the state's Sioux communities said so. Standing Rock refused.

Another thing to say is that David Archambault, Standing Rock's tribal chair, has warrior blood in his veins. He's been on the front lines at the protest. On the pipeline issue, he's led the tribe to federal court and to the United Nations.

This is no surprise. At the opening of the 2015 legislative session, Archambault delivered the "State of the Relationship" message, a cry from the heart in which he spoke truth to power about Native issues and state jurisdiction.

Then there's the political context.

North Dakota's November ballot has three Native candidates: Chase Iron Eyes for Congress, Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun for Public Service Commission and Ruth Buffalo for insurance commissioner. All are Democrats, and none has much of a chance.

But each of them stepped up to fill slots on a major party ticket.

This has two important implications. First, as major party candidates, they will have media access. Second, they've established that the Democratic Party in the state can't just count on Native voters; it must also promote Native candidates to the white population.

It's also the essence of political organizing, as Mark Trahant pointed out in his blog, at trahantreports.com. Trahant is the nation's best known native journalist, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and a member of the faculty at UND's Program in Communication.

None of this goes to the question of pipeline safety, much less to the future of fossil fuel development.

On these issues, everybody ought to be heard.

So there is one more thing, at least, to say about last week's developments.

Brian Kalk, one of three members of the Public Service Commission that approved a permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline, dismissed the protest. He told the Bismarck Tribune, "These groups didn't come to our hearings."

Well...

They could have been asked.

That's what "public service" means.

Disclaimers: Enbridge has right-of way on property that my partner Suezette and I own in Mountrail County, N.D. I was at Nekoma with the protesters. I was not at the so-called "Zip to Zap."

North Dakota Tests Drones To Be Used For Disaster Response (AP)

HILLSBORO, N.D. (AP) — A 20-foot-long drone that was brought to North Dakota to test precision agriculture methods is now part of a trial run to see if can help crews restore power to areas hit by natural disasters.

The Israeli-manufactured Elbit Systems Hermes 450 aircraft can cover 40,000 acres in an hour and fly up to 17 hours before refueling. Officials involved in the Xcel Energy test program say the larger drone's ability to cover more ground, collect more data and fly at night is expected to help the company move crews, materials and equipment quickly and safely.

"When you have a storm, when you have fires, getting crews on the ground to identify damage is flat-out dangerous," Raanan Horowitz, president and CEO of Elbit Systems of America, said Monday when the drone was shown off to public officials at an airport in Hillsboro, about 35 miles north of Fargo.

One of the tests involves a mock disaster using power poles placed in ditches in and around the nearby city of Mayville. Preliminary reports show that the drone is effective in quickly locating the downed poles both day and night, Xcel Energy Vice President Laura McCarten said.

"Apparently those wood poles stay warmer than the surroundings, so the infrared technology is able to spot them at night," she said.

Xcel Energy is headquartered in Minneapolis and serves customers in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Colorado, Michigan, Texas and New Mexico.

There are still key issues to be ironed out before the drones can be used on a widespread commercial basis, including Federal Aviation Administration approval to operate beyond line of sight, or without the use of a chase plane keeping tabs on the planes. North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said he hopes North Dakota will be flying drones without chase planes by the end of the year.

"You're covering such big distances. You're losing the utility of the unmanned aircraft if you have to have a chase plane," Hoeven said.

Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district borders North Dakota, said the FFA “didn’t do too bad of a job” on regulations for small drones, but he expects a much stiffer challenge on rules for larger aircraft.

“The FAA is very slow moving bureaucracy, to say the least,” Peterson said.

If larger unmanned aircraft are approved for beyond-line-of-sight operations, Horowitz said the quadcopters and drones that weigh less than 55 pounds would still be used in a complementary role.

“The bottom line is, when you look at the size and the areas that you are trying to cover, when you look at the resolution, when you look at using sensors that can yield data that is actually usable, this is the way to go,” Horowitz said of the Hermes drone.

Elbit Systems and Xcel Energy have combined to contribute about $500,000 into flying the Hermes drone. McCarten said the agriculture test program that began in May provided a “ready-made platform” for the Xcel study.

North Dakota State University researcher John Nowatzki said the agriculture test has yielded impressive results on the drone’s ability to capture images. Nowatzki has displayed pictures of a shelter belt taken from 4,000, 6,000 and 8,000 feet, with no discernable difference to the human eye.

“The key message here, maybe, is that we get high resolutions at all levels,” he said.

Sarah Lovas, an area farmer and crop consultant, said some of her cohorts still want to find out how they can manage the data in an affordable way, but most have embraced the technology.

“There’s just no such thing as a dumb farmer anymore,” she said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota reports first Zika virus infection (Rapid City Journal)

Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 22, 2016

South Dakota has reported its first Zika virus infection, according to state health officials.

The infected person is a woman who traveled to a country in the Caribbean where Zika virus is transmitted. She later developed symptoms, the Department of Health said today in a press release. The infection was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“This is a good reminder for anyone who travels to Zika-affected areas that it’s important to protect themselves from mosquito bites,” Dr. Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department, said in the release.

Kightlinger said state officials are not disclosing where the woman infected is from in South Dakota, but did note that she is in her 30s and is not pregnant.

Zika is a tropical mosquito-borne infection. The virus is not known to be carried by the mosquitoes found in South Dakota.

Officials say there are no vaccines or treatment for the virus. To avoid infection, travelers to Zika-affected areas, particularly pregnant women, should follow strict mosquito control precautions — wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, use an EPA-registered insect repellent and ensure that windows and doors have intact screens.

According to the Department of Health, the infection is mild for most healthy adults. About one in five people who are infected will become ill.

The release says symptoms typically occur two to seven days after a bite and include fever, muscle or eye pain and a rash. Pregnant women who are infected run the added risk of having babies with the birth defect microcephaly. Microcephaly means the babies have heads smaller than expected and often have smaller brains that might not have developed properly, the department said.

UTAH

Crews battling new wildfires in northern, central Utah (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published 1 hour ago • Updated 1 hour ago

Two new wildfires had ground crews scrambling in Sevier and Cache counties on Tuesday, as fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft swarmed the flames from above.

The Sand Ledges Fire, first spotted on Saturday just west of Richfield along Highway 24, had blackened 3,022 acres and was 27 percent contained as of Tuesday, said Fire Information Officer Shayne Ward.

Believed human-caused, the blaze was consuming dry grass and sage brush, including valued sage grouse habitat, but no structures were threatened and no evacuations had been ordered.

In all, 70 firefighters were working to hem in the Sand Ledges Fire. It was a slow, often frustrating task with gusty winds periodically fanning the flames through the tinder-dry vegetation, Ward said.

Still, crews hoped to have the blaze 100 percent contained sometime Saturday.

What sparked the Peterson Hollow Fire Sunday afternoon was still under investigation, but it had scorched 150 acres on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest's Logan Ranger District as of

Tuesday. Fire Information Officer MaryEllen Fitzgerald said it was 5 percent contained, with no estimated time for when crews will completely contain it.

The fire is 23 miles northeast of Logan and just north of the Beaver Mountain Ski Area.

"[The resort] is currently not imminently endangered, but is the most important focus at this time. Structure protection is in place and being ramped up as a precaution," Fitzgerald stated.

The Peterson Hollow Fire is one of five active blazes on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest; the other four are being allowed to burn as beneficial to clearing away accumulated undergrowth and dead timber.

About 160 firefighters were battling the blaze, aided by a fleet of air tankers and helicopters. Hot, dry and occasionally windy weather continue to challenge efforts to hem in the flames.

Utah forecast: Midweek weather brings high fire danger north, storms in the south (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune

If Goldilocks grew up to be a meteorologist, she might say of the midweek forecast for the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys, "Ahhh, just right."

If the fabled cabin burglar walked into the forests of the northern Wasatch Front, however, she might toss her porridge and run: from the mountains above Logan stretching south through Salt Lake City and Provo to Nephi, the National Weather Service declared a Red Flag Warning for wildfire danger from noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday.

Potentially too hot, indeed, thanks to low humidity, rain-starved rangelands and forests, and gusty winds.

Southern Utah? Goldilocks might prefer the company of three offended bears, after all. The region expects a cycle of thunderstorms the next several days — and humid, hot weather. High temperatures were forecast to be in the low- to mid-90s Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

No, it will be the balmy weather due in the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys that is best for that post-porridge nap. Sunny to partly cloudy skies will reign through the midweek, with highs ranging from the mid- to upper-80s Tuesday through Thursday, and overnight temperatures in the upper-50s to low-60s making for sweet dreams.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

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To: R8 All Hands
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Subject: FEMA Region 8 Clips - Wednesday, October 12, 2016
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Region VIII Clips
Wednesday, October 12, 2016

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STORIES

COLORADO:

Study: Human-caused warming burns more Western forests – Colorado Springs Gazette

By: KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press
Updated: October 11, 2016 at 4:47 pm

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A new study of Western forest fires confirms what is already apparent — wildfire seasons are getting longer and more destructive.

But researchers with the University of Idaho and Columbia University also say humans are to blame.

The study made public Monday says human-caused global warming contributed an additional 16,000 square miles of burned forests from 1984 to 2015.

Researchers say the 16,000 square miles represent half of the forest areas that burned over the last three decades.

"We're no longer waiting for human-caused climate change to leave its fingerprint on wildfire across the western U.S.," John Abatzoglou, the study's lead author and an associate professor of geography at the University of Idaho, said in a statement. "It's already here."

The authors of the study, published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, say it's the first to try to quantify how much human-caused climate change has increased wildfires in Western forests. Some other factors that had to be considered as contributing to the increase, the report said, included a legacy of fire suppression in the West, natural climate variability, and human settlement.

The study found that longer and hotter dry spells are causing Western forests to dry out and become more susceptible to wildfires.

Specifically, researchers said, spring and summer temperatures have warmed by 2 to 2.5 degrees since 1950. Researchers said that warming accounts for 55 percent of what they call "fuel aridity" from 1979 to 2015. The study attributed the other 45 percent to natural climate variations.

The study found that since 2000 there's been a 75 percent increase in forested lands with elevated aridity and nine more days each year with dry forests especially susceptible to wildfires.

"Anthropogenic climate change has emerged as a driver of increased forest fire activity," the report says.

Park Williams of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and a co-author of the study, said the report provides a better understanding of the effects human-caused global warming has on Western forests.

"This knowledge will allow us to make more educated fire and land management decisions," he said.

One of those decision-makers is Idaho Forester David Groeschl, who said the report could offer some help in the future.

"We know that our fire season is getting longer," Groeschl said. "We know that we're seeing more and longer fires, and we know that we have increasing fuels out there as well."

The fuel aridity was particularly bad in Idaho in 2015 when an extended heat and drought left northern Idaho forests parched and in the worst condition since 1926, officials said.

That summer and fall, 600 square miles of U.S. Forest Service land burned. Idaho's bill for fighting wildfires soared to $60 million with some 100 square miles, about three quarters of it forests, burning on state, private and federal lands that are in forest protective districts designated as the state's responsibility.

Idaho has taken a number of steps aimed at the wildfire risk, including increasing the pay of in-demand, experienced firefighters who were leaving to take similar jobs with more money at other agencies. Idaho also recently formed a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to take on landscape-scale projects by using the state's land management expertise that includes selling timber on federal land. The state's first auction of federal timber took place last month.

How successful the partnership will take years to determine.

The study released Monday concluded that the trend of increased forest aridity resulting in large wildfires is likely to continue for decades while there are enough trees to fuel the flames.

MONTANA:

Protesters cause temporary shut-down of pipeline in northcentral Montana- KBZK TV Bozeman

Posted: Oct 12, 2016 8:28 AM MDT

GREAT FALLS -
The battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota came to Montana on Tuesday.

Protesters forced the temporary shutdown of five pipelines carrying oil from Canadian tar sands, including one at Coal Banks Landing south of Big Sandy in Chouteau County.

Spectra Energy confirmed to MTN News that trespassers tampered with a valve on its express pipeline on Tuesday, and that as a precaution it was shut off.

The environmental group Climate Direct Action said Tuesday that it had also successfully shut down express pipelines at locations in Washington, North Dakota, and Minnesota.

The group says it was attempting to shut the pipelines down over concerns about global warming, and in solidarity with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Spectra Energy says it worked with law enforcement officers in its response to the tampering incident in Chouteau County, and that their primary concern was safety of the community and environment.

The website Unicorn Riot posted the following information on Tuesday:

> *Early this morning, five water protectors successfully shut down five pipelines across the northern United States that were delivering tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada. The action was in support of the call for International Days of Prayer and Action for Standing Rock.*
>
> *The individuals used manual safety valves and bolt cutters to access and shut down the flow of tar sands oil into the US. They are "calling on President Obama to use emergency powers to keep the pipelines closed and mobilize for the extraordinary shift away from fossil fuels now required to avert catastrophe."*
>
> *The actions were undertaken by Emily Johnson, 50, and Michael Foster, 52, of Seattle, WA, Annette Klapstein, 64, of Bainbridge Island, WA, Ken Ward, 59, of Corbett, OR, and Leonard Higgins, 64, of Eugene, OR.*

There is no word yet on whether any of the protesters might face charges.

Spectra released the following statement: "Spectra Energy has responded to a situation during which trespassers broke into a locked facility and tampered with a valve on its Express Pipeline Tuesday morning in Montana. We coordinated with law enforcement in this response. Our first concern is for the safety of the community and the environment, and tampering with this important U.S. energy infrastructure will not be tolerated. This pipeline provides a vital source of affordable, reliable energy to fuel the everyday lives of Americans. As a cautionary measure, we temporarily shut down this section of the Express Pipeline."

Butte firefighters teach students about fire safety- KTFM TV News Kalispell

Posted: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 8:46 PM

BUTTE -
Butte firefighters said fire education starts here, in the classroom. After the kids saw firefighters put on their gear and learn about stop drop and roll. Firemen Pat Doherty then spoke about the most common house fires

"Most structure fires in the United States are from cooking materials. It's always best to stay in the vicinity and keep an eye on it," said Pat Doherty, Butte Fire Department.

During the predicted cold snap, families will be turning up the heat. However, Doherty explains to kids to watch out for the dangers that can sometimes come from using space heaters.

Doherty also adds it's never smart to leave them unattended.

"Space heaters are dangerous. In the case of people forgetting to unplug them or they keep them too close to stuff that's going to catch on fire," said Doherty.

NORTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Airport Disaster Exercise Set for Thursday – DRGnews.com

October 12, 2016 (Dakota Radio Group)
By: Press Release

PIERRE, SD- You can expect lights, sirens and a whole lot of activity at the airport later this week.

Thursday evening, from 5:30 – 7:30, the Pierre Regional Airport and Hughes County will conduct a full scale disaster exercise. The mock disaster scenario includes a hazardous materials response on a simulated aircraft. The exercise is required by the Federal Aviation Administration and designed to provide first responders and airport personnel with disaster response experience.

"This is really practice for all the responders," said Mike Isaacs, Pierre Regional Airport Manager. "We do everything we can to avoid aircraft accidents, but we want to be prepared in the event there's one we can't avoid."

Isaacs went on to say that the exercise requires all the activity that a real disaster would require. Those involved in the exercise will be assigned a variety of responsibilities that include everything from information gathering and dissemination to coordination of involved entities to response management to logistics and cost tracking.

"An Emergency Operations Center and Unified Command Post will be set up at the airport for this exercise," said Isaacs. "They will serve as the hubs of all disaster response and recovery efforts.

Approximately 50 people will be involved in the exercise including volunteers, city and county officials, and first responders.

The Federal Aviation Administration requires airports with commercial air service to conduct a full-scale disaster exercise every three years. Additionally, the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management requires counties to conduct a variety of exercises throughout the year. The Thursday night exercise fulfills requirements for both Hughes County and Pierre Regional Airport.

National Fire Prevention Week (Hot Springs Star)

By John D. Taylor

A closer look at Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department history

HOT SPRINGS – The advent of National Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 9 -15 this year, is a good time to look at the important role firefighters play in the community, and to consider what everyone can do to prevent fires.

Fire Prevention Week

Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, that tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,400 structures.

The fire began on October 8, but did most of its damage on October 9, 1871 – why Fire Prevention Week is held on Oct. 9 annually.

Popular legend holds that while Mrs. Catherine O'Leary was milking a cow, it kicked over a lamp, ignited her barn, then lit the whole city of Chicago on fire. However, recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has debunked this fairy tale – while retaining some elements of truth in the story.

The fire did, indeed, originate near the barn where Mrs. O'Leary kept her five milk cows. But there is no proof that her cow sparked the blaze. O'Leary's testimony says she and her cows were asleep, not milking, when the fire broke out.

Who started it then? Some blame some neighborhood boys who were near the barn sneaking cigarettes, some say a O'Leary's neighbor started the fire, another theory is that a meteorite shower that fell during Oct. 8 all over Michigan and Wisconsin may have started the fire.

Also, while the Chicago Fire is one of the most well known, it wasn't the biggest fire in American history. That notoriety belongs to the Peshtigo Fire, which also occurred on October 8, 1871, in northeast Wisconsin. It burned 16 whole towns, killed more than 1,100 people, and scorched 1.2 million acres. It began when several railroad workers, clearing land for tracks, unintentionally lit a brush fire. Before long, the fast-moving flames were whipping through the area “like a tornado,” survivors said. Peshtigo, Wisconsin got the worst of it, within an hour, the entire town was destroyed.

These fires changed the way firefighters and public officials thought about fire safety. And on the 40th anniversary the fires the Fire Marshals Association of North America decided to mark the anniversary in a way to keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed. According to the National Archives and Records Administration’s Library Information Center, it is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

Hot Springs VFD

On July 2, The Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) celebrated its 125th anniversary.

The fire company was formed, according to a VFD history by William T. Richer – VFD member Jenni Sotherland shared this with the Star – in January of 1890, when a group of Hot Springs citizens gathered at the Minnekahta Hotel to organize themselves into the VFD. At this meeting, John Gillespie was elected chief; H. C. Venette, first assistant chief; John Mueller, second assistant chief; Kenneth Harris, secretary and Wally Root, treasurer.

In those days, there was no citywide water system, so the only equipment the VFD needed was a large number of leather water buckets. To fight fires, the men formed two lines –Richer calls them “strings” – going to and from the fire and a water source. Usually, Fall River, water holes or cisterns were the water sources. One line of men passed buckets of water from the river to the fire, the other line returned the empty buckets.

In July, when the modern VFD was whooping it up with a masquerade ball at American Legion Post 71 they may not have been thinking about these roots, but they are where the VFD originated.

Early days

Later in 1890, the city began to pipe water into the business district, so it purchased its first fire-fighting equipment: two, high wheeled hose carts, and one hook and ladder wagon. The hose carts were drawn by men, the wagon pulled by a team of horses.

Throughout those early days the city’s firefighting ability grew. In 1893, the city bought another high-wheeled hose cart, placed iton College Hill (where the high school is today).

One interesting story from those days is connected to John Mueller, father of the Mueller Center founder. In 1896, when Mueller was the VFD’s first assistant fire chief, he bought a white horse, named “Old Granger” from Bill Perry.

Mueller used Old Granger to ride to and from fires, and pull the No. 1 hose cart to fire scenes.

For many years Mueller kept his stable much the same as the city's fire equipment stables, with the bridle bit in Old Granger's mouth, so the horse was ready to go. When an alarm sounded, Old Granger would leave his stall, make a run for the buggy shafts, where the No. 1 hose cart could be hooked up to him with one snap of the harness, and "away he would go," says Richer.

Sometimes, Mueller was able to catch a ride on the horse, other times, Old Granger was the first responder to a fire.

Richer says, "The call of the fire alarm was greater to this noble horse than was the call of the feed box." Mueller used Old Granger in this fashion for a quarter century, until 1915, when the horse was "pensioned." The horse was so stiff and lame then he could hardly walk the streets, according to Richer. "But if an alarm came in, one would think he was a mighty young horse. He was able to forget his stiffness and lameness to answer the call."

Richer says in 1916, when Old Granger was "pensioned" and put out to pasture near town, the horse heard an alarm call and in a few moments showed up in town to answer the call.

Granger answered his last fire call in 1917.

Also during these early days, the VFD sponsored three-day 4th of July celebrations, free to the public. Special trains brought large crowds of people into Hot Springs from surrounding areas and the entertainment included greased pig-catching and greased pole-climbing contests, rodeo-style bucking horses, baseball games, swimming contests, foot races, human wheelbarrow races, tug-of-wars, band concerts and reading the Declaration of Independence.

In 1899, the VFD fire hall became a dual-purpose building, hosting Hot Springs' first opera hall as well as the fire hall. What happened was that the fire department remodeled their building, adding a small stage to the east end of the room, a set of bleachers in the west, and covering the remaining floor space with folding chairs advertising Happy Bill cigars. Two small dressing rooms were also built outside the building. The Fireman's Opera House was in operation until about 1909, when the skating rink and theater opened. The opera house never made much money, but it gave city residents a place for entertainment.

Up until the end of World War I (1918), the fire fighting equipment of the city included three hose carts and one hook and ladder wagon or truck. The hose carts were housed in various parts of town: One in the lower end, one on College Hill, one on Minnekahta Ave. The hook and ladder wagon was kept at city hall. Fire alarms were anything that made noise -- train whistles, church bells and "men hollering at the top of their voices," notes Richer.

There were no telephones in those days, so when fires occurred at night, VFD members "would generally exhaust themselves in running from their homes to the scene of the fire."

Often, by the time the hose carts got to the scene, the fire was out of control, and the VFD's efforts focused on keeping the fire from spreading to adjoining properties. "It was quite generally considered those days that if a property caught fires during the night time, there would be nothing left in the morning, except the lot. One example of this is how an April 1891 fire wiped out a whole city block of business buildings in “lower” town, the damage estimated at $35,000 – big money in those days.

Other big blazes of that era the 1891 blaze that took the Minnekahta Hotel, the 1892 blaze that took out several buildings where the Post Office now stands, an 1895 fire that destroyed the Jay Crane store building, a 1903 fire that took a block of business houses what was People’s National Bank and the Riverside Apartments, a 1907 fire that took the Catholican Hotel and bath house and the Siloam bath house, 1910’s Gibson Hotel fire and 1915’s Gillespie Hotel fire. In 1924, the High School building burned to the ground.

Motorization

In 1918, a movement was started to motorize the VFD. City businessmen, citizens and the fire company made donations of $1,875 which bought a combination Ford chemical and hose truck. This was put into service in June of 1919, when Dave Batchelor was foreman of the fire company. Batchelor’s house burned down, a $3,000 loss, in 1908.

An REO Speedwagon Fire Truck equipped with a pump was purchased in 1924, after the high school fire, to increase water pressure, and town founding father F.O. Butler offered the fire company his Pierce-Arrow touring car, which was reworked into a hook and ladder truck. This unit remained in operation until 1938, when it was replaced by a new, Ford V-8 truck.

In 1934, the REO Speedwagon was converted into a smoke extractor, a move made possible by the ingenuity of Vic Englebert, H.C. “Swede” Nelms, and Fire Chief L. J. Bingham. These men added a 25-horsepower Waukesha motor to a large suction fan, salvaged from the State Soldier’s Home. This rig was given credit for saving more property than any other equipment in the department, drawing smoke and gas from burning buildings at a rate of 6,500 cubic feet per minute, which made it possible for firefighters to get into burning buildings and extinguish fires.

Growth

Throughout the 1930s the VFDs gear grew, as Hot Springs grew, with horses and carts being replaced by larger and more powerful motorized equipment. In 1936, this enabled Hot Springs to get a 10 percent cut in insurance rates because of the efficiency of the fire department.

By the 1940s, there were 561 people in the VFD, with 65 active members and six living in Fire Hall, on call to fight fires. Engines and other gear were purchased by the city or the VFD via proceeds for insurance money or annual dances. But in 1942, city agreed to begin paying the VFD $200 per month to, with the understanding that the VFD would pay for all equipment, pay their own insurance, water, lights, telephone, gas, oil, fire station upkeep and other incidental expenses.

“Without a doubt the Hot Springs Fire Department is one of the very best strictly volunteer fire departments in the state…the department has brought home the South Dakota State Championship trophy a total of 11 times.

During the late 1940s, the fire chief was conducting “fire drills at both schoolhouses several times each year. These drills are not at regular intervals, but just whenever he takes the notion, giving no notice to teachers, janitors or pupils at the building.” A general inspection of “every business house within the city” was also held annually, which revealed any fire hazards.

In 1948, after Frank Fetzner, Deputy State Fire Marshall, saw the VFD in action for the first time, he said the VFD handled themselves like a experts and that the city should feel mighty proud that they have such a group of fire-fighters.

After flood of 1948, a VFD American LaFrance pumper was used to pump out Evans Plunge. This took days. Also, extension ladder truck saved a “kid” marooned on the cliffs at Hot Brook, with two fireman saving the goat.

Also, 800 questionnaires and inspection blanks were sent home with school kids, asking that they report any fire hazards in their homes. Returning this would get the kids a ride on the fire truck. More than 700 of these came back, the kids ratting out their parents bad habits, even in the homes of firemen.

Emergency ambulance was first put into service in November of 1949.

The 1950s

These were high times for the VFD – in more ways that one, according to new VFD scribe Howard McBride. In 1950, Chief Vic Englebert resigned, saying “he had gone on a bender, got himself in jail and fined. Was called on the carpet by his boss and was given an enforced vacation for two weeks from his job.”

That same year the city floated a $15,000 bond issue for new fire station, and it carried 1,098 to 487 votes. The VFD bought three lots (where the Valley Hotel burned in 1946) for $3,500 in the city’s name. Many private citizens gave donations to this, including one widow who gave $100, quite a bit of money then.

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UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

USDA designates Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area (Northern Wyoming Daily)

CASPER — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area due to a recent drought.

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Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program;Livestock Indemnity Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; and the Tree Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online athttp://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

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Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 12, 2016

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STORIES

COLORADO:

Study: Human-caused warming burns more Western forests – Colorado Springs Gazette

By: KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press

Updated: October 11, 2016 at 4:47 pm

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A new study of Western forest fires confirms what is already apparent — wildfire seasons are getting longer and more destructive.

But researchers with the University of Idaho and Columbia University also say humans are to blame.

The study made public Monday says human-caused global warming contributed an additional 16,000 square miles of burned forests from 1984 to 2015.

Researchers say the 16,000 square miles represent half of the forest areas that burned over the last three decades.

"We're no longer waiting for human-caused climate change to leave its fingerprint on wildfire across the western U.S.," John Abatzoglou, the study's lead author and an associate professor of geography at the University of Idaho, said in a statement. "It's already here."

The authors of the study, published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, say it's the first to try to quantify how much human-caused climate change has increased wildfires in Western forests. Some other factors that had to be considered as contributing to the increase, the report said, included a legacy of fire suppression in the West, natural climate variability, and human settlement.

The study found that longer and hotter dry spells are causing Western forests to dry out and become more susceptible to wildfires.

Specifically, researchers said, spring and summer temperatures have warmed by 2 to 2.5 degrees since 1950. Researchers said that warming accounts for 55 percent of what they call "fuel aridity" from 1979 to 2015. The study attributed the other 45 percent to natural climate variations.

The study found that since 2000 there's been a 75 percent increase in forested lands with elevated aridity and nine more days each year with dry forests especially susceptible to wildfires.

"Anthropogenic climate change has emerged as a driver of increased forest fire activity," the report says.

Park Williams of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and a co-author of the study, said the report provides a better understanding of the effects human-caused global warming has on Western forests.

"This knowledge will allow us to make more educated fire and land management decisions," he said.

One of those decision-makers is Idaho Forester David Groeschl, who said the report could offer some help in the future.

"We know that our fire season is getting longer," Groeschl said. "We know that we're seeing more and longer fires, and we know that we have increasing fuels out there as well."

The fuel aridity was particularly bad in Idaho in 2015 when an extended heat and drought left northern Idaho forests parched and in the worst condition since 1926, officials said.

That summer and fall, 600 square miles of U.S. Forest Service land burned. Idaho's bill for fighting wildfires soared to $60 million with some 100 square miles, about three quarters of it forests, burning on state, private and federal lands that are in forest protective districts designated as the state's responsibility.

Idaho has taken a number of steps aimed at the wildfire risk, including increasing the pay of in-demand, experienced firefighters who were leaving to take similar jobs with more money at other agencies. Idaho also recently formed a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to take on landscape-scale projects by using the state's land management expertise that includes selling timber on federal land. The state's first auction of federal timber took place last month.

How successful the partnership will take years to determine.

The study released Monday concluded that the trend of increased forest aridity resulting in large wildfires is likely to continue for decades while there are enough trees to fuel the flames.

MONTANA:

Protesters cause temporary shut-down of pipeline in northcentral Montana- KBZK TV Bozeman

Posted: Oct 12, 2016 8:28 AM MDT

GREAT FALLS -

The battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota came to Montana on Tuesday.

Protesters forced the temporary shutdown of five pipelines carrying oil from Canadian tar sands, including one at Coal Banks Landing south of Big Sandy in Chouteau County.

Spectra Energy confirmed to MTN News that trespassers tampered with a valve on its express pipeline on Tuesday, and that as a precaution it was shut off.

The environmental group Climate Direct Action said Tuesday that it had also successfully shut down express pipelines at locations in Washington, North Dakota, and Minnesota.

The group says it was attempting to shut the pipelines down over concerns about global warming, and in solidarity with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Spectra Energy says it worked with law enforcement officers in its response to the tampering incident in Chouteau County, and that their primary concern was safety of the community and environment.

The website Unicorn Riot posted the following information on Tuesday:

> *Early this morning, five water protectors successfully shut down five pipelines across the northern United States that were delivering tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada. The action was in support of the call for International Days of Prayer and Action for Standing Rock.*
>
> *The individuals used manual safety valves and bolt cutters to access and shut down the flow of tar sands oil into the US. They are "calling on President Obama to use emergency powers to keep the pipelines closed and mobilize for the extraordinary shift away from fossil fuels now required to avert catastrophe."*
>
> *The actions were undertaken by Emily Johnson, 50, and Michael Foster, 52, of Seattle, WA, Annette Klapstein, 64, of Bainbridge Island, WA, Ken Ward, 59, of Corbett, OR, and Leonard Higgins, 64, of Eugene, OR.*

There is no word yet on whether any of the protesters might face charges.

Spectra released the following statement: "Spectra Energy has responded to a situation during which trespassers broke into a locked facility and tampered with a valve on its Express Pipeline Tuesday morning in Montana. We coordinated with law enforcement in this response. Our first concern is for the safety of the community and the environment, and tampering with this important U.S. energy infrastructure will not be tolerated. This pipeline provides a vital source of affordable, reliable energy to fuel the everyday lives of Americans. As a cautionary measure, we temporarily shut down this section of the Express Pipeline."

Butte firefighters teach students about fire safety- KTFM TV News Kalispell

Posted: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 8:46 PM

BUTTE -

Butte firefighters said fire education starts here, in the classroom. After the kids saw firefighters put on their gear and learn about stop drop and roll. Firemen Pat Doherty then spoke about the most common house fires

"Most structure fires in the United States are from cooking materials. It's always best to stay in the vicinity and keep an eye on it," said Pat Doherty, Butte Fire Department.

During the predicted cold snap, families will be turning up the heat. However, Doherty explains to kids to watch out for the dangers that can sometimes come from using space heaters.

Doherty also adds it's never smart to leave them unattended.

"Space heaters are dangerous. In the case of people forgetting to unplug them or they keep them too close to stuff that's going to catch on fire," said Doherty.

NORTH DAKOTA:
No FEMA-related stories

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Airport Disaster Exercise Set for Thursday – DRGnews.com
October 12, 2016 (Dakota Radio Group)
By: Press Release

PIERRE, SD- You can expect lights, sirens and a whole lot of activity at the airport later this week.

Thursday evening, from 5:30 – 7:30, the Pierre Regional Airport and Hughes County will conduct a full scale disaster exercise. The mock disaster scenario includes a hazardous materials response on a simulated aircraft. The exercise is required by the Federal Aviation Administration and designed to provide first responders and airport personnel with disaster response experience.

"This is really practice for all the responders," said Mike Isaacs, Pierre Regional Airport Manager. "We do everything we can to avoid aircraft accidents, but we want to be prepared in the event there's one we can't avoid."

Isaacs went on to say that the exercise requires all the activity that a real disaster would require. Those involved in the exercise will be assigned a variety of responsibilities that include everything from information gathering and dissemination to coordination of involved entities to response management to logistics and cost tracking.

"An Emergency Operations Center and Unified Command Post will be set up at the airport for this exercise," said Isaacs. "They will serve as the hubs of all disaster response and recovery efforts.

Approximately 50 people will be involved in the exercise including volunteers, city and county officials, and first responders.

The Federal Aviation Administration requires airports with commercial air service to conduct a full-scale disaster exercise every three years. Additionally, the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management requires counties to conduct a variety of exercises throughout the year.

The Thursday night exercise fulfills requirements for both Hughes County and Pierre Regional Airport.

National Fire Prevention Week (Hot Springs Star)

By John D. Taylor

A closer look at Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department history

HOT SPRINGS – The advent of National Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 9 -15 this year, is a good time to look at the important role firefighters play in the community, and to consider what everyone can do to prevent fires.

Fire Prevention Week

Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, that tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,400 structures.

The fire began on October 8, but did most of its damage on October 9, 1871 – why Fire Prevention Week is held on Oct. 9 annually.

Popular legend holds that while Mrs. Catherine O'Leary was milking a cow, it kicked over a lamp, ignited her barn, then lit the whole city of Chicago on fire. However, recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has debunked this fairy tale – while retaining some elements of truth in the story.

The fire did, indeed, originate near the barn where Mrs. O'Leary kept her five milk cows. But there is no proof that her cow sparked the blaze. O'Leary's testimony says she and her cows were asleep, not milking, when the fire broke out.

Who started it then? Some blame some neighborhood boys who were near the barn sneaking cigarettes, some say a O'Leary's neighbor started the fire, another theory is that a meteorite shower that fell during Oct. 8 all over Michigan and Wisconsin may have started the fire.

Also, while the Chicago Fire is one of the most well known, it wasn't the biggest fire in American history. That notoriety belongs to the Peshtigo Fire, which also occurred on October 8, 1871, in northeast Wisconsin. It burned 16 whole towns, killed more than 1,100 people, and scorched 1.2 million acres. It began when several railroad workers, clearing land for tracks, unintentionally lit a brush fire. Before long, the fast-moving flames were whipping through the area "like a tornado," survivors said. Peshtigo, Wisconsin got the worst of it, within an hour, the entire town was destroyed.

These fires changed the way firefighters and public officials thought about fire safety. And on the 40th anniversary the fires the Fire Marshals Association of North America decided to mark the anniversary in a way to keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed. According to the National Archives and Records Administration's Library Information Center, it is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

Hot Springs VFD

On July 2, The Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) celebrated its 125th anniversary.

The fire company was formed, according to a VFD history by William T. Richer – VFD member Jenni Sotherland shared this with the Star – in January of 1890, when a group of Hot Springs citizens gathered at the Minnekahta Hotel to organize themselves into the VFD. At this meeting, John Gillespie was elected chief; H. C. Venette, first assistant chief; John Mueller, second assistant chief; Kenneth Harris, secretary and Wally Root, treasurer.

In those days, there was no citywide water system, so the only equipment the VFD needed was a large number of leather water buckets. To fight fires, the men formed two lines –Richer calls them "strings" – going to and from the fire and a water source. Usually, Fall River, water holes or cisterns were the water sources. One line of men passed buckets of water from the river to the fire, the other line returned the empty buckets.

In July, when the modern VFD was whooping it up with a masquerade ball at American Legion Post 71 they may not have been thinking about these roots, but they are where the VFD originated.

Early days

Later in 1890, the city began to pipe water into the business district, so it purchased its first fire-fighting equipment: two, high wheeled hose carts, and one hook and ladder wagon. The hose carts were drawn by men, the wagon pulled by a team of horses.

Throughout those early days the city's firefighting ability grew. In 1893, the city bought another high-wheeled hose cart, placed iton College Hill (where the high school is today).

One interesting story from those days is connected to John Mueller, father of the Mueller Center founder. In 1896, when Mueller was the VFD's first assistant fire chief, he bought a white horse, named "Old Granger" from Bill Perry.

Mueller used Old Granger to ride to and from fires, and pull the No. 1 hose cart to fire scenes.

For many years Mueller kept his stable much the same as the city's fire equipment stables, with the bridle bit in Old Granger's mouth, so the horse was ready to go. When an alarm sounded, Old Granger would leave his stall, make a run for the buggy shafts, where the No. 1 hose cart could be hooked up to him with one snap of the harness, and "away he would go," says Richer.

Sometimes, Mueller was able to catch a ride on the horse, other times, Old Granger was the first responder to a fire.

Richer says, “The call of the fire alarm was greater to this noble horse than was the call of the feed box.” Mueller used Old Granger in this fashion for a quarter century, until 1915, when the horse was “pensioned.” The horse was so stiff and lame then he could hardly walk the streets, according to Richer. “But if an alarm came in, one would think he was a mighty young horse. He was able to forget his stiffness and lameness to answer the call.”

Richer says in 1916, when Old Granger was “pensioned” and put out to pasture near town, the horse heard an alarm call and in a few moments showed up in town to answer the call.

Granger answered his last fire call in 1917.

Also during these early days, the VFD sponsored three-day 4th of July celebrations, free to the public. Special trains brought large crowds of people into Hot Springs from surrounding areas and the entertainment included greased pig-catching and greased pole-climbing contests, rodeo-style bucking horses, baseball games, swimming contests, foot races, human wheelbarrow races, tug-of-wars, band concerts and reading the Declaration of Independence.

In 1899, the VFD fire hall became a dual-purpose building, hosting Hot Springs’ first opera hall as well as the fire hall. What happened was that the fire department remodeled their building, adding a small stage to the east end of the room, a set of bleachers in the west, and covering the remaining floor space with folding chairs advertising Happy Bill cigars. Two small dressing rooms were also built outside the building. The Fireman’s Opera House was in operation until about 1909, when the skating rink and theater opened. The opera house never made much money, but it gave city residents a place for entertainment.

Up until the end of World War I (1918), the fire fighting equipment of the city included three hose carts and one hook and ladder wagon or truck. The hose carts were housed in various parts of town: One in the lower end, one on College Hill, one on Minnekahta Ave. The hook and ladder wagon was kept at city hall. Fire alarms were anything that made noise -- train whistles, church bells and “men hollering at the top of their voices,” notes Richer.

There were no telephones in those days, so when fires occurred at night, VFD members “would generally exhaust themselves in running from their homes to the scene of the fire.”

Often, by the time the hose carts got to the scene, the fire was out of control, and the VFD’s efforts focused on keeping the fire from spreading to adjoining properties. “It was quite generally considered those days that if a property caught fires during the night time, there would be nothing left in the morning, except the lot. One example of this is how an April 1891 fire wiped out a whole city block of business buildings in “lower” town, the damage estimated at $35,000 – big money in those days.

Other big blazes of that era the 1891 blaze that took the Minnekahta Hotel, the 1892 blaze that took out several buildings where the Post Office now stands, an 1895 fire that destroyed the Jay

Crane store building, a 1903 fire that took a block of business houses what was People's National Bank and the Riverside Apartments, a 1907 fire that took the Catholican Hotel and bath house and the Siloam bath house, 1910's Gibson Hotel fire and 1915's Gillespie Hotel fire. In 1924, the High School building burned to the ground.

Motorization

In 1918, a movement was started to motorize the VFD. City businessmen, citizens and the fire company made donations of $1,875 which bought a combination Ford chemical and hose truck. This was put into service in June of 1919, when Dave Batchelor was foreman of the fire company. Batchelor's house burned down, a $3,000 loss, in 1908.

An REO Speedwagon Fire Truck equipped with a pump was purchased in 1924, after the high school fire, to increase water pressure, and town founding father F.O. Butler offered the fire company his Pierce-Arrow touring car, which was reworked into a hook and ladder truck. This unit remained in operation until 1938, when it was replaced by a new, Ford V-8 truck.

In 1934, the REO Speedwagon was converted into a smoke extractor, a move made possible by the ingenuity of Vic Englebert, H.C. "Swede" Nelms, and Fire Chief L. J. Bingham. These men added a 25-horsepower Waukesha motor to a large suction fan, salvaged from the State Soldier's Home. This rig was given credit for saving more property than any other equipment in the department, drawing smoke and gas from burning buildings at a rate of 6,500 cubic feet per minute, which made it possible for firefighters to get into burning buildings and extinguish fires.

Growth

Throughout the 1930s the VFDs gear grew, as Hot Springs grew, with horses and carts being replaced by larger and more powerful motorized equipment. In 1936, this enabled Hot Springs to get a 10 percent cut in insurance rates because of the efficiency of the fire department.

By the 1940s, there were 561 people in the VFD, with 65 active members and six living in Fire Hall, on call to fight fires. Engines and other gear were purchased by the city or the VFD via proceeds for insurance money or annual dances. But in 1942, city agreed to begin paying the VFD $200 per month to, with the understanding that the VFD would pay for all equipment, pay their own insurance, water, lights, telephone, gas, oil, fire station upkeep and other incidental expenses.

"Without a doubt the Hot Springs Fire Department is one of the very best strictly volunteer fire departments in the state…the department has brought home the South Dakota State Championship trophy a total of 11 times.

During the late 1940s, the fire chief was conducting "fire drills at both schoolhouses several times each year. These drills are not at regular intervals, but just whenever he takes the notion, giving no notice to teachers, janitors or pupils at the building." A general inspection of "every business house within the city" was also held annually, which revealed any fire hazards.

In 1948, after Frank Fetzner, Deputy State Fire Marshall, saw the VFD in action for the first time, he said the VFD handled themselves like a experts and that the city should feel mighty proud that they have such a group of fire-fighters.

After flood of 1948, a VFD American LaFrance pumper was used to pump out Evans Plunge. This took days. Also, extension ladder truck saved a "kid" marooned on the cliffs at Hot Brook, with two fireman saving the goat.

Also, 800 questionnaires and inspection blanks were sent home with school kids, asking that they report any fire hazards in their homes. Returning this would get the kids a ride on the fire truck. More than 700 of these came back, the kids ratting out their parents bad habits, even in the homes of firemen.

Emergency ambulance was first put into service in November of 1949.

The 1950s

These were high times for the VFD – in more ways that one, according to new VFD scribe Howard McBride. In 1950, Chief Vic Englebert resigned, saying "he had gone on a bender, got himself in jail and fined. Was called on the carpet by his boss and was given an enforced vacation for two weeks from his job."

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Farmers and ranchers in Carbon, Gallatin and Park counties in Montana also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Oct. 5, 2016, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program;Livestock Indemnity Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; and the Tree Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online athttp://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 15 Apr 2016 16:09:41 +0000
To: R8 All Hands
Cc:
(b)(6)@state.co.us'(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)(b)@utah.gov';(b)(6)@wyo.gov'(b)(6)@nd.gov(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov'(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;'(b)(6)'@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)(b)(6@sba.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil'(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@state.co.us';Wetherington, Jeffrey
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for 4-15-16
Attachments: @

Region VIII Clips

Friday, April 15, 2016

ANALYSIS

- Colorado: Colorado Springs OEM hosted a workshop on flash flooding.

- Montana: The Montana-Idaho communications director for Red Cross had a column about first aid for pets in emergencies.

- North Dakota: No FEMA-related stories

- South Dakota: Almost half the state is abnormally dry, according to the U.S. Drought Report. Two areas show moderate drought, the first areas so identified in SD since June… The leak in the Keystone Pipeline near Menno was apparently caused by a bad weld. The leak was about two drops per minute; almost 17,000 gallons of oil leaked. The company is working on where to dispose of the affected soil…. This weekend's massive storm will drop heavy rain from South Dakota south to Texas, including eastern Colorado. The worst day for violent thunderstorms and possible tornadoes should be today. The storm should quiet current fire danger.

- Utah: T

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 14 Oct 2016 12:04:31 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @state.co.us';(b)(6) @mail.mil'(b)(6) @mail.mil';(b)(
(b)(6 @nd.gov';(b)(6) @state.sd.us';(b)(6) @state.sd.us'(b)(6) @utah.gov'(b)(6) @wyo.gov';(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6) @usace.army.mil';(b)(6) @usace.army.mil';'(b)(6) @state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;'Ronald.(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @sba.gov';(b)(6) @sba.gov';Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6) @fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Friday
Attachments: R8 Clips 10-14-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Friday, October 14, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* A researcher from Colorado State University tested cheaper air sampling devices at a controlled burn in Colorado this summer.
- *Montana:* No FEMA-related stories
- *North Dakota:* A flood protection plan for Fox Island in Bismarck has taken a step forward… Senator Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic Senators have asked President Obama to halt construction of the Dakota Access pipeline being protested in North Dakota…. A lengthy piece covers how much time the Cass County sheriff is spending at the protest. … A councilwoman from Madison, Wisconsin, who was arrested Monday describes the protest very differently than the sheriff's office.
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- *Wyoming:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Other FEMA-related stories:* Storms with hurricane-level winds are expected to hit Washington and Oregon over the next few days.

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Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

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COLORADO:

Don’t go chasing wildfires – unless you’re Scott Kelleher

13Oct, 2016 by Anne Ju Manning – Source/Colorado State University

Most people drive *away* from fires burning in the mountains. Scott Kelleher drives straight at them – well, near them, anyway. And it’s not for thrill seeking.

For two weeks in September, Kelleher drove the perimeter of a 6,000-acre prescribed burn in southern Colorado to set up 13 outdoor air samplers on steel stakes.

Kelleher’s system is suited for monitoring smoke emissions for both controlled burns and wildfires. Field-testing the sensors during an actual, unplanned wildfire would prove challenging. So, Kelleher received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to tag along on a planned, prescribed burn, which are common in the Rocky Mountains and other densely forested areas.

“The long-term goals of this project are very motivating,” Kelleher said. “It’s applying science and technology in an affordable new way to make the lives of those responsible for monitoring smoke much easier, with the main thought of protecting public health in mind.”

Field testing

Kelleher’s first field-testing campaign took place in a swath of land between Pagosa Springs and Bayfield, Colorado, near Pargin Mountain. Working closely with his contacts at the forest service, Kelleher set up each of his monitoring checkpoints in strategic proximity to the forest service’s monitoring zones.

The sensors Kelleher is testing are based off the principle of an Ultrasonic Personal Aerosol Sampler (UPAS) designed in the lab of his advisor, John Volckens, who is a professor in mechanical engineering and member of the CSU Partnership for Air Quality, Climate, and Health. The UPAS features an ultrasonic pump that draws in air, a sampling filter, rechargeable batteries, and an air flow rate sensor.

Kelleher’s master’s project involves adapting the UPAS for conditions suitable for prolonged outdoor monitoring. His new version, for which he is quick to point out he received many hours of help from other Volckens lab members, includes a hardened enclosure for weatherproofing; a solar cell for charging an extended-life battery; and a real-time, optical particle sensor that tracks the flow of particles 2.5 microns in diameter and smaller. “PM 2.5” is a standard measure for describing air pollution particles small enough to penetrate human lungs and cause health problems. The optical sampler contained in the device gives live updates.

The sensor also has a gravimetric analysis device that collects particles onto a filter. The filter is later weighed and analyzed for particulate matter concentrations. The entire device can be controlled remotely by smart phone.

The total cost of one of Kelleher's sensors is estimated at about $500, compared with particulate matter monitors used today that cost $10,000 to $20,000. The standard sensors usually require line power, and are large – about the size of a microwave oven.

Kelleher's unusual road trip involved seven rounds of 24-hour sampling. This involved traveling a route of 90 miles, changing out filters on each device and extracting information. In all, he was out in the fire for 14 days.

Automation in rural environments
A graduate of Montana Tech who grew up on a beef cattle, wheat and barley farm near the Canadian border, Kelleher is motivated by his work to bring the power of automation and monitoring to rural environments. Recognizing his penchant for engineering cost-effective solutions, and armed with his CSU master's degree in a couple of years, Kelleher hopes he can make a difference by bringing simple automation technologies to farmers or small businesses. The remainder of Kelleher's thesis will involve organizing and analyzing the data he collected at Pargin Moutain as well as follow-up prescribed burn experiments as needed. He will present his recent findings at the Second International Smoke Symposium (ISS2) in Long Beach, California next month.

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No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Fox Island residents approve flood protection plan (Bismarck Tribune)

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 18 hrs ago

A $3.92 million Fox Island flood protection project has been approved 72-18 by property owners, who will pay part of its cost via a special assessment district, the Burleigh County Water Resource District Board announced Wednesday.

The project will involve raising a section of road and adding a levee to safeguard against a 20-foot flood. The Legislature has committed $2.8 million toward its completion, and the Burleigh

County Commission has approved funding of $920,000 in yearly installments. Fox Island property owners will pay the balance.

The project was driven by the 2011 Missouri River flooding.

The raising of the road would start at the pump at Tavis Road and move west along Farwest Drive and Gallatin Loop, according to Michael Gunsch of Houston Engineering, consulting engineer for the water resource district. The levee would extend west from Gallatin Loop to the Missouri River bank, then run north to the Whispering Bay accessory channel, he said.

Gunsch said about 80 percent of the 91 property owners who voted favored the project. One submitted a blank ballot.

With the residents' approval on record, the board is moving forward with the project and paying a design fee of $325,000 to Houston Engineering.

Completion is planned during the 2018 construction season, but authorization must first be granted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the North Dakota State Engineer's Office.

Earlier precautions were taken when the county partnered with Bismarck in creating the Tavis Road floodgate after the 2011 flood and Bismarck raised Mills Avenue, according to Larson.

A Dec. 14 hearing has tentatively been set to allow those within the special assessment district to protest.

Sixteen residents in the far western Gallatin Loop area signed a petition saying the construction of the levee would damage their yards, said Greg Larson, a member of the water resource district board.

"We 16 receive none of the flood benefit, but receive 100 percent of the street and yard destruction," he read from the statement.

The homeowners signing the petition also asked that a different street be raised near their properties.

Board members agreed they did not want to change the protection plan or do more study at increased cost to those being assessed.

Each property owner in the assessment district can expect to pay an average of $3,790 toward the construction project, Gunsch said. In addition, he said, some of them will pay $943 each toward the system's operation and maintenance.

Sen. Bernie Sanders asking President Obama to halt North Dakota pipeline for full review (KFOR TV, Oklahoma City, and AP)

Posted 7:17 am, October 14, 2016, by KFOR-TV & K. Querry and AP Wire

BISMARCK, N.D. – Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic senators are asking President Barack Obama to halt construction of the four-state Dakota Access pipeline until a full environmental review can be completed.

In a statement, the senators said Thursday the request is due to a federal appeals court denying the Standing Rock Sioux's motion for a temporary work stoppage in southern North Dakota within 20 miles of Lake Oahe. The feds stopped construction on land bordering and under the lake in order to review the permitting process.

An environmental review would likely delay the pipeline, which Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners hopes to complete by the end of the year.

White House spokesman Patrick Rodenbush declined to comment.

The other senators are Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Dianne Feinstein of California, Ben Cardin of Maryland and Ed Markey of Massachusetts.

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

However, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe says the pipeline would come within a half-mile of their reservation and could disturb or destroy sacred historical sites.

Also, tribal leaders are concerned about the consequences the pipeline would have on their water supply.

North Dakota sheriff out of town almost constantly as pipeline protest drags on (Fargo Forum News Service, WDAZ TV)

- By TU-UYEN TRAN Forum News Service
- 18 hrs ago

FARGO — In mid-August, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney headed for southeastern Morton County, the scene of protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and, except for a few breaks, he's been there ever since. Serving as the elected sheriff of what's by far the state's largest county while consumed by policing the ongoing tribal protests of the oil pipeline has been a daily act of priority-balancing, Laney said.

"I'm very blessed to have a command team that I believe is second to none," Laney said. "They can hold the fort with most things, but there are certainly things that need my attention."

Laney, who is halfway through a third term after first taking office in January 2007, said he feels it's important for him to do everything he can to help Morton County in its time of need because Cass County got help during the flood fights of 2009, 2010 and 2011. In the worst of those floods, in 2009, hundreds of law enforcement officers from around the state and country came to Cass County for more than 40 days, he said.

“The fact that we've had to go out of state to bring in assistance,” he said, “how do we in-state not help first?”

Hundreds of law enforcement officials from all over the state and other parts of the country have been helping police the protests at the request of Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, whose force is stretched thin. Laney has been the operations chief for the law enforcement presence to the protests.

Last week, a representative from the Western States Sheriffs’ Association and the National Sheriffs’ Association said members of both groups have pledged to help Morton County. Laney is a board member for the national group.

Cass County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling agreed with Laney’s sentiment that pitching in is worth the heavy strain on the sheriff’s time.

“When we’ve had floods, for example, we've relied on many many outside agencies to help us with all of our sandbagging and dike patrols and search and rescue and so on and so forth,” she said. “The counties don't live in a bubble. We have to help each other and we’re glad to be able to do that.”

Scherling said she knows Laney is in “constant communication” with his subordinates in Fargo. Laney said he’s been able to take care of business back in Cass County by phone, by email or with scanned documents.

Cass County Chief Deputy Col. Rick Majerus is in charge while Laney is out. The sheriff said he does come back to Cass County when he’s absolutely needed.

Marty Johnson, Scherling’s opponent in November’s County Commission election, didn’t return a phone message Wednesday.

The pipeline construction site targeted by protesters is near the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Protesters, many of whom are American Indians, say construction of the $3.8 billion oil pipeline would desecrate burial grounds and other sites sacred to Indians. They also say a rupture would threaten water quality in the Missouri River, which the pipeline must go under as it continues on its way to Illinois.

Laney estimated that there have been 7,000 to 8,000 protesters, though more recently the numbers have dropped to 2,500 to 3,000 who are in it for the long haul. The majority are peaceful but 300 to 400 are “extremely confrontational,” he said, accusing them of trying to disrupt construction and intimidating farm workers. As of Tuesday, Oct. 11, the protests had led to 123 arrests.

State officials and lawmakers have criticized the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers surprisingly withdrew its required approval of the pipeline’s Missouri River crossing for further review -- an announcement made Sept. 9, just minutes after a federal court ruling in support of the pipeline’s construction.

The number of law enforcement officials on the scene has fluctuated based on the need, though Laney said he couldn’t say how many because of security concerns. Several of his deputies have rotated in and out of Morton County over the last few months, he said, but it’s hard for him to stay away because he’s one of three top commanders on the scene.

Cass County taxpayers won’t bear the cost of deploying the deputies and Laney to the protest, and patrols in Cass County and jail security haven’t been affected, a department spokesman previously told The Forum. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs.

Laney said the days are long there, leaving only enough time to outside of work for him to grab a bite and sleep. Deputies who volunteer to rotate in all work seven days a week with no time off until they rotate out again, he said.

“I’m not going to lie, we’re all tired,” he said, but law enforcement officers expect that they may have to make sacrifices.

Asked how long he thinks he'll be needed in Morton County, Laney said that depends on the protesters.

The company building the pipeline, which was 87 percent complete in North Dakota as of the end of September, said Tuesday that it intends to resume construction promptly after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request to stop work on the pipeline in places where it believes the project will desecrate sacred land was denied Sunday.

Protesters have also said they don't plan to leave anytime soon.

"This currently is a situation that there's no way one agency alone could handle this," Laney said.

Madison City Council member arrested in North Dakota pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune, Wisconsin State Journal)

- Dean Mosiman, Wisconsin State Journal
- Oct 12, 2016

Madison Ald. Rebecca Kemble was arrested and jailed on Monday while acting as a legal observer of the continuing protests over a controversial oil pipeline in North Dakota that a Native American tribe says threatens tribal land.

Kemble's version of events contrasts sharply with statements by law enforcement, who characterized the event as a riot.

Kemble was among more than two dozen people arrested on Monday at two protests, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. She faces tentative charges of misdemeanor criminal trespassing, destruction of evidence, resisting arrest and engaging in riot.

She was taken to Morton County jail and released after posting a $1,250 bond Tuesday morning, Keller said.
Actress Shailene Woodley, who starred in the "Divergent" movie series and most recently in Oliver Stone's film "Snowden," was also among those arrested.

Kemble said Tuesday afternoon that she was wearing a hat that identified her as a legal observer and was videotaping a peaceful prayer ceremony when police arrived and began making arrests. She said she intends to fight the charges.

"I wasn't protesting. It wasn't a protest," she said. "I was legal-observing. I was targeted by law enforcement for my camera."

Kemble, 18th District, traveled with her husband over the weekend to Morton County to present the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe with a parchment copy of a recent City Council resolution expressing solidarity with those protesting the pipeline.

The tribe wants construction halted due to concerns of potential contamination of its water supply and says the pipeline will encroach on tribal burial sites and other cultural artifacts.

On Monday morning, Kemble said she went with others to attend a ceremony that started at an encampment on the reservation. The ceremony, she said, moved to the pipeline site near St. Anthony and featured prayer, drumming and dancing by tribes from Argentina and the Arctic Circle.

She said most people were beginning to leave after the event, except for about 16 people sitting under a tepee, when at least 40 police officers arrived.

A commanding officer, Kemble said, told the protesters they faced arrest if an officer touched them. She said most people backed up but police pursued. She said the commanding officer ran at her, grabbed her while she was holding her camera, put her hands behind her back, bound her with a zip tie, and took her camera as evidence, with police taking her and those arrested to jail. A Morton County's Sheriff's Department press release on Monday afternoon describes a different scene.

On Monday morning, authorities got a call that two protesters had locked themselves to equipment on private property near St. Anthony and were arrested and charged with a felony and misdemeanors, the release said. Another arrest was made and the group disbanded.

About two hours later, authorities were alerted to a convoy of about 100 vehicles assembling near the pipeline site, the release said. Law enforcement closed a road and told the protesters to disband. The crowd refused and 24 more people were arrested, it said.

In the statement, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney said, "While some would like to say this was a protest, this was not a protest — this was a riot."

Kemble rejected the description. "What alternate universe was the sheriff in that day?" she said. "It was so peaceful. The whole day was steeped in prayer and ceremony.

"The police are fear-mongering."

Kemble said she'll present the parchment to tribal leaders Wednesday morning.

Last weekend, the Dane County Sheriff's Office sent 10 deputies from its special events team to the site of the protests, part of a state contingent of 40 members of law enforcement that have gone to provide assistance to the area.

Construction resumed Tuesday on the $3.8 billion, 1,200-mile pipeline on private land about 20 miles from the so-called Red Warrior Camp where thousands of protesters have gathered, The Associated Press reported.

Dean Mosiman covers Madison city government for the Wisconsin State Journal.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

Republican lawmakers are demanding the Department of Justice explain why criminal charges have not been leveled against an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employee allegedly responsible for a massive mine spill in Colorado.

"By not taking up the case, the Department of Justice looks like it is going easy on its colleagues in EPA," three lawmakers with the House Natural Resources Committee wrote Wednesday in a letter to Attorney General Loretta Lynch.

Republican Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah joined fellow GOP colleagues Chairman Jason Chaffetz, also from Utah, and oversight subcommittee chairwoman Cynthia Lummis, who represents Wyoming, to send out the letter Wednesday afternoon.

"Its lack of action on these charges give the appearance of hypocrisy," the lawmakers claim, "and seem to indicate that there is one set of rules for private citizens and another for the federal government."

The Colorado mine spill resulted in three million gallons of dangerous mine waste being dumped into Colorado's Animus River, turning it yellow and poisoning the drinking water for thousands of residents across three states and the Navajo Nation. The spill also dumped more than 880,000 pounds of toxic elements — like lead and arsenic — into the water.

The EPA had tried to keep the identity of the person responsible for the spill under wraps until June, when The Daily Caller News Foundation reported that EPA worker Hays Griswold was in charge at the Gold King Mine during the spill.

Someone removed Griswold's name from an "independent" review of the disaster, according to documents obtained by TheDCNF in June.

An EPA inspector announced Wednesday Bishop's committee wrote the letter that it found evidence an unnamed employee violated the Clean Water Act. The Department of Justice will not pursue the case, a spokesman told reporters, and is instead referring the case to the EPA's leaders.

The lawmakers added that the "EPA disaster deserves the same level of accountability to which private citizens are held."

EPA's failure to hold its employees accountable for last year's leak has become a standard operating procedure.

Senior EPA officials in 2015, for instance, largely ignored complaints by 16 women, mostly employees, accusing one agency official of sexual harassment. The employee got promoted despite the complaints.

Bishop's committee held a hearing in May showing that the EPA paid a registered sex offender to retire rather than terminating his employment.

The child molester was a registered sex offender and was fired in 2014 for violating his probation – but the EPA, as its custom, reinstated him under the Merit Systems Protection Board reinstated him. The employee was eventually paid $55,000 to resign in 2015.

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

By Max Blau

CNN, October 13, 2016

Brace yourself, Pacific Northwest. What's left of a typhoon, which has made its way across the ocean, is expected to pummel parts of Oregon and Washington over the next several days.

The National Weather Service has said a pair of strong storms are set to hit the West Coast on Thursday and Saturday.

CNN meteorologist Dave Hennen said parts of Washington and Oregon could see gusts of up to 80 mph near coastal ranges Thursday. According to the weather service, rivers are expected to rise, with flooding remaining most likely in the Olympic Peninsula.

"Areas of ponding on roadways will slow Thursday commutes," the weather service said. "Small creeks and streams will rise and flood as well."

After a brief lull, the fierce winds could whip again through the Northwest at up to 100 mph. Hennen, who described this storm as a "monster," said it has the potential to match the pressure levels of a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. The weather service has cautioned residents to watch out for tree damage due to the high winds.

"Many of the wind-related deaths in western Washington occur when trees topple onto people in cars," it said.

Though it's still too early to tell, the weather service said the Saturday storm could also lead to widespread wind damage, power outages and coastal erosion.

"(There's a chance for) a worst-case scenario leading to a historical and destructive windstorm for the area," it said.

According to Hennen, a third storm may pass through the Pacific Northwest next week.

Region VIII Clips

Friday, October 14, 2016

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No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Fox Island residents approve flood protection plan (Bismarck Tribune)

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 18 hrs ago

A $3.92 million Fox Island flood protection project has been approved 72-18 by property owners, who will pay part of its cost via a special assessment district, the Burleigh County Water Resource District Board announced Wednesday.

The project will involve raising a section of road and adding a levee to safeguard against a 20-foot flood. The Legislature has committed $2.8 million toward its completion, and the Burleigh County Commission has approved funding of $920,000 in yearly installments. Fox Island property owners will pay the balance.

The project was driven by the 2011 Missouri River flooding.

The raising of the road would start at the pump at Tavis Road and move west along Farwest Drive and Gallatin Loop, according to Michael Gunsch of Houston Engineering, consulting engineer for the water resource district. The levee would extend west from Gallatin Loop to the Missouri River bank, then run north to the Whispering Bay accessory channel, he said.

Gunsch said about 80 percent of the 91 property owners who voted favored the project. One submitted a blank ballot.

With the residents' approval on record, the board is moving forward with the project and paying a design fee of $325,000 to Houston Engineering.

Completion is planned during the 2018 construction season, but authorization must first be granted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the North Dakota State Engineer's Office.

Earlier precautions were taken when the county partnered with Bismarck in creating the Tavis Road floodgate after the 2011 flood and Bismarck raised Mills Avenue, according to Larson.

A Dec. 14 hearing has tentatively been set to allow those within the special assessment district to protest.

Sixteen residents in the far western Gallatin Loop area signed a petition saying the construction of the levee would damage their yards, said Greg Larson, a member of the water resource district board.

"We 16 receive none of the flood benefit, but receive 100 percent of the street and yard destruction," he read from the statement.

The homeowners signing the petition also asked that a different street be raised near their properties.

Board members agreed they did not want to change the protection plan or do more study at increased cost to those being assessed.

Each property owner in the assessment district can expect to pay an average of $3,790 toward the construction project, Gunsch said. In addition, he said, some of them will pay $943 each toward the system's operation and maintenance.

Sen. Bernie Sanders asking President Obama to halt North Dakota pipeline for full review (KFOR TV, Oklahoma City, and AP)

Posted 7:17 am, October 14, 2016, by KFOR-TV & K. Querry and AP Wire

BISMARCK, N.D. – Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic senators are asking President Barack Obama to halt construction of the four-state Dakota Access pipeline until a full environmental review can be completed.

In a statement, the senators said Thursday the request is due to a federal appeals court denying the Standing Rock Sioux’s motion for a temporary work stoppage in southern North Dakota

within 20 miles of Lake Oahe. The feds stopped construction on land bordering and under the lake in order to review the permitting process.

An environmental review would likely delay the pipeline, which Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners hopes to complete by the end of the year.

White House spokesman Patrick Rodenbush declined to comment.

The other senators are Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Dianne Feinstein of California, Ben Cardin of Maryland and Ed Markey of Massachusetts.

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

However, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe says the pipeline would come within a half-mile of their reservation and could disturb or destroy sacred historical sites.

Also, tribal leaders are concerned about the consequences the pipeline would have on their water supply.

North Dakota sheriff out of town almost constantly as pipeline protest drags on (Fargo Forum News Service, WDAZ TV)

- By TU-UYEN TRAN Forum News Service
- 18 hrs ago

FARGO — In mid-August, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney headed for southeastern Morton County, the scene of protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and, except for a few breaks, he's been there ever since. Serving as the elected sheriff of what's by far the state's largest county while consumed by policing the ongoing tribal protests of the oil pipeline has been a daily act of priority-balancing, Laney said.

"I'm very blessed to have a command team that I believe is second to none," Laney said. "They can hold the fort with most things, but there are certainly things that need my attention."

Laney, who is halfway through a third term after first taking office in January 2007, said he feels it's important for him to do everything he can to help Morton County in its time of need because Cass County got help during the flood fights of 2009, 2010 and 2011. In the worst of those floods, in 2009, hundreds of law enforcement officers from around the state and country came to Cass County for more than 40 days, he said.

"The fact that we've had to go out of state to bring in assistance," he said, "how do we in-state not help first?"

Hundreds of law enforcement officials from all over the state and other parts of the country have been helping police the protests at the request of Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, whose force is stretched thin. Laney has been the operations chief for the law enforcement presence to the protests.

Last week, a representative from the Western States Sheriffs' Association and the National Sheriffs' Association said members of both groups have pledged to help Morton County. Laney is a board member for the national group.

Cass County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling agreed with Laney's sentiment that pitching in is worth the heavy strain on the sheriff's time.

"When we've had floods, for example, we've relied on many many outside agencies to help us with all of our sandbagging and dike patrols and search and rescue and so on and so forth," she said. "The counties don't live in a bubble. We have to help each other and we're glad to be able to do that."

Scherling said she knows Laney is in "constant communication" with his subordinates in Fargo. Laney said he's been able to take care of business back in Cass County by phone, by email or with scanned documents.

Cass County Chief Deputy Col. Rick Majerus is in charge while Laney is out. The sheriff said he does come back to Cass County when he's absolutely needed.

Marty Johnson, Scherling's opponent in November's County Commission election, didn't return a phone message Wednesday.

The pipeline construction site targeted by protesters is near the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Protesters, many of whom are American Indians, say construction of the $3.8 billion oil pipeline would desecrate burial grounds and other sites sacred to Indians. They also say a rupture would threaten water quality in the Missouri River, which the pipeline must go under as it continues on its way to Illinois.

Laney estimated that there have been 7,000 to 8,000 protesters, though more recently the numbers have dropped to 2,500 to 3,000 who are in it for the long haul. The majority are peaceful but 300 to 400 are "extremely confrontational," he said, accusing them of trying to disrupt construction and intimidating farm workers. As of Tuesday, Oct. 11, the protests had led to 123 arrests.

State officials and lawmakers have criticized the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers surprisingly withdrew its required approval of the pipeline's Missouri River crossing for further review -- an announcement made Sept. 9, just minutes after a federal court ruling in support of the pipeline's construction.

The number of law enforcement officials on the scene has fluctuated based on the need, though Laney said he couldn't say how many because of security concerns. Several of his deputies have rotated in and out of Morton County over the last few months, he said, but it's hard for him to stay away because he's one of three top commanders on the scene.

Cass County taxpayers won't bear the cost of deploying the deputies and Laney to the protest, and patrols in Cass County and jail security haven't been affected, a department spokesman previously told The Forum. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs.

Laney said the days are long there, leaving only enough time to outside of work for him to grab a bite and sleep. Deputies who volunteer to rotate in all work seven days a week with no time off until they rotate out again, he said.

"I'm not going to lie, we're all tired," he said, but law enforcement officers expect that they may have to make sacrifices.

Asked how long he thinks he'll be needed in Morton County, Laney said that depends on the protesters.

The company building the pipeline, which was 87 percent complete in North Dakota as of the end of September, said Tuesday that it intends to resume construction promptly after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's

request to stop work on the pipeline in places where it believes the project will desecrate sacred land was denied Sunday.

Protesters have also said they don't plan to leave anytime soon.

"This currently is a situation that there's no way one agency alone could handle this," Laney said.

Madison City Council member arrested in North Dakota pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune, Wisconsin State Journal)

- Dean Mosiman, Wisconsin State Journal
- Oct 12, 2016

Madison Ald. Rebecca Kemble was arrested and jailed on Monday while acting as a legal observer of the continuing protests over a controversial oil pipeline in North Dakota that a Native American tribe says threatens tribal land.

Kemble's version of events contrasts sharply with statements by law enforcement, who characterized the event as a riot.

Kemble was among more than two dozen people arrested on Monday at two protests, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. She faces tentative charges of misdemeanor criminal trespassing, destruction of evidence, resisting arrest and engaging in riot.

She was taken to Morton County jail and released after posting a $1,250 bond Tuesday morning, Keller said.
Actress Shailene Woodley, who starred in the "Divergent" movie series and most recently in Oliver Stone's film "Snowden," was also among those arrested.

Kemble said Tuesday afternoon that she was wearing a hat that identified her as a legal observer and was videotaping a peaceful prayer ceremony when police arrived and began making arrests. She said she intends to fight the charges.

"I wasn't protesting. It wasn't a protest," she said. "I was legal-observing. I was targeted by law enforcement for my camera."

Kemble, 18th District, traveled with her husband over the weekend to Morton County to present the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe with a parchment copy of a recent City Council resolution expressing solidarity with those protesting the pipeline.

The tribe wants construction halted due to concerns of potential contamination of its water supply and says the pipeline will encroach on tribal burial sites and other cultural artifacts.

On Monday morning, Kemble said she went with others to attend a ceremony that started at an encampment on the reservation. The ceremony, she said, moved to the pipeline site near St. Anthony and featured prayer, drumming and dancing by tribes from Argentina and the Arctic Circle.

She said most people were beginning to leave after the event, except for about 16 people sitting under a tepee, when at least 40 police officers arrived.

A commanding officer, Kemble said, told the protesters they faced arrest if an officer touched them. She said most people backed up but police pursued. She said the commanding officer ran at her, grabbed her while she was holding her camera, put her hands behind her back, bound her with a zip tie, and took her camera as evidence, with police taking her and those arrested to jail. A Morton County's Sheriff's Department press release on Monday afternoon describes a different scene.

On Monday morning, authorities got a call that two protesters had locked themselves to equipment on private property near St. Anthony and were arrested and charged with a felony and misdemeanors, the release said. Another arrest was made and the group disbanded.

About two hours later, authorities were alerted to a convoy of about 100 vehicles assembling near the pipeline site, the release said. Law enforcement closed a road and told the protesters to disband. The crowd refused and 24 more people were arrested, it said.

In the statement, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney said, "While some would like to say this was a protest, this was not a protest — this was a riot."

Kemble rejected the description. "What alternate universe was the sheriff in that day?" she said. "It was so peaceful. The whole day was steeped in prayer and ceremony.

"The police are fear-mongering."

Kemble said she'll present the parchment to tribal leaders Wednesday morning.

Last weekend, the Dane County Sheriff's Office sent 10 deputies from its special events team to the site of the protests, part of a state contingent of 40 members of law enforcement that have gone to provide assistance to the area.

Construction resumed Tuesday on the $3.8 billion, 1,200-mile pipeline on private land about 20 miles from the so-called Red Warrior Camp where thousands of protesters have gathered, The Associated Press reported.

Dean Mosiman covers Madison city government for the Wisconsin State Journal.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

Republican lawmakers are demanding the Department of Justice explain why criminal charges have not been leveled against an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employee allegedly responsible for a massive mine spill in Colorado.

"By not taking up the case, the Department of Justice looks like it is going easy on its colleagues in EPA," three lawmakers with the House Natural Resources Committee wrote Wednesday in a letter to Attorney General Loretta Lynch.

Republican Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah joined fellow GOP colleagues Chairman Jason Chaffetz, also from Utah, and oversight subcommittee chairwoman Cynthia Lummis, who represents Wyoming, to send out the letter Wednesday afternoon.

"Its lack of action on these charges give the appearance of hypocrisy," the lawmakers claim, "and seem to indicate that there is one set of rules for private citizens and another for the federal government."

The Colorado mine spill resulted in three million gallons of dangerous mine waste being dumped into Colorado's Animus River, turning it yellow and poisoning the drinking water for thousands of residents across three states and the Navajo Nation. The spill also dumped more than 880,000 pounds of toxic elements — like lead and arsenic — into the water.

The EPA had tried to keep the identity of the person responsible for the spill under wraps until June, when The Daily Caller News Foundation reported that EPA worker Hays Griswold was in charge at the Gold King Mine during the spill.

Someone removed Griswold's name from an "independent" review of the disaster, according to documents obtained by TheDCNF in June.

An EPA inspector announced Wednesday Bishop's committee wrote the letter that it found evidence an unnamed employee violated the Clean Water Act. The Department of Justice will not pursue the case, a spokesman told reporters, and is instead referring the case to the EPA's leaders.

The lawmakers added that the "EPA disaster deserves the same level of accountability to which private citizens are held."

EPA's failure to hold its employees accountable for last year's leak has become a standard operating procedure.

Senior EPA officials in 2015, for instance, largely ignored complaints by 16 women, mostly employees, accusing one agency official of sexual harassment. The employee got promoted despite the complaints.

Bishop's committee held a hearing in May showing that the EPA paid a registered sex offender to retire rather than terminating his employment.

The child molester was a registered sex offender and was fired in 2014 for violating his probation – but the EPA, as its custom, reinstated him under the Merit Systems Protection Board reinstated him. The employee was eventually paid $55,000 to resign in 2015.

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

By Max Blau

CNN, October 13, 2016

Brace yourself, Pacific Northwest. What's left of a typhoon, which has made its way across the ocean, is expected to pummel parts of Oregon and Washington over the next several days.

The National Weather Service has said a pair of strong storms are set to hit the West Coast on Thursday and Saturday.

CNN meteorologist Dave Hennen said parts of Washington and Oregon could see gusts of up to 80 mph near coastal ranges Thursday. According to the weather service, rivers are expected to rise, with flooding remaining most likely in the Olympic Peninsula.

"Areas of ponding on roadways will slow Thursday commutes," the weather service said. "Small creeks and streams will rise and flood as well."

After a brief lull, the fierce winds could whip again through the Northwest at up to 100 mph. Hennen, who described this storm as a "monster," said it has the potential to match the pressure levels of a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. The weather service has cautioned residents to watch out for tree damage due to the high winds.

"Many of the wind-related deaths in western Washington occur when trees topple onto people in cars," it said.

Though it's still too early to tell, the weather service said the Saturday storm could also lead to widespread wind damage, power outages and coastal erosion.

"(There's a chance for) a worst-case scenario leading to a historical and destructive windstorm for the area," it said.

According to Hennen, a third storm may pass through the Pacific Northwest next week.

From: Torres, Mariano
Sent: 24 May 2016 16:12:24 +0000
To: R8 All Hands
Cc:
(b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@mail.mil';'(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)
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cf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch,
Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';'(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson,
Mark
J;'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)
(b)(6)@sba.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz,
Benigno;'(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard,
Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us';'(b)(6)@state.co.us';Wetherington,
Jeffrey
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Tuesday 5-24-16
Attachments: @

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, May 24, 2016

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Four Montana state parks top foundation's 'endangered' list (Montana Standard)

Early runoff prevents flood levels in Clark Fork River (NBC Montana)

Flathead flood waters recede, closures still in effect (NBC Montana)

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North Dakota to test AMBER Alert system (The Jamestown Sun)

Dakota Access Pipeline Construction Begins Despite Standing Rock Sioux Objections (Indian Country Today Media Network)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Pierre marks five years since the Missouri River flood (KSFY ABC)

Long-time Pierre business survives the 2011 Missouri River flood (KSFY ABC)

Pierre: Five Years After The Flood (KDLT NBC)

Remembering the flood: Mayors Hanson and Gill reflect on the summer of 2011 (Capital Jour

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 14:13:39 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @state.co.us';(b)(6) @mail.mil';(b)(6) @state.sd.us';(b)(6)
(b)(@utah.gov';(b)(6) @wyo.gov';(b)(6) @nd.gov';(b)(6) @state.sd.us';'(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6) @usace.army.mil';'(b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6) @usace.army.mil';(b)(6) @state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark
(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @hhs.gov';'(b)(6) @sba.gov';(b)(6) @sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6) @mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6) @fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Tuesday
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-30-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 30, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A hailstorm and flash flood in Colorado Springs made the CBS national news. Some drivers needed rescuing; up to two feet of hail was reported…. The *Colorado Springs Gazette* carried an AP story in which a Florida congressman said FEMA's response in Louisiana, with only one mobile home set up so far, was "pitiful."
- **Montana:** The south entrance to Yellowstone has been reopened after being closed because of wildfire… Two stories report on the economic impact of the fish kill in the Yellowstone River. Governor Bullock declared an emergency, making state unemployment and retraining aid available. Some businesses hope for SBA loans to help them survive the lost tourism…. A roundup of wildfires indicates general stabilization.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from the Christian Science Monitor and one from The Guardian. The Guardian story cites protesters saying their effort might fulfill old Indian prophecies. … United Blood Services will test the blood of only donors who might be at risk for the Zika virus. The FDA had recommended testing all donors, but the disease is rare in North Dakota. … An attorney argues in favor of a proposed safety rule that would require more than one person be aboard some freight trains.
- **South Dakota:** No stories today.
- **Utah:** *The Salt lake Tribune* reports on the status of four major wildfires in the state… The *St. George Spectrum* reports that two Michigan firefighters were killed Saturday in Minnesota on their way to fight the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when their truck left the road. The driver has been charged with criminal vehicular homicide; he allegedly fell asleep while driving, and had used marijuana earlier that day.
- **Wyoming:** *The Teton Valley News* reports on the status of the Berry Fire and, in a separate article, notes another fire and recent earthquake and urges preparedness.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, reported on existing drugs that might help fight the Zika virus.

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CBS: Colorado Springs Flooding.

Wild weather causes flooding, hail on Colorado Springs streets (KKTV news, Colorado Springs)

FEMA criticized as slow on disaster housing aid in Louisiana (Colorado Spring Gazette)

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Yellowstone's south entrance reopens Tuesday morning (Billings Gazette)

Governor declares state of emergency for Yellowstone River fish kill (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Yellowstone River's closure worries outdoors industry (AP)

Montana Wildfire Roundup For August 29, 2016 (Montana Public Radio)

NORTH DAKOTA:

Oil pipeline protests in North Dakota draw Native Americans, celebrities (Christian Science Monitor)

'We're not going home': inside the North Dakota oil pipeline protest (The Guardian, US edition)

United Blood Services testing some blood for Zika (Bismarck Tribune)

Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No stories today.

UTAH:

Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

WYOMING:

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

STORIES

COLORADO

CBS: Colorado Springs Flooding. The CBS Evening News (8/29, story 5, 0:15, O'Donnell, 11.17M) reported, “Heavy rain and hail caused flash flooding today in Colorado Springs. Streets became rushing rivers. It came on so quickly, drivers got stuck. Their cars had to be pulled out of the flood waters.”

Wild weather causes flooding, hail on Colorado Springs streets (KKTV news, Colorado Springs)

Posted: Mon 5:38 PM, Aug 29, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 5:46 AM, Aug 30, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (KKTV) Wild weather roared through Colorado Springs Monday afternoon, quickly causing streets to flood and keeping emergency personnel busy.

Several drivers were caught in the rapidly rising water. Just east of downtown on Pikes Peak Avenue, four people inside one car, including a toddler, had to be rescued after the vehicle got stuck in fast-moving water.

"I saw that it only came up to the middle of the hubcap there, so probably up to my knees," said Sgt. Erick Frederic with the Colorado Springs Police Department, who pulled the victims from the car.

No one was hurt in the incident, but were all left pretty shaken up.

"That's always a scary thing because if there becomes more water then the car could be pushed over," Frederic said. "So it's a matter of yes, stay in there until the car stops moving, but you don't want to get stuck in a moving car either."

Plenty of others were left stranded after water came rushing down streets.

“It’s kind of scary, cause you don’t know what might happen," said Susan Kellman.

Near Bijou and Logan, a snowplow that was trying to move nearly 2 feet of hail off the street ended up having to be towed.

Zach Smith faced another obstacle. His car was picked up by moving water and floated down the street.

"I was at work and my neighbor gave me a call and said, 'Hey, your car’s in the middle of the road; you should probably come move it,'" he told 11 News.

When Smith got home, he found the car sitting sideways, literally in the middle of the street.

“It’s pretty crazy. I’ve seen some pretty heavy rains, but not one to float a parked car like that.”

Another problem spot was off Platte Avenue near Tia Juana. A car got stuck near Fargo's Pizza after water quickly overtook the roadway.

Other areas of Platte, just east of Union, were underwater after storm drains got clogged by the amount of water running down the street.

"It's mayhem. You never know what you're going to get in Colorado. First we have hail, then we get some flooding," said Phillip Groskinsky.

HOMES DAMAGED BY FLOODING

Homeowners near Platte and Wahsatch in Colorado Springs say a dog was killed when fast-moving water got into their garage.

The Pikes Peak Red Cross went to more than 60 homes on Monday. Although not all were damaged, some were left unlivable.

Tim and Debbie Hertzog had their fence destroyed by rushing water, their backyard deck lifted up, and thousands of dollars worth of damage to the inside their home.

Debbie said she came home in the middle of the storm and got trapped in her garage.

"I just saw sheets of rain coming down, so I rushed home. ... As soon as I pulled into the garage, the river coming down the alley came into the garage with me," Debbie recalled. "I couldn't open the door without it coming in. So I called 911...they told me to stay sheltered in place in my car, unless [the water] came in the car.

"It did come to about a quarter of an inch, to the bottom of my car, while I was sitting in there. And I was probably in there an hour and a half, or maybe close to that, and I had no idea what was going on with my house. ... I couldn't get out either door without an onslaught of water. There was so much water."

Tim described the outside as chaos.

"She called me, so I came home and I was trying to get her out of the garage, but the water was almost 18 inches over the garage door, couldn't get the garage door open, so we just had to wait for the waters to subside.

"We weren't sure how bad it was going to get; if it was going to get worse."

Near Palmer Park and Union, one family said they worry about flooding -- like what happened Monday -- any time it rains.

"It's not something to mess with," said Jessica Staten. "If you can't see the road, don't go through it, plain and simple."

Staten snapped video of a car and truck stuck in high water at Mount Vernon Street and Tweed Street. Firefighters were eventually able to help both out.

"This intersection is prone to getting flooded pretty bad," Staten said. "It was already up to the wall of my neighbor, the wall where his fencing is, so there's no way you would have been able to clear it with a car. The minute he [one of the drivers] hit the dip, he was gone. He was done."

It was a similar scene near Fountain and Circle. Kellman saw others get trapped trying to plow through standing water. She decided not to chance it.

"It's scary because you don't know what might happen. I mean, there's lots of accidents, too," Kellman said.

"I just pulled over and waited for it to stop."

FEMA criticized as slow on disaster housing aid in Louisiana (Colorado Spring Gazette)

By: MELINDA DESLATTE, Associated Press •
August 29, 2016• Updated: August 29, 2016 at 12:43 pm

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The first out-of-state congressman to survey Louisiana's damage from catastrophic flooding Monday blasted the Federal Emergency Management Agency response as "pitiful."

U.S. Rep. John Mica, a Florida Republican who chairs a subcommittee with jurisdiction over FEMA, toured the destruction with U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, a Republican who represents much of the most heavily damaged region.

Mica said housing aid for the tens of thousands of people displaced by floodwaters two weeks ago has been sluggish and FEMA has been too slow to set up mobile homes that give people somewhere to stay while they repair their houses.

He said FEMA needs more "flexibility" in its programs to make them more adaptable to individual disasters.

"This is one of the biggest displacements of people I've ever seen in the country, and the response is pitiful from the federal level," Mica said.

Only one manufactured housing unit has been set up so far. FEMA regional director Gerard Stolar said the agency is working to speed aid to people displaced by the flooding.

"We're working very closely with the state. We're well aware of the devastation that's out there, that this is an historic event," Stolar said.

He said that FEMA's priority is to get people back into their homes and that 50 to 60 additional manufactured housing units are ready to be set up for homeowners after inspections of their property are complete.

"I'm very confident we're going to be able to ramp up the capacity for this in the very near future," Stolar said.

More than 100,000 homes are estimated to be damaged from flooding described as the worst disaster since Superstorm Sandy, after a storm that started Aug. 12 dumped as much as 2 feet of rain in some areas over two days.

More than 1,400 people remained in shelters Monday.

Entire communities were ravaged by floodwaters, and residents and volunteers have spent the last two weeks ripping out flooring, damaged furniture and drywall to ready homes for repairs. But many people didn't have flood insurance, leaving them dependent on savings and FEMA for rebuilding assistance.

Federal officials say more than $277 million in recovery grants have been approved for households so far and 22 assistance centers are open across the damaged parishes. FEMA said it has more than 1,100 housing inspectors on the ground.

Gov. John Bel Edwards has praised the federal response.

Graves, however, said FEMA needs to quicken the pace of its inspections and grant approval. He also worried about the size of grants. While the cap on assistance to households is $33,000, Graves said the largest grant received is around $8,000 so far.

"People are sitting there, looking at their home and business situation. They've got to make decisions," Graves said.

Edwards' administration opened registration Monday for a new, FEMA-funded "shelter at home" program aimed at providing grants of up to $15,000 to help people make modest repairs that can get them quickly and safely back into their houses while they start work on the larger renovations.

Graves said that program was a "fantastic" concept.

Both congressmen said some of the flexibility they'd like to see in FEMA programs could require congressional action. Edwards was meeting with Louisiana's congressional delegation Monday to discuss a flood relief package.

MONTANA

Yellowstone's south entrance reopens Tuesday morning (Billings Gazette)

The south entrance to Yellowstone National Park reopened at about 7 a.m. Tuesday after a wildfire cut off access for several days, said Larry Helmerick, National Park Service public information officer.

The more than 13,000 acre Berry fire shutdown a stretch of Highway 89/191/287 between Jackson Hole and the south entrance of Yellowstone. Pullouts near the burn area will remain closed, said a National Park Service news release.

The Berry fire cutoff access to the south entrance on Aug. 23 but no roadways inside Yellowstone National Park were affected.

Governor declares state of emergency for Yellowstone River fish kill (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

By Michael Wright Chronicle Staff Writer

LIVINGSTON —Montana's governor on Monday signed an executive order declaring the fish kill on the Yellowstone River earlier this month an emergency, a move that makes available millions of dollars for unemployment benefits and other labor programs.

The order frees up $15.4 million in emergency funds for workers and businesses affected by the river's closure, accessible to them mostly through unemployment insurance, retraining programs and planning grants.

Patricia Dowd, a natural resource policy adviser for the governor, announced the order at a meeting here on Monday, where officials from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry tried to offer people guidance on how they could get help in this time where businesses built on the tourism economy are taking a major hit.

"The Yellowstone River is a key contributor to Montana's tourism and outdoor recreation economy," Dowd said.

Earlier this month, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks closed 183 miles of the Yellowstone River and hundreds more miles of its tributaries to all public use in response to the deaths of thousands of whitefish in the river. Dead fish were found as far upstream as Corwin Springs and as far downstream as Springdale. Mostly whitefish have been found dead, and FWP estimates the total death toll to be in the tens of thousands.

Tissue samples showed the culprit to be a parasite that causes proliferative kidney disease, which can decimate trout and whitefish populations. An FWP press release sent Monday said whitefish have tested positive for the parasite as far downstream as Laurel and that the parasite had been confirmed in two brown trout taken from Nelson’s Spring Creek.

The river and tributaries were closed as a way to reduce stress on the fish so they might be able to fight off infection. It also was meant to prevent the spread of the parasite to other watersheds in Montana. But the move has significant economic consequences for people who depend on the tourism dollars that the river brings in — like fishing guides, raft companies and hotels and restaurants.

The governor’s emergency declaration allows the state to dip into a $16 million fund to offer assistance to people out of work or who have lost money because of the river closure. About $600,000 from that fund has already been spent in response to a heavy winter storm along Montana’s Hi-Line and a tornado in eastern Montana.

How much is spent from the fund depends on how many people are able to access the money, which may be tricky. Unemployment insurance, for example, might not be available to fishing guides who work as independent contractors.

For workers to be eligible, they have to work in a job where their employer pays payroll taxes — which might not be the case for all independent guides. But if they work seasonally at another job that does pay those taxes throughout the year and quit to guide in the summer, they may qualify for some benefits.

Paul Martin, who works in unemployment insurance claims processing for the Montana Department of Labor, said people won’t know if they qualify unless they apply because each individual case is so different.

“It’s like snowflakes,” Martin said.

Some at the meeting on Monday said they weren’t interested in being retrained, and others said they would probably try for a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration — which is federal money, not state — to keep their doors open into the next year.

“I think I’m looking at a small business loan,” said Jim Kahl, the co-owner of River Source Rafting Company north of Gardiner.

Kahl said the last few weeks have been “pretty dismal,” and that the final weeks of the season are crucial for his company. A loan would be the way to make sure they are around for next season.

Tina Marshall, the ranch manager at 7 Point Ranch in Emigrant, said she hopes the emergency declaration would help them file a successful loss-of-income claim with their insurance company. The ranch hosts events and offers lodging to travelers, and Marshall said they had lost $43,000 in cancellations since the closure.

“It adds up fast,” Marshall said.

She said an initial attempt at filing a claim was rejected, but that the emergency declaration might help with that. Recovering that income would help her keep her staff intact.

“I don’t want to lay anybody off,” she said.

When the river or its tributaries will reopen is unknown. FWP closed the river using an emergency 120-day closure, but that could be extended if river conditions don’t improve or if fish don’t stop dying. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission would have to approve any extension and solicit public comment.

FWP crews are still regularly surveying the river and the tributaries. The press release from the agency on Monday said that they were starting to find fewer dead fish on the banks of the river.

Yellowstone River's closure worries outdoors industry (AP)

Matthew Brown, Associated Press

Updated 7:01 pm, Monday, August 29, 2016

LIVINGSTON, Mont. (AP) — Tens of thousands of dead fish have closed Montana's Yellowstone River and stirred new worries Monday about lasting impacts to the region's lucrative outdoors industry.

Gov. Steve Bullock declared an "invasive species emergency" over an aquatic parasite blamed for the dying fish. A 183-mile stretch of the Yellowstone and all waterways that drain into it have been closed since Aug. 19 to prevent the deadly parasite from spreading. The unprecedented move came after thousands of dead mountain whitefish started washing up on the river's banks downstream from Yellowstone National Park.

Smaller numbers of other fish species have been killed. That's offered hope that the parasite will spare the trout populations that made the Yellowstone a destination for fly fishers from around the world.

But uncertainty over how long the closure will remain in force — and whether the parasite will crop up again in future years — has unsettled those whose livelihoods depend on the river.

Fishing guide Chase Chapman of Livingston said he's losing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of business as customers cancel previously booked trips. The losses are likely to grow as the closure continues, he said. Yet Chapman is not interested in training for another occupation and foremost wants to know when the river will re-open.

"I don't think anyone wants re-training," Chapman said Monday, during a workshop in Livingston for affected workers that was hosted by the state Department of Labor and Industry. "We all have established businesses. We're not going anywhere.... Now what do we do?"

Monday's emergency proclamation from Bullock will allow Montana to spend up to $15.4 million on worker retention grants and other programs meant to blunt the economic harm of the closure, state officials said.

The number of people and businesses that lost work over the closure has not been tallied, said Scott Eychner, workforce services administrator of the state labor agency. Eychner said officials did not want to wait until that information was tallied before holding Monday's workshop, so that assistance could be given to those who need it as quickly as possible.

Repairing the river's reputation is another matter.

Paul Weamer, who manages a fly fishing shop in the Paradise Valley north of Livingston, said he has no doubt the Yellowstone and its fishery will recover. But Weamer said news reports of the fish kill have left a negative impression among outsiders that will be hard to overcome even when the Yellowstone reopens and fishing resumes.

"You hear dead fish and that freaks people out and I understand that. But I really think our fishery will be good next year," Weamer said.

State officials on Monday said infected fish have been discovered in Laurel, more than a hundred miles downstream from the epicenter of the fish kill. A small number of whitefish that were collected near Laurel have tested positive for exposure to the parasite, officials said.

Whitefish exposed to the parasite also were collected near Columbus, Big Timber and at the mouth of the Boulder River, but officials said all the downstream fish were still alive and appeared healthy.

The rate of fish dying appears to have eased in recent days, said Sam Sheppard, regional supervisor for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Sheppard added that it was too soon to say if the decrease in deaths would prove lasting.

Officials have warned outbreaks of the parasite are possible in future years now that it's been established in the Yellowstone.

Montana Wildfire Roundup For August 29, 2016 (Montana Public Radio)

By MTPR News •

The latest on wildfires around western Montana.

Last Update 5:35 p.m. 08/29/16

The Clear Creek Fire popped up early Saturday morning on tribal land 3 miles northwest of Perma on the Flathead Reservation.

It’s just over 1,200 acres, and zero percent contained, says Tribal Fire Prevention Specialist C.T. Camel.

"Last couple days just been burnout operations, trying to get a hold of it. Because it’s gonna get really warm these next couple days.”

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes’ Division of Fire is fighting the blaze.

It’s cause is still under investigation.

Update: 10:38 a.m., 08/29/16

The Copper King Fire, under the command of Greg Poncin's Type I Incident Management Team, has reached 24,017 acres and remains 15 percent contained.

A community meeting will be held on Monday, August 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sanders County Fairground Pavilion (30 River Road, Plains, MT). Fire and local officials will provide an update on current and project fire activity.

There are 780 personnel working the fire, located eight miles outside of Thompson Falls and one mile north of Highway 200. The Copper King Fire has cost an estimated $15 million so far.

Yesterday aerial resources conducted burnout operations on the northern perimeter while hotshot crews built hand lines around the active southeast edge.

Helicopters dropped 258,000 gallons of water while small planes spread 36,500 gallons of retardant.

Today's weather is expected to bring in a high pressure front, with low humidity and high temperatures. This could result in increased fire activity, though winds are not predicted to be a problem.

Over the next 24-48 hours, officials say the construction of indirect lines and firing operations are crucial. Scoping for additional contingent lines will continue for the benefit of communities to the east.

In Yellowstone National Park, the Berry Fire continues to keep the south entrance to the park closed.

The Maple Fire in Yellowstone National Park, located about four miles north of West Yellowstone, has reached 31,405 acres. All of Gneiss Trail remains closed, including the Cougar Creek cabin.

The Maple Fire has yet to reach the Madison River or Madison Junction, and has not yet required burn out operations near Highway 191. A Red Flag weather warning is in effect throughout today.

Diane Hutton's Wildland Fire Management Team has assumed command of the Maple Fire and is stationed in West Yellowstone.

There will be a Maple Fire community meeting Monday, August 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of Latter Day Saints, 245 Faithful St., West Yellowstone, MT.

The Bierney Creek Fire west of Lakeside is transitioning from a Type 3 team to a smaller Type 4 team as containment operations continue to be successful. The fire is 90 percent contained.

The 60 acre fire, discovered on August 22, has been declared 'human caused' by fire officials.

The Roaring Lion Fire located five miles southwest of Hamilton remains at 8,533 acres and 70 percent contained. Firefighters continue to put out hotspots, evaluate containment lines, protect structures, and monitor for erosion possibilities where they have built defensive lines.

Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft continue to drop water and retardant when necessary. Area closures remain in effect.

NORTH DAKOTA

Oil pipeline protests in North Dakota draw Native Americans, celebrities (Christian Science Monitor)

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's protests against a four-state oil pipeline have drawn members of other tribes, as well as a few Hollywood stars.

By Jason Thomson, Staff August 29, 2016

Oil pipelines are no strangers to controversy, often courting a wide range of opposing opinions: Witness the years of debate that plagued the Keystone XL project between the United States and Canada, eventually blocked by US President Obama in November 2015.

The latest project to attract the ire of protesters, a 1,100-mile pipeline already under construction, is set to pass through four US states – Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Its aim is to transport Bakken shale from North Dakota directly to US Gulf Coast refineries, the first pipeline to do so.

The core group of opposition is the native American Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which says the pipeline could disturb sacred sites, as well as contaminate water for millions of people. They have been joined by activists from dozens of different tribes, and the protest, which began in April, now boasts upward of 1,000 indigenous participants.

"The things that have happened to tribal nations across this nation have been unjust and unfair, and this has come to a point where we can no longer pay the costs for this nation's well-being," Dave Archambault, chair of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, told Democracy Now last week. "All too often we share similar concerns, similar wrongdoings to us, so we are uniting, and we're standing up, and we're saying, 'No more.' "

The protests have temporarily shut down construction, and about 30 people have been arrested in recent weeks. The group behind the pipeline, Dakota Access, filed a restraining order against Mr. Archambault and other protesters earlier this month in federal court; the tribe subsequently sought a preliminary injunction to halt construction.

As legal proceedings unfolded over the $3.7 billion project last week in the US District Court for the District of Columbia, about 100 members of the native American group protested outside. They were joined by actors Susan Sarandon, Riley Keough, and Shailene Woodley.

"I'm here as a mother and a grandmother," said Ms. Sarandon, an Oscar-winning actress known for social and political activism, "to thank the people of the Standing Rock community for bringing our attention to this horrible thing that is happening to their land, which in turn will endanger all of us... because all of our waters are connected."

As part of their legal case, the protesters say the US Army Corps of Engineers violated historic preservation and environmental laws by giving the pipeline their approval. Supporters counter that the project would, in fact, provide safer and cheaper passage for the Bakken shale, when compared with road or rail transport.

District Court Judge James Boasberg is expected to announce his decision on the preliminary injunction requested by the tribe no later than Sept. 9.

'We're not going home': inside the North Dakota oil pipeline protest (The Guardian, US edition)

Nicky Woolf in Cannon Ball, North Dakota

Monday 29 August 2016 16.16 EDT
Last modified on Tuesday 30 August 2016 10.53 EDT

The Cannonball river flows into the mighty Missouri about 50 miles due south of Bismarck, North Dakota.

At its confluence, a protest encampment – really a series of camps, on both sides of the Cannonball, strewn with kitchens and canteens, portable toilets, stabling for horses, sweat lodges and tall teepees, and stands selling indigenous art – has sprung up.

The inhabitants are there to block the planned $3.7bn Dakota Access Pipeline, which would transport fracked crude from the Bakken oil field in North Dakota to a refinery near Chicago.

Many at the encampment speak of two prophecies, dating back to the 1890s. A leader called Black Elk foretold that in seven generations, the Native American nations will unite to save the Earth; another legend predicted that a zuzeca snake – a black snake – would threaten the world. For many of the protesters here, the pipeline is that black snake. They are the seventh generation: their moment of destiny has come.

The pipeline's planned route takes it close to the northern boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and the town of Cannon Ball within it, which means it would cross the Missouri immediately upstream, endangering, protesters say, the reservation's drinking water and threatening sacred sites. At Standing Rock, they have put their bodies between the water and the oil.

A few days earlier, on 24 August, a federal judge in Washington DC delayed a ruling over whether indigenous rights were violated by the approval of the project. Tribal members say they were not sufficiently consulted about the route and are suing for an injunction.

The population of the camp ebbs and flows. Many have given up jobs and brought their families here, and a core of between 500 and 1,000 people live here semi-permanently. Some, such as Wiyaca Eagleman, a member of the Sicangu Lakota from Rosebud, South Dakota, have been here since the beginning of April. He plans to be here, he said, "as long as it takes".

Hundreds more join when they can, swelling the camp's numbers on weekends. Others come when they get time and bring what supplies they can.

It is an unprecedented gathering. Members of more than 90 Native American nations and tribes have a presence here, according to Eagleman, who has become a sort of unofficial spokesman for the protest camp. Up the road, where the building site was besieged, the flags of many of those nations now fly together. The unity on display here is a dream come true for Eagleman. "There has been no moment like this in history," he said.

On Saturday, a delegation from the Crow nation arrived from Montana, bearing offerings of firewood and 700lb of buffalo meat. That's truly historic: the Crow and the Lakota have been enemies for more than a century. They were at war once; the Crow acted as scouts for Gen George Custer. Buffalo meat has powerful symbolic value: a gesture of solidarity and friendship from longtime former foes.

Dennis Banks, a member of the Chippewa nation of Minnesota and one of the founders of the civil rights group the American Indian Movement in the 1960s, who met the Crow delegation, recounted the meeting. "The main speaker said, 'I know you think of Crow as working with the enemy – but we too struggled for water rights, treaty rights'," Banks said.

Omaka Nawicakinciji of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota participates with his mother Heather Mendoza during a rally on the Dakota Access Pipeline. Photograph: Alex Wong/Getty Images

Then he paused. "The Missouri river starts up there," he added, to indicate that the Crow and the Lakota share more, now, than just food and firewood. The river connects them, too.

Ladonna Allard is a member of the Dakota Sioux. The first protest camp, named Sacred Stone for the perfectly round stones that were formed by a whirlpool where the two rivers met, was erected in April on Allard's land. The whirlpool is gone now, its eddies quieted by a dam built by the army corps of engineers in 1948, which also flooded the lush forest that abutted Allard's birthplace.

"This is sacred land," Allard told the Guardian, speaking by a campfire on which burritos cooked in aluminum foil. Children and dogs played; a brilliant sunset had just turned to dusk. "This is not about trying to be a protester," she said. "I am a mother. My son is buried at the top of that hill. I can't let them build a pipeline by my son's grave."

Looking across the Missouri from the camp, you can see the route of the pipeline on the east bank. Diggers and bulldozers began digging out the turf on the west bank, a mile north of the camp, churning the green prairie to brown clod, in August – accompanied by armed security guards.

They were ordered to stop when protesters, some on horseback, broke on to the site and surrounded the machines on 10 August. Eighteen were arrested, including Standing Rock tribal chairman David Archambault II.

Madonna Antoine Eagle Hawk, a member of the Sicango Rosebud Sioux, arrived last Friday and quickly assumed the role of head chef of the Rosebud camp. The children, she said, call her "Unci", the Lakota word for grandmother. "I'm proud to be here," she said. "It's a powerful feeling."

"Right now, all these different tribes – this will never happen again in our lifetime," she said. "If we don't make a stand, who else will?"

Richard Leading Fighter Jr – another member of the Rosebud tribe, a biology student and a distance runner – joined Eagle Hawk in the kitchen tent. He has assumed the role of lifeguard in the camp, keeping an eye on the children who frolic and splash in the Cannonball. He's been here two weeks now and is preparing to return to university, but like many in the camp, is planning on coming back when he can.

"This feeling is history, right here," he said. He hunkered down on his shins to grab a handful of soil, grey from the ash of the cooking fire. "We're doing something that will be in stories told for our grandchildren," he said, as the earth streamed through his fingers.

"I know we can defeat this," he said. "I'm hoping the world is with us."

United Blood Services testing some blood for Zika (Bismarck Tribune)

- JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune
- Aug 29, 2016

United Blood Services is testing the blood of all donors at risk of having contracted the Zika virus.

Zika is spread mostly by infected Aedes species mosquitoes, which are not found in North Dakota. While most people get mild symptoms from the virus, it can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her fetus and can cause birth defects, including microcephaly and other brain abnormalities. There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika.

The Food and Drug Administration last week recommended testing all donated blood nationwide for Zika. The agency previously had recommended deferring anyone at risk of having contracted the virus.

Marni Wild, district director of manufacturing and laboratory services at United Blood Services, said the FDA only is recommending — not requiring — all blood to be tested. UBS, which handles blood donations in North Dakota, has been testing the blood of donors at risk of having contracted the virus since before the FDA made the recommendation as a precautionary measure, she said.

Michelle Feist, epidemiology and surveillance program manager at the North Dakota Department of Health, said active transmission of Zika is not happening in North Dakota, because the types of mosquitos that carry the virus are not found in the state.

However, people can contract the virus if they travel to a place with Zika or if they have sex with someone who has Zika. Wild said UBS asks questions during its pre-donation screening to see if donors are at risk of having Zika; if so, their blood automatically is screened before being used.

Wild did not know how much each Zika test costs UBS, but she said there is a financial hit on the organization each time a new test is added. She asked that anyone healthy and eligible to donate blood do so to help those who may need it.

While people in North Dakota are not at high risk to contract Zika, Feist said it is important for pregnant women or for couples who are planning to become pregnant to talk to their doctor about risk if they plan to travel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintain a list of places where Zika transmission is occurring, which should be consulted before travel, Feist said.

Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)

Posted by Randy Appleton

August 30, 2016 4:27 AM

Automation and budget-cutting have led many freight and passenger railroads across the United States to cut crew sizes. As a logical result of such staff reductions, many of the largest trains moving along the nation’s rails have only a single engineer in the locomotive—even those transporting oil and toxic chemicals. As recently as 20 years ago, a standard long-distance train crew consisted of an engineer, a fireman, a conductor and two

Regulators and rail worker unions have raised alarms about train crew reductions for many years. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) responded in 2015 by drafting a rule mandating minimum crew sizes of two people for Class I railroads, a group that includes Amtrak, BNSF, CSX and Norfolk Southern. The rule was published for comment this past winter, and the FRA held a hearing on its provision in July 2016.

FRA experts and representatives of rail employees, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, argued for larger train crews. They cited incidents like a conductor taking over for an incapacitated engineer aboard an out of control engine in North Dakota. The conductor’s actions prevented a major derailment and likely explosion.

Arguing against the two-crew person minimum, rail companies said, against actual evidence, that “no evidence” existed to prove that adding crew to one-person trains could prevent accidents, injuries, deaths and property damage. The corporations also claimed that putting more than one person on a train would impose unsupportable costs on their operations.

FRA analysts countered the cost complaint by noting that putting one more person in a locomotive would require a maximum expenditure of $27.7 million over 10 years. That is far below the estimated value of the workers’ lives expected to be saved and a tiny fraction of revenues for companies that regularly report annual earnings of several billion.

Having represented railroad employees injured in crashes and derailments for three decades, I know that placing more than one person in a locomotive adds an invaluable safety factor. Even with the (too slow) deployment of braking technology like positive train control, the role of a trained human in preventing tragedies cannot be overemphasized. Should an equipment failure occur or should an engineer suffer an unexpected injury or illness, having a conductor or other crew member present can make the difference between a disaster and a near-miss.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No stories today.

UTAH

Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 29 2016 01:21PM • Last Updated Aug 29 2016 10:30 pm

Aided by fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft, about 50 firefighters worked Monday to keep the 4,000-acre Box Canyon Fire from spreading outside its remote, steep and rugged perimeter in Summit County.

The human-caused, four-week-old blaze continued to consume conifer, aspen and fallen dead timber about 12 miles east of Oakley, and it began Monday at 20 percent containment. Crews were focused on preventing any further spread downslope into Smith and Morehouse Canyon, or toward the Ledgefork Campground, Fire Incident Commander Nick Hillman reported.

No structures were threatened and no injuries had been reported, but the campground, the Smith and Morehouse Reservoir boat ramp and the Mud Lake Flats area, along with some trails in those districts, were closed for public safety reasons.

The Peterson Hollow Fire, now mostly burning toward the Idaho side of the state line, had topped 1,200 acres and was 22 percent contained as of Monday, said Fire Information Officer Sierra Hellstrom.

In all, 311 firefighters battled that blaze of undetermined origin. Crews were concentrating on keeping the flames within the unpopulated and rough terrain where it began Aug. 21, burning mostly timber and grass about 6 miles northwest of Garden City, Utah.

"Despite some tree torching, the Peterson Hollow Fire [has] made no significant runs," Hellstrom reported.

Meanwhile, central Utah's Briggs Fire was being monitored by about 10 firefighters, but otherwise being allowed to burn in the Beaver District of the Fishlake National Forest. In spots, back fires were set to deprive the blaze of uncontrolled fuels.

"Over the last 14 days a lot of progress has been made in firing operations, improving contingency lines and protecting values at risk," said Fire Information Officer Daniel Claessen, adding that it likely will take the onset of winter and snowfall to finally snuff the last of the flames.

The lightning-sparked fire had burned 3,418 acres along the south fork of North Creek since it was first reported on Aug. 9, about 10 miles northeast of Beaver.

Several other, smaller wildfires also were being allowed to burn throughout the state where potential for structural damage was nil, and the benefits to the health of forest lands involved were deemed positive in the long term.

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

Written by Kimberly Scott

ST. GEORGE — A group of firefighters from Michigan on their way to the Box Canyon wildfire in Utah were involved in a crash on Interstate 35W in Anoka County, Minnesota, which left two firefighters dead and multiple others seriously injured.

The driver of the truck was subsequently charged with two counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

At approximately 3 p.m. Saturday, a truck carrying nine members of a wildland firefighting crew left the roadway for an unknown reason, struck the median cable barriers and rolled, according to a statement issued by Minnesota State Patrol.

The wildland fire crew was from the Beartown Firefighters, which is based in Baraga on Michigan's Upper Peninsula and is managed by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

State Patrol officials identified the driver of the truck as 28-year-old Michael Johnson.

Eight of the passengers were identified as 23-year-old James Shelifoe; 25-year-old Alan Swartz; 26-year-old Dave Varline; 33-year-old Ross Jaukkuri; 34-year-old Gavin Loonsfoot and Joseph Jossens, all of Michigan; 29-year-old Shashaywin Sandman, of Minnesota; and 26-year-old Tyler Tolonen, of Wisconsin.

Shelifoe and Swartz were pronounced dead at the scene, according to the State Patrol.

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community released a statement about the crash on its Facebook page Saturday night: "Our hearts are broken and our prayers are with the family members and those injured."

In a separate statement Sunday, the tribal government said that the injured firefighters were expected to recover, but released no details about their conditions.

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred, according to the statement. The wildland fire crews were reportedly traveling in a convoy of three but became separated from the truck that crashed.

“Those firefighters are understandably shaken and are getting much-needed support from local agencies,” the statement said.

Officials investigating the crash said Johnson showed “signs of impairment and combative behavior” when officers arrived at the scene of the crash, according to charges filed Monday in Anoka County District Court documents and obtained by ABC News.

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel and that he hadn’t slept more than 45 minutes in more than 24 hours, according to a criminal complaint.

Johnson also allegedly admitted to using marijuana early Saturday and to using cocaine two days earlier. Toxicology results are pending.

As a result of the crash and subsequent investigation, Johnson was arrested and charged with two felony counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

The Box Canyon Fire in Summit County east of Park City had consumed 4,000 acres as of Monday.

Unstable weather systems brought heavy winds into the area, increasing the fire’s activity, according to a press release from U.S. Forest Service.

Officials said Sunday that the Utah National Guard had been activated to assist in battling the wildfire.

Utah Guard’s 97th Aviation Troop Command and 2nd Battalion 211th Aviation responded to the Box Canyon Fire with two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, according to a press release from the Utah National Guard.

The human-caused fire is reportedly 20 percent contained.

Persons arrested or charged are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law or as otherwise decided by a trier-of-fact.

WYOMING

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

Since its discovery, Grand Teton National Park has been actively managing the Berry Fire for ecological benefits. The fire originated in the northern portion of the park, near Berry and Owl Creeks on the west side of Jackson Lake. Extreme fire behavior as a result of high winds and low relative humidity on Monday, August 22 pushed the fire across Jackson Lake and into the Teton Wilderness on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. A Type 2 Great Basin Incident Management Team took command of the fire on August 24th.

Closures:

At this time, fire managers anticipate being able to reopen Highway 89/191/287 tomorrow, Tuesday, August 30. This is subject to change dependent on weather and fire conditions. Until then the highway does remain closed for safety between the South Gate of Yellowstone National Park and Leeks Marina.

While Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and Bridger Teton National Forest all have area closures in effect, both National Parks are open to visitors. This includes Leeks Marina and most visitor destinations and services. Travel times to Yellowstone may be increased depending on planned routes. Check before you go. And please drive carefully, with lights on, due to both visibility concerns from smoke and increased vehicle numbers.

Current Situation:

The Berry Fire was much more active yesterday. Most of the growth occurred on the northeast corner of the fire - in the Teton Wilderness - and the southwest portion of the fire - along Jackson Lake. Firefighters have completed preparatory actions around Flagg Ranch, as well as on historic cabins and lookouts to minimize impacts from the fire, in the event the fire should reach those locations.

Today's weather will again be warmer and drier with atmospheric instability, which can contribute to rapid fire growth. Temperatures will rise into the mid-80s, and the relative humidity may drop into single digits. Light winds will prevail over the fire area. Despite the shorter days, thermal belts are allowing the fire to burn actively throughout the night.

Western Wyoming is experiencing historical lows for fuel moistures. Currently, no significant moisture is in the extended forecast. The conditions are similar to 2012, when fires burned actively well into September. The Berry Fire will continue to burn in the coming weeks, accomplishing the goal of rejuvenating the ecosystem through the natural process of wildland fire.

Firefighters expect to finish their work along Highway 89/191/287 today. Unless fire behavior or weather conditions change today, the road will reopen to the general public tomorrow.

For more information:

Follow Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton National Forest on social media: @GrandTetonNPS and @BridgerTetonNF on both Facebook and Twitter. Information on other fires in western Wyoming is available at www.TetonFires.com. And information on fires burning in eastern Idaho can be found at www.IdahoFireInfo.com, or by filtering Idaho incidents on InciWeb.

One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

Bruce Mason -- Teton Valley Weather

August 27, 2016. The Tie Canyon fire had been slow the last couple of days, but the wind was forecast to gust up from the west in the afternoon. As that afternoon wind increased, near Hoback in Wyoming there was an earthquake. True story with a happy ending. Our amazing firefighters from Great Basin Team 5 had put down barriers which successfully held the fire from progressing toward Victor. In addition, the earthquake was magnitude 4.8, a light quake. It was felt throughout Teton Valley but no damage was reported. It was a good day.

Saturday is also a good reason to stop and think what might have happened. Not to scare, but because playing the “what if” game in your mind can make you more ready to take action should a number of things go bad at once. When situations turn really dicey, it's usually not just one thing that's gone wrong, but a combination. What if Saturday had gone differently?

Suppose that the wind had picked up more than forecast and pushed the fire toward Victor. And suppose that at the same time, the earthquake had been much stronger and much closer to Teton Valley. Well planned and prepared evacuations would have begun just as the earthquake damaged the roads and bridges making evacuations as planned impossible. Families would be separated. Shelters would have been set up by the Red Cross in Driggs and Alta for the Victor evacuees, but how could they get there with, say, Yellow Bridge gone or Highway 33 buckled and impassable? Are alternate routes available? Do the drivers on the roads in front of you know them? Do you know them? Can those routes handle the traffic? Were they damaged, too? And what about the fire; is it going to stop at the predesignated evacuation zone or go beyond, further clogging the blocked roads with frightened residents?

This past week was a great drill if it prompted us to make individual and family disaster plans. Where will your family meet up? Do you each have a go bag, jump bag, or 72 hour kit packed with the essentials you'll need away from home a while? Have you thought about what you would grab if you could only take an armload of items with you from your home? Can you easily get from point A to point B by more than one route? Does each family member know how to contact the one person, preferably outside of the valley, who will be your central information point?

Did you know that detailed suggestions for this kind of plan have been made by Teton County Emergency Management? It has been tailored to Teton Valley and the kinds of disasters we are most likely to face here. Part one of this guide can be found at:

These guides are meticulously detailed and will take more than a quick glance by everyone in the family for them to be effective. Make the time now, because as the guide says, when disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed.

And one more thing this week showed, the value of the CodeRED emergency alert system. Should an emergency occur near you, with CodeRED you will be notified by phone, and if you choose, on your smart phone using the app. If you have a land line phone in Teton Valley, you are already enrolled and will get a call should something important come up. If you have a cell phone, you will have to go on line and register with CodeRED to receive notifications on it. You can do that at:

Either way, you will receive word of impending situations faster by phone than if you have to wait for an officer to knock on your door.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

By Maggie Fox
NBC News, August 29, 2016

A drug already on the market to treat worm infections and another being tested against liver diseases may also help treat Zika virus infections, researchers reported Monday.

The findings are a rare bit of good news about Zika, which has caused epidemics across Latin America and the Caribbean, and smaller outbreaks in Florida, the Pacific and southeast Asia.

Zika has caused smaller epidemics of birth defects, notably brain damage that can cause miscarriages or profound developmental injuries in babies. It can also cause a paralyzing condition called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

It's spread by mosquitoes and by sex. As of now, there is no vaccine or treatment.

The team at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Johns Hopkins University and Florida State University looked first in a library of existing drug compounds for products that might act to stop Zika from killing brain cells and perhaps stop it from replicating itself.

"It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug."

"It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug," says Hongjun Song of Johns Hopkins, who worked on the project. "In this sort of global health emergency, we don't have that kind of time."

But libraries of existing compounds let researchers use a computer to look for drugs that work in specific ways.

"So instead of using new drugs, we chose to screen existing drugs," said Dr. Guo-li Ming, a neurology professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "In this way, we hope to create a therapy much more quickly."

They were delighted to find a drug already on the market and considered safe to use in pregnant women. "Niclosamide is an FDA-approved drug (trade name Niclocide) that has been used in humans to treat worm infections for nearly 50 years, and it is well tolerated," the team wrote in their report, published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"It is known to inhibit several viruses in culture systems, including the Japanese encephalitis flavivirus."

Japanese encephalitis is a relative of Zika and also carried by mosquitoes.

Tests on human brain stem cells in lab dishes showed it could interfere with Zika's replication in those cells. "Niclosamide is a category B drug, which indicates that no risk to fetuses has been found in animal studies. It has low toxicity in mammals," they added. "Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

Another drug, called emricasan, helped prevent Zika from killing those cells.

"Emricasan is currently being evaluated in phase 2 clinical trials for the reduction of hepatic injury and liver fibrosis caused by chronic hepatitis C infection," the team wrote.

"Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

A third compound called PHA-690509 also helped stop Zika replicating and from killing nerve cells, they said.

While the drugs work well in lab dishes full of cells, "we don't know if they can work in humans in the same way," Song said.

Niclosamide works in the gut, but it's not clear if it's possible to get it into the brain, Song said.

The researchers think the drugs might work best as a cocktail, attacking the virus from several fronts — in much the same way as drug cocktails fight the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS.

"To address these questions, additional studies need to be done in animal models as well as humans to demonstrate their ability to treat Zika infection," Ming said in a statement. "So we could still be years away from finding a treatment that works."

The White House has asked for $1.9 billion in federal funding to help pay for studies like these and to keep them going after Zika is no longer making headlines. But Congress could not agree on a funding plan and took a seven-week break without appropriating any cash.

The NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies have taken money from other programs to pay for urgent Zika research.

At the beginning of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, researchers complained that they'd been working on drugs and vaccines for years but that inconsistent funding and a lack of interest from Congress and from drug companies made it impossible to make better progress. More than 11,000 people died in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea before the Ebola epidemic wound down last year.

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 30, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A hailstorm and flash flood in Colorado Springs made the CBS national news. Some drivers needed rescuing; up to two feet of hail was reported…. The *Colorado Springs Gazette* carried an AP story in which a Florida congressman said FEMA's response in Louisiana, with only one mobile home set up so far, was "pitiful."
- **Montana:** The south entrance to Yellowstone has been reopened after being closed because of wildfire… Two stories report on the economic impact of the fish kill in the Yellowstone River. Governor Bullock declared an emergency, making state unemployment and retraining aid available. Some businesses hope for SBA loans to help them survive the lost tourism…. A roundup of wildfires indicates general stabilization.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from the Christian Science Monitor and one from The Guardian. The Guardian story cites protesters saying their effort might fulfill old Indian prophecies. … United Blood Services will test the blood of only donors who might be at risk for the Zika virus. The FDA had recommended testing all donors, but the disease is rare in North Dakota. … An attorney argues in favor of a proposed safety rule that would require more than one person be aboard some freight trains.
- **South Dakota:** No stories today.
- **Utah:** *The Salt lake Tribune* reports on the status of four major wildfires in the state… The *St. George Spectrum* reports that two Michigan firefighters were killed Saturday in Minnesota on their way to fight the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when their truck left the road. The driver has been charged with criminal vehicular homicide; he allegedly fell asleep while driving, and had used marijuana earlier that day.
- **Wyoming:** *The Teton Valley News* reports on the status of the Berry Fire and, in a separate article, notes another fire and recent earthquake and urges preparedness.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, reported on existing drugs that might help fight the Zika virus.

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United Blood Services testing some blood for Zika (Bismarck Tribune)

Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)

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Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

WYOMING:

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

STORIES

COLORADO

CBS: Colorado Springs Flooding. The CBS Evening News (8/29, story 5, 0:15, O'Donnell, 11.17M) reported, "Heavy rain and hail caused flash flooding today in Colorado Springs. Streets became rushing rivers. It came on so quickly, drivers got stuck. Their cars had to be pulled out of the flood waters."

Wild weather causes flooding, hail on Colorado Springs streets (KKTV news, Colorado Springs)

Posted: Mon 5:38 PM, Aug 29, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 5:46 AM, Aug 30, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (KKTV) Wild weather roared through Colorado Springs Monday afternoon, quickly causing streets to flood and keeping emergency personnel busy.

Several drivers were caught in the rapidly rising water. Just east of downtown on Pikes Peak Avenue, four people inside one car, including a toddler, had to be rescued after the vehicle got stuck in fast-moving water.

"I saw that it only came up to the middle of the hubcap there, so probably up to my knees," said Sgt. Erick Frederic with the Colorado Springs Police Department, who pulled the victims from the car.

No one was hurt in the incident, but were all left pretty shaken up.

"That's always a scary thing because if there becomes more water then the car could be pushed over," Frederic said. "So it's a matter of yes, stay in there until the car stops moving, but you don't want to get stuck in a moving car either."

Plenty of others were left stranded after water came rushing down streets.

“It’s kind of scary, cause you don’t know what might happen," said Susan Kellman.

Near Bijou and Logan, a snowplow that was trying to move nearly 2 feet of hail off the street ended up having to be towed.

Zach Smith faced another obstacle. His car was picked up by moving water and floated down the street.

"I was at work and my neighbor gave me a call and said, 'Hey, your car’s in the middle of the road; you should probably come move it,'" he told 11 News.

When Smith got home, he found the car sitting sideways, literally in the middle of the street.

“It’s pretty crazy. I’ve seen some pretty heavy rains, but not one to float a parked car like that.”

Another problem spot was off Platte Avenue near Tia Juana. A car got stuck near Fargo's Pizza after water quickly overtook the roadway.

Other areas of Platte, just east of Union, were underwater after storm drains got clogged by the amount of water running down the street.

"It's mayhem. You never know what you're going to get in Colorado. First we have hail, then we get some flooding," said Phillip Groskinsky.

HOMES DAMAGED BY FLOODING

Homeowners near Platte and Wahsatch in Colorado Springs say a dog was killed when fast-moving water got into their garage.

The Pikes Peak Red Cross went to more than 60 homes on Monday. Although not all were damaged, some were left unlivable.

Tim and Debbie Hertzog had their fence destroyed by rushing water, their backyard deck lifted up, and thousands of dollars worth of damage to the inside their home.

Debbie said she came home in the middle of the storm and got trapped in her garage.

"I just saw sheets of rain coming down, so I rushed home. ... As soon as I pulled into the garage, the river coming down the alley came into the garage with me," Debbie recalled. "I couldn't open the door without it coming in. So I called 911...they told me to stay sheltered in place in my car, unless [the water] came in the car.

"It did come to about a quarter of an inch, to the bottom of my car, while I was sitting in there. And I was probably in there an hour and a half, or maybe close to that, and I had no idea what was going on with my house. ... I couldn't get out either door without an onslaught of water. There was so much water."

Tim described the outside as chaos.

"She called me, so I came home and I was trying to get her out of the garage, but the water was almost 18 inches over the garage door, couldn't get the garage door open, so we just had to wait for the waters to subside.

"We weren't sure how bad it was going to get; if it was going to get worse."

Near Palmer Park and Union, one family said they worry about flooding -- like what happened Monday -- any time it rains.

"It's not something to mess with," said Jessica Staten. "If you can't see the road, don't go through it, plain and simple."

Staten snapped video of a car and truck stuck in high water at Mount Vernon Street and Tweed Street. Firefighters were eventually able to help both out.

"This intersection is prone to getting flooded pretty bad," Staten said. "It was already up to the wall of my neighbor, the wall where his fencing is, so there's no way you would have been able to clear it with a car. The minute he [one of the drivers] hit the dip, he was gone. He was done."

It was a similar scene near Fountain and Circle. Kellman saw others get trapped trying to plow through standing water. She decided not to chance it.

"It's scary because you don't know what might happen. I mean, there's lots of accidents, too," Kellman said.

"I just pulled over and waited for it to stop."

FEMA criticized as slow on disaster housing aid in Louisiana (Colorado Spring Gazette)

By: MELINDA DESLATTE, Associated Press •
August 29, 2016• Updated: August 29, 2016 at 12:43 pm

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The first out-of-state congressman to survey Louisiana's damage from catastrophic flooding Monday blasted the Federal Emergency Management Agency response as "pitiful."

U.S. Rep. John Mica, a Florida Republican who chairs a subcommittee with jurisdiction over FEMA, toured the destruction with U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, a Republican who represents much of the most heavily damaged region.

Mica said housing aid for the tens of thousands of people displaced by floodwaters two weeks ago has been sluggish and FEMA has been too slow to set up mobile homes that give people somewhere to stay while they repair their houses.

He said FEMA needs more "flexibility" in its programs to make them more adaptable to individual disasters.

"This is one of the biggest displacements of people I've ever seen in the country, and the response is pitiful from the federal level," Mica said.

Only one manufactured housing unit has been set up so far. FEMA regional director Gerard Stolar said the agency is working to speed aid to people displaced by the flooding.

"We're working very closely with the state. We're well aware of the devastation that's out there, that this is an historic event," Stolar said.

He said that FEMA's priority is to get people back into their homes and that 50 to 60 additional manufactured housing units are ready to be set up for homeowners after inspections of their property are complete.

"I'm very confident we're going to be able to ramp up the capacity for this in the very near future," Stolar said.

More than 100,000 homes are estimated to be damaged from flooding described as the worst disaster since Superstorm Sandy, after a storm that started Aug. 12 dumped as much as 2 feet of rain in some areas over two days.

More than 1,400 people remained in shelters Monday.

Entire communities were ravaged by floodwaters, and residents and volunteers have spent the last two weeks ripping out flooring, damaged furniture and drywall to ready homes for repairs. But many people didn't have flood insurance, leaving them dependent on savings and FEMA for rebuilding assistance.

Federal officials say more than $277 million in recovery grants have been approved for households so far and 22 assistance centers are open across the damaged parishes. FEMA said it has more than 1,100 housing inspectors on the ground.

Gov. John Bel Edwards has praised the federal response.

Graves, however, said FEMA needs to quicken the pace of its inspections and grant approval. He also worried about the size of grants. While the cap on assistance to households is $33,000, Graves said the largest grant received is around $8,000 so far.

"People are sitting there, looking at their home and business situation. They've got to make decisions," Graves said.

Edwards' administration opened registration Monday for a new, FEMA-funded "shelter at home" program aimed at providing grants of up to $15,000 to help people make modest repairs that can get them quickly and safely back into their houses while they start work on the larger renovations.

Graves said that program was a "fantastic" concept.

Both congressmen said some of the flexibility they'd like to see in FEMA programs could require congressional action. Edwards was meeting with Louisiana's congressional delegation Monday to discuss a flood relief package.

MONTANA

Yellowstone's south entrance reopens Tuesday morning (Billings Gazette)

The south entrance to Yellowstone National Park reopened at about 7 a.m. Tuesday after a wildfire cut off access for several days, said Larry Helmerick, National Park Service public information officer.

The more than 13,000 acre Berry fire shutdown a stretch of Highway 89/191/287 between Jackson Hole and the south entrance of Yellowstone. Pullouts near the burn area will remain closed, said a National Park Service news release.

The Berry fire cutoff access to the south entrance on Aug. 23 but no roadways inside Yellowstone National Park were affected.

Governor declares state of emergency for Yellowstone River fish kill (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

By Michael Wright Chronicle Staff Writer

LIVINGSTON —Montana's governor on Monday signed an executive order declaring the fish kill on the Yellowstone River earlier this month an emergency, a move that makes available millions of dollars for unemployment benefits and other labor programs.

The order frees up $15.4 million in emergency funds for workers and businesses affected by the river's closure, accessible to them mostly through unemployment insurance, retraining programs and planning grants.

Patricia Dowd, a natural resource policy adviser for the governor, announced the order at a meeting here on Monday, where officials from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry tried to offer people guidance on how they could get help in this time where businesses built on the tourism economy are taking a major hit.

"The Yellowstone River is a key contributor to Montana's tourism and outdoor recreation economy," Dowd said.

Earlier this month, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks closed 183 miles of the Yellowstone River and hundreds more miles of its tributaries to all public use in response to the deaths of thousands of whitefish in the river. Dead fish were found as far upstream as Corwin Springs and as far downstream as Springdale. Mostly whitefish have been found dead, and FWP estimates the total death toll to be in the tens of thousands.

Tissue samples showed the culprit to be a parasite that causes proliferative kidney disease, which can decimate trout and whitefish populations. An FWP press release sent Monday said whitefish have tested positive for the parasite as far downstream as Laurel and that the parasite had been confirmed in two brown trout taken from Nelson's Spring Creek.

The river and tributaries were closed as a way to reduce stress on the fish so they might be able to fight off infection. It also was meant to prevent the spread of the parasite to other watersheds in Montana. But the move has significant economic consequences for people who depend on the tourism dollars that the river brings in — like fishing guides, raft companies and hotels and restaurants.

The governor's emergency declaration allows the state to dip into a $16 million fund to offer assistance to people out of work or who have lost money because of the river closure. About $600,000 from that fund has already been spent in response to a heavy winter storm along Montana's Hi-Line and a tornado in eastern Montana.

How much is spent from the fund depends on how many people are able to access the money, which may be tricky. Unemployment insurance, for example, might not be available to fishing guides who work as independent contractors.

For workers to be eligible, they have to work in a job where their employer pays payroll taxes — which might not be the case for all independent guides. But if they work seasonally at another job that does pay those taxes throughout the year and quit to guide in the summer, they may qualify for some benefits.

Paul Martin, who works in unemployment insurance claims processing for the Montana Department of Labor, said people won't know if they qualify unless they apply because each individual case is so different.

"It's like snowflakes," Martin said.

Some at the meeting on Monday said they weren't interested in being retrained, and others said they would probably try for a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration — which is federal money, not state — to keep their doors open into the next year.

"I think I'm looking at a small business loan," said Jim Kahl, the co-owner of River Source Rafting Company north of Gardiner.

Kahl said the last few weeks have been "pretty dismal," and that the final weeks of the season are crucial for his company. A loan would be the way to make sure they are around for next season.

Tina Marshall, the ranch manager at 7 Point Ranch in Emigrant, said she hopes the emergency declaration would help them file a successful loss-of-income claim with their insurance company. The ranch hosts events and offers lodging to travelers, and Marshall said they had lost $43,000 in cancellations since the closure.

"It adds up fast," Marshall said.

She said an initial attempt at filing a claim was rejected, but that the emergency declaration might help with that. Recovering that income would help her keep her staff intact.

"I don't want to lay anybody off," she said.

When the river or its tributaries will reopen is unknown. FWP closed the river using an emergency 120-day closure, but that could be extended if river conditions don't improve or if fish don't stop dying. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission would have to approve any extension and solicit public comment.

FWP crews are still regularly surveying the river and the tributaries. The press release from the agency on Monday said that they were starting to find fewer dead fish on the banks of the river.

Yellowstone River's closure worries outdoors industry (AP)

Matthew Brown, Associated Press

Updated 7:01 pm, Monday, August 29, 2016

LIVINGSTON, Mont. (AP) — Tens of thousands of dead fish have closed Montana's Yellowstone River and stirred new worries Monday about lasting impacts to the region's lucrative outdoors industry.

Gov. Steve Bullock declared an "invasive species emergency" over an aquatic parasite blamed for the dying fish. A 183-mile stretch of the Yellowstone and all waterways that drain into it have been closed since Aug. 19 to prevent the deadly parasite from spreading. The unprecedented move came after thousands of dead mountain whitefish started washing up on the river's banks downstream from Yellowstone National Park.

Smaller numbers of other fish species have been killed. That's offered hope that the parasite will spare the trout populations that made the Yellowstone a destination for fly fishers from around the world.

But uncertainty over how long the closure will remain in force — and whether the parasite will crop up again in future years — has unsettled those whose livelihoods depend on the river.

Fishing guide Chase Chapman of Livingston said he's losing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of business as customers cancel previously booked trips. The losses are likely to grow as the closure continues, he said. Yet Chapman is not interested in training for another occupation and foremost wants to know when the river will re-open.

"I don't think anyone wants re-training," Chapman said Monday, during a workshop in Livingston for affected workers that was hosted by the state Department of Labor and Industry. "We all have established businesses. We're not going anywhere.... Now what do we do?"

Monday's emergency proclamation from Bullock will allow Montana to spend up to $15.4 million on worker retention grants and other programs meant to blunt the economic harm of the closure, state officials said.

The number of people and businesses that lost work over the closure has not been tallied, said Scott Eychner, workforce services administrator of the state labor agency. Eychner said officials did not want to wait until that information was tallied before holding Monday's workshop, so that assistance could be given to those who need it as quickly as possible.

Repairing the river's reputation is another matter.

Paul Weamer, who manages a fly fishing shop in the Paradise Valley north of Livingston, said he has no doubt the Yellowstone and its fishery will recover. But Weamer said news reports of the fish kill have left a negative impression among outsiders that will be hard to overcome even when the Yellowstone reopens and fishing resumes.

"You hear dead fish and that freaks people out and I understand that. But I really think our fishery will be good next year," Weamer said.

State officials on Monday said infected fish have been discovered in Laurel, more than a hundred miles downstream from the epicenter of the fish kill. A small number of whitefish that were collected near Laurel have tested positive for exposure to the parasite, officials said.

Whitefish exposed to the parasite also were collected near Columbus, Big Timber and at the mouth of the Boulder River, but officials said all the downstream fish were still alive and appeared healthy.

The rate of fish dying appears to have eased in recent days, said Sam Sheppard, regional supervisor for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Sheppard added that it was too soon to say if the decrease in deaths would prove lasting.

Officials have warned outbreaks of the parasite are possible in future years now that it's been established in the Yellowstone.

Montana Wildfire Roundup For August 29, 2016 (Montana Public Radio)

By MTPR News •

The latest on wildfires around western Montana.

Last Update 5:35 p.m. 08/29/16

The Clear Creek Fire popped up early Saturday morning on tribal land 3 miles northwest of Perma on the Flathead Reservation.

It’s just over 1,200 acres, and zero percent contained, says Tribal Fire Prevention Specialist C.T. Camel.

"Last couple days just been burnout operations, trying to get a hold of it. Because it’s gonna get really warm these next couple days.”

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes’ Division of Fire is fighting the blaze.

It’s cause is still under investigation.

Update: 10:38 a.m., 08/29/16

The Copper King Fire, under the command of Greg Poncin's Type I Incident Management Team, has reached 24,017 acres and remains 15 percent contained.

A community meeting will be held on Monday, August 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sanders County Fairground Pavilion (30 River Road, Plains, MT). Fire and local officials will provide an update on current and project fire activity.

There are 780 personnel working the fire, located eight miles outside of Thompson Falls and one mile north of Highway 200. The Copper King Fire has cost an estimated $15 million so far.

Yesterday aerial resources conducted burnout operations on the northern perimeter while hotshot crews built hand lines around the active southeast edge.

Helicopters dropped 258,000 gallons of water while small planes spread 36,500 gallons of retardant.

Today's weather is expected to bring in a high pressure front, with low humidity and high temperatures. This could result in increased fire activity, though winds are not predicted to be a problem.

Over the next 24-48 hours, officials say the construction of indirect lines and firing operations are crucial. Scoping for additional contingent lines will continue for the benefit of communities to the east.

In Yellowstone National Park, the Berry Fire continues to keep the south entrance to the park closed.

The Maple Fire in Yellowstone National Park, located about four miles north of West Yellowstone, has reached 31,405 acres. All of Gneiss Trail remains closed, including the Cougar Creek cabin.

The Maple Fire has yet to reach the Madison River or Madison Junction, and has not yet required burn out operations near Highway 191. A Red Flag weather warning is in effect throughout today.

Diane Hutton's Wildland Fire Management Team has assumed command of the Maple Fire and is stationed in West Yellowstone.

There will be a Maple Fire community meeting Monday, August 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of Latter Day Saints, 245 Faithful St., West Yellowstone, MT.

The Bierney Creek Fire west of Lakeside is transitioning from a Type 3 team to a smaller Type 4 team as containment operations continue to be successful. The fire is 90 percent contained.

The 60 acre fire, discovered on August 22, has been declared 'human caused' by fire officials.

The Roaring Lion Fire located five miles southwest of Hamilton remains at 8,533 acres and 70 percent contained. Firefighters continue to put out hotspots, evaluate containment lines, protect structures, and monitor for erosion possibilities where they have built defensive lines.

Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft continue to drop water and retardant when necessary. Area closures remain in effect.

NORTH DAKOTA

Oil pipeline protests in North Dakota draw Native Americans, celebrities

(Christian Science Monitor)

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's protests against a four-state oil pipeline have drawn members of other tribes, as well as a few Hollywood stars.

By Jason Thomson, Staff August 29, 2016

Oil pipelines are no strangers to controversy, often courting a wide range of opposing opinions: Witness the years of debate that plagued the Keystone XL project between the United States and Canada, eventually blocked by US President Obama in November 2015.

The latest project to attract the ire of protesters, a 1,100-mile pipeline already under construction, is set to pass through four US states – Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Its aim is to transport Bakken shale from North Dakota directly to US Gulf Coast refineries, the first pipeline to do so.

The core group of opposition is the native American Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which says the pipeline could disturb sacred sites, as well as contaminate water for millions of people. They have been joined by activists from dozens of different tribes, and the protest, which began in April, now boasts upward of 1,000 indigenous participants.

"The things that have happened to tribal nations across this nation have been unjust and unfair, and this has come to a point where we can no longer pay the costs for this nation's well-being," Dave Archambault, chair of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, told Democracy Now last week. "All too often we share similar concerns, similar wrongdoings to us, so we are uniting, and we're standing up, and we're saying, 'No more.' "

The protests have temporarily shut down construction, and about 30 people have been arrested in recent weeks. The group behind the pipeline, Dakota Access, filed a restraining order against Mr. Archambault and other protesters earlier this month in federal court; the tribe subsequently sought a preliminary injunction to halt construction.

As legal proceedings unfolded over the $3.7 billion project last week in the US District Court for the District of Columbia, about 100 members of the native American group protested outside. They were joined by actors Susan Sarandon, Riley Keough, and Shailene Woodley.

"I'm here as a mother and a grandmother," said Ms. Sarandon, an Oscar-winning actress known for social and political activism, "to thank the people of the Standing Rock community for bringing our attention to this horrible thing that is happening to their land, which in turn will endanger all of us... because all of our waters are connected."

As part of their legal case, the protesters say the US Army Corps of Engineers violated historic preservation and environmental laws by giving the pipeline their approval. Supporters counter that the project would, in fact, provide safer and cheaper passage for the Bakken shale, when compared with road or rail transport.

District Court Judge James Boasberg is expected to announce his decision on the preliminary injunction requested by the tribe no later than Sept. 9.

'We're not going home': inside the North Dakota oil pipeline protest (The Guardian, US edition)

Nicky Woolf in Cannon Ball, North Dakota

Monday 29 August 2016 16.16 EDT
Last modified on Tuesday 30 August 2016 10.53 EDT

The Cannonball river flows into the mighty Missouri about 50 miles due south of Bismarck, North Dakota.

At its confluence, a protest encampment – really a series of camps, on both sides of the Cannonball, strewn with kitchens and canteens, portable toilets, stabling for horses, sweat lodges and tall teepees, and stands selling indigenous art – has sprung up.

The inhabitants are there to block the planned $3.7bn Dakota Access Pipeline, which would transport fracked crude from the Bakken oil field in North Dakota to a refinery near Chicago.

Many at the encampment speak of two prophecies, dating back to the 1890s. A leader called Black Elk foretold that in seven generations, the Native American nations will unite to save the Earth; another legend predicted that a zuzeca snake – a black snake – would threaten the world. For many of the protesters here, the pipeline is that black snake. They are the seventh generation: their moment of destiny has come.

The pipeline's planned route takes it close to the northern boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and the town of Cannon Ball within it, which means it would cross the Missouri immediately upstream, endangering, protesters say, the reservation's drinking water and threatening sacred sites. At Standing Rock, they have put their bodies between the water and the oil.

A few days earlier, on 24 August, a federal judge in Washington DC delayed a ruling over whether indigenous rights were violated by the approval of the project. Tribal members say they were not sufficiently consulted about the route and are suing for an injunction.

The population of the camp ebbs and flows. Many have given up jobs and brought their families here, and a core of between 500 and 1,000 people live here semi-permanently. Some, such as Wiyaca Eagleman, a member of the Sicangu Lakota from Rosebud, South Dakota, have been here since the beginning of April. He plans to be here, he said, "as long as it takes".

Hundreds more join when they can, swelling the camp's numbers on weekends. Others come when they get time and bring what supplies they can.

It is an unprecedented gathering. Members of more than 90 Native American nations and tribes have a presence here, according to Eagleman, who has become a sort of unofficial spokesman for the protest camp. Up the road, where the building site was besieged, the flags of many of those nations now fly together. The unity on display here is a dream come true for Eagleman. "There has been no moment like this in history," he said.

On Saturday, a delegation from the Crow nation arrived from Montana, bearing offerings of firewood and 700lb of buffalo meat. That's truly historic: the Crow and the Lakota have been enemies for more than a century. They were at war once; the Crow acted as scouts for Gen George Custer. Buffalo meat has powerful symbolic value: a gesture of solidarity and friendship from longtime former foes.

Dennis Banks, a member of the Chippewa nation of Minnesota and one of the founders of the civil rights group the American Indian Movement in the 1960s, who met the Crow delegation, recounted the meeting. "The main speaker said, 'I know you think of Crow as working with the enemy – but we too struggled for water rights, treaty rights'," Banks said.

Omaka Nawicakinciji of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota participates with his mother Heather Mendoza during a rally on the Dakota Access Pipeline. Photograph: Alex Wong/Getty Images

Then he paused. "The Missouri river starts up there," he added, to indicate that the Crow and the Lakota share more, now, than just food and firewood. The river connects them, too.

Ladonna Allard is a member of the Dakota Sioux. The first protest camp, named Sacred Stone for the perfectly round stones that were formed by a whirlpool where the two rivers met, was erected in April on Allard's land. The whirlpool is gone now, its eddies quieted by a dam built by the army corps of engineers in 1948, which also flooded the lush forest that abutted Allard's birthplace.

"This is sacred land," Allard told the Guardian, speaking by a campfire on which burritos cooked in aluminum foil. Children and dogs played; a brilliant sunset had just turned to dusk. "This is not about trying to be a protester," she said. "I am a mother. My son is buried at the top of that hill. I can't let them build a pipeline by my son's grave."

Looking across the Missouri from the camp, you can see the route of the pipeline on the east bank. Diggers and bulldozers began digging out the turf on the west bank, a mile north of the camp, churning the green prairie to brown clod, in August – accompanied by armed security guards.

They were ordered to stop when protesters, some on horseback, broke on to the site and surrounded the machines on 10 August. Eighteen were arrested, including Standing Rock tribal chairman David Archambault II.

Madonna Antoine Eagle Hawk, a member of the Sicango Rosebud Sioux, arrived last Friday and quickly assumed the role of head chef of the Rosebud camp. The children, she said, call her "Unci", the Lakota word for grandmother. "I'm proud to be here," she said. "It's a powerful feeling."

“Right now, all these different tribes – this will never happen again in our lifetime,” she said. “If we don’t make a stand, who else will?”

Richard Leading Fighter Jr – another member of the Rosebud tribe, a biology student and a distance runner – joined Eagle Hawk in the kitchen tent. He has assumed the role of lifeguard in the camp, keeping an eye on the children who frolic and splash in the Cannonball. He’s been here two weeks now and is preparing to return to university, but like many in the camp, is planning on coming back when he can.

“This feeling is history, right here,” he said. He hunkered down on his shins to grab a handful of soil, grey from the ash of the cooking fire. “We’re doing something that will be in stories told for our grandchildren,” he said, as the earth streamed through his fingers.

“I know we can defeat this,” he said. “I’m hoping the world is with us.”

United Blood Services testing some blood for Zika (Bismarck Tribune)

- JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune
- Aug 29, 2016

United Blood Services is testing the blood of all donors at risk of having contracted the Zika virus.

Zika is spread mostly by infected Aedes species mosquitoes, which are not found in North Dakota. While most people get mild symptoms from the virus, it can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her fetus and can cause birth defects, including microcephaly and other brain abnormalities. There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika.

The Food and Drug Administration last week recommended testing all donated blood nationwide for Zika. The agency previously had recommended deferring anyone at risk of having contracted the virus.

Marni Wild, district director of manufacturing and laboratory services at United Blood Services, said the FDA only is recommending — not requiring — all blood to be tested. UBS, which handles blood donations in North Dakota, has been testing the blood of donors at risk of having contracted the virus since before the FDA made the recommendation as a precautionary measure, she said.

Michelle Feist, epidemiology and surveillance program manager at the North Dakota Department of Health, said active transmission of Zika is not happening in North Dakota, because the types of mosquitos that carry the virus are not found in the state.

However, people can contract the virus if they travel to a place with Zika or if they have sex with someone who has Zika. Wild said UBS asks questions during its pre-donation screening to see if donors are at risk of having Zika; if so, their blood automatically is screened before being used.

Wild did not know how much each Zika test costs UBS, but she said there is a financial hit on the organization each time a new test is added. She asked that anyone healthy and eligible to donate blood do so to help those who may need it.

While people in North Dakota are not at high risk to contract Zika, Feist said it is important for pregnant women or for couples who are planning to become pregnant to talk to their doctor about risk if they plan to travel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintain a list of places where Zika transmission is occurring, which should be consulted before travel, Feist said.

Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)
Posted by Randy Appleton

August 30, 2016 4:27 AM

Automation and budget-cutting have led many freight and passenger railroads across the United States to cut crew sizes. As a logical result of such staff reductions, many of the largest trains moving along the nation's rails have only a single engineer in the locomotive—even those transporting oil and toxic chemicals. As recently as 20 years ago, a standard long-distance train crew consisted of an engineer, a fireman, a conductor and two

Regulators and rail worker unions have raised alarms about train crew reductions for many years. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) responded in 2015 by drafting a rule mandating minimum crew sizes of two people for Class I railroads, a group that includes Amtrak, BNSF, CSX and Norfolk Southern. The rule was published for comment this past winter, and the FRA held a hearing on its provision in July 2016.

FRA experts and representatives of rail employees, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, argued for larger train crews. They cited incidents like a conductor taking over for an incapacitated engineer aboard an out of control engine in North Dakota. The conductor's actions prevented a major derailment and likely explosion.

Arguing against the two-crew person minimum, rail companies said, against actual evidence, that "no evidence" existed to prove that adding crew to one-person trains could prevent accidents, injuries, deaths and property damage. The corporations also claimed that putting more than one person on a train would impose unsupportable costs on their operations.

FRA analysts countered the cost complaint by noting that putting one more person in a locomotive would require a maximum expenditure of $27.7 million over 10 years. That is far below the estimated value of the workers' lives expected to be saved and a tiny fraction of revenues for companies that regularly report annual earnings of several billion.

Having represented railroad employees injured in crashes and derailments for three decades, I know that placing more than one person in a locomotive adds an invaluable safety factor. Even with the (too slow) deployment of braking technology like positive train control, the role of a trained human in preventing tragedies cannot be overemphasized. Should an equipment failure occur or should an engineer suffer an unexpected injury or illness, having a conductor or other crew member present can make the difference between a disaster and a near-miss.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No stories today.

UTAH

Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 29 2016 01:21PM • Last Updated Aug 29 2016 10:30 pm

Aided by fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft, about 50 firefighters worked Monday to keep the 4,000-acre Box Canyon Fire from spreading outside its remote, steep and rugged perimeter in Summit County.

The human-caused, four-week-old blaze continued to consume conifer, aspen and fallen dead timber about 12 miles east of Oakley, and it began Monday at 20 percent containment. Crews were focused on preventing any further spread downslope into Smith and Morehouse Canyon, or toward the Ledgefork Campground, Fire Incident Commander Nick Hillman reported.

No structures were threatened and no injuries had been reported, but the campground, the Smith and Morehouse Reservoir boat ramp and the Mud Lake Flats area, along with some trails in those districts, were closed for public safety reasons.

The Peterson Hollow Fire, now mostly burning toward the Idaho side of the state line, had topped 1,200 acres and was 22 percent contained as of Monday, said Fire Information Officer Sierra Hellstrom.

In all, 311 firefighters battled that blaze of undetermined origin. Crews were concentrating on keeping the flames within the unpopulated and rough terrain where it began Aug. 21, burning mostly timber and grass about 6 miles northwest of Garden City, Utah.

"Despite some tree torching, the Peterson Hollow Fire [has] made no significant runs," Hellstrom reported.

Meanwhile, central Utah's Briggs Fire was being monitored by about 10 firefighters, but otherwise being allowed to burn in the Beaver District of the Fishlake National Forest. In spots, back fires were set to deprive the blaze of uncontrolled fuels.

"Over the last 14 days a lot of progress has been made in firing operations, improving contingency lines and protecting values at risk," said Fire Information Officer Daniel Claessen, adding that it likely will take the onset of winter and snowfall to finally snuff the last of the flames.

The lightning-sparked fire had burned 3,418 acres along the south fork of North Creek since it was first reported on Aug. 9, about 10 miles northeast of Beaver.

Several other, smaller wildfires also were being allowed to burn throughout the state where potential for structural damage was nil, and the benefits to the health of forest lands involved were deemed positive in the long term.

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

Written by Kimberly Scott

ST. GEORGE — A group of firefighters from Michigan on their way to the Box Canyon wildfire in Utah were involved in a crash on Interstate 35W in Anoka County, Minnesota, which left two firefighters dead and multiple others seriously injured.

The driver of the truck was subsequently charged with two counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

At approximately 3 p.m. Saturday, a truck carrying nine members of a wildland firefighting crew left the roadway for an unknown reason, struck the median cable barriers and rolled, according to a statement issued by Minnesota State Patrol.

The wildland fire crew was from the Beartown Firefighters, which is based in Baraga on Michigan's Upper Peninsula and is managed by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

State Patrol officials identified the driver of the truck as 28-year-old Michael Johnson.

Eight of the passengers were identified as 23-year-old James Shelifoe; 25-year-old Alan Swartz; 26-year-old Dave Varline; 33-year-old Ross Jaukkuri; 34-year-old Gavin Loonsfoot and Joseph Jossens, all of Michigan; 29-year-old Shashaywin Sandman, of Minnesota; and 26-year-old Tyler Tolonen, of Wisconsin.

Shelifoe and Swartz were pronounced dead at the scene, according to the State Patrol.

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community released a statement about the crash on its Facebook page Saturday night: "Our hearts are broken and our prayers are with the family members and those injured."

In a separate statement Sunday, the tribal government said that the injured firefighters were expected to recover, but released no details about their conditions.

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred, according to the statement. The wildland fire crews were reportedly traveling in a convoy of three but became separated from the truck that crashed.

"Those firefighters are understandably shaken and are getting much-needed support from local agencies," the statement said.

Officials investigating the crash said Johnson showed "signs of impairment and combative behavior" when officers arrived at the scene of the crash, according to charges filed Monday in Anoka County District Court documents and obtained by ABC News.

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel and that he hadn't slept more than 45 minutes in more than 24 hours, according to a criminal complaint.

Johnson also allegedly admitted to using marijuana early Saturday and to using cocaine two days earlier. Toxicology results are pending.

As a result of the crash and subsequent investigation, Johnson was arrested and charged with two felony counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

The Box Canyon Fire in Summit County east of Park City had consumed 4,000 acres as of Monday.

Unstable weather systems brought heavy winds into the area, increasing the fire's activity, according to a press release from U.S. Forest Service.

Officials said Sunday that the Utah National Guard had been activated to assist in battling the wildfire.

Utah Guard's 97th Aviation Troop Command and 2nd Battalion 211th Aviation responded to the Box Canyon Fire with two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, according to a press release from the Utah National Guard.

The human-caused fire is reportedly 20 percent contained.

Persons arrested or charged are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law or as otherwise decided by a trier-of-fact.

WYOMING

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

Since its discovery, Grand Teton National Park has been actively managing the Berry Fire for ecological benefits. The fire originated in the northern portion of the park, near Berry and Owl Creeks on the west side of Jackson Lake. Extreme fire behavior as a result of high winds and low relative humidity on Monday, August 22 pushed the fire across Jackson Lake and into the Teton Wilderness on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. A Type 2 Great Basin Incident Management Team took command of the fire on August 24th.

Closures:

At this time, fire managers anticipate being able to reopen Highway 89/191/287 tomorrow, Tuesday, August 30. This is subject to change dependent on weather and fire conditions. Until then the highway does remain closed for safety between the South Gate of Yellowstone National Park and Leeks Marina.

While Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and Bridger Teton National Forest all have area closures in effect, both National Parks are open to visitors. This includes Leeks Marina and most visitor destinations and services. Travel times to Yellowstone may be increased depending on planned routes. Check before you go. And please drive carefully, with lights on, due to both visibility concerns from smoke and increased vehicle numbers.

Current Situation:

The Berry Fire was much more active yesterday. Most of the growth occurred on the northeast corner of the fire - in the Teton Wilderness - and the southwest portion of the fire - along Jackson Lake. Firefighters

have completed preparatory actions around Flagg Ranch, as well as on historic cabins and lookouts to minimize impacts from the fire, in the event the fire should reach those locations.

Today's weather will again be warmer and drier with atmospheric instability, which can contribute to rapid fire growth. Temperatures will rise into the mid-80s, and the relative humidity may drop into single digits. Light winds will prevail over the fire area. Despite the shorter days, thermal belts are allowing the fire to burn actively throughout the night.

Western Wyoming is experiencing historical lows for fuel moistures. Currently, no significant moisture is in the extended forecast. The conditions are similar to 2012, when fires burned actively well into September. The Berry Fire will continue to burn in the coming weeks, accomplishing the goal of rejuvenating the ecosystem through the natural process of wildland fire.

Firefighters expect to finish their work along Highway 89/191/287 today. Unless fire behavior or weather conditions change today, the road will reopen to the general public tomorrow.

For more information:

Follow Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton National Forest on social media: @GrandTetonNPS and @BridgerTetonNF on both Facebook and Twitter. Information on other fires in western Wyoming is available at www.TetonFires.com. And information on fires burning in eastern Idaho can be found at www.IdahoFireInfo.com, or by filtering Idaho incidents on InciWeb.

One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

Bruce Mason -- Teton Valley Weather

August 27, 2016. The Tie Canyon fire had been slow the last couple of days, but the wind was forecast to gust up from the west in the afternoon. As that afternoon wind increased, near Hoback in Wyoming there was an earthquake. True story with a happy ending. Our amazing firefighters from Great Basin Team 5 had put down barriers which successfully held the fire from progressing toward Victor. In addition, the earthquake was magnitude 4.8, a light quake. It was felt throughout Teton Valley but no damage was reported. It was a good day.

Saturday is also a good reason to stop and think what might have happened. Not to scare, but because playing the “what if” game in your mind can make you more ready to take action should a number of things go bad at once. When situations turn really dicey, it's usually not just one thing that's gone wrong, but a combination. What if Saturday had gone differently?

Suppose that the wind had picked up more than forecast and pushed the fire toward Victor. And suppose that at the same time, the earthquake had been much stronger and much closer to Teton Valley. Well planned and prepared evacuations would have begun just as the earthquake damaged the roads and bridges making evacuations as planned impossible. Families would be separated. Shelters would have been set up by the Red Cross in Driggs and Alta for the Victor evacuees, but how could they get there with, say, Yellow Bridge gone or Highway 33 buckled and impassable? Are alternate routes available? Do the drivers on the roads in front of you know them? Do you know them? Can those routes handle the traffic? Were they damaged, too? And

what about the fire; is it going to stop at the predesignated evacuation zone or go beyond, further clogging the blocked roads with frightened residents?

This past week was a great drill if it prompted us to make individual and family disaster plans. Where will your family meet up? Do you each have a go bag, jump bag, or 72 hour kit packed with the essentials you'll need away from home a while? Have you thought about what you would grab if you could only take an armload of items with you from your home? Can you easily get from point A to point B by more than one route? Does each family member know how to contact the one person, preferably outside of the valley, who will be your central information point?

Did you know that detailed suggestions for this kind of plan have been made by Teton County Emergency Management? It has been tailored to Teton Valley and the kinds of disasters we are most likely to face here. Part one of this guide can be found at:

These guides are meticulously detailed and will take more than a quick glance by everyone in the family for them to be effective. Make the time now, because as the guide says, when disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed.

And one more thing this week showed, the value of the CodeRED emergency alert system. Should an emergency occur near you, with CodeRED you will be notified by phone, and if you choose, on your smart phone using the app. If you have a land line phone in Teton Valley, you are already enrolled and will get a call should something important come up. If you have a cell phone, you will have to go on line and register with CodeRED to receive notifications on it. You can do that at:

Either way, you will receive word of impending situations faster by phone than if you have to wait for an officer to knock on your door.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

By Maggie Fox

NBC News, August 29, 2016

A drug already on the market to treat worm infections and another being tested against liver diseases may also help treat Zika virus infections, researchers reported Monday.

The findings are a rare bit of good news about Zika, which has caused epidemics across Latin America and the Caribbean, and smaller outbreaks in Florida, the Pacific and southeast Asia.

Zika has caused smaller epidemics of birth defects, notably brain damage that can cause miscarriages or profound developmental injuries in babies. It can also cause a paralyzing condition called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

It’s spread by mosquitoes and by sex. As of now, there is no vaccine or treatment.

The team at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Johns Hopkins University and Florida State University looked first in a library of existing drug compounds for products that might act to stop Zika from killing brain cells and perhaps stop it from replicating itself.

“It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug.”

"It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug," says Hongjun Song of Johns Hopkins, who worked on the project. "In this sort of global health emergency, we don't have that kind of time."

But libraries of existing compounds let researchers use a computer to look for drugs that work in specific ways.

"So instead of using new drugs, we chose to screen existing drugs," said Dr. Guo-li Ming, a neurology professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "In this way, we hope to create a therapy much more quickly."

They were delighted to find a drug already on the market and considered safe to use in pregnant women. "Niclosamide is an FDA-approved drug (trade name Niclocide) that has been used in humans to treat worm infections for nearly 50 years, and it is well tolerated," the team wrote in their report, published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"It is known to inhibit several viruses in culture systems, including the Japanese encephalitis flavivirus."

Japanese encephalitis is a relative of Zika and also carried by mosquitoes.

Tests on human brain stem cells in lab dishes showed it could interfere with Zika's replication in those cells. "Niclosamide is a category B drug, which indicates that no risk to fetuses has been found in animal studies. It has low toxicity in mammals," they added. "Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

Another drug, called emricasan, helped prevent Zika from killing those cells.

"Emricasan is currently being evaluated in phase 2 clinical trials for the reduction of hepatic injury and liver fibrosis caused by chronic hepatitis C infection," the team wrote.

"Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

A third compound called PHA-690509 also helped stop Zika replicating and from killing nerve cells, they said.

While the drugs work well in lab dishes full of cells, "we don't know if they can work in humans in the same way," Song said.

Niclosamide works in the gut, but it's not clear if it's possible to get it into the brain, Song said.

The researchers think the drugs might work best as a cocktail, attacking the virus from several fronts — in much the same way as drug cocktails fight the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS.

"To address these questions, additional studies need to be done in animal models as well as humans to demonstrate their ability to treat Zika infection," Ming said in a statement. "So we could still be years away from finding a treatment that works."

The White House has asked for $1.9 billion in federal funding to help pay for studies like these and to keep them going after Zika is no longer making headlines. But Congress could not agree on a funding plan and took a seven-week break without appropriating any cash.

The NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies have taken money from other programs to pay for urgent Zika research.

At the beginning of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, researchers complained that they'd been working on drugs and vaccines for years but that inconsistent funding and a lack of interest from Congress and from drug companies made it impossible to make better progress. More than 11,000 people died in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea before the Ebola epidemic wound down last year.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 12:00:13 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@mail.mil'(b)(6)@mail.mil';'(b)(6 (b)(6)@nd.gov';(b)(6)@state.sd.us'(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@utah.gov'(b)(6)@wyo.gov';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';'(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark
(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26
Attachments: R8 Clips 10-26-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

MONTANA:

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NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

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Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

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CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff’s deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline. The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff’s Department, Marion County Sheriff’s Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff’s Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. “The federal government pays for it through FEMA,” said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

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Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

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Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the

road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

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"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Phan, Minh
Sent: 2 Aug 2016 11:23:15 -0400
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@utah.gov(b)(6)@wyo.g
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y.mil;(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov;Wernisch, Phil;Coley,
Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark
J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@sba.go
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Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel
Subject: FEMA Region 8 Clips Tuesday August 2, 2016
Attachments: R8 Clips 08-02-16.docx

Have a Terrific Tuesday!

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 2, 2016

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COLORADO:

Colorado Springs homeowners clean up after "catastrophic" hail storm

(KOAA-Pueblo)

Lena Howland | August 1, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS - The cleanup continues in the aftermath of last week's hail storm on the south end of Colorado Springs. Insurance companies say they've seen so much damage, they are now calling it a catastrophic weather event.

“It just sounded like literally someone was throwing baseballs at my house!" Sharon Navarrette said.

This house on the eastern edge of Colorado Springs took a beating during the storm.

"I started running from room to room and the hail was just hitting and I was expecting every window to shatter," she said.

A family room window, a skylight, a car, and even her sunflowers, destroyed.

"It wasn't a tornado but the damage that it did to homes was almost as devastating," she said.

A storm so big, insurance companies have now classified it as a catastrophe.

"Anytime that there's a significant number of claims like this, it will reach a threshold between a storm and the number of claims in a given area in which we categorize a catastrophe," Rich Johnson, a spokesman for USAA said.

That's why USAA has deployed its Catastrophe Response Team in the JCPenny parking lot off of Powers. The last time they needed this type of response in Colorado Springs was after nearly 500 homes were destroyed in the Black Forest Fire three summers ago.

"We want a convenient place for them to be able to drive up, maybe have a cold drink, bottle of water and start their claim," Johnson said.

USAA alone has already received more than 15,000 hail damage claims.
"Auto body shops, glass shops, roofing repair companies, they're going to see an influx in volume, and so really having that patience, materials are going to get low," he said.
With an estimated $40,000 worth of damage done to Navarette's house, she says she's just grateful she has the insurance to cover it.
"We will rebuild, they will get the new roof on and repaint our house and everything and have it looking like it's supposed to be when we bought it," she said.
Moving forward, insurance companies recommend you file your claims online whenever possible, do what you can to prevent further damage to your property, make sure you document those repairs and be patient along the way.
They say it could still be a matter of several weeks before the entire city has cleaned up.

MONTANA:

New DES director survives 1st trial by fire (Billings Gazette)

Mike Ferguson | July 31, 2016

Last week's Fritz fire may have been his baptism by fire, but Brad Shoemaker has emerged unsinged from that significant early test in his new job as the county's director of disaster and emergency services.

"The key to success" in such a large, cooperative effort to save lives and property, he said this week, "is getting everyone to operate toward the same goal, and in this case, I think all the agencies did an excellent job doing that."

Shoemaker, 29, began work April 1 after previous stints with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. He said he had an idea last winter that the current fire season would be a challenge after taking a look at the area snowpack. That suspicion was confirmed in May, "when we started looking at fuel numbers and how things were trending, that we'd have an above-average year," he said.

He began meeting with fire chiefs around the county "so we'd all be on the same page and so we could do some preseason preparation."

Others charged with protecting the public in Yellowstone County say they appreciate Shoemaker's openness and proactive approach, as well as his ability to communicate — both among fire and law enforcement agencies and with the public.

"The Fritz Fire was a pretty big deal here in Yellowstone County, and for him to be able to make the call for graders and dozers and other county resources and to work with the DNRC to start mobilizing equipment from surrounding counties, that sure took a lot of the load off me," said Rick Cortez, chief of the 20-member Blue Creek Volunteer Fire Department and the incident commander for the fire west of Billings. "That freed me up to concentrate on the incident at hand."

“He is very knowledgeable and easy to talk to,” said Yellowstone County Sheriff Mike Linder. “He’s proactive, which doesn’t surprise me based on the experience he’s had from previous positions. He’s enthusiastic about the job, and from what I’ve seen, I think he will work out very well.”

“He is engaged, especially as a public information officer,” said Billings Fire Chief Paul Dextras. “That makes a real difference when all kinds of people are calling him at once or he’s dealing with the media. His job is to let people know there’s a plan in place and the progress that's being made, and from that aspect he’s doing a stellar job. It’s more than a full-time job, but he seems to be managing and prioritizing things well.”

Shoemaker earned his undergraduate degree in forestry from Virginia Tech University and a master’s degree in emergency management from Anna Maria College in Paxton, Mass. He and his wife have a 15-month-old daughter. During the weekend of the Fritz fire July 22-24, he got home once, for five hours, which he spent, understandably, sleeping.

“We’re used to the summer busy season, so we do our traveling around Thanksgiving and Christmas,” he said.

Everything in its place

Even an initial glance at his third-story office in the Yellowstone County Courthouse proves Shoemaker prefers order over chaos. The office is full of thick three-ring binders and maps — even a couple white boards with columns of what Shoemaker refers to as “my half-baked ideas" — but not turnout gear or self-contained breathing apparatuses.

There’s a reason for that, he said.

“Credit for the actual responsibility of saving all those homes goes to the guys in the engines, trucks and helicopters who are doing the hard work,” he said. “My job is to coordinate it and get it moving in the same direction.”

The list of agencies involved in the Fritz fire response is extensive, including “nearly every fire district in the county,” the sheriff’s office, Montana Highway Patrol, DNRC fire and air personnel, private aircraft providers, Red Cross, contract U.S. Forest Service firefighters — even the Yellowstone County Extension Service, which helped gather and protect livestock, among other duties.

“What I try to do is fit together individuals and groups with different skill sets,” he said. “I did very little of the actual work” of dousing the Fritz fire, he said. “They get all the credit for getting the work done.”

Where Shoemaker can take credit, fire chiefs and law enforcement officials say, is in upgrading the county's disaster planning.

“The plan itself is important, but it has to be written in a flexible way,” Shoemaker said. “You can’t predict every input.”

He's worked to involve all the fire agencies and districts as well as law enforcement in the planning process.

"They have to have face-to-face interaction, and a prior relationship," he said, to ensure that "an element of trust has been developed. A lot can be taken care of just bringing in the right people, and that's my job."

Once the fire season winds down, emergency and disaster managers in the West typically turn to planning. Shoemaker said he's already working on communications systems among the county's various responders to improve both fire and ambulance response. He hopes to be successful writing grants to purchase about $600,000 in radio system upgrades, since grants will pay for up to 75 percent of the cost.

"I hope we can finish that over three years," with the upgrades occurring in stages, he said.

"The quick way to go is to ask for money and then spend it out your ears if you want to," he said. But a better route is to develop a long-term communications plan "that's well thought-out and well written, stretched out over a timeline. There are federal and state funds to get that paid for out of other pockets. I want to pursue those grants to be as responsible as we can be."

Another key communications component — between his office and the public — will also be improved, once a software upgrade can be purchased to allow text blasts to be effectively sent to smart phones in Yellowstone County in times of emergency.

Then there are longer-term projects, including the modernization of the county's emergency operations center, now in the basement of Fire Station No. 1 in Billings. That will also be mostly grant-funded, he said.

All the while, Shoemaker said a review of the county's emergency operations plan continues to move forward.

"If we stopped our monthly meetings every time we have an incident, I'd never make any progress," he said, adding that the potential for spring floods and potential disasters at the county's three refineries and extensive pipeline system "are year-round items."

"Even after the Fritz fire, I still came to work for the rest of the week, because there was still stuff to do," he said. "I went home and slept for those five hours — and those were five really good hours."

Roaring Lion fire claims one life, 14 homes near Hamilton (Montana Standard)

Rob Chaney | August 2, 2016

The Roaring Lion fire has claimed one life, but the scores of people who fled the flames Sunday were still waiting Monday night to learn the fate of their homes as officials kept the area off limits.

“It was still too hot and too volatile to let people back in,” said Ravalli County Sheriff Chris Hoffman. “Those areas will remain closed for now.”

Bruce Lee Robinson, 64, died of cardiac arrest during the mandatory evacuation from the fast-moving fire southwest of Hamilton.

The Ravalli County Sheriff’s Office confirmed late Monday that at least 14 homes have been destroyed. Specific addresses were being withheld until the owners could be notified.

The Roaring Lion capitalized on some exotic wind conditions during its Sunday evening takeoff, and it will have more atypical weather on Tuesday.

“We expect to upgrade to red flag warnings on Tuesday afternoon, when a strong cold front moves in,” National Weather Service meteorologist Genki Kino said Monday. “A cold front this strong for this time of year is unusual.”

The front should bring winds with gusts between 25 and 35 mph through the Bitterroot and Missoula valleys on Tuesday afternoon, with speeds in the mountain ridges topping 50 mph around Tuesday evening. That’s likely to make firefighting on the 3,505-acre Roaring Lion fire 5 miles southwest of Hamilton even more challenging.

About 150 firefighters have been deployed to the blaze, with a Type I incident command team – deployed on the most serious fires — expected to take over operations Tuesday morning. The Roaring Lion fire has triggered evacuations of at least 500 people, with another 1,000 residents on pre-evacuation notice. The fire threatens about 400 primary homes as well as about 100 secondary homes near Hamilton.

Rick Potts has spent the summer at the St. Mary Peak fire lookout, about 23 air miles from Roaring Lion Canyon. Although he served on an initial attack team during the catastrophic Yellowstone National Park fires of 1988, he said he’d never witnessed fire behavior like Sunday’s in the Bitterroots.

“Watching that go from a thin plume of smoke to a roaring inferno within half an hour – I’ve never seen that,” Potts said. “It went from something you might handle with initial attack to something you couldn’t get close to. And the Forest Service and Hamilton Fire (Department) moved on it almost instantly. They had engines and a helicopter up there but by the time they got to it, it exploded up the hill, spotted and started a second fire. It just engulfed the whole mouth of the canyon.”

Many observers noticed the fire and smoke column rotating as it rose on Sunday evening. Kino said that’s because a regular down-canyon evening wind created spinning vortexes as the fire’s uphill heat pushed the opposite direction. The effect is similar to whirlpools that form between the main downstream current of a river and the upstream flow of a streamside eddy. In the Roaring Lion fire, the wind shear also created fire whirls that lifted tornadoes of flame hundreds of feet into the air.

Tuesday's cold front should pass out of the Bitterroot Mountains area by Wednesday morning. But it will be followed by persistent hot weather leading to a weekend of potential dry thunderstorms. Those storms carry lightning that could trigger more wildfires.

Missoula County fire officials raised the local fire danger status "very high" on Monday.

"All fuels both live and dead have dried to the point that fires will become very active quickly," said Jordan Koppen, spokesman for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. "We can't afford for anyone to be careless during activities that have the potential to start a fire, so we urge the public to be extremely cautious with fire."

Koppen added that equipment operators and motorists towing trailers should be especially careful about controlling hot metal and friction sparks while outdoors. More information on fire-safe tactics is available at http://firesafemt.org/.

On Monday afternoon, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced Roaring Lion firefighting efforts were eligible for federal assistance. Federal Emergency Management Agency funds can be used to cover 75 percent of state and local firefighting costs. However, the grants do not provide assistance for individual home or business owners affected by the fire, or other infrastructure damage related to the fire. FEMA spokesman Randy Welch said the money would pay for field camps, equipment use, repairs and replacement, tools materials and supplies.

The increased tempo of fire activity has forced state and federal fire crews to prioritize their resources. Lolo National Forest spokesman Boyd Hartwig said three 20-person Hotshot crews have been released from the 13-acre South Tamarack fire 6 miles north of St. Regis after reaching mop-up status on Monday. A Type-II initial attack crew remains on the scene, where the fire is 20 percent contained.

The Northern Region Geographic Area, which includes Montana, shifted to Preparedness Level 3 on Monday. That reflects the changing tempo of fire starts and need for personnel, equipment and aircraft. The Northern Region remains ranked fourth out of seven geographic areas as fires in Colorado and parts of the Southwest demand higher priority. As dry weather shifts to the Northwest, that priority will shift as well.

Statewide, Montana fire observers reported 15 new fires including two large incidents (Roaring Lion and Copper King). Those come on top of five existing large fires and dozens of smaller blazes.

The Copper King fire 8 miles east of Thompson Falls should move to a Type II incident command management on Tuesday. It has burned about 700 acres. As of Monday, it had a crew of 33 backed up by a helicopter on the line.

While no evacuations have been ordered, residents in the Copper King and Snider communities have been warned to prepare their structures for fire defense.

Several roads along the west side of the Thompson River have been closed for fire safety, as have the Copper King and Clark Memorial campgrounds.

Zero containment on Copper King Fire (ABC-FOX Montana)

Mackenzie Allen | August 1, 2016

KALISPELL - Officials with the Lolo National forest say the Copper King Fire, burning just outside of Thompson Falls has grown to 700 acres.

The fire broke out Sunday afternoon and a cause has not been identified.

According to spokesman John Hamilton there is no containment on the fire and personnel have begun notifying the 10-15 nearby residents of the situation, but he says he's "very confident" an evacuation will not be necessary at this point.

A Type II Incident Management Team is on their way and is scheduled to take over firefighting operations early Tuesday morning.

Currently 33 personnel, a helicopter and several engines are on scene.

A public meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday night at the Thompson Falls Community Center.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Lightning causes fire, spill at oilfield facility (Forum News Service)

Aug 1, 2016

NEW TOWN, N.D. – A lightning strike is blamed for a fire at a saltwater disposal well that occurred Sunday in Mountrail County, the North Dakota Oil and Gas Division said.

Whiting Oil and Gas Corp. reported that 400 barrels of produced water, or 16,800 gallons, were released, contained and recovered from a fire at a disposal well about 10 miles north of New Town.

Saltwater is a waste byproduct of oil production.

The fire, which involved five tanks at the location, is extinguished, said Alison Ritter, spokeswoman for the Oil and Gas Division. A state inspector visited the location.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Flood Of 2011 Gavins Point Withstood Historic River Surge (Yankton Daily)

Brayton Hagge | August 1, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of a series of stories this summer to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Missouri River flood of 2011.

In comparison to the repairs needed after the Missouri River flood in 2011, this year's Gavins Point Dam repairs are relatively minor.

"We've had really major stuff going on with the flood repairs from 2011 to 2015," said Dave Becker, operations project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Gavins Point. "Now we're just doing minor repairs out there. Things are in good working order."

This year's projects include installing new safety railings on the spillway and completing gate maintenance.

"Each year they bring (the gates) up and down to do maintenance on them," Becker said. "They clean them, power wash them and inspect the rollers on them to make sure they are functioning well. They are making sure those gates are ready to use when we need them."

He said none of this year's projects are related to the damages caused by the 2011 flood.

"The repairs of the flood damages were all completed last year," he explained.

After the flood, the dam was left in need of nearly $20 million worth of repairs. Becker said the damages were to be expected considering the record amounts of water which passed through the spillway gate, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers did face public concern on the matter.

"The public was in a very heightened state," Becker said. "They were very aware of the flood going on, so they were very watchful and concerned."

However, he maintained that the damages the dam sustained were in no way reflective of its ability to handle the flood.

"We had no concerns (about the dam), although we were monitoring it very closely," he said. "We had no big warning signs or anything like that (indicating) there were any major problems. Any time something is working hard, you just watch it closely."

After water levels lowered, crews began commencing work on major repair projects.

"One of the big (projects) was the repair of the spillway gates," Becker said. "(Workers) redid a fair number of the welds on the gates and inspected them. They repainted them and put new cables on them to lift and lower them. They also did maintenance on the gear boxes for the gates."

Repairs on the spillway apron, which consists of the concrete below the gates, comprised another large repair project.

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The Corps also installed 35 new relief wells and brought in 75,000 tons of riprap to replace the rock that had been swept away by the fast flowing waters.

Becker felt some of the adjustments made during the flood repairs could decrease the amount of work required to rehabilitate the dam in the case of another record flood.

"I would think our damages would be less than that because we went in with a bigger size of stone (riprap) that doesn't wash away as readily," he said. "But any time something gets a real hard workout like that, there's something that needs to be repaired."

According to Becker, now that all the flood repairs have been finished, the maintenance projects being completed this year are all the dam currently requires to stay in peak condition. The only other projects currently in the works involve resurfacing Crest Road this summer and updating the power plant throughout the next five years.

"We've been able to keep up with routine things because we have good funding and support, and because of that, we don't really have any real major work on the horizon," he said.
Becker predicted the 59-year-old dam could be kept in good working condition for many more years.
"Really as long as the public is supportive of the dam being here, we can continue to do the necessary operations and maintenance on it," he said.

Following the South Dakota drought online (KELO-Sioux Falls)

Mark Russo | August 1, 2016

PIERRE, SD (KELO-AM) South Dakota now has a website with updated drought information.

The website: drought.sd.gov,

Governor Daugaard says the website will help keep farmers and ranchers in the know.

"The website will include information such as the latest U.S. Drought Monitor, fire conditions, weather reports and agricultural information," says the Governor. "We know many people are impacted by the dry conditions and we want to provide the best information we can."

Other features on the website include a map comparing this year's drought to the 2012 drought and a fire map showing the number of acres burned and the perimeter of the fires on state jurisdictional land.

While there has been recent rainfall in some areas, extremely dry conditions exist in other parts of the state. An emergency fire declaration earlier had been declared for 13 central and western South Dakota counties impacted by the drought conditions. Those counties are Butte, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Hughes, Jackson, Jones, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins and Stanley.

UTAH:

Some evacuated areas open back up as Tokewanna Fire continues to burn 1,300 + acres (KUTV-Salt Lake City)

Cimaron Neugebauer | August 1, 2016

(KUTV) A wildfire that has been burning for the past 5 days near the Utah/Wyoming border has charred 1,300 acres and is 24 percent contained, as of Monday morning.

About 500 firefighters have been fighting the blaze, primarily on private land, located near the Meeks Cabin Dam about 15 miles south of Mountain View, Wyoming in Uinta County. The cause of the fire is unknown and still under investigation.

A few residents who were evacuated will be allowed to return to their homes today.

At noon on Monday residents living north of the intersection of Blacksfork Drive and County Road 271 (Meeks Cabin Dam Road) and the intersection of Wapati Road and East Wapati Road (including East Wapati Road itslef) will be allowed to return to their homes. These areas include Meeks Ridge and Aspen Springs subdivisions north of Cattle Guard 7. The Burearu of Land Management noted that residents may not have electrical power when they return. At this point, a few other areas remain closed to the public while firefighting efforts continue.

STILL CLOSED:

- The Uinta County Youth Camp
- Tokewanna and BlacksFork River Estates
- County Road 271 south to Meeks Cabin remain closed

The area of primary attention and concern has been protecting structures in the Tokewanna and Blacks Fork River Estates areas.

Continued hot temperatures and low relative humidity combined with the possibility of thunderstorms in the area will bring potential for increased fire activity in the area.

There will be a community meeting on Aug. 2 at 7 p.m. at the Mountain View High School located at 330 7th Street, Mountain View, Wyoming to give an update and discuss the state of the Tokewanna Fire.

WYOMING:

Beware of rattlesnakes this time of year (Casper Star-Tribune)

Kelsey Dayton | August 1, 2016

It feels like a slap and sounds like a pop. It’s the shimmying sound of the rattle afterward that’s terrifying.

Zack Walker, now non-game supervisor with Wyoming Game and Fish, was once working near Waltman studying rattlesnakes as the state herpetological coordinator. He jumped off a rock and had barely landed when he felt something hit him in the leg and heard the warning rattle.

“I jumped right back out of there,” he said.

It’s not a sound anyone wants to hear.

If you spend time in snake country, be especially careful this time of year, Walker said. While rattlesnakes usually spread across the landscape, they congregate to breed in mid-summer. If you see one, there’s probably more around, Walker said.

The snakes are found throughout the state, usually staying within 3 or 4 miles of where they hibernate.

“When you are in that pocket, you know you are in that pocket,” Walker said.

Despite emerging from hibernation a couple of weeks earlier than normal in the beginning of May, anecdotally, this year’s snake sightings seem to reflect a normal season, Walker said.

Eugene DuQuette, an emergency room doctor at Wyoming Medical Center, said in the hospital’s health news service that during one particularly wet spring and summer, he saw eight bites. Wyoming Medical Center reported only one bite so far this year.

Snake bites are rarely fatal in the United States. According to Wyoming Medical Center, without antivenin, snake bites have a 2 percent mortality rate and only .2 percent with it. In Wyoming there are even fewer as the rattlesnake isn’t as poisonous as some breeds.

The seriousness of a bite depends on the amount of venom the snake injects. Between 10 percent and 20 percent of snake bites are dry, meaning they don’t inject venom, Wyoming Medical Center reported.

Rattlesnake bites might cause heart arrhythmias, nose bleeds, bloody stools or vomit and, more rare in Wyoming, neurological changes like paralysis and weakness. They are treated with antivenin.

Walker has been struck more than once by rattlesnakes, but snake-proof gaiters protected him from ever being bitten.

“I’ve had many close encounters, but I’ve never had one get their fangs in me,” he said.

It doesn’t stop the jolt of adrenaline whenever he feels one strike and he wonders if it broke through.

Avoid a bite

- Make noise while walking in snake country, especially in grass where snakes are hard to spot. Wyoming snakes are not aggressive and usually strike because they are startled.
- Know where to look. Snakes are often in grassy areas where they are hard to see.
- Leave snakes alone. Don’t dig in burrows where snakes may live. Don’t try to catch a rattlesnake, even if you are trying to confirm a friend was bitten by one.
- Wear high-legged boots and gloves. Boots can prevent fangs from puncturing the skin, or minimize the amount of venom the snake can inject. Gloves will protect your hands.
- Watch the kids. Venom travels faster in smaller bodies.

What to do if you're bitten

- Call 911 immediately.
- Note the size. The smaller the snake, the more concentrated the venom.
- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Do not attempt to suck out the venom. You can poison yourself if it gets in the mouth and you can cause tissue damage around the bite.
- Keep bitten limb in a neutral position --- do not elevate.
- Do not ice the bite area.

- Stay calm. If you aren't in cell range, send someone else to get help. You have four to five hours before the venom has time to fully circulate.

Source: Dr. Eugene DuQuette and Wyoming Medical Center

Minh Phan
DHS/FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs
Phone: (303) 235-4943

Region VIII Clips
Tuesday, August 2, 2016

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

STORIES

COLORADO:

Colorado Springs homeowners clean up after "catastrophic" hail storm

(KOAA-Pueblo)

Lena Howland | August 1, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS - The cleanup continues in the aftermath of last week's hail storm on the south end of Colorado Springs. Insurance companies say they've seen so much damage, they are now calling it a catastrophic weather event.

“It just sounded like literally someone was throwing baseballs at my house!" Sharon Navarrette said.

This house on the eastern edge of Colorado Springs took a beating during the storm.

"I started running from room to room and the hail was just hitting and I was expecting every window to shatter," she said.

A family room window, a skylight, a car, and even her sunflowers, destroyed.

"It wasn't a tornado but the damage that it did to homes was almost as devastating," she said.

A storm so big, insurance companies have now classified it as a catastrophe.

"Anytime that there's a significant number of claims like this, it will reach a threshold between a storm and the number of claims in a given area in which we categorize a catastrophe," Rich Johnson, a spokesman for USAA said.

That's why USAA has deployed its Catastrophe Response Team in the JCPenny parking lot off of Powers. The last time they needed this type of response in Colorado Springs was after nearly 500 homes were destroyed in the Black Forest Fire three summers ago.

"We want a convenient place for them to be able to drive up, maybe have a cold drink, bottle of water and start their claim," Johnson said.

USAA alone has already received more than 15,000 hail damage claims.

"Auto body shops, glass shops, roofing repair companies, they're going to see an influx in volume, and so really having that patience, materials are going to get low," he said.

With an estimated $40,000 worth of damage done to Navarette's house, she says she's just grateful she has the insurance to cover it.

"We will rebuild, they will get the new roof on and repaint our house and everything and have it looking like it's supposed to be when we bought it," she said.

Moving forward, insurance companies recommend you file your claims online whenever possible, do what you can to prevent further damage to your property, make sure you document those repairs and be patient along the way.

They say it could still be a matter of several weeks before the entire city has cleaned up.

MONTANA:

New DES director survives 1st trial by fire (Billings Gazette)

Mike Ferguson | July 31, 2016

Last week's Fritz fire may have been his baptism by fire, but Brad Shoemaker has emerged unsinged from that significant early test in his new job as the county's director of disaster and emergency services.

"The key to success" in such a large, cooperative effort to save lives and property, he said this week, "is getting everyone to operate toward the same goal, and in this case, I think all the agencies did an excellent job doing that."

Shoemaker, 29, began work April 1 after previous stints with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. He said he had an idea last winter that the current fire season would be a challenge after taking a look at the area snowpack. That suspicion was confirmed in May, "when we started looking at fuel numbers and how things were trending, that we'd have an above-average year," he said.

He began meeting with fire chiefs around the county "so we'd all be on the same page and so we could do some preseason preparation."

Others charged with protecting the public in Yellowstone County say they appreciate Shoemaker's openness and proactive approach, as well as his ability to communicate — both among fire and law enforcement agencies and with the public.

"The Fritz Fire was a pretty big deal here in Yellowstone County, and for him to be able to make the call for graders and dozers and other county resources and to work with the DNRC to start mobilizing equipment from surrounding counties, that sure took a lot of the load off me," said Rick Cortez, chief of the 20-member Blue Creek Volunteer Fire Department and the incident commander for the fire west of Billings. "That freed me up to concentrate on the incident at hand."

"He is very knowledgeable and easy to talk to," said Yellowstone County Sheriff Mike Linder. "He's proactive, which doesn't surprise me based on the experience he's had from previous positions. He’s enthusiastic about the job, and from what I’ve seen, I think he will work out very well.”

“He is engaged, especially as a public information officer,” said Billings Fire Chief Paul Dextras. “That makes a real difference when all kinds of people are calling him at once or he’s dealing with the media. His job is to let people know there’s a plan in place and the progress that's being made, and from that aspect he’s doing a stellar job. It’s more than a full-time job, but he seems to be managing and prioritizing things well.”

Shoemaker earned his undergraduate degree in forestry from Virginia Tech University and a master’s degree in emergency management from Anna Maria College in Paxton, Mass. He and his wife have a 15-month-old daughter. During the weekend of the Fritz fire July 22-24, he got home once, for five hours, which he spent, understandably, sleeping.

“We’re used to the summer busy season, so we do our traveling around Thanksgiving and Christmas,” he said.

Everything in its place

Even an initial glance at his third-story office in the Yellowstone County Courthouse proves Shoemaker prefers order over chaos. The office is full of thick three-ring binders and maps — even a couple white boards with columns of what Shoemaker refers to as “my half-baked ideas" — but not turnout gear or self-contained breathing apparatuses.

There’s a reason for that, he said.

“Credit for the actual responsibility of saving all those homes goes to the guys in the engines, trucks and helicopters who are doing the hard work,” he said. “My job is to coordinate it and get it moving in the same direction.”

The list of agencies involved in the Fritz fire response is extensive, including “nearly every fire district in the county,” the sheriff’s office, Montana Highway Patrol, DNRC fire and air personnel, private aircraft providers, Red Cross, contract U.S. Forest Service firefighters — even the Yellowstone County Extension Service, which helped gather and protect livestock, among other duties.

“What I try to do is fit together individuals and groups with different skill sets,” he said. “I did very little of the actual work” of dousing the Fritz fire, he said. “They get all the credit for getting the work done.”

Where Shoemaker can take credit, fire chiefs and law enforcement officials say, is in upgrading the county's disaster planning.

“The plan itself is important, but it has to be written in a flexible way,” Shoemaker said. “You can’t predict every input.”

He’s worked to involve all the fire agencies and districts as well as law enforcement in the planning process.

“They have to have face-to-face interaction, and a prior relationship,” he said, to ensure that “an element of trust has been developed. A lot can be taken care of just bringing in the right people, and that’s my job.”

Once the fire season winds down, emergency and disaster managers in the West typically turn to planning. Shoemaker said he’s already working on communications systems among the county’s various responders to improve both fire and ambulance response. He hopes to be successful writing grants to purchase about $600,000 in radio system upgrades, since grants will pay for up to 75 percent of the cost.

“I hope we can finish that over three years,” with the upgrades occurring in stages, he said.

“The quick way to go is to ask for money and then spend it out your ears if you want to,” he said. But a better route is to develop a long-term communications plan “that’s well thought-out and well written, stretched out over a timeline. There are federal and state funds to get that paid for out of other pockets. I want to pursue those grants to be as responsible as we can be.”

Another key communications component — between his office and the public — will also be improved, once a software upgrade can be purchased to allow text blasts to be effectively sent to smart phones in Yellowstone County in times of emergency.

Then there are longer-term projects, including the modernization of the county’s emergency operations center, now in the basement of Fire Station No. 1 in Billings. That will also be mostly grant-funded, he said.

All the while, Shoemaker said a review of the county’s emergency operations plan continues to move forward.

“If we stopped our monthly meetings every time we have an incident, I’d never make any progress,” he said, adding that the potential for spring floods and potential disasters at the county’s three refineries and extensive pipeline system “are year-round items.”

“Even after the Fritz fire, I still came to work for the rest of the week, because there was still stuff to do,” he said. “I went home and slept for those five hours — and those were five really good hours.”

Roaring Lion fire claims one life, 14 homes near Hamilton (Montana Standard)

Rob Chaney | August 2, 2016

The Roaring Lion fire has claimed one life, but the scores of people who fled the flames Sunday were still waiting Monday night to learn the fate of their homes as officials kept the area off limits.

"It was still too hot and too volatile to let people back in," said Ravalli County Sheriff Chris Hoffman. "Those areas will remain closed for now."

Bruce Lee Robinson, 64, died of cardiac arrest during the mandatory evacuation from the fast-moving fire southwest of Hamilton.

The Ravalli County Sheriff's Office confirmed late Monday that at least 14 homes have been destroyed. Specific addresses were being withheld until the owners could be notified.

The Roaring Lion capitalized on some exotic wind conditions during its Sunday evening takeoff, and it will have more atypical weather on Tuesday.

"We expect to upgrade to red flag warnings on Tuesday afternoon, when a strong cold front moves in," National Weather Service meteorologist Genki Kino said Monday. "A cold front this strong for this time of year is unusual."

The front should bring winds with gusts between 25 and 35 mph through the Bitterroot and Missoula valleys on Tuesday afternoon, with speeds in the mountain ridges topping 50 mph around Tuesday evening. That's likely to make firefighting on the 3,505-acre Roaring Lion fire 5 miles southwest of Hamilton even more challenging.

About 150 firefighters have been deployed to the blaze, with a Type I incident command team – deployed on the most serious fires — expected to take over operations Tuesday morning. The Roaring Lion fire has triggered evacuations of at least 500 people, with another 1,000 residents on pre-evacuation notice. The fire threatens about 400 primary homes as well as about 100 secondary homes near Hamilton.

Rick Potts has spent the summer at the St. Mary Peak fire lookout, about 23 air miles from Roaring Lion Canyon. Although he served on an initial attack team during the catastrophic Yellowstone National Park fires of 1988, he said he'd never witnessed fire behavior like Sunday's in the Bitterroots.

"Watching that go from a thin plume of smoke to a roaring inferno within half an hour – I've never seen that," Potts said. "It went from something you might handle with initial attack to something you couldn't get close to. And the Forest Service and Hamilton Fire (Department) moved on it almost instantly. They had engines and a helicopter up there but by the time they got to it, it exploded up the hill, spotted and started a second fire. It just engulfed the whole mouth of the canyon."

Many observers noticed the fire and smoke column rotating as it rose on Sunday evening. Kino said that's because a regular down-canyon evening wind created spinning vortexes as the fire's uphill heat pushed the opposite direction. The effect is similar to whirlpools that form between the main downstream current of a river and the upstream flow of a streamside eddy. In the Roaring Lion fire, the wind shear also created fire whirls that lifted tornadoes of flame hundreds of feet into the air.

Tuesday's cold front should pass out of the Bitterroot Mountains area by Wednesday morning. But it will be followed by persistent hot weather leading to a weekend of potential dry thunderstorms. Those storms carry lightning that could trigger more wildfires.

Missoula County fire officials raised the local fire danger status "very high" on Monday.

"All fuels both live and dead have dried to the point that fires will become very active quickly," said Jordan Koppen, spokesman for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. "We can't afford for anyone to be careless during activities that have the potential to start a fire, so we urge the public to be extremely cautious with fire."

Koppen added that equipment operators and motorists towing trailers should be especially careful about controlling hot metal and friction sparks while outdoors. More information on fire-safe tactics is available at http://firesafemt.org/.

On Monday afternoon, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced Roaring Lion firefighting efforts were eligible for federal assistance. Federal Emergency Management Agency funds can be used to cover 75 percent of state and local firefighting costs. However, the grants do not provide assistance for individual home or business owners affected by the fire, or other infrastructure damage related to the fire. FEMA spokesman Randy Welch said the money would pay for field camps, equipment use, repairs and replacement, tools materials and supplies.

The increased tempo of fire activity has forced state and federal fire crews to prioritize their resources. Lolo National Forest spokesman Boyd Hartwig said three 20-person Hotshot crews have been released from the 13-acre South Tamarack fire 6 miles north of St. Regis after reaching mop-up status on Monday. A Type-II initial attack crew remains on the scene, where the fire is 20 percent contained.

The Northern Region Geographic Area, which includes Montana, shifted to Preparedness Level 3 on Monday. That reflects the changing tempo of fire starts and need for personnel, equipment and aircraft. The Northern Region remains ranked fourth out of seven geographic areas as fires in Colorado and parts of the Southwest demand higher priority. As dry weather shifts to the Northwest, that priority will shift as well.

Statewide, Montana fire observers reported 15 new fires including two large incidents (Roaring Lion and Copper King). Those come on top of five existing large fires and dozens of smaller blazes.

The Copper King fire 8 miles east of Thompson Falls should move to a Type II incident command management on Tuesday. It has burned about 700 acres. As of Monday, it had a crew of 33 backed up by a helicopter on the line.

While no evacuations have been ordered, residents in the Copper King and Snider communities have been warned to prepare their structures for fire defense.

Several roads along the west side of the Thompson River have been closed for fire safety, as have the Copper King and Clark Memorial campgrounds.

Zero containment on Copper King Fire (ABC-FOX Montana)

Mackenzie Allen | August 1, 2016

KALISPELL - Officials with the Lolo National forest say the Copper King Fire, burning just outside of Thompson Falls has grown to 700 acres.

The fire broke out Sunday afternoon and a cause has not been identified.

According to spokesman John Hamilton there is no containment on the fire and personnel have begun notifying the 10-15 nearby residents of the situation, but he says he's "very confident" an evacuation will not be necessary at this point.

A Type II Incident Management Team is on their way and is scheduled to take over firefighting operations early Tuesday morning.

Currently 33 personnel, a helicopter and several engines are on scene.

A public meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday night at the Thompson Falls Community Center.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Lightning causes fire, spill at oilfield facility (Forum News Service)

Aug 1, 2016

NEW TOWN, N.D. – A lightning strike is blamed for a fire at a saltwater disposal well that occurred Sunday in Mountrail County, the North Dakota Oil and Gas Division said.

Whiting Oil and Gas Corp. reported that 400 barrels of produced water, or 16,800 gallons, were released, contained and recovered from a fire at a disposal well about 10 miles north of New Town.

Saltwater is a waste byproduct of oil production.

The fire, which involved five tanks at the location, is extinguished, said Alison Ritter, spokeswoman for the Oil and Gas Division. A state inspector visited the location.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Flood Of 2011 Gavins Point Withstood Historic River Surge (Yankton Daily)

Brayton Hagge | August 1, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of a series of stories this summer to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Missouri River flood of 2011.

In comparison to the repairs needed after the Missouri River flood in 2011, this year's Gavins Point Dam repairs are relatively minor.

"We've had really major stuff going on with the flood repairs from 2011 to 2015," said Dave Becker, operations project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Gavins Point. "Now we're just doing minor repairs out there. Things are in good working order."

This year's projects include installing new safety railings on the spillway and completing gate maintenance.

"Each year they bring (the gates) up and down to do maintenance on them," Becker said. "They clean them, power wash them and inspect the rollers on them to make sure they are functioning well. They are making sure those gates are ready to use when we need them."

He said none of this year's projects are related to the damages caused by the 2011 flood.

"The repairs of the flood damages were all completed last year," he explained.

After the flood, the dam was left in need of nearly $20 million worth of repairs. Becker said the damages were to be expected considering the record amounts of water which passed through the spillway gate, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers did face public concern on the matter.

"The public was in a very heightened state," Becker said. "They were very aware of the flood going on, so they were very watchful and concerned."

However, he maintained that the damages the dam sustained were in no way reflective of its ability to handle the flood.

"We had no concerns (about the dam), although we were monitoring it very closely," he said. "We had no big warning signs or anything like that (indicating) there were any major problems. Any time something is working hard, you just watch it closely."

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Becker predicted the 59-year-old dam could be kept in good working condition for many more years.

“Really as long as the public is supportive of the dam being here, we can continue to do the necessary operations and maintenance on it,” he said.

Following the South Dakota drought online (KELO-Sioux Falls)

Mark Russo | August 1, 2016

PIERRE, SD (KELO-AM) South Dakota now has a website with updated drought information.

The website: drought.sd.gov,

Governor Daugaard says the website will help keep farmers and ranchers in the know.

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Cimaron Neugebauer | August 1, 2016

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STILL CLOSED:

- The Uinta County Youth Camp
- Tokewanna and BlacksFork River Estates
- County Road 271 south to Meeks Cabin remain closed

The area of primary attention and concern has been protecting structures in the Tokewanna and Blacks Fork River Estates areas.

Continued hot temperatures and low relative humidity combined with the possibility of thunderstorms in the area will bring potential for increased fire activity in the area.

There will be a community meeting on Aug. 2 at 7 p.m. at the Mountain View High School located at 330 7th Street, Mountain View, Wyoming to give an update and discuss the state of the Tokewanna Fire.

WYOMING:

Beware of rattlesnakes this time of year (Casper Star-Tribune)

Kelsey Dayton | August 1, 2016

It feels like a slap and sounds like a pop. It's the shimmying sound of the rattle afterward that's terrifying.

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The snakes are found throughout the state, usually staying within 3 or 4 miles of where they hibernate.

"When you are in that pocket, you know you are in that pocket," Walker said.

Despite emerging from hibernation a couple of weeks earlier than normal in the beginning of May, anecdotally, this year's snake sightings seem to reflect a normal season, Walker said.

Eugene DuQuette, an emergency room doctor at Wyoming Medical Center, said in the hospital's health news service that during one particularly wet spring and summer, he saw eight bites. Wyoming Medical Center reported only one bite so far this year.

Snake bites are rarely fatal in the United States. According to Wyoming Medical Center, without antivenin, snake bites have a 2 percent mortality rate and only .2 percent with it. In Wyoming there are even fewer as the rattlesnake isn't as poisonous as some breeds.

The seriousness of a bite depends on the amount of venom the snake injects. Between 10 percent and 20 percent of snake bites are dry, meaning they don't inject venom, Wyoming Medical Center reported.

Rattlesnake bites might cause heart arrhythmias, nose bleeds, bloody stools or vomit and, more rare in Wyoming, neurological changes like paralysis and weakness. They are treated with antivenin.

Walker has been struck more than once by rattlesnakes, but snake-proof gaiters protected him from ever being bitten.

"I've had many close encounters, but I've never had one get their fangs in me," he said.

It doesn’t stop the jolt of adrenaline whenever he feels one strike and he wonders if it broke through.

Avoid a bite

- Make noise while walking in snake country, especially in grass where snakes are hard to spot. Wyoming snakes are not aggressive and usually strike because they are startled.
- Know where to look. Snakes are often in grassy areas where they are hard to see.
- Leave snakes alone. Don’t dig in burrows where snakes may live. Don’t try to catch a rattlesnake, even if you are trying to confirm a friend was bitten by one.
- Wear high-legged boots and gloves. Boots can prevent fangs from puncturing the skin, or minimize the amount of venom the snake can inject. Gloves will protect your hands.
- Watch the kids. Venom travels faster in smaller bodies.

What to do if you're bitten

- Call 911 immediately.
- Note the size. The smaller the snake, the more concentrated the venom.
- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Do not attempt to suck out the venom. You can poison yourself if it gets in the mouth and you can cause tissue damage around the bite.
- Keep bitten limb in a neutral position --- do not elevate.
- Do not ice the bite area.
- Stay calm. If you aren’t in cell range, send someone else to get help. You have four to five hours before the venom has time to fully circulate.

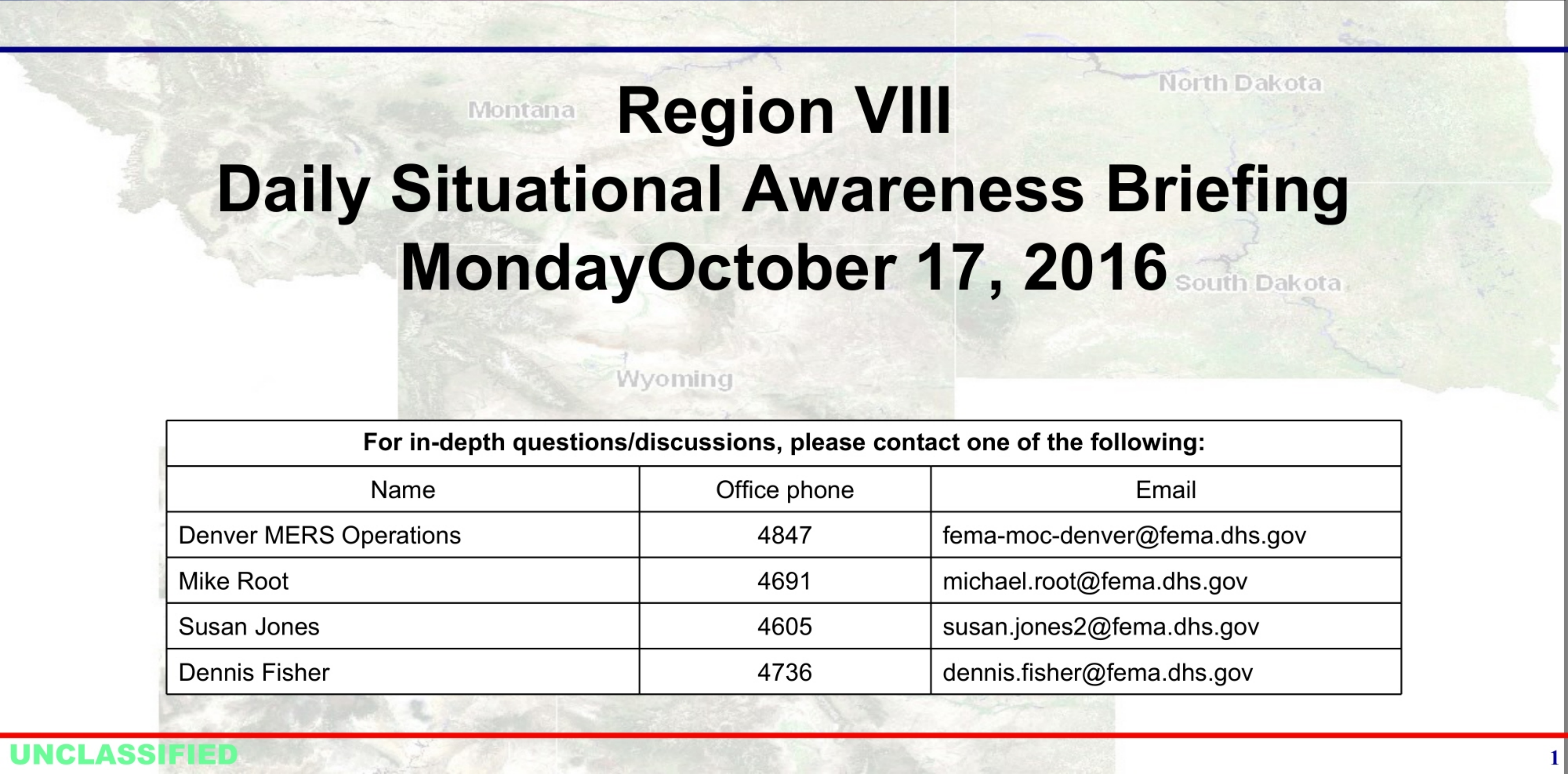
Source: Dr. Eugene DuQuette and Wyoming Medical Center

From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: 17 Oct 2016 10:43:10 -0400
To: (b)(6)@nd.gov;Alexander, Daniel;Americanos, Christopher;Andersen, Chris;Appenrodt, Kathleen;(b)(6);Bakersky, Pete;Brazelton, James;Bruce Holloman (b)(6)@state.co.us);Bush, Tom;Chris Sorensen - CO SEOC;(b)(6) MAJ;(b)(6) (b)(6);DCE R VIII Operations (usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.dco-region-viii-ops1@mail.mil);DCE-(b)(6) (b)(6) SFC (b)(6)@mail.mil);DCE-(b)(6)@us.army.mil);DCE-(b)(6) SFC (b)(6)@mail.mil);(b)(6);Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee;Dragani, Nancy;Espinosa, Adam;Feighert, Dan;Copen, Larry (FEMA CORPS);FEMA-NWC;Fisher, Dennis;Garcia, Maria;(b)(6)(Denver EPA);Graff, Shawn;Gray, Patricia;Helland, Kevin;(b)(6) (b)(6)@wyo.gov(b)(6);Hudson, Lamont;Jason Bauder;Jones, Susan (b)(6);(b)(6) (b)(6);Lawley, Charles;Longenecker, Herbert;Lyman, AJ;McCool, Thomas;McCown, James;McNeese, Colleen;Moore, Jkevin;Moreno, Paul;(b)(6)@nd.gov);Nyquist, Daniel;Pendergrass, Michael M;Poore, Stephanie;R8 Division Directors;R8 External Affairs;(b)(6);Richey, Sharon;Rockabrand, Ryan;Root, Michael;(b)(6);tina titze;(b)(6);Stensgaard, Theresa;(b)(6);Volkman, Jeff;Watkins, David
Cc: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Subject: FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Brief Slides for 17 Oct 2016
Attachments: Stand Up Consolidated Brief 17 Oct 2016.pptx

Good Morning,

Today's FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Briefing slides. Have a great day!

Elizabeth Nakai
Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC), Region VIII Watch &
FEMA Alternate Operations Center – West (FAOC-West)
800-311-7021



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
MondayOctober 17, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: FYSA SD-Cottonwood FireFYSA CO-Custer County Wildfire MOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: Deployed ISO DR-4277-LARVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	LEVEL III (MONITORING)
Utah	NORMAL
S. Dakota	NORMAL
N. Dakota	LEVEL II (PARTIAL)
Wyoming	NORMAL
Montana	LEVEL III (MONITORING)

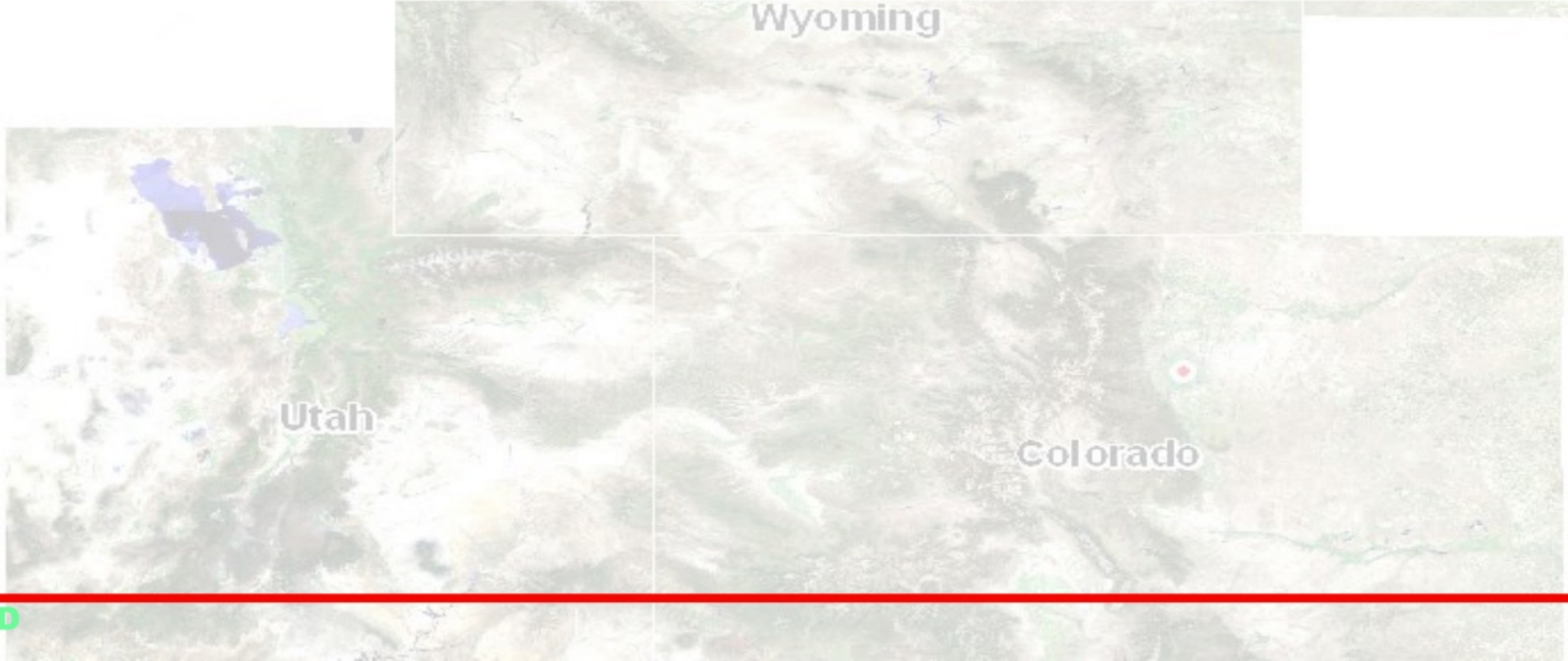
Events

- Tue 1:00-2:00 Sr Leadership VTC-Region 8, RA Conf RmThu 1:30-3:00 R8 Division Directors Meeting, RA Conf Rm

Exercises and Training

Region Active Fires updated as of 0815, 17 Oct 2016

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 17 Oct 2016)				
Cottonwood Fire	Cottonwood, South Dakota	5,000 - 6,000 acres	0%	Source: kotatv.com
Junkins Fire	Custer County	100	0%	Evacuations underwaySource: Local media reports/WebEOC



FEMA Region VIII
Serving CO, MT, ND, SD, UT and WY

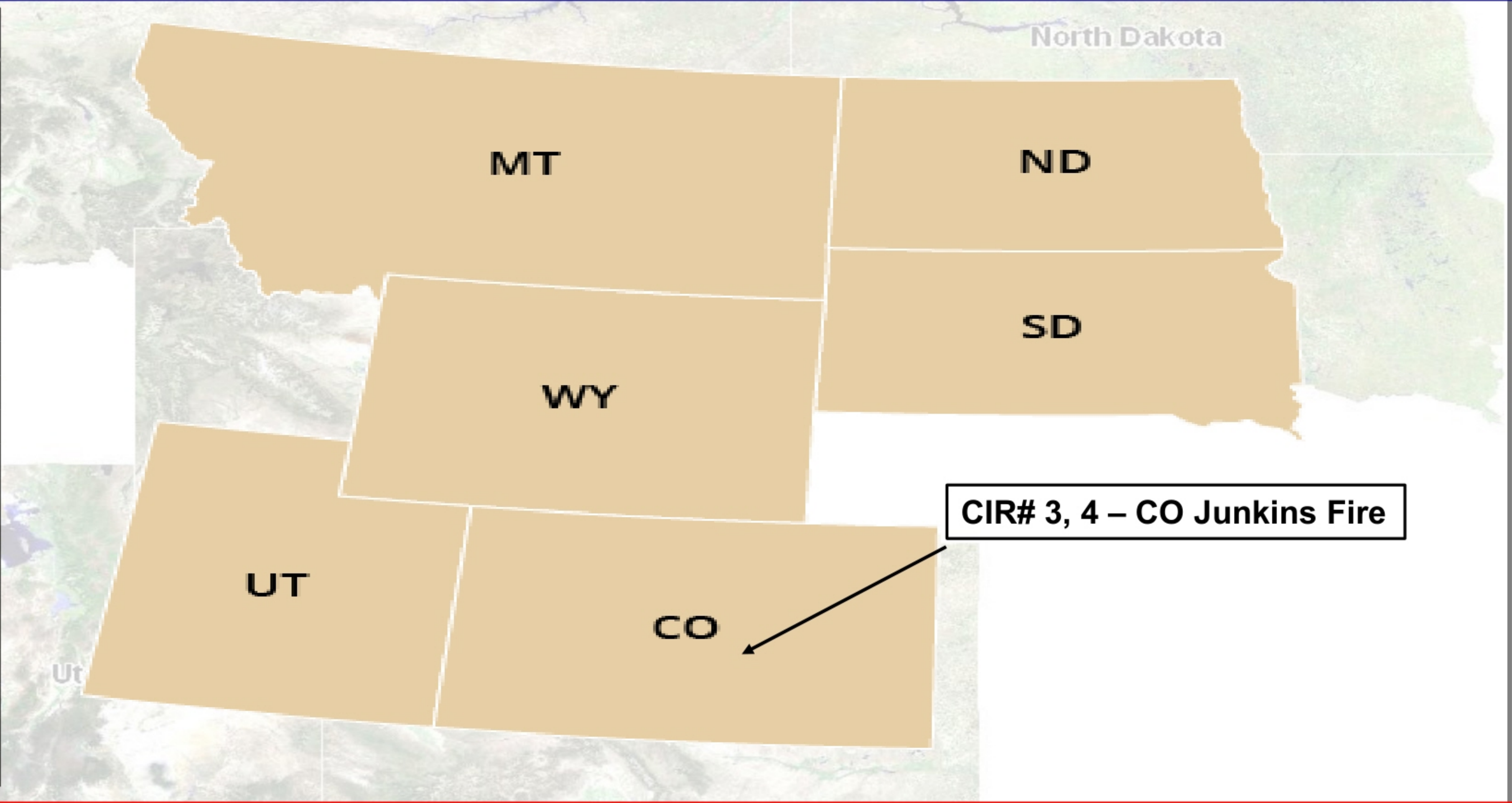
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

🟩 No Activity 🟨 Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) 🟥 Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as "Major" by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟨	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟨	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟩	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state's population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

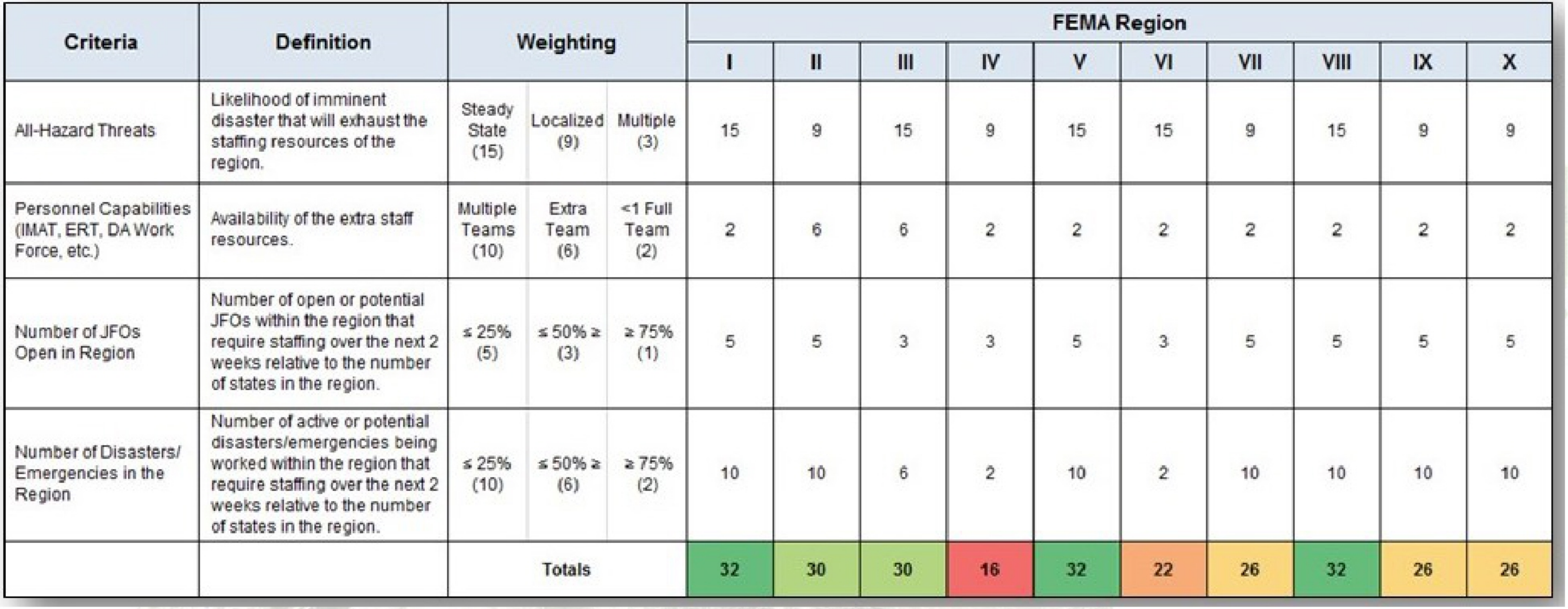
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3	🟥	
CIR 4	🟥	
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11		
CIR 12		
CIR 13		
CIR 14		
CIR 15		
CIR 16		
CIR 17		
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 4 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 17 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	9	15	9	15	15	9	15	9	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	10	2	10	10	10	10
		Totals			32	30	30	16	32	22	26	32	26	26

Backup Regions I, V, VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations		
Level	**Reason for Activation**	**Activated Times**

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations		
State	**Activation**	**Event/Incident**
MT	Level III Monitoring	Flooding
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level III Monitoring	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations		
State	**Activation (Event)**	**Supporting**
LA	Flooding	DR-4277-LA

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status		
FCO	**Deployed Location**	**Declaration Number**

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)		
RCO	**Deployed Location**	**Declaration Number**
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

R8 PDA Summary

State	Event	Type	Counties / TribesRequested	Completed	(Estimated) Start / End Date

Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

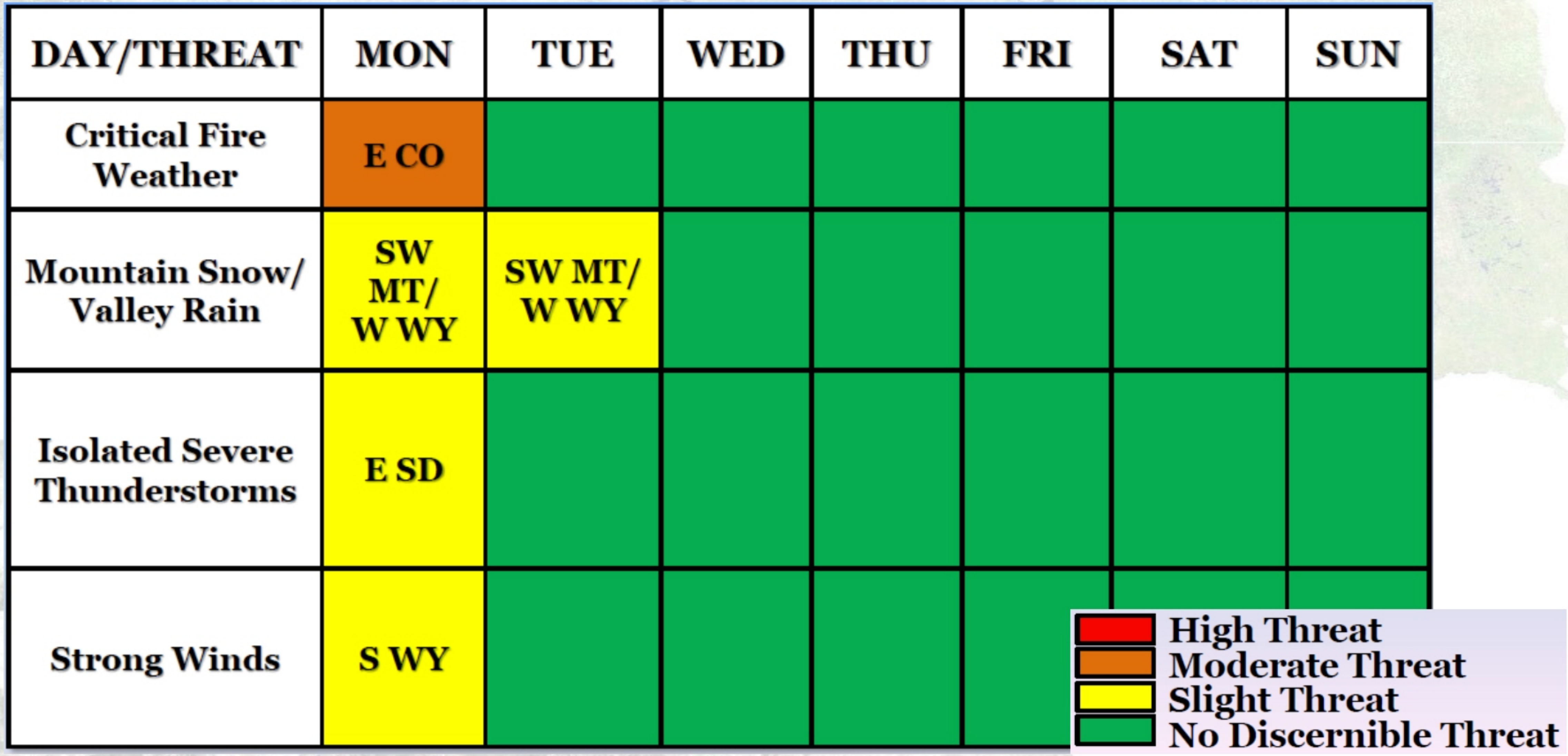
Today-Wednesday

- Critical fire weather conditions will continue across eastern CO through this evening. Ongoing fires will have the potential to continue to grow quickly
- A marginal risk for severe thunderstorms exists across E SD this afternoon. Primary threats will be gusty winds and large hail
- Strong winds will continue across southern portions of WY which could result in impacts to transportation along Interstates 25 and 80
- Periods of valley rain and mountain snow will continue through mid-week across portions of the Intermountain West and Northern Rockies
  - Impacts to travel across mountain passes are possible but should lessen after tomorrow

Thursday-Sunday

- A ridge of high pressure is expected to build across the area late in the week and into the weekend keeping the threat for widespread impactful weather low

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

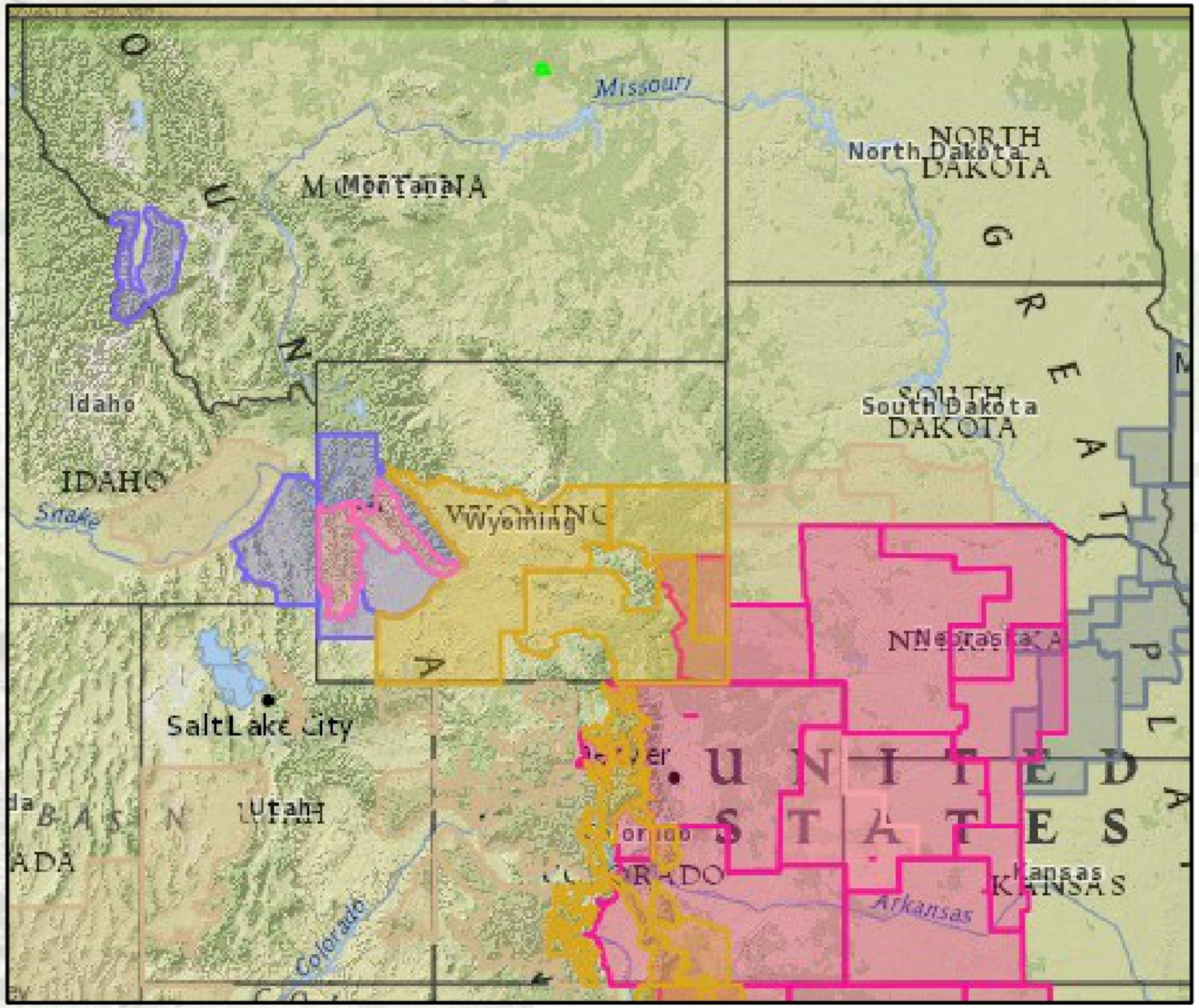


DAY/THREAT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Critical Fire Weather	E CO	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snow/ Valley Rain	SW MT/ W WY	SW MT/ W WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Isolated Severe Thunderstorms	E SD	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Strong Winds	S WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

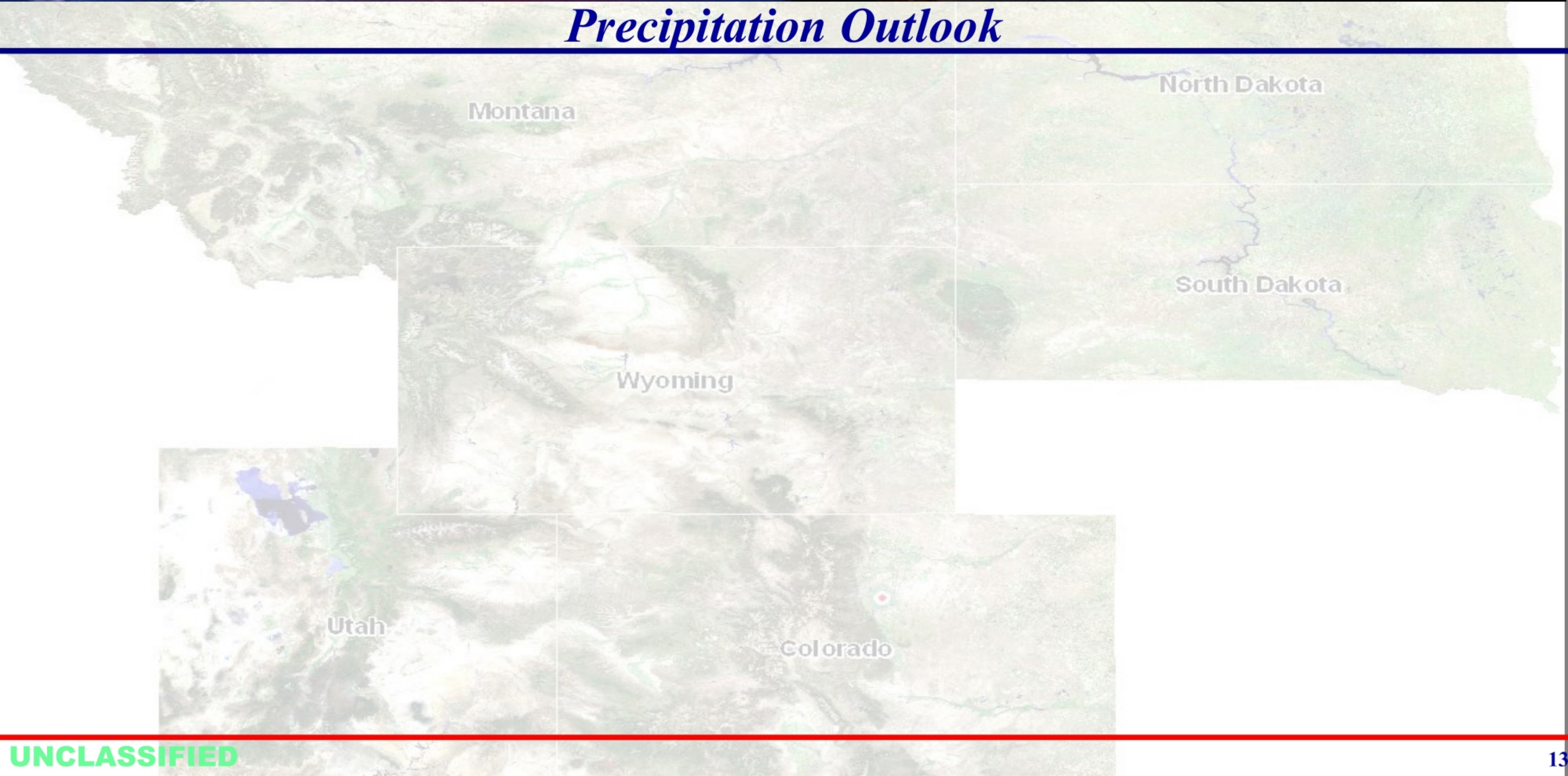
🟥 High Threat
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

Regional Weather Hazards

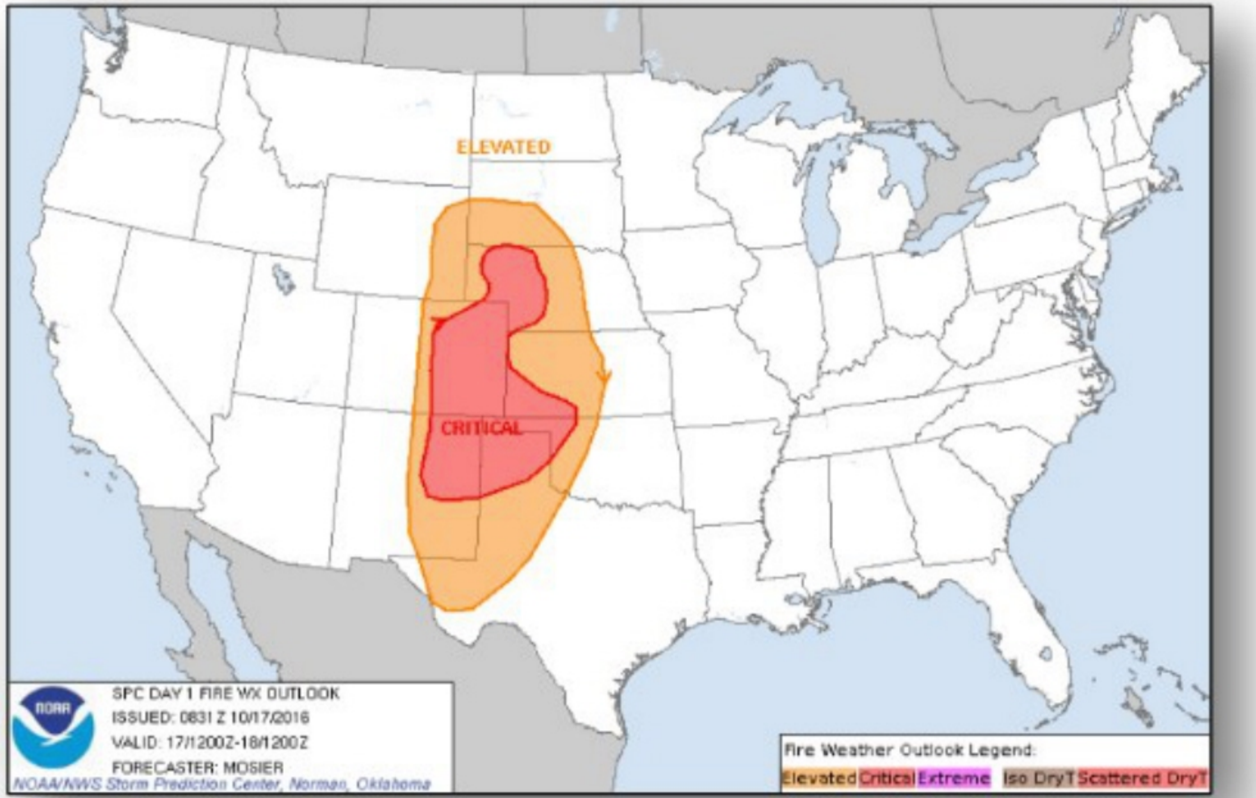
CO: High Wind Warning until noon for central valley and mountain areasRed Flag Warning until 9 PM for all of eastern plainsMT: Winter Weather Advisory until noon for part of southwestSD: Wind Advisory from 11 AM to 6 PM for portion of southwestWY:Winter Storm Warning until 6 PM across west; significant snowfall expected 9-16 inchesHigh Wind Warning until 6 PM across portions of central and south central areasWinter Weather Advisory until 6 pm across western areas


Missouri
MONTANA
Montana
NORTH DAKOTA
North Dakota
GREAT PLAINS
SOUTH DAKOTA
South Dakota
Idaho
IDAHO
Snake
WYOMING
Wyoming
NEBRASKA
Nebraska
Salt Lake City
Utah
UTAH
BASIN
ADA
Denver
UNITED STATES
Colorado
COLORADO
Kansas
KANSAS
Arkansas
Colorado

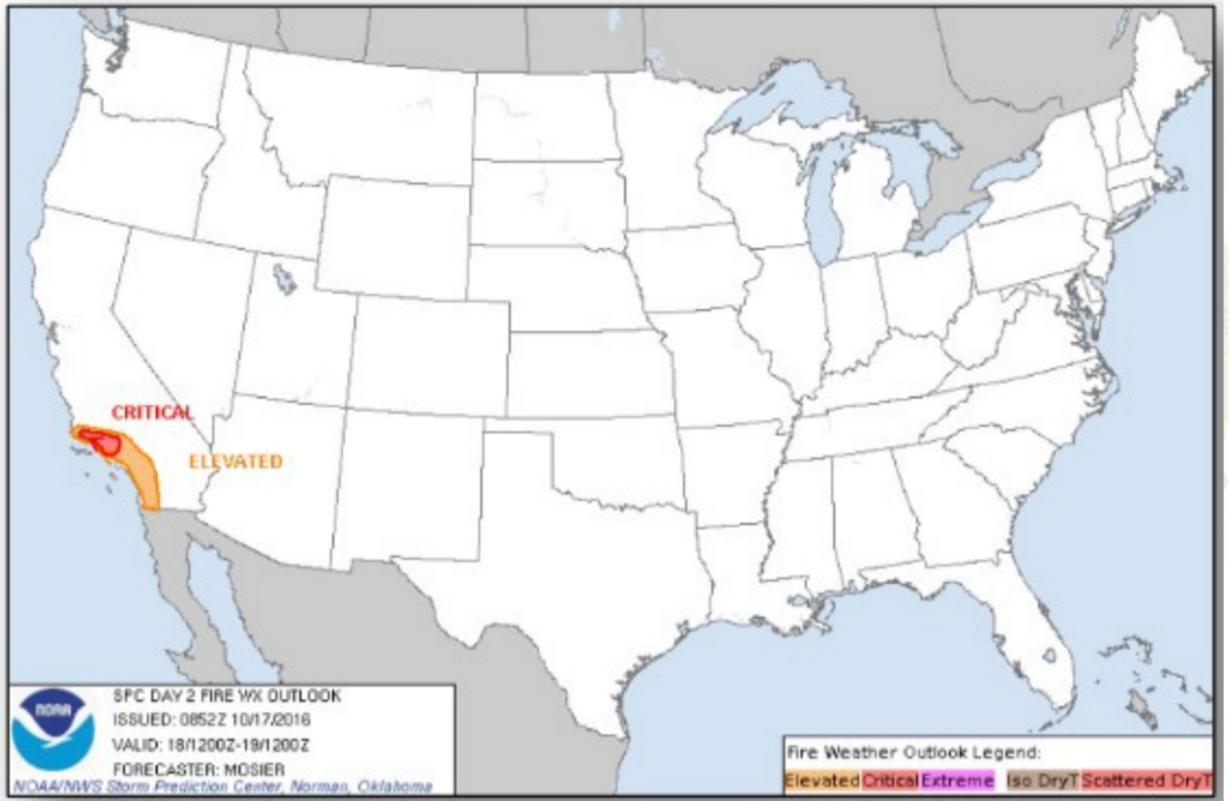
Precipitation Outlook


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

Fire Weather Outlook


ELEVATED
CRITICAL
SPC DAY 1 FIRE WX OUTLOOK
ISSUED: 0831 Z 10/17/2016
VALID: 17/1200Z-18/1200Z
FORECASTER: MOSIER
NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center, Norman, Oklahoma
Fire Weather Outlook Legend:
Elevated
Critical
Extreme
Iso DryT
Scattered DryT

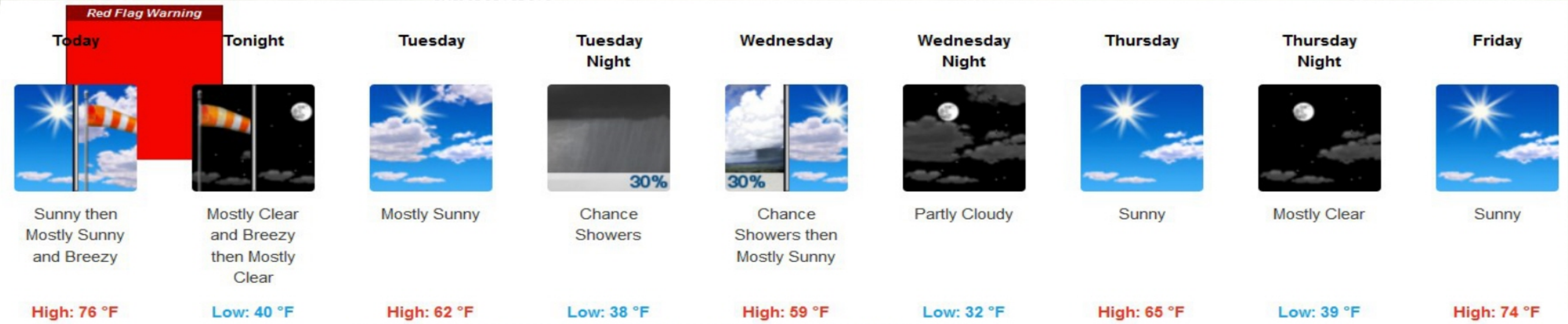
Day 1


CRITICAL
ELEVATED
SPC DAY 2 FIRE WX OUTLOOK
ISSUED: 0852Z 10/17/2016
VALID: 18/1200Z-19/1200Z
FORECASTER: MOSIER
NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center, Norman, Oklahoma
Fire Weather Outlook Legend:
Elevated
Critical
Extreme
Iso DryT
Scattered DryT

Day 2

State Weather Forecast

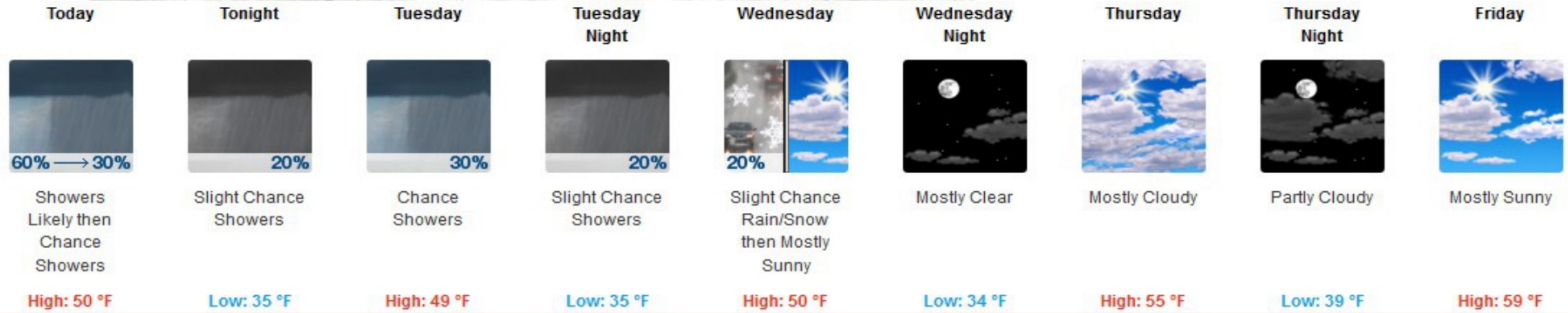
Denver, CO



Red Flag Warning

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
			30%	30%				
Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Chance Showers	Chance Showers then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 76 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 62 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 59 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 74 °F

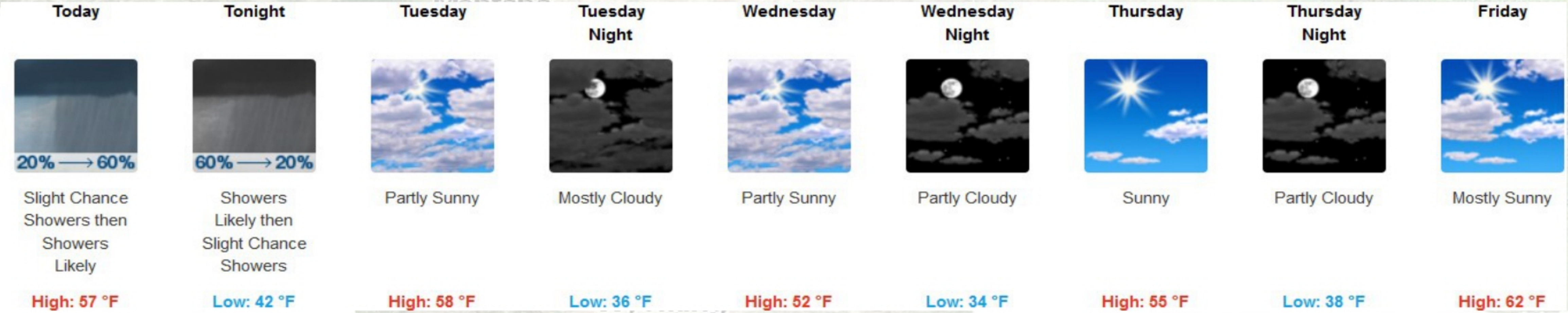
Helena, MT



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
60% ⟶ 30%	20%	30%	20%	20%				
Showers Likely then Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Rain/Snow then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 50 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 49 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 50 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 59 °F

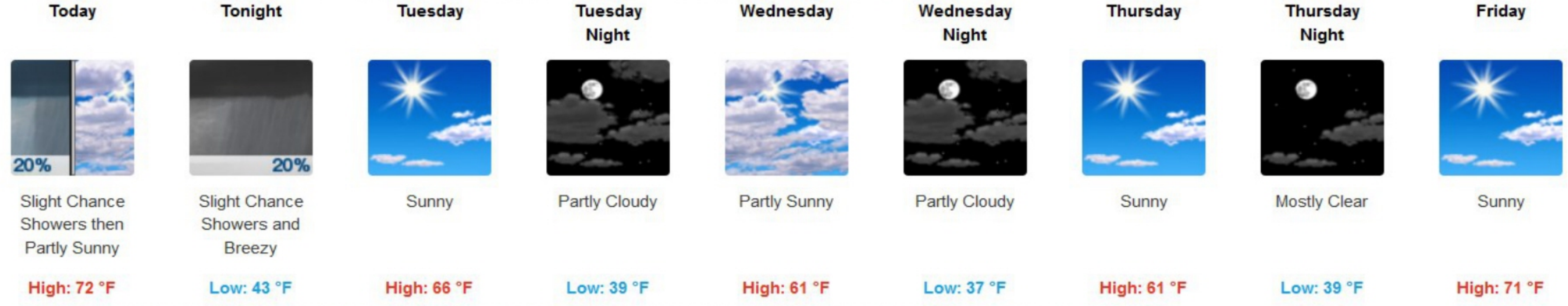
State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
20% → 60%	60% → 20%							
Slight Chance Showers then Showers Likely	Showers Likely then Slight Chance Showers	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 57 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 52 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 62 °F

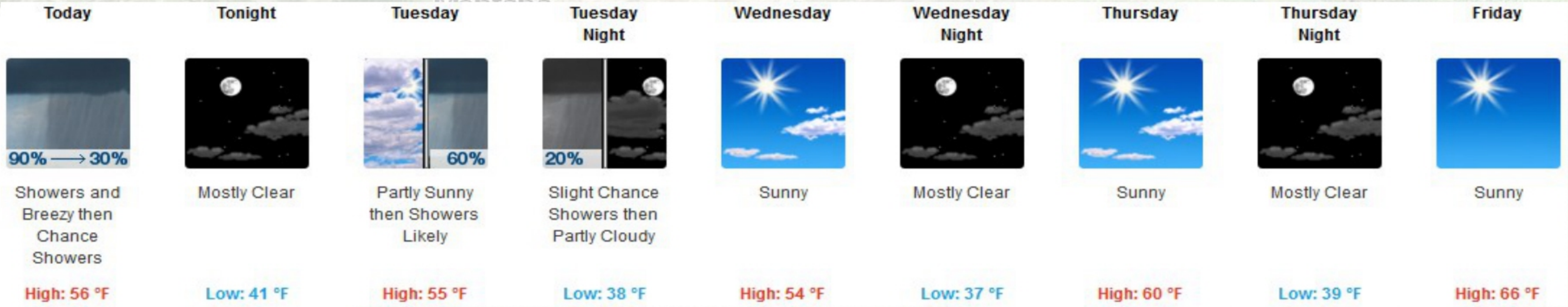
Pierre, SD



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
20%	20%							
Slight Chance Showers then Partly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers and Breezy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 72 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 71 °F

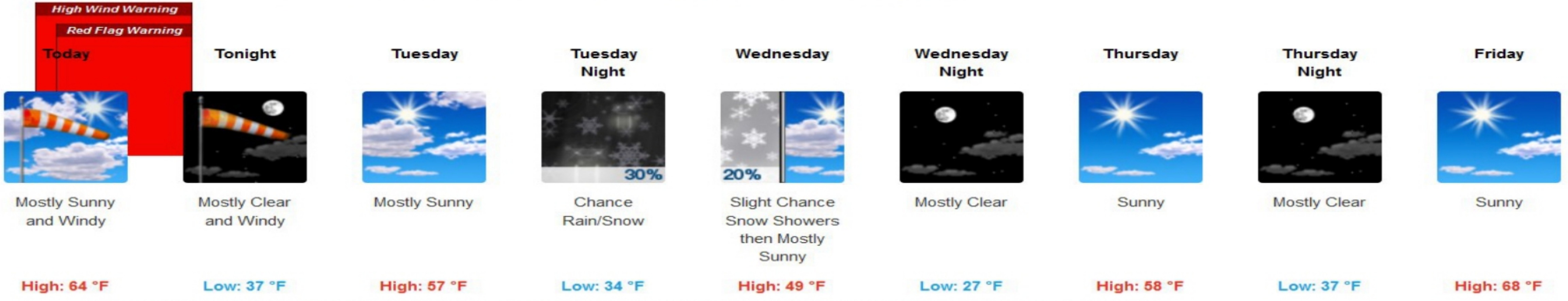
State Weather Forecast - Cont

Salt Lake City, UT



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
90% ⟶ 30%		60%	20%					
Showers and Breezy then Chance Showers	Mostly Clear	Partly Sunny then Showers Likely	Slight Chance Showers then Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 56 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 66 °F

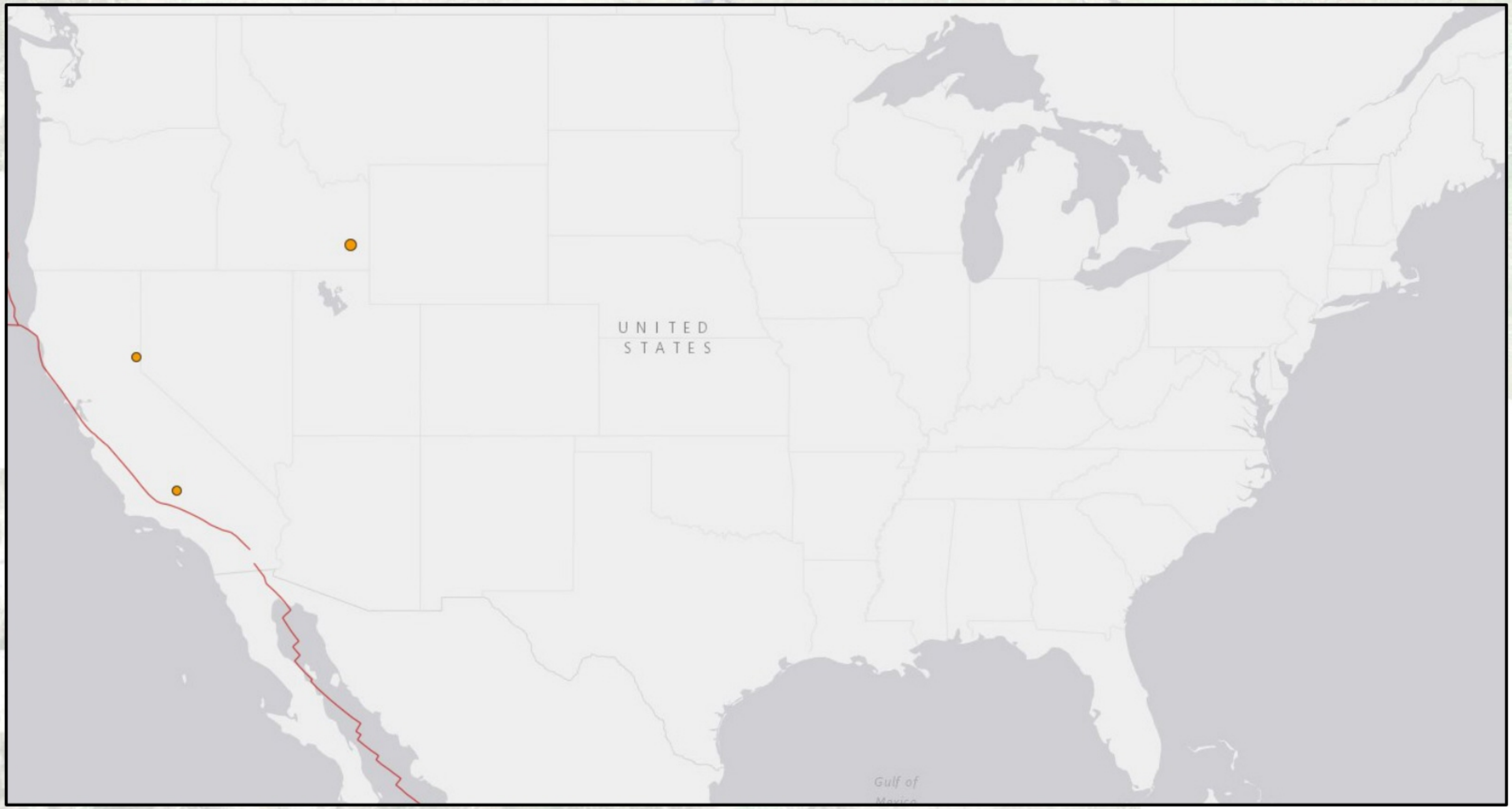
Cheyenne, WY



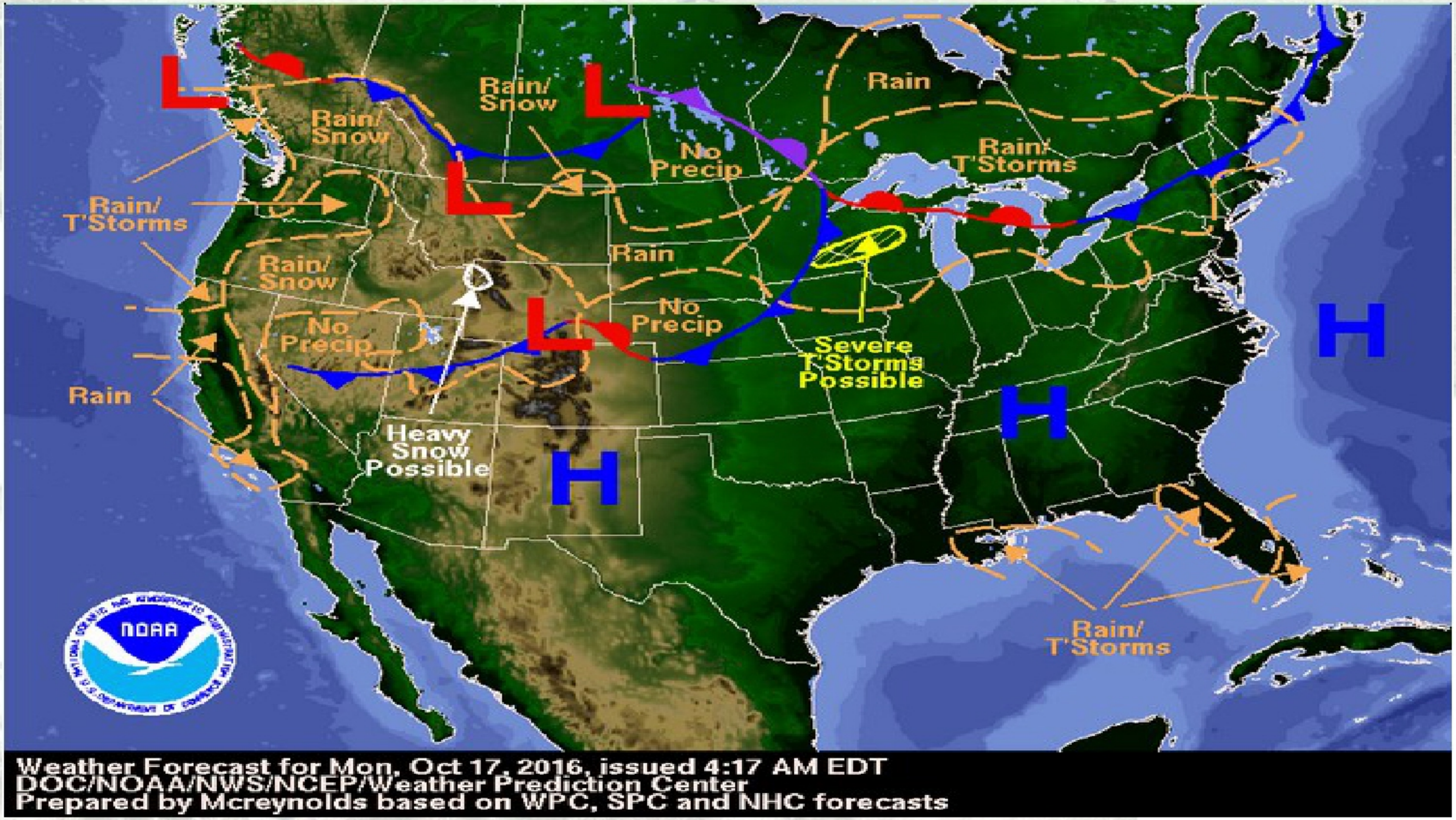
High Wind Warning
Red Flag Warning

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
			30%	20%				
Mostly Sunny and Windy	Mostly Clear and Windy	Mostly Sunny	Chance Rain/Snow	Slight Chance Snow Showers then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 64 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 57 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 49 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 68 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity


UNITED STATES
Gulf of Mexico

Today's National Weather Forecast


L
Rain/
Snow
L
Rain/
Snow
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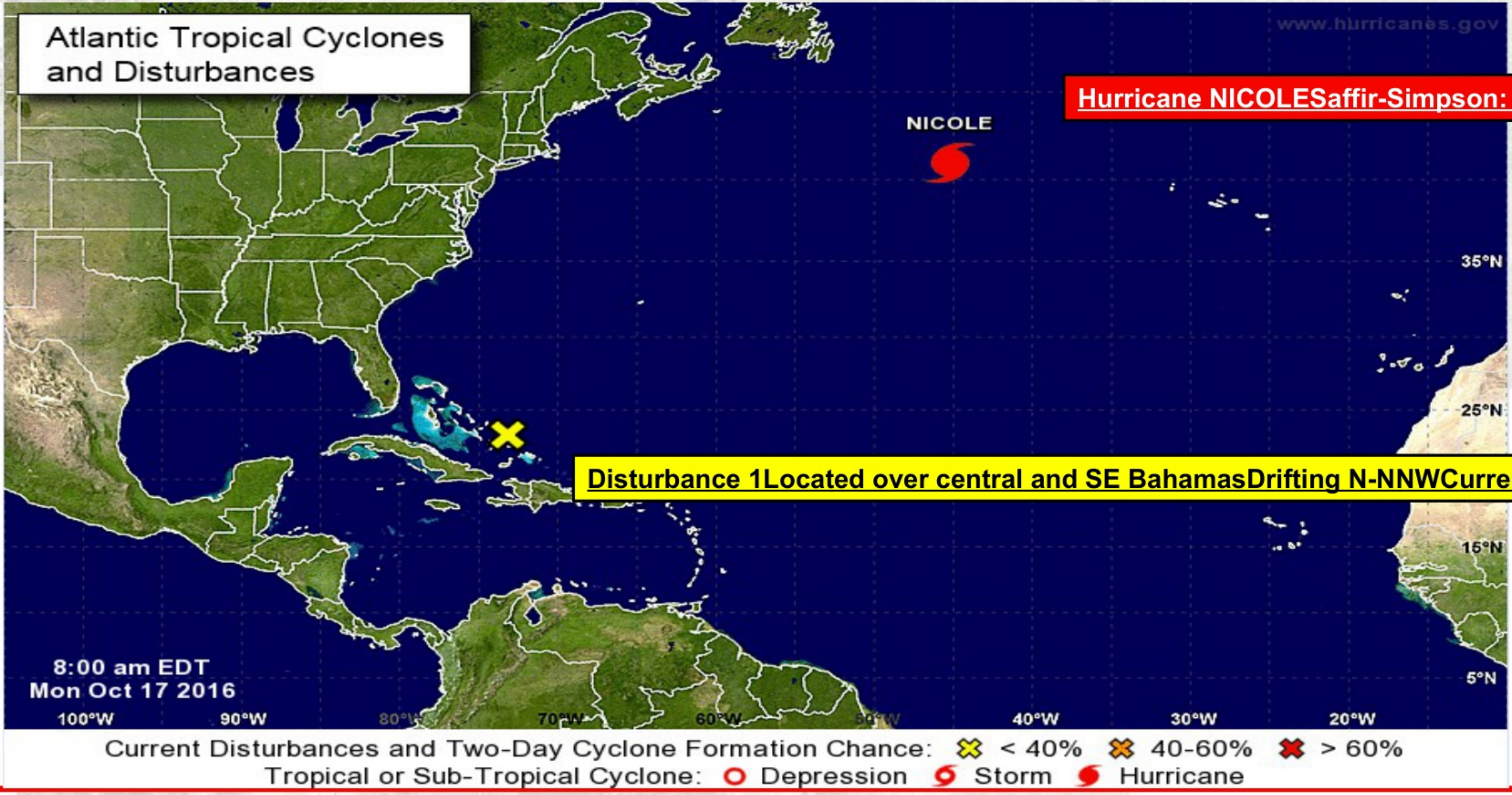
Rain
No
Precip
Rain/
T'Storms
Rain/
T'Storms
Rain
Rain/
Snow
L
No
Precip
No
Precip
Severe
T'Storms
Possible
H
Rain
Heavy
Snow
Possible
H
H
NOAA
Rain/
T'Storms

Weather Forecast for Mon, Oct 17, 2016, issued 4:17 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

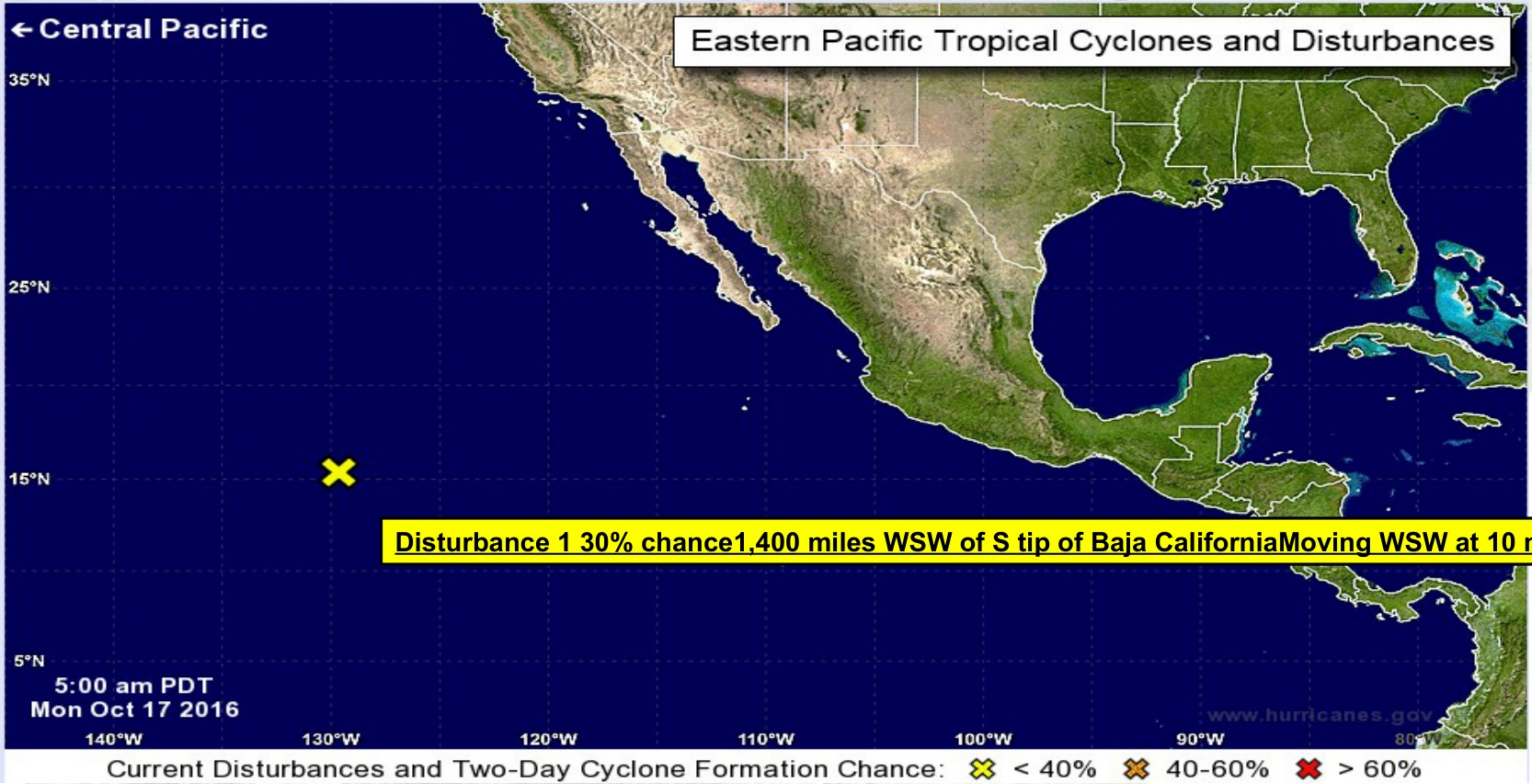
Atlantic Tropical Assessment


Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
www.hurricanes.gov
NICOLE
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
8:00 am EDT
Mon Oct 17 2016
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: < 40% 40-60% > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: Depression Storm Hurricane

Hurricane NICOLESaffir-Simpson: Category 1

Disturbance 1Located over central and SE BahamasDrifting N-NNWCurrently unfavor

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment


← Central Pacific
Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
5:00 am PDT
Mon Oct 17 2016
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
www.hurricanes.gov
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%

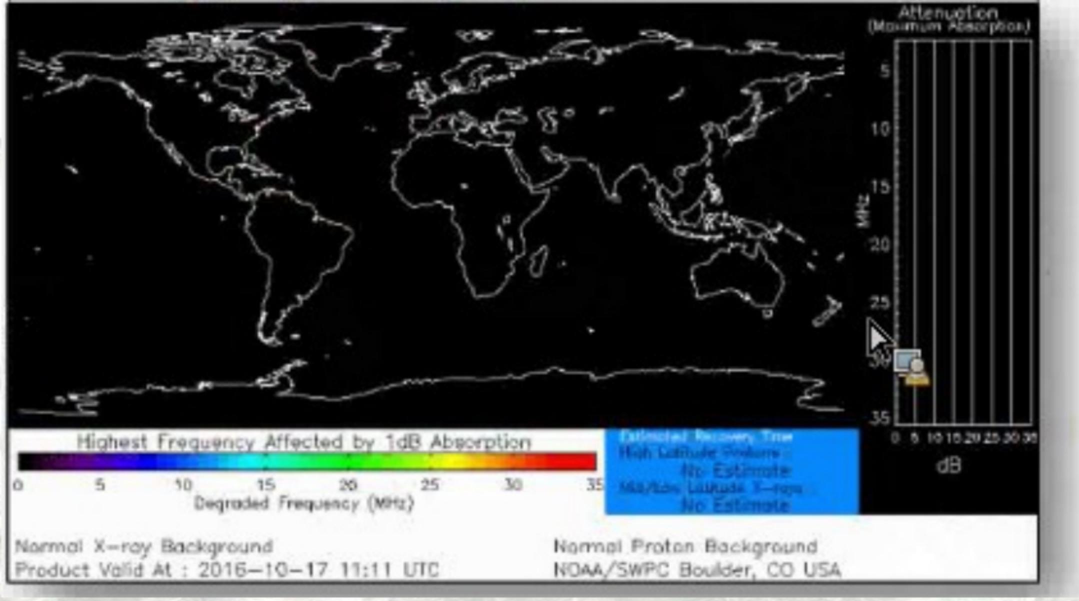
Disturbance 1 30% chance1,400 miles WSW of S tip of Baja CaliforniaMoving WSW at 10 mphSome s

Space Weather

	Space Weather Activity	Geomagnetic Storms	Solar Radiation	Radio Blackouts
Past 24 Hours	Minor	G1	None	None
Next 24 Hours	Moderate	G2	None	None

For further information on NOAA Space Weather Scales refer to http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/noaa-scales-explanation

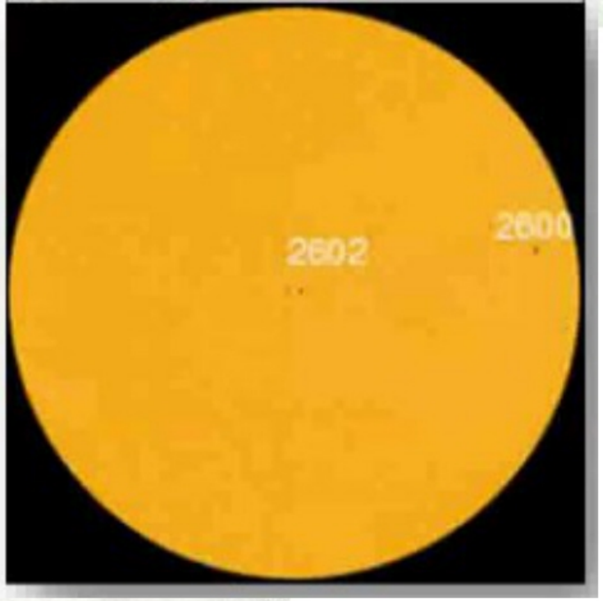
HF Communication Impact


Attenuation
(Maximum Absorption)
MHz
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
dB
Highest Frequency Affected by 1dB Absorption
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
Degraded Frequency (MHz)
Estimated Recovery Time
High Latitude Proton:
No Estimate
Mid/Low Latitude X-ray:
No Estimate

Normal X-ray Background
Product Valid At : 2016-10-17 11:11 UTC

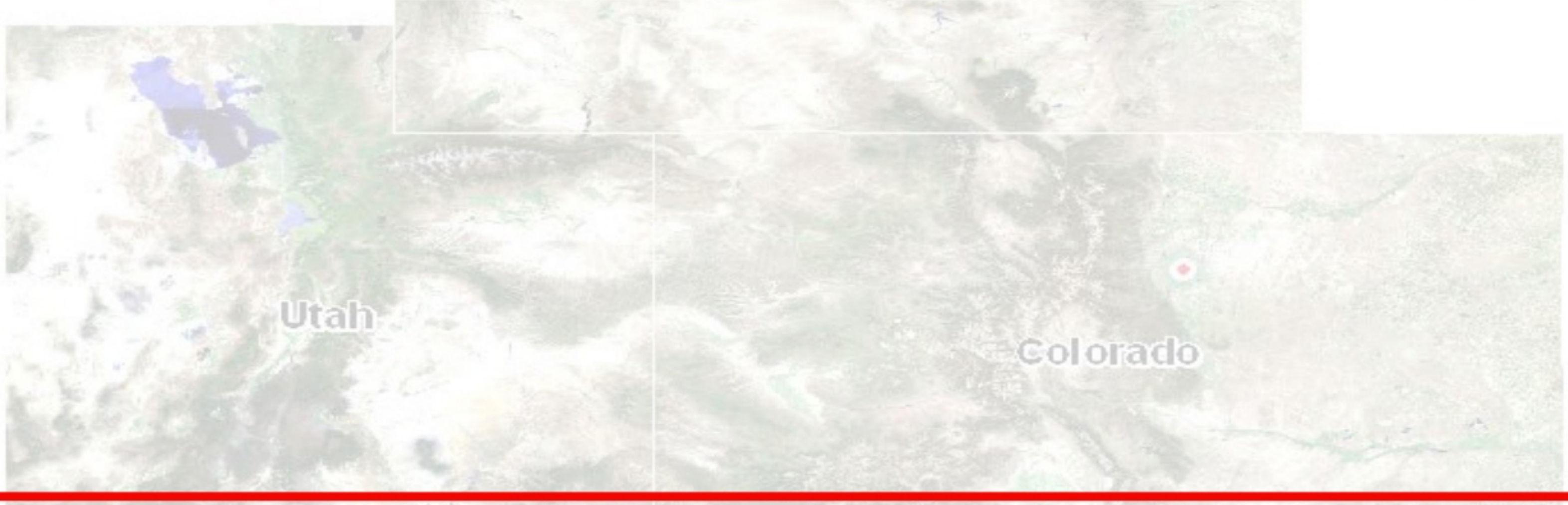
Normal Proton Background
NOAA/SWPC Boulder, CO USA

Sunspot Activity



National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
2	**Date Requested**	**0**	**0**
KS – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 10, 2016		
WI – DR Severe Storms, Flooding and Mudslides	October 11, 2016		



IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 03, 2016 /

Position	**Name**	**Contact Number**
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Darrin Ricketts	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Tracy McCauley (Until 30 Oct)	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

Stand-by Team Roster *(Updated: Oct 6, 2016 / 1000)*

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Kevin Moore	303-941-2113
Operations Sec Chief	AJ Lyman	303-350-0412
Infrastructure Branch Director	Leigh-Andrea Phillips	720-398-7531
Ind Asst Branch Director	Brannen Ulrick	303-681-4988
Planning Section Chief	Mike Pendergrass	303-746-3640
Situation Unit Lead	Susan Jones	303-263-5415
Resource Unit Lead	Bob Schroder	303-453-9482
Logistics Section Chief	Lamont Hudson	303-842-4682
Service Branch Director	Josh Turner	720-415-6353
Support Branch Director	Cedric Corney	303-515-1928
External Affairs Officer	Brian Hvinden	303-681-1454
Finance/Admin	Bonnie Garfias	303-884-7049

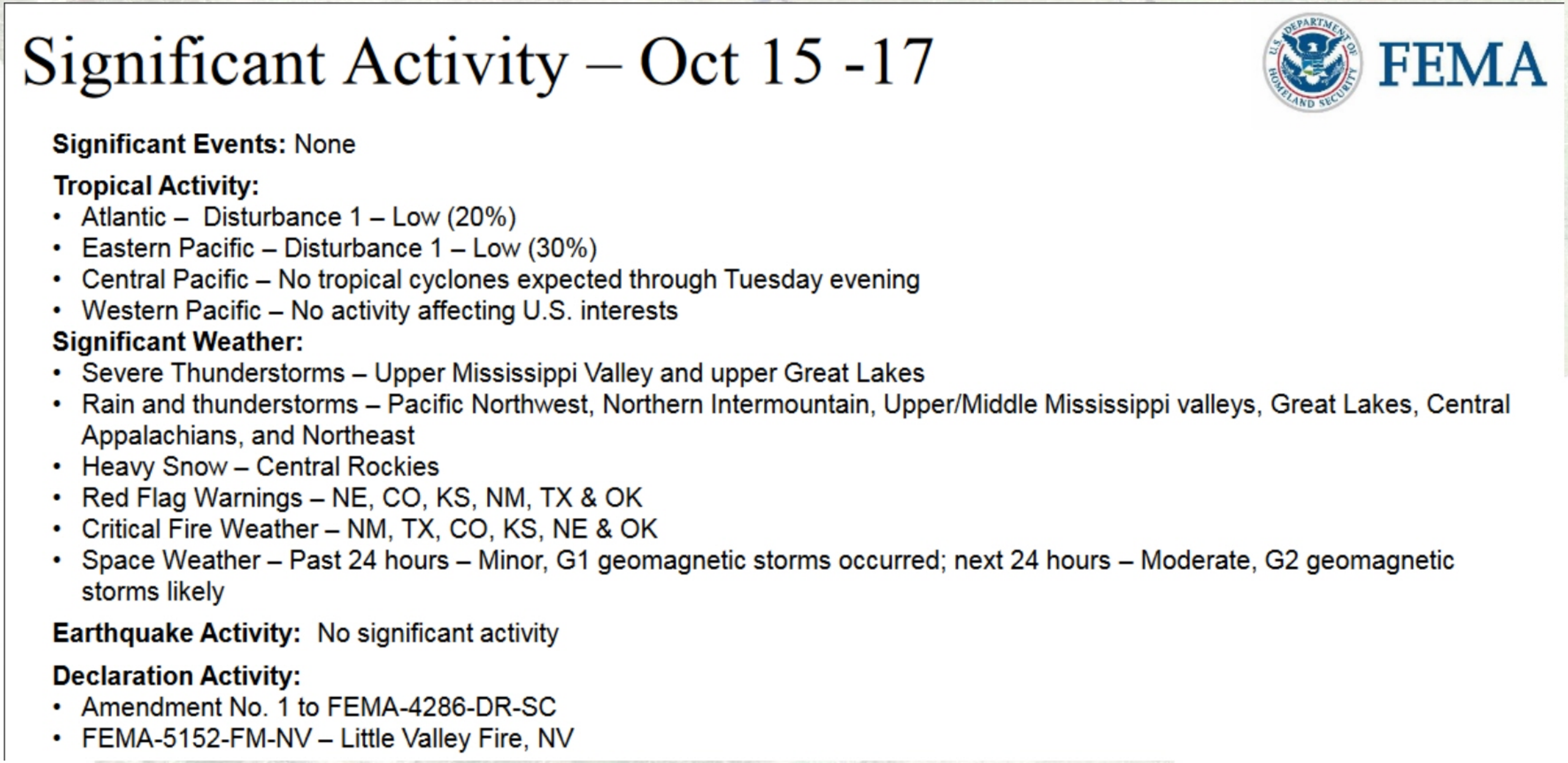
October RRCC Standup Roster (Orange Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Kevin Moore
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	AJ Lyman
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Mike Ordonez
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 13, 2016 / 0600)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	John Holub (14 Oct – 17 Oct)Michael Pendergrass	720-315-0651303-746-3640	303-235-4864303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	David Watkins	720-683-2565	303-235-4359
WY	AJ Lyman (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton	303-350-0412303-495-0051	303-235-4319303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity



Significant Activity – Oct 15 -17

FEMA

Significant Events: None

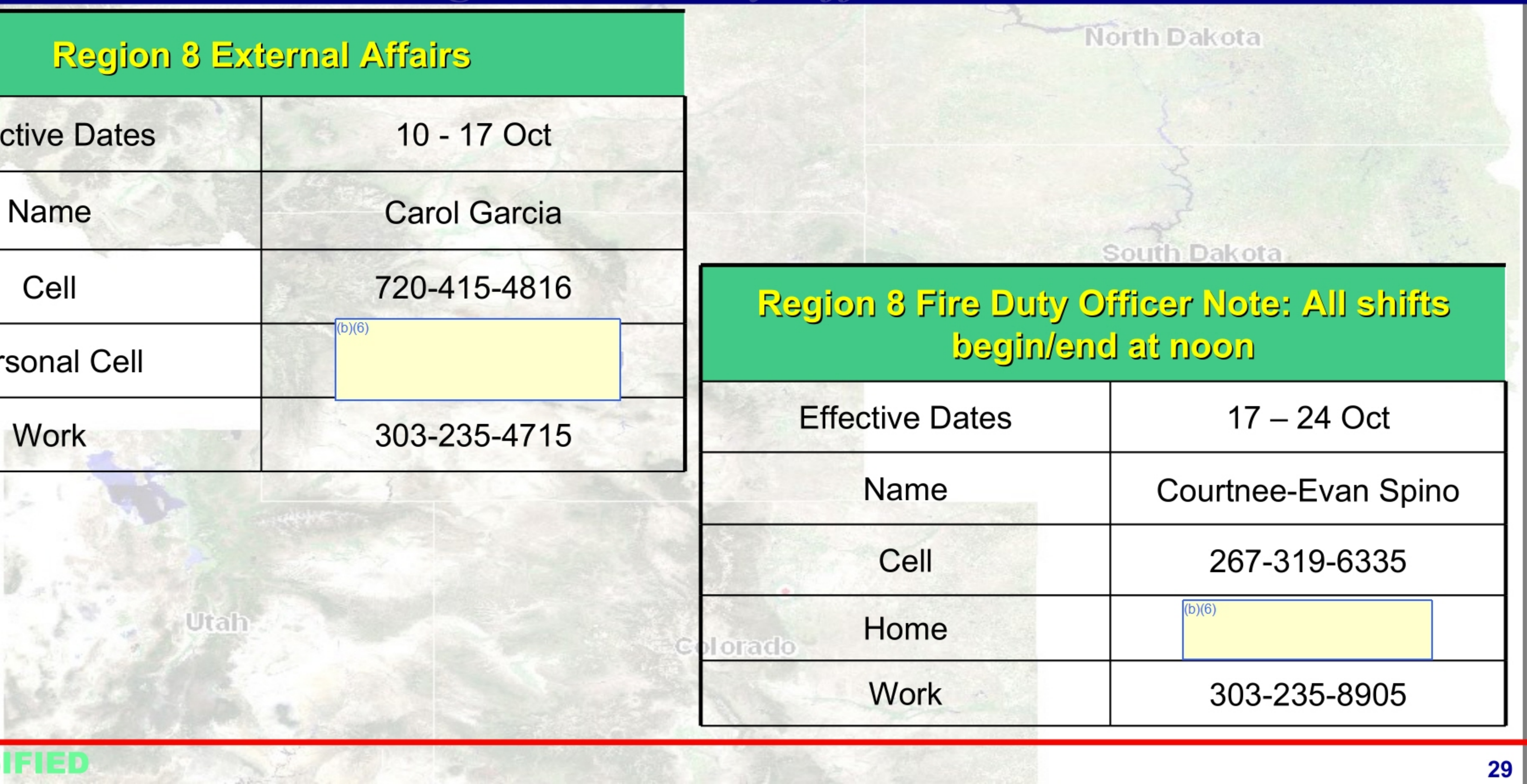
Tropical Activity:
- Atlantic – Disturbance 1 – Low (20%)
- Eastern Pacific – Disturbance 1 – Low (30%)
- Central Pacific – No tropical cyclones expected through Tuesday evening
- Western Pacific – No activity affecting U.S. interests

Significant Weather:
- Severe Thunderstorms – Upper Mississippi Valley and upper Great Lakes
- Rain and thunderstorms – Pacific Northwest, Northern Intermountain, Upper/Middle Mississippi valleys, Great Lakes, Central Appalachians, and Northeast
- Heavy Snow – Central Rockies
- Red Flag Warnings – NE, CO, KS, NM, TX & OK
- Critical Fire Weather – NM, TX, CO, KS, NE & OK
- Space Weather – Past 24 hours – Minor, G1 geomagnetic storms occurred; next 24 hours – Moderate, G2 geomagnetic storms likely

Earthquake Activity: No significant activity

Declaration Activity:
- Amendment No. 1 to FEMA-4286-DR-SC
- FEMA-5152-FM-NV – Little Valley Fire, NV

Region VIII Duty Officers



Region 8 External Affairs

Effective Dates	10 - 17 Oct
Name	Carol Garcia
Cell	720-415-4816
Personal Cell	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4715

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon

Effective Dates	17 – 24 Oct
Name	Courtnee-Evan Spino
Cell	267-319-6335
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-8905

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY

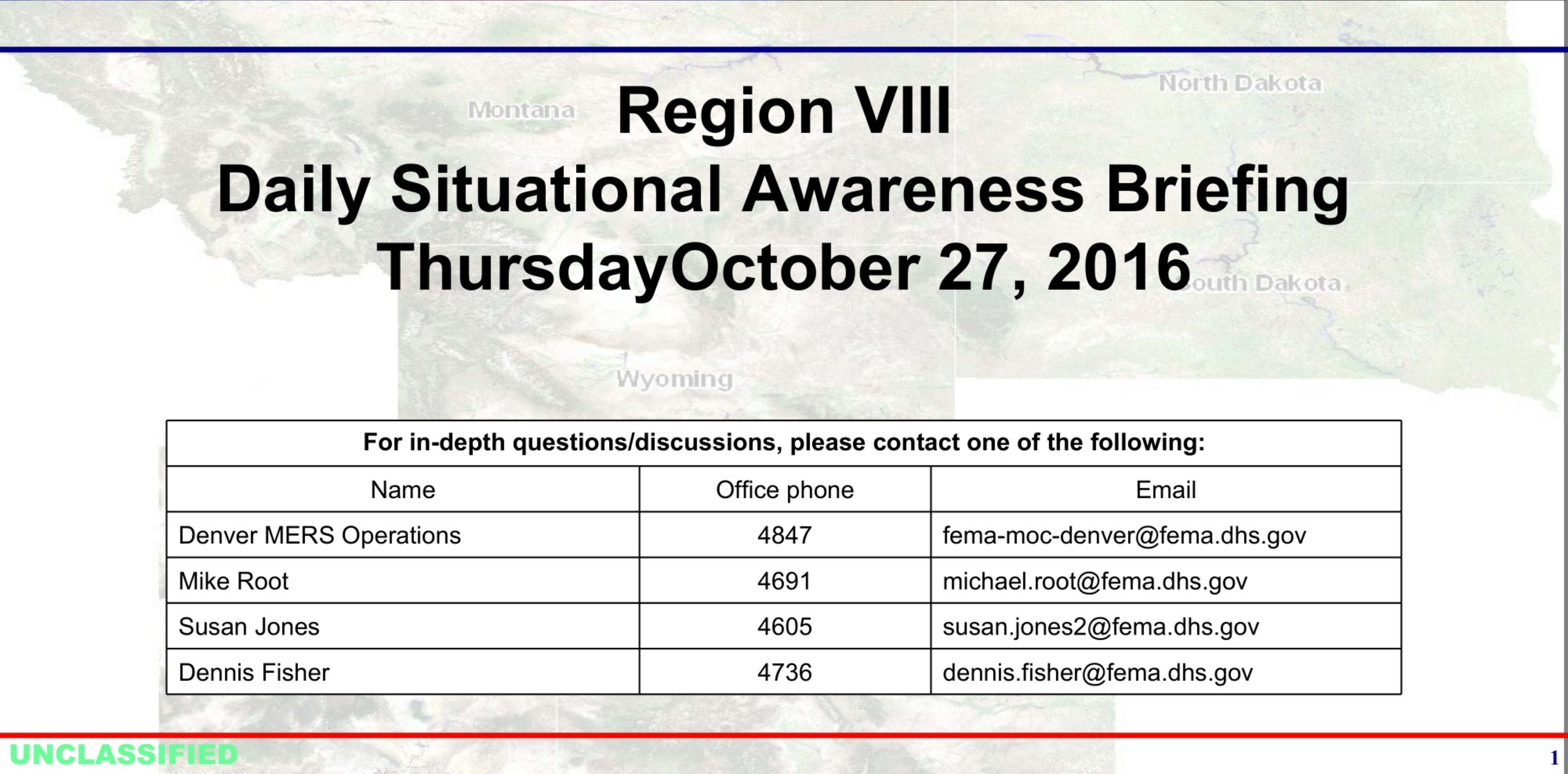
From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 10:03:28 -0400
To: (b)(6) @nd.gov;Alexander, Daniel;Americanos, Christopher;Andersen, Chris;Appenrodt, Kathleen (b)(6) ;Bakersky, Pete;Brazelton, James;'Bruce Holloman (b)(6) @state.co.us)';Bush, Tom;'Chris Sorensen - CO SEOC' (b)(6) MAJ;Darabaris, John;'DCE R VIII Operations (usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.dco-region-viii-ops1@mail.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) (b)(6), SFC (jessie.d.freeman.mil@mail.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) @us.army.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6), SFC (b)(6) @mail.mil)';(b)(6) ;Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee;Dragani, Nancy;Espinosa, Adam;Feighert, Dan;Copen, Larry (FEMA CORPS);FEMA-NWC;Fisher, Dennis;Garcia, Maria;'(b)(6) (Denver EPA)';Graff, Shawn;Gray, Patricia;Helland, Kevin;'(b)(6 (b)(6) @wyo.gov (b)(6) ;Hudson, Lamont;Jason Bauder;Jones, Susan K;(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) Lawley, Charles;Longenecker, Herbert;Lyman, AJ;McCool, Thomas;McCown, James;McNeese, Colleen;Moore, Jkevin;Moreno, Paul;'(b)(6) @nd.gov)';Nyquist, Daniel;Pendergrass, Michael M;Poore, Stephanie;R8 Division Directors;R8 External Affairs (b)(6) ;Richey, Sharon;Rockabrand, Ryan;Root, Michael;(b)(6) ;tina titze;'Settle, Sean';Stensgaard, Theresa;(b)(6) ';Volkman, Jeff;Watkins, David
Cc: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Subject: FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Brief Slides for 27 Oct 2016
Attachments: Stand Up Consolidated Brief 27 Oct 2016.pptx

Good Morning,

Attached are today's FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Briefing slides.

Have a great day!

Mike Root
Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC) &
FEMA Alternate Operations Center - West (FAOC-West)
Fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
800-311-7021 or (303) 235-4847



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
ThursdayOctober 27, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: FYSA UT-Hicks Creek Fire 100% ContainedMOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: DEPLOYED ISO DR-4277-LARVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	LEVEL III (Monitoring)
Utah	NORMAL
S. Dakota	NORMAL
N. Dakota	LEVEL II (Partial)
Wyoming	NORMAL
Montana	NORMAL

Events

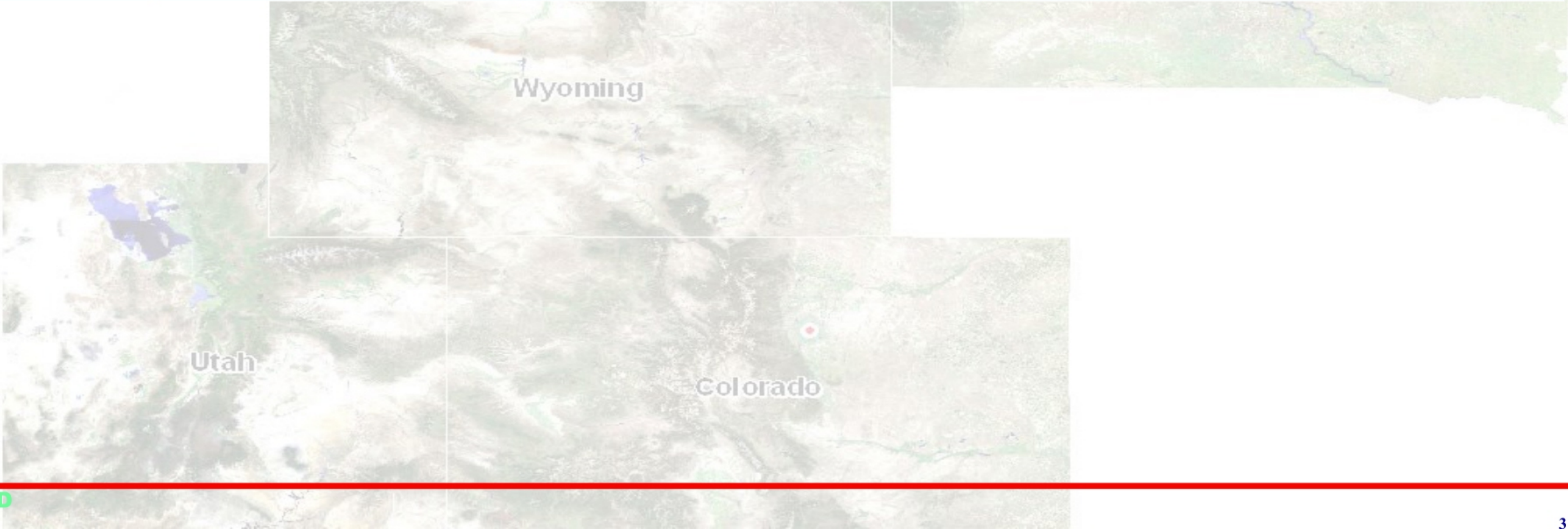
- **Thu 7:30-11:00 Ms. Dragani-CFEB QTRLY MTG- Delivering Outstanding Customer Service, CFEB Trng RmThu 11:00-2:00 CFC Kick-Off, Long's Peak Conf RmThu 1:30-3:00 R8 Div Dir Meeting, RA Conf Rm**

Exercises and Training

- None

Region Active Fires

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 27 Oct 2016)				
Junkins FireFEMA-5175-FM-CO10/17/2016	Custer & Pueblo Counties	17,675 (- 457)	80%(+10)	All evacuations lifted; only those with homes destroyed remain displaced.Est. containment: Nov 15, 2016Source: Inciweb



FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

No Activity Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as “Major” by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟥	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟩	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟥	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state’s population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3		🟥
CIR 4		🟥
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11		🟥
CIR 12		
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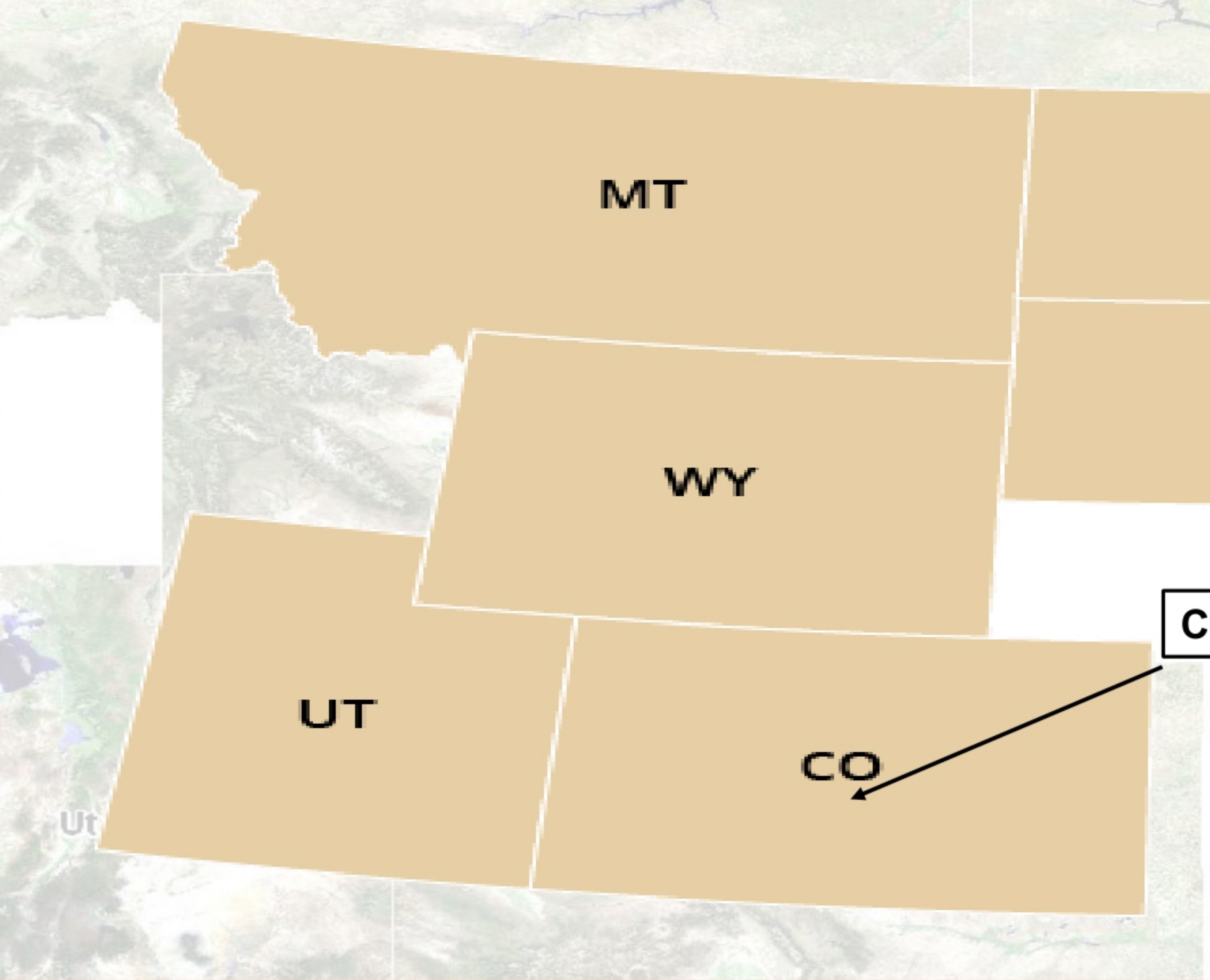
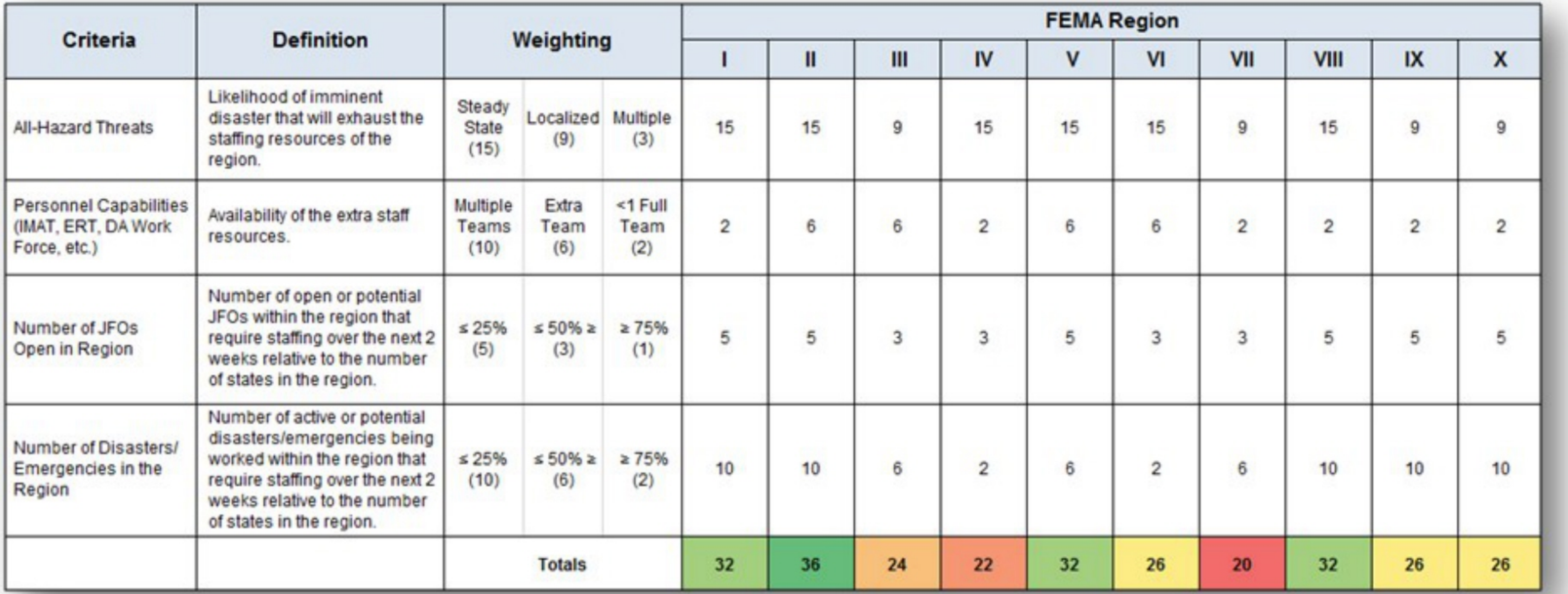
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 4, 11 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 24 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	15	9	15	15	15	9	15	9	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	6	6	2	2	2	2
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	3	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	6	2	6	10	10	10
		Totals			32	36	24	22	32	26	20	32	26	26

Regions II, I, V, & VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations

Level	Reason for Activation	Activated Times

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations

State	Activation	Event/Incident
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level III Monitoring (0800-1700)	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations

State	Activation (Event)	Supporting
LA	Flooding	DR-4277-LA

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status

FCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)

RCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

Today-Saturday

- An elevated fire danger risk for Wyoming this afternoon
- A storm system will cross the northern Rockies Friday
  - Valley rain/mountain snow for southern Montana and western Wyoming
  - Strong winds are possible across northern Utah

Sunday-Wednesday

- A stronger storm system will cross northern Rockies/Northern Plains
  - Mountain snow for western Wyoming and southwestern Montana Sunday into Monday
  - Strong winds in Colorado and Wyoming Sunday then in Wyoming Monday

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

DAY/THREAT	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
Heavy Rain	🟩	SW MT/ W WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snow	🟩	SW MT/ NW WY	🟩	NW WY	W WY/ SW MT	🟩	🟩
Strong Winds	🟩	N UT	🟩	CO/WY	WY	🟩	🟩
Fire Weather	WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

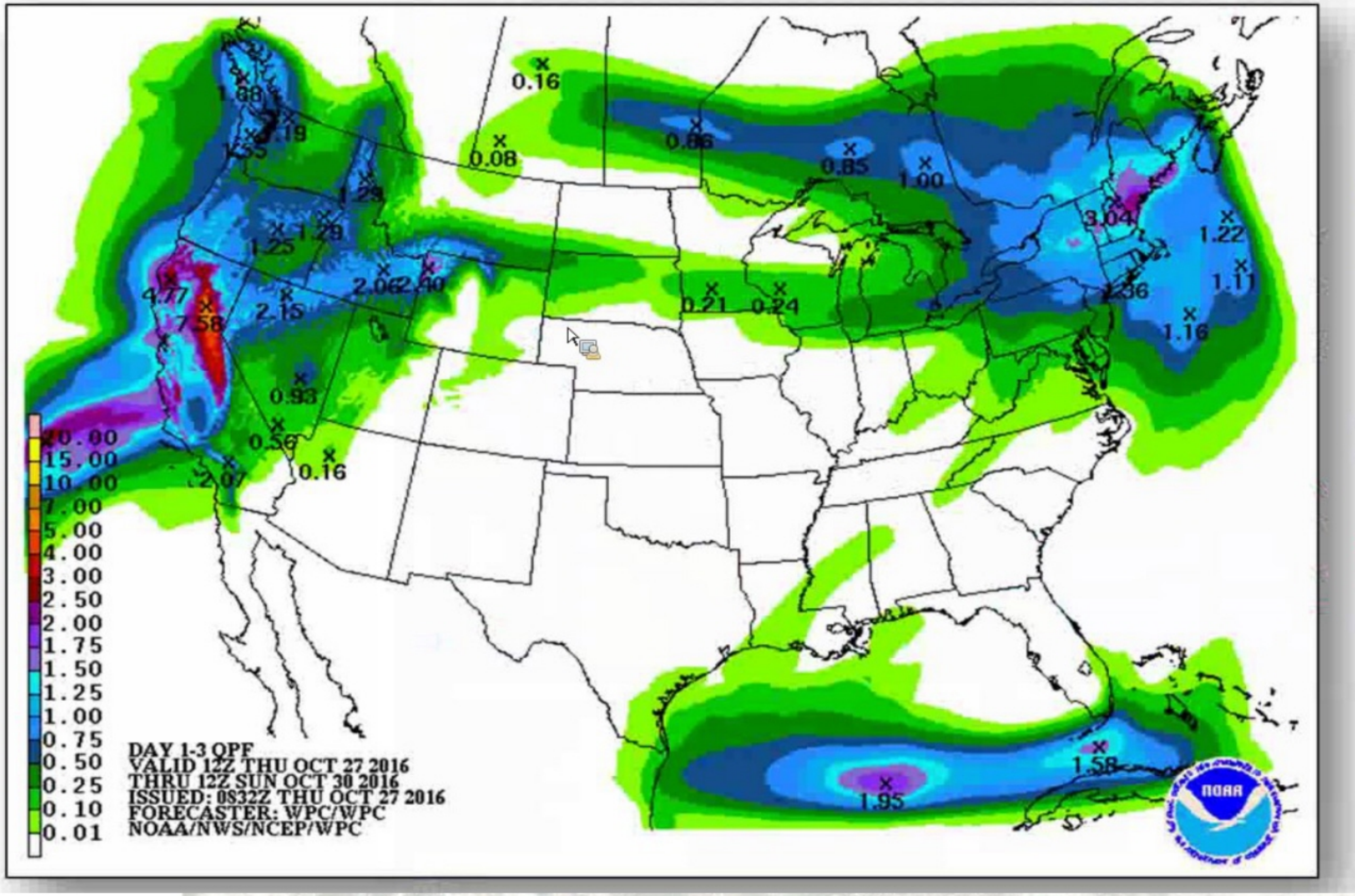
🟥 High Threat
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

Regional Weather Hazards

- NSTR

MONTANA
Helena
Billings
Missouri
Lake Sakakawea
NORTH DAKOTA
Bismarck
Fargo
Lake Oahe
Pierre
SOUTH DAKOTA
Sioux
IDAHO
Boise
Idaho Falls
Snake
WYOMING
Cheyenne
SAND HILLS
NEBRASKA
Lincoln
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
UTAH
BASIN
Denver
Colorado
COLORADO
Rio Grande
UNITED STATES
KANSAS
Arkansas
Wichita
COTEAU DU MISSOURI
GREAT PLAINS
BITTERROOT RANGE
ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Precipitation Outlook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5.00
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1.50
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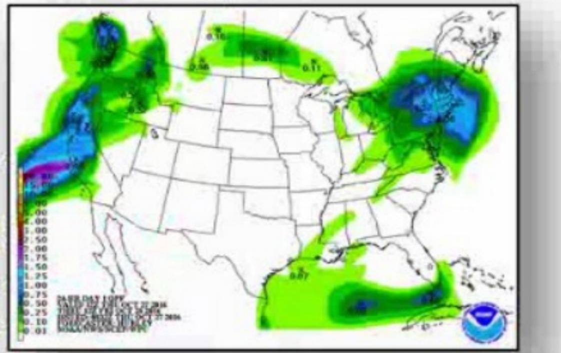
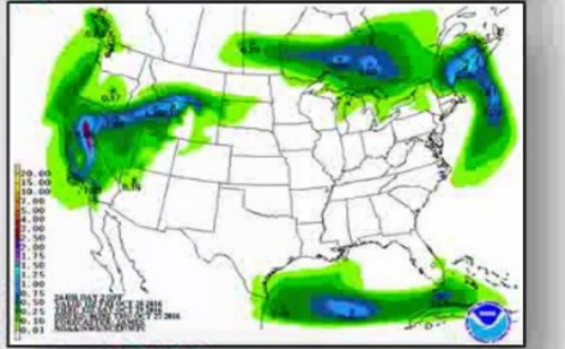
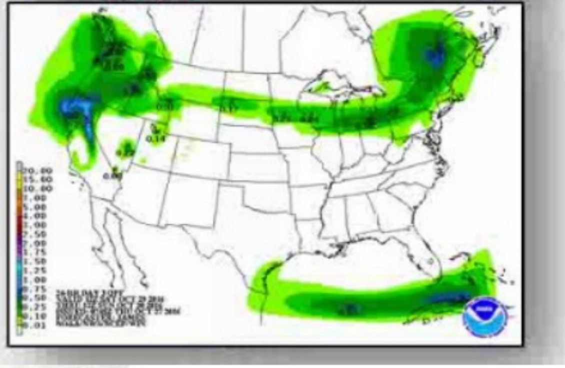
NOAA

DAY 1-3 QPF
VALID 12Z THU OCT 27 2016
THRU 12Z SUN OCT 30 2016
ISSUED: 0832Z THU OCT 27 2016
FORECASTER: WPC/WPC
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WPC


Day 1


Day 2


Day 3

State Weather Forecast

Denver, CO

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 81 °F	Low: 50 °F	High: 80 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 75 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 71 °F

Helena, MT

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
	20%	20%	30%		30%	20%		
Mostly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Partly Sunny	Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers
High: 67 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 48 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				20%			30%	40%
Patchy Fog	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Rain	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Rain	Partly Sunny then Chance Rain
High: 67 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 67 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 46 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 53 °F

Pierre, SD

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
			20%	30%	20%			
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Rain	Chance Rain	Slight Chance Rain then Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 76 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 67 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont

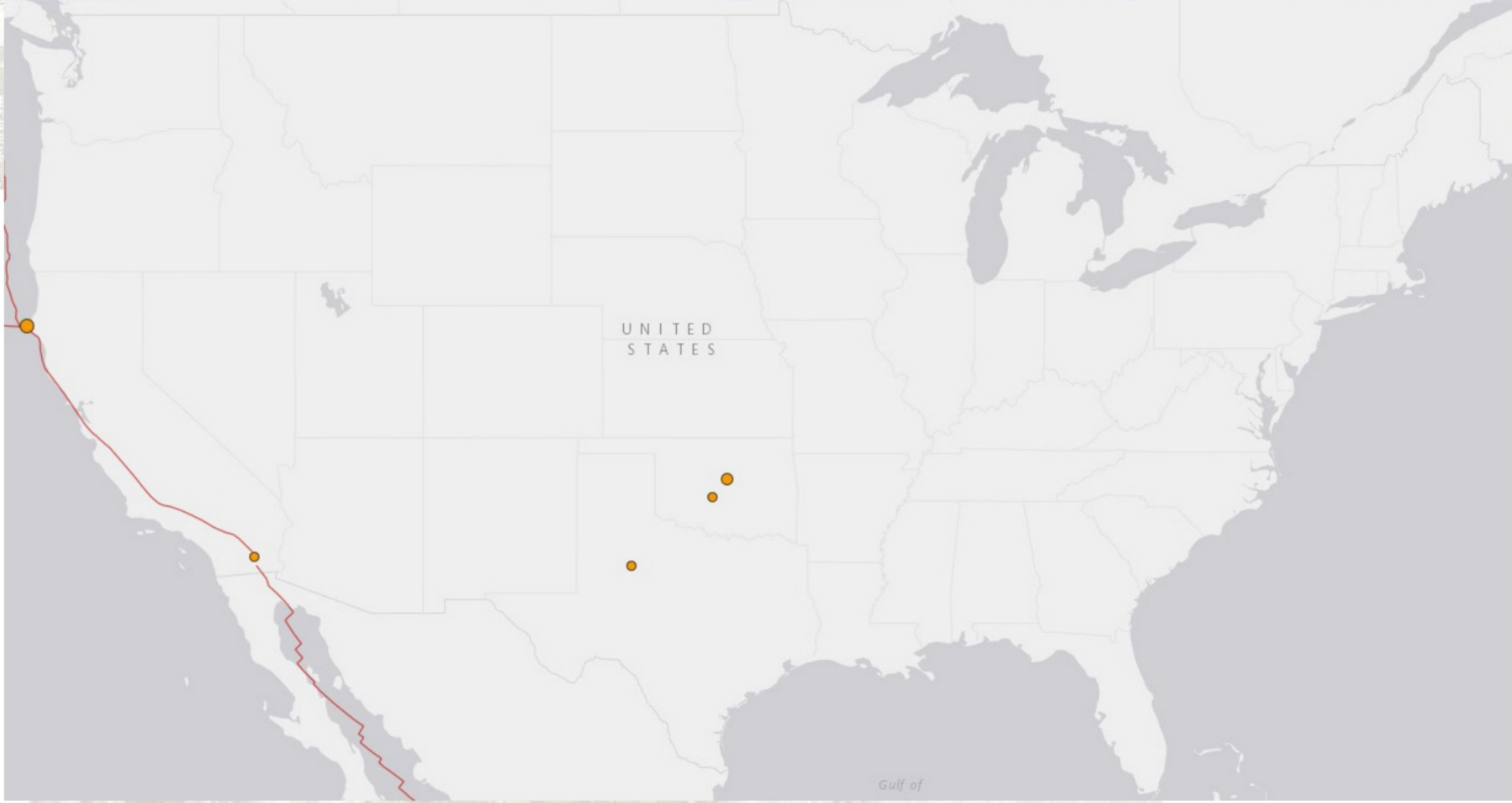
Salt Lake City, UT

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
		30% ⟶ 70%	70% ⟶ 20%		20%	40%		
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Chance Showers then Showers Likely	Showers Likely then Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers
High: 76 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 63 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 60 °F

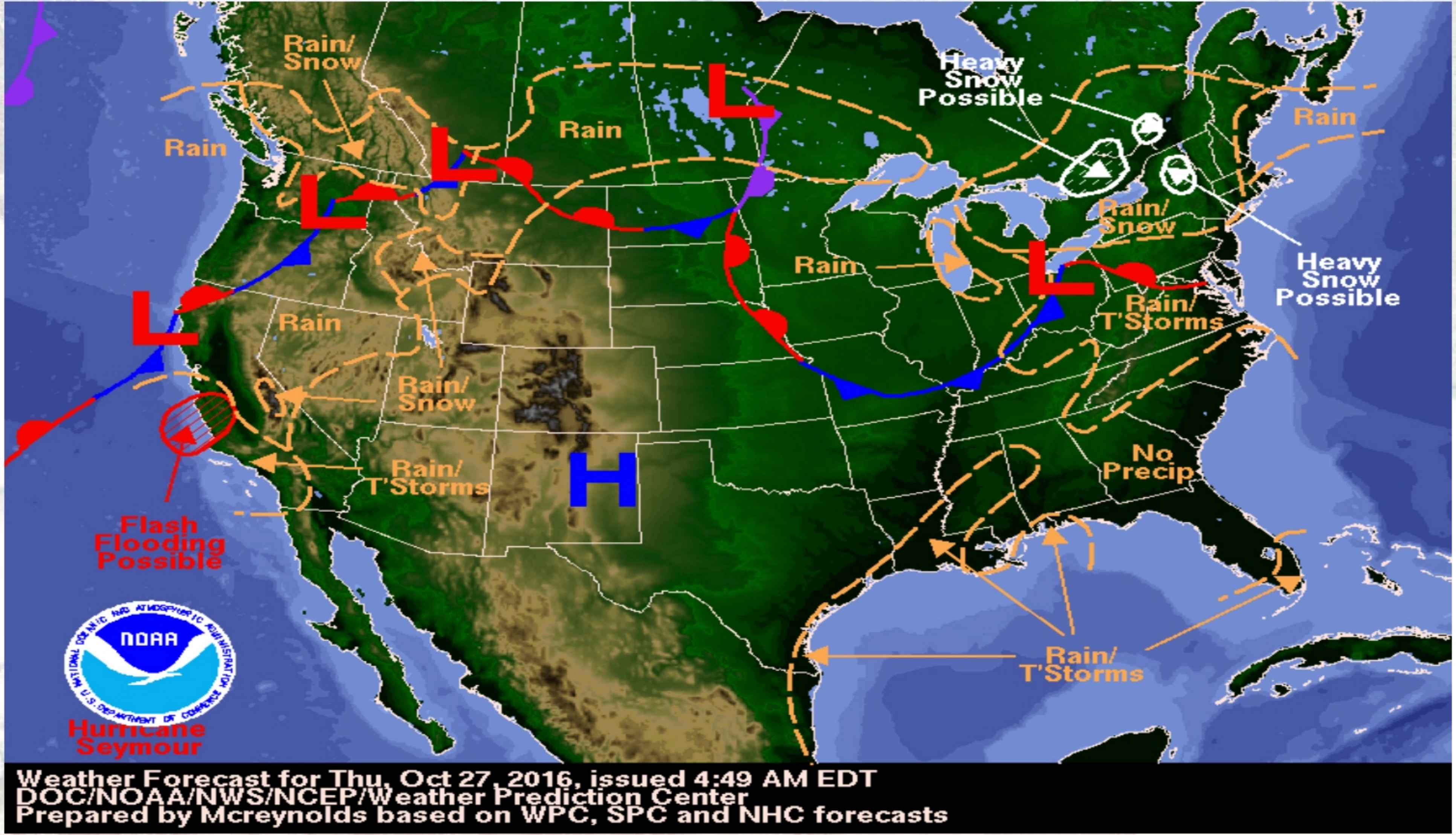
Cheyenne, WY

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Partly Cloudy and Breezy	Sunny and Windy
High: 75 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 60 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity


UNITED STATES
Gulf of

Today's National Weather Forecast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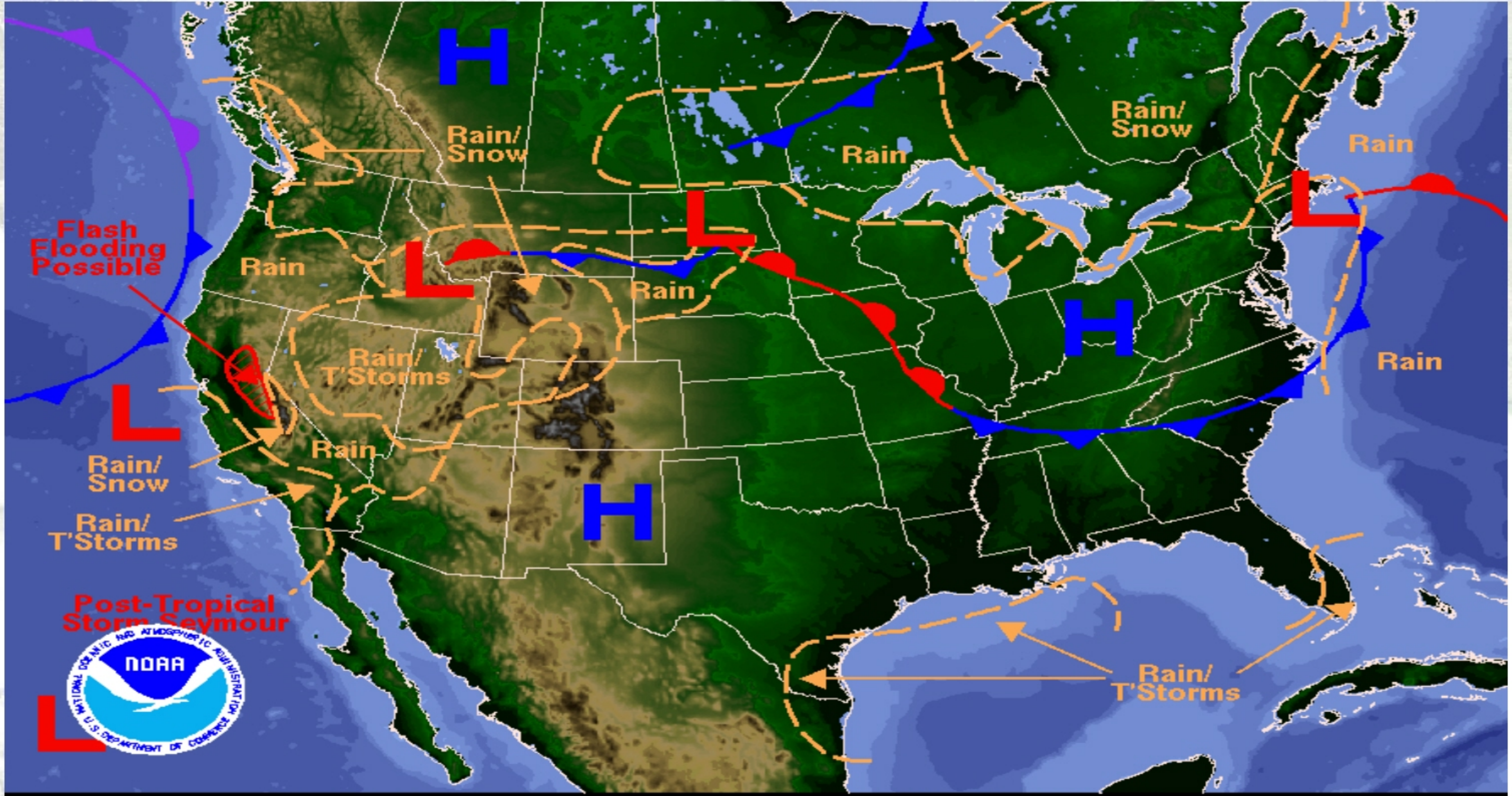
NOAA

Weather Forecast for Thu, Oct 27, 2016, issued 4:49 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Tomorrow's National Weather Forecast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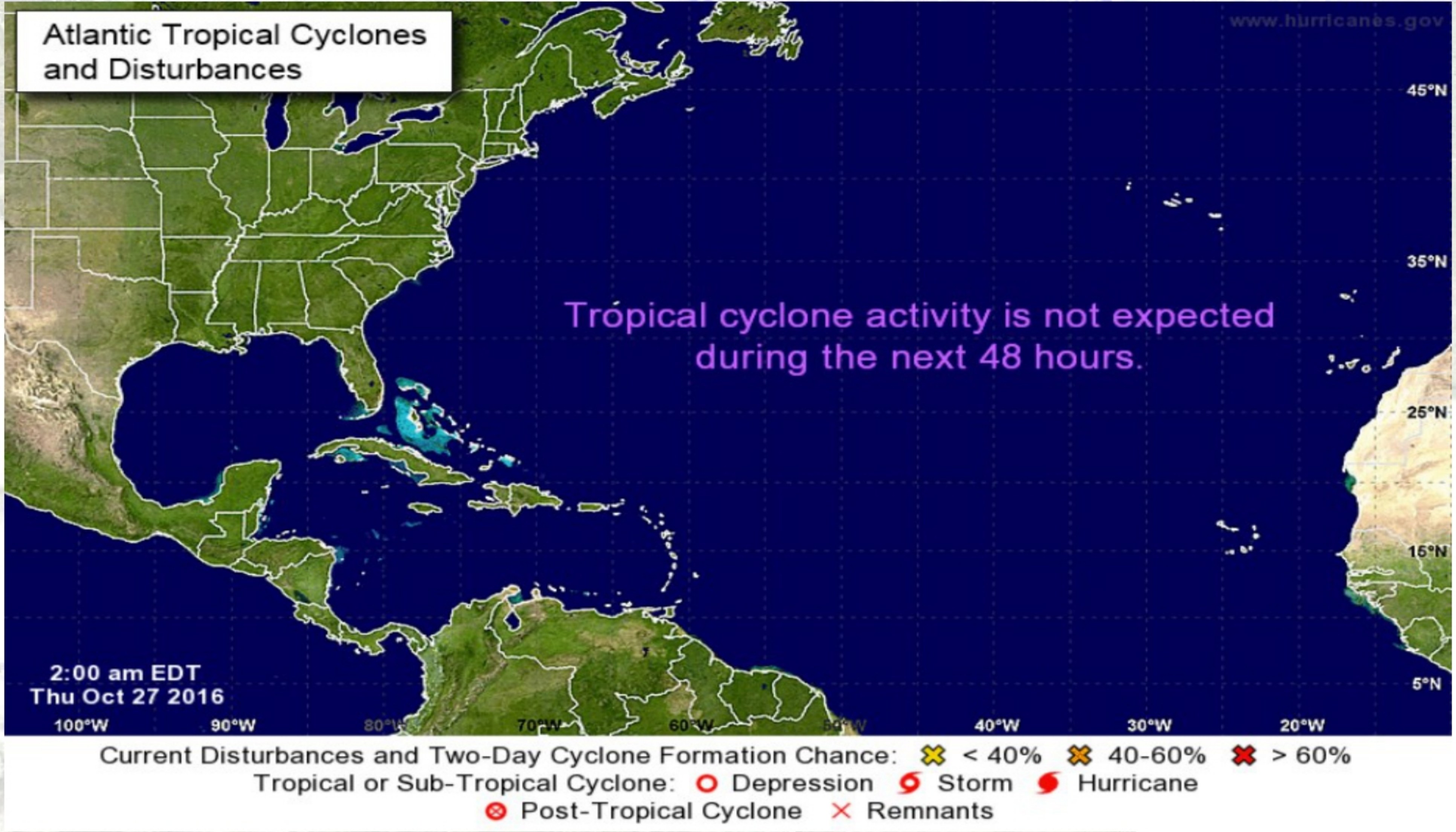
Weather Forecast for Fri, Oct 28, 2016, issued 4:58 AM EDT Thu, Oct 27, 2016
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Atlantic Tropical Assessment



Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances

Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours.

2:00 am EDT
Thu Oct 27 2016

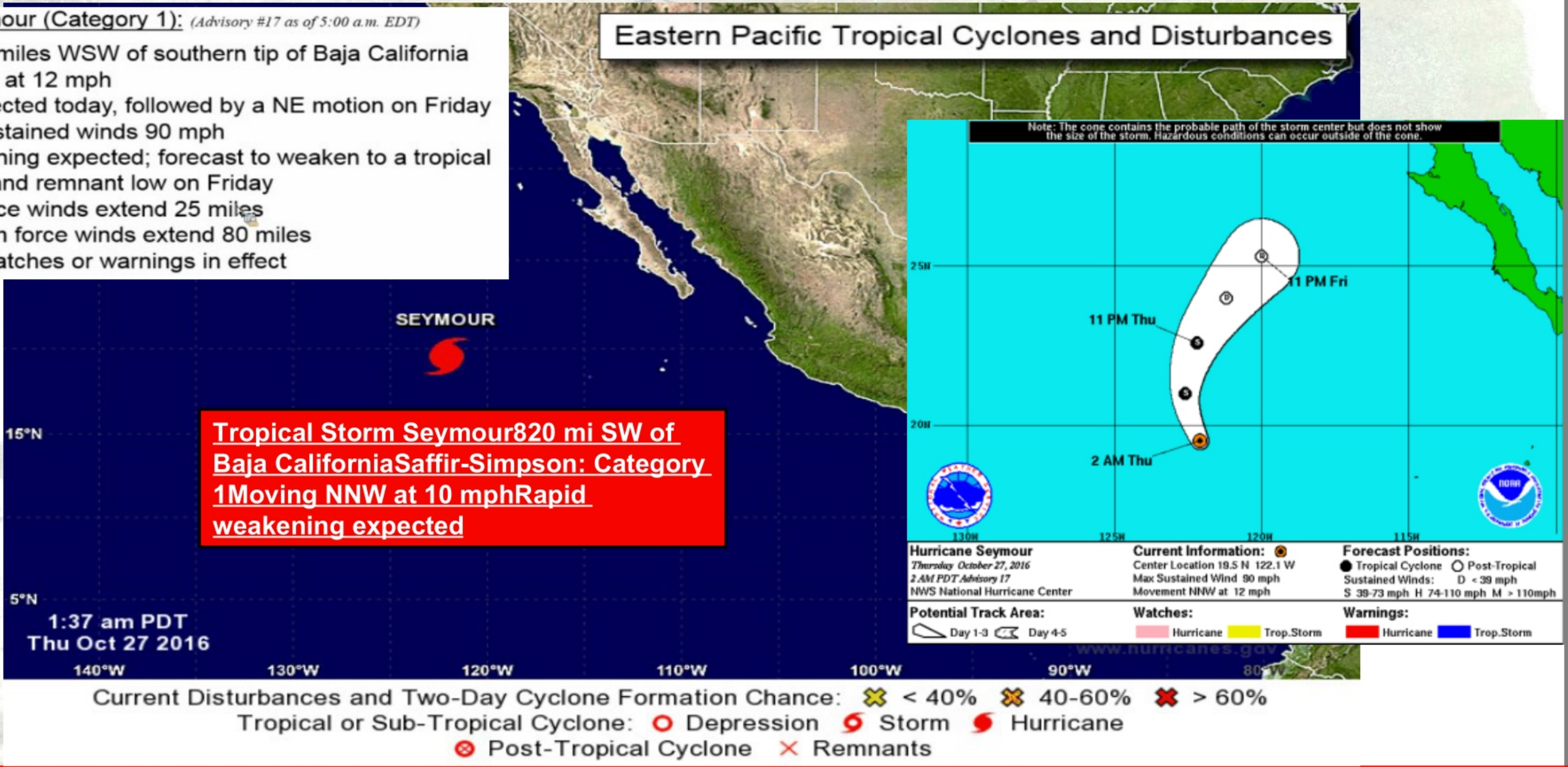
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression 🌀 Storm 🌀 Hurricane
⊗ Post-Tropical Cyclone × Remnants

www.hurricanes.gov
45°N
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment

Hurricane Seymour (Category 1): *(Advisory #17 as of 5:00 a.m. EDT)*

- Located 820 miles WSW of southern tip of Baja California
- Moving NNW at 12 mph
- A turn N expected today, followed by a NE motion on Friday
- Maximum sustained winds 90 mph
- Rapid weakening expected; forecast to weaken to a tropical storm today and remnant low on Friday
- Hurricane force winds extend 25 miles
- Tropical storm force winds extend 80 miles
- No coastal watches or warnings in effect



Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances

Tropical Storm Seymour820 mi SW of Baja CaliforniaSaffir-Simpson: Category 1Moving NNW at 10 mphRapid weakening expected

1:37 am PDT
Thu Oct 27 2016

Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: < 40% 40-60% > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: Depression Storm Hurricane
Post-Tropical Cyclone Remnants

Note: The cone contains the probable path of the storm center but does not show the size of the storm. Hazardous conditions can occur outside of the cone.

Hurricane Seymour
Thursday October 27, 2016
2 AM PDT Advisory 17
NWS National Hurricane Center

Current Information:
Center Location 19.5 N 122.1 W
Max Sustained Wind 90 mph
Movement NNW at 12 mph

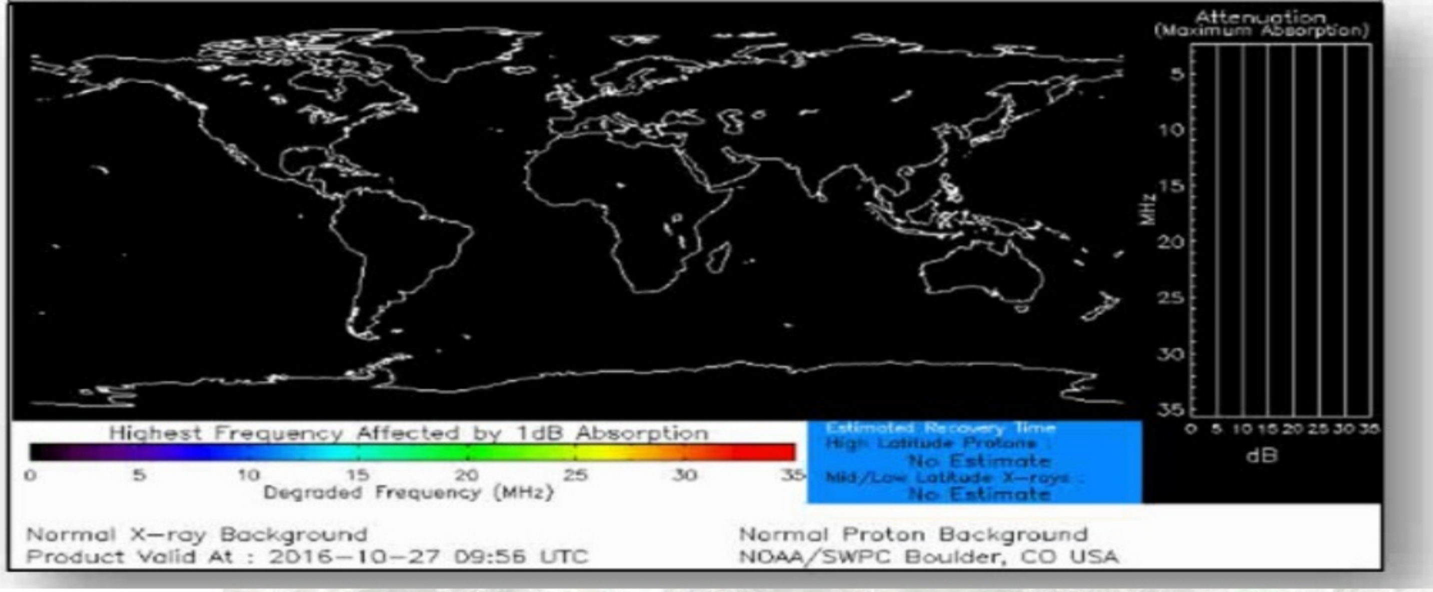
Forecast Positions:
● Tropical Cyclone ○ Post-Tropical
Sustained Winds: D < 39 mph
S 39-73 mph H 74-110 mph M > 110mph

Potential Track Area: Day 1-3 Day 4-5
Watches: Hurricane Trop.Storm
Warnings: Hurricane Trop.Storm

Space Weather

	Space Weather Activity	Geomagnetic Storms	Solar Radiation	Radio Blackouts
Past 24 Hours	Moderate	G2	None	None
Next 24 Hours	Minor	G1	None	None
For further information on NOAA Space Weather Scales refer to http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/noaa-scales-explanation				

HF Communication Impact


Attenuation (Maximum Absorption)
MHz
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
dB
Highest Frequency Affected by 1dB Absorption
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
Degraded Frequency (MHz)
Estimated Recovery Time
High Latitude Protons :
No Estimate
Mid/Low Latitude X-rays :
No Estimate
Normal X-ray Background
Product Valid At : 2016-10-27 09:56 UTC
Normal Proton Background
NOAA/SWPC Boulder, CO USA

Sunspot Activity

National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
5	**Date Requested**	**0**	**0**
Bad River Band Tribe – DR (Appeal) Severe Storms and Flooding	October 15, 2016		
Spokane Tribe – DR Cayuse Mountain Wildfire	October 18, 2016		
MN – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 19, 2016		
IA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016		
VA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016		

IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 25, 2016 /

Position	**Name**	**Contact Number**
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Kevin Moore (UFN)	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Tracy McCauley (Until 30 Oct)	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

October RRCC Standup Roster (Orange Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Dennis Fisher
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	Kevin Moore
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Mike Ordonez
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 18, 2016 / 1240)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	Michael Pendergrass	303-746-3640	303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	Paul Moreno (24 – 28 Oct)David Watkins	720-315-5647720-683-2565	303-235-4668303-235-4359
WY	Carita Ricley (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton (Deployed)	720-315-6931303-495-0051	303-235-4322303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity

Significant Events: None

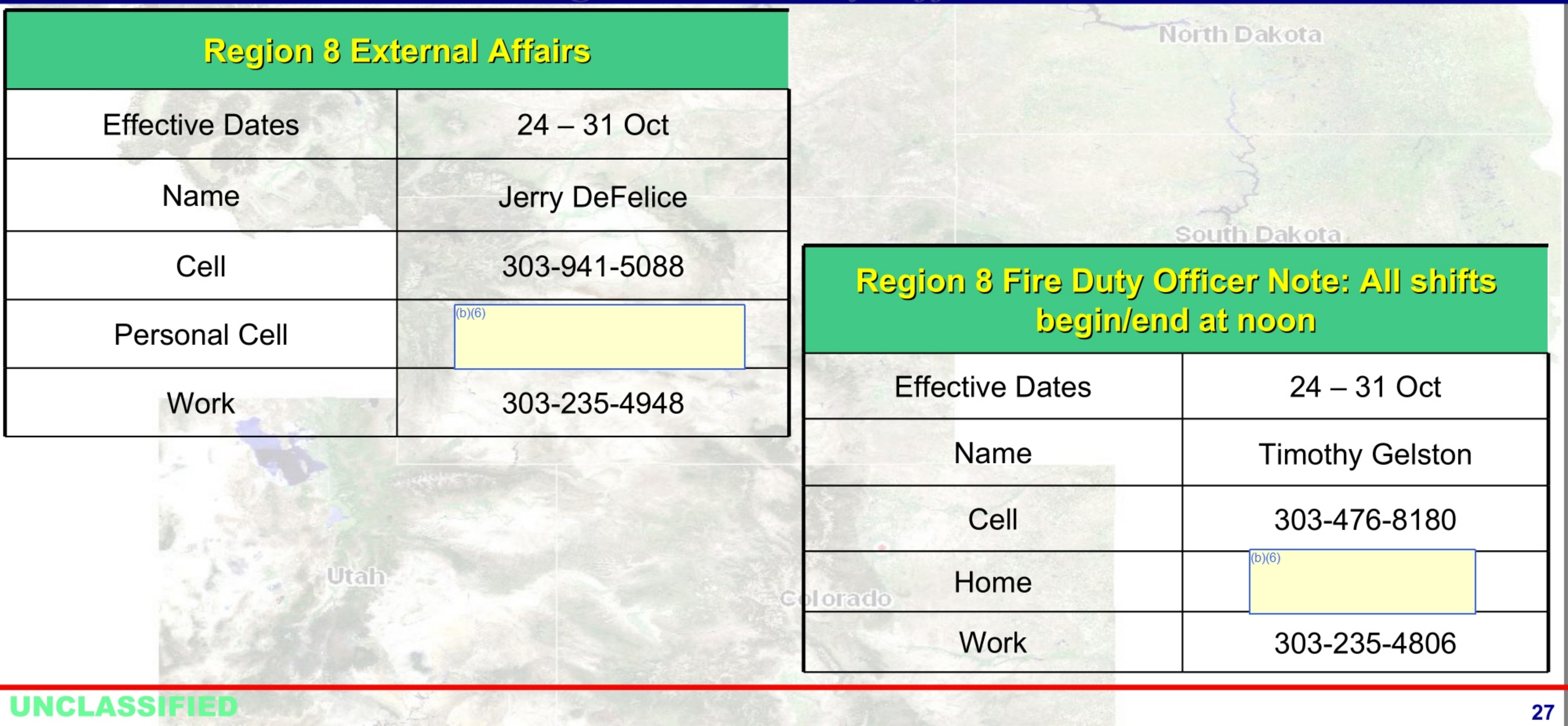
Tropical Activity:
- Atlantic – Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours
- Eastern Pacific – Hurricane Seymour (Category 1)
- Central Pacific – No tropical cyclones expected through Friday evening
- Western Pacific – No activity affecting U.S. interests

Significant Weather:
- Flash flooding possible – central CA
- Rain and thunderstorms – central to southern CA; Gulf coast; Tennessee Valley to Mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes
- Rain and snow – Northern Intermountain to Northern Rockies; Great Lakes to Northeast
- Heavy snow possible – Northeast
- Rain – Pacific Northwest to Northern Plains, Central Great Basin & CA; New England
- Space Weather – Past 24 hours: moderate with geomagnetic storms reaching G2 level occurred; next 24 hours: minor with geomagnetic storms reaching G1 level expected

Earthquake Activity: No significant activity

Declaration Activity: None

Region VIII Duty Officers



Region 8 External Affairs

Effective Dates	24 – 31 Oct
Name	Jerry DeFelice
Cell	303-941-5088
Personal Cell	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4948

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon

Effective Dates	24 – 31 Oct
Name	Timothy Gelston
Cell	303-476-8180
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4806

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY

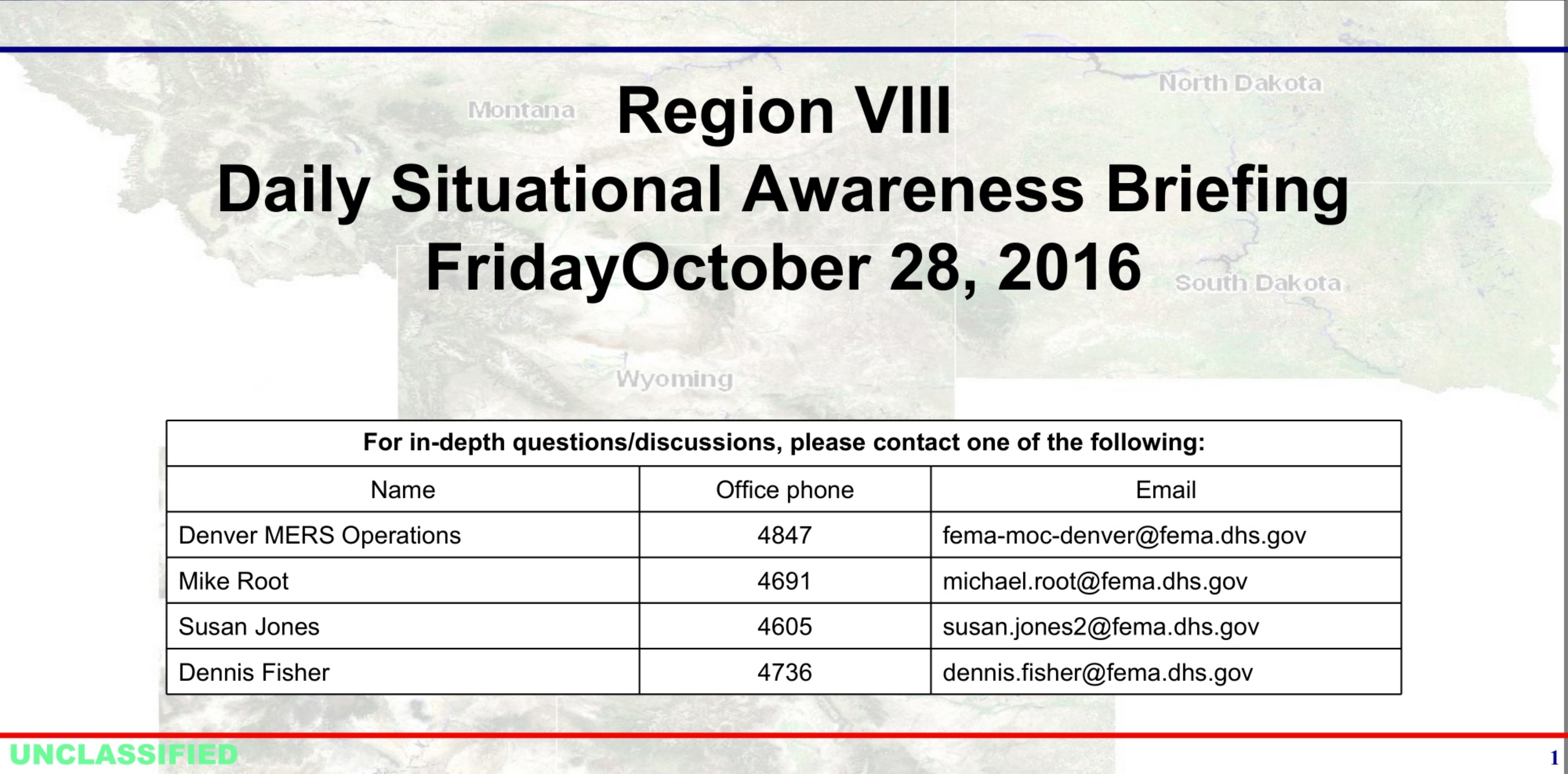
From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: 28 Oct 2016 10:53:12 -0400
To: (b)(6)@nd.gov;Alexander, Daniel;Americanos, Christopher;Andersen, Chris;Appenrodt, Kathleen;(b)(6);Bakersky, Pete;Brazelton, James;'Bruce Holloman (b)(6)@state.co.us)';Bush, Tom;'Chris Sorensen - CO SEOC'(b)(6) MAJ;Darabaris, John;'DCE R VIII Operations (usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.dco-region-viii-ops1@mail.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) (b)(6) SFC (b)(6)@mail.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6)@us.army.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) SFC (b)(6)@mail.mil)';(b)(6) Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee;Dragani, Nancy;Espinosa, Adam;Feighert, Dan;Copen, Larry (FEMA CORPS);FEMA-NWC;Fisher, Dennis;Garcia, Maria;(b)(6)(Denver EPA)';Graff, Shawn;Gray, Patricia;Helland, Kevin;'(b)(6 (b)(6)@wyo.gov'(b)(6) Hudson, Lamont;Jason Bauder;Jones, Susan K(b)(6) (b)(6);Lawley, Charles;Longenecker, Herbert;Lyman, AJ;McCool, Thomas;McCown, James;McNeese, Colleen;Moore, Jkevin;Moreno, Paul;'(b)(6)@nd.gov)';Nyquist, Daniel;Pendergrass, Michael M;Poore, Stephanie;R8 Division Directors;R8 External Affairs;(b)(6);Rockabrand, Ryan;Root, Michael(b)(6)tina titze;'(b)(6);Stensgaard, Theresa;(b)(6) (b)(6);'Victor P.';Volkman, Jeff;Watkins, David
Cc: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Subject: FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Brief Slides for 28 Oct 2016
Attachments: Stand Up Consolidated Brief 28 Oct 2016.pptx

Good Morning,

Attached are today's FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Briefing slides.

Have a great day!

Mike Root
Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC) &
FEMA Alternate Operations Center - West (FAOC-West)
Fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
800-311-7021 or (303) 235-4847



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
FridayOctober 28, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: FYSA UT-Hicks Creek Fire 100% Contained – Final ReportMOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: DEPLOYED ISO DR-4277-LARVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	LEVEL III (Monitoring)
Utah	NORMAL
S. Dakota	NORMAL
N. Dakota	LEVEL II (Partial)
Wyoming	NORMAL
Montana	NORMAL

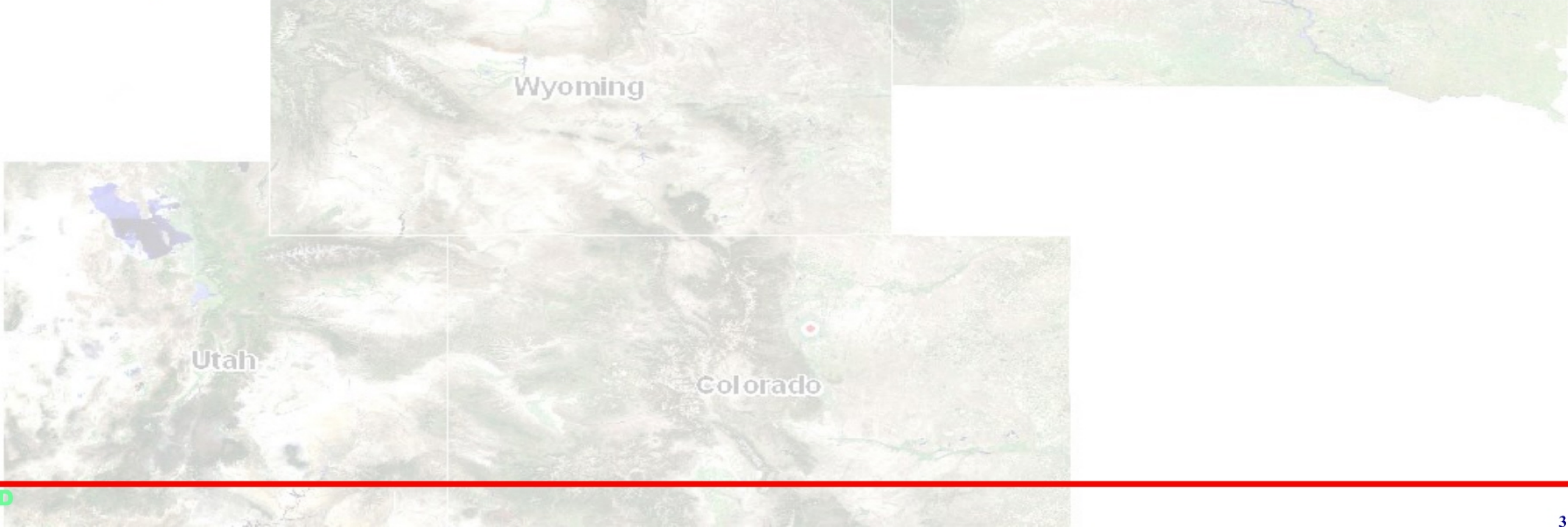
Events

Exercises and Training

- 1 Nov: 0800-1600 RRCC Exercise, Long’s Peak Conf Rm3 Nov: 1000-1230 Readiness Day, Long’s Peak Conf Rm

Region Active Fires

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 27 Oct 2016)				
Junkins FireFEMA-5175-FM-CO10/17/2016	Custer & Pueblo Counties	17,741 (+66)	80%(+10)	All evacuations lifted; only those with homes destroyed remain displaced.Est. containment: Nov 15, 2016Source: Inciweb



FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

No Activity / Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) / Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as “Major” by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟥	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟩	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟥	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state’s population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3		🟥
CIR 4		
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11		🟥
CIR 12		
CIR 13		
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CIR 15		
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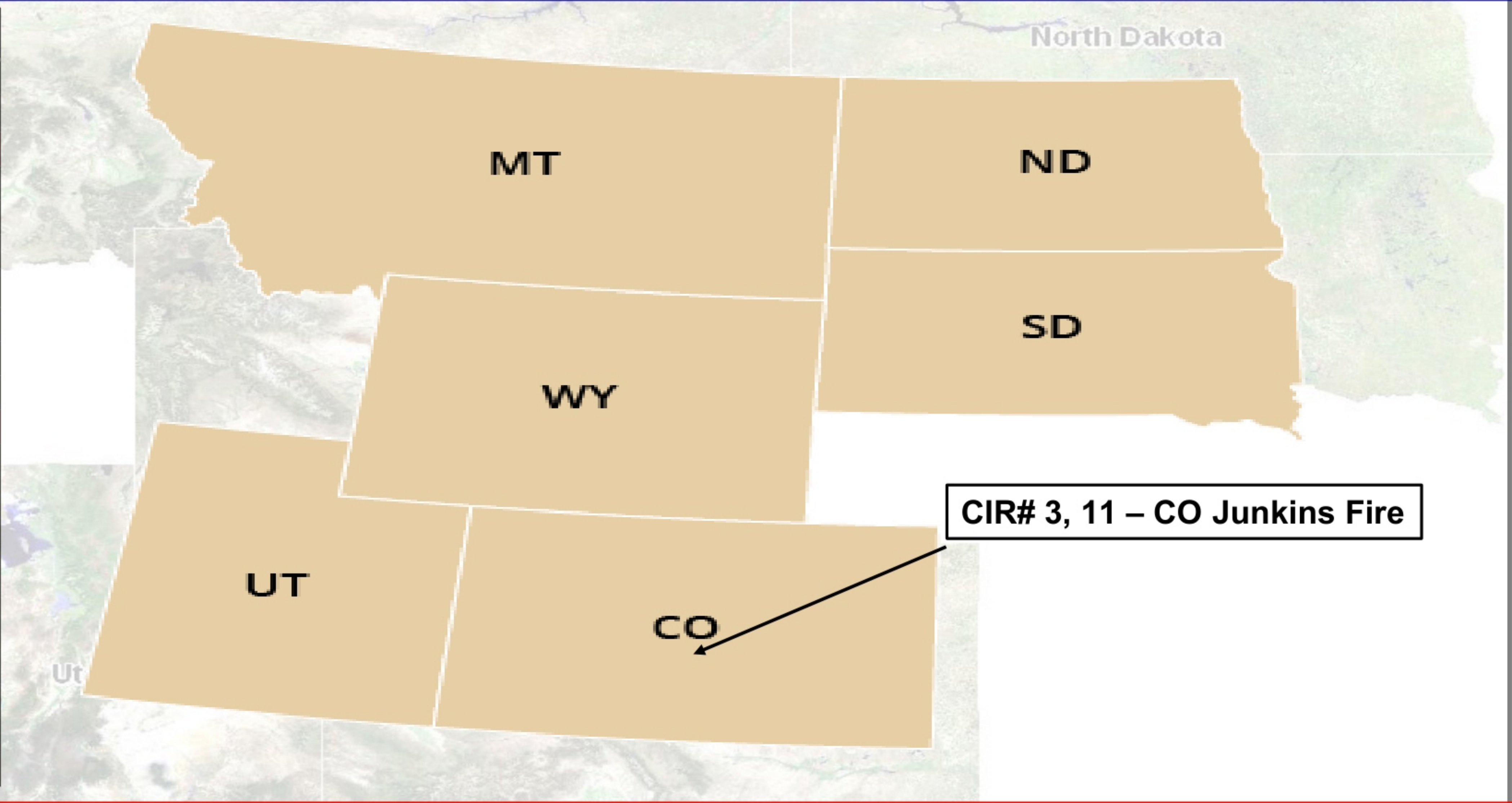
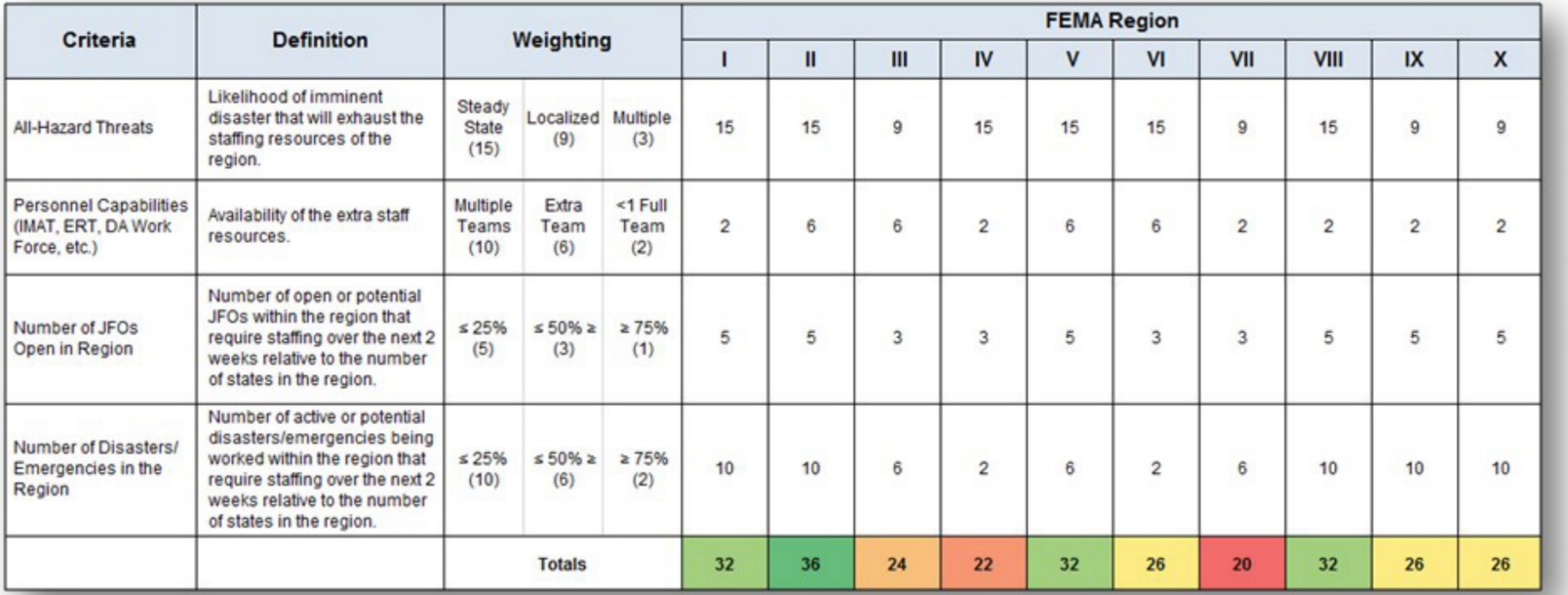
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 11 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 24 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	15	9	15	15	15	9	15	9	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	6	6	2	2	2	2
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	3	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	6	2	6	10	10	10
		Totals			32	36	24	22	32	26	20	32	26	26

Regions II, I, V, & VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations		
Level	Reason for Activation	Activated Times

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations		
State	Activation	Event/Incident
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level III Monitoring (0800-1700)	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations		
State	Activation (Event)	Supporting
LA	Flooding	DR-4277-LA

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status		
FCO	**Deployed Location**	**Declaration Number**

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)		
RCO	**Deployed Location**	**Declaration Number**
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

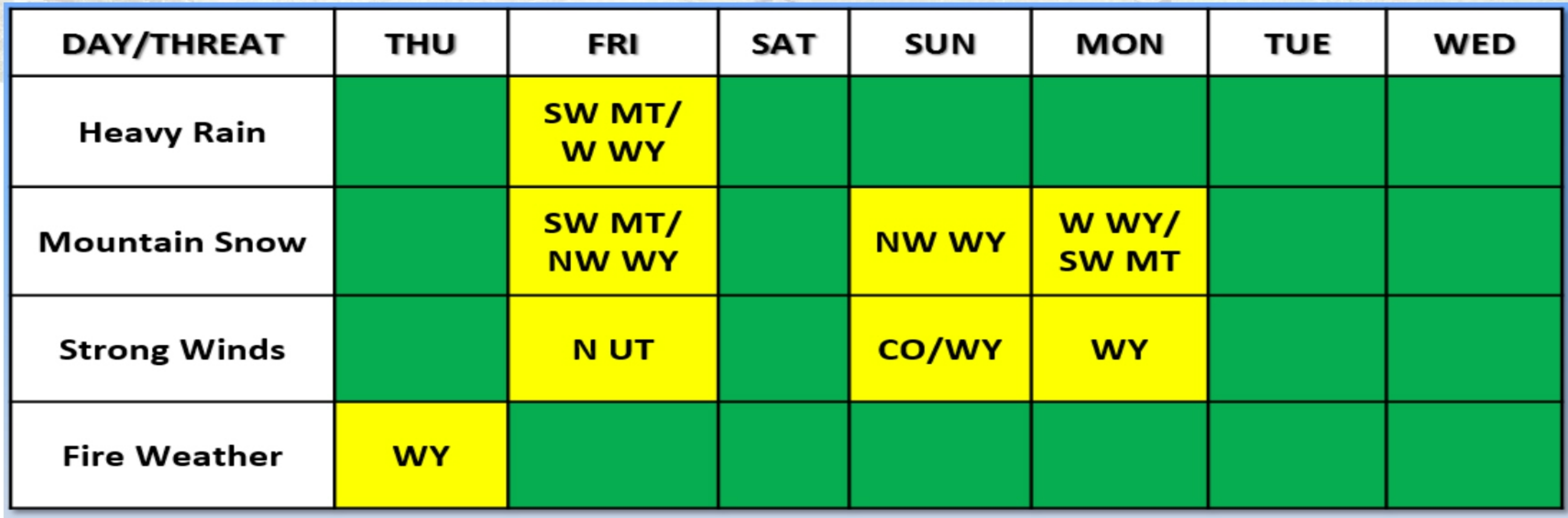
Today-Saturday

- An elevated fire danger risk for Wyoming this afternoon
- A storm system will cross the northern Rockies Friday
    - Valley rain/mountain snow for southern Montana and western Wyoming
    - Strong winds are possible across northern Utah

Sunday-Wednesday

- A stronger storm system will cross northern Rockies/Northern Plains
    - Mountain snow for western Wyoming and southwestern Montana Sunday into Monday
    - Strong winds in Colorado and Wyoming Sunday then in Wyoming Monday

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

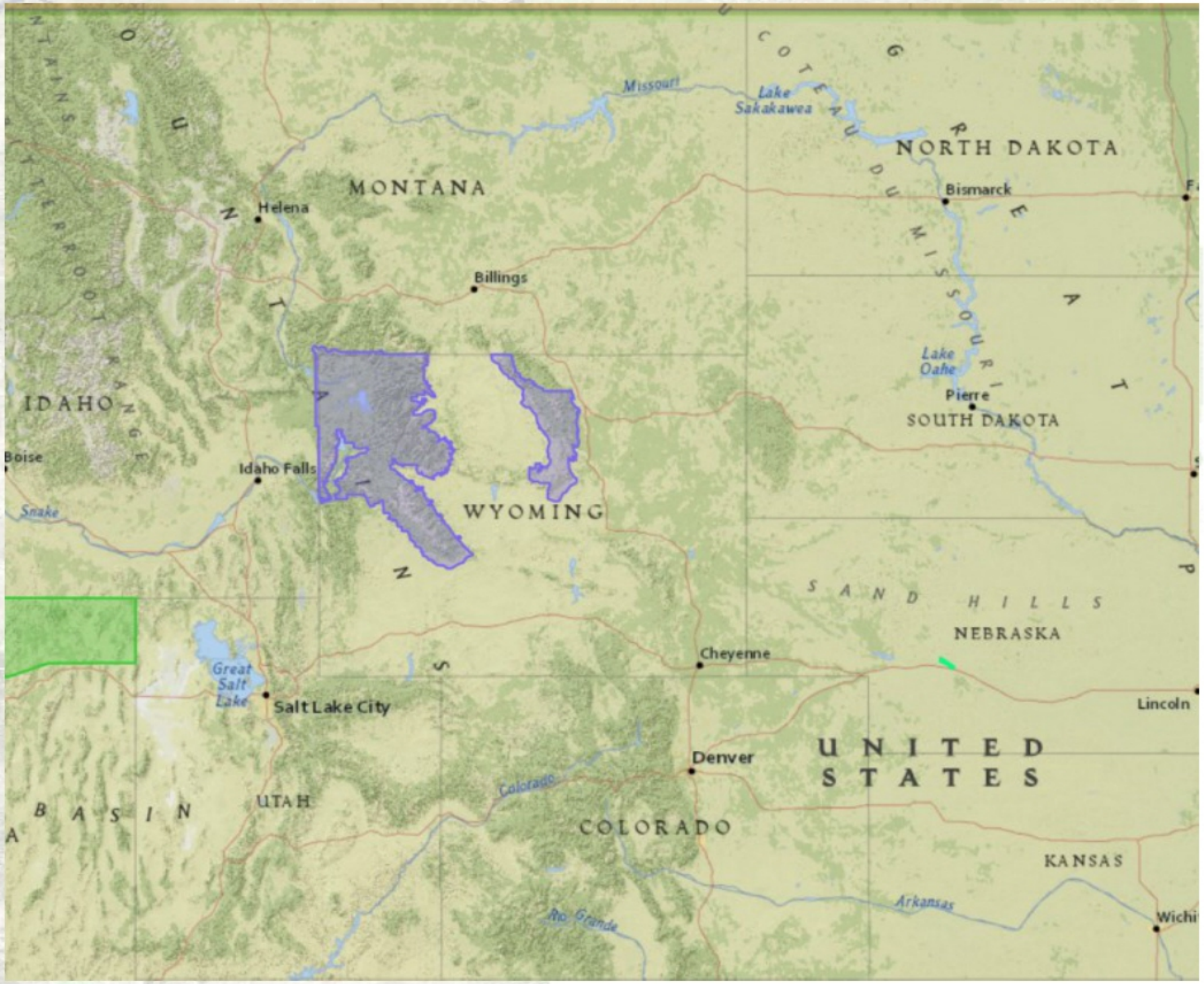


DAY/THREAT	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
Heavy Rain	🟩	🟨 SW MT/ W WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snow	🟩	🟨 SW MT/ NW WY	🟩	🟨 NW WY	🟨 W WY/ SW MT	🟩	🟩
Strong Winds	🟩	🟨 N UT	🟩	🟨 CO/WY	🟨 WY	🟩	🟩
Fire Weather	🟨 WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

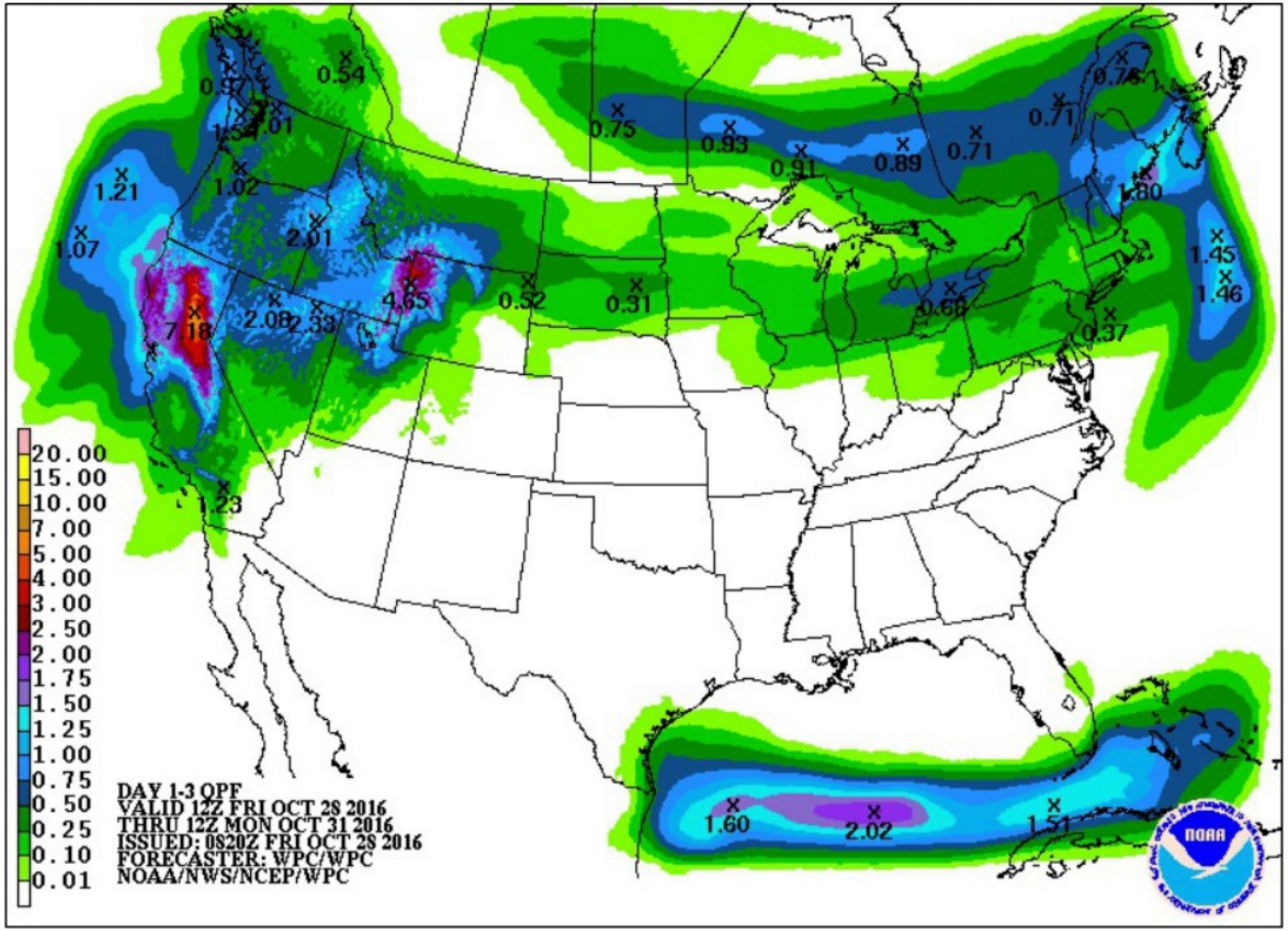
🟥 High Threat
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

Regional Weather Hazards

- WY – Winter Weather Advisory remains in effect through portions of Western, Central and Northern Wyoming from 6 PM this evening to noon MT SaturdayUT, CO, SD, ND, MT - NSTR


MONTANA
Helena
Billings
NORTH DAKOTA
Bismarck
Lake Sakakawea
Missouri
IDAHO
Boise
Idaho Falls
Snake
WYOMING
SOUTH DAKOTA
Pierre
Lake Oahe
NEBRASKA
SAND HILLS
Cheyenne
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
UTAH
Denver
COLORADO
Colorado
Rio Grande
UNITED STATES
KANSAS
Arkansas
Lincoln

Precipitation Outlook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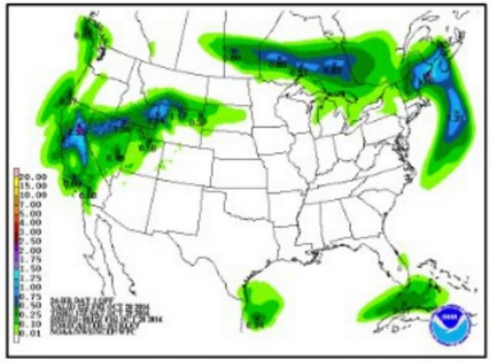
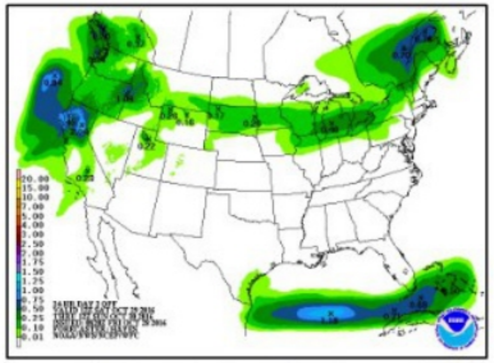
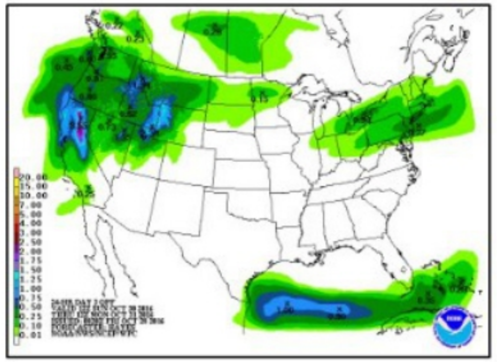
DAY 1-3 QPF
VALID 12Z FRI OCT 28 2016
THRU 12Z MON OCT 31 2016
ISSUED: 0820Z FRI OCT 28 2016
FORECASTER: WPC/WPC
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WPC
NOAA



Day 1



Day 2



Day 3

State Weather Forecast

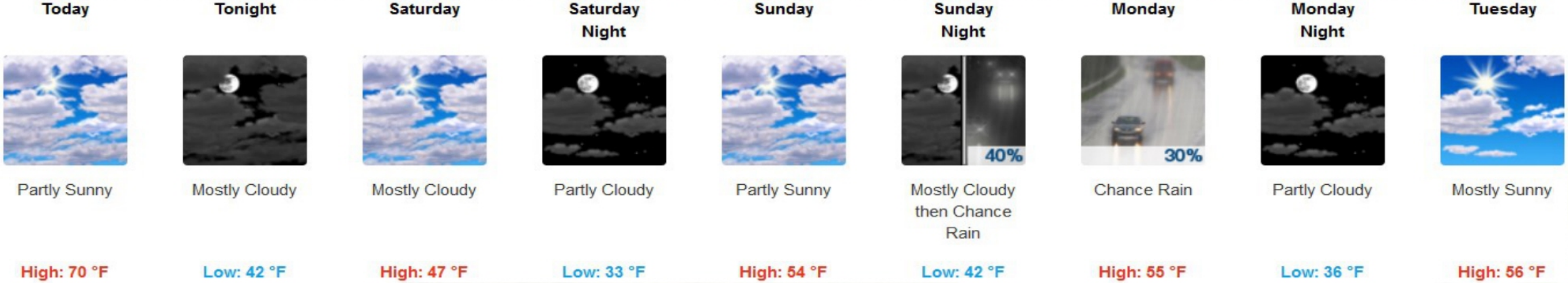
Denver, CO

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 82 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 75 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 66 °F

Helena, MT

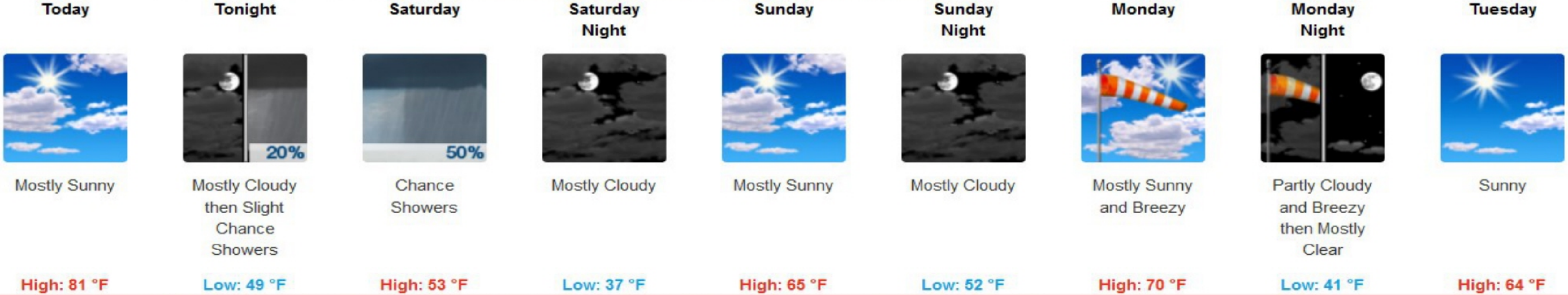
State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND



Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
					40%	30%		
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Rain	Chance Rain	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 70 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 47 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 56 °F

Pierre, SD



Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
	20%	50%						
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 81 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 53 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 64 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont

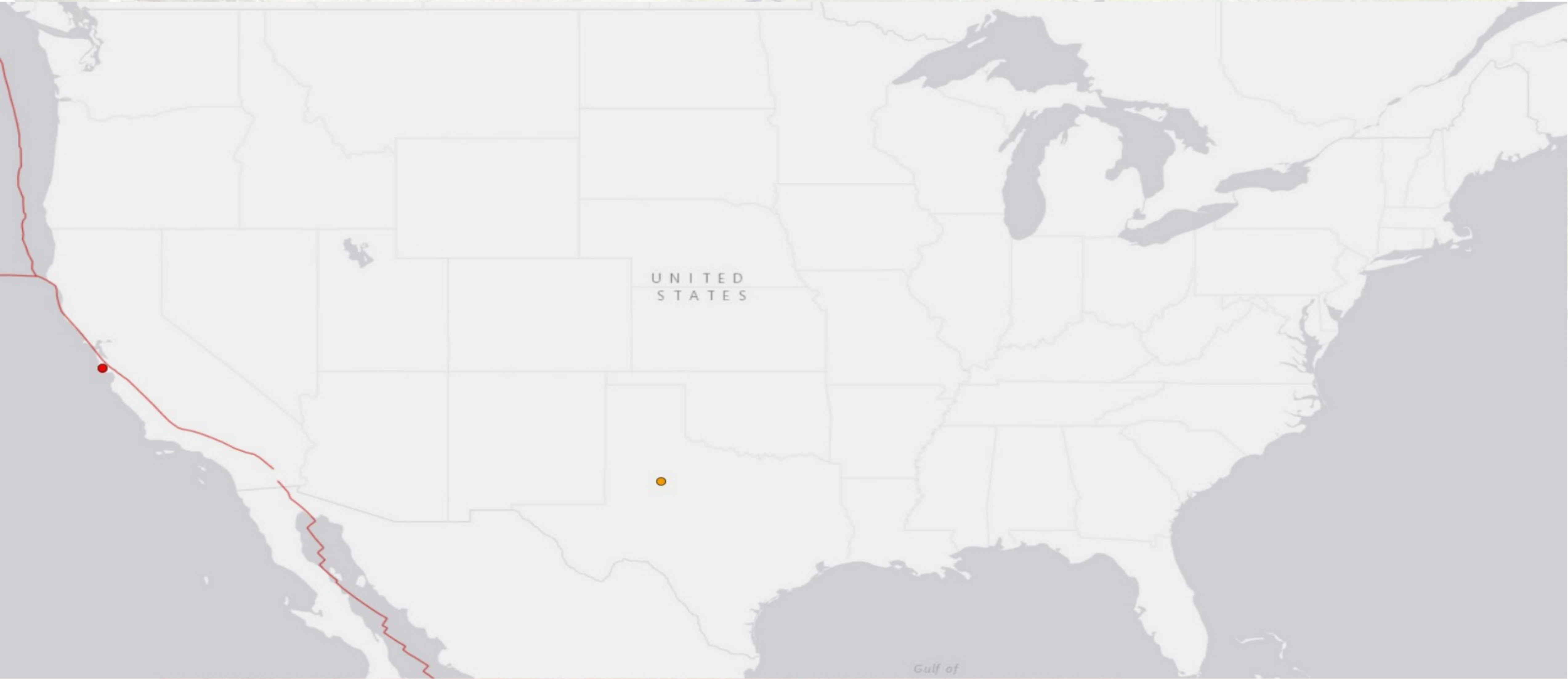
Salt Lake City, UT

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
20% → 50%	50%	30%	20%	40%	60%	60%		
Isolated Showers then Scattered Showers	Scattered Showers	Scattered Showers then Mostly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Showers Likely	Showers Likely then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 71 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 71 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 62 °F

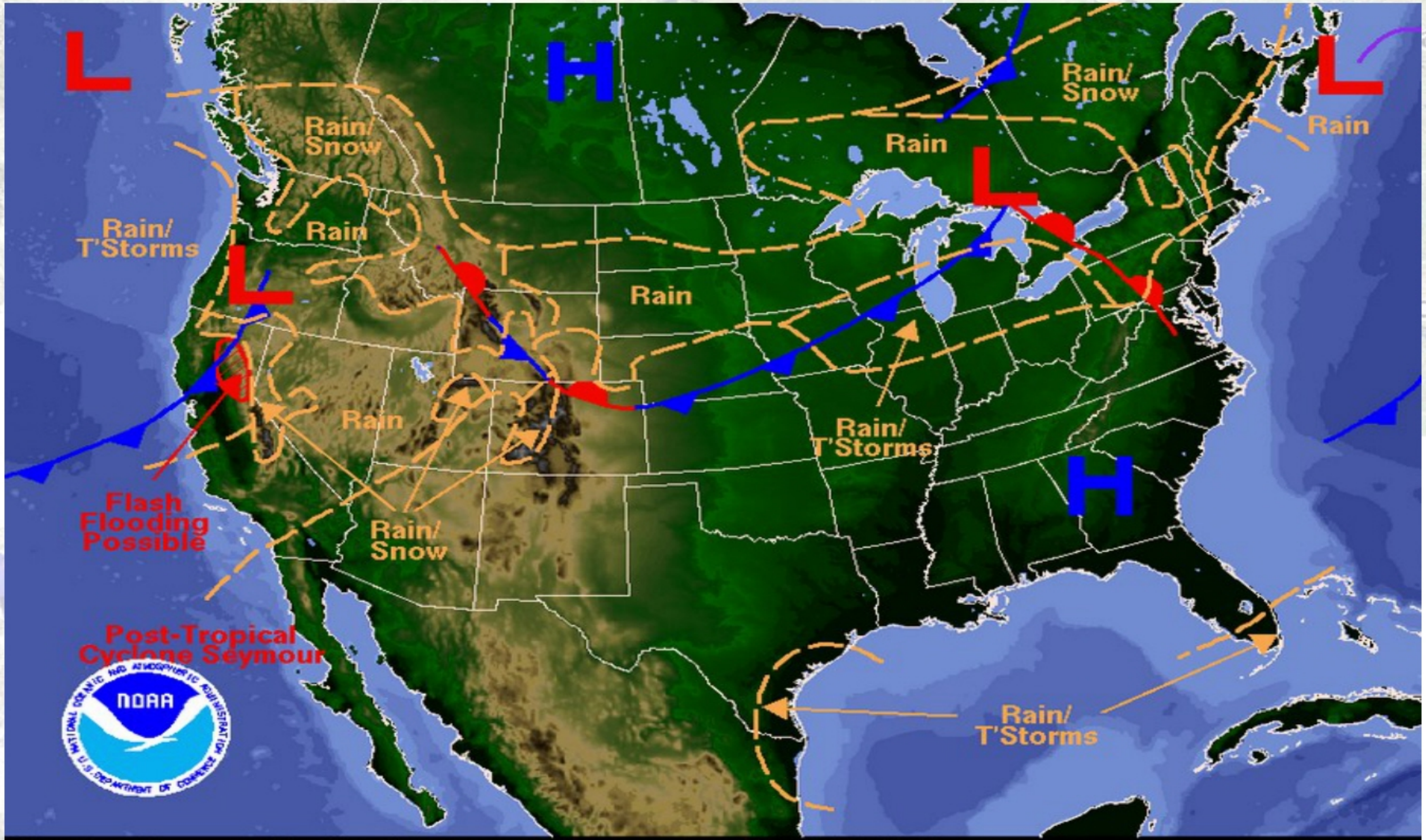
Cheyenne, WY

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny and Windy	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 74 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 59 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity


UNITED STATES
Gulf of

Today's National Weather Forecast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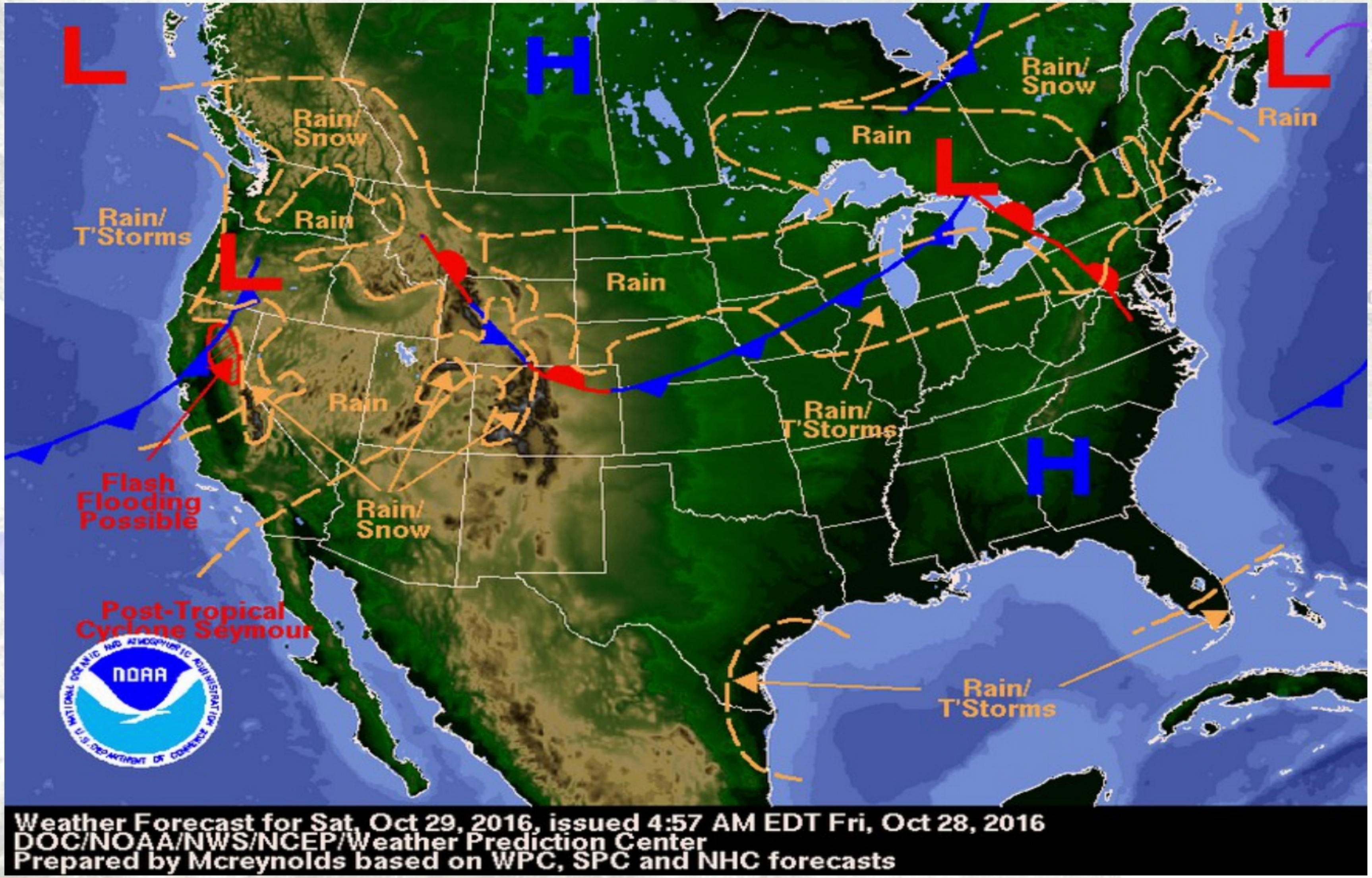
Post-Tropical Cyclone Seymour
NOAA
Rain/ T'Storms

Weather Forecast for Sat, Oct 29, 2016, issued 4:57 AM EDT Fri, Oct 28, 2016
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Tomorrow's National Weather Forecast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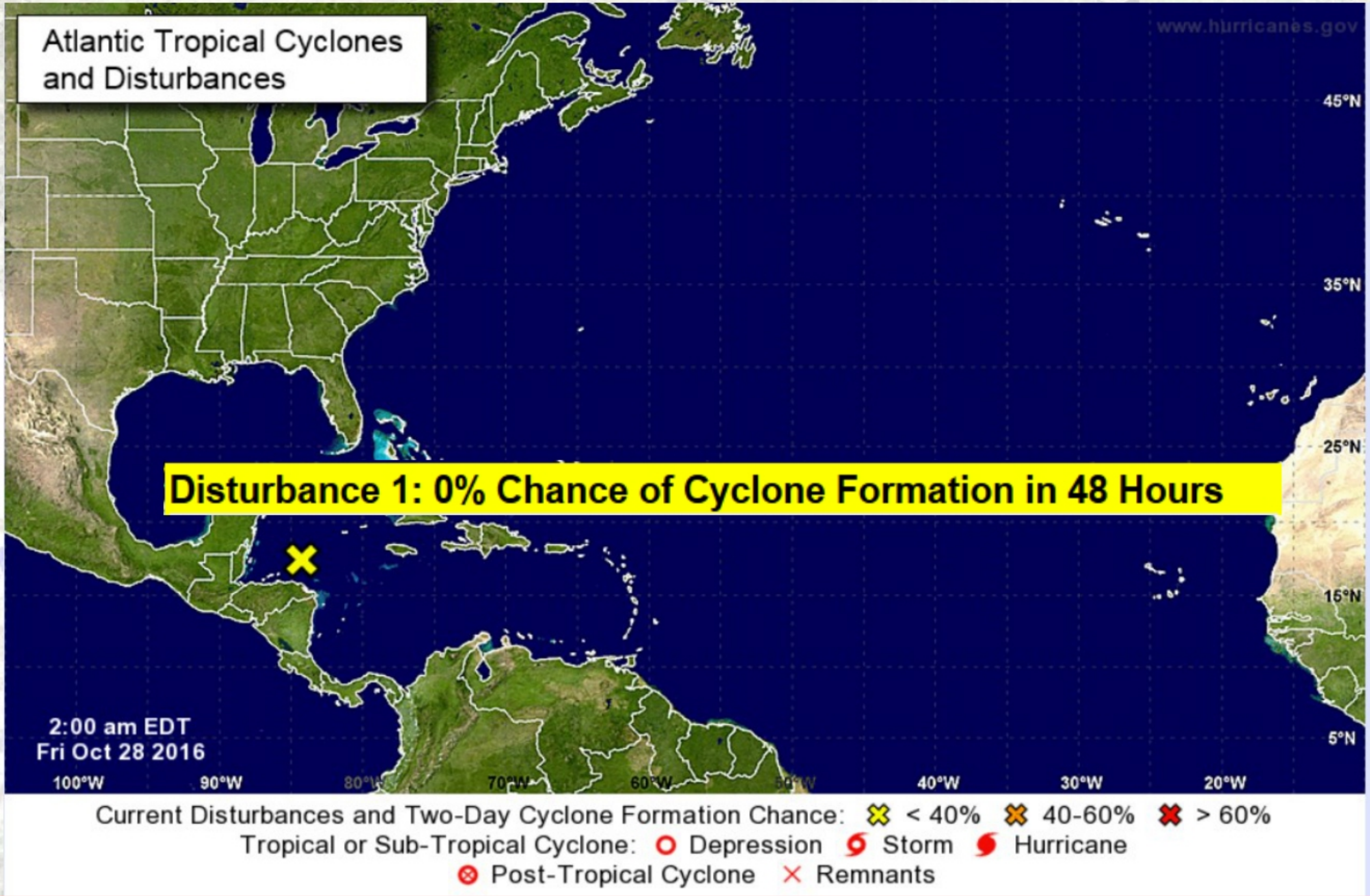
Flash
Flooding
Possible
Rain/
Snow
Post-Tropical
Cyclone Seymour
NOAA
Rain/
T'Storms

Weather Forecast for Sat, Oct 29, 2016, issued 4:57 AM EDT Fri, Oct 28, 2016
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

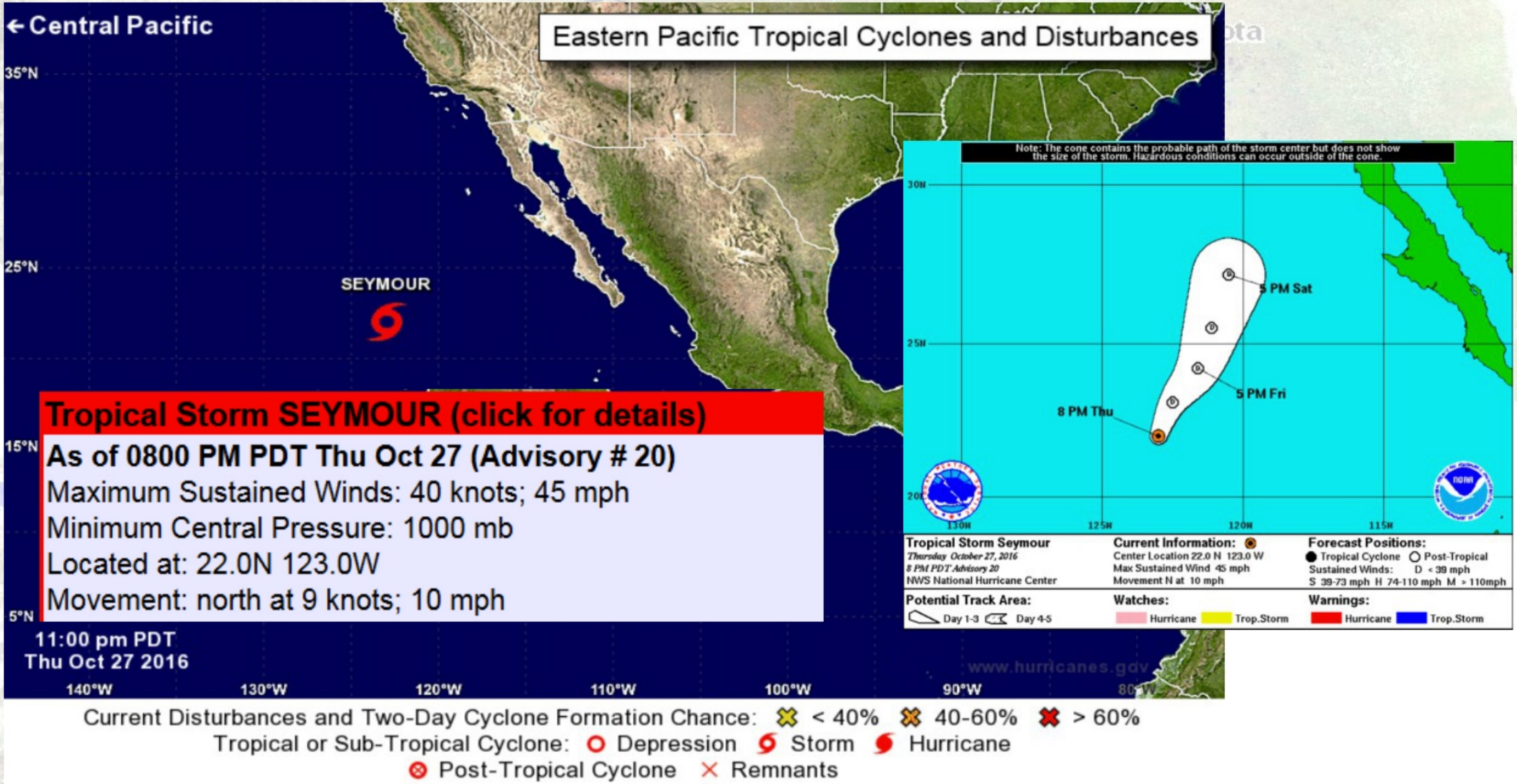
Atlantic Tropical Assessment



Disturbance 1: 0% Chance of Cyclone Formation in 48 Hours

Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
www.hurricanes.gov
45°N
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W
2:00 am EDT
Fri Oct 28 2016
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: < 40% 40-60% > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: Depression Storm Hurricane
Post-Tropical Cyclone Remnants

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment


← Central Pacific
Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
SEYMOUR
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
www.hurricanes.gov
30N
25N
20N
130W
125W
120W
115W
5 PM Sat
5 PM Fri
8 PM Thu

Tropical Storm SEYMOUR (click for details)

As of 0800 PM PDT Thu Oct 27 (Advisory # 20)

Maximum Sustained Winds: 40 knots; 45 mph
Minimum Central Pressure: 1000 mb
Located at: 22.0N 123.0W
Movement: north at 9 knots; 10 mph

11:00 pm PDT
Thu Oct 27 2016

Note: The cone contains the probable path of the storm center but does not show the size of the storm. Hazardous conditions can occur outside of the cone.

Tropical Storm Seymour
Thursday October 27, 2016
8 PM PDT Advisory 20
NWS National Hurricane Center

Current Information:
Center Location 22.0 N 123.0 W
Max Sustained Wind 45 mph
Movement N at 10 mph

Forecast Positions:
● Tropical Cyclone ○ Post-Tropical
Sustained Winds: D < 39 mph
S 39-73 mph H 74-110 mph M > 110mph

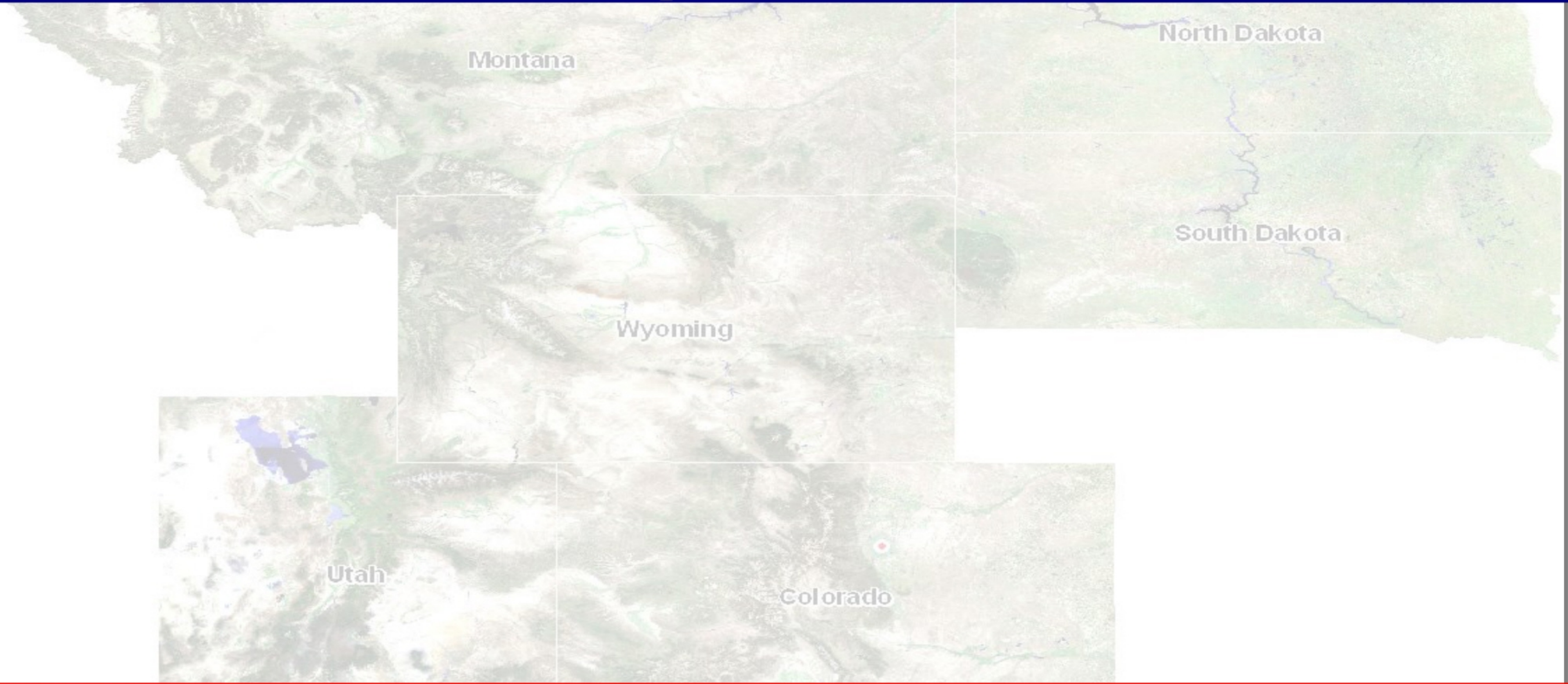
Potential Track Area: Day 1-3 Day 4-5

Watches: Hurricane Trop.Storm

Warnings: Hurricane Trop.Storm

Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: < 40% 40-60% > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: Depression Storm Hurricane
Post-Tropical Cyclone Remnants

Space Weather


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
6	Date Requested	0	0
Bad River Band Tribe – DR (Appeal) Severe Storms and Flooding	October 15, 2016		
Spokane Tribe – DR Cayuse Mountain Wildfire	October 18, 2016		
MN – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 19, 2016		
IA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016		
VA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016		
DE – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 27, 2016		

IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 25, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Kevin Moore (UFN)	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Tracy McCauley (Until 30 Oct)	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

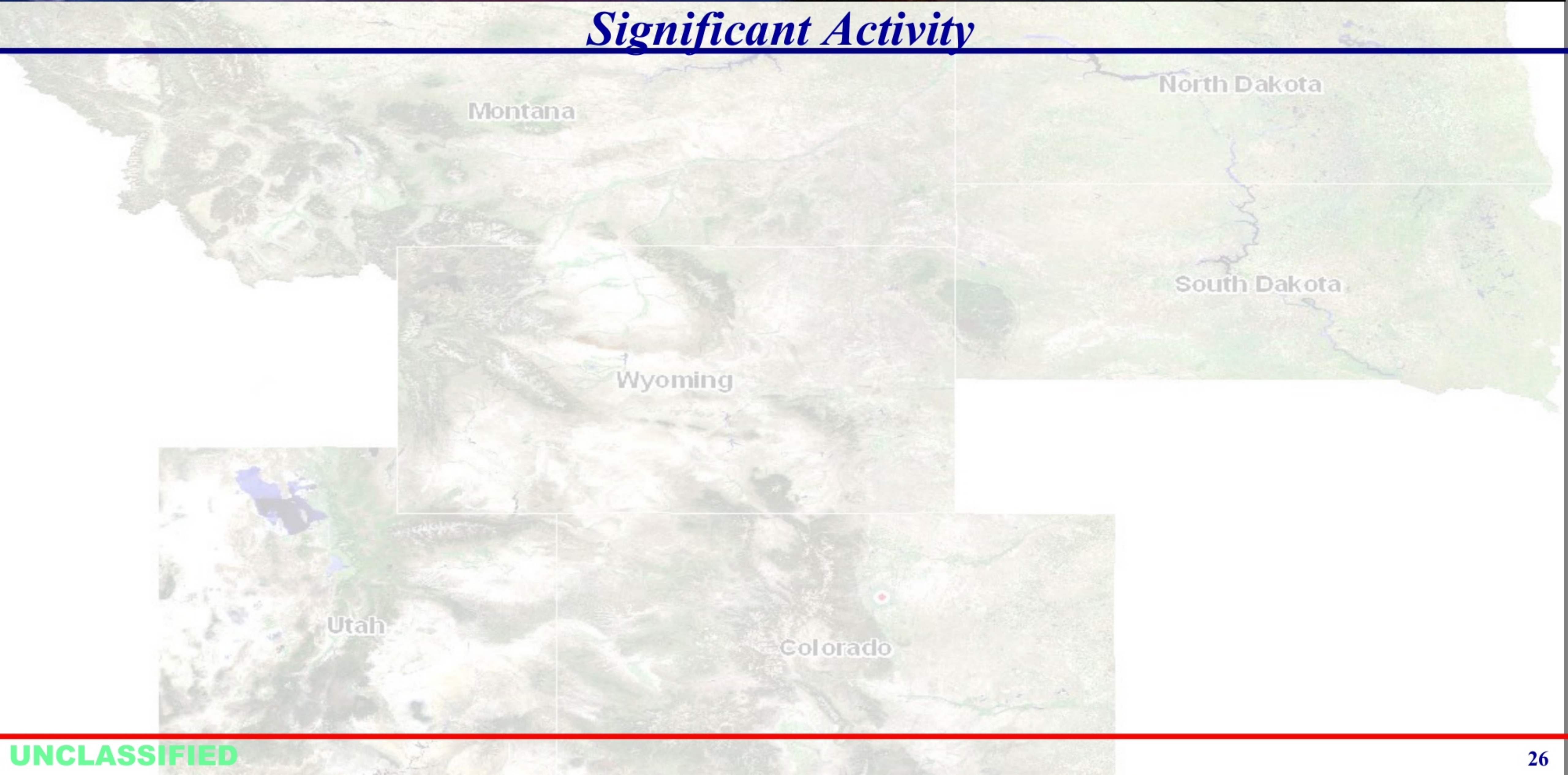
October RRCC Standup Roster (Orange Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Dennis Fisher
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	Kevin Moore
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Mike Ordonez
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

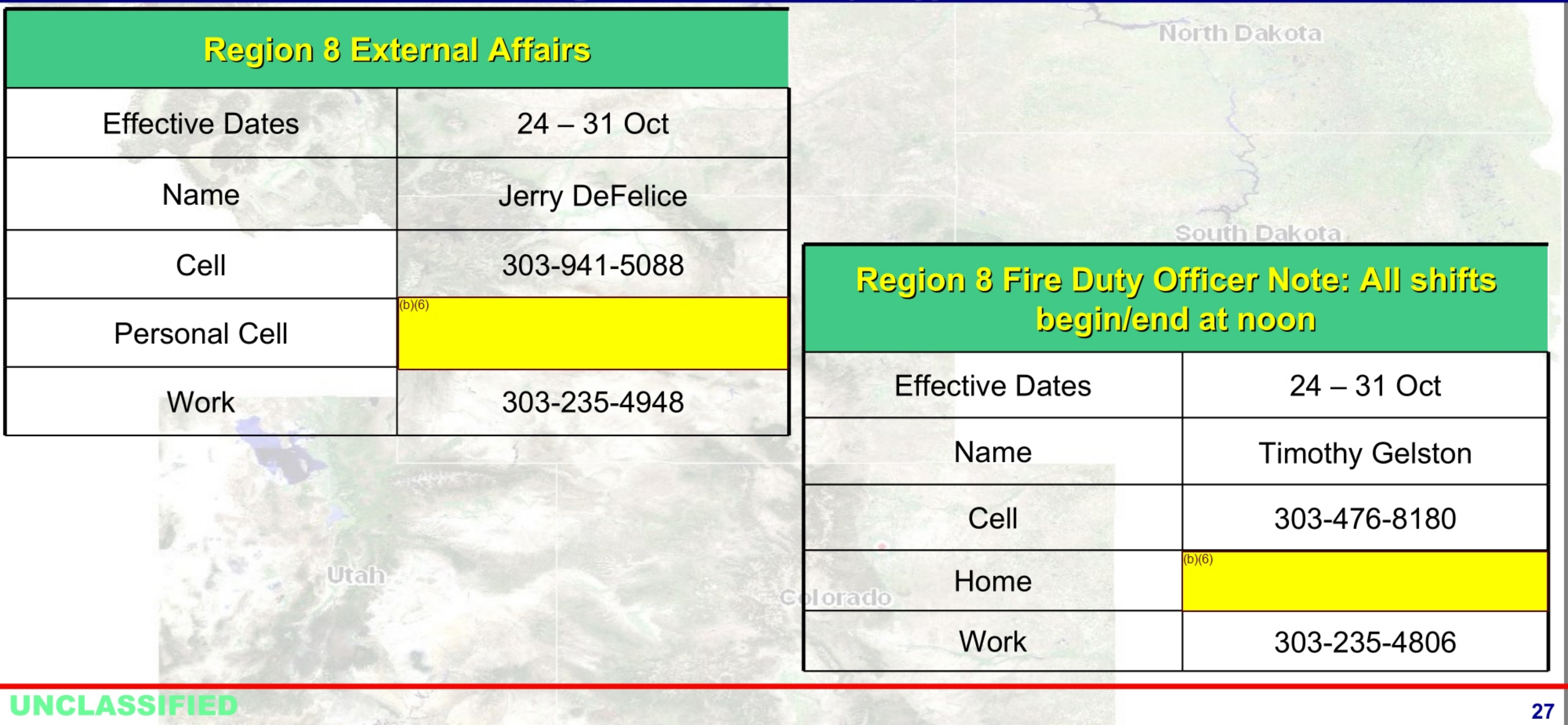
Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 18, 2016 / 1240)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	Michael Pendergrass	303-746-3640	303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	Paul Moreno (24 – 28 Oct)David Watkins	720-315-5647720-683-2565	303-235-4668303-235-4359
WY	Carita Ricley (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton (Deployed)	720-315-6931303-495-0051	303-235-4322303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

Region VIII Duty Officers



Region 8 External Affairs

Effective Dates	24 – 31 Oct
Name	Jerry DeFelice
Cell	303-941-5088
Personal Cell	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4948

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon

Effective Dates	24 – 31 Oct
Name	Timothy Gelston
Cell	303-476-8180
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4806

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY

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PREPARED BY THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY DIVISION OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2016
(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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NATIONAL NEWS

Obama Declares Disaster In 12 Texas Counties

Associated Press, June 11, 2016

HOUSTON (AP) – President Barack Obama has declared a major disaster in 12 Texas counties throughout the state that suffered severe flooding last month during heavy rainfall.

The declaration, approved on Saturday, covers Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington counties.

It enables residents to received federal grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover.

The declaration also approved funding for local and state response costs and sheltering.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott thanked Obama and said the declaration lets Texans "begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Abbott says more counties could be added to the declaration.

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Some Residents Of Flood-evacuated Texas Checking Damage

Associated Press, June 12, 2016

ANGLETON, Texas (AP) – Floodwaters are receding in parts of South Texas and residents of some areas evacuated since last week are getting a chance to check their damaged property.

Brazoria County has begun limited re-entry, via boat or land vehicle, to formerly flooded areas as some evacuation orders remain. Some roads remained closed Sunday due to lingering high water or damage.

County Judge Matt Sebesta, in a statement Saturday, said people must show proof of residency to be allowed in to evaluate property or retrieve supplies.

President Barack Obama on Saturday declared 12 Texas counties federal disaster areas due to heavy rain and flooding since late May.

The declaration covers Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington counties. Residents are eligible to seek federal assistance.

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Rookie Firefighters Test Mettle Ahead Of Wildfire Season

By Nathan Brown

Associated Press, June 12, 2016

FAIRFIELD, Idaho (AP) – More than 40 rookie wildland firefighters spent the past week learning about their new trade at a camp in the Sawtooths north of Fairfield.

On Thursday, they put out a fire for the first time.

Crew boss Adam McKean knelt down and drew a diagram in the dirt path, explained to his crew what they were about to do and gave them tips like paying attention to the wind and weather and trying to chat and get to know their colleagues as they worked. The firefighters, some wearing the Bureau of Land Management's black helmets and others from the U.S. Forest Service and wearing yellow or light blue ones, leaned on their tools – some with shovels, some with combis – a tool that combines a pick and a shovel, some carried a pulaski – a combination cutting/digging implement named after Ed Pulaski, the northern Idaho forest ranger who invented it a century ago – and listened.

They headed up the nearby hill into the woods, where a few test fires had been set. Walking in a line – a technique known as gridding, where firefighters find small fires in an area by walking in a grid and covering the ground systematically – they practiced building fire lines, which is when firefighters dig a trench around a fire to contain it by cutting it off from any nearby fuels.

"This is where they put everything they've learned all week long," said B.J. Stauffer, an engine captain with the BLM and one of the co-leaders of this year's rookie school.

Then, they put the fires out, practicing techniques such as bone piling – piling up branches, logs and other flammable materials that have been left within the fireline so they burn up and out faster.

"It's important to get down to where there's no material that'll burn in there," said Kurt McDonald, field training officer with the BLM.

One of the values in this training, which is held every year at the Sawtooth United Methodist Camp, is that it brings Forest Service and BLM crews together, Stauffer said. Fire crews from both agencies frequently work together and respond to fires on each other's land, and the training lets them meet and practice working together.

For 19-year-old Tristan Kulhanek, who graduated from Kimberly High School, his new job, which he intends to make a career of, puts him on the path to fulfill a lifelong dream. He has family members who are firefighters both with the BLM and with city departments.

"It's always been a passion of mine ever since I was little," he said.

Kulhanek and the others came to the camp last week, waking up at 6 a.m. and starting their days with an hour of physical training before breakfast. Then, they would take classes until dinner, learning about firefighting and fires. Much of Wednesday was spent outside, practicing gridding and other techniques without an actual fire so they would be ready for Thursday's practice. When Kulhanek and the others are done, they will be Firefighter Type Twos.

"After tomorrow, we'll be available to be on fires," he said.

The National Interagency Fire Center's Predictive Services released its fire outlook for the summer last week, predicting a normal June fire season for Idaho, but above-normal risk in much of southwestern Idaho and northern Nevada in July and August, due to more rain than normal earlier this year, which has led to an above-average grass crop in the region.

Stauffer said the rookies will likely spend most of fire season in south-central Idaho, but they could also be sent to other states if there's a big fire and their help is needed.

This area includes both hilly, wooded environments like the Sawtooths north of Fairfield and sagebrush deserts, and they pose different challenges to firefighters. Generally, forest fires move more slowly but take more time and effort to put out, while in the desert you get "light, flashy fires" that consume the sage brush and desert grasses quickly, said Chris Anthony, fire operations specialist with the BLM.

"They move faster," he said. "But they don't take near as much effort to extinguish."

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High Waves During Storm? New Forecast Model Tries To Predict

By Martha Waggoner

Associated Press, June 11, 2016

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) – When John Couch is certain a storm will hit Hatteras Island, he goes into action, moving merchandise in his auto parts store from bottom shelves to top ones and hauling away the most valuable items.

But at 64 years old, Couch is less and less enamored of spending eight hours packing up his property. So his ears perked up when he learned about a new forecasting model from the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Association that's intended to give a better idea of how much ocean water will overrun an area.

"Any and all information is always helpful," says Couch, who owns the Lighthouse Service Center and Lighthouse Auto Parts along North Carolina's Outer Banks. "You don't want to put up stuff unless you really have to."

The USGS is running its coastal change forecast model to predict how far a storm's waves will push water up the beach – whether it will go just to the dunes, over the dunes, or even farther onto roads and property. Oceanographers are in the pilot stages of a new implementation of the model that would predict beach changes in all weather conditions.

As part of the pilot program, hour-by-hour forecasts of potential beachfront changes caused by wave conditions are underway in some areas of North Carolina, Massachusetts and Florida, said USGS research oceanographer Hilary Stockdon. The pilot program runs all the time for all sorts of weather, not just big storms such as hurricanes and nor'easters. Eventually, the forecasts – which give details for the coming days – will be available for all Gulf and Atlantic states up to 102 hours before storms.

The pilot program was running in North Carolina during recent Tropical Storms Bonnie and Colin, but the forecasts aren't yet available publicly. Officials hope the information for the three states will be online in three months.

"In places like the Outer Banks, there could be a high tide and winds from a particular direction that are going to overwash Highway 12 and cut off transportation," Stockdon said, referring to the narrow road that provides the only nonferry access to Hatteras Island. "Those are the kind of events we want to be able to help locals with."

Since 2011, the model has been used to forecast coastal change during storms that make landfall. USGS used it most recently when Colin made landfall in Florida; researchers are studying the results to determine the accuracy of their forecasts. Those are available to the public through the USGS coastal change hazards portal.

The model adds data about what's called wave run-up to information on storm surge and tides. That results in a total on the amount of water that will come ashore in any kind of storm, said USGS research oceanographer Joseph Long. Storm surge measures how high the ocean will rise; wave run-up determines how big the waves will be at the shoreline, on top of the rising ocean.

"It's the addition of the two," he said. "They're both important. In the past the forecasts have only given us the storm surge. ... A lot of times, they're equally important."

The new model could save lives on vulnerable barrier islands such as the Outer Banks by advising residents of when escape routes might be cut off, said Jeff Masters, meteorology director of the private Weather Underground.

For example, Masters wrote in an email, during Hurricane Ike in 2008, residents of Texas' Bolivar Peninsula had their only route cut off nearly 24 hours before the storm arrived. Seven people died on the peninsula from storm surge – several while attempting to escape, he said.

Last fall, Hurricane Joaquin stayed well to the east of the Outer Banks. Yet the USGS model accurately forecast dune erosion that occurred in Duck and overwash on a road in Kitty Hawk, Long said.

"Water levels got pretty high, but there wasn't a big surge," he said. "That's the kind of event you would miss if you're only forecasting storm surge."

The USGS uses a camera that takes before and after photos at the Army Corps of Engineers field station in Duck to check the accuracy of its forecasts. Officials also want to install cameras on the northeast coast of Massachusetts; in Jupiter, Florida; and on the Gulf of Mexico at Tampa Bay.

On the Outer Banks, Dare County didn't issue a mandatory evacuation before Sandy struck in 2012, buckling part of N.C. Highway 12. Drew Pearson, now emergency management director for the county, said, "This product may have told us what we were going to get, and we may have been able to make a different decision."

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Minor Flooding Continues In Central And Southeast Wyoming

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) – Flood warnings have been posted for areas of central and southeast Wyoming as rivers and streams overflow their banks with runoff from the melting mountain snowpack.

So far, flooding has been limited to low lying areas along the rivers and streams in Fremont, Carbon, Albany and Lincoln counties.

In Fremont County, the North and Middle Forks of Popo Agie (pah-POE'-shuh) river were running near flood stage Friday in the Lander area.

The Wind River at Riverton has been rising but has remained below flood stage so far.

In Carbon County, minor flooding is occurred along the North Platte River at Saratoga, where sandbags are protecting the town. Minor flooding also is occurring at Laramie from the Laramie River.

In southwest Wyoming, the Green River at LaBarge is near flood stage.

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The Latest: Some Evacuated Yarnell Residents To Return Home

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

YARNELL, Ariz. (AP) – The Latest on a wildfire that has led to evacuations near Yarnell, Arizona. (all times local):

6:30 p.m.

Some residents of Yarnell and Peeples Valley who were evacuated by a brush fire are being allowed to go back home.

At 4 p.m. Friday, authorities reopened a 7-mile stretch of Highway 89 that has been shut down since Wednesday when the blaze began.

About 250 Yarnell residents were evacuated Wednesday night and 30 residents of nearby Peeples Valley were evacuated Thursday afternoon after winds fanned the flames.

Fire officials say Peeples Valley residents and evacuated residents from the west side of Yarnell are being allowed to return home Friday night.

Homes on the east side of town closest to the fire remain under mandatory evacuation, but authorities say that order could be lifted sometime Saturday.

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5:15 p.m.

Some residents evacuated by a brush fire near in the north-central Arizona town of Yarnell are being allowed to go back home.

At 4 p.m. Friday, authorities reopened a 7-mile stretch of Highway 89 that has been shut down since Wednesday when the blaze began.

About 250 Yarnell residents were evacuated Wednesday night and 30 residents of nearby Peeples Valley were evacuated Thursday afternoon after winds fanned the flames.

Fire officials say residents on the west side of Yarnell are being allowed to return home Friday night.

Homes on the east side of town closest to the fire remain under mandatory evacuation, but authorities say that order could be lifted sometime Saturday.

The human-caused fire remains 10 percent contained. It has charred more than 5 square miles, but officials say the fire continues to move away from the towns.

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4 p.m.

Authorities have reopened a major road that has been shut down by an Arizona brush fire near Yarnell.

Highway 89 was reopened at 4 p.m. Friday.

A 7-mile stretch through Yarnell was shut down Wednesday after the blaze began.

The fire forced roughly 300 people to evacuate. It has grown to roughly 5 square miles and remains 10 percent contained.

There is no immediate word when evacuees can return to their home.

_____

1:08 p.m.

Officials are weighing whether to reopen a major road that has been shut down by an Arizona brush fire.

Fire spokesman Gerry Perry says firefighters will determine Friday afternoon whether to reopen part of State Route 89 near Yarnell.

A 7-mile stretch through Yarnell was shut down because of the blaze, which started Wednesday and is 10 percent contained.

The fire forced roughly 300 people to evacuate and grew overnight to roughly 5 square miles.

Overcast clouds will bring slightly cooler temperatures as firefighters continue efforts to control the fire.

Forecasts predict the weather will stay mostly the same as Thursday, which had light winds of 5-10 mph, but with a slight increase in humidity.

Arizona Public Service is working to fix power outages caused by the fire.

8:10 a.m.

Firefighters are hoping to gain control of an Arizona brush fire that has forced the evacuation of about 300 people and has since more than doubled in size.

Fire officials said Friday that overnight mapping determined the blaze is now burning roughly 5 square miles.

Officials are scheduled to hold a morning news briefing on the blaze that broke out close to Yarnell, a community where a 2013 wildfire killed 19 members of an elite firefighting crew.

The fire is currently 10 percent contained.

It has not damaged any homes but three structures such as sheds have been burned.

Firefighters are hopeful the fire will not grow out of control and containment could happen by early next week.

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Crews Box In Juab County Desert Wildfire Ahead Of Wind Gusts

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

EUREKA, Utah (AP) – Fire crews are trying to box in a relatively small desert wildfire that could grow Friday as winds push the flames through dried up sagebrush and grass.

Fire spokesman Adam Solt says no structures or people are threatened by the fire burning in central Utah's Juab County but crews are working to reign it in.

Solt said Friday afternoon that the lightning-caused fire was a little larger than 2 square miles. It's burning about 25 miles southwest of Eureka.

Officials said Thursday they would evacuate the nearby Cherry Creek camping area, but Solt says no campers were there at the time.

Solt says officials have not closed off any areas near the fire.

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5.2 Quake Near Borrego Springs Gives The Southland A Jolt

By Times Staff

Los Angeles Times, June 10, 2016

A shallow magnitude 5.2 earthquake was reported Friday morning 13 miles from Borrego Springs, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The temblor occurred at 1:04 a.m. Pacific time at a depth of -0.6 miles.

According to the USGS, the epicenter was 16 miles from La Quinta, 19 miles from Palm Desert, and 20 miles from Rancho Mirage. There were several aftershocks.

Borrego Springs is a community of about 3,000 people in eastern San Diego County, near the Imperial County line. The quake was felt throughout the Southland. A Downey woman called KNX 1070 and said it struck with "a soft roll," then later "hit again stronger." A caller from Costa Mesa described a "back and forth" sensation.

As of 1:30 a.m., there were no reports of damage.

Earthquake: 3.1 Quake Strikes Near Borrego Springs, Calif.

By Quakebot

Los Angeles Times, June 10, 2016

A shallow magnitude 3.1 earthquake was reported Friday afternoon 13 miles from Borrego Springs, Calif., according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The temblor occurred at 4:42 p.m. Pacific time at a depth of 5.6 miles.

According to the USGS, the epicenter was 15 miles from La Quinta, Calif., 17 miles from Palm Desert, Calif. and 19 miles from Rancho Mirage.

In the last 10 days, there have been eight earthquakes of magnitude 3.0 or greater centered nearby.

This information comes from the USGS Earthquake Notification Service, and this post was created by an algorithm written by the author.

'Like A Disney Ride': Southern California Shakes From Quake

Associated Press, June 11, 2016

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. (AP) — Doriel Wyler was asleep at her home outside Palm Springs when her cats bolted off the bed and things started jolting and swaying early Friday — turning her room into a surreal theme park ride.

The magnitude-5.2 earthquake that struck near the desert city woke up people across much of Southern California but reportedly caused no significant damage.

"It became like a Disney ride," said Wyler, who lives in La Quinta, a resort city near Palm Springs. "I love earthquakes!"

The breakfast restaurant she owns, called the Egg Cafe, escaped without damage, but she said the liquor store at the end of the street smelled "like vodka" from its broken bottles.

And one La Quinta couple had mirrors fall off the wall and shatter, news station KESQ-TV reported (http://bit.ly/1UGQ1bI).

People in San Diego and Los Angeles, about 100 miles to the west, posted on Facebook and other social media that they felt the shaking.

Saum Yermian, a longtime Los Angeles resident who has been through his share of quakes, posted video on Instagram of a chandelier still swaying after the ground stopped moving.

He was in bed getting ready to go to sleep when he felt the jolt.

"Within the first 2 seconds or so, I noticed this was a large-size quake," he said. "The jolt was strong enough for me to recognize this wasn't a (magnitude) 3 or 4."

It touched off dozens of smaller aftershocks, including a magnitude-3.8 less than a minute later, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department said they had no reports of damage. But it shook nerves.

Dudley Detamore was working at Domino's Pizza in La Quinta when he felt the store vibrating.

"I felt like I wanted to get sick," he told KESQ.

The quake struck in a region covered by the rugged expanse of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, which sprawls over more than 900 square miles.

Veteran seismologist Lucy Jones, who recently retired from the Geological Survey, tweeted that the earthquake occurred near the San Jacinto Fault, which is historically the most active in Southern California.

The quake was near the locations of a magnitude-6 in 1937 and a 5.3 in 1980, she said.

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Deadly But Little-known: Why Scientists Are So Afraid Of The San Jacinto Fault

By Rong-Gong Lin Ii, Shelby Grad And Joseph Serna

Los Angeles Times, June 10, 2016

The 5.2 magnitude earthquake that hit the desert southeast of Los Angeles on Friday was centered along the San Jacinto fault, which is one of the region's most active and potentially dangerous fault lines.

The fault runs through populated areas such as San Bernardino, Colton, Moreno Valley, Redlands, Loma Linda, Hemet and San Jacinto, as well as near Riverside, Rialto and Fontana. The epicenter of Friday's quake was in a more isolated area near Borrego Springs in eastern San Diego County.

The quake, which struck at 1:04 a.m., triggered more than 450 aftershocks but caused no major damage.

Experts have been warning for some time, however, that the San Jacinto fault — while less well known than the San Andreas — poses a major threat to the region.

Globalized Economy More Susceptible To Weather Extremes, Scientists Warn

By Megan Rowling

Reuters, June 10, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Still Waiting For A Monster El Niño Storm? Forget It

By Hector Becerra

Los Angeles Times, June 9, 2016

Remember those monstrous storms that bore down on Southern California this year courtesy of El Niño, and how they caused mudslides, mass flooding and general pandemonium on the freeways?

Neither do we.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has declared El Niño, the climate pattern that can bring powerful rains to the region, over – and after a rather anemic showing.

"We're sticking a fork in this El Niño and calling it done," NOAA said in a statement. "The king is dead!"

Though the ocean-borne El Niño helped conjure strong rain and snow in Northern California, it did very little in this regard for the Los Angeles area. From October 1 to midnight Wednesday, downtown L.A. had 6.88 inches of rain. That was even less than the 7.71 inches that fell during the same stretch the year before.

The average rainfall in downtown L.A. during that period is 14.59 inches.

"We're still in an extreme drought situation … for Southern California," said Stuart Seto, a weather specialist for the National Weather Service in Oxnard.

Southern California would need about three years of substantially above-normal rainfall – as much as 10 inches each year – to climb out of that situation, Seto said. And nothing in L.A.'s recent history would suggest that that is going to happen.

"The last five years we've been getting half of the normal rainfall," Seto said.

Hopes had been high that El Niño would be a force in Southern California this year. February was expected to be one of the wettest on record. Instead, by one measure at least, it became the hottest. Many weather experts said the conditions in the Pacific appeared similar to the El Niño of 1997-98, which dumped double the average amount of rain in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Instead, the amount of warm water under the surface was less this time around and the atmospheric response was generally weaker.

"In short … no two El Niños are alike," the NOAA said.

The National Weather Service said it now appears that come the late fall and winter, Southern California could be in the grip of La Niña, which could bring drier-than-average conditions. And the summer is expected to have above-normal temperatures, Seto said.

"Everybody that was looking at it was expecting a 'Godzilla' El Niño," he said. "But nature has its way."

El Nino Has Runs Its Course. But Did It End California's Drought?

By Lucy Schouten

Christian Science Monitor, June 10, 2016

El Niño has passed on its merry way after 17 months of unusual warmth, wet weather, and unusual storms from the Pacific Ocean around the world.

The big story for this El Niño has been whether it would aid dry California's comeback from a drought. The answer is mixed.

"In California, it's all about location, location, location," Jan Null, San Francisco meteorologist said, according to USA Today.

The wet-weather patterns certainly helped the state, filling some low reservoirs and showering rain on dry land, but after years of drought, California needs more than one good winter – even an unusually wet one – to solve its problems completely.

The power was there, as it was one of the largest patterns in history, but the question was where it went. This El Niño was "very strong," comparable to only two others in the 60 years since the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has made records of these patterns, according to analysis by Mr. Hull. The two previous El Niño patterns to receive "very strong" ratings – one in 1982-1983 and the other in 1997-1998 – drenched the entire state of California with rainfall 4 to 10 inches above the average.

This El Niño was equally generous in its rainfall but somewhat different in its allocation. Northern California still received the customary, well-above-average rainfalls this winter, as did the Pacific Northwest to an unusual degree. Southern California did not, and rainfall throughout the Southwest was disappointingly average to low. For this reason, Hull gave the pattern an A- for northern California, a C for the central part of the state, and failing marks in its southern climes.

Peter Gleick, president of the California-based think tank Pacific Institute, was also unimpressed.

"[El Niño] was not enough water to bail us out of the drought, but it was enough water to make many people believe, wrongly, that the drought has ended," he told USA Today.

The weather pattern's rain-giving focus was so far north that for southern regions where a long-term drought was in place before the El Nino, long-term drought remains, according to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln-based US Drought Monitor.

The early-June record heat blast – with temperatures up to 12 degrees F. above average in the West – suggests a hot, dry summer has begun, although the Drought Monitor predicts summer monsoons will begin soon.

El Niño affected the country's southern coasts more typically, offering the Southern states and Texas unusual tornadoes and flooding throughout the winter, as The Christian Science Monitor reported:

El Niño patterns typically hit the Deep South with cool, wetter-than-average weather during the late winter and spring months when the jet stream shifts, leaving an unusually deep trough of air pressure to transport storms from the Gulf of Mexico. The likelihood of extreme, wet weather between January and March increases by twofold during an El Niño year, according to the National Weather Service's Jackson, Miss., office.

As the Golden Gate Weather Services meteorologist and top El Niño tracker Null has said, the 2015-2016 El Niño has been a "poster child" for his mantra, "All El Niños are not the same!"

Humans Caused 5-square-mile Arizona Wildfire

By Ricardo Cano And Ron Dungan

USA Today, June 10, 2016

PEEPLES VALLEY, Ariz. — Residents of Yarnell, Ariz., learned Thursday that a fire, which erupted the day before across a major highway from the fatal 2013 Yarnell Hill wildfire, didn't come from a lightning strike but instead came from human activity.

Exactly who started the Tenderfoot Fire, which has been burning between slopes southeast of Yarnell since about 3:15 p.m. MST Wednesday, and whether it was arson or unintentional is not yet known, said Dolores Garcia, a federal Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman. Fire officials have set up their command center in Peeples Valley, Ariz., about 5 miles from the fire's origin.

Aerial infrared photo mapping overnight showed the blaze at a little more than 5 square miles and 10% contained.

So far, the fire is posing no eminent threat to homes or structures and has not crossed any containment lines, Garcia said late Thursday.

Wildfires tend to calm down as evening approaches but often grow in the heat of the day when vegetation is at its driest and windy conditions propel flames. The fire is about 80 miles northwest of Phoenix and less than a mile southeast of Yarnell, a community of about 700 residents best known for a lightning-caused wildfire in which 19 members of the Granite Mountain Hotshots firefighting team were killed June 30, 2013.

About 300 people who had been evacuated from the potential path of the fire were hoping to return home Thursday if only to retrieve necessities but ultimately were not allowed back in the area, Garcia said.

"The last thing we want to do is have residents go back into unsafe situations," she said.

Friday's forecast calls for a high of 92 degrees with no chance of rain and winds from the southwest at 10 mph, weather often duplicated in the summer in the high desert.

On its first day, the fire burned three structures — all out buildings — and appeared to move northeast, burning upslope just east and away from Yarnell, on the east side of Arizona 89. A photo showed flames moving up Y Mountain, just beyond a monument honoring the firefighters who died in 2013. By nightfall, the fire had reached the top of the ridge, destroying cellphone towers there, said Dwight D'Evelyn, a Yavapai County Sheriff's Office spokesman.

Conditions in central Arizona are extremely dry with a high fire danger, Garcia said.

The last measurable rainfall in the area was in Prescott, Ariz., about 30 miles to the northeast, which had 0.04 inches May 17 and traces of rain May 18. The highest temperature was 69 degrees both days. Since then, the area has seen warmer temperatures and high winds in the afternoon, drying up plants, said meteorologist Hector Vasquez of the National Weather Service.

"The vegetation has gotten dryer," Vasquez said. "That's why it's fire season. Everything is bone dry. Any moisture that fell in the spring is gone by now until the July monsoon season."

The Latest: FEMA Authorizes Funds To Help Fight Arizona Fire

Associated Press, June 9, 2016

YARNELL, Ariz. (AP) — The Latest on a wildfire burning near Yarnell, Arizona. (all times local):

3:45 p.m.

Federal authorities have authorized the use of federal funds to assist the Arizona Department of Forestry fight a brush fire burning near Yarnell.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide funding for up to 75 percent of eligible firefighting costs.

The fire is believed to be human-caused and already has burned about 2 square mile of brush and grass.

The flames broke out Wednesday, leading about 250 people to evacuate their homes close to Yarnell, a community about 60 miles northwest of Phoenix where a 2013 blaze killed 19 members of an elite firefighting crew.

Authorities ordered additional evacuations Thursday, including about 30 homes in the Peeples Valley Area, as they feared the fire might make its way down to Highway 89.

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2:30 p.m.

Authorities have ordered additional evacuations for a brush fire near Yarnell, an Arizona community where a June 2013 blaze killed 19 members of an elite firefighting crew.

About 30 homes in the Peeples Valley area were evacuated Thursday afternoon as authorities fear the fire might make its way down to Highway 89.

That brings the total of evacuees to near 300 in the area. But authorities remain confident that the fire won't grow out of control and containment could still be made by sometime early next week.

Fire officials on Thursday put the fire near Yarnell at roughly 2 square miles, up from the square mile estimated late Wednesday.

They say the fire is 10 percent contained and still burning away from Yarnell.

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12:35 p.m.

A brush fire burning outside an Arizona town near where 19 firefighters died in a 2013 wildfire has been mapped as being twice as large as previously estimated.

Fire officials on Thursday put the fire near Yarnell at roughly 2 square miles, up from the square mile estimated late Wednesday.

Bureau of Land Management spokesman Delores Garcia says the fire continues to burn but that the doubling in its estimated size is a result of GPS mapping.

Containment remains at 10 percent, and Garcia says the fire continues to burn away from Yarnell.

She says authorities now believe State Route 89 through Yarnell can be reopened Thursday evening.

There had been talk of reopening the highway Thursday afternoon but Garcia says fire managers want to avoid any congestion for movement of firefighting equipment during the heat of the day.

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7:45 a.m.

Officials say weather conditions are favorable for fighting a brush fire burning outside an Arizona town near where 19 firefighters died in a 2013 wildfire.

The fire has burned nearly a square mile but incident commander RobRoy Williams says its growth slowed overnight. He says light winds Thursday morning are blowing the fire away from Yarnell and that the weather forecast is favorable for several days.

Around 200 firefighters and other personnel are assigned to the fire, which is 10 percent contained.

Williams says the origin of the fire is under investigation but a human cause is suspected.

About 250 to 300 residents left their homes but Williams say the evacuation order could be lifted as early as Thursday afternoon if favorable conditions continue.

The fire has not burned any homes but three structures such as sheds have burned.

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6:55 a.m.

Calm weather near an Arizona community allowed firefighters to get some sleep overnight as they resume the fight against a wildfire that has burned nearly a square mile of brush and grass.

The fire is burning near Yarnell, where a 2013 blaze killed 19 members of an elite firefighting crew.

Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman Dolores Garcia says 250 to 300 people left their homes in Yarnell about 60 miles northwest of Phoenix.

Garcia says winds may pick up late Thursday but calm and cooler conditions with higher humidity overnight helped firefighters.

There have been no reported injuries. The fire has burned close to Yarnell but so far the only structures reported to have burned are three unoccupied buildings such as sheds.

The cause of the fire isn't known.

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Grand Isle Gets $3.4M To Elevate Houses; More Sought

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

GRAND ISLE, La. (AP) — The federal government is providing almost $3.4 million to elevate houses on Grand Isle, but officials said that money will help only a fraction of the island homeowners whose structures are subject to flooding.

The latest funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency funds are enough for about 20 houses, far less than the number of homeowners who are seeking the funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, The Times-Picayune (http://bit.ly/1YdM3Nm) reported.

Jefferson Parish's floodplain management director Michelle Gonzales said 390 repeat-flood houses on Grand Isle have filed a total of 1,200 flood claims with FEMA. The payments total $26.4 million.

There are 42 houses that have either been approved to receive FEMA money for elevation or are in the process of being approved. The Jefferson Parish Council approved the houses after seeking and approaching property owners whose homes best met FEMA's requirements.

Gonzales estimated that an additional 100 to 150 homes are still in need of elevation.

She said the process of distributing funds can be challenging, as federal money usually becomes available in connection with natural disasters.

"It gets difficult, if your house has 4 feet of flood water in it and you need to elevate it before you rebuild, to wait on grants to come down 12 to 24 months later," she said.

Gonzales urged homeowners who are still awaiting elevations to maintain flood insurance because the federal government wants to see that homeowners who have previously been given federal money have kept up with regulations. She also recommended homeowners file claims if their homes get flooded.

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Responders Hone Parachuting, Other Skills At Doomsday Drill

By Rachel La Corte

Fairfield (CT) Citizen, June 10, 2016

SHELTON, Wash. (AP) — The parachutes slowly float down from Chinook helicopters, first carrying boxes of supplies and then the paratroopers who set up a field operations center as part of a readiness drill for a megaquake and tsunami.

Chief Warrant Officer James Pierce packed up his parachute and grabbed his gear shortly after hitting the ground Thursday at Sanderson Field, an airfield in the small city of Shelton on the west side of Puget Sound.

Parachuting in may be the only option for some responders following a massive earthquake, especially to get to remote locations that are rendered undriveable.

"It's a good, effective way to get gear to the ground," Pierce said.

Thursday's exercise was part of a four-day event that ends Friday, called Cascadia Rising, built around the premise of a 9.0 magnitude earthquake 95 miles off the coast of Oregon that results in a tsunami. Both events would likely destroy buildings, roads and buildings and disrupt communications.

For the drill, the airfield and adjoining Mason County Fairgrounds have been converted into a staging area with hundreds of members of the National Guard, a tactical operations center where officials communicate directly with officials at Camp Murray and a trauma center.

Emergency officials believe Shelton — about 70 miles east of the Washington Coast — will be the closest airfield to the coast to survive the disaster.

"After a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, we fully anticipate that roads are going to be cut off, bridges are going to be down and we're going to have isolated pockets of people that are going to need some help and support," said Major General Bret Daugherty, commander of the Washington National Guard.

Research suggests that the Cascadia Subduction Zone — a 600-mile-long fault just off the coast that runs from Northern California to British Columbia — on average produces magnitude 9.0 quakes every 500 years. Big quakes have been separated by as few as 200 years and as many as 1,000, so it's impossible to predict when the next monster quake occurs. However, tectonic stresses have been accumulating for more than 300 years and seismologists say it could rupture any time.

Officials say about 20,000 people have been involved in the disaster drill throughout the Pacific Northwest, representing federal agencies, the U.S. military, and state and local emergency response managers from Washington, Oregon and Idaho, Native American tribes and emergency management officials in British Columbia. More than 8 million people live in the zone, which includes the population centers of Portland and Seattle.

One main goal is to test how well they will work together to minimize loss of life and damages when a mega-quake unleashes a tsunami. They're also testing their ability to communicate without the internet or phones; delivering services in emergency conditions; and search and rescue, decontamination and evacuation abilities.

On Wednesday, one exercise showed the Navy's capability to deliver personnel and equipment to a disaster zone where ports would be destroyed by tsunami waves.

The Navy sent the USNS Bob Hope with about 500 sailors to build a temporary camp on a Naval Magazine Indian Island, a munitions depot in the Puget Sound.

It took the Navy four weeks from loading the Bob Hope to setting up the camp — a similar timeline would be expected after the earthquake.

In Port Angeles, a shoreline city on Washington's Olympic Peninsula, members of the Washington National Guard practiced decontaminating vehicles and first responders. Tsunami waves hitting this area would pick up biohazards while surging through land.

First Sgt. Kent Keller of the Washington National Guard said that these drills allow them to make mistakes now, so they don't make them later during the real thing.

"We are going to learn, and we're going to change the way we behave based on the lessons learned in this training," he said.

FEMA's 2016 National Preparedness Report Shows Health Care On Right Path

By Jamie Morgan

Health Facilities Management, June 10, 2016

FEMA's 2016 National Preparedness Report shows health care on right path

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released its 2016 National Preparedness Report, which evaluates emergency preparedness among individuals, communities, private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations and all levels of government. FEMA reported on key findings in five areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery.

Regarding health care and public health sectors, the report states, "Planning; public health, health care and emergency medical services; and risk and disaster resilience assessment are three core capabilities in which the nation has developed acceptable levels of performance for critical tasks, but that face performance declines if not maintained and updated to address emerging challenges."

FEMA cites the United States' 2014 Ebola response as an example, stating that although federal, state and local health partners began addressing challenges such as personal protective equipment for health care workers and medical countermeasures, the presence of the outbreak itself highlights the need to sustain and build capabilities to counter other infectious outbreaks.

ASPR issues Zika planning resources for health care providers, coalitions

The Department of Health & Human Services' Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response has issued resources to help health care providers and coalitions plan for a real or potential Zika virus outbreak.

"A Zika outbreak is unlikely to result in large numbers of acutely ill patients needing simultaneous care, making surge planning for Zika unique from that of conventional disaster events, including those with an infectious disease component (e.g., pandemic influenza, Ebola)," the resource guide states. "In contrast, the known and suspected complications of Zika infection (including Guillain-Barré syndrome, microcephaly and other neurological disorders) are likely to disproportionately affect certain patient populations, most notably pregnant women and their developing fetuses. Treatment of these complications will likely require the participation of health care specialties and social services that may have limited experience with preparedness activities."

CDC releases toolkit to reduce risk of Legionella

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a new toolkit to prevent Legionnaires' disease outbreaks. The toolkit builds off of ASHRAE 188: Legionellosis: Risk Management for Building Water Systems.

The toolkit provides an easy-to-understand interpretation of ASHRAE Standard 188, as well as worksheets, checklists and scenarios of common water-quality problems. It also contains special sections and considerations for health care facilities.

In the last year, about 5,000 people were diagnosed with Legionnaire's disease and more than 20 outbreaks were reported to the CDC. The most common source of building-associated Legionnaires' disease outbreaks was drinkable water (56 percent), such as water used for showering, followed by cooling towers (22 percent), and hot tubs (7 percent).

House members call for flexible payment rule for hospital outpatient facilities

A bipartisan group of 235 House members urged the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to provide flexibility in the implementation of the Medicare payment reductions for new off-campus hospital outpatient departments (HOPD) under the Bipartisan Budget Act to protect patients' access to care. Specifically, they said the site-neutral payment reductions under Section 603 of the Act should not affect existing off-campus HOPDs that relocate, rebuild, change ownership or types of services, and should not affect services provided by a dedicated emergency department. They also urged the agency's regional offices to use the rule of "reasonable proximity" when evaluating on-campus status.

Preparedness bill clears House panel with AHA-backed provision

The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved the Strengthening Public Health Emergency Response Act (H.R. 3299) with a provision supported by the American Hospital Association (AHA) that would require the Government Accountability Office to report on state, local and hospital preparedness programs. The Department of Health & Human Services' Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) is the primary federal program for hospital emergency preparedness.

The AHA also urged Congress to fully fund the program at the authorized level of $374.7 million, noting that appropriations have been reduced by more than 50 percent since the program began.

Visual triggers increase hand-hygiene compliance, study says

Unpleasant images may motivate hospital staff to comply with hand-hygiene guidelines, according to a new study that will be presented at the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology's annual conference June 11.

The infection control team at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit used images of bacterial growth to provoke feelings of disgust. They tested the images on hospital units that had low hand-hygiene compliance rates. Compliance in these units increased by between 11 and 46 percent in units in which the study was conducted.

"Hospital staff wanted to wash their hands after looking at the book and picturing similar contamination on their own skin," said Ashley Gregory, MSL (ASCP), an infection prevention specialist who co-led the project.

NFPA releases updated Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) released the second edition of its Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities. The guide is free and accessible online, and features updated statistics, graphics, photos and links. It also includes an expanded and more detailed checklist for planning an evacuation process.

"Accessibility among the disabled community is a relatively recent subject that we've begun to address in fire and building codes, but it's one we must continue to proactively focus on, so that we can fully meet the safety needs of people with disabilities," says Allan Fraser, senior specialist for NFPA's Building Fire Protection division. "Moving forward, we plan to update the guide more frequently with timely updates and information that reflect the continually changing and evolving built environments in which we all work and live."

FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants Axed In DHS Funding Bill

By Brandon Ross

Bloomberg BNA, June 10, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's funding for its pre-disaster mitigation grant program would be slashed nearly in half to about $55 million under a bill approved by a House Appropriations Committee panel.

The Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee in bipartisan fashion advanced the Department of Homeland Security's fiscal year 2017 spending measure on a June 9 voice vote without any amendments.

But Rep. Nita Lowey (N.Y.), the full committee's top Democrat, criticized the cut in pre-disaster mitigation spending, echoing complaints from insurers, real estate interests, wildlife advocates and others. She said widespread evidence shows that spending on such measures, such as the establishment and enforcement of stricter building codes, yields savings compared with the money spent on post-disaster recovery (See previous story, 04/06/16) (See previous story, 02/23/16).

Lowey also noted that the bill would cut $12.5 million from FEMA's flood zone mapping functions compared to FY 2016, bringing funding to $177.5 million for mapping.

"The more we invest in mitigation, the more we save when disasters inevitably strike," Lowey said, calling the cuts "troubling."

Insurers: Savings a 'Mirage.'

The mitigation cuts represent a "backwards approach" to the goal of saving taxpayers' money, Jimi Grande, senior vice president of federal and political affairs for the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC), told Bloomberg BNA in a June 9 e-mail statement.

"Any savings for taxpayers from these cuts are just a mirage, because the inevitable—and inevitably much, much bigger—disaster aid bill following the next catastrophe will come off-budget," Grande said in the statement.

Despite the criticism from Grande and Lowey, the subcommittee and President Barack Obama had other priorities. The pre-disaster mitigation cut falls in line with what Obama requested for the DHS's FY 2017 budget.

Overall, the subcommittee-approved budget would boost funding $432 million over the White House request.

Several Injuries Reported After Tornado Hits Eastern Montana

Associated Press, June 12, 2016

BAKER, Mont. (AP) – Several people were injured and one person had to be rescued after a tornado destroyed several homes and damaged a dozen others Saturday night in Baker in eastern Montana.

National Weather Service meteorologist Wright Dobbs says it happened about 7 p.m. Authorities say everyone in the town of about 1,900 people near the North Dakota border has been located.

Electricity was out and phone service was limited after the storm hit.

Dobbs says severe weather, including hail up to 2 inches in diameter, was reported near Miles City, 80 miles west of Baker.

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ABC: Severe Weather. ABC World News Tonight (6/12, story 8, 0:30, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "And we're seeing severe weather across the nation. Here are some of the pictures coming in this evening. A tornado in Montana hitting late Saturday destroying several homes, even lifting an RV right off the ground. In the heartland, heavy rain and flash flooding forcing water rescues like this one. And look at the map, this weekend's heat will continue. Temperatures topping 90s from Texas to the Carolinas."

NBC: Arizona Wildfire. NBC Nightly News (6/10, story 10, 0:20, Holt, 16.61M) reported, "Firefighters in Arizona are still trying to contain a big wildfire tonight. Some 400 of them now involved in that effort. The Tender Foot Fire near Yarnell, Arizona, has burned more than 3,000 acres and forced the evacuation of several hundred people. This is the same area where a wildfire killed 19 firefighters back in 2013."

FEMA HOUSING

No stories for this edition

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

On The Move: What Newcomers Need To Know About Flooding, Flood Insurance

By Michelle Sandlin

Houston Chronicle, June 10, 2016

The Houston area has taken quite a beating over the past several weeks, as rain and flooding have continued to take their toll on the city and its residents.

Unfortunately, many Houstonians have learned the hard way, that although history has a way of repeating itself, it isn't always reliable. So, just because their home or neighborhood hasn't fallen victim to flooding in the past, doesn't mean that they are safe from flooding in the future.

That is why obtaining a flood insurance policy is strongly urged for people who are moving to Houston and buying a home, even if that property is located in a low-risk flood zone.

Ed Wolff, president of Beth Wolff Realtors Real Living, shares both his professional advice and personal experiences with his relocation clients when it comes to the importance of having flood insurance. As a two-time flood victim himself, he knows first-hand what flooding can do to a home.

He said that for people who have been through a flood, that it is the psychological ramifications of that experience that leaves a much deeper and lasting impression than the actual effects on a property's value in the marketplace.

"Houston is a city that is very resilient, and from a property value standpoint, we consistently see, even in neighborhoods that have flooded repeatedly, that value and market memory is substantially shorter than the psychological effects on people who have been through a flood," said Wolff.

He added that the consistency of the rainfall has prolonged the marketing time for many properties that might have otherwise been sold over the past several weeks.

This is a result of that psychological effect, which he said has instilled some fears in home buyers about the properties and neighborhoods that they might have been considering.

While that fear might have hindered a number of home sales, Wolff said, "Value will rebound and value will come back, and anybody who mitigates their damage will see a return on that investment, but it's just going to be a matter of time and distance from past, current and future events."

He said that because no property is immune to flooding, he recommends flood insurance for all home buyers and current homeowners and warns his clients against making rash decisions. He tells them to take their time and carefully consider how to best put their homes back together.

Chris Badger, owner of Badger Insurance, said that the recent flooding, compounded by the threat of hurricane season, has many new and current Houston residents taking out flood insurance policies. Ideally, he said that homebuyers should obtain a flood insurance policy when they buy a new home.

"I always tell Realtors that as soon as their clients find a house that they like, that they need to call an insurance agent and have them run a Flood Zone Determination," Badger said. "This will tell them exactly where the property is mapped, and give them an idea of what the rate is going to be for flood insurance for that location."

According to Badger, the cost for flood insurance is relatively low when compared to the potential risk posed by flood damage, and the subsequent loss of property and personal belonging.

"For example, if the home is your primary residence, and you are in Flood Zone X, which is the lowest premium zone, you can obtain a preferred risk policy for $450 through FEMA. That covers you for $250,000 on the structure, and $100,000 on contents with a $1,250 deductible per clause. So, if you have a loss that encompasses both sides of the policy, your total out-of-pocket expense will only be $2,500," Badger said.

He added that FEMA wants to prevent property owners from jumping in and out of policies if they are in lower-risk areas, so there is a 30-day waiting period before a flood insurance policy can go into effect, and the premiums for those policies must be paid in full and in advance each year.

For properties that are in a higher-risk flood zone, home buyers should also be aware that mortgage companies do require flood insurance, and as such the policy would be effective at the time of closing.

Michelle Sandlin is an award-winning writer, journalist and global mobility industry expert. She is a frequent contributor to Worldwide ERC's Mobility magazine, and is vice president of creative strategies at AMBER Lodging Co. Follow her on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMichelleSandlin and on Twitter: @MichelleSandlin. Also visit "On the Move" at blog.chron.com/onthemove.

6.8 Million U.S. Homes At Risk Of Hurricane Storm Surge Damage In 2016

By Michael Gerrity

World Property Journal, June 10, 2016

Total Reconstruction Cost Value for All Homes Over $1.5 Trillion

According to CoreLogic's 2016 Storm Surge Report, more than 6.8 million homes on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts are at potential risk of damage from hurricane storm surge inundation with a total reconstruction cost value of more than $1.5 trillion.

In addition to the number of homes at risk, the analysis also provides the reconstruction cost value (RCV), which is the cost to completely rebuild a property in case of damage, including labor and materials by geographic location, assuming a worst-case scenario at 100-percent destruction. Using more advanced and granular data than in previous years, the 2016 analysis shows an increase from 2015 in the overall number of homes at risk of storm surge as well as an increase in the reconstruction value of these homes. Despite the overall increases, the 2016 analysis shows a decrease in the most extreme category for both the number and value of homes at risk.

The CoreLogic analysis examines risk from hurricane-driven storm surge for homes along the Atlantic and Gulf coastlines across 19 states and the District of Columbia, as well as for 88 metro areas. Homes are categorized among five risk levels, including Low, Moderate, High, Very High and Extreme.

"Using more granular-level data has given us an even clearer picture of which homes are at risk of storm surge damage," said Dr. Tom Jeffery, senior hazard risk scientist for CoreLogic. "Despite the overall increases in risk, we were glad to see that the number and value of homes in the most extreme, and dangerous, category actually declined. It just goes to show the power of how advanced data can improve risk assessment at the property level."

At the regional level, the Atlantic Coast has just under 3.9 million homes at risk of storm surge with an RCV of $953 billion, and the Gulf Coast has just over 2.9 million homes at risk with $592 billion in potential exposure to total destruction damage (Table 2).

At the state level, Texas and Florida, which have the longest coastal areas, consistently have more homes at risk than other states. Florida ranks first with 2.7 million at-risk homes across the five risk categories and Texas ranks third with 531,169 at-risk homes (Table 3). Since the number of homes at risk strongly correlates with the accompanying RCV, these two states rank first and fifth, respectively for having the largest RCV (Table 4). States with less coastal exposure but lower-lying elevations that extend farther inland, such as Louisiana (ranked second at 800,521 at-risk homes) and New Jersey (ranked fourth at 468,823 at-risk homes), tend to have more total homes at risk because of the potential for surge water to travel farther inland. Louisiana and New Jersey are also near the top of the list for RCV, with Louisiana totaling $184 billion (ranked second) and New Jersey totaling $139 billion (ranked fourth).

At the local level, 15 Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) account for 67.3 percent of the 6.8 million total at-risk homes and 68.3 percent of the total $1.54 trillion RCV (Table 5). This disproportionate distribution of homes suggests that the location of hurricanes that hit land is often a more important factor than the number of storms that may occur during the year. The Miami CBSA, which includes Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, has the most homes at risk totaling 780,482 with an RCV of just under $144 billion. By comparison, the New York City CBSA has slightly fewer homes at risk at 719,373, but a significantly higher total RCV totaling $260 billion.

The CoreLogic storm surge analysis also complements Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone information to provide a snapshot of potential damage exposure at the property level since many properties located outside designated FEMA flood zones are still at risk for storm surge damage. Standard FEMA flood zones are designed to identify areas at risk for both freshwater flooding, as well as storm surge, based on the likelihood of either a 100-year or 500-year flood event. They do not differentiate risk based on storm severity, and as a result, do not accurately reflect the total extent of potential risk along coastal areas. Homeowners who live outside designated FEMA flood zones often do not carry flood insurance, given that there is no mandate to do so, and therefore may not be aware of the potential risk that storm surge poses to their properties.

East Gloucester Waterfront Rezoning Meetings Begin

By Sean Horgan

Gloucester (MA) Times, June 12, 2016

The city is embarking on the public process for developing a new zoning district for the East Gloucester waterfront properties removed in 2014 from the Designated Port Area (DPA).

The Planning Department, in conjunction with consultants from the Urban Harbors Institute at the

University of Massachusetts at Boston, will hold the first public meeting Thursday, June 16, at 6:30 p.m. at Maritime Gloucester to explain the process, which will include several more public meetings and is expected to last into the fall.

In April 2014, the state approved the redrawing of the city's DPA boundaries within the inner harbor, removing from the DPA all but two East Gloucester and Smith Cove waterfront parcels — the East Gloucester Cold Storage site and the Gloucester Marine Railways parcel at the end of Rocky Neck.

Those changes, designed to spur a more diverse and increased development along the city's historic waterfront, also generated the need for developing a new zoning district. It was the first modification of the city's DPA footprint since it was established in 1978.

Currently, according to city Planning Director Gregg Cademartori, the neighborhood of East Gloucester primarily is zoned marine industrial, but includes a mix of uses such as residential, commercial, marine industrial and marine commercial.

The city, he said, is considering the formation of a new water-dependent zoning district that could preserve existing uses while embracing a future mix of residential, commercial and marine uses.

The Urban Harbors Institute has been tasked with creating zoning recommendations within the parameters of state and federal regulations associated with public access, flood risk, the existing Chapter 91 and FEMA floodplain regulations.

Selectmen Say Door Not Shut On North Attleboro Joining Federal Program To Save Residents Money On Flood Insurance

By Andrew Doerfler

Attleboro (MA) Sun Chronicle, June 10, 2016

NORTH ATTLEBORO — Before Monday's Town Meeting rejected a $13,600 proposal to join a federal program that would save residents money on flood insurance, one Representative Town Meeting member had an idea: The 327 households affected by FEMA's expanded flood plain could pay for the town to enter the program — at about $41 each.

Cindy Desisto of Phillips Street took his advice.

At Thursday's board of selectmen's meeting, she held up her $41.60 at the lectern and wondered whether the money could truly be allocated to join the FEMA's Community Rating System, or if it would just fall into the general fund.

She denounced RTM's decision as "short-sighted."

Later in the meeting, selectmen and the town administrator assured residents that the door was not shut on joining the program, which rewards municipalities with reductions on flood insurance if they exceed standards on flood mitigation.

FEMA's updated flood maps took in many new households, requiring them to buy expensive flood insurance for the first time. Residents protested, but North Attleboro's appeals of the expanded flood plain were denied by FEMA.

The town accepted the flood maps so that it would remain eligible for certain grants.

The proposal before RTM would have directed $12,000 to consultants and $1,600 to the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, a planning agency that would help North Attleboro and other communities join the program.

Town Administrator Michael Gallagher said that the town could look into joining the system without SRPEDD, and possibly save money in the process.

Joining the program, he said, is "something we definitely need to pursue."

Selectmen, who had all previously voiced support for joining the program, agreed. More residents and businesses, they suspected, should expect to be affected as FEMA expands the flood plain.

Selectwoman Anne Lonzo said that high flood insurance costs would risk driving off homeowners and businesses.

"We're going to be losing income," Lonzo said.

As for Desisto's $41.60, Selectman John Rhyno encouraged her to hold onto it for the time being.

Austin's Flood-prone Home Buyouts Puzzle Locals, Leaders

By David Barer

KXAN-TV Austin (TX), June 10, 2016

AUSTIN (KXAN) — An ongoing city program to buy out swaths of homes in flood-prone parts of South Austin has puzzled some homeowners and raised questions from a city leader about inflated appraisals.

City council pushed along $50 million in non-voter approved debt, in the form of certificates of obligation, Thursday, for the ongoing buyout programs in neighborhoods along Onion and Williamson creeks, where multiple floods have devastated homes and killed residents in recent years.

City officials told KXAN some home appraisals in flood-prone areas have increased year over year due to high demand, desirable creek frontage and remodeling done with insurance money. The purpose of the buyouts is to ultimately remove people and property from danger. The Austin Watershed Protection Department oversees the buyout program.

City councilwoman and realtor Ellen Troxclair said she's seen appraisals for certain homes that appear inflated, and the city has sought to buyout homes that have never flooded. Russell Julian points to the ground floor of his home, which was elevated four feet to avoid flooding. He has refused a city buyout offer. (KXAN Photo)

"I certainly understand the need to help people who have found themselves in a bad situation," Troxclair said. "But the reality is, when you look at the average market value the average sale price of homes in these areas versus what the city of Austin is paying for them, there is a significant difference."

When KXAN visited Onion and Williamson creek neighborhoods Friday, several homeowners still living in buyout areas unburdened themselves with a mix of concerns about the programs. One Onion Creek resident said the city did not offer him enough money to justify selling his home.

Another resident, Russell Julian, who lives next to Williamson Creek, said city-hired appraisers placed significantly divergent values on neighboring Heartwood Drive properties. Julian said he turned down city requests for a buyout. Years ago, Julian hired an engineer and paid to have his home elevated by four feet, which took it out of flood danger.

"The discrepancies are incredible in buyout appraisals," Julian said.

Overall the city has so far bought 715 homes, and it plans to buy 138 more. Buyouts along the two creeks have cost the city $125.6 million, including $8 million from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, according to records provided by the Austin Watershed Department.

At an Austin City Council meeting on Feb. 4, 2016, Troxclair said she was concerned about average appraisals for some homes jumping nearly $100,000 in a single year. At the meeting, Alex Gale with Austin Real Estate Services, said appraisal averages for those homes increased from $276,000 to $360,000 from 2014 to 2015.

In an interview with KXAN on Thursday, Gale said the concerns over inflated appraisals have originated more in Williamson Creek rather than Onion Creek.

Gale said values of many properties have gone up, despite being in danger of flooding.

Homeowners "took their flood insurance money and completely renovated and remodeled their homes. So, that led to these homes, the fair market value of these homes, being a little bit higher," he said.

The Onion Creek buyout program got its start after the historic Halloween floods of 2013. In September of 2014, the city approved $60 million in funding for the watershed department to spend on buyouts. In March of 2015, City Council approved purchasing 232 homes in the 100-year floodplain. The city is purchasing those homes in two phases, placing priority on higher-risk homes, according to the city.

In addition to buying properties, the city gives assistance money to help homeowners afford to purchase and move into comparable homes. The city also pays for demolition of the homes it purchases, which can include asbestos abatement. The program has assisted moving families out of harms way and into new homes.

We Are On Way To Water Solutions

By Larry Kiker, Lee County Commissioner District 3

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, June 11, 2016

Dirty water, red drift algae, too much water release, too little water release, brown water, algae bloom, dead fish, big sugar, too much fertilizer, clean water, Lake O, and land purchases – if it took a long time to get it this way, how long will it take to get if fixed?

Recently in Washington, D.C., Lee County Commissioner Frank Mann, county staff and I were able to meet with our senators, Congressmen and/or their staff in addition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the federal Everglades projects. There is little doubt that our Congressmen are keenly aware of the issues and opportunities surrounding water quality, FEMA Flood insurance, flood maps, Restore funding and transportation.

Some highlights:

FEMA continues to be on the front burner, considering that it was a short program that requires re-authorization next year; it affects many business and homeowners in Lee County.

Flood maps are behind schedule, and the product does not live up to the needs of our communities when it comes to how the new ones are being produced and how much it could cost a property owner if he or she ever needs to challenge them.

Transportation is an exciting subject on its own. We have asked for them to prioritize existing funds for communities that have a fast growth rate and are willing to participate with the funding; we are making progress.

On the water front, our elected officials have written bills, co-sponsored bills and been proponents of buying conservation lands; they also support the water quality initiatives for this year. Our meetings exhibited among our Congressmen an unusual acceptance of how best to work with the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure all of this happens in the now and future; they were all supportive of the Corps efforts, with an emphasis on budgeting.

As it turned out, our last scheduled meeting was with the Corps' civil deputy chief. We discussed a master schedule for federal projects, noting the need to help facilitate and articulate expectations for everyone. We offered that an opportunity may exist here in Lee County to sponsor a "town hall" regarding Corps work and efforts.

Authorizing and budgeting by our federal administration is key to the success for the 20-year plan. Much of the discussion postured projects differently than I have ever had it explained before, giving a truth about what is actually being done to remedy the age-old problems that plague our environment, economy and quality of life. Some of the information was a bit difficult to digest since many of the projected completion dates seem so far away. The first major deliverable is targeted to be finished in 2024: Complete the Herbert Hoover Dam project. As you have heard, the safety of those who live near the dam is critical to the Corps' major role as well as expanding the functionality of the dam for water retention.

In that perspective, the conversation shed a different light on the "other" projects that seem to come out of nowhere and – according to local critics – appear to be just another band aid for our serious situation. There are three major intermediate projects, two of them are designed to send more water south, which most agree needs to happen, and one is the much talked about C-43 reservoir, which will be designed for additional water storage. We strongly recommended that the Corps add a water-quality component to that project now, not later.

After a detailed explanation of the steps that need to occur and how budgeting affects the outcome, we had two questions: Is there a chance to speed up that project? (Answer: Yes); and, what can we do in the meantime?

Along with the work in federal and state-funded programs, local projects continue to be a focus in Lee County. Our projects include $316 million spent on 25,000 acres of Conservation 20/20 land, $25 million already spent on water quality projects in the past 10 years with another $12.2 million planned for the future, plus another $60 million in estimated capital expenditures during the next 15 years for state-mandated Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) compliance. Overall, Lee County has spent approximately $96 million during the last five years for stormwater-related activities, not including land purchases. Lee County Commissioners have placed a referendum for the continuation of a conservation program on the ballot for this year.

It is time to re-think how individuals and groups intend to work with each other because this problem only becomes more difficult when the words being used are as toxic as the water that we are trying to clean. Our environment is one of the only things that we all share together as we put our collective best foot forward.

NJOP To Lead Discussion, Workshops During Sandy Memorial Wall Tour Stop At Stafford Town Hall June 23

Surf City (NJ) Sandpaper, June 10, 2016

The New Jersey Organizing Project, based in Southern Ocean County and "standing together for community solutions," brings its message – that more than 3½ years after Superstorm Sandy, some 5,000 families are still struggling to get home – and a memorial wall to Sandy-affected residents on Thursday, June 23, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Stafford Township municipal building; and the following week, Tuesday, June 28, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Tuckerton Seaport. The organization urges the public to take action against private insurance companies that take advantage of policy holders in the National Flood Insurance Program.

The presentation is one of several the organization is holding in the area while on tour with its Sandy Memorial Wall, created in Trenton during a three-night campout at the statehouse to mark the three-year anniversary, last October.

"We use our Sandy Memorial Wall to bring people together and bring out the best in our communities."

The public is invited to add photos and mementos to the wall and "hear from groups on the front lines, community leaders and elected officials (speakers list in development) on how we recover, protect, prepare and thrive. Connect with resources that are available if you're still struggling to get home, and compare notes with fellow Sandy survivors."

The wall was recently featured on PBS Frontline's "The Business of Disaster," according to Amanda

Devecka-Rinear, the head of the organization. "Speakers will talk about whether we've recovered from Superstorm Sandy or not, and if we're ready for the next storm, and what kind of action we can take to help us recover and get ready. Nonprofit organizations that assist Sandy survivors will be tabling. All community members (are) welcome."

Part of taking action is signing an online petition to tell Congress to cut the private insurance companies from the NFIP.

The Frontline program brought to light some important details, as pointed out by NJOP spokeswoman Krista Sperber: The insurance companies made more than $400 million in profits just from the flood program after Sandy; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (i.e. taxpayers) pays all the legal bills for the private insurance companies when homeowners sue them over unfair settlements.

"It's by standing shoulder to shoulder and fighting for our homes and communities that we set things right," Sperber said. —V.F.

FEMA Set To Change Flood Maps At Lake Of The Ozarks

KOLR-TV Springfield (MO), June 12, 2016

LAKE OF THE OZARKS, Mo- FEMA has decided to change the flood maps they made for Lake of the Ozarks in 2011. The change comes after complaints by lake area stakeholders and two major floods that happened last year.

The properties on the main channel will not be affected by the new map, only these tributaries off the main channel of the lake:

- Niangua River
- Little Niangua River
- Grand Glaize River
- Linn Creek
- Gravois Creek

Property owners up there have to wait for the FEMA calculations to depend on if they have to pay for flood insurance, according to Brian Myers of Schultz Surveying and Engineering. Mortgage lenders require borrowers to pay flood insurance, if the property is designated by FEMA to be in a flood hazard zone.

Flood Insurance can cost anywhere from $800 to $3,000.

Myers recommends property owners conduct a new survey, once the final map is released, to see if they can lower their insurance premiums, or in some cases, eliminate the need for insurance all together.

The news of the change was released during a FEMA Flood Risk Review Meeting on Wednesday, June 8, attended by lake area surveyors, engineers, government officials and realtors at Wilmore Lodge in Lake Ozark.

FEMA Risk Analysis Branch Chief Richard J. Leonard discussed the revised flood mapping at the meeting, saying the new map was a result of a new Flood Insurance Study.

According to FEMA, they are committed to sending officials the preliminary revised flood insurance rate map panel by the end of June. The revised rate map is anticipated by the end of calendar year 2017.

Another community meeting will be scheduled in July to discuss the findings. Then, a 90-day appeals period. An appeal can be submitted, if it can demonstrate that a change is needed in the map, because it is incorrect.

FEMA will then have to send community officials a "letter of final determination" declaring the final map changes. Once the letter is sent, there will be a six-month compliance period before the new maps become effective. "The entire process will take approximately 18 months," Leonard said. This timeline can change according to how many appeals are submitted and how long it takes to resolve the appeals.

"While there is still much work to be done, the Congressman is encouraged by the progress that has been made on the new Flood Assessment Risk map that was presented at yesterday's meeting," said Luetkemeyer's Communications Director Kristina Weger.

"This will also affect the housing industry because people will be willing to purchase homes that were once considered in the flood plain, that are now out of the flood plain, according to the new map," SSE Survey Technician Brian Myers said. Myers advises property owners in the new floodplain map area get a new survey to see if they can lower their insurance cost. "A lot of people previously denied a LOMA certificate will now be eligible by just reapplying," Myers said.

"Camden County property owners who were previously turned down for a construction permit by Camden County Planning and Zoning may now be able to build," Myers added.

Carpentersville Creek Restoration Could Reduce Flood Insurance Costs

By Erin Sauder

Elgin (IL) Courier News, June 12, 2016

Carpentersville is continuing to make progress on the Carpenter Creek restoration project that could reduce flood insurance costs on as many as 40 properties, including businesses and residences, located along Sedgewick and Brook streets.

At Tuesday's board meeting, Kevin Gray, assistant director of public works and village engineer, gave board members an update.

Construction began last fall on the $1.1 million project to address erosion and establish more accurate base flood elevations around Carpenter Creek in Old Town, as well as stabilize 9,200 feet of stream bank in the area north of Carpenter Park.

As of late May, construction activities have been substantially completed, Gray said.

Representatives of HR Green, which the village partnered with on the project, are having the land surveyed. They will then send their findings to the Federal Emergency Management Agency in order to revise the existing flood plain and potentially remove existing structures from the flood plain, Gray said.

It will take about 12 months before the new flood plain maps go into effect, he said.

Property owners taken out of the flood plain are still urged to get a low-cost, preferred-risk flood insurance policy.

"So they still have the full benefits of having flood insurance but not having to pay a large premium," Gray said.

"Instead of paying $3,000 a year, it's typically $80 a year, depending on the property value."

Omaha-area Flood Plains Might Recede On New FEMA Maps

By Roseann Moring

Omaha (NE) World-Herald, June 11, 2016

Flood plains in the Omaha area could shrink when the Federal Emergency Management Agency issues new maps next year.

Preliminary information shows that new data and new reservoirs are likely to produce smaller flood plains, said John Winkler, general manager of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District.

The NRD's board on Thursday approved a $167,000 study to produce final data. The board voted 10-0. Director Scott Japp abstained.

If FEMA agrees to use the new data, the district will pay Fyra Engineering to study water patterns in the area.

Winkler said the flood plain could shrink along the Big, Little and West Papio Creeks.

He said that over 40 years, flood plains in this area have only increased.

"This would truly be a reversal," he said.

If the data comes in as expected, the next step would be another study — at a cost of about $500,000 — to create a flood plain map from the data. The NRD expects to pay about $300,000 of the cost of that study, if it happens, Winkler said.

The district hopes to use new rainfall intensity and distribution data from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to build the new flood plain map.

And officials want to take into account four new reservoirs. One has been built in Papillion, one is being built near 168th and Fort Streets, and the district is in the process of acquiring land in Sarpy County for two more.

Voters denied the district a bond issue that would have allowed it to quickly build six new dams. But the district already has the funds to move forward with the three sites in progress.

One member of the public spoke about the vote. The woman, Shawn Melotz, asked that the district seek bids on the contract.

Winkler responded that Fyra Engineering already has done work in the area and has the data needed to move forward.

Japp asked why the district didn't ask state legislators to help fund the project. Winkler said the study would be specific to the Papio-NRD and wouldn't be as useful to other entities.

The information is due to FEMA in mid-October, Winkler said.

Papio-Missouri River NRD Board To Update Floodplain Data

KETV-TV Omaha (NE), June 10, 2016

OMAHA, Neb. —The Papio-Missouri River NRD Board of Directors has approved contracting for an update of Papillion Creek Watershed hydrology to provide new flood hazard information which could potentially factor into floodplain mapping due for release by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2019. Much of the Omaha metro area is within this watershed.

The contract with FYRA engineering will total $167,000 and will cover FYRA's study of the watershed that will incorporate new rainfall data and the flood protection benefits being realized by the recently completed Prairie Queen Reservoir, Dam Site 15A now under construction and two additional reservoirs being designed for construction in the watershed.

"We hope that the new FEMA floodplain maps, due to be published in 2019, take into account all the latest flood protection efforts by the NRD in the watershed," said John Winkler, NRD General Manager. "We also have new rainfall intensity and distribution data, recently published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which could show a significant reduction in peak flows within the watershed," he said.

Rainfall frequency and distribution was last published for this area by NOAA during the 1960s.

"This process has the potential to remove thousands of homes and businesses from currently designated floodplains and to keep countless others from being placed in floodplains," said Winkler. "This effort represents one of the main benefits of Nebraska's Natural Resources District system in that we stay abreast of the most current information and technology available and we deploy these resources when appropriate to protect lives, property and the economic well-being of our constituents."

The NRD, along with the Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership, recently completed Dam site WP-5 west of Papillion, now known as Prairie Queen Recreation Area. Dam Site 15A is now under construction near 168th and Fort Streets in Omaha. Two additional sites in Sarpy County are being designed.

"If preliminary results hold true, this will demonstrate without a doubt, that these new reservoirs will have a dramatic impact in protecting our floodplains and reducing flood potential," said Winkler. "Without question, the new data and new floodplain conditions present today should be considered."

A preliminary study by FYRA Engineering of the West Branch Papillion Creek Watershed showed much-improved protection for the Papillion and Millard areas produced by the new reservoirs, floodplain mapping techniques, and other updated data.

MITIGATION

Coan Lake Seawall Reconstruction Begins At Heritage Park

By Dave Herndon

Southgate (MI) News Herald, June 12, 2016

It's been several years since the seawall at Coan Lake, inside Taylor's Heritage Park, has been in effective working order.

Thanks to a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that wall will soon be in perfect working order. The grant is not to exceed $229,845.

Work on replacing the seawall began after Memorial Day when workers from Cross Lake Construction began tearing out the old wall. Temporarily the damaged old wall is being stacked in the parking lot near Maggie's Sweet Shop, residents are asked to use caution near the debris pile.

The seawall repair is just part of the Heritage Park renovations that Mayor Rick Sollars recently talked about.

"We recognize that Heritage Park is one of the most beautiful parks in the entire region," Sollars said. "It is heavily used, not only for recreation purposes, but for literally anything you can think of during the warm-weather months. Wedding and prom photos, fishing – you name it, Heritage Park-goers are interested in it. We know that we need to spend some time and give the park some TLC."

Beyond the seawall construction, the city also will be taking on repairs to the bridge and the deteriorating areas surrounding it in the historical area of the park, the white wooden fencing at the Petting Farm and the walking path.

The Downriver campus of WCCCD also is partnering with the city, working on starting up the waterwheel, adding decorative lighting and creating a space that is similar to carnival wheels like in other parks across the country.

Through another partnership with WCCCD, the park's walking/jogging/cycling path will be connected to the college campus, creating a serene pathway from points in Heritage Park, through the wooded areas, into the back lots of WCCCD and back out to the sidewalks along North Line Road that reconnect with the park.

Right now, the pathway is unfinished along the northern boundary of the park and WCCCD. City leaders hope this will entice local runners and cyclists to bring their athletic and leisure activities to the center of the community.

"Runners and walkers will have a long-distance route without having to cross city streets, and it will be a boon for the ever-increasing cycling crowd," Sollars said.

Penfield Pavilion Project Cost Increases As Town Forgoes State Grant

Fairfield (CT) Patch, June 12, 2016

Fairfield, CT — The town's share of the cost of the project to rebuild the Penfield Pavilion will increase from about $1.5 million to $2 million after the Penfield Building Committee voted to forgo a $500,000 state grant, according to the Fairfield Citizen.

The Citizen reports First Selectman Mike Tetreau said the state grant came with some strings attached, mainly that the building would need to be raised another foot and it presented too many challenges at this point in the project.

Also, while the state DEEP was reviewing plans for the grant, it notified the town that a bulkhead that was installed in front of the pavilion several years ago wasn't properly permitted, according to the Citizen.

Rather than risk the 75-percent FEMA reimbursement for the $7.4 million project, the town removed a portion of the bulkhead, according to the Citizen.

City Park Volunteer Cleanup Day A Big Success

By J. Michael Ross

Stephenville (TX) Empire-Tribune, June 11, 2016

As most city residents know, Stephenville City Park was hit hard by the recent thunderstorms and park maintenance crews needed some extra hands for the cleanup. They got plenty of that from volunteers on a foggy Bosque River Saturday morning in the park.

Community Services Director Jeremy Allen and his staff put the word out earlier in the week that there would be a volunteer workday on Saturday and Allen says it turned out to be a real success.

The E-T caught up with him next to the tennis courts that sit very close to the river and were badly flooded.

"It's hard to tell how many people turned out at the moment because they're spread out all over the park right now. But Allsup's sent a crew of 25, and most of them are here cleaning up the courts," Allen said. "I can't believe how much silt was on these courts, but the Allsup's people are doing a great job of scraping and sweeping it all up and getting it in piles outside the fence. We really appreciate them and everybody that turned out for this."

City Council members in attendance that we spotted were Sherry Zachary, Carla Trussell and Allen said Mayor Kenny Weldon was out in the weeds somewhere. That doesn't mean there weren't other council members and city staff there, but as Allen said, folks were spread out all over the park and we didn't find all of them.

Stephenville Parks and Cemeteries Supervisor Jesus Coronado and his son, Dasiel, were cruising the Bosque River Trail in a four-wheeler and we managed to hitch a ride back to the center of the park.

Oh, and there was also a pair of geese with their little gosling in tow doing their part to serenade the volunteers with a cacophony of quacks and honks.

Here's a list of damage and debris areas that were addressed:

- Large, eroded portions of the trail next to the river
- Downed trees
- General debris all over the park.
- Tennis courts [as mentioned]
- Main city park parking lot and parking areas on both sides of the Graham Street Bridge.
- The RV park [electrical damage]
- Lights under the Washington Street Bridge
- The fishing dock [a total loss]
- Downed light pole on the Bosque River Trail

This by no means implies that repairs and cleanup are complete, as much of it – electrical, asphalt, concrete, etc. – will require licensed contractors as well as City of Stephenville and FEMA funding.

Counties Receive Emergency Funds

Dalton (GA) Daily Citizen, June 12, 2016

Whitfield and Murray counties have been awarded federal funds made available through the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency under the emergency food and shelter national board program.

Whitfield County will receive $51,863 and Murray County will receive $21,740 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in each county.

The selection was made by a national board that is chaired by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities USA, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, the Jewish Federations of North America, the Salvation Army and United Way Worldwide. Each county local board is charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

Each local board reflects the makeup of the national board and includes representation from the county and will determine how the funds awarded to each county are to be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area. Each local board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds and any additional funds made available under this phase of the program.

Under the terms of the grant from the national board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must be private voluntary nonprofits or units of government; be eligible to receive federal funds; have an accounting system; practice nondiscrimination; have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs; and if they are a private voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board. Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

Whitfield County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously with Dalton Organization of Churches United for People (DOCUP), the Salvation Army, Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Center, Oak Haven, City of Refuge, Dalton Greater Works, Soul Station Ministries and Family Promise.

Murray County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously with the Dalton-Whitfield Community Development Corp., Murray County Next Step, the Salvation Army and the Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Center.

Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds and receiving the phase 33 application must contact Margaret Zeisig, director of community solutions for the United Way of Northwest Georgia, at (706) 876-1599 or at margaret.zeisig@ourunitedway.org for an emailed application. Completed applications must be emailed to Zeisig no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, June 17.

EYE ON JEFFERSON: County To Consider Monday Undi Road Repair

Peninsula (WA) Daily News, June 11, 2016

The three Jefferson County commissioners will discuss options for Undi Road when they meet Monday.

The discussion will be at the commissioners' briefing session at 1:30 p.m. in commissioners' chambers at the Jefferson County Courthouse, 1820 Jefferson St., Port Townsend.

The regular meeting will begin at 9 a.m. in the same location.

The commissioners will consider whether to continue repairs of the West Jefferson County road. Repair of the washed-out road is estimated at $1.8 million.

At 10 a.m., commissioners will interview two applicants — Jean Ball and Michael Nilssen — and possibly appoint one to the District 3 seat on the county planning commission.

They plan an executive session at 10:30 a.m. to discuss potential litigation.

At the afternoon briefing, they will hear reports on the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Endangered Species Act, Beckett Point's potential request for special historic shoreline community designation, a comprehensive plan update and amendments to the Unified Development Code.

Items on the consent agenda include:

■ An agreement terminating the employment of interim Department of Community Development David Goldsmith, who served in that position for nine months until a permanent director was hired.

■ The appointment of Malloree Weinheimer to a two-year term on the Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Port Townsend city

The Port Townsend hearing examiner will consider a conditional use and height variance for a personal wireless installation Monday.

The hearing will begin at 1:30 p.m. in council chambers at historic City Hall, 540 Water St.

The council workshop scheduled for Monday has been canceled.

Council office hours, during which members of the public can discuss any topic with a member of the City Council, take place from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday in the mayor's office at 540 Water St.

Port Townsend schools

The Port Townsend School Board will consider agreements with companies involved in the replacement of Grant Street Elementary when it meets Monday.

The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. in the Gael Stuart Building, 1610 Blaine St.

The board will consider approving a fee proposal from Integrus Architecture of Seattle and an interim agreement with Robinson Co. of Seattle for project management services for the school project.

It will review its policy on effective communication in light of a settlement agreement between a blind parent and Seattle Public Schools and hear a preliminary budget report.

Jefferson Healthcare

Jefferson Healthcare commissioners will hear the results of a 2015 financial auditor report when they meet Wednesday.

The meeting will begin at 3:30 p.m. in the Jefferson Healthcare conference room at 2500 W. Sims Way, Port Townsend.

Peninsula College

Peninsula College trustees will meet at 2 p.m. Tuesday.

The meeting will be in the Cornaby Center at Peninsula College, 1502 E. Lauridsen Blvd., Port Angeles.

The full agenda will be available 24 hours prior to the meeting at www.pencol.edu/aboutpc/board/agendas.

Steele County's Public Works Building Phase 1 On Track To Begin This Month

By Ashley Stewart

Owatonna (MN) People's Press, June 10, 2016

OWATONNA — Nearly all the pieces have fallen into place for construction to begin on the first phase of Steele County's new public works building this month.

Anita Benson, Steele County engineer and Public Works division director, said the county is in the process of gathering paperwork from the contractors awarded the project and expects work to begin within the next week or two.

"We're on track for Phase 1 to be completed by end of this year, which was the deadline given by [Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management]," she said.

Meeting that deadline, she said in March, was dependent on the completion of the environmental assessment and the approval of the improved project application, both of which were completed in May.

"There's always a light at the end of the tunnel, but sometimes there's a longer tunnel that's more circuitous," Benson said.

The $12.6 million public works building will be built on land north of old Highway 14, also known as County Road 2, and west of 28th Avenue that Steele County purchased after its old highway maintenance operations complex on Hoffman Drive was damaged in the 2010 flood.

The cost and scope of the project was determined in August when the Steele County Board of Commissioners in a 3-2 vote moved the project forward for the first time since June 2012, when it was halted because of public outcry about the county board's original building proposal, which carried a $13.6 million price tag.

Prior to that decision, however, the county board unanimously voted to construct the public works project in two phases to retain the $1.5 million Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursement, which requires work to be completed by Dec. 31, 2016.

The first phase includes the construction of a salt and shed, fueling station, parking lot and building pad as well as all the site work that will be funded through FEMA and county reserves.

The second phase includes the construction of the 71,094 square-feet precast building that will be funded through state bonds, reserves and bonding from the county.

And because of that, the two phases have different timelines.

In March, the Steele County Board approved the authorizing of bids for Phase 1 of the building, and on May 24, the commissioners unanimously awarded a total of six bids totaling about $1.8 million for the project, contingent on notification from Homeland Security and FEMA's funding obligation.

Benson said that week, Steele County was notified its improved project application had been approved and it'd be reimbursed $1.6 million for Phase 1, which is a little more than originally stated.

The county also received favorable low bids for Phase 1 of the project, which was anticipated to cost $2.5 million, and because of that Benson said it'll cost about $2.2 million, including general conditions, contingency and construction management.

For the second phase of the project, the county board unanimously authorized the submission of the county's grant application to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, or DEED, which is required to secure the $4 million in state bonds it was awarded last spring, earlier this year.

The grant submission was one of Steele County's first steps in receiving the bond dollars it's been allocated, according to the Minnesota Capital Grants manual.

The application — and the project — will also be reviewed by the Minnesota Department of Administration, DEED and Minnesota legislative committees.

According to a tentative schedule created by Benson, she anticipates the state grant agreement process to be completed by this fall.

In the meantime, the county is continuing work on the building's design for the second phase as well as its capital improvement plan and bond authorization.

Steele County Treasurer Cathy Piepho said a timeline for the capital improvement plan and bonding will be discussed at Committee of the Whole at 4 p.m. on Tuesday.

According to the proposed time schedule document in the Committee of the Whole packet posted online Friday afternoon, the commissioners will vote on the capital improvement plan and schedule a public hearing on Nov. 15 — a week after the general election.

Project To Install Northend Pump Station Advancing As Planned

By Andrew Parent

Shore News Today (NJ), June 10, 2016

OCEAN CITY — City business administrator Jim Mallon told City Council Thursday, June 9 that the city will move forward with plans for a pump station on Sixth Street after several months of discussions with state representatives.

Plans for the estimated $8.7 million project, which officially say will help improve drainage between First to Eighth streets from Asbury Avenue to the bay, were presented to the public in a November 2015 meeting.

Mallon said the location for the pump's outfall pipe will stay at Sixth Street on the bay as planned. Officials had explored moving the outfall to the city's Bayside Center in response to complaints from residents in the area of Sixth Street who did not want the outfall put there.

According to a press release sent Friday by officials, the city has spent the last six months trying to get permission to move the outfall pipes to the Bayside Center. Talks have included discussions with Cape May County, which owns the property.

Pending final permits and a public construction bid for the job, work could begin in late 2016, according to the release.

Mallon added that sticking with a new plan to move the outfall to the Bayside Center would have added "significant time and expense to the project," and that it would have been a "long uphill battle with no guarantee of approval."

"The people who lived at the end of Sixth Street asked, 'You own city property just down the way. Why don't you consider it there instead of the end of our street?'" Mallon said Thursday.

Some residents openly complained about the plan when the city proposed it in a November 2015 public meeting, and were afraid the work on the project would damage their homes. They also feared the additional water flowing out at the street end would cause problems, with one resident saying the water flowing out of the outfall after heavy rain "sounds like it's going to be a waterfall."

"We're just supposed to support this because the city says so? I don't think so," another commenter said at that meeting.

Another resident suggested the city had been keeping the project a secret, and that the city should expect a lawsuit.

On Thursday, Mallon said the agencies that have worked with the city on possibly moving the outfall to the Bayside Center which include the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the state Green Acres program and the Division of Land Use Regulation and Coastal Regulation, understood the residents' concerns.

"All of our government partners in this project acted professionally … and were open to the request to consider the Bayside Center, while honestly portraying the requirements facing the city," Mallon said. "Ultimately we decided that, along with facing time restrictions related to the permitting and the grant requirements, the residents of this entire neighborhood have waited long enough for this project to move forward. If the neighborhood wants to see relief any time in the foreseeable future, the city will have to stick to the initial plan."

The project will be funded in part by a $5 million Federal Emergency Management Agency grant, the largest grant received in the city's history.

Mallon said the city's request for a CAFRA permit has been deemed complete for final review, and that the city expects to hear from the DEP on whether the permit will be approved by August.

"This fits the timeline we outlined in the public meeting, that the CAFRA permit would take six to nine months," Mallon said.

The city is also waiting hear back on a Green Acres permit, required because a small portion of the underground station would be located directly under the soccer field on Sixth Street and Bay Avenue, a Green Acres property, city public information officer Doug Bergen said. Bergen said he couldn't give an estimate on when Green Acres may notify the city of the permit's status, but he said that process will likely take longer than that of the CAFRA permit.

The city allotted $17.4 million on road and drainage projects in its 2016 capital plan, and has set aside $34.6 million total over the next five years.

A $1.6 million drainage replacement and road paving project was recently completed from 14th to 16th streets on the bayside of the island, while the city has set aside $4 million for a paving and drainage project involving most of the area between 26th and 34th streets from Bay to West avenues.

Drainage systems between 28th and 33rd streets would be reconfigured, and three pump stations are planned as part of that project, which officials have said should start in the fall.

Ocean City North End Drainage Project Moves Forward

Cape May County (NJ) Herald, June 11, 2016

OCEAN CITY – Following several months of discussions with representatives of permitting agencies, including the N.J. Department of Environmental

Protection administration, the state Green Acres program and the Division of Land Use Regulation and Coastal Regulation, the city has decided it is prudent to move forward with its north-end pump station project with the outfall located at Sixth Street, where it was originally proposed.

Based on feedback from neighbors, the city spent six months trying to get permission to move the outfall pipes to the Bayside Center, including discussions with Cape May County, owner of that property.

"Although not completely impossible, this change would have added significant time and expense to the project, and would have been a long uphill battle with no guarantee of approval," Ocean City Business Administrator Jim Mallon said.

"All of our government partners in this project acted professionally, understood the public's concerns, and were open to the request to consider the Bayside Center, while honestly portraying the requirements facing the city. Ultimately, we decided that, along with facing time restrictions related to the permitting and the grant requirements, the residents of this entire neighborhood have waited long enough for this project to move forward. If the neighborhood wants to see relief any time in the foreseeable future, the city will have to stick to the initial plan."

The plan calls for a new stormwater pumping station near Sixth Street and Bay Avenue to improve drainage from 1st Street to 8th Street from Asbury Avenue to the bay. The estimated $8.7 million project will use a $5 million FEMA grant, the largest Ocean City has ever received.

The project remains on the schedule outlined at a public meeting in Nov. 2015. Pending final permits and successful bid submissions, construction could begin in late 2016.

Santa Clara Seeks Funds To Help FEMA Landslide Grant

By Kevin Jenkins

St. George (UT) Spectrum, June 11, 2016

Santa Clara is hopeful that federal funding will soon be available to help it move residents out of a Heights neighborhood that is regarded as a critical area for controlling a years-long landslide, and approved a loan application this week to provide some of the needed project money.

The City Council agreed Wednesday to seek a state loan-grant mix from the Community Impact Fund Board that would help it in turn qualify for a matching grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to buy four properties on Truman Drive.

"The engineers have said the weight of the homes is causing pressure that makes the hillside move," City Councilman Ken Sizemore said. "The intent is to remove homes from willing sellers."

Mayor Rick Rosenberg said Santa Clara is asking for $351,000 as a half-and-half loan-grant combination from the state CIB fund.

The $351,000 would serve as the 25 percent community match FEMA requires for its "Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant."

Rosenberg said Thursday that the city is "very close" to obtaining the federal grant, having completed an environmental review and other preliminary steps necessary to satisfy the grant's requirements.

"They're pretty detailed when it comes to property acquisition," he said.

If the grant is approved, the city will buy and destroy three homes in the Heights and leave the property, as well as an undeveloped fourth lot, empty.

The city acquired one home at the base of the slide zone in 2013 with the same intent. It had already been vacated due to damage from the shifting land.

City officials removed some land from the top of the slide zone that year to help reduce some of the weight on the hillside, using the soil for repairs on the washed-out Laub Wash detention dam and Santa Clara river banks damaged during flash flooding the previous September.

After the Hillside Commission determined in 2013 that there were new signs of instability in the sloping land of the Heights, commission member David Black informed the council that the three primary solutions for tackling the blue clay slide were to reduce the weight at the top of the slide zone, create a buttress at the foot of the slide to restrain downward movement, and remove as much water feeding the slide as possible, primarily through drains that intercept and carry the water away.

Rosenberg and Sizemore said Thursday that the city is pursuing all three options.

"We're obtaining the maximum-risk properties, relocating the people that are there, and lessening the risk for adjoining properties in the process," the mayor said.

"The rest of the money will be used to grade the slope so it's not so steep, and to build a buttress at the foot of the hill so it doesn't slide," Sizemore said.

"There will be some additional geotechnical work … some drainage work," Rosenberg added.

Rosenberg said there are no signed sales agreements yet, but the property owners in question on the south rim of the Heights overlooking Santa Clara

Drive and the now-dead end Chapel Street have signed "willing seller" agreements.

"We're hoping to be able to go to work later this summer, but until we get formal notice from FEMA, I don't know (when it will be)," he said.

Some Heights rim residents who aren't in the impacted Truman Drive area that have nonetheless suffered slide damage have complained about not being similarly compensated for damages by the city.

During a 2014 community meeting about the FEMA grant proposal, Patricia Nunnely said her 4,315-square-foot Crestview Drive home has seen an increasing degree of damage during the two decades she has lived there.

"We fell in love with the area, and got gypped on the house," she said. "I've watched the hill slide down. ... We're not on Truman Drive, but we have a lot at stake."

Food, Shelter Funds Made Available

By Kristy Carter

Sampson Independent, June 12, 2016

While many people aren't aware of the need for food and shelter across Sampson County, the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency have recognized that need and provided local funds to be used to supplement emergency food and shelter programs.

According to Nancy Carr, chair of the Emergency Food and Shelter program for Sampson County, $27,849 in federal funds has been made available to Sampson County, that will be used in situations where there is a need to assist with providing food and shelter.

"We have a significant need in Sampson County on all levels that EFSP provides," Carr said. "This assistance can make a difference in someone being homeless or not."

The local EFSP board will be charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in the high-need areas across the county.

Under the terms of the grant, Carr said local agencies who receive funds must be a private voluntary non profit or unit of government, eligible to receive federal funds, have an accounting system, practice nondiscrimination, have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter and have a voluntary board.

The funds must be utilized in providing food, shelter, rent/mortgage and utility assistance.

The selection for federal funds, Carr said, was made by a national board that is chaired by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.; The Jewish Federations of North America; The Salvation Army; and United Way Worldwide.

According to Carr, the local board has representatives from City of Clinton, County of Sampson, The United Way of Sampson County, The Salvation Army, the Catholic church, American Red Cross, Department of Social Services, Coharie Indian Tribe, a local physician, dentist, banker and local churches. The local board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds under this program.

Sampson County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously with U-Care Domestic Violence Shelter, First Baptist Church 900 College Street Food Pantry, Rock Ministry, Inc. (Garland), Mr. Window Soup Kitchen, Backpack Buddies – First United Methodist Church, Enlighten the World Ministries Community Assistance Program, Harrells Community Center, and First Baptist Church 408 College Street Soup Kitchen. Last year in Sampson County there was $28,965 in funds distributed under this program.

Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact Nancy Carr c/o United Way of Sampson County, P.O. Box 1677, Clinton NC 28329; 910-592-4263 for an application. The deadline for applications is Tuesday, June 21.

Union Pacific Investing In Kansas Project

By Ray Scherer

St. Joseph (MO) News-Press, June 12, 2016

Later this month, Union Pacific will deploy from 120 to 140 laborers in Atchison, Kansas, for the replacement of track segments in northeast Kansas.

The Atchison Globe said public works and utilities director Justin Pregont told the city commission about the project on June 6.

Hotels are expected to host the workers, bringing a temporary boost to the economy.

The railroad plans to invest more than $70 million in the state this year to improve its infrastructure. Officials said the work is designed to improve employee, community and customer safety and increase operational efficiency.

Taken alone, the improvements between Atchison and Huron will represent more than $6 million of investment to replace 12 miles of rail.

Summit Street work begins in Smithville

Activity has started on a $450,000 project for West Summit Street.

The Smithville Herald reported the work seeks to keep the road and additional ground from sliding down a hillside.

Problems began surfacing about a year ago, city officials said, when ground on the north side of the street loosened and a two-story house slipped partially off its foundation. Large fissures appeared in the ground, including one that reached up to West Summit.

The affected area is located south of downtown.

Missouri Gas Energy is relocating its lines. Meanwhile, Pyramid Excavating has undertaken the task of relocating impacted water lines.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is covering 75 percent of the project, with the city providing the remaining 25 percent.

New Hiawatha postmaster settling into new duties

Mark Hoffman is the new postmaster for Hiawatha, Kansas.

The Hiawatha World said Hoffman comes to the city following a transfer from St. Mary's Post Office.

He began his U.S. Postal Service career in 1999 as a clerk and carrier in Blue Rapids, Kansas. He later transferred to Seneca, Kansas, before returning to Blue Rapids.

He was chosen for the Hiawatha post from among several applicants last fall.

Jacksonville Accepts Bid For Work On Reservoir Dam Spillway

By Tony Boom

Medford (OR) Mail Tribune, June 10, 2016

JACKSONVILLE — Enlargement of the spillway at Jacksonville's reservoir on Jackson Creek will probably start in July after the City Council voted Tuesday to accept the low bid of $73,825 from Kogap Enterprises for the project.

Without the spillway work, a catastrophic flood in Jackson Creek might cause the dam to collapse, imperiling life and property downstream, officials said. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers issued a permit authorizing the work in January.

"We are tickled to death. We can't believe how cheap it is," said City Administrator Jeff Alvis. The city looked at a number of options, some costing nearly $800,000, before the spillway proposal was developed and approved.

Work in the stream must be done between June 15 and Sept. 15 to prevent impact to fisheries. The work can't proceed until the reservoir water level drops.

"We are probably looking at the latter part of July," said Alvis. "We had a pretty wet season. Last year, we could have worked in there at this time."

KOGAP will construct a couple of roads into the site and clean up the top of the dam so that operations can be conducted from there. Work to enlarge the spillway is estimated to take about two weeks, Alvis said.

The next lowest bid was $110,620 from Pilot Rock Excavation. Ledford Construction Company bid $157,320, and LaDuke Construction bid $166,048. City Engineer Scott Pingle reviewed the bids to ensure they met proposal requirements and recommended the award go to Kogap. Pingle had estimated the work would cost $80,000.

In 2012, the city set aside $200,000 from the sale of land in the watershed above the reservoir to fund the work. Kogap will compact material that is removed to enlarge the spillway in an area below the dam. The city will plant trees and vegetation this fall on the material to prevent erosion.

While much of the dam will remain in place, the project is considered a breeching. The old concrete spillway will be demolished and replaced with a 10-foot-wide channel that exceeds FEMA's 500-year flood flow estimates. The new spillway will be about 12 feet below the current dam face slope. Up to 873 cubic yards of riprap can be used for the spillway.

Patience in exploring alternatives over a two-year period resulted in a plan the city could afford, said Alvis.

"You have to wait on all these things," said Alvis. "Don't take the first option."

Keith Mills, dam safety engineer with the state Water Resources Department, deserves credit for helping devise the plan, said Alvis. Mills and Alvis met several times and visited the site to explore options.

"We are very happy that they are moving forward. It is making the dam safe," said Mills. As a high-hazard dam, it is subject to annual inspection until the correction is completed, he said.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Marine Fisheries Service and Oregon's Division of State Lands were all consulted on the project. Those agencies will be notified that work will proceed.

In 1999, a state study classified the dam as a high hazard. Constructed in 1910 to provide water for the town, use was discontinued in the 1950s when the city connected to the Medford Water Commission system.

Sediment has filled much of the reservoir. The city no longer has water rights in Jackson Creek.

Federal Aid Is Needed For Our Lake Michigan Bluffs

By Journal Times Editorial

Racine (WI) Journal Times, June 12, 2016

When we talk about "federal assistance" for disater relief, we obviously mean money and personnel subsidized by federal taxpayers. That includes those of us living here in Wisconsin. We didn't personally deliver the federal aid in times of need. But indirectly, through the taxes we pay, we did.

We haven't had a full-fledged disaster here along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Racine County. But in the erosion of the bluffs along the lakeshore in Mount Pleasant and Caledonia, we do have a crisis which requires federal assistance. Put simply, it's our turn to be helped by the federal government.

Late last month, Racine County Executive Jonathan Delagrave issued a declaration of emergency due to the erosion. Such a declaration better positions the county to get state and federal assistance and gives the county authority to make personnel and resources available, according to a news release.

The declaration also allows the county to close public streets and, if necessary, evacuate residents from their homes, Delagrave said.

High Lake Michigan levels have eroded the bluffs, putting homes in Mount Pleasant and Caledonia in danger. One home has already been removed and officials say 10 to 12 other homes in Mount Pleasant and multiple properties in Caledonia are threatened.

In addition to homes, officials are worried about public utilities and streets, Delagrave said, and fear a strong storm could move through and erode more of the bluffs. "We don't want homeowners to lose their houses unnecessarily and we're also concerned about erosion encroaching on public utilities," Delagrave said.

State Rep. Peter Barca, a member of the Federal Emergency Management Agency National Advisory Council, said he has also contacted federal and state entities and hopes for a quick solution.

"There are people in Wisconsin right now who could wake up tomorrow without a home. We need to take action as quickly as possible," said Barca, D-Kenosha, whose district includes the Lake Park neighborhood of Mount Pleasant. "For the people of Mount Pleasant, time is of the essence."

This is most definitely true, in Mount Pleasant and in Caledonia.

During Tuesday night's meeting at the Mount Pleasant Village Hall, several residents called for the state and Gov. Scott Walker to get more involved. Walker has not issued an executive order regarding the erosion, but has directed staff to provide support in the area, said Pat O'Connor, director of the Bureau of Response and Recovery for Wisconsin Emergency Management.

Apparently, Racine County got the governor's attention, and he responded: On Friday, he made public a letter he sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, requesting assistance under Section 14 of the 1946 Flood Control Act, which gives the corps emergency authority.

During his June 3 visit with the Journal Times Editorial Board, House Speaker Paul Ryan said that his office is working with the Army Corps and local officials, including Delagrave and Mount Pleasant Village Administrator Kurt Wahlen.

The Army Corps is determining whether the issue fits under the agency's Section 14 emergency authority, Ryan said. Under Section 14, the Army Corps "is authorized to construct bank protection works to protect endangered highways, highway bridge approaches, and other essential, important public works, such as municipal water supply systems and sewage disposal plants, churches, hospitals, schools, and non-profit public services and known cultural sites that are endangered by flood-caused bank or shoreline erosion."

"We're moving as fast as can be done, meaning we've gotten this moving faster than I've ever seen it," said Ryan, whose district includes all of Racine County. "The question is, how long will it take for them to study this situation, and what resources are available there."

We don't seem to have reached the higher threshold required for Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance, but we definitely have an issue with regard to local infrastructure: It's a short trip north along the shoreline from the worst of the existing Caledonia erosion to We Energies' Oak Creek Power Plant.

Our situation isn't at the level of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, or the New York-New Jersey area after Superstorm Sandy in 2012. But with our shoreline erosion crisis, we have an issue which calls for a remedy from an arm of the federal government; in this case, it's the Army Corps of Engineers.

To our fellow federal taxpayers, we say: We helped you then. You must help us now.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

NFPA S Firefighter Fatalities Report Shows 68 On Duty Firefighter Deaths In 2015

By Lorraine Carli

KCSG-TV St. George (UT), June 12, 2016

NATIONAL – The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has released its annual U.S. Firefighter Fatalities report, which showed that a total of 68 firefighters died while on duty in the United States in 2015. This represents the fourth time in the past five years that the total number of deaths has been below 70. The number of deaths of volunteer firefighters was the second lowest total ever reported (32 deaths).

The largest share of firefighter deaths occurred while firefighters were operating at fires (24 deaths), accounting for just over one-third of the on-duty deaths last year. This is the fourth time in the last six years that the total has been fewer than 25 deaths.

"For several years, the number of on-duty firefighter deaths averaged around 100 deaths per year, but recently there's been a fairly consistent decrease in the annual totals," said Rita Fahy, NFPA's manager of fire databases and systems. "The 10-year average has now dropped from approximately 100 firefighter deaths to 81."

Of the 68 firefighter fatalities last year, 32 were volunteer firefighters, 24 were career firefighters, six were employees of federal land management agencies, three were federal contractors, one was an employee of a state land management agency, one was a civilian employee of the military, and one was a state prison inmate.

Overexertion, stress and medical issues accounted for by far the largest share of firefighter deaths. Of the 40 deaths in this category, 35 were classified as sudden cardiac deaths, usually heart attacks, with onset while the victim was on duty. This reflects only one less death than the 2014 total, reinforcing last year's finding, which showed that the general downward trend in on-duty sudden cardiac deaths since 2007 has stopped. Cardiac-related events accounted for 51 percent of the deaths in 2015, and 42 percent of the deaths over the past 10 years.

"While it's encouraging to see an overall decline in the number of firefighter fatalities, areas of concern remain, particularly sudden cardiac deaths," said Fahy. She also noted the significant number of cancer deaths and suicides among current and former firefighters that are not captured in the report that only tracks on-duty deaths.

The firefighter fatality study is made possible by the cooperation and assistance of the United States Fire Service, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program of the Department of Justice, the CDC National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the United States Fire Administration, the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Land Management of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Founded in 1896, NFPA is a global, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach and advocacy; and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission.

For more information visit www.nfpa.org.

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

Officials Pin Hopes On Grant To Cover Long List Of Fire Rescue Needs

By Livi Stanford

Leesburg (FL) Daily Commercial, June 12, 2016

TAVARES — Citing the need to increase manpower, Lake County officials have made it abundantly clear that Lake County Fire Rescue has glaring staffing deficiencies, outdated fire stations and equipment.

There have also been concerns raised about the department's inability to meet National Fire Protection Association standard 1710, a metric calling for the assembly of 15 firefighters to the scene in eight minutes.

A sampling of nine fire reports over the last year in outlying areas shows it takes an average of 36 minutes to assemble 15 firefighters to the scene.

The majority of the 24 fire stations in the county are staffed with just two firefighters on each shift, making it particularly difficult to respond adequately to emergencies in outlying areas such as Pine Lakes, Astor and Sorrento without jeopardizing the safety of firefighters and citizens, according to the local fire union.

But when the county's Public Safety Deputy Director John Molenda presented his budget to county commissioners this week, he did not ask for a budget increase to address those issues. Instead, he presented a status quo budget at $23 million.

County officials, who long spoke of increasing manpower, believe the budget request is adequate at this time because plans are still being ironed out to implement a timeline for funding the fire department's needs.

Those officials say there are missing pieces preventing the completion of that timeline such as: the results of a study to evaluate whether EMS should partner with Lake County Fire Rescue to provide medical transport services in certain geographic areas to improve response times; and whether the county will receive a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant to hire 15 firefighters.

"I think if we don't explore the SAFER grant we are doing an injustice to the taxpayers of Lake County," Commissioner Tim Sullivan said. "It is a wise use of dollars …"

But this means the hiring of more firefighters will not occur for at least another year. The fire department has not received or asked for a budget increase in years, leaving the department limping along with the limited resources they have.

The county has put on hold a plan to replace aging and dilapidated stations and has slowed the purchase of equipment to a trickle because of budget constraints. Half of the firetrucks in service are more than 10 years old, and 27 percent have more than 150,000 miles on them.

But a draft of a strategic plan — obtained through a public records request and written by a committee consisting of three firefighters, three lieutenants, a battalion chief and an assistant chief — lists six goals in order of importance for the department, including staffing, an apparatus replacement plan, operational effectiveness, advanced life support, fire stations and firefighting personal protective equipment.

The committee cites many weaknesses in the department: It is understaffed and underfunded in comparison to other similar fire departments in the Central Florida area; Fire Rescue needs to increase firefighter and paramedic staffing to meet the 26 percent increase in call load; and it is experiencing an increased turnover rate of experienced personnel.

In year one, the committee suggests implementing 24 new firefighter positions, six new lieutenant positions, two new fire inspector positions, three new battalion chief positions and one new division chief of training.

"The staffing has not increased to match the community needs," according to the plan.

Over the years, the county has a history of delaying action on fire stations. Station 90 in Clermont will finally be completed in July after an eight-year wait for firefighters who were staying in the Value Place Hotel off of State Road 50.

Further, in Altoona, the building continues to deteriorate. A portion of the ceiling has fallen through in the last year. A new station was expected to be completed at the end of 2015 but did not occur. Now, four years later, fire officials say they will finally put in a new station.

Lt. Brian Gamble, vice president of the Professional Firefighters of Lake County, said it was certainly disappointing the manpower shortage was not addressed this budget season.

"It seems we are counting on the SAFER grant to go through," he said. "We are all hoping it does."

Even if the grant is approved, it will only meet a fraction of the manpower needs in the department, Gamble said.

County officials bristle at the notion that they are once again delaying improvements in the fire department, stating they have faith the grant will come through.

"We should be able to obtain the grant for much-needed manpower, but if it doesn't come through then we will regroup and address what needs to be done as quickly as possible," Commissioner Leslie Campione said.

Commissioner Sean Parks agreed, stating he was also confident.

But the grant is competitive, according to Danon Lucas, FEMA Region IV external affairs spokesman.

He added for fiscal year 2014 there were "1,335 applications for the $340 million appropriated for the program nationwide." Out of those applicants, 254 were awarded the grant.

What happens if the grant is not approved? Officials are vague on this answer, stating they will weigh different options.

Sullivan said one of those options would be looking at the fire assessment and other revenue sources. County staff recommended this year the assessment remain the same at $175.

But Sullivan also said the fire department is doing well, particularly in receiving an improved Insurance Service Organization rating.

However, that same ISO rating cited problems with water supply and manpower issues.

Public Safety Director Molenda said the department is making progress, particularly in expanding ALS services over a three-year period beginning with fire station 53, Lady Lake and harbors. It is also certifying six firefighters to paramedics.

In addition, he said the department is purchasing property for future fire stations for Lake Yale and the Seminole Springs area.

"The key is appropriating the money and having a timeline when to implement certain steps in the plan along the way," he said.

Asked about why the strategic plan had not been implemented, Molenda said it had yet to be finalized.

Diverse Native Landscapes Are Best Bet For Fire Safety In The East Bay Hills

By Michelle Myers, Director of the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay chapter

East Bay (CA) Times, June 11, 2016

We all cherish the Bay Area's open space and parklands, and it is the Sierra Club's mission to protect these areas for wildlife and public enjoyment. Because the stakes are so high, any changes to how these lands are managed and maintained will understandably raise questions and concerns.

That's the case with an ongoing debate over vegetation management for fire safety in the East Bay hills. But especially when there's so much at stake, it's important to get the facts right.

The Sierra Club has urged FEMA to allow three East Bay agencies – the city of Oakland, the East Bay Regional Park District, and the University of California – to use promised grant money to carry out a well-considered and scientifically approved fire-mitigation plan in our hills.

This preferred strategy entails removing the most highly flammable trees like eucalyptus – in phases, and only in select high-risk areas.

When the most flammable trees are selectively cut and mulched, they rapidly deteriorate and return to the soil. Species like oaks and bays in the eucalyptus understory are preserved during the selective tree removal, and in the restored landscape they can get the sunlight and water they need to thrive.

This restoration process will take place slowly, over time, giving native ecosystems the opportunity to rebound.

Under our preferred approach, many thousands of acres of eucalyptus and other non-natives will remain in the East Bay hills.

Our proposal only covers areas near homes and businesses where a fire would be most costly to lives and property. In fact, removing monoculture eucalyptus groves and providing for the return of native ecosystems will create a much richer landscape than the alternative – the thinning of eucalyptus groves – which requires regularly scraping away the forest floor to remove flammable debris.

Our approach has many benefits, most notably fire prevention and greater biodiversity. Eucalyptuses are among the most flammable trees on Earth.

They are notorious for quickly spreading canopy fires and for releasing flammable gases and long-burning embers; this is what made the Oakland Hills fire of 1991 so devastating. And today's hotter, drier climate means fire is a greater concern than ever.

Native plants, on the other hand, are generally far less of a fire hazard. They also support greater biodiversity. Oak woodlands support the richest wildlife community of any habitat in California – ecosystems estimated to be ten times more diverse than eucalyptus forests.

We also understand and share concerns over broadcasting herbicides. We should always be alert to their misuse and overuse. In this case, herbicides have been proposed as a solution to stopping the rapid regrowth of eucalyptus suckers.

We encourage the land-management agencies to explore all viable, natural solutions. In the event that herbicides are the most effective remedy available, we insist on a full environmental review and the strictest controls to prevent possible negative effects.

Fortunately, work by environmental professionals shows that the careful use of herbicides can assist in the successful restoration of native habitat, whether it be nesting sites for the endangered California least tern along the San Francisco Bay shoreline, or important dune habitats at Point Reyes's Limantour Beach.

The Sierra Club has worked on this issue for 25 years – ever since the Oakland Hills fire of 1991 – and in that time we have listened to all sides and considered a wide range of views.

While cutting down any tree is a painful thing to consider, selective removal and restoration will make our hills safer, more sustainable, and richer in native plants and wildlife.

Read more at www.sierraclub.org/sfbay/hillsfacts.

FIRE GRANTS

Gary Fire Department Looking To Upgrade Equipment

By Ed Bierschenk

Times of Northwest Indiana, June 12, 2016

GARY — Millions of dollars worth of improvements may be made at the Gary Fire Department over the next year.

The fire department recently bought some new ambulances and officials hope over the next year to add several new fire engines and an aerial ladder truck to its inventory, according to Fire Chief Paul Bradley.

The department recently received a $758,044 grant that will be used to buy 133 self-contained breathing apparatus devices, which supply air to firefighters when fighting fires.

The money came from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance of Firefighters Grant program. Bradley said the city is also seeking another grant from that program to buy a new aerial ladder truck, which can cost between $700,000 and $1 million.

The department currently has three trucks in service while one is being overhauled.

"We need to have four in service every day, but you always need to have a spare," Bradley said.

Equipment and personnel shortages have been an issue for some time, but things seem to be improving, according to some observers.

In December 2010, under the administration of former Mayor Rudy Clay, 35 positions were eliminated in the fire department, which went from 236 to 201 firefighters. Firefighters joined police officers in 2014 and again early last year in picketing over inadequate equipment and salaries, which was said to be responsible for personnel leaving for other departments that paid more money.

The city now has 187 firefighters, but raises were approved last year and Lt. Adam Friday, vice president of Gary Firefighters Association Local 359, believes things are improving. In addition to raises that are expected to eventually increase annual salaries by $10,000, Friday said equipment has gotten a lot better.

"It's better, but we have a ways to go," said Friday.

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson said "it's all about dollars and cents."

She said when she came into office "there were some large gaps with equipment. They (the firefighters) were grossly underpaid. So every year we've worked with the chiefs (including past chief Teresa Everett) to find more dollars. But they have also been very active in finding dollars for themselves," she said.

For instance, Bradley said a new company is doing a better job now of collecting fees for ambulance service. The money collected is being used to help get new ambulances.

One of the issues still remaining, according to Friday, is a new fire station to permanently house Station 5 firefighters, who have been working out of temporary quarters for the last several years. Bradley said the city has been approved for federal assistance for a new fire station that will be located in the 4900 block of Pennsylvania Street. He hopes to break ground on it this year. Bradley also said he has improved furnishing at the stations.

Friday said another issue the union and administration are working on has to do with obtaining additional personal protective equipment and additional cleaners for that gear. The equipment helps protect firefighters against hazardous chemicals they might encounter when responding to a call.

Freeman-Wilson also is working with department heads, union officials, and the council to create public safety positions. These employees would be trained to perform both police and firefighting duties to some degree.

Bradley and Freeman-Wilson said it will be up to employees to decide whether they want to apply for these positions. Bradley said some firefighters have expressed interest in the positions.

In addition to paying a higher salary, Bradley said employees might be attracted to the position because of the opportunity to learn new skills.

$900K Federal Grant Will Allow Paulding To Buy New Ladder Fire Truck

Marietta (GA) Daily Journal, June 10, 2016

Paulding's fire department has received a major injection of funds to allow it to buy a new aerial ladder truck without using money from county taxpayers.

Paulding County Fire and Rescue Department announced Thursday it received a federal grant totaling $909,091. The funds, earmarked to purchase a new aerial ladder truck, will help improve emergency response and save lives, department officials said.

"Grants like this are crucial for departments like ours," said Paulding Fire Chief Joey Pelfrey.

"We rely on our firefighters to function on a limited budget to get the job done. This federal grant will allow the men and women of our department to have the most up-to-date, lifesaving equipment without having to make harmful budget cuts or add to local taxes.

"With continued growth in the county this vehicle acquisition will enhance fire suppression and rescue capabilities to the citizens of Paulding. We are extremely happy to have earned this grant, and appreciate the federal government's contribution back to our taxpayers," Pelfrey said.

The funds came form the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters Grant

(AFG) program. They are designed to help communities meet their emergency response needs without placing an additional burden on their local budgets, a news release stated.

U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson said, "This grant is important to the safety and well-being of my constituents in Georgia. Funding will enable the department to purchase an aerial apparatus for its fleet to replace aging equipment and increase the ability to respond to incidents involving taller structures."

The federal grant program awards more than $300 million annually to fire departments and EMS organizations nationwide in an effort to improve public safety and responsiveness in times of emergency.

West Sac Firefighting Grant Aids County Agencies

Woodland (CA) Daily Democrat, June 11, 2016

A consortium of regional fire agencies led by the West Sacramento Fire Department has been awarded a $1.1 million grant through FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters program.

Other cities and agencies that will benefit include Davis, and fire protection districts in Madison, Yolo, Zamora, Esparto, Knight's Landing, West Plainfield, and Elkhorn, and the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.

Grant funds will be used to purchase Self Contained Breathing Apparatus, air compressors, and related equipment that will improve interoperability and firefighter safety throughout the region.

Congresswoman Doris Matsui was instrumental in securing the grant. "Our firefighters are true heroes in our communities, and are so deserving of this great news," said the Congresswoman. "This federal funding will ensure our first responders are supplied with up-to-date equipment and gear as they protect us from fire and other natural disasters, which ultimately strengthens our efforts to keep our entire region safe."

West Sacramento Mayor Christopher Cabaldon said, "It is comforting to know that our front line emergency crews will now be better equipped to protect our community. Thank you to all of our Yolo County partners as well as the OES for assistance in developing the Grant."

Training on the new equipment will be provided by the West Sacramento Fire Department and Davis Fire Department.

TOP STORIES

Mariposa County Fire Department Call Log: May 23

Sierra (CA) Sun Times, June 11, 2016

Monday, May 23 thru Sunday, May 29
EMS – 8
Fires – 1
Public Assists – 1
Auto Collisions – 3

Mariposa County Fire Department supports the county with 14 volunteer stations located throughout the county. If you are 18 years of age and possess a valid CA driver's license, we would love to hear from you! Positions are available for fire, medical, and various support duties. No experience necessary – we will train you! – Please call (209) 966-4330 today for more information!

Safety Tip: Toddler Fire Safety

Children are curious about fire and do not understand the dangers of fire. FEMA shares that new parents and others who care for babies and small children need to pay special attention to fire safety.

Children under age 5 are twice as likely to die in a fire than the rest of us. In fact, toddlers age 3 to 4 actually cause a large number of home fires by playing with lighters and matches. And, when fire breaks out, babies and toddlers can't escape without your help. Practice and teach fire safe behavior in your home.

- Calmly but firmly explain to your child that matches and lighters are tools for adults to use carefully. Teach young children to tell an adult if they see matches or lighters.
- Always store matches and lighters out of children's reach and sight, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Purchase only child-resistant lighters. Remember: no lighter is child proof!
- Never use lighters or matches as a source of amusement. Children may imitate what you do.
- Always supervise young children closely.
- Prevent fires by practicing and teaching fire safe behaviors in your home. Keep children 3 feet away from the stove when cooking, don't overload outlets, have your heating systems checked annually and use deep ashtrays and soak the ashes in water, if you smoke.

Helpful Information from Mariposa County Fire Department

Special Note:

Mariposa County Fire Department would like to remind you of the dangers in leaving children, animals and the elderly in closed vehicle, especially as the weather gets hotter. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a locked car sitting in the summer sun quickly turns into an oven, and temperatures can climb from 78 degrees to 100 degrees in just three minutes, to 125 degrees in 6-8 minutes. Parking in the shade, cracking windows open and tinted windows do not make a difference in the interior temperature of a closed car, according to pediatric researchers.

Kids and Adults are at great risk for heat stroke, which can lead to a high fever, dehydration, seizures, stroke and death. Animals do not sweat so their body temperature heats up quickly making them at risk of overheating (hyperthermia), heatstroke and death. Think that quick trip back into the house to get that forgotten item will be ok?... Think again... Even five minutes locked in a car when it's hot outside endangers children, adults and pets.

PLEASE USE CAUTION!!!

Vegetation fires are preventable if you follow some basic safety rules:

Do your property clearing before 10 A.M.

When driving, if you need to pull off the road, do not park in dry vegetation.

Don't leave candles unattended.

Make sure to properly dispose of all cigarette butts.

And remember, fireworks are illegal throughout Mariposa County year round.

Driving Reminder

Mariposa County Fire Department would like to remind you to limit possible distractions that could take your attention away from driving. When driving at high speeds on our mountain roads it is of the utmost importance you concentrate on the roads, your vehicle and the weather conditions. A distraction of just a split second can be disastrous.

Thank You

Still 1,930 Acres, 44 Percent Contained; Cooler Weather Is A Help

Bend (OR) Bulletin, June 9, 2016

Cooler weather helped firefighters make "solid progress" Thursday on the Akawana Fire burning 13 miles north of Sisters.

The fire on private land protected by the state remained at 1,930 acres and was 44 percent contained, according to a news release Thursday night from the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Burning in grass, brush and timber, the fire moderated and crews were able to fight it right at its edge,

The evacuation level for the Three Rivers area near the blaze was lowered to 1 ("get ready"), but the Forest Park, Air Park and Rim Park subdivisions and outlying properties are still at Level 2 ("get set"). That's a total of 262 structures at level 2, according to the release. No residences have burned.

There were spot fires in a few areas Thursday, but they were quickly contained. Planes and helicopters played a big part in getting the fire further under control, according to the release.

Firefighters plan to mop up hot spots Friday and strengthen fire lines along the northeast corner of the blaze.

The fire caused by a lightning strike was first reported Tuesday afternoon and is named for nearby Akawana Butte.

About 3,000 people live in the area immediately threatened by the fire, which is near Lake Billy Chincook, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is paying some firefighting costs associated with the fire. Most of the homes in the area are secondary homes, although about 250 are primary homes. FEMA approved using federal funds to assist in paying for firefighting costs Wednesday night.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Hilton Head Beach Renourishment Project Comes Summer After Record Tourism Year

By Rebecca Lurye

Hilton Head Island (SC) Packet, June 10, 2016

Each year, Hilton Head Island's calm tides and cool waters attract millions of dollars in tourism. And each year, those same waters cost the island millions of dollars, sweeping at least 150,000 cubic yards of sand out to sea.

This week, likely Wednesday, work will begin on a $20.7 million project to restore much of what Hilton Head has lost since its last beach renourishment in 2007 — about 2.2 million cubic yards of sand along eight miles of shoreline.

It's a rebuild that town officials and hospitality representatives had hoped would start earlier in the year instead of in June, the start of the island's tourism season.

But inclement weather and a backup in the contractor's schedule delayed the February start date. Town engineer Steve Liggett said contractors hope to begin Wednesday, although there is still some flexibility in the schedule.

Most hotels reached for comment this week said they're not worried the project will stymie revenues, which are on track to beat last year's record tourism season.

The most optimistic are those located along Hilton Head's central shoreline, which won't see any work until late August to October.

"I don't doubt we may have another record year again," said Jay Wiendl, general manager of the Sonesta Resort. "The way I look at it is, I can't wait for our Visitor's Convention Bureau to be able to say, 'Come see our new beautiful beaches.' "

Hilton Head saw 2.65 million visitors in 2015, up from nearly 2.62 million the year before.

There were other indicators of a record tourism year in 2015:

- Hotel occupancy rates were up 1.6 percent from 2014 and by a total of 4.6 percent from 2013, according to the University of South Carolina Beaufort Lowcountry and Resort Islands Tourism Institute.
- The hotels' average daily rate also rose by 4.9 percent and by 12.5 percent from 2013.
- Together, those figures gave the island a 17.6 percent jump in revenue per available room between 2013 and 2015.

Those gains translated into big money for the town. Last year, Hilton Head had a record-breaking haul of nearly $3.1 million from its local accommodations tax, which is money collected on overnight lodging from visitors. That's up from about $2.8 million the year before. As of April, the town had already received nearly $2.1 million, up from $1.9 million at the same point last year.

In March, some business owners expressed concerns that the project could hurt tourism. Leaders of Sea Pines Resort, which declined to comment this week, said that it would face a slew of cancellations if the town moved forward with the project in the summer rather than delaying the work until next winter.

Ariana Pernice, vice president of the visitor and convention bureau of the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, said at the time that the project would be a "pretty substantial hit," as the chamber would need to spend five to 10 times more to change someone's mind about a negative experience as it would to attract a new visitor.

While only 1,000 feet of beach is restricted at a time, and the project moves about 300 feet each day, it will be moving through the heel of the island in June and July and through Sea Pines' South Beach from mid-July to mid-August.

Rob Jordan, of the island's biggest employer, SERG Restaurant Group, said he thinks the town was smart to rework the project schedule to avoid the central shoreline during the summer months. And while SERG does not operate any restaurants on the beach, Jordan doubted the island would see fewer visitors because of the months of loud, noisy work.

"I think (visitors will) just move 50 yards down the beach and enjoy the day," Jordan said. "(The rebuild) is important. It's our lifeblood. We'll get through it."

The five-month-long project involves submerging pipelines into underwater sandbars, or shoals, to pump the material onto the beach. Trucks then spread the sand to recreate the shape of the shoreline.

To date, the town has spent about $50 million to renourish and protect its beaches through regular rebuilds. This year's is especially timely, as severe storms last October washed away about 150,000 cubic yards of sand at once.

The lost sediment alone is worth about $1.7 million, and the town hopes to be reimbursed for up to $6-7 million for the total cost of replacing the sand. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is processing Hilton Head's claim that the damage was associated with a declared disaster, Hurricane Joaquin, said town engineer Scott Liggett.

Surveyors have been using high-tech equipment to scan the dredging area for any sub-par sand, such as overly muddy material, or obstacles, including old anchors or shrimp trawler doors and chains.

"We're obviously not trying to dredge up an old ship wreck or something like that," Liggett said.

The project will begin at Mitchelville Beach Park, and the town will post daily updates about the location of the work on its beach renourishment website.

Those who want to walk or bicycle on the beach can access temporary walkways past the dunes once they reach a worksite, Liggett said.

More likely to be impacted than tourists are sea turtles that are in the middle of their nesting and hatching season.

Volunteers with the Hilton Head Island Sea Turtle Protection Project have been on the beach daily since mobilization for the project began and, as of Thursday, have moved about 70 nests out of about 130 nests on the island's beaches, according to Liggett.

"They've been up to their eyeballs with turtle-nesting activities," he said. "It's a very active and demanding time for them."

FLOODS

Obama Approves Federal Money For Flooded Texas Counties

By Staff Report

Houston Chronicle, June 11, 2016

President Barack Obama on Saturday approved a request from Gov. Greg Abbott for federal aid for the Texas counties hardest hit by the latest run of storms that flooded thousands of homes and streets with reckless force.

Obama declared a major federal disaster in the 12 counties, including Brazoria, Fort Bend and Montgomery, where the powerful storms and flooding swamped cars, ruined houses and businesses, washed out roads and snapped trees and power poles.

The president already had declared disasters in many of the same places after flooding in April – an unfortunate fact that Abbott highlighted in his letter requesting another round of federal help.

ON THE MOVE: What newcomers need to know about flooding, flood insurance

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," Abbott said Saturday in a statement. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

The president granted money for sheltering and local and state response costs. Additional money for debris remains on hold as water continues to recede and pending additional damage assessments.

Other counties may be added to the request once they meet the threshold required by the federal government.

With a presidential declaration, people whose homes were damaged or destroyed can apply for a grant up to $33,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The amount will depend on the severity of the reported damage.

In addition to repair costs, some aid can be used for certain medical expenses, funeral costs and damage to clothing or household items, among other losses.

Abbott has declared a disaster state in 46 counties since June 1, but his request for federal aid only covers those with storm-related damage "of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments."

Abbott wrote that the most recent storms, which began May 26, dumped up to 20 inches of rain in parts of Southeast Texas that typically receive between 40 and 50 inches of rain a year.

Brenham alone had 16 inches on the first day of the storms, shattering the Washington County city's one-day rainfall record by more than 6 inches.

At least 20 deaths

To make matters worse, the region has been pounded with heavy rain for weeks, so the ground already was saturated, the rivers, bayous and creeks already brimming. This latest rain had nowhere to settle.

By the time the Brazos River crested June 4 near Rosharon, it was nearly 10 feet above flood stage, the Nation Weather Service said. Officials expected the river to remain out of its banks through at least Wednesday as the high water makes its way to the Gulf of Mexico.

Cypress Creek and the Colorado, San Jacinto and Trinity rivers also reached major flood stages.

The severe storms were blamed for at least 20 deaths, including nine soldiers who were killed when their truck was overturned by swift water near Fort Hood, north of Austin.

READ MORE: Family uses boat to rescue area pets stranded by flood waters

A Montgomery County man, 77, was swept away while walking outside. In Washington County, the body of a 21-year-old Guardsman was found downstream from where his overturned truck had been located earlier.

"Texas is suffering from disaster fatigue," wrote Abbott, who promised to push for federal relief after an aerial tour of flooded areas near Houston a week ago. "There seems to be nowhere safe from the most recent severe weather."

In all, Abbott said the flooding threatened nearly 90,000 homes and forced mandatory evacuations in Bastrop, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Hood, Parker and Wharton counties.

Officials estimated that the flooding destroyed or damaged more than 5,500 houses and nearly 300 businesses.

Montgomery County Judge Craig Doyal said in a statement that he is "very hopeful" that the federal government will move quickly with disaster aid, "given the extent of the damage" from the floods, which ruined nearly 900 homes in the suburban county.

Fort Bend County Judge Robert Hebert said the county was "very pleased" by the governor's request.

"Those folks are going to need all the help they can get," he said.

While a majority of Fort Bend County residents have returned to life as usual as the floodwaters receded this week, Hebert said as many as 30,000 people are continuing to confront the aftermath of "real disaster."

The county reported damage to more than 1,200 homes. There also was roughly $14 million in damage to roads, bridges and water systems, "and that number will only grow," Hebert said.

Water receding

In Brazoria County, the flooding has affected at least 100,000 residents, or roughly one-third of its population, officials said. Floodwaters inundated or cut off hundreds of homes in a slow rise that spread from near Rosharon to Lake Jackson.

The water continued to recede Friday, but officials expected levels to remain high in the south county for days.

"There are areas that are going to have water for several days," said Sharon Trower, spokeswoman for Brazoria County's Office of Emergency Management. "Weeks, possibly."

Harvey Rice and Emily Foxhall contributed to this report.

Obama OKs Disaster Aid For 12 Texas Counties

By Brian Rogers

Houston Chronicle, June 11, 2016

President Barack Obama on Saturday approved a request from Gov. Greg Abbott for federal aid to the Texas counties hardest hit by the latest run of storms that flooded thousands of homes.

Obama declared a major federal disaster in 12 counties, including Brazoria, Fort Bend and Montgomery, where powerful storms washed away cars, swamped houses and businesses and flooded roads.

"It's needed. We've seen widespread devastation," said Brazoria County Judge Matt Sebesta. "There's going to be millions of dollars, and probably hundreds of millions of dollars, in damage."

Sebesta said the process to determine which homes, businesses and roads are seriously damaged, and how much it will take to fix them, will take months.

The president already had declared disasters in many of the same places after flooding in April – an unfortunate fact that Abbott highlighted in his letter requesting another round of federal help.

"Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face, and this time will be no different," Abbott said Saturday in a statement. "With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Other counties may be added to the request for assistance once they meet the threshold required by the federal government to request federal disaster aid, Abbott said.

With a presidential declaration, people whose homes were damaged or destroyed can apply for a grant up to $33,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The amount will depend on the severity of the damage.

In addition to repairs, some money can be used for certain medical expenses, funeral costs and damage to clothing or household items, among other losses.

Abbott has declared a disaster state in 46 counties since June 1, but his request for federal aid only covers those with storm-related damage "of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments."

Abbott wrote that the most recent storms, which began May 26, dumped up to 20 inches of rain in parts of Southeast Texas that typically receive between 40 and 50 inches of rain a year.

Authorities estimated that the flooding destroyed or damaged more than 5,500 houses and nearly 300 businesses. The severe storms were blamed for at least 20 deaths.

In addition to the large counties around Houston, the other counties that will benefit are Austin, Brazos, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington. Harris County was not included in the request for federal dollars.

Abbott Seeks Federal Aid For Recent Storms, Flooding

By Matthew Tresaugue

Houston Chronicle, June 10, 2016

Gov. Greg Abbott is seeking federal aid for the Texas counties hardest hit by the latest run of storms that flooded thousands of homes and streets with reckless force.

In a letter dated Thursday, Abbott asked President Obama to declare a major federal disaster in 12 counties, including Brazoria, Fort Bend and Montgomery, where the powerful storms and flooding swamped cars, ruined houses and businesses, washed out roads and ripped apart trees.

The other counties earmarked by Abbott are Austin, Brazos, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington.

The governor's action is a necessary first step before Obama decides whether to release funds to the counties as they clean up from the storms. U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady tweeted that the state's congressional delegation had written Obama in support of Abbott's request. Officials said they expect a decision within days.

The president already had declared disasters in many of the same places after major flooding in April — an unfortunate fact that Abbott highlighted in his letter requesting more federal help. Major storms and flooding have hammered the Houston area on the last two Memorial Day weekends.

"The last year has taken a terrible toll on the people and the property of this state," he wrote Thursday. "Texans are resilient, but few can recover without assistance when disaster after disaster hits in the middle of recovery."

With a presidential declaration, people whose homes were damaged or destroyed can apply for a grant of up to $33,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The amount will depend on the severity of the reported damage.

In addition to repair costs, some aid can be used for certain medical expenses, funeral costs and damage to clothing or household items, among other losses.

Although Abbott has declared a disaster in 46 counties since June 1, his request for federal aid only covers those with storm-related damage "of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments."

Abbott wrote that the most recent storms, which began May 26, dumped up to 20 inches of rain in parts of Southeast Texas that typically receive 40 to 50 inches of rain a year.

Brenham alone had 16 inches on the first day of the storms, shattering the Washington County city's one-day rainfall record by more than 6 inches.

To make matters worse, the region had been pounded with heavy rain for weeks, so the ground already was saturated, the rivers, bayous and creeks already brimming. This latest rain had nowhere to settle.

The severe storms were blamed for at least 20 deaths, including nine soldiers who were killed when their truck was overturned by swift water near Fort Hood, north of Austin.

President Grants Disaster Request For All Counties Affected By Flooding

Houston Community Newspapers, June 11, 2016

The President today granted Governor Greg Abbott's federal disaster request for individual assistance for all 12 counties affected by the recent flooding, including: Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington.

Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) for local and state response costs and sheltering was also granted. Category A (Debris) remains on hold as water continues to recede, and pending additional damage assessments.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," said Governor Abbott. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Additional counties may be added to the Governor's request for assistance once they meet the threshold required by the federal government to request federal disaster aid.

Texas Congressional Delegation Asks Obama To Declare Flood Disaster For Second Time Since April

By Stephen Green

Houston Community Newspapers, June 11, 2016

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and 25 Texas members of Congress are asking President Barack Obama to issue a disaster declaration to help residents affected by the late May and early June floods.

Abbott sent in his request to the White House Thursday; and, led by U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady, R-The Woodlands, the delegation of congressmen followed up with a bipartisan letter.

"This month's severe weather and flooding devastated the properties and lives of thousands of Texans across the state," Abbott said in a statement. "Today's disaster declaration is the first step in helping these Texans rebuild their lives. Texans are resilient by nature, and with the proper resources, we will together overcome the challenges we face."

If Obama gives his OK, residents of Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington counties could be eligible for Individual

Assistance grants of up to $33,000 from the federal government, and low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

"We write to express support for Governor Abbott's request for a major disaster declaration on behalf of Texas counties impacted by severe storms and flooding beginning on May 26, 2016," the congressional delegation wrote in its letter. "These storms caused widespread flooding and damage to numerous areas including many impacted by the Tax Day floods just over one month ago.

"Texas has experienced six major disasters over the past 13 months, including three major flood events this year. These most recent storms occurred just as many of our local communities and residents were beginning the recovery process from the Tax Day floods. Residents, emergency responders, local governments and volunteer agencies have shown tremendous fortitude in their response; however, the seemingly continual storms and flooding have taken their toll. The continued response and long-term recovery from this round of storms will require federal assistance."

More than 800 homes, including 20 businesses, were damaged or destroyed in the recent bout of flooding — by far eclipsing the damage from April's storms, according to Montgomery County Judge Craig Doyal.

FEMA officials toured flood-damaged homes in Montgomery County Monday, a key step toward clearing the way for a federal disaster declaration and the federal aid that would flow to residents, Doyal stated in a release Monday afternoon.

"Given the extent of the damage from May's floods, I am very hopeful that the federal government moves quickly to support a disaster declaration for the county," Doyal stated.

According to data from the National Weather Service, some areas of the county received more than 20 inches of rain between May 26 and June 6. The average annual rainfall for Conroe is 48 inches.

The storms led to more than 200 water rescues, downed trees in homes, and a tornado. At one point, more than 35,000 residents were without power, due to destroyed power lines from high winds, until Sunday, May 29.

Doyal signed a disaster declaration for Montgomery County May 27 — the second such declaration in two months. Abbott issued his declaration soon after.

12 Texas Counties Granted Federal Disaster Declaration After...

KPRC-TV Houston, June 11, 2016

HOUSTON – President Barack Obama granted Governor Greg Abbott's federal disaster request for Individual Assistance for all 12 counties affected by the recent flooding, including: Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington.

Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) for local and state response costs and sheltering was also granted. Category A (Debris) remains on hold as water continues to recede, and pending additional damage assessments.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," Abbott said.

"Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Federal Disaster Declaration Granted For Texas Counties

KTVT-TV Dallas, June 11, 2016

AUSTIN (CBSDFW.COM) – President Barack Obama granted Governor Greg Abbott's federal disaster request Saturday for assistance in 12 counties that were affected by recent flooding.

The counties affected are Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington.

Public Assistance Category B, which are emergency protective measures, for local and state response costs and sheltering were also granted.

Category A, which is debris assistance, remains on hold as water continues to recede and damage is assessed.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," said Governor Abbott. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Additional counties may be added to Governor

Abbott's disaster request once they met the threshold required by the federal government to request aid.

Federal Disaster Declaration Granted For Travis, Other Texas Counties

Austin (TX) American Statesman, June 12, 2016

President Barack Obama approved on Saturday Gov. Greg Abbott's request seeking federal assistance and funding for a dozen Texas counties, including Travis, that suffered from flooding and other damage during recent storms.

Abbott asked Obama for a federal disaster declaration Thursday.

The preisdent granted individual assistance for 12 counties affected by the recent flooding, including: Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington, according to a media release from the governor's office.

Assistance for local and state response costs and sheltering was also granted, which is classified as Public Assistance Category B for Emergency Protective Measures, officials said. Category A, for debris, remains on hold pending additional damage assessments as water continues to recede, officials said.

"I would like to thank the president and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," said Abbott in the statement. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Additional counties may be added to the governor's request for assistance once they meet the threshold required by the federal government to request federal disaster aid, officials said.

President Grants Disaster Request For 12 Texas Counties

By Nadine Bonewitz

KXAN-TV Austin (TX), June 11, 2016

AUSTIN (KXAN) — President Obama granted a federal disaster request for all 12 counties affected by recent floods on Saturday.

Individual assistance will be available to flood victims in Travis County, along with Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Waller and Washington counties.

The federal funding will also cover local and state response costs and sheltering. Funding to help with debris remains on hold as water continues to recede. The grant could be approved after damages are assessed.

Governor Greg Abbott said in a statement that he was thankful to the President and to FEMA for quickly responding to the needs of Texas flood victims.

"Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different," he said. "With this latest development Texas can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Additional counties could be added to the disaster request once they meet the federal requirements needed to request for aid.

Federal Disaster Declaration Granted For 12 Texas Counties

KHOU-TV Houston, June 11, 2016

On Saturday, President Barack Obama granted Texas Governor Greg Abbott's federal disaster declaration request for all 12 counties affected by recent flooding.

Those counties include Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," Governor Abbott said in a statement. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) for local and state response costs and sheltering was also granted by President Obama.

Category A (Debris) remains on hold as water continues to recede and pending additional damage assessments.

Other counties may be added to the request for assistance once they meet the threshold required by the federal government to request federal disaster aid.

The Brazos River Flood Recovery Center is the central hub for flood victims seeking immediate help. It's located at BF Terry High School in Rosenberg. It will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. everyday until July 3rd.

Texas Counties Granted Federal Funds After Recent Floods

KEYE-TV Austin (TX), June 11, 2016

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Obama has granted Texas Governor Abbott's federal disaster request for assistance to all 12 counties affected by flooding.

The counties named in the federal disaster request were Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington County.

Emergency protecting actions for local and state response costs were also funded.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," said Governor Abbott. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Obama Declares State Of Disaster For 12 Texas Counties

Bryan College Station (TX) Eagle, June 12, 2016

HOUSTON — President Barack Obama has declared a major disaster in 12 Texas counties — including Brazos, Grimes and Washington — that suffered severe flooding last month during heavy rainfall.

The declaration, approved on Saturday, also covers Austin, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, and Waller counties.

It enables residents to receive federal grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover.

The declaration also approved funding for local and state response costs and sheltering.

According to Brazos County officials, those affected by the storm can register for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency by calling 1-800-621-3362 or visiting www.disasterassistance.gov. Those who have already registered with FEMA do not need to register again.

FEMA inspectors will begin making appointments with residents that applied for assistance after insurance documentation is submitted, according to Michele Meade, Brazos County emergency management coordinator. When an applicant registers with FEMA and becomes eligible for a damaged housing inspection, a FEMA inspector contacts the applicant to set up an appointment and reviews what documentation is required, officials said.

Texas Task Force 1 and the Texas Military Department made 1,444 evacuations statewide, 40 rescues, 520 acts of assistance and victim recovery, 618 welfare checks and hundreds of animal rescues, a press release from State Rep. John Raney's office sent earlier this week stated. In Brazos County, five homes were determined to be destroyed, according to the American Red Cross, and more than 100 suffered major damage.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott thanked Obama and said the declaration lets Texans "begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Abbott says more counties could be added to the declaration if a threshold requirement is met.

Subdivision Never Flooded, Until It Did, And Residents Want Answers

By Mike Tolson

Houston Chronicle, June 11, 2016

Something was wrong – that was obvious to everyone who looked at the flooded streets around them. For most of the morning, water had steadily flowed toward the creek behind the neighborhood, as it had done after countless other storms. Now it was going the other way. And rising.

Hank Rennar stood on his corner lot in the Stable Gate subdivision in Cypress and knew they were in trouble. Neither Rennar nor his neighbors had seen anything like it. Cars parked at the bottom of driveways were doomed by the suddenly about-face muddy torrent.

A day that had begun with the promise of brighter skies and no more rain was about to turn into a frantic rush to shut off the power, find the family photos, move the antiques, locate the pets. Within the hour, Rennar was standing in water over his ankles. Down the street and across the way, some had it worse, with water rising to several feet. By the time the so-called Tax Day Flood was over, about 90 percent of the community's 250 or so homes had flooded.

Like residents across the western third of the county, those in Stable Gate view their lives – and the place they call home – a bit differently after the events of April 18. Occasional heavy rains may be a given in Greater Houston, flat and bathed in moist Gulf air, but to see widespread flooding in newer precincts, supposedly built to modern drainage standards and with keen awareness of geographic vulnerability, was shocking.

Angry flood victims pointed fingers at the generic "upstream," not buying official explanations of an unforeseeable, extreme rain event. For the first time, people were suspicious of the boomtown growth mania they had long taken for granted. Developers had cut corners, they insisted. And those charged with overseeing them must have just rubber-stamped their plans, they said.

Another twist of the knife came about five weeks later. On the Friday evening leading into Memorial Day weekend, the skies let loose once more. Cypress Creek flooded – again – and Little Cypress as well. A number of Stable Gate residents who were in the middle of repairs saw water return to their homes. So did some of the neighborhoods to the south.

Asking questions

The head of the Stable Gate homeowners association, Greg Bowen, summarized the fear that now pervades communities that previously had been preoccupied with traffic congestion and school taxes.

"You know something is wrong when sewage is coming out of your shower drain," Bowen said. "This is an ongoing condition. Unless the county does something, this will keep happening."

But what something?

"I have no idea," he said. "Until somebody steps up, all I can think of doing is to keep asking questions."

The answers, of course, likely will not satisfy him, his neighbors, or much of Harris County for that matter. They complain that phone calls to elected representatives and relevant agencies may yield expressions of sympathy but little more. If there is anything like a consensus among flood victims, it's that government at every level does not consider their problems a priority once the waters recede.

Built 15 years ago, Stable Gate is a relatively small, modestly aspirational upper-middle-class neighborhood off Telge Road, home to a healthy contingent of baby boomers for whom the large, two-story homes represent a lifetime of hard work. For many of them, such as travel business owner Tina Hearn, it figured to be the last house they would own. Now they say they couldn't sell if they wanted to, certainly not for the appraised values, which typically exceed $400,000.

"Everything I worked for in my whole life is in this house," said Hearn, whose home flooded a second time last month. "We moved here from Baytown because we were concerned about hurricanes. We never dreamed a rainstorm could come in and take it all away."

All it took was a single night of rain, pounding and relentless, for the entire Little Cypress Creek watershed to be overwhelmed. Massive rainfall upstream slowly made its way down the narrow floodway to the southeast, where the creek eventually connects with its bigger brother, Cypress Creek. As it did, water flowing into it from a variety of sources, including Stable Gate's pipes and ditch, had no outlet. Seeking equilibrium, it spread out and in some cases pushed back in the direction from which it had come.

It's as simple as that, says the Harris County Flood Control District: too much rain. More, in fact, than the agency had ever recorded at any of its rain gauges in the Little Cypress watershed back to 1989, when it started keeping track.

"I know that's not what the residents want to hear," said Matt Zeve, chief operations officer for the agency and a drainage engineer by trade. "But our design criteria is the 100-year flood."

The record rainfall, which exceeded 15 inches in some places, was felt through much of west and northwest Harris County and surpassed even once-a-century expectations. The result was more than 7,000 flooded homes and plenty of stunned residents who never figured they had a water problem, only to spend the next few days ripping out waterlogged carpet and tearing out saturated drywall. Some of them were in so-called 100-year floodplains, some in 500.

Not all of the flood victims are ready to accept Zeve's simple explanation. Instead, they see the crazy quilt of the county's western development – booming for more than two decades – as the likelier culprit. In Stable Gate, the second storm convinced them that the combined effect of runoff from newer construction, including new highways, may not be fully understood.

"It is the freaking flood that keeps happening in Cypress," said Hearn, who said rising water got close to her home on two earlier occasions. "There is not enough retention and detention ponds around this area, and they keep building more and more concrete. Telge Road gets completely flooded when it rains hard. It never used to be."

'No rise' policy

Unlike Tax Day, the May deluge was not off the charts. According to a report compiled by the flood control district, rainfall amounts in the Little Cypress watershed, while far above normal, for the most part were well under 10 inches. That provided ammunition to Stable Gate residents who claim that something has changed over the years, whether because of the completion of a section of the Grand Parkway immediately to the north, or from the construction of newer subdivisions around them.

Zeve, however, insists development in the watershed should not make a difference. The district has a strict "no rise" policy, meaning developers cannot build in a way that pushes more water into creeks and bayous than went there when the land was undeveloped. All construction plans are reviewed to make sure drainage elements are adequate to ensure that, he said.

While sympathetic to calls for new detention basins that could protect downstream residents, Zeve said there is nothing that can be done along the lower stretches of Little Cypress Creek because all the property adjacent to it is fully developed. Instead, he said, the flood control district is concentrating on the creek's upper reaches, where its "frontier program" calls for regional detention facilities to be built to keep storm runoff from rapidly entering the creek.

"We have no plans to modify or make changes to Little Cypress Creek," he said, pointing out that adjacent communities would vigorously fight any attempt to remove trees or deepen the channel even if the district wanted to.

As for Stable Gate, if water is intruding into the neighborhood because of inadequate drainage ditches along Telge Road or because of some feature belonging to a nearby subdivision, that is not the flood control district's responsibility, Zeve said. Its concern is limited to the water in the creeks and bayous and how development may affect that. His review of the neighborhood's original construction plans found nothing irregular, he said.

The head of the flood control district, Mike Talbott, has said that problems in some areas reflect engineering strategies made many decades ago. A comprehensive solution to ongoing flooding woes would require major building and widening projects as well as buyout programs, he said.

The current flood control system was not designed to handle the infrequent "monster" storm, he said. The consequence of not building in excess capacity, especially as growth intensified and density increased, was ever-more-expensive and damaging floods.

"A lot of engineering was done before people understood the risks," Talbott said, pointing to the countless residencies that sit uncomfortably close to floodways.

Re-engineering it to a higher standard might cost $26 billion, he said.

Devising own solutions

In other words, nothing is going to change anytime soon. After the April floods, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner appointed Steve Costello, a former city council member, as his flooding "czar." Costello acknowledged straightaway he had no idea what the job entailed or what authority, if any, he would have. With a background in residential development, the engineer by trade has said that a reflexive desire to blame new, upstream development, while understandable, fails to appreciate the complicated nature of storm runoff in a relatively flat environment.

As neighborhoods in Houston and surrounding areas are learning, it may be for the residents themselves to devise solutions. Stable Gate, for example, could deepen its drainage ditch, install gates to prevent water from flowing back through the storm drains, or build its own detention pond on 26 wooded acres it owns at the back of the neighborhood.

Environmental lawyer Charles Irvine, who frequently consults with neighborhoods on flooding matters, senses rising frustration across the area and foresees a likely increase of improvised solutions such as "decorative" garden walls that may serve as mini-levees when waters rise. He faults those in leadership, including the flood control district, for not embracing the need for a more assertive approach to dealing with apparent weaknesses in the system, especially in those areas that recently have begun to flood but don't have a history of doing so.

"When you have 6 or 8 inches of rain, you cannot always use the excuse of excessive rain amounts," Irvine said. "What people want is honesty and transparency, not silence and willful blindness."

Irvine said the regulations imposed on new development need to be enhanced in light of more – and more intense – storm systems. Likewise the mandatory review of construction plans should be much more rigorous, he said. He said his own reviews of such plans have revealed shoddy data, dubious hydrological modeling, and countless simple and "horrific" mistakes that somehow never were corrected.

What Irvine argues for most vigorously is a change in attitude. He believes local residents are willing to pass bond projects and endorse stricter controls if the payoff is a significantly more robust system of flood control.

"Why is it unreasonable to spend $10 billion on a flood control project when one flood alone causes $5 billion in damage?" he said.

Ever fearful

In Stable Gate, homeowners are confused and ticked off. They sense that something has changed with respect to local drainage patterns, but unless they hire an engineering firm to analyze their problems, they are not likely to get answers beyond what they already know: Houston is flat; it can rain a lot; the watersheds cannot handle all the runoff.

Rennar and his wife, like most of his neighbors, are dealing with contractors on a daily basis as they try to get about $50,000 worth of repairs completed. If they were confident it was a unique event, unlikely to be rivaled anytime soon, the unpleasantness would be easier to tolerate. But every time the skies get cloudy and it looks like rain, they wonder whether the repairs will have been made in vain.

Tucked away in the trees, close to trails that run along a creek that they believed rarely flooded in a serious way, Stable Gate residents had exactly what they wanted – reasonable solitude in an urban environment and a small community that actually felt like one, where neighbors were friendly and looked after each other.

Hearn, who had left her longtime Baytown home in search of security, said Stable Gate "just looked like home" as soon as she passed through the front gates. Rennar seconds her opinion, saying he thought it was a "perfect place" that offered an antidote to road congestion and urban hurly-burly.

"We thought we had discovered a little paradise," he said. "I guess not."

Impact Of Flood Still Being Assessed After 'Five Lake Granbury's' Of Rain, Deemed 'Extremely Dangerous' By BRA

By Kelsey Poynor

Glen Rose (TX) Reporter, June 9, 2016

GLEN ROSE- Approximately 205 billion gallons is enough to fill Lake Granbury five times.

It is also the estimated amount of rainfall that fell during last week's historic flooding around Somervell, Hood and Erath counties, according to officials with the Brazos River Authority.

A spokesperson for the BRA estimated that enough rain fell to fill the lake – which according to Waterdatafortexas.org has a maximum capacity of 125,756 acre-feet – just north of Somervell County five times. A simple conversion with the help of a conversion table brings the estimated total rainfall to a mind-boggling 204,888,860,269.06003 gallons of water.

Because of last week's historic flooding, homes, businesses and families are now facing a time of trouble – both big and small.

Outside of Gov. Greg Abbott's declaration of 46 counties to be in a state of emergency – up 15 from the original June 1 declaration and now includes Somervell County, representatives of the BRA, Somervell County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Coordination Dwayne Griffin, and county residents recently gave their re-cap of the week-long rain.

US Senator Ted Cruz also endorsed Abbott's efforts earlier this week during a speech while on the US Senate floor.

Brazos River Authority, 'It is extremely dangerous'

Judy Pierce from the Brazos River Authority reported the De Cordova Bend Dam of Lake Granbury would still need to release water at a higher-than-usual rate over the next several days, but the release during last week's rain was jaw dropping

"The most the dam let out was at one point was 69,900 CFS," Pierce said. "It stayed there for about a two hour time period and then it came back down pretty quickly. It was the fourth largest amount of water we've released at one time."

"From May 27 to June 7 the total volume of water released was about 650,000 acre-feet," Pierce noted. "Releases are expected to continue the next couple of days where we currently are at. For every day we're releasing about 40,000 acre-feet a day."

According to Price, the gauge located in the Somervell County portion of the Brazos River crested on the morning of Friday, June 3, and it was then that the river entered into the category of a major flood stage.

"After cresting, it immediately moved down. On average, the gauge is 7 feet deep and at the peak of the flooding on June 3 the depth of the water was 35.3 feet," Price explained. "It was about 28 feet deeper than it normally would be."

On June 4 around noon the gauge hit it's lowest part of the action stage and on June 7 at 1PM it measured in at 20.5 feet, which is below the action stage, according to the BRA.

"The action stage is a period designated at what appears to be approximately 25 feet," Pierce added. "What it is made for is to give people time going into a flood situation to have time to move cattle and equipment that might be in the floodplain zone around the river. It is out of that stage now and is predicted to stay at this stage now through the weekend."

Pierce advises for those who may want to brave the cool waters this weekend to stay off the Brazos, and other rivers and lakes, until the water has time to return to normal levels.

"It is going at about 23,000 [cubic feet per second] right now and I know that most tube rental places in Glen Rose cut [rentals] off at about 3,000 CFS," Pierce said. "It is extremely dangerous."

Griffin updates conditions of Somervell County

Somervell County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Coordinator Dwayne Griffin reported that there were indeed a few areas of the county that sustained major flood damage over the five-day period from June 3-7.

"County Road 1008 was damaged quite severely out on the 5000 block, it got scoured down to the road base," Griffin said. "County Road 1007 had a couple of areas that got tore up also. CR 413 had road damage that occurred down the sides of the road."

According to one county official, roughly 98% of all roads in Somervell County are paved. While this is normally a benefit a vast majority of the time, conditions such as those experienced last week can leave those roads in dire need of repair.

Not only were there roads damaged, but also there was also confirmed damage to a bridge at Squaw Valley Golf Course and the river walk along the Paluxy River a few blocks off the downtown Glen Rose square.

"The golf course lost a bridge and the city had a major loss with the river walk," Griffin said. "It got tore up a lot. As far as I know, those are the only ones that have sustained major damage. However, there are other roads here and there that are beginning to show signs of water damage."

According to Griffin, once a full report is created for the flood damage it will be sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Since the county was under a state of emergency, FEMA should cover up-to-75 percent of the total damage costs, Griffin noted.

"Right now we're just discussing what we're going to do with the golf course bridge, Griffin said. "The bridge itself is used for utility for moving their equipment back and forth. If we get some FEMA money, we may be moving it to higher ground to where it won't get washed out again."

A full report of personal property loss was not available as of press time.

20 years and it's 'never been this high'

Roughly three miles from the historic Glen Rose downtown square, Cedars on the Brazos Bed and Breakfast is located quite a bit closer to the bank of the Brazos River than it was last week.

The owner, Janice Lewis, who also lives in the bed and breakfast with her husband, has yet to see anything like this flood while residing on the property.

"We bought the land in 1997, it's been almost 20 years, and I have never seen the water as high as it is right now," Lewis said

The bed and breakfast opened 16 years ago. The cabin the bed and breakfast is in has no damage, but an area on the bank of the river that many baptisms and other events have taken place is now underwater.

According to Lewis some of the picnic tables, benches and chairs were washed away and whatever items were left are now submerged in water.

"Most of the old-timers here in Glen Rose know this property 'the garden spot,'" Lewis said. "It's a lower area that we call 'the meadow.' It has never had water in it and now it is flooding."

Sen. Cruz backs flood recovery efforts

The reach of pleas for assistance has gone beyond those immediately affected. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz delivered a speech Tuesday, June 7 on the Senate floor, where he pledged to work closely with state and local government officials to ensure a speedy recovery, backed Gov. Greg Abbott's for federal assistance to help those affected, and asked for condolences to be sent to the 16 families who lost a loved one – which included nine soldiers stationed at Fort Hood – during the historic flooding.

"Mr. President, my home state of Texas is strong and resilient. Texans aren't people who tire easily, and we certainly don't give up when the going gets tough," Cruz said. "But that doesn't mean that the State of Texas hasn't faced its share of adversity. Over the last few weeks, the resolve of our great state has been tested with historic flooding that has taken at least 16 lives across Texas.

"[...] Heidi and I right now, along with millions of Americans, are lifting up in prayer those Texans who have lost their lives, who have lost their homes, the families that are suffering due to this flooding," Cruz added.

"And we're also lifting up the first responders who so bravely risk everything to keep us safe. In particular, I want to take a moment to praise the Red Cross," the former GOP presidential candidate continued. "I had the privilege yesterday of speaking with the CEO of the Red Cross to thank them directly for their efforts on the ground – helping people who are suffering, helping people who have lost their home, who are struggling. And you know, she and I shared what we've seen in tragedy after tragedy after tragedy, which is in the face of disaster, in the face of adversity, Texans and Americans come together.

"[...] As the water continues to recede and the wreckage is being cleared, my office will continue to work very closely with local and state government officials, along with the entire Texas delegation, to help ensure a smooth recovery process, including offering, as I already have, my full support and assistance when Gov. Abbott requests federal aid for those afflicted by this disaster," Cruz concluded. "And while Texas continues to rebound from these torrential floods, our nation is also flooded with circumstances that require the very same strength and resolve that we face in the face of tragedy."

Cruz took time during his speech to individually thank and pay remembrance to the nine Fort Hood soldiers who tragically lost their lives when their truck overturned into a flooded creek. Those nine included Spc. Yingming Sun, Staff Sgt. Miguel Angel Colonvazquez, Spc. Christine Faith Armstrong, Pfc. Brandon Austin Banner, Pfc. Zachery Nathaniel Fuller, Pvt. Isaac Lee Deleon, Pvt. Eddy Raelaurin Gates, Pvt. Tysheena Lynette James, and Cadet Mitchell Alexander Winey.

Fort Bend Officials Implementing Long-term Recovery Efforts

Houston Community Newspapers, June 11, 2016

Fort Bend County officials are planning long-term flood recovery efforts and have begun coordinating with the county departments and voluntary agencies involved In recovery. Personnel are currently conducting flood damage assessments and evaluating closed roads as water levels recede. Numerous previously closed roadways have reopened.

Contractors will be picking up debris starting Monday, June 13 through Friday, June 24.

Residents are encouraged to separate debris by kind and pile as close to the road as possible without impeding traffic or blocking fire hydrants and meters.

Please do not relocate deceased animals to roadways, they will not be retrieved. Fort Bend County has a strategic plan in place to address environmental hazards during the recovery process. For further information about the handling of debris, including deceased animals, please call the Emergency Operations Center at 281-342-6185.

Household trash service has resumed in most areas however residents are encouraged to contact their provider to ensure service has resumed.

Residents may apply for FEMA assistance at www.disasterassistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-3362. Residents requiring immediate assistance with disaster clean-up should call the Clean Up Assistance hotline at 1-800-451-1954. Residents unaffected by the floods and wishing to volunteer may visit the Brazos River Flood Multi-Agency Recovery Center located at BF Terry High School in Rosenberg.

Donation receiving and distribution sites have been established throughout the county and monetary donations are currently being managed by the American Red Cross. Residents and businesses wishing to donate manpower, money, or materials should reference the "How can I help?" page on the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management's website or by calling the Emergency Operations Center at 281-342-6185.

For more information about what to do next, how to get help, or how to offer help, plus the most accurate and up to date flood and recovery information, please visit fbcoem.org website or call 281-342-6185.

The Next Step: Recovery

Fort Bend (TX) Herald, June 10, 2016

The Memorial Day flood devastated West Fort Bend County.

Water engulfed homes, parks, roadways, and farm land.

It destroyed property, killed animals and forever changed lives.

The river has finally fallen below flood stage and the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg are attempting to get back to normal.

The community is doing its part. The American Red Cross is set up at B.F. Terry High School. Numerous groups have sprung up to help those in need and those helping with recovery: Fort Bend Strong, Rosenberg-Richmond Helping and Hands, Inc.

The next step for residents who were affected by the flood is debris pickup and Federal Emergency Management Agency assistant pre-registration.

The Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management has outlined the guidelines for collecting flood debris into specific categories: normal household waste, vegetative, construction/demolition, appliances, electronics, and hazardous waste debris.

Construction and demolition materials include building materials, carpet, drywall, furniture, lumber, mattresses and plumbing.

Household hazardous waste debris includes cleaning supplies, batteries, lawn chemicals, oils, oil-based paints and stains and pesticides.

Make sure to put debris as close to the curb as possible without blocking the sidewalk or lean on trees, poles or other structures including fire hydrants and meters.

OEM announced that debris pick-up will begin on Monday and run through June 24. Normal household trash pickup has already started for most areas.

FEMA per-registration will help speed the process for federal assistance when the federal government stops dragging its feet on the disaster declaration.

Residents can pre-register at with FEMA at www.disasterassistance.gov or call 800-621-3362. Fill out the residential report form at www.fbcoem.org.

FEMA was quick to step in for the Tax Day Floods in April, but for some reason has taken over two weeks to help with the even more destructive Memorial Day flooding.

But there's no need to sulk about it. Instead, take the next step to getting back to normal.

Texans Have Only A Few Days Left To Register For Disaster Assistance For April Storms

Eastex (TX) Advocate, June 10, 2016

Texans who suffered damage or loss from the April storms and flooding in 12 counties have only until Friday, June 24, to register for FEMA disaster assistance.

Assistance can include money for rental assistance, essential home repairs, personal property loss and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

Texans with disaster-related damage or loss from the April 17-24 storms may be eligible for assistance if they live or work in the following 12 counties: Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Fort Bend, Grimes, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, Parker, San Jacinto, Waller and Wharton.

Texans can register the following ways:

- online at DisasterAssistance.gov
- by phone at 800-621-3362 (FEMA). Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. Applicants who use 711 or Video Relay Service may also call 800-621-3362. The toll-free numbers are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Multilingual operators are available.

FEMA grants do not have to be repaid. FEMA assistance is nontaxable and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits.

Survivors should register even if they have insurance. FEMA cannot duplicate insurance payments, but underinsured applicants may receive help after their claims have been settled.

Tax Resources For Disaster Victims; Special Webinar June 30

Gilmer (TX) Mirror, June 10, 2016

DALLAS – The tax law may help you recover financially from a disaster, especially if you are located in a presidentially declared major disaster area. Depending on the circumstances, the IRS may give you additional time to file your return and pay taxes. Also, individuals and businesses in a presidentially declared disaster area can get a faster refund by claiming losses related to the disaster on the previous year's tax return, usually by filing an amended return.

A federally declared disaster is a disaster that took place in an area declared by the President to be eligible for federal assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. A list of areas warranting public or individual assistance (or both) is available at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) web site at www.fema.gov.

"Reconstructing records after they were lost or destroyed in a disaster may be vital for tax purposes, getting federal assistance or insurance reimbursement," said Clay Sanford, an IRS spokesman in Dallas. "You may need to reconstruct your records to prove you have a casualty loss and the amount of the loss."

You can file IRS Form 4506, "Request for Copy of Tax Return," to request copies of the previous four years of income tax returns. If you need additional federal tax forms or publications, there are several ways you can obtain them. You can download forms fromwww.irs.gov. You can also order forms or publications at no cost by calling 1-800-829-3676. If you need additional tax assistance, please call 1-800-829-1040. Assistors are available Monday through Friday to provide explanations on filing and payment relief that may have been provided by IRS due to a disaster. You may call the Disaster Assistance Hotline at 1-866-562-5227, between 7:00 am and 7:00 p.m., local time. IRS personnel may be able to provide face-to-face assistance on disaster related issues at your local IRS office. Access http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html to find a Taxpayer Assistance Center in your area. For more information, see IRS Publication 2194, "Disaster Resource Guide for Individuals and Businesses," available on IRS.gov.

The IRS will host a webinar on June 30 at 1:00 p. m. (Central Time) for those dealing with disasters such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and more. This webinar will give information on what to do if you are involved in a disaster and the tax implications. To register visit the Internal Revenue Service Webinar Registration. If you are unable to connect by computer, send an email to sl.southwest@irs.gov. Enter “Disaster Webinar” in the subject line. Information on how to attend will be forwarded to you.

Several Residents Still In Need From March Flooding

By Robert Magobet

Delta (MS) Democrat Times, June 12, 2016

GREENVILLE — Although most folks’ lives are back to normal after March’s high water event, there are still several residents who are trying to recover from the flooding.

The slow, low-pressure weather system that dumped more than a foot of rain in some areas from March 10-12 destroyed 14 homes, caused major damage to 241 structures and minor damage to another 245 structures, affected 48 and left 13 inaccessible, according to reports conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, Small Business Administration and local officials.

Monday Is Deadline To Seek FEMA Help

By John Walton

KTAL-TV Shreveport (LA), June 12, 2016

Monday is the deadline for Louisiana residents impacted by the March flooding to register for disaster relief.

To register for FEMA assistance, call the helpline at 800-621-3362. Lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Residents are asked to have the following information ready:

Your Social Security number

Your current and pre-disaster address

A telephone number where you can be contacted

Insurance information

Total household annual income

A description of your losses caused by the disaster.

Or you can register online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or www.fema.gov/disaster/4263.

Registering by phone or online are the only ways you can register for disaster relief.

All the Disaster Recovery Centers in Louisiana have closed.

Deadline Is Monday To Seek FEMA Flood Relief

Monroe (LA) News Star, June 12, 2016

Louisiana residents who suffered losses to the flooding that ravaged the region face a Monday deadline to register for disaster relief.

Maria Padron, media relations specialist with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is urging those who think they might qualify for help from FEMA for losses suffered from March 8 to April 8 to register before the deadline expires Monday.

So far, 39,740 people throughout Louisiana have filed for FEMA assistance, and FEMA has approved the allocation of $175,588,240, Padron said.

Of those, about 25 percent were applicants from Ouachita Parish. In the parish, 10,484 have registered for aid, and FEMA so far has approved $51,888,367.

To register for FEMA assistance, call the helpline at 800-621-3362 or (TTY) 800-462-7585. Lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.The phone conversation will take about 20 minutes if you have the following information available:

Your Social Security number

Your current and pre-disaster address

A telephone number where you can be contacted

Insurance information

Total household annual income

A description of your losses caused by the disaster.

Or you can register online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or www.fema.gov/disaster/4263.

All FEMA disaster recovery centers in the state closed as of Friday.

Those with losses have until Dec. 13 to apply for a low-interest disaster SBA loan for economic injury.

Call SBA’s Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955, email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visit SBA’s website at SBA.gov/disaster. If you are deaf or hard-of-hearing you can call 800-877-8339.

Louisiana Disaster Survivors Are Reminded To Register For FEMA By June 13 Deadline

KALB-TV Alexandria (LA), June 10, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La.(FEMA) – The people of Louisiana have had a rough time. Almost everyone knows someone who is still getting their life back on track after the March 8 through April 8 floods. You may be one yourself.

You owe it to yourself to see if you qualify for help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency before the deadline to register expires Monday, June 13.

Don't miss out. If you live in one of the 36 designated parishes and had disaster related damage or loss, here's how you can find out what may be available. Be sure to do it by June 13:

- Call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362 or (TTY) 800-462-7585. Lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. The phone conversation will take about 20 minutes if you have the following information available:
  – Your Social Security number
  – Your current and pre-disaster address
  – A telephone number where you can be contacted
  – Insurance information
  – Total household annual income
  – A description of your losses caused by the disaster
- Cuando llame al 800-621-3362 marque el 1 y escuche las instrucciones en español. Favor llamar antes del lunes 13 de junio.
- If you use 711/VRS call 800-621-3362.
- Register online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or www.fema.gov/disaster/4263. You have until June 13 to do so.
- All FEMA disaster recovery centers in the state closed as of Friday, June 10.

If you have questions about how you may qualify for a low-interest disaster SBA loan for property damage, make sure you apply before Monday, June 13. You have until Dec. 13, 2016 to apply for a low-interest disaster SBA loan for economic injury.

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Group To Help With Flood Assessments

By Monte Miller

Missourian, June 11, 2016

Months after devastating winter floods hit Franklin County, the cleanup and recovery process is still in its infancy and may take years to be fully complete.

Next week, the faith-based group World Renew will be in the Pacific area helping residents with flood assessments in an effort to fill voids that haven't already been addressed by other agencies.

Franklin County EMA Deputy Director Stephanie Norton, who also serves on the Long Term Recovery Committee, said the group, which specializes in disaster recovery, will be in Franklin, Jefferson and St. Louis counties June 13 to June 24.

"They will focus mainly on Pacific and perform site assessments with flood victims to see what needs they may still have," Norton said. "Not every home will be assessed due to time constraints. Based on information from FEMA, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and the local long-term recovery committees, they will visit as many sites as possible. Their assessments will help to prioritize disaster case management."

Norton added the assessments will focus on primary private residences only.

Rental properties and businesses will not be included.

The work done by World Renew volunteers will help residents fill gaps and acquire household items that were not covered by FEMA, private insurance, or other charitable organizations.

"We are all working together on this," Norton said. "There are several charitable groups that have different items to give out.

These site assessments will help us know which group to contact to help fill needs."

Since some residents are not living in their flood-affected homes, there will be a walk-in center available at the First Baptist Church of Gray Summit, 2705 Highway 100, Gray Summit.

Hours for the walk-in center are:

- Thursday, June 16, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Friday, June 17, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Saturday, June 18, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Norton added if World Renew stops at a home and no one is there, a note with the walk-in center information will be left at the residence.

They also will include a Red Cross phone number residents can call to schedule a site assessment, or talk with a case specialist. That number is 314-516-2754.

Although it already has been half a year, and the flooding has moved out of the "emergency" phase, the recovery process can drag on for months and years before cases are fully resolved.

"The case management portion doesn't move very quickly," Norton said. "Right now, we are only about two weeks into it. This process could take two to three years for Franklin County residents."

Norton added there are FEMA disaster cases still pending from Hurricane Katrina that have yet to be resolved more than a decade later.

According to their website, this is the opportune time for World Renew to come into the area and assist residents with their claims, because at this point in the process they may have received larger items but are still in need of things like backpacks for their children that weren't a priority right away.

According to FEMA, there were 391 homes affected by the winter flooding in Franklin County and 374 have filed claims with the federal agency.

Group To Assist Residents With Flood Assessments

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Eight Years After The Flood

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, June 12, 2016

In 2008 the Iowa and Cedar Rivers reached water levels Iowans had never seen before or since.

Across the state, flooding forced 85 of Iowa's 99 counties to be declared as federal disaster areas and total statewide damage ultimately was estimated at $10 billion, according to the National Weather Service.

Three communities among the hardest hit by flooding were Cedar Rapids and the combined metropolitan area of Iowa City and Coralville, according to NWS.

Some areas within these communities battled 500-year flooding — that is, flood levels were so high, they have a .2 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in a given year or should statistically only occur once every 500 years, according to Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Other areas experienced 100-year flooding, meaning they have a 1 percent chance of reaching or exceeding those heights in a given year.

In the months after the flood, discussions began in all three cities on securing riverfronts to ensure such an event never repeat itself.

Now eight years later, Iowa City is embarking on a massive flood mitigation effort in the Gateway Project, Cedar Rapids officials are about to take on the first piece of a $625 million flood protection system and, in Coralville, the final piece of the city's flood mitigation is nearly underway.

Iowa City

Just as the city of Iowa City embarks on one of its largest flood mitigation projects, the University of Iowa is crossing the finish line with its 2008 recovery.

The Iowa River crested at 31.53 feet on June 15, 2008, with at-times 500-year flood stage levels. Since then, the University of Iowa and the city have been working to rebuild, repair and protect themselves from future flooding.

Iowa City has spent almost $138 million in flood mitigation projects. Ron Knoche, Iowa City's director of public works, said flood recovery and mitigation for Iowa City took the form of two major projects — the wastewater plant relocation and the Gateway Project.

The larger project, relocation of the city's north wastewater plant and consolidation with the south plant, cost about $63.4 million and is complete.

"I would say we're further along than half today, from a project standpoint. From number of projects, we're 90 percent complete," Knoche said of flood-recovery overall. "From a dollar-amount standpoint, we're probably closer to about 75 percent complete."

The city began construction on May 31 on its other major mitigation project, the Gateway Project — an effort to raise Dubuque Street and the Park Road bridge up to a height that would protect against 100-year flood levels.

The city initially planned to raise the roads to protect it against 500-year floods but, Knoche said, the city changed the plan to only protect against 100-year levels after residents expressed concern over the potential height of Dubuque Street.

Construction on the $59.5 million Gateway Project is not scheduled to be complete until 2018.

Knocke said the city still hopes to work on more small mitigation projects, such as flood-proofing City Park, when money becomes available.

The UI saw $230 million in flood damage and cleanup costs. One-sixth of the UI's campus closed while 20 of its major buildings — including Mayflower Residence Hall and the 300,000-square-foot Hancher-Voxman-Clapp music and art building — sustained damage.

The university finished all its flood protection and repair projects. This summer the school is scheduled to complete the last of the replacement projects supported by FEMA, including Hancher Auditorium, a new art studio building and the Voxman Music Building.

More Flood Info: Iowa City

Day river crested: June 15, 2008

High water mark: 31.53 feet

Total cost of damage: $6.5 million (city property) and $230 million (university property)

Total cost of mitigation: $137.8 million (city) and $150 million (university estimate)

Cedar Rapids

Eight years after the 2008 flood, Cedar Rapids is preparing to install the first pieces of a $625 million flood protection system with levees, walls, gates and pump stations to protect property along the east and west banks from the Cedar River.

Two separate projects are slated to begin later this year at roughly the same time the contract process for two 2017 projects gets rolling.

"The reason you will see construction now is because the money is starting to come in," said Rob Davis, Cedar Rapids flood control program manager. "We didn't have a way to pay for it before."

Funding hasn't been fully identified for the entire 7.5-mile flood system, which includes 81 separate projects and may take 17 years to complete — by 2033 — Davis said. In light of funding uncertainty, the city shifted gears from a north-to-south construction plan to taking on what the city can tackle as it can pay for it, while addressing the most vulnerable areas first, he said.

That's not to say Cedar Rapids hasn't protected itself. The city has spent $79 million raising and repairing 45 wells so they don't get inundated with water, which consumed all but one in 2008, making critical levee repairs, designs, moving key facilities out of harm's way, and fortifying the wastewater pollution plant, Davis said. Another $52 million went for buyouts of flooded properties.

Projects this fall will be centered on the NewBo District and Czech Village.

Cedar Rapids signed a contract this spring for the first phase of the Parking Lot 44 pump station at 10th Avenue SE. It is one of four pump stations planned for the east side of the river and 11 total in the flood protection system.

The system with a brick housing, three pumps — one for redundancy — and a backup generator eventually could pump 36,000 gallons of water per minute. The initial $5.9 million project, which is scheduled to begin in October and end by early 2018, would erect the brick housing, install one pump and a backup generator.

Next up, the city plans to hire a contractor this summer to build a half-mile levee 100 feet wide at the base and standing 13-feet tall — in place of the existing six-foot-tall berm, Davis said. The levee, which would have a trail built on top, would separate the old Sinclair meatpacking plant site and the river, and run from the African-American Museum of Iowa to near the Alliant Energy substation. Tree clearing and building removal has already occurred, but additional site preparation is needed, Davis said.

The $11 million project due for construction from November 2016 to November 2017 will protect NewBo from a 40-year flood, Davis said. In a 40-year flood, the river reaches 21 feet, which still would be 10 feet below the record 2008 flood level, Davis said.

This fall, city officials will lay the groundwork for two additional projects.

The city will seek a company for a $4.1 million project to relocate sanitation, stormwater and water main pipes on the west side of the river in Czech Village. Utilities under a levee could compromise the system, Davis said.

A $5 million second phase of the Sinclair site system, which build about half of an eventual 10-acre stormwater detention basin and a second pump station, also is in queue for the fall.

Both projects are scheduled for construction from spring to fall 2017, according to city documents.

“We are starting on the downstream ones first because those projects will offer some interim protection for the east and west side of the river,” Davis said.

As part of a five-year plan, a Quaker Oats flood wall and Union Pacific Railroad floodgate, and a Time Check utility relocation project are slated for 2018. Levees for Czech Village and Time Check are scheduled to begin in 2019.

More Flood Info: Cedar Rapids

Day river crested: June 12, 2008

High water mark: 31.18 feet (gauging station near Eighth Avenue Bridge)

Total cost of damage: $2.4 billion

Total cost of mitigation: $131 million spent so far including $52.6 million for buyouts. The first pieces of a $625 million (adjusted for inflation) flood protection system is going up this year

Sources: City of Cedar Rapids, except damage cost comes from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Coralville

As with so many other communities along the Iowa River, Coralville was slammed by record level flooding in 2008.

On June 15 of that year, the Iowa River in nearby Iowa City crested at a record 31.53 feet. Major flood stage is 25 feet.

Ellen Habel, Coralville’s assistant city administrator, recalled the frustration felt by community members after efforts to sandbag went in vain.

“It was a strange time, we became so focused on trying to protect everything we could,” Habel said.

The flood caused $21 million in damage to more than 200 businesses and another $4.5 million to 400 households. City infrastructure took on another $7 million in damage.

As floodwater receded, Coralville officials decided to not let such an event happen again.

“We decided, ‘We’re going to build back better and we’re going to put in permanent flood protection,’” Habel said.

Since then, Coralville has embarked on close to $63 million in flood mitigation work, excluding flood buyout or FEMA public-assistance dollars.

Work has involved a number of efforts, including reconstructing and raising First Avenue Bridge over Clear Creek, reconstructing and elevating Fifth Street across Biscuit Creek and constructing flood protection along the Iowa River from Rocky Shore Drive to the north end of the Iowa River Power Company Restaurant. A number of earthen berms and flood stations also have been built.

Later this summer, Coralville officials plan to begin the final piece — an $8.6 million flood wall along the south side of Clear Creek from First Avenue to Highway 6 — which will close the city’s eight-year effort.

When the Clear Creek wall is finished, Coralville will be protected to one foot above a 100-year flood level. With the ability to add temporary walls in some places, the city easily will reach one foot above the 500-year level.

Habel said the city’s aggressive approach to flood protection has resonated with businesses and residents, who have returned to and reinvested in the area that sat underwater eight years ago.

“It’s something that really impacts the community as a whole, just our economy, our continued vibrancy,” she said. “You had to give people reassurance that they could reinvest or could go into those properties and not flood.”

TORNADOES

Woman Sentenced For Filing False Disaster Claim

By Emily Caussulo

WCBI-TV Columbus (MS), June 10, 2016

WINSTON COUNTY, Miss. (WCBI) — A year and a day is how much time a Winston County woman will spend in federal prison for filing a false disaster claim.

Judge Sharon Aycock handed that sentence to 35-year-old Kourtnee Triplett, Friday.

Triplett admitted she lied when she told FEMA her apartment was damaged in the April 2014 tornado.

A FEMA investigation discovered the Beal Avenue home was not Triplett's primary residence.

Triplett must also pay back more than $10,000, and serve five years probation.

Relief Crews Working To Help Baker After Tornado

KRTV-TV Great Falls (MT), June 12, 2016

Relief agencies and personnel are headed to Baker after a tornado tore through the town in southeastern Montana on Saturday evening.

The tornado hit at about 7 p.m. in the small town of less than 2,000 people.

There were no fatalities, and no life-threatening injuries. One man was sent to a hospital in Billings for a broken hip; other injuries were relatively minor, such as cuts and bruises.

The National Weather Service in Billings still has a team assessing the full extent of the damage, but what they have found so far indicates that an EF-3 tornado lasted for about 10 minutes. An EF-3 tornado translates to wind speeds of between 135 and 165 miles per hour.

The tornado started on Baker Lake and moved into a nearby subdivision where six homes were destroyed. In addition, at least 30 homes were severely damaged.

Officials estimate the storm has caused more than one million dollars in damages, and expect that figure to rise.

Responding agencies include the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"Whenever there is a disaster in Montana, we have about 400 volunteers across the state, they will get up in the middle of the night to make sure that anybody who has been impacted by the disaster does not have to face it alone," said Anna Fernandez-Gevaert of the Montana Red Cross.

Four volunteers with the American Red Cross are currently in Baker to help provide shelter for those without family or friends in the area.

"They housed two families, arranged for hotel rooms for two families, and then generally they met with every single family to asses their needs, and they will be checking in again with these families as they recover," said Fernandez-Gevaert.

A shelter is not set up right now, however if there are more people that need assistance and lodging, the Red Cross will be setting up a shelter in one of the schools or churches.

"Anyone who needs the Red Cross can call 1-800-272-6668, that's anywhere in the state, they should ask for the duty officer on call who is a volunteer, and that volunteer is going to make sure that they alert the local team that there are needs in the community and they will deploy or they will come to somebody's house, they will do this in the middle of the night," said Fernandez-Gevaert

Financial donations can be made to the Red Cross to provide assistance for those in Baker and also future disasters in Montana.

Montana typically sees several tornadoes every year at this time, particularly in the eastern part of the state.

Unlike those in "Tornado Alley" in the central part of the country, most Montana tornadoes are relatively small and usually touch down in sparsely-populated areas – but not always.

Last year, a small tornado hit near Sidney in Richland County in eastern Montana, injuring one person and causing damage; click here for details.

In June 2010, a tornado hit Billings, causing significant damage to the MetraPark facility; click here to see video.

Just several weeks later, two people were killed when a tornado struck a family ranch near Reserve in northeastern Montana.

Click here for a list of Montana tornadoes recorded between 1950 and 2012.

Relief Efforts Organize For Baker Residents, NWS Releases Report On Tornado

By Morgan McKay

KBZK-TV Butte (MT), June 12, 2016

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WILDFIRES

UPDATE: Evacuation Orders Lifted In Tenderfoot Fire; Fire Now 30 Percent Contained

By Jennifer Thomas

KPHO-TV Phoenix, June 11, 2016

YARNELL, AZ (KPHO/KTVK) –

All evacuation orders have been lifted in the Tenderfoot Fire burning near Yarnell.

The fire has burned more than 4,000 acres, but is now 30 percent contained.

On Saturday at 5 p.m., the Yavapai County Sheriff’s Office announced that home and business access has now opened on the east side of Highway 89. YCSO also says there are no further evacuation restrictions or road closures in Yarnell.

The Red Cross shelter at the Yavapai college campus has now been closed.

More than 350 fire personnel are battling the wildfire, which started Wednesday afternoon.

Fire officials said the fire was human-caused and is under investigation. As of Saturday morning, the fire had scorched 4,040 acres.

Authorities remain confident the fire will not grow out of control and containment could still happen by sometime early next week.

“I am very happy with the progress crews are making in the field,” said Alan Sinclair, incident commander. “Weather conditions and good planning allowed firefighters to put together a good strategy to fight this fire while ensuring the safety of our crews.”

At 4 p.m. Friday, authorities reopened a 7-mile stretch of Highway 89 that had been shut down since the blaze began.

APS restored power to the town of Yarnell and some residents who had to evacuate were allowed to go back home.

About 250 Yarnell residents were evacuated Wednesday night and 30 residents of nearby Peeples Valley were evacuated Thursday afternoon after winds fanned the flames.

Federal authorities have authorized the use of federal funds to assist the Arizona Department of Forestry fighting the wildfire.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide funding for up to 75 percent of eligible firefighting costs.

No homes have been damaged or destroyed but three "outbuildings" were damaged, according to the Arizona Bureau of Land Management.

[Photos: Tenderfoot Fire near Yarnell]

The Arizona State Forestry said the Tenderfoot Fire started near the south side of Yarnell. The wildfire is burning on the east side of the town. The 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire burned on the west side of Yarnell.

Officials said brush clearing and other preventative work done in the community since the 2013 fire helped firefighters keep the latest fire out of the town by connecting areas already cleared of brush with new fire lines and burnout areas.

Air crews dropped water and retardant to slow fire growth to the northeast.

Fire crews from multiple agencies are battling the fire, including those from the U.S. Forest Service, Arizona Bureau of Land Management, the Yarnell Fire Department and the Congress Fire Department.

Resources include nine hot shot crews, 22 engines, five helicopters, two air attack fixed-wing aircraft platforms, two bulldozers, and various overhead and support personnel.

No injuries have been reported.

Yavapai County has a phone bank open for residents to call, 928-442-5103.

The brush fire comes nearly three years since the Yarnell Hill Fire took the lives of the 19 Granite Mountain hotshots. The men died on June 30, 2013, trying to protect the community from fast-moving and erratic flames that trapped them with nowhere to go. It was the largest loss of life for U.S. firefighters since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The fire burned 127 homes.

Tenderfoot Fire Near Yarnell Estimated At 3,300 Acres; Fire Was Human-caused

By David Baker, Jennifer Thomas

KPHO-TV Phoenix, June 8, 2016

YARNELL, AZ (KPHO/KTVK) –

The Tenderfoot Fire burning near Yarnell is now at 3,300 acres after aerial mapping, according to officials. The wildfire is still about 10 percent contained.

The fire had been reported to be about 5,000 acres Thursday night, but that number was adjusted around 6 a.m. Friday after the fire was mapped by infrared flight. It will be mapped again later in the morning and acreage could change at that time.

Fire officials now say the fire was human-caused and is under investigation.

Authorities remain confident the fire will not grow out of control and containment could still happen by sometime early next week.

"It's still a situation where we want to err on the side of safety for residents," said Mike Reichling, a state fire official. "We want to make sure that they are out of there just in case."

Around 250 firefighters are battling the fire that started at about 3:15 p.m. Wednesday. Two more hot shot crews and 12 engines were brought in on Thursday.

"We're one of the highest priorities in the United States right now," said Mike Reichling with the Arizona State Forestry.

At 4 p.m. Friday, authorities reopened a 7-mile stretch of Highway 89 that has been shut down since Wednesday when the blaze began.

Some residents who had to evacuate are being allowed to go back home.

About 250 Yarnell residents were evacuated Wednesday night and 30 residents of nearby Peeples Valley were evacuated Thursday afternoon after winds fanned the flames.

Fire officials say residents on the west side of Yarnell are being allowed to return home Friday night.

Homes on the east side of town closest to the fire remain under mandatory evacuation, but authorities say that order could be lifted sometime Saturday.

APS crews worked throughout the night and power has been restored to half of the community. Once the area is safe for personnel to enter, APS will work on the damaged poles.

Federal authorities have authorized the use of federal funds to assist the Arizona Department of Forestry fighting the wildfire.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide funding for up to 75 percent of eligible firefighting costs.

Light winds of 5-10 mph Thursday were blowing flames away from Yarnell, said Dolores Garcia, a Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman.

The weather forecast calls for favorable conditions over the next several days, said RobRoy Williams, the incident commander. "We're looking very good," he said.

Helicopters were dipping in small ponds in the area Thursday, filling up with water and dumping it on the flames along the ridge tops.

No homes have been damaged or destroyed but three "outbuildings" were damaged, according to the Arizona Bureau of Land Management.

[Photos: Tenderfoot Fire near Yarnell]

The Red Cross opened an evacuation center at Yavapai College at 1100 E. Sheldon St. in Prescott for those who evacuated due to the Tenderfoot Fire.

"We're prepared to shelter them for as long as it takes," said Diana Rodriguez with the Red Cross.

"We're praying our houses don't go again," said Yarnell resident Jane Sanderson, who was packing up and preparing to evacuate. "We just want everybody to be safe and have our homes safe and trust that our firefighters will be safe also."

[Raw video: Aerial view of Tenderfoot Fire near Yarnell]

The Arizona State Forestry said the Tenderfoot Fire started near the south side of Yarnell. The wildfire is burning on the east side of the town. The 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire burned on the west side of Yarnell.

Officials said brush clearing and other preventative work done in the community since the 2013 fire helped firefighters keep the latest fire out of the town by connecting areas already cleared of brush with new fire lines and burnout areas.

Sanderson said she is always prepared for something like this to happen.

"We keep defensible space," she said. "We always have the ability to pack and be ready to leave within a few minutes. We have medicines, we have important papers; we have clothing. That's about all you can do."

You can see a map of the area by clicking/tapping here.

Yarnell resident Shannon Smith, who lost her home in the 2013 fire, was one of the few on her street who decided not to follow mandatory evacuations this time around after seeing the fire was at least a mile away. Her car is packed just in case.

She said neighbors have been in constant contact and offered to help each other pack, ensure doors are locked and deliver food and water.

"That is just a beautiful aspect of tragedy, how close we as a community have grown and healed through what we all went through," she said. "And this, I'm sure, is stirring it up for a lot of people."

Fire crews from multiple agencies are battling the fire, including those from the U.S. Forest Service, Arizona Bureau of Land Management, the Yarnell Fire Department and the Congress Fire Department. Several aircraft, including a helicopter and a large jet, are dropping water on the flames.

Resources include:

1– Air Attack
2 – Helicopters
4 – Type 1 Hotshot Crews
2 – Type 2 Hand Crews
20 – Engines
4 – Water Tenders

There are no injuries reported.

Yavapai County has a phone bank open for residents to call, 928-442-5103.

The brush fire comes nearly three years since the Yarnell Hill Fire took the lives of the 19 Granite Mountain hotshots. The men died on June 30, 2013, trying to protect the community from fast-moving and erratic flames that trapped them with nowhere to go. It was the largest loss of life for U.S. firefighters since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The fire burned 127 homes.

Tenderfoot Fire Updates

KNAU-FM Flagstaff (AZ), June 11, 2016

UPDATE, 6/11/16, 8 a.m.:

Yarnell residents east of State Route 89 are still under mandatory evacuation due to the Tenderfoot Fire. Residents of Peeples Valley on the west side of SR 89 are still under a precautionary alert. The highway has also been reopened by the Arizona Department of Transportation. The Tenderfoot Fire is at 4,040 acres and remains at 10 percent. The incident commander says crews are making progress fighting the blaze.

http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4774

UPDATE 6/10/16, 9 a.m.:

The evacuation orders for more than 250 people in Yarnell and the residents of 30 homes in Peeples Valley are still in effect Friday morning as a result of the Tenderfoot Fire. The blaze was mapped by a morning infrared overflight and its current size is 3,300 acres. It was downgraded from an earlier estimate of 5,000 acres. The fire is still at 10 percent containment.

A type 2 incident command team assumed control of the firefighting operations this morning. Officials say the Tenderfoot Fire was human-caused and the blaze remains under investigation. State Route 89 also remains closed between mileposts 275 and 282.

UPDATE, 6/9/16, 3 p.m.:

Officials have ordered the mandatory evacuation of 30 additional homes in Peeples Valley near Yarnell because of the Tenderfoot Fire. It affects the eastside of State Route 89. They say the order is for precautionary reasons and not because of any imminent threat. Officials also report increased activity on the north side of the fire.

In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has authorized federal funds for fighting the Tenderfoot Fire. It'll assist the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management and cover up to 75 percent of firefighting costs for field camps, equipment repair, materials, and supplies. FEMA officials determined the fire has the potential cause significant destruction and could represent a major disaster. The Tenderfoot Fire is currently burning on private and state land.

UPDATE, 2 p.m.:

The evacuation of 250-300 people in Yarnell remains in effect Thursday afternoon as a result of the Tenderfoot Fire. Officials say personnel on scene have made progress fighting the fire.

Fire officials surveyed the blaze from the air earlier today, and say it's now 1,237 acres in size and 10 percent contained. No homes have been burned, but three small structures were destroyed by the flames. In addition, State Route 89 remains closed between mileposts 275 and 282.

For the latest information, see. http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4774/

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The Tenderfoot Fire prompted Yavapai County Sheriff's officials Wednesday to evacuate between 250 and 300 residents from the town of Yarnell. The American Red Cross established an evacuation center at Yavapai College in Prescott, and Yavapai County has set up a phone bank open for public phone calls at (928) 442-5103.

Fire managers are hopeful, however, that the evacuation order could be lifted by noon Thursday. In addition, the Arizona Department of Transportation has closed State Route 89 between mileposts 275 and 282. ADOT says there is no estimated time yet for the the highway to reopen.

The fire began Wednesday afternoon and has burned more than 600 acres and three structures, though no homes have been lost. Fire managers say crews have made progress fighting the Tenderfoot Fire, and now have it 10 percent contained. Crews are conducting burnout operations and utilizing helicopters and planes to douse the flames. They say the it could be fully contained by next week.

The Tenderfoot Fire is burning on the east side of Yarnell. The June 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire that claimed the lives of 19 Granite Mountain Hotshots took place on the west side of the town.

Animal Disaster Services is on site to take small pets, and larger animals can be taken to the Prescott Rodeo Grounds. The fire is under investigation and no cause has yet been identified. For more information on the Tenderfoot Fire, see http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4774/.

WINTER STORMS

Newtown Ambulance Squad Updates Township On Emergency Calls; Township Supervisors Accept Bids To Repave Roads

By D.E. Schlatter

Bucks Local News (PA), June 12, 2016

NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP >> The Newtown Ambulance Squad (NAS) on May 11 updated the Newtown Township Board of Supervisors on its emergency calls for the first few months of 2016.

According to the squad's chief of operations Evan Resnikoff, the squad had about the same number of emergency responses as it did for the same period last year.

"About 70 percent of our calls are in Newtown Township," explained Resnikoff, noting that the average age of those needing medical assistance is 69, with about 30 percent being over 85.

He also explained that the three top medical emergencies are: respiratory complaints, falls and cardiac incidents.

"We've seen a huge increase in cardiac complaints with people between 40 and 60 years old," Resnikoff told the board.

Opioid overdoses also increased from five to 15 compared to this same last year, according to the ambulance squad chief.

Resniknoff also said that because of the high call volume on Sundays, the rescue squad is going to add another ambulance during that 24-hour period.

In addition, he said that the NAS just retired a 2005 ambulance with 169,000 miles on the odometer, and purchased a used 2015 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter with about 8,500 miles.

"The vehicle is expected to have a seven to ten-year live span," Resnikoff pointed out. "It has good fuel mileage and low maintenance costs."

He also said that the ambulance squad is replacing four cardiac monitors with new ones at a cost between $92,000 and $108,000.

Because of the high cost, the squad is considering leasing the devices.

Newtown Township helps fund the NAS.

For the current fiscal year beginning Jan. 1, it was allocated $110,000, which is $7,000 less than for the 2015 budget year ending Dec. 31.

However, funding is dependent on Local Service Tax (LST) receipts which may be more or less than actual budgets.

In other news, the supervisors in a 5-0 vote accepted $536,228 in low bids from Harris Blacktopping, Inc. in Yardley for repaving about 1.2 miles of the 71 miles of township-owned roads.

Liberty and Justice Drives will be completely repaved, as will portions of Linton Hill and Upper Silver Lake Roads.

The supervisors also agreed to resurface three of the four alternate roads outlined on the township's 2016 road improvement list: Richboro Road, Walnut Avenue and Swamp Road.

Those three added projects will cost a combined $38,313 with Harris Blacktopping also doing the work.

According to the township manager, about $509,000 of the total cost will come from the state's liquid fuels fund, with the township responsible for roughly $64,811.

The supervisors also unanimously approved designating township manager Kurt Ferguson as the point man to seek as much as $100,000 in reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the heavy snowstorm that hit the area January 23 and 24.

The township had declared a state of emergency, and according to Ferguson, FEMA will offset Newtown's added costs for employee overtime, equipment and materials needed to plow and salt the roads.

With the resolution, Ferguson now can prepare the required documents to submit to the agency within the next few weeks.

The board also designated the Pottstown-based Cedarville Engineering Group, LLC to handle building inspections for the township. Boucher & James, Inc, of Doylestown will still be in charge of code and zoning enforcement.

And the supervisors have scheduled a work session for Monday, May 16 at 8:00 p.m. during which several proposed developments will be discussed.

The meeting's focus includes the renovation of a good portion of the Village at Newtown Shopping Center.

The Brixmor Property Group, which owns most of the center, is scheduled to be at the work session to answer questions.

Acme Plans Frosted Mug Cafe At Newtown Store; Township Supervisors Approve Liquor License Transfer To Allow Beer, Wine Sales At Store

By D.E. Schlatter

Bucks Local News (PA), June 11, 2016

NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP >> Sales of beer, and possibly bottles of wine, will soon be coming to the Acme Market in the Newtown Shopping Center off of Route 413.

At the June 8 supervisors' meeting, the board voted 4-1 to approve the transfer of a liquor license from a restaurant at 727 Second Street Pike in Upper Southampton Township to the Newtown Acme store.

Voting for the resolution were: Chairman Kyle Davis and Vice Chairman Ryan Gallagher, along with Supervisors Jennifer Dix and Phil Calabro.

Supervisor Mike Gallagher opposed the liquor license transfer.

"We're on the cusp of the past and the future," said Supervisor Ryan Gallagher who supported the transfer. "Pennsylvania is an antiquated system ... I hear it from a lot of people around town that they want more convenience in terms of alcohol sales."

Unless a local government can show that transferring a liquor license raises serious health, safety and welfare issues for the municipality, it must be approved, according to township solicitor Jeffrey Garton.

With the township's go-ahead, the supermarket will now be able to formally ask the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) to approve the transfer of the restaurant liquor license, which could take between 90 to 120 days.

After the license is in place, Acme will build a 2,500 square foot dedicated section inside the store which will have tables and 30 seats, the minimum required under state law to sell beer for in-store consumption and take out, as well as wine by the glass.

In keeping with the other seven Acme locations in Pennsylvania currently selling beer, the new area will be called The Frosted Mug Café.

The name was chosen because customers can use frosted mugs provided by the supermarket for in-store consumption.

According to Acme's attorney Mark Kozar, the café will offer more than 400 varieties of beer, as well as prepared foods and sandwiches to either eat in or take out.

"This is not where people come to just hang out and drink," he explained. "There is no entertainment or games there."

Kozar, who is with the Pittsburgh-based firm of Flaherty & O'Hara which specializes in beverage alcohol law, said that selling beer at supermarkets and convenience stores has been growing in popularity around the country in recent years.

Acme shoppers will be able to purchase up to two six-packs of beer totaling 192 ounces for takeout at any one time. Several varieties of beer can be mixed and matched in a six pack.

There is no limit on the number of six packs a person can buy, according to Kozar, as long as sales are limited to two at a time.

Purchases will be paid for at a dedicated cash register in the café where IDs will also be checked to ensure that customers are over 21 years old.

The same day that Acme asked the supervisors to approve the liquor license transfer, Gov. Tom Wolf (D) signed into law a measure permitting establishments holding a restaurant liquor license to apply for a new enhanced permit allowing them to sell up to four bottles of wine at any one time for takeout.

The new law takes effect in 60 days.

"Acme will also be pursuing this," said Kozar about applying for the new enhanced liquor license.

Supervisor Mike Gallagher, who opposed the license transfer at this time, said that he first wanted to know more about the new wine-sale law before he would vote to allow it in Newtown.

"I'm still not comfortable with it," he said, also questioning whether there are enough safeguards in place to keep alcohol out of the hands of minors.

Acme, which operates 176 stores in six states, has more than 19,000 employees, 158 of them at the Newtown township location.

"Of the 159 stores in Pennsylvania, seven already have beer sales," according to Dan Croce, president of the Malvern-based Acme Markets. "It's another opportunity for our customers to get what they want at Acme, they've been asking for this.

"We're also putting in a Starbucks," he added.

The supermarket chain already has beer sales at its South Philadelphia location, as well as in Doylestown, Flourtown, Devon, Granite Run, Concordville and Paoli.

There is no hard liquor or mixed drinks sold at Acme, according to Croce.

When asked whether the Newtown café will need more parking spaces, the Acme president told the supervisors that other stores with beer sales have not seen an increase in the number of space needed and that many of the customers using the beer area are already shopping for other items in the store.

The café at the Newtown store will be open from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday.

Under state law, beer can be sold until 2 a.m. seven days a week, but the supermarket does not plan to extend its hours past 10 p.m.

All servers at The Frosted Mug Café will be 21 years or older, as will the area manager, even though that is not required under PLCB regulations.

As far as any liquor code violations, including illegal sales to minors, Croce said, "We've been checked and audited at our other stores and we haven't had any problems."

If all goes well, the Newtown Acme plans to start beer sales this year.

The Minnesota-based SuperValu, Inc. sold Acme Markets and four other supermarket chains in 2013 for $3.3 billion to a consortium called AB Acquisition LLC.

Last year, that company merged with Safeway Inc. to form the nation's second-largest grocery store chain.

The parent company plans to remodel more than 115 locations throughout the country and invest more than $1 billion to improve its stores, manufacturing facilities and distribution centers.

In other news, township manager Kurt Ferguson said that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved giving the township $92,000 of the estimated $124,000 that Newtown requested in reimbursement for overtime and other costs associated with the late-January blizzard.

Going into the storm, the township already spent all of the money allocated for this winter's snow removal and other storm-related costs, according to Ferguson.

"This [FEMA] money will go a long way in restoring the budget," he pointed out.

On another matter, Ferguson said that renovations of the township-owned house at the Clarke Nature Center is complete and the building ready to rent.

He explained that the Clarke House has been painted, as well as a new natural-gas heater and cabinets installed.

"It's quite a unique house," the township manager maintained, noting that the 1,450 square-foot structure will be ready to rent this summer, and will soon be advertised.

Ferguson said that the township will be seeking about $2,000 a month in rent and has already had several interested inquiries.

"It will be nice to get that money back into the township budget," he said.

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

Despite Quakes, Most California Homeowners Don't Have Earthquake Insurance

By Daniel Goldstein

MarketWatch, June 10, 2016

On Oct. 17, 1989, Arthur Reyes was in his dorm room at Stevenson College, on the picturesque hilltop campus of the University of California at Santa Cruz, when his bed started to shake violently.

"I looked across my dorm room to see books flying off the shelf, the door swung open and the light fixture fell from the ceiling," he recalled.

It was 5:04 p.m. From its epicenter just 10 miles north of Reyes, near the Loma Prieta Peak, the 7.1 magnitude quake roared along a 22-mile stretch of the San Andreas fault through the Bay Area, collapsing a portion of the Bay Bridge and the Cypress Freeway in Oakland, and crushing homes in the Marina District in San Francisco and the Pacific Garden Mall in Santa Cruz.

When it was over, 63 people were dead, more than 11,000 homes destroyed and $6 billion in damage done.

See Photos: Loma Prieta earthquake, 25 years later.

Today Reyes is a biologist married with three children, but he's still struggling with the Loma Prieta quake, in a different way.

For many of Reyes' generation, who are now entering their peak earning years and looking to purchase bigger homes to accommodate families, the aftershocks of the Loma Prieta quake, as well as the 1994 Northridge quake in Southern California, are financial. He paid $1,200 in 2014 on top of his homeowner insurance for an earthquake rider on his Palo Alto house, and the price increases every year. The average premium in Santa Clara County was $1,447 in 2014, according to the California Earthquake Authority (CEA), which writes about 76% of earthquake insurance policies in the state. Still, of the close to 7 million single-family homes in California, there are only 879,000 CEA earthquake policies in force.

"As a homeowner, it's frustrating dealing with these insurance premiums," he said. "We might get priced out of our home if our premiums keep increasing."

The likelihood of a severe quake for Californians is never far away either, a major quake with a magnitude of 7.0 or more strikes ever ten years, according to the CEA and a moderate earthquake of 5.5 or more strikes about four times a year. All told, there are more than 2,000 earthquake faults in California, the CEA said.

Early Friday a 5.2 magnitude quake rocked the Southern California desert in San Diego County, about 14 miles northwest of Borrego Springs. Monica Reichl, a drama teacher at Tahquitz High School in the town of Hemet, about 60 miles away from the epicenter said the 1:05 a.m. temblor, which was about 150 miles southeast of Los Angeles, was still strong enough to wake her and her dogs. "It was a noisy quake. Long but not too bad," she said. Still, like a veteran of the London Blitz in World War II, she was unfazed. "My Labs woke up but we didn't want to get out of bed for it," she said.

Even though Californians like Reichl and Reyes live with quakes as a near daily occurrence, earthquake insurance often isn't a priority. The expensive deductible related to earthquake insurance are sometimes as high as 15% of the value of the home, which has many homeowners giving the insurance a second thought.

Premiums are determined by a combination of a home's replacement value and its proximity to a high-risk fault. And for homeowners in Northern California, where some of the most valuable real estate in the country lies in an earthquake hot zone, that makes for an expensive financial double whammy. An expensive one-two punch

The CEA was set up in the aftermath of the 1989 and 1994 quakes to help provide low-cost insurance, after many property and casualty insurance companies pulled out following the quakes. According to the CEA, average earthquake insurance premiums statewide rose from about $540 a year in 1998 to $830 in 2005. The CEA instituted a decrease in premiums later that year, but they have been rising ever since, averaging about $800 a year in 2014.

But the average figures don't really illustrate the cost in some of the highest-risk and most populous areas. The average premium in 2014 on earthquake insurance in San Francisco County was $2,156; it was

$1,800 in Alameda County (along the Hayward Fault) and nearly $1,000 in Los Angeles County, according to the CEA. The areas of greatest earthquake risk in the San Francisco Bay Area. (Map by Risk Management Solutions.)

In contrast to Florida, where hurricane insurance is often mandatory, earthquake insurance is entirely optional in California. And as premiums have gone up, more homeowners have opted out. The number of earthquake insurance policies in California has dropped to just 10% of homes statewide, down from 34% in 1994, according to Risk Management Solutions, a Hayward, Calif.-based company.

Newcomers to the Bay Area who haven't experienced a big quake and are put off by the insurance price are partly responsible for the low numbers of home buyers signing up for earthquake insurance, according to Patricia Grossi, senior director of global earthquake modeling at RMS.

"A lot of young people who are here today, just weren't around during the 1989 quake. They also see it as a low probability event. And they see earthquake insurance doubling their premiums. All those things are working together" to reduce insurance purchases, Grossi said.

Andy Doran is one of those Californians considering the cost of insurance coverage. He was a senior at Berkeley High Schoo in Berkeley, Calif. in 1989 when the quake hit. "I remember turning on the TV after riding it out in the doorway and finding static on all the channels except one," he recalls. "'The Cosby Show' was somehow happily humming along so I knew everything would be all right."

Now a scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, in the East Bay hills, Doran bought a house in Berkeley in 2011 (where the median home value today is more than $1 million and up 12% in the past year) and is looking to add earthquake insurance, but premium payments in the realm of $4,000 a year and a $70,000 deductible are putting him off.

"The fact that it is a separate policy and so expensive with such a huge deductible, it's difficult to impossible to accurately assess," he said. "I've been convinced we should get it, but figuring out how to afford it is hard." Another 'big one' is inevitable

The most recent major quake in the Bay Area occurred on Aug. 24, 2014 quake in Napa, just north of San Francisco, and was a 6.0 magnitude quake, causing more than $250 million in damage while killing one person and injuring more than 100.

The reticence of California homeowners to buy earthquake insurance has many state and federal officials worried. The U.S. Geological Survey predicts that there is a 68% chance of a 7.0 magnitude earthquake in the Bay Area in the next 30 years, either along the San Andreas fault, which ruptured in 1989 and 1906, or the Hayward or Calaveras fault. The chance of a 6.7 magnitude quake over the next 30 years is now predicted at 99%, the USGS says.

The insurance "gap" in the Bay Area, as the CEA sees it, is more than $600 billion as of 2014, assuming $690 billion in reconstruction costs and having only about $90 billion in earthquake insurance in force as of 2014. The CEA says it has the ability to pay $12 billion worth of claims.

"California is completely uninsured," given the risk of a major quake along the faults, said David Schwartz, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park, southeast of San Francisco. "I can't tell you which (fault) will be the first to go, but we know that these faults have to move. You can run, but you can't hide." Emergency workers prop up a collapsed building in the Marina district.

A 7.9 magnitude quake (The estimated size of the Great San Francisco Earthquake along the San Andreas fault on April 18, 1906) in the Bay Area could potentially cause as much as $200 billion in damage and $25 billion in insurance claims, and have a regional and national impact as bad as Hurricane Katrina's aftermath, according to RMS. The CEA said in April, on the 110th anniversary of the 1906 quake that it would cost about $555,000 to rebuilt a single family home in the nine-county Bay Area if a similarly-sized temblor struck.

In addition to the San Andreas fault, the Hayward Fault runs under much of the East Bay and directly under the University of California at Berkeley's Memorial Stadium (which was upgraded to be more earthquake resistant in 2012 at a cost of more than $300 million and has halves designed to move independently in a quake). Both RMS and the USGS predict that the Hayward fault is most likely to experience an earthquake of a 7.0 magnitude.

A quake of that magnitude could severely disrupt the Port of Oakland, one of the West Coast's biggest ports alongside Seattle and Long Beach, Calif. Oakland handled more 2.3 million containers in ship traffic, or 1,400 vessels a year in 2015, nearly 100% of the Bay Area's containerized import and export traffic.

"Our real concern is the Hayward Fault: It's got the highest population density, and it's heavily industrialized," said Schwartz.

Indeed, the Bay Area has added nearly 8 million new residents since 1989, and seen the value of its residential real estate go up 50%, to $1.2 trillion, in that time. “The good thing about a financial boom is it creates money to do seismic upgrades,” says Lewis Knight, regional director of planning and urban design with the architecture and design firm Gensler in San Francisco. “We’ve made so many advances in the 25 years since Loma Prieta.”

Knight noted that dozens of warehouses in the Bay Area—now home to tech companies and dot-coms—that were dangerous in 1989 have been rehabbed. “Any time you do 20% or more floor rehabilitation you must do a seismic upgrade per California code,” he said.

The CEA has also tried to convince Californians to buy more earthquake insurance.

CEA chief executive Glenn Pomeroy,has implored residents to buy insurance and not to be put off by premium prices, which on average was $803 a year as of Dec. 31, 2014 and is as little as $100 a year in less vulnerable regions of California, like Sacramento or Fresno. (Of course, one reason earthquake insurance is inexpensive in those areas is that they’re far from active faults.)

“The insurance premiums aren’t the culprit,” he said in an interview. “There’s a mis-perception out there that insurance is based on market value and not the reconstruction cost. The problem is that the reconstruction costs keep going up,” he said. Pomeroy, a former state insurance commissioner in North Dakota and the former president of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) says he hopes to roll out earthquake insurance products later this year with as little as a 5% deductible. “Some people don’t like the high deductible, but if you’re uninsured for earthquake damage, you have a 100% deductible.”

Ibrahim Almufti, a structural engineer at Arup in San Francisco, says given the sizable deductible for most insurance policies, either offered through the CEA or elsewhere, it makes better sense for homeowners in the most vulnerable areas to spend the money upgrading their home seismically. Search and rescue support workers embrace after rescuing a survivor at Oakland’s Cypress Freeway.

“My advice to my clients is not to buy earthquake insurance but invest it in your home yourself,” he said.

Hemant Shah, the founder of RMS, who was a student at Stanford University during the 1989 quake, disagrees, but he’s not surprised to hear the advice. “It’s a classic dilemma for homeowners,” he said. “The costs are here and now and the benefits are in the future.”

That’s just what Melissa Clyde Baylis, who lives in Pleasanton, just east of the Bay Area, is thinking.

A teenager living in Oakland at the time of the quake, she now lives in a home built in 1994, after both the Loma Prieta and Northridge quakes led to stronger building codes. As for earthquake insurance, she and other family members have opted to skip it entirely given the expense.

“We will just take our chances,” she said.

‘It Will Happen Here’: Washington Coast School Builds Nation’s First Tsunami Refuge

By Sandi Doughton

Emergency Management Magazine, June 10, 2016

(TNS) – The first students to race up the stairs at Ocosta Elementary School’s new gym and tsunami refuge were so excited, it took teachers a while to corral them into orderly lines on the rooftop.

“It’s really cool to finally see kids up here,” Paula Akerlund said, as the third-graders jostled and joked and tried to peer over the tall parapet on a sunny spring afternoon.

Akerlund is superintendent of the Ocosta School District, headquartered near Westport in Washington state a scant half-mile from the Pacific Ocean. On Saturday, she will preside over a dedication ceremony for what — on the outside — looks pretty much like any modern school complex.

What’s unique about this gym is mostly hidden from view: tons of concrete and steel that make it the first structure in the nation designed to withstand a tsunami and provide a safe haven from the rushing waters.

“This is a historic building, in this little town on the coast of Washington,” Akerlund said. “All the best science we know today and all the best structural engineering that we have are in that building.”

With the junior-senior high school on the same campus, all the district’s 700 students and staff can take shelter on the roof.

The structure was designed to accommodate 1,000 people comfortably, and is strong enough to hold at least twice that many.

“It could easily fit 2,000 packed in shoulder to shoulder,” said Cale Ash, principal at Degenkolb Engineers in Seattle and lead structural engineer on the project.

The new school and gym are anchored by 169 pilings sunk up to 50 feet deep. Each corner of the flat-roofed gym is dominated by a massive staircase constructed of 14-inch-thick concrete with 50,000 pounds of rebar. Steel beams 3 feet wide crisscross the gym's ceiling for extra strength.

Engineers factored in safety margins to withstand battering by the immense loads of trees, rubble and other debris tsunamis can carry.

The pilings are deep enough to hold firm even if the water scours out the soil and breaks through the lower portion of the building.

Extra-wide stairs

The staircases are extra wide, so people will be able to get to safety quickly, Ash said.

The roof sits 53 feet above sea level. That's well above the 40-foot surges predicted in the vicinity by worst-case tsunami models. The 6-foot parapet provides an additional layer of protection to prevent the water from sweeping people off the roof — as happened in Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Akerlund took charge of the district shortly after the Japan disaster. Images of the tsunami tossing cars like toys, pulverizing homes and sweeping ships inland were fresh in everyone's minds.

"You just think: Well, that could happen here," she said. "It will happen here."

The Ocosta school complex sits on a peninsula surrounded by water with no high ground nearby.

A magnitude 9 Cascadia megaquake, which is predicted to hit the area someday, will destroy roads and bridges and cause the ground to drop by 6 feet or more. The tsunami will roll ashore about 20 minutes later.

"You're not going to be able to drive anywhere," Akerlund said.

The district's old evacuation plan was to herd the students to the second floor of the high school. But that building opened in the late 1980s and might not survive the earthquake, let alone the tsunami.

"That's the thing that wakes you up at 3 in the morning," Akerlund said.

So she turned to the community.

It was clear the old elementary school needed to be replaced, she said. Modern building codes require any new school to be earthquake resistant. Reinforcing a portion of the complex — the gym — to also serve as a tsunami-evacuation structure had never been done before.

"Everybody was worried the cost was going to be astronomical," said Chuck Wallace, deputy director of emergency management for Grays Harbor County.

But the premium proved to be only about $2 million, or less than 15 percent of the total project cost of $16 million.

"When you consider that the building is designed to save a thousand people or more, the cost per person is not very high," Ash said.

Despite the region's stagnant economy, residents overwhelmingly approved a levy to pay for the project.

"People made a big sacrifice of their tax dollars to make this happen," Akerlund said.

The refuge is not just for students and staff, she added. It's intended to be accessible by anyone nearby when the quake and tsunami strike.

"We would never, ever turn anyone away," Akerlund said. "It's actually the reverse: Get as many people as you can here, as quickly as you can."

The external stairway doors are normally locked, but several triggers will open them automatically, including a tsunami alert or power outage. School personnel can also open them with the push of a button.

If all else fails, there's a "break-glass-in-emergency" lever mounted outside each entrance, with battery-powered backup and lights.

And teenagers take note: Video cameras are positioned to capture evidence of late-night mischief.

Emergency stash

The district also plans to stash enough emergency supplies on the roof to last for several days.

The Ocosta dedication comes on the heels of this week's four-day exercise organized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to practice for a Cascadia megaquake and tsunami.

FEMA estimates 10,000 people or more could die in the tsunami, depending on what time of year the quake strikes.

The Ocosta tsunami haven is a good start, but thousands of people remain at risk across the region, Akerlund said.

The city of Long Beach is considering construction of a 30-foot-tall berm, or artificial hill, for tsunami evacuation. And the Quinault Indian Nation plans a four-story parking garage at its Quinault Beach Resort and Casino in Ocean Shores that could also serve as a tsunami refuge.

But according to one analysis, it would take more than 50 tsunami-evacuation structures to provide safe havens for everyone in the highest-risk zones of Grays Harbor and Pacific counties.

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ZIKA VIRUS

Officials Preparing For Zika Virus To Spread In The U.S.

By Sabrina Tavernise

New York Times, June 10, 2016

WASHINGTON — The federal government is preparing to release a proposal for responding to the first homegrown cases of the Zika virus, health officials said Friday.

The 60-page document is a blueprint for action when the first cases of locally transmitted Zika occur in the continental United States. Officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention could not say when it would be made public and emphasized that it was a working draft that could change based on input from state officials.

Sylvia Mathews Burwell, the secretary of Health and Human Services, and Dr. Thomas Frieden, the director of the C.D.C., spoke by video conference on Thursday with state governors about the plan. On Friday, experts with the C.D.C. planned to talk with state health departments.

The Zika virus is transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito — a bug that is found in the United States mostly in the South and Southwest, though its range can spread in summer. So far no one has been infected with Zika by a mosquito in the continental United States, but health experts expect it to happen.

The health experts do not expect there to be an explosive Zika virus transmission like the recent one in Brazil because many homes in the United States are air-conditioned and keep their windows closed. Many also have screened windows that keep mosquitoes out. The United States is also much less densely populated than the areas of Brazil where the outbreak of the Zika virus occurred.

Many health experts worry, however, that a Zika virus outbreak could be difficult to fight because 80 percent of the people infected with it experience no symptoms.

“If we have a homegrown case, that’s a game changer,” said Dr. Thomas E. Dobbs III, Mississippi’s epidemiologist, in a telephone interview. “The real challenge,” he said, is that “if only 20 percent of people have notable symptoms, what about the 80 percent who don’t?”

Zika causes debilitating birth defects, including abnormally small heads and damaged brains from a condition called microcephaly. Health officials are focusing on protecting pregnant women from exposure to mosquitoes or people infected with the Zika virus. The disease can be sexually transmitted, too.

The government’s response plan includes helping states define the geographic boundaries where transmission of the virus has occurred and making sure that states reach pregnant women and their doctors in the infected areas to warn them. The C.D.C. will also make sure that any Zika-infected pregnant women are entered into the agency’s registry so the cases can be monitored and tracked after the babies are born.

The C.D.C. will also deploy multidisciplinary rapid response teams. Those teams will provide technical and logistical expertise, epidemiology, laboratory services and vector control, which is the term for controlling animals or insects that transmit disease.

The C.D.C. has used rapid response teams for years to track diseases of all sorts, from E. coli outbreaks in fast-food restaurants to hospital infections.

Many states have been actively preparing already. This winter, Florida declared a state of emergency in the counties that had Zika cases in people who had become infected while traveling abroad. In Mississippi, health experts have been gathering mosquito samples in five places in every county since May, Dr. Dobbs said. So far, no Aedes aegypti mosquitoes have turned up, he said.

“This has really jarred people out of any type of complacency they had,” said Joseph M. Conlon, a retired Navy entomologist who is a technical adviser to the American Mosquito Control Association, based in Mount Laurel, N.J. “They’ve gotten into planning mode big time.”

In states like Mississippi, where poverty and modest tax bases make mosquito control spotty, contracts with private vector-control companies are being put in place. These companies are commonly used in states that are plagued by hurricanes, Dr. Conlon said.

Dr. Dobbs of Mississippi said the state was currently negotiating with two private vector-control companies.

CDC Director Visits Puerto Rico Amid Zika Outbreak

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is in Puerto Rico to discuss the U.S. territory’s response to an outbreak of the Zika virus.

Tom Frieden met with Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla behind closed doors Friday. It is his second visit to the island in recent months.

Puerto Rico is reporting 149 new cases of the mosquito-borne virus in the past week. The island has more than 1,500 cases, including 182 in pregnant women. A total of 40 people have been hospitalized.

Zika can cause fetal death and severe brain defects in the children of women infected during pregnancy. The World Health Organization has recommended that women living in areas where Zika is spreading consider delaying pregnancies.

The outbreak has also hurt tourism in Puerto Rico.

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CDC: Map Zika In States To Prepare For Outbreaks

By Tom Howell Jr.

Washington Times, June 12, 2016

The Obama administration says it doesn't expect the Zika virus to blanket whole states if and when mosquitoes begin to spread the virus on the U.S. mainland, though it wants state officials to map outbreaks so locals can protect themselves.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recorded nearly 700 travel-related cases in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, including nearly a dozen through sexual transmission. Yet the agency expects Zika to circulate on its own this summer, when Aedes mosquitoes flourish and start biting.

In a conference call, CDC officials said transmission in the continental U.S. should be "geographically limited" to relatively small areas, compared with Latin America and the Caribbean.

The CDC has recorded more than 1,300 locally acquired cases in the U.S. territories, mainly in Puerto Rico, and an outbreak in Brazil has been linked to an uptick in the rate of babies born with abnormally small heads, a condition known as microcephaly.

Local transmission will most likely hit Texas, Florida and other states along the Gulf of Mexico, based on previous outbreaks of dengue and chikungunya, which are ferried by the same type of mosquito as Zika.

But Zika is the first mosquito-borne illness to be linked to birth defects, and it has never hit the U.S. mainland before, officials said.

"There's a lot we still don't know about Zika virus," said Peggy Honein, a CDC epidemiologist.

The agency urged local officials Friday to report positive Zika tests right away and determine whether the infection is related to travel or sexual transmission. If those can be ruled out, local surveillance teams should monitor family members and surrounding households to see if the virus spreads.

The CDC said it is issuing fact sheets in multiple languages to make sure people who don't speak English are aware of Zika and ways to avoid mosquito bites.

The government wants to be prepared for the emerging threat, particularly after the Ebola scare of 2014, when the death of a Liberian man at a Texas hospital exposed gaps in reporting and forced states to scramble to set up quarantine rules.

Dr. Robert Quigley, senior vice president at International SOS, a company that advises clients on global medical and security issues, said the government seems to be ahead of the private sector in its response to Zika.

"I would have to say that typically, on any issue, the government tends to lag behind, just because of the bureaucracy," he said.

He cited a February report in the Military Times that said pregnant family members of Defense Department employees or active-duty personnel stationed in affected areas could relocate voluntarily.

Private-sector clients, meanwhile, are still trying to hammer out policies that protect pregnant women and other employees, while remaining competitive in their respective markets.

"What they all want to know is, 'What is the benchmark, what is everyone else in our sector doing?'" Dr. Quigley said.

While the federal government outlines its policy, lawmakers on Capitol Hill have not agreed on the amount of funding needed to prepare for Zika and implement the administration's plans.

President Obama in February requested nearly $2 billion to combat the virus at home and abroad, yet congressional Republican leaders have forged plans that offer much less.

The Senate approved $1.1 billion in emergency funding that isn't offset with cuts elsewhere in the federal budget, and the House moved to take $622 million from the lingering Ebola response in West Africa and other health accounts to address the emerging threat.

Sen. Marco Rubio, Florida Republican, urged negotiators from both chambers to fund what Mr. Obama requested.

"As you know, I supported fully funding the fight against Zika with emergency funds to the amount of $1.9 billion, which was calculated by experts in federal public health agencies as the appropriate amount of funds to successfully protect the public health of our country against the imposing threat of Zika," Mr. Rubio wrote Thursday in a letter to all 33 conferees. "I urge you to consider these specific requests as you negotiate the final legislation through this conference as quickly as possible."

WHO Clarifies Zika Pregnancy Guidance – Again

By Sandee Lamotte

CNN, June 11, 2016

(CNN)Are you considering getting pregnant and live in an area where Zika is actively circulating? Then the World Health Organization wants you to do the following:

"Seek counseling from your country's health services about the risks of a pregnancy, what your options are, what support services are available, and so on," WHO spokesperson Nyka Alexander told CNN. "Women and their partners should be provided with evidence-based information to enable them to make informed choices about delaying a pregnancy or becoming pregnant."

Contrary to news reports last Friday, including that of CNN, the WHO says it is not advising couples living in Zika hot zones to delay having children.

"Whether and when to become pregnant should be a personal choice, made on the basis of information and access to affordable, quality health services," Alexander said.

Clear as mud?

Corrections are meant to clarify, not confuse. And that's exactly what the World Health Organization says it meant to do last week when it sent media an email updating the previous week's guidance on Zika and sex.

"Men and women of reproductive age living in affected areas should be informed and orientated to consider delaying pregnancy," said the email, with bolding as shown.

"This was the original intention of the guidance," the email continued. "The correction makes this more clear."

Based on that language, CNN, The New York Times and other international news outlets released stories saying the WHO was advising couples living in one of the 50 countries and territories where Zika is active to consider delaying pregnancy.

The World Health Organization is now saying media misunderstood that statement.

"Some have interpreted the language as meaning that WHO is recommending that couples living in areas of Zika should delay pregnancy," said Alexander. "Instead, WHO is advising that they receive counseling from health care providers about risks of sexual transmission of Zika, and risks of Zika for pregnant women."

"Women should be informed about the options to consider before conceiving, including delaying pregnancy," Alexander continued. "The misinterpretations are understandable and we will be clarifying the language in the guidance."

Guidance for travelers

On May 30, the WHO updated its guidance on sex and Zika for travelers. Men or women who visit any country with a current outbreak of Zika should wait a full eight weeks, instead of four, after their return to have unprotected sex or attempt to conceive a baby.

That holds true even if there are no active symptoms of the disease, as only one out of five people with Zika experience symptoms.

Men with known Zika-like symptoms should wait a full six months before attempting to conceive, said the WHO.

Couples Living In Zika Areas Should Delay Pregnancy, WHO Advises

By Steven Reinberg

HealthDay, June 10, 2016

FRIDAY, June 10, 2016 (HealthDay News) – Couples who are trying to have children and live in Zika-affected areas should consider delaying pregnancy to avoid having babies born with birth defects, U.N. health officials now recommend.

The new guideline replaces an earlier one that suggested women planning to become pregnant should wait at least eight weeks before trying to conceive if they or their partner live in – or are returning from Zika-affected regions.

Mosquito bites remain the most common source of infection of the virus that causes the severe birth defect microcephaly, which results in babies with abnormally small heads and brains. But transmission of the virus through sex is more common than previously thought, World Health Organization officials have said.

In the United States, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has refrained from recommending that couples delay pregnancy in Zika-affected areas, although Puerto Rico's Health Secretary has issued advice that is similar to the new WHO guideline, The New York Times reported.

Although the new WHO recommendation doesn't specify how long couples should delay pregnancy, the recommendation "means delaying until we have more answers, more evidence, more science," WHO spokeswoman Nyka Alexander told the Times.

However, she added that WHO is only suggesting, and not telling, couples in Zika-affected areas to delay pregnancy.

The vast majority of Zika infections have occurred in Latin America, with Brazil the hot zone with an estimated 5,000 cases of microcephaly. There have been no reports of Zika-induced microcephaly contracted in the United States, although Zika is now circulating in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa.

And U.S. health officials have said they expect to see Zika infections in Gulf Coast states such as Florida, Louisiana and Texas as mosquito season picks up.

Last month, U.S. health officials reported that the number of pregnant women in the United States infected with the Zika virus had tripled because cases were now being counted in a more comprehensive way.

So far, an estimated 280 infected women are being followed in the United States and its territories, according to two registries that have been created by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Previously, only cases of pregnant women who had Zika-related symptoms or pregnancy complications were being tallied, CDC officials said. But recently published reports have found that some pregnant women show no symptoms of Zika infection, yet still give birth to babies with microcephaly.

To limit any potential spread of Zika virus via mosquitoes, health officials on the federal, state and local level are deploying a three-pronged strategy: improving mosquito control; expanding their ability to test for Zika; and urging the public to protect themselves against mosquitoes.

Women of child-bearing age who live in an active Zika region should protect themselves from mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, using mosquito repellent when outside, and staying indoors as much as possible, according to the CDC.

President Barack Obama has asked Congress to allocate $1.9 billion to combat the Zika threat, but lawmakers have yet to agree on a spending package.

White House Rolls Out Zika Crisis Plan

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, June 10, 2016

The White House is amplifying its efforts to contain the chaos from a nearly inevitable outbreak of Zika virus in the U.S. in upcoming weeks.

Senior health officials outlined the national Zika response plan for the first time Thursday during a video briefing with officials from nine states deemed most vulnerable to an outbreak.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is arming the states with a step-by-step emergency plan to respond to the first locally transmitted cases of Zika. The virus, which is spread by mosquitoes, is expected to begin hitting Southern U.S. states later this month.

The document, which the CDC says is still a draft, includes “detailed guidance” about the protocol for federal and state officials when Zika spreads to the U.S. for the first time.

The document has not yet been made public, according to a CDC spokeswoman, though some details were included in a release from the Obama administration late Thursday.

The up-front coordination on Zika is a clear attempt by the administration to avoid the 2014 crisis that stemmed from the first U.S. case of the Ebola virus.

Ebola was an international disaster for more than a year when a U.S. nurse became infected by a patient living in Texas — a situation that exposed massive communication gaps between federal, state and local health officials. For months afterward, government officials on all levels took part in finger-pointing about the outbreak.

States like Florida have already made clear they are anxious about the impending spread of the disease. The National Governors Association recently declared that “the nation is on the threshold of a public health emergency.”

Zika has already arrived in droves in the U.S. Many states are dealing with dozens, if not hundreds of Zika cases. U.S. states have reported 691 known cases of Zika, according to CDC data from June 8. Puerto Rico has more than 1,300 cases.

So far, the majority of the White House’s communication about Zika has been urging Congress to approve new funding to help speed up testing, vaccine development and mosquito-fighting efforts. Senate and House leadership began talks this week to create a joint funding package.

Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell did make a pitch for Congress to approve funding during the call but focused on what states needed to do to prepare themselves.

Burwell urged states to quickly step up their anti-mosquito efforts while also boosting public outreach, diagnostics and ensuring the safety of the blood supply.

The call included six governors as well as officials from three additional states, all but two of them led by Republicans. The states are Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Georgia, Hawaii and California.

Senators: Bill Will Give States, Cities Tools To Fight Zika

By Associated Press

Associated Press, June 11, 2016

PORTLAND, Maine — A group of senators, including Maine's Angus King, has introduced a bill they say will give states and municipalities tools to fight the Zika virus.

King, an independent, submitted the bill along with Democrat Bill Nelson of Florida and Republican Richard Burr of North Carolina. The senators say the Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act would reauthorize public health tools that help control mosquitoes.

The senators say up to $130 million in grants to support state and local mosquito control work will be authorized every year under the bill.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says more than 1,700 cases of the mosquito-borne Zika virus have been reported in the country and its territories. Zika is linked to neurological disorders and the birth defect microcephaly.

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Congress Spars As Zika Threat Grows

By Columbus Dispatch Editorial Board

Columbus (OH) Dispatch, June 12, 2016

It's disappointing that congressional Republicans are holding up federal funding needed to stop the spread of the Zika virus. Every day that passes without a full-on assault in the research lab and with education allows a frightening health threat to grow.

Just as federal response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic was slowed by an abdication of leadership, political ideology is trumping public health with Zika funding. With 14 confirmed cases in Ohio, including one woman from central Ohio who tested positive in late May after a trip to the Dominican Republic, there's no time to waste in combating the mosquito-borne virus.

Republicans say they are worried about handing President Barack Obama a "blank check," which he could use for other purposes. This president has acted autocratically when he can't get his way with Congress. But in this case, the president is right: His request to Congress is based on public-health assessments to prevent the virus from spreading extensively in the U.S. A vaccine appears likely within the year.

"We didn't just choose $1.9 billion from the top of our heads," Obama said.

It would cost much more to educate and provide medical care should thousands of babies be born with microcephaly, a birth defect linked to Zika that causes an abnormally small head and brain. For most people, Zika is a mere annoyance. Some people don't even experience symptoms, while others report a mild fever, skin rashes, muscle and joint pain, malaise headaches or conjunctivitis. But for women who are pregnant or hope to be, Zika is terrifying.

The House allocated only $622 million (most transferred from Ebola funds), while the Senate in late May approved $1.1 billion — this after four months of wrangling with the White House. Congressional Republicans said these dollars are sufficient to get efforts started on a rapidly approaching emergency. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell promises House and Senate negotiators will work to reconcile their legislation to provide up to $1.1 billion.

Congress should follow the guidance of public-health experts in allocating the proper amount of money and not allow partisanship and ideological budget differences to let Zika advance. Congress can and should hold Obama accountable for properly spending the money. But if Congress dithers, the public can and should hold its members accountable, too.

Congressman Skimps On Zika Funding, Then Complains About Needing More Money

By Jennifer Bendery, White House And Congressional Reporter, The Huffington Post

Huffington Post, June 10, 2016

WASHINGTON – Rep. Ted Poe (R-Texas) complained this week that his district isn't getting enough federal grant money to combat the Zika virus from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – the same agency he's repeatedly voted to underfund as it tries to prevent an outbreak.

"We are vulnerable to the threat of Zika virus for several reasons," Poe said in a statement on Tuesday, referencing a letter he recently sent to the CDC. "Both mosquito vectors that carry Zika virus are present in Harris County. Located on the Gulf Coast, we have experienced high flood waters in recent months. In addition, there are also areas of our community that are poverty stricken. Each of these factors create conditions that are ideal for mosquitoes to breed."

"The CDC must work with our community both now and in the future to address this flawed grant system and help allocate federal dollars for Harris County's public health response," he added.

But Poe was among those who voted last month to give the CDC just one-third of the $1.9 billion it requested to protect the public from a Zika outbreak. The bill he voted for, which came three months after the CDC asked for aid, also provided just one-fifth the amount the agency requested for its overall public health activities.

Beyond that, the Texas congressman has voted six times to block the full $1.9 billion in emergency resources for Zika. Those votes were tied to his support for the GOP's transportation and housing spending bill; a chemical regulation bill; a separate Zika funding bill; a defense spending bill; a scholarship reauthorization bill; and a bill related to privacy for angel investors.

For good measure, Poe also voted against letting Washington D.C. use local funds to combat Zika.

A spokeswoman for Poe did not respond to a request for comment.

Neither the House nor the Senate fully funded the CDC's request. House Republicans passed their bill to give the agency $622 million, while the Senate passed a $1.1 billion bill. They'll be hashing out the differences between their two bills in the coming weeks.

The CDC has activated a Level 1 response to a possible Zika outbreak, the highest response level at the agency. Top public health officials warned in April that the mosquito-borne virus is "scarier than we initially thought," and CDC Director Tom Frieden made an emotional plea to Congress last month to fully fund the prevention efforts.

"Imagine that you're standing by and you see someone drowning, and you have the ability to stop them from drowning, but you can't," Frieden said at a National Press Club event. "Now, multiply that by 1,000 or 100,000. That's what it feels like to know how to change the course of an epidemic and not be able to do it."

The lifetime cost of care for just one baby with microcephaly, the birth defect caused by the Zika virus, is estimated at as much as $10 million.

House Passes Puerto Rico Rescue Bill; McConnell's Trump Frustrations; Blunt To Push For Full $1.1 Billion In Zika Funding

By Kelsey Snell

Washington Post, June 10, 2016

HOUSE PASSES PUERTO RICO RESCUE PACKAGE: In a rare bipartisan move on Thursday the House voted 297-127 to approve a financial rescue package for Puerto Rico. The legislation allows the troubled island territory to accept new government regulation in exchange for a $72 billion debt restructuring plan. Power Post's Mike DeBonis has more:

Thursday's House vote came ahead of a crucial July 1 deadline, when the territory is poised to default on $2 billion in bond payments. The Senate, however, has yet to act.

Lead sponsor Rep. Sean Duffy (R-Wis.) said that unless the rescue bill becomes law, "the Puerto Rican government is likely to collapse, participants in public pension plans will be terribly damaged, and almost all bondholders could lose their investments.

"Absent this bill," he said, "almost nobody wins and nearly everybody loses."

McCONNELL'S RAW TRUMP ASSESMENT: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has been growing increasingly frustrated when reporters ask him about the latest controversies over the presumptive GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump and he seemed to let loose this week in an interview with Bloomberg Politics. McConnell said that while he's still okay with the nominee, he's got a lot of concerns about Trump's understanding of policy.

"He needs someone highly experienced and very knowledgeable because it's pretty obvious he doesn't know a lot about the issues," McConnell said. "You see that in the debates in which he's participated. It's why I have argued to him publicly and privately that he ought to use a script more often—there is nothing wrong with having prepared texts."

The Kentucky Republican's frustration with Trump has been clear, especially this week after Trump's tarring of Judge Gonzalo Curiel as biased against him because the Indiana-born former prosecutor is "Mexican." Still, McConnell said he remains "comfortable" backing Trump.

"For all of his obvious shortcomings, Donald Trump is certainly a different direction, and I think if he is in the White House he'll have to respond to the right-of-center world which elected him, and the things that we believe in. So I'm comfortable supporting him," McConnell said.

BLUNT TO PUSH FOR FULL $1.1 BILLION IN ZIKA FUNDING: The Senate voted this week to formally begin working out a compromise with the House on how to fund the battle against Zika. Both chambers have already passed funding bills but the House legislation provides $622 million through the end of 2016 while the Senate plan would provide $1.1 billion through Sept. 2017. Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), one of the top negotiators on the Senate side, told Morning Consult that he plans to make sure the House gets on board with the extra money.

Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) said Thursday he thought it would be possible to convince House Republicans to agree to the Senate's $1.1 billion legislation, in part because it would settle the question of how to fund the fight against Zika, a topic of discussion on Capitol Hill for the past four months. And the Senate bill comes with the added bonus of funding that fight until September 2017.

"The difference in the two numbers is their number only went through September the 30th of this year, and our number goes through Sept. 30 of next year," Blunt said. "I'm hopeful that everybody will decide it's better to deal with this right now rather than continue to deal with it for the rest of the summer."

Rubio Calls On GOP To Support Obama's Nearly $2 Billion Zika Plan

By Juliegrace Brufke

Daily Caller, June 9, 2016

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio urged 33 of his Republican colleagues in the upper chamber to support President Barack Obama's call for $1.9 billion in funding to fight the Zika virus.

The Senate had approved $1.1 billion in funding while GOP members in the House were calling for $622 million, which reallocates funding left over from the Ebola outbreak.

"As you know, I supported fully funding the fight against Zika with emergency funds to the amount of $1.9 billion, which was calculated by experts in federal public health agencies as the appropriate amount of funds to successfully protect the public health of our country against the imposing threat of Zika," Rubio wrote in the letter sent Thursday. "I urge you to consider these specific requests as you negotiate the final legislation through this conference as quickly as possible."

Rubio argued Florida and Puerto Rico will be hit the hardest, therefore he believes they need the funding as summer mosquito season reaches its full force.

The Senate is slated to vote on a larger spending bill, which includes funding for the virus, in the coming days.

Zika has been linked with serious birth defects and was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organization earlier this year.

Ted Cruz Didn't Bother To Vote On A Bill To Fight The Zika Virus As Texas Scrambles To Prevent An Outbreak

By Bethania Palma Markus

Raw Story, June 10, 2016

Texas is scrambling to stop a potential Zika emergency after floodwaters left pools of standing water — but when it came time for Texas Sen. Ted Cruz to vote on federal funding to fight the virus, he was no where to be found, according to RealClearPolitics.

Gov. Greg Abbott this week asked President Barack Obama for a disaster declaration because of widespread storm damage and flooding, Bryan College Station Eagle reports. The Republican governor's request comes as local officials worry resulting pools of stagnant water could create a Zika virus outbreak.

KBTX reports that while no declaration has yet been issued, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) workers were on the ground this week. And while Texas officials are scrambling to deal with the Zika threat, Republicans on Capitol Hill have been blocking a federal bill aimed at fighting the virus.

Cruz was one of three senators who did not vote on a bill to spend $1.1 billion to fight it.

"With all of the flooding, all of the rainfall in our area, this is a state of emergency," Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said, according to the Houston Press. "What we don't want to do, we don't want to wait like we did with AIDS and HIV, assuming that it impacted people on the other side of the globe, were slow to respond, and then it became a global epidemic. We want to get out in front of this."

Turner is urging Abbott to declare a public health emergency to counter spreading of the virus.

Twenty-three Republicans voted to join Democrats to pass the Zika bill and 29 voted against it. Cruz and two others, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and Wyoming Republican Mike Enzi did not case votes.

Abbott, in turn, is asking Obama to declare a disaster to release funding to help the state cope with the storm fallout.

"I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments, and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary to save lives; to protect property, public health and safety; or to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster," Abbott wrote in a letter to Obama.

Severe storms and flooding in Texas have resulted in a large amount stagnant water — which attracts mosquitoes that potentially carry and spread Zika.

Abbott's request comes amid 1,444 evacuations along with hundreds of other rescue and emergency actions statewide, including fatalities.

U.S. Senate Republicans blocked a stand-alone $1.9 billion bill requested by Obama to fight the Zika virus, the Hill reported.

Weeks later, little progress has been made.

"Republicans and Democrats worked together to pass a bill here in the Senate to provide funding and resources," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Wednesday, according to the Hill. "The House passed its own version. We're ready to go to conference and complete a final bill. I'll have more to say on that soon."

According to Patch, the state is working with the federal government to secure funding to help communities fight the virus.

"Texas is working with our local and federal partners to ensure Texans are protected from the Zika virus," the governor said in a prepared statement. "With the recent floods, and as we enter the height of mosquito season, I encourage Texans to take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito exposure and heed all warnings and recommendations from health officials."

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, Democrats have set a floor of $1.1 billion in funding to fight Zika while Republicans have agreed to $622 million. The Hill reports it remains unclear how the two parties will work out their differences.

Official Map Finds Zika-transmitting Mosquitoes In Much Of U.S.

By Sebastien Malo

Reuters, June 10, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Florida Health Warriors Deploy In War On Zika

By Leila Macor

AFP, June 11, 2016

Miami (AFP) – Carlos Varas inspects the front yards of Miami homes armed with larvicide, pesticide and what looks like a long-armed eyedropper. His mission: destroy the Aedes aegypti mosquito that spreads the Zika virus.

Varas reaches into a leafy garden and sucks up water from tiny pools drop by drop. He examines the sample and grins: inside, tiny critters wiggle around nervously.

They are the larvae of the feared Aedes aegypti.

"We look for standing water or flying mosquitoes," Varas told AFP.

If they find larvae they spread out grain larvicide with a scoop. "If we find adult mosquitoes in the area we spray, and we try to eliminate the sources where they are breeding," he said.

The mosquito-borne Zika virus has been linked to a surge in cases of the birth defect microcephaly – babies born with abnormally small heads and deformed brains – after their mothers were infected with the virus. There is no vaccine for Zika.

Zika has spread rapidly across Latin America and the Caribbean in the past months, and experts warn that the continental United States will likely see an increase in cases as summer begins in the northern hemisphere.

Florida's hot, wet climate "has all the environmental conditions for an epidemic," said Carlos Espinal, head of the Florida International University Global Health Consortium and an expert in tropical diseases.

– Primed for an epidemic –

The best way to stop the spread of Zika is to kill off Aedes aegypti mosquitos, which breed in even tiny pools of stagnant water – the mammoth task facing Varas and his fellow inspectors.

But given the size of Florida "there will not be enough inspectors to cover the territory," Espinal told AFP.

"This is a job that has to be done not only by the health service, but by the community."

Coordinated work between community leaders and county health officials to destroy the Aedes aegypti larvae is "very important," he said.

Health authorities are especially frustrated by Washington's delay in releasing more federal funds to fight the virus.

Tom Frieden, head of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is working feverishly to convince Congress to approve the $1.9 billion to fight Zika that President Barack Obama asked for in February.

"Imagine this: You're standing by a lake and you see someone drowning. You have the ability to save that person, but your hands are tied," Frieden wrote recently on the White House blog.

"The ability to prevent dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of severe birth defects creates a special responsibility – every child protected is a tragedy prevented."

In Brazil, some 1.5 million people have been infected with the virus, and nearly 1,300 babies have been born with microcephaly since the outbreak of Zika began there last year.

The virus, which usually causes only mild, flu-like symptoms, can also trigger adult-onset neurological problems such as Guillain-Barre Syndrome, which can cause paralysis and death. In an added complication, there is limited, but growing evidence that Zika can be transmitted sexually.

As of June 1 the CDC had registered 618 cases of Zika infection in the continental United States – all of them people who contracted the virus abroad.

The Florida Health Department as of June 3 registered more than 170 Zika cases in the state, nearly 40 of them in pregnant women.

Governor Rick Scott said that Florida residents must prepare for a Zika outbreak with the same diligence that they prepare for a hurricane.

"We don't yet know for certain what will happen with this virus, but we owe our citizens a vigorous and thorough preparation effort at the federal level to best protect their health," he said.

"Washington must put politics aside and agree to a comprehensive plan to protect and respond to the spread of Zika in America."

4th Case Of Zika Reported In Delaware; Man Had Been Abroad

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

DOVER, Del. — Public health officials say a fourth case of Zika infection has been confirmed in Delaware resident who had traveled abroad.

The Division of Public Health said in a news release Friday that the Kent County man had traveled abroad in May and acquired the mosquito-borne virus.

International health officials say Zika can cause fetal death and severe brain defects in the children of women infected during pregnancy. Zika can also be spread by men via vaginal, anal, and oral sexual activity.

Health officials recommend condom use for men who have been diagnosed with Zika virus.

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OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Quake Simulation Exposes Cracks As City Prepares For The Big One

By Bianca Pahl

Portland (OR) Tribune, June 10, 2016

Fallen bridges, collapsed buildings, downed utility lines and thousands of casualties are just some of the things that will occur when a massive earthquake hits the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the Northwest coast and reduces most of the Willamette Valley to rubble.

Are we ready for that?

"We're really not ready," said Carmen Merlo, director of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Management.

At 9 a.m. Wednesday, June 8, representatives of several city bureaus took part in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Cascadia Rising quake simulation to help local agencies and officials get ready for The Big One. More than two dozen agencies across Oregon were part of the exercise designed to prepare first-responders and others to deal with the effects of a massive quake.

The simulation took place in PBEM's emergency coordination center, which was built to withstand a 9.0 magnitude quake, making it the most logical place for city officials to gather after a disaster.

Goals for the two-day simulation were to test emergency plans, identify gaps in policies and procedures, better understand where limited resources should be focused, train staff and provide "situational awareness," Merlo said.

Where the city failed to meet Merlo's expected level of preparation was building codes, old infrastructure, training and drills, tracking resources, communication to the public and the lack of "culture preparedness."

"There's always room for improvements," Merlo said. "I'm pleased with what I saw, but clearly the fact that we don't get to do this often for a real emergency, there is a lack of common understanding around protocols and processes."

Merlo said the simulation emphasized the downtown area because she predicts it will be most vulnerable during an earthquake, mostly because of the density of high-rise buildings and because it's the "economic engine of the city." It focused on everything that could go wrong in the city during a major disaster.

"Every part of the city has its own unique challenges," Merlo said.

'Small incremental improvements'

In the coordination center, four long rows of desks with computers and landline phones were ready for staff. Large television monitors with maps and status updates were mounted on each wall. Ten teams of bureau members were assigned to different responsibilities. One of the teams was in charge of planning, another handled finances and another was a liaison to other agencies.

As the simulation began, chaos unfolded. Monitors communicated the amount of the dead and the wounded. The map lit up with colored dots indicating which buildings and bridges had collapsed. Areas were marked as inspected, restricted and unsafe.

The scenario: Within the first hour, the nearly 500,000-square-foot Mall 205 had collapsed in Southeast Portland, 300 people were injured, some hospitals were being evacuated and building damage was estimated at $197.8 million.

Merlo said the exercise also assumed that all Portland-area bridges, except for the new Tilikum Crossing and the rebuilt Sellwood Bridge, would be unusable.

Team members walked the room and hovered over computers, talking with one another. Their faces displayed concentration and focus. Phone calls were made, plans were discussed and communication seemed strong. The room remained calm and productive.

During the exercise, Merlo's agency tested some new technology. A smartphone app "collector," which the agency customized to Portland's Geographic Information System, was used to quickly assess the location of damage throughout the city and help city officials communicate that location.

Merlo said the app became so "noisy with information" it was distracting. Other agencies didn't have the same customized app as PBEM, which produced another complication, said Merlo.

The other piece of technology tested was the Basic Earthquake Emergency Communication Node. Merlo mentioned there weren't enough people in the communications department using the BEECN to relay messages to the public.

It wasn't all bad, though. Merlo was impressed with all of the bureaus capability to work together and be creative in their problem solving. Merlo said, as information came in they were acting, tracking and following up "very quickly." She also said they were comfortable with the technology they used.

"We're making small incremental improvements and making progress, but it will be years, if not decades, before we can say, with a straight face, that we're ready for the kind of earthquake we're expecting," Merlo said.

Banding Together In Quake City

By Steve Duin

Oregonian, June 10, 2016

Almost a year ago, Kathryn Schulz dropped the Really Big One on those of us still napping aside the Cascadia subduction zone.

Her Pulitzer Prize-winning piece in The New Yorker described the jaw-breaking havoc that will ensue when the Earth buckles once again along "the continent's worst fault line."

There was the delicious brunch quote: "Our operating assumption," Kenneth Murphy, of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, told Schulz, "is that everything west of Interstate 5 will be toast."

There was the wrenching image of the Gearhart elementary school, which offers no escape route from the ensuing tsunami for students and teachers.

There was a fresh, and refreshing, sense of urgency regarding the catastrophic earthquake that is, roughly, 70 years overdue.

Carmen Merlo, director of the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, called the Schulz essay "a game-changer. A watershed moment. She was able to do in 10,000 words what we've been trying to do for 15 years."

Assemble the masses. Apply the cattle prod. FEMA projects the 9.0 earthquake and ensuing tsunami will kill 13,000 along the 700-mile fault line. As many as ten Portland bridges will collapse into the rivers below. It may take three months to restore electricity in the city.

"Even those numbers do not fully reflect the danger," Schulz wrote, "or, more to the point, how unprepared the Pacific Northwest is to face it."

In other words: Our move, bucko.

In the past week, 20,000 emergency responders in the Northwest were out in force for Cascadia Rising, a training exercise in the chaotic triage that will occur after the fall.

But an equally significant seismic event unfolded last Sunday when the Willamette Heights neighborhood celebrated earthquake preparedness at the Friendly House Community Center.

Five hundred 5-gallon water containers disappeared into the night. Newcomers to the party were schooled in retrofits and gas shut-off valves.

Steve Eberlein of the American Red Cross delivered his 90-minute presentation, "Prepare Out Loud."

"Two hundred and fifty people showed up," says Val Aitchison, the chief organizer of the event. "Not bad for a 100-degree day."

Willamette Heights is one of the city's more responsive and organized communities.

Two years ago, residents gathered to stop Google exec Kevin Rose from demolishing an 1892 home to build his Deku Tree Retreat. They sent the neighborhood mailman off with a $10,000 gift when he retired after 25 years.

And they're setting the pace in an arena where neighborhoods matter.

"Social influence is more impactful than media influence," Eberlein argues, and when it comes to earthquake preparedness, your friends and neighbors are the catalytic converters.

You can argue, of course – and several emergency-planning experts quietly do – that public officials could contribute far more to the cause.

Gov. Kate Brown is tweeting about Cascadia Rising, but the state is still approaching building codes and retrofits on the cheap.

Tilikum Crossing and the Sellwood Bridge will survive the quake – "Two years ago, I wouldn't have known how we would ferry people across the river," Merlo says – but the city still has 1,200 people on its waiting list for Neighborhood Emergency Teams training.

And while Portland Public Schools is rebuilding its schools to ensure they will be safely evacuated when the quake hits, Beaverton is holding its seven new schools to a higher seismic standard, making them safe for reoccupation.

Yet most of what people do or don't do to prepare for the Cascadia quake, Eberlein says, will be based on what they see and hear on their daily rounds.

"It's difficult for a government body to influence culture," Eberlein says, "and preparedness is a cultural issue. Seeing our peers change their behavior is a message that we should change ours, especially when we know better."

That's why the Red Cross wants your neighborhood, like Willamette Heights, to "Prepare Out Loud."

Don't be subtle in your stockpiling. Don't go quietly into that Go kit. Make sure you're not the only one on your block with the essential reserve in flashlights, sleeping bags, first-aid kits, water, and ham radios.

Because when the tremors end, you will lean on your neighbors and they will depend on you.

"Driving won't be an option. Phone calls won't be an option," Eberlein says. "Our ability to access the services, utilities and goods we rely on daily will be vanquished."

In the last five years, Aitchison and her friends have organized three earthquake events. Sunday was the finale, she says: "We announced to our neighbors that we're going to stop pestering you."

Willamette Heights is relatively ready for the Really Big One. If you live in Ashcreek or Alameda, Woodlawn or Woodstock, Parkrose or the Pearl, can you say the same?

No Emergency Hubs In Capitol Hill For Cascadia Rising; Organizer Hosting Disaster Preparedness Meeting

Capitol Hill (WA) Times, June 10, 2016

Capitol Hill has been left out of the region's largest regional training exercise simulating a 9.0-magnitude earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone, reportedly due to a lack of volunteers to support an emergency hub in the neighborhood, prompting Charlette LeFevre to quickly put together her own informational event on Saturday.

Led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Cascadia Rising is testing the readiness of local, state and federal agencies for a catastrophic earthquake predicted to occur anytime within the next 50 years or so. The 4-day drill will end Saturday, with residents encouraged to go to their respective community hubs 9 a.m. to noon to participate and learn what they will need to do when the big quake occurs.

Capitol Hill, First Hill and the Central District are devoid of community hubs. LeFevre, who is one of the organizers for the Capitol Hill Pride Festival, plans to use the event as a springboard for forming a Seattle Neighborhood's Actively Prepare (SNAP) group in Capitol Hill.

"Currently Capitol Hill has NO SNAP groups although in the past there were Hubs at Cal Anderson Park, Volunteer Park and Miller Playfield," according to a news release from LeFevre.

Since Capitol Hill won't be involved in Cascadia Rising, LeFevre is providing disaster preparedness information 9:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 11, at the Cal Anderson Park shelter house, as well as engaging with community members about forming a SNAP group and making the park a hub again.

The Big Quake Is In Our Future

Daily News (WA), June 12, 2016

Editor's note: Today's editorials appeared in The Wenatchee World. Editorial content from other publications is provided to give readers a sampling of regional and national opinion and does not necessarily reflect positions endorsed by the Editorial Board of The Daily News. We naive human beings spend such a short time on earth that we get a twisted concept of time. When we hear something bad happened 300 years ago, we think it ancient. When we hear it might happen again in 200 years, we shrug. When we hear it might happen in 200 years or next week, we assume 200 years is more likely.

In geologic time, that 500 years is a beat faster than a ticking clock. It is a frequent event. Our complacency is all too human and dangerous, yet we seek comfort in ignorance. Geologic disasters like massive earthquakes or volcanic eruptions are not here and now, we think. They are in history books. If they do strike, they hit the unfortunate poor in some distant and exotic land and we will watch on CNN. Even when Mount St. Helens was smoking and bulging we thought volcanic eruptions were someone else's problem. Curious people now no longer with us crept in for a closer look. We knew it could happen. We could see it. Still, we were surprised and unprepared.

The quake geologists are certain is coming will be perhaps a magnitude 9.0, more than 1,000 times stronger than the Nisqually quake of 2001 that nearly knocked down the state Capitol, or the 1872 quake near Lake Chelan that triggered slides so massive they blocked the mighty Columbia. The quake will be followed in minutes by a speeding tsunami 30- to 60-feet high that will devastate coastal communities and rip across the North Pacific. The last Cascadia megathrust hit Jan. 24, 1700, the date determined by civic records in Japan, where the resulting tsunami washed away entire villages. Geologists say such quakes occur here every 300 to 500 years.

So it is slightly comforting that this week the many agencies with responsibility in emergencies are part of an earthquake drill called Cascadia Rising. Headed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the event has as many as 20,000 participants, making it perhaps the largest disaster preparedness drill in the nation's history. They are testing command, control and coordination in a world without communication, without passable roads, without water, power, food distribution, functioning hospitals, where tens of thousands are dead or injured or missing, hazardous materials are everywhere spilled, where waves have washed much away and thousands of bridges and buildings are laid waste or sunk in the quake-liquified soil. How many of us will die in the quake?

FEMA is testing community cooperation and coordination in the face of unimaginable catastrophe. The exercise will certainly be helpful. It is a useful to consider what may happen, and what will happen. The catastrophe will bring chaos, and days and weeks when our modern, comfortable life will be forgotten.

Then again, even in relatively small disasters, almost nothing goes as expected. In this coming quake, which may be the largest natural disaster to strike North America in our history, the best of plans will likely disappear. That does not mean planning has no value, or preparing for what we think might happen will do no good.

'Any Type Of Structure Will Be Damaged' After A Mega-quake, Official Says

By Kipp Robertson

KIRO-FM Seattle (WA), June 10, 2016

The most damage done to inland cities during a massive earthquake will be from the shaking itself, and Regional Administrator of FEMA Kenneth Murphy says no structure is safe.

Scientists predict a magnitude-8.7 or higher earthquake — which is what Washington agencies have been training for all week — will shake for about five minutes. There isn't much that will go undamaged from so much shaking, Murphy told KIRO Radio's Dave Ross.

Many houses in the Northwest are woodframed. Murphy says they will have moderate damage. Older homes will have even more damage.

"Really, any type of structure will have damage," Murphy said. "A lot of things don't do well being shook for five minutes."

On the coast, a tsunami will cause even more devastation. Concerned with the safety of people in Seattle, Dave asked Murphy how far up James Street he needs to run to escape a tsunami.

"In all honesty … I don't think the power of a tsunami will reach [Seattle]," Murphy said. "The tsunami will hit the coast and islands and lose its power."

However, Murphy says it might not be a bad idea to go about a half-mile away from the Seattle waterfront, just in case.

Cascadia Tsunami Evacuees Leave All Behind

By Brian Walker

Bonner County (ID) Daily Bee, June 10, 2016

Editor's note: This story is not real.

The earthquake and tsunami didn't happen — not yet, anyway. But experts say it's only a matter of time until Cascadia Fault sets off a disaster of historic proportions on the coast that will also have a dramatic impact throughout the Northwest, including North Idaho.

Numerous agencies are responding to the fictional disaster in region-wide training exercises. The Hagadone News Network is treating these exercises as an actual news event to try to relay the importance of efficient and effective response.

COEUR d'ALENE — Audrey Hammons wept as she recounted evacuating her Seattle assisted living facility due to the earthquake and tsunami that has devastated the West Coast.

Hammons, who is battling Lou Gehrig's disease, was among about 40 seniors who arrived at a medical needs shelter on Thursday afternoon at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds after a six-hour bus ride to Coeur d'Alene.

"I'm so scared and don't have my wheelchair," she said. "I'm in pain."

Hammons said she had to leave all of her belongings behind — including her medications — as she was unexpectedly rushed to a bus.

Hammons said she didn't see any of the destruction because she was whisked from the senior facility so rapidly.

"It all happened so fast," she said. "A lot of us were just put on the bus, and that's all I really remember."

Tuesday's earthquake, which measured 9.0 on the Richter scale, was centered 95 miles east of Eugene, Ore. It caused a tsunami that has crippled the coast from northern California to British Columbia. About 13,000 people have died.

Government officials on Thursday released the latest estimated number of evacuees expected to arrive in Kootenai County at 40,000 and in Idaho 140,000. Bonner County officials estimated 3,000 evacuees would be arriving there by Thursday night, while 750 were estimated for Boundary County.

The influx of people to the area has wreaked havoc on local resources as scattered power and cellphone outages have been reported across the region. A team of ham radio operators is assisting with communication during the crisis due to cellphone problems.

The crisis is also causing heavy traffic on local roads and lines at gas stations and grocery stores as some local residents fear the influx could cause fuel and food shortages.

"Please do not travel unless needed, fuel supplies are limited," an Office of Emergency Management press release states.

Most local hotels are booked up and have increased their rates by 50 percent.

"People are looking for shelter for their pets and sleeping in cars," said Sandy Von Behren, Kootenai County's OEM director.

An estimated one million people on the coast have been displaced.

There are almost no working hospitals west of Interstate 5. It may be months before areas on the coast have power again and it may take up to a week for some residents to have power back here.

About 40 percent of the police and fire stations on the coast have been destroyed, and roughly half of the bridges have either been damaged or knocked out.

No aftershocks or damage have been reported in Idaho.

The catastrophe was caused by the rupturing of the 700-mile Cascadia Subduction Zone.

The zone averages a quake every 300 to 500 years. The last one prior to this occurred 316 years ago.

The emergency operations center (EOC) at the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office was activated on Thursday morning to coordinate relief services.

"Having enough shelter, food and water is our priority," said Jim Lyon, public information chief at the center, adding that the Idaho Army National Guard is assisting in that effort. "We want to direct people to the shelters whenever possible so we don't overwhelm our local hospitals."

Most Idaho counties, along with the states of Washington, Oregon and California, have declared a state of emergency.

Hundreds of local volunteers are staffing relief operations ranging from the EOC to the medical needs shelter organized by the Panhandle Health District and the general population shelter at the fairgrounds organized by the American Red Cross. There is also a section at the fairgrounds dedicated to pet care.

Melanie Collett, public information officer at the shelters, said the medical needs shelter is for people with non-acute medical conditions, but require medical assistance beyond what is available at the adjacent Red Cross shelter.

Hammons said she's thankful for the help.

"Everybody here has been so nice, but I don't know when I'll be able to go home," she said. "I feel lost."

While sitting beside Hammons, Shauna Miller, a volunteer with the Medical Reserve Corps, said she wanted to be a part of the relief efforts due to the magnitude of the crisis. The tsunami was comparable to the one that hit Japan in 2011 when nearly 16,000 people were killed.

"Sometimes people just need comforted," she said. "They're having emotional distress, and it's important that their needs are met."

Cascadia Rising: Days After Quake, Military Aid Would Arrive By Air

By Natalie Johnson

Centralia (WA) Chronicle, June 10, 2016

A day after local emergency responders and community members discussed how they would respond in the first three days after a catastrophic earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone, the Army and Air National Guard on Thursday rehearsed their response in the days after the last rumbles subside.

Specifically, troops roved through Western Washington looking for places to land helicopters and airplanes in order to bring food and water to stranded residents.

"We're looking for farmers' fields," said Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Rikstad, of the Army National Guard. "What they're really using us for is to make our way through the rubble."

In the event of a major disaster, Rikstad's cavalry reconnaissance squad would make its way through heavily damaged areas, reporting what it sees to headquarters.

"With that information, we're able to bring in the big … planes and transports that are going to bring in food and water," he said.

About two dozen members of the Army and Air National Guard gathered Thursday to practice landing a UH-60 helicopter in a field south of the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds. Both exercises were a part of the week-long Cascadia Rising exercise, coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is designed to plan emergency responses to a predicted 9.0 magnitude quake affecting western portions of Washington, Oregon, California and British Columbia.

The Cascadia Subduction Zone stretches 800 miles from California to British Columbia. Earthquakes have historically occurred along the fault every 200 to 500 years, with the last major earthquake occurring about 300 years ago, according to FEMA.

Agencies throughout the region conducted exercises under a scenario of a 9.0 magnitude earthquake with an epicenter off the coast of Oregon.

"Think of it as a pre-planned operation. You plan it and you put in on a shelf," said Staff Sgt. Jimmy Takach, of the Air National Guard.

Sometime down the line, when an actual disaster occurs, leaders can take the plan off the shelf and use it to inform their response, he said. That doesn't mean everything will go according to plan.

"It's going to be a hodgepodge," Takach said.

While the National Guard conducts regular exercises around the country to prepare for natural disasters, Lt. Col. Chris Blanco, of the Army National Guard, said this exercise particularly gives the troops "proof of principle" of their skills.

"Being able to train in an environment like this is really important," he said. " … It's kind of neat the whole state is united in this effort."

In the event of a catastrophic earthquake, National Guard members would be expected to report to their posts in three to five days, Rikstad said, after they've taken care of their own families.

"My job starts in my community," he said.

After that, reconnaissance squads will move through damaged areas sending information back to headquarters, which will be in Spokane, outside the radius of the earthquake's damage.

"They're trying to get out in the community," Rikstad said. "That's how you start calming the community down."

Takach said civilians can expect the scale of damage and aftermath to be similar to that of Hurricane Katrina.

"There's no cellphones, there's no power, there's no running water, there's no running sewage," he said.

He said people should expect looters and general disorder following a large-scale disaster in an urban area.

Officers said people in rural areas will likely be more resilient after a disaster.

Residents should consider stockpiling water and non-perishable food, and rotating their stock to ensure freshness, Takach said. People can also take part in Community Emergency Response Team training to prepare for disaster response of any kind.

Most importantly, Takach said, people need to remember that help will come.

"You're not alone in this thing," he said.

Bonner County Daily Bee – State News, Lessons Are Learned In Cascadia Drill

By Mary Malone

Bonner County (ID) Daily Bee, June 12, 2016

Lessons were learned during the four-day "Cascadia Rising" drill, resulting in a successful exercise for the region's emergency responders, local officials, health and medical staff, private industry and emergency operations center personnel who participated in the drill.

"Events like this are useful in that you can plan for it, but when you actually run it you can see what worked and what didn't work, and what would become critical quickly and what doesn't," said Kootenai County Commissioner Marc Eberlein.

The large-scale exercise drill took place throughout Idaho, Washington, Oregon and British Columbia with the epicenter of the "9.0 earthquake" to have taken place along the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the coast of Oregon and causing a "tsunami." In North Idaho, the efforts focused on the wave of evacuees who would seek shelter away from the coastal areas that would be devastated by the earthquake and subsequent events.

Sandy Von Behren, director for the Kootenai County Office of Emergency Management, said the exercise took a year and a half to plan, and "has been well worth every minute."

"The whole purpose of an exercise is testing plans and procedures, so that's what we did," Von Behren said. "We all had plans that we needed to test and we all had exercises that we were required to do, and we designed one huge exercise and came together to do one to test all of the different plans."

Von Behren said the OEM had their systems and processes in place, but sometimes things don't quite go as planned. She said the county's Emergency Operations Center was set up three days prior to the exercise to make sure everything was up and running, ensuring that all the telephones and computers were working properly. Once the training began, they still had real-life trouble with the equipment and during an emergency, "information sharing is key," Von Behren said.

One test for the agencies involved was finding the best way to share information, the quickest and most efficient way. Von Behren said they utilized WebEOC, an incident management website where they could communicate with states and counties and all the different partners, and found there were "some good things about it and some bad things about it." So one thing they will look at is whether there is a way to improve it.

"That's one of the things that we want to work on is identifying our best means of communication so that it's efficient and effective, and getting to the right people," Von Behren said.

Eberlein said one of the first things they noticed was a shortage of fuel, which is especially needed for emergency services to keep running — fire trucks, ambulance, police — and is something they would need to address more quickly in a real emergency.

Fuel and supplies would quickly run short, and Von Behren said they do not want to wait until they find out the stores and gas stations are running out of fuel and supplies.

"We learned in this exercise we are going to think immediately about getting food and getting fuel in here before it gets to be a problem and being ahead of the game — being proactive instead of reactive," Von Behren said.

If more supplies and fuel are not available locally, she said they would immediately request assistance from the state and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. In a real situation with such a far-reaching effect, the resources would be limited, so the sooner the county orders what it needs, the more likely it would be to receive the fuel and supplies in a timely manner.

The briefings began Tuesday, with a conference call on Wednesday. On Thursday, Panhandle Health District set up a medical needs shelter alongside Red Cross at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds as the "evacuees" began to arrive.

Melanie Collett, spokeswoman for Panhandle Health, said several members of the medical staff from Panhandle Health, Kootenai Health and Heritage Health helped out, as well as about 50 volunteers who acted as evacuees, some in need of medical attention.

She said the Panhandle Health District's official after-action report will be published soon, but said there were a lot of good things shared in their reports. She said nurses felt prepared for the "surge" of patients and various scenarios they practiced.

"It was our first time practicing this in a full-scale, fully functional exercise, and it was very successful," Collett said.

Dean Keck, director of training and exercise for Panhandle Health District, acted as the lead controller and exercise director during the airplane "crash" at the Coeur d'Alene Airport Friday. He said the drill tested the airports response plan and the county mass casualty and mass fatality plans. He described the scenario — a passenger plane carrying about 30 evacuees was diverted from Spokane to Coeur d'Alene. As it landed, the plane struck a small commuter plane carrying two people. The fuselage of the larger plane broke in half and caught fire.

Northern Lakes Fire District was the first to respond to the scene, activating an alarm that brings in more resources, including more EMS and Life Flight as well as several fire departments from throughout the county.

With all of the volunteer "passengers" covered in blood, eight were transported to Kootenai Health, one by Life Flight, Keck said.

Kim Anderson, spokeswoman for Kootenai Health, said the drill went as planned as far as taking in "patients" from the airplane drill, and Kootenai Health did not identify any need for process changes.

"Conducting process drills like this help us ensure that our processes work correctly, and enables us to have good responses in emergency situations," Anderson said.

Keck, as well as Northern Lakes Fire personnel, said they are still working on putting together the after-action report, but Keck said there were areas for improvement and overall the drill went "very well."

"There was really great, participation, cooperation, communication and teamwork amongst all those agencies," Keck said.

Northern Lakes Division Chief, Mike Mather, said they did a quick hotwash, or after-action discussion, Friday to identify some key points regarding protocol and procedure during the "crash."

"Dealing with different response protocols from different agencies, everybody thinks a little different in the different guidelines on how to respond to various incidents," Mather said. "When you put that all together under one command structure it can be difficult."

Being the largest exercise they have ever done and working with agencies they don't work with on a regular basis, Mather said the bottom line is the it went well and was "very beneficial" for the responders and the community.

Jim Lyon, deputy fire marshal and public information officer with Northern Lakes, is also a lead PIO for EOC when needed, so he worked both sides during the exercise. Lyon said he was "inundated with information" on the first day, following news agencies that simulated real footage of the tsunami and social media coverage.

"It was a lot of frustration at first, as incidents usually are, whether they are real or simulated," Lyon said, adding that they had some technology problems, such as the phones. "From that point of view, it was kind of a controlled chaos at the beginning."

He said those involved slowly got into a rhythm and by Thursday things were running "pretty smoothly." During Friday's airplane "crash," Lyon said there was a security breach when a man who was not supposed to be there got inside the perimeter. He also said, in a real-life scenario, the Hagadone News Network would not have been allowed on the scene.

One thing that was noticed by all the personnel involved in the training was the amount of people who volunteered their time to help — a good indication of how the community would come together in a real emergency.

Eberline said the community is "very fortunate" to have so many people willing to participate to make the scenario work.

According to an email to the Hagadone News Network from Idaho Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter, 850 Idaho responders participated in the exercise.

"I was extremely impressed by the level of professionalism and dedication that our civilian and military emergency personnel brought to this training exercise," Otter stated in the email. "We hope it never happens, but if it does, Idahoans should feel some comfort knowing we have very capable men and women trained to deal with such catastrophic events."

Von Behren said volunteers came from Bonneville, Bonner and Spokane counties. Agencies volunteered their time in planning the exercise and conducting the exercise, and Von Behren said the outside agencies coming in to help allowed the local agencies to play a part rather than being the ones running the exercise.

All the agencies involved spread the word of volunteers needed as extras to play the part medical patients and evacuees.

"It's really cool to see how the community has come together and how the partnerships that we work to build really do work," Collett said. "And we have been lucky that we haven't had a disaster like this, but it is important that we practice."

If there is ever a real disaster in the region, whether it is an earthquake or other catastrophic event, it would directly affect North Idaho, Von Behren said.

"We are very fortunate to live here in Kootenai County, because in Coeur d'Alene we have a lot of resources that are right here," Von Behren said.

County Greets Cascadia Rising

By Keith Kinnaird

Bonner County (ID) Daily Bee, June 10, 2016

SANDPOINT — Bonner County's emergency management plans and abilities were put to the test

Thursday as it took part in Cascadia Rising, a massive interstate disaster exercise.

The exercise's name is drawn from the Cascadia subduction zone, which stretches 700 miles from Medocino, Calif., to Vancouver, British Columbia. The exercise contemplated a magnitude-9.0 earthquake and attendant tsunami.

Such an event has the capacity to destroy the Interstate 5 corridor and inundate it with water, potentially pushing a wave of humanity east to escape the devastation.

"It wiped out a lot of the coastal areas," Matt Klingler, a Bonner County Public Works director who served as director of emergency management director during the exercise.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said such an event could cause as many as 3,000 people to seek refuge in Bonner County, which would place a significant amount of strain on local shelter, food and fuel resources.

"That's one of the priorities for us to figure out," Klingler said of the sudden influx of displaced citizens.

An Emergency Operations Center established at the Bonner County Administration Building, which was staffed with employees from across various departments who have been undergoing EOC training since the start of the year, said Emergency Management Director Bob Howard, who served as an evaluator during the training exercise. Howard said EOC trainees were subjected to increasingly complex scenarios in the training leading up to the massively complex Cascadia Rising exercise.

Logistics and planning sections at the EOC grappled with the demands of sheltering and feeding earthquake refugees.

Throughout the day, mock disaster planners would throw out curve balls the EOC would then have to react to.

"We had food shortage concerns. We had gasoline/fuel shortage concerns and they dealt with those issues, too," said Howard.

There were even scenarios involving rowdy situations at local grocery stores and rolling power outages as the disaster unfolded.

Howard said Bonner General Health conducted its own functional exercise to take part in Cascadia Rising.

"They had volunteers to be patients and so they were triaging those patients," he said.

The Bonner County Amateur Radio Emergency Service also took part in the exercise. The volunteer group served as backup communication.

"Our amateur radio people were fantastic. They were able to communicate with Washington, Oregon and Boise," said Howard.

Bonner County ARES' role in the exercise grew when radio actual radio trouble flared up elsewhere.

"Bonner County picked it up and carried it. They did relay for other states," said Howard.

Howard said he was pleased with Bonner County's performance during the exercise and said he would have no qualms with activating the EOC in an real-life emergency. He also plans to have EOC disaster exercises at least twice a year.

"We're going to continue to train and exercise as often as we can. We want to get better at what we're doing and be ready for when the big one happens," said Howard.

Megaquake Rehearsal Highlights Prominence Of Northwest Command Center

By Andy Hobbs

Stars And Stripes, June 11, 2016

OLYMPIA, Wash. (Tribune News Service) — The largest earthquake and tsunami drill in Northwest history continued Thursday at a critical command post in Shelton that will serve five Washington counties when "the big one" strikes.

The Mason County Fairgrounds will host the main operations for Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor, Lewis and Pacific counties. The site includes Sanderson Field, which is the five-county area's largest aircraft runway that is near the coast but less likely to suffer tsunami damage.

If the Shelton site is out of commission, the backup airfield would be Bremerton National Airport, said Lt. Col Clay Braun of the Washington National Guard.

"Shelton is a very critical place for us," he said.

Thursday's Cascadia Rising drill in Mason County included a mix of National Guardsmen, Army soldiers and Air Force airmen — and offered a snapshot of the bases that will spring up statewide in the case of a major natural disaster.

Service personnel manned tents for medical care and X-rays. Helicopters dropped supplies via parachute while a handful of paratroopers practiced their landings. These airdrops will be critical when trying to reach isolated pockets of people.

The Shelton operations center will coordinate efforts alongside the state's other bases. Military personnel will check roads and bridges while also assisting local law enforcement and rescue workers.

The base will house a mobile high-frequency radio system that can keep communication alive when cell towers and phone lines are down.

Some of the soldiers at Thursday's drill in Shelton have assisted in past natural disasters such as the 2014 Oso mudslide and 2005's Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast.

Lt. Col. Adam Iwaszuk of the 96th Troop Command said his experience in New Orleans revealed at least one key survival tip for the public in any disaster — whether it's a flood, storm, earthquake or tornado.

"You should know an escape route," he said. "The citizens need to be prepared for what they're likely to be subject to."

Washington National Guard Maj. Gen. Bret Daugherty urges the public to stock up on emergency supplies such as food, water and medicine to help make the military's job easier. He said the Guard will continue to train and ensure a proper disaster response.

"Our intent is to keep revisiting this until an actual earthquake strikes us," he said. "Hopefully, that's not for a long time."

Co-sponsored by FEMA, the Cascadia Rising drill began Tuesday and wraps up Friday. It was designed to allow the area to practice emergency response to a disaster involving the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a faultline that stretches between Northern California and Vancouver Island.

The zone has produced earthquakes with a 9.0 magnitude or higher at intervals of 400 to 600 years — with the last one occurring in January 1700, according to the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network.

And the stakes are high. Washington state alone could face thousands of deaths and injuries. Emergency responders also estimate that at least 1.27 million people could end up without adequate food and water in a worst-case scenario.

Hospitals and nursing homes could see a combined 80,000 medical evacuees. Main roads such as Interstate 5 and U.S. 101 would likely be unnavigable.

"It could happen right now. It could happen 500 years from now," said Lt. Col. Braun about the possible large-scale disaster. "This is our rehearsal."

Megaquake Minded

By Erick Bengel

Daily Astorian (OR), June 10, 2016

Clatsop County isn't as far along in prepping for a Cascadia earthquake and tsunami as Tiffany Brown, the county's emergency manager, would prefer. But that's nothing to be ashamed of, given that the region only realized the full magnitude of the threat within the last decade.

"We've known about it for 20 years or so, but it's really that additional study that has occurred since 2011 that has left us with a greater understanding of how big the threat is, and that's why everybody is really paying attention to: What are we doing, and how ready are we?" she said. "Relative to how long we've understood the enormity of this hazard in our community, we are where I would expect us to be."

Brown took stock of the county's disaster readiness this week during Cascadia Rising, a Tuesday-through-Friday focus on preparing agencies in Oregon and Washington state for the Cascadia Subduction Zone megaquake, a rare but cataclysmic event that could cause a humanitarian crisis in the Pacific Northwest.

At Camp Rilea in Warrenton, the staff at the County Emergency Operations Center practiced communicating and coordinating efforts with local agencies and military personnel.

The team leveraged social media for the first time during an exercise, and conducted successful ham radio operations with everyone they'd intended to — including Arch Cape and a citizen in Lewis & Clark — plus some they hadn't: Federal Emergency Management Agency Region X headquarters in Bothell, Washington, and Pacific County Emergency Management.

In addition, they used the county mass notification system, ClatsopALERTS!, to communicate with other participants in the training exercise, notify community leaders that the EOC had been activated, and advised Arch Cape and Falcon Cove residents that the military would be conducting aerial assessments in their area.

These latest measures follow steps the county has taken to raise awareness of Cascadia, including the installation of signs directing people out of the tsunami zone and local high schools adding Community Emergency Response Team training to the curriculum.

"We only have so many resources to throw at this, and I think we're moving in the right direction in terms of whole community planning," she said.

"There's also no end to the list of things that we need to be looking at, improving upon."

'Cycle of improvement'

How did communication between the county's emergency operations center and military personnel go during Cascadia Rising?

"It went great," Brown told a group of local officials and community leaders touring the military base Thursday. "Did it go like we thought it was going to? Yes and no. We knew there would be problems talking to one another, systems that didn't jive. But that's the nature of exercising."

Most of those problems happened on the first day, before the teams had found their "battle rhythm," she said.

"When it came time to send our requests to the state, the way we had practiced and understood that it would be happening was not the way it ended up happening, and it took us several hours to sort of readjust and get that moving in the right direction," she later elaborated. "And it's no one's fault, it's just the way things played out that morning that weren't anticipated."

Sometimes a communication hiccup boiled down to human error. Other times it was a technical difficulty, like a nonfunctioning fax machine.

"You can have all the systems and the plans and the latest and greatest equipment, but, at the end of the day, you still have human beings running it," she said.

Making mistakes and figuring out how to correct them is precisely the point of training exercises, she said: "Mistakes are good in this world. And it's counterintuitive to a lot of people, but mistakes are what we're looking for."

"We write a plan, we exercise it to identify the gaps and vulnerabilities, we take corrective action, we update our plan, we exercise our plan, and we continue that," she said, "and, in this way, it's a continuous cycle of improvement."

Meanwhile, the agencies build relationships and get used to working together under pressure.

"If you participate in an exercise, you always have the opportunity to improve relationships," she said. "That may be the most important thing that comes from them in many cases."

Disaster relief

During Cascadia Rising, about 800 soldiers comprising a dozen military teams assembled at Camp Rilea and ran through a series of simulated rescue operations, including saving people in a collapsed inner city.

After touring the County Emergency Operations Center, some local leaders — and a few international dignitaries from partner agencies in Vietnam and Bangladesh — headed to the training site to observe the mechanics of a relief effort.

The VIPs witnessed National Guard soldiers moving and breaking up heavy boulders from a rubble pile to reach victims; attending to the wounded or deceased (played by actors in Hollywood-style makeup) at a casualty collection site; checking the area for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive materials while decontaminating people suspected of facing exposure; and triaging and treating the survivors.

Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, the adjutant general of Oregon, told local leaders — including Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear, Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop and Cannon Beach Mayor Sam Steidel — that under the worst-case scenario, a 9.0 earthquake, most life-saving efforts in the first 36 to 72 hours will depend on local responders, able-bodied citizens and well-prepared neighbors.

"We expect that the casualty rate's going to be phenomenal, and even a lot of your firemen ... aren't going to be there right away," he said. "We don't know what the condition's going to be for your hospitals and their ability to take patients."

Though outside forces will come, the mobilization may take a while, he said. "They're going to be anxious to get here, but it's going to be a struggle."

Stencel asked the officials to do everything they can to help their citizens prepare for Cascadia.

Compared to Japan — a country that had spent about 50 years preparing for an earthquake and tsunami, yet lost more than 15,000 people during the 2011 disaster — "we're behind the curve," Brown said.

"We just need to do more of this," she said. "And my hope in all of this, despite what anyone did or didn't learn in the exercise, is that it helps them recognize the importance of it, and makes them want to do more of it."

Editorial: Cascadia Rising Offers Chance To Plan For Earthquake

By Corvallis Gazette-Times Editorial Board

Corvallis (OR) Gazette-Times, June 12, 2016

The big one hit the Pacific Northwest this week — the massive 9.0 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Oregon that will trigger a deadly tsunami and widespread devastation far inland.

Well, not really. Not yet. But what did begin on Tuesday is a four-day event called "Cascadia Rising," a three-state drill to rehearse scenarios on how the region would deal with the double-fisted punch of the quake and tsunami. The working assumptions Cascadia Rising organizers are using include these sobering estimates: The quake will kill about 1,100 people. The tsunami will be deadlier, with an estimated toll of 13,000. Some 24,000 people will be injured.

The quake and tsunami will cut off coastal communities and collapse phone and internet service. Roads may be impassable in the wake of the quake, and it could be weeks before emergency services can get to neighborhoods to render aid.

Not to mince words, but that's all bad.

The good news is Cascadia Rising itself, an event of unprecedented scope: This week's exercise will involve about 20,000 people, representing various federal agencies, the U.S. military and state and local emergency response managers from Oregon, Washington and Idaho, Native American tribes and emergency management officials in British Columbia.

The city of Albany will get involved in the exercise on Friday: Officials are planning to test the capabilities of their emergency coordination center as well as disaster management. The city of Corvallis has nothing that elaborate planned, but some employees plan to participate in Cascadia Rising events throughout the state.

At the heart of all of this is the Cascadia subduction zone, a 600-mile-long fault just off the coast that runs from Northern California to British Columbia. Geologists say that the zone on average produces magnitude 9.0 quakes every 500 years, but big quakes have been separated by as few as 200 years and as many as 1,000. The last big quake occurred about 300 years ago. No one knows for sure when the next big quake will occur, but it's a sure bet that it will happen.

So it makes sense to prepare for it now — and to review those preparations from time to time.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, standing in front of military and other federal vehicles brought into Washington's Camp Murray for the exercise, put it well when he said that "Cascadia Rising is about making sure we're as prepared as we can be. The hope is to identify those areas where we perform well. But obviously we also want to identify our weaknesses." In fact, identifying those weaknesses — and they will emerge — may be the most important part of the entire exercise.

There's a role for the rest of us to play in this. Cascadia Rising gives us a chance to update our own disaster plans, which likely have grown a little dusty since the flurry of publicity about the subduction zone last summer. Taking steps now to be prepared is a great way to shake off the fatalism that can often take root in the face in such powerful natural forces.

In fact, the one thing we don't like about Cascadia Rising is its name, which sounds like the title of the first book in a young-adult series of novels set in a dystopian future. When the quake comes, though, it'll bring plenty of real-life drama. It's best to get ready now.

North Marion Participates In Cascadia Rising Event With Evacuation, Reunification Drill

By Lindsay Keefer

Woodburn (OR) Independent, June 10, 2016

What would happen if an 8.2 magnitude earthquake hit the Northwest? That's what North Marion School District is trying to find out.

The district expounded on an October emergency preparedness drill on Friday, taking part in the statewide Cascadia Rising event. The four-day exercise June 7-10 is for governments and other entities to train, practice and collaborate on how they would best coordinate and organize in the aftermath of an earthquake, the disaster most likely to strike Oregon.

At North Marion, this not only included a regular earthquake drill, evacuation and reunification process with parents, but also meant assigning roles to staff and high school students and collaborating with local emergency personnel, namely Aurora Fire District, Woodburn Fire District and Marion County Sheriff's Office. Additionally, more than 100 parents arrived to take part in the reunification exercise.

Friday's imagined scenario involved a boiler room fire in the high school (which was contained) and a beam falling down, blocking freshman English teacher LINDSAY KEEFER – Firefighters Morgan Whaley (left) and Blake Julian strap ninth-grader Keila Dubikin to a stretcher as part of Friday's emergency preparedness drill at North Marion School District.

Maureen Davis' classroom door. Davis' students each had an index card taped to their shirts to tell the search and rescue team, made up of staff members who have been getting basic medical training, what injuries they have. Injuries varied from a lacerated forehead to a collapsed lung.

"It's a good thing to have, being prepared," Davis said. "For the most part, my kids have been really good and are taking it seriously."

Not only that, but the day's events really unnerved some "injured" students.

"It was well-run, but they took more time than I thought (to rescue all the students)," said junior Kyia Brooks. "But I thought the fact we did this drill was cool.

"In the time it took to find me, I would probably have died," said sophomore Anna Allison, who suffered multiple pretend injuries, including internal bleeding. "It concerns me because people react slower when they're frantic, when the real thing happens."

That's why practice makes perfect, and why the district will continue working with community partners and on its internal response time, Superintendent Boyd Keyser said.

"We need to be working closely together here in north Marion County, because we're not going to be able to get fully involved services right away," he said. "So over the next six months to a year, you'll see the majority of these entities continuing with this collaboration."

The district is also using funds for a generator, a long range antenna and a ham radio, among other emergency kit items.

"We consider it a long-term investment," Keyser said. "We wish there were funds from the state or elsewhere specifically for this."

He added that the district has applied for a FEMA grant to purchase a diesel generator that would back up a freezer in the middle school, since the North Marion campus is considered a Red Cross shelter site in case of disaster and would need to provide food for several days.

Though, as the students pointed out, there are still issues to work on, Aurora Fire District Lt. Bill Hansen observed that the district's preparedness is continuously improving.

"They've definitely come a long way," he said. "They're reaching out to us a lot more. They realize they need to learn how they can become more self-sufficient because we might take a while to get to them."

Quakes Shake Ring Of Fire After FEMA Launches Doomsday Drills

Trunews, June 10, 2016

(TRUNEWS) In the last 24 hour two major earthquakes struck along the ominous 'Ring of Fire', a week after FEMA started doomsday quake drills.

A 6.1-magnitude hit Nicaragua and a 5.2 -mag. shook Borrego Springs in San Diego County, California.

The U.S. Geological survey said the Nicaraguan earthquake hit Thursday night, with an epicenter 16.1 miles northeast of Chinandega and a depth of 6.2 miles. No casualties were recorded but the newspaper La Presna reported that the walls of a church collapsed in Chinandega.

The quake was felt strongly in Nicaragua's capital, Managua, 84 miles away, and Reuters reports it was also felt strongly as far away as Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, 167.7 miles away.

As for the California earthquake, the USGS said it hit around 1:05 am with its epicenter 13.7 miles northwest of Borrego Springs. About 3,000 people reported feeling the earthquake, with residents feeling the earthquake in northern Los Angeles County, Orange and Ventura counties, and the Inland Empire.

These recent quakes along the Ring of Fire — a string of volcanoes and sites of seismic activity or earthquakes around the edges of the Pacific Ocean — come after FEMA began the "Cascadia Rising" drill on June 7th, a drill to simulate the effects of a magnitude-9.0 earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone and an accompanying west coast tsunami dozens of feet tall.

According to the official public statement for the event, more than "50 counties, plus major cities, tribal nations, state and federal agencies, private sector businesses, and non-governmental organizations across three states—Washington, Oregon and Idaho" participated.

In addition to "Cascadia Rising," U.S. Northern Command held five other exercises simultaneously. According to the final draft of the Cascadia Rising drill plan, those five exercises are entitled "Ardent Sentry 2016," "Vigilant Guard," "Special Focus Exercise," "Turbo Challenge" and "Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore." The primary scenario that of all of these participants focused on was one that involves a magnitude 9.0 earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone followed by a giant tsunami that could displace up to a million people from northern California to southern Canada.

Read more at http://www.trunews.com/quakes-shake-ring-of-fire-after-fema-launches-doomsday-drills/#vFwcSpGvMOhx1CXw.99

Is The US Prepared To Tackle Natural Disasters?

By Caroline Diana

Inquisitr, June 10, 2016

A shallow magnitude 5.2 earthquake woke up the residents of California near Borrego Springs on early Friday morning. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the earthquake occurred at 1:04 a.m. Pacific time at a depth of -0.6 miles. The epicenter was 16 miles from La Quinta, 19 miles from Palm Desert, and 20 miles from Rancho Mirage, reported the Los Angeles Times.

Seismologist Lucy Jones on her Twitter feed reported that several aftershocks were felt. Jones said that the earthquake occurred along the San Jacinto Fault, the most active fault in Southern California.

Meanwhile, social media is abuzz with status updates from the residents of San Diego and Los

Angeles, reporting that they felt the tremors of the earthquake.

Amy Vaughan, a USGS geophysicist, pointed out that the earthquake has resulted in a series of aftershocks, according to Fox News. Vaughan said that the earthquake was strong enough to have woken up the sleeping residents.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department said that the earthquake has not caused casualties so far.

The largest of the earthquakes occurred at 1:05 a.m. and was centered 13 miles north of Borrego Springs, according to River Side County News Source.

According to NBC News, the quake was followed by three aftershocks over the next three minutes. These earthquakes measured between magnitude 2.8 and 3.5. Another two aftershocks of the earthquake of similar magnitudes were recorded over the next 40 minutes. The epicenter was around 13 miles north of Borrego Springs, which has a population of around 3,500. The local police department told NBC News there were no reports of damage caused by the earthquake.

Paratroopers prepared for earthquake

Science Alert reported that this week, more than 20,500 personnel from the government and healthcare agencies took part in Cascade Rising, a huge training exercise designed by the U.S. government to prepare the Pacific Northwest for a catastrophic earthquake. Paratroopers also took part in the readiness drill.

Chief Warrant Officer James Pierce said that parachuting may be the only option to get to remote locations that are rendered undrivable.

"It's a good, effective way to get gear to the ground," Pierce told U.S. News.

While no evacuations are taking place, Cascadia Rising is using various emergency scenarios to test communication capabilities, medical supply routes, and transportation issues, reported Science Alert.

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In a press release issued on June 6, Ken Murphy, the regional administrator for FEMA Region 10, said, "A 9.0 Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake will be a disaster unlike anyone has ever seen. Cascadia Rising will test our own preparedness. It is exercises like this, ahead of a disaster, that foster coordination and help build relationships before a real world event occurs."

"Oregon is looking forward to strengthening the partnerships with our local, tribal, state and federal partners through the Cascadia Rising exercise," said Oregon Emergency Management director Andrew Phelps in the news release.

"This exercise gives Oregon, Washington, Idaho and FEMA Region 10 an invaluable opportunity to validate and improve upon the planning initiatives, training and other exercises we've undertaken over the past several years to prepare for the threat of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami. This exercise should also serve as a reminder to all Oregonians that individual and family emergency preparedness is key to augment an effective response to an earthquake or any disaster and begin the recovery process. Ultimately, the work we do leading up to the exercise and the lessons we learn in a controlled and evaluated environment will translate into lives saved during what could be the country's biggest disaster," Phelps said.

"We've worked tirelessly in Washington state to work with our partners and develop a response plan so we can immediately coordinate assistance and provide help following a catastrophic disaster," said Major General Bret Daugherty, the director of the Washington Military Department and commander of the Washington National Guard, in the recently issued press note.

"Every exercise teaches us something and improves our response. I'm pleased so many partners are participating and are eager to collaborate with us so we can effectively carry out our mission to protect lives and property," Daugherty said.

Earthquake in Canada

Meanwhile, natural Resources Canada, which records earthquakes in Canada, posted on its Earthquakes Canada section of the website Thursday evening that a 3.0 magnitude earthquake took place around 19 km north of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

On the Yarmouth Vanguard Facebook page, residents said that they heard a loud rumble. Some even said they felt their house shake or vibrate as a result of the earthquake.

"My husband and I were both sitting at our kitchen table in Amirault's Hill and heard what sounded like a big truck going by and looked around and seen no trucks headed down the road. My husband said, 'I bet that was an earthquake," Alanna Fitzsimmons-Bourque told the Vanguard.

Read more at http://www.inquisitr.com/3188521/earthquake-in-california-is-the-us-prepared-to-tackle-natural-disasters/#mGlzx0xivEsDRyPP.99

New Photo Exhibit Honors September 11 First Responders

By Thomas Urbain

AFP, June 10, 2016

New York (AFP) – They were among the heroes of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the first responders who rushed to the World Trade Center site to search for survivors.

But they worked mostly in anonymity.

Now, photographer Andrea Booher pays tribute to the men and women who toiled at "the pile," with a showcase of her work in the "Hope at Ground Zero" exhibition opening Friday at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum which now occupies the site in downtown New York. It runs through May 2017.

"In the beginning it was firefighters, volunteers, search and rescue, police. Everybody had sort of a different approach to how they were searching for survivors," she said. "The only goal was trying to find survivors in the pile."

Booher, a photographer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), had arrived at the site the evening of September 11 and was assigned along with colleague Michael Rieger to document the aftermath of the deadliest terror attack on US soil.

She ended up staying two and a half months.

"I really felt that it was an incredible honor but it was a lot of responsibility," she said. "I pushed myself to my limit workwise and in every aspect."

In the early days, the work was frantic as rescuers searched for survivors.

But around September 20, "I showed up at the site. Nobody said anything, but it was just like this very depressing feeling, very heavy feeling at the site," Booher said.

"It was kind of rainy, and it was just... there was no energy. You had just the feeling that it was over, that the hope was gone. We weren't going to bring (out) anyone else. It kind of switched to a recovery mission at that point."

Twenty people were found alive in the rubble, the last one September 12. In all, the attack in New York claimed 2,753 victims.

– "The best in humanity" –

Booher, a veteran of many major disasters, initially had access to the World Trade Center site but not the pile that was the remains of the Twin Towers.

But over time, the firefighters who were running the site began to trust Booher and Rieger after seeing them working "every day, all hours."

The firefighters, who lost hundreds of their comrades in the attack, noticed that the pair always put their cameras down and didn't take photos when bodies were recovered, out of respect.

"So there was a certain trust that was built up. That was why we were able to gain access to the pile. There was this bond," she said.

Her subjects posed amid grotesque tangles of giant steel beams, alone or in groups, with blackened faces like those of coal miners.

"To this day, I have that bond with so many of the people that are in those photographs," Booher said, noting that she and Rieger later sent more than 600 CDs of images to the people they met. "We keep in touch, we check on each other."

"Most people think of disaster as just this traumatic experience, but ... as horrific as it was you also saw this incredibly human side of people come forward," she said. "I think it's when you see the best in humanity."

IBAT Tips: Natural Disaster Preparedness And Insurance

Pasadena (TX) Citizen, June 10, 2016

Independent Bankers Assoc. of Texas

AUSTIN — Texans live in a state with the potential for many types of natural disasters — flash floods, hurricanes, windstorms, tornadoes and wildfires, to name the most common. While we may never know for certain when a natural disaster will strike, you can minimize damage and risk of harm by being prepared. The following tips discuss preparedness for any natural disaster and explore insurance coverage in this unfortunate situation.

Disaster Supply Kit

Every household should have an emergency supply kit ready and easily accessible in case of a disaster. This kit should include a flashlight with extra batteries, a first aid kit, a crank or battery operated radio with NOAA weather radio capabilities, necessary prescription medications, an emergency whistle to signal for help, a gallon of water per person and pet for at least three days, and several days' worth of nonperishable food. Other items to consider including are pet food, a list of emergency phone numbers and a cell phone with a battery powered charger. If possible, it's also helpful to include three to five days' worth of cash in the instance that ATMs are either unavailable or damaged.

Family Emergency Plan

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, and this can cause increased panic if you haven't prepared for this situation. A family disaster plan that includes how you will contact each other, where you will meet and identifies a safe place to gather as an alternative to your home is extremely important. This plan will ensure your children know what to do, where they can go and who they can stay with in the event of an emergency.

The FEMA website includes a family emergency plan that can be printed to help assist families with developing their individual plans. Experts agree that developing a disaster plan ahead of time reduces fear and anxiety in children, which means they have a better chance of staying safe until help arrives.

Safeguard Documents

Prepare a vital records kit with copies of important documents to store in a waterproof and fireproof container in a safe place in your home. Another option is to scan and store these documents in a cloud-based application so that it will be protected even if your home is destroyed. Yet another good option is a safe deposit box at your local community bank. Documents and items for this kit include copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records, proof of vaccinations for pets, mortgages, birth and marriage certificates, and irreplaceable photos.

Homeowners Insurance

While it's difficult to think about losing your home due to a natural disaster, it's important to understand what your homeowners insurance policy does and does not cover. Since policies vary by insurance company, you shouldn't make any assumptions as to what may or may not be covered. Most basic homeowners policies cover fire and lightning, explosion, smoke, and damage caused by the weight of ice, snow or sleet. Perils of hail, windstorm, vandalism, theft and water damage may be restricted or even excluded by many policies. In coastal regions or in areas prone to windstorm or hail, it's likely that your policy will have specific conditions, restrictions or full exclusions regarding coverage. Flood is always excluded and must be purchased through the Federal Flood Insurance Program. Other perils that are likely excluded include earthquake, water damage if related to flood or an otherwise excluded peril, sewer back-up and nuclear accidents.

All policies have exclusions, even if you have an "all risk" policy. If your policy contains an exclusion of coverage, ask your insurance agent to provide an option for the coverage through another carrier or specialty policy. Often windstorm coverage for Texas coastal locations must be obtained through TWIA – the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association.

While putting together your disaster kit, family plan and other preparations, it's helpful to know the available resources. The FEMA website (www.ready.gov) and the American Red Cross website (www.redcross.org/prepare) are good resources. Being prepared will help you and your family remain calm and rational when a disaster strikes, which can also save lives. Being educated about your specific homeowners insurance, what is covered and what isn't will help you make an informed decision about any additional coverage to purchase before a disaster hits. The bottom line is that being prepared for a natural disaster, on several fronts, will help ensure your family recovers and gets back to normal life as quickly as possible.

The information above is provided with the understanding that the association is not engaged in rendering specific legal, accounting or other professional services. This information is intended to be a helpful guide. If expert assistance is required, the services of a professional person should be sought.

About the Independent Bankers Association of Texas

Formed in 1974, the Independent Bankers Association of Texas (IBAT) represents Texas community banks. The Austin-based group is the largest state community banking organization in the nation, with membership comprised of more than 2,000 banks and branches in 700 Texas communities. Providing safe and responsible financial services to all Texans, IBAT member bank assets range in size from $10 million to more than $20 billion with combined assets statewide of nearly $165 billion. IBAT member banks are committed to supporting and investing in their local communities.

Area Health Departments Will Participate In Statewide Emergency Exercise

Bureau County (IL) Republican, June 10, 2016

Bureau, Putnam and Marshall County Health Departments, joined by area law enforcement agencies, emergency management agencies, the Bureau-Putnam and Marshall County Medical Reserve Corps, Liberty Village in Princeton, St. Margaret's Hospital and the Marshall County Highway Department, will participate in the exercise to test the ability of the state public health system to receive and distribute medicine and medical supplies during a public health emergency.

As part of the exercise, Bureau, Putnam and Marshall County Health Departments will receive shipments of medical supplies and simulated medications, sort them and redistribute them to points of distribution where they will practice dispensing the simulated medication to volunteers.

Volunteers are needed to participate in the exercise in the role of citizens needing to receive the medication. They will be asked to arrive at a point of distribution and go through the process of filling out a short form then receiving a package of simulated medication. Depending on the number of volunteers at each site, they may be asked to repeat the process a few times in order to give the health departments sufficient numbers to measure the time needed and ability to dispense to large numbers of people.

The public points of distribution will be at Henry-Senachwine High School in Henry beginning at 9 a.m. Wednesday, June 15, and at Putnam County High School in Granville beginning at 1 p.m. Wednesday, June 15. Volunteers may be needed for up to 90 minutes.

It is not necessary to pre-register as a volunteer. For more information, or to let the health departments know you are interested in volunteering to help this important exercise, contact Terry Madsen or Kurt Kuche at 815-872-5091 or Kaylee Halberg at 309-525-1833.

Bretagne, Last Living Ground Zero Rescue Dog, Passes At 16

By Chris Boyle

Long Island (NY), June 10, 2016

Bretagne, last of the 9/11 Search & Rescue Canines who helped find countless victims trapped in the rubble of Ground Zero, died peacefully in Cypress, Texas on Monday, June 6 at the age of 16.

The Golden Retriever, who was suffering badly in recent months due to the effects of old age, was euthanized at Fairfield Animal Hospital in Cypress, Texas. Over a dozen emotional firefighters lined up outside of the Hospital, all standing at full attention, and respectfully saluted Bretagne as she was brought inside; they remained as such when she left, motionless and covered with an American Flag, an honored and courageous hero to one and all.

Bretagne (pronounced "Brittney"), along with her handler, Denise Corliss, was a member of Texas Task Force 1 (TX-TF1), one of the 28 teams under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) who worked at the site of the World Trade Center for 10 days in 2001, searching for survivors and, later, remains of those less fortunate. Ground Zero was the 2 year-old Bretagne's her first-ever assignment as a Search & Rescue Canine after having been certified as such by FEMA, and was truly a trial by fire if there ever was one.

Bretagne and Corliss first met when the pup was but a mere 8 weeks old; a Cy-Fair Fire Department volunteer, Corliss had been on the lookout for the right dog to train for Search & Rescue work, and noted that Bretagne's determination, drive, and personality made her the idea candidate for the tough assignment. The two quickly became best friends.

After spending ten days assisting in the search & rescue efforts at Ground Zero after 9/11, Bretagne continued to distinguish herself over the years with Texas Task Force 1, bravely responding to nearly a dozen other disasters, including Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ivan, and was responsible for saving many lives during that time.

Despite the harrowing assignments that she would regularly have to contend with, Bretagne nonetheless is remembered as a warm and affectionate dog whose special ability to seek out those who needed emotional support made her as much a helpful therapy animal as it did a courageous First Reponder, according to a statement released by Texas Task Force 1.

"If you ask anybody whoever knew or trained with Bretagne, they would tell you 'Oh she just loves me!' That's the kind of dog she is, affectionate to everybody, and fiercely devoted, never takes her eyes off her handler," they said. "She has always taken her job as a search dog seriously, but herself not so much. Always ready for a belly rub, or a treat. In remembering her first deployment at the World Trade Center, there are images of her going to where she was directed to search, the unknown, the chaotic environment. But even then, she knew who needed the comfort of a dog, which firefighter needed to hold her close and stroke her fur."

Bretagne eventually retired from Search & Rescue at the age 9, but don't think she slowed down during her Golden Years; she continued to serve as a goodwill ambassador for the Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department in Harris County, Texas, as well as a reading assistance dog.

"Bretagne's calm demeanor and warm heart helped the young and old through their own difficult moments," said the Cy-Fair Fire Department in a statement.

"Each week she would visit a first grade classroom and listen to young readers, providing a non-judgmental ear and soft paw. She also visited students with special needs, such as autism. Her calm demeanor and warm heart helped the young and old through their own difficult moments."

Bretagne was also featured in a non-fiction book about senior dogs and has held audiences with Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott and former President George H.W. Bush. Later, at the age of 15, Bretagne, and her longtime handler Denise Corliss, returned to the site of her very first assignment – New York City – to visit the 9/11 Memorial Museum, and was later "interviewed" by Tom Brokaw of NBC News.

In 2014, the American Humane Association nominated Bretagne for their illustrious "Hero Dog Award," and last year she made headlines as she celebrated her "Sweet 16" birthday in New York City .

Bretagne – just shy of her 17th birthday – had begun to experience a host of health problems, a lack of energy, kidney failure, and a loss of appetite; it was then that Denise Corliss noted that it was time for her beloved partner to finally rest after a lifetime of hard, dedicated work for others.

Clinton CERT Inc. To Hold Second Mass Casualty Exercise

By Bobby Jones

DC Military, June 10, 2016

"People don't think about preparedness until it's too late," Paula M. Hughes, president of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) of Clinton, said. "So we prepare ahead of the incident, then we're ready."

Hughes is referring to the upcoming Functional Exercise, CERTEX PGC 2016 FE being held June 18 at Clinton Baptist Church in Clinton. Sponsoring the event for the second year, the training also ensures that CERT team members refresh their skills during the mass casualty exercise. Hughes noted the hope is to eventually provide the community-based training quarterly.

The training provided is between 16 to 20 hours long. The CERT program is a national program because the protocol taught is standardized. Participants learn about basic first aid, psychological first aid, terrorism, how to shut off the utilities at home, the three basic killers, airway obstruction, excessive bleeding and how to treat for shock.

Nationally, CERT has been around for the last 15 years, but CERT of Clinton, a 501c3 non-profit organization, was established in 2014.

Hughes said Clinton CERT is unique because it is incorporated, unlike other CERTs' located in townships and cities like Berwyn Heights, College Park and Laurel – all organizations that work under their local municipal governments.

"We don't have a mayor or town council to answer to," Hughes said.

Operating off a limited budget, Clinton CERT solicits private donations, but the county supports the exercises by providing food.

"The Prince George's County Police Department is donating their time and we hope to get participation from the fire department as well," Hughes said.

However, Clinton CERT funding is paid through FEMA grants and Prince George's County Office of Homeland Security is the overarching sponsor of CERT in the county.

With terrorism always being a constant threat to the nation, Hughes stressed there's a greater need for this particular training – especially when lives are on the line.

"And the thing is, if there is a real big disaster, the police and the fire department cannot rescue everyone," Hughes said. "So, we need to be prepared to do the best we can to help ourselves. The training is valuable, and once people go through it they think 'oh my goodness.' There's other training they can benefit from like CPR, AED, shelter management and hand radio classes which are all free."

Hughes mentioned Maryland's Emergency Management Agency's slogan – "A resilient Marylander makes a resilient citizen." She explained that the community has been receptive to the training as she has reached out to AARP, who participated last year as victim-actors, the NAACP and Clinton Baptist Church with inclusion of their Spanish congregation who meet there on Saturdays.

"This is training for the local community. It's like neighbors helping neighbors. Clinton CERT is taking the lead and hopefully other CERT teams will follow suit," Hughes said. "The importance of this training is that it's the basic start for getting prepared. When you take the training you get a backpack, which includes a hat, a safety vest, some tools, some gloves; and from that moment on when you receive that backpack you can fill it with what you need for you."

Additionally, Clinton CERT is looking for victim-actors to play injured people at the mass casualty exercise during the training event. The actors are not required to be CERT-trained. All participants must sign a waiver. The exercise will be held rain or shine.

Those interested in participating in the exercise please register on Eventbrite at: http://www.eventbrite.com/e/certex-pgc-2016-fe-exercise. A continental breakfast and a light lunch will be provided. Community service hours are available for high school students accompanied by an adult. For more information on the national FEMA CERT program visit: https://www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams.

For additional information on CERTEX 2016, contact Hughes at pgcert.pmhughes@gmail.com or at (443) 474-3239.

Last-minute Budget Tweaks, Not Dog Parks, Spark Debate In Warrenton Work Session

By Michael Melkonian

Fauquier (VA) Times, June 10, 2016

Last-minute budget tweaks and a final review of dog park plans highlighted a Warrenton Town Council work session Thursday night, June 9 – just days before a meeting to approve the measures on Tuesday.

Ironically, the dog park provoked little discussion.

But the Council voiced split opinions on a $20,000 budget placeholder for an emergency planning grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The grant application is due at the end of the month, and Town Manager Brannon Godfrey expects another 60 to 90 days to find out if they will get the funds.

While Fauquier County has similar groundwork in place, the grant would help pay for developing an emergency operations plan to cover Warrenton specifically.

Yakir Lubowsky, Ward 3 councilperson, said emergency planning is an essential function of government and funding needs to be approved now.

"(Emergency planning) is ultimately the thing that citizens expect us to do: to prepare for emergencies and be prepared to recover from disasters," Lubowsky said.

Sunny Reynolds, at-large councilperson and Warrenton vice-mayor, said although she agreed it was "extremely important," she also wondered if we need to budget the money now before talking to the county government.

"We need to have this meeting with the county and sit down with them, which we have not done, and find out what they suggest the town's role is in this," Reynolds said.

Once we have that discussion, we can amend the budget later, Reynold suggested.

"The county seems to have abdicated its responsibility frankly, until they get their house in order," Lubowsky said, referencing the search for a new fire chief. "This is a fairly token amount (of money)."

The $20,000 line item represents less than .001 percent of the $20 million dollar fiscal year budget (embedded below).

Manager Godfrey pushed to amend the budget before the vote on Tuesday.

"It would be a more affirmative commitment to change the numbers now," Godfrey said. "It's still contingent on funding from FEMA, but it would then be adopted as part of the budget and we wouldn't have to go back."

Robert H. Kravetz, Ward four councilperson, agreed with Reynolds about conferring with the county first, but Lubowsky pressed on.

"If this is not important, what is important?" Lubowsky said.

At-large councilperson Sean Polster, a firefighter and paramedic by day, had another question: If town hall catches fire tonight or if Warrenton loses their water supply, what's the plan?

"How do we maintain our essential functions?" Polster said. "I think we have a great opportunity in front of us to take a small step forward. I'd like to build that roadmap before anything happens downtown."

Chief Louis Battle of the Warrenton Police Department said an emergency plan is a "living, breathing document, consistently and continuously under review and testing." And if we go down that road, we're responsible for (the plan) and anything that happens.

"That means we have to have the manpower, the resources and the assets to implement that plan," Battle said.

Lubowsky stood his ground again.

"But it starts with an inquiry," Lubowsky replied "You can always decide. At the moment, there's nothing."

And Battle's concerns about creating a new infrastructure with evergreen obligations depends on council action in the future, not this budget item, Lubowsky said.

"If it becomes a big bureaucracy, shame on the folks sitting up here," Lubowsky said.

We've been talking about this for a while now, but this is the first time we've really heard about money, Ward 1 councilperson, Jerry Wood, said. And he's not in favor of the surprise spending this close to approving the budget.

"I don't see any reason to not do it and I see many reasons to do it," Lubowsky said. "I mean, this is the group that had seven or eight meetings about a dog park, but we still haven't had a meeting about how to prepare the town for a disaster."

Godfrey said he will apply for the grant either way and as Kravetz noted, "it's not a commitment to spend" the money.

After 30 minutes of discussion, Godfrey said the best choice was to include it in the budget now.

"Please tell me you're not going to defeat the budget on Tuesday over this item," Godfrey said Wood as the group chuckled.

Wood had earlier voiced concerns with excess spending and tax increases in the proposed budget.

"To start off, I do plan to vote for this budget, there is nothing that would stop me from doing it," he said from the outset. "Still, I would like to see the property tax raised to 3 cents instead of 5 cents."

Though the $300,000 gained by the extra 2-cent increase will be needed to balance the budget, he added.

"I think we need to keep taxes as low as possible, services as good as possible and spending in check," Wood said. "I also think we need to separate our needs from our wants."

This $20,000 budget item seemed to straddle that line for Council members Thursday.

"Sounds like we're close enough," Mayor Powell Duggan said.

The item will be included in the budget to be approved by a Council vote at the next meeting on Tuesday night, June 14. The Council will also vote to approve a proffer-funded dog park on a vacant lot off of 5th Street in Old Town, near the Warrenton Branch Greenway trailhead.

At that meeting, the Council will also hold a public hearing on town code amendments about unsightly weed growth on undeveloped properties and to add hotels, inns and bed and breakfasts to permitted uses and remove motels.

The Beckoning Beauty Of The Waffle House

By Lisa Frame

WFAE-FM Charlotte (NC), June 10, 2016

There is something intrinsically beautiful about the Waffle House. Every building is identical, the decor and layout don't change, and the meal tastes the same every single time.

Called by many a "Southern Cultural Phenomenon," the Waffle House is where you go to hear yourself called "Darlin'" and "Sugar." Where regular customers aren't allowed to leave without hugging all of the waitresses goodbye. If you're road tripping, it's always just off an exit, inviting you in for a warm meal, no matter the time of day.

It's been this way since Labor Day 1955, when the first Waffle House restaurant opened its doors in Avondale Estates, an Atlanta suburb, with no plans to build another unit. Seventeen-hundred plus restaurants later, customer loyalty, friendly service, and menu favorites including Bert's Chili and Alice's Iced Tea, keep a steady stream of regular and new customers looking for that friendly, yellow Scrabble-tile sign.

The mission of the Waffle House is "...to deliver a unique experience to our customers through delivering great food, friendly, attentive service, excellent price and a welcoming presence." That's part of the beauty. It's a modern day corner pub where folks go to sober up after a night of revelry. People from all walks of life go to the Waffle House looking to feed bellies, but more often or not, their spirit is filled. I don't know if it's the smell of the coffee brewing, the glistening syrup floating in the crevices of the pecan waffles, or the sizzle of the hash browns as they are scattered, covered, smothered, and chunked on the grill.

Maybe it's the waitresses lining up to hug their regulars, cajoling them to stay and have one more pot of coffee. Everyone talks and laughs, yet the people at Waffle House also recognize that sometimes you need to be alone with your cup of coffee and think. No matter what you need today, the Waffle House is there for you, comforting you in the way that only a hot meal and people who have joined together in the common act of eating can offer. It's a temporary family, always changing, but when you're sitting in your booth, you realize this is exactly what you needed.

But Waffle House isn't just for everyday folks. One of the Carolina Panthers reportedly called Waffle House an "advantage" for his team. James Beard Award winner Sean Brock took Anthony Bourdain to visit while the TV personality was covering Charleston for his show Parts Unknown. In fact, on their Pinterest board, the Waffle House maintains a list of celebrities who have dined in the restaurants.

Every day of the year, 24 hours a day, the lights stay on at the Waffle House. That's something the company prepares for when Mother Nature comes knocking at their door. FEMA even relies on the Waffle House as an indicator of damaging storms. The "Waffle House Index" isn't scientific, but if the Waffle House is closed it's an indicator of how things are in different areas. When the Waffle House is fully operational, that's a green condition; when it's operating with a limited menu, that's yellow. Red means the restaurant's closed.

Now that it's hurricane season, my local Waffle House is green, but prepared for yellow – that would mean no bacon (takes up too much grill space) and no waffles (uses too much energy when operating on a backup power source). But no matter what, the friendly faces at the Waffle House will be there cooking meals, keeping the community fed, and giving everyone who walks in the door service with a smile.

Waffle House is a brightly-lit beacon of all things cooked on a well-seasoned griddle. It doesn't matter what your socioeconomic status is, nor the color of your skin, or how inebriated you are, or aren't; the Waffle House is where you go to find more than griddle cooked food and a bottomless coffee cup, it's where you go to find what makes the South and Waffle House beautiful – the people inside.

Lisa M. Frame is a writer and social media manager who lives in Belmont, NC. She works for Atlanta-based Everywhere Agency and is currently working on her first novel. Visit her at www.adailypinch.com.

Emergency Kits For Sale

eCatalina (CA), June 11, 2016

AVALON, CATALINA ISLAND – In a "worst case scenario" such as a natural disaster or large scale emergency (earthquake, flood, fire, biological attack) Catalina with its geographical location could be cut off from the mainland for days. Emergency services from overtown may be unable to assist Catalina residents because of concentrating resources in their own population centers. Catalina and its residents could very well be "on their own."

Through Catalina Island Medical Center's Disaster Preparathon last November over 100 households were provided with their own home kit of emergency supplies.

Now CIMC is offering a new chance for islanders to purchase these premium preparedness kits at a great discount. The backpacks available for sale have a 3-day supply of emergency provisions for a family of four. They are valued at over $100 and CIMC is offering them for only $40.

These "go bags" contain 16 lbs of items in a backpack easy to grab in case of evacuation. Contents include: emergency food rations, emergency water, a First Aid Kit, LED Flashlight, 12-hour glowsticks, Ponchos for severe weather, 24-hour Body Warmer blankets, a temporary shelter tent, an emergency whistle with compass, a 4 in 1 Dynamo Radio Flashlight, medical grade face masks for dust and more---Everything you need for 72 hour emergency survival is in this one complete, portable backpack.

FEMA, the Red Cross, and the State of California recommend you have these supplies on hand for personal needs, shelter, warmth and much more. This survival kit has a 5 year shelf life and is packaged in a durable backpack that is easy to carry and store. It is ideal for smaller living spaces.

A batch of Disaster Kits were sold at the April 28 Community Health Fair and now there are only 15 left. The purchase of these additional emergency bags was made possible by the generous support of CIMC's community partners: Southern California Edison who provided a $5000 grant. The CIMC Foundation donated $1500, the Catalina Island Women's Forum gave $1000, as did the Lions Club and Rotary.

Supplies won't last, so those interested should leave a message with Judy Hibbs (310) 510-1264 or pick up their emergency kit at the hospital reception area soon. Get a backpack and be safer and more prepared for an emergency or disaster.

Catalina Island Medical Center is committed to provide quality health care to each individual and improve the overall health of our community. For more information about medical services or disaster preparedness please call (310) 510-0700.

Heat Can Strike Down The Unwary

By Jessica Imbimbo

Columbia (SC) State, June 10, 2016

FLORENCE, SC

Coward resident Lisa Shaw was enjoying the summer sun with her daughter two years ago. Hours later, she had to be rushed to the hospital.

Heat exhaustion had set in after less than three hours in the 100-plus degree weather.

"When it got too hot we came inside and tried to cool off, but I could not get cooled off," Shaw said. "I was nauseated, couldn't catch my breath, felt almost like my whole body was on fire."

After a few bags of fluid from an area emergency room, Shaw made a full recovery.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, heat disorders occur when people have been overexposed to high temperatures or have overexerted themselves for their age or physical condition. As temperatures and humidity levels rise, evaporation slows and the body is forced to work harder to maintain a normal temperature.

Extreme heat is most likely to affect young children, older adults and those who are overweight.

Shaw said her weight may have been a factor in her susceptibility to the heat.

"I believe I suffered more than she (her daughter) did because I am overweight," Shaw said. "I am 5 feet 10 and at the time I weighed about 305 pounds."

Elderly individuals are also vulnerable when it comes to heat-related health issues. On June 9, Chief Danny Watson of the Darlington Police Department initiated a challenge to other Darlington organizations to collect small box fans for older people.

Watson's challenge will run through the end of the month. Donated box fans can be taken to either the Darlington Police Department or the Darlington Fire Department at 400 Pearl St.

Watson said something as simple as a small fan can prevent heat-related ailments during the summer.

"As a person advances in age, the ability to regulate their body temperature as well as they did when they were younger degrades significantly," Watson said. "This is why it is especially important for seniors to have access to fans and air conditioning."

People living in more urban areas are also at greater risk, due to poor air quality and stagnant atmospheric conditions. Areas covered with concrete and asphalt will stay hot longer and release heat during nighttime hours, which produces higher temperatures throughout the day.

Michael Miller, the S.C. Department of Transportation district safety coordinator, said the asphalt can reach temperatures upwards of 150 degrees when employees are working. The department provides coolers full of water and ventilated clothing to prevent heat-related health problems.

"We tell everybody to please be careful," Miller said. "If the guys work as a team, trade off and take breaks, it's not as bad as it could be."

Miller said department employees are encouraged to drink at least a quart of water per hour and take breaks from the heat every 45 minutes or so.

"I don't think we've had any significant heat-related issues for the past couple of years and that's primarily because our folks know what the symptoms are," Miller said. "We make sure everybody knows the differences."

There are different levels of heat-related illness: heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat cramps are often the first sign that the body is struggling with hot temperatures. Heavy exertion in hot conditions can cause muscular pains and spasms.

Heat exhaustion is the next phase. It typically occurs when body fluids are lost through sweating heavily. Blood flow becomes concentrated in the skin, and by doing so, decreases blood flow to vital organs. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include fatigue, rapid pulse, shallow breathing, dizziness and nausea. If not treated, the person's body temperature will continue to rise and heat stroke may occur.

Heat stroke, or sun stroke, is a life-threatening condition. A person's temperature control system stops functioning, causing the victim to stop perspiring. A person suffering from heat stroke will have skin that feels hot, but will not be sweaty. Other warning signs include confusion, headaches, trouble breathing, vomiting and loss of consciousness. A heat stroke victim's body temperature can rise so high that brain damage or death may occur.

"Heat kills by pushing the human body beyond its limits," according to a media advisory from the Florence Fire Department. "These conditions can be hazardous for people who do not take the proper precautions."

Dr. Iris D. Ignacio, a family medicine physician with Pee Dee Family Physicians, said that although certain groups of people may be more susceptible to heat-related illness, heat stroke can affect people of any age or fitness level.

"Don't underestimate the danger," Ignacio said. "Be extra careful when the heat index is 90 degrees or above and always drink plenty of water or fluids with electrolytes when the heat index is high."

"Virtually all heat-related illnesses are preventable," he said.

To prepare for extreme heat, the Florence Fire Department recommends checking air-conditioning ducts for insulation problems and making sure window air-conditioning units are installed properly. To keep the cool air inside the home, weather-strip doors and window sills.

Windows that receive morning or afternoon sun should be covered with drapes or shades. Outdoor awnings or louvers can reduce heat from entering the home by up to 80 percent, according to the Florence Fire Department.

In extreme heat, people are advised to stay inside and limit their sun exposure. If a person must go outside, the Florence Fire Department recommends wearing loose-fitting, light-colored clothing, avoid working during the warmest parts of the day and drinking plenty of water.

For more resources about extreme heat safety, visit ready.gov/heat.

Commission Discussed Grant, PDA

By Chance Hoener

Pittsburg (KS) Morning Sun, June 10, 2016

GIRARD — The Crawford County Commission discussed animal control, fairgrounds maintenance and emergency planning at its regular meeting Friday.

The commission agreed to renew a $2,500 grant to Pawprints on the Heartland after much discussion. The original grant was given in November of last year and helped Pawprints on the Heartland to maintain a Trap, Neuter and Release program for feral cats in the county.

Pawprints provides spaying and neutering services at a more affordable price, but uses donations and grants like this one to control feral cats in the area. Pawprints President Mary Kay Caldwell said that since the grant was issued in November, Pawprints has spayed or neutered 62 stray cats in Crawford County.

“If we look at just those 62 cats with four litters and four kittens to a litter,” Caldwell said. “Then we have prevented over 15,000 homeless cats being born in Crawford County.”

According to City Clerk Don Pyle, the first grant came from the county’s miscellaneous fund. Caldwell reported that they had asked the City of Pittsburg for funding as well, but were denied. She said they would be returning to Pittsburg and requested that the county bump the grant up to $4,000.

The County Commission settled on just renewing the grant for $2,500.

“I know you guys do good work,” Commission Chairman Tom Moody said. “We want to help you out.”

Emergency Manager Eldon Bedene also addressed the commission to make them aware of changes to emergency management and disaster assessment policies on the state level. Bedene said that Kansas is the first state in its region that will follow a new Preliminary Damage Assessment manual.

The new assessment process will require photos of damaged properties as well as maps and addresses of damaged locations before being assessed by FEMA. Bedene said there are also new Emergency Management Performance Grant changes that are being talked about.

“Whoever you pick is going to have a lot to do, and I’ll have a lot to do to train them,” Bedene said.

Bedene plans to retire when a new Emergency Manager is found. Applications for the position close June 17.

The commissioners also discussed mowing the fairgrounds and fixing power lines and poles that are down in that area. They also discussed mowing tractor maintenance.

Exercise Set For Cooper Station

St. Joseph (MO) News-Press, June 10, 2016

KANSAS CITY — The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency has announced plans for a one-day preparedness exercise next week at the Cooper Nuclear Station in southeast Nebraska.

Missouri and Nebraska officials will participate on Tuesday, joining with agencies in Atchison, Richardson and Nemaha counties.

Officials said the exercise is a biennial requirement aimed at protecting the health and safety of those living and working in the station’s vicinity.

The exercise will measure the adequacy of state and local radiological emergency readiness and response plans, and will require the activation of emergency facilities.

A public meeting to describe and explain the exercise will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday at the Nebraska Public Power District’s emergency operations facility in Auburn, Nebraska. The utility owns and operates the plant.

Weathering The Storm: What’s Your Emergency Action Plan?

By Elliott Falcione

Bradenton (FL) Herald, June 12, 2016

It’s that time of year where we need to prepare our community and ourselves for Hurricane Season, a season that if not prepared, can cause devastation and loss of life if a major storm impacts our area.

Although our community has not experienced catastrophic devastation from a major storm, we must find the time to prepare ourselves, our families and our businesses now. A complacent mindset will, no doubt, be detrimental to our area, so let’s take Hurricane Season seriously.

If we take the time to develop and implement an emergency preparedness plan, then our businesses can survive when any kind of disaster strikes.

American businesses form the backbone of the nation’s economy. Small business alone employs half of all private sector workers and provides nearly 45 percent of the nation’s payroll. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, 40 percent of businesses do not reopen after a disaster and another 25 percent fail within one year. The U.S. Small Business Administration statistics suggest that over 90 percent of businesses fail within two years following the impact of a disaster.

These odds are not very comforting and are extremely eye-opening. But these statistics can be shifted.

How quickly your business can get back after a terrorist attack, fire, flood, tornado or hurricane often depends on emergency planning done today. Though each situation is unique, your business can be better prepared if you plan carefully, put emergency procedures in place and practice for all kinds of disasters.

To survive, business owners must take steps to minimize and weather the effects of a disaster. The first step is understanding your business's vulnerabilities. Disasters such as wide area flooding or a hurricane certainly make the top list. However, smaller events such as burglary or water damage due to a faulty roof or plumbing can have the same catastrophic result. The second step is to determine the varying impacts to your business. This will support your third step of developing a plan.

I urge you to take the time to conduct your own research for information that supports your unique business safety and security. At the start of every Hurricane Season, various businesses including grocery stores, building supply or home improvement centers, pharmacies, and insurance carriers produce volumes of literature to assist your personal and home preparations.

Unfortunately, complacency is common in today's society, so let's not allow complacency to cost us our lives and businesses. Please, dedicate time now to prepare for the next six months.

For more information, please visit: www.mymanatee.org/emergency, www.floridadisaster.org, www.ready.gov and www.tbrpc.org.

One Month At A Time: Preparing To Survive Stress-free In An Emergency

By Bill Lynch

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, June 12, 2016

The tent stayed up in the yard for the rest of the week, while I nursed a cold indoors and slept in my own bed.

Keeping with living unplugged for the month, I avoided using power. I continued to eat cold food, mostly fresh fruit and bagels with peanut butter. I didn't open my refrigerator, didn't use my stove or microwave.

The television stayed off. The only time I heard the radio was in the car.

At home, I showered by candlelight and read books using a gadget I could clip to the back cover that provided just the barest amount of illumination.

"What are you going to do when you run out of clothes?" one of my editors asked. "You need to get a washboard."

That sounded like a pretty good idea. I told him I'd check the local flea market, but if worse comes to worst, I guess I'll be in the creek down the road beating my boxer shorts on rocks.

In the meantime, I worried about caffeine withdrawal. My supply of Neuro Fuel energy drinks from Smith's Food Fair (a bargain at $1.19 each) was running low. Because I wasn't using electricity, I hadn't been able to brew coffee.

I was also not brewing coffee at my desk or buying it elsewhere. My logic is if the power was down, I wouldn't be able to get coffee.

So no coffee, except for a tiny, glass jar of instant I got at Wal-Mart for $2.

This was always my backup in case nothing else worked.

Finally, five days in, I broke out the small burner and propane tank, carefully assembled the thing (which was really easy), turned the knob, lit a match and did not set myself on fire.

Almost five days since I'd pitched the tent, I made coffee and had a hot breakfast on my front porch. I had oatmeal with raisins. It tasted much better than it deserved to.

Clearly, I needed some advice on how to do this. So I went to Keller's Survival in Cross Lanes.

Bob Keller has been in business since 2012. Before he opened his store, he was an engineer and an engineering teacher.

He opened the store because there really wasn't anything like it around.

"It was just something I saw as a need here," he said

So, just over four years ago, Bob opened a tiny place in North Charleston selling a mix of camping equipment, hunting apparel and paramilitary gear.

That summer, the derecho blew through, knocking some people in the area off the grid for over two weeks.

"Then we had the Halloween snowstorm and the chemical leak from Freedom Industries," he said.

People come looking for him now, and Keller's Survival has expanded.

He and his wife moved to a larger building, and the space he had set aside for classes has been turned into more retail floor space with shelves of merchandise for help living off the grid. That includes everything from portable water purification systems and tiny, alcohol-fueled stoves to bulk dried foods and solar panels.

"I'm not really a big fan of whole house solar," Bob said. "But I do like it for a backup generator. They're silent. If the power goes out and you fire up your generator, what you have there is a beacon.

He added, "If the power stays off, you could end up with some company."

Keller's Survival can be a starting point for someone interested in prepping for a disaster, but most of what he has on the shelves is designed for relatively short-term interruptions — at maximum, a few months.

He is glad to talk about what is necessary for the long haul, for what you might need to do if the lights go off and they don't come back on.

Bob described "prepping" as a kind of journey. No one is required to go the whole distance, whatever that might be, but instead, people can choose where they want to stop.

At the minimum, he thought, people need to be able to get through three days of interruption. This is not his number, Bob pointed out, but the government's.

"[The Federal Emergency Management Agency] wants you to have a bug out bag and three days supplies," he said.

Bob said he meets people all the time who don't even have three days worth of non-perishable food in their home, let alone three days worth of drinkable water.

"And what if the government can't get here in three days?" Bob asked and then added, "You think of it in the rule of threes. What can you not have? Three minutes without air, three days without water, three weeks without food."

That's what everyone should think about at the very beginning of the journey, he said, but it's only the beginning.

"You start off with trying to replace things or an activity," Bob said.

"You keep spare food and water. You make sure you have candles, flashlights and firewood.

"Then you move on to the self-reliance phase," he said. "That's when we get into urban agriculture and self-sustaining."

Some of this is as simple as just doing what our grandparents did. They kept gardens, raised chickens and dug wells.

From there, prepping moves on to being in a state of preparedness, working to be ready for whatever comes.

Bob acknowledged being ready for anything is probably impossible, but you could be absolutely ready for what is likely (power outage caused by storms or water contamination caused by industry), and try to prepare for what seems possible somehow, but is probably unlikely (zombie uprising or full scale invasion by Luxembourg).

Being prepared is not incredibly expensive, though it can be, if you really want to put out the money.

"You'll find a lot of slick guys selling garbage online," he said. "The thing about prepping is you spend 50 bucks or $5,000 or more. That's all up to you."

Good prepping is about managing stress and maintaining balance. Preparing for trouble in and of itself helps to reduce anxiety.

Stress is a killer.

Bob said, "When the water crisis happened, my wife called me and asked me, 'What should we do?'"

Bob said he told her, "Nothing."

They were already ready.

Where people go wrong with prepping is when they don't think through what they've done. They'll lay up a couple of weeks worth of non-perishable canned goods.

"The good news," Bob said, "is if the cans aren't dented or rusted, they'll last practically forever."

The bad news is you get what you pay for, literally.

"You can probably get a case of green beans for about six bucks," he said. "But what if your wife isn't a big fan of green beans? That's going to raise her stress level, which I assure you will raise yours, too."

I told him that I'd only been going without power at home for about a week, but already missed leafy green vegetables. I'd tried keeping them in a cooler, but without regularly replacing the ice, my salad had quickly turned to mulch.

He shook his head.

"Maybe you could do that in winter," he said. "Look where you are. You'll have to adjust your diet."

A longer-term solution might be to have a garden, which could provide fresh vegetables, but that probably wouldn't be year-round.

Without getting into specifics, Bob acknowledged that some of the people who come into his store have some unusual ideas.

"I've heard some really interesting things over the years," he said.

Some of these ideas lead people to obsessively hoard guns.

Bob said he supports the right to bear arms, believes having adequate protection is a core part of survival preparation and thinks if you have guns, you ought to know how to use them.

But … some people put a lot more resources into their guns than into the rest of their survival plan.

"If my plan is survival, and your plan is to have enough weapons to take from me," he said, "the only thing you're prepping for is to be a criminal."

The key, he said, to getting through a crisis might sound a little corny, but it's faith.

"There's definitely a spiritual side to this," he said, but then added, "But I also think it's more than just religion. You have to have a reason bigger than yourself to keep going. It could be your family, but you have to have something to latch onto."

Bob didn't think that was profound, just common sense, but then again, a lot of prepping, to him, was about rigidly applying logic and common sense.

I told him he'd given me a lot to think about, but that I was doing better than I expected. At least, I was doing better than I did in 2012. I told him about my little burner, which I'd used to make coffee and oatmeal.

Keller said he had one, too.

"They're pretty handy," he agreed. "But what are you going to do when the gas runs out?"

I wasn't sure. Also, while I'd successfully made coffee and oatmeal, I'd had less success with making plain old white rice, a major staple in my house.

The rice had come out gritty and undercooked.

I tried eating it anyway, but then tossed it out and had another bagel with peanut butter.

– See more at: http://www.wvgazettemail.com/life-columns/20160612/one-month-at-a-time-preparing-to-survive-stress-free-in-an-emergency#sthash.LmpzLC3h.dpuf

'Full Measure': Coming To Cleveland

KUTV-TV Salt Lake City, June 12, 2016

WASHINGTON (SBG) — Republicans and Democrats finally have presumptive presidential nominees and are headed toward their summer conventions.

For Democrats, with Bernie Sanders still in the race, there could still be fireworks inside the convention center in Philadelphia.

For the GOP, the action may be outside the convention in Cleveland, where the Republican National Convention is being held next month. Some violent protests have followed Donald Trump on the campaign trail. "Full Measure" correspondent Lisa Fletcher went to Cleveland to see if the city is ready for the political rumble.

Two years ago when the City of Cleveland bid, and won, the right to host the RNC Convention, it had no way of knowing that some of today's GOP rallies would be so violent.

Next month, the LeBron James posters will come down and the GOP banners rise, as the Quicken Loans Arena will be transformed. Donald Trump and thousands of GOP luminaries and delegates will flood into the highly secured zone.

Fletcher: "We are at Quicken Loans Arena, where the RNC is going to be. What's it going to be like with 50,000 people here?"

Steve Loomis: "It's going to be crazy busy, crazy busy."

The area inside and surrounding the arena will be closely guarded by Secret Service. It's the area outside the zone that keeps Loomis, the president of the Police Patrolmen's Association, up at night.

Loomis: "You know, I would love to be able to tell you guys that we're in a good place right now, and that we're ready for this. And I can't, I can't."

Loomis' union represents 1,400 Cleveland "rank-and-file" officers, 600 of whom will be on convention duty manning checkpoints, monitoring traffic, and trying to keep a lid on violence.

Fletcher: "Are you afraid your guys are going to get hurt?"

Loomis: "Yeah, there's definitely going to be guys that are going to get hurt. But the city has a responsibility and a duty to make us as safe as possible by providing us the gear that we need to do the job, the training we need to do the job, and the numbers we need to do the job."

Loomis says with just five weeks to go, "rank-and-file" officers feel unprepared. He says the city has failed to communicate logistics, and has provided very little specialized training.

Loomis: "We have 600 police officers, 500 of them haven't been through one minute of training after the three-day FEMA course they went through last year. Not one day."

FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It provides on-site training to cities hosting national security events.

Loomis: "I'm concerned when I have FEMA instructors telling me personally that they have never been to a city that has been so non-responsive to their recommendations as the City of Cleveland."

Both the Cleveland mayor and chief of police declined "Full Measure's" request for an interview. At a recent press conference, Police Chief Calvin Williams insisted the city is in good shape.

Williams: "So, we are prepared, we are ready. And our partners are out there prepared and ready.

There are going to be officers and individuals and things that you will never see, but they'll be here making sure this city is safe."

Matt Zone is a city councilman who has been overseeing the preparations.

Zone: "Some of the stuff that is happening behind the scenes, the rank-and-file officers, they're not even aware of."

Fletcher: "Enlighten me a little bit on what's going on behind the scenes, because I think these officers would, too, like to be enlightened, because they feel like, 'We are not prepared yet, we haven't seen the gear, we haven't had the training.'"

Zone: "FEMA, which is an elite entity of the federal government that does massive training around issues, they've been in our city for over nine months. So, there's been extensive training that's been happening with not only certain leadership of the Cleveland Police Department, but our county sheriffs, the National Guard, our state troopers, and many jurisdictions throughout northeast Ohio."

Fletcher: "Now, Cleveland P.D. tells us they've had three days of training with FEMA, and that's it."

Zone: "So, did you hear that from FEMA, or did you hear that from the police union?"

Fletcher: "The Union."

Zone: "See, of course. Now you're only getting one perspective."

We contacted FEMA, and it confirmed it had provided a three-day course for the Cleveland Police Department, and a one-day executive course for the city managers. Hardly the "nine months" the councilman claimed.

FEMA declined to comment on the preparedness of the city, stating, "We are in no position to offer official recommendations or guidance to the City of Cleveland or Cleveland Police Department, and have not done so."

Loomis: "You know, police departments from all over the country are backing out of this thing right now in large scale."

Milwaukee, Denver, Cincinnati, and Greensboro, North Carolina all had originally pledged manpower, but are now pulling out.

Fletcher: "Why are these police agencies that had been committed, in some cases for months, Greensboro had been committed since October, why are they now pulling out?"

Zone: "You know, I've heard stories that they are concerned about depleting their rank and file in their hometowns. I'm not privy to the Greensboro situation."

It wasn't a privileged conversation.

In fact, in a widely publicized letter, the Greensboro Deputy Police Chief cites conversations with other police administrators, "Who expressed a lack of confidence in the City of Cleveland and their preparedness for the RNC," and noted that, "We have a responsibility to ensure that we are sending our officers to an event that is well planned."

Chicago in 1968 was a historical example of how things can go wrong when police, protesters, and political turbulence come together.

Across the country this year, protests at Trump rallies are a clear prediction of what Cleveland is likely to face.

Zone: "Let's face it, most of these police officers, they're gonna be just shepherding and ushering crowds in."

Fletcher: "True, but you don't know which officers are going to be confronted by violent protesters in any part of the city."

Zone: "Sure, but we're going to have such mobility throughout our city, where our police officers are going to be able to move not only on bike, and foot, and horse but also be enabled to set up motorcades that will just roll through the city."

While most of the city's 300 mountain bikes have arrived for the Cleveland Police Cycle Squads, as well as upper-body protection, officers we talked to say much of the other equipment they're expecting, like ballistic helmets, vests, and emergency transport vehicles, are yet to be seen.

Fletcher: "But why the photo finish? The city has known for two years that the RNC is coming here, why wait until the last two or three months to really get the ball rolling?"

Zone: "I mean, that is certain people's opinions. What is happening here in Cleveland is happening in Philly as well. There are different --"

Fletcher: " – Philly's had their equipment for seven months."

Zone: "No, no, no, no, no, not all their equipment."

"Full Measure" contacted the Philadelphia Police Department, and with the exception of sophisticated radio equipment that is still on order, its union president told us they are flush with gear, and have been training on it daily in preparation for the DNC.

Civil rights attorney Jacqueline Greene has been critical of Cleveland Police and says more training is exactly what they need.

Greene: "We have a police department that has been found to have previously engaged in a pattern and practice of unconstitutionally use of excessive force."

Force so excessive the city is currently under federal oversight.

According to a 2014 Department of Justice report, the Cleveland Police "Use unnecessary and unreasonable force, at a significant rate, and in a manner that is extremely dangerous to officers, victims of crimes, and innocent bystanders.

The review also found inappropriate use of Tasers and pepper spray.

Fletcher: "Are you concerned that the previous lack of restraint that has been demonstrated is going to show itself during the protest of the RNC?"

Greene: "Yes, we are concerned about that. We're concerned not only because of the reputation of Cleveland Division Police themselves, but also because there are other law enforcement agencies that are brought in to assist."

Fletcher: "Are you concerned about the reputation that's been laid on the Cleveland Police Department going into something as potentially volatile as the RNC?"

Loomis: "Sure. We're always concerned about reputation, but we'd ask people to look at the facts."

As for the protesters, Loomis says their actions will dictate how this convention plays out.

Loomis: "Speak your mind, do whatever it is that you're going to do for protesting, don't throw a rock at my guys. Don't break a window. Don't burn a car. That just brings a negative light to whatever you're trying to sell, and everything will be fine."

Zone: "We have a very good police department and I'm proud of them. They work very hard every single day, and so I know that they're going to be up for the task. This convention is going to come and go, and people are going to look back and say, you know Cleveland? Job well done."

To complicate things even more, because the Cleveland Cavaliers are in the NBA Finals, and game six is in the same arena as the convention, they are going to lose about two weeks out of the six weeks' prep time that the RNC usually has.

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Cumberland Matters: Public Hearing Planned On County Budget

By Jon Soles

Fayetteville (NC) Observer, June 11, 2016

The Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the Cumberland County Fiscal Year 2017 recommended annual budget Monday at 7 p.m. in Room 118 of the Courthouse. The recommended budget has $430 million in total expenditures and maintains the property tax rate at 74 cents per $100 valuation.

Anyone interested in signing up to speak should contact the clerk's office at 678-7771 or cwhite@co.cumberland.nc.us. Residents can watch the meeting live through the County's website at co.cumberland.nc.us or on Time Warner Channel 5 (Fayetteville/Cumberland County Educational TV).

Care Center donation

The Department of Social Services received a donation on May 25 to help the Care Center. The Daughters of Penelope of Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church, Chapter 416, presented a $1,500 check and hygiene kits for the Care Center, which provides holistic domestic violence-related services to victims, children and abusers.

The Care Center's most sought-after services are counseling and shelter for women and children in imminent danger. The Care Center 24-hour crisis telephone line is 677-2532.

Emergency training

Cumberland County Emergency Management Coordinator Gene Booth recently graduated from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Emergency Management Advanced Academy, which provides strategic-level training, education and essential skills needed to manage dynamic and resilient emergency management programs.

Earlier this week, Booth and the county's Emergency Services Department were carefully monitoring Tropical Storm Colin and reminding residents to be ready for severe weather by creating disaster-preparedness kits in their homes. A kit should contain enough nonperishable food and a gallon of water per person, per day, to last three to seven days. Other essential items include a first-aid kit, a weather radio and batteries, hygiene items and changes of clothes. Learn more about emergency preparedness by visiting readync.org. To sign up for the free emergency and severe weather notification service CodeRED, visit co.cumberland.nc.us or call 910-678-7641 or 910-321-6676.

Canning class

You can save on your grocery budget by growing and preserving your own fruits and vegetables. The Cooperative Extension offers the workshop "Basic Water Bath Canning" June 23 from 9 a.m. to noon. The workshop, from the Extension's Better Living Series, will teach the basics of canning produce from the garden. Participants will learn hands-on techniques for preserving high-acid foods. Class size is limited, so apply early. The $10 workshop fee is due by June 20. To register, call Susan Johnson at 321-6405.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

No stories for this edition

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

No stories for this edition

FEMA CORPS

Health Center Celebrating National Men's Health Week

Farmington (MO) Daily Journal, June 11, 2016

St. Francois County Health Center in Park Hills is celebrating National Men's Health Week this year with free walk-in screenings from 8-11 a.m. June 17.

Located at 1025 W. Main St., the health center is offering cholesterol, A1C, weight, and blood pressure checks at no charge — as well as PSA, a blood test used primarily to screen for prostate cancer for $10. No physician order or appointments are required for any of the tests.

National Men's Health Week is celebrated June 13-19, which is the week leading up to Father's Day. During this week, individuals, families, communities and others work to promote healthy living among men and boys.

The health center received the 2015-2016 Medical Reserve Corps Challenge Award from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to work on chronic disease prevention and health promotion. The funding from this grant is helping to provide the cholesterol and A1C tests for free on Men's Health Day.

"When it comes to prevention and early detection, men's health often takes a back seat to women's health," said Jessica McKnight, SFCHC assistant director. "Research, however, shows that, compared to women, men are more likely to smoke and drink alcohol and generally lead less healthy lifestyles. In addition, men are more likely to put off routine checkups and also delay seeing a healthcare provider for symptoms of a health problem.

"There are several health conditions that only affect men, such as prostate cancer and low testosterone. Many of the major health risks that men face — like colon cancer or heart disease — can be prevented and treated with early diagnosis. It is recommended for men to visit their medical provider for checkups, even if they are not sick. Certain diseases and conditions may not have symptoms, so checkups and preventive screenings help identify issues early or before they can become a problem."

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, chronic diseases are responsible for 7 of 10 deaths each year and treating people with chronic diseases accounts for 86 percent of the nation's health care costs.

For more information on the steps men can take to improve health visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Men's Health Day website www.cdc.gov/men/nmhw/ or call SFCHC at 573-431-1947.

Much Work Went Into Planning Walkway Marathon

By Dr. Henry M. Kurban, Commissioner of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health

Poughkeepsie (NY) Journal, June 10, 2016

The months of preparation are over, and today is race day. Runners from around the county and around the globe have descended on Dutchess County to take part in the second annual Walkway Marathon race series.

The Walkway Marathon event is a great example of the activities that are helping Dutchess County reach its goal of becoming New York's healthiest county over the next decade. It's also a chance for visitors to come to our county and discover what makes us unique.

More than just several hours on the course, the Walkway Marathon race series is the culmination of months of preparation from the Walkway Over the Hudson organization, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and various county departments, all with participants' health, safety and enjoyment in mind – responsibilities we all take seriously.

Most of the miles covered – be they part of the 5K race, half-marathon or full marathon – will traverse the Dutchess Rail Trail, showcasing the work the Dutchess County Department of Public Works' Parks Division performs to keep the linear park pristine.

This weekend's event, though, is an example of several county departments working together, all with the benefit of keeping both competitors and spectators as safe and healthy as possible. Seemingly as soon as last June's race weekend concluded, Dutchess County and its partners began working to make today as successful – both from a running standpoint and in terms of health and safety – as the inaugural race series.

Our Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH) has played several key roles in helping plan the weekend, and you'll see our staff throughout the day at various locations, there to aid runners should a medical emergency occur. Between first-aid stations and medical tents set up along the race route, the department will support everyone from athletic trainers and podiatrists to nurses, paramedics and physician assistants.

Behind the scenes, DBCH officials have met regularly with their colleagues in the Dutchess County Department of Emergency Response, working on a comprehensive plan for today which offers quality medical care, as needed for those involved in the races – runners, spectators and volunteers. If an unforeseen situation arises, DBCH and Emergency Response representatives have formulated guidelines to keep everyone informed. Officials with DBCH will use the Walkway Marathon as a drill and will be evaluated on several objectives to gauge our strengths.

Alongside with local volunteer groups, the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) of Dutchess County will line the race route at all eight medical tents and the Marist Medical Tent, providing healthcare assistance and logistical support such as documentation and communications. Supporting both DBCH and Emergency Response when responding to various incidents, MRC of Dutchess County is a partner of a national network of volunteers dedicated to supporting public health infrastructure and disaster preparedness and response in local communities.

Just like last year, officials from Emergency Response will man both the central command center and a mobile command vehicle, all to stay abreast of up-to-the-minute conditions on the course and in the surrounding areas in real time, providing warnings of potential predicaments.

Dutchess County's Division of Public Transit will again shuttle runners, utilizing hybrid buses to cut down on carbon emission, which affects air quality. The Division of Solid Waste helped the inaugural Walkway Marathon become New York's first certified "green race" ever and will likewise support organizers' pledge of sustainability, providing recycling bins and supporting the Walkway Green Team.

Having worked and planned with their counterparts in Ulster County, as well as local police agencies, representatives from the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office will provide safety, security and law enforcement throughout the day. You'll see a visible presence – on foot, bikes and ATVs, and in patrol cars and boats – to protect runners, volunteers and spectators.

This collaboration among several Dutchess County departments and divisions has been critical in developing plans to make the Walkway Marathon as safe, healthy and successful as possible for all involved.

Whether you're running in a race, volunteering or watching the excitement from the sidelines, we hope you enjoy the Walkway Marathon and the fruit of our months of preparation. You likely won't see many of the measures we've undertaken, but rest assured our department and several others have worked tirelessly to keep you healthy and safe.

Be sure to like Dutchess County Government's Facebook page and follow Dutchess County Government on Twitter (@dutchesscogov) for updated photos throughout the day, as well as from Saturday's first-ever Think Differently Dash.

MCPHD Opens Substance Abuse Treatment Program

Macoupin County (IL) Enquirer Democrat, June 9, 2016

Though it has only been operating for about three weeks, Macoupin County Public Health Department's new outpatient, medicine-assisted opioid drug treatment program, operating out of Maple Street Clinic in Gillespie, already has 18 participants.

At a press conference held Tuesday morning in the county board room at Macoupin County Jail, MCPHD Administrator Kent Tarro announced that the organization is partnering with Addiction Treatment Strategies out of Edwardsville to provide the program, which is funded for the first two years through a $325,000 federal grant. After that, if the program is successful, MCPHD will receive funding for it along with the rest of its federal funding, which is awarded on a competitive basis every three years.

Also speaking at the press conference were ATS Director John Crum, Macoupin County Sheriff Shawn Kahl, Macoupin County State's Attorney Jennifer Watson and moderator Angela Weidner, RN and chief operating officer at Maple Street Clinic.

Tarro said there are three priorities for the program: helping people who are addicted to heroin and other opiates stop using, saving the lives of people who are currently addicted, and supporting and working with people who are currently addicted to change their lives to lead happier, healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives.

"The problems of heroin and other opiates has continued to grow in Macoupin County and the surrounding areas," Tarro said. When the funding proposal for the proposal was being put together, MCPHD researched drug statistics in Macoupin, Madison, Jersey, Montgomery and Sangamon counties. For the five-year period from 2010 to 2014, those counties had a total of 501 opioid overdose deaths, increasing year-to-year to a high of 165 in 2014, and a total of 4,843 opioid-related arrests, also gradually increasing until 2014, which had 1,581.

Crum noted that in the United States, about 120 people per day die of heroin overdoses, which amounts to about 44,000 people per year — the population of Macoupin County. In Macoupin County, Kahl said, there are typically three to five opiate overdose fatalities each year.

Watson pointed out that 43 percent of the felonies that were filed in her office in 2015 were drug-related, and that number doesn't include other crimes that were committed due to addiction, such as larceny. "With this program, we're hopeful that this will reduce the number of felonies that are being committed in Macoupin County and that these people will be able to get the treatment that they need," she said, noting that for users, prosecution tends to lean more toward probation and treatment rather than incarceration, which is more of a priority for dealers.

Kahl pointed out that his department typically tries to hit 30-60 homes per month where drugs are suspected, in order to get the drugs out; homes are targeted based on information received from the general public. "The biggest issue now is that they're spread out, they're everywhere," said Kahl. "They're in your neighborhoods, they're around your children. There's needles laying all over the streets anymore. It's getting out of hand. With this kind of treatment, it's going to help us tremendously. At least we have a resource now to direct these people to, to try to get help if they truly want it — which most of them we talk to do want it, but there was really no resource to do it."

Locally, Kahl said users are typically in their late teens to earliy 20s, but heroin has been prevalent long enough that people who started using it 5-10 years ago are now in their 30s. "The sad thing is, it's family members, it's moms and dads and they've got young children in these houses," he said. "We don't have a lot of big-time drug dealers here. There are a lot of users." Kahl noted that locals typically go to the North City/St. Louis area or Springfield and bring the drugs back to the county. "It would probably shock you to know how many people take a trip to Springfield or St. Louis from this county on a daily basis to bring the drug back," he said.

"We see everyone," said Weidner. "We see moms, we see dads, we see teenagers, we have some people that are in their 60s. Addiction does not discriminate. It's a disease, and it does not discriminate."

"Some of the statistics are absolutely alarming," said Tarro, noting that the United States consumes 99 percent of the world's supply of Oxycontin and 80 percent of the world's supply of prescription opiates overall. In addition, 85 percent of people who use heroin began with prescription opiates. "Right now it is so much easier and [there's] such less bureaucracy to prescribe opiates than it is to get Suboxone," said Tarro; Suboxone is the prescription used to treat opioid addiction. "That is absolutely insane when you think about where this problem came from."

Tarro said Crum will be working with health care providers throughout the counties to let them know the current guidelines for opiate prescriptions. "The hard line from the Centers for Disease Control is that, yes, it needs to be used during cancer therapy and end-of-life hospice care," said Tarro. "Then there's debate about post-surgery, acute injury, etc., but the hard line is just cancer treatment and end-of-life hospice care. We need to reduce the supply."

According to Tarro, about 20 years ago hospitals started making pain a vital statistic, similar to temperature and blood pressure, which he believes is part of the problem. "We need to teach both children and adults that your goal should not be to live a pain-free life," he said. "Pain is a part of living, it's a part of healing, and it's a part of growing."

Tarro noted that Macoupin County communities have been working on solutions to the growing drug problem, such as by having town meetings regarding heroin and other opiates and their "addictive, destructive and fatal consequences". In addition, MCPHD is working to expand the Macoupin County Medical Reserve Corps and has recently received funding to recruit and train additional volunteers to provide outreach in the communities, including education and awareness to help people prevent their loved ones from becoming addicted and making sure people know where to seek treatment for addiction.

The program is based on the idea that addiction is a disease. "It is not a choice, it is not poor willpower," said Tarro. "It is very comparable to diabetes, heart disease, and cancer." He also noted that there is a large genetic component to addiction, as much as 50-60 percent. “That is a fair warning for people who have had that in their families in a big way.”

Tarro said there are four “pillars of community action” for dealing with the problem of addiction: prevention, education, treatment and enforcement. “We intend to attack all four at the same time,” he said. “A public health department’s supposed to address the biggest health problems in their community and work with everyone else to make that problem either disappear or at least reduce it as much as possible and help people live a healthy, self-actualized life.”

For now, the program is limited to 30 participants due to federal regulations concerning the number of patients a health care provider can prescribe Suboxone. After Maple Street Clinic’s psychiatrist has had her Suboxone license for one year, which will be in November, they will be able to apply to expand to 100 patients. Until that time, if there is more demand than the clinic can meet, the additional patients will be referred to the ATS program, which has open spots.

Crum said that long-term outpatient programs such as this one are far more successful than 30-day inpatient programs. “The outcome of 30-day treatment is zero, but that’s the current model,” he said. “They’re usually high on the plane ride home.” However, insurance companies will typically pay for at least two hospitalizations or two residential treatment programs — which can cost $25,000 to upward of $90,000 per 30-day stay — per year, but are not as willing to fund outpatient programs such as ATS, which Crum said has a much higher success rate as most patients are involved in it for a minimum of two years. “At the end of the two-year period of time, about 63 percent of our patients are no longer using anything and haven’t used anything for over a year,” he said. “Most of my patients aren’t ever going to use again, but it takes an extended period of time to get to that point. Thirty days of treatment is a myth; treatment on a residential basis is a myth. It has to be in the environment in which the addiction occurs.”

“You go away for 30 days, you’re isolated, you’re not having to deal with your kids, your family, your parents, work, legal problems. You get out of inpatient and all those problems hit you. In outpatient, you’re dealing with all of those problems, and we’re helping you deal with them step-by-step,” said Weidener, who pointed out that even if inpatient programs worked, there aren’t any available in this area due to the state budget crisis. “I had a patient come to us in tears last week. She was told by two inpatient places just to keep using for three months until a bed became available.”

Medicaid pays for Suboxone, but that is not the case with most insurance companies. “We currently have to fight with every insurance company for them to pay for it,” said Weidner. “We are billing insurance for what we can bill for, but, again, the rate of what they pay for outpatient services isn’t near enough. That’s why we needed the grant.” Like all of the clinic’s services, the substance abuse program fees are offered on a sliding scale based on income. No patients will be denied based on their inability to pay.

The program also will treat underlying problems of addiction, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. “First we do an extremely careful assessment, then we go to the medical system, which impacts on the cravings for the drug,” Crum said. “Then we look at the psychological component of the cravings. Why do people continue to use? We can treat that on a psychological basis that supports the medical component.” Patients will be required to attend group and individual therapy sessions every week, as well as keep a journal and stay in regular contact with the therapist.

“Success is in small steps,” Crum said. “We have had patients who had been using 140 milligrams of Vicodin on a daily basis that are down to four milligrams a month. That’s extremely significant change. What that means is the neurobiology of the brain is changing back and the patients are gaining control of their lives. For the most part, our patients are using to stay alive. They don’t use to get high; that’s a myth. They use to be functional.” He added, “It’s not necessarily the cravings that get them, which we can address with medication. It’s the compulsion to do something. It’s not atypical for our patients to shift one compulsion to another; they may shift from heroin to gambling. Gambling’s not a drug, but it works exactly the same way.”

Farmington Hills Teen Picked For FEMA Youth Council

By Brad Kadrich

Hometown Life (MI), June 11, 2016

Preston Buszka thinks young people need to become more aware of safety and emergency preparedness.

Now the 15-year-old, just completing his sophomore year at Farmington High School, is going to be in an even better position to help make that happen.

Buszka, already a member of the Mayor’s Youth Council and one of two youth representatives to Farmington Hills’ Emergency Preparedness Council, has been named to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's 2016-2018 Youth Preparedness Council.

"I'm very excited," Buszka said. "I'm really looking forward to making our region, and the country, safer."

Created in 2012, the council brings together youth leaders from across the country who are interested in advocating on behalf of preparedness and making a difference in their communities by completing preparedness projects.

The council supports FEMA's commitment to involve youth in preparedness-related activities. It also provides an avenue to engage youth by taking into account their perspectives, feedback, and opinions.

Buszka, the son of Shelly and Dan Buszka of Farmington Hills, has already been involved in safety measures. As a freshman, he became the safety captain for the school's robotics team, a position he's continued.

He was honored at recent competitions in Traverse City and at the world competition for his work setting up the team's safety program.

"I enjoyed doing that job," Buszka said. "Our safety program really improved, and I really enjoy it."

Tim Tutak, the vice-chair of the Farmington Hills Emergency Preparedness Council, said Buszka will provide a great deal of insight to FEMA.

"Over the years we have had a number of youths from our communities provide input to the EPC," Tutak said. "They have provided us with insight from the youth in our communities. Preston has a sense for safety and preparedness that provides us with insight from that his group that most of his peers do not."

Farmington Hills Mayor Ken Massey said Buszka's selection for the FEMA honor is "very impressive."

"Yet again, Farmington Hills stands out and leads the way, and this time it's one of our youth doing it," Massey said. "Preston is a very outgoing young man. He's bright, he's motivated and I think he's got a very bright future ahead of him."

PRIVATE SECTOR

No stories for this edition

CITIZEN CORPS

County Launches Volunteer Database Website

By Brendan Denison

Danville (IL) Commercial News, June 12, 2016

DANVILLE — The Vermilion County Board recently launched a website its chairman calls a "one-stop shop" where organizations can easily link up with volunteers.

County Board Chairman Mike Marron said board members gathered a lot of grassroots input from people across the county, asking residents about the local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the county.

Marron said that one recurring strength the county has is its people, who always want to get involved and donate time and money.

"We tried to come up with a plan to harness those assets and make it more effective," Marron said.

So far, the following organizations have signed up with the website: CRIS Senior Services, Big Brother Big Sisters of Vermilion County, Vermilion County Emergency Management Agency, Vermilion County Health Department and Danville Public Library foundation.

The website can be accessed at the following address: www.vcvolunteer.net.

Marron also said another part of the plan is about trying to coordinate efforts.

"We need to try to get everybody to work together to the greatest extent possible," Marron said.

Melody Ehrlich, director of the Danville Public Library foundation, commended the county for getting the website launched, and said it will be a valuable tool for various non-profit organizations.

"We have a book sale three times a year and we rely heavily on volunteers," Ehrlich said. "We have a group of volunteers that have been supportive and steadfast for many years, but we are always looking for new volunteers to help with the book sale."

She also mentioned the foundation sponsors an annual fundraiser, From Page to Stage, where volunteers are needed as well. Other volunteer opportunities with the foundation include office duties, help with mailings and data entry.

Ehrlich said individuals interested in volunteering for the foundation can call 477-5220.

Melissa Rome, emergency preparedness coordinator with the Vermilion County Health Department, said the department doesn't have as much staff as it used to, and it has to heavily rely on volunteers if there's a public health emergency.

According to Rome, the Vermilion County Medical Reserve Corps would respond to events such as a large pandemic or bioterrorism incident, or help with dispensing medicine or vaccinations to large numbers of people. Rome said the Medical Reserve Corps is part of a nationwide organization, and there are quite a few throughout Illinois.

She also said they have had few volunteers signed up, and they try not to take on spontaneous volunteers who show up during a major event. Rome said they need to make sure volunteers are trained and know how to give shots, and normally need nursing staff, pharmacists and doctors.

Rome also said they need individuals who aren't medical professionals to help with registration, traffic control and helping greet people.

"We need people from all different areas to help," Rome said.

According to Rome, interested volunteers would need to fill out an application through the health department, which also goes through the Illinois Health program. The volunteers also would also be asked to take a few online courses.

"Because we are so limited, really the only reason we would use our volunteers is for drills, exercises and a real event," Rome said.

Volunteers

Lowell (MA) Sun, June 12, 2016

Email information for this listing 10 days in advance to jdeegan@lowellsun.com.

DISASTER VOLUNTEERS: The Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps. seeks both medical and non-medical members to be trained for public health initiatives and emergency service in their community. See www.UMVMRC.org for examples of activities. Call Nancy at 978-399-2549 for information.

STRAIGHT AHEAD MINISTRIES: Christian non-profit looking for men and women of faith interested in visiting incarcerated teens in detention facilities, including Merrimack Revocation in Lowell, to build relationships, bring hope and share their faith. Trainings are scheduled according the each volunteer's location and schedule; commitment is one hour, once a week. For information, visit www.straightahead.org or email marc@straightahead.org.

TUTORS NEEDED: Seeking volunteer tutors in Math, English, Arts/Comprehension for high school seniors to prepare for MCAS tests. Those eligible are: current/retired teachers, teachers' assistants, education students, experienced tutors. Call Lauri Murphy, 781-932-5520.

UPPER MERRIMACK VALLEY MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS: Medical and non-medical volunteers who would like to join the local MRC unit are invited to call Nancy Burns, Coordinator, at 978-399-2549 or Sandy Collins, Director, at 978-399-2908; or e-mail

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

OPINION: Time To Flip The Federal Disaster Equation

By Garret Graves, US Rep. from Louisiana's 6th district

Gonzales (LA) Weekly Citizen, June 11, 2016

June is upon us, bringing with it the things we love about summer in South Louisiana: longer days, snowballs, cicadas buzzing in the background and maybe a family trip to the beach. It's also the time of year to keep a watchful eye on the Gulf of Mexico as we're making plans to beat the heat – June 1 is the official start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season. Despite the unusual, 9 year drought of Category 3 storms making US landfall, Louisiana natives know that the run of luck can't hold forever.

The Congressional Budget Office recently released a report predicting that federal costs associated with hurricane damage could rise 39% in coming decades, attributing the increase to climate conditions and development trends along our nation's coast. Regardless what the exact figures turn out to be, we know it won't get cheaper – that's why I've been outspoken about shifting the federal paradigm on disaster management and community resilience.

We've spent hundreds of billions of dollars on disaster response as a country, but a fraction of that could have been spent to prevent damages. Multiple government and independent reports show that every one dollar invested in prevention and resiliency saves as much as four dollars in disaster response costs. But our government is stuck on stupid: instead of making these investments on the frontend, it's dead-set on this broken process of coming in after a disaster and spending exponentially more dollars. We have to break this cycle and redesign policies around resiliency to stop hemorrhaging billions of dollars after the fact – that approach is wasteful and leaves our communities, economies and ecosystems just as susceptible as they were before the event.

Earlier this year, I supported House passage of a bill reauthorizing the programs and activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and we worked hard to ensure that it included language to lay the groundwork for a paradigm shift. The bill commissions an assessment of trends in disaster losses—their causes and amounts—and requires the agency to submit recommendations to Congress on how to reduce losses and produce savings for taxpayers. Last month, we advanced legislation authorizing US Army Corps of Engineers programs and included provisions to accelerate completion timelines for water resources development projects critical to the structural resiliency of our communities. The bill also empowers local entities and cuts costly bureaucratic barriers that impede the progress of these projects – like the 44-year study of the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Project, which is now finally set to be authorized.

Despite advancements in the world around them, agencies like FEMA and the Corps of Engineers largely operate today the same way they have since their inception. For example, FEMA was established at the end of the 1970's to coordinate response efforts in the wake of disasters and mostly applies the same, decades-old mentality in 2016. But static solutions will never fix dynamic problems – like the rapidly changing conditions along Louisiana's coast. Coordinating relief efforts is absolutely important, but it's only one component of how we ought to be thinking about disaster management and should not be the core mission of our federal disaster agency. Its core mission should be prevention, i.e., "how can we best invest today to prepare for and reduce the severity and expense of inevitable natural occurrences?"

Why is changing the approach so difficult? You know the answer: government is change averse. Self-preservation and bureaucratic complacency have a vice grip on the status quo. But the status quo is preventing better service for taxpayers who want and should demand better – and it's putting people in harm's way.

Unlike what's brewing in the Gulf, a disturbance in Washington is exactly what we need, and being an agent of that change gets me out of bed in the morning. We're going to untangle this bureaucracy and make government work – one agency at a time.

How Hillary Clinton And Chuck Schumer Are Teaming Up With The NYPD To Push Police Militarization

By Sarah Lazare

AlterNet, June 9, 2016

Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton are teaming up with the NYPD to request high levels of funding for a federal "counter-terror" program that is directly bankrolling the militarization of police forces nationwide. To secure the funds, they are invoking the threat of terrorism and exploiting the climate of fear and incitement that has come to define the 2016 election cycle.

At issue is the the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), which was created in 2003 as a Department of Homeland Security grant program aimed at assisting "high-threat, high-density Urban Areas in efforts to build and sustain the capabilities necessary to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism." From 2003 through 2015, at least $8.9 billion from taxpayers have been distributed in the form of UASI grants.

In reality, the program funds initiatives that contribute to blatant law enforcement overreach, including a police militarization and weapons expo known as Urban Shield and the training of SWAT teams across the country. According to the War Resisters League, which contributed research to this report, UASI effectively "strengthens and unifies state repression."

In his proposal for next year's federal budget, President Obama requested cuts to DHS's funding of UASI from $600 million in fiscal year 2016 to $330 million in 2017, arguing that counter-terror funds are sufficiently provided elsewhere. A broad coalition of human rights organizations called this move a "step in the right direction."

The Obama administration's call for reductions provoked a fierce backlash, with the mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio, joining with NYPD police commissioner Bill Bratton to demand high levels of funding by casting the city as a "top terror target."

Buoyed by support from Clinton, Schumer announced in a press statement in late May that he has successfully restored the UASI funds to the proposed Homeland Security budget. Schumer declared, "UASI is the cornerstone of effective preparedness and prevention against terror attacks and in an era of rising terror threats, our support for anti-terror programs should not be falling."

The tussle over funding comes amid mounting concerns over police impunity. At a time when Black Lives Matter protests have forced public scrutiny of police militarization and killings of African Americans, politicians and police leaders are using the supposedly imminent threat of terror to bulk up their budgets and subvert a national conversation about the proper allocation of public resources.

"Ticking Time Bomb Mentality"

UASI grants do not exclusively fund police; they also finance first responders like firefighters when they can show that a "nexus to terrorism exists." A FEMA spokesperson told AlterNet that the agency is unable to immediately provide a breakdown of what percentage of the recipients are law enforcement agencies.

Lara Kiswani, executive director of the Arab Resource and Organizing Center, explained in an interview with AlterNet: "If you want to fund emergency response, fund emergency response. We do not believe UASI is intended for that at all."

Kiswani's suspicion is understandable. A 2011 report from the National UASI Association, which describes itself as a "nonprofit composed of UASI Programs," notes that, "From 2003 to 2010, Urban Areas spent approximately $623 million to support terrorism prevention capabilities. Much of this funding has focused on enhancing intelligence collection, analysis and sharing with fusion centers playing a key role in the process."

Such centers, which operate as ill-defined counter-terrorism spying and intelligence gathering hubs, have conducted warrantless surveillance on Occupy activists and Muslim-American communities. "Fusion centers have long been an issue that Congress keeps pouring money into without comprehensive oversight or accountability," Michael German, a fellow for the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law School, told AlterNet. "Because their focus is on intelligence, their threat to civil liberties is enormous and the ability to check abuse is almost nonexistent."

But it gets worse. Craig Dziedzic, general manager for the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative, noted this year that the funds continue to bankroll Urban Shield, which he described as "an annual full-scale exercise, which is conducted throughout the Bay Area UASI region for 48 hours." Urban Shield brings together international SWAT teams, weapons manufacturers and police agencies to Alameda County, Calif. for a war games and arms sales extravaganza human rights campaigners say illustrates the epitome of state violence. The event has met such stiff resistance from local residents and activists that in 2014 its weapons expo was kicked out of Oakland.

UASI is also funneling money into SWAT teams across the country, from Macomb, Michigan to Boston, Massachusetts. According to a 2012 report from Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), "Keene, New Hampshire, with a population just over 23,000 and a police force of 40, set aside UASI funds to buy a BearCat armored vehicle." Coburn pointed out that UASI funds bankrolled first responders' $1,000-per-person attendance at a training that included a workshop where actors dressed as zombies were gunned down "to simulate a real-life terrorism event."

FEMA says that, in fiscal year 2016, 29 urban areas were deemed eligible for funds according to "an analysis of relative risk of terrorism." The New York City area is by far the largest recipient of UASI funds, which finance the NYPD's 500-officer Critical Response Command, a permanent counter-terror unit whose cars are "fitted to hold Colt M4 semiautomatic assault rifles," according to New York Times reporter David Goodman.

UASI is helping expand and arm "counter-terror" policing in a city whose top police officer, Bratton, used public fear over terrorism in the wake of the Paris, Brussels and San Bernardino attacks to press for the expansion of police powers, including access to phone data. Some complain that his department has treated Black Lives Matter protesters like a terrorist threat. According to Josmar Trujillo, a writer and organizer with New Yorkers Against Bratton, "They are using this ticking time bomb mentality, where the mysterious threat of terrorism is always there and at any moment we could all die, so you have to rush to make decisions and bypass civil rights and human rights."

AlterNet reached out to DHS but was unable to locate an official willing to speak on the record. The NYPD did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"Nexus to Terror"

What is the system-wide impact of financially incentivizing disaster response rooted in counter-terror measures, in a country that has been fighting a nebulous war on terror for nearly 15 years?

In a letter to U.S. senators, 35 grassroots groups, including the American Friends Service Committee, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and Center for Constitutional Rights, argued that "by requiring training supported by these federal funds to contain a 'nexus to terrorism,' UASI serves to fuel the dangerous culture of aggression so rampant in U.S. police departments. UASI also creates a structural bond between militarized law enforcement and vital emergency response resources and workers."

Notably, the congressional fight over UASI funding comes at a time when social movements are demanding accountability for police violence and racism and calling for alternatives to mass incarceration. Even Clinton claims to be disavowing her track record of supporting "tough on crime" and "war on drugs" policies, yet she is invoking the threat of terror to back high levels of UASI funding. "We need it, we need it, I want it," Clinton said of UASI funding in an April interview with reporters for the

New York Daily News. “I don’t agree with the Obama administration on that.”

Kiswani claimed that “politicians are exploiting the climate of fear of Muslims and racism against Arabs in order to further programs like UASI so that they can use them to further exploit other communities of color. I think the war on terror has consistently been used to further the already-existing oppressive structures in the United States. This is no different than the way that the war on drugs has been used.”

Data shows that there is already tremendous overlap between the war on terror and the war on drugs. Of the wiretaps granted by state and federal courts in 2013, nearly 90 percent were used for drug investigations, with drug wiretaps almost tripling between 2003 and 2013.

UASI is just one piece of a much larger patchwork of federal initiatives that militarize police departments, including the 1033 program, which allows the Department of Defense to transfer weapons of war to state and local law enforcement agencies.

“Time after time we’ve seen how programs like UASI feed on cultures of fear to further militarization around the country and the world,” Tara Tabassi, national organizer for the War Resisters League, told AlterNet. “But we’ve also learned how being SWAT raided or teargassed by law enforcement, compels us to build movements across communities—working together to build a demilitarized world.”

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

ABC: Severe Weather. ABC World News Tonight (6/23, lead story, 2:50, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "And we begin tonight with the urgent water rescues now under way. Families trapped in rising waters. An entire community under water. And now fears that a toddler, a little boy, was swept away. These pictures coming in near Richwood, West Virginia. You can see the shopping center there. Water several feet high. Cars nearly disappearing. Also tonight, the new number just in. At least 10 confirmed tornadoes. This one touching down in Illinois. Chief Meteorologist Ginger Zee with the track as this system now moves into the East. But first, ABC's Alex Perez with the rescue efforts and the state of emergency just declared." ABC (**Perez**) added, "Tonight, torrential rains sending a muddy wall of water down a Richwood, West Virginia, street. Evacuations under way. The entire town engulfed. Officials declaring a state of emergency. Worries that a nearby dam could breech." **Leslie Rubin**, WCHS-TV: "They are looking for a four-year-old boy. He was washed away." **Perez**: "Reports of a four-year-old child swept away by floodwaters. All part of the same powerful storm that brought hours of fear to the Heartland." **Unidentified speaker**: "Just a thin snake coming out of the sky." **Perez**: "Truckers forced to pull over in Buckley, Illinois." **Unidentified speaker**: "We've got to get off the highway. Big tornado." **Perez**: "A storm chaser in the thick of it, pummeled with debris. Multiple confirmed tornadoes, including this EF2, with winds up to 125 miles per hour, tearing an 11-mile path through Pontiac, Illinois. Mary Johnson says this mobile home flipped over three times. Luckily, everyone safe." **Unidentified speaker**: "It could have been so much worse." **Perez**: "At Chicago's Soldier Field, 50,000 fans at the Chile versus Columbia soccer match, scrambling for cover. And back here in Pontiac, even though the tornado crushed this gas station building, officials say several people who were seeking shelter here were lucky enough to walk away without any serious injuries. David?" **David Muir**: "All right, well, that's good news, but we are thinking about that family and that toddler tonight. Alex, thank you. Let's get right to Ginger, because unfortunately these next few hours could be very dangerous." **Ginger Zee**, ABC News Chief Meteorologist: "Every time I refresh the storm reports, I'm coming up with something up with something new. So a landslide now on Interstate 79, just out of Charleston, is the very latest. You can see the tornado watch and severe thunderstorm watches that stretch from parts of Kentucky to North Carolina. The flash flooding is the imminent threat, for sure, along with those damaging winds. And of course, the isolated tornado that could come out of this. You see the flash flood watch because this area has already had upwards of eight inches of rain. These trailing thunderstorms, the ones that keep coming, line after line, David, is what we're concerned about tonight. West Virginia finally starts clearing out after midnight. But that's not good for Knoxville, all the way to parts of North Carolina. And look, tomorrow, the low does the same thing. Another severe weather day." **Muir**: "All right, watching it again tomorrow. Ginger, thank you."

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (6/23, story 4, 0:20, Holt, 16.61M) reported, "A state of emergency has just been declared in two West Virginia counties, where heavy rains are causing devastating floods, rock slides, and mudslides. Much of Richwood, a city about two hours east of Charleston, is under water. The storms also took down trees and power lines, knocking out service to tens of thousands."

CBS: Severe Weather. The CBS Evening News (6/23, story 3, 0:20, Pelley, 11.17M) reported, "Well, severe storms pounded the middle Atlantic states today. In Ravenswood, West Virginia, a toddler was swept away by flood waters. The governor declared a flood emergency. 40,000 homes and businesses lost power. In Allegheny County, Virginia, streets turned into rivers. Police were warning people to stay off the roads."

At Least 6 Tornado Touchdowns Confirmed In Northern Illinois

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

CHICAGO — Illinois officials and residents began assessing damage Thursday after eight tornadoes damaged rural communities in the northern part of the state amid powerful storms that swept across the Upper Midwest.

The National Weather Service said an EF2 tornado with estimated top wind speeds of 115-125 mph cut a path more than 11 miles long and about four football fields wide into the city of Pontiac on Wednesday night. Officials said at least seven people were injured in that tornado.

An EF2 tornado with top wind speeds of 116 mph cut an 8-mile path from Marseilles to Seneca. Weaker tornadoes struck Cissna Park, Ottawa, Troy Grove, West Brooklyn, Mazon and a rural area 5 miles northwest of Ottawa. No injuries resulted from those storms.

"We are fortunate things are not worse and are thankful there were no fatalities," Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner said in a Thursday morning statement.

In the Pontiac area, about two dozen homes — 10 to 15 outside of the city and 13 within the city limits — and nine commercial businesses were damaged, according to Pontiac Fire Chief Scott Runyon.

"Most of the residential reports ranged from minor shingle damage and tree damage, to pretty extensive window repair and holes, but trees did most of the damage to the residential homes," Runyon said during a news conference, The Daily Leader newspaper in Pontiac reported.

"Some of the commercial buildings were reporting relatively minor damage, but the majority of the reports are fairly severe. It's going to take a great deal of money to get these repaired," Runyon said.

The storm system produced dime-sized hail in some areas, and its high winds snapped trees, blew roofs off buildings and downed power lines. The weather service reported winds from 80 mph to 100 mph in some parts of northern Indiana.

The northwestern Indiana town of Brookston, among those buffeted by the high winds, declared a state of emergency Thursday after the entire town lost power. WLFI-TV reported two state highways in the town were blocked by storm debris, and authorities were warning people to avoid the area.

"The wind was so ferocious you couldn't have stood out in it at all," Brookston resident Steve Hall told WLFI. "This tulip (poplar) tree behind me was a healthy young tree and (the wind) just twisted it and laid it over like a pretzel."

A 100 mph wind gust was recorded in the nearby town of Battle Ground, the weather service said.

Firefighters responded to reports of people trapped in a house in Seneca, Illinois, after a tornado moved through the village about 70 miles southwest of Chicago. No injuries were reported.

Jeff Maierhofer said he huddled in a basement with his wife, two children and seven neighbors when the storm arrived. He said his farm was badly hit.

"Nobody's hurt. Everybody's fine. All the neighbors are fine. Everybody checked in with everybody. But there's a lot of damage," Maierhofer told WLS-TV.

In nearby Serena, Nate Hermann said he drove his pickup truck around 10 square miles and found farmland "wiped out everywhere."

"Lines are down, trees are down, corn is flat everywhere," he told the Chicago Tribune.

A strong band of thunderstorms forced a two-hour delay in Chile's 2-0 victory over Colombia in the Copa America semifinal at Soldier Field, the home of the Chicago Bears football team. Fans sheltered beneath the stands until the danger passed. Fans also were told to take shelter at Target Field, home of the Minnesota Twins, before their game against the Philadelphia Phillies resumed after a 70-minute delay.

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Heavy Rains, Severe Storms Damage Some North Dakota Crops

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

FARGO, N.D. (AP) – Another week of heavy rainfall has drowned out some crops in northeastern North Dakota, while the southwestern part of the state received some much-needed moisture.

The Agriculture Department says in its weekly crop report that up to 4 inches of rain was reported in the northeast. The impact of the flooding won't be known until later.

The report also says that while the southwest got needed rain, storms also brought strong winds and hail, damaging some crops.

The condition of the state's staple spring wheat crop is still rated 82 percent good to excellent.

Pasture and range conditions statewide are rated 66 percent good to excellent. Stock water supplies are 87 percent adequate to surplus.

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Flash Flooding Damaged Woodbury County Spans, Engineer Says

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

SIOUX CITY, Iowa (AP) – Authorities say flash flooding has damaged one Woodbury County bridge beyond repair and heavily damaged another.

County engineer Mark Nahra told county supervisors Tuesday that creek flooding moved the Haskel Avenue bridge three feet off its abutments, according to the Sioux City Journal (http://bit.ly/28QGjWf).

"Even though it didn't go anywhere, it's a total loss. It cannot be repaired," Nahra said.

He estimated the replacement cost will be between $600,000 and $650,000 for that bridge and between $650,000 and $700,000 to repair the heavily damaged 170th Street bridge.

Some area farmers reported up to a foot of rain from Friday's storms, which swelled McElhaney and Wolf creeks.

Nahra estimated the county sustained between $1.5 million and $1.6 million in storm damage and cleanup and restoration costs.

"I would say it's going to take us two weeks to get the road tops completely restored," he said.

Emergency management coordinator Michelle Skaff said she's asked all 15 county cities about damage to public property so she can determine whether the county would qualify for a presidential disaster declaration and funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

For such aid, Skaff said, two thresholds must be met: The county must have sustained at least $365,000 in damage, and the state must have sustained at least $4.3 million in damage.

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Floodwatch Underway At Metro's Cleveland Park Stop After Earlier Rushing Water Problem

By Dana Hedgpeth

Washington Post, June 23, 2016

With heavy rains hitting Washington Thursday morning, there was a flood watch of sorts underway at the Cleveland Park Metro stop after the station experienced heavy flooding from another storm earlier this week.

On Twitter, Michael Marriott was tracking the morning commute at the stop, as crews were seen trying to unclog a drain and a worker used a squeegee to keep the water back. The Cleveland Park stop's flooding issue has its own hashtag — #ClevelandParkFloodWatch.

On Tuesday, the station had what many riders described as a 'Noah's Ark'-like experience when water gushed into an escalator and stairwell at the station during a heavy rain storm.

The stop closed for nearly two hours Tuesday until the water was drained and cleared. Metro officials had said the station was "prone to flooding because it is at the bottom of a hill."

"In these extreme weather conditions, we get flash flooding," according to Metro spokeswoman Sherri Ly.

On Thursday morning, Marriott joked on Twitter that crews were on hand to "handout life vests as needed" at the stop.

After Station Flood, D.C. Moves To Improve Drainage Near Cleveland Park Metro

By Faiz Siddiqui

Washington Post, June 23, 2016

The District will make efforts to improve drainage near the Cleveland Park Metro station, after storms Tuesday swept a cascade of rain inside, flooding the upper level, city officials said Thursday.

D.C. Council member Mary M. Cheh (D-Ward 3), who represents Cleveland Park, outlined plans Thursday for the District to examine drainage and recommend ways to reduce runoff in the Connecticut Avenue corridor where the Metro station is located. Puddling and minor flooding has long been a problem in the area, which is replete with concrete surfaces that are impermeable to rainwater, but Tuesday's unprecedented flash flood prompted officials to act, Cheh said.

"This is something that I've been working on for some time, but the challenges of coordinating between three entities—DDOT, DC Water, and (Metro)– frustrated the process," Cheh said. "But, at long last, I think we're going to see some significant movement to address the problem."

The first phase of a design process for improvements, led by the District Department of Transportation, is set to begin within two months. The plans, which are expected to be devised over the next year, are expected to result in a better drainage system, rebuilt drainage structures and improved stormwater retention, according to Cheh, who chairs the council's Committee on Transportation and the Environment.

DDOT spokesman Terry Owens said the design phase of the project is estimated to cost about $600,000. The project is not new; DDOT has already met with the community and conducted a study of the area, Owens said, and the nine-month phase is part of a larger streetscape plan.

Cheh said the project also would involve raising Metro's vent shafts to levels less susceptible to flooding, adding that DDOT would work with Metro to assess any other design improvements that can be made.

Metro said Wednesday that it had federal grant money to raise the vent shaft at Cleveland Park, but the project is in the midst of an approval process involving regional planning commissions, and no timeline has been set.

This post has been updated.

100-acre Wildfire Contained In North Central Nevada

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

GABBS, Nev. (AP) — Fire crews in north-central Nevada have fully contained a 100-acre wildfire burning in a remote area north of Gabbs about 120 miles east of Carson City.

The Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center said Thursday a fire line has been drawn completely around the blaze that was burning in grass and brush near Lodi Valley.

The fire was reported shortly after 4 p.m. Wednesday.

Crews halted the advance of the flames overnight and remained on the scene Thursday mopping up and putting out hotspots.

No homes or structures were threatened. But fire officials cautioned that a "red flag warning" remains in effect until 9 p.m. Thursday due to gusty winds and low relative humidity.

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Central California Fire Burns Structures, Spurs Evacuation

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

LAKE ISABELLA, Calif. (AP) — A wildfire broke out Thursday and exploded in size, consuming at least 50 to 60 homes as it tore through several rural communities in Central California northeast of Bakersfield, authorities said.

The blaze broke out near Lake Isabella in late afternoon amid heat in the 90s and single-digit humidity, climbing over at least three ridges into hillside neighborhoods, Kern County fire Capt. Tyler Townsend said.

The fire has burned nearly four square miles, and about 1,000 homes are under threat.

Live video from fire officials at the scene showed hillside homes along dirt roads consumed by heavy flames in Squirrel Mountain Valley, a community of about 500 people. Some houses were already little more than embers on the ground, while others were deep in flames.

Smoky haze could be seen for miles around, and orange flames lit the evening air as planes and helicopters made drops on the blaze.

"I've never been in a wildland fire where I've seen so many homes burn," said Townsend, who has been in the area for nearly a decade. "It's one of the most devastating I've ever seen."

Many of the houses in the area have propane tanks, adding to the danger, he said.

The small rural communities of South Fork, Weldon, Onyx, Lakeland Estates, Yankee Canyon and Mountain Mesa were also under evacuation orders.

Some residents were refusing to evacuate, Townsend said.

There are also power and cellphone outages in the area.

Elsewhere in the state, cooler weather helped crews fighting two fires that burned more than 8 square miles of chaparral and brush in the Angeles National Forest and foothill communities northeast of Los Angeles. The fires were 15 percent contained.

More than 1,300 homes were evacuated during the 4-day-old blaze, but around half have been allowed back.

On Thursday, authorities let hundreds of evacuated residents return briefly to homes in Azusa and Duarte to gather belongings. Residents might not be allowed back permanently for several more days, officials said.

One of the fires broke out Monday when a car ran off a highway. No homes have burned.

Near the San Diego County border with Mexico, an 11-square-mile fire was 35 percent contained after burning five homes. A majority of evacuees were cleared to return at 6 p.m. Thursday.

A heat wave coupled with nightly wind gusts drove the fires earlier in the week before slightly cooler weather took hold. But National Weather Service forecasts warned red-flag conditions of extreme fire danger could return by evening.

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Red Flag Conditions Ahead For Southern California Amid Several Wildfires

By Joseph Serna And Nina Agrawal

Los Angeles Times, June 23, 2016

A short respite from triple-digit heat allowed crews battling several wildfires in Southern California to block the flames from destroying homes this week, but dangerous red flag fire conditions have returned, the National Weather Service said Thursday.

Temperatures in the Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara county mountains and valleys were expected to hover in the 90s Thursday, but they could climb into the 100s by the weekend while coinciding with a drop in humidity and strong wind gusts, NWS meteorologist Todd Hall said.

A red flag warning — meaning weather conditions are prime for a fast-moving, destructive wildfire — was in effect for the those three counties, while a heat advisory was expected in Orange, San Diego and Riverside counties, the weather service said. It will get worse through the weekend, Hall said.

Several wildfires have broken out across Southern California since a heat wave settled over the region late last week.

The San Gabriel Complex fire, a pair of wildfires burning in the San Gabriel Mountains above Duarte, began Monday and forced hundreds of evacuations.

"When we drove away, I thought we had a 50-50 chance of seeing our house again," said Roger Bosch, a Duarte resident.

On Wednesday, relief washed over the 73-year-old: He got to go home. Evacuations were lifted as conditions improved and firefighters increased containment of the two fires.

Of the 858 homes evacuated in the foothills areas, 534 households were allowed to return, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Capt. David Halm said. Mandatory evacuations remained in place for other parts of Duarte and Azusa, authorities said.

The fires have burned 5,235 acres and were 15% contained, officials said Thursday.

The battle against the flames was aided by cooler temperatures and higher humidity in the days following Monday's record-breaking heat, authorities said. Steep, challenging terrain presented a problem, said Mike Wakowski, the commander for the multiagency wildfire effort.

"We're trying to secure as much as possible before the next heat wave comes," Los Angeles County Fire Department Deputy Chief Vince Peña said Wednesday.

Conditions improved enough this week in Santa Barbara County that crews began leaving the Sherpa fire burning in the Santa Ynez Mountains and Los Padres National Forest. That fire has burned 7,486 acres and was 93% contained, the U.S. Forest Service said.

Three hot shot crews dropped onto the mountain earlier this week to help build defenses at the fire's most isolated points deep in the forest, the Forest Service said.

In San Diego County, firefighters have increased containment of the Border fire just north of the U.S.-Mexico border that prompted mandatory evacuations for the entire east county community of Potrero. The Border fire was about 20% contained and has burned 6,840 acres, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The Border fire has destroyed four outbuildings and left three firefighters with minor injuries. The cause is under investigation.

How Aerial Mapping Has Helped Contain San Gabriel Complex Fire

By Lucy Schouten

Christian Science Monitor, June 22, 2016

Reports called it "firenado" and a "heat wave blitzkrieg," but by Tuesday evening, firefighters had the information they needed to start containing the San Gabriel Complex Fire.

The weather helped, as firefighters took advantage of clear skies on Tuesday to employ aerial mapping and chart the fire's movement in real time, the Associated Press reported.

The Reservoir and Fish fires have been burning through the rugged foothills near Los Angeles since Monday, evolving quickly into a twin fire system that that firefighters are now combatting as a single, 4,900-acre wildfire as they work to keep the blaze away from people and property, the US Forest Service reported.

The wildfire shrank for the first time on Tuesday night, and firefighters ended the day with 10 percent containment on both fires.

Although private drones have been cited as a hazard to firefighting – California's legislature passed a bill punishing drone fliers who interfere with firefighting last year, although the governor vetoed the measure – aerial tools aid the efforts in significant ways. Jets and helicopters are flying hotshots into tough areas such as the California foothills while others pour gallons of red fire retardant on stubborn blazes.

Satellite and drone images are aiding firefighting strategy for the fires blazing throughout California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, providing both information about the fire's current location and the geographical detail to estimate where it could go next.

To this end, NASA developed a Rapid Response system in 2001. The system provides a way to connect satellite images from its Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) instrument on board the Terra research satellite with the firefighting work of the National Interagency Fire Center and the US Forest Service.

"By 2007, the Rapid Response System was producing data globally and had incorporated data and imagery from the MODIS instrument on the Aqua satellite," according to a NASA news release. "Users quickly realized that the imagery and data products produced by Rapid Response could be used for other tasks that required low latency products, including imagery for monitoring air quality, floods, dust storms, snow cover, agriculture, and for public education and outreach."

NASA has used MODIS to create satellite images of the San Gabriel Complex, which the forest and fire officials then use when deciding how to employ over 1,000 personnel currently working on the fire.

The aerial mapping strategy gives firefighters an extra edge toward containing the large fires, especially when they burn through steep or even inaccessible terrain.

"They are working so hard, it's excruciating with the heat, and up and down these hills, they're steep," Los Angeles County fire Capt. Mike McCormick told CBS News.

Despite the progress, evacuations will continue for at least one more night while firefighters work toward greater containment.

"We're looking at another night at least," US Forest Service spokesman Nathan Judy told CBS News. "We understand the stress it puts on families if you displace them from their homes, and we want to get them back as soon as we can."

Millions Of Dead Trees Pose Massive Wildfire Risk. What Can Be Done?

By Ben Rosen

Christian Science Monitor, June 23, 2016

Because of a historic five-year drought, warmer temperatures, and beetle infestation, 66 million trees have died in California since 2010, increasing the risk for disastrous wildfires, the US Forest Service said Wednesday.

In its announcement, the Forest Service demanded Congress allocate more money for firefighting so it doesn't have to.

"Unless Congress acts now to address how we pay for firefighting, the Forest Service will not have the resources necessary to address the forest die-off and restore our forests," said Tom Vilsack, secretary of the Department of Agriculture, the parent agency of the Forest Service, in a statement Wednesday.

"Forcing the Forest Service to pay for massive wildfire disasters out of its pre-existing fixed budget instead of from an emergency fund like all other natural disasters means there is not enough money left to do the very work that would help restore these high mortality areas. We must fund wildfire suppression like other natural disasters in the country."

The Forest Service spent 56 percent of its budget last year on fire management, compared to 16 percent in 1995. The Forest Service said 2015 was the most expensive fire season in its history, costing them more than $2.6 billion, according to The Sacramento Bee.

The Forest Service expects the combination of drought and bark-eating beetles to ravage more trees near California's Yosemite National Park and Lake Tahoe in the near future. As natural disaster attributed to climate change intensifies, the Forest Service's plea to Congress underscores a question the federal government has wrestled of late: Who is responsible (and should pay for) forest and wildlife management?

As firefighters contend with several early season wildfires across California, the Forest Service said it has found 26 million dead trees across 760,000 acres in the southern portion of the Eastern Sierra since October 2015. This is in addition to the 40 million trees it estimates died there from 2010 and late 2015. There are an estimated 3.9 billion trees in California.

The prevalent death of trees, in particular the death of pines and fires, is a straightforward story. The five-year drought and warmer temperatures have stressed the trees, even though California experienced historic rains this winter. The needles of drought-stricken pines weakened, leaving them incapable of secreting the sticky resin they need to fight off bark beetle infestations. Mild winters don't kill off as many insects. Bugs burrow beneath bark and into the tree's soft innards, which larvae feed on.

Officials expect more trees to die in the near future, and the rampant mortality to reach the northern Sierras.

"Tree dies-offs of this magnitude are unprecedented and increase the risk of catastrophic wildfires that puts property and lives at risk," said Mr. Vilsack, in his statement.

For years, the Forest Service has asked that fire management be funded like other natural disasters. Last year, a bipartisan coalition supported legislation that would have prevented the Forest Service from "cannablizing" its budget to fight wildfires, wrote Ryan Sabalow for The Sacramento Bee. But lawmakers couldn't agree on how much logging should be allowed in national forests.

Fire suppression isn't the only wildlife management service. At Yosemite National Park alone, more than half a billion dollars worth of repairs have been neglected, reports David Iaconangelo for The Christian Science Monitor.

Meanwhile, President Obama has overtaken former President Theodore Roosevelt, protecting 256 million acres of public land and water under the federal Antiquities Act, the Monitor's Josh Kenworthy reported.

However, more national parks, forests, and monuments comes with a price, one the Forest Service has said it pays for, drawing away from its ability to manage forests and plant trees.

Agency Enlists High-tech Help Keeping Drones From Wildfires

By Keith Ridler

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

BOISE, Idaho — When Brian Cresto and his fellow firefighters fly toward a wildfire at just a few hundred feet off the ground, he's scouting for the best spot for them to land when they parachute down.

Lately, he's also been keeping an eye out for hobby drones that could take out their twin-engine propeller craft before it climbs to 1,500 feet, where the eight smokejumpers exit.

"It's dangerous anytime you drop an aircraft down to a certain level," said Cresto, a smokejumper with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. "Drones are starting to be a part of that conversation."

Hobby drone ownership has spiked in recent years, and more and more of the devices have been spotted flying illegally over active wildfires, where they can endanger the airplanes and helicopters being used to battle the blazes.

It's a high-tech problem, and federal authorities are thinking high-tech to stop it: The U.S. Interior Department is working with drone makers and mapping companies to create a system that uses smartphone apps already on the market to quickly alert drone fliers to temporary flight restrictions at wildfires.

Initial attacks on a wildfire are crucial, but firefighting aircraft can't fly if a drone is in the restricted area because a collision could be catastrophic, officials say.

Retardant bombers and helicopters typically fly even lower than smokejumpers, at just above the trees or rooftops, and have little time to react in an emergency. A drone collision could take out an engine or break a windshield. The devices also can get sucked into a helicopter's intake or hit a rotor.

In just the past week, drone sightings have grounded aerial firefighters on three different days at a Utah blaze that has forced the evacuation of 100 homes. Utah Gov. Gary Herbert governor said those evacuations might have been avoided if not for the drones.

According to Federal Aviation Administration rules, hobby drones are limited to 400 feet above ground level and within sight of the operator. But internet videos show a stream of violators, including at wildfires.

"I've heard sometimes that at a wildfire, there might be 20, 30 guys out there flying their quadcopters," said Patrick Harper of the Meridian-based Idaho Drone Co.

Wildfires tend to attract spectators, including drone pilots who can use their devices to capture stunning aerial footage from a unique perspective.

Authorities across the U.S. recorded 20 incidents in which drones flew too close to wildfires last year, with more than half hindering firefighting efforts. It has happened again at least nine times so far this year.

In Utah, a helicopter pilot refused an assignment after one of the recent near-drone collisions, fire spokeswoman Carissa Silvis said. A $1,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the drone pilot's conviction.

On Thursday, hobby drones grounded flight operations at an Arizona fire where more than 15,000 people are under pre-evacuation notice.

The Interior Department hopes the new smartphone notifications will keep drone fliers at a safe distance. Its plan is to post data online that companies can start using in August to keep the notification apps up-to-date.

"It will be successful if we are able to provide real-time information and have it depicted on those mapping programs," said Brad Koeckeritz, the department's division chief for unmanned aircraft systems.

The next step is asking drone builders to make it possible for drone operators to activate systems that would automatically prevent a drone from entering temporarily restricted airspace, Koeckeritz said.

Idaho drone maker xCraft has a website intended to help drone fliers stay out of permanent no-fly zones, said JD Claridge, company co-founder and CEO. That kind of system likely is also possible for temporary flight restrictions at wildfires, he said.

"For safety concerns, I agree that it would be a good step forward to start creating some shield-fence algorithm inside the drones that would prevent them from flying where there are wildfires," he said.

But it should be an option for the drone flier, as some drones legally fly at wildfires, Claridge noted. Federal agencies are looking at drones for mapping fire perimeters, and are even developing drones to fight wildfires.

There's urgency to the Interior Department's plan because the FAA predicts 1.9 million hobby drones will be sold this year and as many as 4.3 million by 2020. Their popularity is due to falling prices and increasingly sophisticated onboard computer systems that make the devices easier to pilot, Harper said.

The FAA in December required drone operators to register crafts weighing between about half a pound and 55 pounds, meaning recovered drones could potentially be matched with their owners. And on Tuesday, the Obama administration created a new category of rules designed specifically for drones weighing less than 55 pounds, allowing commercial operators such real estate agents, farmers, filmmakers and others to fly them without special permission.

Those are steps in regulating drones, but Claridge and Harper said technology is still advancing faster than oversight.

Harper said hobby drone operators would do well to keep in mind some commonsense rules.

"If you're going to fly someplace that causes somebody danger," he said, "that's not a hobby anymore."

Dar Schmid works for Missoula, Montana-based Leading Edge Aviation and transports smokejumpers as a BLM contract pilot. He said pilots who fly into wildfires at low levels, including retardant bomber and helicopter pilots, often are navigating near mountains and dealing with heat and smoke.

They have too much going on in the cockpit to worry about drones and risk what he called task overload.

"You wouldn't know it was coming," Schmid said. "You'd just hit one, and the damage would be done."

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Lack Of Preparation For Massive Earthquake Could Bring Catastrophe, Report Says

By Rong-Gong Lin

Los Angeles Times, June 23, 2016

Southern California's smaller cities and large businesses must take the threat of a crippling earthquake far more seriously than they have been, a committee of business, public policy and utility leaders said Thursday, saying action is needed to "prevent the inevitable disaster from becoming a catastrophe."

Despite strides made by the city of Los Angeles to focus on earthquake safety, Southern California still faces significant threats that haven't been resolved.

One of the most ominous is the looming threat on the edge of Southern California's sprawling metropolis — the Cajon Pass. It's a narrow mountain pass where the San Andreas fault — California's longest and one of its most dangerous — intersects with combustible natural gas and petroleum pipelines, electrical transmission lines,train tracks and Interstate 15 north of San Bernardino.

A huge earthquake on the San Andreas could move one side of the fault as much as 30 feet from the other. Such an earthquake would rupture flammable pipelines and lead to a catastrophic explosion so powerful it leaves behind a crater.

And if utilities aren't able to shut off the flow of petroleum or natural gas, firefighters could be helpless to keep a raging wildfire from spreading across the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountains, just as the rest of Southern California staggers from the worst earthquake it has seen in more than 150 years.

There are solutions to these problems, said seismologist Lucy Jones, who advised the Southern California Disaster Risk Initiative Committee. But little has been done precisely because many people don't know the extent of the problems, and, if they do, fixing them seems so daunting.

"Don't fall into the trap of, 'It's so impossible, so we can't do anything,' or, 'We have to do everything.' Take a piece. Get it done. You're now better off. Go on to the next one," Jones said. "There's plenty that can be done."

Among those pushing for fixes are executives for Southern California Edison, the Southern California Gas Co., the Walt Disney Company, and Wells Fargo, along with the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, USC, the Port of Los Angeles and the Southern California Assn. of Governments.

Their pitch: create a Southern California Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative, intended to highlight the unresolved earthquake risks and convince decision makers to fix them. The group issued a report with recommendations on Thursday.

"It's easier to bury your head in the sand, but that's no longer an acceptable answer," said John Bwarie, the committee's project coordinator.

Here are five major threats Southern California faces that could imperil our ability to recover after a massive earthquake strikes the San Andreas fault, and how they could be fixed:

One way to reduce the risk of catastrophe at the Cajon Pass would be to put shutoff valves on both sides of the San Andreas fault on petroleum and natural gas pipelines. If the pipelines are automatically turned off during the earthquake, it could prevent huge amounts of fuel from being ignited if the pipelines break, Jones said. Officials say a big quake on the San Andreas is overdue.

Small changes can make a big difference. Jones recalled the meltdown of a Japanese nuclear power plant after a 9.0 earthquake and tsunami hit in 2011.

A meltdown might've been avoided had the backup cooling system's diesel fuel was stored at a higher elevation, keeping it functioning even after the tsunami hit, she said.

The reality is disturbing — burst water pipes could leave parts of Southern California without running water for six months. Natural gas pipelines can fuel dangerous city fires.

Some experts point out that it's impractical to retrofit all of Southern California's water pipes with earthquake-resistant, flexible versions in our lifetime. But even some retrofitting would help.

"Not every pipe in the systems needs to be quake-proof, but by targeting key lengths of pipe in the system, enough can be in place to address the firefighting needs of the region," the report said.

Installing more remote-control gas shut-off valves for natural gas transmission and high-pressure distribution pipelines would also help.

Many people don't know how bad the aftermath of a huge earthquake can be: "Water and power delivery systems could be off for weeks, housing for tens of thousands could be damaged," the report said, an event far worse than experienced by veterans of the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

Large businesses need to develop a plan for getting back to work as quickly as possible. The worst-case scenario would be that major industries, such as aerospace, give up and leave Southern California if the region remains dysfunctional for too long.

That means businesses like banks need to know how to get their branches running as quickly as possible, perhaps by installing backup generators and keeping caches of emergency supplies on site.

If it's too hard to have a home improvement chain keep all of its branches open in, say, Granada Hills, Northridge and Chatsworth, perhaps one plan would be to keep just the Northridge store operational, Bwarie said.

A key factor that could determine what neighborhoods survive and which ones are abandoned after an earthquake is how well the neighborhood works together to recover, instead of giving up and leaving town.

Southern California, unfortunately, has a reputation for neighbors not knowing each other.

But things can be done to help establish a sense of community, such as cities encouraging block parties or organizing people to check in on each other after an earthquake.

One idea Jones is working on at her own church is creating a system in which people are assigned to check on each other after an earthquake hits, and complete a drill on that annually.

The city of Los Angeles has moved ahead on requiring apartments and concrete buildings at risk of collapse to be retrofitted, but most of Southern California's vast suburbs have not followed suit.

In fact, there are cities that haven't even done what Los Angeles began in the 1980s: requiring the retrofit of deadly brick buildings, whose bricks turn into projectiles in even slight shaking. The two women who died in the 2003 San Simeon earthquake in Paso Robles died as the facade of an unretrofitted brick building collapsed.

Another problem: The minimum standard for new buildings permits them to be so severely damaged in an earthquake that it might need to be torn down. The only requirement is that people not be killed by that building in an earthquake.

"Cities have to ask themselves: Are you approving buildings that are designed to fail — but won't kill anyone? That doesn't do much for our economy," Bwarie said.

The committee suggests creating a uniform standard that would make it easier for building owners to choose higher levels of minimum safety, such as a building that would remain in operation even after a significant earthquake.

"Southern California's vulnerability to natural disasters demands that we look forward and prepare," Hasan Ikhrata, executive director of the Southern California Assn. of Governments, said in a statement. "It is critical to our economy, and to the 18 million residents in the region."

11:25 a.m. Updated with more information about San Andreas.

FEMA HOUSING

No stories for this edition

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

No stories for this edition

MITIGATION

N.J. River Town Finds Relief In Completion Of $100M Flood Control Project

By Dave Hutchinson

New Jersey Local News, June 23, 2016

BOUND BROOK — Nearly 17 years after deadly flooding from Hurricane Floyd decimated Bound Brook, a massive $100 million system of levees, flood gates and pumping stations in the small borough has finally been deemed finished.

The completion of the Bound Brook portion of the $330 million Green Brook Flood Damage Reduction Project brings both a sense of security to the town and has financial implications for homeowners, said Mayor Robert Fazen.

"This is a great thing for Bound Brook," Fazen said. "The entire borough is going to benefit. Developers will look at Bound Brook differently."

As of July 18, roughly 500 residences and businesses once located in flood zones will no longer be required to have flood insurance, said Fazen. The annual insurance cost to homeowners was between $4,000 and $5,000 a year, he said.

Fazen said the change in flood zone designation could result in an increase of 15 to 20 percent in property values and spark a renewed interest in development for the 1.7 square-mile borough.

Fazen said plans for 300 new apartments have been approved by the zoning board and another 700 new apartments are in the planning stages. He said expects the population to grow 10 to 20 percent from its approximately 10,000.

"We're going to need new restaurants and stores to serve our new population," he said. "This is an exciting time for Bound Brook."

Flood project keeps Hurricane Irene from becoming another Floyd

The borough is hosting a public meeting on Monday at 7:30 p.m. at Bound Brook High School to review the project with representatives from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The federal officials will release a revised flood map and answer any questions.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Somerset County Engineering and Public Works and Bound Brook officials will also attend the meeting.

Columbia City Council Approves 2016–2017 Budget And Receives Update On Flood Recovery

By Josh Cruse

Columbia (SC) Star, June 24, 2016

The Columbia City Council held its monthly meeting Tuesday, June 21.

Council approved the second reading of the 2016/2017 budget, which takes affect July 1. The second reading included a budget without the proposed four percent rate increase to water and sewer.

Council chose at the previous meeting to not include the rate hike. While he voted in favor of the budget, Mayor Steve Benjamin did not agree with council's decision not to include a rate increase.

"It's short sighted; it's misguided. It's a mistake," Benjamin said.

Councilman Moe Baddourah, who voted against the rate increase, commented it was Benjamin's opinion that doing away with the increase was a mistake.

Without the rate increase, the amount of funding for water capital improvement projects was decreased from $60 million to $ 40 million. The sewer capital improvement projects funds remained at $ 80 million. To reduce the amount to $40 million, staff had to cut projects to Chapin, Longtown Road, and Horseshoe BPS improvements. The funds for unforeseen projects were also cut from $1.3 million to $100,000.

Missy Gentry, assistant city manager, said developers on some of the sites cut from the budget may express their concerns to council in the future.

Benjamin said $312,000 has been allocated to Hospitality Tax.

Keely Thibideaux, with Landmark Consulting, provided an update on the historic flood recovery.

Thibideaux said the current funding sources being explored are the FEMA Public Assistance Grant, the FEMA 406 Hazard Mitigation Grant, the CDBG-Disaster Recovery Grant, the 404 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the NRCS Waterway Debris Removal Grant, and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program. The State of South Carolina is also responsible for a 25 percent match for large projects.

Other potential funding sources include the Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program and the Five-year Hazard Mitigation Plan. The estimated total for the 404 Mitigation is $165 million.

The city can access a $ 19.89 million HUD grant for repairs. A risk analysis and implementation plan must be submitted by July 22. Council also has to submit a final action plan to HUD by September 15. Approval of the plan takes no longer than 45 days after it has been submitted. All the funds from HUD must be expended within six years of the grant execution.

The estimated total for the NRCS is $1.2 million. The cost is for six sites, including Trenholm Road to Woodlake Road and Smith Creek– upstream of Sunset Drive. A 25 percent funding match is required. A project agreement and a detailed update will be provided to council at the July meeting.

Thibideaux said the Lost Creek Bridge will reopen Wednesday, June 22.

She reported over 200 property owners sent in letters of interest for property acquisition based on repetitive loss. So far, 61 property owners have responded to letters of interest involving acquisition or elevation; 34 acquisition applications have been submitted and 21 elevation applications.

Thibideaux anticipates eight to ten FEMA obligated projects by the end of the month.

The 404 Mitigation application has to be submitted by August 18.

She also anticipates the start of the design process for the canal.

In other news, Hernan Villalba has been appointed to the Climate Protection Action committee.

Council approved a resolution designating the Wheeler Hill Neighborhood as a residential parking permit district. Council also approved the first reading of an ordinance granting a franchise to Keyser Concessions for operation of a stationary sidewalk vending car on the northwest corner of Main and Washington Streets.

The second reading of a zoning map amendment for 1829, 1859, and 1863 West Buchanan Drive was approved by a vote of 4-2. Baddourah and Benjamin voted against the ordinance, while Reverend Ed McDowell Jr., Howard Duvall, Sam Davis, and Tameika Isaac Devine voted for the amendment.

The next Columbia City Council meeting will be Tuesday, July 19 at 1737 Main Street, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Engineer: Two County Bridges "Total Loss" After Friday's Storm

By Ian Richardson

Sioux City (IA) Journal, June 23, 2016

SIOUX CITY | Flash flooding during Friday's severe storms has damaged two bridges in northern Woodbury County beyond repair, according to county officials.

On Tuesday, County Engineer Mark Nahra told county supervisors that flash flooding in McElhaney and Wolf creeks permanently damaged two county bridges, one on 170th Street between Jewell and Jasper avenues and another on Haskel Avenue.

That area of the county received 7 to 12 inches of rainfall, according to local farmers.

"The Haskel Bridge has been moved about three feet off of its abutments," Nahra said Tuesday. "Even though it didn't go anywhere, it's a total loss. It cannot be repaired."

Nahra said the estimated cost to rebuild the bridges would be between $650,000 and $700,000 for the 170th Street bridge and between $600,000 and $650,000 for the Haskel Avenue bridge. Repairing the bridges would require an amendment to the county's fiscal year 2017 program, he said.

Nahra said he and county supervisor Larry Clausen surveyed the bridge damage Wednesday.

In all, Nahra estimates the county sustained between $1.5 million and $1.6 million in damages from the Friday night storm. Along with the bridges, the estimate includes loss of gravel, debris cleanup and worker overtime hours. Nahra said county crews are continuing their work to clean up.

"I would say it's going to take us two weeks to get the road tops completely restored," he said.

Woodbury and Plymouth counties are continuing to assess the damage to see if they qualify for a presidential disaster declaration and funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

For Woodbury County to qualify for funding, Emergency Management Coordinator Michelle Skaff said two thresholds must be met: The county must have sustained at least $365,000 in damage, and the state must have sustained at least $4.3 million in damage.

Skaff said she has asked all 15 cities within the county about any significant damage sustained to public property and is working on collecting the information.

"We're On Our Own": Sutton Residents Take Matanuska River Erosion Into Their Own Hands

By Daniella Rivera

KTVA-TV Anchorage (AK), June 23, 2016

SUTTON –

A neighborhood in Sutton has watched their properties wash away for years, as the Matanuska River inches closer to their homes. It's a decades-old problem they say grows more urgent by the day, and they want help from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the state. But changing a natural force like a meandering glacial river is complicated.

"The last two years, previous, it's been terrible," said Donnah-Rae Devernon-Pearson.

She says the Matanuska River used to be at least half a mile away from her home, but over the years it's moved in closer, carrying pieces of her upstream neighbors' lives with it.

Wednesday, an old pickup truck showed up in the river in front of her house. Another piece of debris the river has picked up along the way and carried with it.

"It's just difficult to live with it," said Devernon-Pearson.

And the borough says it's complicated to fix because it's a state-owned river, meaning anyone who wants to clean it up or move debris has to have a special permit.

Any changes made to protect homes like Devernon-Pearson's could hurt someone else downstream.

"So what do you do?" asked Devernon-Pearson. "Come up with something creative. That's what my husband did."

They can't legally touch the river, but the couple decided they could build a makeshift dike — a long wall to prevent flooding — on their private property. Her husband placed four large metal boxes filled with rocks on land upstream. As the water has eroded that land, the boxes have helped redirect the water away from several homes. But even those boxes are moving under the force of the current.

A little farther upstream from the boxes is another reminder of the river's power. Rushing water has eaten away what was once a yard behind a now empty home, carving out the bank and carrying it downstream.

Devernon-Pearson says she never knows what to expect to see in the river.

"There is, two years ago, there was actually a roof that was out down by our house that had floated down."

Hot summer days make glacial rivers rise. The borough says that river has already been at flood levels this summer.

Borough spokesperson Patty Sullivan said the borough emergency manager is constantly watching for dangerous conditions. She also said it's difficult for the borough to get involved because the land is privately-owned, and the river is state-owned.

She says they've been able to use funds from FEMA to buy out residents losing their land in the past but wasn't able to say if that is a current option for residents.

KTVA wasn't able to immediately reach someone with the state for comment.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

House Panel OKs $41B Homeland Security Discretionary Budget For FY 2017

By Jane Edwards

ExecutiveGov, June 23, 2016

The House Appropriations Committee has passed by a voice vote a bill that would allocate $41.1 billion in discretionary funds to the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2017.

The committee said Wednesday the DHS appropriations bill would authorize $7.3 billion in funds to help the Federal Emergency Management Agency perform emergency response and disaster relief operations.

The proposed legislation shows a $100 million increase from the enacted discretionary budget for FY 2016 and contains five amendments approved by the full panel through a voice vote.

One of the amendments was introduced by Rep. John Carter (R-Texas) and seeks to provide FEMA with $49 million in additional funds to support a local grant program that aims to counter violent extremism and terrorist attacks.

The vote comes two weeks after the House committee introduced the bill.

The proposed legislation would authorize $11.2 billion in funds for the Customs and Border Protection, $10.3 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard, $5.9 billion for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and $7.6 billion for the Transportation Security Administration, according to the bill's summary.

The bill also includes $1.8 billion in budget for the National Protection and Programs Directorate's cybersecurity programs, $1.9 billion for the U.S. Secret Service and $119.1 million for the Citizenship and Immigration Services' E-Verify platform.

Public Transportation Safety Challenged By Funding Issues

By Belle Hillenburg

Homeland Security Today, June 23, 2016

Time limits on grant funding have left several organizations within the US public transportation sector unable to continue to increase safety procedures and emergency preparedness across public transit systems.

Panelists spoke Tuesday at a field hearing held in New Jersey by the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications to address concerns surrounding grant requirements for major surface transportation systems and to discuss the importance of increasing the safety of surface transportation systems, specifically in the New York and New Jersey areas.

US surface transportation systems serve over 28 million riders daily and over 10 billion riders annually. Surface transportation includes mass transit systems, pipelines, passenger and freight railroads, motor carrier operators, highways and maritime facilities.

Training emergency responders to respond to attacks on these systems is increasingly important to counter potential threats posed by terrorists, active shooters and natural disasters.

Richard Sposa, Chief of EMS Operations at Jersey City Medical Center and RWJBarnabas Health, testified that funding from grants has increased the capability of Emergency Medical Services and hospitals to respond to mass casualty events, pandemic events and acts of terrorism.

"We are cognizant of the limited resources available and the difficult decisions that you must make in Congress on how to allocate resources," Sposa said. "However, because of the changing landscape, we are hopeful that the recent trend to reduce homeland security grants, is reversed."

Subcommittee Chairman Dan Donovan (R-NY) cited the March 2016 terrorist attacks in Brussels--which left 32 dead in a metro station and international airport--as an example of the increasing need for public transportation safety procedures and enhanced first responder training in the United States.

"Since 2002, authorities have thwarted six terrorist plots against mass transit systems in the United States," Donovan said. "Alarmingly, five out of those six plots were against systems serving the New York metropolitan region."

Surface transportation system safety protocol is most often the responsibility of system owners and operators, unlike the aviation sector, which is heavily federally regulated.

Thomas Belfiore, Chief Security Officer of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, said the timeline for grant funding prohibits the ability to create and implement large scale projects that would increase public transportation safety.

Public awareness campaigns and security equipment such as cameras are often funded by grants. These grants are awarded with timelines for implementation preventing organizations from executing larger scale planning and projects.

Belfiore said the period of performance for grants is currently three years and would be more effective if increased to five years to allow industry officials to create more effective security projects.

"A critical resource is the federal grant funding program. This funding source is essential to help us continue to protect our facilities from evolving threats," Belfiore said.

Furthermore, Director of the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security of Jersey City, New Jersey Sgt. W. Greg Kierce said surface transportation cannot be protected in the same way commercial aviation is protected due to the need to keep costs low and accessibility and convenience high.

"The deployment of metal detectors, X-ray machines, explosive sniffers, and armed guards, which have become features of the landscape at airports, cannot be transferred easily to subway stations or bus stops," Kierce said. "The delays would be enormous and the costs prohibitive – public transportation would effectively be shut down."

In order to ensure passenger safety without prohibiting access, many public transportation systems encourage passenger involvement through public awareness campaigns.

Director of the Surface Division of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Sonya Proctor said TSA works to analyze funding opportunities from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to ensure organizations with the greatest need receive grants.

TSA has implemented campaigns supported through DHS funding, such as the If You See Something Say Something campaign. The campaign encourages civilians to reach out to local law enforcement if they encounter suspicious activity.

Similarly, TSA's Not On My Watch program is an awareness campaign designed to make employees of surface transportation systems more cognizant of threats targeting the transportation community.

"TSA also works with industry to identify emerging security training needs, develop new training modules, and refresh existing training," Proctor explained.

FIRE GRANTS

Hamilton Firefighters Get $140K Grant For New Gear

By Cristina Rojas

New Jersey Local News, June 23, 2016

HAMILTON — One of Hamilton's nine fire districts has been awarded a $140,908 federal grant that will allow it invest in new respirators and other gear.

U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-4th Dist.) made the announcement Thursday.

Fire District 4 will use the money to buy 22 self-contained breathing apparatus and a thermal imaging camera that can be used to help find downed firefighters and bring them to safety.

"This grant will help protect those who are willing to put their lives on the line every day and to run into burning buildings to save lives," Smith said. "This federal support will help them obtain more substantial equipment to keep them as safe as possible."

The new SCBA gear, which will have face pieces and air cylinders, will replace its inventory of obsolete or damaged equipment.

Smith, in his letter of support, referenced a recent risk analysis that found the department's current SCBAs are either approaching or have exceeded their recommended replacement dates.

District 4, which is led by Chief Thomas Gribbin, has 16 career staff and 20 volunteer firefighters. It provides mutual support to the township's eight other fire districts as well as to neighboring Trenton.

The grant was awarded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters program.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

No stories for this edition

FLOODS

County Still Waits Word From FEMA; Red Cross Shelters Begin Closing

By Roy Reynolds

Liberty County (TX) Vindicator, June 23, 2016

Liberty County officials were still in limbo Wednesday morning, waiting for word from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that the county would – for the fourth time in a year – qualify for federal disaster assistance from the last round of rain and floods in May.

"I expect to hear from them today," said Tom Branch, emergency management coordinator for the county said on Tuesday, but he was still without word the next morning.

Liberty County officials fully expect to be added to the rolls with FEMA for federal funding, something that has become fairly routine with floodwaters inundating the county numerous times in the past year.

As of Wednesday morning, the Trinity River in Liberty County stood at 27.39 feet, still above the 26-foot flood stage, but down considerable over the past couple of weeks. Officials announced Wednesday that the discharge from the dam in Livingston would increase to 42,700 cubic feet per second from 39,400 cubic feet per second, which will increase levels downstream in Liberty.

In past disaster declarations, Liberty County has been one of initial round of announced areas for help. This time, officials hope to be one of the "add-on" counties, even if they have to wait a while.

"Hey, someone has to be last," joked Branch.

Signs that Liberty County and other areas of the state are getting close to full recovery from the earlier April flooding are appearing with regularity. FEMA announced Tuesday that it will close three Disaster Recovery Centers in Houston and Cypress Saturday, while many of the Red Cross shelters installed for the Tax Day Floods are also shifting their focus.

The Disaster Recovery Center for Liberty County, in Cleveland, will close Friday.

Disaster Recovery Centers are facilities or mobile office where survivors may go for information about our programs or other disaster assistance programs, and to ask questions related to their case.

The Red Cross, on the other hand, provides immediate assistance for disaster victims, including shelter for those displaced from their homes.

According to Betsy Moore, a public affairs volunteer with the Red Cross' Texas flood efforts, the Liberty facility, in the Hartell Building near downtown, housed 12 people after the Tax Day Floods.

Five remained in the shelter last week, when word came down that it would shutter those operations on Friday.

"They started to close on Monday, but they hadn't yet coordinated with us," Branch said. Red Cross officials delayed the closure to allow for two more days notice, rather than the 36-hour advance notice originally given.

The Red Cross worked with local and regional charities such as Catholic Charities of Houston for housing appraisals and referred clients to the United Way of Greater Houston's 211 service.

"They addressed the needs of the folks who were there," Branch said.

According to Moore, during the sheltering period, the agency had mental health workers at the shelter multiple times, had caseworkers meet with each individual/head of family and worked with a humane officer in Dayton to offer kennels for dogs and guidance for caring for animals and accessing resource, among other efforts.

"One caseworker, who also is a social worker when not with the Red Cross, went repeatedly to the shelter to try to interest clients in services such as women's programming services for transitional housing," Moore said in an e-mail.

Overall, in three shelters across Liberty, San Jacinto and Polk counties, the Red Cross served more than 7,000 meals to residents who spent a total of 375 nights in the shelters.

"For the Trinity River flooding, 37 shelters were opened by the Red Cross and partner agencies," Eric Jones, Assistant Director of External Relations, Red Cross Texas Spring Floods Response, said. "While sheltering is an important interim step for many people, it is only the first step in rebuilding lives after a disaster.

"The goal is to make sure people have been offered the resources they need to plan and manage their own recoveries and return to conditions which are similar to their pre-disaster lives."

Recent Heat Among Factors Causing County Roads To "Disintegrate"

By Josh Kellams

KOLN-TV Lincoln (NE), June 23, 2016

LINCOLN, Neb.-- The recent extreme heat in Lancaster County is among the factors that caused county roads to "disintegrate" this week, according to county engineers.

Local officials are also trying to find a way to keep costs down while maintaining, and fixing, the roads.

A stretch of 40th St. near Rokeby Rd. is one of the county roads concerning Pam Dingman, the Lancaster

County Engineer. N. 14th St. has had similar problems, too.

Dingman said the heat and heavy construction-related traffic over-burdened the roadway on 40th.

"We've really seen the edge of it just completely disintegrate," Dingman said.

"So, it did reach the point [Wednesday] where I did have to shut the road down."

Dingman said this part of 40th St. has an estimated lifespan of 20 years and is currently on year 28. She also said it is a candidate to be overlaid in the 2016-2017 budget, but right now, the road is too dangerous for motorists.

Crews are supposed to put new asphalt down Friday and reopen the road by the evening, but these patchwork solutions are one of several issues currently facing county engineers.

For example, Dingman is responsible for monitoring 270 miles worth of county roads. But, many of the roads need to be fixed.

"Of that 270," Dingman said, "we have about 90 miles that need to be overlaid right now."

Essentially, the top layer of asphalt needs to be removed and have new asphalt put down.

However, Dingman said the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners informed her Thursday that the county needs to trim roughly $700,000 from their budget, and they've asked her to make some cuts. Realistically speaking, she said they may only be able to overlay 20 miles of road in the next year.

She said she's also still waiting for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reimburse the county for the cost of repairing flooded roads during the last two years.

"I had to fix all the damage from the [recent] flooding," Dingman said.

"So, Lancaster County has spent, in this year's budget, oh, probably $3.2 to $3.7 million in flood repair."

Dingman said she'll have to do the best she can while they wait for reimbursement.

The new county budget is supposed to start in July.

"I'm going to have to really aggressively maintain these [roads] in the years to come because of how far behind we are," Dingman said.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

Officials: Drones In Arizona, Utah Hamper Firefighters Battling Wildfires

By Graig Graziosi

Arizona Republic, June 23, 2016

Firefighters battling the Arizona wildfires have a new threat to worry about: drones.

A pair of drones were heard Wednesday in airborne crews' operating area at the southern end of the Cedar Fire, which is burning about 10 miles south of Pinetop-Lakeside and Show Low, officials said.

Anyone determined by law enforcement to have endangered manned aircraft with their drone or interrupted a firefighting operation can be fined and even jailed, officials said.

Despite their size, drones, sometimes known as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or Unmanned Aerial Systems, can substantially damage a helicopter or airplane in a collision. As a result, firefighters cannot operate in airspace where drones are flying.

Jennifer Jones, public affairs spokeswoman for the U.S. Forest Service, said she has seen a substantial rise in the number of reported cases of drone flights over firefighting operations.

"There's no centralized method for tracking incidents, but we started to notice the trend of seeing UAVs over fire suppression operations in 2014," Jones said.

In 2015, there were 21 reported cases of public drones flying in air zones where firefighters were operating," she said. "In nine of those instances, the firefighters had to suspend their work due to the presence of the drone."

In 2016, there have been nine reported cases, at least three of which forced fire managers to ground their air crew, Jones said.

According to firefighting officials in Utah, a drone came within feet of a firefighting helicopter there. Drone appearances have been so frequent in Utah this week that fire crews fighting the Saddle Fire have been forced to ground their aircraft three days in a row. Utah Gov. Gary Herbert visited nearby Pine Valley on Wednesday, saying that some evacuations may not have been necessary had the drones not stymied the efforts of the firefighters.

The Washington County Sheriff in Utah was offering a $1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the individual or individuals flying the drones.

Firefighters in California are also contending with the problem. The Federal Aviation Administration has issued a temporary flight restriction over the San

Gabriel Complex fire to ensure drones do not interfere with the fire suppression efforts.

Small aircraft and drones caught violating the temporary flight restriction will face serious criminal charges.

No data were available to explain why people fly their drones over wildfires, but Jones believes the drone pilots likely just are trying to get photos and video of the fire.

"That's what's dangerous and unfortunate about this. You have people who probably just want to have some fun with their drone and get neat images of the fire unknowingly putting firefighters' lives in danger and interfering with their ability to put out these destructive fires," Jones said.

In an attempt to prevent future incidents with drones, the U.S. Forest Service and partner agencies have launched a publicity campaign with the slogan "If you fly, we can't."

The campaign aims to educate the public about the dangers of flying drones near wildfire suppression operations.

Jones expects as the prevalence of drones in society continues to grow, the need for public education campaigns about their safe use will continue to grow. Likening the campaign to the Smokey Bear wildfire prevention campaigns, she anticipates the drone safety campaign likely will be necessary for decades.

The Cedar Fire is now 24 percent contained according to a report from fire officials Thursday morning, although winds were expected to increase in the area. According to officials, the pre-evacuation notice for the communities of McNary, Hon-dah, Pinetop-Lakeside, Show Low and Cedar Creek was still in effect.

Includes information from Associated Press.

Southbound I-17 Open After Brush Fire

By Ryan Santistevan

Arizona Republic, June 23, 2016

A brush fire that consumed six acres forced authorities to close a portion of southbound Interstate 17 early Thursday afternoon.

The Arizona Department of Transportation reported that the southbound lanes of I-17 were closed about 1 p.m. Thursday. At least one lane had reopened by 2:40 p.m., according to an ADOT representative.

Drivers were being asked to use caution as traffic resumed, as firefighters remained in the area.

The closure was reported near milepost 255, eight miles south of Cordes Junction, according to ADOT.

Northbound lanes of I-17 remained open throughout.

A Bureau of Land Management Arizona fire representative said resources, including a trio of engines and a type-2 crew, were working to tame the wildfire. Fire retardant was also being dropped by air.

A BLM representative said the agency was working with ADOT to evaluate when I-17 could reopen completely.

35-acre Fire Contained In Lee County

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, June 23, 2016

A 35-acre brush fire south of FGCU has been contained.

The fire burned for at least two hours Thursday.

According to tweets posted by the Florida Forest Service, the fire grew from 5 acres to 35 acres.

The fire was located off of Ben Hill Griffin Parkway, just south of the university.

No structures were threatened, said Samantha Quinn, spokeswoman for the Florida Forest Service.

"Wildfires are a year-round occurrence for Florida, a couple days of no rain can quickly dry out dry, dead vegetation," Quinn said. "This allows for a wildfire to quickly ignite."

Quinn said it's important for people to remove any dry vegetation surrounding homes.

"This will increase the safety of your home during a wildfire," she said.

Mandatory Evacuations Lifted For Pine Valley Residents

By DJ Bolerjack

KUTV-TV Salt Lake City, June 23, 2016

Washington County public safety officials and fire managers lifted the mandatory evacuation for Pine Valley residents in the Lloyd Canyon area Thursday.

Affected campsites, roads and recreation areas will remain closed.

Acreage burned in the Pine Valley Saddle Fire has stayed at a steady 823 acres, according to Mike Ferris with the National Interagency Fire Center.

Ferris said the aerial attack started early Thursday morning and due to the low wind speeds, only reaching 18 mph, the attack has been successful so far.

The Saddle Fire is said to be moving up the mountain still keeping distance from evacuated homes in Lloyd Canyon the area.

More than 400 firefighters are currently out fighting the fire and setting a perimeter around the evacuated community.

Christian Venhuizen, media spokesman, said so far with all the personnel in Pine Valley fighting the fire they're estimating a cost of $1.2 million coming from the state FEMA budget.

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

2015 Landslides Caused $7 Million In Damage To Colorado Springs, Assessor Reports

By Maria St. Louis-Sanchez

Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette, June 23, 2016

Damage to homes from 2015 landslides in Colorado Springs is totaled at a little more than $7 million, according to the El Paso County Assessor.

Assessor Steve Schleiker announced the total at a Tuesday Board of El Paso County Commissioners meeting. He said his office has assessed 53 properties for landslide damage and, of those, 34 have had adjusted property values.

Of those 34 homes:

– Three properties reduced in value by 100 percent

– 11 properties reduced in value by 75 percent

– Four properties reduced in value by 50 percent

– 15 properties reduced in value by 15 percent

– One property reduced in value by 10 percent

The homes damaged by landslides are within Broadmoor Bluffs, Broadmoor Hills, Broadmoor Resort and Skyway neighborhoods. Schleiker said the damaged homes amount to a small percentage of the total homes in those neighborhoods.

The city has applied for grants to help 26 homeowners buy out their damaged properties. The victims initially were only eligible for a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant worth about $3 million. The Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management announced recently that other grants, totaling between $6 million and $9 million, may be available as well. Homes that are bought out will be torn down and building will no longer be allowed on those sites.

This is the third time the city has applied for federal grants to aid landslide victims since the 90s. A Gazette investigative report found that Colorado Springs has allowed continued building in landslide-susceptible areas despite decades of warnings from geologists.

The total property loss from these recent landslides could change, Schleiker said.

"This is a moving target," Schleiker said. "My staff members have been out there every time we have a rain. We visit with property owners and see if there is any new damage. We have not added any new properties to our list for quite some time."

Property owners who believe their homes were damaged by the landslides but have not contacted the assessor's office may call 520-6600 or email asrweb@elpasoco.com to set up an appointment to have the property inspected.

ZIKA VIRUS

Zika Spending Bill Faces Likely Senate Rejection, Certain Veto

By Ryan McCrimmon, Paul Krawzak And Kellie Mejdrich

Congressional Quarterly, June 23, 2016

The Zika response package and fiscal 2017 Military Construction-VA appropriations bill passed by the House early Thursday appears to lack the votes to make it through the Senate amid strong Democratic opposition.

Even if the Republican-crafted product somehow reaches the 60 votes needed to avoid procedural hurdles in the Senate, it faces rejection from the Obama administration. A White House aide told CQ that President Barack Obama would veto the measure over objections to its offsets, restrictions on contraceptive services and rolling back of certain clean water protections.

It's unlikely the conference report will get to that point.

The measure is likely to receive a procedural vote early next week. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., filed cloture Thursday, setting up a vote to limit debate as early as Monday, though no timeline has been announced. A GOP leadership aide said McConnell needed to file cloture due to Democratic opposition to the conference report.

Majority Whip John Cornyn, R-Texas, estimated the cloture vote on the appropriations package will be next week. "I think it's certainly ripe for action," he said. "We need to get that done pronto, but my guess is it will be next week."

As soon as the proposal was announced Wednesday night, Senate Democrats unleashed a flurry of statements denouncing it. They stepped up their criticism Thursday and predicted Senate Republicans will face a steep climb to reach the 60 votes needed to proceed.

"I think it's going to have an extremely difficult time being positively considered or finding 60 votes," Senate Democratic Whip Richard J. Durbin of Illinois said.

In a statement released by her office, Patty Murray, D-Wash., slammed House Republicans for choosing "partisanship and tea party pandering over working together on a comprehensive response to the Zika virus." She urged House Republicans to "come back and work with us to pass the Senate proposal that received overwhelming bipartisan support."

The conference report for the appropriations package (HR 2577) was filed by House Republicans late Wednesday night and passed by the House early Thursday on a 239-171 vote, mostly along party lines.

Contraception Criticism

Much of the criticism from Democrats centered around language that they say would roll back women's access to health care services.

The conference report provides $95 million in Social Services Block Grants for areas with active Zika transmission, like Puerto Rico. But Republicans specified that the funds must be used for public health departments, hospitals and Medicaid managed care clinics — and not for family planning clinics that focus on contraception.

Democrats claim that omission is problematic given that the Zika virus can be transmitted sexually.

Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., accused Republicans of "trying to turn an attempt to protect women's health into an attack on women's health."

Murray said Republicans were "using women's health as a political football by restricting access to women's health care, like contraception, which is especially critical to preventing the spread of this virus."

Democrats also objected to the absence of $50 million requested by the administration for maternal and child health programs.

Debate Dispute

House Democrats on Thursday also complained that no debate on the conference report was allowed under the rule adopted for floor consideration.

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter of New York, the top Democrat on the House Rules Committee, told CQ she was not pleased with the decision by House Republicans to move the Zika conference report without the customary hour of debate.

"I hope that doesn't catch on," she said. "I was equally distressed that the bill itself had no debate as well."

When a bill comes to the House floor via the Rules Committee, there is typically an hour of debate on the rule, evenly divided between the two parties, and an hour of general debate on the bill itself, also evenly divided.

But none of the four Democrats on the panel showed up to the late-night Rules meeting to draft the rule for the Zika conference report, allowing the nine Republicans on the committee to craft a closed rule without any debate.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan defended the closed process, pointing to House Democrats' sit-in demanding action on gun legislation as a clear sign they weren't willing to have a legitimate debate on Zika.

"To the point of last night, do you think we were going to have a civilized debate about the Zika virus? Do you think they were interested in coming to the mike and debating Zika? Of course not. They were screaming and shouting over each other. So we were going to get our job done," the Wisconsin Republican said at his weekly news conference.

He urged senators to adopt the plan, noting the $1.1 billion funding level was the same as what was agreed to in the Senate: "This is a good compromise, it meets an urgent need," he said.

The conference report was the result of an agreement between House and Senate Republicans that left out Democrats. The White House has issued a very negative statement about it, though stopping short of a veto threat.

Durbin confirmed to reporters he expects a strong veto message from the White House on the package.

But Cornyn cast doubt on Democrats' ability to maintain opposition to the package, which provides $1.1 billion in partly offset funding for Zika, the same amount Democrats voted for when the Senate passed its measure on May 19.

"I don't think that's a sustainable position," Cornyn said. He said he hopes there are enough votes for cloture, adding, "Everybody wants to deal with this before it becomes an even more serious problem."

In comments on the floor Thursday, McConnell urged Democrats to support the conference report. "Senators debated that $1.1 billion compromise on the floor and voted to pass it," the Kentucky Republican said. "Every single Democrat voted for it."

The Senate passed its version of the legislation with $1.1 billion for Zika on an 89-8 vote. Forty-three Democrats voted for it and none voted against it. The funds were not offset.

Earlier, the Senate voted 68-30 for the amendment offered by Roy Blunt, R-Mo., to provide $1.1 billion for Zika. All 44 Democrats voted for the amendment.

Durbin said this deal is not acceptable, though. "It's almost as if the House was daring us by putting together a proposal that is so outrageously one-sided," Durbin said.

First posted June 23, 2016 12:35 p.m.

Topics

Zika

State of Play

At the end of May, appropriators and congressional leaders in the House and Senate were poised to confront discrepancies in the Zika virus response packages each chamber had recently passed.

The House passed a supplemental appropriations package (HR 5243) crafted by GOP appropriators that provided $622 million in new resources to confront the virus. The funds were set to expire on Sept. 30, the end of fiscal 2016, and the Zika spending was fully offset by rescinding previously appropriated dollars for the 2014 Ebola response and other administrative purposes.

The Senate's $1.1 billion emergency spending package, passed as an amendment to a broader appropriations package (HR 2577), provided fresh funding without any offsets or expiration date. The compromise measure was reached by top Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Democrats have said neither option is adequate. The administration has maintained it still needs the full $1.9 billion it requested earlier this year.

The administration's request would provide $828 million to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to enhance mosquito control programs. Officials say eradicating mosquitos is one immediate action that can be taken in the absence of a vaccine but emphasize how difficult it can be to control indoor mosquitoes.

Another challenge is diagnostic testing. Though there are ample tests to detect an active infection, tests to detect a prior infection are more limited. Public health officials say it takes more steps to diagnose a prior Zika infection because of the condition's similarities to other viruses. Obama's request includes money to boost the supply of diagnostics, as well as develop more accurate testing methods.

Prospects for a funding package also hinge on the politically sensitive issue of contraception policy. Congressional Democrats are pressing for additional contraception and family planning services for women in affected countries — a request that is meeting resistance from key Republicans. The House-passed legislation would subject Zika funding to the same restrictions included in the most recent omnibus package (PL 114-113), which includes a prohibition on the use of funds to pay for abortions.

The request contains $250 million to assist pregnant women in Puerto Rico, who are being encouraged to wear long sleeves, use bug repellent and stay in air conditioned or screened-in areas.

Reid: House-passed Zika Deal A "Disgrace"

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, June 23, 2016

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) ripped a GOP deal to provide $1.1 billion to fight the Zika virus hours after it passed the House.

"It's a disgrace. It's a mockery of how Congress should treat an emergency," he said from the Senate floor. "This is something that I'm sorry to say is part of the McConnell-Trump tactics we've found lately."

Reid's comments come after House Republicans approved the plan in an early morning vote over the protest of Democrats.

The Zika deal — which is attached to a larger military and veterans spending bill — would be partially paid for by using money from other health department proprieties, including the Ebola virus fund.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) tried to temper Democratic opposition, saying the House-passed deal "represents our only chance to put Zika control money to work right now."

"The House did its part. Now the Senate needs to do its part," he added.

The Senate also approved $1.1 billion in Zika funding earlier this year, but Democrats quickly dismissed the deal from the conference committee because of how it is paid for.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) who helped spearhead the Senate's Zika proposal, ripped the conference committee report as "hyper-partisan" and "more about throwing red meat to the Tea Party than actually tackling the crisis."

Senate Democrats have pushed for Congress to pass the Obama administration's full $1.9 billion request, a move that has found little support among Republicans.

Senate Sets Up Zika Vote

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, June 23, 2016

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.)

is turning the Senate toward a fight over funding to combat the Zika virus.

McConnell on Thursday filed cloture on the House-Senate deal on a military and veterans funding bill, which includes the Zika money. The move sets up a procedural vote for next week.

The House passed the $1.1 billion for Zika funding early Thursday morning over the protest of Democrats, who were waging a sit-in to demand votes on gun control.

But Senate Democrats argue the House-Senate agreement is all but doomed to fail in the upper chamber, where it will need support from Democrats to be sent to President Obama's desk.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) called the GOP-backed deal a "disgrace."

"It's a mockery of how Congress should treat an emergency," he said from the Senate floor Wednesday. "This is something that I'm sorry to say is part of the McConnell-Trump tactics we've found lately."

The Senate previously passed $1.1 billion in funding to combat the Zika virus, but Senate Democrats have denounced how the House-Senate compromise pays for the bill.

In addition to taking money currently earmarked to fight the Ebola virus, the GOP bill would also likely restart a fight over Planned Parenthood because it includes language that prevents funding from going to it and other family planning groups.

Democratic opposition is throwing the Zika funding package into flux, making it increasingly likely Congress won't be able to get an agreement to Obama's desk by the July 4 recess.

McConnell tried to temper Democratic criticism earlier Thursday, arguing the current deal "represents our only chance to put Zika control money to work right now."

"The House did its part. Now the Senate needs to do its part," he added.

Congress Headed For Recess Without Zika Funding Deal

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, June 23, 2016

The fate of a $1.1 billion package to fight the Zika virus has been thrown into flux after the abrupt collapse of bipartisan talks Wednesday.

The breakdown between Republicans and Democrats in both chambers has delayed any action on Zika until after the Fourth of July recess.

GOP leaders announced late Wednesday they had reached a deal on Zika, but without the support of the dozen or so Democrats who had previously been involved. The GOP's bill passed the House in a hurried vote around 3 a.m. Thursday amid a dramatic Democratic gun control protest.

The sharply partisan proposal bill is now headed to the Senate, where Democrats say it is doomed in its current form. The bill is expected to prompt a formal veto threat from the White House later Thursday.

The House is out of session until after the Fourth of July. The Senate's holiday recess begins next Thursday.

Among the biggest concerns with the Republican bill is that it injects specific language to prevent funding from going to Planned Parenthood and other family planning groups — a move that one women's health group called "a slap in the face."

While the House-passed bill includes the same amount of total funding as the Senate's initial bipartisan bill, most comes from existing funds in the administration's health department.

It takes about $500 million from an existing ObamaCare fund for state health exchanges and redirects it for the Zika effort. About $100 million in the administration's Ebola fund would also be repurposed for Zika — a move strongly opposed by federal health officials.

The failure to pass a Zika funding bill before the holiday — a self-appointed goal for GOP leaders — could be politically troubling for both parties.

Public health experts as well as state and local leaders have been intensifying their warnings about a disease outbreak in the U.S. The virus is known to cause severe birth defects, and about 400 pregnant women in the U.S. states and territories have already tested positive.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which would receive the most funding under any Zika bill in Congress, has declined to specifically comment on the latest House-passed bill other than to apply pressure for swift action.

"CDC remains hopeful that Congress will quickly finalize and pass a comprehensive bill that meets critical needs without exposing Americans to other dangerous health threats," the CDC wrote in a statement Thursday.

Democrats say one of their biggest concerns about the bill — and one that would be expected to prompt a White House veto — is that Republicans are targeting women's health groups.

"Preventing funding from going to Planned Parenthood? That's a poison pill," Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) told reporters Thursday.

Schumer, the No. 2 Senate Democrat, said the GOP's plan had become "a hard-right wish list" that had no chance of landing on the president's desk.

The bill appears doomed to fail in the Senate. Even with support from all 54 Senate Republicans, the bill would fall short of the 60 votes needed to proceed.

When asked about the next step for the bill, Schumer said: "Don't know, we'll have to see."

But he left the door open to a move by Senate Republicans to tweak the language of the House-passed Zika bill before it reaches the upper chamber: He said the final bill hasn't been released yet.

"It hasn't come out yet, but it has all the things that they put in it, all these external poison pills, I don't see how it would pass," Schumer said. "We have to see the bill first."

It's unclear whether the House's bill — which was a conference committee report — could still be amended before reaching the Senate.

The Zika bill's primary source of funding for healthcare is allowed only to go to health departments, hospitals or other providers that are "reimbursed through public health plans," according to the House-passed bill's text.

"Family planning clinics are excluded, which is simply nuts," said Donna Crane, vice president of policy at NARAL Pro-Choice America.

"[The Republican bill] significantly hampers America's ability to respond to the Zika virus by cutting off the very clinics in the neighborhoods that are going to need these services."

White House Threatens Veto Of GOP's Zika Bill

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, June 23, 2016

The White House on Thursday officially rejected a $1.1 billion Zika funding package from Republicans that would have forced the administration to pull most of the money from existing healthcare programs.

"The president would veto it if it ever got to his desk," White House spokesman Eric Schultz told reporters, though he said the bill "doesn't look like it could even pass the United States Senate."

The GOP bill passed the House along party lines early Thursday, and faces an uncertain fate as it heads to the Senate next week.

Senate Democrats say the bill is all but doomed in the upper chamber, where it will need support from members of their party to pass. Lawmakers and aides say that would be extremely unlikely after Democratic lawmakers were dropped from the previously bipartisan talks.

The Senate had agreed to $1.1 billion in funding to combat the Zika virus — a bill that earned support from Democrats because it created new funding, rather than looking to existing accounts.

The House bill takes about $500 million from an existing ObamaCare fund for state health exchanges and redirects it to the Zika effort. About $100 million of the administration's Ebola fund would also be repurposed for Zika.

The GOP's bill passed the House in a hurried vote around 3 a.m. Thursday, amid a dramatic Democratic gun control protest.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell tried to temper Democratic criticism earlier Thursday, arguing the current deal "represents our only chance to put Zika control money to work right now."

"The House did its part. Now the Senate needs to do its part," he said.

Obama Would Veto Republican-backed Zika Funding Bill: White House

By Roberta Rampton

Reuters, June 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Obama Threatens To Veto GOP-backed Bill On Zika Virus Aid

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – The White House Thursday promised that President Barack Obama would veto the long-delayed response of the Republican-controlled Congress to the president's request for fighting the Zika virus, saying it provided too little money and contained too many partisan provisions.

The $1.1 billion measure had already appeared sure to die in the Senate next at the hands of filibustering Democrats backing Obama's $1.9 billion request and opposing spending cuts that House Republicans added to the measure.

White House spokesman Eric Schultz says if the measure does pass the Senate, Obama will veto it.

"One party doesn't just huddle in the corner, come up with an ideological bill and then throw up their hands," Schultz said.

The bleak fate of the compromise worked out by House and Senate Republicans seemed certain, and it was unclear what alternative might emerge, given the hard feelings surrounding the issue and the short timetable ahead.

The Zika plan came out late Wednesday and won approval in the House hours later. That vote came amid a Democratic floor protest of GOP inaction on gun legislation. Republican leaders called the Zika vote abruptly, permitted no debate and immediately adjourned through July 4.

The result was more of the partisanship that has dogged the Zika proposal from the start and raised questions about whether lawmakers will manage to approve any assistance in the short time left before they leave Washington in mid-July for the political conventions.

The measure matches a bipartisan $1.1 billion figure adopted by the Senate last month to fight the virus, which can cause grave defects and can be transmitted by mosquitoes and sexual contact.

The House was largely satisfied in their demand to pair Zika aid with about $750 million in offsetting cuts to spending, including $543 million in unused funds from implementation of Obama's health care law and $107 million in cuts to leftover Ebola money.

Democrats objected. They made inflated claims about restrictions the measure would place on Planned Parenthood and they complained about a watered-down version of a provision backed by the House that would ease rules on pesticide applications to battle the mosquitoes that can spread Zika.

Obama requested $1.9 billion four months ago to fight the virus. Republicans initially displayed little urgency to respond to the request and forced the administration to devote more than $500 million of unspent Ebola money on Zika.

Democrats also said it was wrong to require spending cuts to pay for a response to a public health crisis while not requiring them for past emergencies such as wildfires, floods and Ebola.

Republicans said the cuts were relatively innocuous. For instance, the $543 million cut to Obama's health law was to a pot of money aimed at helping territories set up health insurance exchanges under the law. None did so, and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that cutting the program won't actually save any money. Also, Democrats privately indicated they could live with the additional $100 million-plus cut to overseas Ebola aid.

While some Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee believed any deal with Republicans would have to have some cuts, party leaders such as Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., took a harder line that ultimately prevailed.

The Zika money was added to an $82 billion measure covering the Department of Veterans Affairs and military construction projects. That measure is among the most popular of the 12 annual appropriations bills, and Republicans held out hope that its popularity might break free enough Democrats to squeak through the Senate.

More than 2,200 cases of Zika infection have been reported in the U.S. and its territories. In Puerto Rico, more than 400 pregnant women were at risk of having babies with major deformities such as microcephaly, a condition in which newborns have smaller brains that might not have developed properly.

The virus is spread mainly through the bite of a tropical mosquito called Aedes aegypti. It can be found in the southern United States, but there's no evidence that they've been spreading the virus in the mainland U.S. yet.

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The Price Of Congressional Inaction On Local Response To Zika

Huffington Post, June 23, 2016

Congress is finally answering the call to address the alarming infectious disease threat of the Zika Virus. However, the level of funding included in their recent votes is not close to enough. The effect will be particularly disastrous for local governments across the country.

By refusing to fully support President Obama's request for $1.9 billion to fight the Zika virus, Congress is forcing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to shift nearly $45 million from state and local public health emergency preparedness (PHEP) funds to pay for Zika preparedness at the federal level. In turn, cities and counties are now facing substantial cuts to essential emergency preparedness funds--a deep irony, because these are the very funds that allow local health departments to prepare and respond to disease outbreaks and other emergencies.

The implications for cutting emergency preparedness funding go far beyond Zika. When Baltimore was shaken by unrest last April, PHEP funds allowed us to take a lead role in coordinating the public health response for our city. Because of our emergency planning and response capabilities, the Health Department worked with city and state partners to create a security plan for Baltimore hospitals. When over 13 pharmacies were burned down or closed, we set up a prescription delivery program for older adults and vulnerable citizens. Our staff mobilized volunteers to canvas dozens of senior buildings and over 150 churches, and served more than 3,000 emergency meals to those affected in the community. With partners across the city, we developed and implemented a Mental Health/Recovery Plan that included an around-the-clock mental health crisis line along with teams of licensed mental health professionals who were deployed in affected neighborhoods for group counseling and debriefing.

More recently, when our region was crippled by nearly three feet of snow in a historic storm this past January, it was again emergency preparedness funds that enabled Baltimore City to be the only jurisdiction in Maryland to ensure transportation to life-sustaining dialysis and chemotherapy treatment for critical patients by knowing how to triage available resources. Like last April, we were again able to deploy frontline workers to go to where our residents were, quickly direct a multi-sectoral response in the face of a unique emergency situation, and act swiftly to protect our most vulnerable. Without these federal funds we could not have provided these critical emergency services to our residents during times of extreme need.

This is the necessary role of local public health: to implement effective, agile strategies to address emerging threats to public welfare. Health departments across the country serve on the frontlines of public health emergencies. It was local public health that coordinated immediate trauma-based mental health services for a city reeling from the September 11th terrorist attacks. Local public health organized a drop-in center following the Boston marathon bombings to provide support to thousands of stranded runners and coordinated with area hospitals to connect patients with family members. And when Hurricane Katrina devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast, including health facilities, local health departments provided direct health services to the region out of mobile vans and tents.

Though my counterparts and I are proud to take a lead role in coordinating these efforts and providing direct services during emergencies, sustained federal funding is critical to ensuring that local health departments remain prepared to respond to evolving public health threats. The Baltimore City Health Department employs a small team to coordinate our public health emergency response and engage the community and health care sector in preparedness planning. Under these anticipated cuts, we will have to reduce that team by a third--from six to four people. This will severely limit our ability to serve a population of over 620,000 residents, in a time of increased threat of Zika and other emerging infections. When it comes to protecting the health and safety of our citizens, this is an untenable ratio.

The World Health Organization and the CDC have declared Zika virus to be a public health emergency. We support full supplemental funding to prepare for this disease. It is particularly important to ensure capacity for our urban centers. The Aedes mosquito that carries Zika is a “container breeder” that proliferates in densely-populated urban areas. Cities like Baltimore with high rates of vacant housing and concentrated poverty will be the hardest hit, and generations of our children will suffer the consequences.

Public health services need to be there when we need them most. Congress must strengthen, not limit, local capacity to respond to this emerging public health threat.

Lena Wen, M.D.

Health Commissioner Of Baltimore City; Emergency Physician

Follow Leana Wen, M.D. on Twitter: www.twitter.com/drleanawen

It’s Us Against Zika — Whose Side Is Congress On?

Washington Post, June 23, 2016

IN THE very early morning hours Thursday, Republicans who control the House pushed through a bill to combat the Zika virus that is a totem to their favored causes and a poke in the eye of Democrats. More than four months after President Obama requested nearly $1.9 billion in emergency funding to deal with a public-health emergency, the House voted for $1.1 billion but saddled it with unnecessary partisan baubles. This may further delay action against the mosquito-borne virus that can cause severe fetal birth defects.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers (R-Ky.) declared that the bill, approved along party lines 239 to 171, was the product of “careful and thorough deliberations.” But in fact, the Republicans compromised only with themselves and took to the House floor a bill that lacked bipartisan support.

The legislation would limit payments for birth-control services, an indirect way of defunding Planned Parenthood, long a GOP talisman. At this moment, it seems terribly punitive, coming as the nation faces a virus that puts pregnant women at risk and is spread through sexual contact as well as by mosquitoes. Republicans must have known this controversial provision would provoke howls of protest from Democrats. As Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) noted, House Republicans were playing to a very narrow segment — the tea party wing of the GOP — with "a hyperpartisan proposal that doubles down on using women's health as a political football." The cost of this will probably be more wrangling. Are these the same Republicans who took control of Congress promising to break the partisan gridlock?

There is no known cure or effective therapy for the Zika virus, which has already hit Latin America and the Caribbean hard in places, including Puerto Rico. If it begins to spread on these shores — so far it has not, but the probability is high that transmission will begin — then pregnant women across the South and Southwest will be at risk of giving birth to children with abnormally small heads and brain damage, a condition known as microcephaly, while other people may face Guillain-Barré syndrome, which can lead to paralysis.

The House, which had earlier approved $622 million for the Zika response, has now agreed to the $1.1 billion approved earlier by the Senate. That is promising because it would provide money for fighting mosquitoes, for carrying out vaccine research, for finding new diagnostics and for public education. But the downside is that the House bill funds the Zika battle by cutting $750 million from other programs, including Obamacare and the Ebola virus response effort. There is probably insufficient support in the Republican-controlled Senate to pass the House version, which means back to the drawing board, more delay and more of a chance that Zika will lead to birth defects in the United States.

To both parties in Congress, we say: The tiny Zika organism doesn't care one whit about your acrimony, your blame-throwing, your delays. All Zika knows is how to infect and cause human suffering when it can. Who is going to win this battle: the virus, or us?

No Help From DC? Florida To Spend Millions On Zika Fight

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) – Saying he was "profoundly disappointed" with the ongoing federal stalemate over the Zika virus, Florida Gov. Rick Scott on Thursday ordered the state to spend millions in an effort to stop its potential spread.

Scott used his emergency powers to authorize spending up to $26.2 million on everything from killing mosquitoes, training mosquito technicians and purchasing Zika prevention kits.

The Republican governor has been calling on the federal government for weeks to approve money to fight the Zika virus, which can cause grave birth defects and can be transmitted by mosquitoes and sexual contact. The U.S. House this week approved a $1.1 billion measure. But President Barack Obama is threatening to veto the legislation, saying it provides too little money and contains too many partisan provisions.

"We are in the middle of hot, rainy weather which is when mosquitoes are most prevalent," Scott said in a statement. "It is clear that allocating this funding is necessary if we are going to stay ahead of the spread of this virus. I am profoundly disappointed that Washington does not share in our commitment and has continued to play politics with the health and safety of our families."

Florida currently has more than 200 cases of Zika virus, including 40 pregnant women. All of the cases involve residents infected outside the country, but Scott has predicted that it would be a "disaster" if mosquitoes in the state started transmitting the disease.

The Scott administration says that so far the federal government has only allocated $153,844 for epidemiology and lab support, $500,000 for seven counties for mosquito control and $40,856 in lab supplies and personnel.

Scott said that more than 40 counties, cities and mosquito control districts have asked for $19 million in assistance. He has declared a state of emergency in 23 counties because of the virus, a move that allows Scott to bypass the Florida Legislature and take money from the state's main bank account.

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Zika Virus: Florida Gov. Rick Scott Says State Can Spend $26.2 Million On Prevention

By Michael Auslen

Miami Herald, June 23, 2016

Gov. Rick Scott declared Thursday he would use his executive powers under a public health emergency to spend up to $26.2 million in state money to fight the Zika virus.

The money will be used for mosquito control, lab equipment and to purchase “Zika prevention kits” from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. According to the CDC website, the kits include a bed net, insect repellant, standing water treatment tabs and condoms.

It will be released as needed, the governor’s office said. Scott has given state Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip the authority to spend the money.

“We are in the middle of hot, rainy weather, which is when mosquitoes are most prevalent,” Scott said in a statement. “It is clear that allocating this funding is necessary if we are going to stay ahead of the spread of this virus.”

Until Thursday, Scott had resisted expanding an emergency declaration he signed in February to give himself the authority to spend state money. Instead, he has called on the federal government to fund Zika prevention programs.

In a statement Thursday, he again called out “Washington’s inaction.”

Asked earlier this month about why he hasn’t tapped into state reserves, he told Fox News that Florida has been spending money to fight the disease but that it would “rely on our federal partners.”

“This is a national issue,” he said. “This is not just affecting Florida.”

There are 213 documented cases of Zika in Florida, according to the Department of Health, and they are all travel-related. There are no known cases of people being infected with the virus after being bitten by a mosquito in Florida.

Rick Scott Gives State Power To Spend $26.2 Million On Zika

By Michael Auslen

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, June 23, 2016

Gov. Rick Scott declared Thursday he would use his executive powers under a public health emergency to spend up to $26.2 million in state money to fight Zika virus.

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People Previously Infected With Dengue May Be More Vulnerable To Zika Virus

By Liz Szabo

USA Today, June 23, 2016

New research points the way toward a potential vaccine against Zika, and may explain why the formerly mild virus exploded with such fury when it arrived in Brazil.

A pair of studies published Thursday focus on Zika’s complex relationship with a related virus called dengue, a common illness in Latin America and the Caribbean that causes flu-like symptoms. Dengue is spread by the same mosquito species as Zika, and the two viruses are so similar that blood tests sometimes can’t tell the two apart.

When people are infected with dengue, or any virus, the immune system releases key proteins called antibodies to neutralize the invaders. Authors of a study published Thursday in Nature found that two of the antibodies the body makes to fight dengue also prevent Zika infections.

That finding could help scientists develop vaccines against Zika and dengue, said study coauthor Juthathip Mongkolsapaya, a researcher at Imperial College London. Scientists also might be able to use these antibodies to treat Zika, she said.

Several groups are already working on Zika vaccines.

Inovio Pharmaceuticals announced this week that it has received Food and Drug Administration permission for a small, early clinical trial of a Zika vaccine it's developing with GeneOne Life Science. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases is pursuing four types of Zika vaccines; officials there say they expect to begin clinical trials in August.

Yet the close relationship between dengue and Zika has a dark side.

In a second paper, published in Nature Immunology, researchers found that the vast majority of dengue antibodies do nothing to stop Zika infection. In fact, a lab experiment showed that most dengue antibodies actually helped Zika viruses proliferate and invade cells. That suggests that people previously infected with dengue, whose antibodies against dengue remain in their blood, might have a more severe reaction to Zika, said Gavin Screaton, chair of medicine at Imperial College London.

These results lend support to similar findings from Florida Gulf Coast University and the University of Pittsburgh Center for Vaccine Research.

Mother Jusikelly da Silva holds her 7-month-old daughter Luhandra, who was born with microcephaly, as she wears her new glasses while waiting for a bus on June 2, 2016 in Recife, Brazil. (Photo: Mario Tama, Getty Images)

There are four varieties of dengue virus. People infected with the virus one time may develop relatively mild symptoms. But people who get a second round of dengue, caused by a different variety of the virus, can develop severe, life-threatening complications, said Amesh Adalja, a senior associate at the Center for Health Security at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Although scientists first discovered Zika in 1947, it was never known to cause birth defects until Brazil experienced an alarming increase last year in microcephaly, a condition in which babies are born with abnormally small heads and incomplete brain development.

Brazil has reported 1,660 cases of microcephaly, about 10 times more than usual, according to the World Health Organization. Microcephaly linked to Zika has been reported in 11 other countries or territories, including Puerto Rico, Panama, El Salvador, Colombia, Martinique, the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia and Cape Verde.

These locations have different varieties of dengue viruses, Adalja said. It's possible that some varieties of the virus are more likely to be associated with Zika complications than others.

Researchers have looked at a number of possible explanations for Zika's explosive growth, said Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. It's possible Zika's spread has been aided by environmental factors, such as climate change, poverty and urbanization. It's also possible the virus has mutated.

To really understand Zika's relationship with microcephaly, researchers will need to study pregnant women, said Ernesto Marques, scientific director of Cura Zika, an international alliance between the University of Pittsburgh and Brazil's Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, known as Fiocruz.

The National Institutes of Health announced this week that it will partner with Fiocruz in a study of up to 10,000 pregnant women in areas with Zika outbreaks, beginning with Puerto Rico and expanding to Brazil and Colombia.

Leaders of the new study will study whether a past dengue infection increases the risk of complications on pregnant women and their babies. Researchers also will compare the health of babies born to mothers infected with Zika virus and those who were not, recording rates of miscarriage, premature birth, microcephaly, malformations of the nervous system and other complications.

Researchers will study whether these problems are more common in women who had symptoms of Zika compared to those with no symptoms. Only about 20% of Zika patients develop symptoms, which include rash, fever, joint pain and pink eye. Researchers also will study whether complications are more common in women infected early in pregnancy compared to those infected later. Doctors will follow women throughout pregnancy and for six weeks after delivery.

A New Must For Your Medicine Cabinet: Bug Spray

Washington Post, June 23, 2016

If the makers of bugs pray and U.S. health officials get their way, insect repellents will take up permanent space alongside toothpaste in America's medicine cabinets.

Drugstores and local health agencies are doing their part in the marketing push by issuing warnings about Zika, a virus that causes devastating birth defects in babies infected in the womb. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the species of mosquito that carries Zika has been found across most of the nation.

"If you are going outside, wear mosquito repellent," said Michael Beach, deputy incident manager for the CDC's Zika response team. "It needs to be the same as putting on sunscreen or brushing your teeth."

Game change

The goal of health experts isn't to overwhelm or scare people but to prepare the public for the likelihood that Zika infections may start to transmit locally, Beach said. Several hundred pregnant women in the United States who contracted Zika contracted through travel or infected partner are being monitored. There is already widespread local transmission in Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, and officials expect that about 20 percent of the island's 3.5 million residents could become infected with Zika.

"This virus is a game-changer from a reproductive-health standpoint because the birth defects are horrendous in nature," Beach said.

New York City launched a three-year Zika-control program in April that expands testing, monitoring and eradication. The city is tapping its experience from previous bouts with West Nile, a virus transmitted by a mosquito different from the one that carries Zika.

West Nile doesn't produce symptoms in most people, but it can cause serious symptoms such as paralysis and vision loss in about 1 in 150 infected people. The virus appeared in the Western Hemisphere in and around New York in 1999, causing dozens of serious illnesses and seven deaths that year. The city employed large-scale pesticide spraying, including by air.

Subway advisories

Today, it's Zika that's getting the attention in New York. "Reduce your risk of Zika virus," says a sign accompanying an Off Deep Woods bug-spray display near the checkout of a Manhattan drugstore. Signs in the city's subway system and elsewhere urge New Yorkers to "Fight Back" against Zika by using repellent and dumping standing water.

It's not enough for people to be vigilant only from dusk to dawn, when most mosquitoes bite, the CDC says. Aedes mosquitoes, the species that transmits Zika, are active in the daytime. They can live inside homes and often bite each member of a family, taking sips of blood from each.

Manufacturers are working to ensure they have enough insect repellent to meet a spike in demand. Spectrum Brands Holdings, which makes Cutter products, has seen a 19 percent surge in sales of personal bug sprays over the past six months compared with the same period last year, said John Pailthorp, a spokesman for the Middleton, Wis.-based company.

Spectrum expects to increase capacity of its spray repellents by almost 60 percent when a new production line debuts this year. The company, which is updating its packaging, displays and websites to include Zika information, is working with federal officials to get language approved in record time, Pailthorp said.

SC Johnson & Son, maker of Off sprays, boosted production in Latin America starting in November as reports of local cases started to trickle in, said spokesman Jeff McCollum. It started ramping up U.S. production early this year, running its largest facility — near the company's headquarters in Racine, Wis. — around the clock. Peak demand in the United States has been about 50 percent higher than last year, he said.

"We're working with a real sense of urgency," said McCollum said.

Other viruses

Several other infections carried by mosquitoes strike thousands of Americans each year. While they don't create the same fear as Zika, which is still poorly understood and impossible to treat, they can produce devastating symptoms.

Dengue, which can cause a high fever, severe pain, rash and mild bleeding, has already been reported this year in the Florida Keys. The virus can also cause dengue hemorrhagic fever, which can kill if not recognized early. Chikungunya can cause fever, joint pain and muscle aches. There's no prevention or cure for either, with patients getting supportive care to help their bodies fight the infection.

"We have multiple viruses that are spread by mosquitoes," Beach said. "It's not just about avoiding nuisance mosquitoes any more. It's about disease."

— Michelle Fay Cortez And Lauren Coleman-Lochner

Bloomberg News

Best Bug Sprays For Fighting Zika

By Mary Brophy Marcus

CBS News, June 23, 2016

Mosquito season is here, and as the threat of Zika virus rises in the U.S., people in affected areas need to arm themselves, health officials say. The illness is spread by mosquitoes and some bug sprays can help.

According to Consumer Reports, a number of insect repellents on the market can stop the mosquitoes that transmit the dangerous virus, as well as another mosquito-borne illness, West Nile virus. They put 16 insect repellents to the test to see which ones are the most effective.

"In a laboratory, very brave volunteers put their arms into a cage full of 200 disease-free mosquitoes and we use two types of mosquitoes," Trisha Calvo of Consumer Reports told CBS New York. "One is the Culex mosquito that carries West Nile and the other is the Aedes mosquito that carries Zika."

The results? "We found three ingredients that are safe for everyone to use, even pregnant women, and are very effective. And those are Deet, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and Picaridin," Calvo said.

Sawyer's Fisherman's Formula Picaridin got top results in Consumer Reports testing, keeping mosquitoes away for up to eight hours.

Other top performing repellents on the list include:

Ben's 30% DEET Tick & Insect Wilderness Formula

Natrapel 8 Hour, with 20 percent picaridin

Off! Deepwoods VIII, with 25 percent DEET

Repel Lemon Eucalyptus, with 30 percent lemon eucalyptus

Repel Scented Family, with 15 percent DEET

Consumer Reports advises skipping most repellents made with natural plant oils such as lemongrass or citronella, which were not very effective in their testing.

Zika risk in the U.S.

As of June 15, a total of 756 cases of Zika have been reported across the U.S. – all in people who contracted it abroad or through sexual contact with someone who traveled abroad. Forty-seven states have reported cases.

So far there have not been any cases in the U.S. of mosquitoes transmitting Zika from one person to another, but experts say there's a risk of local outbreaks, especially in some southern areas like Florida and Texas, as the season progresses.

In states that are home to the type of mosquitoes known to transmit Zika, the virus can be spread if an infected person is bitten and then that mosquito then goes on to bite other people. That's the way the disease spread from Brazil throughout Latin America and the Caribbean over the past year.

It's especially important for pregnant women to protect themselves because Zika has been linked to severe birth defects called microcephaly, where babies are born with abnormally small heads.

More mosquito-fighting tips

If you use bug sprays proven to deter them, or purchase clothing with insect repellent already built in, the critters may still try to bite. But bug sprays can kill or incapacitate the bugs when they land. "And hopefully that happens before the mosquitoes bite you," Calvo said.

Experts recommend applying sunscreen first, then bug spray, not the other way around. And even if you wear bug repellent clothing, Consumer Reports recommends also using bug spray for greater protection.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing long-sleeve shirts and long pants, and staying in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.

An experimental vaccine for the Zika virus is due to begin human testing soon, after getting the green light from U.S. health officials.

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OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

DHS CIO Touts Tech Transformation

By Mark Rockwell

Federal Computer Week, June 23, 2016

An increased focus on agile development and contracting is helping the Department of Homeland Security move ahead on a host of technical fronts, DHS CIO Luke McCormack said.

"We're transforming, using modern techniques to modernize" the department, he said during a panel discussion at AFCEA's Homeland Security Conference on June 22.

He added that the increasingly close collaboration with DHS Chief Procurement Officer Soraya Correa though programs such as the Procurement Innovation Lab, which lets contracting officers try out new ideas, is helping to shift the agency's culture toward "taking risk to eliminate risk."

Michael Palmer, a member of the DHS Digital Service team, said the department is working on an agile procurement vehicle that will enhance its digital capabilities. A request for information was released in May.

Palmer declined to comment on how the Flexible Agile Support for the Homeland (FLASH) contract would interact with other digital services such as those offered by the General Services Administration's 18F. But he did say contractors should be familiar the

Digital Services Playbook and incorporate its concepts into their work.

McCormack said FLASH could be a significant building block for the agency's acquisition efforts. Although no date has been set for a formal request for proposals, DHS plans to hold an industry day on June 29 to explain the project in more detail.

DHS is conducting five IT pilot projects designed to showcase the pivot to agile: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' verification system, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood insurance and grants management programs, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Student and Exchange Visitor Information System and the Transportation Security Administration's Technology Infrastructure Modernization Program.

McCormack said the projects are using modern development techniques in real-world applications with the goal of modernizing aging, ineffective systems more quickly and efficiently than traditional acquisition techniques allow.

Local Family Still Living In A Tent 10 Months After Soudelor

By Bryan Manabat

Marianas Variety, June 24, 2016

ALMOST a year after Typhoon Soudelor devastated the island and destroyed their home, Marilyn Ada Taitano and her family still live in a tent.

She said the construction of their new house in Dandan remains unfinished due to a lack of workers and high labor costs. She said they are having difficulty finding skilled individuals and those who can be hired charge $9 to $10 per hour which they can't afford.

Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance, she said, did not include funds for building the house because they are staying on land that doesn't belong to them. The property belongs to an aunt who lives nearby.

"The FEMA assistance was actually only for our family belongings that were destroyed or damaged by the typhoon," Taitano said.

But she said she asked FEMA if she could use the monetary assistance to buy construction materials to rebuild their home. "They told me, yes."

She said she is hoping that three months from now, their home will finally be built.

In the meantime, she said they depend on "happy labor" — those constructing their house do so if they have time.

"Two people are helping us right now, one actually said not to worry about paying him, but I can't do that," she added.

As for the tent that her family uses, she said it came from AmeriCorps.

"They came in and gave us this tent, and also helped us with the temporary shelter."

Taitano is a full-time housewife, and her husband Jessie works for the Department of Public Works. They have two children — 21 and 14 years old — and two grandchildren.

What worries her is the coming typhoon season.

"That's my concern now — if there's another typhoon," Taitano said.

"I was really scared when Soudelor came, and I feel hopeless because our house is gone. I don't want to go through that again."

Needy Fund Launches Disaster Response Arm

By Ethan Genter

Cape Cod (MA) Times, June 23, 2016

HYANNIS — The Cape Cod Times Needy Fund has launched a disaster response organization "to provide humanitarian aid to local individuals and families," according to a statement from the organization.

The Cape Cod and Islands Major Crisis Relief Fund has been in the works for a few years, and the process was sped up after the devastation from Hurricane Sandy, said Judy Scarafile, the managing director of the relief fund and former president of the Cape Cod Baseball League.

"On the Cape and Islands we have experienced fierce hurricanes, epic winter storms, and significant beach erosion," Scarafile said.

The fund's goal is to raise $1 million, and it plans to work with other agencies who do similar work, like the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross.

"We will continue to collaborate with our many colleagues as part of an integrated approach to crises," Scarafile said. "At the same time, we realize that significant needs of many local individuals and families are now unmet by traditional forms of public and private disaster aid and that's where we step in."

A committee formed to create the fund has been meeting for nearly three years, Scarafile said. During those meetings, Hilary Greene, the executive director of the Cape, Islands and Southeast Massachusetts chapter of the Red Cross, and other agencies went over what is already done for disaster relief so the Major Crisis Relief Fund could learn their roles.

"The Red Cross is the first people there," Greene said about disaster response.

After the initial efforts, the Red Cross could send people in need to organizations like the new fund, she said.

"They're really trying to fill a gap," he said.

The fund plans to provide assistance in the form of financial aid for food, transportation, housing, medical services, child care and other needs. That could mean helping someone pay for a rental car get to and from work if, for example, a flood washed theirs away, Scarafile said.

The organization's board of directors includes Needy Fund board members, local emergency response professionals and an advisory committee, according to Peter Meyer, president and publisher of the Cape Cod Times.

The use of the fund will be considered when 50 or more families or 100 or more individuals are affected by a crisis, according to the statement. The crises need to either have been declared a local, state, or federal disaster; require multiple hospitalizations; or trigger the opening of all Cape Cod evacuation shelters.

"This is just in case, or when, the big one hits," Greene said. "Here's a local funding arm."

Movement Detected On Both Sides Of San Andreas Fault

By Max Gelman

New York Daily News, June 23, 2016

Large sections of southern California are slowly rising or sinking, a groundbreaking new study shows.

Researchers have observed for the first time that, along portions of the San Andreas fault, land on both sides is moving vertically by a few millimeters each year. Such motion had been theorized but never proven.

Vertical movement of tectonic plates is difficult to track compared with horizontal movement, which is much easier to predict and the cause of most earthquakes in California. GPS sensors helped the scientists study large, southern areas of the state that included the Los Angeles Basin, San Diego County and Santa Barbara, Calif.

"Using this technique, we were able to break down the noisy signals to isolate a simple vertical motion pattern that curiously straddled the San Andreas fault," Samuel Howell, lead author of the study, said in a statement.

Previously, vertical movement had been difficult to detect because of groundwater levels, Howell told the Los Angeles Times. As California's large agriculture industry flushes out groundwater for irrigation, parts of the state sink.

However, the study won't help predict when the next big earthquake will take place. Rather, it is supposed to help researchers understand more about the San Andreas fault itself and how its behavior will affect the adjacent areas.

Howell said quakes along the southern San Andreas happen once every 150 years on average. The last major earthquake along the southern San Andreas fault occurred in 1857 — a 7.9 magnitude quake, according to the study.

The San Andreas fault forms the boundary between the tectonic plates for most of North America and the Pacific Ocean and sits on the infamous "Ring of Fire," where a large number of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur. It is also classified as a "strike-slip" fault, meaning the plates move alongside each other horizontally.

Vertical movement is more common in "subduction zones," where tectonic plates instead press against each other and one side is forced into the Earth's mantle over time. The Cascadia fault, which sits just north of the San Andreas and stretches into Canada, is a known active subduction zone.

Local Canine Team Certified By Urban Search & Rescue Foundation

By Jennifer Rogers

WKRG-TV Mobile (AL), June 23, 2016

Year of training has paid off for a woman from Mobile and her lab. Debra Wright and Chance are civilian team members of Alabama Task Force One: Urban Search and Rescue. The team recently traveled to Tennessee to be recertified by the Urban Search & Rescue Foundation and passed a rigorous Federal Emergency Management Agency test, putting them among some of the most highly trained canine resources in the U.S.

To pass the certification, Wright had to show knowledge in search strategies and tactics, mapping, and other skills.

Chance also had to demonstrate his skills, including command control, agility, and a willingness to search for live victims even with distractions like other animals, food, excessive heat and noise. Chance also had to show his confidence in searching independently, negotiate different surfaces and move through dark spaces.

During their testing last week, Wright and Chance used all of their training and knowledge to find victims in two large rubble piles.

Alabama Task Force 1 is sponsored by Mobile-Fire Rescue, the City of Mobile and the State of Alabama.

Wright and Chance are volunteers and continue to train weekly, to be ready in the event of any emergency. They've also responded to calls to assist Mobile Fire-Rescue, when necessary.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

No stories for this edition

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(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

West Virginians Turn To Federal Government For Help After Devastating Floods

By Rebecca Hersher

NPR, June 28, 2016

As the water recedes in West Virginia, residents are taking stock of their losses. At least 23 people died in massive floods that swept across the southeastern part of the state on Friday.

According to state authorities, the water damaged or destroyed more than 1,200 homes, and thousands of people who lost power are just getting it back.

President Obama has declared three counties — Kanawha, Nicholas and Greenbrier — disaster areas, which gives residents there access to emergency funds for housing and medical care.

On Tuesday, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin requested a federal major disaster declaration for an additional seven counties in the central part of the state. In a statement, Tomblin said, "As cleanup continues in so many communities across West Virginia, we are seeing the overwhelming damage that has been left behind."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is already on the ground in the three disaster-designated counties, surveying the damage and meeting with individuals whose homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed.

One of the hardest-hit towns is Rainelle in Greenbrier County. All of the downtown area next to the Meadow River was washed away.

Linda Rhodes has lived there for 55 years. Driving down Main Street, she says she doesn't know how the town will rebuild.

"There aren't any jobs here. None at all," she says. "Now, everything's gone. God help us."

The mayor of Rainelle, Andy Pendleton, is hoping the federal government will help. Pendleton says she met Monday with FEMA representatives, and says that all this week she and other local leaders will hand out packets to residents, explaining how to apply for federal money to rebuild homes and businesses and to replace cars and other personal items that were destroyed.

"I worry the most about the people who don't have anything to go back to," she says. "All those people who lost their homes, who lost people in their families in the flood. They need help."

At least a dozen people in Greenbrier County died, according to the West Virginia medical examiner.

The National Guard helped with the search and rescue operation and continued to be on call as more rain fell on areas where the soil was already saturated, prompting the National Weather Service to issue flash flood warnings. Some areas where water had receded were flooded anew, but no further fatalities were reported, according to the state police.

The National Guard says it expects to be on the ground at least until the end of the week, removing debris and assisting the local and state police in cleanup efforts.

WV Governor Adds 7 Counties To Disaster Request

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

LEWISBURG, W.Va. (AP) — Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has added seven counties to his request for a federal disaster declaration for flood-ravaged West Virginia.

The counties added by Tomblin in a statement Tuesday are Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster.

The three hardest-hit counties — Greenbrier, Kanawha and Nicholas — already have received approval for a federal declaration. That allows residents to apply for individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Those affected can apply for aid online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by phone at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or (TTY) 1-800- 462-7585 for the deaf or hard of hearing.

West Virginians needing assistance should contact their local offices of emergency management. Contact information for each county office can be found at www.dhsem.wv.gov/Important%20Contact%20Numbers/Pages/default.aspx.

Flash flooding last week damaged thousands of homes and businesses and killed 23 people. Tomblin previously issued a state of emergency in 44 counties, which authorizes the mobilization of state resources for flood-relief efforts.

As of 8 a.m. Tuesday, 7,077 residents still are without power across the state. More than 400 Red Cross workers are responding across West Virginia, distributing more than 10,000 meals and 2,000 cleanup kits so far.

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The Latest: 5 More West Virginia Counties Get Disaster Nod

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

LEWISBURG, W.Va. (AP) — The Latest on flooding that has devastated parts of West Virginia (all times local):

5:40 p.m.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin says a federal disaster declaration have been approved for five more flood-ravaged counties in West Virginia.

Tomblin announced on his Twitter feed that the Federal Emergency Management Agency granted the state's request for Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Roane and Summers counties. It allows residents to apply for individual assistance from FEMA.

Previously, federal disaster declarations were approved for the three hardest-hit counties — Greenbrier, Kanawha and Nicholas.

Tomblin says he's waiting word on disaster requests made earlier Tuesday for Pocahontas and Webster counties.

Flash flooding last week damaged thousands of homes and businesses and killed 23 people. Tomblin previously issued a state of emergency in 44 counties, which authorizes the mobilization of state resources for flood-relief efforts.

___

5:30 p.m.

Police have arrested a man on charges of stealing items from flooded properties in southern West Virginia.

Fayette County Sheriff Steve Kessler says in a news release that 53-year-old Mark Anthony Moore of Russellville was charged Tuesday with burglary, petit larceny and possession of a controlled substance.

Kessler says beer and bottles of liquor were stolen from a home, vehicle registration and state inspection stickers were taken from an abandoned vehicle, and a tire and rim had been removed from a truck. The release says the stickers allegedly were found on Moore's vehicle.

Kessler says the area where the theft occurred had extensive damage in last week's flooding and many residents lost their homes and personal possessions.

Moore was taken to the Southern Regional Jail. Bond was set at $50,000. Jail records didn't list if he had an attorney.

___

2:30 p.m.

Tetanus vaccines are available to West Virginia residents who have been exposed to floodwaters.

The tetanus bacteria can be contracted through an open cut or wound. The state Department of Health and Human Resources recently suggested the vaccines to residents who are have not received tetanus booster shots in the past 10 years.

The Greenbrier resort says free tetanus vaccines are being administered Tuesday at two locations in White Sulphur Springs.

On the other side of the county, Rainelle Medical Center CEO Kristi Atha-Rader says 600 tetanus vaccines were already given to residents and the hospital has received 600 more.

The Clendenin Volunteer Fire Department says tetanus shots are available at two sites in that Kanawha County community, while the Summersville Regional Medical Center is offering the shots at its clinics in Ansted in Fayette County and Summersville in Nicholas County.

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12:45 p.m.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has opened disaster centers for residents in two flood-ravaged West Virginia counties.

The centers opened Tuesday in Greenbrier and Kanawha counties. They were part of a federal disaster declaration issued last week that also included aid for Nicholas County after floods killed at least 23 people in the state.

FEMA says Greenbrier County residents can apply for federal assistance at the Emmanuel United Methodist Church in White Sulphur Springs. Kanawha County residents can apply at the Crede Warehouse in Charleston.

___

12:30 p.m.

Procter & Gamble is helping flood-ravaged West Virginia residents wash their clothes.

The company says in a news release that a mobile laundry unit is providing full-service laundry to residents starting Tuesday. The first mobile unit is being set up at Elkview Middle School in Kanawha County.

Residents can bring clothes to the mobile unit to be washed, dried and folded free of charge. Up to 100 loads of laundry per day will be collected from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. All washable clothing and other items will be accepted with the exception of heavy bedding.

The company says personal care kits will be distributed containing items such as deodorant, toothpaste, shampoo and household cleaning products.

Floods last week killed at least 23 people in West Virginia.

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11:20 a.m.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has added seven counties to his request for a federal disaster declaration for flood-ravaged West Virginia.

The counties added by Tomblin in a statement Tuesday are Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster.

The three hardest-hit counties — Greenbrier, Kanawha and Nicholas — have already received approval for a federal declaration. That allows residents to apply for individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Those affected can apply for aid online or by phone.

Flash flooding last week damaged thousands of homes and businesses and killed 23 people. Tomblin previously issued a state of emergency in 44 counties, which authorizes the mobilization of state resources for flood-relief efforts.

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This item has been corrected to show that seven counties were added to a federal disaster declaration request. There are 44 counties included in a separate state of emergency declaration by the governor.

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10:45 a.m.

Actress Jennifer Garner is urging support for a charity she is involved with that is assisting families following devastating flooding in West Virginia.

Garner grew up in Charleston and is a member of the Save the Children board of trustees. The group offers early education, literacy, activity and nutrition programs for children.

It partners with local schools to help nearly 2,000 children in West Virginia. Three of the counties it serves have been ravaged by flooding: Roane, Calhoun and Nicholas. Garner says her “heart is breaking” for the state.

The group’s West Virginia director, Anna Hardway, says it has been unable to make contact with half of the families in its programs due to flood-related power and phone outages.

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7:15 a.m.

Jim Justice, the Democratic nominee for governor of West Virginia, says he will pause his campaign for at least two weeks so he can concentrate on helping flood victims.

Justice says he has started a relief fund called Neighbors Loving Neighbors to help those who lost their homes or other possessions in last week’s devastating floods that killed 23 people.

He says “politicking is the last thing that’s on my mind,” and though his headquarters will remain open, he won’t personally campaign.

Thousands of homes and businesses across the mountainous state were damaged or destroyed when up to 9 inches of rain fell in a short span, causing perhaps the worst flooding West Virginia has seen in three decades. More than 400 people are living in shelters statewide.

___

4 a.m.

Like the other business operators on Main Street in Rainelle, Pamela Wallace Arnold is slowly cleaning up from West Virginia’s worst flooding in decades. She’s also preparing to help bury the dead.

She runs Wallace and Wallace, one of two funeral chapels in this rain-soaked West Virginia town of 1,500 residents. Wallace is doing double duty drying out her business started by her great-great-grandfather in 1926 while planning the funerals of flood victims in the coming days.

Rainelle is in Greenbrier County, where 15 of the state’s 23 deaths from last week’s devastating floods have occurred.

Where the visitations will be held, not even Wallace knows. She’s also not sure whether she can ever reopen at the same location.

She just understands the community needs her.

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Flood Carves A Path Of Destruction At Historic Resort

By Jonathan Mattise

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.Va. — At West Virginia’s usually immaculate Greenbrier resort, the grandstands set up for a PGA tournament that was supposed to start the week of July Fourth now look out on a muddy, gouged-out golf course strewn with trash, tires, refrigerators and severed trees.

The devastating floods that swept through West Virginia last week and killed at least 23 people statewide carved a path of destruction unseen in generations at the historic Greenbrier.

Running through the Old White TPC golf course, Howard’s Creek raged over its banks during the pounding storms Thursday. When the worst of it was over, Greenbrier employees came upon two bodies on the resort grounds, and they are draining a lake on the 16th fairway to search for more.

Dating back to 1778, the 700-room resort with an iconic white facade has long been one of the jewels of West Virginia’s tourism industry, hosting presidents and royalty and holding a once-secret underground bunker built for Congress in case of nuclear attack during the Cold War.

But on Tuesday, 300 of the neediest victims from the flood-ravaged area occupied the rooms, and the hotel was closed for business while it fed and sheltered the disaster refugees.

"West Virginians are tough, loving, prideful, good people. They'll bond together, and I've said this many times, they'll get through this," said billionaire Greenbrier owner Jim Justice, who threw open the place for use as a shelter.

"We won't forget it, and we're not supposed to forget it. And we'll be scarred with it forever, but we'll survive it, and we'll figure it out."

Fifteen people died in the resort's namesake county, Greenbrier, where many were swept away by swift, mucky floodwaters. A dead 14-year-old boy washed up against a maintenance shed at the resort, and the body of an elderly man was pulled from of a lake on the grounds.

The Old White had been manicured to host some of golf's biggest names at a tournament starting July 7. The event was going to be free for the first time, and about 300,000 fans were expected. But then the rains began, and the water rose and kept rising.

On Thursday evening, pro golfer Bubba Watson, who has a home at the resort, tweeted a video that showed that the course had become a flowing river of brown water.

After the rain stopped, Justice checked out a high-water mark on the 15th hole, a record that was set in 1915. This flood topped it by 5 feet.

The tournament has been canceled.

The Greenbrier's newly built chapel was filled with 4 feet of mud. At the tennis complex, mud coated a few levels of seats around the year-old center court. Water spilled into several areas of the resort's main building, but Justice said it might be able to reopen in a month or two.

The golf course is another story. It might take a full year to bring Old White back into proper shape so the PGA Tour can come back in 2017 as expected, Justice said.

"In all honesty, the course will probably have to be completely redone," he said.

The Greenbrier is also set to host the New Orleans Saints' training camp starting in late July. The NFL team said it is still coming.

Justice, a coal and agriculture magnate who is the Democratic nominee for governor in November, has put the campaign on hold for at least two weeks.

"Honest to Pete, that's the last thing that I need to be doing today," he said.

Instead of campaign checks, money to help the victims is starting to roll in. Justice's flood-relief charity, Neighbors Loving Neighbors, has received $600,000 in commitments in just a few days, include five-figure pledges from former NBA star and West Virginia native Jerry West, Rite Aid and a FirstEnergy executive, he said.

As they grabbed a free lunch Tuesday, flood victims staying at the Greenbrier said they were grateful.

Kenneth Hoke, 45, fled his home Thursday in Monroe County to stay at the Greenbrier with his wife, Melanie. By the time he left, water had crept up to the bottom of the stairs and was rising quickly. He hasn't been home since.

"We were hit pretty hard in the hollow," Hoke said. "We lost everything we had."

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Evacuations As Fire Spreads Near Northern California River

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

FORESTHILL, Calif. (AP) — People living in a rural subdivision 50 miles northeast of Sacramento were evacuated Tuesday as firefighters braved triple-digit temperatures to battle a wildfire that climbed out of a steep canyon along the middle fork of the American River.

Placer County Sheriff's spokeswoman Dena Erwin said homes near Todd Valley between the cities of Foresthill and Auburn were evacuated as a 20-acre fire quickly grew to 300 acres.

Erwin did not know how many homes were affected, but said the fire was approaching a subdivision with large lots and a scattered population.

"It's all hands on deck...we have everyone up there working on evacuations," she said.

The fire began Tuesday afternoon in El Dorado County before jumping the river and climbing out of the canyon and into neighboring Placer County.

Firefighters on the ground and in the air were working in 101-degree heat against the fire in a remote, rugged area that is difficult to access, said California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection spokeswoman Lynnette Round.

"It's in some really steep terrain. We have air and ground units out there working really, really aggressively to put this fire out," Round said.

Sacramento television station KCRA-TV reported a drone spotted over a section of the fire grounded aircraft in the area for about an hour as the Placer County Sheriff's Office worked to find the owner. Air attacks resumed Tuesday evening with a D-10 Airtanker making drops over the flames.

No injuries or structure damage had been reported by Tuesday night.

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Firefighters Turn Corner Against Deadly California Wildfire

By Steve Gorman

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Husband Appeared To Be Shielding His Wife As Wildfire Reached Their Home. Both Died

By Brittny Mejia And Alexia Fernandez

Los Angeles Times, June 28, 2016

Bill Johnson always knew he was getting close to home when he saw the distinctive red barn-style house from across Lake Isabella.

The two-story home belonged to Byron McKaig, 81, an Anglican priest, and his 90-year-old wife, Gladys.

On Friday morning, after the Erskine fire tore through the area, Johnson ventured into a neighbor's yard, and from there, spotted the couple's two cars next to the burning stubs of their home.

"They didn't get out," Johnson thought. Then he spotted the McKaigs lying against a corner of their fence, a tree near their bodies smoldering like their house.

Their clothes did not appear to have been touched by flames. Johnson said Byron looked like he died trying to protect his wife.

"He was like on top of her, and they were together, like he was blocking her from the fire," Johnson said. "It made me sick because immediately I saw and knew exactly what had happened — that they were alive and ran out of this burning inferno and got stuck, and that was where they ended. I thought it was terrible for those people to go like that. Just horrible. They didn't deserve it."

The McKaigs are the two confirmed casualties of the worst wildfire so far this year in California. The blaze has burned more than 46,000 acres and destroyed more than 200 structures. Many residents ran for their lives as the fire raced toward them, but the McKaigs appeared unable to escape.

The fire all but wiped out the community of South Lake, where the majority of residents are retirees living on fixed incomes. Many lived alone.

Officials have long said this population was especially vulnerable when fast-moving fires move in.

Last September, a monster fire in Lake County killed four people, at least three of whom were elderly people who could not escape. Others who did survived arrived at shelters in wheelchairs and using oxygen tanks.

Around Lake Isabella, many wondered whether the elderly victims there could rebuild their lives.

Louis Reyes, 59, moved to South Lake to care for his 95-year-old mother. To him, South Lake always felt more like a retirement community. After the fire broke out, Reyes' brother helped evacuate neighbors who didn't have cars — driving up and down Goat Ranch Road several times until the flames and smoke became too much to bear.

The home Reyes shared with his mother and wife burned down. He said he would like to buy the land from the owner.

"It was a beautiful mobile home with a built-in porch and big yard," he said. "We'll have to rebuild it ourselves. We're not going anywhere."

On Tuesday, an acrid, burning smell hung in the air outside the foundation of the McKaig's home. Ash littered the ground, and the trees on the property were blackened like used-up matches.

In the ruins Johnson could make out a desk, a freezer and a washing machine. Other items were so twisted and warped by the fire that they were difficult to identify.

Johnson said he remembered how Gladys used to drive around in an old pickup, her red hair tucked under a bonnet.

"She was just a sophisticated lady," he said. "She was like a tough country woman."

He recalled that when singer John Denver died in 1997, Byron McKaig played his music loudly and belted out songs like "Take Me Home, Country Roads."

"Gladys' house — I don't know if her daughter will want to rebuild," he said. "It'll probably be an empty lot now, so it'll be a big hole in our community. … You always expect to see Gladys' home sticking out. You'd always see it."

Geralin Montgomery lived across from the McKaigs for nine years. She didn't know them well, though she said "they were very, very, very religious."

Montgomery said Gladys would pass out religious pamphlets and used to often play the organ.

"The whole neighborhood could hear," Montgomery said.

Ray Conner lives along McCray Road, where the McKaigs also lived.

"They never went anywhere without each other," Conner said. "And that's the best way I'm going to describe them. They were just together all the time. Through it all, they were together."

On Friday morning, Conner and his wife had taken a drive to check on a friend's home, when his wife wondered aloud if the couple had made it out.

When news came out about bodies being found, they were sure it was the McKaigs.

"We knew right away who it was because we knew the location of the house," Conner said.

Though he lamented their deaths, he said he was relieved there wasn't a greater loss, considering how quickly the fire moved.

"It's a miracle more people didn't lose their lives," he said.

"Knowing that a lot of my friends have lost their homes and lost everything, you don't know where to begin," he said. "The one thing I can say about the Kern River Valley is that we came together as a community to help everybody we possibly could."

The couple would visit Nelda's Diner in Lake Isabella a couple of times a week, choosing a booth on the right side near the windows facing out on Lake Isabella Boulevard.

They would stay for a couple of hours, enjoying cups of coffee and conversation.

"They were really nice people," said waitress Suz Humphers. "Been coming here for years."

Humphers said the McKaig's got around slowly. When Gladys would get her food, and it was arranged to her taste she would exclaim: "Oh this is just lovely," Humphers recalled with a smile.

Frank Brassell, who co-owns the diner with his wife, called Byron a "sharp guy" and said Gladys was very proud that Byron had studied at a seminary and was an ordained minister.

"He was devoted to her," Brassell said. He said he wouldn't have been surprised if Byron had tried to protect Gladys from the fire.

"He would have stayed past the last minute in order to save her," Brassell said. "I know he would have."

This post was updated with details about last year's Lake fire.

: This post was updated with comments from a fire official.

: This post was updated with comments from the co-owner and waitress of a diner.

This post was updated with comments from neighbors.

This story was originally posted at 1:01 p.m.

Deadly California Wildfires Spark Debate About Development

By Scott Smith

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

FRESNO, Calif. — A speeding wildfire in California that turned hundreds of homes near Lake Isabella to piles of twisted rubble has forced a conversation about how to minimize destruction in the most populous state experiencing the effects of climate change.

Wildfires in the last years have killed several people in California, a drought-prone state experiencing a five-year dry spell.

Weather is one factor, but more critical is the state's exploding population, spawning communities in the once sparsely inhabited ranch and timberland regions long known to burn, experts say.

"We know this is going to happen," said Kevin Ryan, a former U.S. Forest Service fire scientist, now a consultant with FireTree Wildland Fire Sciences. "We need to manage to take the crisis out of it."

Judy and Ken Brown were among hundreds who narrowly escaped the firestorm last week that swept down a mountainside and through their community beside Lake Isabella, an hour east of Bakersfield.

They've seen wildfires in the past, but none like this one that quickly consumed their mobile home and dozens in the neighborhood largely made up of retirees.

Judy Brown said she and her husband received an automated call telling them to leave. They soon heard exploding propane tanks and neighbors screaming.

With their two dogs loaded in their car, the couple drove to safety through thick smoke as their home burned behind them. Judy Brown said they were lucky to survive.

"It was like a tornado, but it was fire," she said. "I thought it was the end of the world."

The fire, driven by strong winds across mountains covered with dry grass and trees, travelled 11 miles in its first 13 hours, which firefighters say is fast. It killed and elderly couple and destroyed more than 200 homes.

California's wildfire season typically starts in August, raising concerns about the June fire at Lake Isabella sparking so early.

It also follows 2015's voracious wildfire season marked by six deaths. Four people died in a Lake

County fire north of San Francisco that destroyed 1,300 homes. A fire in Amador and Calaveras counties destroyed more than 800 buildings and killed two people. Both fires rapidly spread.

Climate change will continue to make wildfires more severe throughout the western states, including California, according to a report by the Climate Central, a nonprofit organization of scientists.

An estimated 11 million Californians live in areas with a high risk of wildfire, the report says, and by 2050 California's wildfire season is expected to increase from 120 days to 144 days.

Bill Patzert, a climatologist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, says changing weather patterns are one factor. Winter temperatures have risen 2 to 3 degrees in the last century, he said, and California's snowpack is more fleeting. Millions of trees in the Sierra Nevada have died in drought.

The weather, however, is not solely to blame for the highly destructive wildfires, said Patzert, who blames poor planning that allowed communities to be built in risky places.

"Putting it all in the climate change bin is like throwing in the towel," Patzert said. "Let's not forget a lot of it is our misbehavior and our decisions how we zone and where we zone."

The areas throughout California, where cattle grazed and loggers harvested trees, have given way to subdivisions of homes in the last 50 years, said Bill Stewart, co-director of the Center for Fire Research and Outreach at the University of California, Berkeley.

Residents in these places must be aware of the danger, and not rely on the local fire department to tell them when to clear the grass and trees that could easily spread fire to their homes, he said.

"That's the issue — more people living right next to wildland," Stewart said of the wildfire near Lake Isabella. "If no one lived there, this wouldn't have been a big story."

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California Land Officials Sign Off On Closing Nuclear Plant

By Alison Noon

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California land officials dropped their longstanding environmental objections to the state's last nuclear power plant and signed off Tuesday on a deal to close the Central Coast facility nearly 20 years ahead of its previously planned termination.

The State Lands Commission approved a lease allowing Pacific Gas and Electric Co. to continue operating the Diablo Canyon twin-reactor plant through August 2025, a date the company and environmental groups agreed to last week. Members turned down a proposed environmental impact assessment, which can take years, in part to meet the earlier termination date.

Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom said keeping the plant open for nine years allows PG&E to avoid the mistakes of Edison International, which terminated its San Onofre nuclear generator in 2013 after hundreds of abrupt layoffs. The company largely replaced the nuclear power with climate-changing natural gas plants.

"Let's not fail the plant," Newsom said. "Let's have the conversation now about what that means to the workforce, what that means to the community, what that means to our efforts to provide alternative energy sources at a competitive price."

Tom Dalzell, business manager of a union that represents 600 of the plant's employees, said the agreement promises to retrain and transition employees away from Diablo Canyon, avoiding a precipitous change.

Friends of the Earth President Erich Pica, whose organization participated in the negotiation to terminate the plant, said the agreement is fair to workers while eliminating two decades of seismic risks.

"This is the way you do it," Pica said. "You have time, you can bring on the right resources and you can treat people right."

Not all conservationists back the plan, though. Dozens of activists, including some who have been fighting nuclear energy for 40 years, argued Tuesday against the plant's continued operation near major earthquake-causing fault lines.

John Geesman of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility said the state should have conducted one of its strict environmental reviews before approving the lease, however short.

Geisha Williams, PG&E president of electric operations, said the nine years are a gift and the company will use the better part of that time to build and prepare an alternative energy facility in California.

Williams said PG&E could pivot to wind, solar, biomass, geothermal or hydropower to replace the energy Diablo Canyon currently provides — about 9 percent of the state's power.

PG&E President Tony Earley told reporters last week the utility will save more money closing Diablo Canyon than running it through 2044 as planned.

The commission's vote is the first of multiple regulatory hurdles facing the agreement to shut down the 31-year-old plant.

Diablo Canyon's twin reactors hug a Pacific Ocean bluff midway on the coast between Los Angeles and San Francisco, in San Luis Obispo County.

Fears about the seismic faults running through the area have dogged the project since its conception in the 1960s, and fostered opposition nationally to nuclear power within the country's then-fledgling environmental movement.

PG&E maintains the plant could withstand the strongest likely earthquakes, but growing scientific knowledge about the seismology has heightened worries.

The state's largest utility and environmental groups agree that California no longer needs the electricity from Diablo Canyon, given increased energy efficiency in the state and the growing availability and affordability of solar and wind power and other renewable energy.

Nationally, the nuclear-power industry is caught in a debate between those who call nuclear power an essential alternative to climate changing fossil fuels, and those who question the growing costs of maintaining the country's decades-old nuclear plants.

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Hail, Flooding Cause Delay At Coors Before Jays-Rockies

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

DENVER — Rain and hail came down on Coors Field in a fierce, hour-long downpour that forced officials to delay the start of an interleague game Tuesday night between the Toronto Blue Jays and Colorado Rockies.

Heavy runoff poured into the Rockies' dugout and tunnel leading into the clubhouse, causing some flooding. Grounds crew workers were able to clear the water away by sandbagging the tunnel entrance and clearing debris over the drains, allowing the pooled water to dissipate.

Other members of the crew used shovels, squeegees and large brooms to scrape the water and pea-sized hail from the field.

An air blower also was driven across the field to help dry it out and an absorbent mix was thrown onto the infield to soak up additional moisture.

First pitch was thrown at 9:21 p.m., which was 2 hours, 41 minutes after the scheduled start time.

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A Massive Storm Completely Flooded The Rockies' Stadium

By Andrew Joseph

USA Today, June 28, 2016

Let's hope fans attending Tuesday's Rockies game found somewhere comfortable and dry because a massive hailstorm is not ideal baseball conditions.

About an hour before Tuesday's scheduled first pitch, the sky started falling in Denver. The entire stadium had to take cover as outrageous amounts of hail and rain poured down.

It didn't stop.

It got worse.

This is fine. Nothing to see here.

The world might be ending.

Estimated time of first pitch: Never. The world has ended. No more baseball. Melvin Upton Jr. robs home run by reaching over the wall for ridiculous catch

24m agoHouston Police pulls out all the stops for Running Man Challenge video with Astros, Bun B

1hr agoAnthony Rizzo dove over tarp for an outrageous catch, then got up like it was nothing

1hr ago

Colorado Rockies, Hail, MLB, Rain, so much rain, MLB Andrew Joseph

Andrew Joseph is a writer at For The Win. He's the proud owner of a Johnny Estrada bobblehead, and he once shared an elevator with Matthew McConaughey.

FEMA HOUSING

No stories for this edition

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

45 Moorhead Properties Removed From Flood Plain

Forum of Fargo-Moorhead (ND), June 28, 2016

MOORHEAD — Another 45 properties will be removed from the 100-year flood plain in the Moorhead Country Club area, the city of Moorhead announced Tuesday, June 28.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency informed the city that the Flood Insurance Rate Map for the area will be revised to reflect the flood protection measures put into place. The revised map will take effect Nov. 11, the city said in a news release.

The 45 properties are generally from 18th Avenue North to Country Club Parkway between 11th Street North and the Red River. Twelve of the properties had one or more structures touched by the 100-year flood plain (including one structure with eight residential condominium units).

A Letter Of Map Revision will eliminate a FEMA requirement for mandatory flood insurance for those properties with federally insured mortgages.

Property owners will still be able to buy voluntary flood insurance at preferred rates.

Since 2009, the city has removed 240 homes from the flood plain through buyouts and 199 properties through map revisions for accredited flood protection projects in the Horn Park, Woodlawn Park and Moorhead Country Club neighborhoods.

MITIGATION

No stories for this edition

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

FEMA Funds For Roads Approved

By Nicole Bradford

Nacogdoches County (TX) Daily Sentinel, June 28, 2016

Still with a lengthy list of county roads to be oil-coated and otherwise maintained, Nacogdoches County Commissioners accepted the eighth of 10 FEMA grants on Tuesday.

Funds Available For Food, Shelter Program

Muskogee (OK) Phoenix, June 29, 2016

Muskogee County Emergency Food & Shelter Program has been awarded federal funds made available through the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP). Muskogee County EFSP is slated to receive $26,584 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in Muskogee County, according to a media release.

Each area's awarded amount is partially based upon unemployment data as it compares to overall unemployment data.

The National Board chaired by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency consists of representatives from American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; The Jewish federations of North America; The Salvation Army; and, United Way Worldwide. The Local Board is charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

The Local Board comprised of local representatives reflective of those on the National Board and local non-profit organizations of a similar nature will determine how the funds awarded to Muskogee County are to be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area. The Local Board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds and any additional funds available under this phase of the program.

Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must:

- Be private voluntary non-profits or units of government.
- Be eligible to receive Federal funds.
- Have an accounting system.
- Practice nondiscrimination.
- Have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs.
- If a private voluntary organization, it must have a voluntary board.

Muskogee County Emergency Food & Shelter Program has distributed EFSP funds previously for meals, food and utility distribution, or other related temporary shelter. Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact Terry Beutelschies at Lake Area United Way, 311 Court St., (918) 682-1364 for an application. The deadline for applications to be received is July 15.

FIRE GRANTS

No stories for this edition

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

No stories for this edition

FLOODS

FEMA Disaster Center, Laundry Facilities Now Open In Kanawha

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, June 28, 2016

More facilities have opened in northern Kanawha County to help those affected by last week's flooding.

Kanawha County officials say a Disaster Recovery Center run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency now is open at the Kanawha County Schools warehouse in Crede, 300 Pennsylvania Ave., by Elk Elementary Center. A center is also open at 65 W. Main St. in White Sulphur Springs through Friday.

People can go to those centers from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to apply for disaster assistance. Disaster Recovery Centers are one-stop shops for eligible storm survivors to provide one-on-one, face-to-face help.

The three hardest-hit counties in West Virginia – Kanawha, Greenbrier and Nicholas – have already been declared a federal disaster area by President Obama. On Tuesday, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin asked that seven additional counties – Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster – be added to the disaster declaration.

People do not have to visit a Disaster Recovery Center to register with FEMA. Those who have not yet registered are encouraged to do so as soon as possible by visiting DisasterAssistance.gov. FEMA also accepts registrations through your smartphone at m.fema.gov. For those without access to the internet, FEMA has a toll-free number at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or (TTY) 1-800-462-7585 for the deaf or hard of hearing.

"The most important thing for them to remember is that if they're a victim of flooding, they have to register with us to receive FEMA assistance," said Candace Cleveland, the manager for the FEMA center in Crede. "It's very important, and the only way you register — because sometimes people go to town meetings and different things and walk away thinking they've registered for FEMA — is by calling the 1-800 number."

Cleveland said FEMA can provide several forms of support for flood victims, including crisis counseling, unemployment assistance and child care services. The center will also direct victims to local resources available to them, Cleveland said.

Kanawha County residents with significant damage to property as a result of flooding can call the county planning office at 304-357-0570, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., to report the damage. The Planning Office will log all property damage, officials said in a news release Tuesday.

Kanawha Metro 911 spokeswoman Brooke Hylbert said in the news release that clothing donations received in recent days have been greatly appreciated, but are no longer needed at this time. Instead, cleaning supplies, such as bleach and also tarps to lay items out on, are especially needed.

The Tide "Loads of Hope" mobile laundry unit will be providing free full-service laundry to residents affected by the flooding.

A news release from the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management says residents from directly affected areas can bring clothes to the mobile unit to be washed, dried and folded free of charge. All washable clothing types can be accepted with the exception of heavy bedding.

In addition, Procter & Gamble will be providing personal care kits containing items such as deodorant, toothpaste and shampoo as well as household cleaning products.

Tide "Loads of Hope" and the P&G product distribution program is planning to visit multiple areas affected by the floods, but initially will be located at Elkview Middle School, at 5090 Elk River Road N., in Elkview.

Shower facilities also are available at Elkview Middle School, and will be open each day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

American Red Cross has opened up the Safe & Well website for concerned friends and family to search for individuals that have registered themselves as Safe & Well with Red Cross. To register on the site, visit https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php.

The Kanawha County Emergency Operations Center will remain open throughout today to assist the public with questions. It can be reached at 304-746-8828.

Optum, a health and behavioral health services company, is offering a free emotional-support help line for flood victims. The toll-free number, 866-342-6892, will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for as long as necessary and is free and open to anyone, according to a release.

FEMA Mobile Unit Arrives In Greenbrier County After Floods Wreck The Region

By Annie Moore

WVVA-TV Bluefield (WV), June 28, 2016

White Sulfur Springs (WVVA) A community that took decades to build, washed away by the rain. FEMA's mobile disaster assistance unit arrived in White Sulfur Springs on Tuesday to help those impacted by the floods.

"I was always the person who said, that's never going to happen to me. Right now, I'm in shock," said Laura Bare, one of hundreds who will be able to receive assistance at the new unit located on Tressel Street.

Bare was at work at The Greenbrier; her toddler at daycare, when floodwater ripped through her street. "It was so fast there would have been no getting out, and that's what scares me the most. I just keep thinking, what if we had been in there? It weighs on me."

In the days and weeks ahead, Bare and other families of the flood will be working with FEMA officials in White Sulfur Springs to get back on their feet.

"Candidly, getting FEMA in here this morning was a pretty significant development. We're trying to put the word out over the last 24 hours to get people to call the 1-800-621-FEMA number. If you've been impacted in any way, you need to register," said Rep. Evan Jenkins, who is helping residents sign up for assistant.

FEMA spokesman Peter Herrick said officials are currently working on a more permanent location in White Sulfur Springs to coordinate assistance. In the meantime, he is encouraging residents to call or visit the mobile until at the Emmanuel United Methodist Church between 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

As of Tuesday afternoon, only Greenbrier, Kanawha, and Nicholas counties are FEMA disaster areas, but Herrick is encouraging anyone affected to register as some counties could be added as officials survey the state.

To help Laura Bare and her 3-year-old daughter, visit https://www.gofundme.com/2b8vqpxg

FEMA Opens Mobile Disaster Recovery Center In Greenbrier County

WSLS-TV Roanoke (VA), June 28, 2016

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.Va. (WSLS 10) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency now has a Mobile Disaster Recovery Center open to help those affected by the recent West Virginia flooding.

It's located at the Emmanuel United Methodist Church (31 Tressel Street, White Sulphur Springs, WV 24986) in Greenbrier County.

It will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday and 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday.

People do not have to visit a Disaster Recovery Center to register with FEMA.

FEMA urges those who have not yet registered to do so as soon as possible by visiting DisasterAssistance.gov. For those without access to the internet, FEMA has a toll-free number at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or (TTY) 1-800-462-7585 for the deaf or hard of hearing.

Federal disaster assistance for individuals and families can include money for rental assistance, essential home repairs, personal property loss and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

Rep. Mooney On Middle East Trip During Floods

By David Gutman

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, June 28, 2016

Most of West Virginia's federal elected officials have been out in force since last week, coordinating, helping out and trying to keep the public informed as southern parts of the state have been hit with the worst flooding in at least a generation.

All except one — Rep. Alex Mooney, who represents Kanawha County and some of the hardest hit areas.

Mooney, R-W.Va., who has made no public appearances during the flooding, is on a previously scheduled congressional trip to the Middle East, his office said.

"The trip has included meetings with American military leadership and troops fighting terrorists in the Sinai Desert region of Egypt," Mooney spokeswoman Meredith Jones said. "He is working with the American military liaisons through the Department of Defense to return as quickly as possible without putting a strain on our service members. He is receiving regular briefings on the flooding in West Virginia and is eager to return home to continue to help his constituents."

Asked repeatedly when Mooney left for the trip — before or after the flooding began — Jones did not respond.

Mooney was in Washington on Wednesday of last week, the night before the flooding began.

Jones noted that Mooney's offices were open and providing services.

Every member of West Virginia's congressional delegation, Mooney included, has signed letters to President Barack Obama asking him to provide federal disaster assistance to the regions hardest hit by the flood.

Obama approved the first request, dated Saturday. The second request was sent and approved (in part) on Tuesday.

Three of eight counties — Kanawha, Roane and Clay — where a federal disaster has been declared are in Mooney's district.

West Virginia's other federal representatives have crisscrossed the state in the days since the flood, providing assistance in any way possible.

Sen. Joe Manchin, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito and Rep. Evan Jenkins all did a fly-over with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, viewing the scale of the damage in Clendenin, Richwood, Rainelle and at the Summersville Dam.

All have also had their staffs fan out across the most affected areas to provide assistance.

Manchin, the lone Democrat, visited Elkview, Clendenin, Richwood, Craigsville, Boggs, Walnut Grove and Birch River.

Capito visited similar locations and also met with people taking shelter at Capital High School.

Jenkins held a news conference at White Sulphur Springs, visited Richwood, Ansted, Charmco, Ronceverte, Cowen, Rupert and Fairlea, among others.

All three were briefed by the West Virginia National Guard, and other emergency officials.

Mooney's political opponents have often made hay of his relatively scant presence in the western portion of his 2nd Congressional District — Mooney lives in the Eastern Panhandle.

He attended his first Kanawha County Commission meeting in May, leaving shortly after it began to attend a Donald Trump rally.

Marc Savitt, Mooney's opponent in the Republican primary, dubbed him "congressman no show," and criticized him for missing the groundbreaking of the new Procter & Gamble facility in Berkeley County and President Barack Obama's visit to Charleston. (Congress was in session during the president's visit.)

"This job isn't about photo ops, it's about putting on your jeans and work boots and getting out in the district to help the people who trusted you to improve their lives," Savitt said in February.

Mooney handily defeated Savitt, winning more than 70 percent of the vote, in the May primary.

Mooney's general election opponent has also been critical of his non-presence.

"Alex Mooney is an absent congressman," Mark Hunt, his Democratic challenger, said in April. "His office is in my building, 405 Capitol St.; I've never seen him."

Hunt spent Monday and Tuesday helping and handing out supplies in Clendenin, Elkview and Clay.

Gov. Tomblin Expands FEMA Assistance Requests To Seven Additional Counties

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), June 28, 2016

Charleston, W.Va. – On June 28, 2016, Gov. Tomblin expanded his request for a federal Major Disaster Declaration from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide assistance for Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster counties.

Greenbrier, Kanawha and Nicholas counties have already received federal declaration and FEMA teams are on the ground working with residents and providing individual assistance.

If Gov. Tomblin's request is approved by FEMA, these additional seven counties would also be eligible for federal assistance, which includes individual assistance, Damage-Frequency Assessment (DFA), Emergency Protective Measures and Debris Removal.

"As cleanup continues in so many communities across West Virginia, we are seeing the overwhelming damage that has been left behind," Gov. Tomblin said. "To ensure all those affected by these devastating floods have access to the assistance they need to rebuild their homes, businesses and communities, I have expanded my request for federal aid to include seven additional counties. I appreciate the continued support of our congressional delegation as we work with federal partners to provide critical resources to West Virginians in need as quickly as possible."

West Virginians needing assistance should contact their local offices of emergency management.

Contact information for each county office can be found at:

http://www.dhsem.wv.gov/Important%20Contact%20Numbers/Pages/default.aspx.

Those who need cleanup assistance, are available to volunteer or want to donate should visit https://wvvoad.communityos.org/cms or connect with an agency in their local community.

Individuals and businesses in counties that have been declared federal disaster areas should visit www.disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

5 Counties Added To FEMA Disaster Declaration

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), June 28, 2016

Earlier today, Gov. Tomblin expanded his request for a federal Major Disaster Declaration from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide assistance for Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster counties.

According to Governor Tomblin's Twitter Page, FEMA has added five counties to the list of counties able to receive federal disaster aid. The counties FEMA has approved are Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Roane, and Summers.

He also tweeted that declaration status is still pending for Webster and Pocahontas counties. According to his Twitter page, the WV Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management continues to work with FEMA to provide additional assistance.

It is unknown at this time when residents of these counties can begin applying for aid. However, these are the current links and contact numbers concerning FEMA assistance:

West Virginians needing assistance should contact their local offices of emergency management.

Contact information for each county office can be found at:

http://www.dhsem.wv.gov/Important%20Contact%20Numbers/Pages/default.aspx.

Those who need cleanup assistance, are available to volunteer or want to donate should visit https://wvvoad.communityos.org/cms or connect with an agency in their local community.

Individuals and businesses in counties that have been declared federal disaster areas should visit www.disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

Stay with 13 news for the latest updates.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

No stories for this edition

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

Napa County Ends Earthquake Emergency Status

By Barry Eberling

Napa Valley (CA) Register, June 28, 2016

It took almost two years, but Napa County is officially no longer under a local emergency proclamation linked to the Aug. 24, 2014, South Napa earthquake.

The county Board of Supervisors last week terminated the emergency proclamation initiated on the day of the earthquake. County Executive Officer Nancy Watt called attention to what might have otherwise been a routine item passed along with other routine items.

"It's somewhat anticlimactic," she acknowledged.

But up to 20 seconds of shaking during the earthquake yielded plenty of long-range, bureaucratic chores for the county. The immediate, chaotic signs of a major emergency — sirens, buckled roads, toppled bricks, collapsed buildings — were only the beginning.

A world of flashing red emergency vehicle lights yielded to a world of red tape. Napa County government's slow-motion recovery included securing federal reimbursements to help pay for government building and rural road damage, tasks that required emergency status.

Now Napa County has reached a point in its dealings with the Federal Emergency Management Agency that it felt comfortable terminating its local emergency proclamation.

"We still have a lot of work to do to get back to pre-earthquake life," Napa County Risk and Emergency Services Manager Kerry John Whitney said late last week. "But we're in recovery now, not response."

The county still has building repairs to make. Most notably, the oldest section of its historic courthouse remains closed and braced on the outside by giant metal beams.

FEMA has tentatively agreed to pay more than $500,000 toward the $635,000 earthquake insurance deductible on the building, Whitney said.

Napa County might be as long as two years away from holding a grand reopening for the damaged courthouse, Whitney said. It will reassemble a building shaken to its core by the quake while also paying attention to Victorian Italianate architecture and other historic details.

"That's an absolute priority," Whitney said. "We have a historical expert on our team to make sure that happens."

The need to maintain the building's historic integrity is one reason it took so long for the county to work with FEMA on a repair strategy. Only in late November 2015 did the parties agree on how to shore up the courthouse enough to begin an in-depth damage assessment.

Ultimate repair costs for the 1878 courthouse are still unknown. Much will depend on to what degree the building is strengthened to withstand future earthquakes.

"That building was very, very severely damaged and it has to be done right," Whitney said.

FEMA has also agreed to pay about $1.2 million toward the $1.4 million insurance deductible for the county Hall of Justice on Third Street. Whitney said the county should soon know the cost for repairs that remain to be done there.

Another factor allowing the county to end its earthquake emergency status involves the downtown jail. Because of earthquake damage to the jail, the county signed a contract with Solano County that allowed it to house as many as 125 inmates in the Solano County jail.

The county in early April stopped housing inmates in Solano for earthquake-related reasons. However, it still is housing inmates in Solano because of a remodeling project at the Napa County jail that has closed an inmate housing unit.

Napa County last August announced that total earthquake damage to its government buildings, roads and infrastructure was near $15 million. The county has long expected costs to top $20 million when all the bills are known and tallied. Much of the cost is to be reimbursed by insurance, and federal and state governments.

The city of Napa also declared a state of emergency that the City Council terminated on April 21, 2015. City officials said at the time that they had worked with the federal and state governments on an estimated $12 million in city earthquake-related damage costs.

ZIKA VIRUS

Zika Sets Off Urgent, Complex Communications Effort From CDC

By Bradley Johnson

Advertising Age, June 28, 2016

A blood-engorged female Aedes albopictus mosquito feeding on a human host. Credit: CDC/ James Gathany

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is pushing hard to spread the word about Zika, the first new cause of birth defects identified by the CDC in 50 years and the first time ever that the cause has been spread by mosquitos.

CDC communications professionals are working side-by-side with scientists and emergency responders as the Zika hazard grows. And even though the agency still has to protect against all other hazards, anyone who can spare time from their normal duties is helping through the CDC's Emergency Operations Center.

The center is running at its highest state of activity, Level 1, under which the CDC says it assigns the most staff possible to work around the clock. It is the fourth Level 1, following the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the H1N1 outbreak in 2009 and Hurrican Katrina in 2005.

The work is complicated by the multiple fronts on which Zika transmission must be fought, apathy among those who don't feel at risk and a still-evolving understanding of the threat.

"This is probably one of the most complex communication responses the CDC has ever faced," said Katherine Lyon Daniel, associate director for communication at the Atlanta-based government agency.

"We know we can't stop every mosquito from coming here, and we know this is a terrible outcome, so we feel we have to do everything we can to be as ready as we can be," she added, calling Zika a "global crisis" that can potentially affect tens of thousands of babies.

There were 820 reported cases of Zika infection in the U.S. as of June 22.

To reach health professionals around the country, the CDC is hosting thousands of clinician calls where doctors and nurses can learn how to answer patient questions substantively and in an understandable manner.

It is sending messages through its Health Alert Network, or HAN, to its priority recipient list, which includes about 1,200 public information officers, health practitioners from the federal to local level, clinicians and public health laboratories. All HAN messages are also distributed through the CDC's Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity listserv of 36,500 subscribers and 155 partner organizations, posted on CDC.gov and Facebook, and distributed via

GovDelivery to HAN professional and media partners and individual subscribers.

But the agency is emphasizing the media as well. That's partly just another route to medical professionals. "We know physicians and clinicians are people too and they also consume the news, so that's one way were trying to get out the correct information," Ms. Lyon Daniel said.

It can also provide a more direct line to people concerned about the virus. The CDC's communication team is reaching out to mommy bloggers with suggested talking points for their audiences.

The organization recently created a Spanish-language PSA about Zika for Puerto Rico, which will run in movie theaters, on the radio and on social media.

On Facebook and Twitter, the CDC has been regularly posting relevant Zika-related infographics, videos and podcasts, focusing on vacation and travel themes as summer got underway. A post last week urged people to protect themselves if they are going to the Summer Olympics in Rio.

And the CDC website separates Zika information into sections for specific audiences, such as pregnant women or healthcare providers.

Because partner organizations are key to getting the word out to both health professionals and the general public, the CDC has also been working with the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists around Zika.

And the agency has hired Abt Associatates to help with productions, marketing and communcations.

Part of the challenge is "getting people prepared for something they're not really worried about yet," Ms. Lyon Daniel said, citing those who are neither pregnant nor thinking about having children soon, she said.

There's also still plenty of uncertainty about the virus itself. "We're sharing all the information we have as quickly as we can, but things will change and people's personal risk may be uncertain," she said.

And Zika's many facets, including sexual transmission and travel, complicates matters further.

The CDC is trying to get people to act now when possible, which means not leaving sitting water outside that could attract mosquitos and wearing insect repellent for three weeks after returning from countries with Zika to prevent mosquitos from spreading it in the U.S.

"We're trying to drive behavior change in a way we haven't tried to communicate before," said Ms. Lyon Daniel.

Dems-GOP Squabble Stalls Zika Funding

By Ted Barrett

CNN, June 28, 2016

Washington (CNN) Efforts to combat the Zika virus stalled in the Senate Tuesday when Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion House-passed funding bill, escalating the political battle between the parties over how to respond to the looming public health crisis.

The bill – which was put into final form in negotiations between House and Senate Republicans but not Democrats – fell eight votes short of the 60 it needed to advance. Congress now has just a narrow window to find a compromise before departing Washington in mid-July for a lengthy recess.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, said it was "absurd" Democrats filibustered the bill and said he hoped they would feel pressure as they explained to their constituents this weekend why they voted against the money.

McConnell said he would schedule a vote on the bill again next week.

Democrats said they opposed provisions blocking funds for Planned Parenthood and freezing some environmental regulations to allow for spraying of the mosquitoes that carry the virus. They accused Republicans of inserting those "poison pills" to secure the backing of far-right Republicans in the House at the expense of being able to pass it in the Senate.

Top Democrats sent a letter to GOP leaders seeking fresh negotiations on the bill. While McConnell appeared wary of new talks, others GOP senators, like Roy Blunt of Missouri, who has been heavily involved in the issue, acknowledged they would be necessary.

"We have to deal with this. Everybody understands that this has to be dealt with," Blunt said.

Republicans argued that they had met the funding level acceptable to Senate Democrats and charged that Democrats backed off the bill because of pressure from special interests, like Planned Parenthood.

"This is purely and simply about politics on the part of the Democrats. And worse yet, special interest politics that has gotten in the way of what's in the best interest of the safety and health of the American people," said Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota.

The rhetorical attacks were surprisingly harsh – even for this divided Congress – as each side blasted the other's handling of the issue as motivated more by base politics than the health care needs of women who if infected with Zika can have children with serious birth defects.

"Republicans decided they'd leverage a national health emergency and a public health crisis to sneak in special interest poison pills," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-New York.

"It is completely unacceptable, actually shameful, hypocritical, cynical for the Democrats to block this funding at this time," said Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who earlier gave a lengthy floor speech while standing next to a blown up photo of a baby with a shrunken head due to microcephaly, the birth defect linked to Zika.

"We all realize what a threat this is to the public health and safety of women in the United States," he said.

Democrats Block $1.1 Billion Zika Bill

By Ted Barrett

CNN, June 28, 2016

Washington (CNN) Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a Zika funding measure over the objections of Republicans, and both sides are trying to figure out a path forward to find a compromise.

The vote, which needed 60 to advance, failed 52-48. Democrats on Monday vowed to defeat the $1.1 billion package that was agreed to by House and Senate Republican negotiators – and approved in the GOP-controlled House last week – because it contained what Democrats called "poison pills" inserted in the measure.

Democrats opposed a provision easing Environmental Protection Agency regulations but were especially frustrated by a measure that would have prevented funding for Planned Parenthood.

"They restrict funding for birth control provided by Planned Parenthood. Can you believe that?" Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said Monday. "And the Zika problem, who does it affect? Women and especially pregnant women."

Republicans argued the EPA changes were temporary and designed to make it easier to spray pesticides to kill mosquitoes. They also say that while funds are denied to Planned Parenthood, there are no actual cuts to women's health funding. The money is redirected to community health centers and other organizations.

Republicans cautioned Monday that Democrats will be blamed if children are born with the birth defects caused by the dangerous mosquito-borne virus.

"I think there's going to be a heavy price to pay when this virus hits our shore and women start having babies with terrible birth defects," said Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican leader. "I wouldn't want to be in their position."

Lawmakers have debated how to respond to the public health crisis caused by Zika for months but Republicans made clear if Democrats block the GOP compromise, it could be weeks before the chamber – which will soon break for party conventions and summer recess – can vote again.

A Reid spokeswoman sought to put blame on Republicans if the Senate leaves town before voting on a Zika funding measure.

"It would be a tragic mistake if Republicans give up and skip town for a two month summer recess without forging a bipartisan agreement to protect American mothers, babies and families from the rapidly-rising threat of the Zika virus," Kristen Orthman in a statement Monday.

Tuesday's measure was part of a larger spending bill for veterans' programs and military construction.

Senate Dems Block Zika Funding

CBS News, June 28, 2016

WASHINGTON – Senate Democrats have blocked a GOP-drafted measure to provide $1.1 billion to fight the Zika virus, accusing Republicans of packing the measure with partisan provisions and unfair spending cuts.

The nearly party-line 52-48 vote Tuesday left the Senate short of the 60 votes required to advance the measure. What happens next is unclear since the White House is adamant in dedicating $2 billion to fight the Zika virus, which, scientists say, causes severe birth defects in children if the mother contracts the disease during pregnancy.

Democrats say they also oppose the provision because of offsets attached to the drafted measure, which would take away $95 million in federal grants from vital services such as providing birth control to women in Puerto Rico where the disease is rampant.

"They restrict funding for birth control provided by Planned Parenthood. Can you believe that?" Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said. "And the Zika problem, who does it affect? Women and especially pregnant women."

On the other side of the aisle, however, Senate Republicans warned their liberal counterparts prior to Tuesday's vote not to block the measure because they will have to bear the responsibility of children born with microcephaly, one of the birth defects caused by the virus in which the a baby's head and brain is smaller than normal.

"Putting politics before a public health crisis is about as irresponsible as it gets," House Speaker Paul Ryan said in a statement following the vote. "So much for all those lectures about doing your job."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms more than 2,500 of Zika cases in the United

States and its territories. In February, the CDC issued travel notices in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. Just this past April, the first Zika-related death was reported in Puerto Rico.

Though no formal vaccine exists, vaccine trials to prevent the virus are set to begin this September, nearly seven months after the virus hit the U.S. mainland.

Senate Democrats Block GOP's Zika Funding Bill

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a Republican proposal to provide $1.1 billion to fight the Zika virus, faulting the GOP for packing the measure with restrictions on Planned Parenthood money and changes to policies on pesticide spraying.

The nearly party-line 52-48 vote Tuesday left the Senate short of the 60 votes required to advance the measure. What happens next is unclear, though neither side is looking forward to leaving Washington next month for a seven-week vacation without having acted to address the health threat.

Zika is spread mainly by a tropical mosquito and is causing an epidemic in Latin America and the Caribbean. The virus can cause horrible birth defects and is likely to spread further this summer. So far, there's been no transmission by mosquitoes in the continental U.S.

Democrats pressed to resume negotiations while Republicans insisted, for now at least, that the measure negotiated by House and Senate Republicans is the best the Obama administration is going to get. The administration had requested $1.9 billion in emergency funds in February.

"There's not going to be another opportunity to deal with this in the near future," promised No. 2 Senate Republican John Cornyn of Texas.

The White House has threatened to veto the legislation.

The House-Senate measure matches the $1.1 billion measure that passed the Senate last month on a sweeping vote, but Democrats oppose a handful of provisions designed to mollify GOP conservatives in the House and the attachment of companion spending cuts to defray its cost.

Democrats particularly oppose a provision that restricts the use of $95 million worth of federal grants to provide services such as birth control to women in Puerto Rico threatened by the virus. Democrats charged that the restrictions were targeted at Planned Parenthood, a group loathed by many anti-abortion Republicans.

In addition to the limits on Planned Parenthood, the bill would temporarily lift permitting requirements on pesticide spraying.

Even as Democrats pressed for compromise, they crowed that Republicans controlling Congress would soon reconsider.

"They come back with their tail between their legs saying 'Let's pass something,'" said Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y.

Republicans controlling Congress have been slow to act on Obama's request, instead forcing the administration to redirect more than $500 million in unspent Ebola-fighting funds to combat Zika.

In a letter Tuesday morning, top Senate Democrats reiterated their opposition to the partisan provisions, but offered relatively mild objections to the inclusion of spending cuts to finance the Zika package.

"We stand ready to work cooperatively with you," the Democrats' letter said.

The measure is an agreement between House and Senate Republicans who say they drafted it in hopes of finding a compromise that could somehow satisfy both tea party Republicans and Obama's Democratic allies in the Senate. It did nothing of the sort. The House passed the measure along party lines last week.

Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., reacted with outrage that GOP negotiators dropped a House provision to ban the display of the Confederate flag at federal veterans' cemeteries a day or so each year. Democrats did not seek to address the issue during Senate debate last month.

Each side already has begun the blame game. Cornyn appeared on the Senate floor with a poster of a baby born with microcephaly, a severe deformity in which children are born with poorly developed brains and small skulls.

"I wonder what the senators who voted against this bipartisan Zika funding bill would tell the mother of this child," Cornyn said.

"What a cynical and hypocritical thing to do," Schumer said. "All Democrats have ever asked for on Zika was to give the (Centers for Disease Control) and the other agencies to protect the American people, pregnant mothers, and their babies from this dangerous virus."

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Funding To Combat Zika Fails To Advance In Senate

By Susan Cornwell

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Zika Funds Fail In Senate As Democrats Decry "Poison Pills"

By Steven Dennis

Bloomberg Politics, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked Republicans' plan to partially fund President Barack Obama's request for funding to tackle the Zika virus and attach it to other items Democrats dismissed as partisan, setting off a bitter round of sniping ahead of the July 4th recess.

Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn of Texas called Democrats "sore losers" and said they, not Republicans, will pay a political price for blocking the $1.1 billion Zika funding package, which was to be attached to a funding bill for veterans and military construction.

"Here we are in an utterly absurd position, playing political games as this public health crisis mounts here in our country," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said after the vote. "Pregnant women all across America are looking at this with dismay, utter dismay.''

The measure was blocked on a 52-48 vote, short of the 60-vote threshold needed to advance it. Democratic leaders called for a new round of negotiations to produce a bipartisan bill.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said Democrats "have been trying for months" to pass President Barack Obama's request for $1.9 billion to fund Zika control efforts. The Republican measure blocked Tuesday would take away funding from birth control, veterans and combating Ebola, he said.

"It is unbelievable that somebody would have the audacity to come to the floor and say it's Democrats' fault," said Reid of Nevada. "A significant amount of American women, especially young women, go to Planned Parenthood," he said. "The Republicans said you can't do that."First Case

Shortly before the vote, the Florida Department of Health announced the first Zika-linked case in the state of a baby born with microcephaly, to a Haitian woman who contracted the virus abroad.

McConnell said the measure was senators' last chance to provide Zika funding "for weeks" because the chamber will be off next week for the July 4 holiday. But Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the third-ranking Democrat, said the package was "a bill designed to fail."

Democrats say the package is filled with "poison pills," forcing them to vote against the Republican-written plan.

Among the items Democrats objected to were limits on family-planning services, which Democrats called a "back door" cut to Planned Parenthood; a suspension of Clean Water Act rules on use of some pesticides without EPA approval; funding for veterans that was $500 million below what the Senate passed; and the deletion of a provision sought by Democrats to stop flying the Confederate battle flag at veterans' cemeteries.Veto Threat

The White House has said Obama would veto the measure, H.R. 2577, if it reached his desk.

Reid also said it would set a bad precedent to require funding for emergencies to be offset by cutting federal spending elsewhere. Typically, emergency spending is paid for by borrowing.

Cornyn said Monday that Democrats "want to spend $1.9 billion in emergency spending with no offsets." He added, "Busting the budget caps is more important to them than the public health and women who might suffer from birth defects."

Cornyn didn't sound open to renegotiating the bill.

"This is their shot. I think there is going to be a heavy price to pay when this virus hits our shore and women start having babies with terrible birth defects," Cornyn said. "I wouldn't want to be in their position."

Obama requested $1.9 billion to fight the virus in February, but Republicans didn't act for months and ultimately balked at the price tag. A $1.1 billion emergency plan passed the Senate as an amendment to a spending bill last month on a 68-30 vote, with most Republicans, including Cornyn, voting against it because it would add to the deficit.Florida Focus

Democrats have been pounding Republicans for failing to act for months, particularly in the key battleground state of Florida.

Senator Marco Rubio, who changed his mind and decided to seek re-election this year, has been the most visible Republican pushing for Congress to act. He now faces the unwelcome prospect of going home for another recess and explaining why his party was unable to enact any funding yet again.

"I'm frustrated that we haven't dealt with this, quickly, effectively, weeks ago, before the middle of the summer, middle of mosquito season," Rubio told reporters Monday.

Rubio said he had hoped the measure would be the full $1.9 billion on its own, as the president requested.

"I wish it didn't have all these strings attached, because it would have been easier to pass a long time ago, but not doing anything is no longer an option," he said.

Bill To Provide $1.1 Billion Zika Funding Dies In Senate Vote

By Erin Kelly

USA Today, June 28, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Tuesday blocked a $1.1 billion bill to combat the Zika virus, giving Congress just two weeks to try to reach a new deal before lawmakers leave for a seven-week recess in the midst of mosquito season and a growing public health crisis.

Senators voted 52-48 to advance the bill, falling eight votes short of the 60 needed. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., immediately made a motion to reconsider the vote, raising the possibility of another vote on the same bill next week.

"We'll address this matter again (next week) and hopefully respond...to this pending health care crisis," he said.

Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate, warned before the vote that there would be no negotiations on a new Zika bill if the legislation failed Tuesday. But Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., predicted that Republican leaders would relent and return to the negotiating table at the last minute to seek a compromise rather than go home for the summer with nothing to show their constituents.

"Republicans will come back in a few weeks with their tails between their legs," Schumer said. "Why they don't avoid that embarrassment is beyond me."

McConnell blamed Democrats for playing partisan politics and dooming Zika funding.

"Our friends across the aisle can try to come up with a line of excuses as to why they are blocking funding to address the Zika crisis," McConnell said. "But here's what it all boils down to: partisan politics."

Democrats opposed the bill, which they complained was negotiated between Senate and House Republicans with little input from them and was loaded with "poison pill" riders that cut health programs, restricted funding for birth control services from Planned Parenthood, weakened clean water laws and blocked a ban on displaying the Confederate flag at U.S. military cemeteries.

Democratic leaders sent a letter Tuesday to McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., calling for an immediate round of new talks to try to produce a bipartisan compromise.

Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., whose state has been hit hardest by the Zika virus, warned his colleagues that the public health crisis is poised to become much worse if Congress doesn't act soon.

Florida has 223 Zika cases, including 40 pregnant women. The Florida Department of Health announced Tuesday the first confirmed case of microcephaly in an infant born in Florida. Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby is born with an unusually small head, often due to abnormal brain development.The Florida baby's mother contracted Zika while in Haiti.

"If you don't think the Zika crisis is an emergency, just wait," Nelson said. "These numbers are just going to increase...We need to stop playing these political games."

The bill, passed by the House at about 3 a.m. Thursday with no debate, would have cut $750 million from other health programs to fund anti-Zika efforts. The bill also would have cut $543 million in unused funds from the implementation of Obamacare, $107 million from leftover funds used to fight Ebola, and $100 million in administrative funds from the Health and Human Services Department.

The legislation would have provided $230 million for the National Institutes of Health to develop a vaccine and $476 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help pay for mosquito control efforts.

President Obama asked Congress in February to provide $1.9 billion to fight the Zika virus, a mosquito-borne illness that can cause devastating birth defects.

The Senate passed legislation in May to provide $1.1 billion in funding. Unlike the bill that came to the floor Tuesday, it did not require any budget cuts to fund it and did not include controversial provisions. The House passed a bill last month to provide $622 million in funding, drawing a veto threat from the White House, which called it woefully inadequate.

The legislation that the Senate voted on Tuesday was an attempt by House and Senate negotiators to try to find a compromise between those two bills.

Zika Bill Is Blocked By Senate Democrats Upset Over Provisions

By David Herszenhorn

New York Times, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a federal spending bill that would have provided $1.1 billion to fight the mosquito-borne Zika virus, saying Republicans had sabotaged the legislation with politically charged provisions. The move raised the possibility that no new money would be available soon to fight the disease as Southern states brace for a summer outbreak.

The stalemate, accompanied by an sharp war of words on the Senate floor, raised the prospect that the fierce partisan divide in Congress was hindering the government's ability to respond effectively to a pressing public health emergency. Democrats blocked the bill because they were upset with cuts to programs and changes in policy they have long supported.

Democrats and the White House have been pushing since February for the Republican majorities in Congress to approve $1.9 billion in emergency financing to fight Zika, which can cause microcephaly and other serious defects in infants born to infected mothers.

The Democrats reacted with disbelief on Tuesday as Republicans tried to turn the tables and blame Democrats for delaying the money because they had blocked the legislation.

"We have a public health crisis descending on our country," Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky and the majority leader, said moments after the vote. "Pregnant women all across America are looking at this with dismay, utter dismay, as we sit here in a partisan gridlock manufactured by the other side."

The Senate Democratic leader, Harry Reid of Nevada, was incensed. "I don't know what universe my friend is living in," Mr. Reid said, referring to Mr. McConnell. "What does he think? Does he think we're all stupid? The American people are dumb?"

The sniping continued as Senator John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican declared, "Our Democratic friends block it because they are sore losers."

In May, the Senate approved $1.1 billion in funding after months of partisan brinkmanship, during which the Obama administration ultimately redirected nearly $600 million previously approved to fight the Ebola virus so that federal health agencies could get a start on working against the Zika virus.

House Republicans, in turn, adopted legislation providing $622 million, with most of the money cut and redirected from other federal programs supported by Democrats. Democrats were willing to go along with the Senate version, but in talks controlled strictly by Republicans, House and Senate negotiators agreed last week to provide $1.1 billion, with $750 million in cuts and policy changes.

Democrats charged that Republicans had booby-trapped the legislation by adding provisions that included a ban on any direct government financing for Planned Parenthood, the women's health organization, to provide contraceptive services related to fighting the Zika virus, which is also transmitted sexually.

The Democrats also said Republicans had inserted a provision cutting $500 million in financing for the Affordable Care Act, President Obama's signature health care law, and that they had stripped a House provision that would ban the flying of the Confederate battle flag in federal cemeteries.

Another provision of the bill that Democrats disliked was a further reallocation of money from Ebola programs, totaling $107 million. While Democrats have long maintained that money previously appropriated to fight Ebola is vitally needed, it does indicate that the Obama administration still has some flexibility in reapportioning funds among different health programs — in addition to the nearly $600 million already taken from Ebola programs — while waiting for Congress to act.

The White House has been reluctant to specify how much money it might be able to temporarily redirect to fight Zika — or how long it would be able to make do — because that could ease pressure on Congress to approve the new money.

Whichever side is more to blame, it was clear that no new government funds would be approved to fight the Zika virus until after Congress returned from a recess for the Fourth of July holiday. And even then, the prospects of an agreement are uncertain.

With Southern states expected to be hit hardest by Zika, lawmakers representing Florida have been among those pushing hardest for bipartisan action. But even Senator Bill Nelson, Democrat of Florida, said Republicans had poisoned the chances for moving ahead by blocking money for Planned Parenthood, knowing Democrats would never agree.

"They're just not living in the real world, and they're just not facing the fact that this is an emergency," Mr. Nelson said. He noted that at least five babies had been born with microcephaly in the United States — the most recent one in Florida — but said he expected the disagreements to continue.

"We go until enough of these horrible cases are born that it is finally beginning to penetrate their hard heads," he said.

Democrats on Tuesday morning urged renewed negotiations, but Mr. Cornyn, speaking to reporters off the floor, said matter-of-factly, "There's not going to be another opportunity to deal with this for the near future."

The vote on Tuesday morning was 52 to 48, with Republicans falling short of the 60 votes needed to overcome a Democratic filibuster and advance the bill to a final vote.

Democrats said they had no choice but to block the legislation as it was written.

"If there was ever a bill obviously designed to fail, it was this one," Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York, said in a statement on Monday evening. "Loading up the bill with poison pills was the only way Republican leadership could pass a bill without Democratic support, and it is a cynical strategy."

But Senate Republicans were unapologetic and said Democrats were now to blame. "Here we are in an utterly absurd position, playing political games," Mr. McConnell, the majority leader said, "as this public health crisis mounts here in our country."

Senate Democrats Block Zika Funding Bill

By Tom Howell

Washington Times, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion deal Tuesday that uses Obamacare and Ebola funds to combat the mosquito-borne Zika virus, throwing negotiations into disarray even as the nation racks up 800-plus cases and insects begin to bite on the U.S. mainland, sparking fears of widespread infection.

All but one Democrat filibustered a military construction bill that contained the money, saying Congress should rewrite the package because GOP drafters included "poison-pill" provisions on women's health and the environment.

"This conference report is the most irresponsible legislation I have ever seen in my 34 years in Congress," Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, Nevada Democrat, said. "That says a lot. I can't think of anything that's close."

The legislation needed 60 votes to advance but fell short, 52-48, with two Republicans voting "no" because drafters only paid for $750 million of the package by taking funds from elsewhere in the budget.

Furious Senate Republicans accused Democrats of playing election-year games with the bill, which also funds veterans programs, after GOP negotiators agreed to the $1.1 billion spending level that Senate Democrats supported in May.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the filibuster could spoil Congress last shot to fund mosquito control and the pursuit of a vaccine for Zika, which causes birth defects, before a seven-week break for July conventions and the August recess.

"We need to act and we need to act right now," the Kentucky Republican said.

Mr. McConnell changed his vote to "no" after the measure fell short, a parliamentary maneuver so that the chamber could try again after the July 4th holiday.

The standoff comes amid increasing worry over local outbreaks of Zika in the states and D.C.

Mosquitoes are spreading the disease in Puerto Rico and Latin America, where Brazilians first noticed an uptick in both Zika and microcephaly, a condition in which babies are born with abnormally small heads.

Meanwhile the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recorded more than 820 travel-related cases of Zika in the states and D.C., a handful of them through sexual transmission, though experts say the virus could puncture the mainland further once summer ramps up and Aedes mosquitoes flourish.

President Obama in February requested $1.9 billion in new spending for the fight, but House GOP leaders balked, saying there was plenty of money in other accounts to combat the disease in the near term.

Four months later, House and Senate negotiators melded competing plans, option to use the Senate's $1.1 billion funding level while paying for part of it with money from the Ebola fight in West Africa, unobligated funds at the Health and Human Services Department and funds earmarked for territories to set up Obamacare exchanges.

It also included measures that would appeal to House Republicans, such as excluding Planned Parenthood from its pipeline of grant funds and temporarily rolling back clean-water rules on pesticides to kill mosquitoes.

Democrats accused Republicans of locking them out of conference negotiations and then crafting a package that was doomed to fail.

"They did everything they could to make sure the result we saw today would happen," said Senate Minority Whip Richard J. Durbin, Illinois Democrat.

Democrats said the GOP must explain why it took four months to land on a plan that falls $800 million short of Mr. Obama's request and takes money from other health accounts.

The administration hadn't bothered to look for funding offsets elsewhere in the massive federal budget, saying it would set a bad precedent in funding emergencies.

Mr. McConnell, in response to the Democrats' complaints, said there are benefits to being in the majority. He also said the conference report cannot be amended at this point, anyway.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, Wisconsin Republican, also said he doesn't want the Senate to send the package back to his chamber, after he muscled the bill to passage in predawn votes Thursday. He said he had no choice at the time, because Democrats disrupted the chamber with a sit-in over gun control.

"This is ridiculous. Senate Democrats, after demanding Zika funding for months and supporting this exact funding level for weeks, now block it to create a political issue," Mr. Ryan said Tuesday. "Putting politics before a public health crisis is about as irresponsible as it gets. So much for all those lectures about doing your job."

Zika Funding Bill Defeated In US Senate

By Todd Ackerman

Houston Chronicle, June 28, 2016

Houston politicians and public health leaders have complained about inadequate funding in congressional proposals to fight the Zika virus, but it's beginning to look like no legislation of any amount is going to be passed.

Senate Democrats Tuesday blocked a $1.1 billion Zika package drafted by their Republican colleagues, just two weeks before lawmakers are scheduled to leave for a seven-week recess. Both parties cited partisan politics by the other side for the bill's defeat.

"It's distressing," said Dr. Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital. "At some level, Congress doesn't seem to think the Zika threat is real. There's certainly not much urgency to get something through."

Experts fear the Zika threat could become reality in the U.S. in the next two months, the height of mosquito season. The mosquito-borne virus has been linked to a broad array of birth defects and neurological disorders, mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean. There, thousands of babies have already been born with microcephaly, a condition in which an infant is born with an abnormally small head and brain.

There has been no "local transmission" of Zika in the U.S. yet, but more than 800 Americans have acquired the virus traveling to Zika-affected countries. Forty-eight such cases have been reported in Texas.

The bill blocked Tuesday was an attempt to merge a Senate bill that would allocate $1.1 billion toward the Zika fight and a House bill that would have allocated $622 million. The vote to advance the bill was 52-48, eight votes short of the 60 needed.

Democrats complained the Senate bill was loaded with "poison pill" riders, which included cutting health programs, restricting funding for Planned Parenthood birth control services, relaxing clean water laws and blocking a ban on Confederate flag displays at military cemeteries. Republicans responded that the bill opposition was politics as usual for Democrats, more interested in attacking Republicans than passing legislation to provide funding.

The bill's fate is still uncertain. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said lawmakers would address the matter again after the July 4 holiday next week, but neither side appeared inclined to budge.

Sen. John Cornryn, R-Texas, issued a statement saying he couldn't "imagine a more disgraceful vote than what some of our colleagues across the aisle have cast." Meanwhile, Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he couldn't "remember anything as outrageous, as shameful as this piece of legislation."

Senate Vote On Zika Money Fails, Leaving Funding Future Uncertain

By Dylan Scott

STAT, June 28, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Senate failed Tuesday to advance a Republican-negotiated plan to fund the US response to the Zika virus, leaving no end in sight for the Zika funding fight in Congress that has dragged on for more than four months.

The procedural vote failed 52 to 48, 126 days after President Obama first requested a $1.9 billion package to address the virus. It needed 60 votes to advance.

The failure leaves the Zika funding effort in an increasingly bitter standoff.

GOP leaders do not appear willing to reopen negotiations on the Zika funding proposal, and Democrats showed Tuesday that they would not support the $1.1 billion deal reached by House and Senate Republicans. With mosquito season in full swing, both parties resorted to attacking the other over the impasse.

"This is the one shot we have to resolve this, and it'd be a shame if people refused the opportunity," Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn of Texas told reporters before the vote. "There's not gonna be another opportunity to deal with this in the near future."

Senate Democrats derided the GOP plan as a partisan proposal filled with poison pills because it included spending cuts to the Affordable Care Act and a provision meant to stop funding for Planned Parenthood.

"What we want them to do is negotiate. We're willing to compromise," Senator Chuck Schumer of New York told reporters after the vote. "What they're doing is going to kill any chance of Zika, and anyone who thinks that is not the case, just look at the words Planned Parenthood. That has been a poison pill on every issue."

Republicans, meanwhile, tried to shift the blame to the Democrats, arguing that the final bill has the same funding level that Senate Democrats already endorsed when they voted for the original Senate bill — and that the House has already moved in their direction.

Cornyn called the Democratic minority "a sore loser" on the floor after Tuesday's vote while standing alongside a poster of a baby with microcephaly, the birth defect linked to Zika that causes babies to be born with abnormally small heads.

"Today, Democrats have a choice: continue pushing thinly veiled partisan arguments and block the Zika control funding, or join with us to advance a serious solution and send critical funding to the president's desk right now," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said in a floor speech shortly before the vote.

Congress has now left itself a narrow window to pass a Zika funding bill before its long August break. Lawmakers will leave Washington in mid-July ahead of their party's presidential conventions and won't return until after Labor Day.

At this point, though, it's not clear what Republicans' next move will be — if there will be one at all. Senator John Thune of South Dakota, a member of the GOP leadership, demurred when asked if the GOP would be willing to undertake talks again.

Senator Bill Nelson of Florida, a Democrat, told STAT that Republicans had given no indication that they would be open to continuing talks on the issue.

"They're just not living in the real world," he said, "and they're not facing the fact that this is a real emergency."

Frustrations were equally high on the other side of the aisle.

"It's not good," said Senator Marco Rubio of Florida. "If you can't come together on an issue of public health and safety, a disease, whose impact we have seen graphically, you start to wonder if you can do it on anything."

The original Senate-passed bill, negotiated by Republican Roy Blunt of Missouri and Democrat Patty Murray of Washington, had provided $1.1 billion for Zika with no accompanying spending cuts. But the House had fully paid for its $622 million plan with spending cuts, and the final deal negotiated by House and Senate Republicans included $750 million in cuts to offset the $1.1 billion in funding. Even if the Senate had approved the new funding plan, the White House has pledged that Obama would veto it.

Shortly after the vote, a coalition of 30 health organizations sent a letter to congressional leadership urging them to scrap the GOP plan and start negotiating a new funding bill. Senate Democrats were urging the same course.

"Hopefully calmer heads will prevail now and we can go back and do a bipartisan bill and do our job," Murray said.

But she declined to comment when asked if there had been any sign from Republicans that they would do so.

Democrats Block Zika Funding Bill, Blame GOP

By Burgess Everett And Jennifer Haberkorn

Politico, June 28, 2016

Congress is poised for an epic failure in its efforts to combat Zika before lawmakers leave Washington for a seven-week vacation — and it could come back to bite Republicans at the ballot box if there's an outbreak of the mosquito-borne virus in the United States this summer.

Senate Democrats rejected the GOP funding measure on Tuesday, 52-48, arguing that it would rob Obamacare of funding, impose new restrictions on Planned Parenthood and provide some $800 million less than the Obama administration is seeking. They're also miffed that the measure, part of legislation to finance the Veterans Affairs Department, would allow the Confederate flag to fly at veterans cemeteries.

The stalemate carries real political risk: In 2014, Republicans blasted the Obama administration and Democrats' response to Ebola, contributing to a public perception in the midterm election of feckless Democratic rule. Republicans gained control of the Senate that year — but now find their playbook is being used against them.

Republicans "taught us with Ebola," said Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.). "A public health crisis? Take it seriously. I don't believe they've taken it seriously at all."

The attack ads this time write themselves: Faced with months of dire warnings from health experts, the Republicans who control Congress failed to provide money to stop the spread of Zika to the United States. Bracing for such a message, Republicans began the week spinning the expected defeat of the House-passed bill as politics as usual for Democrats, alleging that the minority party would rather attack Republicans over the issue than pass a funding bill.

Indeed, in the short term, Democrats are more open to criticism: After clamoring for new Zika funding for months, they are set to vote against a bill at funding levels they've already agreed to. They've offered myriad objections: That the bill is paid for irresponsibly, inordinately relaxes clean water regulations and was constructed with no Democratic input. On Tuesday morning, Planned Parenthood wrote all Senate offices opposing the bill, arguing that "a vote against this bill will be seen as a vote for women's health care."

"The first TV picture of an American woman bearing a child with a birth defect caused by this virus will be on [Democrats]," said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas). "I wouldn't want to be in their position."

Democrats are now calling for the GOP to reopen the Zika negotiations entirely, but Republicans say there will be no do-over: Once the bill fails on Tuesday, the Senate will not revisit Zika funding, Cornyn said. They say Democrats got what they wanted and won't take yes for the answer.

But given the history on legislative impasses, Democrats are betting that the majority party will be held responsible by voters.

"They have to be responsible. It falls on Republicans," said Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), a Senate leader and former top campaign strategist. "We're just supposed to say yes? That's not how we do things responsibly around here."

The stalemate comes in the midst of the summer mosquito season, when the Zika threat is strongest. So far, there has been no local transmission of the Zika virus in the continental United States. But federal health officials warn that it is coming, this summer or in the future. The virus has been scientifically proven to potentially cause microcephaly, a severe brain abnormality, when a woman is infected during pregnancy. The Centers for Disease Control lists eye problems, hearing loss and slow growth as other birth defects caused by the virus.

Health officials don't know exactly how strong the link is between Zika and microcephaly, but studies indicate up to a 13 percent chance that a woman infected with Zika can give birth to a baby with the severe birth defect. Already, there are 265 pregnant women in the continental United States with the virus; all of them got the virus while in other countries or through sex with a man who had it.

Given those dire statistics, the lack of congressional action is alarming, said Cindy Pellegrini, a lobbyist for March of Dimes, which advocates for maternal and fetal health. She said the GOP's bill was "doomed from the start."

"We have a hard time imagining an issue that could be more of an emergency than an infectious disease transmitted by mosquitoes that destroys babies' brains in utero," Pellegrini said. "The package looked like it was not designed to be successful and that was deeply troubling for us."

The impasse began in the House. Democrats held the floor for more than a day last week to advocate for more gun control legislation. Eager to end what he deemed a "publicity stunt," House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) moved to pass Zika legislation in the middle of the night last week and recess the House until after July 4, leaving Democrats who had withdrawn from the bicameral negotiations with a bill they say they could not support.

No Democrats signed the bicameral conference report on Zika funding and just six supported the House legislation. But the failure to complete the negotiations with Republicans is on Democrats, GOP leaders say. AshLee Strong, a spokeswoman for Ryan, said Democrats' opposition is "not only irresponsible but dangerous."

"It's really bad politics for them," said Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the GOP's No. 3 leader. "It's going to be hard to defend."

Still, it was difficult to find a single Democratic supporter on Monday, even among the most moderate members. That suggests the minority party is comfortable with the politics of blocking the Zika bill, particularly since the White House is threatening a veto, anyway. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) said he is "skeptical" of the funding apparatus and Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, who also runs the Democrats' campaign arm, said he probably could not support the legislation.

"I don't know why anyone would vote for it," Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said in a brief interview. "Look at what they gave us. How about the Confederate flag thing? Is that about the clincher."

The failed vote will have special political and practical resonance in Florida, the presidential battleground state and site of a competitive Senate race this fall, as well as home to hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans. As Puerto Ricans have fled the island for the sunnier economic outlook in Florida, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) went so far as to join Democrats pushing for $1.9 billion requested by Obama to fight the disease.

He'll vote for the compromise Tuesday — but did not hide his irritation with the impasse.

"I wanted it to happen two months ago. I'm not pleased," he said.

Zika Funding Stalls In The Senate Amid Partisan Rift

By Kelsey Snell And Mike Debonis

Washington Post, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a $1.1 billion Zika virus funding package drafted by congressional Republicans, citing politically motivated language aimed at Planned Parenthood and environmental regulations.

The partisan clash casts serious doubt on whether Congress will be able to heed increasingly dire warnings from public health officials and provide new funds to combat the virus before lawmakers leave Washington next month for an extended congressional recess.

Top Senate leaders appeared to be sharply at odds after the vote failed on a 52-to-48 vote, with 60 votes needed to advance the legislation. Both sides charged the other would be responsible if money isn't approved and the virus, which causes birth defects, begins to spread in the United States over the summer.

"This is the one shot," Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) told reporters. "There's not going to be another opportunity to deal with this in the near future."

"I don't remember anything as outrageous, as shameful as this piece of legislation," said Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) on the Senate floor a few minutes later.

Cornyn then retorted on the floor, standing next to a large photo of an infant with microcephaly, a developmental defect involving abnormally small heads linked to Zika.

"I'll tell you what shameful is," he said. "That's allowing more women of child-bearing age to contract the Zika virus so their babies can end up looking like this."

Cornyn called Democrats "sore losers" and accused them of betraying their previous calls for action, which date back to President Obama's February request for $1.9 billion: "I frankly do not understand how Senate Democrats, having taken this position previously, can come in here and engage in a partisan filibuster to stop funding for this impending public health crisis."

Not all Republicans were willing to abandon the talks completely. Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) told reporters that he spoke with Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) on Tuesday morning, leaving the door open for further talks.

"We'll see what happens," Blunt said. "I know we have to do something, and someone has to figure out how to do it."

Blunt and Murray co-sponsored a bipartisan funding package that passed the Senate in May. That measure provided the same $1.1 billion funding level without the added restrictions and cuts opposed by Democrats.

The package that failed Tuesday was negotiated between House and Senate Republicans after Democrats left bipartisan talks due to spending cuts included in the legislation and what they viewed as "poison pill" political provisions, according to Democratic aides.

The House passed the bill early Thursday morning without debate, as GOP leaders sought to short-circuit a Democratic floor protest over gun control.

Republicans' decision to try to advance a GOP-only package was a setback after weeks of optimism that Congress would be able to fund measures to combat the spread of Zika before leaving for an extended summer break next month.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said Tuesday the Republican bill was "filled with poison pills" and a "cynical maneuver" that stood no chance of being accepted by Democrats.

"What we want them to do is negotiate," he said. "We're willing to compromise. We already showed that in the previous bill that the Senate passed… But what they're doing is going to kill any chance of Zika [funding]."

Lawmakers in both parties could face blowback at home for failing to craft a consensus measure. Zika is linked to severe birth defects in babies of pregnant women who are infected with the virus. Three women on the U.S. mainland have given birth to infants with birth defects related to Zika, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is currently monitoring 265 women on the U.S. mainland and another 189 with Zika in Puerto Rico.

The House-passed measure would provide $1.1 billion to fight the mosquito-borne virus through Sept. 2017, including funds to help develop a vaccine. The spending would be offset by $750 million in savings, including $107 million in unused Ebola funds, $100 million in cuts to administrative funding for the Department of Health and Human Services and $534 million from unspent Obamacare money for health care exchanges in U.S. territories.

The package also loosens Environmental Protection Agency restrictions on pesticides and strikes a measure that would have banned display of the Confederate battle flag at cemeteries run by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On Monday, Reid called the bill “nothing more than a goodie bag for the fringes of the Republican party.” The White House has threatened to veto the legislation and Democrats argue the additions were politically motivated and intended to kill the entire funding package.

“It’s like we’re being dared to oppose this legislation,” Reid said. “We have no choice.”

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) charged Democrats on Monday with quibbling over minor provisions and standing in the way of spending that could help avert a public health crisis.

“There is no reason Democrats should reverse course now and block funding for Zika control in the midst of mosquito season,” McConnell said, noting the final legislation contains the same amount of funding as an earlier bipartisan Senate agreement. “There’s no reason they should put partisan politics above the health of pregnant women and babies.”

Reid (D-Nev.) shot back that GOP leaders were catering the extreme wing of their party by including language in the package that would put restrictions on how the funding could be used by Planned Parenthood and by offsetting the cost of the legislation through spending cuts to the Affordable Care Act and to Ebola readiness efforts.

Following the vote, neither McConnell nor Reid gave any public indication that they were ready to begin a new set of negotiations. Senate Democrats made a last-minute attempt to salvage the legislation Tuesday morning by sending a letter to McConnell and House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wisc.) requesting that they reopen negotiations.

“We stand ready to work cooperatively with you to address this national public health emergency,” they wrote.

Republican leaders have not formally responded, but any chance of new negotiations is slim. The House left town last week and will not return until after the July 4 holiday. Both chambers will be in for two weeks before heading out on a seven-week recess.

Efforts To Fight Zika Fail As Lawmakers Play Politics With Looming Health Crisis

By Katie Zezima

Washington Post, June 28, 2016

Congressional efforts to fight the Zika virus failed Tuesday, as lawmakers accused each other of playing politics with a looming public health crisis while doctors and medical experts warned of the risk of an outbreak on the U.S. mainland.

Senate Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion funding package to fight the mosquito-borne virus because of “poison pill” measures added by Republicans on other issues. The clash raised serious doubts about whether Congress will heed warnings and allocate funds to fight Zika before lawmakers leave for an extended recess next month.

Each side said the other would be responsible if the money isn’t approved and the virus spreads in the country this summer. The issue could also become a factor in the November elections, particularly in states such as Florida and Texas where the mosquitoes that transmit the disease flourish.

The inaction came amid dire warnings from medical experts about Zika, which can cause devastating birth defects in babies whose mothers are infected while pregnant. Public health experts said money is desperately needed to develop a vaccine, educate the public and learn more about the virus, which can be spread through mosquitoes and through sexual activity.

“This is the ultimate playing politics with the public’s health and it’s really shameful and just unfortunate,” said Irwin Redlener, a pediatrician and director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University.

The package that failed was negotiated between House and Senate Republicans after Democrats left bipartisan talks due to spending cuts included in the legislation and provisions to, among other things, block funding for Planned Parenthood and curb environmental regulations. President Obama originally asked for $1.9 billion to fight Zika in February.

“I don’t remember anything as outrageous, as shameful as this piece of legislation,” said Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.).

Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Tex.) responded by standing on the Senate floor next to a large photo of an infant with microcephaly, a developmental defect linked to Zika that causes unusually small heads and often incomplete brain development.

"I'll tell you what shameful is," he said. "That's allowing more women of child-bearing age to contract the Zika virus so their babies can end up looking like this."

While Democrats have pushed for new negotiations, Cornyn told reporters this was the only chance to pass a measure to fight Zika. "This is the one shot," Cornyn said. "There's not going to be another opportunity to deal with this in the near future."

Florida Sens. Marco Rubio (R), who is seeking reelection, and Bill Nelson (D) have both pushed for Zika funding, although Nelson voted against Tuesday's package because of the Republican provisions. In a statement, Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) blasted Congress and said the state allocated more than $26 million in funds last week for preparedness and prevention of the virus.

"It is time for Congress to stop playing politics with the health, safety and well-being of families in Florida and come together to address the serious threat of the Zika virus," Scott said in a statement.

Jason Kander, who is running against Missouri Republican Roy Blunt, said in a statement that "Washington dysfunction has stopped Congress from responding to a public health crisis."

Last month, Blunt helped orchestrate a bipartisan deal to fund Zika response efforts. But on Tuesday, he stood with other GOP leaders and urged Democrats to vote for the Republican deal instead.

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton called on Congress to pass a deal and said funding is needed. She retweeted a message from her senior policy advisor, Ann O'Leary, that read: "Senate Dems are right: Public Health emergencies are not the place to inject harmful partisan policies."

Clinton dispatched O'Leary and political director Amanda Renteria to meet with doctors and officials in Puerto Rico, and directed policy staff to focus on the issue.

The White House also blasted congressional Republicans.

"You would think that at some point the safety and well-being of pregnant women in the United States would be more important than politics to Republicans," said White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest. "But unfortunately it's not."

Presumptive Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has not talked about Zika and his campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

The virus has infected thousands of people in Puerto Rico and is lapping at the mainland's shores: women in 46 Latin American and Caribbean countries where the virus is circulating have been advised by the World Health Organization to consider delaying pregnancy.

While no localized transmission has yet occurred in the continental United States, three women on the U.S. mainland have given birth to infants with Zika-related birth defects. The Centers for Disease Control is monitoring 265 pregnant women infected with the virus on the U.S. mainland and 189 in Puerto Rico.

"This is a public health emergency," said Benard Dreyer, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

He said of Congress: "They just need to get their act together and act in a responsible way, in a bipartisan way, on an issue that is clearly extraordinarily impactful to children and their families, and do it immediately."

Public health officials warned that even if funding were to pass Congress within the next week, much of it wouldn't get to states and municipalities before September at the earliest. In most parts of the country, peak mosquito season is between June and early October.

"We're not happy with it, obviously, because the more resources we can put toward preventing this disease rather than reacting to it . . . the more protected the American public will be," said Joseph Conlon, technical adviser to the American Mosquito Control Association.

A coalition of nearly 40 groups — including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and Easter Seals — sent a letter this week urging Congress to pass a measure that would not place restrictions on Zika funding and that would allow the budget to be expanded in subsequent years.

"The fact that it is already almost July and Congress has failed to act would seem to reflect an appalling indifference to the lives of infants and their families," it read.

The letter cited an April summit where Centers for Disease Control Director Thomas Frieden said caring for a single child with birth defects can cost at least $10 million.

"There's a real aspect here of being penny wise and pound foolish," said Cynthia Pellegrini, senior vice president of public policy at the March of Dimes, which signed the letter.

"We can pay now and do prevention or we can pay later," she said.

Why Congress Is Probably Not Approving Any Zika Funding This Summer

By Amber Phillips

Washington Post, June 28, 2016

Summer is here and so is the threat of the Zika virus in the United States. But Congress will probably not do anything about it after a debate over $1.1 billion to fight it collapsed in the Senate on Tuesday thanks to — you guessed it — partisan bickering.

The Washington Post's Mike DeBonis reports that Senate Democrats blocked a funding package that had already passed the House of Representatives, saying the bill was filled with other political goodies for Republicans that Democrats simply couldn't support.

The end result will probably be that Congress leaves town for most of July and August without approving any funding that government health officials say they badly need to keep Americans safe from the Zika virus — and, by extension, Zika could become a campaign issue this November on both sides.

Here's what happened. First, a debate over money

In May, with summer approaching, we asked what was taking Congress so long to send a check to government agencies to start developing a Zika vaccine and launch prevention measures. The Obama administration wanted $1.9 billion in new funds, and I explained why they were most definitely not going to get it:

The reason is the same it always is with Congress: money. Specifically, different ideas between Republicans and Democrats about what's worth going further into debt for.

Republicans are hesitant to approve more than a billion taxpayer dollars to fight Zika. And they control both chambers of Congress, so any funding increase that's not offset by savings somewhere else in the budget is squarely on them

The House proposal for $620 million that doesn't extend any cash beyond this fall, when the fiscal year we're in comes to a close.

But lawmakers did find a compromise: They settled on $1.1 billion. The Senate passed a version last month, and House lawmakers passed their own version last week that was offset by some $750 million in savings – including cuts to the Affordable Care Act and yet-unused money for the now-passed Ebola scare. Depending who you're talking to, the additions to the House bill would end up derailing the entire thing. Sidetracked by other issues

As the funding package was passing the House of Representatives last week, Senate Democrats actually walked away from the negotiations.

As is often the case in Congress, this funding bill was attached to a larger, unrelated bill — this one funding veterans and the military. And as often the case in Congress, House leaders shaped the bill so that a majority would vote for it; in a conservative House, that meant making the bill more amenable to conservatives.

The end result was a proposal Democrats said was untenable. They accused Republicans of adding on a bunch of unrelated extras that Republicans knew would be red lines for the other side.

DeBonis reports Democrats weren't happy about the idea of voting for a bill that cut President Obama's signature health-care achievement. They also didn't like that the bill proposed loosening government regulations on pesticides.

And they definitely didn't like that the bill restricted $95 million of federal grants to provide services like birth control to women in Puerto Rico. Democrats — and the president of Planned Parenthood — called it a direct attack on the women's health-care organization that's been the target of conservative Republicans' ire for a year now:

The bill also dropped a provision to ban the Confederate flag at federal veterans' cemeteries — a ban that the House, including 84 Republicans, voted in favor of just a month earlier..

"It's like we're being dared to oppose this legislation," Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said on Monday. "We have no choice." A loss for Zika help, a win for partisanship

Senate Democrats tried to reopen negotiations at the last minute, but it didn't work. The bill came to the floor and Democrats voted no, with Reid calling it "outrageous," and "shameful."

It failed Tuesday 52-48. (Even though a majority voted for it, the Senate needed 60 votes to pass it — the bar for pretty much any controversial legislation these days.)

Republicans hit back that Democrats were the ones playing politics.

"This is ridiculous," House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) said in a statement.

"I'll tell you what shameful is," said Sen. John Cornyn (R-Tex.) after the vote, standing alongside a blown-up picture of a baby with a disease thought to be caused by Zika. "That's allowing more women of child-bearing age to contract the Zika virus so their babies can end up looking like this. That's shameful."

Cornyn also said this was probably the "last shot" to approve Zika funding this summer, and he's probably right: The House is already on a week-long break, and when members return after July 4, both chambers have nine days in session before they're out for seven weeks.

There's still a slim chance Congress will find a last-second compromise. Both sides are loath to go back home to constituents, especially in Southern states that are most at-risk, and try to explain this. The takes are already starting when it comes to which party will fare worse for this Zika fail.

Senate Democrats Block Zika Spending Bill Over Exclusion Of Planned Parenthood

By Siobhan Hughes And Stephanie Armour

Wall Street Journal, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

The Zika Democrats

Harry Reid blocks money to fight the virus as an election ploy.

Wall Street Journal, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Senate Democrats Block Zika Agreement Ahead Of Recess

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a deal providing funding for the fight against the Zika virus, virtually guaranteeing that Congress won't get legislation to President Obama's desk this month.

In a 52-48 vote, the Senate fell eight votes short of moving past a procedural hurdle against the House-Senate conference report on a military and veterans spending bill, which includes $1.1 billion to fund the Zika virus research.

Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) broke with his party and backed moving forward with the deal. GOP Sens. James Lankford (R-Okla.), Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) voted against the Zika deal. McConnell's "no" vote allows him to bring the measure back up for another vote.

The vote leaves the current fight over the Zika virus at a standstill with days left before the July 4th recess.

Democrats criticized the legislation for including "poison pills" that they said made it difficult for their party to support.

The legislation would take money now earmarked for the fight against the Ebola virus to use against Zika.

It also would restart a fight over Planned Parenthood with language that prevents funding from going to the group, which provides abortion services, and other family planning groups.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said the agreement is "the most irresponsible legislation I have ever seen in my 34 years in Congress."

"I don't know what planet my friend the Republican leader is living on," he added. "[The] conference report is nothing more than a goody bag for the fringes of the Republican Party."

Even if the legislation had made it to President Obama's desk, the White House said he would veto it.

McConnell slammed Democrats on Tuesday, saying their current position is "partisan politics."

"They might like to pretend this Zika control measure is woefully inadequate, but Senate Democrats are all on record supporting this level of funding," he said. "It's really puzzling to hear Democrats claim to be advocates for women's health measures when they are the ones trying to block the Zika legislation."

The House approved the legislation last week.

The next steps on the Zika legislation are unclear. Lawmakers in both parties pointed fingers ahead of Tuesday's vote on who is responsible for breaking the current stalemate on funding legislation.

Reid and other Democrats sent a letter to McConnell and Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) ahead of Tuesday's vote calling for a new round of negotiations.

"We are writing to urge your cooperation in quickly negotiating an agreement that rejects politicizing disaster response with extreme and unnecessary partisan priorities," the Senate's four top Democrats added in the letter.

But the House left Washington last week for the July 4th recess, and GOP leadership have given no indications they are willing to rethink the current agreement.

McConnell said lawmakers would vote again on the Zika deal once senators return from the July 4th recess.

"When we get back after we've had time to think about it all, we'll address this matter again and hopefully respond, as our constituents all across America are asking us to respond, to this pending health care crisis," he said after the vote.

The stalemate comes after a bipartisan Senate agreement — negotiated by Murray and Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) – began to crack open in late April as Democrats said they were frozen out of the talks.

The deal finally collapsed last week after GOP leaders in the House and Senate agreed to a $1.1 billion deal comprised mostly of healthcare dollars pulled from elsewhere in Obama's health department.

The U.S. has a total of 2,680 Zika cases, including 481 pregnant women, according to the most recent data from CDC.

McConnell Pledges Redo Vote On Zika After Break

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, June 28, 2016

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) warned lawmakers Tuesday they would vote again on a $1.1 billion package to fight the Zika virus after their July Fourth recess.

"I'd like to call on my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to think about this, to think about where they have left this issue for the American people," McConnell said from the Senate floor Tuesday. "So when we get back after we've had some time to think about it all, we'll address this matter again."

On Tuesday Senate Democrats blocked the Zika funding — attached to a larger military spending bill — from overcoming a procedural hurdle.

Arguing they weren't consulted on the current House-Senate deal, Democrats balked at how the agreement would offset its costs.

McConnell was one of three Republicans who voted against the deal during Tuesday's vote, allowing him to bring it up again.

GOP senators quickly blasted their colleagues for being unable to find a deal to fight the virus heading into the summer months.

Zika has been shown to cause severe birth defects when contracted by pregnant women, and health officials are expecting more cases in the U.S. as mosquito populations grow.

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), who announced last week that he would run for reelection, said "shame on Washington."

"I realize this was not a perfect Zika bill, but getting this plan approved now is absolutely better than nothing," he said.

But Democrats are giving no early indication the holiday recess will be enough to make them reconsider the current House-Senate conference deal on Zika funding.

"What we want them to do is negotiate. We're willing to compromise," Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said after Tuesday's vote. "What they're doing is going to kill any chance" of passing an anti-Zika measure.

Asked about next steps, Schumer said Republicans need "to get rid of this cynical sham bill and start negotiating with us."

Schumer, Minority Leader Harry Reid (Nev.), and Democratic Sens. Dick Durbin (Ill.) and Patty Murray (Wash.) have sent a letter to McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) asking for a new round of talks.

Blame Game Begins On Zika Funding

By Peter Sullivan

The Hill, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a funding bill to fight the Zika virus, infuriating Republicans and raising real doubts about whether Congress will approve an emergency response before the summer recess.

Both parties agree that the virus is a real and growing health crisis; each blames the other for the failure to act.

Republicans slammed Democrats for voting down the $1.1 billion bill, arguing the party is standing in the way of funding it has claimed for months to desperately want.

Democrats countered that the bill was not a serious effort at bipartisan compromise and was loaded with unacceptable riders, including limiting funding to Planned Parenthood and loosening Clean Water Act rules for pesticides. They also objected that the measure was paid for with cuts to Ebola-response funding and ObamaCare.

They called for a new round of negotiations to produce a bipartisan bill, but Republicans rejected that demand, saying that they would instead hold another vote on the same measure after the Fourth of July recess to give Democrats another chance.

At a press conference Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) repeatedly said no changes would be made to the bill to address Democratic concerns. He said that as a conference report, the product of negotiations between the House and Senate, no amendments could be made.

Asked if he is willing to reconsider the Planned Parenthood provision, given that it is the focus of the Democratic objections, McConnell said: "Well, it's an interesting discussion, but it's irrelevant. This is a conference report. It's not amendable. It's not amendable."

He rejected Democratic calls to go back to the drawing board and produce a new bill with Democratic input. "The negotiations have already occurred," he said.

McConnell called Democrats' actions "inexplicable and unacceptable."

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), the Senate's No. 2 Democrat, dismissed suggestions that Democrats might get the blame for the lack of Zika funding, saying that Republicans knew their bill was doomed to fail but had no choice but to appease hard-line conservatives in the House.

"It's all going to be on the Republican shoulder," he said. "It's obvious what they're doing."

The Senate previously reached a bipartisan Zika deal to provide $1.1 billion in funding that would not be paid for, but House Republicans insisted that the cost of the measure be fully offset.

Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), the top Senate Republican on health spending, acknowledged the problems bridging the gap with the House.

"The big obstacle here is clearly is that the House appropriately wanted to do everything possible to pay for this, and Democrats in the Senate don't," Blunt said.

"They'd like it not paid for at all," he added. "The House would like it all paid for, so to get a bill that the House would pass and the Senate would pass, some of it needs to be paid for. Democrats don't want to do that, and that becomes a needless obstacle to getting this money available."

Blunt, who has taken the lead in negotiating with Democratic Sen. Patty Murray (Wash.) on Zika funding in the past, took a softer line than McConnell. "We have to get a solution," he said.

Blunt spoke with Murray about Zika on the Senate floor Tuesday, an aide said, though it is unclear what, if anything, came of that conversation. In fact, Blunt pointed to McConnell's stance that negotiations would not be reopened.

"We have to get to a solution on this, and it has to be a solution that both the House and the Senate can pass, and you heard the leader explain what his view of the next step was," Blunt said.

Democrats say House Republicans and Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) will have to answer to voters if the Zika outbreak worsens.

"People need to look no further than Speaker Ryan's office if Zika develops into the problem that we're all concerned that it might be," said Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.).

Ryan, meanwhile, called it "ridiculous" that Senate Democrats would block the Zika funding bill after stressing the urgency of the crisis.

Health experts warn that transmission of Zika within the continental United States will begin this summer and that the unpredictable virus carries serious dangers for pregnant women, given that it can cause major birth defects and developmental problems in children.

The virus is generally mild and carries lower risks for people who are not pregnant. Its spread is expected to be contained to small clusters in the Southern United States, though experts emphasize that they cannot be certain and that Puerto Rico will be hit particularly hard.

Athletes are already dropping out of the Olympics in Brazil for fear of contracting Zika. There are already 2,680 cases of Zika in the U.S. states and territories and 481 cases in pregnant women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A range of health groups, including the March of Dimes and the American Academy of Pediatrics, wrote to congressional leaders on Tuesday urging them to reopen negotiations to find a bipartisan deal.

"If this does not take place, Congress will bear the full responsibility for Zika-related birth defects across the nation in the coming years," the letter states.

Zika Funding Up In The Air After Senate Blocks Moving Ahead

By Ryan McCrimmon

Congressional Quarterly, June 28, 2016

The Senate on Tuesday voted to block a final $1.1 billion Zika virus spending package, scrambling plans to provide much-needed resources for public health agencies to combat the mosquito-borne disease this summer.

The vote occurred just as the Florida Department of Public Health confirmed the first Zika-related case of microcephaly, a birth defect, in a child born in Florida. The mother, a citizen of Haiti, delivered the baby in Florida.

Senators voted 52-48, short of the 60-vote threshold needed to invoke cloture, stymieing progress on the conference report (HR 2577) to the Zika and Military Construction-VA appropriations package. All Democrats except Sen. Joe Donnelly of Indiana voted against cloture, objecting to the levels of spending and offsets in the package as well as policy provisions they deemed "poison pills."

Two Republican senators, James Lankford of Oklahoma and Mike Lee of Utah, voted with Democrats.

Following the vote, Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn, R-Texas, said he did not expect Republicans to reopen negotiations with Democrats on Zika funding.

"No," he said. "We're done."

However, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell entered a motion to reconsider the Zika vote and said lawmakers would take another crack at the conference report following the July Fourth recess.

"When we get back after we've had time to think about it all, we'll address this matter again and hopefully respond, as our constituents all across America are asking us to respond, to this pending health care crisis," McConnell, R-Ky., said.

Conference reports are not amendable, so the vote would be on the exact same materials considered Tuesday.

The House-passed measure also faced a presidential veto if it passed the Senate. Congress adjourns for a seven-week recess on July 15, so little time is left for additional negotiations.

The Obama administration on Tuesday said it would "welcome" renewed talks by lawmakers to find a compromise Zika funding bill. "Congress still has time to act before they leave for their summer recess," a White House official said shortly after Senate Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion House version.

But the official signaled that the White House is sticking to its stance that only a $1.9 billion bill that matches its initial request will get Obama's signature. The official urged lawmakers to pass "a fully funded Zika supplemental request – unlike the irresponsible, underfunded and purely partisan bill currently making its way through Congress."

Ahead of the vote, Republicans warned Democrats that this would be the last chance to approve the anti-Zika legislation ahead of the long summer recess.

"They might like to pretend this Zika control measure is woefully inadequate, but Senate Democrats are all on record supporting this level of funding and the CDC director has testified that this $1.1 billion funding level is sufficient," said McConnell, referring to the bipartisan Senate approval of a different $1.1 billion Zika package in May and testimony from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Remember, this legislation is the last chance we have to get a Zika-control funding [measure] to the president's desk for weeks."

"Democrats have apparently decided to engage in their favorite game of late — refusing to take yes for an answer," added John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 3 Senate Republican.

"Here's what I see today: I see Republicans ready to pass a Zika bill and send it to the president this minute, right now. And I see Democrats who are more interested in pacifying a Democrat special interest group than actually doing anything about Zika," Thune said.

Democrats were adamant that the GOP-written proposal was not an adequate response to the crisis, and they objected to policy language related to environmental protections and access to contraception. Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., called the conference report "nothing more than a goody bag for the fringes of the Republican Party."

"This conference report is the most irresponsible legislation I have ever seen in my 34 years in Congress," Reid said. "That says a lot. I can't think of anything that's close."

Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., added, "This bill is not only going to fail, it was designed to fail from the very beginning."

Reid, Schumer and other Democratic leaders sent a letter Tuesday morning to McConnell and House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, R-Wis., calling for another round of conference negotiations. Democrats claimed they were frozen out of the previous round, which led to the GOP-produced conference report the Senate rejected.

Several senators lamented the inability of Congress to perform one of its most basic duties to prevent against a public health threat.

"Why can't we grow up and get to the point where we don't have to play partisan politics?" lamented Florida Democrat Bill Nelson, whose state has recorded the highest number of cases of Zika so far.

A House Republican from Florida also expressed his outrage. "The Senate needs to put aside partisan politics and get the job done," said Rep. Vern Buchanan of Florida, one of the few Republicans in Congress to support the full $1.9 billion request from the Obama administration. "Summer's here, Zika's here, and that means people are at risk. It's beyond frustrating that Washington can't agree on funding to stop this public health crisis."

State of Play

At the end of May, appropriators and congressional leaders in the House and Senate were poised to confront discrepancies in the Zika virus response packages each chamber had recently passed.

The House passed a supplemental appropriations package (HR 5243) crafted by GOP appropriators that provided $622 million in new resources to confront the virus. The funds were set to expire on Sept. 30, the end of fiscal 2016, and the Zika spending was fully offset by rescinding previously appropriated dollars for the 2014 Ebola response and other administrative purposes.

The Senate's $1.1 billion emergency spending package, passed as an amendment to a broader appropriations package (HR 2577), provided fresh funding without any offsets or expiration date. The compromise measure was reached by top Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Democrats have said neither option is adequate. The administration has maintained it still needs the full $1.9 billion it requested earlier this year.

The administration's request would provide $828 million to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to enhance mosquito control programs. Officials say eradicating mosquitos is one immediate action that can be taken in the absence of a vaccine but emphasize how difficult it can be to control indoor mosquitoes.

Another challenge is diagnostic testing. Though there are ample tests to detect an active infection, tests to detect a prior infection are more limited. Public health officials say it takes more steps to diagnose a prior Zika infection because of the condition's similarities to other viruses. Obama's request includes money to boost the supply of diagnostics, as well as develop more accurate testing methods.

Prospects for a funding package also hinge on the politically sensitive issue of contraception policy. Congressional Democrats are pressing for additional contraception and family planning services for women in affected countries — a request that is meeting resistance from key Republicans. The House-passed legislation would subject Zika funding to the same restrictions included in the most recent omnibus package (PL 114-113), which includes a prohibition on the use of funds to pay for abortions.

The request contains $250 million to assist pregnant women in Puerto Rico, who are being encouraged to wear long sleeves, use bug repellent and stay in air conditioned or screened-in areas.

After Senate Stalls, White House Digs In On Zika Funding

Roll Call, June 28, 2016

Shortly after Senate Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion Zika funding measure from advancing, a White House official urged lawmakers to send President Barack Obama "a fully funded Zika supplemental request."

White House aides and Senate Democrats spent much of Tuesday accusing Republicans of "playing politics" with a virus that is spreading throughout the U.S. and its territories — especially Puerto Rico — and can cause major birth defects. GOP members returned the charge in kind.

The procedural vote continued a standoff over how much is needed to counter the virus and what those funds should be used for, and over provisions congressional Republicans inserted into the package limiting funding for birth control and allowing Confederate flag displays on certain days at Veterans Affairs facilities.

The White House continued to signal it is in no mood to compromise, making it difficult to see how lawmakers will strike an accord that satisfies enough of them and Obama.

Underscoring the bad blood, the White House official called the House-passed measure, which the Senate attempted to move toward a final vote, an "irresponsible, underfunded and purely partisan" effort.

That comment came via an email received minutes after Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn of Texas blasted Democrats on the floor in front of a large picture of a child with a misshapen head due to Zika-caused birth defects.

"It should go without saying that now on the front lines of this major public health concern, we need to respond at the federal level," Cornyn said. "That's why it's shocking and shameful to see so many Senate Democrats oppose this bipartisan effort to guard against the virus."

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest was unable to predict when existing Zika funding would run out. But he did say the proposed new spending is "insufficient."

"Republicans don't take this particularly seriously," Earnest said, adding that he is unsure what a pro-Confederate flag provision "has to do with Zika funding." Later, he said, given the disease's impact on pregnant women and unborn babies, Republican lawmakers seem to "have no shame."

Earlier Tuesday, a source who closely follows budget matters said "there is no Plan B" after the House-passed measure.

Asked if there would be additional Zika floor votes in the Senate, Cornyn told reporters, "We're done." But Maryland Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski , the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, said Tuesday of reviving negotiations: "We are looking at how to keep hope and help alive."

"Our backup plan already has been deployed," Earnest said, referring to the administration's initial Zika request. "Why should the president be in a position of twisting arms in Congress ?"

The Senate vote came around the time a Florida hospital reported its first case of a baby born with Zika-related birth defects. The child's mother apparently contracted the virus in Haiti before traveling to Florida.

White House Chides Congress For Failing To Fund Zika

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Is "Complete Protection" Against The Zika Virus In The Near Future? Scientists Make Progress On Two Vaccines

By Melissa Healy

Los Angeles Times, June 28, 2016

Just five months after the Zika virus was declared a global public health emergency, a scientific team's feverish efforts to create a vaccine against the viral threat have borne promising fruit: With a single shot of two different types of vaccine, experimental mice gained near-total immunity to Zika for at least two months.

Writing in the journal Nature on Tuesday, a U.S.-Brazilian team of scientists reported that two distinct vaccine candidates conferred powerful protection from Zika infection when they were delivered by intra-muscular injection to mice.

"We were very surprised--and quite impressed--that a single shot of either of these vaccines provided complete protection," said study co-author Dr. Dan H. Barouch, who after years of work on vaccines against the HIV virus pivoted in late January to work on Zika.

"Of course, we need to be cautious about extrapolating" from a study that has so far only shown success in mice, said Barouch, who directs vaccine research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

But several of the study's findings "certainly raise optimism that the development of a safe and effective vaccine against Zika virus for humans may be successful," he added.

The Zika vaccine effort is a race against time. Since its arrival in Brazil in 2013, the Zika virus has marched steadily north. Carried by the Aedis egyptii mosquito, the virus is already spreading vigorously in Puerto Rico and is expected to circulate inside the continental United States this summer.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has concluded that Zika infection in pregnant women is the cause of grievous brain abnormalities in the infants they bear. For those who are not pregnant, Zika infection is generally not dangerous. But it can, in rare cases, cause Guillain-Barre syndrome, a life-threatening condition in which the immune system attacks the peripheral nervous system, causing partial paralysis that is generally temporary.

The Boston-based team also discerned how the tested vaccines worked to provide protection—an important milestone in building a vaccine. Soon after their first shot of either vaccine, the immune systems of lab mice quickly mounted an army of circulating antibodies that recognized and attacked Zika virus as soon as it began replicating.

Such "antibody protection," produced by the immune system's B-cells, is not generally as enduring as the long-term immune memory produced by T-cells. But "it's good: it makes a vaccine that's nice and neat and simple," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergies and Infectious Diseases.

Fauci called the vaccine candidates' early success "an important step on the road to getting vaccines into humans." He confirmed that several other Zika vaccine candidates are being tested in animals, and that very early testing in humans could begin as early as late August.

The two vaccine candidates described in Nature represent two very different approaches to training the immune system's killing power on the Zika virus. One takes the whole of a single Zika virus, inactivates it by removing the machinery that makes it replicate, and shows it to the immune system. The other candidate shows the immune system only the distinctive outer sheath of the Zika virus in a bid to prompt attacks on anything enclosed in such an envelope.

Both approaches worked in several different strains of laboratory mice. But while "inactivated virus" vaccines are already in wide use, so-called "DNA vaccines," which show the immune system small pieces of a virus, have never been approved for use in humans in the United States.

"Some call them vaccines of the future," said Barouch of the DNA vaccines. Whether they lend themselves to large-scale production and distribution remains unclear, he said. "But they do have a variety of…technological advantages compared to the traditional approaches"—not least that vaccine designers can make rapid changes in the mix of puzzle-pieces shown to the immune system.

Given the uncertainties of developing vaccines for emergency use, "a diversity of approaches is always beneficial," he added.

In the experiments, the mice cleared Zika virus from their bloodstreams even when their army of antibodies was "relatively modest," said Barouch. With an additional booster shot or two, he said the experimental vaccines could prompt an immune response a hundred times as strong, if needed.

One other factor should prompt optimism that this early success might lead to a timely vaccine, said Barouch: Immunologists have had success in building vaccines against viruses in the same family as Zika, including those that cause yellow fever, dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis.

In a related development reported Tuesday in the journal Nature Communications, scientists concluded that macaque monkeys, which have become a mainstay of nonhuman primate research with the diminishing use of chimpanzees, respond to Zika virus infection in ways that strongly mimic humans' reactions.

That finding means scientists will have a highly reliable stand-in for testing the safety and effectiveness of vaccines and other new therapies against Zika before they are administered to humans. The ability to use macaques to approximate a human's response to the two vaccine candidates already tested, as well as to test other vaccines under development, will be key to speeding the development of such medications.

Still, many hurdles remain.

Among the challenges for a Zika vaccine, says Mayo Clinic immunologist Dr. Gregory Poland, is that it will likely be used to protect diverse populations with very different risks, and must be found acceptably safe in all.

A vaccine that is safe for younger women—who could be pregnant or become pregnant—may not be the same as a vaccine that protects older patients, who are at greatest risk of developing Guillain-Barre syndrome following infection, said Poland. As testing proceeds, he added, researchers and regulators will also have to find a vaccine safe for use in populations that span the spectrum of age, gender, ethnicity and medical history.

"Under the normal course of events, it could take years," said Poland. "There's just a whole lot of complexity here."

Zika Vaccines Prove 100 Percent Protective In Mice; Monkey Study Shows Promise

By Julie Steenhuysen

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Two New Zika Vaccines "Show Complete Protection" In Lab Tests

CNBC, June 28, 2016

A group of researchers said Tuesday that vaccines for Zika offered protection against both Puerto Rican and Brazilian strains of the virus in mice.

The scientists working on the research came from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and Harvard University.

"Our data demonstrate that a single dose of a DNA vaccine or a purified inactivated virus vaccine provides complete protection against the ZIKV-challenge in mice," said study author Dan H. Barouch, director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, in a news release. "Importantly, we showed that vaccine-induced antibodies provided protection, similar to existing vaccines for other flaviviruses."

One of the vaccines was a DNA vaccine — an injection made up of genetically engineered cells based on a Brazilian strain of the virus. The other was a purified inactivated virus vaccine — a vaccine containing a "dead" or inactive virus — from Puerto Rico.

Both vaccines created antibodies in the bodies of mice.

The scientists published the results of their research Tuesday in the peer-reviewed journal Nature.

In a news release, scientists from Walter Reed said they will be ready to begin testing the vaccine on humans by the end of the year.

Flaviviruses are a group of viruses, often carried by mosquitoes and other insects, which are closely related and produce some of the same symptoms. Along with Zika, they include West Nile virus, dengue, yellow fever and others.

The virus has been widespread in several countries, especially in Latin America. Recent reports have confirmed that nearly 2,000 people have been infected with the virus in Puerto Rico, and Brazilian officials have linked 1,400 cases of microcephaly, a condition that stops brain development, in children born to infected mothers.

Other teams have been racing to develop vaccines for the virus.

Earlier in June, another group of researchers from pharmaceutical company Inovio was reportedly the first team to win approval from the Food and Drug Administration to begin testing its vaccine on human subjects.

However, some public health experts have expressed skepticism that a vaccine for the drug will be able to pass regulatory tests in the next several years.

Peter Hotez of the Baylor College of Medicine told CNBC last week that he believes "we are not going to have a vaccine in time for this epidemic."

Correction: This version corrects the day the researchers announced their findings and the spelling of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Zika Vaccine Shows Promise In Mice

By Alexandra Sifferlin

TIME, June 28, 2016

A new vaccine for the Zika virus showed "complete protection" against the virus in recent testing in mice, adding support for testing the vaccine in humans in the future.

The vaccine is being developed by The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) and researchers at the University of São Paulo, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School. The researchers tested two versions of a Zika vaccine in mice and found that both were safe and spurred the creation of antibodies, which can offer protection against the virus.

Mouse studies are not directly translational to humans, but they are the first step in confirming that a vaccine has potential to work and not cause health complications. The new findings were published Tuesday in the journal Nature.

The race is on when it comes to developing a vaccine for the Zika virus, which is spreading in the Americas. Other research and pharmaceutical groups are developing their own versions. Earlier in June vaccine developers at Inovio Pharmaceuticals and GeneOne Life Science announced they had received the green light from U.S. health regulators to move forward on an early clinical trial for a Zika vaccine in humans. One of the greatest concerns for researchers is protecting pregnant women, since the virus is known to cause birth defects.

Two New Zika Vaccines Prove Successful In Mice

By Steve Sternberg

US News & World Report, June 28, 2016

The race to create a vaccine that can guard against Zika virus reached a new milestone Tuesday with reports that two experimental Zika vaccines have fully protected mice against infection and may prove similarly effective in humans.

"The protection was striking and very robust," says Dr. Dan Barouch, of Harvard University and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, a leader of the research team.

Developing an effective Zika vaccine is a global health priority. A vaccine would be the least expensive and most reliable way to protect women of child-bearing age and others against the mosquito-born Zika virus, declared a global emergency after researchers in Brazil linked it to an epidemic of birth defects in fetuses of women infected during pregnancy.

One vaccine was made using a technique on the frontier of vaccine research, using DNA snipped from a virus strain found in Brazil. The virus has been shown to cause birth defects in mice just as it does in humans. The other was made using a more traditional approach, by taking live virus from Puerto Rico, inactivating and purifying it.

Although the new vaccines were formulated in different ways, they appeared to be similarly protective, researchers report Tuesday in the journal Nature. "All of the vaccinated animals showed no virus in their bloodstream, [while] all unvaccinated animals had high levels of virus in their blood, after challenge by virus from Brazil and Puerto Rico." Barouch says,

Both vaccine prototypes are likely to begin Phase I safety tests in humans in a matter of months, says Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which supported the research and is developing its own DNA vaccine.

"The DNA [vaccine] is going into phase I in late August or early September," Fauci says. "The other one a little later."

Any experimental vaccine must first surmount another hurdle: It must be shown to prevent infection in non-human primates, which are more like humans and harder to protect than mice. Those trials are now under way, Fauci says. "The proof of the pudding is nonhuman primates."

Researchers didn't start from scratch. Vaccines have previously been developed to protect against West Nile, dengue and tick-borne encephalitis viruses, all of which are in the same flavivirus family as Zika. "Taken together, our findings provide substantial optimism that the development of a safe and effective Zika vaccine for humans will likely be feasible," the researchers write.

The experiments were carried out in stages. First, Barouch's team demonstrated that the DNA vaccine could provoke an immune response that directly targets the virus.

Next, the researchers injected additional groups of mice with single doses of either the DNA vaccine or the inactivated vaccine, which was developed by Dr.

Stephen J. Thomas and his colleagues at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Four weeks after the injection, mice given the DNA vaccine were exposed to live Zika virus. In an unvaccinated individual, mouse or human, the virus will multiply. In the vaccinated mice, however, no virus replication was detected. Mice given the inactivated vaccine were also challenged with live virus and remained infection-free, researchers say.

In addition, the mouse antibodies produced by vaccination were potent enough to fight off infection when they were transferred into unvaccinated mice. "That is essentially proof that the vaccine antibodies themselves were able to protect against infection," Barouch says.

DNA vaccines are appealing to researchers, because they would be easier to manufacture than vaccines made from whole virus, which must be cultivated in large quantities. Once researchers know the formula, they can churn out high volumes of vaccine. "DNA can be up scaled much much more easily and more quickly," Fauci says.

But scientists have not yet conquered many of the scientific challenges inherent in using DNA to create vaccines. No DNA vaccine is yet licensed for use in humans, Barouch says. "DNA vaccines have been explored experimentally for HIV, malaria and TB, vaccine targets that have not been [conquered] by traditional vaccines," Barouch says, "I wouldn't call that a failure of DNA vaccines. I still remain optimistic that they will have an important role to play in the future. That's why, in addition to exploring a next-generation vaccine, we also used a tried-and-true approach."

As many as a dozen other Zika vaccine candidates are in the works, experts say. The U.S. biotech firm Inovio announced in February that a prototype Zika vaccine produced a robust immune response in mice.

Fauci noted that the NIH's vaccine candidate, also made of DNA, is slated for its first human safety tests in late summer or early fall, in a trial involving 80 volunteers. That will take three months, likely ending in early 2017, he says. Next come the most critical trials, required to demonstrate that the vaccine is not only safe in humans but effective.

"The more effective a vaccine is, the quicker you can prove it," Fauci says, because fewer people in an at-risk population will become infected. Another determining factor, he says, is the rate of infection in a population. The higher the infection rate, the easier it is to determine whether a vaccine works.

"If you've got a high infection rate, you can get your answer pretty quickly," Fauci says. "If the infection rate begins to tone down, it can take longer."

So far, so good, Barouch says. "One shot and they're all protected."

Success In Mice Shows Zika Vaccine "Feasible"

By Dennis Thompson

HealthDay, June 28, 2016

Studies involving mice support the effectiveness of two vaccine candidates against the Zika virus, scientists say.

This "critical first step" is leading to trials in monkeys and humans, "and gives us early confidence that development of a protective Zika virus vaccine for humans is feasible," said researcher Col. Nelson Michael.

He is co-leader of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) in Silver Spring, Md., and one member of a team involved in the search for a vaccine against the mosquito-borne virus.

Zika infection during pregnancy can cause a devastating birth defect known as microcephaly, where an infant is born with an abnormally small head and brain. In Latin America, thousands of babies have already been born with microcephaly, and health officials are scrambling to help prevent cases in the United States as the summer mosquito season arrives.

At least 10 pregnant women in the Dallas area have been infected with Zika, Texas officials confirmed last week. All of the women contracted the mosquito-borne virus while traveling abroad.

A vaccine effective against Zika would be invaluable. Reporting June 28 in the journal Nature, researchers said one of the new shots was developed at Harvard Medical School in Boston and is partly based on a Zika strain isolated in Brazil.

The other vaccine, using a strain isolated in Puerto Rico, has been developed by Michael's team at WRAIR.

Both vaccines shielded mice against Zika infection with just a single shot required, the researchers said.

The two vaccines are similar to other shots already in use against flaviviruses, which include dengue fever, West Nile and others.

"We showed that vaccine-induced antibodies provided protection, similar to existing vaccines for other flaviviruses," said Dr. Dan Barouch. He directs the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

"The effectiveness of these vaccines ... provide substantial optimism for a clear path forward for the development of a safe and effective ZIKV vaccine for humans," Barouch said in a Beth Israel Deaconess news release.

Clinical trials in humans are scheduled to begin later in 2016, the scientists said.

In related news, federal funding the United States needs to help fight the Zika threat could be stalled, according to reports.

According to the Associated Press, President Barack Obama requested $1.9 billion for the effort four months ago, and last week a Republican-drafted measure offered $1.1 billion.

But the news agency said Senate Democrats blocked that $1.1 billion proposal Tuesday, arguing there were too many spending cuts and restrictions on which groups could provide health care and contraception to women in Zika-endemic Puerto Rico.

Further action may not occur until Congress returns from a seven-week hiatus that begins in July, the AP said.

The Zika threat to the United States is real, according to Dr. Tom Frieden, who directs the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Speaking earlier in June, he warned, "in coming months it's possible that thousands of pregnant women in Puerto Rico could become infected with Zika. This could lead to dozens or hundreds of infants being born with microcephaly in the coming year."

So far the CDC says there have been no local transmissions of Zika reported in the United States. However, the number of cases of infection among pregnant women keeps climbing.

As of June 16, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported there are 265 cases of pregnant women on the U.S. mainland who have been infected with Zika, which typically involves relatively mild symptoms in most adults. However, it can cause devastating birth defects in babies that include microcephaly.

In Latin America, thousands of babies have already been born with microcephaly. And researchers reported last Wednesday that fears of Zika-related birth defects may be driving up abortion rates in Latin American countries affected by the virus.

No nation has been more affected than Brazil. As a result of the Zika epidemic, almost 5,000 babies have been born with microcephaly there.

Zika is typically transmitted via the bite of the Aedes aegypti mosquito. But, transmission of the virus through sex is more common than previously thought, World Health Organization officials have said.

Women of child-bearing age who live in an active Zika region should protect themselves from mosquitoes by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, using mosquito repellent when outside, and staying indoors as much as possible, according to the CDC.

U.S. health officials have said they expect to see Zika infections in Gulf Coast states such as Florida, Louisiana and Texas as mosquito season ramps up.

More information

Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for more on the Zika virus.

This Q&A will tell you what you need to know about Zika.

To see the CDC list of sites where Zika virus is active and may pose a threat to pregnant women, click here.

SOURCES: June 28, 2016, news releases, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, and the U.S. Military HIV Research Program, Silver Spring, Md.; Associated Press; June 17, 2016, media briefing with Tom Frieden, M.D., MPH, director, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; June 17, 2016, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

First Baby With Zika-related Microcephaly Is Born In Florida

By Emily Cochrane

Miami Herald, June 28, 2016

A baby with Zika-related microcephaly was born in Florida, Florida Department of Health officials confirmed Tuesday.

The baby is the first child to be born in Florida with the defect, which causes abnormally small heads and incomplete brain development, as a result of the Zika virus. The mother, a Haiti citizen, had a travel-related case of Zika and came to Florida to deliver her baby, officials said. Previous cases, where mothers with travel-related cases of the virus gave birth to babies with microcephaly, were reported in Hawaii and New Jersey.

The announcement comes a day after the health department officials confirmed three new cases of the virus — one in Broward, one in Collier and one in Miami-Dade counties. As of now, all 213 Florida cases are travel-related. Of those cases, 40 involve pregnant women, regardless of whether they exhibit symptoms.

Babies with microcephaly often have a series of developmental problems, including intellectual disability, hearing loss and vision problems and problems with movement and balance. Researchers established a connection between the birth defect and the Zika virus, which is primarily transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito, earlier this year.

Following the announcement, Florida Gov. Rick Scott called on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to host a call with Florida medical professionals to discuss precautions for pregnant for new and expecting mothers.

"It is heartbreaking to learn that a baby has been born with Zika-related microcephaly in our state and my thought and prayers are with the mother and child," he said in a statement.

Last week, Scott announced he would use executive powers to spend up to $26.2 million in state money to fight the Zika virus. He had previously called for immediate federal action.

President Barack Obama asked Congress earlier this year for $1.9 billion to combat the spread of the virus; Congress has held up his request.

Department officials said they are working to connect the mother and her child with the department's Early Steps program, which establishes support for families with infants and toddlers who have developmental delays, or a condition that could result in a developmental delay.

First Baby Delivered In Florida With Zika-related Microcephaly

By Kathleen McGrory

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, June 28, 2016

Doctors have delivered the first baby in Florida with Zika-related microcephaly, state health officials said Tuesday.

The child's mother is a Haitian citizen who contracted the mosquito-borne virus while in her home country, the health department said. She came to Florida to give birth.

It was not clear where in the state the baby was born.

As of Monday, 223 people in Florida, including 40 pregnant women, have been diagnosed with Zika. All of the cases are travel related, meaning the person contracted the virus while traveling overseas or had sexual intercourse with someone who had recently traveled abroad.

Most people who contract the Zika virus don't know they have it. If a pregnant woman passes the virus to her developing fetus, however, it can cause the baby to be born with microcephaly, an irreversible condition marked by a small head and underdeveloped brain.

Tuesday's news prompted Republican Gov. Rick Scott to seek additional guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

"I have requested the CDC to immediately host a call with Florida health care professionals to discuss the neurological impacts of Zika and how this virus impacts new and expecting moms," he said in a statement. "The Olympics will begin in less than 40 days and millions of Americans will travel through our state to and from Brazil, a country where the Zika virus is rapidly spreading, and we must be prepared."

Scott also renewed his call for Congress to release additional funding for Zika prevention. Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a $1.1 billion Zika virus funding package because they contended it did not provide enough spending and includes politically motivated language aimed at Planned Parenthood and environmental regulations.

The funding package, which was passed by the House last week and attached to a larger bill providing funding for veterans and military construction programs, was negotiated by House and Senate Republicans in recent weeks after Democrats abandoned bipartisan talks due to the spending cuts included in the legislation and what they viewed as "poison pill" political provisions, according to Democratic aides.

"Now that a baby has been born in our state with adverse impacts from Zika, it is clear that every available resource is needed to prevent local transmissions in our state," Scott said.

Last week, the governor signed an executive order dedicating more than $26 million in state funding for mosquito control and abatement and other readiness measures.

Florida's First Zika-related Birth Defect Reported

By Frank Gluck

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, June 28, 2016

Florida public health officials have confirmed the state's first case of Zika-related microcephaly, a crippling birth defect, affecting an infant born to a woman infected in her home country of Haiti.

Gov. Rick Scott has called on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to work with Florida's medical community on the case and further discuss what precautions other new and expecting mothers should take.

"It is heartbreaking to learn that a baby has been born with Zika-related microcephaly in our state and my thoughts and prayers are with the mother and child," Scott said in a written statement Tuesday. "The Olympics will begin in less than 40 days and millions of Americans will travel through our state to and from Brazil, a country where the Zika virus is rapidly spreading, and we must be prepared."

Scott, who calls the Zika threat a "national emergency" has allocated more than $26 million in state funds to combat it. He has also supported the Obama administration's call for $1.9 billion in federal funds to fight the disease.

Congress has so far failed to reach a deal on Zika funding. This confirmed case in Florida is could sharpen criticism of the deadlock and put increasing pressure on lawmakers to reach a deal.

Florida's Department of Health did not immediately identify the county in which the baby had been born. Department spokeswoman Mara Gambineri also would not comment on the severity of the microcephaly affecting the baby.

But she said it is working to connect baby and mother with the state's Early Steps program, which helps infants and toddlers with developmental delays.

Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby is born with an abnormally small head and, as a result, an under-developed brain, according to the CDC.

Problems for such babies can last a lifetime and include: seizures; developmental delays, such as speech problems; intellectual disabilities; problems with movement and balance; feeding problems, such as a difficulty swallowing; hearing loss; and vision problems.

As of Tuesday morning, Florida had confirmed 183 cases of Zika infections. All involved people who were infected while outside the country, according to the Florida Department of Health. Five cases involved people living in Lee County. Another three live in Collier.

At least 40 people statewide contracted Zika while pregnant. State officials have not said where they live currently.

Florida Confirms Birth Defects After Mom Gets Zika Abroad

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) – Florida confirmed its first Zika-related case of microcephaly, in a child whose mother contracted the virus in Haiti, officials said Tuesday.

In a statement, Republican Gov. Rick Scott called the diagnosis "heartbreaking" and asked federal health experts to talk with Florida medical professionals about what precautions pregnant women should take.

The mother is a Haitian citizen who came to Florida to give birth, and the family would be connected with a state program for infants and toddlers with developmental delays, according to a statement from Florida's Department of Health.

The extent of Haiti's Zika outbreak is unknown due to the country's lack of routine data collection systems. Its health ministry hasn't reported any Zika-related microcephaly cases, though it has reported about a dozen suspected cases of the neurological disorder Guillain-Barre, including two definitively linked to Zika by lab tests.

The virus is primarily spread by tropical mosquitoes. It's linked to birth defects, including microcephaly, which causes babies to be born with abnormally small heads and incomplete brain development.

Federal health officials have tracked four babies born in the U.S. with Zika-linked birth defects. The defects were also seen in four other pregnancies that ended in miscarriage, stillbirths and terminations.

All the cases stem from travel primarily Latin America and the Caribbean. There's been no local spread of Zika in the U.S.

Frustrated by an ongoing federal stalemate over Zika funding, Scott used his emergency powers last week to authorize spending up to $26.2 million to try and stop its spread in Florida.

Senate Democrats, including Bill Nelson of Florida, on Tuesday blocked a GOP proposal to provide $1.1 billion to fight the Zika virus, faulting Republicans for including restrictions on Planned Parenthood money and changes to policies on pesticide spraying. Nelson said that bill was an effort to "further extremist political agendas."

Republican Florida Rep. Vern Buchanan said in a statement that Senate Democrats were putting "politics ahead of public health."

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First Baby With Zika-related Birth Defect Microcephaly Born In Florida

By Colleen Jenkins

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Gov. Rick Scott To Congress On Zika: "Do Your Part"

By Ryan Benk

WJCT-FM Jacksonville (FL), June 28, 2016

Florida Governor Rick Scott stopped in Jacksonville Tuesday to warn residents about the Zika virus epidemic and meet with local officials.

Scott also took the opportunity to slam congressional leaders for failing to pass a funding bill to combat the virus.

In West Palm Beach earlier in the day, Scott said it was "heartbreaking" to learn Florida has its first confirmed case of Zika-related microcephaly — the condition causing a newborn's head to not fully form.

In Jacksonville, Scott praised local officials for following his administration's lead and "stepping up" their response where the federal government failed.

He said he was disappointed to learn a billion-dollar Zika funding bill was shot down in the U.S. Senate.

"So the federal government needs to show up and do their part. Congress and the White House need to come together and provide the funding to make sure we don't see the spread of Zika," he said.

Senate Democrats say they would've backed the legislation but last-minute amendment cutting funding for Planned Parenthood made it a poison pill.

As of Tuesday afternoon, there have been 230 confirmed cases of Zika in more than 20 Florida counties.

Factbox: Why The Zika Virus Is Causing Alarm

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

How An Electric Shock Could One Day Protect You From Zika

By Michaeleen Doucleff

NPR, June 28, 2016

This summer, it's not just athletes that are looking to set world records. Scientists are also trying to break a record — for how quickly they can make a vaccine for a new virus.

It's for Zika. And one team is leading the pack.

The biotech company Inovio just got the first approval from the Food and Drug Administration to test an experimental vaccine in people. They've already shown the virus protects monkeys from Zika, says the company's president, Joseph Kim. And a small study begins in people in a few weeks.

"We'll be testing 40 people at three locations on the East Coast," he says. From that study, they'll be able to see if the vaccine is safe. If so, they'll start a larger a trial in South America or the Caribbean by the end of the year, Kim says.

In many ways, Inovio has done what seemed impossible a few years ago: They've created a promising vaccine in just a few months. And they're not the only ones to do it.

Today researchers at Harvard Medical School report in the journal Nature two experimental vaccines that completely protect mice from Zika.

"The protection was shocking," says Dr. Dan Barouch, who led the study. Usually the Zika virus replicates to high levels in these mice, he says. But when they gave the animals the vaccines, they couldn't detect any virus.

One reason scientists have created these experimental vaccines so quickly is they're using a relatively new technology. It's called DNA vaccines.

"It is really the vaccine trend of the future," says Dr. Anthony Fauci, who leads the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases.

Traditional vaccines — like for the flu or measles — contain whole viruses. They're crippled or inactivated. But to make the shots, you have to grow up batches of live virus. That can be dangerous and usually requires special permits.

By comparison, a DNA vaccine contains just a tiny piece of a virus's genetic code. It's harmless and easy to work with.

"So it's a simpler, more efficient and ultimately a safer approach," Fauci says.

So far, no DNA vaccines have made it through clinical trials and been approved by the FDA. But in recent years, the vaccines have improved quite a bit, both Kim and Fauci say.

In particular, researchers had to develop a new way of delivering the vaccine. For these vaccines to work, they have to get inside cells — which is much harder for a piece of DNA than a whole virus.

In one delivery system, Fauci says, there's a device that that actually shoots the DNA vaccine in through the skin without necessarily using a needle. "It's kind of like a jet stream that puts the virus the vaccine right through the skin into the tissue," he says.

Inovio has made another system, Kim says. It actually gives the person a low voltage electrical shock to coax the vaccine into cells. “That happens very quickly, like in millisecond or a hundredth of a second,” he says, “so the pain level is similar to that of a regular needle.”

Researchers at NIH are also working on a DNA vaccine for Zika, Fauci says. They hope to begin clinical trails in a few months.

That means there are at least four Zika vaccines are showing promise. And with a little luck, one of these could make it through approval sometime in early 2018.

“Nobody Is Immune”: Bracing For Zika’s First Summer In The US

NPR, June 28, 2016

The mosquito-borne Zika epidemic is headed for its first summer in the United States. New York Times reporter Donald G. McNeil Jr. tells Fresh Air’s Terry Gross that if the virus is ever going to hit hard in the U.S., 2016 will be the year.

“No one in the population has had the disease before, so nobody is immune to it, nobody has antibodies to it,” McNeil says. “After this year, a fair number of people will be immune, and each year immunity will grow.”

In his new book, Zika: The Emerging Epidemic, McNeil explores the origins of the Zika virus, as well as how it spreads and the best means of protecting ourselves from it.

When it comes to the virus’ transmission in the continental U.S., McNeil notes the Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, which carry the Zika virus, are mostly concentrated in Florida and the Gulf Coast. But, he adds, the fact that the virus can be transmitted sexually means that Zika has the potential to spread more broadly.

“Scientists are just gobsmacked” by the virus’ sexual transmission, McNeil says. “Viruses mutate like crazy, but one thing they don’t normally change is how they’re transmitted. ... You don’t expect a mosquito-borne virus to become something that can be transmitted through an act of unprotected sex. But this one is.”

Interview Highlights

On where the Aedes aegypti (Zika-carrying) mosquitoes are now, in relation to the U.S.

They’re all over Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa. The mosquitoes that can transmit Zika are the Aedes aegypti mosquito, the yellow fever mosquito, is strong or numerous all over Florida and the Gulf Coast, and there have been previous small outbreaks of dengue virus and chikungunya virus in Key West and Marin County, Florida, and Texas and in a few places like that.

The mosquitoes in very hot, wet summers can range as far as New York City and a touch north. It’s not like they’re very numerous up here and it’s not like they’re here every month, and it’s not even like they’re here every summer. But they have been found up this far north, so the potential for transmission is there, although it’s low outside of the tropical Southeast.

On if mosquitoes can fly long distances

There is no mosquito that typically flies far distances. They’re really inefficient fliers, and one of the best ways to keep mosquitoes off you if you’re having a barbecue is to keep a fan blowing on everybody, because most mosquitoes are lucky if they make it a mile in their lives. I mean, once in a while they fly onto a jet and they make it from Africa to Paris, and that’s why you have occasional cases of airport malaria in Paris, but most of the time mosquitoes only get a few blocks.

On the World Health Organization’s recommendation to not cancel the Olympics

The World Health Organization is not paying attention to the polluted bays, and not paying attention to the crime rate or anything like that, they’re paying attention only to Zika. And their decision — it’s only a recommendation on their part — but what they’re saying is they don’t think that [the threat of] Zika is so great that anybody ought to avoid going to the Olympics, or that the Olympics ought to be canceled, unless you’re a pregnant woman, in which case pregnant women should avoid that, or unless you’re somebody who is having sex with a pregnant woman or a woman who wants to get pregnant. ...

The basis for this is that August is winter in Rio and even though winter in Rio means temperatures of 70 to 80 degrees, it is the low mosquito season. If you look at the transmission of dengue or chikungunya in Rio, you see that it’s roughly 5 percent of what it is at its height in January and February and March. So they figure the risk is fairly low, and the Brazilians have convinced them that they’re going to do everything they can to empty standing water. ... I think fogging is mostly a semi-useless exercise, but they’re going to do what they can. The recommendation is that it’s OK to go unless you’re pregnant or having sex with somebody pregnant.

On how Zika is mostly a mild disease

Zika is a mild disease in 99.9 percent of cases, so it’s not as bad as dengue or chikungunya for example. It’s not nearly as bad as malaria. It’s one that if you’re an otherwise healthy person, you shouldn’t worry about. There's about 1 in 4,000 to 5,000 chance that somebody will get Guillain-Barre syndrome.

On seeing Zika cases pop up in the U.S. from being sexually transmitted

We don't have to wait for the Olympics for that to happen, it's happening right now. It happened in Texas in January. The virus can be transmitted sexually. That's a game-changer.

It's not clear how often it happens, but it happens often enough so that it's the second most common form of transmission. Right now, in New York City, despite all those subway posters saying "watch out for mosquitoes," frankly, those subway posters ought to have good-looking guys on them, because good-looking guys who have just come back from Puerto Rico or Brazil or the Virgin Islands or any place else are a bigger risk factor for Zika in New York City than mosquitoes are right now. There are no aedes aegypti mosquitoes here, but there are good looking Puerto Rican guys who might, in remote chances, be carrying the virus.

On how Zika can be sexually transmitted

We know it can be transmitted through vaginal sex. We also know it can be transmitted through anal sex. ... There is some suspicion that it can be transmitted through oral sex, because there's one case of a couple in France and it looks like she was infected through oral sex, so that may be a possibility too. So basically any sex involving mucus membranes is dangerous. ...

It's only transmitted from men to women, or from men to other men. There is no known known instance of a woman transmitting the disease to a man or a woman. The assumption is that the virus gets into either the prostate or the testes and sets up an infection there, and it can persist for a long time. We learned this with Ebola, that once a virus breaks into the immunologically privileged parts of the body, which are separate from the rest of the body and have their own sort of fluids — the eyes are immunologically privileged and the testes are immunologically privileged — once a virus gets in there, it's hard for it to break in, but once it gets in, it's hard for the body to get rid of it, because antibodies and white blood cells can't get in there to kill it.

On microcephaly, a birth defect caused by the Zika virus

It means a tiny head and generally a very underdeveloped brain. The babies have tiny, smooth brains and there are varying degrees of microcephaly. In the most severe, the baby dies or the baby is born unable to swallow, may have repeated seizures, and may die from those seizures and may never learn to walk, never learn to talk, never learn to control his or her bowels.

There's a whole range of ills that come out of it, and also along with that comes, since it's a virus that attacks the growing brain, things like the nerves that connect the eyes to the brain or the ears to the brain are often damaged along the way, so the baby will end up blind or deaf, but you may not know that when the baby is born, the eyes will look normal, but you suddenly realize they're not following objects or they're not hearing noises.

On the development of a Zika vaccine

It'll probably two, three, four years until there's a vaccine. Most scientists who know vaccines say this is a disease that will be relatively easy to make a vaccine for because we have one for yellow fever, we have one for Japanese encephalitis, there's a new one for dengue. These are all related viruses. You could literally take the spines of those vaccine viruses and snip out the genes that code for the outside of the yellow fever virus and attach with DNA technology, the genes for the outside of the Zika virus, and make a pretty good vaccine. Some of those vaccines have already been made, but now the testing process begins, and testing takes pretty close to two years at the minimum.

On the Roman Catholic Church's position on contraception because of Zika

The Church isn't speaking with one voice entirely on this issue. ... We have to draw a distinction between abortion and contraception here. No Catholic bishop and the Pope ... are [ever] going to come out in favor of abortion, and their argument would be it's better to suffer from raising a child with severe handicaps than it is to take an innocent life.

On the other hand, there's been a fair amount of disparate statements within the Church about contraception, in this case. The archbishop of Puerto Rico quickly spoke out against contraception when the health secretary of Puerto Rico suggested that women might want to delay pregnancy and say women should practice self-discipline. ...

But the Pope, in a conversation with reporters ... was asked a question about Zika and said that under the doctrine of the lesser of two evils, it might be possible that contraception could be acceptable in a case like this, because it would prevent a great evil, like deformity and suffering of a child. He drew the parallel to Pope Paul VI allowing the use of contraceptives by Belgian nuns in the Belgian Congo, because so many of them were being raped during the liberation struggle of the 1960s. ... It was kind of shocking, but it opened the door to the possibility that contraception might be OK in what would be considered an extreme case like this.

Lethal Buzzers: America's Six Most Dangerous Mosquitoes

By Emily Rueb

New York Times, June 28, 2016

With the spread of the Zika virus, the threat posed by the tiny mosquito has been magnified into shark-sized proportions.

But among the more than 3,000 species of the insect worldwide, only two in the Americas are actually known carriers of the virus: the yellow fever mosquito (Aedes aegypti) and the Asian tiger mosquito (Aedes albopictus).

The potential range of the two species in the United States helps explain where Zika could be a threat. The yellow fever mosquito, for instance, prefers the hot and humid climate in Florida and the southeastern part of the country. But it has colonized states as far west as California and Hawaii, and has the potential to live as far north as Connecticut in warmer weather, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Asian tiger mosquito, meanwhile, also favors tropical and subtropical locales but can withstand cooler temperatures, so it can range farther. In summertime, the insect can sometimes even be found in northern states like Maine and Minnesota.

Maps showing where the species might survive, notably, exempt the Northwest, the Mountain West and northern parts of the Midwest.

But Zika is not the only disease that mosquitoes can carry. Other threats include West Nile virus, dengue fever and various types of encephalitis.

In all, there are about 174 species of mosquitoes in the United States, according to Joseph M. Conlon, a retired Navy entomologist who is a technical adviser to the nonprofit American Mosquito Control Association. Texas has the most species with about 85, and West Virginia has the least, with roughly 24. New York City alone has more than 50 species.

A vast majority of these species in the United States, Mr. Conlon said, actually do not transmit any disease.

Whether or not they do depends, in part, on their physiology. Most viruses (and other microorganisms) are simply digested in the mosquito gut along with the blood. But other viruses have evolved to penetrate the mosquito's body cavity and migrate to the salivary glands, from which they are injected with salivary fluid when the mosquito feeds. Those are the diseases that mosquitoes can transmit. Certain bacteria, like Wolbachia, have also been shown to interfere with transmission. Other factors that affect their disease-spreading potential include feeding habits, where they lay eggs and the density of the infected population compared with the human population.

And only female mosquitoes bite.

Here are six of the most common disease-spreading offenders endemic to the United States.

An intensely black mosquito, distinguishable by its pointed abdomen and two white stripes in the shape of a lyre on its back (the dorsal thorax), and white bands on its legs.

They primarily bite humans, rather than other animals, and they like to feed indoors. The combination makes them particularly dangerous when it comes to spreading disease.

They're also fidgety. They'll eat several partial meals on multiple victims, called sip-feeding. It is one way they pass pathogens.

Females draw blood to nourish their eggs. They prefer to lay them in clean water, including birdbaths, clogged gutters, pet bowls, bottle caps and even shower drains. The eggs stick to the sides of containers and can survive drying out.

Most cases of Zika, which can cause debilitating birth defects including microcephaly, have been transmitted through this aggressive insect. It can also carry the viruses that cause dengue fever, chikungunya and yellow fever.

The species rarely flies more than a block in its lifetime. It is mostly found in the South and the Southwest. But it has been found in New Jersey, southern Connecticut and New York City, though not necessarily in large populations.

Experts theorize that the areas at greatest risk for a Zika outbreak are poor urban areas along the Gulf Coast. But the C.D.C. is focusing its mosquito control efforts more broadly in areas of Texas, Florida, Hawaii, Arizona and Louisiana, California and Los Angeles County, which have high population densities and a high number of travelers coming in from areas with Zika, two factors that increase the likelihood of local transmission.

While no one has yet contracted the Zika virus from a mosquito in the continental United States, experts expect it to happen this summer.

The insect is usually larger and more intensely black than aedes aegypti, but with the same pointed abdomen. It has striking white stripes, including one white stripe down the middle of its back.

They have a nasty habit of feeding on the lower extremities, so they can be difficult to spot. And their bites are barely perceptible.

They are most likely to come out during the day. And they feed on pets and wild animals as well as humans.

"They're ambush predators," said Mr. Conlon. "Whenever you invade their territory, you're on the menu."

They lay eggs in potted plants, buckets, tires, tin cans, or wherever there's a small pool of standing water.

The Asian tiger mosquito is known for spreading dengue and chikungunya viruses. It has also tested positive for Zika, West Nile, Eastern equine encephalitis and Japanese encephalitis. But it is not clear how efficiently it transmits the Zika virus.

The species first hitchhiked to the southern United States in the 1980s, probably as stowaways in shipments of used tires. And since then, it has colonized the entire Eastern Seaboard up to Maine. In all, it has been sighted in about 30 states, including Hawaii.

A nondescript brownish insect, with a rounded abdomen.

This is usually the one you'll hear buzzing in your ear at night. It will overwinter in your attic if it can.

This species feeds on humans, other mammals and many types of birds, which are the main carriers of West Nile virus. The mosquitoes typically lay their eggs in dirty water, in ditches and shallow ruts.

Dozens of species have been known to carry West Nile, but the Culex pipiens is the primary culprit.

Most healthy people don't even know they have been infected. But West Nile can cause flulike symptoms and, in rare cases, permanent neurological damage or death. The virus first arrived in New York City in 1999 and spread slowly west. Three years later, the United States experienced one of the largest outbreaks of a mosquito-borne virus ever recorded. The virus is now endemic in the lower 48 states and has killed more than 1,700 people. The greatest numbers of incidents per capita are in North and South Dakota and Colorado, said Mr. Conlon.

The species is found in urban areas across the country.

Distinguishable by its rounded abdomen and light-colored band around its proboscis.

They breed in "enormous numbers," said Mr. Conlon, typically in agricultural runoff and in ditches.

In western states, this species is the primary carrier in rural areas for West Nile virus. They have also been associated with Western equine encephalitis (W.E.E.), St. Louis encephalitis (S.L.E.) and California encephalitis.

The species is abundant in California, Utah and the western half of North America.

The dark brown insects are recognizable by long palpi, tasting organs, which are almost the same length as its proboscis, or mouthparts. It rests on surfaces diagonally, with its head down and abdomen jutting into the air.

Females feed on humans and other mammals, usually in the evening. They prefer to lay eggs in freshwater ponds, streams and lakes.

Only the Anopheles genus carries malaria. In Africa, Anopheles gambiae is the primary offender. In the eastern United States, it is the Anopheles quadrimaculatus.

Although malaria was eradicated decades ago in the United States, about 1,500 cases are still reported a year, primarily on the East Coast, from travelers who were infected outside the country. Last year, 438,000 people died worldwide from malaria, mostly in Africa and Southeast Asia, according to the World Health Organization.

The common malaria mosquito is found in large numbers in the southeastern states, but it inhabits a wide swath of the east, from Mexico to southern Canada.

These straw-color insects are noted for the way their abdomens lift into the air when they sit. Their wings are dotted with dark spots. The female's clear belly will turn red and swell when full of blood.

Females usually come out at dusk, and fly farther than other species. They'll travel from rural areas into homes or barnyards to feed. They prefer to lay eggs in leafy, sunlit pools and drains, rice fields and ponds.

They were once the primary carriers of malaria in agricultural areas on the West Coast, especially California. While malaria is gone, health officials worry that local mosquitoes could pick it up again from an infected human and trigger anoutbreak.

In New York City, low-flying helicopters have sprayed larvicide over nonresidential areas of Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx to stop the West Nile virus. But the tactic is not considered particularly effective against the yellow fever mosquito, the primary carrier of Zika, because it breeds in gardens and homes.

There have not been any instances of mosquitoes in New York City transmitting the Zika virus in the area, according to the city's Health Department. But

West Nile virus was detected in the northern house mosquito in Staten Island this month.

Health officials offer some advice: Make sure gutters or any containers that could collect water are emptied or turned upside down. Check for holes or tears in window screens, too.

Mr. Conlon recommends using repellents registered with the Environmental Protection Agency, ones that contain DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol.

"Don't listen to your Aunt Ethel who puts toad pee on her arm," he said.

Wristbands and ultrasonic devices are worthless against mosquitoes, too, he said. And despite all of the testimonials on the internet for repellents made of natural, organic or essential oils, he said the E.P.A. has not deemed them effective.

"It's an important consideration," Mr. Conlon said. "It could be a matter of life and death."

Cuba Reports No Zika Transmission Since March; Dengue All But Eliminated

By Marc Frank

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

First Day Of FEMA Training Briefs Participants On Emergency Plans, Procedures

By Elizabeth Meyer

Hawk Eye (Burlington, Iowa), June 28, 2016

EMMITSBURG, Md. — Much like the uncertainty and anxiety that consumes people during an emergency, the Integrated Emergency Management Course is designed to test a community's ability to respond effectively when faced with a large-scale disaster.

"Everybody's got a plan until they get punched in the mouth," said Joe Goldsberry, an Integrated Emergency Management training specialist.

Goldsberry's words early Monday morning when Des Moines County began day one of the 4-day training course, foreshadowed the week ahead for business leaders, public officials and safety officers participating in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's training program.

Seventy-seven participants arrived on the Emergency Management Institute's campus Sunday afternoon with little knowledge of what the next few days would bring.

The college campus-turned-federal institute was founded in 1809 as an all girls Catholic school and has been used by FEMA since 1981 to educate civilians through an emergency management curriculum, with over 500 courses available.

After check-in at the front desk and settling into their individual rooms, many participants flocked to the campus Command Post Pub to socialize and unwind after a long day of travel.

But by 8 a.m. Monday morning, everyone was settled into a classroom and ready to learn. Much like days of their youth spent taking notes and listening to an instructor, the first day in Emmitsburg comprised mostly of reviewing course objectives, learning about the Des Moines County Emergency Management Agency and hearing from members of the group about the role various agencies in the county would play in responding to an emergency.

"Every disaster is local," Goldsberry emphasized throughout the day.

In the event of an emergency, communities must be prepared to fend for themselves before outside help from state and federal agencies arrives. With that mentality in mind, Goldsberry stressed the importance of the "whole community" approach to disaster preparedness and relief. One of the benefits of the course is the ability to bring together a wide variety of people from different sectors of the community to better understand how they can work together when disaster strikes and foster working relationships so the line of communication is established well before an emergency occurs.

The Mississippi River flood of 2008 was referenced throughout the day as an example of a large-scale disaster that required local, state and federal agencies to respond. Des Moines County emergency management coordinator Gina Hardin said 2008 was the only time in the last 20 years the county officially activated its Emergency Operating Center (EOC), even though a federal state of emergency has been declared 12 times in the county over that same period. Located in the conference room of the Des Moines County Sheriff's Office in Burlington, Hardin said the EOC is activated only when multiple agencies need to coordinate face-to-face continuously and for an extended period of time during an emergency. It is the job of an EOC to visualize the big picture response to a disaster and prioritize the community's needs accordingly.

In the afternoon, participants were broken up into four groups based on the role their agency would play during an emergency: EOC management and support, public information officials, emergency support functions and policy makers.

As the groups analyzed Des Moines County's comprehensive emergency management plan, though most aspects of the plan were agreed upon and self-explanatory, discussion arose about a community's expectations for long-term recovery in the wake of mass devastation. Is it reasonable to expect a city will be able to fully restore its facilities and services to pre-disaster conditions? Lack of clarity on that point was discussed and tabled for officials to work toward clarifying during the week.

Looking forward to the rest of the week, Greater Burlington Partnership CEO Jason Hutcheson said he was impressed by the wide cross-section of community members brought together for the training.

"I didn't completely know what to expect, and certainly emergency response is not my area of expertise," Hutcheson said. "But I really was impressed with how well most of the people here know each other and have worked with each other already, so that shows good cooperation between community groups. And I think it really speaks to the importance of having so many people out here because it really does take a whole community to respond to a major disaster."

Two men with a wealth of emergency response experience pointed out the responsibility course participants have to their communities when attending training like this, so they can bring what they learned back to their agencies and apply it effectively.

"I think, overall, with the size of the group that you have out here – the diversity of the group – the take back is really going to be something that's going to be advantageous for the county for any future, either plan development or any disasters that might happen," said West Burlington Fire Department chief Shaun Ryan. "I just think the ability to put this many different walks of life, entities into one room – getting the same message – it's going to be a great thing. And the fact that we were able to include private and public sectors ... that helps a lot."

Jesse Logan, assistant police chief in West Burlington, noted the ability of various agencies within Des Moines County to work well together compared with other communities he has observed.

"Going to different conferences throughout the state, you can tell, you just talk to other agencies where there's no cooperation between the city or county organizations," Logan said.

"Unlike Des Moines County where everybody works together," Ryan added. "It's been getting better and better every year."

Mediapolis city councilman Jimmie Spence said the first day was "very informative" and a good introduction to the next three days. The community-wide approach to emergency management was an aspect of the training Spence was glad to see emphasized.

"It takes everybody in a community to take care of these problems, you know. You can't just sit down and say, 'Huh, the city will take care of me.' The citizens have to contribute."

Hardin noted the county's recently launched emergency messaging system – Des Moines County/Alert Iowa! – as a way for residents to easily stay involved and informed in the event of an emergency or severe weather. By signing up for the free service, an alert will be sent to the phone number or email address provided to Des Moines County Emergency Management. County residents can sign up for the alerts by visiting the Emergency Management page on the Des Moines County website, dmcounty.com.

Agencies Conducting Emergency Simulation At Prairie Island Nuclear Plant

Red Wing (MN) Republican Eagle, June 28, 2016

Residents near the Prairie Island nuclear plant may notice extra activity Tuesday June 28 in response to an emergency simulation. The exercise allows the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and other Minnesota and Wisconsin agencies to test their response in the event of an incident at the Red Wing plant.

A variety of field activities involving emergency responder vehicles will take place in proximity to the plant in Dakota and Goodhue counties of Minnesota and Pierce County in Wisconsin, according to a news release.

The exercise and preparedness plans will be reviewed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Xcel Energy operates the two-reactor facility located on the Mississippi River adjacent to the Prairie Island Indian Community.

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No stories for this edition

FEMA CORPS

No stories for this edition

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FRIDAY, JULY 15, 2016

(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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NATIONAL NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (7/14, story 6, 0:25, Holt, 16.61M) reported, "A severe weather alert for millions tonight as fast-moving storms like one here in New York today sweep across the Northeast. And in the Midwest, powerful thunderstorms blew through the region. Wichita, Kansas—strong winds tipped over a semi-truck on the highway. Gusts up to 70 miles per hour also knocked down a number of trees and power lines."

ABC: Severe Weather. ABC World News Tonight (7/14, story 11, 1:30, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "Next here this evening, to severe weather on the move from Texas to Maine, and extreme heat warnings and advisories for much of the East. Some of the most dangerous weather in New York City a short time ago. Take a look at this storm from over Manhattan not long ago. ABC's Gio Benitez on the severe weather and the scorching heat." ABC (**Benitez**) added, "Tonight, severe storms hitting hard in the Northeast. Downing trees, forcing a ground stop at JFK Airport. Here in New York City, we are getting those ferocious winds, that rain, that lightning, that thunder. This is what's been moving all across the country. Blinding rain in Kansas. A semi overturned in Wichita, firefighters struggling to rescue the driver. More than 400 severe weather reports in the past 24 hours. A water rescue in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Even cows are forced to escape the rushing floodwaters. They got out. Outside St. Louis, a man electrocuted by a downed power line. This, as straight-line winds up to 100 miles an hour hit Cincinnati neighborhoods." **Jason Adams**, Meteorologist, WCPO-TV: "You can see the roofs have been almost completely torn off of two units." **Benitez**: "More than two dozen residents out of their homes." **Unidentified Speaker**: "I heard a big whoosh of wind and the next thing you know it was blowing out our windows." **Benitez**: "And in DC, extreme heat, the heat index reaching 104 degrees. And David, here in New York, those storms have moved through and now here comes the heat. Tomorrow's highs will feel like the mid-90s. David?" **Muir**: "Gio Benitez with us tonight. Gio, thanks."

ABC: Weather Tracking. ABC World News Tonight (7/14, story 12, 0:30, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "Let's get right to Chief Meteorologist Ginger Zee, who is tracking this system on the move tonight." ABC (**Zee**) added, "David, the heat advisories go from North Carolina to New York City. And you can see the excessive heat warnings for Philadelphia, even northern Delaware—well, that's because we're not going to cool down overnight. So cumulative heat—day after day, morning after morning—that's what we're dealing with. It feels like 81 when you wake up in Virginia tomorrow morning. And then the afternoon comes and it feels like it's above 100 in a lot of spots. We'll finally break this heat, David, as we go through the weekend." **Muir**: "All right, relief on the way. Ginger, thank you."

ARRL CEO, Emergency Preparedness Manager Visit FEMA Headquarters

eHam, July 15, 2016

ARRL CEO Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, and Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, KI1U, recently visited Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA http://www.fema.gov/) headquarters in Washington, DC, to further explore areas of cooperation and partnership, in line with the Memorandum of Agreement http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Public%20Service/FEMA/FEMA-ARRL-2014.pdf that ARRL and FEMA signed in 2014.

During the June 29 visit, Gallagher and Corey met with FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, KK4INZ. FEMA Chief Technology Officer Ted Okada, K4HNL, also attended the meeting.

"Administrator Fugate's detailed knowledge of Amateur Radio is impressive, and his support for the amateur community is very encouraging," Gallagher said afterward. He went on to say that he was most impressed by Fugate's observation that "any mode of RF that will connect across the continent is valuable; we don't have enough backups to the public switched network."

Report: State Does Little To Protect Schools From Quakes

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

SEATTLE — More than 380,000 students in Washington state live in earthquake-prone areas and attend schools built before seismic construction standards were adopted statewide, according to a Seattle Times report.

The newspaper, analyzing state data, also reports (http://bit.ly/29x9MDQ) that more than 31,000 students attend schools that are in or near tsunami danger zones.

However Washington doesn't mandate seismic evaluations or upgrades of school buildings and doesn't keep an inventory of unsafe schools. California, Oregon and British Columbia have all mandated seismic examinations of schools in earthquake-prone areas. And each has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to strengthen vulnerable buildings.

In Washington local school districts must raise their own funds before the state contributes money, creating disparities in school safety between wealthy and poor districts.

"By law, we make kids go into buildings that may not be as safe as they should be," said Jim Mullen, Washington's top emergency-management official from 2004 to 2013. "Safe schools are a moral and legal obligation of the state Legislature, the governor and every other public official."

A magnitude 9 earthquake and tsunami could kill up to 7,600 students and staff and cause $4 billion in damage and losses to schools, according to a 2014 study commissioned by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates almost 75 percent of coastal schools and one in five schools along the I-5 corridor could suffer extensive damage, including collapse.

A seismic evaluation for every school in the state would cost between $10 million and $13 million, a federally funded study found in 2011.

In a statement, Tara Lee, a spokeswoman for Gov. Jay Inslee said: "Safety in our schools and communities is always a high priority" but that "more work needs to be done."

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State Does Little To Protect Schoolkids From Earthquake, Tsunami

By Sandi Doughton And And And Daniel Gilbert

Seattle Times, July 14, 2016

This is part of a continuing series about Washington state's lack of preparation for a major earthquake.

All that separates Long Beach Elementary from the Pacific Ocean is a half-mile expanse of flat, sandy ground dotted with restaurants, hotels and shops catering to tourists. When the next Cascadia megaquake strikes, the 250 students at the school will face a choice Washington officials would rather not think about.

They can try to outrun the inevitable tsunami and reach high ground two miles away. Or they can hunker down in a two-story building that wasn't designed to withstand an unstoppable wall of water. "It's a nightmare I hope I never have to face," said Principal Todd Carper. "Our current plan is a 'go upstairs and hope' situation."

When it comes to protecting Washington schoolchildren from earthquakes and tsunamis, hope often substitutes for dollars and steel, The Seattle Times has found.

No state faces a greater threat from the offshore fault called the Cascadia Subduction Zone than Washington. But none has done less to ensure that kids in school buildings will be safe when the disaster hits.

More than 31,000 students attend schools like Long Beach that are in or near tsunami danger zones, according to a Times analysis of state data. Across Washington, roughly 386,000 pupils — one in every three enrolled — live in earthquake-prone areas and attend schools built before seismic construction standards were adopted statewide.

Yet Washington doesn't mandate seismic evaluations or upgrades of school buildings. It doesn't keep an inventory of unsafe schools. Even earthquake and tsunami drills, routine in many schools, are a suggestion and not a requirement under Washington law.

For decades, the state has shrugged off the recommendations of its top earthquake-safety advisers.

As a result, Washington is an outlier along the seismically active West Coast.

California, Oregon and British Columbia have all mandated seismic examinations of schools in earthquake-prone areas. Each has anted up hundreds of millions of dollars to strengthen vulnerable buildings.

In Washington, by contrast, local school districts must raise their own funds before the state kicks in any cash, creating disparities in school safety between wealthy and poor districts.

"By law, we make kids go into buildings that may not be as safe as they should be," said Jim Mullen, Washington's top emergency-management official from 2004 to 2013. "Safe schools are a moral and legal obligation of the state Legislature, the governor and every other public official."

A magnitude 9 earthquake and tsunami could kill up to 7,600 students and staff and cause $4 billion in damage and losses to schools, according to a 2014 study commissioned by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates almost 75 percent of coastal schools and one in five schools along the I-5 corridor could suffer extensive damage, including collapse.

No single entity in Washington is responsible for ensuring that schools are structurally sound. The state superintendent of schools oversees all public-education matters, but school districts own the buildings. Neither the Legislature nor the governor's office has taken steps to make money available for seismic evaluations or retrofits.

The last legislation focusing on earthquake safety in schools was offered 25 years ago, before today's high-school seniors — and some teachers — were born.

Reluctance to study buildings

A seismic evaluation for every school in the state would cost between $10 million and $13 million, a federally funded study found in 2011. That's about 0.02 percent of Washington's operating budget.

But some lawmakers have been reluctant to sanction a seismic survey of schools, fearing it would uncover deficiencies that would be costly to fix.

"Then the pressure will be there to do something," said state Sen. Dean Takko, whose district includes Long Beach. And if legislators have evidence of structural problems and fail to act, he wondered, "Now are we liable for not doing anything?"

Takko favors such a survey, but believes it has little chance of passing.

Gov. Jay Inslee declined an interview request. In a statement, spokeswoman Tara Lee said, "Safety in our schools and communities is always a high priority" but that "more work needs to be done." She wouldn't elaborate.

Randy Dorn, Washington's schools superintendent, acknowledged that seismic safety is not a high priority.

He has been consumed in recent years with trying to increase state funding for education to comply with the McCleary ruling, a state Supreme Court order. His office requested $500,000 from the Legislature in 2011 to help school districts identify their structural weaknesses, but the money was left out of the budget.

Dorn believes the state's system for doling out school funds puts poorer districts at a disadvantage, because it's harder for them to raise money for upgrades.

"The system is slanted and it's an advantage to the property-rich districts," he said. "It's a civil-rights issue."

Many of Washington's older school buildings have been renovated, but state officials do not collect enough data from districts to know which ones are likely at risk.

OSPI has such data for just 17 districts — of 295 in the state — that participated in a federally funded study. The 2014 study's preliminary results show that more than 100 buildings, 6.4 percent of those surveyed, had high seismic risk.

The peril varies considerably by district — and by wealth. In Everett, where household income is above the state median, less than 3 percent of school buildings were deemed high-risk and many have been retrofitted or replaced. The district has approved nearly $350 million in school bonds over the past decade.

In Port Angeles, which hasn't passed a bond or capital levy since 2001, about 43 percent of school buildings were found to be high-risk, and none have been seismically retrofitted. Median household income is about 20 percent less than the statewide figure of $60,300.

"There's an unfairness here," said Port Angeles schools superintendent Marc Jackson. "I believe students should attend safe schools and that school safety should not be compromised by where a student lives or by their zip codes."

"Enormous and reasonably foreseeable"

Washington schools built before 1949 were designed under the assumption that the state had little or no earthquake hazard — an assumption proved profoundly wrong on April 13 of that year. A magnitude 7.1 quake struck near Olympia, damaging 30 schools and killing two students.

The toll could have been worse had many schools not been closed for spring break.

It wasn't until the mid-1960s that basic seismic building codes were adopted in several parts of the state. The codes weren't implemented statewide until 1975 and have since been strengthened several times.

Mandating a study of seismic vulnerabilities in schools, and a plan to fix them, was one of the first recommendations of Washington's Seismic Safety Council.

"The potential for injury and loss of life among students and school personnel," the council warned the Legislature in a 1986 report, "is enormous and reasonably foreseeable."

Beginning in the early 1980s, more than a dozen bills were proposed to improve seismic safety in schools. None passed the Legislature. The last such legislation offered was in 1991, seeking $49,000 to help schools assess seismic stability.

A legislative report noted the opposition: "The amount of money appropriated will not go very far and there will be intolerable pressure to fix both nonstructural and structural school earthquake hazards."

The bill failed.

By then, the full scope of the Northwest's earthquake dangers was coming into sharper focus. Scientists had uncovered evidence that magnitude 9.0 quakes and tsunamis slammed the coast, on average, every 500 years — but sometimes only 200 years apart. The last such event was in 1700.

A coastal megaquake would be hundreds of times more powerful than any quake in recent state history, roiling the ground for five minutes or more across an area stretching from British Columbia to Northern California. Shallow faults under cities like Seattle, Tacoma and Everett can also trigger locally destructive quakes.

"We like to bury our heads in the sand about the risk of seismic events," said Phil Talmadge, a former lawmaker and state Supreme Court justice who pushed for school earthquake-safety reforms while in the state Senate in the 1980s and 1990s.

… If children die and you have not taken action as public policymakers, the liability is going to be ungodly." – Oregon state Sen. Peter Courtney

In 2012 the seismic safety committee again called on the state to prioritize schools in its Resilient Washington State report — again, with no action.

California took a different lesson from a close call in 1933.

On a Friday evening in March, an earthquake struck Southern California just a few hours after classes were dismissed. More than 230 school buildings were severely damaged, 70 of them flattened. Within 30 days, California's Legislature mandated that new schools be constructed to strict earthquake safety standards. Soon after, it added a requirement that existing schools be upgraded.

In British Columbia, a coalition of parents, students and structural engineers pushed the government to evaluate and upgrade schools in earthquake-prone areas. Since 2004, the province has spent or committed $1.7 billion to retrofit 214 schools.

In Oregon, state Sen. Peter Courtney led the way.

With vivid memories of a 1993 quake near the Capitol that knocked him out of bed, Courtney was receptive when state geologists first briefed him on the Cascadia threat. In 2002, Courtney and his allies won voter approval for the state to issue bonds for school seismic upgrades. The Oregon Legislature ordered a survey that identified more than 1,100 school buildings at high risk of collapse.

Oregon has provided almost $210 million in grants to retrofit 79 school buildings. Courtney, president of the Senate since 2003, is pushing for more.

"Given what we know about this monster, you better hope it doesn't hit in your lifetime," he said, of a Cascadia megaquake. "Because if it does, if children die and you have not taken action as public policymakers, the liability is going to be ungodly."

And it's not just a matter of saving lives, he pointed out. After a major earthquake, schools will be vital as shelters and community centers. Business can't resume until kids are back in school.

In Oregon, "It's the state's responsibility to make sure every school is taken care of," Courtney said. "We're not going to leave it up to the school districts."

Leaving it to districts

Seattle Public Schools owns some of the oldest, most vulnerable school buildings in the state.

But it has the biggest property-tax base of any school district, and it has successfully passed every bond and capital levy it has proposed since 1996 — a haul of at least $2 billion. Since 2010, the district has earmarked $100 million from levies for seismic retrofits at more than 50 schools, while others are getting upgrades as part of larger renovations.

The Highline School District shares a border, and many of the same seismic risks, with Seattle. But it's one of the poorer districts in King County.

While Highline has about a third as many students as Seattle, its property-tax base is less than one-tenth of its wealthier neighbor's. Individual homeowners in Highline would have to pay about 10 times as much as those in Seattle to raise the same amount of money.

Highline's last two attempts to issue a school bond were rejected by voters in 2014 and 2015. Its most recent successful bond election was 10 years ago.

So children continue to spend their days in Des Moines Elementary, one of the district's oldest schools and a priority for replacement. The original building was constructed in 1924, and other than additions in subsequent decades, it has never been modernized.

"We would never put students in a building deemed to be unsafe, but making seismic and other safety improvements in our schools is a top priority," said Catherine Carbone Rogers, a spokeswoman for the Highline School District. The district plans to propose another bond in the coming year.

The disparities are even starker in communities along the coast like Aberdeen, a faded logging hub where the Chehalis River spills into the Pacific and where grunge rocker Kurt Cobain, of Nirvana, grew up.

In 2011, structural engineers examined 12 school buildings in the city to see how they would perform in a powerful earthquake. The federally funded study found that seven buildings had a greater than 95 percent chance of extensive to complete damage.

Tom Opstad, Aberdeen's superintendent, walked through one of those buildings, Hopkins Preschool Center, on a recent spring day, pointing out the warped floors caused by shifting soil. The 60-year-old building also houses a day care and alternative high school — and has a 99.8 percent chance of major damage in a quake.

That means chunks of debris could rain down on schoolchildren and parts or all of the sprawling complex could collapse, said Cale Ash, a structural engineer at Degenkolb who helped with the study. The entire structure could slump when shaking liquefies the loose soil, causing more damage and trapping students if doors jam shut.

Opstad is laying the groundwork for a bond, but expects it will take more than one try to gain voter approval. The district hasn't approved a bond since 2003.

"There's not a lot of industry here to help support taxes, like there would be in Seattle," he said.

"We should be screaming"

Aberdeen is ringed with hills that offer tsunami escape routes for all of the district's schools. But along parts of Washington's outer coast, including the 25-mile-long sand spit called the Long Beach Peninsula, high ground could be out of reach for all but a few.

In the open ocean, a tsunami travels at the speed of a commercial jet. The surge slows and builds as it approaches land, muscling ashore faster than most humans can run. Scientists estimate the first waves will slam into Long Beach in as little as 20 minutes after the earthquake.

Local cross-country standout Ben Brownlee recently ran the 2-mile evacuation route from his former school, Long Beach Elementary, at The Seattle Times' invitation.

After a megaquake, children at Long Beach Elementary could have just 20 minutes to run to higher ground. We asked a local track athlete to see if he could make it before the tsunami. (Katie G. Cotterill & Ellen Banner / The Seattle Times)

The 17-year-old Ilwaco High student cut through the rodeo grounds and sprinted past cranberry bogs. He pulled up panting at the city's garbage transfer station, more than 100 feet above sea level, in just under 15 minutes.

In an actual quake, it will take several minutes for those who aren't injured to get their bearings and run. Then they'll face an obstacle course of downed power lines, toppled trees and buckled pavement.

There's no way teachers would be able to shepherd 250 terrified children, many with special needs, to safety in time, said Carper, the principal.

So Long Beach hopes to build a tsunami refuge on the school's old play field. City officials landed a $2 million federal grant to design and build a berm, essentially a man-made hill of hard-packed earth reinforced with concrete and steel.

The flat-topped structure would stand about 30 feet high, placing it nearly 50 feet above sea level. It would cover three-quarters of an acre and have room for more than 850 people to escape the water — including all of Carper's kids.

But it's not certain the structure will be built. Cost estimates are coming in at more than $3 million, with no obvious source of funding to make up the shortfall. Even if the city comes up with the money, the berm won't help the 170 youngsters who attend the district's other elementary school, 10 miles up the peninsula in the town of Ocean Park.

On another vulnerable spit of land about 40 miles north of Long Beach, the Ocosta School District faced a similar threat.

When Paula Akerlund took over as superintendent in 2011, she was haunted by the devastation from Japan's earthquake and tsunami earlier that year.

"That's the thing that wakes you up at 3 in the morning," she said.

The district, which includes Westport, is ailing from slumps in the fishing and timber industries. Household income is barely half the statewide median. The previous two school bonds had failed.

Animated graphic: The state's only school building constructed to provide shelter during a tsunami. (Zach Walker/The Seattle Times)

Working with scientists, engineers and emergency managers, Akerlund and the school board turned to the community again, with a proposal to replace the crumbling elementary school and add a gym that could double as a tsunami-evacuation structure. With room for 2,000 people on the roof, the structure could shelter all students, staff and nearby residents with room to spare.

The district and its allies sought support for the project from local residents at every opportunity: Every sports event, every concert and every school activity. A friends group set up a Facebook page. A local Realtor offered prizes for people who registered to vote.

The $13.8 million bond passed with 70 percent support from voters. The state provided an additional $2 million in matching funds. Earlier this month, the new gym opened.

State officials are eager to talk up Ocosta's success. But the fact that so many kids across the state remain at risk from quakes and tsunamis leaves Akerlund frustrated with the Legislature, the governor and other officials who refuse to take responsibility.

"You cannot fool around with children's safety," she said. "All of us in education are so polite. We should be screaming: This is not ethical."

Colorado Wildfires Continue, More Than 35,000 Acres Burned

By Kieran Nicholson

Denver Post, July 14, 2016

Several wildfires in Colorado, totaling more than 35,000 acres burned, remain active as firefighters work to control and extinguish the blazes.

The biggest blaze, the Beaver Creek fire, has burned 20,981 acres in northern Colorado along the Wyoming state line about 24 miles north of Walden, according to state and federal fire officials.

The Beaver Creek fire was detected June 19 and is burning through heavy beetle-killed timber. The fire is about 5 percent contained, and 286 firefighters are working on the blaze. The fire remains active and is expected to continue to spread to the north and east, according to the Western Colorado Interagency-Type 3 Incident Management Team.

The Hayden Pass fire continues to burn in the Colorado mountains about 20 miles southeast of Salida. It has scorched 14,788 acres and remains active, The wildfire is crowning and accelerating in the Mosher Creek area as it moves toward the Sangre de Cristo ridge line, according to fire officials. The fire, burning mostly through timber, heavy logging slash and chaparral, was first reported on July 8.

The Cold Springs fire is burning in Boulder County about 2 miles northeast of Nederland. It started Saturday on private property, has burned more than 528 acres and is 100 percent contained. At least eight homes have been torched, and about 1,000 residents were forced to evacuate. All roads were open, and all residents were allowed to return home.

Two men face criminal charges for allegedly starting the blaze.

Jimmy Andrew Suggs, 28, faces four charges, including two counts of fourth-degree arson and one count each of possession of a weapon by a previous offender and criminal trespass. Suggs is being held on $150,000 bail.

Zackary Ryan Kuykendall, 26, is facing two charges of fourth-degree arson and one count of criminal trespass. He is being held on $5,000 bail.

Both are scheduled to appear in court Sept. 1.

The Cold Springs fire continues to creep and smolder, according to firefighters. Crews continue to work on eliminating hot spots and protecting homes and structures within and near the fire perimeter.

Endangered Trout Feared To Be Impacted By Colorado Wildfire

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS — State wildlife officials are concerned that an endangered fish may be extinct now that a wildfire burning in the southern Colorado mountains has reached a creek home to the thriving habitat of cutthroat trout.

The Gazette reports Greg Policky with Colorado Parks and Wildlife says the fish in a 3-mile stretch of Hayden Creek are "one of a kind." He says they're related to greenbacks but have DNA not known to be in any other fish.

Policky estimated the population of trout to be about 2,000. He says there's been ongoing efforts to sustain the fish, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Officials say the Hayden Pass fire in the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness has spread across 13,000 acres. More than 100 homes have been evacuated. A helicopter continues efforts to keep the Hayden Pass fire away from structures near Coaldale, southeast of Salida on Wednesday, June 13.

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Information from: The Gazette, http://www.gazette.com

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The Cold Springs fire continues to creep and smolder, according to firefighters. Crews continue to work on eliminating hot spots and protecting homes and structures within and near the fire perimeter.

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78-acre Black Ridge Wildfire Near Durango Is 40 Percent Contained

By Jesse Paul

Denver Post, July 14, 2016

A 78-acre wildfire sparked Wednesday in the mountains south of Durango is 40 percent contained as crews work to keep the burn from spreading toward nearby homes.

Durango Fire Rescue said in a tweet Thursday morning that the fire has been 80 percent surrounded with retardant to keep it from moving outside its current lines.

The fire is burning in the Black Ridge area. Durango firefighters are working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the firefight.

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe says the fire is on their land and was reported at about 4 p.m. on Wednesday.

“Southern Ute Tribal Rangers are notifying residents in the area of the fire to be ready to evacuate should conditions change,” the tribe said in a bulletin.

La Plata County says flames are surrounded by 304 structures — including homes — but that so far residents are safe to stay put. Residents are on pre-evacuation notice, however, as a precaution.

“The fire is laying down as relative humidity is increasing in the area,” the county said in a news release Wednesday night. “Air crews dropped retardant around most of the perimeter of the fire and the fire has burned into the 2005 Black Ridge fire burn scar. Crews will remain on scene throughout the night.”

Aerial resources are expected to join the battle Thursday.

Exploding Propane Tanks Hinder Reporting Of Wildfire Damage

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

TIMBERON, N.M. — Exploding propane tanks Thursday kept firefighters from confirming the extent of damage in and around a southern New Mexico mountain village of Timberon where authorities said a wildfire apparently burned multiple homes.

Firefighters’ operations also were hindered by downed power lines in the area, according to state officials.

There are no reported injuries, the fire’s cause hadn’t been determined and there was no estimate when the fire would be contained.

The blaze led Gov. Susana Martinez to activate the state’s emergency operations center to help coordinate the response. Federal officials approved her request for funds to help cover the cost of firefighting efforts.

Martinez was briefed by incident commanders Thursday after flying over the fire, which had charred nearly half of a square mile.

“Sadly, the fire may have already destroyed more than a dozen homes, and many more are at risk,” she said. “I ask New Mexicans to join me in praying for the residents of Timberon.”

Otero County Sheriff Benny House told The Associated Press during a telephone interview that he saw about 15 burned structures while viewing just the fire’s perimeter Wednesday night and that many appeared to have been homes. There may have been additional burned structures in the interior of the fire area, he said.

The area consisted of wooded hilly terrain, House said. Timberon is 25 miles southeast of Alamogordo.

A multiagency team was arriving to take command of the incident by late Thursday night or early Friday morning.

Deputies went door to door Wednesday to recommend that residents evacuate, House said. Many homes in Timberon are not owners' primary residences, he said.

Several dozen Timberon residents spent the night in an evacuation shelter in Cloudcroft. But House said many people had other places to stay or weren't in the area.

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The Latest: Federal Funding Approved For New Mexico Wildfire

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

TIMBERON, N.M. — The Latest on a wildfire burning in part of a mountain village in southern New Mexico (all times local):

5:25 p.m.

Gov. Susana Martinez says federal funding will help cover the costs associated with fighting a blaze that has destroyed homes and burned nearly a half square mile in southern New Mexico.

Martinez was briefed Thursday by fire officials on efforts to corral the blaze, which forced the evacuations the night before of dozens of residents who live in and around the community of Timberon.

The governor says the fire may have destroyed more than a dozen homes and that many more are threatened. Conditions have prevented firefighters from confirming damage reports.

Martinez also activated the state emergency operations center to help coordinate the response to the fire in Otero County.

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12:50 p.m.

Gov. Susana Martinez plans to be briefed by fire officials leading efforts to corral a blaze that has destroyed homes in southern New Mexico.

Martinez will be visiting the Timberon area Thursday afternoon. She's expected to catch a glimpse of the fire as she flies in on a National Guard helicopter.

Fire officials say the blaze has burned about 290 acres and an unknown number of structures. Exploding propane tanks have kept firefighters from confirming any damage reports.

Otero County Sheriff Benny House told The Associated Press early Thursday that he saw approximately 15 burned structures while viewing the fire's perimeter Wednesday night and that many appeared to have been homes.

Some roads are closed in the area.

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Noon

Authorities say exploding propane tanks are keeping firefighters from confirming how many structures have been destroyed by a wildfire burning in and near the southern New Mexico mountain village of Timberon.

A multiagency fire information service also reports Thursday morning that there are downed power lines in the area.

According to the service's update on the Timberon fire, it has burned an estimated 290 acres of private lane and that an interagency team will take over command of the incident by late Thursday night or early Friday morning.

Otero County Sheriff Benny House told The Associated Press early Thursday that he saw approximately 15 burned structures while viewing the fire's perimeter Wednesday night and that many appeared to have been homes.

There are no reported injuries.

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11:10 a.m.

A wildfire that destroyed a dozen homes and scorched 28 square miles in the Manzano Mountains southeast of Albuquerque has been declared fully contained.

Fire officials say that means crews have completed a control line around the perimeter of the blaze, which was sparked a month ago by a wood-chipping machine being used to clear brush and forest debris as part of a federally-funding project.

Officials warned Thursday that 100 percent containment doesn't mean the fire is out.

There are still engines patrolling the area and watching for any fire activity.

The blaze forced residents from several small communities along the eastern edge of the Manzanos to flee their homes. Gov. Susana Martinez also declared an emergency after the fire ballooned to more than 19 square miles in two days.

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9:10 a.m.

A southern New Mexico sheriff says he believes homes are among the 15 or so structures burned by a wildfire burning in and near the mountain village of Timberon.

Otero County Sheriff Benny House says many of the burned structures he saw when he viewed the fire's perimeter Wednesday night appeared to have been homes and says there could be more in the fire's interior.

House says the fire burned 250 acres of wooded hilly terrain as of Thursday morning. Its cause isn't known.

The sheriff says deputies went door to door Wednesday to recommend that residents evacuate. He says many homes in Timberon are not owners' primary residences.

Local fire departments are fighting the fire with help from the Forest Service.

Timberon is 25 miles southeast of Alamogordo.

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8:30 a.m.

A wildfire is threatening a village in mountains of southern New Mexico.

The Otero County Sheriff's Office says the fire near Timberon has burned an estimated 200 acres as of Thursday morning and destroyed a dozen structures and a fire engine since being reported Wednesday afternoon.

Timberon is 25 miles southeast of Alamogordo.

Sheriff's dispatcher Chris Patton says no injuries have been reported and that it's not immediately known what type of structures burned. She says they could include homes, sheds and garages.

Patton says cause of the fire isn't yet known.

Officials say several dozen Timberon residents spent the night at an evacuation shelter in Cloudcroft.

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Providence, Cranston To Get $18M Total To Hire Firefighters

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

Rhode Island's congressional delegation has announced a total of $17.8 million in federal funding to help Providence and Cranston hire and train new firefighters. The Providence Fire Department says eight firefighters were injured battling this house fire on Orms Street, Thursday, June 30, 2016. (WJAR)

Rhode Island's congressional delegation has announced a total of $17.8 million in federal funding to help Providence and Cranston hire and train new firefighters.

A spokesman for U.S. Sen. Jack Reed, a Democrat, says the funding will help fill a total of 95 firefighter positions that were vacated due to normal attrition and left empty because of economic hardship.

Providence will receive approximately $15 million to hire 80 firefighters. The rest will go to Cranston to hire 15 firefighters.

The funding is provided through the competitive Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration.

The federal grants will cover the cost of the new hires for the next two years.

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Third Victim Dies In Wisconsin Flood Waters

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

HAYWARD, Wis. — A third person has died in the floodwaters in northern Wisconsin.

The Ashland County Sheriff's Office says an 82-year-old man was found dead early Thursday in a pickup truck in the floodwaters of the Marengo River. Authorities say the truck was found in the water near the bridge over the river in the Town of White River.

The sheriff's department says Elmer Lippo was an elected supervisor for the Town of Marengo. Two others have died in northern Wisconsin flooding since severe weather washed out roads and caused other damage earlier this week.

Highway 2 between Ashland and Hurley remained closed as well as other roads in the region. In the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, the Beaver Lake Campground near Mellen is closed due to flood damage.

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West Virginia's Money Woes Could Affect Flood Recovery

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

West Virginians who are trying to rebuild their lives from last month's severe floods could be almost completely reliant on federal agencies.

Slumping tax revenue and budget constraints mean the state's role in helping homeowners, businesses and local governments rebuild from last month's deadly floods could be limited, The Charleston Gazette-Mail reported (http://bit.ly/29KnVkq).

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said at a news conference Wednesday that he hopes the state's rainy day fund will be used to cover 25 percent of the costs of reconstructing public buildings and other infrastructure. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will cover the other 75 percent.

"Obviously, we do have the money there," Tomblin said of the rainy day fund. "Hopefully, the Legislature, at the appropriate time, will allow us to take that money."

In terms of repairing the estimated 2,500 damaged houses, though, Tomblin said he is not considering spending any additional money to supplement the federal disaster relief funding.

The June 23 floods killed 23 people and caused more than $55 million in damage to roads and bridges.

For businesses without flood insurance, owners are going to be reliant on loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration or private lenders, which, in some instances, can be insured by the West Virginia Economic Development Authority. That money needs to be paid back, with interest.

Homeowners without insurance will have to rely on the federal grants that FEMA provides through the agency's individual disaster assistance. Homeowners can receive a maximum of $33,000.

"When FEMA was created, it was created to give folks a step towards recovery — to get them safe, to get them sheltered — but it was never really meant to make them whole again, like they were pre-disaster" said Albie Lewis, the federal coordinating officer for FEMA, who spoke with the governor.

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Money Woes Could Hamper Flood Recovery

Associated Press, July 15, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginians who are trying to rebuild their lives from last month's severe floods could be almost completely reliant on federal agencies.

The Charleston Gazette-Mail (http://bit.ly/29KnVkq) reports that the state's role in helping homeowners, businesses and local governments rebuild from last month's deadly floods could be limited by slumping tax revenue and budget constraints.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said at a news conference Wednesday that he hopes the state's Rainy Day Fund will be used to cover 25 percent of the costs of rebuilding public buildings and other infrastructure. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will cover the other 75 percent.

In terms of repairing the estimated 2,500 damaged houses though, Tomblin says his administration is not considering spending any additional money to supplement the federal disaster relief funding.

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West Virginia's Money Woes Could Hamper Flood Recovery

By Andrew Brown

Charleston (WV) Gazette, July 14, 2016

Nearly four weeks after severe flooding hit several counties in West Virginia, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and his administration said the Mountain State is moving into the long-term response phase.

But with an estimated 2,500 houses damaged and more than $55 million in road and bridge repairs needed — according to numbers provided by West Virginia Transportation Secretary Paul Mattox —the state's role in helping homeowners, businesses and local governments that are recovering from the flooding could be limited — or impossible — because of slumping tax revenue and budget constraints in the state government.

As a result, West Virginians who are trying to rebuild their lives will be almost completely reliant on federal agencies and the limits of the disaster recovery programs that they administer.

For the county and city governments, the costs of rebuilding public buildings and other infrastructure might be solved. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will cover 75 percent of the costs under the agency's Public Assistance program. Tomblin suggested that state lawmakers might be asked to appropriate the other 25 percent of those costs through the state's Rainy Day Fund.

At a news conference Wednesday, Tomblin said he anticipates calling the Legislature back to Charleston for a special session, but wasn't sure when that might occur.

"That's one of the reasons that we have a Rainy Day Fund," Tomblin said. "Obviously, we do have the money there. Hopefully, the Legislature, at the appropriate time, will allow us to take that money."

But for the average West Virginian, whose home or business was damaged or destroyed by the flooding, Tomblin said his administration is not considering any additional money to supplement the federal disaster relief funding.

For businesses without flood insurance, it means owners are going to be reliant on loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration or private lenders, which, in some instances, can be insured by the West Virginia Economic Development Authority. That money, obviously, isn't free, and needs to be paid back, with interest.

For homeowners without insurance, they are going to have to live with the federal grants that FEMA provides to them through the agency's individual disaster assistance. The max you can get through that program is $33,000 and, if homeowners or renters need any more to rebuild, they'll have to rely on the SBA for a loan or seek out private lending.

Tomblin made it clear Wednesday that the West Virginia government can't afford to fund other financial assistance for the people who lost their homes, clothes, furniture and cars to the surging floodwater that swept through parts of the region.

"We're not considering it at this time," Tomblin said. "Obviously, we're under some tight budget constraints ourselves."

The underlying financial problem is largely a result of the lack of flood insurance among many of the communities that found themselves awash on June 23. In some instances, homeowners in a floodplain dropped their insurance after they paid off their mortgage. Others weren't in the floodplain and weren't eligible for discounted insurance, but found their home under water anyway.

In Richwood, there were only 40 policyholders under the National Flood Insurance Program, as of May of this year. Clendenin had 60 insurance plans. Rainelle had 40. White Sulfur Springs had 84. And in Clay, there were only 6 flood insurance policies in place.

That means most of the people in those communities who were hit are reliant on whatever money FEMA decides they are entitled to.

While some are frustrated with the grant total they are qualifying for, federal officials made it clear that FEMA was not created to pay for everything that people lost. And after national flood events, like Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy, federal lawmakers have called for the agency to rein in the cost of major flooding events.

"When FEMA was created, it was created to give folks a step towards recovery — to get them safe, to get them sheltered — but it was never really meant to make them whole again, like they were pre-disaster" said Albie Lewis, the Federal coordinating officer for FEMA, who spoke with the governor Wednesday. "So we are just one part of that entire process. That is why it's so important that we partner with all the other agencies and volunteer agencies to bring people back to normalcy."

During Wednesday's news conference, Tomblin and members of his administration also said the warning systems for the major flooding event that killed 23 people worked properly and that it is too early to know what types of polices need to be reviewed or changed to help prevent or limit flooding damage of this magnitude in the future.

When questioned about a state Flood Protection Plan that is more than a decade old but not fully implemented, Jimmy Gianato, the director of the state's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, said his agency has adopted some of the recommendations laid out in the 365-page report but that much of that plan required legislative action that never took place.

Gianato specifically cited the adoption of better warning systems for flooding, which now includes cellphone alerts, radio and television announcements and, in some cases, reverse 911 alert systems.

He also said additional gauges that track water levels have been installed in streams and rivers throughout the state over the past 10 to 15 years.

Neither Tomblin or Gianato directly stated during the news conference whether they will review the unadopted portions of the Flood Protection Plan. Tomblin spokeswoman Jessica Tice said that decision would have to be made later.

"A final decision has not yet been made regarding a review of the flood protection plan," Tice said. "Additionally, the need for a potential after-action review is still being assessed.

"Any additional factors or considerations will be up to the administration in place at that time."

Homeowner Sued For $25 Million Over California Wildfire

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

LOS ANGELES — The federal government sued a homeowner for nearly $25 million on Thursday, contending his negligence sparked a 2013 fire in the mountains east of Los Angeles that forced 5,000 people from their homes.

The lawsuit says that a short in a poorly maintained electrical junction box sparked a blaze in the San Jacinto Mountains above Palm Springs that charred more than 27,500 acres of brush and timber —

about 43 square miles — and at one point threatened the town of Idyllwild.

Investigators determined that the lid of the plastic box containing wires was warped and ajar, the lawsuit said.

“As a result, an electrical discharge inside the box shot sparks and hot material out of the box and onto dry ground vegetation below,” according to the lawsuit.

“Property owners and their agents have a responsibility to ensure that property under their control is maintained in a safe fashion,” U.S. Attorney Eileen M. Decker said in a statement.

The fire endangered “countless lives, including those of firefighters who battle these large-scale blazes,” she said.

The fire burned for more than two weeks in and around San Bernardino National Forest. More than 3,000 firefighters, 250 fire engines and 30 aircraft fought the blaze.

The U.S. Forest Service spent more than $15 million on firefighting, and the blaze caused in excess of $9 million in damage to resources, ranging from wildlife and timber to eroded soil, according to the lawsuit. More than $300,000 was spent on emergency rehabilitation of the area.

The lawsuit, which alleges negligence and violations of California law, was filed in Los Angeles one day before the third anniversary of the fire’s eruption. It names Tarek M. Al-Shawaf and two caretakers he employed at his home, known as Gibraltar West, in the community of Mountain Center.

The lawsuit was filed after Al-Shawaf and the caretakers failed to pay the costs of firefighting and fire damage demanded by the government, according to the lawsuit.

Messages for Al-Shawaf’s attorney, James Lance of San Diego, weren’t immediately returned.

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Severe Weather, Power Outages In Oklahoma

WRC-TV Washington, July 15, 2016

Former Presidents George W. Bush, back right, and Bill Clinton, back second from left, speak on stage alongside former United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair, back second from right, at the Presidential Leadership Scholars graduation on July 14, 2016. The three presidents were hustled away after winds began breaking windows.

A strong storm sent powerful winds through Arkansas and Oklahoma, forcing the evacuation of a high school graduation and leaving thousands without power, NBC News reported.

Former Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair were whisked away from an Arkansas high school graduation Thursday after severe winds began breaking windows. It wasn’t known where they were taken.

The storm brought as much as 2 inches of rain that fell in six hours. There were also reports of scattered flaw floods. Sustained winds above 50 mph were recorded in many parts of the state, with hurricane force gusts above 70 mph in spots.

Electric utilities reported almost 130,000 people in Oklahoma and 63,000 in Arkansas were left without power because of the severe weather.

According to the National Weather Service, significant wind damage was possible across southeastern Oklahoma into western Arkansas as the system moves toward the mid-Atlantic region.

Weather Advisories Issued For Southwestern Pennsylvania

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, July 14, 2016

Numerous weather advisories were issued in southwestern Pennsylvania this evening after strong storms made their way through the region.

Officials reported numerous trees and wires down throughout Allegheny County this evening after heavy thunderstorms began pounding the region around 8 p.m.

Earlier tonight, the National Weather Service announced a flood advisory for parts of Allegheny and Westmoreland counties. The weather service also issued a severe thunderstorm warning for northern Fayette County and southeastern Westmoreland County.

Up to an inch of rain hit the area, according to weather service meteorologist Brad Rehak.

Pittsburgh River Rescue responded to two overturned watercraft on the Allegheny River about 8:15 p.m., city public safety spokeswoman Sonya Toler said.

A boat with six people inside capsized near Washington’s Landing Marina, Ms. Toler said. A canoe with two people inside overturned underneath the 31st Street Bridge, she said.

All of the boaters were rescued, and none of them required medical attention.

Duquesne Light reported that 350 customers in Monroeville were without power as of 10 p.m. Another

50 customers were without power in Castle Shannon, according to Duquesne Light.

The Pittsburgh Riverhounds game at Highmark Stadium was delayed during the thunderstorm as power went out in the stadium.

The Riverhounds said on their Twitter account that the power outage appeared to affect the entirety of Station Square.

Tornado Warning Over, But Counties Warned Of Thunderstorms

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

PHILADELPHIA – A tornado warning is no longer in effect for a county in eastern Pennsylvania and one in northwestern New Jersey but thunderstorms are still bearing down in some areas.

The National Weather Service had said a severe thunderstorm Thursday afternoon was capable for producing a tornado in Northampton County in Pennsylvania and in central Warren County in New Jersey. The warning passed at 3:15 p.m., but severe thunderstorm watches and warnings were in effect for several counties in New Jersey. Union County, eastern Passaic County, Essex County, southeastern Bergen County and Hudson County were all under a thunderstorm warning until 4:30 p.m.

The agency urges people in those areas to take cover until about 3:15 p.m.

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DNR Grant To Stabilize Trails, Aquatic Habitats Along Vermillion River

By Natalie Daher

Minneapolis Star Tribune, July 14, 2016

A Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant will help stabilize eroding trails along the Vermillion River in Farmington and improve the habitat for its aquatic species.

The $225,000 grant is expected to preserve the riverbank in Rambling River Park, a popular site for biking and trout fishing, between Schmitz-Maki Arena and the County Road 50 bridge. The city and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization, made up of Dakota and Scott County commissioners, will lead the project, and construction will begin in 2017 or 2018, planners say.

“We wanted to mitigate the erosion issue, because if we didn’t, eventually it would eat away the trail,” said Randy Distad, the city’s parks director. “Down the road, we would have had to address reconstructing the trail because of the erosion.”

During a recent site visit, officials with the DNR, the watershed group and the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District detected three areas with “considerable erosion,” Distad said, along the trail. The project’s other goals include providing refuge areas for trout and other aquatic species, restoring vegetation along the trail and mitigating future flooding.

The City Council approved an agreement with the watershed group at its latest meeting and will contribute $20,000 in staff time and in-kind services. The watershed group will contribute $30,000 for project design and management as well as $5,000 for construction.

The DNR requires construction to occur in April and September to protect trout spawning season. The city will next finalize designs and select a contractor, Distad said.

Residents Stranded, Roads Remain Closed After Torrential Rains

By Maggie Angst

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, July 15, 2016

Residents in northern Wisconsin are grappling with the aftermath of extreme storms and flooding that swept through the area earlier this week, leaving three people dead, roads washed out and some residents still stranded in their homes.

Authorities on Thursday confirmed that a third person had died as a result of the flooding.

Elmer Lippo, 82, of Marengo, was found early Thursday in a pickup truck in the floodwaters of the Marengo River in the Town of White River.

The Ashland County Sheriff’s Office said Lippo was an elected supervisor for the Town of Marengo.

Meanwhile, authorities said Thursday that main roads in several counties are still closed, including U.S. Highway 2 between Ashland and Hurley, state Highway 13 and U.S. Highway 63. And chances are they will not reopen anytime soon.

State and county engineers will be out evaluating damage to bridges and roads over the next few days.

“We want to make sure we’re making these roadways as safe as possible, as soon as possible,” said Diana Maas, spokeswoman for the state Department of Transportation’s northwest region. “We’re out there actively working to resolve as many issues as possible, and many other roadways are open already.”

Gov. Scott Walker on Tuesday declared a state of emergency in eight northern Wisconsin counties — Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Sawyer, Washburn and Price counties — after torrential rains flooded parts of the area, causing three fatalities, closing roads, destroying a harbor and washing out multiple roads.

Maas said the main corridors of U.S. Highway 2, state Highway 13 and U.S. Highway 63 are a major concern.

Repairs on state Highway 13 in Ashland County will take the longest, up to five months, she said. Two bridges near Highbridge were washed out and significantly damaged. The agency is hopeful an alternate route on county trunk roads can be used in a couple of weeks until the bridges on the highway can be replaced.

A bridge on U.S. Highway 63 also was significantly damaged near Grand View in Bayfield County. The state is working on terms to hire an emergency contractor by Monday. The highway will be closed for about a month, and there are no reasonable alternative routes in that area, according to Maas.

Water levels on U.S. Highway 2, which passes through Ashland, Bayfield and Iron counties, are too high to assess the damage right now, she said. Officials suspect the damage is minimal and that the road will reopen in a few weeks.

"We're hopeful the water will go down by the end of the week and we'll be able to fully assess the damage," Maas said.

The closures come at the height of region's busy tourist season. And local businesses and state Department of Tourism are encouraging visitors not to cancel their vacation plans. Many businesses and parks remain open, they say. But they urged travelers to call the local chamber or tourism office, or check state web sites for road closings and park and trail conditions.

Claire Rupnow of the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Bureau, said the annual Bayfield Festival of Arts is still on for this weekend, but some people will have to make a significant detour to attend.

"Roads to the west are open, so people coming from that direction, like Duluth will be fine," Rupnow said. "People from Michigan's Upper Peninsula or southeast Wisconsin will have about a three-hour detour."

High waters and road closures continued to strand some residents in Bayfield and Iron counties on Thursday.

In the Town of Lincoln in Bayfield, about 26 people were isolated in their homes, and authorities were using boats to get supplies to them "on a road that is now a river," said Jan Victorson, director of emergency management for Bayfield County.

Washed-out roads in the Town of Gurney in Iron County had left four families stranded in their rural homes off state Highway 169 as of Thursday morning. Town Chairman Tom Innes said authorities were hoping to reach them through a back channel by the end of the day.

Elsewhere, the U.S. Coast Guard continued to patrol Saxon Harbor in Ashland County and monitor stranded boats, which were destroyed by the storms. Local and county officials are meeting with the U.S. Coast Guard to determine a damage estimate to the facilities and develop a repair plan for the harbor.

About 85 boats and 100 boat slips were damaged or destroyed, according to the Wisconsin Emergency Operations Center. As of Thursday morning, 40 of those were displaced, some ending up miles off shore. Six were unaccounted for, and four had sunk, said Christopher Yaw, public affairs specialist with the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Pollution is the main concern because most of those vessels have fuel and oil on board," Yaw said. "We don't want any of that leaking and getting out into the environment so we're helping to get that cleaned up and mitigate those posing a threat."

Also Thursday, Sawyer County authorities were assuring residents that the Nelson Lake Dam is not in danger of failing. They continue to monitor water levels in Hayward, they said. And inmates from the Department of Corrections' Gordon Correctional Facility are helping to fill sandbags through Saturday.

The extent of the damage across the region is still being assessed. The Department of Transportation is working with the governor's office and the state Department of Administration, as well as the Federal Highway Administration, in an effort to secure relief funds.

U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy and Sen. Ron Johnson sent a letter to President Barack Obama on Thursday seeking disaster assistance.

Below are the preliminary damage estimates for counties assessed so far by the Wisconsin Emergency Management Center.

■ Burnett County: about $375,000 in damage to roads, bridges and other public infrastructure.

■ Douglas County: about $602,800 in damage and repair costs from flooding of roads, bridges and public buildings.

■ Sawyer County: about $70,000 in minor damage reported to 15 homes, and $365,000 to public infrastructure, including roads and bridges. County officials are reassuring the public the Nelson Lake Dam is not in danger of failing.

■ Chippewa County: About $25,000 in damage was reported to one home. The damage was caused by a tornado that touched down near the O'Neil Creek Campground.

U.S. Weather Forecaster Sees Likelihood Of La Nina August-October

By Marcy Nicholson

Reuters, July 14, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Hurricane, Emergency Prep Are Key For Area Communities

By Jill Narciso, Senior Living Correspondent

Houston Chronicle, July 14, 2016

Despite a record 33 inches of rain in April, May and June, local retirement communities state they are more than prepared for this year's hurricane season.

Buckner Parkway Place and Holly Hall take the necessary precautions each year to make sure residents are safe at the time of an emergency.

"The time to prepare for an emergency is before you have one," said Carol Klappenbach, director of performance improvement at Holly Hall.

Accoding to Klappenbach, Holly Hall has enough emergency supplies to sustain its 216 residents for at least a week, including food, water, medication, flashlights, batteries and an emergency generator. At the start of hurricane season, Holly Hall updates inventory, adds extra supplies and updates its staff phone list. While Holly Hall facilities have not been impacted by recent floods, its surrounding streets have flooded and prevented staff from coming to work and relieving the prior shift.

Part of Holly Hall's disaster plan involves determining which staff realistically would be available in an emergency so they can better organize responsibilities. Klappenbach said while she is currently not seeing patients, she is a licensed RN and can help in an emergency if necessary.

"You just don't know," Klappenbach said. "In Texas, a storm comes out of nowhere and drops a lot of water."

Holly Hall residents are also notified in a written letter each year signifying the start of hurricane season, and staff helps residents register on the 211 emergency management database.

The retirement community at Buckner Parkway Place follows a similar emergency plan.

Sunny Chatagnier, executive director of Buckner Parkway Place, said the community will never run out of food for its 400 residents. Besides canned goods, Parkway Place has a contract with its suppliers to have extra food delivered if necessary, or to have a refrigerated truck available on site. In an emergency, residents will continue to have "real meals," Chatagnier said.

Other emergency supplies at Parkway Place include a large emergency generator, batteries, flashlights and medical supplies. There is also enough water set aside for drinking water, and water to flush toilets.

In addition, Parkway Place staff is trained on disaster response each year by the Office of Emergency Management. This month, Parkway Place also will hold an informational session for residents about hurricane preparedness.

However, Chatagnier said during a hurricane, most independent living residents like to stay with their families if possible, and they mainly track who remains on or off the site. Assisted living and skilled nursing residents remain at Parkway Place, and staff is directed to those who need the most care.

Both Parkway Place and Holly Hall are "shelter-in-place" communities, which means they only will be evacuated if they are notified by the state of Texas. In this scenario, Parkway Place residents will be transported to a sister community in the cities of Austin or Longview, while Holly Hall has facilities in town and out of town for residents to be transported if necessary.

Chatagnier said even with the recent floods, Parkway Place operations ran "as smoothly as normal" thanks to its staff, and at the time, residents were more concerned about their families.

With hurricane season stretching to Nov. 30, Chatagnier is confident in the community.

"With hurricanes we have advance warning," Chatagnier said. "For the most part, the safest place to be is here. Residents will be provided for and kept safe to the best of our abilities."

Emotional Healing After A Flood Can Take Just As Long As Rebuilding

NPR, July 14, 2016

A small memorial marks the former homestead of the Nicely family, who died in the June flooding of White Sulphur Springs, W. Va. Kara Lofton/West

Virginia Public Broadcasting hide caption toggle caption

Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting

A small memorial marks the former homestead of the Nicely family, who died in the June flooding of White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting

Most of the front door of Rachel Taylor's little yellow house in White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., is pasted with paw prints where her dog struggled to get inside during the flood last month. He was too big to carry through the rising waters.

Across the street, nestled between two battered houses, an empty lot is marked by a cross with an array of flowers and photos — a small memorial for a family washed away by the torrent.

Taylor's dog survived and is now with some of her family members in Kentucky. But those neighbors across the street, the Nicelys, were swept away when their house collapsed; they have since been confirmed dead.

"When I start feeling overwhelmed with this," Taylor says from her front porch, "I just look across the street at that memorial and I think, there's nothing that we have lost that can't be replaced or mended."

She and her husband spent seven years renovating this 1930s Craftsman house, room by room. They were just about done with renovations when their house flooded a few weeks ago. Today the living room is gutted.

"You know, the first couple of days it was very intense," Taylor says. "It was kind of 'crisis mode.' Maybe that's the way I would describe it, because you didn't really have time to think about it and process it."

But once the full extent of the damage set in, Taylor says, she developed severe nausea and carsickness to the point of not being able to drive.

A number of people, she says, have chalked up her symptoms to nerves. "You know, the stress level. You don't realize your body is just having a response to this."

Taylor worries that the houses in her neighborhood will remain abandoned and that she, her husband and her 14-year-old daughter won't feel safe at home anymore. She plans to rebuild, but says her family will likely sell the house and move.

Rachel Taylor surveys the flood damage from her front porch in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va. Muddy paw prints on the front door still mark her dog's panic as the waters rose. He survived, but others didn't. Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting hide caption toggle caption

Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting

Rachel Taylor surveys the flood damage from her front porch in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va. Muddy paw prints on the front door still mark her dog's panic as the waters rose. He survived, but others didn't.

Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting

"The words we use when we talk about it are 'I don't know if I have it in me;' 'I'm not sure if I can do it again,' " she says. "Things like that. And then we just say, 'Well, we'll take it one day at a time.' "

Psychologists say this kind of response is normal following natural disasters.

"It's a physical aspect of the stress response — it will affect the body's ability to concentrate, to rest and to be able to function," says Marcie Vaughan, leader of the state-funded West Virginia Community Crisis Response Team. "Cognition is slowed and impaired," she adds.

Vaughan's team offers support, counseling and referrals for further mental health care at local behavioral health centers.

"From the behavioral health perspective, we find we are more in need after the tenth [or] twelfth day," Vaughan says, "just because immediate needs of food, clothing and shelter take precedence."

In the first few days following the flood, Vaughan's team members split their time between helping people replace lost psychiatric medications and looking for signs of mental distress in people at shelters or feeding stations.

"We see fatigue, problems with cognition," she says. "You have individuals who walk into a supply center and they have no idea what they need."

A 2012 study published in the journal Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology found that while most people bounce back a few months after a disaster, if their ongoing stressors aren't addressed — such as a lack of permanent shelter, financial challenges and repeated exposure to the trauma — affected residents will continue to struggle.

In addition to Vaughan's team, church disaster-assistance teams and Hope Animal-Assisted Crisis Response — a support organization that uses trained therapy pets for comfort — stepped in to help.

"As the fatigue sets in and the frustration, we see an increased need for behavioral health intervention," says Vaughan.

Unfortunately, that's just when the work becomes hardest, Vaughan says, and it's often after national organizations and media have lost interest. Very real, tough problems persist, though only local groups and neighbors remain to extend helping hands.

This story is part of NPR's reporting partnership with West Virginia Public Broadcasting and Kaiser Health News.

FEMA HOUSING

FEMA Unveils 'Last Resort' Mobile Home Housing For Flood Victims

By Matt Maccaro

West Virginia MetroNews, July 14, 2016

QUINCY, W.Va. — For those unable to find temporary housing as they rebuild from last month's flood, FEMA unveiled temporary mobile homes in eastern Kanawha County Thursday.

About a dozen mobile homes were lined up, which can be used for up to 18 months in Greenbrier and Kanawha counties.

"This is housing of last resort," said FEMA Public Information Officer Bob Howard. "What we're trying to do is get people into more permanent housing, either rental units or other long term housing while they're repairing and rebuilding their homes. As has been identified in those two counties, there's a shortage of rental units."

The homes were available in one, two and three bedroom units, as well as accessible units for those who are disabled.

"The first thing we're trying to do is encourage people to find housing," Howard said. "There is a housing website that people can go on and check on that. Then we look at other options in the area; local hotels; these kinds of things."

Howard explained that even if the mobile units are being used long term, FEMA would still keep tabs on the rebuild of the residents' homes.

"People are evaluated on a regular basis what's the progress on rebuilding their home, what's their recovery plan. But it can extend up to 18 months."

For those still looking for flood relief assistance, Howard said the first step is to register with FEMA online at disasterassistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-3362.

FEMA Seeks Landlords With Vacant Properties To House Flooding Victims

By Amanda Barren

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), July 14, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. – Those left without a home because of the June 23 flooding will be eligible to apply for a temporary trailer to call home from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The units are fully furnished and come with utility hook-ups.

The mobile homes are actually a last resort for FEMA. The agency is trying is to get people into already standing apartments and homes. That is preferred because the trailers cannot go into the flood zones where the people once lived.

"There are combined units of state and federal people looking at all these accessible sites," said Thomas Kempton with FEMA. "They are working with the local community leaders to identify these sites. We have specialists. That's their job, to go out and search for those kind of sites."

Landlords with vacancies can email FEMA if they think they can help with housing needs. Send emails to: FEMA-Housing@fema.dhs.gov and include your name, contact number, and property location.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Flood Zone Changes Could Impact Thousands Of St. Johns County Structures

By Bakari Savage

WJXT-TV Jacksonville (FL), July 14, 2016

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, Fla. – The Federal Emergency Management Agency will be reconfiguring flood zone designations for thousands of structures in St. Johns County, which will affect how much homeowners pay for insurance.

About 10,000 buildings will be moved out of the flood zone and 1,600 will be moved into the flood zone, according to the preliminary map.

Properties in the coastal areas will be moving off the flood zone list, largely because of dunes. But low-lying spots in Ponte Vedra Beach, mainly Sawgrass, will be added to the flood zone list, the preliminary map shows.

Insurance agent Matt Carlucci said he has seen these changes happen before.

"The big myth is, 'Oh, I'm not in a flood zone.' Everybody is in a flood zone," Carlucci said. "People would be surprised at how little the retention ponds actually hold the rain. A lot of people in low-risk flood zones do get flooded."

Carlucci said anyone who lives in the Sawgrass area or in one of the neighborhoods being added to the flood zone list could see a change in the price of insurance.

"The premiums are going to go up because they're at high risk," Carlucci said.

The preferred rate for high-end flood insurance is about $250,000, Carlucci said. That would break down to about $500 per year.

He recommended that anyone who lives in a high-risk flood zone should get an elevation certificate, which will give an exact measurement of how high the property is above the base flood elevation.

That will help calculate the rate and could save money, according to Carlucci.

"Oftentimes, getting the elevation certificate will help you. If you don't, it'll go to the standard rate. That can run from about $2,000," Carlucci said.

Anyone interested in getting an elevation certificate will have to get in touch with a land surveyor, who will then come out to the home and do it.

People living in the affected areas can also call their insurance agent to discuss rate changes.

To find out if a home is impacted by the flood zone changes, check out the St. Johns County's flood map viewer.

FEMA said it will be holding public outreach meetings in the near future, which will provide additional information on any insurance impacts and the appeal process. The dates of the meetings have not yet been announced.

Palo Alto Considers Bracing Now For Sea Level Rise

By Jacqueline Lee

San Jose (CA) Mercury News, July 15, 2016

PALO ALTO – Many more Palo Alto homes and businesses than the 2,700 estimated to be vulnerable in a 100-year flood of San Francisquito Creek could be inundated if sea levels rise at least a foot, according to federal flood maps.

In an attempt to ward off such a disaster, the City Council has directed staff to plan for a 55-inch sea level rise by 2100. Staff requested that course at a May study session.

A 55-inch sea level rise would endanger properties from the Bay to Middlefield Road, between Embarcadero and San Antonio roads, according to maps from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Such flooding would cut off the Palo Alto Airport, Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course, the Regional Water Quality Control Plant serving multiple cities and the city's Municipal Services Center, thus limiting some emergency response capabilities.

Bayfront levees from San Francisquito Creek to the Mountain View border do not meet today's height and construction standards set by FEMA for 100-year floods, let alone for more potentially damaging sea level rise.

The local San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority is studying the feasibility of proposals for new levees and results should be available this summer.

"The levee has to be rebuilt, but also raised," said Phil Bobel, the city's assistant director of public works.

A typical levee in Palo Alto stands about 10 feet high, Bobel said. Consequently, a 100-year flood in the area, or a tidal wave of 11 feet, would wash over an estimated 2,700 properties in Palo Alto, even if the sea level does not rise.

More Peninsula properties will be included in the floodplain if sea levels continue to rise.

Experts agree that the rate of sea level rise is expected to accelerate in the next century, but predictions range from 1 foot to 6 feet and beyond.

The Bay has seen 0.63 feet of sea level rise over the last century.

"We've got to protect our facilities," Bobel said. "But it actually makes sense to do things incrementally given the level of uncertainty."

One proposal would have the new levees built up to 18 feet, which assumes a mid-range estimate of sea level rise of 3 feet and takes into account higher waves from wind, Bobel said.

A 3.28-foot rise in sea level would put 220,000 Bay Area residents at risk, according to an estimate by the Pacific Institute. It's unclear how many Palo Alto residents that figure includes.

FEMA flood maps do not currently account for sea level rise, but the 3 feet was included to begin planning for sea level rise projections for the next 50 years.

"We don't know for sure how much it's going to rise, so you probably wouldn't design these levees at the extreme," Bobel said. "You would build them to that maximum height, but what probably makes the most sense is to build a big firm base for them ... so you can add height over time."

A feasibility study to be released this summer related to the Strategy to Advance Flood protection, Ecosystems and Recreation along the Bay, or SAFER Bay, project will include options for boundaries and height of the new levees.

The jurisdictions affected by the levee update project – Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Santa Clara Valley Water District and San Mateo County Flood Control District – will have to agree on where to place the levees.

Then, “hundreds of millions of dollars” will have to be secured locally and federally for the multi-year project, Bobel said.

In coming months, Palo Alto officials could be deciding what resources to pour into the effort and how much research to devote toward developing new zoning codes and building restrictions for areas potentially impacted by sea level rise.

Vice Mayor Greg Scharff said sea level rise is a concern, but it’s important to weigh it against the city’s other priorities. He anticipates other agencies will provide more data and clarity in the next two years, so the city may be in a better place then to help address this regional issue.

“We talk about a lot of stuff at council ... and then there’s no staff resources to do it,” Scharff said. “Should we be spending city time to do this at this time? Do you have the bandwidth?”

Councilman Cory Wolbach said he shares Scharff’s concerns about staff limitations and priorities, but sea level rise is too important of an issue.

“I’m not willing to drop this one,” Wolbach said. “We’re talking about an existential threat to large parts of Palo Alto, essentially irreplaceable, mission critical utilities equipment and other infrastructure.”

Some properties could potentially be affected by flooding from the Bay as well as San Francisquito Creek.

About 40 percent of the creek floodplain is also in the Bay floodplain, according to Len Materman, executive director of the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority.

The agency was formed following a combination of creek and tidal flooding in 1998 that caused millions of dollars of damage in Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Palo Alto.

New Dorp Beach Houses To Be Acquired By Build It Back

Staten Island (NY) Live, July 14, 2016

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. – A new city pilot program is poised to scoop up possibly dozens of abandoned properties in New Dorp Beach that have been badly damaged in Hurricane Sandy and left to rot.

Amy Peterson, director of the city’s Housing Recovery Office, announced the pilot, taking place in that neighborhood and in Brighton Beach in Brooklyn and Edgemere in Queens.

With her was Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis, who, along with state Sen. Andrew Lanza and Councilman Steven Matteo, last year asked the city to consider acquiring the abandoned properties through its Build It Back program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Malliotakis and then-Councilman James Oddo had penned letters to the city since 2012, asking them to help with abandoned properties.

Peterson announced Thursday that the city is using its funds to buy houses, as long as owners are willing to sell.

Standing in front of an abandoned house at 32 Topping St., Malliotakis said residents have their property values lowered by neighboring abandoned and dilapidated houses that attract rodents and sometimes squatters.

The Topping Street house sits between two elevated houses — one rebuilt and elevated and the other in the process. The one-story home sits low to the ground, left abandoned for years. There are a handful of houses on the street that are elevated or in the process of being elevated. They sit beside houses like the one at No. 32 — close to the ground and vacant.

Nicole Romano, president of New Dorp Civic Association, is in an attached house and can’t elevate hers without her neighbors agreeing to raise their houses too. Plus there are other logistical issues. She is hoping she won’t have to elevate her house — once a planned seawall is built, it will protect homes in the area and flood insurance rates will decrease and she will be able to afford it.

“The wall is my saving grace,” she said.

There are many people who are finally coming home, back to the neighborhood they left after Hurricane Sandy “only to see there’s still a lot of devastation here,” she said.

The neighborhood has a slightly eerie feeling — pretty, newly reconstructed homes sitting next to destroyed, abandoned houses.

“The reminders of Sandy are still here,” Romano said.

Build It Back officials will canvass New Dorp Beach and the Brooklyn and Queens neighborhoods to identify which houses are abandoned. They will contact the homeowner or bank that owns the property and try to convince them to sell.

Once the city buys the properties, it will demolish the houses and sell the land to a developer who will build according to FEMA standards.

Peterson said the city would offer to purchase properties at post-storm values.

Malliotakis and Romano have already created a working list of many abandoned properties in the neighborhood, estimating there are between 40 and 50.

It's not the only community on Staten Island to see abandoned houses pepper its streets but it's the one selected by the city for the pilot.

Malliotakis expects the bank-owned properties to be eagerly sold to the city. After all, since the state passed a law recently battling "zombie" properties, banks have to care for and maintain houses they own once the foreclosure process begins, not once it's completed, which can take years.

"There's going to be really no reason for them to hold onto these properties and I hope they will sell so we can" get people into these homes.

Bloomingdale Bar's Kitchen Open For Business

By Deborah Walsh

North Jersey (NJ) Media Group, July 14, 2016

BLOOMINGDALE – The borough has had a new pub on Main Street for about nine months where residents can quench their thirst with a variety of tap beers and other libations, and now they can have "Soule food" too at River of Beer.

In celebration of the kitchen being open at River of Beer (aka "The River"), the public is invited to a grand opening on Tuesday, July 18, at 4:15 p.m. There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and local and county dignitaries have been invited as well.

The River is run by the Soule family of Kinnelon. Fred Soule said business has been good, with his taproom getting busier and busier every day. The establishment began serving food two weeks ago, and the fare is drawing rave reviews. Those attending the grand-opening ceremony can taste for themselves as free samples will be provided.

Soule said The River gets its beef fresh from a Sussex County rancher, which is compatible with his aim to provide locally-sourced food and beverage options. The beef, used in The River's hamburgers and roast beef sliders, is from grass-fed cattle.

Soule's wife Nancy also came up with the recipe for "turkey gobblers," which consists of turkey wrapped in stuffing that is then fried and topped with cranberry sauce. That item is becoming a fast favorite, he said.

All the food is made from fresh ingredients and prepared from scratch, he said.

The holdup of the kitchen opening was the result of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations. Because the basement of the establishment is located in the floodplain, FEMA would not allow food storage in refrigeration boxes in the basement unless the units met certain specifications. The owners of The River had to install watertight flood-proof units that had to be certified. Now that The River has received its certifications, it received its permanent certificate of occupancy, and the eagerly-awaited dining experience has begun. A new menu will be published shortly, Soule said.

The pub, which has a capacity of 86 patrons, prides itself in providing a fun atmosphere complete with eight TVs and games, like a giant Jenga. Young patrons routinely play with the pub's board games, and even put down their cell phones to do so, said Soule.

The interior features dark wood and a touch of antique furnishings, and the exterior draws customers to a fire pit and a corn hole game. The bar has 20 taps of beer from local craft breweries or microbreweries in the taproom. The beer inventory includes several selections of Ramstein beer from the High Point Brewery in Butler, which brews year-round and creates seasonal varieties. The beers are rotated, with patrons routinely getting the chance to try something different from microbreweries in the area.

The Main Street establishment also includes a whiskey bar that stocks craft whiskies. The pub has rear parking available, and patrons are permitted to park in the Wells Fargo lot.

For more information on River of Beer, visit riverofbeer.com or call 973-750-1820.

New FEMA Floodmaps Drawn For Lake Of The Ozarks; Some Homeowners To See Insurance Savings

By Nathan Bechtold

Lake Expo Online (MO), July 14, 2016

CAMDEN COUNTY, Mo. — New floodplain maps drawn by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will spell big savings for many homeowners at Lake of the Ozarks. The preliminary versions of the new maps were recently completed. Click to view.

The maps, known as "Flood Insurance Rate Maps" (FIRM) are used by insurance companies to set rates based on projected flood risks.

Camden County Presiding Commissioner Greg Hasty says the main areas affected by the new maps are mainly on the Niangua Arm, but some other areas are included too. He says the new maps are far more accurate than previous versions, and that they properly represent areas that genuinely do flood as well as areas that don't. None of the areas affected by the two floods in 2015 have been moved outside the flood zones, Hasty noted.

FEMA will be sending a consulting officer to discuss some of the specific ways the redrawn maps will affect county government and citizens.

Hasty says he has been working on seeing the flood maps redrawn for four years.

"These maps are a vast improvement and will remove thousands of homes in Camden County from a special flood hazard area," Hasty said, adding, "It's a great day for Camden County.

Climate Action Business Assoc. Shares Resiliency Plan With Scituate Businesses

By Kristi Funderburk

Scituate (MA) Mariner, July 14, 2016

Three interns with the Climate Action Business Association went store-to-store along Front Street on Friday to help get local merchants thinking about the dangers of rising sea levels.

The Boston-based non-profit organization identified areas that are vulnerable to storms and flooding to target for its Businesses Acting on Rising Seas campaign.

The college students' goals were to provide businesses with information on the effects of sea level rise and promote climate adaptation and resiliency planning.

"We think it's really important, but people don't take it into account when they're running a business," said Pete Hoegler, a Walpole resident and junior at George Washington University. "Economic development is really important in the state of Massachusetts and climate change is really going to effect that going forward."

Sea level rise has already been part of the conversation in recent years in Scituate, which has gone back and forth with the Federal Emergency Management Agency over its latest proposed flood maps. Town officials hope to keep working with the federal agency on flaws in the maps, though the maps are up for adoption at the special town meeting this fall.

According to a 2013 study that examined the effect of sea level rise in Scituate, an extra foot by 2038 wouldn't heavily impact the harbor businesses, putting mostly the docks off the harbor below water. Sea level rise of 1 foot with a storm surge from a Category 1 hurricane is expected to flood Cole Parkway through to Front Street, the study showed.

The town has also been working with Applied Coastal Research and Engineering to determine ways it can better protect its shoreline. In late June, a company engineer proposed options ranging from beach nourishment to managed retreat.

More recently, town officials made contact with the Dutch consulate, which has been connecting with Boston, to discuss with officials there ways Holland has been successful in preventing flooding, Public Works Director Kevin Cafferty said.

"We hope to have future meetings on it. We can share technologies and ideas back and forth," he said.

In spreading word of the Businesses Acting on Rising Seas, the Climate Action Business Association interns initially had some brush off from businesses that thought of them as a sort-of marketing team, but of the 20 shops they visited, every one ultimately accepted their Small Business Resilience Guide.

The guide offered tips on what the businesses could do to better prepare themselves. That included knowing your risk, such as by reviewing flood maps; planning for different scenarios from sea level rise to extreme heat; developing an emergency plan, including getting a disaster supply kit ready; and engage the community to drive climate awareness.

Some of the shop employees even joked with the students that if they were talking about flooding, they came to the right place, noting portions of the harbor are susceptible to flooding under certain tides and during bad storms.

"Raising awareness is great," Cindy Vogel, who works at The Welch Company, said of the association's effort.

She said while many who live in Scituate already know the flood risks, she thought it was a good idea the group was spreading the word for anyone who wasn't aware.

One message the group wanted to make clear was the harsh impact of a bad storm, and how preparation can help. Sam Morales, a Boston College senior from Washington D.C., said a quarter of the businesses affected by superstorm Sandy in New Jersey and New York didn't re-open.

"We're trying to take steps to help small businesses help prepare for that kind of disaster, which is expected to hit the region in the next six years or so," he said.

The trio of interns—including Hoegler, Morales, and Chris Burnham, a Connecticut College senior from Needham—asked some of the businesses if they had an emergency plan and most often heard no. The team ran into several stores where the manager wasn't in, but were able to verify Vision Source did have an emergency plan, Hoegler said.

Less than 5 percent of the businesses in any town they've visited, including Gloucester, New Bedford, and the Back Bay neighborhood of Boston, have had one, Hoegler said.

"That's really concerning considering these places are so vulnerable," he said.

Council Gives Stamp Of Approval On Hwy. 53 Consultant, Floodplain Relief

By Jourdan Vian

La Crosse (WI) Tribune, July 14, 2016

The city of La Crosse will get started developing its vision for the Rose Street corridor after the La Crosse Common Council Thursday approved a $200,000 contract with a group of planning consultants.

The council also delayed changes to the make-up and duties of the Aviation Board and put the final stamp of approval on the floodplain relief program.

Perkins + Will, ISG and Toole Design Group will assist a city committee as they work to develop a master plan for the Highway 53 gateway into downtown, from Exit 3 to the La Crosse River.

The design group also has experience framing corridor plans in Rochester, St. Paul and Minneapolis. Their proposal for La Crosse calls for a consultant team to focus on open access, redevelopment and new investment.

Council member Ryan Cornett, who chairs the highway 53 steering committee, said the group chose the consultant in part because of their ability to offer a working document, rather than one that would sit on a shelf somewhere gathering dust.

"We couldn't make a bad decision on this one and we're going to have a document in the end that will actually give us something practical to work with," Cornett said.

Council members Gary Padesky, Jai Johnson and Martin Gaul voted against the contract, with Padesky saying he didn't approve of the expense.

"I'm opposed to this. I don't know where everyone feels we have this money tree, but we can put that money to a lot better use," Padesky said.

Cornett disagreed, saying the plan would be "very important," as the Wisconsin Department of Transportation continues its road construction down the state highway, citing last year's controversy surrounding the differing viewpoints between the DOT and city when it came to the Exit 3 revamp planned for next year.

The city and DOT were at odds when it came to a number of details in the DOT redesign, which is part of its larger Interstate 90 project, before eventually finding an agreement in September 2015.

Cornett said the plan would prevent similar disagreements in the future.

"This will give us the tools to direct the city, and we will have a back-up document to show the way for it," Cornett said.

The contract was approved in a 13-3 vote.

The council voted to wait a month before deciding on changes to the Aviation Board membership and powers after council member David Krump raised concerns that the ordinance changes would delete language requiring council approval for contracts related to the operation of the La Crosse Regional Airport.

The proposed ordinance change strikes one instance of language requiring council oversight, but leaves another. Krump asked that it be clarified before approval.

In other business, the council unanimously gave the planning department final approval to move forward with the floodplain relief program, which will give financial assistance to home-owners attempting to raise their homes out of the floodplain.

Under the program, the city will offer 50 percent up to $20,000 for projects that result in a successful letter of map revision which states that FEMA agrees the structure is no longer in the high-risk flood area. To be eligible, a property would need to have an assessed value of more than $50,000 and be located within the city of La Crosse.

An estimated 1,800 structures are in the floodplain.

MITIGATION

County Adopts Updated Hazard Mitigation Plan

By Melissa Crockett Meske

Jersey County (IL) Journal, July 15, 2016

Ensuring eligibility for funds in case of a natural disaster was top of mind with Jersey County Board members on Monday night.

With updates made through December 2015, the board unanimously voted to adopt a revised Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan that meets the requirements set forth by FEMA for funding from state and federal levels if any natural disasters occur in the county.

The entire plan is available for viewing on the county's website under the "Code Enforcement" section.

According to Mary Kirbach, one of the board members serving on the Legislative Committee, Cindy Cregmiles completed most of the work needed to bring the document up-to-date since its first publication in February 2008.

Patti Thompson, communications manager for Illinois Emergency Management Agency, had recently shared with Journal staff that local governments would still be eligible for public assistance funding in the absence of a local hazard mitigation plan.

However, if a state plan was not in place that had been approved by FEMA, then local governments would only be eligible for emergency work such as debris removal and emergency protective measures. Permanent repairs would not have been eligible, according to Thompson. The state has a FEMA-approved plan in place through 2018.

Jersey County Board members also approved adoption of the 2016 Prevailing Wage Act resolution, with Roger Newberry casting the only dissenting vote. In a phone interview on Tuesday morning, Newberry explained his reason for voting against adopting the prevailing wage resolution.

"It seemed to me to be that wages would be set for workers such as mechanics and laborers based on the work they would be doing for the county rather than a set wage for anyone needing that type of work. For example, if a mechanic is working on a county vehicle, why pay them any more just because it is a county vehicle?" Newberry explained.

Chairman Don Little recommended the adoption of the resolution that would form the Jersey County Citizens Corps Council being organized through Larry Mead, ESDA coordinator. This group would consist of volunteers identified throughout the county that could be called upon as needed in the event of a countywide emergency.

An addendum presented by Gary Krueger, board member, to add a further definition of what constitutes a meeting and how that impacts board member compensation was referred to the Legislative Committee for further discussion.

The board also passed a resolution of sympathy for the family of Monica Goetten Brennan, daughter of former board member Willie Goetten.

In other county business, the audit for fiscal year 2015 was accepted and the list of election judges was approved. Also approved was the closing of the road for a fireworks display on July 30 for the New Piasa Chautauqua Community.

The animal control report for June was accepted, and County Clerk Pam Warford briefly described two new database tools developed in her office.

The board then adjourned into closed session to discuss mediation activity regarding the labor contracts with the United Steel Workers and Teamsters bargaining units, with no further action taken.

Escambia To Spend $4.5M To Buy Property For New County Jail

By Drew Buchanan

The Pulse, July 14, 2016

Escambia County commissioners voted Thursday to spend $4.5 million to purchase a 14-acre property in West Pensacola to construct and expand the county jail complex.

The purchase of the property on the southeast corner of Fairfield Drive and Pace Boulevard, commonly known as the McDonald Shopping Center, paves the way to develop the site for the new jail facility in the wake of the explosion that destroyed the jail's central booking facility.

The April 2014 explosion killed two people, injured more than 180, and destroyed the jail facility on Leonard Street. Federal Emergency Management Agency officials concluded last year that replacement of the jail was preferred over repair, which led to county officials pursuing sites where a new facility could be built.

As part of the plan, the county will retain a consultant to develop a master plan to assist with economic development and neighborhood revitalization within a 12-block diameter of the intersection of Pace Boulevard and Fairfield Drive in West Pensacola. The redevelopment would include reserving approximately 300 feet of road frontage for economic development, with an emphasis on small businesses and businesses owned by minorities and women.

"Today's decision helps move the construction of a new jail facility forward significantly," the county said in a statement. "The commission vowed to work with current tenants and leaseholders in their transition as the project progresses. Property owners will not be expected to vacate until six to 12 months from now."

Additionally, the county will build a youth center in the vicinity of the property that is similar in size, design and facilities as the Wedgewood Community Center.

Commissioners unanimously agreed the design of the expanded jail complex will be "street-friendly" and not institutional like the current complex design.

The property was originally appraised at $3 million, $1.5 million under the purchase price commissioners agreed to.

Despite the cost, commissioners agreed that rebuilding at the current site will allow the county to resolve stormwater issues surrounding the county complex and keep the sheriff's office and jail facilities consolidated in one central location.

Outside consultants hired by Escambia County have said that with the acquisition of the shopping center property up to 40 percent of the land will have to be used as a stormwater pond to mitigate flooding impacts in the flood-prone areas surrounding the jail.

As the county moves forward to rebuild the jail, the county is paying nearly half a million dollars per month to house inmates in out-of-county detention facilities.

Early estimates put the cost of building a new jail at more than $160 million, with FEMA and the state expected to contribute about $50 million for jail demolition and construction. County officials have said it could take up to four years to construct the facility.

Alachua County Commissioner Looks For Solution To Collapsed Northeast 96th Avenue Crossing

WUFT-FM Gainesville (FL), July 14, 2016

Alachua County Commissioner Looks For Solution To Collapsed Northeast 96th Avenue Crossing

Almost a year since the bridge on Northeast 96th Avenue in Gainesville collapsed after a storm, area residents are still parking their cars and walking across the collapsed bridge to their homes every day.

Alachua County Commissioner Robert Hutchinson said he is continuing to search for a temporary solution to the problem, namely the use of a Bailey bridge, a type of portable, pre-fabricated, truss bridge used by the military, to allow vehicles to cross the creek.

Hutchinson, who proposed the idea at the May 24 County Commission meeting, said he wrote to Gov. Rick Scott on June 14 thanking him for his offer to help Alachua County residents. In the letter, Hutchinson wrote that an 80-foot Bailey bridge or equivalent military surplus item would be a simple solution. As of last week, the Governor's office had not responded.

Area residents said they are disheartened by the situation.

Lisa Franklin, who lives on Northeast 96th Avenue, said she was waiting to hear if Hutchinson would meet with someone from Camp Blanding in Starke to find out if there are surplus bridges, and what the cost would be to get one.

Franklin said she has not heard anything since the Alachua County Commissioners meeting in May. While she said she understands the commissioner's hands are tied, she believes a declaration of an emergency early on would have provided aid from FEMA or a grant to cover the cost of a bridge.

She said the residents are still looking for a solution.

Roxanne Eckles-Macdonald, another Northeast 96th Avenue resident, said everyday activities like bringing in groceries have been made difficult.

"You don't realize how lucky you are when you have a driveway you can just drive up into," she said.

But the most difficult part, according to Eckles-Macdonald, is that emergency services cannot reach them.

"If we needed an ambulance, if we needed fire, how would they reach us and in a timely manner?" she said. "Someone could die before they could get to us."

If there is a Bailey bridge available, the best route is to get the military to transfer the bridge to the Florida National Guard since Gov. Scott could then declare the bridge as surplus, Hutchinson said.

"I think if that happens, we would be able to get some military guys or even ex-military guys to construct that bridge or assemble that bridge," said Hutchinson, who has been searching the Internet for surplus Bailey bridges. "That's, hopefully, if not a permanent solution, at least a solution that will last us for many years."

Hutchinson said the county might be looking for two Bailey bridges — the second one for Northeast 108th Avenue, where the crossing has also collapsed. But residents living on Northeast 108th Avenue have another way into their neighborhood, while Northeast 96th Avenue residents have only one road into their subdivision.

"It's not the public's bridge, and that's the problem we're dealing with here," Hutchinson said. "We're looking for a public solution, but at the end of the day, we can't do this for everybody, and we'll do the best we can."

Voters To Decide On Raising Building Heights And Density In Treasure Island

By Jennifer Rich

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, July 14, 2016

TREASURE ISLAND — Despite protests by some residents, the City Commission has decided to give voters the chance to decide whether there can be increases in height and density for some Gulf Boulevard development.

The commission voted last week to put proposed changes to its land use regulations and comprehensive plan to a vote in November.

In 2002, Treasure Island voters made it clear that all future increases in building height and density must be approved in a referendum vote.

The changes, if approved, would establish a planned development zoning district on the east and west side of Gulf Boulevard north of 127th Avenue and on the west side of Gulf Boulevard between 104th and 119th Avenues.

New structures in the district could take advantage of higher density and height in order to encourage redevelopment, city officials said.

The northern end of Gulf Boulevard, which would be included in the new zoning district, is the "gateway to the city," Community Improvement Director Paula Cohen said, and the proposed zoning changes would benefit redevelopment.

Properties on the west side of Gulf Boulevard between 104th and 119th have the greatest concentration of transient lodging in the city.

If approved by voters, density could increase from 50 to 75 units per acre in resort facilities high zoning and up to 60 units per acre in commercial general zones from the current 22 units.

The changes would also mean a possible increase in height from five stories to seven.

State and local agencies reviewed the proposed changes and found the suggested increases in density would not present significant problems related to water and air pollution, evacuation, sanitation, sewer and traffic.

"It's the voters decision," said Mayor Robert Minning, who plans to vote for the issue in November. "We are doing it because we are a 50-plus-year-old city in need of upgrades. With the (Federal Emergency Management Agency) restrictions we have now, if the hotels or condos needed to rebuild, they could not be built to current densities."

But some residents don't want the city to open the door to possible density and height increases.

"This plan is illegal because it doesn't comply with state statutes," said Shelley Eckert, a Key Capri condo owner. "The way they are setting this up, a person could go in and ask for a planned development district in places like Sunset Beach or Paradise Island."

Ella Solomons, a Sunset Beach resident, told commissioners that the assertion that increased density won't make for more traffic congestion "is ludicrous. One doesn't need a study to see the congestion that already exists during tourist season and is starting to become a problem year round."

She said the zoning changes, if approved, "would make Treasure Island look like every other overdeveloped town in Florida."

Former planning and zoning board member Heidi Horak said any increases in density "conflicts with the statewide policy of strategic retreat from our coastal barrier islands."

Some of the "loudest voices of protest" seem to be from residents of Key Capri Condominiums near Johns Pass, Minning said.

"That is a seven-story building, so I don't understand why they can have seven stories and the rest of the city can't," he said.

Eckert said Key Capri was built in the 1970s when the island's population was much less than today.

Minning said he would support the voters' decision.

"Whatever the vote, I will be happy to endorse it," he said.

Technical, Financial Assistance For Property Owners Among Flood Mitigation Options In Centralia

By Justyna Tomtas

Centralia (WA) Chronicle, July 15, 2016

The Centralia City Council on Tuesday night received an update on a flood mitigation program currently under development by the city.

Community Development Director Emil Pierson said the council is working with Kahle Jennings, public works director, and the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority to come up with ways to help reduce flooding in the area.

"Sometimes we forget in the middle of summer what can happen at any time of the year," Pierson said. "One thing the council is charged with is using the toolbox in front of us and finding ways to mitigate the flooding that occurs in our community."

French Wetmore, of French and Associates, has been working with the Flood Authority and other agencies to come up with a variety of solutions.

He said historically Centralia's weak spot is helping individuals protect their properties in existing floodplains.

The program aims to help in that effort with six proposed approaches.

Wetmore said the city could get rid of buildings in harm's way, although that solution is not appropriate everywhere. Other perhaps more viable solutions include elevating buildings above the floodplain and creating flood walls or barriers.

Other options include dry floodproofing homes by converting the walls of structures into waterproof barriers, and wet floodproofing the inside of homes by placing valuables above the height of potential floodwaters. The least expensive option protects utilities by placing electrical components higher in a structure.

"That's the range of options for any particular property," Wetmore said. "Which one works on which building depends on the flood hazards being faced, but the area around here is very conducive to these measures."

He explained the program is currently in its draft form. The next steps would be to propose a program to be run by the city that would provide technical and financial assistance to property owners.

"The goal is to try to find funding opportunities so we don't have to wait till right when a flood occurs when we go to FEMA," Pierson said. "It doesn't matter what time of year, there would be funding available to protect homes and residences in a cost-effective manner."

French and Associates is funded through the Flood Authority, and since the money for this biennium is already spoken for, any financing would have to come out of the 2017-19 biennium.

Wetmore said he expects to have a draft program vetted by the Department of Ecology and ready to present as an option for the city to pursue at the next council meeting on July 26.

Highland Village Council Approves First Read For Age-restricted Development

By Laurie Mullens

Flower Mound (TX) Leader Star, July 14, 2016

Tuesday, the Highland Village City Council conducted a public hearing and approved the first read of an ordinance amending the zoning of a 26-acre tract of land on the east side of Chinn Chapel to allow for an age restricted (55-and-older) planned development.

The planned development would allow for a detached residential condominium development consisting of approximately 100 homes.

The applicant, G&A Consultants, on behalf of the Integrity Group, is proposing a maintenance-free, gated community integrated with quality amenities to enhance the quality of life for active adults seeking a maintenance free lifestyle.

Also at the meeting, the council approved a resolution awarding the bid for the Canyon Creek Drive drainage improvement project to SJ&J Construction, LLC in the amount of $260,572. Previously, the council approved the engineering design of the project in May 2015. Due to erosion around the culverts in the creek under Canyon Creek, the culverts are exhibiting failure causing damage to the pavement on Canyon Creek.

The project will consist of removing the existing 72-inch corrugated metal pipe, constructing approximately 60 linear feet of reinforced concrete boxes, the removal and replacement of approximately 45 linear feet of 6-inch water line, as well as 85 linear feet of asphalt.

Funding for this project comes from the 2016 tax note as well as FEMA reimbursements.

The council also approved a resolution supporting the Lewisville Independent School District in seeking fair and appropriate methods for educating local students. LISD has uncovered grading errors in a significant sample of the state standardized tests that were administered to local students during the 2015-16 academic year. At its own expense, tests were regarded.

Officials said the council supports LISD in their efforts to promote fairness and consistency in the state testing system, as well as in their efforts to seek restitution for the expenses incurred attempting to correct grading errors made on the state standardized tests.

During the mayor's comments, Mayor Charlotte Wilcox presented the winners of the Highland Village Balloon Festival Poster Contest.

Following the mayor's comments, Police Chief Doug Reim spoke about the recent tragedy in Dallas where four Dallas Police Officers and one DART Police Officer was killed in the line of duty.

The city is looking for ways to help the families and friends as they cope with the loss of their spouse, parent, child or sibling.

The city, Highland Village Business Association and the Highland Village Police Department are showing their support for the Texas Police Chiefs Association's Fallen Officer Fund.

The Fallen Officer Fund provides monetary assistance to Texas families of fallen heroes within 24 hours following an officer's line-of-duty death. Currently, the TXFallenPD shirt with the names of each Texas Police Officer killed in the line of duty since 2008 is available for purchase at bonfirefunds.com/txfallenpd. All proceeds go directly to the Fallen Officer Fund.

The HVTV Update informed residents that July is Parks and Recreation month. The Parks and Recreation Department has many athletic leagues and community education classes, check out www.hvparks.com to sign up.

The update also encouraged residents to “Be a Hero” and volunteer to be on a board or commission. Deadline to apply is July 29.

City officials encourage residents to fill out a vacation watch request with the police department. They also reminded residents to leave their pets at home and not in a hot car.

The council early work session and regular session is available on HVTV (Time Warner 16; Frontier 43) and via the website streaming by clicking HVTV. The meetings are also available for on-demand viewing on highlandvillage.org.

Kiawah Council Hears About High-tech Trash, Alligators

By Gregg Bragg

Kiawah (SC) Island Connection, July 14, 2016

Lengthy debates marked the July 5, 2016 meeting of The Town of Kiawah Island Town Council. Roll call confirmed all council members were in attendance for those who forgot their glasses, and remaining routines were quickly dispatched. Council shaved a full hour off last month’s three hour and 40 minute meeting with the help of a relatively thin agenda.

Citizens’ Comments

Wendy Kulick opened the first round of “agenda related” citizens’ comments by suggesting the town wait to act on hiring a new attorney until after this year’s election. Council should instead seek permission to use Young, Clement, and Rivers in the interim, she added. Such a move would enable the town to avoid “tying the hands of future councils,” an oft stated goal. However in this instance, council seems inclined to fill the vacancy during the current term.

Kiawah resident Dennis McGill asked if terms on the Board of Zoning Appeals were staggered, and if the current opening was restricted to the remaining term (end of this year]. He was informed, yes they were, and yes it was.

New Business

There was no old business, so council began a discussion on the amount of coverage the town receives from the Charleston County Sheriff’s office. The motion was made to extend the existing arrangement until Aug. 2, allowing time for a review. The town currently engages four deputies at a time, divided between the island itself and Freshfields 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The contract has a budget of $622,131. Changes in the amount of coverage and method of payment were being floated but hadn’t been resolved by the time the “current” contract expired at the end of June.

“

With the direction from the Public Safety Committee, staff is reviewing the current contract with the CharlestonCounty Sheriff’s Office and other community stakeholders to evaluate the town’s law enforcement needs. We anticipate completing this evaluation and bringing forth the Charleston County Sheriff’s Office Contract at the July Ways and Means Committee meeting,” said the town administrator in a memo to the mayor and council members. The temporary extension was approved unanimously, although there wasn’t as much discussion on this topic as some others.

“

As a means controlling and monitoring the amount of calls the town receives, Carolina Waste (trash and recycling) has proposed installing a RFID (radio-frequency identification system) that would log service real time through a barcode system when the containers are brought to and emptied at the truck.

The contractor as well as the town would have live-time access to this information through a web-based system, “said Rusty Lameo in a memo to the mayor and members of council.

This could help resolve a variety of issues, for example, mixups with cans being placed at the wrong house. “This system will also give us the ability to locate missing containers through its GIS system and send photos of problem areas such as: blocked streets, cans locked in garages and yard debris placed out improperly.”

He pitched the time savings staff could enjoy without the burden of monitoring and following up on collections. Carolina Waste Systems would also save time and effort by eliminating return trips to the island, and would front the estimated $60,000 for the system. However, CWS is asking for an additional $4.50/household [minimum] increase in the rate the town pays, and an extension of their contract until 2020 to recoup the investment.

Questions followed Lameos’s presentation for some time but resulted in unanimous approval of the agreement.

Debris removal, however, is a separate issue from trash and recycling. The contract with Phillips and Jordan for debris removal expired on June 1, 2016.

TOKI requested bids from five different companies but All South Consulting Engineers was the only firm to respond with a completed form. Given the lack of options and considering the Federal Emergency

Management Agency requires a mechanism in place for the removal of storm debris, debate was relatively short.

All South Consulting Engineers received unanimous support for services the town will only have to pay for in the event of a natural disaster. The quick pace of discussions on this topic would not extend to the next agenda item, however.

Board of Zoning Appeals member Jack Braden resigned his seat in late May. The town solicited candidates and ended up with a list consisting of Kiawah residents Wendy Kulick and Barbara Howell. Preparations for the council meeting included a memo from the town administrator to council which read, "I announced at the June Town Council meeting that due to Mr. Braden's resignation that we have one opening on the BZA. In addition, we sent out an e-blast to the community with same information that we have one opening. The Chair (Randy Gilmore) and members of the BZA reviewed the bios of both candidates, and after careful consideration recommend Mrs. Barbara Howell as the next appointee to the Board of Zoning Appeals."

The majority of council members said they didn't know Howell, despite her stint on the Public Service Commission.

Everyone on council knew Kulick though, if for no other reason than her seven years previous experience on the BZA, and they began questioning the recommendation.

Council member Wilson pushed back hard saying he had spoken with Gilmore and was certain Howell was the consensus candidate. Resumes of both candidates were detailed at length by each council member, and while they unanimously felt both candidates qualified, they unanimously voted to appoint Kulick to the position.

The subject of new employees was on the agenda after being tabled for 90 days {along with the purchase of an additional truck} in the course of last month's budget process.

Two council members (Weaver and Wilson) said including two positions in the budget represented an obligation to hire. They didn't feel there was a case for the positions, but neither wanted to delay the budget process. It didn't take 90 days for the town administrator to re-tool her pitch.

The great debate from last month resumed with renewed vigor and went on for some time. Each council member and several staff members had plenty to say about each position. Both positions were approved despite it all, with Wilson voting no on the communications position, and Weaver voting against the new permitting clerk.

The final item of new business on the agenda was a "Request to Proceed with Search for New Town Attorney." This wasn't a matter of making a motion so much as setting a policy direction. The town has formed an ad hoc committee which includes members of council, some residents and Charleston area attorney Dwayne Green. Three options fell out of the committee's discussions: hire someone, contract with someone or, retain a firm on an as needed basis.

The three options were discussed with every council member offering pros and cons. Green had advised the committee a rate of $160 per hour and 10 hours a week (about $80,000 per year), would both garner interest and produce viable candidates. The amount the town's current attorney is paid annually has been a confused issue for some time now. The town expects to begin immediately and make a decision before the end of the current term.

Reports

The town administrator has been busy working toward a new website and updating the town's "alligator protocol."

It seems the recent incident at Disney in Orlando, where a 2-year-old was taken by an alligator, has prompted a lot of calls about aggressive animals on Kiawah.

The mayor talked about legal action against the town's former treasurer and administrator but had little to report.

The town's attorney contacted both U.S. senators and U.S. Congressman Mark Sanford only to be informed there was nothing they could do. The attorney then defended the response saying there was a constitutional prohibition against representatives "appearing to interfere in legal matters." He continued by offering to contact others in law enforcement but no clear directive was given. There is still time for a civil suit, he concluded.

The mayor continued his report saying he and Wilson had been working aggressively to get the Cross Island Parkway on the county's list of priority projects. He even went to the trouble of paying consultant Mike Touhill $600 to produce a presentation to deliver during last month's meeting at St. John's High School, sponsored by the county and city of Charleston. He remembered it wasn't "that kind of meeting" only after he arrived.

"

It has to be Johns Island groups that make it (CIP) happen, if at all," the mayor said. Meetings with other groups (e.g. Johns Island Community Association and Johns Island Task Force) have shown more promise. He said the Coastal Conservation League and Lowcountry Land Trust were on board with the project in exchange for $125 million in conservation considerations. Colin Cuskley of Johns Island Task Force, couched his position in slightly different terms in an email to The Island Connection.

"

The Johns Island Task Force had been discussing the proposed upcoming Charleston County transportation sales tax referendum. The County has been soliciting groups and individuals for their priorities for potential road projects to be funded by the sales tax. The sales tax is also to include funding for the County Greenbelt program.

"

The Task Force supports including $125 to $200 million in the sales tax for Greenbelt programs. (The wide range depends upon whether you are looking at the net funds available from bonding the sales tax or the gross amount of sales tax needed to pay off the bonds over years.)

"

The Task Force supports four Johns Island road projects to be funded by the sales tax, in order of priority:

1. Flyover at intersection of Main Rd and Rt. 17
2. Widening of Main Rd. to four lanes, two each way, from Maybank to Rt. 17.
3. A more comprehensive solution to the Maybank corridor traffic problems beyond the current short term widening project from the Stono Bridge to River Rd.
4. Additional capacity from Betsy Kerrison and River Rd up to Maybank corridor, NOT to be widening of Bohicket or River.

This must include conservation and recreational components. In other words, yes, 'Cross Island Parkway'

"

Natalie [Olson] from CCL attends our meetings. She has not opposed these priorities. I would not take that as CCL's endorsement. So there is some basis for Mayor Lipuma's assumption. But I think it is a bit of a stretch."

Natalie Olson, Esq., Land Use Program Director & Staff Attorney with CCL also responded to a request for follow up information from The Island Connection.

"

We are advocating for $210 million for the greenbelt fund with that conservation component. However, we are supportive of a number of transportation projects in the region – especially the bus rapid transit on I26 and the Flyover at Main Rd and US17 (and widening Main Rd from US17 to Maybank). The other projects mentioned by the task force are also good considerations, and our position (especially [and] specifically on the "Cross Island") is that first and foremost, a comprehensive study of Johns Island needs to be completed to determine what is the most efficient and effective use of funds for transportation and conservation. With this information, we will be able to justify and support the capacity improvements needed on Johns Island, but without that information, we cannot be supportive of a blanket statement or assumption on project design that hasn't been fully studied [or] vetted with the community."

Citizens' Comments, round two

Kiawah resident Wendy Kulick took to the podium for the last installment of citizens' comments. She hesitated for a moment and then thanked council for their strong show of support and for appointing her to the BZA.

Kiawah resident Dennis McGill reminded council about the details of an FOIA request filed with the town of Seabrook. The request revealed Kiawah spent more in any one of the last five years on their in-house attorney than the total Seabrook spent in five and a half years.

McGill added that this comparison of legal expenses did not include costs of TOKI's arrangement with YCR, which handles the town's human resource functions and any litigation. He suggested the town contact peers to see how they manage it.

Kiawah resident Marilyn Larach expressed her frustration with the additional taxes proposed by the City of Charleston for which "we get nothing in return." She suggested the town council members take representatives from both the county and city on driving tours of Johns Island. She specified some of the worst choke points on and off of Johns Island (Maybank and River, Main and 17) and added the tours should be conducted during rush hour as a way to demonstrate the need for funds.

Herbert Hoover Students To Begin School Year Splitting Time In Elkview Middle Building

By Jeff Jenkins

West Virginia MetroNews, July 14, 2016

ELKVIEW, W.Va. — Herbert Hoover High School students will begin the new school year on a half-day schedule in the building that houses Elkview Middle School.

The state Board of Education approved the plan presented by Kanawha County School Superintendent Dr. Ron Duerring at its meeting Thursday morning.

The Hoover building at Falling Rock was hit hard in the June 23 flood. The Elk River exceeded its banks and flooded the school's first floor including two gymnasiums, a band room, administrative offices and other rooms. FEMA must still complete an assessment of the building.

When the school year begins Aug. 8 Hoover students will attend Elkview Middle School from noon to 4:30 each day. The Elkview Middle students will be in the building from 7:30 a.m. until noon, Duerring said.

Portable buildings will be constructed on the football field at Elkview Middle to house Herbert Hoover students.

"This is only going to be a temporary situation until we get a portable high school set up," Duerring said.

When those are completed Hoover students will return to a full school schedule. It's unclear when the Herbert Hoover building will be ready for students to return.

"At this time we do not have that kind of information. We are still in the emergency cleanup phase," Deurring said.

A meeting between Kanawha County school officials and the company with the modular buildings have a meeting scheduled for later Thursday, Duerring said.

The split schedule will involve feeding Elkview Middle students lunch before they leave and feeding Herbert Hoover students lunch when they arrive. Herbert Hoover students will practice sports in the mornings and Elkview Middle students in the afternoons.

Bus schedules are being worked out, taking into consideration a number of roads were damaged by the flood.

Duerring said he's not overly concerned about logistics.

"It's an issue of mobilizing everybody and getting the plan together and being proactive instead of reactive when the time comes," he said.

County Signs On For Island View Project

By Richard Johnson

International Falls (MN) Daily Journal, July 13, 2016

The Koochiching County Board this week approved a project partnership agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for design and construction assistance for the $17 million Island View sewer project.

The project, near Voyageurs National Park and Rainy Lake, will extend service to about 162 residences and some resorts along Highway 11 East, from Tilson Creek to Sha Sha Point.

The county will receive $4.5 million from the Army Corps. County Environmental Services Director Dale Olson has said the project has just more than $13 million in state and federal funding, and the rest will come from assessments to property owners.

Olson said he hopes bids can be let this fall and construction can start in 2017. The project will take one-and-a-half to two construction seasons.

"We just have to kind of wait and see how the bids come in, and see how close we are," he told The Journal. "It's one of the biggest projects in the five-state area. When we asked how close bids were coming in, they said there are no projects this big to compare them to."

Olson said he will present information at next Tuesday's board meeting that will establish the property cost assessment policy and schedule a public hearing to take input on creation of the sewer system.

Commissioner Wade Pavleck said he hopes cost estimates can be available for homeowners at the hearing.

He said the county still has funding tied up in the state Legislature, as this year's legislative session ended without an approved bonding bill.

"I'm hoping that the Legislature will hold a special session and wrap things up," Pavleck said. "But if they don't, we're probably looking into next year to get the final money. In essence, we're moving forward without all of the funding that we would be able to get. But we're in pretty good shape. A lot depends on the bids, and how they come in."

Olson said the county can seek reimbursement from the grant for design work done to date.

The Island View work is part of a larger project, known as the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project, that would bring sewer solutions to communities that surround the park (see www.sehinc/online/namakan for more information).

In other business, the board authorized a budget adjustment of $14,000 to nominate the 1904 Williams Township school building for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, and approved spending $8,000 to hire a consultant to evaluate the building.

Commissioners set aside restoration funding in 2009, but delayed spending it until an assessment of the building's historic significance could be determined for placement on the National Register.

The building is on county land in the northwest corner of the county. It is the only remaining one-room school building of its kind in the county.

Its foundation needs repair in order for the building to be used as a community center and historic visiting site, said Ed Oerichbauer, director of the Koochiching Museums.

He said the building would probably be used more if it was renovated. Any work would probably be done in 2018.

"I certainly believe it's worth preserving," Oerichbauer said.

Many people in the township area believe the school building should be preserved, Commissioner Wayne Skoe said.

"My sentiment is, this is the only way to do this," he said.

Commissioners reviewed Federal Emergency Management Agency road projects in which FEMA awarded funding for repairs and mitigation due to flooding in 2014.

The board accepted a low bid of just more than $49,000 from Reierson Construction, Bemidji, for a repair project on County Road 146 at Littlefork, and a low bid of of just more than $64,000 from Redstone Construction, Mora, for work on a bridge on County State Aid Highway 22 at Beaver Brook, on the north end of Littlefork.

A contract was awarded to Gladen Construction, Laporte, for a low bid of just more than $467,000 for bridge and culvert replacement projects on Unorganized Township Road 17, between County Road 27 and Highway 6, east of Northome.

Also Tuesday, commissioners in committee began drafting a plan to study implementation of buffer zones.

The Department of Natural Resources this week released a map of Minnesota public waters and ditches requiring permanent vegetative buffers or alternative water quality practices, as part of its commitment to protecting clean water.

The map shows landowners and local governments where protective vegetative buffers of 16.5 feet or an average of 50 feet are required, as approved by the state Legislature in 2015 and revised this year. More than 90,000 miles of Minnesota waters require buffers or alternative water quality practices, according to the DNR.

Minnesota's buffer law establishes new perennial vegetation buffers along rivers, streams, lakes, public ditches and some wetlands. Buffers protect water resources by helping filter phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment.

The county board will discuss buffer requirements, the role of the county and the Koochiching Soil and Water District, and related information during its Aug. 9 meeting.

EPA Responds To Certification Story

By Frank Lewis

Portsmouth (OH) Daily Times, July 14, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has responded to a recent story in the Daily Times concerning the certification of the floodwall levee in the city of Portsmouth. The story related that there was no concern on the part of Wastewater Director Rick Duncan that the certification will take place. FEMA does not give any reason to believe it will be otherwise.

"Regarding the status of the levee accreditation process: our team has been working closely with the City of Portsmouth and the Village of New Boston regarding their levee accreditation packages within Scioto County, Ohio," Cassie Ringsdorf of FEMA Region-5 in Chicago, said in an email. "These levee accreditation packages were just recently submitted for FEMA review at the end of June 2016. We are currently reviewing them for completeness and will continue working with these communities to move the accreditation process forward."

The story expressed concern by insurance agent Dan Cassidy of Berndt-Murfin Insurance agency, that if decertification took place, FEMA might tell the city they would not issue flood insurance to people in the city.

"Regarding the availability of flood insurance in these areas: when levees meet Federal standards for protection, flood maps show them as accredited levees and show the land facing the levee as a moderate-risk area (Zone X) on the map," Ringsdorf said. "Flood insurance is not federally required by lenders, but it is strongly recommended and available for purchase by residents and business owners if that community participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)."

Ringsdorf said, in situations when levees do not meet Federal standards, they are considered non-accredited, and flood maps show the levee-affected area as a high-risk area. She said the scenario does not mean federal flood insurance is no longer available.

"In these high-risk areas, most mortgage holders will be required to carry flood insurance by their lender. Residents and business owners can learn more about the NFIP and living behind levees by visiting www.FloodSmart.gov, and if they need to find an insurance agent in their area, estimate their insurance premiums or rate their flood risk, they can do so on this site," Ringsdorf said.

She said it is important to note that neither certification nor accreditation guarantees protection. All flood hazard maps showing levees will carry a warning that overtopping or failure is possible, and that flood insurance and adherence to evacuation procedures are strongly recommended.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

New Jersey Firefighter Dies Following Call

Fire Engineering, July 14, 2016

Chief Engineer Richard N. Zadorozny of the Eatontown (NJ) Engine, Truck and Hose Co. #1 died earlier this week following a fire department response, according to the U.S. Fire Administration.

Along with other firefighters from his fire department, Chief Engineer Zadorozny, 66, was dispatched for an odor of natural gas at a local apartment complex on July 10. Operating the first responding apparatus, Zadorozny and his crew arrived on scene to investigate the incident. The odor was eventually unfounded and the apparatus returned to quarters.

Chief Engineer Zadorozny returned to his home for the evening and, a few hours later, suffered a medical event (likely cardiac). EMS responded to Zadorozny's home, but were unable to revive him. Zadorozny was pronounced dead a short time later.

Illinois Firefighter Collapses During Training, Dies

Fire Engineering, July 14, 2016

A 52-year-old volunteer firefighter has died after collapsing during training in Illinois.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, on July 12, Captain Eric Kohlbauer of the Freeport Rural Fire Protection District was working with other members of his fire department on a pumper relay drill when he suddenly collapsed and fell face forward into a dump tank of water.

Fellow responders immediately placed Kohlbauer on the ground and rendered medical aid, including AED. Within minutes, Captain Kohlbauer was transported to the hospital where, despite all best efforts, he succumbed to his injury reported to have been an aortic rupture.

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

Houses Passes Four Critical Homeland Security Bills

By Amanda Vicinanzo

Homeland Security Today, July 15, 2016

The House of Representatives on Monday passed four homeland security bills to protect the United States against the wide array of ever-evolving threats facing the homeland today. The bills include measures to curb foreign fighter and terrorist travel to the United States, enhance airport security, and improve internal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) practices and procedures.

"We face an unprecedented pace of terror worldwide," said Rep. Mike McCaul (R-Texas), Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security. "To fully understand and defend against the growing threat, the United States must learn from our past actions, defend against current plots, and actively protect potential future vulnerabilities."

McCaul continued, "The bills passed by the House today do just that. These bills bolster security at airport entry points, preemptively defend against evildoers attempting to travel to our homeland, and improve DHS's internal operations to constantly find ways to improve safety and efficiency."

HR 4404, the Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel Exercise Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Martha McSally (R-AZ), requires DHS to conduct an exercise to evaluate the nation's preparedness against all phases of foreign fighter and terrorist planning and travel to the United States.

The last major government exercise on terrorist travel was conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2009 and focused primarily on terrorists attempting to infiltrate the United States rather than on Americans leaving the country to train overseas with terrorist groups as foreign fighters.

The bill is the result of the Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel, which investigated the threat pose by ISIS. The report includes 32 findings and 50 recommendations.

"In our findings, the Task Force found that the growing complexity and changing nature of the foreign fighter phenomenon may be creating unseen gaps in our defenses, yet it has been years since any large-scale stress test has been conducted," said Rep. McSally. "Carrying out such a test would be beneficial in understanding how partners at all levels of government, and abroad, are currently responding to these scenarios."

HR 4785, the DHS Stop Asset and Vehicle Excess Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA), seeks to improve management of DHS's vehicle fleet. The bill directs the Under Secretary for Management to, among other things, provide Departmental components with a standardized vehicle allocation methodology.

Rep. Perry introduced the bill in response to several DHS Office of the Inspector General (IG) reports, including a 2015 report revealing that the vehicle fleet of the Federal Protective Service (FPS) has not been managed effectively, potentially costing DHS $2.5 million in FY 2014.

As Homeland Security Today previous reported, FPS's fleet consists of 1,059 SUVS – 93 percent of its total fleet—even though the National Protection and Programs Directorate Fleet Manual states that midsize sedan is the preferred vehicle, and an SUV only an exception.

A law enforcement SUV costs on average $1200 more annually than a sedan. Consequently, if sedans had been used instead of SUVs, FPS could have saved more than $1.1 million annually, according to the report.

"To ensure it has the optimal fleet necessary to meet its mission, FPS needs to develop and use a sound methodology instead of making ad hoc, undocumented decisions," IG auditors concluded. "Without better oversight and accurate data, FPS cannot ensure it is effectively managing its fleet, and it is also missing opportunities to identify cost savings."

HR 5385, the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) Technical Correction Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ) revises the requirements of the QHSR in an effort to improve the quality and timeliness of the review that DHS carries out.

This entails including more stakeholder engagement, conducting a regular risk assessment, and maintaining all documents regarding the Quadrennial Review.

In April 2016, GAO released its review of DHS's second QHSR, which was issued in 2014, and reported that, despite some progress in addressing weaknesses in the first review, there were several areas for improvement for future reviews.

The bill would make mostly technical changes to the current requirements for that quadrennial review implementing various GAO recommendations.

HR 5056, the Airport Perimeter and Access Control Security Act of 2015, introduced by Rep. William Keating (D-MA), requires the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to update airport security risk assessments, specifically along airport perimeters and points of access to secure areas.

As Homeland Security Today reported earlier this year, weaknesses in TSA's oversight of airport perimeter security and access controls may be putting the nation's civil aviation system at grave risk, according to a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report.

"The intense scrutiny placed at checkpoints in airports, but not on the perimeter, is the equivalent of locking your home's doors while leaving your windows wide open. The GAO found that in many instances, the windows are open at our airports," said Rep. Keating.

McSally Bill To Prevent Foreign Fighter Travel Passes House

By Alex Murtha

Homeland Preparedness News, July 14, 2016

The U.S. House of Representatives passed U.S. Rep. Martha McSally's (R-AZ) legislation on Monday to require a stress test of U.S. government protection and prevention programs against terrorist travel.

The bill, the Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel Exercise Act, is the result of a task force on combating terrorist and foreign fighter travel into U.S. security that investigated vulnerabilities and threats posed by ISIS. After a six month investigation, the task force released a report containing 32 key findings and more than 50 different recommendations to strengthen the nation's safety.

"In our findings, the task force found that the growing complexity and changing nature of the foreign fighter phenomenon may be creating unseen gaps in our defenses, yet it has been years since any large-scale stress test has been conducted," McSally said. "Carrying out such a test would be beneficial in understanding how partners at all levels of government, and abroad, are currently responding to these scenarios."

The U.S. government last conducted an exercise of this nature with its Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2009. The exercise focused primarily on terrorists attempting to infiltrate the United States through a variety of means.

McSally noted that the task force should also focus on homegrown terrorists leaving the country to train overseas with terrorist groups as foreign fighters.

Rogers: National Security Agency Becoming 'FEMA Of The Cyber World'

By Yasmin Tadjdeh

National Defense Magazine, July 14, 2016

Following major cybersecurity breaches nationwide, the National Security Agency is increasingly being called upon to advise both government offices and the private sector, said the head of the United States' spy agency.

"Over the course of the last decade or so, increasingly NSA in its information assurance mission is being called upon to provide defensive insight as to how you stop penetrations — and once a network is penetrated — how do you drive the opponent out and then how do you configure structures so they can't get back in," said Adm. Mike Rogers, commander of U.S. Cyber Command and director of the National Security Agency.

Rogers said he often jokes with colleagues that, "we find ourselves becoming the FEMA of the cyber world."

During the infamous Sony hack — in which the motion picture company suffered a major data breach in 2014, allegedly at the hands of North Korea — NSA was called in to help, he said July 14 during remarks at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

"If you had told me as a military leader, as the director of the NSA, that I was going to be involved in supporting a motion picture company in responding to how it was going to deal with a significant penetration I'll be honest and tell you 'Boy, I don't think that's going to come up during my time as the director.' I failed to anticipate that one miserably," he said.

The NSA also was part of a team that provided expertise following the Office of Personnel Management breach in 2015, Rogers said. During that incident, millions of government employee's personal data was compromised.

Within Cyber Command, officials are working to increase its capacity and capability, Rogers said. Working alongside the Defense Department, the command is generating a "cyber mission force."

"It's a force of dedicated, focused, trained and organized cyber professionals" designed to provide the department with high-end cyber warriors, he said.

There are about 6,200 individuals within the force currently, he said. That is about half of the total goal, he added. Full operational capability is slated for late September 2018. Initial operating capability is scheduled for Sept. 30.

"That's only three months away so I'm focused right now on making sure … that we meet that timeline," he said. "I'm comfortable that we're going to meet those milestones."

Of the 6,200 individual currently in the cyber mission force, they are divided into 133 specialized teams. Some are defensive and some are offensive, he said.

Demand for these types of cyber warriors is high and exceeds capacity, he noted. "We're not even waiting until a team is fully constructed," he said. "As soon as we get a cadre we are putting teams on targets."

"Think about what that means," he said. "In DoD we don't take a fighter squadron and say, 'Well, you've got five of your 24 aircraft. We're sending you to Afghanistan.' We don't say, 'Hey, we've got a brand new carrier coming out of the yards. You've done your builders acceptance trials, but you haven't done your workups. We are forward deploying you to the Persian Gulf.' The reality is because of the dynamics of cyber, we need to apply capacity as soon as we're generating it."

Meanwhile, Rogers said that U.S. Cyber Command is working alongside the rest of the military to help destroy the Islamic State. "We are doing offensive actions right now against ISIL in cyber in the fight in Syria and Iraq," he said.

He declined to go into any further details.

FIRE GRANTS

Trumansburg And Ovid Fire Departments Receive Federal Grants

By Tom Reed

Lansing (NY) Star, July 15, 2016

Congressman Tom Reed announces the Trumansburg and Ovid Fire Departments will be awarded a regional federal grant through the Department of Homeland Security in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"As a community, we care about demonstrating our appreciation by recognizing the men and women who are committed to keeping us safe," said Reed. "These individuals devote hours of hard work to protect us and it is only right we give them the resources they need to do their jobs."

The Trumansburg and Ovid Fire Departments will receive a $224,400 regional grant which will be used to purchase new self contained breathing apparatuses and replace old units. This will allow the department to update their units to ones that are up to current NFPA standards.

"As the Fire Chief of the Trumansburg Fire Department I would like to say thank you to Tom Reed and his staff for their efforts and to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Committee for awarding us our Regional grant with the Ovid Fire Department," said Trumansburg Fire Chief Jason Fulton. "These funds of $224,400.00 will give us the opportunity to purchase new self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) for both departments to replace old, broken, and out dated units that are not up to the current NFPA standards. The new SCBA will allow us to meet the current NFPA standards and will serve both of our communities for years to come."

Sandwich Selectmen Consider Grant, Fire Station Renovations

By George Brennan

Cape Cod (MA) Times, July 14, 2016

SANDWICH – With a potential $1.2 million federal grant pending that would allow the fire department to hire eight additional firefighters for two years, the Board of Selectmen held off on deciding what to do about renovations to the East Sandwich Fire Station.

Voters in May supported renovating that building, but rejected a $750,000 Proposition 2½ override to fund the positions.

But a grant Fire Chief William Carrico applied for could provide the funds, at least temporarily.

The potential of the town getting the grant "looks good," Carrico told selectmen Thursday night, noting that he had been contacted by a key official with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is awarding the so-called SAFER grant. "I could know as soon as (Friday)."

The grant isn't a complete solution because it only provides salary and related costs for two years. The town would still have to come up with $80,000 for equipment for the firefighters, as well as health care costs, Town Manager George "Bud" Dunham said.

But the grant would buy the town time to secure the funding, Selectman Patrick Ellis said, potentially spreading out some of the costs over three fiscal years by the time the firefighters are hired and trained.

Selectman Peter Beauchemin urged his fellow board members to move forward with the $1.2 million renovation of East Sandwich, regardless of the grant.

"We've got the money, let's do the fire station," he said.

But Selectman Frank Pannorfi was unconvinced it was a good idea without a plan to staff the building.

"Building a building for the sake of building a buiding makes absolutely no sense," Pannorfi said.

When Carrico floated the idea of rotating staff among the three stations – closing a fire station for a week at a time – Pannorfi liked that idea as a stop gap measure if the grant isn't funded.

"I don't think it's fair to people of East Sandwich to have half a plan," he said.

The board is expected to tackle the issue at its next meeting July 28.

Carrico said if the town receives the grant, it has 30 days to approve or reject it.

"If you decide to refuse the grant, I can never go back to the well again," he said.

Meanwhile, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved a $1.2 million contract with architect Kaestle Boos to do the architectural drawings and engineering for a new police station, fire station and the renovations for East Sandwich.

If the board decides not to do the renovation, Dunham said there will be money returned to the town from the Kaestle Boos contract.

Amherst Seeks Grant To Add Firefighters

By Scott Merzbach

Amherst (MA) Bulletin, July 14, 2016

AMHERST — As fire tore through an apartment building on Belchertown Road last month, the first firefighter who responded to Alpine Commons was the only person on board the fire engine.

That firefighter from the Central Fire Station was unable to begin any work on combating the blaze.

"There's nothing we can do with one guy on one fire truck," said Fire Chief Walter "Tim" Nelson.

Even though eight firefighters were on duty June 4, four were already handling medical calls on two ambulances at the time the fire broke out, while three other firefighters arrived a short time later on a second fire engine from the North Fire Station, Nelson said.

Though Nelson acknowledges the lack of personnel to battle the fire did not change the outcome, noting that the fire had "a good head start," he said the apartment fire illustrates the challenges the department faces with a minimum staffing of seven firefighter paramedics on duty when the University of Massachusetts and two colleges are not in session, and a minimum staffing of eight career firefighters during the school year.

"Getting our staff up is a goal so that we can better serve the public," Nelson said.

To that end, Nelson said the department has applied for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, also known as SAFER. If selected, the two-year, $1.08 million grant would add eight professional personnel, six who would join the 42 firefighter paramedics currently "on line," as well as one firefighter whose focus would be on prevention and another who would be dedicated to training.

"That would brings us up to 48 on the line," Nelson said. "This is a labor intensive business, and one of the major resources we need right now are people."

The grant, which will be awarded in late summer or early fall, would cover the full pay and benefits of those hired for the two-year period, at which time the town would determine whether it could absorb these costs into the department's $4.5 million budget.Annual calls at 6,200

Amherst firefighters respond to about 6,200 calls a year, with call volume rising at about a 2 percent annual rate. Nelson said nearly 80 percent of the calls are for medical reasons at an average of 90 minutes each due to ambulance trips to out-of-town hospitals such as Cooley Dickinson in Northampton.

The ambulances also serve four surrounding towns — Hadley, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury, encompassing 125 square miles and 80,000 people, Nelson said.

A study 13 years ago revealed that minimum staffing should be 11 firefighters.

Nelson said runs have been climbing steadily for 15 to 20 years. With the exception the weekends when UMass provides the town money to have at least 13 firefighter paramedics on duty during peak times, roughly 20 hours on Friday and Saturday nights, "we're barely keeping our heads above water," he said.

But firefighters are getting tired and can't get to all the work that needs to be done. "Our people are showing signs of stress," Nelson said. "There's a lot more work being done by the same pool of folks."

Meantime, the town is about to learn what the department needs through a staffing study to be done by The Carlson Group of Andover.

"We think this company will do well in giving our staffing an objective look," Nelson said.

Besides making recommendations about minimum staffing, the study may determine whether the department should have someone who directs, manages, supervises and coordinates the activities and operations of each shift.

"Another thing we'd like to see down the road is a shift commander," Nelson said.

Peter Hechenbleikner, the interim town manager, said in an email that the staffing and deployment study, which will be complete in three to four months, will inform the town as to what, if any, need there is for additional staffing.

Martinez Activates State Emergency Operations Center, Federal Funding Approved To Assist In Response

KRWG-FM Las Cruces (NM), July 14, 2016

Santa Fe, NM — Today, Governor Susana Martinez directed the activation of the New Mexico Emergency Operations Center to assist in the coordinated response to the Timberon Fire in Otero County. The Governor also announced that federal funding to help cover costs associated with fighting the fire has been approved.

"First and foremost, our priority is protecting the people of Timberon and surrounding areas," said Governor Martinez. "I've directed our state agencies to work together to ensure that all resources are available to assist in fighting the fire. Sadly, the fire may have already destroyed more than a dozen homes, and many more are at risk. I ask New Mexicans to join me in praying for the residents of Timberon."

The state has been approved for a Fire Management Assistance Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to cover 75 percent of the cost of suppressing the fire. Eligible costs include pre-positioning of resources, evacuations and sheltering, traffic control, and fire equipment.

Additionally, the Governor has directed state agencies such as the New Mexico State Police, the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Department of Transportation, New Mexico State Forestry, and others to assist in the response to the fire.

Earlier today, the Governor joined the New Mexico National Guard for a flyover of the affected areas to survey the damage, and received a briefing from incident commanders and first responders on the fire. The Timberon Fire has burned an estimated 290 acres so far. State, local, and federal partners involved will continue to monitor and respond to the fire in a coordinated manner.

New Mexico State Forestry and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management urge all state residents and visitors to do their part in preventing and being prepared for wildfire. Should evacuations because of wildfire become necessary, remember the "Five Ps" you need to have ready to go: People, important Papers, Prescriptions, family Pictures and Pets.

For current information about the Timberon Fire, active wildland fire in New Mexico or information on wildfire preparedness and prevention, log onto www.nmfireinfo.com or www.inciweb.org.

Jailer David Moss Wants To Arm All 38 Of His Officers

By Janie Slaven

Somerset (KY) Commonwealth Journal, July 14, 2016

Pulaski County Judge-Executive Steve Kelley opened yesterday's fiscal court meeting with a moment of silence in remembrance of "all the tragedies this country has faced this week."

While one would like to think the turmoil won't spread to this community, the possibility that it might has weighed on many local officials' minds.

In his departmental report, Jailer David Moss advised the court that he wants to arm each of the jail's 38 sworn officers. Currently the jail has six weapons, which are used primarily during transports such as to hospitals or other prisons.

"With what's happened across the country, our officers have the same powers as every police officer in the state of Kentucky," Moss said. "Our officers are wearing uniforms; they're unarmed…We're just trying to make it safe for them. That's just another officer in the county that's going to be able to help someone out if we need to."

Magistrate Glenn Maxey asked if the deputy jailers would be safer if they changed into their uniforms after arriving at work.

"I can see where you're going with that," Moss responded, "but they're officers…We don't allow them to be off-duty wearing their uniforms [but] they're on duty, to us, coming to work and going home."

The jailer also announced that the Pulaski County Detention Center has averaged 377 inmates over the past month — prompting the jail to stop accepting inmates from other counties for the time being.

Moss went on to say that overcrowding is an issue statewide with the Department of Corrections preparing to open up two private facilities to house approximately 1,600 state inmates.

While there were no planned speakers during the Citizens Comments portion of the meeting, Judge Kelley opened the floor for questions from the latest Leadership Lake Cumberland class.

Court officials gave a brief overview of the duties for a judge-executive and magistrates as well as discussed the budgeting process.

Judge Kelley also spoke about the new economic development initiative known as SPEDA (Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority) as well as the current financial crisis for the Pulaski County Alzheimer's Respite Center.

"We are close to making that new organization," Judge Kelley said of SPEDA. "We've got a lot of people who care but we don't have one entity that's driving that…I think it's going to be a great tool moving forward for Pulaski County, Somerset and this region."

Regarding the Alzheimer's center, Judge Kelley said the county provides the building, utilities and maintenance in addition to a $7,500 annual stipend. While the county, he said, couldn't take over the center from the Lake Cumberland Area Development District, Kelley is hopeful the ADD can work with the center toward a resolution.

"Hopefully we'll be able to buy another 4-6 months to figure out how to go forward," Judge Kelley said. "We want it to stay open; it's a great program that's needed."

In other business, the court:

- heard from the Lake Cumberland District Health Department, whose board had approved property tax rates in the amount of three cents per $100 for both real and personal properties. The rates have not changed since 2011.
- approved a $2,500 Grand Slam sponsorship for the upcoming Ohio Valley Regional Tournament for 10-year-olds which will be hosted by the Lake Cumberland Cal Ripken League. Local coach Steve Acton estimated that the July 20 event (featuring 12 teams from six states) would bring up to 700 people into Somerset.
- approved a resolution to apply for a $419,000 Kentucky Department of Local Government/FEMA grant toward collecting LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data for Pulaski and portions of three other counties. Judge Kelley said the aerial pictography and topographical data would be helpful for flood control and other development projects.
- heard from Community Development Director Tiffany Bourne regarding a successful Master Musicians Festival this past weekend. Bourne estimated the festival has a $3 million impact on the local economy.
- authorized bidding for a utility tractor.

- approved a list of state-approved building and electric inspectors able to work on projects in Pulaski County.

The next meeting of Pulaski County Fiscal Court is scheduled for July 26 at 10 a.m.

Federal Grants Will Enable Rhode Island Cities To Hire 95 Firefighters

By Gregory Smith

Emergency Management Magazine, July 15, 2016

The City of Providence will receive a $15,011,440 federal grant to hire 80 firefighters and stanch the bleeding from a mass loss of Fire Department personnel over the past 18 months.

And the City of Cranston will receive a $2,765,310 federal grant to hire 15 firefighters, increasing the possibility that the Fire Department will hire its first female firefighter.

Rhode Island's congressional delegation, Providence Mayor Jorge O. Elorza and Cranston Mayor Allan W. Fung announced Wednesday that FEMA has made the grants under the SAFER program. SAFER means Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response.

Providence will receive the largest SAFER award being made this year nationally, according to U.S. Sen. Jack Reed.

Providence has seen more than 100 uniformed personnel retire over the past 18 months, because, Public Safety Commissioner Steven M. Paré said, the department had a work force that skewed older and beyond the age of retirement eligibility. A significant factor in the exodus, he acknowledged, was the controversial change in the department's work schedule.

A SAFER grant carries the full cost of firefighters with fringe benefits for two fiscal years, after which the municipality must pick up the cost.

Providence has allocated money for an 80-person training academy, scheduled to begin in January or February. Receiving the grant creates an operating budget surplus of about $7.5 million for the 2016-2017 fiscal year because the city will not have to spend its own money initially.

On paper, the department has an authorized uniformed force of 438, is budgeted for 422 and has an actual head count of 342. Filling the 80 vacancies will bring it back up to 422.

In the 2015 calendar year, the department had 41,783 calls for service, of which 29,739 were for emergency medical services.

Cranston Fire Chief William McKenna could not be reached for comment.

The Cranston department has no members of racial or ethnic minority groups in its 195-member uniformed force and never had a female. A female is ranked number 18 on a hiring eligibility list, so as more retirements occur, it appears likely that her spot will be reached for hiring before the list expires and is replaced with a fresh list of recruits.

If Cranston did not land a SAFER grant, it planned to hire and train seven firefighters at its own expense. Now it can bring on 15.

Cranston has an annual average of 15,000 calls for service, according to the announcement.

Since 2005, fire departments and other first responders in Rhode Island have won more than $30 million in SAFER grants.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Schoharie Man Sentenced For Defrauding FEMA

Oneonta (NY) Daily Star, July 14, 2016

A 31-year-old Schoharie man was sentenced to prison Thursday in Albany for defrauding the Federal Emergency Management Agency for benefits after Hurricane Irene, according to a media release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Scott A. Clapper, Jr. was sentenced to 18 months incarceration for making false statements and submitting false documents.

The announcement was made by United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian and Giovanni Tiano, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, Detroit Field Office.

Senior U.S. District Judge Thomas McAvoy also ordered Clapper to serve 3 years of supervised release, to begin upon Clapper's release from prison; to pay $16,426 in restitution to FEMA; and to pay a $1,300 special assessment to the court. Clapper will serve the 18-month prison sentence concurrently with state prison sentences he is serving for burglary convictions unrelated to his defrauding of FEMA. He becomes eligible for state parole in March 2019.

As part of his guilty plea in January, Clapper admitted to making false statements and submitting false documents to FEMA following Hurricane Irene, which struck New York in August 2011 and made uninhabitable the Schoharie County home in which Clapper was living at the time.

Clapper told FEMA that his monthly rent at his new home, in Westerlo, was $1,200, when it was really $500. In an effort to document the $1,200 monthly rent, Clapper also submitted to FEMA fake lease agreements and rent receipts containing the forged signature of his landlord. Clapper received $16,426 from FEMA as a result of the falsehoods, the release said.

This case was investigated by the Detroit Field Office of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael Barnett.

Man Sentenced To 18 Months For Defrauding FEMA Following Hurricane Irene

WTEN-TV Albany (NY), July 14, 2016

A judge sentenced 31-year-old Scott Clapper Jr. to 18 months in prison for defrauding FEMA.

Clapper's sentence will be served concurrently with another sentence he is currently serving.

He will also have to pay $16,426 in restitution to FEMA and pay a $1,300 special assessment to the court.

Clapper admitted to making false statements, submitting false documents, and lying about how much he paid in rent in order to receive more than $16,000 in benefits from FEMA following Hurricane Irene.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Clapper pleaded guilty in January.

He faces a maximum of 30 years in prison.

Man Sentenced For Post-Irene FEMA Fraud

Oneonta (NY) Daily Star, July 14, 2016

A Schoharie man has been sentenced to 18 months in prison for defrauding the federal government after Hurricane Irene, a media release said.

Scott A. Clapper Jr., 31, pleaded guilty in federal court in January to making false statements and submitting false documents to FEMA following Hurricane Irene, which struck New York in August 2011. Clapper received $16,426 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a result of the falsehoods, the release said.

In the sentencing, Senior U.S. District Judge Thomas J. McAvoy for the Northern District of New York also ordered Clapper to serve three years of supervised release, to begin upon Clapper's release from prison; to pay $16,426 in restitution to the FEMA; and to pay a $1,300 special assessment to the Court.

Clapper's sentence was announced Thursday by U.S. Attorney Richard S. Hartunian and Giovanni Tiano, special agent in charge of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, Detroit Field Office.

Clapper will serve the 18-month prison sentence concurrently with state prison sentences he is serving for burglary convictions unrelated to his defrauding of FEMA, according to the release, and Clapper becomes eligible for state parole in March 2019.

The FEMA case was investigated by the Detroit Field Office of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, and it was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael Barnett.

Schoharie Man Sentenced For Defrauding FEMA During Hurricane Irene

WNYT-TV Albany (NY), July 14, 2016

A Schoharie man is sentenced for defrauding FEMA after Hurricane Irene.

The U.S. Attorney's office says Scott Clapper Jr. submitted false documents after the storm made his home uninhabitable.

Clapper told FEMA his monthly rent was $1,200, when it was really $500.

He also submitted fake lease agreements and rent receipts in the amount of more than $16,000.

Clapper will serve 18 months in prison, concurrent with time he's serving for burglary convictions.

Schoharie Man Who Stole FEMA Money Heads To Prison

By JP Lawrence

Albany (NY) Times Union, July 14, 2016

ALBANY — A Schoharie man was sentenced 18 months in prison for lying to get more Tropical Storm Irene recovery money, federal prosecutors said.

Scott A. Clapper, 31, pleaded guilty to making false statements and submitting false documents to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Clapper admitted to telling FEMA he paid more money for rent on his home than he actually did.

The storm hit New York in August 2011 and destroyed Clapper's home. He told FEMA he paid $1,200 rent a month at his new home in Westerlo, when it was actually $500. Clapper sent FEMA fake lease agreements and rent receipts containing the forged signature of his landlord.

Clapper received $16,426 from FEMA, the U.S Attorney's Office said. Clapper will have to pay back the $16,426 he received and a $1,300 special court assessment.

He will serve the 18-month sentence concurrently with state prison sentences he is currently serving for burglary convictions, the U.S Attorney's Office said. The burglary convictions are unrelated to his defrauding of FEMA.

Elgin Approves Bin Rules, Senior Housing Zoning, Firefighter Contract

By Mike Danahey

Chicago Tribune, July 15, 2016

The Elgin City Council Wednesday evening moved along approving new rules for putting up collection boxes in town, gave approval to conditional use zoning for a senior apartment complex and signed off on a new contract with the firefighters union — all by unanimous vote.

The new rules would have it that such outdoor bins may "only be located in conjunction with uses to which such receptacles are customary and traditional: units of local government, churches and not-for-profit organizations."

Where permitted, and before placing the collection bin, the bin's owner would have to obtain a $75 annual license, which would be waived for units of local government and not-for-profit organizations.

The application would require the property owner's written permission to locate the bin. The bin must display the name and contact information of the associated organization and whether the organization is for-profit or not-for-profit, the meeting material states.

A bin would not be allowed in a vacant lot, within a right-of-way, or within the area between a building and the street. Bins would have to be placed upon a hard surface, but not within a parking space.

A license sticker would have to be attached to the bin, and the bins would be required to be serviced regularly, with no overflow of items allowed.

Maintenance failure would mean the bin license holder would be given 48 hours notice to address the issue. Failure to do so, would mean city staff would remove the bin and any contents and hold such for seven days.

Bins could be retrieved after the city receives payment of a $100 administrative penalty, plus $25 per day penalty charged for storage and other reasonable removal costs must also be paid. Citations in the amount of $50 to $750 per day per offense, could be issued to both the collection bin owner and the property owner.

Council member Rich Dunne said he noticed how bins were being dealt with when on the East Coast in 2012 in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy for his job with FEMA. Council member Terry Gavin said he and a resident spotted a bin near an east side grocery store almost a year ago. And Council member John Prigge paid compliment to Community Development Director Marc Mylott for staff being proactive addressing a spate in recent months where dozens of such bins have sprouted up across the city.

After the meeting, Mylott said one man had recently been written a citation for leaving such bins on private property and violating existing rules. However, the city still was unsure for whom the man was working, Mylott said.

The new rules are set for final approval at the Aug. 10 City Council meeting.

The unanimously approved request for conditional use zoning was granted to the developers of Fox River Crossing, a new, affordable apartment complex for those 55-and-older being planned for the northwest corner of Route 31 and Lawrence Avenue.

The Ohio-based Buckeye Community Hope Foundation project calls for a 94,583 square-foot, 4-story residential apartment building that would have indoor parking on the first floor and 60 residential units on the second through fourth floors. The indoor parking would have 60 spots, and there also would be outdoor parking for 12 vehicles.

Council members noted the need for more senior housing in Elgin and that the building will bring life to a corner not far from downtown that has been an empty lot for more than almost a quarter century.

Council member Carol Rauschenberger, though, asked the city and developer to see if anything can be done to help make it easier for pedestrians to get from where the building would be across busy Route 31. The Gail Borden Public Library and The Centre of Elgin are just across the Fox River from the site.

The vice president of the foundation's housing division, David Petroni, told the City Council funding for the project would come through a highly competitive program using federal money run through the Illinois Housing Development Authority.

As such, Petroni said that if all goes well work probably wouldn't start until 2018 — or late 2017 at the earliest on the project, which will house income-qualifying residents.

As for the fire contract, with no comments offered, the council unanimously approved the agreement.

The last contract with the International Association of Firefighters Local 439 expired in 2013, and the new one covers 2014 to 2017. Per recession-related concessions, the old contract had no annual salary increases. The one the council OK'd has 2.5 percent annual pay hikes built into it.

According to the contract document, effective Jan. 1, 2017, the base pay range for union firefighters would range from $67,181 for those starting to $132,338 for those at the highest level of base pay for captains. The union ratified the agreement last Friday.

Q And A: Laguna Niguel Fire Captain Scott Ashbach Talks About Hurricane Katrina, Saving Kids And Battling The San Gabriel Complex Fire

By Marie Ekberg Padilla

Orange County (CA) Register, July 13, 2016

Aliso Viejo resident Scott Ashbach, a Laguna Niguel fire captain from Station 39, is among the hundreds of firefighters who recently battled the more than 9,500-acre San Gabriel Complex fire in Angeles National Forest.

The fire included the Reservoir fire and the Fish fire, which is nearly contained. Ashbach, 48, a logistics manager, is part of the incident management team consisting of several agencies and hosted by the U.S. Forest Service fighting the fire.

"Although we all wear different uniforms, I truly feel that our varied background, experiences and diversity is one of our greatest assets," he said. "The experience we bring back to the home agency is invaluable. It's the kind of training and experience that will help keep us safe and make better decisions when the next large incident strikes the O.C."

Here's what Ashbach had to say.

Q. How has the experience been battling the San Gabriel Complex fire?

A. With the exception of the extreme heat at the beginning of the fire, this has been like battling a typical wildland fire. Air and ground resources worked very well together to suppress the main bulk of fire movement in the first couple of days. Once most of the smoke faded away … several days of mop-up put firefighters on the ground throughout the perimeter to assure there are no residual fires at the parameters edge to about 100 feet into the burned area. This process requires lots of manpower, and lots of manpower requires lots of support. That's where the logistics section comes in – my forte.

Q. What was your role during this fire?

A. Almost every large emergency incident has four major sections that come into play – operations, finance, planning and logistics. The section that I've been a part of for the last 15 years is the logistics section. I like to think of this section as the backbone of the incident. The section provides important aspects of the incident that include radio communications, food, intraincident medical response, supply, vehicle mechanics, a central ordering point, office trailers, electricity, fuel, telephones, copy services and the list goes on. On this fire, I'm feeding the troops.

Q. What other large fires have you worked during your career?

A. I've been to many large incidents, including the Station fire in the Angeles National Forest, the North Pass fire in the Mendocino and dozens of others from the Klamath, Six-Rivers, Inyo and Sequoia to the San Bernardino and Cleveland national forests. Our team has traveled a couple of times out of state as well, including responses to large fires in Nevada and just last year to Washington. As a member of California US&R Task Force 5, a FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Task Force, I was a part of the response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008.

Other interesting experiences during the first part of my career include the Los Angeles riots in 1992 and the Laguna fire in 1993. Of course, I can't forget some of the more local fires, like Santiago in 2007 and the Freeway fire in 2008.

Q. Why did you want to become a firefighter?

A. When a high school friend of mine showed up at my house wearing a fire department uniform, I started asking about it. I started as a paid-call firefighter in 1987. They were typically called to the station via pager, then jumped on "big red" and responded to the incident as needed. At $7 per call, it wasn't much of a career, but at the time it was a great way to jump-start a career while going to college, paramedic school and the fire academy. In 1996, I was hired as a full-time firefighter by the Laguna Beach Fire Department. One year later, I was picked up by the Orange County Fire Authority. I've been there ever since. It's the best job in the world.

Q. What is the biggest challenge working as a firefighter?

A. A lighthearted conversation was interrupted by a call to respond to a cardiac arrest victim. We've responded to many of these before. The challenge comes when you're faced with the unexpected. Just as soon as I stepped off the engine, I was handed a lifeless, 3-week-old child who had succumbed to meningitis.

Of course, I didn't know what had caused this child's condition, so instinctively I started CPR. By the end of the event, the child had passed and I had been exposed to meningitis, requiring treatment. Emergency calls involving children are always challenging to first responders. As your career advances and your own children begin to enter the picture, these types of events become more and more difficult to rationalize.

Q. What is the biggest reward working as a firefighter?

A. The rewards come with a big dose of perspective. Medals or monetary packages don't really mean much after a while, so I'd like to think that the rewarding part of this career is served up by an uncommon, experienced and firsthand appreciation for the life we've been empowered and honored to lead as a public servant. It's a perspective most folks don't have and it's one that provides a framework for the appreciation of relationships, talents and energy-expending efforts that make life meaningful.

FLOODS

FEMA Disaster Registration Assistance Still Available

By Jeff Schrock

WBOY-TV Clarksburg (WV), July 14, 2016

WEBSTER COUNTY – FEMA is still working in Webster County to help residents with disaster assistance.

They are going door to door asking residents if they've registered or not. FEMA members are equipped with IPads to help people register, rather than having them go to disaster recovery centers or call in.

"We want to make sure we have teams that go door to door as we're doing today, catching anybody that may slip through the cracks because that's something we don't want to happen," said Jerry Cooper, of FEMA.

People have 60 days from the day of the disaster to register.

You can apply by phone by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or online at www.disasterassistance.gov

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Hoover High Students To Temporarily Attend Elkview Middle

By Ryan Quinn

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, July 14, 2016

Kanawha County Schools Superintendent Ron Duerring said Thursday that Herbert Hoover High students will temporarily attend classes in the Elkview Middle building in the upcoming school year, until they can move into portable classrooms on Elkview's football field.

Duerring also told the Gazette-Mail on Thursday that he couldn't say if the existing Hoover building in Clendenin, which received about 7 feet of water in the late-June flooding, will ever reopen. He said damage assessments of Hoover's building are ongoing. It is about a mile and a half from Elkview Middle.

As of late last week, he said it was still his goal to open all four of the county's flood-damaged schools on time for the Aug. 8 start date that applies to almost all Kanawha public schools. That start date is West Virginia's earliest.

When asked what new information has put into question whether Hoover will reopen at all, he said, "Plans change, and that's all I can tell you."

He said he couldn't say how long the school sharing period will last.

"We hope it's for a very short period of time," Duerring said.

He said there are about 700 Elkview Middle students and 800 Hoover High students.

Duerring's statements came after the West Virginia Board of Education, in a voice vote with no nays heard, approved a waiver of its policy regarding instructional time, to allow Elkview students to attend their school in the morning and Hoover students to attend it in the afternoon.

Betty Jo Jordan, executive assistant to state schools Superintendent Michael Martirano, said the policy waiver was required, to allow the school system to drop below the state-required minimum daily instructional minutes: 315 for elementary schools, 330 for middle schools and 345 for high schools.

Lou Maynus, Kanawha's assistant superintendent over middle and alternative schools, said Hoover students will have 205 daily instructional minutes during the school-sharing period, while Elkview students will have 240. Duerring said students will get more instruction time than the minutes indicate through digitally delivered assignments.

Elkview students, whose bell schedule last school year was 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., are set to attend their school from 7:30 a.m. to noon each day, while Hoover students, whose bell schedule last school year also was 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., will attend from noon to 4:30 p.m.

Hoover students will have sports practice in the morning, while Elkview students will have it in the afternoon. When asked where practices and games will take place, with the football field hosting portables, Maynus said the plans are still being developed and should be finalized in the next few days.

Duerring said he didn't yet know what form of portable classrooms — which can range from single-classroom portables to large ones with inside hallways — Kanawha will receive or how much they will cost, but he said it's possible the Federal Emergency Management Agency will cover a significant amount of the cost.

He said putting them on Elkview's field will allow that school's cooking facilities to serve Hoover students.

During the school sharing, Elkview students will have when they arrive in the morning and lunch from 11:30 a.m. to noon. Hoover students, who won't get school breakfast, will have lunch from noon to 12:40 p.m.

Hoover will have 45-minute-long classes on an alternating schedule, with one set of classes one day and the other set the next day.

Maynus said that, during the temporary period, Elkview will go from two daily periods of "related arts" classes, like chorus, current events and health, to one daily related arts period that would alternate from one course to the other each day.

She also said there will be weekly, instead of daily, "developmental guidance" periods for most Elkview students. She said these periods, also called "Herd Time," provide time for things like career exploration and anti-bullying lessons.

Duerring said all students would return to full-day schedules when the Hoover students move into the portable classrooms.

Some of Hoover's senior band students said Thursday that they're glad to have a place for classes, although they're not looking forward to going back to middle school.

"I'm eager, but I'm not," Marie Good said during a break in marching band practice Thursday. "I'm just happy I have some place to go and take my courses. [But] I just left middle school."

Good said she and her classmates have to be understanding of the situation.

Wesley Monk said he is disappointed that he'll spend at least a portion of his last year of high school away from the school he attended.

"It's OK, for a short time," he said, "but I don't really want to spend an entire year going to Elkview."

DOT: Flooding Shouldn't Affect Road Projects

Morgantown (WV) Dominion Post, July 15, 2016

MORGANTOWN — West Virginia Department of Transportation (DOT) Spokesperson Carrie Jones said the DOT's efforts in flood-ravaged southern West Virginia will not result in less funding or fewer projects for the rest of the state.

Jones said the latest estimates put damages to transportation infrastructure at $52 million in the wake of historic flooding that claimed more than two dozen lives and damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and businesses.

While Jones didn't specify what percentage of the cost will be covered, she explained that the state "will be reimbursed by FEMA and the Federal Highway Administration for a majority of the costs."

Regarding manpower, Jones said DOH personnel from across the state were sent to the impacted areas to remove debris and slides from roads, stabilize embankments and clear ditches and culverts.

Aside from the personnel, Jones said projects planned for this summer in other parts of the state will not be impacted.

"As far as the impact to funding for projects, that shouldn't be affected," Jones said, adding that the temporary mobilization of DOH personnel shouldn't impact paving as the vast majority of paving projects are contracted out.

Flood Relief Continues As Residents Of Southern West Virginia Are Still In Need

By Victoria L. Cann

Clarksburg (WV) Exponent-Telegram, July 14, 2016

CLARKSBURG — A little over three weeks after the flooding occurred in southern West Virginia, disaster relief efforts are ongoing with various organizations helping those affected.

Ricky Eads, volunteer coordinator for Mountain Mission in Charleston, said it is still the first stage of disaster relief. They are no longer looking for clothing or cleaning supplies at the moment.

"We are trying to get supplies so people can start cleaning and repairing things right now. Hopefully, we will be starting a new phase of relief in the upcoming weeks," he said.

Mountain Mission is looking for donations of batteries, flashlights, rakes, work gloves and undergarments such as socks and underwear.

Eads said they have an abundance of clothes and cleaning supplies.

"We have received a lot of food donations. The only problem is that people no longer have a place to cook meals. So we are asking for can openers and grills, things people can make food with," Eads said.

Carissa Collins, executive director of the Northeast West Virginia chapter of the American Red Cross, said that even in the beginning while the Red Cross was providing emergency relief, they had trained case workers out providing support for survivors.

"Red Cross case workers have met one-on-one with those impacted to learn what kind of care might be needed in the coming days and weeks to help them maintain their independence," she said.

So far they have opened at least 1,200 cases to assist those affected. Something what takes only hours to cause destruction can take months and years for people to recover and rebuild, and she said the Red Cross will be there.

"On July 6 the emergency relief efforts were estimated to cost them $5-$6.5 million. We have raised approximately $940,000 in designated donations and pledges that will stay and go directly to the West Virginia flood relief efforts," said Krista Farley Raines, regional communications and marketing director for the American Red Cross.

She said the financial stipulations and estimates are bound to change as they continue to respond and identify people's needs and continue to enhance their efforts.

"The amount of costs estimated include providing food, shelter, blankets, cots, emotional support, and health services, case work efforts, relief supplies, and the people and things such as vehicles and technology that make it possible," Raines said.

The Red Cross has provided 190,000 meals and snacks as well as distributing over 7,700 cleanup kits. Raines said they have had 585 Red Cross workers from all over the nation respond for relief efforts.

"Disaster assistance grants have exceeded $28 million for the West Virginia storm survivors. That includes $24.2 million just in housing assistance," said John Homstad, FEMA media relations officer at the West Virginia field office.

He said their efforts are focused on housing and that their emphasis is making sure individuals have safe, secure, and sanitary places to stay.

"Our goal is to keep people in their homes if we can. For people who have had homes destroyed and need a place to stay, FEMA offers housing assistance. We try to always utilize already existing housing," he said.

Homstad said the housing assistance entails money for rentals and repairs to be done in homes. Greenbrier and Kanawha counties are declared for a particular housing mission, meaning they will be utilizing manufactured housing units.

"People can also fill out an application for a low interest disaster loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration. They're our federal partner and provide these loans to businesses of all sizes, homeowners, and renters," he said.

Anyone looking to volunteer can sign up at bit.ly/WVFloodVol with the American Red Cross. Information regarding what donations are needed can be found at wvvoad.communityos.org.

Morgantown Salvation Army Assists In Flood Relief

WAJR-AM Morgantown (WV), July 14, 2016

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — The Salvation Army of Morgantown has returned from flooded southern West Virginia but expects to be needed for weeks to come.

Lt. Allen Adkins served as incident commander for Salvation Army operations for two weeks shortly after the June 23 disaster.

He said when first arriving, volunteers have to focus on logistics.

"Drinks and snacks and supplies, cleaning kits and hygiene kits, we make sure those items are staged when we need them so we can have access to them."

The Salvation Army remains in the flooded regions rotating incident commanders every two weeks.

According to Adkins, the organization has provided disaster relief since early 1900's beginning in Galveston, Texas in 1900 when a hurricane ripped through the town killing up to 8,000 people.

In West Virginia, FEMA $29.4 million has already been approved in individual assistance along with $24.9 million in housing assistance.

"Everything you have is there one moment and then it's gone. Not only is yours gone, but also your neighbor's, your neighbor's neighbor. These communities, some of the devastation is pretty intense," Adkins assessed.

Adkins noted there are two stages of response in a disaster.

First, The Salvation Army addresses immediate needs in the disaster mode stage.

Next, volunteers are there for necessities and emotional support.

"We go in, we help not only to bring food, clothing and shelter and those sorts of things. We're also there to try to help to bring hope to people knowing there is a tomorrow. We just try to bring needed aid to them," Adkins said.

Adkins explained that canteen work continues in a number of counties.

He will share more on The Salvation Army flood relief efforts and needs on WAJR's Morgantown AM Friday at 9:20 a.m.

Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams Working Across State

Clay County (WV) Free Press, July 14, 2016

Twelve teams of disaster survivor assistance (DSA) specialists are now working in affected areas across West Virginia, helping survivors of the devastating floods, mudslides and landslides that began June 22.

The teams are made up of disaster specialists from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Using the latest mobile technology, DSA teams can register survivors with disaster assistance, update their records and make referrals to whole community partners. Team members tailor the information and services they provide to the individual survivor's needs.

Like all FEMA field personnel, team members carry official identification. Residents are encouraged to ask for official identification before providing personal information.

In addition to the registration opportunity offered by recovery teams, survivors can register for assistance by the following methods: Visit DisasterAssistance.gov or call 800-621-3362. TTY users can call 800-462-7585. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Services can call 800-621-3362 to register.

By registering with FEMA, survivors may qualify for federal disaster assistance such as: Grants to rent a temporary place to live; Grants for essential home repairs not covered by insurance.; Grants for disaster-related needs not covered by insurance — such as medical, dental, transportation, funeral expenses, moving and storage fees, personal property loss and child care.

Registering with FEMA is also the first step in qualifying for help from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Low-interest disaster loans from SBA are available to businesses of all sizes (including landlords), homeowners, renters, and private non-profit organizations to cover losses not fully compensated by insurance. Low-interest disaster loans help fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged real estate and personal property. Economic injury disaster loans are available to businesses and private non-profits to assist with working capital.

Business owners can find an electronic loan application on the U.S. Small Business Administration's secure website at disasterloan.sba.gov/ela. Questions can be directed to the SBA Disaster Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955/ (TTY) 800-877-8339 or by visiting sba.gov.

West Virginians seeking information about disaster-related services and unmet needs should call West Virginia 211, a statewide information and referral service. Contact 211 for help finding food, childcare, crisis counseling, and many other resources in your local community

The West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) has set up a hotline for flood survivors needing free cleanup services: 800-451-1954. Volunteers who wish to help with flood response and recovery may sign up at www.volunteerwv.org or www.wvvoad.org. To make a financial donation, visit https://wvvoad.communityos.org/cms/home

To find current shelter locations for displaced survivors who need a place to stay overnight, please call the American Red Cross at 800-RED-CROSS or download the FEMA App on a mobile device.

Herbert Hoover, Elkview Middle To Go Half Day Due To Damaged Schools

By Anna Baxter

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), July 14, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. – With the start of the school year less than a month away in Kanawha County, a plan is officially in place for where students of the badly damaged Herbert Hoover High School will go for classes.

The school will have a split schedule with middle school students at Elkview Middle School. The middle school will go from 7:30 a.m. to noon, and the high school will go from noon to 4:30 p.m. It's a schedule Kanawha County Superintendent Dr. Ron Duerring says took a lot of planning.

"On a split schedule we met with both principals, we developed a schedule," Duerring tells WSAZ. "We looked at transportation, we looked at food services, and we got all of that ready to go because we wanted to be proactive rather than reactive when the time had come. It just took planning but it worked out really well."

Duerring says getting students back into the classroom by the Aug. 8 start date, and giving them a since of normalcy back into their lives after going through so much, is really important.

"That's what we're trying our best to do here," Duerring said. "And that's why we devised a schedule so we could get our kids in on the first day of school and bring some normalcy to them, to help them, be able to feed them. If somehow they were looked over we can help them and provide services, like a clearing house. Our counselors I know will work with these students if something has been missed or they need help with an outside agency. So that we can help take care of our children after all this is their school, this is their school system and we need to take care of our children."

Duerring says breakfast and lunch will be available for the middle school students and lunch will be available to the high school students.

Tim Clifton is a teacher at Herbert Hoover and he says it's great to see a plan in place, and he's ready to get back to any classroom setting and see his students again.

"That first day we'll get a chance to talk, to talk it out," Clifton said. "The kids are gonna cry when they have a chance and the pressure's off, and when there's people caring, they often cry, and talk. And I think it'll be a good thing not a bad thing to get them started again."

The schools will operate under the split schedule until a modular campus is in place on the Elkview Middle School football field. Once everything is in place, the Hoover students will then use the modular campus and both schools will go back to a normal all day schedule. No time frame of when the modular campus will be ready has been determined.

The future of the current Herbert Hoover building is still up in the air, but Clifton says he's positive that they will return "home."

"It'll happen. It's not 'if' it's 'when.' I don't know when," he said.

Duerring says all subjects will still be covered during the shortened schedule. Last year more than 700 students each attended both Elkview Middle and Hoover High.

WSAZ reached out to FEMA to get a comment on their assessment of the damage to the school, however they said all updates will have to come from the school board.

ORIGINAL STORY 7/14/16 @ 10 a.m.

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) – Herbert Hoover High School will not open for the first day of school after floodwaters severely damaged the school.

Students at Hoover will start the school year with a shortened schedule and attend classes at Elkview Middle School.

The West Virginia State Board of Education unanimously voted Thursday to grant Kanawha County a waiver which will allow for a shortened school day for both Elkview Middle School and Herbert Hoover High School students due to the recent flooding, according to a spokesperson.

That way students at both schools can attend classes in the same building, but only go half days.

Students at Elkview Middle will attend class from 7:30 a.m. until 12 p.m. Herbert Hoover attend classes at Elkview Middle from 12 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. Students at Elkview Middle will still be served breakfast and lunch while operating under this temporary schedule. Hoover students will be served lunch at the beginning of their school day.

A spokesperson with the state board of education says the two schools will operate under this schedule until a modular campus is constructed for Hoover students. She also says the campus would be built at Elkview Middle School.

No date was released on when the modular campus would be operational. However, during the meeting Kanawha County Superintendent Dr. Ron Duerring told the board the modular campus will be constructed as quickly as possible, but did not provide an exact date for completion.

According to a news release, Hoover will still have seven periods, but they will be on a rotating schedule from day to day. However, students will attend 7th period every day. That's the period students have classes like choir and band. Classes will be 45 minutes.

The contingency plan at Elkview Middle School will focus on the four core subjects.

701 students attend Elkview Middle School. 770 attend Hoover.

During the June 23 flood, more than two dozen schools were damaged. Herbert Hoover suffered some of the worst damaged.

The first day of school is August 8.

You can read more about the plans for these two schools by clicking the link.

Chamber To Offer Grant Help To Flooded Small Businesses

By Shauna Johnson

West Virginia MetroNews, July 14, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — At least $100,000 in grant funding will initially be available through the

West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Foundation for qualifying small business owners trying to recover from the devastating June 23 flood.

Shauna Johnson/WVMetroNews.com

The Clendenin Dairy Queen, known for its hot dogs, was destroyed in flooding along the Elk River. This photo was taken on June 25, 2016.

"What we need to do is help get some of these small businesses back on their feet as soon as possible," said Steve Roberts, president of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

"Many small businesses really are the fabric of a community, particularly in a small town."

The Chamber, he said, is trying to fill a need with the grant program, funded with donations, since so many affected business owners did not have flood insurance and assistance options for flooded businesses from the federal government are largely limited to low-interest loans through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Individuals can qualify for grant assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, businesses cannot.

Helping businesses with flood recovery helps communities, in Roberts' view.

"Imagine if you're a small hardware store or you're a small lumber company, right now, people want to get to you to get the supplies and materials they need," he said. "The sooner we get them back on their feet, the sooner we get them open, the sooner those communities begin to recover."

As of Thursday, about $100,000 had been raised for the Chamber's grant effort and, Roberts said, that amount was growing each day. During a preliminary survey, about 50 applications for or interest in the direct mini-grants for small businesses had been identified.

The West Virginia Bankers Association is working with the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce on the effort.

More information on grant donations or applications is available by calling the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce at 304-342-1115 or by clicking here.

During an expected Special Session later this year, state lawmakers could be asked to approve additional grant funding from the state for small businesses in flood recovery.

Though the Chamber has not yet taken an official position on the possibility, "This is a case where just a little bit of money can help many of these businesses," Roberts said on Thursday's MetroNews "Talkline."

"A very small public investment would yield huge dividends in terms of quality of life, in terms of allowing people to be able to stay in their community because the goods and services that they depend on would then be available."

More Counties Eligible For Federal Flood Assistance

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, July 14, 2016

The U.S. Department of Labor has approved a $3.5 million grant to Workforce West Virginia to create temporary cleanup and recovery jobs in the wake of last month's floods.

The National Dislocated Worker Grant will be used to target in Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Kanawha, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster counties, according to a news release from the Department of Labor.

The money, according to the release, will provide for temporary employment on projects to help clean up, demolish, fix, renovate and rebuild public structures, facilities and land that were affected by the flood. The temporary workers may also work on the homes of people who qualify for the federal weatherization program, with priority given to elderly or disabled residents.

Also, several more counties have been approved for "public assistance" to help with recovery from last month's floods.

Braxton, Gilmer, Lewis, Randolph, Upshur and Wayne counties have been approved for the assistance, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. That money can go to public or nonprofit agencies to fix, rebuild or replace public facilities and infrastructure destroyed by a disaster.

In addition, Lincoln County — which was previously approved for assistance to pay for "emergency protective measures" as a result of the disaster — is now eligible for all forms of public assistance.

Counties previously approved for public assistance included Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Jackson, Kanawha, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster.

Volunteer organizations are making a final push to get support to families cleaning out their homes after the floods.

The AmeriCorps disaster response teams arrived in West Virginia this week.

They will help organize volunteers for the next 10 days.

Health officials have urged getting homes cleaned out as quickly as possible to help avoid the spread of black mold.

Herbert Hoover High School Location Closed To Start School Year

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), July 14, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, WV –

Kanawha County Board of Education approves a temporary schedule for flood damaged schools until all repairs can be made.

Elkview Middle School Students will be in class from 7:30 AM – 12 PM at Elkview Middle School and Herbert Hoover High School students will attend classes at Elkview Middle School from 12 PM – 4:30 PM. They will use this schedule until portables are placed at Herbert Hoover High School.

Kanawha County Superintendent Duerring says 45 portables will be placed on Herbert Hoover High School's football field. He doesn't think it will take a long time to get them.

Duerring says that, at this time, he has no idea how long it will be before Hoover is back open.

Fundraising Ongoing For Shared-use Path

By Carrie McDermott

Wahpeton (ND) Daily News, July 14, 2016

Organizers of Breckenridge's planned shared-use walk/bike path along Highway 75 on the city's north side have reached 86 percent of their fundraising goals.

The entire project will cost approximately $750,000, with the local share of $103,000 still needed.

The city's Economic Development Director, Stan Thurlow, gave an update on fundraising efforts to the Breckenridge Port Authority Board Wednesday afternoon.

He explained The Minnesota Department of Transportation had $550,000 available for project grants and the city received $150,000 of that, or about one-third available for the entire state. A Transportation Alternatives Plan grant netted the city $468,000 toward the project, and locally, the city's Active Living Committee has helped raise $29,000.

To be able to use the grants received, the project has to be completed by June 2018, Thurlow said, which means a call for bids would need to go out this winter.

He said the city has also applied for a $75,000 Bremer grant to help with the local share.

The shared-use path would run along Highway 75/Fifth Street North from the old Dairy Queen north to CHI St. Francis Health.

Those interested in donating to the bike path fund are asked to contact City Hall at 218-643-1431.

In other news, the board's executive committee recommended approving a $49,000 Minnesota Investment Fund loan to Scott Tischer and his wife for building improvements at Tischer Therapeutic Services on Nebraska Avenue, the former River of Church building across the street from City Hall. After some discussion, the board agreed to approve the loan.

Resident Bernie Koch attended the meeting and requested a Port Authority sign, located on property he recently purchased from the board, be moved to allow for construction of a building. The sign is along Highway 75 South. Public Utilities will help move the posts and the board gave Koch permission to dismantle the sign so he can begin construction.

Two outlots in the Gewalt Addition, purchased as part of the flood levy project, were discussed. The lots are between the levy and Tangen Addition. They can be sold but there is a drainage easement that goes through the lot so no permanent structures can be built on them.

Adjacent landowners Dean Jirak and Darren Leinen have brought in fill to level the lots out, seeded grass and have been maintaining them, according to minutes from the June 22 meeting. Leinen put a movable shed on the lot next to his. The shed conforms with the 200 square-foot maximum size in the Tangen Addition covenants, although he did not receive prior authorization from the city to put up the shed.

The board had offered to sell the lots to the adjacent landowners for 25 cents per square foot with the understanding they must conform to the Tangen covenants. The property owners rejected the offer. The board approved requesting a counter offer from the landowners and invited them to the next meeting, scheduled for July 27.

Mayor Cliff Barth reminded the board that representatives from FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be at the July 18 city council meeting to discuss flood work around the city. The public is invited to attend. Representatives of the office of Minn. Rep. Collin Peterson are expected to attend, as well.

FEMA Approves $28 Million For Disaster Assistance

By Liz McCormick

WMKY-FM Morehead State University (KY), July 14, 2016

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin says it will be some time before the state has fully recovered after devastating floods in late June. He says he anticipates the damage to well-exceed $100 million.

Governor Tomblin held a press conference Wednesday to update the state on the status of recovery efforts in West Virginia.

Tomblin says 12 counties have been approved for FEMA assistance, and more than 7,000 residents have applied for individual assistance. FEMA has approved more than $28 million for individuals and households.

More than 3,300 visitors have stopped by at recovery centers. More than 400 disaster-related unemployment claims have been filed.

Roadways impacted by the flooding have reached about $55 million worth of damages.

"Obviously this, you know, as big as it is, it's going to take some," Tomblin said, "and you know, it will be expensive and ongoing for some time to handle all the cleanup of this event."

Tomblin says he's planning to schedule a special session sometime soon to see what the state Legislature can do to help in the relief efforts.

Walker Directs Agencies To Assist In Northern Wisconsin Flooding

WEAU-TV Eau Claire (WI), July 14, 2016

MADISON, Wis. – On Tuesday, Governor Scott Walker participated in a storm damage tour to assess the need for assistance in northern Wisconsin following heavy storms in the area, which led to his declaration of a State of Emergency. Governor Walker released the following statement today after his briefing on the situation:

Wisconsin Emergency Management briefed us today about the ongoing flooding situation in northern Wisconsin, and we continue to gather information from local emergency management staff regarding the severity of the damage so we can prepare a request for a federal disaster declaration. We are working diligently to ensure services and resources are made available to all citizens and communities impacted by this event.

The following state agencies have resources available to assist local communities:

- Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) continues to work with local, tribal, and county officials assessing the damage and coordinating state resources. WEM is also working closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal agencies to provide situational awareness and review all possible disaster resources.
- The Department of Administration (DOA) will work with communities to make Community Development Block Grant Emergency Assistance Program (CDBG-EAP) funds available. The funds may be used to assist eligible, low to moderate income homeowners for housing rehabilitation; business assistance; and/or repair local public infrastructure and community centers. Local communities should work with the Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources to apply. Please visit our web page or call (608) 266-7531.
- The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will connect affected farmers with crop damage and livestock shelter needs for assistance and counseling through its Farm Center and Animal Health Division. The connection can be made by dialing 800-942-2474. Major storms bring transient (temporary) home improvement workers and scams to Wisconsin communities. Contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection to find out if there are complaints on file against the contractor. The Consumer Protection Hotline can be reached at 800-422-7128 or via email: datcphotline@wisconsin.gov. Additional information is available at http://datcp.wi.gov.
- The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) is working directly with the American Red Cross on emergency housing for residents displaced by the flooding. Homeowners with a WHEDA mortgage that have been negatively impacted by the flooding should contact WHEDA at 800-562-5546.
- Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will monitor groundwater issues in regards to flooded wells, monitor and inspect dams in the affected area, and work with local communities to expedite the permitting process for necessary repairs.
- The Department of Transportation (WisDOT) staff are inspecting and documenting the impacts and damages to existing infrastructure and looking into what type of funding may be available for repairs. Road closures and detours are available at www.511wi.gov.
- The Public Service Commission (PSC) will continue to monitor utility infrastructure, local grid reliability, and fuel supply to the region.

The Department of Health Services (DHS) has been, and will continue to be, in contact with local health departments and is providing resources and assistance as requested. One of the resources available is the Wisconsin Flood Toolkit, designed to aide local leaders in offering clear and accurate information about keeping people and property safe before, during, and after a flood. You can find the Wisconsin Flood Toolkit here.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center At Palestine Mall

Jacksonville (TX) Daily Progress, July 14, 2016

PALESTINE – Starting July 12, FEMA will open a Disaster Recovery Center at the Palestine Mall, according to a release issued by City Communications and Best Practices Officer.

The center, located at 1920 S. Loop 256 inside the former pain management clinic, will help and check the status of applications for disaster relief and help applicants write letters of appeal from the April 30 flooding.

The Disaster Recovery Center will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

FEMA recently declared Anderson County, along with Cherokee, Smith, and Wood counties, to be part of a federally-declared disaster area and available for individual relief. The disaster area encompasses counties in Texas affected by heavy rains and major flooding from April 17 to April 30.

To apply for disaster assistance online, visit disasterassistance.gov, or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). Representatives from the Small Business Administration will also be on hand to help with federal disaster loans for businesses, nonprofits, homeowners, and renters.

Texans Have Two Weeks Left To Register For April Flood Disaster Aid

Tomball (TX) Potpourri, July 14, 2016

Texans who suffered damage or losses from the April storms and flooding have only two more weeks to register with FEMA for federal disaster assistance.

Residents of 16 counties who experienced damage or losses between April 17 and 30 have until July 29 to register for assistance after FEMA – at the request of the state – extended both the deadline to register as well as the period of time during which damage is eligible.

Residents of Anderson, Austin, Cherokee, Colorado, Fayette, Fort Bend, Grimes, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, Parker, San Jacinto, Smith, Waller, Wharton and Wood counties as well as those who work in those counties are encouraged to register with FEMA if they have not already done so.

Disaster assistance for homeowners and renters may include grants to help pay for temporary housing and essential home repairs, as well as other serious disaster-related needs such as medical and dental expenses.

Applying for disaster assistance is essentially a two-step process, which ensures consideration for all FEMA programs and the U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans. First, register with FEMA, then complete and return the no-obligation SBA loan application, if one is offered. There is no charge to apply for the loan and if approved, no obligation to accept it.

Disaster survivors may register the following ways:

Online at DisasterAssistance.gov.

By phone at 800-621-3362 (FEMA). Applicants who use 711 or Video Relay Service may also call 800-621-3362. Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. The toll-free numbers are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Multilingual operators are available.

At a disaster recovery center. To find the nearest one, go online to the disaster recovery center locator at asd.fema.gov/inter/locator.

FEMA grants do not have to be repaid. FEMA assistance is nontaxable and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits.

Survivors should register even if they have insurance. FEMA cannot duplicate insurance payments, but underinsured applicants may receive help after their claims have been settled.

A free multilingual guide to the types of assistance available can be found at fema.gov/help-after-disaster.

For more information on the Texas recovery, visit the disaster webpage for the April storms at fema.gov/disaster/4269; or visit the Texas Division of Emergency Management website at txdps.state.tx.us/dem.

$975,000 In Storm Aid Approved In County

By Arthur Hahn

Brenham (TX) Banner-Press, July 14, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved almost $1 million in storm recovery payments in Washington County.

FEMA officials said Wednesday that $975,271 for 217 applications has been paid out, an average of about $4,500 for each.

What Texans Are Asked When Applying For FEMA Assistance

Spring (TX) Observer, July 14, 2016

Residents of 24 Texas counties affected by storms and flooding that occurred in May and June are encouraged to register with FEMA for federal disaster assistance. Having the information they need ready when they call or go online to register will speed the process.

Applicants will be asked for the following information:

- Social Security number
- address of the damaged primary residence
- description of the damage
- information about insurance coverage
- a current contact telephone number
- an address where they can receive mail
- a bank account and routing numbers for direct deposit of funds

Eligible individuals and households of the 24 declared counties have until Aug. 10 to apply for assistance for damage that occurred between May 26 and June 24.

The affected counties are Austin, Bastrop, Brazoria, Brazos, Burleson, Eastland, Fayette, Fort Bend, Grimes, Harris, Hidalgo, Hood, Kleberg, Lee, Liberty, Montgomery, Palo Pinto, Parker, San Jacinto, Stephens, Travis, Tyler, Waller and Washington.

Applying for disaster assistance is essentially a two-step process, which ensures consideration for all FEMA programs and the U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans. First, register with FEMA, then complete and return the no-obligation SBA loan application, if one is offered. There is no charge to apply for the loan and if approved, no obligation to accept it.

Disaster survivors may register the following ways:

- online at DisasterAssistance.gov
- phone 800-621-3362 (FEMA). Applicants who use 711 or Video Relay Service may also call 800-621-3362. Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. The toll-free numbers are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Multilingual operators are available.
- at a disaster recovery center. To find the nearest one, go online to the disaster recovery center locator at asd.fema.gov/inter/locator.

FEMA grants do not have to be repaid. FEMA assistance is nontaxable and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits.

Survivors should register even if they have insurance. FEMA cannot duplicate insurance payments, but underinsured applicants may receive help after their claims have been settled.

A free multilingual guide to the types of assistance available can be found at fema.gov/help-after-disaster.

For more information on the Texas recovery, visit the disaster webpage for the May-June storms at fema.gov/disaster/4272; or visit the Texas Division of Emergency Management website at txdps.state.tx.us/dem. Follow FEMA on Twitter @femaregion6.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

31 Homes Among 60 Buildings Destroyed Or Damaged In Timberon Fire, Now At 290 Acres

By Blair Miller And Caleb James

KOB-TV Albuquerque (NM), July 14, 2016

Thirty-one homes are completely destroyed and among 60 total buildings damaged or lost after a fire burned through Timberon, a community southeast of Alamogordo, Wednesday and Thursday.

Gov. Susana Martinez announced 31 homes had burned at a Thursday afternoon press conference, where she also declared a state of emergency in order to free up federal funds to help in the emergency response. One firetruck for Timberon's volunteer fire department was also lost to the flames.

"I've directed our state agencies to work together to ensure that all resources are available to assist in fighting the fire. Sadly, the fire may have already destroyed more than a dozen homes, and many more are at risk. I ask New Mexicans to join me in praying for the residents of Timberon," Gov. Martinez said in an afternoon news release after she toured the site in a National Guard helicopter.

The approval of a Fire Management Assistance Grant from FEMA means 75 percent of the cost of suppressing the fire and evacuations will be covered.

The fire was estimated as being 290 acres in size Thursday night. Though flames and smoke had dissipated since the fire first started Wednesday evening, it continues to burn and is 0 percent contained.

Exploding propane tanks had kept firefighters from getting close enough to the fire to confirm the number of damaged or destroyed properties earlier Thursday.

160 personnel are at the site of the fire.

Many who are now realizing they have lost their homes remain at a Red Cross-sponsored evacuation center around an hour away at Cloudcroft High School.

"It's like something you'd see in Iraq or something: cars melted down and stuff. It's crazy," said evacuee Jake Yancy.

The entire community of Timberon was evacuated Wednesday night. The junction of State Road 6943 and Sunspot Road and the area south of it is closed.

The entire area is part of a "no entry" zone. A fire line has been established around the perimeter of the fire and is holding, crews said Thursday night.

Timberon Fire At 290 Acres; 60 Structures, 16 Vehicles Burned

By Jacqueline Devine

Las Cruces (NM) Sun-News, July 14, 2016

TIMBERON, N.M. – Mandatory evacuations are still in effect after a wildfire swept through private and public lands in Timberon that destroyed 60 structures and burned 16 vehicles during the estimated 290-acre fire.

Otero County with several state and federal fire fighters responded to the fire at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday in the isolated town about 30 miles south of Cloudcroft.

No injuries have been reported. One Timberon VFD fire engine was also damaged

Timberon's power lines were knocked down during the fire. Air tankers from Alamogordo's White Sands Regional Airport continue dropping slurry on the fire and hot spots.

Gov. Susana Martinez toured the most damaged areas of the fire Thursday afternoon.

Martinez said she was shocked that the damage was much worse than expected.

"We have four homes that have mild to medium damage to them, 16 vehicles have been destroyed as well. I flew over the fire earlier, I could see the retardant that was dropped in order to keep the perimeter," Martinez said. "I could see the homes from up above, it's just a white ashy pile that you see. I've met volunteers that are helping feed firefighters that are here. I met a lady that actually lost her home in the last fire but she's here cooking and making sure everyone gets fed that are here at the management center."

She said she met and talked to a former Timberon fire chief during her tour.

"There's another gentleman I met who was the previous fire chief in Timberon along with his wife and he left his home to go fight fires. He is 80-years-old," Martinez said.

She said she learned the Federal Emergency Management Agency is helping with the cost of fighting the fire.

"We're making everything available that the community needs from the state government," Martinez said. "We have received a federal grant that has now been approved that will pay 75 percent of the costs of containing and fighting this fire. That means 75 percent will go to paying firefighters, they will be reimbursed and the costs to the county will also be reimbursed for the fighting of this fire. The state will be able to pick the rest of the 25 percent."

U.S. Forest Service spokesman Caleb Finch said firefighters continue to work on containing the fire at this time.

"As of right now there is zero percent containment. We expect containment to increase in the next few days, the control lines are holding and they have been holding throughout the day but we want to ensure the resources on the ground continue to establish a good control with those lines as that happens," Finch said. "When we get through the burning periods, we will be able to increase containment."

He said 160 personnel are assisting with the fire that includes state, county and federal units and they expect more soon.

"Currently we have 160 personnel and that's a combination of engines and crews, state, county, volunteer fire departments and federal units," Finch said. "We expect another 40 to 60 to arrive in the next 24 hours that will help extinguish the hot spots which will help us wrap it up sooner than anticipated."

He said the cause of the fire is undetermined at this time.

"The cause of the fire is still under investigation, we have fire investigators on scene right now. Some of the evacuees are able to come look at their homes as we make containment with the fire according to the Sheriff's Office, New Mexico State Police and New Mexico State Forestry regarding the coordination of bringing those homeowners in to look at their homes and retrieve valuables," Finch said. "We do our best not to allow anyone to come in to the perimeter of the fire because we still have 160 people working the fires."

He said fire personnel continue to determine the exact acreage of the fire.

"The number of acres may increase with more accurate mapping. The monsoon rains are late this year and so we are abnormally hot and dry. We still can have fires in July but it is abnormal this time of year. If the public can just be cognizant of how they're treating their camp fires and their barbecues that will help reduce the risk of wildfires," Finch said. "I think it's great that there's a lot of inter-agency coordination among numerous agencies like state, local and federal. It's a great way to show support for the residents of Timberon and what they've experienced and also the firefighters have also received support."

The Cloudcroft High School gym is being used as shelter for evacuees until the fire is fully contained.

The American Red Cross confirmed that a total of 21 people stayed overnight when the fire started and 15 people have registered with them making it a total of about 40 Timberon residents who have stayed at the shelter.

"We are providing warm blankets and everyday essentials. We also have extra meals for people that get hungry in between meals. Residents have also donated towels so evacuees could take showers here," said American Red Cross Disaster Chair James Gutierrez. "We also heard from a lot of outside agencies like the Presbyterian Medical Group that is willing to assist with mental health counseling or if they just need to see a doctor. Unfortunately we do not allow pets unless it is a service animal. Livestock is being set up at the Otero County Fairgrounds."

Communities from around the area have also come together to show support for Timberon residents on Facebook and they encourage anyone that needs help to speak up. Assistance can be found on the following Timberon Facebook pages, https://www.facebook.com/groups/126788310437/ and https://www.facebook.com/groups/274514549576721/

Some Butte Fire Property Owners Unhappy With Tree Removal Plan

By Courtney McKinney

Calaveras (CA) Enterprise, July 14, 2016

Some property owners in the Butte Fire burn area Wednesday voiced concerns about the number of purportedly hazardous trees that county officials seek to remove from private properties.

The remarks came during a public meeting in Mountain Ranch hosted by Calaveras County Public Works Department personnel. Officials are asking owners of more than 260 parcels with hazardous trees on their properties to provide right-of-entry releases by July 22. The right-of-entry forms will allow the county's contractor, Tetra Tech Inc., to access private property to cut down the trees.

One man who spoke at the meeting called the tree plan "overdone, expensive and excessive," while others said that there are trees marked for removal that could potentially survive.

"We have lost thousands upon thousands of trees in the fire, so if we can save one, do it," another man said. Neither man identified himself and both left before the meeting ended.

The federally funded tree removal program targets trees deemed to pose threats to Calaveras County roads. County officials estimate that 6,500 dead trees that are on private property stand close enough to county roads to endanger motorists if they fall.

Typically, the Federal Emergency Management Agency pays 75 percent of the cost for such post-disaster projects, while state and local agencies pay for the rest. But because of the high risk posed by the hazardous trees, the federal and state governments have stepped in to pay for removal, which means it will not come out of county coffers or out of the pockets of county residents.

The professional arborist for the project, William Butler of Butler Enterprises, told residents that although some trees may seem OK from the outside, there are many secondary issues for trees with fire damage that are not easy to see. He and the program manager of Tetra Tech, Will Mcgowen, both assured residents that only trees deemed unsafe for county roads will be removed. "We are working in your best interests," Mcgowen told the crowd. "We are personally accountable to the county."

Another concern raised by some property owners is the requirement that they bill their insurance for the tree removals. According to Earl Seaberg of the Public Works Department, FEMA requires homeowners with insurance for tree removal to submit bills to their insurers for reimbursement while those without insurance will not be required to do anything.

Landowners who have trees cut down on their properties through this program can keep the logs if they wish. Otherwise, Tetra Tech will place the trees in storage. Another point of contention at the meeting came when residents were told that they are not allowed to receive double benefit from the removals, meaning they cannot sell or barter the felled trees.

Landowners with hazardous trees on their properties who do not participate in the removal program will be liable for any trees that fall onto county roads and for damage caused by the trees.

The meeting ended with county officials reiterating how important it is to public safety for the trees to be removed. They said landowners can and should call the designated hotline with any questions or concerns about tree removal on their properties. That number is 754-6767. The questions and answers from Wednesday's meeting will also be available on the county website.

Meanwhile, Tetra Tech personnel on Wednesday began posting right-of-entry permits at the entrances to properties where owners have agreed to cooperate with the tree removal program. The permits are displayed on small wooden stakes.

Santa Clarita's Sage Fire Burns 1,100 Acres; 92 Percent Contained

By Debbie Sklar

My News LA (CA), July 14, 2016

The Sage Fire, which has scorched 1,110 acres west of Santa Clarita, was 92 percent contained Thursday was firefighters patrolled the area putting out hot spots, authorities said.

Two patrols of firefighters were assigned day and night through tomorrow night to put out hot spots, said Inspector Gustavo Medina of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Since the blaze was reported about 12:05 p.m. Saturday, three firefighters have been injured and at least one building damaged. The cause of the fire was still under investigation, as was the issue of whether the house fire was related to the Sage Fire, Medina said.

After the fire was reported on Saturday, residents were evacuated from 700 homes but were told about 9:30 that night that they could go home.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced that it has authorized the use of federal funds to assist with the firefighting effort, which has involved personnel from Los Angeles County, the city of Los Angeles, the U.S. Forest Service and the Orange County Fire Authority. Fire Management Assistance Grants provide federal funding for up to 75 percent of eligible firefighting costs.

Winners And Losers Of The Week

By Kenneth Quinnell

AFL-CIO, July 14, 2016

Each week, we take a look at the biggest friends and foes of labor. We celebrate the workers winning big and small battles, and we shame the companies or people trying to deny working people their rights.

Winners: Home care workers, now that nearly 2 million of them have overtime protections.

Runners-Up: Fire Fighters (IAFF), for assisting locals apply for FEMA grants to improve firefighter safety and effectiveness, totaling $500 million.

Losers: Manufacturers that pay low wages, as a new report shows that one-third of working people in nonsupervisory positions in manufacturing are on public assistance.

Runner-Up: U.S. District Judge Sam R. Cummings in Texas, for blocking the "Persuader Rule," which would have increased transparency for those attempting to influence union elections.

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

Lawmakers To Go On Recess Without Addressing Zika

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – Congress is about to leave for a seven-week vacation without giving the Obama administration any of the $1.9 billion it's seeking to battle the Zika virus, and a Senate effort to revive the nuts-and-bolts process of passing agency budgets was dealt a significant setback at the hands of Democrats.

Meanwhile, House Republicans are poised to pass a $32 billion spending bill for the Interior Department and the Environmental Protection Agency as lawmakers exit Washington for a seven-week recess, though the move would do little to advance GOP leaders' hopes of fixing the Capitol's shattered budget process.

The House measure, laced with a wish-list of GOP provisions to roll back Obama administration clean air and water regulations, faces a White House veto threat – as does a $1.1 billion GOP-drafted Zika measure that's been grounded by abortion politics and other problems.

GOP efforts in both the House and Senate to restart the annual budget process hang by a thread, pointing to yet another take-it-or-leave-it trillion-dollar-plus bill this fall to keep the government open weeks before the election. The House Interior measure would be just the fifth of the 12 spending measures to clear the House. In the Senate, an effort by majority Republicans to revive debates on the measures – which had languished under Democratic control of the chamber – hasn't gone as well as hoped.

Senate Democrats on Thursday again filibustered the advance of an annual Pentagon spending measure over fears that Republicans would boost defense while keeping domestic programs frozen. And a much-needed bill to battle the Zika virus faces a Democratic filibuster on Thursday, as well, over a GOP provision that would block Planned Parenthood from receiving anti-Zika funding.

"When they were in the majority, they didn't want to pass appropriations bills. When they were in the minority, they don't want to pass appropriations bills," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who has been frustrated in his efforts to move the measures through. "I gave it every opportunity this year to succeed. We have spent weeks and weeks and weeks trying to get a regular order of process on appropriations through the Senate."

The House measure, likely to pass late Wednesday, is red meat for conservatives seeking to take a whack at the Environmental Protection Agency. But its passage would run into a veto threat from President Barack Obama and a certain filibuster from Senate Democrats.

The Interior and EPA funding bill is part of the $1 trillion-plus budget to bankroll day-to-day agency operations. In the past, Congress has devoted much of the spring and summer to passing the 12 individual spending bills that are a part of that process. But divided government between the Obama administration and Republicans controlling Congress has produced lowest-common-denominator catchall spending bills that offended lawmakers on both the political right and left.

The House measure would block EPA rules on coal-fired power plants and clean water rules involving coal operations. The Obama administration has successfully used veto threats to strip such provisions in the past. The GOP measure also cuts the budget of the EPA, an agency loathed by many Republicans.

Meanwhile, Senate Democrats are poised to vote Thursday to again block bills to finance the fight against the Zika virus and fund the Pentagon for the upcoming budget year. The Zika measure has been hung up over Democratic objections to GOP language that would block Planned Parenthood clinics in Puerto Rico from receiving money to fight the virus.

At the same time, Senate Democrats have blocked action on a huge Pentagon spending bill over a move by House Republicans to use accounting moves to add $18 billion to the measure. Democrats say the GOP move would unravel last year's hard-fought budget deal, which reversed curbs on both Pentagon and domestic accounts.

McConnell has called for re-votes Thursday on both the Pentagon and Zika measures as the final major action before the chamber adjourns until after Labor Day.

In one bit of progress, the House was on track to clear for Obama's signature legislation requiring labels on foods containing genetically modified ingredients.

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Congress Takes A Vacation Without Doing Anything About Zika

New York Times, July 14, 2016

Members of Congress are about to leave Washington for seven weeks without passing a bill to pay for the fight against Zika. Their failure to do so will delay the public health response to the mosquito-borne virus that causes birth defects, unnecessarily putting thousands of people at risk.

As of June 30, nearly 600 pregnant women appeared to be infected with Zika in American states and territories and seven babies had been born with birth defects linked to the virus. Public health experts believe these numbers are likely to increase in the coming weeks as mosquitoes become more prevalent, especially in Florida, Hawaii and Texas. This calls for swift action by the government, but instead the Republicans who control Congress are trying to exploit this crisis to advance ideological causes.

The House last month passed a bill that would allocate $1.1 billion to fight Zika by funding vaccine development, mosquito control efforts and other programs. But Republican lawmakers attached so many objectionable provisions to the measure that Democrats have effectively blocked the bill in the Senate where 60 votes are needed to cut off debate and bring legislation to a vote.

The biggest problem with the bill is that it would provide funds for contraception and maternal care only through public health departments and Medicaid-run clinics. This provision is designed to freeze out private providers like Planned Parenthood, which Republicans love to hate. For no good reason, it would deny many women in Puerto Rico and Southern states who do not live near public health centers the care they need. It should not be lost on anyone that Republicans insisting on this condition are usually eager to embrace the private sector and to criticize government programs.

Another troubling aspect of the bill is that, to offset costs, it would rob other important programs of about $750 million; funding for Ebola, for example, would be cut by $107 million. The bill would also relax environmental laws by allowing businesses to spray pesticide near lakes, rivers and other waterways without notifying the Environmental Protection Agency. Republicans say that this would make it easier for local governments to control mosquitoes — even though the law on pesticide spraying already has an exception for health emergencies.

The absence of funding, however temporary, is expected to cause major problems. Many local governments need federal assistance to control mosquitoes in the coming weeks. And researchers at the National Institutes of Health may be forced to stop tests on a potential vaccine as well as efforts to develop tools that can quickly diagnose Zika infections, which in most people do not cause any visible symptoms.

It's always troubling to see good legislation hijacked to score political points. In this case the timing could not be worse.

GOP Calls Out Obama For Millions Of Unspent Dollars Amid Zika Fight

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, July 14, 2016

Top Republicans in Congress are demanding to know why the White House is holding onto more than $400 million that they say could have already gone to fighting the Zika virus.

Six leading GOP appropriators wrote to President Obama on Thursday, voicing strong concerns about the administration's slow pace in exhausting its existing resources on Zika, as Democrats dig in their heels to demand a $1.1 billion emergency spending bill.

"This money is available immediately to prepare for and combat Zika, yet is seemingly not being spent," the letter reads, echoing remarks by House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-Ky.) on Wednesday.

Lawmakers remain at a standstill over Zika funding as members of both chambers departed Thursday for a record seven-week recess. A last-ditch move to approve the funding by Senate Republicans on Thursday failed after Democrats blocked the GOP's bill for a second time.

A once-promising Zika compromise bill, which had been backed by both parties in the Senate, collapsed late last month after House GOP leaders decided to advance their own version in protest of a Democratic sit-down over gun controls bills. The most recent version, which has earned no Democratic support, also faces a veto threat from the White House.

Officials from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) told reporters last week that about $112 million of the roughly $589 million from the Ebola funding has gone out the door to fight Zika as of July 5.

That would mean the White House has drained only about one-sixth of its half-billion dollar funding pool for Zika amid vocal calls from Democrats to approve $1.9 billion in emergency spending.

Federal health officials have rejected the GOP's claims that Democrats are choosing not to spend the money they have on hand. An HHS official argued that the process for spending federal dollars "takes time," and that the president made his $1.9 billion request knowing it would be a lengthy process.

"The suggestion that repurposed Ebola funds are sitting unused is misleading," the HHS official said. "We have gone through the standard process for awarding that money, and much of it will move in July and August."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is planning to give states and territories nearly $100 million over the next month to fight Zika.

Last Friday, the CDC doled out another $25 million in state and local government grants.

HHS has also warned that its vaccine work — undertaken by the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority — "is in the middle of vaccine-related negotiations that will exhaust all of its repurposed Ebola funds."

Congress Will Go The Rest Of The Summer Without Passing Anything On Zika

By Michael Mcauliff, Senior Congressional Reporter, The Huffington Post

Huffington Post, July 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — The political conventions, followed by a long summer break, proved a higher priority for Congress on Thursday than funding the nation's response to Zika, as the Senate failed again to pass legislation dealing with the mosquito-borne illness.

With Congress leaving this week to pick presidential candidates, and then staying on recess until after Labor Day, the rest of the summer will pass before there's another chance for lawmakers to fund the efforts to prevent Zika from becoming an epidemic in the United States.

The virus is linked to severe birth defects, including microcephaly, and was recently blamed for the death of a Utah man. According to the most recent count from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 3,600 people in the United States and its territories have been diagnosed with the disease, including 599 pregnant women.

The White House sought $1.9 billion for anti-Zika efforts in February. The House passed just $622 million in May on a party-line vote, and the Senate passed a bipartisan bill for $1.1 billion soon thereafter. In working out the differences between the measures, a Republican-led conference committee kept the Senate's spending levels, but added riders restricting birth control, promoting the Confederate flag, cutting Obamacare and relaxing clean water rules. It also included a provision to cut funding for the ongoing response to Ebola, which would run out of money in October.

The resulting measure again passed the House, but Democrats in the Senate objected to the "poison pill" riders that were added, and blocked it. It is that same measure, offered again by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), that failed again Thursday on a procedural vote, with Democrats preventing it from getting the necessary 60 supporters.

The vote was preceded by finger-pointing from each party's leader, who each said that everything the other guy claimed was false.

"The idea that it would underfund Zika. The idea that it would prohibit funding or deny access for birth control. The idea that it would actually weaken clean water protections... We've shown how these claims just don't stand up to scrutiny," McConnell said.

"I would like to echo the words of the senior senator from Texas, who said that our Democratic colleagues seem to be operating in a 'logic-free zone' when it comes to Zika," he added. "It's time to get back to reality. This is a serious crisis that demands serious solutions."

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) mocked McConnell's claims, since the provisions that have angered Democrats are, in fact, included in the bill.

"I assume that my Republican friend feels if you say just the opposite of [what] is valid and true, that some people will believe it," Reid said. "You talk about a logic-free zone, as my friend mentioned. We've got one in the last half-hour here."

Not only did the Zika bill come laden with partisan riders, it was attached to a much larger measure to fund military construction and veterans affairs.

The failure of the bill came just two days after the White House and the Department of Health and Human Services warned in a letter to McConnell that efforts to curtail the Zika virus would suffer if lawmakers did not act.

"It is imperative that Congress act to pass a bipartisan Zika supplemental bill before departing for summer recess," wrote budget director Shaun Donovan and HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell. "Failure to do so will significantly impede the administration's ability to prepare for and respond to possible local transmission in the continental United States and Hawaii, and address a growing public health crisis in Puerto Rico."

Delaying funding would slow the development of a vaccine and hinder the CDC's ability to track the spread of the disease and control mosquitoes, the letter said.

CDC head Tom Frieden has estimated that preventable cases of babies born with birth defects from Zika will each cost an average of $10 million over a lifetime to treat.

At least eight babies have already been born in the continental United States to mothers who are believed to have contracted the virus while traveling.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) denounced the outcome of Thursday's vote.

"It's been more than five months since President Obama put forward his proposal to combat Zika, and more than two months since the Senate passed a strong, bipartisan downpayment on that proposal," Murray said in a statement. "But instead of staying the bipartisan course, Republicans have unfortunately chosen to put their ideological battles against Planned Parenthood and women's health providers ahead of the health needs of women and children nationwide."

Senate Rejects Zika Package Again, No Signs Of A Deal

Roll Call, July 14, 2016

The 52-44 vote on the motion to limit debate on the $1.1 billion anti-Zika funding bill amounted to a last-minute attempt by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to move the legislation to the president's desk with the chamber set to leave for a seven-week summer recess Thursday afternoon. Sixty aye votes were required to advance the measure.

"It's time for our friends to start worrying less about pleasing outside political groups and start worrying about actually helping the Americans who are counting on all of us," McConnell, R-Ky., said, during floor remarks Thursday morning.

Democrats have repeatedly criticized Republicans for including language in the conference report that Democrats say would prevent funds from going to

Planned Parenthood clinics in Puerto Rico. Republicans have shot back at Democrats by saying their position on the conference report represents a lack of support for pregnant women throughout America.

Minority Leader Harry Reid critiqued House Republicans during his floor speech, calling them “crazies.” The Nevada Democrat also said not allowing funds to go to Planned Parenthood’s Pro Familias clinics in Puerto Rico would limit the ability of women to prevent pregnancy while Zika continues to be a threat.

“How could anyone in good conscience vote for that [bill]?” Reid asked, referring to provisions in both the Military Construction-VA and the Zika sections of the conference report. “We can’t and we aren’t going to.”

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan , R-Wis., slammed Senate Democrats for blocking the Zika aid package at his weekly press conference Thursday.

“They need to drop politics and pass the bill,” Ryan said. He specifically objected to Democratic criticisms of offsets: “They wanted no offsets, we partially offset it with what I would call extremely vanilla offsets.”

“They need to drop the politics and pass the bill so we can respond to this real need,” Ryan added.

As the clock ticked down to the vote, House Appropriations Committee Democrats sent a last-minute letter to Ryan, encouraging Republicans to take a vote on a bill that would allocate the $1.9 billion in emergency funding that President Barack Obama requested in February. Democrats have made numerous attempts to do the same thing during committee meetings on the fiscal 2017 spending bills. All of those proposals have failed.

The letter followed a final plea from the White House on Wednesday that did not cite a specific dollar amount or the so-called poison pills, but encouraged Congress to pass anti-Zika funding before leaving for recess.

Ranking member of the Appropriations Committee Barbara A. Mikulski , D-Md., said on Wednesday that her “optimism is shrinking” when asked about the prospects for a last-minute Zika deal.

Republican Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri, who negotiated the Senate’s $1.1 billion emergency compromise with Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington in May, said on Wednesday that the “meaningful conversations” are taking place at the leadership level. He named McConnell, Reid, Ryan and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi , D-Calif.

The inability of the Republican-led Congress to pass the legislation is a politically risky move ahead of the seven-week summer recess. The number of infants born with microcephaly linked to the Zika virus will continue to grow in the coming weeks and months.

As lawmakers from both political parties return to their districts to fundraise and run for reelection, additional funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health will be held off for at least a couple of months.

Congress is slated to return in September and while the political parties could hash out a deal then, they may likely feel less pressure to act with summer over, unless Zika becomes a larger public health problem. Without any of the 12 fiscal 2017 appropriations bills enacted, they will only have four weeks to negotiate and vote on a stopgap spending measure known as a continuing resolution to keep the government funded past the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30.

However, there is a possibility that bill could include additional money for the CDC and NIH to continue their research and vaccine trials.

Zika Funding Bill Fails As Congress Is Unable To Reach Compromise

By Will Drabold

TIME, July 14, 2016

After months of negotiation and national calls to action, Congress will not provide any money to fight the spread of Zika in the United States this summer. The final chance this summer to fund the White House’s February request evaporated in the form of a failed Thursday vote in the Senate.

The White House did not immediately provide comment on the stalemate and how it will impact efforts to combat the spread of the virus. President Barack Obama previously blasted Republicans in May for not allocating money to fight Zika and criticized their proposal to spend funds left over from fighting Ebola on Zika, something the administration started doing in April.

Both Democrats and Republicans said they wanted to spend money to prevent the spread of Zika, but political disagreements ultimately trumped numerous health warnings. Senate Democrats refused to support House Republican additions to the legislation that would reduce funding for Planned Parenthood, defund parts of the Affordable Care Act and reversed a ban on flying Confederate flags in military cemeteries.

[Read more from TIME: 10 Zika Facts You Need to Know Now]

After this week, Congress will recess till September. That punts funding for research and prevention of a virus that is proven to cause severe birth defects in infants and has already infected more than a thousand travelers in the continental United States.

Zika has infected more than a million people in Central and South America. Hundreds of babies have been born with shrunken heads, a disease called microcephaly, from mothers infected with Zika.

When Ebola ravaged Africa and fears rose that the deadly disease could spread in the U.S., Congress allocated $6 billion to fight the virus. So far, the White House has reportedly spent more $700 million

in leftover Ebola funding to fight Zika.

There are over one thousand Americans in the U.S. with travel-associated cases of Zika, including 320 pregnant women. There are also 2,534 people in U.S. territories who are infected, including 279 pregnant women. In the U.S. there have been at least three reported cases of infants born with Zika-related microcephaly. On Wednesday, it was confirmed

a baby born with microcephaly in Texas received the defect from the Zika virus. The child's mother traveled to Latin America during her pregnancy.

"We are disappointed," says Dr. Umair Shah, executive director of Harris County Public Health. "We confirmed the first travel associated case of Zika in Texas in January, and yesterday we confirmed the first travel-associated case of microcephaly."

"It would be a lot better if we had those resources," Shah adds. "I have to be honest, our team is stretched quite a bit."

Shah says he hopes that should funding be passed after the recess, he hopes the funds could go towards retrospectively covering costs incurred by health departments during the outbreak response.

[Read TIME's Cover Story About Zika and How to Beat It]

Before the vote, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell attacked Senate Democrats for blocking the bill. "

This is a serious crisis that demands serious solutions," McConnell said on the Senate floor. "It's time for our friends to start worrying less about pleasing outside political groups and start worrying more about actually helping the Americans who are counting on us."

In a floor speech Thursday, Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid fired back, accusing Republicans of making the bill impossible to vote for.

"The Republicans are choosing vacation over protecting pregnant women and their babies from these terrible birth defects that can be prevented," Reid said.

Zika is transmitted by mosquito bites or through sex. More than 1,110 Americans now have Zika they contracted while traveling. Whether Zika has transmitted between people in the U.S. is unknown. But public health experts have told TIME they believe local transmission may have already happened and would be difficult to track. Local transmission is expected to be worse in Florida and Texas where the type of mosquito that carries Zika is abundant while travel to Central and South America is high.

There is no drug or vaccine for the virus.

Partisan Split Delays Zika Bill

By Shannon Firth

MedPage Today, July 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – As partisan rancor around stalled Zika legislation continues, the chances of reconciling the bill before the Senate's 7-week recess vanished.

On Thursday, the House version of the Zika bill failed a test vote in the Senate with a 52-44 tally. The vote signaled that the bill would not come to an up-or-down vote.

"The problem is only getting worse," said Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues in his opening remarks at a hearing a day earlier, speaking of the Zika virus epidemic.

"It is our duty to act now while we can still get ahead of this disease and before it is simply too late," he said.

Physician and health policy groups were disappointed with Congress's inaction.

"Without ensuring there are sufficient resources available for research, prevention, control and treatment of illnesses associated with the Zika virus, the United States will be ill-equipped to deploy the kind of public health response needed to keep our citizens safe and healthy – especially since the spread of mosquito-borne illness is accelerated during the summer months," said Andrew Gurman, MD, president of the American Medical Association, in a press release on Thursday.

"By the time Congress returns in a couple of months, the damage to our nation from Zika will likely be irreversible. This failure to act severely hampers the full response that is greatly needed," said Richard Hamburg, interim president and CEO of Trust for America's Health, a health advocacy non-profit.

Democrats continue to oppose the latest version of the Zika bill, while acknowledging that the politicking in Congress has inflamed the public.

"This is why people hate Congress. This is why people hate Washington," said Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) at Wednesday's hearing.

Kaine, who has emerged as a potential pick to be Clinton's running mate, argued that the bipartisan $1.1 billion bill the Senate passed was originally a "clean bill."

"It was about one thing: fighting Zika," he said, but then the House revisions loaded the bill with other provisions targeting Planned Parenthood and the Affordable Care Act.

A visibly irritated Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) said the new bill could do more harm than good by undercutting family planning services.

"Birth control should not be controversial and it's part of the first line of defense," she said, reminding the committee that Zika is sexually transmissible.

The House version of the bill also "eviscerates" the Clean Water Act, she said.

Under current law, pesticides from an approved list can be sprayed near water sources without a permit in emergencies, but the Environmental Protection Agency must be notified.

Under the Zika bill, however, "[t]here's no more right to know ... you may not get the Zika but your kid could get cancer from swimming in water that's laden with a pesticide that's very harmful."

Senators on both sides tried to bully witnesses over to their camp.

"Does the House bill take money away from Planned Parenthood?" Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) asked CDC Director Tom Frieden, MD, MPH, point-blank.

Frieden parried, saying he didn't know the "exact funding allocations."

"I believe the answer is 'no.' And if you can, get back to me on that," Gardner shot back.

Boxer badgered Irene Koek, acting deputy assistant administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development, who struggled to get her words out without interruption.

Boxer asked whether specific countries in Latin America and the Caribbean where women had been warned to postpone pregnancy actually had the infrastructure to provide free contraception.

Koek said that in most cases supplies were available but delivering them was sometimes a challenge.

Boxer also questioned Frieden about rumors that Olympic athletes would be tracked after the events to see whether or not they contracted Zika.

Frieden confirmed that the CDC has a "memo of understanding" with the U.S. Olympic Committee and said that a university in the U.S. would be testing the athlete volunteers to see who was infected and who wasn't.

"If the risk is so great that you're going to spend money following them maybe they ought to know it," she said.

Rubio pressed Frieden to explain how delaying funds would impact his agency.

Frieden said delaying funding meant delaying long-term research into understanding how to effectively protect pregnant women from the virus. He noted that the CDC had already borrowed emergency funding from states and that those monies needed to be repaid.

"This is not the way to fight epidemics," he said.

But Frieden didn't stop there. He also lobbied for a public health fund similar to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) where resources could be tapped during health emergencies like this one. Boxer, who has a bill outlining plans for such a fund, made a similar pitch during her opening statement.

Kaine also backed the idea.

"We don't know where a hurricane will hit. We don't know where there will be a forest fire, where there will be a flood but we do know from experience that there will be these items and so we budget for them. And then we deal with them. We don't do that with respect to infectious disease," he said.

Shannon Firth's sister works for USAID.

Zika's Spread Can't Be Stopped, Study Argues, But It Will Burn Out In 3 Years

By Nick Miroff

Washington Post, July 14, 2016

Trying to stop the Zika virus from spreading in Latin America is probably pointless, according to a new study by medical modeling experts at Imperial College London, who predict the epidemic is likely to fizzle out on its own within three years.

The findings, published Thursday in the journal Science, used Zika data collected across Latin America, where the outbreak erupted last year in Brazil. The study concludes that attempting to prevent Zika by eliminating the mosquitoes that spread the virus is a largely futile endeavor, because those methods haven't eliminated dengue fever, which is carried by the same vector.

In February, after Brazilian officials linked Zika to surging numbers of fetal deformities, U.N. health officials declared Zika a "public health emergency of international concern." Nations across Latin America sent out brigades of soldiers and sanitation workers to battle mosquitoes, while urging women to avoid or delay pregnancy for up to two years.

But the study argues that Zika is simply "not containable" and will simply fade away on its own once enough people develop antibodies to the virus.

"The current explosive epidemic will burn itself out due to a phenomenon called herd immunity," according to Neil Ferguson, the lead author and a professor at Imperial College's School of Public Health.

"Because the virus is unable to infect the same person twice — thanks to the immune system generating antibodies to kill it — the epidemic reaches a stage where there are too few people left to infect for transmission to be sustained," he said.

More than 1,100 Americans have been infected with Zika, mostly while traveling abroad, but mosquitoes are not spreading the virus on the U.S. mainland, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A $1.1 billion bill to increase funding for Zika prevention and research has stalled in Congress, after Democrats rejected Republican attempts to attached provisions that would restrict funding for abortion, birth control and other programs.

According to U.N. officials, the epidemic already appears to be declining in South America. In Colombia, the nation with the second-largest number of reported infections after Brazil, authorities say Zika has peaked.

Still, experts caution that it is too early to declare any sort of victory. Many Zika-infected patients do not seek medical attention because they experience relatively mild symptoms, or no symptoms at all. There is no cure for the virus either, and many Latin Americans in areas with a lot of Zika know that doctors have little to offer beyond pain relievers, so they simply grit it out at home.

Ferguson and the study's other authors argue that efforts to slow the spread of the virus through mosquito control may, in fact, prolong the current epidemic: "Slowing transmission between people means the population will take longer to reach the level of herd immunity needed for transmission to stop. It might also mean that the window between epidemics — which we predict may be over a decade — could actually get shorter," he said.

One concern raised by the study's authors is that by the time a Zika vaccine is ready for testing, "by the end of the year if not sooner," there may not be a community left in Latin America with enough cases of the virus.

Zika Outbreak May Have Peaked In Brazil, Researchers Say

By Liz Szabo

USA Today, July 14, 2016

Brazil's Zika outbreak, which grew explosively after the virus first appeared in the country a year ago, appears to have peaked, with fewer new infections and cases of birth defects, new research suggests.

Zika cases hit a high of nearly 8,000 suspected new infections in Brazil in March and have declined steadily since then to fewer than 200 a week.

It's possible that the Zika outbreak — which has spread to 40 countries in the Americas — is burning itself out in Brazil as a large portion of the population survives infection and becomes immune to the disease, said Neil Ferguson, co-author of a study published online Thursday in Science.

"The epidemic is probably at least more than halfway through in Brazil," said Ferguson, director of the MRC Centre for Outbreak Analysis and Modelling, School of Public Health at Imperial College London.

Not all experts are convinced Zika is on its way out of Brazil.

The declining number of cases is more likely caused by the change of seasons in the Southern Hemisphere, said Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy.

Brazil and the rest of the Southern Hemisphere are heading into winter, when the weather is cooler and drier, which tends to make the mosquitoes that spread Zika less active, Osterholm said.

While it's possible Zika cases will pick up again when spring returns, Ferguson said infections are unlikely to be as numerous as when the virus first hit Brazil. New diseases tend to spread explosively when they arrive in an area with no previous exposure, he said.

A Zika outbreak in French Polynesia, for example, infected 66% of the population in the six months between October 2013 and April 2014. Studies suggest Zika first entered Brazil between May and December 2013. The first official diagnosis of the virus wasn't made in Brazil until April 2015, largely because

Zika's symptoms — which include rash, fever and joint aches — are similar to those of dengue, a disease that's common throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

As a population develops immunity and there are fewer susceptible people left to be infected, outbreaks tend to wind down. That appears to be happening in Brazil, Ferguson said.

Doctors have been concerned about Zika's spread because it can cause devastating birth defects, including microcephaly, in which babies are born with abnormally small heads and incomplete brain development. Brazilian health officials have confirmed more than 1,600 cases of microcephaly since the Zika outbreak began, about 10 times more than usual. Seven babies in the U.S., whose mothers were infected due to travel, also have been born with microcephaly or other birth defects.

Researcher Karin Nielsen, who is conducting a study of pregnant women infected by Zika in Rio de Janeiro, said she and her colleagues haven't diagnosed the virus in a pregnant woman since April.

"We were getting 20 to 40 pregnant women a week with Zika in January and February," said Nielsen, director of the Center for Brazilian Studies at the University of California-Los Angeles. "We just don't have those numbers anymore."

Zika seems to have been replaced in Rio by another mosquito-borne virus, called chikungunya, Nielsen said. Although chikungunya can cause fever and severe joint pain, it doesn't cause birth defects. Mosquitoes can also spread chikungunya more quickly than Zika.

Mosquitoes need to incubate chikungunya for only three days before they can spread it to a person, Nielsen said. In contrast, mosquitoes need to incubate Zika for 10 days. That means that mosquitoes, which only live about a month, are much more likely to live long enough to spread chikungunya than Zika, she said.

Ferguson predicts the Zika outbreak in the Americas will be largely over in about three years. But that doesn't mean the disease will disappear.

Viruses tend to return when there are enough susceptible people, such as children, to sustain a new outbreak, Ferguson said. So even if Zika fades in the short term, it could cause regular outbreaks among children who've never been infected by it before. This phenomenon explains why viruses such as chickenpox tend to be diseases of childhood.

Zika is still spreading in many other parts of the Americas. Doctors in Puerto Rico, which reported its first case of the virus in December, have now diagnosed nearly 2,500 cases of the virus. The true number of cases could be much higher, given that 80% of people with Zika have no symptoms.

Health officials in the U.S. are worried the disease could spread here, as well, although they note that American's use of air conditioning and window and door screens are likely to prevent massive outbreaks by reducing the number of people exposed to mosquito bites.

Zika Epidemic In Latin America May Have Peaked, And Scientists Predict It Will Be Over In 3 Years

By Melissa Healy

Los Angeles Times, July 14, 2016

Researchers modeling the rampant spread of the Zika virus say that, like a wildfire consuming a parched landscape, the epidemic that has caused a plague of birth defects in Brazil is already showing signs of slowing and is likely to largely burn itself out in three years.

Peak Zika spread may already have passed, said researchers writing in the journal Science. At a slower rate and with seasonal ebb and flow, the Zika virus' march across the Americas, they reckon, will likely grind to a halt.

After Latin America's current Zika epidemic goes to ground, the group's epidemiological model suggests that another epidemic spread of Zika in the Americas is unlikely for "at least a decade."

"The current epidemic is not containable; at best, interventions can mitigate its health impacts," wrote a group of researchers led by Imperial College London epidemiologist Neil M. Ferguson. "More optimistically," they added, "the natural dynamics of the epidemic are now likely to give a multiyear window to develop new interventions before further large-scale outbreaks occur."

Discovered in 1947 and introduced into Brazil in 2013, the Zika virus has brought mild illness to the populations of 65 countries, and has become epidemic throughout South and Central America. Since 2014, more than 1,400 babies with grievous birth defects have been born to women in Brazil who were infected with Zika during their pregnancies. And Zika, which has been determined to cause brain abnormalities in gestating fetuses, has been blamed.

Until at least 2026, the researchers said, the virus' prodigious spread will be its undoing: having infected and thus inoculated most in its path, Zika would be deprived of the kindling that allows a viral outbreak to gain a foothold and march across a human landscape it has trodden before.

With much of Latin and South America having already been exposed to Zika virus and thus immune to further onslaughts, researchers said Thursday that "herd immunity" is likely to take over by 2019. Herd immunity takes hold when a dwindling slice of the population remains vulnerable to becoming ill and sustaining the transmission of virus to others who have not yet been exposed.

Under those circumstances, small, localized outbreaks of Zika will occur, the group acknowledged. But the viral epidemic's opening volley in the Americas will have ended.

The conditions for an epidemic's resurgence do not return until a new generation of never-infected children repopulates the landscape with potential victims, and elderly people's immunity to Zika begins to wane.

In Zika's case, that process will take a decade or more, the authors of the new report project.

Future epidemics of Zika infection, the group said, will likely affect a younger and younger population, as the probability rises that most older people in the virus' path have been exposed before and developed immunity. Even so, they wrote, future outbreaks will continue to take hold in areas where women of childbearing age have not yet been exposed to the virus. As a result, "substantial risk to pregnant women in future Zika epidemics" is highly likely.

Those projections came in two articles published Thursday in the journal Science. To make them, a respected team of epidemiologists collected data on the rate at which the Zika virus, which incubates in the bellies of biting mosquitoes, spread through Brazil and marched northward through Latin America.

They measured Zika's rate of spread as it waxed and waned with the seasons and different mosquito populations. And they gauged the deceleration of its spread as large swaths of the populations in Zika's path were infected and gained immunity against the bug.

Finally, in a bid to sketch the likely future of the epidemic, they projected those observed patterns onto a map of the areas into which Zika is now spreading, and allowed those patterns to play themselves out.

The results are subject to many caveats, and to assumptions that could be unique to the circumstances from which the model's data were collected. But modeling results like these allows researchers to make informed estimates of epidemic patterns, and often to highlight factors that could accelerate or delay a viral epidemic's resolution.

Mosquito-control efforts were one such factor flagged by the authors of the latest study.

Evidence from other outbreaks of mosquito-borne illness has suggested that battling Zika by reducing mosquito populations could slow the population's path to herd immunity, wrote Ferguson and his colleagues.

By protecting more of the population in Zika's path from becoming uninfected, aggressive mosquito control could also leave a larger share of people uninoculated. That, in turn, could shorten the time window during which there exist too few potential victims for a Zika epidemic to stage a resurgence.

A delay in reaching the threshold for herd immunity, wrote the researchers, could make it particularly hard for women who have delayed pregnancy to remain patient.

The new analyses are not without detractors.

"I think this model is a real overreach of the data we have," said Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy. Osterholm pointed to the four-year spread across the United States of the West Nile virus — which is in the same family of viruses as Zika. Because only mosquitoes and not birds are implicated in its spread, Zika, he said, likely spreads far less fast. Yet Zika is thought by the researchers to have covered far more ground in much less time than West Nile took to spread.

"I really believe the worst is yet to come with Zika throughout the Americas," said Osterholm. "It has not peaked."

Safe sex without condoms? With drugs keeping HIV in check, infected partners didn't spread virus

Zika Outbreak To End In 2 To 3 Years, Scientists Predict

By Julie Steenhuysen

Reuters, July 14, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Zika Epidemic In Latin America May Be Subsiding But U.S. Still Could See A Spike

NPR, July 14, 2016

A sitting duck. That's what South America was a few years ago when Zika first struck. The continent had never recorded a case of the mosquito-borne virus. And everyone was susceptible.

"So you get this huge raging epidemic that blows through the population, usually very fast and infects a pretty high percentage of the population," says Justin Lessler, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

That's exactly what happened. Millions of people across South and Central America have been infected with Zika. More than a thousand babies have been born with birth defects caused by the virus.

But now the worst might be over.

Lessler and his colleagues report evidence Thursday that the epidemic has peaked and started to subside. The virus has spread so quickly and infected so many people that it's actually burning itself out, the team writes in the journal Science.

By graphing the number of Zika cases over time, it easy to see cases have been declining rapidly over the past few months. But Lessler and his team couldn't tell if this decline was because the epidemic is waning or because the mosquito season is South America has finished for the year.

To figure that out, Lessler and his team built a simple computer model of Zika spreading across the Western Hemisphere. The model predicts the epidemic will probably last another 1.5 to 2 years and will likely peter out by spring 2018.

Then Zika will lay low for years, the team predicts. There could be small outbreaks, but "the disease is going to appear for all intents and purposes to have gone away," Lessler says. "It could be five years or even a decade before we have another significant epidemic."

The reason for this is pretty simple: A large portion of the population in Latin America will have been exposed to Zika and become immune to the virus.

"You can think of it like the forest after a giant fire," Lessler says. "All of the extra brush is gone, and it's going to take a while before enough brush — or in the case of a disease, enough susceptible people — can build back up to support another fire."

Clearly this is good news for South America. But what does it mean for the U.S.?

"That's an interesting question," says Bryan Lewis, a disease modeler at Virginia Tech.

The new study suggests Zika will be a threat in the U.S. for a few summers to come, Lewis says. But this summer will likely be the worst in terms of the number of imported Zika cases we get."Because the spike in Latin America is probably the highest it's going to be this current season," he says. "This summer is probably the big one."

All these predictions need to be taken with a big grain of salt, cautions epidemiologist Alex Perkins at the University of Notre Dame, because they are based on computer models — which aren't great at making long-term forecasts.

"It's much like when you watch the nightly weather," he says. "The weather people usually do a very good job of saying what the weather is going to be like tomorrow. But the longer time horizon you look at, the harder it is to predict what's going to happen."

Zika Outbreak Could Last 3 Years, Scientists Estimate

By Alexandra Sifferlin

TIME, July 14, 2016

The Zika virus outbreak spreading through the Americas could go on for three years, according to a new study published in the journal Science.

Scientists from Imperial College London and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health estimate that the current Zika epidemic will be "largely over" in Latin America in three years. That's because so many people are being infected, and therefore become immune to the virus. "Herd immunity will likely then cause a delay of over a decade until further large epidemics are possible," they write in the study.

The Zika virus is confirmed to cause the severe birth defect microcephaly, and it's estimated millions of people are infected in the Americas. In the continental U.S. there are over 1,000 people infected due to travel, including 320 pregnant women. There are also 2,534 people in U.S. territories who are infected, including2 79 pregnant women. On Wednesday it was reported that the first baby in Texas with Zika-related microcephaly was born. The U.S. Congress on Thursday failed to pass the $1.9 billion in funding to fight Zika that was requested by the White House in February.

The researchers note that some countries where the virus is spreading have advised people to avoid pregnancy, which the study authors write "has been criticized for being infeasible for many women—especially long term." Understanding a country's local context through monitoring could be helpful, they suggest. Mosquito control can also help prevent some spread, but the authors argue that expectations should be realistic, and that traditional insecticide use has not necessarily prevented other serious mosquito-borne diseases like dengue from spreading in the past.

"Like Ebola, Zika is a public health crisis in which policymakers have had to make decisions in the presence of enormous uncertainty," the study authors conclude. "The current epidemic is not containable; at best, interventions can mitigate its health impacts. More optimistically, the natural dynamics of the epidemic are now likely to give a multiyear window to develop new interventions before further large-scale outbreaks occur."

Latin America Zika Outbreak Should 'Burn Out' Within 3 Years, Scientists Say

By Mary Elizabeth Dallas

HealthDay, July 14, 2016

A team of British experts in disease outbreaks believes that the Zika epidemic afflicting Latin America will end within three years.

They based their estimate on modeling using available data on the outbreak, which has so far involved thousands of cases of Zika-linked birth defects, mainly in Brazil.

The Zika virus is typically spread by mosquito bites. For most people the health risks are mild. But, maternal infection in pregnancy can trigger microcephaly, a condition where babies are born with too-small heads and neurological issues.

The new analysis uses "all available data to provide an understanding of how the disease will unfold – and allows us to gauge the threat in the imminent future," lead researcher Neil Ferguson said.

"Our analysis suggests that Zika spread is not containable, but that the epidemic will burn itself out within 2-3 years," Ferguson, of Imperial College London's School of Public Health, said in a college news release.

Reporting July 14 in the journal Science, Ferguson and his team pulled together all the existing data on Zika transmission throughout Latin America. They then used this data, along with information on outbreaks of similar viruses, such as dengue, to create a model that represented the current outbreak and future patterns of transmission.

Because people who have already been infected with Zika are unlikely to be re-infected, the epidemic should burn itself out within three years, the study authors estimated.

"The current explosive epidemic will burn itself out due to a phenomenon called herd immunity," Ferguson explained. "Because the virus is unable to infect the same person twice – thanks to the immune system generating antibodies to kill it – the epidemic reaches a stage where there are too few people left to infect for transmission to be sustained."

That will mean Zika can't gain a foothold again in the Latin American population for at least a decade, when a new generation without exposure will emerge, the researchers said. "This mirrors other epidemics, such as chikungunia – a similar virus to Zika – where we have seen explosive epidemics followed by long periods with few new cases," Ferguson said.

As for the current Zika outbreak, it may already be too late to do much to curb case numbers, he said.

"Efforts to contain the epidemic would have needed to have been implemented much earlier in the current Zika epidemic to have a major effect – but by the time we realized the scale of the problem it was too late," Ferguson said.

He added that all of this means that efforts to find a vaccine should be encouraged, while Zika is still highly active.

Another study published in the same issue of Science looks to the future of epidemic control, as well. Researchers in the United States believe new strategies are needed to prepare for unexpected mosquito-borne epidemics, such as the recent outbreak of the Zika virus.

The history of Zika, which was discovered in Uganda in 1947, may provide valuable lessons for the current crisis in Brazil, Colombia, Puerto Rico and other parts of the Americas, said scientists from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore.

"The rise of Zika after its long persistence as a disease of apparently little importance highlights how little we truly understand about the global spread of mosquito-borne viruses and other lesser-known diseases," said the study's co-leader, Justin Lessler, an associate professor of epidemiology.

"Over the past decades, dengue, chikungunya, West Nile virus and now Zika have emerged or re-emerged across the globe. Yet why these viruses have expanded their range and others have failed to invade areas potentially ripe for their spread remains a mystery," Lessler said in a university news release.

Most people infected with Zika have few or minor symptoms. But since early 2015 thousands of women – largely in Brazil – exposed to the virus in pregnancy have had babies with serious birth defects. Many of the infants have smaller heads and brains associated with microcephaly.

The Hopkins researchers analyzed existing studies on Zika to assess its global threat. They came up with two main theories that could help explain why Zika has become such a risk.

One theory is that the virus mutated and became more dangerous and infectious.

The alternative theory is that the virus previously spread among just a small group of people, so its effects were less obvious. But once Zika spread to Brazil – a country with 200 million people having no immunity to the virus – the complications became more apparent.

"Despite knowing about this disease for nearly 70 years, we were completely surprised and rushing to discover the very basic things about it when it invaded the Americas," Lessler said.

"We have been completely unable to stop its spread. That is a problem for how we approach public health," he added.

Better preparation is essential, Lessler said. "We will always be in this situation when something new comes about or something little-known re-emerges unless we do a better job planning for threats more generally instead of always fighting the last battle," he said.

There is currently no vaccine or cure for Zika. The Hopkins review called for more research to assess the effectiveness of mosquito-control methods.

Zika Epidemic Should Fizzle Out Within 3 Yrs: Study

AFP, July 14, 2016

The outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus, blamed for a surge in birth defects, has likely reached its peak in Latin America and the epidemic should be over within three years, researchers said Thursday.

The study by scientists at Imperial College London appears in the US journal Science.

"The current explosive epidemic will burn itself out due to a phenomenon called herd immunity," said Neil Ferguson, a professor at Imperial's School of Public Health.

"Because the virus is unable to infect the same person twice – thanks to the immune system generating antibodies to kill it – the epidemic reaches a stage where there are too few people left to infect for transmission to be sustained."

This should happen within two to three years, he added.

Then, this herd immunity "will likely delay the next large Zika epidemic for more than a decade."

The virus, though first discovered in 1947, largely took public health officials by surprise when it began spreading through the Americas last year and causing birth defects.

The rise in infants born with irreversible malformations has been most acute in Brazil, where some 7,438 suspected microcephaly cases have been reported as of May and 1,326 cases confirmed, the study found.

Typically, Brazil saw fewer than 200 annual cases of microcephaly – in which the infant is born with an unusually small head and brain.

Zika infections have been reported in dozens of countries throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.

The United States has seen a rise in travel-associated cases, but so far no local transmission has been observed.

– Vaccine too late? –

Ferguson also warned that efforts to slow the spread of Zika, by increasing mosquito-control measures, could actually prolong the epidemic.

And efforts underway to design a vaccine – which officials have said could take several years – may come to fruition too late, he said.

"If our projections are correct, cases will have dropped substantially by the end of next year, if not sooner," said Ferguson.

"This means by the time we have vaccines ready to be tested, there may not be enough cases of Zika in the community to test if the vaccine works."

Amid concerns about the potential spread of Zika during the upcoming Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, a separate report out Wednesday by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that the risk of transmission is low.

As many as 500,000 international visitors and athletes from 207 countries are expected to travel to Rio, but "this travel volume represents a very small fraction –- less than 0.25 percent –- of the total estimated 2015 travel volume to Zika-affected countries," said the CDC.

"Visitors to the Games are expected to have a low probability of mosquito-borne Zika infections because the Games will occur during the winter season in Rio de Janeiro (August 5-21 and September 7-18, respectively) when the cooler and drier weather typically reduces mosquito populations."

The US agency did raise particular concern, however, about Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea and Yemen. It said "these four countries do not have substantial travel to any country with local Zika virus transmission, except for their participation in the Games, and have environmental conditions and population susceptibility to sustain mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus."

Pregnant women should not travel to the Olympics, and all visitors should take steps to avoid mosquito bites and prevent potential sexual transmission of the virus, the CDC urged.

The CDC Wants Your Semen (If You've Had Zika)

By Elizabeth Cohen, Senior Medical Correspondent

CNN, July 14, 2016

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is collecting semen from hundreds of men in the United States in order to figure out how long the dreaded Zika virus lasts in the bodily fluid.

The virus can be transmitted sexually, and it's been known to linger in semen long after a man's fever, rash and itchy eyes have gone away.

If a man has the virus in his semen and has sex with a woman who is pregnant or becomes pregnant, the baby could be born with devastating neurological birth defects.

After about two months of recruiting, some 40 men who've had Zika have volunteered to donate their semen. The CDC hopes to bring in about 210 more.

The men are asked to make about a dozen donations in their homes every other week for six months after their illness, and each time are given a $50 multi-use gift card.

A courier picks up the donations, which are then delivered to the CDC's labs in Fort Collins, Colorado.

"I'm happy to say patients really have been quite receptive about volunteering their specimens," said Dr. Paul Mead, the senior epidemiologist at the CDC who is running the study. "They seem to understand the importance of the study."

So far, there have been more than a thousand cases of Zika in the United States, and that number is expected to grow.

There have been 14 cases of sexual transmission of the virus, according to the CDC, although some experts think the actual number is higher.

The CDC currently recommends that men who've had Zika use a condom or abstain from sex for six months after their illness.

That advice is based on studying the semen of just three men who had Zika, which is why the CDC is doing the larger study.

Separately, the CDC is doing a study in Puerto Rico that will examine the semen of men who contracted Zika but never actually had symptoms of the disease – an important group since many who become infected have only mild symptoms or none at all, according to the CDC.

In addition to looking at the virus in semen, the Puerto Rico study will also be examining blood, saliva and vaginal secretions.

The CDC plans to recruit 300 men and women in Puerto Rico who've had Zika and 1,000 people who live in the same households.

"The response has been amazing. People have welcomed strangers to come and get their bodily fluids," said Dr. Gabriela Paz-Bailey, the investigation's lead researcher.

She said the Puerto Rico study is the largest collection ever of bodily fluids from Zika patients.

"Nearly everyone we've approached has agreed to participate," Paz-Bailey said. "They understand that many things are not yet known."

CDC Going After Your Zika Semen, Report Says

By David Oliver

US News & World Report, July 14, 2016

If you're a man who's had the Zika virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will pay you for your semen.

The agency has gathered about 40 volunteers to donate semen for a new study but is looking for approximately 210 more, according to CNN. Those who volunteer will receive a $50 multi-use gift card after providing a dozen samples every other week for half a year.

Each participant's samples will be picked up by a courier and sent for testing at the CDC's labs in Fort Collins, Colorado, where scientists will study how long the virus survives in bodily fluid. Though the virus spreads primarily through infected mosquitoes, it can also be transmitted through sexual contact, but it's unclear how long virus particles remain in the body after symptoms disappear. This research will help shed light.

The CDC has not yet responded to a U.S. News request for more information about the study.

Fears about Zika are at a fever pitch leading up to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which kick off August 5.

CDC data shows there have been 1,133 cases of Zika in the U.S., 14 of which were sexually transmitted. Travel-associated cases tallied at 1,132, with just one laboratory-acquired case.

Only 20 percent of those infected with Zika will show symptoms, which include fever, rash, red eyes and aching joints.

The CDC recommends men who live in or have traveled to active outbreak areas either abstain from sexual activity or use condoms during sexual contact.

Had Zika Virus? CDC Is Offering Men Who Have Been Infected $50 Gift Cards To Provide Sperm Donations

By Stephanie Castillo

Medical Daily, July 14, 2016

Hey, guys who have been infected with the Zika virus — want a $50 gift card you can use just about anywhere? Donate your sperm to the The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

For the past two months, the organization has been recruiting men to donate their semen samples in order to figure out how long Zika stays in the bodily fluid, CNN reported. So far about 40 men have signed up to make donations every other week for six months after they've recovered from the virus. The CDC is hoping to recruit at least 210 more, and yes, guys are given a gift card for every donation.

It's convenient, too. CNN reported that a courier picks up the donations so that they can be delivered to the CDC's lab in Fort Collins, Colo.

"I'm happy to say patients really have been quite receptive about volunteering their specimens," Dr. Paul Mead, the senior epidemiologist at the CDC who is running the study, told CNN. "They seem to understand the importance of the study."

The CDC reported 14 cases of sexually transmitted cases of Zika virus, with experts anticipating many more.

John Moore/Getty Images

Maybe you're wondering why sperm — isn't Zika contracted through a mosquito bite? Typically, the answer is yes. If humans are bitten by an infected mosquito from the Aedes genus family, the same mosquitoes that carry dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever, they can develop symptoms. But there are a number of cases that have been contracted through sexual contact. In fact, the CDC reported 14 cases of sexually transmitted viruses, with experts bracing for a higher number of cases in the future.

The donation program has inspired a separate study in Puerto Rico, where Zika has been spreading more rapidly compared to other countries. Some believe the country's crippling debt has hampered its response, especially when it comes to getting women contraceptives. Reuters reported that only a small fraction of methods to prevent Zika-related birth defects were expected to get to women in June. Long-term birth control isn't on the table either (think of an intrauterine device) since many local doctors are not trained to implant them, according to Reuters.

CNN reported a fraction of Puerto Rican men and women have contracted the disease, but did not experience any symptoms; in which case, they'll sample blood, saliva, and vaginal secretions on top of men's sperm.

Zika has been spreading across South America at an alarming rate, as well as parts of the United States and western Europe. The World Health Organization (WHO) is even facing pressure to postpone next month's Rio Olympics due to the fact this latest outbreak originated in Brazil. While the virus usually only amounts to a week-long mild fever, skin rash, and muscle aches and fatigue, it can pose a special threat to pregnant women, namely microcephaly — a condition that affects fetuses in utero so they're born with severely small heads and develop neurological issues.

The CDC is regularly updating its Zika and sexual transmission page with the latest information, which at this point includes transparent insight into how little we still know. For now, condoms are considered the best way to reduce the chance of getting Zika from sex, as is the case for all sexually transmitted diseases. And for pregnant couples with male partners who live in or travel to areas affected by the virus, the advice to "use a condom every time they have sex or not have sex" is in bold. Couples trying to get pregnant should talk to their health care provider, the CDC said.

Study Finds Zika In Woman's Genital Tract

Can Women Spread Zika Sexually, Too?

By Julie Beck

The Atlantic, July 14, 2016

So far, all known cases of sexually transmitted Zika have involved a man spreading it to a partner. The virus thrives in semen, and lives there longer than it does in blood, which is why experts recommend that men use condoms if they've been in areas where Zika is spreading—for six months if they've had symptoms, and eight weeks even if they haven't.

Currently, the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states, "We don't know if a woman with Zika can pass the virus to her partners, during vaginal or oral (mouth-to-vagina) sex." But now there's reason to suspect that women might be able to.

Related Stories

In a new case study published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases, doctors at Pointe à Pitre University Hospital, in Guadeloupe, treated a woman with Zika in May, and detected the virus in her genital tract. When she first came in, her blood tested positive for Zika, though her urine did not. Three days after the onset of her symptoms, doctors did a genital swab, a swab around the opening of the cervix, and also took a sample of cervical mucus. All three samples tested positive for Zika virus RNA. They did another round of tests 11 days after her symptoms started—of blood, urine, and cervical mucus—and while the blood and urine were clear, the virus was still in the mucus.

This doesn't prove anything, but it does raise the possibility that sexual transmission of Zika could come from anyone. And it seems there's something about sexual fluids that helps Zika survive longer in the body. How long is unclear; apparently at least 11 days in a woman is possible.

The researchers speculate that this discovery could open the door to a much more serious one. "Our findings raise the threat of a woman potentially becoming a chronic Zika virus carrier, with the female genital tract persistently expressing the virus RNA," the study reads. For women hoping to have children, given the risks of Zika to fetuses, that could be a huge threat.

Pa. Giving Out Zika Prevention Kits For Pregnant Women

Philly (PA), July 14, 2016

The Wolf administration is distributing free kits for pregnant women to protect against the Zika virus.

The kits contain small amounts of federally approved insect repellent for skin, permethrin spray repellent for treating clothing and shoes, standing water tablets for killing mosquito larva, condoms to prevent sexual transmission of Zika, and educational materials in English and Spanish, the state Department of Health said Thursday.

They will be available in "limited quantities" to pregnant women from local health departments, community health centers, offices of the Women, Infants, and Children federal nutrition program, and non-profit organizations that primarily serve low-income or homeless women, the state said in a news release.

The kits at this point are mainly an educational campaign since no infections in the continental United States have been transmitted via local mosquitoes. But more than 1,300 cases have been acquired by Americans traveling in areas where mosquitoes that carry the virus are circulating and another 14 via sexual transmission, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The totals include 39 cases in Pennsylvania and 50 in New Jersey. The CDC said 346 of the cases in U.S. states and another 303 in American territories such as Puerto Rico, where mosquitoes currently are carrying the virus, involved pregnant women as of July 7.

"While Zika is spread primarily by mosquitoes that are infected with the virus, it also can spread through sexual contact with individuals who have the disease," Pennsylvania Health Secretary Karen Murphy said in the release. "Because Zika poses serious health risks for babies born to women who contracted the virus during pregnancy, the kits include health education materials and prevention tools to avoid mosquito bites and sexual transmission of the disease to pregnant women. Using the products in the Zika Prevention Kit can help protect you and your loved ones from the virus."

New Jersey is considering a similar measure, a spokesperson for the state health department said.

Some women who were infected during pregnancy have miscarried or given birth to babies with abnormally small heads and other serious birth defects. Some health authorities have advised women traveling in areas where the virus is circulating – much of South and Central America and the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico – to temporarily postpone becoming pregnant.

The mosquito species that is mainly responsible for spreading millions of cases of the virus does not thrive in the mid-Atlantic region even in summer. But another species that is among the biggest nuisances locally, known as the Asian Tiger mosquito, has been shown to be capable of transmitting Zika in laboratory settings, although in temperate regions it has been an inefficient transmitter of related viruses like Dengue.

Zika is far from the only disease carried by mosquitoes, however. The New Jersey Department of Health on Thursday confirmed the state's first human case of West Nile virus this year, in a 48-year-old Camden County man who remains hospitalized; information about the disease is posted here.

Pennsylvania has had one case so far this year, in Indiana County.

West Nile, while typically causing mild symptoms, if any, is most dangerous for people who are elderly or have compromised immune systems, and can be fatal in some cases.

Zika, by contrast, almost never causes serious harm – except for pregnant women and, in rare cases, others who are stricken with a temporary paralysis known as Guillain-Barre syndrome.

Pa. Offering Zika Prevention Kits For Pregnant Women

By Adam Smeltz, Pittsburgh Post-gazette

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, July 14, 2016

Zika prevention kits designed to safeguard pregnant women from the mosquito-borne virus will be available across Pennsylvania, the state Department of Health announced this morning.

The department will begin distribution today for the kits, which include insect repellents, water tablets for killing mosquito larva and condoms to prevent sexual transmission of the virus, the department said in a news release. Pregnant women can pick up the kits at no charge from local health departments, federally qualified health centers, community health centers, nonprofit organizations and offices for the Women, Infants and Children assistance program.

A complete list of kit providers is posted at www.zika.pa.gov. The cost of the effort wasn't immediately clear.

"Because Zika poses serious health risks for babies born to women who contracted the virus during pregnancy, the kits include health education materials and prevention tools," state health secretary Karen Murphy said in a statement.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed 40 Zika cases in Pennsylvania since the winter, all in people who contracted the virus while visiting an outbreak-affected area abroad, according to the health department. While no Zika cases have been tied to mosquitoes in the continental United States, health authorities are monitoring domestic populations of the insect.

Most Zika cases are thought to arise from mosquito bites, but the disease can spread through blood transfusions and sexual contact, as well. About 20 percent of infected people show symptoms, most recovering within several days from fever, joint pain or other mild ailments.

But researchers have linked the infection in pregnant women to serious birth defects, such as microcephaly. Children with the neurological condition often have developmental issues, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Alabama Lab Gets Almost $1 Million For Zika Research

By Amy Yurkanin

Birmingham (AL) News, July 14, 2016

An Alabama drug development lab will receive almost $1 million to expand research into Zika virus, which is carried by mosquitoes and has been linked to serious birth defects.

The grant to Birmingham-based Southern Research from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases could grow to $3.9 million over the next two years, according to a press release.

Scientists at Southern Research have studied mosquito-borne illnesses including dengue, chikungunya and West Nile Virus. The grant will fund efforts to develop non-human primate models that can be used to test Zika virus treatments, according to the statement.

"Our ultimate goal with this project is to establish a model of Zika virus infection that can be used for the evaluation of new vaccines and therapeutics in optional efficacy studies sponsored by NIAID," said Jonathan Rayner, principal investigator on the project, in a statement.

Zika virus has been linked to an increase in cases of microcephaly, or unusually small heads and brains, in newborns. The condition can cause lifelong disability. Public health officials have warned women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant to avoid travel to areas where the virus is prevalent.

Zika virus only causes symptoms in about one out of every five cases. Symptoms include fever, rash, red eyes and joint pain.

Zika can be spread by mosquitoes or by sex with an infected person. Eleven people in Alabama have tested positive for Zika virus, but all have been associated with travel to an affected area. No locally or sexually-transmitted cases have been reported in the state, according to the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Southern Research Gets Nearly $1M Grant To Study Zika Virus

By Peyton Shepard, Editorial Intern

Birmingham (AL) Business Journal, July 14, 2016

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases of the National Institutes of Health have given Southern Research a government contract worth nearly $1 million for use in its research on the Zika virus.Southern Research's Drug Discovery and Drug Development divisions have worked for the past year to develop a vaccine for the virus, which the World Health Organization has determined to be an epidemic.The contract will allow the institute to broaden their research as they attempt to develop a non-human primate model for antiviral drug testing, which will help inform other research into potential vaccines."Our ultimate goal with this project is to establish a model of Zika virus infection that can be used for the evaluation of new vaccines and therapeutics in optional efficacy studies sponsored by NIAID," said Jonathan Rayner, head of drug development and a principle investigator, in a statement. "There is an understanding that the virus may continue to spread into new regions over the summer. Therefore, this contract from NIAID is timely and will help us to expedite efforts to understand the pathogenesis of this virus, and support the search for new vaccines and therapeutics."

Related: How Southern Research is working to limit the spread of Zika

The company's infectious disease research team has conducted studies on six strains of the virus, and created an antiviral test that will allow other researchers to gauge the efficacy of the drugs they develop.While the initial contract is worth $901,048, it could expand to almost $4 million over the course of the next two years."Southern Research has a long history of pivotal work on infectious diseases, including mosquito-borne illnesses including dengue, chikungunya, and West Nile Virus," said Art Tipton, president and CEO of Southern Research, in a statement. "Our team is uniquely positioned to support the growing body of global research on the Zika virus through translational science, and we're grateful for the solid partnerships we've developed over the years with the NIH and NIAID."

Zika Virus Worries Pregnant Women As Mosquito Season Approaches

By Maggie Fox

Today Show Online, July 14, 2016

It was Christmas, and Victoria Eljach was visiting her family in Colombia. Zika was all anyone talked about on the television news, she said. The virus had by then been carried from Brazil to Colombia — and suspicions were growing that it was causing a horrendous birth defect called microcephaly.

Eljach went home to Houston after the holidays. Zika was making news in the U.S., too, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention alerted pregnant women to stay away from Brazil and Colombia. Even women who might become pregnant should consider staying away, the CDC warned.

"Then, two months later, I learned I was pregnant," Eljach said. "I was very scared."

Now 22 weeks pregnant, Eljach is thriving. But she's not relaxed.

"I thought I was going to be safe here in Houston but there's Zika in Houston," said Eljach. Just last week, three patients getting pregnancy care at Legacy tested positive for Zika virus. Now they are being monitored closely to see if the virus will affect their babies.

So far, all 1,300 known cases of Zika in the continental United States — and all 340 pregnant women affected— are related to travel. Either the women were infected in another country where Zika is spreading, or they were infected by their husbands or partners who had traveled.

Jennifer Weiss / NBC News

Victoria Eljach, who is 22 weeks pregnant, watches as Dr. Juan Franco performs an ultrasound on her Friday, July 8, 2016, in Houston. Two months after visiting family in Colombia, Eljach learned she was pregnant. "I was very scared," she said.

One baby has been born with microcephaly in the Houston area. Nine babies have been born in U.S. states with Zika-linked defects, and another six died, miscarried or were aborted, the CDC says.

"The mother, who traveled from Latin America, was tested for Zika, but had received inconclusive test results. Since the infant received a definitive positive lab result for Zika, it is suspected that the mother probably carried the virus while pregnant, and presumably was infected in Latin America," the county health department said in a statement.

It's just a matter of time before someone who brings the virus to Houston is bitten by a mosquito and the virus starts to spread locally, experts agree. While no one predicts an all-out epidemic like in Brazil or Puerto Rico, it's enough to make Eljach and her medical providers nervous.

Victoria Eljach takes notes on her cell phone as she and her husband, Jorge Varón, wait to check out after a routine prenatal checkup.

"I thought it was in Central and South America. That's why I felt safe here," Eljach said. "But with summer coming, I saw there were some cases here in Houston."

She made another trip to Bogota after doing some research and seeing that Bogota's elevation made it an unlikely home for the Aedes aegypti mosquito that spreads Zika. The virus is more common in low-lying, humid, tropical areas — like Houston. At 8,600 feet, Bogota's higher above sea level than Denver.

Nonetheless, the trip troubled her doctor Dr. Juan Franco at Legacy Community Health, a network of not-for-profit clinics in the Houston area. Eljach, a behavioral analyst specializing in developmental disorders, had been Franco's patient for eight years.

He had her tested for possible Zika infection, just to be sure: She was clear.

"We screen every patient who comes through Legacy," said Franco. "We are testing people who have recent travel [to Zika-affected areas].

No one knows what percentage of women infected with Zika go on to have babies with birth defects. As with other infections that cause birth defects, the most dangerous time appears to be earlier in the pregnancy — when damage to just a few cells has big consequences.

Victoria Eljach, who is 22 weeks pregnant, has her blood pressure taken by nurse Cindy Lozano during a routine prenatal checkup Friday, July 8.

But the evidence is building that infection at any point during a pregnancy can endanger the baby. And women who don't have symptoms from their Zika infections do not appear to be safe; babies with severe birth defects have been born to women who do not remember any symptoms of a rash or fever.

Since Zika does not appear to cause symptoms in most people it infects, this worries doctors who fear an invisible epidemic of birth defects.

"It's a delayed catastrophe," says Dr. Peter Hotez, dean of the school of tropical medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "It is every parent's worst nightmare."

Dr. Juan Franco confirmed to patient Victoria Eljach that she is having a boy while performing an ultrasound. Eljach's pregnancy is doubly high risk because of her travel and her husband's.

At 36, Eljach is considered at moderately high risk to be having her first baby, anyway. And she's doubly at risk. Her husband, Jorge Varón, lives in Panama, traveling frequently around the region for his work in the retail industry.

Eljach is worried about sexual transmission of Zika.

"We are sleeping together but nothing is happening," she said, laughing.

"The other night, my husband came to visit me. We left the balcony door open," she said. They fell asleep but in the middle of the night she got a rude awakening.

"He heard a mosquito in his ear and he took the OFF and started spraying me all over," she said.

Eljach's taking every precaution she can. "I love to go to the pool in the summer but I am scared," she said. "My doctor tells me to always wear pants and to cover up and to use repellent. I am using OFF every day and I try to stay indoors."

Zika fears have cramped her style in other ways, also. "I had to cancel some trips to Mexico and Colombia that I had scheduled," said Eljach, who likes to visit family frequently and who also had hoped to fit in one last Caribbean vacation before she gave birth.

But with the Zika risk so high this summer, Caribbean resorts are off-limits for pregnant women.

'Mosquitoes are everywhere'

Every pregnant woman at Legacy gets a Zika kit: a ziplock bag with a bottle of repellent containing DEET; condoms; and a card with information about how to avoid mosquito bites.

"There are patients who ask us about mosquito repellent. We just assure them it is safe during pregnancy," Franco said. The CDC says DEET is safe for pregnant women and children alike and is more effective than some "natural" formulations that can irritate the skin.

Franco also tested a woman from El Salvador who did test positive for Zika and whose baby so far is healthy. "The patient came to us at 36 weeks," Franco said. So far, the news is good.

"She delivered in late May. The baby is doing well," he said.

Eljach talks to nurse Cindy Lozano during a routine prenatal checkup.

He's treating a patient from Brazil who had the symptoms of Zika infection and who tested positive for infection at 16 weeks. She's now 20 weeks pregnant.

"I think it is just a matter of time before we see these numbers increase," Franco added. "There are lots of women with husbands who travel back and forth."

And he doesn't doubt there could be local outbreaks. "Mosquitoes, as we are aware, are everywhere in Houston," Franco said.

Dr. Ann Barnes, chief medical officer for Legacy, agrees.

"I think there is significant concern, and justified, on that. Houston is notorious for being a place where there are lots of mosquitoes in summer," she said.

Excited and concerned

When treating women who have evidence of Zika infection, the team at Legacy will follow the CDC protocols, which include regular ultrasounds to check the baby's development.

"What we are looking for is any changes in the circumference of the head. We are looking for microcephaly," Franco said. "When the baby is born, we test the placenta." If the virus is in the placenta, that indicates it's also been in the baby's body and could have done damage.

Not all of Zika's destruction immediately apparent. Sometimes babies miscarry or die shortly after birth, and some have normal-sized heads but scans indicate extensive brain damage. Some have hearing and vision abnormalities. So all babies born to women who had Zika while pregnant need close scrutiny.

And if there are problems, they could end up being expensive for parents, taxpayers or both.

"It would be very difficult for most of our patients to care for a sick baby. Most are indigent," Franco said. While Medicaid covers the children, it's not always easy to find the care. “The problem is finding physicians to care for them,” Franco said.

Eljach had her latest ultrasound just last week, and everything looks fine. The scan confirmed that she is having a boy.

“I am excited but at the same time I am a little concerned,” she said.

There is one area of disagreement — the baby’s name.

“I like Santiago. I like Emilio. My husband likes Valentino,” she said, smiling.

Stop Using The Zika Virus To Attack Planned Parenthood

By Dawn Laguens

STAT, July 14, 2016

Imagine a virus for which there is no vaccine that can be sexually transmitted and lead to devastating birth defects. Imagine also that a powerful tool is available to combat it. You would expect — even demand — that policymakers immediately make that tool as widely available as possible.

That virus, the Zika virus, is here today. But Republicans in Congress are ignoring medical science by trying to restrict access to family planning, a proven form of protection from Zika’s harms, as part of their ongoing and dangerous crusade against women’s health care providers.

The Zika virus, transmitted by mosquitoes and by sex, is a global public health crisis. It puts the health of pregnant women and families in jeopardy. Medical science and common sense would dictate that family planning services like contraception that help prevent sexual transmission of the virus and prevent or delay pregnancy should play a central role in combating this epidemic. Yet Republicans in Congress are recycling age-old political attacks on birth control and Planned Parenthood to try to justify their indefensible position on Zika.

The scientific and public health communities speak with one loud and urgent voice: Zika poses its greatest threat to pregnant women and babies, and so family planning and maternal health care must be a central part of combatting the virus. It is the primary strategy recommended by the World Health Organization, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and many others.

Republicans in the House of Representatives want to cut off reproductive health care providers from receiving Zika emergency funds. They also want to go further — their goal is clearly to limit family planning access at every turn. The House Fiscal Year 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services bill would eliminate all funding for Title X, the nation’s family planning program. Title X provides essential services to 4.1 million people every year; Planned Parenthood centers provide preventive health care to 1.5 million of those women, men, and families.

Similarly, a House committee approved on Tuesday the Fiscal Year 2017 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill, which imposes severe cuts to international family planning funding.

As Republicans in Congress have done before, this legislation puts politics before science and excludes critical reproductive health organizations that are uniquely suited to address the Zika crisis. Under the new legislation, qualified health care providers like ProFamilias in Puerto Rico, the first organization there to publicly discuss the connection between Zika and reproductive health, would not receive any funds to fight the epidemic simply because they are affiliated with the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

In a public health emergency, it is illogical and unethical to prevent the people and organizations who are best qualified to help, and who are already making a difference, from doing more.

Women in Latin America and the Caribbean face immense difficulty accessing reproductive and maternal health services. In this region, which is the hardest hit by the Zika virus, more than half of women who need pregnancy-related medical care do not receive it. An estimated 23 million women in the region have an unmet need for contraception.

In the US and Puerto Rico, women are fortunate to have Planned Parenthood, ProFamilias, and other organizations that strive to bridge this gap. But the weak Zika-response plan proposed by Republicans in Congress would endanger those who are most vulnerable to this epidemic — pregnant women and their developing babies. It blatantly disregards the facts from the public health community, and throws common sense out the window.

In the face of a public health emergency, in defiance of advice from countless health experts, and against the wishes of 65 percent of Americans who have called for the government response to Zika to include reproductive health care, Republicans in Congress still refuse to drop their dangerous crusade against women’s health care providers and instead adopt common sense to pursue an attainable solution.

At the end of this week, Congress will break for its summer vacation. Approximately 600 pregnant women in US states and territories have already been infected with the Zika virus, and many more are likely to get it before Congress returns to work on Sept. 6. Congress should act now to pass a bill that includes funding for expanded family planning services as part of the US response to the Zika outbreak.

We cannot afford congressional inaction. We cannot afford one more life altered irrevocably and senselessly by the preventable outcomes of the Zika virus. We need a real response that empowers women.

Congress must step up now to defend the women and families counting on them to address and prevent this public health crisis while there is still a window to do so. Republicans' political games will mean loss and heartache to families in the US and around the globe.

Dawn Laguens is executive vice president of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Vermont Needs 'Actors' For Emergency Exercise

Brattleboro (VT) Reformer, July 14, 2016

WILMINGTON – The town is seeking actors to participate in Vermont's Vigilant Guard catastrophic exercise on July 29.

Volunteers are needed to help prepare emergency responders in Vermont for future disasters. About 36 people are needed to spend a day at a shelter, have simulated injuries or illnesses, and other roles. Volunteers will be given a role to play and instructed on what needs they should present to responders. They will then play out the scenario in order for evaluators to record how fire, police, rescue, and other responders react. Those observations will then be used to identify gaps and improve responses. Before the event, actors will be given a complete orientation to the incident site and what actions are expected of them. Food will be provided.

Six volunteers are needed from 8 to 10:30 a.m. and 30 volunteers from 4 to 6 p.m. Actors must be 18 or over with the following exceptions: 16-17 year-olds may participate with parents' permission. Younger children can participate if part of a "family" at a shelter.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact Jessica DeFrancesco at the Town Offices at jdefrancesco@wilmingtonvt.us or 802-464-8591. The state is also looking for participants. For more information, email brittany.marquette@vermont.gov.

Three years in the making, the state-wide Vigilant Guard exercise will include 5,000 people and evaluate the effectiveness of state and local responses to a number of crises. The exercise is being organized by the Vermont Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security, in collaboration with the Vermont National Guard, and is scheduled for July 25 through Aug. 2.

Vigilant Guard is Vermont's largest ever emergency exercise and will play out in 50 locations throughout Vermont, to include state agencies, local communities, 16 hospitals, the Burlington Airport, and the Vermont National Guard among many others. The goal of the exercise is to evaluate performance and identify gaps that may exist in the state's response to a catastrophic event.

Emergency Operations Centers at several state agencies and the National Guard will be activated at different times during the week, and the exercise will culminate with a 53 hour around-the-clock activation at the State Emergency Operations Center involving all agencies.

"We've designed this exercise to pose as many real challenges as possible," DEMHS Director Christopher Herrick said. "Urban search and rescue teams will work with the National Guard to clear tons of debris, the Health Department will receive and distribute Strategic National Stockpile medicines and supplies, and actors will inundate hospitals and shelters needing assistance. This degree of realism will help us hone our response by identifying not only what went right, but what went wrong and rectifying those mistakes in the future."

National Guard vehicles will be on the road and in the sky during the event, and hundreds of members of the Guard will perform emergency tasks for which they have trained.

The Vermont Department of Health will play a major role during the exercise. A simulated health emergency will test that department's ability to respond and distribute life-saving medications.

Should a real emergency occur the public will be notified through traditional means like Vermont Alert (http://vtalert.gov), the Emergency Alert System, or through the media.

Specific details of the exercise will remain confidential as some participants cannot know those details before being evaluated during the exercise.

Communities that are participating include Colchester, Guilford, Lyndon, Newport, Wilmington and Windsor. Agencies, departments and other state entities participating include the Department of Public

Safety, the Division of Fire Safety, Urban Search and Rescue, the Vermont State Police, the Agency of Agriculture, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Agency of Transportation.

In addition, 16 hospitals around the state will be involved, as well as Civil Air Patrol, the National Weather Service, the Red Cross, Vermont Electric Cooperative, Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control.

Activities include natural disaster response and recovery, a medical surge and a cyber attack.

'Largest Ever' Emergency Drill To Test Vermont Responders

By Elizabeth Hewitt

Bennington (VT) Banner, July 14, 2016

COLCHESTER – A series of simulated incidents over the course of nine days this summer will test Vermont's emergency responders.

The event, called Vigilant Guard, will take place in 50 places around the state and involve some 5,000 emergency responders, according to the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, part of the Department of Public Safety.

State law enforcement, multiple state agencies, 16 hospitals, the Burlington International Airport, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Vermont National Guard and others will participate in Vigilant Guard, which will begin July 25.

Several municipalities — including Colchester, Guilford, Lyndon, Newport, Wilmington and Windsor — are also part of the plan.

At a news conference Wednesday at Camp Johnson, the Vermont National Guard base in Colchester, Gov. Peter Shumlin invoked the experience of the state during Tropical Storm Irene in discussing the significance of emergency response training.

Shumlin stood in front of a simulated disaster site featuring concrete rubble, upside-down cars and shipping containers, which will be used for practicing urban rescues.

DEMHS Director Christopher Herrick speaks about Vigilant Guard. Photo by Elizabeth Hewitt/VTDigger

"It's important when we're trying to save lives and deal with crises to have rehearsed, to have figured out who does what when, to have figured out how we minimize loss of life and loss of property," Shumlin said.

He and others said Vermonters are likely to see some activity during the course of the drill, including movement of the Vermont National Guard by land and air.

State officials characterized the event as the "largest ever emergency exercise" in Vermont. It has been in the works for three years. The federal government, which requires such tests of the state's emergency response system, is footing the estimated $570,000 bill, according to Christopher Herrick, director of the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

Herrick said he could not share many details of the event, in part because he does not know the details, but that simulations will test cybersecurity as well as urban search and rescue.

The response effort will be headquartered at an operations center in Waterbury, he said. It will test the coordination of responses across multiple agencies.

"Vigilant Guard is designed to challenge us, and when I say 'us' I mean the entire state, to handle situations with which we may be familiar and, more importantly, those we haven't seen," Herrick said.

Organizers of the simulation are seeking 200 actors to participate in the drill to "inundate" hospitals and emergency shelters around the state to test preparedness, Herrick said.

Evaluators and monitors will be on site to observe and gather data from each simulation, he said. Agencies will analyze the results and draw on them to make changes to the system.

If at any point during the simulation there is an actual disaster, the exercise will be halted, Herrick said.

Health Commissioner Harry Chen said he expects "nearly every" employee of the department will be involved with the simulation in one way or another.

"This is an important exercise because we must be ready for anything, whether it be a natural disaster like (Tropical Storm) Irene, an actual disease threat like H1N1, a cyberattack, or any combination of these catastrophes. We must have a system ready to respond immediately and effectively to any threat of the health and lives of Vermonters and visitors," Chen said.

Some secondary roads in certain locales may be temporarily closed, but detours will be made clear, according to Jessica Stolz, of the emergency management division.

Planners for the event have contracted with local and regional businesses for services during it, according to Stolz.

Emergency Preparedness Solutions, a private business, is helping to organize the evaluators for the event, and Norwich University is assisting with the cybersecurity element. There are also contracts with local food providers for meals and with hotels to house personnel coming to the state for the event, she said.

Emergency Preparedness Workshop July 26

The Catholic Messenger, July 14, 2016

Faithful Readiness: An Emergency Preparedness Workshop for Faith Communities will be held July 26 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, 4097 18th St., Bettendorf.

It is a collaborative effort between FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Center for Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships, and state and local partners. The event is free, but registration is required.

Participants will meet FEMA Region VII liaisons to discuss the Faithful Readiness Initiative involving faith communities throughout the region, be introduced to FEMA's booklet, "Developing a High Quality Emergency Operations Plan for your House of Worship" and connect with new partners ready to help support your house of worship's members prepare for emergencies.

Please register at: http://goo.gl/forms/dWb72AXfz84ej09C3 or email dave.donovan@scottcountyiowa.com with subject line "RSVP-Iowa" and include name(s) of participants, organization(s), title within the organization, e-mail address and phone number. Seating is limited. Lunch will be provided by the Red Cross.

Preparing For The Unpredictable

By Carolin Jones

Tacoma (WA) Weekly, July 14, 2016

Imagine you are on your way to work, and the earth starts shaking. Bridges collapse, I-5 turns into a massive sinkhole, and if you make it out alive, you are now stuck in your car in the middle of chaos, injuries and no option of receiving help anytime soon. Are you prepared to be stuck in your car without help for days? Living on air and sunshine won't be an option as the human body can go without water for about four days. Now, what?

The Center for Disease Control estimates that half of adults in the U.S. are unprepared for emergencies. But, the solution is closer than you think. American Preparedness, a Burien-based company, has made it its goal to keep people safe, and started packing emergency preparedness kits that have all things you need once disaster strikes.

"We offer the insurance we hope you never have to use," says Jeff Guite, American Preparedness president, who founded the company in 1981. Guite, who is a disabled veteran and whose company employs service-disabled veterans, wanted to keep serving his country after he left the Army in 1969.

Guite's military background inspired him to start emergency kits. "Military people are ready to go before anything happens. I thought: How about a survival package for people before a disaster occurs?" Guite says.

American Preparedness' ready-to-go kits come in a variety of sizes. A one-person kit at $54.95 includes a first aid pack, hygiene pack, emergency drinking water pouches, food packets, a thermal blanket, flashlight and batteries, whistle, poncho, lightsticks, and hand warmers. Items essential when waiting for help during a three-day period – or riding along in the backseat for five years until it's time for a replacement.

Guite, who is also Native American and a member of the Huron Tribe, has partnered with various tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest to outfit members for disasters. The company was able to partner with the Puyallup Tribe and supply backpacks for seniors on the reservation.

About 9,000 injuries are expected just along the Washington coastal regions and I-5 during an earthquake according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Guite urges residents to take personal responsibility when it comes to preparing for disaster. "There isn't any cavalry to the rescue. If you don't have the supplies in place before the disaster happens, you're in deep trouble," Guite says.

American Preparedness has taken the plan-ahead mindset a step further and donated emergency kits to groups especially vulnerable to the aftermath of a disaster. Seniors, low-income families, and school children are often the ones least prepared for an emergency.

Guite and his team started the "Kits for Kids" program in 1991 and have since distributed several thousand kits to ensure safety in schools. In July 2015, American Preparedness partnered with King County Senior Services and Swedish Hospital to donate 1,500 emergency kits to seniors receiving Meals on Wheels services.

"If you're ready for a big earthquake, or volcanic eruption – you're ready for anything," says Sarah Foster, Public Information Officer at Pierce County Department of Emergency Management. She says residents should consider what essentials they need to survive for a few days as every situation is unique, and special medications or pets should be considered when putting a kit together.

"What does your routine look like? What supplies do you need if you were cut off and the roads are closed? How would you make sure that you, your family and your pets are safe?" Foster says. She recommends to assemble kits for at least five to seven days and place them at home, work and inside the car. Adding a written list of important phone numbers to the kit, as cell phone batteries won't last forever and contact information might become unavailable, is essential when coordinating with families and friends.

The Pierce County Department of Emergency Management offers courses for residents that want to learn more about their individual neighborhoods and what potential hazards they can encounter during an emergency. The free training aims to prepare residents to help their community during a disaster and act as an effective first responder.

Emergencies can come in many forms, ranging from natural disasters, man-made catastrophes, and terrorist attacks. Guite says he used his emergency kit's light sticks to highlight his damaged vehicle and ensure safety for himself and other drivers. He also heard about his light sticks finding their way to rock concerts, heat packs going to sporting events and flashlights randomly disappearing. But no matter where the kit ends up, it is essential to be prepared. "Education and training never produce fear. Take personal responsibility for your family's safety," Guite says. American Preparedness is always looking for volunteers to help with the emergency kit assembly.

Pet Health: Emergency Preparedness Helps Animals During Wildfires

By Dr. Ragan Adams

SOURCE at Colorado State University, July 14, 2016

As the hot, dry summer envelops Colorado and wildfires burn across the state, the news fills with horrifying images, heartfelt evacuation stories and heroic emergency responses. The steady flow of fiery reports is a stark reminder that natural disaster could suddenly disrupt any of our lives.

Rather than dreading a potential fire, use your energy to prepare. Friday, July 15, is National Pet Fire Safety Day – a perfect time to make sure you and your pets are ready for evacuation and emergency shelter, should the need ever arise.

Preparing for your pets' welfare in an emergency will help first responders, evacuation groups and emergency animal shelters better care for the animals, and will give you peace of mind. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has a comprehensive Family Emergency Guide, but for the 60 percent of households with pets, preparation must be made for animals as well.

Effective emergency planning involves backup help from other people; a basic understanding of emergency response and resources in your community; setting aside needed animal feed and supplies; compiling health records and care instructions; and clearly communicating this information in written plans and simple signage. Planning for pets

CSU veterinary students treat a horse evacuated from the 2012 High Park Fire at The Ranch, Larimer County Fairgrounds. Photo: William A. Cotton, CSU Photography

Start by making with friends, family and neighbors a "buddy plan" that addresses the needs of your pets, horses or livestock. You may be at work and unable to access your animals when a fire, flood or other disaster unfolds. As part of the plan, make sure your buddies have written permission to care for your animals and have access to your pet emergency kit and kennels.

Know evacuation routes. Fires can blow up quickly, so it is best to identify multiple evacuation route options.

Put a sticker or sign on your house to inform fire personnel that there are animals inside. It's a good idea to place this kind of emergency sticker adjacent to entrances, such as the door from your garage to home, where the information would be easily visible to responders.

The Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management urges residents to sign up for emergency alerts on county websites. The division offers a list of local emergency management websites, and other ways to stay updated on local emergencies. Create a "ready-go" bag for your pets that includes:

Food, water and medications for three days

Copies of vaccination records and medical histories

List of important animal emergency contacts, such as the names and locations of veterinary offices

Collars with tags and microchip information

Photos of you with your pet

Bowls, can openers, spoons

Cat litter, scoop and pan

Pet first-aid kit

Bedding, crate or carrier

Leashes, harnesses

Toys, grooming supplies

Paper towels, trash bags, disinfectant

Towels, gloves and hand sanitizer

Learn more about pet preparations in Ready Colorado's Plan for Pets guide. Planning for non-commercial livestock

Many families own acreage on which they keep small numbers of horses, goats, chickens, sheep and/or cattle whose emergency needs also must be considered. The above readiness tips may be revised for larger animals, with preparation on a different scale.

For instance, rather than crates, you might need a trailer; instead of dog food, you might need to set aside hay and grain. When identifying evacuation routes, you might need to make sure they will accommodate a horse or livestock trailer. Prepare for larger animals with:

Three days of food, water and medication

Registration papers and brand inspection cards

Copies of veterinary records

List of animal emergency contacts, such as animal control, animal shelter, veterinarians

Halters, lead ropes

First-aid kit

Grooming tools

Water and feed buckets

Fly spray

Tack

Muck bucket, rake and shovel

Learn more about livestock preparations in Ready Colorado's Plan for Livestock guide. Taking these steps may help calm your anxiety about the potential for natural disaster – and will provide concrete help to ensure animal safety when time is of the essence.

Dr. Ragan Adams is a veterinarian and coordinator of Colorado State University's Veterinary Extension team. She is a senior research associate in the Department of Clinical Sciences and produced "Saving pets, saving people," a video about how two Colorado counties developed animal disaster response plans.

FEMA, Lowe's To Offer Tips, Methods To Prevent, Lessen Future Disaster Damage

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, July 14, 2016

As West Virginians repair or rebuild their homes damaged by last month's storms, floods, landslides and mudslides, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and local Lowe's Home Improvement stores have teamed up to provide free information, tips and literature on making homes stronger and safer.

FEMA mitigation specialists will be on hand, this week and next, at in-store information centers in five area locations to answer questions and offer home improvement tips and proven methods to prevent and lessen damage from future disasters. Most of the information is geared for do-it-yourself work and general contractors.

FEMA advisers will be available July 14-19 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily at Lowe's stores in:

Fayette County: 46 Fayette Town Center Road, Fayetteville

Nicholas County: 5200 W. Webster Road, Summersville

Kanawha County: 1000 Nitro Marketplace, Cross Lane

Cabell County: 700 Mall Road, Barboursville

Free reference booklets, in English and Spanish, with information on protecting your home from flood damage, will be available at all locations. More information about strengthening property can be found at fema.gov/what-mitigation.

West Virginians who have questions about their flood insurance policies and coverage should contact the National Flood Insurance Program call center at 800-621-3362 (Option 2) between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Specialists can help service claims, provide general information regarding policies, and offer technical assistance to aid in recovery.

Additional information on West Virginia's disaster recovery can be found by visiting fema.gov/disaster/4273, twitter.com/femaregion3, twitter.com/FEMA, facebook.com/FEMA, fema.gov/blog and the flood information pages at http://wvflood.com

Senate Passes FAA Funding Bill With Drone Directives

Radio Magazine, July 15, 2016

WASHINGTON – A bill authorizing continued funding for the Federal Aviation Administration lays out several directives pertaining to drones with regard to firefighting, air traffic control, research and mid-air collisions with manned aircraft.

On Wednesday, the Senate voted 90-4 to pass the ''FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016

" to extend funding for the agency through Sept. 30, 2017. The bill represents the third extension to reauthorize the FAA after the full, six-year reauthorization choked on a provision to privatize air traffic control. This latest 14-month extension is needs the president's signature by July 15, when current authorization ends and both the House and Senate adjourn for summer break.

The bill includes provisions for drones, or "unmanned aircraft systems," as they are referenced in the text. These provisions build on rules

for operating drones that the FAA established last month, most of which cover basic flight parameters such a altitude, line-of-sight operation, piloting qualification, restricted airspace and registration.

The FAA extension bill further directs the FAA to coordinate with the Department of the Interior and Agriculture Department to expedite the authorization of drones in firefighting. It also instructs the FAA to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to do the same for drones used in efforts to restore utilities in the event of a major outage.

Also on the firefighting front, the bill authorizes the FAA to go after drone operators who interfere with wildfire suppression efforts with a fine of up to $20,000. Drones have become an increasingly common sight for pilots flying in flame retardant and fire jumping teams. Aircraft were temporarily grounded last month because of drone interference during efforts to contain a wildfire in the San Gabriel Mountains in Southern California, ars technica

reported. Firefighting aircraft were grounded last week after drones were spotted over the Saddle Fire in Utah, according to KSL

.

The bill further calls on the FAA to team up with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to continue developing an air traffic control system for drones, and figure out how to integrate it into the national airspace system, including the use of "decision-making by adaptive systems, such as sense-and-avoid capabilities and cyber-physical systems security."

NASA and the FAA also are directed to create comprehensive "testing or modeling" of drones colliding with jets, propeller and rotary aircraft of various sizes, speeds and points of contact.

Finally, the FAA will have to deliver a study to the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on "the potential use of probabilistic assessments of risks by the administration to streamline the integration of unmanned aircraft systems into the national airspace system, including any research and development necessary."

Kara Calvert, director of the Drone Manufacturers Alliance, released the following statement after the Senate vote: "The Drone Manufacturers Alliance is pleased the House and Senate have passed a short-term FAA extension bill. We applaud the inclusion of provisions to protect emergency responders from unauthorized drones, while also encouraging the use of drones to save lives and property in emergencies.

"However, new requirements for mandatory reporting statements and identification standards could end up limiting the benefits of drone technology, and these provisions will require careful coordination with the FAA to ensure they are implemented without stifling innovation.

"We look forward to working with congress and the FAA to advance a streamlined regulatory process for low-risk 'micro' drones and preserve the FAA's sole authority over unmanned aerial operations."

A Futuristic Marriage: Spy Satellites And Virtual Reality Could Pair To Aid Field Agents

FedTech Insider, July 14, 2016

U.S. government diplomats, officials and soldiers are often deployed to far-flung regions of the world and need to relay to officials back in Washington what they are seeing on the ground. Often, this is done via secure cables and electronic communications.

However, at some point in the future, those in the field could send back images that their stateside counterparts can access via virtual reality — letting them get a realistic look at what conditions are like on the ground using a VR headset. The agency that uses spy satellites to gather information and images from around the globe could be a key part of that effort.

Though it's in the early stages, Nextgov reported last month that conversations "have just started" between National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) immersion researchers and the agency's mobile application developers to merge VR and mobile apps, according to Joe Wileman, a researcher at NGA. Bridging the Gap with VR

At NGA's headquarters in Springfield, Va., emerging technology developers are experimenting with Oculus Rift VR headsets and other gadgets to push the boundaries of the agency's tech ambitions.

Before, as Nextgov notes, those in the field could use a tripod-mounted scanner to take images that would then be composited into a 3D-panoramic view. However, using a smartphone camera and mobile apps, users can take photos of wherever they are —perhaps a streetscape somewhere, which could then be loaded into a generic building model at NGA. "We can then take those images and then overlay them on top of the building, so that our model becomes now the actual building," an unnamed agency researcher who spoke on background told Nextgov.

Wileman said an American embassy employee based in Nepal, for example, could use such technology to bring a Federal Emergency Management Agency official into a disaster zone if another earthquake shook the country, as occurred in April 2015.

Or perhaps, "we can't afford to send somebody to Mogadishu [who can] walk around and see what it really looks" like, but "we may have somebody in a consulate who is in there who can take the day and take photos" to send those images back, another unnamed researcher told Nextgov.

What are the practical implications of such technology? Beyond relaying information about, and conditions of, a foreign location, it could help intelligence analysts assess whether or not it is safe for certain individuals to be in a specific area, or how intelligence officers could avoid detection, Nextgov notes.

In June, Lenovo released the PHAB2 Pro, billed as the world's first Tango-enabled smartphone to enable augmented reality experience. Project Tango, which Google first unveiled in early 2014, lets mobile devices quickly and easily make a 3D map of an indoor space using 3D motion tracking and depth sensing.

Yet, as Nextgov notes, it's unlikely that NGA will be rolling out similar gadgets in the near future, thanks to rigorous data security requirements imposed by the Department of Defense and the intelligence community. Still, it seems possible VR and spy satellites could be married at some point in the future.

Hospitals Prep To Treat Protesters And Delegates At Upcoming Conventions

By Dr. Mary Carr

WBT-AM Charlotte (NC), July 14, 2016

(CLEVELAND) – With thousands of people expected to pour into the cities of Cleveland and Philadelphia for the upcoming Republican and Democratic conventions, hospital health officials are prepping for any kind of medical emergency, both large and small.

In Cleveland, the three major health systems have been working out a coordination plan to ensure they can handle a mass casualty event and also everyday medical needs like helping a delegate get prescription drugs they forgot.

Dr. Michael Anderson, Chief Medical Officer University Hospitals Case Medical Center in Cleveland, told ABC News a hotline is being set up so all attendees can get easy access to medical help. He said if people need help getting medication or finding an urgent care center they can call the number. Additionally at the hospital – one of two Level-1 trauma centers in the city – the staff has been prepping for over a year to handle various crises.

"We said no vacation for trauma surgeons," that week, Anderson said. In case of a mass casualty event, Anderson said the health system would be able to quickly accommodate multiple patients.

He said all staff have been warned to "have your cellphone, have a full tank of gas," in case of emergency.

Anderson also said they've been consulting with experts about how to treat tear gas or pepper spray injuries if needed. He pointed out that all hospitals in the region must have enough supplies to be self-sufficient for 72 hours in case of emergency.

At Cleveland Clinic, officials have put into place 200 surge plans in place to address everything from an increased number of dehydration cases to mass disaster responses.

"We've been planning for this for the past year-and-a-half in concert with the other health systems here in Cleveland," a spokeswoman for Cleveland Clinic told ABC News in a statement. "We have done numerous drills in preparation for the upcoming convention with the city of Cleveland and others."

MetroHealth System, which runs the other Level-1 trauma center in Cleveland, said they expedited construction on a new ICU center to ensure they had extra beds before the convention and all staff are expected to be ready to respond.

"We have been preparing for a while and will be adequately staffed," Hospital spokeswoman Tina Arundel told ABC News. "There are no vacations and people are expected to be here."

Hospital team members also take part in FEMA training regularly in order to prepare for large-scale events.

"They learned how information flows, who makes what decisions when coordinating with cities, counties, etc. and even went through full scale exercises," at the training, a Arundel told ABC News.

In Philadelphia, officials said past events like the papal visit have helped them prep for the upcoming influx of visitors.

Mark Ross, Regional Manager of Emergency Preparedness for the Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania, said they have planning for the Democratic National Convention for months.

"This is a big city, we do big events, we've had a few recently here with the papal visit and the unfortunate events around Amtrak 188," said Ross. "We routinely meet plan, exercise, and coordinate between healthcare and all our other partners in emergency management, law enforcement, fire, EMS."

Tom Runkle, Associate Administrator at Hahnemann University Hospital, administrators have been prepping different responses for a variety of disaster events.

"We have an administrative team that will be on standby that week and will be on call in the event something occurs," said Runkle. "If we have large crowds we're expecting to see a lot of dehydration, heat exhaustion, so we're stocked up with cases of bottled water that we'll have available. We have 150 cases of bottled water."

In case of a major event the medical staff has been going through multiple drills to prepare.

"We normally do seven to nine drills a year," he said. "We just change the scenarios to kind of reflect what's going on in the environment. We just did a mass casualty drill three weeks ago."

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

No stories for this edition

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

No stories for this edition

FEMA CORPS

No stories for this edition

PRIVATE SECTOR

No stories for this edition

CITIZEN CORPS

No stories for this edition

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Tears And Laughter: Wilcox County

By Amanda Walker

Alabama Live, July 14, 2016

As I have said before, not everything here is beautiful. Headlines that make it across the county line are seldom positive. During the past week we have had three gang related shootings that reportedly stem back to the fatal May 29 shooting at the Flip Flop Club. The shootings have had everyone's attention.

A lot of people also turned their attention to the hearing Thursday evening that finalized the EMA director being relieved of her position. Anytime there is a job opening in Wilcox County involving a salary and a car, it always creates somewhat of a hustle and shuffle.

Still others were angry that there are county commissioners who have had time to already begin trying to sabotage reelection campaigns of fellow commissioners two years from now, but who did not have the leadership ability to make sure employees in positions the commission supervises were meeting important deadlines. The state EMA Director had to make a special trip to a commission meeting in order to spell out the problem. As a result of the incompetence, the county lost out on just over $400,000 in disaster assistance relief from FEMA.

Maybe it is the heat and humidity that has everyone so sensitive, but anyone not upset over the shootings, or the lost money or worried over who will replace the EMA director, seemed to be offended by a picture that was on the back page of last week's Wilcox Progressive Era. It was a picture of a couple of young guys playing around at the river the way young guys play around in 2016, but it was perceived by some readers as being distasteful.

This was amusing to me. I found it interesting that a silly picture truly offended people, but for about three weeks straight the facts about the Commission Chairman having a sexual relationship with a student while he was teacher were spelled out in great detail and it didn't seem to overly offend too many. It didn't even seem to bother local advocates of abused women and children...partly, I suppose, because so many of them already knew. And I think that speaks a lot about a person's character. It's the type of thing you can genuinely judge someone on. So rationally, it would seem a man disqualified by the state to teach children should be by default no longer qualified to lead an Alabama County. But...I guess there needed to have been pictures.

So it is true that Wilcox County can often look a bit like a disaster area from a distance, but what we have now is the opportunity to learn from one another. We have a mingling of races and cultures and ages. We are all imperfect and have all fallen short of the glory. There has to be some hope of finding harmony and moving forward, as the alternative serves no one well.

When a destructive storm blows through all you can do in the aftermath is what is directly in front of you. Whatever is within your reach and ability, and in doing that, you arrive at something more that needs to be done and then you do that too. It's the same with cleaning up your own act or cleaning up the county's image and reputation. If we all to the best of our being do over and over, the things we are individually charged with doing, and if we will do them truthfully and in accordance with what best serves our community as a whole, we should shortly find ourselves better than we thought us to be. We owe it to our children to at least try and set a functional example for the future.

We Are Stronger After Hurricane Dennis

By Lisa Newell

Gulf Breeze (FL) News, July 14, 2016

It passed without much fanfare, but back in 2005, it was front page news. Jim Cantore from the Weather Channel was setting up to broadcast live from Pensacola Beach in what was anticipated to be a direct hit by Hurricane Dennis, just 10 months after Hurricane Ivan shocked us with its power.

Many people were still living in FEMA trailers, many houses were still sporting "blue roofs" or tarps to cover damage from the previous storm.

The MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) were still in the pantry, a reminder of the situation we were in after Ivan.

People were still experiencing post traumatic stress disorder from Ivan's impact. Some lost everything, down to the concrete slab. Others found everything ruined by rising water.

Others had minimal damage but were still affected by the losses in their community, the disruption of services and the disruption of routines. Schools were canceled for months. The high school gym was still not repaired. Churches became makeshift care centers, providing sandwiches and kindness while people applied for benefits from the Federal Emergency Management Association.

Many others were still negotiating settlements with their insurance companies.

Now, here was another storm gathering strength in the Gulf, ready to threaten whatever we had rebuilt in the previous 10 months.

Hurricane Dennis made landfall near Navarre on July 10 and the impact was most intense to the east. However, as a "dry storm," Hurricane Dennis knocked out power to many Gulf Breeze homes for many days.

Although Dennis didn't find much to destroy in Gulf Breeze that wasn't already destroyed by Hurricane Ivan, Dennis packed quite a punch economically.

Several families decided enough was enough and sold their homes to move inland and a housing glut took the place of the housing shortage that Ivan caused. Investments in our area remained down through the Great Recession and the Deepwater Horizon disaster in 2010.

We are turning the corner now, and most of our homes are built to withstand strong storms but we've also endured higher insurance premiums and a bit of cynicism over what your policy will cover. We are wiser and stronger but we must remain vigilant against the next storm.

Bay Area Leaders, Community Members Discuss Obama Town Hall

KGO-TV San Francisco, July 14, 2016

SAN FRANCISCO –

The conversation continued online following President Barack Obama's historic town hall on ABC7. We gathered Bay Area leaders and community members for perspective where you live.

This local event, that took place at 9 p.m. on abc7news.com and ABC7 News on KOFY-TV 20, will be available to watch online on Friday.

Our guests included:

Allwyn Brown – Richmond Police Chief

Chief Allwyn Brown has been a sworn member of the Richmond Police Department for over 30 years, serving as assistant police chief between July 2015 and January 2016, and then he was appointed interim police chief. He was promoted to sergeant in 1994 – then later served as acting lieutenant for one year helping to institute a new policing system before being promoted to captain in January 2008. He served as one of two deputy chiefs in the Department between 2010 and 2015. Chief Brown attended POST's Supervisory Leadership Institute (Class 86), and he is a graduate of Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute for Police (SMIP). He holds a Master's Degree in HR Management and an undergraduate degree in Business/HR Management.

http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/82/Police-Department

Antwan Wilson – Superintendent of Oakland Unified School District

Before serving as Superintendent of Oakland Unified School District, Antwan Wilson was the Assistant Superintendent for Post Secondary Readiness in Denver Public Schools for six years where he led

Denver's Middle, High, and Intensive Pathway Schools.

Under his leadership in Denver, there were significant improvements in graduation rates, reductions in drop-out rates, increases in students entering college, a doubling of enrollment and qualifying score rates in Advanced Placement courses, tripling of Concurrent Enrollment college-level courses, and a revamping of the district's Intensive Pathway Options.

Prior to this role, Antwan served as a high school principal in a high poverty neighborhood and as a middle school principal in Denver Public Schools and Wichita Public Schools respectively. Antwan has also worked as an assistant high school principal and as a middle and high school classroom teacher in Wichita, KS, Lincoln, NE, and Raleigh, NC.

Antwan graduated with Distinction from Nebraska Wesleyan University with a Degree in History-Social Science Education with Minors in Women's Studies and Minority Studies. In addition to an advanced degree in School Leadership Degree from Friends University, Antwan is a graduate of The Broad Academy class of 2014.

Antwan and his wife – a career educator – have been married for 18 years and have three children – a middle school student, and two elementary school students who attend public schools.

www.ousd.org

Arash Daneshzadeh – Communities United For Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)

Dr. Arash Daneshzadeh is a scholar-activist, and former war-displaced refugee, whose research in the UC Davis School of Education, centers around the decriminalization of historically dehumanized youth of color. He is the author of scholarly articles, books, and op-eds that focus on youth incarceration including: How Whiteness Stole Justice, Dismantling The School To Prison Pipeline: An Anthology of Solutions, Unhooking From Whiteness: Volume 3, Hip Hop & Dismantling The School To Prison Pipeline. He is the editor for the Journal of Peace Studies, and serves as an editor for the Journal of Culture and Education. The crux of his praxis converges on the intersections between youth incarceration, indigenous incarnations restorative justice, hip hop pedagogy, identity formation, and organizational theory. Dr. Daneshzadeh is a faculty member at the University of San Francisco-- School of Education, as well as faculty for the Prison University Project at San Quentin State Penitentiary. He currently serves as the Director of Programs at CURYJ (Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice) in Oakland, California. Learn more about his work at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw9tD6sdH24 and curyj.org.

Carroll Fife – Oakland Alliance

Carroll Fife is an organizer, educator and mother who has lived and worked in Oakland for the past 30 years. As founder and co-chair of Oakland Alliance, Carroll works to increase access to jobs, housing, and quality education for disenfranchised Oakland residents. As an educator, Carroll focuses on the impacts of race and income inequality on student achievement, developing holistic, culturally affirming curriculum to engage urban students in life saving education. As an activist, Carroll is a leader in the Oakland Alliance, OaklandWORKS, Oakland Justice Coalition, the State of Black Oakland Central Coordinating Committee, and the Post Salon Community Assembly, just to name a few. In 2014, Carroll served as the Campaign Coordinator for Dan Siegel for Mayor of Oakland, which ultimately became the moral compass for all other mayoral candidates that year. She was also a delegate to the DNC's 2016 Platform Committee where she held the line for radical, grassroots values. Carroll is currently employed as a legal assistant and apprentice at Siegel & Yee, a prestigious Oakland civil rights law firm that primarily represents whistleblowers and victims of police violence and employment discrimination.

www.oaklandalliance.org

Casey Griffin – Parent Activist from The Village Method (Union City)

I am a career public servant for 25 plus years and enjoy serving others through leadership. I am happily married with a blended family of five children and five grandchildren. In my spare time, I support my local community in a few ways. I serve as President of a local actors guild and, serve as a Parent Ambassador for The Village Method (TVM) initiative.

www.thevillagemethod.org

Chris Copeland – Retiree

I spent my childhood moving around the world (Turkey and Germany, and many US stations) with my family, being an Air Force brat.

I spent 38 years in the insurance industry, and retired five years ago as a Vice President and Executive General Adjuster in the claim department of a Major insurance company. My father was an officer in the USAF, and he taught me to shoot, from the age of seven. I have been a competitive shooter in various disciplines for all of my adult life. I am now 66 years old, and still competing.

I am an alumnus of the FBI Citizens Academy, and have been a volunteer role player for SF FBI SWAT on many occasions. I have also been a role player for FEMA training, including being trapped in a collapsed building for two hours. The fire fighters who tried to rescue me were finally told to “black Tag” ,me on the grounds that it was unlikely that I would survive for the additional two hours it would have taken to get me out. Black Tag, means administer a large dose of morphine and leave to die. This was all simulated in the actual collapsed building located at the FEMA training site at Moffett Field.

I have been the photographer for more than a dozen Community Theatre productions, and acted in one, playing Wiley Post in “The Will Rodgers Follies”. I have one magazine cover, and dozens of published photos .I live on two acres of redwood forest in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Christopher (Chris) Bridges – Equal Justice Society

Chris is a graduate of Northeastern University School of Law, where he served as an active member of the Black Law Students Association, the Asian Pacific Law Students Association, and the Latin American Law Students Association. He also holds an MS in Criminal Justice from Michigan State University and a BS in Political Science and BA in Criminal Justice, both from North Carolina Central University. Chris began his legal career in 2012 with the ACLU of Northern California as the Racial Justice Project Fellow, where he worked on school to prison pipeline issues as a member of the Education Equity team. Chris began his work at the Equal Justice Society in Oakland as the Butler Koshland Fellow and is currently focusing on school discipline and education issues as well as inequities within the criminal justice system. To aid in these efforts, Chris is using social science, structural analysis, and real life experiences to help broaden conceptions of present-day discrimination to include implicit bias.

www.equaljusticesociety.org

John Dennis – Republican Party

John Dennis is Nancy Pelosi’s 3-time former opponent for Congress. He is the former chairman of the Republican Liberty Caucus of California, currently serves on the national board of the RLC, is a member of the San Francisco Republican Central Committee and is a California Republican Party delegate.

www.sfgop.org

Joseph Jackson – Richmond Youth Council

I am a native of Richmond, CA and product of my environment, I am a community leader, advocate and believer in change in our communities. I am a Police Explorer with a local police department and what many called an endangered race with having the status of being a young black man.

http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/1074/Richmond-Youth-Council

Kamau Walton – Black Lives Matter

Kamau Walton is a member of Black Lives Matter Bay Area and Critical Resistance. Since the Black Friday 2014 BART Shutdown they have supported and participated in several Black-led direct actions across the Bay Area. In 2014 they were the lead coordinator in the fight to stop Urban Shied and increased militarization in communities of color in the Bay Area. Kamau has also worked against the violence of policing as one of many leaders in the successful fight to stop civil gang injunctions in Oakland, as well as worked to abolish solitary confinement during and following the historic prisoner hunger strikes in California in 2011 and 2013.

www.blacklivesmatter.com

Reverend Kurt Kuhwald – Bay Area SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice)

Rev. Kurt A. Kuhwald is a Unitarian Universalist Community minister and a member of the Coordinating Committee of Bay Area SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice). He has served as an anti-racist trainer and workshop leader for the national Unitarian Universalist Association and within a California-wide Community College Counseling professional group. Trained as a psychotherapist, mediator, Special Ed. teacher and liberal minister, his passion is racial and climate justice and Conscious Eldering.

www.showingupforracialjustice.org

Laurie Valdez – Concerned Parent from Silicon Valley DeBug

•Partner Antonio Guzman Lopez shot and killed by police two years ago, and she has since become a powerful and compelling voice around police and race issues in San Jose.

•Son Josiah suffers in the shadows of trauma and aftermath

www.siliconvalleydebug.org

www.Justice4Josiah.org

Mandela Schumacher-Hodge – Kapor Capital

A former public school teacher, education policy researcher, and PhD candidate, Mandela Schumacher-Hodge began her career in tech as startup founder. After raising funds from Kapor Capital, 500 Startups, and Imagine K12, Mandela’s company, Tioki, went on to build technology that helped hundreds of schools across the country secure great teachers for their students. Thereafter, she was recruited to Startup Weekend Education (SWEDU). In just two years, Mandela and her team successfully scaled the organization from three to six continents, officially establishing it as the largest initiative in the world focused on teaching people how to use entrepreneurship to improve education.

In October 2015, Mandela joined Kapor Capital as its founding Portfolio Services Director. At the Oakland-based venture capital firm, Mandela oversees a portfolio of 114 tech startups, helping them make progress on their business, social impact, and diversity goals. Most recently, Mandela helped launch a first-of-its-kind venture-backed diversity pledge titled the Founders' Commitment. 77 companies in the Kapor Capital portfolio have already signed on, and over the next year, Mandela will work alongside acclaimed diversity expert and Kapor Capital Partner, Dr. Freada Kapor Klein, to develop diversity workshops and resources to help founders make progress on their Commitment.

Over the past five years, Mandela has advised hundreds of aspiring entrepreneurs and her writings on Medium and Forbes are a reflection of those lived experiences. To-date, Mandela has presented on over 50 stages and has received several recognitions, including being named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 in Education list, presenting at TEDx, and publishing three Top 20 Medium articles.

www.kaporcapital.com

Maria Poblet – Causa Justa::Just Cause

María Poblet is Executive Director of Causa Justa :: Just Cause. She is Chicana and Argentine, with extensive experience in Latino community organizing, connecting the provision of services to organizing and leadership development. She led the merger between St. Peter's Housing Committee and Just Cause Oakland that created Causa Justa :: Just Cause, and the subsequent merger integrating POWER (People Organized to Win Employment Rights). This strategic growth aggregated the power of neighborhood-based Latino & African American organizing, creating a single, regional, multi-racial powerhouse for racial and economic justice. Next City named her a US Vanguard Fellow -one of 40 leaders under 40 inspiring better cities. Under her leadership, CJJC's work addressing racialized displacement has earned a number of Awards, including the Patiño-Moore Legacy Award for breaking down barriers between Latino and African American communities, and building a national movement to ensure the well-being of all America's families. Within and beyond her role at Causa Justa, María is active in social movements, serving in the leadership of the US Social Forum, the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, and various progressive formations. She is a founder of the US chapter of the World March of Women. Maria had the privilege of being mentored by June Jordan, and was the Artistic Director of Poetry for the People before she fell in love with community organizing.

www.cjjc.org

Michelle Meow – SF Pride Board President

Michelle Meow, host and producer of "The Michelle Meow Show," is your A-Z, covering the LGBT, LMNOP, and everyone in between. She attended San Francisco State University and received a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism and shortly after, started her career in radio. Michelle's show can be heard in San Francisco and nationally on the Progressive Voices Network. The local TV show can be seen on KOFY TV, Ch 20/ Cable 713 Sunday nights at 930pm. Michelle has also been a co-host of the San Francisco Pride Parade broadcast since 2006. She is currently the President of the San Francisco Pride Board of Directors. She is a self-described LGBT history geek, information sponge, and a lover not a fighter. On the weekends, she can be found laying around with her cat and partner humming a song she's never heard of.

www.michellemeow.com

www.sfpride.org

Rachel Williams – Yelp

Rachel Williams returned to Yelp in 2014 to assume the role of Head of Diversity and Inclusion. She is currently focused on building Yelp's diversity initiatives to accelerate action. Having grown up in San Mateo, CA, Rachel often found that she was one of only a couple faces of color in her classrooms. This early awareness of her own differences inspired her thirst for increased diversity and inclusion at a young age.

With a B.A. in Psychology from UC Berkeley and more than 15 years of human resources experience in a variety of industries including technology, life sciences, consumer products and retail, Rachel has honed her expertise in recruitment, organizational development, and strategic change activities. She is thrilled to be able to narrow her focus on Diversity and Inclusion, a very important element of the employee experience and a passion for Rachel. She returns to Yelp after most recently serving as the Head of Talent Acquisition for ClearSlide. She has also held talent acquisition roles at SolarCity, Peet's Coffee & Tea as well as an executive search consultant for venture capitalists.

www.yelp.com

Ronald Shaw – Richmond Youth Service Bureau

Dr. Susan DeMersseman – Child Psychologist

Susan DeMersseman, Ph.D. is a psychologist and writer in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she has worked with children and families for more than 30 years. This has given her a backstage pass to the wonderful and challenging world of parenting.

Dr. DeMersseman grew up in South Dakota and has shared that experience and the rich community of the Bay Area with her husband and her now grown children. When she appears on local media or at parent workshops she is often introduced as a "parenting expert," a label she describes as her favorite oxymoron (followed closely by sweet "sixteen").

Dr. DeMersseman's writing has appeared in many national publications and in several books. This book and her website offer a sensible and sometimes humorous approach to being a parent. Her blog includes articles on raising children, gardens, and awareness.

www.thegoodenoughparent.org

Tur-Ha Ak – Community READY Corps

www.crc4sd.org

Walter Katz – San Jose Independent Police Auditor

Walter Katz is the Independent Police Auditor for the City of San José. He is an attorney who was appointed by Mayor Sam Liccardo and the City Council in November of 2015 and he assumed his responsibilities this past January. Previously, Mr. Katz served as a Deputy Inspector General for the County of Los Angeles Office of Inspector General (OIG) which oversees the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. In that role, he led the Inspector General's effort in monitoring the LASD's body-worn camera implementation program and developed a framework for increased transparency by the LASD to disclose use of force and civilian complaint information to the public through open data. Prior to the Inspector General, he was an attorney at its predecessor agency, the Office of Independent Review, where he monitored and reviewed the LASD's investigations of deputy-involved shootings and disciplinary investigations. Mr. Katz has also advised other police agencies and municipalities in their reform efforts.

Mr. Katz is active in the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), where he serves on the Training, Education and Standards Committee and has frequently been a panelist or moderator on open data, accountability and transparency issues. He has written about police accountability in the Harvard Law Review Forum and The New York Times. Prior to his work in civilian oversight of law enforcement, he served a deputy public defender in Southern California for seventeen years.

He received his law degree from the McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento and his undergraduate degree from the University of Nevada, Reno.

Are Elected Officials Doing Enough For Flood Relief?

By Rachel Ayers

WOAY-TV Bluefield (WV), July 14, 2016

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS-- White Sulphur Springs is working hard to rebuild after flood waters destroyed much of the town. While residents work tirelessly to rebuild, some feel elected officials like Congressman Evan Jenkins aren't doing enough.

"When I would get home from volunteering all day long I would get on Facebook. I've heard people talking about Mr. Jenkins coming and helping them, but I would get on Facebook and almost every hour he was able to be on there posting things and taking pictures. That's great to let everyone know what is going on, but then it goes a little deeper and you realize is he really helping. It's more than just taking a picture of where you are. It was upsetting to be out here working all day while he is on his phone being escorted around with his staff taking pictures," Nick Irvine said.

Irvine claims that Jenkins came to homeowners and offered them little help, but not before snapping a photo.

"He came to visit my neighbor who is currently pregnant and her house was destroyed," Irvine said. "He said FEMA will help you and we will get you taken care of. Later FEMA compensated her less than two thousand dollars and he took a picture and was gone. It's really upsetting for someone in that situation to get a hey I'm here and see you are doing pretty bad but let me get a picture with you."

Some of the photos Jenkins posted were from Emmanuel United Methodist Church in White Sulphur. Pastor Shari Stilgenbaur says his visit there was a positive one.

"We had a truck come with supplies for the people in need and he happened to be here. He and two of his assistants just jumped right in. They grabbed dusk masks and started unloading the truck. I got kinda tickled. That truck has Lyme in it that had made a mess and they grabbed some brooms and started sweeping that truck out," Stilgenbaur said.

But Jenkins' Facebook posts aren't the only thing that has Irvine concerned.

"He posted mobile office hours and they aren't really neat any disaster hours and they are only open for an hour," Irvine said. "He claims he can cut through all this red tape with FEMA, but how many people are you actually going to help that need it in one hour?"

We reached out to Congressman Jenkins' press secretary and received no response at the time of this story. We also reached out to Jenkins' current political rival Matt Detch. His press manager who also happens to be his sister said they cannot comment on Mr. Jenkins' involvement in flood relief, but did say "I need to point out something people may not realize about my brother – he is HIGHLY allergic to mold. Even though he can barely breathe, and his eyes are red and swollen, he has been out cleaning. It would have been very easy for him to say he couldn't clean. He, however, hasn't complained or made any excuses."

We will see how the floods have impacted this political race come November, but Mr. Irvine says he probably won't be voting for Jenkins' re-election.

Should State Bail Out Flooded Businesses?

By Hoppy Kercheval

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, July 15, 2016

Dozens of West Virginia business men and women who were flooded out in the June 23 storm face the difficult and life-changing decision of whether or not to rebuild.

Individual flood victims can qualify through the Federal Emergency Management Agency for direct cash grants, with a maximum of $33,000, to help them get back on their feet.

Businesses do not qualify for cash assistance. Instead, they can receive loans from the Small Business Administration.

However, many business owners, especially if they are older, are reluctant to take on a big loan at 4 percent interest for up to 30 years. If they don't or can't, many of these flooded businesses will never reopen, causing even greater economic hardship in communities that were struggling before the flood.

Should the state step in and help out? House Speaker Tim Armstead, R-Kanawha, whose district includes hard-hit Clendenin, believes it should. "I think we've got to," Armstead said.

"I'm not for handouts, [but] this is make or break for them. In the long run, it's a sound investment."

Gov. Tomblin is open to the idea, but cautious. "We want to do everything to get these businesses open again, but how far can we go? There is a finite amount of money that the state would have available to put into a program like that."

It's a conundrum.

On one hand, what is the taxpayers' obligation to help out an unfortunate victim of the flood? Some of the businesses in the flood plain are protected because they bought flood insurance from the federal government, while others rolled the dice or never imagined the water would reach their doors.

But on the other hand, one could argue the government has a moral obligation to provide assistance to all those impacted by a historic natural disaster.

Additionally, the state has an interest in helping maintain the health of communities.

Bill Ore owns and operates the Clendenin Pharmacy. The store, which has been a business landmark in the town for decades, was destroyed by the flood. He's operating temporarily out of a trailer, but doesn't know if he wants to take on massive new debt to stay in business.

"We are devastated," he told me. "We have no churches, we have no bank, no grocery store. We have nothing. I just think they should be putting more help in here to get people started again, but it doesn't look like they are going to."

Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper supports the concept of cash grants from the state to damaged businesses. "It wouldn't take that much to take care of the businesses in the entire flooded area of the county."

Maybe not for one county, but there are a dozen counties that had flood damage with perhaps a couple hundred businesses that need immediate assistance to keep their doors open.

How much can an already cash-strapped state afford to hand out? How do you administer such a program to determine which requests are legitimate? Are some businesses more worthy or viable than others?

Under normal circumstances, free market principles should apply with businesses rising or falling based on their merit with the government acting as a neutral observer. But these are not normal times.

This is a historic disaster that will alter the nature of communities forever. Public policy makers must give that serious consideration as they decide what investment the state should or should not make rebuilding devastated businesses.

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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NATIONAL NEWS

11 Years After Katrina, FEMA Has Learned From Its Failures

By Richard Rainey

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 27, 2016

After striding among piles of broken drywall, soggy carpets, and mud-stained sideboards on a sun-drenched street in Zachary early this week, President Barack Obama did to FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate what George W. Bush did 11 years ago to his own disaster chief, Michael Brown, in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Obama praised him.

"Somebody who I can't brag enough about," he said of Fugate. "One of the best hires I made as president."

By most accounts, Fugate has steered a seamless federal response to the Louisiana flood of 2016, earning Obama's plaudits but also praise from local officials and residents who say the agency has responded quickly to immediate needs.

But Bush's words in early September 2005, spoken from an airplane hangar in Mobile, Ala. — "And Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job" — became a sarcastic catchphrase for FEMA's botched response to the costliest hurricane ever to hit the Gulf

Coast. Aid was late or non-existent, locals complained of confusion and obstruction. Brown would resign days after accepting his boss' praise.

Approaching the 11th anniversary of Katrina's landfall Monday (Aug. 29), those two scenes between a president and his emergency manager bookend a startling evolution of a federal agency from maligned incompetence to a well-coordinated disaster response team. And Louisiana, once the stone on which FEMA stumbled, is now the beneficiary of that transformation as it recovers from a deluge.

It's unfair, admittedly, to compare this month's flood to the one that followed Katrina. Central Louisiana was struck by a massive rain event that forced rivers and bayous over their banks and into towns. Thirteen people died. Katrina's waters were from a man-made disaster, wrought by faulty levees that left houses underwater for weeks. St. Bernard Parish and swaths of the North Shore were swamped and flattened. More than 1,800 people died.

Katrina became FEMA's crucible, one that it did not quickly rise to meet.

"It was probably one of the largest disasters they had to work on, and I've got to say — and I know that they had a lot of great people back then — they weren't really organized for a large-scale operation. That was pretty obvious," said Kevin Davis, former St. Tammany Parish President and director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness under Gov. Bobby Jindal.

After levees failed across New Orleans and water poured into the streets, disarray marked the response. With faint understanding of the city's topography, Brown and FEMA's top brass weren't aware of the magnitude of the flood. They dismissed reports from Marty Bahamonde, FEMA's only staffer on the ground, that the 17th Street Canal wall had broken and later that 80 percent of New Orleans was underwater. Brown told CNN that FEMA didn't know for three days that hundreds of people were trapped at the Convention Center with no food or water.

After rescues were well underway, FEMA turned away offers of personnel and supplies from the Department of Interior and denied a request from the state Wildlife & Fisheries agency for 300 rubber boats. It was slow to provide food, shelter, and supplies to first responders and stranded residents alike. Its leaders bickered with Gov. Kathleen Blanco and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin over who was in charge.

And when the response switched to recovery, there were the infamous FEMA trailers, those glorified recreation vans, hastily built and steeped in toxic resins, that populated yards and vacant lots for years after the storm.

They were only supposed to be in place for up to 18 months. The last one purportedly left New Orleans in February 2012, more than six years into the recovery. By then it was the wrong kind of icon: a symbol of FEMA's grinding, inept bureaucracy.

Brown and others were hauled before Congress in the days and weeks after Katrina. From those testimonies grew an eventual overhaul of the way the agency responds to large-scale disasters.

FEMA hadn't always been in disarray. Dinged for a similarly slow response to Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the agency had improved during the Clinton years. It's director, James Lee Witt, earned praise from Democrats and Republicans for his response to the Oklahoma City bombing and other disasters.

Then the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 changed the world. FEMA was rolled into the newly created Department of Homeland Security, and terrorism threats replaced natural disasters as the catastrophes warranting the most attention.

"If you look at the history of FEMA, we tended to grow and get resources after a bad response, and when we were doing well, resources got pulled away," said Fugate, who was director of Florida's emergency management in 2001. "And so, when you look at 9/11, nobody questioned FEMA's response, from deployment of the Urban Search and Rescue Teams to the recovery. By and large, FEMA did its job. But in the creation of what I like to refer to as an era, when almost everybody went to look at terrorism attacks, I was kind of looking around going, 'Last time I checked, hurricanes didn't stop.'"

Rather than stand up a new state homeland security department, Fugate's boss at the time, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, instead pumped federal funding into Florida's emergency management programs.

"Quite honestly, we were able to maximize the infusion of homeland security dollars and the attention on terrorism to build a much more robust, capable response that then paid off in the '04 hurricane seasons and again in '05," Fugate said.

Fugate carried that fundamental understanding — that states and local governments are best suited to be the first responders in a disaster — with him when Obama hired him to run FEMA in May 2009. By then FEMA had undergone a dramatic revamp to reconcile its failures during Katrina. Its role as a secondary, support organization was more clearly defined. It was given more autonomy within DHS to manage a response to a disaster. And Its budget was increased.

During Katrina, Brown testified Katrina ran on about $1 billion. In 2016, that budget was $13.9 billion.

Its role as a secondary, support organization was more clearly defined. It was given more autonomy within DHS to manage a response to a disaster. And its budget was increased. During Katrina, Brown testified Katrina ran on about $1 billion. In 2016, that budget was $13.9 billion.

"It's a 180-degree turn," said Davis, who had testified before Congress after the 2005 storm. "We got through Katrina. It was very lengthy and bureaucratic, and people were being moved in and out of the organization regularly so you had no continuity of knowledge at the time ... but I think it awakened on the federal level the need to reevaluate their response to a state when a call is made. And I have to say they've done a great job."

Congress also put aside a $2 billion disaster relief fund that FEMA can tap to get ready for a disaster, even before an official declaration. It's that tranche that Fugate tapped to spend $127 million in the immediate wake of this month's floods.

Out of that 2005 catastrophe, FEMA eventually emerged as a bright spot. Fugate credited major overhauls of federal law after Katrina and the Obama administration's willingness to overreact to a potential disaster rather than wait for it to unfold.

"Previously, you're always pretty much waiting for the governor to ask before you did it, and the problem with that is you're maybe a day or two or three days into something by the time you get asked, and we're not that nimble," he said. "So we're fortunate that President Obama has made it very clear that he'd rather err on getting there and not being needed than not being there at all."

One outward sign of FEMA's new approach are the temporary homes it plans to deploy in the 20 parishes drenched in the August floods. These are prefabricated, modular homes with two or three bedrooms and access ramps for those with physical disabilities. While they cost more — between $59,000 and $69,000 — than the glorified RV trailers that dotted lawns and landscapes after Katrina, they signal FEMA's pivot in philosophy from "What can we afford to do?" to "What do people need?"

"I'm proud to call these FEMA trailers," Fugate said in an interview Thursday. "They're not the RVs we were using. And again, it shouldn't be taken that the RV industry doesn't have a good product, it's just a product that's not designed for long-term housing."

The change is also evident in the push, learned during Superstorm Sandy in 2012, to gut homes quickly to reduce the need for temporary housing and preserve stricken communities. But more subtly it is a refashioned attitude at FEMA — what Obama called a "change of culture" — that has improved its ability to respond, Fugate said. The agency now recognizes that residents, business owners, local police, paramedics, firefighters are the best resources in the first minutes and hours of a disaster.

"While everybody from the Coast Guard to the state Fish & Wildlife, they get the press releases out about how many people they saved, you and I know that most people got saved because a neighbor knocked on a door or showed up in a boat," Fugate said. "If we'd waited for all the official stuff to kick in, we'd have lost more people.

"So I'm of the mind to look at the public as a resource, not a liability. Yeah, there are some crazy people out there doing stupid stuff, but we shouldn't use that to then frame the whole thing as 'We shouldn't have engaged the public because there's risk.' There's always going to be risk."

La. Congressional Delegation: Raise Federal Cost Share; Include Both Floods

Monroe (LA) News Star, August 27, 2016

Louisiana's congressional delegation has joined Gov. John Bel Edwards in asking for the federal government to take on a bigger share of the cost for flood response and recovery for both the August disaster in southern Louisiana and the March deluge in northern, central and southern Louisiana.

The delegation — Republican Sens. David Vitter and Bill Cassidy and Reps. Ralph Abraham, R-Alto, Steve Scalise, R-New Orleans, John Fleming, R-Minden, Cedric Richmond, D-New Orleans, and Charles Boustany, R-Lafayette — made the request in a letter sent to Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Craig Fugate on Friday.

They asked for the feds to bump up their share of the costs from 75 percent to 90 percent and include both floods as one.

Abraham has seen 22 of the 24 parishes in his 5th District declared major disasters in the March and August floods.

"We've been hurt mightily by these two disasters," said Abraham in an interview Saturday with USA Today Network of Louisiana. "We are all Louisianians. We want to make sure nobody gets left out of the box."

Thirty-six parishes were declared federal disasters in the March flood. Twenty have been declared in the

August flood, but the summer flood affected higher populated areas, thus causing more damage.

Each of the six congressional districts has had at least one parish flood this year. Some parishes have been affected by both flood events.

FEMA uses a formula to determine its share of disaster recoveries. To reach a 90 percent share, damage must reach the level of $137 per capita. With 4.6 million people in Louisiana, the total would have to reach $637 million. “We’ll shatter that in both events,” Abraham said.

“Louisiana has suffered tremendously this year, experiencing two federal disasters within just six months,” Cassidy said in a statement. “More than half of our state has been somehow affected. That’s why Rep. Abraham and I are asking FEMA to consider both of these disasters as one and to recommend a cost-share adjustment to the president.”

The letter specifically requests FEMA consider both the flooding from March that affected northern, central and southern Louisiana and the current flood in southern Louisiana as a single disaster when making its cost-share reduction determination.

“I’ve seen the devastation up close — both from the flood in March and this historic recent flooding,” Fleming said in a statement. “Given the magnitude of the damage, FEMA should reduce their cost share to help Louisianians get back on their feet again.”

“The road to recovery for Louisiana will be long and costly, and we will need all the assistance we can get,” Boustany said in a statement. “I urge the consideration of these devastating disasters together in order to provide timely relief for the thousands of flood victims throughout our state who desperately need it.”

Jay Dardenne, Edwards’ commissioner of administration, said the “request to consider the floods as a singular event is appropriate. It makes sense to roll them together,” he said Saturday.

“It will make a huge difference for us as a state if we can reduce our cost share to 10 percent, particularly on the front end because we have to spend it first before we can be reimbursed,” Dardenne said.

– Greg Hilburn, USA TODAY Network

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Louisiana Will Need Congress’ Help After Flooding

By Melinda Deslatte

Associated Press, August 28, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. – Insurance payments and traditional federal aid programs won’t be enough to respond to the catastrophic flooding that ravaged tens of thousands of homes across south Louisiana, wrecking entire subdivisions and devastating entire cities.

Louisiana, once again, will be asking Congress to lend a hand to an ailing state.

But the state delegation lacks some of the seniority it once had, and stalemates in Congress have made it difficult to even get funding for a Zika virus response to final passage, raising worries that flood disaster aid may be hard to get.

Plus, several of Louisiana’s congressional members voted against a Superstorm Sandy relief package only a few years ago, which could make it an uncomfortable ask of colleagues to help their state now.

The full scope of the flood’s destruction is only starting to become clear as people rip out the insides of homes and deposit moldy carpets, soaked drywall, water-damaged furniture and heaps of personal belongings onto their front lawns.

Gov. John Bel Edwards estimates well over 100,000 homes took damage from the floodwaters. That doesn’t count ruined businesses, fire stations, schools and other public buildings.

State officials first will need a better tally of the devastation to make a case for congressional assistance. As a preliminary request, Edwards asked President Barack Obama during his Tuesday visit to push Congress for federal block grant aid.

“This was a one in a thousand year flood event, and most of the affected homeowners did not, nor were required to, have flood insurance,” the governor wrote in a follow-up letter handed to the President. “The (FEMA) individual assistance funds that will be available, while critical, will simply not be sufficient to allow our citizens to rebuild their homes.”

Obama said he’ll support the recovery effort, both through his oversight of existing federal aid programs and in urging further action from Congress.

“The whole country is going to continue to support you and help you until we get folks back in their homes and lives are rebuilt,” the President told Louisiana residents.

In trying to negotiate a relief package, Louisiana should be helped by the clout of U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise, R-Metairie, the third-ranking GOP member of the House. In a statement, Scalise called making sure that assistance is available to flood victims his “top priority.”

Congress isn't currently in session, but members of the Louisiana delegation say they've started laying the groundwork for aid requests.

"We're going to need some supplemental help," said U.S. Rep. Charles Boustany, R-Lafayette, whose district had widespread damage. "I just don't see any way out of it, when you have communities where 90 percent of homes were flooded."

Beyond block grant money, Boustany expects the agriculture industry will need specific aid. He's also looking at possible tax relief Congress could offer storm victims, like easing penalties for tapping into certain retirement accounts if people need the money to repair and rebuild.

Boustany, running for a Senate seat against U.S. Rep. John Fleming and 22 other opponents, said he's concerned a vote that Fleming, Scalise and U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy took against Sandy relief in 2013 may make it tougher for Louisiana to win support for flood aid.

"I warned members of our delegation and others who have experienced disaster that if you oppose Sandy relief you're going to come across as being hypocritical and the next time we need help, we may not have it," Boustany said.

Cassidy, R-Baton Rouge, said he voted for Sandy aid and has a track record of supporting disaster relief for states, but couldn't support legislation bulked up with "pure pork which was unrelated to Sandy." He said if his colleagues "vote against our folks" because of his Sandy vote, they are "deliberately misunderstanding" his position.

Fleming, R-Minden, offered a similar defense, saying he didn't support final passage of some Sandy aid because a long list of spending unrelated to direct storm response was added.

"I support the appropriate use of federal funds to help when disaster strikes," Fleming said in a statement.

Thousands of Louisiana residents will be waiting to see Congress' reaction.

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In Louisiana, The Political Mess May Outlast The Flood

By Andrew Vanacore

Politico Magazine, August 27, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — Imagine everything you own, dunked in dirty water and mounded on the curb outside your house. Old VHS tapes, the piano, the wardrobe, the family photos. The water came up so quickly you couldn't save anything. Now, imagine the same thing at the house next door and the one across the street. All the way down the block and the block after that. Ramparts of debris, piled head-high in front of every home. That's how things look right now across whole neighborhoods of Baton Rouge and the surrounding counties, or parishes as they're called in Louisiana. It's all the more breathtaking because it wasn't supposed to happen here. This isn't below-sea level New Orleans caught in the path of a hurricane. This is the high-and-dry state capital. This is where people fled after Hurricane Katrina, and, ironically, where many stayed, thinking they were finally out of harm's way.

And yet here we are, with 13 dead and perhaps 40,000 homes damaged (the estimate keeps climbing) after a storm that dropped more than 20 inches of rain in some areas over the space of a few days. Meteorologists pegged the odds of seeing an event like that in a given year at between 0.2 percent and 0.1 percent—a once-in-a-1,000-years storm. Nearly a third of the state has been declared a federal disaster area.

Two weeks after the rain finally stopped and the flooding began to recede, a reflexive need to help has taken hold. Co-workers, church groups and perfect strangers are still turning up to help stunned flood survivors tear out sodden drywall and insulation. Neighbors downriver, who have done all this before, are eager to lend a hand. As are the nonprofit groups that sprang up in Katrina's wake, with intimate knowledge to pass along about battling the red tape of the recovery bureaucracy and the black mold endemic to water-logged houses. While the flood was still rising around people's homes, a fleet of good Samaritans with fishing boats, known locally as the Cajun Navy, came to the rescue. In Lafayette, a city to the west of Baton Rouge where low-lying neighborhoods had been swallowed by the Vermilion River, I ran into a couple who had driven a half hour from Opelousas with a boat in tow. They were sick of watching the disaster unfold on Facebook and the TV news. "People need help," they said.

But this kind of goodwill is going to do only so much for beleaguered flood survivors. And that's where the politics of America's latest natural disaster will get dicey. Start with the local officials in charge of hauling off all of that putrid debris—the contractor in charge in Baton Rouge says he has enough trucks; we'll see—and go all the way up to Louisiana's new Democratic governor and the Washington lawmakers holding on to the federal purse strings. Data from the local chamber of commerce show there were twice as many homes inundated in the region as active flood insurance policies. Local officials estimate that nearly half the homes that took on water in East Baton Rouge weren't even inside areas where mortgage companies require flood coverage. If these people are going to fully recover, it will be up to state or federal taxpayers to bear the burden.

First, the good news. The man in charge at the Federal Emergency Management Agency these days is Craig Fugate and not Michael Brown, who became the face of a botched federal response after Katrina. Brown still argues—as recently as last year in this magazine, actually—that he was not to blame for the ghastly suffering that took place in the Superdome and elsewhere, saying the important decisions were out of his hands. But it's hard not to feel better about the new guy's track record. We learned in 2005 after Katrina that Brown, before his time at FEMA, used to work for the International Arabian Horse Association. Fugate's résumé is basically just a list of dozens of storms that he helped respond to while he was an emergency manager in Florida, first at the county level and then for the state. So far, he hasn't had a "heck of a job" moment damage his career the way Brown did.

A speedy, competent response on Fugate's part may redound to the benefit of his boss, although President Obama has already caught criticism for deciding not to cut short his vacation when the flooding hit. Donald Trump beat him to the ground and got his picture taken handing out supplies from the back of a truck. House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, who represents a congressional district near New Orleans, promptly issued a statement calling on Hillary Clinton to make the trip as well. And he made sure to point out that Clinton at the time was on a fundraising swing through "Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Silicon Valley and the Hamptons."

Scalise may have more of a role to play than issuing partisan news releases, however, which brings us to some of the problems Louisiana might run into should the state come to Congress for extra recovery dollars. The FEMA response is just a first step. The agency helps shelter flood survivors in the immediate aftermath of a storm and pays for some other incidentals. But up to only about $33,000 per person. The average is typically much less, say around $8,000. That won't cut it for people trying to replace a house without flood insurance. So it may not help that Scalise and two of his Republican colleagues from Louisiana voted against the $50 billion that Congress set aside for survivors of Hurricane Sandy in early 2013. They opposed the Sandy bill on grounds that it was stuffed with "pork barrel" spending unrelated to the storm. And granted, the package certainly did stretch the definition of emergency aid. Millions of dollars were set aside, for example, for projects aimed at mitigating the impact of future storms. And conservative groups were aghast at the $2 million earmarked to repair the roof at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

But the dust-up also reflected a new political reality. In 2005, a similarly-sized aid package for the states walloped by Katrina passed the Senate with a unanimous vote and drew opposition from only 11 House members. President George W. Bush was signing it a little more than a week after the storm. The states hit by Sandy, which killed 117 and did $70 billion in damage, had to wait three months, in part because Scalise and others pushed amendments to offset the relief by cutting other areas of federal spending. More than 200 Republicans voted against the final bill. (A year later, the conservative Heritage Foundation came out with a report bemoaning how often the states have come to rely on the federal government to pick up the recovery bill, and recommending the feds cut back on how frequently they declare official disasters.) No one from the New York or New Jersey delegations is threatening to derail future aid for Louisiana, but things could certainly get awkward in the next few months. Our state's Democratic governor, John Bel Edwards, has already presented Obama with a wish list, and it includes forgiveness for the money the state owes the federal government for improvements to the levees around New Orleans.

Here's another potential problem for Louisiana. By any definition, the flooding that hit Baton Rouge and other parts of Louisiana was a major event. But the storm—there doesn't seem to be another way to put it—has a bit of an image problem. For starters, it didn't have a name. Andrew, Sandy, Katrina. These are monikers that strike fear, at least for people of a certain age from certain parts of the country. What happened in Louisiana this month was an anonymous rainstorm. There was no edge-of-your-seat buildup as it crossed the Gulf of Mexico and took aim. There were no dramatic cable news images of sandbags being dropped into a breach in the levee. The New York Times got a scolding from its own public editor for failing to devote more resources to the coverage. It must have been hard for the rest of the country to sense any kind of emergency going on in the first place. And it will be the rest of the country devoting tax dollars to the cleanup, if Congress steps in.

Which, as anyone who lived through Katrina or Sandy knows, is only the start of what can go wrong. If Louisiana's delegation in Washington steps up and wrangles the extra money, it's likely to be the state's governor who handles getting it to the right people, a job that could be legacy-defining for him. Edwards pulled off a stunning upset to win office last year. He is the only Democrat elected to statewide office in Louisiana, a state whose shade of red has been deepening for a generation. And so far, his time in office has been devoted almost entirely to the state's woeful budget situation. Now, the governor's office is likely to be consumed by recovery efforts for the foreseeable future. The potential pitfalls are legion, and familiar in New Orleans: contractor fraud, grants that don't cover the real cost of repairs, confusion about the strings attached to federal dollars. Louisiana's last Democratic governor, Kathleen Blanco, was widely criticized for the headaches that plagued the Road Home program after Katrina. She declined to even run for a second term. If Edwards wants one, he may have to do better.

Andrew Vanacore is a New Orleans-based editor for the Advocate.

Louisiana, Its Floods, And The Presidential Question

By Douglas McCollam

The New Yorker, August 27, 2016

In Louisiana, the history of rain and flooding flows through the culture. Whether from the skies, the rivers, or the encroaching ocean, the people of the southern half of this subtropical state are pitted in a constant contest against water. Indeed, but for seasonal flooding through geologic history, much of the very land they live on would not exist.

But even for the Bayou State, the deluge that began on August 11th was extraordinary. More than two feet of rain fell in seventy-two hours across a wide band of the state north and west of New Orleans, causing local tributaries to reach flood stages never before recorded. More than sixty thousand homes and businesses were inundated. A sixty-mile stretch of Interstate 12 was shut down, stranding more than a hundred motorists in their cars. In all, more than a hundred thousand residents had to be evacuated out of the flood zone. And unlike the traditional televised countdown that precedes the arrival of hurricanes—complete with B-roll footage of cleared-out store shelves and boarded-up windows—the 2016 flood appeared more or less out of nowhere, a slow-moving low-pressure system conjured seemingly overnight.

The combination of the sudden onset of disaster and the perceived lack of attention to their plight by the national media produced strong feelings of aggrievement among the state's residents. And it didn't take long for that anger to home in on the figure of President Obama, who, for reasons that perplexed many victims, opted to ride out the disaster on Martha's Vineyard instead of visiting the flood zone or even tossing on a jacket and making some televised statement of support. Soon enough the meme of Obama in golf shorts squeezing in another eighteen holes juxtaposed with images of evacuated refugees and flooded communities began to circulate widely on social media. Matters weren't helped when Donald Trump showed up near Baton Rouge with a semi-trailer full of supplies. ("I think Obama just had a par on 16," one Baton Rouge friend texted me from the flood zone during Trump's visit).

The issue of federal response to natural disasters is, for obvious reasons, a touchy one in South Louisiana. It's been more than a decade, but memories of the federal government's botched response to Hurricane Katrina still vex many residents. In President Obama's seemingly nonchalant attitude, many saw a reminder of President George W. Bush's ineptitude in the days following that deadly hurricane. The comparison seems unfair based on the facts. Obama apparently stayed in close contact with Louisiana's Governor John Bel Edwards, who, concerned about diverting resources to cope with the Presidential entourage, said he was O.K. with Obama holding off on a visit. In stark contrast to the delays, red tape, and managerial incompetence that snarled the federal response to Katrina, Louisiana officials of both parties have praised the initial federal response to this month's flood. Craig Fugate, the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, was on site almost immediately, and more than a thousand FEMA staff members were deployed in the days after the storm. Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security, also toured the region.

Given that the federal government seems to have supplied all the requested help, worked closely with state officials, and been attentive to the needs of victims, it can be asked, What difference would it have made if the President had shown up earlier? Not that much, Obama seemed to say when addressing the criticism surrounding his delayed visit during a tour of the flood zone, earlier this week. "One of the benefits of being five months short of leaving here," he said at a curbside press conference in a Baton Rouge neighborhood, "is I don't worry too much about politics."

Part of the local criticism of Obama is certainly political. Louisiana is among the reddest states in the country, and many of the rural parishes north of New Orleans that were hit hardest by the flood are decidedly conservative. "You have to remember that in a poll taken just a few years ago a majority of Louisiana Republicans blamed Obama, not Bush, for the response to Katrina," John Barry, whose book "Rising Tide" is a definitive history of the great Mississippi River flood of 1927 that devastated Louisiana and other Southern states, says. Still, Barry thinks that Obama probably should have come South sooner. "Symbols are important. Physical presence matters," Barry says, noting that, for raising donations and drawing national attention, little competes with a Presidential visit. "This event didn't really register in a huge way in the national psyche."

The politics of disaster response can be unpredictable. During the 1927 flood, President Calvin Coolidge designated Herbert Hoover, his Secretary of Commerce, to head flood-relief efforts, declining to get personally involved or even to visit the flood zone despite a national clamor that he do so. Hoover used the publicity he garnered as flood savior as a springboard to the White House the following year. The decision at the time by local political and financial power brokers to dynamite the levees south of New Orleans to save the city from potential flooding gave rise to a populist backlash among rural voters who got flooded instead; their anger fuelled Huey P. Long's rise in Louisiana.

The Advocate, in Baton Rouge, likened Obama's reserve to that of "Silent Cal" Coolidge—Louisianans have long memories—and raised the example of Lyndon Johnson, who, after Hurricane Betsy, in 1965, prowled the still darkened and flooded blocks of the city's Ninth Ward by flashlight, announcing, "This is your President! I'm here to help you!"

While no one would confuse President Obama's contained persona with L.B.J.'s backslapping bonhomie, the President did show respect for symbolism when Hurricane Sandy blasted the East Coast, in late October, 2012. Touring the devastated coastal region, comforting victims, winning praise from New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, Obama received an approval bump from his handling of the disaster in the week leading up to the Presidential election. Meanwhile, his Republican opponent, Mitt Romney, seeking to avoid the perception of political opportunism, could only sit on the sidelines and stew, holding small donor events far from the disaster zone. Some inside Romney's campaign came to see the storm as the final turning point that sealed the 2012 race for the incumbent.

Oddly, the politics of the Sandy response may yet have an impact on Louisiana's recovery effort. Though the final tab for flood damage is still being added up, it's likely that the state will need to go to Congress to request more money to aid in the recovery. In 2012 a similar request by the states affected by Sandy was opposed by several members of Louisiana's congressional delegation, including the Republican Steve Scalise, who is currently the House majority whip. The Louisiana representatives complained that the final Sandy relief bill was larded with projects unrelated to the disaster and demanded that the funds be offset by spending cuts elsewhere in the budget. The bill passed over their opposition, but now the Louisiana politicians are at pains to explain why their votes shouldn't be held against their state's flood victims. The situation is "apples and oranges," a spokesman for Scalise told the Los Angeles Times, noting that the congressman actually voted for the initial disaster-relief bill before voting against the more expensive final package. Maybe, but that's the kind of political distinction that can easily get lost in a flood.

– Douglas McCollam is a writer living in New Orleans.

A Mom's Life, Rebuilt After Katrina, Wrecked By Baton Rouge Floods

By Eve Troeh

NPR, August 27, 2016

"It was wonderful to feel like I'd never have to be homeless again."

Myra Engrum is sitting in a McDonald's in Louisiana, steeling herself for another day of mucking out her flooded home. The parking lot is full of construction trucks and cars with a insurance company logos. A lot of meetings are happening here.

"I had over four and a half feet of water in my home, on the inside and outside," she says. "This is my first home that I ever purchased. I got the home right after Katrina."

Engrum, like many of those who lost everything in the recent floods around Baton Rouge, La., is a veteran of disaster. She lost everything when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans 11 years ago, and like thousands of others moved north to rebuild her life, bringing along her pregnant daughter.

Her daughter died soon after childbirth, and Myra

Engrum became the baby's mother. Jeremiah is now ten; she's 61.

The two of them were in their small brick ranch house earlier this month when the flood came.

"I call him my hero," she says, "because that Saturday, it was not raining. We were in the living room; he looked through the mail slot and said, 'Mommy there's water in the street.' "

They drove out, just in time. That night, around midnight, Engrum sat in her car with her son in the dark, and something clicked. Her disaster experience from a decade ago kicked into gear.

"All of a sudden I said 'Jeremiah, do you have a tablet? '" Engrum says. " 'I need a tablet to write on, I've gotta make some notes.' "

Her son pulled a notebook from his backpack. Now it's on the McDonald's table, full of lists, phone numbers, names of FEMA reps and insurance agents.

"Because of my experience with Katrina, I knew that people were gonna be asking things like 'What did you lose in the house?' " Engrum says.

Eventually she's ready to face the day, She heads out to her house on Acacia Street to meet her contractor, who says he's going to spend the day gutting her kitchen.

Engrum had taken the precaution of buying flood insurance, but it only pays for home repairs. She couldn't afford the more expensive policy to cover contents — the kitchen appliances that are now piled in a mountain out front, for instance.

The list of things Engrum may have to pay for out of pocket is endless: "Everything I owned — pots and pans, cabinets, you name it, mattresses, Jeremiah's camping stuff, his Boy Scouts uniform."

Engrum won't let Jeremiah see the house — health officials want kids to stay away from moldy homes and slippery debris, and she worries it would be traumatic for him.For now, they're staying with one of Jeremiah's former teachers, an hour's drive away.

Each day Engrum makes the trip to Baton Rouge to drop her son at day camp, while she deals with house stuff. Today, she stops in to check on him.

It's hard to tell if he understands the extent of what's been lost. He lists off the library books he had checked out when the water rose, and Engrum tells him they're gone. He says he hopes they'll be understanding about not getting them back.

As he runs off to return to day camp it starts to rain. Standing beneath the concrete overhang, Engrum starts to sing an old spiritual, "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen."

It feels like a momentary break from the huge tasks ahead — finding work and a place to live, providing a stable life for Jeremiah. She's starting all over again.

She's done it before, but that doesn't make it any easier.

Donald Trump Has Now Given More To Charity In The Last Four Months Than In The Previous 10 Years Combined

By David Fahrenthold

Washington Post, August 26, 2016

On Friday afternoon, Greenwell Springs Baptist Church in Louisiana confirmed that it had received a $100,000 personal check from Donald Trump.

Trump had promised the donation a week earlier, after he'd visited the church during a tour of flood-damaged areas of the state. The church's interim poster is Tony Perkins, who is also the head of the Family Research Council, an influential social-conservative group.

The church itself, located near Baton Rouge, has coordinated volunteer efforts and provided hot meals to victims and those working on the cleanup. Before Trump's visit to the state, Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) had suggested a "sizable donation" to another charity, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's Louisiana Flood Relief Fund. Trump gave that group nothing. A spokeswoman said he'd given to the church instead.

In a statement, Perkins said that Trump's donation would be used only for disaster relief, and kept separate from the church's general operating fund.

"The funds will not be used for normal church expenses, nor will the funds be used for cash grants to individuals," Perkins said. "Any funds not used in this initial relief phase will be used for subsequent efforts to support and/or directly restore and rebuild homes and church facilities impacted by the flood."

That was at least the second time this year that Trump has given a personal check to a charity. Both of those donations were entwined with his campaign.

In May, under pressure from the media, Trump made good on a promise he'd made at a campaign event four months earlier: to give $1 million to a veterans' charity. And now, after a high-visibility trip to Louisiana with his running mate, Trump gave from his own pocket again.

Now, it appears that Trump has given more of his own money to charity in the last four months than he gave in the last decade combined.

Since 2006, Trump has given $675,000 to the Donald J. Trump Foundation, a charity he founded in the late 1980s. The bulk of that money was given in 2006, when he donated $610,000.

Trump's donations fell off sharply in 2007 and 2008. Then they stopped completely. Tax records show no gifts from Trump to his own foundation since a $30,000 gift in 2008. The foundation's coffers have been filled, instead, by gifts from other donors.

The Post has made a months-long effort to identify instances where Trump made personal donations to other charities — surveying more than 270 nonprofits with some past ties to the GOP nominee. But that effort has turned up only a handful of other gifts, the most recent of which was in 2009.

In all, the total of all the donations that The Post has discovered between 2006 and this May — to the Trump Foundation and other charities — appears to be less than $800,000.

It is impossible to give an exact number, because in some cases organizations disclosed only a range of dollar figures, not the exact value of Trump gift.

Hope Hicks, a spokeswoman for Trump's campaign, did not immediately respond to an inquiry asking why Trump's generosity had apparently increased so sharply since the spring.

What changed in the spring? Trump locked up the GOP nomination, for one thing.

For another, The Washington Post and other media outlets began looking into Trump's charitable giving, after Trump had made that public promise to give $1 million to veterans — and then delayed paying it off.

Trump has not released his tax returns, which would show exactly what he had given to charity. He has, however, said publicly that his net worth is over $10 billion.

Florida Donors Favor Clinton Over Trump

By Ledyard King

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, August 27, 2016

WASHINGTON – Floridians have given three times as much to Democrat Hillary Clinton as they have to Republican Donald Trump, the latest campaign finance figures show.

Of the $40.5 million Sunshine State donors have shelled out to all presidential campaigns so far, Clinton has gotten one-third: $13.3 million.

Trump has received about $4 million, less than the amount raised in-state by either of Trump's two former GOP rivals — former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush ($6.6 million) and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio ($5.5 million), according to Federal Election Commission records.

It's not a surprise. Clinton is a prolific fundraiser with deep-pocketed support in Florida. Trump made little effort during the primary to solicit contributions, touting his independence from special interests he said couldn't buy him.

More than half Clinton's haul — $7.2 million — came from South Florida: Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe counties.

Other places that gave to her include the Orlando area ($1.2 million), the Tampa-St. Pete metro area ($1.05 million), Sarasota/Bradenton ($773,000), Southwest Florida ($630,000), greater Jacksonville ($434,000), the Space and Treasure coasts ($375,000), and the Big Bend region ($337,000).

Trump, on the other hand, has drawn fairly evenly throughout the state.

Palm Beach County donors gave him the most ($581,000), but there were no standouts among the other areas — Southwest Florida ($466,000), Miami-Dade ($432,000), Orlando area ($392,000), the Space and Treasure coasts ($300,000), Tampa-St. Pete ($244,000), the Panhandle ($185,000), and greater Jacksonville ($157,000).

The number and size of campaign contributions isn't necessarily a sign of voter support, though most recent polls have Clinton leading Trump by percentage points in Florida.

Breaking pledge not hurting Rubio much

It looks like Florida voters have largely gotten over Marco Rubio's decision to break his pledge not to run for re-election.

Most voters (53 percent) responding to a Monmouth University poll said Rubio decided to run for a second term after losing his bid for the White House (despite his repeated insistence he would return to private life in January) more to improve his chances for a future presidential run than to serve the public (25 percent).

Despite that, more Florida voters approve (47 percent) than disapprove (39 percent) of the job Rubio has done as a senator, and a plurality (40 percent) hold a favorable opinion of Rubio compared to 33 percent who don't.

The poll, issued last week, also showed Rubio with a 5-point lead over Rep. Patrick Murphy, the Jupiter congressman expected to win the Democratic Senate nomination in Tuesday's primary.

The telephone poll of likely voters has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.9 percentage points.

Carlos Beruff, Republican businessman running against Rubio for the GOP nomination, has hammered the incumbent for breaking his promise. But Patrick

Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute, said Rubio's large lead over Beruff suggests the argument isn't sticking.

"People just personally like Rubio in Florida enough that it's overcoming those negatives," Murray said.

Florida is ground zero for TV ads

Here's a shocker to any Floridian with a television: The Sunshine State boasts three of the nation's top five media markets when it comes to number of presidential campaign ads on TV.

Tampa has seen 6,553 ads aired from June 8 through Aug. 18, the single most saturated media market in the nation, according to the Wesleyan Media Project, a nonpartisan center that tracks political advertising.

The Orlando media market followed with 5,723 ad airings. West Palm Beach, with 4,623, was fifth.

Those are among the more than 2 million TV spots for all political races that have aired so far nationwide during the election cycle, according to the center. The cycle officially began Jan. 1, 2015 but most of the ads have been running in recent weeks.

At this point during the last presidential cycle in 2012, there had been about 1.87 million total airings.

An estimated $1.56 billion has been spent to date, according to Wesleyan.

About one-third of that total ($517 million) was spent on nearly 610,000 ad airings in the presidential race, while spending on campaigns for U.S. Senate came to $247 million for more than 280,000 airings.

Spending on races for governor and U.S. House lag behind, clocking in at a little over $80 million apiece. Just over $34 million has been spent on ballot measures so far.

"Judging by where advertisers are putting their money, Florida, Ohio and North Carolina are the biggest presidential battlegrounds in 2016," said Michael Franz, co-director of the Wesleyan Media Project. "These swing states have not changed much, if any, from four years ago."

Obama heaps praise on Fugate

President Obama believes a Floridian was one of his best hires.

That's how he described Federal Emergency Management Agency Director Craig Fugate during a trip to flood-ravaged Louisiana on Tuesday.

Obama said Fugate "has done such an outstanding job not just in dealing with this particular incident, but has really rebuilt FEMA so that there's a change of culture," the president said. "And everybody knows that when a disaster happens, FEMA is going to be there on the ground, cooperating with state and local officials rapidly and with attention to detail, and keeping the families who've been affected uppermost in their minds. So we very much appreciate everything Craig has done."

Not everyone is that impressed with the agency, tarnished by its sluggish response to Hurricane Katrina more than decade ago. It's accused of responding too slowly or too ham-handedly at times. But Fugate has won praise from both sides of the aisle for being a straight shooter — no easy task in Washington.

Obama hired the former Alachua County paramedic in 2009, after Fugate had spent eight years running Florida's Department of Emergency Management.

During the news conference in Baton Rouge, Obama conceded it wasn't easiest of visits for his crisis czar, and not just because of the floods that killed 13 and left tens of thousands homeless.

"It's hard, by the way, for Craig to be here because he's a Florida Gator — (laughter) — and he's been seeing a lot of LSU T-shirts as we've been passing by," the president said.

In Louisiana Flooding, It's Neighbor Helping Neighbor

Voice of America, August 27, 2016

Graham Kinchen had an emergency when a sandbag wall near his home began to fall apart.

The wall was protecting his house in Baton Rouge, Louisiana from the recent flooding.

He let people know about his problem on Facebook and by telephone. Within five minutes, friends gathered to help rebuild the wall.

The incident shows how neighbors have helped each other in response to the recent flooding in Baton Rouge and nearby communities. Baton Rouge is the capital of the southern state of Louisiana.

Storms and flooding hit the area from August 8th to 14th. Thirteen people were killed and about 100,000 homes were damaged. Thousands of people are homeless. Many are staying in shelters or the homes of friends or family.

Spirit of Cooperation

"We have seen a great spirit of cooperation, with neighbors, churches and friends pitching in," said Peter Kovacs, editor of The Advocate, the daily newspaper in Baton Rouge." Many of us have unexpected houseguests, and we're making a great adventure of it."

Kinchen and his wife, Denise, use a boat to get from their front door to the road. Sandbags have been keeping most of the flood waters out of their house.

Louisiana has suffered severe flooding before. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 killed 1,833 people and heavily damaged or destroyed 300,000 homes.

Many residents of New Orleans left their flooded homes behind and moved to other cities, including Baton Rouge. Eleven years later, many former New Orleans residents remain in Baton Rouge.

Obama: Confident Rebuilding Will Move Forward

"Sometimes when these kinds of things happen, it can seem a little bit too much to bear," said President Barack Obama. Obama was in Baton Rouge Tuesday, noting that he had visited New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina when he was a U.S. senator.

Obama said he is confident flooded communities in Baton Rouge and nearby communities will recover, just as many neighborhoods in New Orleans did after Hurricane Katrina.

"And the reason I can say that with confidence is because that's what Americans do in times like this," Obama said. "I know how resilient the people of Louisiana are, and I know that you will rebuild again."

By resilient, Obama means having the ability to overcome problems, no matter how tough.

Dustin Clouatre is a member of the self-named "Cajun Navy." It is a group of residents who use Facebook to organize private boat owners to rescue people and move food and other aid where it is needed.

'Love Is All You Need'

He soon became popular on social media.

"Me and my uncle had just gotten a family out of a house and something got caught in the motor," he said. It was a sign that said, "Love is All You Need." The photo quickly spread on social media.

David Vitter is a Republican senator from Louisiana. He visited flooded communities with the president on Tuesday.

"There's a spirit of helping folks and it really was in full display when the president visited the neighborhood," Vitter said.

Vitter calls the rain that brought the floods a 1000-year event, meaning it has a one-in-1,000 chance of happening in any year. The Red Cross said it is the biggest natural disaster in the United States since Super Storm Sandy in 2012.

Despite this, Vitter and others said the Louisiana disaster has not received much news coverage outside the state.

Competition for News Coverage

"I think people are a little disaster weary, plus there are other competing stories," Vitter said.

Both Vitter and Obama praised the willingness of people to help each other.

They spoke to a young African-American man, who was helping his father clean out his flooded home. The man was also helping his dad's elderly white neighbor, who lives alone.

The work of removing flooded walls, floors and furniture is not easy.

Kevin White has been working on flood relief for the past week in Saint Amant, Louisiana. He said the smells at the water-damaged houses are terrible.

White is housing a family of four who were flooded out of their own home. He and the family spent the past few days tearing out walls and throwing out everything else damaged in his guests' flooded house. The damaged things represent almost everything the family owned, he said.

I'm Bruce Alpert.

Marissa Melton reported this story for VOA. Bruce Alpert adapted the story for VOA Learning English.

We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments Section and share your views on our Facebook Page.

sandbag – n. bag filled with sand and used as a weight or to build temporary walls to protect homes and businesses

pitching in – v. offering help

houseguests – n. people who are invited to stay at a person's house

confident – n. having a feeling or belief that people can do something well or succeed at something

resilient – adj. having the ability to overcome problems

display – n. put out so people can see it

weary – adv. tired, lacking interest because you have seen it often before

furniture – n. chairs, tables, beds, etc., that are used to make a room ready for use

Filing, Payment Extensions For Those Affected By Flooding

Associated Press, August 27, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — State tax extensions are available to Louisiana taxpayers whose homes, business and critical tax records are located in 20 parishes designated as federal disaster areas following recent flooding.

The Louisiana Department of Revenue says for sales, severance and excise taxes due on or after Aug.

11 and on or before Oct. 31, the extended deadline is Nov. 15.

For withholding tax returns and remittances due on or after Aug. 11 and on or before Nov. 15 the extended deadline is Nov. 30.

For individual income, corporation income, franchise and other income taxes, along with estimated tax payments due on or after Aug. 11 and on or before Jan. 17, 2017, the extended deadline is Jan. 17, 2017.

For items submitted by extended deadlines, the department will waive penalties and interest.

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Dukes Of Hazard Actor's Louisiana Home, Studio Swamped

By Chevel Johnson

Associated Press, August 27, 2016

Actor, writer and director John Schneider, known for his past role on the "Dukes of Hazzard" and current role on "The Haves and the Have Nots," thought the first flood he experienced at his Louisiana production studio was bad.

Now, he knows there are different levels of what's considered "bad."

Schneider's Livingston Parish-based studio — which includes his home, offices, cars, wardrobe, sound stages, and more — flooded in mid-March but the water didn't get into his 116-year-old home. This time around, he wasn't as lucky.

He says overflow from the Tickfaw River this month inundated all of his property in Holden, flooding his home with about 4 feet of water as well as another house in which his mother lives. He says he's lost a lot of memorabilia and equipment but his situation is not unique. About 90 percent of the homes in the parish were flooded.

Still he says the response by friends and strangers has been amazing.

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CNN Segment On Flooding Leads To $1 Million Donation

By A.J. Katz

AdWeek, August 27, 2016

CNN anchor Ashleigh Banfield was conducting a live, in-studio segment on her program Legal View last week about the horrific flooding in Louisiana. Heart breaking photos of a flooded-out local Salvation Army were shown in the background during her report. Banfield then held a remote interview with Captain Brett Meredith, head of the that Salvation Army of Baton Rouge, who was speaking from a temporary office. This doesn't end up being your typical conversation. How so? An anonymous donor went on to pledge $1 million to the Salvation Army for Louisiana relief efforts, citing this exact interview in the process. Here's Banfield's conversation with Captain Meredith:

An Inconvenient Truth: Few Signs Of Global Warming In Antarctica

By Michael Bastasch

Daily Caller, August 27, 2016

Antarctica has confounded scientists, defying the dire predictions of scientists the South Pole would shrink and exacerbate sea level rise in the coming decades.

Climate models predicted Antarctic sea ice would shrink as the world warmed, and that warming would boost snowfall over the southern continent. Neither of those predictions have panned out, and now scientists say "natural variability" is overwhelming human-induced warming.

"Truth is, the science is complex, and that in most places and with most events, natural variability still plays a dominant role, and undoubtedly will continue to do so," Chip Knappenberger, a climate scientist with the libertarian Cato Institute, told The Daily Caller News Foundation.

"This applies to goings-on in Antarctica as well as in Louisiana," Knappenberger said, referring to the recent flooding in Louisiana activists have already blamed global warming for.

What recent studies have shown is that natural variability in the climate system plays a big role in the South Pole, and there are few signs of man-made global warming in Antarctica.

Shouldn't There Be More Snow?

Antarctica is a tricky topic for scientists. It has a long history of chaotic weather and dramatic changes in its ice sheet, and scientists are realizing just how difficult it is to predict future behavior down under.

A recent study seemed to sum up what Knappenberger said should be the "consensus" of mainstream scientists: global warming has exerted little to no detectable influence in Antarctica.

Scientists with Columbia University's Earth Institute found there's been little change in Antarctica's annual snowfall, which flies in the face of what climate models predicted would happen as the planet warmed.

They blamed strong "natural variability" for the models' failures.

"This new paper affirms these other recent findings showing that the expected signal from climate change has been struggling to rise above the noise of natural variability over recent decades, but expects the signal to eventually become noticeable," Knappenberger said of the study.

Columbia scientists, however, said global warming's influence on the South Pole should become apparent "by the middle of the current century, thus mitigating future increases in global sea level."

This is just one of several recent papers suggesting natural variability is still dominant in the South Pole. So why don't we hear more about supposedly good news?

"When it comes to 'good' expectations, such as increase in the surface mass balance of Antarctica, activists prefer to ignore the projections, and instead claim that recent trends indicate the situation is 'worse than expected,'" Knappenberger said.

The Ice Is Melting … Maybe

Scientists have also been warning for years that, on net, Antarctica has been losing 147 gigatons of ice per year for the last decade or so, mostly from melting on the northern Antarctic Peninsula and its western ice sheet.

There's seems to be a news story every day about how things are looking worse in the Antarctic. The Washington Post, for example, recently warned a long crack in western Antarctica' ice was growing. Sounds scary, but sort of obscures what's happening overall with Antarctica.

A 2015 study by NASA found Antarctica's ice sheet increased in mass from 1992 to 2008. The study found ice gains in Eastern antarctica more than offset ice loss from melting glaciers in the west.

Zwally's study was controversial and challenged years of assumptions about what was happening in the South Pole. But months later another study was published showing a "pause" in warming on the Antarctic Peninsula due to a recovering ozone hole and shifting wind patterns.

"The ozone hole contributed to a warming of the Antarctic Peninsula, but has given a small cooling around the rest of the Antarctic," John turner, a variability climatologist with the British Antarctic Survey, told The Daily Caller News Foundation.

Turner, one of the paper's co-authors, found the ozone hole and wind patterns created a cooling trend over the Antarctic Peninsula, masking the warming trend predicted by climate models.

"It's recently been published that the level of stratospheric ozone has been slowly recovering since the late 1990s, which has played a part in the cessation of the 'peninsula warming' that we reported in our recent Nature paper," said Turner.

"Parts of the ice sheet are certainly melting, but as a result of relatively warm waters getting under the ice shelves and melting the ice from below," Turner said.

Turner and his colleagues noted that even in a warming world Antarctic temperatures can go up or down in a given year, such is the power of natural variability over the region.

Ice, Ice, Baby!

Climate models predicted Antarctic sea ice would shrink as a result of global warming, but the opposite happened. Antarctic sea ice actually increased in the last two decades.

Chinese scientists compared climate model sea ice predictions to actual observations from 1979 to 2005 and found "the main problem of the [climate] models is their inability to reproduce the observed slight increase of sea ice extent."

As it turns out, natural variability plays a big role here as well.

"Sea ice extent is strongly influenced by the winds and these have increased from the south over the Ross Sea, contributing to a small increase in total Antarctic sea ice since the late 1970s," Turner said. "The increase in ice seems to be within the bounds of natural variability."

Had Chinese researchers gone beyond 2005, they would have found more than just a slight increase. 2014 was the first year on record that Antarctic sea ice coverage rose above 7.72 million square miles. By Sept. 22, 2014, sea ice extent reached its highest level on record — 7.76 million square miles.

Antarctica also had unique ocean currents that keep surface waters cooler than the rest of the world.

A June 2016 study found Antarctica has a unique current pulls cold water from the Southern Ocean's depths to the surface, causing the surface water to be colder than, say, in the Arctic. Cold water has helped sea ice hit record levels in 2014.

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FEMA HOUSING

Much Like Post-Katrina, A Major Homeowner Aid Package Could Make Or Break Flood Recovery

By Gordon Russell

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Drop the phrase "Road Home" around New Orleans and other parts of southern Louisiana, and you're likely to hear groans, followed by horror stories about interacting with the suits who ran a homeowner-aid program that became synonymous with government inefficiency.

But dig deeper, and many people will tell you the money that flowed through the Road Home — even if it was too little and very late — was the difference between rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina or walking away.

"The Road Home was the key to the region's recovery," says former Gov. Kathleen Blanco, who traveled to Washington nine times to seek money for the program and then opted not to seek a second term in the wake of its frustrating launch.

Now, after historic flooding in Baton Rouge and other areas of the state, Louisiana may have arrived at another moment where a decision by lawmakers in Washington on how generously to respond will be make-or-break for a whole region.

It's no stretch to say that the Road Home, warts and all, saved New Orleans after the disaster that struck 11 years ago this week. In the months after the storm, the scale of the damage, the realization that many devastated homeowners lacked flood insurance and the fact that many of the hardest-hit survivors were among the region's poorest led to a surreal debate about whether New Orleans would ever recover, or whether parts of it should simply be abandoned.

In the end, Congress and the George W. Bush administration doled out $13.4 billion to underwrite the Road Home program. Affected homeowners, about 130,000 of them, got an average of $70,000 apiece.

Were it not for the Road Home, most experts believe the New Orleans of today — not to mention Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes — would look very different.

Vera Triplett, an educator who after Katrina led the Gentilly Civic Improvement Association, shudders to think about it.

"Even now, you see blocks and blocks of homes that are unfinished, or where more work still needs to be done," Triplett said. "I imagine we'd have that on a much more massive scale had it not been for the infusion of those funds."

There's no guarantee the great flood of 2016 will attract a federal care package. It will be up to Congress to decide that.

But in New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu's view, getting Congress on board with a program that bridges the huge gap between the losses suffered by property owners and the amount they'll receive from their insurance claims is more than crucial. It's the "whole ballgame," the mayor said in a recent interview.Going beyond the basics

For now, Louisiana is receiving the basics that come with every federally declared disaster: temporary housing assistance and help with debris removal and other short-term needs, including "individual assistance" grants handed out by the Federal Emergency Management Agency that top out at $33,000 but are usually a fraction of that amount.

But larger bailouts of affected property owners have become increasingly common in recent years, starting with a special package aimed at helping lower Manhattan after the 9/11 terrorist attacks of 2001 and continuing four years later with grant programs for those whose homes were ruined by hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma.

Congress sent a similarly massive pile of money to help the Eastern seaboard recover from 2012's Superstorm Sandy, but even more modest disasters, such as last year's devastating floods in Texas and South Carolina, have been deemed worthy of special appropriations.

Typically, money to support homeowners' recovery comes through a supplemental appropriations bill that is passed by Congress, allocated to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and then sent to the affected state in the form of block grants. It's up to the state to design the program, though HUD must sign off on the rules.

Not surprisingly, there's a consensus among Louisiana's largely Republican congressional delegation and its Democratic governor that plenty more aid will be needed this time. The Obama administration is also showing clear signs of support.

Julian Castro, the HUD secretary, said Thursday after touring the flooded region that the administration sees "a real need for significant investment in getting people back to where they were before."

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, R-Baton Rouge, called the standard off-the-shelf aid "wholly insufficient" and said a much bigger aid package will be needed.

So did U.S. Rep. John Fleming, R-Minden, one of three members of Louisiana's delegation who voted against the omnibus bill for Sandy victims in 2013 — a stand that has drawn criticism recently as Louisiana's delegation prepares to rattle the cup for money for the Pelican State.

Several members of New Jersey's delegation have said they still have a sour taste in their mouths over the Sandy votes, but they promised not to hold it against Louisiana in 2016.

Edwards will meet with Louisiana's entire congressional delegation Monday in Baton Rouge to make sure everyone's on the same page, according to a spokesman. U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise, R-Metairie, who as majority whip is the third-ranking member of the House, is expected to carry the ball on an appropriations bill.

No one has yet begun to float specific amounts of aid that will be needed, in part because damage estimates — and estimates of uninsured losses — are still all over the map.

They've been changing steadily as the floodwaters slowly recede. Some reports — such as one by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber — have estimated there could be as many as 145,000 flooded homes across the region, a number that would put this unnamed rainstorm within an order of magnitude of Katrina. (The federal government's final estimates for Katrina damage in Louisiana were 515,000 housing units damaged, 204,682 of them severely or totally.)

In a letter delivered to the president during his visit to Baton Rouge on Tuesday, Edwards said he expects to provide the Obama administration with "clear information about the damage assessments and specifics about the necessary federal assistance" by Sept. 2.Worse than Katrina?

The numbers that have emerged so far suggest that a request for several billion dollars could be in the offing.

While the scope of damage is certainly less, the insurance picture could be much worse, at least proportionally, than it was after Katrina. Whereas only about one-quarter of the owner-occupied homes ruined in Katrina lacked flood insurance, early estimates are that at least two of every three homes inundated in the 2016 storm were not covered by flood policies.

Many of those who got swamped had good reason to think they'd never see water in their homes — another reason there could be broad support for an aid package.

New data released by East Baton Rouge city-parish officials, for instance, indicate that about half of the homes inundated in this month's floods were not considered to be in "high-risk" areas, meaning their risk of flooding was less than once per 100 years — and their banks therefore didn't require the owners to carry flood insurance.

"Most of the people affected by this disaster received advice through their lenders that they didn't need insurance," said Walter Leger, a lawyer and native of St. Bernard Parish who headed the Housing Committee for Blanco's Louisiana Recovery Authority after Katrina. "And that advice was given indirectly by the federal government through the development of the (federal) flood maps.

"You can't accuse homeowners in these areas of being irresponsible. The federal government basically said, 'Don't worry about it.' Does the federal government now have an obligation to help? A legal obligation, maybe not. But a moral obligation? Probably yes."

In such large-scale events, refusing to help the uninsured punishes the insured as well, Blanco pointed out. "Their properties are devalued when they're living next to blight," she said. "There's a common good here we need to look for."

If there's a consensus that a homeowner-aid program is needed for the Baton Rouge region, that doesn't mean the lamented Road Home model must be re-created exactly.

There's no reason to think it would be. The Road Home was the first such effort of its kind and thus presented a raft of unique challenges. There was endless debate over rules: how much money was required; how to give it out; what steps homeowners should be forced to take to reduce future risk.

Then, an entire bureaucracy had to be built from the ground up to oversee the dispensing of the money and make sure it was being spent as intended. The rules were constantly being rewritten as problems arose.

Most significantly, the program was changed at HUD's insistence from one based on reimbursements for completed renovations to straight-up grants.

The Blanco administration had designed the program so that homeowners would be reimbursed as they rebuilt, figuring that more people would actually renovate that way, and that it would be harder for unscrupulous contractors to take advantage of unwary homeowners. The Bush administration wanted to get the money moving more quickly, and it forced the change to a lump-sum grant.Learning from experience

That dust-up was one of many signs of partisan tension between the Blanco and Bush administrations — tension that appears to be mostly absent so far in this disaster, with Edwards and Obama belonging to the same political party.

Also in the plus column for Louisiana this time: Residents and officials now have a much better idea about what to do, and what not to do, after such an event.

That's been obvious even in the immediate response to the storm, with volunteer gutting crews from around south Louisiana ripping out sodden drywall and insulation as soon as the waters receded.

As Leger put it: "Unfortunately, we have gained a tremendous amount of experience and expertise."

Leger, who has been involved in discussions about what a new homeowner aid program might look like, said Louisiana will benefit both from its history with the Road Home and from the experiences New York and New Jersey have had with dispensing Sandy aid.

"We have the benefit of both the achievements and the failures of various programs," he said. "Certainly there are things that we'll model."

In Sandy, for instance, the aid programs that policymakers built managed to avoid the accusations of built-in racial discrimination that dogged the Road Home, according to James Perry.

Perry, a New Orleans fair housing advocate who successfully sued the Road Home over its practice of awarding grants based on a house's pre-storm value rather than the cost of rebuilding it — effectively punishing people in poor neighborhoods — said HUD has since "universally agreed" that the cost of rebuilding should govern the size of the grant.

All of this was uncharted territory 11 years ago, when Leger recalled acquiring a copy of the Marshall Plan — the American blueprint for reviving Western Europe after World War II — because there didn't seem to be another prototype.

"I'd put it under my pillow at night, hoping I'd learn by osmosis," he said.

One common element among all large-scale disasters, in Leger's view, is that people will be reluctant to reinvest in their communities without robust government intervention. That's especially true in the most damaged areas, like Livingston Parish this time.

Leger said: "I used to tell people all the time, 'When a house burns down, it's a terrible tragedy. But when a whole community floods, you lose everything that makes a community your home: your dentist, your favorite restaurant, the grocery store. Until you know they're coming back, it's hard to come back, and until they know you're coming back, they might not come back.' "

Rule Could Limit Where FEMA Mobile Homes Are Set Up In Ascension Parish

By Kevin Frey

WAFB-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

GONZALES, LA (WAFB) –

Some leaders are worried that one regulation on FEMA's new mobile homes could greatly limit where they are set up in Ascension Parish, forcing people to live far away from their own property.

The "Manufactured Housing Units" can be installed on people's property, in commercial parks, or – as a last case scenario – in parks established and maintained by FEMA.

Under the rules, however, the units cannot be located in places deemed as "Special Flood Hazard Areas" – a specific type of flood plain.

Much of Ascension Parish is designated as this particular type of flood zone, according to maps posted online by the parish government. That includes the communities of St. Amant and Sorrento, which were severely impacted by the flooding.

"When you put that designation and put that blanket over where it can't go. Well, it's basically it can't go in Ascension Parish, in 70 percent of Ascension Parish," said Parish Council Chairman Randy Clouatre.

The historic flooding had a wide impact in the parish, with between 17,000 and 19,000 homes impacted. Possibly more than 50,000 people are now left to rebuild.

Many of them could be forced to live in those FEMA mobile homes.

Clouatre said the restriction could force many Ascension Parish residents to set up their mobile homes far from their own property, thereby serving as a hindrance to the rebuilding process.

"It's not feasible for a person trying to rebuild their home, rebuild their lives, and get back in working in the community, to send them away," Clouatre said.

He is calling on Louisiana leaders at the national level to ask FEMA for an exception to the rule.

"We need them to go, beat up somebody, get the red tape removed," he said.

A spokesman for FEMA said the reason mobile homes cannot be placed in those areas is largely a safety precaution for the people inside. He also said letting the homes get flooded would be a waste of taxpayer money.

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First Look Inside New FEMA Housing Units For Flood Victims

WAFB-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 25, 2016

BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) –

On a mobile device? Click here to take a look at the HUD-approved trailers.

The first set of FEMA temporary housing units are expected to arrive in south Louisiana Friday.

So far, 56 people have been approved to get one of the manufactured housing units or MHUs as they are called.

"We have 100,000 registered for FEMA. 56 people vetted now. 214 in the queue that been approved but we need to inspect," said Willie Nunn with FEMA.

FEMA is first looking at people who can keep one of their own property. It would be placed in either the front or back yards and they would have to have access to power, water, and sewage as well as be out of a flood zone.

The options available for the mobile homes include one, two or three bedroom or a handicap accessible.

Some have wondered if these are the same from Hurricane Katrina.

"In Katrina, I would say it was travel trailers, it was all hands on deck," Nunn said. "These are the trailers that come from qualified, safe and secure. These are federally-inspected mobile homes that we can rest assured are safe for the inhabitant."

FEMA said they are also looking at commercial RV and mobile lots. Beyond that, it is up to the state and local officials to decide whether there will be specific parks set aside to house groups of the mobile homes.

Click here for more information about the interim housing assistance.

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NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

After Superstorm Sandy Missteps, FEMA Touts Flood Insurance Reforms, Lessons Learned

By Chad Calder

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

If the Federal Emergency Management Agency dealt itself a black eye with the poor job it did responding to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the horror stories that came out of the flood insurance claims process after Superstorm Sandy gave the agency another nasty shiner seven years later.

And for tens of thousands of victims of this month's Louisiana floods who actually had flood insurance coverage, the reports of widespread denials and low-balling of claims, altered engineering reports and a Kafkaesque appeals process that came out of New York and New Jersey after Sandy are hardly encouraging as they begin trying to collect for damages.

FEMA, however, points to new leadership at the National Flood Insurance Program and a series of reforms either enacted or underway as evidence that it has learned valuable lessons from the experience that still has some Sandy victims seething.

"We are working closely with survivors to make sure they are paid and that every dollar that is owed is paid out," FEMA spokesman Rafael Lemaitre said. "We are committed to that, and that applies to Louisiana as well."

The NFIP, which is now part of FEMA, was created in 1968 after decades of flood losses caused private insurers to exclude flood coverage from the typical homeowner's policy and later drove them out of the market almost entirely.

About 80 percent of the country's 5.1 million flood insurance policies are so-called "write your own" policies that originate with and are serviced by private insurers, who were kicked out of the program in the 1970s but came back in in the 1980s. Even those policies that are purchased directly from the NFIP are farmed out to contract companies.

Essentially, the government holds the bag and is responsible for the program, but it uses the private sector to market, write and service the policies.

But the underlying economics of flood insurance remained deeply flawed, and the NFIP took a giant hit from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, forcing it to borrow $17 billion from the U.S. Treasury.

Then Sandy cost the program another $7 billion, and as the claims process for that storm began, consumer complaints and news reports about problems began to emerge.

Adjusters were invoking an obscure clause in flood policies known as the "earth movement" exclusion and using it to deny claims based on cracks in foundations and in basements that they said were evidence of structural problems before the storm.

Some adjusters' reports were found by an NPR "Frontline" investigation to have been edited by managers who simply inserted the word "not" before "covered" in their conclusions, and some former adjusters spoke of pressure to deny claims to keep the losses down.

Exasperated policyholders said they filled out the same forms multiple times and repeatedly had to start over with the various representatives who took their calls. Thousands of cases ended up in court.

FEMA has avoided publicly getting into the reasons why there were problems with the program, but it denies they were as widespread as news reports suggested.

Roy Wright, who was promoted to director of the program in June 2015, has only gone so far as to characterize some of the work by Sandy adjusters, who report to the private insurers, as "sloppy."

FEMA spokesman Lemaitre stressed last week that most of the Sandy claims were handled fairly, a point he said was validated by a review by the Senate Banking Committee.

He also said the program's financial straits are neither a threat to policyholders' chances of getting paid what they're entitled to nor an incentive to underpay claims.

"The answer is unequivocally 'no,' " Lemaitre said about that question, noting that FEMA has $3 billion cash on hand to deal with disasters. "There is a $23 billion debt. But that does not preclude FEMA from paying every dollar of every claim."

Nevertheless, Lemaitre said FEMA is clear-eyed about the fact there were problems after Sandy.

"People were underpaid, yes," he said. "I'll leave the legal stuff to the courts, but what I can tell you is that after Hurricane Sandy, there were people who were underpaid by their insurance company."

Lemaitre said FEMA has stepped up its efforts to make changes to the program and make sure the private insurance companies that participate in the program "share our values and put policyholders and survivors first."

When Wright came in as director, allegations of wrongdoing were referred to the appropriate state attorneys general, and the agency began settling the more than 1,500 lawsuits it was still facing for underpayment of claims.

FEMA set up a claims review process to invite any of the 144,000 flood insurance claimants to challenge their awards. About 20,000 came forward, and FEMA has worked through about 91 percent of those reviews and has paid out another $93.8 million.

It has settled 1,618 of the 1,632 suits and paid out another $163.9 million, though some Sandy victims have complained they still don't have enough to rebuild and resent that FEMA paid the legal bills of insurers but not of policyholders.

Lemaitre said FEMA has taken several steps to right those wrongs.

He said it has increased its scrutiny over contract engineers, whose bills used to be paid automatically but now must first be reviewed and approved. It launched a hotline for policyholders who had issues with their insurer, and it hired a full-time flood insurance advocate who works directly with private insurers to "make sure they share our values," Lemaitre said.

In May, FEMA overhauled the appeals branch and separated it from the claims branch in order to make it more independent and transparent, he said.

Wright also has begun the process of trying to make FEMA's arrangements with private insurers easier to alter, add oversight provisions and generally keep up with changes since private insurers came back into the system in 1983.

However, Amy Bach, director of the consumer advocacy group United Policyholders, said that while FEMA has instituted some reforms since Sandy, "there have not been any of the kind of deep reforms that are needed to make the flood program more fiscally efficient."

She said the flood insurance advocate is a good idea but should be far more than a single position, and that there should be penalties for companies that underpay claims.

Lemaitre pointed to the response to floods in Texas, West Virginia and South Carolina since Sandy as evidence that things have gotten better. "We have not seen widespread challenges with regard to flood insurance claims in those disasters," he said.

In South Carolina, the state's Department of Insurance and its Department of Natural Resources, which includes the agency that handles flood mitigation, said they didn't hear many complaints of denied or low-balled claims stemming from the major flooding around Columbia last fall.

"I'm usually the first one who is skeptical about federal involvement, and I know about the debacle and the experiences (people had) with Sandy," state Insurance Commissioner Ray Farmer said. "I was prepared for that. What I was not prepared for was the excellent service we got for our consumers. As far as the NFIP, there were no coverage issues that arose, and whatever was a covered claim was a covered claim."

Lemaitre said that for the March flooding that hit more than 30 Louisiana parishes, the NFIP has paid 5,000 claims a total of $228 million, an average of about $46,000.

Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon, who said he remembers watching a particularly damning post-Sandy report on “60 Minutes,” said he has met with NFIP Director Wright and was assured claims here would be handled properly. He said he asked whether backwater flooding might not be covered and was told that it would be.

“Call me naïve,” he said, “but I just don’t believe that our federal government would take advantage of victims of these events for the alleged purpose of diminishing the costs of the program.”

Donelon said that while his department doesn’t regulate flood insurance, “if we find there are any violations, we will certainly report them.”

With Insurance Claims In The Balance, Flooded Homeowners Fed Up With Debris Pickers

By Amy Wold

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

The piles of debris lining the streets of many flooded neighborhoods now come with their own signage – “Our crap, not your’s,” or “you loot, we shoot,” or even more to the point, “do not touch.”

The signs written on plywood or messages painted on appliances started popping up soon after the flooding subsided and residents had a chance to start cleaning out their homes.

“Right after we put our stuff out, we had people asking if they could take the washer and dryer,” said Kim Halphen, 46, from Walker, who had large “do not touch” signs in front of the house debris. “We can’t get rid of it until the (insurance) adjusters come.”

The problem has received a lot of attention in neighborhoods and on social media where people with pickups or even trailers are going through the piles of debris and taking anything of worth. It has riled many homeowners who are concerned it’s hurting their chances of collecting from insurance or FEMA aid.

“They’re rummaging through everybody’s worldly possessions,” said Don Gerard, 60, of Walker.

One evening, Gerard said he drove to his house and saw four men in a pickup loading material from the debris pile and had made it to his house. Gerard asked the men to leave the stuff alone, but they told him they were going to keep looking anyway.

That could be a problem for people, he said, because insurance companies are asking homeowners to save certain things such as pieces of carpet or wood trim.

Andrew Haley, 32, filmed a number of trucks taking away just appliances while he was helping his insurance adjuster parents work in East Baton Rouge Parish Monday

The workers identified themselves as working with FEMA or the city-parish, but Haley said after working a number of flood disasters with his parents, he knew that wasn’t true.

“They’re not cleaning anything up. They’re just taking the appliances,” Haley said. “The insured has no way to get these items paid for.”

Haley said he decided to post the video on Facebook to bring attention to the problem.

“People shouldn’t take advantage of other people in need,” Haley said.

Central’s Mayor Jr. Shelton took a much more firm approach.

“If we catch them, we will arrest them,” Shelton said. “They’re profiting off the backs of tragedy of people.”

Residents should document what is coming out of their homes for insurance purposes, but the piles don’t have to remain intact for FEMA, he said.

“FEMA is not looking at your piles,” he said.

However, trash pickers coming through a neighborhood looking for anything valuable out of people’s yards are like vultures, Shelton said.

It also becomes a safety hazard because people will dismantle piles to get at the stuff they want, leaving material in the streets, he said.

“It’s going to become a bigger problem the longer it (debris) stays on the street,” Shelton said.

Reimbursement for lost household items can follow a couple paths and each has different requirements for documentation depending on whether a homeowner has flood insurance or is going to be applying for FEMA grants.

“Make sure you take your pictures because debris pick up is going on now,” said Karen Khonsari, city-parish director of environmental services in East Baton Rouge Parish.

For insurance purposes, including the National Flood Insurance Program, documentation of household items with photos, serial numbers, makes and models is important and should be done before or directly after something is moved to the curb for disposal, said Kurt Pickering, FEMA media relations manager for the Louisiana flooding recovery.

For those without flood insurance, photos are always a good safety net, but claims can be made even without the documentation, he said. The adjuster can see where the appliances were hooked up and see imprints in the floor along with the water level in the house. Unlike insurance, FEMA grants and assistance would pay the same for a high end dryer as a low end one, so serial numbers are less important.

Not having a photo won't impact a FEMA grant, he said.

A misconception is that FEMA grants are supposed to cover losses, but it's not insurance. The FEMA grants are instead meant to help people get back on their feet in a habitable home, but not replace the value of what was lost, Pickering said.

Having appliances taken from yards by people other than the debris contractor is not something he said they've seen a lot, but it does happen. However, that has little to do with how much or whether a homeowner can get FEMA assistance, he said.

"The idea that we need to look through a pile is not true," Pickering said. "It's not a good idea to have it (debris) sitting outside the house."

Follow Amy Wold on Twitter, @awold10.

St. Charles Dodged Historic Flood, But Not Residents' Attention

By Anna Thibodeaux

St. Charles (LA) Herald-Guide, August 27, 2016

Since Louisiana's historic flood, the telephone has been ringing steadily at local insurance companies to buy policies, inquiry about coverage and ensure flood insurance is current.

"It was expected," said Lisa Clark, staff assistant at State Farm in Luling who's been in the insurance business 30 years. "We might average one to two a month, but I've written policies for four people already this week. I expect more actually."

Their phones also have steadily remained busy with calls from people asking for insurance quotes, as well as from those who want to ensure their policies are current.

This isn't a surprising trend considering one in eight East Baton Rouge businesses and residents have flood insurance, although it wasn't required for their area hit by a disaster some have compared to Superstorm Sandy. Their houses are located in an area identified by FEMA as Zone X, which meant mortgage providers did not require they have flood insurance.

FEMA has announced a grant program for those affected that would provide up to $33,000 assistance if they lived in Zone X.

Statewide, an estimated 21 percent of Louisiana residents have flood insurance, a number that even the state's Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon deemed low.

Earl Matherne, St. Charles Parish's planning administrator, said FEMA uses the 100-year flood level to designate flood zones, but the Great Flood of 2016 exceeded it possibly reaching the 500-year level in an area where water rose five to six feet.

In St. Charles Parish, Matherne reported flood insurance policies were down by 1,047 as of June of this year.

"Regardless of what zone you're in, I think it's urgent to carry flood insurance," said Jason Noto, agent for Farm Bureau Insurance. "I think the biggest thing is that we live in Louisiana – the whole state is a flood zone."

Noto questioned how anywhere in the state can be designated as Zone X, which he maintained has "put people in financial crisis in Baton Rouge because they weren't required to have the insurance."

At his office in Luling, the phone has been ringing about flood insurance, too.

They're averaging a dozen calls a day from people who want to buy it, get quotes or update policies.

"We are absolutely seeing an increase in demand for flood insurance," Noto said. "There's a lot more people looking to review their policies to ensure their coverage is up to date."

People are a lot more receptive to discussing their coverage, he said. And, even with levee construction underway in the parish, Noto said flood insurance is a necessity because there is no way to predict what nature will do.

Bottom line, he added, "History can be made in one day."

MITIGATION

Denham Springs, Central Residents Worried About Federal Requirements To Elevate Homes

By Heidi Kinchen And Timothy Boone

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Denham Springs residents, anxious to rebuild their homes and lives after the devastating floods earlier this month, packed a church sanctuary Saturday to find out whether they will have to elevate their homes before they set about getting permits to make the needed repairs.

The answer they received was as unsettling as the question: "That is one of the issues we are trying to address," Mayor Gerard Landry told an audience of about 250 people at the New Covenant Baptist Church.

Homes built before latest flood hazard maps were adopted in 2012 largely avoided having to comply with federal and local requirements that they stand at or above the Federal Emergency Management Agency's most recent base flood elevations. Existing structures were "grandfathered in," and homeowners were allowed to make minor improvements without triggering the new standards.

But that all changes when a home sustains damage equal to half or more of its value.

Then it must be built at or above the base flood elevation, according to minimum standards set by the federal government and adopted by local governments in order to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

In a city like Denham Springs, where more than 3,000 of its 4,200 homes saw 18 inches or more of floodwater this month, the number of people who may now be required to elevate their homes or find somewhere else to live has put city officials on edge.

Landry said he has talked to numerous officials at the state and federal levels – including Gov. John Bel Edwards, Louisiana's congressional delegation and the U.S. secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

"That issue has to be solved at the federal level," Landry told residents, "but we here in the city of Denham Springs are going to do whatever we can to get you back into your homes."

Similar concerns were expressed Friday night in Central at a FEMA town hall at Zoar Baptist Church that Mayor Jr. Shelton said more than 1,200 people attended.

"There are citizens coming to me literally with tears in their eyes," Shelton said. "They're helpless. And we can't get anybody other than (U.S. Rep.) Garret Graves or (U.S. Sen.) Bill Cassidy to acknowledge a problem on the federal level."

Shelton said widespread house raising would cost more than most Central residents can afford. He said FEMA needs to allow people to rebuild at the level their house currently stands, with the understanding they will have to pay more for flood insurance. "We can't have whole subdivisions raised," he said.

Shelton said if people walk away from their homes because of rebuilding costs, it will hurt the local and national economy. "What will happen to the mortgage companies and the finance companies?" he said. "People are so frustrated. I'm begging for the federal government to come through and come through quickly."

In Denham Springs, the answers were less than soothing to Paul Wesley, who said his neighbor recently received a permit to rebuild but was told by FEMA that he would have to raise the home 6 feet. Newer homes in the subdivision also were built up 6 feet, he said.

"Us having to raise our houses 6 feet off the ground to rebuild them would undo any help we would get from anybody to rebuild," Wesley said. "We need something done before we can rebuild our houses."

FEMA representatives at the meeting avoided similar questions about elevation requirements by punting back to the city and parish.

"They lay out those ground rules," said Carl Ray, a mitigation specialist. "You'll have to be in line with the city or parish ordinance. Contact your floodplain manager for requirements."

Landry said after the meeting that the city adopted its flood prevention ordinance, which mirrors federal regulations, out of necessity.

"They kicked it back to us, saying, 'It's not our standards. It's the city's standards,' but guess what? If we didn't adopt those standards, they wouldn't be able to get flood insurance," Landry said.

Landry urged residents to remain calm, register for federal assistance and work with the city's permits department as he and other officials worked on possible solutions.

In the meantime, Landry said debris removal efforts continue. Ceres Environmental had 16 trucks on city streets, as of Friday, and had covered about 25 percent of the city so far.

"The contract says they will make two or three passes, but in all reality, it will probably be eight, nine or 10 times because it takes time to get everything out of your homes," Landry said.

Debris removal is expected to continue for about 45 to 60 days, he said.

The city's contract covers only city streets, with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development being responsible for state highways, Landry said.

The contract also does not address commercial debris, which has caused problems in the city's Antiques Village, where waterlogged furniture and other items are stacked in precarious piles that tumble out onto Range Avenue anytime someone picks through the trash, Landry said.

The mayor said he is working with Mark Harrell, the parish's emergency preparedness director, to address that issue.

Livingston Parish Residents Seek Flood Answers At Community Meeting

By Earl Phelps

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 27, 2016

DENHAM SPRINGS – Livingston Parish residents attempted to get answers concerning how to begin the rebuilding process at a community meeting Saturday.

Many of the residents were looking to find out whether home elevation would be necessary or required.

"This is a question that's going to have to be answered at the federal level," Denham Springs Mayor Gerard Landry said. "That's why I reached out to our U.S. senators and congressmen as early as I did."

Paul Wesley attended the town hall meeting. His home is included in the 90 percent of Denham Springs homes that were damaged by flood waters. Wesley says he did not have flood insurance.

"We need help, and we need help now," Wesley said.

Wesley says his biggest problem is not knowing if, or how much he was have to elevate his home before he can start major renovations.

"If this FEMA regulation is in affect," he says, "us having to raise our house 6 feet to rebuild them would undo any help we can get from anybody. We wouldn't be able to rebuild them. We need some so we can rebuild out where they are."

FEMA has yet to set a requirement on any possible elevation requirement. The mayor says it could be a year or more before a decision is made.

US Rep. Abraham Says Louisianians "Take Care Of Each Other"

By Raymond Daye

Avoyelles (LA) Journal, August 28, 2016

With the nation's eyes on Louisiana and the record-breaking floods that have displaced thousands and killed at least 13, U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham said the country also sees the character of the Bayou State's people.

"We do circle the wagons to deal with adversity," Abraham told the Marksville Chamber of Commerce Aug. 18. "We take care of each other."

Abraham said what sets Louisiana's response to disasters apart from other states' is the widespread reaction of communities reaching out to help those in need.

"In other states, there are individuals who want to help, but it's different here," Abraham said.

The Mangham Republican said that communities in South Louisiana responded to floods in North and Central Louisiana earlier this year.

"It's what we do," he added.

Most of Abraham's other remarks dealt with national issues – including the national debt, Obamacare, illegal immigration and terrorist threats on the nation's southern border.

Abraham said there is a known Hezbollah command center within a few miles of the U.S.-Mexico border.

"In the front of the building, it operates a legitimate taxi cab business," he said. It operates a counterfeiting operation in the back half of the building, he added.

ISIS also has a presence near the Mexican border, Abraham said.

"We know what they are doing," he continued. "We are watching them, but we cannot strike."

Abraham said the issue "that keeps me up at night" is the staggeringly high national debt, which is now almost $20 trillion.

Congress can "kick the debt down the road" and not deal with it, but it must pay the interest on that debt.

In 2016, the interest is $230 billion "which is twice what we give our veterans in a year, including all programs for veterans."

Abraham said he has heard complaints that Congress doesn't do anything.

He said members of the House – where the GOP has a working majority – have passed 350 "good bills," but only 26 made it through the Senate to become law.

During the question and answer period, Marksville Mayor John Lemoine told Abraham that the city and Police Jury had wanted to work together to clear out a drainage canal behind the Garan plant in Marksville.

"We met with FEMA and the Corps of Engineers a couple of years ago to present ways to relieve flooding in the city," Lemoine said. "The Corps flatly rejected the idea. They said they didn't want us digging back there because it's wetlands. We told them we wouldn't be digging. We only want to clear out the debris and trees blocking up the canal."

Lemoine said about 50 houses flooded in Marksville, and he believes some of that flooding could have been avoided had the city and parish been given permission to move forward with the clearing project.

"That canal drains 60 percent of Marksville," Lemoine said.

Abraham said he would contact the Corps concerning the issue.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

No stories for this edition

FIRE GRANTS

No stories for this edition

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Film Recalls Katrina's "Cajun Navy": Heroic, Unselfish Despite Orders To Turn Away

By Patricia Gannon

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

The "Cajun Navy" that swung into action during the recent flooding got a much different reception from those who tried to help out in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

"From my limited observation, the big difference was that in this recent flood event, it was the local governments that stepped to the front of the line, especially the sheriffs' offices," said Allan Durand, a St. Martinville attorney and filmmaker. "They didn't wait for federal or state guidance … and after Katrina, who would reasonably expect them to wait for it anyway."

In 2005, as New Orleans lay roof-deep in water from the Category 3 storm, hundreds of civilians and their boats were turned away by police. Some from the Acadiana area, later dubbed the "Cajun Navy," stayed the course and saved an estimated 10,000 lives.

"This was magnificently unselfish," said Durand. "Heroic in the traditional sense. And I'm a sucker for heroes and hero stories."

Now, he's telling of their bravery in "The Cajun Navy," a documentary Durand started in 2012 and only recently finished. The film is making the rounds of film festivals, where Durand hopes it will garner the attention its subjects deserve. The documentary premiered at the Newport Beach International Film Festival and won the Remi award at the Worldfest Houston International Film Festival.

Durand conceived the project after talking with St. Martinville resident Doug Bienvenu, one of the stubborn few who circumvented law enforcement and subsequently rescued 797 people.

"I was so fed up, completely fed up," said Durand. "A lot went wrong with Katrina, a blame marathon. No one got credit for anything."

It was Bienvenu's story that hooked him.

"Even if I just have a Doug, I can do a short (film)," he said. "If there are others like this — and there were — that's the icing on the cake."

A filmmaker since 1981, Durand is, perhaps, best-known for his feature-length film with Glen Pitre "Belizaire the Cajun," which was the official 1986 Sundance selection. In it, Durand himself played a priest. He had produced 90-minute documentaries before, among them "Texas Rangers" and "Willie Francis Must Die Again."

"I knew it was work, and I needed help," he said. "So I went to the film department at UL-Lafayette and told them I'd teach a class in advanced documentary filmmaking in exchange for grunt work."

The student recruits located the interviews for Durand and acted as his research assistants, associate producers, sound technicians and editors.

"Kids in the class found everyone," he said. "Half of the students were originally from New Orleans."

A UL-Lafayette graduate himself, Durand credits the entire film to the university.

He says it's not as though there was an abundance of rescuers to choose from.

"The first weeding out was done by police — they turned back most of them," said Durand.

What was left were the few dozen that said, "We're not turning around," and sneaked past the perimeter. Those who pushed their way through took alternative routes, shortcuts and detours and even posed as part of a penitentiary bus convoy.

"Cajuns follow all laws that make sense and none that don't," Durand explained.

"Cajun Navy" utilizes stark black-and-white headings to separate segments and move the story forward. Photos of the aftermath were supplied by the documentary subjects themselves, some of whom took cameras with them on their rescue missions with the intent of documenting bodies for identification purposes. Actual aerial and ground footage used in the film was supplied by KLFY TV- 10 and KATC TV- 3.

"They were very generous with their pictures," said Durand.

Other than the photographs — as visually compelling now as they were then — there are only the words of those who were there: longtime New Orleans anchor Garland Robinette; then-Mayor Ray Nagin's press secretary Sally Foreman; Opelousas resident Frank Angelle, who told his wife he "wanted to go" after seeing the city in distress; and Bryan Smelker, who disguised himself as part of a prison escort.

"We could look off into the distance and see people hanging out of the windows," Smelker says in the film. "There was no way I was going back to Lafayette.

"Anarchy is the best word I can think of."

There is no narrator, no one to buffer the images for the viewer.

"Narrators say things people don't say in interviews. After trimming and moving things around as it evolved, it came together without one," said Durand, who used Danny Glover to voice over "Willie Francis." "You get a lot of surprises. It came together smoothly, and I went with first-person. It was more evolution than director's decision."

Despite Foreman's unflattering picture of FEMA and Bienvenu's none-too-stellar portrait of the National Guard, "Cajun Navy" is not a rebuke to state agencies but rather a tribute to the heroism of ordinary lives.

"There are national events that there is no preparation for," said Durand. "I thought someone needed to say 'Doug, Bryan — someone give them a hand.' The people from around here needed to be congratulated."

While he encountered no inherent problems making the film, Durand regrets his law practice prevented him from having the film ready for Katrina's 10th anniversary. He also wishes he could have included the rescuer who picked up what appeared to be gang members when no one else would, due to their appearance and the implied possibility of violence.

"One guy had nothing," he said, "but felt he needed to give something in return and offered his shirt."

Durand has submitted "Cajun Navy" to all 24 film festivals in the 40-minute-or-less category and is awaiting a reply from half of them.

"Oscar nominations come out of the festivals," explained Durand, who won the 2012 Nicholl Award for Screenwriting from the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences for "Willie Francis."

"You just find a really good story," he said, "and get out of the way."

FLOODS

Louisiana Flood Victims Can Get Sales Tax Refunds On Damaged Property

By Jennifer Larino

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 27, 2016

Louisiana flood victims can claim refunds for state sales taxes paid on clothing, furniture, electronics and other items that were destroyed by the floodwaters. Refunds are available only for damaged property not covered by insurance or disaster relief funds.

The Louisiana Department of Revenue said in a Friday (Aug. 26) news release that refunds are available for flood victims who lost property after severe storms and flooding in August as well as earlier this year in March. Eligible taxpayers must live in a parish declared a federal disaster area after one or both of the flooding events.

The state said it will refund the value of the sales tax paid on the original purchase of the destroyed property. Victims will not be able to get a refund for sales taxes paid on replacement property, according to the release.

Only individuals are eligible for refunds. Property owned by corporations, partnerships or any type of business does not qualify.

State law requires damaged property to meet the following criteria to be eligible for a refund:

A Louisiana taxpayer must have suffered the loss on property used in or around the individual's home, apartment or homestead in the state.

The destroyed property must have been moveable at the time of purchase and at the time of its destruction. That includes furniture, clothing, and electronics, but not cars, trucks, ATVs or other motor vehicles.

The taxpayer must have paid Louisiana state sales tax on the purchase of the destroyed property.

Moveable property eligible for a refund also includes recreational equipment used at home and appliances not attached to a house or building. Examples of items that are not eligible include central heating or cooling systems, lighting fixtures, hot tubs and spas, boat trailers, water or snow skis and golfing or tennis equipment.

Damaged property that is reimbursed by insurance, disaster relief funds or any other source is not eligible for a refund.

Parishes declared federal disaster areas after the August floods include Acadia, Ascension, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermillion, Washington and West Feliciana.

Parishes declared federal disaster areas after the March 2016 floods include Allen, Ascension, Beauregard, Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Calcasieu, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, DeSoto, East Carroll, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Sabine, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Union, Vernon, Washington, Webster, West Carroll and Winn.

Bret Bielema, Arkansas Sending Water, Supplies To La. Flood Victims

By Jim Kleinpeter

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 27, 2016

Add Arkansas and football coach Bret Bielema to the list of SEC schools helping victims of the Louisiana Flood of 2016.

Bielema and the Razorbaacks program loaded up on supplies to send to the relief effort in South Louisiana. South Carolina and Alabama have also contributed truckloads of supplies in the past two weeks.

Louisiana Republican Party Has A “Cash Flow” Problem In Wake Of Floods

By Julia O'Donoghue

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 27, 2016

The Louisiana Republican Party’s quarterly meeting closed Saturday (Aug. 27) with a plea from its chairman, Roger Villere, to donate to the organization.

Villere said the state political party is strapped for cash, though he wasn’t specific about numbers. He said some of the issues may be connected to the impact of recent flooding on donors.

This is a busy and expensive season for the organization, with the presidential election and an open Louisiana Senate seat on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Villere said the party spent money in August based on some promises of donations that haven’t materialized. Supporters had committed money before massive flooding hit Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and the surrounding areas. And some of those contributions never materialized.

The Republicans were also forced to cancel a major party fundraiser in August because of the flood. The event was supposed to be held at the Celtic Media Centre, which was being used as a shelter for thousands of people displaced from their homes at the time.

In an interview, Villere said the fundraiser has been rescheduled for Sept. 29, but the political party is hoping some donations come in before that time as well.

“It’s really just about cash flow,” he said.

Flooding Poses Challenges, Opportunities For Baton Rouge Mayoral Candidates

By Andrea Gallo

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

For the third time this summer, Baton Rouge’s mayor-president race has a new issue at its forefront as residents look to rebuild from recent flooding and search for a vision of how the city-parish can heal after multiple tragedies over a short time span.

The flooding in East Baton Rouge parish alone is estimated to have swept through nearly 55,000 homes and leaves a long list of questions about how to rebuild when at least half those homeowners were not required to have flood insurance.

The city-parish’s next mayor will have to address underlying infrastructure and drainage problems that some have blamed as part of the reason floods became so widespread. Some are already worrying that people will flee Baton Rouge permanently unless leaders act quickly to prevent future flooding.

The floods have presented new challenges for candidates on the campaign trail seeking to become the next mayor.

Mayoral candidates have seen their campaign headquarters flood, canceled fundraisers and been forced to rethink how they can get people to show up at the polls.

“A local mayoral race is heavily dependent on people having a mailbox,” said Martin Johnson, a political communication professor at Louisiana State University, who pointed out the physical and geographical implications the floods will have on the mayoral race. Campaign mailers are usually one of the most widely used tools to reach prospective voters.

“The idea that you’re going to door knock on somebody in high boots and gloves taking their stuff out to the door — that’s just not a practical vision,” Johnson said.

Further complicating the campaign dynamic are the other tensions and tragedies that have arisen in Baton Rouge this summer.

The campaigns had already switched directions twice in the past few months — first when Baton Rouge Police Department officers killed Alton Sterling and protests began in early July; second when a gunman killed three Baton Rouge law enforcement officers and critically injured a fourth later that month.

Questions about inequality, race, police distrust and other emotional topics were laid bare on Baton Rouge’s table before the floods rushed in.

“In spite of what has happened with the flooding, we can’t lose sight of those issues that were before us before the flooding happened," said Rev. Lee Wesley, pastor of Community Bible Baptist Church and one of the leaders of faith-based community group Together Baton Rouge.

Johnson said it's also possible the disaster will inspire residents to vote en masse because they are especially worried about the future of Baton Rouge. But he said such a dynamic often occurs when an incumbent is in the race.

Term-limited Mayor-President Kip Holden is running for U.S. Congress, leaving a crowded field of 12 trying to succeed him. Many of the leading candidates have already been especially visible helping in their communities, trying to distribute aid and more.

They've mostly said the city-parish will need to lean on Congressional and state leaders to tap federal funding for rebuilding. They also hope Congressional leaders can help lower the city-parish's match for FEMA reimbursement from 25 percent to 10 percent at the most.

Xavier University pollster and sociologist Silas Lee said the role of local government right now is to advocate for the resources to help people that local government cannot provide itself.

CANDIDATES CHART NEW TERRITORY

Mayoral candidate and former Democratic State Sen. Sharon Weston Broome is among the thousands of residents whose homes flooded. Around 18 inches of water entered her home in Baton Rouge's Park Forest neighborhood. She did not have flood insurance, and is staying with family while she rebuilds.

Since then, Broome has been volunteering around Baton Rouge and trying to make people aware of the resources available for them when they try to recover and rebuild.

"I don't see a mass exodus because of the floods," Broome said. "What I see are many people who paid for their homes and they say, 'I didn't have flood insurance before but I'm going to get some now.' And I hear people saying they want to stay in their homes as they rebuild. It could be for many of us the worst times in our lives, but most of the people I talk to see the end of the rainbow."

Republican State Sen. Bodi White, who lives in the especially hard-hit city of Central, is more worried about whether people will flee and he wants incentives for them to stay. White sent a letter to President Barack Obama earlier this week requesting help with finishing the Comite River Diversion Canal, which advocates say could have prevented floodwaters from reaching many homes.

Along with the Comite River Diversion Canal, White said he's interested in projects that would divert floodwaters from Bayou Manchac, Wards Creek, Jones Creek and other sources of backwater in East Baton Rouge.

Earlier in the week, White held the first of what he said could be several briefings on the flood recovery through the Senate Select Committee on Homeland Security that he chairs in the state Legislature. The committee received updates from FEMA, GOHSEP, law enforcement, the Louisiana National Guard, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the state Department of Transportation and Development.

"So far, this mayor-president race, you have so many different things that happened that kind of shaped the race to me," White said. "The Sterling shooting and then the assassination of police officers, and then the education and the crime and the streets, which are still major issues. But another big issue now is bringing East Baton Rouge back together and keeping our citizens here."

Republican Metro Councilman John Delgado also said local waterways need to become a major priority. Delgado said the city-parish needs to tap its "rainy day" funds to help pay for rebuilding.

"That's something the local government has to get on the stick about, is the maintenance of these water ways in the parish that are within our control," he said.

Delgado predicted that Baton Rouge will not see a mass exodus of people but that jobs created by the need for construction in the city-parish will attract some new residents.

Democratic State Rep. C. Denise Marcelle said she is especially worried about the FEMA cap of $33,000 to help people without flood insurance rebuild their homes. Marcelle said she is afraid it will feed into blight problems that already affect the city-parish.

Marcelle said she's already seen a sign advertising six houses that flooded off Winbourne Avenue being sold at $90,000 for the batch. She expects that more will pop up if people cannot afford to gut and rebuild their homes, exacerbating the blight problem.

"If we don't get that funding, we're going to see a lot of people walk away from these houses and leave a lot of blighted houses," Marcelle said. "I'm hearing the same thing in all of these neighborhoods — how do I survive for this? This is not going to be enough money for me to repair my house. A lot of people have spent a lifetime building their homes and (acquiring) all of the stuff that's inside of their homes."

Independent mayoral candidate Darryl Gissel is a realtor, and he is already seeing the real estate implications the flooding has created. Experts have predicted major shifts in Baton Rouge's real estate market because a low number of homes were on the market before the floods and demand for new homes and rental housing has skyrocketed.

"It's going to change the direction in which we build," Gissel said. "Should we rebuild some of these inner city neighborhoods that are high and dry?"

Gissel said Baton Rouge needs to look closely at the successes and failures in rebuilding New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and that those can instruct how the city-parish should bounce back.

Lee, the Xavier University pollster and sociologist, cautioned about buying into any candidate who says they could have responded better to the natural disaster than the existing government leaders.

He said New Orleans voters gave their former Mayor Ray Nagin, later convicted on corruption charges, the benefit of the doubt when he ran for re-election after Hurricane Katrina because Nagin was trying to manage an unprecedented disaster.

"You can't try to exploit it because nobody can predict what impact it will have, a natural disaster," Lee said. "The minute someone tries to exploit it, that's seen as a cheap method of campaigning because you are exploiting people's misery."

None of Baton Rouge's mayoral candidates were ready to commit to asking for a bond issue or tax plan to pay for major drainage and infrastructure projects, though none of the candidates ruled it out, either.

HOW LONG WILL UNITY LAST?

The mayoral candidates have insisted that the unity seen across Baton Rogue in recent weeks should carry through in the future, despite analysts and academics predicting more fights over how flood relief aid is distributed and about how the city-parish is rebuilt.

Related

"Baton Rouge held together as a community better than anyone could have expected given where we were just a month ago," Delgado said.

Marcelle and Broome both said the barriers in Baton Rouge have fallen to the side since the storm, and that people have rallied together. Marcelle said the storm put residents "on an equal playing field," while Broome said the same mentality of "oneness" in the city needs to be carried into the future.

The candidates all pledged to distribute any storm aid to where it is needed the most, regardless of the ZIP code or the demographics there.

"A fair distribution of resources is what we have to do," White said. "You can't forget Baywood, you can't forget Pride, you can't forget north Baton Rouge and you can't forget south Baton Rouge."

As people rebuild, Wesley said, the mayoral election should become even more important in people's minds. But Johnson and political consultant Roy Fletcher both predicted that voter turnout could drop.

From a physical standpoint, Johnson said people who are not in their homes and in their communities will not be as easily able to vote. But the elections could be affected from a psychological standpoint as well.

"They're not paying attention, they're not going to pay attention and they shouldn't pay attention," Fletcher said of Baton Rouge voters who are rebuilding their homes. He said the mayor's race is far from many of their minds.

"Too many people are fighting for the lives and their futures."

Obama Administration Cabinet Officials Talk About SBA Loans Available

By Mark Ballard

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 26, 2016

Over jambalaya and catfish strips, Dr. Franklin Johnson told the head of the U.S. Small Business Administration that he has seen a 60 percent drop off in patients in the two weeks since intense rains led to massive flooding in the Baton Rouge area.

Two of his Dermatology Associates locations were open, but the offices in Central and Denham Springs would be closed well into the future, Franklin told SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet at luncheon Thursday put together by U.S. Sen. David Vitter so that Obama administration cabinet members could hear the personal stories of area businessmen and professionals impacted by the historic flooding earlier this month.

A couple of Franklin's offices had property damage. But that was not the real worry. He couldn't predict when his patients could focus on anything but ripping out water-soaked carpets and drywalls and getting their lives back in order. In the meantime, he had staff and loan payments to consider. And the business interruption insurance he had bought excluded flooding events.

Contreras-Sweet repeated what had become something of mantra for her visit to the Baton Rouge area: enroll for federal disaster assistance programs and start the process.

"A lot of people think, 'Oh, I'll be alright'," Contreras-Sweet said. "What they don't realize is that what happens is it takes a while to recover. They will lose customers over time."

In some parts of the 20 parishes inundated by floodwater and declared a disaster by President Barack Obama, as many as 80 percent of the homes and businesses were impacted to some level. That translates to customers hoarding dollars to get their lives back in order and suppliers being unable to fulfill their obligations, which could impact businesses not this month or next but several months out, said Contreras-Sweet, a banker by trade.

Even if in the end Johnson – and other small business owners – choose not to accept an SBA loan, the paperwork would be complete and the trigger, ready to be pulled, if they find they need the assistance, she said.

Businesses can borrow up to $2 million for physical damage and economic injuries in loans with interest rates below 4 percent.

The SBA also has loans available to cover uncompensated losses for homeowners – up to $200,000 to repair a disaster damaged residence or buy a new one – at interest rates from 1.56 percent to 3.13 percent.

Renters can borrow up to $40,000 to replace possessions.

Julian Castro, secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, made the point to Dr. Johnson that congressmen would rely on the registration numbers to help calculate how much additional aid – above what is set aside for disasters – would be available, should they vote to award a supplemental appropriation, as was done after hurricanes Katrina/Rita and Sandy.

The impact of the flood with no name is still being calculated, Castro said. But fly-over imaging shows about 150,000 properties were damaged and FEMA indicates about 120,000 people have filed for assistance.

The lunch meeting hosted by Vitter, chairman of the Senate Small Business & Entrepreneurship, was at Mason's Grill, a Baton Rouge restaurant that had flooded, repaired itself with the aid of an SBA loan and reopened.

The meal was midway through two separate tours the cabinet officers made of disaster areas.

After viewing demolished public housing for the elderly in Denham Springs, Castro said he understood the need for aid.

"There's no question this is one of the worst natural disasters that we have seen in quite awhile," he said. "We see a real need for significant investment in getting people back to where they were before."

SBA District Director Michael Ricks announced Friday that the SBA had approved more than $35 million in federal disaster loans for Louisiana businesses and residents impacted by the flooding. The SBA had approved 20 business disaster loans for $1.3 million and 456 disaster loans for homeowners and renters totaling $34.8 million to help rebuild and recover from this disaster.

"This isn't just for business owners. A lot of times, if you're a renter you don't think to call on us," Contreras-Sweet said while Secretary of State Tom Schedler showed her around a SBA disaster assistance center set up in the State Archives.

Renters may be eligible for grants from FEMA to help with such disaster-related expenses as: renting a new place to live; medical and dental expenses; replacement or repair of personal property lost, such as vehicles, appliances and furniture, textbooks and computers used by students, and work equipment or tools used by the self-employed.

FEMA grants are not loans, are not taxable and do not have to be repaid.

Additionally, renters may qualify for a low-interest loan of up to $40,000 from the SBA to repair or replace personal property.

Eric Donaldson left one of the repurposed archives offices with a packet in his hand.

Floodwater rose almost to the ceiling of the ground floor of the Denham Springs apartment Donaldson and his wife rented while their home was being built. They lost all their furniture, appliances, and technology. Only their clothes survived, but the garments had to be soaked, washed and rewashed.

Donaldson retreated to his father's home and applied for assistance online. He was referred to the SBA and had come to the State Archives Thursday to talk with an SBA agent and receive the terms of the loan, which he has 60 days to consider. He'll probably accept the loan. "There are not many other options," Donaldson said.

William A. Tryon, of Pensacola, a SBA counselor, said the agents had handled the applications for 70 businesses and 69 homes in three days at the SBA center located at the State Archives. Tryon had become an agent after going through the process after Hurricane Ivan in 2004 washed over the island off Pensacola and destroyed his home. "I've been on the receiving end of this," he said.

Contreras-Sweet spent the morning with Vitter, U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy and U.S. Rep. John Fleming and other officials touring St. Amant.

Speaking from the command center in St. Amant still set up with tables and cots for the National Guardsmen, firefighters and deputies who had worked around the clock pulling people from flooded homes, Ascension Parish Sheriff Jeff Wiley pointed out that most of the property owners did not have flood insurance. That was largely because they weren't in flood zones and their properties hadn't flooded in 1983, the last major event.

A suburb of Baton Rouge, Ascension is one of the wealthiest parishes in the state. Local government had spent money on pumps and levees, he said. But the amount of water overwhelmed the systems.

"This is a parish that takes care of itself," Wiley said. "But, we got knocked to our knees."

Now that the water had gone down, the rescuers were gone and the focus turned from Wiley's command center to recovery, most of the action was taking place next door at The Church, where trucks were stopping with food and water.

Driving down the streets of newly-built subdivisions, American flags flew from piles of rubble, many of which had spray painted "Romans 8:31" – "if God is for us, who could be against us?" Hanging in the air was that fetid smell of waterlogged carpets and drywalls, well known to many on the Gulf Coast but new to Contreras-Sweet and her SBA entourage.

Fleming, a Minden Republican, said he was struck by the photographs, knick-knacks and stuffed animals tossed onto the piles of ruin.

"It wasn't just appliances. Their entire lives were completely gutted and thrown out on the streets," Fleming said.

The U.S. Small Business Administration has opened seven Business Recovery Centers to serve as one-stop assistance sites for businesses and homeowners.

Visit http://sba.gov/laflood or call (800) 659-2955.

Businesses and residents who sustained damages are encouraged to register prior to the October 13 deadline with the Federal Emergency Management Agency by calling (800) 621 FEMA (3362) or (800) 462-7585 (TTY) for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"Gut Check Saturday" Helps Flood Victims Begin Rebuilding

By Timothy Boone

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

For the second Saturday in a row, volunteers organized by Together Baton Rouge were out helping people gut and clean up homes that were damaged in the recent flooding.

"I'm doing a happy dance with these people here today," said Brenda Jackson, who lives in the hard-hit Monticello subdivision. "It's truly a blessing from God that these people gave up their time."

Korey Jarmon, Jackson's son, signed her up for the cleanup last week. Jackson, who is retired, said she doesn't know how she would have gotten her home gutted without the volunteers. "I don't know anything about this," she said. Some family members were helping her clean up, but they became exhausted at the sheer volume of work.

Jackson said her goal was to get all of the drywall and flooring torn out of her home Saturday. "Those people are working like worker bees," she said, standing in her front yard before, while hammers clanged in the house behind her. "Put that in the paper."

More than 60 people took part in Together Baton Rouge's "Gut Check Saturday". They gathered at St. Mary's Baptist Church Saturday morning, put on matching light blue t-shirts and picked up cleaning supplies such as bleach, garbage bags and paper towels before heading out to the flooded homes.

"There are people out there waiting for you," said retired Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré, who helped organize the cleanup. "Do what you can to help them."

Honoré said getting houses gutted quickly is important, so mold growth doesn't set in and give homeowners another expensive headache to deal with.

Valarie Oliver said the help will make her Park Forest home ready for rebuilding. Oliver is temporarily living with family members. "I was just coming over here and doing a little bit of cleanup by myself," she said. Most of her family and friends are either too busy with work or cleaning up their own damage to help her.

"This is the major part of the process, to get everything gutted out," she said.

Together Baton Rouge has set up a website at togetherbr.nationbuilder.com/gutcheckla that allows people who need help gutting their property to put their home on a master list.

Tens of thousands of homes need to be gutted. Broderick Bagert, lead organizer with Together Baton Rouge, said the coalition of churches and community groups is working on ways to increase its capacity to clean up more houses.

A few streets over from Oliver's house in Park Forest, Toye Hebert, Charlie Whinham, Eva Windhoffer and Andy Johnson took a breather in the driveway of a Ridgemont Drive home. Whinham said the volunteers had just torn the water-logged carpet out of the house, a heavy, stinky task that took four people and a wheelbarrow to accomplish.

"It's one thing to see this on social media, it's another to actually see it in person," said Windhoffer, a student at Nicholls State University.

Red Stick Rumble Robotics Competition Delivers Welcome Respite For Flood-weary Students

By Samuel Carter Karlin

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Piles of donated backpacks filled with school supplies, toiletries and toys lining the floor of Woodlawn High School's gymnasium Saturday underscored a day of robotics competitions that, for many, served as a respite from rebuilding flood-ravaged homes and a sense of normalcy for students whose schools remain closed.

The Dow Red Stick Rumble, a competition for 22 teams – around 400 students from Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas – showcased student-built and operated robots navigating an arena of obstacles and throwing gray dodge balls at castle towers they were bent on destroying. The event doubled as a flood relief effort, with dozens of the competitors bringing donations to support fellow students throughout the state.

The items donated included essentials such as paper towels, as well items like teddy bears for children. And some, said Woodlawn Robotics Coach Daniel Eiland, were things like posters for high school classrooms, to replace those added to debris piles in the aftermath of the floods.

Eiland said students and parents have been quick to help out the community by gutting homes and donating. Last week, the school hosted parents and restaurateurs who cooked around 1000 meals for flood victims.

Eiland said the competition was a good way to get students out of the stressful, difficult environment of clearing out flood ravaged homes at least for a time.

"It's been a long slog," Eiland said.

After the flood earlier this month, Eiland asked Scott Travis, third year principal of Woodlawn, whether the event should still go on. Students had spent six weeks working on their robots ahead of the competition.

"I said, 'We're still doing this,'" Travis recalled as robots in the arena behind him catapulted dodge balls across the gym. "Our folks need something to get their minds off of what is going on. And our students don't want to hang out at home anymore."

Woodlawn, like other East Baton Rouge Parish schools, has been closed in the aftermath of the floods and is set to reopen September 6.

Travis said there are still a handful of students and parents the school has not heard from. He estimates at least 10 Woodlawn families lost everything in the flood, and dozens more took on water.

Lafayette High School senior Burke Bolinger watched as his teammates tinkered with the inner-workings of their 120-pound robot following one of their matches. Bolinger said in the past couple of weeks he and his teammates have helped tear out the interiors of flooded houses in their city of Lafayette, which was particularly hard-hit.

"There's a lot of positive vibes out here," he said. "We're trying to make a difference, as small as it may be."

Rebekah Travis, a junior at Benjamin Franklin High School, a charter school in New Orleans, remembered sharing a bus with Hammond High Magnet School on the way to the world robotics competitions last year.

When Travis and her teammates heard Hammond High took on water in the floods, they immediately wanted to help. So Travis and her teammates organized the donation of dozens of backpacks full of food, toiletries and school supplies.

"There are people who lost everything," said Wytni Widmeier, a 20-year-old Woodlawn alumna who was on the robotics team in high school and now serves as a mentor. "And backpacks are expensive."

Carnival Aids Flood Relief, Encourages Cruise Guests To Do Same

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Carnival Corporation Chairman Micky Arison and his wife Madeleine have matched the $250,000 donation made recently by Carnival Cruise Line and parent company Carnival Corporation to aid organizations assisting victims of the Louisiana floods.

The additional $250,000 donation was made through the Micky and Madeleine Arison Family Foundation and raises the total contribution from Carnival Cruise-related organizations to $500,000.

Recipients include the American Red Cross, Louisiana Association of United Ways and Save the Children.

In addition, guests sailing on Carnival cruises from New Orleans have the option to donate when they check in for their cruise and Carnival employees are being encouraged to donate, as well.

The American Red Cross is sheltering thousands of residents displaced by the flooding in southern Louisiana and delivering food, relief supplies and emotional support to flood victims. Donations to the Louisiana Association of United Ways will be dispersed among regional United Way organizations in communities affected by the floods to support long-term needs. Save the Children has deployed an emergency response team to Louisiana and is focused on meeting the critical needs of flood affected children and families and moving forward will be working to restore services essential to children's well-being.

Carnival has operated from the Port of New Orleans since 1994.

Edwards Asks For Patience On Recovery At Legis-Gator

By John Guidroz

Lake Charles (LA) American Press, August 27, 2016

As tens of thousands of residents in southern Louisiana shift from response to recovering from the recent historic flooding, Gov. John Bel Edwards asked for patience as government officials do their part in assisting them.

"Our primary goal right now is getting people back to their homes, back to their communities," Edwards told a sold out crowd at the 11th annual Legis-Gator luncheon, hosted by the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance. "(But) this doesn't happen overnight. We have a long way to go."

Edwards spoke of the three new housing assistance programs announced this week. The one officials are pushing the most is the Shelter At Home Program, which seeks to invest money in residents' permanent homes. It would cover the cost of work like removing carpet and insulation; repairing air conditioning and hot water heaters; and inspecting electrical and plumbing lines. The program, he said, will be open to the public Monday.

"If we can go into somebody's home and, with $15,000, make it secure, habitable and safe, then that's what we are going to do," Edwards said.

It's the first time the program is being rolled out in Louisiana. Other states, like New York and New Jersey, used a similar program after Hurricane Sandy's landfall in 2012, but that effort was criticized by some because of a lack of good-quality repair work.

Edwards said the state will work to make sure the program uses "our contractors (and) laborers."

Another program will provide temporary manufactured homes, including mobile homes approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The third is a Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program that seeks to find available rental properties for displaced families.

Edwards also spoke of the record flooding in March that occurred "in every corner of the state." While residents affected by both floods are going through difficult times, he assured them that officials will work to help them recover.

"We know we are going to do everything we can to make them have a better life as soon as possible," Edwards said.

He spent time touring Lake Arthur on Thursday, visiting with residents and officials and praising them for using measures to prevent additional flooding from the Mermentau River.

During the flooding, Edwards said nine weather stations around the state recorded more than 21 inches of rainfall in less than 48 hours. Flood gauges stopped reporting because they were washed away.

The flooding claimed 13 lives. Edwards said the death toll could have been higher if not for residents quickly responding to rescue more than 30,000 people who were in danger.

"We saw people being neighbors to one another, not just neighbors to people who happen to live next to them ... but neighbors to strangers," he said.

When describing how Louisiana residents responded to the flooding, Edwards said the one word that came to mind was "resilient."

"Let me tell you what makes the state of Louisiana great; it's the people," he said.

Edwards also praised the working relationship the state has had with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies in the wake of the flooding. He said he has asked the federal government to reduce the state match from 25 percent to 10 percent and include the March flooding when seeking relief.

The flooding has damaged 125,000 homes, with less than 20 percent of homeowners having flood insurance. While FEMA is not an insurance program, Edwards said he is meeting Monday with federal lawmakers to "fashion a program that doesn't currently exist" to help residents.

"The worst thing we can have is people walking away from their businesses (and) homes," he said. "We're going to have to think outside the box."

Edwards said there are plans to use hazard mitigation funding to pay for drainage projects instead of elevating homes.

Awards

Senate President John Alario, R-Westwego, received the Legis-Gator of the Year award. His career as a state lawmaker dates back to 1972.

Freshman Rep. Stephen Dwight, R-Moss Bluff, received the Fusion Five award. Sen. Ronnie Johns, R-Sulphur, received the Governmental Affairs award.

The event was held at L'Auberge Casino Resort.

Governor Addresses Flood Recovery At LegisGator Luncheon

By Maranda Whittington

KPLC-TV Lake Charles (LA), August 26, 2016

LAKE CHARLES, LA (KPLC) –

Friday's LegisGator luncheon had a wide variety of speakers, but their focus was the same – flooding and flood recovery.

The heavy rains created heavy flooding that left many with damaged homes.

"Our primary goal is to get people back in their homes, and back in their communities, so they can go to their schools, to their churches and go to their jobs," said Gov. John Bel Edwards.

Edwards announced that he has created three new housing assistant programs for flood victims. Two are temporary but the third one, Edwards believes, will be the most beneficial because it will invest money in people's permanent homes.

"It's called 'Shelter at Home' and it will be open to the public starting Monday," said Edwards.

"Shelter at Home will grant $15,000 to making homes secure, habitable and safe. Edwards also addressed FEMA and the role it plays in the state.

FEMA is not designed to make people whole," said Edwards. "FEMA is designed to give you assistance and to stabilize your life so that you can recover from there."

Edwards called on congressmen to come together to help.

"If you all will work with me, I know that we would be successful on behalf of the people of Louisiana," he said.

Edwards ended his speech thanking those who have united together to help one another. He remains hopeful for our state.

"We are gong to be stronger and better than ever, and I want you to know, I have no doubt that our best days are ahead," he said.

For more information on the Shelter at Home program click HERE.

The application, phone number and websites for the program will be available starting Monday.

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KSLA-TV Shreveport (LA), August 26, 2016

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– Maranda Whittington

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FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Opens In Denham Springs Saturday

By Kevin Dupuy

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

BATON ROUGE – FEMA will open a disaster recovery center in Denham Springs Saturday after historic flooding ravaged much of Livingston Parish last week.

The FEMA disaster recovery center will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the following location:

North Park Recreation Center (At the corner of Lockhart)
30372 Eden Church Road
Denham Springs, LA 70726

Represenatives from GHSEP, FEMA, the Small Business Administration, and volunteer groups will be available to answer questions about disaster aid and low interest disaster loans. Residents can also apply for federal disaster aid.

It is not necessary to visit a center to register for and receive federal disaster assistance. Disaster Survivor Assistance teams are canvassing many affected areas to register people for federal aid.

If possible, residents should register with FEMA online at DisasterAssitance.gov before visiting a recovery center.

Renters May Be Eligible For Federal Disaster Aid

By Kevin Dupuy

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

BATON ROUGE – Renters who experienced losses from last week's historic flooding may be eligible for federal disaster aid.

According to a FEMA statement Friday, renters may be eligible for grants from FEMA to cover certain disaster related expenses, including:

Disaster related medical and dental expenses

Replacement or repair of necessary personal property (appliances and furniture, textbooks, computers used by students and work equipment for the self-employed)

Repair or replacement of vehicles damaged by the disaster

Disaster related funeral and burial expenses

FEMA grants are not loans and do not need to be repaid. FEMA says the grants are also not taxable income and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid, welfare assistance, SNAP benefits or other programs.

Renters may also qualify for a low-interest loan up to $40,000 from the SBA to repair or replace personal property.

Residents can apply for aid online with any computer, smartphone or tablet at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362. . The toll-free telephone numbers are open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

FEMA Encourages Residents To Read Determination Letters Carefully

By Brock Sues

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

BATON ROUGE – If you're a survivor of recent flooding and receive a letter that says your application for federal assistance is "ineligible" or "incomplete," be sure to read the letter all the way through to the end to find out why.

FEMA officials point out that all applicants have the right to appeal and, in many cases, a quick fix can remedy the situation.

FEMA listed some common reasons why people receive an ineligible determination:

The most common reason for ineligibility is you didn't provide FEMA with a copy of a letter verifying your insurance coverage and detailing your settlement. FEMA needs this to process your grant application.

Your insurance company will be able to provide you the documents. Find your insurance company's information online at the Louisiana Department of Insurance's website: www.ldi.la.gov/onlineservices/ActiveCompanySearch

Other reasons for ineligibility may include:

-You did not sign the required documents.

-You did not prove occupancy or ownership.

-Your identity may not have been verified.

-The damage is not to your primary residence, but to a secondary home or a rental property.

-Another member of your household may have applied and received assistance.

-Your disaster-related losses could not be verified.

What to do next:

You may take copies of the documents to your closest Disaster Recovery Center where a FEMA specialist can help you.

Find DRC locations by going online at fema.gov/disaster-recovery-centers or by downloading and using the FEMA app. You may also call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362. If you use TTY, call 800-462-7585. If you use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362.

Or mail copies of the needed documents within 60 days of receiving your letter to the address below:

FEMA – Individuals & Households Program
National Processing Service Center
P.O. Box 10055
Hyattsville, MD 20782-7055

You can also fax the documents to:

800-827-8112

Attention: FEMA – Individuals & Households Program

It's important to write the registration number that FEMA gave you after applying for help on all the documents. Write the federal disaster declaration number, DR-4277-LA, too.

If you have more questions:

If you registered, you should have received a booklet called "Help after a Disaster" that details how FEMA determines what's eligible for assistance. You can access the booklet online at www.fema.gov/help-after-disaster.

If you have questions about your application or about filing an appeal, call the FEMA helpline at If you use TTY, call 800-462-7585. If you use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362.

Visit a DRC to speak with a FEMA specialist who can help you appeal.

Tullier Family On Deputy's Condition, Loss Of Home During Flood

By Trey Schmaltz

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

BATON ROUGE – As his neighbors toss flood debris and heirlooms to the curb, the soaked belonging of James Tullier's family remain locked in the first floor of his two story home in Livingston Parish.

Before the flood, Tullier and his wife were rarely home since their lives were upended by a gunman who shot their son, an East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's deputy, three times in July. The Tulliers rarely leave Our Lady of the Lake where their son, Nick, is under the care of doctors and nurses.

"He's hanging in there. He's fighting," James said in an exclusive interview first televised on WBRZ News 2 at 6:00 Friday. "He's fighting everyday."

Friday was the fortieth day the Tulliers have spent in the hospital. The family told WBRZ anchor Michael Shingleton, they don't count days – instead, they count blessings and miracles.

"Every day, to us, has been a miracle." James Tullier said doctors weren't optimistic about his son's survival, though, at the end of August, he still clings to life.

"He wasn't suppose to live longer than a day. Then he wasn't suppose to live longer than two days. Then five days. Then it became a 21 day forecast."

As the family listened, prayed, and hoped, they missed the sound of severe weather moving across the region. When Baton Rouge, Livingston and Ascension began flooding, the Tulliers were flooding heaven with prayers from inside the hospital, oblivious to what was happening outside.

Michael Shingleton asked, "You didn't know it was raining?"

"No," James Tullier answered."

"Not a clue?"

"No."

It is believed, the Tulliers' neighborhood took 92 inches of flood water. As their neighbors work to recover their homes and lives, the Tulliers pray for their son's recovery.

"Our priority has been with Nick. The house is an object. We know that it's a process that has to be dealt with, but to us, it's on the back burner."

James has been able to meet with both the Vice President and the President. This week, President Obama streamlined the process with FEMA and flood insurance inspectors. Vice President Biden set up the family with the nation's top doctor. The doctor is now familiar with Nick Tullier's condition.

And, the Tulliers ask people stay focused on their son's condition and not the condition of the family's home.

"People have offered to come and clean out our house. No, pray for Nick," Tullier said.

The Tulliers ask for prayers, hope and support. Nick Tullier's condition is updated frequently on this Facebook page, organized to share information on his health. James Tullier routinely posts. Social media hashtags #TullierStrong #TeamNick are used to share thoughts, support and messages, too.

Watch the exclusive report by clicking the attached video link.

STORY UPDATE: The Tullier's thank everyone for their calls to the Sheriff's Office. The family does not need help cleaning out or gutting their home. They have already been in touch with FEMA and their insurance company, and they're making progress. Keep praying for Nick. – Michael Shingleton – Twitter: @ShingletonWBRZ

Annual Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival Cancelled

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

GONZALES – Officials in Ascension Parish say that this year's Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival is cancelled due to recent historic flooding and in anticipation of any further weather events.

"We are hurting, but on the mend, in Ascension Parish. Over 50% of our annual attendees at the Hot Air Balloon Festival are folks from the affected areas," said Ascension Parish President Kenny Matassa. "I want them to know we are experiencing this trial together, and next year we will bring the Hot Air Balloon Festival back for everyone to enjoy."

The festival was scheduled for Sept. 23 and 24 at the center off Louisiana Highway 30 and Interstate 10.

The usual site of the festival, the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center, remains fully operational and has served as a center for recovery activities in the parish. The expo center has been used as a shelter, a staging spot for debris and also is playing host to a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center.

Parish and state officials said they are also in discussions concerning the use of Lamar-Dixon for any future weather events that may threaten south Louisiana through the remainder of hurricane season.

Longview Citizen And Red Cross Veteran Travels To Louisiana For Flood Relief

By Hayat Norimine

Daily News (WA), August 28, 2016

Longview resident Julia Bishop is a veteran when it comes to disaster relief.

Bishop, 64, travels to disasters as a Red Cross volunteer three or four times a year. She will spend the next week working 12- to 15-hour shifts, every day, assisting flood victims in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

According to Red Cross official Brad Kieserman, the catastrophic flood devastating Louisiana is now the worst natural disaster to strike the United States since Hurricane Sandy four years ago.

Piles of garbage, damaged furniture and other belongings were left lining the streets after a prolonged rainfall overwhelmed the state. More than 20 inches of rain fell in less than three days. FEMA declared a major disaster in Louisiana on Aug. 14, the second time in just a few months that it had done so.

"If you drive down the streets, everybody's life is laying out there in the road," Bishop said.

Tens of thousands of homes have been damaged. More than 100,000 individuals and households have asked for FEMA assistance, and Bishop said the economic hardship is apparent. Small business owners often close their stores permanently from such disasters, unable to recuperate from such a financial loss.

As a shelter manager in Baton Rouge, Bishop assists in organizing shelters' needs and preparing supplies. Bishop said there are 15 shelters that hold anywhere from less than 100 people to as many as 1,300. Five of those shelters are for the staff, she said. Over 2,000 Red Cross volunteers are currently stationed in Louisiana.

Bishop is the only remaining Red Cross volunteer in Cowlitz County after its Longview office closed. She said many of them retired, others moved away or moved on.

But Bishop has "the disaster bug," she said, and while she works at Janus Youth in Portland, she said the organization allows her to fuel her passion for disaster relief on the side. She has assisted in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in the Northeast, tornadoes in the Midwest, wildfires in California, and several disasters in Texas.

For Bishop, it all started back in 2005 with her first trip (with 100 church volunteers from Longview) to Louisiana to assist with reliefs after Hurricane Katrina that August. Seeing how thankful the people were for the help, she said, made her realize that trip wouldn't be her last.

"When you can do what you can to help people in their worst time, it changes their lives," she said.

She is also inspired by people's survival stories. Sometimes, she said, it hits close to home. In 2011 a devastating tornado hit Joplin, Missouri, a town that reminded Bishop of her own hometown.

It looked "like a bomb went off there," Bishop said. She drew parallels between the Midwestern area to Longview, as if it had hit the Highlands, took out hospitals, fire departments and schools, and wiped out every business on Ocean Beach Highway.

"There was a lot of death there, that was hard," she said. "It seemed too much like Longview."

Bishop said in the process of being exposed to such tragedies, she also developed bonds and it makes her grateful for her own life. She has friends all over the country that she still keeps in touch with.

"It makes me very appreciative of everything I have," she said.

"I'm So Lucky": Homeowner Thankful Following Harrowing Louisiana Flood Experience

By Sara Smith

WCAU-TV Philadelphia, August 27, 2016

Kyung Kim was home with her dog when the flood waters began to rise in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Within a few hours, more than 2 feet of water filled the first floor of the home along Bourque Road. The lights went out and for three days she sat in the dark, watching snakes and catfish swim by her door.

At one point, people came by with a boat offering her a way out, but she didn't want to leave. Her husband, Steve, was away in Colorado and she was worried about the house.

"I told them no, I was staying," she said. They did help her charge her phone, though, so she could keep in touch with relatives.

Knowing the dire situation at home, Steve jumped on a plane for Baton Rouge – about 60 miles west of Lafayette.

He took a cab from the airport, but while the water had receded from the Kims' neighborhood, the road leading there was still inundated.

Desperate to get home, Steve waded, for a mile, through snake-infested waters.

"I saw him coming," Kyung explained, holding up her arms over her head, "with water up to here," she said gesturing to her chest.

The Kims moved to the United States from South Korea in 1999. Kyung runs a salon nearby. It's the couple's only source of income.

She says as soon as the water receded, she began scrubbing the house.

"I had no idea you had to do all that," she said pointing to the pile of debris on the side of the street. Thing is, if you don't rip out everything touched by the flood water, mold can take over the home.

On this Friday, the Kims have extra help in the clean up. Volunteers from Samaritan's Purse, a North Carolina-based Christian disaster relief organization buzz around like bees in bright orange shirts.

It's just one job site of more than 3,500 that have been requested by those affected by the flooding across the state.

Helping Louisiana Flood Victims

Volunteers from our region are helping victims of the disaster in Louisiana. NBC10.COM's Sara Smith tells us what kind of work Samaritan's Purse offers. (Published Saturday, Aug. 27, 2016)

Among the volunteers were Drew and Pat Alexander from Aldan, Pennsylvania, a small suburb in Delaware County.

"We both have a spirit for serving people in a time of need," Pat says of why she and Drew drove 20 hours south to help. "Some people run from disaster, we seem to run to disaster."

The Alexanders have been married 34 years and volunteer with multiple organizations together.

"We're at just about every disaster we can get ahold of," Drew explains. "We know the need is there and we have some ability to be able to help to ease people through those difficult times they're experiencing. That's our mission in life."

The Kims also met with a FEMA adjuster this day. They hope for some help from the government to rebuild. They, like so many others, don't have flood insurance.

Standing among the mess, Kyung feels grateful.

"I'm so lucky, look at all those cars, all those people helping us," she said.

Her thoughts about the volunteers is heartfelt, but unfortunately the work won't be over once they leave.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

No stories for this edition

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

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PRIVATE SECTOR

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CITIZEN CORPS

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POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Jeff Sadow: Obama Shows Hypocrisy In Answering Flood

By Jeff Sadow

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

President Barack Obama finally came to Baton Rouge last week, prodded by this newspaper and other, mainly Republican, critics. Meanwhile, Louisiana's elected Democrats did their best to cover for his hypocrisy on presidential crisis visits.

Regarding what relief agencies describe as the largest American disaster since Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast nearly four years ago, at its start Obama authorized relief but didn't shorten his vacation to toney Martha's Vineyard in order personally to assess the situation. Obama's reluctance prompted a call-out from The Advocate on its editorial page, joined by many others, for him to visit Baton Rouge. Eventually he assented and appeared almost two weeks after the waters began invading structures and washing out infrastructure.

Apparently, flooding of such severity believed typically to occur every thousand years did not give Obama a sufficient chance to advance his ideological or electoral agenda. Just as April showers bring May flowers, so do mass shootings attract Obama, as during his terms in office nine times he quickly visited locations of such tragic events and the families of victims — although not last summer's unfortunate killings in a Lafayette theater that occurred while he traveled to Africa. At these gatherings, he demanded more gun control, although nothing short of disregarding the Second Amendment and turning the country into a police state might have prevented any of these lamentable occurrences.

Obama had graced Baton Rouge with his presence earlier this year — when he came to celebrate Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards' unwise order to implement Obama's signature expansion of Medicaid. But it proved too much for him to help the city heal by coming soon after last month's unfortunate Alton Sterling shooting by police and the subsequent retaliatory assassinations of three officers.

Regarding water-caused natural disasters, shortly after Hurricane Sandy struck Obama managed to survey from above the damage. Broadcast media for several hours portrayed him acting presidentially, viewed by voters there and in swing states.

But Obama is not on this fall's ballot; Louisiana will vote overwhelmingly Republican; and, since floods don't lend themselves for use as ideological tools, when the waters rose Obama couldn't be bothered to sacrifice even one of the nine rounds of golf he played among the well-off in order to commiserate with the less fortunate. In the process Obama hung out Edwards to dry, leaving the state's most prominent flood victim to mumble about what stellar attention Obama's underlings paid to rescue and recovery matters and how a presidential drive-by would be too distracting.

One such underling, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, during his own trip to Baton Rouge noted Obama had "a very busy schedule;" after all, Obama paused during his vacation to headline a fundraiser for Democrat presidential candidate Hillary Clinton — the day after the disaster declaration. New Orleans Democratic Rep. Cedric Richmond, running for reelection, didn't mind Obama's absence for this or any reason, declaring "the federal government has our back."

As laughable as such excuses might be, at least they don't display Obama's own hypocrisy. As a candidate eight years ago, Obama criticized his predecessor, former George W. Bush, who traveled to the Gulf Coast five days after Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005 with rescues ongoing, as "a president who only saw the people from the window of an airplane instead of down here on the ground trying to provide comfort and aid."

Thanks for stopping in, Mr. President, even if we can't serve as a prop for your agenda.

Jeff Sadow is an associate professor of political science at Louisiana State University Shreveport, where he teaches Louisiana Government. He is author of a blog about Louisiana politics at http://www.between-lines.com, where links to information in this column may be found. When the Louisiana Legislature is in session, he writes about legislation in it at http://www.laleglog.com. Follow him on Twitter @jsadowadvocate. Write to him at jeffsadowtheadvocate@yahoo.com. His views do not necessarily express those of his employer.

Political Horizons: Congressman Argues Katrina Relief Is Related To Flooding Disaster

By Mark Ballard

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Congressman John Fleming last week scratched his chin for a moment, wondering who Rahm Emanuel was paraphrasing when the president's then-chief of staff said, "You never let a good crisis go to waste."

Emanuel, now Chicago's mayor, said it a couple times but importantly when he was talking about an effort to aid the victims of Superstorm Sandy. Fleming ultimately opposed the effort — a now-uncomfortable position as Louisiana's delegation puts together a similar congressional request to aid the approximately 140,000 victims of the flood with no name.

Some internet commentators nodded to Winston Churchill as a source of the quote. But, other than a bunch of readers "liking" it, the sourcing on Churchill is rather scarce for a quote that has come to mean that a disaster could be exploited to find money for projects that otherwise wouldn't be approved.

The Freakanomics website tracked the quote down to a 1976 Medical Economics journal article, in which M.F. Weiner argued that a health crisis should be used to motivate healthier habits in the patient's lifestyle.

That's an origins story that Fleming and U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, both physicians who opposed the Sandy supplement, might appreciate.

Fleming, a Minden Republican, was using the quote to explain why he voted in 2013 against the final bill that provided Superstorm Sandy victims more financial aid than was set aside for "regular" disasters. He's being pummeled by opponents in the U.S. Senate campaign about the vote. Public Service Commissioner Foster Campbell said Fleming's political orthodoxy might haunt Louisiana's congressional delegation's efforts to find additional funding for south Louisiana flooding victims.

Fleming said he backed the bill when it was just for Sandy victims. He opposed the final measure because it was chock-a-block full of projects that, while tangentially related to disaster mitigation, had little to do with getting New Jersey and New York homeowners and businessmen back on their feet.

For instance, Fleming tried to strike as unrelated the $1.55 million for upgrading the emergency generator backup system at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia.

"Disaster funds must go directly to needed areas with no added pork," Fleming said.

So last week when Obama arrived to tour north Baton Rouge neighborhoods, Gov. John Bel Edwards pressed the president with his "ask." The four-page letter included all the expected stuff — please lower the portion the state would have to pay, and would you mind covering the full cost for temporary shelter and shelter-in-home assistance?

Perhaps under the theory of asking for the stars in the opening gambit, down there near the bottom of page three, Edwards requested that Obama forgive the state's portion to improve the levees around New Orleans after the 2005 Hurricane Katrina.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is putting the finishing touches on a $14.5 billion storm protection system that installed pumps and improved levees. Under a complex formula, the state this year had to start paying $100 million a year until 2048 as Louisiana's match.

"These obligations are crippling to the state as we attempt to fund Master Plan projects designed to save the Louisiana coast," Edwards wrote the president. "A full waiver will allow Louisiana to spend these needed funds on coastal projects to prevent future disasters."

U.S. Sen. David Vitter said that Louisiana's congressional delegation always had argued for the federal government to pick up the tab.

"It's not particularly related (to this disaster), but it is and has been a priority for the delegation," Vitter said.

As the longest-serving member of Louisiana's delegation to Washington, Vitter is leading the effort to gather the statistics that support a request for federal appropriations above what is set aside for disasters. Louisiana's congressmen already are putting together ideas for the supplemental bill and Edwards hopes to meet with them this week or next to cobble out the details.

"Forgiving the $100 million debt is a big ask," Fleming said. "I don't think the president can do that without support from Congress."

He agreed that the Katrina levees protect a population not directly affected by this month's flooding. But he gamely argued that this request has a better link to the problem at hand than, say, relocating damaged roads in unspecified wildlife refuges or development projects in cash-strapped Puerto Rico — both in the Sandy supplemental legislation.

Every time south Louisiana gets hit hard by Mother Nature, and it happens frequently, new pain comes on a variation of the same theme — levees breaking, coastal erosion, water backing up, etc. "So, in that sense it's all part of the same problem, just a different verse of the same song," Fleming said.

At Random: Flood Makes Simple Question More Profound

By Danny Heitman

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

As a scholar who had studied the 19th century remarked some years ago, when people asked you how you were doing back then, they really wanted to know how you were doing. At a time when death and loss were all too common, a friend or neighbor's well-being couldn't be taken for granted. Inquiring after someone wasn't a rhetorical question; it was how you gauged whether a person in your life might truly be in need.

"How are you doing?" has that kind of emotional resonance these days in much of south Louisiana in the aftermath of a flood that's disrupted so many lives. When people ask about each other this month, the words usually come with a furrowed brow of concern. It's a natural response in communities where just about everyone either has a flooded home or knows someone who has.

My house stayed dry, but my sister-in-law and her 10-year-old son evacuated their neighborhood by boat, and they're staying with us until their place is fixed. In emptying the mess from their home after the flood, they came across a bowl of loose change. Last week, we wanted to do something frivolous as a respite from our troubles, so my nephew and I took his bowl of money to a grocery store that had one of those mechanical coin counters — the kind that sort nickels, dimes, pennies and quarters, spitting out a receipt that can be redeemed for paper cash.

There was a line at the coin sorter, something I'd never seen before. In front of us were customers for whom the counting of pennies didn't seem like a casual pastime. They looked poor, and I suspected that the flood had forced them to look with fresh eyes at every nickel to their name.

Pain is palpable throughout south Louisiana, as I tried to explain last week in an essay I wrote for The Wall Street Journal. Some friends wanted extra copies of the piece, so I stopped by a local newsstand to buy some. The owner hadn't answered his phone the day before, and I soon found out why. His house had flooded, and he felt relieved that his home could be repaired, with insurance covering most of the cost. But then fouled wiring sparked a fire, burning his place to the ground. On the day I had called, he'd closed his shop to rush to the fire. He arrived in time to see it reduced to cinders.

That's the story I got when I asked something so simple that many of us utter it from reflex: "How are you doing?"

There are thousands of answers to that question in south Louisiana this week, many of them tragic.

Many years ago, a Bosnian refugee described her newfound life in Louisiana to me as boring and happy. After enduring the destruction of war, she'd learned that the little dull things in life — a safe home on a quiet street — were blessings too easily overlooked.

In south Louisiana this month, those dull days before the flood can seem like chapters from a distant time.

Aid, Yes, But Talk Changes

Lafayette (LA) Daily Advertiser, August 26, 2016

Lafayette Parish residents got a cold splash of reality from Gov. John Bel Edwards this week.

Visiting flood-ravaged Youngsville, Edwards told residents there — more than 600 in that town had water in their homes — that the Federal Emergency Management Agency can't make them "whole."

No, it can't. Most Louisianans affected by the flood did not have flood insurance. That's at least understandable, because so many who were flooded were not living in what the government believes are flood zones.

"It's very similar to stories we've heard all over South Louisiana," Edwards said of his Youngsville visit. "Historic, unprecedented flood. Homes here have never flooded before. They don't live in a flood zone."

Flood zone or not, though, Louisiana is a water-rich environment. There are 5,000 miles of navigable water. It borders the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River, one of the major water systems in the world. Flood possibilities shift with every development.

The Red River bisects Louisiana and other, robust rivers cut across and through it. We have bayous and canals, swamps and wetlands.

When it comes to water, Louisiana is a geographic wonder. It is the stuff of legends, too. Evangeline and Gabriel might tell you that, if those fictional characters could.

The hard truth that Edwards delivered is that without flood insurance, affected homeowners may have to depend on the slow, uncertain wheels of government for additional help. FEMA can help some — up to $33,000, but likely less.

The unnamed flood that beset 20 Louisiana parishes from Aug. 11-13, America's largest natural disaster since Superstorm Sandy, has changed lives here, and not for the better.

Edwards has made a pitch directly to President Obama for help additional to that which FEMA routinely provides; Louisiana's congressional delegation, which is not without skills and influence, must make the case to their colleagues for supplemental help.

That may be out of character for some of our delegation, which oftentimes preaches limited, not robust, government. It comes during the political campaign season, too. Flood insurance and coastal management are campaign issues that may have moved up — should have moved up — the political pecking order.

The state seems to be functioning at a high level for affected citizens. The federal government, too, is established on the ground and distributing good information as quickly as possible. That's not easy, especially with so many people displaced.

But when it comes to help, a federal government that's $20 trillion in debt seems an unlikely bet to solve every citizen's need in times of high water.

Louisianians need solutions for the flood effects now, but the country needs more planning and options for offering flood insurance and protections later. It's campaign season: What better time to talk?

Hurricane Irene Popular Again — Louisiana Flood? "Eh"

By Antonio Newell

Inquisitr, August 27, 2016

Five years after Hurricane Irene's damage, it still gets more coverage than Louisiana's flood. Sad.

Interestingly enough, Louisiana's flood crisis has been labeled the "worst natural disaster since Hurricane Sandy," according to Washington Post.

You know who made that statement? Brad Kieserman, vice president for disaster services operations and logistics for the Red Cross.

And mind you, Sandy's damage was estimated around $50 billion, with 200,000 homes lost — "second only to Hurricane Katina," notes Live Science.

Yet, Louisiana's massive flood has received nowhere near the coverage, support, or national outcry as Sandy or Irene. Why is Hurricane Irene Trending?

As mentioned, Hurricane Irene made landfall in 2011; it's the five-year anniversary.

Yes. There was definitely catastrophe. Actually, New York Daily News reports that — after a year of evaluation — the total damage was an estimated cost of $15.8 billion.

Now, if Louisiana's flood devastation is as bad as authoritative representatives say, why aren't flood headlines doing as well as "Hurricane Irene" headlines?

Is it not weird how the nation seemingly continues forgetting about Louisiana in its time of need? The same happened during Katrina.

This flood happened in and around the same city and region where Alton Sterling was murdered, where there was massive coverage in our faces day in and day out.

So, what's different now?

The Real Reason Why Louisiana's Flood Gets Little Love

What spurs your emotion? What makes you, as a reader, search for something informative? What catches your attention?

Here's a little secret. In large, news media outlets only report what you find interesting.

Take Hurricane Irene for example. What was significant about 2011 that had many people around the world on edge?

In 2011, people were concerned with natural disasters because the world was supposed to experience horrific devastation in 2012. Remember the infamous "Mayan calendar"?

Shortly before that time, but definitely during the "calendar" watch, Hurricane Sandy had also made its round of disaster wrath. The world was primed and ready for "natural disaster" news.

And now? Police brutality — as can be seen from Alton Sterling's coverage.

Five years later, after the Mayan calendar mayhem, we're still here. Disasters aren't "trending" now.

Louisiana Struggles for 'Likes' and Life

Hurricane Irene is currently trending because people remember its devastation and the feelings they had about it — just like Hurricane Katrina and Sandy victims.

However, also like Katrina survivors, victims of Louisiana's flooding will surely remember how alone they felt as the rest of the country went on about its life — wondering, rather, when Kylie Jenner's sextape will release, or if Donald Trump will finally release his tax returns.

This was — and is — a statewide catastrophe which should've gained more national concern. It wasn't some small flash flood.

According to National Public Radio (NPR), over 40,000 Louisiana homes have been found damaged, and the investigation is ongoing. Likewise, as concerns residents, at least twice that number are awaiting response from FEMA. The source mentions that the disaster stretches over 20 parishes (counties).

Do you realize the magnitude of this flood? That's an entire state in other parts of the country. Some states don't even have enough land for 20 counties.

The report notes that some people closely compare it to the devastation experienced during Hurricane Katrina.

Honestly, if you look at aerial shots from the hurricane and the flood aftermaths, it's difficult to tell which photos belong to what disaster.

But, does the rest of the United States care?

While these concerns have always been at the forefront of news reporting, social media integration has not. Now, with just a click of a few pages, research organizations, television crews, etc. can see exactly what you like to watch or read via your timeline.

Not so? Look at your personal timeline.

See anything regarding contributions you've made to flood victims? If you haven't even spoken about it in a week, the fact is you've moved on.

It's a harsh reality of these United States.

La. Floods Should Be Wake-up Call

By Amy Goodman

Albuquerque (NM) Journal, August 27, 2016

The floodwaters are receding in Baton Rouge, La., and the scale of the damage is revealing itself. It has been described as a 1,000-year flood, leaving at least 13 people dead and close to 60,000 homes ruined.

According to Weather Underground meteorologists Jeff Masters and Bob Henson, August has been the wettest month in Baton Rouge in 174 years, when records were first kept. They added, "Since June 1, Baton Rouge has picked up an amazing 40.95 inches – more rain in three months than downtown Los Angeles has recorded over the last five years (38.79 inches)!"

President Barack Obama traveled there Tuesday. "I think anybody who can see just the streets, much less the inside of the homes here, people's lives have been upended by this flood," he said after walking through part of the devastated city.

While Obama was criticized by his political opponents for not visiting Baton Rouge earlier, it's what happened one day later, in nearby New Orleans, that should have everyone concerned.

The Obama administration conducted a massive auction of offshore oil and gas drilling leases in the Gulf of Mexico.

The irony was not lost on Antonia Juhasz. She is a journalist and energy analyst who has long tracked the multinational petroleum corporations engaged in deep-water oil extraction.

"Following Obama #LouisianaFlood visit, Interior Dept to auction offshore drilling leases to 24 million acres in Gulf on 8/24 at Superdome," she tweeted, followed by, "After protests nearly shut down lease sale in March at Superdome, for first time, BOEM closes sale to public, makes viewing available online."

The BOEM is the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. The agency was auctioning 23.8 million acres in the western section of the Gulf of Mexico, for deep-water oil and gas exploration and extraction.

We spoke to Juhasz on the "Democracy Now!" news hour, just before the auction began: "The timing of all of these events couldn't be more devastating," she said. "You have this historic flood. You have the president there to offer assistance from FEMA and to hopefully try and assist those on the ground, while at the same time the Interior Department is continuing the problems that help accelerate this storm in the first place, help make it more ferocious, help make these storms more frequent. And that, of course, is the burning of fossil fuels, leading to climate change."

Adding to the irony is the site of the auction: the Superdome. After Hurricane Katrina inundated most of New Orleans, this sports stadium became a refuge of last resort for an estimated 15,000-20,000 stranded residents.

While any one extreme weather event can't be directly attributed to climate change, storms, droughts, wildfires, floods and hurricanes all are expected to become more frequent and more severe as the planet warms. Those thousands in the Superdome after Katrina should be considered climate refugees. For this building now to house the auctions for drilling for more fossil fuels only adds insult to the injury.

There is growing grass-roots activism directly confronting the extraction and transport of fossil fuels, from communities in the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Plains in the northern U.S. and Canada.

On Tuesday, hundreds protested the planned auction. A huge banner floated beneath a balloon, reading "Another Gulf is Possible." Four demonstrators were arrested after refusing to leave the Interior Department office in New Orleans.

Last March, a similar auction of offshore Gulf drilling leases was almost canceled, as hundreds protested in the Superdome. That protest occurred just weeks after another massive flood hit southern Louisiana.

Meanwhile, in North Dakota, more than a thousand indigenous activists at the Sacred Stone Spirit Camp are blocking construction of the proposed $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline. They say the pipeline could contaminate the Missouri River, which provides water for the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and for millions more downstream.

Also on Wednesday, an action was held outside the federal District Court in Washington, D.C., where the Standing Rock Sioux tribe has filed suit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the pipeline.

Rather than enabling more dangerous deep-water oil extraction off the shores of the Gulf Coast, President Obama should be spending his remaining months in office doing everything in his power to reduce our national dependence on fossil fuels.

– Amy Goodman | Syndicated Columnist

Distributed by King Features Syndicate.

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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NATIONAL NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather-Hermine. NBC Nightly News (9/5, lead story, 2:25, Snow, 16.61M) reported, "For millions of Americans up and down the East Coast this holiday, wasn't quite what they hoped. Churning surf, dangerous rip currents and high winds from Hermine closed down beaches and forced a lot of vacationers to leave the water on this Labor Day. It's the latest impact of a deadly storm that has lingered for days and the effect on businesses that rely on summer tourist dollars is still being tallied. Gabe Gutierrez is on New York's Long Island." NBC (**Gutierrez**) added, "Tonight, the stubborn storm is stalling off the northeast coast. Hermine now a post tropical cyclone that just won't quit, bringing fierce waves and rip currents." **Unidentified speaker**: "The wind's coming from the north and when you're out on the beach, it's hard to keep your head up and look." **Gutierrez**: "Though Hermine is 200 miles offshore, but a tropical storm warning is still under effect." **Unidentified speaker**: "I had taken the 9:30 ferry over and it was canceled." **Gutierrez**: "After Hermine made landfall in Florida on Friday, it's been blamed for two deaths, hundreds of thousands of people are left without power. Emergency declarations in eight states. On its way to Birmingham, the cruise ship Anthem of the Seas rocked by Hermine's waves." **Unidentified speaker**: "I ate in the restaurant, dishes going all over the place, it was pretty exciting." **Gutierrez**: "The choppy water kept people out of the water." **Unidentified speaker**: "When they start giving out the warnings, but Montock people are different, they go out anyway." **Gutierrez**: "In Ocean City, Maryland, the financial hit already stinging, several cancellations at this hotel on this last summer holiday weekend." **Unidentified speaker**: "This is our last hurrah, so to speak. This is our last big weekend to really make lasting memories." **Gutierrez**:

"In New Jersey, some business owners in Seaside Heights say their business was slashed in half." **Unidentified speaker**: "There was lots of people on the boardwalk, but people were on stand by, people going back to their homes and staying in town, and it hurt business a whole lot." **Gutierrez**: "This might be the best view of Hermine's strength off the coast of Long Island. Treacherous rip currents are expected along with beach erosion in the next few days."

NBC: Hermine-Forecast. NBC Nightly News (9/5, story 2, 1:00, Snow, 16.61M) reported, "Meteorologist Dylan Dreyer is joining us with more on where this stubborn storm is going next and the new hurricane that's out there now. Dylan?" NBC (**Dreyer**) added, "We'll talk about that one in just a second, but let's start with Hermine, which has been producing some heavier bands of rain across southeastern Massachusetts. It still has winds right now of 70 miles an hour. And it is still moving to the west-northwest. It will take a turn to the northeast tomorrow, then weaken as it passes very close to Nantucket Wednesday into Thursday. We are looking at sustained winds across eastern Long Island and Nantucket up around 40 miles an hour. Tomorrow, sustained winds around 30 miles an hour with even higher gusts, that will lead to more coastal flooding around high tide and beach erosion and those dangerous rip currents. Out in the Pacific, we have Hurricane Newton making landfall along Baja California tomorrow. Could produce some flash flooding Tuesday into Wednesday across the western United States."

ABC: Severe Weather-Hermine. ABC World News (9/5, story 5, 2:05, Vega, 14.63M) reported, "We want to turn now to the extreme weather. Hermine packing a punch this Labor Day weekend. Look at the high surf off Rhode Island. Coastal flood threats and tropical storm warnings tonight along the coast of New England. At least two people killed, including the driver of this tractor trailer, blown over by a gust of wind on a North Carolina bridge. And in Florida, where Hermine made landfall as a hurricane, tonight tens of thousands of residents still without power. ABC's Ginger Zee with the storm track in a moment, but first, ABC's Gio Benitez on the Jersey Shore." ABC (**Benitez**) added, "Tonight, winds from Hermine still packing a punch in parts of the Northeast. In Cape Cod, Massachusetts." **Unidentified speaker**: "Whipping across the beach, waves are picking up. No swimming ban in effect. But a surprising number of people are actually out here." **Benitez**: "Royal Caribbean's Anthem of the Seas got caught in the rough waters. They got out of it safely, but on the shore, rough, dangerous surf. And lifeguards warn, it could be deadly." **Unidentified speaker**: "As soon as you get waist deep, you are swept down the beach." **Benitez**: "And all of those businesses along the eastern coast; Fire Island already saying they've lost millions. And look at these empty beach chairs on the Jersey Shore. The beach itself, even more barren. And small businesses, like The Gables Hotel and Restaurant, taking a hit worth tens of thousands." **Sondra Beninati**, The Gables owner: "The phones were ringing like crazy and there was a mass exodus from the island." **Benitez**: "A mass exodus. And so, here are you, left with all these open tables that would have otherwise been filled." **Beninati**: "I know. I know. And people miss their holiday." **Benitez**: "And Cecilia, in the next few days, expect those dangerous rip currents and those big, rough waves are going to keep tearing down these massive dunes. Of course, they're going to need some repair for nor'easters in the fall and winter. Cecilia?"

ABC: Hermine-Forecast. ABC World News (9/5, story 6, 0:55, Vega, 14.63M) reported, "I want to bring in Ginger Zee. You have been tracking this for so long, and it's not over yet." ABC (**Zee**) added, "Feels like forever. And, yes, we've been tracking this system for weeks, Cecilia. Let's look at it. Hermine, still a post-tropical cyclone with max sustained winds of 70 miles an hour. It will weaken as it keeps turning back towards eastern Long Island, all the way through Cape Cod. And that's why we are still paying attention to this. You pile on water for two, three days, and you are going to erode those beaches, major rip currents. I wanted to show you this. We will see some rain bands coming out of this, 20 to 40-mile-an-hour gusts with it, and the shield of clouds makes it all the way back into parts of New Jersey. Then, we go to the middle of the nation, we've had big issues with severe weather the last 24 hours. Now flash flood warnings for Minneapolis. A quick look, Hurricane Newton, headed for Cabo San Lucas."

CBS: Severe Weather-Hermine. The CBS Evening News (9/5, story 3, 1:45, Quijano, 11.17M) reported, "Tonight, Hermine is still causing trouble after ruining a lot of Labor Day plans. They're still cleaning debris along the Florida Panhandle. Thousands are still in the dark. At least three people were killed in the South. The Northeast was spared the high winds as the storm headed out to sea. But Hermine is still sending large waves crashing in New England. Here's Demarco Morgan." CBS (**Morgan**) added, "As

Hermine turned up the northeast, she put a fizzle on the unofficial last day of summer. Thrashing waves and dangerous rip currents kept most beachgoers from New Jersey to Cape Cod out of the water. Geraldine Dry spent the weekend at Coney Island." **Geraldine Dry**, beachgoer: "No ocean for us. You step on to the water but the lifeguards were looking at us so we had to run off." **Morgan**: "Hermine kicked off with a punch, a category one hurricane that came ashore early Friday morning in Florida with 80 mile per hour winds and dumped up to 18 inches of rain. It quickly lost steam as it veered through the Carolinas. Still, tropical storm warnings were issued for shore towns up the East Coast. Overnight, rough waters brought to this Royal Caribbean cruise ship headed from New Jersey to Bermuda. Passenger Derek Peterman." **Derek Peterman**, passenger: "When you see the crew on a cruise ship starting to get dizzy and sick you know it has gotten pretty bad." **Morgan**: "The owner of the Beachcomber restaurant in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, is relieved to be spared by the brunt of the storm. Any concern when it was moving up Florida?" **Unidentified speaker**: "Pretty much from the beginning they thought it would stay east of us, which was fine with me." **Morgan**: "This slow-moving system is packing 60 mile per hour winds off the coast of New England, and could make landfall by Wednesday. Elaine, it's expected to head back out to sea later this week."

CBS: Severe Weather-Hermine.

The CBS Weekend News (9/4, lead story, 2:50, Quijano) reported, "Hermine is gaining strength and threatening to become a hurricane again. The slow moving system has already killed at least two people including a homeless man hit by a falling tree in Florida, and a truck driver blown off the road in North Carolina. Storm warnings and watches are posted along the Atlantic coast from North Carolina to Massachusetts. Tony Dokoupil is on the jersey shore." CBS (**Dokoupil**) added, "After mowing through Florida as a hurricane, tropical storm Hermine chewed the coast of Georgia and the Carolina Saturday bringing heavy rain and punishing wind. Rough seas rocked this Royal Carribbean cruiseship en route to New Jersey to Bermuda. Now Hermine may crash a five foot wall of water into the mid Atlantic. The storm is menacing picturesque coastline from Maryland to Massachusetts, much of it newly rebuilt after superstorm Sandy tore through in 2012. Tony Voz is the mayor of hard hit Seaside Heights, New Jersey. How bad was the damage when Sandy came through?" **Tony Voz**, Seaside Heights Mayor: "Devastating, devastating. This has all been rebuilt over the last four years. Approximately four years. The icon of it was destroyed. It was devastating." **Dokoupil**: "Sandy damaged thousands of homes in Ocean county. Residents are aren't taking any chances with Hermine which could bring record floods. Emergency coordinator Bill Hibell." **Bill Hibell**, Emergency coordinator: "Just out here making sure what is on the other side of the boardwalk but when the wind shifts I'm concerned with the bay area." **Dokoupil**: "New Jersey Governor Chris Christie put Hermine in context." **Chris Christie**, New Jersey Governor: "I want to make this clear, this is certainly not Sandy. Nowhere near that." **Dokoupil**: "But he warned against complacency." **Christie**: "The biggest thing today is for people not to be lulled by the nice weather that nothing is going to what, something is going to happen." **Dokoupil**: "The storm was already washing out holiday weekend plans." **Unidentified speaker**: "We didn't think it would be this bad with the waves being this, you know, tall. But I would imagine the undertow would take you right out, so yeah, I can understand their concern." **Dokoupil**: "Instead of one last weekend of summer fun, beaches for hundreds of mile as long the Atlantic coast are closed and swimming is forbidden. Farther south storm cleanup continued as officials tried to restore power to thousands of homes from Florida to Virginia. So far the mid Atlantic impact is economic. Adir Gallani runs Sea Side Eatery in the boardwalk in New Jersey." **Adir Gallani**, restaurant owner: "Today we were expecting a lot more people but because of the storm, a lot of people...we had a lot of cancellations from the hotel people." **Dokoupil**: "As it continues to churn up the Atlantic coast officials warning residents to secure loose items so they don't become project aisles, Elaine, in seaside heights many homes were elevated after sandy. For those that weren't, the fire department here has handed out about 500 sand bags."

CBS: Hermine-Forecast.

The CBS Weekend News (9/4, story 2, 1:05, Quijano) reported, "Meteorologist Pamela Gardner is tracking the storm at WBZ." CBS (**Gardner**) added, "The storm continues to churn up rough seas and some strong winds. Max winds 70 miles per hour moves east northeast at six miles per hour but it is soon to take a turn towards the mid-Atlantic states and that is where we have warnings and watches in place also across south eastern New England. The storm will continue to push slowly north, northwest and then linger to our south and west here. Tuesday morning, 75 mile per hour winds. That is equal to hurricane strength, Tuesday into Thursday, the storm exits out to sea and then we're done with it. But prior to this, we could pick up some beneficial rain in south eastern Massachusetts. One to two inches of rainfall, with the heaviest rain staying offshore and those max wind gusts, 50 miles per hour from time to time, right during labor day. And we're also dealing with some intense wind gusts of 35 to 60 miles per hour all along the coast, primarily lieu Tuesday morning with major erosion likely across the beaches."

ABC: Severe Weather-Hermine. ABC World News (9/4, lead story, 3:00, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "We start again with the powerful and deadly storm, Hermine. The system making its mark up the eastern seaboard, killing two people since making landfall on Friday, including taking the life of the driver of this big rig in North Carolina. Hermine triggering a new state of emergency tonight. And dangerous rip currents and severe erosion. And a rocky ride for some cruise ship passengers heading to Bermuda. Ginger Zee in breezy points, queens, has been tracking the system for weeks now." ABC (**Zee**) added, "It seems like the storm that will never end, and for some, it's like the storm that never happened. So it's been sunny and beautiful Sunday for many folks because Hermine is still 350 miles south and east of me. It kept moving east, so some people got away from it. But that does not take away the impact at beaches from Virginia all the way to Nantucket. Tonight, big breakers taking a bite out of New Jersey beaches, eroding this shoreline in Holgate. In Ocean City, large waves, dangerous rip currents, and blustery winds busting beachgoers' labor day weekend. Rough waters rocking passengers aboard the Royal Caribbean's Anthem of the Seas, bound for Bermuda from New Jersey. And further south, in parts of Poquoson, Virginia, neighborhoods under water." **Unidentified speaker**: "We've dealt with this our whole lives, we just don't take our cars out in it." **Zee**: "Hermine first making landfall as a category one hurricane early Friday. It's been a night of tornado warnings, torrential rain. The eye just a couple of miles away. I was in the eye as it made landfall, tracking it all as 80-mile-per-hour winds battered the gulf coast, tossing trees. The gusting winds exploding and igniting power lines, leaving thousands without power. More than 60,000 in Florida still without service tonight. And claiming one life." **Unidentified speaker**: "Ferocious. Absolutely ferocious." **Zee**: "Pasco County, just north of Tampa, still under siege with flood waters after more rain from a different system fell on the already saturated land. The governor urging people to evacuate their homes. Not done yet, Hermine marching north, hitting Georgia and the Carolinas with tropical storm strength winds, gusts toppling this tractor-trailer in Columbia, North Carolina, killing the driver. And in Hatteras, the storm spawning a tornado, dumping these trailers into a creek and injuring four. I want to articulate again, this is not a rainstorm any longer. So, many will not see a drop of rain let alone clouds. But the beach erosion and advisories through Maryland, New Jersey, through parts of southern new England, that's what we're concerned about. As the waves push down the shoreline."

ABC: Hermine-New Jersey. ABC World News (9/4, story 2, 1:10, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "And let's go to Long Beach Island, New Jersey. As some residents are taking no chances. Here's Eva Pilgrim." ABC (**Pilgrim**) added, "Tonight, Hermine taking aim at the same coastal communities devastated by Superstorm Sandy." **Glenn Knigge**, resident: "We've been here for some storms but it has never been anything like that." **Pilgrim**: "Glenn Knigge still remembers returning to the Jersey Shore, homes toppled, entire neighborhoods destroyed. Belongings turned into piles of trash. Four years later, rebuilt, but not willing to take any chances." **Chris Christie**, New Jersey Governor: "Our mode right now is sort of a wait and watch mode." **Pilgrim**: "Governor Chris Christie declaring a state of emergency, emptying out beaches that should be packed this holiday weekend. The biggest threats, coastal flooding, rip currents, and beach erosion. Crews working through the weekend to shore up sand dunes to keep the storm surge at bay. Knigge, cutting his weekend short, leaving tonight before high tide." **Knigge**: "I'll take a storm like this any day." **Pilgrim**: "Take a look. The dune here already taking a beating from the crashing waves this weekend. Tonight, the beach here is closed. Tom?"

ABC: Hermine-Forecast. ABC World News (9/4, story 3, 0:55, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "We'll get back to Ginger Zee with more on the forecast and what to expect from Hermine." ABC (**Zee**) added, "That forecast includes Hermine taking a bit of a north and northwesterly track back towards say Eastern Long Island and parts of Nantucket. Again, it's still going to stay out to sea. This is no direct hit, there is no direct anything. You can see the coastal part of it will just be the piling of wind and waves. We put on the futurecast, you can see, very little rain makes it way on to the continental part of our states. As we go through even Monday, 7:00 pm, you'll start to see some rain bands in eastern Long Island and again right along the Connecticut and parts of the Rhode Island coast. Wind gusts could top 40 miles an hour. Some places could see 50. It's just, we don't get rid of Hermine until

Thursday. So, piling of waves and water, that's going to be the issue. Tom?"

CBS: Pacific Hurricane. The CBS Evening News (9/5, story 4, 0:15, Quijano, 11.17M) reported, "A new hurricane formed today in the Pacific. Newton is about 200 miles southeast of Cabo San Lucas, tracking toward the Baja Peninsula. Remnants could hit Arizona by Wednesday."

ABC: Oklahoma Earthquakes-Fracking. ABC World News (9/4, story 8, 1:35, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "Next, a significant earthquake striking Oklahoma this weekend. Wells linked to fracking now shut down. With the frequency of these quakes on the rise, there's worry about new tremors. Here's Lauren Lyster." ABC (**Lyster**) added, "This sudden shaking sending stone plunging from the top of this building. The sides of homes crumbling right off. Food thrown from the shelves of this grocery store. The quake felt from Texas to Nebraska. The question tonight, was this 5.6 magnitude earthquake, the most powerful to hit the state in years and tied for the strongest ever, man made?" **Daniel McNamara**, US Geological Survey: "Several of the larger earthquakes in Oklahoma the last couple of years have been linked to waste water disposal from oil and gas production." **Lyster**: "Scientists say a lot of that water comes from a process called fracking. Much of the water injected back into deep wells in the ground, linked to tremors. More than 900 3.0 or larger quakes hitting the state last year. Jumping from just over 100 in 2013. And in response to the earthquake, dozens of wells ordered to be shut down around the epicenter."

CBS: Oklahoma Earthquake-Fracking. The CBS Weekend News (9/4, story 8, 2:10, Quijano) reported, "A powerful earthquake rattled central Oklahoma Saturday. The magnitude 5.6 quake centered near the city of Pawnee tied a state record and was felt in seven states. It also renewed concerns about the disposal of waste water from oil and gas production which has been linked to the recent outbreak of quakes in Oklahoma. Here's Mireya Villarreal." CBS (**Villarreal**) added, "Bricks and debris from historical buildings in Pawnee, Oklahoma, cover the sidewalks. This small city is the latest epicenter of concern over Oklahoma's oil and gas industry." **Unidentified speaker**: "It was bad, the whole thing was just going like this. It was bad." **Villarreal**: "In 2015 Oklahoma averaged 2.5 earthquakes a day with a magnitude of 3.0 or higher, a total of 907 at that rating shook the state last year compared to just two in 2008. Oklahoma geological survey experts have connected the increase of quakes from waste water from an oil and gas production known as hydraulic fracturing or fracking. Saturday's quake prompted the state to initiate the fastest shutdown of waste water wells in state history; 37 are scheduled to be closed." **Susan Hough**, US Geological Survey: "If we stopped all the activity tomorrow it is not like all the earthquakes would stop tomorrow." **Villarreal**: "Seismologist Susan Hough said induced earthquake mainly caused by waste water injection wells aren't as severe as naturally caused ones but that could change if Oklahoma and other states where fracking is booming don't take note. Is there a chance things could get worse?" **Hough**: "We expect that the regulatory steps are going to help overall, the rates are going go down and the hazard will go down. But we don't have an exact crystal ball so there is the potential certainly for more earthquakes. There is the potential for bigger earthquakes than what we have seen." **Villarreal**: "The 37 waste water wells set to be shuts down are just a small fraction of the 4,200 currently permitted by the state. Elaine, the Oklahoma governor has declared a state of emergency for the affected area."

CBS: Oklahoma-Earthquake. The CBS Evening News (9/3, story 4, 0:20, Morgan, 11.17M) reported, "An earthquake rattled central Oklahoma overnight. It was magnitude 5.6, centered near the city of Pawnee, and it was felt in seven states. Minor damage was reported, but no one was hurt. This is believed to be the strongest quake to hit the state since 1952. Oklahoma has seen a surge in earthquakes, blamed on the injection into the earth of waste water from fracking."

NBC: Oklahoma-Earthquake. NBC Nightly News (9/3, story 4, 1:50, Diaz-Balart, 16.61M) reported, "In the middle of the country, it was a jolting morning in parts of at least seven states as an earthquake in Oklahoma rattled millions and caused at least some damage there. The quake was the latest and the most powerful in a huge increase of earthquake activity in the region. Gadi Schwartz has that story." NBC (**Schwartz**) added, "Nearly a full minute of shaking in Oklahoma, a state now rivaling California as earthquake country." **Unidentified Speaker**: "It was the biggest one I've ever felt." **Schwartz**: "Today, a 5.6 quake in the small town of Pawnee. Emergency crews dousing fires while other areas saw 100-year-old stone facades come crashing down. And in grocery stores, aisle after aisle in shambles." **Unidentified Speaker**: "Right away, you could tell this was something different.” **Schwartz**: “The quake fanning out across the country, felt in Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, Arkansas, Texas, and as far as Illinois and Colorado. But more alarming than the shaking, an upward trend documented by the US Geological Survey showing a spike in Oklahoma earthquakes, a region with heavy oil and natural gas production. This year, for the first time, geologists putting out a map highlighting areas prone to human-caused earthquakes. They’re linked to the practice of fracking and injecting waste water at high pressure deep into the earth.” **Dan McNamara**, US Geological Survey: “There’s a pretty strong chance this is also related to waste water injection.” **Schwartz**: “Before 2000, the Sooner State saw about 2 quakes a year larger than a 3.0; in 2011, the number up to 63, and last year a staggering 890 quakes. The state recently ordered a cutback in waste water injection sites to reduce the number of earthquakes.” **McNamara**: “Today, specifically, they’re shutting down up to 40 wells within a five-mile radius of the epicenter.” **Schwartz**: “Growing concern as the Heartland finds itself on increasingly shaking ground. Gadi Schwartz, NBC News.”

Hermine Drifts Past Northeast, Threatening Storm Surge And 70 MPH Winds

By Alastair Jamieson, Alex Johnson And Elisha Fieldstadt

NBC News, September 5, 2016

Storm warnings were in effect Monday from Long Island to Nantucket as post-Tropical Cyclone Hermine drifted slowly up the Atlantic, promising near hurricane-strength winds, floods and beach erosion.

The National Weather Service said large waves will pound the East Coast from the mid-Atlantic states to southern New England through the end of Labor Day. Life-threatening rip currents are expected at least into the middle of the week, it added.

At 11 a.m. ET, Hermine was about 230 miles southeast of the eastern tip of Long Island, N.Y. The storm was moving northwest at 6 mph and expected to will “meander slowly offshore of the New England coast through Tuesday,” according to the National Weather Service.

It said a storm surge of up to two feet was expected around the time of high tide late Monday along the coast of Long Island.

“The combination of a storm surge and the tide will cause normally dry areas near the coast to be flooded by rising waters moving inland from the shoreline,” the NWS said in an advisory. “Along the immediate coastline, the surge will be accompanied by large and dangerous waves.”

Connecticut’s Gov. Dannel Malloy partially activated the state’s Emergency Operation Center at the Hartford Armory at 6 p.m. Sunday to monitor conditions as Hermine churned to the south.

“We must keep our guard up,” he said, according to NBC Connecticut. “I want to caution residents that weather conditions can change quickly. Especially with a slow-moving storm.”

Tropical storm warnings were in effect Monday for the eastern seaboard from New Haven, Connecticut to Massachusetts’s Sagamore Beach, Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard. Warnings were also in effect for Block Island and Long Island — from Fire Island Inlet to Port Jefferson.

Hermine was packing maximum sustained winds of 70 mph, just short of hurricane strength — and expected to remain near hurricane strength through Monday evening.

Beaches in Nantucket were closed for the Labor Day holiday, and New York City announced Monday that all beaches would be closed to swimmers for a third day Tuesday.

Boaters, meanwhile, were busy retrieving their vessels or making sure they were secure for Monday’s holiday.

Hermine has been moving east since it battered Florida and the Carolinas on its way up the coast beginning Friday. But updated NWS projections indicated that its eastward motion is ending and that Hermine is likely to slowly veer northwestward through Tuesday back toward the Northeast coast.

Vacationers who fled the beaches Friday and Saturday kept business owners busy figuring out just how much revenue they’d lost.

“We live by the weather and we die by the weather,” said Louis Gouvas, who’s owned Louie’s Pizza in Rehoboth Beach, Del., for almost 60 years.

A voluntary evacuation from Long Island’s popular vacation destination Fire Island was lifted Monday, leaving some business owners on the narrow barrier island feeling that they had suffered from an overhyped forecast.

“Fire Island’s small businesses from Davis Park to Kismet lost millions of dollars in lost revenue in what was supposed to be one of the most profitable weekends of the summer because of timid politicians who were slow to realize that the threat of Tropical Storm Hermine had dissipated,” a Long Island Citizens for Good Government statement said.

But the storm, because it is slow-moving, remained unpredictable. Even under sunny skies, rip currents and storm-surges posed a threat, and the storm had a track-record of wreaking lasting havoc.

When it first made landfall as a hurricane in Florida Friday, the storm knocked out power to hundreds of thousands. Gov. Rick Scott said Monday that nearly 21,000 customers were still without power.

Just north of Tampa in Florida's Pasco County, residents were forced from their homes two days after the storm hit as run-off from flooded northern parts of the state washed over roads and through houses. About 2,500 residents were still displaced Monday.

Lenny Panzitta joined friends and neighbors who spent Sunday sawing up downed trees that were blocking the roads on Whitemarsh Island, off the Georgia coast.

Then "the electricity went off, and I said I hope another tree didn't come down where they were clearing, and it did," Panzitta told NBC station WSAV of Savannah.

"It knocked the transformer down," he said. "Nobody was hit, but now we have wires hanging over the road so you can't get through."

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory and other state officials spent the day touring farm damage in the eastern part of his state, where thousands of acres of crops remained under water.

Two deaths — one in Florida and one in North Carolina — have been blamed on the storm.

Editor's note: An earlier version of this story attributed three deaths to the storm, but a fatality in South Carolina has not been confirmed to have been Hermine related.

Truncated Hermine TV Alert Wrongly Airs Evacuation Order

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

ISLIP, N.Y. (AP) — Federal officials in New York are investigating an emergency alert system after a mistakenly truncated message about storm system Hermine wrongly advised TV watchers on Long Island of an ordered evacuation, authorities said Sunday.

The Saturday night confusion started after Suffolk County emergency officials used an aspect of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's alert system for the first time since gaining access to it after Superstorm Sandy. They had hoped to advise viewers that a voluntary evacuation had been ordered for Fire Island, a thin strip of land off of Long Island's southern shore and a popular summertime destination.

Instead, somehow only the first part of the message — that an evacuation order had been issued — was broadcast to viewers. That the order was voluntary and only applied to those on Fire Island didn't make it onto TV screens.

"It caused obvious and expected questioning," said Gregory Miniutti, chief of communication for Suffolk County's Department of Fire Rescue.

Lauren Lefebvre, a spokeswoman for the FEMA region that covers New York, said officials are investigating what caused the message to be shortened.

It wasn't immediately clear how many TV viewers saw the wrong alert. Nearly 3 million people live on Long Island, with 1.5 million people in Suffolk County and another roughly 1.3 in Nassau County, census records show.

After county officials realized the misleading alert had been sent to the public around 7:30 p.m. Saturday from FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, a clarifying alert was subsequently issued, Miniutti said.

Emergency officials gained access to the FEMA broadcast system after 2012, when Superstorm Sandy caused major devastation, flooding and even deaths across Long Island and throughout New York and New Jersey.

Suffolk County normally uses another system that sends out emergency messages and mass notifications through text messages or reverse 911 calls to landlines, Miniutti said. But on Saturday evening officials decided to use the FEMA broadcast system because most of the people on Fire Island are tourists and visitors who don't have landlines or sign up for emergency alerts on their phones, he said.

This story has been corrected to show that 1.3 million people live in Nassau County, not 321,000, and that the Suffolk County Department of Fire and Rescue chief's last name is Miniutti, not Miniutto.

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Hermine Launches Waffle House Storm Team

By Jennifer Leslie

WXIA-TV Atlanta, September 2, 2016

NORCROSS, GA. – The Waffle House storm team left company headquarters in Norcross early Friday to roll to restaurants impacted by Tropical Storm Hermine in South Georgia, Florida and South Carolina.

By noon, Waffle House had 14 restaurants without power. It was able to open two stores that had to close in the morning.

"If we have running water and gas, we can stay open and cook even when the power goes out," said Pat Warner, Vice President of Culture at Waffle House. "We're there 24/7 the rest of the year, so we want to be there when a storm goes through. We owe it to our customers and associates."

Warner said company officials have already been in touch with FEMA to help monitor the "Waffle House Index."

That's a term coined by FEMA Director Craig Fugate when he led emergency operations in Florida.

"If a Waffle House restaurant is open or on generator, emergency workers can keep moving," explained Warner. "If it's closed, they need to stop and start working."

Warner said the company began developing its emergency response plan in 1989 when Hurricane Hugo made landfall near Charleston, South Carolina.

"Katrina was the biggest test," Warner said. "We had to shut down 107 restaurants because of evacuations. We lost 7 restaurants."

Waffle House now has a mobile command center to help restore communications between headquarters and restaurants impacted by a storm like Hermine.

Warner said power is the main issue with this storm. The company's first priority is getting generators to restaurants that lost power.

"Staying open helps everyone get back that sense of normalcy," he added.

(© 2016 WXIA)

Hurricane Newton Heads Toward Resorts In Mexico's Baja

By Ignacio Martinez

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

CABO SAN LUCAS, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Newton soaked Mexico's western Pacific coast Monday and took aim at Baja California's twin resorts of Los Cabos, where residents and officials braced for a possible direct hit two years after they were slammed by a major storm.

Newton's maximum sustained winds increased to 75 mph (120 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami, making it a Category 1 hurricane. The storm was centered about 215 miles (350 kilometers) southeast of Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo and was moving northwest at 16 mph (26 kph) on a forecast path that would bring it near or over the area Tuesday morning.

Some foreign tourists were still walking the streets of Cabo San Lucas on Monday even as workers began nailing plywood over the windows of businesses.

Los Cabos Mayor Arturo de la Rosa Escalante said storm shelters were being opened and low-lying areas would be evacuated.

"There is no need for mass buying," he said. "There is enough food and fuel for the next 20 days."

Los Cabos police were stationed at shopping malls to guard against the kind of looting that occurred after Hurricane Odile struck the area in 2014 as a Category 3 storm, with 125 mph (205 kph) winds.

Earlier Monday, as a tropical storm, Newton dumped torrential rains that prompted some 100 people to evacuate their homes and damaged residences in Uruapan in the Pacific coast state of Michoacan, the city government reported.

Some roads were blocked by flooding and mudslides in the neighboring state of Guerrero, where some people were evacuated by helicopter. No deaths were reported in either state.

A hurricane warning was in effect for Cabo San Lucas and the nearby coastline. Coastal portions of five Mexican states could see 5 to 10 inches of rain, with isolated maximums of 15 inches, the hurricane center said.

Newton was expected to cross over the peninsula and enter the Gulf of California, also known as the Sea of Cortez, on Wednesday. The hurricane center said the storm was likely to continue north into Arizona as a tropical depression later in the week.

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Nearly $9 Billion In Damage After Catastrophic Louisiana Flooding, Gov. John Bel Edwards Tells President Barack Obama

Associated Press, September 3, 2016

BATON ROUGE (AP) — Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards says his state had more than $8.7 billion in damage from catastrophic flooding in August, and the figure will increase as officials finish assessing damage to roads and other public infrastructure.

The governor's office Saturday released a letter Edwards sent Friday to President Barack Obama.

Edwards asks that Congress this month approve $2 billion in federal aid for Louisiana for housing, economic development and infrastructure. He says it's a "very reasonable request," adding to other federal programs assisting in Louisiana's flood recovery.

Edwards says damage has been documented to more than 55,000 houses, and that could double as aid applications and inspections continue. More than 80 percent of damaged homes lacked flood insurance because most were outside the flood plain. More than 6,000 businesses flooded.

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Analysis: Flood Recovery Programs Complex, Require Patience

By Melinda Deslatte

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

BAKER, La. (AP) – FEMA. SBA. NFIP. To navigate the complex world of flood recovery takes not only an acronym dictionary, but patience, persistence – and a binder to keep track of the applications.

People have to sift through local, state and federal regulations that range from home permitting requirements to elevation standards.

Since flooding ravaged south Louisiana more than three weeks ago, thousands of storm victims can't live in their houses. Transportation, jobs and children's school plans were disrupted. On top of that hair-pulling stress, add in the complexity of available assistance programs, and it's easy to see how discouraging the recovery can be.

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, a Republican who represents much of the most heavily damaged region, said aid has been too sluggish so far.

"People need to know what type of assistance is going to be available to them. That's something that's key," Graves said after taking a Florida congressman on a tour of the damage. "You have people sitting around that don't have a home, that don't have cars, that don't have wardrobes. In some cases, their employers are under water."

At a Tuesday night meeting in Baker for flood victims, representatives of at least eight state and federal agencies – a myriad of acronyms – offered information about disaster programs and recovery tips in a pile of handouts so numerous they covered a long table.

Mayor Darnell Waites, in office only since July, had questions of the agencies assembled, as did a dozen flood victims who arrived at the local school seeking information.

One man talked of seeing a flood insurance adjuster, then hearing nothing. A woman worried her flood insurance wouldn't cover her losses and wanted to know what else is available. Another woman wanted to get a FEMA mobile home while she repaired her house.

People scribbled down phone numbers and websites in notebooks and on scraps of paper trying to keep track of the programs and agencies they should contact.

For the homeowners who had flood insurance, their path to recovery started by filing claims with the National Flood Insurance Program, NFIP for short. But fewer than one in five homeowners with damage is estimated to have paid for the flood coverage.

The main stop for anyone with flood damage, with or without insurance, is the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in aid has been approved so far, with more than 130,000 households registered for assistance. But the grants offered there max out at around $33,000 and the average that people have received in past disasters falls far short of that amount.

FEMA aid is aimed at helping people get more stable, not at making them whole.

"It's not an insurance program. It's to get people back on their feet," said Gov. John Bel Edwards. He said even with available FEMA aid, people are "still going to have a hard time."

That's where the U.S. Small Business Administration steps in. The SBA offers low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters and businesses for repair and replacement of damaged property. Repayment terms can be up to 30 years. Applications are separate from FEMA registration.

For housing help, the Edwards administration has set up a FEMA-funded "shelter at home" program that offers up to $15,000 in modest, quick repairs to help people get back into their houses while they do larger reconstruction work. That requires a separate registration beyond the FEMA application, and the aid doesn't count against other available FEMA assistance.

Homeowners with more severe damage who aren't able to tap into the "shelter at home" program could be eligible to set up a FEMA-issued mobile home in their yards.

At the meeting in Baker, it quickly became clear that some folks were farther along in cleanup and recovery than others.

One man spoke of an elderly neighbor who didn't leave during the flood, hadn't gutted his home and refused to leave even as mold climbed up the walls and onto the ceiling. Officials with state and federal agencies rushed to get the address, saying they'd send someone to his home.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Melinda Deslatte covers Louisiana politics for The Associated Press. Follow her at http://twitter.com/melindadeslatte

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People And Governments In More Parishes Can Get FEMA Help

Associated Press, September 2, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Individuals who suffered flooding damage in St. James and West Baton Rouge parishes in the August floods are now eligible for federal disaster assistance.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency made the announcement Thursday, adding them to a list of 20 other south Louisiana parishes that have been declared federal disaster areas.

People can go to www.DisasterAssistance.gov to register or call 1-800-621-3362 any day from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Residents of the parishes who have already registered don't need to act again.

The agency also says that governments in Assumption, Cameron, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist and West Baton Rouge parishes are now eligible for FEMA assistance in repairing damage to public assets or cleaning up, joining a list of 20 other parishes.

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FEMA Offers Temporary Work To Louisianians To Help In Flood Recovery

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana residents looking for temporary work have an opportunity to help in the flood recovery process by working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

FEMA is advertising through the Louisiana Workforce Commission to fill open positions at its disaster recovery offices in the state.

These are full-time jobs, but of temporary duration, with benefits including health insurance, sick leave and holiday pay.

To apply, visit www.laworks.net, the website for Louisiana Workforce Commission – Helping Individuals Reach Employment.

FEMA is seeking a variety of skilled workers, including administrative assistants, construction cost estimators, construction trade workers, drivers, environmental experts, historic preservation specialists and travel agents.

Candidates must be U.S. citizens, 18 years or older and have a valid government identification card, such as driver's license or military ID.

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FEMA Hiring Temporary Workers For Disaster Recovery Aid

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Louisiana residents looking for temporary work have an opportunity to help in the recovery process by working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

WAFB-TV (http://bit.ly/2bRrlyR) reports FEMA is advertising through the Louisiana Workforce Commission to fill open positions at its disaster recovery offices in the state.

These are full-time jobs, but of temporary duration, with benefits including health insurance, sick leave and holiday pay.

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The Latest: Red Cross Casework Starting For $125/person Aid

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The Latest on Louisiana flooding (all times local):

3:15 p.m.

The American Red Cross says it's beginning recovery casework to help people connect with services other than the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Senior vice president Harvey Johnson says the Red Cross can also provide $125 per person to people who have major damage to their homes but don't qualify for federal disaster assistance. That would mean $500 for a family of four.

The agency says the recovery casework is starting even as volunteers continue to operate shelters, serve meals and distribute relief supplies in south Louisiana.

Regional executive Joshua Joachim says "People in Louisiana are ready to take the next step, to try to get back to a normal life, to have a home again instead of staying in a shelter."

He says anyone affected for the floods should apply to FEMA.

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10 a.m.

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The Federal Emergency Loans Louisiana Isn't Getting

By Danny Vinik

Politico, September 2, 2016

Fifteen miles outside of Baton Rouge, on a road washed out by the flooding that submerged a nearby highway, Robert Formeller is rebuilding his property, or trying to. An insurance agent and sole proprietor of the real estate company Formeller Investments LLC, he owns three small office buildings in Denham Springs, Louisiana. Having lived through the disastrous Louisiana floods in 1983, Formeller invested almost $100,000 raising the office buildings above historic flood levels.

But the torrential rains that struck the Baton Rouge region in August flooded the buildings anyway. He's been spending days and nights since working to recover his business before mold sets in and his tenants move out. "He's tapping into every loose dollar he can find to get things moving and get on top of the recovery," said his daughter, Nicole Gould.

As millions in disaster-relief money pours into Louisiana, you might think a good federal disaster policy would get money to people like Formeller almost immediately, giving them enough short-term cash to keep their businesses afloat. And you'd be right: experts on disaster recovery think getting money quickly to small-business owners is crucial not just for the owners, but letting the community around them recover. One oft-cited study by the Federal Emergency Management Agency found that 40 percent of small businesses that close for even a day after a disaster never reopen.

"[Small businesses] are so much the part of a fabric of a community," said Robin Keegan, the former executive director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, which was created following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to oversee the recovery. "In most cases, the recovery of a community is almost a mission rather than a profit-making endeavor. They need the resources to be part of that recovery."

After Katrina, Congress passed a new law designed to do just that. The Immediate Disaster Assistance Program, 1 of 3 emergency loan programs created under a 2008 law, was supposed to funnel money to small businesses within 36 hours of a disaster, with a government guarantee for the lender. But as POLITICO reported last year, that program — which was supposed to be piloted in 2010 — had never actually managed to secure a loan for any small business.

Congress held a hearing on the problem last summer, but today, as Louisiana faces its worst disaster since Katrina, the emergency loan program still hasn't secured a single loan. What has happened, instead, is a bit of buck-passing. Last year, Congress was pointing the finger at the Small Business Administration, which was supposed to administer the loans but had never actually helped issue one. This year, Congress has the agency's feedback on what went wrong — but it's unclear what, if anything, lawmakers plan to do about it.

So far the SBA has spent $3 million on the program. Its eight-year history has become a story of slipshod reporting and missed deadlines. And it still hasn't funneled a dollar to people like Formeller.

"That would be critically important, especially getting it up in 36 hours," said Charles D'Agostino, executive director of the LSU Innovation Park, a research complex in Baton Rouge. "We don't have a week. We don't have two weeks."

The emergency loan program was invented to fill a gap. Businesses actually can get disaster relief from Washington, but it takes a while — after Superstorm Sandy, the Government Accountability Office found it took nearly 40 days for SBA to review disaster loan applications from small businesses. In that time, they can lose inventory, miss payroll, lose all their customers, and usually need short-term cash to keep the doors open. The Small Business Disaster Response and Loan Improvements Act was supposed to do that, offering loan guarantees to local banks, with a goal of approving the money for businesses within 36 hours.

Congress appropriated $3 million in the 2010 fiscal year for the SBA to pilot the program, and the agency actually released rules for it the same year. But the pilot never happened, with the agency repeatedly pushing back its projected launch date. The GAO investigated the delays and delivered a scathing report against the agency in 2014. The watchdog pinpointed two main problems: faulty computers and an unwillingness among lenders to participate.

Last summer, despite the GAO report, the program still hadn't made a loan, and POLITICO reported that lawmakers were increasingly concerned with SBA's ability to get it up and running. The agency said it had solved its computer problems but had been unable to persuade banks to take part in the program under the strict financial terms required by law. It reiterated that complaint this summer, sending a letter in July to Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-N.Y.), the ranking member of the House Small Business Committee, outlining comments it had received from lenders who refused to participate in the program.

Is the program doomed because banks simply won't help? The National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders, a trade association for banks and other institutions, sent detailed objections to the loan rules in a comment to the SBA, and went so far as to argue that disaster funding shouldn't be their job, writing: "providing loans to assist such individuals and entities is an inherently governmental function and is a role unsuited to private commercial lenders."

But on the ground, it's not clear how big an obstacle that really is. In Baton Rouge, Nicole Gould said that a local bank quickly said it could lend her father the emergency money he needed — even without the government guarantee. She'd originally tried to help her father apply for disaster loans from the SBA, but gave up on trying to fill out the forms after spending hours on them and getting only halfway through. "There's not enough time to spend on a 10-hour application," she said. "We just talked to the banker and he promised us the lending is on and their rate is going to be very close to 4 percent anyway. They already have the first mortgage on the property. They have a vested interest in the property succeeding."

The state of Louisiana has had good luck working with local banks as well. After Katrina, the state set up a temporary bridge loan program to help small businesses recover. Like the Immediate Disaster Assistance Program, the Louisiana program worked through private-sector lenders. Its terms were slightly better than the federal program: The SBA law offers banks an 85 percent repayment guarantee; Louisiana offered 100 percent. The program delivered $10 million in loans to 407 small businesses within three weeks.

The idea does require some community spirit on the part of banks: Even with a 100 percent loan guarantee, "It's not going to make the banks any money," said Adam Knapp, who was the policy director for the Louisiana Economic Development agency at the time and now is the CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber,. "They are doing it out of their goodwill."

The NAGGL did not respond to a message asking for further comment on its objections to the loan program.

By all accounts, the SBA has improved its processes for responding to natural disasters in recent years. It has been quick to set up field offices in the region and put out information for how affected businesses can apply for loans. But the flooding in Louisiana is putting the agency to its first major test since Sandy. Through Thursday, the agency had received 801 applications for its traditional business disaster loans. So far it has approved only 92 for a total of $7.9 million; it declined 243, with 415 still pending. (51 were withdrawn.) Carol Chastang, a spokesperson for the agency, said the applications are being processed within five days — not quite 36 hours, but far better than the SBA's processing times after Sandy. However, keeping up that pace will be critical as more small-business owners file their applications. The agency received nearly 15,000 applications after Sandy. While the numbers aren't expected to reach that high in the Baton Rouge region, Knapp estimates that 12,000 small businesses were affected, so the number of applications could rise considerably in the coming weeks.

"Getting cash out within about a week is really the time frame you want," said Michael Hecht, the president of Greater New Orleans, a regional economic development group.

So the complaints do seem to have improved at least one part of the disaster lending program. As for the quicker emergency loan program launched in 2008? The short answer is that it's been punted: The SBA has told Congress what the problems are, so in theory the impetus for fixing them falls on Congress. Potential solutions to make it more appealing to banks include increasing the loan guarantee and loosening restrictions on the loan term and associated fees, which would require changes to the law. In November, Congress passed legislation, sponsored by Velázquez, that made small changes to the traditional disaster loan program and gave businesses affected by Sandy another chance to apply for aid, but did not address the loan programs created under the 2008 legislation.

In response to questions about whether Congress was considering changes to the program, Velázquez said in a statement, "We should look carefully at potential changes to improve these other disaster loan initiatives, encourage private sector involvement and create more options for businesses impacted by disasters. It is inexcusable that the agency has taken 8 years and still hasn't been able to get this program off the ground. If legislative changes are necessary, we can look into them and I would hope my Republican colleagues would be open to such an effort, but regardless the agency needs to make this initiative a priority." Any changes will ultimately be up to the committee chairman, Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), and Republican leaders in Congress. Chabot's staff said they were awaiting another GAO report in October.

Meanwhile, in Baton Rouge, the community is coming together to help each other in any way it can. D'Agostino, who has worked with small businesses in the region for almost 30 years, said he and his staff drove around handing out Visa gift cards and household goods like toothbrush and toothpaste—the small items that are critical for people to get their lives back on track but are easily overlooked. He offered small businesses a computer with Internet and a phone to call suppliers, cancel deliveries and inform customers their orders would not arrive on time.

"It's a monumental thing," he said, adding, "This is not going to be a short process."

After publication, Rep. Velázquez's office provided an additional statement on the need for the Small Business Administration to prioritize the emergency loan program. The story has been updated to include it.

Louisianans Spurn Government And Crowdsource Aid In Wake Of Floods

Cajun Army harnesses power of social media to rescue people and locals have turned to sites such as Amazon to raise necessities and distribute them

By Matthew Teague

The Guardian (UK), September 2, 2016

The flooded people of southern Louisiana are losing a race against mold, hunger and homelessness, driving an already insular region into deeper mistrust of the federal government and other outside agencies.

The flood in mid-August was one of the first natural disasters of its scale in the US to unfold in the fully connected world of social media, and many residents are finding that the response of the Red Cross and federal groups has not kept up with the speed of the internet. So residents are turning to technology to organize themselves and, to some extent circumvent the government.

More than 150,000 houses were affected by the flood. On Wednesday, state lawmakers blasted the response from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema) in a House homeland security committee meeting. Congressman Clay Schexnayder said Fema's mobile home program has set up just one mobile home in his district.

"We're not expediting it fast enough to get these trailers in place. I'm confused as to why it's taking us so long to do that," he said. "Having one trailer set up so far out of all of this, one trailer – where I'm from I don't call that satisfactory at all."

Julie Ralph of Saint Francisville, Louisiana, said: "I know there are some people who lost everything and are getting pretty much peanuts from Fema. It's a drop in the bucket compared to what they lost."

So people are crowdsourcing, she said, bypassing Fema and the government. Ralph created a page on Amazon for donations of supplies such as toilet paper and toothbrushes, which she then distributes through the affected area.

The social media bypass began in the immediate aftermath of the flood, with the instant formation of the "Cajun Navy", a group of hunters and fishermen who used their boats to rescue tens of thousands of stranded residents.

They used Facebook and Google maps to pinpoint where people needed help, with locations and detailed information for rescuers like: "Rescue urgency:

Moderate as of 2am Aug 15. Personal Information: 2 are elderly, 1 has alzheimers and diabetes … They are in room over garage."

It's impossible in these still-early days to measure the exact impact of social media on the recovery in Louisiana – say, how many Twitter posts resulted in rescues or donations or volunteer hours – but government agencies are scrambling to get a sense of it; they're realizing dialing 911 for help isn't the only option now, or even the fastest.

Emergency responders are studying a group called Louisiana Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue Team, or LATF-1, an emergency response team that realized the importance of social media during the floods while others didn't. "LATF-1 was a governmental entity that could help, and in many cases, it was the only one responding via social media," team members wrote in an industry debriefing.

During the floods the taskforce started receiving requests for help via Facebook messages, which was unprecedented. "After the first message was received LATF-1 leadership made the decision to respond to all messages as they were received," they wrote. That created a logistical nightmare, but along the way they started to develop new tools for social media: ways of streamlining requests, feeding them to other agencies and weeding out false alarms.

On a larger, national scale, technologists are now puzzling over how to use all that data. "This year's Louisiana flood was one of the first attempts to leverage data from the population and then integrate that data back to a place where the public could use it," according to Government Computer News, a publication for technology experts. "The next generation of citizens and community leaders will have the skills and tools to be able to make better informed decisions."

Meanwhile, in Louisiana, people continue to make it up as they go.

Ralph, who distributed supplies via Amazon, said people are now crowdsourcing demolition and repairs. As floodwaters receded and rescue turned to recovery, the Cajun Navy evolved to become the Cajun Army.

"As it stands, the boots on the ground are the Cajun Army," Ralph said, "and anyone who can be summoned through Facebook or Twitter by people sharing how bad things are to get people to come over and help."

The Cajun Army's volunteers have created a website and its Facebook page has more than 5,000 members, who post requests and responses like this one Wednesday, from Todd Rossnagel in Baton Rouge: "Greetings Army. I have someone who needs a hand pulling wet insulation out from under her raised house. It's in Baton Rouge on S Tiger Bend. Please let me know if you can come help out and I can share the contact info."

Three hours later he wrote: "I received a phone call – thanks."

Together Baton Rouge is a collective of community groups now focused on tearing out damp home interiors.

The group said in a statement Wednesday: "Fifteen of the 288 house-gutting requests we've received so far on gutcheckLA.com, or 5% of the total, are living – literally sleeping – in mold-infested homes. All of those 15 are elderly women, most with medical issues. Projecting that percent out, there are probably between 1,600 and 2,600 people, mostly seniors, in that situation. That's a public health crisis."

In response, Together Baton Rouge is hiring 100 people for one month, at $15 an hour, to gut 2,000 homes. Donations will cover the quarter-million-dollar cost, they said, and as more donations come in they will hire more people.

Among those affected is Amber Cassady, whose home in Denham Springs has black mold that has bloomed across her ceiling, making the youngest of her five children sick, she said, and her car is completely flooded. Fema said on Wednesday that it is essentially handing out money as fast as it can – $202m so far. But Cassady said she was denied a Fema grant because although the water came up to her threshold it didn't enter at the ground floor; instead the rain, pouring at a rate up to 3in an hour, leaked in through her roof.

Now she stays home with the children, ranging in age from two weeks to seven years, because school and daycare are all canceled for the foreseeable future. Her husband, Shane, does auto body work and hitches rides every day.

"Fema told me to get a small loan, but I don't have credit. I have a low income," Cassady said on Wednesday. "I get depressed because I can't take my kids anywhere and I'm scared this mold is going to get us all sick."

Louisiana Residents Weigh Options For Temporary Housing

NPR, September 2, 2016

Louisiana residents displaced by the recent floods started registering for state and federal programs to provide a way to live in or near their flood damaged homes.

ARI SHAPIRO, HOST:

Tens of thousands of people are still homeless in Louisiana because of last month's floods. Many moved in with relatives when their homes were damaged. Others went to shelters. Federal and state officials are offering other housing options. None is a quick fix, as WWNO's Ryan Kailath reports.

RYAN KAILATH, BYLINE: After her house took on 4 feet of water, Maura Lewis and her family were rescued by boat and taken to a shelter. Now she's at a federal disaster center in Baton Rouge, where contractors are on hand to advise homeowners on how long restoring their home might take.

MAURA LEWIS: Four to six months and maybe even closer to a year's what I'm thinking because it's just so many homes that have been destroyed.

KAILATH: Lewis and her three kids are staying with her in-laws, but they can't stay there forever. She wants a place of her own by next week. At another disaster center, Arthur Williams is in line at 8 a.m. in a Chicago Bulls shirt and basketball shorts. He learns that FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will spring for a hotel room. Here's the catch.

ARTHUR WILLIAMS: All the hotels are booked around here forever, booked all the way up to Lafayette.

KAILATH: The Chicago native lives and works in a suburb of Baton Rouge, 90 minutes from Lafayette.

WILLIAMS: And our kids go to school here so that would be – and I work here – and that would be impossible.

KAILATH: There is another option – one of FEMA's new manufactured housing units. These mobile homes have built-in sprinklers and other safety measures to distinguish them from the notorious trailers used after Hurricane Katrina. Idea is, park the trailer on your lawn and live there while you rebuild. Arthur Williams doesn't qualify for one because his property is in a flood zone. Maura Lewis does qualify, but...

LEWIS: How long is it going to take, you know? You're talking about thousands and thousands of people who – a trailer would fit on their lot, too.

KAILATH: So far, exactly one family has gotten a trailer. One. The state is now touting another program called Shelter at Home. It pays for basic fixes to make your home livable – if you're approved. Even then, as Richard Carbo of the governor's office cautions, it's not a home makeover.

RICHARD CARBO: This will not make your home the way it was before the storm. This is not a rebuild. It is a repair.

KAILATH: This program was first tried after Superstorm Sandy. Rapid Repairs, as it was called, was beset with problems like shoddy construction and lost paperwork. Jimmy Oddo helped implement the program. At the time, he was a New York City councilman. He says when he read that Louisiana is trying something similar...

JIMMY ODDO: Just reading this has made me slightly nauseous and raised my blood pressure significantly. Good luck, Louisiana.

KAILATH: So far, more than 14,000 Louisianans have signed up. Not Maura Lewis.

LEWIS: Shelter at Home? It could be an option, but with the requirement of no more than 2 feet, it probably will not be.

KAILATH: The requirement she's referring to says if your home took on more than 2 feet of water, it has to be reviewed before you're eligible. And the list of other eligibility requirements is two pages long. When I asked Arthur Williams if he was interested in Shelter at Home...

WILLIAMS: This is my first time hearing about that. So where do you suggest we have to go for that?

DARLENE TULLIER: Unfortunately, FEMA and the state are both trying to help, but they aren't working together so...

KAILATH: That's Darlene Tullier. She shuttles between disaster centers now, playing emergency case manager for 13 family members.

TULLIER: I wish there were a person that each of these families could go to who could handle their process.

KAILATH: Maura Lewis finally found a solution. She's renting an apartment. FEMA will defray a good chunk of her rent, and she'll need that. She's still paying the mortgage on her flooded house. But that FEMA assistance only lasts for two months. For NPR News, I'm Ryan Kailath in Baton Rouge.

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La. Lawmakers Will Seek More Flood Recovery Money

WWL-TV New Orleans, September 2, 2016

WASHINGTON — Louisiana lawmakers plan to push for more federal aid to speed flood recovery efforts when they return to Congress next week.

Congressional, state and local officials are still assessing damage from last month's flooding that killed 13 people and destroyed tens of thousands of homes and businesses. But congressional lawmakers say they're working on legislation and met Monday with Gov. John Bel Edwards to discuss early needs.

"It's going to require a tailored response," said Republican Rep. Garret Graves, whose district includes hard-hit Baton Rouge. "The needs are pretty extraordinary."

With less than five weeks before Congress breaks for elections, Louisiana lawmakers vow to step up pressure to get colleagues to act.

"I certainly appreciate that this (effort) is going to have some challenges associated with it just because of the schedule, elections and everything else," said Graves. "But I'll tell you there's no doubt that these funds are needed yesterday."

Graves said the legislative wish-list will likely include Community Development Block Grant disaster recovery aid. Lawmakers also hope to create a task force of state, federal and local officials to coordinate and track recovery efforts.

To bolster their case, Louisiana members of Congress will invite colleagues in key positions to tour damaged communities. Rep. John Mica, R-Florida, who chairs a subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Federal Emergency Management Agency, toured Monday with Graves. California Rep. Maxine Waters, top Democrat on the Financial Services Committee, visited last Friday.

"You can't understand the gravity of this unless you see it," Graves said.

Last week, Democratic Rep. Cedric Richmond, who also represents parts of Baton Rouge, and Waters called for a field hearing in the city. Republican Sen. David Vitter, chairman of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, will hold a hearing Sept. 15 in Washington.

Lawmakers are also looking to tap economic aid and housing-repair programs and explore U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects to stabilize the Amite and Comite rivers.

Steve Ellis, vice president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, predicts there will be bipartisan support.

"I don't think anybody wants to appear to be hard-hearted," he said. "I would be surprised, considering the level and the scale of the loss, that there wouldn't be something."

Ellis said Congress could attach recovery aid to a continuing resolution to fund government operations, to emergency legislation to fund anti-Zika efforts, or to some other legislative vehicle.

"If they needed to do anything more with the flooding in Louisiana, they certainly could," he said. "But that's going to be more short-term, and what we really need is some systemic changes in how we approach disasters."

One possible complication, Ellis said, is that lawmakers who represent areas outside Louisiana that also have been hurt by recent flooding may push "to get a piece of the pie.''

President Barack Obama, who recently visited the state, urged Louisiana Republicans to press GOP leaders on recovery measures. That would include Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise, the majority whip and the No. 3 Republican in the House.

Obama said federal disaster relief funds will cover short-term cost, but "the issue is going to be less what we need to do in terms of paying for the short term — it's going to be the medium-term and the long-term rebuilding."

Obama declared 20 parishes major disaster areas. More than 128,000 households have registered for FEMA aid.

FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate said the state may also need help from other federal agencies to fund emergency road repairs and provide housing aid. He said it's too early to determine final costs, but FEMA already has approved $385 million in aid to flood victims.

"That should be some indicator ... this is not going to be a small event; it's going to be rather large," he said.

Graves said he expects most of the recovery efforts can be funded with existing pots of money or by shifting funds.

Lawmakers are looking to model legislation introduced after other disasters, including Superstorm Sandy, which hit New Jersey and New York in 2012.

"That storm absolutely deserved a recovery package," Graves said.

Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-New Jersey, called on Congress to cut short its recess to help flood victims, even though some Louisiana lawmakers voted against a Sandy disaster aid package.

Pascrell said the lawmakers "found the dumbest reasons to vote against" the package, but that shouldn't count against them.

"I'll have a Jersey moment with those guys, believe me," Pascrell said. "But retribution has no place in politics. It's petty politics when I'm being asked, why help these people when these three congressmen didn't help you in your state."

Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy was still a member of the House when lawmakers voted in January 2013 on the Sandy aid package. He, Scalise and Republican Rep. John Fleming opposed an amendment offered by Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, R-New Jersey, that provided nearly $34 billion for block grants. The Louisiana lawmakers said some of the Sandy aid measures included funding unrelated to the 2012 storm.

Their votes against Sandy aid may come back to haunt them now that their state faces similar needs, said Pearson Cross, a political scientist at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

"There may be some people who have longer memories and look at that and say, payback time,'' he said. "One would hope not."

Graves said most communities will be affected in some way by a disaster.

"Disasters happen, and folks need to know that when you have a catastrophic disaster, something on the scale of a 1,000-year event, that your government is going to be there to provide some degree of a safety net," he said.

– Deborah Barfield Berry, USA TODAY , WWL

Benchmark Used To Gauge Flood Size Can Muddy The Water

By Jo Craven McGinty

Wall Street Journal, September 2, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Flooding Of Coast, Caused By Global Warming, Has Already Begun

By Justin Gillis

New York Times, September 3, 2016

Huge vertical rulers are sprouting beside low spots in the streets here, so people can judge if the tidal floods that increasingly inundate their roads are too deep to drive through.

Five hundred miles down the Atlantic Coast, the only road to Tybee Island, Ga., is disappearing beneath the sea several times a year, cutting the town off from the mainland.

And another 500 miles on, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., increased tidal flooding is forcing the city to spend millions fixing battered roads and drains — and, at times, to send out giant vacuum trucks to suck saltwater off the streets.

For decades, as the global warming created by human emissions caused land ice to melt and ocean water to expand, scientists warned that the accelerating rise of the sea would eventually imperil the United States' coastline.

Now, those warnings are no longer theoretical: The inundation of the coast has begun. The sea has crept up to the point that a high tide and a brisk wind are all it takes to send water pouring into streets and homes.

Federal scientists have documented a sharp jump in this nuisance flooding — often called "sunny-day flooding" — along both the East Coast and the Gulf Coast in recent years. The sea is now so near the brim in many places that they believe the problem is likely to worsen quickly. Shifts in the Pacific Ocean mean that the West Coast, partly spared over the past two decades, may be hit hard, too.

These tidal floods are often just a foot or two deep, but they can stop traffic, swamp basements, damage cars, kill lawns and forests, and poison wells with salt. Moreover, the high seas interfere with the drainage of storm water.

In coastal regions, that compounds the damage from the increasingly heavy rains plaguing the country, like those that recently caused extensive flooding in Louisiana. Scientists say these rains are also a consequence of human greenhouse emissions.

"Once impacts become noticeable, they're going to be upon you quickly," said William V. Sweet, a scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Silver Spring, Md., who is among the leaders in research on coastal inundation. "It's not a hundred years off — it's now."

Local governments, under pressure from annoyed citizens, are beginning to act. Elections are being won on promises to invest money to protect against flooding. Miami Beach is leading the way, increasing local fees to finance a $400 million plan that includes raising streets, installing pumps and elevating sea walls.

In many of the worst-hit cities, mayors of both parties are sounding an alarm.

"I'm a Republican, but I also realize, by any objective analysis, the sea level is rising," said Jason Buelterman, the mayor of tiny Tybee Island, one of the first Georgia communities to adopt a detailed climate plan.

But the local leaders say they cannot tackle this problem alone. They are pleading with state and federal governments for guidance and help, including billions to pay for flood walls, pumps and road improvements that would buy them time.

Yet Congress has largely ignored these pleas, and has even tried to block plans by the military to head off future problems at the numerous bases imperiled by a rising sea. A Republican congressman from Colorado, Ken Buck, recently called one military proposal part of a "radical climate change agenda."

The gridlock in Washington means the United States lacks not only a broad national policy on sea-level rise, it has something close to the opposite: The federal government spends billions of taxpayer dollars in ways that add to the risks, by subsidizing local governments and homeowners who build in imperiled locations along the coast.

As the problem worsens, experts are warning that national security is on the line. Naval bases, in particular, are threatened; they can hardly be moved away from the ocean, yet much of their land is at risk of disappearing within this century.

"It's as if the country was being attacked along every border, simultaneously," said Andrea Dutton, a climate scientist at the University of Florida and one of the world's leading experts on rising seas. "It's a slow, gradual attack, but it threatens the safety and security of the United States."

One night eight years ago, Karen Speights, a Norfolk resident, was sitting at the dinner table with her mother, eating crab legs dipped in butter and a tangy sauce. She felt a tingle.

"Ma!" she cried. "My feet are wet!"

Her mother laughed, but then she felt it, too: a house that had not flooded since the family moved there in 1964 was soon awash in saltwater. Ms. Speights initially hoped that flood was a fluke. Instead, it turned out to be the first of three to hit their home in less than a decade.

Nowadays, Ms. Speights, an administrative worker at a utility company, is wondering how to get her and her mother out of the neighborhood before the water comes again, without taking too much of a financial hit. And she pays more attention to problems that once seemed remote, like warnings from scientists about the rising sea.

"I believe it because we're living it," Ms. Speights said as she sat on her sofa, nodding toward the nearby tidal marsh that sent water into her living room. "The water has to be rising if we never flooded, and all of a sudden we've flooded three times in eight years."

Because the land is sinking as the ocean rises, Norfolk and the metropolitan region surrounding it, known as Hampton Roads, are among the worst-hit parts of the United States. That local factor means, in essence, that the region is a few decades ahead in feeling the effects of sea-level rise, and illustrates what people along the rest of the American coast can expect.

The biggest problems involve frequent flooding of homes and roads. As the sea rises, hundreds of tidal creeks and marshes that thread through the region are bringing saltwater to people's doorsteps.

This summer, on a driving tour of Norfolk and nearby towns, William A. Stiles Jr. pointed to the telltale signs that the ocean is gradually invading the region.

He spotted crusts of dried salt in the streets, and salt-loving marsh grasses that are taking over suburban yards. He pointed out trees killed by seawater. He stood next to one of the road signs that Norfolk has been forced to install in recent years, essentially huge vertical rulers so people know the depth of floodwaters at low-lying intersections.

"There's just more and more visible impacts: water on the street, water that won't clear from the ditch, these intense rain events, higher tides," Mr. Stiles said.

"It's beginning to catch the attention of citizens, restaurant owners, business people, politicians. There's just much more of a conversation, and it's not just in the politically safe places. It's everywhere."

Mr. Stiles, known as Skip, heads a local environmental group, Wetlands Watch. At his suggestion, students at two local universities began looking at the neighborhood where Ms. Speights lives, Chesterfield Heights. It has had little history of flooding, but that is starting to change as the water rises.

The plan the students developed has morphed into an ambitious program to safeguard the neighborhood, and another nearby, for decades. The Obama administration recently gave Virginia more than $100 million to carry the plan out. The administration has also enlisted one of the universities, Old Dominion in Norfolk, to spearhead a broad effort at better planning.

But the size of that grant illustrates the scope of the problem confronting the region, and the country: protecting a single neighborhood from rising water can easily cost tens of millions of dollars. Sea walls and streets may have to be raised, or movable gates built along waterways so they can be closed at times of high water.

While the Obama administration is trying to create a few showcase neighborhoods, there is no sign Congress is prepared to spend the money that cities and states say they need: tens of billions of dollars just to catch up to the current flooding problems, much less get ahead of them. Norfolk alone, a town of 250,000 people, has a wish list of $1.2 billion — or about $5,000 for every man, woman and child in the city.

As the national response lags, experts warn that the flooding is putting the country's defense at risk.

Several studies have concluded that Naval Station Norfolk, the world's largest naval base, is profoundly threatened by rising seas, as are other coastal bases. The Pentagon has managed to build floodgates and other protective measures at some facilities. But attempts by the military to develop broader climate change plans have met fierce resistance in Congress.

That was the case this summer, when an effort by the Pentagon to appoint officers to take charge of climate resilience led to a House vote prohibiting taxpayer money from being spent on the plan.

"When we distract our military with a radical climate change agenda, we detract from their main purpose of defending America from enemies" like the Islamic State, said Mr. Buck of Colorado, the Republican congressman who sponsored the measure. His amendment passed the House 216 to 205, though the Senate has yet to agree to it.

Many people in Congress, almost all of them Republicans, express doubt about climate science, with some of them promulgating conspiracy theories claiming that researchers have invented the issue to justify greater governmental control over people's lives. So far, this ideological position has been immune to the rising evidence of harm from human-induced climate change.

The Obama administration has been pushing federal agencies, including the Pentagon, to take more aggressive steps. But without action in Congress, experts say these efforts fall far short of what is required.

"In the country, certainly in the Congress, it hasn't really resonated — the billions and perhaps trillions of dollars that we would need to spend if we want to live on the coast like we're living today," said David W. Titley, a retired rear admiral who was the chief oceanographer of the Navy, and now heads a climate center at Pennsylvania State University.

"I haven't seen any evidence that there is serious thought about this: what does a world of three, four, five feet of sea-level rise look like?"

Deep in a thicket of trees on an out-of-the-way island in the Florida Keys, a diesel engine roared to life. Soon a drill bit was chewing through ancient limestone, pulling up evidence from the geological past that might shed light on the future of the planet.

On a sultry day in March, Dr. Dutton, the University of Florida scientist, stood watch over the drilling operation, inspecting her samples as they emerged from the ground. She spotted fossilized corals, proof that what is now the dry ground of Lignumvitae Key was once underwater.

With taxpayer funding from the National Science Foundation, Dr. Dutton is chasing what might be the most urgent question in climate science: How fast is the ocean going to rise?

"Is it going to happen in decades, or centuries, or a thousand years?" Dr. Dutton asked as she took a break to eat lunch on a tarpaulin spread under the trees. "This will give us an example to say, 'Well, the last time this happened, here is how long it took.'"

The opponents of climate science in Congress, and the tiny group of climate researchers allied with them, have argued that the concerns of thousands of mainstream scientists about the future are based on unproven computer forecasts.

In reality, their concerns are based in large part on mounting evidence of what has happened in the past.

Through decades of research, it has become clear that human civilization, roughly 6,000 years old, developed during an unusually stable period for global sea levels. But over longer spans, coastlines have been much more dynamic.

During ice ages, caused by wobbles in the Earth's orbit, sea levels dropped more than 400 feet as ice piled up on land. But during periods slightly warmer than today, the sea may have risen 70 or more feet above the current level.

Dr. Dutton and other leading scientists are focused on the last sea-level high point, which occurred between the last two ice ages, about 125,000 years ago.

After years of surveying ancient shorelines around the world, scientists determined that the sea level rose by something like 20 to 30 feet in that era, compared with today. But how long did it take to make that jump? That is the question Dr. Dutton, using improved research techniques, wants to answer.

Large parts of the Florida Keys are simply ancient coral reefs that grew during the period of high seas, and were exposed when the levels fell. Trees, roads and houses now sit atop the old reefs. By recovering samples, Dr. Dutton hopes to date a sequence of corals as they grew along with the rising sea, potentially revealing the rate at which the water rose.

The research, likely to take years, may supply a figure for how quickly the ocean was able to rise under past conditions, but not necessarily a maximum rate for the coming decades. The release of greenhouse gases from human activity is causing the planet to warm rapidly, perhaps faster than at any other time in the Earth's history. The ice sheets in both Greenland and West Antarctica are beginning to melt into the sea at an accelerating pace.

Scientists had long hoped that any disintegration of the ice sheets would take thousands of years, but recent research suggests the breakup of West Antarctica could occur much faster. In the worst-case scenario, this research suggests, the rate of sea-level rise could reach a foot per decade by the 22nd century, about 10 times faster than today.

In 2013, scientists reached a consensus that three feet was the highest plausible rise by the year 2100. But now some of them are starting to say that six or seven feet may be possible. A rise that large over a span of decades would be an unparalleled national catastrophe, driving millions of people from their homes and likely to require the abandonment of entire cities.

In essence, by revealing how sensitive the ice sheets have been to past warming, Dr. Dutton's research may answer the question of whether such a rapid jump is possible.

Along those parts of the United States coast that are sinking at a brisk clip, including southern Louisiana and the entire Chesapeake Bay region, including Norfolk, the situation will be worse than average. On the Pacific Coast, a climate pattern that had pushed billions of gallons of water toward Asia is now ending, so that in coming decades the sea is likely to rise quickly off states like Oregon and California.

Along the East Coast, scientists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration say that many communities have already, or will soon, pass a threshold where sunny-day flooding starts to happen much more often.

"When you look at the historical record, there's no trend saying the flooding is going down," said Dr. Sweet, the NOAA expert. "The trends are all very clear. They're going up, and they're going up in many of these areas in an accelerating fashion."

Late last year, in Paris, nations reached a landmark global agreement to cut emissions. It is fragile, and might not survive if Donald J. Trump is elected president in November; he has vowed to scrap it.

But the air is already so full of greenhouse gases that most land ice on the planet has started to melt. So even if the deal survives, it will, at best, slow the rise of the sea and perhaps limit the ultimate increase. Many climate scientists, including Dr. Dutton, believe a rise of at least 15 or 20 feet has already become inevitable, over an unknown period.

As Brad Tuckman walked the piece of land in Fort Lauderdale where he is building a grand new house, he pointed toward the canal that wraps around three sides of the property.

It is scenic, with yachts plying the water, yet as the sea has risen, street flooding in the area has become a recurring nuisance. So before starting construction, Mr. Tuckman said he spent nearly a half-million dollars to raise the sea wall and truck in dirt to elevate the land.

"The predictions of what's going to happen over the next 20, 30, 40 years — it's real," said Mr. Tuckman, the founder of a company offering creative services to the retail industry.

In South Florida, among the worst-hit parts of the country for sunny-day flooding, people are not waiting for state or federal help. Those who can afford it are starting to act on their own. A company, Coastal Risk Consulting, has cropped up to advise them, and is offering its services nationally.

Cities and counties in the region have formed an alliance and enlisted professors to help them figure out what to do. They are hiring "chief resilience officers," an idea pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, which is paying some of the salary cost.

In Miami Beach and Fort Lauderdale, as well as in older Northern cities like Boston and New York, tidal marshes and creeks were filled in a century or more ago to make new land, and it is in these areas — "back bays," as some of these spots are called — where the flooding is happening first.

That is because they remain the lowest spots in the landscape, vulnerable to the rising water nearby. Old drain pipes empty into the tidal creeks, and at high tide the water can back up through these pipes, bubbling into the streets seemingly from nowhere.

In Miami Beach, the city engineer, Bruce A. Mowry, has come up with a plan for combating the flooding. He rips up problematic streets, raises them with extra dirt and repaves them, installing new drains and giant pumps that can push water back into the bay. The approach has already been shown to work in several neighborhoods.

A controversy has erupted about whether Miami Beach is polluting Biscayne Bay with the water, but the city is pushing ahead. Miami Beach plans to spend at least $400 million on its plan by 2018, raising the money through fees imposed on homes and businesses.

The huge county government for the region, Miami-Dade County, is developing its own resilience strategy, one likely to cost billions. It has committed to rebuilding some of its decaying infrastructure, like a sewage plant, in a way that safeguards against sea-level rise and storm surges.

"I don't see doom and gloom here; I see opportunity," said Harvey Ruvin, the clerk of courts for Miami-Dade County, who has been a leading voice on the environment in Florida for a half-century, and who recently led a county task force on sea-level rise. "We're talking about the most robust possible jobs program you can think of, and one that can't be outsourced."

Many of the Republican mayors in the region are on the same page as Democrats in requesting national and state action on climate change, as well as pushing local steps. James C. Cason, the Republican mayor of Coral Gables, has convened informational sessions that draw hundreds of residents, and he has received no complaints for his stance.

"I hope in coming years when we have to spend a lot of money, the citizens will still support it," Mr. Cason said in an interview.

Still, his city, and others in South Florida, have some hard decisions to make.

Some property owners cannot afford to raise their sea walls, putting their neighborhoods at increased risk of flooding. Will they be held legally responsible when floods do occur? A strict policy could force some people from their homes. Conversely, should public money be spent to do the work, even if it largely benefits private property?

Just for streets, storm drains and the like, South Florida governments will need to raise billions, and they have yet to figure out how. Moreover, if the rise of the sea accelerates as much as some scientists fear, it is doubtful the cities will be able to keep up.

The region has one mayor, Philip K. Stoddard of South Miami, who is a scientist himself — he studies animal communication at Florida International University — and has been a close reader of scientific papers about climate change since the 1990s.

"I remember lying in bed at night thinking, 'I hope this isn't real,'" Dr. Stoddard, a Democrat, recalled. "I hope other data comes in that contradicts it. It took me several years to get my head around it and say, 'Oh, God, it is real.'"

Now he is focused on easing the pain for South Miami, with a $50 million system of sewer pipes to replace septic tanks threatened by the rising water table.

"You can play it really badly and let unpleasant things happen earlier," he said. "Or you can push them off by doing some infrastructure repairs and some thoughtful planning."

He is, though, under no illusions about the long-term fate of the region he calls home.

"We're putting enough heat in the ocean to send water over us, no question," Dr. Stoddard said. "Ultimately, we give up and we leave. That's how the story ends."

Jackson Considers $1.67 Million Grant To Hire 9 Firefighters

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

JACKSON, Mich. (AP) — A southern Michigan city that has sharply reduced the number of firefighters over the past decade is trying to determine the financial ramifications if it accepts a $1.67 million grant to hire nine firefighters for two years.

Jackson public information officer Will Forgrave told the Jackson Citizen Patriot (http://bit.ly/2ccnj7V) the concern is pension costs. He says even though the firefighters could only be employed two years, they would still pay into the pension plan.

City Councilman Daniel Greer says officials don't want to hamstring taxpayers with unanticipated costs.

The grant is from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The city accepted a $1.9 million grant in 2012. It has since eliminated all the positions it created.

The city had nearly 40 firefighters in 2006. It now has 15.

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Yakama Tribal Members Evicted In Push To Clean Up Housing

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

WAPATO, Wash. (AP) — For the past few weeks, Stephanie Shippentower and Billie Shoulderblade have been helping renovate homes at a Yakama Nation housing project they were recently kicked out of.

Shoulderblade was long behind on her rent. Shippentower had been caught living there with her dad after she was evicted two years ago because of repeated police calls to her house.

Both women are among a wave of evictions that began in June, the largest the tribe has seen in recent history, with more than 270 tribal members kicked out of housing across the 1.2 million-acre reservation for violating lease agreements.

Yakama Nation Housing Authority officials acknowledge that rules have long been ignored in at least one housing project, where overcrowding from unauthorized tenants for years fostered drug use, crime and unkempt properties. While the push to clean up housing projects is sudden and drastic, housing officials say something has to be done to improve the quality of life.

Many of those evicted — more than 50 families and 130 people, including Shoulderblade and Shippentower — have taken refuge at the tribe's RV park in Toppenish, where they are living in tents and are allowed to use restrooms, showers and laundry facilities. The tribe is providing food daily.

"My kids aren't used to sleeping in tents," said Shoulderblade, who's living in a tent with her seven children and husband. "It broke my heart to see my kids suffer."

A bulk of the evictions have been at the Apas Goudy housing project in east Wapato, where a massive $14 million project to refurbish the tattered homes there is underway.

But funding requirements for the project prompted Housing Authority to step up enforcement of rules that had largely gone ignored for years at Apas Goudy, where crime and drugs have been common, said Housing Authority Director Craig Dougall.

That funding comes from a state housing program, in which investors fund the project upfront and reap tax credits for 10 years. Those investors set requirements to ensure that the property is maintained, and the requirements are more stringent than regulations set by the Federal Housing Authority, Dougall said.

"I'd say my position is we're running into extreme social conditions, social problems with crime, with overcrowding. A number of these issues come with a housing park with no rules being enforced," Dougall said. "The Housing Authority has had a hand in these poor conditions. Hopefully (we're) honest enough to admit our own failures and strong enough to address them."

Now Shoulderblade and Shippentower have taken jobs with the Housing Authority as a way to make up for past problems and get back into permanent housing.

On this recent afternoon, both women labored on demolition work inside one home at the project.

"My hope is to get back on my feet and take care of my kids," said Shippentower, mother of five children ages 2 through 19. "It's going good now — I'm learning a lot. It's temporary, but they said (the job) could go into a permanent position."

Providing a safe and clean environment for children is the thrust behind refurbishing the housing project, Dougall said.

"There are many good tenants and we owe them the protections provided by our policies and mission for safe, decent and affordable housing," he said. "We are not judging our membership, but we are responsible for the conditions of our housing parks. We need to take this responsibility more seriously."

But the move hasn't come without controversy. Several evicted tribal members who refused to be identified, saying they feared retaliation from the Housing Authority, said they were given little notice and that the enforcement action was too sudden and harsh.

Not so, says grants and housing coordinator Debra Whitefoot. Letters were sent to tenants early last year informing them of the refurbishing project, funding requirements and what would be expected to meet those requirements and community meetings were held, she said.

"They knew over a year ago that this was coming," she said.

Big challenge

The Yakima Housing Authority is a tribal agency that operates 750 homes and duplexes stretching across the Lower Yakima Valley from Toppenish to White Swan. It also provides repairs and other services to more than 3,000 homes occupied by tribal members on the reservation. Housing employs about 120 workers, most of them tribal members.

Apas Gaudy, a project of 58 homes and duplexes on Larena Lane on Wapato's east side, has been one of its biggest challenges.

Meth labs were discovered at four houses during the evictions, each costing some $40,000 to clean up, Housing Director Dougall said, largely blaming outsiders who found tribal members and the project easy prey for drug operations because of lax policing.

"This one housing project is not reflective of Yakama culture at all," said Dougall, who was hired by the tribe a year and a half ago. "This is a complete collapse. I said we've got to address the drug culture here because we've got too many good people, children and elders living here too."

The housing project has a capacity of about 180 residents, but the housing authority found more than 500 people living there. For example, 18 people were found living in one three-bedroom home, Dougall said.

"We can't blame tribal members who take in family in need, as is customary within the Yakama culture. We can blame ourselves for not having the discipline to build more housing for our membership over the years."

Of the authorized tenants at Apas Goudy, 178 were evicted, he said.

There's also an accumulation of about $1.5 million in unpaid rent at all housing projects, he said.

But the neighborhood hasn't always been that way, said Whitefoot, who lived there as a child in the early 1970s. "Years ago, Apas Goudy was a nice housing project," she said. "The park was nice — everyone had nice yards, lawns."

Lease agreements require tenants to pass drug tests, remain current on rent and take care of the property. But Whitefoot said changes in tribal leadership over the years as well as differences in philosophy over how to run the Housing Authority led to less enforcement.

Now, current tribal leaders want to change that.

Tribal leaders couldn't be immediately reached for comment before leaving for North Dakota, where they've joined other tribes in protest of a proposed oil pipeline.

"They see a need to send a different message to the people, provide a positive environment for the children," Whitefoot said.

Controversial move

Evictions were triggered in the process of relocating tenants in the housing project to temporary housing elsewhere while homes are being refurbished, Dougall said.

Those who are current on their rent and pass drug tests will be placed temporarily in alternative housing until their homes are rebuilt, while those who don't meet the requirements are evicted, he said.

"But there was no initial plan to launch a mass eviction," Dougall said.

If anyone in a family failed a drug test, the entire family was evicted, he said.

A combination of unpaid rent and failed drug tests was responsible for most evictions, Whitefoot said.

But a group of seven evicted tenants who met with a Yakima Herald-Republic reporter argue otherwise. They wouldn't provide their names for publication, citing a fear of being blacklisted from future tribal housing programs.

They complained of unfair drug tests, and accused the Housing Authority of training staff "on the spot" to conduct urinalysis drug test. They also say collection cups were used by more than one tenant, and merely rinsed after each use.

Evicted tenants say Housing refused to accept the negative test result from a professional drug treatment facility of a woman who was contesting Housing's results. Tenants disputing screenings had the option of getting tested by an outside professional, and Housing would pay for it if the results were negative.

Housing Director Dougall said two tenants were tested again by a local drug treatment provider. Results of one test were overturned after learning the tenant was on prescribed painkillers while the other was upheld because of cocaine use, he said.

Dougall said he has staff that are certified by a national drug test supplier in administering drug screens.

Evicted tenants also blame housing for not fulfilling its side of lease agreements, letting homes fall into disrepair.

Residents described homes where people had to use chains for door locks; where asbestos was common in the walls and flooring; where, no matter how much they cleaned, cockroaches would manage to get inside through the connecting pipes between structures.

"Housing allowed the homes to go down the way they did," one evicted tenant said. "They never took care of Apas. They knew about the problem; they knew about the situation in the homes."

Dougall said often tenants refused to allow Housing Authority staff into the homes to conduct annual inspections and that overcrowding led to much of the wear and tear.

"As a result, the home deteriorates far more than you would expect," he said.

Tenants can appeal evictions before a board appointed by the Yakama Tribal Council. Although several tenants challenged the evictions, none were overturned. Dougall said.

Controversy often surrounds efforts to clean up housing projects, said U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development spokesman Leland Jones in Seattle.

"My impression would be the Yakama Housing Authority isn't the first to face this challenge and it won't be the last," he said. "To its credit, I think what the Yakama Housing Authority is saying 'We're not going to take it anymore,' and that's a tough thing for a housing authority to do. They're putting their foot down."

Cultural change

Standards have to be met if living conditions are to improve in the housing project, Dougall said. To that end, Housing is offering those evicted employment, education programs and even access to substance abuse recovery programs.

Displaced tenants who commit to substance abuse treatment or any other needed services to help them improve will be allowed into transitional housing and eventually into permanent housing, Dougall said.

In January, the tribe purchased a 41-unit apartment complex at 310 S. Ahtanum St. in Wapato that's now being used as transitional housing for the homeless as well as housing for homeless veterans.

The tribe also purchased the former armory on Division Street in Toppenish that it plans to use as a homeless shelter, and has applied for 100 trailers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that will be used for transitional housing.

Dougall said tenants who have been evicted will be allowed into the shelter when winter comes. If they commit to treatment or agree to begin working off any unpaid rent, they will be allowed into transitional housing, and eventually into permanent housing if they stay the course, he said.

"Our sincere hope is that people who are affected by this get help and get all the services the tribe provides and develop a sustainable lifestyle," Dougall said. "If we can develop a generation of sustainable parents, then the children will see that and follow."

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Information from: Yakima Herald-Republic, http://www.yakimaherald.com

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FEMA HOUSING

Louisiana Flood Did More Than $8 Billion In Damage

By T. Becket Adams

Washington Examiner, September 6, 2016

The Louisiana floods last month caused a $8.7 billion in damage, a number that is expected to increase as officials continue to take stock of the damage, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced this week.

Edwards' office revealed the estimated cost of the flooding damage Saturday when it released a copy of a letter the governor sent President Obama earlier this week.

The governor's letter to Obama asked for a "very reasonable" $2 billion in federal aid, and said it would be the bare minimum necessary to help the state recover from a flood that claimed the lives of 13 Louisianans.

"While short-term relief for immediate needs available through [Federal Emergency Management Agency] for items such as temporary rental assistance, essential home repairs and other disaster-related needs are greatly needed and greatly appreciated, our full recovery will not be realized without additional help," Edwards' letter read.

The storm has drawn a national response from relief organizations and other good Samaritans. It has even caught the attention of the two 2016 presidential candidates.

On the left side, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton tweeted her sympathies and directed social media users to donations pages belonging to groups specializing in offering aid to disaster victims.

On the other side of the aisle, GOP nominee Donald Trump and his running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, went to Baton Rouge personally to assess the damage and speak with the victims.

At the time, Edwards caught some heat for seemingly referring to Trump's visit as a shameless photo-op. The Democratic governor later claimed he was not attacking the GOP nominee.

"I didn't dismiss his trip as a photo op. Before he came down I said I — we welcome him here," the governor said last month on CNN. "We want him to be helpful and we hope that doesn't turn into a mere photo op. So you got the story backwards," he added.

"Okay. So, was he helpful? Now that it's come and gone, was he helpful? Was it a good thing that he came down?" the CNN reporter continued. The Democratic governor agreed that, yes, Trump's visit was indeed helpful to the state.

"Yes, for the reasons that I stated earlier because it helped to shine a spotlight on Louisiana and on the dire situation that we have here, that it was helpful," he said.

"And I will tell you that I also appreciated the good phone call, the conversation that I had with [Indiana] Gov. Pence," he added in reference to Trump's running mate, "who was sincere and genuine when he called, and we spoke for a long time on Friday morning about their desire to be helpful."

As of Friday, there were a reported 50,000 houses in Louisiana damaged by the flood waters, Edwards' letter to Obama said.

"More than 80 percent of damaged homes lacked flood insurance because most were outside the 100-year flood plain," the Associated Press reported, adding "the majority of flooded households were for people with low to moderate incomes, and 20 percent were renters."

The governor said that number of houses damaged by the heavy rains will undoubtedly increase as additional applications pour in and state officials continue to inspect the damage.

"The majority of these citizens did not carry flood insurance, and I impress upon you that they will not be able to make critical decisions on rebuilding their homes and their lives without the availability of CDBG-DR funds," Edwards wrote to the president. "This additional assistance is critical to Louisiana's full recovery from these floods."

He also said that more than 6,000 businesses were damaged, and that more than 1,400 bridges are now in need of inspections. Edwards also told the president that approximately 30 state roads were washed away, and that there is roughly $110 million in damage to agriculture.

The storm, which began on Aug. 12, poured nearly 2 feet of rain in some parts of Louisiana during a 48-hour period, the AP noted, adding, "and the flooding has been described as the worst disaster in the U.S. since Superstorm Sandy struck the East Coast in 2012."

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

No stories for this edition

MITIGATION

No stories for this edition

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

No stories for this edition

FIRE GRANTS

City Council Considering Acceptance Of $1.67 Million Federal Grant To Hire Firefighters

By Danielle Salisbury

MLive (MI), September 3, 2016

JACKSON, MI – Jackson has been awarded a $1.67 million grant to hire nine firefighters for two years beginning in February.

The City Council has to decide by October whether to accept the award, distributed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response program. It would bolster a shrinking firefighting force in Jackson, but any long-term financial impact on city taxpayers has to be considered, city officials said.

At issue is a "rapidly unsustainable increase in pension costs," according to a statement from city public information officer Will Forgrave. "The city believes it's critical to consider the city's future and make sure the decisions made today do not negatively impact citizens years down the road."

Though the grant, awarded Aug. 19, would pay the firefighters' wages and they might only be employees for two years, they would still pay into the city retirement plan, Forgrave said.

Resources are limited and the city has to be careful about adding employees to any department, City Councilman Daniel Greer said. "We don't want to hamstring the taxpayers into an unanticipated cost."

Firefighters have, in the past, supported the grant-funded hires, saying dwindling numbers affect services and safety.

It would be the second time the city collected such an award. The city accepted a $1.9 million, two-year grant in 2012 and has since eliminated all the positions it created.

The firefighter union president, when reached Friday night, said the union contests some of the figures contained in the city's Friday statement.

It highlighted a steadily dropping number of building fires from 2012 to 2015. Response times to home fires remained steady during that same period and in 2012 and 2013, just 4.5 and 2.5 percent of department calls were fire-related, according to the statement.

The union is to release its own statement next week.

Talk of the grant come as contract negotiations between the city administration and firefighters are underway. "Just like the SAFER grant before it, we want to have a contract before we accept the grant," Forgrave said.

Layoffs early this year brought the number of city firefighters to 15. As late as 2006, there were almost 40 department firefighters and until 2011, there were three operating fire stations. Now, there is one.

In the meantime, a fluctuating tax that funds firefighter and police pension costs has increased from 0.4 mills in 1974 to 7.2 mills, costing city property owners $4.1 million annually, Forgrave reported.

If accepted, the city, even if there is a fiscal emergency, could not lay off any firefighters during the period of the grant.

Jackson hired 13 firefighters using the last SAFER grant; four of them were able to move into permanent positions made available by retirements and one left to take a job in Summit Township.

The city was able to extend the employment period for about a year because it still had about $719,000 left in the grant when it expired in 2014.

Two firefighters were allowed to remain employed until early this year, but they too were laid off as a plan to collaborate with the Summit Township Fire Department never got off the ground.

Federal Grant Of $167,522 Will Help Firefighters

By Sherry Kuyt

MLive (MI), September 2, 2016

Thornapple Township Emergency Services has been selected to receive an Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of $167,522 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The grant will be used to replace all scuba units currently in service in the department, according to a department press release. Using the grant and a matching amount of $8,376, the department will be able to replace current scuba units that have reached the end of their life expectancy and have become costly to maintain.

This is the fourth time in six years the department has been successful in receiving the grant to assist in purchasing critical fire and EMS equipment.

Thornapple Township provides fire-rescue and ambulance (advanced life support) transport response for residents of Thornapple Township through a voted fire millage and service fees. In addition, a portion of Irving Township contracts with Thornapple Township for fire-rescue services.

The Emergency Services Department Building is located at 128 High St. in downtown Middleville. The building includes the apparatus bay, living quarters and office/administration space, including a state-of-the-art training room. In addition, the department owns an offsite training facility for flashover training, which was obtained through a previous federal grant.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Mobile Homes Take A Beating From Hermine. And It Wasn't The Wind

Miami Herald, September 4, 2016

When Larry Johnson and his wife moved to Bradenton three years ago, it was a dream come true to get waterfront property in Braden Castle Park. Most days, they have breakfast on their back deck while watching the sun rise over the Braden River.

But on Friday, the 68-year-old Johnson woke up hours before the sun would rise, although it would never make an appearance.

He, like others, worried what high tide would mean for the already rising water onto his property.

"I wanted waterfront not 'watertop,'" Johnson said.

At high tide, the water, far surpassing the seawall, was one third of the way up the ramp to his back deck. The deck and home are raised four feet above the water level.

"It came up into carport yesterday afternoon and then even higher last night," Johnson said.

The street in front of his home was completely underwater.

"It was knee-high when I walking down the street yesterday afternoon," Johnson said.

From his driveway, he could no longer see the boat launch and the dock, normally about four feet above the water level, was now about one foot above the water.

Manatee County Emergency Management officials are still working to assess the overall damage caused by Hermine.

"Mobile home parks seemed to take the biggest beating," Emergency Management Chief Don Hermey said Saturday.

Anna Maria Island also took a strong hit, with streets still flooded as of Saturday afternoon.

Hermey said residents need to report any structural damage to their homes to enable him to provide state and federal officials with the most accurate estimate of local damage.

In order for a disaster declaration to include Manatee County and get the Federal Emergency Management Agency to respond to the area, Hermey said he will have to be able to show impact with total damage estimates of about $1.3 million. Statewide, counties affected by Hermine are working to estimate the damages that will have to reach $25 million for it to be declared a disaster.

Hermey anticipates there are still some stragglers who have been unable yet to access damage to their homes, but they likely will do so this weekend.

Flooding wasn't the only problem experienced by mobile home residents during Hermine. In Swan Lake

Village, wind gusts damaged roofs of some mobile homes on Thursday.

Back in Braden Castle Park on Saturday, the flooding was receding, leaving a mess of vegetation debris behind. Johnson was out pressure cleaning the mess left on his driveway.

Johnson said that in the three years he has lived in Braden Castle since he and his wife moved from Minnesota, they had never seen flooding quite that bad. Sometimes the water behind his home will even recede out a good 25 feet, he said, exposing the river bank.

"That even makes this more impressive," Johnson said.

Post-Hermine Scams Reported In Taylor County

By Michael Moline

Saint Peters (FL) Blog, September 5, 2016

First comes the natural disaster. Then come the scam artists.

Someone is going around Taylor County claiming to represent the Federal Emergency Management Agency and demanding $150 to help people file Hurricane Hermine-related insurance claims, the state Department of Financial Services said Monday.

"There is no fee to file a FEMA claim and Floridians who encounter this scam should report it by calling the Department's Consumer Insurance Helpline at 1-877-693-5236," the department said in a news release.

"Consumers can also utilize this helpline to get free help with the filing of hurricane-related insurance claims," the agency said.

"It's unconscionable to think that someone would lie and cheat their way into profiting off of catastrophe but, unfortunately, it happens," state Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater said.

"I strongly urge all Floridians to remain vigilant against such scams, and to report all suspicious activity to authorities immediately. My office will thoroughly investigate reports of insurance and financial fraud and will prosecute the offenders to the fullest extent of the law."

The department's Division of Investigative and Forensic Services has dispatched fraud investigators to the county.

Officials expect that this is just the beginning, and urged policyholders to contact insurers directly to report storm damage.

"Be wary of strangers who call on the telephone or who knock on your door asking for personal information," the department said. "Ask for a telephone number so can you call back to verify that the entity is legitimate; hang up on anyone who refuses to coordinate in providing such information."

Demand to see contractors' credentials before you sign anything, the department said. Check them out with the state Department of Business and Professional Regulation, here.

"Beware of fly-by-night repair companies and hire only licensed and reputable people," the agency said.

Read everything carefully. Ask questions — like, who is responsible for paying, you or your insurer?

Understand that only a licensed public adjuster or attorney can file an insurance claim on your behalf. You can check credentials here. And you can find more information here.

When in doubt, call the department's insurance consumer hotline at 877-693-5236.

FLOODS

More Parishes Added To Disaster Declaration

Monroe (LA) News Star, September 2, 2016

Six parishes have been added to the federal disaster declaration from the August flood, U.S. Rep. Charles Boustany said in a press release late Friday afternoon.

Boustany, R-Lafayette, said St. James and West Baton Rouge were added to individual assistance designated parishes, which means flood victims are eligible for help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Assumption, Cameron, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist and West Baton Rouge were all added to the public assistance designated areas, which means those governments can qualify for federal aid for response and recovery expenses.

Twenty south Louisiana parishes were already included in the disaster declaration.

Greg Hilburn covers state politics for the USA TODAY Network of Louisiana. Follow him on Twitter @GregHilburn1

Understanding FEMA Flood-recovery Programs, Why You're Not Getting "Thousands Of Dollars" Immediately

By Mark Ballard

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 2, 2016

Unrealistic expectations are leading to a lot of questions, and sometimes anger, about the disaster assistance available and how the programs work, said officials with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"A lot of survivors think they'll get thousands and thousands of dollars," said Alberto Pillot, FEMA's media information manager. "They think replacement value. But it's not. It's immediate needs … What do you need right now to get into safe and sanitary shelter? There are programs available that can get closer back to whole."

FEMA gives out tax-free grants of up to $33,000, regardless of income levels, as part of the Individuals and Households Program, or IHP.

Victims from catastrophic flooding from the storm that began the night of Aug. 11, living in one of the 20 parishes declared a disaster by President Barack Obama, can get money to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs, medical and dental needs, new clothing, furnishings, appliances and a number of other expenses.

Counts are not complete but the federal government estimates about 160,000 properties were flooded.

Gov. John Bel Edwards and the Louisiana congressional delegation are preparing a bill to ask Congress to approve money over and above what is set aside for disasters. The supplemental money would go to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which would send the money to Louisiana in form of grants for storm victims to rebuild.

In the meantime, however, the basic federal aids available for people without insurance are loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration and the IHP.

Survivors must apply with FEMA for disaster assistance online or over the phone.

Their damaged residence will be inspected.

From the inspector's report of specific damages, the family structure and a predetermined amount for a minimal replacement, FEMA calculates a grant.

For instance, if a family of four had damage to four bedrooms, one which is used as a guest room and the other is for a child who is away at college, leaving husband and a wife and one child using two bedrooms, FEMA would give enough to replace the bedding for three people. It would be up to the applicant to go out and purchase the beds — three singles or a single bed and double bed.

Depending on the damage, FEMA also will replace chairs, couches, tables and lamps. The thing to remember, Pillot said, is that the replacement is minimal. The money won't be enough to replace a ruined leather couch and love seat set. "You may not get a leather couch, but you'll have something to sit on, something to get you going," Pillot said.

FEMA will buy what's necessary: washing machines, window air-conditioning units, televisions and refrigerators are on the list. Dishwashers are not, at least for the young and the healthy.

"It's a matter of what is necessary to get back up and running," Pillot said.

If one vehicle was flooded and the other was not, then chances are no money will be set aside for a second car, he said.

The letter outlines basically what the money is for: this much for repairs, that much for appliances.

"You'll have to come back and explain why it was spent. You have to justify why you need more," Pillot said.

If the survivor spends the money dedicated to hiring an electrician to buy a stainless steel sub-zero refrigerator, rather than something much simpler inexpensive, chances are very good that FEMA will not give more money for the electrician.

"What you do with the grant and how you choose to spend the money, well, be wise," Pillot said.

Damage From Flood Is At Least $8.7B, Governor Says

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 3, 2016

Baton Rouge, La.

Damage from flood is at least $8.7B, governor says

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards says his state had more than $8.7 billion in damage from catastrophic flooding in August, and the figure will increase as officials finish assessing damage to roads and other public infrastructure. The governor's office Saturday released a letter Edwards sent Friday to President Barack Obama. In it, the Democratic governor asked that Congress this month approve $2 billion in federal aid for Louisiana for housing, economic development and infrastructure. He said it's a "very reasonable request," adding to other programs assisting in Louisiana's flood recovery, such as aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "While short-term relief for immediate needs available through FEMA … are greatly needed and greatly appreciated, our full recovery will not be realized without additional help," Edwards wrote.

Los Angeles

Shooting at county jail wounds 2 employees

A Fresno, Calif., man was taken into custody Saturday after shooting two correctional officers in the lobby of the Fresno County Jail. Thong Vang, 37, entered the jail lobby shortly after 8:30 a.m. Saturday, saying he wanted to visit someone and trying to get to the front of the line, Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims told reporters. When he was ordered to wait his turn, Vang began to exhibit “bizarre behavior,” pacing back and forth around the lobby, Mims said. During the confrontation that ensued, Vang pulled out a gun and shot correctional Officers Juanita Davila and Toamalama Scanlan, neither of whom were armed, Mims said. Another correctional officer fired several shots at Vang, who then retreated into a hallway before ultimately dropping his weapon and saying that he wanted to be arrested, Mims said. Vang, who had been previously convicted of rape, was held at gunpoint while the two injured officers were taken to ambulances outside.

Atlanta

Giant female panda delivers twins, again

Atlanta’s zoo said a 19-year-old giant panda gave birth to a set of twins Saturday. Zoo Atlanta said giant panda Lun Lun delivered the twin cubs at 7:20 a.m. and 8:07 a.m. It’s Lun Lun’s second pair of twins. Officials said Lun Lun was artificially inseminated in March. Lun Lun and 18-year-old male panda Yang Yang have seven offspring together, all resulting from artificial insemination.

Bangladesh

Islamist party leader is executed for role in 1971 war

A senior Islamist party politician was hanged Saturday for crimes committed during Bangladesh’s 1971 war of independence against Pakistan, an official said. The execution of Mir Quasem Ali, 64, a leader of the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami party, was carried out three days after the Supreme Court dismissed his plea for a review of his death sentence. Jail officer Prashanta Kumar Bhoumik said Ali was hanged at Kashimpur jail in central Bangladesh. Ali, also a business tycoon and financier of the party, was sentenced to death in November 2014 by a tribunal set up to prosecute people who worked with the Pakistani military during the war. Both the Pakistan army and its local agents were responsible for atrocities on unarmed civilians during the nine-month conflict in what was then the eastern wing of Pakistan. The defendant received the death sentence for crimes including abductions and killings.

Turkey

Turkish forces expand intervention in Syria

Turkey launched a new incursion into Syria on Saturday, dispatching additional tanks and troops across the border to support Syrian rebels fighting the Islamic State, expanding the scope and reach of its 10-day old military intervention. The private Dogan news agency reported at least 20 tanks and five armored personnel carriers crossed at the Turkish border town of Elbeyli, across from the Syrian rebel-held town of al-Rai. The incursion is unfolding about 35 miles west of Jarablus, where Turkish forces first crossed into Syria last month.

Hong Kong

Voting gets under way in a crucial election

Hong Kong voters headed to the polls today for the specially administered Chinese city’s most crucial election since the hand-over from Britain in 1997. The vote for lawmakers in the Legislative Council is the first since 2014 pro-democracy street protests rocked the Asian financial hub, and the outcome could lead to a fresh round of political confrontations over Beijing’s control of the city.

Times wires

FEMA Inspectors Make Rounds In Baton Rouge Area

By Kevin Frey

WAFB-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 2, 2016

BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) –

FEMA has completed more than 65 percent house inspections after August’s historic floods in the Baton Rouge area.

The organization has 1,100 inspectors on the ground, each completing about five inspections each day. Overall more than 130,000 people have signed up with FEMA after the flood.

“We’re looking at the amount of damage to the home itself, the real property, and then what is required to bring it back to that safe, habitable, sanitary condition,” said Darrell Habisch, a FEMA representative.

Wait times for FEMA inspectors to visit homes have dropped in recent days from about three weeks to now seven days.

While waiting, FEMA encourages flood victims to clean out their homes, removing mold and other water-logged items.

“We want you to document, take photos, and document the damage, but don’t wait for a call from FEMA – you can’t live in that environment,” Habisch said.

On Friday, Brenda Roberts visited her home for the first time since it took on more than three feet of water. The rising waters forced her to evacuate by airboat.

"I couldn't imagine. It didn't seem real. This is not happening. Maybe the water won't get high, maybe nothing will be damaged. It was in disbelief," Roberts said.

Outside her home, however, sits evidence of a devastating, inescapable truth. Piles of memories dot every curb in her neighborhood off Greenwell Springs Road.

"When I came down the street and I saw everybody's life on the street, it was heartbreaking," Roberts said.

A FEMA inspector joined Roberts at her home, documenting the skeletal remains of what was once her home.

"It was totaled, everything in this house was totaled," she told the inspector.

Her piano, a side table from her great-grandparents, her computer and more were destroyed in by the water. In their place now sit piles of sheetrock and paneling.

The trials of the past weeks have been difficult, but Roberts said they have brought out the best in so many.

"You'll see things, and it chokes you up, and then someone will respond with a tremendous amount of kindness," Roberts said.

Some important tips:

FEMA will call to set up an appointment

The inspector will have a FEMA ID

If they seem suspicious, it is okay to turn them away

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Northshore Homeowner Said Flood Relief Option Set Her Up For Foreclosure

By Jennifer Crockett

WDSU-TV New Orleans, September 5, 2016

Hammond, La. – As people across Louisiana work to save their flooded homes, some are having trouble catching a break from their bank.

Cathleen Dell and her husband William live in Hammond. Floods spared their home in March, but in the two were not so lucky in August.

The couple and their pets were rescued from the flood by boat. They lived with a friend while their home sat in water for a week. It's now stripped and drying out, but the panic they felt as the water was rising still keeps them up at night. This time, it's mounting bills for repairs that's swamping them.

Cathleen is a teacher. William retired from the U.S. Army. The home they bought two years ago is not in a designated flood zone, and they did not have coverage. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is helping a little, but the couple contacted their mortgage company to apply for forbearance on their mortgage, so they could use that money for repairs.

Instead of getting temporary relief, she said the terms their private mortgage company laid out could have easily made things worse and possibly led to foreclosure. According to her paperwork, all of the payments would come due at once, including fees. Dell thought she was signing up to have her payments suspended for 90 days and repaid at the end of her loan.

"Our house payment is basically is almost $1,300 a month," Cathleen said. "So, there was no way that we were going to be able to afford a $10,000 house note on March 1."

Cathleen wants other homeowners to read their paperwork carefully before agreeing to any new terms.

"I contacted you guys because I want people to make sure that they're reading their information," Cathleen said. "I don't want anybody to have to lose their home again over paperwork."

Kemberley Washington is a certified public accountant practicing in New Orleans. She said terms for forbearance on conventional mortgages vary, and that the Dell's aren't alone.

"It's really actually to the discretion of the lender, so the lender really has control," Washington said.

She said there are more protections in place on government-backed mortgages, such as an FHA loan, but there is no way to know what you're signing up for unless you call and ask.

"Ask, 'When will I have to make this payment?' 'Is there interest that will be accrued on this payment?' There are so many different terms and things that an individual needs to know, but those questions need to be asked right there in the beginning," Washington said.

Washington put together the following information to help guide homeowners through the rebuilding process. She also said the Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, can be a good resource to council homeowners about their different options, even with private mortgages.

Tips from Kemberley Washington, CPA:

According to HUD, if you are unable to pay your mortgage because of a natural disaster, there may be relief available to you. Lenders can stop or delay foreclosure for 90 days and also waive any fees.

What type of mortgage do you have?

First, the type of assistance that may be available depends on the type of mortgage you have. According to the Home Buyer Institute, there are different types of loans, which includes government backed mortgages and conventional loans.

A government backed mortgage protects lenders against losses. These loans include an FHA or VA loan, which provides certain relief options after a natural disaster. A conventional (regular) loan may provide options; however, these may differ based on the lender.

What type of assistance is available for government loans?

For government insured loans, lenders can evaluate your loan for mitigation assistance to help you keep your home. Also, lenders may execute a loan modification, temporarily suspend mortgage payments up to six months and waive late charges or other options to help the homeowner. Keep in mind, for conventional loans, you must reach out to the lender to see what relief may be available.

What steps should a homeowner take?

A homeowner should contact their lender immediately if they are unable to make the payments. Before signing any documents, get an understanding of the new terms of your payments. For instance, you should ask questions such as:

When will the amounts be due in full?

Will interest incur on the amounts suspended?

What are the new terms of the modification?

If homeowners are not satisfied with the options provided by the lender, they are encouraged to contact HUD's National Servicing Center at 800-569-4287. In addition, they can also contact FEMA for financial assistance.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

No stories for this edition

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

CDC Grants $2.4 Mln To Five US Jurisdictions To Fight Zika

By Dipika Jain

Reuters, September 2, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Poll: Amid Zika Fears, Support For Funding

By Susan Page

USA Today, September 5, 2016

WASHINGTON — Nearly a third of Americans say fears of the Zika virus are affecting travel or other plans by members of their families, a broad impact that is fueling support for Congress to pass funding to curb spread of the disease in the United States.

In a USA TODAY/Suffolk University poll, those surveyed by more than a 3-1 margin — 62%-19% — said Congress should approve additional funding to fight the virus rather than continue to divert funds from other programs. The Senate could vote on a $1.1 billion measure on Zika as early as Tuesday, when lawmakers return after a seven-week recess.

Senate Democrats have blocked a version passed by the House because it includes provisions they say would bar funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides health-care services to pregnant women and others most affected by the mosquito-borne virus. Dozens of cases of Zika, which can cause devastating birth defects, have been diagnosed in Florida and elsewhere since Congress left town.

"It does scare me," said Carol Fisher, 56, a nurse from Teaneck, N.J., who was among those called in the poll. "It has the potential to blow up in a world-wide problem with the way people travel, the idea of containing this to a neighborhood in Miami is just ridiculous. It's almost like that movie, Contagion, where it keeps going and going and going." (The 2011 medical thriller tracked a mysterious and deadly disease that spread worldwide after a Minnesota woman returned from a business trip to Hong Kong.)

The poll of 1,000 likely voters, taken Aug. 24-29, has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

The other most pressing item of business for Congress during its final four-week session before the election is a short-term funding bill to keep the federal government operating after the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

Last week, Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, warned that the health agency is almost out of money to fight Zika's spread. "The cupboard is bare," Frieden told reporters.

Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of health gives a presentation about the Zika virus at the Georgetown University Law Center on Aug. 31. (Photo: Chip Somodevilla, Getty Images)

Three in 10 Americans, including 36% of those who live in the South, the most affected region, say concern about Zika has affected travel or other plans by themselves or family members. There's no partisan profile to the reported impact, which is roughly the same among Republicans and Democrats.

Both Democrats and Republicans were inclined to back additional funding to combat Zika. Democrats supported the idea by an overwhelming margin, 78%-11%. Republicans also backed the new funding, but by a narrower 44%-27%; another 28% said they were undecided.

"Personally, I don't think it's something to worry about," said Joe Thomas, 64, of Trinity, N.C., who was among those surveyed. Thomas, in a follow-up interview, said other priorities were more important. "We need to get to the matters at hand."

Florida GOP Ready To Retreat From Planned Parenthood Fight

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, September 3, 2016

Several House Republicans in Florida say they're willing to concede defeat in their party's months-long battle over Planned Parenthood if that's what it takes to pass a $1.1 billion funding package for the Zika virus.

With Zika spreading rapidly in south Florida, even some of the most conservative members of Congress say GOP leaders should strike a deal with Democrats to get emergency money to their home state.

"Take everything out of it except Zika funding, and don't put any riders in it," Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.), a member of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, said in an interview Thursday.

Another Freedom Caucus member, Rep. Curt Clawson (R-Fla.,) is urging the Senate to reconsider the House's earlier Zika funding bill — which did not pick a fight over Planned Parenthood — even if it means providing less money overall.

"It is time for members to pull all levers in both chambers of Congress to get a funding measure to the president's desk," Clawson wrote in a letter to GOP Leaders, along with another Florida Republican, Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart.

Other Florida Republicans — including Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Rep. Dennis Ross — have hinted recently at relenting in the fight over Planned Parenthood by urging GOP leaders to drop political issues from the bill.

The two parties have been deadlocked over a Zika response since February. Democrats have pressed for more money, while Republicans have argued the White House should use existing funds, like those from the Ebola virus or ObamaCare.

In June, the fight intensified as House and Senate Republicans put forward a new bill that targeted Planned Parenthood — ditching the upper chamber's previous deal with leading Democrats.

The bill's language does not mention Planned Parenthood. Specifically, it says that only health services "provided by public health departments, hospitals, or reimbursed through public health plans" can receive the Zika funding from Congress.

Republicans, including the top health appropriator Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), have acknowledged that the bill targets Planned Parenthood, while stressing that they are willing to pay almost as much money as the Obama administration has asked for.

"We do have provisions, obviously, to make it more difficult for Planned Parenthood. But in divided government, it's a pretty fair compromise," Cole said in a recent interview.

Eight months later, lawmakers from Florida are feeling the pressure as their home state deals with the first outbreak of Zika in the continental U.S.

Florida's Republican Gov. Rick Scott is planning to make his second trip to Congress this year to lobby for Zika funding. He will be waiting when Congress returns from its seven-week recess next Tuesday, and plans to meet with Senate GOP leadership, according to one lawmaker.

More than 600 people in Florida have tested positive for the Zika virus, which can cause birth defects in newborns. Eighty of those cases are in pregnant women, according to data from the Florida Department of Health on Thursday.

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) has said he is committed to passing Zika funding by Sept. 30, the deadline when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says it will run out of funds.

Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla), who faces a close election race in his South Florida swing district this fall, asked Ryan about Zika funding on a House GOP conference call last week.

"Speaker Ryan assured me that this was going to get done," Curbelo said in an interview Thursday. He added that he is urging his GOP colleagues to support a Zika bill even if it means dropping the Planned Parenthood provisions.

When asked about a scenario in which the Zika bill was not approved, he said: "I'm unwilling to even consider the possibility."

"This Planned Parenthood clinic in Puerto Rico, is that really worth killing Zika funding over?" Curbelo said. "The question that comes, is Zika funding a chief priority for you or not? I certainly hope that at the very least, for every representative or senator for the state of Florida it would be."

Outlook: Congress Returns To Fights Over Spending, Zika

By Alex Rogers

National Journal, September 6, 2016

House Re-pub-lic-an lead-ers will be faced with two no-win de-cisions this week, as the House Free-dom Caucus looks to force a vote to im-peach IRS Com-mis-sion-er John Koskin-en and the con-fer-ence meets to dis-cuss the length of an im-pend-ing con-tinu-ing res-ol-u-tion.

The House Free-dom Caucus is ex-pec-ted to re-sume its quest to im-peach Koskin-en as soon as Wed-nes-day by bring-ing to the floor a priv-ileged mo-tion for-cing a House vote. If they do so, the House must vote on the meas-ure by Fri-day.

GOP lead-ers have been care-ful to stay pub-licly neut-ral on the top-ic be-cause the vote puts them and many of their mem-bers in a tough polit-ic-al po-s-i-tion. Al-though most likely do not be-lieve that Koskin-en de-serves to be im-peached and fret set-ting a pre-ced-ent of im-peach-ing mid-level ad-min-is-tra-tion of-fi-cials, there is little polit-ic-al up-side among the Re-pub-lic-an base to de-fend-ing the IRS.

The meas-ure is sure to be dis-cussed at a Wed-nes-day morn-ing con-fer-ence meet-ing. But the Free-dom Caucus is be-ing bolstered by re-ports this week that the IRS did not tell tax-pay-ers that their So-cial Se-cur-ity num-bers were stolen by un-doc-u-mented im-mig-rants, so it is un-likely that lead-er-ship or oth-er mem-bers can talk them out of push-ing the im-peach-ment.

On Fri-day, the House is ex-pec-ted to hold a second con-fer-ence meet-ing to dis-cuss the length of a con-tinu-ing res-ol-u-tion, which could again put lead-er-ship at odds with the House Free-dom Caucus. Lead-ers are look-ing to a CR through Decem-ber in or-der to give the ap-pro-pri-ations com-mit-tees more time to fin-ish a po-ten-tial om-ni-bus bill. The Free-dom Caucus, however, wants to can-cel the lame-duck ses-sion and pass a CR through March.

Sen-at-ors, mean-while, will re-turn to Wash-ing-ton on Tues-day night fa-cing an acute sense of deja vu, as they vote again on pre-vi-ously blocked spend-ing bills.

The Obama ad-min-is-tra-tion has pleaded Con-gress for months to pass le-gis-la-tion to help fight the spread of the Zika vir-us, as the num-ber of cases in Flor-ida and Pu-erto Rico pre-dict-ably jumped over the sum-mer. But Sen-ate Demo-crats have blocked a bill sup-por-ted by Re-pub-lic-ans, primar-ily over con-cerns that it would pre-vent some fund-ing for Planned Par-ent-hood. Re-pub-lic-ans con-tin-ue to counter that the $1.1 bil-lion bill ad-equately provides for wo-men's health through com-munity health cen-ters.

After its pro-ced-ur-al vote on that bill, the Sen-ate ex-pects to vote on ad-van-cing a $575 bil-lion pack-age fund-ing the De-fense De-part-ment. Demo-crats have blocked it be-fore, while ur-ging Re-pub-lic-ans to pub-licly pledge that ap-pro-pri-ations bills will have par-ity between de-fense and nondefense spend-ing. While the Sen-ate agreed to that concept in its de-fense bill, House Re-pub-lic-ans have pushed to spend bil-lions more in a sep-ar-ate war-time ac-count, which many Demo-crats op-pose.

Here's what else is on tap this week:

EN-ERGY AND EN-VIR-ON-MENT

A week after vis-it-ing the site of Louisi-ana's dev-ast-at-ing floods, Rep. John Mica will con-vene a hear-ing on the Fed-er-al Emer-gency Man-age-ment As-so-ci-ation's re-sponse. After his trip, Mica raised con-cern about the speed with which FEMA was de-liv-er-ing claims checks to flood vic-tims and the tem-por-ary hous-ing struc-tures the agency had brought in. Fri-day's hear-ing in the House Over-sight sub-com-mit-tee on trans-port-a-tion and pub-lic as-sets could also touch on what the fed-er-al gov-ern-ment can do to en-sure that af-fected res-id-ents can re-build their homes.

The bid to pass the first com-pre-hens-ive en-ergy bill in more than a dec-ade re-sumes Thursday, when House and Sen-ate lead-ers open a form-al con-fer-ence on the bill. Ne-go-ti-at-ors will have to strip veto-bait pro-vi-sions—in-clud-ing lan-guage on Cali-for-nia's drought, en-ergy de-vel-op-ment on tri-bal lands, and re-search fund-ing—from the House-passed bill, while fa-cing a crowded and nar-row work cal-en-dar to move a fi-nal product.

The House En-ergy and Com-merce Com-mit-tee will con-tin-ue a long-term re-view of the na-tion's elec-tri-city grid with a hear-ing on the cre-ation of today's de-reg-u-lated en-ergy mar-ket. The Wed-nes-day hear-ing in the En-ergy and Power sub-com-mit-tee will be the first without chair-man Ed Whit-field, who is resign-ing at the start of the week.

HEALTH

The polit-ic-al fight over Zika fund-ing will dom-in-ate the Sen-ate's health care agenda this week, while in the House, the Ways and Means health sub-com-mit-tee will hold a hear-ing Wed-nes-day about how to in-centiv-ize bet-ter qual-ity care with-in Medi-care's hos-pit-al cov-er-age. The En-ergy and Com-merce Com-mit-tee's health care pan-el meets Thursday to dis-cuss five pub-lic-health bills, in-clud-ing meas-ures that would deal with dia-betes, con-gen-it-al heart fail-ure, and end-of-life care.

TECH-NO-LOGY

A meas-ure to im-prove call qual-ity in rur-al areas will get a hear-ing in the House on Thursday. The bill put forth by a bi-par-tis-an group of le-gis-lat-ors would hold ser-vice pro-viders to a new set of stand-ards and pro-ced-ures to ad-dress the un-re-li-able call qual-ity mem-bers say is af-fect-ing their rur-al con-stitu-ents. The hear-ing will be held by the Com-mu-nic-a-tions and Tech-no-logy sub-com-mit-tee of the En-ergy and Com-merce Com-mit-tee.

An-oth-er House hear-ing will look at the state of the com-mer-cial re-mote-sens-ing in-dustry—the space-based sur-vey-ing of earth for map-ping, crop mon-it-or-ing, weath-er fore-cast-ing, and oth-er ap-plic-a-tions. Mem-bers of the Space sub-com-mit-tee of the Sci-ence, Space, and Tech-no-logy com-mit-tee will hear from in-dustry lead-ers and aca-dem-ics.

WHITE HOUSE

Pres-id-ent Obama will spend the bulk of this week over-seas, par-ti-cip-at-ing in three sum-mits at-tract-ing more than 50 world lead-ers. He starts in Hang-zhou, China, site of the G-20 sum-mit. That meet-ing wraps up Monday with a press con-fer-ence. From there, the pres-id-ent flies to Vi-en-tiane, be-com-ing the first U.S. pres-id-ent ever to vis-it Laos. He will at-tend the U.S.-ASEAN and East Asia sum-mits, with a speech planned Wed-nes-day on the im-port-ance of the Trans-Pa-cific Part-ner-ship trade deal. On Wed-nes-day he will take a side trip to the cul-tur-al cen-ter of Lu-ang Pra-bang for a speech on un-ex-ploded ord-nance re-main-ing from the Vi-et-nam War and a town-hall meet-ing. The ASEAN and EAS sum-mits take place on Thursday back in the cap-it-al city of Vi-en-tiane. On Fri-day, he heads back to the United States.

The Day Zika Deal Died: A Cautionary Tale Of Congressional Gridlock

By Lindsay Wise

McClatchy, September 2, 2016

Democrats and Republicans were tantalizingly close to a deal on funding Zika prevention measures this summer when it all fell apart in the final 48 hours, according to interviews with a half-dozen senior congressional staffers involved in the talks.

The staffers, three Democrats and three Republicans, spoke to McClatchy anonymously because of the sensitivity of the negotiations. They described a week of intense talks thwarted, in the end, by political entrenchment and unfortunate timing.

"I thought we were really close," said one staffer who was in the room the last time negotiators from both parties met in June.

Had there been more time, more space, had the atmosphere been a little different, maybe progress could have been made.

Republican staffer involved in Zika negotiations

But outside that room, partisan rhetoric was heating up. And time was running out.

The House of Representatives had to pass a bill in time for the Senate to take it up before the July Fourth recess. After that, members of Congress would be out of Washington for the rest of the summer.

This was the last chance to boost funding to fight Zika before peak mosquito season hit and the country registered its first locally transmitted cases of the disease.

The story of how Congress missed that chance is a cautionary tale about the politics of gridlock: In an election year, it's more tempting to beat up your opponents for intransigence than make concessions you have to sell to your own base.

"The closer you get to the election, the more the whole thing gets tied up in the politics of the election coming up," said Bill Hoagland, senior vice president of the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington.

"This year in particular," he said, "the degree of polarization is very, very high."

The parties' presidential conventions were just days away, and it was becoming increasingly clear that control of the Senate was on the line in November.

Further complicating matters was a Democratic sit-in in the House of Representatives to demand votes on gun control that began shortly before noon on June 22, the same day that Republicans presented their final draft of the bill to Democrats.

"It was not a good situation for Kumbaya," as one Democratic staffer put it.

Pressure to fund a response to the Zika virus begin in February, when President Barack Obama requested $1.9 billion to boost vaccine research and ramp up testing and mosquito control efforts. Evidence was growing that Zika could cause debilitating brain damage in unborn children, as were fears of an outbreak in the continental United States.

On May 18, the House passed a bill that provided $622 million for Zika through September, only about a third as much as Obama had requested. The spending was entirely offset by budget cuts, with half of the money coming from unspent Ebola funds.

The bill also included grant funding language for states and U.S. territories that was so restrictive that even Republicans admitted it likely would prevent the use of the money for contraception, which was crucial to preventing Zika-related birth defects.

The White House threatened to veto it.

The Senate passed its own bill the next day. The bipartisan compromise worked out by Republican Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri and Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington sailed through by a vote of 89-8. That legislation would have provided $1.1 billion in emergency funds, which by definition did not have to be financed by any spending cuts.

There were no provisions about how states could spend grant money or language about lifting environmental regulations to spray for mosquitoes, even temporarily.

There's no question the sit-in didn't help. It just threw that gasoline on that fire. . . . Would it have made a difference? Who knows? But it certainly didn't help.

Bill Hoagland, senior vice president, Bipartisan Policy Center

Blunt and Murray were among 32 members of Congress from both parties who were appointed to a special "conference" committee to reconcile the House and Senate versions of the bill.

That committee met only once, on June 15.

The real work got underway afterward, at the staff level.

Staffers broke into teams to tackle different sections of the bill, hashing out details face-to-face, by phone and email. By all accounts, the negotiations were intense but made progress for nearly a week until coming to loggerheads over the final three issues: funding cuts, Planned Parenthood and pesticides.

Two senior Democratic staff members and two senior Republican staff members from the House and Senate appropriations committees led the talks in the final stages. The four have decades' worth of experience on the Hill and a tradition of working together across party lines on everything from emergency funds for Ebola to massive omnibus spending bills.

It was clear from the outset that Democrats were unwilling to compromise on funding. They wanted what they had agreed to in Blunt and Murray's bipartisan Senate bill: at least $1.1 billion in emergency funds, no offsets.

There is a definition in the law of what constitutes an emergency, Democrats said, and Zika meets the definition by any standard. Accepting cuts would create a terrible precedent, they said.

Republicans directly involved in the talks agreed that their counterparts had no leeway to negotiate the matter.

"They just didn't have license at whatever level, I don't know what level," a Republican staffer said. "It was a theological issue."

Although cuts were off the table, there was some back and forth on the language about block grants and pesticides, with each side making offers and counteroffers.

On pesticides, Republicans decided to lift the pesticide rules for 180 days, thinking the time limit might be palatable to Democrats.

Republicans also dropped the original House language on grants and ended up with an alternative they considered to be a compromise. The grants could go to health services provided by public health departments or reimbursed through Medicaid. At the last minute they added hospitals, too.

But since Planned Parenthood isn't eligible for Medicaid reimbursement in Puerto Rico, this was a no-go as far as Democrats were concerned.

From Blunt's perspective, House Republicans' insistence on including block grant language to keep funds from Planned Parenthood distracted from the more serious obstacle to an agreement: How to pay for new Zika spending?

Had that language not been included, he said, "then it would have become more clearly a fight about would you pay for an emergency" instead of a partisan battle over Planned Parenthood.

Believing they were at an impasse with

Democrats, House and Senate Republicans withdrew to confer among themselves on June 21.

That morning, Democratic lawmakers began to imply publicly that they weren't happy.

At 10:03 a.m. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid tweeted, "Republicans should not turn Zika health emergency into a partisan game by siphoning money from Ebola or Affordable Care Act."

Murray went on the floor of the Senate two hours later to warn against taking money from one public health priority to support another.

"With the health and well-being of women and babies on the line – now is not a time for nickel-and-diming," she said.

The next day, at about 11:30 a.m. on June 22, Georgia Rep. John Lewis and other Democratic House members walked onto the floor of the House and sat down. What began as a hastily planned gesture quickly escalated into a full-fledged sit-in to demonstrate Democratic frustration over the Republican refusal to hold votes on gun control.

When House Republicans turned off the chamber's cameras, Democrats switched on their cellphones to broadcast images of the sit-in via the internet and C-SPAN. Within hours, a sympathetic crowd started to gather outside the building, adding to the pressure on Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan to bring the legislature back to regular order or adjourn.

Elsewhere in the Capitol, Republican staffers presented Democrats with their final draft of the Zika bill. It would cut $750 million from Obamacare, Ebola and the Department of Health and Human Services to pay for $1.1 billion in spending on Zika.

By far the largest chunk of cash came from $543 million intended to set up Affordable Care Act exchanges in the U.S. territories. In a quirk of the budget, the money couldn't be used for the purpose originally intended and so was "dead money" that enabled both parties to avoid cutting programs they really cared about.

Democratic staffers made it clear they hadn't been posturing. They weren't empowered to talk about offsets or accept the riders as proposed.

The feeling among staffers involved in the negotiations was that the differences could be worked out eventually. But time was not on their side.

Although there were two more working days on the calendar that week, Republicans were eager to end the sit-in that had roiled the House floor that day.

And they had to get a bill to the Senate with enough time for that chamber vote before the summer recess or risk getting blamed for missing the window to act.

Republicans filed the bill at 10:04 p.m. on June 22. It had none of the customary Democratic signatures that characterize a bipartisan agreement.

Ryan brought the bill to a vote at 3:11 the next morning, amid deafening shouts of "shame" and boos from Democratic protesters. It passed on a party-line vote as Democrats sang "We Shall Overcome" and waved papers with the names of gun victims on them.

Ryan then adjourned the House until July 5, effectively ending the sit-in.

Outraged Senate Democrats vowed to block the bill.

They did so before the summer recess and are expected to do so again Tuesday, when Congress returns to Capitol Hill.

Editorial: Zika Spread Should Spur Congress To Act

Palm Beach (FL) Post, September 3, 2016

After a seven-week hiatus, Congress returns to Washington on Tuesday to a list of must-do legislation. One item that should be at the top of the list: a vote to provide crucial emergency funding to fight the spread of the Zika virus.

The time for partisan excuses and political dysfunction is long past. The virus, which can cause serious birth defects, continues to spread while money dedicated to preventing it dwindles.

"Basically, we're out of money," Tom Frieden, who heads the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said last week. "… and we need Congress to act to allow us to respond effectively."

Frieden said of the $222 million that the CDC was allocated for domestic Zika response this year, about $200 million has been committed. "The rest will be gone by the end of September."

By the way, we're in the peak of mosquito season — which typically lasts through the end of October in the United States. As reports of virus infections broaden, the CDC "might not have the resources" to respond and send teams to support state and local officials, Frieden said.

How pathetic has been Congress' response to this burgeoning public health threat? When the lawmakers folded their tents on July 15, the total number of Zika infections in Florida — ground zero for the virus in the U.S. — was 276, including 43 pregnant women. None local.

As of Thursday, Florida had 49 locally transmitted cases, 576 travel-related cases and 80 infections involving pregnant women, according to the state Department of Health website.

Palm Beach County now has three locally acquired cases of Zika virus. And 33 cases of travel-related Zika.

That's as many non-travel-related Zika cases as the entire island of Cuba. Officials there also say they've diagnosed just 30 people with cases of the virus they got outside the island. That's because they've taken what The AP calls "a militarized nationwide campaign of intensive mosquito spraying, monitoring and quarantine."

Even casting a suspicious eye toward the Cuba figures does not diminish the plain good sense of our making a similar full-fledged attack. Especially after the state Department of Agriculture announced Thursday that it had detected Zika in three mosquito samples from an area of Miami Beach where the virus has been transmitted. Those were the first mosquitoes that have tested positive for the virus in Florida.

The news prompted Gov. Rick Scott to direct state health officials to "aggressively expand testing and outreach efforts in the areas around the traps that caught the positive mosquitoes." This aggressive expansion will take money. More than the $26.2 million that Scott has earmarked for the fight. And obviously, more than the CDC and U.S. Department of Health Human Services have on hand.

Zika is an economic, as well as health care, threat to Florida. So we were heartened to see all 27 members of the Florida congressional delegation put their names on a letter to Frieden last month demanding a bigger share of $16 million in emergency money set aside by the agency.

Scott has taken an unhelpfully partisan approach by steadily blaming the Obama administration for not responding swiftly enough to the growing threat. This, despite the fact that the White House recommended $1.9 billion to fight the virus in February.

The governor, when he travels to Washington this week, needs to direct his ire toward his party brethren in the Republican-led Congress who, in a silly game of chicken, refused to support the $1.9 billion allocation and then failed to reach agreement on a $1.1 billion plan before heading home for summer recess.

Scott should tell them to stop playing politics with the lives of Floridians and pass a straightforward Zika bill that, this time, isn't laden with "poison pills" that, for example, punish Planned Parenthood and honor the Confederate flag.

On Aug. 3, Scott said: "We will continue to do everything possible to keep our residents and visitors safe."

We're holding you to that, governor.

As of Thursday, Florida had 49 locally transmitted cases, 576 travel-related cases and 80 infections involving pregnant women.

Our Views: We Are All In The Front Line In Mosquito War

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 2, 2016

Even if you are among those fortunate enough to avoid drastic home repairs in the wake of last month's flooding, there is still work for you to do: mosquito prevention.

The record-breaking deluge of August is only going to worsen the chronic problem of mosquitoes in southern Louisiana. God forbid that there are more heavy rains or a tropical storm, but even regular showers will continue to collect in basins of all types, from ponds to flower pots to old tires.

These are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and in recent years, Louisiana has been challenged by infections from the West Nile virus. The disease can lead to deadly consequences for infants and the elderly, or others with compromised immune systems.

The potential for Zika to come to Louisiana is also there, although there are no reports of mosquito-borne cases.

Rebecca Christofferson, an assistant professor at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine, has been awarded a research grant provided by the National Institutes of Health for $1.2 million to study the mosquito-borne viruses, Zika and chikungunya. Both viruses have recently emerged in the Western Hemisphere.

That's a big grant, and one that shows how valuable to everyday life is the intellectual talent in Louisiana's universities. But if the heavy brain work must be done by specialists, Christofferson recently told the LSU Science blog that every resident can help prevent the spread of these potentially lethal diseases.

"Flood waters flush out mosquito larva that have already been there but leave behind lots of standing water that is prime real estate for mosquito breeding. People cleaning up can help mitigate this by getting rid of any sources of standing water they see in or around their homes," Christofferson said. "So to everyone: Wear a mosquito repellent with DEET. The EPA has a website that will match you with the appropriate repellent. Re-apply as you sweat and dump out standing water around your homes."

We are fortunate that Zika has not found its way here yet, but Louisiana has seen more than a dozen cases of West Nile this year. Standing water is where the pests proliferate.

As Christofferson advises, mosquito repellent is vital during a long Labor Day weekend when many people are out and about. But in yards and ditches, flower pots or other containers, the battle lines against infection are within reach of ordinary citizens.

Tending to the yard and eliminating mosquito breeding grounds — indeed, factories for their production — is a basic public health battle that can be done by everyone.

Zika Virus Is Spreading And Remains Global Emergency, According To The WHO

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, September 2, 2016

The World Health Organization said Friday that the growing spread of Zika around the world and basic gaps in knowledge about the virus's devastating complications in babies continue to make Zika a global health emergency.

After convening its expert committee this week, the U.N. health experts said that more research needs to be focused on what other factors beside the mosquito-borne virus could be causing severe birth defects, such as microcephaly.

One of the most fundamental questions in this current epidemic is why countries like Brazil, the epicenter of the current epidemic, have reported nearly 2,000 cases of microcephaly and other brain abnormalities, while countries like Colombia have reported fewer than three dozen cases.

Scientists need to examine possible factors that could affect Zika's damage, including genetic factors, environmental contaminants, and other co-infections, said David Heymann, the committee's chair and an infectious disease professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

"A whole range of co-factors must be eliminated to say, with certainty" that the only culprit is the Zika virus, he said.

Peter Salama, WHO's executive director for outbreaks and health emergencies, said researchers need to understand whether the time lag between when an outbreak occurs to when birth defects show up nine months later could account for country-by-country differences, or "is it truly something to do with cofactors."

Meanwhile, the virus continues to infect new countries, including most recently Singapore, which reported 189 confirmed cases Friday.

"An extraordinary event is becoming, unfortunately, an ordinary event," Heymann said.

WHO officials also said Brazil reported no confirmed cases of Zika following the Rio de Janeiro Olympics. That data is based on information collected by authorities on people who sought treatment at health facilities who were athletes or spectators.

Most people with Zika don't have symptoms, but Salama said enhanced surveillance by WHO of the Olympic delegations shows no large-scale transmission of Zika, confirming the earlier assessments of WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that the Olympics posed no significant additional risk of spreading Zika.

A study published Thursday identified eight countries in Asia and Africa that researchers say are at the greatest risk of Zika virus transmission.

The countries — India, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Nigeria, Vietnam, Pakistan and Bangladesh — all have hot and humid climate conditions; the type of mosquitoes that primarily spread the virus; a high volume of travelers returning from Zika-affected areas in the Americas; and large, dense populations. And several have limited health-care resources.

With the geographic expansion of Zika, one of the most urgent questions is whether the virus will cause the same kind of brain damage and other complications to babies in Asia and Africa.

A big unknown is the extent to which communities in Asia and Africa might have immunity to Zika, because the virus has sporadically been reported on both continents. The virus occurs in two different strains, the Asian strain and the African strain. It's unclear whether infection with one strain will protect people with the strain now circulating in the Americas, which is the Asian strain.

Zika was first identified in Uganda in 1947 in a monkey. But in Africa, "it's not even known how large outbreaks have been in the past in humans," Heymann said. "They've not come on the radar screen. They've never been reported in outbreaks."

Singapore authorities are still determining which strain of the Zika virus is causing its outbreak.

In Guinea Bissau in West Africa, the Zika virus reported in four cases suggests it is the African strain, which has not previously been associated with birth defects. Guinea Bissau also had detected five cases of microcephaly before its outbreak of Zika.

"Is that reporting bias or were they epidemiologically connected?" said Salama, of the WHO. "We don't know the answer."

Previous infections with Dengue, a related virus that is widespread in Brazil, may also amplify the damage from Zika, according to lab studies.

Olympics Had No Zika Cases, WHO Says

By Peter Sullivan

The Hill, September 2, 2016

The World Health Organization (WHO) said Friday that there have not been any confirmed cases of Zika among people who attended the Olympics.

The announcement comes despite concerns preceding the games that the Olympics could provide a dangerous opportunity for the virus to spread.

The WHO said the Emergency Committee on Zika "congratulated Brazil on their successful application of appropriate public health measures during the Olympic Games."

"To date, there have been no reports of confirmed cases of Zika virus among people who attended the Games, both during the games and since their return," the statement continued.

International health authorities had said that the Olympics would not be a danger for furthering spread of the virus.

A group of 150 health experts had called on the Olympics to be postponed or moved because of Zika concerns.

Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said in May that "there is no public health reason to cancel or delay the Olympics."

He said travel to the Olympics would make up "less than 1 percent" of all travel to South American countries affected by the Zika virus.

Zika Count Rises To 215 In Singapore

By Maggie Fox

NBC News, September 4, 2016

Singapore reported another big batch of Zika virus cases Sunday, bringing its total count in just a week to 215, and World Health Organization officials said the spread of the virus definitely still constitutes a global health emergency.

Zika's apparent quick spread out of Latin America and in Asia and Africa has WHO officials worried. They have no idea if the virus will spread as explosively as it has in the Americas, and they cannot predict if it will cause a fresh wave of birth defects and side-effects such as the paralyzing Guillain-Barré syndrome.

Miami-Dade mosquito control worker Carlos Vargas looks for the Aedes aegypti mosquito larvae at a home in Miami, Florida, on June 8. Rhona Wise / AFP – Getty Images

They don't even know if they can keep track of it if it spreads into countries with poor healthcare systems and little facility to test people for the virus.

"There's still an urgent need to continue global research and this still does remain an emergency of international concern," said Dr. David Heymann, chairman of WHO's emergency committee. "Zika is beginning to spread, continuing to cause outbreaks in many countries around the world."

"This extraordinary event is rapidly becoming, unfortunately, an ordinary event. And Zika is beginning to spread, continuing to cause outbreaks in many countries around the world," Heymann told reporters.

Tiny Singapore — the city-state is only about two-thirds the size of Washington, D.C. — only first saw Zika a week ago. It's moved quickly to try to contain local spread of the virus, carried by the same mosquitoes that spread dengue virus. It has also quickly reported every case it finds to WHO.

"The way the government of Singapore has handled the outbreak really represents a role model," said Dr. Peter Salama, executive director of WHO's Health Emergency Program.

It's not entirely certain that the strain is the same one that swept across Latin America, causing at least two outbreaks in south Florida, Salam added. Singapore's Ministry of Health said genetic sequencing had shown the virus spreading there was of Asian lineage and that it was not from South America. But the South American strain was also shown to have originated in Asia and not directly from Africa, so it was not clear precisely what the ministry meant.

Experts are worried because they cannot predict what Zika will do. The virus was first identified back in 1947 and seemed relatively innocuous. When it did infect people, which appeared to be rarely, it didn't even cause symptoms in most of them and appeared to cause, at worst, a rash, muscle aches and fever.

But when it showed up in Brazil, authorities immediately noticed a giant increase in cases of microcephaly, a severe birth defect defined by a small head. It's caused when the virus attacks the brain cells in a developing fetus, killing them off and stunting the growth of the skull.

Now Zika has been shown to cause a range of other, sometimes less-visible birth defects. There's no doubt it's the virus causing them — it's been found in the damaged brain tissue of miscarried babies and lab experiments have shown that the virus zeros in on immature brain cells.

It's also causing a rare paralyzing side effect seen with other infections called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

The question no one can answer is whether all this is new. "A year ago, there wasn't a test for Zika," says U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Tom Frieden. Zika is closely related to dengue and chikungunya and tests mix them up.

There had not been a good test that could tell if someone was infected with Zika in the past, and no one can say how many people in Asia or Africa have been infected with Zika previously — or whether they will be immune if it comes around again. There are two known strains of Zika: One that originated in Africa, and the one that spread from Asia to Latin America.

"This is a new manifestation of an old disease," Salama said. "This is a new manifestation of an old disease."

Added to all that, Zika is difficult to prevent. Most people don't show obvious symptoms when they are infected, making it hard to track. They can unknowingly spread it through sex, or infect mosquitoes that can then bite someone else.

The Aedes mosquitoes that spread Zika are very hard to kill, and the steady march of the virus illustrates just how easily travelers can carry it from one country to another.

"Even if they do not feel sick, travelers returning to the United States from Singapore should take steps to prevent mosquito bites for three weeks so that they do not spread Zika to uninfected mosquitoes," the CDC advises.

The same advice goes for any country or territory with active Zika outbreaks — including parts of Miami.

"Travelers returning from Singapore who have a pregnant partner should either use condoms or not have sex for the rest of the pregnancy," the CDC adds.

"People who have traveled to Singapore should use condoms for at least eight weeks after travel to protect their sex partners. Men who have Zika symptoms or are diagnosed with Zika should use condoms for at least six months after symptoms start; women with symptoms should use condoms for at least eight weeks after symptoms start."

People in Zika zones should use mosquito repellent, cover up and stay inside behind screens as possible, the CDC and WHO both advise. And women who might become pregnant need full access to birth control, they both added.

Singapore Should Brace For Long-term Battle With Zika: Experts

By Aradhana Aravindan And Marius Zaharia

Reuters, September 2, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Zika Researchers Work To Crack Virus's Genetic Secrets

By Daniela Hernandez

Wall Street Journal, September 5, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Study Finds Rumors Hurting Zika Efforts

By Maggie Angst

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, September 4, 2016

The Zika virus is not spreading from vaccines or chemicals. It's not a part of some big scheme by the U.S. Congress or pharmaceutical companies. Yet, rumors and conspiracy theories like these fill the screens of Facebook users.

Medical researchers are raising concerns that this public health misinformation could impede efforts to limit the spread of the virus.

Megha Sharma, a senior pediatrics fellow in neonatal-perinatal medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin, led a team analyzing Facebook as a social media health information platform, specifically for the Zika disease pandemic.

Sharma, an expecting mother, spends most of her days treating infants with diseases and counseling expecting mothers.

"In my practice, I've seen many mothers misinformed about a lot of things— especially the Zika virus," Sharma said. "A lot of false beliefs are finding their ways into the minds of patients."

In the last several years, Facebook has become a news powerhouse, and it has the potential to play a decisive role in times of public health crises.

Roughly two-thirds of U.S. adults use Facebook, and 30% of the general population obtains news from the website, according to Pew Research Center.Misleading posts

Sharma's study consisted of searching Facebook using the keywords "Zika virus" for posts and videos in the past month containing public health information about the disease.

The top 200 posts were selected for analysis by two independent physician reviewers and then classified as relevant or misleading. The classification was based on the quality of scientific information, emphasis on prevention and citations of credible sources.

One of the most popular misleading posts Sharma found was a video called "10 reasons why Zika virus fear is another fraudulent medical hoax and vaccine industry funding scam." The video has more than 690,000 views, 35,000 shares and 700 supportive comments on Facebook.

It claims that the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "fabricated the science linking Zika to microcephaly," that Congress used Zika to "remove bans on other toxic pesticide chemicals" and that microcephaly cases in Brazil "were caused by larvicide chemicals, not by Zika."

Microcephaly means that an infant is born with a small head, which is the biggest symptom of Zika. This condition causes brain malformations that can lead to long-term cognitive issues.

Sharma said Facebook posts claim larvicidal chemicals created by multinational conglomerates are causing birth defects like microcephaly rather than the virus itself. This claim was also shared on social media in an article from The Wall Street Journal, which emphasized that mosquito larvicide might be responsible for the birth defect rather than Zika. This claim is an unfounded rumor, according to Sharma.

Yet, the Brazilian government shut down a larvicidal factory in February because of this conspiracy, Sharma said.

"This is undermining the efforts to control disease," Sharma said.

During her time as a pediatrician, Sharma frequently saw a tendency for patients to blame major public health issues on vaccines.

"As someone who has taken care of babies for a while, I know that vaccines have no role in the risk of autism, the risk of behavior problems, and the risk of the Zika virus," Sharma said.

On the other hand, the World Health Organization, one of the most prominent organizations for health information dissemination, received only about 43,000 views for its video briefing on the facts about Zika.

Sharma concluded that posts with credible information about Zika are not as popular or widely viewed as misinformation and conspiracy theories.

Sharma hopes her research will encourage public health authorities to monitor the information on Facebook.

Two physicians at Tulane University School of Medicine, Kapil Yadav and Keith Ferdinand, were co-authors on the study with Sharma. The team's research study has been accepted for publication in the American Journal of Infection Control and should be available online in about a month.

"It's most important during a time of public health crisis or epidemics that the right information gets through, so patients and people are aware of the effects and the preventative measures that need to be taken," Yadav said.

The misleading information leads expecting moms to disregard the true measures for limiting Zika, such as avoiding travel to certain areas and watching for certain symptoms, Sharma said. That contributes to the spread of ZIka, according to Sharma.

"Every single day that I go to the hospital, I have a fear that this (Zika) is something we will see in a patient in Wisconsin," Sharma said. "But this misinformation spreads farther and is more contagious than the disease itself."

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Officials: Automated System Caused False Evacuation Alert For Hermine

By David Schwartz

Newsday (NY), September 5, 2016

A countywide evacuation order that crawled ominously — and falsely — across Suffolk television screens Saturday night as Tropical Storm Hermine approached was caused by the federal alert system that automatically generated a summary of the county's warning but cut off the longer message, federal and county officials said Monday.

A spokeswoman for the Federal Emergency Management Agency said its officials are investigating why the message, sent by Suffolk County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services, was shortened. County officials said they wouldn't use the Emergency Alert System again until they had answers.

Sent from county emergency offices in the basement of a county building in Yaphank, the message that was supposed to appear was for a voluntary evacuation of Fire Island. Instead, what showed up on television screens at 7:40 p.m. on Saturday night read, "Civil Authorities have issued an Evacuation Immediate for the following New York counties: Suffolk. Effective until September 04-07:10 AM EDT. This is an emergency message from." It ended there.

The partial message sparked a flood of 911 calls from concerned residents and agencies, said Greg Miniutti, chief of communication for the Department of Suffolk Fire and Rescue.

"It was controlled chaos," Miniutti said. "The phone was ringing off the hook."

While Bellone's team took to Facebook to correct the alert and the police sent their own messages that county residents didn't need to leave, Miniutti and his team scrambled. They couldn't cancel the message. But they tried to send another.

They guessed a shorter version might go through, rather than the 600-character advisory originally sent. And it did.

About 10 to 15 minutes after the first message, the original warning reappeared with the new message — "UPDATED Message — Voluntary evacuation of Fire Island ONLY by 1 pm Saturday 9/4/16" — tacked onto the end.

Miniutti said the dispatch supervisor who sends the alert typed in the message correctly through the county's Code Red system, which it buys through a vendor to interact with the federal systems, including the Emergency Alert System.

FEMA spokeswoman Lauren Lefebvre said the original message that appeared on television is generated automatically by the computer system. The agency is investigating why the rest of the county's message wasn't broadcast.

"We've formally asked New York State Emergency Management to find out what happened," Suffolk Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services Commissioner Joseph Williams said. "Not to point fingers, but to find out what happened. We want to make sure what happened doesn't happen again."

The county will continue to use other aspects of the federal notification system, which allows it to send messages in other ways, including text messages to mobile phones near specific cell towers — as it did on Saturday night when the voluntary evacuation of Fire Island was enacted.

Lefebvre said she did not know of another instance when an abbreviated automated alert was sent in error. She said the public should continue to pay attention to local officials, newscasts and emergency alerts.

"It's peak hurricane season. Alerts will go out if needed and are critical and contain lifesaving messaging," she said.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

FEMA: September Is Nat'l Preparedness Month

By Alex AuBuchon

Alabama Public Radio, September 5, 2016

September is National Preparedness Month, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency is urging Alabamians to be prepared for disasters.

FEMA is partnering with the Ad Council to encourage people to take time to develop a plan in the event of a disaster. The agency says families should think about things like supplies to have on hand, locations of local shelters and where to go in the event of an emergency.

Rafael Lemaitre is the director of public affairs for FEMA. He says flooding is the most common and costly disaster the agency encounters, which means having flood insurance is crucial.

"This is not something that is covered under standard homeowner insurance policies, but it's important that folks just take time to protect themselves, because if something were to happen, FEMA assistance isn't designed to make you whole. Insurance, however, can replace what you lose."

Lemaitre also encourages people to download FEMA's app, with readiness checklists and built-in alerts from the National Weather Service. The app is free on Apple's App Store and Google Play.

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

No stories for this edition

FEMA CORPS

No stories for this edition

PRIVATE SECTOR

No stories for this edition

CITIZEN CORPS

No stories for this edition

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Our Views: Labor Day Closes Summer Of Sadness In South Louisiana, Hopefully Brings A Page Turn

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 4, 2016

The arrival of Labor Day brings the unofficial end of summer, concluding a season in the life of Louisiana that no one could have envisioned when schools closed for the vacation break last May.

This has been a summer of sadness in south Louisiana, the timing made all the more ironic because summer, of all the seasons on the calendar, is supposed to be the most carefree time of the year.

Instead, cares crowded the summer of 2016 like hordes of locusts in some biblical plague. The July 5 shooting of a black man during a struggle with police at a Baton Rouge convenience store prompted protests in Louisiana and across the country. The July 17 shooting of six Baton Rouge law enforcement officers by a gunman bent on revenge left three lawmen dead, bringing even more international attention to an already wounded city. Then came last month's historic flooding in south Louisiana, a tragedy that displaced thousands of homeowners and killed 13 people.

Although Labor Day is typically devoted to backyard barbecues and time off the clock, this won't be a day of rest for many south Louisiana residents. They'll be working hard to clean out and repair flood-damaged homes, a drudgery others confronted after hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Labor Day began as a celebration of the American capacity for hard work, a reality made evident here in the aftermath of the August flood. Thousands of homeowners, taking their destinies in their own hands, are gutting their homes and reclaiming their lives, affirming the basic resilience of Louisiana's people.

Louisiana is known around the world as a place to have a good time, a reputation we embrace. But when crisis calls, our people work harder than anyone to fix what is broken, to heal what is hurting, to restore what's been lost. The labor of recovery that so many undertake this Labor Day is a hard job, but it's a labor of love for a state that will rebound, better than ever.

With Labor Day, a page turns. We hope the holiday signals a slow return to routine after an anguished summer. May we once again enjoy cooler temperatures, football, calmer skies. And may more of us be settled in our own homes again – maybe by Halloween.

Our Views: A Bipartisan Stand On Louisiana Recovery

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 4, 2016

In a deeply partisan presidential campaign season, a natural disaster has reminded Louisiana residents that in times of crisis, petty party politics should have no place in relief and recovery.

Shortly after the flood, Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, asked Republican Lt. Gov. Bill Nungesser to help local officials in flooded areas navigate the federal bureaucracy for aid. As president of Plaquemines Parish, Nungesser gained lots of experience in disaster management, leading the parish through five hurricanes and the BP oil spill. Edwards' willingness to cross party lines and enlist Nungesser in the recovery is a healthy sign that when trouble calls, the state's leaders can be grown-ups.

The governor's meeting with Louisiana's congressional delegation to chart the state's recovery needs was another welcome development. The delegation includes outgoing Republican U.S. Sen. David Vitter, Edwards' rival in the governor's race last fall, as well as other members of the GOP who have disagreed with the governor on basic matters of public policy.

But the issue of disaster assistance for Louisiana should inspire bipartisan unity, and we hope the apparent cooperation among members of the delegation and the governor proves durable. "The meeting was very productive, and as we continue to get a clearer picture of the damage sustained in this historic flood, we will continue to fight together for a stronger Louisiana," Edwards said of his session with the delegation.

The delegation has lost seniority in recent years — the coin of the realm in congressional influence — so working together will be especially important in getting Louisiana the recovery resources it needs.

We urge the state's senators and congressmen to work with the governor to develop a coherent request for the extra federal help only Congress can approve.

The basic ingredients of such an aid package should include housing assistance for displaced residents and funding for long-delayed flood control projects for the region.

National attention for the flood's aftermath is already fading. Given the narrowly closing window of opportunity to gain congressional support for Louisiana's recovery, the state's leaders must act quickly and decisively to press Louisiana's case.

They can boost their chances of success — and

Louisiana's prospects for recovery — by acting together, Republicans and Democrats united.

Our Views: It's Not Enough To Finish The Comite Canal

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 2, 2016

If there's a convenient scapegoat for the flooding of recent weeks, it is the Amite River Basin Commission, principally charged with building the Comite River diversion canal that might have mitigated some of the damages from floods in the Amite basin.

This week, the commission met for the first time since the floods, mostly to mostly to sign off on some emergency contracts.

The diversion canal is not the only project of the 13-member commission, a board with represenatives from the six parishes in the Amite basin. But in light of disaster, there is a lot of focus on failure to complete the canal, which has faced challenges for years: a lack of state and federal funding even as taxpayers in four parishes have been chipping in property taxes since 2001; what commissioners say is a low estimate of the benefits of the project from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; debates over property "takings" for the canal – a politically controversial matter in conservative suburbs.

What cannot be denied, though, is the evidence that the lack of a diversion canal is not a plausible scapegoat for all of last month's flooding.

State Climatologist Barry Keim told the Press Club of Baton Rouge this week of the almost unbelievable readings of rainfall from the storm, including the amazing 33 inches-plus at Watson in Livingston Parish.

At the Amite commission meeting, Executive Director Dietmar Rietschier noted that the dimensions of the disaster were such that no single project could have saved all those engulfed by flood waters.

Indeed, many of the neighborhoods damaged in East Baton Rouge Parish suffered from flash floods because of past neglect of more basic drainage projects that were smaller than the Amite canal but certainly expensive.

The cost of the diversion canal remains an issue, but as Rietschier said, the floods may prod the Corps and Congress into a crash program to complete the project.

It would be after the fact, that's true. But if the canal can perform as projected, future floods that are less severe can be mitigated and damage sharply reduced downstream of the Comite project.

We encourage policy makers at the state, federal and local level not to regard the Comite canal as a magic bullet. Even if completed, it won't make up for a long-term failure to invest in more drainage projects throughout our generally low-lying area.

These aren't the sexiest public works projects in the world, and and they're costly – but far less costly than the flooding pain that so many of our families are enduring now.

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

ABC: Iowa Flooding. ABC World News (9/25, story 8, 1:30, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "Now to the flood emergency in Iowa. Rivers rising, forcing evacuations in Cedar Rapids. And families facing some of the worst flooding in years. The danger expected to grow worse during the week. Here's Rob Marciano in the flood zone." ABC (**Marciano**) added, "Tonight, the major flooding disaster in Iowa is only getting worse. Up to seven feet of water submerging homes. Entire neighborhoods swamped by rivers. The only way in or out, by boat." **Unidentified speaker**: "We built what we thought was good enough, but it wasn't. We'll rebuild back." **Marciano**: "This baby deer getting caught in the water surge, a good Samaritan rushing to rescue it from the dangerous currents. In cedar rapids, they're scrambling to fill thousands of sandbags to protect against the growing threat. Evacuations begin tonight as residents brace for one of the worst floods in the city's history." **Ron Corbett**, Cedar Rapids Mayor: "We really need to push hard these next days to be fully prepared for that crest." **Marciano**: "The water coming up to street level, which is why they built these temporary barriers. Forecasts have the crest at 23 feet. A long duration event they haven't seen since 2008. Tom?"

CBS: California-Wildfire Airdrop Plane. The CBS Evening News (9/24, story 7, 1:50, Ninan, 11.17M) reported, "At least five large wildfires are burning in California, and the worst part of the fire season is actually just beginning. With red flag warnings posted across the state, tonight Chris Martinez takes us aboard California's top weapon for battling its biggest fires." CBS (Martinez) added, "Firefighters battling California's largest wildfires call this their 'big gun.'" R.K. Smithley, pilot: "When you're up there trying to save lives and property, it's pretty intense." Martinez: "R.K. Smithley is the pilot of a DC-10 passenger aircraft that's been transformed into a powerful weapon against flames." Smithley: "Somebody that was very, very smart — way smarter than me — decided, 'Let's put three tanks on a DC-10.'" Martinez: "Together, those tanks carry more than 11,000 gallons of fire retardant, about nine times more than any other plane in the fleet. All three tanks can be rapidly refilled." Smithley: "Twelve to 15 minutes, these babies are full and we're going." Martinez: "What makes this plane unique isn't just its payload but also how it's flown, making fighter-style turns just 250 feet above the ground. You don't expect that of an aircraft like this." Smithley: "No. We fly this in some amazingly tight spaces." Martinez: "Spaces firefighters often can't reach from the ground. Without that air support…" Unidentified Speaker: "We'd see a lot bigger fires. We'd see a lot more rapid growth. We'd see fires lasting longer, consuming more ground resources." Martinez: "Smithley says he knows how critical his job is." Smithley: "People on the ground are relying on us doing it right. That's what it's about, right there." Martinez: "That thought is top of mind, he says, every time he makes a drop. Chris Martinez, CBS News, Sacramento."

ABC: Severe Weather-Storms. ABC World News Tonight (9/23, story 4, 0:50, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "We are tracking a severe storm threat as we begin this weekend, tonight from Texas all the way north. Two confirmed EF1 tornadoes now in Utah, this one in Washington Terrace. Heavy rain in the Midwest, severe flooding in Greene, Iowa. The system is moving east at this hour. So let's get right to meteorologist Rob Marciano, tracking it all. Rob?" ABC (Marciano) added, "Hi, David. That storm that spawned the tornadoes in Utah, as you mentioned, is on the move. We've got severe thunderstorm watches posted for eastern Wyoming, for Nebraska, South Dakota. By tomorrow, strong storms expected from Minnesota all the way into Texas. And for California, our first big Santa Ana wind event. It's going to peak on Sunday, hot, dry winds over 50 miles per hour, fire watch posted there. And here in the East, the summerlike heat is over, a fall cool finally coming this weekend. David?" Muir: "All right, Rob Marciano with us on a Friday. Rob, thank you."

NBC: Severe Weather-Storms. NBC Nightly News (9/23, story 4, 1:35, Guthrie, 16.61M) reported, "States of emergency are in effect tonight in parts of the Midwest, where 48 hours of relentless rain triggered deadly floods. The National Guard is now being called in to help, while out west, tornadoes have struck hard. We get details now from NBC's Gadi Schwartz." NBC (Schwartz) added, "Across the country, weather systems so powerful that rain-heavy wind gusts swept sideways. In Utah." Unidentified Speaker: "Look at that!" Schwartz: "Dark storm clouds brought out onlookers with cameras." Unidentified Speaker: "There goes the transformer." Unidentified Speaker: "Oh, my gosh!" Schwartz: "A small twister damages homes. This one knocked clean off its foundation and cracking its roof in half. While men in chest-high waters built up walls with sandbags. In the Midwest, monster rain totals. Parts of Wisconsin and Iowa seeing over a half-a-foot of rain in 48 hours. And in Minnesota, a whopping 13 inches in some areas. Rivers overflowing into towns across those states. A dock with a boat swept into a dam. A train derailment spilling diesel fuel into the Mississippi. The damaging flood waters killing at least two men in Wisconsin. And the death toll from these storms may have been even higher if not for quick-acting Minneapolis police officers." Unidentified Speaker: "Yeah, we're going to try to yank him up." Schwartz: "Their body cameras capturing a daring nighttime rescue of a man being swept away in a flood channel." Unidentified Speaker: "My partner was hanging on to the back of my belt so I wouldn't fall over the edge." Schwartz: "A reminder of the dangers of torrential downpours that can threaten lives with each storm." Unidentified Speaker: "There it goes." Schwartz: "Gadi Schwartz, NBC News."

State Of Emergency Declared For Wright County

By Kacey Ginn

Wright County (IA) Monitor, September 25, 2016

In a special meeting this morning, the board of Supervisors unanimously voted to declare a state of emergency for Wright County due to a high accumulation of rainfall and flooded rural roads.

So far, flooding has been found to be particularly affecting the northern half of the county, prompting Belmond-Klemme Community Schools to dismiss class at 11:30 a.m. Heavy rainfall in Hancock County overnight is expected to continue affecting Wright County as the water flows downstream.

"We've got several areas of rural roads that are under water," said Jim Lester, County Emergency Management Coordinator. Board Chairman Stan Watne also wanted to urge drivers to be cautious.

Roads superintendent Chase Pruismann reported that they've closed 50 roads so far, with 100 more flagged and coned. Problem areas include the grove southeast of Belmond and various roads near the Iowa and Boone Rivers in Boone, Belmond, and Pleasant townships.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency also released a statement today urging Iowans to be prepared for flooding. "Additional rainfall, even in smaller amounts, when combined with an already saturated ground, could quickly lead to hazardous conditions," said FEMA Region VII Administrator Beth Freeman. "It's critical that Iowans prepare now to do what's needed to be safe in the wake of current and near-term flooding, as well as other severe weather."

The emergency declaration will allow state assistance and for county emergency funds to be used for road repair and barricading, if needed.

24 Tips From FEMA That Will Prepare You For Flooding

Des Moines (IA) Register, September 23, 2016

With active flooding underway in parts of Iowa and the threat of more to come, FEMA is urging Iowans to be ready to take life-saving actions on short notice.

"Additional rainfall, even in smaller amounts, when combined with an already saturated ground, could quickly lead to hazardous conditions," said FEMA Region VII Administrator Beth Freeman. "It's critical that Iowans prepare now to do what's needed to be safe in the wake of current and near-term flooding, as well as other severe weather."

Haylie Wasem, 18, (in gray) was evacuated from her home on the southeast side of Waverly as floodwaters continue to rise through northern Iowa. Neighbor Elizabeth Bluhm, 19, said floodwaters are about two feet from her home.

FEMA's Region VII office in Kansas City, Missouri has been in regular contact with emergency management officials in Iowa as both agencies actively monitor severe weather and flooding in many parts of the state.

"This flooding is a serious situation for many Iowans," Freeman added. "We can't stress enough how important it is for citizens to stay informed of ever-changing conditions, to follow official emergency instructions, to have an emergency plan for all members of the family, including pets, and to be ready to quickly put that plan into action."

Flooding is not unfamiliar to many Iowans but it helps to refresh on the immediate steps to stay safe:

Be Informed and Know the Danger:

Keep track of severe weather and flood forecasts, and take them seriously. To do that:

Plan for the Worst:

Severe weather can strike suddenly so have a plan to stay safe and take life-saving action if needed. The plan should include:

For more information on creating an emergency plan, visit Ready or www.beready.iowa.gov.

Be Ready:

Gather essential items in one place if evacuation is needed. Those should include:

Wallets, purses, car/house keys, eyeglasses, cash, credit cards;

Medicine and basic first-aid supplies;

Daily living supplies for infants/young children, family members who are elderly or have access and functional needs, and pets;

Important information such as numbers for bank accounts, insurance policies (health, auto and property) and credit cards;

Important phone numbers of relatives, employers, schools and medical professionals such as pharmacies, physicians and veterinarians;

Chargers for mobile devices;

One or more changes of clothes. Include long pants, socks, boots and/or sturdy shoes;

Bottled water and high-protein, non-perishable food such as a peanut butter, tuna and nuts.

Talk through the emergency plan with all family members so that everyone knows what to do.

If there is time, consider making a more complete emergency supply kit for homes and cars. To learn how, visit Ready or Ready Iowa.

FEMA Won't Change Maps After Floods; Some Worry Of Consequences

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 24, 2016

Daniel Champton didn't buy flood insurance for his home in the Ascension Parish town of Galvez. Based on federal flood maps, he wasn't required to.

In August, he became one of the tens of thousands of south Louisianians living outside of federally designated high-risk flood zones whose houses took water.

Yet Federal Emergency Management Agency officials — tasked with not only responding to those victimized by floods but also with helping prevent the damage to begin with — have made it clear over the past month they won't revisit the accuracy of those maps.

Even more recently, officials doubled down on that promise, saying that not only would the flood maps stay the same, the widespread devastation won't prompt increases in flood insurance premiums. The reason is simple, FEMA officials have said: The rain that brought on the flood was so unprecedented it won't force a re-examination.

Leaders in the hard-hit Baton Rouge area have welcomed FEMA's assurances as needed continuity for their constituents.

But some researchers and critics of the flood-map process are raising questions about that approach, saying the scale of the flooding is actually a reason to take another look at the maps. They argue that inspection should not only reflect on the conclusions the maps come to but dig deep into the way they are developed and how construction throughout the region over the past couple of decades has altered drainage.

Craig Colten, an LSU historical geography professor, urges revising the maps. He noted the August flood was Louisiana's second major flood caused by rain in 2016. Severe rain in March brought high water to Livingston and Tangipahoa parishes and elsewhere. But he said he understands why people might be glad to hear FEMA doesn't plan to change the maps, which could lead to higher insurance costs or even pricey elevation of homes.

"I'm always sympathetic. If my house was out there and been flooded, I'd be in the same boat, and I would be basically facing extraordinary expenses, but I think in the long run, what's really unfair is to force these people who've suffered damage to face the risk again and face the peril that that they'd have to rebuild again," said Colten, who has written about Louisiana's efforts to tame its swamps and coastal environment. "Which is more expensive? Raising a house now or relocating now, which might be a big financial burden, but if they have to do this again in five or 10 years, it's an even bigger burden, to say nothing of the emotional cost."Bigger storms?

Meanwhile, nationally, experts are rethinking the FEMA maps relied on by the National Flood Insurance Program. Some see the current map methods as out-of-date, painting with too broad of brush that, in combination with local building rules, fails to adequately convey the risk of flooding to property owners.

Sally Ann McConkey, who coordinates hazard assessment and mapping for the Illinois State Water Survey and has advised FEMA on updating its maps, said the flood maps are designed for a bigger picture purpose than what's needed for local growth planning. They're created to manage the financial risk for national flood insurance and don't provide the kind of safety standard that the public or even local government officials might expect, she said.

The threshold used by FEMA on those maps is the 100-year flood. Where such a disaster is likely to strike drives who must have flood insurance if they have a mortgage on a property.

Despite the name, the 100-year flood is statement of probability — a flood that has a one-in-a-hundred chance of happening in a given year, though also a more than one-in-four chance of happening over the life of a 30-year mortgage.

Further, the models behind the FEMA maps don't take into account additional levels of uncertainty from the growing effects of incremental sea level rise and the prospect of even more severe increases due to global climate change, floodplain experts say.

Chad Berginnis, executive director for the Association of State Floodplain Managers and a former Ohio hazard mitigation officer, said the nation's flood modeling, which relies on statistics from years of past rainfall and flooding, has the built-in assumption that the future will be the same as the past. But floodplain managers across the nation are seeing that storms are increasingly more intense than the statistical data used to create flood maps had predicted, he said.

"We are seeing change in our atmospheric events, and so what does that mean for the future?" Berginnis asked.

Flood maps also might not adequately reflect changes in drainage because of construction. McConkey said FEMA chronically has lacked the funding to consistently update flood maps to account for new development and other changes. She suggested the best solution to avoid future flooding is to tightly control and limit development in the 100-year floodplain.

"That's really the key, is to get of out high risk areas because the rains are going to come. You can't build enough reservoirs; you can't build enough levees," McConkey said.

East Baton Rouge, Ascension and Livingston parishes all have flood maps that are 9 years old or newer, but important studies of the hydrology that underlie those maps mostly date from 2005, before periods of strong home construction in the parishes.

However, Shannon Dupont, East Baton Rouge's floodplain manager, said he believes with the flood mitigation the city-parish has long required on new development, the map is still current. FEMA also updated parts of the parish map in 2012.Elevation requirements

FEMA maps define the breadth and depth of a 100-year flood, designating the area that would be affected as a "floodplain" that is at highest risk of inundation. Researchers create the maps by combing through historical river and rainfall data, using airborne laser surveying equipment and tapping other information. When interpreted by local building codes, the 100-year-floodplain sets the mark for how high new properties must be built at a minimum, also known as the "base flood elevation."

In most of East Baton Rouge and Ascension parishes, new structures and subdivisions generally must be built 1 foot above the 100-year flood elevation determined by FEMA. In Livingston Parish, they must be built at or above that elevation.

Local officials around Baton Rouge said any bid to remap based on the August flood could deal a death blow to their communities. The governments of East Baton Rouge and Ascension parishes, as well as the city of Central, actually took steps post-flood to ease elevation regulations, which in some cases had previously been set higher than federal minimum requirements.

The exact toll of the flood across south Louisiana is still being tallied, but state officials estimate waters swamped 150,000 homes and businesses in at least 25 parishes. Thousands of homeowners are now awaiting damage assessments that will determine if they have to bear the added expense of elevating their homes, in addition to the repairs. Those within the 100-year floodplain that incurred damage adding up to 50 percent or more of the value of the home might have to elevate, depending on how high the structure is already raised.

"If they were to take this flood event that was so much of an anomaly and change the base flood elevation, you decimate the city, and folks are going to want to leave this city," Central Mayor Jr. Shelton said.

FEMA says it ultimately will use the data from this flood for regular map revisions, but the agency does not typically change the maps after one major flood. And, in any event, the process of making the map changes probably wouldn't be finished soon enough to affect rebuilding, local officials say.

But the idea of quickly putting in new elevation standards after a major event is not without precedent. After Huricane Katrina in 2005, FEMA established advisory elevation standards for New Orleans when the levee failures called into question what a safe elevation would be in the future. Communities had to adopt the advisory elevations to get access to money through the Road Home, the state rebuilding program funded by federal dollars.

Some have speculated that the Augst storm wasn't just a 100-year flood but in fact a 1,000-year flood — an event that has a 0.1 percent chance of happening in a given year and is 10 times less likely than FEMA's benchmark.

Local officials point to that fact, and the record-breaking river levels, to suggest the flood shouldn't prompt map changes.

"This thing that we just experienced in this parish, by any stretch of the imagination, whether you ask any meteorologist that's an expert on this type of an event, is exceedingly rare," Metro Councilman Trae Welch said. "To the point to where — I don't know where the 1,000-year number came from, but we don't base base-flood elevations on 1,000-year events and we shouldn't base base-flood elevations on 1,000-year events."

FEMA officials themselves have said part of the reason they aren't remapping is the enormous scale of the flood.

"All we administer to is the 100-year. So there are not going to be any advisory base flood elevations or map changes," Mark Lujan, FEMA's top mitigation expert for the South, told Sorrento residents in a meeting last month.

While the recent flood was a big one, it may not hit that 1,000-year mark. Climatologists have documented that a 1,000-year rain occurred in several places hit by the flooding. But soil conditions and other factors can affect runoff, making the official "size" of the flood less than the rain storm.

Todd Baumann, data chief for the United States Geological Survey in Baton Rouge, said recently that his agency has not yet determined the extent of the flood, but early data showed flooding was "routinely higher than a 1 percent event and, in multiple locations, approaching the 0.2 percent (500-year) range."

Insufficient data

Put down in various shades and tied to an entire architecture of local building regulations, FEMA flood maps have an air of certainty to them. Like road maps, they are marked with lines, abbreviations and numbers, showing where and how high the 100-year flood will reach with an implied level of precision that filters down to local building rules.

But Bob Jacobsen, a consulting environmental engineer and hydrologist for the Amite River Basin Commission, argues that the maps, while they achieve what Congress has mandated, don't paint an accurate enough picture of how flooding happens in the basin. Instead, federal, local and state officials should come together to devise better models, he said.

One problem with the maps is they are based on a limited historical record, even though it can take several hundred years worth of data to establish the true extent of a 100-year flood, Jacobsen said.

With that range of uncertainty, the flood height at the Denham Springs gauge on the Amite River for a 100-year event could vary by plus or minus 4 feet, Jacobsen estimated. The gauge saw its record height exceeded by 4.7 feet last month, still falling within the 100-year flood range that Jacobsen believes exists.

A written statement from FEMA did not dispute Jacobsen's assertions but did say the agency works with local officials to improve the maps' accuracy, continually evaluates the maps in light of new data and scientific methods, and strives to improve communication of the maps' findings to the public.

Insurance implications

Roy Wright, FEMA deputy associate administrator for insurance and mitigation, told a Congressional committee earlier this month that flood insurance claims filed over the August floods in Louisiana already had totaled 29,000, making it the fourth biggest storm since the creation of the program.

Only Katrina in 2005, Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and Hurricane Ike in 2005 were higher, he said.

While exact numbers are still uncertain, preliminary data suggests the flood touched thousands of homes in the Baton Rouge region outside the zones FEMA designated as at high risk of flooding — the areas where mortgage holders must have flood insurance.

For years, federal officials, joined by local and state leaders across Louisiana, have urged people to buy flood insurance whether they live in a high-risk zone or not.

But Jacobsen and Wright agreed that by using hard thresholds like the 100-year flood, the insurance program often creates a binary choice with the homeowners: In the plain, you need insurance; out of it, you don't.

Champton, the homeowner in Galvez, got 6 inches of water. Unknown to him, more than half of the lots in the Twelve Oaks of Galvez subdivision, including his, had been in the 100-year floodplain at the early stages of development a decade ago and would have been required to have flood insurance.

But, under parish rules, dirt had to be added to raise those lots above the floodplain before they could be sold, said developer Michael Boies. The lots were built up 2.4 to 3.6 inches above the projected level of inundation from a 100-year flood, according to FEMA map amendments.

Boies then was able to get the flood map amended under a legal process through FEMA to exclude those lots from insurance requirements.

Champton said he wasn't told about the map change when he bought his house. But the St. Amant native also said he never would have thought the Galvez area was vulnerable. "I never ever considered flooding until ... right after we flooded," he said.

In October, a committee that reviews FEMA's flood mapping procedures recommended the agency move away from the 100-year-flood threshold for insurance rating purposes. Instead of looking at swaths of homes, individual structures would be examined.

But Wright said that while he agrees with the goal, it's a "transformative" leap that will require lots of new data, major changes in what FEMA does for insurance underwriting and revamping local development rules.

"It will take us years to get there, and it's not exactly clear what we're moving toward," Wright said.

Meanwhile, local officials who oppose map changes, like Central's Mayor Shelton, said this flood offers a succinct lesson: Buy flood insurance.

"If you're somebody who flooded, I don't care if it's the first time your house flooded, if you see that possibility and don't do something to minimize that issue, then shame on you," Shelton said.

Louisiana Officials Ramp Up Shelter At Home Program

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — A top aide to Gov. John Bel Edwards says the Shelter at Home program has "ramped up" in recent days.

The Advocate reports (http://bit.ly/2csRPv9) Julie Baxter Payer and others, including officials of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, issued an update on the flood recovery.

Payer touted the Shelter at Home program, which allows families to stay in damaged homes during repairs if the work needed to remain there costs less than $15,000.

Single-family homeowners are eligible for work like repairs to kitchen sinks, shower tubs, exterior door replacements and bathroom privacy walls.

About 19,000 people have applied for the assistance.

Payer says the program began less than three weeks ago and is moving faster than any previous such aid after a storm.

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West Virginia County School Board Lands $1.5m Flood Grant

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — A West Virginia county school board has landed a $1.5 million federal grant for flood recovery efforts.

On Friday, U.S. Sens. Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito announced the grant for the Kanawha County Board of Education.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency grant will help the board address flood-related issues in Kanawha County schools.

Five schools across the state, including two in Kanawha County, are being rebuilt because of extensive flood damage.

The June 23 floods killed 23 people and devastated homes, businesses and infrastructure.

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Cedar Rapids Begins Evacuations Ahead Of Major Flood

Water from last week's storm to north hits city that has been preparing since 2008 event

By Joe Barrett

Wall Street Journal, September 25, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Iowans Leave Homes As Floodwaters Rise

By William Petroski

USA Today, September 25, 2016

DES MOINES — As the Cedar River continued to rise Sunday, residents were asked to leave low-lying areas of Cedar Rapids that are in danger of flooding.

The National Weather Service predicts the river will reach a crest of 23 feet in Iowa's second-largest city Tuesday morning. Officials have asked those in downtown areas of the city near the river to leave by 8 p.m. Sunday. They expect it could be a week before people will be able to return home.

Jen Winter, Cedar Rapids public works director, cautioned that despite the revised flood projection to 23 feet, "this is still a major flood event" and floodwaters may still seep out of areas where steps have been taken to hold back flood waters.

Cedar Rapids City Manager Jeff Pomeranz says the city has been preparing to deal with a major flood since a major flood that hit the area in 2008, and that those preparations should help.

"All this work is coming together. You can see the benefits of planning and preparation in the various streets and infrastructure improvements and the protection systems in order to make sure that our city is safe," Pomeranz said. "That could not have happened without tremendous preparation by our city, our county government, our private sector and most importantly our citizens."

Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett said that city officials learned Wednesday that they had four days to react to the flood, and he praised residents for taking ownership of their community in the flood fight.

"This is the last day to get all the work done that needs to be done, and people have been working very hard," Corbett said. "I know that there have to be a lot of sore backs and sore arms and shoulders for all the work that has been done. It was citywide, really."

Corbett also said that all areas of Cedar Rapids were the subject of efforts to establish flood defense, unlike plans for flood control developed by federal officials that only would have protected the east side of the river.

MidAmerican Energy said Sunday that 890 Cedar Rapids properties had been identified for natural gas service disconnection because of flooding. Affected customers would be contacted by phone, the company said. In Plainfield, natural gas was being shut off to 20 homes in low-lying area due to high water levels from the runoff.

Police Chief Wayne Jerman said a curfew will be imposed from 8 p.m. Sunday until 7 a.m. Monday and police officers will patrol flood affected areas. He said 300 to 400 Iowa National Guard troops will be assisting police and 60 additional sworn law enforcement officers will be arriving to assist Cedar Rapids police with their operations.

Officials said that as of Sunday morning, no looting had been reported and that National Guard troops who assist law enforcement officers will not be armed.

In Palo, a small community in Cedar Rapids, city officials said no water use was mandatory for all local residents. Officials said the sewer system had been taking on a large amount of water and a sewer line had possibly been severed. The water system remained operational, however. In addition, a mandatory evacuation was in effect for parts of Palo, and a curfew in the evacuation area had been declared from 8 p.m. Sunday to 6 a.m. Monday.

In Charles City, the Cedar River was slightly under 16 feet late Sunday morning after cresting Saturday at 20.95. Flood stage is 12 feet in Charles City, and the river was forecast to fall below that level sometime late Sunday night.

In Waverly, the Cedar River was at 12.79 feet late Sunday morning, which was just above flood stage of 12 feet.

In the Waterloo and Cedar Falls area, where the Cedar River crested Saturday morning, local officials were keeping their fingers crossed that flood damage will be significantly less than the devastation experienced in the 2008 flooding.

"I am so proud of the towns we have here," said Black Hawk County Emergency Management Coordinator Lorie Glover. "Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Evansdale and some of the others were extremely proactive — two and three days ahead of the flood, using lessons learned from 2008. They did a phenomenal job."

At least four bridges were still closed in Waterloo on Sunday, and Fletcher Avenue was shut down from University Avenue to Highway 63 because of flooding on Black Hawk Creek. However, bridges on U.S. Highway 63 and several other roads remained open.

The river peaked Saturday in Waterloo at 22.65 feet, which was well above flood stage of 13 feet, but less than the 2008 record crest of 27 feet.

"We do have pockets of damage in some areas that we will be looking at, but the water is still very high," Glover said. "We need to wait until it goes down a little bit before we can get into some areas to look at what damage there will be."

Local residents "sandbagged and sandbagged" around businesses in an effort to mitigate flood damage, so damage totals to businesses aren't clear yet. Glover said she already knows that some residents have water in their basements and some houses may have water on the first floor, but she can't get a better idea until flooding recedes.

However, it appears there has not been any catastrophic damage in Black Hawk County, unlike 2008, when a railroad bridge collapsed in downtown Waterloo under enormous pressure from the swollen Cedar River.

"This time the bridge was battered pretty good by the water, but it has held up and it is doing well," Glover said.

Residents Evacuate Cedar Rapids Homes Ahead Of Flooding

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Several thousand residents of Cedar Rapids left their homes Sunday as floodwaters began to spill out of the rising Cedar River, and Iowa's second-largest city worked to apply the lessons officials learned after the record 2008 flood.

The river crested Saturday night in Waterloo and Cedar Falls, which are about 55 miles (90 kilometers) upstream from Cedar Rapids, which is Iowa's second-largest city, with about 130,000 people.

The water levels in Cedar Falls and Waterloo were slightly lower than had been expected, but they still reached levels that were second only to those in 2008, when a major flood devastated the region.

The National Weather Service predicted that the river will crest at 23 feet (7 meters) in Cedar Rapids on Tuesday morning — well below the 2008 record of 31.12 feet (9.5 meters). Officials asked those living in about 5,000 downtown homes near the river to evacuate. They said it could be days before people can return home.

The Cedar Rapids school district said Sunday that it is canceling classes through Wednesday because of the flooding. District officials will reevaluate the situation by Wednesday afternoon.

Cedar Rapids City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said the city has been preparing to deal with a major flood since that of 2008, which caused billions of dollars of damage. City workers and volunteers have been working for days to build a temporary system of levees to try to contain the floodwaters.

"All the work is coming together, and you can see the benefit of planning and preparation," Pomeranz said.

After the 2008 flood, about 1,350 homes near the Cedar River were bought out and destroyed to reduce the amount of damage that future floods could inflict. About 45 acres of green space sit in that area today.

On Sunday morning, more than 100 volunteers helped remove the seats from the restored Paramount Theater in Cedar Rapids and move them up to the second floor to protect them from floodwaters. The theater was heavily damaged in the 2008 flood because it is one block from the Cedar River, and it cost $35 million to restore.

Unlike in 2008, residents have had more time to prepare for a flood. The benefit of that extra time was clear in the small town of Palo upstream where residents of more than 80 homes evacuated.

Kim Hutchins, whose home in Palo is about 10 miles upstream from Cedar Rapids, told the Des Moines Register that she spent Saturday packing up her kitchen while some friends unhooked her furnace in the basement and moved it up to the garage. Most of her furniture was piled onto trailers to move.

"They've been telling us it was coming for days. Last time, we had eight or 10 hours to get out," said Hutchins, 53, who planned to go stay with her mother.

Palo residents were being urged not to use water on Sunday because of a sewer line break and area flooding. Officials said they were working to repair the sewer line quickly. In the meantime, they were providing bottled water to residents.

Officials in Waterloo and Cedar Falls hope their communities will sustain less damage in this flood because of steps taken since 2008, but Black Hawk County Emergency Management Coordinator Lorie Glover said the extent of the damage won't be clear until the water recedes.

In Waterloo, the Cedar River crested at 22.95 feet (7 meters) Saturday. That's well below the 2008 record of 27 feet (8.2 meters), but still caused major flooding. It remained at 22 feet Sunday afternoon.

"We do have pockets of damage in some areas that we will be looking at, but the water is still very high," Glover said. "We need to wait until it goes down a little bit before we can get into some areas to look at what damage there will be."

Parts of southern Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin experienced flooding over the past few days, but it appeared that most of the threat of major flooding had passed in those states by Sunday.

In the southern Minnesota town of St. Clair, eight to 10 homes remained evacuated Sunday. Assistant Blue Earth County Emergency Manager Eric Weller said Sunday that "we were very lucky overnight" that not much rain fell.

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The Latest: Iowa Cities Donate Sandbags To Cedar Rapids

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — The Latest on flooding along rain-swollen rivers in Iowa (all times local):

4:20 p.m.

Nearby communities are donating several thousand filled sandbags to Cedar Rapids as the city prepares for flooding.

Waterloo and Cedar Falls endured the crest of the Cedar River Saturday evening.

So on Sunday those cities sent their extra sandbags about 55 miles (90 kilometers) downriver to Cedar Rapids.

Forecasters say flooding is expected to begin in Cedar Rapids Sunday night and reach its height by Tuesday.

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3:05 p.m.

Brady Coleman spent most of the days before his wedding filling sandbags, but the flooding didn't derail Saturday's ceremony in Shell Rock, Iowa.

Coleman and his bride, Abby Rundle, thought about moving the ceremony to another town because of the record flooding on the Shell Rock River in northeast Iowa.

But some of the main routes into that other town were blocked by flooding.

Rundle told the Des Moines Register (http://dmreg.co/2cDzNVr) the couple took a chance and had the wedding in Shell Rock, as planned.

Most family members were able to attend even if they had to take detours to get there.

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1:55 p.m.

Residents in the northeast Iowa town of Palo are being urged not to use water on Sunday because of a sewer line break and flooding in the area.

About 80 homes were evacuated Saturday in Palo because of the rising Cedar River.

Officials said they were working to repair the sewer line quickly. In the meantime, they were providing bottled water to residents.

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1:45 p.m.

About 10 homes remain evacuated in the southern Minnesota town of St. Clair, but the flooded Le Sueur (leh soor) River is receding.

Assistant Blue Earth County Emergency Manager Eric Weller said Sunday, “We were very lucky overnight” that not much rain fell. But he says crews are still pumping at the wastewater treatment plant’s lift station, and residents of the town of 870 are still advised not to take showers or use toilets.

Weller says two bridges remain closed because of high water, but schools are expected to reopen Monday.

Meteorologist Bill Borghoff at the National Weather Service in Chanhassen, Minnesota, says the threat of major flooding is over for southern Minnesota.

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1 p.m.

The Cedar Rapids school district has cancelled classes for three days and closed its offices because of the flooding expected in Iowa’s second largest city.

The district said Sunday that no classes will be held through Wednesday.

The flooding along the Cedar River is expected to reach its peak on Tuesday, but it may take several days for the water to recede.

District officials will reevaluate the situation by Wednesday afternoon.

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11:35 a.m.

The National Weather Service has revised its forecast for the Cedar River near Iowa’s second-largest city of Cedar Rapids.

The river is expected to crest there on Tuesday morning at 23 feet. That level will cause significant flooding in Cedar Rapids, but it has been reduced since earlier forecasts for a crest above 25 feet.

But officials are preparing for the worst flooding since 2008.

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As River Rises, Iowans Apply Lessons From 2008 Floods

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Volunteers filled sandbags and homeowners began moving things out of their basements on Saturday, and one small town evacuated about 100 homes in preparation for flooding along the Cedar River in Iowa.

The river is expected to crest Tuesday in Cedar Rapids, Iowa’s second-largest city with a population of about 130,000. But with more rain expected Saturday night, officials there warned people to evacuate downtown areas of the city near the river by 8 p.m. today.

“We have emergency personnel that can help you if needed,” Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett said Saturday. “They’ll risk their lives for you. But we don’t want them to risk their lives.”

At the Cedar Valley Montessori School in downtown Cedar Rapids on Friday, about 100 volunteers from area high schools helped move all the school equipment above the ground floor.

Stacy Cataldo, head of the Montessori school, told television station KCRG that many remember how flooding damaged the school in 2008 and don’t want that to happen again.

“We’re applying those lessons as we move forward,” she said.

Just upriver in the small town of Palo, about 100 homes in low-lying areas were evacuated on Saturday.

City Clerk Trisca Dix said that the mandatory evacuation in the town of about 1,000 took place Saturday afternoon before the river was expected to crest tonight at 24.5 feet.

Mayor Tom Yock told the Des Moines Register that volunteers and work crews scrambled Saturday to protect as much of the town as possible. Palo was devastated by record flooding in 2008.

Many people moved their belongings to the upper levels of their homes and built sandbag barriers before evacuating, he said.

“We’re just trying to be more proactive than we were in ‘08, trying to save as many homes as we can,” Yock said.

In Cedar Rapids, Fire Chief Mark English asked the curious to stay out of the flooded areas, saying that some heavy equipment used to build earthen dams and erect flood barriers has been hindered by gawkers. He said an estimated 1,500 properties near the river were expected to get at least some flooding.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad and other state officials toured flood-damaged areas Saturday in the Cedar River basin.

Officials warned that residents who have been asked to evacuate should plan to remain out of their homes and businesses for up to a week. A curfew in Cedar Rapids also was to go into effect today beginning at 8 p.m.

There was some good news on Saturday: When the Cedar River crests Tuesday, it's expected to be at 24.5 feet — nearly a foot lower than projected earlier.

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Floods Force Mandatory Evacuations In Iowa

By Kelly McGowan

USA Today, September 24, 2016

Residents are being told they must evacuate their homes in Palo near Cedar Rapids due to flooding, a TV station tweeted Saturday morning.

People who live in the southeast corner of the Linn County town were evacuating at 10 a.m. CT Saturday, according to KGAN-TV.

Evacuations in Cedar Rapids are set to begin at 8 p.m. Sunday. Officials, including the Iowa National Guard, will enforce an 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. curfew in evacuated areas along the Cedar River.

"We know it's a very stressful event for someone to have to leave their home, their belongings, and walk away," Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett said at a news conference Saturday morning. "Our home is our castle."

The city released maps showing areas that are predicted to be inundated by floodwaters if the Cedar River reaches a flood level of 24 feet or more. Current forecasts call for that level to be exceeded by at least a foot.

Cedar Rapids announced the evacuation decision to give residents time to plan, Corbett said.

"We want you to today take care of your belongings and your pets," Corbett said. "Tomorrow, we want you to take care of yourself."

The Cedar Rapids evacuation is not mandatory, Fire Chief Mark English said, but is very strongly recommended.

"I hope next week ... I can proclaim that no lives were lost," Corbett said.

Cedar Rapids officials are helping with sandbagging and evacuation efforts in Palo, and encouraged anyone who is not volunteering to avoid the affected areas.

The Red Cross opened a shelter Saturday at Cedar Hills Community Church in Cedar Rapids, organization spokesman Peter Teahen said.

Red Cross has plans to open more shelters in the coming days.

Teahen also urged people to check on their neighbors, especially those who are disabled.

As of 11:30 a.m. Saturday, the National Weather Service forecasted that the Cedar River would crest at 99.5 feet at 1 a.m. Sunday in Cedar Falls, at 25.5 feet at 1 a.m. Sunday in Waterloo, and at 24.5 feet at 7 a.m. Tuesday in Cedar Rapids.

Harvest Halts, Processors Close As Rains Swamp Upper Midwest

By Karl Plume

Reuters, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Heavy Rains In Midwest Flood Roads, Cause Two Deaths In Wisconsin

Iowa officials prepare for flooding of the Cedar River with more rain to come

By Kris Maher

Wall Street Journal, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Rains Wash Away Once-promising Crops In Western Wisconsin

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

MADISON, Wis. — Floods and mudslides are washing away promising-looking corn and soybean crops in western Wisconsin.

Before the recent flooding, farmers were looking at a potentially record-setting harvest after a near-perfect growing season, the Wisconsin State Journal (http://bit.ly/2cU9BFN) reported.

But farmers hit by mudslides in the valleys "are basically in hell right now," said Vance Haugen, the agriculture agent for the UW Extension in Crawford County.

Farmers whose fields are covered in water or mud may have to wait until the ground freezes before they can harvest whatever is left, Haugen said.

"Farmers are getting psychologically worn down," Haugen said.

He said farmers are in the middle of harvesting corn silage used for animal feed, "and the quality goes down the longer you take to harvest it. And if you go into the fields too soon with your machinery you can squash the soil structure and it can take years — sometimes decades — to repair some of that damaged soil."

Corn already is showing signs of poorer quality in wet areas, Haugen said. Farmers worry that the quality of their corn will dip so low that it won't meet the standards to make ethanol, he said.

Adam Hady, the ag agent for the UW Extension in Richland County, said corn stalks also are weakening in some areas. That will lead to machinery breakdowns during harvest, he said.

"The crops were so beautiful and a lot of guys went from believing that this was going to be one of the best harvests ever to wondering if they'll even get into their fields for the harvest," Hady said.

Because the flooding has happened in just one region and a bountiful harvest is still expected in most grain-producing states, prices for corn futures have not risen, analysts say.

"So now they're going to get poor prices with less of a crop. That's tough to take," Haugen said.

After last week's heavy rains, forecasts call for a dry week ahead in southwestern Wisconsin.

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Information from: Wisconsin State Journal, http://www.madison.com/wsj

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The Latest: About 100 Homes In Palo, Iowa, Evacuated

Associated Press, September 24, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — The Latest on flooding along rain-swollen rivers in Iowa (all times local):

5:30 p.m.

About 100 homes in low-lying areas of the small Linn County town of Palo along the Cedar River have been evacuated.

City Clerk Trisca Dix tells The Associated Press that the mandatory evacuation in the town of about 1,000 took place Saturday afternoon before the river was expected to crest Sunday night at 24.5 feet.

Mayor Tom Yock told the Des Moines Register that volunteers and work crews scrambled Saturday to protect as much of the town from flooding as possible.

Yock said the town, which was devastated by record flooding in 2008, is trying to be more proactive this time around.

He says many people moved their belongings to the upper levels of their homes and built sandbag barriers before evacuating.

4:10 p.m.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad and several other state leaders on Saturday toured flood damage in Clarkesville and Shell Rock and assessed flood preparedness plans underway in Cedar Rapids.

Branstad was joined by Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, Iowa National Guard Adjutant General Tim Orr and Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Mark Schouten.

Branstad and Reynolds also expect to assess flood damage next week.

On Friday, Branstad signed a disaster proclamation for 13 northeast Iowa counties affected by flooding. It activates the Iowa National Guard to assist in preparedness and in response when there's damage.

3:30 p.m.

Cedar Rapids officials are asking curious residents to stay out of downtown and flooded areas.

City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said Saturday that people wanting to get a glimpse of rising Cedar River have been getting in the way of workers trying to protect property.

Pomeranz says heavy equipment brought in to build earthen dams and erect flood barriers was hindered Friday because of heavy traffic from gawkers.

Officials also don't want traffic from onlookers clogging streets for those trying to evacuate areas around the river before it's expected to crest on Tuesday.

11:10 a.m.

Officials have lowered their estimate of where the swollen Cedar River will crest in Cedar Rapids, but they are still asking people to stay out of the Iowa city's downtown on Sunday night.

City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said Saturday at a news conference that the river is expected to crest at 24.5 feet on Tuesday, which is nearly a foot below the earlier expected crest of 25.3 feet.

Downtown Cedar Rapids is still expected to see flooding that will affect an estimated 1,500 properties.

Fire Chief Mark English asked those living in an area outlined on a flood map posted on the city's website to evacuate their homes by 8 p.m. Sunday. A curfew will be in place from then until 7 a.m. Monday.

Police chief Wayne Jerman says 73 checkpoints will be set up to ensure that residents and their properties remain safe.

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This item has been corrected to reflect that it's the Cedar River, not the Mississippi River, that is threatening to flood Cedar Rapids.

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10 a.m.

Iowa officials are pleading for volunteers to help fill sandbags and scrambling to erect earthen dams and berms to stave off flooding.

Cedar Falls officials issued calls Friday night and Saturday morning for volunteers, ahead of heavy rains forecast for Saturday night. Volunteers have been asked to bring work gloves, appropriate footwear and shovels.

Flooding has already forced road closures and evacuations in several communities upstream.

The National Weather Service has issued a flood warning for the area, including Waterloo, Waverly, Hampton and Eagle Grove in Iowa. While sunny skies were expected for much of Saturday, the weather service says storms Saturday night into Sunday are expected to bring more heavy rain to the area.

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This item has been corrected to remove reference to the Mississippi River, which is not near Cedar Falls. It is the Cedar River that flows through the city.

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The Latest: Iowa Governor Signs Disaster Proclamation

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Latest on flooding along rain-swollen rivers in Iowa and Wisconsin (all times local):

5:20 p.m.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad has signed a disaster proclamation for 13 northeast Iowa counties affected by flooding. It activates the Iowa National Guard to assist in preparedness and in response when there's damage.

The proclamation also enacts a grant program for homeowners meeting poverty guidelines to apply for up to $5,000 in financial aid to repair damage to a home or car or to replace food or clothing lost in the flood.

The Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has coordinated the delivery of state resources to the affected communities, including more than 120,000 sandbags, 22 water pumps and 400 flood cleanup kits.

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5 p.m.

Gov. Scott Walker plans to tour flood damage in a southwestern Wisconsin village.

Walker's office announced Friday that the governor would visit Gays Mills on Saturday afternoon.

The village of about 500 people sits on the Kickapoo River. Dozens of homes in the village were damaged by flooding in 2007 and 2008. The floods drove part of the village to relocate to higher ground.

WXOW-TV reports (http://bit.ly/2d4O3nG) flooding over the last few days has left Gays Mills' downtown underwater, forcing village officials to reschedule the annual Apple Fest.

State emergency officials said Friday that state Highways 131 and 171 in Gays Mills were closed due to water over the roadway and a washout.

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3 p.m.

Sandbagging is underway in the southern Minnesota town of St. Clair, where the Le Sueur River continues to rise after torrential rains earlier this week.

Officials say the floodwaters have already far surpassed the levels they saw in 2010, and the river isn't expected to crest until Saturday at the earliest.

The floodwaters are threatening sewer lift stations, which officials say will likely cause basement flooding. The town's more than 800 residents have been encouraged to cover their drains, remove valuables from their basements, and not to flush their toilets or run water.

While more than 7 inches of rain fell on St. Clair from Wednesday night into Thursday, the main problem is that even more fell upstream in the Waseca area, and that water is now making its way downriver.

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This story has been corrected to state that 7 inches of rain fell on St. Clair, not St. Cloud.

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10:50 a.m.

Authorities say a second person has died in the storms and flooding hitting western Wisconsin.

Vernon County sheriff's officials say 79-year-old Joseph Menne attempted to drive through floodwater on a road near his home on Thursday.

Investigators say he was in a pickup truck pulling a trailer that got stuck in six feet of water. The flood water eventually filled the pickup compartment. Menne was reported missing about 7 p.m. His body was found about two hours later.

The torrential rain and flooding also killed 53-year-old Michael McDonald in the same western Wisconsin county on Thursday, when his home slid down the side of a bluff and onto a highway.

The flooding and mudslides heavily damaged the small community where McDonald lived near the base of a bluff along the Mississippi River.

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10:30 a.m.

Authorities in several eastern Iowa cities and counties are mobilizing resources to handle flooding from the rain-swollen Cedar River.

The river has already left its banks upstream, forcing evacuations in several communities upstream along its path through northeastern Iowa. More rain fell Thursday night and earlier Friday, and the National Weather Service says the flash-flooding threat remains high.

The weather service says more rain could change forecasts, and local officials say at least moderate flooding seems a certainty.

Just across the Mississippi River in southwest Wisconsin, residents of the tiny community of Victory are recovering from storms and flooding that caused one death. Authorities say local resident Michael McDonald died Thursday when his house slid onto state Highway 35.

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6:30 a.m.

Residents of a tiny Wisconsin community along the Mississippi River are recovering after torrential rain and flooding ripped through the town and caused one death.

Heavy rain, flooding and mudslides have caused widespread damage in Victory, an unincorporated community in the Town of Wheatland. Authorities say 53-year-old resident Michael McDonald died after his house slid onto Highway 35 on Thursday.

Vernon County Sheriff John Spears says the community has been devastated and torn apart by the flooding.

The landslides and flooding closed roads throughout the area and contributed to a train derailment in Crawford County. Although the storms have moved away, the National Weather Service extended a flooding warning for Crawford, Vernon and Richland counties through Friday morning.

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Utah Hit By Tornados, Flooding

Thousands of residents remained without power, schools canceled

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

SALT LAKE CITY—People across Utah were reeling Friday after storms ripped through the state, including two tornados that damaged more than a dozen buildings hundreds of miles apart.

Thousands of people remained without power after the severe weather that also flooded streets and dropped golf-ball-sized hail.

No serious injuries have been reported, but at least 12 homes were badly damaged by a tornado in the northern city of Washington Terrance, the Standard-Examiner of Ogden reported.

A garage was lifted from its foundation, trees were ripped from the ground and cars were dented by hurtling chunks of debris. Authorities say the cleanup is just beginning, but could take days or weeks.

Classes were canceled Friday at several area schools.

Another twister tore roofs off buildings in the southern Utah town of Panguitch, marking the second touchdown there in less than a month, officials said.

Severe weather also caused extensive flooding in southern Utah and dropped hail near the Great Salt Lake. In the town of Roosevelt, several homes were affected by the rising water, which also filled part of State Street. STT -0.59 %

Up north, hail pelted Antelope Island on the Great Salt Lake and the winds ripped the roof off a building.

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2 Tornados Touch Down Hundreds Of Miles Apart In Utah

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

SALT LAKE CITY — Two tornados touched down hundreds of miles apart in Utah, damaging about two dozen buildings and knocking out power to thousands of people.

The severe weather also flooded streets and dropped golf-ball-sized hail in some areas.

No serious injuries were reported, but damage from one tornado left 21 homes unlivable the

Washington Terrace area, sheriff's Lt. Nate Hutchinson told the Deseret News.

Resident Gaelynn Sewell's lost her home in the storm, leaving her without as much as a toothbrush or clean clothes.

"We lost things that can never be replaced," Sewell told The Salt Lake Tribune.

A garage was lifted from its foundation, trees were ripped from the ground and cars were dented by hurtling chunks of debris, officials said.

About 50 families were evacuated due to the tornado, and damages were expected to top $1.5 million. Classes were canceled at several schools.

A group of students from Utah Military Academy was nearly caught in the twister while running a 5K race. Pelted by flying debris, the group tried to hang onto trees — some of which snapped in half.

"If felt like there was a huge, almost like a slingshot bringing you back toward the tornado," Jacob Hite told the Deseret News. "It was pretty much like trying to run away from a huge vacuum cleaner."

Authorities say the cleanup could take weeks. Utah Gov. Gary Herbert planned to survey the area.

Another twister tore off a roof as it damaged two buildings in the southern Utah town of Panguitch. It was the second time in less than a month that a tornado touched down there, officials said.

Severe weather also caused extensive flooding in southern Utah and dropped hail near Great Salt Lake.

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Flooded Roads In Southeastern Minnesota Reopening

Associated Press, September 24, 2016

ROCHESTER, Minn. — Roads are reopening in southeastern Minnesota as flood water recede.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation says Highway 105 near the Iowa border south of Austin reopened early Saturday after being closed because of flooding from the Cedar River.

Highway 250 north of Lanesboro also reopened Saturday morning. But Highway 65, which is Main Street in Albert Lea, remains closed with a local detour in place.

MnDOT says rivers in southeastern Minnesota remain at high levels. Motorists should not try to drive through standing water on roads.

North of Minneapolis, parts of Highway 169 remain closed in both directors on the border of Maple Grove and Brooklyn Park because of flooding. The Star Tribune reports the road is expected to remain closed until Sunday. More rain is forecast for the area.

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Heavy Rain Leads To Flood Warning In Northwestern Oklahoma

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

SEILING, Okla. – Forecasters have issued a flood warning for parts of northwestern Oklahoma following thunderstorms that dropped more than 2 inches of rain in some areas.

The National Weather Service in Norman said Sunday a flood warning for the North Canadian River near Seiling in Dewey County is in effect until this evening.

Forecasters say that at 9 a.m. Sunday the river's level was slightly higher than its 11-foot flood stage and minor flooding was occurring. River levels were expected to fall later Sunday and will fall below flood stage late Sunday afternoon.

The flooding could inundate croplands, pastures, oil wells and rural roads. Affected areas include Major County downstream to the headwaters of Canton Lake in Dewey County. Forecasters say livestock should be relocated to places higher than nearby river banks.

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N. Carolina Flooding From Julia Closes Schools, Spews Sewage

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

WINDSOR, N.C. — Damage from flooding in eastern North Carolina approached the level of destruction left behind by Hurricane Irene in 2011, Gov. Pat McCrory said Friday.

But instead of the hurricane's storm surge, the cause of this week's flooding was days of rain.

"We literally have water up to people's waist and above, and many houses have been flooded," McCrory said at a news conference.

About 63 people across northeastern North Carolina have had to be rescued from their homes by fast-water rescue teams. Another 61 were taken to safety from threatened nursing homes.

For much of this week, the remnants of Tropical Storm Julia sat spinning off the coast, dropping anywhere from a foot of rain in parts of North Carolina to nearly 18 inches in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia.

Schools canceled classes, a downtown was submerged and overwhelmed sewers spewed untreated wastewater.

McCrory said the Bertie County seat of Windsor appeared to suffer the worst, although floodwaters appeared to be receding. The town of about 3,000 along the Cashie River received more than a foot of rain.

Windsor Police Chief James Lane asked people to stay out of downtown. He said business owners need a chance to assess damage after flood waters inundated the business district. The Cashie River reached 15 feet (5 meters) on Thursday, 2 feet (2/3 meter) above major flood stage.

Windsor Fire Chief Billy Smithwick said the river was dropping "pretty quickly" and that 35 homes had been damaged. The American Red Cross put that number at around 60 homes.

But other parts of northeastern North Carolina were also flooded.

A news release from Elizabeth City reported that 1 million gallons of untreated wastewater flowed into the Charles Creek and the Pasquotank River.

City manager Rich Olson told the Virginian-Pilot (http://bit.ly/2d61wxB) that floodwaters had overloaded manholes, sending sewage into the city's storm water system and on into the waterways. The leakage began Wednesday and continued for about 24 hours, the city said.

School district websites in several counties also reported closings for a second day or more, including Bertie, Currituck and Hertford.

Media outlets reported that Pender County schools are operating on a two-hour delay Friday after the area received 7 inches of rain, with more on the way.

Gov. McCrory had declared a state of emergency in 11 counties Thursday.

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California Wildfire In Sonoma County Sends Residents Fleeing

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

CLOVERDALE, Calif. — A wildfire that erupted amid hot, dry conditions and gusty winds in Sonoma County north of San Francisco has sent about 90 people fleeing from their homes.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection says the blaze in rural Cloverdale began Sunday morning and spread to 1,500 acres (607 hectares), or more than 2 square miles (5.2 square kilometers).

Fire spokesman Paul Lowenthal says about 90 people in 36 homes were evacuated, and that the fire was threatening the Geysers geothermal field.

Firefighters were battling the blaze in steep terrain, temperatures in the high 90s, and strong winds in the higher elevations of northern Sonoma and northern Napa counties.

The fire is about 10 percent contained.

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Moderate Earthquakes Recorded Off Oregon, California Coasts

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

PORTLAND, Ore. — Scientists say two moderate earthquakes occurred off the Oregon and California coasts late Saturday and early Sunday but neither triggered a tsunami warning.

The U.S. Geological Survey says a 5.0 earthquake occurred in the Pacific Ocean about 93 miles southwest of Gold Beach, Oregon, at about 10 p.m. Saturday.

Scientists say a 4.6-magnitude quake in the ocean about 97 miles west of Brookings, Oregon, followed at about 3 a.m. Sunday.

Neither quake prompted a warning from the National Tsunami Warning Center.

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Haitians Gathered In Tijuana Awaiting Entry To U.S. Now Face Likely Deportation

By Sandra Dibble

Los Angeles Times, September 23, 2016

Hundreds of Haitians in Tijuana preparing to present themselves to U.S. officials at the San Ysidro Port of Entry face an unpleasant surprise: the probability of detention — and eventual deportation to their impoverished country — under a new policy by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

A day after the new policy went into effect, Haitian men who gathered in small groups on Friday morning outside the Padre Chava soup kitchen said they had heard nothing of the changes and asked anxiously for details.

"I don't believe it," Miterson Derisseau, a 25-year-old tile-setter from Port-au-Prince, said in French.

"Did Obama's party decide this? He has a generous heart; he cannot deport us to our country," added Derisseau, who hopes to join his sister in Boston.

Announced Thursday by Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, the new policy entails the resumption of regular, noncriminal deportations to Haiti, more than six years after these were suspended on the heels of the country's devastating 2010 earthquake. Haitians without visas now face the same treatment as most foreigners who show up at the border without permission to enter the United States: detention and deportation, unless they express fear of persecution upon being sent back.

The changes have come on the heels of an unprecedented and unexpected flow of Haitians to the San Diego border, more than 4,346 in the first 11 months of the current fiscal year — out of a total of 4,844 nationwide. Last year's total for San Diego was 315, while the national total was 795. The figures were released Friday by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

In congressional testimony on Thursday in Washington, the director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Sarah Saldaña, called it "an emergency situation" and said she had learned of "40,000 Haitians who are en route to the United States," through South and Central America.

Most of the Haitians in Tijuana have come by land from Brazil, where they moved after the 2010 earthquake to find work, but found survival increasingly difficult as the South American country has suffered a severe economic downturn.

The Haitians usually obtain safe passage through Mexico with a document called "oficio de salida" that allows them in the country for a limited time period, usually about 30 days, enough time to make it to the U.S. border.

Until Thursday, when the new policy went into effect, most Haitians presenting themselves at the San Diego border were allowed into the United States under humanitarian parole, and typically released with notices to appear before an immigration court at a later date.

But as of Thursday, the reception changed: Haitians seeking entry now are subject to a fast-track process called Expedited Removal that entails immediate detention.

It is unclear how soon the deportations to Haiti would take place, said Faye Hipsman, an analyst with the Washington-based Migration Policy Institute.

"The big factor is cooperation with Haiti," Hipsman said. "My understanding is that this was a unilateral decision made by DHS," she said, adding that the Haitian government has yet to publicly respond.

Until now, many Haitians have been traveling to established Haitian communities in New York City and Miami, where activists have been closely following news of the Haitians in Tijuana. Marleine Bastien, executive director of FAMN Haitian Women of Miami, was part of a group from Miami who came to the San Diego-Tijuana border recently to understand the situation.

"My heart really bleeds for them. I saw their faces. I saw their hope, such hope," said Bastien, who has been collaborating with members of the San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium.

Tijuana government officials have worked to distance themselves from the situation, privately stressing that the migrants are a federal matter, not a municipal one. Requests for interviews went unanswered this week.

As they have attempted to serve the rising numbers of Haitian migrants, Tijuana's four main shelters have found themselves overwhelmed. Of 2,823 people receiving shelter at Padre Chava since May 27, a total of 1,831 have been Haitians, according to the center.

Near the U.S. border, at the Desayunador Salesiano Padre Chava, a shelter and soup kitchen, the news of the policy had yet to fully hit on Friday morning. And the few who had an inkling of the changes remained undeterred, said Margarita Andonaegui, the shelter's administrator.

"Up to now, everyone has decided to go ahead" and keep their appointments with U.S. Customs and Border Protection at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. "Only one person asked me, 'What do you recommend?'"

Costa Rica Gets 100 Illegal Immigrants A Day Hoping To Get To U.S.

By Hugh Bronstein

Reuters, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Children From Central America Flood U.S. Border--Again

By Alan Gomez

USA Today, September 23, 2016

The number of Central American children fleeing to United States is booming once again, as security and economic troubles continue to grip El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

The rush of minors across the southwest border became a political firestorm in the summer of 2014, prompting the Obama administration to enact emergency measures to stem the flow and drawing intense scrutiny from critics of the president's immigration policies.

Last year, the efforts seemed to work as the number of unaccompanied minors from those three countries entering the U.S. dropped from nearly 70,000 in 2014 to 39,970.

Now the exodus to the USA is back on the rise. In the first 11 months of the 2016 fiscal year, which ends in September, 54,052 children made the journey.

There are many reasons for the surge:

--In El Salvador, people are fleeing a staggering level of violence that has made the country the murder capital of the world. It recorded a homicide rate of 104 people per 100,000 in 2015, the highest for any country in nearly 20 years, according to data from the World Bank.

--In Honduras, violence has come down in recent years, with a 15% drop in homicides in 2015, meaning many people leaving there are seeking better economic opportunities in the United States.

--In Guatemala, pockets of intense violence are driving some to the U.S. But Guatemalan officials said at the United Nations this week that their migrants are leaving mostly for economic reasons and should not be considered refugees.

And in all three, U.S. politics are at play. Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has made a crackdown on illegal immigration a central tenet of his campaign, vowing to build a giant wall along the southwest border and deport millions of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, a group that advocates against illegal immigration, said the prospect of a Trump presidency is a terrifying one for would-be immigrants, and is spurring the current rush of minors.

Krikorian said the Obama administration's "policy of deterrence" — warning Central Americans that they will be deported if they make the voyage — has fallen flat.

"Eighty percent of the people (Customs and Border Protection) catches are released," Krikorian said. "That's not deterrence. You'd be an idiot not to get into the United States now while you can."

The countries are making some progress in addressing their problems. In Honduras, the government created a commission to review all 14,000 members of the national police force, which has long been plagued by corruption. In the past few months, the commission has interviewed nearly 300 high-ranking police officers and dismissed 110 of them, according to a report from the Wilson Center, a Washington-based think tank.

In El Salvador, the government passed a law that's made it more difficult for gang members to continue running their operations from prisons. Before, people could easily smuggle cell phones into jail and even set up WiFi networks near the prisons so leaders could stay in contact with their gangs. But the new law has slowed that, according to Reuters.

President Obama requested $1 billion to help the so-called Northern Triangle countries improve their economies, security institutions and immigration enforcement capabilities. Congress approved $750 million in December, but most of that money hasn't arrived.

Nebraska Town Considers Banning Smoking In Apartments

By Margery A. Beck

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

Some leaders in a blue-collar Nebraska suburb that's home to Offutt Air Force Base are borrowing an idea from a vastly more liberal state: Ban apartment renters from smoking cigarettes and e-cigarettes inside.

The proposal, which would be one of the few such restrictions outside of California and is similar to federal rules for public housing across the U.S., isn't meant to protect the health of the city's 50,000 residents, but instead to prevent fires.

Councilman Don Preister proposed the ban, which wouldn't affect duplexes and single-family homes, in August after cigarette smoking at a single Bellevue apartment complex led to two fires a month earlier. The second fire destroyed the building, displacing dozens of people, and injured four, including a firefighter.

"We had firefighters in the building … when the floor started giving way," Preister said. "Had they not evacuated, we could have lost lives in the fire. I want to prevent that going forward."

But some residents in the city that borders Omaha set in a deeply conservative state see the proposal – set for a vote by the City Council on Monday – as an example of government overreach.

"I don't see how you're going to tell people what they can do in their homes," Brent Clatterbuck, who owns three apartment complexes in Bellevue, told the City Council earlier this month. "You're messing with somebody's home."

Even some anti-smoking advocates noted that Nebraska would seem an odd choice for the proposal.

"It would be surprising, if it had come up in isolation," said Pat McKone of the American Lung

Association, an anti-smoking group. "But there was a fire. We all understand – no matter what our political persuasion – that fire kills."

The ban, which Preister acknowledged would have secondary benefits of reducing health problems caused by secondhand smoke, is similar to those in dozens of California cities. Federal officials have adopted similar rules in public housing nationwide, but cities have rarely taken up the effort.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees the anti-tobacco group SmokeFree Nebraska, said it couldn't find any local ordinances in Nebraska or surrounding states that are similar to the Bellevue proposal.

"Smoking is both a health and safety issue," McKone said. "I'm not sure why we separate the issues of secondhand smoke and fire safety. Both are a danger to those living in multifamily dwellings."

Preister, who said he has nothing against smokers, argues that such a ban would also lower insurance premiums by preventing expensive fires. U.S. Fire Administration statistics show smoking is the No. 1 cause of home fire deaths.

Opponents of the proposal said officials haven't thought through the proposed change.

Margie Guy, a smoker who also rents four apartments located above her bridal boutique, recently told council members that three of her four renters smoke and two live on fixed incomes.

"Who are we to tell them they can't smoke in their own homes?" Guy asked. "What are the costs of actually enforcing these laws? Has anybody looked at that?"

James Hardy, a smoker who lives in an apartment, argues the measure would violate a state law that says people have a reasonable expectation of privacy in their own homes. He also contends it relegates apartment dwellers, who are often poorer than homeowners, to second-class citizens.

"By passing this law, you're effectively saying to the whole country, 'If you're a private property owner, you may still exercise your personal liberties and still have a reasonable expectation of privacy within your own dwelling' … you're saying to the denizens of all apartments that this new class of citizen must surrender their civil liberties by virtue of where they chose to live."

David Sutton, a spokesman for Richmond, Va.-based Altria Group Inc., which owns the nation's biggest cigarette maker, Philip Morris USA, said in an email there are places where smoking should be banned, such as in small enclosed areas, such as elevators, and places where children primarily are, such as schools.

"Complete bans go too far," he said. "Owners of private residences and other private places should determine the smoking policy for that particular location."

Preister understands the arguments against his proposal. He's not backing down.

"I can empathize with smokers who are continually feeling put upon," he said. "However, smoking is a choice. It's not a protected class. … They just need to go outside or to a safe place."

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FEMA HOUSING

For Disabled Flood Victims, Answers On Housing Take On Special Urgency

By Andrea Gallo

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 23, 2016

Julie Harvey has been sleeping in her wheelchair since last month's floods swallowed up her home, her handicap accessible van, the red curtains she just bought and the souvenirs from a trip to Hawaii before a degenerative disease took hold.

She and her husband, Roy, both 55, have been trying for more than a month to receive a manufactured housing unit from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Harvey is battling Lou Gehrig's disease, also called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS.

As they stay in a Baton Rouge hotel, they wonder why Harvey's condition did not place them at the top of the list to receive a FEMA housing unit and how many other disabled people are living in similar circumstances. FEMA estimates that 15 percent of Louisiana's flood victims will need some form of accessible housing to accommodate a disability.

Advocates for people with disabilities say they should be prioritized for housing after disasters.

"Not only do they have special needs but sometimes they don't have the resources both physical and monetary to help themselves," said Lois Simpson, executive director of the Advocacy Center of Louisiana, which serves disabled people and senior citizens. "They should go to the front of the line."

After The Advocate asked FEMA specifically about Harvey's case on Friday, the Harveys received a call from the agency saying that they would survey their property in Central and that they should be receiving a housing unit. But prior to the newspaper's inquiry, Harvey had spent weeks calling FEMA and asking about whether she could receive one of the units and never received answers.

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In determining whether people are eligible for mobile homes, disabilities may not be a reason why somebody is moved up on the list.

“We aim to treat all eligible survivors equally, as our assistance is based on a case-by-case basis,” a FEMA representative said in response to a specific question as to whether disabled people are given preference for mobile housing units.

The statement said FEMA encourages “all survivors — regardless of their specific situation — to call us and let us know about their situation. We will work with them and help them find solutions that fit their individual needs.”

FEMA has made strides in recent years to try to ensure that their disaster responses include accommodations for people with disabilities, and Simpson said she has seen the improvements. The agency has an Office of Disabilities Integration and Coordination, which was created after their response to Hurricane Katrina did not include enough accommodations for disabled people.

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Instead of working directly with disabled people impacted by floods, the office works mostly within FEMA to make sure that their responses and protocols are inclusive for disaster survivors with disabilities. They send interpreters for sign language to FEMA town hall meetings and make sure that disaster recovery centers have signs and equipment for people hard of hearing or with bad vision.

They also meet frequently with a group called Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition, which makes use of Louisiana’s existing agencies and advocacy groups for disabled people and senior citizens.

Marcie Roth, director of FEMA’s Office of Disabilities Integration and Coordination, encouraged disabled flood victims looking for help to reach out to FEMA directly and to make use of advocacy groups for people with their particular disability.

Roth also encouraged people to mention their disability every time they reach out to FEMA.

Harvey said she tried to do just that, but FEMA never referred her to anyone who could speak to her about the complications her disability presented.

ALS attacks cells that control muscles until it kills those who have it. Along the way, people with ALS lose their ability to walk, to eat, to use the bathroom and to breathe on their own. ALS has no cure, but medicine can help to slow down the progression of the disease.

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“If I had to live in a trailer for the rest of my life, I’d be fine with that,” Harvey said. “I don’t want to spend the rest of my life in hotel rooms.”

She and her husband both grew up in Baker and have been married for 35 years. They had been living in their home in Central for 25 years before it flooded, and stayed with a cousin before moving earlier this month to the Homewood Suites on Corporate Boulevard.

Harvey was diagnosed with ALS in 2012. She can still use her arms, talk and eat on her own. But she needs her husband’s help to screw open bottles and has started needing his help over the past few weeks to wash her hair in the shower — something she could do by herself before the floods.

They worry that the stress from the floods is making her worse.

Sleeping poses one of the biggest challenges. She’s on a breathing machine that requires her to be elevated when she sleeps, and the beds in the hotel where the Harveys have been staying for nearly a month do not adjust or elevate her the way she needs to be.

Harvey needs lots of specialized pillows to prop her up and keep her elevated, which the hotels do not have even in their handicap accessible rooms.

Their specialized bed was lost to the flood. She now spends all day, every day, in her wheelchair. She watches TV during the day, attempts to sleep at night and struggles too much to open the hotel doors to let her dog, Buck, play outside no matter how much he whines.

She was thrilled when FEMA finally contacted her late Friday afternoon saying they were working on a mobile housing unit for them, after unsuccessfully trying for weeks to get a response.

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Roth said FEMA has multiple housing unit options for people with disabilities. They have handicap accessible units, which have bigger bathrooms where wheelchairs can spin around, but they can also modify newer units with wheelchair ramps, grab bars or other accommodations for people who need them.

Other units need simpler fixes, like visual fire alarms for people who are deaf.

“We’re not simply saying, everybody who has a wheelchair gets this unit," Roth said. "What we're doing is supporting a good match."

Other people trying to work through the system and find FEMA manufactured housing units for disabled people are still going through the same frustrations Harvey experienced.

Elizabeth Chapoton, a volunteer advocate for people with disabilities, has been working with a few families staying in hotels.

She said she constantly gets conflicting information about what people need to do to receive a housing unit. FEMA says people requesting units need to stay in touch with the agency and make sure to send them the proper paperwork.

"I need to know if these mobile units are real, if they're happening, and an actual timeline," Chapoton said. "If these people are not eligible for them, they need to be told so and moving on. Because they're holding onto a lot of hope here."

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The Harveys envision putting a housing unit on their property in Central, which is in a floodplain.

Local officials have to provide permits for people to place FEMA housing on their property. FEMA says mobile units can only be placed on a floodplain if there are no other housing resources, like commercial sites or rental properties nearby.

FEMA also says that people can stay in mobile housing units for up to 18 months.

"The first week, possibly two weeks, we cried more than anybody I've ever seen," Julie Harvey said, trying to fight back tears. Her husband rubbed her back and brought her tissues.

"But we're not complaining," she added. "We've had a lot of help."

Permit Office Sees Renovations Flurry

By Lauren Langlois

Hammond (LA) Daily Star, September 25, 2016

Tangipahoa Parish Permit Office processed more than 180 permits from Aug. 16 to Sept. 23 for residential renovations.

Many of those sought the free permits to rebuild after their homes being flooded in August.

Many of the renovations are happening in Ponchatoula, with permits for residential renovations in Robert, Hammond, Tickfaw and Independence coming up frequently as well.

The parish permit office has also processed permits for Federal Emergency Management Agency mobile homes provided to flood victims. So far, 10 permitted mobile homes are on private lands and 18 are in a trailer park on Miller Lane off Airport Road in Hammond.

Parish President Robby Miller said residents have not yet moved in to the emergency mobile homes inside the trailer park, but they should be moving soon as the mobile homes are about ready.

The permit office began seeing requests for FEMA mobile home permits starting last Friday. Six FEMA mobile homes went to residences in Ponchatoula, while one went to a home in the Village of Tangipahoa, two went to Hammond and one went to Independence.

For the period Aug. 16 through Sept. 23, there were 70 new construction permits for residential homes in the parish.

Parish President Denies Trailer Politics

By John Dupont

Livingston Parish News (LA), September 24, 2016

LIVINGSTON — Parish President Layton Ricks on Wednesday denied a Baton Rouge TV station's allegations that political pull put his daughter and son-in-law first in line to receive a FEMA trailer.

The report Tuesday on WBRZ said some parish employees requested the station's investigation after they questioned the issuance of a FEMA trailer to Ricks' daughter.

"I have zero control over FEMA," Ricks told The News. "A parish president gets no control over something like that."

More than 1,400 displaced residents have applied for the mobile housing units in the flood-affected areas. Approximately 40 had moved into the MHUs as of Wednesday.

FEMA grants top priority to first-responders.

He said his son-in-law – a war veteran – works as a first-responder with the Denham Springs Police Department. His daughter also works for DSPD.

"What you have is a war veteran trying to work as a policeman all the while his home is flooded and he's trying to work around the clock, while getting a few hours of sleep while he tries to rebuild their home," Ricks said.

The parish president said his daughter is eight months pregnant and falls into a "high risk" stage.

"I have another daughter who is flooded and she is staying with friends," Ricks said. "She doesn't have a FEMA trailer and she's not married to a first responder.

"It's a sad day when people begrudge first responders," he said.

Ricks does not believe his family members should receive preferential treatment.

He does not believe, however, that they should be "punished" for their association with him if they go through the same application process.

Ricks is also working to repair his home, which received floodwater and damage to newly purchased furniture.

"I don't have a FEMA trailer, yet I'm still slammed and snowed under," he said.

SpayMart Founder Comes To Rescue Of Kitties From Louisiana Flood

New Orleans Times-Picayune, September 24, 2016

When I talked to Lynn Chiche on Wednesday morning, she was getting medical records together for the 10 cats she was taking from her SpayMart Sanctuary in Picayune, Miss., to Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans. She was thrilled because they were on their way to new forever homes.

"It's going to be awesome," she said. "Alaskan Airlines is doing once-a-week transports, taking flood dogs and cats to the Northwest. The Cat Adoption Team in Portland , Ore., has agreed to take 10 of our cats."

I was not surprised when she told me about the days she had spent in late August, visiting overstressed and overcrowded shelters from Denham Springs to Opelousas, leaving supplies and picking up kitties – a whole lot of kitties, as it turned out.

"I never intended to take so many," she said, which made me laugh.

Once, a long time ago, Chiche told me she was like an alcoholic, except it wasn't another drink she craved.

"I just always have to save one more cat," she said.

That could be her motto.

She and Pam Casey founded SpayMart in 1998 with the mission of promoting spaying and neutering to help solve the pet overpopulation crisis in southeast Louisiana. They settled on saving cats after visiting local shelters and asking, 'What can we do to have the biggest effect on euthanasia rates?" The answer was always the same: Educate people about the need to spay and neuter their pet cats. Educate people about the need to spay and neuter feral cats, too.

"Most shelters were killing five cats for every dog they euthanized," Chiche said. "That number has stayed about the same over the years."

Shortly before Katrina, the nonprofit group was getting ready to open a low-cost, high-volume spay-neuter clinic, but the storm tore the roof off the building and destroyed everything inside.

It flooded Chiche's house in Metairie, too, and she and her husband ended up in a FEMA trailer in rural Mississippi. The property included a 17,000 square-foot building that would become the SpayMart cat sanctuary.

Eventually, the FEMA trailer was replaced by a double-wide, and Chiche has been there ever since, caring for hundreds of cats. She brings adoptable cats to the SpayMart Thrift Shop on Veterans Boulevard in Metairie, adopts out senior cats to senior humans, and has a Community Kitten Foster Program in southeast Louisiana, where volunteers foster litters of kittens until they're ready to be adopted.

She takes in special-needs cats, older cats rescued from hoarder cases, cats left behind when people move out of apartments, kittens found in parking lots. She has always told me she wants to keep her numbers at "no more than 250," but when I ask her how many she has at the sanctuary, she usually admits to "almost 300."

I knew she would be rescuing cats after the August flooding, and I was happy to learn that Patty Hegwood had been with her. The two animal advocates are longtime friends.

"Patty brought money and support from Best Friends, and I told her, 'Why don't you and I get in the car and see where the help is needed most,'" Chiche said.

Hegwood was the business partner of Dr. Rollie Norris at Ark Animal Hospital on Jefferson Highway until 10 years ago. She left Metairie in 2006 and went to work for Best Friends Animal Society in Angel Canyon, Utah, so she could "help animals on a national level."

After the historic flooding, she came back to Louisiana to assess the situation.

"She talked them into letting her come," Chiche said.

Everywhere the two women went, they were moved by the devastation.

"It just pulled at your heart," Chiche said. "The shelter in Denham Springs was completely destroyed. It looked like after Katrina. The Companion Animal Alliance in East Baton Rouge got it really, really bad, too."

They visited one shelter and rescue group after another and left behind donations of dog and cat food, bowls, blankets, leashes and other supplies.

"I had put out a plea through the Thrift Shop," Chiche said.

As they went from place to place, they saw members of other familiar New Orleans area rescue groups, like ARNO, the St. Francis Animal Sanctuary, and Zeus's Place. And as they made their way west, they met others who shared their mission.

"Like Cat Haven and Companion Animal Alliance and Acadiana Animal Aid," she said.

It wasn't until they got to their last stop on Aug. 28 – the St. Landry Parish Animal Control in Opelousas – that Chiche felt the full impact of the disaster.

"I'd never seen so many dogs in my life. It was just row after row after row of them," she said.

The St. Landry shelter takes in dogs and cats from several rural areas where strays are handled by police departments, and there's no other animal control.

"It's just an endless stream of dogs and cats, puppies and kittens coming in," Chiche said.

She had already grabbed six older cats from Lamar-Dixon that day – pets whose families could no longer keep them because they had lost their homes – but when she entered the cat holding area at St. Landry, she knew she had to take more.

"The whole area was full, and cats were spilling out into the annex," she said. "It was mommas and babies and half-grown kittens. You see those little faces, and your heart just breaks."

She started walking up and down the rows, looking for the friendliest cats, the prettiest kittens, the most adoptable ones.

"I spent 30 minutes trying to make selections," she said.

Then she spied a pitiful tabby kitten with a look of total defeat on his face.

"He had his head down, and one arm was hanging outside the cage," Chiche said. "He had obviously given up hope."

She told Hegwood "I don't think I can do this," and Hegwood said, "Do you want me to pick?"

"I told Patty, 'No, I think I'm just going to take them all,'" Chiche said.

The room got very quiet, and the director said, "What did you say?" wondering if she had heard correctly. And then the director was crying and Chiche was crying, and they were loading up 59 cats and kittens. She named the sad little kitten "Reggie," and he is now a beautiful, playful 5-month-old ready to be adopted.

"I named every single one of them," Chiche said. "They're already all of our children."

When I asked her how many cats she'd have at the sanctuary after the 10 left for their new homes in Oregon, she said, "Over 300."

But that's all right. She did what Reggie's sweet little face inspired her to do.

What heartens Chiche is knowing how many other rescues in south Louisiana are passionate about saving animals.

"That's the little silver lining in all the sadness," she said. "I met so many people who are doing what we're doing. We're making progress. It's just going to take some time."

To learn more about SpayMart or about adopting a SpayMart cat, visit SpayMart.org.

Lake County's Recovery: South Lake County Fire Continues Commitment To Protect, Rebuild Community

By Elizabeth Larson

Lake County (CA) News, September 25, 2016

SOUTH LAKE COUNTY, Calif. – The year 2015 will be remembered by many for the personal destruction it brought in the form of the Valley fire.

Tens of thousands of people were driven from their homes, thousands were left homeless.

The southern Lake County landscape – known for its pine forests as well as oak-studded vistas – was drastically changed and is unlikely to recover fully within the lifetimes of many those who loved it.

The 2015 wildland fire season and the damage it did across Northern California as a whole is likely to be remembered for one horrifying fact, according to Los Angeles-based Fire Family Foundation Executive Director Robin McCarthy.

"This is the largest loss of property since the 1906 earthquake for firefighters," she told Lake County News.

McCarthy said that, altogether, 33 firefighters across Northern California lost their homes while they were simply out doing their jobs on the lines of the Butte and Valley fires.

Of those firefighters, 16 were in the South Lake County District. Dan McCabe, president of the South Lake County Firefighters Association, said that number included current or past South Lake County Fire and Cal Fire personnel – both paid and volunteer, as well as a board member – and their families.

The third most damaging wildland fire in California's history, the fire began on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2015, on Highway Valley Road in Cobb and peaked seven days later, according to Cal Fire.

It burned approximately 76,067 acres, primarily in Lake County, but with some of that acreage also in neighboring Napa and Sonoma counties.

The fire resulted in four confirmed fatalities, with authorities unable to confirm if a fifth man who disappeared during the fire also ultimately perished in it.

There also were four significant firefighter injuries when Cal Fire Copter 104's crews were caught in a burn over within the first hour of the fire. Cal Fire said one of those firefighters' injuries were serious enough that he did not return to work.

Cal Fire said the effort to fight the fire involved 4,400 personnel, 437 fire engines, 22 helicopters, 56 bulldozers, two airtankers, 100 hand crews, 75 water tenders, and more than 200 cooperating local government and volunteer agencies assisting from throughout the nation.

Based on Cal Fire's final damage assessment on the fire, released in January, the fire destroyed approximately 1,955 structures, including 1,308 residences, 66 commercial buildings, 558 outbuildings and 23 other structures. Another 93 structures were damaged.

All but eight of the destroyed or damaged structures were in Lake County. Two were in Napa and six in Sonoma, Cal Fire said.

This summer, Cal Fire released its final determination that the fire had been sparked by faulty wiring to a hot tub at a Cobb residence.

Cal Fire reported that it paid $59 million out of its emergency fund to fight the fire, with the state seeking additional assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

State Sen. Mike McGuire said the fire resulted in $1.2 billion in damage in Lake County alone.

More than 50 percent of acres burned in the State Responsibility Area in 2015 were in Lake County, according to Cal Fire.

And in 2015, the South Lake County Fire Protection District – one of the state's largest fire districts by land area, according to district Board President Jim Comisky – was hit especially hard.

Cal Fire said 63 percent of the district's footprint burned between the Jerusalem and Valley fires in 2015.

As a result, the men and women of the South Lake County Fire Protection District would suffer devastating losses that mirrored those endured by the community members they serve.

Help from the state, Fire Family Foundation, local friends

The Fire Family Foundation became a nonprofit in 2008, and is the charitable hand of the Firefighters First Credit Union, headquartered in Los Angeles but covering the entire state of California, McCarthy said.

She explained that it was formed in response to needs that arose from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack.

Firefighters, she explained, are part of a larger brotherhood.

The credit union had created a fund to help the firefighters' families impacted by the attack, and ultimately led to a desire to create a foundation to provide financial assistance to departments, firefighters and their families impacted by disaster.

When the Valley fire first hit early last September, the foundation decided to open a relief fund specifically for Middletown, and issued a challenge by the California Credit Union League, McCarthy said.

The foundation also partnered with Redwood Credit Union and Mendo Lake Credit Union, which already were part of fire-related fundraising efforts. "They know the community much better than we do," she said.

Ultimately, the foundation – in partnership with the California Credit Union League – provided $167,800 for care, counseling, housing and community support to assist children and families in recovering from the fire, McCarthy said.

Another piece of the funding, about $18,000, went specifically to help firefighters and came about through a separate fund called "Helping Firefighters Heal" through which Northern California fire departments could adopt the impacted firefighters, McCarthy said.

She said that funding effort – a partnership of the Fire Family Foundation and the Oakland Firefighters Random Acts – determined immediate needs and provided up to $1,000 per impacted firefighter.

McCarthy said the foundation doesn't provide cash, but offered gift cards to cover needs such as appliances, fencing, tools and, in one firefighters' case, paid for training because of loss of training paperwork.

In some cases, she said fire departments that adopted the firefighters who lost homes went out shopping and delivered the items to the individuals they were designated to help.

"It really varied depending on the individuals and where they were," she said.

McCarthy added, "This is literally what we do."

Among the foundation's efforts on the ground in Lake County, it donated money to help rebuild local youth sports programs, including the Middletown Colts, soccer boosters, Clear Lake Youth Soccer, Middletown Youth Little League and Middletown Youth Basketball, McCarthy said.

She said the foundation also donated funds to help with South Lake County Fire's Christmas event, which handed out toys to hundreds of children in December, and hosted Santa and Mrs. Claus.

The foundation also provided funding to repair the Pine Summit Recreation and Social Club, gave funds to support school garden programs – "dirty therapy" for children – throughout the burn area as well as money to help the Cobb Mountain Lions Club Relief Center.

"They've been a key player," Cal Fire Division Chief Greg Bertelli said of the Fire Family Foundation.

There also was an effort by other local firefighters to assist.

In October, the Northshore Fire Association held a pancake breakfast benefit for firefighters who lost homes in the Valley fire.

That event may well have been the most successful pancake breakfast in memory. Northshore Fire Chief Jay Beristianos said it generated $10,000 to assist the impacted firefighters.

The toll on employees

Bertelli was a battalion chief the day he responded to the Valley fire last year. Since then he's been promoted to division chief, and also is South Lake County Fire's chief.

He said the district's employees who were affected are moving forward with their lives. There is a fair amount of turnover among the district's professional firefighters, with some moving on to other jobs. But he's not aware of anyone leaving strictly due to the fire.

Bertelli acknowledged, "Everybody's a little shell-shocked."

Add to that, they're working longer hours in response to the area's wildland fires.

"And the anticipation of another one, it does hang over people's heads," Bertelli said.

It was tough enough just recovering from the Valley fire, but so see the Clayton fire impact another community so heavily, and so soon afterward, was difficult, he said.

The main thing, he said, is the health and welfare of the district's employees and their families.

Bertelli said fire seasons are getting longer every year, and it could be another few months before the 2016 fire season is over. Over the last few years, fire seasons have extended deeper into the fall months, finally being called closed at the start of December.

The months of September and October also pose particular challenges, as they're when catastrophic fires normally occur, Bertelli said.

There are concerns that the winter may not have enough wet weather. "I don't see any rain in the forecast," said Bertelli, noting that Northern California will need a lot of rain to get onto the ground to alleviate its fire conditions.

Amidst the concerns of fires here in Lake County, Bertelli said the district's Cal Fire firefighters, crews, engines and bulldozers have continued to travel to other areas to work on major incidents, such as the Sobranes, Gap and Saddle fires.

"We constantly are moving resources around," he said.

Financial realities and project planning

South Lake County Fire contracts with Cal Fire each year for service at a cost of $2.2 million. However, with 70 percent of its property tax dollars lost primarily due to the Valley fire, officials said it has required financial assistance.

McGuire and Assemblyman Bill Dodd obtained funds to backfill those obligations from the time of the fire through June, at which time Gov. Jerry Brown's new budget included another $2.2 million to cover the district's budget through the end of June 2017.

"There is no way the district can afford this contract, which is why the state is stepping in to continue to ensure there is not a blip in coverage," McGuire told Lake County News.

In addition, McGuire and Dodd managed to get another $1.3 million included in the state's 2016-17 budget to help the county cover lost revenue from property, sales and bed tax lost as a result of the Valley fire.

"The full financial impact hasn't yet been felt," Bertelli said of the Valley fire, explaining that the district is still trying to project out the budgetary impacts.

Comisky, himself a firefighter for 38 years, said one of the immediate impacts is that the district's call volume dropped significantly in the fire's wake.

He said the district is now working on a strategic plan to assess its future and what it will require to meet the needs of its community in the years to come.

Part of the focus is on fiscal responsibility – including putting as much money into reserves as possible – and creative thinking. Both will be needed as Comisky does not expect a third year of funding from the state to cover the Cal Fire contract after having received two years of that support.

Comisky estimated the district's annual budget totals between $2.6 million and $2.7 million. Of that amount, $2.4 million annually goes to the contract with Cal Fire.

In March, Comisky – along with Sheriff Brian Martin and Comisky's high school classmate and longtime friend, Board of Supervisors Chair Rob Brown – testified before a state legislative committee on behalf of fire relief assistance legislation put forward by McGuire and Dodd seeking assistance for the county.

Without Cal Fire, the district couldn't on its own afford the level of service currently offered to the community, he said.

Rob Bostock, the board's vice president, said that along with Comisky he works to keep an eye on the money.

At the open house the district and Cal Fire held on Sept. 11 to mark the fire's one-year anniversary, Bostock said that dollars and cents "is the issue."

Beyond that, speaking of his community of Cobb, he believes people will rebuild because it's a special place.

The district's roadmap for the days to come includes creating a strategic plan and finding sustainable funding, Comisky said.

While he said the situation is a "scary thing," he added, "I think we're going to be OK."

In the short-term, as rebuilding is under way, he said the district has brought on Chris Vallerga to fulfill fire captain and fire marshal duties. Vallerga will be devoted full-time to signing off permits for new construction.

"The codes have changed significantly," said Comisky, so having a staffer devoted to working with the community to meet those changes is critical.

Comisky also wants to push forward on a plan for emergency sirens – a total of seven in the district's coverage area – which will cost more than $184,000.

Sirens – one each – would be located in Loch Lomond, Cobb, Anderson Springs and Middletown, with three in HVL, he said.

Cal Fire Battalion Chief Mike Wink said Loch Lomond has siren equipment that needs to be replaced.

An overarching plan that's under way calls for a total of 28 sirens all over the county, according to Supervisor Rob Brown.

"We hear loud and clear from the community, this is what we want," Comisky said of the siren project.

There used to be sirens on stations to notify volunteers. "We quit using them years ago," said Comisky.

A question still to be answered is how many of the burned structures will be rebuilt.

For Comisky, the hope is that the community's population won't just return but will grow beyond what it was before.

Bertelli said one of the key lessons to emerge from the fire is relevant to firefighters and everyday community members alike.

Whether in business or in one's personal life, "We're all vulnerable to the effects of fire."

How Louisiana Property Owners Can Help Disaster Survivors

Gonzales (LA) Weekly Citizen, September 26, 2016

If you own a multi-family dwelling that needs repairs and are willing to lease to eligible FEMA applicants, then you may be interested in the Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program (MLRP). This FEMA program provides funds to make rental units habitable again, and at the same time helps survivors of the severe August storms and floods.

Here's how it works: After you and FEMA agree on the work that needs to be done and the associated costs, you may choose your own contractor and start the repairs. The repairs or improvements do not need to be storm- or flood-related. The value of the work will be deducted from the value of the lease agreement, but may not exceed its total value.

To qualify for MLRP funds your property must meet certain criteria. First, it must have five or more units to qualify as a multi-family dwelling. Second, it must have been previously used as a rental unit. And third, it must be located in one of the following parishes: Acadia, Ascension, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. James, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermilion, Washington, West Baton Rouge, or West Feliciana.

In addition, the property must be accessible to community services like schools and grocery stores, and not be located in a flood-prone area. FEMA will require a lease of exclusive use of the property as temporary housing for a period of at least 18 months. The property owner must provide all property management services, and repairs must comply with local building codes, standards, permitting, inspection requirements and other laws.

Contact the Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program at (225) 382-1464 or email FEMA-ia-dhops@fema.dhs.gov if you are a property owner interested in having your rental property repaired and assisting disaster survivors.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Central Officials Say Inspection Process Moving Along In City Hit Hard By Floods

By Amy Wold

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 25, 2016

The now-familiar piles of debris look exactly the same in front of two neighboring homes along Elkhorn Drive in Central.

Both homes got the same amount of flooding, about 40 inches or so. Both have been cleaned out of drywall and carpet, with air conditioning humming at all hours to help dry out the interiors.

However, the path forward toward rebuilding will be different for each because one is in the 100-year flood zone and one is not.

“It’s in a holding pattern until a valuation can be done,” said David Ratcliff, program director of Central Municipal Services, pointing to the house on the left, the one in the flood zone, on a recent trip down through parts of Central to look at home inspection progress.

The home in the 100-year-floodplain, what FEMA designates as the area at highest risk of flooding, will need an evaluation to determine if it has to be elevated. The house just a few feet to the right will only require an inspection and free permit before the homeowners can start rebuilding.

“People don’t understand that,” Ratcliff said.

In Central, homes fall into three categories for what homeowners need to do before rebuilding.

Home owners outside the FEMA flood zone just need to get a permit and inspection before they rebuild.

Related

A home in the flood zone that received 36 inches or less of water will need a permit and inspection and then it’s ready to go, Ratcliff said. The city has determined those houses are unlikely to lend themselves to substantial damage, which is part of the threshold that provokes an evaluation of whether a structure needs to raised.

But owners of homes in a flood zone that got more than 36 inches of water are going to need an elevation certificate, which is a determination of whether the house is above the base flood elevation on FEMA maps. If the home is above the base flood elevation, then the owner just needs to get a permit from the city, which are free for rebuilding work, and then can start rebuilding.

If the home is found to be below base flood elevation, the owner will need to get a contractor estimate for repairs. If that estimate shows that repairs will cost less than 50 percent of the value of the home, the owner can get a permit and rebuild. However, if the damage estimate comes back as costing more than half of the home’s value, there will be additional requirements before a home can be repaired, such as elevation.

That isn’t the final say since homeowners can appeal a decision, Ratcliff said. So far, out of 1,500 or more homes that have been evaluated so far, only one has met that description of being below base flood elevation, got more than 36 inches of water and had more than 50 percent damage, he said.

The home inspections are moving along in a city where Ratcliff estimates at least 90 percent of the damaged homes have already been cleaned out.

When people are ready to go, they come in for a permit and an inspector makes an appointment for a home inspection before people can get started putting up drywall and generally rebuilding.

The city services, run by the private company IBTS, called in additional inspectors who have come in from all over the country to help out for two-week stints. They are doing building inspections of the estimated 6,000 to 8,000 Central homes that were damaged in the August floods.

Inspections include moisture tests, checking out electrical and plumbing systems, along with giving some helpful advice.

“We’re doing a lot of instruction of what to do,” said Jack Gleason, building official for Central.

Some of the tips include replacing the electrical inlets if they had been underwater, placing a small metal plate over studs where water pipes go through to avoid puncturing them when putting up drywall and to keep the air conditioning running to prevent the house from building up moisture.

Currently, there are four to six inspectors working during the week with six to eight working on the weekends when more people are at home. Each inspector can do about 30 homes a day, Ratcliff said. Once that is done, the city gives a certificate for occupancy.

Mayor Jr. Shelton said it can be frustrating for people to go through all the steps, but it’s necessary not only to make sure homes are safe for people to start rebuilding, but for larger reasons as well.

“I’ve got a letter from FEMA saying if we don’t make people get permits our National Flood Insurance Program is in question for the whole city,” Shelton said. “It is something being done for their protection and it’s mandated by FEMA.”

One other tip city officials have is for those residents getting FEMA manufactured housing units set up on their property while they work on their homes. As soon as a person knows they’re going to get one of the mobile homes, Ratcliff said, they need to call the utility company to get a power hookup in place since it can take seven to 10 days for the necessary equipment to get set up.

So far, the city has received 138 pre-applications for the temporary housing units, a bit of a frustration for city officials. Rules have been set up by FEMA to get permits, but then FEMA contractors don’t seem to be following those rules all the time, Shelton said.

Just Wednesday morning, Radcliff said he called the FEMA temporary housing liaison to get help for a woman looking for a temporary shelter where she and her ailing husband could stay, only to be told that the FEMA representative had been reassigned.

The person didn’t know who the new representative was but said he would get the person to make contact with the city. FEMA did not respond to requests for comment about the criticism.

“FEMA is too large to operate in an emergency,” Shelton said. “It’s obvious they try to use one template for every disaster.”

Shelton said he’s had to spend large parts of his time using “common sense” to address FEMA rules that he doesn’t find logical.

For example, a renter who was flooded out wanted to get a mobile home placed at her mother’s house so she could stay in Central and her children could stay in school instead of being moved out of the area.

Related

There was concern from FEMA officials that if the trailer was placed at the mother’s home, the mother would end up living in it, Shelton said. No one, Shelton said, would want to live in these temporary homes if they had any other choice, but that’s the type of thing that has been taking up a lot of his time.

“This event could happen anywhere in the United States,” Shelton said. “You would think they’d have a procedure just for this kind of event.”

FEMA Addresses Survivor Concerns, Updates Deadlines

Donaldsonville (LA) Chief, September 24, 2016

The TSA checkout date has been extended to Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2016. FEMA will contact applicants who are eligible for the extension to notify them of their new checkout date.

National Flood Insurance Program considerations

Rates

Flood losses in Louisiana will not cause flood insurance rates to rise above scheduled annual rate

increases. Properties located in a floodplain that have federally backed mortgages are required by law

to be properly insured against known hazards, such as flooding. Anyone can purchase a flood insurance

policy if they live in a community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Coverage

The NFIP offers two types of coverage — building and contents. The mortgage lender may only

require you to purchase flood insurance for the structure. Contents coverage will cover items such as

personal belongings and furniture for an additional premium. To find your approximate flood insurance

costs and the hazard level of your area, visit FloodSmart.gov and enter the property address.

Contact your insurance agent for questions about a specific property.

Help paying for flood insurance in Louisiana

You may have to obtain flood insurance as a condition of receiving federal disaster assistance

following Louisiana’s recent severe storms and floods, but FEMA can help. FEMA may pay for three

years’ worth of premiums if you’re a homeowner or renter who receives federal disaster help and didn’t

have flood insurance. Keep flood insurance once FEMA stops paying your premiums to be considered

for certain recovery grants after future disasters.

NFIP Deadline extended

Policy holders now have 120 days from the date of loss to file a flood insurance claim. The extension

doubles the 60 day deadline NFIP usually requires.

NFIP Milestones

As of Sept. 16, the NFIP authorized and issued more than $373 million in payments to 28,900

policy holders so they can repair and rebuild.

Other survivor concerns

Re-internment: FEMA disaster assistance may be available for re-internment efforts in Louisiana

cemeteries, where floodwaters have dislodged or destroyed caskets, vaults, and mausoleums.

In privately owned cemeteries, assistance may be available if the costs are the legal responsibility of an individual and not the cemetery. Individuals seeking assistance in a privately owned cemetery should register at (800) 621-3362. For publicly owned cemeteries, assistance may be available through our Public Assistance program which reimburses local governments for infrastructure repairs. The owner and/or operator of the public cemetery must apply via Louisianapa.com.

Flood Protection May Lower Insurance

By Zita Fletcher

Rio Rancho (NM) Observer, September 24, 2016

Thanks to efforts of county floodplain managers and their team, Sandoval County property owners might get a break on flood insurance rates.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which oversees the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), provides community flood insurance in return for local government's adoption and enforcement of a floodplain management ordinance.

The ordinance creates safe standards for structures built in flood hazard areas.

Flood-prone areas are rife throughout the county – rivers, streams, arroyos, watercourses and steep topography create dangers for homeowners during and after heavy rains.

A recent FEMA inspection found county floodplain management has gone above and beyond federal standards, creating safety conditions that earned the county a special commendation from FEMA Branch Chief Lisa Jennings.

"Sandoval County is commended for adopting this higher regulatory standard for new or substantially improved structures, which protects property from flood loss and reduces potential for human loss in all areas of the community," Jennings wrote in a letter to County Manager Phil Rios.

County floodplain managers Maria Martinez-Encinias and Brad Stebleton worked to ensure NFIP building requirements in floodplain areas surpassed federal standards. They took FEMA officials on a tour of the county's floodplain last fall.

"What they told us when they audited us is that we were doing a bunch of things that the program already does," said Stebleton, "so we should apply to become part of that so our people can get lower insurance rates."

The county has since been invited to participate in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS), which results in a reduction in premiums for the community's flood insurance policyholders.

"They basically told us, 'You guys are doing these things, anyway. You might as well get credit for it. And it saves your residents' money,'" said Stebleton.

The CRS is similar to ISO ratings for fire protection.

"They (FEMA) are showing us how we can better educate the community through the CRS program," said Martinez-Encinias.

Martinez-Encinias, whose in-laws suffered property damage from an unexpected flood, said the county seeks greater public engagement in flood safety education.

"We have ideas," she said, describing plans to put signage on common and hazardous floodways. She also wants to arrange visits with schools to educate youth about flood safety.

"What better way is there to reach out to the community than to reach out to children and do projects with them?" said Martinez-Encinias, suggesting the creation of tiny floodway models as a teaching option.

Flooding affects both rural and urban communities across the county.

"Rio Rancho is surprisingly very flood prone," Stebleton said.

He said most common deaths in flood events are caused by people attempting to drive their cars through floodwater in the road.

"Water is more powerful than people think it is," he said.

Both managers attended CRS training courses. They hope to partner with members of the community to increase flood education and enhance their CRS rating to lower insurance rates.

"CRS is voluntary. It's not something we have to do," said Martinez-Encinias. "It's something we're doing for the community."

Commission To Comment On Convention Center Annexation

Las Cruces (NM) Sun-News, September 24, 2016

LAS CRUCES – Doña Ana County commissioners on Tuesday will weigh in on a proposed annexation of land by the city of Las Cruces for an expansion of the Las Cruces Convention Center and the construction of a hotel.

Commissioners don't have authority to interfere with annexations by the city but are given the chance to comment on them in state law, county officials have said.

The city's proposed annexation covers 7.165 acres to the south and west of the city-owned Las Cruces Convention Center, 680 E. University Ave., Las Cruces.

The Development Review Committee and county staff recommended commenting that the acreage is in a high-risk flood zone area under Federal Emergency Management Agency flood zone maps and rules pertaining to development in those zones should be followed, according to county documents.

In addition, county commissioners are set to:

The meeting starts 9 a.m. Tuesday at the Doña Ana County Government Center, 845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces.

–

If you go

What:

Doña Ana County commission meeting

When:

9 a.m. Tuesday

Where:

Doña Ana County Government Center, 845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces

Info:www.donaanacounty.org; 575-647-7200

Tsunami Inundation Zones Not The Same As Flood Zones

Maui (HI) Now, September 25, 2016

Mayor Alan Arakawa answers some of the questions submitted to his office staff.

Submit your own questions about County of Maui programs, services, operations or policies to Mayor Alan Arakawa via email at AskTheMayor@mauicounty.gov, call 270-7855 or send them by mail to 200 S. High St., 9th Floor, Wailuku, HI 96793. Questions submitted will be considered for inclusion in the "Ask the Mayor" column.

Aloha Readers,

Recently in this column, I answered a question about flood insurance and mentioned that you could find out if you are in a flood zone by looking at the maps in the white pages of your phone book.

I have since been reminded that these are not technically flood maps, but rather tsunami inundation maps. The difference is that a flood doesn't need to originate from the ocean, as does a tsunami.

Floods can occur near streams, rivers, gulches, ditches, roads or anywhere fast-running water can flow.

The 'Īao Valley flood last week is a perfect example, as that flood came from the Wailuku River overflowing.

For viewing flood maps, you can use FEMA's map service center at https://msc.fema.gov/portal.

For information on flood insurance, premiums, flood risks and other related information, go to www.floodsmart.gov.

Please note that these FEMA flood maps do not include parcel boundaries on properties. You may need to compare FEMA maps with county property tax maps.

Also, you can use the State of Hawai'i flood hazard assessment tool, which will give an approximate location of the property.

To find a particular flood zone, log on to http://gis.hawaiinfip.org/FHAT. Using the "TMK Search" on the right, you can enter the Tax Map Key or the address on the upper left "Search" window.

Once you locate the property, the tab labeled "Map Legend" on the right gives an explanation of what color is associated with which flood zones and what it means.

I apologize for the mistake last week, but hopefully with the Īao flood still fresh on everyone's mind, this expanded explanation will be both relevant and useful.

FERC Notice Starts Clock Ticking

By Melinda Stotts

Miami (OK) News Record, September 25, 2016

MIAMI – Despite great efforts by local and tribal governments to stop any changes in the operations of the Pensacola Dam Project at Grand Lake for hydroelectric power generation, the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) has filed an application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to permanently amend its re-licensure and the process continues to move forward.

On Sept. 22, FERC issued a public notice of the application for GRDA's amendment of license soliciting comments, motions to intervene and protests.

"GRDA believes that if granted by the Commission, the change in the rule curve under this Application will result in significant improvements to public recreation and safety during the peak recreation period each year, and eliminate the need for stakeholders to consult yearly on temporary variance to the rule curve for the remainder of the license term," Sullivan wrote, in a May 6 letter to FERC's Secretary Kimberly D. Bose, accompanying the application.

GRDA's formal request to FERC is asking for permanent amendment of the project's Article 401 reservoir elevation rule curve of Grand Lake from Aug. 16 through Oct. 31 each year as part of its renewed license.

Under GRDA's proposal, between Aug. 16 and Sept. 15 the reservoir would be maintained at 743 feet

Pensacola Datum (PD), which is up to 2 feet higher than the current rule curve.

Between Sept. 16 and Sept. 30, the elevation would be lowered from 743 to 742 feet PD.

Between Oct. 1 and Oct. 31, the reservoir would be maintained at 742 feet PD, which is up one foot higher than the current rule curve.

After Oct. 31, reservoir elevations would follow the project's current rule curve.

GRDA's application was filed on May 6, and supplemented on June 2, and again June 30 in regards to the Pensacola Hydroelectric Project. The project affects Craig, Delaware, Mayes and Ottawa counties in Oklahoma.

The City of Miami and the nine tribes of the Northeastern Oklahoma Inter-Tribal Council — the Quapaw, Peoria, Wyandotte Nation, Miami, Modoc, Seneca-Cayuga, Shawnee, Eastern Shawnee and Ottawa — have intervened directly to FERC to halt any efforts by GRDA to make amendment to their operations of the Pensacola Dam and Grand Lake levels without proper notice, input and relevant studies being completed and considered.

These intervening governments have alleged GRDA's operations of the project historically have caused backwater effect flooding, or have increased flooding in Ottawa County along the watershed upstream.

These governments also allege proper easements have never been purchased by GRDA to operate the lake at current levels, let alone with any increases.

During a consultation with the Inter-Tribal Council, tribal leaders spoke passionately about the adversity, devastation and hardships created by backwater flooding to tribal lands, homes, businesses, services, culturally and historically important property, economic revenues and tribal members.

The City of Miami makes similar arguments against the proposed rule curve changes.

Both the City of Miami and tribes have intervened to ask that no further changes be granted to GRDA until proper studies occur.

"The City of Miami intends to be a very active participant in the process to address the flooding issues that have been experienced by our community for years," Miami City Manager Dean Kruithof said in response to FERC's recent notice.

Miami's Flood Mitigation Advisory Board is meeting at 7 p.m. on Sept. 26 at the Miami Civic Center to discuss GRDA's re-application for license and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) flood risk maps.

The tribes are asking FERC to consider the Federal Power Act and the National Historic Preservation Act responsibilities of both FERC and GRDA required for the purpose of operation a hydroelectric facility on tribal lands.

These requirements were not met according to ITC's legal counsel. Nor was any or adequate compensation been made to the tribes.

GRDA's 786-page re-license application filing on May 6 includes a letter to FERC from GRDA CEO and General Manager Dan Sullivan outlining reasons for the amendment request.

Sullivan states in his letter the request is for purposes of promoting public safety, water quality, and recreational enhancement through a peak public recreation period at Grand Lake.

Sullivan's letter to FERC with the application states the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined the application request would not adversely affect any listed species under the Endangered Species Act and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is in full support of the proposal.

GRDA advised the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality asked for water quality certification, which GRDA applied for on April 16.

Sullivan's letter states that the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office recommended plans for storm and drought management.

Along with GRDA's application, a Storm Adaptive Management Plan to address high water conditions upstream and downstream of Grand Lake during major precipitation events has been included.

GRDA also included a Drought Adaptive Management Plan to be followed to determine project operation if certain drought conditions occur.

According to Sullivan's letter, GRDA included in their filing comments from agencies and stakeholders, a complete record of consultation.

GRDA was granted a temporary variance by FERC on Aug.12 for this year, again despite protests form both the City of Miami and individual tribes of the NEO Inter-Tribal Council.

"In determining the appropriate action to take, the Commission will consider all protests or other comments filed, but only those who file a motion to intervene in accordance with the Commission's Rules may become a party to the proceeding," FERC Secretary Kimberly D. Bose states in the public notice.

All interested and effected parties now have 30 days from the date of the notice to file comments, motions to intervene, or protest.

According to FERC's notice adherent to the Federal Power Act, 16 USC 791(a)- 825 (r), all documents may be filed electronically via FERC's website at http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/efiling.asp.

Commenters can submit comments up to 6,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at http;//www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/ecomment.asp. and include name, and contact information at the end of the comments.

All filings and comments must bear in all capital letters the title " COMMENTS," "PROTEST," or " MOTION TO INTERVENE," as applicable.

FERC may be contacted for assistance toll free at 1-866-208-3676,but strongly encourages electronic filing. Documents may also be paper-filed to Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington DC 20426. All comments should include the project number (P-1494-437).

Dewberry Proceeds With FEMA Task Order For Louisiana Rainfall And Flash Flooding Event Analysis

Sensors & Systems, September 23, 2016

Dewberry is proceeding with a task order from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for imagery and data interpretation of the recent Louisiana floods under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's strategic source indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity, remote sensing to support incident management and homeland security contract.

The firm will determine impacts from the heavy rains, flash floods, and inland riverine flooding in the state. Imagery and other source materials regarding the areas of interest will be interpreted to provide flood extents; an enumeration and typing of damaged buildings; a classification of individual building damage levels; and an analysis of infrastructure damage, isolated communities, and debris accumulation resulting from the flooding events. Imagery and relevant data will range from Civil Air Patrol geotagged digital images, Synthetic Aperture Radar, field reports, and other damage observations.

Within 48 hours of the task order award, initial assessments were available and will continue to be updated as new ones are completed or as imagery is further processed. Damage assessment progress maps will be updated and sent daily until the task is complete.

Dewberry has already used National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service (NOAA AHPS) to analyze the peak crest dates and elevations and found that historic flood crest records have been exceeded. NOAA AHPS will continue to be used to assist in the data planning and acquisition. As more information is collected, the firm will refine the flood extent boundaries created during initial assessments. Dewberry will also create a grid based on the U.S. National Grid over the areas of interest, analyzing damages to each section. This will indicate damage assessment progress and be provided to FEMA every day.

MITIGATION

Richwood Turns To Watergate For Help In Solving Middle School Location Issues

By Rick Steelhammer

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 25, 2016

RICHWOOD — Land made available for public use by the owner of Richwood's Watergate Inn, following talks with Richwood Mayor Bob Henry Baber, could help ensure that Richwood's middle school students remain in town until a new school is built, rather than be relocated to a site outside the community.

Land already has been cleared for the lot, and a liner and crushed rocks were being put in place on Thursday following an agreement with Andreas Karas, owner of the long-shuttered inn, damaged by floods in June and in years past, and scheduled for eventual demolition, Baber said. Work is being done by United Coal Co., which has donated at least $50,000 in labor, according to the mayor.

Richwood Middle School and Richwood High School were deemed unfit for use by Federal Emergency Management Administration officials after the buildings were battered and deluged by floodwaters that swept through the Nicholas County town in late June. Richwood High School students temporarily have relocated to the former Beaver Elementary School near Craigsville, while the middle school students have been sharing space with students at Richwood's Cherry River Elementary School, which was not damaged in the flooding.

By developing a second parking lot at the lower end of the school, the existing parking lot, which lies above the floodplain, can be used to locate temporary pods for additional teaching space to reduce crowding within the middle school building. The added parking area also would eliminate concerns about a shortage of parking space, now that teachers and staff from two schools are sharing the existing lot, and include a loop road for buses to access the school.

During the last Nicholas County School Board meeting, Superintendent Donna Burge-Tetrick said the lack of adequate parking at Cherry River Elementary could result in Richwood Middle School being relocated in modular classrooms at Craigsville, according to the Nicholas Chronicle.

So far, FEMA has turned down proposals to build a new Richwood High School on the grounds of the former Richwood Area Community Hospital, and vetoed a pair of other prospective sites.

Last week, the Legislature approved an $85 million appropriation for matching funds to capture FEMA flood recovery grants totaling an estimated $339 million. Of that sum, flood-ruined Richwood High School, Richwood Middle School, Summersville Middle School, Clendenin Elementary School and Herbert Hoover High School would be allocated a total of about $130 million to rebuild.

In other flood recovery developments, Baber said the town's Rite-Aid and Dollar General stores should reopen by the end of next month, and that all of the town's flood-damaged sewer mains that once ran along the bottom of the Cherry River, have been patched and temporarily relocated under shore rocks along a bank of the stream. The repairs dramatically decreased the flow of river water entering the pipes and needlessly passing through the town's treatment plant, making it more difficult to process sewage.

The town still lacks a supermarket, and the town's emergency pantry is nearly empty, Baber said.

State Officials Tour Shell Rock Flood Damage

By Stefanté Randall

KIMT-TV Rochester (MN), September 24, 2016

SHELL ROCK, Iowa – State officials toured the town of Shell Rock as residents picked up the pieces after the flooding.

Governor Terry Branstad, Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds along with leaders from the Iowa National Guard and Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management got a firsthand look at the damage.

Mayor Larry Young says he appreciates the support his town is getting.

He also says the city took steps to make sure they were prepared.

"Well, we continued the FEMA buyout program where instead of having 35 houses that were damaged we could have had another 20 or 25 that were taken out, so that relieves some tension and we've upgraded our lift station as much as we can. That's an expensive proposition," says Young.

Dumpsters will be brought in on Monday for residents to throw away flood debris items.

Governor Branstad also made stops in Clarksville and Cedar Rapids.

Illinois Says Levee District Raised Heights Without Permit

By Jacob Barker

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, September 25, 2016

A large Illinois levee district north of St. Louis accused of building its Mississippi River levees too high has until next month to give the state a plan to mitigate flood impacts on its neighbors.

The action from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is the latest from government agencies who say the Sny Island Levee and Drainage District hasn't complied with state and federal rules meant to manage flooding and levee districts along the river.

The Sny stretches from Quincy to Belleview in Illinois. For years, officials with the politically and financially powerful agricultural levee district have argued about levee heights with regulators who have struggled to enforce their rules.

Residents across the river in Missouri worry the Sny is illegally pushing floodwater onto their communities, but Sny officials have denied they raised levees above authorized levels. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates the Sny could push an additional 2.5 feet of water onto some areas in the Missouri counties of Marion, Pike, Lincoln and St. Charles.

According to an IDNR letter to Sny superintendent Mike Reed dated Aug. 23, the Sny Island Levee and Drainage District's work to maintain its height after flooding in 2008 was done without a state permit.

The department gave the levee district until Oct. 15 to submit a plan and a schedule to fix what it says are unauthorized levee modifications.

Except for a permit issued in 1996, no work has been authorized on the Sny levees in recent years, the state letter says.

Sny attorney Karin Jacoby of Husch Blackwell said in an email that the district is "firm in our conviction the Sny acted in accordance with applicable regulations."

"The sharing of preliminary, inaccurate or incomplete information, particularly concerning impacts of the Sny on others, has generated much unnecessary confusion," Jacoby wrote.

It's not just Illinois that has raised issues with the Sny's management of its huge levee. The corps has said the Sny's levees are built above authorized levels, something the Sny denies.

River advocates worry the Sny isn't alone and that there's little enforcement or incentive for levee districts to follow the law.

"It's really, really shocking to us to see such blatant activities, by the Sny levee district in particular, to just ignore state and federal rules at the peril of the neighbors across the river in Missouri," said Olivia Dorothy, associate director of Mississippi River management at advocacy group American Rivers.

While the corps has authorized the nearly 60-mile-long Sny District to maintain 50-year flood protection, the district has managed to win 100-year protection from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The FEMA accreditation means the farmers who own the fertile 115,000 acres of floodplain protected by the Sny levees don't have to buy flood insurance.

It's not entirely clear how the Sny attained 100-year accreditation from FEMA despite being authorized for 50-year flood protection from the corps. FEMA representatives have said documentation the Sny submitted to them indicated it met the agency's standards, and the corps has said it assisted with engineering work despite not authorizing higher levee heights.

"The Sny just made the modifications without telling anybody," Dorothy said. "We're not quite sure what broke down to allow that accreditation to happen, because they should have been required to provide to FEMA all necessary approvals for that accreditation."

A FEMA representative didn't immediately return a call and email requesting comment. A corps spokesman said there's little the agency can do to enforce its rules beyond making the district ineligible for federal flood repair funds, an action it took last year.

"Our final authority would be to remove them from that program," corps spokesman Allen Marshall said.

Mike Klingner, an engineer who does work for the Sny and is board president of a group representing flood control agencies in the region, said IDNR appears to have "misplaced" permitting documentation for the Sny work.

"It's quite clear they don't have all the information," he said.

The Sny plans to present more information at a meeting with the state in October, Klingner said.

Based on the information Illinois has now, it appears the Sny will have to mitigate its flood impact somehow, said Loren Wobig of IDNR's water resources office. It could purchase flood easements or engineer its levees so certain areas store water, which would allow the Sny to maintain levee height at other locations.

"There's still options for them," Wobig said.

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Marion County Beats Bridge Project Deadline

By Danny Henley

Hannibal (MO) Courier-Post, September 23, 2016

Marion County is one big step closer to getting a new bridge built on County Road 104 after securing formal state permission to use federal funds on the project. The county was facing a Saturday, Sept. 24, deadline to submit the proposal for the alternate project to the state of Missouri Emergency Management Agency (SEMA).

"It's a relief," said Lyndon Bode, presiding commissioner of Marion County, of meeting the deadline.

Bode applauded the efforts of Teya Stice, Marion County coordinator, for getting everything to the state well advance of the deadline.

"Teya let us know it was a firm deadline and the county needed to have that turned in by the 24th. She was able to get that secured and turned in ahead of time," he said. "Now we're just waiting for FEMA's response. We don't anticipate any problems because everything they've asked for has been turned in. If they have any questions we can answer them and hopefully keep the project moving along."

The proposed project is like none the county has attempted before since the bridge being replaced — on County Road 104 — is not in the same location as the span for which the county is receiving federal compensation — on County Road 117. The County Road 117 bridge was swept away during July 2015 flooding.

Because of the low volume of traffic the 124-foot structure had seen on a daily basis before it was destroyed, and the projected cost of replacing the bridge (between $800,000 and $1 million), the County Commission decided not to have a new span put up on County Road 117.

If FEMA follows through and gives its blessing, as is expected, "roughly $90,000" in federal dollars will go toward the cost of the new bridge. The remaining cost of the new structure will be covered by county capital improvement sales tax funds.

Whatever amount the county winds up paying to complete the County Road 104 bridge, Marion County will be able to apply for "soft match" credits for the Bridge Replacement Off-System (BRO) program, which is administered by the Missouri Department of Transportation.

When a county pays for all or part of the cost of a replacement bridge that expense is considered "soft match" money which can then be applied as the 20 percent local match required by the BRO program, provided the "soft match" bridge is built to state specs.

Because the County Commission had already identified the County Road 104 bridge as its next span to replace, regardless of the availability of federal funds, MECO Engineering has already been doing design work on the new structure. That opens the door to starting the replacement phase sooner than later.

"There is a chance if everything works right it could be built during the winter," said Bode.

If federal funds are used the county will face a construction deadline in February 2017. Unlike the September deadline, however, an extension could be sought for the project if everything has not yet been finalized.

According to Bode, Marion County will have to build and pay for the new bridge before it will see a dime of federal reimbursement money.

Bertie County Commisioners Hold Emergency Meeting On Recovery Efforts

By Tamara Scott

WNCT-TV Greenville (NC), September 25, 2016

WINDSOR, N.C. – An emergency Bertie County Board of Commissioners meeting held Sunday shed light on the next steps of recovery.

After days of flooding, the water in Bertie County has finally receded, and now it's time to move forward.

Bertie County Board of Commissioner Chairman John Trent said their first concern is citizen safety.

"There's 42 businesses that have been affected by this flood, not including people who have been uprooted from their home which is over 50 and these numbers are gonna grow," said Trent.

Home owners, residents of Bertie County, and commissioners discussed what needs to be done in order for everyone to get back on their feet.

Many residents, like Douglas and Annette Jernigan, are currently experiencing their 3rd flood clean up.

"It's still devastating regardless it makes it hard on everybody," said Douglas Jernigan.

Annette Jernigan added, "No matter how much water you get, you still have to move out and relocate with jobs and everything like that, so it's really hard."

Emergency Services Director Mitchell Cooper said they are working hard to get people back in their homes.

"We have damage assessment teams coming in and we'll split them up to be with our county folks so we can do this as swiftly as possible and get a number back to the state to figure out how this declaration will work," said Cooper.

Once assessment results are sent in, there will be a decision on how much money can be brought in to help residents rebuild their town.

Annette said they got what they needed out of the meeting, but still have some questions. "Mainly was FEMA going to buy us out, but of course we don't know anything on that yet until they get their calculations."

Cooper said the mental health of residents who have been affected is also a growing concern.

Public health and Trillium Health officials will be available later this week.

Some commissioners will be in the state's capital later this week to vouch for the residents on recovery funds.

Governor Pat McCrory will be in Windsor on Monday with North Carolina Emergency Management Director Mike Sprayberry to assess the damage.

Tornado Alley Dead-ends Before Lake County

By Dan Moran

Lake County (IL) News-Sun, September 23, 2016

Jinx. Knock on wood.

Having established that, let's talk about a dirty little secret that really shouldn't be aired out, lest the fates be tempted: Lake County sits in a sweet spot when it comes to avoiding severe weather.

Sure, we get our thunderstorms that rip off branches and knock out power from time to time, as more than one Waukegan resident reported just this Wednesday. And ask anyone in Grayslake about the small but memorable tornado that skipped through town last year.

But, generally and most likely unscientifically speaking, Lake County — roughly 50 miles north of the undefined end of tornado alley — isn't known as the primary Chicagoland target when it comes to spring and summertime events like biblical downpours or the phrase "tornado warning."

A measure of proof is provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which has a Storm Events Database that dates back to June 1950. Searching specifically for tornadoes over the last 76 years in Lake County, we find that the "number of days with an event" (which we can assume means "a tornado") is 15. Eleven of those caused damage, four caused death or injury and one resulted in death.

For the record, that fatal event was the April 1967 F4 tornado that ran from North Barrington through Mundelein and Lake Zurich, killing two motorists near Route 59 and Cuba Road. But even that dark day, we got off relatively lightly: 57 people were killed in Belvidere and Oak Lawn by other F4 twisters in the outbreak.

Now let's run, say, Will County through that same database: Between June 1950 and June 2016, there were 44 days with a tornado event — four times that of Lake County. Thirty-six caused damage, 11 resulted in injury and five recorded fatalities, including the infamous 1990 Plainfield tornado, which occurred on a sunny afternoon in our end of the region.

A little farther south, the tornado numbers since 1950 are also way up for Kankakee County (29) and Iroquois (36). In the collar counties, the same higher result is true for DuPage (22), Kane (17) and even McHenry (16).

Looking strictly at Lake vs. Will, we find our not-so-southern cousins also outpace us in severe warm-weather events like "thunderstorm wind" (171 for Will, 101 for us) and floods (35 for Will, 18 for us).

All told, there's almost a sense of guilt when Lake County residents are invited to participate in the All Hazards Mitigation Plan by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As the name probably doesn't imply, this is a routine exercise FEMA requires counties to perform every five years so they can remain eligible for Disaster Assistance Grants, according to information currently posted at the city of Waukegan's website (www.waukeganweb.net).

The posting includes a SurveyMonkey link for residents to complete a short Q-and-A to gauge community-disaster preparedness.

"Public input and comments are important to the (hazards) plan update," the post reads. "Survey responses provided will help Lake County prioritize natural hazards that could impact residents and property owners, and to determine how to be better prepared for natural hazard emergencies."

It is duly noted that "surveys may only be taken once," so don't even bother trying to pump up our disaster resume and squeeze more dollars out of the feds.

After clicking on our respective community name, we're asked if, "in approximately the past 15 years, you or someone in your household, while living in Lake County, experienced a natural disaster? (Check all that apply)" Along with tornadoes and severe summer storms, our choices include everything from flood and drought to "sewer backup."

They also include "earthquake," so those of us who felt the 2.0-magnitude temblor that reflected into Lake County from the 5.8-magnitude quake that hit Virginia in August 2011 can go ahead and check the box, even if all it did was rattle our dish rack in a modest way.

A similarly long and varied list of disasters large and small is included twice when we're asked which ones raise concern for our family and then for our community. Feel free to check everything, up to and including "dust storm," because this is all about getting bang for the buck.

All of us, no matter where we live, will be visited at some point by the extreme wrath of Mother Nature, so an ounce of prevention could be worth a pound of federal aid.

In fact, when it comes to the cold-weather months, Will and Lake are almost tied in the number of winter storms over the last 76 years (around 23 each) and blizzards (around 4) — so those of us living in the tranquil north shouldn't whistle too much as we pass the graveyard.

Another One Off The List: Second And Niblack Project To Start Soon

By Jenny McNeece

Vincennes (IN) Sun-Commercial, September 25, 2016

First came the Second Street project, a six-block upgrading of a major thoroughfare connecting more downtown to Vincennes University more than a decade in the making.

Then came the long-awaited River Walk, a sprucing up of Culbertson Boulevard complete with new lighting, some covered benches and an observational point over the Wabash River.

Both projects were on the city's books for years, but only recently have officials managed to get them moving. Second Street opened to traffic a year ago thanks to a federal-for-state money trade, and the River Walk is expected to open to pedestrians next month.

But there was another at the bottom of the city's list of unfinished projects — the raising of the intersection of Second and Niblack streets.

It's a major project, and because the flood gate there hasn't fit for years, it's one now being mandated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

So that after nearly four years of waiting, that project is finally getting underway.

"It's the last on our list," said Mayor Joe Yochum. "And I'm very excited to see it get moving."

The project is one of dozens that ensures the city will keep its flood protected status with FEMA.

Most of the needed repairs and updates have been done already. Raising the intersection and fixing the gate at Second and Niblack is one of the last on the list.

To pay for it, the city is using money left over from a $5 million federal grant secured during former mayor Terry Mooney's administration that was initially to be used to study relocating the railroad tracks to outside the city.

The money was later switched by mayor Al Baldwin to the possibility of building a railroad overpass on North Sixth Street.

After that project derailed because of a lack of community and city council support — and after another municipal election — Yochum announced he had received permission from federal officials to use what was left (about $1.75 million) to completely redo the railroad crossing at Second and Niblack.

But federal money can sometimes be difficult to spend; the process comes with much red tape to cut through.

And city officials, too, have experienced significant delays — not to mention cost overruns — in trying to communicate with CSX Corp.

But things have picked up pace over the last month, the mayor said, and he expects work could begin early next year.

City engineer John Sprague said much of the utility work has already been done, and he expects to the let the bulk of the project — the actual raising of the intersection and railway — out for bid sometime next month.

Sprague said, if all goes well with the bidding process, that crews will likely begin mobilizing in November.

And the crossing will be closed, he said, for an entire year once they do.

But Sprague said this project, as opposed to the Second Street and River Walk projects, has actually moved rather swiftly, at least as far as federal projects go.

The city signed its first contract regarding work on the intersection in May of 2013.

"So it's been in the works for just three-and-a-half years," he said. "And I'd say that's an average amount of time for a federal-aid project like this. In fact, it's probably faster than normal.

"If you think about the other two projects, those had been in the works for a decade or more," Sprague said. "So you could definitely make the argument that this one has moved rather quickly."

Sprague said the entire intersection will be closed for the duration of the project, and specific detours will be posted for motorists.

And in the end, the flood gate — which to the mayor's knowledge has never had to be installed — will be abandoned in favor of a smaller sandbag gate instead.

"It's just taken a long time to get through all this stuff," the mayor said. "It's tedious. There's a lot to it, and it can be a bit aggravating.

"But this is the last one, and it's one of the last projects having to do with our levee, too," he said. "So this is a good thing, a very good thing."

The Saints Are Coming: An Oral History

By Doug Tatum

New Orleans Saints, September 24, 2016

Drew Brees: I would have been in San Diego, California. I was playing for the San Diego Chargers. We would have been getting ready for our first game of the season.

Sean Payton: I was coaching in Dallas and we would have been in our preseason training camp.

Edge: I was in my house in France. We were between two legs of a tour and we were recuperating after a long and hard first leg and first caught the news that there was this hurricane on its way to New Orleans. Then turned on the news channels and just watched as this horror unfolded.

Mike Tirico: I was doing a full season of college football on Thursday nights and Saturdays. We were getting our season started. Like many, not in the Gulf Coast area, you were a prisoner to cable news and what was going on. It was hard to go to sleep because you were just watching and waiting and wondering with everyone else. As we know, we didn't find out really until the next day began how bad the night was.

Steve Gleason: The team had just evacuated a day or two before that. So we were in the San Francisco Bay area ahead of the preseason game against the Raiders.

Quint Davis: I was in a fetal position in a hotel room in New York City.

Doug Thornton: I remember waking up that morning at about 5 A.M. and looking out my window and seeing the trees bent over double and the rain pouring down, so that was a day that I will never forget.

Hurricane Katrina, which started out as a tropical wave off the western coast of Africa, passed over South Florida as a Category 1 hurricane, moved into the Gulf of Mexico and then came ashore at Buras, Louisiana at 6 a.m. Aug. 29, 2005. After reaching category 5 status in the Gulf, it was a Category 3 storm when it slammed into the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts with 125 mph winds, laying waste to everything in its path.

New Orleans was buffeted with hurricane-force winds and heavy rains but because it was on the western side of Katrina's eye the area was spared the full force of the storm. The initial reports were that the city had dodged a major bullet.

It hadn't.

Dennis Lauscha: When I got word that the levees had broke and the streets were flooding and neighborhoods were completely flooding, that's when we got really scared. There was a lot of concern. A lot of concern for our employees, a lot of concern obviously for our fans and the neighbors and everything else. Like everyone else, it was beyond comprehension.

Mike Tirico: To see that really as a place of survival and the shredding of the top, the skin of the roof. Those pictures. Of course, the other ones were haunting. But for me, having spent a lot of time in the Dome, covering sports, as a sports fan as well, those were the ones that allowed me to understand the enormity of what was going on here.

For the Edge, it triggered memories of U2's Super Bowl 36 performance at the Superdome in 2002 and how, in a twist of fate, being in New Orleans for that gig saved most of his key instruments from being lost in a flood that swamped the band's storage facility in Dublin.

Edge: So in some ways New Orleans saved my most precious guitars and amps because had I not been there performing at the Super Bowl in the Superdome, I would have lost them all. So here I'm looking at New Orleans and it's going through a flood and I couldn't help but think, "Oh my God. This is, in my mind and many people's minds, the city. The music city of the United States America, maybe one in the world. Maybe the most important music city in the world." What's happening here is like a thousand times worse and I just couldn't help but think about all the musicians that left their instruments behind that were destroyed in this flood.

Halfway across the country, Saints players and coaches were trying to come to grips with what they were watching on TV.

Steve Gleason: The morning after the storm hit we were getting ready for practice in the hotel there near Oakland. We had the TVs on as we were getting taped up. I remember coming down the hotel stairs and hearing that the levees had broken. Everyone was trying to contact their families and figure out what the status of their houses were. It was pretty much chaos from that point and the chaos continued for several months.

Mickey Loomis: You know, we had finished the 2004 season 8-8 but we had won our last four games, three on the road. So, we went into this 2005 season feeling like, "Hey, we've got a chance to be a decent, good football team." Then all of a sudden we're practicing on a high school field. There's concern about families, about people, our friends in New Orleans and all the things that happened that were very distracting to our football team. It was really kind of an unfair circumstance for our team, difficult.

Somehow, the Saints won their first game in Carolina when John Carney drilled a winning field goal with three seconds to play. Carney's embrace with quarterback Aaron Brooks was immortalized on the cover of that week's Sports Illustrated.

Then, they went to New York to play in a "home" game against the Giants.

Jay Rothman, MNF executive producer: We meet with the team's coaches and players for every game, you know and the meeting with Jim Haslett, I'll never forget how distraught he was about not that. San Antonio welcomed the team, but the circumstances in which they were welcomed and what they had to deal with. You know, practicing on the concourse of the Alamodome, I remember. Going to a local gym to train and workout. Practicing on high school fields and never having a home game.

The team had two five-game losing streaks, with half-attended "home" games at Tiger Stadium and lackluster efforts at the Alamodome in San Antonio.

Matters weren't helped when Deuce McAllister, star running back and locker room leader, tore his ACL in a loss to the Green Bay Packers.

The season ended with a 27-13 loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Jan. 1. The Saints were 3-13. General Manager Mickey Loomis took quick action, firing Coach Jim Haslett, who had the impossible task of trying to lead a team that had no home, no real training facilities and was missing its best player.

Steve Gleason: It was a long, unsuccessful year.

The Superdome dominates the New Orleans skyline.

The brain child of visionary Dave Dixon and the creation of the architectural firm of Curtis and Davis, the Superdome came to life on Aug. 3, 1975, a state-of-the-art domed structure that appeared had descended from outer space and taken up residence at the end of Poydras Street.

Frank Supovitz: It was just a magnificent looking structure. It was an indoor hard- walled and hard-roofed building. It was very much ahead of its time when it was built. It wasn't an air-supported dome. It just had this sense of permanence and wonder about it.

The Superdome immediately became the home of the Saints, Tulane football, the Sugar Bowl and more. And, while it was truly a multi-purpose stadium — baseball and basketball games were played under its expansive roof—for New Orleanians it was the home of the Saints.

Dennis Lauscha: It's so much more than a building. It's really a temple, if you will, for the community. Everyone comes together. There's a handful of landmarks in town, the cathedral, the Superdome. When you look up the definition of a landmark, it really is a landmark for us. Both, I think, emotionally and spiritually and community-wise."

Trombone Shorty: It's like a heart to the city, you know if you're flying from the sky or whatever it may be and looking down, I look at the Superdome as a heart to the city.

But the savage beating the Superdome took from the winds of Katrina and the resulting floodwaters caused by the failure of levee system combined with the horror experienced by the thousands of people who eventually took refuge there, caused many to question whether the building could—or should—be repaired.

Mike Tirico: I think if you're on the outside looking in, you don't know the spirit of the place, and the spirit of the people more importantly, I think you should have had doubts.

Doug Thornton: As we did the damage assessment, we realized that the mechanical systems and the electrical systems were fairly well intact. It was just the interior spaces that needed to be replaced. We brought in a team of engineers, 16 specialty consultants from around the country, took them over a month to crawl through this building with flashlights to determine that it could be salvaged. I remember the day very well. It was Sept. 30 when Paul Greismar with Ellerbe Beckett, the architectural firm we had brought in, said to me "It probably can be saved. It's going to take over two years, it will take well over $200 million, but that's assuming you don't have severe damage to your mechanical systems and that you can get rid of the mold." So that was our first glimmer of hope.

Governor Kathleen Blanco turned hope into reality.

Kathleen Blanco, former governor of Louisiana: I just kept thinking that the people of New Orleans deserved a symbol of hope, a demonstration that this city could be brought back and brought back more quickly than anyone ever imagined. I was willing to take the chances that if we invested that kind of commitment, that the Saints would also make that commitment.

That commitment was affirmed by NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue.

Kathleen Blanco, former governor of Louisiana: He said, "If you can get the building up for the first regular game in the 2006 season on Sept. 25," he said. "I will guarantee you that Tom Benson won't even think about leaving."

Doug Thornton: We asked Governor Blanco to sign an executive order in early December 2005 and that was critical to this project. Without that executive order, we wouldn't have been able to fast-track the construction.

Dennis Lauchsa: It was gigantic. There was so much discussion prior to the hurricane, on whether or not the Saints would be here in the long-term.

The Superdome was going to be re-built. Now the Saints had to build a new and improved team.

On Jan. 6, 2006, the Saints and the NFL held a joint press conference announcing plans for the 2006 season.

On Jan. 19, Loomis and owner Tom Benson introduced Sean Payton as the franchise's 10th full-time head coach.

Tom Benson: Well the organization, where he was, they were praising him so much, I was a little concerned.

While Payton came with a strong endorsement from Bill Parcells no one knew if the fresh-faced offensive play-caller would work.

And the hire almost didn't happen.

Payton: At the end of the season I had an interview with Green Bay and then had spoken to Mickey about taking an interview with the Saints afterwards, and then I was going to Buffalo after New Orleans.

Mickey Loomis: That was an interesting process we went through because first of all, there were a lot of jobs open that year, 10 as I recall, and you know if you lined up in order of attractiveness, we were probably 10th given the circumstances. But I knew we needed a lot of energy so I felt like we wanted to go with a young coach that had a lot of energy. I was looking on the offensive side of the ball. We had dinner and it was a quick three-hour visit and yet I remember after that meeting, 'This is our guy.'

Once Payton came on board the real work began— hiring a staff and building the team. Gary Gibbs was the first hire as defensive coordinator. Then veteran Joe Vitt signed on to be the assistant head coach and oversee the linebackers.

Sean Payton: There's a scene in Jerry Maguire where the main character Tom Cruise leaves the law firm and grabs the fish and he says "Who's coming with me?" and it was like crickets. It's quiet. Then at some point, Renee Zellweger says "I'll go," it was a little bit like that.

Mickey Loomis: There were a number of coaches who saw the condition of the city and didn't want any part of it. Yet, there was a number who wanted to come and felt like, "Hey, this is not just coaching a football team but there was a little higher purpose in coming to New Orleans and helping the city recover.

With the staff in place the next order of business was finding a quarterback to replace Aaron Brooks. Payton and Loomis quickly focused on Drew Brees, who just had his shoulder severely mangled in the final game he played in the 2005 season for the San Diego Chargers.

With his shoulder—which had recently been repaired by noted orthopedic surgeon James Andrews—Brees had a limited market. The Saints and the Miami Dolphins, coached by Nick Saban, were the only two serious players.

Mickey Loomis: Well, we were really concerned and we had a lot of doctor's reports. We did a lot of due diligence on that. Not just on the injury but on Drew himself and what we found was a young man who always defied the odds to be successful. We know it wasn't going to be matter of lack of effort. He was going to do everything he could to get his shoulder back to where he could play again.

Payton was able to convince Brees and his wife Brittany to visit New Orleans. But the recruiting visit didn't go entirely as planned.

Sean Payton: I'm driving the car, Drew in the front seat, Brittany in the back seat. I'm driving like I've been a resident for 10 years and I've only been here for a couple of months. So we went over to the North Shore to look at some housing. We came back and somewhere off the Causeway I ended up, spun around. And I was heading toward Baton Rouge. Now just over and back from the North Shore would take an hour and a half. So there's that point I look in the rear-view mirror and I see Brittany kind of nodding off and I'm thinking, "I might as well drive them to the airport and put them on the Miami Dolphins plane."

Drew Brees: "I remember looking to my left and seeing a house that was really just a concrete slab and no house. And then seeing another house that was halfway off the foundation with a truck upside-down in the living room. Then we had to stop because there was a tug boat sitting in the middle of the road upside-down and it was that moment where I looked at Brittany and I remember our eyes met and we knew that this was so much bigger than football. I think we both felt the calling there to New Orleans. That this was just not the resurgence of a football team or an organization, but that it was about the rebirth of a city.

With a quarterback in place that made preparing for the 2006 draft that much easier. Mario Williams, an imposing pass rush specialist from North Carolina State and Reggie Bush, a Heisman Trophy winning tailback from USC, were the top two non-QBs on most draft boards. A day before the draft the Texans announced they were going to draft Williams, leaving the dynamic Bush available for the Saints at No. 2.

Paul Tagliabue, NFL Commissioner: Reggie Bush

Sean Payton: It was a 9.0 on the Richter scale.

While the Saints were putting their team together, the state of Louisiana, SMG and a small army of contractors were working nearly round-the-clock to rebuild the Superdome. The state and SMG had re-financed the Dome's debt and used that extra money, along with FEMA and insurance payments, to make sure the re-built Superdome wasn't going to be the same-old building.

At the same time the NFL was working on plans to make the pregame entertainment before the re-opening game Super Bowl-worthy.

Charles Coplin: There was a guy that was working for me named David Saltz, he was a consultant, and he kept saying to me, "I can get U2 to do this." And I was like, "If you can get U2 to do this, I'll put myself on a line and basically, and say to everybody we're getting in the way, we're going to interfere because we think we can do a much bigger show."

Ezrin, a legendary music producer, became involved because he and a group of his friends in the music industry had formed a charity, Music Rising, to help all of the New Orleans musicians and bands who had lost their instruments to the flood waters of Katrina. The group's immediate goal was to raise $1.2 million to help replace instruments for 1,200 musicians.

Bob Ezrin: A few weeks after the flood, U2 are coming through Toronto they were actually playing and I was there. So we were there and I was sitting next to the Edge and being the brazen guy that I am, I said to him, "Hey, look we're going to be replacing a lot of instruments that were lost in the Gulf South, do you have any guitars you don't need?" I figured, rock star. He's going to say, "Sure" and then I'll never hear from again but he said, "I can do better than that." I said, "Here's my home number. If you come up with anything, give me a call." Sure enough, that weekend, just a few days later, I got a call from Edge, he said, "Okay, I've spoken to Yamaha. I've spoken to this one. I've spoken to that one. I've spoken to Live Nation. I've gotten these people to agree to put this money in, this company to agree to sell us instruments." He kept saying, "We, us, we." And I thought, "Okay, partner, here we go."

Edge: We started Music Rising and we're very proud to say within six months we'd started to get a lot of equipment replaced and lot of musicians back to work which was our original phase one, the music had to continue. Not just because, where music is, hope abounds. If the music is silenced it just feeds into people's sense of desperation. So bringing back music had an important role to play we felt in the regeneration of the city, but it was also the continuity. We just wanted to make sure that this wonderful tradition and music culture of New Orleans was maintained, supported, that it survived and we didn't look back in 20 years and say, "Well, the great music culture of New Orleans pre-Katrina and then afterwards had been dissipated."

Bob Ezrin: So both Edge and I made separate trips in the fall and winter of 2005 to see what was going on and it was astounding. Honestly like visiting the dark side of the moon when you went down to the 9th Ward and beyond moving. It strengthened my resolve that this was something that we had to fix. And what our thought was, was, "If they play it, others will come." If the music is playing, people will come back. Without the music, there is no heart to the Gulf. So that became our mission, put the music back.

And then Ezrin and Edge were approached by the league about playing the re-opening game.

Edge: So the initial idea was that they'd like us to put together an event that was inspired obviously by New Orleans and the music of New Orleans but might include some international artists. I thought on this for a while and said, "Well, definitely we should do something." I'm not sure what it should be at first and then Bob says, "You know maybe we could bring in a guest or two and you could perform with maybe another singer. Maybe Billie Joe from Green Day might do it." I know Billie Joe so I reached out and said, "Would you be interested?" It's a kind of pretty amazing opportunity to perform at such an event. So Billie Joe reaches out and says, "I'm in. Great. What are we going to do?"

Bob Ezrin: So Edge came up with this song called "The Saints Are Coming" by a little known band called the Skids, a little known punk band. I vaguely knew the song but the minute I played it again, I went "Oh, my God this is perfect."

Edge: I thought for a couple of days and then it just came to me. This song. My favorite song when I was like 17 years old, written and performed by a band called the Skids from Ayrshire in Scotland was this song called "The Saints Are Coming." I thought, wow that's obvious because Billie Joe was so inspired by music of punk rock and we started out as a band kind of post that musical movement so a lot of our roots are punk rock roots. It's the perfect combination for us to sing that song.

So I called Billie Joe and said, "What about the 'The Saints Are Coming?'" I'd sent him the song and he loved it. So that was our first idea and we're very happy about that. Then I was playing the tune and I shared this idea with Bono and Adam and Larry and the idea, "Well you know, maybe we could get the whole band to come along. That would be really cool." So I asked them what they thought. … They said, "Okay, it sounds like it could work." With one of these things it's kind of once you get one little piece of the puzzle in place, you can start to get the other things. I talked to Billie Joe, I said, "Billie Joe, I think maybe U2 might come on board. What about Green Day? What about the whole band?" He said, "I think that would be really cool. Let me go and check."

So bit by bit, we got everyone on side for this idea. Then we happened to be recording in London at Abbey Road with Rick Rubin so we looked at diaries and it turned out that Green Day were free. So they flew over and spent like three days in Abbey Road in the same room that the Beatles recorded all their most important studio recordings and we had two days of amazing time playing together and recording. Of those sessions, that song was the strongest thing that we came out with. It seemed like at that point a no-brainer to lead with that track and of course we made it a benefit for Music Rising, so it earned a lot of money for our charity. Then that came out to a lot of attention and we knew then that was absolutely had to be part of our performance at the Superdome.

Quint Davis was brought on board to help stage the production and legendary Grammy's producer Ken Ehrlich was hired to run the TV production of the performances.

Quint Davis: We had two or three days of run-throughs to stage because we had this giant thing that we built that had to roll in and out. We didn't just have U2, we had U2 and Green Day. And then we had like Trombone Shorty and Kermit Ruffins. We had two whole brass bands. We had two whole Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs.

Charles Coplin: This was one of those shows where everybody was pushing in the right direction. Everybody's hearts were in the right place. And seeing these musicians on stage and the way things were being planned and the music that Bob Ezrin, the producer, put together, the rehearsals were really, really special. When Bono started to improvise "Beautiful Day" and after the flag and the colors come out, you really started to get goose bumps.

Edge: You know, it's funny, we showed up at the Superdome and I think we were all kind of a little nervous because there was so much that had to be done in that rehearsal you know, integrating Trombone Shorty and the other musicians and two bands that hadn't really played together that much so the sound check and all was quite a high, an intense moment.

Trombone Shorty: I don't think I ever captured that emotion again, years later, it was just a monumental thing – that moment let us know that if we had any doubt of coming back to New Orleans, we are here now and from this moment we can build and make sure this city is OK."

The 2006 Saints gathered for training camp at Millsaps College in Jackson, Miss., about three hours north of New Orleans. Practices were hard, temperatures were hot and the Saints looked like a team a long ways away from being a playoff contender.

Sean Payton: Obviously, it was going to be a tough camp. We were going to try and to really challenge the players and build a foundation and really create an environment where toughness was going to be what made it. There weren't many restrictions then. We were going two-a-day. It was hot, obviously. I would say it was one of the more difficult training camps in our league's history.

Drew Brees: You could maybe relate it to the weeding out period of a boot camp or of a military training where you are trying to find the best of the best and you're trying to set the tone and you're trying to break everybody down and to a point where you can build them back up together as well as a unit and truly build a foundation on what will be our organization moving forward and I think that was the vision that Sean Payton had in his mind when we went to Jackson.

Mickey Loomis: Man, it was tough but the players that came through that I think they would all say, "As tough as that was, it made us better."

Sean Payton: Honestly, the season started off in training camp and I would say average to poor. We struggled in some of those preseason games, Deuce was still recovering from an ACL. Drew still wasn't 100 percent.

Drew Brees: We were abysmal during the preseason and listen, a part of that was because we were gassed. That training camp was so physical and so tough and so long and so draining, by the time you got to the games, you didn't have anything left. Guys were fighting for survival really. In general terms, you were each day, at some point during practice, you just went in survival mode, which is like how do we get through this?

The Saints started the season at Cleveland and scratched out a victory.

Sean Payton: That was an important win, it was a low-scoring game. Then we go to Green Bay and we fall down 13-0, but we bounce back and are able to get back in the game.

Mickey Loomis: I felt like that Green Bay game was pretty important to us.

But nothing was going to be more important than the re-opening game, which pitted the Saints against their longtime rival, the Falcons, also undefeated.

Drew Brees: I think one of the best things Sean did was he took the entire team to have our Friday practice which took place on a Saturday in the Superdome prior to the Monday night game. This, for many of us was our first time in the Dome, ever and certainly post-Katrina for the guys that had been there. It was a bit eerie and we got through the practice and sitting there just imaging all that had taken place over the past six months or certainly year. Then, at the end of practice he calls us all up and the lights go out and then up on the JumboTron he plays a video for us just kind of documenting the storm, the devastation, what had happened in the Dome. Then what this game represented for so many people and there wasn't a dry eye amongst the team as we watched that video. We all knew right then and there that we were going to win this game because we had to.

Sean Payton: I remember our focus being just on the routine and making sure players knew how to get to the stadium, more than 50 percent of the team hadn't played the year before. And so, we had valet parking, we had the hotel we were staying at, making sure they beat traffic. There were all these steps in place just to make sure on Monday they were ready to play the game.

Steve Gleason: The two things I remember that were unique to my experience were, they wanted every player to use the red carpet valet service that was right in the middle of the arriving crowd. I didn't want to do that. So, I drove in the back entrance and parked in my spot. The other moment was during the National Anthem, minutes before kickoff. I vividly remember looking across the field and seeing the Falcons and looking up at the crowd in the Dome and seeing the fans thinking, 'It is impossible for us to lose tonight.

Sean Payton: It was only going to be a special night if we won. In other words, we did not want to have the re-opening and the nationally televised game and lose the game. It had to be with us winning, because it was one of those once in a lifetime moments that was much bigger than the sport itself.

Mike Tirico: Never seen a stadium for a regular season game like that, a Super Bowl-type energy in the building. But it was different because it was real passion. It came from the heart. It wasn't just hey our team is playing. No, our city is playing.

Frank Supovitz: One of the things that I thought was important was to do some form of a reveal. Something that said, "Okay, now the Superdome is open," and we did that with the big banner reveal on the outside of the building.

Archie Manning: I get a call; I don't recall if it was from the Saints or the Superdome people. They were going to have a countdown; people were going to be out there. They weren't going to open the dome until 5:30 or something. "We're going to have a countdown, we'd like for you to get up on this big deal and count it down." I said, "Shoot yeah, I'm honored. I'll be there."

Frank Supovitz; Once inside when the preshow started, pregame show started, the U2 and Green Day performance was just one of these things where even during the rehearsal, when we were watching rehearsal, we were looking at each other and saying, "This was an important thing to do. This is not something you even have to pay us for, I would do this for free."

Robin Roberts: Now, please welcome two of the world's greatest rock and roll bands, U2 and Green Day, ushered in by some of New Orleans' finest brass musicians.

Bob Ezrin: Billie Joe comes out and starts singing 'House of the Rising Sun.' And of course this a room where just one year before people had been dying and the smell of that was still in the air.

Keith Spera: When Billy Joe Armstrong sang, 'There is a house in New Orleans, they call the Superdome,' I mean I still get chills when I think about it now. Incredible, how they tailored that moment and it couldn't have been more effective and more powerful."

Bob Ezrin: Then, the came the statement of defiance: the saints are coming. And everyone had come to this Saints game. This was, in a way, this was New Orleans standing up. This was New Orleans getting off its knees and standing up and saying to the world, "We're back."

Trombone Shorty: You can hear when we're walking up, the people that ran on the field, oh my God, this is amazing to play with U2 and Green Day and represent the city and that part, when he mentioned the names, that wasn't part of the rehearsal, so I had no idea that he was going to do that. But, I do remember being on stage, all of those people and when he mentioned each one of our names, you can hear like a big roar in the crowd and that was a very, very proud moment for all of us to be able to be representatives in our hometown on that stage.

Edge: I think when we saw the response of the crowd at the event, I think we realized that this was a coming together of so many things and it was, it's significance started to dawn on me particularly. After the show, it was really getting out and talking to people. The locals, Quint, Trombone Shorty, his cousins and musician friends and guys from Preservation Hall started to realize that this actually, this is big. This is big, bigger than I thought.

Dennis Lauscha: It was almost like an alarm clock. For the last year, year and a half, since Katrina had hit, we'd been living in a nightmare and the alarm was going off. The song was waking us up.

Bob Ezrin: When the show was over we had a big gathering in the dressing room of U2 and Bono, unaccustomed as he is to public speaking, gave a little speech about the meaning of this thing. And acknowledged everybody that was involved and there was a feeling of kind of solidarity in the room. We had just made history.

Charles Coplin: Another cool thing was when the show was over and pregame was over, I remember just walking towards the stage and Larry Mullen, the drummer of U2 who I had not spoken with at all, slapped me five and I slapped him five and we went on our way.

Edge: And well I had no idea was that the song "The Saints Are Coming" was going to be adopted in the way it has been and I have to say that I was very proud to realize that that has happened. It was great fun to talk to some of the guys from the Skids and kind of explain to them because they were like had no idea what was going on so suddenly for them to have one of their songs be such an important part of a sports team on another side of the world. It was kind of mind-blowing for them.

Music: are coming. I say no matter how I try I realize there's no reply. The saints are coming.

Sean Payton: We were in the locker room when that took place. So now when you see the video of it and you hear it, you just think of that night. I think every one of us felt fortunate and blessed to be in a position to be a part of the recovery. If you didn't at the beginning, you quickly got on board and recognized this was more than we got into this sport for. I wanted to become a coach, but this was about a bigger thing than just winning games.

Two of the main icons of New Orleans music, Irma Thomas and Allen Toussaint, came onto the field to perform the anthem.

Irma Thomas: Normally I do the anthem acapella, but this particular time they decided to pair me up with along with Allen Toussaint. We did a quick rehearsal backstage, well backstage as the Dome is backstage, and that was the first time I actually sung it with accompaniment.

Irma Thomas: Oh say can you see, by the dawn's early light.

Sean Payton: One of the challenges for any artist singing a national anthem was you got a lot to lose and not a lot to gain. We hear about the mistakes made during anthems. Every once in awhile you hear about Whitney Houston hitting out of the park. Irma Thomas hit it out of the park. At that moment, that was the person who should have been singing the anthem. You have goose bumps, you're numb, you're trying to stay in the moment, but it was special.

Irma Thomas: And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air.

Irma Thomas: It was odd because once finished singing it, normally they start applauding, but for some reason on that day, if there wasn't a good 30-second pause, which 30 seconds on TV is a long time, a good 30-second pause before everybody started applauding. There wasn't a dry eye in the house, including mine. For some reason it just meant, we were home. There's a big difference when you realize you're in a place where you think you would not be and it hits you. For 30 whole seconds, we just stood there and went wow, we are home.

Trombone Shorty: She was singing from a different place. She was singing to make sure the city, this was the beginning to us rebuilding. You can hear it in her voice how touching it was for her to be able to be there and represent at that level. And then for us to come along, it just captured everything that New Orleans has from football to music to the queen of soul.

Drew Brees: It still gives me chills to hear the U2 and Green Day 'The Saints Are Coming 'and it's awesome. So many New Orleans legends in and around that as well. Like you said, Irma Thomas and Allen Toussaint. We knew that it was going to be a spectacle. We knew that "Monday Night Football," two undefeated teams, the re-opening of the Dome, I mean just all the festivities that come along with that and yet there was a laser focus on our team and we knew we had to take care of business and we knew we had to start fast, too. And I don't think we could have started that game off any better than we did.

Mike Tirico: A moment, almost unimaginable 13 months ago is here. The NFL, the Saints, back in New Orleans. Back in the Superdome. Russell from the five. And a nice return to the 25-yard line. That brings Michael Vick and the Atlanta Falcons out to the field. Vick lost the football! Goes out of bounds, New Orleans did not have possession. It's still Atlanta ball, but it's fourth down. Fujita came in and freed it out of Vick's hands.

Sean Payton: The plan wasn't to rush the first punt. I don't know if we had a plan in regards to when we were going to rush the punt. Typically, you rush six. When you rush it you rush eight. John Bonamego, our special teams coordinator, just as third down had been run, he said, "Do you want to rush this first one?" So my reaction was "Yeah!" But it's not like we spent all week deciding that we were going to rush the first punt. But where the ball was on their side of the field, we did and Steve did a great job. He timed it up.

Steve Gleason: I was a little surprised to hear the block call after the first series, especially in the field position, which usually calls for a return. The scheme is an interior stunt where I cross from the right A-gap to the left A-gap. Sure enough, the Falcons had some confusion on their assignments. They tried some bizarre slide scheme which I'd never seen in eight seasons. So, I actually didn't hit the A-gap like it was drawn up. Because they used the slide technique, I actually ended up unblocked and the B-gap opened up for me.

Drew Brees: I remember we had it in the plan and it was one of those, hey right moment and hey we got the look that we wanted on that first punt. So as I'm standing there, I'm trying to act cool. It's kind of one of those acting jobs where you don't want to act too excited about what's happening down there with the punt, you know I kind of look like I'm getting locked in for the drive but in the back of my mind I'm thinking alright we've got the punt block on. Come on Steve-o, come on Gleason. And then sure enough it sets up perfectly and he blocks that punt and it was like a shotgun blast.

Mike Tirico: to punt and it's blocked! It's rolling inside the five and it's going to be covered by the Saints for a touchdown. Oh baby! What a moment, just listen to this croud!

Mike Tirico: In the back of my mind I had thought later on that afternoon as I was kind of going to the game that if the Saints do score the first thing I want to say is 'Touchdown New Orleans.' It wasn't 'Touchdown Saints,' it was a New Orleans moment. With the energy that was in the building, it had built up through the music and then that play, it was just the perfect time. I remember saying 'Touchdown New Orleans.' I've done that in other places, just kind of put my hands out to make sure nobody said anything. There was nothing any human alive could say that could be better than that moment.

Jay Rothman: I give Tony Kornheiser credit because words in the moment were priceless, I thought.

Tony Kornheiser: You could not have scripted this any better than it just happened for the New Orleans Saints. Everybody thought that the wave of emotion would come in with the Saints. If you were the Falcons, the first thing you had to be afraid of was being swept away in that particular wave of emotion and that is exactly what happened. Now those people that look to the New Orleans Saints as something that would uplift them, uplift the city, uplift the entire Gulf region, they just had it.

Zach Strief: But that moment to me was the defining moment in the city's rebirth. It was a belief that the city could be better than it was before and that is such a rare and unusual thing to be part of as an athlete.

Quint Davis: It was transcendent. What happened, in our experience, was that what we did in the music and the song was tied to the punt block from 'The Saints are Coming.' They came. They blocked the punt. They scored a touchdown. They won the game.

Sean Payton: I just remember the noise. I remember Curtis DeLoatch scoring and spiking it. But I can't recall Steve's reaction because it was just so loud. It was kind of a we scored. We aren't going to get shut out in this game. Scoring first with that crowd was significant in that, it was as loud a stadium that night that we, that I've ever experienced.

Mickey Loomis: You're just pumped up and excited and the crowd has never been that loud ever. Then, there's tears being shed. Man, it's just a perfect play at a perfect time.

Kathleen Blanco, former governor of Louisiana: I don't think I've been to any ballgame or any other event with a crowd of people that were more joyful and just shouting for joy when Steve Gleason blocked that ball.

Dennis Lauscha: All of the times that there seemed to be that we could have turned a corner as an organization and we went the wrong way. For some reason, that night it felt like we finally turned the corner and we were heading in the right direction.

Jay Rothman: It's the most impactful, it's the most impactful game I've done on literally over a thousand events, not just football – baseball, basketball and just because of the responsibility we had that night and the meaning. The meaning of what that game was for the people. The game was secondary to the event and the rebirth of a city. So that made that night, more than anything, super special for all of us.

Steve Gleason: There was so much emotion and passion in the Dome that night. The people of New Orleans had spent the previous 12 months being devastated and frustrated and angry. This was their chance to release all those emotions and to let the world know the city of New Orleans was back. Because I had been in New Orleans for the previous six seasons, at least to some degree, I understood the culture and mentality of New Orleanais. I was dating, and would later marry into a New Orleanais family. I also endured the chaos of the previous 13 months. As a result, the significance of the block, even in the moment immediately after the play, was not lost on me.

Drew Brees: Complete elation. It was an eruption. It was such a bang bang. If you didn't know that we were going to win prior to that moment, then you knew that there was going to be from there on in and basically it was a resounding, not only are we going to win this game but New Orleans, we are back.

Sean Payton: I can't split this ball up five hundred thousand ways. I can't do that. I can't cut it up into five hundred thousand pieces to give to everybody in this city. But, this game ball is going to everybody in this city. This city is getting this game ball from our organization, this team. This game ball is going to the city of New Orleans.

The impact of Sept. 25, 2006 – the performances of U2 and Green Day, Irma's national anthem, Steve Gleason's block – still resonates today, 10 years later.

Irma Thomas: To be at the Dome, back in the Dome, no matter what the situation was outside. It was a way to get away from thinking about, "Well I gotta get my house together. I gotta do this, I gotta do that." You can forget it. For whatever time you were spending in that Dome, all of that just went away for that moment. It was a come together. It was just special.

Trombone Shorty: It was bigger than the football game for us, for the city, for the team, for the musicians, it represented more than just football.

Kathleen Blanco, former governor of Louisiana I think that a lot of credit goes to the Saints. Drew Brees was fairly new at the time and he took the city to heart, he became the symbol of a winning team and that was the other thing that happened. The Saints transformed themselves, from a team on the margins to a winning team. That elevated the whole state.

Sean Payton: You didn't realize it at the time, but all of a sudden you found yourself in this event at this period of time, that you realized it was going to be something you remembered long after you were here.

Dennis Lauscha: I think it was a sign that hey, we can do it. We can be a championship organization. We can deliver a championship. We can be a championship city. We can be a championship community. We are different. That's what makes New Orleans so great. We do things a little bit differently, but that doesn't mean we can't be successful and can't be champions. That night again was the first step in our journey to winning a championship and it was one heck of an experience.

Edge: Well, I have to say for me personally it's probably the pinnacle because this was an initiative that I started. The idea, the genesis of this song was something that came to me in response to that request to perform so you know, it was very personal to me. In the sort of U2 context, I think it's way up there because it's everything that U2 are about as a band. You know, we were so proud to being able to give back in this way. And so the fact that the song lives on in this way was totally unforeseen and just an incredible, I would say an honor.

Brees: I'd say my lasting memory from the Monday night game, the re-opening of the Dome, the Atlanta Falcons was just the feeling that we can really accomplish anything. I mean who would have thought, a year earlier after everything that had transpired, that we would be sitting here doing this? Certainly just go back six weeks prior to that during training camp. Who would have thought that we would be sitting here having this moment? I mean, we felt like we can do anything, we can accomplish anything. I'm not just talking about the team, scoring touchdowns, winning football games. I'm talking about the city, the people, like New Orleans is not just going to come back, we're going to come back stronger than ever."

Resiliency And Affordability Focus Of Edgemere Planning Study

By Katie Honan

DNAinfo, September 24, 2016

EDGEMERE — A new supermarket, increased resiliency measures, and better streets and sidewalks are part of a plan to reinvigorate the bayside Queens neighborhood of Edgemere, officials said.

City officials released their report on the Resilient Edgemere Community Planning Initiative on Saturday, which completes a year of planning workshops in the neighborhood on the low-lying Rockaway peninsula.

Around 250 people attended the workshops, and questionnaires were sent to the neighborhood's 1,700 households, according to the city.

The plan features a five-year timeline of work that's focused on protecting the area from future flooding, creating more commercial opportunities and building affordable housing, according to the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

The city nearly 20 years ago designated Edgemere as an urban renewal area, but work and progress has since stalled, according to City Councilman Donovan Richards.

Residents lack resources, and even the streets and sidewalks need major work. At the workshops, officials found residents desired basic improvements like better transportation, stores and flood protection.

"Many of their ideas in particular is stuff that was promised," he said.

Major issues found through the workshops included protection from the flooding that's common during rain storms and high tides — with an eye towards future storms similar to Hurricane Sandy.

"We want to find ways to alleviate tidal flooding as we wait for FEMA funding" for larger projects, he said.

Part of the resiliency measures include long-term buyout options for homes closest to Jamaica Bay, officials said. So far, five homeowners have agreed to be relocated. While the city won't force anyone out, they "wanted to make sure that there were options," according to Richards.

Throughout the Urban Renewal process, residents were promised more commercial development, but the plans never came to fruition, he said.

A new supermarket on NYCHA-owned land by the Beach 41st Street Houses will be built over the next two years, officials said.

In addition to better streets — which recently underwent a massive rebuilding and repaving project — residents spoke about better traffic signals and more green spaces.

And a major component to the study was maintaining residential affordability, even as major investment comes through.

"We want to make sure that even as property values go up we're not pricing people out," Richards said.

Superintendent Lauds Support Of VB Voters

By Kenneth Fry

Van Buren (AR) Press Argus-Courier, September 23, 2016

The support of voters in Tuesday's school election was overwhelming, according to Dr. Harold Jeffcoat, superintendent of the Van Buren School District.

By a margin of 681 for to 313 against, voters approved a three-mill increase, which would generate roughly $1 million per year for much needed facility improvements, including replacing the district's aging bus fleet, updating classroom technology and building a more competitive salary schedule.

Voters also approved the restructuring of four bonds, which would generate one-time revenue totaling approximately $8 million for facility improvements.

"Now, the work begins," Jeffcoat said. "While it will take some time for all pieces to fall into place, we are well on our way to making significant improvements throughout the district."

He said the district will initiate the process of restructuring the four bonds with funds expected sometime after the Christmas break

"These dollars will be paired with funds made available through the Arkansas Facilities Partnership program," Jeffcoat said. "At this point, all projects have been approved by the state but funding amounts have yet to be determined. We should know the degree of financial support from the state by the end of this school year."

In addition to state aide, he said the district will begin the process of applying for partnership funds through Federal Emergency Management Agency for two tornado shelters, one at City Heights Elementary School and the other at Northridge Middle School.

The millage increase will allow the district to begin work on improving the district's certified and classified salary schedules.

"Our personnel policy committees definitely have their work cut out for them this year," Jeffcoat said. "Any changes made to the salary schedules will be reflected in contracts for the upcoming school year."

Jeffcoat said the election results were the result of a team effort.

"With nearly 1,000 votes cast, we had 69 percent in support of our school district's vision for progress," he said. "We are truly blessed to live in a community that is confident in us as educators and willing to invest in the future for our kids."

Jeffcoat also congratulated Carman Young on being re-elected to the school board. She will serve a five-year term for Zone 4. Young received 156 votes to 95 for Bob Robinson.

"I would like to thank the school board for its continued support and vision throughout this process," Jeffcoat said. "We would not be where we are today if it wasn't for their bold leadership and desire for greater success for our school district and community. When they publicly voted 7-0 to pursue this campaign, they set the stage for a very bright future for the Van Buren School District.

Jeffcoat said the result of this election is further proof that Van Buren is on the rise.

"What an exciting time to be a Van Buren Pointer," he said.

Also Tuesday, Mulberry voters voted 157 to 6 to continue the district's current millage, Mountainburg continued its millage 11 to 2, Alma continued its millage 41 to 13 and Cedarville its millage 6 to 1.

Candidates for Alma Position 2, Alma Position 6, Cedarville Position 2, Mountainburg Position 2, Mulberry Position 5 and Mulberry Position 1 ran unopposed.

Bellevue Joins Effort To Fix Levees

By Eugene Curtin

Bellevue (NE) Leader, September 26, 2016

The Bellevue City Council voted 6-0 Sept. 12 to contribute $3 million to an almost $28 million fund that will be used to strengthen 19 miles of levee that protects the base from the Missouri River.

The levees also protect thousands of developable acres south of the base.

The Sarpy County Board Aug. 30 made the same $3 million commitment Aug. 30.

Other contributors are the State of Nebraska, which will contribute $13.7 million, and the City of Omaha, which will contribute $3 million.

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District will contribute $5 million, a contribution that might climb to $7 million, potentially raising the total cost to almost $30 million.

John Winkler, general manager of the Papio-Missouri River NRD, has said he hopes construction will begin next year.

The work should take two years to complete, he said.

The work is being conducted by order of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which has threatened to decertify the levees if the improvements are not made.

That would leave Offutt, and thousands of developable acres, listed as sitting in a floodplain.

Decertification would put the base at greater risk of closure, and would make the area south of the base undevelopable.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

Millard To Be Honored At National Memorial Service

Portage (WI) Daily Register, September 25, 2016

The 35th annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service will honor four Wisconsin firefighters who died in the line of duty. They are among the 79 firefighters who died in 2015 and 33 firefighters who died in previous years who will be remembered at the official national service at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, on Oct. 9.

Firefighter Lawrence W. Millard will be among those honored. Millard, 56, of the Endeavor Moundville Fire Department, died after he was struck while directing traffic at the scene of a motor vehicle accident on Dec. 11, 2015.

Others from Wisconsin include Firefighter Leslie W. Fryman, 58, of the Rosendale Volunteer Fire Department; Lt. Michael P. Miller, 45, of the Green Bay Metro Fire Department; and Firefighter Dale J. Wege, 59, of the Pine Lake Volunteer Fire Department.

Their names will be added to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial on the Academy grounds. The national tribute is sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Fire Administration.

Families will receive flags flown over the U.S. Capitol and the National Memorial. Members of the fire service, honor guard units and pipe and drum units from across the country will participate in this national tribute.

For a complete list of fallen firefighters being honored, visit www.firehero.org.

Tax-lien Sales Can Ignore Charleston's Most Neglected Properties

By Elaina Sauber

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 24, 2016

This is the first of a two-part story about the system of tax lien sales in West Virginia and how they're connected to the growing problem of vacant and blighted properties in the capital city.

Three years ago, Janie Hamilton moved back to her childhood home on Woodland Drive, only to discover the prominent, Colonial-style house next door that once anchored the hilly neighborhood had become a living nightmare.

In the 1960s, she remembers, its previous owners lovingly tended to the home and grew flowers and vegetable gardens in the backyard.

The charming home from Hamilton's youth has now been vacant for more than a decade. What remains now is a kudzu-covered ghost of Hamilton's memories. She refers to it as "the jungle."

The large front porch is completely inaccessible — the weeds and brush render the front door invisible.

The side entrances aren't boarded up, creating easy access for the homeless and trespassers.

The inside, Hamilton said, is just as bad. What hasn't been pilfered over the years is strewn around the house. The kitchen has been all but gutted. An upstairs bedroom is filled with stacks of newspapers and magazines reaching toward the ceiling. Mold grows up the walls from where water made its way inside over the last decade. Tufts of feathers and fur from curious animals litter the floor.

"There's just filth all over the house," said Hamilton, who admitted to trespassing in the house shortly after moving back home.

As the home's physical state worsened, its owner Kenneth Nicholas, a relative of the previous owners, stopped paying property taxes.

Eventually, the property's liens were auctioned off at a Kanawha County tax sale in 2014 for $2,000.

The lien purchaser, an Atlanta-based limited liability company, took title to the property in April after Nicholas failed to redeem it. It remains to be seen whether the new owners will make improvements to the property.

"I'm here alone, 60 years old, and I'm here fighting a jungle," Hamilton said.Investing in debt

Hamilton's story is just one example of West Virginia's tax lien system and its trickle-down effect across the capital city's neighborhoods.

Proponents of tax lien sales, which are used in at least 30 states, argue that the process is a tool for cash-strapped local governments to quickly collect on debt. The county receives the amount it's owed for property taxes immediately after the liens are sold — and it also gets to pass off the burden of collection to a private third party.

Critics argue that the practice perpetuates the cycle of delinquency that frequently accompanies long-vacant, low-value properties because there's no way to ensure investors will make them safe and habitable.

As Charleston's Building Commission scrambles to consistently update its vacant building registry — a list of roughly 400 empty, blighted properties in the city — it's losing the battle of addressing those that have been cycled through the tax lien system.

A Gazette-Mail investigation found that nearly 170 of those vacant properties — more than 40 percent — have gone through the tax lien system at least once in the past decade. Many of these properties are clustered on the West Side flats around Mary C. Snow Elementary, and also in various neighborhoods on the West Side hill.

The county collects between $1.5 and $2 million at each tax sale, according to Kanawha County Tax Deputy Allen Bleigh.

West Virginia state code declares that selling tax liens provides for the transfer of delinquent properties "to those more responsible to, or better able to bear, the duties of citizenship than were the former owners;" and for the reduced cost to the state and local governments.

Each November, the Kanawha County Sheriff's Office holds two-day tax lien sales, where scores of investors, local attorneys and representatives of out-of-state hedge funds bid on liens for at least the amount due in property taxes. In some cases, that's as little as a few hundred dollars.

The most savvy investors buy hundreds of liens at each sale. Per state code, the lien buyers become the collectors of the debt they purchase. Over the next 18 months, they're responsible for contacting the owners or heirs to give them a chance to pay back the debt and redeem the property.

The economic incentive for buying tax liens has little, if anything, to do with the real estate itself. Rather, the industry is driven by the high interest rates owners must pay to keep their property — that's how investors turn a profit.

During the redemption period, the buyer collects 1 percent interest on their investment monthly for up to an 18-percent return if the property is redeemed. If it's not, the lien buyer has a legal right to take title to the property.

The identity of the Woodland Drive property's new owner is murky at best. The deed was granted to Christiana Trust, a subsidiary of Delaware-based WSFS Bank. Christiana Trust is actually the custodian for a Georgia-based hedge fund, GSRAN-Z, LLC, which is also named on the tax deed application.

A custodian is a third party that oversees an investors' assets to ensure the lender receives its money if the investor defaults.

Like most tax sale investors, Christiana Trust profits from collecting on the liens it purchases in bulk at tax sales.

It makes sense, then, that investors benefit from researching property tax liens before the sale to determine which ones are most likely to be redeemed by the owners.

It's a familiar practice that real estate attorney Frank Alexander, a co-founder of the national Center for Community Progress, has studied over the years. He believes selling tax liens to private investors is damaging to communities in the long run.

"How do they maximize revenue? They want to buy the tax liens with the highest probability of redemption," he said. And the longer investors wait to collect on the debt, he said, the more interest they accumulate.

More than 2,000 liens were sold at the 2015 Kanawha County tax sale. About 25 percent of those properties are within Charleston city tax districts, Bleigh said.

During the 2014 tax sale, Christiana Trust purchased 206 liens as custodian for GSRAN-Z — for more than $1.5 million.

After the 18-month redemption period concluded, only eight of those properties — 3 percent — weren't redeemed by their owners, including the one next to Hamilton's house.

But what happens to the 3 percent of properties that aren't redeemed — and why would an investor take title to them?

"The rational reason is that it's convinced the value of the property is greater than the lien amount, and can sell it immediately," Alexander explained.'Common misconception'

Shawn Means, executive director of Habitat for Humanity for Kanawha and Putnam, first learned about tax lien sales years ago, when people would offer to donate their properties to the organization to get tax write offs.

But there was a problem: Many of those people offering to donate properties didn't own them.

"After chasing down numerous potential donations and finding out that either they had purchased a lien and never had a deed issued, or the lien had been resold, I started learning more and more about the process," Means said.

A major issue with tax lien sales, he said, is that many people don't understand what they're buying.

"There's a very common misconception that if you go to a sheriff's tax sale and buy a lien, you're actually buying the property," Means said.

Habitat works to build safe, affordable homes for area families, but Means said it's not realistic to build new homes in neighborhoods peppered with blighted, tax-delinquent structures.

"We have these neighborhoods that become huge tracts of delinquent properties, [which] tends to degrade neighborhoods even more," Means said. "Habitat's mission is to provide decent shelter ... it's very difficult to accomplish that when most properties in a community are decimated by time [and] neglect, with no incentives for owners to take care of their property." 'A crude instrument'

Georgia attorney and investor John Ramsey heads GSRAN-Z, the investment fund that bought the lien on the property next to Hamilton's home.

Barely a month after GSRAN-Z, via its custodian Christiana Trust, took title to 1240 Woodland, it filed a quitclaim deed in the Kanawha County Clerk's Office, transferring the title to NR Deed, LLC, another company linked to Ramsey — its listed address is identical to his Atlanta law office.

Local attorney John Kennedy Bailey, who does due diligence and legal work for Ramsey's investment groups, said it's common for investors to use one company to purchase tax liens, and another to take ownership over the few that aren't redeemed.

"Generally, the entities that lend money to buy liens are not interested in owning houses at the end," Bailey said. "There's basically a separation between raising money to go to these sales, and then dealing with whatever property might come out of the process."

Bailey said Ramsey's business practice is to rehabilitate and sell the properties his firms acquire via tax liens, but said finding reliable construction crews poses issues.

"It's just very hard to get people to do rehab work that are both affordable [and] show up every day and work," Bailey said. "[They] struggle to find someone in between who will get it fixed at a reasonable price."

Numerous calls to Ramsey for this story were not returned.

A similar scenario played out last year when GSRAN-Z took title to 837 Watts St., after the lien it bought for $2,700 at a 2013 tax sale wasn't redeemed. The firm immediately transferred it via quitclaim deed to NR Deed.

Today, 837 Watts is still empty, untouched and barely visible from the street. No one cuts the grass or trims back the weeds, which keeps the property concealed.

In other cases, local investors who become owners of unredeemed properties have no interest in dealing with the headache of housing and building code violations that frequently accompany such buildings, so they transfer them to someone who does.

"That's a problem inherent in the tax sale," Bailey said. "Most of the houses that [aren't] redeemed have some underlying problem or issue that makes it more likely they'll be vacant properties."

Because investors tend to buy only the most valuable and low-risk liens, Alexander argues local governments are actually losing money in the long run.

"If a tax lien investor bought $10 million in tax liens, they're probably going to make between $1.8 and $2 million in 12 months," he said. "[Local governments] get the base taxes paid as of the day of sale, but they're ... giving up a positive income stream."

But the problem goes further than governments losing out on interest to the private sector — it also means they're still burdened with the worst properties that no one wants to bid on.

"The local government is stuck with the properties the market doesn't want to buy liens on," Alexander said. "It hurts neighborhoods because nothing is done on the weakest properties."

By selling the most valuable liens, Alexander argues, local governments end up keeping the problem of low-value, blighted properties.

In 2013, nearly 700 of the 2,030 properties, or 34 percent, whose liens went to the Kanawha County tax sale received no bids.

Over the past three years of tax lien sales, on average, more than one-third of the listed properties received zero bids.

In those cases, the no-bid properties are then certified to the state Auditor's Office, where they sit for another 18 months before being sent off to the Deputy Land Commissioner for another public auction.

"It's a crude instrument for reducing the number of vacant properties," Bailey said.'We've been neglected'

Some of Charleston's bleakest examples are clustered around the West Side hill, especially west of Garvin Avenue. The steep, unforgiving terrain quickens foundation issues.

Livingston Avenue is just half a dozen blocks north of Washington Street, but the sound of traffic is replaced by the roar of insects. The occasional car rolls slowly by. Bits of trash, food and condom wrappers sprinkle the roadside beneath power lines weighed down by years of untrimmed vines and ivy.

Margaret Wilkinson moved into a house on the 1500 Block of Livingston Avenue recently, and is familiar with the West Side's reputation as crime ridden. The slew of vacant homes surrounding her own doesn't put Wilkinson's mind at ease.

Another neighbor, who owns her home, worries that someone will break into the empty house next door and start a fire. The owner of the neighboring structure, NAJ LLC, is headed by local attorney Bob Johns.

Johns is listed as a member or manager for nearly half a dozen LLCs that have purchased more than 1,000 tax liens since 2012.

During the 2013 tax lien sale, NAJ paid the county more than $438,000 for 227 liens. Roughly 75 percent were redeemed by their owners during the subsequent 18 months.

Attempts to reach Johns for comment were unsuccessful.

A while back, Wilkinson said, she walked to another vacant house at 1544 Livingston — what's left of it, anyway. The house's charred remains are still visible from the street, but a shed that sits on the property was untouched.

Inside the shed was evidence of squatters — just a few hundred yards from Wilkinson's home.

"I went up there and just looked around. I saw an electric cord. There was a book bag, a bed and everything," she said.

A 2015 report from the U.S. Fire Administration found that 7 percent of all residential building fires occur in vacant structures, based off data from 2010 to 2012.

At 37 percent, "intentional fires" were the leading reported cause of fires in vacant, residential buildings.

Several of the houses on Livingston have been demolished, but someone still owns the empty lots that have since grown into thick, invasive tangles that completely block out the view of the city below.

Because the owners don't cut the weeds back, they grow up and down — and through — the power lines that criss-cross above the street. Power outages are common, Wilkinson says.

Shawn Little, a 20-year veteran with the Charleston Fire Department, is also working with tax lien opportunities.

He owns five lots in the 1500 Block of Livingston. Just one still has a house on it — shuttered and empty. The rest have melded in with the other empty lots that seem forgotten by their owners.

"I don't want to comment, period, on what I do on my days off," Little said.

Wilkinson said she thinks the city could be doing more to address vacant and problem properties.

"I don't think it's fair — people going in these abandoned houses, doing their drugs or staying there. They [could] catch it on fire, then the next house will catch on fire," Wilkinson said. "It feels like we've been neglected."

Coming Monday: One property's long line of questionable ownership, loopholes in West Virginia's tax lien system and possible solutions to address them.

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

UA Seeks Gift To Start Cybercrime Institute

By Jaime Adame

Arkansas Democrat Gazette, September 24, 2016

FAYETTEVILLE – A proposal for a new University of Arkansas at Fayetteville research institute devoted to cyberterrorism and cybercrime has been submitted to an anonymous donor, according to the university.

UA would create a cybercrime database for the state attorney general's office as part of the proposal. For the attorney general, the project would be "a resource for investigators to easily access a database containing names and in particular cyber crime information," Judd Deere, a spokesman for Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, wrote in an email.

Deere said the attorney general's office has committed $100,000 to support the proposal, with the money coming from settlements in previous litigation involving the office.

The proposed UA cyberterrorism/cybercrime institute hinges on additional funding from the anonymous donor, based on university documents.

The university declined to name the donor or release the proposal. Mark Rushing, a UA spokesman, in an email said the donor is a foundation.

A document from UA's Terrorism Research Center, on campus since 2003, stated the center "submitted a proposal to an anonymous donor to create a specialized 'institute' focusing on cyberterrorism and cybercrime."

The proposal calls for "interdisciplinary, undergraduate and graduate certificate programs in cybersecurity and intelligence analysis," according to the document prepared by the center.

The document that discussed the proposed institute was a summary of center activity that was put together to help UA's ongoing planning process under new Chancellor Joe Steinmetz. Other departments submitted similar documents.

UA released the departmental summaries in July.

The center's summary stated the proposal "was accepted for funding, but a delay in obtaining matching money" halted the donor's gift. The document continued: "We expect this opportunity to remain available this year and are hopeful of receiving these funds later this fall."

Rushing, in an email, said the donor is now reviewing the proposal with no timetable for a decision.

The Terrorism Research Center, led by Brent Smith, hosts what's known as the American Terrorism Study.

The project "provides a comprehensive record of persons indicted in federal courts as a result of FBI 'terrorism enterprise' investigations," according to the center's website. It's also described as "the nation's longest running research project on terrorism in the United States."

The center has collaborated with other UA centers. The proposed cyberterrorism and cybercrime institute would include researchers from the university's Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies and computer scientists from the university's Center for Information Security and Reliability, according to the document prepared by the center.

Smith did not respond to email and phone requests for an interview.

Top U.S. officials have warned about the dangers of cybercrime and cyberterrorism.

"The nation's networks, communications, and data are increasingly at risk from diverse and persistent threats," Adm. Michael Rogers, chief of the National Security Agency, told Congress last year.

The threat of cyberterrorism in part depends on how the term is defined, said Meg King, director of the Digital Futures Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.

"We haven't had an incident connected to cyber that is a massive loss of life," King said. She said she'd estimate the number of true cyberterrorism attacks at "very, very few."

Terrorist groups thus far have not been making cyberattacks a priority, she said.

"Those capabilities are fairly low for now," King said.

UA, in declining to release the proposal, cited an exemption in the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act for records that give an advantage to competitors or bidders.

"The requested proposal, if released, would harm the University's ability to compete with other entities for scarce funding resources, including disclosure of craft knowledge developed by the University," a university spokesman said in declining a request for disclosure.

The university cited Arkansas Code Annotated 25-19-105 (b)(9)(A), which says files that shall not be made public include those "that if disclosed would give advantage to competitors or bidders and records maintained by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission related to any business entity's planning, site location, expansion, operations, or product development and marketing, unless approval for release of those records is granted by the business entity."

The search for a sponsor comes as public universities are receiving less money from state and federal governments, said Jennifer Victor, an associate professor of political science at George Mason University.

Schools "are pretty much forced to look for other types of funding," said Victor, who serves on the board of the Center for Responsive Politics. The nonprofit organization tracks the influence of money in politics and public policy.

She said a donation broadly earmarked for counterterrorism research would be appropriate.

"But what you want to be suspicious of are restrictions on donations that would restrict academic freedom in some way," Victor said.

Rushing, in an email, said "it wouldn't be appropriate to speculate about any potential restrictions" associated with the donor's gift.

Before UA establishes a new institute, a review takes place involving faculty, academic deans, Steinmetz and UA System officials, including the university's board of trustees, Rushing said.

Thomas Holt, a criminal justice professor at Michigan State University, said in an email that several universities have research centers devoted to cybercrime and cybersecurity issues, including the City University of New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

"With respect to research on cybercrime/terror, it is increasing, especially in the social sciences as criminologists and sociologists are increasingly interested in these issues. So it is a hot area of study," Holt wrote.

UA and Michigan State have partnered on a proposal to the National Institute of Justice. The project would involve studying policing and terrorist plots, according to the Terrorism Research Center document.

Elsewhere in Arkansas, the National Cybersecurity Preparedness Consortium, formally established in 2014, consists of five members that include the Little Rock-based Criminal Justice Institute, part of the UA System. The consortium has received various federal grants, including $3 million last year from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

DHS Testing Mobile, Attribute-based Identity System For First Responders

By Zack Martin

SecureID News, September 23, 2016

The need to properly identify first responders at incident sites has been an ongoing challenge for more than a decade. Federal, state and local governments have been trying to figure out the best way to know who has arrived at a scene while also ensuring that they have the proper qualifications to be there.

For years Homeland Security and FEMA wanted smart cards issued to first responders. Multiple programs were launched, but complications led to the majority being scrapped.

The logical next step – as with most identity projects these days – seems to be the leveraging of the first responders mobile devices. One such project is being piloted by the Kantara Initiative and the Command, Control and Interoperability Center for Advanced Data Analysis (CCICADA). Based at Rutgers University in New Jersey, CCICADA is a Homeland Security Center of Excellence.

Called Mobile Device and Attribute Validation (MDAV), the system enables a first responders smartphone to send encrypted information about their credential to another smartphone used by local authorities managing a response operation. In this manner, the credentials can be instantly verified and access granted to the scene.

The identity and access management system enables local management to access a certificate authority database containing current status and other information about emergency responders. Responders' smartphones hold their credentials or attributes, and once verified, local authorities can be assured of who is onsite and their expertise. Examples of expertise can include hazardous material training, fire fighting or medical training.

Currently, first responders present badges or other forms of ID to check-in with local authorities in a disaster situation. This is a time-consuming process and doesn't truly verify the individual, the agency they represent or their expertise.

"This isn't an identity problem, it's about attributes and how you get someone on the ground who is qualified and has the necessary skills," says Steve Wilson, founder of Lockstep Technologies, the company developing MDAV.

What sets this system apart from others is that it provides only the necessary attributes and nothing more, Wilson says. With the Homeland Security grant, Lockstep wants to build a proof of concept, show how it can work and then add use cases.

Two particular areas of interest are age verification and mobile driver licenses, Wilson says. Typically when someone needs to have their age verified they pull out a driver license or passport, which displays date of birth plus a variety of additional data elements that are not necessary. With this system a mobile device could communicate that the individual is the appropriate age without giving up excess personal data. The same use case would be relevant for mobile driver licenses. Instead of showing an address the system could just confirm residency or age.

MDAV uses x509 digital certificates, Wilson says. "The cryptography is pretty standard, you can go into the phone and sign stuff with the certificate once you put the credential on the phone," he explains.

Rutgers University in New Jersey is home to the Command, Control and Interoperability Center for Advanced Data Analysis (CCICADA), a group that is looking at different areas of identity and access management as well as privacy for Homeland Security, says Dennis Egan, assistant director at CCICADA.

CCICADA is a Homeland Security Center for Excellence and will be searching for and funding different projects. The Kantara Initiative is helping to find worthy projects that the center might be able to help get off the ground, Egan says.

The projects work in three phases. The first is a six-month project where an organization will produce a design for a system, identify customers and partners and submit it for assessment by Homeland Security and CCICADA. Phase two is building a prototype – which has a longer time span and involves more money – while the final phase is a full-blown pilot, Egan explains.

The center has been open for a little more than a year, and to date only has projects in phase one. Egan expects some to move forward shortly as others in the pipeline begin the process.

Someone Revived The Baltimore Gazette To Spread Fake News

Baltimore City Paper, September 23, 2016

The Baltimore Gazette, a newspaper that existed very briefly just after the Civil War, has returned online as a site to spread fake news stories and other nonsense.

One article in particular, "ATLANTA OFFICER KILLS BLACK WOMAN, INJURES CHILD, FOLLOWING BREASTFEEDING ARGUMENT," caught the attention of the online sleuths at Snopes.com after it apparently went viral. Search "Baltimore Gazette" on Facebook and you'll find a number of people who have been deceived by the breastfeeding story or are trying to prevent others from doing the same.

The Gazette's "article" is a rehash of a bogus story that ran in a bogus source, the National Report, in 2014, Snopes reported yesterday in a post that has been shared more than 20,000 times.

Other stories on the site appear to be similarly fake, even though the innocuous, newspaper-ish name, basic web design, and dry tone of the prose could lead some—particularly people who don't live here—to be easily deceived. But there are plenty of signs that the site is full of it.

Most of the articles are written by "BG Staff," with no proper byline given, and it appears the earliest article was published a few days ago, on Sept. 20.

A local story about an 11-year-old girl hit by a minivan in Woodberry is riddled with falsehoods. It says she was hit near a school at 4041 W. 41st St., Ridley Elementary, that does not exist and says she is a student at Dwyer Middle School, another made-up school. The site also "reports" the incident was being investigated by the "County Sheriff's Office," despite it happening in the city.

In other big local news, according to the Gazette, a man made off with Sudafed from a Walgreens on East Fayette Street. Reporter "Dan Stevens" learned from a "Baltimore Police Department media release" the pharmacist thought the man was "casing the place." The suspect, not surprisingly, in light of the racial undertones of some of the articles, is described as an "unknown black man."

BPD spokesman T.J. Smith says the story "doesn't appear to be true" and notes that the phone number listed for anyone with information to contact is not affiliated with the department.

The other two national news stories on the site are related to the rioting in Charlotte, and both—that "anyone caught looting will have welfare and food stamps revoked for life" and that Charlotte will receive $80 million from FEMA—are unsubstantiated. The FEMA food stamps one was debunked by Snopes too.

They are positive about one thing, though: "Here's How Homeschooling is Changing America."

The URL for the website was registered in July 2015 through Domains By Proxy, a company started by GoDaddy.com founder Bob Parsons that keeps owner information marked private. An email inquiry to the totally legit-sounding BALTIMOREGAZETTE.COM@domainsbyproxy.com was not immediately returned.

Interestingly enough, the site did just put up a post about a police-involved shooting in Baltimore County this afternoon, a story that is developing right now in real time—perhaps an attempt to look more credible. But the three-sentence post is aggregating the reporting of WBAL-TV.

Also, the Baltimore Gazette lists its offices at 612 E. Pratt St. There is no such address—the entire 600 block of E. Pratt is occupied by Lockwood Plaza, at 600 E. Pratt, the home of Marshall's, Panera Bread, Fogo de Chão, and other retail stores.

In sum, the Baltimore Gazette is basically your conservative wingnut uncle's email chain trying to masquerade as a credible news source. Don't buy into it.

FIRE GRANTS

Alle-Kiski Valley Fire Departments Get $1.2M From FEMA For New Equipment

By Jodi Weigand

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, September 25, 2016

Seven fire departments in the Alle-Kiski Valley will be able to replace aging gear and air packs thanks to recently awarded federal grant money.

The volunteer fire departments are New Kensington, Upper Burrell, Brackenridge's Pioneer Hose, West Deer Company No. 2 and No. 3, Vandergrift No. 1 and Lower Burrell No. 1 (Kinloch).

Each received a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters program.

The grants total nearly $1.2 million. Each department must provide 10 percent of their grant in matching funds.

The primary goal of the program is to help firefighters and other first responders obtain equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources.

Pioneer Hose Co. Chief Rick Jones said the $68,000 grant the departments received will replace their 12 air packs.

He said the department bought the breathing apparatus used from another department and they're at least 20 years old.

"They have to be certified every so many years, and they get costly to repair," Jones said.

He said this is the first time the department has gotten a FEMA grant in the 17 years he's been chief.

"I'm very excited," Jones said. "I don't know how we would have afforded to replace them if we didn't get it."

New Kensington Assistant Fire Chief Ed Saliba Jr. said they applied for a departmentwide grant. The $441,000 the department is getting will benefit each of the city's five fire companies.

The money will be used to replace all 52 breathing apparatuses, which includes the tank, harness and mask; and 36 sets of gear, which includes coat, pants, boots, gloves, helmet and a hood.

The breathing masks are 14 years old, just one year shy of the recommended replacement date, and the gear is about 10 years old.

Breathing apparatus cost about $7,000 each, and a set of gear is about $3,000, Saliba said.

He said without the grant money, the department couldn't afford to buy this much equipment at once.

"For us to spend that kind of money, we'd basically go broke," Saliba said, "because on top of that we have vehicles to maintain, rescue tools to maintain and upgrade, and everyday expenses.

"What we will be purchasing will be an upgrade to what we currently have and be able to provide good protection for the firefighters and for the people we're there to help."

Applying for a departmentwide or regional grant appears to have been a common way to seek money.

Ted Hereda, Lower Burrell (Kinloch) Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 chief, said the federal government encouraged multi-department grants.

"The more product you buy, the better price you get," he said.

"It's easier for the government to approve one large grant rather than five or six individual ones — especially if it's in the same area," said Bryan Fitch, chief of the Upper Burrell Volunteer Fire Department.

West Deer Volunteer Fire Company No. 3 applied for a regional grant for its department, West Deer No. 2 and Richland and North Hampton volunteer fire departments.

The $436,000 grant will be divided between the departments based on the amount of gear that each needs to replace.

"We were all faced with the same need at the same time," said Jim Wiegand, chief of West Deer No. 3. "Finances are tight, and, with the cost of the equipment going up, budgets buy less and less."

Upper Burrell VFD applied for the grant along with Kinloch.

Their $145,000 grant will buy 28 full sets of turnout gear for each department.

Fitch said their current gear is about 12 years old.

"(The grant) saves us from having to get a loan or spending money that we could use on other equipment," Fitch said.

Tom Schaeffer, chief of Vandergrift Fire Department No. 1, said that without grant money his department wouldn't be able to afford to replace its 14 breathing apparatuses. The department received about $99,000.

"The ones we have now were purchased with a federal grant in 2002," he said. "It's a nice program."

Desert Hills Fire District Awarded $71,810 Grant

River Scene Magazine (AZ), September 25, 2016

The Desert Hills Fire District has been awarded a $71,810 Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for the replacement of their protective clothing commonly known as "turnouts" and helmets.

The National Fire Protection Standards (NFPA) calls for the complete replacement of firefighters protective clothing every 10 years and protective clothing currently in use is at their maximum useful life as described in NFPA 1971 standards.

According to FEMA, the primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire-related hazards by providing direct financial assistance to eligible fire departments for the purchase of new equipment.

Interim Fire Chief Pat Dennen said, "We are very excited to receive this grant. It will allow us to provide the best possible protective clothing for our personnel when they encounter environments that are in immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH) atmospheres – and we would like to publicly thank FEMA for considering and funding our grant applications."

Captain Steve Bunn and Captain Jason Sayre were credited with writing the grant application.

ICYMI: Antonia Fire Gets $1.6 Million Grant To Hire 14 Firefighters

By Tracey Bruce

Jefferson County Leader, September 25, 2016

The Antonia Fire Protection District will nearly double its staff thanks to a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The $1,597.826 grant will be used to hire 14 firefighters and pay their salaries for the next two years to allow the district to meet safety standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Assistant Chief Glenn Nivens said.

Currently, the district has 17 employees but cannot meet NFPA standards that require four firefighters on a truck.

Currently, Antonia sends two firefighters on each truck.

"They call it two in and two out," Nivens said.

When four firefighters are on a truck responding to a fire, two can go in the structure (if they determine it to be safe) and two can remain outside the building to monitor the situation or relieve the firefighters, Nivens said.

"It will increase the safety of our people (firefighters) and of citizens," Nivens said.

Nivens said most smaller fire departments and districts cannot meet the NFPA standards because of the cost.

"It's something all districts strive for, but how do you finance it and make it happen?" he said.

Fire Chief John Newsome wrote the grant, and this is the second time the district has applied for it, Nivens said.

Once the 14 firefighters are hired, Antonia's staff will swell to 31 employees. The district will strictly follow federal guidelines in the hiring process, Nivens said.

"We will be dotting the i's and crossing the t's," he said. "There's a lot of paperwork to read. We don't want to violate the grant contract and be responsible for that money."

Nivens said the district hopes to hire firefighters by the end of the year.

Two years after receiving the federal grant, however, the additional staff will no longer be supported.

"It's something the district will have to look at," Nivens said.

"There is no way the budget can support 14 additional people and maintain it."

He said the board will have to decide at that time whether to ask residents for a tax increase to maintain the additional staff.

BFD Gets $633,746 Federal Grant

By Randy Patrick

Kentucky Standard, September 26, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has awarded a $633,746 grant to the Bardstown Fire Department for hiring and training volunteer firefighters.

"This grant is a huge win for the city of Bardstown, its citizens and the Fire Department," said Capt. Todd Spalding, who handled the grant application. "The grant is 100 percent funded. No matching contributions have to be made by the city."

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

City To Get Storm Damage Update

By Buster Thompson

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle, September 26, 2016

The Crystal River City Council will get another update Monday on the city's recovery from Hurricane Hermine. As of Saturday, Florida was still awaiting a federal disaster declaration from President Barack Obama, which would allow the Federal Emerge

The Crystal River City Council will get another update Monday on the city's recovery from Hurricane Hermine.

As of Saturday, Florida was still awaiting a federal disaster declaration from President Barack Obama, which would allow the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist the state and affected counties.

Crystal River officials approved $1 million Sept.

10 for two rounds of storm debris pickup prior to a presidential declaration.

Pikes Peak Observatory Would Further Solar Science, Education

By Billie Stanton Anleu

Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette, September 24, 2016

A new scientific endeavor in Colorado Springs could help safeguard the nation's electric grid, satellites, aircraft, spacecraft and radio transmissions and save hundreds of billions of dollars.

The first step is a biggie at 14,115 feet. It requires putting an observatory atop Pikes Peak – perhaps the only high-altitude site in the world with year-round access, a continual power source and hundreds of thousands of visitors a year.

The mountaintop observatory has been a two-decade quest by Dimitri Klebe, founder of the Pikes Peak Observatory and space content specialist for the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

But he and Robert Sallee, board chairman of the National Space Science & Technology Institute, remain undeterred.

"We understand that the process may take (another) three or more years, but we are willing to stay the course," Sallee said last week.

The proposal has been lauded as a way to lure more people to the city's most famous icon, to spur more science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, to enlighten and entertain visitors and to complement the impending new Summit House.

But it could do so much more.

Scientists will be able to test instruments and learn how the sun affects the Earth.

When a big storm on the sun sends magnetized clouds through the atmosphere to Earth, for example, currents shoot through the ground and endanger everything from electrical grids to oil pipelines, said NSSTI board member Mark Miesch, a scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research High Altitude Observatory (HAO).

The potential effect is billions of dollars in losses. But hundreds of billions would be lost if a large solar storm hit, Miesch said.

Compare that with the $108 billion tab for Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster in the U.S.

That's why space weather – the HAO's focus – is so important to the $1 billion-a-year satellite industry, utilities, airlines and others.

It's so important that the federal government has created a National Space Weather Strategy and Action Plan.

And in June, U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., introduced the Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act to the Senate to better predict and mitigate the effects of space weather. Co-sponsors are U.S. Sens. Cory Gardner, R-Colo. Gary Peters, D-Mich., and Cory Booker, D-N.J.

Forecasts are critical. A solar flare can disrupt radio transmissions, which are very important to the military.

Flight attendants traveling between London and Colorado can build up significant amounts of radiation, but planes can dodge a solar storm by changing routes or flying lower.

"But you don't want to do that unless you're sure. It costs a lot of money," Miesch said. "In order to improve forecasts, you need to increase understanding."

And that's a primary aim of the observatory, which would start with an 18-foot-diameter dome that can withstand 200 mph winds. It will be equipped with a viewing deck, a main 1-meter PlaneWave telescope for various kinds of research and a Lunt 6-inch H-Alpha Solar Telescope geared for sun studies. The entire installation would cover only 900 square feet.

Small telescopes, particularly with the sensors used today, collect more light than the older, bigger telescopes did, so they're more efficient for their size, Klebe said.

They also fill a niche for research needing a big view of the sky, such as finding planets around other stars. That can't be done through bigger telescopes, which only observe a smaller slice of sky, he said.

The 1-meter telescope will be the largest in Colorado, and it will be used by Colorado College, the Air Force Academy, the University of Denver and the University of Colorado at Boulder, among other educational and scientific institutions. It will be the biggest telescope in the Air Force Academy's international Falcon Telescope Network.

The solar telescope will be equipped with a camera, with images displayed in the Summit House, the city or on the Internet. And both scopes can be operated remotely.

Another instrument, an All Sky Visual and Infrared Analyzer, will record atmospheric conditions and phenomena, providing a 180-degree hemispheric perspective. A modified version of the instrument will identify smoke and ash particles in the atmosphere to help the Forest Service with swift response to wildfires.

The push will be to increase understanding not only among scientists, but also among students – including undergraduates from tribal colleges.

"We appreciate that Pikes Peak is a sacred space for Native Americans (including the Utes) and would not build anything there without their blessing," Miesch said. "We want them to be a partner in this. We want to inspire individuals of all backgrounds to pursue science and technology careers."

Construction of the observatory first requires obtaining a permit from the U.S. Forest Service. The observatory team will request a 15-year permit. An environmental impact statement also is needed, and the scientists would like to establish a private-government partnership to accomplish the EIS.

In 2019, the new Summit House is to be erected and the Army's High Altitude Research Laboratory on the peak will be moved. The following summer, the original research lab will be demolished, the site prepared and the observatory installed, if all goes according to plan.

Use of that site for the observatory reduces impacts on the fragile permafrost and is scientifically advantageous in relation to prevailing winds.

The Pikes Peak Observatory is expected to greatly enhance the new Summit House's destination value.

But tourism wasn't the motive for Klebe, who incorporated the observatory as a nonprofit in 1997 with a group of astronomers, astronauts, engineers and educators.

As a researcher at the University of Denver, whose telescope on Mount Evans closes in winter, he saw Pikes Peak as the ideal site for infrared astronomy and education.

In addition to the observatory, the group plans to deploy mobile science labs to remote schools to advance science and technology education.

Its mission, in addition to advancing scientific research, is "to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the universe through education at all levels, media presentations, environmental studies, historical preservation, cultural exhibits and the expansion of tourism to benefit the community."

FLOODS

Evacuations To Begin In Cedar Rapids

By Chelsea Keenan

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, September 24, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS — As the city braces for the Cedar River to crest at about 24 feet early next week, city officials are asking residents in flood-affected areas to evacuate their homes and businesses by 8 p.m. on Sunday.

The evacuations, while not mandatory, are highly recommended and strongly encouraged, said Mayor Ron Corbett during a 10 a.m. news conference on Saturday at the Ice Arena.

"We know it is a very stressful event for someone to leave their home, leave their belongings and walk away," Corbett said. "Our home is our castle, a sacred place, our sanctuary — and to walk away is difficult."

Evacuations are a necessary safety precaution, and those who choose to stay in their homes are not only risking their lives, Corbett said, but the lives of emergency crews who will have to rescue them.

"Mayor (Kay) Halloran was able to proclaim in 2008 that there were no fatalities," Corbett said. "When you look at flooding around the country, not every mayor and community can say that. I hope next week, a week from today, I can stand before the people of Cedar Rapids and proclaim the same, that there were no lives lost."

Earlier projections were for the Cedar River to crest at 24.5 feet. But the National Weather Service lowered that forecast to 24 feet at 5 p.m. Saturday.

A curfew will be put into effect from 8 p.m. on Sunday until 7 a.m. Monday. Seventy-three check points will be put up throughout areas expected to be affected by the flood. Several hundred Army National Guard members as well as state law enforcement are standing by for additional help.

Some 5,800 parcels are included in the evacuation plan, which covers homes and businesses in areas that could be hit if waters crest at 28 feet. City officials said those impacted should anticipate to be out of their homes and businesses for up to one week until water recedes and inspection teams are able to ensure their is no danger.

To see a list of the area to be evacuated, go to www.cedar-rapids.org.

Cedar Rapids Animal and Control has asked pet owners to use its services only as a last resort. Pet owners evacuating their homes should seek to board pets at animal day cares, veterinary offices or with friends and family to save space for pet owners with no other options, officials said during the news conference.

Alliant Energy plans to keep power on as long as possible. Crews will evaluate on a block-by-block basis, giving advance notice to residents when they can. Home and business owners also can call to request their power be shut off.

Elderly and disabled residents who are evacuating can schedule transportation services and help through Linn County Emergency Management, (319) 892-6500.

The American Red Cross opened a shelter Saturday at Cedar Hills Community Church, 6455 E. Ave. NW. A second shelter tentatively is scheduled to open on Sunday, with more to open as needed.

Individuals may stay at the shelter until they are able to get back in their homes. The shelters can accommodate individuals with special needs, officials added.

City officials have asked residents to stay clear of the downtown area and other affected neighborhoods, including NewBo, Time Check and Czech Village, so that crews are able to get around more easily and work to secure the areas with HESCO barriers, berms and sandbags.

Entrances into downtown closed, including Fifth Street SE and Sixth Street SE, and from First Ave. E to Eighth Ave. SE. Bridges on First, Second and Third Avenues also are closed.

The city is working with Iowa Department of Transportation and will restrict Interstate 380 on and off ramps into downtown.

‘Ready and willing’

Also on Saturday, city and county officials briefed Gov. Terry Branstad, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, Sens. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst, and U.S. Rep. Rod Blum on the community’s efforts to mitigate floodwaters.

“We stand here ready and willing to do whatever we can to help in this effort,” Branstad told the Linn County Board of Supervisors.

The supervisors on Saturday unanimously declared a state of emergency for the county, which allows the board access to emergency funds, opens up mutual aid possibilities and the potential for Federal Emergency Management Agency funds. The amount would depend on actual damage costs.

Branstad on Friday issued a proclamation of disaster emergency for 13 counties, including Linn, Black Hawk, Buchanan and Cedar. The proclamation allows state resources to be used and activates the Iowa National Guard — something he has not done since 2011.

Branstad said on Saturday while in Cedar Rapids that he learned early on in his tenure as governor to be proactive and assure that assistance is given in a timely fashion.

“In this case, we’re being really proactive and proclaiming a disaster before the water gets here,” he said.

Reynolds said they are receiving updates two to three times a day and will likely be back next week.

“This is never a good situation, but there is a stark difference from 2008, from a preparation standpoint,” she said.

The federal and state officials spoke with Corbett and other city officials in Kingston Village, on the west side of the river and across from the McGrath Amphitheatre. At the same time, city crews were working diligently to put up a temporary barrier in front of the amphitheater.

Blum told Corbett he was impressed by the organization and dedication of city employees and volunteers working together to prepare the city. It was a sentiment echoed through out the day by city leaders and other elected officials.

“Iowans helping Iowans,” Blum said.

Cedar Rapids Residents Flee Homes Ahead Of Expected Floods

By Mahita Gajanan

Fortune, September 25, 2016

Residents are evacuating low-lying parts of Cedar Rapids, Iowa following a request from authorities to leave the area by Sunday night due to a flooding risk from the rising Cedar River.

KCRG reports that evacuation and curfew starts at 8:00 PM Sunday the evacuation will begin at Sunday at 8:00 pm with a curfew starting at that time, too. “Even if you do not expect to take on water, the fire department warns water may prevent emergency services from reaching you,” KCRG noted.

Water levels rose in Cedar Falls and Waterloo, both about 55 miles upstream from Cedar Rapids. The rise was slightly lower than expected, but still reached large enough levels to create a flood. CNN reports that flooding already claimed two lives this week in western Wisconsin’s Vernon County.

The National Weather Service predicted the Cedar River will crest 23 feet in Cedar Rapids, Iowa’s second-largest city, on Tuesday morning. If that crest comes to bear, this will be the second worst flood in Cedar Rapids history. Residents living in about 5,000 downtown homes near the river were asked to leave. Officials said it could be days before they can return home.

The city has been preparing for a second major flood ever since 2008. According to the Gazette, that flood crested at 31,12 feet, which qualified as a 500 year flood and caused billions in damages. The New York Times noteded that Cedar Rapids was once known as "the city would never flood" after near misses in 1851, 1966, and 1993 when the Cedar River swelled dangerously but stayed the course.

The Associated Press reports city workers and volunteers have worked for days to build a temporary system of levees to hold the floodwater. KCRG also reported that local utilities were working on rerouting or cutting off gas and electricity in anticipation of the flood and "could not guarantee service" as the situation unfolds. Animal services have ale been accepting pets ahead of time, according to KCRG.

The Midwest flooding comes a little over a month since devastating floods struck Baton Rouge, Louisiana and surrounding parishes. Some 86,500 people filed for federal aid and 40,000 homes were damaged, with many homeowners lacking flood insurance. The Wall Street Journal reports that, a month later, recovery has been slow as residents rebuilt not only homes, but small businesses and infrastructure. Cedar Rapids has been similarly struggling even eight years after the previous record-breaking flood.

Gov. Branstad Activates Iowa National Guard For Flood Response; Disaster Declarations Issued For 13 Counties

By Erin Murphy

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, September 23, 2016

JOHNSTON — Gov. Terry Branstad on Friday afternoon activated the Iowa National Guard and issued disaster declarations for 13 northern and Eastern Iowa counties experiencing flooding.

The proclamation allows for state resources to be used toward flood mitigation efforts.

"In a situation like this, in major cities like Waterloo and Cedar Rapids, obviously we have a little time to prepare, and we want to do everything we can for the state to assist the communities and do the best job we can to avoid and mitigate damage," Branstad said in a news conference at Iowa National Guard Joint Forces headquarters in Johnston.

The disaster proclamation makes grant money available for low-income families affected by flooding. The grants are available through the state Department of Human Services.

Branstad said the state has dispatched more than 120,000 sandbags and four dump truck loads of sand, deployed or staged 22 water pumps, placed or staged 48 pallets of flood barriers, and placed 50 traffic barricades.

He added that he spoke with Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett on Thursday.

Adjutant General Tim Orr said the Iowa National Guard will begin its work by sending liaison teams to communities in the affected region to determine further resources.

"This really is to try and assess what the needs and requirements are," Orr said. "Right now we have no missions that have been tasked to the Guard for soldiers or equipment.

"... The key to any successful operation is getting out in front of it. And that's what we're really trying to do now, is identify potential needs so we have time to respond."

Branstad, Orr, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds and Homeland Security and Emergency Management director Mark Schouten on Saturday will tour Cedar Rapids as well Clarksville and Shell Rock. Reynolds said they also likely will tour more areas in the coming days.

This is the first time the governor has activated the National Guard since flooding on the Missouri River in 2011, Branstad said.

U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, of Iowa, said the federal Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service also are involved in flood response efforts.

Branstad Meets With Linn County About Flood Efforts

By Mitchell Schmidt

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, September 24, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS — Gov. Terry Branstad, along with Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, U.S. Sens. Joni Ernst and Chuck Grassley and other state officials, met Saturday with the Linn County Board of Supervisors for a briefing on local flood efforts and offer words of encouragement.

"We stand here ready and willing to do whatever we can to help in this effort," Branstad said.

The supervisors on Saturday unanimously declared a state of emergency for the county, which allows the board access to emergency funds, opens up mutual aid possibilities and the potential for Federal Emergency Management Agency funds. The amount would depend on actual damage costs.

The state of emergency will be for yesterday through next Thursday, Sept. 29.

Steve Estenson, the county's incident commander, expressed his confidence in the county's efforts, considering the lessons learned in 2008.

"In 2008, if you would have said 24.5 (feet of water), we wouldn't have really known what that meant," he said. "We feel that with the resources available now, we're very much prepared and we have a great respect for when the water gets here, there's not much you can do but wait it out until the water goes away."

Branstad Issues Disaster Proclamation For 13 Counties In Flood Path

By Erin Murphy

Waterloo-Cedar Falls (IA) Courier, September 24, 2016

JOHNSTON – Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad on Friday activated the Iowa National Guard and issued disaster declarations for 13 northern and eastern Iowa counties experiencing flooding, including several in the Cedar Valley.

The proclamation allows for state resources to be used toward flood mitigation efforts.

Heavy rains in recent days caused rising levels on the Cedar, Shell Rock and Maquoketa rivers in Northeast Iowa, causing flooding in some communities and the likelihood of flooding in more across eastern Iowa.

Officials expected the flooding to be significant, although not to the extent of the 2008 floods in eastern Iowa.

Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds visited Clarksville on Saturday, along with U.S. Sens. Charles Grassley and Joni Ernst, to survey damage there. A levee breach overnight Thursday caused significant flooding and some evacuations in that community overnight Thursday and early Friday. The nearby Butler County city of Greene also was hard hit, as was Waverly in Bremer County.

Cities from Mason City all the way to the Mississippi River have seen flooding or could feel its effects by early this week.

In a news conference at Iowa National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters on Friday, Branstad said the river is expected to crest in Cedar Rapids on Monday night, and in communities south of Cedar Rapids in the days that follow.

"We just have to deal with whatever situation comes our way. We need to be as well-prepared as possible," Branstad said. "In a situation like this, in major cities like Waterloo and Cedar Rapids, obviously we have a little time to prepare and we want to do everything we can for the state to assist the communities and do the best job we can to avoid and mitigate damage."

Branstad said the state already is working with communities to address flooding. He said the state dispatched more than 120,000 sandbags and four dump truck loads of sand, deployed 22 water pumps, 48 pallets of flood barriers and placed 50 traffic barricades.

Adjutant General Tim Orr said the Iowa National Guard sent liaison teams to communities in the impacted region to determine what resources are needed.

"I think the key to any successful operation is getting out in front of it," Orr said. "And that's what we're really trying to do now, is identify potential needs so we have time to respond."

Branstad, Orr, Reynolds and Homeland Security and Emergency Management director Mark Schouten on Saturday also toured Shell Rock and Cedar Rapids. Reynolds said they likely will visit more areas in coming days.

Branstad said it is the first time he has activated the National Guard since flooding on the Missouri River in 2011.

The disaster proclamation makes grant money available for low-income families impacted by flooding. The grants are available through the state Department of Human Services.

Grassley said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service also are involved in flood response efforts.

Linn County Supervisors Declare State Of Emergency

By Mitchell Schmidt

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, September 24, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS — The Linn County Board of Supervisors declared a state of emergency for the county due to impending flooding.

The board on Saturday unanimously approved the declaration, which allows the board access to emergency funds, opens up mutual aid possibilities and the potential for Federal Emergency Management Agency funds. The amount would depend on actual damage costs.

The state of emergency will be for yesterday through next Thursday, Sept. 29.

Updated projections put the Cedar River's crest at 24.5 feet on Monday evening, and Linn County incident commander Steve Estenson said the latest forecast shows high floodwater lingering in the county longer than first anticipated.

"Now it looks like after it spikes, it's going to plane off slower, so we may have water here for a longer duration, based on the model," he explained.

The Linn County Sheriff's Office closed Friday and has been surrounded by eight feet of HESCO barriers to protect the building up to as much as 29 feet of water, Estenson added.

Linn County Jail also has closed, with inmates being relocated to neighboring counties. The County Courthouse and Juvenile Justice Center are preparing to close Monday.

The Jean Oxley Public Services Center, 935 Second St. SW, also will be closed on Monday, with many services relocated temporarily to the Community Services Department, 1240 26th Avenue Ct.

Estenson added that the county is working closely with the city of Cedar Rapids and other communities such as Palo — which began some mandatory evacuations Saturday — to coordinate sandbagging efforts and provide aid.

Flood Summary: Sandbagging, Evacuations In Eastern Iowa

KCCI-TV Des Moines (IA), September 23, 2016

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad has signed a disaster proclamation for 13 northeast Iowa counties affected by flooding. It activates the Iowa National Guard to assist in preparedness and in response when there's damage.

Authorities say flash flooding is occurring across several counties in Iowa after a second night of heavy rains.

View video | Current weather alerts

The National Weather Service says storms are impacting the areas that saw downpours on Wednesday night. A flash flood warning has been issued for parts of Story, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Franklin and Bremer counties until early Friday morning.

Authorities in Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids and other cities are mobilizing resources to handle flooding from the Cedar River.

The rain-swollen river already has left its banks upstream, forcing evacuations at several communities along its path through northeastern Iowa.

On Friday the National Weather Service was predicting less-than-record crests, but officials say at least moderate flooding seems a certainty.

Officials were contacting people in the North Cedar area of Cedar Falls, telling them about the rising water and offering aid in evacuation. Officials closed floodgates in Waterloo, and Cedar Rapids officials deployed portable dams, barriers and pumps in preparation for flooding before Monday's expected crest at 24 feet. That's 7 feet below the June 13, 2008, record of just over 31 feet.

Sen. Chuck Grassley today met with top staff for Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad to discuss preparation efforts for expected flooding in the Cedar Valley. Grassley also has talked with Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett. Grassley made the following comment on the flooding preparation efforts so far.

"The governor's office is working with counties and cities on flood preparation, mitigation and response. Federal agencies including the Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the National Weather Service are involved. Communities including Cedar Rapids that were struck by prior floods, including the devastating 2008 floods, have done a lot of work to protect their residents from flooding. As I have before, I'm ready to help the state and communities with whatever they need from the federal government, whether it's disaster assistance or making sure farmers have their federal crop insurance needs fulfilled. The flooding is coming at a critical time for farmers with many crops still in the field and not yet ready to be harvested.

"Emergency management officials urge drivers to be careful and follow road closure alerts as closely as possible. Tree limbs hidden under water can be a safety concern. Shelter is an important need to keep in mind, and volunteer agencies are anticipating areas where people can be housed. Schools may not be option since school is in session."

CHARLES CITY

People in Charles City are being asked to stop all water use that goes down a drain or toilet.

KCRG reports a water pump at the Sewer Wastewater Treatment Plant failed on Friday, causing the issue. This comes after significant rainfall and flooding in that area earlier in the week.

Water from the tap is still safe to drink.

AMES

Four to five inches of rain fell in Ames Thursday night, causing flash flooding around the city.

Video submitted to KCCI from T.J. Kleckner showed 2 to 3 feet of water standing in city streets.

Several cars near Jack Trice Stadium were submerged up to the windows. A total of 14 vehicles were damaged there.

Grand Avenue and Lincoln Way were just two of the streets affected.

By around 3:00 a.m., most of the water had gone down. The city did issue an alert that low-lying areas around Squaw Creek could experience flooding.

They warned residents of apartments on South 4th and 5th streets to move their vehicles to higher ground.

City officials said lightning caused damage to equipment at two Ames Municipal Electric Services substations, interrupting service to several hundred customers. Power was restored by 12:45 a.m.

CLARKSVILLE

The police chief says several people have been forced from their Clarksville homes by floodwater from the swollen Shell Rock River.

Chief Barry Mackey said Friday morning that water overtopped the levee that runs down the east side of the river west of the Butler County community of about 1,400 people. The chief says several homes are surrounded by water, including his. He spoke from the home of another police officer that sits on higher ground.

Mackey says Clarksville Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and Westside Assisted Living Suites has been evacuated as a precaution.

The National Weather Service has issued a flash flood warning for parts of Story, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Franklin and Bremer counties.

GREENE

About 60 homes in the northeast Iowa town of Greene took on waist-deep floodwaters from the Shell Rock River.

Butler County Emergency Manager Mitch Nordmeyer said this reminded him of the devastating 2008 flood that caused extensive damage.

People in the towns of Clarksville and Shell Rock filled sandbags in preparation for the river's crest there Friday.

Audrey Smith's husband had to be rescued after the tractor he used to try and retrieve a freezer of meat from the couple's home in Butler County was swamped.

Smith told the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier they'd worked all night to remove items from their home, but they didn't finish before floodwaters arrived.

Water was 4 feet high during the 2008 flood and the Smiths rebuilt. Smith said: "Guess what? We aren't rebuilding again."

MASON CITY

Authorities say about 100 people are being evacuated from two apartment complexes in Mason City in northern Iowa.

Cerro Gordo County emergency management spokesman Michael Groesbeck says Chelsea Creek has left its banks, forcing the evacuations.

The National Weather Service says more than 2½ inches of rain has fallen in the past 12 hours at Mason City and more is in the forecast. The Winnebago River sits 2 feet over flood stage of 10 feet and is expected to crest at 14.2 feet early Friday morning, near the top of the dike on the north side of Mason City.

The city says an emergency shelter has been set up for those who've been evacuated.

FEMA Urging North Iowans To Prepare For Another Round Of Rains And Flooding

By AJ Taylor

KIOW-FM Forest City (IA), September 24, 2016

With active flooding underway in parts of Iowa and the threat of more to come, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is urging Iowans to be ready to take life-saving actions on short notice.

"Additional rainfall, even in smaller amounts, when combined with an already saturated ground, could quickly lead to hazardous conditions," said FEMA Region VII Administrator Beth Freeman. "It's critical that Iowans prepare now to do what's needed to be safe in the wake of current and near-term flooding, as well as other severe weather."

FEMA's Region VII office in Kansas City, Missouri has been in regular contact with emergency management officials in Iowa as both agencies actively monitor severe weather and flooding in many parts of the state.

"This flooding is a serious situation for many Iowans," Freeman added. "We can't stress enough how important it is for citizens to stay informed of ever-changing conditions, to follow official emergency instructions, to have an emergency plan for all members of the family, including pets, and to be ready to quickly put that plan into action."

Flooding is not unfamiliar to many Iowans but it helps to refresh on the immediate steps to stay safe:

Be Informed/Know the Danger:

Keep track of severe weather and flood forecasts, and take them seriously. To do that:

Monitor newspaper, radio and TV reports of current and predicted weather conditions;

Keep a NOAA Weather radio turned on and charged up to get alerts around the clock;

Set mobile devices to alert with the latest weather information. Make it easy by downloading and using afree

FEMA app, which provides real-time weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations anywhere in Iowa or the nation. The app also provides valuable safety tips to help families prepare for, and recover from, more than 20 natural and man-made hazards, including how to make a family communication plans, a customizable checklist of emergency supplies and maps of open shelters and disaster recovery centers. The app is available on the Apple App Store and on Google Play.

Plan for the Worst:

Severe weather can strike suddenly so have a plan to stay safe and take life-saving action if needed. The plan should include:

Actions to take if it's necessary to shelter-in-place;

Where each person/pet will go to get out of danger;

How each person/pet will get to a place of safety;

How family and friends will communicate with one another if evacuation to or from different locations becomes necessary.

For more information on creating an emergency plan, visit

www.Ready.gov or

www.beready.iowa.gov.

Be Ready:

Gather essential items in one place if evacuation is needed. Those should include:

Wallets, purses, car/house keys, eyeglasses, cash, credit cards;

Medicine and basic first-aid supplies;

Daily living supplies for infants/young children, family members who are elderly or have access and functional needs, and pets;

Important information such as numbers for bank accounts, insurance policies (health, auto and property) and credit cards;

Important phone numbers of relatives, employers, schools and medical professionals such as pharmacies, physicians and veterinarians;

Chargers for mobile devices;

One or more changes of clothes. Include long pants, socks, boots and/or sturdy shoes;

Bottled water and high-protein, non-perishable food such as a peanut butter, tuna and nuts.

Talk through the emergency plan with all family members so that everyone knows what to do.

If there is time, consider making a more complete emergency supply kit for homes and cars. To learn how, visit www.Ready.gov or

www.beready.iowa.gov.

Know What to Do:

Understand severe weather terms and know what to do for each.

Watch means a specific type of threat (flooding, tornadoes) could be forming;

Warning means take action. Life/property threatening conditions are occurring or imminent.

Heed emergency instructions. If told to evacuate, go immediately!

Move immediately to higher ground if flash flooding is possible. Don't wait to be told. DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOOD WATER, even if you know the road. Turn around, don't drown!

Abandon mobile homes. They offer little to no protection, even if tied down.

Don't touch downed power lines or objects in contact with downed lines. Report electrical hazards, downed lines and gas leaks to the police and utility companies.

Don't re-enter damaged structures without first checking to see if they are safe.

Henderson County Holding Special Meeting To Address FEMA Debt

By Elizabeth Meyer

Hawk Eye (Burlington, Iowa), September 24, 2016

OQUAWKA, Ill. — Henderson County officials will meet in a special session Tuesday to discuss a near half-million-dollar debt the Federal Emergency Management Agency claims it is owed.

Following the record-breaking 2008 flood, FEMA distributed money for the county's cleanup efforts. Though the grant was awarded by FEMA, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency was tasked with administering the funds.

Henderson County officials received notification earlier this month it owes IEMA — which then would reimburse FEMA — $471,791 due to mismanaging flood relief funds.

Based on a 2011 audit by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the county received $3.7 million worth of ineligible funds from FEMA, according to the Galesburg Register-Mail.

The administrative ruling filed in July by IEMA argued "Henderson County did not comply with all applicable federal ... laws and regulations," thus rendering some work ineligible for reimbursement.

"It is not the type of work, but the failure to comply with Federal laws and regulations, that renders the work ineligible," the document stated.

The audit specifically referenced 23 "small" demolition projects and asbestos testing on 13 properties, in which federal funds were "not expended on eligible work."

Henderson County appealed in 2013, which reduced the debt to its present cost.

FEMA has requested the debt be repaid by next June, nine years after the historic flood. But if the money is not repaid, the county may face halting several vital agencies, including the health department, sheriff's office and transportation services.

"We're continuing to work with them (Henderson County), and we're hopeful that it will work out in a way that works for everyone involved." IEMA communications manager Patti Thompson told The Hawk Eye Friday.

"These are things that happen during difficult times, but when there has been public assistance granted, there is a lot of review and everything to try and help them work through it."

FEMA Says Important Deadline Approaching For Flood Victims

By Sabrina Wilson

WVUE-TV New Orleans, September 23, 2016

HAMMOND, LA –

FEMA is reminding flood victims that the deadline for registering for assistance related to the August flooding is fast approaching.

"The deadline to register is October 13 and we've had 146,000-plus individuals register for federal assistance," said FEMA External Affairs Specialist Steven Solomon.

But flood victims who have registered said they are still waiting to hear back from FEMA.

"I need help around here to help me get all of this stuff out of here," said Bobbie George, a widow who has mold growing in her flood-damaged home in Independence.

She moved to the small town after losing her home to flooding 11 years ago during Hurricane Katrina. There is a gaping hole in her roof and ceiling, as well. Plastic bins catch water when it rains. George said she had a small flood policy when the flooding happened last month, but not enough coverage to pay for all of the damage her home sustained. Now, her carport is filled with clothes and other items she has tried to salvage.

"I have some comforters, blankets," said George.

FEMA said it is working hard to process applications for assistance.

"Working to do everything we can to ensure eligible survivors get the federal assistance they're entitled to," said Solomon.

He said once flood victims sign up, an inspection typically follows. H said they have made great progress.

"We've completed 99.3 percent of those inspections. We have nearly 100 inspectors still out in the field," Solomon said.

But the agency has taken a lot of criticism from flood victims, as well as members of Congress over the pace of getting manufactured housing units to the people who need them. They are not the same as the tiny, travel-type trailers doled out in the New Orleans area after Katrina.

"As a last option, nothing else is working, and the individual is eligible, we bring in what we call a manufactured housing unit. So these are not trailers like you see pulled by car, these are like single-wide homes with rooms and doors and windows," said Solomon.

He said FEMA is assisting people who have been forced to take shelter in hotels and motels.

George said she would welcome a FEMA trailer while repairs are made to her home. Solomon could not say how many flood victims have received the manufactured housing so far.

"I don't have numbers for that," said Solomon.

Solomon urges flood victims to sign up with FEMA if they have not already, and he also warned against scam artists. He said all FEMA workers have identification, and victims should ask to see it before providing any information.

He also warned against people showing up stating that they are third-party contractors who can help speed up the assistance process.

"There are also folks who pretend that they can facilitate the process between the survivor and FEMA for a fee, that's an out-and-out scam. No one can make the process go any quicker, or any better," Solomon said.

Louisianans Can Get Smithsonian Preservation Advice

Donaldsonville (LA) Chief, September 23, 2016

Experts from The Smithsonian Institution will be on hand in Baton Rouge to demonstrate how to salvage valued possessions that got wet in the flood.

The event will be held on Saturday, Sept. 24 at 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the FEMA Disaster Recovery Center at Celtic Studios, 10000 Celtic Drive, Baton Rouge.

Baton Rouge Mayoral Candidates Address Traffic, Public Safety And Flood Recovery During Forum

By Annie Ourso

Baton Rouge (LA) Business Report, September 23, 2016

Five candidates running for Baton Rouge mayor tackled traffic, public safety, education and flood recovery topics during a forum hosted today by several architecture, engineering and construction groups.

The candidates discussed their vision for the parish, with some laying out specific plans or programs to support and, of course, reiterated their campaign platforms during the forum that took place at Drusilla Seafood.

"The mayor has to bring people together," said Darryl Gissel, a realtor and former head of the state Republican party who is running as an independent. Asked how he plans to unite the parish, Gissel said it's not that difficult: learn to work with the Metro Council.

Every section of the parish has felt at some point that it hasn't been well served, Gissel said. The divides are visible, and they affect every issue the parish encounters, he said.

State Sen. Mack "Bodi" White focused on flood recovery efforts as he addressed the crowd. It's difficult to get federal attention, White said, but the parish must have the help of Congress and the Federal Emergency Management Agency if it hopes to recover.

White, a Republican, also touched on education, an issue he's passionate about. He mentioned the high rate of males in East Baton Rouge Parish who don't graduate high school. Along with flood recovery, White said, his top issues would be education, transportation and crime.

"This mayor's race is a very important turning point in the parish and city of Baton Rouge," White said.

Metro Councilman John Delgado also touted a message of uniting Baton Rouge. Delgado, a Republican, laid out some specific plans for public safety, traffic and education.

He said he would increase the number of law enforcement officers and give them the tools they need to protect the parish. Delgado supports the city-parish's Green Light Plan for road improvements, and for alternatives to interstate travel, he supports the BUMP plan, a northern loop and a southern bypass down Nicholson Drive. Delgado also advocated for the council and mayor to have more of a role in creating a stronger education system.

"For too long, it's been someone else's job," he said.

Greg LaFleur, a Democrat and former LSU and NFL player, shared his past job experiences as an athletic director at colleges such as Texas State University and Southern University. He also worked for a while at the Baton Rouge Marine Institute and said he would implement some of its program in parish schools.

LaFleur also addressed his arrest in Houston for allegedly soliciting a prostitute. He was later acquitted of that charge. He related his run-in with police to the Alton Sterling shooting and explained how having one bad officer can lead to problems. LaFleur also listed his top concerns as traffic, jobs and education.

Former Metro Councilman Smokie Bourgeois, a Republican, discussed traffic issues, saying that he would implement a rapid response motorcycle team to tend to wrecks, and he criticized the money spent on the oft-maligned Capital Area Transit System.

After candidates addressed the audience, they were assigned to separate tables, each with their own moderator, to answer 17 questions prepared beforehand by the organizations hosting the event. The organizations included local chapters of Louisiana Engineering Society, the American Institute of Architects, Louisiana Associated General Contractors, American Planning Association, American Society of Landscape Architects, American Council of Engineering Companies and American Society of Civil Engineers.

Seven candidates did not attend the forum: former state Sen. Sharon Weston Broome, state Rep. C. Denise Marcelle, Beverly "B.J." Amador, Braylon Hyde, Rufus Craig, Byron Sharper and Cade Williams.

Complaint Filed Against Opelousas Mayor Over Mayor's $13k Paycheck

By Holly Duchmann

Opelousas (LA) Daily World, September 24, 2016

A formal complaint was filed with the District Attorney's office alleging Opelousas Mayor Reggie Tatum illegally paid himself nearly $13,000 in overtime for working after the flooding in August, despite being a salaried public official.

The complaint was filed by former Opelousas police officer Paul Gennuso after a preliminary payroll document for some of the executive department of city workers was leaked onto Facebook last Wednesday showing Tatum received a check for $12,972.96.

Gennuso said the mayor illegally paid himself for the time Tatum spent running the shelter at the Civic Center in Opelousas after the heavy flooding in August.

"It's common knowledge in the city of Opelousas, that Mayor Tatum is using his authority as Mayor to defraud the City and (Federal Emergency Management Agency) by receiving an illegal payment from the City of Opelousas, for events that took place during the recent flooding," said Gennuso in his letter to District Attorney Earl Taylor.

Gennuso said it is against city ordinance for the mayor to receive overtime payment. He is also alleging that the funds Tatum used to pay himself with require city council approval before being spent.

Tatum contests that he's been following FEMA regulations word-for-word, and that during the disaster under FEMA guidelines city employees can be repurposed, and it was after he was repurposed as the shelter director that he was eligible for overtime. He also denied that the funds used had to be cleared by the city council first.

"Normally a salaried employee, a mayor, does not receive overtime, but according to these FEMA (regulations), you can get overtime because it says that if you are salaried in an emergency, you can be repurposed," said Tatum.

FEMA was unable to be reached in time for publication.

His pay rate was converted to an hourly scale from his normal mayoral salary by a payroll clerk, and once he hit more than 40 hours, he became eligible to be paid time and a half like any other employee, Tatum said.

Tatum said he worked at the shelter, day and night, for 21 days, which is the entire length of time the shelter was open.

Tatum also said the city and local law enforcement, including the FBI, is investigating who leaked the preliminary payroll document because it showed employees full names and last four digits of their Social Security number, which Tatum insists in very dangerous.

"This document they posted on social media, first of all, is illegally obtained and an incomplete document because it's not something I approved to be sent out of our office and has city employees names and Social (Security numbers) on it, and that's just illegal to post it all over social media," said Tatum.

The Daily World has requested copies of any and all documents showing the mayor's time sheets, requests for payment and salary/payroll checks for the month of July, August and September, including his regular salary and any and all overtime.

The DA's office was unable to be reached for a comment in time for publication.

Flood Recovery Damage Assessment

By Brittany Kemmerer

KEYC-TV Mankato (MN), September 23, 2016

WASECA, Minn. –

Flood recovery efforts continue over in Waseca.

Senator Amy Klobuchar and Representative Tim Walz visit Waseca to assess the flood damage in the area.

"First of all the number one thing is to keep people safe. It's been so fortunate that no one has died yet and then the second thing is to start cleaning people out assessing the damage so we can see if it meets the federal requirements to get FEMA help," U.S Senator Of Minnesota, Amy Klobuchar said.

If it doesn't quite make the federal requirements after the assessment is reviewed, the state kicks in.

Klobuchar says over the years the state has done a better job at making this a more orderly process.

"It used to be just a mess and now while it's a mess from the rain we at least have a process in place to try to get federal funding," Klobuchar said.

Federal requirements are based on public infrastructure damage.

You've got culverts, you've got bridges, you've got roads closed, you've got a library roof that fell in in Waseca. There are tons of crops and farms," Klobuchar said.

As a member of the agriculture committee, Klobuchar says it's important to look at the long term effects.

"A lot of these fields are going to be damaged; it's going to kick in the crop insurance, hard time for our farmers because they were just ready to harvest," Klobuchar said.

Waseca County may face more flooding issues.

"And that's really the unfortunate part. Maybe we could deal with this but if there's a lot more rain it's going to be tougher because the ground is so saturated already," Klobuchar said.

Some Waseca County residents have been forced out of their homes due to the flooding.

Waseca County is working on open up a school for certain hours to allow people to come take showers.

Rice County Staying Alert As Flooding Mitigates; Klobuchar Visits Faribault

By Philip Weyhe

Faribault (MN) Daily News, September 24, 2016

Though Waseca, Owatonna, and other cities farther south saw the worst of the damage, Rice County is getting plenty attention, as it attempts to deal with and recover from flooding concerns over the last few days.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., Sen. Vicki Jensen, D-Owatonna, and Rep. Brian Daniels, R-Faribault, paid a visit to the Faribault Wastewater Treatment Plant Saturday afternoon to get a look at what the city is dealing with at the site. On Thursday, Public Works Director Travis Block led an effort to get a berm built up on the river side of the facility for the third time in six years.

In 2014, upon the second time of building the berm, the city looked to build it permanently. However, due to funding rules from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the berm had to be taken down, in order for the city to receive $120,000 in reimbursement.

Klobuchar was on site Thursday to learn. She said she was impressed by the efforts to allay any flood damage in the city, but her message seemed to be that it might be time for Faribault to look at a longer-term situation at the wastewater site.

“We’ve seen, during this flooding, that there are multiple federally-funded projects that can provide aid,” Klobuchar said. “There are mitigation projects that make a big difference.”

Klobuchar also visited the flooded site at the Faribault Woolen Mill.

The 2016 flooding has yet to impact the treatment facility with the berm providing a more-than-effective barrier. Block said Saturday that the rains expected Saturday evening weren’t likely to raise the Straight River to levels any more dangerous to the facility.

According to Rice County Sheriff Troy Dunn, flood levels in Faribault started slowly decreasing by Friday evening.

However, in Northfield, the Cannon River continued to rise, slowly, over Friday night and into Saturday morning. The river in Morristown also continued to rise slowly over that time, according to Dunn.

“We’re definitely hoping for less, rather than more, rain Saturday night,” he said. “We have three or four county roads that are going to need some more work.”

The Northfield Police Department issued a press release Friday evening and again Saturday morning, providing details on the flooding status in the town. According to the Saturday release, the river reached its highest point early Saturday at 900.88 feet above sea level, which is 7.5 feet above levels from the previous Wednesday.

Police Chief Monte Nelson also expects the Cannon’s levels to remain high for “quite some time.” Sechler and Babcock parks have both been closed in the city. The downtown walk bridge, bicycle bridge and Fourth Street bridge are all closed to vehicle traffic, though the latter is open to foot traffic.

In Faribault, the Woolen Mill continues to be surrounded by water, as Alexander Park remains flooded. Second Street Northwest was still closed Saturday afternoon from Fairgrounds Drive to 14th Street Northwest, due to water in the road, in front of the Alexander Park entrance.

Sheriff Dunn is asking all residents, throughout the county, to exercise caution near flooded areas, and to stay out of the river waters.

“I try to be proactive in telling people not to go kayaking, tubing, whatever,” he said. “That’s not a smart thing to be doing. Right now, I just don’t think being on the water is safe.”

The National Weather Service is predicting a 90 percent chance of rain late Saturday and early Sunday, with potentially 0.5 to 1 inches coming down in Rice County. City and county departments will continue to monitor flood levels and road conditions through the weekend.

Sandbagging Continues Friday In Faribault

KSTP-TV Minneapolis-St.Paul (MN), September 23, 2016

With the potential for more rain, businesses and residents are ready for whatever Mother Nature and the river throw at them in the coming days.

For residents like Sarah Stradler, it meant sandbagging and getting everything off the ground in the basement. Businesses, like the Caves of Faribault, are protecting property with berms and sandbags.

Meanwhile, the city has built a berm to protect the wastewater treatment plant.

Sandbagging efforts are continuing Friday with help from Shattuck-Saint Mary’s students.

The state of emergency is the city’s third for flooding since 2010. The emergency declaration will allow the city to seek reimbursements from the state and FEMA if a spending threshold is met.

Flooding isn’t just causing problems in Faribault. Schools in St. Clair and Waseca remain closed Friday as cleanup from the heavy rain continues in those areas.

St. Clair School Resumes Monday

By Brittany Kemmerer

KEYC-TV Mankato (MN), September 25, 2016

ST. CLAIR, Minn. –

The city council met this morning to discuss the cleaning up process.

“We’re going to get in contact with blue earth county and see if they can assist in removing and dealing with the sand,” St. Clair Mayor, Marvin More said.

The city also shows concerns with the landfill.

"People are going to have carpets furniture hazardous things and how we're going to deal with all of that," More said.

Blue Earth County is having a board meeting tomorrow to discuss FEMA help.

The city hopes to fix the sewer plant within the next few days.

"We're waiting for the water to get a little lower so we can get inside the buildings and then the engineers will assess of all the damage that's done," More said.

The city also shows concerns for the people and what they can do to prevent this from happening again.

"Some of them have been through this three times in six years. It's a tough, tough deal. We're hoping we can get other government agencies to help us figure out how we can prevent this from happening. It's an uphill battle," More said.

But part of the city's normal routine returns tomorrow, with school resuming.

"There will be some inconveniences, but there are no showstoppers. We should be able to have class as usual," Superintendent, Tom Bruels said.

Students will have a two hour late start.

"We want to be able to give them a little time to get things back in order before the students come in. We anticipate this to be the only two hour late start," Bruels said.

The food service staff has prepared lunches that require a minimal amount of water.

"We're not allowed to use the showers or the restrooms so we've brought in trailer based toilet facilities and we'll be using those. We don't anticipate a major problem," Bruels said.

Sunday Brings Little Rest To Waseca, St. Clair

By Mark Fischenich

Mankato (MN) Free Press, September 25, 2016

From Waseca to St. Clair, residents were feeling a bit blessed Sunday after days of rain-driven misfortune. Predicted storms came, but they didn't drop heavy torrents on areas already struggling after several-months-worth of typical rainfall dropped in less than 24 hours.

"I didn't even see it on my rain gauge," said Marvin Moore, mayor of flood-ravaged St. Clair. "So we lucked out there."

Mankato, which has plenty of wet basements but not the major problems of areas to the east and southeast, had four-tenths of an inch overnight. Waseca, where overflowing lakes have collapsed basements and where 14 inches of rain has affected hundreds of homes, received less than two-tenths of an inch of new rain.

Road work

For highway workers keeping an eye on inundated roads and overwhelmed bridges, it's mainly about waiting for water to recede and inspections to begin.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation was able to reopen the last closed section of Highway 14 near Janesville at 9 a.m. Sunday.

Highway 83 remained closed just north of St. Clair at a bridge over the Le Sueur River, and Highway 30 east of Mapleton had nearly a half-mile stretch that remained at least partly under water Sunday, said Jed Falgren, a district maintenance engineer for MnDOT.

The hope is to get both of those roads reopened sometime Monday, but that can happen only after the water drops and the roads and bridges can be checked for problems under daylight, Falgren said. Avoiding another major downpour helped.

"It might slow its retreat," Falgren said of the relatively light rains effect on the Le Sueur River. "But it shouldn't bring it up much."

In fact, the level at the Highway 83 bridge dropped about two inches from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday.

Enough water was surging under the bridge late last week that crews put 60,000 pounds of weight on the span, using portable concrete median barriers, to keep the bridge in place. That appeared to be successful and the weight was removed on Sunday.

Nine other sections of state highway in the area were also impacted by the storm but were reopened to traffic earlier. Dozens of county and township roads also remain closed.

Water-logged junk

In Waseca, water receded enough for clean-up operations to begin on many properties over the weekend. Waseca opened a debris collection site at the fairgrounds for people looking to get rid of flood-soaked appliances, electronics and general waste such as carpet, wood and damaged personal possessions. The collection site will be open from noon to 7 p.m. until further notice.

Janesville also set up a site near the water tower at Teal and Front Streets for the disposal of demolition waste and other garbage but is not accepting appliances and electronics. New Richland has a waste disposal drop-off site near its public works building, and Waldorf, starting today, has one west of the local school.

In each case, hazardous waste is not accepted and residents are asked to fill out paperwork to help the municipality obtain potential reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

A lengthy agenda

St. Clair held an emergency City Council meeting Sunday morning, officially declaring a disaster and beginning the planning for clean-up.

The city's wastewater treatment plant is underwater, meaning sewage and other waste water from homes is going directly to the Le Sueur River. That, along with concerns that the city's one remaining lift station could be overwhelmed, has prompted the importation of dozens of portable toilets.

Residents have water service but are asked not to flush toilets, take showers or put any water — even from hand-washing — down the drain. Instead, people are using basins for tooth-brushing and washing before tossing the water on to their lawns.

On Sunday a trailer full of portable toilets arrived at the St. Clair school, and classes will resume Monday — albeit with a two-hour-late start — for the first time since Wednesday. A week's worth of school lunches have been planned that require very little water usage.

Moore also asks potential volunteers from the region to keep St. Clair in mind in the days ahead. The city was flooded with kindness late last week, but the mayor said help will be needed again once the clean-up starts — including helping people carry heavy, water-logged items from homes and scrubbing up basements.

"I'm dreading the clean-up process," he said.

Cyclones in the forecast

St. Clair residents will have an opportunity to cheer for inclement weather Monday night. The St. Clair High School Cyclones ("Fear The Wind") will be taking on the visiting United South Central Rebels at 7 p.m. in a football game rescheduled after being postponed by the flood.

Moore expects many St. Clair residents will be ready for some high school football despite their exhaustion.

"It's got to be better than sitting at home thinking about this," he said.

And the Cyclones on the field are the only nasty weather in the forecast. As recently as last Friday, the long-range forecast showed a chance of storms for each of the ensuing 10 days.

The revised forecast from the National Weather Services shows not even a hint of rain on Monday, with sunny skies and dry nights through the entire week.

County, Townships Continue To Fight To Get FEMA Aid

By Julie Clements

Butler County (KS) Times-Gazette, September 24, 2016

What's happening: Find out what the townships are doing after being denied FEMA assistance for the flooding in May.

The townships in Butler County are continuing to battle to get assistance to repair their roads damaged by flooding back in May.

Several townships, especially those in the southwest part of the county, saw significant damage to their roads during May and have continued to deal with heavy rains since then, but FEMA is denying assistance to the townships.

"FEMA sent down a group of inspectors," said Emergency Management Director Jim Schmidt of the May flooding event. "We've never had any of our officials treated the way they were treated. I was very disappointed in their attitude and demeanor. The state folks were great. They kind of got blindsided that these other folks were showing up."

Schmidt said FEMA had given them unrealistic demands.

"We've been doing this for a long time," he said. "We know when we turn in a preliminary damage estimate we might be off by 5, maybe 10 percent at the most."

He said they knew what was required in the past, but FEMA changed those rules on them without telling them.

"None of us knew this had even happened," Schmidt said of the changes. "We found out that over half a million in what we would consider normally eligible damage had been reduced to $9,000. We weren't the only ones."

Darryl Lutz, public works director, said they were being required to document the condition of the road before the disaster and after it happens. They also are requiring the roads to be barricaded until they are repaired.

Schmidt added if it was just rock washed off that was not allowable damage.

Lutz said there were just a lot of things from a practical standpoint that aren't feasible when a township is trying to respond to an emergency with minimal resources.

Lutz said they had material washed off of the roads, ditches eroded and water ways that don't have the capacity to handle the amount of water that fell.

"Several townships have been hit four times with major rainfall events," Lutz said.

One of those townships hit hard was Augusta Township.

Nick McClure, Augusta Township trustee, said the biggest thing was not getting the help they have depended on in previous years.

"Now FEMA doesn't want to apply any of their grants," he said. "Everything they say was caused from the flooding, they don't want to take care of anymore."

But he said their township budget only takes care of the maintenance each year, not replacing all of the material that was washed down the river three times for them this year.

"It is a challenge," he said.

While some of their roads saw a lot of damage, others had less damage, but in all, 50 percent of the roads in Augusta Township saw some type of damage.

"What's hardest on the roads is the damage when it rains six inches at one time," McClure continued. "It is hard on the roads and ditches."

During the May rain, the roads in Augusta Township were impassable for two days, blocking people in their homes.

"This year is worse than any we have had in the past and they (FEMA) don't want to participate in it," he said. "We really, really need it now and they don't want to help."

Since mid-May, Butler County has seen from 20 inches up to 40+ inches depending on where you are in the county.

The county has not given up though. They have filed an appeal with FEMA with the help of the State of Kansas.

One problem with the first time FEMA came down was that it was during harvest season so it was hard to have township people spend two days going through the process.

"We worked with the state and they came back down," Schmidt said. "We got a meeting with our townships and they spent an entire Monday morning in here with the state going back out and re-looking at some of the things so we could do an appeal. Now one of the requirements is we have an impact statement. There is just a number of new hoops.

"It is really making it hard on these townships."

Most townships are represented by volunteers with maybe one person hired to grade the roads.

The biggest challenge would have been barricading all of the roads. Townships don't have that many barricades or enough manpower.

Schmidt pointed out people also still need to get through to feed cattle and do other tasks.

"These are people who have really no idea of how we do things in the heartland," Schmidt said. "There was actually a comment made on one of the other visits: 'Well, you guys ought to pave all of these roads'."

Schmidt has heard there have been conversations that maybe the barricading requirement is not going to be enforced, but there are still other issues they are fighting.

FEMA has 60 days to respond to the appeal, which was filed about a month ago. Schmidt also has heard from Rep. Mike Pompeo and Sen. Pat Roberts' offices.

"Our fear is for us in emergency management if this is the new standard of what we're going to be looking at to get a disaster declaration," Schmidt said. "When you have a half million in damages and your townships are going to have to absorb that, that's the whole point of having FEMA."

So now, the county and townships are waiting to hear back from the appeal.

"If we lose the appeal it is a whole new ball game," Schmidt said.

While the townships have done what is necessary to keep the roads passable, they are waiting to see if they get FEMA assistance to do the major repairs.

"It's kind of scary," Schmidt said. "This is taxpayers' money, whether FEMA or local, but when you are sharing it with 30 people it is a lot more expensive than when sharing it with a few million."

Just one township had more than $100,000 in damage.

Now they are waiting and hoping they win the appeal.

"One of the things that gets lost is people say it's FEMA money, but it's tax money," Schmidt said. "Let's be smart about how we spend it but let's not kick the whole support system out without saying we're going to do this slowly."

Schmidt's biggest concern is if this request is denied, they may never qualify again for flooding assistance on their township roads.

"We just hope and pray it's not going to set a precedent," he said.

County, Townships Continue To Fight To Get FEMA Aid

By Julie Clements

Butler County (KS) Times-Gazette, September 24, 2016

What's happening: Find out what the townships are doing after being denied FEMA assistance for the flooding in May.

The townships in Butler County are continuing to battle to get assistance to repair their roads damaged by flooding back in May.

Several townships, especially those in the southwest part of the county, saw significant damage to their roads during May and have continued to deal with heavy rains since then, but FEMA is denying assistance to the townships.

"FEMA sent down a group of inspectors," said Emergency Management Director Jim Schmidt of the May flooding event. "We've never had any of our officials treated the way they were treated. I was very disappointed in their attitude and demeanor. The state folks were great. They kind of got blindsided that these other folks were showing up."

Schmidt said FEMA had given them unrealistic demands.

"We've been doing this for a long time," he said. "We know when we turn in a preliminary damage estimate we might be off by 5, maybe 10 percent at the most."

He said they knew what was required in the past, but FEMA changed those rules on them without telling them.

"None of us knew this had even happened," Schmidt said of the changes. "We found out that over half a million in what we would consider normally eligible damage had been reduced to $9,000. We weren't the only ones."

Darryl Lutz, public works director, said they were being required to document the condition of the road before the disaster and after it happens. They also are requiring the roads to be barricaded until they are repaired.

Schmidt added if it was just rock washed off that was not allowable damage.

Lutz said there were just a lot of things from a practical standpoint that aren't feasible when a township is trying to respond to an emergency with minimal resources.

Lutz said they had material washed off of the roads, ditches eroded and water ways that don't have the capacity to handle the amount of water that fell.

"Several townships have been hit four times with major rainfall events," Lutz said.

One of those townships hit hard was Augusta Township.

Nick McClure, Augusta Township trustee, said the biggest thing was not getting the help they have depended on in previous years.

"Now FEMA doesn't want to apply any of their grants," he said. "Everything they say was caused from the flooding, they don't want to take care of anymore."

But he said their township budget only takes care of the maintenance each year, not replacing all of the material that was washed down the river three times for them this year.

"It is a challenge," he said.

While some of their roads saw a lot of damage, others had less damage, but in all, 50 percent of the roads in Augusta Township saw some type of damage.

"What's hardest on the roads is the damage when it rains six inches at one time," McClure continued. "It is hard on the roads and ditches."

During the May rain, the roads in Augusta Township were impassable for two days, blocking people in their homes.

"This year is worse than any we have had in the past and they (FEMA) don't want to participate in it," he said. "We really, really need it now and they don't want to help."

Since mid-May, Butler County has seen from 20 inches up to 40+ inches depending on where you are in the county.

The county has not given up though. They have filed an appeal with FEMA with the help of the State of Kansas.

One problem with the first time FEMA came down was that it was during harvest season so it was hard to have township people spend two days going through the process.

"We worked with the state and they came back down," Schmidt said. "We got a meeting with our townships and they spent an entire Monday morning in here with the state going back out and re-looking at some of the things so we could do an appeal. Now one of the requirements is we have an impact statement. There is just a number of new hoops.

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Kanawha County W. Va. Schools Gets $1.5 Million Grant For Flood Relief

By Mike Kennedy

American School and University, September 23, 2016

The Kanawha County (W.Va.) district is receiving a $1.5 million federal grant for flood recovery efforts.

The funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency will help Kanawha County repair and replace facilities damaged or destroyed in June flooding, as well as other flood-related issues, according to a news release from West Virginia’s two U.S. senators.

The flooding caused serious damage to several Kanawha County schools. District officials have determined that Hoover High School and Clendenin Elementary School sustained too much damage and will have to be rebuilt.

Earlier this month, FEMA approved the district’s plan to place portable classrooms at Elkview Middle as a temporary home for Hoover High School and at Bridge Elementary to accommodate students who attended Clendenin Elementary School.

TORNADOES

Massive Cleanup Underway Following Two Tornadoes In Utah

By Pat Reavy

Deseret (UT) News, September 23, 2016

WASHINGTON TERRACE, Weber County — As emergency officials continued Friday to add up the damage caused by a destructive tornado in Washington Terrace, the massive cleanup also got underway.

As of Friday afternoon, 21 homes in Weber County — primarily in Washington Terrace, Riverdale and South Ogden — were determined to be “uninhabitable” because of major structural damage, and building inspectors were still counting, said Weber County Sheriff’s Lt. Nate Hutchinson.

About a dozen of those homes are total losses, Hutchinson said.

“The damage is so extensive that we’re talking major, major overhaul just to get them back up and working. Some of them are without roofs, or have shifted off their foundations,” he said.

The total damage from Thursday’s storm, Hutchinson said, was expected to grow into the millions.

“We’re looking at well over $1.5 million at this point, and to be honest, I think that’s going to be pretty low,” he said.

That early estimate is based on homes “that will need major renovations,” and not the hundreds of others that suffered some type of property damage. It also doesn’t include cars and other vehicles damaged in the storms, Hutchinson said.

“Most of these cars are total losses. We’ve had cars tipped over. We had one camping trailer picked up and moved several houses in the air and landed in the neighbor’s yard down the street,” he said.

Weber County Emergency Management Services has been in contact with officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to begin the process of applying for federal aid, Hutchinson said.

On Friday afternoon, Gov.Gary Herbert walked through neighborhoods that suffered the worst devastation. He called the scene “a little bit stunning.”

“We’re not used to tornadoes,” Herbert said, calling the “sporadic” damage in the neighborhoods “kind of unsettling.”

Herbert praised county and city officials, saying the response to the disaster was fast and thorough.

“I came here expecting to see a lot of debris, kind of a war zone, that we’ve seen at other times,” he said. “I come here and it’s mostly all cleaned up. And so it just tells me that the people in charge here are really doing good things.”

The governor said disasters frequently bring communities closer together.

“It gives us an opportunity as people to serve our neighbors,” Herbert said.

Cleanup was also underway Friday in southern Utah, where the National Weather Service confirmed that a tornado with 110 mph winds ravaged a 25-yard area in Garfield County near Panguitch, causing heavy damage to several structures and minor damage to several more homes.

Yardley Insurance Agency, 609 N. Main, Panguitch, was the hardest hit. A house next to it also suffered damage when the roof from the insurance business was blown off.

“It pretty well touched down here and wiped us out for the time being. But honestly, we feel mighty blessed because it could have been worse,” owner John Yardley said.

In northern Utah, Thursday’s tornado initially touched down in the southwest section of Washington Terrace and moved northeast. A five-block area from about 5200 South on 50 West to 4700 South and 300 West was hardest hit, Hutchinson said.

From there, the tornado “skipped like a rock,” he said, leaving the ground and touching down again in the 4600 block of 200 East.

“It really took a toll on the homes in that neighborhood,” he said.

Approximately 50 residents were evacuated Thursday night either because of damage or for safety precautions because of a teetering tree or power pole that could fall, or a gas leak.

Of the 21 homes that were determined to be uninhabitable, Hutchinson said, “it’s gonna be awhile” before those people will be able to return to their homes.

In Riverdale, a couple of mobile homes were blown over and destroyed by the wind, he said.

Most of the 50 displaced residents stayed with other family members Thursday night, Hutchinson said. The Red Cross put up four families in local hotels.

Other areas of Weber and Davis counties also suffered damage from strong winds associated from the storm front. The National Weather Service recorded a gust of 81 mph in South Ogden on Thursday, and 101 mph at Ogden Peak.

Hutchinson said “dozens” of extra sheriff’s deputies began patrolling those neighborhoods Thursday night and would continue to do so until further notice to deter potential looters.

The Weber County Landfill, he said, is accepting all green items for free while the cleanup effort is ongoing.

Although a tornado did not hit Antelope Island, the storm produced strong enough winds that the roof of a barn was blown off. Fielding Garr Ranch, which survived a wildfire in July, will be closed until further notice, according to Utah State Parks officials, because of damage caused to several structures.

“The ranch will reopen after park staff have assessed the situation and determined it is once again safe,” the Park Service said in a prepared statement.

The damage forced at least four school closures Friday: Bonneville High School, T.H. Bell Junior High, Washington Terrace Elementary and Roosevelt Elementary. Hutchinson said the schools were closed mainly for safety, particularly for students who would have had to walk through the tornado-ravaged neighborhoods to get there. But he expected all schools to be open again Monday.

At the height of the storm, approximately 38,000 people were without power in Davis and Weber counties. By late Friday night, approximately 1,130 customers remained without power in Ogden, South Ogden, South Weber, Riverdale and Washington Terrace. And about 930 customers were without power in Clearfield, Clinton, Hooper, Layton, Syracuse and West Point.

“We still have lines going down, poles catching on fire, and there’s just a lot of cleanup,” said Rocky Mountain Power spokesman Paul Murphy.

There was no time estimate as to when power would be fully restored to all customers, Murphy said. Extra crews were being brought in from Wyoming and Idaho to help fix the damaged lines, he said.

The power outage indirectly contributed to a mobile home fire in Clearfield about 9:10 a.m. Friday when a generator being used to power the home caught fire. The fire was determined to be accidental, though the mobile home likely is a total loss, fire officials said.

Emergency officials say despite the widespread damage, they were extremely thankful that no major injuries were reported. Hutchinson said there was one report of a resident who suffered a broken arm, and another report of a person who suffered a foot injury when a car he was standing next to was lifted by the tornado and landed on his foot.

WILDFIRES

Extreme Weather Cost U.S. Taxpayers $67 Billion

By Erin Auel And Alison Cassady

EcoWatch, September 24, 2016

One of the most visible and immediate ways climate change has affected—and will continue to affect—Americans is through extreme weather exacerbated by rising global temperatures.

Aerial image of flooding in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Between 2005 and 2015, the annual average temperature in the U.S. exceeded the 20th-century average every year, with increases ranging from 0.15 degrees Celsius to 1.81 degrees Celsius above normal. Moreover, the federal government's most recent National Climate Assessment concludes that as temperatures continue to rise, extreme weather events and wildfires will increase in frequency and intensity.

Climate change will worsen heat waves, winter storms, and hurricanes. It will exacerbate extremes in precipitation, leading to more severe droughts and wildfires in some areas and heavier rainfall and flooding in others. And when the damage is done, taxpayers will be left to pick up the bill.

When extreme weather strikes and state and local governments are overwhelmed, the federal government must often intervene. In the worst cases, the president can declare an emergency or a major disaster, which releases federal funds for the damaged areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides financial assistance to local, tribal and state governments, as well as individual households, after the president declares an emergency or major disaster.

The Center for American Progress (CAP) examined FEMA data on weather- and wildfire-related disaster declarations between 2005 and 2015 to identify trends in FEMA disaster spending, which is funded by U.S. taxpayers. CAP found that:

Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA issued more than $67 billion in grants to assist communities and individuals devastated by extreme weather and wildfires. Overall, FEMA spent about $200 per U.S. resident for disaster assistance during that time period.

FEMA provided the most disaster assistance to Louisiana and New York, which, combined, received more than half of the agency's total assistance over the 10-year period due to damage caused by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy, respectively. Texas, Mississippi, and New Jersey rank third through fifth for FEMA disaster spending between 2005 and 2015.

The states that received the most FEMA disaster assistance spending per capita were Louisiana ($4,345), Mississippi ($1,607), North Dakota ($843), and New York ($807). In North Dakota, unprecedented flooding events in 2009 and storms in 2011 caused substantial damage, driving up per-person costs among a smaller state population.

These findings likely underestimate the true federal cost—and thus the cost to taxpayers—of extreme weather. FEMA provides assistance in response to the worst natural disasters—those that triggered emergency and major disaster declarations. As a result, the findings do not include the costs of smaller but still destructive storms, costs borne by private insurers, and other government spending, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's disaster assistance program.

As the climate warms, these types of extreme weather and wildfire events could impose an even greater burden on American communities and taxpayers. In order to prepare for this reality, communities must invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and integrate climate considerations into their development plans.

Findings: FEMA Is Spending Billions on Natural Disasters

Between 2005 and 2015, the president issued 832 separate emergency or disaster declarations for which FEMA provided either public assistance—defined as funding for state, tribal, and local governments—or individual assistance in the form of grants typically made to homeowners and renters whose home damage was not covered by homeowners insurance.

Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA spent $67.7 billion on household and public assistance in response to presidentially declared emergencies and major disasters. Of this amount, $14.36 billion was spent on individual and household assistance, and public assistance outlays to state, tribal and local governments made up the rest—$53.31 billion.

During this 10-year period, there were extreme weather and wildfire events in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories and throughout all seasons. Severe storms were the most frequent cause of disaster declarations, with 470 distinct declarations across the examined time period.

Although less common than severe storms, hurricanes caused the most damage. Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA spent $49.5 billion on public and individual assistance to help communities recover from hurricanes. FEMA spent $12.7 billion for assistance related to severe storms over the same 10-year period.

Hurricanes accounted for eight of the top-10 costliest disaster declarations between 2005 and 2010, including hurricanes Katrina, Sandy, Ike, Wilma, Rita, Gustav, Irene and Isaac.

Accordingly, although the total assistance by state varied widely, FEMA directed significant disaster spending to states that experienced historic hurricane damage during the period examined. These states include Louisiana and Mississippi, where Hurricane Katrina hit hardest in 2005, and New York and New Jersey, where Hurricane Sandy landed in 2012.

Nationwide, FEMA spent more than $22 billion in assistance responding to Hurricane Katrina, including allocations for states that provided assistance related to evacuations. The agency provided nearly $16 billion in household and public assistance grants in response to Hurricane Sandy.

Non-hurricane events can cause significant and costly damage as well. In August 2016, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, experienced historic flooding from torrential rainfall. As of Aug. 23, the floods had killed 13 people, and more than 100,000 people had applied for federal assistance. Preliminary analysis from Climate Central and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that increased temperatures due to climate change increased the likelihood of intense downpours in Louisiana by 40 percent.

Floods are among the most costly extreme weather events that can hit an area, as they can destroy large areas of property and can take a long time to recede. Between 2005 and 2015, flooding caused eight of the 10 costliest non-hurricane disaster declarations and occurred across several different regions.

Looking at the per-capita costs of extreme weather reveals that these disasters have a profound impact on individuals and communities. Louisiana received $4,345 per person in FEMA disaster spending between 2005 and 2015, the most of any state. Mississippi received the second-highest amount per capita—more than $1,600. Overall, FEMA spent about $200 per U.S. resident for disaster assistance between 2005 and 2015.

Damage is not just limited to coastal areas. States in the central U.S. with relatively small populations have been hit hard by extreme weather and subsequently received significant assistance from FEMA. North Dakota, for example, ranks third for per-capita FEMA assistance over the analyzed decade due largely to eight distinct flooding events. Iowa ranks fifth for per-capita FEMA spending and seventh for total spending because of severe storms that caused major statewide flooding in 2008. Of the 10 states with the highest per-capita spending, half are located in the central U.S.

Conclusion

Extreme weather is already costing taxpayers and the federal government valuable public dollars and resources. Americans have recognized these costs; in a 2015 New York Times survey, 83 percent of respondents said that unmitigated climate change poses “a very or somewhat serious problem in the future.”

Because of the damage already caused to the climate, communities in the U.S. and around the globe will experience more frequent and intense extreme weather events, even if world leaders take immediate action to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Faced with this reality, FEMA has proposed a rule that would establish a deductible for disaster assistance in order to encourage states to make investments in resilience measures before disasters occur. This rule could incentivize states to invest in climate-smart infrastructure to minimize the financial and human toll of extreme weather.

The FEMA proposal is one among many efforts to push communities to better prepare for storms, floods, and other natural disasters—an effort made even more urgent because of climate change—rather than focusing only on responding to a disaster’s aftermath. Resilience, however, is only one prong in a coordinated response to climate change. The world must also focus on mitigating the worst impacts of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning the global economy to cleaner, low-carbon forms of energy.

Methodology

CAP examined FEMA data on presidential declarations of major disasters and emergencies between 2005 and 2015. The data reflect the two primary disaster declaration types: major disaster and emergency. CAP analyzed FEMA data on public and individual/household assistance spending in response to these declarations. The data were last updated on July 12.

For the per-capita analysis in Table 3, CAP used population data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. To calculate the per-capita costs by state, CAP averaged the state population totals from 2005, 2010 and 2015. The national per-capita figure in Table 3 reflects FEMA disaster assistance to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories.

CAP developed a methodology for excluding and including disasters to ensure the analysis only includes declarations that reflect the types of events that could become more common with unmitigated climate change.

We included public and individual assistance payments made in response to major disaster declarations and emergency declarations for the following types of incidents: coastal storms, drought, flooding, freezing, hurricanes, mudslides from flooding, severe ice storms, severe storms, snow, tornadoes, typhoons and wildfires. We excluded public and individual assistance payments made for the following types of incidents that occurred between 2005 and 2015: water main breaks, terrorism, explosions, earthquakes, chemical spills, tsunamis, the 2009 presidential inauguration, bridge collapses and volcanoes.

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

Miami Neighborhood's Zika Outbreak Likely Curtailed By Aerial Spraying

New Zika cases in Wynwood have apparently stopped, but transmission continues in Miami Beach

By Melanie Evans

Wall Street Journal, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Double Dose Of Pesticides Stops Zika Mosquitoes, CDC Says

Two pesticides were needed to stop Miami's Zika-carrying mosquitoes

NBC News, September 23, 2016

It took a double dose of pesticides that kill both adult mosquitoes and their larvae to stop the first outbreak of Zika virus in Florida, health officials said Friday.

They said while aerial spraying of pesticides may be controversial and frightening to some people, they've shown it's safe when done right and that it killed off the mosquitoes that were spreading the virus.

An aerial banner is flown over the South Pointe Park pier on Sept. 6, 2016, in the South Pointe Park area in Miami Beach, Fla. Aerial spraying of the insecticide naled is scheduled over South Beach, where more mosquitoes have tested positive for the Zika virus. In a statement Tuesday, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez said the flights recommended by Florida health officials and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will begin Thursday and continue for a month. Alan Diaz / AP

"Aerial spraying is an effective addition to mosquito control on the ground. In fact, it's been the most effective tool," Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told NBC News.

Florida is still fighting a second outbreak in Miami Beach. There are also individual cases across the state. Three new local cases were reported Friday, bringing Florida's total count to 105 cases — 95 in residents and 10 among people infected while visiting the state. "As soon as aerial spraying was done, mosquitoes plummeted and transmission slowed."

The CDC and Florida's department of health on Monday declared the Zika outbreak over in Miami's Wynwood neighborhood. Thirty people who lived, worked or visited there had tested positive for Zika. Most had been in or around a work zone with many areas of standing water.

It took several weeks to get the outbreak under control, and aerial spraying of the pesticide naled, plus use of ground sprays that disperse larva-killing bacteria, is what ended the outbreak, the CDC says.

Officials started out using sprayers loaded with Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (Bti), a species of bacteria that can kill developing insect larvae in water. It is sold in mosquito dunks and pellets that homeowners can buy to treat ponds or other standing water. It's effective but takes time to work.

Related: Activists Protest Mosquito Spraying in Miami Beach

"Despite extensive ground-based efforts, Zika continued to spread among people. As soon as aerial spraying was done, mosquitoes plummeted and transmission slowed," Frieden told reporters in a telephone briefing.

"Aerial application appears to be our strongest tool. Aerial spraying with Bti that controls the young mosquitoes and naled is currently the most effective tool in the Zika prevention toolbox."

But aerial spraying alone doesn't work, either, Frieden said. "In the areas that only used naled, mosquito populations rebounded," he said. "So the one-two punch is important."

The Aedes aegypti mosquito that carries Zika is especially hard to kill. Frieden likes to call it the "cockroach of mosquitoes" because it's so difficult to control. It lives in and around houses and can breed in tiny amounts of water.

Aedes spreads not only Zika, but dengue, yellow fever and chikungunya viruses. No one's been able to eradicate populations since governments stopped spraying DDT in the 1970s.

Related: Study Rules Out Birth Defect Doubts

The CDC and state health department officials said the naled spray that was used is not dangerous to people when sprayed in ultra-low doses.

"Less than one ounce of naled per acre is used for aerial spraying, which might explain the absence of observed negative health effects during and after aerial spraying," they wrote in a joint report. Other studies have tested people after naled has been sprayed and find little evidence of it in their bodies. "In the areas that only used naled, mosquito populations rebounded."

Zika is a threat mostly because of what it does to developing babies. It attacks their brains and nervous systems, causing a wide range of birth defects, from horrific brain damage to subtler effects on vision. There's no way to protect a fetus if the mother is infected.

Travelers from other Zika-affected areas carry the virus with them — often unwittingly, because most people infected don't have symptoms. Zika can cause a rash, headache and fever and, rarely, it can cause neurological side-effects.

Zika can spread sexually but it only causes outbreaks where Aedes aegypti mosquitoes live.

CDC: Aerial Spraying Curbed Zika Transmission In Wynwood

Fox News, September 23, 2016

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced Friday that aerial spraying with the controversial pesticide naled in Wynwood helped curb the region's mosquito population, thereby halting active local transmission of the Zika virus. In a press release, the CDC declared that ground spraying to fight Zika was not sufficient to suppress active transmission in the arts hub of Miami, which was the first area of local transmission in the continental United States.

Health officials identified 29 people, including one in Broward County and 28 in Miami-Dade County, who were infected with Zika via local transmission from late June to early August. A cluster of those cases occurred in Wynwood.

Naled, which can be toxic to humans in large quantities, elicited protests from locals who were concerned about its dangers. Europe has banned the use of naled. However, active transmission did not stop until Florida health officials began an aerial spraying plan that included naled and bacillus Thuringensis, according to the CDC.

"After mosquitoes persisted and infections continued despite ground-based spraying, aerial spraying knocked down mosquitos rapidly and was associated with interrupting transmission of Zika in Wynwood," CDC director Dr. Tom Frieden said in the release. "When faced with the potentially devastating outcomes of microcephaly or other serious brain defects that Zika can cause during pregnancy, we must use the best available tools to prevent infection. According to EPA assessments, when used properly, aerial spraying with naled for mosquito control doesn't pose a risk to people or the environment."

Officials cleared Wynwood of active local transmission in Zika on Monday, as no new local cases have surfaced in the region since early August.

Zika Virus: CDC Hails Aerial Spraying In Killing Wynwood Mosquitoes

By Daniel Chang

Miami Herald, September 23, 2016

Aerial spraying of insecticides over Wynwood in August was so successful at interrupting the spread of Zika that federal health officials on Friday heralded the approach as "a new era" in the fight against mosquito-borne diseases — even as a local biologist who reviewed Miami-Dade surveillance data said that the air attack did not work as well as advertised.

As Zika continued to spread in a 4.5-square-mile area of Miami Beach, where the health department reported three more local infections on Friday, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Tom Frieden delivered a cautiously enthusiastic endorsement of aerial spraying with two different pesticides — one that takes out adult mosquitoes, the other that kills eggs and larvae.

In a teleconference with State Surgeon General Celeste Philip, Frieden highlighted a new CDC report co-authored by Florida scientists showing that the combined aerial approach delivered results that on-the-ground efforts alone, such as truck spraying and backpack fogging, could not have accomplished in Wynwood.

"We cannot know with certainty that the control measures ended transmission, and of course the virus could come back tomorrow," Frieden said, noting that the CDC report was not based on a controlled study but rather "a rigorous analysis" of mosquito surveillance data from Wynwood.

"But, having said that," he said, "the findings are clear. Despite extensive ground-based efforts, there remained large numbers of mosquitoes, and Zika continued to spread among people in the area. As soon as aerial spraying was done, mosquito populations plummeted and monitoring found no more people infected in the weeks after the aerial application."

On Sept. 19, the CDC lifted a travel advisory that warned pregnant women to avoid the area because the Florida Department of Health had not found any new mosquito-borne Zika infections in 45 days — meeting the federal agency's standards for suggesting that mosquito-borne transmission of the disease is no longer occurring.

30 Number of people with mosquito-borne Zika infections linked to Wynwood

Though no new Zika infections have been reported in Wynwood since early August, Philip Stoddard, a Florida International University biology professor and the mayor of South Miami, said the evidence that aerial spraying significantly reduced mosquito counts in the area is not so clear cut.

Stoddard said he had not yet seen the CDC report on Friday. But he has reviewed Miami-Dade mosquito surveillance data for Wynwood gathered during roughly the same period — July 27 through Sept. 9 — examined in the CDC's report.

He produced a study, which has yet to be published, and found that four rounds of aerial spraying of the pesticide naled over Wynwood did not have a lasting effect.

"If they can find something that works, God bless them," he said. "But the naled started showing a lot of promise and then it stopped working. This is a problem."

Stoddard said there was a decline in Wynwood's mosquito counts associated with spraying of the larvacide BTI. But he added that other efforts, such as a door-to-door campaign to remove standing water and other mosquito breeding grounds, may have had a bigger impact.

"I'm encouraged by the BTI findings," he said. "But you can't be sure the BTI is what was doing it."

As soon as aerial spraying was done, mosquito populations plummeted.

CDC Director Tom Frieden

For the uncertainty, Stoddard blamed federal and state health officials for not designing a more rigorous study of the ongoing public health crisis, which has led to more than 105 local mosquito-borne infections, most of those in Miami-Dade. An additional 773 travel-related Zika cases also have been reported in Florida, including 90 pregnant women.

"They dropped the ball," he said. "They did not design a controlled test. These data are extremely important, and you would think they would have a statistician to help them design a study that would have given them the information they needed. But they did not do that."

During the news conference, Frieden repeatedly stated that the CDC report produced by Florida officials was not a controlled study. He also emphasized that what worked in Wynwood may not work in other areas, including Miami Beach. Stoddard said his review found naled alone "never worked in Miami Beach."

Still, Frieden said the data strongly suggested that the combination of naled and BTI had emerged as a new weapon in the fight against Zika and other mosquito-borne diseases.

"In the balance between protecting pregnant women and the next generation against devastating birth defects, we're encouraged that there is now a new tool that appears to have had such dramatic results in Wynwood."

Zika cases reported in Florida as of Sept. 23

* Counties of pregnant women are not disclosed.

** Does not include local cases

Source: Florida Department of Health

It Takes Two Chemicals To Knock Out Mosquitoes That Carry Zika

'One-two punch' shows promise in knocking out mosquitoes that carry Zika, CDC reports

By Helen Branswell

STAT, September 23, 2016

Aerial spraying of the insecticide naled, followed by a product that targets mosquitoes when they are in the larval stage, may be responsible for a sharp drop in Aedes aegypti mosquitoes in a part of Miami where local transmission of the Zika virus was first found, the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Friday.

CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said the apparent success of the combination in the Miami neighborhood of Wynwood may represent a new standard for control of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes.

"It appears that the aerial application of this one-two punch has the ability to rapidly interrupt transmission," Frieden said during a media conference Friday.

article continues after advertisement

"The findings are quite striking," he added. "Those who've worked in the field of arbovirology and control of diseases spread by Aedes aegypti and have looked carefully at this data are struck that we haven't seen similar control in other diseases spread by this particular mosquito species."

Aedes aegypti mosquitoes are extremely difficult to control. The females, which need a blood meal to procreate, prefer to bite humans. As a result, they live close to people, in or around homes. They need only small amounts of water to lay their eggs — as little as the amount that a discarded bottle cap could hold — which adds to the difficulty of getting rid of this species.

The bugs are resistant to some of the chemicals that have been used against them in the past, which is why public health officials turned to the combination of naled and a biological product called Bacillus thuringiensis subspecies israelensis — Bti — that kills larvae.

Naled alone didn't appear to knock down the mosquito populations as successfully, Frieden said. It was tried in a different part of the city.

The CDC's report noted that local hospital admission records were checked to see if people came in complaining of respiratory problems or skin rashes followed spraying of the chemicals. There was no evidence that happened.

A number of protesters in Miami objected to the spraying. And earlier, Puerto Rico dropped a plan to use this approach there over public objections.

Duane Gubler, an expert in mosquito transmitted diseases, was cautious about interpreting the results, saying several methods of mosquito control were used in the Wynwood neighborhood, and it's not clear the drop in mosquitoes can be attributed to the aerial spraying.

A former head of the CDC's dengue branch in Puerto Rico, Gubler had been skeptical of the aerial spraying plan before the work was undertaken.

Insecticide Spraying Working Against Florida's Zika Mosquitoes: Officials

By Steven Reinberg

HealthDay, September 23, 2016

Aerial spraying of insecticides seems to be stopping the spread of the Zika virus in south Florida, health officials said Friday.

Seventy-four confirmed cases of the mosquito-borne infection that causes devastating birth defects have been reported in the state, the only state in the nation to report any local infections.

A combination of insecticides was needed to beat back the Aedes aegypti mosquito that carries the virus, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Florida Department of Health.

While ground spraying was ineffective, aerial spraying with the insecticides naled and Bti (bacillus Thuringensis) dramatically reduced the mosquito population and local transmission of Zika, CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said during an afternoon media briefing.

"This really heralds in a new era of [mosquito] control," Frieden said. "It appears that the aerial application of the one-two punch has the ability to rapidly interrupt transmission. It doesn't mean that the area is immune from future spread, but the findings are quite striking," he added.

These pesticides kill both the insect and its larvae, preventing the birth of new mosquitoes, Frieden said.

Aerial spraying is part of a comprehensive mosquito-control program that also includes encouraging people to get rid of standing water on their property and protect themselves against mosquito bites as well as using ground spraying in hard-to-reach areas, Frieden said.

This breed of mosquito has been particularly hard to control, Frieden said. And it's impossible to know if spraying will work in the long run, he added. But after spraying, the mosquito population in the Miami area dropped significantly, as evidenced by the low numbers of insects found in mosquito traps, he said.

The initial Florida outbreak started in late June and ran through early August. In Miami's Wynwood neighborhood, 30 people were identified as having been infected with Zika virus through local mosquito-borne transmission. In Miami Beach, 44 confirmed cases have been reported so far, according to Dr. Celeste Philip, Florida's surgeon general, who also spoke at the briefing.

Transmission of the virus in Wynwood stopped quickly after aerial spraying with both chemicals, Philip said. Since early August, no new cases of locally transmitted Zika have been reported in Wynwood, the health officials said.

Any new cases of Zika infection have been among people who brought the infection with them from areas outside the United States, Philip said.

The Zika epidemic has been centered in Latin America and the Caribbean, with Brazil reporting the largest numbers of infections and the birth defect microcephaly, which causes babies to be born with extremely small heads and underdeveloped brains.

In Miami Beach, aerial spraying stopped only recently, so it's too early to know if it will be as effective as it was in Wynwood, Frieden said. However, early results appear to mirror those seen in Wynwood.

Despite concerns about the effect of these pesticides on humans, Frieden said they are safe when used as directed, and no short-term health problems have been reported.

To reduce the risk of local Zika transmission within the United States, the CDC recommends that people returning from places with ongoing infections should use mosquito repellent every day for three weeks and follow the CDC's guidelines to prevent sexual transmission of Zika.

The Zika virus doesn't pose a significant health threat to most people, except pregnant women and fetuses.

The virus can be spread by infected men and women to their sex partners. There is no vaccine or treatment for Zika.

The CDC advises that partners of pregnant women use a condom to guard against sexual transmission during pregnancy.

The results of the aerial spraying efforts were reported Sept. 23 in the CDC publication Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

SOURCES: Sept. 23, 2016, media briefing with: Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., director, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and Celeste Philip, M.D., M.P.H., Florida Surgeon General and Secretary; Sept 23, 2016, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

Mayors Say State Told Them To Keep Zika Mosquito Sites Secret

By Daniel Chang

Miami Herald, September 25, 2016

The mayors of Miami-Dade County and Miami Beach on Sunday accused the Florida Department of Health of lying after the state agency said last week that it never told local officials to hide the locations in Miami Beach where mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus were captured.

Florida's health department strongly denied instructing local officials to keep the information confidential — and said the decision was entirely up to Miami-Dade — after the Miami Herald reported on Friday that a county attorney said the state agency had ordered them to keep it a secret.

The statement was made during a court hearing for the Miami Herald's lawsuit against Miami-Dade seeking the locations of traps in Miami Beach where mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus were captured this month. The suit seeks disclosure of the locations on grounds that the information would help the public make decisions about precautions to take if they live or work nearby, and also inform the community debate on the use of the controversial insecticide naled.

On Sunday, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez, who is facing a runoff election in November, pushed back against the Florida health department's denial with a written statement repeating that the agency had ordered secrecy in regards to the locations.

"During multiple meetings, phone calls and conversations, officials from the Florida Department of Health explicitly stated to county officials that information identifying the addresses of traps containing mosquitoes positive for the Zika virus is confidential during active, ongoing epidemiological investigations," Gimenez said in the statement.

At least five traps in Miami Beach have captured mosquitoes that tested positive for Zika, but Florida officials have identified only one place: the Miami Beach Botanical Garden, which had been closed three days prior to the announcement.

"It is disturbing that the Florida Department of Health is denying previous directives to maintain confidentiality of the trap locations," Gimenez said in the statement. "At the end of the day, this is about the health and safety of our community, and we have been carrying out the express orders of the Florida Department of Health as it relates to disclosure of mosquito-trap information."

Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine corroborated Gimenez's statement, which added that the state health department had ordered the information kept secret to protect the privacy of residents living in the areas where Zika-positive mosquitoes were captured.

Levine said he was present when Florida health department officials, including Miami-Dade Director Lillian Rivera and state Surgeon General Celeste Philip, instructed county and city officials not to disclose the locations. He said Florida Agriculture

Commissioner Adam Putnam also told him that the health department had ordered the information remain confidential.

"Mayor Gimenez is only doing what the state told him, his staff, me and my entire staff, specifically, that they would not permit the county to release the information on the locations," Levine said Sunday. "Lillian Rivera said it multiple times that she has been instructed and the department of health will not permit the locations of the traps to be released. That's No. 1. No. 2, I remember hearing the state surgeon general saying it directly to us, Celeste Philip. And No. 3, Adam Putnam told me and the city manager directly in my office that. In fact, I reaffirmed it with Commissioner Putnam on the phone the other day, and he was dumbfounded."

Mayor Gimenez is only doing what the state told him, his staff, me and my entire staff, specifically, that they would not permit the county to release the information on the locations.

Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine

Representatives for Florida's department of health and agriculture did not immediately respond to the Herald's request for comment on the mayors' statements. Jennifer Meale, a spokeswoman for the agriculture department, replied to the Herald's request in an email Sunday.

Meale's statement: "In consultation with the Department of Health, we believe the locations of the traps are exempt per 381.0031(6), F.S.," a state statute governing information gathered during epidemiological investigations.

On Friday, the health department issued a written statement denying the agency ever muzzled the county.

"The statements made by the county today are completely false," Mara Gambineri, a health department spokeswoman, said in an email. "At no time did the Florida Department of Health instruct Miami-Dade County to withhold the location of mosquito traps. This is solely the decision of the county."

Miami-Dade remains the only place in the nation identified as having active spread of Zika by mosquitoes, specifically in a 4.5-square-mile area of Miami Beach between Eighth and 63rd streets from the ocean to the bay.

As of Friday, Florida's health department reported a total of 105 local mosquito-borne Zika infections, most of those in Miami-Dade. An additional 773 travel-related Zika cases also have been reported in Florida, including 90 pregnant women.

At least five traps in Miami Beach have captured mosquitoes that tested positive for Zika, but Florida officials have identified only one place: the Miami Beach Botanical Garden, which had been closed three days prior to the announcement.

Adult, Larval Insecticides Pack Deadly Punch To Mosquitoes, Zika: U.S.

By Ransdell Pierson

Reuters, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Metro Health Confirms Two New Cases Of Zika In San Antonio

By Silvia E Foster

San Antonio Express-News, September 23, 2016

Two new Zika cases have been confirmed in Bexar County, the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District announced Friday.

The number of reported cases in Bexar County was 13 at 11 a.m. on Friday, but later in the day the district had identified two more, bringing the total to 15 confirmed cases in San Antonio. All the cases were contracted outside the country, officials said.

The virus travels through mosquitoes. While relatively harmless for the average person, it has been linked to birth defects. — pregnant women infected with Zika could give birth to children with microcephaly, or abnormal brain development.

On Feb. 1, the World Health Organization declared Zika an international public health emergency.

In June, there were only eight reported cases of Zika in San Antonio. Last week, three more cases were identified. Also last week, a mosquito was found in Bexar County with a different virus: West Nile.

Metro Health recommended residents take preventative measures to deter mosquitoes from their home by frequently cleaning out or upending containers that hold water, which are often breeding grounds for mosquito eggs. The agency suggests covering up exposed skin and using repellent to avoid getting bitten. Pregnant women are discouraged from traveling to Zika-affected areas, including much of Latin America.

The Texas Department of State Health Services updates its Zika count by county every day. Friday, there were 201 confirmed cases of Zika on the statewide list; that didn't include the two new San Antonio cases reported Friday afternoon.

There have been 3,358 cases of Zika in the United States and of those only 43 were locally acquired, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Puerto Rico Reports 2nd Death Tied To Zika-related Condition

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) – Health officials in Puerto Rico say a 75-year-old man infected with Zika has become the second person to die from a paralysis condition linked to the mosquito-borne virus.

Authorities said Friday that the man died this month after developing complications from Guillain-Barre. They noted he had previous health issues including diabetes, asthma and a history of cancer.

The first victim was a man between 35 and 45 years old who died in July after contracting Zika and developing Guillain-Barre.

There are 22,358 people with Zika, including 1,871 pregnant women. This is of concern to health officials who anticipate babies being born with severe birth defects.

A total of 170 people infected with the virus have been hospitalized. Two people who had Zika coupled with other unrelated medical conditions have died.

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Singapore Considers Monitoring Program For Babies Born To Women With Zika

By Saeed Azhar

Reuters, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Great Central ShakeOut Coming Up

Washington (IN) Times-Herald, September 24, 2016

The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut is four weeks away – Oct. 20 at 10:20 a.m. – and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security is encouraging Hoosiers to register and participate in this drill promoting earthquake safety preparation and awareness.

Indiana is exposed to a serious threat of earthquakes along the New Madrid Seismic Zone – located 180 miles southwest of Evansville – and the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone, which encompasses parts of Southeastern Illinois and Southwestern Indiana.

The ShakeOut is an opportunity to practice proper safety measures in the event of an earthquake, and participating is simple and only takes a few minutes. Here's how it works: on Oct. 20 at 10:20 a.m., participants should drop to the ground, take cover under a table or desk and hold on as if a major earthquake were happening.

The days leading up to the ShakeOut are a great time to check houses, workplaces or schools for potential earthquake hazards and to create a preparedness kit that can be used for a variety of situations, not just earthquakes. Disaster kits should include water and food for all household members, first-aid supplies, flashlights and batteries, medication, items for pets, and extra clothing. For information on disaster kits and emergency preparedness, visit GetPrepared.in.gov.

To learn more about how individuals, families or organizations can participate in the 2016 Great Central U.S. ShakeOut and to register, visit GetPrepared.in.gov. Registration is free and open to everyone.

The ShakeOut is the largest earthquake drill in the Central United States, and it's led by local emergency management agencies, IDHS, the Indiana Geological Survey, the Indiana Department of Education, the Central United States Earthquake Consortium, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey.

A total of 2.3 million people in the Central U.S. region have registered so far, and Indiana is currently in the lead with more than 561,000 registrants. Other states participating include Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Iowa, Nebraska, Louisiana, Kansas and Tennessee. Last year, Indiana had nearly 700,000 Hoosiers register for the drill.

Missouri's Annual Earthquake Drill To Be Oct. 20

Liberty (MO) Tribune, September 26, 2016

JEFFERSON CITY — Registration is open for the 2016 Great Central U. S. ShakeOut earthquake drill in October. More than 450,000 Missourians are already registered to participate in the annual drill, which teaches people how to protect themselves in an earthquake.

More than 2 million people are signed up in 14 central U.S. states that could be impacted by a major New Madrid Seismic Zone earthquake.

At exactly 10:20 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 20, participants will practice Drop, Cover, Hold On:

- Drop to your hands and knees, under a table or a desk if you can;
- Cover your head and neck with your hands and arms; and
- Hold on until the shaking stops.

Experts say this method is the best way to protect yourself from falling debris, which is the most likely cause of injury during an earthquake in developed nations with modern building standards.

“It’s very important for people to immediately know what to do to protect themselves because earthquakes occur without warning,” said State Emergency Management Agency Director Ron Walker in a press release. “If you and your family know in advance how react and take cover, it could prevent serious injury.”

To sign up for the ShakeOut, visit www.shakeout.org/centralus. Once registered, participants receive regular updates on the drill, as well as information on earthquake preparedness and safety. The ShakeOut website also includes many resources, including manuals, videos, audio drill broadcasts and earthquake scenarios.

From 1811 to 1812, the New Madrid Seismic Zone, which includes southeast Missouri, produced some of the largest earthquakes ever in the continental U.S. A major earthquake in this area could result in damage in much of southern and eastern Missouri, including the St. Louis area.

To learn more about earthquakes in Missouri and how to prepare, visit www.sema.dps.mo.gov/earthquake_preparedness. The site includes brief videos that show how to conduct a ShakeOut drill.

American Red Cross Volunteers Are Ready; Volunteers Teaching Public How To Prepare For Cascadia Earthquake

By Peter Madsen

Bend (OR) Bulletin, September 25, 2016

Theresa and Richard Grimes keep their emergency suitcases packed and ready to go. As on-call American Red Cross disaster service volunteers, the husband and wife — together and individually — have deployed many times with less than 24 hours’ notice.

“If they call me today at 3 o’clock, I’m ready to go tomorrow morning,” Theresa said.

Among The Red Cross Cascades — which serves Oregon and Southwest Washington — the Grimeses are two of approximately 2,500 regional volunteers and 1,400 disaster relief volunteers who drop everything to help survivors. Responsibilities are wide-ranging yet typically involve food and water distribution and sheltering concerns.

However eerily, the Grimeses — and the Red Cross — know their next deployment may be in their own backyard in response to Cascadia Rising, the catch-all term for the earthquake and tsunami that seismologists say are poised to strike the Pacific Northwest.

“It’s easy to think, ‘It’ll never happen to me,’” she said. “Even I think that — it’s human nature. But Mother Nature has no boundaries.”

As a way to spread awareness about Cascadia Rising, the Red Cross has launched its Prepare Out Loud presentation throughout Western and Central Oregon.

The presentation, which began in June and has reached 2,000 people, is a Cascadia earthquake crash-course. It covers the science and history of the Cascadia subduction zone, human behavior during disasters, what to expect during and after an earthquake, how to locate loved ones and how much food, water and supplies a person will need.

Steven Eberlein, a Red Cross foundations director and the presentation’s creator, is particularly concerned about what he calls the culture of preparedness.

“The cultural problem we have with preparedness is we don’t expect each other to prepare. It’s not part of our social dynamic yet,” he said. Cascadia earthquake preparation will catch on the same way people quit smoking and began wearing seat belts — when people see their peers changing their behaviors.

Based in Portland, Eberlein, 39, said Prepare Out Loud was inspired by his relief work in Sri Lanka after the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. He was already there, working as a teacher for a different international aid organization, when a subduction zone earthquake off the coast of Indonesia — more than 1,000 miles away — sent a massive wave rolling westward. Sri Lanka didn’t feel the 9.0-magnitude earthquake but its tsunami killed more than 30,000 people on the island alone.

The pending Cascadia earthquake, if it's a full rip along its 700-mile fault line, will also register around 9 on the Richter Scale. Earthquakes this strong shake for four to six minutes. Eberlein said Cascadia Rising will be on par with the earthquakes and tsunamis that originated near Indonesia and, in 2011, Japan — two of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded.

Cascadia's fault

The Cascadia subduction zone, located 80 miles from the Pacific Northwest coast and running parallel, stretches from Northern California to Vancouver Island. Along this fault line, the Juan de Fuca oceanic plate is sliding gradually under the North American tectonic plate. Over time, pressure has gradually accumulated, which unleashes a massive earthquake and resultant tsunami, on average, every 243 years. As scientists have recently learned, the Cascadia subduction zone is 76 years overdue.

From California to Canada, 7 million people will be directly impacted by just the shaking, said Eberlein. This makes it a much more difficult relief operation than, say, a San Francisco earthquake where the damage is relatively isolated and relief is more easy brought from the outside.

According to a 2015 Pulitzer Prize-winning New Yorker article, the Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates 13,000 people will die in the Cascadia earthquake and tsunami. The odds of a Cascadia earthquake and tsunami happening in the next 50 years are about 1 in 3.

"Right now we have a situation where millions of us will directly impacted by the largest natural disaster to ever hit North America," Eberlein said.

Richard Grimes, 74, who is also a Red Cross Cascades board member and head of sheltering, said he was briefed about Cascadia Rising years ago during his 26-year tenure as a police officer in Eugene. Now living in Bend (he said the move had nothing do with Cascadia Rising), the Grimeses attend the Red Cross Cascades Disaster Academy in Salem twice a year where they take refresher courses. Volunteers learn how to administer relief to the survivors of a variety of disasters, including floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes and wildfires.

"We've taken every class you can take. On paper we're qualified to do anything the Red Cross wants us to take," Richard said. He also attended a weeklong Cascadia Rising exercise a few months ago that simulated disaster scenarios in Central Oregon. In one simulation, the Wickiup Dam ruptured, and he and his team were responsible for sheltering 10,000 people displaced from the La Pine area.

"That was an eye-opener," Richard said. "We thought we would use the fairgrounds as a sheltering spot for refugees, but they said 'No, you can't use that area because FEMA is going to be using it.'"

Eberlein said preparation for a natural disaster ultimately comes down to the individual. He recommends visiting "Aftershock," an Oregon Public Radio's interactive online feature, where users punch in their zip code and learn about their area's seismic risks and what they can do to prepare. Of Bend, the site says: "The shaking here is moderate. You feel it. It wakes up anyone who's sleeping. Books and knick-knacks are falling off shelves. Windows and dishes are breaking." It may take several weeks for Bend to repair damages to its natural gas lines, according to the site.

Eberlein said, "No one has power over time and space. After an emergency, we expect help, but there is no magic button to get you everything you need. Today is when you have power over time and space."

Answering a call

The Grimeses have responded to numerous natural disasters, including the December 2015 floods in Portland and Seattle. In 2005, Theresa helped out in Louisiana for 31 days after Hurricane Katrina. She recently deployed to the area again; this time to Baton Rouge, where she served meals to flood survivors from a Red Cross emergency response vehicle. It was her eighth deployment in 14 months.

"You have to take a break," said Theresa, 64, adding that between the heat, humidity and the physical and emotional toll "it was the hardest work I ever did."

Theresa described a lasting memory serving meals in a Baton Rogue apartment complex. She met parents of two young children who lost their jobs because of flooding, and they were in the process of losing their apartment, too, which was succumbing to mold. Being able to provide sustenance to their two young children was the parents' top priority. Theresa said she was gratified to guarantee them two hot daily meals. Before she returned to Bend, Theresa said she made it clear to the survivors there would be a Red Cross volunteer to take her place.

"Being there, (showing) affection, understanding, giving a hug, a smile" goes a long way, she said. "I would do it again in a heartbeat."

Small Business Disaster Plan App Helps Prepare For The Worst

Kansas City (MO) infoZine, September 23, 2016

Small Business Disaster Plan App Helps Prepare for the Worst

Follow Monday, September 26, 2016 Kansas City infoZine

Manhattan, KS – infoZine – If you own or manage a small business, a disaster like any one of these could put a major dent in your work and your bottom line.

A new phone app won't fix such problems, but could help a business start operating again more quickly and easily.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app is available free for iOS and Android tablets and smartphones. It was developed by the North Dakota State University Extension Service and Myriad Mobile, Fargo, N.D.

"We used FEMA's ready.gov information for businesses and the Extension Disaster Education Network's Ready Business training program to integrate with the functionality of the tablet and smartphone," said Bob Bertsch, the NDSU web technology specialist who led work on the app's content. "Yes, there are online templates for business disaster plans, but this app provides portability and functionality."

The Extension Disaster Education Network is a collaboration of land grant universities focused on reducing the effect of disasters through education. Kansas State University is a part of EDEN and shares preparedness tips on its Prepare Kansas blog.

"There are two things that I have heard small-business owners say repeatedly: The first is, they never have enough time. And the second is, 'Where did I file that?'" said Glenn Muske, NDSU extension rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app takes on both of those, Muske said, by letting you fill out important disaster plan information, along with supporting photos right from your smartphone or tablet – which you always have with you.

"Of course, you should save the information in the cloud, too, in case your phone or tablet is lost," he added.

The app lets you enter information for your business, including basic and contact information, emergency planning, evacuation, insurance information and more.

Plans should be reviewed annually, Muske said, so the app uses your phone's alerts to remind you to review the information at a designated time in the future.

The content can be downloaded as a csv file. The app also encourages you to upload the content to a cloud service such as Dropbox, iCloud, Drop or a similar service for backup.

"Planning is never high on anyone's list," Muske said. "But think how easy the process is when the structure is there and you just need to fill in the blanks. That's exactly what this Small Business Disaster Plan app provides. And because September is National Preparedness Month, it's a great time to get your business prepared for disasters."

Development of the Small Business Disaster Plan app for tablets and smartphones was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Nationwide Test Of Emergency Alert System To Take Place September 28

Newtown (CT) Bee, September 24, 2016

On Wednesday, September 28, at 2:20 pm EDT, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in collaboration with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Weather Service, will conduct a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

The test is scheduled to last approximately one minute. An alert message will clearly indicate that the alert is a test of the EAS.

The message of the test will be similar to the regular monthly test message of the EAS, normally heard and seen by the public: "This is a national test of the Emergency Alert System. This is only a test."

The alert will be transmitted in English and Spanish and will include both audio and the text of the test message, which can be used to populate an accessible video crawl.

All EAS participants — radio, television, cable, and direct broadcast satellite system providers — are required to participate in this nationwide test.

The nationwide test will assess the reliability and effectiveness of the EAS, with a particular emphasis on testing FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), the integrated gateway through which common alerting protocol-based (CAP-based) EAS alerts are disseminated to EAS participants.

These improvements will help ensure that all members of the public, including non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities, will receive emergency information.

According to the FCC, the test will provide an opportunity to evaluate this and other measures that the FCC has adopted to address issues identified in connection with the 2011 Nationwide EAS Test.

EAS participants are required to file reports with the FCC after the test, which the commission will analyze to determine how the test performed.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) will not be part of the test; the public will not receive test alerts over their mobile devices.

General information about the Emergency Alert System and the test is available on FEMA's website at fema.gov/emergency-alert-system.

Okmulgee County Firefighters Train In Swift Water Rescue

By Christina Good Voice

KOTV-TV Tulsa (OK), September 24, 2016

OKMULGEE COUNTY, Oklahoma –

Okmulgee County Emergency Management sponsored two days of Swift Water Rescue Training for 22 firefighters Friday and Saturday.

The training was held at Okmulgee Lake and taught the firefighters the "skills necessary to effect safe rescues in high water emergencies," the OCEM stated in a news release.

The training was held in coordination with Tech ResQ.

The funding to purchase safety equipment and to conduct the training was provided for by an SLA funding grant from FEMA.

"Over the last several years there are now nearly 50 firefighters trained in our county," said Mark Conklin with OCEM.

Nationwide Emergency Alert Tests Set Sept. 28

Dyersburg (TN) State Gazette, September 25, 2016

On Wednesday, Sept. 28, at 1:20 p.m. CDT, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in collaboration with the FCC and the National Weather Service, will conduct a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The test is scheduled to last approximately one minute. All EAS Participants include radio, television, cable and direct broadcast satellite system providers – are required to participate in this nationwide test. The nationwide test will assess the reliability and effectiveness of the EAS.

During the first test a text message will be sent out clearly stating that the alert is only a test of the EAS. The test is scheduled to last approximately one minute. The message of the test will be similar to the regular monthly test message of the EAS. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) will NOT be part of the test; the public will not receive test alerts over their mobile devices.

Big Bear Valley C.E.R.T. Training In October

Inland Empire Weekly (CA), September 25, 2016

Big Bear Lake, California – WHAT IS CERT? The objective of the Big Bear Valley Community Emergency Response Team or BBV-CERT is to provide public education, training and opportunities for volunteers to support community and family safety. To educate citizens to be better prepared to take care of themselves, family, friends and neighbors in the event of a disaster of any type until emergency responders can arrive.

The next CERT class is scheduled for the week of October 17th thru October 21th from 5:45 pm to 9:45 pm at the Paradise Training Center located at 417 Grenfal in Big Bear City (Corner of Grenfal and Paradise). There is no fee to attend this 20 Hour CERT training class. There is a pre-requisite for this basic CERT training course, individuals need to complete the FEMA ICS-100 and ICS-700 training series by going to http://training.fema.gov.is/ Those wanting to attend this CERT class must be at least 18 years old.

CERT team members are trained in disaster preparedness with basic disaster response skills such as light search and rescue, disaster medical operations, fire safety, First Aid, CPR, and much more. Our CERT team members can assess structure safety after a disaster, whereas they can ask you to remain outside your home because of safety concerns. CERT team members can also do basic medical assessment and get quicker medical treatment from the triage units that will be set up. This is Big Bear Valley's way of making sure you, and our community is safe and gets medical evaluation and basic lifesaving treatment.

Those wishing to attend the upcoming 20-hour CERT training can register by emailing Kristin Saukel, CERT President, at k.saukel@verizon.net. Check out the Big Bear Valley CERT website at www.bbvcert.org.

NASA's 'Daily Minor Planet' Warns Of Impending Asteroid Collisions

By Coburn Palmer

Inquisitr, September 24, 2016

Scientists agree the Earth is vulnerable to killer asteroids, and although NASA has identified thousands of the dangerous space rocks, there hasn't been a way to notify the public of an impending collision until now.

The Minor Planet Center, the NASA-funded organization responsible for tracking asteroids, comets, and other near-Earth objects, now has a news service dedicated to releasing information on dangerous space rocks.

Dubbed the Daily Minor Planet, the news service is dedicated to educating the public on the latest asteroid facts, said Matt Holman, astronomer and director of the Minor Planet Center.

"Most people don't realize how common asteroid flybys are. We want the Daily Minor Planet to educate readers in an entertaining way, so the next time they see a doom-and-gloom asteroid headline, they'll know where to go to find the facts." [Image by Mode-list via iStock]

The name of the asteroid news service comes from a mashup of Clark Kent's newspaper in Superman, the Daily Planet, with the names of asteroids and celestial objects.

Almost every day the Earth is threatened with an asteroid collision, and on those days the Daily Minor Planet will publish information on the passing space rock including its name and distance to our planet. When there's no imminent threat, the news service will feature a newly discovered asteroid.

Sign up for the asteroid newsletter.

The planet was forced to acknowledge the danger of falling space rocks in 2013 when a previously undiscovered asteroid exploded over the Russian city of Chelyabinsk injuring 1,000 people.

Russia responded by cobbling together an untested planetary defense system made from Cold War-era ICBMs the country plans to fire off at incoming asteroids.

An international group of scientists led by astrophysicist and Queen guitarist Dr. Brian May, along with Apollo 9 astronaut Rusty Schweickart, responded by creating Asteroid Day.

Asteroid Day is celebrated every year on June 30, the day of the largest asteroid impact in modern history, the Tunguska event. In 1908 a space rock believed to measure almost 330 feet wide exploded over a Siberian forest, destroying more than 1,200 square miles with an explosive force 185 greater than the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima during WWII, former astronaut Dr. Thomas Jones told the Observer.

"Big answer, big picture is we are 100 percent positive Earth is going to be struck again by an asteroid, and those range from small to large. If we do nothing, we are bound to be hit eventually by an asteroid that is damaging enough to destroy civilization."

An asteroid would need to measure at least half a mile in diameter to threaten the future of mankind, but even a small space rock could do considerable damage if it managed to strike the Earth, Jones told the Observer.

"The largest hazard remaining is the smaller ones, those that are about 100 to 150 meters across, and those could do regional damage. One could destroy several states in the U.S. for example."

NASA's Planetary Defense Coordination Office is responsible for notifying the president and managing FEMA's response to any asteroid emergency. [Image by Aunt_Spray via iStock]

There are currently only a few ways to protect the Earth from falling space rocks, not including the untested Russian idea of shooting nuclear missiles at them. One idea is a gravity tractor where a spacecraft flies over an asteroid and the mutual gravity between the two objects gradually moves the dangerous space rock away from its collision course over several months.

A more popular theory, the impact deflection method, basically involves shooting an object at the asteroid at such a high speed the velocity changes the speed of the space rock and makes it miss its appointment with Earth.

Another possible deflection method involves shooting lasers at the incoming asteroid to vaporize part of it; the destruction of the rocks moves the asteroid off its collision course.

Ambulance Company Closings Directly Impact EDM

By Allison G. S. Knox

EDM Digest, September 24, 2016

On August 31, 2016, The Journal of Emergency Medical Services (JEMS) reported that the Johnston Ambulance Service in Goldsboro, NC abruptly closed its doors, leaving hundreds of people without employment.

JEMS reported that the ambulance service was the largest private ambulance service in the area and thousands of patients who used this service would need to find another ambulance company for their non-emergency transportation needs.

It is devastating any time an organization closes its doors for the hundreds of people suddenly without employment. Despite the fact that Johnston Ambulance Service was not running emergency 911 calls, the idea that they would no longer be serving the public is a matter of emergency management concern.

Ambulance companies having financial trouble is not news, though, and is an issue that affects ambulance agencies throughout the country. An ambulance company closing its doors may not have a big influence on local level emergency response if they do not answer 911 calls. It can, however, affect large scale emergencies if the federal government needs to step in to assist in the emergency. Emergency Support Functions

The federal government has included "emergency support functions," which are essentially, packages of resources based on needs and based on the scope of the emergency. FEMA lists these emergency support functions in detail on their website.

Ambulances are part of this function and serve as a vital component of federal level response to a major disaster. Without this assistance, and without the resources in a region, the management of an emergency can become complicated as this important resource isn't available. Disaster Management Plans, Revisited

Emergency managers are tasked with the important job of making sure their emergency plans are functional, updated and have the appropriate resources to effectively manage a disaster. When ambulance companies close down because of financial reasons, it can be devastating to an area for the loss of employment for hundreds of people.

Because ambulance companies like Johnston do not respond to 911 calls, it can be easy for lawmakers to forget about their direct impact to emergency management. Emergency managers, though, need to carefully revisit their emergency management plans when ambulance companies are dismantled for how they may affect their emergency responses–even when those companies are not responsible for managing 911 emergencies.

Whenever an organization is no longer in business, it can be hard for a community to recover from the loss. Where ambulances are concerned, emergency managers need to take how their loss affects their community and the resources they plan to use in an emergency. At the federal level, emergency management officials will need to figure out how to make up for this type of loss in regions throughout the country.

Mashpee Senior Center

Falmouth (MA) Enterprise, September 23, 2016

Arts & Crafts Class: Create A Decoupage Vase

Create beautiful vases to showcase your favorite fall arrangements using wine bottles and colorful scrapbook paper! It is fun and easy to design these lovely pieces, and all materials will be provided. This class will be held on Monday, September 26, at 1 PM. There will be a small fee. A reservation (required) may be made at the front desk or by calling 508-539-1440.

Talking With Your Doctor Workshop

Take an active role in your health care. How well you and your doctor talk is one of the most important parts of getting good health care. But, talking to your doctor isn't always easy. It takes time and effort on your part as well as your doctor's. On Tuesday, September 27, at 2:30 PM, Betty Blackham from the Visiting Nurse Association of Cape Cod will be presenting a free workshop offering some tips and tools to use to prepare for a doctor visit and get the most from the visit. Reservations are appreciated and can be made at the front desk or at 508-539-1440.

Cape Cod Senior Appreciation Picnic

This event is sponsored by the Barnstable County Deputy Sheriff's Association. Join them on Wednesday, September 28, from 11 AM to 1 PM for a K-9 demonstration, a free lunch for seniors, and bingo games with prizes. Location: Bass River Beach Parking Lot (aka Smuggler's Beach), Yarmouth. For more information, call Joseph Gordon 508-563-4319.

CARES Program: Hope Dementia & Alzheimer's Services

This program is specifically for people with memory impairment and their care partners. CARES provides an opportunity for families affected by memory impairment to participate in two separate support groups—held simultaneously—that provide information, guidance, and respite to care partners; and, conversation and socialization for those with memory impairment. The sessions are available at Mashpee Senior Center on the second and fourth Wednesday each month, from 1:30 to 3:30 PM; the next meeting will be September 28. To register or for more information, call Hope Dementia & Alzheimer's Services at 508-775-5656.

Drivers are needed to provide transportation to medical appointments on Cape for ambulatory seniors. We ask that the volunteer drivers accept a minimum of two trips per month. A typical trip is three hours. A volunteer would need a reliable vehicle, automobile insurance and a good driving record. Drivers must have a congenial rapport with seniors.

Reception desk/secretarial workers are also needed. These volunteers must be able to handle phone calls, follow the procedures for handling appointments, be able to handle several things at the same time, and be a friendly presence for people coming in to ask questions.

Newsletter preparation: The day before the newsletter mailing takes place, we need volunteers to help set up and organize the newsletter stations for the volunteers the next day.

If you have any special skills, talents, or interests you would like to share with other seniors at Mashpee Senior Center, call Deborah Converse, volunteer coordinator, at 508-539-1440.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), more commonly known as the Fuel Assistance Program, is administered by South Shore Community Action and provides low income households with help in paying heating bills. The Mashpee Senior Center will assist residents in completing a fuel assistance application. Appointments will be available on Mondays from 1 to 3 PM beginning September 27. The program officially starts November 1. Income eligibility for a family of one is $34,001; a family of two is $44,463. Once the application and documentation are complete, they will be sent to South Shore Community Action in Plymouth, who will determine eligibility.

Please note that the following documents should be brought to the appointment: all sources of gross income for all members of the household; a heating bill showing the account number; electric bill; copy of a mortgage statement or front page of the lease agreement; homeowners insurance; real estate tax bill; photo identification; Social Security numbers; and birth dates. Call the Mashpee Senior Center to set up an appointment at 508-539-1440.

Telephone, e-mail, and door-to-door scams are continuing at a rapid rate.

Asked to pay back taxes with an iTunes gift card? It's a scam!

Scammers have come up with yet another way to get people to part with their hard-earned money. This time they are getting people to buy iTunes gift cards and share the code on the back of the card.

Are you oversharing on public WiFi?

Connecting to the Internet in a public space like a coffee shop, the library, or an airport is a wonderful modern convenience, but it comes with significant risk. Public WiFi is never private, so we're asking for your help in preventing WiFi fraud!

Now is the time to prepare in case Mother Nature pays us an unwelcome visit. You can find detailed preparedness information on the National Weather Service website, www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/ready.php, and at FEMA's ready.gov site for hurricanes at www.ready.gov/hurricanes. To prepare for a hurricane, here are some of the following measures to take to protect you and your family:

Build an emergency kit and make a family communications plan; learn community hurricane evacuation routes and how to find higher ground; determine where you would go and how you would get there if you needed to evacuate; make plans to secure your property; be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed so they are more wind resistant; clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts; plan to bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans, and anything else that is not tied down.

Don't forget about your pets! Check out Cape Cod DART at www.capecoddart.org for complete details, but here are some basics: Know which shelters in your area are pet-friendly. If you go to a shelter, if possible bring a crate for your pet. Prepare an emergency go-kit for your pet including at least three days of food in an airtight, waterproof container, at least three days of water specifically for your pets, and an extra supply of your pet's meds in a waterproof container. List the name and contact information for your pet's veterinarian. Keep up-to-date copies of your pet's registration information, adoption papers, vaccination documents, and medical records in a clean plastic bag or waterproof container in your kit.

Local shelters are at Barnstable Intermediate School, 895 Falmouth Road, Hyannis; Falmouth High School, 874 Gifford Street, Falmouth; Sandwich High School, 365 Quaker Meetinghouse Road, Sandwich. (Those designated as pet-friendly will be determined at the time of the emergency.)

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH: The Communication Plan

By Leandra McLean

Walpole (MA) Times, September 25, 2016

Editor's note: This is the second in a three-part series submitted by the Walpole Health Department.

The basic theme behind preparedness is to be ready for an emergency, and there are a number of different ways to accomplish this. The next time a disaster strikes, you may not have much time to act. Planning ahead reduces anxiety!

Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to think about the following situations and plan just in case. Consider the following questions when making a plan:

- How will my family/household get emergency alerts and warnings?
- How will my family/household get to safe locations for relevant emergencies?

- How will my family/household get in touch if cell phone, internet, or landline doesn't work?
- How will I let loved ones know I am safe?
- How will family/household get to a meeting place after the emergency?

Before a disaster happens, it is a good idea to have a conversation with those in your support network: your friends, family and neighbors. Let them know your needs in an emergency situation; ask them how they could assist with your plan and whether they would be willing to help. Consider that during some emergencies travel is severely limited and they may not be able to get to you.

Have a family communication plan! A family communication plan includes a local contact and an out of state contact and meeting places if you have to evacuate from your home or from the area.

- Carry family contact information in your wallet (both home and cell numbers)
- Make sure to choose an out-of-town contact person, in case you need to evacuate your area
- Post emergency numbers near all of your phones. Include the numbers of those in your support network and consider having alternative plans for contacting those in your network
- Keep a list of important school and business numbers with you

Please take your dogs and cats with you if you have to evacuate!

National Preparedness Month

Marshfield (MO) Mail, September 24, 2016

While most people don't like to think about worst case scenarios, giving them their proper consideration can ultimately offer peace of mind.

September is National Preparedness Month and it is a great time to get your home and family ready for a range of emergencies. Here are three steps to take.

STOCK UP

Every home should contain a supply kit that includes a surplus of nonperishable food items, as well as fresh bottled water. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends one gallon per person in your household per day for three days.

FEMA also recommends that the kit include prescription medications for everyone in the family, personal hygiene items, a flashlight, extra batteries and matches, amongst other items. For a complete list, visit fema.gov.

FREE YOURSELF FROM YOU PHONE

While we all know that smartphone technology and other mobile devices offer us useful information, in an emergency scenario these devices may lose their signal or their battery life. Stay prepared and informed no matter what happens with wearable technology that is not at the mercy of a cellphone tower or a battery that needs to be recharged every few hours.

For example Casio's PRO TREK PRG300 timepieces feature functions like an altimeter, compass and barometer (great for staying aware of changes in temperature or air pressure). They also deliver this information hands-free, which can be useful any day of the week but extra valuable in an emergency.

GEN INSURED

Is your home and property properly insured? Know what your homeowners insurance covers and determine whether it is sufficient to meet your needs. For example, homeowners insurance policies do not typically cover flooding, which requires separate coverage. Learn more about your home's primary risks and get covered now, before it's too late.

No one has a crystal ball that can see into the future, so to best protect your family and your home, get prepared for everything.

ORV Chapter Of American Red Cross Offers Tips For National Preparedness Month

By Stephanie Stanley

Pike County (OH) News Watchman, September 24, 2016

September is National Preparedness Month, and the Ohio River Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross reminds locals to "prepare your home, make a plan, and be informed", not just in September, but throughout the entire year.

"Everyone needs to be prepared. You never know when an emergency might occur," said Debbie Smith, community executive for the ORV Chapter of the American Red Cross. "With September being National Preparedness Month, this is a perfect time to begin creating a kit, establishing a plan and making sure you're ready for any of the emergencies that might strike at a moment's notice."

The Red Cross has put together "a few helpful tips" to assist locals in being prepared for the unexpected when disaster strikes.

To keep preparedness and disaster information at their fingertips, locals are encouraged to download a free Red Cross mobile app.

"A great place to begin is with the all-inclusive emergency app which covers 17 different types of emergencies, quizzes, alerts, and information on what to do before, during, and after an emergency," said Smith. "Or, the Red Cross offers 17 individual apps that range from first aid to hurricanes to wildfires or earthquakes."

According to Smith, children and adults will equally enjoy the Monster Guard app, which helps to teach preparedness for real-life emergencies at home "with the help of friendly monsters."

"Monster Guard and all Red Cross apps can be found in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store for Android, or by searching redcross.org," said Smith.

To be prepared before an emergency strikes, locals are encouraged to have an emergency kit containing a three-day supply of non-perishable foods and water (one gallon per person, per day, for drinking and hygiene), a battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible), a flashlight and extra batteries, first-aid kit, medications, and medical items, copies of important documents (proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, and insurance policy information), and extra cash.

"Having things in one place and close at hand can make a difference for everyone in the household," said Smith. "Store your kit in an easy-to-carry container that someone can use at home or take with them in case they have to evacuate."

The Red Cross also recommends people have a two-week supply of supplies available at home at all times.

"The Red Cross Store has items available, ranging from a hand-crank radio to a fully-stocked deluxe emergency preparedness kit," said Smith.

According to Smith, seven people perish each day and another 36 are injured in house fires. For this reason, locals are reminded of the importance of installing a working smoke alarm in the home.

"Home fires are the biggest disaster that people face. Your chance of survival can be doubled by one simple move — installing smoke alarms," she said. "If there's a fire, a smoke alarm will alert you long before you smell the smoke or see the flames, giving you precious time to escape. The Red Cross will install them for free. Just make an appointment by calling (740) 354-3293."

In addition to installing smoke alarms, Smith says "the other vital part of surviving a home fire" is developing a fire escape plan and practicing it with your family.

"Walk through your home and locate all exits and escape routes, and do not forget to include windows," she said. "Always pick a place to meet outside. Make sure your family practices a fire escape plan at least twice a year."

The key to safety is being informed, said Smith.

"Know what situations may occur where you live. Make your families familiar with what to do during tornadoes, floods, and extreme heat and cold," said Smith. "Winter is right around the corner, so now is the time to learn what to do during a winter storm. Remember that emergencies like fires and blackouts can happen anywhere, so everyone should be prepared."

The Red Cross also offers first aid/CPR/AED classes "to help everyone recognize and respond appropriately to cardiac, breathing, and first-aid emergencies.

"Learn first aid and CPR/AED so that you have the skills to respond in an emergency before help arrives, especially during a disaster when emergency responders may not be as available," said Smith.

The Red Cross' CPR/AED program offers the following benefits: two-year certification with free digital course, free downloadable digital course materials or affordable print course materials, free access to digital course materials, branding images and materials, easy access to certificate printing and tracking, and a "concise learner-centered course" designed "to emphasize hands-on skills."

For more information, visit the Ohio River Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross, located at 1801 Robinson Avenue, in Portsmouth, or visit redcross.org.

As Potential Peril Approaches, Be Prepared And Connected

By Glenn Rolfe

Sussex County (DE) Post, September 24, 2016

GEORGETOWN – Sussex County is not immune to natural or man-made disasters.

Flooding precipitates evacuations.

High wind knocks out power.

Snowstorms and blizzards can deal a paralyzing punch.

When disaster strikes, be like Boy Scouts: Be prepared.

That is the timely reminder from the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center, during the county's observance of National Preparedness Month in September.

Disaster kits, planning ahead with a game-plan and social media connections are vital ingredients in the recipe for public safety and safe-sledding through emergencies, says Sussex County EOC Director Joseph Thomas.

Sussex County Emergency Operations Center

Director Joe Thomas monitors weather updates at the EOC in Georgetown.

"I am a firm believer everyone should have a disaster kit. Although we typically talk about flooding in this county, the fact is that anything could happen at any given time. I know we don't see a lot of them in this area but there could be a potential for a tornado," said Mr. Thomas. "Out west, they deal with wildfires and you see people's homes destroyed, and when they are told to evacuate they have to evacuate very quickly. So having that kit at the ready is probably very important, actually, because now you don't have to take the time to put everything together."

Disaster kits should include a three-day provision of essentials: food and water, prescriptions and medicines, a flashlight with batteries, a battery-powered radio and money – as in cold cash.

"People think of food and water. You don't think about the fact that you need to have cash because nine times out of 10 power is out. You can't use ATMs if the power is out," said Mr. Thomas. "We tell people to put your insurance documents in some sort of plastic; something that won't get damaged or wet."

Kits are designed to "help you get through after a storm. FEMA, the federal assistance is typically two to three days getting to us. So if you've got three-days' worth of supplies that you can be self-sufficient, then when help does arrive you just go from one transition to another," said Mr. Thomas.

Stay connected

Before and during an emergency event, Mr. Thomas urges people if possible to stay in touch with social media, including those at the county level as well local media.

"We do a very robust social media posting. We typically will post on Facebook and Twitter; that is continuously updated all of the time," said Mr. Thomas.

Information would encompass weather conditions, forecasts, road closures and shelter openings and locations.

When sufficient information warrants, press releases are sent to all local media outlets.

During the Superstorm Sandy event in the fall of 2012, Sussex County launched another informational element: You Tube.

During the height of that storm that hammered New Jersey and impacted Sussex County, notably its coastal communities, Sussex County Director of Communications Chip Guy recommended the county climb another rung up the ladder.

"Chip said need to 'up our game.' We did You Tube videos," Mr. Thomas said. "That really got a good response. One of our first responses was from the governor (Jack Markell). He came down. He and I did one, about two or three minutes along."

Emergency Preparedness

On the county's website – www.sussexcountyde.gov – in the "Citizens" tab is information on emergency preparedness, hurricane information, shelters, evacuation plans.

Also on the county website is the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center, which includes local weather advisories, hurricane and flood safety, Smart911 and the emergency notification system.

The Delaware Emergency Notification System (DENS) is a notification system designed to notify Delaware residents in the event of an emergency in their area.

The Sussex County Emergency Operations Center, along with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency, encourages residents who exclusively use mobile telephones to register their numbers in a statewide database that will be used for the Delaware Emergency Notification System.

To register your mobile telephone, call or log on to http://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/BF1D885328BF.

Sussex County's EOC can be followed on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/SussexCountyEOC) and Twitter (https://twitter.com/sussexctyde_eoc).

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

Community Briefs

Aurora (IL) Beacon-News, September 25, 2016

ESO performs score to Chaplin's 'City Lights'

The Elgin Symphony Orchestra will present Charlie Chaplin's silent film masterpiece "City Lights" with the orchestra, led by Resident Conductor Stephen Squires, performing the movie score live on Friday, Oct 7 to Sunday, Oct. 9.

Even though silent films were on their way out, Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights" was an instant success when released in January 1931, according to a news release. It has consistently been listed as one of the most influential films of all time and directors like Orson Welles, Stanley Kubrick, George Bernard Shaw, Federico Fellini and Woody Allen rate "City Lights" as one of their favorite movies, the release stated.

Squires has conducted for many artists, including Frederica von Stade, Samuel Ramey, Janos Starker, Pinchas Zuckerman, Shmuel Ashkenasi, John Browning, Leon Bates, Stewart Goodyear, Richard Stoltzman, Ani Kavafian, Wendy Warner, James Tocco, Kevin Cole, Vadim Gluzman and most of the principal players of the Chicago Symphony and Lyric Opera orchestras, according to a release. He has premiered over 80 new works.

Squires received his musical training at the Preparatory School of the Eastman School of Music and the Crane School of Music, in New York, and he earned his master's degree in instrumental conducting/trumpet performance at California State University, Northridge, the release stated.

The film runs 90 minutes without an intermission. Popcorn is provided by Mama Lee's Gourmet Popcorn. Sponsors are WDCB Radio, The Palmer Foundation and EFS Foundation.

For tickets, which start at $30, call 847-888-4000 or go to ElginSymphony.Org.

The ESO City Lights performance and film screening is part of A Celebration of Music from the Golden Age of Cinema and Radio, a project of the ESO, Chamber Music on the Fox and the Gail Borden Public Library.

For information, go to gailborden.info/BernardHerrmann.

Emergency management program in Aurora

In partnership with America's PrepareAthon, the city of Aurora Emergency Management Agency will host its first Aurora PrepareAthon to help residents prepare for potential emergencies and disasters.

The Aurora PrepareAthon will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Oct. 3 at the Aurora Police Department, 1200 E. Indian Trail.

Attendees will learn how to create a family disaster plan, assemble an emergency kit and prepare for specific hazards through group discussions, drills and exercises, event organizers said.

The Aurora PrepareAthon is free and open to the public, but space is limited and registration is mandatory. To reserve a seat, go to https://aurora.seamlessdocs.com/f/PrepareAthon

The biggest trees in Kane County

A guided hike to see some of the biggest trees in Kane County will visit the sites of some of the local champions in the Kane County Big Tree Program. During the walk, there will be a little tree identification and how trees are measured in the Big Tree Program.

- Saturday, Oct. 8, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Bliss Woods Forest Preserve, located at 5S660 Bliss Road, Sugar Grove.
- Wednesday, Oct. 12, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at Hannaford Woods Forest Preserve, located at 5S002 Merrill Road, Sugar Grove.
- Saturday, Oct. 22, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Glenwood Park Forest Preserve, located at 1644 S. River St., Batavia.

Advance registration is required for this free program. Call 630-444-3190 or e-mail programs@kaneforest.com.

To view a full roster of Forest Preserve District nature programs, go to www.kaneforest.com.

'Coffee with a Cop' in St. Charles

Participants can enjoy complimentary coffee and talk with St. Charles Police Chief Jim Keegan and St. Charles police officers at the inaugural "Coffee with a Cop" event at McDonald's at 915 W. Main St. Thursday.

The event will run from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

"We have so many ways to communicate these days, between smartphones, apps and social media. But sometimes face-to-face conversation is best," said Keegan. "We look forward to getting out and meeting St. Charles residents. This gives them a chance to get to know us in a casual atmosphere."

FEMA CORPS

No stories for this edition

PRIVATE SECTOR

$376 Million In Loans Approved For Homeowners, Renters And Businesses

Gonzales (LA) Weekly Citizen, September 25, 2016

WASHINGTON – Maria Contreras-Sweet, the Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), issued the following statement before a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship examining the federal response to recent floods in Louisiana.

"The SBA's commitment to provide disaster assistance to our fellow citizens in their greatest hour of need is one of our most important duties. I have made it my priority to ensure that our services are delivered as quickly and effectively as possible.

Right now, SBA team members are providing financing, resources and counseling to Americans facing devastation and despair in 20 different states, including the 22 parishes in Louisiana. Day and night, the SBA's committed professionals are on the ground in unfamiliar places, manning hotlines, setting up disaster recovery centers, assessing damage, and processing loan applications. I am proud and inspired by their compassion and dedication.

Recently in Ascension Parish, I saw home after home bearing the mark of high water lines, as families piled their ruined possessions out front, a lifetime of hard work and memories washed away by the rising waters. In Denham Springs, I walked down North Range Avenue to visit the city's famous antique stores – entire inventories of irreplaceable treasures lined the roadway, destroyed.

It's one thing to see photographs or videos of the devastation, it's quite another to see the loss of so much reflected in people's eyes. These are images I will never forget.

I visited two of our eight business recovery centers, where homeowners and business owners are able to talk with SBA staff and apply for federal disaster assistance. In the month since the flooding began, SBA has deployed 356 staff members to Louisiana, who are working in concert with FEMA. We have received more than 21,000 loan applications and approved more than $376 million in financing.

This is our largest disaster since Superstorm Sandy hit in 2012. As part of our disaster recovery work, we continually apply lessons learned and endeavor to make the process simpler for the survivors who depend on it. In the 11 years since Hurricane Katrina, we have been working hard to automate and streamline our application, approval and disbursement processes – shaving weeks off the time it takes for homeowners and small business owners to get the help they need to rebuild.

When the rains hit Louisiana in August, we implemented many of these advancements and improvements – which meant that we didn't have to wait for the water to go down before rolling up our sleeves and getting to work.

Throughout the first month of this disaster, 97 percent of SBA disaster loan applications have been submitted online through our newly updated, secure website. In addition, our loss verification teams have been using the latest advances in technology to make desktop assessments of damaged properties by downloading the footprints of affected homes and businesses.

Based on our experience in Superstorm Sandy, we revised our regulations to increase the unsecured loan limits for both physical damage and economic injury loans to $25,000. This change allows SBA to ensure that those first, crucial funds get into the hands of renters, homeowners and business owners in Louisiana more quickly. And we've called in our reserves to make sure there are enough trained professionals in our call centers, in our processing centers and on the ground.

We have made significant progress in reducing our processing and disbursement times. We will continue to do everything we can to further streamline our process, without sacrificing the integrity and compassion that we aim to include in everything we do.

The SBA and our team of tireless men and women will do everything we can to give the people of Louisiana the tools and resources they need to rebuild. And we will keep working until the job of recovery is done. Even after losing nearly everything and facing desperate and tragic conditions, Louisianans continue to step forward to offer help to neighbors and strangers alike. I remain in awe of their mettle, resiliency, and generosity."

FEMA Help Is Still Available

Eunice (LA) Today, September 24, 2016

Baton Rouge, La. –

It is now more than a month since the record flooding and storms of August.

If you or anyone you know is still having problems finding suitable accommodations, it is not too late to register with FEMA for assistance with your housing needs.

FEMA cannot duplicate insurance payments, but survivors should register even if they have insurance because underinsured applicants may receive help after their claims have been settled. And remember that FEMA grants do not have to be repaid. FEMA assistance is nontaxable and will not affect your eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits.

Applying for disaster assistance is essentially a two-step process – registering with FEMA and completing a U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loan application. This process ensures that you will be considered for all programs you may be eligible for. There is never any charge for registering or applying. If approved for the loan, you are under no obligation to accept it. But the examination of your SBA application will determine what other types of assistance you may be eligible for.

Disaster survivors may register the following ways:

Online at DisasterAssistance.gov with any computer, smartphone or tablet.

By phoning Applicants who use or Video Relay Service may also call .Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. The toll-free numbers are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Multilingual operators are available.

At a disaster recovery center. To find the nearest one, go online to the disaster recovery center locator at asd.fema.gov/inter/locator.

A free multilingual guide to the types of assistance available can be found at fema.gov/help-after-disaster.

CITIZEN CORPS

County Officials Satisfied With Drive-through Flu Clinic Results

By David Danzis

New Jersey Herald, September 25, 2016

HOPATCONG – Although county health officials may have wanted to attract larger numbers, Saturday's drive-through flu clinic was an operational success.

Emrick G. Seabold, acting administrator/health officer of the Sussex County Department of Environmental and Public Health Services, said the three-hour exercise in the parking lot of the Hopatcong Public Works was very well organized and proved that the county's health department could distribute vaccines on a large-scale in the event of an emergency.

"We're satisfied that we could handle a large-scale event," Seabold said. "The clinic's success is a testament to the Emergency Preparedness Team staff and all our volunteers."

Several service areas allowed for motor vehicle access and vaccinations were administered through the window. Patients were encouraged to bring along signed consent forms to expedite the process, but paperwork was available at the site.

Sixty-six vaccines were distributed on Saturday, according to Tracy Storms-Mazzucco, health educator for the county's Emergency Preparedness Team.

"As an exercise, we were still satisfied," she said. "We're pleased with the results."

The drive-through point of distribution plan was developed by the Emergency Preparedness Team with the assistance of the state Department of Health. The exercise was an attempt to simulate operations in the event of a public health emergency.

The plan is adaptable and may also be used by Sussex County Office of Public Health Nursing as an annual flu clinic in the future.

Seabold said, "lots of credit," should be given to the volunteers and to the Borough of Hopatcong for organizing and executing the event.

"It takes a lot to put something like this together," he said. "We very much appreciate Hopatcong and the students from the college (Sussex County Community College) who helped today."

Several organizations participated in the exercise, including the state Department of Health, Sussex County Department of Environmental and Public Health Services, Sussex County Sheriff's Office and Bureau of Emergency Management, county government and administration, Board of Chosen Freeholders, Medical Reserve Corps, Warren County Health Department, Warren County CERT, Hopatcong Borough Police Department, borough government and administration, Hopatcong Community Emergency Response Team and Sussex County Community College.

Latah County Receives FEMA Funds For Local Emergencies

By Taylor Nadauld

University Of Idaho's (ID) The Argonaut, September 25, 2016

Four local organizations will receive funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its 33rd distribution phase, said Cretia Bunney, executive director of United Way.

The news came after an announcement that Latah County was chosen to receive $11,812 in federal funds by the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program. It is down from the $12,683 the county received during the last phase, Bunney said.

Frances Trevisan of St. Vincent De Paul, a nonprofit Catholic organization that received a portion of the FEMA funds, said she writes grant applications that her organization can use to give back to the Moscow community.

The organization relies solely on outside donations, Trevisan said. As a Catholic agency, members come from both St. Augustine's and St. Mary's Catholic churches in Moscow, where collections are held four times a year for the agency.

"That's our only regular money that we know we're going to do every year," Trevisan said.

Trevisan recently submitted an application on behalf of the agency asking for $5,500 worth of FEMA funds. She said she was not yet aware how much the organization will actually be allocated. In the last phase, Bunney said St. Vincent De Paul received $4,179.

Other agencies receiving funds include Latah County Community Action Partnership, Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse and JK Good Samaritan Food

Bank. They were the only agencies to apply, Bunney said.

The local agencies that applied were required to meet certain conditions, said Elizabeth Prasil, account executive at Appearances and Marketing Promotions, in a press release. This included being a private voluntary nonprofit or unit of government, having an accounting system, practicing nondiscrimination, having demonstrated the capacity to deliver emergency food or shelter programs and having a voluntary board if they are a private voluntary organization.

Bunney said the application process can be a lot of work, though Trevisan said FEMA applications are actually easier to submit than others.

An agency's application must include a narrative with the amount they are requesting and an explanation for the request, a capacity statement that includes references to an accounting and service delivery system, a statement agreeing to educate staff and volunteers about available referral resources and a list of the organization's board of directors, Prasil said in the press release.

Agencies can apply to use the money for several categories including served meals, mass shelter, supplies and equipment, rent and mortgage, other food, other shelter, rehabilitation and utility assistance, Bunney said. Most applications are submitted for mass shelter, other shelter and food.

St. Vincent De Paul volunteers spend the funds on other shelters, including hotel rooms for people or families who have nowhere to stay, Trevisan said.

"You get inspired by people, too. It's amazing," Trevisan said. "There's nothing like making you feel like, whenever you feel like your life is hard, and then you see what some people are going through, with their illnesses, or their disabilities, or their mental health issues or whatever, and you just realize how blessed you are because they have such challenges."

Trevisan was one of the founding members of the Moscow conference of St. Vincent De Paul. She and several others have remained active volunteers ever since. Trevisan said she was president of the conference for 10 years before she began writing grant applications and the role was turned over.

The organization works to help those who are poor or in a crisis by distributing money, meeting with people in need and running a hotline that Trevisan said gets anywhere from five to 25 calls a day. She said the organization has an estimated 20 active members and 50 associate members.

"It's good work. We like it," Trevisan said.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Our Views: Homeowners Need Federal Help Now

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 24, 2016

As flood victims across south Louisiana plummet toward possible financial ruin, Congress cannot offer them a parachute long after they've crashed.

It's a simple reality of life that if help doesn't arrive when it's needed, then it can be little or no help at all. That is why we're heartened by news that some $500 million — what's billed as a "down payment" on flood relief for Louisiana — has been included in a larger bill to fund the federal government. We urge members of Congress to approve the provision.

Much federal aid has already flowed to the state through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal agencies. But given the scale of the flooding, Louisiana needs a lot of extra federal help that only Congress can approve. President Barack Obama has come out in favor of a more than $2 billion aid package. It would include help for infrastructure, other recovery needs and, perhaps most importantly, housing assistance.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, a Baton Rouge Republican, said he's confident that Louisiana will get a flood aid package, although the timing is uncertain. Congress could approve the package before it recesses or when it returns in December, or perhaps approve some parts of the aid now and other parts later. Louisiana native and National Public Radio congressional correspondent Cokie Roberts, in a Baton Rouge speech on Tuesday, also predicted that an aid package would eventually be approved.

But around kitchen tables right now, flooded homeowners are putting pencil to paper to determine if they can afford to rebuild. In many cases, part of that calculation involves what help, if any, they might receive from Washington. As Congress dithers — and the prospect of long-term uncertainty looms — those homeowners might opt to walk away from distressed properties and start over somewhere else.

"For folks who are struggling now, the same amount of money has a greater impact now than it does later," Cassidy told The Advocate. "That's what I'm stressing to people."

The future of many south Louisiana neighborhoods —and the health of local businesses and tax bases they support — are at stake.

That is why Washington must act now rather than later to advance Louisiana's recovery.

Louisiana Flood Of 2016 Made Worse By Growth-focused Policies

By JR Ball

New Orleans Times-Picayune, September 23, 2016

There's nothing new about flooding in southeast Louisiana. But in the Baton Rouge area, at least, the devastation wreaked by heavy rains is getting worse.

Suburban growth into areas with a history of flooding is putting more houses, businesses and lives at risk. Every new road, bridge, levee or other human-made structure further obstructs — and slows — the natural drainage patterns within the Amite River Basin, where the Amite and Comite rivers flow into Lake Pontchartrain. And long-discussed projects intended to mitigate flood damage in and around Baton Rouge remain under-funded and far from finished.

"Damage from these natural disasters is only going to get worse because we've overbuilt our capacity to manage existing risks," said professor Edward Richards, who has written extensively on coastal and floodplain issues as director of the program in law, science and public health at LSU's Law Center. "Our drainage system is blocked up."

The Louisiana Flood of 2016 killed 13 people, displaced tens of thousands of others, caused an estimated $8.7 billion in damage and destroyed some 60,000 houses. Gov. John Bel Edwards is requesting $2.8 billion in federal recovery money, and more than 73,000 households across 20 parishes have been approved for Federal Emergency Management Agency aid.

Louisiana hasn't seen a natural disaster of this magnitude since 2005, when storm surge from Hurricane Katrina or the failure of levees and floodwalls submerged much of New Orleans and St. Bernard Parish and parts of St. Tammany and East Jefferson. The causes of the two events were different, and the damage inflicted by Katrina was far more tragic and extensive. But both share this bond: Decisions by human beings to allow development in known flood areas, and their failure to complete flood mitigation projects, increased the devastation.

"We keep saying this won't happen again, but it does keep happening and it will continue to happen," said Craig Colten, the Carl O. Sauer professor of geography at LSU and a longtime student of why communities expand in harm's way. "After each one of these events we say we've learned our lesson, but then we ignore what we've learned."

No one is suggesting that rainfall totals seen in mid-August— when some spots saw more than two feet of rain in 72 hours— will become the norm. But flooding in the Baton Rouge area and across the Capital region, as it has for centuries, will happen again. And rapid and largely unchecked growth in the suburbs of Baton Rouge and neighboring Livingston and Ascension parishes, coupled with a degraded natural drainage system, is putting more people in harm's way.

Absent drastic measures to make suburban growth safer and to improve watershed drainage, the widespread destruction caused by these floods will almost certainly become more common, more expensive and more deadly. "We keep rolling the dice hoping disaster won't strike twice," Colten said, "and we keep losing."

What's troubling is how much damage was done to property outside the "100-year flood zone," where there is a 1 percent chance of flooding in any given year. No doubt that's partly due to the freak nature of the August storm, considered a "1,000-year event."

Yet experts warn it's a mistake to chalk up this as a once-in-a-millennium happening. The accuracy of FEMA's flood-prediction maps is not perfect, and a recent study by the nonprofit Resources for the Future found someone living in the 500-year flood zone was as likely to be flooded as someone living in the 100-year flood zone. Those inside the high-risk 100-year flood zone are predicted by FEMA to have a 26 percent chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage.

"It's wrong to create a false sense of security by saying this flooding only happened because it was a 1,000-year rain," Richards said. "There's been numerous flooding in this area in the past, and it won't take a 1,000-year rain to do it again.

"If you got two or three feet of water in your home, it doesn't matter if the next storm is a 100-, 500- or 1,000-year event; your house is going to flood again."

Moreover suburban sprawl is pushing deeper into the floodplain. In the city of Central, incorporated in 2005, 75 percent of the property is in the 100-year flood zone, Colten said. The mayor, Jr. Shelton, said as much as 90 percent of the houses and businesses sustained flood damage.

In neighboring Livingston and Ascension, two of the fastest-growing parishes in the state, real estate developers are racing to build along the Comite and Amite rivers and in the area where the two waterways converge and spill into Bayou Manchac during floods.

These are all areas that have repeatedly flooded in the past, yet local officials are doing little either to slow the growth — in fact, they're encouraging it— or impose stricter safety standards within the 500-year flood zone.

"This was a huge rainfall, but it didn't have to be such a huge flood with so much devastation," Colten said. "So much development has been allowed since 1983. We have created this situation."

The year 1983 is important. That's when much of the same area suffered extensive flooding, causing damage of $344 million – $831 million in today's economy. It was the fourth flood along the Amite River in 11 years, prompting Rod Emmer, long-time director of the Louisiana Floodplain Managers' Association, to call for tougher flood zone construction standards, including elevation standards above FEMA's minimum requirements, and flood-reduction projects. Significant flooding in the Baton Rouge area also occurred in 1990 and 1993, and in 2001 Tropical Storm Allison dropped 19 inches of rain over a two-day period, swamping much of the region.

After the 1983 flood, local officials adopted a series of measures to improve water flow and better manage backwater flooding, which is water building up faster than it can be drained. By 1990, planning departments in Baton Rouge and Denham Springs had upgraded floodplain construction standards above the FEMA baseline, and Ascension Parish and Central largely followed that lead.

Those tougher standards are why Frank Duke, the Baton Rouge planning director, disputes blanket statements that explosive suburban growth everywhere amplified the flood damage. "Growth didn't contribute to the flooding," said Duke, citing post-1990 developments that did not flood in Baton Rouge. "I do agree that anything built prior to 1990 did have an impact."

That's not the case elsewhere in the region. A residential development under construction in Watson, in Livingston Parish, flooded badly in August, and much of hard hit Central was built after 1990. Duke acknowledged that suburban growth in areas prone to flooding "does complicate issues if you don't provide for the proper mitigation."

One of those is the Comite Diversion Canal, designed to carry water surge from the Comite River west across East Baton Rouge Parish to the Mississippi River. It would reduce flooding risks, especially outside the 100-year flood zone – if it's ever completed.

The project was authorized in 1986, and voters in East Baton Rouge, Ascension and Livingston parishes approved a property tax in 2000 to help fund construction. But much of it remains unfinished. U.S. Rep. Garrett Graves of Baton Rouge said 20 percent to 25 percent of homes that sustained flooding in August would have been spared if the canal were operational.

Even the diversion canal is no magic bullet solution, however. Some members of Louisiana's congressional delegation, already committed to securing an estimated $211 million in federal money to finish the canal, are now pushing to expand the project to include overflow from the Amite River.

Others, including Colten, wonder why local government officials gave the OK to new developments in floodplains near the Comite when it was clear that completion of the diversion canal was nowhere in sight? "Everyone understands the importance of growth and new tax revenues," he said, "but those decisions put lives at risk."

Rather than raising building standards to account for repeated flooding in the presumably lower-risk 500-year flood zone, officials now are scrambling to relax standards for rebuilding flooded houses.

The Baton Rouge Metro Council on Sept. 14 voted to waive existing regulations and exempt some 32,000 households outside the 100-year flood zone from having to elevate their flood-damaged homes. The night before, frustrated residents of Denham Springs, the region's hardest-hit city, packed a public meeting to complain about regulations that could require them to elevate their homes before securing a permit to repair or rebuild.

In Central, the mayor and City Council members vowed to roll back rebuilding standards to the FEMA minimum. "If we have to start elevating our houses and demolishing them, Central's going to turn into a ghost town," said Shelton, the mayor.

Colten argues these officials shouldn't be easing standards, but, rather, expanding them to make the 500-year flood zone the baseline at-risk designation. "It's a tough job because they're trying to protect the financial resources of their constituents, but long-term safety is more important than short-term finances."

Elected officials also are pushing to have FEMA not count the August flood when determining the region's base flood elevation, which is the height that inundation waters are expected to reach in a 100-year flood. New buildings and those significantly damaged by storms must be constructed one foot above that base elevation. "I don't want it to count," said Baton Rouge Metro Councilman Trae Welch, asserting it would be unfair for such a "rare event" to have such a significant impact moving forward.

"We just had a 1,000-year flood that literally was 6 feet above the 100-year base flood elevation," said Central City Councilman Jason Ellis. "It would be ridiculous if every single one of us had to go raise our houses above a 1,000-year flood event."

Colten, however, said those who want to exclude the August event as the flood of record are ignoring reality. "If you don't, then it's likely these homes will flood again in the future. People don't want to deal with the truth of the situation."

When Congress approved the Disaster Relief Act of 1950, enabling the federal government to provide relief and recovery funds, Colten said, it gave the region a false sense of security and a willingness to allow development in higher risk areas. Making the risk even more tolerable is the National Flood Insurance Program, created in 1968 after Hurricane Betsy flooded New Orleans three years earlier. The intent of the insurance program was to provide affordable, government-subsidized flood coverage for homes already at risk of flooding. In exchange, local communities are supposed to prevent new development in high-risk areas.

Not only have local governments largely ignored their role, but also local officials routinely threaten lawsuits whenever FEMA attempts to expand the 100-year flood zone, where homeowners must carry private flood insurance. Most of the houses damaged in the Louisiana Flood of 2016 did not carry flood insurance because they were located outside FEMA's high-risk zone. And instead of limiting development, the flood insurance program has opened the door for more expensive homes, constructed on concrete slabs, to be built in areas likely to flood.

"It's been 50 years of unintended consequences," said Richards, the LSU law professor. "A program designed to help has made the problem worse."

Louisiana leads the country in severe repetitive loss properties, according to FEMA records, with more than 7,200 of the National Flood Insurance Program's 30,000 multi-flood homes. One house in Batchelor, in Pointe Coupee Parish, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, has flooded 40 times over the past four decades, collecting $428,379 in insurance payments. Since 1978, repeat loss properties in the state have received $1.22 billion in flood insurance payments — 22 percent of all repetitive loss claims in the U.S., according to the council's research.

"We need to change the emphasis of the NFIP from a rebuilding program to a risk mitigation program," said Rob Moore, a flood policy analyst at the council. "It currently addresses people's short-term need to get their life back in order, not the long-term risk."

The flood insurance program is $23 billion in debt, much of that due to massive payouts after hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and Sandy in 2012, prompting some to wonder whether federal officials will do what those at the local level will not: impose higher elevation rules on development, expand at-risk flood zones and broaden private insurance mandates.

"Why should the federal government keep bailing us out if we're not willing to build safer communities in areas that we know will experience flooding," asked Richards. "People are right saying what happened in August was rare, but what they won't acknowledge is a 100-year rain, which is common, may do 90 percent as much flooding. Are we ready for that?"

Hurricane Rita: Lessons Learned

Lake Charles (LA) American Press, September 24, 2016

Today, Sept. 24, marks the 11th anniversary of the day that Hurricane Rita made landfall between Holly Beach, Louisiana and Sabine Pass, Texas with 120 mph winds and an enormous storm surge.

Rita did $12 billion damage and about 120 deaths were attributed to the hurricane throughout its existence. Seven of those deaths were directly storm related, such as winds, storm surge, floods and other oceanic events. Other deaths attributed to the hurricane were the result of traffic accidents, fires, crimes and other incidents.

Southwest Louisiana was particularly hard hit in the storm because it was in the northeast quadrant, known as the "dirty side" of tropical event. Rainfall from the hurricane peaked in Central Louisiana at 16 inches.

Studying such historic events have great value to us today and to future generations, because the teach us lessons that can help us survive future disasters.

Here are some of the lessons learned:

Local officials had been practicing for such disasters for years, and had been dealing with evacuees from Hurricane Katrina for weeks. Local government was much more efficient than federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The large-scale evacuation was largely successful. Officials learned it was better to call for an evacuation too early than too late.

Evacuation routes needed to be improved. It took some people 13 hours and more to get through the traffic jam between Lake Charles and Alexandria and other destinations north.

Rita's straight-line winds did much damage, as did tornadoes, explaining why some streets saw horrific damage, and other homes a block or two away escaped unscathed.

Residents who remained at home during the storm spent nerve-racking hours huddled in an interior closet or lying in a bathtub. Many who survived that experience said, "Never again."

Residents who live along waterways received unexpected damage from the storm surge.

Roofs, buildings and furnishings can be replace, lives cannot.

It takes weeks to repair ravaged electrical substations, transformers, poles and lines. People also learned life without electricity is miserable.

Help from neighbors and volunteers are a vital to the recovery of individuals, families and getting life back to normal.

We've still got another month left in this hurricane season, so here are some additional tips: stay alert, keep informed by the

American Press

and other news media; make sure you know the evacuation routes; have personal plans for evacuation; have emergency, supplies ready, such as food, water and medicine; keep your vehicle in good running order, and help elderly relatives or friends if needed.

Learning the lessons of history is always a good idea, particularly from great natural disasters such as Hurricane Rita.

SAFER Grant Will Make City Residents, Businesses Safer

By Anna McCann, Merritt Machinery LLC President

Lockport (NY) Union Sun Journal, September 25, 2016

As the owner of a city business near the recent HTI fire, I was disappointed to read the Union-Sun & Journal's negative opinion concerning the Common Council's approval of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant, which will provide funds to hire four additional firefighters at no cost to the city. Your editorial board may have agreed with the council and firefighters had you done some research on fire standards.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the SAFER grant was created to help fire departments increase or maintain the number of "trained, 'front line' firefighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association."

In the case of the HTI fire, Lockport Fire Department was unable to bring its aerial ladder truck to the fire scene due to being understaffed. This fact was confirmed by Chief Brady at the recent meeting of residents affected by the HTI fire. The ladder truck would have required a minimum of seven men, but the department's current staffing level is six men.

NFPA Standard 1710 is based on the review of many studies, evaluations and reports citing empirical data on fire department response time and fire mitigation. The NFPA technical committee's review of this data clearly demonstrates that for safe, effective and efficient fire suppression and rescue operations, each responding fire apparatus must be staffed with four firefighters, and "requires five to six personnel for high tactical hazards (high-rises, large commercial occupancies, industrial complexes, large multi-dwellings, geographical restrictions, etc). If the ladder truck crew is expected to perform both engine and truck work simultaneously, they should be staffed with additional personnel."

That means more than six men are required for the Initial Rapid Intervention Crew when responding to a fire in a typical 2-story house. The NFPA recommendation for fighting the typical house fire is 17 men. How many firefighters do you think are required for initial response to an industrial tire fire?

Standard 1710 further states "given that the progression of a structure fire to the point of flashover generally occurs in less than 10 minutes, two of the most important elements in limiting fire spread are the quick arrival of sufficient personnel, and equipment to attack and extinguish the fire as close to the point of its origin as possible."

City firefighters responding to the HTI fire lacked the two most important elements, sufficient personnel and equipment. This was proven by their inability to obtain adequate water source immediately upon arrival. The ladder truck is a more effective platform than an engine for a large fire.

I commend Alderman Anita Mullane for supporting the four-man SAFER grant application in 2015. Unfortunately, the mayor did not agree, and broke a 3-3 tie vote of the council by voting against it. Had the city applied for and received the grant last year, the firefighters' initial response to the HTI fire would have included the ladder truck.

Could that have prevented the fire from spreading? Most likely, and it may have prevented the smoke and soot damage to not only neighboring residences, but homes like mine 7 miles from the fire scene that were also affected, along with the endangerment of city firefighters and some 200 volunteer firefighters that responded to the mutual aid call.

Those calls work both ways, as was the case in the deployment of city firefighters to the Badger Drive house fire in the town of Lockport. An extra man on a platoon would save city overtime costs by eliminating the need to call in off-duty firefighters during mutual aid calls.

Your opinion stated "accepting the SAFER grant ends up insulting to the city Fire Board, which has stood by its decision that a six-man minimum shift staffing level is adequate to keep city residents safe." I find it interesting that four of the five members of the Fire Board — Dr. Jeffrey Schratz, Christopher Prucha, former alderman Pat Schrader and current Alderman David Wohleben — all live in the 4th Ward. The fifth member, former alderman Kitty Fogle, was appointed to the board in January by Mayor McCaffrey despite being voted out of office last November. Why aren't members appointed from all regions of the city? Perhaps the fire board and your editorial board would have a different opinion of the SAFER grant if their homes and offices were located in the vicinity of the HTI fire.

In March, the new council voted 5-1 to apply for the four-man grant. Alderman Wohleben cast the only "no" vote and the mayor also voiced her opposition during discussions prior to the vote. It's sad that it took a major fire to change their minds at last week's vote, most likely because voting "no" would have been political suicide.

As a business owner, I pay city taxes and do my part in supporting local organizations and keeping my property neat and orderly. In return, I expect to be protected in the event of an emergency, whether it's a fire, accident or medical event. As Alderman Abbott stated while running for office last year, "We are paying a premium tax rate; so therefore, we need to provide quality services to our residents. Quality services is not a perk, it is an obligation."

The SAFER grant will make Lockport residents and businesses safer, at no cost to taxpayers, for the next 2 years. As for the city's long-term financial future, given the legacy costs of the 10-year police contract negotiated by the mayor and corporation counsel just before last year's elections, the city may be bankrupt in 10 years, waiting for another state bailout but that's another story. When do you plan on printing that one?

Minimize Risk, Have Emergency Plans On Farms

By Anita Deming

Plattsburgh (NY) Press Republican, September 25, 2016

Farm Safety Week is dedicated to reminding rural communities that agriculture is one of the most dangerous occupations in the U.S., and farm injuries and fatalities are preventable through implementing safety plans and using common sense.

The most recent data from the U.S. Department of Labor indicates that farming accounted for 568 fatalities, with an estimated 70,000 injuries. Farming is particularly dangerous as people (including seniors and children) live on farms 24 hours, so any accident is counted as farming related.

Other factors include large unpredictable animals, large hardened steel equipment sometimes operated on hills, chemicals, increased potential for fires and long, exhausting hours during planting and harvest.

Planning and preparation can help farmers and homeowners minimize risk on their property and protect their loved ones and employees. There are many places to find information on preventing accidents and minimizing their impact. I recommend the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN): http://eden.cce.cornell.edu. They have lists for emergency kits, "go bags" and training videos.

In addition to accidents and weather disasters to prepare for, there are several occupational hazards such as hearing loss, repetitive joint damage, lung impacts from breathing dust and zoonotic diseases. For information on these hazards, contact New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (www.nycamh.org). They can come to your farm to audit for your risk factors.

Minimizing risks using personal protective equipment and doing jobs the right way every time can help workers avoid illness and injury. Still, emergency situations can happen when you least expect it, and the first few minutes are crucial.

It's important to have a plan and ensure that everyone knows what to do in a fire, power outage, pesticide exposure, illness, injury or other sudden emergencies. This plan should include: evacuating procedures, steps to ensure the safety of others, who to contact and a safe meeting area. Things such as an emergency phone call list for emergency services, hospitals, power and repair services. Also designate an emergency contact person to coordinate communications within your family.

Just a little bit on our emergency response system: When you contact 911 they will ask you for details of the emergency to determine the level of response needed and whether it is a potential terrorist or mass casualty problem. Providing 911 GPS addresses will help tremendously in finding the accident site.

In certain cases, they may activate special teams, such as the high angle rescue team for silo rescues or the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) team for entering certain manure storages. If the incident is widespread as were the Irene washouts, the State Emergency Management System (SEMO) or even the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be activated.

The first steps in a disaster are to rescue injured people, if there are too many for the town to handle then they will activate the Mutual Aid Plan. As the disaster goes on we move to identifying the impact on people, roads and other public systems with an eye toward evaluating if this disaster qualifies for state or federal funding. This means you will be asked for estimates of the economic value of your losses over and above personal losses.

Phones will likely be out, so if you have access to phones, please find out how your neighbors are doing and relay that information as well. If you have to relocate, each town has emergency shelters, and there are county animal response teams for your animals. Be sure to include resources for your pet in your go bag.

So remember that "Safety is No Accident," and your time preparing and insuring against disaster may save lives in addition to money. Contact your local CCE office for more information on what you can do to prevent and minimize accidents.

Anita Deming is the executive director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Essex County, and is the coordinator for Adirondack Harvest. Reach her at 962-4810, Ext. 409, or ald6@cornell.edu.

Commentary: State Response To Hoosick Falls Has Echoes Of Love Canal

As with earlier environmental crisis, state looks to feds for money to clean up mess

By Bruce W. Dearstyne, Author

Albany (NY) Times Union, September 24, 2016

Recent state Senate hearings in Hoosick Falls about PFOA contamination of drinking water have featured an effort by state officials to put some of the responsibility on the federal Environmental Protection Agency. State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker accused the agency of shifting its standards on what constitutes an unsafe level of the chemical.

It's not the first time the state has tried to draw the federal government into a state environmental crisis. That happened in 1978-1980 during the health crisis at the Love Canal area in Niagara Falls.

In 1978, residents there discovered their homes had been built at the site of an abandoned canal used by Hooker Chemical to dump toxic chemicals, some of them carcinogenic. The long-buried chemicals were leaching into people's basements and bubbling out in backyards. The state responded slowly but began buying up homes and relocating people closest to the site. There was at that time no dedicated federal funding for cleaning up toxic sites.

In August 1978, Gov. Hugh Carey convinced President Jimmy Carter to declare Love Canal a federal disaster area. After months of negotiation, the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (predecessor of today's Federal Emergency Management Agency) agreed to provide limited funding only to partially reimburse the state for the cost of demolishing homes closest to the site.

In May 1980, the EPA conducted what was supposed to be a confidential study of the health effects at Love Canal. It found many people suffering from "supernumerary acentric chromosomes," which sounded frightening. Leaked to The New York Times, the report set off a new round of panic and demand for more government action at Love Canal.

The new federal report documented "extraordinary exposure to cancer, birth defects, and crippling and possibly killing diseases," the governor said. Permanent relocation was "the only reasonable way to deal with the trauma being experienced by area residents," he said. The state had already spent more than $40 million; now the federal government needed to step in because the EPA report had caused so much fear.

At about the same time, the Love Canal Homeowners' Association, which had been organized to demand government help, invited two EPA officials who happened to be visiting Niagara Falls to meet with residents to discuss the EPA study. Once they were inside, the citizen activists refused to let them leave. They listened to citizens' complaints. Media representatives were allowed into the building to report the event. An angry crowd gathered outside. Someone outlined the letters "EPA" with gasoline on the grass and set it on fire.

In the evening, FBI agents and U.S. Marshals from Buffalo, and Niagara Falls police, escorted the EPA men safely out of the building. Love Canal people demanded answers and action from Washington;

otherwise, said Homeowners' Association President Lois Gibbs as the federal officials were driven away, "this will look like a Sesame Street picnic."

Carey's demand and Gibbs' direct action shifted the focus to Carter, who was running for re-election. In late May, he announced the EPA would provide enough funding to relocate all affected residents, on a matching basis with New York funds. On Oct. 1, Carter flew into Niagara Falls to sign the legislation authorizing the promised funds and also money to clean up another waste site in the region. "I don't believe Governor Carey has ever overlooked an opportunity to remind me of the problems of Love Canal," he told the crowd.

Federal largesse was enough to get the job done. Affected families were relocated, their homes and other buildings were razed, the landfill was capped, and a facility was built to monitor, collect and treat any additional runoff.

But New York's gratitude was limited. In the November 1980 election, Jimmy Carter carried Niagara County but lost New York, and the election, to Reagan.

The Love Canal crisis led to stronger state and federal restrictions on dump sites and to the creation of the Superfund for cleanup of sites contaminated by hazardous materials. (Some of those funds may help Hoosick Falls and other towns with PFOA issues.)

Though Hooker Chemical denied responsibility, asserting that the dumping had been legal under the lax state and federal rules in the 1940s and early 1950s, its successor company, Occidental Petroleum, ended up paying large fines to the federal and state governments. The company also paid undisclosed amounts to residents who sued, and agreed to assume responsibility for the treatment facility that the state had built to deal with chemicals still seeping out at the site.

Saint Gobain, the company allegedly responsible for the contamination at Hoosick Falls (and possibly other sites), has so far picked up much of the tab for remedial work, such as installation of filters.

But New York officials seem to be setting up the case to tap federal resources, much as Carey did back then.

In an Aug. 30 letter to EPA, the health and environmental conservation commissioners said the state had already spent $25 million and anticipates at least $50 million more. Asserting that the EPA's "changing, conflicting guidance" on what constitutes a safe level of PFOA had caused "undue public confusion" and has "aggravated the situation, causing undue expense to our agencies," they asked for federal reimbursement of state expenses.

Federal EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy responded that her agency's health advisories were clear and consistent and implied that New York officials may have misunderstood them. She urged the New Yorkers to "move beyond accusatory letters" and work with EPA to resolve the crisis.

Like the residents of Love Canal, the people of Hoosick Falls and other affected areas want answers and help from government health experts. They may also expect someone to pay for their health risks and ordeal. The Rensselaer County Legislature just passed a resolution asking for a federal tax credit for residents of Hoosick Falls and Petersburgh, one of the other communities affected by PFOA contamination.

"Regarding the missing link of liability, if health-related dangers are detected, what are we as a people willing to spend to correct the situation? How much risk are we willing to accept? Who's going to pick up the tab?"

Those were the words of an EPA administrator discussing Love Canal 37 years ago. But they could just as easily describe the outstanding questions in Hoosick Falls today.

Bruce W. Dearstyne is the author of "The Spirit of New York: Defining Events in the Empire State's History."

Fallen Firefighters Define True Heroism

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, September 24, 2016

As is too often the case, it has taken a tragedy to remind us that heroes are not comic book or movie characters. They do not seek or bask in any spotlight.

They seek only to help others. To them, it is not a job. It is their life's passion.

Heroism is not a physical gift. It is an all-too-rare psychological strength – the ability to recognize when others are in danger and confront that danger head-on. Most of us flee danger. Heroes face it with calm and poise, all in the name of holding suffering and sadness at bay.

They do not need to be told that others need help. It is their instinct. And when the work is done and the danger has passed, the heroes retreat quietly, knowing full well that danger will emerge in another form or fashion within hours or even minutes.

Christopher Leach and Jerry Fickes are heroes. We will not use "were" because the sacrifice Christopher Leach and Jerry Fickes made will not soon be forgotten.

The two died early Saturday when a floor collapsed above them as they looked for residents in a burning Wilmington rowhome. According to the

Wilmington Fire Department, firefighters became trapped some 20 minutes after arriving on the scene. Four other WFD firefighters were injured.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, Christopher Leach, Jerry Fickes were the 64th and 65th American firefighters to die in the line of duty in 2016. The previous two died in separate incidents on Wednesday.

How Saturday's tragedy happened is under investigation.

Why it happened is less of a mystery. Christopher Leach, Jerry Fickes and their comrades entered 1927 Lakeview Road because their minds were fixed on saving people. On helping. On putting others' lives ahead of their own.

If you've met a firefighter, you know that a passion for the vocation is woven through the fabric of their being. They love their comrades. They love the equipment. They love life at the station. They love being on the job. The members of Ladder Co. 2 and Squad 4, like their counterparts around the world, did not become firefighters on a whim. Nor do they often leave the service to find "more rewarding work."

Christopher Leach and Jerry Fickes will always be members of the Wilmington Fire Department. They will always be firefighters.

May they always inspire others to be heroes.

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

Guardia Nacional Comienza Distribución De Plantas Eléctricas

Telemundo, September 26, 2016

Guardia Nacional comienza distribución de plantas eléctricas

Por CYBER NEWS

Publicado sábado 24 de septiembre de 2016

La Guardia Nacional de Puerto Rico (GNPR) informó el sábado que comenzaron este fin de semana con la distribución de generadores de electricidad suministrados por la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA).

En un parte de prensa, la GNPR detalló que en la noche del viernes escoltaron a la Policía con tres camiones tácticos hasta las instalaciones de FEMA en Caguas para recoger tres plantas generadoras, que fue luego transportadas hacia Gurabo y Yabucoa.

La planta que tenían sufrió una avería, por lo que el Municipio de San Juan les suplió una. (Publicado viernes 23 de septiembre de 2016)

"Con este apoyo de nuestra Guardia Nacional reafirmamos el compromiso y deber de ayudar a alivianar la situación de emergencia que enfrenta Puerto Rico. Estoy muy orgullosa y agradecida de mis ciudadanos-soldados que siempre están presentes para actuar en cualquier situación de emergencia arriesgando de alguna forma sus vidas", expresó la ayudante general de Puerto Rico, Marta Carcana.

El jueves a través de una Orden Ejecutiva, el gobernador Alejandro García Padilla activó a la GNPR para la distribución de estas plantas generadoras de energía.

Mientras defendía las cifras oficiales ofrecidas por la AEE, se interrumpió el servicio de energía eléctrica. (Publicado viernes 23 de septiembre de 2016)

El director de FEMA en Puerto Rico, Alejandro de la Campa, manifestó el jueves que el gobierno federal puso a disposición del país unas 77 plantas de energía tras el apagón masivo del miércoles que dejó a 1.5 millones de abonados sin luz y a miles sin servicio de agua.

Publicado sábado 24 de septiembre de 2016

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(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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NATIONAL NEWS

Presidential Disaster Approved For 19 Iowa Counties

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — President Barack Obama has approved a major disaster declaration for 19 Iowa counties because of storms and flooding in September and October.

That makes federal funding available to state and local government agencies and some nonprofit organizations.

The money will help perform emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding that occurred between Sept. 21 and Oct. 3.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency says additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Most of the counties are in northeast and north-central Iowa but Des Moines County is southeast Iowa also is included.

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Obama Declares Federal Disaster In Iowa

Quad-City (IA) Times, November 1, 2016

DES MOINES — President Barack Obama designated 19 Iowa counties as eligible for federal assistance to help repair and rebound from at least $22 million that results when severe storms caused extensive flooding along the Cedar River from Sept. 21 to Oct. 3.

Obama signed a presidential disaster proclamation Monday declaring that a major disaster exists in parts of Iowa and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the affected areas of Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek and Wright counties.

Federal funding is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding in the designated counties. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

W. Craig Fugate, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, named James N. Russo as the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

FEMA said additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Last month Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad signed a letter asking Obama to issue a presidential disaster declaration for public assistance as a result of damage sustained in 19 Iowa counties. However, the governor's request did not include activation of the federal Individual assistance program as the damage incurred to private homes during flooding did not meet FEMA's criteria.

The governor requested funding under FEMA'S public assistance program, which is used to rebuild damaged infrastructure that may include roads, bridges, culverts and other public facilities, or to cover costs of emergency work during, and debris removal after, the storms.

A joint federal, state, and local preliminary damage assessment of the 19 counties found the severe weather caused an estimated $22 million worth of damage that could be eligible under the public assistance program. The governor also requested funding to conduct hazard mitigation activities for the entire state.

In Linn County, the damage estimated at $12,742,469 includes about $11.3 million for the city of Cedar Rapids, about $630,000 for the county, $314,000 for the city of Palo and $373,000 for the Mercy Medical complex, Benson said. Damage to infrastructure in upstream Black Hawk County totaled at least $3,423,005 and Butler County's damage assessment totaled $1,633,164.

In conjunction with Iowa's latest severe weather event, Branstad announced the creation of a flood recovery task force — comprised of state and local agencies — to address the unmet needs of impacted residents as part of an effort to assist Iowans in their recovery from flooding and severe weather. The task force will focus on working with communities to develop long-term housing recovery options, according to the governor's office.

– Rod Boshart

Obama Declares Federal Disaster In Iowa, Makes Aid Available

By Rod Boshart

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, November 1, 2016

DES MOINES — President Barack Obama designated 19 Iowa counties as eligible for federal assistance to help rebound from at least $22 million in damages caused by extensive flooding along the Cedar River from Sept. 21 to Oct. 3.

Obama signed a presidential disaster proclamation Monday declaring that a major disaster exists in parts of Iowa and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the affected areas of Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek and Wright counties.

Federal funding is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private non-profit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding in the designated counties. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Craig Fugate, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, named James N. Russo as the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

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Last month, Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad signed a letter asking Obama to issue a presidential disaster declaration for public assistance as a result of damage sustained in 19 Iowa counties. However, the governor's request did not include activation of the federal Individual assistance program as the damage incurred to private homes during flooding did not meet FEMA's criteria.

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Steve Estenson, Linn County risk manager, said flood insurance should cover any damage to the interior of the county courthouse and sheriff's office, which saw some water damage.

Anything after that would be submitted to FEMA, he said.

Cedar Rapids City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said expenses in a "typical disaster" are covered by 75 percent federal money, 10 percent state and 15 percent local. FEMA must still write project worksheets to identify costs, he said.

"The declaration is good news, and will help Cedar Rapids as we work towards recovery," Pomeranz said. "We appreciate the quick response of the Governor, FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security, as well as the President for signing the declaration."

In conjunction with Iowa's latest severe weather event, Branstad announced the creation of a flood recovery task force — comprised of state and local agencies — to address the unmet needs of impacted residents as part of an effort to assist Iowans in their recovery from flooding and severe weather. The task force is to focus on working with communities to develop long-term housing recovery options, according to the governor's office.

Obama Disaster Declaration Includes North Iowa

Mason City (IA) Globe Gazette, November 1, 2016

North Iowa counties are among 19 in the state that are now eligible for federal assistance to help rebound from extensive flooding along the Cedar River from Sept. 21 to Oct. 3.

President Barack Obama signed a proclamation Monday declaring a major disaster exists in parts of Iowa and ordering federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the affected areas. At least $22 million in damage was caused by the storms and flooding.

Counties in the proclamation are Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek and Wright.

Federal funding is available to state and local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities in the designated counties. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

W. Craig Fugate, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, named James N. Russo as the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

FEMA said additional designations may be made later if requested by the state and warranted by further damage assessments.

Last month Gov. Terry Branstad signed a letter asking Obama to issue a presidential disaster declaration. However, the governor's request did not include activation of the federal Individual assistance program because the damage incurred to private homes during flooding did not meet FEMA's criteria.

The governor requested funding under FEMA'S public assistance program, which is used to rebuild damaged infrastructure that may include roads, bridges, culverts and other public facilities, or to cover costs of emergency work during the storms and debris removal after.

Branstad also announced the creation of a flood recovery task force with state and local agencies to address unmet needs of affected residents to assist them in their recovery from flooding and severe weather.

The task force will focus on working with communities to develop long-term housing recovery options, according to the governor's office.

– Rod Boshart

Hurricane Matthew Took A Big Bite Out Of Southeastern States' Beaches

By Greg Allen

NPR, November 1, 2016

Beaches in the Southeastern U.S. took a tremendous beating last month from Hurricane Matthew. The U.S. Geological Survey has found that the storm washed over and damaged 15 percent of sand dunes on Florida's Atlantic Coast, 30 percent along Georgia's coastline and 42 percent of the dunes on South Carolina beaches.

In Florida, few coastal areas were hit harder by the hurricane than the 18 miles of dunes and beaches in Flagler County. County Administrator Craig Coffey says, "What Matthew did to us essentially [was] eat about 30 feet of coastline all the way along the county, and created a bunch of breaches through that dune system."

Matthew also washed out a big chunk of coastal highway A1A in Flagler Beach. The state and county are working to have that road repaired and open within 45 days. Fixing that highway is important, Coffey says. But he is equally worried about damage to the county's beaches and dunes, which provide the community with important protection from tides, wave action and storm surge.

When Hurricane Matthew overtopped and breached Flagler County's beaches, some 800 homes were flooded. Coffey says, "We're trying to figure out how can we protect those for next hurricane season so we don't have more breaches. We literally were fighting breaches in about 10 locations." Flagler County is hoping federal money will be available to help it begin restoring the dunes, which provide protection for hundreds of coastal homes.

Many other communities are facing similar problems. The USGS says 53 miles of dunes were damaged and overtopped in Florida. In Georgia, 32 miles of shoreline were affected. Seventy-seven miles of dunes were damaged in South Carolina.

Hilary Stockdon, a research oceanographer at USGS, says a survey of the beaches compared aerial photos taken before and after the storm. It showed extensive beach erosion all along the Southeast Atlantic coast, Stockdon says, "where waves removed sand from beaches and sharply eroded sand dunes. There were locations where houses were undermined or roads were undermined. And we also saw locations where the sand was pushed inland."

After small storms, Stockdon says, beaches and dunes can recover naturally. With major storms like Hurricane Matthew, though, sand is washed inland and bulldozed away, she says. Restoring sand dunes after those events often requires big engineering projects.

Haley To Visit Lowcountry To Discuss Hurricane Matthew

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

RIDGELAND, S.C. (AP) – Gov. Nikki Haley is heading to the Lowcountry to talk about recovery from Hurricane Matthew.

The governor's office said Haley will be in Ridgeland on Wednesday as part of a relief event. The event is set from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Jasper County Farmers Market.

Federal, state and nonprofit organization officials will be available to answer questions from residents of Beaufort, Jasper, Colleton and Hampton counties about help families and businesses after the storm.

Those who visit the event can register for financial help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They can also apply for disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency will also be on hand to provide information for farmers about crop losses and damage.

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Kinston Remains Short On Hotel Rooms After Hurricane Matthew

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

KINSTON, N.C. (AP) — The impact of Hurricane Matthew continues to be felt in Kinston's hotel market.

WITN-TV in Greenville reports (http://bit.ly/2ekuHyu) four of the city's six hotels were flooded. The Hampton Inn on U.S. 70 Bypass had 21 inches of water on the first floor, where 26 guest rooms were destroyed.

General manager Travis Baker says the hotel still has no power and is awaiting an inspection of flooded transformers so they can get temporary power back into the building.

Baker said the goal is to reopen by the middle of next month.

Visit Kinston director Jan Parson estimates the city will lose between $70,000 and $95,000 in occupancy taxes due to the loss of hotel reservations. The money helps market the area to attract visitors and help with tourism.

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Information from: WITN-TV, http://www.witntv.com/

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McCrory: Hurricane Relief Timetable Includes Special Session

By Gary Robertson

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Gov. Pat McCrory said Tuesday he expects to call lawmakers to a special session next month on Hurricane Matthew relief for eastern North Carolina, looking to Congress for supplemental aid first and developing policy based on recommendations from committees his administration created.

Addressing the first meeting of one panel assigned to examine the damage and pinpoint unmet needs, McCrory and other administration officials told participants the actual recovery will be long and hard.

"It won't be a sprint. It will be a marathon," said McCrory Chief of Staff Thomas Stith, who is also the panel's chairman.

The storm raked the eastern half of the state 3½ weeks ago, dumping up to 17 inches of rain and leading to record flooding along rivers and in the towns and cities adjoining them. Authorities said there were 28 storm-related deaths. While federal damage assessments are continuing, state officials earlier estimated $1.5 billion in damage to 100,000 homes, businesses and government buildings. That doesn't count agricultural losses.

"Our state has gone through a very traumatic, violent and emotional disaster," McCrory told the Hurricane Matthew Recovery Committee, but "now we need to reinvent ourselves on how do we recover from this."

McCrory laid out a plan that in which the bipartisan committee — comprised of elected leaders, business people, government officials and citizens — would tour hard-hit areas. In early December the panel would fashion recommendations for recovery assistance that wouldn't be covered with existing funds. A separate panel of emergency management officials would consider more technical issues related to federal and state assistance and address immediate needs.

The governor said he would turn in the state's request for federal disaster assistance on Nov. 14 and wait for Congress to approve it. The state would have to provide matching funds and cover items not included in supplemental federal funds. McCrory said he envisioned calling a special legislative session for early December, although the date could move up depending on the speed of Congress.

"I am confident that we'll be able to recover and rebuild even stronger than what we had before in many of these areas impacted," he said.

The General Assembly likely would be asked to create state recovery programs and permit spending from the state's reserve fund, now close to $1.6 billion. Laws also would be amended to exempt some schools from the required minimum number of days or instructional hours they must be open.

State Budget Director Drew Heath told the committee the state has enough disaster funds to meet immediate needs through January, when the legislature convenes its two-year session. But McCrory told reporters waiting until then to act would hamper long-term recovery planning.

The governor said he wanted the recovery committee to raise private and corporate funds to address permanent housing and small business aid. State officials said 250 people are still in shelters and more than 1,500 displaced households are still living in hotels.

The committee's members include former Gov. Beverly Perdue, ex-McCrory budget director Art Pope and current University of North Carolina system President Margaret Spellings.

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McCrory Suspends Non-essential Travel For State Workers

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) – The Latest on the Alabama pipeline explosion and its impact on North Carolina: (all times local):

6:45 p.m.

Gov. Pat McCrory has signed an executive order waiving some requirements to allow trucks to deliver gasoline and to protect consumers from price gouging.

McCrory's latest executive order is an extension of an order issued for Hurricane Matthew. The order waives maximum hours of service for drivers and temporarily suspends vehicle size and weight restrictions to allow transport of gasoline. Extending the state of emergency also extends price gouging laws to help protect North Carolinians from excessive gas prices at the pump. The governor took similar action during an earlier disruption to the pipeline in September.

The governor has suspended non-essential travel for state employees. McCrory also directed the Department of Environmental Quality to work with the Department of Agriculture to use different gasoline formulas to increase access to supplies from northern states.

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4:20 p.m.

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory said his administration was monitoring the explosion at an Alabama pipeline for possible disruptions to the state's gasoline supply.

McCrory said Tuesday that his office is preparing for all options in response. He later urged citizens not to participate in panic buying, saying it would only make the situation worse.

The governor said the pipeline provides 70 percent of North Carolina's gasoline supply.

Earlier. North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper announced the state's law regarding price gouging was still in effect. It was initially implemented after the same pipeline was disrupted by a leak in September. It was triggered again after Hurricane Matthew struck the eastern part of the state.

McCrory, a Republican, and Cooper, a Democrat, are opposing each other in the 2016 governor's race.

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3:58 p.m.

North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper is reminding residents that the state's price gouging law remains in effect in the wake of a fatal explosion in Alabama that shut down a pipeline supplying gasoline across the Southeast.

A previous shutdown of the same gas pipeline in September triggered the law, which went into effect again in October by Hurricane Matthew and remains in effect statewide.

Cooper's office is currently investigating businesses for possible price gouging related to Hurricane Matthew as well as for alleged gas price gouging due to problems with the pipeline in September. He advised residents that if they see excessive prices at the pump, they should call his office.

Cooper is the Democratic candidate for governor in North Carolina, challenging Republican incumbent Pat McCrory.

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Largest US Oil Pipeline Shut Off After Deadly Blast

AFP, November 1, 2016

The largest gasoline pipeline in the United States remained shut off Tuesday in the southern state of Alabama following an explosion that killed one and injured five, as crews battled to control the resulting wildfire.

The blaze broke out Monday afternoon in Shelby County after an excavator being used by contractors hit the Colonial pipeline and sparked an explosion, the company said in a statement.

"After the incident occurred, Colonial shut down its two main lines, which traverse Shelby County," the company said.

Fuel Prices Up And Down East Coast Spike After Ala. Pipeline Explosion

By Steven Mufson

Washington Post, November 1, 2016

For the second time in less than two months, a major breach closed down a key gasoline pipeline, driving up fuel prices and demonstrating the vulnerability of the entire Eastern Seaboard to an accident on a single piece of infrastructure.

Just before 3 p.m. Monday, a track hoe used for excavation struck Colonial Pipeline's Line No. 1 in Shelby County, Ala., breaking the 53-year-old steel pipe and igniting the gasoline inside. One worker was killed and five severely injured. The fire sent flames and black smoke billowing high into the sky and was still burning Tuesday afternoon.

The accident took place just a few miles from the site of a Sept. 9 leak from the same pipeline. The leak closed down the pipeline for 12 days, sparking long lines for gasoline in Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama.

Colonial's Line No. 1, 36 inches in diameter, carries approximately 1.3 million barrels a day of gasoline from Houston to Linden, N.J., branching off along the way to provide more than a third of the supplies for the entire East Coast.

"I think the issue of pipeline safety is important, given several recent high-profile accidents," said Jason Bordoff, director of Columbia University's center on global energy policy. "It certainly is a reminder of the vulnerability of East Coast gasoline supply."

Bordoff said the Energy Department had considered creating a reserve for refined products after Hurricane Sandy, in part because of the East Coast's dependence on limited pipeline infrastructure. Hurricane Katrina also caused gasoline shortages in places such as Atlanta because refineries along the Gulf of Mexico could not supply the southeastern portion of the pipeline network. But no reserve has been created.

Gasoline prices before taxes and fees soared Tuesday more than at any time since 2008. Early in the day, prices jumped 15 percent but finished the day up 4.6 percent at $1.4841 a gallon after the company said it hoped to reopen the pipeline Saturday afternoon. But Barclays analysts said the outage could last longer. “In an optimistic scenario,” they wrote, “Line 1 remains shut for at least another month, as the fire is put out and repairs and safety inspections take place.”

“It’s a very fragile system,” said Andre LeBlanc, vice president of Petroleum Marketing Group, which supplies more than 1,400 gas stations, from Maine to Tidewater, Va. “As we’ve seen over the past two months, this can be very impactful to us.”

Michael O’Connor, president of the Virginia Petroleum Convenience and Grocery Association, said that 70 percent to 80 percent of the gasoline and diesel for the state’s 5,000 fuel stations come through the Colonial pipelines. Colonial’s line No. 2, which parallels line one, carries diesel.

“That is a lot of dependence on one source,” he said, adding “you have to look at the 99.5 percent of the time when things are working like finely tuned Swiss watch.”

Throughout the Mid-Atlantic, wholesalers made plans for trucks to pick up supplies in ports such as Baltimore and in northern New Jersey. O’Connor said Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) had not lifted emergency measures imposed during Hurricane Matthew. Those measures eased limits on truckers and also relaxed weight restrictions on trucks carrying fuel.

In addition to concerns about the reliability of supplies, the latest pipeline accident exacerbates anxiety about pipelines in general. Environmental groups have been opposing both oil and natural gas pipelines from North Dakota to New England.

Colonial, founded in 1962, is owned by a group that includes Koch Industries, an affiliate of the KKR buyout firm, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, and a Royal Dutch Shell affiliate. The company’s two pipelines form a 5,500-mile network.

The Sept. 9 leak occurred in the original pipeline construction and dumped about 7,370 barrels of gasoline into man-made ponds about 460 yards away, according to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The ponds were once used for waste from strip mining.

The PHMSA, recently given expanded authority to order pipeline closures, said later that a crack was discovered on a buckle in the pipe. PHMSA regulators ordered Colonial to limit the volume of gasoline flow so that pipeline pressures did not exceed 80 percent of ordinary levels.

To restore the pipeline to service, Colonial used a stretch of pipe to bypass the leak.

Then on Monday, a crew working for a contractor was excavating the pipeline in preparation for the removal of the bypass when it hit the gasoline line.

For now, Colonial is literally focusing on getting the smoke to clear. The company said about 4,000 barrels of gasoline had burned or leaked since the explosion. Fire departments from three counties and two cities have teamed up with state and federal agencies to put out the fire. The firefighters had already been busy battling wildfires after weeks of drought.

The company said it also had laid containment booms at two locations along the Cahaba River. It said it did so “out of an abundance of caution.”

Firefighting crews built a 75-foot-long earthen dam to contain burning fuel, Reuters reported. Two wildfires caused by the explosion burned across 31 acres of land, officials said.

“Given these two recent disasters, we call for the federal government to conduct an immediate investigation into the Colonial Pipeline Company so that those impacted are fully compensated and no community is forced to face the risks Shelby County and so many like it around the country do on a daily basis, “ Lena Moffitt, director of Sierra Club’s Dirty Fuels campaign, said in a statement.

In North Carolina, Attorney General Roy Cooper told residents that the state’s anti-price-gouging law remains in effect, ABC News reported. Gov. Pat McCrory (R) urged citizens not to indulge in panic buying that could create artificial shortages.

Watch This Rare “Medicane” Tropical Storm Take Shape In The Mediterranean

By Angela Fritz

Washington Post, November 1, 2016

A rare, ostensibly bizarre storm formed in the Mediterranean over the weekend. It was a tropical storm, which is uncommon for that region simply because the Mediterranean Sea is usually too cold.

This odd storm started as an average low-pressure system on Saturday, east of Malta. What made it different was the exceptionally warm water in the Mediterranean Sea. The water temperature there is running 5 to 6 degrees above average for this time of year, which means it was around the special 80-degree mark that tropical storms usually need to develop.

Strong thunderstorms bubbled up in the system on Saturday and Sunday, and the pressure dropped. The atmosphere was moist and warm enough for the storm to become “warm core” — the signature difference between something like a hurricane and the day-to-day storms we get in the mid-latitudes.

Scott Bachmeier, a research meteorologist at the University of Wisconsin, has been tracking the storm since the weekend. He said "it developed over the Ionian Sea between Italy and Greece, initially moved southwestward, and then turned to the east where it eventually produced a wind gust to [60 mph] and caused some damage on the Greek island of Crete on 31 October. A wind gust to [57 mph] was also seen from a ship report at [1 p.m. local time Friday]."

The storm didn't have a name because the National Hurricane Center doesn't cover the Mediterranean Sea. However, it did reach tropical storm status, according to the Weather Channel.

The last time a storm like this occurred in the Mediterranean was in November 2011. The satellite division of NOAA designated it "Rolf."

The storm dissipated on Monday — though not before it slammed Malta with strong winds. Giant waves crashed on the shoreline in St. Julian's Bay and other east-coast locations, which experienced the strongest winds. The waves stopped traffic and damaged hotels, according to the Times of Malta:

Vicious winds are lashing the Maltese islands leaving a trail of damage, especially at the Radisson Hotel in St Julian's which was flooded after strong waves smashed through its windows.

The police today issued a warning advising the public to avoid coastal areas and seafronts such as Triq Borg Olivier in St Julian's due to high waves crashing onto land. Seawater had flooded one side of the Strand in Sliema.

A resident said the strong sea waves even smashed cars into the Park Towers Mall in St Julian's.

The Times of Malta even reported a strange slimy substance washing ashore. People blamed local fish farms, which denied responsibility:

Meanwhile, a glutinous slime was washed into Portomaso but fish farms have categorically denied it had anything to do with them.

Joseph Caruana, Fish & Fish director, said: "This slime has absolutely nothing to do with us. We have asked the government to carry out an investigation to establish this once and for all, and we're going to keep putting pressure until it's resolved."

Still, a reader reported seeing amounts of "strange slime like big snowflakes or foam from a washing machine being washed up by the waves" along the Coast Road, making the roads slippery and dangerous to drivers.

Wednesday's Forecast: Soggy Central, Warm East

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, November 1, 2016

Showers will dampen the central U.S. on Wednesday while the East sees another warm day.

Central U.S.: Showers and thunderstorms will fall along a slow-moving cold front from the southern Plains to the Upper Midwest. Some of the heaviest rain will be in Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan.

East: Warmer than normal temperatures will dominate the eastern half of the U.S., with temperatures as much as 20 degrees above normal through Thursday in some areas.

West: Other than some afternoon rain in western portions of Washington and Oregon, most of the western U.S. will be clear and dry on Wednesday.

Weather history for Nov. 2: In 1743, the first tropical storm in America to be measured accurately by scientific instruments was detected by Harvard professor John Winthrop in Cambridge, Mass. In 1989, almost four feet of lake-effect snow piled up in Ironwood, Mich.

Flood Of Weather Warning Terms Fuels Confusion

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, November 1, 2016

When you hear there's a "flood watch" in your town, do you know what that means? What about a "flood warning"? And what in the world is a "flood advisory?"

Do you have to think about which one is worse?

The National Weather Service is aware there is confusion around the watches, warnings and advisories it issues and is considering making small to potentially dramatic changes to how the agency lets Americans know when and where dangerous weather threatens.

The rampant befuddlement over the terms prompted the launch a few years ago of the hazard simplification project, an endeavor that's continually seeking input from the public, said Eli Jacks, chief of the agency's forecast services division. In the next few weeks, a survey asking for comments on winter weather and flooding hazard terms will be available on the project's website.

So what, exactly, do the names mean? At the most basic level, a watch means there's the potential for hazardous or dangerous weather, while a warning indicates hazardous or dangerous weather is imminent or occurring, the weather service said. Meanwhile, an advisory is issued for hazardous weather that is also imminent or occurring but is "less serious than a warning."

Therefore, a watch is typically the first product issued, followed by either an advisory or a warning, depending on the severity of the weather hazard.

Baffled yet?

One simple reason for the confusion is that both watch and warning start with the letters “wa,” while another is that advisory “doesn’t have any specific connotation,” Jacks said.

Not only are the three levels befuddling, there are also too many of them: In all, the weather service transmits a whopping 122 different watches, warnings and advisories, all the way from Air Quality Alert to Winter Weather Advisory. Some of the more obscure ones include Ashfall Warning, Freezing Spray Advisory and Lakeshore Flood Watch.

“If you look at the current suite of flood watches and warnings, there are more than even I was aware of,” said University of Georgia meteorologist Marshall Shepherd.

“With so many types of warnings, it is not surprising that some might downplay a deadly flood threat like we saw in Louisiana earlier this year,” he added, recalling the disaster that killed 13 people and destroyed nearly 150,000 homes.

The impetus for the project was partly due to twister outbreaks in Alabama and Missouri in 2011 that killed hundreds of people despite widespread tornado warnings, Jacks said.

“What can we do better?” he wondered.

Shepherd said the KISS principle (Keep It Simple Stupid) still works. “I learned this as a child and think it can apply with our weather warnings,” he said.

If the entire system is overhauled, what should the terms be replaced with? Jacks said the weather service is looking at many options, such as switching to the color-coded (yellow, orange, red) warnings some European countries use, or possibly different wording, such as warning of low, medium or high impact events.

But a switch isn’t necessarily simple or easy, Jacks said, as some emergency managers and municipalities have the watch, warning and advisory terms already baked into their systems.

Though a widespread change could still be a few years away, Jacks said, tweaking or reducing the confusing terms could happen sooner. “This is a very complex issue,” he said. “We’ve got to get it right.”

A tornado moves through Tuscaloosa, Ala. Wednesday, April 27, 2011. Hundreds of Americans were killed by tornadoes in 2011 despite widespread warnings. (Photo: Dusty Compton, AP)

U.S. Top Court Skeptical Toward State Farm Hurricane Fraud Appeal

By Lawrence Hurley

Reuters, November 1, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

State Farm, Whistleblowers Facing Off At U.S. Supreme Court

Chicago Tribune, November 1, 2016

Two whistleblowers from Ocean Springs, Miss., are headed to the U.S. Supreme Court Tuesday to defend the guilty verdict they won against State Farm Fire & Casualty Co. for defrauding the National Flood Insurance program after Hurricane Katrina.

The Supreme Court is set to hear oral arguments on State Farm’s appeal Tuesday — 11 years and two months after the hurricane.

The court has agreed to consider one question in the case a federal jury decided in Gulfport: whether attorneys for the whistleblowers, Cori and Kerri Rigsby, violated federal law by disclosing the lawsuit to members of the media while it was under seal in 2006. A whistleblower lawsuit is sealed, so federal prosecutors have time to investigate the alleged government fraud and decide whether to undertake prosecution.

The Rigsbys, who worked as State Farm claims adjusters after Hurricane Katrina, proceeded with the case after the government decided against intervening. The sisters proved at trial in 2013 that State Farm charged policy limits of $250,000 to the federal flood program while minimizing wind losses the insurance company owed on the claim of Biloxians Thomas and Pamela McIntosh.

The case included an infamous sticky note in the McIntosh file, attached to an expert report blaming wind for the loss, that said, “‘Put in Wind File. DO NOT Pay Bill. DO NOT discuss.’”

Ozerden ordered Bloomington-based State Farm to pay $750,000 in damages in the case, with the Rigsbys set to receive 15 percent. However, the Rigsbys have not been compensated for pursuing the claim because of the appeal.

The Supreme Court’s decision to consider the case will not necessarily change the jury’s verdict. If the question is resolved in State Farm’s favor, an attorney for the Rigsbys has said, the court could allow the fraud verdict to stand or set it aside.

The federal trial judge and the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals found early disclosure had not harmed the case and also that the Rigsbys previous legal team, not the women, had leaked the lawsuit.

The 5th circuit also upheld the jury's verdict and directed the judge in the case, Sul Ozerden, to allow the Rigsbys to examine other State Farm claims for evidence of fraud. State Farm has denied any wrongdoing. The broader fraud investigation also has put on hold pending the appeal's outcome.

The Supreme Court calendar shows that New York attorney Kathleen M. Sullivan is set to argue the case for State Farm, while Tejinder Singh of Bethesda, Maryland, is the attorney for the Rigsbys. Both attorneys are experienced appellate practitioners.

Supreme Court Hears Last-ditch Appeal From State Farm In Katrina Case

By Lydia Wheeler

The Hill, November 1, 2016

The Supreme Court grappled Tuesday with whether to let State Farm off the hook for the more than $3 million it's been ordered to pay for fraudulently billing the government in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The company says a lawsuit that two contracted insurance adjusters filed against it on behalf of the government in 2006 should be dismissed because their attorney, who is no longer on the case, violated a court-ordered seal when he leaked case evidence to three media outlets.

Justice Stephen Breyer said it's a serious thing when someone deliberately breaks a court seal and delivers the contents of a lawsuit to the press.

But Tejinder Singh, the attorney for the two whistleblowers, argued that the information given to the media was not for attribution. He told the justices Tuesday that journalists have ethics and are not allowed to quote material that's been given to them on background.

If your goal is to tar and feather the defendant, Sighn said, you do that by leaking the lawsuit to the press, not by leaking evidence.

But Chief Justice John Roberts countered that the press could easily put two and two together and realize that a complaint has been filed.

Under the False Claims Act, whistleblowers can sue on behalf of the government and receive a portion of the damages awarded. But the act requires the lawsuit to be kept sealed from both the public and the defendant for at least 60 days to give the government time to decide if it wishes to intervene.

A lower court awarded the sisters who brought the lawsuit, Cori and Kerri Rigsby, a 30 percent share of the $7358,250 award against State Farm and $2.9 million in attorney's fees and expenses.

Justice Anthony Kennedy asked whether State Farm was seeking any other sanction other than dismissal.

The attorney for the company, Kathleen Sullivan, argued that dismissing the case is the only appropriate way to punish whistleblowers who violate a court ordered seal when suing on behalf of the government.

"If you affirm, you are sending a message to every relator in the country: Leak away," she said.

The Extreme Unwisdom Of Burning Forests For Fuel

By Jane Maslow Cohen And Cindy Morris

The Hill, November 1, 2016

A bipartisan coalition in the U.S. Congress is pressing hard to advance a dangerously destructive environmental policy. It would require the Environmental Protection Agency to define biomass—energy obtained from wood-- as a carbon-neutral, renewable fuel, like solar power and wind. The EPA and its Science Advisory Board are opposed. They should be.

The idea is to kindle a mass market in the incineration of forests to generate electricity. If it succeeds, biomass technologies will be eligible for new funding in the race inspired by the 2015 Paris Agreement toward carbon-neutral fuels. Representatives of forest-rich states seek to wedge their desired mandate into three major bills now pending before Congress. One, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, is up for reconciliation now: Only the Senate bill includes the provision.

If this move becomes national policy, it will displace decades of international efforts to reduce forest loss from the use of wood for fuel, inviting emulation world-wide. Biomass combustion has been a source of serious atmospheric pollution. It releases 150 percent more greenhouse gases per unit of electricity than coal; and 400 times more than natural gas. Forest-destruction generates a double loss: Forests are the earth's largest terrestrial carbon sinks. As policy analyst Mary S. Booth observes, "From the atmosphere's point of view, decreasing a carbon sink has the same effect as increasing pollution from another source."

Proponents claim that biomass combustion would be carbon-neutral: While forests' combustion would release their carbon dioxide stores, newly-planted trees would restore carbon sinks in a repeating cycle.

Opponents respond that the carbon sinks that new trees provide could not occupy the same time-frame as the atmospheric carbon that would be released. The lag is non-trivial: Saplings take 40 to 50 years to absorb the carbon released by mature trees, leaving their heat-trapping gases in the air. A study commissioned by Massachusetts caused the state to abandon biomass subsidies for this cause.

But the most pervasive mistake the biomass enticement represents is that it is framed by a carbon-centric mindset that ignores the essential relationship between forests and the hydrological and energy cycles. Forests are not merely convenient closets for carbon storage. An outpouring of international research has been discovering and validating the unique, irreplaceable influence of forests on the natural regulation of the earth's climate through their generation of the land-atmosphere circulation of water and their maintenance of the patterns that distribute solar energy, with coolant effects. Forests play these interdependent roles through the atmospheric transport of moisture across land masses at regional and continental scales; the evapotranspiration of vast quantities of water from the earth's surface to the lower atmospheric boundary layer, where liquid water is converted to rain and snow; the filtration and storage of moisture, which forests' diverse structures pull from the atmosphere and guide underground, thereby mitigating drought and moderating floods; and the modulation of solar energy, through the natural cooling systems that forests are.

Until forests' crucial roles in the generation of planetary well-being can be reliably handed off to other natural or humanly-designed agents, it will be dangerous-- and perverse beyond measure-- to destroy forest placement and function in the misguided production of yet another heat-trapping fuel. Because such a move by the United States would put the Paris Agreement at grave risk, it is hard to imagine a worse signal to send-- or a worse time to send it.

If need be, the President should veto any bill that would cripple the unique capabilities of forests, on which all life depends.

Jane Maslow Cohen is a law professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Cindy E. Morris is a senior scientist at the French National Agricultural Research Institute (INRA) in Avignon and an Affiliate Professor at Montana State University in Bozeman. Both belong to an international science network that studies the interaction of landscapes with atmospheric processes.

The views expressed by authors are their own and not the views of The Hill.

Small Earthquakes Recorded In New Hampshire On Halloween

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) – Seismologists say small earthquakes were recorded in the New Hampshire towns of Salisbury and Andover on Halloween.

The United States Geological Survey says a 1.8-magnitude earthquake was centered in Salisbury at 2:47 a.m. Monday.

At 2:58 a.m., a 1.6-magnitude earthquake was registered in Andover.

There were no reports of any damage or injuries.

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Early Los Angeles-area Quakes Linked With Oil Production

By Steve Gorman

Reuters, November 1, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Heads Up! How NASA's Super Fast New Asteroid Detector Works

NBC News, November 1, 2016

Earthlings, always trust a Scout to have your back.

NASA's new asteroid detector, a computer program aptly named Scout, is the celestial equivalent of the person who yells "heads up" as a baseball comes barreling toward the stands.

Scout is a computer program designed to detect Near Earth Objects that could be on track for impact with Earth in a matter of days or weeks.

Scout works by scanning data from NASA's network of telescopes and assessing the likelihood of a Near Earth Object's slamming into Earth. It's then able to have other telescopes around the world confirm its findings.

"We can get a heads-up immediately, within an hour of the data being reported," Paul Chodas, manager of NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object (NEO) Studies at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, told NBC News. Cholas has been part of the team working on refining Scout over the past year.

A Near Earth Object is a comet or asteroid with an orbit that brings it within 30 million miles of Earth's orbit. NASA and its partners have a catalogue of around 15,000 Near Earth Objects that don't appear to pose threats to Earth any time soon.

Scout has already proven to be useful spotting the smaller objects as they near Earth. Chodas compared them to “a dot moving in the sky.”

A Scout report issued Tuesday shows that a tiny rock will whiz by Earth on Wednesday at a distance of 58,500 miles. When it looked like an asteroid would make a close pass with Earth last weekend, Scout was able to determine that it would pass 310,000 miles away, giving Earth a roomy buffer zone.

Finding Threats Early

Scout also has a big brother, Sentry, which is designed to keep track of objects over the course of the century.

Kelly Fast, program manager for Near Earth Objects Observations at NASA, told NBC News that tools like Sentry and Scout are part of the first line of defense, allowing the space agency and its partners to “find them and keep track of them.”

“The goal would be to have decades of lead time if there is something that could be a problem in the future,” she said.

Anything larger than 30 to 50 meters could survive entering Earth’s atmosphere and have the potential to inflict damage around its impact site, according to NASA.

Rob Landis, program executive for the Planetary Defense Coordination Office, told NBC News there’s a mantra that sums up the work they do detecting Near Earth Objects: “Find them early.”

“There is probably no greater gift that the space agencies of the world can provide humanity than to know the time and place of an impact event and to plan a response to it,” he said.

Managing the Risk of an Impact

Whether it’s decades or days, NASA has conducted a few simulations with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Landis said, allowing them to outline how they would respond to a potential close call.

NASA has never needed to mitigate a threat from a Near Earth Object. However, the agency has a number of concepts in the works so it’s ready if the need ever arises.

One of those is set to be demonstrated as part of the Asteroid Redirect Mission, which is slated for 2021. While the scope of the project is intended to test tech to be used on a future Mars mission, it will also demonstrate a key planetary defense method call the “gravity tractor.”

After capturing a boulder from the surface of an asteroid, NASA hopes to use the spacecraft’s gravitational force to slowly alter the rock’s trajectory.

Another possibility is the kinetic impactor method, which would work by sending one or more large, high-speed spacecraft into the path of a Near Earth Object, with the goal of changing its path.

Still, NASA says decades or more may be needed to successfully deflect a potential thread from a large asteroid using the kinetic impactor method.

“It’s like having a reasonable insurance policy,” Landis said. “God forbid you ever have to use it, but you can plan ahead as best as one can.”

Asteroid Warning System Found “City-Killer” Object Heading Toward Earth

By Andrew Follett

Daily Caller, November 1, 2016

NASA’s new asteroid warning system detected a large “city-killer” asteroid hurtling toward Earth less than a week before it narrowly missed.

The rock, officially named 2016 UR36, was first detected Oct. 25 by a telescope in Hawaii and passed by Earth five days later. The asteroid missed by a distance of only 310,000 miles, around 1.3 times further away than the Moon. That’s incredibly close in space terms.

2016 UR36 could be up to 82 feet across, roughly comparable in size to the meteor that exploded over Russia in February 2013, causing hundreds of injuries.

If 2016 UR36 had slammed into Earth, it would have struck with a force 55 times stronger than the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima near the end of World War II. That’s more than enough force to level a city.

NASA director Charles Bolden told reporters in 2013 that the only response to a such a late detection of an asteroid set to collide with Earth was to “Pray.”

Global asteroid detection programs found more than 15,176 near-Earth objects of all sizes with 1,562 new near-Earth objects being identified this year alone, according to International Astronomical Union’s Minor Planets Center. These newly discovered near-Earth objects are part of a much larger population of more than 700,000 known asteroids in our Solar System.

NASA and its European partners are now focused on finding objects that are 450 feet in diameter or larger, which could devastate a city or country if they struck Earth.

In the event an asteroid couldn’t be prevented from hitting Earth, the Planetary Defense Coordination Office would work with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Defense, and other federal agencies to coordinate disaster response.

The federal "omnibus" budget approved last month includes $50 million for near-earth object observations and planetary defense, up from just $4 million in 2010.

Four asteroids came uncomfortably close to Earth early last month, according to NASA's Asteroid and Comet Watch.

A different asteroid came disturbingly close to Earth in March, and was 16 times closer to Earth than the Moon. It actually passed closer to the world than many communications satellites. Though Earth is safe for now, NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object Studies identifies a 1-in-250-million chance the asteroid could impact Earth on Sept. 28, 2017.

NASA created the anti-asteroid Planetary Defense Coordination Office in January, to defend Earth from impacts that could potentially end humanity.

FEMA HOUSING

Berkeley Residents Approved For FEMA Assistance Following Hurricane Matthew

Goose Creek (SC) Gazette, November 1, 2016

Residents in Charleston and Berkeley counties who suffered significant damages to their property during Hurricane Matthew can apply for individual assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Gov. Nikki Haley's office reported Tuesday that the two counties join 22 others that have been approved. Dorchester County was approved last week.

The federal program will provide money for temporary rental assistance, home repairs, low-cost loans and other needs.

Survivors can register at www.disasterassistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362. The toll-free numbers will operate every day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. until further notice.

FEMA Offers Help To Renters

Walterboro (SC) Press and Standard, November 1, 2016

With so much attention given to businesses and homeowners, survivors who are renters may think they are not eligible for disaster assistance even though they suffered losses from the storms and floods spawned by Hurricane Matthew. But they are.

Like homeowners, renters must first register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

Go online to DisasterAssistance.gov. Call toll-free 800-621-3362 (711, voice or video relay services) or 800-462-7585 (TTY). Lines are open daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. until further notice.

Visit one of the nine Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) operating in Beaufort, Dorchester, Florence, Horry, Marion, Orangeburg and Williamsburg counties. Find the DRC closest to you at "Quick Links" on DisasterAssistance.gov. Representatives from FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration and various state agencies are on hand to answer questions.

Registering with FEMA is the first step toward qualifying for disaster assistance, which may include grants to help renters and homeowners pay for temporary housing, personal property replacements and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

After registering with FEMA, renters may also be eligible for low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). SBA offers such loans to businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, and homeowners as well as renters. SBA loans to renters may cover the cost of repairing or replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property.

For more information on SBA loans, call SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800 659-2955 or 800 877-8339 for TTY; email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov or visit http://www.sba.gov/disaster. Applicants may also apply online at https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela for the Electronic Loan Application on SBA's secure website.

More Than 15,000 Claims Made To FEMA

By Bob Shiles

Robesonian (NC), November 1, 2016

.LUMBERTON — The Robeson County Board of Commissioners was told Monday night that more than 15,000 claims totaling have been made to FEMA by people who have suffered damage to Hurricane Matthew, and that number is growing.

The commissioners met with representatives of FEMA and other government agencies providing recovery assistance to discuss what the county's role should be in helping residents and businesses rebound from destruction resulting from Hurricane Matthew.

"We need to get everyone on the same page," Jerry Stephens, chairman of the county board, said during Monday's special meeting of the commissioners and federal and state agencies. "Every one has their own regulations and requirements. I'd like to see us develop some way to track the progress that we all are making."

Stephens requested that county officials be given updates from agencies as they move forward with efforts to help those who lost their homes and personal property and need assistance to get back on their feet.

In addition to FEMA, those present at Monday's meeting included representatives of such agencies as the U.S. Small Business Administration, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Lumberton Housing Authority, and state emergency management officials. All agreed that disaster recovery in Robeson County is going to take years.

Jan Stout, a FEMA spokesperson, told the commissioners that there are 587 Robeson County families temporarily being sheltered in hotels and other temporary accommodations. She said that 15,361 individuals have registered with FEMA to receive some kind of financial and housing assistance totaling $16 million in claims.

FEMA and the Small Business Association have set up at one-stop shop at the former Kmart building on Roberts Avenue in Lumberton. Those who believe they have a claim to make can file it there.

The commissioners listened to presentations by the different agencies outlining what they hope to accomplish in both the short- and long-term recovery processes.

Commissioners David Edge and Roger Oxendine told the FEMA representatives that they are hearing complaints about how FEMA determines eligibility for long-term and short-term housing.

Stout said every claim is addressed individually and every letter explaining ineligibility needs to be read carefully. Ineligibility can be for numerous things, including a wrong Social Security number listed on the individual's registration, she said.

Tract Aupperlee, individual assistance branch director for FEMA, said that eligibility for assistance from her agency is currently running at 40 percent. She said that a single household potentially could receive up to $33,300 in FEMA assistance.

Commissioner Tom Taylor said that small business owners like himself are not receiving assistance that they deserve.

"We're not getting help," he said. "We had money lost because people are not spending."

Tamara Jackson, with the U.S. Small Business Administration, told Taylor that her agency provides loans to businesses of 4 percent. Loans are also available for qualifying individual homeowners and renters for as low as 1.563 percent, she said.

"Four percent is not helping us as small businesses," Taylor said. "We can do better than that at a bank."

Stephens told Taylor that the county's first priority needs to be addressing issues related to residents who have been displaced from their homes.

"I'm more concerned with the folks in the hotels and their mental state," he said. "I don't want to focus first on those who just lost money."

Ed Ellis, the leader of the HUD team working to getting displaced families in public housing back in their homes, said his agency is working closely with local public housing providers to get public housing available as soon as possible. He also said his agency is working closely with those disaster survivors from public housing to meet their housing needs.

Ellis said that those individuals living in public housing should contact their individual providers or HUD so that it can be determined how their needs can best be addressed.

Those who choose to contact HUD should call the agency's field office in Greensboro at 336-547-4000, said Ellis.

Larry Russell, executive director of the Lumberton Housing Authority, said that 375 of the authority's 729 apartments, located in five locations throughout the city, suffered damage during the hurricane.

FEMA Struggles To Find Housing For Hurricane Matthew Victims

WRAL-TV Raleigh (NC), November 1, 2016

Goldsboro, N.C. — Three weeks after Hurricane Matthew tore through North Carolina, three shelters remain open, including one in Goldsboro.

As of Tuesday, about 250 people remained in shelters across the state following the storm, according to FEMA.

Teresa King and her 17-year-old son have been staying at the School Street Learning Center for three weeks.

"All of us who are still here really want to get out of here," she said. "I can't take it no more. It's just too much."

A FEMA representative came by Tuesday to help King and the others who have called the shelter home since Matthew, but a manager said it has not been easy finding housing.

Deborah Roberson, her husband and brother have been living in a shelter since the flood waters destroyed their home. The family was renting the home and did not have flood insurance. They lost everything.

This week, Roberson and her family finally found a new place to rent.

"FEMA gave me some money so it's alright though. I'm going to find me somewhere to stay so it's alright," she said.

Officials were working through different options in an effort to house the remaining families as soon as possible. Mobile homes could possibly be brought in to help.

Brunswick County Now Eligible For FEMA Assistance

WECT-TV Wilmington (NC), November 1, 2016

NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NC (WECT) –

Brunswick County was added to the list of counties available for FEMA assistance in southeastern North Carolina on Tuesday.

Residents living in Pender, Columbus, and Bladen counties were already elligible for FEMA assistance

New Hanover and Brunswick counties are designated to receive public assistance for things such as damage to roads and bridges. Those with flooding damage in counties not named can still register with FEMA.

Disaster assistance for homeowners from FEMA may include grants to help pay for temporary housing, essential home repairs, and uninsured and under-insured personal property losses.

Debra Young joined WECT's First at Four on Monday to explain how FEMA could help residents.

Businesses of all sizes can obtain a low-interest disaster loan from the U.S Small Business Administration.

In order to apply for federal disaster assistance you can register online, by phone at 800-621-3362, or apply via the FEMA app which you can download on your mobile device. Make sure to have your social security number, address of the damaged residents along with a description of the damage, information about insurance coverage, a current telephone number, a mailing address and a bank account along with routing numbers for direct deposit of funds.

After registering, if there is house damage, you may receive a call from a FEMA inspector who will make an appointment to come to your home and inspect the damage. FEMA does not charge for any service whether it is the inspection or help filling out your application. They also do not endorse any commercial businesses, products or services. There is no such thing as a FEMA contractor. If you suspect fraud, call the North Carolina consumer hotline at 877-566-7226. FEMA employees wear an official identification badge, so make sure to ask to see it.

Once the inspection is complete you will receive a determination letter from FEMA. Be sure to read the letter in its entirety. Some people do not immediately qualify for help and the letter will tell you the reason. It may just mean that you are missing one of the required pieces of information.

Even if you had minor damage or losses be sure to register. Many times structural and other types of home damage do not show up until months after the event.

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FEMA Opening Center Downtown To Process Hurricane Matthew Claims

By David Chapman

Jacksonville (FL) Daily Record, November 1, 2016

Duval County residents quickly responded after being made eligible last week for post-Hurricane Matthew federal assistance.

Of the 33,000 people in Florida who have registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, almost 3,400 were from Duval County.

It's an "impressive" start, said retired Gen. Montague Whitfield, a local liaison with the federal agency.

Starting today, that local number could swell even larger.

The agency is opening its first Duval County Disaster Recovery Center with experts available to assist residents and register them for financial help, if they're eligible.

The center is open 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday at the Prime Osborn Convention Center.

Winfield told the City Council Neighborhoods, Community Investments and Services Committee on Monday that additional centers could open later.

Experts at the center are not available on the agency's website or over the telephone.

Possible financial assistance is available to residents who are uninsured or underinsured. Those with the proper level of insurance are not eligible for FEMA assistance.

"We will be here until the job is completed," Winfield told the committee.

"Completed" in this instance is when it's deemed all citizens in a disaster-declared area have been reached.

Winfield told the group flooding often is a common issue, but it depends on the level of severity.

Major damage might mean flood water has reached a dwelling's subfloor.

Other major damage might be a tree through a roof. Even food spoilage at a business or employer that impacts an ability to work could merit assistance.

FEMA grants will help homeowners and renters pay for those types of repairs, temporary housing or replacing personal property.

Additionally, the U.S. Small Business Administration is offering low-interest loans to all businesses hindered by the storm.

Prior to today's center opening, FEMA officials were going door-to-door in impacted areas to help residents register.

People also have been calling in or using the agency's website, disasterassistance.gov.

As of Monday afternoon, there was $12.5 million in total individual and household program funding approved for Hurricane Matthew-impacted areas. To date, 4,212 applications have been approved.

As for the city's application, the expanded declaration also made harder-hit area infrastructure — like the Jacksonville Beach public pier and Huguenot Memorial Park — a possibility for funding.

Deadline Approaching For FEMA Assistance From August Floods

WGNO-TV New Orleans, November 1, 2016

NEW ORLEANS (WGNO) – Louisiana residents affected by the widespread flooding in August have two weeks left to file for assistance.

The cutoff for all Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance is November 14.

Assistance ranges from grants to cover rent to temporary housing, home repair, medical and dental expenses, and even funeral and burial costs.

Disaster assistance submissions go to the U.S. Small Business Administration, which handles the loans.

Anyone displaced or affected by the flooding can register with FEMA online at disasterassistance.gov, by phone at (800) 621-3362, or through the FEMA app.

You can also register for assistance at any FEMA disaster recovery center. To find a disaster recovery center near you, call the FEMA helpline or text DRC and your zip code to 43362.

For more information, contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955, disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or SBA.gov/disaster.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Mohave County To Receive FEMA Grant Funding

By David Louis

Havasu (AZ) News-Herald, November 2, 2016

As part of its ongoing efforts to update floodplain and risk maps throughout Mohave County, the flood control district plans to put $650,000 in Federal Emergency Management Agency grant funding to use.

The FEMA Cooperating Technical Partner grant will be presented as a consent agenda item during Monday's Mohave County Board of Supervisors meeting.

Through this grant funding a new risk analysis and mapping will be conducted in Lake Havasu City in the coming months. Similar projects also will benefit the cities of Kingman and Bullhead City.

In these fiscally challenging times, the FEMA grant – with a 25 percent matching grant split – will give the county a big bang for the $215,000 it will spend, said Nick Hont, chief engineer for Mohave County flood control district, and director of development services.

"Lake Havasu definitely has risks and the hydrologic studies were done way back in the '60s when they built the levies that protect the city," Hont said. "I am very proud of this program. I believe we are the only county in Arizona that gets this funding almost consistently every year."

The CTP program is designed to improve the floodplain mapping, as well as to create risk map that pinpoints areas that need to be addressed, said Shannon Summers, floodplain programs manager.

"This is intended to help communities update their floodplain maps or identify risks and potential solutions," Summers added. "Projects that could fall under this grant include a flood warning plan, a master drainage plan or just finding out where the water goes."

The CTP grant helps identify problem areas that other grant money can be used to correct.

With more than 20,000 communities in the National Flood Insurance Program, there is a significant challenge keeping flood hazard maps current.

The CTP Program is an innovative approach to creating partnerships between FEMA and participating NFIP communities, regional agencies, state agencies, tribes and universities that have the interest and capability to become more active participants in the FEMA flood hazard mapping program.

"This is a very powerful tool that we started using in 2010 when we received $350,000 to do floodplain mapping in Fort Mohave, north Lake Havasu and Golden Valley areas," Summers said.

The result of the mapping removed more than 2,400 parcels from FEMA high hazard area designation.

"The maps here had been fairly rough," Summers said. "They hadn't been looked at by FEMA for a long time – some of them were as old as 1980. We've been working really hard in the past six years to completely overhaul our mapping system and make sure they are all accurate and the residents are getting a fair assessment of their risks."

Not only is flooding one of the most common and costly disasters, flood risk also can change over time because of new development, weather patterns and other factors. FEMA is working with federal, state, tribal and local partners across the nation to identify flood risk and help reduce that risk.

In late 2014, Mohave County started incorporating the cities into the CTP grant application.

"There are a lot of benefits to this grant program," Summers said. "For the cities of Kingman and Bullhead they received LIDAR mapping at one foot intervals that was paid for through the CTP grant, which provided updated topographic data for their entire city. Not only can they use this data for hydrologic analysis – finding problem areas and solutions – but land developers can use the information to make good decision about future development."

In 2015, FEMA embarked on a multi-year project to update floodplain risk maps throughout the nation.

The FEMA Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning — or Risk MAP program — helps communities such as Lake Havasu identify areas of potential flooding and provides information to enhance mitigation efforts.

County Approves Flood Report

Lebanon (TN) Democrat, November 1, 2016

As a part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System program, the Wilson County/Watertown floodplain administrator must make an annual report of activities that were undertaken to fulfill the requirements of the federal CRS program.

The report was presented to and accepted by the Wilson County Commission on Oct. 18. Watertown's annual report was presented to and accepted by the Watertown City Council on Oct. 11.

Wilson County has maintained membership in FEMA's Community Rating System program since 2013.

The program rewards local communities for continued compliance with their locally adopted flood management prevention programs and for adopting heightened regulatory, record keeping, outreach and mitigation efforts regarding flood hazard in their communities.

CRS is a voluntary program for NFIP-participating communities. The intended goals of the program are to reduce flood losses, facilitate accurate insurance ratings and to promote the awareness of flood insurance. For more information on the NFIP's CRS program, visit fema.gov/business/nfip/crs.shtm. For more information about the NFIP, a program administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, visit floodsmart.gov.

Wilson County has participated in the National Flood Insurance Program since Aug. 27, 1975 in the emergency program and since June 15, 1984 in the regular program, making flood insurance available to its citizens and property owners. Since entering the NFIP, FEMA has witnessed Wilson County make increased strides in the administration and enforcement of its floodplain management program. The results of these efforts have been a safer, more disaster-resistant community.

As a part of the program, Wilson County is required to maintain and update a locally approved Flood Damage Prevention Resolution and Program. The Wilson County Flood Damage Prevention Resolution, or "Floodplain and Floodplain Management Ordinance" as it is commonly referred to, is maintained within the context of the Wilson County zoning resolution. The flood damage prevention resolution was last updated May 18, 2009.

The CRS program positively affects the flood insurance rates for 548 policy holders in unincorporated portions of Wilson County and an additional 13 within the city of Watertown as a result of their like enrollment.

For a complete copy of either report, contact the Wilson County Planning Office at 228 E. Main St. in Lebanon or Watertown City Hall at 8630 Sparta Pike in Watertown.

Wilson County planning director Tom Brashear may be reached at the Wilson County Courthouse in room 5 or at 615-449-2836.

MITIGATION

President Signs Iowa Disaster Declaration To Make Aid Available

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, November 1, 2016

President Barack Obama has declared a major disaster exists in Linn County and 18 other Iowa counties and has ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding during the period of Sept. 21 to Oct. 3.

Federal funding is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private non-profit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding.

The presidential declaration applies to the counties of Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek, and Wright.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

FEMA said additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

UPDATE: Obama Declares Federal Disaster For NE Iowa

By Pat Kinney

Waterloo-Cedar Falls (IA) Courier, November 1, 2016

CEDAR FALLS — A federal flood disaster declaration is good news for local governments in 19 Iowa counties but does little to help as many as 700 homeowners and businesses in Black Hawk and Butler counties damaged by flooding, local officials said Tuesday.

President Obama designated 19 Iowa counties as eligible for federal assistance to address least $22 million in damage from flooding in late September and early October.

The assistance will help local governments with damage to public facilities and cleanup, not individual property owners. That may leave some home and business owners in a lurch.

"When we applied for this presidential declaration we knew we were not going to get individual assistance. We just didn't have the numbers," said Mitch Nordmeyer, Butler County emergency management coordinator. About nine of the 19 counties unsuccessfully tried to get individual assistance.

The fall flood was nearly as bad as 2008 in Butler County, Nordmeyer said. Butler County had 521 private properties affected, from minimal damage to homes that were destroyed. Most were in Clarksville, Greene and Shell Rock. About 79 of those were rated as being in the "major damage" to "destroyed" category, below the federal threshold for individual assistance.

"It's going to be a big deal here. We're working a number of angles with the state of Iowa to figure out ways to help people with unmet needs. ... It's a slow process," Nordmeyer said.

Cedar Falls officials estimated estimated about 165 properties in that city sustained some kind of flood damage — about 60 percent of some 270 properties the city inspected. Those properties are in the flood-prone northern part of the city, many of them in the North Cedar area.

"This was a little bittersweet," Mayor Jim Brown said of the disaster declaration. "The city's getting reimbursed for its expenses, but nothing we saw related to the folks affected in northern Cedar Falls." Like Butler County, Brown said Cedar Falls officials are looking at all avenues to help affected individual residents and businesses.

One avenue Nordmeyer and Cedar Falls officials mentioned is a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant program that allows for acquisition, relocation or elevation of buildings in a flood area. Grant requests would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and depend on funds available.

Black Hawk and Butler counties had the second- and third-largest losses of the $22 million in damage incurred by public entities in the 19 counties. Black Hawk had $3.4 million damage and Butler $1.6 million. Linn County had the most at $12.4 million.

U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley's office also noted individual home and business owners may apply for low-interest loans through the U.S. Small Business Administration. Call Grassley's Waterloo office at 232-6657 with any concerns or questions.

Waterloo had the largest amount, at $1.9 million, of the $3.4 million in flood damage in Black Hawk County.

"Our early estimates are $840,000 for emergency protective measures and debris removal and approximately $1 million in repairs needed to streets, city parks and trails," Waterloo chief financial officer Michelle Weidner said.

Cedar Falls incurred nearly $900,000 including sandbagging and installing Hesco barriers on the Cedar River flood control levee.

Mayor Brown said city officials met with U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst's office for assistance in expediting federal U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approval of a plan to raise the downtown levee by three feet. Grassley already has written a letter to Corps officials requesting expedited approval since the city secured funding though the state two years ago.

Counties included in the presidential disaster declaration Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek and Wright counties.

Benton County Part Of Federal Disaster Aid Declaration

Iowa City (IA) Press-Citizen, November 1, 2016

Benton County is among 19 in Iowa that were declared eligible for federal disaster aid, the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced Tuesday, Nov. 1.

The aid will supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding during the period of Sept. 21 to Oct. 3. More than 10 inches of rain fell in those storms, in some instances coming in a few short hours. Vinton, Benton County's seat, was among the hardest-hit areas.

The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by severe storms and flooding.

Also part of the disaster declaration were Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek, and Wright counties.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

James N. Russo has been named as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Russo said that additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Haley To Visit Conway For Hurricane Matthew, Flood Relief Event

South Strand News (SC), November 1, 2016

Gov. Nikki Haley will visit Conway this week as part of a statewide tour promoting assistance and relief for survivors of Hurricane Matthew and the flooding of the Waccamaw River that followed.

On Friday, Nov. 4, Haley will arrive in Conway as part of the Team South Carolina Hurricane Matthew relief event, scheduled to take place between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the Conway Recreation Center, 1515 Mill Pond Road.

Haley will be joined by other state and federal officials to help those residents affected by the storm and the subsequent flood. Residents will be able to register for financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, apply for disaster assistance loans with the U.S. Small Business Administration, apply for food and financial assistance with the S.C. Department of Social Services, discuss insurance options with the S.C. Department of Insurance, learn about unemployment options through the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, and receive free well water testing kits and tetanus shots from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Governor Nikki Haley will visit Conway on Friday, November 4, for a Team South Carolina Hurricane Matthew relief event. Team South Carolina Waccamaw River Day will serve residents impacted by the storm from Horry and Georgetown counties and will be held from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM at the City of Conway Recreation Center.

For those impacted by river flooding in the Waccamaw River area caused by Hurricane Matthew, the Team South Carolina event will serve as a one-stop where residents can find out about resources available to families and businesses to aid recovery. Team South Carolina events bring together representatives from state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations to assist those in need in the wake flooding and other destruction caused by Hurricane Matthew.

At the Team South Carolina Waccamaw River Day residents can:

Register for financial assistance from FEMA

Apply for disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration

Learn more about repairing and flood proofing their home from FEMA

Get information about assistance for farmers with crop losses or damage from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency

Apply for unemployment benefits from the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

Apply for food and financial assistance from the S.C. Department of Social Services

Get information about mental health and other healthcare services from the S.C. Department of Mental Health and the S.C. Department of Health and Human Services

Get help with insurance claims from the S.C. Department of Insurance

Receive a free kit to test well water from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control

Receive a free tetanus shot from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control

WHO: Gov. Nikki Haley, state and federal officials, and non-profit organizations

WHAT: Team South Carolina Waccamaw River Day

WHEN: Friday, November 4, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

WHERE: City of Conway Recreation Center, 1515 Mill Pond Road, Conway, SC 29527

Fort Worth Considers Buying Flood-Prone Homes

KTVT-TV Dallas, November 1, 2016

FORT WORTH (CBSDFW.COM) – The City of Fort Worth is looking into purchasing a number of homes that are prone to flash flooding. The idea is to turn those properties into green spaces, maintained by the city and designed to allow floodwaters to flow through them without causing serious damage or injury.

The houses are all located in the Arlington Heights area, near the intersection of Interstate-30 and Hulen Street, southwest of the Fort Worth Cultural District. There are at least 30 homes that might be eligible for the program. Those flood-prone homes would be purchased and then promptly demolished.

According to city press secretary Cheraya Pena, the Arlington Heights neighborhood was built upon a creek bed half a century ago, and flooding has been a major problem for its homeowners. Those residents have been dealing with high water for years, and city officials have spent just as long searching for a solution.

Millions of dollars were spent on drainage improvements that should have eased the flooding concerns. And yet, just this past June, people found themselves under four feet of water. “It did not work,” resident Karen Abrams said over the summer. “It is rapid and rolling through backyards and driveways.”

“They need to get this crap fixed,” Abrams continued. “Period.”

At the time, Fort Worth city council member Dennis Shingleton explained that the drainage repairs were only designed to stop flooding during normal rains, and that no fix was available for torrential downpours. “When you get 3.7 inches of rain in one hour, very difficult to plan for that,” he said.

The idea of the city buying these high-value homes, tearing them down and repurposing the property was discussed back then too, with a decision on this matter fast approaching.

Money for purchasing the homes would come from FEMA grants. The Fort Worth City Council will decide on November 15 if they should apply to receive this financial assistance. Pena explained that other options are being explored by officials as well, however, she did not offer further details.

A similar plan was discussed eight years ago, but residents at the time refused to sell. According to the proposed plan, only the homeowners who choose to accept the offer will be included in the program. City officials will not force any residents to vacate their homes.

There has already been some debate between neighbors, with opinions coming from both sides. A number of homeowners are happy to see the city take action, but others are worried about what it would mean for the overall look of the Arlington Heights neighborhood.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

No stories for this edition

FIRE GRANTS

No stories for this edition

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Legal Aid Extended To Nassau

Fernandina Beach (FL) News-Leader, November 1, 2016

Gov. Rick Scott announced Friday that the federal government has expanded Disaster Unemployment

Assistance for residents of Nassau and Seminole counties who have lost jobs as a result of severe storms and flooding during Hurricane Matthew, according to a news release.

In a separate announcement Tuesday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said free legal aid is available for eligible low-income survivors in the 17 counties affected by both hurricanes Hermine and Matthew, including Nassau County.

On Oct. 17, the federal government approved a limited part of Scott's request for a major disaster declaration for Flagler, St. Johns, Volusia and Putnam counties, allowing the use of Disaster Unemployment Assistance funds for individuals affected by the storm. The declaration has since been expanded to include Brevard, Indian River, Duval, Nassau and Seminole counties.

Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance, administered by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, assists individuals who become unemployed as a direct result of a federally declared disaster and who do not qualify for regular re-employment assistance benefits. The program also covers self-employed individuals, owners of farms and ranches, farm and ranch workers, as well as fishers and others who are not normally covered by state re-employment assistance benefits.

The deadline for Disaster Unemployment applications varies by county:

- Nov. 18: Flagler, St. John, Volusia and Putnam
- Nov. 21: Indian River and Brevard
- Nov. 23: Duval
- Nov. 28: Nassau and Seminole

Applicants must be legal U.S. residents and must have been working in or residing in the counties listed above. The individual must:

- Have become unemployed as a direct result of the disaster;
- Be unable to reach the place of employment as a direct result of the disaster;
- Have been scheduled to begin work and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of the disaster;
- Have become the major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of the disaster; or
- Be unable to work because of an injury caused directly by the disaster.

To file a Disaster Unemployment claim, call (800) 681-8102 or go to https://connect.myflorida.com/Claimant/Core/Login.ASPX.

Legal assistance

Free legal assistance is available to eligible low-income survivors in the 17 counties affected by hurricanes Hermine and Matthew, including Nassau County, according to a FEMA news release.

This service is a partnership among The Florida Bar, The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division and FEMA. Examples of the legal assistance available include:

- Assistance with securing FEMA and other benefits available to disaster survivors;
- Assistance with life, medical and property insurance claims;
- Help with home repair contracts and contractors;
- Replacement of wills and other important legal documents destroyed in the disaster;
- Assistance with consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures;
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems;
- Counseling on landlord/tenant problems.

Survivors may call the legal assistance hotline at (866) 550-2929, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Those who qualify for assistance will be matched with Florida lawyers who have volunteered to provide free, limited legal help. Although consultations with attorneys are confidential, survivors should be aware that there are some limitations on disaster legal services.

For example, assistance is not available for cases that will produce a fee (i.e., those cases where fees are paid as part of the settlement by the court). Such cases are passed to a lawyer referral service.

Other entities providing free legal aid are:

- National Disaster Legal Aid Online (DisasterLegalAid.org);
- Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida Inc. (800-405-1417);
- Three Rivers Legal Services Inc. (1-866-256-8091).

For more information on Florida's disaster recovery visit fema.gov/disaster/4280, fema.gov/disaster/4283, twitter.com/femaregion4, facebook.com/FEMA, and fema.gov/blog, floridadisaster.org or #FLRecovers. For imagery, video, graphics and releases, see fema.gov/Hurricane-Matthew.

Free Legal Help Available For Low-Income Survivors Of Hurricanes Matthew, Hermine

By Jessica Palombo

WJCT-FM Jacksonville (FL), November 1, 2016

Free legal assistance is available to eligible low-income survivors affected by hurricanes Hermine and Matthew, provided by the Florida Bar and FEMA.

In Northeast Florida, the counties where it's offered are Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns and Volusia.

People affected by the hurricanes can get free:

Assistance with FEMA benefits;

Assistance with life-, medical- and property-insurance claims;

Help with home-repair contracts;

Replacement of wills and other important legal documents destroyed in the disaster;

Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems or landlord/tenant problems.

Hurricane survivors may call the Florida Bar's legal assistance hotline at 866-550-2929 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Those who qualify will be matched with Florida lawyers who have volunteered to provide free, limited legal help.

SBA Representatives In Vass Through Thursday

By Laura Douglass

Southern Pines (NC) Pilot, November 1, 2016

Representatives with the U.S. Small Business Administration are working in Moore County this week – alongside FEMA's efforts – to provide information about low interest federal disaster assistance loans to businesses and homeowners impacted by Hurricane Matthew.

FEMA has established a Disaster Recovery Center at the Crain's Creek Volunteer Fire Department at 4525 Lobelia Road. Hours of operation will be Monday – Saturday, Nov. 5, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. SBA representatives are at the same location, Tuesday – Thursday only.

Small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and homeowners or renters may apply for low interest SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans. Businesses can apply for loans to repair or replace real estate, machinery, equipment, inventory, and other business assets. Homeowners can apply for up to $200,00 to repair or replace disaster damaged real estate; and homeowners and renters can apply for up to $40,000 to repair or replace damaged personal property, including automobiles.

Interest rates are as low as 4 percent for businesses, 2.6 percent for private nonprofit organizations, and 1.5 percent for homeowners and renters, with terms up to 30 years. The SBA customizes loan amounts and terms based on each applicant's circumstances.

"Some homeowners and renters may receive a SBA application when they seek aid from FEMA. These are low interest loans but there is no obligation to accept them. But, depending on circumstances, completing the paperwork may be essential to continuing the federal disaster process," said Tamara Jackson, a SBA public affairs specialist. "We want to let people know we are here and can answer any questions they may have."

Visit the Disaster Recovery Center for more information. Online loan applications are available through SBA's secure website at https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela, or call SBA Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955.

City Of Charleston: 46,000 Cubic Yards Of Debris Removed Since Hurricane Matthew

WCSC-TV Charleston (SC), November 1, 2016

CHARLESTON, SC (WCSC) –

In an update Tuesday, the city of Charleston reported that 46,645 cubic yards of FEMA-measurable debris were collected in the city over the last three weeks in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

"Though there's still much to do, we're proud that our hard-working city employees and staff have so far been able to match the standard of excellence set by the city of Charleston in previous hurricane recoveries," Mayor John Tecklenburg said. "And our task moving forward is clear – it's to keep moving faster, to keep bringing more resources to bear, until this job is done and our streets and neighborhoods are even cleaner and clearer than they were before the storm."

The city also announced that \ it is working with the FEMA-certified contractor to add more local debris-removal subcontractors.

"With almost fifty percent more debris than we saw after Hurricane Floyd in 1999, this a big job, and we need to have all hands on deck," Tecklenburg said. "We are grateful for the tremendous efforts of everyone who's worked so hard up to this point, and we appreciate the willingness of our local small businesses to add their resources to the effort. Even more, we're grateful to our citizens, who've done so much over the past few weeks to assist with the cleanup, and whose patience and understanding throughout this process has been so remarkable."

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FEMA Disaster Recovery Center To Open In Georgetown Tuesday

WCSC-TV Charleston (SC), November 1, 2016

GEORGETOWN, SC (WCSC) –

FEMA will open a disaster recovery center in Georgetown County Tuesday.

According to a statement from Georgetown County, the center is slated to open at 1 p.m. at the Beck Recreation Center, 2030 Church St. in Georgetown.

Going forward, the center will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, according to a county official.

There, residents affected by Hurricane Matthew and related flooding can meet with FEMA representatives and get information on how to apply for aid.

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Georgetown Gets A FEMA Disaster Recovery Center

By Gabrielle Ware

WBTW-TV Florence-Myrtle Beach (SC), November 1, 2016

GEORGETOWN, SC (WBTW) – A FEMA disaster center is now open in Georgetown County. The center is a one stop shop for victims of Hurricane Matthew.

Tuesday officials cleared up some confusion about FEMA assistance.

Many people are referred to the Small Business Administration after registering for FEMA automatically, even if they don't want a loan. But FEMA officials say that's all part of the process.

When that happens you must go through the process or you won't receive assistance.

Renee Bafalis is a FEMA representative and said, "that is just a process you must go through. You may not think you want a loan through SBA but it's very possible that if you go through the process you may not be eligible for the loan."

If you aren't eligible for SBA then you get bounced back to FEMA to see if you qualify for grant assistance. But if you don't go through SBA that stops the whole process.

FEMA is also encouraging renters to stop by. Home and business owners are not the only people who can get help.

"Renters also have the same eligibility as a home owner, Bafalis said. "But it's not for their domicile it's actually for their personal property damages that they may have."

And you don't have to do anything differently to apply.

"Same process… same process, anyone that may be out of their home because of the storm has the same rights, homeowner or renter.

SBA also offers loans to both home and renters at lower than average interest rates.

So far 1,052 people have registered for FEMA assistance in Georgetown County.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center To Open In Whiteville

WECT-TV Wilmington (NC), November 1, 2016

COLUMBUS COUNTY, NC (WECT) –

Columbus County residents who suffered losses and damage as a result of Hurricane Matthew will be able to get information about available state and federal assistance at a Disaster Recovery Center opening Wednesday in Whiteville.

According to officials, the center will be located at 913 Jefferson Street, and will be open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

DRCs are staffed with representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, North Carolina Emergency Management and the U.S. Small Business Administration. You can receive help applying for federal disaster assistance, learn about the types of assistance available, learn about the appeals process and obtain updates regarding your application.

If you have phone and/or internet access, you may register in one of the following ways:

Online at DisasterAssistance.gov.

Call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 for voice, 711 and Video Relay Service (VRS). If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY, call 800-462-7585.

Download the FEMA Mobile App and apply.

Recovery centers are open throughout the disaster-affected counties in the state. To locate the center nearest to you, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362.

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LIRR: Sandy Repairs Progressing, But Much Work Still Ahead

By Alfonso Castillo

Newsday (NY), November 1, 2016

The Long Island Rail Road is making progress on repairing, rebuilding and hardening its system devastated four years ago by superstorm Sandy, officials said.

However, they say some projects are still years from completion, including several along the LIRR's vulnerable Long Beach branch.

The railroad's post-Sandy improvement efforts have been focused on the four areas hit hardest by the October 2012 storm — rail yards in Long Island City and on Manhattan's West Side, the East River Tunnels leading into and out of Penn Station, and the Long Beach branch, which residents and officials say may never fully be out of harm's way. StorySome upset with post-Sandy buyout programStorySandy victims wait for payment 4 years laterStoryRunners mark Sandy anniversary with 5k race

"When Superstorm Sandy roared across the New York/Long Island region . . . the effects were devastating, but preparation paid off," said LIRR spokesman Salvatore Arena, adding that the railroad's pre-emptive shutdown before the worst of the storm allowed it to move trains to higher ground to protect them. "However, although LIRR personnel planned carefully for Superstorm Sandy, there was substantial damage to the infrastructure due to greater-than-expected storm surge."

Some efforts have already made considerable progress.

New electrical substations — elevated to protect them from flooding — have already been installed in Long Island City, near the East Rockaway station and in the Oil City section of Oceanside. A contractor has finished 13 of 15 new elevated platforms, which will protect new signal and communication huts from flooding.

Improvements to the Wreck Lead Bridge, which carries the LIRR over Reynolds Channel, are well underway and expected to be finished by April. The bridge has already gotten a new emergency generator, walkway lighting, high-tension poles and other electrical equipment.

Other improvements, however, are far from being finished.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board on Friday awarded a $2.4 million contract for new signal equipment for the Long Beach line — part of a broader effort to replace signal, switch, communications and third rail equipment along the line that isn't expected to be completed before September 2019.

"There's still a lot of work that needs to be done. But then again, a lot of work has been done," said John Molloy, the Nassau County representative on the MTA Board. "I think the MTA has done nice work moving this thing along . . . You just can't do it overnight. It's a lot of work, and a lot of pieces that have to be put together. "

Nowhere did the LIRR's system get hit harder by Sandy than on the Long Beach line, where tracks and delicate electrical components were submerged under 4 feet of corrosive saltwater and sewage, three electrical substations were damaged, and nearly two dozen boats and personal watercraft washed up on tracks.

It took nearly a month for the LIRR to restore full service on the line, used by more than 20,000 riders each weekday.

"It was very difficult. We were the last [LIRR line to be restored.] It's highly insulting, but what can you do about that?" said Island Park Mayor Michael McGinty, who commended the LIRR for its work modernizing electrical substations on the line, but said the agency hasn't done enough to seek input from local government on the problems facing local commuters, including over drainage. "The line is very important to the residents of Island Park, as well as Long Beach, Lido Beach, Point Lookout and, believe it or not, some from Oceanside."

Fran Kravitz, who commutes from Island Park for acting classes and jobs in Manhattan, recalls her husband having to move into Manhattan for weeks after Sandy because of the service problems on the Long Beach line.

Four years later, Kravitz, 56, said the branch remains particularly susceptible to flooding.

"If we get a storm on a full moon in high tide, those train tracks are under water . . . The tracks are still on the ground, so it's still going to flood, just like the rest of Island Park."

William Henderson, executive director of the MTA's Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee, which includes the LIRR Commuter Council, said although the MTA has done substantial work to repair and fortify its system over the last four years, the work may never be fully done, in part because it will have to keep up with rising sea levels and other major weather events.

"I think they're going to be doing hardening for years — probably for our lifetime," said Henderson, who singled out the Long Beach line as a particular challenge. "At the end of the day, you've got tracks that are going over and basically next to water. If there's a storm that comes up and across the water, there's going to be impacts."

Other flood-prone parts of the LIRR's territory are also in line for improvements. The LIRR is putting $100 million in Federal Transportation Administration grant funding toward several planned projects to fortify its West Side Yard, the Queens portals of the East River Tunnels, and the tunnels themselves. Those efforts are in their early stages, with the MTA currently working out cost estimates, officials said.

The LIRR has also begun flood-protection work on its Atlantic Avenue tunnels along its Brooklyn line and at the Long Island City yard.

The Federal Transportation Administration also in June awarded the MTA $432 million to make critical repairs inside the East River Tunnels, which were badly damaged by corrosive saltwater from Sandy flooding. Amtrak, which owns the tunnels and is responsible for the repairs, has said the work won't begin until the end of this decade, and take several years to complete.

Superstorm Sandy Walk-in Legal Clinic Wednesday In Lindenhurst

By Emily Dooley

Newsday (NY), November 1, 2016

The Touro Law Center Disaster Relief Clinic and Adopt-a-House are hosting a superstorm Sandy walk-in legal clinic Wednesday in Lindenhurst.

The free clinic will be open from 4 to 7 p.m. in the board room at Babylon Town Hall, at 200 Sunrise Hwy.

Staff of the clinic will provide free one-on-one legal consultations for any residents of Nassau or Suffolk county who were affected by the 2012 storm. Experts can help people with many legal issues, such as flood insurance claims, Federal Emergency Management Agency recoupments, problems with New York Rising and contractor disputes. Story'Sandy not over' as LIers struggle to make lives whole

People seeking legal advice should organize their paperwork — such as flood insurance declaration pages, denial letters, photographs, award letters, contracts — in advance for review and consultation.

The Touro Law Clinic also has a hotline at 631-761-7198.

Carnival Brings Fantasy Ship To Mobile For Mexico Cruises

By Anita Lee

Biloxi (MS) Sun Herald, November 1, 2016

Carnival Cruise Line is returning to Mobile, dredging up memories of another ship's service as an emergency shelter after Hurricane Katrina and the voyage from hell when passengers were stranded on the "poop cruise" before being towed into Mobile.

Carnival has committed to service for 13 months from Mobile to Mexico beginning Nov. 9. The company says it will offer a four-day cruise to Cozumel and five-day cruises to Cozumel and Progreso.

The Carnival Fantasy can carry 2,056 passengers. The maiden cruise is sold out, Carnival says. A number of restaurants and bars are housed on the ship, including Guy's Burger Joint, developed with the Food Network's Guy Fieri.

It also offers a spa, water park and Egyptian-themed piano bar, the Carnival website says.

Mississippi Coast residents will remember that Carnival's Holiday cruise ship temporarily served as a Federal Emergency Management Agency shelter, housing more than 6,000 Katrina refugees in Mobile.

And then there was the infamous "poop cruise" in 2013, when the Carnival Triumph drifted in the Gulf of Mexico for four days after an engine fire. The cruise got its ignominious moniker because toilets on the ship overflowed. The ship, which had sailed out of Galveston, Texas, was eventually towed into Mobile.

The Associated Press reported that Carnival is returning to Mobile after a five-year absence and $4 million in improvements to the Alabama Cruise Terminal located downtown.

Carnival service also runs to the Caribbean out of New Orleans, which doesn't see the Mobile service as competition.

"We see our market as a different market," said Don Allee, director of cruise and tourism and the Port of New Orleans. "We're selling two different features, so to to speak. When we sell and market New Orleans, we're selling two vacations in one. New Orleans is one of the most popular destinations in the world."

" . . . When you put a cruise on top of that, it enhances the New Orleans experience."

Allee was previously director at the state port in Gulfport, which over the years has flirted on and off with cruise services.

Allee was in Gulfport when the Carnival Conquest docked temporarily in Gulfport for 18 weeks because of navigation problems in the Mississippi River. Back then, Allee had hoped to steer cruise lines to Gulfport.

FLOODS

Edwards, Congressmen Press Obama On Flood Aid For N. La.

Alexandria (LA) Town Talk, November 1, 2016

Local governments in Bossier, Caddo and Ouachita parishes alone would save at least $1.5 million if Gov. John Bel Edwards and the state's congressional delegation can convince FEMA to increase its share of flood recovery costs to 90 percent.

Edwards, through his Governor's Office of Homeland Security Secretary Jim Waskom, sent a letter to President Barack Obama this week appealing FEMA's ruling to keep the federal share for the spring flooding in northern Louisiana at 75 percent. FEMA has already agreed to take on a 90 percent share for the southern Louisiana flooding in August.

"The inequity of the cost share adjustment will saddle millions of dollars of burden on these parishes simply because their disaster happened first," Waskom wrote in the letter to Obama.

Edwards and the delegation have argued that the two flood events should be counted as one disaster because they occurred during the same year. That would allow the March flood damage to meet the threshold for the 90 percent federal cost share.

Fifth District U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham, R-Alto, coordinated a delegation letter sent to Obama Tuesday in support of Edwards' appeal.

"It's certainly a good step that FEMA has rightfully granted a cost-share adjustment for the victims of the August flood, but March victims cannot be forgotten during this recovery process," Abraham said. "We're still assessing damage, and people are still hurting. They need the support of their federal government. They're still suffering."

Abraham said he believes "we stand better than a 50-50 chance" of ultimately convincing FEMA to raise the federal cost share to 90 percent.

– Greg Hilburn covers state politics for the USA TODAY Network of Louisiana. Follow him on Twitter @GregHilburn1

Governor Asks To Lessen Louisiana's Cost For Share Of March Flooding

By Juan Sanchez

WDSU-TV New Orleans, November 1, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. —

Gov. John Bel Edwards is asking President Barack Obama's administration to reconsider its refusal to lessen Louisiana's share of disaster response costs after March flooding that inundated north and central Louisiana.

The governor's office released the appeal letter Monday.

Louisiana's share of the federal disaster response to the August flooding that ravaged south Louisiana is 10 percent. The Federal Emergency Management Agency denied a request to lessen the state's costs for the earlier March flooding from 25 percent to 10 percent.

Edwards' Homeland Security secretary, James Waskom, wrote to the White House that the two floods should be considered together because they have caused "significant economic hardship" to state and local government.

Waskom wrote that lessening the match rate for the March flooding could save the state an estimated $28 million.

Disaster Assistance Briefings Scheduled For This Week

Jackson County (WI) Chronicle, November 1, 2016

Local governments and private nonprofit agencies that sustained damage during the Sept. 21-22 flooding in Western Wisconsin are encouraged to attend briefings this week to learn about applying for federal disaster assistance.

Gov. Scott Walker recently announced that 10 Wisconsin counties were approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for disaster assistance to help with costs associated with debris removal, emergency protective measures and damage to public infrastructure such as roads and bridges. The counties in the declaration are Adams, Chippewa, Clark, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland and Vernon.

Two teams of specialists from Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency will explain how state and local agencies and certain private non-profit groups can apply for federal Public Assistance to help recover from flooding. Under the cost-share program, FEMA funds 75 percent of the cost for eligible work and 25 percent is shared equally between state and local applicants.

The program is not for businesses or homeowners as the level of damage in these areas does not currently meet requirements for FEMA assistance.

Applicant briefings will be held at the Jackson County Courthouse in Black River Falls in the county board room this Thursday from 8-9:30 a.m. Monroe County's is scheduled for Thursday from 12:30-2 p.m. at room 500 of the Justice Center in Sparta.If a local government or private nonprofit organization cannot attend the briefings, they should contact their county emergency management director.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

More Georgia Burn Bans As Rocky Face Mountain Fire Continues

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, November 2, 2016

Two more metro Atlanta counties came under outdoor burn bans Tuesday, and a North Georgia wildfire burned on as the state's fire situation continued.

The fire on Rocky Face Mountain in Whitfield County could continue into next week, the Dalton Daily Citizen reported. Georgia Forestry Commission crews said more than 200 acres have been "blackened or are actively on fire" since the fire began Thursday.

Crews have been hampered by the rugged nature of the terrain.

"It is a very labor-intensive fire," GFC ranger Pat Stockett told the Daily Citizen. "Our hand crews at times are having to hike an hour or an hour and a half in just to get to the fire. The terrain is posing a very unique obstacle, and bulldozers don't like rocks. Our operators are doing exceptional work. This is a very technical operation."

There have been seven new fires since midnight, GFC spokeswoman Wendy Burnett said. Fire crews are active from Cherokee County north to the state line.

The ongoing drought conditions are a factor everywhere.

The GFC has included Gwinnett County in a temporary suspension of all outdoor burning, according to the Gwinnett County Fire Marshal website.

"Outdoor burning will resume once conditions are within an acceptable range and the suspension has been lifted by the Georgia Forestry Commission," the website said.

On Tuesday, Henry County joined the list of metro Atlanta counties with self-imposed burn bans, along with Paulding County, Cobb County and Douglas County.

Significant rain is not in the near-term forecast for North Georgia.

"Mother Nature is not looking too good as a helper," Stockett said. "She got tired from Hurricane Matthew."

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

In The Wake Of Hurricane Matthew — To Spray Or Not To Spray?

By Shahir Masri

The Hill, November 1, 2016

Confronted by devastating Hurricane Matthew, Florida residents and city officials have even more to deal with than the obvious destruction and loss at hand.

When floods and rain subside, stagnant puddles and newly formed ponds persist — a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes. What this has meant previously is aerial spraying of highly toxic organophosphate pesticides (OPs).

Just recall Hurricane Isabel in 2003, or Charley, Jeanne, Frances, and Katrina in 2004 and 2005. Don't forget Hurricane Irene in 2011. In all instances, flooding resulted in real or anticipated increases in mosquito abundance, and aerial spraying of toxic OPs ensued.

Out went the hurricanes and in came the pesticides. Will this be the story again following hurricane Matthew? It's only been weeks since Miami Beach experienced repeated aerial spraying of the insecticide Naled in spite of much protest by locals. Yet history would suggest Florida may be in for another spray.

Naled is a potent neurotoxin being used to kill mosquitoes in order to combat the spread of Zika virus. It is also a chemical the European Union banned in 2012. Meanwhile in the U.S. Naled remains the weapon of choice come virus or natural disaster, with nearly 6 million acres of land sprayed in Florida in 2014 alone. As a public health scientist specialized in chemical exposure assessment, I provide a word of caution against this frequent aerial OP spraying.

OPs affect cholinesterase inhibition in the body, and is toxic to the nervous system. While they have been widely used since WWII, their use has not been without consequence.

Rather, a number of scientific studies have shown an association between OP exposure and neurological outcomes such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, and neuro-developmental impacts to the unborn fetus. Studies have also shown pre-natal OP exposure linked to premature birth, reduced birth weight, and cardiovascular abnormalities. One study showed childhood exposure linked with reduced lung function. OPs can cause toxicity through all routes — inhalation, consumption, and physical skin contact.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), aerial spraying of Naled is inconsequential to human health because the quantities used are very low. This assertion, however, neglects that low dose exposure, particularly repeated exposure, can be problematic if you're someone prone to chemical intolerance.

As we say, "dose plus host" determines toxicity. This is because people's ability to detoxify OPs and other chemicals varies greatly from person to person. For some, exposure may go unnoticed. For others, the consequence can be severe and long lasting. Unfortunately, there is no easy way to know which child or adult is genetically susceptible—until it's too late. That is, until they've been exposed.

Chemical intolerance afflicts many people and can be triggered by repeated low level OP exposure. Dr. Claudia Miller, a physician and research scientist with three decades of experience studying the health effects of OPs and other chemicals, has investigated numerous exposed populations and established a strong link between OP and other low level exposures and chronic health problems. She coined the term Toxicant Induced Loss of Tolerance, or TILT, to describe the two-stage physiological process of an initial chemical exposure followed by subsequent intolerances to many other chemicals.

People who get "TILTed" lose their capacity to tolerate common, chemically unrelated substances such as fragrances, cleaning products, nail polish, and vehicle exhaust. Once TILTed by an initial chemical exposure, these substances can trigger serious health problems such as fatigue, headache, weakness, mood changes, difficulties with memory and concentration, as well as respiratory and skin problems. Symptoms from even a single exposure leave some people debilitated for life.

In the last decade TILT has become increasingly well documented and studied worldwide by doctors and medical researchers. A validated questionnaire called the Quick Environmental Exposure and Sensitivity Inventory (QEESI) has been developed to help patients and doctors identify this elusive disease process. The QEESI is now being used in more than a dozen countries.

Of great concern in Florida and elsewhere are the repeated OP exposures among susceptible individuals in the spray zones. They and their doctors must be aware of the two stages of TILT, which can develop in the days and weeks following a salient exposure event, such as the recent sprayings in Florida and potentially another in the wake of Hurricane Matthew. Early diagnosis and avoidance of symptom triggers is essential to getting well — similar to when someone develops an allergy to a food or drug.

However, TILT differs from usual allergies in that the specific antibodies that characterize allergic sensitization are largely absent. Consequently most diagnoses are missed by doctors and allergists. Nor are there accepted lab tests for TILT. The QEESI questionnaire is currently the most reliable tool for screening.

Disaster relief efforts are undoubtedly of utmost importance following devastating hurricanes. The routine accompaniment of aerial OP spraying to such efforts, however, must be questioned and suggests the impacts of low level OP exposure are underappreciated. Naled, like many OPs, affects more than just mosquitoes—with every man, woman, and child in the spray zone at risk of developing TILT. And let's not forget the prenatal impacts during pregnancy.

Without question, Zika represents a public health threat that necessitates urgent action. Indeed this will complicate the post-Matthew response efforts. We can be sure, however, that resorting again to aerial spraying of highly toxic OPs is simply opting for one of two evils — replacing mosquitoes with yet another problem. Given our current inability to identify OP-susceptible individuals, spraying cannot be carried out with necessary prudence.

As a precautionary measure, residents should therefore be made aware of the risks and be encouraged to remain inside with closed windows during aerial spraying; something the CDC currently deems "not necessary" on its website. Meanwhile, alternative vector control strategies by CDC and other agencies should be thoroughly investigated and funded accordingly by Congress. Aerial OP spraying should be an infrequent resort, if ever a resort at all.

Shahir Masri is an assistant specialist in air pollution exposure assessment and epidemiology. He has his Doctor of Science degree from the Department of Environmental Health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The views expressed by contributors are their own and not the views of The Hill.

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AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

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NATIONAL NEWS

ABC: Millennium Tower Lawsuit.

ABC World News Tonight (11/3, story 8, 1:25, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "Back here at home tonight, and to new concern at this hour over a skyscraper, a high rise, now teetering. The city's attorney in San Francisco taking legal action, and tonight, families who live there showing us the video that they say proves that their building is, in fact, leaning. ABC's Kayna Whitworth is there." ABC (**Whitworth**) added, "The Millennium Tower soars over the San Francisco skyline, 645 feet high. The problem is, it's getting shorter. Sinking 16 inches already, and now it's tilting two inches. Tonight, the city is suing, claiming the problem was never disclosed to potential buyers and now these cracks in the sidewalk, rattling homeowners." **Unidentified speaker**: "We really don't feel safe in this building." **Whitworth**: "Frank Jernigan says this marble rolling and even changing direction across the floor of his high rise apartment shows the tilt in the building. Your life's hard work is now leaning this way and someone could have told you that before you bought it." **Unidentified speaker**: "Before we bought. Absolutely." **Whitworth**: "The building's developer, Millennium Partners, says the city's lawsuit has no merit." **PJ Johnston**, Millennium Partners spokesman: "The building is safe, it's seismically sound, its structural integrity has not been compromised." **Whitworth**: "David, not only is this tower sinking and leaning, but it's in a major earthquake zone. So, when residents walk out their front door and see this, they're fearing for more than just their investment, but their safety, as well. David?" **Muir**: "Kayna Whitworth from San Francisco. Kayna, thanks."

President Obama Signs Disaster Declaration For Hampton Roads

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (AP) — President Barack Obama has signed a Virginia disaster declaration that will provide federal aid to Hampton Roads cities affected by Hurricane Matthew.

Local news organizations report that the order was signed Wednesday and will provide funding for Chesapeake, Newport News, Norfolk and Virginia Beach. The funds will be used for programs including temporary housing, home repairs and low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses.

Residents and businesses that were affected by the storm can apply for assistance by registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-3362.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will establish a local disaster recovery center to help people register and get answers about available resources. Federal, state and local agencies will staff the center.

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McCrory: Mobile Homes On Way For Some Homeless After Matthew

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) – Families in four North Carolina counties forced from their homes after flooding from Hurricane Matthew could be moving into mobile homes soon.

Gov. Pat McCrory said Thursday the Federal Emergency Management Agency approved the help for people displaced from their homes in Columbus, Edgecombe, Robeson and Wayne counties. The help could be extended to more counties.

The state signed contracts last month to start providing mobile homes in areas where hotels and rental homes were flooded, or didn't exist before the storm.

About 240 people are living in four shelters and more than 1,700 families are living in temporary housing after Matthew, which drenched the state a month ago.

The McCrory administration also revised the storm's death toll back up to 28 with the death of a Pitt County man.

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Governor Says Pitt County Man Dies Cleaning Up Storm Debris

By Jason Boyd

WCTI-TV Greenville (NC), November 3, 2016

RALEIGH – Governor Pat McCrory said a Pitt County man has died following Hurricane Matthew and the flooding that followed.

In a press conference Thursday morning to update the storm recovery process, McCrory said the additional fatality had been attributed to the storm, bringing the total to 28. A Pitt County man passed away as a result of injuries sustained while cleaning up storm debris.

No further information has been released at this time. NewsChannel 12 is working to confirm the incident.

While the state continues to work with FEMA, the governor is seeking approval of additional assistance for Carteret, Perquimans, Scotland, Richmond, Anson, Chatham and Northampton counties. McCrory's request for federal direct temporary housing assistance has been approved to help people displaced from their homes in Columbus, Edgecombe, Robeson and Wayne counties following his meeting with FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. The governor said the state hopes to add additional counties to the declaration in the coming days.

"Moving people out of shelters and into temporary and permanent housing continues to be one of our immediate priorities," McCrory said. "I want to thank our federal partners and my team for their incredible work, but we still have a lot of work to do. As our weather continues to be pretty, sunny and hot, many people are still facing dire circumstances in our state and we will continue to do all we can to help them recover."

Temporary housing has proven challenging because many hotels and rental homes in the impacted communities were also flooded. Currently, 240 people remain in four shelters across the state and more than 1,700 families are living in temporary housing.

Last week, the governor requested direct temporary housing authorization from the federal government to help provide manufactured homes as a temporary housing solution. The state signed contracts last month to ensure that once the request was approved work could start immediately.

According to FEMA officials, manufactured homes are just one of many options available for temporary housing. Other options include rental homes, apartments and hotels. Based on the FEMA contract, more than 165 manufactured homes are now available in North Carolina with others on the way. Officials are continuing to assess the need for these homes in impacted areas.

Governor McCrory noted that his team continues to monitor water system issues in Robeson and Brunswick counties. The good news is that the water system in Lumberton should be repaired this week. Additionally, a bypass line should be completed and operational this week in Brunswick County.

The governor has encouraged individuals and groups to help in the relief efforts by making a financial or other contribution. Monetary contributions to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund for Hurricane Matthew can be made by texting NCRECOVERS to 30306 or by visiting NCDisasterRelief.org. This is one of the best ways to help fund long-term recovery efforts.

Gov. McCrory's press office contributed to this story.

1,400 Added To Georgia's Voter Rolls During Extension

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

ATLANTA (AP) — More than 1,400 Chatham County residents have been added to Georgia's voter rolls after they took advantage of an extended registration deadline last month due to Hurricane Matthew.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (http://on-ajc.com/2f5yAFN) reports a federal judge had ordered the county to reopen registration after voting rights advocates argued that the storm had prevented would-be voters from signing up. Local government offices were closed in Chatham for what would have been the last six days of the voter registration period that ended Oct. 11.

U.S. District Judge William Moore extended the period for county residents until Oct. 18 even though Secretary of State Brian Kemp had encouraged residents in the storm's path to take advantage of the state's online and mobile voter registration access points.

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Information from: The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, http://www.ajc.com

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Flood Debris Costs Top $13 Million In Livingston Parish

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

LIVINGSTON, La. (AP) — Livingston Parish officials say the removal of August flood debris has topped the $13 million mark, with the final pickup set to begin.

Mark Harrell, the parish's emergency preparedness director, says the parish's contractors had picked up about 660,000 cubic yards of debris, 17,000 white goods and about 15,000 pounds of putrid food.

The Advocate reports (http://bit.ly/2e57n9r) Finance Director Jennifer Meyers said the parish recently received about $4.2 million in reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the parish's first round of debris removal. That figure represents the federal 90 percent cost share of the $4.7 million in invoices submitted for the work up to that point.

Harrell says Ceres Environmental Services' final pass through the parish could begin this week.

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Information from: The Advocate, http://theadvocate.com

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Oklahoma Regulators Close Wells, Reduce Volumes After Quake

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

PAWNEE, Okla. (AP) — Oil and natural gas regulators in Oklahoma are ordering the operators of 70 disposal wells to either shut them down or reduce disposal volumes after a 4.5 magnitude earthquake shook northern Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission said Thursday the new guidelines affect 38 disposal wells within 15 miles of the quake's epicenter that are under its jurisdiction and another 32 wells under the sole jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The earthquake was recorded Tuesday night in the Pawnee area, where a record-setting 5.8 magnitude quake struck two months ago. The commission says 15 wells included in its latest directive were ordered closed following the Sept. 3 quake.

Scientists have linked Oklahoma's increase in earthquakes to the underground disposal of wastewater from oil and gas production.

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Friday's Forecast: Soggy Southwest, Texas

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, November 3, 2016

The Southwest is in for a wet Friday while a few light showers dampen the Northwest and Florida.

West: Widespread showers and thunderstorms are forecast across the Southwest and west Texas on Friday. The heaviest rain is likely in New Mexico. Some flooding is possible. Light afternoon showers are expected along the Pacific Northwest coast.

East: Most of the eastern third of the country will see a dry and cool Friday thanks to Thursday's cold front that's pushed off the coast. A few showers are forecast in southern Florida.

Central U.S.: A mild to warm day is expected Friday for most of the central U.S. as highs soar into the 70s as far north as the Dakotas.

Weather history for Nov. 4: In 1927, heavy rain led to terrible flooding in New England, in which 200 people died. In 1956, Phoenix had its earliest freezing temperature on record.

13 Urgent Science And Health Issues The Candidates Have Not Been Talking About

Scientific American, November 3, 2016

In this election season science and health have taken a backseat. Worse, presidential candidate Donald Trump dismissed climate change as a Chinese hoax. His opponent, Hillary Clinton, vowed to dig up what the government knows about UFOs. Science is hardly getting its due.

Meanwhile in labs and institutions around the country, scientists are hard at work: inventing technologies to make guns safer, developing antibiotics to quell treatment-resistant infections and searching for more efficient forms of renewable, clean energy. This research addresses complex scientific and social issues that require thoughtful policy-making and debate. The country's next Congress and president will have much to consider.

To that end, Scientific American corralled some of the key scientific issues that U.S. politicians should be paying attention to, but aren't—from the threat of nuclear Armageddon to the ethics of medically assisted suicide. We spoke with top thinkers in each field—policy experts at universities, members of foundations and nonprofits, and the scientists themselves. What, our reporters asked, should government be doing to keep Americans healthy, safe and productive?

To learn the answers, read on. We hope those who would be our leaders will do the same.—Emily Laber-Warren The End of Antibiotics

Tuberculosis. Gonorrhea. Pneumonia. All these infections were once readily cured but overuse of antibiotics has created "superbugs"—bacteria that are resistant to even last-resort medicines.

Twenty-three thousand people die in the U.S. each year from antibiotic-resistant infections, and by 2050, experts estimate that rogue bacteria will kill more people than cancer. The United Nations recently held an unprecedented conference on how to combat superbugs. Here in the U.S. experts endorse a three-pronged approach: Congress should invest in drug development, ban the wanton feeding of antibiotics to cows and pigs, and attempt to reduce the number of patient infections. Hopefully, says Kathy Talkington, director of the Antibiotic Resistance Project at The Pew Charitable Trusts, "we can move something in the near future through Congress while the iron is hot."

Unlike medicines for heart disease or diabetes, a good antibiotic is usually used by patients for just a single occurrence of an illness, which makes pharmaceutical companies reluctant to pour money into developing new ones. Congress could help by funding some of the research as well as by enacting legislation that eases the economic burden of testing new antibiotics.

Meanwhile 80 percent of all antibiotics sold in the U.S. are given to cattle and other food animals, so legislators like Rep. Louise Slaughter (D–N.Y.) are turning their attention to the farmyard. Antibiotics make animals grow faster, and poultry, beef and pork farmers include regular doses in their animals' feed. Slaughter has proposed legislation that would prohibit the use of antibiotics in healthy animals.

Experts say we should also try to prevent the spread of infections in the first place—by encouraging hand washing and safe cooking practices.—Elyssa Bernfeld Clean Drinking Water

In Flint, Mich., thousands of children live with brain damage because lead from aging pipes leached into their drinking water. More than 360,000 underground water reserves have been polluted by waste from industrial processes. Severe droughts in the western states threaten water supplies for some 43 million people.

Of all the services Americans depend on, clean drinking water is the most precious. But crumbling infrastructure, contamination from fracking and farming, and climate change–related drought are depriving many Americans of this essential resource. Experts say Congress must take a range of actions—from helping cities identify toxins in their water systems to setting stricter limits for the dumping of industrial waste. "Drinking water is a basic human need," says Erin Derrington, a Pacific Northwest–based environmental consultant who specializes in wetlands. "Without wise management—a goal that does not seem to be at the top of either the Republican or Democratic nominees' agenda—we face real risks of degraded drinking water quality."

Experts say Congress should close a loophole in the Safe Drinking Water Act that allows energy companies to inject wastewater into the ground, where it contaminates underground water supplies that could be useful in the future. In addition, they say, the federal government needs to invest more than the $5.4 billion it spent in 2014 to help states replace old water mains and pipes—an investment that will pay off by preventing costly public health crises like the recent one in Flint.—Nicole Lewis Making Guns Safer

When the automobile was introduced, it was a death trap. But in the 1950s universities began crash testing—research that ultimately led to safer cars, better driver education and speed limits—and that slashed vehicular fatalities by 90 percent.

Now public health experts—including the American Medical Association, which put out a statement in June—want the government to take a similar approach to gun violence, which is responsible for more than 30,000 deaths a year.

The question of whether to regulate guns has become polarized, quelling progress on reducing deaths. But scientific research could liberate the issue from politics. Instead of debating whether people should have guns, science can suggest ways to make people safer: For example, how to prevent accidents and suicides in the 22 percent of U.S. homes where there are guns—by understanding how to best keep loaded guns out of the hands of children and distraught people who might act impulsively. Everytown.org, a leading gun violence prevention organization, wants Congress to fund research into technology such as biometric gun locks and safeties that would make it impossible for anyone but a gun's owner to fire it. "The truth is, whether you want gun rights or you support gun control, you should want these kinds of detailed academic, scientifically rigorous studies," says Adam Winkler, a constitutional law expert at the University of California, Los Angeles. "That is what a public health approach takes."—Stephanie Daniel Keeping Our Technological Edge

U.S. scientists and engineers produced the defining technologies of the modern era: the car, the airplane, the atom bomb, the iPhone. But the nation is quickly losing its edge. Foreign-born scientists and engineers are filling key slots at universities and in private labs, in part because of a dearth of qualified Americans.

Most experts trace the problem to the U.S. educational system. Our students rank far below other industrialized countries in math and science. The average American 15-year-old has difficulty solving an equation using pi. But there is a huge variation in how students fare depending on the state they live in; some Bible belt states shirk teaching evolution science or present it as a competing theory with religious creationism whereas states like New Hampshire offer excellent math and science instruction.

The solution, policy experts say, is for the federal government to create uniform, up-to-date requirements for the science and math concepts students should know at each grade level, as is done in other countries. But recent attempts at implementing national curricular conformity such as the Common Core have met resistance.

For now, experts say, the best approach is to suggest, not require. The Next Generation Science Standards, led by educators from nonprofits, philanthropies and state governments, are an attempt to codify a national baseline of math and science achievement. But so far only 18 states and the District of Columbia have signed on. The standards are optional but their authors hope that more state legislatures will sign them into law.—W. Harry Fortuna Protecting National Parks

America's national parks and forests are facing many challenges. In recent years legislators have stymied attempts to increase park funding and pushed for privatization of publicly owned lands. The National Park Service is some $11 billion behind on repairs and maintenance. Meanwhile, Arizona's congressional representatives support new uranium mines on public land near the Grand Canyon—and legislators from other states have similar projects such as oil and gas development in the lands around Arches National Park in Utah. "There's constant pressure to develop the land surrounding parks," says Kristen Brengel, vice president of government affairs at the National Parks Conservation Association.

But Pres. Barack Obama has taken steps to protect public lands. Earlier this year the U.S. Bureau of Land Management created a plan to protect Utah's public landscapes from energy developers. The Department of the Interior also recently canceled an oil-and-gas lease that threatened wildlife-rich regions around Montana's Glacier National Park.

Meanwhile private groups are taking their own steps to protect the nation's public lands. The nonprofit Trust for Public Land recently worked with a philanthropist to add 282 acres to Arizona's Saguaro National Park.

But whether the money comes from Congress or private pocketbooks, some advocates say it would be better spent readying parks for the impacts of climate change or fixing trails and roads at heavily-visited sites like Yellowstone. "We shouldn't be expanding our parks. We should be maintaining them," says Bonner Cohen, senior fellow at The National Center for Public Policy Research.—Samantha Lee Meeting Our Climate Change Promises

Last year in Paris the U.S. was one of 191 countries to sign a global agreement to slash the emissions that fuel climate change. It was an historic moment, but the hard work is yet to come: figuring out how to reduce the country's greenhouse gases to at least 26 percent below 2005 levels within the next nine years.

Climate change has gotten little attention during this presidential election season. Although Democrat Hillary Clinton has called climate change an "urgent threat" and pledged to carry on Obama's climate initiatives, GOP candidate Donald Trump has openly denied climate change and said he would withdraw the U.S. from the Paris agreement.

Part of the Obama administration's solution—dubbed the Clean Power Plan—would require power plants to limit their emissions, but it has been blocked both by the Republican-controlled Congress and the Supreme Court. Most policy experts agree that Obama's power plan is the best tool to meet the nation's emissions reduction target.

If Democrats win the presidency and control of both houses of Congress, the Clean Power Plan might get new legs. Other solutions include taxing carbon or allowing companies to profit when they reduce emissions more than required, says Daniel Fiorino, director of the Center for Environmental Policy at American University.

If Republicans remain in control, experts say, Congress might do better to focus on investing in renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power, an approach that might appeal to the GOP because it could stimulate the economy by adding new jobs.—Suzanna Masih Genetically Enhanced Humans

Scientists are inching closer to the holy grail of genetic engineering—the ability to add or remove DNA from an organism to change specific traits.

Genetic engineering, also known as gene editing, has been used for years to enhance agriculture and treat disease. But a new technology that harnesses the CRISPR–Cas9 gene–protein complex makes it possible to add and remove genes with unprecedented speed and precision, bringing designer babies and other sci-fi capabilities closer to reality.

Scientists are testing whether gene editing can help treat diseases such as HIV and hemophilia. But CRISPR opens the door to editing for human enhancement—such as adding genes for bigger muscles or whiter teeth—possibilities that are "soon to be on the horizon," says Fyodor Urnov, a geneticist at the University of California, Berkeley.

There are as yet no laws regulating gene editing for enhancement. Bioethicist Jonathan Moreno of the University of Pennsylvania says that's proper, because the technology is not yet developed, and "once you legislate, it's very hard to unlegislate [sic]."

For now experts are wrestling with the ethical implications of gene editing and making recommendations: In December a committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, comprising specialists in health, science and bioethics, will publish their recommendations on how to legislate as the technology develops.—Michael R. Murphy Nuclear Safeguards

Nuclear war is no longer a two-player game, as it largely was during the cold war, with the U.S. and NATO facing off against the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. The geopolitical nuclear landscape has grown more fraught and complex than ever. China, India, Pakistan and Israel all have nuclear weapons. North Korea's dictator is conducting missile tests with great fanfare. These new configurations multiply exponentially the rivalries and passions, global and regional, that could ignite a regional or global nuclear conflict.

Experts are divided over how the U.S. should act to minimize the threat. Some say we should publicly embrace a "no first use" policy, solidifying our implicit vow never to be first to push the button. But Obama's advisers maintain that any change of policy could upset the status quo—and hence the safest action is no action at all.

Another issue is how to respond to a perceived nuclear attack. The current policy is "launch on warning," meaning that we will fire as soon as we learn that another country has attacked us. This policy has led several times to near-catastrophe, when our warning systems were mistakenly tripped by a satellite, a faulty computer chip and even the moon.

A safer doctrine, say experts including former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry, is to avoid mistakes by retaliating only after being struck. Once nukes have been launched against us, there's nothing we can do to stop them. But we can strike back—even after being hit—using our fleet of nuclear subs and bombers. "We're not going to change," Perry says, "until people understand what those dangers are."—Michael O'Brien The Right to Die

Two years ago, a 29-year-old woman named Brittany Maynard who was dying of brain cancer decided to end her life. But she did not want to swallow a bunch of pills. She wanted to die safely and without pain, under a doctor's supervision. That meant Maynard had to move from California to Oregon, one of the few states where medically assisted suicide was legal at the time.

Maynard's story made the cover of People magazine. Suddenly the "right to die" had become a national issue—a far cry from the 1990s, when physician Jack Kevorkian was nicknamed "Dr. Death" and convicted of murder for helping his dying patients end their lives.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1997 that the right to medically assisted death is not constitutionally protected, leaving legislation up to the states. Assisted suicide is now legal in Montana, Vermont, Washington State and California as well as Oregon—and 20 other states and the District of Columbia are considering the move. But as right-to-die legislation gains traction, it is becoming as polarizing as the abortion debate, raising similar religious and ethical questions about an individual's rights and who should have authority in matters of life and death.—Alyssa Pagano The Threat of Microplastics

In 2013 the U.S. threw away more than 32.5 million tons of plastic waste, up from around 390,000 tons in 1960. Much of this plastic litter reaches rivers and makes its way to the sea. Plastic bags, balloons and six-pack rings pose known dangers to birds, sea turtles and other wildlife. But recent research suggests that once in the ocean, plastics degrade into microscopic particles that can be hazardous not only to animals and the environment but to humans as well. These so-called microplastics—particles smaller than one fifth of an inch—are ingested by fish, then by people if they eat the affected seafood. A new study by researchers at Plymouth University in England found that a single washing machine cycle can release hundreds of thousands of microplastic particles from fleece and other synthetic fabrics. The U.N. has singled out microplastics for their potential to cause infertility and other health issues.

One approach to the problem has been to institute bans or taxes on plastic shopping bags, but only three of 77 such proposals have passed in recent years, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Similar efforts are being made to ban so-called microbeads—tiny plastics manufactured for use in soaps and cosmetics. Conservation groups also organize beach and road cleanups, to prevent plastics from lingering in the environment.—Michael H. Wilson Tackling Obesity

Obesity now affects more than a third of American adults. It's associated with myriad diseases—the treatment of which costs over $147 billion a year. And almost one in five children are now obese, detracting from their self-esteem, emotional well-being and health. "If we continue on this course, this generation of children could be the first in U.S. history to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents," Donald Schwarz, vice president, Program, of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest public health philanthropy, said during a telephone press conference.

Experts say there is no single way to reduce obesity, because so many factors can impact weight—income, education, access to healthful food, physical activity. This is confounded by the fact that weight is not necessarily an indicator of overall health.

States and even city governments have introduced policies aimed at changing people's exercise and eating habits and fighting the hold fast food has on the U.S. diet. For example, the cities of Philadelphia and Berkeley, Calif., recently instituted a tax on sugary sodas—something that New York City tried and failed to do several years ago. Critics reject such programs as government overreach, calling them behavior taxes, but a similar program in Mexico has curbed soda consumption substantially. "We know it works," says spokesperson David Goldberg of Healthy Food America, a science-based nonprofit.—Kazi Awal Abandoning the Coasts

Hurricane Matthew, which devastated Haiti and deluged huge swaths of North Carolina earlier this month, was the latest in a barrage of catastrophic storms to hit U.S. coastlines in recent years. With storms and flooding along the coasts intensifying due to climate change, experts say it is time for a paradigm shift in how we think about our coasts, home to nearly 40 percent of the U.S. population. "I wouldn't put my money in investing in real estate at the coast, certainly not in the long term," says Jeff Williams, a coastal marine geologist and scientist emeritus at the U.S. Geological Survey.

The most sensible strategy, however difficult to stomach, is for the government to buy damaged property so that it never gets built on again, and people need to move inland. "Basically coastal communities in this country are staring down the loaded gun of climate change," says Shiva Polefka, an ocean policy analyst with the liberal-leaning think tank, the Center for American Progress. "Due to sea level rise, we're going to have to pull back from the coast."

Instead, the approach that towns and cities have been taking, with financial support from the federal government, has been to build walls around their shorelines or dump tons of sand on eroding beaches.

Experts say Congress should reallocate money into large-scale programs to buy property from coastal homeowners. Buyout programs do exist, but they are tiny. After Hurricane Sandy in 2012, for example, New York City helped rebuild more than 10,000 houses, but bought fewer than a thousand.—Meaghan Lee Callaghan Cleaner Energy

The next president will inherit a national patchwork of renewable energy policies. Only 30 states mandate renewable energy. Top on the list are Maine and Idaho, which derive 100 percent of their energy from renewable sources such as biomass and hydropower. But Pennsylvania produces a paltry 4 percent of its energy from renewables. And the states that have set no requirements lag even further behind. Wyoming, for instance, generates less than 1 percent of its energy from renewables.

The U.S. has around 4 percent of the world's population but emits some 25 percent of global CO2, the main driver of climate change. Yet only about 13 percent of the nation's electricity comes from renewable sources like wind, solar, hydropower and biomass.

Many believe it is high time for Congress to create a national standard. The Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonprofit advocacy group, points out that half of U.S. wind production between 2001 and 2006 was the result of state energy standards. Others contend that, given the huge differences in natural resources around the country, it makes sense for states to retain flexibility on how to meet their energy needs. A Great Plains state like Iowa, for example, may be well situated to harness energy from windmills whereas sunny Arizona would do better to rely on solar. Most attempts at national renewable energy policy take this geographic variability into account, allowing states to develop individualized portfolios while adhering to strict standards that increase over time.

Standards aside, experts say the federal government needs to modernize the energy grid. Renewable energy is not evenly distributed across the country. For example, lots of wind is collected in the western plains, and most solar energy is generated in the Southwest, but the areas with highest energy demand are on the coasts. Territorial battles among the states hold up necessary permits, leading to delays in connecting the isolated segments of the energy grid, according to policy expert Jules Kortenhorst, CEO of the Rocky Mountain Institute, a nonprofit research center in Colorado.

Kortenhorst suggests that a future president could institute a "federal override" that would allow the government to step in and force the integration of various regional grids, as it currently does with pipelines.—Roshan Abraham

The reporters are students in Emily Laber-Warren's science journalism class at the C.U.N.Y. Graduate School of Journalism.

FEMA HOUSING

Obama Declares Newport News Eligible For FEMA Disaster Grants And Loans

By Reema Amin

Newport News (VA) Daily Press, November 4, 2016

President Barack Obama declared Wednesday that residents of Newport News and three South Hampton Roads cities are eligible for disaster grants and loans related to damage from Hurricane Matthew.

The declaration makes residents of Newport News, Virginia Beach, Norfolk and Chesapeake eligible to apply for federal assistance, which could come in several forms based on damage, according to an statement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Kim Lee, Newport News spokeswoman, said that the city was aware of at least eight properties that were damaged by the hurricane. City Line Apartments had about 100 damaged units, causing some kind of displacement for those families, Lee said. She did not know the status of the repairs, and a representative for City Line could not be reached for comment.

The assistance, administered through FEMA, can include rental payments for temporary housing; grants for home repairs and replacements of essential items that aren't covered by insurance; grants to replace personal property and pay for medical or transportation bills; and unemployment payments for up to 26 weeks for those who temporarily lost their jobs because of the hurricane and don't qualify for benefits.

They can also apply for low-interest loans to pay for losses in a home that aren't covered by insurance. Loans up to $200,00 for residences and $40,000 for personal property. Loans up to $2 million are available for business property damage.

Loans up to $500,000 are available for farmers, ranchers and aquaculture operators.

Those wanting to apply can go to www.disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-FEMA. Those who have a speech disability or hearing loss should call 1-800-462-7585.

Lee said there will be a FEMA disaster assistance center set up in Newport News soon, but she didn't know the exact date on Thursday.

Planning commission OKs laser tag business

TagTime Laser Tag, a Yorktown-based business hoping to open a location in Denbigh, got the OK for a conditional-use permit on Wednesday from the Newport News Planning Commission.

The family-owned business had requested a permit to operate as an amusement establishment at DW Center, formerly known as Denbigh Village Shopping Center. It would be one of at least three entertainment businesses opening at the new plaza.

The laser tag business would be located at 14346 Warwick Blvd., Suite 420. Brad Drummond, one of the owners, said they also set up laser tag events for birthday parties, many of those in Newport News.

"We have a huge customer base in Newport News," he said. "Every weekend we find ourselves in someone's backyard."

FEMA Trailers Coming To Robeson, Columbus, 2 Other N.C. Counties

By Bill Kirby

Fayetteville (NC) Observer, November 3, 2016

Hurricane-displaced residents in four North Carolina counties will be moving into manufactured homes, Gov. Pat McCrory announced Thursday.

He said the Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved the state's request to set up mobile homes in the four worst-hit counties by Hurricane Matthew: Robeson, Columbus, Edgecombe and Wayne.

More counties could be added in the coming days for FEMA mobile homes, McCrory said, in an effort to provide direct temporary housing assistance to those who can't yet go back to their homes.

Some of the worst flooding from the Oct. 8 storm, McCrory said, occurred in communities with few hotels, and in the case of Kinston in Lenoir County, several of the hotels were also flooded.

"Moving people out of shelters and into temporary and permanent housing continues to be one of our immediate priorities," McCrory said at a news conference in Raleigh.

The governor said there are 240 people remaining in four shelters across the state, and more than 1,700 families are living in temporary housing, mostly hotels and motels.

McCrory: Mobile Homes On Way For Some Homeless After Matthew

WITN-TV Greenville (NC), November 3, 2016

Families in four North Carolina counties forced from their homes after flooding from Hurricane Matthew could be moving into mobile homes soon.

Gov. Pat McCrory said Thursday the Federal Emergency Management Agency approved the help for people displaced from their homes in Columbus, Edgecombe, Robeson and Wayne counties. The help could be extended to more counties.

The state signed contracts last month to start providing mobile homes in areas where hotels and rental homes were flooded, or didn't exist before the storm.

About 240 people are living in four shelters and more than 1,700 families are living in temporary housing after Matthew, which drenched the state a month ago.

FEMA Offering Temporary Jobs, Has Approved $1.6M For Bladen County

Elizabethtown (NC) Bladen Journal, November 3, 2016

RALEIGH –- North Carolinians looking for temporary work now have an opportunity to be part of the team to help their state recover from Hurricane Matthew and to learn first-hand about the recovery process. North Carolina Works, in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is advertising open temporary positions.

Individuals interested in working with FEMA can visit the NC Works workforce office serving their area, visit www.ncworks.gov to find available job opportunities, or call 919-560-6880. Positions are posted as the need arises.

Applicants seeking a job with FEMA must be a U.S. citizen 18 years of age or older and have a valid government identification card, such as a driver's license or military ID. Before hiring, candidates will be subject to a complete background investigation and fingerprinting. FEMA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Thursday, FEMA released the following numbers reflecting the number of applications received and money approved for Bladen County and neighboring counties:

— Bladen: 2,519 applications, $1,584,343.49

— Columbus: 4,324 applications, $4,317,191.38

— Cumberland: 12,021 applications, $11,358,473.30

— Pender: 668 applications, $1,432,039.08

— Robeson: 15,918 applications, $17,368,158.77

— Sampson: 1,716 applications, $1,353,116.32

To date, 38 North Carolina counties have been approved for federal disaster assistance. On Oct. 28, FEMA opened a Disaster Recovery Center in Elizabethtown, stationed at the agricultural center on Smith Circle, where staff are accepting applications and offering assistance in person.

"We continue to encourage people to go ahead and register," said FEMA Media Relations Specialist Rita Egan. "Don't delay; register today — that's my mantra."

FEMA Individual Assistance is designed to help survivors get back on their feet and covers essential needs not covered by insurance, including assistance with essential home repairs and temporary rental assistance.

The state and FEMA work closely with state, federal, private sector, faith-based and voluntary agency partners to help match survivors who have remaining needs with other sources of assistance.

Egan encouraged residents who receive notices beginning with “Your application has been denied” to continue reading, as additional action on the part of the applicant may resolve the issue. She noted that rejection letters are often sent for issues like a phone number being inactivated or an adult not being on site when the inspector showed up. Such issues can be quickly and easily corrected, and will result in the application process moving again. Additionally, application decisions can be appealed if done so within 60 days of receiving the letter.

For more information on the North Carolina’s recovery, visit the disaster webpage at fema.gov/disaster/4285 or visit the North Carolina Emergency Management website at ncdps.gov/.

FEMA Assistance Expanded To Wakulla, Taylor

Tallahassee (FL) Democrat, November 3, 2016

FEMA now is offering individual assistance to Hurricane Hermine victims in Taylor and Wakulla counties.

The grants can help with temporary housing, home repair and low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses.

Previously, Leon County was the only county in the Big Bend to be offered individual assistance. U.S. Rep. Gwen Graham had asked relief be extended to Taylor, Wakulla and Franklin counties after the Sept. 1 storm devastated the Big Bend.

“Now all those affected by Hurricane Hermine will be able to receive the assistance they deserve,” Graham said.

Did Hurricane Hermine Damage Your Property? The Government May Be Able To Help.

By Mark Young

Bradenton (FL) Herald, November 3, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has designated residents of Manatee County as eligible for individual assistance under its disaster relief program in the aftermath of Hurricane Hermine.

The storm hit well north of Manatee County on Sept. 2, but its outer bands brought drenching rains to the county for two days, dropping up to 13 inches in some areas and causing flooding in some areas.

The federal disaster assistance designation applies for uninsured or under-insured homeowners, renters and business owners. FEMA funding does not replace existing insurance claims.

In addition to Manatee County, 22 Florida counties received the designation prior to Thursday’s announcement. Two other Florida counties, Taylor and Wakulla, were also added to the list this week.

To be eligible, storm damage and losses must have occurred as a direct result of Hurricane Hermine. Those eligible are encouraged to register with FEMA as soon as possible. If you have already applied to the Individual Assistance Program, you do not have to do so again.

Those seeking assistance can apply online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362. For those who have hearing or speech disabilities may call 800-462-7585.

According to a FEMA press release, “Assistance for eligible survivors can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, and for other serious disaster-related needs, such as medical and dental expenses or funeral and burial costs.”

Long-term, low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also may be available to cover losses not fully compensated by insurance.

Federal Aid Now Possible For Hermine Damage In Taylor, Wakulla Counties

By Brittany Bedi

WCTV-TV Tallahassee (FL), November 3, 2016

WAKULLA COUNTY, Fla. (WCTV) – It’s been nearly two months since Hurricane Hermine slammed the Big Bend of Florida.

Coastal communities in Taylor and Wakulla counties had to deal with storm surge, flooding, and debris.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has now designated Taylor and Wakulla county for individual assistance. This means that residents and small businesses that were damaged by Hermine are eligible for federal aid.

Assistance may include grants for temporary housing, home repairs, medical needs, or funeral or burial costs.

Residents from both counties were left out of the first round of financial aid eligibility back in September, so residents are now breathing a sigh of relief.

Cypress Rudloe is the director of the Gulf Specimen Marine Lab in Panacea. He says that the marine lab suffered flooding and damage to their “Living Dock.”

"Well I'm really happy FEMA decided to include Wakulla County.," says Rudloe. "We did get hurt down here, and as a community, if one of us get hurt, all of us hurt."

Residents in counties designated for federal aid must register with FEMA .

Registration can be completed online here, on the FEMA mobile app, or by calling 800-621-3362 between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

What's Next For Homes Affected By Pender Flooding

By Ashley Morris

Wilmington (NC) Star News, November 3, 2016

PENDER COUNTY – Street corners in Currie and Canetuck this week were lined with heaps of home interiors tossed out after historic flooding condemned dozens of homes and damaged dozens of others.

Sofas, chairs, tables, rugs, carpets, books and draperies were lumped into mountains until county officials collect the treasured items that are now garbage.

Steven Woodcock and Kristee Spearman lost everything in their home after just living there for one year. Monday they were still waiting for their FEMA application to be approved. Two weeks ago Woodcock said he entered in his information and started a ticket with FEMA in hopes to recover some of what they lost.

Family photos of Christmas, his kid's school photos and antique family portraits hanging on the wall – those were among the only items salvageable from their house right off N.C. 210 that filled with two feet of water.

"It was pretty heartbreaking the first time going back in the house and seeing all the damage," Woodcock said. His two children's toys were scattered everywhere and covered in the silt the rising Black River left behind.

So far Pender County officials have counted 18 homes around the Black River Basin that are considered total losses and have been condemned, said Emergency Management director Tom Collins. More than 650 Pender homes experienced damage to their homes and property. As of Wednesday, FEMA had spent $1.3 million in funds on Pender residents for rental costs and food.

Collins expects the FEMA numbers to go up as people are approved for disaster assistance loans. He also expects the number of homes condemned to rise.

For several weeks Woodcock and his family have stayed in Ivanhoe with friends, about 30 minutes away.

"It's tough not having a home of your own to sleep in," he said. "When you get off work, you know you aren't getting to go home."

Residents from Ivanhoe, Atkinson and down through Currie were told if the water came up to two feet in their home, they have to take out everything below four feet, Collins said.

"If they had flooding pretty soon they will have a mold problem and their home won't be safe to live in," Collins said, explaining why not only sheetrock and insulation have to be thrown out, but even items like coffee tables.

Anything the water touched was ruined.

Once the county is able to clear debris and ruined interiors, Collins said the biggest struggle remains finding temporary housing for those displaced and waiting to get back into their homes. The next issue is disseminating information to those affected about where they can seek help and what programs they are eligible for.

For residents rebuilding like Ervin Ezzell, each day he can work on his home he says he has more hope. The inside of his ranch house was filled with three feet of water. Monday he had fully gutted the interior walls, his brand-new cabinets and all the furniture. Only the exposed brick walls and brick fireplace with two deer trophies remained as he used fans to dry out the crawlspace and floorboards.

"The worst part was waiting for the water to stop rising, because we didn't know how high it would get," Ezzell said. "Waiting to come back and see the damage in your house and waiting for FEMA – the suspense is what is so bad."

FEMA Registration Deadline Is Nov. 14

Eunice (LA) Today, November 3, 2016

Baton Rouge, La. –

Louisiana disaster survivors affected by August flooding have two weeks left to register for disaster assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The deadline to register is Nov. 14.

Survivors may register with FEMA by going online with any computer, smartphone or tablet to DisasterAssistance.gov, calling the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362, or downloading the FEMA mobile app. Survivors who use a TTY may call 800-462-7585 to register.

Survivors can also register for assistance at any FEMA disaster recovery center. To find a disaster recovery center near you, call the FEMA helpline or text DRC and your zip code to 43362. You can also find a center near you by downloading the FEMA mobile app or going online to fema.gov/drc.

FEMA assistance for homeowners and renters may include grants for rent, temporary housing and home repair to their primary residence, as well as other serious disaster-related needs, such as medical and dental expenses or funeral and burial costs.

Survivors should also be sure to submit their disaster loan application to the U.S. Small Business Administration by Nov. 14. Submitting a loan application does not imply acceptance of a loan, but it is a necessary step to being considered for other forms of disaster assistance.

For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling 800-659-2955, emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visiting SBA's website at SBA.gov/disaster. Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may call 800-877-8339. SBA representatives are also available at any disaster recovery center, disaster loan outreach center, or business recovery center.

Flood Victims Reminded About Approaching Deadline

WVUE-TV New Orleans, November 3, 2016

AMITE, LA (WVUE) –

Tangipahoa Parish President Robby Miller reminds survivors of the August flood event that Monday, Nov. 14 is the deadline to register for disaster assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Miller said residents may register with FEMA by going online with any computer, smartphone or tablet to DisasterAssistance.gov, calling the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362, or downloading the FEMA mobile app. Survivors who use a TTY may call 800-462-7585 to register. Survivors can also register for assistance at any FEMA disaster recovery center.

FEMA assistance for homeowners and renters may include grants for rent, temporary housing and home repair to their primary residence, as well as other serious disaster-related needs, such as medical and dental expenses or funeral and burial costs.

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For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling 800-659-2955.

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NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

No stories for this edition

MITIGATION

Workshop On Area Disaster Planning Set For Nov. 14

Charlottesville (VA) Daily Progress, November 3, 2016

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission will hold a public workshop to discuss updating the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The workshop will be held from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Nov. 14 at the commission's Water Street Center at 407 E. Water St. Participants will be able to generate ideas to enhance the region's ability to be prepared for emergency responses and to bounce back after a natural disaster.

The prior plan was adopted by all jurisdictions in the planning district — Charlottesville and the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson — and was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2012. The plan is required to be updated every five years for localities to be eligible for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

No stories for this edition

FIRE GRANTS

Frederick County Fire & Rescue Are Asking For A $4 Million Grant

WHAG-TV Hagerstown (MD), November 3, 2016

FREDERICK COUNTY, Va.

The Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department and its 11 volunteer fire and rescue companies are asking for a $4 million dollar grant to replace over 330 self-contained breathing apparatuses.

Right now, none of the department's breathing apparatus units meet the current national Fire Protection Association's standards due to new changes.

The department applied for an assistance to firefighters grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and it was approved by the Board of Supervisors to replace all units within the Frederick County Fire and Rescue system.

The life span of the units is typically between 15 and 20 years.

Dan Sova, Assistant Fire Chief Gainesboro Volunteer Fire & Rescue explained why getting new appartuses are so important.

"We use the self contained breathing apparatuses. It's kind of like a backpack that you see kids wearing to school, when you see firefighters on the fire ground, we're wearing our S-C-B-A's as call them and what they have is air in a tank that allows us to breathe air as we're inside of a fire."

The Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department will know if they got the grant between the spring and fall of next year.

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NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

1,400 Added To Georgia's Voter Rolls During Registration Extension

By Kristina Torres

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, November 3, 2016

Advocates are celebrating the addition of more than 1,410 Chatham County residents to Georgia's voter rolls after they took advantage of an extended voter registration deadline last month due to Hurricane Matthew.

A federal judge had ordered the county to reopen registration after voting rights advocates argued that the storm —including a mandatory evacuation and related power outages —had prevented would-be voters from signing up. Local government offices were closed in Chatham for what would have been the last six days of the voter registration period that ended Oct. 11.

Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp, who has embraced technology including a pilot program this year allowing voter registration via text message, had encouraged residents in the storm's path to take advantage of the state's online and mobile voter registration access points. U.S. District Judge William Moore, however, still extended the period for county residents until Oct. 18.

Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the national Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, noted that the number of those submitting applications during the extension would have represented more than 10 percent of all voters who registered in 2012 before that year's presidential election. Advocates were also encouraged nearly half of the group were black or Latino —groups traditionally underrepresented on the rolls.

The Lawyers' Committee brought the suit along with Atlanta law firm Bryan Cave on behalf of the Georgia NAACP, the Georgia Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda and the New Georgia Project.

FEMA To Pay For Private Roads Debris Removal In Beaufort County, But Tells Chatham County "No"

By Lou Phelps

Savannah (GA) Business Journal, November 4, 2016

Last week, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved Beaufort County's request for reimbursement for the cost of removing private property debris from both roads and rights-of-way under FEMA's 'Public Assistance Program.'

The news added confusion for those in Chatham County living in large private communities such as The Landings at Skidaway Island after property owners of the almost 4,000 homes there learned this week that Chatham County will not be reimbursed by FEMA to remove their enormous levels of debris. But, Chatham County officials announced Wednesday that the County will assist in debris removal.

Contractors being used around the County, funded by FEMA, were sent to The Landings on Wednesday to remove some of the debris, as several elected officials held a press conference to explain their intention to appeal FEMA's decision.

Residents there maintain that they pay County property taxes, and should receive supportive services, despite the fact that all roads at The Landings are 'private,' and are maintained by The Landings Association's capital fund year-around.

Paul Kurilla serves as Director of Public Works for The Landings Association. At Wednesday's press conference, and through emails to residents, he stated that workers have removed 80,000 cubic yards of tree and branch debris from the area, but have at least 280,000 cubic yards left to be picked up.

FEMA informed County Manager Lee Smith this week that The Landings and 20 other private residential neighborhoods are not eligible for debris removal reimbursement.

And, Smith said that the Thunderbolt municipality also received notice this week that FEMA had also denied reimbursement for cleanup of its streets that are 'private.'

The County intends to file an immediate appeal of FEMA's decision within six days. Congressman Buddy Carter's office stated today that he is "working with Chatham County officials to form that appeal."

At this Friday's County Commission meeting, Smith will update County Commissioners on the appeal, progress in cleaning up the County to date, and projected costs and funding sources to deal with non-FEMA reimbursed expenses.

FEMA denied pickup based on their analysis of the volume of debris to be removed, which differs widely from the estimates of local officials.

According to State Rep. Jesse Petrea, Sen. David Perdue, Sen. Johnny Isakson, as well as Congressman Carter, are all pressuring FEMA to re-evaluate their decision. Petrea adds that The Landings is not looking for assistance with debris on golf courses, etc, but debris on public rights of way, debris that poses a fire danger and issues related to mosquito control.

FEMA Denies Request For Reimbursements On Private Roads In Chatham County

WJCL-TV Savannah (GA), November 3, 2016

Chatham County, GA —

FEMA sent a notice to Chatham County on Monday, informing them that FEMA would not reimburse the county for costs associated with debris removal in private communities.

A decision that left local leaders stunned.

"We're disappointed," said County Commissioner Pat Farrell.

Farrell, Commissioner Helen Stone, County Manager Lee Smith, and State Representative Jesse Petrea held a press conference Tuesday in the Landings, a private community in unincorporated Chatham County.

Among a pile of debris as big as a mobile home, they discussed frustration with FEMA.

County Manager Smith said FEMA's reasoning for not paying for pickup was due to the volume of debris in the 20-plus gated communities.

"But we believe their estimates are severely, severely minimized," said Smith.

Commissioner Farrell said FEMA also failed to understand the legal and financial responsibilities the county has to the private neighborhoods.

"There's a long precedent in this county for treating all those communities equally," he said.

Commissioner Helen Stone said residents in the gated neighborhoods pay local taxes to Chatham County, and should get the same amount of assistance from FEMA.

"And I believe that they should be treated accordingly and treated differently because of the fact that they live behind a gate," said Stone.

The county, along with the state are appealing the FEMA decision. Smith said another pressing issue is the amount of mosquitos brought on by the piles of debris in the gated areas. Making removal a public health necessity.

Smith said the county is working on getting the debris picked up in all of unincorporated Chatham County, despite the denial from FEMA.

He cautioned that residents need to be patient while crews move throughout the county.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Open On Hilton Head Island

By Georgiaree Godfrey

WTOC-TV Savannah (GA), November 3, 2016

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SC (WTOC) –

FEMA representatives are present throughout the Coastal Empire helping in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

We saw how they've been responding here in Georgia, but this week they're also very active in the Lowcountry.

The centers are a way for residents and small business owners alike to get face to face interaction with FEMA representatives. Earlier this week, they were in the northern part of the county, and now they've made their way south.

A center is set up at Hilton Head Town Hall, and it will be open through Saturday evening. Consider it a one-stop shop for everything you need to know to recover from the storm.

This is the second step to the assistance process. Residents should have already created a profile with FEMA and applied online for assistance. From there, you're given an applicant number which is used throughout the process to keep track of your needs and assistance you have received. With more than 35,000 people statewide already signed up, these recovery centers are essential in making sure all needs are met.

"The collaboration of that face to face is immense to be able to sit down and have someone discuss your individual needs. It's immense as far as expediting your recovery. However, you don't have to come in here once you register. You don't have to come to a DRC, but if you have a need, or if there is a breakdown in communication, this is why we're here," said William Lindsey, FEMA.

Representatives will be there until 7 p.m. Thursday night and until 6 p.m. on Saturday. So far, they've seen more than 50 people with needs related to Hurricane Matthew.

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FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Opens In Burgaw

WECT-TV Wilmington (NC), November 3, 2016

PENDER COUNTY, NC (WECT) –

Pender County residents who suffered losses and damage as a result of Hurricane Matthew will be able to get information about available state and federal assistance at a Disaster Recovery Center opening Thursday in Burgaw.

According to officials, the center will be located at Malpass Corner Elementary School, 4992 Malpass Corner Road, and will be open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

DRCs are staffed with representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, North Carolina Emergency Management and the U.S. Small Business Administration. You can receive help applying for federal disaster assistance, learn about the types of assistance available, learn about the appeals process and obtain updates regarding your application.

If you have phone and/or internet access, you may register in one of the following ways:

Online at DisasterAssistance.gov.

Call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 for voice, 711 and Video Relay Service (VRS). If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY, call 800-462-7585.

Download the FEMA Mobile App and apply.

Recovery centers are open throughout the disaster-affected counties in the state. To locate the center nearest to you, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362.

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Federal Aid Now Available To 7 More NC Counties Impacted By Matthew

WAVY-TV Norfolk (VA), November 3, 2016

NORTH CAROLINA (WAVY) — Disaster assistance has been approved to help individual residents in an additional seven North Carolina counties as they clean up from Hurricane Matthew.

Carteret and Perquimans counties had already been approved for federal public assistance to help local governments and non-profits. Thursday's approval means individuals are now also eligible to apply for aid.

With the addition of these counties, 45 counties have now been approved for federal individual and public assistance. Two counties have been approved for public assistance only. Nearly $64 million has already been approved for individuals who have been affected by the storm.

The 45 counties currently eligible to apply for individual assistance are: Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chatham, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Harnett, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Martin, Moore, Nash, Northampton, Onslow, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Tyrrell, Wake, Washington, Wayne and Wilson.

To apply for federal aid, go to DisasterAssistance.gov, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 or download the FEMA Mobile App.

FEMA has set up a disaster recovery center which will move throughout Dare County to help give all residents affected by Matthew a chance to get help.

The center will be set up in Kill Devil Hills from Tuesday, Nov. 8, through Thursday, Nov. 10, in the north parking lot of the Kill Devil Hills Fire Station, located at 1634 N. Croatan Highway.

The center will then move to Manteo and will be open on Saturday, Nov. 12, Monday, Nov. 14 and Tuesday, Nov. 15. It will be closed Sunday. The Manteo location will be located at the Dare County officer, 954 Marshall C. Collins Drive.

The recovery center's regular hours are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Looking for a recovery center near you? They are set up all over the disaster-affected counties of North Carolina. To find one close by, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 or go online.

If you'd like to donate to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund for Hurricane Matthew, text NCRECOVERS to 30306 or visit NCDisasterRelief.org.

FEMA: Disaster Assistance Does Not Affect Government Benefits

By Matt Corpening

WMBF-TV Myrtle Beach (SC), November 3, 2016

COLUMBIA, SC (WMBF) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced Thursday disaster assistance does not count as income, and therefore will not affect recipients' Social Security checks or other government benefits.

According to a FEMA news release, Medicare benefits and eligibility for food stamps or Medicaid are also unaffected by disaster relief funds. Eligibility for FEMA assistance is not dependent on outcome, but is based on the amount of damages incurred as a direct result of Hurricane Matthew.

The number of registrants for individual assistance in designated counties totals 35,690. The total amount of individual and household assistance disbursed is $23,324,413. FEMA has completed 22,613 of 24,308 inspections issued. The Small Business Administration has approved 159 applications totaling $5,642,400 of 1,062 applications received.

Survivors of Hurricane Matthew have until December 13 to register with FEMA for disaster assistance by one of the following methods:

Call 800-621-3362 (voice, 711 or video services) or 800-462-7585. Lines are open daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and multilingual operators are available.

Apply online here.

Visit a Disaster Recovery Center. To find the one nearest you, click here and check "Quick Links." DRCs are accessible to people with disabilities. The centers have tools to amplify sound, magnifiers and materials in alternative formats along with video remote interpretation. Sign language interpreters are available upon request at the center.

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FLOODS

No stories for this edition

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

No stories for this edition

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

Zika Causes A Unique Syndrome Of Devastating Birth Defects

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, November 3, 2016

The birth defects caused by Zika have been described in heartbreaking detail as the virus has spread to more than 45 countries, infecting hundreds of thousands of people, including tens of thousands of pregnant women. Now researchers have concluded that a Zika infection during pregnancy is linked to a distinct pattern of birth defects that they are officially calling congenital Zika syndrome.

In a report released Thursday in JAMA Pediatrics, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describe five types of birth defects that are either unique to Zika or occur rarely with other infections during pregnancy:

Severe microcephaly (abnormally small head size) with partly collapsed skull.

Decreased brain tissue with a specific pattern of calcium deposits indicating brain damage.

Damage to the back of the eye with a specific pattern of scarring and increased pigment.

Joints with limited range of motion, such as clubfoot.

Too much muscle tone, restricting movement soon after birth.

Researchers at the CDC, along with colleagues elsewhere in the United States and Brazil, analyzed publicly available reports about defects among infants and fetuses whose mothers had either confirmed or presumed infection with Zika virus during pregnancy. Most of the clinical descriptions of Zika-affected infants are from Brazil, the heart of the epidemic.

The most common timing of infection that led to birth defects is late first and early second trimester, although third-trimester infections were also reported among infants with birth defects.

The five features described in the report are an initial list of clinical findings. It's becoming increasingly clear, however, that the full spectrum of health problems caused by a Zika infection won't be known for months and even years after birth.

At a conference in September on Zika's effect on children, sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, researchers described an array of problems associated with Zika exposure beyond microcephaly, mostly stemming from the virus's harm to the nervous system.

Children born to Zika-infected mothers will need to be regularly monitored because some problems don't show up until months later, said Catherine Spong, an obstetrician-gynecologist and the institute's acting director.

"Although the severe cases are teaching us a lot, the impact is likely much more broad, and these impacts, although less striking, may be much more widespread and may need more monitoring and interventions," she said.

Researchers say the purpose of the latest report is to describe what is known about the congenital syndrome. The description is intended to help health-care providers "better recognize the pattern of birth defects associated with congenital Zika virus infection," said Cynthia Moore, a clinical geneticist and birth-defects expert for the CDC and lead author of the report.

Doing that will help providers evaluate and coordinate care for affected babies and their families, she said.

At least 1,005 pregnant women have Zika infections in the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 25 U.S. infants have been born with Zika-related birth defects and an additional five pregnancies are known to have resulted in miscarriage, stillbirths or terminations with evidence of birth defects.

Zika-related Symptoms In Infants Get A Name

By Margarita Cambest

York (PA) Dispatch, November 3, 2016

Researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have put a name to a distinct pattern of birth defects associated with the Zika virus.

Eight states, including Pennsylvania, have reported more than 100 cases of travel-related Zika as of Oct. 26. The mosquito-borne virus is especially problematic for pregnant women because of the possibility of birth defects in unborn children.

According to a report in the Journal of American Medicine Pediatrics, the five types of birth defects that most commonly occur from contracting the virus during pregnancy — severe microcephaly, thin cerebral cortices, scarring of the eye, congenital contractures and a reduced ability of muscles to stretch — are now officially called congenital Zika syndrome.

Researchers said the recognition of the defects as a syndrome in infants and children will help providers evaluate, investigate and define affected patients and determine ongoing care.

The Zika outbreak began in Brazil in May 2015, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and has spread rapidly. In response, the CDC has issued travel notices to regions where the Zika virus is being transmitted locally, including parts of Florida and Puerto Rico.

Pregnant women are advised to postpone travel to parts of Miami-Dade County, including Miami Beach and another 1-square-mile area of the county, as no vaccine or treatment is currently available.

The DOH updates confirmed cases on its website each Monday. As of Oct. 31, there were 127 confirmed Zika infections and 38 probable cases in Pennsylvania. While all of the cases are travel-related, the CDC has cautioned the species of mosquito responsible for the infection could travel as far north as southeastern Pennsylvania.

Most people infected with Zika do not have symptoms, but fever, rash, joint pain, red eyes, muscle pain or headache could last for several days to a week after infection.

Anyone who develops these symptoms and has visited an area with Zika is encouraged to see a doctor or health care provider, especially if pregnant.

CDC Defines Congenital Zika Syndrome

By Laurie Barclay

Medscape, November 3, 2016

Recognizing the congenital Zika syndrome (CZS) phenotype defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) allows clinicians to provide comprehensive workup and management for infants and children, according to a literature review published online November 3 in JAMA Pediatrics.

"[Zika virus (ZIKV)] infection in pregnancy appears to be the cause of a recognizable pattern of congenital anomalies that is consistent and unique," write Cynthia A. Moore, MD, PhD, from the Division of Congenital and Developmental Disorders, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, and colleagues. "Although many of the components of this syndrome, such as cognitive, sensory, and motor disabilities, are shared by other congenital infections, 5 features differentiate CZS from other congenital infections."

Distinctive features reported in CZS are:

severe microcephaly (>3 SD below the mean), with findings consistent with fetal brain disruption sequence, including partially collapsed skull, overlapping cranial sutures, prominent occipital bone, redundant scalp skin, and neurologic impairment;

brain anomalies, including cerebral cortex thinning, abnormal gyral patterns, increased fluid spaces, subcortical calcifications, corpus callosum anomalies, reduced white matter, and cerebellar vermis hypoplasia;

ocular findings, such as macular scarring, focal pigmentary retinal mottling, structural anomalies (microphthalmia, coloboma, cataracts, and posterior anomalies), chorioretinal atrophy, and optic nerve hypoplasia/atrophy;

congenital contractures, including unilateral or bilateral clubfoot and arthrogryposis multiplex congenita; and

neurological impairments, such as pronounced early hypertonia/spasticity with extrapyramidal symptoms, motor disabilities, cognitive disabilities, hypotonia, irritability/excessive crying, tremors, swallowing dysfunction, vision impairment, hearing impairment, and epilepsy.

Diagnostic Workup Needed

Many of these features can also occur in other congenital infections, such as congenital cytomegalovirus, rubella, varicella, and coxsackie B, mandating thorough workup. Brain anomalies may also occur in genetic syndromes, such as Aicardi-Goutières syndrome, pseudo-TORCH syndrome, and gene mutations in JAM3, NDE1, and ANKLE.

Congenital infections with HIV, varicella-zoster, and rubella virus may cause microcephaly, but distinctive findings such as hepatomegaly and rash help differentiate these from ZIKV infection. To date, hematologic, hepatic, or renal laboratory abnormalities have not been reported in infants with congenital ZIKV infections.

Clinical, epidemiologic, and laboratory evidence thus far is sufficient to determine that ZIKV infection can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to the fetus, resulting in microcephaly and serious brain anomalies. As with other newly recognized teratogens, these characteristics most likely reflect only the tip of the iceberg, and underlying pathogenetic mechanisms are incompletely determined. This is the first review characterizing the full spectrum of congenital abnormalities related to prenatal ZIKV infection.

"In particular, more data are needed on infants with congenital ZIKV infection who do not have microcephaly at birth and the brain findings in these infants," the reviewers conclude. "In addition, knowledge about the frequency in which the various components co-occur in an infant, as well as whether any component(s) are mandatory features, is lacking at this time."

The authors note that most congenital anomalies associated with Zika infection appear to be related to the neurotropic nature of the virus. However, other sporadic reports of anomalies, such as congenital heart defects, will need further investigation in epidemiologic studies to exclude coincidental associations and define a more complete CZS phenotype.

The authors developed the current definition of CZS based on a comprehensive English literature search using Medline and EMBASE from inception through September 30, 2016. They identified 34 published reports of congenital anomalies occurring in fetuses or infants with presumed or laboratory-confirmed intrauterine ZIKV infection.

After considering these in light of presumed, underlying pathogenesis related to the neurotropic characteristics of ZIKV, the reviewers conclude that CZS is a distinctive pattern of structural anomalies and functional disabilities caused by damage to the central and possibly peripheral nervous system.

On the basis of maternal symptoms, the most common timing of infection is late first and early second trimester, but third trimester infection can also cause CZS.

ZIKV infection has been reported in at least 45 countries in the Americas, three US territories, and Florida, with spread to other US states possible based on the estimated range of the Aedes mosquito vectors. Sexual transmission has also been reported.

Limitations of this review include the lack of testing for ZIKV infection and incomplete description of the full range of anomalies in most reported infants.

The authors have disclosed no relevant financial relationships.

JAMA Pediatr. Published online November 3, 2016. Full text

Battling Zika...and Armchair Critics With Wacky Suggestions

By Alan Gomez

USA Today, November 3, 2016

MIAMI — Soon after the USA's top disease prevention official said the Zika virus could not be contained using "existing technologies," the Internet disagreed.

Some people argued the technology did exist, but the feds – stuck in the Middle Ages – failed to grasp it. Others suggested the government unleash genetically-modified mosquitoes to wipe out the Zika-transmitting mosquitoes. Still more contended the U.S. was ignoring groundbreaking vaccines and mosquito sprays used with success in other mosquito-infested countries. Even a veterinarian weighed in, saying a good shot of Vitamin C would do the trick.

The surge of suggestions came after Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Tom Frieden gave a grim assessment of the virus' trajectory, explaining during a conference in Miami last month that it would eventually become endemic throughout the continental U.S.

While armchair critics had some pretty wacky ideas, infectious disease experts say Frieden was, unfortunately, right.

"What he's talking about is the fact that Aedes aegypti have been a plague on the human race for centuries," Amesh Adalja of the Infectious Diseases Society of America said of the mosquito species that carries Zika. "These mosquitoes are very hard to stop, they're evolutionarily adaptive and they're hard to eradicate."

Infectious disease experts also agreed that they all get a constant stream of unsolicited, and usually unproven, advice.

"All the time," said Daniel Olson, an assistant professor of pediatric infectious diseases at the University of Colorado. "You hear about treatments they read about on the Web. Or they'll say, 'I heard this thing works. Can we try it?'"

Despite the depressing conclusion of Frieden and others, infectious disease experts say some of the proposed solutions could develop into realistic answers down the road.

Vitamin C may not cure Zika. As Olson explained: "There's not a lot of evidence behind a lot of these claims."

But Adalja points to genetically-modified mosquitoes as one mosquito-control technique that has been widely tested and could be ready for deployment in the U.S.

Oxitec, a British company, has tested a procedure to alter the genetic code of male mosquitoes. When those modified mosquitoes mate with females, the offspring die before reaching adulthood, reducing the number of mosquitoes in the area.

Oxitec has tested such mosquitoes in Brazil, Panama and the Cayman Islands, and reported dramatic drops in the mosquito populations there. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a controlled test of the mosquitoes in the Florida Keys, but that is on hold after residents there protested.

Adalja said people need to accept that kind of technology, which he said has been carried out "elegantly" and could become a common mosquito eradication technique in the very near future.

"Absolutely, that should be pursued," said Adalja, a senior associate at the Center for Health Security at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Olson said the U.S. also needs to invest more in improving surveillance technology so that local medical officials can better track where Zika, and future mosquito-borne viruses, spread. He said the initial response to Zika from public health officials was slow because they rely mostly on doctors and hospitals to report patients they see, a process that is voluntary and does not include penalties for failing to participate.

"If you can't see it, you can't study it," he said.

Allowing citizens to self-report their symptoms – known as "participatory syndromic surveillance" in the scientific world – helped Olson and a team of researchers closely track the spread of dengue in Guatemala last year. Citizens used a smartphone app to report their symptoms, which Olson said allowed researchers to more closely monitor where dengue flourished.

The infectious disease experts said there are other technologies in development that could help, from vaccines that can be produced more quickly, to mosquito sprays that can help eradicate the virus-carrying mosquitoes.

Hagai Levine, a communicable disease expert at the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical Center School of Public Health in Jerusalem, said the U.S. has simply lacked the will to pursue those possible solutions.

Levine said the proliferation of mosquito-borne diseases in recent decades is obvious to anybody paying attention. But since those viruses did not tear through developed nations, Levine said those governments didn't spend much time finding solutions. Zika, for example, first appeared in Brazil in 2015, several months before it surfaced in South Florida.

"Then we wake up," he said. "Any country focuses on issues that are relevant to its own population. But we live today in a world of global health."

That requires collaboration among scientists in countries around the world, he said.

"Once we put our effort to such problems, I'm sure we will come up with more solutions," he said.

Miami-Dade To Consider Deploying GMO Mosquitoes In Fight Against Zika

By Daniel Chang

Miami Herald, November 3, 2016

Entering their fourth month of fighting a local outbreak of Zika, Miami-Dade officials are considering releasing thousands of genetically engineered mosquitoes in Miami Beach and Miami's Little River neighborhood to reduce the numbers of insects and help stop the virus's spread, county officials said this week.

Miami Beach commissioners were the first to propose using genetically engineered mosquitoes in September, when they were faced with throngs of protesters opposed to the county's aerial spraying of the pesticide naled over sections of the city to reduce the number of insects that carry the virus.

Since then, Miami-Dade officials, who oversee mosquito control in Miami Beach and Miami, also have taken an interest in the genetically engineered insects bred and sold by the biotechnology company Oxitec, which has been collaborating with the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District for a potential trial release in Monroe County. The proposed trial release became so controversial in the Florida Keys that the question was placed on the Nov. 8 ballot for a non-binding county vote.

Oxitec representatives are scheduled to meet with county mosquito control and Miami Beach officials on Nov. 17, said Mike Hernandez, a spokesman for Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez, who is running for re-election on Tuesday.

"We need to listen to any potential solution or vehicle that could mean fewer mosquitoes in Miami-Dade County, which means we would have a lower risk of disease transmission again next season," Hernandez said, adding that county officials want to understand the regulatory requirements, costs and public opinion on the possible use of Oxitec's mosquitoes.

If Miami-Dade and Oxitec decide they want to collaborate, the company will submit an application, including an environmental assessment, to the Food and Drug Administration for a trial release.

"We are eager to discuss our solution with any Florida county that is seeking alternate solutions," Derric Nimmo, Oxitec's project coordinator in the Keys, said in a written statement.

Oxitec researchers say their genetically engineered mosquitoes have helped reduce mosquito populations by as much as 90 percent during trial releases in regions of Brazil, Panama and the Cayman Islands. Any release of genetically engineered mosquitoes would be integrated with more traditional methods of mosquito control, including spraying and reducing breeding sites, Nimmo said.

For the proposed trial in Monroe, Oxitec would breed mosquitoes from eggs in the company's laboratory in Marathon and then release the non-biting males in the designated area about three times a week, Nimmo said. Once released, the genetically engineered mosquitoes mate with females, producing offspring that die before reaching adulthood.

Before moving ahead with a release, however, Monroe County residents will vote Tuesday in a straw poll to determine the level of support for a trial in Key Haven, an affluent island east of Key West. Key Haven residents also will vote in their own local poll.

Three of the five members of the local mosquito control district board have pledged to act in accordance with the results, which aren't binding, Nimmo said.

Miami-Dade mosquito control has been spraying pesticides — by air, truck, and handheld foggers — reducing breeding sites and raising public awareness about the local spread of Zika since August, after state officials identified a one-square-mile area of Miami's Wynwood neighborhood as the first place in the continental United States with mosquito-borne transmission of the virus.

Since then, local cases have also been reported in Broward, Palm Beach and Pinellas counties, but Miami-Dade remains the only county with sustained outbreaks of the disease, including in most of South Beach and Middle Beach, and in the newest Zika zone, a one-square-mile section of Miami's Little River neighborhood identified in October.

Miami Beach Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez first proposed using Oxitec's genetically engineered mosquitoes in September, sponsoring a resolution authorizing the city manager to begin exploring the possibility.

Gonzalez also has proposed releasing bats, a natural predator of mosquitoes, and said she wants to exhaust all options for ridding Miami Beach of Zika.

Aerial spraying of naled hasn't done the job, she said.

"People would like a solution and they would like a non-toxic solution," Gonzalez said. "I wouldn't like to use naled anymore given the fact that even after we sprayed we still continue to have locally transmitted cases. I would prefer to find another option."

The county has said it expects spend up to $12 million combating Zika by the end of mosquito season in December.

In September, Miami Beach City Manager Jimmy Morales sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requesting that the FDA approve the "emergency use" of Oxitec's genetically engineered mosquitoes.

Aedes aegypti mosquitoes are a non-native species in the United States that spread diseases such as Zika, dengue fever and chikungunya, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

FDA Commissioner Robert Califf responded that any local governments in Florida interested in a trial release of Oxitec's mosquitoes should contact the company so it could submit the required information.

The FDA in August cleared the way for Oxitec and the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District to release genetically engineered mosquitoes in Monroe County after finding that a field trial would not significantly harm the region's environment. But the plan has met significant resistance from Florida Keys residents and others opposed to the release, including Mila de Mier, a realtor and mother of three who lives in Key West.

De Mier led a petition drive that she said has gathered about 170,000 signatures opposing the release. She said she doesn't trust Oxitec's data and that the FDA should require the consent of residents before allowing a trial release.

De Mier said she also worries that genetically engineered mosquitoes could open the door to unforeseen consequences, like antibiotic resistant bacteria

"It could really be opening a huge problem that's not even talked about," she said.

Miami-Dade officials said they will be watching results of the Monroe County referendum to inform their decision about whether to use Oxitec's mosquitoes in Miami Beach and Miami.

"The county is not taking a position for or against," Hernandez said. "We're listening."

Hernandez said mosquito counts have remained relatively low in the sections of Miami-Dade where health officials have confirmed local spread of Zika, with per trap averages of 4.8 in Wynwood; 1.6 in Little River; 0.47 in South Beach; and 1.25 in Middle Beach — all as of Wednesday.

Still, Zika continues to spread in other areas of Miami-Dade. On Thursday, the Florida Department of Health reported two more mosquito-borne Zika infections outside of the transmission zones in Miami Beach and Miami, requiring an epidemiological investigation to determine the source of exposure.

A total of 1,120 Zika infections have been confirmed in Florida this year, with 207 mosquito-borne cases and 907 travel-related cases, including 131 pregnant women. An additional six cases have been ruled "undetermined" after state investigators failed to identify the source of exposure.

Zika cases confirmed in Florida as of Nov. 3

* Counties of pregnant women not disclosed

** Does not include local cases

Source: Florida Department of Health

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TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2016

(SECOND EDITION – 8:30 AM EDT)

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NATIONAL NEWS

Crews Repairing Storm Damage In Michigan’s Upper Peninsula

Associated Press, July 19, 2016

IRONWOOD, Mich. (AP) — Crews are working to repair millions of dollars in damage in Michigan’s western Upper Peninsula after a tornado and flooding hit the area.

Gov. Rick Snyder took an aerial tour Monday of part of Gogebic County and said afterward that the National Guard is working with the county on the recovery effort. Snyder says costs will be sorted out later, but for now “the job is getting done.”

Gogebic County Road Commission Manager Darren Pionk tells the Daily Globe of Ironwood (http://bit.ly/29RL17n) it could cost around $6 million to repair some roadways.

Snyder declared a state of disaster Friday for Gogebic County, accompanied by an order activating the Michigan National Guard to assist response and recovery efforts. The moves stem from severe storms that moved through the region July 11-12.

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Information from: Daily Globe, http://yourdailyglobe.com

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Storms Bring Golf Ball-sized Hail, Tornado Warnings

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

A line of thunderstorms moving across northern New England has left thousands of people in the dark.

The line of thunderstorms had strong wind gusts on Monday. There also were reports of hail and even a pair of tornado warnings.

Tom Hawley from the National Weather Service said golf ball-sized hail was reported in northern New Hampshire.

In Maine, about 10,000 homes and businesses lost power. About 2,000 customers were in the dark in new Hampshire.

Tornado warnings are rare New England, and at least three were issued in Maine and New Hampshire on Monday. There were no reports of a twister touching down.

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Weekend Storms Wreak Havoc In Northeastern South Dakota

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) – Weekend storms in northeastern South Dakota damaged buildings, caused power outages and led to at least a couple of injuries.

National Weather Service reports show wind gusts on Saturday in the region in the range of 75 mph. The American News reports the wind downed power poles and trees, damaged a machine shed near Bath and a hangar at Aberdeen's airport. Heavy rain also led to street flooding in Aberdeen.

The Daily Republic reports that winds estimated at up to 80 mph knocked over a camper at Lake Poinsett. JL Dye of Sioux Falls was knocked unconscious and suffered a cut on his nose. His wife, Chrissy, was taken to a Sioux Falls hospital with a back injury.

Dye says the camper and several others were heavily damaged.

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Woman Dies After Driving Around Road Barricades In Wisconsin

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

GRAND VIEW, Wis. (AP) — Authorities say a woman has died after driving her car around barricades on a washed-out highway in flooded northwestern Wisconsin.

A Wisconsin Department of Transportation official called 911 around 9:30 a.m. Monday to report the crash on U.S. Highway 63 just north of Grand View.

The official said the car drove around two sets of "road closed" signs and into the washed-out part of the highway, which goes down about 50 feet. The car came to rest at the bottom of the washout.

Bayfield County sheriff's authorities say the woman had to be extricated from her car and brought to the surface using ropes. WDIO-TV (http://bit.ly/29QAGX9) reports she was airlifted to a hospital in Duluth, Minnesota, where she died.

The name of the woman was not immediately released.

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Information from: WDIO-TV, http://www.wdio.com

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Tornado Touchdown Confirmed In Kankakee County On Sunday

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

DWIGHT, Ill. — The National Weather Service has confirmed one tornado touched down Sunday night as storm moved across northern Illinois.

Forecasters at the weather service office in Romeoville on Monday said the tornado ranked an EF-1 with estimated peak wind speeds of 100 mph. It touched down near Cabery in Kankakee County at 200 yards wide and traveled for about 2.2 miles. Survey crews on Monday also were surveying a possible tornado touchdown in northern Livingston County.

Strong storms moved across the region Sunday evening bringing lightning, high winds, pea-sized hail and heavy rain.

The weather service reported two destroyed grain bins and a shed near Herscher in Ford County along with downed power lines.

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Garland County To Buyout Home That Repeatedly Floods

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

HOT SPRINGS, Ark. (AP) — The Garland County Quorum Court has adopted a voluntary buyout policy that would allow the county to use Federal Emergency Management Agency funds to purchase of private property prone to repeated flooding.

The Hot Springs Sentinel-Record (http://bit.ly/29PSYK) reports that the policy was adopted last week. It'll be used to purchase a home near Lake Catherine that regularly floods when water is released from Carpenter Dam.

Garland County Department of Emergency Management Director Bo Robertson told the quorum court that it's more cost effective for FEMA to buy the property than pay repeated claims made on the owner's federal flood insurance.

The property will be transferred to the county, but no new structures can be built on it. According to FEMA policy, it will be maintained for uses consistent with open space, recreation or wetlands management practices.

According to Robertson, the funds will be used to demolish the structure and remove a septic tank.

Robertson said the county used a FEMA template to formulate the policy. Under the policy, property owners are allowed 45 days to accept the county's offer, which will be based on the state-established pre-flood fair market value of the residential structure, underlying real property and outbuildings.

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Information from: The Sentinel-Record, http://www.hotsr.com

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Sandoval To Attend Memorial For Firefighters Killed In Crash

Associated Press, July 19, 2016

WINNEMUCCA, Nev. (AP) — Gov. Brian Sandoval is attending a memorial service for two federal firefighters killed when their fire truck crashed on the way home from wildfire spotting patrol.

The service remembering 27-year-old Jacob O'Malley and 22-year-old Will Hawkins will be held Tuesday at the Winnemucca Events Complex Exhibit Hall.

A statement from the Bureau of Land Management says the O'Malley family in Zephyr Cove and Hawkins family in Reno are planning private funerals in their towns.

A 23-year-old firefighting colleague, Zachery McElroy of Reno, is recovering after he was hospitalized for injuries he received in the July 10 crash about 40 miles north of Winnemucca.

The Nevada Highway Patrol says a tire blow-out apparently caused their fire truck to roll over several times.

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Conference On Church Preparedness Planned In Bettendorf

Houston Chronicle, July 18, 2016

BETTENDORF, Iowa (AP) — A conference on church preparedness for various events such as tornadoes, fires, floods and mass shootings is to be held in Bettendorf.

The Quad-City Times (http://bit.ly/29JcxkT) reports that the first-ever Faithful Readiness: An Emergency Preparedness Workshop for Faith Communities is planned for July 26 at John Vianney Catholic Church.

The conference was initiated by Scott County emergency management coordinator Dave Donovan after he attended a Federal Emergency Management Agency conference. Donovan reached out to FEMA representatives to help with the event.

The conference aims to give participants an "Emergency Management 101" course that'll focus on personal, family and congregational preparedness. It'll also cover disaster mission decisions, such as being a shelter, feeding site or center for bulk distribution of emergency supplies.

The conference will have a panel discussion on the various issues, and the Bettendorf Police Department will lead an active shooter presentation.

Police Capt. Keith Kimball said there will be information option about what to do if active shooter situation were to arise during a church service or event.

Marcus Coleman with the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the White House will be the keynote speaker. Coleman will provide an overview on emergency operation planning.

Organizers say they hope 100 or more representatives of churches, synagogues, mosques and temples in the region will attend.

Jordan Schneider, emergency coordinator at the Muslim Community of Quad-Cities, said that houses of worship would ideally network in response to a disaster.

"One church can provide food, one clothes, maybe another one has shelter for others. We want to find the strengths of the congregations and help them to be more prepared," she said.

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Information from: Quad-City Times, http://www.qctimes.com

Series Of Earthquakes Hits California's Central Coast Area

By Shelby Grad

Los Angeles Times, July 18, 2016

A series of small earthquakes have been recorded in the last day along California Central Coast.

The quakes hit roughly between Hollister and Cambria. The largest, which measured magnitude 3.8, was centered near the town of Ridgemark. A 3.7 magnitude quake occurred in Hollister early Monday morning.

There were five quakes greater than 3.0 and more than a dozen smaller quakes in the area.

The temblors were felt over a relatively small area, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, and no damage was reported.

The “Earthquake” Off Florida’s Coast Was Likely Navy Testing

Associated Press, July 19, 2016

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — An apparent 3.7 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Florida was likely triggered by a man-made explosion to test the seaworthiness of a new U.S. Navy vessel.

Seismographs detected the earthquake Saturday afternoon about 168 nautical miles northeast of Daytona Beach Shores.

The Daytona Beach News-Journal (http://bit.ly/2a7apZl) reports a similar 3.7 magnitude “earthquake” on June 10 off of Ormond-by-the-Sea happened about the same time the Navy reported conducting a shock trial on the USS Jackson for testing. The Navy notified the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Marine Fisheries Service that another shock trial would be conducted between July 16 and July 20.

The Navy’s Sea System Command spokesman Dale Eng tells the newspaper the Navy is working on a statement to release this week.

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Information from: Daytona Beach (Fla.) News-Journal, http://www.news-journalonline.com

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How TIDES Can Trigger The San Andreas Fault: Researchers Find Earthquakes Can Be Caused By The Gravitational Tug Of The Sun And Moon

By Cheyenne Macdonald

Daily Mail, July 18, 2016

The gravitational pull of the sun and moon is tugging on Earth’s crust, causing it to stretch and compress.

And in certain phases of the cycle, this can even trigger earthquakes deep underground.

In a new study, researchers analysed thousands of these ‘low-frequency earthquakes’ along California’s San Andreas Fault, and found that they are more likely to occur when the tide is waxing.

As the surface of the Earth rises and falls with the tides, it influences activity at the faults, either promoting or inhibiting fault slip deep at the roots.

When the moon is pulling in the same direction of the slip, the effect is far more dramatic, Nicolas van der Elst, a U.S Geological Survey geophysicist and lead author of the study, explained to the L.A. Times.

In the study, published recently to Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the researchers investigated roughly 81,000 low-frequency earthquakes from 2008 to 2015 along the Parkfield section of the San Andreas Fault.

These are small in magnitude, often less than 1.0, and occur between nine and 19 miles below the surface.

The researchers compared the earthquake data to the ‘fortnightly tides,’ the two-week cycle that occurs as the sun and moon change their positions in the sky in relation to each other.

This revealed that the low-frequency earthquakes were more likely to occur when the tides were waxing.

And, more of these quakes will happen if the tidal amplitude is greater than the day before.

In the paper, the researchers explain that ‘deep, small earthquakes on the San Andreas Fault are most likely to occur during the waxing fortnightly tide – not when the tidal amplitude is highest, as might be expected, but when the tidal amplitude most exceeds its previous value.

‘The response of faults to the tidal cycle opens a window into the workings of plate tectonics.’

The tides are strongest when the sun and moon are in line with each other, the L.A. Times explains, similar to the ocean tides.

When they are 90 degrees apart, they’ve reached their weakest point.

These findings provide new insight on the behaviour of the fault’s deeper regions.

‘They tell us that the fault continues down below where the regular or typical earthquakes stop on the San Andreas, about 10 or 12 km [about six to seven miles],’ David Shelly, one of the authors on the study, told the L.A. Times.

‘And they tell us a lot of things about that deep part of the fault that before, we had no idea existed at all.’

And, the researchers say the data indicates that the Parkfield region of the San Andreas Fault is creeping constantly.

The study provides a way for researchers to measure the fault’s recharge time in some areas – but, they still don’t know if this will help provide warnings when an earthquake is set to hit.

CALIFORNIA IS ‘NOT READY’ FOR THE BIG ONE

Beyond the sunshine, the palm trees and Hollywood, if there is one certainty in California, it’s that a massive earthquake will strike at some point.

But when the Big One hits, a recent report says, the western state is ill-prepared and local officials as well as major businesses need to face that reality to 'prevent the inevitable disaster from becoming a catastrophe.'

Drafted by a group of business and policy leaders, the report identifies several key areas that need to be addressed before a quake as strong as a magnitude 8 happens, notably aging infrastructure, water supplies and the risk of catastrophic fires.

One of the biggest vulnerabilities, the report states, relates to the Cajon Pass, a narrow mountain pass where the mighty San Andreas Fault intersects with key lifelines, including freeways, railway lines, gas and petroleum pipelines as well as electric lines.

A major earthquake on the San Andreas, one of California's most dangerous faults, would cut most lifelines in and out of southern California, preventing critical aid from reaching some 20 million people and hampering recovery efforts, experts say.

It is commonly referred to as the 'Big One' a hypothetical earthquake of magnitude 8 or greater that is expected to happen along the San Andreas fault.

Such a quake is expected to produce devastation to human civilization within about 50-100 miles of the quake zone, especially in urban areas like Palm Springs, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Connecticut Park Damaged By Superstorm Sandy Reopens

Associated Press, July 19, 2016

STAMFORD, Conn. (AP) — A portion of a Connecticut park severely damaged by Superstorm Sandy nearly four years ago has finally reopened.

The southern point of the seven-acre Kosciuszko Park in Stamford was reopened Monday by Mayor Kevin Martin after a more than $286,000 renovation project. The city got a $120,000 relief award from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The project included restoration and re-pavement of about 700 feet of the walking path and reinforcement of the embankment at the waterfront park.

A portion of the path used by walkers and cyclists collapsed into the harbor after strong waves caused erosion during the 2012 storm.

City engineer Lou Casolo tells the Stamford Advocate (http://bit.ly/2a5H12P) the park is now better able to withstand extreme weather.

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Information from: The Advocate, http://www.stamfordadvocate.com

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CHRISTIE Praises Trump's Imaginary Sandy Giving – MANAFORT Disputes "Livid" Comment – PRO-FULOP Super PAC Donor Disclosure Cheered

Politico, July 19, 2016

Good Tuesday morning in Cleveland! It's day 2 – and the night of Gov. Christie's big speech.

QUOTE OF THE DAY: ""From a young age, my parents impressed on me the values that you work hard for what you want in life, that your word is your bond and you do what you say and keep your promise, that you treat people with respect. They taught and showed me values and morals in their daily lives. That is a lesson that I continue to pass along to our son. And we need to pass those lessons on to the many generations to follow. Because we want our children in this nation to know that the only limit to your achievements is the strength of your dreams and your willingness to work for them" — Melania Trump last night and, basically, Michelle Obama in 2008 http://politi.co/29ISEP3

HAPPY BIRTHDAY – Fox Rothschild's Brian McGinnis

WHERE'S CHRISTIE: Cleveland

NEWS

GENEROSITY — "Christie spokesman: Governor 'misspoke' about Donald Trump's gift for Hurricane Sandy relief," by The Washington Post's David A. Fahrenthold: "On Monday morning, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie told a group of Republican convention delegates a story about Donald Trump's generosity. After the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, Christie said, his wife Mary Pat Christie had asked Trump for a donation to a New Jersey disaster-relief fund. 'He said, 'How much does the check need to be? Just tell me and I'll send it,' ' Christie told the crowd ... But then, Monday afternoon, a spokesman said Christie 'misspoke.' The spokesman, Brian Murray, appeared to be indicating that Trump had not donated anything to the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund, which was run by Mary Pat Christie. 'Mr. Trump has given to other New Jersey charities, including the Drumthwacket Foundation,' Murray said. He was responding to questions from The Washington Post, which noted that the New Jersey disaster-relief fund did not list Trump among its major donors. The Drumthwacket Foundation, which cares for New Jersey's historic governor's mansion, has received at least $40,000 since 2010 from the Donald J. Trump Foundation — a charity which Trump controls, but which is stocked with other people's money." http://wapo.st/29UjHqf

—"Christie praises Pence pick over 'big mouth from Congress'" http://politi.co/29R7dMG

'I DON'T BELIEVE THE LIBERAL MEDIA' — "RNC 2016: Trump campaign manager dismisses report Christie was 'livid' over VP snub," by NJ Advance Media's Matt Arco: "A top aide to presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump on Monday denied a report that claimed he said Gov. Chris Christie was 'livid' about being passed over as running mate. 'I never said that,' Paul Manafort, Trump's campaign manager, told NJ Advance Media just hours before the start of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. 'That's totally misrepresented.' 'And I don't think he was livid,' Manafort added about Christie. According to The Weekly Standard, a conservative magazine, Manafort was overheard telling someone in Cleveland that Christie was 'livid' that Trump tapped Indiana Gov. Mike Pence as his vice presidential pick instead of him." http://bit.ly/2a30t1w

—"N.J. sends state troopers to Cleveland for RNC 2016 security" http://bit.ly/29QJvA9

CODEY DID IT FIRST —"Chris Christie now officially a bobblehead" http://bit.ly/2a2ZzlG

** A message from the Fair Share Hospitals Collaborative: New Jersey's Charity Care funding formula is unfair to patients and to a majority of the hospitals that provide the care. People who are uninsured live in ALL of the cities and towns in ALL of New Jersey's 21 counties — not just in a few of the State's urban centers. Get the facts: Health Care Cuts Hurt All NJ Hospitals **

BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS IS WHITE HOUSE SUBS ARE DELICIOUS — "This year, Atlantic County playing a role in the presidential race," by POLITICO's Matt Friedman: "At every GOP convention since 1984, Atlantic County Republicans have brought trays of submarine sandwiches from the White House Sub Shop in Atlantic City to the New Jersey delegation's hotel. Usually, that's been about the extent of Atlantic County's involvement in the presidential race. This year is different. The subs were there at the hotel outside Cleveland — Italian, turkey or cheese. But Atlantic County — and in particular struggling Atlantic City — finds itself with a real role in the race." http://politico.pro/29R6zi1

VEEPSTAKES — "Could Christie prevent Booker from being Clinton's choice for vice president?" by NJ Advance Media's Jonathan D. Salant: "if Booker (D-N.J.) is nominated for vice president and wins, Christie will get to appoint his temporary replacement. That would cost the Democrats a Senate seat, making it even harder for a President Hillary Clinton to move her agenda through Congress. 'It's a very important consideration,' said Jim Manley, a former top aide to Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada. 'Every vote will help the next president to move their agenda.'" http://bit.ly/29QLyEt

LONEGAN HOME AGAIN — "Lonegan says failed effort on roll call vote 'shows the power of the gavel'" by The Record's Herb Jackson: "Steve Lonegan began working to stop the Republican Party from nominating Donald Trump almost from the time his preferred presidential candidate, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, dropped out of the race in May. But the firebrand former mayor of Bogota and 2013 Republican nominee for U.S. Senate was not there Monday as the effort came to a final end in a chaotic scene on the floor of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. He'd gone home on Monday, he said, expecting the worst." http://bit.ly/29UmTSM

IF HE STILL FLEW PRIVATE PLANES NO ONE WOULD'VE SEEN THIS — "Chris Christie would rather watch sports than Donald Trump," by The New York Post's Carlos Greer: "While on a flight to Cleveland to attend the Republican National Convention, Christie flew first class, a spy told us, and was 'watching sports or some game show. Half of the TVs were tuned to the interview, but he wasn't interested.'" http://pge.sx/29R5bfq

THEY CAN IMAGINE THE CAMPAIGN LIT — "Few N.J. Republican lawmakers show up to Trump's convention," by POLITICO's Matt Friedman: "According to the Republican State Committee, there are more than 250 Republicans from New Jersey in Cleveland for the party's national convention. They have prime seats for the proceedings, in the front row of the Quicken Loans Arena. But while Gov. Chris Christie may be one of Donald Trump's biggest surrogates, few other New Jersey GOP lawmakers are taking advantage of the view. " http://politi.co/29RU59V

—"Bramnick, in Cleveland, isn't ready to endorse Trump" http://politico.pro/29R70Jv

—"Hamilton Mayor Kelly Yaede attends Donald Trump's RNC nomination party in Cleveland" http://bit.ly/29RLTsO

—"Which GOP Convention speaker said it? Chris Christie or Scott Baio?" http://bit.ly/29RUwRw

JOB CHANGE — "Wirths leaving office for new post," by The AP: "A longtime member of Gov. Chris Christie's cabinet is leaving for another state post. The Republican governor announced Monday night that Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner

Harold Wirths will step down next month. Christie says he will nominate Wirths to serve on the state parole board. Wirths, a Republican who lives in Hardyston Township, has served in Christie's cabinet since 2010." http://on.app.com/29RTm8Q

GARRETT EFFECT — "Gottheimer boasts GOP support with new website, endorsements," by POLITICO's Ryan Hutchins: "Democrat Josh Gottheimer, a Microsoft executive and former speech writer for former president Bill Clinton, won the endorsement Monday of 12 local Republicans who support him in his race to unseat GOP Rep. Scott Garrett in New Jersey's Fifth District. Along with the endorsements, Gottheimer launched a new website to promote support from the other side of the aisle: RepublicansForJosh.com. His campaign boasts in a press release that it has 'the backing of more than 100 Republicans nationwide over his Tea Party extremist opponent.'" http://politico.pro/29R7miU

TRANSPARENCY — "Watchdogs cheer disclosure of $1M donor to super PAC linked to Fulop," by The Jersey Journal's Terrence T. McDonald: "A nonpartisan ethics watchdog is taking credit for Friday's revelation that a $1 million donation to a super PAC linked to Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop came from a co-founder and co-owner of local hospital system CarePoint Health. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, which filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission in February after super PAC Coalition for Progress initially declined to identify the person behind the $1 million donation, said in a statement today that it's important for voters to know the origin of big-money political contributions. 'We're glad that this super PAC finally disclosed the true source of the million dollars, but it shouldn't have taken legal action from us to get them to do it,' said CREW Executive Director Noah Bookbinder. 'A million dollars goes a long way — New Jersey residents should know who is trying to influence their elections.'" http://bit.ly/2a2ZuOP

—"CarePoint Health's Garipalli has given $40k to Hudson Dems since 2010" http://bit.ly/29UHqH2

#TELLINGITLIKEITIS — "Christie, a onetime rising star, now just part of Trump's supporting cast," by The Record's Charles Stile: "When Christie was on the rise in 2012 — and considered by nominee Mitt Romney as a possible running mate — Christie struck some themes and phrases that would be out of sync with Trump's vision and tone, and would be probably unwelcome. Four years ago, it was Christie who was offering up himself to the nation as a battle-tested leader, who guided New Jersey through a catastrophic storm and landmark reforms through a hostile, Democratic-controlled Legislature. He was selling experience — an attribute that has held little sway with angry anti-establishment voters. 'It takes leadership that you don't get from reading a poll,' Christie said in his keynote speech in Tampa. "You see … real leaders don't follow polls. Real leaders change polls." Now, Christie is taking marching orders from Trump, who constantly cites polls as a validation of his success. In Tampa, Christie asserted that it was time to consider cuts to Social Security, the so-called third rail of politics. His new boss says he won't tinker with Social Security benefits if elected." http://bit.ly/29UGZfG

YOU CAN TAKE THE REPORTERS OUT OF NEW JERSEY — I caught a ride back to the NJ GOP delegation's hotel in Cleveland with a few New Jersey reporters. On the way we stopped for gas. It didn't go well. http://bit.ly/29UcHd9

AAAAAAWKWARD — "Bramnick, in Cleveland, isn't ready to endorse Trump" http://politico.pro/29R70Jv

YOU CAN SAIL THE SEVEN SEAS — "Critics cast doubt on N.J. mayor's military service. Here's the truth," by Steve Novak for LeHighValleyLive.com: "An embattled mayor in Warren County raised eyebrows earlier this year when he said he could not remember details of his time in the U.S. Navy, and refused to show proof that he had been in the service, as he had claimed during his election bid. The mayor, Tom McKay of Lopatcong, was already facing a recall effort. And now, his evasiveness fueled speculation among critics that he might be lying. But records obtained by lehighvalleylive.com solve the mystery. After numerous inquiries and federal Freedom of Information Act requests, the National Archives on Thursday produced a document showing McKay served in the Navy as an enlisted reservist from 1968 to 1970 in the New York City area." http://bit.ly/2a1YBpA

MASTRO CARD — "Murphy: Christie should pick up tab for Bridgegate investigation," by PolitickerNJ's J.T. Aregood: "The first official candidate in New Jersey's 2017 gubernatorial race called on Governor Chris Christie to foot the bill for the investigation into the Bridgegate scandal instead of drawing on tax coffers. The investigation into whether Christie knew about two appointees' plot to close down lanes on the George Washington Bridge in retaliation against the mayor of Fort Lee has cost the state over $10 million." http://bit.ly/2a2ZCxQ

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS — "Proposed N.J. law would ban prior restraint of student newspapers," by NJ Advance Media's Sallie Graziano: "State legislators have re-introduced a bill that would prohibit school districts and public universities from authorizing prior restraint of school-sponsored media. The legislation is backed by Tom McHale, an English teacher at Hunterdon Central Regional High School. ... McHale resigned as adviser of the award-winning school newspaper The Lamp in 2013 after trying, but failing, to get the board to amend its policy that requires the administration's review of The Lamp's content prior to publication. He had held the post for a decade. McHale, who is also a Garden State Scholastic Press Association executive board member, said he is aware of journalism students … self-censoring out of fear of administration backlash." http://bit.ly/29KCa4M

THE HORROR — "Trenton is one of only 4 U.S. capital cities without a Starbucks," by The Trentonian's David Foster: "No venti, non-fat, Caramel Macchiatos are served in the capital city. And it's become a bit of a joke on social media throughout the years that Trenton has not landed a single Starbucks within its city limits. 'I had to do today's argument without my morning Starbucks...risky,' one attorney wrote on Facebook in 2011. 'Apparently, there are no Starbucks in Trenton, NJ.' 'Can Trenton get it together so I don't have to travel so far for a Starbucks?" another man tweeted in 2012.'" http://bit.ly/29TSa8F

IT WILL TAKE BRRRRRAAAINS TO FIX THIS PROBLEM — "'Zombie' houses in foreclosure can sit vacant, haunt neighbors for years," by the Record's Kathleen Lynn: "On Cumberland Avenue in Teaneck, weeds grow through the patio behind a vacant brick ranch; inside, paint is peeling off the walls in sheets. Neighbors call these homes eyesores. Real estate experts have another name: "Zombie" houses — homes in foreclosure that stay empty and neglected for years. A decade after the housing market began its slide into the worst downturn in generations, New Jersey still has about 4,000 homes left empty because of foreclosures, according to RealtyTrac, which follows the foreclosure market nationwide. That's about 6.2 percent of the total number in foreclosure in the state, higher than the national rate of 4.7 percent. … Under New Jersey law, the properties have to be maintained by the mortgage lender while they're in the foreclosure process, but neighbors say the maintenance usually doesn't go beyond mowing the lawn and making sure the doors are locked." http://bit.ly/29R2Rrh

DO IN AC — "Fitch: As states consider casino expansion, Atlantic City most at risk," by POLITICO's Ryan Hutchins: "Even with the casino gambling market beyond the point of saturation in the Northeast, with some resorts struggling to keep the lights on, a number of states have moved forward with efforts to expand their offerings. Fitch Ratings service says none stands to lose more than New Jersey, where voters will decide in a November ballot referendum whether casinos should be opened outside of Atlantic City for the first time in the state's history. As many as four of the eight remaining casinos there could close, Fitch says." http://politico.pro/29R6pXX

TTF — "Christie balks at Sweeney gas tax compromise, calls offer 'ridiculous'" by POLITICO's Ryan Hutchins and Katherine Landergan: "Gov. Chris Christie rejected Senate President Stephen Sweeney's latest attempt at a compromise on gas tax legislation and says he doesn't know how the crisis over the nearly broke Transportation Trust Fund will end. In his first public remarks on the topic since meeting privately with Sweeney last Tuesday, Christie told reporters in Ohio on Sunday night that he already had ruled out the proposal. That's despite repeated statements from both sides that the concept remained under review. 'It was ridiculous and I rejected it,' Christie said, according to audio of the exchange. 'Myself and the [Assembly] speaker have passed a bipartisan plan to fund the Transportation Trust Fund and to cut the sales tax significantly for the people of New Jersey. And the Senate president needs to come along with a plan. And what he proposed to me the other day was unacceptable. He knows it.' … In a statement, Sweeney spokesman Richard McGrath said it was the first the Senate president had heard that the governor was not willing to support the offer." http://politi.co/2abIwiD

—"Is Sweeney playing coy about his gubernatorial ambitions?" http://bit.ly/29UGQJj

FAIRNESS CODE — "In New Jersey, ZIP code is a cruel indicator of life expectancy," by NJ Spotlight's Lilo H. Stainton: "A new analysis reveals that the difference between living in Trenton and nearby Princeton Junction isn't just quality of life, it's 14 years. When it comes to living a long and healthy life, it turns out that few miles or a few digits in a ZIP code can mean a decade or more. Or 14 years, when it comes to the life-expectancy difference between those who reside in Princeton Junction and those who call Trenton home, according to a new analysis released today." http://bit.ly/29UH4QE

THE NEXT DRUMTHWACKET — "Thumbelina's secret architect, creating fairy houses on a New Jersey trail," by The New York Times' Tara George: "Intricate little fairy houses started appearing in the woods of South Mountain Reservation here about five years ago. They were delicate creations made largely of the natural materials one might find in the woods: a chair seat made of an acorn, a ladder of twigs, a seat back fashioned from a fungus fan, a sofa cushioned with moss. And they mainly dotted a part of the Rahway Trail in Locust Grove, a short walk from downtown Millburn that draws dog walkers and runners from the surrounding towns. There were 20 to 30 of them, new ones replacing old ones over the years, discreetly tucked in a tree hollow or artfully incorporated into a root. They all had a similar enchanting style and looked like the work of one person, but nobody seemed to know exactly who.” http://nyti.ms/2a2YPNd

NAUGHTY BY NATURE. LUXURIOUS BY DESIGN. — “Is $12M real estate sale sign that East Orange could become millennial hot spot?” by NJ Advance Media’s Jessica Mazzola: “When millennials searching for walkable, transit-oriented communities are priced out of high rises in Hoboken and Jersey City, will they head to East Orange? A recent $12 million land sale seems to suggest it might be.” http://bit.ly/2a2YBWG

COP SHOT — “Questions mount in shooting death of retired cop,” by The Asbury Park Press: “Details remain scant in a police shooting that left a retired police lieutenant dead in the woods near his Sycamore Drive home Saturday. What authorities have said so far is that 57-year-old Patrick Fennell, known in his neighborhood for hosting street parties for children and helping neighbors, fled with a handgun into the woods near his home on Saturday evening. He was shot to death by a SWAT officer around 10:30 p.m.” http://on.app.com/2a2YPwI

HE MUST ALSO LISTEN TO ME SING ‘TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART’ FOR 24 HOURS STRAIGHT — “A once prominent figure in North Jersey’s Korean-American community was spared a prison term Monday when a judge sentenced him to home confinement and a $50,000 fine for soliciting a bribe for a Palisades Park official in exchange for approvals to open a karaoke business.” http://bit.ly/29Uk2Jx

PULITZER ALERT — “Plainfield man pooped his pants to avoid arrest, police say,” by NJ Advance Media’s Jessica Remo: “Arriving officers found Kyle Chambliss talking loudly on his cell phone while sitting in a car, Sarnicki said. The officers smelled alcohol on Chambliss and asked him to step out of the car, the captain said. Sarnicki said that after being told to end his call, Chambliss became aggressive towards the officers. When told he was being placed under arrest, Chambliss responded that he had to defecate and proceeded to do so to keep the officers at bay, Sarnicki said.” http://bit.ly/29RTIvX

MORE NEWS

—”Watch: Cory Booker says Donald Trump ‘demeans’ and ‘divides’ America” http://washex.am/29QLkNz

—”Local 54 rejects Icahn’s offer as expected” http://bit.ly/29RUyJs

—”For South Jersey activists, DNC is a chance to be noticed” http://bit.ly/29UmFep

—”Group hoping to revitalize Trenton names founding CEO” http://bit.ly/2a2ZcHQ

—”Ex-Paterson councilman says rival hiding fraud by not filing finance reports” http://bit.ly/2a305Qt

—”Newark Mayor Ras Baraka leads protest for more port jobs for residents” http://bit.ly/29R4OBu

—”Nearly 100 ducks left at Secaucus park, condo complex [video]” http://bit.ly/29UH8zR

—”’RHONJ’ star Teresa Giudice ordered into mediation with bankruptcy trustee” http://bit.ly/2a302EA

—”NJ Supreme Court sides with Castellani, ends three year case” http://bit.ly/29RUp8B

—”Hudson County lures more than 1,200 jobs from N.Y. with state tax credits” http://bit.ly/29RTN2V

—”These public colleges paid their presidents the most in 2015” http://bit.ly/29KDhkF

—”Schaer pushes benefits of tuition aid for unauthorized immigrants” http://politico.pro/29Kh2eI

—”Undocumented students eligible for in-state tuition not enrolling in colleges due to cost, study says” http://bit.ly/29UlUlU

—”7 Canada geese gassed in Edgewater, mayor says” http://bit.ly/29UH5nJ

** A message from the Fair Share Hospitals Collaborative: 59 hospitals in New Jersey receive only 17 percent of Charity Care funding, even though these 59 hospitals care for roughly HALF of all Charity Care patients in the state.

During Trenton’s annual budgeting process, the Governor tossed out the proposed plan for Charity Care funding and decided to redirect 82 percent of the Charity Care funding to only 12 New Jersey hospitals.

The Governor’s budget cuts resulted in many hospitals being reimbursed LESS THAN ONE CENT for each dollar spent on health care for the uninsured, compared with the 12 hospitals in the state that are being reimbursed 96 cents on the dollar. All of New Jersey’s hospitals – not just 12 of them – are part of the state’s safety net and provide care to those in need.

Our state’s leaders shouldn’t be playing games with New Jersey's health care system. Get the facts: Health Care Cuts Hurt All NJ Hospitals **

-Want to make an impact? POLITICO New Jersey has a variety of multi-platform solutions available to reach and activate the most influential people in the Garden State. Have a petition you want signed? A cause you're promoting? Share your message with our influential readers to increase awareness and drive action. Contact Chris Falls to find out how: cfalls@politico.com.

FOR MORE political and policy news from New Jersey, check out Politico New Jersey's home page: http://politi.co/1JiYTDg

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The Daily 202: Seven Things To Watch At The Republican Convention In Cleveland

Washington Post, July 18, 2016

THE BIG IDEA:

CLEVELAND—Hurricane Gustav in 2008 and Hurricane Isaac in 2012 upended the first nights of the Republican National Convention. In 2016, a man-made tempest is making landfall here on the shores of Lake Erie: Hurricane Donald.

In what might be interpreted as a metaphor, a bad storm swept through town overnight – briefly knocking out power at some hotels.

The coming days will undoubtedly be awkward. Exactly one year ago today, Donald Trump declared in Iowa that John McCain was not a war hero because he got captured by the North Vietnamese. As recently as last week, Trump reiterated his refusal to apologize for saying that and even attacked the 2008 GOP nominee for not doing enough to help veterans. (Ironically, Trump being at the top of the ticket has imperiled the Arizona senator's reelection hopes.)

We know McCain is one of many luminaries – including Mitt Romney and the Bush clan – who will skip the festivities to celebrate Trump officially completing his hostile takeover of the Republican Party.

Partly because Trump values and thrives on unpredictability, there's a lot we still don't know. Organizers said at a briefing last night that there will be "plenty of surprises."

Here are seven questions we will know the answers to by the end of the week:

1. How many speakers don't say his name?

Chris Christie was widely lampooned in Tampa for delivering a self-aggrandizing convention keynote that did not mention Romney until 16 minutes in and, even then, made him seem lukewarm about the then nominee.

That could happen again in several of this week's highest-profile speeches.

Respecting the adage that "if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all," many leading Republicans are not going to take the stage – including home-state Gov. John Kasich and Sen. Rob Portman.

One of the drollest neologisms this cycle comes from GOP members of Congress who say they "support the nominee" but steadfastly refuse to say Trump's name and insist that "supporting" him is not the same as "endorsing" him – a distinction without a difference, as far as the dictionary is concerned.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Speaker Paul Ryan and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy are speaking Tuesday night. All have been lukewarm about Trump; will they do the same awkward dance that their members do in the corridors of the Capitol?

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) – one of the most vulnerable congressional incumbents up for reelection this year – is also speaking Tuesday in prime-time. It's hard to imagine a full-throated endorsement, unless he's looking to commit political suicide…

It's also difficult to envision Ted Cruz heaping too much praise on Trump, whom he has still not endorsed, when he talks Wednesday night. (See the full schedule here.)

2. Do the protesters make bigger headlines than the speakers?

The city is jittery, and security is tight. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson testified last week that he's "concerned about the possibility of violence in Cleveland."

A major skirmish could occur as early as today when pro-Trump demonstrators hold a midday rally. Local hospitals have opened up extra bed space in case of mass casualties, and battalions of police officers on bikes are prepared to swarm protest areas, Joel Achenbach reports. The chief says the city has brought in "thousands" of officers from "hundreds" of other police departments across the country.

While there are widespread fears that Cleveland in 2016 could become like Chicago in 1968, but there's also a very good chance that the planned protests are being over-hyped and will stay relatively peaceful. It's impossible to know at this hour. Importantly, unlike Mayor Richard J. Daley in the Windy City, local leaders here seem eager to do everything possible to diffuse tensions.

Ohio has an open-carry law that permits people to walk around with loaded handguns or long guns. A man with a long rifle slung over his shoulder attracted a cluster of cameras and curious onlookers yesterday, Achenbach reports. And some members of the New Black Panther Party, a black militant group, have said they plan to carry weapons around the streets of Cleveland.

After the horrifying murder of three Baton Rouge police officers yesterday, the president of the local police union publicly called upon Kasich to temporarily suspend open carry in Cuyahoga County for the week. The governor quickly rejected the request.

"He could very easily do some kind of executive order or something," Stephen Loomis, president of Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association, said Sunday. "I don't care if it's constitutional or not at this point. They can fight about it after the RNC, or they can lift it after the RNC, but I want him to absolutely outlaw open-carry in Cuyahoga County until this RNC is over."

A spokeswoman for the governor said he does not have "the power to arbitrarily suspend federal and state constitutional rights or state laws as suggested."

3. How thin is the veneer of party unity?

"The Never Trump agitators have been defeated, but they say they're not going away," Ed O'Keefe reports. "Republicans who failed to change party rules (last week) are threatening to cause chaos on the floor … to draw at least some political blood … The options are limited, and attempts to cause trouble at political conventions are usually quickly thwarted. But anti-Trump activists who spent weeks trying to play within the party structure now say they will do what Trump hates the most — find a way to embarrass him."

How could they do that? Upset delegates might attempt to officially register their opposition to Trump on the floor or to force an hours-long roll call of the states, which would upend a schedule aimed at prime-time television coverage, O'Keefe explains. They could also stay away: "Some senior RNC officials worry that delegates might start leaving Cleveland before Trump is scheduled to formally accept the nomination on Thursday night, possibly forcing the campaign to scramble to fill seats inside Quicken Loans Arena. The lack of prominent speakers on most nights of the convention might also compel delegates to reconsider their plans."

RNC Chairman Reince Priebus yesterday called on anti-Trump Republicans to "give up." "If they want to delay the proceedings, all they're doing is delaying the evening and helping Hillary Clinton," he said on ABC's "This Week." "There is no [alternative] candidate. … What is your goal other than to distract and cause problems?"

Mike Pence's speech on Wednesday night could excite some rank-and-file delegates, especially religious conservatives who view the thrice-married Trump warily because of his brash lifestyle and apostasy on abortion. "One of the big reasons that I chose Mike … is party unity, I have to be honest," Trump said Saturday. "So many people have said, 'party unity.' Because I'm an outsider. I don't want to be an outsider."

4. Can Trump's family members sandpaper his rough edges?

A fresh Washington Post/ABC News poll finds Clinton leading Trump by 4 points among registered voters, 47 percent to 43 percent. That's down from 12 points last month, a reminder that he has some momentum coming into the convention. But there is a notable gender gap: Trump leads among men by 8 points (49-41), while Clinton leads among women by 14 points (52-38).

Trump's campaign wants to make inroads with women by softening his image, and they're leaning on his family to do that.

"I think people actually want to like him," Priebus told Karen Tumulty and Philip Rucker. "They're intrigued by him. They're interested in him. And him becoming likable will make him unstoppable."

Trump's wife Melania, who very rarely speaks in public and usually says little when she does, is tonight's headline speaker. Tomorrow his children Donald Jr. and Tiffany speak. His son Eric speaks Wednesday. And then Trump's daughter, Ivanka, will introduce him Thursday night.

It will be amusing to listen to what Melania and all the children say about Trump as a dad in the context of his past comments about parenting. The business mogul has boasted about never changing diapers and bragged about refusing to take his kids out for walks in Central Park. "I won't do anything to take care of them," he told Howard Stern in 2005. "I'll supply funds and she'll take care of the kids." Ivana Trump said earlier this year that she deserves the credit for raising Don Jr., Ivanka and Eric because they were very little when Donald divorced her.

5. What does Donald do?

Trump originally wanted to speak every night, which is at odds with decades of precedent in both parties. He's only officially on the schedule for Thursday, but campaign chairman Paul Manafort said last night that there is a good chance he will appear more than once. "Donald Trump will be Donald Trump. Scripted is the wrong word," Manafort said. "He will probably be making a couple of appearances."

How exactly he appears is unknown. Does Trump do some TV interviews? Provocative tweets? Appearances on the Jumbotron by satellite?

Trump's unpredictability could be great for ratings. Real people hate stage-managed conventions, and they love reality TV. "Overall, viewership for the national political conventions dropped 26% after 1968," USA Today reports, citing Nielsen ratings. "The drop became even more pronounced after the 1980 conventions. The average ratings for the 1984 to 2004 conventions were 30% lower than the previous 20-year period. There was a dramatic jump in viewers for the 2008 GOP convention, driven largely by interest in … Sarah Palin. … (Pence) isn't likely to generate the same level of interest as Palin did in 2008, but many people will be tuning in to get their first look at the Indiana governor. The real draw, of course, will be Trump himself. He brought record numbers of viewers to the GOP primary debates, and it's likely he'll have a similar effect on interest in the convention."

6. Does Trump seem plausible as a president?

Though he's only trailing Clinton by 4 points in our new poll, 64 percent of Americans view Trump unfavorably as he enters the convention – more than twice as many as view him positively. "The Post-ABC poll found that nearly six in 10 registered voters say he is not qualified to serve as president — with 49 percent saying they strongly believe that," Scott Clement and Dan Balz note. "Meanwhile, Clinton is seen as qualified to serve as president by 56 percent of voters."

The attempted coup in Turkey and the Bastille Day attack in France are reminders that the world is a tinderbox and unexpected challenges confront a president.

Today's theme is "Make America Safe Again" and will focus on foreign policy. Among the speakers are Rudy Giuliani, who has criticized the Black Lives Matter movement, retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn and Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst (a combat veteran). Two Americans who were present during the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi will also appear.

"Because of events, Republicans this week and Democrats a week from now will be judged on far more than whether their conventions are well run and well produced, on whose video biography of the nominee is more compelling or whether the balloon drop works smoothly," Balz writes in his column. "Both Trump and Clinton will be measured by more exacting standards than usual. Can either speak in language strong enough to break through the wall of polarizing rhetoric with which both political parties seem most comfortable? … The rewards for success could be significant. Which candidate will be seen as more suited for the demands of the Oval Office in an uncertain time? Which candidate can voters imagine responding effectively to terrorist attacks? Who will be judged as equipped to bridge racial divisions and ease racial tensions? There will be nothing abstract about all these questions. The videos from around the world will be a constant reminder of the stakes of this election."

As CNN puts it, "Trump enters the convention under pressure to show more discipline, gravitas, and sobriety."

7. How big is Trump's post-convention bounce?

If Trump does not blow it and violence does not overshadow it, the next four days could be a made-for-TV infomercial about how great he would be as president —with 15,000 credentialed journalists on hand to chronicle it all.

"Presidential candidates historically have seen a median increase of five percentage points in their support in preference polls among registered voters after their party's nominating convention," Gallup found in a 2012 study. (Check out a cool breakdown going back to 1964 here.)

It will be political malpractice if Trump's image and standing do not improve. But, but, but: Clinton gets her own coronation next week in Philadelphia. And she is expected to announce her running-mate this Friday, partly to blunt any momentum Trump might get coming out of Thursday night.

THE LONG, HOT SUMMER OF DISCORD AND DISCONTENT:

– A lone gunman killed three police officers and injured three others in Baton Rogue. From Mark Berman, Matt Zapotosky and Peter Holley: "The shootings occurred when police responded to a 911 call that a man dressed in black and armed with what appeared to be an assault-style rifle was walking near a shopping plaza about a mile from police headquarters. Alton Sterling was fatally shot by officers outside a convenience store in the city two weeks ago.

– The gunman, who was shot and killed, was Gavin Long, an African American resident of Kansas City, Mo. "He turned 29 on Sunday and was in Baton Rouge celebrating his birthday. ... In the spring of 2012, Long was named to the dean's list at the University of Alabama, which he attended for one semester. ... (He was) a Marine who achieved the rank of sergeant and had been deployed to Iraq before leaving the service in 2010." Under a pseudonym, Long had posted videos on YouTube advocating for violence instead of protests. (Matt Zapotosky has more.)

– The victims:

Montrell Jackson, 32, an African American, was married and had a baby. "It's coming to the point where no lives matter," his sister said last night, "whether you're black or white or Hispanic or whatever." (Theresa Vargas)

Matthew Gerald, 41, a white officer with two daughters, had served in the Marines and the Army before joining the Baton Rouge police force last year. (Jessica Contrera)

Brad Garafola, 45, who served with the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office, was working extra duty at the B-Quik convenience store on Airline Highway and was headed home to begin vacation when he was gunned down. (Jessica Contrera)

– Thirty officers have now been shot and killed in the line of duty since 2016 began, nearly double the toll at this time last year. (William Wan and Kimberly Kindy)

– President Obama condemned the assault as "cowardly and reprehensible": "These are attacks on public servants, on the rule of law, and on civilized society, and they have to stop." He also pleaded with the presidential candidates not to politicize the shootings: Describing the upcoming conventions in Cleveland and Philadelphia as "a time when our political rhetoric tends to be more overheated," Obama broadly urged public officials to temper divisive words. "We don't need careless accusations thrown around to score political points or to advance an agenda," he said. (Greg Jaffe)

Here's how Trump responded to the plea:

– "We must all stand together to reject violence and strengthen our communities," Clinton said in her statement.

– Leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement strongly condemned any form of violence against the police: "We don't value any life more than any other life," said Ada Goodly, an attorney and activist with the National Lawyers Guild in Baton Rouge. "This is a huge loss for a community that is already grieving." "Shooting police is not a civil rights tactic," said longtime civil rights leader Jesse Jackson. "The shooting in Dallas had nothing to do with the civil rights struggle, and neither does the shooting in Baton Rouge." (Wesley Lowery)

GET SMART FAST:

French authorities detained three more suspects in connection with the Bastille Day truck attack, including two Albanians who they believe supplied the weapons and a third man who the attacker texted with. Seven others had been detained earlier. ISIS declared on Saturday that Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, 31, was "a soldier of the Islamic State." (Sudarsan Raghavan)

U.C. Berkley confirmed that one of its students was among the 84 who died in Nice. The 20-year-old was participating in a summer entrepreneurship program. (LA Times)

Leaders of Nice's Muslim community fear an anti-immigrant backlash will make people such as the attacker even more disconnected from French society, sharpening the risk of more attacks. (Michael Birnbaum)

Anti-doping officials from more than 10 nations will request that the entire Russian delegation be banned from participating in the Rio Olympics, highlighting revelations of a state-sponsored doping program. The request comes just three weeks before the summer games are set to begin. (New York Times)

Obama calls on Republicans to confirm Merrick Garland in a Wall Street Journal op-ed, calling the gridlock "much more serious than [a] typical case of Washington dysfunction." "If we allow it to continue, the consequences of congressional inaction could weaken our most important institutions, erode public trust and undermine our democracy," he writes.

Venezuela temporarily opened its border with Colombia this weekend, allowing more than 100,000 people across the border to shop for food and medicine amid nationwide shortages. (AP)

A 20-year-old survivor of gang rape in India was sexually assaulted again by the same five men who had previously attacked her. The men were out on bail and allegedly wanted to punish the girl and her family for refusing to withdraw charges against them. (Max Bearak)

The brother of a slain Pakistani model admitted to strangling his sister for "family honor" after she posted photos on social media that he found embarrassing. "I was determined either to kill myself or kill her," he told reporters. (AP)

The FBI has found "no evidence" that Orlando gunman Omar Mateen chose to target the Pulse nightclub because of its gay clientele. (Adam Goldman)

Mick Jagger, 72, announced that he is expecting his eighth child. The legendary rocker, who has children ranging in age from 45 to 17, is expecting a baby with his 29-year-old girlfriend. (Ellen McCarthy)

A 26-year-old Pennsylvania man faces criminal charges after police found a stolen human brain under his porch, which he and his friends were using to get high. (Peter Holley)

PENCE'S ROCKY ROLLOUT:

– Trump and Pence appeared on CBS's "60 Minutes" last night. It quickly turned awkward when Donald was confronted with Pence's vote to authorize the use force of Iraq in 2002: "I don't care," he told host Lesley Stahl, effectively giving his running-mate a pass for the exact same thing he has long slammed Clinton for doing. "It's a long time ago. And he voted that way and they were also misled."

Trump said Pence is "entitled to make a mistake every once in a while." Lesley Stahl asked if that meant Clinton, who voted for the war as a New York senator, is too. "No," Trump said. "She's not." (Sean Sullivan has more.)

– Trump totally domineered the interview. During the 21-minute segment, Trump uttered 2,160 words to Pence's 900. "When Pence did get the chance to speak, Trump would often cut him off with a correction or answer of his own," Jenna Johnson notes. In one example, "as Pence tried to explain why he was at first opposed to Trump's ban on foreign Muslims, he began by pointing out that Trump 'clearly...is not a politician' and 'doesn't speak like a politician.' 'He speaks from his heart," Pence said earnestly. Trump cut in: 'Is that a good thing? I think that's a good thing. Well, I speak from my heart and my brain. Just so we understand.'"

In another awkward moment, Stahl asked Pence about Trump saying McCain is "not a war hero." "I have a great deal of respect for John McCain,' Pence said carefully. 'And...' Stahl pressed: 'Do you think he went too far?'" Trump jumped in: "You could say yes... That's okay. That one, you could say, 'yes.'" (Watch the full interview here.)

– It came after a terrible event Saturday to unveil Pence. The lighting and sound were bad. Trump came on stage to "You can't always get you want." He rambled for 28 minutes alone on stage before calling Pence up. "You're amazing," Pence whispered to him. Then Trump left the stage. The interaction lasted six seconds. (Jenna Johnson and Robert Costa)

– What was he thinking? In 1999, Pence attacked the family film "Mulan" as the work of a "mischievous liberal" and said it was obviously designed to "influence the debate over women in the military": "Despite her delicate features and voice, Disney expects us to believe that Mulan's ingenuity and courage were enough to carry her to military success on an equal basis with her cloddish cohorts," Pence wrote in an op-ed. "Obviously, this is Walt Disney's attempt to add childhood expectation to the cultural debate over the role of women in the military … I suspect that some mischievous liberal at Disney assumes that Mulan's story will cause a quiet change in the next generation's attitude about women in combat and they just might be right." (Read more from Buzzfeed)

– "Pence used campaign funds to pay his mortgage — and it cost him an election," by Rosalind S. Helderman, Tom Hamburger and Alice Crites: "Campaign finance records from the 1990 effort showed that Pence, then 31, had been using political donations to pay the mortgage on his house, his personal credit card bill, groceries, golf tournament fees and car payments for his wife. The spending had not been illegal at the time."

– Manafort confirmed that Christie was "livid" he wasn't picked. From the Weekly Standard's John Mccormack: "While minding my own business at the Starbucks inside the Westin hotel this morning, I saw a man engage (Trump's chairman) in conversation about the VP selection process. The man … suggested that Pence was a smart pick and Gingrich would've been a disaster. 'Christie was livid, right?' the man said at one point. 'Yeah,' Manafort replied."

– New York Magazine, “Trump May Have Fired Corey Lewandowski, But He’s Still Taking His Advice,” by Gabriel Sherman: “Advisers and allies of Trump are increasingly concerned that ousted campaign-manager-turned-CNN-pundit Corey Lewandowski could play a wild-card role in Cleveland. Their principal worry: Lewandowski will give Trump hard-edged advice that goes against the campaign’s stated plan to soften and humanize the candidate. Although Trump fired Lewandowski last month, the power struggle between Lewandowski and … Manafort continues … Lewandowski is said to have lobbied hard for Trump to pick Christie for vice-president. Lewandowski’s enduring presence in Trump’s orbit is frustrating to allies like [Roger] Stone, who believe that Lewandowski doesn’t have the political experience to warrant his access to the candidate.”

THE DAILY DONALD: On the eve of any convention, media outlets tend to publish deep dives on the presumptive nominee. Here’s a sampling of the best stories in this vein that have popped in the past 24 hours:

– “Trump doesn’t read much. Being president probably wouldn’t change that,” by Marc Fisher: “Presidents have different ways of preparing to make decisions. Some read deeply, some prefer to review short memos. … But Trump, poised to become the first major-party presidential nominee since Dwight Eisenhower who had not previously held elected office, appears to have an unusually light appetite for reading. He said in a series of interviews that he does not need to read extensively because he reaches the right decisions ‘with very little knowledge other than the knowledge I [already] had, plus the words ‘common sense.’ ... Trump said he is skeptical of experts because ‘they can’t see the forest for the trees.’ He believes that when he makes decisions, people see that he instinctively knows the right thing to do: ‘A lot of people said, ‘Man, he was more accurate than guys who have studied it all the time.’”

– The New Yorker, “Trump’s Ghostwriter Tells All,” by Jane Mayer: Tony Schwartz ghostwrote Trump’s 1987 book “The Art of the Deal.” “The book expanded Trump’s renown far beyond New York City, making him an emblem of the successful tycoon. … [A]s Trump defied predictions by establishing himself as the front-runner for the Republican nomination, Schwartz’s desire to set the record straight grew. It wasn’t because of Trump’s ideology—Schwartz doubted that he had one. The problem was Trump’s personality, which he considered pathologically impulsive and self-centered. ‘I put lipstick on a pig,” he said. “I feel a deep sense of remorse that I contributed to presenting Trump in a way that brought him wider attention and made him more appealing than he is.’ He went on, “I genuinely believe that if Trump wins and gets the nuclear codes there is an excellent possibility it will lead to the end of civilization.”

“If he were writing ‘The Art of the Deal’ today, Schwartz said, it would be a very different book with a very different title. Asked what he would call it, he answered, ‘The Sociopath.’”

– Boston Globe, “Trump’s drive to surpass his father’s success,” by Matt Viser: “Fred Trump couldn’t understand it. His son Donald was building a new Manhattan skyscraper, and in the process blowing huge sums on exotic materials. … Donald’s glitzy vision for what would become Trump Tower was a dramatic departure in sensibility for the senior Trump, who built tens of thousands of middle-class apartments in Queens and Brooklyn using boring, solid brick. Fred Trump would tour the building site … finding fault and declaring, ‘You guys don’t know what you’re doing.’ Donald Trump ultimately prevailed. And the midtown Trump Tower stands as tribute to the son’s obsessions with glitz and showmanship, which can seem like a direct repudiation of his father’s determinedly practical approach to life.”

– Politico, “The Executive Mr. Trump,” by Michael Kruse: “Based on [many conversations] … the reality of Trump as an executive—his methods and his manner—bears little resemblance to the man viewers saw on (“The Apprentice”). Rather than magisterial and decisive, Trump the actual boss swings wildly between micromanaging meddler and can’t-be-bothered, broad-brush, big-picture thinker. He is both impulsive and intuitive, for better and for worse. He hires on gut instinct rather than qualifications; he listens to others, but not as much or as often as he listens to himself. He’s loyal—’like, this great loyalty freak,’ as he once put it—except when he’s not. “He went from one kind of person to another,” says Barbara Res, who was his project manager on Trump Tower and later played an important role in the refurbishment of the Plaza Hotel under Trump. And what might surprise people most about Trump, Res said, is this: ‘He didn’t like firing people.’”

– BuzzFeed, “Confessions Of A Dishonest Slob: How The Haters Got Trump This Close To The White House,” by McKay Coppins: “Trump stood on a debate stage in downtown Detroit, surrounded by haters he was determined to dispatch: Liddle Marco to his right, Lyin’ Ted to his left … About 30 minutes into the debate, Kelly asked Trump to respond to a recent

BuzzFeed News report about his position on immigration. 'First of all, BuzzFeed?' Trump said … 'They were the ones that said under no circumstances will I run for president — and were they wrong.' Trump was referring to a profile I'd written two years earlier in which I chronicled a couple of days spent inside the billionaire's bubble and confidently concluded that his long-stated presidential aspirations were a sham. What had most struck me during my two days with Trump was his sad struggle to extract even an ounce of respect from a political establishment that plainly viewed him as a sideshow … But what I didn't realize at the time was that he'd felt this way for virtually his entire life — face pressed up against the window, longing for an invitation, burning with resentment, plotting his revenge."

– David Maraniss has written a hilarious piece about Trump's affinity for one-syllable words – entirely in one-syllable words. (Read it here.)

CONVENTION COVERAGE:

– Only one of Virginia's eight Republican House members is coming to Cleveland: Rep. Rob Wittman, a 2017 gubernatorial candidate who got behind Trump only when his last rival dropped out, will attend to hob knob with activists. (Laura Vozzella)

– Trump punished Ohio delegates in their own state (because he lost the March 15 primary and Kasich is a holdout) by reassigning the delegation to a conspicuous spot in the back of the arena. It's a breathtaking act of pique against a state that he needs to win the presidency. (Front Row at the Circus)

– It took an intervention by Priebus to stop Don King from speaking at the RNC. "Trump was told, no, it was not sensible to have ... the flamboyant boxing promoter, address the Republican convention. But Mr. Trump, who has repeatedly boasted of having Mr. King's support, kept pressing the matter. Finally, officials [including Priebus], firmly explained to Mr. Trump why Mr. King should not be invited: He once stomped a man to death and was convicted of manslaughter," Jonathan Martin and Jeremy W. Peters report. "The party could not associate itself with someone convicted of a felony. Mr. Trump eventually relented. Mr. King, a Cleveland native, will not take the stage. But the exchange, relayed by three Republican strategists familiar with the conversations, highlights the difficulties that planners have had building a program for a presidential candidate who is as much an entertainer as a politician."

– "She's a lifelong Democrat who's voting for Trump. And she's Dennis Kucinich's sister," by Karen Tumulty in Cleveland: "For nearly her entire life, Teresa Sikorski has been active in Democratic politics, starting as a 12-year-old who overcame her shyness to knock on doors for her big brother's Cleveland City Council race in 1966. He lost that time. But her brother Dennis Kucinich went on to become Cleveland's mayor and congressman, a two-time presidential candidate and one of the most passionate liberal voices in the his party. This year, Sikorski and her husband, Marty, quietly changed their party registration to Republican so they could vote in Ohio's GOP primary. Their choice: Donald Trump. Sikorski, 63 … remains a staunch supporter of her brother and the underdog causes for which he has fought. But the couple no longer sees the Democratic Party — or Washington, under the influence of monied interests — looking out for ordinary people. The whole system, they believe, should be kicked over. 'I listened to everything he had to say. I understood it. I got it,' Teresa Sikorski added. 'Everybody else — they're liars.'"

– Great essay: "One street in Cleveland tells the immigrants' story," by Mary Jordan: "In the 1970s, when I was growing up in Cleveland, the city had twice the national average of foreign-born people. Many worked in the steel mills along the river or in the giant Ford plant. … After Soviet tanks smashed the 1956 uprising in Hungary and refugees streamed out, it was often said that there were more Hungarians in Cleveland than anywhere outside Budapest. In fact, welcoming immigrants was how a politician got elected in those days. Ralph Perk was elected mayor of Cleveland in the 1970s three times, casting himself as the 'ethnic candidate,' the one to represent all the blue-collar workers from so many different faraway places. That was a winning slogan for the Republican. Now instead of from Europe, those coming are from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The jobs are more biomedical than blue-collar."

– Priebus said Trump has "pivoted" away from his Muslim ban: "If you have seen the last few weeks, his position that he's put on the table in his position papers that are on his website and what he's been talking about is a temporary ban of immigration from countries that harbor and train terrorists," Priebus said on CNN's "State of the Union." "There is no religious test on the table."

– The RNC chair also announced a special Hispanic "engagement tour" aimed at shoring up support among Latinos – after the convention: "I know [Trump] is going to be doing a Hispanic engagement tour coming up soon," he said on "Fox News Sunday." "He is going to be talking about those issues. He understands we need to grow the party." (Elise Viebeck)

MORE NEW POLLING:

– From our Post/ABC poll: 58 percent of Americans are dissatisfied with their choices in the election.

Three-quarters of voters say Clinton is "too willing to bend the rules," while 56 percent called Trump biased against women and minorities.

Independents lean toward Trump 47-41, while Clinton leads among moderates 52-36. Meanwhile, white voters with college degrees are evenly divided, with 43 percent for Trump and 42 percent for Clinton.

– Clinton topped Trump by 7 points (49-42) in a head-to-head CNN/ORC matchup. She leads him on likeability (43 percent to 39 percent) and experience (64 percent to 32 percent), while Trump has the advantage on the economy and terrorism.

– Clinton holds a 5-point national lead (46-41) in the new NBC/WSJ poll. (Janet Hook's analysis)

– A new NBC/WSJ/Telemundo poll shows Clinton leads Trump 76 percent to 14 percent among Latinos. She is viewed positively by 64 percent of Latino voters, compared to 11 percent for Trump.

– Large majorities of Americans and Mexicans on BOTH sides of the border oppose building a wall dividing the two countries, according to a survey from Cronkite News/Univision/Dallas Morning News. 72 percent of Americans living near the southwestern border said they are against a border wall, while 86 percent in Mexico's northernmost cities said the same. Both parties believe the tone of the presidential campaign is hurting U.S.-Mexican relations, with 59 percent of Americans and 69 percent of Mexicans agreeing.

– Nearly HALF of Republicans say their party has gone astray, according to a Morning Consult poll: 46 percent of Republicans said they think their party has "pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track." (40 percent said they believe it's on the right track, and 14 percent don't know or are undecided.)

Only 27 percent of voters 55-64 said they believe the party is on the right track. Meanwhile, that number doubles among voters between the ages of 30 and 44 (54 percent) who view the party in a more positive light.

Two-thirds of Republicans believe the party is "stale."

One in five Republican voters believe the Republican Party does not accurately represent their views.

HILLARY'S VEEPSTAKES:

– "A liberal firebrand who could stoke the passions of the Democratic base. A Hispanic who could fire up one of the country's fastest-growing population — and make history. Someone with governing experience who might also help with a key group where Demo-crats lag: white men." From John Wagner, Abby Phillip and Ed O'Keefe: "With less than a week to go before Clinton is expected to select a running mate, these are among her choices. She has focused intensely on the task in recent days … And she is looking for the best partner in the White House more than the best campaign asset, they said. So while her highly anticipated announcement could telegraph crucial electoral calculations, it may signal even more how she plans to run the presidency." Clinton's pick could also reveal something about how she wants to be viewed. Others say relationship is key: "For her, it may literally be a matter of who she wants to work with," said veteran Democratic operative Joe Trippi.

– V.P. contender Tom Vilsack compared Trump to Bernie Madoff: "He is selling something that people don't fully understand and appreciate what it actually means." (NBC)

– A West Virginia lawmaker says he regrets tweeting that Clinton should be "hung on the mall in Washington, D.C." as punishment for her private email server. "But Michael Folk, a member of West Virginia's House of Delegates, said he still believes Clinton should be tried for treason after an FBI investigation determined she handled classified information on the server," CNN reports.

TURKEY

– Turkish authorities fired 8,000 police officers today, raising fears of an "all out purge" of President Recep Erdogan's dissenters as he continues to concentrate power. Arrest warrants have also been issued for at least 2,745 judges and prosecutors across the country. (Hugh Naylor and Erin Cunningham)

As many as 3,000 Turkish members of the military have also been detained: "Among those arrested was the commander at Incirlik Air Base, which is used by U.S. forces to launch raids against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria … The base is a major NATO installation hosting U.S. forces that control a stockpile of nuclear weapons."

– John Kerry this morning urged the Turks to uphold democratic principles as it goes after the alleged plotters.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:

— ZIGNAL VISUAL: Over the weekend, our analytics partners at Zignal Labs tracked more than 200,000 mentions of the Republican convention online.

Here were the most discussed topics among those writing and tweeting about the convention:

Mentions spiked when it was announced that Scott Baio – who played Chachi on “Happy Days” – will speak in Cleveland. “I actually was at a fundraiser for Mr. Trump the other night with my wife, and he invited me to speak at the convention, which was completely unexpected and out of left field,” Baio explained on Fox News.

The most popular RNC-related Tweet of the weekend came from Wall Street Journal reporter Byron Tau, who highlighted this awkward sign in the convention hall:

More sights from Cleveland:

From a CNN reporter:

A joke from our colleague, Wes Lowery:

Trump switched his campaign logo from this:

To this:

Samantha Bee’s gif illustrates the unintentional humor (click to watch):

Political Twitter had plenty to say:

A flashback to Pence’s literature for a failed 1988 House campaign:

Many are making fun of the Melania Trump biography that the RNC sent out:

Trump’s official bio notes that he had lunch at the Pentagon ... in 1996.

The California delegation in Cleveland is staying 60 miles – yes, 60 miles – from the city:

(The Plain Dealer has maps of where every delegation is sitting here.)

Carl Paladino brings new meaning to the term “hyperbole”:

A blast from GOP conventions past:

House Republicans drew criticism for this selfie of an almost exclusively white 2016 intern class, which starkly highlights the party’s diversity problem.

Here’s Kevin McCarthy with Lynyrd Skynyrd:

Finally, a shot capturing a gorgeous D.C. night sky over the Nats game:

DAYBOOK:

On the campaign trail: Republicans kick off their convention with a day focused on national security, including speeches by retired Lt. General Michael Flynn, Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), Jason Beardsley of Concerned Veterans for America and Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.).

Clinton is at the NAACP Convention in Cincinnati and the American Federation of Teachers Convention in Minneapolis.

At the White House: Obama presents the Medal of Honor to Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Charles Kettles, U.S. Army. Joe Biden is in Australia.

On Capitol Hill: The Senate and House are out.

NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

– Another day of humidity to kick off the week. The Capital Weather Gang forecasts: “It’s a steamy one. Under a mix of sun and clouds, highs head for the mid-90s, but humidity is up noticeably compared with the weekend. The combination of heat and humidity makes it feel close to 100 at times this afternoon.

– The Nationals lost to the Pirates 2-1.

– A Baltimore rape suspect who took four people – including a seven-year-old girl – hostage at gunpoint in a Burger King surrendered after a dramatic, five-hour negotiation with police. (Peter Hermann)

VIDEOS OF THE DAY:

In 1964, Lyndon Johnson ran an ad called “Confessions of a Republican” that gave voice to fears about Barry Goldwater being rash and impulsive. The Clinton campaign tracked down the same guy, Bill Bogert, and got him to make the same case about Trump. Watch the 1-minute web video:

If you missed it on Saturday, here’s a 3-minute highlight reel from the Trump-Pence announcement event:

Seth Meyers previewed the RNC:

Stephen Colbert wrapped up the week in politics:

Here are clips from Colbert’s time on the convention floor yesterday:

John Oliver offered a few endorsements in the spirit of the season:

Gay Talese, his credibility damaged, defended his journalistic integrity on Seth Meyers’s show. “Talese now says reports about flaws in his new book are themselves flawed,” Paul Farhi reports. “In interviews to promote ‘The Voyeur’s Motel’ over the past week, Talese has defended his reporting about his subject, Gerald Foos, who said he spied on guests of his Colorado motel from an attic perch for decades. Talese initially disavowed the non-fiction book amid questions about an eight-year gap in Foos’ ownership of the motel during the 1980s. But he then reversed himself, saying he had over-reacted when he first learned about the ownership gap late last month. ... Talese’s pushback comes as new questions concerning the veracity of ‘The Voyeur’s Motel’ have come to light.”

Finally, in honor of the Apollo 11 lunar landing anniversary this week, check out these rare panoramas and gifs from the mission ...

... And this video of Buzz Aldrin punching a moon landing denier who was harassing him (hat tip to David Frum):

These Truckers Are With Trump For The Long Haul

By Nina Burleigh

Newsweek, July 18, 2016

Truckers Jim and Lorraine Morrison started out from Southern California last week, hauling a load of tires to drop off at different points across the West and Midwest. They got a picture taken in front of the Trump casino in Las Vegas before heading off to Utah, Colorado and Nebraska and then up into Minnesota, where they did their last drop. They then turned south and east, planning to reach Cleveland in time for Monday's Citizens for Trump rally.

The Morrisons are founders of Truckers for Trump, which has 18,000 Facebook likes and a Go Fund Me site that states: "We campaign for Trump in all 48 States as we truck drive across this Great nation of ours. We would like to have 1 million truckers with Truckers for Trump bumper stickers T shirts and signage to Unite all Truckers to support Trump for President. Please help us to go to all the possible rallies to show the protesters we will stand strong for America."

They had hoped to organize a convoy of truckers to the Republican National Convention this week, and at one point were talking about a thousand truckers converging at Cleveland. But they say the city put a kibosh on that idea, banning an influx of large rigs. So they set off themselves, stopping in towns and at truck stops along the way, handing out red and white Truckers for Trump bumper stickers and hats and campaigning for their candidate.

Lorraine Morrison, 47, a mother of six (five with a previous husband who died), was born in Mexico. Her mother brought her up into the El Norte of Southern California on a visa when she was 3. She isn't bothered by Trump's call for a Mexico wall.

"I know about people coming over and leaving their families behind. But I do feel we need to close our borders. There has to be a stopping point, in order to make America great again.... You used to work and be able to get a car and a house and go on vacation. Now you can bust your ass and not get anywhere."

The former executive assistant forgives Trump's impolite comments about Mexican criminality, too. "I grew up Hispanic, I understand their heritage and struggles and I understand their concerns,' she says. "I speak to people differently. But I know that he's not hateful and not racist. He's just like all other Americans—he's fed up."

Jim Morrison, 48, was born in El Paso, Texas, and spent the last three decades driving a truck. "Why do I support Donald Trump?" he says. "It's real simple: You gotta look at a man, look in his eyes, eyes are windows to the soul. I was a sheriff once and I've got some experience in looking into eyes. The guy is not gaining anything from this. He already has power and money and you can see the care in his eyes."

Lorraine and Jim have an 8-year-old daughter together, and for the last few years they have been home-schooling the child on the road, in the truck. Lorraine says she made the decision to take her child out of school and move into the truck after hearing a theory that President Obama could institute martial law and send people like her or her husband to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) camps. What would happen, she thought, if her husband was across the country and her child in school when they came for her or them? "I don't want to sound like a conspiracy theorist," she said, "But then again, I don't want to be stupid when it happens either."

Jim shares Lorraine's expectation that Obama still has time to install martial law: "You look at Barack Hussein Obama, look at what he's done what he stands for and what he protects. First, let me say not all Muslims are terrorists, but isn't it funny that all terrorists are Muslims? Every time there's a mass shooting he comes on tv and scolds us and doesn't even say the words 'radical islam.'"

Morrison also says he's heard Obama talk about a third term, although a fact-check doesn't come up with any source for the claim. "Add that to the things he's defended and I believe if he could impose martial law, he would. All he needs is two of his generals to sign off, and some kind of big problem to happen," he says.

Whatever Obama does and whatever comes down the pike in these uncertain times, Lorraine Morrison reckons Trump will take care of them. "I've admired him since I was 23," she says. "I believe in him and the words he's saying and he does love America, he does want to save America. And I am going to feel safe with him. I look at the way he takes care of his household and takes care of his children. He will run us like that. He will keep us safe and self-sufficient and prosperous. I want that, the way he takes care of his family."

10 Things To Know About Florida's Harmful Algae Blooms

By Pam Wright

Weather Channel, July 18, 2016

The enormous harmful algae bloom that has blanketed Florida's Treasure Coast waterways with a "guacamole-like" blue-green sludge is a man-made affliction and one that periodically plagues the Sunshine State to the chagrin of residents, tourists and officials alike.

Earlier this month, Gov. Rick Scott declared a state of emergency in four Florida counties after a bloom reached Florida's beaches this spring. On Friday, the Obama administration denied his request for a federal emergency declaration, according to TCPalm.

In the letter to Scott, FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate wrote the request was denied because "supplemental federal assistance under the Stafford Act is not appropriate for this event."

Scott's press secretary said Saturday that he would appeal FEMA's decision.

As the county officials and the governor wait to hear the decision on the appeal, here are 10 things you should know about the crisis:

1. What It Is and Where It Came From

The algae is a cyanobacteria found in Lake Okeechobee, which comes from the runoff containing human waste and fertilizers from nearby farms and ordinary neighborhoods, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Nitrogen and phosphorus, as well as other nutrients in the polluted runoff, can act like fertilizer for the algae, creating large and extensive blooms.

2. Eager Developers Changed Florida's Waterways

In an attempt to spur the economy years ago, Florida land developers and government officials broke up the natural flow of the state's rivers, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades to redirect water south from central Florida, according to the Associated Press. The economy did grow as the land was reclaimed from the Everglades for development, but now the unnatural water flow has periodically left rivers and lagoons so toxic with HAB that fish die off, residents become ill and tourists are turned off.

3. The Risks to Humans

If ingested, water contaminated with toxic cyanobacteria can cause nausea, vomiting and, in severe cases, acute liver failure, according to Florida's FWCC. While there have been no documented cases of anyone becoming ill from drinking water containing these toxins, it remains a concern. The Centers for Disease Control says coming in direct contact with the algae can cause a rash and some research indicates a link between long-term inhalation of toxic algae fumes and neurological disorders like Parkinson's and Lou Gehrig's diseases.

4. The Risks to Wildlife and Pets

Florida's wildlife and pets are exposed to the same risks as humans if the toxic water is ingested or contacted, according to the CDC. Pets are particularly vulnerable and owners should be cautious about letting pets near algae-ridden waters. In addition, HABs can deplete the oxygen and block the sunlight that other organisms need to live.

5. Why It Has Reached the Beaches

In January, record rains prompted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to start releasing the polluted water into rivers and estuaries in an attempt to keep Lake Okeechobee from overflowing. The algae bloom became so extensive that it reached area beaches.

6. The Economic Impact

The impact is great. Health care costs from hospital and doctor visits, beach clean-up activities following fish kills, and losses in tourism revenues are some of the costs associated with these harmful algae blooms, according to the Florida Department of Health. While the total loss associated with Florida's most recent outbreak in unknown at this point, on average, $22 million dollars are lost annually in health care costs alone during HAB events.

7. The Short-Term Solutions

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District, which control much of the flow through levees and gates, stopped releasing water into the rivers in an attempt to curb the outbreak, according to AP. That alleviated the immediate outbreak, at least in the river, but it will take much more to alleviate the problem entirely.

8. The Long-Term Solutions

According to AP, Scott wants to "spend unspecified millions to get homeowners off septic tanks and onto sewer lines, reducing nutrient runoff." He also wants to hurry along an $880 million project to strengthen a dike which surrounds Lake Okeechobee, which controls its water flow. The 18-year project is scheduled for completion in 2025, but Scott is calling on federal authorities to help get the job completed faster. The political debate between Democrats and Republicans over who should allocate the extra funds is heeding the progress.

9. What the Florida Environment Protection Agency Says

Dee Ann Miller, spokeswoman for the state Department of Environmental Protection, said that predicting future algae blooms and preventing them are daunting and complicated tasks.

"The nature of most freshwater algal bloom events makes it difficult to predict where and when a bloom will occur or how long it will last," Miller told the Miami Herald. "However, lessening the negative effects of algal blooms is possible through restoration work to improve water quality by reducing nutrients. By reducing nitrogen and phosphorous levels, we can help decrease the intensity and duration of algal bloom events."

10. Precautions Should You Take

According to the CDC, people should avoid exposure to cyanobacterial HABs. The center recommends that people refrain from swimming, water skiing or boating in areas where the water is discolored or where foam, scum, or mats of algae are visible on the water.

If you do swim in water that might have algae, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible. The same goes for pets and livestock.

The CDC also says to avoid irrigating lawns or golf courses with pond water that looks scummy or smells bad and recommends that any "musty" smell or taste in your drinking water be reported to your local water utility.

Florida Can Pay For Algae Recovery On Its Own, FEMA Says

By Isadora Rangel

TC Palm (FL), July 18, 2016

Florida has enough money to handle the Treasure Coast algae crisis on its own and without federal help, a Federal Emergency Management Agency spokesman said Monday.

Gov. Rick Scott failed to prove the state isn't able to handle the "severity and magnitude" of the blooms in his request for a federal emergency declaration, which the Obama administration denied Friday.

"The state of Florida is the (fourth) largest state in the nation with a population of almost 20 million people," FEMA spokesman Rafael Lemaitre said. "The state has robust capability to respond to emergencies and disasters."

Scott himself has boasted the state's economy has grown 2.3 percent and revenue was up by $1.3 billion this year, Lamaitre pointed out.

Scott will appeal the denial but his office on Monday didn't say when. He has 30 days from July 15 to do so.

Florida's Department of Environmental Protection and Martin County have been testing the algae for toxicity, but neither have spent any money to clean it up. Both are monitoring the work of Stuart-based Ecosphere Technologies, which conducted a free demonstration of its method to clean algae from the water earlier this month.

BASIS OF DENIAL

States that request a federal state of emergency must meet the following requirements, Lemaitre said:

Is an effective response to the event beyond the capability of the state and the affected local governments?

Does it require supplementary federal emergency assistance to save lives and to protect property, public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster?

FEMA's denial letter said the federal government already is helping the state, FEMA Administrator W. Craig Fugate wrote. The Environmental Protection Agency is testing St. Lucie River water. Also, the Small Business Administration is offering loans to businesses affected by the algae and opened a Stuart application office last week.

It's unclear what kind of federal funding would become available with a declaration and whether it would make a difference, said Julie Hill-Gabriel, Audubon Florida's deputy policy director. She said she hoped Friday's denial for assistance doesn't hamper coordination between the state and federal governments to address the algae. U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio said he believes those federal dollars could pay companies to remove algae from the water.

FEMA has approved about 85 percent of almost 400 disaster declaration requests since 2011, Politifact reported in June. Disaster standards are unclear and often ignored, and decisions seem arbitrary and politically motivated, according to a Pew Charitable Trusts 2013 report. President Barack Obama, for example, denied a 2013 request from Arizona's Republican governor after a wildfire killed 19 firefighters and destroyed 109 homes at an estimated cost of $6.8 million.

George W. Bush denied a 2002 request from his brother, Gov. Jeb Bush, to help 2,400 Apalachicola Bay workers who lost their jobs because of red tide, a toxic microscopic algae. FEMA said the situation was not severe enough for such a declaration. Jeb Bush's appeal was denied too.

A STATE ISSUE

Scott repeatedly has blamed Obama for the algae crisis, saying the federal government has failed to fund restoration projects and a Herbert Hoover Dike improvement project around Lake Okeechobee.

Scott is expected to challenge Democratic U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson in 2018.

Scott is wrong to blame the federal government, said Audubon Florida Executive Director Eric Draper. The algae blooms are flowing into the St. Lucie River, Indian River Lagoon and Atlantic Ocean beaches with water discharged from Lake Okeechobee. Pollution entering the lake from the north is causing the blooms in the lake.

"Water quality is 100 percent a state issue," Draper said.

TCPalm Trending: Why Did FEMA Reject Emergency Declaration?

By Gil Smart

TC Palm (FL), July 18, 2016

So maybe someone else should have asked?

On Friday, the Obama administration denied Gov. Rick Scott's request for a federal emergency declaration in the wake of the Treasure Coast's blue-green algae crisis.

In typical cryptic bureaucratic style, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Craig Fugate wrote that the request was denied because "supplemental federal assistance under the Stafford Act" — which gives the president authority to determine where and when to declare an emergency — "is not appropriate for this event."

What, exactly, does that mean? Fugate didn't say and FEMA officials weren't available for comment.

But for the record, this was the 11th time Scott has asked for federal money from FEMA since he took office in 2011. FEMA has rejected seven of those requests.

That rejection rate, PolitiFact Florida reported last month, is far higher than the national average.

So what gives? Are Florida disasters somehow less worthy of federal assistance than disasters elsewhere? Does it have more to do with politics than it does the disaster itself?

Or are we just doing it wrong?

As PolitiFact reported last month, there are two types of declarations a governor can request: emergency declarations, like the ones Scott made for the algae crisis and the Orlando nightclub shooting, and major disaster declarations.

Emergency declarations are designed to save lives and property immediately before or after a disaster occurs by providing up to $5 million for generators, national guard evacuations or other specific forms of aid.

FEMA records show Scott has made one other emergency declaration since 2011, following severe storms that slammed Panhandle counties earlier this year. That request also was denied, meaning all three of Scott's requests for an emergency declaration have been nixed.

Nationwide, PolitiFact reported, FEMA grants the vast majority of emergency declaration requests, signing off on 61 of 67 since 2011.

Scott's press secretary, Lauren Schenone, said the Obama administration's decision to nix the request was "frustrating."

"He's clearly not making this a priority," she said, adding that Scott likely would appeal the decision, but Schenone wasn't sure when.

But U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy blamed Scott for the denial, saying the governor's initial request "only sought to point fingers at the federal government and away from the state's responsibilities."

And Murphy kind of has a point.

In Scott's request to Obama, the governor blamed "the federal government's lack of appropriate maintenance" of the Herbert Hoover Dike around Lake Okeechobee as the reason for the discharges that have fouled our waterways. "Consequently," Scott wrote, "any damage caused by the unnecessary water releases ... is the federal government's responsibility."

In other words: It's your fault. Now give us money.

So maybe there's a reason this didn't fly.

Unless pleas from area legislators and Scott's appeal can change FEMA's mind, it looks like we're on our own. The calvary is not on the way.

But while we can't know whether wording the request in a more conciliatory way would have produced a different outcome, we also can't help but think it might have been better to say "please" — rather than, "You OWE us."

About Gil Smart

Gil Smart is a columnist for Treasure Coast Newspapers and a member of the Editorial Board. His columns reflect his opinion. Readers may reach him at gil.smart@tcpalm.com, by phone at 772-223-4741 or via Twitter at @TCPalmGilSmart.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Flood Maps May Change For Some, Not All, Areas

By Pamela Pritt

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, July 19, 2016

A significant number of state residents who were flooded last month didn't have flood insurance, mainly because they were not in the flood zone, according to maps produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

But that doesn't mean the FEMA maps were wrong, said Kevin Sneed, West Virginia's floodplain management assistant coordinator.

The maps encompass areas likely to be flooded in 100-year flood events. June's devastating flash flooding is said to be in the 1,000-year flood range.

A 100-year flood has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year; the probability decreases for a 500-year event to 0.2 percent and a 0.1 percent annual chance for a 1,000-year flood.

It's highly unlikely that the larger maps will change, Sneed said, although certain map panels may be revised. "It's hard to get a study redone, but it might be necessary in Rainelle."

In western Greenbrier County, nearly all of Rainelle's businesses were flooded, as were hundreds of residents, who live between Sewell Creek and Little Sewell Creek.

"There will be community meetings in Rainelle about mitigation and how to rebuild Rainelle the right way," Sneed said.

Sneed said his agency is out collecting high water marks, and new map panels could come out of the data collected.

FEMA requires that homes and businesses be elevated above the 100-year mark, but most communities in the state have enacted ordinances that require a 2-foot elevation above that mark.

Sneed said homeowners with a mortgage who live in the "Special Flood Hazard Area" have a 26 percent chance of flooding during the life of a 30-year mortgage.

"The chances of flooding in a Special Flood Hazard Area are far greater than your house catching fire," he said.

Open House Being Held To Introduce New Chatham County FEMA Flood

WTOC-TV Savannah (GA), July 18, 2016

SAVANNAH, GA (WTOC) –

An open house concerning new flood maps will be held Tuesday for residents and business owners of Chatham County.

The event will offer the community a chance to learn how and why the local risk of flooding has changed, how the proposed new flood maps will be used, and steps they can take to protect themselves from the extensive damage that flooding often causes.

The open house will be Tuesday, July 19 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at Savannah Technical College (Savannah Campus).

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MITIGATION

FEMA Assessing Storm Damage In Northern Wisconsin

By Bill Novak

Wisconsin State Journal, July 18, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will begin assessing storm damage in northern Wisconsin next week to help officials determine if the state should apply for federal relief.

Gov. Scott Walker asked for FEMA's damage assessment after storms ripped through eight counties and a reservation, washing out highways and bridges, with some roads expected to take weeks to repair.

The Wisconsin Emergency Operations Center said more than $30 million in damage has been reported, with over $28.8 million in damage to public infrastructure and almost $1.8 million to private property.

"Communities throughout northern Wisconsin were hit hard by flooding last week," Walker said Monday. "We are doing everything we can to help them."

The governor declared a state of emergency for Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer and Washburn counties.

FEMA will look at public infrastructure damage in those counties, as well as on reservations for the Bad River Band and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

FEMA is expected to begin assessing damage on July 25. The assessment will be forwarded to Walker to help determine if the state will request a federal disaster declaration, the first step to requesting federal disaster assistance.

FEMA To Begin Northwoods Flood Inspections Next Week

WHBL-AM Sheboygan (WI), July 19, 2016

UNDATED (Wisconsin Radio Network) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency will look at northern Wisconsin's storm damage next week to see if it's enough to qualify for possible disaster aid.

Governor Scott Walker has asked FEMA to assess the damage to government and tribal facilities — including roads and bridges. Many roads remain closed one week after as much as eleven inches of rain fell in the region – which includes Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer, and Washburn counties. Walker already declared a state of emergency in the area last week.

Preliminary estimates put the damage to public facilities and infrastructure at almost $29 million. That figure could grow as crews continue to inspect areas impacted by flooding.

The FEMA assessment begins next Monday. Walker's office says it will take several days to complete.

Walker Seeks Fed Assessment

WTAQ-AM Green Bay (WI), July 18, 2016

MADISON, WI (WTAQ) – Governor Scott Walker is seeking a federal assessment to conduct a damage estimate in the wake of storm damage to roads and bridges in northern Wisconsin.

"Communities throughout northern Wisconsin were hit hard by flooding last week. We are doing everything we can to help them," Governor Walker said in a statement. "I saw the damage firsthand and have worked with Wisconsin's federal delegation and my cabinet to provide immediate assistance to the effected communities."

The storm and flooding caused more than $28 million in damage to those roads, bridges and trails. Walker has declared a state of emergency for Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer, and Washburn counties.

According to a release by state emergency management officials, the storms caused nearly $1.8 million to homes and businesses in the affected counties.

Teams from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will begin assessing damage the week of July 25. The assessment is expected to take a few days to complete.

Information gathered will be provided to Governor Walker to help determine if the state will request a federal disaster declaration. It is the first step to request federal disaster assistance.

– Jeff Flynt

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Flood Victims And Volunteers Invited To Town Hall Meeting In Fayette

By Sarah Plummer

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, July 19, 2016

Fayette County flood victims, volunteers and residents are invited to a Town Hall meeting at 6:30 p.m. today at Midland Trail High School.

FEMA and county code enforcement will be on hand to answer questions as residents begin to rebuild after the June floods.

Items to be discussed range from individual assistance, hazard mitigation, flood plain management, building permits and grant programs.

Time will be set aside for questions and discussion.

St. Albans Directs Flood Damage Reports To FEMA

By Emily Rice

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, July 18, 2016

St. Albans City Council opened session with a public hearing regarding a code ordinance regarding floodplains and protocol for reporting flood damages.

The city requested that all damage reports be made to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and not the city itself. Council also made a resolution authorizing participation in the hazard mitigation grant program, which was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Council also approved second readings of four ordinances all by unanimous voice vote and read by Charles Riffee, city attorney.

A second reading of the ordinance to vacate and abandon a portion of a 20-foot right of way between Second and Third Streets to make way for the CVS project was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Councilman-at-large Jerry Cogar asked that questionnaires regarding street lights be returned and asked his fellow council members to report any non-burning lights in their wards.

Ward 3 Councilman Jason Philabaun presented the Finance committee report and council approved payment of current invoices in the amount of $20,891.81 and purchase of a zero-turn mower for the Parks department from Pile Hardware in the amount of $4,249.

“This thing is phenomenal,” Kevin Pennington, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, said in regard to the new lawnmower. “It will cut our grass cutting time in half and we are really looking forward to it.”

Ward 4 Councilwoman Cheryl Thomas announced St. Albans Night Out Against Crime from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on August 2, in Mayberry’s parking lot. The event is free to the public. Thomas also mentioned that there will be about 50 different exhibitors including Batman from Heroes for Hire.

Kevin Pennington, superintendent of Parks and Recreation, made multiple reports of events from his department including a Family Pool Party on July 29 with Marco’s pizza provided at the city pool and movie night at dusk July 30 at Roadside Park where the movie “Zootopia” will be shown. Other events include Super Hero day at the City Park on August 13. The time will be announced at a later council meeting.

Pennington commented on the damage the city’s dock sustained during the recent flooding.

“We are trying to get some funding to repair that,” Pennington said. “We are going to fix it the best we can right now, to try to get us through this summer and should be completed by next week so our boaters will be able to use the ramp.”

Council then opened the floor to a public forum.

A group of residents from Edgehill Drive in Ward 2 attended the meeting and addressed council regarding a condemned house in their neighborhood that allegedly had been raided for methamphetamine production and has attracted vermin.

They requested assistance from the council to have the house demolished or remediated. The group addressed council one by one, each pleading or demanding help from council.

Riffee told the group that there were some hold-ups in the Building Department about the city's interest for remediation because of funding or demolition because of toxins that may be present in the structure.

The group asserted that it would continue to attend city council meetings requesting assistance in this matter until it was resolved.

All members of council attended Monday's meeting.

Council's next meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 1 on the second floor of the Municipal Building at 51 Sixth Avenue.

Santa Clara Wins FEMA Grant For Blue Clay Slide

By Julie Applegate

St. George (UT) News, July 18, 2016

SANTA CLARA – Santa Clara City has finally been awarded a federal grant which will allow the city to stabilize a landslide which has been plaguing residents for decades.

City officials received word Monday that a $1.17 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency had been granted, Mayor Rick Rosenberg said.

"It's good news, good news," Rosenberg said. "We're excited about it."

The hillside near Truman Drive on the edge of Santa Clara Heights has been sliding for decades; the first instability was noticed by the Utah Geological Survey in 1981 and the first major landslide happened in 1992.

This is the second year in a row the city has applied for a FEMA hazard mitigation grant.

Read more: City seeks grant to stabilize blue clay slide area, purchase homes for demolition

At least 26 homes have been impacted by the slide, Rosenberg said. Movement is believed to be caused by a combination of blue clay and underground water. Attempts to pinpoint the source of the water have been unsuccessful, and repeated efforts have been made to stabilize the hillside. A slow-moving landslide in Santa Clara destroyed homes and forced the closure of Truman Drive, Santa Clara, Utah, Dec. 23, 2015 | Photo by Julie Applegate, St.

In 1993 large cement shafts were installed above the slide area behind affected homes on Cinnamon Circle, in an effort to stabilize the slope.

The shafts extended between 20 and 40 feet into the shale bedrock under the hill, but in 2002, the hill moved again, forcing residents to vacate two homes and displacing most of the cement shafts.

The FEMA grant will be combined with a $351,000 loan from the Community Impact Board and $40,000 in cash and in-kind contributions from the city, Rosenberg said. The FEMA pre-disaster mitigation grant requires Santa Clara to fund 25 percent of the project.

The total of $1.56 million will allow Santa Clara to purchase five properties including three homes that are affected by the slide but still occupied, Rosenberg said. Two vacant lots will also be purchased.

The homes will be torn down and the top of the hillside will be graded to remove weight from the top of the slide area. In addition, ground water drains will be installed in the unstable hillside and a buttress will be built at the base of the hill.

The work is expected to reduce the risk to adjacent homes, Rosenberg said.

Affected homeowners will be contacted by city officials with more detailed information, and meetings with homeowners and appraisers will be set up within the next few weeks, Rosenberg said.

The homes being considered for purchase are those considered to be at highest risk. If purchased, the homes would be demolished and the area would become open space.

"No one would be able to buy it, purchase or build on those lots," City Manager Ed Dickie said in an earlier interview. "Ever."

Hopefully, the hillside mitigation efforts will stop the slide, make property in the area safer and prevent future problems, Dicke said.

"So that's what we hope to do, is stop this so it doesn't affect any other property owners."

Production Schedule Delays Saltillo Storm Shelter

By William Moore

Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, July 19, 2016

SALTILLO – Local officials hoped the large, community storm shelter beside Saltillo City Hall would be completed and in place by mid-April.

But it now looks like it will be some time in August before the $47,000 shelter that will house up to 96 people will be ready.

"We are waiting for the manufacturer," said Saltillo zoning administrator Brian Grissom. "We did a purchase order. It will be prefabricated in Decatur, Alabama.

"It hasn't really been delayed, it's just the company had several other projects ahead of ours."

Officials accepted the bid from Supercell Shelter late February. The 10-foot wide arched building will be

48 feet long and have benches along both sides and the center. It's designed to house 96 people.

"There are a lot of residences and businesses in the immediate downtown area," Grissom said. "They tried to look at people who could make it there within five minutes."

The bulk of the funding for the project will come from federal funds through a Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant. The grant will pay 75 percent, just more than $35,000. The city's matching funds will be $11,695. That can include in-kind services such as preparing the site.

The city will handle the dirt work for the site. The manufacturer will come in and pour the concrete slab and let it cure. The bulk of the shelter will be prefabricated and shipped to Saltillo. An 80-ton crane will then hoist it into place – at the south end of the city hall parking lot, between the fire department and the railroad tracks.

Saltillo already has two small, prefabricated concrete and steel tornado shelters at City Park that are available to the public. The desire for a large safe room to serve the community grew out of the April 2014 tornado that hit Tupelo.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

FEMA Releases New Guide On Radio Communications For Fire Service

Radio Resource Magazine, July 18, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) released a new guide on radio communications for the fire service. The 97-page guide offers 10 sections covering from why the fire service is different from other first responders to the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet).

The USFA worked with labor union International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to develop the second edition of the "Voice Radio Communications Guide for the Fire Service." The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), First Responders Group, Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) supported the partnership.

"The USFA is committed to using all means possible for reducing the incidence of injuries and deaths to firefighters," the guide's acknowledgements said. "As a labor union, the IAFF has been deeply committed to improving the safety of its members and all firefighters."

Sections also cover basic radio technology, digital and analog technology, conventional and trunked radio systems, portable radios, system design and implementation, interoperability and spectrum licensing.

The guide is available here.

FIRE GRANTS

Great Barrington Fire Department Snags Grant For New Oxygen Tanks

Pittsfield (MA) Berkshire Eagle, July 18, 2016

GREAT BARRINGTON — U.S. Rep. Richard Neal, D-Springfield, congratulated members of the Great Barrington Fire Department on Monday for winning what he termed a "handsome" $160,477 award from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Neal was in town to announce the grant, which will be used to purchase 28 new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) units — commonly known as air packs, according to Fire Chief Charles Burger.

"The units we have now are 11 years old, and some are in poor condition," Burger said. In fact, he said, the manufacturer who used to make the Great Barrington units has gone out of business, making it impossible to get replacements.

Neal said FEMA grants of this nature are extremely hard to get.

"These applications are scrutinized very carefully," he said. "A $160,000 grant is a handsome award to a small community like Great Barrington. I'm assuming that like any small community, you have expenses."

Burger confirmed that his department "has a number of capital projects we're looking at. This grant will help tremendously."

He said the new air bottles that are the principal part of the air packs will be 45-minute bottles, as opposed to 30-minute bottles.

In addition, he said, the new air bottles will sound an alarm when they are two-thirds depleted. Formerly, he said, the new bottles would sound an alarm when they are three-quarters depleted.

"That's a help for us," he said. "Earlier warning is always a help."

The new air packs will also be easier to maintain and have face plates that will not fog up. Visibility, he said, is especially essential in fighting fires.

The new air packs also have better communication equipment, Burger said.

The packs are used an average of 20 to 25 times a year, the chief said.

He expects to get the new equipment in about three months. Firefighters also will need a few weeks to train with it, he said.

Rep. Neal Highlights FEMA Grant For Great Barrington Firefighters

WAMC-AM Albany (NY), July 18, 2016

Congressman Richard Neal was in Great Barrington today to celebrate a federal grant upgrading the town's firefighting equipment.

The Democrat met with Great Barrington Fire Chief Charles Burger at the fire station to highlight the $160,000 FEMA award.

"This grant is going towards replacing our self-contained breathing apparatus or what most people know of as air packs," Burger said. "It's the cylinders we wear on our backs in order to breathe clean air in a hazardous environment."

Neal says part of the determination to bring about this type of funding stemmed from a 1999 warehouse fire in Worcester that killed six firefighters.

"In Worcester in particular the building was old and the firefighters ran out of oxygen," Neal said. "They were lost in the building. They were trapped."

Chief Burger expects to have 28 new air packs in the next three months, followed by a month of training before they are put in use.

"You have to be able to operate them flawlessly with your eyes closed at 3 o'clock in the morning," said Burger.

Burger says the new air packs are made by a company called Scott which has 60 percent of the market share. They contain 50 percent more oxygen than the current "30-minute packs," which provide about 12 minutes of working time. He says firefighting packs have universal air connections among the manufacturers.

"There are operating improvements with regards to communications," Burger said. "Obviously speaking through a mask is very difficult particularly when speaking through a mask over a radio. These new units transmit sound through them almost as clean as speaking without a face piece on."

Burger says the existing 32 packs are 11 years old — made a manufacturer that is out of business.

"The plastic is becoming more and more brittle and stuff is breaking," he said. "Every time we use them we take multiple packs out of service that then need to be repaired."

He adds that the new masks don't have to be completely taken apart to clean them, unlike the current set.

"Despite the fact that's just water that dried on there that creates such a strong seal, you physically cannot exhale," Burger said. "You have to then take the thing apart – you hope the building's not burning down at that point – break the seal, stick it back together and go to work."

Burger says the town's 35 active volunteer firefighters train with the equipment all the time, using it 20 to 30 times a year for fires, carbon monoxide and hazardous materials calls. He says the new equipment holds up better to modern firefighting because today's building products release heat energy at three times the rate as materials used in the 1970s. Burger says when the current masks are scratched they can absorb heat energy and potentially fail.

"It looks like it glazes over and your first instinct is 'Well, what's wrong?'" Burger explained. "So you go to touch it and you just wipe your face piece right off your face. So the way we have to train people to do it is as soon as you think that something might be wrong you have to get out."

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Councilman Eric Ulrich Blasts Mayor De Blasio Over "Inefficient" Sandy Relief, Build It Back Program: "It's A Bureaucratic Nightmare"

By Erin Durkin

New York Daily News, July 18, 2016

City Councilman Eric Ulrich blasted Mayor de Blasio for his handling of the Build It Back program, saying hundreds of families have been left hanging years after Hurricane Sandy.

The Queens Republican, who is considering running against de Blasio for mayor next year, said the program's director Amy Peterson should resign or be fired.

"It's broken. It's not working. It's inefficient. It's a bureaucratic nightmare. It's a boondoggle," Ulrich said.

Speaking outside a Rockaway Park home that is still waiting for construction, Ulrich cast doubt on de Blasio's promise that all work on homes in the program will be done by the end of 2016.

"There's just no way that's going to happen," he said.

De Blasio appointed Peterson in March 2014 and pledged to turn around the program after it launched under former Mayor Bloomberg but did not fix up a single home.

"Amy Peterson has very good intentions. I'm sure that she gives 100% to her job, but she is simply in over her head and she is not able to effectively turn around the program," Ulrich said. "She's just not able to get the job done."

The Queens lawmaker has created an exploratory committee to look at a run against de Blasio.

"This is not a griping session. It's not an opportunity to do political grandstanding. It's not a chance just for me to take potshots at the mayor — although I'm happy to do that," he said Monday.

He said the city also is counting homes as under construction when a fence has been erected but no actual work has been done, and counting them as completed when families are still not allowed to move back in.

Ellen Nichtern, 59, said the city asked her to move out of the Beach 117th St. home she shares with her elderly mother in February to make way for Build It Back construction — but still hasn't started work.

Her mother, also named Ellen Nichtern, 86, bought the home in 1968.

"She's very depressed and she just wants to get home. This is killing her," Nichtern said.

Officials have told her issues with permits are holding up the construction, as the house sits empty waiting for elevation and repairs to a damaged bedroom and her family rents an apartment nearby.

"I've done everything," she said. "I talked to everybody and I'm just getting nowhere."

Nearly 20,000 homeowners applied for help from the program, though thousands have withdrawn in part because of long delays.

Out of 8,729 active applicants, construction has started on 3,000 homes and finished on 2,000 homes, while other families have received reimbursement checks for work they paid for themselves, the mayor's office said.

"When Mayor de Blasio took office and appointed Amy Peterson to run the program, not one homeowner had received a check or seen construction. That is why this administration immediately overhauled the program and took over direct management — resulting in 80% of homeowners served to date. Further, $120 million in reimbursement checks have been issued to residents," said de Blasio spokesman Raul Contreras. "We are continuing to elevate and rebuild homes across the City and Staten Island to complete the program — as the Mayor committed — by the end of this year."

FLOODS

NW Wisconsin Flood Damage Estimate Tops $30 Million

By Andrew Krueger

Duluth (MN) News Tribune, July 18, 2016

Damage from last week's major flooding in parts of Northwestern Wisconsin is now estimated at more than $30 million, and the state is considering whether to request a federal disaster declaration.

Assessments of flood damage also are continuing in parts of east-central and Northeastern Minnesota, which also were hit by rainfall in excess of 8-10 inches a week ago. The rain sent creeks and rivers out of their banks, and caused damage to highways, local roads and some homes.

Wisconsin emergency management officials reported Monday receiving preliminary estimates of nearly $29 million in public infrastructure damage from eight counties, as well as the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

That total includes more than $11.5 million in Iron County — where the campground and marina at Saxon Harbor were devastated by floodwaters — as well as more than $5.8 million in Ashland County, more than $5.4 million in Bayfield County and more than $3.4 million on the Bad River Reservation.

Damage to homes and businesses across those jurisdictions is estimated at nearly $1.8 million so far. The Bad River band reported the most serious damage, with 10 homes destroyed by floodwaters and two others sustaining major damage.

Bayfield County reported 10 homes with major damage and 20 others with some effects from flooding; Ashland County reported two with major damage and 140 others at least affected; and Sawyer County reported 112 with minor damage or affected by the storms.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker has requested that the Federal Emergency Management Agency conduct a preliminary damage assessment, starting next week, to determine if the state should request a federal disaster declaration; state officials said that's the first step toward requesting federal disaster assistance.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is being assisted by eight teams of Wisconsin Army National Guard engineers in assessing flood-damaged roads.

"Local authorities requested the Guard and DOT to assess damaged town roads in rural and isolated areas where local resources are limited," state officials reported Monday.

Work continued Monday to fully reopen U.S. Highway 2 between Ashland and Hurley. The road is open to car and light truck traffic using a detour around a washout near Odanah, but semi traffic still is being directed to use a lengthy detour. Repair work on Highway 2 is slated to be finished Friday.

Meanwhile, U.S. Highway 63 remains closed near Grand View, and State Highway 13 is closed near Highbridge; detours are in place for what officials have said will be long-term closures because of major washouts.

In Iron County, state officials reported, "based on new sonar information from the U.S. Coast Guard, a dive team will arrive in Saxon Harbor (Tuesday) in an attempt to locate and recover two boats and two vehicles still unaccounted for."

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest crews are making progress on reopening roads and trails damaged by flooding. Crews are working to clear or repair nearly 100 separate obstructions — such as damaged bridges and culverts, and washouts. A large-area closure has been lifted, and a new closure order is in place affecting individual areas.

Closures include the Beaver Lake, Lake Three, Mineral Lake and Namekagon campgrounds and the St. Peter's Dome/Morgan Falls area. Find the full list at fs.usda.gov/CNNF; click on the "Flash Flooding Affects Forest" link.

In other news:

The Bad River band will open a multi-agency resource center Tuesday and Wednesday to help connect residents with available resources. The center at 72772 Elm St. in Odanah will be open from 2-8 p.m. Tuesday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday.

Douglas County is collecting flood damage reports from residents; call (715) 395-1636 during business hours.

Sawyer County ((715) 638-3355) and Washburn County ((715) 468-4601) also are collecting flood damage reports.

The American Red Cross has set up a dedicated phone line — (715) 563-6188 — for people whose homes have suffered damage from flooding.

Ashland County has established a disaster relief fund to cover long-term recovery efforts not covered by other funding sources. Donations can be made at Northern State Bank branches in Ashland, Mellen, Glidden or Butternut. For more information, call (715) 682-2772.

MINNESOTA

In Minnesota, where parts of Aitkin, Carlton and Pine counties saw flooding from last week's heavy rain, state officials still are working to determine if the damage qualifies for state disaster assistance.

All three counties have issued emergency declarations and completed initial damage assessments, which now are under state review.

Carlton County emergency management director Brian Belich said Monday that initial estimates are $480,000 in public infrastructure damage in the county — but that's not counting some jurisdictions where officials still have not been able to reach damaged areas because of high water.

At least eight homes in the county suffered measurable damage from flooding, with assessments still underway.

Carlton County is seeking state aid for infrastructure damage, Belich said, but so far has not qualified for state aid for homeowners. Residents with flood damage should contact Volunteer Services of Carlton County, (888) 419-1235.

The Pine County Sheriff's Office reported Monday that many county roads have reopened, but County Highway 61 near the dam in Willow River remained closed, along with Government Road between Sandstone and Hinckley.

Pine County officials asked that residents who suffered damage report it to (320) 591-1634 so the damage can be assessed.

Iron County Seeks Federal Help For Storm Recovery

KBJR-TV Duluth (MN), July 18, 2016

Hurley, WI (NNCNOW.com) – Much of Northwestern Wisconsin is still reeling from last week's storms. Iron County was one of the hardest hit areas and the community is just starting to rebuild.

Like many people who have been through northwestern Wisconsin recently, Stacy Ofstad, Iron County Emergency Management Director, said that flooding and damage in the area is worse than anything he's ever seen and it's especially bad in the place he calls home.

"That's where I live," he said. "I live in Saxon I grew up in Gurney the harbor's been a part of my life for many years."

The destruction of Saxon Harbor has been one of the most striking images to come out of the storms and the recovering has only just begun.

Ofstad listed the damages and said it will take at least two or three years before the harbor will be like it once was.

"The creek being not in its channel anymore and the damages to the harbor and the extent of the repairs and the environmental work that's going to be done there," he said.

Representatives from the state are currently assessing Saxon Harbor to get some hard numbers they can use to apply for a federal disaster declaration. If that happens FEMA would be on site for three months.

For Ofstad though, it's all about making sure Iron County works as a community to rebuild.

"As far as I'm concerned, we're all in this together," he said. "We're one big family throughout the county."

And they're a family that's recovering from more than just physical damage. In Hurley, a memorial has been set up for Montreal firefighter and former county board member Mitch Koski, who died in the flooding in Saxon Harbor.

"We lost a very important individual," Joe Pinardi Chairman of the Iron County Board said. "We can't recoup that one. The harbor I guess we can rebuild."

Governor Scott Walker ordered all flags in Wisconsin to be flown at half staff today in memory of Mitch Koski.

Bayfield Co. Authorities: Woman Dies After Driving Around Barricades

WDIO-TV Duluth (MN), July 18, 2016

The Bayfield County Sheriff's Office says a woman died after driving around a barricade on a washed-out highway.

A Wisconsin Department of Transportation official called 911 at about 9:30 a.m. Monday to report the incident on U.S. Highway 63 north of Grand View. The official reported that a car drove around two sets of "road closed" signs and into the washed-out portion of the highway, which goes down about 50 feet. The vehicle came to rest in the bottom of the washout.

The driver was airlifted to a Duluth hospital, where she died from her injuries.

The woman's name is not being released because family members are still being notified.

Besides the sheriff's office, the U.S. Border Patrol, Mason EMS, and fire departments from Grand View, Mason, Drummond, and Ashland responded to the scene.

The woman is the fourth person to die in northern Wisconsin in relation to the July 11 storm. One person was killed during the storm, and two others died after their vehicles became stuck in floodwaters.

$2.5 Million Going To Repair Road Damage

WSAU-AM Wausau (WI), July 18, 2016

UNDATED (WSAU) – The Wisconsin Department of Transportation announced that $2.5 million in emergency federal funding is being released to assist in the repair of roadways damaged during heavy rains and flooding last week in northern Wisconsin.

Emergency assessments, operations and repairs have been ongoing since the storms that brought more than eleven inches of rain to some areas overnight between July 11th and 12th, causing a state of emergency as declared by Governor Scott Walker.

Multiple roadways were overtaken by water and some sections were completely washed away. Several highways in Bayfield, Iron, Sawyer, and Washburn Counties have been already been reopened thanks to repairs and detours.

"After a week of working around the clock to help restore Northern Wisconsin's vital transportation links, this funding will enable us to accelerate efforts to make emergency repairs and reopen roadways as soon as possible," said WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb. "We recognize the important role these highways play in tourism, freight movement and daily life for thousands of people, and we are doing everything we can to help restore normalcy."

The funding announcement came upon receipt of a letter from Secretary Gottlieb to the Federal Highway Administration. WisDOT so far has identified nearly $10 million in repair needs for state and federal highways.

– Zach Hagenbucher

Emergency Response To Northern Wisconsin Flooding Continues

By Haleema Shah

Wisconsin Public Radio, July 18, 2016

FEMA announced today that it will be doing a preliminary assessment in northern Wisconsin where Governor Scott Walker declared a state of emergency after severe flooding last week. The torrential rain has caused damage in eight northern Wisconsin counties as well as tribal lands of the Bad River and Red Cliff bands of the Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe. We talk to the secretary of the Department of Administration about the ongoing emergency response in the region.

Host:

Rob Ferrett
Guest(s):
Scott Neitzel
Producer(s):
Haleema Shah

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County Awaiting Federal Assessment Of Storm Damage

Durham (NC) Herald Sun, July 18, 2016

DURHAM – County and state officials are evaluating the damage caused by severe weekend storms and flash flooding to see how residents and business owners were impacted by the storms.

Right now the numbers aren't clear, but Durham County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Director Jim Groves said more than 50 people were directly impacted by flooding and storm damage – including 30 one-person units at the Econo Plaza at 3115 Fayetteville Street and 24 more at the Eagle Point apartments at 412 Pilot Street.

Groves said on Sunday afternoon county officials conducted a tour of the properties prior to having state officials come in on Monday to validate the damage reports.

"It sounds like they've already reached out to FEMA region four," Groves added, saying federal officials will be in town Wednesday morning. Officials hope by that night the county will know whether it will be able to set up a disaster recovery center where residents and businesses can apply for low-interest loans or grant opportunities to help with the clean up.

He said several homes also had damage from trees, including some on Fayetteville Street and Duke Street. One house on Schrewsbury Street had a load-bearing wall wash away, which was "pretty significant damage because of the moving water."

Over the weekend the Durham Fire Department responded to 28 water rescue calls, most of which were for people trapped in their vehicles by high water. More than 20 streets flooded and were impassable during the storm.

On Saturday about 5 to 6 inches fell in a short time period – just over an hour – and that contributed to the flash flooding.

Flooding has caused the city of Durham's Parks and Recreation Department to close Long Meadow Park and White Oak Park until further notice.

Michael Webb, with the county's Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Department, on Monday was assisting the the assessment teams throughout the affected areas to see how much damage was done.

So far no monetary estimate of the damage is available.

Webb said damage wasn't confined to the apartment complexes, which are just a few blocks from each other, but rather spread throughout the city.

"We've had some where the ceilings are falling in," Webb said. "A lot of It was just the creeks not being able to keep up, just minor flooding that comes through crawl spaces."

However, even with all of the flooding there is a silver lining – so far no injuries have been reported from the flooding and no fatalities.

Webb, a 16-year veteran of the department, said he hasn't seen anything like this since Hurricane Fran which hit the area in September 1996.

Over the weekend a shelter was set up at Hillside High School to help those displaced by the flooding. But by Sunday afternoon only 10 people had used the shelter. The Red Cross is helping out those people as well.

Groves said Monday the shelter is still open for people if they need a place to stay at night.

While storms have calmed down, Durham isn't in the clear. Tuesday has a 50 percent chance of having thunderstorms roll through. While the National Weather Service is reporting less than a tenth of an inch of new rain could fall, it also has a caveat, adding higher amounts of rainfall could be seen if thunderstorms appear.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Opens In Tyler

By Paul Rivera

KLTV-TV Tyler (TX), July 18, 2016

TYLER, TX (KLTV) –

FEMA officials say a disaster recovery center was opened Monday to help those affected by flooding.

The center is located at Wise Elementary School at 10659 TX-64 in Tyler and will help those in Smith County affected by any flooding, wind, or water damage from the April 17-30 storms. The center is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Officials say they will be at that location accepting applications until July 29, but may close early if the need is not there.

They say two other centers have also been opened in Cherokee and Anderson Counties. The Cherokee County Location is at the A. Frank Smith Methodist

Church at 131 Cooper St. in Alto and the Anderson County location is at the Palestine Mall.

Those who were affected in these areas can apply at any of the centers that are open. Those applying will need a photo ID, proof of residential ownership, Social Security Card and proof of citizenship.

Those not able to make it to the centers can also apply online.

They can also call 202-368-7966.

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FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Opens In Tyler

KXXV-TV Waco (TX), July 18, 2016

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– Paul Rivera

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County, City Gets Ready For FEMA Reimbursement

KSWO-TV Lawton (OK), July 18, 2016

COMANCHE COUNTY, OK (KSWO) – Now that FEMA has approved counties and cities disaster assistance, Comanche County and Lawton city officials are getting their damage estimates ready. The county could be reimbursed for part of the cost it took to repair this once washed out road in the eastern part of the county on 120th Street.

FEMA could reimburse the city for almost the entire cost it took to repair this road just off Cache in west Lawton. The city had to remove the road to replace the damaged pipes below. City officials say they can receive money for the debris clearing, and removing blockage from sewage pipes.

The city has an estimate of one-point-five million dollars in damages, and the county has nearly 2 million.

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OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

Rubio Returns To Algae Front Lines After FEMA Funding Fails

WPEC-TV West Palm Beach (FL), July 18, 2016

STUART (CBS12) — U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-Florida) is trying to rebound from the Federal government's failure to come to the aid of the toxic Treasure Coast with any real relief from the algae.

Now, the toxic algae covers 30 miles of waterways and beaches.

The question now, as the layoffs continue, is what can be done to save the river and the way of life.

This time for Rubio's return to the Treasure Coast, there is no grand entry on a million dollar yacht at Central Marine, a marina still coated in a foot of manure-like algae.

There is also no talk of hope that this environmental financial disaster will end.

"If businesses do need to close for a day or week or two until this subsides, that they are going to give us reimbursement, that would be wonderful but until then we are stuck and subjected to this," manager Mary Radabough said during his first visit.

Today she tells CBS 12, no one private or public has offered them funding nor help.

So yes, the protesters will again line up to shout at the Senator for taking money from major political donors like the Sugar Industry--who often back pump dirty water into the already-polluted Lake Okeechobee.

But, we now know FEMA is not coming to the rescue.

The Army Corps of Engineers confirms discharges will continue

And scientists confirm the toxic algae isn't going away, even when it dies and sinks to the bottom of the waterway and Lake. It will then be waiting for the next perfect heat wave to rebound and bloom again, taking an entire ecosystem and economy down with it.

Democratic Congressman Patrick Murphy is now urging Governor Rick Scott to "immediately submit an appeal to the President providing the necessary information to justify an emergency declaration" without the insults. In the initial request for FEMA relief for the toxic region, Governor Scott blamed the President for creating this disaster due to a lack of federal funding for the Herbert Hoover Dike.

Rubio is expected to arrive and meet with local leaders on what options remain for the region before addressing the media shortly after at 4:45 pm.

ZIKA VIRUS

Family Member Of Utah Zika-patient Infected With Zika Virus, Puzzling Health Officials

By Adam Shrier

New York Daily News, July 18, 2016

Authorities are scratching their heads over how a family member who helped care for the elderly Utah man who died of a Zika-related death in late June was infected with the virus, state and federal officials announced Monday.

The infected family member helped care for the deceased patient — the first Zika-related death in the continental U.S. — but had not traveled to a Zika-affected region or had sexual relations with the deceased, presenting the alarming possibility that the infection spread through a new route, health officials said.

"This is a unique situation," CDC Director Tom Frieden told the Washington Post. "This is the first time where there is a suspected spread of one person to another" outside of sexual transmission.

The infected person, who recovered quickly according to officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was in close contact while providing care for the deceased patient. During that time, he "could have been exposed to that individual's sweat or tears or bodily fluids," Frieden said.

But Frieden described the transmission of the virus as "unusual." There are currently 1,306 travel-related Zika cases in the continental U.S. If this unexplained transmission was occurring regularly, "it's likely we would have seen it before," he said.

"There is uncertainty about how this new case contracted Zika," said Gary Edwards, a health official with the Salt Lake County Health Department. "But we do not believe that there is risk of Zika transmission among the general population in Utah based on what we know so far."

The Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquito species capable of carrying Zika virus are not present in Utah, Edwards said. CDC scientists are investigating the possibility that the virus mutated or that an infected mosquito may have returned to Utah from a Zika-affected region in the deceased Zika patient's clothing or luggage.

Health officials are also investigating the elevated levels of the virus present in the deceased patient's blood. The deceased, who traveled to a Zika-affected region, had concentrations of the virus 100,000 times higher than samples of other infected people, the CDC said.

The newly infected person showed symptoms of Zika but did not exhibit the same high concentrations of the virus, officials said.

Health officials are currently interviewing and collecting samples from family members and health-care workers who were in contact with the deceased patient.

The Utah person's infection is the fifth case of Zika virus reported in Utah, according to CDC data.

As of July 13, the CDC has documented 1,306 cases of Zika virus related to travel in the continental U.S, including 285 cases in New York State and 14 instances of sexual transmission.

There are 2,916 documented cases of Zika virus in U.S. territories, the vast majority of which were acquired locally. Send a Letter to the Editor Join the Conversation: facebook Tweet

Georgia, Augusta Preparing For Zika

By Tom Corwin

Augusta (GA) Chronicle, July 18, 2016

A "unique" case of Zika infection in Utah that might have spread to a family contact is being investigated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the agency reported Monday. Meanwhile, Augusta and Geor-gia are preparing for the mosquito-borne virus.

CDC officials say they are looking into the case of a man who died in late June and was found to be infected with Zika, with levels of the virus in his body that were 100,000 times what would normally be expected.

A family contact who cared for the patient was later found to have contracted Zika without the primary ways it is normally transmitted, said Satish Pillai, the CDC's deputy incident manager for Zika response.

That person had not traveled recently to an area where Zika is actively spreading and had not had sex with a returning traveler. Also, Utah does not appear to have the two mosquito species known to transmit the virus, he said.

"This is a very unique situation with these elevated viral loads (in the deceased patient) that we haven't previously seen," Pillai said. "There's a lot we don't know about Zika virus, and we are still doing a lot of investigation to understand whether Zika can be spread from person to person through contact with a sick person."

He stressed that there is no evidence Zika can be spread by casual contact with an infected person and that the primary way of spreading is through a mosquito bite or sex with an infected person.

Of the 1,306 cases of Zika in the U.S., "none of these have been the result of local spread by mosquitoes," Pillai said.

How the deceased patient got such a large amount of virus in his body is a "chicken-or-the-egg question," said Michael Bell, a medical epidemiologist for the CDC.

"Someone who is extremely ill and debilitated from another disease process could have a diminished immune system that doesn't fight the virus as well. That might allow more virus to have proliferated in the bloodstream."

Or it could be the primary infection, he said. For now, the CDC has not changed its recommendations, and health care workers should use standard precautions to prevent infection, Bell said.

The virus has not made it to Georgia, but officials in the state are getting ready, said Fred Koehle, the special projects manager for Richmond County Mosquito Control. The state Department of Public Health holds a weekly conference call on Mondays devoted solely to Zika, he said.

"We have pediatricians and mosquito control people and health people (on the call)," Koehle said. "It covers any new scientific information that comes up during the week and also covers the numbers and what's going on in the state as far as programs, what we're doing in different areas to get ready, just in case."

There are only two major mosquito control programs in the state, in Augusta and Savannah, he said. The counties in the Atlan-ta area put out larvicides but are not part of the health departments, Koehle said.

"Whatever they have is small and tied to public works or roads and bridges or something like that," he said.

Savannah has a much lar-ger program, with a budget of $3.5 million and aircraft, compared with Augusta's budget of $225,000, he said.

For now, Augusta is continuing its normal program of treating storm drains, putting out larvicides, and investigating and responding to complaints, he said.

"We're as prepared as we can be (for Zika)," Koehle said.

Manatee County Reacts To First Travel-related Confirmed Case Of Zika Virus

Bradenton (FL) Herald, July 18, 2016

With the first confirmed case of Zika in Manatee County, officials are taking extra precautions to keep residents safe.

"It is important to note the case of Zika in Manatee County is travel-related, meaning the person acquired the virus overseas," Mara Gambineri, the communications director for the Florida Department of Health, said in an email. "All cases of Zika in Florida are travel related. There has been no local transmission."

Manatee County has now been added to the "declaration of public health emergency," which prompts more action and cooperation from local officials, including mosquito control.

Mosquito control has been working closely with the Department of Health to make sure the area around the first confirmed case gets some extra attention, said Mark Latham, director of Manatee County Mosquito Control.

"We'd already been out to where the confirmed case was, but we went back out and did a little bit of extra, just to be extra sure," Latham said.

Prior to the confirmed case, there were some suspect or possible cases that mosquito control responded to, and the affected area with the confirmed case had been sprayed before it was confirmed. Mosquito control was back out early Friday afternoon, after the case was confirmed.

Typically, mosquito control covers a 300 to 500 foot area near the contaminated area. There are only two types of mosquitos in Manatee County that can carry the disease, and Latham said they aren't strong fliers. The particular mosquito loves dark, shady areas, Latham said, so mosquito control makes sure to pay close attention.

They also knock on doors and talk to residents, trying to get into backyards and make sure there's no standing water or other breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Latham said people should continue to take precautionary measures, making sure they are not leaving standing water and protecting themselves from mosquitoes by using repellants.

The CDC recommends testing for any person with two of the four most common symptoms — fever, joint pain, rash and red eyes — and a travel history to a Zika-infected area. The federal agency also recommends testing for all pregnant women with a travel history, or a partner with travel history, to any area where Zika is transmitted by mosquito bites.

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists and CDC released a new case definition for Zika that now includes reporting asymptomatic and symptomatic cases of Zika. Prior to this change, states reported only symptomatic non-pregnant cases and pregnant cases regardless of symptoms. This change comes as a result of increased availability for testing in commercial laboratories, according to the Florida Department of Health website.

According to CDC, symptoms associated with the Zika virus last between seven to 10 days. The Florida Department of Health issues a Zika virus update each at 2 p.m. each weekday.

On Saturday, after the case in Manatee was confirmed, U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Sarasota, called Washington's failure to approve Zika funding a "national disgrace."

"Communities in Manatee County and elsewhere in Florida needed federal resources weeks ago to stop this deadly virus," he said in a statement. "The health of thousands of lives are now at stake because Congress and the president could not overcome their political differences."

In June, Buchanan hosted a forum on the Zika virus at University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee with other community partners.

We All Can Use Congress' Vacation

Tyler (TX) Morning Telegraph, July 18, 2016

Once again, we must come to the defense of the do-nothing Congress. Or to be more precise, the do-nothing part, not necessarily the Congress bit.

Congress has adjourned for a lengthy vacation, to allow each member to avoid his or her party convention. And predictably, some critics are stepping forward to chide Congress on work left unfinished.

"Last week, Congress recessed for a 7-week summer vacation with little to show for it," Environment Texas wrote on Monday. "There are important issues still on the table that have not been addressed, including the Zika virus and gun reform. In addition, there's one other thing that Congress still needs to get done this year and that's dealing with the crisis surrounding our drinking water infrastructure."

That group is focusing its harshest criticisms on water quality.

"The devastating lead contamination that has been discovered in Flint, Mich. has highlighted how bad our water quality infrastructure really is, with 18 million Americans living in communities where the water systems are in violation of the law," Environment Texas wrote. "We have major problems with water contamination here in Texas. In fact, over 5 million Texans have been drinking water with reported lead violations."

Now, let's look more closely at those claims. First, the problem in Flint wasn't a lack of federal government involvement – federal government involvement was at the root of the problem.

"Local public officials have called on the federal government to intervene," the Huffington Post reported. "In her successful mayoral bid this past fall, Karen Weaver campaigned in part on that demand. In fact, the federal government was already deeply involved. It took the efforts of private citizens to expose the threat to public health, as it had in Washington, D.C., when that city suffered a major water lead crisis a decade ago."

The problem was that Flint started buying Flint River water, rather than purchasing treated water from Detroit's extensive system. When confronted with increasing reports of health problems, the EPA investigated – and then quashed its own report.

The issue was quickly remedied, once government officials stopped working so hard on the cover-up, by switching back to Detroit water. It will take some time for lead levels in Flint residents go down, but that's not something that Congress can fix.

Nor is it a budgetary issue. The state of Michigan is spending millions of dollars on Flint's water system (including $165 million to replace lead pipes). And President Obama has declared Flint a federal emergency, which frees up federal funds. The real point here is that Congress isn't here to fix Flint. It's a state matter, and the state is handling it. The EPA has a role, of course, as does FEMA. But not Congress. Congress would mostly just get in the way and politicize matters.

The truth is that when the former swampland that makes up D.C. is drained of politicians, we're really better off. Gridlock, in fact, is good.

Let's not begrudge members of Congress their vacations. They can do less harm when they're at the beach.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Open-carry AK-47 In Cleveland Plaza

By Kyle Rowland

Toledo (OH) Blade, July 19, 2016

CLEVELAND — Jesse Gonzales didn't come downtown to disturb the peace. But his appearance in Cleveland's Public Square caused a circus-like atmosphere.

The 26-year-old from nearby Lakewood, donning a camouflage Make America Great Again hat and a Nintendo Duck Hunt T-shirt, had an American-made AK-47 slung over his shoulder. Mr. Gonzales said he brought the firearm "because I can."

"In my lifetime, there's been a gradual, social push for more gun control, specifically for firearms like the one I'm carrying," he added. "All you have to do is listen to the rhetoric on TV every day. There's a lot of emotional language, and it doesn't accomplish anything. No one talks about the actual statistics about homicides with firearms. Specific instances of crime are maintained to fit an agenda."

RELATED: Convention speakers line up to support Trump | Toledoans join protests | Ohio delegates committed to Kasich | Australian enjoy: 'America is great' | Ohio Hometowns Left Behind: Marietta | Clinton speaks to NAACP | ToledoBlade.com/RNC2016

The weapon was unloaded and the safety was on, though Mr. Gonzales did have 30 rounds in his pocket. Mr. Gonzales, who supports Donald Trump because of his Second Amendment beliefs and views on the economy and immigration, does not agree with the notion that there is rising gun violence in the United States, even after several high-profile gun deaths in recent weeks.

Instead, he says it's a media creation and that gun deaths have actually declined dating to the 1990s.

More than 50,000 people are expected to descend on Cleveland this week and none of them can bring a tennis ball or metal-tipped umbrella into the 1.7-square-mile area near Quicken Loans Arena. They can, however, carry an assault rifle under Ohio's open-carry laws.

The Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association asked Ohio Gov. John Kasich to temporarily ban open-carry weapons in the wake of gun violence in Baton Rouge and Dallas, which included the shooting deaths of eight police officers.

In response, Mr. Kasich said he did not have the authority to arbitrarily suspend constitutional rights or state laws.

"An AR-15, a shotgun, multiple handguns. It's irresponsible of those folks, especially right now, to be coming downtown with open-carry ARs or anything else," Stephen Loomis, the head of the police union, said Sunday. "I couldn't care less if it's legal or not. We are constitutional law enforcement, we love the constitution, support it, and defend it, but you can't go into a crowded theater and scream fire. And that's exactly what they're doing by bringing those guns down there."

Security is the topic du jour of the moment after a spate of police shootings across the country. Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson said there is no credible threat on the city. But it is still overrun with law enforcement as violent encounters remain a possibility — the city has a $50 million protest insurance policy.

There's $48.9 million in federal money being spent on security, 4,000 federal personnel from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, FBI, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Secret Service, and other agencies, and 3,000 police officers, with many coming from out-of-state.

Mr. Gonzales said he understands the concerns for public safety. He also countered with questions of why it's OK for police to carry weapons, but it's menacing if he does so.

He owns five guns and said protection is his primary reasoning.

"You can't coerce an armed man," Mr. Gonzales said. "The biggest, strongest man can try and do you harm. But it doesn't matter how big or how strong he is if you have a firearm. It's an equalizer. If you don't have them anymore, it reduces us back to the medieval age where the strongest, fastest men get to do whatever they want."

Information from The Blade's news services was used in this report.

CTX Delegates Notice Heightened Security At RNC

KXXV-TV Waco (TX), July 18, 2016

CENTRAL TEXAS (KXXV) –

The heightened security at the Republican National Convention has not gone unnoticed by delegates from our area.

According to Toby Marie Walker, a Texas alternate delegate at large from China Spring, said it was noticeable even when her group arrived to Cleveland on Saturday night.

"Normally that's a 20-30 minute ride, it's only 13 miles. But it took us an hour and a half with all of the security and the checkpoints and everything to get to our hotel. It was a little interesting because they closed streets and later on those streets may be open but a different is closed," Walker said.

She added it was difficult navigating the streets when going in a vehicle.

In terms of security when going to the convention, she said buses are checked before they go to the convention center. At the location, they go through Secret Service security and security similar to the one at airports.

Walker has noticed a heavy police presence throughout the convention.

"There is Capitol Hill Police all the way down to local. They're everywhere and so it's a little different than being in Waco. There is a police officer every five feet. You see them everywhere," Walker said.

District 17 Alternate Delegate from Lorena Christine Turpin said on their way to an RNC welcome party on Sunday night, they ended up on the route for a parade, where people had a permit to protest.

"It wasn't a very large group of protestors but there was a huge police presence. It looked like there were 10 law enforcement police officers per protester that was there," Turpin said. "It went smoothly, there were no problems. No issues. They were doing their first amendment rights and they were marching down the street as they are welcome to do," Turpin said.

On Monday, Turpin reported seeing people protesting against GOP presumptive nominee Donald Trump.

According to CNN, 3,000 police officers were tasked with guarding the RNC. In addition, 4,000 federal personnel, including 3,000 agents from Secret Service, Transportation Security Administration were expected to be present. Agents from Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Federal Bureau of Investigation, FEMA and elsewhere planned to be there.

Republican National Convention kicked off on Monday in Cleveland, Ohio with approximately 2,470 delegates and 2,302 alternate delegates from all 50 states.

The Texas Republican Party of Texas listed 108 delegates, alternates and 47 delegates and alternates at large from Texas.

Three of the delegates and alternates from District 17 are from McLennan County, two are from Travis County, one is from Brazos County and one is from Freestone County.

This is the first time both Walker and Turpin have been at a national convention.

Walker who supported Sen. Ted Cruz in the primary said her vote had been assigned to Trump, as a delegate at large.

Turpin who is proud to represent Central Texas even as an alternate was paired with a delegate throughout the convention. She anticipates being on the floor throughout the convention but doesn't anticipate voting.

Turpin said the party is not yet unified for the presumptive nominee.

"Is there complete unity? Absolutely not. Was that expected? Absolutely not. [The delegates] are trying to have voices hear. I don't know what the percentage is. We'll find that out on Thursday when the actual vote is for the nominee," Turpin said.

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Teachers Receive New Active-shooter Protocol

By Caitlin Conrad

KSBW-TV Monterey (CA), July 18, 2016

Administrators and staff with Monterey Peninsula Unified School District are going through an intensive active-shooter training this week.

Teachers spent Monday morning in the classroom and ran simulations in the afternoon. Several active-shooter scenarios were simulated using a pellet gun as the weapon and an air horn to simulate gunshots.

The training program is called ALICE, which stands for Alert Lockdown Inform Counter Escape.

"ALICE is providing a different variety of issues, and at the same time, empowering the teachers and the students inside the classroom to take action," school resource officer Patricia Perez said.

Perez has taken the ALICE training and said it goes beyond the shelter-in-place training of the past.

"It is very important. Not just giving you the option of lockdown, it's giving you several options of counter, as well as evacuation," she said.

ALICE trainers got teachers mentally prepared for an active-shooter situation so they know what to do and when to do it. Instructors told them if they have the option to escape and get their students out, it's often the best option. But in the event they come face to face with the shooter, they need to counter.

Counter does not mean fight, it means distract and, if possible, disarm.

Teachers had to think about how to distract a shooter and practiced yelling and throwing things at the person.

Staff members also practiced taking shooters on in groups and disarming them.

"We are training them on ALICE protocol to make sure that students and staff are safe in the event we have an unforeseen violent intruder on campus," Assistant Superintendent Tony Shah said.

Shah said this is the first time district staff members have gone through ALICE.

"So we have had violent intruder drills. We haven't been as consistent as we should be. This is the first that I know of that the district is receiving uniform training," Shah said.

The educator said that while a shooting is unlikely, in this day and age he wants teachers to have the best training possible.

ALICE is validated by research. It is supported by 2,300 law enforcement agencies and complies with the new standard of care developed by the U.S. Department of Education, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

FEMA, FCC Look To Second EAS Test For Clues To Progress.

Inside Radio, July 19, 2016

A second-ever national test of the Emergency Alert System will be held Sept. 28. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Federal Communications Commission have made the previously announced tentative test date official. They've also scheduled Oct. 5 as the date for a secondary test if one is required.

All stations will be required to take part in the test; it comes five years after the first national test and will provide FEMA and the FCC with real-world data on whether changes it has implemented will fix some of the glitches discovered during the first national activation.

The agencies say they're especially interested in determining if the next-generation common alerting protocol-based or "CAP-based" alerts are properly disseminated to stations, as they were designed to be. Since it is one potential solution to the problem of how to send alerts in multiple languages, the national EAS test will be transmitted in both English and Spanish and will include both audio and the text of the test message. "These improvements will help ensure that all members of the public, including non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities, will receive emergency information," the FCC says in a statement.

The other area of special interest for EAS managers is how the test alert is distributed to cellphones and other wireless devices.

As it prepares for the national test, the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau has been deploying an improved feedback portal known as the EAS Test Reporting System, or ETRS, during the past several months. That system is now ready to begin receiving reports from stations. As a result, each station must create an account and submit identifying information to the FCC by Aug. 26. Stations will then have until Sept. 26 to correct any errors in the ETRS system.

Then on Sept. 28 when the next national EAS test is conducted, broadcasters will have 24 hours to log into ETRS to file an initial report about whether they were able to receive and send the alert. Stations will then have 45 days to file a more detailed set of post-test data notes regarding the national test.

You can see the ETRS webpage HERE.

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(SECOND EDITION – 8:30 AM EDT)

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NATIONAL NEWS

Louisiana Gov. Requests $2 Billion In Federal Funding For Flood Recovery

By Gretel Kauffman

Christian Science Monitor, September 12, 2016

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards appealed to Congress on Friday to approve $2 billion in federal funding for flood recovery efforts, telling lawmakers that the state "cannot recover without it."

Speaking at a House subcommittee hearing on the federal response to the August flooding that displaced thousands and caused $8.7 billion in damage, Governor Edwards said the money was needed for housing, economic development, and public works. He also urged the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to speed up the delivery of manufactured housing units, part of efforts to shelter people who were living in the more than 55,000 homes now destroyed.

"While the response with manufactured housing units has been quicker than any other Louisiana disaster, it has not been fast enough for the families in Louisiana who have lost their homes and have no place to go," Edwards said.

But while the governor praised the federal response to the flooding thus far, a number of local mayors who spoke said that it was not enough, and lamented a lack of communication between local and federal officials.

One mayor, Jr. Shelton of Central, La., said that he did not directly speak with FEMA for three weeks after the flooding.

"That debris that's out there? That's not debris, it's people's lives," Mr. Shelton said. "We have suicides, we have mental breakdowns, we have families being torn apart."

Some have argued that the slow federal response could be due, in part, to a lack of national media coverage of the disaster.

"It's not just water that's rising," Mike Scott, of the New Orleans Times-Picayune, wrote on August 16. "So is the frustration level of many observers who can't help but notice a key absence amid the tragedy: the national media." And such complaints "aren't trivial," he said.

"As Louisiana well knows, the loosening of the recovery purse strings is directly commensurate to the number of people who are made aware of the scope of the devastation," Mr. Scott wrote. "In this case, where national news coverage has been scarce, locals have every reason to worry that recovery funds will be just as scarce."

While displaced residents wait for FEMA housing units to arrive, a number of local Airbnb hosts have offered to let flood victims stay in their homes for free, as Winston Ross reported for The Christian Science Monitor last month.

"The generosity, compassion and caring, to take from their own income and welcome strangers into their property. There are just no words for that," Kim Stewart, a Baton Rouge resident staying in an Airbnb property while her home is repaired, told the Monitor. "There are no words. I truly believe it's a Southern thing."

This report contains material from the Associated Press.

WH Challenges Republicans On Aid For Louisiana, Flint

By Devin Henry

The Hill, September 12, 2016

The White House on Monday challenged congressional Republicans to provide new funding for the Flint, Mich., water crisis, as well as recovery efforts following severe flooding in Louisiana.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest defended the Obama administration's response to Flint and Louisiana when asked whether funding for the crises will come up during budget meetings with Republicans.

He noted, for example, that 63,000 Louisiana families have received federal assistance and that there's been $260 million in insurance payments there since last month's flooding in and around Baton Rouge.

Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) last week asked federal officials for more than $2 billion to help further recovery efforts. Earnest said Congress would have to address that request.

"Theres a lot of moralizing about how the president should do his job," he said during a press briefing Monday.

"Well he's done it. The question now is, are Republicans in Congress going to do their job? ... Are they going to do their job for the people of Louisiana? I think we're going to find out."

Earnest said the White House "would support congressional action to offer additional assistance" to Flint, which is suffering from elevated levels of lead in its drinking water.

Lawmakers have long tried to cut a deal on aid for Flint. Senators agreed over the summer to include $220 million in funding for Flint and cities with other drinking water problems in a water infrastructure bill, legislation that is set to receive a vote this week.

"It's clear that the problems in Flint are deeply entrenched and the administration would certainly be supportive of an effort in Congress to offer additional assistance," he said. "We'll just add it to the long list of things that Republicans in congress have failed to make progress in."

President Obama and congressional leaders will meet on Monday afternoon to discuss funding the government after the fiscal year ends on Sept 30.

Overnight Energy: Senate Advances Water Bill With Flint Aid

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 12, 2016

WATER BILL, FLINT AID MOVE FORWARD: The Senate inched closer on Monday to wrapping up work on $9.4 billion waterways bill that that provides emergency funding for lead-contaminated communities like Flint, Mich.

The Senate voted 90-1 to end debate on a substitute amendment to the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which authorizes dozens of waterways projects around the country.

Bill sponsors are putting together a package of bipartisan amendments for the bill, but they're likely to steer clear of any controversial provisions in an effort to swiftly advance the legislation this week.

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, said they considered around 35 provisions for the package and "hope to get consensus to adopt [the package] shortly after the cloture vote tonight."

The measure provides $220 million in emergency assistance to address drinking water crises in communities such as Flint, where water from the Flint River corroded the city's pipes, contaminating the water supply with lead.

"We are pleased that after months of working with Republicans and Democrats, our bipartisan agreement to help Flint and other communities is now before the Senate as part of the Water Resources Development Act," Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.) said in a statement.

"In the coming days, we will continue our effort in the Senate to finally pass this urgently-needed help for Flint families."

Read more here.

WHITE HOUSE PRESSURES CONGRESS ON AID: Hours before the Senate's waterways vote, the White House challenged congressional Republicans to do more for Flint and victims of last month's flooding in Louisiana.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest defended the Obama administration's response to Flint and Louisiana when asked whether funding for the crises will come up during budget meetings with Republicans.

In fact, he said, it was time for Republicans to do something the victims – whether it's the WRDA aid package for Flint or the $2 billion Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) wants to help recover from the flooding near Baton Rouge.

"There's a lot of moralizing about how the president should do his job," he said during a press briefing Monday.

"Well he's done it. The question now is, are Republicans in Congress going to do their job? ... Are they going to do their job for the people of Louisiana? I think we're going to find out."

He also knocked Congress for moving slowly on Flint.

"We'll just add it to the long list of things that Republicans in Congress have failed to make progress in," Earnest said.

Read more here.

WH: PIPELINE DECISION CAME FROM OTHERS: The White House on Monday downplayed its influence on an administration decision Friday to block construction on a pipeline project in North Dakota.

The Department of Interior and the Army Corps of Engineers decided Friday to halt construction on a crucial stretch of the Dakota Access Pipeline while it decides whether the project needs a new, tougher environmental review. The decision came moments after a federal court ruled Army Corps officials conducted a proper assessment of the pipeline project's impact on Native American cultural lands in North Dakota.

"I think they're trying to do the right thing here in terms of making sure that everybody's interests are

taken into consideration," Earnest said at his briefing. But he declined to say what role, if any, President Obama had on the decision from Interior and the Army Corps.

"This was a decision that they made." Earnest said.

"I can't speak to the discussions they may have had with the White House. This was ultimately their decision, and they made this decision to ensure that the interests and concerns of everybody who is affected by the construction of this project were properly taken into account."

FIGUERES DROPS OUT OF UN RACE: Christiana Figueres, who led the United Nations' efforts toward last year's Paris climate agreement, is ending her campaign to lead the UN.

Figueres sent a letter Monday to the UN's general assembly and Security Council notifying them, and tweeted it out.

"Out of loyalty to the United Nations and in order to facilitate the advance [sic] of the selection process I hereby inform you that today I withdraw my candidacy to the position of secretary-general," the Costa Rican diplomat wrote.

A poll of UN diplomats last week had Figueres in ninth place out of 10 candidates, according to the Associated Press.

Join The Hill on Wednesday, September 14 for "Preparing for the Next Disaster: A Policy Discussion on Community Resilience," featuring Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.), and Timothy W. Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness at FEMA. Topics of discussion include preparedness efforts to increase community resilience and the role of federal, state & local government in pre-disaster mitigation. RSVP here.

ON TAP TUESDAY I: Sen. Bernie Sanders and others hold a rally outside the White House, protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline. Sanders had asked the Obama administration to block the pipeline, and introduced an amendment in the Senate last week to slow down its construction. The protest is one of dozens around the country.

ON TAP TUESDAY II: A House Oversight Committee panel will host a hearing on conservation efforts.

Rest of Tuesday's agenda ...

The Senate Agriculture Committee will meet to discuss a forestry bill.

AROUND THE WEB:

A mining firm is suing the federal government over its decision to review its lease renewal request for precious metal mining in Minnesota, the Duluth News Tribune reports.

The Alaska Railroad will soon become the first railroad in North America to haul liquefied natural gas, the Alaska Dispatch News reports.

Enbridge, which last week delayed its planned Sandpiper pipeline, is still moving forward with a replacement for it's 1,097-mile Line 3 pipeline running from Alberta to Wisconsin, Forum News Service reports.

BONUS AROUND THE WEB: Web comic XKCD looks at historic deviations in Earth's temperature from the 20th century average. It's fun, until the end.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Check out stories from Monday and this weekend...

-Water bill with Flint aid moves ahead in Senate

-Feds to halt red wolf recovery program

-WH challenges Republicans on aid for Louisiana, Flint

-India challenges US renewable energy programs at WTO

-Brazil ratifies Paris climate deal

-Feds move to protect orchids

-Greens move to dismiss EPA lawsuit over airplane emissions

-Obama eyes big finish on climate

-Week ahead: Senate poised to pass $220M in Flint aid

Melanie Zanona contributed. Please send tips and comments to Timothy Cama, tcama@thehill.com; and Devin Henry, dhenry@thehill.com. Follow us on Twitter: @Timothy_Cama, @dhenry, @thehill

Overnight Finance: Obama, Leaders Huddle On Budget | McConnell Tees Up Short-term Spending Bill | Trump Says Yellen Trying To Help Obama

By Sylvan Lane

The Hill, September 12, 2016

Budget powwow at the White House: President Obama on Monday urged congressional leaders to avert a government shutdown ahead of the Oct. 1 deadline, with election politics looming large over the discussion.

Obama encouraged leaders to move forward on an emerging compromise to keep the government open through mid-December and provide more money to fight the Zika virus.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) attended the White House meeting in what has become a familiar ritual before a funding deadline.

But the dynamic of the meeting was different than in the past, when leaders often engaged in combative negotiations. The Hill's Jordan Fabian has the details: http://bit.ly/2cjOz19

McConnell tees up short-term spending bill: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is turning the Senate toward a short-term spending bill as lawmakers face an Oct. 1 deadline to avoid a government shutdown.

"I expect to move forward this week on a continuing resolution through Dec. 9 ... that includes funds for Zika control and for our veterans," the Senate Republican leader announced Monday on the Senate floor.

McConnell filed cloture on proceeding to a House legislative appropriations bill, which is expected to be the vehicle for the short-term continuing resolution (CR). The move sets up the Senate to take an initial procedural vote this week, once it wraps up work on a water infrastructure bill.

Wrapping up the CR ahead of the Oct. 1 deadline could allow McConnell to get his conference out of Washington and back on the campaign trail. The Hill's Jordain Carney has the latest: http://bit.ly/2cm7j1j.

Cruz throws cyber curveball: Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) is meeting with conservative lawmakers in both chambers to build support for a showdown with the White House over funding the government and power over the internet.

Cruz wants a stopgap measure to fund the government to include a rider that would block the administration from relinquishing the special oversight role the United States has had over the internet since its inception.

The prospect of Cruz leading rank-and-file House Republicans – including members of the House Freedom Caucus – into a last-minute fight with President Obama over a government funding resolution would be a rerun for the Texas senator, who was blamed by his colleagues for causing a 2013 government shutdown over an ObamaCare fight.

It's also a headache for Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who both want to avoid even the slightest chance of another government shutdown. The Hill's Alex Bolton tells us more: http://bit.ly/2cSjDGi.

Bill would extend foreign investor visa program: Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) said Monday that a short-term spending bill will include an extension of a visa program set to expire at the end of the month, even as negotiations remain deadlocked.

Asked if the EB-5 investor visa program would be a part of the government funding bill, the Senate's No. 2 Republican told reporters "I think that will be part of the [continuing resolution], yeah."

Cornyn's comments come as talks about how to reauthorize the program have stalled in Congress, with senators split on how to determine where money under the program is sent. Jordain Carney surveys the battlefield: http://bit.ly/2cEjXsQ.

Trump: Yellen's doing Obama's bidding: Donald Trump accused Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen on Monday of doing President Obama's bidding by keeping interest rates low.

In an interview with CNBC, the Republican presidential nominee charged that the Fed was no longer politically independent and instead was pursuing policies to boost Obama in his final months in office.

"She's obviously political, and she's doing what Obama wants her to do," he said in a phone interview. "As soon as [rates] go up, your stock market is going to go way down, most likely. Or possibly."

While Yellen was Obama's pick to lead the Fed, the central bank prizes itself as a politically independent institution and strongly rebuts any claims that outside politicians weigh on its efforts to steer the U.S. economy. Here's more on the madness from The Hill's Peter Schroeder: http://bit.ly/2czbmJP.

Fed official urges caution in raising rates: Lael Brainard, a member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, made the case Monday for the Fed holding off on rate increases, arguing that inflation remains lower than normal and there remain economic risks looming abroad. That combination of factors "counsels prudence in the removal of policy accommodation," she said.

Brainard's speech had been closely monitored by financial markets for any indications that the central bank could be preparing to raise interest rates again at its September meeting. The Fed has only raised rates once since the financial crisis, back in December, but Fed watchers are expecting another hike could be coming soon.

But Brainard's speech appeared to suggest such a hike could still be a ways off, as she contended that there was still more the Fed could do to boost the labor market while keeping rates low to protect the U.S.

economy from potential disruptions from foreign economies: http://bit.ly/2cqzQRx.

Happy Monday and welcome to Overnight Finance, where we're also feeling a bit better after this weekend, thank you for asking. I'm Sylvan Lane, and here's your nightly guide to everything affecting your bills, bank account and bottom line.

Tonight's highlights include more anger over the Iran settlement, congressional heat on Wells Fargo, more Fed rate hike delays and a vision for a new financial regulatory system.

See something I missed? Let me know at slane@thehill.com or tweet me @SylvanLane. And if you like your newsletter, you can subscribe to it here: http://bit.ly/1NxxW2N.

On tap tomorrow:

House Financial Services Committee: Markup of the Financial CHOICE Act of 2016, 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cA1i0l.

House Small Business Committee: Hearing entitled "The Cumulative Burden of President Obama's Executive Orders on Small Contractors," 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2c5X1pT.

House Ways and Means Committee: Hearing on tax-exempt college and university endowments, 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cLDuv1.

Senate Banking Committee: Hearing on National Flood Insurance Program mapping, 10:30 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cr3pq4.

House Judiciary Committee: Hearing on Oversight of the Patent and Trademark Office, 1 p.m. http://bit.ly/2czNymh.

Amplifying U.S.-Africa Trade, Investment, and Economic Relations: From Obama to the Next Administration, 2 p.m. http://bit.ly/2cSpvzs.

Chamber calls for overhaul of financial regulatory system: While Congress mulls how to replace Dodd-Frank financial regulation, the United States' largest business advocate is looking to reshape the system around it.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce on Monday called for a complete reboot of how the United States regulates financial institutions and banks, insisting that the current framework is outdated and cumbersome for businesses of all sizes.

Top Chamber officials panned the country's "1930s regulatory system," arguing it stifles economic growth and capital access with redundant, overbearing regulations.

The Chamber's Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness (CCMC) outlined potential fixes in a report released Monday that it said was meant to start an "honest debate" about the country's regulatory future.

The release comes a day before the House Financial Services Committee marks up the panel's sweeping overhaul of Dodd-Frank. I'll take you inside the Chamber's proposal here: http://bit.ly/2cHWw0v.

Senate Dems call for investigation into Wells Fargo's fake accounts: Five Senate Democrats are calling for hearings to investigate the actions of Wells Fargo employees who created millions of fake bank and credit card accounts to boost their sales.

Led by Sen. Robert Menendez (N.J.), the Democrats sent a letter on Monday to Senate Banking Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) urging him to hold immediate hearings to delve into what happened at one of the nation's largest banks and to determine whether more consumer protections are needed.

"The magnitude of this situation warrants thorough and comprehensive review," the senators wrote in the letter. The Hill's Vicki Needham explains: http://bit.ly/2cRJS3F.

Coalition urges SEC to require disclosure of more tax info: The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) should update its rules to require U.S. multinational corporations to disclose more tax information, a financial-transparency coalition argued in a report released Monday.

"As multinational corporations have increasingly relied upon complex, international tax strategies to affect their bottom lines, the SEC's disclosure framework has not kept pace," the Financial Accountability & Corporate Transparency Coalition wrote in the report. "It's time for the SEC's disclosure rules to catch up."

The report was issued shortly after the European Commission ruled last month that Apple owes Ireland $14.5 billion in back taxes because Irish authorities gave the company an unfair advantage over other businesses. The Hill's Naomi Jagoda breaks it down: http://bit.ly/2c6mL44.

Top Dem urges Labor Dept. to investigate Chipotle for wage theft: Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) is calling on the Labor Department to investigate allegations that Chipotle Mexican Grill is failing to pay employees overtime.

According to media reports, nearly 10,000 workers from the fast casual Mexican restaurant chain have joined a class action lawsuit against the company for allegedly forcing employees to work "off the clock" hours without compensation.

The workers claim in the suit that Chipotle uses timekeeping technology that automatically punches workers off the clock, even if they are required to continue to work

In a letter Monday to the David Weil, the director of the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division, DeLauro demanded an investigation into the corporation's labor practices and policies. The Hill's Lydia Wheeler has it all here: http://bit.ly/2cmb7Q5.

GOP lawmaker wants answers on Iran payment: A Republican congressman is asking the Treasury Department whether a recent cash payment to Iran could be used to fund terrorism, and how the department plans to keep that from happening.

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) said he's "gravely concerned with the nefarious possibilities" of what Iran could do with $1.7 billion in cash from the United States. He sent a letter sent Tuesday to the Treasury under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, outlining his fears.

At issue is a payment made to Iran by the U.S. earlier this year to settle part of a 1970s lawsuit between the countries. The payment, converted into European cash and airlifted to Iran, preceded a prisoner swap between Iran and the United States.

Republicans have since accused the Obama administration of paying ransom for American prisoners and funding Iran's terror sponsorship with untraceable money.

"By providing this regime with billions [sic] of dollars in untraceable foreign currency, the Administration is aiding the regime and criminals across the world in their perpetuation of financial crimes," wrote Wilson: http://bit.ly/2cjFsxn.

India challenges US renewable energy programs at WTO: India has filed a new dispute against the United States at the World Trade Organization (WTO) challenging domestic content requirements and subsidies in renewable energy programs across eight states.

The complaint, highlighted by the WTO on Monday, argues that renewable energy programs in Washington, California, Montana, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Michigan, Delaware and Minnesota are getting favorable treatment compared with imported products to the United States.

India's case charges that the energy program measures are inconsistent with WTO's rules "because they provide less favorable treatment to imported products than to like domestic products, and because the subsidies are contingent on the use of domestic over imported goods," the trade group said.

The new case comes a few days ahead of an expected WTO Appellate Body decision on a U.S. challenge to India's domestic content requirements for solar cells and solar modules under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission. Here's more from Vicki Needham: http://bit.ly/2cqBqDf.

Flood risk: SmarterSafer, A coalition of dozens of environmental, business and fiscal groups are urging Congress to act on flood insurance. The Hill has an exclusive excerpt of a letter to be sent to lawmakers tomorrow:

"Congress should invest in proven mitigation strategies--both at a community and property level--for those areas most at risk to future disasters. Mitigation should include multiple options including strengthening natural features that help buffer storms, buyouts and preservation of green space, and elevation and other property-level interventions. In addition to shifting to additional pre-disaster spending, Congress should make changes to disaster assistance including strengthening requirements for communities and states--those states and communities that plan for and mitigate risks would be 'rewarded' with the full share of federal disaster assistance, while those that do not plan for known risks, would get less in federal assistance. In addition, federal disaster assistance funds should only be spent on resilient projects--on building smarter and safer-- and not spent on construction that is not resilient and not safe. This will protect people, communities, and scarce federal resources.

Congress must also strengthen the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and reduce regulatory burdens to private sector competition. Too few people purchase flood insurance, even those at risk. While there are numerous reasons for this, many people do not trust NFIP, and many people mistakenly believe the federal government will step in and disaster assistance will make them whole. Given the average award of disaster assistance ($8,016 for Superstorm Sandy), without flood insurance, many families are unable to rebuild."

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Weathering The Storm

By Scott Burns

U.S. News & World Report, September 12, 2016

Anna Johnson didn't have to go to church on Sunday, Aug. 14 to hear prophetic stories about the dead being raised from their graves. That morning, the Denham Springs, Louisiana native awoke to an eerie sight: a procession of coffins uprooted from a nearby cemetery by the rushing floodwaters steadily floating down her street. Her community was buried beneath six feet of floodwater. "We've never seen anything like it," she said.

What's most extraordinary about this story isn't the haunting imagery of the floating dead casually drifting through the streets or the enormous magnitude of the damage that resulted from what the Red Cross called "the worst natural disaster since Hurricane Sandy." It's what people like Johnson and her husband did next. Undeterred by the floating coffins and raging current, Johnson's husband immediately set out on his boat to help the local sheriff's department rescue those in jeopardy.

He was just one of thousands of Good Samaritans who risked their lives to save their neighbors. Louisianans affectionately refer to this armada of hunters, fisherman and ordinary citizens from all across the south who deployed their own motorized boats to rescue thousands of people and pets stranded by the flood as the "Cajun Navy."

Not everyone has been so supportive. Some state senators have tried to propose legislation that would require members of the Cajun Navy to receive formal training and certification from the government.

This precautionary impulse is not uncommon. Even in dire circumstances, many lawmakers are very hesitant to cede any authority over to private citizens. Their first instinct is to rely on the top-down efforts of formal authorities.

This proposal was immediately met a flood of backlash from members of the Cajun Navy. As Dustin Clouatre, a Cajun Navy member from St. Amant, Louisiana, said: "How can you regulate helping people?"

The heroic actions of these community members doesn't just capture the spirit and tenacity of the people of Louisiana, it also provides a vivid illustration of how the bottom-up efforts are at the heart of a community's revival after a disaster. The ordinary men and women who formed the Cajun Navy didn't wait for the National Guard or ask for permission from any top-down authority. Instead, they took the response into their own hands. Clouatre said it best: "These people are not going to wait for assistance. They're doers."

Many Louisianans learned this lesson the hard way over a decade ago during Hurricane Katrina when authorities tried to prevent private citizens from conducting rescue missions for safety reasons. More than 1,800 people lost their lives.

The death toll could've been much higher had it not been for the thousands of original Cajun Navy members who defied government edicts and launched their boats to rescue neighbors. Their courage provided a stark example of the how the power of civil society shined through despite rampant government failures.

As Mercatus Center scholars documented in their book "Community Revival in the Wake of Disaster," in many cases it was these private citizens and businesses that helped spur the post-Katrina recovery. Many local entrepreneurs, charitable and religious organizations also banded together to donate goods and keep their doors open through the recovery. Even large corporations like Wal-Mart and UPS were among the first on the scene delivering much-needed supplies.

Louisianans didn't wait for the government's permission this time around either. They jumped into action. As one member told ABC News, "We are a people that stick together. [We] take care of our own." As a result, thousands of lives were saved, and an entire community was able to unite around their courage and resilience.

This inspiring story provides an important lesson for policymakers. The first responsibility of federal and state authorities after a disaster should be to "do no harm" – removing barriers to recovery and allowing for, and even encouraging, private relief efforts in response to disaster. These bottom-up relief efforts are superior precisely because they empower local citizens to use their intimate knowledge of their area and its unique needs rather than top-down authorities whose actions are all-too-often bogged down by politics and red tape.

Some lawmakers might not fully appreciate the efforts of the thousands of volunteers who risked their lives to rescue their neighbors. But the people of Louisiana most certainly do. These local efforts, not the

action of governmental authorities, provide the bedrock of society that make communities like Louisiana so resilient in the wake of disaster.

Scott Burns is a Mercatus Center PhD fellow in economics at George Mason University, a graduate of the E.J. Ourso College of Business at LSU and a Baton Rouge native.

Woman In Viral Flood Rescue Video Meets Her Rescuer

By Michael Kunzelman

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

(DENHAM SPRINGS, La.) — Millions of people have seen and shared the video of a good Samaritan jumping off a boat to rescue Hailey Brouillette and her dog from a car sinking into south Louisiana floodwaters

last month. Brouillette isn't one of them, but she finally got to meet the man who saved her life.

Although she heard David Phung's voice during the rescue, Brouillette never saw her rescuer's face before their reunion Monday at a Denham Springs home where she is temporarily staying.

"I know I don't know you, but I love you," Brouillette, 53, said as she hugged and thanked the man she called her "angel" and "savior."

"It was nothing," Phung, 27, replied before Brouillete introduced him to Sassy, the poodle mix he also saved.

A Red Cross volunteer who befriended Brouillette at a shelter arranged Monday's meeting. Brouillette lost her trailer home and all of her belongings in the flooding

. Phung brought her a load of supplies, including dog food.

"It's just who we are in Louisiana. We help people in times of need," he said. "I was put in that place to help her out."

The Aug. 13 rescue video shot by WAFB-TV has millions of YouTube views. It shows floodwaters

swallowing Brouillette's red convertible as David Phung and two of his relatives arrive in a boat and urge her to get out of the car.

"I'm trying! I can't!" she replied. "Oh my God! I'm drowning!"

Phung tried to smash a car window from the boat, then jumped into the water and used his hands to rip open a hole on the top of the car. Phung grabbed Brouillette by her arms as the car disappeared in the murky waters. She remained submerged for several seconds before Phung finally pulled her out of the water.

"Get my dog!" she immediately shouted.

The poodle appeared to be underwater for at least 20 seconds before Phung took a deep breath, dipped below the surface and emerged with the dog cradled in his arms.

"I got your dog!" he yelled. "Swim to the boat."

Phung said he lost count of how many people that he helped save from the floodwaters, but none was more dramatic than Brouillette's.

"I didn't actually see the tape until two days later because I was working from sun up late into the night, just helping people," he said. "I was actually amazed at how calm and collected I was. I guess it was just the adrenaline took over."

Before getting caught in the floodwaters, Brouillette said she had been released from a hospital that morning after being treated for a kidney ailment. She was on her way to a pharmacy to get prescriptions filled when the car she borrowed from a friend was overcome by the water.

"It still seems like a dream," she said.

She believes "divine intervention" also played a part in her survival.

"He saved my life," she said. "I don't even know if I'm worth saving. I guess God said, 'Yeah.'"

Carolyn Perry, a Red Cross volunteer, said she watched the rescue video several times from her home in Kern County, California, before she was deployed to Louisiana.

"I was drawn to it," she said. "I just had this strange feeling I'm going to meet this woman."

Within three days of seeing the video, Perry recognized Brouillette at a Baton Rouge shelter that provided refuge to hundreds of flood victims. Perry said she hugged Brouillette and explained how the rescue had struck a chord with her.

"She was very, very humble, and we just struck up a friendship," Perry said. "For the next three days, we had a lot of heart-to-heart talks about life."

Before Perry returned home to California, Brouillette asked her new friend for help in connecting with the man who had saved her. Perry contacted an Associated Press reporter, who provided her with a telephone number for Phung. Perry called Phung and arranged for him to meet Brouilette and her dog.

At the end of their meeting, Brouillette gave Phung her phone number and embraced him one more time.

"And if I can ever do anything for you, let me know," she said.

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Senate Boosts Bill For Water Projects, $220M For Flint

By Matthew Daly

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Senate voted to move forward Monday on a $10 billion water projects bill that includes $220 million in emergency funding for Flint, Michigan, and other communities beset by lead-contaminated water.

Senators advanced the bill 90-1 on a procedural vote, with approval expected later this week.

The bipartisan measure would authorize 29 projects in 18 states for dredging, flood control and other projects overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The measure includes $100 million in grants and loans to replace lead-contaminated pipes in Flint and other cities with lead emergencies, as well as $70 million toward loans to improve water infrastructure across the country. It also includes $50 million to bolster lead-prevention programs and test water for lead in schools.

Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., said lawmakers finally "have a pathway to success" on Flint after months of effort. Senators have twice reached a bipartisan deal to help Flint but were blocked after Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah objected.

Flint's drinking water became tainted when the city switched from the Detroit water system and began drawing from the Flint River in April 2014 to save money. The impoverished city was under state control at the time.

Regulators failed to ensure the water was treated properly and lead from aging pipes leached into the water supply. Elevated lead levels have been found in at least 325 people, including 221 children. Lead contamination has been linked to learning disabilities and other problems.

Peters urged his colleagues to support the bill "to show the American people that we can continue to work together to address urgent needs across the country" and "deliver much-needed support to Flint families."

A spokesman said Lee remains opposed to the bill, which he said increases spending without offsetting budget cuts.

Several proposed amendments to the bill are still being negotiated, including one to resolve a dispute over dredging in Long Island Sound that pits Democrats in Connecticut and Rhode Island against Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y.

The issue involves dredging near a submarine base outside New London, Connecticut, to make room for the U.S. Navy's newest Virginia-class submarines. Gillibrand and other New York officials fear the project could violate the state's stringent water quality standards.

Gillibrand secured language in the water-projects bill aimed at blocking any disposal that violates water quality standards. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and other lawmakers are trying to block the provision or amend it to apply only to standards in the state where the disposal occurs.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., welcomed the Flint measure, but said it comes months too late.

"For the people of Flint, this has taken way too long," Stabenow said in an interview. City residents are still using bottled water nearly a year after officials declared a public health emergency.

Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, called the water-projects bill crucial, not just for Flint but for the rest of the nation.

The bill includes about $1.9 billion for projects to restore Florida's Everglades and combat algae blooms that have fouled the state's beaches and rivers. Inhofe said in a newspaper column last week that fellow Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida had convinced him to back the project after years of opposition.

Rubio's Democratic opponent, Rep. Patrick Murphy, has accused Rubio and Republican Gov. Rick Scott of not doing enough to find a long-term solution for algae blooms caused by polluted water flowing from Lake Okeechobee.

If approved by the Senate, the bill would go to the House.

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Follow Matthew Daly: https://twitter.com/MatthewDalyWDC

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WVU Alumnus Challenge Hits $1M In Flood Relief Donations

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia University says more than $1 million in donations will help West Virginia flood victims through a challenge

match from Arizona Diamondbacks owner Ken Kendrick.

Kendrick is a WVU alumnus. He had said after devastating floods in late June that he would match contributions to the WVU Foundation dollar-for-dollar up to $500,000.

The university says in a news release that more than 1,600 donors have given more than $502,000.

The floods killed 23 people in the state.

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Gulfport, USO To Help Those Affected By La. Flooding

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

GULFPORT, Miss. (AP) — The city of Gulfport is partnering with the United Services Organization, Gulfport businesses, military and the fire department to send donations to the areas of Louisiana affected worst by flooding.

The Sun Herald reports (http://bit.ly/2c7GQY5) it's the second trip for the city in less than a month.

On Aug. 17, the city sent two truckloads of supplies immediately after the flood waters started to recede.

Gulfport Chief Administrative Officer John Kelly said Monday the National Guard Armory in Hammond, Louisiana, set up a store specifically for military families.

The USO is a nonprofit that operates two locations in Gulfport and annually provides programs and services to more than 60,000 service members and their families in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana.

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Information from: The Sun Herald, http://www.sunherald.com

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$250K Grant To Help With Wilkinson County Flood Recovery

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) – State and federal officials say a $250,000 grant will help people in southwestern Mississippi repair homes damaged by flooding in mid-August.

Three homes were destroyed, 23 had major damage and 58 others had minor damage in Wilkinson County. Most were in the town of Crosby.

The damage fell short of the threshold for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper says in a news release Monday that the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is providing the grant to the new nonprofit Community Based Recovery Committee in Wilkinson County with money remaining from the Alternative Housing Pilot Program that FEMA awarded to Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina.

Wilkinson County borders Louisiana, and its floods were caused by the same storm system that deluged parts of that state.

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Cayce Officials To Rebuild Flood-damaged Landing

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

CAYCE, S.C. (AP) – Officials in Lexington County are preparing to rebuild a boat landing on the Congaree River that was destroyed in the flooding rains last October.

Officials in Cayce think it will cost about $180,000 to repair the landing, with most of the cost paid by the federal government, The State newspaper (http://bit.ly/2cR0R69) reported.

The 23-year-old landing was closed after its dock was damaged in floods that followed record rain last fall. It's unclear how long the project will take.

Fishing and floating trip guides are happy about the decision.

"It's way overdue," said Kevin Geddings, owner of Adventure Carolina in Cayce.

The most recent renovations to the landing were in 1993 by state natural resources officials to encourage outdoor recreation in the Midlands. It's the only landing on the riverfront in the city of nearly 13,000 residents.

One guide, Jason Bennett of Irmo, says the loss of the dock created congestion on the Richland County side of the river.

"That makes things a little more inconvenient," Bennett said.

The closing shortened float trips by nearly a mile and required longer treks to return boats and equipment to his shop, Geddings said.

"Not having it has been huge for us," he said.

The landing also benefits recreation on land, officials say. The parking lot is a gathering spot for bicyclists and hikers headed for nearby trails.

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Information from: The State, http://www.thestate.com

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Small Earthquake Widely Felt Across San Francisco Bay Area

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — A small earthquake rumbled beneath the San Francisco Bay area early Tuesday and was widely felt across the region.

The U.S. Geological Survey says the magnitude 3.5 temblor struck at 12:40 a.m. PDT and was centered just to the east of central Oakland.

Oakland police said they had no reports of problems associated with the quake, which was fairly shallow at around three miles in depth.

The USGS website recorded responses from people reporting they felt it in many Bay Area cities, including San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley.

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Little Change In Strength For Tropical Storm Ian

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Ian has seen little change in strength as it moves over the central Atlantic.

The storm's maximum sustained winds early Tuesday are near 45 mph (75 kph) with slight strengthening forecast over the next two days. Ian is centered about 980 miles (1,580 kilometers) east-southeast of Bermuda and is moving north-northwest near 9 mph (15 kph).

Meanwhile far out over the Pacific, Hurricane Orlene is expected to slow down. The Category 2 storm's maximum sustained winds are near 105 mph (165 kph). The U.S. National Hurricane Center says gradual weakening is expected during the next few days.

Orlene is centered about 635 miles (1,020 kilometers) west-southwest of the southern tip of Mexico's Baja California peninsula and is moving north near 5 mph (7 kph).

Neither storm currently poses a threat to land.

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Tuesday's Forecast: Rainy Southeast, Plains

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, September 12, 2016

The national weather forecast for Tuesday, September 13th calls for showers to hit from Chicago to Oklahoma City, along the Southeast and Gulf Coast and in the Rockies.

Showers and thunderstorms will make for a soggy day as a front stalls in the Plains while a tropical wave soaks Florida and the Southeast.

Central U.S.: Showers and thundershowers will drench the southern and central Plains as a front stalls across the region, contributing to the potential for heavy rainfall all the way from Texas to the Great Lakes.

Florida, Southeast: A tropical wave will cross Florida Tuesday, enhancing the chances of possibly heavy showers and thunderstorms.

West: The West Coast will be clear and dry. Rain and a few snow showers are possible in the Rockies.

Weather history for Sept. 13: In 2008, Hurricane Ike hit the Texas coast with 110 mph winds.

How To Prepare Your Home Before The Next Big Storm Hits

By Tom Hurd

Washington Post, September 12, 2016

We are just about at the halfway point of the hurricane season, which most forecasters have projected to be above average in intensity.

But aside from official start and end dates for a particular type of natural disaster, extreme weather is the new reality — and in all parts of the country, not just coastal regions. Now consider this frightening thought: It wasn't a "named" hurricane or tropical storm that resulted in an estimated 150,000 damaged properties in the Baton Rouge area and flooded nearly one-third of the state of Louisiana.

Prolonged rainfall was the culprit, and that ended up being the worst disaster in the United States since the devastation caused by Superstorm Sandy. The torrential downfall that very recently washed out a sizable portion of historic Ellicott City, Md., is another example of the uncompromising damage that storms not classified as hurricanes can do to communities.

Essentially, what used to be considered "100-year storms" are now happening approximately every five years. Another eye-opener is that only 65 percent of the U.S. population is covered by model building codes. And when disaster does strike, often times in the rush to rebuild, homes and buildings are not completed up to

local minimum building codes, and that in and of itself is a recipe for disaster.

The good news is that in recent years the design and construction industry has recognized that responding to these sets of natural challenges is a national imperative. In addition to advocating for effective land-use policies, modern building-code adoption and smarter infrastructure investment, we research materials and design techniques and construction procedures to make homes and buildings more resilient to these threats.

But what can you do as you consider the possibility of encountering a dangerous storm or disaster? Here are some tips to help prepare your home for the next one:

Document your home before disaster strikes: Take photos of the inside and outside of your property and share them with your insurance company to have in its files; list rare and special items separately. Put extremely valuable items in a fireproof and waterproof safe or box.

Familiarize yourself with your home's construction: Know the age of your home and what kind of framing it has. Know how recently the roof has been repaired or replaced. All this will help guide you on what design changes or updates should be made to reinforce your home.

Prioritize repair projects: Make easy and inexpensive fixes, and phase repairs, maintenance and retrofits so they are manageable. Use wind-resistant nailing patterns to secure roof sheathing. Consider what flying debris and storm water might do before reworking areas to minimize damage.

Communicate your building performance goals: Make your desire for storm-resistant and resilient design elements known to your architect or contractor from the outset of a project, and include site selection, program and building life cycle in your conversations. Make sure that you are comfortable with their expertise in this area before proceeding with work.

Designate a safe room in your home: This space can be used for certain hazards, including hurricanes, tornadoes and strong storms. Spaces that can be used for this purpose include a mud room, laundry room or even a powder room, and each can be strengthened. If you have a shelter in a low area, make sure you can get out in case of flooding. Consider multi-hazard possibilities, and ask your architect what you'd need to do to reinforce those spaces.

Upgrade your safety standards in your renovation plans: Building codes are a life safety standard that afford only the bare minimum for the protection of property. Hazardous conditions may not be up to date in local maps and regulations to reflect current realities and risk. Any reworked areas or additions can be built to higher-strength standards — often for just a little more money than your planned budget, giving you a better alternative in a storm.

If you are making any big-picture construction or renovation plans, the best advice I can offer is to work only with a licensed architect, engineer or contractor. These professionals should be well-versed in the best practices to prevent destruction with cost-effective mitigation features and advanced planning.

Hurricane Katrina winds caused $8 billion in damage, and stronger building codes would have reduced this by 80 percent. The expression that an ounce of preparation is worth a pound of cure is especially true when it comes to natural disasters. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, every dollar spent on disaster mitigation saves $4 in rebuilding costs.

Design and building material fortifications are your best line of defense to protect your home, but you would also be well served to have a conversation with your insurance carrier — particularly if you can participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. So far this year, thunderstorms and hailstorms have caused the greatest insured property losses — up to $7 billion in damages.

Finally, proper preparation may help change a disaster into just a short-term uncomfortable event. Now is a great time to see where your homeowner's insurance policy stands and to have your home evaluated with an overall risk assessment that an architect can provide, before the next time Mother Nature's unpredictable fury strikes.

Tom Hurd is the chair of the American Institute of Architects Disaster Assistance Committee.

PM Update: Beautiful This Evening, And Warming Up A Little Tuesday

By Ian Livingston

Washington Post, September 12, 2016

Today was classic September. The bluest skies, and low humidity, mixed with warm sunshine. I could go for this kind of weather every day. This bout is relatively short-lived as temperatures are on the way up tomorrow. Heat and humidity continue to build into Wednesday, but thankfully it won't last long. The remnants of summer are certainly on borrowed time.

Through Tonight: We should see a fairly quick fall in temperatures this evening, especially outside the city, thanks to low humidity. Through the night, dew

points rise toward and past 60, which means humidity becomes more noticeable and it helps slow those temperature falls later at night. Lows are mainly in a 60-68 degree range, coolest suburbs to downtown.

View the current weather conditions at The Washington Post.

Tomorrow (Tuesday): It's another day of abundant sunshine. Warmer than Monday, but not hot like last week. We'll save that for Wednesday. Highs are mostly in the mid-80s. It's still relatively comfortable, but warmer than it should be, and humidity is increasingly apparent. Winds are from the south around 5 to 10 mph.

See Jason Samenow's forecast through the weekend. And if you haven't already, join us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram. For related traffic news, check out Dr. Gridlock.

Pollen update: Mold spores, weed and grass pollens are MODERATE/HIGH. Tree pollen is LOW/MODERATE.

Want our 5 a.m. forecast delivered to your email in-box? Subscribe here.

Ian: For some of us (maybe only me), this has been a day we've been waiting on for years (literally, years). Tropical Storm Ian was named this morning. It's seemingly going to pose no real threat to anyone other than fish, and perhaps an errant ship. In fact, this might be about all you hear of Ian given it's not even currently anticipated to become a hurricane as it spins across the Atlantic. I'd be remiss not to at least mention it once here, though! Certainly no Meranti, which became a Category 5 in the Western Pacific today.

Until 2022 (when the name will be reused) …

August Was The Hottest Month Ever Recorded. Again.

By Dominique Mosbergen

Huffington Post, September 13, 2016

Surprise, surprise: Last month was the hottest August ever recorded, marking the 11th straight month that global heat records have been shattered, according to NASA data.

The agency broke the bad, though perhaps not entirely unexpected, news on Monday. August had a global average surface temperature of about 1.76 degrees Fahrenheit above average, NASA said. It also tied with July as the warmest month ever recorded since record-keeping began in 1880.

"We are well on our way to the warmest year recorded," the Union of Concerned Scientists wrote in an email to The Huffington Post this week.

If deemed the hottest year ever, 2016 will be the third year in a row to boast this unfortunate title.

But though every month — and each year — appears to bring the same news about "hottest" this and that, experts are warning against apathy and fatigue regarding record-breaking temperatures.

"While there may be a tendency to be complacent about the recurring record temperatures, with each month come more climate-related consequences that cannot be ignored," wrote UCS climate scientist Astrid Caldas in a blog post.

Climate change is not a future problem, but rather one that we are actively dealing with.

"We are feeling climate change impacts right here, right now," Caldas continued. "From wildfires and droughts to devastating floods, climate change fingerprint is all around us and does play a role in making events more extreme. An example are this summer's floods in Louisiana, caused by intense rains which were "at least 40 percent more likely to happen because of climate change," according to research.

Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, stressed this week that it's long-term trends, rather than monthly readings, that "are the most important for understanding the ongoing changes that are affecting our planet."

NASA data shows a clear upward trend in global temperatures since 1880. The average global temperature has risen about 1.4 degrees F since then.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

FEMA Remapping May Lead To Insurance Hikes

By Jake Abbott

Marysville (CA) Appeal-Democrat, September 12, 2016

Flood insurance is going to increase — probably by quite a bit for some, warn experts who are trying to do something about it.

With federal remapping of floodplains in the works for some counties, professionals working in the field met in Sacramento last week to discuss its effects on insurance rates and the agricultural industry.

Mike Inamine, executive director of the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency, moderated a panel discussion at the Floodplain Management Association 2016 Conference. The discussion was revolved around the impact of FEMA's remapping — Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) — for areas of high-flood risk on insurance rates for structures and businesses operating in floodplains in the Central Valley.

FIRMs are used to administer the National Flood Insurance Program throughout counties.

"The NFIP will result in flood insurance rates going up dramatically, it's quite an increase in flood insurance premiums," Inamine said.

FEMA originally mapped all counties throughout the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s. In 2001, the agency began to update FIRMs to show if a region's levees met requirements for 100-year certification criteria. If an area cannot be certified, it is classified as a special flood hazard area and subject to development regulations.

Denise Carter, a Colusa County supervisor, was a panelist in the discussion. She said people with federally-backed mortgages living or operating in deep floodplains will be hit the hardest by the hike in insurance rates if an area is designated as high-risk. "As a task force, we worked on the possibility of having private insurance come in to have more affordable insurance options," Carter said.

She said while some residents living in Sutter County have already felt the effects of remapping, FEMA is going through the process in Colusa County.

The panel also discussed FEMA's building regulations for rural areas in a deep floodplain.

Inamine said some of the current regulations have an adverse impact on farmers and the agricultural industry.

"If you are in a floodplain, you are required to floodproof structures so water can pass through it," Inamine said. "There are many examples where a building has to have holes in it. That's fine except that some of those buildings hold food and crops."

In terms of floodplain management, farming is regarded as a wise use of a flood zone because it prevents hazardous development — housing or urban development — from occurring in deep floodplains behind levees.

Carter said panelists discussed the possibility of amending certain requirements for floodproofing that accommodate structures that support an agriculture industry.

Inamine said FEMA has shown interest in supporting rural area economies and that it wants to work with farmers on specific methods of improving regulations on agriculture structures while also mitigating costs.

Carter said the discussion was an opportunity for the task force to hear different perspectives on ways to address the issue.

"It provided the possibility to maybe tweak some things with FEMA's regulations," Carter said. "They have all these technical bulletins, which provide guidance on what you can do, and there is a definition of agriculture structures. The discussion was whether or not we should change that definition of what an agriculture structure is."

Inamine said the five panelists provided different perspectives on the complex issue. The other panelists were Gregor Blackburn, Ceil Strauss, Maria Lorenzo-Lee and James Gallagher.

"It highlighted the issue of how important this is moving forward in the Sacramento Valley," Inamine said. "It was essentially how do we do the right thing in a floodplain, in terms of insurance, and still keep it affordable."

Carter said a task force she works on is taking some of the topics discussed at the panel and writing up a report that will be sent to FEMA with recommendations on how to accommodate agriculture businesses looking to develop or build in deep floodplains.

"It's not going to be easy, but we are trying to find some little things we can do that will have a big impact on being able to continue farming in floodplains," Carter said.

FEMA Town Hall In Youngsville Set For Sept. 14

KATC-TV Lafayette (LA), September 12, 2016

The City of Youngsville will host a town hall/informational meeting on FEMA individual assistance Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2016, at 6 p.m. at Ernest Gallet Elementary School, 2901 E. Milton Ave.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide the needed assistance to residents and businesses that were affected by the August flood event. At this meeting there will be representatives from: FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA), National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), Small Business Administration (SBA), Governor's Office of Homeland Security (GOHSEP) and FEMA Mitigation.

At this meeting, residents will be able to get help with the following:

Sign up for FEMA assistance

Check on your FEMA claim

If denied, get assistance to find out why

Meet with the National Flood Insurance Program

Meet with the Small Business Administration and fill out application

Get information on how to mitigate future damage

Youngsville To Hold Town Hall Meeting, Providing Info On FEMA Assistance.

KLFY-TV Lafayette (LA), September 12, 2016

YOUNGSVILLE, La. (KLFY)— The City of Youngsville to hold town hall meeting to provide information on individual FEMA assistance.

According to a news release, the meeting will take place September 14 at 6 p.m. at the Ernest Gallet Elementary School cafeteria. The school is located at 2901 E. Milton Avenue, Youngsville.

Mayor Ken Ritter said the purpose of the meeting is to provide the needed assistance to residents and businesses that were affected by the flood event of August 12.

At the meeting there will be representatives from the FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance, the National Flood Insurance Program, Small Business Administration, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and FEMA Mitigation, according to officials.

The news release also stated that at the meeting, residents will be able to get help with the following:

Sign up for FEMA assistance

Check on your FEMA claim

If denied, get assistance to find out why

Meet with the National Flood Insurance Program

Meet with the Small Business Administration and fill out application

Get information on how to mitigate future damage

The Mayor said he requested this meeting to help residents to get the information they need to continue with their recovery. Everyone that had damage due to the flooding is encouraged to attend.

Duxbury: FEMA Floodplain Map Update

By David Skill

WATD-FM Marshfield (MA), September 12, 2016

Duxbury Town Manager Rene Read says Town Meeting is just a week away, and an article on the warrant about those FEMA floodplain maps needs to pass by a two-thirds majority.

"We've been working very diligently with our consultant, the Woods Hole Group. Leslie Fields will be attending our meeting a week from tonight, and she'll be providing a wealth of information to the voters so they can have a better understanding of what we need to do and why we need to do it," said Read.

But what if it is shot down by voters?

"Without the properly approved flood insurance maps, people will be in a serious financial predicament by not being able to get their mortgages secured," said Read.

We asked Read if the floodplain maps that were recently updated by FEMA are completely accurate, and if he thinks the warrant article will pass at Town Meeting.

"We had some dispute, not acrimonious, but we did have some dispute and we've questioned that with FEMA and we're working to figure out a method for making the correction, but what we'll be doing the following day is filing something called a letter of map amendment, which will allow us amend the map as adopted. So we have to have the maps in place knowing full well that they're not perfect, but knowing also that we're going to achieve perfection somewhere down the road," said Read.

Duxbury selectmen will also get a "litigation tracker" update from the law firm Anderson and Krieger at tonight's meeting.

MITIGATION

FEMA Helps Brandon, Ripton Pay For Irene Damage

Addison County (VT) Independent, September 12, 2016

BRANDON/RIPTON — The Federal Emergency Management Agency in August awarded the state of Vermont's Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security more than half a million dollars to pay the federal share for projects tied to Tropical Storm Irene, which hit Vermont five years ago.

Among the six towns that won awards through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program were Brandon and Ripton.

Brandon received $123,750 to supplement $1,196,533 awarded in July for Phase II of a downtown overflow relief culvert project.

Ripton received $14,848 for an emergency generator at their community shelter.

Other awards were:

$329,923 to Charleston for culvert and ditching improvements along Hudson Road; $79,460 to Richmond for a structural elevation; $11,668 to Marshfield for an emergency generator; and $96,750 to Enosburg for a culvert upgrade on the Tyler Branch.

"This was the latest, but will not be the last project to benefit from federal assistance tied to Tropical Storm Irene," a press release announcing the money said.

The federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, or HMGP, provides assistance to communities to fix areas of repetitive damage and make trouble spots safer. Making those areas more flood resistant through elevation of a building or road, larger culverts, or stronger riverbanks also helps save towns, the state, and

the federal government money in repair costs over the long run.

Of the $34.5 million available for HMGP after Irene, approximately $20 million was allocated for acquisitions — buy-outs of homes and businesses damaged by Irene that were built in floodplains and vulnerable to flooding again. Of 194 HMGP applications submitted to FEMA, 141 were for buy-outs. To date, 133 of them have been approved by FEMA, and more than 100 are completely "closed-out." In Northfield, for example, a neighborhood of homes that had been flooded and were vulnerable to future flooding have been removed, and the land is now a beautiful town park along Water Street.

Vermont's Congressional delegation was essential in advocating for the State with FEMA. The State successfully negotiated with FEMA for extra time, beyond the usual one-year window for submitting HMGP grants and the "routine" 12-month-extension, for a third year, allowing for applications to be submitted right up until the third anniversary of Irene in 2014.

There is still more than $8-million of HMGP funding from Irene available, and more than $8-million in applications pending, many of them still under environmental and historic preservation review. Applications still pending with FEMA include 7 buy-outs (2 in Ludlow and 5 in Chelsea), and 20 infrastructure projects. Permalink

Calallen ISD Hosts New Dome Grand Opening

By Beatriz Alvarado

Corpus Christi (TX) Caller-Times, September 12, 2016

Calallen ISD officials opened the district's estimated $4.8 million gymnasium and Federal Emergency Management Agency safety shelter Monday.

The 20,289-square-foot dome took about a year to complete and was built on a 56-acre lot along Wildcat Drive.

"Thanks to the vision of past and present school leaders, school board trustees and a dedicated Northwest community, Calallen ISD has expanded its facilities to embrace the ever-evolving rich history of the Calallen Wildcats," said Calallen ISD's Superintendent Artie Almendarez. "The official opening of this FEMA dome and the multi-purpose covered practice facility are first class venues that visibly display a long standing tradition of Wildcat pride."

Calallen and Tuloso-Midway independent school districts, along with Del Mar College and the Corpus Christi International Airport, teamed with city officials in 2012 to seek federal grant funds through the Texas Safe Shelter Initiative for the construction of disaster shelters.

The facilities will be used by first responders for emergency operations during a natural disaster, such as a hurricane.

For daily operations, the school's dome can be used as a gymnasium, auditorium, training facility or instructional space.

Clendenin Library Future, Bridge Repair Timeline Uncertain

By Ryan Quinn

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 12, 2016

The Kanawha County Public Library system's director said Monday he's expecting a report this week on the level of flood damage to the Clendenin branch, and he still doesn't know when the bridge to Crossings Mall — where the nearby Elk Valley branch is located — will be repaired.

Alan Engelbert said the system received in the last few days $120,000 of a possible $600,000 in flood insurance coverage money for the contents and building of the Clendenin branch, which got 9 feet of water in the late June flooding. The floods spared the Elk Valley branch but swept away the culvert bridge leading into the shopping center where it and several businesses are located.

On July 26, the library reopened a space it used to occupy at 3636 Pennsylvania Ave., in Big Chimney, to serve both the Clendenin and Elkview areas until the bridge is replaced. The Mobile Library, the 33-foot-long "bookmobile bus" where patrons can check out items, also is stopping in Clendenin.

Kanawha County Deputy Planning Director James Young previously told the Gazette-Mail that the bridge was expected to be constructed off site, starting in early- to mid-August and continuing for six to eight weeks.

Engelbert said a contractor and the insurance company are continuing to assess damage to the Clendenin building and its contents to determine how much flood insurance money the system is owed. The Federal Emergency Management Agency may pitch in funds for whatever the future of the Clendenin branch is, though Engelbert said he is first awaiting the report on how the branch's damages compare to its appraised value.

Such reports have been done on flooded Kanawha schools — one showed the damages to Clendenin Elementary, for instance, equaled about 97 percent of the circa-1930 school's $3.7 million appraised value.

Any time a building is more than 50 percent damaged in such a situation, it has to be brought into compliance with national flood insurance policy, meaning there could be requirements to elevate the flooded structure above the floodplain or other measures.

Under its Public Assistance Program, FEMA can fund 75 percent, and perhaps more, of the cost to fix damage to public facilities, including the cost to build new facilities and establish temporary facilities. Engelbert said the system already expects about $18,000 in reimbursement for the costs to both set up and vacate the temporary branch serving Clendenin and Elkview.

Also at Monday's library system board meeting, Engelbert said the system will add Hoopla to its digital offerings starting Oct. 10. He said patrons will be able to go online and, using their library card information, access up to 10 "units" — such as songs and entire albums, movies and episodes of TV series — per month.

He said patrons will only be able to use such units for a limited amount of time. He said the library system has put $25,000 toward paying the fees Hoopla charges for each unit checked out.

The board also deferred action on a policy change that Engelbert said would pay part-time workers seven and a half hours worth of pay for the four and a half hours worth of work they do on Sundays only in the main Charleston branch of the system.

Engelbert said the change would cost about $5,600 annually in extra pay and benefits for the, on average, six workers who work each Sunday. He said full-time workers have received the benefit of being paid for extra hours each Sunday they work since 1974.

But, after some board members Monday questioned why the system would take the step and a reporter noted the item listed on the meeting agenda to legally allow the board to take the action Monday vaguely only said "Policy #104 Hours of Work," the board deferred action in a voice vote. The only nay heard was from Cheryl Crigger Morgan, the board's former president.

Corps Defends Valley Park Levee Height, Says It's Not Overbuilt

By Bryce Gray

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, September 13, 2016

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is defending its construction of the Valley Park levee system, disputing a recent report suggesting that parts of the system exceed height limits by as much as 8 feet.

Critics say an improperly high levee system would have worsened recent flooding in neighboring communities along the Meramec River, such as Eureka, Fenton and Arnold.

But the corps says the system's construction was based on sound analysis.

"It's our belief that we do not have a levee that was built beyond the authorized level," said John Boeckmann, a hydraulic engineer with the corps' St. Louis District.

Gauging the proper height of the levee comes down to defining the elevation of the 100-year flood level for the Meramec. Generally speaking, levees can be 3 feet higher than the 100-year flood stage for a given location.

But the corps and the levee system's critics disagree over which flood-level estimate is relevant in the dispute.

Corps representatives said the agency has congressional approval to rely on internal data, rather than Federal Emergency Management Agency data to determine flood levels. FEMA flood-level data would have called for the levee to reach a maximum elevation of 435 feet above sea level, based on the 100-year flood level.

A number of experts were under the impression that the 435-foot maximum applied to the levee. Some suspected the structure exceeded that level when it was not topped by catastrophic flooding of the Meramec in late December 2015.

"They appear to use the FEMA data, in which case it's improperly high," said David Stokes, the executive director of Great Rivers Habitat Alliance, an organization focused on river management issues. "If they didn't, they need to explain."

Questions about the levee's height ultimately led Great Rivers Habitat Alliance to commission an investigation by an outside group. The resulting report from St. Peters-based engineering firm Pickett, Ray & Silver Inc. was released in August and identified points of the levee reaching as high as 443 feet above sea level.

Though he could not confirm their accuracy, Boeckmann said many of the levee elevations listed in the report are "in the range of what's expected to be out there," based on the corps' design specifications.Differing estimates

The Valley Park levee system was authorized in 1982 and completed in 2005. Engineers for the corps said that the agency's design process used newer, better data than that provided by FEMA, which releases updated flood level data about once a decade.

"There's nothing in our regulations that requires us to take existing FEMA profiles and use them," said Don Duncan, another corps hydraulic engineer. "In this case, we knew there were floods and other events that happened since those profiles were developed."

The corps indicated by email that "this design procedure was not unique to the Valley Park project," stating that the agency always reserves the right to use flood data at its discretion unless specifically told otherwise.

Besides the use of different flood level data, Boeckmann offered a couple additional reasons the levee is higher than many expected.

Boeckmann said the levee was built slightly higher than authorized to account for anticipated settling as gravity takes its toll. Settling can typically alter levee height by 1 to 3 feet, he said.

Boeckmann also said some of the levee heights cited in the recent investigation may have been distorted by unrelated construction projects. For instance, he said that after the levee was completed, a utility crossing was installed at the spot measuring 443 feet in elevation, creating "an isolated high point."

Despite the counterargument, not everyone is convinced that the corps had reason to deviate from using FEMA flood level data. Critics say that the corps has been inconsistent over time, using FEMA data in various reports and now indicating that separate, internal data guided the levee's design.

"They make up some other number on the basis of their own arguments when it's convenient — they've not been consistent," said Bob Criss, a professor in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Washington University, and one of the first to call the levee's height into question following the recent record-level flooding of the Meramec.Seeking clarity

The levee's design drawings have not been fully disclosed, as Freedom of Information requests filed by those concerned with its height have been denied for national security reasons. Although the drawings were withheld, Boeckmann said the flood data itself went through a public review process in the 1990s and that the levee project was approved by FEMA, St. Louis County, and several cities along the Meramec River.

The corps has offered to meet with a number of interested parties later this week to clarify the design process.

"The gist of (the meeting) is that the Army corps wants to explain whatever process it used in determining the appropriate height of the levee," said Bruce Morrison, general counsel for the Great Rivers Environmental Law Center, one of the organizations that has sought information on the levee.

But critics feel that a different set of flood level data may not fully explain the 8-foot height disparity in the levee's design — a dramatic difference they argue could be hard to justify.

"That number has not changed significantly," said Criss, referring to the 100-year flood level the levee is intended to guard against.

Those pressing the corps for details want to hear an explanation of why FEMA's definition of a 100-year flood was tossed aside.

"If the Army corps deviates, is its modeling defensible? Is it rational?" asks Morrison. "There's a lot of stuff out there to try to lasso."

He says it's entirely possible that the corps felt more conservative flood precautions were necessary. But transparency and consistency, he said, are vital.

"It presents a misleading picture to the public if the Army corps switches to a different standard time and again," said Morrison.

Or, he said, if the corps doesn't have confidence in existing flood data, it may be time for flood maps to be redrawn entirely.

Corps representatives declined to speculate on the extent to which the levee may have influenced nearby flooding in late 2015 and early 2016, saying that "pointing the finger to one cause" would require performing a detailed hydraulic study.

"We can't comment or speculate on specific effects of the levee on neighboring communities," said Boeckmann. "It was really just a historic flood event that reached levels that had not been recorded at Valley Park, for instance."

Combined 'demo & Rebuild' Will Be Mitigation Option In Flood Communities

By Shauna Johnson

West Virginia MetroNews, September 12, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — For the first time, a combination of both structure demolition and rebuilding will be an option for West Virginia residents washed out of their homes and businesses in the June 23 flood and seeking assistance from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to prevent future flooding through reconstruction steps.

What's called "demo and rebuild," in the view of Al Lisko, director of mitigation/recovery for the state

Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, is a way to keep flooded communities intact — a concern that's been raised many times in the months since the flood.

With the number of destroyed structures in the Flood Zone, the idea behind "demo and rebuild" is for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to fund demolition of a building.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program would then step in with grant funding to build a new foundation and help place a modular home on that foundation in accordance with a community's floodplain ordinance,' according to Lisko.

"What it does is it puts the person into a safer situation, but it does not take it (the property) off the tax rolls. They would still live in the same area. They would still have community taxes and the community does not, in a sense, deteriorate its tax base," Lisko said.

It's only one option, he noted, "One of the things we don't know are how the people are going to feel about their options."

A series of public meetings on all the options, which also include stand-alone elevation of structures, relocation of structures to outside floodplains and full acquisition and demolition of properties, begins Tuesday night.

The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday night, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. at Clendenin City Hall in Kanawha County. The public meetings continue Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 6 p.m. at Elkview Middle School in Elkview and Thursday, Sept. 15 at 6 p.m. at Alderson City Hall.

Additional meeting times and locations are as follows:

Sept. 19
Roane County
Geary Elementary-Middle School, 9538 Clay Rd., Left Hand
6 p.m.
Sept. 27
Pocahontas County
Marlinton Town Hall, 709 2nd Ave
6 p.m.
Sept. 28
Richwood and Nicholas County
Alumni Hall, 103 East Main St., Richwood
6 p.m.
Oct. 3
Greenbrier County
Caldwell, White Sulphur Springs, Ronceverte
Location, Time TBD
Oct. 4
Greenbrier County
Charmco, Rupert, Rainelle
Location, Time TBD

Decisions on mitigation methods will be made at the local levels, with applications coming from incorporated areas or county levels for those in unincorporated locations using input from residents.

"The idea is that this is a program where each community has the opportunity to look at their options, to decide what they feel is best and to apply for the funding and then, hopefully, we'll have enough funding to cover everyone's desires and wishes," Lisko said.

"If not, then we have to do a prioritization process here at the state before submitting them to FEMA for final approval."

Lisko could only estimate the potential funding available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which is aimed at reducing future flooding, would amount to "several millions of dollars." The amount will be a percentage of total federal grants awarded for the June flood, and that number has not been finalized.

"They're going to have to look at their situation," Lisko said of the questions residents trying to rebuild will have to answer.

"For example, if you're a family and you were flooded and you're very frightened to live where you lived, would you accept a demolition and rebuild at the same location? Or would you simply say, 'No, I don't want to live there anymore?'"

FEMA Offers New Flood Relief Opportunities

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), September 13, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) – Homeowners who are rebuilding following the June flooding can meet with West Virginia and FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program advisers on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The meetings will focus on the HMGP process and the rebuilding efforts as well discussion of elevation and mitigation reconstruction.

Tips and information will be provided to help homeowners prevent future damage and disaster in the event of a flood.

On Tuesday, flood-affected homeowners in Clendenin can meet advisers at the Clendenin City Hall at 7:00 p.m.

Other flood victims in Kanawha County can meet Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. at Elkview Middle School.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

FLOODS

Gulfport, USO Team Up To Help Louisiana Flooding Victims

By Justin Vicory

Biloxi (MS) Sun Herald, September 12, 2016

If there's still a need, keep giving. That's the view of the city and the United Services Organization.

Monday, the city partnered with the USO, Gulfport businesses, military and the fire department to send donations to the areas of Louisiana affected worst by flooding.

"I found out there was still a need, and helping military families is what we're all about, so I contacted our national office and they approved us to do this," USO Director Felice Gillum said.

It's the second trip for the city in less than a month.

On Aug. 17, the city sent two truckloads of supplies immediately after the flood waters started to recede.

"We got a lot of help after Katrina," Gulfport Chief Administrative Officer John Kelly said. "And this is a military community. So, we all work together when we can."

Kelly said the National Guard Armory in Hammond set up a store specifically for military families. The supplies will be dropped off there. Military personnel and families from the surrounding area can come to shop.

Mississippi Power, Island View Casino, the National Guard, Keesler Air Force Base, Seabee Base in Gulfport, Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport donated Lowes, Home Depot and Wal-Mart gift cards, cleaning supplies, bedding and comforters, blankets and sheets, food, baby supplies, toiletries and bottled water.

Donations were taken to all five Gulfport fire stations and brought to the Central Station in downtown Gulfport for distribution.

John Fayard of John Fayard Moving donated his truck and an employee to help with the haul.

The USO is a nonprofit that operates two locations in Gulfport and annually provides programs and services to more than 60,000 service members and their families in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana.

FEMA To Start Contacting Applicants By Text

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 12, 2016

BATON ROUGE – FEMA announces that flood victims who applied for federal help may soon get a text from officials to let them know of their application status.

FEMA says it is using texts to connect with applicants in an effort to enhance communications as it allows to communicate quickly and easily with applicants.

The agency says that applicants may still be contacted through email or phone if they chose one of those as a preferred communication method when they first applied.

Applicants may then check their application's status by going online to disasterassistance.gov or downloading and using the FEMA app and then logging into their account. They may also call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362.

With the change, FEMA reminds applicants to never provide personal information such as Social Security or bank accounts numbers to anyone. FEMA only requests this information when applicants first apply for federal disaster assistance. FEMA inspectors only require verification or identity.

FEMA Reminds Residents To Check With Officials Before Rebuilding

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 12, 2016

BATON ROUGE – The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and FEMA are encouraging residents to check with local officials before starting to rebuild following last month's flood.

As more financial assistance reaches flood victims, more people are beginning to repair the damages they sustained to their homes and businesses.

Officials want to remind residents of the following:

Work that may require permits often includes plumbing, electrical system, foundation and structural repairs.

Local officials may have building code requirements on how and where flood victims can renovate or rebuild. Officials ask flood victims to find out how repairs or reconstruction can meet current standards and compliance.

Flood victims can contact their parish emergency management office to learn more about elevation and

other ways to make their homes or businesses safer and stronger.

For contact information, visit www.gohsep.la.gov/ABOUT/PARISHPA

As Flood Victims Struggle With Emotional Toll, Doctors Say Help

By Sabrina Wilson

WVUE-TV New Orleans, September 12, 2016

NEW ORLEANS, LA (WVUE) –

In Tangipahoa Parish, there is rebuilding from the recent flooding underway. But amid the painstaking recovery, for many flood victims there are inner feelings to be dealt with.

"I have a lot of faith in God but even with my faith there's moments when it gets overwhelming you wonder how long is this going to take?" said flood victim Sonia Landry who moved to Robert after a catastrophic storm 11 years ago. "This is the second time it's happened for me because I was in St. Bernard Parish for Hurricane Katrina."

Arshile Glaze's trailer barely escaped the spring flooding, but his good fortune ran out in August.

"I know my wife gets depressed about it and upset about it," said Glaze, whose home is uninhabitable right now. "[We're] living with my stepdaughter in Covington. There's no way we can live in here."

Glaze tries to keep his wife's spirits from sinking too low.

"We find different things in the trailer that we had forgot we had and it makes her smile," he said.

On Capitol Hill, some local leaders from flood-stricken areas told members of Congress about the emotional toll resulting from the flood.

"We have suicides, we have mental breakdowns, we have families being torn apart because honestly they don't know how they're going to get back on their feet," said Mayor Jr. Shelton, of Central, Louisiana.

"The most common symptoms are depression, also anxiety and post-traumatic stress," said Dr. Howard Osofsky, chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at LSU Health New Orleans.

Mental health professionals from LSU Health New Orleans are involved in the effort to help flood victims, as well as state workers, cope with the aftermath of the flooding.

"We have worked with all of the partnering agencies and groups responding to the flooding disaster to develop the screening both for adults and for children to try and help identify and respond to people having the greatest need at this time," Osofsky said.

A home can provide a sense of security and familiarity that people rely on.

"There are many people who are suffering a great deal. They've lost their homes, they're rebuilding," Osofsky said.

Often, there are telltale signs of being overwhelmed.

"If people are having a more difficult time getting going in the morning, if they're not sleeping well, if they're drinking more, if they're more irritable, If one can see that they are exhibiting signs that they are stressed out, it's important to not only reach out to them and be supportive but to let them know that help is available," Osofsky said.

He said it's important to return to some semblance of normalcy as soon as possible, and he suggested that parents should speak to their children about the flooding.

"As much as possible, normalize what you're doing, the same type of routine. Parents have to be aware that their children need to be able to talk about it, and to know that this is a very unlikely event and that parents are keeping them secure and the community is keeping them secure," Osofsky said.

State leaders have said the majority of the flood victims did not have flood insurance. A lot of people said adding to their stress is the suspense of how much assistance they will qualify for under FEMA.

"It breaks your heart, makes you wonder what's going on, because when Katrina came, everybody was there, you know, jump in, give you a hand. This time it's like you're out here by yourself," Glaze said.

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Assessment Of Flood-ravaged Library Branch Continues In Clendenin

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), September 12, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) – Kanawha County Public Library leaders say 35 to 40 people per day are using the mobile library set-up in Clendenin, following the June 23 flooding.

That location, along with the Elkview location in the Elkview Crossings Plaza, are both still closed because of flood damage.

The Clendenin location has been cleaned out after its contents were destroyed.

They are currently assessing the condition of the branch location to determine whether or not it will reopen.

The Elkview location did not sustain damage. However, it is not accessible because the bridge that

leads to the Elkview Crossings plaza has not yet been rebuilt. Leaders say they've not received an update on the status of the bridge repair.

To date the Kanawha County Public Library has received $120,000 in flood insurance to cover lost content.

Leaders say they will continue to work with FEMA to try and get more money to cover losses and the cost of temporary library locations in Elkview and Clendenin.

Monday night, the members of the library board voted to spend a nearly $11,000 grant from the West Virginia Library Commission to pay for costs of the Elk Valley Express Library Branch.

In other Kanawha County Library news, staff members have conducted an active shooter training at all of its facilities.

There will be a fire drill on Tuesday.

There was also discussion about updating the lighting at the branch location in Dunbar. In addition, board members heard about the possibility of doing a solar energy project at the St. Albans location.

ZIKA VIRUS

Obama Meets With Congressional Leaders To Hash Out Fall Agenda

By Gregory Korte And Erin Kelly

USA Today, September 12, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Obama will huddle with congressional leaders from both parties at the White House Monday in an effort to sketch out a bipartisan agenda for what remains of the election-year session.

On Obama's agenda: A spending bill to avoid a government shutdown in three weeks, more funding to combat the outbreak of the Zika virus, a Pacific trade deal, criminal justice reform and the confirmation of Merrick Garland to serve on the Supreme Court.

"It's hard to rank them in priority order, because so many of them are important. And the failure of Congress to act on some of these priorities would have significant negative consequences for the American people," said White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest. "These are priorities, each of them, where Congress has not fulfilled their responsibility to the American people."

It's the first opportunity the president has had to meet with congressional leaders since they returned from their summer recess last week. Obama returned from a nine-day Asia trip last Friday.

Congress must act soon to pass a stopgap spending bill, called a continuing resolution, funding the government until an annual appropriations bill can be passed later this year. Congressional leaders are anxious to reach a deal to prevent a government shutdown just weeks before the Nov. 8 election.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Monday that he hoped that funding for Zika and the Department of Veterans Affairs could be rolled into that short-term package. "Members on both sides have been working on an agreement to responsibly fund the government. We've made a lot of progress," he said.

But for that to happen, Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said, "Republicans need to get away from their vendetta on Planned Parenthood."

The nonprofit family planning and abortion provider have been a lightning rod in the Zika debate. The House-passed Zika bill provides funding to state and local health agencies, but omits any funding of Planned Parenthood. Democrats say the agency is a major provider of health services and should get a share of the $1.1 billion in proposed Zika funding.

"They need it more than ever more with this scourge that is sweeping our country — Zika," said Reid, a Nevada Democrat.

Obama has been calling on Congress since February to approve $1.9 billion to help eradicate the mosquitoes that spread the virus and to develop a vaccine, but the House and Senate have not been able to agree on a bill because of a threatened Democratic filibuster in the Senate over Planned Parenthood and other issues.

Also scheduled to attend the meeting in the Oval Office Monday are House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Obama is expected to talk to reporters after the meeting.

Obama Meets With Congressional Leaders Ahead Of Federal Funding Deadline

By Adam Edelman

New York Daily News, September 12, 2016

President Obama sat down Monday with congressional leaders to begin talks on a short-term spending bill that would avert a government shutdown on Oct. 1.

Lawmakers have returned to Washington for an abbreviated session in which they must pass a measure to keep the government funded.

More daunting, however, is the fate of a bill that

would provide money for the fight against the Zika virus.

And as recently as Monday afternoon, the talks seemed destined to go poorly.

Ahead of the closed-door meeting, the White House had choice words for Republican lawmakers.

"Unfortunately, they're stuck with Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan," White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said during his daily briefing, in a jab at Republican leadership

The talks comes as government scientists have stepped up their warnings about the spread of the Zika virus, which can cause devastating birth defects.

More than 670 pregnant women in the states and Washington, D.C., have the virus, leading to the birth of at least 17 babies with microcephaly so far.

Lawmakers left Washington seven weeks ago without resolving a dispute over money for Zika.

Obama asked Congress in February for $1.9 billion in emergency money, but legislation to partially pay for his proposal collapsed in July amid various fights, including over a Republican provision to deny money to Puerto Rican affiliates of Planned Parenthood.

With News Wire Services

Funding Planned Parenthood, Or Not, May Be Key To Keeping The Government Open

By Emmarie Huetteman

New York Times, September 12, 2016

WASHINGTON — Republican leaders looking to avoid a government shutdown one month before Election Day will have to jump a familiar hurdle: demands from some of their members to cut off funding for Planned Parenthood.

When Democrats balked once more last week at approving legislation to combat the Zika virus because the measure included limits on Planned Parenthood, some Republicans indicated a willingness to re-evaluate their position.

But the pressing question for Republicans who want to pass a stopgap spending bill to keep the government running after Sept. 30 is whether enough of their ranks are willing to leave Planned Parenthood out of the legislation.

After a meeting on Monday with congressional leaders at the White House, President Obama said he was hopeful of reaching a deal with Republicans to fund the government until after Election Day.

"Even though I know that we're in the midst of a political season and everybody is thinking about elections, there's still business to be done," Mr. Obama said.

Earlier, Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky and the majority leader, began procedural moves to pass a bill that would fund the government through Dec. 9 and include funds for Zika control and veterans programs.

Democrats have accused Republicans of inserting language targeting Planned Parenthood into the Zika funding legislation to bait them into blocking it. The measure would primarily withhold funding from two Planned Parenthood clinics in Puerto Rico that do not offer screening for the virus, but to Democrats, any limitation on Planned Parenthood sets a dangerous precedent that Republicans could exploit.

The measure is so vague that after multiple votes on the legislation, few from either party seem to clearly understand what the provision — which does not mention Planned Parenthood by name but places limitations almost exclusively on those two clinics — would do. Yet, in a demonstration of just how politicized Planned Parenthood has become, both sides have shown they are willing to wage war over it.

Efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, which performs abortions in addition to providing education, contraception and other forms of reproductive health care, have become such a contentious matter that there have been nine votes to cut off funding to the organization in the past two years alone, said Erica Sackin, a spokeswoman for the group.

After videos surfaced last year that critics said proved some Planned Parenthood clinics had been selling fetal tissue for a profit, a charge the organization denied, some outraged Republicans demanded the inclusion of a measure defunding it in last fall's stopgap spending measure. But Republican leaders redirected those calls into a separate measure, ultimately moving forward on the temporary spending bill.

This has been happening for years, said Senator Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington. She recounted receiving a call in 2010 from Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the Democratic leader, shortly after congressional leaders had come to a consensus on a deal, she said. A group of House Republicans wanted to include restrictions on Planned Parenthood. "Not on my watch," Ms. Murray recalled saying.

"That was my first realization that they were willing to use the funding of Planned Parenthood as a hostage in just about anything," she said.

In the Zika fight, limitations on Planned Parenthood offered Speaker Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin

what he needed: a way to pass the House version of the bill without Democrats. The bill passed during the late-night session gaveled in as Democrats staged their sit-in for gun restrictions in June, with the votes of some conservatives who are typically averse to increased spending.

In Florida, the only place so far in the continental United States where the disease is circulating, Zika has crept into its Senate race — which could help determine whether Republicans hold onto their majority — as Senator Marco Rubio is fending off attack ads over the proposed restrictions on Planned Parenthood.

Buried in the debate over the intersection between the Zika virus and Planned Parenthood is the murky reality of what the failed Zika bill, which could provide a framework for a temporary spending bill, would have done to the women's health organization.

The bill largely focused on funding for Profamilias, Planned Parenthood's partner in cash-strapped Puerto Rico. Because Puerto Rico has been the hardest hit by the virus, it would receive most of the money and thus be the most affected by the bill's restrictions.

Profamilias provides medical services almost entirely out of its two clinics in San Juan. They do not offer Zika testing, which tends to be done by more specialized facilities, said Marjorie Vázquez, a program director at Profamilias in San Juan, so much of their involvement in combating Zika centers on contraception distribution. Profamilias served about 7,000 patients in 2015, she said — not a particularly large number, given that about 390,000 people live in San Juan.

But because the vast majority of the clinic's clientele is poor and young, rerouting funding away from the group could have an outsize effect, some experts said.

Some House Republicans, particularly those from Florida, have at least hinted that they would be open to taking Planned Parenthood out of the ongoing Zika fight.

And Senator John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican, said on Thursday that he was optimistic they could move forward to pass Zika funding.

"We're just going to have to work out our differences on that," he told Morning Consult.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

CITIZEN CORPS

Florence County Hosting CERT Basic Training Course

Florence (SC) Morning News, September 12, 2016

FLORENCE, S.C. – Florence County Emergency Management will host its second Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) basic training course, starting Oct. 21.

The course is open to anyone older than 18 who wants to educate themselves about safety and protection during a man-made or natural disaster. The course is free to anyone interested, and no prior training is required before taking the course.

The course teaches Florence residents about disaster preparedness, search and rescue, medical response, utility controls and fire safety among others. The course will be instructed by members of Florence County Emergency Management, Florence County EMS, and the Howe Springs Fire Department.

According to Andrew Golden of Florence County Emergency Management, the course is a key component for those wishing to become an official CERT member in Florence County.

A CERT is a group of trained volunteers who come together during a disaster or crisis. The volunteers, according to Golden, will take care of their families and themselves while also helping neighbors, suppressing small fires, providing medical aid and conducting small search and rescue operations.

Florence County Emergency Management adopted the National CERT Program after recognizing a need for the Florence community to be better prepared in case of a disaster. The National CERT Program is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Department of Homeland Security.

Those interested in attending the CERT basic training course can register at fcemd.org. Space for the class is limited.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Citizens As Rescuers In Building Collapses

By Eric Holdeman

Emergency Management Magazine, September 12, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has established, in cooperation with local jurisdictions, Urban Search and Rescue Teams

These teams are scattered around the United States as shown in the link above. These are the teams that can help in building collapse situations like the Oklahoma City bombing. They are highly trained with specialized equipment and teams to deal with searching for, finding and attempting the rescue of people trapped in the rubble of a building.

Last week, at an after action review meeting from the June 2016 Cascadia Rising Earthquake Exercise, these figures were shared. I think they come from the Los Angeles Fire Department. It shows what percentages of people trapped and rescued are done at which level:

Search and Rescue

5% entombed, heavy rescue capability

15% void space non-structural, medium rescue capability

30% non-structural entrapment, light rescue capability

50% injured but not trapped, spontaneous program

The above points to the fact that the clear majority of people being rescued are not the results of urban search and rescue teams. The people performing rescues are co-workers; neighbors; passers-by on the street. ... Few if any have any training at all or likely no equipment other than those tools immediately at hand.

Here in the Puget Sound region I recall that light urban search and rescue trainings were offered to companies so that their internal staff would have the ability to extricate people who were trapped within a building. Some buildings have equipped floors with some specialized equipment, like crowbars, hydraulic jacks, blocking material, gloves, etc.

A little bit of forethought could be invaluable in having the tools necessary to provide meaningful help. A few hours of training could be all the difference in keeping people safe and giving them the basic instruction needed to make them much more effective.

Our Views: Big First Step In Federal Aid

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 12, 2016

While he's not physically bringing a check back home, Gov. John Bel Edwards and the state's delegation in Congress have achieved a significantly higher level of federal support to cover the costs of flood damages to public roads and buildings.

In a letter to Edwards, who was in Washington for two days for meetings on Capitol Hill, President Barack Obama agreed to increase the federal government's share of the costs for "public assistance" projects from 75 percent to 90 percent. State and local government agencies cover the balance for these projects, which includes debris removal and emergency response expenses.

The balance is going to be substantial, but the increase in the percentage that the U.S. government will cover makes a big difference to the state and to local governments — parishes, cities, school boards.

The dimensions of the August flooding made it likely all along that the 90 percent threshold would be reached, but until authorized by the president it was nevertheless at the top of Edwards' wish-list. Costs for mobilizing the National Guard and other responses to flooding would be covered by the higher match, as those bills come in.

The U.S. government has responded to Louisiana's plight: Obama's letter noted that the administration already has spent more than $660 million to help the state respond to the floods, including $200 million in direct assistance to flood victims.

Still, the costs to state government — already strapped because of a financial hangover left over by former Gov. Bobby Jindal's administration — makes a higher federal match rate important to the governor, as well as local leaders who face their own financial challenges. Debris removal alone is a huge task.

The governor and a bipartisan group of state leaders were in Washington to lobby for aid beyond the match rate. That decision was like getting to first base in terms of dealing with the impact of the floods, but with the governor we feel more is needed: Edwards told the president earlier that the state's infrastructure and families had sustained more than $8.7 billion in flood damage.

The governor is pitching a $2 billion package of aid that would be beyond that provided to families and agencies by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal sources.

The legislative calendar in an election year is difficult but we applaud efforts by the state's leaders to unite on behalf of more assistance to the struggling communities hit by this major national disaster.

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2016

(SECOND EDITION – 8:30 AM EDT)

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NATIONAL NEWS

Tropical Storm Julia Brings Rain To Florida, Georgia

USA Today, September 14, 2016

JACKSONVILLE — Tropical Storm Julia was bringing heavy rain to north Florida and parts of Georgia on Wednesday.

The storm formed just west of Jacksonville around 10 p.m. Tuesday. The storm's formation was unusual in that the center of circulation appeared to be over land when it formed, near St. Augustine, Fla.

As of 5 a.m. Wednesday, the storm, which has maximum sustained winds of 40 mph, was located about 40 miles north of Jacksonville and 25 miles southwest of Brunswick, Ga. It is moving north at 7 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Julia is expected to drop 3 to 6 inches of rain near the Georgia and South Carolina coastlines through Friday, the hurricane center said. Isolated totals of 10 inches are possible, as is an isolated tornado across coastal Georgia and southern South Carolina, the hurricane center said.

Prior to becoming a tropical storm, Julia was a tropical wave which battered Florida's Space Coast on Tuesday, spawning a tornado and bursts of torrential downpours.

Derrick Weitlich, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla., said a tornado was confirmed by radar Tuesday afternoon in a rural area between Barefoot Bay and Interstate 95. Two spotters also confirmed the tornado.

No injuries were reported as a result of the tornado, but wet highway and roads contributed to numerous traffic incidents across Brevard County, officials said.

Julia's projected path takes it in a slow north-northwest direction over, with the system expected to weaken and eventually dissipate over south Georgia.

A tropical storm warning is in effect for Fernandina Beach, Fla., to Altamaha Sound, Ga.

Tropical Storm Julia is expected to weaken to a tropical depression Wednesday, the hurricane center said.

Wednesday Q + A With John Bel Edwards

By Daniel Newhauser

National Journal, September 14, 2016

Louisi-ana Gov. John Bel Ed-wards traveled to Wash-ing-ton last week to ask Con-gress and the White House for as-sist-ance fol-low-ing the dev-ast-at-ing flood-ing in his state. At the Cap-it-ol, Ed-wards spoke to Zach C. Co-hen about run-ning as a Demo-crat in the Re-pub-lic-an South, as well as his tu-mul-tu-ous first nine months in of-fice.

You're now the only Demo-crat-ic gov-ernor in the Deep South. Do you have any ad-vice for your party for how it can re-build in the re-gion?

Well, I am singly fo-cused on gov-ern-ing the state of Louisi-ana and try-ing very hard not to get en-tangled in polit-ics out-side of my state, wheth-er it's the pres-id-en-tial elec-tion or gov-ernors' elec-tions. But I will tell you just in short that I do be-lieve Demo-crats can win. I think I'm liv-ing proof of that. But you have to have good can-did-ates who are go-ing to work ex-tremely hard, and who rep-res-ent main-stream val-ues in the Deep South—Demo-crats that can win there, then else-where. But the only way you know you can't win is if you don't run.

Does that strategy work in re-pla-cing Dav-id Vit-ter in the Sen-ate?

I hap-pen to be-lieve there's a dif-fer-ence polit-ic-ally between state and loc-al elec-tions and elec-tions for fed-er-al of-fi-cials. And I think the party des-ig-na-tion in the past, at least his-tor-ic-ally, has been more of a de-term-in-ing factor in the out-come in the fed-er-al elec-tion for Con-gress or for Sen-ate. But we have some good Demo-crats run-ning, and one of them will be in the run-off, and we'll just see who. I mean, there's two dozen can-did-ates run-ning in Louisi-ana. It's kind of a wild scene.

One of the first chal-lenges you had to deal with when you came in-to of-fice was the budget ne-go-ti-ations to fix a massive de-fi-cit.

The largest de-fi-cit in our state's his-tory … $2 bil-lion. And so it was an ex-tremely dif-fi-cult prob-lem to deal with, but we had to do it to sta-bil-ize our state and pre-serve in-sti-tu-tions that af-ford op-por-tun-ity, like health care, like high-er edu-ca-tion. But we also have foster chil-dren that are in our cus-tody, and just a whole myri-ad of ser-vices that we provide the people de-pend upon. And ul-ti-mately we were able to work with the le-gis-lature and sta-bil-ize our state to a very large ex-tent and save $200 mil-lion al-most by ex-pand-ing Medi-caid. So we have 300,000 more work-ing poor today with health in-sur-ance than was the case just in June of this year.

Is there any stigma at-tached to Medi-caid ex-pan-sion, be-cause it's re-lated to the Af-ford-able Care Act?

There's some stigma by cer-tain people. That's cer-tainly not a prob-lem that I have. It isn't like by re-fus-ing to ex-pand Medi-caid we de-creased our tax bur-den. So as long we're pay-ing for the pro-gram I think we should get the be-ne-fits from it, es-pe-cially when it saves the state gen-er-al-fund dol-lars. We saved about 2 per-cent of our over-all de-fi-cit by ex-pand-ing the Medi-caid pro-gram. So provid-ing health in-sur-ance to work-ing poor people who to no fault of their own were just caught in a gap is the right thing to do for all reas-ons. And there are some people who were op-posed to it. But in truth, our le-gis-lature did not really stand up and fight against it be-cause I think at the end of the day, most of them were con-vinced as well it was the right thing to do, but they also knew it was sav-ings.

Did the state's fisc-al mis-man-age-ment be-fore you took of-fice make it harder to re-spond to the flood-ing now?

We have not made the de-cision to cur-tail our re-sponse be-cause of any fisc-al lim-it-a-tions. So that has not been a prob-lem at all.

What have Wash-ing-ton and Bat-on Rouge learned from hur-ricanes like Kat-rina? Have all the right tools been es-tab-lished?

You're nev-er go-ing to learn all the right les-sons be-cause every time you go through one of these you're go-ing to make mis-takes. And you're go-ing to real-ize that mis-takes might be policy-driv-en, they might be driv-en by per-son-nel, or they could be stat-utory lim-it-a-tions that only Con-gress can fix. And the truth is, there are go-ing to be prob-lems that arise from all of those. And so con-tinu-ally ana-lyz-ing the situ-ation and in-cor-por-at-ing the les-sons learned in-to fu-ture re-sponses is what's go-ing to be re-quired. And there are ob-vi-ously some things FEMA can do bet-ter, and we need to do that. But there's things that all of us could have done bet-ter in the re-sponse and now in the re-cov-ery as well.

Do you have con-fid-ence in Con-gress to be able to make the right changes to the Stafford Act in or-der to make some of those changes?

Well look, I wish that Con-gress, you know, moved a little faster, and was demon-strat-ing it's a little more cap-able of mak-ing changes than has been the case in the past. But I'm al-ways op-tim-ist-ic that people are go-ing to come to-geth-er and do the right thing when they see a need. And I think that need is evid-ent now.

"I Don't Know You, But I Love You": Woman Meets "Angel" Who Saved Her From Louisiana Floods

By Sarah Larimer

Washington Post, September 13, 2016

The red convertible was caught in the Louisiana floodwaters.

Trapped inside were Hailey Brouillette and her dog, Sassy.

Outside the vehicle, though, was David Phung. The 27-year-old was on a boat with others, desperately trying to help. There was an attempt to break a window. Someone asked around for a knife.

Finally, Phung splashed into the flood and pulled Brouillette from the car, a remarkable effort captured on video in August. He saved her dog, too, plunging down into the water and pulling the pup to safety.

The Associated Press reports that the 53-year-old Brouillette met on Monday with Phung, her rescuer. Brouillette called him her "angel" and "savior," according to the AP. She told him that she loved him.

"I know I don't know you, but I love you," Brouillette said during the reunion in Denham Springs, where she is staying on a temporary basis.

"It was nothing," replied Phung, according to the AP.

Really, though, last month's rescue effort in the south Louisiana floodwaters was pretty dramatic. Video from WAFB-TV, a CBS affiliate, shows murky waters around the red convertible, which is partly submerged. A boat approaches, carrying Phung and a couple of others. (The AP reported that they were Phung's relatives.)

"Oh my God, I'm drowning!" Brouillette can be heard saying, as the rescuers try to break a window and attempt to rip through the convertible's top.

Phung climbs on the car, jumps in the water and pulls Brouillette out, yanking her up as the convertible sinks down.

After she surfaces, though, Brouillette immediately cries out: "Get my dog!"

She repeats this, over and over, and the seconds tick by. Someone tosses a life jacket into the water. Brouillette tries to locate Sassy herself.

"Maybe she's gone," someone says as Phung ducks underwater.

"No, she better not be," Brouillette says.

That's when Phung reemerges, cradling Sassy.

"I got your dog," he says.

Phung told the AP that he didn't see the footage of the rescue until a couple of days later. He said he was "amazed" that he remained calm, adding: "I guess it was just the adrenaline took over."

"We saw Hailey going down the road and we actually tried to stop her, but I don't know if she heard us or not, or if she was trying to turn around," he said. "But by that time, the water — she had gotten into a deep part of the water. That's where you see the car started to sink. She was actually about to be in real trouble."

Brouillette said the water "twirled us around like it was nothing."

The AP reports:

Before getting caught in the floodwaters, Brouillette said, she had been released from a hospital that morning after being treated for a kidney ailment. She was on her way to a pharmacy to get prescriptions filled when the car she said she borrowed from a friend was overcome by the water.

"It still seems like a dream," she said.

She believes "divine intervention" also played a part in her survival.

"He saved my life," she said. "I don't even know if I'm worth saving. I guess God said, 'Yeah.' "

Floodwaters in Louisiana last month forced thousands into shelters and left more than a dozen dead. More than 70,000 people registered for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) called the historic flooding a "very serious event."

Monday's reunion happened after a volunteer met Brouillette, who lost her trailer, in a shelter. The volunteer had watched the video footage of Brouillette and Phung before she arrived in Louisiana, and spotted Brouillette a few days later.

Phung brought supplies to Monday's reunion. The haul included food for Sassy, the dog, according to the AP.

"It's just who we are in Louisiana. We help people in times of need," he told the news agency. "I was put in that place to help her out."

Read More:

This man bought 108 pounds of brisket to cook for the displaced Baton Rouge victims

Baton Rouge flood: "I feel so lucky but so guilty for being spared."

After deaths of Alton Sterling and police, then flooding, Baton Rouge begins recovery, together

Donald J. Trump Foundation Is Trump's Money, His Campaign Manager Says. No.

By David Fahrenthold

Washington Post, September 13, 2016

Donald Trump's campaign manager, Kellyanne Conway, was asked on CNN this morning to provide evidence to prove Trump's claim that he has given generously to charity.

She didn't.

In the process, Conway also seemed to be unaware of a key fact about Trump's personal charity, the Donald J. Trump Foundation.

Which is: The Trump Foundation's money doesn't actually come from Trump's own pocket.

"Donald Trump has been incredibly generous over the course of his life," Conway told CNN's Alisyn Camerota.

"With his own money?" Camerota asked.

"With his own money, and his foundation's money — which is his money," Conway replied.

From all available tax records, that is not true.

In fact, tax records show Trump has not given any money to his namesake foundation since 2008. Instead, Trump retooled his foundation to give away other people's money: Since 2008, Trump has taken in millions from donors and given it away under his foundation's name.

The Washington Post described the workings of the Trump Foundation in an article Sunday. Tax experts said they had rarely seen a charity like this, which defied the convention that wealthy people start private foundation to give their wealth away. Instead, the Trump Foundation allowed Trump to retain the appearance of generosity without giving away a dime of his own.

It's possible that Conway knows something that is not yet public, and has seen proof Trump has donated his own money to the Trump Foundation in 2015 or 2016. The foundation has not released information about those years, and its public tax filings only go up to 2014. The Post has asked repeatedly — including again Tuesday morning — for information about any such recent donations.

The Trump campaign has not responded to those questions.

And, on CNN, Conway did not offer any evidence of new donations. Instead, when Camerota challenged her — "No, the foundation's money [is] other people giving to the foundation" — Conway seemed to concede.

"Other people, but he — okay," she said. "But he's been incredibly generous."

Trump did recently give $25,000 to the Trump Foundation, but it wasn't a donation: It was a reimbursement. In 2013, the Trump Foundation made an improper $25,000 gift to a political group aligned with Florida Attorney General Pamela Bondi (R). IRS rules prohibit tax-exempt charities from making such gifts. After The Post reported on that gift, Trump reimbursed the foundation, saying that the money should have come out of his pocket in the first place. He also paid a $2,500 penalty tax.

Conway's appearance on CNN was one of several recent attempts by the Trump campaign — including Trump's running mate, Gov. Mike Pence (Ind.) — to rebut criticism of Trump's past charitable giving. But no one in the Trump campaign has provided any new details about what they believe Trump gave. Or any new proof of a gift from his own pocket.

The Post has made its own effort to verify that Trump did give away millions of his own money, as he has claimed. But after contacting 326 charities, that search has turned up little. Between 2008 and this May, The Post identified just one gift that seemed to be from Trump's own pocket. It was in 2009, for less than $10,000.

This year, after Trump came under media scrutiny, he has made at least two personal gifts to charity: Trump gave $1 million to a veterans group in May, making good on a promise he'd made during a televised fundraiser four months earlier. And Trump gave $100,000 to a Louisiana church to help recovery efforts after Trump toured flood-ravaged areas near Baton Rouge. With those two donations, it appeared that Trump had given more money to charity in four months — under heavy media scrutiny — than he had in the previous 10 years combined.

On Monday, Trump's spokeswoman, Hope Hicks, said that The Post's article on the Trump Foundation was "not at all accurate," but did not cite any specific inaccuracies. Hicks did not respond to follow-up questions asking for those specifics.

In a written statement, Hicks also noted that Trump did not take a salary for his charitable work: "Mr. Trump serves the Foundation without compensation."

In the most recent IRS filings, Trump said he worked a half-hour per week on the Trump Foundation's business. For the nine years before that, Trump had told the IRS he worked "zero hours" per week.

In Tuesday's interview on CNN, Camerota pressed Conway about Trump's income tax returns, which the nominee has declined to release. Since Trump claims that his tax returns are under audit, Camerota asked: Would Trump release a letter from the IRS, proving that was so?

"Are you calling him a liar?" Conway asked.

Overnight Energy: Trump To Visit Flint Water Plant Wednesday

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 13, 2016

TRUMP TO FLINT: Donald Trump is planning Wednesday to visit Flint, Mich., and its water plant, as the city struggles to recover from a devastating drinking water crisis.

Campaign officials told news outlets such as the Detroit News and AP about the planned trip, but did not go into many details about the Republican presidential candidate's schedule.

Trump has been working in recent weeks to reach out more to black communities, including a recent visit to Detroit and to a majority-black church there.

Democrats have been more vocal than Republicans about Flint, a majority-black city whose water has been tainted with lead since a Gov. Rick Snyder (R) appointee switched Flint's water source in April 2014.

Hillary Clinton visited the city twice during the primary season, and participated in a Democratic presidential primary debate there with Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.).

Trump told the Detroit News earlier this month that the Flint crisis "is a situation that would have never happened if I were president."

Read more here.

PIPELINE DEVELOPER WILL 'TRUST THE PROCESS': The company behind the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline project says it will "obey the rules and trust the process" as the Obama administration considers whether new assessments of the pipeline are necessary.

"I am confident that as long as the government ultimately decides the fate of the project based on science and engineering, the Dakota Access Pipeline will become operational, bringing a safer means of transportation to a much needed supply of oil to communities across the country," Energy Transfer Partners Chairman and CEO Kelcy Warren wrote in a memo to staff.

"So we will continue to obey the rules and trust the process."

The memo is a vote of confidence for the $3.8 billion project. It comes days after the Obama administration said it would halt construction on the 1,200-mile long pipeline while it considers whether new environmental tests for its route are necessary.

Warren's memo, sent Tuesday, reiterated the company's position that it did everything it could to consider objections from North Dakota tribes while routing the pipeline. He also dismissed concerns about the pipeline's threat to drinking water supplies, and noted a judge's Friday decision approving of federal permitting of the project.

Read more here.

The tribe responds: The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which is suing over the pipeline project, dismissed Warren's memo on Tuesday.

"It is unfortunate that the corporate world chooses to ignore the millions of people and hundreds of tribal nations who stand in opposition to the destruction of our lands, resources, waters and sacred sites," tribe chairman Dave Archambault II said.

"Energy Transfer Partners has proven time and time again that the bottom line for them is money. The bottom line for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is and will always be protecting our lands, people, water and sacred sites from the devastation of this pipeline. Our fight isn't over until there is permanent protection of our people and resources from the pipeline."

HOUSE GOP SOUNDS ALARM ON EPA REG: Republicans in two House committees pressed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Tuesday to justify a proposed regulation on hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) used in air conditioning and refrigeration.

The leaders of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's energy and power subcommittee and the House Small Business Committee warned in their letter that the April proposal is expensive and potentially illegal.

"We have serious concerns about this rule's impact on American businesses and consumers, and we also believe that it exceeds the agency's statutory authority by establishing a new and expansive global warming program never intended by Congress," they wrote to the EPA.

The EPA is aiming to phase down HFCs, a potent greenhouse gas, and to allow the use of replacement substances.

ON TAP WEDNESDAY I: The Hill hosts an event at the Newseum called "Preparing for the Next Disaster: A Policy Discussion on Community Resilience," featuring Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.), and Timothy W. Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness at FEMA. Topics of discussion include preparedness efforts to increase community resilience and the role of federal, state & local government in pre-disaster mitigation. RSVP and watch live here.

ON TAP WEDNESDAY II: The House Science Committee will hold a hearing on its subpoena power over state attorneys general investigating Exxon Mobil Corp.

The hearing is likely to solidify divisions between Republicans and Democrats over the subpoena process. Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas) says his committee has the power to subpoena Eric Schneiderman (N.Y.) and Maura Healey (Mass.), two Democrats investigating allegations that Exxon lied about the extent of its climate science research. Democrats reject Smith's contention and say state attorneys general shouldn't have the federal government interfering in their investigations.

It's one of the many subplots in the fight over Exxon's climate science, and it will take center stage on Wednesday.

Rest of Wednesday's agenda ...

A Senate Appropriations Committee panel will hold a hearing on nuclear energy. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz will testify.

A federal judge will hear from the Standing Rock Sioux, which is appealing a ruling allowing the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

AROUND THE WEB:

In opening statements Tuesday in the federal trial of the accused occupiers of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, attorneys presented contrasting views of the protest as an armed, military-style occupation and as a political protest, the Oregonian reports.

Reykjavik, Iceland's capital city, set a goal to be carbon-neutral by 2040, Voice of America reports.

Residents of Fresno, Calif., say a switch in water supplies has caused elevated lead levels in their drinking water, Reuters reports.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Check out Tuesday's stories...

-Utility reaches $4 million settlement in California gas leak

-Green Republican sees party 'evolving' on clean energy

-Trump plans to visit Flint

-Feds move to protect Joshua tree

-Chevy's electric car to have 238 mile range

-Trump: Climate change science still needs to be 'investigated'

-ND pipeline company will 'trust the process' after project halted

Please send tips and comments to Timothy Cama, tcama@thehill.com; and Devin Henry, dhenry@thehill.com. Follow us on Twitter: @Timothy_Cama, @dhenry, @thehill

After Floods Damaged Court, Greenbrier To Host Tennis Event

Associated Press, September 14, 2016

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.Va. (AP) – The Greenbrier is ready to host its annual tennis classic after floods badly damaged its stadium court in June.

The Beckley Register-Herald reports (http://bit.ly/2c8XIxs) that the fifth annual Greenbrier Champions Tennis Classic is taking place this Saturday and Sunday. It features Venus Williams, Madison Keys, John McEnroe and Pete Sampras.

The Greenbrier's 2,500-seat tennis stadium was damaged during the June floods, which killed 23 people statewide. The clay playing surface was ruined, and The Greenbrier replaced it with a hard court.

Terry Deremer, the resort's director of tennis, said flood waters were 20 feet high into the lower level seating the morning after the floods.

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Information from: The Register-Herald, http://www.register-herald.com

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Cooler Temperatures Help Reduce Idaho Wildfire Activity

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

LOWMAN, Idaho (AP) – This year's largest wildfire burning in the rugged wilderness in Idaho has been slowed by cooling temperatures, allowing firefighters to hold containment efforts.

The so-called Pioneer Fire has burned about 291 square miles since July 18 and was 56 percent contained by Tuesday. More than 1,100 firefighters are currently working to suppress the flames.

Forest officials say a dry cold front currently moving into central Idaho has increased the chance of precipitation. The boost in moisture is expected to reduce fire activity.

However, homes throughout Lowman are still being encouraged to be ready to evacuate in case conditions change.

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Climate Change “Significant And Direct” Threat To US Military: Reports

By Idrees Ali

Reuters, September 14, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

FEMA HOUSING

Struggle Remains To Find Housing For Displaced Flood Victims: “We Are Baton Rouge People. They Need To Keep Us Here”

By Terry Jones

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 13, 2016

When the American Red Cross announced it was closing the shelter at the Baton Rouge River Center on Thursday, Tameka Polk and the more than 400 displaced people taking refuge there panicked.

“We just asked, ‘Are y’all just going to put us out? We weren’t homeless before the flood,’ “ Polk said Tuesday afternoon as she tended to a stroller holding the 2-year-old son of a friend.

Their fears subsided when they learned Tuesday morning the shelter isn’t being shut down, per se; it’s being moved across town to the Stage 5 building at Celtic Studios on Airline Highway. And flood victims like Polk, who are still awaiting assistance to find temporary housing in the wake of last month’s devastating floods, will be bused to the new location.

“We were overjoyed we heard we were going back there,” Polk said.

As of midnight Monday, there were 630 displaced flood victims living in seven shelters across the state, according to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services. The River Center in downtown Baton Rouge is serving the largest population, with 411 displaced victims counted on Monday.

The state on Monday had reported there were only 204 people in the downtown shelter. But officials said Tuesday the figure was lower because it didn’t account for those individuals who had left the shelter during the day but returned at night.

Vicki Eichstaedt, a Red Cross spokesperson, said the disaster relief organization is closing the River Center shelter at the request of the city-parish, which is ready to put the facility back to its commercial use.

Baton Rouge Chief Administrative Officer William Daniel said they need the River Center by Thursday in order to prepare for several high-profile events in October, including Elton John’s nine-city concert tour on Oct. 5.

“We’ve already canceled all of the September events. When things were being negotiated with the state to use the facility … we asked if they could tell us what date they could get out the River Center so we’ll be able to do business,” he said. “They came back with that date.”

Because Patrick Mulhearn, Celtic’s executive director, was happy to provide a place for evacuees to live — at least until November, when production begins on an independent feature film — Red Cross now has a little more time to help flood victims figure out their next step.

But the process is not happening quick enough, Metro-Councilwoman Tara Wicker said Tuesday.

“A bulk of these individuals were in rental situations. As I understand it, there are no resources available for property owners renting their properties,” Wicker said. “We need assistance for them so we can put those rental properties back on the market.”

Red Cross has been meeting with its shelter residents to determine their needs and offer solutions, Eichstaedt said.

“FEMA is offering a number of solutions: temporary shelter assistance, which sometimes includes short hotel stays, and the ‘Shelter in Place’ option,” Eichstaedt said. “We’re trying to counsel everyone to make sure they get in touch with caseworkers and explore what options might be available to them.”

However, many flood victims still living in shelters aren’t qualifying for help from FEMA. And those that are say the options being offered aren’t viable solutions.

Polk’s friend, Marie Johnson, said the Federal Emergency Management Agency did offer financial help in booking her a temporary hotel stay in New Orleans for her and her two small children.

But, Johnson said, “I have an 8-year-old in school here. That doesn’t work for me. … They expect us to pull our kids out of school and start over.”

Johnson was living in a Baton Rouge rental property that flooded. So was Mary Berthelot, who said she also hit dead ends with FEMA. Berthelot was also rejected for the limited financial assistance Red Cross is providing for qualified victims.

“They say there are these available hotels in all Houma, LaPlace and wherever else. They’re trying to ship us off and forget about us,” Berthelot said. “We are Baton Rouge people. They need to keep us here.”

That’s easier said than done, said Terri Ricks, deputy secretary for the state's Department of Children and Family Services.

Ricks said it's nearly impossible to accommodate the specific needs of flood victims right now, given the limited availability in the region's housing market after the floods.

"At this stage, everything is happening with a multi-agency approach," she said. "Every parish sees their residents as their responsibility. They don't want them to go. In no way is anybody being forced to go any place they don't want to go."

Ricks said she expects local governments to become more actively involved over the next eight weeks in finding suitable housing for evacuees still depending on shelters. She stressed that keeping shelters open for extended periods of time is not healthy for the flood victims.

"A month ago we had about 11,000 displaced individuals; today it's 600," she said. "No one is going to put these people out on the streets. There will be in-state options for people."

African American Homeowners Struggle To Rebuild After Flood

By Susan Buchanan

Louisiana Weekly, September 13, 2016

Many rural and urban African American homeowners who were flooded in south-central Louisiana last month face a host of worries, especially if they're low-income or seniors. Some of them are dealing with yet another high-water event. Those who received letters from Federal Emergency Management Agency denying them aid have little money for repairs. Others are watching their physical health deteriorate. Homelessness is a risk for people who lost their dwellings. And down the road, some flooded residents could be priced out of housing by the kind of gentrification seen in New Orleans after Katrina.

In one of the worst cases, the African American subdivisions of Pecan Acres and Pleasantview outside of New Roads in Pointe Coupee Parish flooded again last month. They've been in a continuous struggle with water. The Pecan Acres subdivision has officially flooded 16 or 17 times since it was founded 45 years ago, former Pointe Coupee Parish Police Juror Albert Dewey Dukes said last week. He represented the community for two decades before retiring in December. "In August, most of the homes in Pecan Acres were damaged or destroyed as the Portage Canal overflowed again," he said.

Governor John Bel Edwards toured Pecan Acres on August 30 and learned of its problems for the first time then.

"Pecan Acres never should have been developed, at least not for homes," Dukes said. The area was a swamp and a former dumping spot. The community relies on a drainage pump, the canal and a levee to keep water out. "The authorities can't even get in to clean the canal, and it hasn't been dredged in years," he said. The parish police jury is working on a project now to improve drainage and raise the levee, however.

Water has receded in Pecan Acres since mid-August, and Americorps volunteers have helped clean out homes. "Most of the families are doing the rebuilding now themselves," Dukes said. "Many of them are getting FEMA letters denying them assistance. That's because their homes are in a flood zone, and they haven't had the money to pay for the flood insurance that's required."

Those who can rebuild are likely to stay, even with the constant threat of being inundated. "Most of them can't afford to move," Dukes said.

After flooding from Hurricane Gustav in 2008, Pecan Acres residents joined in a class action suit, claiming the parish was derelict in its drainage management. A drainage pump failed in Gustav's rainfall, causing the canal to overflow and flooding homes. In 2012, residents received part of a $2 million insurance settlement.

In July of this year, the parish police jury solicited bids for a Pecan Acres flood-control project, financed by a FEMA hazard mitigation grant to improve drainage and strengthen barriers. The parish hopes to raise the levee along Bayou Pointe and Portage Canal.

Educator Monica Fabre grew up in Pecan Acres after her parents bought a house there in 1971. "They had been sharecroppers until the last cotton gins closed here in 1967," she said. "Then they scrimped and saved, picking pecans to buy their dream house." The community's 16 or 17 floods over 45 years were the recorded ones, she said. In fact, Pecan Acres flooded many more times than that. "Families had cinder blocks or bricks so we could raise our furniture off the floor before it rained," she said. "We would wade off from home in the morning to get to school."

Floodwater from the Portage Canal contains residential and industrial waste water, Fabre said. "People have been dying from cancer and long-term illnesses here younger and at higher rates than they should have," she said. "My mother died at 56."

"The soil and water needs to be tested for toxins," Fabre said. "But the parish may be afraid of what it will find." The state's Department of Environmental Quality hasn't done any recent sampling in Pecan Acres, she said.

Fabre was pleased that Governor Edwards visited Pecan Acres last month. "He put us on his radar screen," she said. "The state should have had us there all along." After his visit, Edwards released a statement saying that his administration is now aware of the area and its residents, and will do all it can to address their needs.

Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Russel Honore, who grew up in Pointe Coupee, met with Pecan Acres residents a number of times from late August to early September. He participated in a town hall meeting there last Thursday.

Fabre said residents of Pecan Acres and Pleasantview are the working poor and seniors on fixed incomes. "They can't afford flood insurance because that would mean not paying their electricity or other bills," she said. Since the August flood, many have received rejection letters from FEMA because of not having insurance. And for residents who do qualify for FEMA's up to $33,000 for home repairs, those payments are seldom the maximum amount and are only intended to cover basics, she said.

As for the availability of federal Small Business Administration loans to cover the bulk of a homeowner's repair work, "my guess is that, based on income, only three to five percent of families in Pecan Acres and Pleasantview would qualify," Fabre said.

Meanwhile, many of those residents are taking advantage of the state's Shelter at Home program, which is independent of FEMA. Shelter at Home provides up to $15,000 for repairs that can make a house safe while owners rebuild. "That gets your plumbing and lights running and a hot plate going," Fabre said.

Someday, resident buyouts could be an option for Pecan Acres and Pleasantview. "But it really isn't feasible for seniors in their eighties and nineties to move," Fabre said.

Fabre said members of her family in greater Baton Rouge, about 37 miles southeast of Pecan Acres, also flooded in August. "My cousins and other relatives in Baker, Zachary and North Baton Rouge all had water for the first time ever," she said. Baker is a small, mostly African-American city in East Baton Rouge Parish, and Zachary is a city—about half white and the rest Black, Asian and Hispanic—in East Baton Rouge. North Baton Rouge is a mostly Black neighborhood in the capital.

Fabre worries that urban areas like North Baton Rouge, which is blighted but has affordable housing, might become gentrified as the city recovers. "Eleven years after Katrina, some New Orleaneans living in Pointe Coupee are still trying to move home, but they can't afford Orleans now because of its gentrification," she said.

Isaiah Marshall, managing partner at consultants Sable International in Baton Rouge, has a number of concerns about African Americans who flooded in and near the capital."North Baton Rouge and Monticello were hit pretty hard," he said. Marshall is a former director of the now-dormant Baton Rouge Black Chamber of Commerce. Monticello is a mostly African American community in East Baton Rouge Parish.

"The water's gone, but some of the homes that flooded in these areas still aren't gutted," Marshall said. Flood victims with poor credit histories are frustrated as they search for loans and decent housing, he said. In African-American areas that were inundated, the need for mental health services is expected to grow. Nonprofits and Black-owned small businesses will struggle for assistance as they try to recover.

Following the flood, homelessness will be on the rise, Marshall predicted. He noted that the large shelter at Baton Rouge River Center is scheduled to close in mid-September. Early last Thursday, the shelter housed 419 evacuees, down from 11,000 in mid-August, the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services said.

Flood Victims Begin To Move Into FEMA Mobile Housing Units

By Robbie Reynold

WAFB-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 13, 2016

BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) –

On a mobile device? Click here to take a look at the mobile housing units.

The manufactured housing units for flood victims are slowly making their way to neighborhoods in south Louisiana.

FEMA said that 16 of the manufactured housing units (MHUs) are currently occupied. That is out of the more than 200 units that have been set up on different sites across the affected parishes. Officials said the remaining units either still need utilities or are in final preparations.

Tonia Kinchen said she is happy to have gotten her unit so early. She has been making the 30 minute drive to her son's home every day since she lost everything in the recent flooding.

She works on her house on Prescott Road and travels back to her son's house on Burbank Drive to sleep. However, that is about to change now that she has a MHU parked in her front yard.

Kinchen and her husband will be moving in within the next few days once it is fully operational.

"They have beds, they have sheets. They have blankets, dishes. The whole nine yards. So it's something to start you off with," Kinchen said.

However, Kinchen said it will still be difficult transition. She signed a year-long contract to use the trailer, but hopes to be back in her repaired home before then, and before it starts to take an emotional toll.

"The hardest part is just not being your home here. Home is home. No matter how you look at it," Kinchen said.

FEMA officials said they are processing applications for trailers as quickly as they can and distributing them from sites like the one on Blount Road. Kinchen said she didn't lose phone or internet service during the flooding, and that's why she got her unit earlier than other people.

"A lot of people didn't have access to a phone, didn't have access to internet, and FEMA said like I was on the top of the list," Kinchen said.

FEMA officials said more than 550 have been ordered for the flooding disaster, but the number will grow as they work with flood victims on their housing needs.

People can apply online at disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-3362. Applicants must have more than $17,000 in property damage to be eligible.

FEMA said people can continue to register through October.

As of Tuesday, Sept. 13, officials reported that 58,800 people had registered with FEMA in East Baton Rouge Parish. Livingston Parish had 28,603 registered with the agency followed by Ascension Parish with 11,446 and Tangipahoa with 9,063.

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With Hundreds Still Homeless, FEMA Trailers Remain Unused

By Brett Buffington And Trey Couvillion

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 13, 2016

BATON ROUGE – FEMA is trying to come up with answers as to why an extensive number of modular homes set aside for flood victims have remained unused. Tonight, more than 100 modular units still sit empty since showing up to the drop site.

At a town hall meeting this evening in Watson, a spokesperson for FEMA said they are slowing transitioning to a recovery effort. The spokesperson also said they are working with local agencies to place the units in a safe location.

"We're slowly turning from response to recovery. This is going to be a long time effort," the spokesman said. "The thing with the manufactured house units, is that we have to work with the state and local officials that we put it in a safe place."

But News 2 was told similar information from a FEMA employee about a month ago. Willie Nunn, who is in charge of the units, said in August that they were looking to inspect the sites for the temporary homes back when they arrived.

"Yes, we're looking to make sure that the house is environmentally sound. We have to go out and inspect the site," Nunn said.

The inspection is supposed to include a check from FEMA to ensure the unit is not placed in a flood plain. But this unit on Fairlane Drive in Denham Springs, marked on FEMA's own map as a designated flood zone. And still a month later, FEMA is having a hard time explaining why these homes have not been put to use.

"It takes a while to install one at a location, we can't just make a home available in 24 hours," said the spokesman.

A month earlier though, Nunn said they were ready.

"We have them here, we have to folks here ready to take them out to the sites where we need to have them."

One thing that FEMA has had a consistent answer with is insisting the modular homes are a last resort for flood victims. FEMA has instructed families to find hotels. After calling 10 hotels in the Baton Rouge area, News 2 found none that could accommodate an extended stay. But tonight, FEMA's final answer as to why the tax payer funded homes still sit parked, is less than informing.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Charleston County To Review Federal Preliminary Updated Flood Insurance Maps

Charleston (SC) Moultrie News, September 13, 2016

Charleston County's Building Inspection Services Department is receiving and will be reviewing the new preliminary flood maps provided by the Federal

Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Flood Insurance Rate Maps are being updated as part of a map modernization program conducted by FEMA.

The updated flood mapping will provide property owners with up-to-date flood hazard information and should prevent unnecessary insurance purchases.

FEMA will host public meetings to provide the public opportunities to review the maps and ask questions. The dates of those meetings have not yet been announced. The public will also have an opportunity to file objections to the mapping of their property. Details about the objection process will be released at the public meetings and on FEMA's website.

"The preliminary maps will start a year or more process to get to a final set of maps for our citizens. The maps will be technically reviewed and presented to the public sometime this fall, according to FEMA and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Following the public meetings, a 90-day period will allow anyone who has problems with the maps to file their concern with FEMA," said Charleston County Building Inspections Director Carl Simmons. "The current maps and regulations will remain official and used until the new maps are finalized and approved by local ordinances."

The projected effective date of the maps, following the County's review and comments as well as the public meetings and objection filings, is April of 2018, according to FEMA.

Citizens with properties within the jurisdiction of a municipality who have questions should contact that municipality's floodplain coordinator. Citizens with properties within unincorporated Charleston County who have questions, should call 843-202-6957. You can also reach the FEMA Map Information eXchange at 1-877-FEMA MAP (1-877-336-2627).

Citizens can later view the maps on the FEMA's Map Service Center here: https://msc.fema.gov/portal/

(Please note: FEMA has not yet posted the maps for Charleston County. Check the website for updated information.)

Goose Lake Residents Ask Grundy County To Get FEMA Flood Maps Updated

By Heidi Litchfield

Morris (IL) Herald-News, September 13, 2016

MORRIS – Nicole Blustein, a resident of Goose Lake, asked the Grundy County Board during its Tuesday meeting to update FEMA flood maps.

"We are joined tonight by many of our neighbors as this issue impacts approximately 40 properties and families in the county," she said during public comment. "For years, we have been incorrectly designated by FEMA as being in a high-risk flood zone due to our proximity to Claypool Drainage District."

She said the designation has cost some neighbors between $15,000 and $30,000 in flood insurance that they will never see a return on because they are not in a floodplain.

"This can have a severe negative impact on our property value as well," she said.

In 2014, the county, along with Claypool and Maine drainage districts and the municipalities of Diamond and Coal City, conducted a hydrologic study and found that property along White Tie Road, Tony Cove Lane and Rollin Lane in Goose Lake were not in a flood zone.

Blustein said that regardless of the study's findings, nothing will be changed until FEMA is updated.

The residents have met with the county's Land Use Committee and understand that the work required would cost the county money, but said the change would not only benefit the 40 homeowners but also help for economic development purposes to have accurate flood maps on file.

John Kerr, another Goose Lake resident, also asked the board to move forward.

County Board Chairman Chris Balkema said the first quote for the letter, which includes significant engineering work to complete, that the county received came in higher than expected at $35,000.

County Administrator Doug Pryor said the county has a request for bid posted on the county website for the work.

"We're trying to get it down to a realistic quote," Balkema said.

Denham Springs City Council Member Wants To Gauge Public Input On City's Future With NFIP

By John Dupont

Livingston Parish News (LA), September 13, 2016

DENHAM SPRINGS – A city council member will recommend the City of Denham Springs host a public hearing to gauge response on withdrawl from the National Flood Insurance Program.

Councilman Chris Davis is not seeking a kneejerk response to the proposal, but he believes FEMA and its subsidiary flood insurance program have not adequately served Denham Springs residents.

He will proposal at the City Council meeting tonight at 6.

"We're a month into this flood and there hasn't been a lot of discussion," he said.

Davis says nine of 10 residents have told him they do not want to elevate or raze their homes.

Davis believes the city could possibly emerge stronger without help from FEMA.

"This isn't a decision the five of us on the council can make," he said. "It's up to the residents, whose lives are being affected. They need to speak and they need to be heard."

He said he was pleased with efforts from the state's Congressional delegate, but that the city cannot brush off its problems to Capitol Hill.

Davis agrees with a suggestion from Congressmen Garret Graves and Cedric Richmond that more money for rebuilding would serve the city better than trailers.

He said a $50,000 damage stipend to residents would go much further than FEMA trailers.

The purchase, placement and removal of each trailer costs FEMA $100,000, Davis said.

"I think they should do that instead of having a program that wastes money," he said.

Davis said FEMA has "strong-armed" communities into participating in their program.

"I don't think our Congressional leaders that in mind when they passed the Stafford Act to respond to disaster in an appropriate way."

Even the loss of 1,000 homes would prove disastrous, Davis said.

FEMA cannot address the plight of Denham Springs as it did for New Orleans.

"For New Orleans to absorb a hit like Katrina was one thing, but to treat Denham Springs like New Orleans will be the death of Denham Springs," Davis said.

National Flood Insurance Program Deadline Extended In Louisiana

KATC-TV Lafayette (LA), September 13, 2016

FEMA has granted an extension for Louisiana National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policyholders affected by August's severe storms and flooding to file proof-of-loss claims.

You now have 120 days from the date of your loss to file a flood insurance claim if you're a Louisiana NFIP policyholder. The extension doubles the 60-day deadline NFIP usually requires for policyholders to submit a fully documented, signed and sworn proof-of-loss claim.

FEMA determined Louisiana policyholders need more time to file claims given the recent flooding's magnitude.

The proof-of-loss is included in the claims package that documents your flood losses. The claims package should include:

Photos or video of your flood damage.

A comprehensive and itemized list of what was damaged.

Receipts, if possible, for your damaged items along with any other supporting documents that show the value of what you lost.

Contact your insurance company as soon as possible to begin processing your claim.

FEMA has streamlined its process to better service flood insurance claims and answer questions. You may call 800-621-3362 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and select Option 2. If you use TTY, call 800-462-7585. If you use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362.

Call-center staff are available to assist you with information regarding your policy, offer technical flood guidance to aid in recovery, and respond to general as well as complicated questions about the NFIP. FEMA can transfer you to your insurance carrier for additional assistance if you have questions specifically about your insurance claim.

FEMA Floodplain Findings

KIDY-TV San Angelo (TX), September 13, 2016

SAN ANGELO, TX – People living south of FM 2105 and north of Cauley Lane got some big news at today's commissioners court meeting.

After about a four-year process, this area is not longer declared a "floodplain."

FEMA approved a study by Chalk Mountain that showed the area was not a floodplain.

Homeowners were having to pay more for insurance because of the designation — now those rates should decrease.

There's also another step to help with those insurance costs.

"If they find that they're still in the floodplain, they can always petition their local land surveyor to create an elevation certificate, and that's going to clarify further whether or not they're in or out of the floodplain," Kenneth Dees, president of Chalk Mountain LLC, said.

To check the location of your home, call your country commissioner. They will have a map of the area.

(© 2016 KIDY)

MITIGATION

Officials Warn Of Long Haul With Hazard Mitigation Program

By Jake Jarvis

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 13, 2016

At the first of several meetings to introduce the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to flood-affected communities, officials warned residents that seeing help from the program will take a while.

The grant program seeks to identify and implement measures a community can take to mitigate future disasters, which could mean buying out a homeowner and demolishing the home, elevating the home or rebuilding it to meet higher safety standards.

Speaking Tuesday evening in the gymnasium of the old Clendenin Middle School, Brian Penix, the state's hazard mitigation officer, couldn't tell a crowd of about 200 residents from Clendenin and the surrounding area how long it would take to see any of that grant money. When members of the crowd pressured him, he said it could take months, even years.

"To be honest with you, this is a very, very long process," Penix said. "We tell everyone, even when we were doing the old massive buyouts, we would tell them to go on about their lives as if they're not being helped."

That's in part because of how competitive the grant program it is. Penix said communities first have to submit a lengthy application to the state, highlighting the community's priorities for distributing grant money. The state, in turn, has to submit its own application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which oversees the grant program.

Having applied for aid or received aid through FEMA's Individuals and Households Program doesn't have anything to do with participating in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Even if someone was denied for the Individuals and Households Program, they still may participate in hazard mitigation if their community qualifies. Individuals may not apply for hazard mitigation on their own.

Once the community's application has been approved, officials will identify what part of the program homeowners qualify for, using the list of priorities the community laid out in its application.

The town of Clendenin could prioritize helping elderly homeowners first, or helping homeowners who live closest to the Elk River. Regardless of how the town decides to prioritize how the grant money is distributed, each town has to follow the same general guidelines.

The program only allows homes located in the floodway — the area directly adjacent to the river or stream that can reasonably expect to flood regularly — to be bought from the homeowner and torn down.

"If I would do that during this event, I would destroy whole communities," Penix said. "It isn't just a matter of buying the house to get you out of there, that house would be bought with deed restrictions preventing any further developments on that property. They can't develop it, they can't sell it, and they don't get taxes from it."

Kevin Sneed, the state's national flood insurance program coordinator, said homeowners can go to mapwv.gov/floods to see if their home falls in the floodplain or floodway. Once on the website, under the "expert" view, the floodplain is show with thin red cross hatching. Areas in the floodway are outlined with a bold red line.

The two other options, which FEMA officials said it and the state prefers, involves reconstructing the damaged home or elevating the home at no cost to the homeowner. If a structure has been substantially damaged, but a structural engineer doesn't think the home can be safely elevated without collapsing, the house will be entirely rebuilt.

Having a home elevated or rebuilt would require the homeowner to agree to purchase flood insurance for the rest of the home's life. This insurance would be significantly cheaper than the cost of flood insurance would have been normally since the home was just updated, according to Sneed.

At the Tuesday night meeting, residents worried that if the town of Clendenin applied for the grant, their homes would be on the hook to be demolished, whether the homeowner likes it or not.

Cristina Pop, a hazard mitigation specialist, tried to ease put those fears to rest. The program is entirely voluntary, she said, and up until the homeowner signs a contract agreeing to let go of their property and allow it to be demolished, they can back out at any time. Even if the town of Clendenin would qualify for the program, homeowners still wouldn't have to participate in it.

The next public meeting to discuss the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program will be held at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Elkview Middle School. Other meetings will be at Thursday at Alderson City Hall; Sept. 19 at Geary Elementary/Middle School; Sept. 27 at Marlinton Town Hall; and Sept. 28 at Alumni Hall in Richwood. All of those meetings start at 6 p.m.

First Public Meeting Held In Clendenin On Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant

West Virginia MetroNews, September 13, 2016

CLENDENIN, W.Va. — The first of several public meetings planned on FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program was held Tuesday night in Clendenin as the three-month mark since the June 23 flood approaches.

Residents came to the meeting with all sorts of different questions on their options under the program.

"My changes of rebuilding here are not good," said City Recorder David Ross. "There's heavy damage to my house and limited aid available."

State Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Jimmy Gianato said there are a number of factors that affect whether residents can rebuild.

"Where they are in the flood plain, can they comply with local flood plain ordinances," he said. "We want to try to maintain the community as a whole so we're working with the county. The county has to put together an application with the state for whatever they decide to do."

Gianato said the grant is very competitive, and not everyone could be considered.

"There's a limited amount of money available for this. All the applicants will go into a pool. This is a statewide grant; it's not just Kanawha or Greenbrier county. Mitigation is statewide so you're competing with applicants from all over the state."

For that reason, Lula Jack, who said her home had sustained minimal damage but her sister's house was destroyed, wasn't holding her breath for any aid.

"I don't feel like there's going to be any help through FEMA. It's just going to be certain ones. The way I understood it, they're not going to help everybody," Jack said.

Heather Gillenwater hadn't been in her home since the flood, and said she had gotten no clear answers since from any organization.

"We feel like we haven't gotten any answers, and that we've been passed around from one place to the next," she said. "We filled every form out that you can fill out and we still feel like we don't know anymore (than we did since) June 23."

Options under the program include stand-alone elevation of structures, relocation of structures to outside floodplains and full acquisition and demolition of properties.

The public meetings continue Wednesday at 6 p.m. at Elkview Middle School and Thursday at 6 p.m. at Alderson City Hall.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin estimated Tuesday that West Virginia had incurred roughly $300 million in flood damage, and would call lawmakers into special session next week.

Denham Springs Residents Voice Frustrations Over Regulations That Could Require Them To Elevate Their Homes

By Heidi Kinchen

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 13, 2016

DENHAM SPRINGS — Residents packed Old City Hall's second-floor courtroom, overflowed to the stairwell and down into the lobby Tuesday night to voice their frustrations to Denham Springs officials about the regulations that could require some of them to elevate their homes before receiving permits to repair or rebuild.

Building Official Rick Foster said the city had received 260 applications for permits so far, and only 10 homes had been declared "substantially damaged" — meaning, the cost of repairing the home will exceed 50 percent of its fair market value.

Related

Homes in flood hazard areas that have been substantially damaged and are below base flood elevation must be elevated before the homeowner can receive a permit for repairs, according to rules the city adopted in order to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Foster said in all 10 cases in which the city declared homes substantially damaged, the homeowners agreed with the determination.

Councilman Chris Davis said the calculation can be skewed significantly by general contractor estimates, which must include overhead expenses that homeowners would not incur when buying their own supplies and doing the work themselves.

He suggested the city Permits Department should be able to accept a homeowner's repair estimate instead.

A licensed contractor is one of five sources for a repair estimate that the city can accept under the NFIP, according to a city-distributed flier on the topic. A local building and permits department also can make a repair estimate "where the unmanageable number of permits must be processed in a major post-disaster situation," the flier states.

Foster said having his limited staff perform repair estimate calculations is not feasible.

"If you think it's hard to get a contractor out there right now, imagine how hard it's going to be for our permit office," Foster said.

Davis said many homeowners either do not participate in the NFIP or would agree to drop their coverage for a private policy if it meant they could avoid having to elevate their homes.

Foster said there are 1,500 active NFIP flood insurance policies in the city — policies that could be put at risk or see significant rate increases if residents disregard the regulations and opt out of the insurance program.

Mayor Gerard Landry said a private insurance company may quote a lower rate today, then drop the policy and decline to renew it in future years. Private companies are not required to offer flood insurance, he said.

Residents concerned about having to elevate their homes should contact their congressional delegation, City Attorney Stephanie Hulett said.

"It will literally take an act of Congress to waive that requirement" for substantially damaged homes, she said.

Landry has been pushing federal officials, including members of Congress, to work on doing just that, Hulett said.

Debra Hebert said three different inspectors from the Federal Emergency Management Agency had visited her home on Kline Street, just a few blocks from the Amite River. The home took on 8 feet of floodwater.

"One of them told me every single home on this street is going to have to be elevated," Hebert said.

Contractors' repair estimates for the home have varied widely, ranging from about $55,000 to $100,000, said Larry Chumney, Hebert's boyfriend.

"It's all over the map," Chumney said. "It's ridiculous."

Hulett stressed that residents should ask contractors for a "barebones" estimate.

"You don't want them to tell you how much it will cost to replace your marble counter tops and all the nice things you had in your home before the flood," Hulett said. "You want them to tell you how much it will cost to make the home livable. That's all."

City Gets $1.3M For Dove Creek

By John Purcell

Amsterdam (NY) Recorder, September 13, 2016

Amsterdam was recently awarded more than $1.3 million to replace damaged retaining walls along Dove Creek and further stabilize the waterway.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide $1,324,744 to the city of Amsterdam for the demolition and removal of damaged retaining walls along a portion of Dove Creek, along with cleaning out the riverbed. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds will also be used to install a new pre-cast stackable concrete retaining walls where sections are failing. Heavy stone fill will be placed along areas of erosion on the banks of Dove Creek to provide erosion protection.

Amsterdam Mayor Michael Villa said stabilization of Dove Creek is another step in the city's recovery process.

"We thank the Governor's Office for helping secure these additional funds as we look to provide protection against flooding, wind and power outages," Villa said in a statement. "The Dove Creek project is a critical component in this process."

Dove Creek runs through the center of the city, under Guy Park Avenue and West Main Street and into the Mohawk River. The creek was damaged during tropical storms Irene and Lee in 2011.

Montgomery County Executive Matthew Ossenfort said completing the stabilization of Dove Creek is a much needed resiliency project, which is "crucial to ensuring the safety of St. Mary's Hospital." He said services the hospital provides are even more critical during disasters.

Scott Bruce, chief operating officer of St. Mary's Healthcare, said severe flooding several years ago resulted in the hospital on Guy Park Avenue being evacuated, which raised awareness about the threat of flooding to patients and emergency services.

"As a community partner concerned about the improvement of our area's quality of life, and as a provider of critical health care and safety net services, we are pleased that this funding recognizes and responds to a serious community need," Bruce said in a statement. "The work that will be done with the Dove Creek stabilization project means that we are much less likely to have to face this type of community-wide crisis."

The tributary had been a growing problem for years with walls eroding, but the historic flooding exacerbated issues.

City Engineer Richard Miller had said erosion and crumbling retaining walls were consuming sections of property and the damage would cause further flooding and infrastructure problems if repairs were not completed.

Miller had said the problem starts with retention ponds and runoff from behind the shopping developments along the Route 30 corridor in the town of Amsterdam. Another issue he had identified was ownership and access to the creek, with the city only owning portions passing through roadways.

The stabilization project of Dove Creek begins near the intersection of West Main Street and Steadwell Avenue and extends approximately 1,300 feet to just north of the Steadwell Avenue near the entrance to St. Mary's Hospital.

Cuomo said the funds will "help harden critical infrastructure" in Amsterdam and ensure residents are protected from flooding following severe storms.

"As this region has experienced first-hand, extreme weather is the new normal and we must do everything we can to help communities become more resilient and prepared to whatever Mother Nature throws their way," Cuomo said in a news release.

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program allows New York state to establish priorities aimed at increasing resiliency, mitigating the risks of loss and damage associated with future disasters, and reducing hardship, according to the Governor's Office.

The Amsterdam Common Council accepted lead agency status for the State Environmental Quality Review of the Dove Creek reconstruction project in February. The city council also authorized John M. McDonald Engineering to provide assistance with a coordinated review of the project.

Previously, FEMA authorized $182,500 for phase 1 design and engineering for the project.

Eddy County, FEMA Talk Road Damages

By DeJanay Booth

Carlsbad (NM) Current-Argus, September 13, 2016

EDDY COUNTY — Eddy County Emergency Management met with representatives from the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and Federal Emergency Management Agency on Tuesday after the county filed for a disaster declaration.

"We put in a declaration for the local disaster (in the county) due to the damages starting Aug. 21. In our area, alone, we had significant damages," said emergency management director Jennifer Armendariz, who filed the declaration on Aug. 24.

Armendariz said Eddy County, FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security conducted a post disaster assessment meeting Tuesday morning. The two agencies will spend a few days assessing the damages and taking photos of the damaged roads and bridges to determine the cost of damages.

On Tuesday, the two agencies visited Dark Canyon, Long Horn and Dillahunty roads.

Armendariz said Dillahunty was still under repair from a flood in 2014. However, the heavy rainfall in August delayed the construction.

The Department of Homeland Security visited Eddy County Sept. 8 to talk about repairs and materials that might be needed moving forward.

Over the next few days, the two agencies will examine other roads and bridges, including Dogtown road.

Armendariz said the Eddy County worked with the Department of Homeland Security to submit a list of repairs and an estimate of the cost of damages. FEMA will evaluate those submission and create a worksheet of damages to compare. Any disagreements are arbitrated.

"(Compensation) all depends on FEMA and what's reimbursable," Armendariz said, mentioning the county's total expenditures are not guaranteed for reimbursement.

Armendariz said FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security visited the county in 2014 to inspect damage from flood waters. Compared to two years ago, she does not believe the cost of damages now will exceed the cost of damages from the flood in 2014.

However, the amount of time it takes to repair the current damages may take just as long.

"The event's over and it takes time to repair the roads," Armendariz said. "It's a long process."

Bryan City Council Looks At Solving Long Term Flooding Issues Around City

By Clay Falls

KBTX-TV Waco (TX), September 13, 2016

BRYAN – The Bryan City Council is looking at long term plans to fix flooding around the city.

Residents are frustrated with their homes being flooded out.

Debbie Hodges loves her house in the Willow Bend area of Bryan, except when her street gets too much rain.

"We've flooded three times in ten years that's quite a lot. That's enough to scare you to death," said Hodges.

She and multiple homes along Burton Creek have flooded in the past.

The last time was in May.

"Never worried about rain, never was scared of it but now every time it rains it's like it comes up this creek gets to a certain level there's no where for the water to go but into these houses and that's very dirty water it could give people very illnesses. There's a lot of things that go along with the flooding other than this flooding and then you've got mass mess to clean up," said Hodges.

Residents along Burton Creek tell us the city is long overdue fixing this problem. They'd like to see things like more clean outs of the creek as well as looking at engineering options.

"About annually every other year we had projects being funded and improvements being done. Some years are larger projects others smaller," said Paul Kaspar, Bryan City Engineer.

Tuesday afternoon the council got an update on mitigation plans. In the coming years the city hopes to spend $800,000 for concrete replacement of lower Burton Creek.

Debbie Hodges's neighbor Hannah Dodge says she hopes to take a buyout after her home was hit hard. The city will consider that for homes with flood insurance.

"We're continuing to work with FEMA on a buyout program so if you are in that consistently flood on a regular basis FEMA's got some programs so the city will continue to work with those and we're continuing to look at flood mitigation," said Mayor Jason Bienski.

"I would be appreciative of anything that they can do or figure out the engineers or whoever needs to do that," added Hodges.

The Bryan City Council did not take any action on the plan Tuesday.

Mayor Bienski tells us he is open to have more meetings and forums for residents to share their concerns.

City engineers tell us they have been doing maintenance on Burton Creek and clearing brush when they can, but say they have to be careful removing too much vegetation or it can create erosion problems.

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

County Receives $74,139 In Federal Emergency Food, Shelter Funds

Orangeburg (SC) Times And Democrat, September 14, 2016

Orangeburg County has been awarded federal funds under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program in the amount of $74,139.

The funds will be used to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county.

The selection was made by a National Board, which is chaired by U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency. The board consists for representatives of the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, USA National Council of Churches, The Jewish Federations of North America, The Salvation Army and United Way Worldwide.

Local Emergency Food and Shelter Boards are tasked with distributing funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

The Local Board for Orangeburg County determines how the funds awarded to the county are distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local agencies as well as any additional funds available under this phase of the program.

Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must 1) be private, voluntary non-profits with a 501©3 status, or units of government; 2) be eligible to receive federal funds; 3) have an accounting system; 4) practice nondiscrimination; 5) have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food or shelter programs; and 6) if they are a private, voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board.

Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

Orangeburg County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously to CASA Family Systems, The Salvation Army, Cooperative Church Ministries of Orangeburg, New Hope Ministries of Holly Hill and the Cooperative Ministry of North.

Public or private voluntary agencies that are interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact Janie Anderson at 1823 Scott Lake Road, Summerville, SC 29148 or 843-708-3936.

The deadline for applications to be received is Sept. 23.

FIRE GRANTS

Myrtle Beach Fire Department Gets $1M FEMA Grant To Hire New Firefighters

Myrtle Beach (SC) Online, September 13, 2016

The Myrtle Beach Fire Department has been awarded a $1 million FEMA grant to add nine full-time firefighters to its staff.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency confirmed the department was awarded a grant of $1,053,522 through its Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program.

Additional firefighters will afford the department the opportunity to dispatch more people to bigger emergencies and provide extra assistance on EMS and ambulance calls, according to a post on the Myrtle Beach City Government Facebook page.

The SAFER grants program was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities, according to the FEMA website. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association.

The grant will fund the salaries of the nine firefighters for two years, after which the city will be responsible for the cost, according to the city's post.

FEMA Awards Myrtle Beach Fire Department $1 Million For SAFER Program

WMBF-TV Myrtle Beach (SC), September 13, 2016

MYRTLE BEACH, SC (WMBF) – FEMA awarded the Myrtle Beach Fire Department a grant of $1 million for Staffing for the Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program, according to Myrtle Beach's City Government Facebook post.

"The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association," the post states.

The department will be able to staff nine additional full-time firefighters with the grant.

The $1 million will also allow the department to dispatch more firefighters to emergencies and provide assistance on EMS and ambulance calls.

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Elkin Fire Awarded $485K Grant

Elkin (NC) Tribune, September 13, 2016

The recruitment efforts of Elkin Fire Department just received a $485,726 boost this week, thanks to a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the department by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Capt. Theresa Knops with EFD made the announcement at Monday's Elkin Board of Commissioners meeting, and asked for the board's blessing to accept the grant and for other action related to the grant. For months, the commissioners and town officials have been wrestling with ways to tackle the town fire department's low volunteer numbers.

Notice of the grant acceptance came Aug. 26 to the fire department. The grant is for four years and requires no match in funds from the town, and there is no requirement to continue funding once the grant period has ended, Knops explained.

The grant period will be Nov. 20 of this year through Nov. 19, 2020, and it includes funding to hire a full-time employee with salary and benefits of $58,091 per year to coordinate the grant and recruitment efforts, as well as recruitment of an additional 20 volunteer firefighters with funding of $4,425 per firefighter per year, including funding for personal protective equipment such as helmets, coats, pants and boots, uniforms, physical exams and more.

Other funding in the grant will allow for implementation of a tuition and mileage reimbursement program for those personnel needing to travel to gain certification and education for the positions in the amount of $10,000 per year, as well as the development of an Explorer program in the final years of the grant period which would be designed to build interest among local youth for fire service, with funding for that program at $2,925 per Explorer for 10 youth and includes gear and uniforms.

The final funding amounts will be used to market the desire for new volunteers through social media advertising, website retargeting, radio advertising, television advertising, printed recruitment materials and improvements to the EFD website.

The department's original request in the grant application was for $570,566, but it was awarded at $485,726, Knops explained.

The commissioners unanimously approved acceptance of the FEMA SAFER grant Monday. In addition, the board unanimously approved adjusting the town budget to accept the funds and authorizing the development of the new full-time position to coordinate the grant and recruitment project.

"With such an extensive level of financial support from FEMA, we feel we can make great headway towards keeping our current firefighters invested in the fire department as well as growing our organization to meet current and future needs," said Chief Mike Morton. He recognized Knops and Assistant Chief Don Mitchell for their work in developing the grant proposal.

Nearly 70 percent of America's firefighters are volunteers, reported Knops in a press release Tuesday morning. Nationally, volunteers save communities an estimated $140.7 billion a year. Communities such as Elkin relay on volunteer firefighters as an effective and cost-efficient means of keeping their citizens and visitors safe, she continued. However, the number of volunteer firefighters has declined by over 18 percent nationwide in the past several decades while the number of incidents to which they respond has increased. At the same time, the average age of the volunteer fire service is increasing.

The SAFER program provides funding to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, front-line firefighters available in their communities, explained the press release. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the abilities of local fire departments to comply with staffing, response and operational standards so that communities are protected from fire and fire-related hazards.

"When emergencies happen, whether they are fires, accident, injuries, or illness, our most important factors in dealing with those emergencies are time and people," Morton said. "The likelihood that we can make a difference increases dramatically when we have enough trained people present to do all that needs to be done, and when we can complete those tasks in a quick and efficient manner."

In addition to the SAFER grant program, the Elkin Fire Department officials also asked the town board for permission to move forward with pursuing the addition of Elkin to Surry County's automatic aid agreement, which would allow Elkin to assist departments outside the town limits and those outside to assist Elkin automatically without having to verbally request assistance for reported structure fires or fire alarms.

A similar agreement was approved by the town board 10 months ago between Elkin and Arlington fire departments, and Morton reported during that time Arlington, which is located in Jonesville, has responded to assist Elkin in 37 incidents, while Elkin has assisted Arlington on eight occasions.

The Surry County agreement would automatically provide mutual aid in a number of layers, with the most immediate fire departments dispatched first, and others being called as the need expanded during an incident, Morton said.

The Elkin commissioners unanimously agreed to allow Elkin officials to further pursue being added to the county's automatic aid agreement, which will require formal acceptance by county and town officials before it is finalized.

Wendy Byerly Wood may be reached at 336-258-4035 or on Twitter @wendywoodeditor.

Members of the Elkin Fire Department, from right, Chief Mike Morton, Capt. Theresa Knops, Assistant Chief Don Mitchell and firefighter Stephen Kelly, are recognized by Mayor Lestine Hutchens as she reads a proclamation recognizing Oct. 6-15 as Fire Prevention Week during Monday night's Elkin Board of Commissioners meeting.

Meriden Awarded Grant To Purchase New Fire Engine

By Jordan Cuddemi

Valley News (VT), September 14, 2016

Meriden — The third time was the charm for Meriden Fire Capt. Jeff LeBlanc.

For the past three years, LeBlanc has applied to the Department of Homeland Security in hopes of landing a grant to replace the department's aging 1980s fire engine.

In 2014 and 2015, LeBlanc's attempts didn't bear fruit; the application he submitted in January of this year did.

The Meriden Volunteer Fire Department last month was granted $328,000 to purchase a new truck through a Federal Emergency Management Agency program that ensures departments are meeting "firefighting and emergency response needs," according to Homeland Security's website.

"It will increase our level of service to residents as well as allow us to provide better service to surrounding towns," LeBlanc said in a recent telephone interview.

The department's 1987 fire engine isn't up to new standards and has become a repair and maintenance problem, LeBlanc said. In addition, the truck is large and hard to maneuver on rural roads.

The new engine, which will have a smaller wheel base that will allow for easier maneuvering, will remedy those issues and more.

"It was getting to the point where the vehicle needed to be replaced," LeBlanc said.

With an annual operating budget of roughly $40,000, LeBlanc said, the department doesn't have much money left over at the end of each year to put into capital reserves for major purchases.

Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program aims to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters by providing grants for "critically needed resources to equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, enhance operations efficiencies, foster interoperability and support community resilience," according to the department's website.

Hundreds of other fire departments received assistance through the program, including 13 in New Hampshire.

Each department must provide a local match to the federal dollars. In Meriden's case, the department must provide 5 percent, or roughly $17,000, LeBlanc said.

The Meriden Fire Department has put together a committee to design a truck suitable for the department. The truck will be special ordered in segments, and LeBlanc said he hopes to have it in the firehouse by next summer.

"Building it takes some time," he said.

The new truck will join Meriden's fleet of a ladder truck, an engine and a utility vehicle.Jordan Cuddemi can be reached at jcuddemi@vnews.com or 603-727-3248.

Bucksport Fire Department Receives FEMA Grant For Smoke Detectors

By David Roza

Ellsworth (ME) American, September 13, 2016

BUCKSPORT — September has been a lucrative month for the Bucksport Fire Department.

Last week, the department was awarded one grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) worth $25,000, and another FEMA grant worth $240,595. That's a huge sum for the department, which has an annual budget of about $366,000.

Though the smaller grant will pay for new pagers and equipment, the large grant won't go toward shiny new trucks or turnout gear.

Instead it will pay for a much smaller tool that Fire Chief Craig Bowden thinks is indispensable toward keeping people safe from fire: the humble smoke detector.

"It can help warn people to get out when they need to," said Bowden, who in 2012 responded to a house fire in Orrington that killed three children and their father. According to the state fire marshal, there were no working smoke detectors in the home.

"When injuries or death may have been preventable with working smoke detectors, it cuts pretty deeply to our people," Bowden said. "You want to do something about it."

Through an unofficial survey, the Bucksport Fire Department found that at least 40 percent of homes in Bucksport either didn't have a smoke detector or didn't have an operable one.

"The regular smoke detectors you can get for $10 to $15," said Bowden, adding that batteries for those need to be replaced every six months. "Then for the cost of two batteries a year we're not protecting our own families."

If you can't bring the people to the smoke detectors, bring the smoke detectors to the people. This is the third year in a row Bowden has applied for the FEMA grant, and each application takes over 100 hours of work.

"The guidelines for the grant application are over 100 pages long," he said. "I probably spend 20 percent of my time doing grant research and grant writing."

All that work makes a successful grant that much more rewarding, but the real work is yet to come. Now that the department has the money, it has to put out bids for buying 2,400 combination smoke and carbon monoxide detectors: one for every single- and two-family home in Bucksport and Verona Island. Department staff also plan on buying 4,800 smoke detectors to place in those homes' sleeping areas.

"New regulations recommend one detector outside every sleeping area and one on every level of your home," Bowden said. "I've got 10 smoke detectors in my house."

Once the department staff buys the detectors, they will spend 10 months installing the 7,800 detectors and giving fire prevention lessons to the 2,400 homeowners in Bucksport and Verona Island.

"Starting in November, we will hit the pavement," said Bowden, who plans on putting the word out for volunteers to help with the installation and education efforts as November draws closer. "It's going to be a pretty ambitious goal to complete."

If some homes already have working smoke detectors, Bowden said they can probably take a few more. The new detectors will last 10 years and they don't even require a battery replacement every six months.

"We are certainly quite pleased to have been chosen for the award," Bowden said. "We may never know how many lives this saves or injuries this prevents."

Beaver Dam Fire Officials Seek Grant To Pay Firefighters At Turnbull Station

By Steve DeVane

Fayetteville (NC) Observer, September 13, 2016

The Beaver Dam Fire Department is seeking a federal grant to help it provide workers for the Turnbull Fire Station, a county official said Friday.

The Beaver Dam fire district board of directors, which oversees fire service in the area, agreed to build a fire station in Turnbull several years ago, after residents there saw their insurance rates increase. Some Turnbull residents became concerned because no firefighters are working at the station, while several paid employees work at the Beaver Dam station.

County officials say the Beaver Dam fire district is the county's largest, but its least populous. The district encompasses Beaver Dam, Turnbull and two other communities in southeastern Cumberland County.

Cumberland County Emergency Services Director Randy Beeman released a statement Friday saying that he spoke with Beaver Dam Assistant Fire Chief Gary Brock about the situation.

Brock told Beeman that the Beaver Dam Fire Department "has made application and preparation" for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, according to the statement.

A FEMA spokeswoman said the agency has not received an application from Beaver Dam Fire Department for a 2015 SAFER grant, which had a March 26 deadline.

Brock did not return a phone message left at the fire station Friday seeking clarification. County officials released a one-sentence statement from Assistant County Manager Tracy Jackson in response to a question about the department's application.

"I received a fax from Gary Brock that indicated they had applied but missed the deadline for the 2015 process," Jackson said.

Applications for the next round of SAFER grants is expected to open this winter, the FEMA spokeswoman said.

The SAFER grant program was created to provide money directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations, according to FEMA's website. The funds are meant to help increase and maintain the number of "front line" firefighters in communities, it said.

The goal of the program is to help fire departments comply with standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association.

Brock said the fire department has no issues related to fire coverage in the area, according to Beeman's statement.

Part-time employees work at the Beaver Dam station from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, Brock told Beeman.

County officials told the fire district board last year that both stations should be staffed. Sally Shutt, a county spokeswoman, said Tuesday that county officials would prefer that the fire district board have already staffed the substation as previously discussed.

County Manager Amy Cannon said in a Sept. 25 letter to Mike Ake, president of the fire district board, that money from a special fire tax that goes to low-wealth districts should be used to improve response times for emergency calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. An audit of the Beaver Dam district showed that money was being used to pay two firefighters to work during evening hours and on weekends, she said.

"Effective immediately, Beaver Dam (Volunteer Fire Department) must discontinue paying firefighters after 5 p.m. on weeknights and weekends," Cannon's letter said.

Beaver Dam fire officials said earlier this year that they are using money from the district's general fund to pay firefighters who work in the evenings and on weekends.

$1.3M Grant To Bring More Firefighters To Rural Alachua County

WUFT-FM Gainesville (FL), September 14, 2016

Three rural Alachua County communities are set to have an increase in firefighters by the end of the year.

The increase from three firefighters a shift to four will give the responding stations the minimum number of firefighters required by law to immediately go into a burning building when no one's life is in danger. (There are no minimums for when a person is inside the burning building.)

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners approved the increase in August through a $1.3 million SAFER grant for Alachua County Fire Rescue. The full grant amount will go to hiring one extra firefighter per shift — 12 total — for the Archer, Hawthorne and Waldo communities.

"Lots of things will be done more quickly and efficiently because of the grant," Fire Chief of Alachua County William Northcutt said.

Hiring is ongoing, and the goal is to have the new firefighters start by Dec. 1. All grant money will go toward their salaries and benefits.

SAFER — or Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response — grants are provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They allow for local fire departments and volunteer institutions to increase or maintain the number of firefighters in their communities, according to the FEMA website.

Alachua County's new grant will last for two years and builds on the one approved in 2014 for the previous two years. Before 2014, certain Alachua County stations had only two firefighters on call.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has a policy known as the two-in/two-out rule, which says that firefighters cannot begin interior firefighting until four firefighters are present.

The Archer, Hawthorne and Waldo stations have only three firefighters per shift, meaning that if a fire occurs in their jurisdiction and there is no imminent threat to life, they have to wait for other stations to join them.

"The closest station to Waldo is Melrose, which means it could be a 10- to 12-minute response time," said Harold Theus, Alachua County's deputy fire chief.

A simulation provided to WUFT News by Waldo's fire station showed what the standard procedure is if only three firefighters are available on scene.

The three arrive with a fire engine and a separate tanker truck, which is the main water supply for fighting fires, according to Lt. Misty Woods of the Waldo station.

Woods said firefighters take a 360-degree walk of the area to determine the best spot to enter the building, and they then bring their equipment to that spot. If there is no imminent threat to life in the building, she said, firefighters must wait to enter until another unit arrives.

Theus described the entire situation as "organized chaos."

The difference between having three and four firefighters at a fire, Theus said, could be the difference between saving the building and having it crumble to the ground.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

County Looks To Post-Hermine Plan

By Sean Rossman

Tallahassee (FL) Democrat, September 13, 2016

The Leon County Commission adopted measures Tuesday aimed at helping the county through the aftermath of Hurricane Hermine.

The commission gave staff the authority to hold, in conjunction with the city of Tallahassee, a series of community listening sessions to allow residents to give feedback on the preparation and response to Hermine. The commission also approved hiring a consultant to help with FEMA assistance and extended the local state of emergency for a third week.

The county, the city and eligible nonprofits haven't yet applied for federal assistance. Together with the state, they need to pass a 2-part test in order to receive federal assistance. The $10.4 million in preliminary storm damage the city, county and nonprofits have assessed is more than enough to clear the local threshold set by the federal government. The state, which is still compiling its numbers, must exceed about $26.5 million in damage.

The commission opted not to hire a disaster planning professional to help evaluate the county's vulnerabilities, strengths and expectations. Commissioner Mary Ann Lindley asked for the decision to be delayed. Lindley later asked county staff to come up with an incentive program with the city to help people maintain dangerous trees on their property. Numerous limbs and trees fell during Hermine, knocking down power lines and leaving residents without electricity for days and in some cases up to a week.

CHSP

The county also gave final approval for its $1.2 million share of Community Human Service Partnership funds, which will go to various social service agencies next fiscal year.

The commission also voted to continue to collaborate on the CHSP funding process with the city and the United Way of the Big Bend through 2018. The United Way board of directors voted earlier this year to create its own process — separate from the city and county — by which it would review and allocate dollars. The city, the county and the United Way have for years worked together to fund CHSP, which awards local grants to local nonprofits and social service agencies.

Budget

The commission gave tentative approval of its 2016-17 budget and property tax rate with no public comment or discussion.

The $246 million budget including capital and operational spending and is 3.2 percent larger than the current year's spending plan. It includes performance raises of up to 5 percent for county employees, a sidewalk program, funding for festivals and events and economic development incentives.

The county voted to maintain the current year's property tax rate. Under state law, this is considered a tax increase because property values are expected to improve. To avoid the bump, commissioners would have to reduce the property tax rate a little more than 1 percent.

The county will vote on the final budget and property tax rate at their meeting on Tuesday.

Odds and ends

The county also made the following decisions on Tuesday:

Approved using $50,000 in leftover tourism dollars for a concert at Doak Campbell Stadium on Nov. 12 featuring Old Dominion, Tyler Farr and Bobby Bones and the Raging Idiots. The Seminole Boosters, which is hosting the concert, had originally considered Toby Keith, or some other big country act, to play that weekend, but a contract was never signed.

After hearing a status report on the county's Zika fighting measures, the commission scheduled a public hearing to consider an ordinance governing mosquito control.

The commission voted unanimously to rename the Fort Braden Branch Library after Commissioner Jane Sauls, who isn't seeking reelection this year after 20 years on the commission.

The Glenn J. Winuk Humanitarian Service Award was given to Sam Carter, the executive director of Carter's Corner — which provides services to at-risk youth and student athletes.

County Looks For FEMA Help Following Hermine

By Regan McCarthy

WFSU-FM Tallahassee (FL), September 13, 2016

Leon County Commissioners are hiring a consultant to help get funding following Hurricane Hermine. County Administrator Vince Long says filing requests with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, can be tricky.

"There have been major rule changes since Hurricane Sandy and we believe that expertise is needed. It's also a reimbursable expenditure," Long says.

Long says the county has exceeded the damage cost required to receive FEMA assistance. He expects Florida to meet the $26-million state threshold required to get assistance from the federal agency.

FLOODS

Local Governments Awaiting Bad News As Assessors In East Baton Rouge, Ascension And Livingston Determine How The Flood Affected Property Values

By Steve Hardy

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 13, 2016

While tax assessors scramble to figure out how much everyone's property is worth post-flood, small government agencies like suburban and rural fire districts are holding their breath that their budgets won't be gutted.

When the governor declared a flood disaster, the assessor in every affected parish got a letter from the Louisiana Tax Commission reminding them they have to reevaluate property in the flooded areas. The assessors' evaluations determine how much government agencies can expect in tax revenue.

However, the state doesn't lay out a specific procedure for the emergency reassessments. Instead of calculating how much a house is worth, assessors are now concerned with finding out how much value has been lost.

"There's no standard out there that determines … how much of a reduction is warranted," said East Baton Rouge Assessor Brian Wilson.

"This is unprecedented."

Neither he nor Ascension Assessor Mert Smiley have laid out a specific formula for determining taxpayers' new property values. Tuesday, Smiley said his staff has been surveying the damage, and he hopes to publish in a few days a provisional list of the addresses to be reassessed. The assessors said property owners need to keep an eye on the process in case their homes were damaged but not reassessed, or if the new property value gets calculated incorrectly.

In Livingston Parish, Assessor Jeff Taylor is preparing to base the updated assessment on the water height in each house. Buildings that received less than 15 inches will probably get a discount based on one rate, while people above that level will likely get a higher reduction rate since the water will have damaged their electrical system. People who saw more than 4 feet and have to replace additional drywall and cabinets will probably see the highest discount rate of all, Taylor said.

However, his office has not yet determined what those reductions will be. They will be based on the estimated damage price per square foot and multiplied to account for the size of a building, Taylor said.

How long will the reassessment last?

"It's gonna take the time that it takes," Taylor said.

"We're just now getting into data collection. … There's going to be a lot of overtime."

Livingston Parish leaders like fire chiefs are waiting to hear from Taylor to see how much tax revenue they stand to lose, but Taylor said he's still waiting on word from the Federal Emergency Management Agency so he can start assessing the damage.

"I'm extremely concerned," said Brian Drury, chief of the Springfield-area fire district and president of the Livingston Fire Chiefs' Association.

Many local government agencies are completely or mostly reliant on their property tax millages. While a parishwide agency like a sheriff's office or school system may see a drop in property values in some places but not others, in the smaller fire, drainage, school and other hyper-local districts in Livingston Parish, just about every taxpayer flooded.

"I'm trying to stop my spending as much as I can through the end of this year," Drury said.

They'll still perform essential functions, but that new turnout gear is going to have to wait, and anyone who gets trapped in a car after a crash is going to have to rely on 10-to-25 year-old extraction equipment that was scheduled to be replaced.

"That's not gonna happen this year," the chief said.

Like Taylor, the East Baton Rouge and Ascension assessors said they also need FEMA flood data to push on with the reassessments.

None of the three men ventured a guess when asked how much their tax bases may have fallen since the flood.

East Baton Rouge's information technology and mapping professionals late Tuesday released new data comparing the pre-flood tax rolls with their latest stats on properties that flooded.

The city-parish staff looked at assessed property values. The assessed value equals 10 percent of the market value of all land and residential buildings and 15 percent of the market value of commercial buildings.

Wilson has said the city-parish saw a $135 million increase in assessed value between the 2012 and 2016 assessments.

The total assessed value of all the inundated properties is estimated at $723 million.

They won't all be total losses, but some may lose half their property value, at least in the short-term, Wilson said. He and the other assessors said they will have to keep updating the rolls in the coming years as people rebuild and values begin to rise again.

Taylor remarked that this large-scale reassessment will also give his staff a chance to check on properties that may not have been updated in the tax rolls for years. Normal assessments rely on nearby property sales, and in a rural area where land doesn't change hands often, the tax roll can become out of date.

"We're fixing those things. … It is not fair for people that pay their fair share," Taylor said.

The new data from the city-parish is also neighborhood-specific, broken down by U.S. Census blocks. Those units vary in size and population from one to another so they can't be directly compared. However, the map shows some general trends. In nearly every flooded block, most of the property value comes from residences. Some public land flooded around the airport and LSU, and commercial property was prevalent in flood-damaged areas such as those around the Mall of Louisiana and Cortana Mall.

The Tenants Of One Baton Rouge Shopping Center Have Lost Their Leases After The Flood—and An Entire Neighborhood Is Losing The Local Businesses That Helped Create A Sense Of Community

By Stephanie Riegel

Baton Rouge (LA) Business Report, September 14, 2016

The Miller Village Shopping Center wasn't the kind of commercial hub that beckoned you from the street. A modest strip mall built in the early 1990s, it housed a bar, a nail salon, a Chinese restaurant, a GNC and a small dance studio. A Storage Center anchored one side of it, a Rite Aid the other.

If you don't live in the neighborhood and you happened to pass it while approaching the intersection of Old Hammond Highway and Millerville Road, you probably wouldn't have looked twice, unless you needed something at Rite Aid. It lacked the charm of the Antiques District in Denham Springs or the retro chic appeal of Government Street in Mid City. After more than 20 years in business, Hong Kong owners Sandy and Sau Yeung not only lost their business in the flood, but their home also took on seven feet of water. Photography by Allie Appel

But the small businesses that were located in Miller Village meant the world to people who call that part of Baton Rouge home. Until Target and Chili's opened down the street in the late 2000s, little else was around.

For more than 20 years, Hong Kong restaurant was the go-to place for Chinese food, and its bustling take-out business saved many working parents the trouble of cooking dinner on a busy weeknight. Exotica Nails was a popular salon, with cheap quality pedicures and killer foot massages. Big Heads was the neighborhood watering hole, where a clientele of mostly middle-aged guys hung out, drank beer and watched sports on big screen TVs.

Then there was Dance by Trudie, something of an institution in that part of town. Its proprietress, "Miss" Trudie Osterberger, began teaching little Baton Rouge girls to dance in 1967. She'd owned her own studio in Miller Village since 1992. In just a few months, she would have celebrated her 50th anniversary of teaching dance.

"I thought we'd make it to 50 years and then I'd step down and retire," Osterberger says. "We didn't make it."

When the waters began rising in the Capital Region during last month's historic flood, Dance by Trudie was inundated with more than three feet of water. So were the other tenants at Miller Village. Their businesses were ruined, and none of them will be coming back—at least not at Miller Village. A few days after the disaster, the shopping center's owner terminated their leases and began moving forward with plans to redevelop the property.

What will they do now? Where will they go?

"We don't know what we will do," says Vy Nguyen, who ran Exotica Nails, supporting her mother and four siblings with the revenues it generated. "How can we reopen somewhere else? We lost the business, we lost the house and we lost the cars, so there's no money now." Kim and Vy Nguyen aren't sure if they'll be able to reopen their family's nail salon after the flood forced them out of Miller Village. Photography by Allie Appel

The story of Miller Village is one that's playing out all over the greater Baton Rouge area, where an estimated 12,000 businesses—roughly 35% of all businesses in the Capital Region—were located in areas affected by flooding. The majority of them are small businesses, and many have been completely wiped out. Fewer than 20% had flood insurance and, like the Miller Village tenants, some are now finding out that on top of losing their livelihoods they'll have to rebuild somewhere else, if they're able to rebuild at all.

The situation is one of many keeping property and business owners up at night. They're calling their lawyers with questions about the legal, technical and financial issues related to the redevelopment of flooded commercial properties.

But important questions are also being raised about what these losses mean for the future of neighborhoods in the Capital Region. What happens when entire developments of small businesses disappear? What is the cost to the community when its mom-and-pop shops go under?

The answer can't be calculated on a spreadsheet because when a neighborhood loses its locally owned establishments it loses more than a convenient place to get a pedicure or a beer. It loses its sense of community, and the connective tissue that holds people together and binds them to the place they call home. SAVE THE LAST DANCE

Osterberger never thought her studio would flood. She rode out Hurricane Katrina there, as well as Gustav and Isaac. Not once in 24 years had the parking lot even taken on water.

"It wasn't until someone sent me a picture of Millerville late that Sunday night (Aug. 14) did I realize we were under water," she says. "It was so high, we couldn't even get here until (the following) Tuesday." "Miss" Trudie Osterberger would have celebrated 50 years of teaching dance in just a few months, but she has been forced to close her studio instead. Photography by Allie Appel

Osterberger is a petite woman with a sprightly demeanor. She talks fast and exudes energy. She wears her 65 years well, and counts among her former students three generations of Baton Rouge women.

She wasn't much older than some of her students when she landed her first gig teaching dance at a BREC park. Osterberger was only in high school at the time, and for the next 26 years she would teach dance in the BREC system, earning a degree in education from LSU, marrying and raising a family along the way.

In 1992, she decided to open her own studio and rented the space in Miller Village. In its heyday, Dance by Trudie enrolled more than 400 students a year, and every spring it put on a lavish recital at the River Center, one of those three-hour productions with sparkles and lipstick and proud parents snapping endless pictures of 4-year-olds in tap shoes.

"Oh, everybody wanted to come to see their baby up on stage," Osterberger recalls.

The little ones called her "Tutu" and made her pictures, which she proudly hung on her studio walls. They were among the mementos she lost in the flood.

"It was the things the children had given me over the years that meant the most to me," Osterberger says. "It was difficult to put those memories into the trash can. But there's no salvaging very much when there's a flood." THE TAKE OUT

The unprecedented rains that brought on the historic flood of 2016 began late Thursday, Aug. 11. Parts of the metro area began flooding the following morning. At Miller Village, the trouble started that Sunday, and by Monday the floodwaters remained more than three feet high.

By midweek the waters had receded. That's when the manager at Brookwood-Millerville LLC, which owns the shopping center, began notifying tenants their leases would not be renewed. They were told they had 48 hours to get everything out.

The calls came as a shock, though perhaps they shouldn't have: None of the tenants had a current lease with Brookwood-Millerville except Big Heads, and it was set to expire at the end of this month. All the others had been operating under a month-to-month arrangement—in some cases, for years.

Nguyen says she begged for more time. She was tied up at the Federal Emergency Management Agency office registering for disaster assistance when she got the phone call. Her family's home on O'Neal Lane had taken in nearly seven feet of water, and all three of their cars were destroyed. Given what she was already facing, she couldn't believe what the property manager told her.

"She told me the landlord was redeveloping the building so we could not have our space anymore," Nguyen recalls. "She told me, 'If you need to save anything come and get it because we have people coming in, so you need to get everything out.'"

Nguyen panicked. So did Sandy and Sau Yeung, who couldn't understand what was going on. Their restaurant, Hong Kong, had been located in Miller Village for more than 20 years. They'd never been late on their rent. The small operation supported their family, and everything they had was invested in it.

Sau Yeung told the property manger it would take time for him to clear out his space and figure out what to do with the restaurant equipment he hoped to salvage. Unlike the dance studio or the nail salon, he had a heavy commercial oven and refrigerator, and he needed a work crew to help him move them out. But before he could find one, he says, a remediation company hired by Brookwood-Millerville gutted his space and hauled his equipment to the debris heap.

"They just took everything out," says Sau Yeung, who emigrated to Baton Rouge with his wife from Hong Kong in 1994 and opened the restaurant two years later. "This is my whole life. Everything was paid for. They just trashed it. Threw it out." Spanky Torres, Patrick Fewell, Hunter Medlen and Stuart Dickey, from left, salvaged what they could from Big Heads, but the local watering hole was among the casualties of the flood and won't be returning to Miller Village. Photography by Allie Appel

Brookwood-Millerville is owned by Craig Smith, an attorney who declines to comment on the situation at the shopping center. But his attorney, Jeff Barbin, says Smith, too, is a victim of the flood.

Smith owns The Storage Center that anchors Miller Village, as well as two other Storage Center facilities in the area. All three flooded, and Barbin says Smith sustained losses of at least $2 million as a result.

Barbin says Brookwood was fair with the tenants. As for the Yeungs, he says Brookwood-Millerville initially agreed to give them more time to clear out their space, and then secured their permission to remove the equipment.

"The landlord spoke to the tenant on multiple occasions after the flood and asked the tenant to remove all of his equipment so that environmental remediation could begin," Barbin says. "The tenant removed some of his equipment and told the landlord's environmental remediation contractor that the rest could be disposed."

The Yeungs dispute that they gave the remediation company permission to dispose of their equipment. As for the other tenants, Barbin says they were given ample notice, and that the landlord was within his rights to terminate their leases and begin remediating the property.

"Each of the tenants was told that from a practical perspective it was necessary to remove any property which remained as soon as possible to prevent further damage to the center" from the spread of mold, Barbin says. "Each of the tenants was given opportunity to remove possessions that still had some value. Some of the property that was built into the premises became the property of the landlord. However, the landlord still allowed them to take what they wanted."

The Miller Village tenants don't exactly see it that way.

"In the end he didn't have to do it this way," says Stuart Dickey, manager of Big Heads. "He was going to win. Our lease was expired. The others leases already had expired. But there was no need to do it this way." RISING LEGAL QUESTIONS

There are two sides to every story. What's indisputable about this one is that without a lease in place, the tenants at Miller Village have no leverage or legal recourse. And even with a lease in place, it's not entirely clear the Yeungs or anyone else in the shopping center would have been protected.

Some, incidentally, say they had tried to secure new, long-term leases when their old ones expired but were put off by the Brookwood-Millerville property manager or told not to worry about it. Some say they didn't worry about it. Others did. For his part, Barbin says, "most of the tenants were happy with a month-to-month lease and the low rents they were paying."

Whatever the individual circumstances, the situation at Miller Village reflects the kind of nuanced legal questions that have arisen as the floodwaters have receded. Property attorney Charles Landry keeps a copy of the Louisiana Civil Code sitting on his desk these days, so peppered is he with questions about property rights and related disputes in the wake of flood.

"I'm getting hammered on these law school questions I never thought I'd have to deal with," he says.

On the subject of commercial leases, for instance, Landry says they all have different provisions, depending on who drafted them and the terms agreed upon. Some clearly favor the landlord over the tenant. Some even have a clause allowing a landlord to terminate a lease if the cost of repairing a damaged property is more than 50% of the pre-flood value of the property.

If that's the case, then "the landlord can say, 'You're out, you're done,' and not rebuild the building," Landry says. "So even with a lease, a tenant is not entirely protected."

Landry and others say this is just one of the many unfortunate realities business and property owners are waking up to as they turn their attention away from their gutted homes and back to their flooded businesses.

"Some of these folks who have been in business 20, 30, 50 years have worked on a handshake agreement with their landlords," says Dawn Starns, president of the Louisiana chapter of the National Federation of Independent Businesses. "They've counted on their lawyers or CPAs to keep up and they haven't understood it all, so there are a lot of challenges they are facing, especially if they have been in the same location for many years."

The Small Business Administration has set up disaster assistance centers throughout the area to help, offering advice and low-interest loans to home and business owners who need to rebuild. But the response from small businesses has been anemic so far. As of Sept. 8, just $5.4 million—or 7%—of the $214.7 million in loans approved by the SBA went to businesses.

Part of the problem may be that small business owners don't want to take on debt. Yeung, for instance, never borrowed to operate his restaurant. His equipment was paid for, a fact of which he was exceedingly proud. He didn't owe anyone any money.

Part of the problem is also the ambiguity surrounding the amount of money the SBA is willing to loan business that needs to relocate. The SBA disaster loan program will let businesses borrow up to $2 million, but it's vague about whether or not that much is available for business owners who need to move. What happens if they can't find a new space at a comparable price? How do they make the numbers work?

A spokesman for the SBA says the agency makes determinations on a case-by-case basis, and factors into its assessment whether the relocation is voluntary or involuntary. He encourages anyone with questions to meet with an SBA representative at one of the disaster assistance centers the agency has set up in the area.

Starns is giving her members the same advice, though she cannot promise any results.

"These businesses really need to go and sit down with someone and say, 'Here is my business, this is what I do, what are my options?'" she says. "That's what we're telling people to do at this point."

FRAYING THE COMMUNITY FABRIC

But there are larger issues than the details of property rights under the Civil Code or the technicalities of the SBA disaster loan program that the Miller Village story raises. Those issues have to do with the loss a neighborhood sustains when its locally owned businesses are washed away overnight.

Nearly 7,900 businesses in southeast Louisiana shut down in the 18 months following Katrina in 2005. Most of them never returned.

Granted, much of New Orleans in the years since has enjoyed an influx of new commerce and entrepreneurial enterprises, particularly in the neighborhoods that the legions of hip, young investors decided were worth bringing back.

But other neighborhoods never recovered, as much because of the loss of residents as the loss of locally owned businesses.

"When small businesses go under, the fabric of the community is what is lost because the services they provide are not just about the money but about support," says Elizabeth "Boo" Thomas, executive director of the Center for Planning Excellence. "When they go, that sense of belonging, that sense of community is gone."

Starns says NFIB is worried about the future of the area's small businesses, particularly in communities like Denham Springs, where an overwhelming majority of business owners were impacted by the flood. Many of them lost their homes and commercial establishments.

"They're the job creators and the taxpayers," Starns says. "They are the true fabric of the community."

At Miller Village, that fabric is unwoven. Big Heads' three owners say they're interested in reopening somewhere else, but with three flooded houses among them they really can't think about it at the moment.

Hong Kong and Exotica Nails have no idea what to do—or even where to begin.

Dance by Trudie is gone for good. Osterberger says she's too old to start over. It makes her sad, but at least in her case it's not really a financial hardship. She just wishes she could say the same for those who had been her neighbors in the shopping center for so many years.

"I'll be OK," she says. "Some of these other people—Hong Kong, the nail salon—they won't be." One of Denham Springs' beloved local businesses plans to make a comeback after the flood, but the challenges are daunting A local institution since 1953 is gone as a result of the flood, but its spirit lives on through a creative partnership with another well-known retailer

Tomblin To Call Flood Relief Session Next Week

By Phil Kabler

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 13, 2016

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said Tuesday he plans to call a special session of the Legislature next week to address the state's share of funding for more than $300 million of recovery costs from the June 23 floods in central and southern West Virginia.

"We should have everything ready to go by tomorrow," Tomblin said of the session, which will coincide with regularly scheduled September legislative interim meetings.

Tomblin hopes the Federal Emergency Management Agency will increase its share of the flood recovery costs from 75 percent to 90 percent.

"We're going to continue to push [for] that," he said of seeking the higher share of federal funding. "It's not a guarantee."

That means the Legislature will need to authorize somewhere between $30 million and $75 million of state funding for flood recovery costs, which Tomblin said will likely come from a combination of unspent funds from the 2015-16 budget year and from appropriations from the state's Rainy Day emergency reserve funds.

"Thank goodness we have that," Tomblin said of the Rainy Day funds, a comment apparently intended for legislators who proposed severe raids on the emergency funds to balance the 2016-17 state budget.

During the extended special session on the budget, Tomblin vetoed a plan to raid more than $180 million of Rainy Day funds to close the state's financial shortfall, ultimately agreeing to a budget compromise that took about $70 million out of the reserve funds.

Tomblin said Tuesday afternoon he planned to contact legislative leaders Tuesday evening or today to finalize plans for the special session.

Lawmakers are scheduled to return to Charleston for interim meetings on Sunday, and the interim schedule has blocked out 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. time periods on Monday and Tuesday for the anticipated special session.

Tomblin had put off the special session until school systems in the 12 affected counties — Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster — could finalize cost estimates to repair or replace schools.

The cost of repairing damage to state highways from the June 23 flooding is also estimated to be in excess of $55 million.

Tomblin said he expects that the session, which he said will be limited to flood relief, can be completed in a day or two.

"I would anticipate it should be fairly simple," he said.

New Architectural Chapter Begins For University Of Iowa Campus

By Jeff Charis-Carlson

Iowa City (IA) Press-Citizen, September 13, 2016

Ten years ago must have seemed like an opportune time to release a guide to campus architecture at the University of Iowa.

The Old Capitol was set to reopen after five years of post-fire restoration, Kinnick Stadium was completing its renovation and expansion and UI's then newest building — the Steven Holl-designed Art Building West — was winning award after award for its innovation.

That's one of the reasons why UI Press and then UI President David Skorton encouraged the cooperation of Rod Lehnertz — then UI's director of planning, design and construction — and UI art professor John Beldon Scott to co-author "The University of Iowa Guide to Campus Architecture."

"We wanted to show how an institution like a state university can be an important patron of architecture that's significant and adds academic importance to the visual aspect of the campus," Scott said in a phone interview last week.

No one knew at the time that the Iowa River would swell two years later and the resulting flood would do nearly $800 million worth of damage to 20 major buildings on campus — some to the point that they never again opened their doors to the general public.

It took a full eight years — involving countless staff hours negotiating with state legislators, Iowa Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency — but UI officials declared earlier this summer that UI is fully recovered from the 2008 flood. The Property and Facilities Committee of the Iowa Board of Regents received its final regular update on UI flood recovery during its meeting last week in Iowa City.

The only deluge this year has been a flood of scheduled open houses and welcome ceremonies for the replacement facilities for Voxman Music Building, Clapp Recital Hall, Hancher Auditorium and the Visual Arts Building. Plans also are underway for similar ceremonies later this year to celebrate the opening of the Stead Family Children's Hospital.

"Those are enormous," Scott said, "and I imagine we're not going to have that many projects of that scale happening so quickly … over the next decade."

It's also hard to imagine, Scott added, any other campus in the country being able to boast a new art school building, performing arts center and music school college building — all designed by world-class architects — coming online at the same time.

"This, of course, is the silver lining in the cloud of the flood," he said. "Because now, after these eight years, the campus is rebounding with an enormous great leap forward."

Thus 2016 seems another opportune time for Scott, now director of UI's School of Art and Art History, and Lehnertz, now UI's senior vice president for finance and operations, to issue a second edition of their decade-old guide with complete information on what is now, and is no longer, visible on the campus skyline throughout the Iowa City and Coralville area.

"The change to this campus will be felt for generations to come," Lehnertz told the Press-Citizen back in 2013.

In addition to the flood-related construction, the past decade also has seen the opening of the Madison Street Services Building (2007), Hope Lodge (2007), the P. Sue Beckwith, M.D., Boathouse (2009), the BioVentures Center (2010), the State Hygienic Laboratory (2010), the Campus Recreation and Wellness Center (2010), the College of Public Health Building (2011), the Pappajohn Biomedical Discovery Building (2014) and the Mary Louise Petersen Residence Hall (2015).

The new guidebook also features descriptions of some buildings still projected or under construction, including the new Elizabeth Catlett Residence Hall (2017) and College of Pharmacy Building (2019).

In addition to the 2013 razing of the flood-damaged Hancher-Voxman-Clapp complex, several other major buildings have disappeared from campus over the past decade

The International Center, built in 1935 and expanded in 1959 as the Law Commons dormitory, no longer sits atop the prominent bluff where Highway 6 and the adjacent railroad turn away from the river. The building was razed in 2008, along with all other remnants of old UI College of Law, to make way for the College of Public Health Building in 2011. Five years later, the college has begun offering an undergraduate major in public health that eventually is expected to bring hundreds of additional students into the building each year.

Quadrangle Residence Hall, built in 1920, was being razed this summer to make way for a new building for the UI College of Pharmacy, which is projected to be completed in 2019. At that point, the college's 1961 building is scheduled to be razed as well. The loss of beds from Quadrangle will be more than made up for when the Catlett Residence Hall opens near the Iowa Memorial Union in 2017.

Oakdale Hall built in 1917 as a tuberculosis sanitarium, was razed in 2011 after the completion of a new state-of-the-art State Hygienic Laboratory. The Oakdale campus in Coralville came under UI's control in 1965, and Oakdale Hall served for three decades as the State Hygienic Laboratory.

Although the scope of changes on campus over the next decade may not be as transformational as the past decade, the UI campus will continue to be a dynamic place.

UI officials hope to have completed substantial construction on a new, $60 million UI Museum of Art building by 2019, the 50th anniversary of the museum on campus. The new facility, to be built adjacent to the UI Main Library, ideally would be far enough along by then to be able to display the most valuable work in UI's collection: Jackson Pollock's "Mural."

UI's former Art Museum Building was damaged in the 2008 flood, but not badly enough for FEMA to agree to cover relocation costs. UI's art collection was removed before the flood, but insurance restrictions and costs have kept the collection from being returned to the building. With the School of Music no longer needing the space as temporary facilities, the museum staff has reoccupied the office portion of the building, and UI officials have yet to announce a new purpose for the building.

It's unlikely that Seashore Hall will be extant by the time a third edition of the campus architectural guide is published. The Iowa Board of Regents has approved plans for UI to construct a new $33.5 million building to house its Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, which has been housed in Seashore Hall since 1930. Once that facility is completed, UI officials can move forward with plans to demolish the 117-year-old building that initially served as the university's main hospital.

Not all proposed university buildings, however, will make it from the designer's drawing board to brick-and-mortar reality.

Last summer, for example, UI officials received permission from the regents to move forward with plans for a new West Campus Residence Hall to serve the on-campus living needs of student-athletes and the general student population.

That proposed dorm is no longer considered "an active project," Lehnertz said last week.

Kingman County Declares State Of Local Disaster Emergency

KWCH-TV Wichita (KS), September 13, 2016

Monday, Kingman County Commissioners signed a State of Local Disaster Emergency due to flooding.

Signed at the commission meeting, the declaration states that flooding, from heavy rain on September 8, caused or threatened to cause "wide-spread or severe damage, injury or loss of life or property in disaster proportion."

According to the Kingman County Commission, Emergency Manager Fred Simon is working to collect damage estimates from townships. The commission added that most of the damage suffered by townships is to roads, culverts and bridges.

In order to be eligible for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the county must meet a public damage threshold of $27,974, according to the county commission. The threshold for the State of Kansas to receive a Presidential disaster declaration is $4,022,896.

This is the second disaster declaration in the past 5 weeks for Kingman County.

On August 8, the county made a disaster declaration, due to flooding. Commissioners said that damage from that event easily exceeded the threshold, topping $100,000. The state threshold was not met.

FEMA discounted claims by other counties, keeping the claim under the state's threshold, disqualifying an additional disaster declaration in May.

Confusion Over FEMA Funding Estimates In Kansas Counties

By Devon Fasbinder

KWCH-TV Wichita (KS), September 13, 2016

KANSAS (KWCH) There's some confusion among emergency managers in Kansas counties, the state and FEMA when it comes to how damage estimates are done after disasters.

Butler County Emergency Manager Tim Schmidt told FactFinder 12 he had heard of some changes from FEMA about how it does estimates for damage after disasters.

"It's harder and harder and harder to qualify for assistance that used to be fairly simple before," Schmidt said.

When counties have natural disasters, they have a certain threshold or dollar figure they have to meet in damages to request assistance. Every county has a different number determined by the population.

If a county needs more than it's threshold, it can go to the state to get more money, though emergency managers tell FactFinder 12 there isn't money from the state to give to local disasters.

The state can then request additional money for counties if it hits it's own threshold or dollar amount, which is $4.02 million. The governor makes the request to FEMA where it is either accepted or denied.

Sumner County Emergency Manager James Fair said it's very rare one county has enough money to meet the state's threshold. Usually, he said, several counties have to have requests to meet that dollar amount for the state to request federal dollars.

In speaking with FEMA, local emergency managers and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM), FactFinder 12 learned there is some confusion.

KDEM and the emergency managers said there have been changes to how FEMA does it's damage estimates meaning it's more difficult to get the grants from the agency. In May, the state requested FEMA dollars for a flood and was denied, though the state is appealing the decision.

But FEMA said that's not the case. The agency said there haven't been any changes as to how damage assessments are done. The only change, FEMA said, is who does the assessments.

Before this spring, FEMA said it partnered with the states and local crews to do damage assessments after the states request money. Now, FEMA said it's changed it's policy to give more responsibility to the local agencies since it says those are the people who know their own roads and what it would cost to fix them. But still, no changes to the actual process.

KDEM sent FactFinder 12 documents it said it received around May from FEMA detailing debris and road guidance. KDEM said these are the changes FEMA put into place.

FactFinder 12 sent those documents to FEMA. A spokesperson said she will check to make sure she didn't miss something, but again, said there haven't been any changes to the way damage assessments are done.

We'll update this story once we hear back from FEMA on the road and debris records. Regardless, it's been a confusing change or lack of changes for the parties involved.

FEMA Visiting Flood Damaged Northeastern Iowa

KCHA-AM Charles City (IA), September 13, 2016

Decorah, Iowa – Preliminary estimates of damages to public property in August 24th's flooding are high enough that, beginning Tuesday, four squads of officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) starting visiting Decorah and Northeast Iowa.

The FEMA inspectors are meeting with state and local officials in an attempt to verify the damage estimates. In Winneshiek County, it's estimated the flooding did $2.4 million in damage to public property. Adding in the figures from Allamakee, Bremer, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Mitchell counties produces a total between $4 million and $5 million of damages. In order for the area to be declared a federal disaster area–which would make federal recovery funds available–flooding damages will have to total $4.2 million.

The damage totals do not include damage to private property, which is not considered by FEMA in the possible disaster declaration. The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management agency says 165 private homes and buildings in Winneshiek County were affected by the flooding.

If the FEMA crews believe the August 24th flooding meets the criteria for federal disaster area designation, they will notify the Iowa Governor's Office, which will make the announcement.

WILDFIRES

SBA Offers Loan Assistance To Clayton Fire Survivors

By Elizabeth Larson

Lake County (CA) News, September 14, 2016

LOWER LAKE, Calif. – Thanks to a disaster declaration issued earlier this month, the United States Small Business Administration is making available to Clayton fire survivors – individuals, businesses and organizations – low-interest loans to help with the rebuilding process.

The agency's Disaster Loan Outreach Center is operating out of the first floor parlor at the Lower Lake Historic Schoolhouse Museum, 16435 Main St., from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays.

"We're offering the same thing we offered last year during the Valley fire," said SBA spokesman William Koontz.

Koontz visited Lower Lake on Monday, as he and SBA staff fanned out across the state, responding to incidents in Lake, Monterey, San Bernardino and San Luis Obispo counties, and a flood in Ohio.

Koontz said the SBA acted under its own authority to declare the Clayton fire disaster on Sept. 6 in response to a request it received on Sept. 1 from Mark Ghilarducci, director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, acting on behalf of Gov. Jerry Brown.

The disaster declaration makes SBA assistance available in Colusa, Glenn, Lake, Mendocino, Napa, Sonoma and Yolo counties, the agency reported.

The process this time around differed from that employed during the Valley fire in that last year the state asked both the SBA and and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to do a damage assessment. President Barack Obama subsequently declared a disaster, which authorized the agencies to offer assistance, Koontz said.

This time, with no presidential disaster proclamation expected, the state asked the SBA to respond and consider the disaster declaration, Koontz said.

Koontz said the SBA has a very simple criteria for making that declaration: If there are 25 homes or businesses damaged in one county, and they have at least 40 percent damage – which is considered major – it's an automatic approval.

The declaration activates the exact same SBA program as was in place during the Valley fire, said Koontz.

The difference is that last year fire survivors first had to apply to FEMA – which is not involved in the Clayton fire response – and then seek out additional help in the form of loans from SBA. If they didn't qualify, they would then be sent back to FEMA for consideration of a grant, Koontz explained.

What's also different for Clayton fire survivors is if they don't qualify for SBA assistance, they won't have FEMA to fall back on but will have to seek assistance from other agencies and organizations, he said.

SBA said businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations may borrow up to $2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets.

The agency said it also can lend additional funds to businesses and homeowners to help with the cost of improvements to protect, prevent or minimize the same type of disaster damage from occurring in the future.

Disaster loans up to $200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to $40,000 to repair or replace damaged or destroyed personal property, the SBA said.

Koontz said the interest rates on the loans change from quarter to quarter.

Interest rates can be as low as 4 percent for businesses, 2.625 percent for private nonprofit organizations and 1.563 percent for homeowners and renters with terms up to 30 years. Koontz said that rate for homeowners is a little lower than it was for the Valley fire, and the lowest he's seen that rate go in some time.

Loan amounts and terms are set by SBA and are based on each applicant's financial condition. Koontz said every case is considered individually.

"We do our darnedest to try to get their loan through the system, but there will be some people who don't qualify," he said.

Koontz said it's free to apply, and no appointment is necessary.

He said the SBA has staff who are expert at helping disaster victims, and can quickly lead them through the application process. He said that process can be completed within 30 minutes. "It's very streamlined," he said, and not unlike getting a bank loan.

Disaster loan information and application forms also are available from SBA's Customer Service Center by calling 800-659-2955 or emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov . Individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may call 800-877-8339.

Applications can be downloaded at https://www.sba.gov/disaster . Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The deadline to apply is Nov. 7, and he encourages fire survivors to turn in applications, explaining they always can turn the loans down later if they don't need them. He pointed out that many people find out later that the recovery process costs more than expected.

"Our program can lend someone who has insurance for the gap that may occur," he said.

As of Monday, SBA had gotten 11 applications from business and homeowners impacted by the Clayton fire, he said.

Last year, for the Valley fire in Lake County and the Butte fire in Calaveras County, the SBA received a total of 897 applications – 719 for homeowners, 178 for businesses – and issued 287 loans, totaling $25,935,700. That number included 55 business loans totaling $4,499,500 and 232 loans for homeowners amounting to $21,436,200, according to a summary Koontz shared with Lake County News.

Koontz said the SBA does not have a deadline at this point for how long its Lower Lake center will stay open.

ZIKA VIRUS

Funding To Fight Zika Is Not A Done Deal, Senate Leaders Warn

By James Rosen

McClatchy, September 13, 2016

A bipartisan battalion of political leaders from South Florida, Tallahassee and beyond converged on Capitol Hill on Tuesday in an all-out blitz for Zika prevention and research funds.

Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of Orlando and a half-dozen House of Representatives members from across the Sunshine State appeared at a crowded news conference where they pleaded for Congress to approve $1.1 billion in Zika money after a seven-month impasse over partisan politics.

The full-court press came as Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, the top Senate Democrat, cast doubt on assertions that a deal had been reached.

"We're continuing on trying to reach an overall agreement," the Kentucky Republican leader said.

"We still don't have an offer in writing from Republicans," Reid said.

Rep. Curt Clawson, a Bonita Springs, Florida, Republican, became emotional as he criticized lawmakers for having failed to pass at least part of the $1.9 billion Zika package President Barack Obama sent Congress in February.

"I'm a conservative Republican," Clawson said. "I support my party. We can't spend $1 billion or $2 billion for babies? Where are our priorities? This is a big moment in the history of Florida."

Clawson added: "By God, if there's one moment that government ought to act and do something, this is the moment. I want to sleep at night knowing I've done everything possible."

In an impassioned speech on the Senate floor, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., cited Zika cases in Florida and Puerto Rico in calling for congressional action. He accused Republicans of trying "to cut corners on the funding, which will cost us money in the long term." But he also accused Democrats of "inventing excuses, just making it up, in order to oppose it and to do so for political reasons."

Rep. Frederica Wilson, a Miami Gardens Democrat who organized the briefing, said microcephaly, which causes abnormally small brains and heads in newborns, and other birth defects were dire effects of Zika that must be urgently addressed.

"We're talking about the brain of an unborn child," Wilson said. "Even scientists are saying they don't know what will happen to the adult brain. Can you really put a price tag on combating this?"

After arriving in Washington to meet with members of the Florida delegation, Gov. Rick Scott called for an end to the political posturing that has stalled Zika funding.

"I'm here because I think the time for politics is over," Scott told reporters. "We have nearly 800 cases of people who've been tested positive for Zika. We've got 86 pregnant women who've been tested positive for Zika. We have 64 non-travel-related cases in our state."

With the virus having hit Florida harder than any other state, Scott rejected Miami Herald reporting over the weekend that Florida health officials have undercounted the number of Zika cases and withheld information from the public.

Calling the reports "sort of laughable," Scott said: "We have been transparent. We have been timely. We have a good process to get information out. We have done whatever we can to make sure people understand what's going on. We have been working with county health departments and whoever's responsible for mosquito control to make sure that we follow CDC guidelines. So we have done a lot."

Scott, however, criticized the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, saying those agencies have been slow to respond to his requests for help fighting Zika.

"The CDC, the Obama administration, has not been a good partner," he said. "It's been almost a month. I've been asking for 10,000 Zika-prevention kits for pregnant women. They don't give them to me. Since June 1, I've asked for a plan to work with FEMA. They haven't given it to me."

The Senate approved a $1.1 billion Zika bill in May. That was less than Obama had requested, but more than the $622 million provided in a separate House measure.

Partisan politics intervened when the two chambers appointed a conference committee to produce unified legislation, and the funding languished over the summer.

Rep. Alan Grayson, an Orlando Democrat who lost his primary bid to run for the Senate, said the amount of money sought by Obama to fight Zika paled in comparison with defense spending.

"He's asking for $1.9 billion," Grayson said. "That's what we spend on the U.S. military every single day. At this particular point in time, Zika is a far bigger threat to Floridians than the Islamic State."

Despite the bipartisan push for Zika funding, Grayson took a shot at Scott's handling of the health crisis.

"We appreciate the governor being here, but the governor should reverse some of the damage he's already done – a 40 percent cut in mosquito control (funding) and zeroing out the budget for our own (state) research."

Scott Blasts Nelson, Obama For Not Doing More About Zika

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, September 13, 2016

WASHINGTON – Florida Gov. Rick Scott lashed out at the Obama administration and Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson on Tuesday for not doing more to help the state combat Zika.

"The time for politics is over," the Republican governor told reporters on Capitol Hill, accusing Democrats of inaction on the growing crisis.

He said Nelson "turned his back on Florida citizens" by joining other Democrats last week in blocking a GOP Zika funding bill that included unrelated provisions they oppose.

Scott also took aim at administration officials, saying they didn't move quickly enough to meet the state's request for resources to battle Zika.

"The Obama administration has not been a good partner," he said. "It's been almost a month, I've been asking for 10,000 Zika prevention kits for pregnant women. They don't give it to me. Since June 1, I've asked for a plan to work with (the Federal Emergency Management Agency). Haven't given it to me. The White House has not been a good partner."

The White House responded that the department of Health and Human Services has provided Florida with more than $35 million that can be used for Zika-related activities. In August, Florida received materials for an additional 6,300 lab tests, in addition to the 2,000 already provided.

The Center for Disease Control also has provided on-site technical consultation to Florida's public health laboratories, enabling them to substantially increase testing capabilities, according to the White House.

Nelson, through a spokesman, scolded Scott.

"Just as we're about to reach a deal to pass a clean emergency Zika funding bill, the governor chooses to fly up here and stir things up politically," the senator said. "He should know better. This is a serious situation, not a time for partisan politics."

Scott was in Washington to pressure lawmakers to come together on a Zika funding bill. Federal health agencies say they're about to run out of money for vaccine development, mosquito control and Zika testing and preparation kits.

Obama first asked for $1.9 billion in February.

The governor met with Republican Sen. Marco Rubio Tuesday afternoon and was to meet with House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin later in the day. He's scheduled to meet with more lawmakers Wednesday.

His comments contrasted sharply with remarks from Democratic and Republican Florida lawmakers, including Nelson, who spoke of a bipartisan Zika effort during a news conference earlier Tuesday.

"We need a clean solution to a messy problem," said Rep. Curt Clawson, the Bonita Springs Republican who helped organize the news conference. "Florida's going to be the front lines of this battle. If we don't stop it in the beachhead in Florida, this is going to spread north and around our country."

The number of Zika cases in Florida is approaching 800, including 86 involving pregnant women.

Senate leaders from both parties reported some progress Tuesday on a $1.1 billion compromise. But the House, which passed a much smaller bill in May, would have to go along.

Attempts to pass Zika funding in the Republican-controlled Congress have been blocked by Democrats who object to hot-button policy riders, including barriers to contraception, the display of the Confederate flag at national cemeteries, and laxer environmental standards for pesticides.

Even if Congress passes a bill before they recess later this month, the delay has already taken a serious toll by most accounts.

It's possible the uncertainty in funding has slowed development of a vaccine that's at least 18 months away. And Florida has had to step in to pay for testing kits and mosquito spraying.

"We should have acted immediately," Rep. Alan Grayson, D-Orlando, said Tuesday at a news conference on Capitol Hill where bipartisan lawmakers from Florida gathered to push for Zika funding. "Now we have a second threat — the economic threat. The sense that people are not going to want to come to our beautiful state any longer if they fell it threatens their health."

In a Kaiser Family Foundation poll released last month, 48 percent of those surveyed said they wouldn't be comfortable traveling to places in the United States where people have been infected by Zika, such as parts of Florida.

– Ledyard King

Contact Ledyard King at lking@gannett.com; Twitter: @ledgeking

Gov. Rick Scott Heads To DC To Garner Support For More Funding To Fight Zika

By Lorena Inclan

WJAX-TV Jacksonville (FL), September 13, 2016

There are now nearly 800 Zika cases in Florida, including six new non-travel related cases in Miami-Dade County.

Duval, St. Johns, Clay and now Nassau County have reported travel-related cases, putting them on the list of counties that are under a Public Health Emergency declaration.

The virus is not only a concern for families but; it's also impacting Florida's tourism industry.

Gov. Rick Scott said in Jacksonville on Tuesday that the Zika crisis isn't unique to Florida but he feels like Florida is in the fight alone.

"I'll be going to DC and asking them to be a partner. The president and Congress have to show up," Scott said. "I have asked and requested the CDC ...

right now we need 10,000 more Zika-prevention kits for pregnant women."

Scott said Florida is already offering pregnant women free assessment testing at county health departments at the state's expense but he said the state needs more resources.

"I had the opportunity to put emergency funding that put $26.2 million up so far. We'll put more money up if we need to fight" the virus, Scott said.

Yulee resident Dorothy Shores was surprised to learn Nassau County reported a travel-related case.

"From what I see on TV, we need more help," Shores said.

Of the nearly 800 Zika cases in Florida, 70 were acquired in the state and 86 of them involve pregnant women.

"It's frustrating the federal government has not been a good partner," Scott said. "I've also asked FEMA for a plan to work with them when we had non-travel related cases. That's been since June 1 and I still haven't heard back."

Scott met with Speaker Paul Ryan, Sen. Marco Rubio and Rep. Ted Yoho on Tuesday.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is also sounding the alarm, saying that without more funding from Congress it'll have to slow down or stop efforts such as vaccine development and mosquito-control work.

Senators Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio have criticized Congress for playing politics with the public health crisis.

"Whether the federal government does their part or not, the state's going to do its part," Scott said.

Scott is expected to meet with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Wednesday as well as members of the Florida delegation before returning to Florida.

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OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Disturbance Along Florida's Northeast Coast Given 40 Percent Chance Of Development

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 13, 2016

Gov. Rick Scott is urging Floridians to prepare as Tropical Storm Julia hits the state's eastern coast.

The system rapidly intensified Tuesday, going from no chance of developing into a tropical depression or storm over the next five days at 8 a.m. to being declared a tropical storm at 10:30 p.m., according to the National Hurricane Center.

"As we know in Florida, storms can quickly develop, bringing severe weather to our state in a moment's notice," Scott said in a news release. "Just as with Hurricane Hermine, I encourage Floridians to get prepared and visit FLGetAPlan.com."

The northeastern coast of Florida between Daytona Beach and the Florida-Georgia border will see heavy rain, thunderstorms, with tropical-storm force winds and rip currents through today, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Julia's sustained winds were about 40 mph, as off 11 p.m. The storm is expected to weaken to a depression by late today.

Isolated tornadoes are possible in Central Florida, said Jerry Combs, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne. A confirmed tornado touched down in southeastern Brevard County on Tuesday, he said.

The Orlando area has a 70 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms today.

"Expect a lot of good, beneficial rainfall," Combs said.

The National Hurricane Center expects heavy rainfall of 3 to 6 inches over the Interstate 95 corridor over the next several days.

Waterspouts are possible, and there also is the potential for heavy rain for portions of the Florida Panhandle. Strong, gusty winds and heavy rains are expected to move over Central and North Florida overnight.

Meanwhile, farther out in the Atlantic, Tropical Storm Ian was churning in its second day. Whereas Ian's maximum sustained winds on Monday were 40 mph, on Tuesday afternoon they were 45 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center.

The storm, which was about 800 miles southeast of Bermuda on Tuesday afternoon, posed no threat to land, the hurricane center said.

In the Pacific, Hurricane Orlene continues to weaken, with maximum sustained winds of 85 mph.

Torres Administration Comes Up With Joint Typhoon Plan

By Jon Perez

Saipan (MNP) Tribune, September 14, 2016

The administration of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has come up with a CNMI Catastrophic Typhoon Plan, a general public information and warning fact sheet that will be followed by agencies that are first responders and are involve in times of typhoons.

The primary purpose of the fact sheet, put together by the CNMI Joint Information Center, is to support a joint analysis of a Category 4 typhoon response for public information and warning. It describes in detail the impact of a catastrophic typhoon in the Commonwealth.

Last year, Saipan was not prepared to handle Typhoon Soudelor as it pummeled the island, with its tornado-like winds downing power poles and destroying houses.

The fact sheet also describes in detail how to deliver basic information and guidance to the public during times of disaster. For example, most government agencies do not have public information officers and they must have a back-up plan or train someone.

"Disaster public information requires special attention and coordination on the process of preparation and dissemination. Information that concerns an emergency situation affecting the general public must be accurate and timely," said in the fact sheet.

Providing accurate, coordinated, timely, and accessible information to the public—including the media; newspaper, television, and radio—government officials, and the private sector is a requirement.

"Life-saving and life-sustaining information must be coordinated among local, territory, and federal stakeholders, and be accessible to individuals with disabilities, others with access, and functional needs; those from diverse religious, racial or ethnic."

The governor's press secretary's office will be the lead agency that is responsible in providing the public the information and warning activities for the CNMI. The Department of Homeland Security and the local Federal Emergency Management Agency through the FEMA office of external affairs will be its counterpart.

The CNMI's Homeland Security Emergency Management Emergency Operation Center will activate the public information plan with the staff of the Commonwealth's PIO tasked to provide the Governor's Office updates and other information.

The contents of the fact sheet were gathered from input from different agencies that became part of JIC last year. It is a joint catastrophic plan that would help prepare the CNMI in future disasters like typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruption, tsunami, and even civil unrest.

Government agencies need to know its basic responsibilities before, during, and after disasters like evacuation plan, responding to emergencies, and how to address the issue on hazardous materials or other wastes. Releasing accurate information before and after a disaster is important.

Federal Grant Will Fund Research To Better Respond To Drought (AUDIO)

By Brent Martin

Nebraska Radio Network, September 13, 2016

University of Nebraska researchers will use a nearly $300,000 federal grant to help policy makers better prepare to respond to drought.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration $284,588 grant will finance two years of research to create a web-based tool to help governments make drought-related decisions.

Senior Research Director Denise Bulling with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center says policymakers don't always connect drought with emergency response.

"Hopefully, this will bridge that gap between what's happening in water resource planning and what's happening in traditional emergency response planning," Bulling tells Nebraska Radio Network.

Bulling says researchers hope to bridge that gap between traditional emergency response planning and resource planning by using the Federal Emergency Management Agency planning process that incorporates realistic impacts of a long-term drought. The challenge, she says, is wading through all the data available and the numerous tools which have been developed to decide what is useful and what is not.

Climatologist Deborah Bathke at the National Drought Mitigation Center at UNL says researchers will explore a way to tie together the FEMA planning process with the drought risk management tools available at the center.

Two years of data drawn from the Platte River Basin will be used to create the model.

Bathke says those who would use it will be consulted.

"The exact form and what that tool looks like will depend on the feedback and the interactions that we have with stakeholders in the region and in response to what they're needs are," Bathke tells us.

Bathke says this web-based tool will not be something developed in a laboratory, but resources will be taken into the field, tested, and refined to be useful to policymakers.

The grant comes from the NOAA Sectoral Applications Research Program. Researchers hope to build a tool that can be used throughout the country to plan for and respond to water-related disasters.

The research team also includes Lisa Pytlik Zillig, senior research manager at the Public Policy Center; Crystal Stiles, applied climatologist and postdoctoral research associate at the High Plains Regional Climate Center.

AUDIO: Brent Martin reports [:50]

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

DAVE ROBINSON: September Is National Preparedness Month

By Dave Robinson

Harrison (AR) Daily Times, September 13, 2016

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (F.E.M.A.) National Preparedness month began on Sept. 1. Each week of the month carries its own theme. Topics like Preparing Family and Friends, Preparing Through Service, and finally, Individual Preparedness. The central theme is "Don't Wait. Communicate, Make Your Emergency Plan Today." Check www.ready.gov for an overview of all the opportunities to participate.

This current week (Sept. 11-17) puts the emphasis on involvement through community service and coordinating your plans with neighbors. Opportunities such as Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.), Citizen Corps or the Youth Preparedness Council offer plenty of outlets for contributions at the community level.The week of Sept. 18-24 emphasizes Individual Preparedness and offers a new app for your smartphone featuring weather alerts, disaster resources and safety reminders. The final week, Sept. 23-30 is billed as a Lead Up To A National Day Of Action. Participants are encouraged to organize a preparedness activity, register it on ready.gov/prepare and then share photos and stories of how your activities made a difference.

Also scheduled for Sept. 30 is National PreparAthon! Day. The goals of this and similar events are to increase the number of folks who are aware of what type of disasters can strike their local community, what to do to be safe and mitigate damage and how to increase their preparedness level so the effects of a disaster are minimized. Community resilience planning is also on the agenda. Opportunities to sign up for individuals and organizations are posted on the website as well. F.E.M.A. has come a long way since Hurricane Katrina and their website is an excellent resource for all types of disaster planning and information.

As usual send your questions and comments disasterprep.dave@gmail.com. Previous columns can be found on my blog at www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com.

Dave Robinson is the Postmaster in Bandon, Oregon, and the author of "Disaster Prep For The Rest Of Us," available on Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble and other online booksellers.

Local Mobile Apps Make Emergency Preparations Easier

Batavia (NY) Daily News, September 14, 2016

September is National Preparedness Month. In our area, we generally think of snow- and ice-related emergencies, however, it is also important to be ready for threats caused by flooding, high winds, earthquakes, fires, chemical spills and infectious diseases.

Thankfully, getting prepared for all types of emergencies is made easier with the assistance of mobile apps like Ready Genesee, Orleans Aware and FEMA. These apps are similar in nature in that all connect consumers to weather alerts, planning features and information on available shelters. Apps like these are user-friendly and give consumers the tools to take part in their own preparedness, which will positively impact the outcome of any emergency.

If you live, work, or visit Genesee or Orleans Counties, download the Ready Genesee and Orleans Aware apps, available on Apple and Android devices, as well as in English and Spanish, too.

"The Emergency Management Offices and Health Departments in both counties teamed up to have these apps made available in an effort to have a local focus," said Bill Schutt, deputy coordinator of Emergency Management Services. "County officials can use this app not only to get information to users before, during and after emergencies in a more direct and modern way, but also to share knowledge on a regular basis, too. Since Ready Genesee and Orleans Aware became available to download earlier this year, the counties have utilized the apps to notify users of road closers, a boil water notice, a gas leak, rabies clinics, as well as sharing of informational articles on the recent drought, Zika virus, Lyme Disease and lighting safety. If you don't travel to either county, the FEMA app is a good, reputable option, too, but it is important to note that users will not receive notifications or general information from their county officials.

Features of Ready Genesee and Orleans Aware:

- My Plan — By answering five simple questions, the app will create a customized emergency supply checklist and plan based on your family's needs, including pets and relatives with special needs.

- Alerts — Get information from the National Weather Service and local county officials. Local officials can instantly inform you of situations including, but not limited to, road closers, evacuation notices, boil water notices, gas leaks, an active shooter or missing persons.
- My Status — With the push of a button let friends and loved ones know "I'm Safe" or "I Need Help."
- EvacMap & Shelters — Find evacuation routes and shelters with on and offline mapping.
- Need to Know — E-books on various topics including Public Health Emergencies, Need to Know Preparedness for Pet Owners, Emerging Infectious Diseases, Floods and Fire Safety.

"The full potential of these new apps will be recognized more so as different emergencies arise, and I predict that utilization will increase, too," said Al Cheverie, public health emergency preparedness coordinator for Genesee and Orleans. "After downloading your app, please take the time to collect the emergency supplies for your home and car. Being ill-prepared for a situation where you are unable to leave your house or car can be dangerous if certain supplies such as necessary medications, blankets, food and water aren't on hand.

To download the apps, visit Ready Genesee or Orleans Aware: http://eocready.com/counties or FEMA: https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app.

For information about Health Department services contact:

- Genesee County Health Department: 344-2580 ext. 5555, www.co.genesee.ny.us/departments/health/index.html. Visit Facebook at Genesee County Health Department and Twitter at GeneseeCoHealthDept.
- Orleans County Health Department: 589-3278, www.orleansny.com/publichealth. Visit Facebook and Twitter: the user name for both is OrleansCoHealth.
- Wyoming County Health Department: 786-8890, www.wyomingco.net/health/main.html.

"Don't' Wait, Communicate" FEMA Says Make A Plan Now For An Emergency

By Alex George

WKBN-TV Youngstown (OH), September 13, 2016

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (WKBN) – September is National Preparedness month and the Federal Emergency Management Agency is encouraging families to make a plan and be informed in the event of an emergency.

"Don't Wait, Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today"- is the theme this year. Mahoning County EMA Director Dennis O'Hara said it's important to understand the types of emergencies that can impact anyone – flooding, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and power outages.

"You want to have supplies on hand for 72 hours. That's a gallon of water per person per day for three days and non-perishable food items such as granola bars and protein bars," O'Hara said.

O'Hara also recommends having blankets, a whistle and flashlight on hand.

It's also important to know the unique needs of your family members, including children, the elderly and pets when making an emergency supply kit, and make sure everyone knows how to send a text message.

"In a large-scale disaster, often times the first thing that fails would be the phones and they are jammed up because everyone is trying to make a phone call and you just can't get a signal," O'Hara said. "But often times a text message will go through, so just learn to text and say I'm okay, this is where I am."

O'Hara also suggests making an emergency plan and confirm that everyone knows how to get out of the house, where to meet, and any contact information for other family members and emergency services. Once a plan is set, practice it.

CITIZEN CORPS

Aspinwall Team To Help In Large-scale Emergencies

By Tawnya Panizzi

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, September 13, 2016

Aspinwall is recruiting for a new Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, that would aid first responders in a large-scale incident.

Examples include communicating with residents or conducting light search and rescue, said Andy Marsh, the borough's emergency management coordinator.

A lieutenant with the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department, Marsh is in his 36th year as an emergency service provider.

"I am trying to better prepare our community," Marsh said. "CERT is community-oriented and enables members to help rebuild and recover from incidents like a super storm, flash floods or major fires. It takes a community to rebound from a tragic and unfortunate incident."

CERT teams can help with evacuation and shelter operations, first aid, traffic control, damage assessments, debris removal and multi-municipal strategy.

Marsh already has trained about 10 volunteers, who underwent 24 total hours of class to learn skills in fire extinguishing, lifting and moving victims, CPR, disaster psychology and incident command systems.

Borough Manager Melissa Lang said Aspinwall always has been a town where neighbors help each other. The CERT team will be an advantage, because volunteers will have an established plan to augment professionals, she said.

“The CERT volunteers will add knowledge and resources to our community in order to better prepare and react to an emergency situation,” she said.

CERT was introduced in California in the 1980s, Marsh said. Training is recognized by both the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

With their extensive training, CERT teams help a community prepare for incidents that can tax the efforts of firefighters, paramedics and police officers, Marsh said.

“For our purposes in Aspinwall, the intention is to help our first responders,” he said.

The team also will be called on to assist with communication, when phone and power outages occur during a large-scale emergency.

Already, members of the team have had a taste of life as a responder. During a water main break this summer, Marsh and his team gathered at the VFD No. 2 firehouse at the top of Center Avenue to distribute water bottles.

Marsh said emergency response is determined by each local municipality. He expects to offer ongoing training for new members and continuing education for current members.

“It is my expectation that this team will grow,” he said. For more information, email Marsh at aspinwall ema@gmail.com.

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NATIONAL NEWS

Surprise Tropical Storm Julia To Drench Coastal South Carolina

By Jason Samenow

Washington Post, September 14, 2016

Out of the blue, a tropical storm was named over northeast Florida on Tuesday night. Now it could unload flooding rains in coastal South Carolina as it stalls over the region.

The storm, named Julia by the National Hurricane Center, stunned meteorologists by forming over land — about five miles west of Jacksonville — rather than water.

"The center has not spent any time over water, and probably never will. This is extraordinary, and from what I can tell, unprecedented," says Brian McNoldy, Capital Weather Gang's tropical weather expert. "While there are dozens of examples of tropical cyclones forming inland near a coastline (Agnes in 1972 over the Yucatán Peninsula and Leslie in 2000 over northern Florida are two examples), they eventually tracked over water and strengthened."

Capital Weather Gang contributor Phil Klotzbach says Julia became the first tropical cyclone on record to form over land in Florida. He told USA Today that the last storm to develop over land anywhere in the United States was Tropical Storm Beryl, which formed over southeast Louisiana in 1988.

Because of weak steering currents, Julia is forecast to meander near the Georgia and South Carolina coastline for days. Weak, slow-moving tropical storms are notorious for producing torrential rainfall, and that is the primary concern with Julia.

The National Weather Service has placed the area from roughly Georgetown, S.C., to Savannah, Ga., including Charleston, in a moderate risk zone for excessive rainfall. Its discussion qualifies the rainfall risk some, noting the most intense thunderstorm activity so far has remained offshore but cautions that some heavier activity could still soak the coast:

Thus far the deep and persistent convection has remained to the east and southeast of the circulation center … favoring the warm waters … and showing some reluctance to move onshore. Without any strengthening of the cyclone this may remain the case … with the heavy rainfall not quite wrapping around the north or northwest side of the circulation. Still … the track of the system as a whole shows enough of a northward component to likely bring steady tropical rainfall and some embedded heavier elements onshore.

The National Hurricane Center's rainfall forecast calls for three to six inches of rain along the South Carolina coastline south of Georgetown, and two to four inches around Savannah. Isolated totals of 10 inches are possible, it says.

The areas expected to receive the heaviest rainfall have not received much rain in the past 30 days — only about half of what's normal — which will help slow the onset of flooding.

Any flooding in coastal South Carolina is unlikely to rival the historic event in early October when up to two feet of rain fell in central Charleston County, and Charleston had its wettest day on record.

Although Julia's formation over land is a meteorological oddity, it is not a requirement for the center of a tropical weather disturbance to be over water to develop into a storm. As long as its circulation is in contact with the ocean, it can tap moisture and organize.

Also, in some instances, storms have shown the ability to maintain their intensity or even strengthen passing over saturated or swampy land areas — which they can draw moisture from, sometimes referred to as the "brown ocean" phenomenon.

UPDATE 5-Storm Julia Threatens Flooding In Coastal South Carolina

Reuters, September 14, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Julia Weakens To Tropical Depression Off US East Coast

By Bruce Smith

Associated Press, September 15, 2016

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Julia has weakened to a tropical depression off South Carolina after bringing steady rains, but not the torrential downpours and widespread flooding that had been feared, to the coast of the Southeast from Florida to the Carolinas.

The depression's maximum sustained winds early Thursday had decreased to near 35 mph (56 kph) with little change in strength forecast over the next two days. The National Weather Service forecast that most of the rain would now remain out at sea.

As of 5 a.m. EDT, Julia was centered about 60 miles (96 kilometers) south-southeast of Charleston. The storm was forecast to meander and then dissipate offshore in the next few days.

Flood watches were dropped for the South Carolina coast Thursday although forecasters issued a small craft advisory for waters near the shore and said there was a danger of rip currents along the coast through Thursday evening.

Street flooding that came about the time of high tide late Wednesday caused a handful of downtown streets in Charleston to be closed. All the streets had reopened by rush hour Thursday morning and the pavement on major arteries leading into town were dry.

Many areas along the South Carolina coast saw more than 2 inches of rain during the storm on Wednesday, but nowhere near the 6 to 8 inches that had earlier been forecast.

Forecasters had issued flood watches, concerned about additional rains coming less than two weeks after Tropical Storm Hermine sloshed across the state. That storm brought from 3 to 6 inches of rain but mainly in areas of the Midlands farther inland.

Meanwhile, a new tropical depression formed far out over the Atlantic and is moving west. The depression's maximum sustained winds are near 35 mph (56 kph) with little change in strength expected over the next two days. It's centered about 365 miles (587 kilometers) west-northwest of the Cabo Verde Islands.

Elsewhere, Tropical Storm Ian is moving north in the central Atlantic but is no threat to land.

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Julia, Off S.C. Coast, Weakens To Tropical Depression

USA Today, September 15, 2016

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Tropical Storm Julia has weakened to a tropical depression off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said Thursday morning.

The storm, located about 60 miles south-southeast of Charleston, S.C., has maximum sustained winds of 55 mph.

Julia is expected to linger off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina for the next few days, the hurricane center said.

The storm system continues to drop rain along the South Carolina coast.

According to the hurricane center, additional rainfall of less than an inch is expected across coastal parts of South Carolina and southeast North Carolina into Friday.

There are no watches or warnings associated with the system.

Minor storm damage from Julia was reported in several Florida coastal communities, including Mayport, Neptune Beach and St. Simons.

St. Simons Island set a record for rainfall Tuesday, recording 4.43 inches, easily surpassing the old record of 2.03 inches, according to the National Weather Service.

Meanwhile, the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla., confirmed an EF-0 tornado touched down in southern Brevard County, Fla., on Tuesday. It had an estimated peak wind of 75-85 mph. The tornado was on the ground for 3 miles.

No injuries were reported, but there was some damage.

Contributing: WTLV- and WJXX-TV, Jacksonville; Chris Bonanno, Florida Today. Follow Daniel Bonds on Twitter: @Daniel_Bonds

Louisiana, Florida Governors Take Different Approach On Aid

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, September 15, 2016

WASHINGTON — It's a tough time for a governor to come to Washington, hat in hand, to ask for billions of dollars for a hard-hit state, especially with Congress in the midst of election-season dysfunction and dominated by tightfisted tea party Republicans.

But Gov. John Bel Edwards is back for the second straight week, pleading for almost $3 billion to help Louisiana rebuild from last month's devastating floods, undeterred by warnings that he should keep expectations low. This is, after all, not the same Congress that voted for $60 billion in the span of a week after Hurricane Katrina slammed Louisiana in 2005.

"What I was told to expect was that there would be a tremendous difference in the way I'm perceived than what would have happened after Katrina because even disaster recovery funding seems to be caught up in partisan gridlock, whereas that was never the case before," Edwards said in an interview. "But that has not been my experience thus far."

Congress was generous in approving $95 billion to help Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas rebuild after Katrina. Funding to help the Northeast after Superstorm Sandy four years ago was a much more difficult lift, with the bulk of President Barack Obama's aid request opposed by House Republicans. More recently, GOP conservatives have been slow to embrace the need for $1 billion or so to battle the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

Edwards, a first-year Democrat, has teamed up with the Pelican State's GOP-dominated delegation behind a drive to add Louisiana flood aid to a short-term, government-wide spending bill that Congress needs to pass to avoid a government shutdown in a little more than two weeks. Louisiana is known for rough-and-tumble politics — Edwards handily beat GOP Sen. David Vitter in last year's gubernatorial race — but the rival sides are united now.

"We've all been working really well together to stay focused on helping people get back in their houses, and that's where our focus needs to be," said Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the No. 3 Republican in the House.

Edwards wasn't the only governor in Washington this week. Another visitor, GOP Gov. Rick Scott of Florida, met with top Republicans on Zika aid on Tuesday and Wednesday — and was spitting fire at Democrats for holding up a GOP-drafted measure to fight the virus, which can cause grave birth defects and is spreading in Florida. But Scott arrived just as the long-stalled Zika measure appears about to break free.

Scott said Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida had "turned his back on Floridians" by supporting a filibuster of the measure over a controversial provision targeting Planned Parenthood.

"This is about pregnant women and developing babies and he said, you know, that he was going to play politics instead," Scott said.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., who joined Scott at a meeting with Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., went out of his way Wednesday to praise Nelson for "his partnership and hard work" on Zika.

Edwards, meanwhile, met with House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., who was "noncommittal" as to whether Louisiana will get Obama's full $2.6 billion request to rebuild housing and infrastructure ruined by the floods. He's finding that the Capitol works at a much slower pace and is a stingier place than it was when Katrina smashed Louisiana a decade ago.

Edwards has a meeting with Obama on Friday after sitting down with two Cabinet members last week, including budget director Shaun Donovan, who submitted the administration's official request Tuesday evening.

"It's incumbent upon us to have good relationships and good communication regardless of party, but it's just easier when you are in the same party. And I think that has been helpful when I've been meeting with the president but also with his Cabinet secretaries," Edwards said. "But it's also obviously helpful to have folks from the Louisiana congressional delegation who can work the Republican side of the aisle."

Timing may also work in Edwards' favor. Part of the difficulty for the Zika request was that it traveled alone in the middle of the political season. It's now catching a ride on the stopgap spending bill, which is the sole must-do item before Congress adjourns for the elections. Flood aid may not be so lucky, though the Louisianans are pushing hard. Odds are good that flood aid could advance in a year-end spending bill.

"We're just pushing," said Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La.

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This story has been corrected to replace 'not' with 'now' in the second-to-last paragraph, so it reads, "It's now catching a ride on the stopgap spending bill ..."

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Louisiana Flooding Makes Case For Changes To Insurance Program

By Joe Coughlin

Roll Call, September 15, 2016

Last month's flooding in Louisiana has once again focused attention on shortcomings with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). As co-designer of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's mandatory purchase guidelines in the 1980s, I believe that recent events show beyond doubt that the program has significant problems and needs to be reformed.

For Congress, there is a bigger issue: Our nation's entire approach to natural disasters, both public and private, needs to be revisited.

There are two issues involved: Is it wise policy to place all natural hazard insurance risk coverage in a single "all hazards" policy? And second, should we require all property owners to purchase this?

Former Louisiana Sen. Mary L. Landrieu is among many who have recently suggested the need for insurance that covers flood, fire, tornadoes and earthquakes. What about wind, other than tornadoes? All forms of wind are already covered in homeowner policies and through wind pools in Eastern and Gulf Coast states. Fire is also already similarly covered in residential and commercial policies.

Mortgage lenders typically require both fire and wind coverage either through a standard homeowner policy for dwellings away from the immediate coasts, or a homeowner policy and a separate wind policy in such coastal areas.

Earthquake coverage is available in California. But it is run by the state and rarely purchased as the coverage amounts, terms and conditions are not attractive.

Mortgage lenders under NFIP jurisdiction are mandated to require flood insurance on mortgages for those structures located inside FEMA-identified Special Flood Hazard Areas. So an "all natural hazard" insurance approach would require owners of all mortgaged structures to buy such a policy regardless of location.

The end result would mean that mortgaged properties throughout the United States would be covered for all such risks. The impacted would likely approach the number currently covered by private sector policies covering fire and/or wind only — in the high tens of millions. That would also mean that the same number of structures would be covered by flood insurance, instead of the current 5 million to 6 million, and earthquake insurance, instead of the handful today.

The issues of a broad all natural hazard, single property insurance policy, together with a broad mandate of its purchase, have been raised in the past with discussions between private insurers and federal officials. Although those discussions were helpful, they were inconclusive.

A congressional proposal would likely result in opposition from the property insurance industry, as its members may not want to give up their wind and fire coverage. In recent years, however, there have been limited indications of a possible softening of positions on wind coverage in the Gulf coast and Southeast coastal areas.

Requiring such coverage on all mortgaged property would likely prove difficult because it would result in a significant expansion of the current flood insurance requirement. Opposition may arise from the mortgage, homebuilding and real estate industries out of concerns that it might cost buyers more and increase the overall costs of home ownership.

Yet such an approach could actually reduce the cost of such coverage because it would spread risk and the expanded protection for millions of structures. That could actually reduce the costs of disaster assistance.

Such coverage would require a legislative change to NFIP statutes. But it may now be time to revisit this approach and expand it.

Requiring an all natural hazard policy to be purchased by all mortgaged property would be a large improvement over the current situation. It should be fairly easy to administer and could use some of the same concepts used by the NFIP. The federal government would use the existing property insurance companies to sell and service the policies, and the current agency system to interface with insured property owners.

Cost- and risk-sharing details would have to be worked out between the government and insurers. But if the private insurers would change their views on all of this, I am convinced the details could be worked out.

Finally, any plausible proposal must address mitigation of risk. The natural hazard risk problem cannot be addressed by financial means alone. There must be a corresponding mitigation component. The NFIP employs this joint approach and without it, our flooding problem would be much worse.

Tough natural hazard mitigation requirements would also be a very political issue. To date, whenever the NFIP has proposed strengthening its standards, officials run into the usual opposition which has prevented implementation.

The most recent effort by FEMA to improve such standards for FEMA-funded projects is an encouraging start. Although supportive and optimistic of such attempts, I am guardedly so about a successful outcome, at least in the near future. At some point, all parties may finally bring something to that table, no matter how much they may be reluctant to do so.

Coughlin is a senior adviser at Dawson & Associates who helped design FEMA's Mandatory Purchase of Flood Insurance Guidelines.

Louisiana Republicans: This Isn't Like Sandy

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 15, 2016

Louisiana lawmakers are defending their 2013 votes against aid for Hurricane Sandy relief — even as they request billions of dollars to help their state recover from last month's floods.

GOP Sen. Bill Cassidy and Republican Reps. John Fleming and Steve Scalise — all of whom voted against the Sandy bill in 2013 — are now asking for more than $2 billion for flood aid for Baton Rouge and other cities in their state.

Fleming and Cassidy say they voted against the $50 billion Sandy bill -because it included $33 billion for programs unrelated to the storm damage. They say the Louisiana request has no such extraneous spending.

Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) formally asked Washington this week to provide up to $2.8 billion in emergency aid after the August floods, which destroyed more than 100,000 homes and killed 13.

The White House mostly supports the effort and formally submitted a request Tuesday for $2.6 billion in emergency spending for the state.

The proposal also has the approval of the congressional delegation, which wrote a letter to the president asking him to remember the state during spending battles between now and the end of the fiscal year, on Sept. 30.

The question now is whether Congress will do anything with the request and if members detect any hypocrisy in funding disaster relief for a state where most members have voted against it in the past.

"I guess there is a certain irony in it, or poetic justice or something, but no, it wouldn't stop me at all for voting for it," Rep. Pete King (R-N.Y.) said.

King aggressively criticized members for delaying votes on the Sandy aid package in 2013, and he said Wednesday that the fight for funds to assist his home state "caused me to change my feelings toward some people."

But aid for Louisiana, he said, "absolutely ... has to be done. No one can even think of voting against it for any political reason."

Fleming, Scalise and Cassidy, then a House member, all voted for a $17 billion lower chamber version of the Sandy bill, complaining that the Democrat-led Senate added unnecessary funding.

"All Louisiana's asking for is direct relief for damage," Fleming said of his state's aid request. "That's what I was willing to vote for in Sandy, and that's what I'm going to vote for on this. And that's all we're requesting. We're not asking for wasteful spending on projects unrelated to flooding."

Cassidy made a similar argument.

"I voted against that final package, you're right," he said. "But I voted for that $17 billion package that was truly recognized as Sandy aid."

The state's other representatives either voted for the Sandy bill or were not in Congress at the time.

Hurricane Sandy caused more than $70 billion of damage in New York and New Jersey, and the $51 billion aid package appropriated billions for community block grants, restoring utilities, rebuilding homes, repairing transit systems and coastal reconstruction.

Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), another outspoken critic of lawmakers who voted against the Sandy aid, said he warned his colleagues back then that they might someday need disaster aid themselves.

"I called out those early on to say that you have to think about that phrase, 'There but for the grace of God go I,' and you're going to need somebody some day," Menendez said. "I think they're going to have to come to some type of reckoning about why this is good in one case and not good in another."

Rep. Cedric Richmond, Louisiana's lone Democrat in Congress, said he doesn't think his party will be uneasy about backing the emergency funding for his state.

"While we did have three that did not vote for [Sandy aid], I came down to the floor and argued for it because it was important," he said. "I think that I have great goodwill among members of my side, so I think as long as we're pushing for a bill that is not insensitive to other needs of other communities, I think we're OK."

Fleming and Cassidy said that because their request is reasonable and doesn't contain unneeded funding, it should pass easily.

Sen. David Vitter (R-La.), who voted for the Sandy bill, told reporters that his colleagues' past votes shouldn't doom this aid package.

"I think when there is a disaster, Congress, administrations, whoever they are, come together and respond in a responsible way," he said shortly after the floods, according to the Greater Baton Rouge Business Report. "I was involved in the Sandy package and built good relationships based on that, so I don't foresee that difficulty."

King said each congressional fight over disaster aid should serve as a warning for all members.

"I would just hope that anyone would look at this and remember the next time there is a natural disaster somewhere to step up and do what has to be done," King said.

Overnight Energy: Trump Visits Flint | GOP Chairman Defends Subpoenas In Climate Probe

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 14, 2016

SUBPOENA FIGHT LIGHTS UP HOUSE: Congress has a "constitutional obligation" to subpoena state attorneys general in its investigation into their climate change-related probes, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) said on Wednesday.

Smith, chairman of the House Science Committee, said at a hearing that as head of the House's lead panel overseeing federal science programs, he is well within his rights and responsibilities.

"The committee has a constitutional obligation to conduct oversight any time the United States's scientific enterprise is potentially impacted," he said.

Smith, a climate change skeptic, wants to learn more about the investigations of two Democratic attorneys general into whether Exxon Mobil Corp. committed fraud by allegedly denying global warming publicly while knowing internally that emissions from fossil fuels warm the climate.

He subpoenaed the attorneys general over the summer, looking for documents related to their investigation. The two attorneys general have refused to comply, and Democrats have supported their opposition.

Smith convened his Wednesday hearing to assert that his panel has power over the state officials and can enforce his wide-ranging subpoenas demanding numerous documents related to their work.

Democrats, led by Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (Texas), shot back at Smith on Wednesday, saying his actions are little more than political stunts and comparing them to the House Un-American Activities Committee's hunt for communist sympathizers.

"In my own mind, I have to go back to the Red Scares of the '50s to recall a similar effort," Johnson said.

Read more here.

TRUMP TALKS FLINT: Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump toured a water treatment facility in Flint, Mich. on Wednesday, pledging to "fix the problem" plaguing the city's drinking water supply if he's elected in November.

"The damage can be corrected, and it can be corrected by people who know what they're doing," Trump said at an area church after touring the water facility.

"Unfortunately, the people that caused this tremendous problem had no clue. They had absolutely no clue."

Michigan officials have been roundly criticized for switching Flint's drinking water supply to a local river, which then corroded pipes and caused lead problems with the city's water.

The state eventually moved Flint's water supply back to a Detroit municipal source. But recovery efforts in the city are ongoing.

"It's amazing the damage that's been done," Trump said. "But we'll get it fixed, and it's going to get fixed quickly, if I'm elected. But it will be fixed quickly and effectively and Flint will come back. Most importantly, we'll bring jobs back to Flint."

Democrats dismissed Trump's visit to Flint.

"We all know why he's doing it: belated photo-op," Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) told reporters in Washington. "We're here solving the problem. The people of Flint don't need politics; they need solutions."

Flint Mayor Karen Weaver (D) also waved off Trump's visit and discouraged him from coming to the city.

"Flint is focused on fixing the problems caused by lead contamination of our drinking water, not photo ops," she said in a statement, adding that Flint "seeks real action and real help to recover from the lead crisis."

Read more here.

AGENCY OPPOSES NEW PIPELINE LAWSUIT, BACKS REVIEW: The Army Corps of Engineers opposes a tribe's court appeal to block construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline, but it supports an Obama administration review of the project.

The Army Corps told a federal court Wednesday that it shouldn't grant the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an injunction against a North Dakota stretch of the project, noting a lower court's Friday decision approving of the way the agency permitted the pipeline project.

Even so, the Corps wrote in a filing, the agency said it supports a temporary halt of construction on the route while federal officials consider whether there needs to be a more rigorous round of assessments on the 1,170-mile, $3.8 billion pipeline.

"While the Corps opposes the Tribe's current motion and believes that it should be denied, the Departments believe that the pipeline company should implement the relief that the Tribe is seeking voluntarily," the agency's lawyer wrote in its filing.

House Democrats asked President Obama to "maintain [the administration's] hold on further permitting" for the project until it can fully vet the tribe's concerns about the pipeline's impact on cultural and environmental areas in North Dakota.

"We stand with tribal leaders in asking you to uphold our federal trust responsibility and protect tribal interests in this and future permitting decisions by the [Army Corps]," said a letter to Obama, signed by 19 House Democrats and led by Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minn.).

Read more here.

TOMORROW IN THE HILL: The Louisiana congressional delegation wants Congress to spend billions of dollars to help assist recovery efforts following severe flooding there in August.

The only problem: many of the state's lawmakers voted against similar aid for Superstorm Sandy relief, raising questions about tensions between lawmakers seeking emergency funding for their constituents.

Tomorrow in The Hill, we preview the politics of the aid request, as Louisiana increasingly emerges as an issue on lawmakers' plates this month.

ON TAP THURSDAY I: The Senate could finish up work on its Water Resources Development Act, legislation to inject more than $9 billion into water infrastructure projects around the country. The bill also contains aid for Flint.

The Senate voted 94-3 to end debate on the bill Thursday, setting up a potential final passage vote on Thursday.

Check The Hill for more.

ON TAP THURSDAY II: President Obama will speak at the State Department's Our Ocean Conference.

Rest of Thursday's agenda ...

Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz will testify at a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing on energy security.

A House Science Committee panel will hold a hearing on Environmental Protection Agency methane regulations.

AROUND THE WEB:

A county sheriff testified in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge takeover trial, the Oregonian reports.

Americans are willing to pay more on their electric bills – but only a little more – to help fight climate change, the AP reports, citing a new poll.

The Wall Street Journal dives into oil giants' big bets on the future of natural gas.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Check out Wednesday's stories...

-Feds roll out conservation, energy plan for California Desert

-Feds argue against pipeline injunction, support new review

-Senate nears finish line on Flint aid bill

-Michigan senator: Trump's Flint visit is a 'belated photo-op'

-GOP rep: Flood insurance bill coming this month

-GOP chairman cites 'constitutional obligation' in climate subpoenas

-Obama requests $2.6B in aid for Louisiana floods

Please send tips and comments to Timothy Cama, tcama@thehill.com; and Devin Henry, dhenry@thehill.com. Follow us on Twitter: @Timothy_Cama, @dhenry, @thehill

Overnight Finance: Senators Struggle With Spending Bill | Obama Lifting Myanmar Sanctions | Dems Turn Up Heat On Wells Fargo | Panel Votes To Exempt Olympic Medals From Taxes

By Sylvan Lane

The Hill, September 14, 2016

House conservatives want first crack at funding bill: The conservative Republican Study Committee (RSC) will urge Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and his GOP leadership team to move a short-term government funding bill through the House before the Senate takes action on its own funding bill, RSC Chairman Bill Flores told The Hill on Wednesday.

In an interview, the Texas Republican said the 178-member caucus discussed a 10-week continuing resolution, or CR, at its weekly lunch meeting and came to the consensus that the House should vote first so the lower chamber doesn't get jammed with a Senate bill it doesn't want.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) have been negotiating a 10-week funding bill to keep the government's lights on past Sept. 30 but are at an impasse over a Planned Parenthood provision and other issues. The Hill's Scott Wong and Sarah Ferris tell us why: http://bit.ly/2cFRHba.

Reid: We've got some issues: Over in the upper chamber, Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid (Nev.) says there "are lots of problems" with a Republican proposal to fund the government beyond the end of the month, dampening hopes a deal might be reached this week.

Reid told reporters Wednesday that Republican and Democratic leaders are at loggerheads over the stopgap funding measure, which includes tens of millions of dollars to fight the Zika virus.

Republicans don't want any of the $80 million slated for Puerto Rico's Zika response to go to Planned Parenthood clinics.

"The CR is not done; it's a work in progress," Reid said, referring to the funding continuing resolution. "Zika funding is not done; it's a work in progress."

Asked whether the partisan dispute over granting Planned Parenthood access to federal funds remains a sticking point, Reid said, "Planned Parenthood is not gone." The Hill's Alexander Bolton takes us there: http://bit.ly/2cFRYur.

Lew meets with lawmakers on offshore tax rules: Treasury Secretary Jack Lew met with House Ways and Means Committee members Wednesday as the Obama administration works to finalize rules aimed at curbing offshore tax deals.

The rules, proposed in April, have drawn concerns from business groups and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. They would treat some inter-company debt as equity.

The rules were designed to take aim at a tax-avoidance strategy called "earnings stripping" that is used by companies that participate in "inversions" – transactions in which U.S. companies move their headquarters overseas to lower their taxes. However, stakeholders say the proposal is too broad and would hurt routine business transactions. The Hill's Naomi Jagoda tells us what happened inside the meeting: http://bit.ly/2cs9aSW.

Obama requests $2.6B in aid for Louisiana floods: The Obama administration is asking Congress for a $2.6 billion emergency appropriation to fund aid efforts following Louisiana's disastrous flooding last month.

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) said Tuesday the money would go to block grants that Louisiana could use for a wide variety of purposes, like emergency aid, small business loans, infrastructure and affordable housing.

The plea to congressional leaders and appropriators comes a day after Louisiana's eight-member congressional delegation asked President Obama to formulate an aid request so Congress could consider it for a stopgap funding measure that the Senate could consider as early as this week. The Hill's Timothy Cama breaks it down: http://bit.ly/2cxD7l.

US restores trade benefits to Myanmar: The United States will reinstate Myanmar's eligibility for benefits under the generalized system of preferences (GSP) program, which lowers tariffs on imports from poorer countries.

President Obama signed a proclamation on Wednesday allowing the Southeast Asian nation to participate in the program again starting in November after a 27-year-hiatus.

"While there is more work to be done, including to address concerns regarding human trafficking, Burma has made important progress in recent years with respect to worker rights," said U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman. The Hill's Vicki Needham tells us why it's important: http://bit.ly/2c9oYqR.

Obama lifting sanctions: The move came after President Obama earlier Wednesday said he intends to lift sanctions on Myanmar, rewarding the former military dictatorship for its move toward democracy.

The president made the announcement after meeting with the country's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, in the Oval Office.

Obama said he is "now prepared to lift sanctions that we have imposed," pointing to a "remarkable social and political transformation" in Myanmar.

"It is the right thing to do to ensure that the people of Burma see rewards for a new way of doing business," he said, sitting beside Suu Kyi. The military junta in Myanmar changed the country's name from Burma in 1989.

Asked by a reporter when sanctions will be lifted, Obama replied, "soon." The Hill's Jordan Fabian has more on the ramifications: http://bit.ly/2cW2ks4

Happy Wednesday and welcome to Overnight Finance, where we're wondering how it's only Wednesday. I'm Sylvan Lane, and here's your nightly guide to everything affecting your bills, bank account and bottom line.

Tonight's highlights include good news for Olympic medalists, more Congressional heat on Wells Fargo and a proposal from Hillary Clinton's potential Defense secretary.

See something I missed? Let me know at slane@thehill.com or tweet me @SylvanLane. And if you like your newsletter, you can subscribe to it here: http://bit.ly/1NxxW2N.

On tap tomorrow:

Senate Agriculture Committee: Hearing to examine the nominations of Christopher James Brummer, of the District of Columbia, and Brian D. Quintenz, of the District of Columbia, both to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cIZ5Qk.

House panel votes to exempt Olympic medals from taxes: The House Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday approved a bill that would exempt many Olympic athletes' medals and prize money from taxes.

The measure was approved by voice vote and heads to the House floor. The vote comes one month after the Rio de Janeiro Olympics and during the Paralympic games.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) has said that the full chamber will consider the measure. The Senate passed a version of the legislation in July.

The bill would generally exempt from taxes the value of Olympic and Paralympic medals as well as prize money awarded to medalists by the U.S. Olympic Committee. The bill would apply to medals and prizes athletes received in 2016 and future years.

The Ways and Means Committee adopted an amendment from Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.) that would prevent the tax exemption from applying to athletes whose adjusted gross income was more than $1 million. Naomi Jagoda tells us more: http://bit.ly/2cWaros.

GOP rep: Flood insurance bill coming this month: Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.) said on Wednesday that he plans to introduce a bill this month reforming a federal flood insurance program.

Luetkemeyer, chairman of the Financial Services subcommittee on insurance, said his bill – the product of almost a year of work – would expand private flood insurance coverage, change rates within the industry and reduce the National Flood Insurance Program's $23 billion debt.

"As taxpayers ... you're paying that $23 billion that's a shortfall right now, some way, some how, some point in time," Luetkemeyer said during an event sponsored by The Hill and Zurich North America.

"So, how do we structure the program in the future so that doesn't increase and be another burden on all of you to have to take care of down the road?"

The program is due for congressional reauthorization next year, creating an opportunity to make changes to the 50-year-old program. The Hill's Devin Henry walks us through: http://bit.ly/2cxDyMw.

GOP lawmaker: Obama must rally Dems on Pacific trade deal: The head of a House trade subcommittee said Wednesday that President Obama must rally members of his own party to pass an expansive Pacific trade agreement in Congress this year.

Rep. Dave Reichert (R-Wash.), chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade, said that passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement will need more than the 40 Democrats who may possibly support the expansive deal.

"There are some political realities here that we all know are creating this uphill battle for us," Reichert said during the Export-Import Council meeting at the White House, the final one of Obama's presidency.

All 28 Democrats who voted with Republicans more than a year ago to pass trade promotion authority, or fast-track, are on board with the TPP, Reichert said. Vicki Needham breaks it down: http://bit.ly/2c9pnt8.

Potential Clinton Defense secretary calls for lifting budget caps: A key Defense Department figure thought to be a candidate to be Hillary Clinton's secretary of Defense is calling for caps on the defense budget to be lifted early in the next administration.

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy on Wednesday said raising the caps is “a national security issue.”

“We have to get out from under [Budget Control Act] caps,” she added, speaking at an Institute for the Study of War conference in Washington.

The 2011 Budget Control Act enacted caps on the Pentagon’s budget that slashed its budget by $500 billion over 10 years, when lawmakers failed to reach a deal on how to close a $1 trillion budget deficit.

Those cuts were on top of an already-planned cut of $487 billion during that time. The Hill’s Kristina Wong has more: http://bit.ly/2c9oOQj.

GOP senator wants hearing on international tax issues: Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.) is asking the Senate Finance Committee to hold a hearing on international tax issues, such as the Treasury Department’s proposed rules aimed at curbing offshore tax deals and the European Union’s investigations of U.S. companies.

“I believe it is critical the Senate Finance Committee has the opportunity to discuss these issues and the ramifications of these issues in a hearing,” Heller, a member of the committee, said in a letter sent this week to Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

Treasury’s proposed rules and the EU’s ruling that Apple owes Ireland $14.5 billion in back taxes have drawn criticism from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. Naomi Jagoda has more: http://bit.ly/2cydqOr.

Lawmakers look to boost agricultural exports to Cuba: Lawmakers at a House Agriculture Committee hearing on Wednesday pushed to expand American agricultural trade with Cuba.

“I believe there lays an opportunity – albeit a rather narrow one – to make changes that will positively benefit both agricultural producers here at home while contributing to economic growth in Cuba,” said Chairman Michael Conaway (R-Texas) in his opening statement.

Conaway and Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) are co-sponsors of the Cuban Agricultural Exports Act, which would permit private financing for agricultural exports to Cuba.

Conaway said the Castro regime’s “heavy hand” still controlled Cuban agriculture but that their legislation could spur positive change.

Peterson also said more must be done to boost American agricultural exports to the island nation. The Hill’s Ellie Silverman has more: http://bit.ly/2cK1jQv.

Treasury floats gold jewelry ban for banks: The Department of the Treasury is proposing a ban on gold jewelry for banks.

Investing in gold jewelry and certain other precious metals does not fall within the “business of banking,” the Treasury Department said Wednesday in the Federal Register.

As such, the Treasury Department’s Office of the Comptroller of the Currency is looking to block national banks and federal savings associations from buying and selling metals that are “primarily suited for industrial or commercial use,” such as gold jewelry, copper cathodes, and aluminum T-bars. The Hill’s Tim Devaney tells us more: http://bit.ly/2cycIAN.

Cummings demands more details on Wells Fargo fraud scheme: A top House Democrat is calling on Wells Fargo & Co. to produce documents that would help determine whether the bank’s managers spurred employees to create fake accounts by using incentives and threats to meet sales goals.

Maryland Rep. Elijah Cummings, ranking member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, sent a letter on Tuesday to Wells CEO John Stumpf requesting information on how the company is holding employees and executives accountable for allegedly opening more than 2 million bank and credit card accounts without customers’ knowledge.

“Wells Fargo apparently just fired more than 5,000 employees, but it is unclear whether the executives who orchestrated this scheme will be held accountable,” Cummings said after meeting with Tim Sloan, Wells Fargo’s president and chief operating officer, in Washington.

Cummings gave Sloan the letter for Stumpf requesting documents about how its “managers used quotas, bonuses, threats and other punitive measures to perpetrate these abuses.”

Any managers who directed the abuses or enforced the quotas should be investigated and prosecuted, he said: http://bit.ly/2cWbV26.

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A Missouri Town Saved From Flood Faces Questions About Its Levee

By Kris Maher

Wall Street Journal, September 14, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

The School Doomed By Climate Change

By Mareesa Nicosia

The Atlantic, September 15, 2016

Newtok, AK.—In Dawn Wilson's classroom, fourth-graders are writing a story about what they would need to survive if their families were forced to quickly leave their homes and relocate down river. Astutely, her young students tick off the essentials: food, clothing, guns, and ammunition.

In this remote Yup'ik tribal community on Alaska's southwest shore, this sort of brainstorming is not an abstract academic exercise. It's a real-life lesson built around the environmental forces now threatening to upend the already-hardscrabble existence of some 400 people for whom hunting is essential to eating.More From The Seventy Four

The very school where Wilson's fourth-graders contemplate their survival supplies will soon be gone, submerged by a fast-rising river that's grown so wide you can't see the other side. Each year, the water slides closer, buoyed by wind and rain storms, record-high temperatures and melting permafrost.

Next year, estimates say, the river will flow past the shoreline houses and reach the school, which is the village's highest point, its community center, and its only source of running water. If the current rate of erosion remains constant, the school—the first in the country to shutter because of climate change—may not make it through 2018.

The current roster of high-school seniors will likely be the last graduating class of Newtok.

"We have to move … the water is eating the land," Wilson read, back in the classroom a few weeks ago, reciting to her students the narrative they had composed together during the first week of school.

* * *

If they don't already, Wilson's young pupils will soon know this lesson by heart: Their village is at the front lines of the global climate-change crisis that could ultimately devastate dozens of small indigenous communities scattered along Alaska's Bering Sea coast. They lie within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, a 19.5-million-acre expanse of wetlands and tundra between the Bering Strait and the Aleutian Islands.

The village of Newtok—a few dozen dilapidated buildings splayed on a treeless, marshy bend of the Ninglick River just before it opens into the ocean—is disappearing. More than 100 feet of its shoreline was ripped away in a single storm; most years average 72 feet. The layer of earth that forms the village's foundation and was once frozen solid is turning to mud.

The Ninglick River has swallowed at least 500 feet of Newtok's southern shoreline since 2005. Erosion claims an average 72 feet of earth each year. (Hanna Craig)

Just a few hundred feet from the encroaching river, Newtok's school sits perched on splintering wooden stilts, a T-shaped modular covered in peeling blue and white paint. Wilson, an elementary-reading specialist from Ohio, arrived here in early August, but her two-year contract could be cut short by the very manifestation of what she is teaching.

In mid-August, though, time feels abundant here. The days stretch on and on, the sun does not set until 11 p.m., and children play and ride their bikes on the rickety wooden boardwalks that serve as Newtok's streets late into the night.

But sooner rather than later, the belongings that Wilson's fourth-graders listed in their story must be packed up, along with their books, pencils and backpacks. And the residents of Newtok will leave their sinking village and abandon the land their ancestors have lived off of for generations, finally moving to sturdier ground—they hope—after years of anxious waiting, bureaucratic missteps and political infighting.

* * *

Newtok's school, also sometimes known as Ayaprun School, is part of the Lower Kuskokwim school district, which serves 4,100 students in 27 schools in a region about the size of West Virginia.

In Newtok, all but a few of the 132 students are Alaska Natives from poor homes. The 28 staff members are a mix of certified teachers from the Lower 48, like Wilson, who are recruited to work on short-term contracts, and local Alaska Natives, often uncertified, who typically work as classroom aides. Part of the draw for outsiders is that certified teacher salaries start at $52,000, quite a bit higher than the recent national average of $36,141.

While students and staff officially occupy the building from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., the doors don't lock most nights until 11 p.m. Any afternoon or evening, the sounds of students singing and drumming Yup'ik music fill the halls. Youth and adult teams play basketball, Newtok's favorite sport, every day in the gym, which doubles as cafeteria. It's also where students on the Native Youth Olympics team practice for the annual statewide competition. They perform a series of traditional endurance and agility feats, like the one-foot high kick, the wrist carry, and the seal hop, which originated with the daily activities of early Alaska Natives.

There are monthly movie nights and occasional extracurriculars, like when a village resident volunteered to teach students archery. This year, another resident offered guitar lessons, so the school purchased a few instruments.

The school is the only building in the village with its own generator, flush toilets, and showers (two for men, two for women). The homes here do not have indoor plumbing or running water, so young men are sent to haul five-gallon jugs of water from the school every day.

When there's a funeral, the gym is where residents gather to eat and mourn. And when other areas of the village flood—as they do almost every year now—the school, as Newtok's highest point, is where residents go to shelter.

"The school is like the qasgiq," said Principal Grant Kashatok, using the Yup'ik term. "It's the communal house from 100 years ago where people come together to become a community."

* * *

The first Newtok school was built in 1958 by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which was, at the time, building schools at many Alaska Native seasonal camps, an attempt to encourage the people to settle year-round and enroll their children in school.

For thousands of years, the camps were inhabited by semi-nomadic Yup'ik who lived off the land and followed their food sources from season to season—fishing, hunting moose and muskox in the winter, hunting seals, and foraging for berries and other plants in the summer."For a lot of them, having a high-school education is important, but it's not as important as, … 'Am I going to have food for my family?'"

As in many native communities, the village of Newtok developed around that first school. Since the 1960s and '70s, according to State Department records, the village has been a year-round residence, but the tradition of subsistence living persists.

"For a lot of teachers, it's hard to get past, 'My student's gonna be gone for a week, because they're gonna go moose-hunting,'" said Brandi Portie, a math teacher and Louisiana native who moved here with her husband 10 years ago. "It's hard to work around, but that's part of the culture, and so it's something you have to accept as a teacher."

This is a place where the daily tasks that ensure students' safety and survival often take precedence over getting to class.

"For a lot of them, having a high-school education is important, but it's not as important as, … 'Am I going to have food for my family? Do I need to miss class this morning to get some stove oil to heat the house? Do I need to go dump the honey bucket because the honey bucket's full?'" The buckets, filled with human waste, are emptied daily into the smaller Newtok River, to the east, where residents dock their boats. There's no other alternative, as the community dump site, along with the village's barge-landing dock, were swallowed by the Ninglick River years ago.

Educators aren't blind to the fact that in many ways, the lifestyle the community has chosen to maintain and protect comes with certain costs. About half of Newtok students graduate from high school in four years, compared to 71 percent statewide and 82 percent nationally. The majority of village students in all grades lag behind their peers in the district and around the state on Alaska's reading and math proficiency tests, school data shows. Ten percent or less of Newtok students were considered proficient in science as of 2015, according to state data.

Many students don't consider leaving the village for college, often because they're relied upon to help care for elderly relatives or siblings (most families have around seven children, Kashatok said). "Teachers don't come in here and think that they're gonna, like, save the world," said Wilson, the elementary-reading teacher, "because this is not our world to save. It belongs to the people of Newtok ... it's up to us to come here and become part of them. It's not up to us to come here and change them."

More than a third of Newtok residents live below the federal poverty line, according to 2010 census data—although the number is likely higher now, officials said. Newtok is legally a dry town, but alcoholism and drug abuse is widespread. School officials say it's not unusual for parents to leave their children to look after each other while they drink away their annual permanent fund dividend check—every Alaska resident received $2,072 in 2015—in Bethel or Anchorage.

Navigating the sometimes bleak realities of their students' lives, Portie and her colleagues can't help but feel weary some days. Yet in nearly a decade of teaching here, she has proudly watched her students inch forward academically.

All students study the Yup'ik language through the school's burgeoning dual-language program. Since the school expanded the program a few years ago, starting English lessons in kindergarten rather than third grade, students have made strides, Portie said.

They are better readers and sharper mathematicians, she said. They stay after school to attend her homework-help sessions, tempted by the knowledge that they'll get a free snack afterward. Kids often show up at teacher's doors at 11:30 p.m. just to talk. When a few visitors recently camped out in the school library, which serves as a makeshift hostel for journalists and state officials, a swarm of smiling and inquisitive elementary-school kids peppered them for information: name, age, place of origin.Past estimates ... have put the total cost of the move at $130 million.

"I don't want to see the kids fall any further behind," Portie said. "I would hate to see for it to go backwards and I feel like that's the way it would go if they plan a move without planning everything together."

It's unclear to what extent local, state, and federal leaders have considered the educational disruption that the village relocation will create for Newtok's 132 students, but what is apparent is the pending move's enormous difficulty. Kashatok, who has been principal for 12 years, has operated in perpetual wait-and-see mode; the relocation will mark the first of its kind in Alaska. He expects to meet with village-council members and state officials this fall to discuss the plans.

Soft-spoken and prone to wry humor, Kashatok is the self-described "gatekeeper" of the school. His roster of duties includes math teacher, sports coach, nurse, back-up cook, guidance counselor, data analyst, and social worker. He likes to hunt, fish, and play bingo in his free time, what little there is of it. His wife, Sarah, is the school librarian, and the youngest of their four children is in eighth grade. Two sons are already in college and their daughter graduated high school in June, with plans to go to the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

* * *

More than 180 Alaska Native villages have experienced gradually worsening erosion and flooding for decades, and Newtok continues to surface at the top of government warning lists. In 2003, it was named one of four villages in "imminent danger" in a U.S. General Accounting Office study; a follow-up report in 2009 reaffirmed that finding. In 2009, the Army Corps of Engineers labeled Newtok one of 26 "priority communities" that were so at risk of damage that they were recommended for "immediate and substantial intervention" by state, federal, or other agencies. Between 2005 and 2014, nearly 500 feet of land along the Ninglick riverbank eroded, according to data provided by the state Department of Natural Resources.

A few villages, including Shishmaref, located on a barrier island north of the Bering Strait, have begun to map out plans for a move. Statewide, Newtok is the furthest along in addressing the crisis, having actually started building anew over the last 10 years at the relocation site, a large island of rolling hills nine miles downriver.

The quiet northern tip of Nelson Island where Newtok plans to relocate is called Mertarvik, which in Yup'ik means "getting water from the spring." Mertarvik's grassy ridges rise 500 feet above sea level versus Newtok's 10, and it's an ideal location in other ways: It has plentiful well water, loads of blueberries, and nearby hunting grounds—muskox roam on the ocean-facing side.

Past estimates by the Army Corps of Engineers have put the total cost of the move at $130 million. The village has so far cobbled together funds piecemeal. Currently it has access to about $20 million from the state and the Bureau of Indian Affairs that's earmarked for "pioneer-level" infrastructure, said Sally Russell Cox, a state employee in the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development who has worked with the Newtok Planning Group for years. It can be used for relocating 12 homes, work on a quarry and a Dura-base road that leads to the quarry, finishing the emergency evacuation center, building a temporary landing strip for deliveries of construction supplies and emergencies, as well as water, sewer, and a landfill.

Most everyone agrees on what needs to be done, and done quickly, Russell Cox said. And yet the plans have sputtered along for decades, stymied in large part by a bitter power struggle between rival factions of local leaders. (Wavering state and federal support as administrations turn over hasn't helped either.) The former village council was led by Stanley Tom, the longtime relocation coordinator for the move. He and his council were ousted a few years ago after some residents accused him of embezzling funds for the project and alleged that local elections were rigged to keep the council in office for the duration of the relocation. As a result, several million dollars in government aid that had been scraped together was frozen, residents said.

The new council stepped in after the Bureau of Indian Affairs took the rare step of intervening in a local issue in 2013. While the two sides remain divided and barely communicate, village officials insist that the lingering dispute is not preventing progress.

This year, in fact, the Newtok project has finally picked up some momentum, officials said, and Romy Cadiente, the relocation coordinator, hopes the village can serve as a "template" for other communities that are or soon will face death by erosion in rural Alaska. "This thing is in full bloom," said Cadiente, who works closely with the state and other agencies. "There's a lot of people that are putting their blood, sweat, and tears into this."

As of late August, the council was considering entering a FEMA buy-out program to demolish some of the most decrepit Newtok homes. Officials would seek grant funding for the remaining cost of building new, replacement ones in Mertarvik, Cadiente said. While each new home is estimated to cost up to $350,000, the appraised value of the existing ones is likely far less. No one can say for sure yet how they'll make up the difference. Three houses already built in Mertarvik are seasonally occupied by pioneering Newtok elders with strong ties to the old council; three other houses stand vacant save for electric wires, new window screens stacked by piles of dead flies, and a dusty white porcelain toilet practically still in its packaging—signs of a project abandoned without explanation.

The rising river could reach the Newtok School as soon as 2017, by some government estimates. (Hanna Craig)

Workers with the Fairbanks-based nonprofit Cold Climate Housing Research Center and villagers spent the summer building a new self-sufficient, energy-efficient home on movable skids that will serve as a prototype for future construction.

For now, the relocation site is only accessible by boat, which drives up the cost of transporting construction materials. The five gallons of fuel required for a recent round trip between Newtok and Mertarvik to carry five people 18 miles by powerboat cost $34.

* * *

When he visited Alaska last September, President Barack Obama spoke at the high school in the village of Kotzebue, where he was greeted with nose-rubbing Eskimo kisses by the president of the regional school district; in the village of Dillingham, he joined students for a traditional Yup'ik dance.

He was there—the first sitting president to visit the U.S. Arctic—to call attention to the threat of global warming and announce that the Denali Commission would coordinate federal, state, and tribal resources used to address erosion, flooding, and climate change in Alaskan communities.

Tucked into the $20 million relocation aid Newtok has now is about $3 million from the Denali Commission for planning and design work, according to Russell Cox, the state staffer. But that's not nearly enough—and it's unclear how much, if any, would aid the school relocation.

The current Newtok school was built in 2000 using $14 million in insurance money after a fire burned down the old school, according to Kashatok, the principal. At the time, Newtok residents had already voted to relocate the village, so the new school was designed to be taken apart and reassembled at the new site.

In the 16 years since, however, the building has aged beyond its intended use, and local officials say it is unfit to be moved by barge to Mertarvik. Plan B, which is being hashed out this school year, is for the village to build new homes at Mertarvik, possibly relocate others, and move several families in next summer.

By next school year, 2017-18, a makeshift school could be up and running in a storage facility that is already built at the new site. Once 25 students have made the move, Newtok can apply through the state education department for an estimated $40 million in capital funding for construction of a new school, local officials said.

The timeline is clearly problematic, some teachers and parents have noted drily.

"You have to have so many kids to build a school, but how can the kids move there without a school?" said Kylie Riches, 24, a teacher from Fairbanks who moved to Newtok three years ago, right out of college.

It's the Catch-22 that will likely consume officials' workdays for months to come.

In an interview, Lower Kuskokwim school district Superintendent Dan Walker said getting through the transition will probably require using portable classrooms or relying on parents to homeschool their children. A few teachers will be assigned to the site to start. The district has a robust distance-learning program that students in Mertarvik could participate in once the new site has internet access, he said.

Meanwhile, the odds of squeezing out extra education funding from the state are slim, especially as several other schools in the Lower Kuskokwim district that need renovations and additions are competing for some of the same pot of money. The village of Napakiak, just downriver from the school-district headquarters in Bethel, is facing similar erosion and flooding problems, Walker said. It could one day be grappling with the same challenge of relocating residents and rebuilding a school."We need to get heard out there [by people who can help] because this place is sinking."

Some 470 miles north, Kivalina is another Alaska Native community of less than 1,000 people located on the tip of an island that is trying to relocate. Officials there asked the state for $64 million in capital funds to build a new school for 175 students. They were granted $43 million, said Tim Mearig, the facilities manager in the state education department.

Newtok and villages like it have no local tax base to support a municipal bond for a project, like most U.S. public-school districts in the United States do. The main state aid source that rural districts like the Lower Kuskokwim can access to build or fix schools is capped at $70 million for 2017, Mearig said, and the fund was cut this year by 25 percent. Once each school project is added to the department's priority list, it must be individually approved by the state Legislature.

Alaska's budget deficit has surpassed $3 billion, thanks mostly to the plummeting price of oil, the state's main source of revenue. That's expected to lead to state spending cuts in education and other areas over the next few years. In 2015, about 22 percent of all state spending went to education.

* * *

Back in Newtok, an environmental disaster is bearing down but life moves along for most at an unhurried pace. "Tomorrow morning but not today," one man quipped, laughing, when asked for his take on when the Mertarvik move will begin.

Then he squinted into the sun and suddenly turned solemn. "We need to get heard out there [by people who can help] because this place is sinking," he said. "I'm not sure how long we got, but it's not long."

The village's slow but certain deterioration is set against a deceptive tranquility. During a handful of sun-drenched days in August, geese honked overhead and the dogs that wander freely barked at a stranger passing by. Children whooped and adults moved over the bleached-out boardwalks that lead from the school through a maze of mud tracts and tall, soggy grass.

A splatter of one-story, weather-worn wooden homes and a few other buildings—two churches, two general stores, a health clinic, the post office, and the tribal council office—make up the whole of Newtok.

Occasionally, the whine of an engine broke the air as an all-terrain vehicle rumbled from one end of the village to the other. A few times a day, weather permitting, a prop plane bound from Bethel buzzed down on the airstrip, shuttling supplies and visitors in and out. The sense that Newtok is drifting and that its inhabitants feel powerless to right its course was palpable in many conversations with village residents.

Andy Patrick Sr., 69, a member of the old tribal council, said he led early efforts to research the move and obtain grants. He's still fuming over the loss of that money and the council's authority. It chafes him that the new relocation manager, Cadiente, hails not from Newtok, but from Hawaii. In separate interviews, both sides indicated their distrust of the other, and any early willingness to cooperate has long since disappeared. Patrick prefers that the village move forward with the relocation independently, without the help of bureaucrats who, he says, are full of empty promises.

"They died waiting for that dollar!" he bellowed, stabbing the air at a photo collage of smiling Newtok elders that hangs on the wall in his office. "Right now, I'm not fighting for my future 'cause I don't have that much time left," he added. "I'm fighting for the future of my grandkids. If we don't fix this problem, they won't have any future. They will have no voice."

Hints that this deep-rooted conflict still simmers beneath Newtok's polite, quiet exterior seem to surface everywhere. Walking north near the village water tank, Sophie Simon, a mother of six, was on her way to the school to find out about selling her handmade grass baskets. Embroidered with a colorful abstract design, they might go for $20 or $30 apiece. The week before, Simon said someone had set fire to the mechanic's shop, destroying several snowmobiles. Not too long before that, the post office was burglarized. State troopers swept into Newtok to investigate one day, and while someone eventually turned themselves in for the burglary, weeks later, nobody had been held responsible for the fire.

Some villagers think these incidents, what in most other communities would be felonies, may be Newtok's disaffected youth acting out. Simon looked pained when asked about the arson, and what could be done to improve life here. She said she lost her mother and her home in 2006 in an accidental fire started by her then-5-year-old son. When kids feel that no one is invested in their future or the community, they're going to spark trouble, she said, and things have steadily been getting worse.

Last year, a 17-year-old student tried to bring a rifle into the school, triggering a lockdown. Kashatok, the principal, said the teenager was drunk and had been targeting him. No one was harmed. Kashatok, who is aligned with the new council, said the incident was unrelated to the tribal dispute, though parents said children of former council members have been bullied in school.

Could the move to Mertarvik be a fresh start? Will it ever actually happen? Standing on the boardwalk, Simon cupped her basket in her hands and looked skyward. "I'm just a resident patiently waiting to move," she said. "Patience and prayer, that's (what) I go by."

* * *

Kashatok is one of only three Alaska Native principals of the 27 schools in the Lower Kuskokwim school district—a point of personal pride but also a symptom of what he views as a potential threat to the survival of the Yup'ik culture.

Grant Kashatok has been the Newtok School principal for 12 years. (Eric Keto)

If educators are not interested in or simply not fluent in the Yup'ik language and traditions, their students will lose touch with their heritage, he reasons. In Kashatok's school, the daily morning assembly is spoken in Yup'ik. Every object in each classroom, including the ceiling, is clearly labeled in both English and Yup'ik.

Kashatok, 52, was born in the nearby village of Kipnuk. Growing up in a culture that relates to the natural world on an intimate, often spiritual level—where village heroes are the young hunters who can fell the largest moose—Kashatok's preference for reading and studying language from an early age made him feel like a misfit, he said.

As a young educator, he grappled with a perceived conflict between his academic ambitions and the strong desire to uphold the Yup'ik way of life.

Eventually, he found that the two parts of his identity could exist in harmony—and he makes a point to convey this to his students with the hope that it will help them overcome any tendencies toward suicide or drugs, which have taken many young lives in Alaska Native villages. (Alaska has one of the highest suicide rates per capita in the country.) "As long as I remain true to being a Yup'ik man, then I will feel good about myself," he said. "If we show that to the other students, then we'll make some inroads (on those problems)."

Kashatok likes to brag that more than half of Newtok's sixth-graders are proficient in the Yup'ik language, even as they struggle with English.

Though there are no Advanced Placement classes and no test prep sessions for juniors and seniors eyeing college, several students each year travel to Bethel, the hub community about an hour east by plane, to live in dorms and take STEM classes in preparation for college. Last year, students raised $18,000 to send all seven seniors in the class of 2015 to Honolulu, an exotic destination for almost anyone, never mind these teens, some of whom had never left their village. "Since we've been having the kids travel more … [their] worldview has gradually changed so that they see themselves succeeding in college and getting professional careers going and so on, which is a good thing," Kashatok said. "[It's a] big change from how it was before."

Bosco Charles, who graduated in June, will be the third in his family to go to college, with plans to major in accounting at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. "I want to do a lot of things," he said, leaning his tall frame, clad in basketball jersey, against a locker. "I want to (come back) and be a Yup'ik teacher."

When the principal envisions the future of his school, at the top of his wishlist is a soundproof Yup'ik room for dancing and drumming. A spacious new gym and a separate cafeteria are a close second. And of course, the tight-knit sense of community that grounds the Newtok school—where teachers can tick off the names of the 10 children in one family, from youngest to oldest, without batting an eye—will be preserved.

Above all, the new school will be safely located on rocky volcanic soil in Mertarvik, far from the rising water that seeps further inland on Newtok's shore every day. And when he considers the futures of his students, Kashatok dreams of them returning home with engineering degrees, prepared to help rebuild their community in its new island berth.

"What I hope are … a lot of students saying 'I went to Newtok School' and that means something," he said. "(And that) even though there was poverty and no running water, shit on the ground … that they made it."

This story was produced in collaboration with The74Million.org.

Outdated FEMA Flood Maps Don't Account For Climate Change

NPR, September 15, 2016

The floods that hit Louisiana last month were caused by rainfall that was unlike anything seen there in centuries. Most of the southern part of the state was drenched with up to two or three inches in an hour. A total of 31 inches fell just northeast of Baton Rouge in about three days; 20 parishes were declared federal disaster areas.

Climate scientists and flood managers suspect there could more like that to come — in Louisiana and in other parts of the country.

There have always been extraordinary rainstorms — storms stronger than anyone can remember. But Nicholas Pinter, a geologist at the University of California, Davis, who researches floods, says we shouldn't write these off as once-in-a-lifetime freak events.

"[In] our experience," Pinter says, "these kind of — call them 'acts of God explanations' — are served up just a little too easily." Sure, he says, amazing rainstorms do happen. But lately, big floods seem to be following storms more often.

"Hundred-year floods — floods of a magnitude that usually occur only once a century — [and] other large [weather] events are occurring bigger and more frequently than the published probabilities predict," Pinter says.

And some of those floods look different.

For example, satellite photos show that about a third of the flooding in Louisiana last month was outside the local flood plain. The flood plain is the area that historically gets inundated by a once-a-century flood.

Pinter says floods that occur outside the historical flood plain appear to be happening more often — in Louisiana and elsewhere.

"Maybe we're seeing a different character of flood event beginning to appear," he says. "More like a climate-driven flash flood event that's affecting these big river systems, which might be a new and different phenomenon that we need to throw into the statistics. Maybe."

A heavy rain, for example, that flashes down onto urban areas and just overwhelms sewers and drains might be this sort of event, he says.

At this point, the evidence that the increasing floods is climate-related is still tentative, because you need a lot of storm data over many years to identify a trend. But Paul Osman, flood plain manager for the state of Illinois, is seeing changes too. Osman studies floods for the state and is charged with figuring out how to prepare for them. He calls these sudden floods that lie outside of flood zones "drainage events."

"We found that 90 percent of our damages in Illinois are not traditional overland flow damages (like a river overflowing its banks)," he says, "but rather heavy rainfall events that cause basements to back-fill with water."

Osman says a 2015 study by Illinois flood authorities found that between 2007 and 2014, almost all the flood damage in urban areas occurred outside the traditional flood plain.

This satellite map of Baton Rouge, La., shows the broad extent of the flooding that resulted from rainstorms in August 2016. The darker blue shows flood inundation on Aug. 14, compared to locations that more typically get flooded after a storm (shown in lighter blue). Mapped flood extent is likely an underestimate, due to cloud cover in the satellite imagery, the mappers say. The background image is from May 2016.

Osman says he suspects that's partly because the region is increasingly covered by concrete — shopping malls, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces that lead to flash-flood runoff. But he says he and other flood plain managers are noticing a shift in rainfall patterns, as well.

"There's no doubt," Osman says. "All the scientific evidence points at those rainfalls, [which] are changing. We're having a lot more of these intense, short-duration storms that happen in relatively small geographic areas" — such as the regions recently affected in Louisiana.

That's consistent with what climate scientists have been predicting. A warmer atmosphere holds more water vapor and can create bigger, more intense storms. And the federal government's latest National Climate Assessment notes that average precipitation is up overall in the U.S., and points to particularly intense rainfall events in the Midwest and East.

Osman says many drainage systems can't handle these intense storms. "Most of those storm sewer designs were built on historic records and historic rainfall events that are no longer the case," he says.

If historic rainfall data no longer hold true, that's a problem for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA draws up maps that show where flood plains are. People with federally backed mortgages in the highest risk areas have to get flood insurance. People outside those areas don't.

Kathy Schaefer is an engineer who spent 10 years drawing those maps at FEMA, and says those in use now don't take into account any rainfall changes that might have started to take place because of climate change.

"You had to ignore climate change [in drawing the maps]," she says. "All of the mapping had to be based on the existing conditions [at the time they were drawn, or many years earlier]." Those conditions were rainfall and flooding statistics from the past, she explains. Sometimes decades in the past.

Schaefer says local flood managers have begun to suspect that "existing conditions" are changing. But, until recently, anytime they came to Washington, D.C., looking for help to deal with those changes, they had to mince their words.

"They [couldn't] even use the words 'climate change,' " she says. "They call it a 'slow moving disaster,' which is sort of a code word for climate change."

Over the past couple of years, FEMA has begun to consider climate change in its flood analyses, Schaefer says. An executive order from the White House now requires it, and the agency is also proposing new operating procedures that require research into the effects of climate change on flooding.

But there's a time-lag problem: FEMA only updates its insurance flood maps every five years. Climate scientists fear that the weather may be changing faster than that.

Climate Change Poses "Significant Risk" To US Military, Report Says

Fox News, September 14, 2016

U.S. military officers and national security officials reportedly believe climate change pose a very real threat to U.S. military operations and could increase the danger of international conflict.

A Washington-based think tank, the Center for Climate and Security, said in a statement that climate change "presents a strategically-significant risk to U.S. national security, and inaction is not a viable option."

According to Reuters, the statement was endorsed by more than a dozen former senior military and national security officials. The group wants the next president to create a cabinet position to deal with climate change and its potential impacts on national security.

The Center for Climate and Security published a separate report, arguing that "extreme weather" poses a threat to coastal military bases.

"The complex relationship between sea level rise, storm surge and global readiness and responsiveness must be explored down to the operational level, across the Services and Joint forces, and up to a strategic level as well," according to the report.

Another report revealed earlier this year that faster sea level rises in the second half of the century could make tidal flooding a normal occurrence for some military installations.

Climate change hasn't been a major focal point of the 2016 campaign. Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has called global warming a concept "created by the and for the Chinese" to hurt the U.S.

Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton wants to have the U.S. use 50 percent cleaner energy by 2030 and promised heavy fracking regulations.

Click for more from Reuters.

Climate Change Is A Military Problem, Former US Officials Say

By Steven Porter

Christian Science Monitor, September 14, 2016

From time to time, tidal flooding soaks portions of the US Naval Academy grounds in Annapolis, Md., where service members have studied since its founding in 1845. As sea levels rise and extreme weather strikes more often due to climate change, however, flooding could affect the site so frequently that it becomes unusable by the end of the century.

That warning is among many outlined in a report unveiled Wednesday by The Center for Climate & Security, with endorsements from retired US military officers and former national security officials. The bipartisan group of supporters called upon the current and coming administrations to anticipate the global conflicts that climate change could cause, and to protect the more than 1,700 coastal sites maintained by the American military across the globe.

"There isn't a region in the world where rising seas don't affect our military readiness and operations, and complicate our ability to do our job," retired US Coast Guard Vice Adm. Rob Parker said in a statement released with the report.

Even certain current conflicts can be attributed, in part, to climate, as US Secretary of State John Kerry noted during a speech last fall at Old Dominion University.

"It's not a coincidence that immediately prior to the civil war in Syria, the country experienced its worst drought on record," Mr. Kerry said. "As many as 1.5 million people migrated from Syria's farms to its cities, intensifying the political unrest that was just beginning to roil and boil in the region."

Alongside the report on rising seas, the Washington-based think tank released a national security "briefing book" for the next president and a consensus statement on climate change signed by 25 former officials.

"These reports make it crystal clear. To national security and defense leaders, there's absolutely nothing political about climate change," the think tank's co-presidents, Francesco Femia and Caitlin Werrell, said in a written statement. "It's a security risk, it makes other security risks worse, and we need to do something big about it."

Since the reports drew such bipartisan support from so many former officials, they could increase future pressure on the White House to dedicate more resources to climate change, which has not been a top priority on the 2016 campaign trail.

Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton has advocated for clean energy and fracking regulation, while her Republican opponent Donald Trump has said global warming is a concept "created by the and for the Chinese" to hurt American business.

Recommendations in the reports include the creation of a cabinet-level official to focus on domestic climate change and related security issues.

The reports and their endorsements failed to impress James Lewis, a senior vice president and program director with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, who suggested the military has more pressing threats to address.

"We tend to militarize everything," Dr. Lewis tells The Christian Science Monitor. While climate change is an indisputable fact and fixing it would be worthwhile, it's not a Department of Defense mission, he adds.

"People have gotten used to tagging the word 'security' to any issue we have," Mr. Lewis adds. "Trying to cram everything into the security framework means we end up being less effective in addressing things."

But the officials who spoke in support of the reports contend they have no choice but to engage.

"Because we define our interests globally, we have to take these things into account," retired US Army Gen. Charles Jacoby Jr. said during an interview with The Weather Channel. "Many conflicts throughout our history have been based on resource competition. Increasingly in the future we'll be defining some of our national security interests in those resource contests."

This report includes material from Reuters.

As Blazes Rage In California, State Firefighters Push For More Pay

By Jennifer Calfas

Wall Street Journal, September 15, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Seneca Man Lost Home In Tornado; Finds New Friends

Associated Press, September 15, 2016

SENECA, Ill. (AP) — Two months ago, Rodney Seibert survived a tornado, which swept across North Central Illinois and La Salle County, but his rental home and the majority of his personal belongings, including his cargo van and work tools, did not.

On Aug. 24, Seibert explained it was through compassion of the local community he is succeeding in his recovery.

Interviewed in the wake of the storm, Seibert, a self-employed contractor, carpenter and cabinet maker, explained he considered himself and other storm-affected neighbors to be fortunate people, despite his personal loss.

No local persons were injured in the June 22 storm.

Standing in the rubble of the rural Seneca house where he had lived for almost 10 years, Seibert, who survived the tornado only by running to his home's basement, told The Times, "Satan was outside my door that night. He was screaming. I thought he had come for me. I never heard anything like it."

Wednesday, Seibert unpacked boxes in his new place.

"I am so grateful for the generosity of the community, of my friends — even strangers — who have given me furniture, a computer, tools, some money and other things to help give me a new start in a new place. I wouldn't have known what to do, who to turn to. Without them, I'd probably be living in some campground someplace."

Instead, just days ago, Seibert, moved into a new rental home in Marseilles and has remodeling work lined up to help him and his three employees in the near future.

Seibert said his new landlord also has arranged some work for his company, P.L.S. Remodeling, and his small crew, which should help them through the lean winter months.

"The shock of that night is still with me," he admitted. "But thanks to many people, I'm on my own two feet again and working toward the future. And to know that people cared was just as important as the things people gave me. I knew people would probably help me, but I was surprised how many actually did. It has all been very nice."

Seibert said he also appreciated the kindness and assistance of his former landlords, The Maierhofer family, of Seneca, as he picked up the broken pieces of his life. He had no renters insurance and only liability on his work van, which was a total loss after the storm.

"The entire Maierhofer family made sure I was taken care of and were very helpful after the tornado even though they had tremendous home and property damage of their own to deal with," said Seibert. He also thanked friend and business client, Jennifer Bilyeu, who arranged a savings account MB Financial Bank in Seneca for donations and set up a GoFundMe page online at gofundme.com/senecatornado.

Seibert said he has used some of the money out of the bank and a few dollars from the internet site. As of Wednesday, the internet site still had $2,321 available to him.

He said it was difficult to drive past the now empty lot where his home and workshop once sat.

"The house, the big trees, the workshop are all gone, leveled and hauled away. It is hard to see that the place I lived at for so long is no longer there."

Asked what does he think he survived the tornado, he said, "God wanting me on a different path and, right now, every day, I am following his lead on that path. I have work every day on the job or here at the new house, and that's great because I need to keep my employees busy and my customers happy.

"It just wasn't my time yet. I know God stayed with me that night and, I guess, he is still looking over my shoulder. The storm changed my life and completely drained me, but, so far, it has been way better than I thought it would be. There are so many people to thank."

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FEMA HOUSING

FEMA Mobile Homes Arriving

By Lauren Langlois

Hammond (LA) Daily Star, September 15, 2016

Tangipahoa Parish is starting to see mobile homes the federal government is providing for displaced residents, Parish President Robby Miller told the Amite Chamber of Commerce Wednesday.

Speaking at the chamber's luncheon, Miller said the parish is getting roughly 100 mobile homes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The mobile homes have started streaming in, and some will be going on people's properties as they work on repairing their homes.

The other FEMA mobile homes will be going into empty slots at existing trailer parks.

Built according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development standards, these mobile homes are supposed to be of better quality than the FEMA trailers provided after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Miller reflected on this year's two major floods and the recovery from the August flood that damaged several parishes across south Louisiana.

More than 9,000 homes in Tangipahoa Parish were flooded from August's storm, he said. Many of them also flooded in the March flood that caused water damage to about 5,200 homes.

FEMA has given out more than $27.1 million in aid to those who qualified so far, he said.

The recovery process has slowed now that the parish has gotten past the first few hectic weeks. Hotels and motels are seeing 75 percent occupancy rather than being 100 percent full as they were in the early days. However, for some the road to normalcy will take months, he said.

"We got a long way to go," he said. During the immediate aftermath of the flood, hundreds of motorists were trapped for many hours on Interstate 12 between Baton Rouge and Covington. Miller said it was a shocking scene.

"It was like a parking lot," he said.

The Louisiana National Guard dropped off supplies by helicopter to stranded people, and Miller told of going on one of those trips.

When he saw the mass of people below, he was unsure what to expect when he stepped out of the helicopter. But then he saw them form an orderly human chain to hand down supplies to the next person. It was a moment during the chaos that has stuck with him since it showed how caring and selfless people can be, he said.

"They were not worried about themselves," he said. "It proved to me that people are good."

Miller also touched on the state bridges that are still out because of flood damage. He said the bridge repairs should take months, as the damage was major.

In Tangipahoa Parish, state bridges that are unsafe to cross include Dunnington Bridge on Morris Road, an La. 22 bridge east of La. 445 going toward Bedico and an La. 1054 bridge on the north end, which has been out since the March flood. Miller said the Dunnington Bridge, which is about 340 feet long, may even need to be replaced.

Flood debris pickup also is continuing, he said. More than 28.39 cubic yards of flood debris has been picked up by trucks that have brought more than 709 loads to the parish landfill. Miller said space at the landfill has not been an issue.

"Shelter At Home" Program Sees Slow Start, But Pace Expected To Pick Up

By Elizabeth Crisp

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

Just four of the more than 18,000 households that have sought help from Louisiana's signature housing recovery program have had emergency repair work completed, following the catastrophic floods that swept across South Louisiana last month.

But leaders say that they expect the number to ramp up as the "Shelter At Home" program gets past the initial hurdles of its launch.

"It takes time to establish a program and get it moving," said Lael Holton, of AECOM, the company selected to administer the program. "Those homes are going to start moving forward very rapidly."

Holton said that at least 900 homes are currently in the process of repairs two weeks after the program formally launched. That number is expected to continue to increase, as more construction crews hit the ground.

"18,000 people are all seeking the same service at the same time," Holton said. "We're pushing it as fast as we absolutely can."

Shelter at Home was unveiled last month as a key component of the state's plan for addressing the needs of thousands of people left displaced by the August floods, while also easing the burden on an already squeezed housing market.

Gov. John Bel Edwards has on several occasions, including during a recent congressional hearing, touted the program as the preferred housing recovery method, as opposed to rental assistance and hotel stays, because it allows people to remain in their communities.

The idea is to get homes into a livable state, so people can live there while they make more permanent repairs.

On Wednesday, Edwards' spokesman, Richard Carbo, said that the governor is closely monitoring the Shelter at Home roll out and remains optimistic about it.

"I think over the next 24-to-48 hours, the numbers will spike dramatically," Carbo said. "We're doing everything we can to get people into their homes as quickly as possible. It's a process."

The state and federal partnership is a first for Louisiana, and leaders have touted it as an innovative solution for the complex housing needs that have arisen following the floods.

But Holton said that homeowners in the pipeline have already been expressing frustration over the pace of the roll out.

"Right now, we are continuing to let folks know that we are hearing their concerns," he said.

During a recent congressional hearing on the flood response, U.S. Rep. John Mica, R-Florida, said that he had also was aware of concerns over the Shelter at Home program's pace.

Mica, who chairs the House subcommittee that oversees FEMA and visited Baton Rouge following the flood, said that FEMA blamed the state for delays.

"The thing I heard was that it took a long time to get Shelter at Home in place," he said. "I'm saying, 'Why hasn't anything been done?' (FEMA) said the state had not approved a plan."

Officials estimate that as many as 160,000 homes have been affected by the flood. The central goal of Shelter At Home is to help people return to their communities and settle back into their lives as they continue the recovery process.

If a home can be back in a livable state with up to $15,000 in repairs, then the state will OK the work and a crew will be sent out to do the work.

The program only covers minor repair work: basic electrical and plumbing inspections; carpet and insulation removal; air conditioning and hot water heater repairs; and installing temporary bathroom fixtures, are among the types of tasks they will consider.

The program will also pay for mini-refrigerators or microwaves to be installed to serve as makeshift kitchen appliances.

Holton said that despite the initial backlog, he thinks that it's important to spread word about the program. Shelter at Home representatives will be setting up at disaster recovery centers in the coming days and work to promote the program throughout affected parishes.

"One of the things we need to focus on is getting the word out to folks," he said.

More Than 32K Homes Can Stay On The Ground After Metro Council Exempts Many From Elevation Requirement

By Steve Hardy

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

The Metro Council on Wednesday made perhaps the most sweeping change to its flood ordinance yet, meaning many people now won't have to worry about whether the government will make them elevate or demolish their homes.

According to the latest numbers from the city-parish, more than half the households that flooded — some 32,000 households — are in areas variously described as X zones, low-and moderate-risk zones and non-special hazard zones. The practical difference is that those people are not required by their mortgage companies to buy flood insurance, as the people in high-risk zones are.

Wednesday, the Metro Council voted to exempt existing buildings in low- and moderate-risk flood zones from elevation requirements.

"That's a big deal," said Mayor Pro Tem Chandler Loupe.

City staff said Wednesday they aren't sure how many of the more than 32,000 homes now relieved of elevation requirements would have actually reached the threshold that would have required they raise or wreck their homes.

Several other flood topics were brought before the Metro Council on Wednesday, including an update on local waterways and the start of talks about how many millions of dollars it's going to cost to pay for all the damaged public property.

There's also a chance the airport could serve as a future site for trailers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA has previously announced its preference for rental assistance and performing basic repairs so flood victims can shelter at home, but many politicians have said the trailers will be the only way forward for many residents, and not every lot has enough space to fit one.

The East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office submitted a $35,000 proposal to lease five acres at the airport to place trailers for deputies and their families, though the measure was pulled without discussion.

However, Aviation Director Anthony Marino said FEMA has expressed interest in renting about eight acres for 27 trailers, but no deal has been struck.

The Metro Council also introduced a measure to allocate $47 million to pay for flood-related expenses. The matter will go up for discussion and vote during the next meeting on Sept. 22. According to supporting documents, it will cost at least $31 million to pay for debris removal, $10 million for building and equipment repairs, $5 million for emergency protective measures and $899,000 for contractors to apply for flood-related grants and oversee the disbursement of federal funds.

The city-parish expects that all or nearly all the money will be reimbursed by the federal government's public assistance program. Recently, the White House upped the amount it will pay local governments' flood expenses from 75 percent to 90 percent. The city-parish intends to pay the rest with its budget stabilization fund, and the East Baton Rouge finance director has said the local government won't have to put off any capital projects to make up its share.

Besides the cost of debris removal, the city took damage to dozens of police vehicles, fire departments, libraries and other public property.

The council also signed off on the $899,000 deal with the grant contractors, which will apply for grants on behalf of the city and oversee the disbursement of federal money. Several asked questions about whether the bid was properly advertised and what it would pay for, but city-parish Chief Administrative Officer William Daniel said it was competitively bid and that the amount is the "not to exceed" amount based on the salaries at the company, CSRS Inc.

Public works staff also submitted a report on parish waterways. Fallen trees have worsened erosion around the Comite River, and water levels in the south of the parish near Bayou Manchac were still high.

Canals appear to be back to normal, but portions of Cypress Bayou and Redwood Creek still had some tree debris when workers performed their observations at various points in the past two weeks.

In their written report, staff recommended three methods to improve drainage. First, the parish could bring back the plan to bond out money to update 42 miles of channels, though a bond issue to support such a strategy has failed three times. The unfunded Comite River Diversion Canal would also help, though it will require federal support. Finally, the connections between subdivision and municipal channels need to be improved to increase capacity.

Public works staff shot aerial photographs of the damage they encountered and made a map for the council. Loupe asked that it be made public. The city-parish has been publishing its flood-related public maps at gis.brla.gov/.

While the big news out of Wednesday's meeting for many was the news that they definitely won't have to elevate their homes, there are a few caveats.

Buildings in high-risk zones — sometimes called A zones — that sustained 50 percent damage and are not currently at least one foot above the base flood elevation level will still have to be torn down or raised up.

"There's nothing we can do about A (zones,)" Daniel said.

High-risk zones must meet standards set forth by the federal government so residents of a parish or municipality may participate in the National Flood Insurance Plan.

For decades, the city-parish has enforced stricter building codes than the federal minimum to receive cheaper flood insurance rates. Earlier this month, the

Metro Council made other changes to try to reduce the number of people who will be forced to rebuild.

Previously, people had to raise or rebuild when their homes received 40 percent damage. The threshold was raised to 50 percent. Also, homes in high-risk flood zones only have to be a foot above the base flood elevation after the council exempted the recent flood from any elevation standards.

The city-parish has lost points toward its flood rating for changing its standards. However, Daniel said Wednesday that none of the changes so far has pushed the parish into a lower rating that will force people to pay higher premiums.

The newest rule does not affect new construction in low- and moderate-risk zones, which must still be built one foot above the street center line, manhole covers and record inundation excluding the recent event, explained engineer Shannon Dupont, the city-parish's floodplain manager.

Furthermore, property owners who have land in a high-risk zone, but their houses are in a low-risk zone and flooded, will not have to meet any type of elevation standard, said interim assistant chief administrative officer Carey Chauvin.

State Politicians Frustrated At FEMA's Slow Flood Response

By Brett Buffington

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 14, 2016

BATON ROUGE – As state politicians countinue to fight for funding, many are saying they're dissatisfied with the time it's taking FEMA to get resources to families.

"This isn't the first time we've had a disaster," Congressman Garret Graves told News Two's Brett Buffington. "It's not the first disaster we've had in Louisiana. They need to have better systems in place to more efficiently get people answers."

Graves says he's frustrated because thousand of people have been asking questions, and they are going unanswered.

"The fact that they can come out in two weeks and blame this entire flood on climate change," Graves explained, "yet can't give us answers on if someone is eligible for financial assistance, can't cut them a check on flood insurance, and other things? Absolutely unacceptable.

Newly released numbers show a clear sign of shockingly slow federal response. FEMA's holding site in North Baton Rouge is storing 198 modular housing units, which started rolling in nearly 3 weeks ago. As of Wednesday, 893 applicants have been approved for the homes, but only 12 are being used.

"They're apparently spendin gup to $20 thousand per trailer just to ship it down from North Carolina," Graves said. "There are trailer dealers here in Louisiana, travel trailers and other trailers. There are more efficient ways to do this."

Graves also suggested any money wasted now would only hurt the Baton Rouge area in the future, saying "the cost of inaction is not free."

Graves, along with the Louisiana Delegation, is pressuring for policy that would put long-term federal funding in place to stop the worst flooding disaster in our nation's history from getting even worse.

"If congress does not step in," Graves said, "if the White House does not step in, you are going to see mas foreclosure and bankruptcies, mortgages backed by the federal government, Fannie May, Freddie Mack, FHA, VA, and others. This is going to be a federal liability one way or another."

Graves added mass bankrupcies would trickle down to falling property values. He says that could mean trouble for some of Baton Rouge's biggest assets, like education and law enforcement.

Gonzales City Council Amends Budget $450,000 For Flood-emergency Repairs To City Hall, Debris Collection

By Peter Pasqua

The Creole (LA), September 14, 2016

GONZALES – The Gonzales City Council approved an ordinance to amend the general fund budget by $450,000 for emergency repairs to City Hall and debris collection after floods inundated the structure and others in the city limits about a month ago.

City Clerk Clay Stafford said emergency protective measures will be sent to FEMA for disaster recovery during the previous meeting and had estimated costs for repairs to City Hall at $300,000 and debris cleanup to be $150,000.

The City Council held their meeting at the Ascension Parish Courthouse East Annex for the second meeting in a row during to flooding of City Hall and Stafford said then that initial estimates on repairs to the structure may be higher, while the collection of debris could be lower.

City engineer Jackie Baumann addressed residents' flood concerns at the beginning of the meeting. She said that a FEMA expert is coming on board and the goal is to help people. A rough estimate of 250 homes were flooded it was reported earlier.

Baumann said the city ordinance doesn't have an inundation clause regarding raising their homes and if a structure has flooded multiple times and you prove a loss has happened it will fit into a category that increases cost of compliance and could result in raising, relocated or demolishing.

"We are not going to force people to raise their homes because of this flood," Baumann said. "There are no places that the city knows are repetitive."

Baumann also said the city has a website to apply for a building renovations permit and it is being used as a tracking mechanism. She also said the clock is ticking encouraged folks to get their project worksheets in as quick as possible to be eligible for reimbursement repairs.

"The truth is we don't require an inspection," Baumann said. "We feel like we have a handle on the depths where it was over two feet."

Mayor Barney Arceneaux said having to deal with rules and regulations is so slow and wants the process accelerated.

"These folks are afraid to make a move," Arceneaux said.

The City Council also unanimously approved temporary housing options for flood victims allowed for up to 180 days as a starting point. Building official Jerry Self said the ordinance has been relaxed temporarily to assist with travel trailers as long as they are connected safely to electric and sewer.

Self also said the FEMA mobile homes are 16×40 and he is not sure if they will fit on some lots as residents repair their homes.

The council also accepted the minutes of its planning and zoning commission which included the denial of a request for a Sober Living Home for Women at 422 E. McArthur Street. There were many that spoke in favor and against the home which would house 10 women there during the Sept. 6 meeting.

Some stated these type of homes helped saved them, while others applauded the effort but said it is just too many people living in one home. The zoning commission voted unanimously to deny the request.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

FEMA And City Officials To Hold Workshop On New Flood Insurance Maps For New Orleans

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 13, 2016

New Orleans officials and FEMA representatives will hold a workshop Thursday to discuss the new flood insurance rate maps for the city.

The new maps, which go into effect Sept. 30, shift 53 percent of properties in New Orleans from categories deemed to be at high risk of flooding to lower-risk zones. That typically means lower rates for flood insurance.

The new maps can be found at www.Maps.RiskMAP6.com.

The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. in the City Council chamber at City Hall, 1300 Perdido St.

Because seating is limited, those who plan to attend must register in advance at www.eventbrite.com/e/orleans-parish-flood-insurance-workshop-for-homeowners-tickets-27314906621.

FEMA Hosting Flood Insurance Workshop For Residents Thursday

By Kelsey Davis

WDSU-TV New Orleans, May 15, 2012

FEMA will host a flood insurance workshop for home owners on Thursday at City Hall.

FEMA's new flood insurance rate maps will go into effect on Sept. 30.

Major changes have been made to federal flood maps that could affect people's flood insurance rates, so officials are encouraging everyone to attend the workshop to get a better understanding of those changes and how or if they will impact their insurance rates.

Officials say because of significant improvements made to drainage and flood protection, more than 53 percent of properties in the city were removed from the special flood hazard areas.

Under the new FEMA flood insurance maps, approximately 85,000 policies will be affected. Officials say these policy holders will see significantly lower insurance rates.

Once City Council adopts the new flood maps, homeowners will be required to build homes higher. The new elevation requirements will be for new construction and major renovations that the city permitted after June 1, 2016.

The workshop is free but seating is limited, so residents and property owners planning to attend should register online in advance.

The workshop starts at 10 am inside City Council chambers.

Dozens In Denham Springs Issued Invalid Flood Repair Permits, Must Reapply

By Heidi Kinchen

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

As frustrated as many homeowners have become with post-flood rebuilding, some Denham Springs residents will have to go through the permitting process twice because the initial trip turned out to be handled by the wrong people.

Denham Springs Building Official Rick Foster said at least 30 homeowners in the city had received inspections and permits from the Livingston Parish permit office, rather than from city officials, within the past few weeks. Those permits were issued "in error, with no authority and are not valid," he said.

Any construction performed under the invalid permits may be in default under city regulations, Foster said, and those homeowners must seek a valid permit from the city's planning and development office. City officials will do everything they can to expedite those requests, he said.

DeeDee Delatte, the parish's assistant permit director, said the invalid permits were the result of the office's heavy workload after the flood and their use of out-of-town inspectors unfamiliar with the municipal boundaries.

Delatte said the parish permit staff has been swamped with applications, issuing 200-300 permits per day, working six or seven days each week since the office reopened Aug. 22.

"We have outside agencies helping us, people from Tennessee and from Baton Rouge, not from permit departments," Delatte said. "Some of them have been working our front desk on the weekends to give us time to catch up on entering our data, and some permits were issued in error by those outside entities."

Just how many invalid permits were issued and to whom is unclear. Foster asked the parish for a list of homeowners inside city limits who received parish permits, but Delatte said they cannot provide that list.

"We've been hand-writing everything and don't have a way to go back and search for those until they have all been entered in our system," she said.

The parish also cannot guarantee the errors won't recur, Delatte said.

The out-of-town inspectors discovered the problem when a Denham Springs resident told them they had no jurisdiction in an area where they were working this past week. After speaking with parish permit staff, the inspectors decided they would no longer conduct inspections at Denham Springs addresses, Delatte said.

"Is it going to happen again? Possibly," she said. "We're seeing so many applications, I just can't say that it absolutely won't happen again. But these were mistakes. We have so much of a workload here, I definitely don't need to be grabbing any from other places."

It's not clear how many of the thousands of parish permit applications have resulted in a "substantial damage" determination — meaning, the cost of repairing the home equals 50 percent or more of its pre-flood value.

Homes in special flood hazard areas that are built lower than the base flood elevation and determined to have been substantially damaged will have to be elevated, according to Federal Emergency Management Agency regulations the parish adopted in order to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Delatte said parish Building Official Chuck Vincent had found some homes to be substantially damaged, but she was unsure how many.

"I'm not quite sure on that total," Delatte said. "He (Vincent) is just running that part on his own. ... Most of them are houses on piers, not slab homes, where the foundation has been shifted and the subfloors are bad. I'm sure there's a whole lot more to come."

In Denham Springs, city inspectors have found 10 homes — among 260 for which repair permits were sought — to be substantially damaged, Foster told the City Council on Tuesday.

Delatte said residents in the unincorporated areas of the parish who believe their homes may have been substantially damaged should call the parish permit office for an inspection.

"We'll come out and look at it and make that determination based on appraised value," she said. "Then at that point, we'll determine if you have to elevate or if you can go in and repair it."

Delatte said what may appear to a homeowner to be substantial damage could wind up falling below the 50 percent threshold.

"If the foundation is there, the outer walls are still intact and the roof is good, there may still be a lot of work to be done but it might not necessarily meet the threshold," she said.

Foster said Denham Springs officials will look at two figures to determine whether homes inside city limits have been substantially damaged: the pre-flood market value and the estimated cost of repairs. FEMA provided a list of approved sources for those figures, which is available on the city's website at www.cityofdenhamsprings.com/docs/MarketValue.pdf.

Realtor: Homeowners Should Consider Flood Insurance Even If Not

By Candy Rodriguez

KPLC-TV Lake Charles (LA), September 14, 2016

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA (KPLC) –

Residents across South Louisiana never expected recent floods to have the damaging results they did – homeowners who never flooded before and didn't have flood insurance are having to deal with the impact left behind.

That's why realtor Brandon M. Duhon, with Keller Williams Realty, recommends people looking to buy a home reconsider buying flood insurance, even if the home is not in a flood zone.

"You and your family just have to decide – is it worth it to spend the extra money on insurance in case if it does happen,

" he said. "Because it's not a guarantee that it won't happen and with the things we have seen here in the last year, is it worth protecting our home."

The hundreds of dollars you spend yearly on flood insurance could save you thousands in the long run if something was to happen.

Zones: A, AE, A1-A30, AR, AH, AO are just some of the zones that require flood insurance. It is mandatory because "areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event," according to FEMA, as well as, Zone V which are coastal zones like Cameron Parish.

Zone X does not require flood insurance because the likelihood of flooding is 0.2-percent-annual-chance (or 500-year).

Click HERE for flood insurance rates.

Click HERE or visit www.fema.gov/flood-zones to take a closer look at the flood zone details.

If you would like to see a map to look at a certain area, click HERE or visit maps.lsuagcenter.com/floodmaps.

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FEMA Officials Discuss New SC Flood Map

WBTV-TV Charlotte (NC), September 14, 2016

AIKEN, SC (WFXG) –

New flood maps have been released for the upper and middle Savannah water sheds in South Carolina.

On Wednesday, FEMA officials hosted an open house in Aiken for residents to see if their properties fell in a flood-prone zone.

They were also able to get information and flood insurance and hear from local officials pertaining to ordinance requirements.

Officials explained why residents need to know what their area of town is labeled under the new maps.

"So, these tell you your level a risk--low, moderate or high risk of flooding. If you were to have a federally backed mortgage on a home that's located in that designated area, you would be mandated to purchase flood insurance," said Maria Cox Lamm, DNR state coordinator.

Officials will be in Edgefield on Thursday to share information on the flood maps:

Edgefield Emergency Management
304 Gray Street
Edgefield, SC 29824
4:00pm-7:00pm

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MITIGATION

Jefferson Anticipates $29.8M FEMA Grant Funding By January

By Wilborn Nobles

New Orleans Times-Picayune, September 14, 2016

In what officials call the largest federal share to a single jurisdiction in this year's funding cycle, Jefferson Parish will receive $29.9 million in FEMA funding for 115 elevation and 36 reconstruction projects.

In addition to working with FEMA, Michelle Gonzales, the parish director of Floodplain Management & Hazard Mitigation, said her office is working with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management to finalize the grant awards now.

She anticipated January to be the earliest date that FEMA will be award the funds as the federal government performs a environmental review. FEMA announced the opening of the grant period in early March 2016 and Gonzales said Jefferson mailed an application opening notice to just over 1,000 properties that were featured on FEMA's Severe Repetitive Loss Properties.

"The grant application was written with focus of properties that met FEMA's priorities," Gonzales said Wednesday (Sept. 14).

The application also focused on what the current flood risk is such as in a flood zone, how low is the structure below the Base Flood Elevation, and how frequently is the structure flooding, she said.

FEMA made $199 million available for Flood Mitigation Assistance Grants within a March 15 – June 15, 2016 application period. Officials said the projects selected had recognized FEMA's priority on projects that mitigate four National Flood Insurance Program insured properties.

The properties include structures having two or more NFIP building claim payments that cumulatively exceed the market value of the insured structure. FEMA also focused on structures that incurred NFIP claim payment on two occasions, in which 25 percent of the market value of the insured structure was exceeded at the time of the event.

FEMA also focused on structures having four or more separate NFIP claim payments with each exceeding $5,000 and the mitigation of the largest number of NFIP-insured properties.

FEMA Report Underscores DHS' Interagency Emergency Response Efforts

By Ramona Adams

ExecutiveGov, September 14, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has released the 2016 National Preparedness Report which highlights the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to prepare emergency first responders through interagency cooperation.

DHS said Monday that FEMA's report tracked progress from the last five years in prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery initiatives.

DHS and interagency partners continue to build on the capacity of National Network of Fusion Centers to facilitate intelligence collection and sharing between fusion center customers, the department noted.

The National Counterterrorism Center, DHS and FBI jointly sponsored counterterrorism awareness workshops to educate first responders across the U.S. on prevention and response strategies against terrorist attacks, DHS added.

DHS' counterterrorism efforts include the launch of web-based messaging materials for public awareness as well as the "If You See Something, Say Something" campaign which aims to provide information on indicators of potential terrorism and crime.

The department has also established the Regional Resiliency Assessment Program to help assess critical infrastructure systems and DHS seeks ways to apply the assessment process to issues such as climate change, cybersecurity and electromagnetic-pulse preparedness.

DHS worked to engage public and private sector partners in the 12th annual National Cyber Security Awareness Month in October 2015 which aimed to increase cyber threat resilience.

FIRE GRANTS

Hanover Fire-EMS Awarded $559,500 FEMA Grant To Train, Recruit Volunteers

By Debbie Truong

Richmond (VA) Times-Dispatch, September 14, 2016

The department that oversees Hanover County's firefighters and medics was awarded more than $550,000 in federal money for training and recruitment.

Hanover Fire-EMS was awarded a $559,500 SAFER grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to recruit, train and retain 48 volunteer firefighters over the next four years. The grant arrives less than a year after a dwindling number of volunteers forced a fire squad in Hanover to disband.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

FEMA Officials Wrap Up Tour

By Mike Wright

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle, September 15, 2016

Round 2 of Hurricane Hermine storm surge damage inspection came and went Wednesday and, other than submitting some final paperwork, Citrus County's role in seeking a federal disaster declaration is complete.

Pinellas Beaches Show Effects From Hurricane Hermine

By Jennifer Rich

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 14, 2016

City crews in Pinellas County's beach communities have been cleaning up debris and filling in eroded sand that created 3- and 4-foot drops at beach accesses after Hurricane Hermine's strong winds and tides battered the shoreline.

The mid-county beach communities like Indian Rocks Beach and Redington Shores were hit the hardest, according to a survey by the University of South Florida's Coastal Research Laboratory.

Professor Ping Wang, director of the laboratory, said the storm surge and wave action along the county's shoreline were greater than those of Tropical

Storm Debby in 2012, the last significant storm to impact the area. However, neither lasted as long as during Debby.

Data collected one day after the storm and compared with data collected two weeks before show significant dune erosion and sand escarpments on beachfronts from Sand Key in the north to Mullet Key at Fort Desoto Park, Wang said.

"It passed the coast rather closely and generated very energetic conditions," he said.

Areas with wider beaches such as the north end of Sand Key near Clearwater Pass and Treasure Island's central beachfront survived the storm better than areas like Belleair Beach, Indian Rocks Beach and Redington Shores with thinner beachfronts.

The state granted an emergency permit to Indian Rocks Beach and other impacted communities to haul in additional replacement sand.

About 30 truckloads of sand purchased from a private company were dumped this week in Indian Rocks Beach to help alleviate the scouring that occurred at beach crossovers, City Manager Greg Mims said.

"We have 28 beach access points and a large number have a 3- to 4-foot drop," he said.

The city also lost beach signage, and recycling and garbage cans that were located along its 2½ miles of beachfront.

Mims estimates the emergency sand replacement and restoring other damage will cost the city around $30,000.

Though Treasure Island beaches might not look as severely damaged, Wang said that doesn't mean they weren't significantly impacted.

"It's probably because of their 2014 beach renourishment," he said. "But the beach is wider to start with so that doesn't mean they didn't lose a lot of sand."

Treasure Island City Manager Reid Silverboard said the hardest hit areas were to the north and south — Sunshine and Sunset beaches.

"It created an escarpment along a portion of the beach so that police and sanitation vehicles can no longer get to some areas," he said.

"We definitely have a flatter beach profile now. We are waiting to see how much beach returns and the impact of the winter storms," Silverboard said.

Both Mims and Silverboard are hoping a scheduled beach renourishment will be moved up after further details of the recent storm are analyzed.

"It does appear there was significant dune erosion," said John Bishop, Pinellas County coastal management coordinator, who has made frequent trips to survey the beaches since the storm.

The county is pushing the Army Corps of Engineers for an estimated $25 million for the renourishment of Sand Key and $12 million for Treasure Island in hopes of moving up the project to 2017, Bishop said.

"We have been trying to get the renourishment moved up for some time now so the storm has given us more impact," he said. "It all comes down to federal funding."

Wang and others are still working on a more detailed analysis and expect to have more details soon.

"We should have numbers on the amount of sand lost in a week or so," Wang said.

FLOODS

Louisiana Leaders Remain Optimistic About Federal Flood Aid Chances

By Elizabeth Crisp

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

Louisiana leaders say they remain optimistic that the state is close to securing federal relief package that will help provide funding for housing, infrastructure and community development programs following the catastrophic floods that left 13 people dead and thousands displaced last month.

Gov. John Bel Edwards spent Wednesday in Washington, D.C., lobbying for what he says is a more than $2 billion immediate need back home to help jump start the recovery process in flood-wracked communities.

Edwards spokesman Richard Carbo said that the governor on Wednesday night was waiting for legislation to be finalized, including an official dollar amount that the state could see, but the latest round of meetings, including with U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisconsin, were positive.

"As far as the delegation is concerned I think everyone is very committed to getting something as quickly as possible," Carbo said. "There are still hurdles to climb but we are working through them."

President Barack Obama's administration has requested $2.6 billion in flood relief for Louisiana that could be used for housing repair or replacement that won't be covered by insurance; additional individual assistance awards through FEMA; small business repair needs; infrastructure improvements and other programs to benefit flood victims, including affordable housing and community development projects.

"The administration urges the Congress to provide additional funding to address Louisiana's unmet housing and infrastructure needs as soon as possible," White House Budget Director Shaun Donovan wrote in the letter formally requesting aid for the state's recovery Tuesday.

Edwards this week announced a 21-member task force that will help lead the state's recovery, including coordinating resources for the rebuilding and redevelopment of flood-wracked areas to "maximize their impact, improve efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts." That group would likely help direct how the federal aid makes its way to communities.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-Baton Rouge, said he's confident that Louisiana will receive federal assistance.

"Everybody's on board and everybody's doing their part," he said. "I'm confident that we will have more relief. The question is whether it will happen in September or December."

The U.S. House and Senate are scheduled to recess by the end of the month and won't return until after the November elections.

The continuing resolution that would be a vehicle to carry the flood aid is needed to keep government funded past the end of the month.

"There is a chance, and we've been working with others to line things up, so at least a portion of it can come out now," Cassidy said. "Aid will be most impactful if it comes out earlier, and not later."

One of the concerns for Louisiana's leaders has been over whether other projects might also get tacked onto the continuing resolution, derailing the flood aid.

Cassidy said that's a concern for him as well, but he sees things generally tilting toward Louisiana's favor at this point.

"I'm the kind of guy that until it's signed into law, I'm going to keep working at it and working for it and not take anything for granted," he said. "We do receive positive feedback as we're working on this."

"We continue to have things lining up," he said.

Representatives from the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry were in Washington on Wednesday for an unrelated meeting with the state's congressional delegation. It's by coincidence that a major issue affecting Louisiana is also going on at the same time, LABI President Stephen Waguespack said.

But the business leaders quickly shifted into unofficial flood ambassador mode – spreading the word about just how badly aid is needed back home.

"They can't wait until December," Waguespack said. "For some of these areas, if there's not an immediate investment of some sort, you just won't have recovery there. We're trying to stay on that message."

Waguespack said that representatives from LABI had met with Edwards and Louisiana's delegation throughout the day. He said they had also been working to stress to lawmakers from other states.

"At this point, I think everyone understands that something has to be done," he said. "It sounds promising that they'll get something done."

Livingston School Board Approves Selection Of FEMA Consultant, School Restoration Company

By Heidi Kinchen

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

LIVINGSTON – The Livingston Parish School Board, meeting this past week for the first time since the flood, ratified Superintendent Rick Wentzel's declaration of a state of emergency for the school system and his selection of contractors for emergency recovery and water damage assessment and restoration services.

The School Board, during the Sept. 8 meeting, also ratified Wentzel's selection of David M. Shapiro Disaster Planning & Recovery Consultants as project manager to guide the school district through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's public assistance grants process.

The contract cost is capped at $3.85 million based on an initial estimate of $100 million in damage to school system facilities due to the flood. If actual damages exceed that amount, the cost could be renegotiated.

"Initially upon meeting with FEMA, they suggested we hire a project manager to handle this for us," Wentzel said, adding that Shapiro was selected from among 11 companies that sought the job.

Wentzel said he had met twice already with the consultant and representatives of FEMA and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, and he was impressed with the firm's work.

"I'm going to tell you, those guys know the ins and outs, and they have definitely got our backs," Wentzel said. "I appreciate them being a part of helping us get through this process, and I believe they're going to do everything they can to get us our due."

The contract with Shapiro, which Wentzel signed Aug. 29, is for a five-year term with the option of two one-year renewals.

Wentzel said Guarantee Restoration Services, of Baton Rouge, helped the district take action immediately after the flooding to save school buildings and point the school system toward recovery. The School Board unanimously supported his selection of that firm for emergency services.

The board also affirmed Wentzel's selection of United States Health and Environmental Liability Management, LLC, to be the district's environmental consultant.

U.S. Helm will perform water damage assessments on 19 School Board-owned properties, including 17 school campuses, the district's central office and an Albany property previously designated as a site for a possible new elementary school.

The contract also calls for the company to perform asbestos testing, lead-based paint testing and HVAC assessments for potential impact from moisture and mold as part of the restoration process at each site.

The work is projected to cost up to $524,400, according to the contract.

In a separate matter, the School Board approved Wentzel's selection of Gregory Hayden as principal of Juban Parc Junior High. Hayden, who has 23 years of experience in education, previously served as the school's assistant principal for four years and was instrumental in the school's flood response, Wentzel said.

"I called Greg Hayden on Aug. 16 and told him I needed him to be principal of Juban Parc Junior High because we were pulling (former principal) Jeff (Frizell) off of that because we needed Mr. Frizell up here to do some stuff for us," Wentzel said. "Mr. Hayden didn't bat an eye. He said, 'Yes sir, you don't worry about Juban Parc Junior High.' And I want you to know I have not worried about Juban Parc Junior High because Greg Hayden has handled that, has done an excellent job thus far, and I just really want to put an exclamation mark on my recommendation of him as principal."

Lafayette School Board Agrees To Move Ahead On Performing Arts Facility At Comeaux High

By Lanie Lee Cook

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

A project to build a multi-million-dollar performing arts facility at Comeaux High School is moving forward after the Lafayette Parish School Board voted Wednesday to allocate initial funds toward its design and to advertise for bids.

Although the board deferred the finance committee's recommendation to designate $6 million in bond money for the project, it instead authorized $500,000 to secure an architect who will begin design plans and then provide a cost estimate.

"I think we might be better served if we get into a habit of developing more accurate estimates," said board member Erick Knezek, who suggested deferring the bond designation, pointing out that projects often need more money than what's allocated.

The board voted earlier this year to transfer the performing arts program from the overcrowded Lafayette High School to Comeaux, which will lose about 900 students next year once the new Southside High School opens in Youngsville. But Comeaux does not have an adequate performing arts facilities.

The board's finance committee last week recommended allocating the $6 million, about a million lower than initially recommended by the administration.

The performing arts program, like other specialized Schools of Choice programs within the district, allows students to attend schools outside their attendance zones for the training. Students in the program study dance, theater arts or music, including guitar, piano, stringed orchestra, choral or instrumental music.

Board member Justin Centanni, who serves on the board's finance committee, said the committee explored options for reducing the project's cost, including reusing existing space — an effort that will be included in the project.

In another matter Wednesday, the board allocated another $500,000 toward flood-damage repairs, putting the system's out-of-pocket costs so far at $1 million, which covers the insurance deductible.

About three-fourths of that money should be reimbursed by FEMA, Superintendent Don Aguillard has said.

Fourteen schools received flood damage, although Westside Elementary School in Scott bore the brunt, taking in 1.5 feet of water. Estimates for repairing that school, which will include construction to bring the facility up to modern coding requirements, have topped $5 million.

The expenses come at a tight budget time for the school system, which budgeted for decreased sales tax collections this year amid the local economic downturn and cut positions throughout the district.

But the school system may receive up to $6 million in new revenue this year because of increased property values in Lafayette Parish, prompting the board to vote last week to maintain its property-tax rates at 33.56 mills. The move means those whose property values increased will pay more in property taxes than last year.

Georgia Pacific Donates $50,000 To Louisiana Flood Relief, Matches Employee Contributions

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

Georgia-Pacific has contributed $50,000 to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation Flood Relief Fund for southeast Louisiana flood recovery efforts.

The company also will match up to $50,000 in contributions from its employees to the Georgia-Pacific Employees Assistance Fund that's held and managed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, an August news release said.

Contributions to the fund from employees of Georgia-Pacific or any other Koch company, as well as Georgia-Pacific's match, will go directly to help affected employees in the area.

Hundreds of employees from the company's Port Hudson operations in Zachary have been impacted — some of whom have lost everything, the release said. In addition, Georgia-Pacific has aided employees there with additional emergency supplies.

"We are deeply saddened by the devastation to the region and particularly the impact to our Georgia-Pacific families and the Port Hudson mill community," said Jim Hannan, CEO and president. "Our thoughts and prayers are with southeast Louisiana as they continue rebuilding the community after this terrible loss. This contribution is targeted to the region where our employees live and work."

Additionally, Convoy of Hope, the company's ongoing partner for distributing Georgia-Pacific products in disaster areas, has delivered numerous truckloads of bath tissue and paper towels into the area. Convoy of Hope also has been working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in expanding distribution to other areas for several weeks.

Louisiana is home to more than 1,000 Georgia-Pacific employees and another 800 employees of other Koch Industries' companies. Georgia-Pacific's Port Hudson operations are in East Baton Rouge, one of the parishes declared a state of emergency by FEMA.

According to the release, the Port Hudson mill in Zachary did not sustain damage and remains operational.

Haunting Photo Puts Baton Rouge Flood, Post-flood Struggles Into Perspective For One Dad

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

Trey Peters watched as daughter Ashlyn, 9, stood and silently stared at the piles of debris.

He quickly grabbed his phone and took a picture. By the time he lowered the phone, the girl and the moment were gone.

What remained was a haunting photo of a little girl in a white dress, dwarfed by mounds of carpet, cabinets and drywall scraps removed from flooded homes on one Baton Rouge street.

Peters is a teacher – 6th-grade world history at Southeast Middle School – but he hasn't taught in more than a month. Like so many in south Louisiana, he and his family are in work mode, recovering from the roughly three feet of water that inundated their home on Woodlore Drive, forcing family members to rely on the Cajun Navy to escape the flood.

On the day the picture was taken, last Sunday, Ashlyn was visiting the house for only the second time since the water came.

"What caught me off guard was that she didn't say anything," Peters said. "She just stood there and stared for roughly a minute... It was a very surreal moment, and I am still wondering what she was thinking.

Ashlyn is a straight-A student in 4th grade at St. Jean Vianney and a "very critical/analytical thinker," her dad said.

"But because I'm taking this so seriously, she probably was wondering what was for dinner," he joked.

The family is now living with relatives in Shenandoah.

"With the help of many friends, donations, FEMA, Shelter At Home Program, and the grace of God, we are trying to rebuild," Peters said.

And there's the picture – Ashlyn looking into what Peters calls "the abyss."

"That picture really put things into perspective for me," he said.

Gonzales To Move Forward With Repairing City Hall

By Ellyn Couvillion

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

GONZALES — Gonzales will be moving ahead on repairs to the flooded city hall on Irma Boulevard after the City Council this week approved increasing the city's emergencies and contingencies budget from $15,000 to a whopping $465,000.

The additional funds come from the general fund balance and will also be going toward the cost of picking up debris at flooded homes and businesses.

"The city crew has made multiple passes" through the city, picking up debris, City Engineer Jackie Baumann said at Monday's City Council meeting, which was held at the parish courthouse in Gonzales.

Baumann said 318 loads have been picked up since Aug. 22, amounting to 815 tons of debris.

That figure represents about 80 percent of the debris brought out to curbs after the flooding, she said. The remainder of the debris should be picked up within the next week, she said.

"The public works department has done a great job," said Councilman Kirk Boudreaux. "I really appreciate the work they've done."

The city will also be temporarily relaxing its regulations regarding placing travel trailers in the yards of homes, as residents continue the recovery and rebuilding process. City officials previously reported that 120 homes flooded.

The council approved a motion to allow travel trailers to be placed at residences for 180 days.

"We're going to be as compassionate as we can," said Jerry Self, building official for Gonzales.

"We certainly want to work with residents as much as we can," Mayor Barney Arceneaux agreed.

City officials met last week with representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and provided the agency an early list of projects — including the repair of city hall and the Gonzales Civic Center, roadwork, sewer projects and work at two playgrounds that flooded — the city expects will be required for recovery. The list will be refined in the coming weeks, officials said.

The city will also be hiring a consultant to oversee the recovery.

Last month's massive flooding highlighted the predicament of residents on Silverleaf Street, a one-street subdivision in Gonzales that floods regularly in run-of-the-mill thunderstorms.

At Monday's meeting, Shana Ryland and Dana Richardardson, both of whom live on Silverleaf, told the council about their efforts to gather information from FEMA on recovery, particularly in light of the repetitive flooding to their homes.

"We flooded three times in four years," Ryland said of her family's home.

Another street in the city, Sybil Street in the Park Vista subdivision, is also known to have repetitive flooding.

Baumann told Ryland and Richardson that the city will help them work with FEMA.

"When we have a consultant on board, it is definitely one of our goals. It is a priority," she said.

FEMA Warns Of Inspector Fraud

KLFY-TV Lafayette (LA), September 14, 2016

LAFAYETTE, La. (KLFY)—FEMA is warning flood survivors to beware of inspector fraud.

According to the government, FEMA will not ask you for financial or payment information up front.

FEMA inspectors also will not ask you for your FEMA registration number or social security number.

A news release states that flood victims should beware of any inspector that seeks payment from you, especially if they promise disaster grants in return.

To ensure that you do not become a victim of inspector fraud, ask to see the inspector's ID prior to the inspection.

If you suspect inspector fraud, call your local law enforcement immediately and then the FEMA Disaster Fraud hotline at 866-720-5721.

FEMA Reinterment Assistance

KATC-TV Lafayette (LA), September 14, 2016

FEMA disaster assistance may be available for reinterment efforts in Louisiana cemeteries, where floodwaters have dislodged or destroyed caskets, vaults, and mausoleums.

FEMA disaster assistance for reinterment of exposed human remains or dislodged burial vessels is available to individual survivors and cemeteries on a case-by-case basis. Factors that affect eligibility for assistance include where the cemeteries are located, who has legal responsibility for them, and who has legal ownership of them.

Information regarding reinterment assistance is available at the FEMA helpline,800-621-3362. Help is available in most languages from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week, until further notice.

Tomblin Requests Additional Flood-related Federal Funds, Anticipates Special Session

By Wendy Holdren

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, September 15, 2016

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin anticipates a special legislative session next week to address the state's portion of costs related to the devastating June 23 floods.

In a letter submitted Wednesday to President Obama, Tomblin requested $310 million in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds. This request is in addition to funds already requested from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Tomblin noted in the letter that more than 20 percent of the state's 55 counties were affected by the floods. He said 23 people lost their lives; more than 5,000 homes and businesses were damaged; 35 schools were damaged, six likely beyond repair; and hundreds of miles of state and local roads were damaged.

While he thanked Obama for his support and assistance, he said, "(T)he path to successful and sustainable long-term recovery in an area of West Virginia that had already been struggling through economic upheaval will require even further support."

The towns and communities once reliant on coal now have "no capacity to build back on their own," Tomblin wrote.

He requested $310 million for "investments in housing, economic development and public resilient infrastructure."

In the letter, he said he will ask the Legislature to allocate $75 million for the state's 25 percent match of FEMA assistance.

Jessica Tice, communications director for the Governor's Office, said traditionally FEMA covers 75 percent of disaster-related costs and the state covers 25 percent. However, Tomblin has requested the White House consider approving a 90/10 cost share.

FEMA has responded that if West Virginia meets a threshold of $253 million in damages, the state will qualify for the 90/10 cost share.

Tice said public school damages have been estimated at $130 million, which could put the state over the threshold. FEMA monies would be used for immediate costs, whereas requested money from CDBG-DR would aid long-term recovery efforts, such as community rebuilding.

More information will be available soon, possibly today, about the special session, Tice said. Other media outlets have reported lawmakers are scheduled to return Sunday to Charleston for interim meetings, and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday and Tuesday has been reserved for the anticipated special session.

Sens. Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito, along with Representatives David McKinley, Alex Mooney and Evan Jenkins, sent a letter Wednesday to the president to express their full support for Tomblin's new request for additional funding.

In their letter of support they said, "Unfortunately, much like Louisiana, the vast majority of the flooded homes and businesses (nearly 90 percent) did not carry flood insurance at the time of the disaster, and, according to FEMA estimates, the average grant award for each eligible West Virginian will be less than $9,000. The challenge we face is clear – without additional assistance, these individuals and the communities in which they live simply cannot afford to rebuild."

Tomblin Seeks Millions More In Federal Flood Relief

West Virginia MetroNews, September 14, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has sought an additional $310 million in flood relief for West Virginia through a disaster relief funding package that could be considered by Congress.

The amount Tomblin is requesting would be beyond what West Virginia already has requested from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"(This is) to basically go back in and help some of these small communities for the things that were not covered. Being able to get people up out of the flood plane and so forth and businesses as well as individuals," Tomblin told reporters Wednesday at the state Capitol.

Another letter supporting Tomblin's request was sent by U.S. Senators Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito, as well as Congressmen David McKinley, Alex Mooney and Evan Jenkins.

"I think it's going to be a bipartisan support. Hopefully, it'll bring some more money into West Virginia to help those that were affected in such a negative way by the flood," Tomblin said.

"We have plenty of needs," he said, referring to West Virginia's damaged roads, river banks and schools.

Tomblin's request, addressed to President Obama, notes that many of the West Virginia communities hit hardest by the flooding were already struggling economically.

"The recovery plan for West Virginia represents an atypical strategy," Tomblin wrote. "It recognizes not only the unique challenges associated with rebuilding in an area that has limited develop-able land in a rural and mountainous region of Appalachia, but it also acknowledges that dramatically depressed conditions require us to reposition and reinvent these communities in a way that will make them sustainable for our citizens and give them hope of economic diversification and recovery."

The letter by West Virginia's congressional delegation noted, "This was one of the deadliest disasters our country has experienced this year, and we owe it to the memory of those that we lost to do everything in our power to ensure a tragedy like this never happens here again."

Louisiana leaders have requested $2.8 billion in federal relief for that state, which was hit by its own devastating floods this summer.

A disaster relief package could be part of a government-wide temporary funding bill that would avert a government shutdown Oct. 1.

Any flood relief component could be considered after this year's general election.

Gov. Tomblin Asks White House For $310 Million In WV Flood Aid

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), September 14, 2016

The rebuilding of flood damaged communities like Clendenin is a work in progress. All over town the signs of the June floods are still unmistakable, just as they are elsewhere in West Virginia. Today Governor Tomblin wrote to the White House, requesting $310 million more federal dollars to help rebuild the state.

"We feel very confident about it. Our whole delegation. Our two Senators and three Congress members are all in support of it and I think it's going to be a bipartisan support and so hopefully it will bring some more money into West Virginia," said Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, (D) West Virginia.

In addition to disaster repair, the Governor wants money for economic development, for communities destroyed by the downturn in the coal industry, even before the floods hit. Meanwhile in Clendenin, where two new schools must be built, Megan Hall was wondering about her 14 year old son's education.

"What are they going to do? Are they still bringing the portables? If they are going to make the kids go year round, after summer break hits again?" said Megan Hall, a Clendenin resident.

Statewide, the bill for school construction and repairs is $130 million dollars. Add another $60 million for road repairs; and 120 million for other expenses. The need for more federal aid is clear.

"What we need to press for is this 90 percent reimbursement figure. And that will help us in terms of rebuilding the schools; the roads; homes; all kinds of things," said Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, (R) West Virginia.

The aid request to the White House, is in addition to what FEMA has already provided West Virginia.

"Nearly every community has specific needs. For example, Clendenin needs $400 thousand dollars to repair the flood-damaged town hall and community center," said Mark Curtis, 13 News Chief Political Reporter.

W.Va. State Leaders Petition Obama For Flood Relief

By Glynis Board

West Virginia Public Broadcasting, September 14, 2016

In a rare unified effort, Senators Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito joined with Representatives David McKinley, Alex Mooney, Evan Jenkins, and Governor Tomblin today to petition president Obama on behalf of flood victims in the state.

23 are dead and eight counties are still under a state of emergency after flooding this June. The delegation pointed out in a letter that 5,000 homes and businesses were damaged, and 90 percent carried no flood insurance.

Dear Mr. President: The hardworking men and women of West Virginia have pulled together to help each other rebuild from the devastating one-in-a-thousand-year floods that inundated their communities earlier this year and led to a major disaster declaration on June 25, 2016 (DR-4273). While we are humbled by the heroic actions of our first responders and the thousands of individual citizens who helped friends, neighbors and complete strangers escape rising flood waters, we now find ourselves unable to help many of these same individuals begin down their own road to recovery, and we urge you to include West Virginia in any Presidential supplemental appropriations request that your Administration may submit to Congress. In West Virginia, more than two months after the deadly June floods that killed 23 people, eight counties remain under a state of emergency. More than 5,000 homes and businesses were damaged during the disaster and over 70% of all applicants incurred at least some FEMA-verified loss. Unfortunately, much like Louisiana, the vast majority of the flooded homes and businesses (nearly 90%) did not carry flood insurance at the time of the disaster, and, according to FEMA estimates, the average grant award for each eligible West Virginian will be less than $9,000. The challenge we face is clear – without additional assistance, these individuals and the communities in which they live simply cannot afford to rebuild. We strongly support West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin's request for $310 million in disaster funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-DR) program to address the critical unmet needs of our constituents. The additional CDBG-DR funding requested by the Governor would help homeowners rebuild safer and stronger. It would give our small businesses an opportunity to reinvest in the communities on which they depend. It would give these communities the resources they need to reduce their exposure to flood threats and promote sustainable development for decades to come. It would be a shame to miss this opportunity. While the scope and scale of this disaster may seem relatively small to some, we cannot forget the 23 men, women and children whom we lost during these floods. This was one of the deadliest disasters our country has experienced this year, and we owe it to the memory of those that we lost to do everything in our power to ensure a tragedy like this never happens here again. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin's separate letter to the president asked for 310 million dollars in disaster funding through the Community Development Block Grant program. In his request, Tomblin also pointed out that, "Most of the areas devastated by floods were towns and communities that had been reliant on coal. The industry's downturn has left most of the with no capacity to build back on their own."

FEMA estimates the average grant award for each eligible West Virginian will be less than 9 thousand dollars. Tomblin announced Tuesday total damages in the state topped $300 million.

FEMA Green-lights Portable Classroom Installation At 2 Kanawha County Schools

West Virginia MetroNews, September 14, 2016

CLENDENIN, W.Va. — After a longer wait than expected, FEMA approved the installation of portable classrooms for two flood-damaged schools in Kanawha County Wednesday.

The Kanawha County Board of Education is expected to officially approve the plan at its Thursday evening meeting. The portables will accommodate Herbert Hoover High at Elkview Middle School and Clendenin Elementary students at Bridge Elementary until new schools are built.

One change made is that portables at Elkview Middle won't be on the football field, but in the parking lot instead.

"I think there was some concern with the football field being in a flood zone. As far as exactly where they'll be on the parking lot I'm not sure," said Kanawha BOE member Ric Cavender.

Cavender said that it was a long process to get the plan approved but FEMA, but the board had no choice but to play by their rules.

"If we're planning on using their funding to execute this project, we have to make sure we're following their guidelines," he explained. "Part of their guidelines throughout this process was that we had to explore a lot of different options for placement of the portables. Our goal and intention was always to make sure they would go where we said they were going to go to make sure students stay together."

Herbert Hoover Principal Mike Kelley wasn't concerned about the change in location, as long as his students would all be in the same spot.

"The main thing that was really important to our kids and our parents was that we keep our kids together here in our community," said Kelley. "I think it's going to be fine. The initial plan was for it to be on the football field but there was some additional costs with raising the portables up out of the flood plain."

Kelley said Hoover students would still use the Elkview Middle cafeteria and gymnasium, and that he saw a silver lining in the very unusual, inconvenient year.

"I really feel like this is good preparation for college, because it's very similar to a college schedule where you go to classes every other day (for about four hours) as opposed to seven or eight," he said. "You have to take more responsibility for your own learning by studying and doing work outside of the classroom."

The Kanawha BOE was expected to approve a plan for the portables at a meeting last month, but it was put on hold indefinitely. The exact cost and number of portables at each school was not announced Wednesday.

The board meets at 6 p.m. Thursday evening.

FEMA Approves Portables For Flooded Kanawha County Schools

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), September 14, 2016

FEMA has approved the Kanawha County Schools site plans for putting portables at Elkview Middle School at Bridge Elementary School.

The portables at Elkview will be used for temporary classrooms for Herbert Hoover High School and portables at Bridge Elementary will be used for temporary classrooms for Bridge and Clendenin Elementary Schools.

The next step for KCS is putting together additional information and going out for bids.

We will continue to update this story as more information becomes available.

S.C. Emergency Officials, Military Review Flood Response, Plan For Next Disaster

Columbia (SC) State, September 14, 2016

For two years, South Carolina's emergency responders and its federal military installations worked to coordinate their responses in the event of a disaster.

Last year, that disaster came, in the form of an historic flood that swamped the Midlands.

Now with the one-year anniversary of the flood coming up, federal, state and local representatives sat down again Wednesday in West Columbia to discuss their response and plan for South Carolina's next major disaster – with Tropical Storm Julia threatening to dump even more water onto the state.

"To make it more realistic, we've cooked up a tropical storm," joked Kim Stenson, director of the S.C. Emergency Management Division, in opening the third annual seminar on the mutual support of local government and military installations at the emergency management headquarters.

Both civilians and soldiers credit the ongoing meetings with improving the state's response to last year's flooding crisis.

"We were so well-prepared because of the relationships we've built," said Maj. Gen. Gregory Batts, South Carolina's assistant adjutant general. "Everybody understood the system."

Batts said the seminar should be a "springboard for later success."

The point man for all sides is Army Col. Bill Connor, the Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer for South Carolina under the FEMA regional office in Atlanta.

"I took over just before the flood, so I kind of had to drink from a fire hose," said Connor, a Reserve officer who practices law in South Carolina in civilian life.

"We were watching Hurricane Joaquin, so a hurricane was what we were planning for," he said. "We didn't think it would just dump that much water on us."

Military forces on the ground in South Carolina were fast to respond to requests for help after flooding hit the state in October, including boats deployed from Fort Jackson at the request of Columbia's police chief.

That request is key, Connor said, because the Posse Comitatus Act prohibits military personnel from operating directly on American soil in the absence of an emergency situation. They must receive a request for help from a civil authority – a governor, mayor or some other civilian – and then work under the local civilian agencies leading the response.

"Troops cannot perform any law enforcement functions, period," Connor said. "We're here strictly in a support role."

After 72 hours, the request has to be reviewed to ensure the emergency situation still exists.

For someone outside the military, knowing the process can be helpful in a pinch. Beth Fletcher, direct services manager for the S.C. Red Cross, said the previous meetings were invaluable in getting that information out.

"Just being able to coordinate, how to access different things, how long it's going to take," Fletcher said. "It definitely helps."

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

State Officials Visit To Assess Storm Damages

Bemidji (MN) Pioneer, September 14, 2016

BEMIDJI – Minnesota Department of Public Safety staff planned to be in Beltrami County on Wednesday and Clearwater County on Thursday, to meet with local officials and possibly survey damage from late July windstorms.

The assessment crews are part of the Homeland Security and Emergency Management division of the public safety department.

Local emergency managers reported the following estimates from their initial assessments right after the July 19-21 storms, which included heavy winds, hail and lightning strikes. Damages included thousands of fallen trees, downed power lines and roofs blown off of buildings on private property. That debris resulted in blocked roads and widespread power outages.

$289,761 in Beltrami County including the Leech Lake Reservation.

$289,137 in Clearwater County including the White Earth Reservation.

The damages do not meet federal requirements for FEMA's Public Assistance Program, but they could qualify for reimbursement through the Minnesota State Disaster Assistance Program, a release said.

ZIKA VIRUS

The Importance Of Planned Parenthood In The Zika Epidemic

By Amy Faith Ho

The Hill, September 14, 2016

While Congress hasn't been able to pass funding for fighting zika virus for over six months since President Obama's request for emergency supplementation, the Planned Parenthood controversy isn't a trivial one.

Specifically, Democrats have been holding out on passing the likely $1.1 billion (down from the $1.9 billion President Obama originally requested in February of this year) due to hidden provisions from Republicans to divert some of those funds from Planned Parenthood.

This is not just political theater, but a medical one, one that reinvigorates debate about women's health. Zika virus is a mosquito-born disease that thus far has its primary effects on the unborn children of infected pregnant women. One in five zika-infected patients are asymptomatic themselves, but the virus is also sexually transmitted. In a fairly grotesque mechanism, zika virus causes microcephaly in unborn fetuses. The skull of a fetus develops prior to the brain, and as the brain grows, it "fills out" the skull and helps it hold its shape. In zika, as the virus attacks the nervous system, the brain never grows to its appropriate capacity, and the skull collapses around it, forming the misshapen and small character of microcephaly that is sometimes not survivable after birth.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and National Institutes of Health are fundamentally out of money, even after diverting funds from many other areas — HIV prevention, malaria, tuberculosis, diabetes, cancer — just to get initial action started while Congress took their seven-week recess. These efforts have focused on mosquito prevention and spraying, education, research, testing and vaccination. The importance of Planned Parenthood, however is fundamental as an immediate response to zika-infections in pregnant women. It offers important roles on safe sex education, birth control, and yes, termination of pregnancies.

This is not a new thought, but a politically charged one so close to an election. Defunding Planned Parenthood in the face of zika is like defunding firefighters in the face of a forest fire. All the other efforts of government agencies are focused on prevention. Planned Parenthood offers an essential right to choose for women. Admittedly this choice is an unpopular one that could be spun by pundits as eugenics, but it is a personal one that mothers should have as to the life they would like their unborn child to have. There are very real considerations as to the capabilities and resources mothers will be able to offer for caring for a special-needs child.

Abortion aside, Planned Parenthood offers a highly effective way of limiting spread of zika without spraying chemicals into the air: condoms and birth control. While hundreds continue to protest as spraying of mosquitoes commences despite CDC assurance that it is safe for humans, even the Pope has already stated condoms are acceptable in the face of zika virus.

Congress needs to put aside political theater and realize that while vaccines, testing and diagnostics will be limited by the natural speed and expense of scientific research, the magic bullet is already here: Planned Parenthood. Fight fire with firefighters, not Smokey the Bear. Fund Planned Parenthood.

Amy Faith Ho, MD is an emergency physician, published writer and national speaker on issues pertaining to healthcare, with work featured in Forbes, Chicago Tribune, NPR, KevinMD, and TEDx. Amyfaithho.com

The views expressed by contributors are their own and not the views of The Hill.

Memo To Congress: Confederate Flags Won't Cure Zika

Washington Post, September 14, 2016

BACK AT the start of this year, Republican leaders were full of promises that Congress could overcome inaction and partisan stalemate. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.) said, "Some thought the Senate could never be cured of its dysfunction and its gridlock. . . . We believed the Senate could be restored to a place of high purpose again." House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (Wis.) declared, "We need to raise our gaze." Well, gentlemen, it is now September, a dangerous virus has hit U.S. shores, and all Congress has contributed so far is bickering. Definitely time to raise your gaze — and do something constructive.

The Zika virus, transmitted by mosquitoes and by sex, has no effective cure or vaccine. To date, some 1,080 pregnant women in the United States and its territories, chiefly Puerto Rico, have been infected; the total number of infections is more than 18,000. For now, most cases involve travelers who brought the virus from abroad. Usually, infection causes a minor illness, but pregnant women are vulnerable because the virus can cause severe fetal birth defects. Florida has already identified two areas of Miami-Dade County where mosquitoes are spreading Zika; local governments are attempting to fight mosquitoes by spraying, but it appears that Zika will not disappear soon.

President Obama requested nearly $1.9 billion in emergency funds in February but ran into partisan delays and sniping. Republicans dithered, then approved a far smaller amount, attaching provisions they knew would be objectionable to Democrats, such as effectively denying money to Planned Parenthood clinics and rescinding some funding for Obamacare. Another amendment would allow Confederate battle flags to fly in military cemeteries. These add-ons have nothing to do with fighting Zika but triggered vigorous objections from Democrats. When Congress returned from summer recess, a $1.1 billion Zika bill again stalled in the Senate. Now it seems the best hope for action is a Zika measure attached to a stopgap spending bill that could be voted on before the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30.

The president said Monday after meeting bipartisan congressional leaders that he is optimistic there will be some action. We hope he is right, because so far Congress has done little to justify optimism on this score. In the absence of approval for emergency funding, the administration earlier reprogrammed $589 million from other sources — chiefly Ebola-fighting money — to cope with the immediate cost of combating Zika. In recent days, the nation's top public-health officials have warned that the money is running out. Moreover, this is no way to run a railroad. Vaccine development is a long-term project requiring difficult clinical trials, and to starve it for funds now will postpone the day when an effective vaccine will be ready.

This is a political season, and after Congress goes home again in a few weeks, voters will be asked to render a verdict on its performance. So far, the record is abysmal. Let's hope members raise their gaze before heading for the exits.

Editorial: Congress Should Approve Zika Funding

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 14, 2016

A tentative deal that finally would provide federal funding to fight the Zika virus offers a glimmer of hope — and sanity — that leaders in Washington will put words into action to combat this spreading public health threat. Congressional leaders are expected to include money for Zika in a broad spending bill that could be considered by the Senate as early as today. That approach has bipartisan support from Florida's congressional delegation and approval is of paramount importance for Florida, where Zika has infected nearly 800 residents and continues to spread.

Zika, which is primarily transmitted by mosquitoes, can cause microcephaly and other grave birth defects in babies born to infected mothers. As the virus appeared across Central and South America earlier this year, President Barack Obama requested $1.9 billion to contain the outbreak. The request should have been easy to pass, but Congress never misses a chance to inject partisanship into governing. House Republicans attached provisions to the funding bill that were deal breakers for Democrats — namely cutting off money to Planned Parenthood. Both of Florida's senators, Democrat Bill Nelson and Republican Marco Rubio, have rightly supported efforts to pass a clean bill that gets the money flowing.

The deal now on the table includes $1.1 billion for Zika in a short-term spending bill that keeps the federal government running into December. It's considered "must-pass" legislation, because without it federal agencies would have to shut down. Congress won't let that happen so close to the election. Voters should remember that this 11th-hour effort did not materialize because leaders in Washington decided to do the right thing and address this crisis. They just want to get out of Washington and back on the campaign trail.

In addition to money, the Zika fight needs more transparency. While Gov. Rick Scott has made himself plenty visible — joining local government roundtables, urging Floridians to use insect repellent and lobbying in Washington — the state Department of Health has been opaque about the real numbers behind cases of locally transmitted Zika. The Miami Herald reported that state health officials stopped providing detailed information on local Zika transmissions, such as the number of people tested in each county and the results. They underreported Florida's total of locally transmitted Zika infections by excluding out-of-state residents from the count, and they won't say how many local cases involve pregnant women. The one non-travel-related case of Zika in Tampa Bay affected a Pinellas resident who is a firefighter for Tampa Fire Rescue, but state Surgeon General Celeste Philip would not specify where in the county that patient lives until health officials confirmed whether the virus was spreading locally. That was more than two weeks ago, and there has been no update. Floridians need timely, complete information about this health threat.

Scott traveled to Washington this week to lobby for money, acting above the fray a la former Gov. Jeb Bush in a hurricane and preaching that "the time for politics is over." Then he singled out Nelson for voting against earlier Zika bills that cut money to Planned Parenthood. The governor's self-serving tour isn't helping Floridians, and his shot at the Democrat he may run against in 2018 was unnecessary. He should come home and get back to handing out bug spray.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Thomas Frieden warned last week that the United States is "about to see a bunch of kids born with microcephaly." Days later, Congress failed for the third time in three months to commit emergency funding. The deal in the works now will not make up for months of lawmakers' willful inaction, but it will provide the crucial ingredient for fighting Zika: money. Lawmakers must get it done.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

N. Hempstead Offers Disaster Preparations In Many Languages

Newsday (NY), September 15, 2016

Korean and Vietnamese translations of disaster preparation advisories will be distributed in North Hempstead in an effort to reach more residents in an area with rapidly changing demographics.

Officials from North Hempstead and Adelphi University have partnered to distribute the materials that have been published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and include the essentials for an emergency supply kit, including medication, flashlights and water. Officials said the documents will be made available to nail salons around the town — businesses often operated by Asian residents.

A public service announcement on the town's website urging residents to pack emergency kits will soon have Vietnamese and Korean subtitles. An Adelphi University grant was used to fund the video, which was previously released last year with Mandarin and Spanish subtitles. See alsoSearch N. Hempstead salaries

The town is looking to accommodate a growing number of Asian and Hispanic residents. Officials, wary of hurricane season, said they do not want any residents to be excluded from receiving the preparation materials.

North Hempstead Supervisor Judi Bosworth said the recent threat of Tropical Storm Hermine, which did not make landfall on Long Island but caused strong winds, waves and some coastal flooding, inspired the multilingual outreach. "We narrowly missed Hermine," Bosworth said. "We missed so many of the people who don't speak English or can't read English."

The town's video features a family's efforts to prepare for a storm. A sequence offers a comical, but serious look at what could happen if storm survivors were without water or other necessities.

In North Hempstead, about 15.3 percent of the town's population — nearly 35,000 residents — is Asian, according to 2015 U.S. Census figures. In 2000, the town was home to 20,000 Asians, making up more than 9 percent of its residents, according to U.S. Census data.

The town's Hispanic population was nearly 31,000 in 2015, about 13.5 percent of North Hempstead's population. The town had 22,000 Hispanic residents in 2000, or about 9.8 percent of its residents, according to census figures.

North Hempstead also has worked to reach more of its residents through its informational signs. Pictorial signs were added near fishing line receptacles, instructing residents to dispose of material that can harm coastal life.

Meghan McPherson, assistant director for the Center for Health Innovation at Adelphi University, said the effort allows non-English speakers to "have this information correctly translated to them to be prepared, so when they hear a storm is coming, they know what to do, and they're clear on what to do, and they can tell their families, and they're less vulnerable."

The public service announcement can be viewed online at northhempsteadny.gov/ready.

Bosworth said she is considering adding subtitles in additional languages, including Farsi and Haitian Creole.

"We're in a multicultural society. We need reach out to as many people" as possible, Bosworth said.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Disaster Prep Dave

Mena (AR) Star, September 14, 2016

September is National Preparedness Month! According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (F.E.M.A.) National Preparedness month began on September 1. Each week of the month carries its own theme. Topics like, "Preparing Family and Friends, Preparing Through Service, and finally Individual Preparedness. The central theme: "Don't Wait. Communicate, Make Your Emergency Plan Today." Check www.ready.gov for an overview of all the opportunities to participate.

This current week (September 11-17) puts the emphasis on involvement through community service and coordinating your plans with neighbors. Opportunities such as Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.), Citizen Corps or the Youth Preparedness Council offer plenty of outlets for contributions at the community level. The week of

September 18-24 emphasizes Individual Preparedness and offers a new app for your smartphone featuring weather alerts, disaster resources and safety reminders. The final week, September 23-30 is billed as a Lead Up To A National Day Of Action.

Participants are encouraged to organize a preparedness activity, register it on ready.gov/prepare and then share photos and stories of how your activities made a difference. Also scheduled for September 30 is National PreparAthon! Day. The goals of this and similar events are to increase the number of folks who are aware of what type of disasters can strike their local community, what to do to be safe and mitigate damage and how to increase their preparedness level so the effects of a disaster are minimized. Community resilience planning is also on the agenda.

Opportunities to sign up for individuals and organizations are posted on the website as well. F.E.M.A. has come a long way since Hurricane Katrina and their website is an excellent resource for all types of disaster planning and information. As usual send your questions and comments disasterprep.dave@gmail.com. Previous columns can be found on my blog at www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com. Dave Robinson is the Postmaster in Bandon, Oregon, and the author of "Disaster Prep For The Rest Of Us," available on Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble and other online booksellers.

FEMA CORPS

St. John's United Methodist Aids Flood Relief Responders

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

St. John's United Methodist Church continues to host Team Rubicon, a disaster response veterans service organization and FEMA Corps.

On Sept. 2, 10 young adults arrived from IsraAID, an organization headquartered in Israel committed to provide lifesaving disaster relief and long-term support all over the world.

St. John's provides cots in the Family Life Center, has two mobile shower trailers and is fixing a hot breakfast Monday through Friday for all of the teams. Twice a week, they feed the teams a hot supper.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Gazette Editorial: A Culture Gap Between WV And FEMA?

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 15, 2016

West Virginia is deeply grateful to the federal government for life-supporting aid that bolstered state residents after the savage June floods. But occasionally, it seems rules, however necessary, can rule out help.

For example, West Virginia Public Broadcasting reported the plight of Tammy Rhodes's family in Clay County. Their home was destroyed by cascading water, forcing them to live temporarily in a camper.

They applied three times for aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but were rejected three times. The wife explained:

"They said, because my mom and dad had given us this part of the property to live on, and because a title had never been switched or a deed had never been put into our name, that they considered us renters."

Of course, many rural families recognize this arrangement. A younger family builds or owns a home on the property of parents. Parents naturally share with children, without going to the courthouse. It's a shame the FEMA rules, which must draw a line somewhere, of course, do not reflect this cultural norm.

It's also a cautionary tale for West Virginia families.

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 21 Aug 2016 22:14:17 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FEMA-State PIO Coordination Call

Stacie—

I realize after I got home on Friday that I never closed the loop with you about an agenda. See draft agenda below. Also, I forwarded you an invite reminder that can be forwarded to state PIOs, after you make any changes to the agenda.

I never did hear back from PIOs, so the state reports are suggestions that may help facilitate the call, but we probably don't want to include this information in the agenda that we distribute.

Tony, Joe and Cecily have confirmed. I think Micki will join but not sure about Kelly and Ryan. I'll check in with Kelly when I'm in Wyoming and will encourage her to call in. I will try to call from Wyoming, too.

Thanks,
Jerry

FEMA—State Public Information Officer Conference Call
Wednesday, August 24, 2016, 10:00-11:00 a.m. MOUNTAIN

Call-in: (b)(6), Pin: (b)(6) #

10:00 a.m. Welcome – Stacie Greff

State reports:

Colorado—Micki finishing Naval Post Graduate School. Project relates to media access.

Montana—Baker disaster. Wildfires.

North Dakota—DES role in pipeline protest.

South Dakota—OEM involvement in Sturgis rally.

Utah—September PIO conference in St. George.

Wyoming—Wildfires. Lusk one year later.
Region VIII reports:

- Region VIII IMAT in Louisiana. Daniel Green is the new IMAT EA Advisor.
- September is Preparedness Month. Be sure to let us know if states have plans. We want to support state efforts.
- NEMA-FEMA meeting in Chicago.
- OST wrap.
- Upcoming Tribal consultation.
- Status of ARA/RA position.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 21:22:03 +0000
To:
(b)(6)@state.co.us'(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@nd.gov';(b)(6)@state.s
(b)(6)@utah.gov';(b)(6)@wyo.gov';R8 External Affairs
Subject: FEMA-State PIO Coordination Call

Good afternoon. Please join us for the State PIO—FEMA Region VIII coordination call. Call-in information and a tentative agenda follows as we listed some potential topics of conversation as a starting point. We look forward to hearing from you!

Wednesday, August 24
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. MOUNTAIN
Dial-in:(b)(6) Pin (b)(6) #

Agenda
10:00 a.m. Welcome – Stacie Greff

State reports:

Colorado-(b)(6) finishing Naval Post Graduate School. Project relates to media access.

Montana—Baker disaster. Wildfires.

North Dakota—DES role in pipeline protest.

South Dakota—OEM involvement in Sturgis rally.

Utah—September PIO conference in St. George.

Wyoming—Wildfires. Lusk one year later.

Region VIII reports:

- Region VIII IMAT to Louisiana. Daniel Green is the new IMAT EA Advisor, deployed to Livingston Parish.
- September is Preparedness Month. Be sure to let us know if states have plans. We want to support your efforts.
- NEMA-FEMA meeting in Chicago.
- OST wrap.
- Upcoming Tribal consultation.
- Status of ARA/RA position.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 17:20:39 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian;Greff, Stacie
Subject: final draft email for IHS about Standing Rock Standing Rock

Stacie – with your final approval I will send.

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .

- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.
- September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck, ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this year's Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.
- Region VIII HHS has informed FEMA there are no current or anticipated requests for HHS/Federal ESF8 assistance.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 19:47:03 +0000
To: Andersen, Chris
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Chris - wanted you to be aware of the inquiry I just received from an individual regarding an article she saw on Facebook. I have not seen the article she is referencing.

Jerry is forwarding the information to HQ EA for awareness as well.

Thanks

Megan

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

There was recently an article posted on Facebook from anarchic news that gave this information about a shoot on sight order given in North Dakota.

Here is a summary and direct quote from the article accusing Homeland Security of giving the order:

At the end of the article in question from the Anarchicnews site, there is an unattributed quote forming the last paragraph that does say "Now though homeland security has taken over, legally, and the situation and the level of threat has been bumped up. This means they consider this a terrorist action and have the authority to shot on sight." The first paragraph and headline attribute the order to North Dakota and the governor. I think this particular Snopes article debunking that the governor issued any such order is a good think and valid.
I have searched diligently and not found any reference anywhere else to Homeland Security issuing such an order.

While Snopes debunked the article as it pertained to the Governor, they did not address the Homeland Security reference. This is now under discussion among members of my tribe and people are very disturbed about it.

Please clarify what Homeland Security;s role is regarding DAPL Pipeline and whether a shoot on sight order was issued. What is Homeland Security's policy on shooting perceived protestors. Is the DAPL protest classified as a terrorist action?

Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 19:40:03 +0000
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

For awareness.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

There was recently an article posted on Facebook from anarchic news that gave this information about a shoot on sight order given in North Dakota.

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Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 18:15:03 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

There was recently an article posted on Facebook from anarchic news that gave this information about a shoot on sight order given in North Dakota.

Here is a summary and direct quote from the article accusing Homeland Security of giving the order:

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Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 15:51:59 -0400
To: Lemaitre, Rafael
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

FYSA. See last two paragraph. Although the HS reference may refer to ND DES, it is worth noting that it could apply to DHS. ND DES director was quoted earlier in response to limiting relief measures to protesters who are participating in an "illegal activity. "

Article is far outside mainstream but apparently has the tribe's interest.
First mention of possible HS involvement.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 1:40:03 PM
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

For awareness.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

There was recently an article posted on Facebook from anarchic news that gave this information about a shoot on sight order given in North Dakota.

Here is a summary and direct quote from the article accusing Homeland Security of giving the order:

At the end of the article in question from the Anarchicnews site, there is an unattributed quote forming the last paragraph that does say "Now though homeland security has taken over, legally, and the situation and the level of threat has been bumped up. This means they consider this a terrorist action and have the authority to shot on sight." The first paragraph and headline attribute the order to North Dakota and the governor. I think this particular Snopes article debunking that the governor issued any such order is a good think and valid.

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Please clarify what Homeland Security;s role is regarding DAPL Pipeline and whether a shoot on sight order was issued. What is Homeland Security's policy on shooting perceived protestors. Is the DAPL protest classified as a terrorist action?

Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 19:42:42 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: a few things

My email and his response.

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 2:27 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Valteau, Margeau <margeau.valteau@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: a few things

Later this month.

Yes. We can send the documents out for the RTL's to see.

Ok.

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 4:18 PM
To: Booth, Milo; Valteau, Margeau
Subject: a few things

Hi Milo and Margeau –

I wanted to touch base on three things….

1) Are we still looking at tomorrow as the start for consultation for the Tribal Policy? And will we get to see the changes before it goes out?
2) There are significant protests going on just north of the Standing Rock Reservation (southwestern SD) regarding the XL Pipeline. Media is anticipating large busloads of people from other reservations arriving today. We are tracking from here. We haven't gotten any questions on it, but depending on how long it goes on, it could impact some of our travel plans and the availability of tribal EMs and Council as well as their interest in FEMA. The protests have all been peaceful and are expected to stay that way.

Hope you are both doing well!

Megan

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:51:35 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Archambault's opinion piece

5

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 3:02 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Archambault's opinion piece

It was in the clips, but I wanted to make sure you saw it.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri

River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:50:08 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

2

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:25 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

"We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably," she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

"He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena," he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

"My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not," he said. "This is our land, our people."

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, "I believe there's strength in prayer," and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Our water is sacred," she said. "I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too."

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes' chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock's opposition.

"We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives," Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe's reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe's water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It's estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it's the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead ‘solidarity’ rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county’s emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe’s request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

Standing Rock tribal leaders represented by former U.S. attorney (Billings Gazette)

- By AMY DALRYMPLE Forum News Service
- 20 hrs ago
-

BISMARCK – Former North Dakota U.S. Attorney Tim Purdon will represent the Standing Rock Sioux tribal leaders who have been sued by Dakota Access LLC for protesting the pipeline construction.

Chairman Dave Archambault II and council member Dana Yellow Fat are among several defendants named in a civil case filed last week in federal court in Bismarck by Dakota Access. The lawsuit alleges that the defendants are interfering with pipeline construction north of the reservation.

Purdon said he worked closely with Archambault while serving as U.S. attorney and he was asked to represent the tribal leaders.

"This case is about the parameters of the First Amendment in terms of tribal officials protesting here in North Dakota," Purdon said.

The complaint claims that Archambault, Yellow Fat and others tried to block Dakota Access employees from entering and exiting the construction site. The complaint also claims that Archambault excused all tribal employees from work on Aug. 12 and encouraged them to protest.

About 4,000 people were estimated to be at the protest site on Monday. Pipeline construction has been halted in that area since last week.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland granted a temporary restraining order against the tribal leaders and other defendants that prevents them from unlawfully protesting the pipeline construction.

A hearing was set for Thursday in the case, but has been postponed because Archambault plans to travel to Washington, D.C., for a hearing on Wednesday in the tribe's lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Purdon said.

The Bismarck hearing is now set for Sept. 8 to determine if a preliminary injunction should be issued. The temporary restraining order has been extended until Sept. 8, though Hovland wrote in his order that the parties are "strongly encouraged to meet and confer in good faith in an attempt to resolve this dispute prior to the hearing."

Archambault and Yellow Fat are among 29 people who have been arrested during the protest. Each faces a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct in Morton County.

Purdon resigned as U.S. attorney for the district of North Dakota last year. He now works in private practice in Bismarck for national law firm Robins Kaplan, where he is co-chairman of the American Indian Law and Policy Practice Group.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 17:36:40 +0000
To: Appenrodt, Kathleen
Subject: FW: Clip: ND tribal

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2016 11:31 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hunter, Cynthia (Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov) <Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Panel votes to borrow $6M for costs associated with pipeline protests, blasts feds inaction

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 12:18 p.m.

NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
HONOR THE EARTH....
UTION
Native

Demonstrators against the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan, N.D., gather in opposition early this month. File photo.

BISMARCK — The state Emergency Commission voted Wednesday, Sept. 21, to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to support law enforcement efforts

related to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, but not before members blasted the lack of federal support to deal with protesters camped out on federal land.

"I know we have to do it, but it's not right, and the lack of federal involvement is disgusting," said House Majority Leader Al Carlson, R-Fargo. "And we need to protect our North Dakota people, but this is just plain wrong that they're ignoring this issue."

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, said the state has spent $1.88 million on protest-related costs so far, the bulk of it personnel costs for assistance from the National Guard and law enforcement agencies from across the state. Morton County estimated last week it had spent about $400,000 on top of that.

The $6 million line of credit from the Bank of North Dakota will fund future efforts as authorized by Gov. Jack Dalrymple's emergency declaration Aug. 19. The Legislature will have to make a deficiency appropriation from the state's general fund to pay back the bank after lawmakers convene in regular session in January, Budget Director Pam Sharp said.

Authorities have responded to multiple protests at pipeline construction sites and in Bismarck-Mandan since protests began to ramp up in mid-August. They've also created a traffic checkpoint and increased patrols in Morton County, which they say are necessary for the safety of local residents, farmers and ranchers and the thousands of protesters camped out on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Last Friday, the Corps of Engineers issued a special use permit for protesters to use Corps land south of the Cannonball River but not the land north of the river where the majority of them are camping, because that land is subject to an existing grazing lease.

Carlson said it bothers him that it's "a federal problem that they've ignored" and the Legislature will have to cover the costs at a time of budget shortfalls. Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, agreed.

"The taxpayers shouldn't have to be paying for this," he said.

Dalrymple said he's been in contact with the White House, U.S. Department of Justice, Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior and the state's congressional delegation but is still waiting to hear if they're going to help financially or with in-kind services.

"The problem that we have, of course, is that these public safety needs are imminent every day," Dalrymple said. "We really have no choice but to protect the public with law enforcement. Recovering funds from the federal government is definitely a top priority, but it undoubtedly will take some time."

The commission's other members are Secretary of State Al Jaeger, Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, Sen. Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, and Sen. Ray Holmberg, R-Grand Forks.

Jerry DeFelice
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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:52:58 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

9

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 6:15 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Thanks for sending these

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 9:39:10 AM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 17:51:43 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: DALRYMPLE STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROTEST ACTIVITIES

This just came out of the Governor's office (not sure you are on the list) and wanted to draw your attention to it. Nothing new, but this is the first time the Governor has said anything.

From: Zent, Jeffrey L. [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 11:04 AM
Subject: DALRYMPLE STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROTEST ACTIVITIES

State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor
Jack Dalrymple
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug.18, 2016

Contact: Jeff Zent or Jody Link
701.328.2200

DALRYMPLE STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROTEST ACTIVITIES

Gov. Jack Dalrymple today issued the following statement regarding recent pipeline protest activities and public safety:

"Public safety is paramount as we continue to closely monitor protest activities and coordinate our public safety efforts with law enforcement leaders and state agency directors.

Following reports of heavy pedestrian traffic and numerous vehicles parked along ND Highway 1806, we restricted travel six miles south of Mandan to local traffic and emergency response vehicles only. Alternate routes are available for through traffic. Additionally, we established a traffic control point at the intersection of ND Highway 6 and Morton County Road 138A to provide information regarding protest activities along the highway.

While we are concerned about some cases of unlawful activity, we are pleased that no one has been injured and it is our top priority to keep it that way."

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 18:50:17 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: DRAFT ND LNO Report
Attachments: ND LNO Report Standing Rock Protests.pptx

Please do not share. You are seeing a draft. Response has the lead and I provided significant input. It is currently in review in response.

From: Jones, Susan K
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 12:28 PM
To: Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: DRAFT ND LNO Report

Susan K. Jones
FEMA Region VIII
Response Division
Denver, CO
O: 303.235.4605
C: 303.263.5415

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

From: Gafkjen, Jeffrey
Sent: 8 Jan 2015 15:19:00 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Subject: FW: EPA-FEMA Discussion on Crude (Bakken) by Rail
Attachments: NEW HAMPSHIRE_Crude Oil Call Notes_123014.docx, MISSISSIPPI_Crude Oil Call Notes_122214.docx, MAINE_Crude Oil Call Notes_11212014.docx, State Call Master Schedule 010615.xlsx

Hi Ricky – Can you cover this for us? I know this is an issue in MT, SD and ND and I won't be here for the meeting.

-----Original Appointment-----
From: Gafkjen, Jeffrey
Sent: Tuesday, January 06, 2015 12:23 PM
To: Gafkjen, Jeffrey; 'Ostrander, David'; (b)(6) Atencio, Kathie; Chavez, Luke; Deal, Timothy; (b)(6) Bakersky, Pete; Vasco, MaryBeth; Serrin, Phillip; Floyd, Megan; Stephenson, James R; Garcia, Carol; McCool, Thomas; Moore, Jkevin; Thaxton, Steven; Espinosa, Adam; Conley, Ed; DeFelice, Jerome; 'Payan, Melissa'; Fisher, Dennis; Mungenast, Paul; (b)(6) COL USARMY (US)'; (b)(6) LTC USARMY ARNORTH (US)'; (b)(6) CIV (US)
Subject: EPA-FEMA Discussion on Crude (Bakken) by Rail
When: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 10:00 AM-11:00 AM (UTC-07:00) Mountain Time (US & Canada).
Where: Teleconference: (b)(6) PIN: (b)(6) #

This is a status update call regarding recent taskings on assessing the current status of preparedness for crude oil (Bakken) by rail and the development of an Oil Transportation Incident Exercise Series. The call-in number is (b)(6) **PIN:** (b)(6) **#**.

Also, attached are the summary of discussions on the State conference calls that have taken place so far.

v/r, jeff

Jeff Gafkjen

National Preparedness Division

FEMA Region VIII

720-237-3489

<<NEW HAMPSHIRE_Crude Oil Call Notes_123014.docx>> <<MISSISSIPPI_Crude Oil Call Notes_122214.docx>> <<MAINE_Crude Oil Call Notes_11212014.docx>> <<State Call Master Schedule 010615.xlsx>>

Shale Crude Oil Dialogue – Notes Template
~~NOT FOR DISTRUBTION – INTERNAL USE ONLY~~

State: New Hampshire
Date of Call: December 30, 2014
Region: I
FPC: Russ Webster
SAA: New Hampshire Department of Safety (NHDOS)
Participating Agencies:

Federal	State
EPA	New Hampshire Governor's Office
USCG	New Hampshire Information and Analysis Center
DOT	New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES)
FEMA	New Hampshire Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (NHDHSEM)
DOE	New Hampshire Office of the Fire Marshal

1. **What planning and preparedness actions have you taken to address incidents involving trains transporting crude oil or other hazardous materials?**

- Two years ago, the Governor's Office coordinated a meeting between DHSEM, the Fire Marshal, NHDES, and all heads of railroad companies that operate in New Hampshire to discuss information sharing and preparedness. During the two-year period following that meeting, the state continued to meet with all railroad companies in the state. They discussed security issues for hazardous materials and safety of citizens. These discussions helped the state learn what was being transported through the state, so their regional hazmat teams could be prepared to respond to incidents involving certain materials. Despite the past dialogue between New Hampshire and the rail companies, it continues to be difficult for the state to obtain information on what materials are traveling on it railway system.
- NH wants to know exactly what is moving on their rail lines so that they can share this information through their fusion center with regional Hazmat teams; the teams can better procure resources and allocate personnel if they know the quantity an frequency of hazardous material shipments
- NH is worried about pre-incident planning efforts, not as much about response capabilities
- The state has had difficulty working with the rail companies in obtaining access to the railways to identify certain environmentally sensitive or physically vulnerable areas due to the rate of activity on rail lines (they're heavily trafficked).
  - This is an area the state believes the Federal government could step in and require the rail companies to allow access to state emergency managers.
- The state is trying to promote a system that encourages rail carriers and security personnel to file Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) when they find an unauthorized person on a train or in a rail yard. This will be shared regionally and nationally through fusion centers to track suspicious activity around rail lines.

Have you convened a working group, task force, or similar group?

- NO

Does the group include representatives from multiple state, local and tribal governments?

- NO

Does the group include participants from rail carriers operating in your state?
- NO

What products has the group produced, e.g., gap analyses or reports?
- N/A

2. Does your State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) include an annex for oil?

- NO
  - An All Hazards plan was recently rewritten and includes an ESF-format hazmat plan, but does not specifically address rail or oil.
  - State hazmat teams have created their own specific plans to create shale crude-specific plans.

Has the plan been updated to address shale crude oil transport by rail?

- NO

Has the plan been coordinated with:
- *Freight rail carriers operating in your jurisdiction?*
  NO
- *Regional Response Team? (RRT)*
  YES
- *State Emergency Response Commission? (SERC)*
  YES
- *If applicable, Tribal Emergency Response Committees? (TERCs)*
  NO

3. Are there communities in your state more at-risk for crude oil incidents?

- YES
  - In Southeast New Hampshire, Pan Am railways operates on a stretch of railroad that has transported crude oil twice this year, in March 2014.
  - This region is the most susceptible to a crude oil spill because trains headed to refineries in New Brunswick pass through, and the state is focusing most of its preparedness efforts, including GRPs, here.

Do at-risk local jurisdictions in your state have freight railroad incident annexes or transportation annexes that specifically address shale crude oil transport?

- NO

Do you have any specific planning needs/concerns?

- NO

4. Have you, or others in your state, been involved with regional EPA pollution response planning efforts, including the Area Contingency Plan (ACP) and/or Geographic Response Plan (GRP)?

- YES
  - The state formed a committee, through which it worked closely with the Coast Guard and the EPA on GRPs and ACPs for railways and waterways that transport hazardous materials through the state, including oil.
  - The ACP was rewritten and finished in December 2014.

Do you feel that your plans are sufficiently coordinated with the ACP and/or GCP to address spills, including crude oil transportation by rail?

Does your GRP cover crude oil spills from other modes of transit, pipelines, or bulk storage facilities?

- NO
  - State hopes to include other types of crude oil spills in future preparedness activities.

5. Do you know of any local training efforts focused on the response to a rail incident involving crude shale oil?

- Over the last three years, the state fire academy has put hundreds of thousands of dollars into hazmat training, specifically rail car training.
  - All of the training conducted by the state has been funded through DHS Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) money.
- Last year, the city of Dover (5th largest city in the state) conducted an exercise, which simulated a railway incident involving a crude oil spill over a major river.
- Pan Am railways has promised New Hampshire a railcar for the state fire academy.
- State officials responsible for conducting exercises are in the process of developing a three year plan for railway preparedness.
- There is a functional rail exercise scheduled for 2016. The state conducted a railway exercise, which simulated a chemical spill, with the EPA in September.
- In conjunction with the University of New Hampshire, the state will administer a railcar investigation class beginning 2015.

Have fire and other emergency management personnel in local and tribal jurisdictions along crude oil rail corridors received specific training on the response to and management of a rail incident involving large amounts of crude shale oil?

- YES
  - Local firefighters have received hazmat training for railway incidents, especially in Southeastern New Hampshire.

Has training been provided by or coordinated with rail carriers operating in your state?

- NO
  - All of the preparedness activities are state-driven hazmat and do not involve the rail companies.
  - Pan Am has promised to provide an old tank car for training at the state fire academy.

Do you have any specific training needs/concerns?

- YES
  - The state's biggest challenge is a lack of funding. It is difficult to send large groups of people to Pueblo, even when the rail carriers (Pan Am) pay for those trainings, because the state must backfill positions while trainees travel to Pueblo, CO, costing the state enormous amounts in overtime and preventing adequate numbers to travel and train together.
  - New Hampshire specifically requested additional training resources specific to shale crude in the coming years; FEMA NPAD promised to provide a list of courses the DHS Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) offers on crude by rail incidents.

6. **Do you know of any local jurisdictions located along crude oil rail corridors that have conducted exercises focused on rail incidents involving crude shale oil?**

   - YES
     - The city of Dover (5th largest city in the state) conducted an exercise, which simulated a railway incident involving a crude oil spill over a major river.
     - An ammonia spill functional exercise was conducted in September 2014 that further stressed hazmat incident response capabilities

In the past 12 months?

- YES

Are any currently being planned?

- YES – State officials responsible for conducting exercises are in the process of developing a three year exercise series for railway preparedness, and there is a functional rail exercise scheduled for 2016.

Have rail carriers or other industry representatives participated in these exercises?

- NO

Did any of these efforts incorporate the whole community (Federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector)?

- NO

Were the exercises conducted as tabletops or full-scale exercises?

- Full-Scale Exercises

Do you have any specific exercise needs/concerns?

- NO

7. **Has the routing information about crude oil trains being provided to your State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), required by the FRA under an emergency order issued earlier this year, been helpful in terms of better understanding the risk in your state? And, has this information been provided to local communities along the rail lines?**
   - It has been difficult to obtain information about the contents of railcars that travel through the state because the rail companies are worried it will be shared publicly and published in newspapers through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), a potential security threat. The issue is currently being litigated and New Hampshire expects the ruling to disallow public requests for this information. Rail companies will be open to sharing with this guarantee. The state already has a system in place to distribute railcar information.
   - The State of New Hampshire does not think that the DOT Emergency Order requiring the rail company to notify the state if it is transporting more than one million gallons of shale crude oil is effective. The order requires rail carriers to disclose when shipments of over 1 million gallons are traversing the state, however, New Hampshire feels that even a spill under 1 million gallons would prove extremely problematic and would like to know anytime a "high hazard" train crosses rail lines.

8. **Have the railroads operating in your state (or communities), been actively engaged with the public safety and emergency response agencies in developing plans, providing training, and other preparedness activities?**

   - YES
     - Offered funding for local first responders to attend classes at SERTC in Pueblo, but backfilling position and overtime costs are currently prohibiting this.

Shale Crude Oil Dialogue – Notes Template
~~NOT FOR DISTRUBTION – INTERNAL USE ONLY~~

State: Mississippi
Date of Call: December 17, 2014
Region: IV
FPC: W. Montague "Q" Winfield
SAA: Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
Participating Agencies:

Federal	State
FEMA (HQ and Regional)	Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
DOT	Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
EPA (HQ and Regional)	Mississippi Fusion Center
DHS IP	
DOE	
USCG (HQ and Regional)	

1. **What planning and preparedness actions have you taken to address incidents involving trains transporting crude oil or other hazardous materials?**

- DEQ
  - Sent employees to Security and Emergency Response Training Center (SERTC) in Pueblo, CO for Crude by Rail (CBR) Emergency Response Course
- Responded to a crude oil spill in New Augusta, MS (50,000 gallons) on January 31, 2014
  - Spill was minor but a learning opportunity for DEQ and MEMA

Have you convened a working group, task force, or similar group?

- NO

Does the group include representatives from multiple state, local and tribal governments?

- No group assembled

Does the group include participants from rail carriers operating in your state?

- No group assembled

What products has the group produced, e.g., gap analyses or reports?

- No group assembled

2. **Does your State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) include an annex for oil?**

- YES
  - DEQ has coordinated development of this

Has the plan been updated to address shale crude oil transport by rail?

- YES

Has the plan been coordinated with:
- *Freight rail carriers operating in your jurisdiction?*
  YES
- *Regional Response Team? (RRT)*
  NO

- *State Emergency Response Commission? (SERC)*
  YES
- *If applicable, Tribal Emergency Response Committees? (TERCs)*
  NO

3. **Are there communities in your state more at-risk for crude oil incidents?**

- YES
  - MS has done studies before for potential hazmat spills; the at-risk communities are the same for a CBR spill

Do at-risk local jurisdictions in your state have freight railroad incident annexes or transportation annexes that specifically address shale crude oil transport?

- NO – Only included in state comprehensive plan

Do you have any specific planning needs/concerns?

- NO

4. **Have you, or others in your state, been involved with regional EPA pollution response planning efforts, including the Area Contingency Plan (ACP) and/or Geographic Response Plan (GRP)?**

- ACP: YES
  - ACP with USCG participation for coastal spills
  - Seeking NOAA participation for coastal imagery technology
- GRP: In progress
  - Incident Action Plan (IAP) has been mocked-up; GRP has gone through multiple drafts so far
  - Canadian National has been helpful in providing their resources and existing HAZMAT plans
  - DEQ has conducted vulnerability assessments

Do you feel that your plans are sufficiently coordinated with the ACP and/or GRP to address spills, including crude oil transportation by rail?

- YES
  - Worked with railroads after New Augusta spill to combine ACP and lessons learned from New Augusta in a new crude by rail plan
  - Identified threats to drinking water sources, population centers, critical ecosystems

Does your GRP cover crude oil spills from other modes of transit, pipelines, or bulk storage facilities?

- YES

5. **Do you know of any local training efforts focused on the response to a rail incident involving crude shale oil?**

- NO
  - No shale oil specific exercises; comprehensive plans for all hazards have been exercised and HAZMAT-specific rail exercises have been performed
  - In general, shortfall in funding for personal protective equipment (PPE) hinders simulation during exercises

Have fire and other emergency management personnel in local and tribal jurisdictions along crude oil rail corridors received specific training on the response to and management of a rail incident involving large amounts of crude shale oil?

- YES. MS has sent people to SERTC.

Has training been provided by or coordinated with rail carriers operating in your state?

- YES. Canadian National has sponsored SERTC training.

Do you have any specific training needs/concerns?

- YES – Because there are a limited number of spots in the SERTC trainings in Pueblo and because attendance requires railroad sponsorship, MS has had trouble sending people due to a shortage of spots at the center. Possible solution to this is obtaining Federal funding for training at the Mississippi Fire Academy. The Academy has capacity for Pueblo-style training there. Mississippi has 13,000 firefighters (mostly volunteer force) and it would be hard to expect a majority to attend training in Pueblo. Another solution is to hold Pueblo-style training around the state. CSX has expressed a willingness to contribute to this effort. Training could be focused on the specifics of the local jurisdiction.

6. **Do you know of any local jurisdictions located along crude oil rail corridors that have conducted exercises focused on rail incidents involving crude shale oil?**

- MEMA
    - NO. Has not led shale crude-specific exercises but has helped local jurisdictions set up their own
    - Hattiesburg conducted train derailment exercise
    - Other locals have done HAZMAT exercises

In the past 12 months?

- YES - Hattiesburg

Are any currently being planned?

- Yes – For 2015

Have rail carriers or other industry representatives participated in these exercises?

- Yes – In Particular, Canadian National

Did any of these efforts incorporate the whole community (Federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector)?

- NO

Were the exercises conducted as tabletops or full-scale exercises?

- Full scale

Do you have any specific exercise needs/concerns?

- YES – More funding needed for PPE for better simulation during exercises

7. **Has the routing information about crude oil trains being provided to your State Emergency Response Commission (SERC), required by the FRA under an emergency order issued earlier this year, been helpful in terms of better understanding the risk in your state? And, has this information been provided to local communities along the rail lines?**

- YES
    - The system is working properly. Info could get to our communications section faster, but overall the system works.

8. **Have the railroads operating in your state (or communities), been actively engaged with the public safety and emergency response agencies in developing plans, providing training, and other preparedness activities?**
   - YES
     - Canadian Northern has shared all of their plans and resources
     - CSX has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for information sharing in the event of a spill

Shale Crude Oil Dialogue – Maine – November 21, 2014
~~**NOT FOR DISTRUBTION – INTERNAL USE ONLY**~~

State: Maine
Date of Call: November 21, 2014
Region: I
FPC: Russ Webster
SAA: Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

1. **What planning and preparedness actions have you taken to address incidents involving trains transporting crude oil or other hazardous materials?**
    - Maine has general experience dealing with shale crude oil transport through various modes. Developed experience preparing for crude oil spills from pipeline and marine transport vessels since the 1940s. There has been an increase in rail transport recently to a nearby refinery in New Brunswick, Canada

Have you convened a working group, task force, or similar group?

- YES
    - Formed Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Rail Response Working Group following a March 2013 derailment of 13 cars. Derailment didn’t cause a spill, but occurred next to a river and exposed the risk of a spill to drinking water sources. Officials cited the 2014 Elk River, WV chemical spill as a motivator driving the state’s development of plans for controlling spills of all chemicals near drinking water supplies; Maine used rivers and lakes for a high percentage of their drinking water

Does the group include representatives from multiple state, local and tribal governments?

- Yes – STATE
    - Work group includes members from Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

Does the group include participants from rail carriers operating in your state?

- YES
    - Work group is a partnership between DEP, MEMA, and rail carriers

What products has the group produced, e.g., gap analyses or reports?

- Inland Environmental Vulnerability Maps: Based off similar concept Maine has done to prepare for a coastal oil spill. Identified sensitive areas; will eventually develop geographic response plans with staging areas and river booming strategies. Equipment procurement: pumps and other clean up supplies obtained through MEMA
- MEMA Commodity Flow Study: Study to identify rail traffic entering/leaving Maine with under 1,000,000 gallons (below required reporting level). Identified population centers, schools, major employers, large nursing homes, and other vulnerabilities proximate to rail lines carrying shale crude oil
- Other MEMA Investments: Used Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants to fund training for first responders. Created an operations program for crude oil spill clean up; hired outside consultants to create the plan

2. **Does your State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) include an annex for oil?**
    - IN PROGRESS: MEMA currently rewriting state EOP to include ESF #10 issues like a shale crude oil spill on Maine railways

Has the plan been updated to address shale crude oil transport by rail?

- IN PROGRESS, see above

Has the plan been coordinated with:
- *Freight rail carriers operating in your jurisdiction?*
  - NO; but the plan is to involve them
- *Regional Response Team? (RRT)*
  - NO
- *State Emergency Response Commission? (SERC)*
  - NO
- *If applicable, Tribal Emergency Response Committees? (TERCs)*
  - NO; not yet, but will as needed

3. **Are there communities in your state more at-risk for crude oil incidents?**

- YES
  - Identified by MEMA Commodity Flow Study and Inland Environmental Vulnerability Maps

Do at-risk local jurisdictions in your state have freight railroad incident annexes or transportation annexes that specifically address shale crude oil transport?

- Question not asked

Do you have any specific planning needs/concerns?

- Question not asked

4. **Have you, or others in your state, been involved with regional EPA pollution response planning efforts, including the Area Contingency Plan (ACP) and/or Geographic Response Plan (GRP)?**

- ACP
  - Exists only for coastal spill events and marine shale crude accidents
  - Vulnerability maps were created as an inland stopgap until ACP is created
- GRP
  - No GRPs for inland areas yet

Do you feel that your plans are sufficiently coordinated with the ACP and/or GCP to address spills, including crude oil transportation by rail?

- Question not asked

Does your GRP cover crude oil spills from other modes of transit, pipelines, or bulk storage facilities?

- Question not asked

5. **Do you know of any local training efforts focused on the response to a rail incident involving crude shale oil?**

- YES
  - Rail carriers have provided basic-level awareness training for responders; see rail carriers subsection for greater detail. Also, regional New England-wide training has been coordinated through the Massachusetts Fire Academy for joint training

Have fire and other emergency management personnel in local and tribal jurisdictions along crude oil rail corridors received specific training on the response to and management of a rail incident involving large amounts of crude shale oil?

- NO
  - We engage with tribes at their request; currently they have not requested training

Has training been provided by or coordinated with rail carriers operating in your state?

- YES
  - New Brunswick Southern Rail Company's Operation Lifesaver: Cooperative effort with Canadian rail associations for first responder training. Pan Am Railways attends local planning events and have offered training to local fire departments

Do you have any specific training needs/concerns?

- YES
  - MEMA lacks the ability to send a task force to the Security and Emergency Response Training Center (SERTC) in Pueblo, CO, the best crude by rail incident training offered. Also lack training props for sufficient training in Maine to run train-the-trainer. MEMA requested to have the Pueblo training come to Maine.

6. **Do you know of any local jurisdictions located along crude oil rail corridors that have conducted exercises focused on rail incidents involving crude shale oil?**

In the past 12 months?

- YES
  - 1) Dover, NH Tabletop Exercise (TTX): Simulated ethanol and petroleum spill on ME/NH border to exercise coordination of railroad, fire, and state officials; good general training for shale crude; 2) Amtrak TTX: Not shale crude scenario; 3) September 2014 TTX with Pan Am, New Brunswick South: Exercised train derailment and coordination between ME, Canadian New Brunswick province

Are any currently being planned?

- YES
  - Spring 2015 TTX: Shale crude spill; emphasis on teaching completion of site safety operations plan

Have rail carriers or other industry representatives participated in these exercises?

- YES; see above

Did any of these efforts incorporate the whole community (Federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector)?

- Question not asked

Were the exercises conducted as tabletops or full-scale exercises?

- Tabletops

Do you have any specific exercise needs/concerns?

- No

Upcoming Calls

State	Date	Time	Phone Number and Pin		
Illinois	Tuesday January 6, 2015	3:00 PM EST	(b)(6)	Pin	(b)(6)
California	Tuesday January 6, 2015	4:00 PM EST		Pin	
Delaware	Wednesday January 7, 2015	1:30 PM EST		Pin	
Nevada	Wednesday January 7, 2015	4:00 PM EST		Pin	
Pennsylvania	Thursday January 8, 2015	2:00 PM EST		Pin	
Maryland	Friday January 9, 2015	1:00 PM EST		Pin	
North Carolina	Friday January 9, 2015	2:00 PM EST		Pin	
Kentucky	Monday January 12, 2015	3:00 PM EST		Pin	
Massachusetts	Tuesday January 13, 2015	10:30 AM EST		Pin	

Completed Calls

State	Date	Time	Phone Number and Pin
Maine	Friday November 21, 2014	9:00 AM EST	(b)(6) Pin (b)(6)
Mississippi	Wednesday December 17, 2014	3:00 PM EST	Pin
New Hampshire	Tuesday December 30, 2014	1:00 PM EST	Pin

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:50:51 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA clips for Thursday, 8-25-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-25-16.docx

3 (includes a comment in the analysis)

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 11:00 AM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>;(b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>;(b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>(b)(6) @state.sd.us (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>;(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov' (b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov>; Wernisch, Phil <Phil.Wernisch@fema.dhs.gov>; Coley, Robert <Robert.Coley@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;(b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>;(b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Bonza, Dale <Dale.Bonza@fema.dhs.gov>; Ruiz, Benigno <benigno.ruiz@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; Sheppard, Helen <Helen.Sheppard@fema.dhs.gov>; Jackson jr, Jesse <Jesse.JacksonJr@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; Lyman, AJ <aaron.lyman@fema.dhs.gov>; Green, Daniel <daniel.green3@fema.dhs.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephens, Holly <Holly.Stephens@fema.dhs.gov>; Castel, Joseph-Richard <Joseph-Richard.Castel@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA clips for Thursday, 8-25-16

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.

- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe's stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. ("Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent.") Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

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Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve
(Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here's a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California's central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire's Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

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IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

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MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana's largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire's perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

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UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

"The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations," Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

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WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

"That everybody stood up for what's right, stood up for what's ours, and that we were all a part of it."

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: "Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children." That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn’t consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

“The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites,” Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. “The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline.”

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

“The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux,” said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company’s attorney, William Leone, told the court, “This is not a cowboy process.”

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday's hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday's hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

"We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters," she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group’s arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

“Our message remains the same,” he said. “We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public.”

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

“A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

"Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court," Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe's historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

"It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them," Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary
The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News
Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary
A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.
Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency’s operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.
Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.
“Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah,” said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job.”

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016

SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):

11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that’s now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It’s burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are "not good in the near future" because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.
- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe's stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. ("Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent.") Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve
(Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here’s a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California’s central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire’s Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana's largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire's perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

"The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations," Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

—

WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe’s cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company’s assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small

construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see

that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn’t consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

“The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites,” Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. “The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline.”

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

“The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux,” said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company’s attorney, William Leone, told the court, “This is not a cowboy process.”

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday’s hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can’t begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn’t immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday’s hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

“We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters,” she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group’s arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

“Our message remains the same,” he said. “We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public.”

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

“A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million,” the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

“Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court,” Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe’s historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

“It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them,” Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary
The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary

A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.

Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency's operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.

Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.

"Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah," said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job."

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016

SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):

11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are “not good in the near future” because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 11:15:29 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016
INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.
The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department,

Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us> (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us> (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>; (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform’s glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

“We don't believe that Zika is the only cause,” Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, “we are not seeing a big increase.”

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

“It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on,” said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

“The fact is we don’t have any idea how many cases there were,” said Maierovitch, meaning it’s possible Brazil’s birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don’t have symptoms and don’t realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress’s failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

“We’ll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months,” he said. “That’s the only way we’ll know whether we’ve dodged a bullet.”

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 15:54:35 +0000
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

“We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc,” said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov> (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>; (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; '(b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper

reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more

than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that

it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

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Kara Kenney

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, “we are not seeing a big increase.”

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika’s potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

“It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on,” said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

“The fact is we don’t have any idea how many cases there were,” said Maierovitch, meaning it’s possible Brazil’s birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don’t have symptoms and don’t realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress’s failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

“We’ll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months,” he said. “That’s the only way we’ll know whether we’ve dodged a bullet.”

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:53:26 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FYSA - Quick Update On The Protests Near Standing Rock

10

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2016 3:23 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>; R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: R8 External Affairs <R8PublicAffairs@fema.dhs.gov>; Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FYSA - Quick Update On The Protests Near Standing Rock

For your situational awareness:

This could be a contentious weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock area.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written letters of support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this always happens before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline.
- The Governor of ND has activated (although not a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling. Guard members will assist in providing security at traffic checkpoints on the state highway leading to the protest site, which is being reopened to traffic this afternoon.
- There are ongoing reports of violence from both sides.
- The Chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

A sampling of article links below:

North Dakota National Guard Deployed: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Calls for Peace in Advance of DAPL Court Decision – Native News http://nativenewsonline.net/currents/north-dakota-national-guard-deployed-standing-rock-sioux-tribe-calls-peace-advance-dapl-court-decision/

North Dakota National Guard to provide backup to law enforcement – Bismarck Tribune
http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/north-dakota-national-guard-to-provide-backup-to-law-enforcement/article_57090461-12d0-5376-bf6b-041a4511ce4f.html

N.D. governor asks for National Guard assistance in pipeline protest – Fargo Forum
http://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/4110814-north-dakota-governor-asks-national-guard-assistance-pipeline-protest

From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 17:09:48 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Cc: Red Feather, Glenda
Subject: FW: Include this as well?

Oops, we just found one more for today.

Phil Wernisch
FEMA External Affairs
DR-4237-OST
202-826-3160

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: Wednesday, August 17, 2016 3:05 PM
To: Wernisch, Phil <Phil.Wernisch@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Include this as well?

Tribal officials arrested at pipeline protest

Resistance builds against startup of Dakota Access Pipeline
By Talli Nauman Aug. 17,2016
Native Sun News Health & Environment Editor

Doctor Sarah Jumping Eagle was one of several pipeline resisters arrested Aug. 12 with Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chair David Archambault II and tribal council member Dana Wasinzi in an action to prevent construction of the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline. COURTESY/Shauna M. Long CANNON BALL, N. D. — After Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chair David Archambault II, tribal council member Dana Wasinzi and several other Dakota Access Pipeline resisters got arrested during a direct action to impede the construction startup on the project here, they set Aug. 20 for another action: A Missouri River water crossing to raise support for the cause.

The actions are among a number leading up to an Aug. 24 hearing on the tribe’s lawsuit to prevent the construction and to strike down the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers’ permits for the private frack oil line to cross 1851 and 1868 Ft. Laramie Treaty territory.

“ALL BOATS ON DECK!!!!” says the announcement of the coming action. “The Camp of the Sacred Stones calls ALL canoeists, kayaktivists, paddlers, and water warriors to bring their boats and courage and join us on the Missouri River on Saturday, Aug. 20,” it says. “Please stand with us on the front lines! This pipeline threatens the longest river on Turtle Island and the drinking water of many millions of people.”

The physical base for the actions, which have attracted hundreds of supporters and celebrity backers, such as Shailene Woodley, from throughout the Oceti Sakowin and the world, is the Camp of the Sacred Stones, a tipi encampment for prayer gatherings erected with crowdfunding near the place where the pipeline would cross the Oahe Reservoir on the Missouri River.

“The threats this pipeline poses to the environment, public health, and tribal and human rights are strikingly similar to those posed by the Keystone XL,” organizers said on Aug. 7, as youth relay runners finished a nearly 2,000-mile journey from here to the White House to raise awareness about DAPL.

The Administration denied a permit to TransCanada Corp. for the Keystone XL tar-sands crude pipeline through Lakota Territory earlier this year, after indigenous and land-based people, as well as climate justice activists, rallied for months against it.

The Dakota Access (or Bakken) Pipeline project is similar in size to the failed Keystone XL project.

Since April 1, campers have been marshaling to defend against the Dakota Access Pipeline, or DAPL, which would carry frack oil from the Bakken Formation centered at the Mandan Hidatsa & Arikara Nation on the Ft. Berthold Indian Reservation, through North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa to Illinois.

There it would meet a nearly finished line called the Energy Transfer Crude Oil Pipeline that would run to the Texas refineries and export facilities on the Gulf of Mexico.

On Aug. 12 pipeline resisters were met by state highway patrol, city police and sheriff’s officers in a scuffle that led to several arrests and was defused when the official in charge of the armed patrol decided to retire it to avoid escalation of tension, according to eyewitnesses. Archambault was released on bond.

Houston-based Energy Transfer Partners and Phillips 66 recently gained the permits to begin building the proposed 1,172-mile DAPL across the Great Plains, the Missouri River, tributaries and wetlands in its watershed.

Then in a significant turn of events on Aug. 2, the Canadian company Enbridge Inc. announced that it is going in on the project instead of pursuing its Sandpiper and its Line 3 Replacement projects to move tar-sands crude to refineries and export facilities.

That means the line could carry, not only light crude from the Bakken, but also heavy tar-sands crude from Alberta Province in Canada, the home of Enbridge.

Enbridge is responsible for the 6-year-old Kalamazoo River tar-sands crude oil pipeline spill in Michigan, which is the worst inland oil spill in U.S. history and remains to be cleaned up to EPA's satisfaction.

A partner in the Enbridge Sandpiper and Line 3 Replacement projects, Marathon Petroleum Corp. is also joining in the Dakota Access Pipeline investment, after the former projects met with strident and sustained grassroots resistance.

Cheyenne River Sioux tribal member and pipeline resister Joye Braun of Indigenous Environmental Network said she is "thrilled Enbridge is pulling away from Sandpiper at the moment. Not so happy that the company is putting its resources into Dakota Access."

Indigenous and conservation groups sued the U.S. State Department in 2014 for allowing Enbridge to build a tar-sands crude line across the U.S. border from Canada without an environmental review. The plaintiffs were White Earth Nation, Honor the Earth, Indigenous Environmental Network, Minnesota Conservation Foundation, MN350, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, and National Wildlife Federation.

Enbridge "fails to see the death warrant of fossil fuels or that for-profit companies have no right to trample on treaty territory or ignore tribal nations who repeatedly say 'no' to them," Braun said.

Since Standing Rock's lawsuit, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe announced that it is filing a legal complaint against the Army Corps of Engineers for the DAPL permits, too. Tribal Chair Harold Frazier visited the spirit camp in a show of support. The Yankton Sioux Tribal Council passed a resolution to file suit as well.

An Aug. 11, Crow Creek Sioux tribal resolution offers the tribe's "full support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline." It also calls on the U.S. Interior Department to exercise its trust responsibility to ensure the federal government blocks the permitting.

Crow Creek Tribal Chair Brandon J. Sazue Sr. traveled to Standing Rock to express his tribe's position: "We will stand with you my relatives. Whether we are Native, White, African American, etc., our water is our most precious resource, along with our children. We must all stand together in this most urgent of times. This is not about race, but about the human race! What we do today will make a difference tomorrow! If there was ever a time to stand united, that time is now!"

On Aug. 12, Rosebud Sioux Tribal President William Kimble sent a letter extending support for Standing Rock's position, agreeing to "stand in strong opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline."

The letter states: “The pipeline could potentially damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious and cultural significance as it crosses ancestral lands of the Great Sioux Nation,” making it an “atrocious act.”

According to the Lakota Law Project Report, from 2006 to 2014, North Dakota’s oil industry caused 8,690 reported incidents of oil and brine spills. “The completion of Dakota Access will surely increase this number to record-high levels,” it said.

“We keep praying for the water and land,” said Ladonna Brave Bull Allard, landowner and director of the spirit camp. “We are searching for every avenue through prayer to defeat this Black Snake. Please remember water is life.”

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
Emergency Liasion
605-440-0993
Glenda.redfeather@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Sep 2016 16:55:28 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2016 9:44:24 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy
Subject: FW: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

Fysa

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2016 8:59:13 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

Thanks Aaron.

I will share that with Matt to see if we can avoid the issue with F1.

Brian

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2016 3:58 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian <brian.cavanaugh@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

Sorry. Spoke with RA Dragani and Stacie and then had to dart back into a meeting. The RA has not identified any Regional staffer who has communicated that to Dir. Wilz. There may have been an ESF on an internal call have an out-of-turn conversation with Wilz, but Nancy has been clear with Wilz from the start that it is the Governor's prerogative to make a request to the President if he wants to do so.

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2016 3:42 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J <Aaron.Davis@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

Hey guys,

Any update here? We can try and avoid this coming up during the call with F1 - but we would need to try and explain this at the staff level. Or we can allow F1 to address the Senator's concerns on the call.

Please advise.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2016 3:10:00 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Cavanaugh, Brian
Subject: FW: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2016 3:04:22 PM

To: Anicich, Adam; Davis, Aaron J
Subject: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

Adam and Aaron,

Senator Hoeven's Chief of Staff Ryan Bernstein was on a call with Greg Wilz just a few moments ago. On this call, Greg Wilz contradicted information FEMA had been sharing with SAC and Senator Hoeven's staff. When asked if he had been in touch with FEMA regarding an EM request, Director Wilz said something to the effect of, no we have not been working together on this and he had been advised by Region 8 not to put FEMA in between the State and the Tribes.

This is an important note as we head into the call this afternoon as we had been stating that we had not been asked about a potential EM by ND directly.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director, External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445 - 5455

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:51:12 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Judge postpones pipeline decision

4

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 3:23 PM
To: R8 External Affairs <R8PublicAffairs@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Judge postpones pipeline decision

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction

- JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune
Jessica Holdman
- 1 hr ago

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

"A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

“Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court,” Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe’s historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

“It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them,” Tsosie said.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 8 Jan 2015 15:27:53 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: FW: Keystone XL Pipeline Legislation in First Week of 114th Congress

As you are all aware the XL pipeline is a very big deal with the tribes, particularly in ND and SD.

From: NCAI - National Congress of American Indians [mailto:ncai@ncai.org]
Sent: Monday, January 05, 2015 2:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Keystone XL Pipeline Legislation in First Week of 114th Congress

<http://r20.rs6.net/on.jsp?ca=7761103d-ccff-45a7-b2aa-3b1216f463e2&a=1101440258860&d=1119671561675&r=3&o=http://ui.constantcontact.com/images/p1x1.gif&c=84d37b00-635c-11e3-a085-d4ae528e486a&ch=84da0ab0-635c-11e3-a085-d4ae528e486a>

New NCAI Header
<http://ih.constantcontact.com/fs055/1101440258860/img/831.jpg>

Keystone XL Pipeline Legislation in First Week of 114th Congress

On Tuesday, January 6th, both the Senate and the House of Representatives will convene for the start of the 114th Congress. Leadership in both the House and the Senate has indicated that action on the Keystone XL Pipeline will be a top priority in the new Congress.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:52:16 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: LaDuke editorial re pipeline

7

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 10:56 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: LaDuke editorial re pipeline

From Ecowatch.com… not included in the clips, but I thought worth having. Winona LaDuke ran for vice-president on a ticket with Ralph Nader long ago…

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

The Dakota Access Pipeline: What Would Sitting Bull Do?
By Winona LaDuke

It's 2016 and the weight of American corporate interests has come to the Missouri River, the Mother River. This time, instead of the Seventh Cavalry or the Indian police dispatched to assassinate Sitting Bull, it is Enbridge and Dakota Access Pipeline.

In mid-August, Standing Rock Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was arrested by state police, along with 27 others, for opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline. In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple called for more police support.

Every major pipeline project in North America must cross indigenous lands, Indian Country. That is a problem.

The road west of Fargo is rarely taken. In fact, most Americans just fly over North Dakota, never seeing it.

Let me take you there.

My head clears as I drive. My destination is the homeland of the Hunkpapa Oceti, Standing Rock Reservation. It is early evening, the moon full. If you close your eyes, you can remember the 50 million buffalo—the single largest migratory herd in the world. The pounding of their hooves would vibrate the Earth, make the grass grow.

There were once 250 species of grass. Today the buffalo are gone, replaced by 28 million cattle, which require grain, water and hay. Many of the fields are now in a single GMO crop, full of so many pesticides that the monarch butterflies are dying off. But in my memory, the old world remains.

If you drive long enough, you come to the Missouri River.

Called Mnisose, a great swirling river, by the Lakota, she is a force to be reckoned with. She is breathtaking. "The Missouri River has a fixed place in the history and mythology" of the Lakota and other Indigenous nations of the Northern Plains, author Dakota Goodhouse would explain.

In the time before Sitting Bull, the Missouri River was the epicenter of northern agriculture, the river bed so fertile. The territory was known as the fertile crescent of North America. That was then, before the treaties that reduced the Lakota land base. But the Missouri remained in the treaty—the last treaty of 1868 used the Missouri as a boundary.

Then came the theft of land by the U.S. government and the taking of the Black Hills in 1877, in part as retaliation against Sitting Bull's victory at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. In a time prior to Black Lives Matter or Native Lives Matter, great leaders like Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were assassinated at the hands of police.

One truth: The Lakota people have survived much.

Forced into the reservation life, the Lakota attempted to stabilize their society, until the dams came. The 1944 Pick Sloan project flooded out the Missouri River tribes, taking the best bottom lands from the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, the Lakota and Dakota. More than 200,000 acres on the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations in South Dakota were flooded by the Oahe Dam itself, forcing not only relocation, but a loss of the Lakota world. The Garrison, Oahe and Fort Randall dams created a reservoir that eliminated 90 percent of timber and 75 percent of wildlife on the reservations.

That is how a people are made poor.

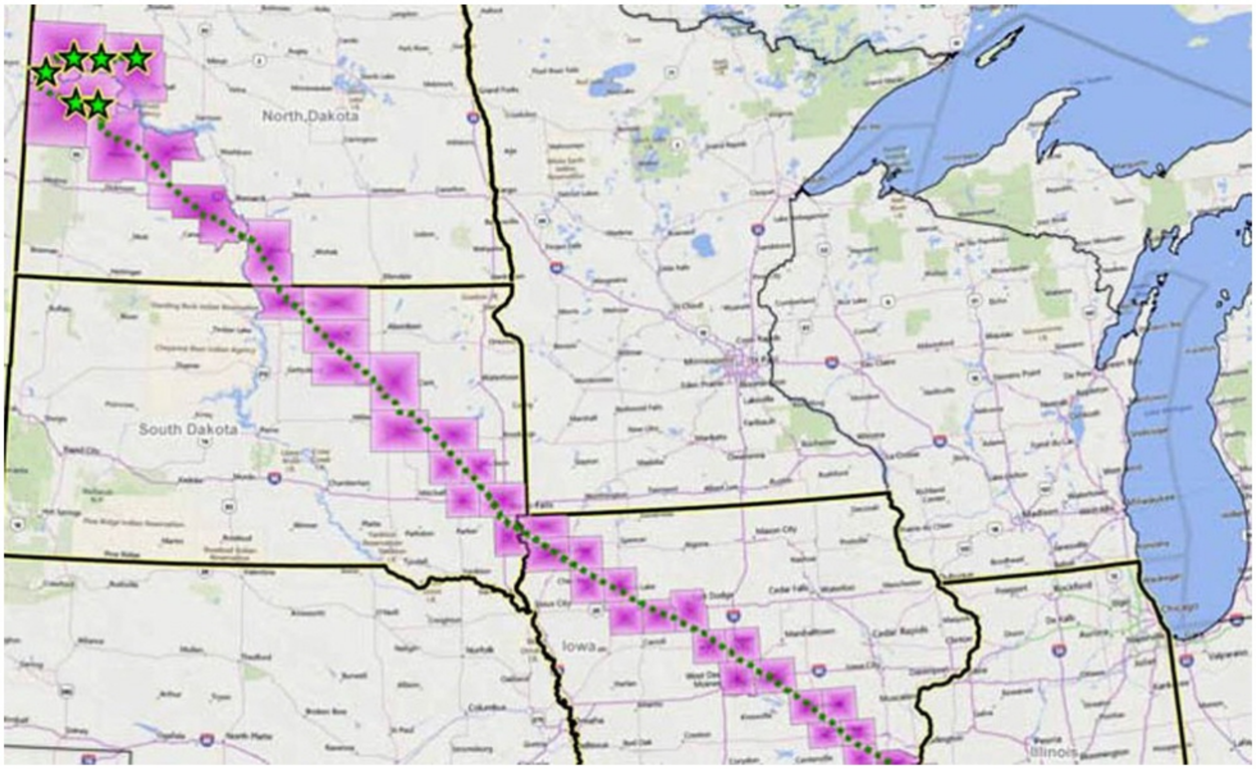
Today, well over two thirds of the population of Standing Rock is below the poverty level—and the land and Mother River are what remains, a constant, for the people. That is what is threatened today.

Enbridge and partners are preparing to drill through the riverbed. The pipeline has been permitted in sections from the west and from the east. The northern portion was moved away from the water supply of Bismarck, into the watershed of Standing Rock. That was unfortunate for the Lakota.

Despite Lakota legal and regulatory objections, the Dakota Access Pipeline construction began in May 2016. If finished it will snake through North and South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois, where it will link to a 774-mile pipeline to Nederland, Texas.

More than 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil will pass through the pipeline daily, along with 245,100 metric tons of carbon daily—enough carbon to combust the planet to oblivion.

The pipeline would span 200 water crossings and in North Dakota alone would pass through 33 historical and archeological sites. Enbridge just bought the Dakota Access pipeline, noting that the proposed Sandpiper route—Minnesota's 640,000 barrel per day Bakken line—is now three years behind schedule.



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The route of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

In late July, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe represented by Earthjustice, filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Standing Rock claims the project violates federal and treaty law. Standing Rock also filed an intervention at the United Nations, in coordination with the International Indian Treaty Council. As Chairman Archambault explained in a New York Times story:

> "The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.
>
> "The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites.
>
> "Without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes."

In Iowa where work on the pipeline is underway, three fires erupted causing heavy damage to equipment and an estimated $1 million in damages. Investigators suspect arson, according to Jasper County Sheriff John Halferty. In October 2015, three Iowa farmers sued Dakota Access LLC and the Iowa Utilities Board in an attempt to prevent the use of eminent domain on their properties to construct the pipeline.

The health of the Missouri River has been taken for granted.

Dammed in the Pick Sloan Dam projects, each project increases contamination and reduces her health. Today, the Missouri is the seventh most polluted river in the country. Agricultural run-off and now fracking have contaminated the river. My sister fished a gar out of the river, a giant prehistoric fish, only to find it covered with tumors.

Here's just one case: In a January 2015 spill, saltwater contamination from a massive pipeline spill reached the Missouri River. In the baffling way of state and federal agencies, North Dakota's Health Director David Glatt did not expect harm to wildlife or drinking water supplies because the water was diluted. The saying is: "The solution to pollution is dilution." That is convenient, but not true.

Blacktail Creek and the Little Muddy River were contaminated after nearly 3 million gallons of saltwater with elevated levels of chloride contamination. All was diluted. But then there was that gar fish with the tumors.

There are pipelines everywhere and fewer than 150 Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) pipeline inspectors in the whole country.

And now comes the risk from oil.

The pipeline companies generally discuss a 99 percent safety record, but studies have found that to be grossly inaccurate. A former Scientific American Editor, Trudy Bell, reports that PHMSA data from 2001 to 2011 suggest the average pipeline "has a 57% probability of experiencing a major leak, with consequences over the $l million range in a ten year period."

Not good odds.

At Standing Rock, as the number of protesters grew from 200 to 2000, state law enforcement decided to put up a safety checkpoint and rerouted traffic on Highway 1806 from Bismarck to Standing Rock, hoping to dissuade people from coming and put the squeeze on Standing Rock's Prairie Knights Casino, which is served by that road.

We just drove around; the scenic route is beautiful. And as supporters surge in numbers, the casino hotel and restaurants are full.

While North Dakota seeks to punish the Lakota, Chairman Archambault expresses concerns for everyone:

From the New York Times: "I am here to advise anyone that will listen that the Dakota Access Pipeline project is harmful. It will not be just harmful to my people but its intent and construction will harm the water in the Missouri River, which is one of the cleanest and safest river tributaries left in the Unit States. To poison the water is to poison the substance of life. Everything that moves must have water. How can we talk about and knowingly poison water?"

In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Dalrymple announced a state of emergency, making additional state resources available "to manage public safety risks associated with the ongoing protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline." He may have exceeded his scope of authority and violated civil and human rights to water.

Chairman Archambault's interpretation: "Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the

Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests."

There are a lot of people at Standing Rock today who remember their history and the long standoff at Wounded Knee in 1973. In fact, some of those in Standing Rock today were there in 1973 at Wounded Knee, a similar battle for dignity and the future of a nation.

I am not sure how badly North Dakota wants this pipeline. If there is to be a battle over the pipeline, it will be here. For a people with nothing else but a land and a river, I would not bet against them.

The great Lakota leader Mathew King once said, "The only thing sadder than an Indian who is not free, is an Indian who does not remember what it is to be free."

The Standing Rock protest camp represents that struggle for freedom and the future of a people. All of us. If I ask the question "What would Sitting Bull do?"—the answer is pretty clear. He would remind me what he said 150 years ago: "Let us put our minds together to see what kind of future we can make for our children."

The time for that is now.

This article was originally published by LA Progressive and reposted with permission from our media associate YES! Magazine.

From: Hunter, Cynthia
Sent: 14 Nov 2016 17:27:03 -0500
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Mints!

From: (b)(6) [mailto:(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2016 8:34 AM
To: Hunter, Cynthia <Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Mints!

Oh, he will!

From: Hunter, Cynthia [mailto:Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2016 8:45 AM
To: (b)(6)@nd.gov>
Subject: RE: Mints!

You're welcome. No worries. Next trip! Hope (b)(6) enjoys them J

From: (b)(6) [mailto (b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2016 7:40 AM
To: Hunter, Cynthia <Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Mints!

Thanks so much! Sorry I couldn't meet with you guys. I'm really swamped with protest stuff. They just won't go away. I think we need a snowstorm! I hope all is well with you!

(b)(6)
Public Information Officer
ND Department of Emergency Services
Office (b)(6)
Cell:
(b)(6)@nd.gov <mailto (b)(6)@nd.gov>

Follow us on Facebook - www.facebook.com/NDDES

Follow us on Twitter - www.twitter.com/NDDES <http://www.twitter.com/NDDES>

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:49:50 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: more stories on tribal pipeline protest

#1

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:20 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: more stories on tribal pipeline protest

Wanted to be sure you guys saw what Brian got in the ND clips this a.m.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down. When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast. Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: ND Dakota Access Pipeline Update

Judge Rules That Construction Can Proceed On Dakota Access Pipeline but three federal agenices have

---

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2016 2:55 PM
To: Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline Update

Hi Lee and Megan,

I'm not sure if you are already aware or not, but I just saw this in the news.

Please see link:

http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/09/493280504/judge-rules-that-construction-can-proceed-on-dakota-access-pipeline

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

"Teamwork makes the DREAM work."

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 19:07:11 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Subject: FW: North Dakota Patrol Asks Motorists To Avoid Pipeline Protest

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 6:37:15 PM
To: Hudson, Lamont; Floyd, Megan
Subject: North Dakota Patrol Asks Motorists To Avoid Pipeline Protest

FYSA

August 15, 2016 11:27 AM

North Dakota Patrol Asks Motorists To Avoid Pipeline Protest

The North Dakota Highway Patrol is asking motorists to avoid state Highway 1806 near Fort Rice because of an oil pipeline protest along the road.

Troopers say traffic delays are expected on the highway that runs through the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in southern North Dakota.

Opponents of the $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline are protesting near a construction zone just north of the reservation. Troopers say motorists should use an alternate route, such as state Highway 6.

Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson says about 250 protesters were at the site on Monday. He says there are about 30 troopers monitoring the protest.

- Pipeline
- News

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http://www.keloland.com/news/article/news/north-dakota-patrol-asks-motorists-to-avoid-pipeline-protest?cid=twitter_keloland

William Sadowski

Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC) &
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Fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
800-311-7021 or (303) 235-4847

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:51:54 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: pipeline clips du jour

6

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Friday, August 26, 2016 12:26 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: pipeline clips du jour

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who's Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment.

The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota's governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country’s pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

For breaking news and in-depth reporting, follow @NYTNational on Twitter.

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

-

Lauren Donovan

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

“They can’t build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe,” Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company’s decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any “Jane and John Doe” from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe's request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

"Everybody thought they had it (easement)," said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. "This is really important information."

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

"We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There's nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court's injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday's news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

"The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she'll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people," Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

"It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making," Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

"When this is done, if it's ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It's a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It's been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman's executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That's essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered
Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:
A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.

MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

⊗ mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 11:38:46 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Pipeline hearing postponed

Judge postpones oil pipeline hearing

Posted: Mon 5:30 PM, Aug 22, 2016 |
Updated: Mon 6:13 PM, Aug 22, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) – A federal judge has postponed a hearing on whether a preliminary injunction should be issued to prevent protesters in North Dakota from interfering with construction of an oil pipeline.

U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland moved the hearing scheduled on Thursday to Sept. 8. The judge also extended a restraining order against the protesters until the hearing.

The judge says in his order filed Monday that the two sides are ``strongly encouraged to meet and confer in good faith" to try and resolve the dispute out of court.

More than two dozen protesters have been arrested in the last month for interfering with the construction of the $3.8 billion Dakota Access Pipeline meant to carry North Dakota crude to Illinois.

Developers have agreed to halt construction until court matters are resolved

Phil Wernisch

FEMA External Affairs
DR-4237-OST
202-826-3160

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 9:32 AM
To: Wernisch, Phil <Phil.Wernisch@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Pipeline hearing postponed

http://www.kotatv.com/content/news/Judge-postpones-oil-pipeline-hearing-390965532.html

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
Emergency Liasion
605-440-0993
Glenda.redfeather@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 9 Dec 2014 22:52:00 +0000
To: Garcia, Carol;Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Pollution Report # (Final)2 Phillips 66 Pipeline Spill - Final
Attachments: @

FYI

-----Original Message-----
From: Vasco, MaryBeth
Sent: Tuesday, December 09, 2014 3:48 PM
To: R8 FEMA SA Team
Cc: Gafkjen, Jeffrey; Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Pollution Report # (Final)2 Phillips 66 Pipeline Spill - Final

For your situational awareness.

Mary Beth Vasco, JD
Tech Hazards Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
303-235-4902
303-243-4965 (BB)

-----Original Message-----

Referred to Another Agency/Component

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 20 Jan 2015 23:30:20 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Subject: Fw: Poplar Pipeline Release (MT) JAN-20 PM R8 SitRep
Attachments: @

From: McCool, Thomas
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 03:58 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Poplar Pipeline Release (MT) JAN-20 PM R8 SitRep

Megan, There are three tribes mentioned here….just wanted to make sure you have SA…

Tom McCool

Federal Coordinating Officer Cadre

Region VIII

Denver Federal Center

Mobile: 303.548.2493

Desk:303.231.1953

Thomas.mccool@fema.dhs.gov

Referred to Another Agency/Component

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 14:26:59 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: R8 RRT - pipeline security incidents/concerns

FYI – since it went to Nancy and for awareness because of the pipeline protests in ND.

From: Vasco, MaryBeth
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 8:19 AM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>; Deal, Timothy <Timothy.Deal@fema.dhs.gov>; Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>; Holmes, Lanney <Lanney.Holmes@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Jones, Susan K <Susan.Jones2@fema.dhs.gov>; FEMA-MOC-DENVER <FEMA-MOC-DENVER@fema.dhs.gov>; Feighert, Dan <Dan.Feighert@fema.dhs.gov>; Bakersky, Pete <Pete.Bakersky@fema.dhs.gov>; Gafkjen, Jeffrey <Jeffrey.Gafkjen@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: R8 RRT - pipeline security incidents/concerns

FYSA. Please let me know if you have any questions,

Mary Beth

Mary Beth Vasco, JD, MEP
Tech Hazards Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
303-235-4902 (desk)
303-243-4965 (cell)

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Page 1793

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Vasco, MaryBeth
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 10:18:30 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee;Holmes, Lanney
Cc: Floyd, Megan;Jones, Susan K;FEMA-MOC-DENVER;Feighert, Dan;Bakersky, Pete;Gafkjen, Jeffrey
Subject: FW: R8 RRT - pipeline security incidents/concerns

FYSA. Please let me know if you have any questions,

Mary Beth

Mary Beth Vasco, JD, MEP
Tech Hazards Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
303-235-4902 (desk)
303-243-4965 (cell)

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Page 1795

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Vasco, MaryBeth
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 11:48:13 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: R8 RRT - pipeline security incidents/concerns

More info

Mary Beth Vasco, JD, MEP
Tech Hazards Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
303-235-4902 (desk)
303-243-4965 (cell)

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Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 1798

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 16:13:01 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Short update on OST

KX has been facebook live at the news conferences. Maybe they will be out at the protest on the capital ground tomorrow.

https://www.facebook.com/kxnews/

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2016 1:53 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Short update on OST

This weekend could likely be a very continuous weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock area.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this is always happened before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline and the protest.
- **The Governor of ND has activated (although no a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling.**
- There are ongoing reports of violence on both sides,
- The chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:48:49 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

And then I forgot to you on the CC line.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:48 PM
To: Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Lee -

I meant to send this to you as well and forgot to put you on the CC line. I apologize and won't forget next time.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:20 PM
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)' <(b)(6)@hhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

Per our conversation, I wanted to let you know that I sent the below email to the FEMA National Tribal Advisor and Rocky Jones with IHS - this is nothing official and just from our media monitoring.

Thanks

Megan

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>(b)(6)@ihs.gov' (b)(6)@ihs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long

time.

- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.
- September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck, ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this year's Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Thanks

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:19:38 +0000
To: (b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM)'
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi (b)(6)

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Thanks

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Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

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Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>(b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 12:23:11 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Depalo, Lee;Moore, Jkevin;Fisher, Dennis;Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Maria
Subject: FW: Standing Rock pipeline protests
Importance: High

Hi Nancy,

Here are the answers from Sean Johnson regarding the questions you had after this morning's stand up meeting:

- Has the National Guard been asked to assist with this incident?

The National Guard is not deployed in support of response operations

- What is NDDES activation level in regards to the Standing Rock protests?

We remain at Daily Ops – Level IV.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

"Teamwork makes the DREAM work."

From: (b)(6). [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 10:03 AM
To: Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock pipeline protests

Answers below….

(b)(6)
Plans Officer
ND Department of Emergency Services
Division of Homeland Security

Work: (b)(6)
Direct:
Cell: (b)(6)

"Ordo ab chao"
(Out of chaos, comes order)

"Incrementalism is the death of innovation " - Nicholas Negroponte

---

From: Hudson, Lamont [mailto:Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 10:54 AM
To: (b)(6) @nd.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock pipeline protests

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks again for the solid information in short order.

I had a few questions asked about the Standing Rock pipeline protests:

- Has the National Guard been asked to assist with this incident?

The National Guard is not deployed in support of response operations

- What is NDDES activation level in regards to the Standing Rock protests?

We remain at Daily Ops – Level IV.

Thank you very much in advance for helping me fill in the blanks.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

“Teamwork makes the DREAM work.”

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 18:53:16 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Subject: FW: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe pipeline protest
Attachments: ND LNO Report Standing Rock Event.pptx
Importance: High

FYI

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 12:52 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>; Deal, Timothy <Timothy.Deal@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Moore, Jkevin <Jkevin.Moore@fema.dhs.gov>; Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>; Jones, Susan K <Susan.Jones2@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Maria <maria.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>; Rozelle, Jesse <Jesse.Rozelle@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe pipeline protest
Importance: High

Hi Nancy,

As discussed earlier, attached for your review is a collaborative effort on the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) report summarizing details of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe protests against the potential pipeline near Cannonball, North Dakota.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

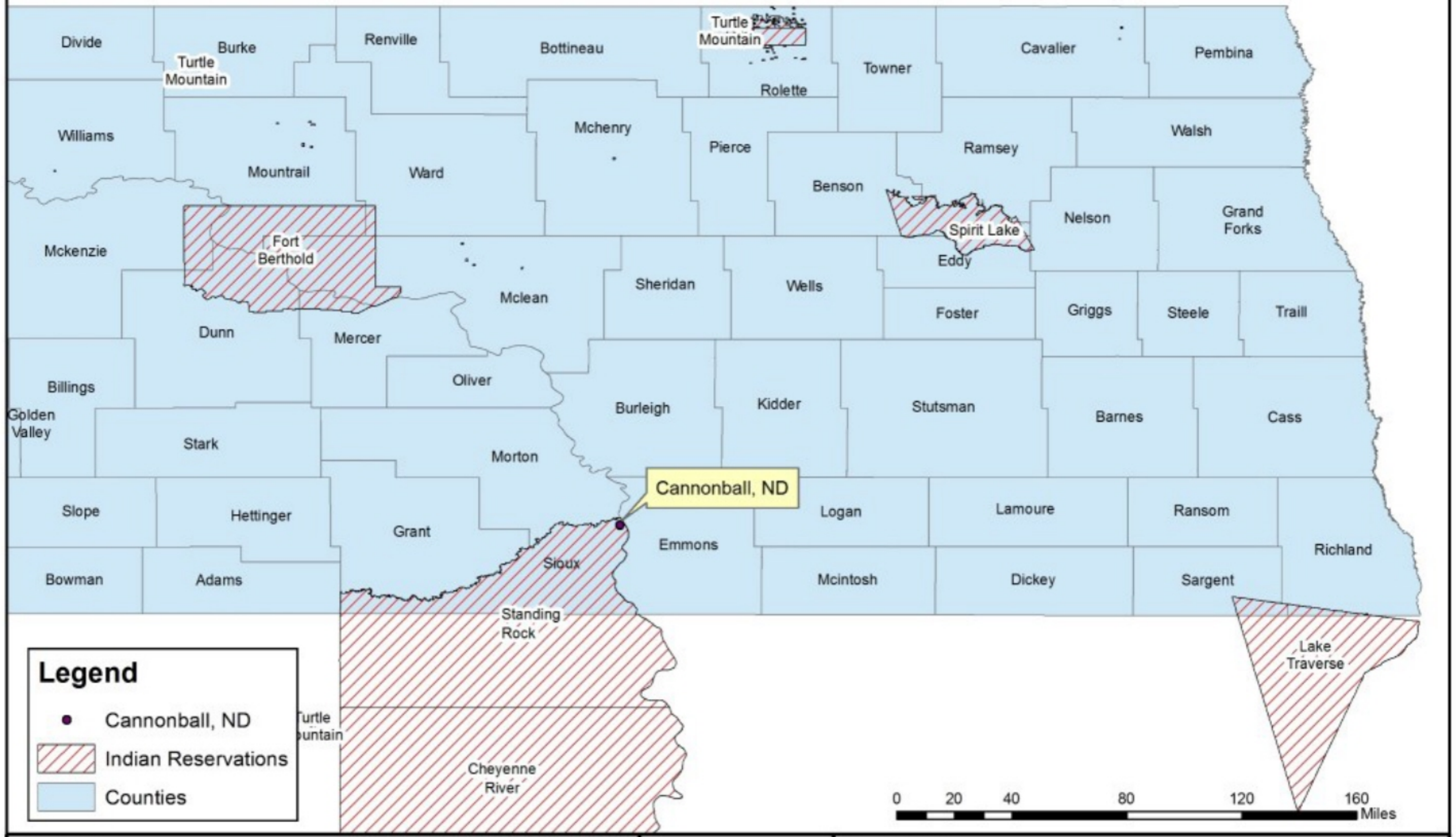
“Teamwork makes the DREAM work.”

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

State of North Dakota

3. Incident Period:
August 16, 2016


Divide
Burke
Turtle Mountain
Renville
Bottineau
Turtle Mountain
Rolette
Towner
Cavalier
Pembina
Williams
Mountrail
Ward
Mchenry
Pierce
Benson
Ramsey
Walsh
Nelson
Grand Forks
Spirit Lake
Eddy
Mckenzie
Fort Berthold
Mclean
Sheridan
Wells
Foster
Griggs
Steele
Traill
Dunn
Mercer
Oliver
Billings
Golden Valley
Burleigh
Kidder
Stutsman
Barnes
Cass
Stark
Morton
Cannonball, ND
Slope
Hettinger
Grant
Logan
Lamoure
Ransom
Richland
Emmons
Sioux
Bowman
Adams
Mcintosh
Dickey
Sargent
Standing Rock
Lake Traverse
Turtle Mountain
Cheyenne River
Legend
● Cannonball, ND
▨ Indian Reservations
🟦 Counties
0 20 40 80 120 160
Miles

4. Source(s):
FEMA

5. Prepared by:
Region VIII GIS

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 19:19:47 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock Tribe information (** FOR REVIEW**)

Hi Stacie –

Below are my changes. I think it is very important that we are truly being natural on this issues and the language below seemed a bit hostel.   Also, I think the DDs is the best way to go. If this goes all hands it turns it into a “thing”. It is not a “thing” and I don’t want to start rumors or people getting worried about general travel or anything else.

M.

Security NOTIFICATION – Situational Awareness for Standing Rock Tribe

IMPACT **FEMA REGION VIII ALL STAFF**

SCOPE **Travel to North Dakota Standing Rock Tribal area**

Good Afternoon Region VIII,

For your situational awareness, Sioux Tribal members are involved in a growing protest against the Dakota Pipeline Access construction near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota.
The North Dakota Highway Patrol is asking motorists to avoid state Highway 1806 near Fort Rice because of the pipeline protest along the road.
Troopers say traffic delays are expected on the highway that runs through the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in southern North Dakota. Troopers say motorists should use an alternate route, such as state Highway 6.
Highway Patrol (b)(6) says about 250 protesters were at the site on Monday. He says there are about 30 troopers monitoring the protest.
Currently, FEMA has no official presence in the Standing Rock Tribal area and we are monitoring the events. The protest has been peaceful, which is a priority of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Leadership. (b)(5)
(b)(5) While there are no know threats to any FEMA employees, any near future FEMA Region 8 official travel to this area should first be coordinated with the Region 8 External Affairs Office and senior leadership.
If you have any questions, please contact Chris Andersen at 303-235-4853.

Bunk

Charles H. Lawley II

Charles "BUNK" Lawley II
Region VIII MSD/IT
RVIII Mission Support Division Director (A)
Office: 303-235-4709
Cell: 303-204-0255
Fax: 303-235-4977
ESD/RVIII Help Desk at 303-235-4347
Charles.Lawley@fema.dhs.gov
Charles.Lawley@dhs.sgov.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:48:17 +0000
To: Depalo, Lee
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Lee -

I meant to send this to you as well and forgot to put you on the CC line. I apologize and won't forget next time.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:20 PM
To:(b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM)' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

Per our conversation, I wanted to let you know that I sent the below email to the FEMA National Tribal Advisor and Rocky Jones with IHS - this is nothing official and just from our media monitoring.

Thanks

Megan

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);
- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):
- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal

protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.

- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement.   .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.
- September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck, ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this year's Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Thanks

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:53:44 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: UPDATE: Fight continues at DAPL at Standing Rock

11

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Garcia, Carol
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2016 11:36 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; R8 External Affairs <R8PublicAffairs@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: UPDATE: Fight continues at DAPL at Standing Rock

Judge won't grant injunction to protect sacred sites in DAPL path

Monday, September 12, 2016

Indianz.Com. In Print.
http://www.indianz.com/News/2016/09/12/judge-wont-grant-injunction-to-protect-s.asp
The #NoDAPL fight continues even after the Obama administration put a crucial portion of the controversial project on hold.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe celebrated on Friday after learning that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers won't allow construction at a key site near the #NoDAPL resistance camps in North Dakota. But they quickly moved for an injunction in federal court to protect cultural sites and burial grounds that aren't covered by the administration's extraordinary action.

Their request, however, has been rejected. On Monday morning, Judge James Boasberg denied the tribes' motion, noting that the partnership behind the $3.8 billion Dakota Access Pipeline, a 1,172-mile crude oil infrastructure project, has agreed to hold off on construction in certain areas until this Friday.

But while the areas east of Highway 1806, which leads to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, and east of Lake Oahe along the Missouri River, remain important, they aren't the ones that the tribes and the #NoDAPL resisters have been concerned about. Dakota Access can still build the pipeline on private lands west of 1806, where a highly-regarded cultural expert reported once in a lifetime discoveries during an initial round of surveys and assessments two weeks ago.

"There should be no further destruction or construction," activist and organizer Winona LaDuke, the founder of Honor the Earth, a non-profit that set up the Red Warrior Camp in North Dakota, said on Friday, underscoring the awareness that the battle is far from over.

The #NoDAPL encampment has grown even larger in the last few days, according to people like Henry Red Cloud, a Democratic candidate from neighboring South Dakota who visited before and after the most recent developments. Estimates put the numbers in the few to several thousands as Indian Country continues to rally to the cause.

"What I've seen in my two visits to Standing Rock is the transformative power Indian Country has when we stand together and speak with one voice to protect our waters, our lands, and our sacred places for future generations," Brian Cladoosby, the chairman of the Swinomish Tribe who serves as president of the National Congress of American Indians, said on Friday.

Meanwhile, left-leaning politicians are slowly but surely following the lead of Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont), a former candidate for president, in expressing solidarity with the movement. Support started trickling out from Democratic lawmakers at committee meetings and hearings in Washington, D.C., last week, when Congress finally returned to work following a seven-week recess.

The Camp has grown a lot these last few days! It's a community led by Native Americans, but made up of every type of person...united in non-violent direct action for our water and a more sustainable future!

"Tribes have the right to self-determination and the right to have a say in decisions that impact their health, sacred lands, and cultural preservation. Too often, there is not meaningful or any consultation with tribal communities regarding development on or near tribal lands," Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-California), the top Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, said in a press release in which he called for a more complete assessment of the pipeline's impact on sacred sites and water resources, something that the Obama administration has in mind with its decision to reconsider the project.

"Our nation has a long and terrible history of environmental and cultural injustices against Native Americans," Sen. Tom Udall (D-New Mexico), who sits on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, said in a press release on Friday.

But not every Democrat is rushing to embrace. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-North Dakota), who otherwise is an outspoken advocate on tribal issues, released a carefully-worded and somewhat pained statement on Friday that glossed over the unprecedented nature of the Obama administration's action in regard to the pipeline.

"Going forward, my main focus will be on making sure that tribes are able to exercise their First Amendment right to protest peacefully, and workers are able to do their jobs safely," said Heitkamp, who also sits on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

Ranking Member Raul M. Grijalva is in North Dakota today to show his support for the Standing Rock Sioux's protest...

Posted by House Committee on Natural Resources: Democrats on Sunday, September 11, 2016

Indian Country can't look to Republican allies either. While Sen. John McCain (R-Arizona), a former two-time chairman of the Indian Affairs committee, has repeatedly slammed the Obama administration for its handling of the Gold King Mine disaster that impacted water resources for several tribes in the Southwest, he been quiet even as leaders of the Navajo Nation have repeatedly linked the #NoDAPL struggle to their environmental justice efforts.

Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-Arizona), on the other hand, was among the Democrats who joined Ruiz's call for an investigation into tribal environmental justice issues. She is running against McCain as he fights for re-election this November.

Sanders, who was the first major political figure to announce opposition to the Dakota Access pipeline, is scheduled to speak at a rally in front of the White House on Tuesday. Tara Houska, a member of the Couchiching First Nation who advised Sanders on Native issues during his presidential campaign, is also expected at the event.

Neither Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton nor Donald Trump, the Republican nominee, have mentioned the project.

Attorneys for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, the Army Corps and the Dakota Access partnership are due back in court later this week. A status hearing is scheduled at 2pm on Friday in Courtroom 19 of the federal courthouse in D.C.

At a hearing on August 24, an attorney for Dakota Access said the pipeline intends to start moving oil by January 1, 2017. But the attorney was taken aback after being informed about the lack of an easement on Army Corps land at Lake Oahe.

Without that easement, the pipeline cannot carry crude oil along the currently proposed route in North Dakota. The Obama's administration statement on Friday makes clear that approval will not be granted at this time due to issues raised by the tribe.

"The Army will not authorize constructing the Dakota Access pipeline on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it can determine whether it will need to reconsider any of its previous decisions regarding the Lake Oahe site under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or other federal laws," the Department of Justice, Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior said. "Therefore, construction of the pipeline on Army Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe will not go forward at this time."

Additionally, the Obama administration plans to initiate "formal, government-to-government consultations" talks with tribes to discuss how their concerns can be better address when reviewing infrastructure projects like pipelines.

Beyond Friday's hearing, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is pursuing an appeal after Judge Boasberg denied its motion for a preliminary injunction against the Army Corps. That portion of the case will be going to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Carol A. García
Tribal Affairs – Region VIII
FEMA
Denver Federal Center, Bldg 710
Denver, CO 80225
(303) 202-8959
(720) 415-4816 Cell

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:52:41 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Violence at pipeline protest

8

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51 PM
To: R8 External Affairs <R8PublicAffairs@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: 13 Oct 2016 10:43:08 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors;R8 FEMA SA Team;Root, Michael;Sterling, Stephen
Subject: FW: FEMA Region VIII Daily Situational Awareness Report - 12 Oct 2016

FYI,

The ND SEOC is at Level II, partial activation due to the on-going Dakota Access Pipeline protest.

V/R

Steve

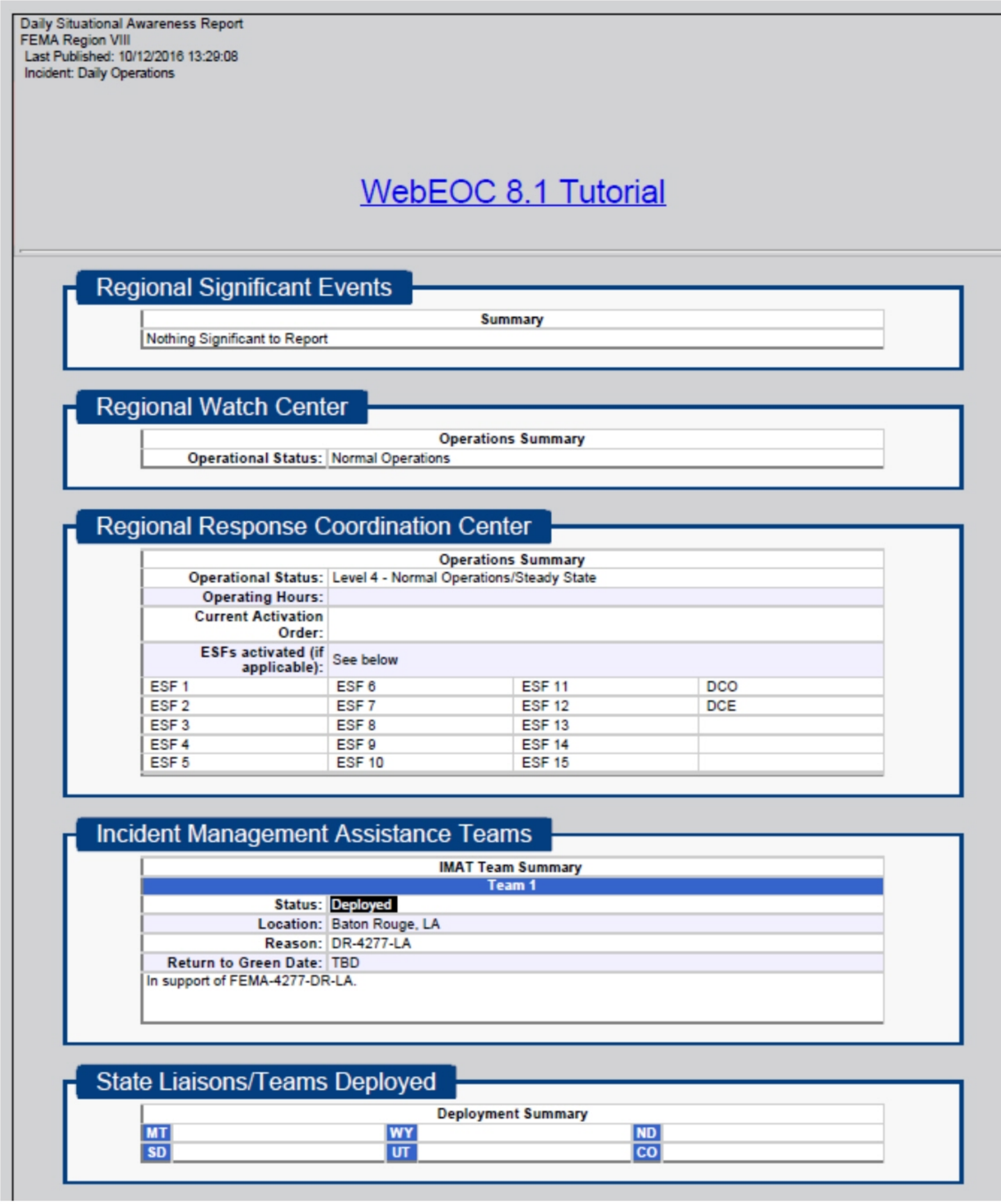
Steven Reinsch
Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC) &
FEMA Alternate Operations Center - West (FAOC-West)
FEMA-MOC-Denver@fema.dhs.gov
1-800-311-7021

Referred to Another Agency/Component

From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: Wednesday, October 12, 2016 12:37 PM
To: (b)(6) @usdoj.gov);(b)(6) Americanos, Christopher; (b)(6) Appenrodt, Kathleen; Batten, Andrew; Behunin, Scott; (b)(6) ; Brazelton, James; Brinkman, Michael; Bruno, Delilah; Bush, Tom; Cameron, Guy; Carroll, Thomas; Central Region NOAA; Chamberlain, Scott; Chris Sorenson; (b)(6) Cristiano, Gina; Crumley, Carol J; (b)(6) ; DCE R VIII Operations (usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.dco-region-viii-ops1@mail.mil); DCE-(b)(6) SFC; DCE-(b)(6) Deal, Timothy; DeFelice, Jerome; Depalo, Lee; Dick, Jennifer; DOE (EmergencyResponseCenter@hq.doe.gov); (b)(6) Dragani, Nancy;(b)(6) FEMA-MOC-DENVER; FEMA-NWC; FEMA-R4-WatchUnit; FEMA-R7-WatchOps; FEMA-R8-RRCC-DIRECTOR; FEMA-R9Watchofficer; Fenn, John; Fisher, Dennis; Floyd, Megan;(b)(6) ; Garcia, Maria; Gelston, Timothy;(b)(6) Glover, Gary; Gray, Patricia; Greff, Stacie; GSA(b)(6) Hardegen, Steven; Hassell, Laurie; Hawkins, Daniel; Helland, Kevin; HHS - Regional Emergency Coordinator; Hillenburg, Mike; Hudson, Lamont; Hunter, Cynthia; James, Diane;(b)(6) @hq.doe.gov); Jones, Susan K; (b)(6) (b)(6) FAA NW Mountain Region'; (b)(6) 'Knecht, Steve (MT DES Dep Administrator)'; Lawley, Charles;(b)(6) McCool, Thomas; McCown, James; McNeese, Colleen; McNeese, Martin; 'Melissa Payan'; (b)(6) ; Moore, Jkevin; Morris, Todd; Moyer, Steven; DES, Montana; Mungenast, Paul; Ordonez, Michael; Paulus, Curice; (b)(6) (ESF-12)'; Pendergrass, Michael M; Petterson, Jeanine; (b)(6) Pinheiro, Ronald; Poore, Stephanie; Puffer, Donovan; R8 Fusion Centers; (b)(6) ; Richey, Sharon; Rockabrand, Ryan;(b)(6) @dot.gov); Root, Michael; (b)(6) @wapa.gov); (b)(6) (b)(6) ; Schaad, David; Jason Bauder; Pluta, Stefan; tina titze; Stanley, Gary; Stensgaard, Theresa; Sterling, Stephen; Stevenson, Geni;(b)(6) LT; Tamillow, Michael; Ulrick, Brannen; Valora, Emily; Volkman, Jeff; Voorhies, Jennifer; Watkins, David; 'Western, Sirg';(b)(6) (b)(6) Greg Wilz;(b)(6) ; WR.ROC (wr.roc@noaa.gov); York, Shane T
Subject: FEMA Region VIII Daily Situational Awareness Report - 12 Oct 2016

Good Morning,

Here is today's Region VIII Daily Situational Awareness Report.



Daily Situational Awareness Report
FEMA Region VIII
Last Published: 10/12/2016 13:29:08
Incident: Daily Operations

WebEOC 8.1 Tutorial

Regional Significant Events

Summary
Nothing Significant to Report

Regional Watch Center

Operations Summary	
Operational Status:	Normal Operations

Regional Response Coordination Center

Operations Summary	
Operational Status:	Level 4 - Normal Operations/Steady State
Operating Hours:	
Current Activation Order:	
ESFs activated (if applicable):	See below

ESF 1	ESF 6	ESF 11	DCO
ESF 2	ESF 7	ESF 12	DCE
ESF 3	ESF 8	ESF 13	
ESF 4	ESF 9	ESF 14	
ESF 5	ESF 10	ESF 15	

Incident Management Assistance Teams

IMAT Team Summary	
Team 1	
Status:	Deployed
Location:	Baton Rouge, LA
Reason:	DR-4277-LA
Return to Green Date:	TBD
In support of FEMA-4277-DR-LA.	

State Liaisons/Teams Deployed

Deployment Summary					
MT		WY		ND	
SD		UT		CO	

State Emergency Operations Centers

Activation Level Summary	
Montana EOC:	Level III - Monitoring
Wyoming EOC:	Level IV - Normal Operations
North Dakota EOC:	Level IV - Normal Operations
South Dakota EOC:	Level IV - Normal Operations
Utah EOC:	Level IV - Normal Operations
Colorado EOC:	Level IV - Normal Operations
MT EOC is at Level III (Monitoring) due to potential flooding.	

Significant Weather

Summary
Nothing Significant to Report

River Outlook

Summary

MT:
Milk River: Near Tampico: Action Flood Stage (21'), last observed at 21.4'.
Forecasted to continue recede over the weekend into early next week.
Impacts: North Tampico Road and county gravel roads north of the river could experience flooding, possibly impassable.

Milk River: Near Glasgow: Minor Flood Stage (25'), last observed at 27.8'.
Forecasted to crest and recede and falling below flood stage early this weekend.
Impacts: Lowland flooding possible.

Beaver Creek: Near Hinsdale: Minor Flood Stage (14'), last observed at 15.7'.
Forecasted to crest and recede and falling below flood stage early this weekend.
Impacts: Lowland flooding possible.

Earthquakes

Summary

Mag	MMI	Date/Time	Lat/Long	Depth (mi.)	Location
Nothing Significant to Report					

Wildfires

Summary
Nothing Significant to Report

Preliminary Damage Assessments

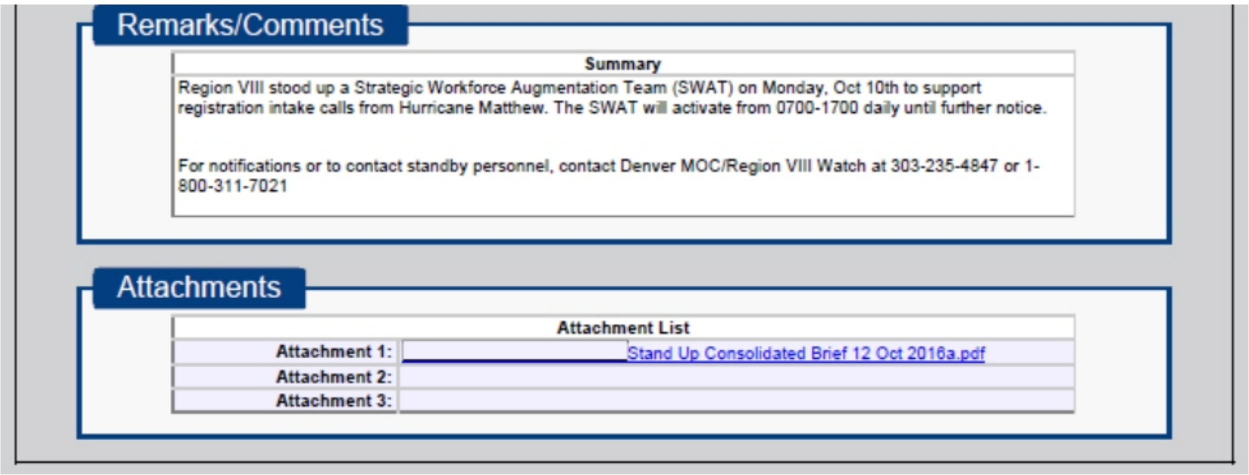
Summary

State	Event	Type (IA/PA)	# Requested	# Ongoing	# Completed	Start Date End Date

JFO/IOF Information

Summary

Disaster #	JFO/IOF Address	FCO	Closing Date	Contact #



Remarks/Comments

Summary

Region VIII stood up a Strategic Workforce Augmentation Team (SWAT) on Monday, Oct 10th to support registration intake calls from Hurricane Matthew. The SWAT will activate from 0700-1700 daily until further notice.

For notifications or to contact standby personnel, contact Denver MOC/Region VIII Watch at 303-235-4847 or 1-800-311-7021

Attachments

Attachment List

Attachment 1:	Stand Up Consolidated Brief 12 Oct 2016a.pdf
Attachment 2:	
Attachment 3:	

V/R

Steve

Steven Reinsch
Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC) &
FEMA Alternate Operations Center - West (FAOC-West)
FEMA-MOC-Denver@fema.dhs.gov
1-800-311-7021

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:19:43 -0400
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)'
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

Per our conversation, I wanted to let you know that I sent the below email to the FEMA National Tribal Advisor and Rocky Jones with IHS - this is nothing official and just from our media monitoring.

Thanks

Megan

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>(b)(6)@ihs.gov(b)(6)@ihs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);
? Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
? The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
? The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
? As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
? This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
? The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):
? There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
? The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
? The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
? The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
? The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
? The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
? The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
? The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.

? Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
? The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.
? September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck, ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this year?s Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Thanks

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>(b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:48:51 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

And then I forgot to you on the CC line.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:48 PM
To: Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Lee -

I meant to send this to you as well and forgot to put you on the CC line. I apologize and won't forget next time.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:20 PM
To: (b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM)' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

Per our conversation, I wanted to let you know that I sent the below email to the FEMA National Tribal Advisor and Rocky Jones with IHS - this is nothing official and just from our media monitoring.

Thanks

Megan

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

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If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

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Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

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Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 15:19:49 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock Tribe information (** FOR REVIEW**)

Hi Stacie –

Below are my changes. I think it is very important that we are truly being natural on this issues and the language below seemed a bit hostel. Also, I think the DDs is the best way to go. If this goes all hands it turns it into a “thing”. It is not a “thing” and I don’t want to start rumors or people getting worried about general travel or anything else.

M.

Security NOTIFICATION – Situational Awareness for Standing Rock Tribe

IMPACT **FEMA REGION VIII ALL STAFF**
SCOPE **Travel to North Dakota Standing Rock Tribal area**

Good Afternoon Region VIII,

For your situational awareness, Sioux Tribal members are involved in a growing protest against the Dakota Pipeline Access construction near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota.
The North Dakota Highway Patrol is asking motorists to avoid state Highway 1806 near Fort Rice because of the pipeline protest along the road.
Troopers say traffic delays are expected on the highway that runs through the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in southern North Dakota. Troopers say motorists should use an alternate route, such as state Highway 6.
Highway Patrol (b)(6) says about 250 protesters were at the site on Monday. He says there are about 30 troopers monitoring the protest.
Currently, FEMA has no official presence in the Standing Rock Tribal area and we are monitoring the events. The protest has been peaceful, which is a priority of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Leadership. (b)(5)
(b)(5) While there are no know threats to any FEMA employees, any near future FEMA Region 8 official travel to this area should first be coordinated with the Region 8 External Affairs Office and senior leadership.
If you have any questions, please contact Chris Andersen at 303-235-4853.

Bunk

Charles H. Lawley II

Charles "BUNK" Lawley II
Region VIII MSD/IT
RVIII Mission Support Division Director (A)
Office: 303-235-4709
Cell: 303-204-0255
Fax: 303-235-4977
ESD/RVIII Help Desk at 303-235-4347
Charles.Lawley@fema.dhs.gov
Charles.Lawley@dhs.sgov.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 21:22:48 +0000
To: Dragani, Nancy;R8 Division Directors
Cc: R8 External Affairs;Hudson, Lamont
Subject: FYSA - Quick Update On The Protests Near Standing Rock

For your situational awareness:

This could be a contentious weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock area.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written letters of support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this always happens before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline.
- The Governor of ND has activated (although not a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling. Guard members will assist in providing security at traffic checkpoints on the state highway leading to the protest site, which is being reopened to traffic this afternoon.
- There are ongoing reports of violence from both sides.
- The Chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

A sampling of article links below:

North Dakota National Guard Deployed: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Calls for Peace in Advance of DAPL Court Decision – Native News
http://nativenewsonline.net/currents/north-dakota-national-guard-deployed-standing-rock-sioux-tribe-calls-peace-advance-dapl-court-decision/

North Dakota National Guard to provide backup to law enforcement – Bismarck Tribune
http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/north-dakota-national-guard-to-provide-backup-to-law-enforcement/article_57090461-12d0-5376-bf6b-041a4511ce4f.html

N.D. governor asks for National Guard assistance in pipeline protest – Fargo Forum
http://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/4110814-north-dakota-governor-asks-national-guard-assistance-pipeline-protest

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 20:37:19 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FYSA - Quick Update On The Protests Near Standing Rock

Since you are sort of working…. I would like to send this to Nancy and the DDs. This weekend could be significant for the protest. I hope everything stays peaceful, or at least does not escalate on either side more than it already has, but I also don't want anyone to be surprised if something doesn't go well over the weekend.

I will hold till 3:00 and then send if I don't hear from you.

For your situational awareness:

This could be a contentious weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock area.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
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North Dakota National Guard to provide backup to law enforcement – Bismarck Tribune
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N.D. governor asks for National Guard assistance in pipeline protest – Fargo Forum

http://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/4110814-north-dakota-governor-asks-national-guard-assistance-pipeline-protest

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 17:22:50 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;R8 Division Directors
Cc: R8 External Affairs;Hudson, Lamont
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N.D. governor asks for National Guard assistance in pipeline protest – Fargo Forum
http://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/4110814-north-dakota-governor-asks-national-guard-assistance-pipeline-protest

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 13:59:29 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FYSA: Standing Rock's response to the Governor's Emergency Declaration

---

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 9:06 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FYSA: Standing Rock's response to the Governor's Emergency Declaration

http://nativenewsonline.net/currents/standing-rock-sioux-tribal-chairman-response-nd-governor/

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Response to ND Governor

BY LEVI RICKERT / CURRENTS / 20 AUG 2016

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Dave Archambault II

Published August 20, 2016

STANDING ROCK INDIAN RESERVATION – Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II responded to North Dakota Governor Darymple's declaration of emergency issued on Friday:

I appreciate the pressure that Governor Dalrymple is working under. We are all feeling the tension created by the recent decision of the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners to rush ahead with construction of the Dakota Access pipeline while important legal issues of tribal sovereignty and public health and safety remain unresolved.

Tribal leaders are committed to non-violence and peaceful prayer as the guiding principle of Cannon Ball River camps. We are doing everything in our power to promote that spirit. This is an opportunity to work together in a spirit of cooperation, and we should take advantage of that opportunity.

But with all due respect, the Governor's declaration of emergency was unfortunate. I wish he had consulted with the tribe before making today's declaration, because the tribe has its hand extended in the spirit of partnership and cooperation. We look upon this situation as an opportunity to work together.

Everyone needs to keep in mind that our families are the ones most affected by the Governor's decision to close parks, blockade roads, and use the language of confrontation rather than cooperation. We are just as conscious of the need for public safety as the Governor, but we do not feel the need to cancel our concerts, or close our parks. In fact, now more than ever, we want people to come to Standing Rock and visit. Just today, our Tribal Council voted unanimously that the roadblocks should be taken down. It is our mothers and fathers who are on the road this week as our children prepare for the opening of school. Our citizens rely on the roads to get from home to work. We are most harmed economically by shutting the last weeks of the tourist season.

> ***What is happening at the Canon Ball Camp reflects a historic moment for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. For the first time in 100 years we are hosting the reconvening of the Seven Council fires of the Oceti Sakowin. This attests to our commitment to working together for our children's future.***

I look forward to working with the Governor to remove the road blocks, reopen the parks and ensure the public safety.

Dave Archambault II

Chairman, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 14:31:32 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors;Andersen, Chris
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: INFO: DALRYMPLE STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROTEST ACTIVITIES
Attachments: 0818 Public Safety statement.pdf

From: Zent, Jeffrey L. [mailto:(b)(6) @nd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 11:06 AM
Subject: DALRYMPLE STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROTEST ACTIVITIES

State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor
Jack Dalrymple
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug.18, 2016

Contact: Jeff Zent or Jody Link
701.328.2200

DALRYMPLE STATEMENT REGARDING PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROTEST ACTIVITIES

Gov. Jack Dalrymple today issued the following statement regarding recent pipeline protest activities and public safety:

"Public safety is paramount as we continue to closely monitor protest activities and coordinate our public safety efforts with law enforcement leaders and state agency directors.

Following reports of heavy pedestrian traffic and numerous vehicles parked along ND Highway 1806, we restricted travel six miles south of Mandan to local traffic and emergency response vehicles only. Alternate routes are available for through traffic. Additionally, we established a traffic control point at the intersection of ND Highway 6 and Morton County Road 138A to provide information regarding protest activities along the highway.

While we are concerned about some cases of unlawful activity, we are pleased that no one has been injured and it is our top priority to keep it that way."

State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor
Jack Dalrymple
Governor

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 18, 2016

Contact: Jeff Zent or Jody Link
701.328.2200

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-###-

-MORE-

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 09:42:05 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors;Andersen, Chris
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Info: New York Times Story on protests

Fysa

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 06:37 AM
To: Greff, Stacie; Hvinden, Brian; Welch, Randy
Subject: New York Times Story on protests

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/us/occupying-the-prairie-tensions-rise-as-tribes-move-to-block-a-pipeline.html?_r=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 11:17:56 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: INFO: Standing Rock Protests - New York Times

Missed cc'ing you

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 9:16 AM
To: Tennyson, Stephanie <stephanie.tennyson@fema.dhs.gov>; Lemaitre, Rafael <rafael.lemaitre@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: INFO: Standing Rock Protests - New York Times

FYSA only.

Note: Our ARA has provided some BLUFs to Beth Z for awareness on the topic.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 8:38 AM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Nadeau, Robert <Robert.Nadeau@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock Protests - New York Times

Hi Milo–

We continue to media monitor the protests at Standing Rock (we are only watching for situational awareness, no activity). The New Your Time picked up the story late yesterday and I wanted you to be aware since I know you have gotten some questions.

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/us/occupying-the-prairie-tensions-rise-as-tribes-move-to-block-a-pipeline.html?_r=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Thanks

Megan

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Sep 2016 16:55:15 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2016 1:10 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Cavanaugh, Brian <brian.cavanaugh@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2016 3:04:22 PM
To: Anicich, Adam; Davis, Aaron J
Subject: Intel - "Pipeline Protest" Conflicting Perspectives

Adam and Aaron,

Senator Hoeven's Chief of Staff Ryan Bernstein was on a call with Greg Wilz just a few moments ago. On this call, Greg Wilz contradicted information FEMA had been sharing with SAC and Senator Hoeven's staff. When asked if he had been in touch with FEMA regarding an EM request, Director Wilz said something to the effect of, no we have not been working together on this and he had been advised by Region 8 not to put FEMA in between the State and the Tribes.

This is an important note as we head into the call this afternoon as we had been stating that we had not been asked about a potential EM by ND directly.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director, External Coordination &

Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445 - 5455

From: Wilz, Greg M.
Sent: 13 Oct 2016 12:33:28 +0000
To: Dragani, Nancy;Cameron, Guy;tina titze;Hamlet, Kris;Bruno, Delilah;Gally, Marilyn;Greff, Stacie
Cc: Kevin Klein
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Region 8 Directors,

I am hoping this all work. Below is a link to a state of North Dakota secure file transfer site. The file is about 190 meg so it was too large to send regular email. It is a briefing that will help explain what is going on in North Dakota. We are providing it all states that have inquired about what is the risk of sending LEO to North Dakota based on our EMAC.

The complete situation here on the ground is very complex almost unbelievable unless you have been here since the beginning. What has started as peaceful protest by concerned citizens and Tribal members has grown to situation that is at times out of control with recent actions bordering on terrorism with state, national , and international implications.

I look forward to talking to you all this morning. If the file transfer works and you get a chance to look at it before the conference call that would be great.

Greg

You can download the file using the following link:
https://apps.nd.gov/itd/filetransfer/downloadByInvitation.htm?id=1-cc8f91f7036cb333c3fdef74e22b47ff.

****
For security reasons, please do not forward this email to other persons. Doing so may allow unauthorized persons the ability to download the file as well.
****

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 17:22:50 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Judge postpones pipeline decision

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction

- JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune
  Jessica Holdman
- 1 hr ago

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

"A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.
Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

"Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court," Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe’s historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

“It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them,” Tsosie said.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 17:22:50 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Judge postpones pipeline decision

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction

- JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune
  Jessica Holdman
- 1 hr ago

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

"A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.
Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

"Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court," Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe's historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

"It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them," Tsosie said.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 12:55:34 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol;DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: LaDuke editorial re pipeline

From Ecowatch.com… not included in the clips, but I thought worth having. Winona LaDuke ran for vice-president on a ticket with Ralph Nader long ago…

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

The Dakota Access Pipeline: What Would Sitting Bull Do?

By Winona LaDuke

It's 2016 and the weight of American corporate interests has come to the Missouri River, the Mother River. This time, instead of the Seventh Cavalry or the Indian police dispatched to assassinate Sitting Bull, it is Enbridge and Dakota Access Pipeline.

In mid-August, Standing Rock Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was arrested by state police, along with 27 others, for opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline. In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple called for more police support.

Every major pipeline project in North America must cross indigenous lands, Indian Country. That is a problem.

The road west of Fargo is rarely taken. In fact, most Americans just fly over North Dakota, never seeing it.

Let me take you there.

My head clears as I drive. My destination is the homeland of the Hunkpapa Oceti, Standing Rock Reservation. It is early evening, the moon full. If you close your eyes, you can remember the 50 million buffalo—the single largest migratory herd in the world. The pounding of their hooves would vibrate the Earth, make the grass grow.

There were once 250 species of grass. Today the buffalo are gone, replaced by 28 million cattle, which require grain, water and hay. Many of the fields are now in a single GMO crop, full of so many pesticides that the monarch butterflies are dying off. But in my memory, the old world remains.

If you drive long enough, you come to the Missouri River.

Called Mnisose, a great swirling river, by the Lakota, she is a force to be reckoned with. She is breathtaking. "The Missouri River has a fixed place in the history and mythology" of the Lakota and other Indigenous nations of the Northern Plains, author Dakota Goodhouse would explain.

In the time before Sitting Bull, the Missouri River was the epicenter of northern agriculture, the river bed so fertile. The territory was known as the fertile crescent of North America. That was then, before the treaties that reduced the Lakota land base. But the Missouri remained in the treaty—the last treaty of 1868 used the Missouri as a boundary.

Then came the theft of land by the U.S. government and the taking of the Black Hills in 1877, in part as retaliation against Sitting Bull's victory at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. In a time prior to Black Lives Matter or Native Lives Matter, great leaders like Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were assassinated at the hands of police.

One truth: The Lakota people have survived much.

Forced into the reservation life, the Lakota attempted to stabilize their society, until the dams came. The 1944 Pick Sloan project flooded out the Missouri River tribes, taking the best bottom lands from the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, the Lakota and Dakota. More than 200,000 acres on the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations in South Dakota were flooded by the Oahe Dam itself, forcing not only relocation, but a loss of the Lakota world. The Garrison, Oahe and Fort Randall dams created a reservoir that eliminated 90 percent of timber and 75 percent of wildlife on the reservations.

That is how a people are made poor.

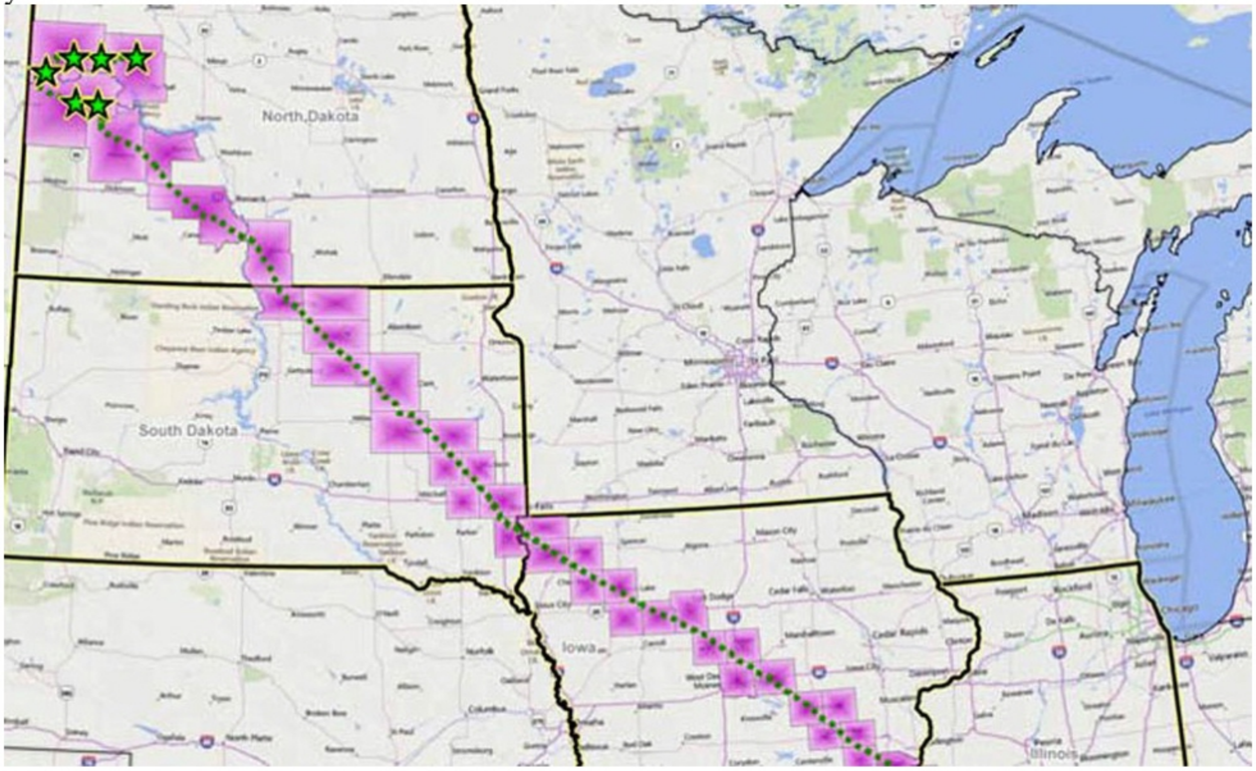
Today, well over two thirds of the population of Standing Rock is below the poverty level—and the land and Mother River are what remains, a constant, for the people. That is what is threatened today.

Enbridge and partners are preparing to drill through the riverbed. The pipeline has been permitted in sections from the west and from the east. The northern portion was moved away from the water supply of Bismarck, into the watershed of Standing Rock. That was unfortunate for the Lakota.

Despite Lakota legal and regulatory objections, the Dakota Access Pipeline construction began in May 2016. If finished it will snake through North and South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois, where it will link to a 774-mile pipeline to Nederland, Texas.

More than 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil will pass through the pipeline daily, along with 245,100 metric tons of carbon daily—enough carbon to combust the planet to oblivion.

The pipeline would span 200 water crossings and in North Dakota alone would pass through 33 historical and archeological sites. Enbridge just bought the Dakota Access pipeline, noting that the proposed Sandpiper route—Minnesota's 640,000 barrel per day Bakken line—is now three years behind schedule.



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The route of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

In late July, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe represented by Earthjustice, filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Standing Rock claims the project violates federal and treaty law. Standing Rock also filed an intervention at the United Nations, in coordination with the International Indian Treaty Council.

As Chairman Archambault explained in a New York Times story:

> "The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.
>
> "The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites.
>
> "Without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes."

In Iowa where work on the pipeline is underway, three fires erupted causing heavy damage to equipment and an estimated $1 million in damages. Investigators suspect arson, according to Jasper County Sheriff John Halferty. In October 2015, three Iowa farmers sued Dakota Access LLC and the Iowa Utilities Board in an attempt to prevent the use of eminent domain on their properties to construct the pipeline.

The health of the Missouri River has been taken for granted.

Dammed in the Pick Sloan Dam projects, each project increases contamination and reduces her health. Today, the Missouri is the seventh most polluted river in the country. Agricultural run-off and now fracking have contaminated the river. My sister fished a gar out of the river, a giant prehistoric fish, only to find it covered with tumors.

Here's just one case: In a January 2015 spill, saltwater contamination from a massive pipeline spill reached the Missouri River. In the baffling way of state and federal agencies, North Dakota's Health Director David Glatt did not expect harm to wildlife or drinking water supplies because the water was diluted. The saying is: "The solution to pollution is dilution." That is convenient, but not true.

Blacktail Creek and the Little Muddy River were contaminated after nearly 3 million gallons of saltwater with elevated levels of chloride contamination. All was diluted. But then there was that gar fish with the tumors.

There are pipelines everywhere and fewer than 150 Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) pipeline inspectors in the whole country.

And now comes the risk from oil.

The pipeline companies generally discuss a 99 percent safety record, but studies have found that to be grossly inaccurate. A former Scientific American Editor, Trudy Bell, reports that PHMSA data from 2001 to 2011 suggest the average pipeline "has a 57% probability of experiencing a major leak, with consequences over the $l million range in a ten year period."

Not good odds.

At Standing Rock, as the number of protesters grew from 200 to 2000, state law enforcement decided to put up a safety checkpoint and rerouted traffic on Highway 1806 from Bismarck to Standing Rock, hoping to dissuade people from coming and put the squeeze on Standing Rock's Prairie Knights Casino, which is served by that road.

We just drove around; the scenic route is beautiful. And as supporters surge in numbers, the casino hotel and restaurants are full.

While North Dakota seeks to punish the Lakota, Chairman Archambault expresses concerns for everyone:

From the New York Times: "I am here to advise anyone that will listen that the Dakota Access Pipeline project is harmful. It will not be just harmful to my people but its intent and construction will harm the water in the Missouri River, which is one of the cleanest and safest river tributaries left in the Unit States. To poison the water is to poison the substance of life. Everything that moves must have water. How can we talk about and knowingly poison water?"

In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Dalrymple announced a state of emergency, making additional state resources available "to manage public safety risks associated with the ongoing protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline." He may have exceeded his scope of authority and violated civil and human rights to water.

Chairman Archambault's interpretation: "Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests."

There are a lot of people at Standing Rock today who remember their history and the long standoff at Wounded Knee in 1973. In fact, some of those in Standing Rock today were there in 1973 at Wounded Knee, a similar battle for dignity and the future of a nation.

I am not sure how badly North Dakota wants this pipeline. If there is to be a battle over the pipeline, it will be here. For a people with nothing else but a land and a river, I would not bet against them.

The great Lakota leader Mathew King once said, "The only thing sadder than an Indian who is not free, is an Indian who does not remember what it is to be free."

The Standing Rock protest camp represents that struggle for freedom and the future of a people. All of us. If I ask the question "What would Sitting Bull do?"—the answer is pretty clear. He would remind me what he said 150 years ago: "Let us put our minds together to see what kind of future we can make for our children."

The time for that is now.

This article was originally published by LA Progressive and reposted with permission from our media associate YES! Magazine.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Sep 2016 16:18:25 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Megan's week

Megan’s Week

Activates:

- Acting for Stacie though Friday.
- Working on Insider.
- Updating performance plan.
- Working with OST and damages from September 23.
- Getting next year’s tribal training straightened out as much as possible.
- Follow-up with SBA regarding the National Preparedness Month story.
- Meetings, meetings and meetings.
- Other items as needed.

Issues:

- Watching Pipeline protests and tracking the discussions with Tribes and senior level officials about meaningful consultation. Including discussions this week with the White House.
- Tracking Utah issues with storm damages.
- Strom at OST and potential for an IA PDA and eventually request.
- Tight timeline on the R8 Insider.

Schedule:

- In all week.

Subject: Megan's Week

Activities:

- Work with EMI, Carol and Ricky on scheduling tribal courses for 2017
- Acting for Stacie (Tuesday-Friday) - several meetings
- R8 Insider
- Support Cynthia with final tribal travel figures
- OST possible request for assistance (IA)
- Watch Utah

Hot items:

- Dakota Access Pipeline
- OST Report of Damages

Schedule

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Sep 2016 12:18:29 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Megan's week

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- In all week.

From: Hunter, Cynthia
Sent: 14 Nov 2016 09:58:08 -0500
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Carol;Stephenson, James R
Cc: Welch, Randy
Subject: Montana Story - Standing Rock Protests Planned

For awareness.

http://missoulian.com/news/local/events-in-support-of-standing-rock-scheduled/article_dddc91f6-3f8c-5649-961b-efb49a9b6526.html

Events in support of Standing Rock scheduled (Missoulian)

PERRY BACKUS pbackus@ravallirepublic.com

People in Missoula and the Bitterroot Valley will join in a national day of protest Tuesday in what organizers are calling "Stand with Standing Rock, in Solidarity."

In the Bitterroot, Sarah Monson and Suzanne Alene Shope are organizing the "peaceful show of support for the water protectors at Standing Rock."

Numerous national organizations are calling for a national day of action at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers offices across the country to ask President Obama to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. Sioux Nation members and others have been protesting the construction of the pipeline since August. The protest has produced confrontations with law enforcement.

In a press release, organizers of the national event say the mass mobilization is important now due to the recent election of Donald Trump as president.

"This mass mobilization will show President Obama that it's more important than ever for him to reject the Dakota Access Pipeline while he's in office," the press release said. "These actions will also be a powerful moment for people across movements to unite in solidarity with indigenous peoples in Standing Rock and to strengthen the resistance movement to fight fossil fuels and white supremacy under a Trump administration."

Monson said she has received numerous calls from people asking for details since she first posted the event on Facebook.

"So far, it's been shared by 600 people," she said. "They are excited about doing something right here. They have felt kind of helpless watching what's happened at Standing Rock. They were interested in jumping on board, but didn't know how."

In Missoula, the renewable energy group 350 Montana is calling for people to rally at the Army Corps of Engineers office on North Avenue at 1 p.m. Tuesday. The event in Hamilton will take place from noon to 1 p.m. Tuesday at the intersection of Highway 93 and Main Street.

If people can't attend the Hamilton event, Monson encourages them take a photograph of themselves holding the sign and post it on the Facebook page: Stand with Standing Rock, in Solidarity – Bitterroot Valley, Mt.

"It's a human rights issue and an environmental issue," Monson said. "It doesn't just affect them. It affects everyone. Their rights are being trampled on. History can't just keep repeating itself. Enough is enough."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 10:59:34 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Hunter, Cynthia;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: More ND tribal

State pulls relief resources from swelling Dakota Access Pipeline protest camp

- Mike Nowatzki Forum News Service
- Updated Aug 22, 2016

CANNON BALL – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 500 to 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the corps as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, “I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well.”

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

“At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit,” which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

“We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably,” she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff’s Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

“I’ve been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it’s continuing to grow,” he said.

Law enforcement on site estimated between 500 and 800 protesters were present Monday morning.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff’s Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

“He’d like to keep this in the law enforcement arena,” he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

"My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not," he said. "This is our land, our people."

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, "I believe there's strength in prayer," and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Our water is sacred," she said. "I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too."

Forum News Service reporter Amy Dalrymple contributed to this story.

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To: Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Carol;Stephenson, James R
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Dragani, Nancy
Subject: More ND Tribal

Two articles from today's Denver Post. AP story gives a quick rundown in Q&A format. Denver Post article talks about yesterday's demonstration in Denver.

Q&A: The 4-state, $3.8 billion Dakota Access oil pipeline

Share this

Robyn Beck, AFP/Getty Images

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and their supporters gather in a circle in the center of camp to hear speakers and singers, at a protest encampment near Cannon Ball, North Dakota where members of the tribe and their supporters have gathered to voice their opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), September 3, 2016.

By The Associated Press

PUBLISHED: September 9, 2016 at 12:33 am | UPDATED: September 9, 2016 at 12:34 am

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BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A federal judge has said he'll rule by Friday on the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's lawsuit that challenges federal permits for the four-state, $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline.

The lawsuit alleges that the pipeline, which would be placed less than a mile upstream of the reservation, could impact drinking water for more than 8,000 tribal members and millions who rely on it downstream. There also have been skirmishes between protesters and private security guards on private land, where the tribe says construction has disturbed ancient sacred sites.

North Dakota's governor said Thursday that a handful of National Guard members will help provide security at traffic checkpoints near the protest site, and another 100 will be on standby.

Some things to know about the pipeline and the tribe's ongoing protest:

WHAT IS THE DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE?

Owned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile project would carry nearly a half-million barrels of crude oil daily from North Dakota's oil fields through South Dakota and Iowa to an existing pipeline in Patoka, Illinois, where shippers can access Midwest and Gulf Coast markets.

WHAT IS THE LAWSUIT TARGETING?

The tribe sued federal regulators for approving the oil pipeline, challenging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' decision to grant permits at more than 200 water crossings. Filed on behalf of the tribe by environmental group Earthjustice, the suit says the project violates several federal laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act, and will disturb sacred sites outside of the 2.3-million acre reservation.

A separate lawsuit filed Thursday by a South Dakota tribe also challenges the decisions to grant the permits.

IS THE PIPELINE SAFE?

ETP says the pipeline includes safeguards such as leak detection equipment, and workers monitoring the pipeline remotely in Texas could close block valves on it within three minutes if a breach is detected.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PROTEST?

Since April, a nonviolent tribal protest by mostly members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe has been set up at a "spirit camp" at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers in the path of the pipeline.

It's grown considerably, as they've been joined by other American Indians and non-Native Americans from across the country, including "Divergent" actress Shailene Woodley.

But the protest has become heated, with nearly 40 arrested, including Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II. None of the arrests stemmed from Saturday's confrontation between protesters and construction workers.

Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein and running mate Ajamu Baraka camped with protesters Monday, and her campaign spokeswoman said Stein spray-painted construction equipment Tuesday. Stein and Baraka have been charged with misdemeanor counts of criminal trespass and criminal mischief.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple on Thursday activated the North Dakota National Guard ahead of U.S. District Judge James Boasberg's impending federal ruling. A handful of soldiers will help provide security at traffic checkpoints near the protest site, and another 100 Guard members will be on standby if needed to respond to any incidents.

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WHAT ABOUT CULTURAL SITES?

Last weekend, tribal officials said crews bulldozed several sites of "significant cultural and historic value" on private land, which Energy Transfer Partners denies. It led to Saturday's clash between protesters and private security guards hired by the pipeline company. Law enforcement officials said four security guards and two guard dogs received medical treatment, while a tribal spokesman countered that six people were bitten by guard dogs and at least 30 people were pepper-sprayed.

On Tuesday, Boasberg partially granted the tribe's request to temporarily stop work near Lake Oahe to prevent the destruction of more sacred sites, but not on the private land that sparked the protest.

North Dakota chief archaeologist Paul Picha plans to inspect the area, likely next week.

ARE THERE PROTESTS ELSEWHERE?

Yes, but nothing like in North Dakota. Construction equipment at several sites in Iowa was set on fire earlier in August, causing more than $1 million in damage.

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WHY IS THE PIPELINE BEING BUILT?

Announced in 2014, supporters said the pipeline would create more markets and reduce truck and oil train traffic — the latter of which has been a growing concern after a spate of fiery derailments of trains carrying North Dakota crude.

North Dakota oil pipeline protest finds support in Denver, hundreds gather at State Capitol

Denver Post, Sept. 9, 2016

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NO-DAPL
DAKOTA
ACCESS
PIPELINE

David Zalubowski, The Associated Press
A line of protesters against the construction of the Dakota Access oil pipeline on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota head to a unity rally on the west steps of the State Capitol late Thursday, Sept. 8, 2016, in Denver. Several hundred marchers walked from the four directions to the Capitol to take part in the rally against the oil pipeline.

By Kieran Nicholson | knicholson@denverpost.com
September 8, 2016 at 9:09 pm

Hundreds gathered at the State Capitol in Denver on Thursday night to protest the Dakota Access oil pipeline, calling for construction of the controversial project to come to a halt.

Protesters in Denver, a great many of them Native Americans, stand in solidarity with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe which is trying to stop the pipeline in North Dakota. Native Americans from across the United States have gathered at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, in the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, to make a stand against the $3.8 billion pipeline.

State Rep. Joe Salazar, D-Thornton, was among the speakers who addressed the crowd on the west steps of the State Capitol.

Salazar rallied the crowd, questioning the safety of oil pipelines and fracking among other means of extracting and transporting fossil fuels. Touching on a recent Colorado Oil and Gas Association statement on oil pipeline safety, Salazar described it as "being full of lies."

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Citing an oil spill in the Yellowstone River, a pipeline explosion in New Mexico and recent earthquakes in Oklahoma, which some say are caused by fracking, Salazar asked: "What is the definition of safe?"

The crowd roared in support and approval of the question.

Native Americans in ceremonial dress danced to drums leading protesters from the Denver City and County Building along Colfax Avenue across Civic Center to the Capitol.

Some protesters carried signs, "Save our Water" and many chanted, "you can't drink oil, water is life," as they marched.

The marchers descended on the Capitol from all four directions and on the west steps they numbered about 500. Marchers from the west wore black; from the north, red; the east, yellow; and the south, white. Sage was burned, a song and speech was given in Native American tongue.

At one point some in the crowd chanted: "We stand with Standing Rock."

"Look at you, every face of our nation is represented here," Salazar told the crowd, which included families and children.

Salazar told the crowd that he works in the Capitol, in the "halls of power." But it's "nothing quite as powerful as what we see here."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 14:59:33 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Hunter, Cynthia (Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov);Hvinden, Brian
Subject: More ND tribal

State pulls relief resources from swelling Dakota Access Pipeline protest camp

- Mike Nowatzki Forum News Service
- Updated Aug 22, 2016

CANNON BALL – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 500 to 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the corps as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, “I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well.”

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

“At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit,” which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

“We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably,” she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff’s Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

“I’ve been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it’s continuing to grow,” he said.

Law enforcement on site estimated between 500 and 800 protesters were present Monday morning.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff’s Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

“He’d like to keep this in the law enforcement arena,” he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

"My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not," he said. "This is our land, our people."

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, "I believe there's strength in prayer," and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Our water is sacred," she said. "I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too."

Forum News Service reporter Amy Dalrymple contributed to this story.

Jerry DeFelice
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Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:20:11 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: more stories on tribal pipeline protest

Wanted to be sure you guys saw what Brian got in the ND clips this a.m.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It's a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

"It's been a long time since we all camped together," said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. "It feels natural."

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

"We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties," said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman's executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. "That's essential."

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast. Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 08:56:55 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Morning

Megan,

Not sure if you have noticed it yet or not, but Scott Logan posted yesterday about being at Standing Rock Sioux tribe for the next week. Not sure how this could affect us, but after being the face of FEMA for so long I'm sure the name will come up. Just thought I would let you know.

Thanks,

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: 23 Sep 2016 11:19:47 -0400
To: Hunter, Cynthia;Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND & SD Clips
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Not sure if you really want to use these attached articles, but is the only thing I could find for ND & SD within the past 24 hours that was disaster related (one is DAPL related).

James "Ricky" Stephenson
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[The Costs of Climate Inaction: How Extreme Weather Burdens U.S. Taxpayers]

[Dem candidates' solution to DAPL: Build a refinery, reroute pipeline]

The Costs of Climate Inaction How Extreme Weather Burdens U.S. Taxpayers (American Progress)

One of the most visible and immediate ways climate change has affected—and will continue to affect—Americans is through extreme weather exacerbated by rising global temperatures. Between 2005 and 2015, the annual average temperature in the United States exceeded the 20th-century average every year, with increases ranging from 0.15 degrees Celsius to 1.81 degrees Celsius above normal. Moreover, the federal government's most recent National Climate Assessment concludes that as temperatures continue to rise, extreme weather events and wildfires will increase in frequency and intensity. Climate change will worsen heat waves, winter storms, and hurricanes. It will exacerbate extremes in precipitation, leading to more severe droughts and wildfires in some areas and heavier rainfall and flooding in others. And when the damage is done, taxpayers will be left to pick up the bill.

Extreme weather events and wildfires not only pose real threats to human health and safety—they put taxpayers at risk as well. Between 2005 and 2015, 93 natural disasters in the United States caused more than $1 billion in damage each, amounting to $586 billion in total losses. This damage can profoundly affect state and local economies. Even after a storm passes or a wildfire is extinguished, displaced people and shuttered businesses impose ongoing financial burdens on communities. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, found that New Orleans lost 95,000 jobs and an estimated $2.9 billion in wages during the first 10 months after Hurricane Katrina.

When extreme weather strikes and state and local governments are overwhelmed, the federal government must often intervene. In the worst cases, the president can declare an emergency or a major disaster, which releases federal funds for the damaged areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, provides financial assistance to local, tribal, and state governments, as well as individual households, after the president declares an emergency or major disaster.

The Center for American Progress examined FEMA data on weather- and wildfire-related disaster declarations between 2005 and 2015 to identify trends in FEMA disaster spending, which is funded by U.S. taxpayers. CAP found that:

- Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA issued more than $67 billion in grants to assist communities and individuals devastated by extreme weather and wildfires. Overall, FEMA spent about $200 per U.S. resident for disaster assistance during that time period.
- FEMA provided the most disaster assistance to Louisiana and New York, which, combined, received more than half of the agency's total assistance over the 10-year period due to damage caused by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy, respectively. Texas, Mississippi, and New Jersey rank third through fifth for FEMA disaster spending between 2005 and 2015.
- The states that received the most FEMA disaster assistance spending per capita were Louisiana ($4,345), Mississippi ($1,607), North Dakota ($843), and New York ($807). In North Dakota, unprecedented flooding events in 2009 and storms in 2011 caused substantial damage, driving up per-person costs among a smaller state population.

These findings likely underestimate the true federal cost—and thus the cost to taxpayers—of extreme weather. FEMA provides assistance in response to the worst natural disasters—those that triggered emergency and major disaster declarations. As a result, the findings do not include the costs of smaller but still destructive storms, costs borne by private insurers, and other government spending, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's disaster assistance program.

As the climate warms, these types of extreme weather and wildfire events could impose an even greater burden on American communities and taxpayers. In order to prepare for this reality, communities must invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and integrate climate considerations into their development plans.

Findings: FEMA is spending billions on natural disasters

Between 2005 and 2015, the president issued 832 separate emergency or disaster declarations for which FEMA provided either public assistance—defined as funding for state, tribal, and local governments—or individual assistance in the form of grants typically made to homeowners and renters whose home damage was not covered by homeowners insurance. (see text box)

Types of FEMA disaster assistance

In fiscal year 2015, Congress allocated $2.9 billion to FEMA federal assistance programs. The assistance FEMA provides in the wake of a presidentially declared emergency or major disaster typically takes one of two forms:

- Public assistance grants fund disaster recovery projects through state, tribal, and local governments and designated nonprofits. The recipients generally spend this money on debris removal, the repair and restoration of damaged public facilities, and other emergency measures.
- The Individuals and Households Program provides smaller grants to homeowners to repair property damage not otherwise covered through insurance. These grants can also cover temporary housing when an extreme weather event or other disaster displaces people.

In addition to these assistance programs, FEMA provides hazard mitigation assistance to prevent or mitigate long-term risks associated with natural disasters. FEMA also offers fire management assistance to state, local, and tribal governments for the “mitigation, management, and control” of certain fires in forests or grasslands. This issue brief only focuses on the public and individual/household assistance programs that are available after a disaster declaration.

Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA spent $67.7 billion on household and public assistance in response to presidentially declared emergencies and major disasters. Of this amount, $14.36 billion was spent on individual and household assistance, and public assistance outlays to state, tribal, and local governments made up the rest—$53.31 billion.

During this 10-year period, there were extreme weather and wildfire events in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories and throughout all seasons. Severe storms were the most frequent cause of disaster declarations, with 470 distinct declarations across the examined time period. Although less common than severe storms, hurricanes caused the most damage. Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA spent $49.5 billion on public and individual assistance to help communities recover from hurricanes. FEMA spent $12.7 billion for assistance related to severe storms over the same 10-year period. (see Table 1)

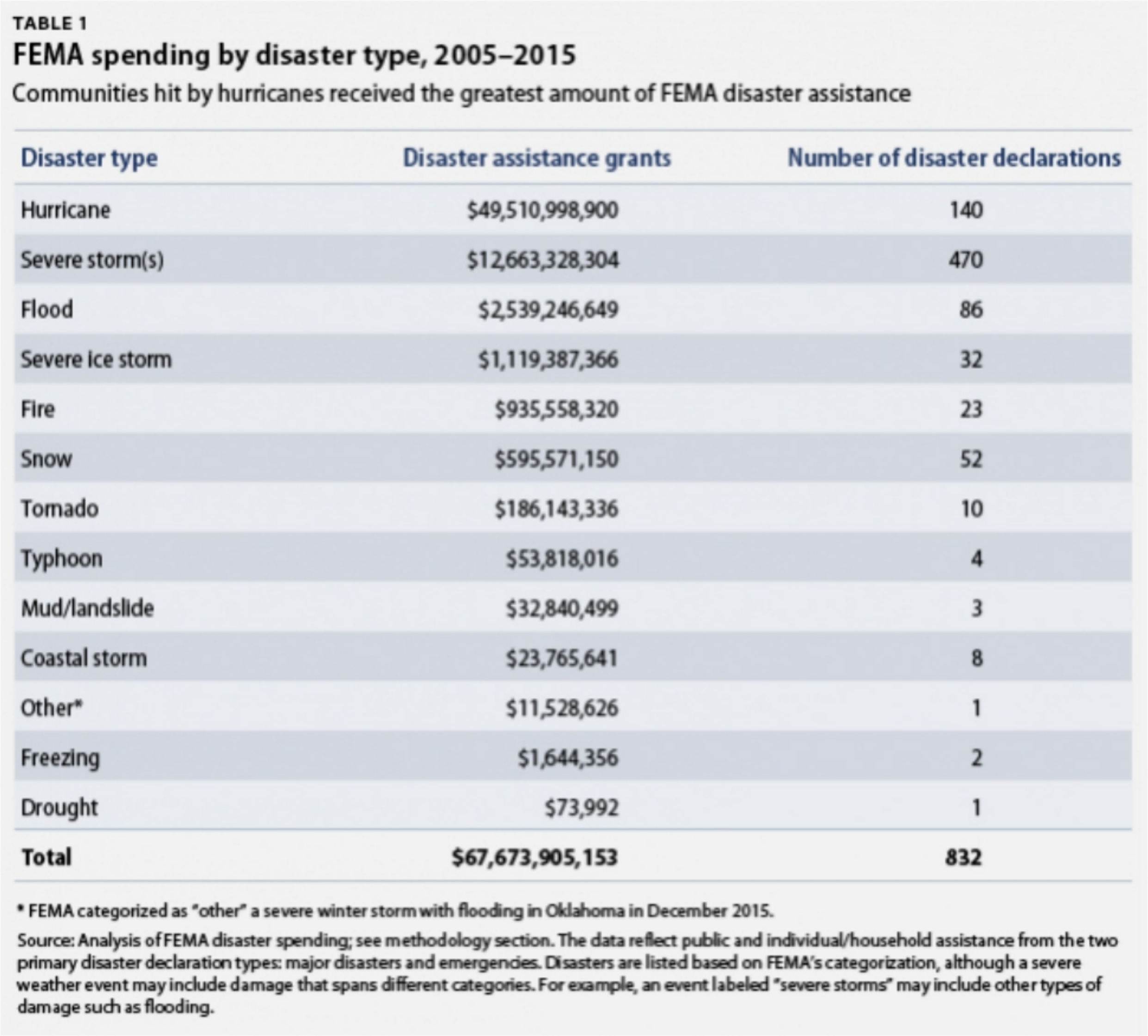

TABLE 1

FEMA spending by disaster type, 2005–2015

Communities hit by hurricanes received the greatest amount of FEMA disaster assistance

Disaster type	Disaster assistance grants	Number of disaster declarations
Hurricane	$49,510,998,900	140
Severe storm(s)	$12,663,328,304	470
Flood	$2,539,246,649	86
Severe ice storm	$1,119,387,366	32
Fire	$935,558,320	23
Snow	$595,571,150	52
Tornado	$186,143,336	10
Typhoon	$53,818,016	4
Mud/landslide	$32,840,499	3
Coastal storm	$23,765,641	8
Other*	$11,528,626	1
Freezing	$1,644,356	2
Drought	$73,992	1
Total	**$67,673,905,153**	**832**

* FEMA categorized as "other" a severe winter storm with flooding in Oklahoma in December 2015.

Source: Analysis of FEMA disaster spending; see methodology section. The data reflect public and individual/household assistance from the two primary disaster declaration types: major disasters and emergencies. Disasters are listed based on FEMA's categorization, although a severe weather event may include damage that spans different categories. For example, an event labeled "severe storms" may include other types of damage such as flooding.

Hurricanes accounted for eight of the top-10 costliest disaster declarations between 2005 and 2010, including hurricanes Katrina, Sandy, Ike, Wilma, Rita, Gustav, Irene, and Isaac. (see Table 2)

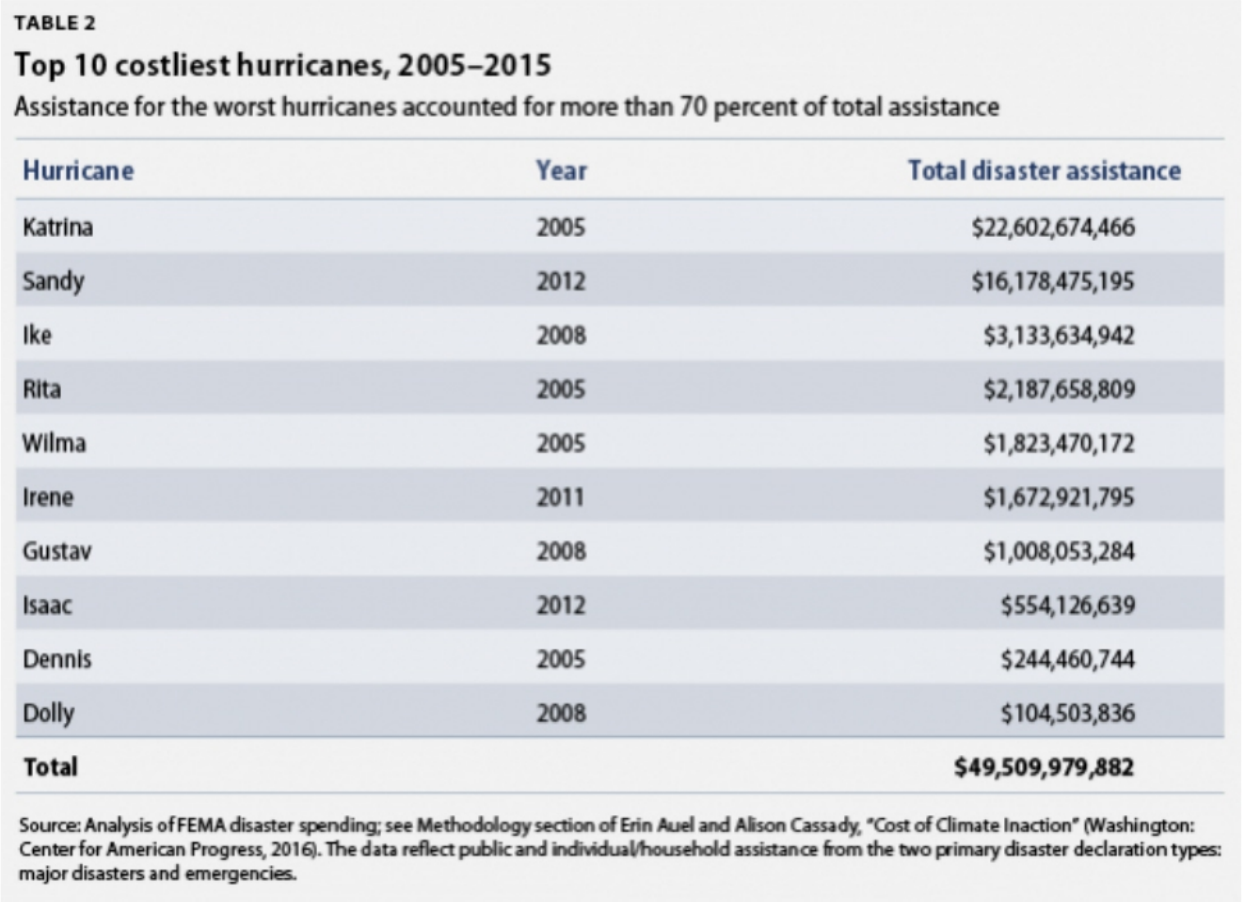

TABLE 2

Top 10 costliest hurricanes, 2005–2015

Assistance for the worst hurricanes accounted for more than 70 percent of total assistance

Hurricane	Year	Total disaster assistance
Katrina	2005	$22,602,674,466
Sandy	2012	$16,178,475,195
Ike	2008	$3,133,634,942
Rita	2005	$2,187,658,809
Wilma	2005	$1,823,470,172
Irene	2011	$1,672,921,795
Gustav	2008	$1,008,053,284
Isaac	2012	$554,126,639
Dennis	2005	$244,460,744
Dolly	2008	$104,503,836
Total		**$49,509,979,882**

Source: Analysis of FEMA disaster spending; see Methodology section of Erin Auel and Alison Cassady, "Cost of Climate Inaction" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2016). The data reflect public and individual/household assistance from the two primary disaster declaration types: major disasters and emergencies.

Accordingly, although the total assistance by state varied widely, FEMA directed significant disaster spending to states that experienced historic hurricane damage during the period examined. These states include Louisiana and Mississippi, where Hurricane Katrina hit hardest in 2005, and New York and New Jersey, where Hurricane Sandy landed in 2012. (see Table 3) Nationwide, FEMA spent more than $22 billion in assistance responding to Hurricane Katrina, including allocations for states that provided assistance related to evacuations. The agency provided nearly $16 billion in household and public assistance grants in response to Hurricane Sandy.

TABLE 3

Total and per-capita FEMA disaster assistance by state, 2005–2015

FEMA spent more than $200 per person in disaster assistance over a 10-year period

State	Per-capita assistance	Per-capita rank	Total disaster assistance	Total rank
Alabama	$150	15	$711,604,498	13
Alaska	$183	13	$129,549,578	39
Arizona	$8	49	$51,932,817	44
Arkansas	$181	14	$522,619,249	19
California	$35	37	$1,302,294,588	8
Colorado	$93	24	$468,056,941	20
Connecticut	$91	25	$323,351,324	25
Delaware	$22	46	$19,413,415	49
District of Columbia	$35	36	$21,532,487	47
Florida	$142	16	$2,696,165,823	6
Georgia	$32	38	$306,707,402	26
Hawaii	$31	40	$42,856,714	45
Idaho	$7	51	$10,773,372	51
Illinois	$72	28	$924,194,778	9
Indiana	$53	32	$343,913,936	23
Iowa	$586	5	$1,785,388,736	7
Kansas	$320	8	$907,177,555	10
Kentucky	$125	18	$541,183,086	17
Louisiana	$4,345	1	$19,977,235,493	1
Maine	$66	30	$86,873,385	42
Maryland	$32	39	$183,720,453	37
Massachusetts	$83	26	$547,743,836	16
Michigan	$19	47	$193,000,759	36
Minnesota	$57	31	$302,911,528	27
Mississippi	$1,607	2	$4,750,705,397	4
Missouri	$131	17	$781,462,067	11
Montana	$68	29	$66,746,845	43
Nebraska	$205	10	$375,796,419	22
Nevada	$8	50	$20,416,318	48
New Hampshire	$111	21	$145,443,728	38
New Jersey	$319	9	$2,811,219,347	5

Nonhurricane events can cause significant and costly damage as well. In August 2016, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, experienced historic flooding from torrential rainfall. As of August 23, 2016, the floods had killed 13 people, and more than 100,000 people had applied for federal assistance. Preliminary analysis from Climate Central and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, found that increased temperatures due to climate change increased the likelihood of intense downpours in Louisiana by 40 percent. Floods are among the most costly extreme weather events that can hit an area, as they can destroy large areas of property and can take a long time to recede. Between 2005 and 2015, flooding caused eight of the 10 costliest nonhurricane disaster declarations and occurred across several different regions. (see Table 4)

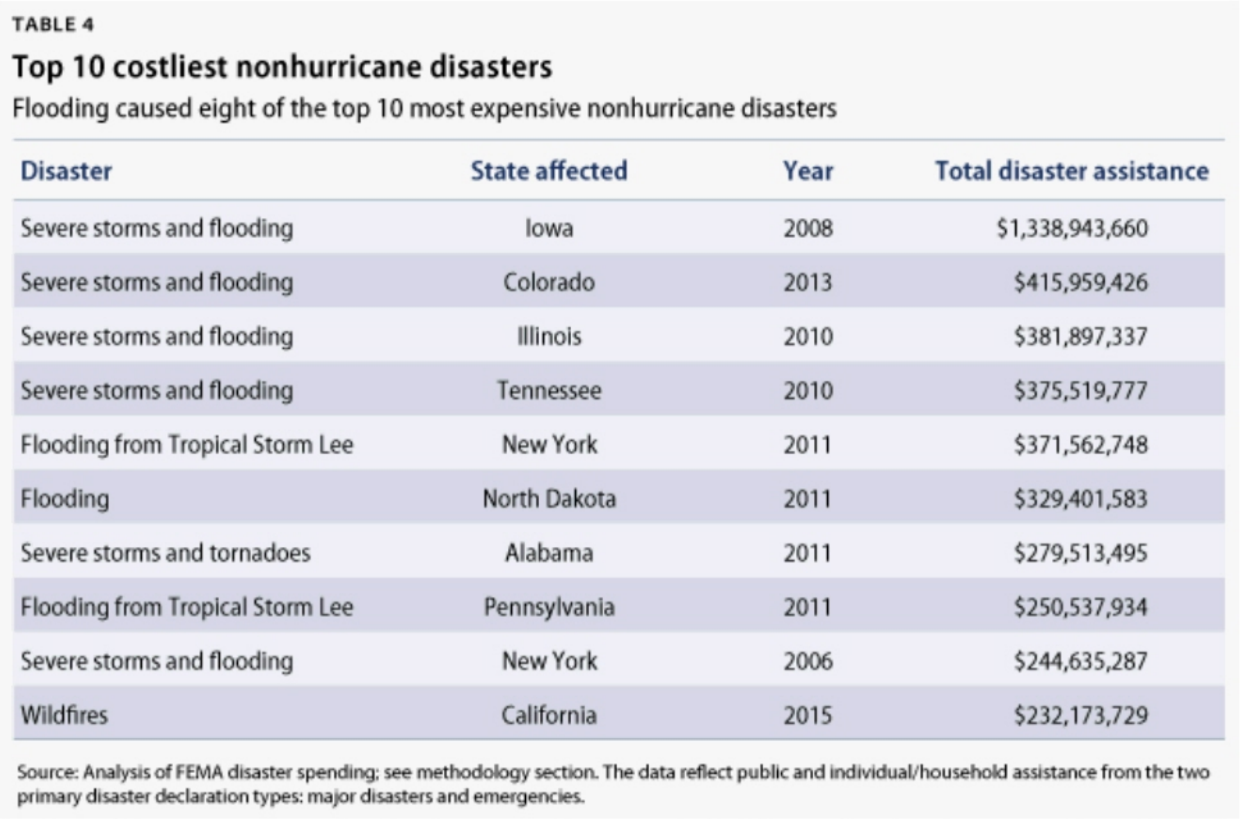

TABLE 4

Top 10 costliest nonhurricane disasters

Flooding caused eight of the top 10 most expensive nonhurricane disasters

Disaster	State affected	Year	Total disaster assistance
Severe storms and flooding	Iowa	2008	$1,338,943,660
Severe storms and flooding	Colorado	2013	$415,959,426
Severe storms and flooding	Illinois	2010	$381,897,337
Severe storms and flooding	Tennessee	2010	$375,519,777
Flooding from Tropical Storm Lee	New York	2011	$371,562,748
Flooding	North Dakota	2011	$329,401,583
Severe storms and tornadoes	Alabama	2011	$279,513,495
Flooding from Tropical Storm Lee	Pennsylvania	2011	$250,537,934
Severe storms and flooding	New York	2006	$244,635,287
Wildfires	California	2015	$232,173,729

Source: Analysis of FEMA disaster spending; see methodology section. The data reflect public and individual/household assistance from the two primary disaster declaration types: major disasters and emergencies.

Looking at the per-capita costs of extreme weather reveals that these disasters have a profound impact on individuals and communities. Louisiana received $4,345 per person in FEMA disaster spending between 2005 and 2015, the most of any state. Mississippi received the second-highest amount per capita—more than $1,600. Overall, FEMA spent about $200 per U.S. resident for disaster assistance between 2005 and 2015. (see Table 3)

Damage is not just limited to coastal areas. States in the central United States with relatively small populations have been hit hard by extreme weather and subsequently received significant assistance from FEMA. North Dakota, for example, ranks third for per-capita FEMA assistance over the analyzed decade due largely to eight distinct flooding events. Iowa ranks fifth for per-capita FEMA spending and seventh for total spending because of severe storms that caused major statewide flooding in 2008. Of the 10 states with the highest per-capita spending, half are located in the central United States. (see Table 3)

Conclusion

Extreme weather is already costing taxpayers and the federal government valuable public dollars and resources. Americans have recognized these costs; in a 2015 *New York Times* survey, 83 percent of respondents said that unmitigated climate change poses “a very or somewhat serious problem in the future.”

Because of the damage already caused to the climate, communities in the United States and around the globe will experience more frequent and intense extreme weather events, even if world leaders take immediate action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Faced with this reality, FEMA has proposed a rule that would establish a deductible for disaster assistance in order to encourage states to make investments in resilience measures before disasters occur. This rule could incentivize states to invest in climate-smart infrastructure to minimize the financial and human toll of extreme weather.

The FEMA proposal is one among many efforts to push communities to better prepare for storms, floods, and other natural disasters—an effort made even more urgent because of climate change—rather than focusing only on responding to a disaster’s aftermath. Resilience, however, is only one prong in a coordinated response to climate change. The world must also focus on mitigating the worst impacts of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning the global economy to cleaner, low-carbon forms of energy.

Methodology

CAP examined FEMA data on presidential declarations of major disasters and emergencies between 2005 and 2015. The data reflect the two primary disaster declaration types: major disaster and emergency. CAP analyzed FEMA data on public and individual/household assistance spending in response to these declarations. The data were last updated on July 12, 2016.

For the per-capita analysis in Table 3, CAP used population data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. To calculate the per-capita costs by state, CAP averaged the state population totals from 2005, 2010, and 2015. The national per-capita figure in Table 3 reflects FEMA disaster assistance to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories.

CAP developed a methodology for excluding and including disasters to ensure the analysis only includes declarations that reflect the types of events that could become more common with unmitigated climate change.

We included public and individual assistance payments made in response to major disaster declarations and emergency declarations for the following types of incidents: coastal storms, drought, flooding, freezing, hurricanes, mudslides from flooding, severe ice storms, severe storms, snow, tornadoes, typhoons, and wildfires. We excluded public and individual assistance payments made for the following types of incidents that occurred between 2005 and 2015: water main breaks, terrorism, explosions, earthquakes, chemical spills, tsunamis, the 2009 presidential inauguration, bridge collapses, and volcanoes.

Dem candidates' solution to DAPL: Build a refinery, reroute pipeline (WDAY6)

By Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 6:20 a.m.

BISMARCK — North Dakota Democrats running for congressional, statewide and legislative office proposed Thursday a state-owned oil refinery and rerouting the Dakota Access Pipeline as potential solutions to the ongoing dispute over the four-state oil pipeline.

Chase Iron Eyes, a Standing Rock Sioux Tribe member and Fort Yates attorney challenging incumbent Republican Rep. Kevin Cramer for North Dakota's lone U.S. House seat, joined other candidates in calling for better communication between state government, protesters and pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners of Dallas.

"We feel that we can reach a peaceable resolution but that all sides need to be talking to each other," Iron Eyes said during a press conference at a Bismarck hotel. "The eyes of the world are on North Dakota right now."

Iron Eyes, District 30 House candidate Tom Asbridge of Bismarck and District 34 Senate candidate David Gipp of Mandan, a Standing Rock Sioux member and former president of United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, suggested the state-owned Bank of North Dakota partner with private investors to build a major oil refinery to create jobs and reduce export of crude oil.

"I'm not saying we could eliminate all of the pipeline issue, but we could vastly reduce it," Gipp said, though Iron Eyes later acknowledged the state would have to export refined product and "we're not going to ever get away from the pipeline issue."

Asbridge said if the Dakota Access Pipeline must be built, it should run north of Bismarck — an alternative route the company considered early on but eliminated in favor of the current route that crosses the Missouri River less than a mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

Iron Eyes said they're not anti-oil, but the state needs leadership to incentivize and facilitate such action. "Because no matter what we say, there are 4,000 people that are willing to engage in civil disobedience to protect their interests," he said, referring to the self-described "water protectors" encamped just north of the reservation.

North Dakota Republican Party Chairman Kelly Armstrong, a state senator from Dickinson, said he's comfortable that Dakota Access chose the route and "went through the proper process." As for the refinery idea, he noted the Tesoro refinery that opened near Dickinson in May 2015 was the country's first new refinery since the 1970s.

"Even if that idea had any merit, you are more than likely a decade out from that even being a possibility," he said. "It's not as simple as saying build a refinery here and then we won't have to move as much oil. ... Right now we need serious solutions and not overly simplistic ones."

Also speaking at Thursday's press conference were state insurance commissioner candidate Ruth Buffalo of Mandaree, a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation; Public Service Commission candidate Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun, a Standing Rock member from Bismarck; and District 28 Senate candidate Dustin Peyer of Driscoll.

The Standing Rock tribe claims in its lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that the agency violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other laws in issuing permits for the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline, which will stretch from the Bakken oilfields to Patoka, Ill., and is more than 60 percent completed.

Construction within 20 miles of Lake Oahe is on hold as the Corps and courts consider the tribe's claims that it wasn't properly consulted and that the project should have undergone more extensive review.

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 9 Sep 2016 19:36:45 -0400
To: Depalo, Lee;Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline news

Hi Lee and Megan,

Please follow this link for another update:

http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/09/the-obama-administration-temporarily-blocks-the-dakota-access-pipeline/499454/

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 9 Sep 2016 16:55:22 -0400
To: Depalo, Lee;Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline Update

Hi Lee and Megan,

I'm not sure if you are already aware or not, but I just saw this in the news.

Please see link:

http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/09/493280504/judge-rules-that-construction-can-proceed-on-dakota-access-pipeline

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

"Teamwork makes the DREAM work."

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Sep 2016 11:32:29 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: R8 External Affairs
Subject: ND delegation call for federal help with pipeline

Saw this and thought I would share. Could not find the story in any other outlets. I also couldn't find the press release referenced in the story.

http://www.myndnow.com/news/bismarck-news/nd-congressional-delegation-asks-for-federal-help

M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Sep 2016 07:32:29 -0400
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http://www.myndnow.com/news/bismarck-news/nd-congressional-delegation-asks-for-federal-help

M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 13 Sep 2016 22:06:34 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: ND GOV. Press Release on Pipeline Protest

Wanted to make sure you saw this. Especially since I just got the ask from IHS.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Zent, Jeffrey L.
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2016 10:45:27 PM
Subject: DALRYMPLE PRESSES WHITE HOUSE, FEDERAL AGENICES TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SAFETY EFFORTS

State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor
Jack Dalrymple
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 13, 2016

Contact: Jeff Zent or Jody Link
701.328.2200

DALRYMPLE PRESSES WHITE HOUSE, FEDERAL AGENICES TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SAFETY EFFORTS

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Jack Dalrymple today called on the White House and federal agencies to provide federal assistance in maintaining peace and public safety for the duration of protest activities involving the Dakota Access Pipeline.

“The federal government’s announcement on Friday regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline has extended indefinitely the period of time necessary to bring the issue to a resolution,” Gov. Dalrymple said. “With a decision on the pipeline delayed indefinitely, the federal government shares in the responsibility of ensuring that peace and order are maintained.”

Dalrymple spoke today with White House officials and has also been in contact with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Interior and the Department of Justice to press for federal assistance, both personnel and financial support. Dalrymple called for federal officials to provide assistance for as long as resources are needed to maintain public safety.

"I'm going to hold the federal government to its word, when the Corps and the departments of Interior and Justice delayed a decision on the pipeline's construction, and offered to deploy resources to North Dakota to help "defuse tensions, support peaceful protest, and maintain public safety,"' Dalrymple said.

Dalrymple said he has also spoken with the state's Congressional Delegation, requesting their assistance in securing federal support. That support is needed in the form of financial assistance and in law enforcement personnel.

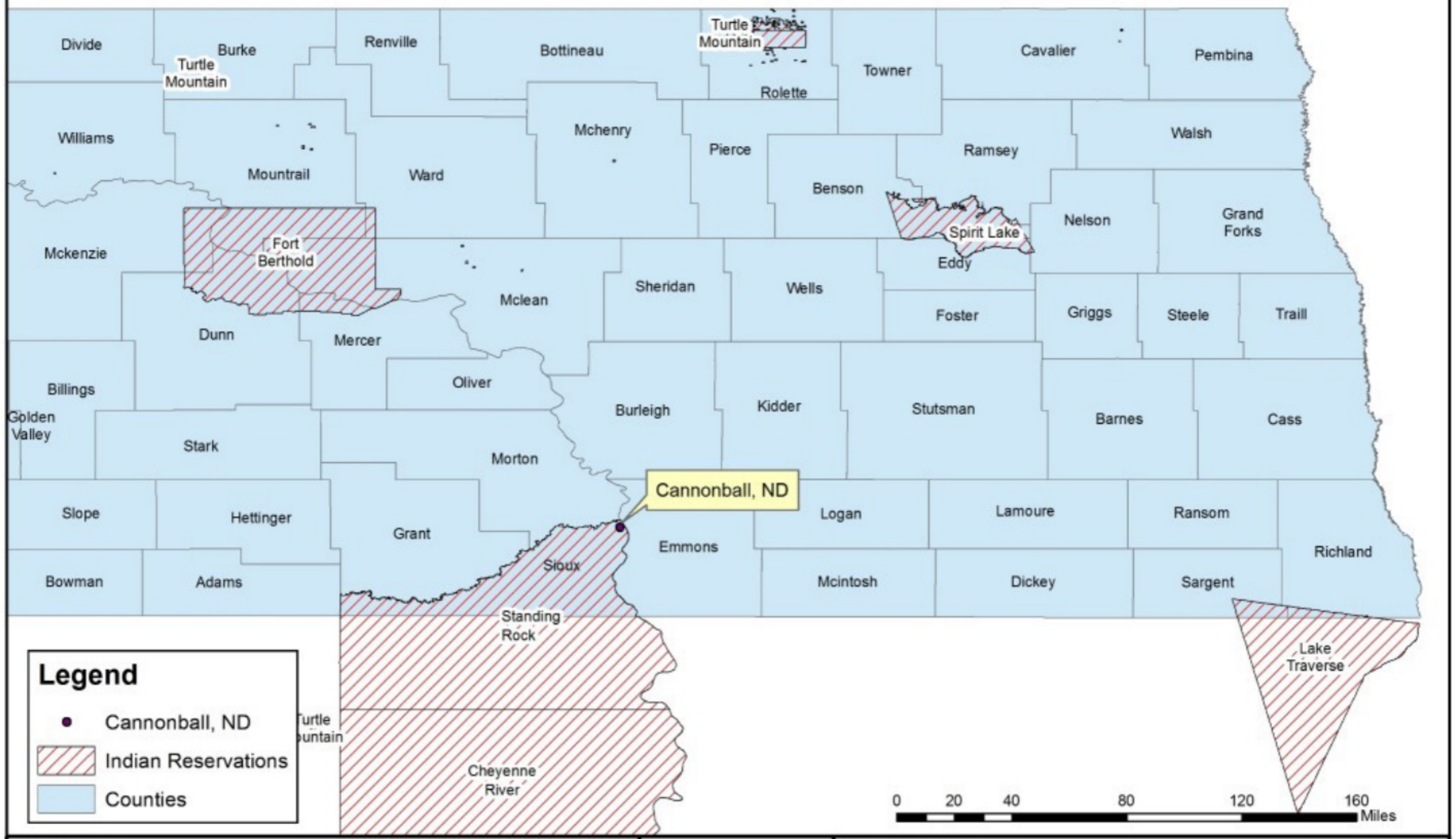
To date, the state Highway Patrol has incurred more than $700,000 in expenses associated with pipeline protest activities. Morton County officials have reported incurring costs of about $100,000 a week for a total of approximately $400,000.

Morton County Sheriff's deputies and state troopers today reported arresting 22 people at a pipeline construction site near Glen Ullin. Additionally, the North Dakota Department of Transportation and Highway Patrol today again closed ND Highway 1806 to southbound traffic about six miles south of Mandan. The highway was closed due to a large number of pedestrians and vehicles along the roadway.

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

State of North Dakota			3. Incident Period: **August 16, 2016**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Benson
Ramsey
Walsh
Fort Berthold
Mckenzie
Spirit Lake
Eddy
Nelson
Grand Forks
Mclean
Sheridan
Wells
Foster
Griggs
Steele
Traill
Dunn
Mercer
Oliver
Billings
Golden Valley
Burleigh
Kidder
Stutsman
Barnes
Cass
Stark
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Grant
Sioux
Emmons
Logan
Lamoure
Ransom
Richland
Bowman
Adams
Mcintosh
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Standing Rock
Lake Traverse
Turtle Mountain
Cheyenne River
Legend
● Cannonball, ND
▨ Indian Reservations
🟦 Counties
0
20
40
80
120
160
Miles

4. Source(s): FEMA		5. Prepared by: Region VIII GIS

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

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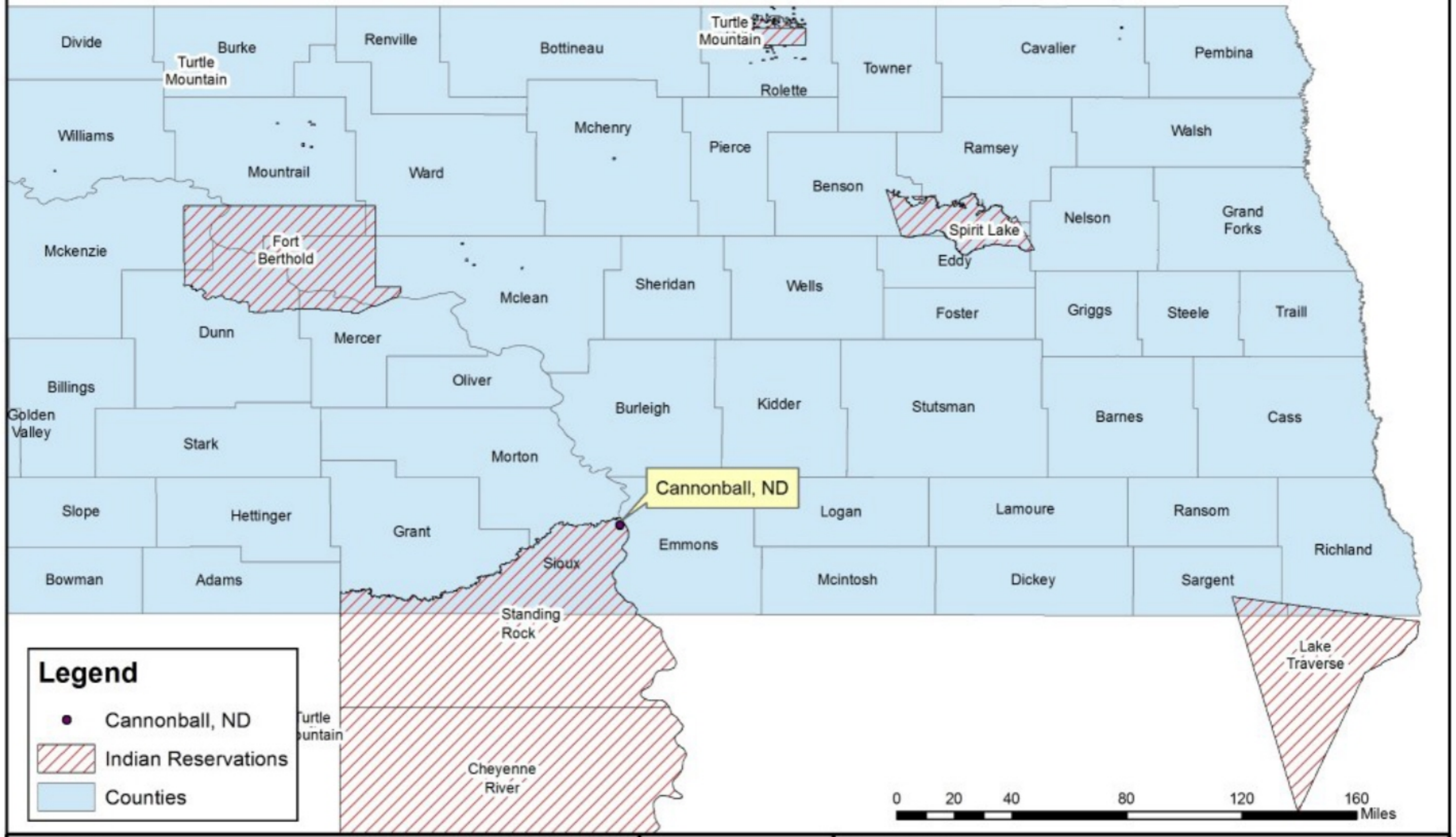
State of North Dakota

3. Incident Period:
August 16, 2016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Cavalier
Pembina
Williams
Mountrail
Ward
Mchenry
Pierce
Benson
Ramsey
Walsh
Spirit Lake
Nelson
Grand Forks
Mckenzie
Fort Berthold
Mclean
Sheridan
Wells
Eddy
Foster
Griggs
Steele
Traill
Dunn
Mercer
Oliver
Burleigh
Kidder
Stutsman
Barnes
Cass
Billings
Golden Valley
Stark
Morton
Cannonball, ND
Slope
Hettinger
Grant
Sioux
Emmons
Logan
Lamoure
Ransom
Richland
Bowman
Adams
Mcintosh
Dickey
Sargent
Standing Rock
Lake Traverse
Turtle Mountain
Cheyenne River
Legend
● Cannonball, ND
▨ Indian Reservations
Counties
0 20 40 80 120 160
Miles

4. Source(s):
FEMA

5. Prepared by:
Region VIII GIS

Dakota Access Pipeline

Protest

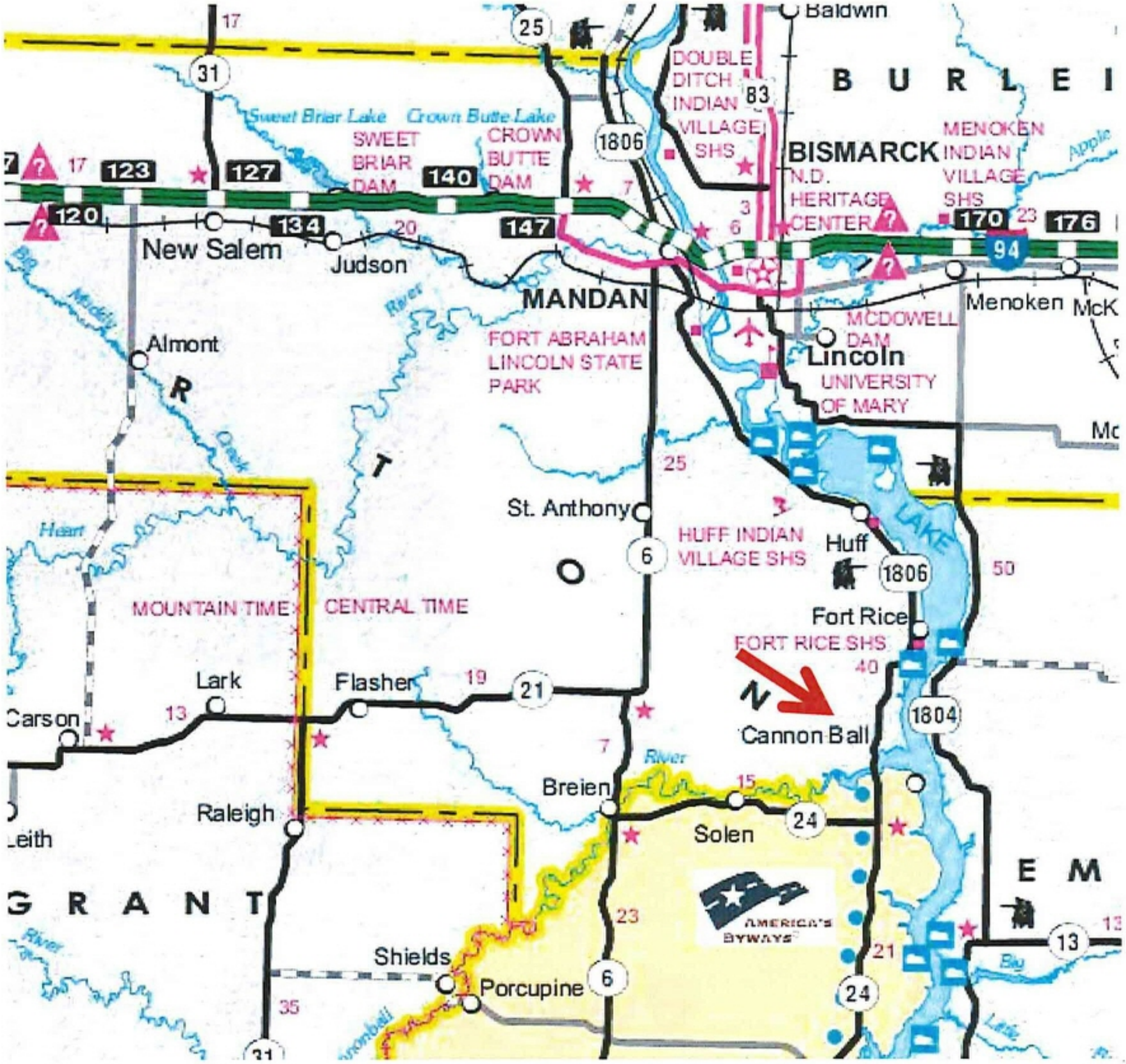
SHERIFF
MORTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

August 10-October 12, 2016

Location

- Extreme SE corner of Morton County
- East side of N.D. Hwy 1806 at approx. mile marker 37
- Approx. 32 miles south of Mandan

- The Spirit Camp is located on the Standing Rock Reservation.
- The Seven Council's Fire Camp is located on Army Corps of Engineers land north of the Cannonball River.


Baldwin
BURLEI
BISMARCK
DOUBLE DITCH INDIAN VILLAGE SHS
MENOKEN INDIAN VILLAGE SHS
N.D. HERITAGE CENTER
Sweet Briar Lake
Crown Butte Lake
SWEET BRIAR DAM
CROWN BUTTE DAM
New Salem
Judson
MANDAN
Menoken
McK
MCDOWELL DAM
Lincoln
UNIVERSITY OF MARY
FORT ABRAHAM LINCOLN STATE PARK
Almont
R
T
O
St. Anthony
HUFF INDIAN VILLAGE SHS
Huff
LAKE
Fort Rice
FORT RICE SHS
Cannon Ball
Heart
MOUNTAIN TIME
CENTRAL TIME
Lark
Flasher
Carson
Breien
Solen
Raleigh
Leith
GRANT
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Shields
Porcupine
AMERICA'S BYWAYS
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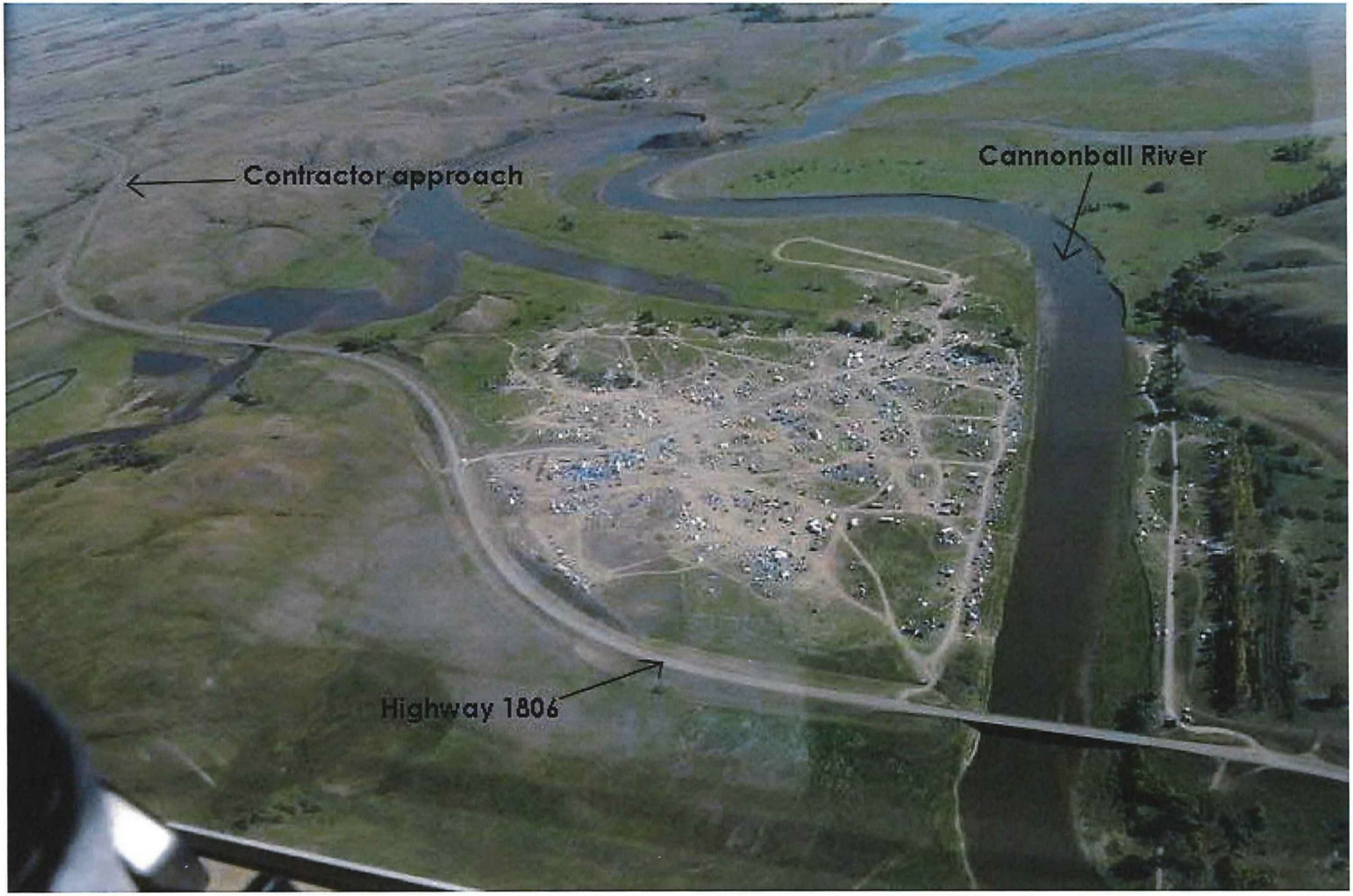
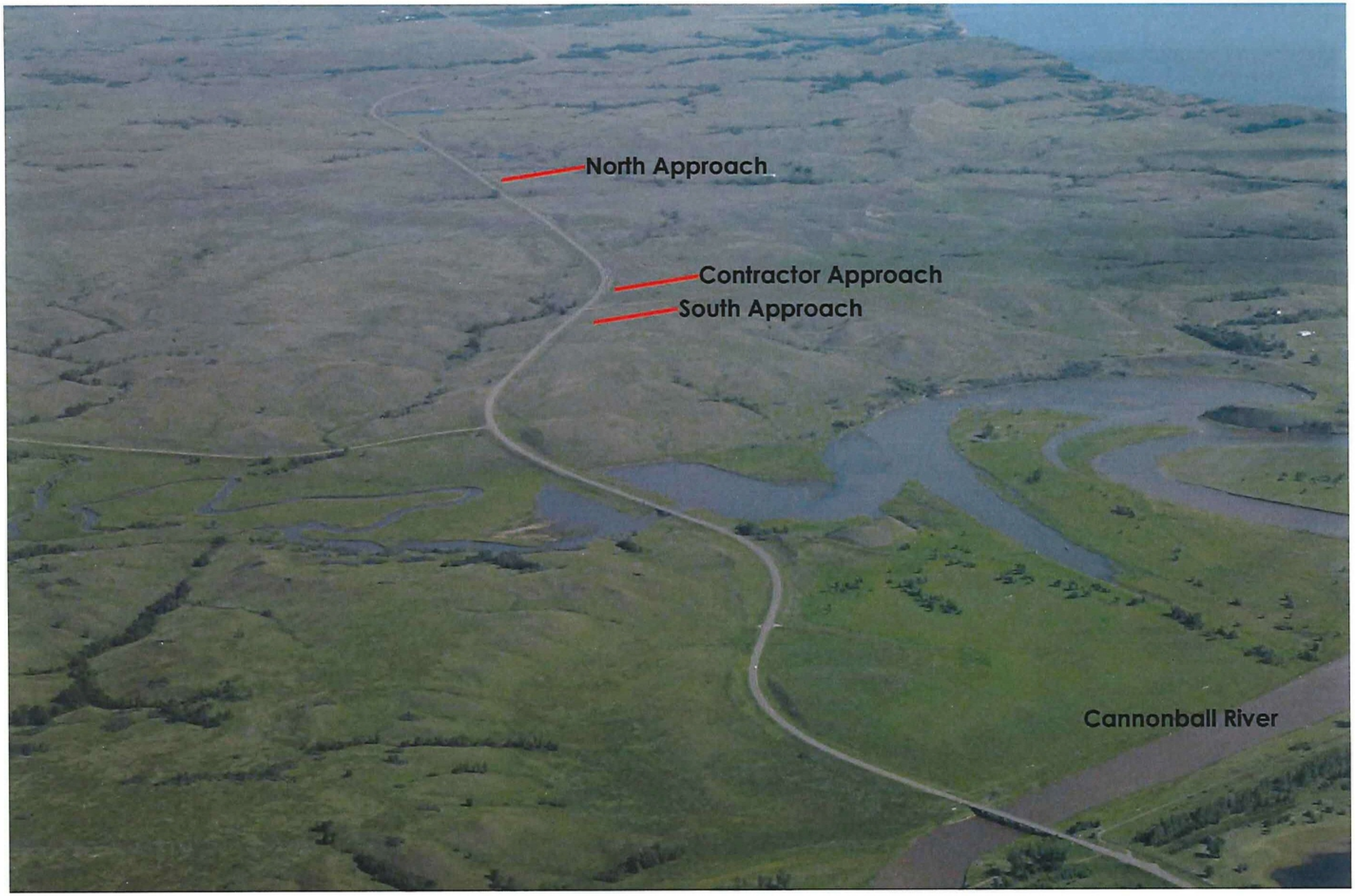

Contractor approach
Cannonball River
Highway 1806

Cannonball River is the dividing line between Sioux County (Standing Rock Reservation) and Morton County


North Approach
Contractor Approach
South Approach
Cannonball River

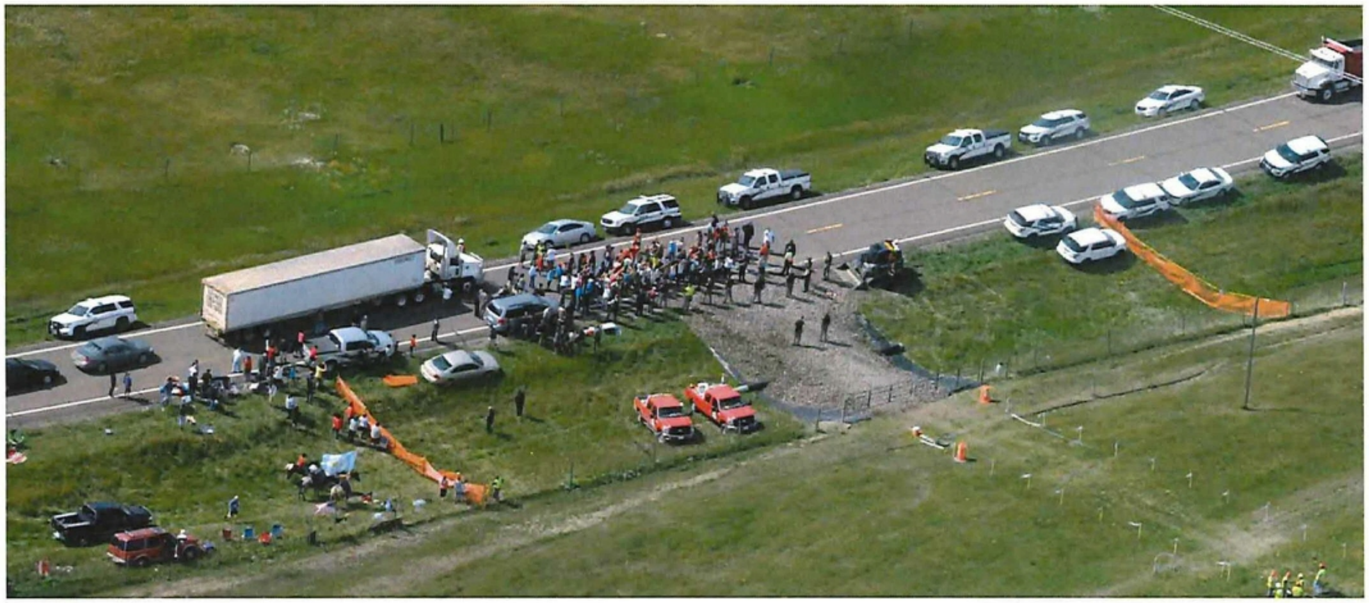
August 7-13

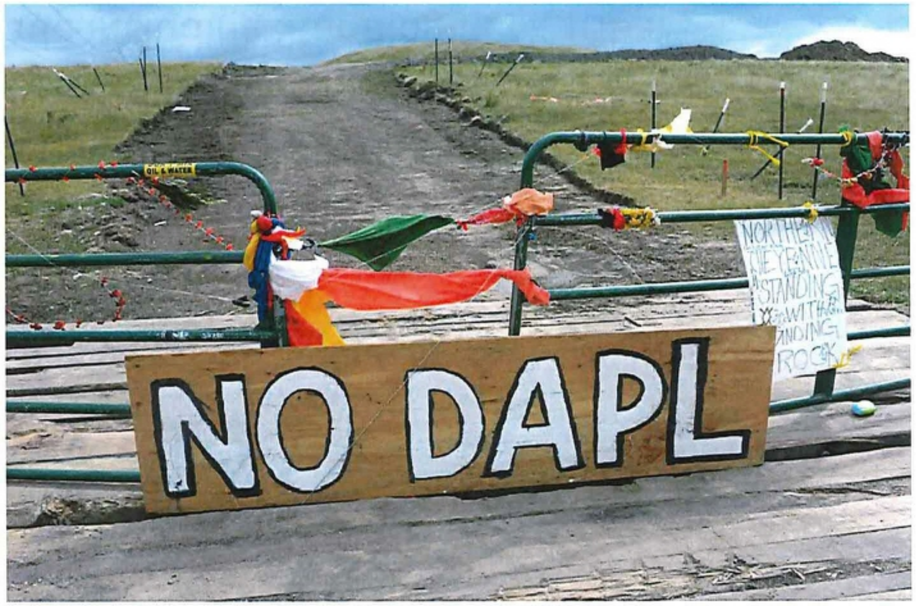
August 10: Protesters started to gather and blocked access to the north and south approaches

August 11: Protesters blocked roadway and hampered construction activities. LE assisted with establishment of contractor approach. 13 arrests made

August 12: Protesters entered private property and blocked construction site. LE cleared the contractor approach. 6 arrests made including Standing Rock Tribal Chairman and a tribal council member

August 13: Construction halted. Protesters marched on Highway 1806 and blocked the bridge over Cannonball River.




NORTHERN
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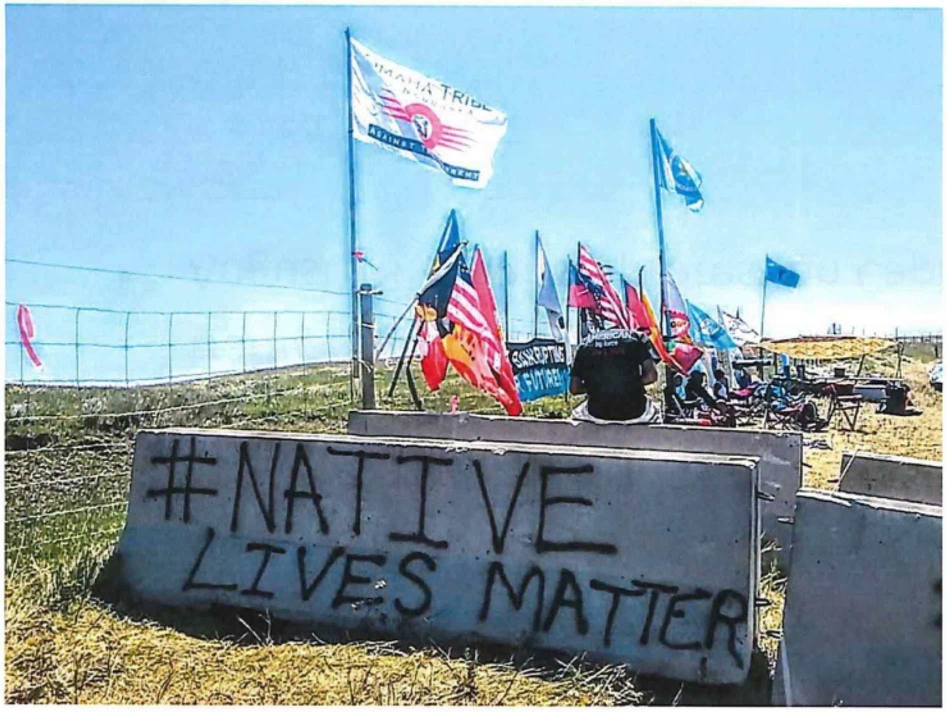
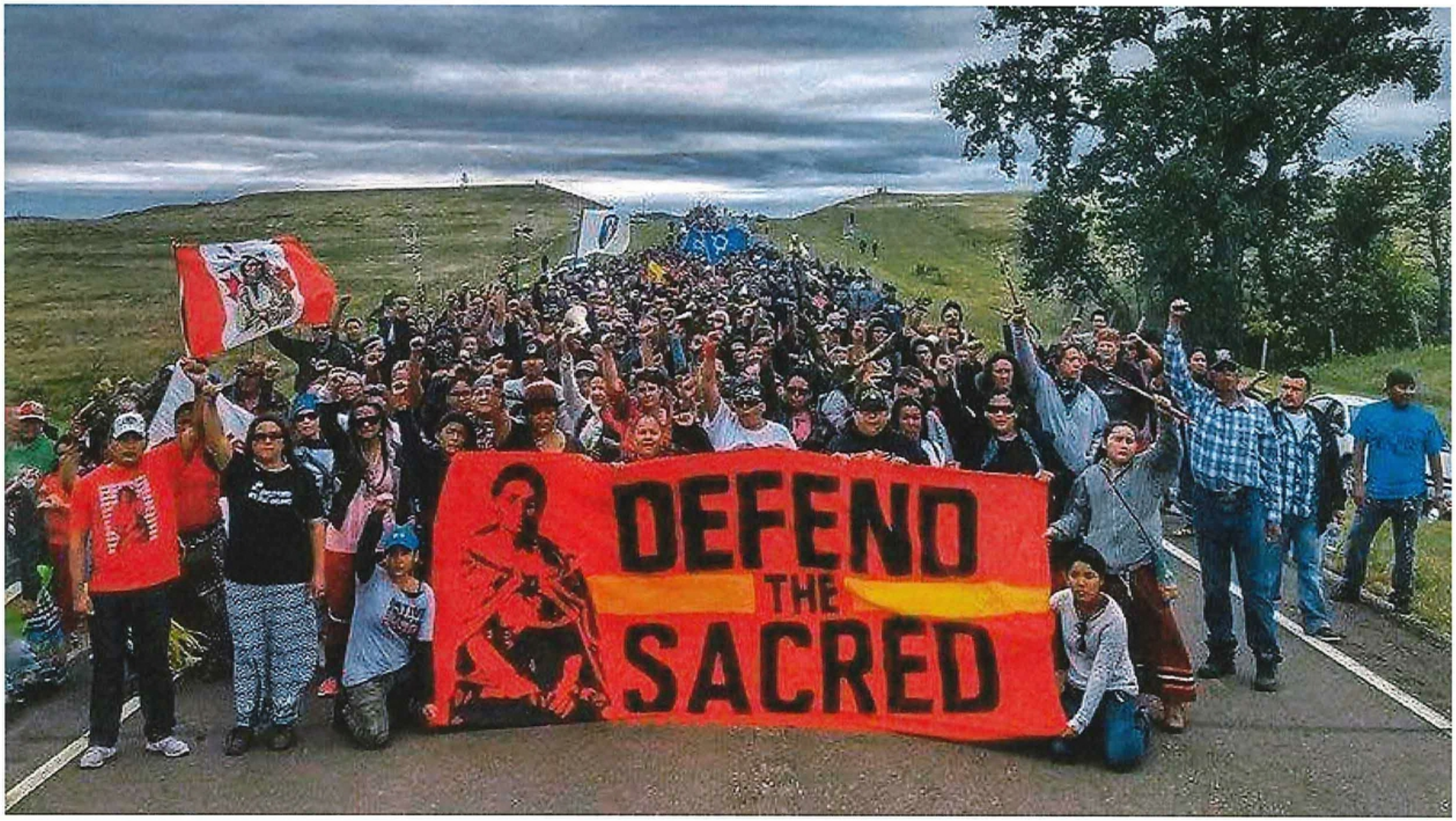

#NATIVE
LIVES MATTER

our children
NEED
CLEAN
WATER

August 14-20

- August 15: Protesters on horseback pushed LE barricade line back. Approx. 50 protesters entered private property. Reports of vandalism included cutting a hole in a fence, breaking windows, and assaulting a private DAPL security worker. All construction ceased. 10 arrests.
  - Emergency Declaration occurred on behalf of Morton County.
- August 16: More vandalism reports. 150-200 protesters reported at Spirit Camp.
- August 17: Traffic Control Point established on Hwy 1806. Southbound traffic rerouted (unless local).
- August 18: Planned protest on Capitol Grounds with no incident.

45

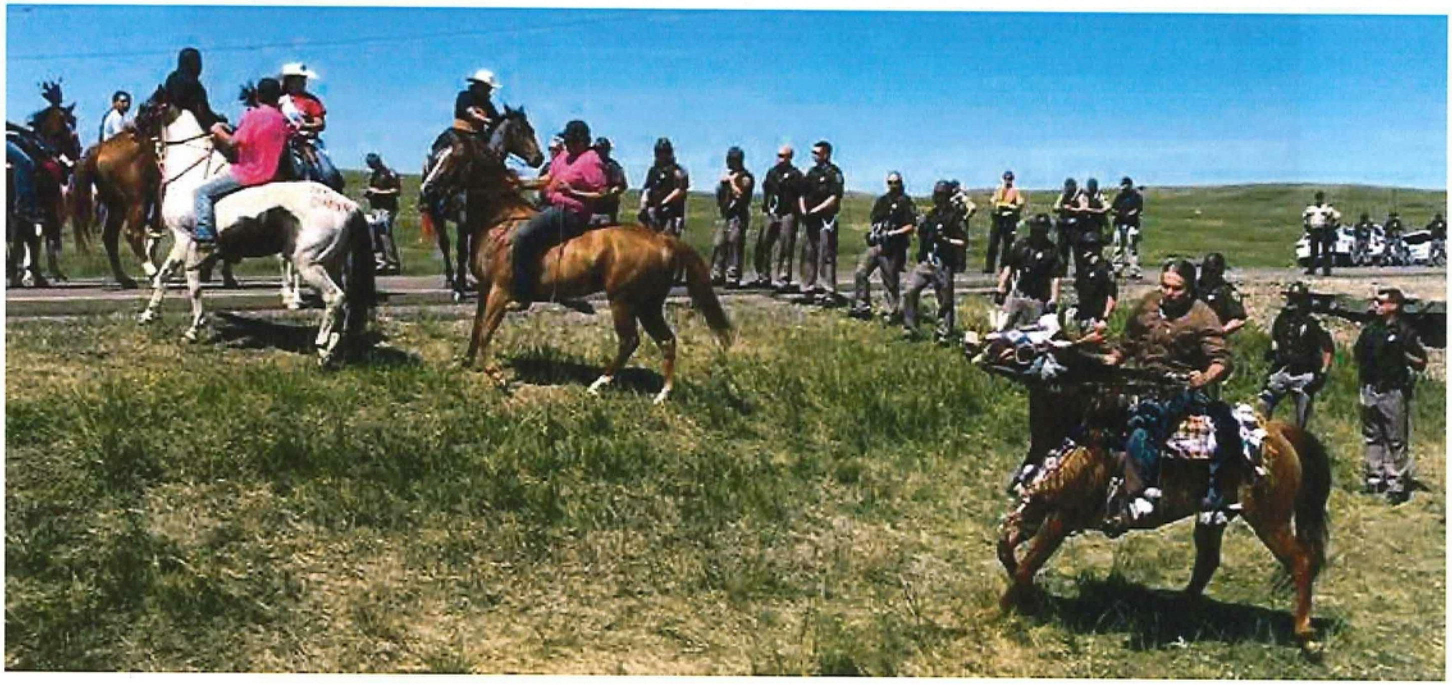


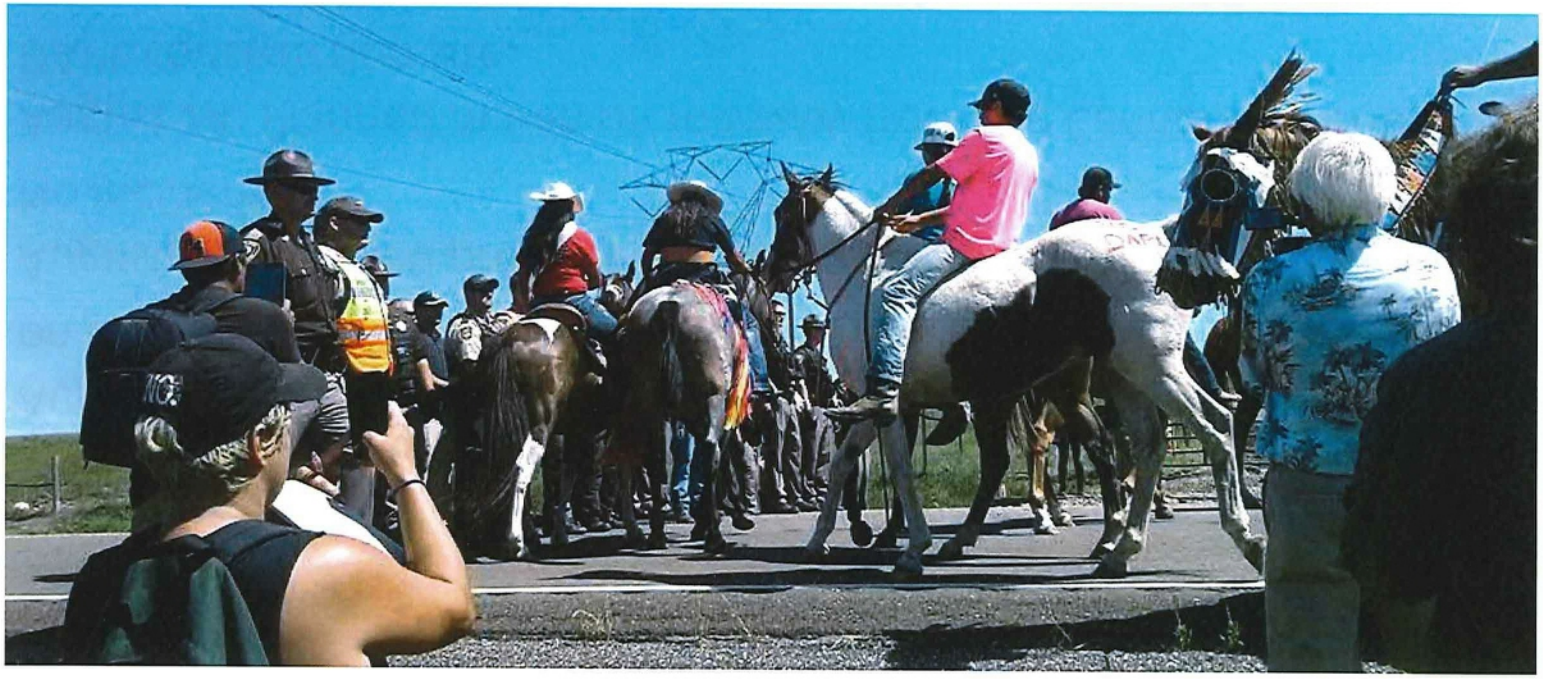
DEFEND
THE
SACRED

UNICORNRIOT.NINJA

WE ARE THE FUTURE
NO DAPL

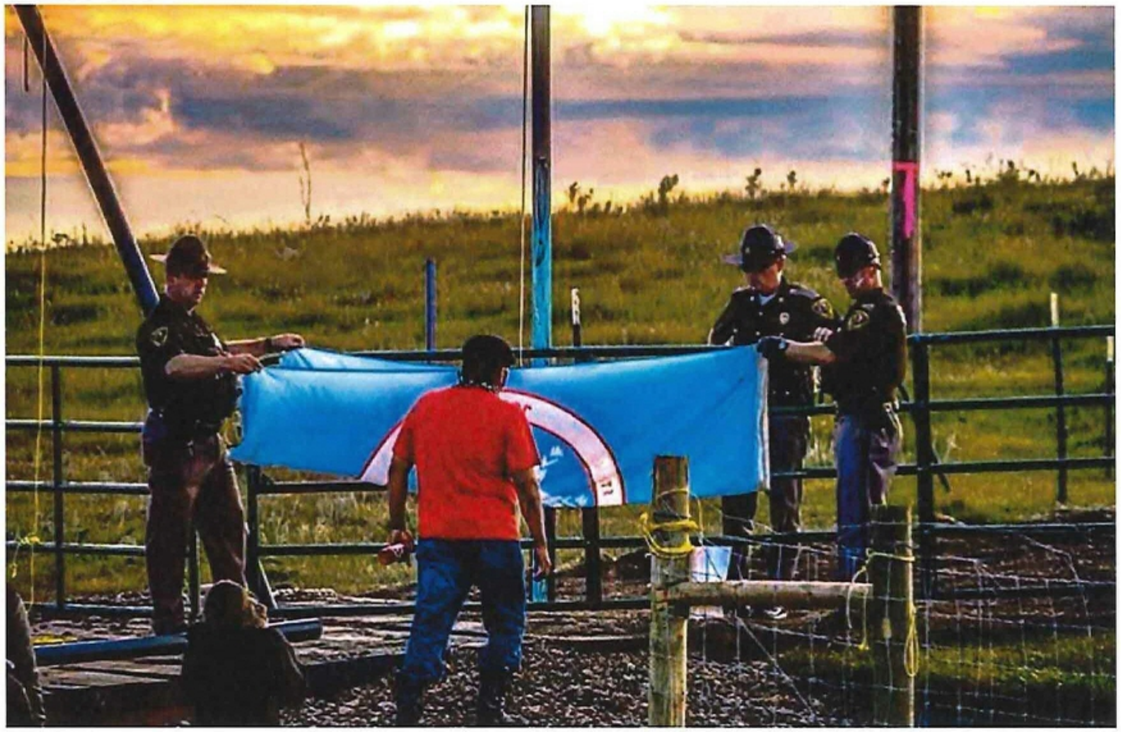
#NATIVE LIVES MATTER
Children Don't Drink Oil
#FTP
NO DAPL
NO DAPL
NO DAPL
MNI WICONI



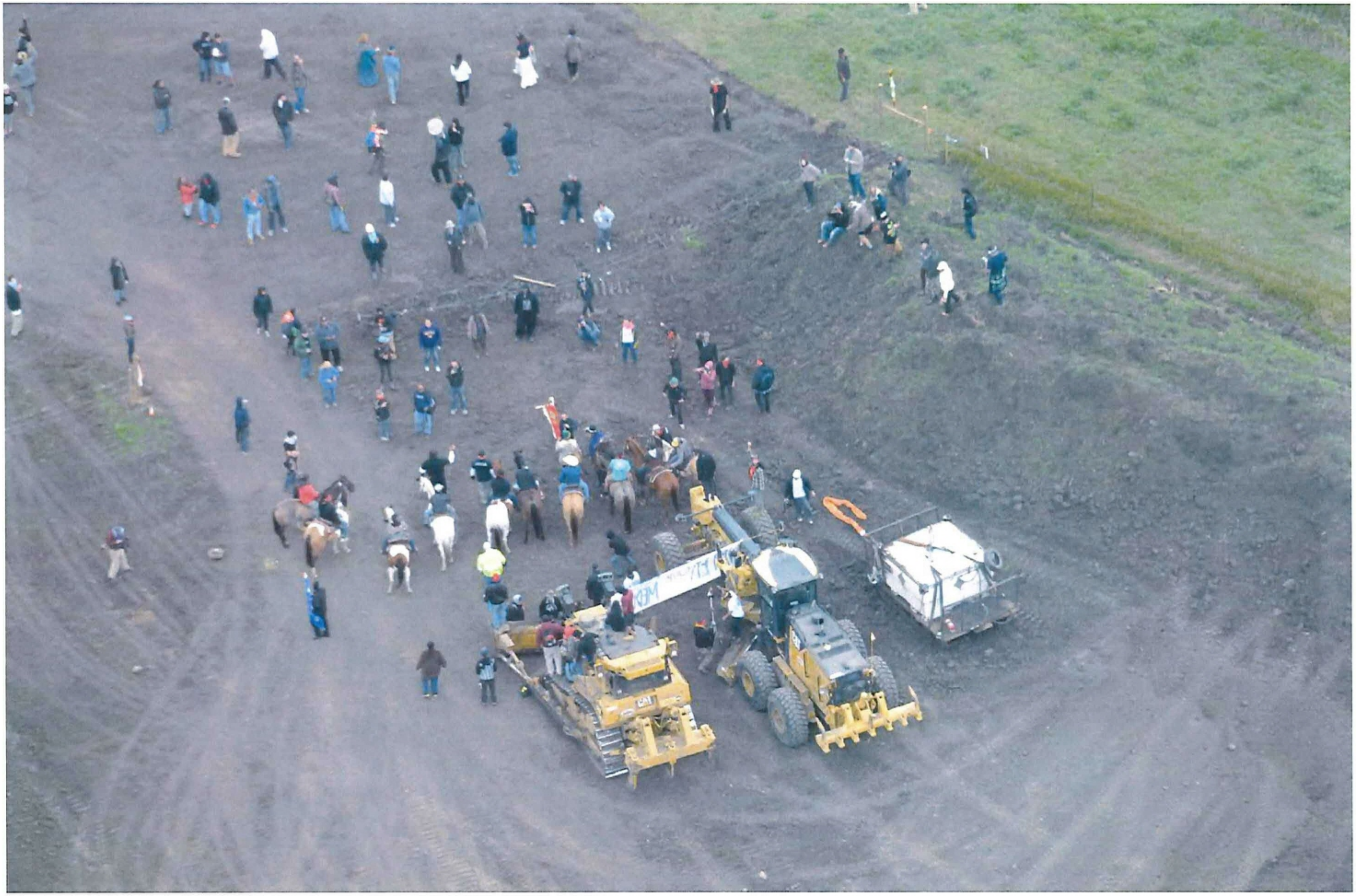


August 21-27

- August 21: Laser strike reported from NDHP pilot. Also said laser was used on 8/17.
- August 23: Planned protester march across Memorial Bridge in Bismarck. No incident.
- August 24: Planned march on roadway from the Cannonball Bridge to DAPL construction site.

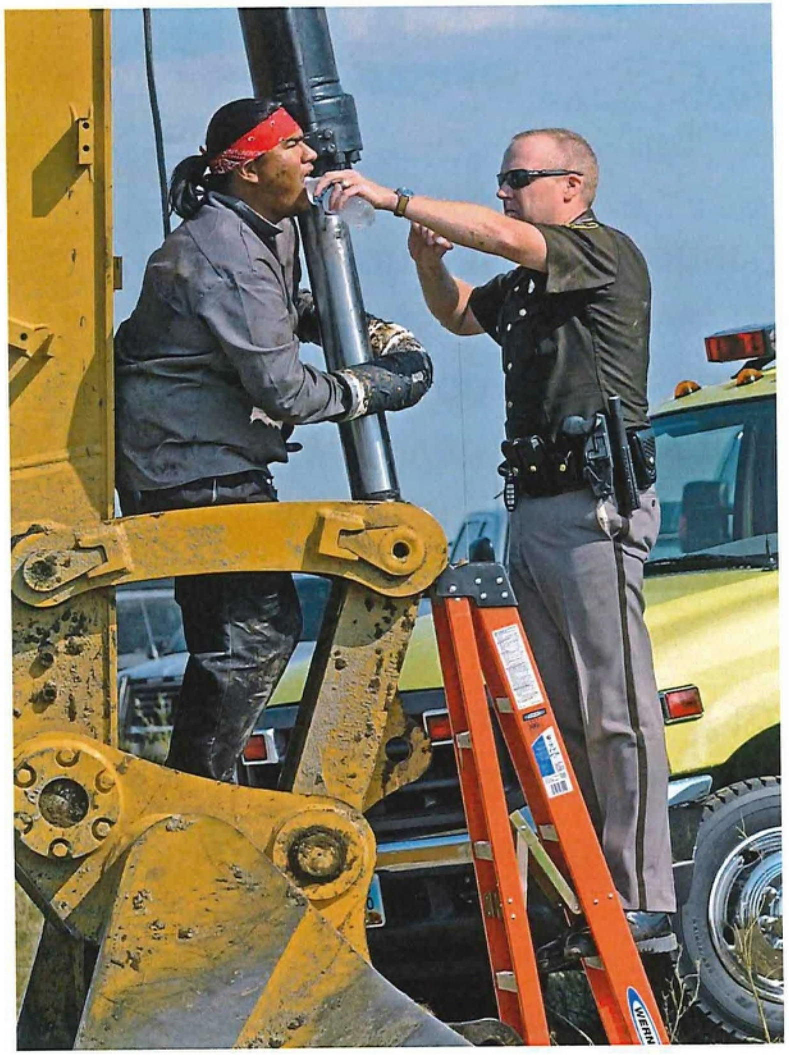


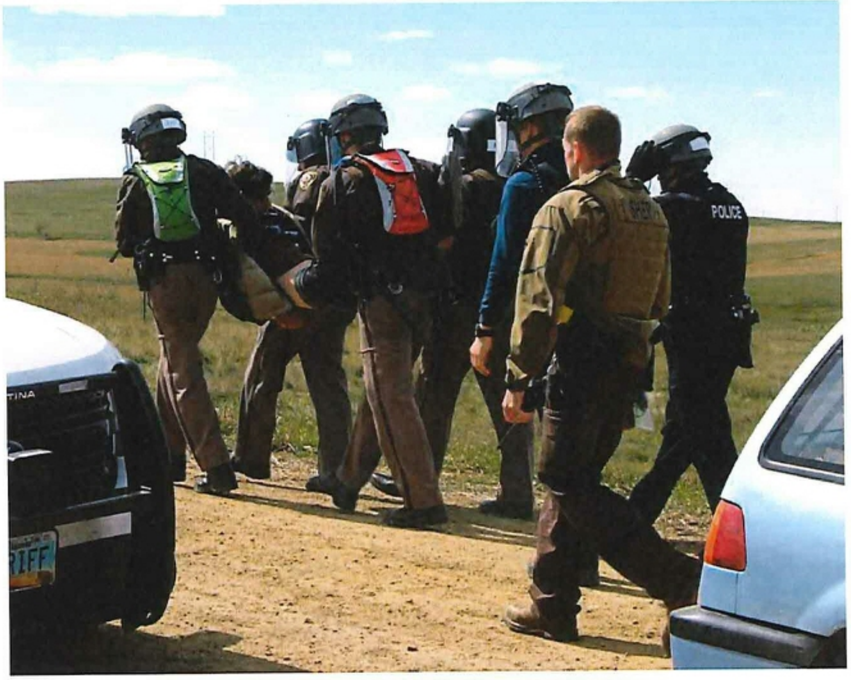
STATE TROOPER
NORTH DAKOTA
PATROL
1935

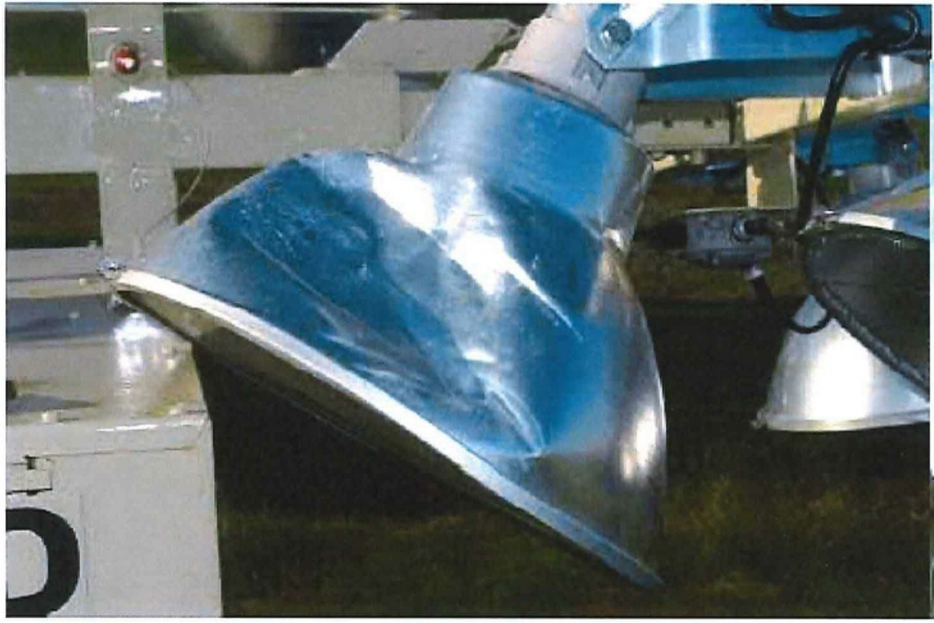


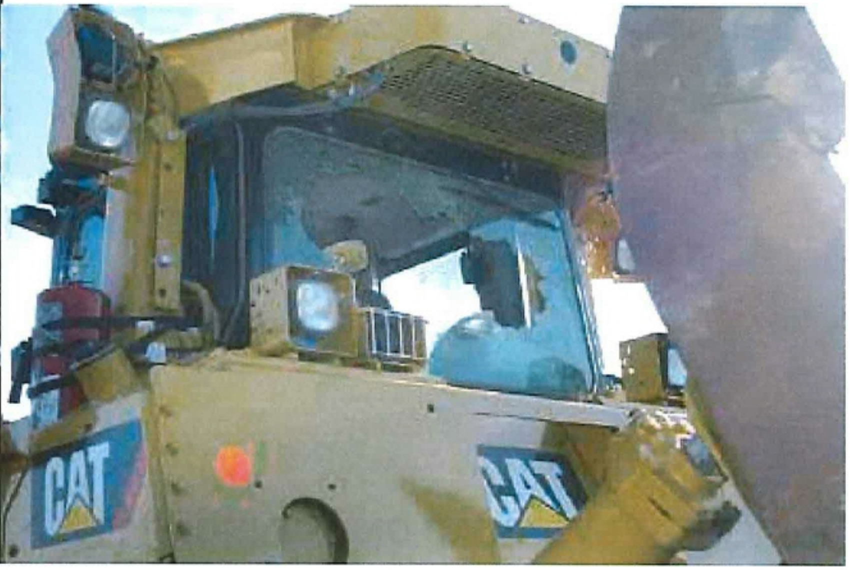
August 28 – September 3

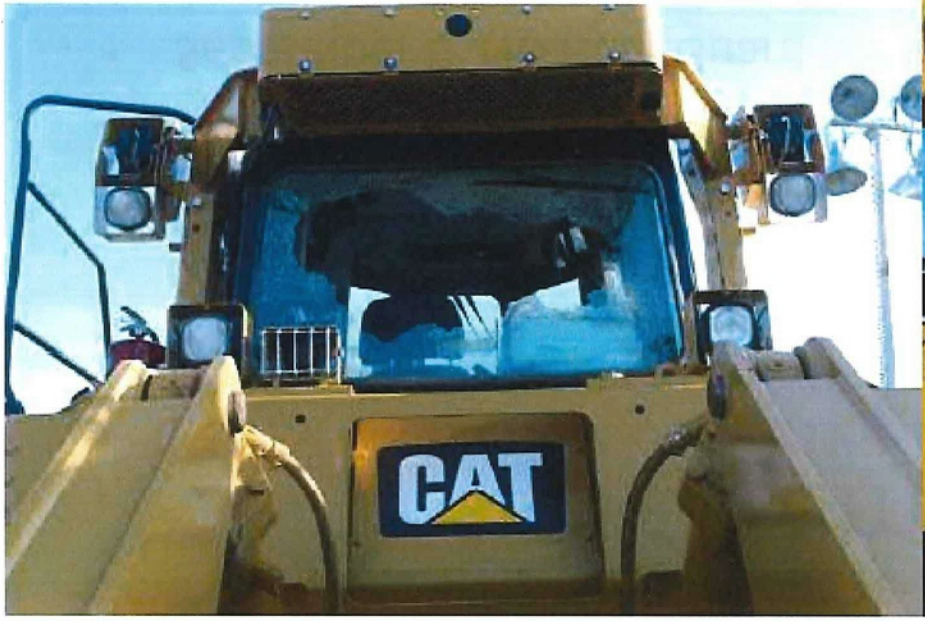
- August 28: Protest at DAPL attorney's office in Bismarck. No incident.
- August 31: Protesters put signs on and vandalized DAPL equipment. A protester attached himself to DAPL equipment and had to be removed. 8 arrests.
- September 3: 300 protesters trespassed on private property. They cut a fence and brought 20-30 horses and possibly vehicles onto the private property. Private security met the protesters and they had K-9s and used pepper spray on the trespassers. Conflict ensued. LE arrived and were able to get trespassers to leave. No arrests. This incident is still under investigation. (as of October 12)




POLICE




CAT
CAT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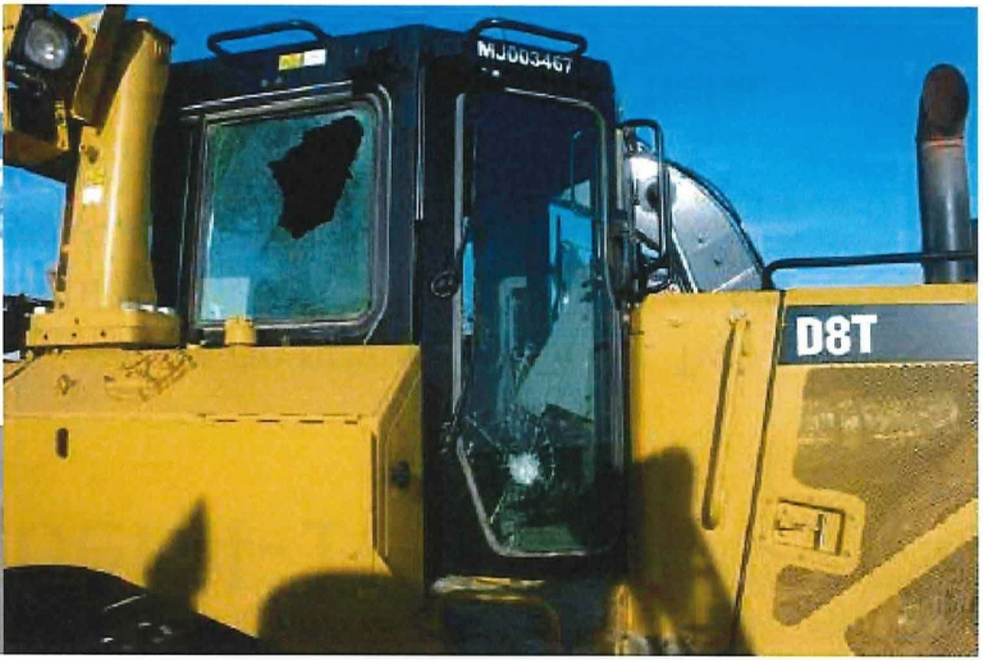
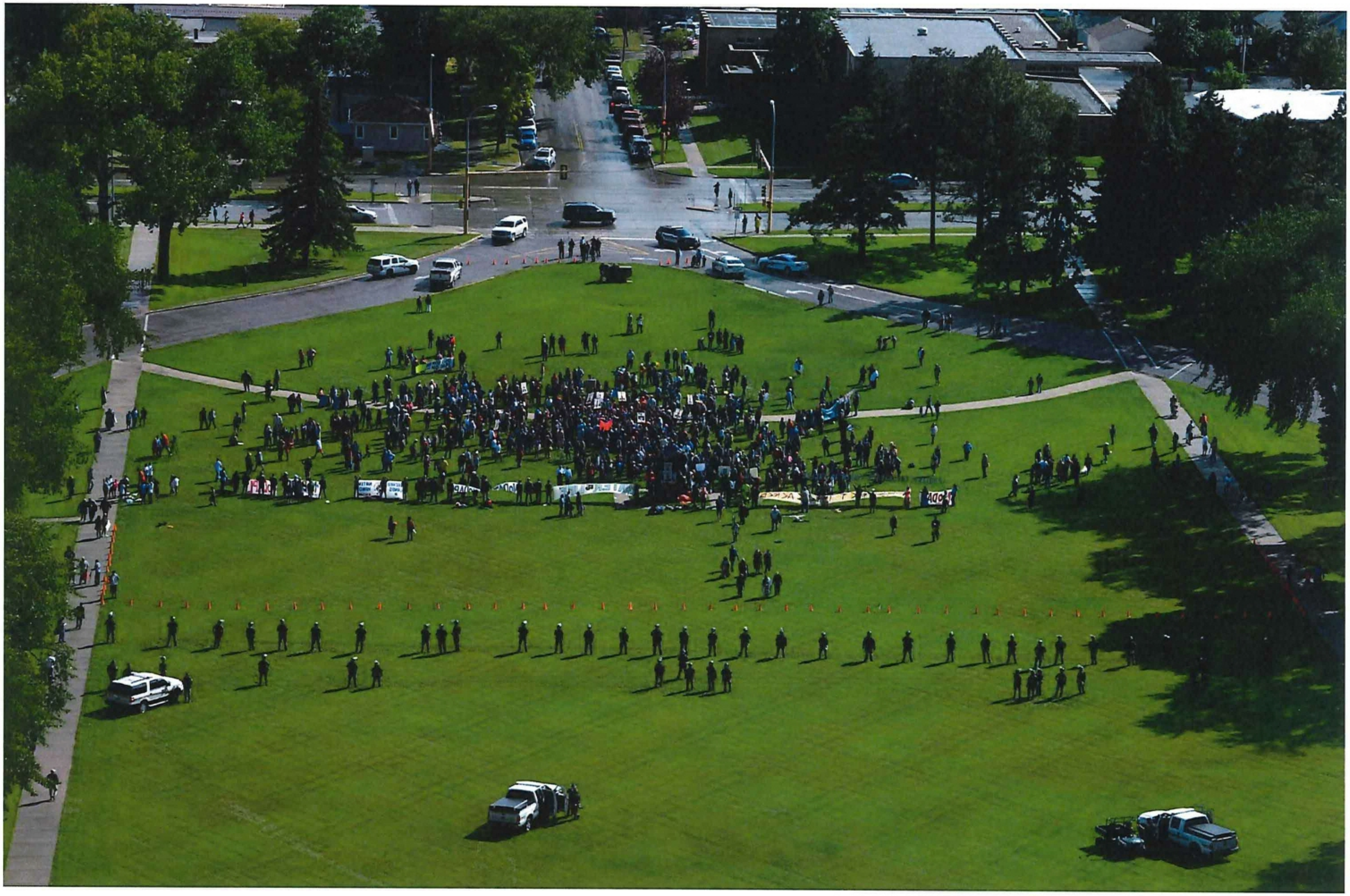

MJ003467
D8T

September 4-10

- September 6: 150-200 protesters trespassed on private property. Two protesters attached themselves to equipment. Protesters, including Jill Stein, spray painted DAPL equipment. A small fire reported on entrance road to DAPL construction site.
- September 8: ND Natl. Guard MP Units assisting with staffing of traffic control point.
- September 9: Planned protest on Capitol Grounds. No incidents.



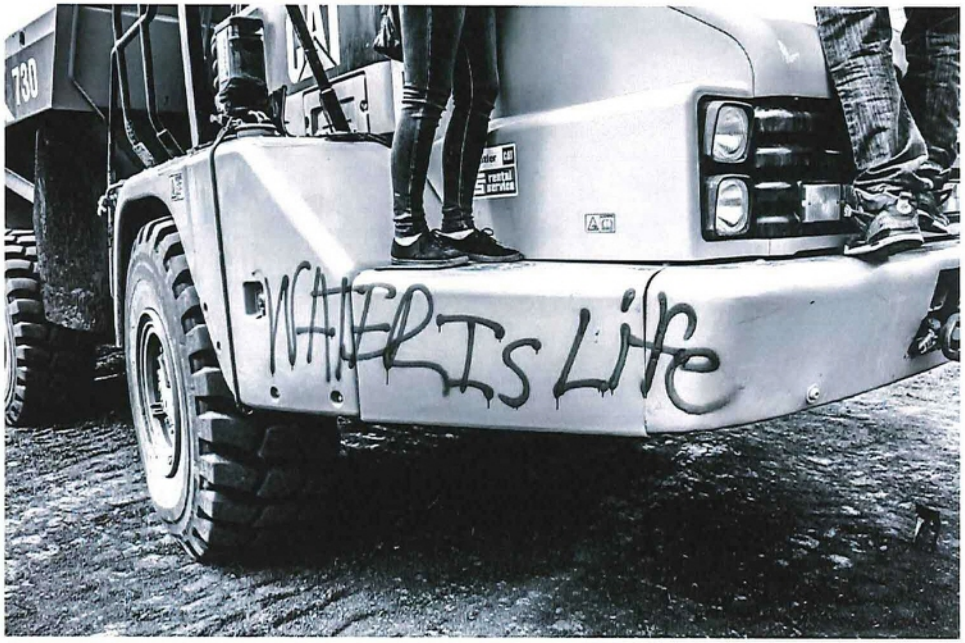
September 11-17

- September 12: Construction halted on pipeline 20 miles east of Hwy. 1806
- September 13: 2 protesters attached themselves to construction equipment near New Salem. 22 arrests for illegal protest activity
- September 14: 3 protesters attached themselves to construction equipment near New Salem. 8 arrests for illegal protest activity
- September 16: 200 protesters assembled on Memorial Bridge on Bismarck side and conducted a march. No incidents

18-15
Still
Construction
ING!!!

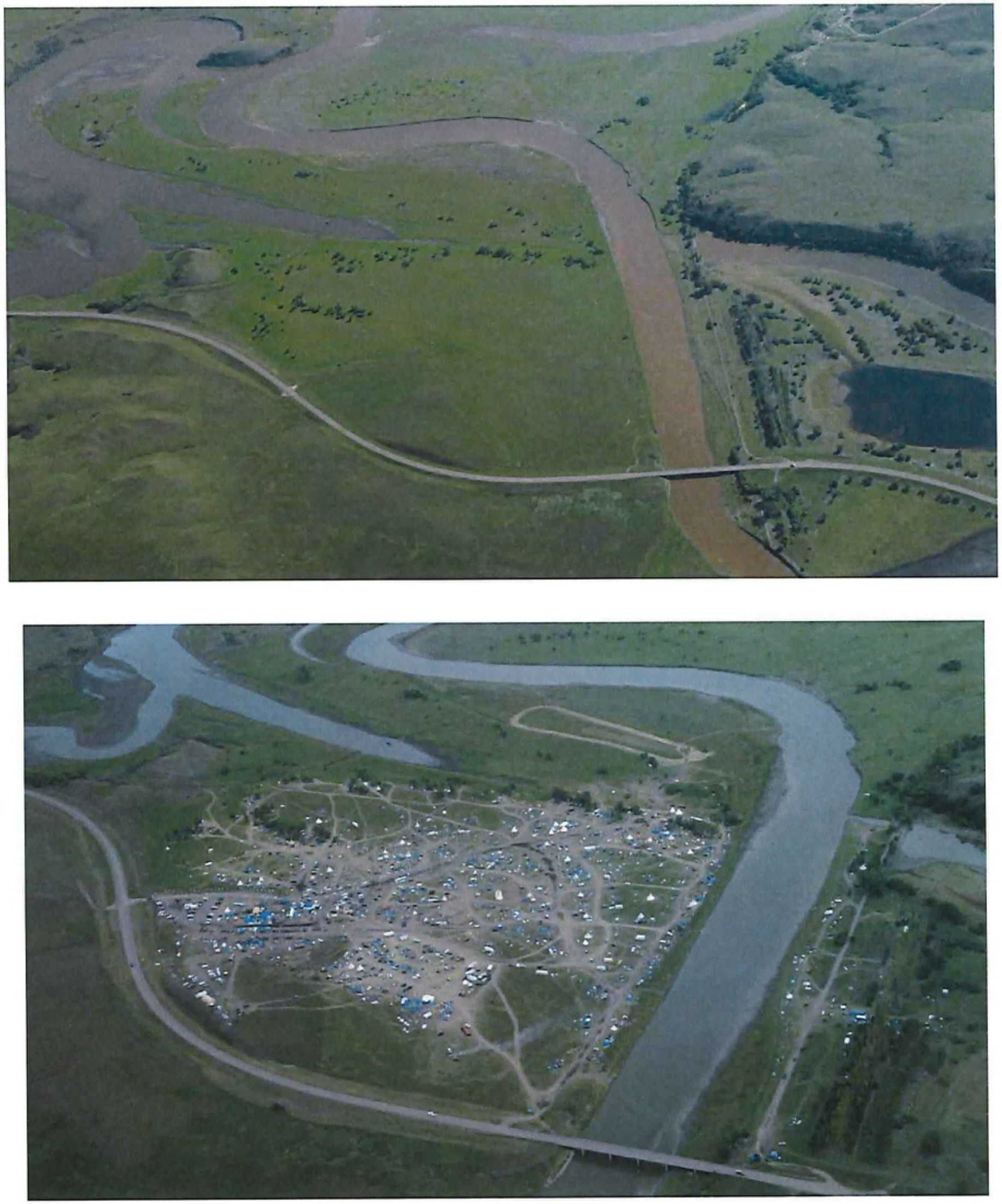
i approve this message
ARE
LOVE WATER NOT OIL
CAT

Protect OUR Water
CAT

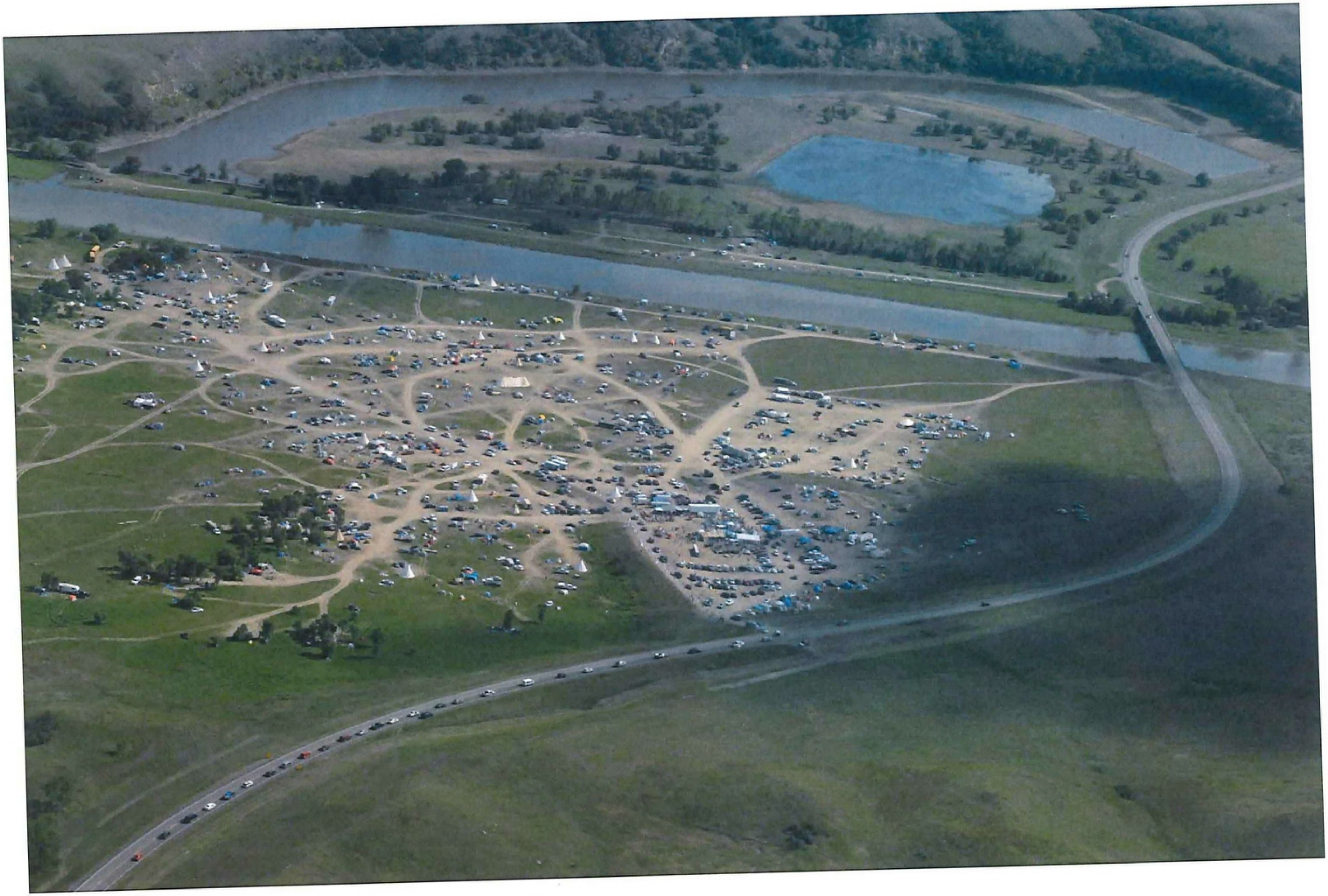

730
WATER IS Life

September 18-24

- September 18: 1 protester arrested for criminal trespass
- September 20: Large protest in Mandan in front of LEC and city hall. Many attempts to verbally antagonize law enforcement. No arrests

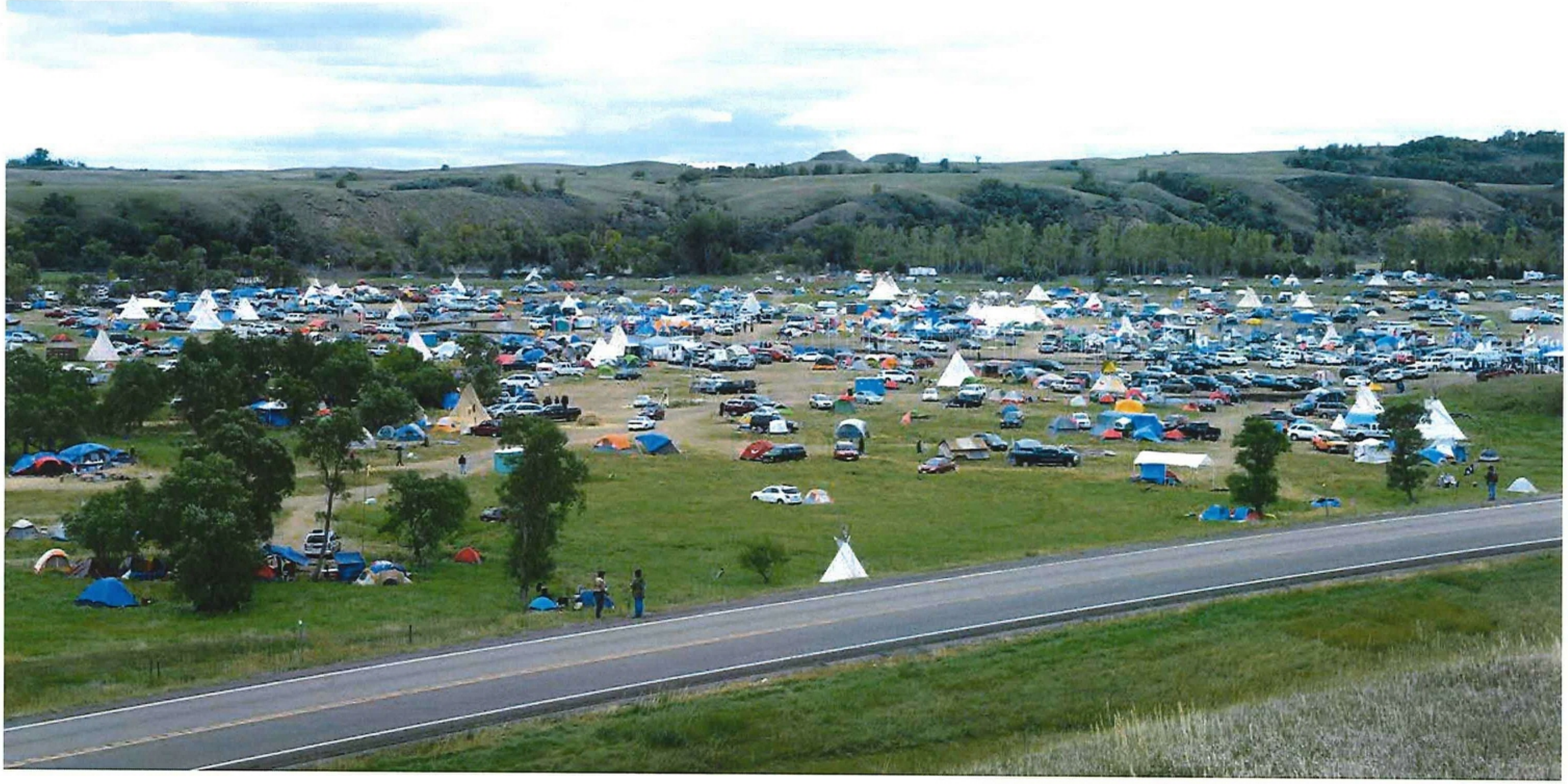


Seven Council's Fire Camp before and during the protest.

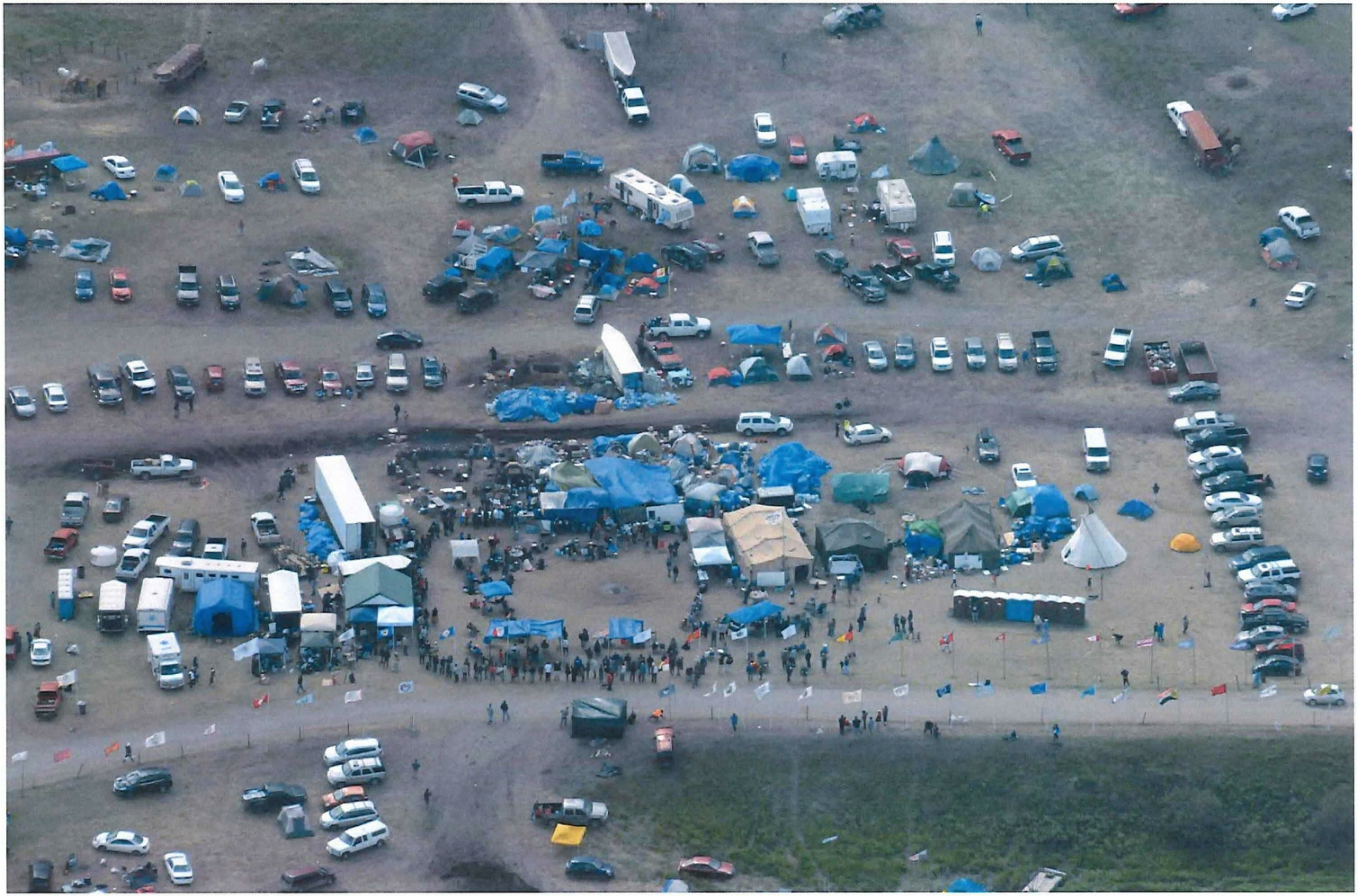


September 25-Oct. 1

- September 25: Large convoy of 60 vehicles and 3 buses left camp and stopped construction at a site west of St. Anthony. 3 security guards on scene were assaulted. Security reported the brandishing of a handgun and knife. Construction equipment was vandalized. Protesters traveled to another site and vandalized equipment
- September 27: Large convoy of vehicles attempting to stop construction near St. Anthony area. 5 arrests for blocking roadway were made. 3 DAPL signs on site were shot at.
- September 28: Large amount of protesters on foot and horseback at construction site. 21 arrests made. Protesters claim LE was using mustard gas as a result of sighting a spray plane doing routine agriculture spraying.



Camp pictured on September 9.

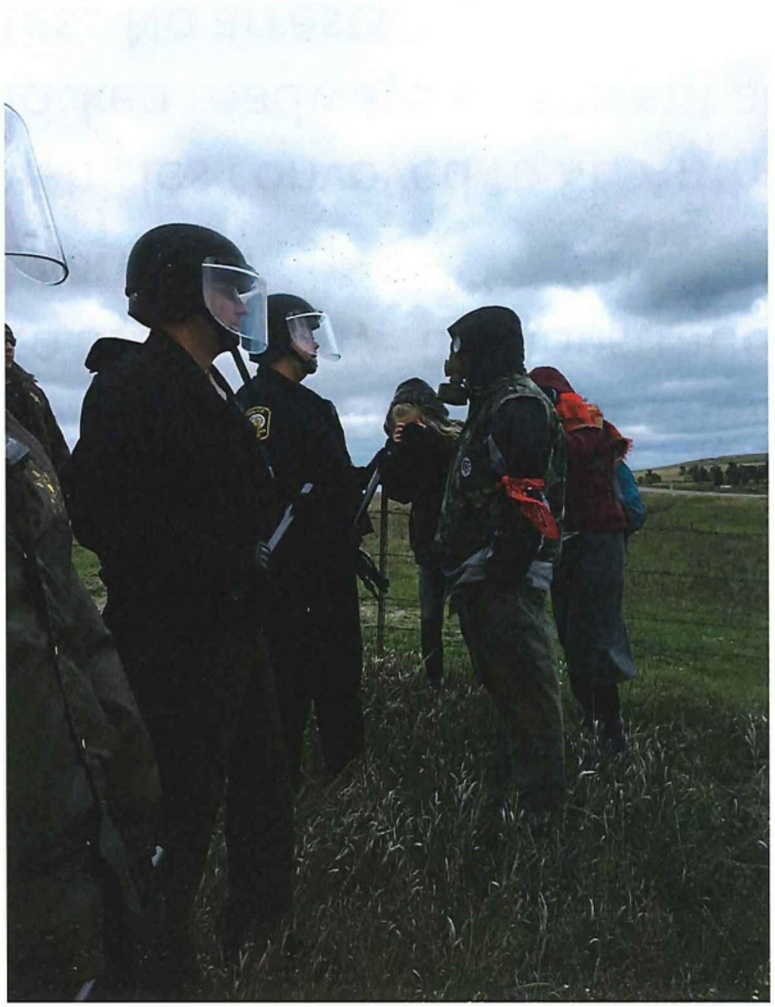


Camp pictured on September 9.

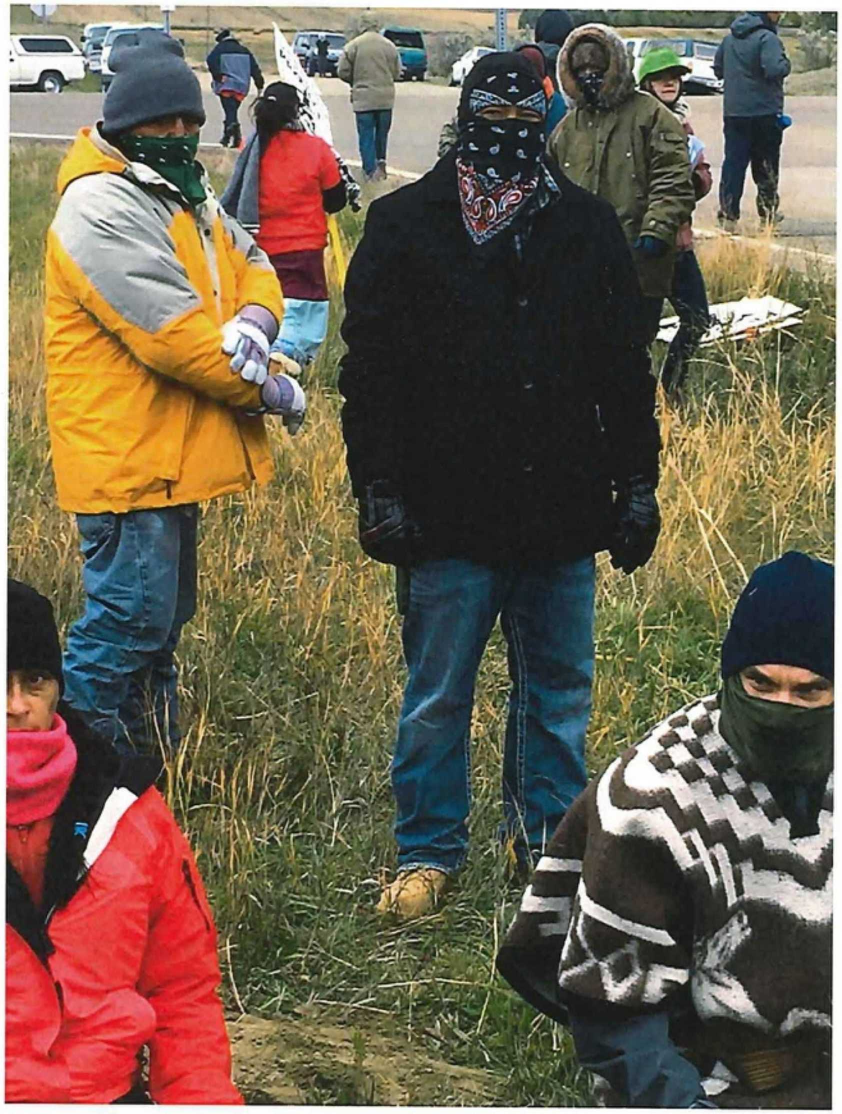
October 2-8

- October 3: Large convoy of vehicles (110) traveled to the St. Anthony area and drove around. No incidents
- October 5: Convoy of 75 vehicles and 2 buses left camp and traveled on Hwy. 6 to St. Anthony. Law enforcement blocked the roadway into St. Anthony. Demonstration ensued at the intersection. No arrests.
- October 6: 60 vehicles convoyed to St. Anthony area. Law enforcement blocked roadways to prevent access to construction sites. No arrests.
- October 8: Drone seized from Myron Dewey

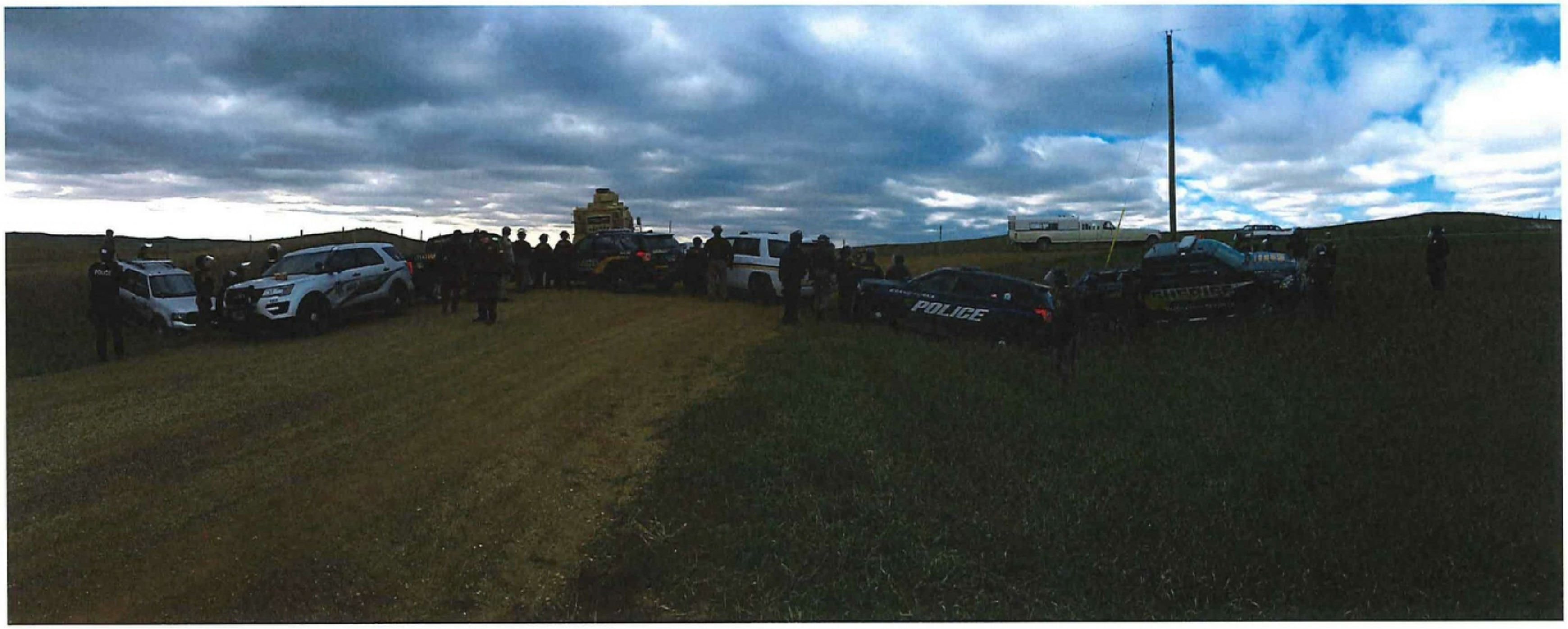
October 5th Protest



October 5th Protest



October 6th Convoy



POLICE
SHERIFF

October 6th Convoy

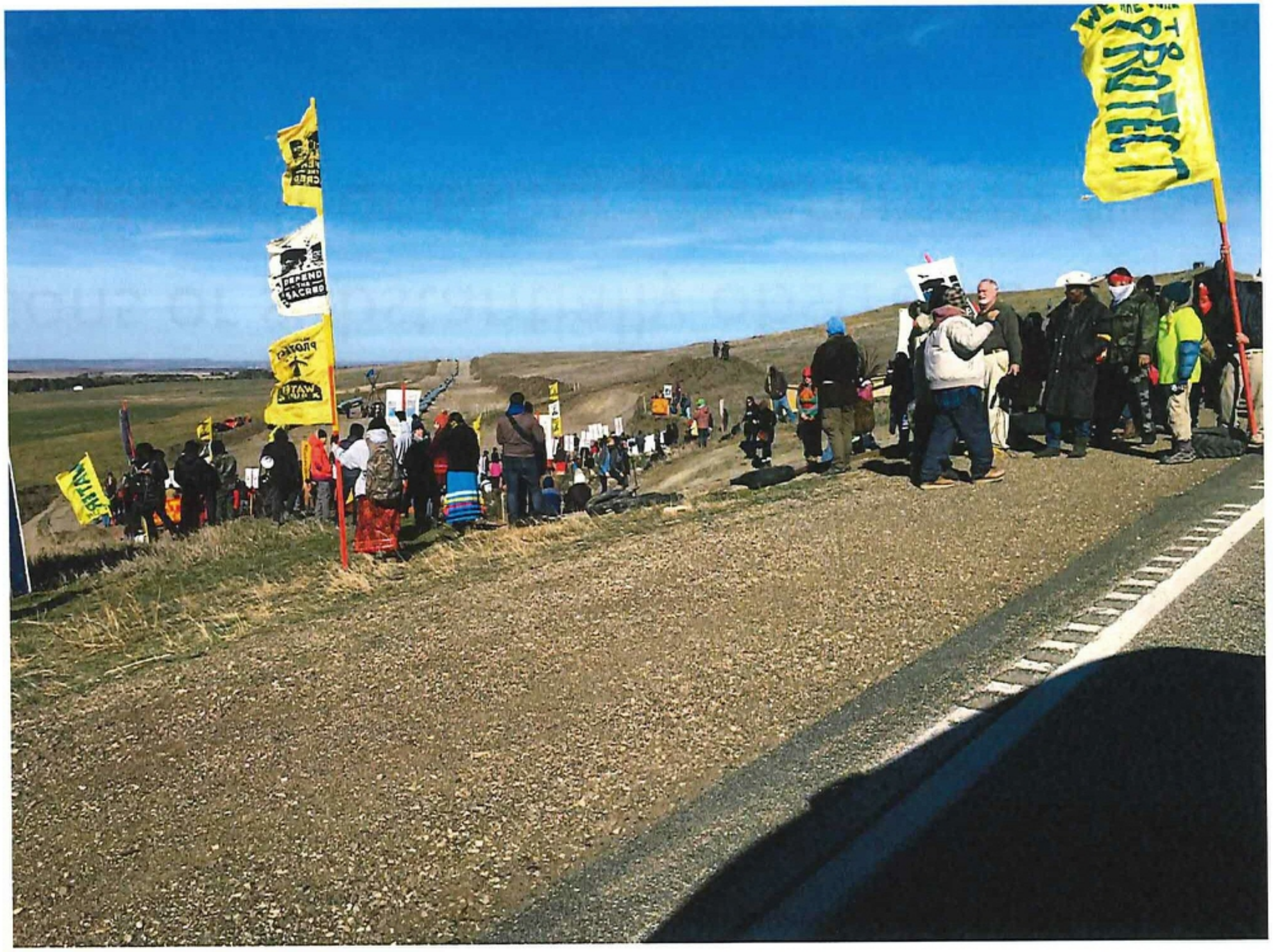
October 9-15

- October 10: 2 protesters locked down to DAPL equipment. 3 arrests made. 100 vehicle convoy staged protest on another DAPL site, resulting in 24 arrests (including actress Shailene Woodley). Local media on scene were harassed and threatened by protesters.
- October 11: Small scale protest in front of Morton LEC. No incidents.

NDCC 12.1-25-01

- "Riot" means a public disturbance involving an assemblage of five or more persons which by tumultuous and violent conduct creates grave danger of damage or injury to property or persons or substantially obstructs law enforcement or other government function.

October 10th Protest


DEFEND THE SACRED
PROTECT

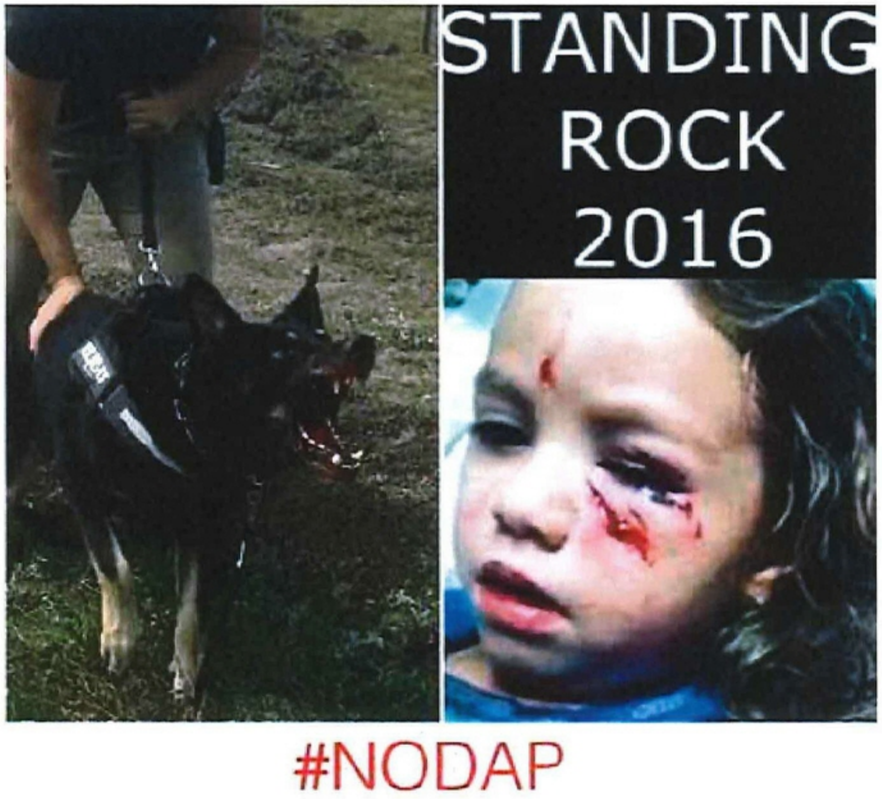
Press Conference addressing October 10th protest activities

1872
MORTON COUNTY
NORTH DAKOTA
1881

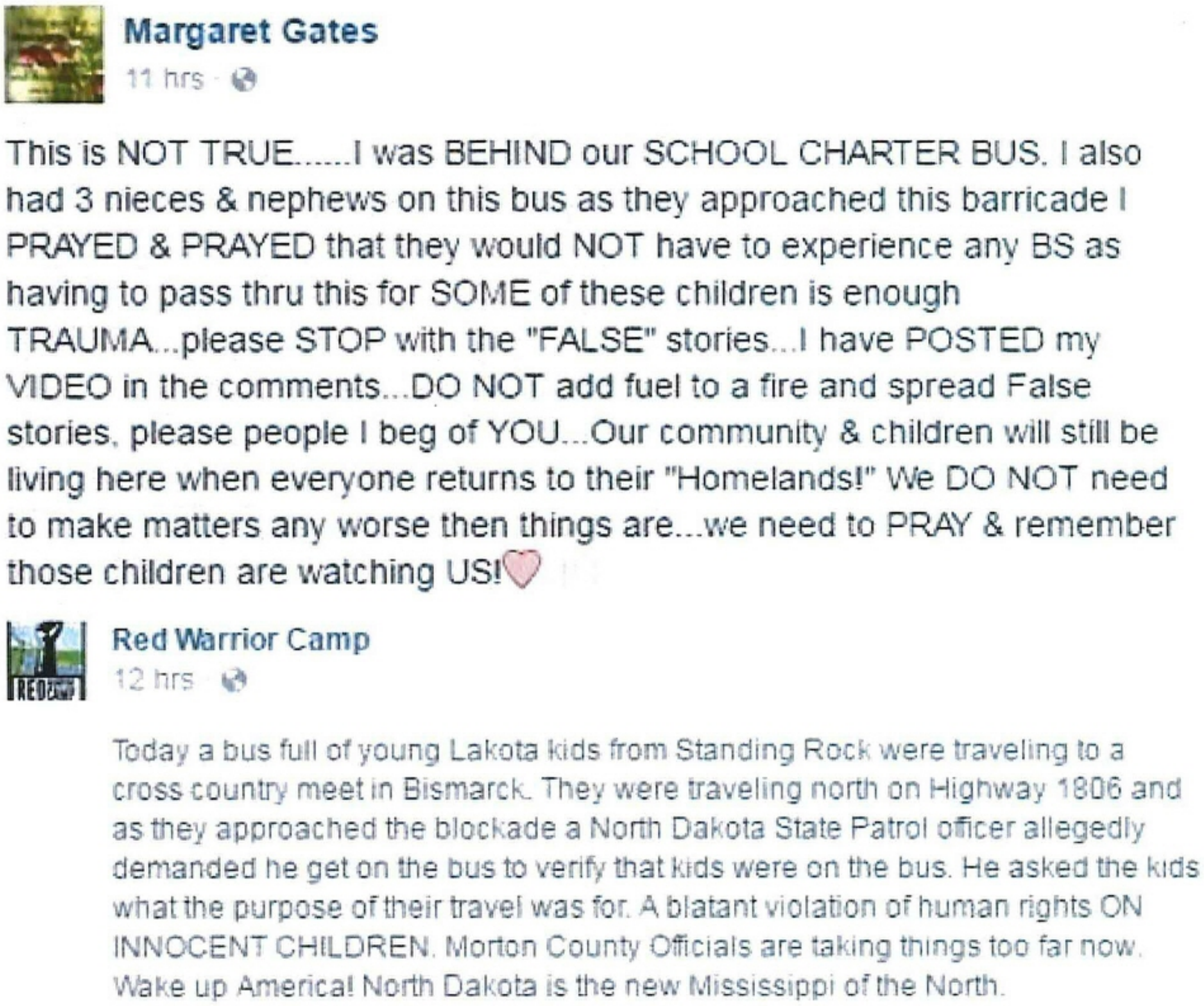
KFYR Story addressing October 10th protest activities

Social Media

- LE, DAPL workers, and their families have been threatened on social media.
- Misinformation has also spread.



Misinformation:
The dog on the left was photoshopped to appear aggressive. The injured girl is an old photo from 2012.

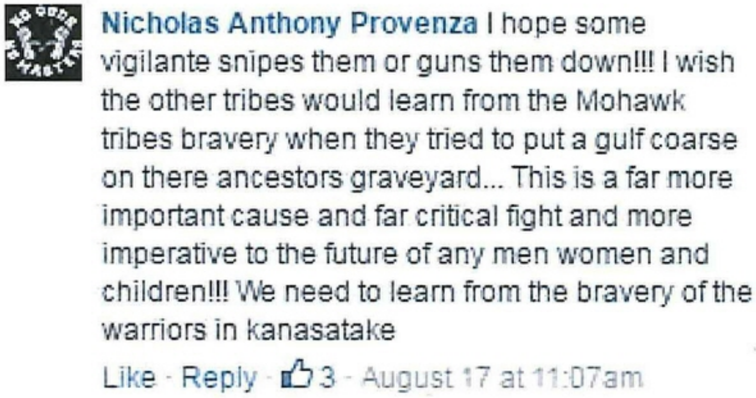


Margaret Gates
11 hrs ·

This is NOT TRUE......I was BEHIND our SCHOOL CHARTER BUS. I also had 3 nieces & nephews on this bus as they approached this barricade I PRAYED & PRAYED that they would NOT have to experience any BS as having to pass thru this for SOME of these children is enough TRAUMA...please STOP with the "FALSE" stories...I have POSTED my VIDEO in the comments...DO NOT add fuel to a fire and spread False stories, please people I beg of YOU...Our community & children will still be living here when everyone returns to their "Homelands!" We DO NOT need to make matters any worse then things are...we need to PRAY & remember those children are watching US!♡

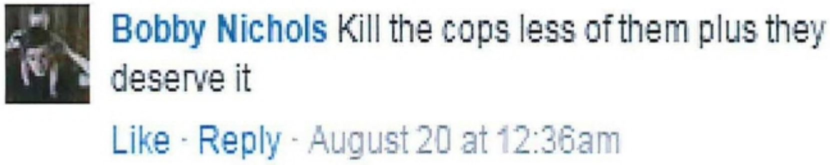
Red Warrior Camp
12 hrs ·

Today a bus full of young Lakota kids from Standing Rock were traveling to a cross country meet in Bismarck. They were traveling north on Highway 1806 and as they approached the blockade a North Dakota State Patrol officer allegedly demanded he get on the bus to verify that kids were on the bus. He asked the kids what the purpose of their travel was for. A blatant violation of human rights ON INNOCENT CHILDREN. Morton County Officials are taking things too far now. Wake up America! North Dakota is the new Mississippi of the North.



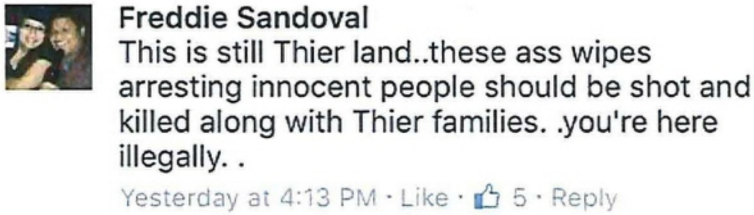
Nicholas Anthony Provenza I hope some vigilante snipes them or guns them down!!! I wish the other tribes would learn from the Mohawk tribes bravery when they tried to put a gulf coarse on there ancestors graveyard... This is a far more important cause and far critical fight and more imperative to the future of any men women and children!!! We need to learn from the bravery of the warriors in kanasatake

Like · Reply · 👍 3 · August 17 at 11:07am



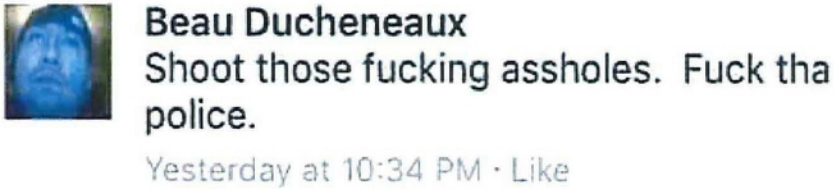
Bobby Nichols Kill the cops less of them plus they deserve it

Like · Reply · August 20 at 12:36am



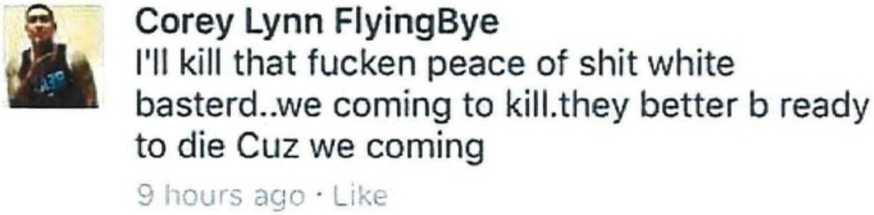
Freddie Sandoval
This is still Thier land..these ass wipes arresting innocent people should be shot and killed along with Thier families. .you're here illegally. .

Yesterday at 4:13 PM · Like · 👍 5 · Reply



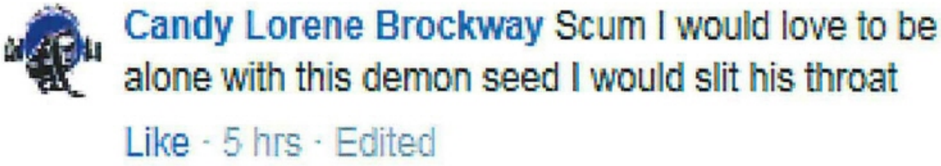
Beau Ducheneaux
Shoot those fucking assholes. Fuck tha police.

Yesterday at 10:34 PM · Like



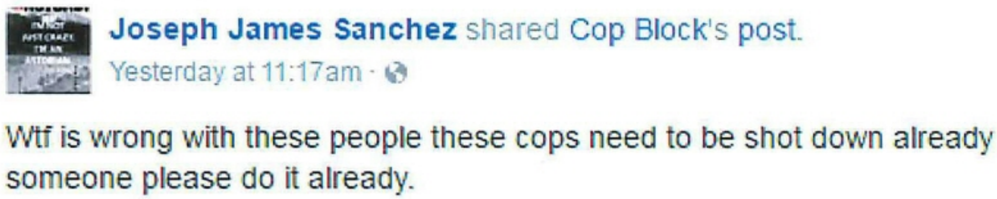
Corey Lynn FlyingBye
I'll kill that fucken peace of shit white basterd..we coming to kill.they better b ready to die Cuz we coming

9 hours ago · Like



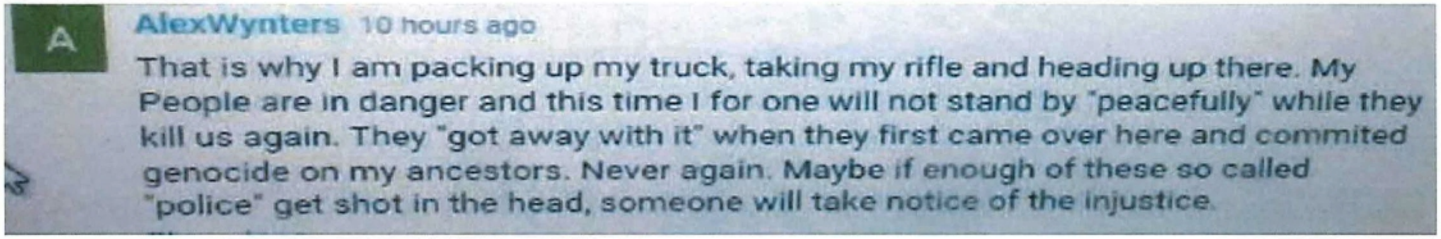
Candy Lorene Brockway Scum I would love to be alone with this demon seed I would slit his throat

Like · 5 hrs · Edited



Joseph James Sanchez shared Cop Block's post.
Yesterday at 11:17am · 🌐

Wtf is wrong with these people these cops need to be shot down already someone please do it already.



AlexWynters 10 hours ago

That is why I am packing up my truck, taking my rifle and heading up there. My People are in danger and this time I for one will not stand by "peacefully" while they kill us again. They "got away with it" when they first came over here and commited genocide on my ancestors. Never again. Maybe if enough of these so called "police" get shot in the head, someone will take notice of the injustice.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 2 Sep 2016 10:15:30 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: ND tribal

The second pipeline dispute…

Tribal consent at heart of court arguments over pipelines below lake

- Mike Nowatzki Forum News Service
- 13 hrs ago

A federal judge will issue what could be a precedent-setting decision after hearing arguments Thursday on whether a Texas company needed consent from Native American tribes to drill two pipelines through tribally owned minerals under North Dakota's largest body of water.

After nearly five hours of testimony and legal arguments in U.S. District Court in Bismarck, Judge Daniel Hovland took the matter under advisement, allowing drilling under Lake Sakakawea to continue until he issues his ruling while also lamenting the lack of legal opinions offered by attorneys and previous case law on the issue.

"It sounds like I'm going to be left to interpret this with no guidance from anybody," Hovland said.

Paradigm Energy Partners LLC has already completed a $125 million oil pipeline under the lake and is boring the hole for a companion $16.6 million natural gas pipeline over the objections of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation, also known as the Three Affiliated Tribes.

The tribes issued a cease and desist order Aug. 8 ordering Paradigm to stop all construction immediately under the lake. They said the company hadn't provided assurance that the oil pipeline, which stretches nearly 9,000 feet at least 100 feet below the lakebed on the Fort Berthold Reservation, posed no threat to their water resources.

Paradigm responded by suing MHA Chairman Mark Fox and Tribal Police Chief Nelson Hart on Aug. 19, arguing they had no authority to halt construction. Four days later, Hovland granted a temporary restraining order preventing the tribe from stopping construction, allowing boring for the gas pipeline to resume.

Thursday's daylong hearing on Paradigm's request for an injunction against the tribe ended without a firm timeline for Hovland's ruling, but the judge noted that the restraining order expires on Monday or Tuesday, and he can extend it for 14 days for "good cause."

"Certainly, in my view, good cause exists because I've got a multitude of issues to sort through," he said.

Attorneys for both sides argued about whether Paradigm needed the tribes' consent to install the two pipelines, which will be owned by Sacagawea Pipeline Co., a joint venture between Paradigm, Phillips 66 and Greywolf Midstream LLC. Greywolf, which holds a 12 percent interest in the oil pipeline, is a subsidiary of MHA-owned Missouri River Resources, giving the tribe a stake in the project.

Paradigm CEO Troy Andrews testified that Fox had been outspoken that the tribe should get more value out of the oil pipeline. But Andrews said he didn't recall Fox or other tribal officials raising the issue of consent until a tribal council meeting June 9, less than a week after boring started on the oil pipeline.

"I definitely thought they were very supportive and on board with the project, for sure," he said.

Fox countered that he informed Paradigm about the consent requirement as early as August 2014 during a Missouri River Resources board meeting, and also brought it up “numerous times” in casual and formal conversations.

“That was always understood,” Fox said.

Tribal officials said Paradigm offered up to $2 million during a June 9 council meeting to resolve the right-of-way and other issues related to the pipelines.

“And I believe they said they had a check there,” Tribal Attorney Caleb Dog Eagle recalled.

Andrews said that while the company never believed it needed the tribes’ legal consent, “I wanted to get a deal done.”

When Paradigm came back a week later with the same request, tribal officials said they felt the company hadn’t fulfilled the council’s request that it reach out to the tribes’ more than 15,000 members to gauge support for the pipelines.

Attorneys for Paradigm argued that the company already had the authority to drill under the lake through its easement from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“The key here is that these are valid authorizations,” attorney Andrew Emrich said.

But lawyers for the tribes said the Fort Berthold Reservation Mineral Restoration Act of 1984 restored the mineral rights under the lake to the tribe, and Paradigm has no right to invade them without consent.

“They tried to get our consent, they didn’t get it, and they bored anyway,” said attorney John Fredericks III. “So as far as we’re concerned, they’re trespassers.”

Paradigm Chief Operating Officer Criss Doss said the work stoppage in August cost the company $750,000, and it stands to lose $12.6 million -- and potentially go under -- if it’s unable to finish the gas pipeline by its Nov. 1 deadline to remove equipment from a landowner’s property on the east side of the lake.

“We can’t afford any delays at all,” he said.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration continues to investigate claims made by workers that the pipeline was not properly inspected before it was installed under Lake Sakakawea. Doss said 109 welds were recoated because they weren’t done right the first time.

“There were not defects in the coating when it was stuck under the lake,” he said.

Attending the hearing in support of the MHA Nation was Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II, whose tribe is awaiting a judge’s decision by Sept. 9 on its request for an injunction to halt construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline across the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock reservation.

Jerry DeFelice
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Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 9 Sep 2016 10:34:07 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: ND tribal

North Dakota National Guard to provide backup to law enforcement

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN and BLAIR EMERSON Bismarck Tribune
- 21 hrs ago
-

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple listens to a question during a press conference in Mandan on Thursday.

The North Dakota National Guard will be activated to assist local law enforcement responding to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests south of Mandan, according to an announcement on Thursday by Gov. Jack Dalrymple.

Dalrymple said the decision was made "out of an abundance of caution" in order to free up law enforcement to patrol Morton County and the Bismarck-Mandan area.

Several armed guardsmen will be posted at a checkpoint along Highway 1806 south of Mandan, which has been reopened. They will provide information about road hazards to drivers passing through.

About 100 guardsmen from the 191st Military Police Company also will be on standby alert, said Maj. Gen. Al Dohrmann. This unit, which is based in Bismarck, Mayville and Fargo, has some law enforcement experience.

Meanwhile, as the annual powwow takes place in Bismarck and a federal court decision is expected today on the tribe's request for an injunction to stop construction on the pipeline, additional law enforcement officers will patrol the area this weekend.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said he wanted to be able to respond more quickly to situations that arise at the protest camps and for residents nearby. Deputies will not be stationed at the camps.

Thirty-seven people have been arrested in connection with the protests for trespassing on private property, refusing to stay in boundaries set by police and chaining themselves to construction equipment.

With the resources he had available Saturday, when a clash broke out between protesters and private pipeline security, Kirchmeier said he did not have the manpower needed to go in and make arrests.

"We want people to have a safe weekend," he said.

In a statement, Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault II asked protesters to remain peaceful following the judge's decision Friday.

"Any act of violence hurts our cause and is not welcome here," he said. "Even if the outcome of the court’s ruling is not in our favor, we will continue to explore every lawful option and fight against the construction of the pipeline."

Dohrmann said he is in discussions with tribal leaders to find a peaceful resolution to the protests. He said he believes there is a group of "agitators" at the site, some of whom have been asked to leave.

Highway 1806 was closed Aug. 17 by Highway Patrol and the Department of Transportation for safety concerns. Tribal members and civil rights groups called for its reopening, citing economic impacts on the tribe and hindrance to First Amendment rights.

"We want to make sure that everybody that is going down on Highway 1806 can get where they're going with families," said Kirchmeier, explaining the reason for reopening the road. "We have had many conversations with tribal leaders trying to keep the roadway open."

The parks in the area will remain closed.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Mike Gerhardt said measures have been taken to make Highway 1806 safer for drivers. The speed limit around the protest sites has been reduced to 25 mph, new signs have been posted and troopers will be patrolling the area.

Dalrymple said anyone who has cost the government money during the pipeline protest may be asked for reimbursement, including the pipeline company.

Since a state — not federal — emergency declaration has been issued, federal funds are not available, Dalrymple said.

Dallas Goldtooth, a protest organizer with the Indigenous Environmental Network, said Dalrymple is sending a disturbing message by bringing in the National Guard.

“I think it’s deeply concerning to see this escalation from the governor of North Dakota," he said.

Goldtooth applauded the removal of the Highway 1806 barricade, a move he called "two weeks overdue."

Still, he said he's not sure what will happen after the federal judge issues his ruling.

“There’s a general anxiety or uncertainty about (Friday)," he said.

The North Dakota National Guard was last deployed at airports after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In 1969, it was called to respond to the Zip to Zap rioting.

Reach Caroline Grueskin at 701-250-8225 or at

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FEMA Region VIII, Denver
303-235-4948
303-941-5088 cell
Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 25 Oct 2016 10:34:49 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: ND tribal

Morton County wants tribal chairman to intervene as frontline camp grows

By mnowa adalr on Oct 24, 2016 at 6:57 p.m.

FORT RICE, N.D. — With help arriving from other states, authorities say they hope to use communication to come to a peaceful resolution after a frontline "no surrender" camp was established to block construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Morton County Commission Chairman Cody Schulz called on Standing Rock Tribe Chairman David Archambault II to condemn the illegal actions of the protesters, which led to 127 arrests over the weekend in an increasingly tense situation.

The U.S Department of Justice said Monday, Oct. 24, said it is closely monitoring the situation and has offered technical assistance and community policing resources, said Wyn Hornbuckle, the department's deputy director of public affairs.

The department reiterated its call for Dakota Access to voluntarily stop construction within 20 miles of Lake Oahe until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authorizes construction on Corps land, Hornbuckle said.

Law enforcement from South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Indiana and Nebraska are now providing additional manpower as protesters have established a roadblock and a new camp on private property east of HIghway 1806 that was growing in size Monday.

"We have made 1806 our no-surrender line," said Joye Braun, a protest organizer with the Indigenous Environmental Network.

During a press conference Monday, Schulz called on Archambault to "show leadership and exert his authority" to encourage the protest camp to move to reservation land the tribal council designated last week.

Schulz said local and state officials recognize that the "dangerous actions and illegal activity" are not being perpetrated by tribal members. Schulz said the county is trying to respect the rights of the protesters, but also needs to protect the rights of local residents.

"It's disrupting the lives and injuring the economic well-being of everyone that lives in the area," Schulz said.

Archambault said in a statement late Sunday the tribe does not condone reports of illegal actions, but tribal leaders believe the militarization of local law enforcement and the enlistment of multiple agencies is "needlessly escalating violence and unlawful arrests."

He called on the Department of Justice to intervene and impose an injunction to all developments at the pipeline site to keep all citizens safe.

"The DOJ should be enlisted and expected to investigate the overwhelming reports and videos demonstrating clear strong-arm tactics, abuses and unlawful arrests by law enforcement," Archambault said.

Authorities arrested 126 people Saturday on charges including reckless endangerment, criminal trespass, engaging in a riot, assault on a peace officer and resisting arrest, bringing the total number of arrests to 269 since Aug. 10.

"The acts over the weekend were intentionally planned in an effort to incite fear and were anything but peaceful," said Capt. Bryan Niewind of the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Officers used pepper spray to protect themselves and control protesters who were trespassing on private property, the Morton County Sheriff's Department said, though protesters pointed to video they said showed the use of pepper spray was unwarranted.

Two officers suffered minor injuries while responding over the weekend and a third was spit on while trying to free a protester who was attached to a vehicle, Niewind said.

One person was arrested Sunday as protesters erected teepees and tents as a "frontline camp" directly in the path of the oil pipeline on the historic Cannonball Ranch, which Dakota Access LLC recently purchased from local rancher David Meyer.

About 15 teepees, several campers, more than 50 tents and several military tents have been set up at the frontline camp, which is across from where Dakota Access security guards armed with dogs and pepper spray clashed with protesters on Sept. 3.

A statement from groups involved in the protest explained that the self-described "water protectors" took back unceded territory affirmed in the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty between the federal government and Plains tribes, including the Lakota and Dakota.

"We will be occupying this land and staying here until this pipeline is permanently stopped," said Mekasi Camp-Horinek, a coordinator of the Oceti Sakowin Camp, the main protest camp about two miles south of the frontline camp.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said, "Individuals trespassing on private property can't claim eminent domain to justify their criminal actions."

When asked about the possibility of law enforcement coming in to remove people, Braun reiterated that they are unarmed and said they're protecting burial sites that are "in imminent danger."

"We're not moving. That's up to them to decide," Braun said.

In the ditch along the highway, protesters were stacking large logs and laying them to form an entrance to the camp.

Frank Archambault, a cousin of the tribal chairman, said the timbers may be used to form some sort of blockade to keep Dakota Access construction from crossing the highway.

About 1 mile south of Fort Rice, law enforcement and the North Dakota National Guard set up a staging area and checkpoint, where they were restricting traffic Monday to local residents.

On Monday, protesters reestablished the roadblock put up Sunday on Highway 1806, north of the camp.

"Even though DAPL bought that from the Meyer family, to us it's an illegal sale because it is unceded territory," said Red Warrior Camp spokesman Cody Hall.

If needed, protesters can move the roadblock to allow first responders through, Hall said.

Highway 1806 will be closed "indefinitely" due to unsafe and illegal protest activities, Niewind said.

On Sunday, a helicopter pilot and a law enforcement officer on board to monitor the protest "were in fear for the lives" Sunday when a drone repeatedly buzzed the helicopter, coming within 30 to 50 feet of the helicopter, Niewind said.

Officers used less than lethal ammunition to shoot at the drone away from the direction of any people, Niewind said.

The shooting at the drone, plus the large law enforcement presence, made protesters fear for their lives, Braun said.

Braun said she is hopeful the federal government will step in and stop construction.

"If the federal government isn't going to protect 18 million people's lives, then we as water protectors and water defenders will do everything we can peacefully to protect people's lives," Braun said.

Hall said more people were continuing to arrive to support the protest.

"They're all bypassing the big camp and going to the front line camp," Hall said.

Around mid-afternoon, there was a call throughout the camp to move north to fortify the roadblock because they said there were law enforcement and military forces coming to surround them, which turned out to be a false alarm.

Kristina Young Bear, 48, Tama, Iowa, showed up Sunday night after tracking the situation on social media. She and her sister, Mary Young Bear, 56, were recruited for cooking duty at the new camp and were preparing bison, boiled potatoes, vegetables and fry bread over a wood fire on Monday.

"Just disgusting what the law's trying to do, using their pepper spray," said Kristina, a member of Meskwaki in Iowa.

Mary said she'd visited the Red Warrior Camp before on a previous trip and said she's "just going where they ask me to go. The people that make these decisions, I assume they know what they're doing. I'm just a visitor, I'm here for support."

Among the 126 arrested Saturday was Sara Lafleur-Vetter, a journalist working on an independent documentary production who was charged with misdemeanor criminal trespassing and engaging in a riot.

Meanwhile, Dakota Access LLC, a subsidiary of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, said in a letter to the North Dakota attorney general's office Monday that it purchased the ranch land in and around the pipeline route in southern Morton County last month "to enhance the safety of its workers" and "to better manage ingress and egress to the right of way."

The company had to explain how its purchase of more than 7,000 acres—including most of the Cannonball Ranch—complied with the state's anti-corporate farming law, which prohibits non-family corporations from owning farm and ranch land, with some exceptions, including for industrial purposes.

"After construction of the pipeline is complete, DAPL will transfer ownership of the property or use the property for some other use in compliance" with state law, Bismarck attorney Lawrence Bender wrote for the company.

Archambault said the militarization of local law enforcement and enlistment of multiple law enforcement agencies from neighboring states is "needlessly escalating violence and unlawful arrests against peaceful protesters at Standing Rock.

"We do not condone reports of illegal actions, but believe the majority of peaceful protesters are reacting to strong-arm tactics and abuses by law enforcement," he said.

Protesters set up a roadblock on Highway 1806 at about 2 p.m. Sunday afternoon, stringing barbed wire and positioning vehicles across the highway and fortifying it with hay bales, rocks, tree stumps, logs and vehicles, the sheriff's department said. They later removed the roadblock after speaking with law enforcement officials who warned them about the liability they could face if something happened at the camp and emergency vehicles couldn't get through.

Opponents of the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline also set up roadblocks on Highway 1806 south of the main camp and on County Road 134, an access road to the pipeline construction sites. They said the frontline camp is on the final 3 miles of the pipeline route before it connects with the drill pad that will take the pipeline under Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River. Construction was about 2 miles west of the frontline camp as of Sunday, they said.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently withholding the lake crossing easement for Dakota Access. In a Sept. 9 statement with the DOJ and Department of Interior, the Corps said it needed to determine whether it should reconsider its previous decisions about the lake crossing under the National Environmental Policy Act or other laws.

U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., said last week he doesn't expect a decision on the easement until after the Nov. 8 election.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is suing the Corps over permits issued for the four-state pipeline, which would carry 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day. Tribal members fear the pipeline would leak and contaminate their water supply, and they say construction will desecrate sacred sites on their ancestral lands

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 4 Nov 2016 10:34:48 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND tribal

$4 million to be requested for response to pipeline protests

- NICK SMITH Bismarck Tribune
  -
- Oct 31, 2016
- TOM STROMME, TRIBUNE

Law enforcement arrest people protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline on a newly constructed roadway near Fort Rice in Morton County in August. The rock bed road connects to Highway 1806 and will allow construction vehicles to access ranch land for building the pipeline. For video and a photo gallery, go to bismarcktribune.com.

The North Dakota Department of Emergency Services will be requesting an additional $4 million to cover the costs associated with the response of law enforcement to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests in Morton County.

Members of the North Dakota Emergency Commission are expected to green-light the request at a 2 p.m. meeting in the governor’s conference room today.

Most of the original $6 million line of credit approved in September has been used as the protest movement near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s reservation boundary over the four-state pipeline project and subsequent response has continued to ramp up.

Lawmakers on the emergency commission said last week they have no choice but to approve funding for law enforcement to maintain order and keep the public safe. They also expressed hope the state’s congressional delegation can get at least partial reimbursement in federal dollars.

Last week marked an escalation in tensions between protesters and police as an hours-long sweep to clear a camp set up on private land recently purchased by Dakota Access LLC was conducted. There were 142 arrests made as protesters were backed off the property.

The North Dakota portion of the 1,172-mile, $3.8 billion project is nearly complete. A permit is still needed to bore under the Missouri River, which is planned to occur less than a mile from the reservation boundary. Opponents of the project are concerned over future pipeline leaks if the pipeline is completed.

(Reach Nick Smith at 701-250-8255 or 701-223-8482 or at nick.smith@bismarcktribune.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 2 Sep 2016 14:15:29 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: ND tribal

The second pipeline dispute…

Tribal consent at heart of court arguments over pipelines below lake

- Mike Nowatzki Forum News Service
- 13 hrs ago

A federal judge will issue what could be a precedent-setting decision after hearing arguments Thursday on whether a Texas company needed consent from Native American tribes to drill two pipelines through tribally owned minerals under North Dakota's largest body of water.

After nearly five hours of testimony and legal arguments in U.S. District Court in Bismarck, Judge Daniel Hovland took the matter under advisement, allowing drilling under Lake Sakakawea to continue until he issues his ruling while also lamenting the lack of legal opinions offered by attorneys and previous case law on the issue.

"It sounds like I'm going to be left to interpret this with no guidance from anybody," Hovland said.

Paradigm Energy Partners LLC has already completed a $125 million oil pipeline under the lake and is boring the hole for a companion $16.6 million natural gas pipeline over the objections of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation, also known as the Three Affiliated Tribes.

The tribes issued a cease and desist order Aug. 8 ordering Paradigm to stop all construction immediately under the lake. They said the company hadn't provided assurance that the oil pipeline, which stretches nearly 9,000 feet at least 100 feet below the lakebed on the Fort Berthold Reservation, posed no threat to their water resources.

Paradigm responded by suing MHA Chairman Mark Fox and Tribal Police Chief Nelson Hart on Aug. 19, arguing they had no authority to halt construction. Four days later, Hovland granted a temporary restraining order preventing the tribe from stopping construction, allowing boring for the gas pipeline to resume.

Thursday's daylong hearing on Paradigm's request for an injunction against the tribe ended without a firm timeline for Hovland's ruling, but the judge noted that the restraining order expires on Monday or Tuesday, and he can extend it for 14 days for "good cause."

"Certainly, in my view, good cause exists because I've got a multitude of issues to sort through," he said.

Attorneys for both sides argued about whether Paradigm needed the tribes' consent to install the two pipelines, which will be owned by Sacagawea Pipeline Co., a joint venture between Paradigm, Phillips 66 and Greywolf Midstream LLC. Greywolf, which holds a 12 percent interest in the oil pipeline, is a subsidiary of MHA-owned Missouri River Resources, giving the tribe a stake in the project.

Paradigm CEO Troy Andrews testified that Fox had been outspoken that the tribe should get more value out of the oil pipeline. But Andrews said he didn't recall Fox or other tribal officials raising the issue of consent until a tribal council meeting June 9, less than a week after boring started on the oil pipeline.

"I definitely thought they were very supportive and on board with the project, for sure," he said.

Fox countered that he informed Paradigm about the consent requirement as early as August 2014 during a Missouri River Resources board meeting, and also brought it up “numerous times” in casual and formal conversations.

“That was always understood,” Fox said.

Tribal officials said Paradigm offered up to $2 million during a June 9 council meeting to resolve the right-of-way and other issues related to the pipelines.

“And I believe they said they had a check there,” Tribal Attorney Caleb Dog Eagle recalled.

Andrews said that while the company never believed it needed the tribes’ legal consent, “I wanted to get a deal done.”

When Paradigm came back a week later with the same request, tribal officials said they felt the company hadn’t fulfilled the council’s request that it reach out to the tribes’ more than 15,000 members to gauge support for the pipelines.

Attorneys for Paradigm argued that the company already had the authority to drill under the lake through its easement from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“The key here is that these are valid authorizations,” attorney Andrew Emrich said.

But lawyers for the tribes said the Fort Berthold Reservation Mineral Restoration Act of 1984 restored the mineral rights under the lake to the tribe, and Paradigm has no right to invade them without consent.

“They tried to get our consent, they didn’t get it, and they bored anyway,” said attorney John Fredericks III. “So as far as we’re concerned, they’re trespassers.”

Paradigm Chief Operating Officer Criss Doss said the work stoppage in August cost the company $750,000, and it stands to lose $12.6 million -- and potentially go under -- if it’s unable to finish the gas pipeline by its Nov. 1 deadline to remove equipment from a landowner’s property on the east side of the lake.

“We can’t afford any delays at all,” he said.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration continues to investigate claims made by workers that the pipeline was not properly inspected before it was installed under Lake Sakakawea. Doss said 109 welds were recoated because they weren’t done right the first time.

“There were not defects in the coating when it was stuck under the lake,” he said.

Attending the hearing in support of the MHA Nation was Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II, whose tribe is awaiting a judge’s decision by Sept. 9 on its request for an injunction to halt construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline across the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock reservation.

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 12:37:12 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie;Hvinden, Brian;Welch, Randy
Subject: New York Times Story on protests

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/us/occupying-the-prairie-tensions-rise-as-tribes-move-to-block-a-pipeline.html?_r=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 12:06:32 -0400
To: Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark—

Heads up. See highlighted news story below. Sherriff has deployed four deputies to ND to help with public safety issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protest.
As HQ email indicates, FEMA is not paying for this EMAC request.

Wyoming is also sending six deputies to support through an EMAC request. There was a news story in today's clips, but did not mention that FEMA was paying for the deployment.

Thanks,
Jerry

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
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direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J

Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline. The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>; (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform’s glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: (b)(6) @utah.gov
Sent: 8 Nov 2016 21:15:48 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: North Dakota EMAC request 2016

DATE: November 8, 2016 2:14:26 PM MST

Dear PIOs,

The Division of Emergency Management has received the following request from North Dakota via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (a system of state-to-state mutual aid). The request is for one PIO to support North Dakota for two weeks during the pipeline protests going on there.

If you are interested in supporting North Dakota, please let me know and I'll get you in touch with our EMAC coordinator.

Please read the following resource request. Here's the short version; the entire request follows:

Deployment period: 11/13-28/16
Description:

> One PIO to act in a support capacity to lead PIO for an ongoing protest incident in ND. 2 week deployment (14 days with 2 days for travel) for a total of 16 days Equipment needed: Laptop computer Assisting lead PIO with media calls, crafting fact sheets, timelines, media alerts, and news releases. Hours are Typically 8:00 am-5:00 pm.
>
> Safety: No safety or health concerns identified; Cold weather gear required.
>
> Working conditions: Field impacted area; Normal - infrastructure & support services operational; Mobile laptop and media phone will be issued.

Resource Request #1102-RR-5386

Contact Name: (b)(6)

Contact Email: (b)(6)@nd.gov

Contact Phone: (b)(6)

Update:

Broadcasted To: All

Total Recipients: 377

Event Name: Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) Protest October 2016

State Mission TN #: 16-073-227 EM Software TN #: 16-073-227

Requesting Agency: State of North Dakota EMAC TN #: 1102-RR-5386

Requesting State REQ-A Contact:

First Name: (b)(6) Last Name: (b)(6)

Phone 1: (b)(6) Phone 2: (b)(6)

Email 1: (b)(6)@nd.gov Email 2: nddes@nd.gov

Mission Type/Source: State Type / Status:

Mission Description: Public Information Offcier

Resource Description: One PIO to act in a support capacity to lead PIO for an ongoing protest incident in ND. 2 week deployment (14 days with 2 days for travel) for a total of 16 days Equipment needed: Laptop computer Assisting lead PIO with media calls, crafting fact sheets, timelines, media alerts, and news releases. Hours are Typically 8:00 am-5:00 pm or as needed to respond to protest activities.

NIMS Type:

Requested: 1 # Type: Personnel

Deployment Dates (including travel days):

Mobilization: Demobilization:

Deployment Date: 2016-11-13 Demobilization Date: 2016-11-28

Duty Length: 16

Deployment Details:

Work Location/Facilities: State EOC

Location/Facility Name: North Dakota State Emergency Operations Center
Address 1: 35 Fraine Barracks Lane
Address 2:
City: Bismarck
Zip Code: 58504
Working Conditions: Normal - Infrastructure & Support services operational
Working Conditions Comments:
Living Conditions: Normal - All amenities available
Living Conditions Comments: Cold weather gear
Logistics Comments: Laptop Media cell phone will be issued

Identify Health & Safety Concerns (All selected Apply):

X	No Safety or Health Concerns have been identified
	Immunizations or Vaccinations are suggested to deploy
	Environmental Hazards Exist
	Personal Protection Equipment Needed

Safety Concerns/Remarks:

Requesting State Resource Coordination Contact:

First Name:	(b)(6)	Last Name:	(b)(6)
Title:	Logistics	Agency:	State of North Dakota
Phone 1:	(b)(6)	Mobile:	(b)(6)
Email 1:	(b)(6)t@nd.gov	Email 2:	nddes@nd.gov

Staging Area and Point of Contact:

POC First Name:	(b)(6)	Last Name:	(b)(6)
Phone 1:	(b)(6)	Phone 2:	(b)(6)

Location/Facility Name: North Dakota State Emergency Operations Center
Address 1: 35 Fraine Barracks Lane
Address 2:
City: Bismarck
Zip Code: 58504

(b)(6), **PIO**
Utah Division of Emergency Management

(b)(6)

(b)(6)**@utah.gov**

Twitter: @PIO_Joe

Utah Department of Public Safety
Utah Emergency Management

Visit this link to unsubscribe

From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 13:37:15 -0400
To: Hudson, Lamont;Floyd, Megan
Subject: North Dakota Patrol Asks Motorists To Avoid Pipeline Protest

FYSA

August 15, 2016 11:27 AM

North Dakota Patrol Asks Motorists To Avoid Pipeline Protest

The North Dakota Highway Patrol is asking motorists to avoid state Highway 1806 near Fort Rice because of an oil pipeline protest along the road.

Troopers say traffic delays are expected on the highway that runs through the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in southern North Dakota.

Opponents of the $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline are protesting near a construction zone just north of the reservation. Troopers say motorists should use an alternate route, such as state Highway 6.

Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson says about 250 protesters were at the site on Monday. He says there are about 30 troopers monitoring the protest.

- Pipeline
- News

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http://www.keloland.com/news/article/news/north-dakota-patrol-asks-motorists-to-avoid-pipeline-protest?cid=twitter_keloland

William Sadowski
Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC) &
FEMA Alternate Operations Center - West (FAOC-West)
Fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
800-311-7021 or (303) 235-4847

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 11:46:39 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Notes from congressional call

- Pretty quiet in HQ congressional
- BCEM is November 15-17
- Employees encouraged to vote, perhaps early because of potential of a no-notice event. (Employees can take three hours on election day if needed to make sure they can vote.)
- I reported on the pipeline protest, the letter going out today to seven mayors and the county commissioner (plus congressionals), and a new one received via HQ from Bennet/Polis re Highlands Ditch.
- R5 RA announced his resignation. First political to leave? … Wisconsin got declared, but the state postponed discussion of JFO/DRCs because it is now hunting season. … Request from Minnesota for IA and PA
- R4 has transitioned Hurricane Matthew calls to weekly instead of daily.
- Flood map update is a couple days late this month.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 16:15:22 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: notes from the 9 am

- IMAT is deploying to LA today to be in place tonight (Conner will be staying and Daniel will be going once he finishes his week at EMI).
- State of ND requested a COW (for support with broadband capability) to put down by the protests that are occurring near the Standing Rock Reservation. We are connecting the State with the Region's contact.
- We have a Red Flag warning in Utah today.
- Rain, Rain and more Rain in LA today and over the next few days.
- MERS will be deploying to Wisconsin, however, they don't have a date yet.
- The new DCO will be starting tomorrow and will start to make the rounds to meet with Divisions. He will be in the Springs the rest of the week for NORTHCOM events.
- Nancy will be here tomorrow and there out the rest of the week.
- Theresa will be teleworking tomorrow morning and then leave in the afternoon (tomorrow is her birthday).
- The cell towner at Rocky Boys is now up and functional. They now have good Verizon service on the reservation.
- Recovery hopes to transition Baker back to the Region by the end of the week (8 PWs).
- Mike O. is back in the office.
- The Region is still looking for a CFC Coordinator.

EA reported:

- Stacie is on leave today.
- Three calls today (pre met for Senate Indian Affairs Committee, call with Senate Indian Affairs Committee and Baker Briefing). Program will be participating in all three calls.
- Protests near Standing Rock Reservation over the oil pipeline have garnered national attention. Representatives from tribes across the region and country will be arriving today. It could impact some of our travel and outreach – we won't be a focus. Tim and Bunk asked that I contact Chris Anderson, even though the protests have been peaceful, for situational awareness.
- Anticipate HQ will open consultation this week for the Tribal Policy, Region VIII will be changing how we engage for this consultation.
- Thanked everyone for support for Sally Clark visit support.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 12:15:24 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: notes from the 9 am

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- Anticipate HQ will open consultation this week for the Tribal Policy, Region VIII will be changing how we engage for this consultation.
- Thanked everyone for support for Sally Clark visit support.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 18 Oct 2016 11:49:08 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Notes on CAD call

Hot Issues:

- Matthew, plus other events.

Briefings:

- None scheduled. Congress returns Tuesday after election.

`

Regional Reports

4: Lot of Matthew decs and requests… Attendance was very low on Georgia cong teleconference, only one or two districts affected, so resorting to individual contacts with those offices now.
5: Dan says quiet now, but one pending dec request for Wisconsin and likely MN will ask for IA and PA. Dan will go staff one of those, since apparently everyone else in country is deployed somewhere.
6: Mapping issue in New Mexico, may be corrected OK… Singapore delegation coming through Louisiana to check recovery (from Katrina? State Dept reached out; need to loop in FEMA intern'l affairs)… congressional complaints about housing in B Rouge, still hot…
8: Noted our recent FMAG, that we are watching the ND pipeline situation, and, as R1 had noted, that the teleregistration intake training for the SWAT was helpful and interesting.
10: Collective sigh of relief storm system that came through not as bad as anticipated…

Strat Comm: agreed the customer intake training for SWAT team was interesting and helpful… **Great Shakeout on 10/20!!** … Tribal policy renewal out for public comment till 10/28… IAEM just finished, no senior VTC today because leaders still out. BCEM Nov. 15-17. …

OCC: Working on draft legislative proposal to give reservists employment protection for when deployed. Request from Dep. Administrator. May circulate among different offices next week. Will go through OMB if to ever go to congress. Will take a while, though Dep. Admin. wants it done pretty quickly, during this administration.

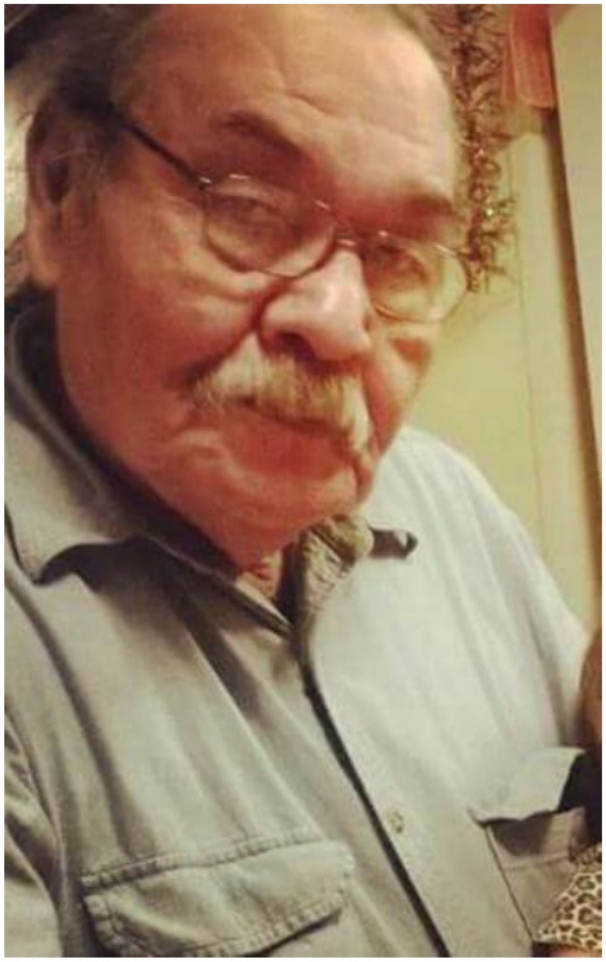
Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 14:51:06 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Oglala Elder Guy Dull Knife arrested at Dakota Access Pipeline blockade

Glenda also came across this story on the pipeline protest. FYI, Mr. Dull Knife had his home repaired under the PHC program.

Oglala Elder Guy Dull Knife arrested at Dakota Access Pipeline blockade

Posted by Brenda Norrell - August 15, 2016 at 2:18 pm



Article by Brenda Norrell

Top photo Guy Dull Knife courtesy Natalie Hand

Scatter Thier Own photo by Julianna BrownEyes Clifford

Monday, Aug. 15, 2016

DANGER
OCETI SAK
of The Great Sioux Nation

CANNON BALL, North Dakota -- Oglala elder Guy Dull Knife was among five people arrested this morning at the blockade of the Dakota Access Pipeline, where hundreds of Lakota and Dakota are now defending their water source of the Missouri River from oil pipeline construction aimed at tunneling under the river.

Police constructed barricades and began restricing access from the north into the camp. Oglala Sioux and Cheyenne River Sioux Nations are sending buses of Lakotas to the blockade today. Cheyenne River Chairman Harold Frazier contacted President Obama urging him to halt the construction, pointing out there was no consultation with Native American Tribes, and Treaty rights are being violated.

Burial places were identified in the path of the pipeline construction on Friday, which requires a halt to the work according to federal law protecting Native American burial places. However, the Dakota Access Pipeline continued the destruction today, enforced by police.

The pipeline is part of a new system which goes all the way from the Alberta tarsands to the Gulf of Mexico and was permitted largely in secret. President Obama was at Standing Rock Sioux Nation in 2014 -- and photographed with Lakota and Dakota babies and children -- while this new pipeline system was being permitted by the United States in secret.

In breaking news, Oglala tribal members Scotti Clifford and Juliana Brown Eyes-Clifford, members of the band Scatter Their Own, were arrested today at the pipeline blockade, in solidarity with their relatives at Standing Rock in the protection of sacred water.

Read today's coverage by Natalie Hand, of the Owe Aku International Justice Project, of the arrest of Guy Dull Knife and four others on Monday, August 15, 2016.

http://bsnorrell.blogspot.com/2016/08/oglala-elder-guy-dull-knife-arrested-at.html

A divestment and boycott campaign is underway of Dakota Access Pipeline of Dallas, and its investors, which includes Enbridge tar sands pipeline corporations in Calgary and Houston and Marathon Petroleum in Ohio.

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Phil Wernisch
FEMA External Affairs
DR-4237-OST
202-826-3160

From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 12 Aug 2016 12:12:51 -0400
To: DR-4237-OST All Hands;R8 External Affairs(b)(6) @mt-rushmore.net;(b)(6)
(b)(6) @gmail.com)
Cc: Wetherington, Jeffrey;Red Feather, Glenda
Subject: Oglala Sioux Recent Media Coverage - August 12, 2016
Attachments: DR-4237-OST MA 081216.docx

Good morning,

Attached and embedded below are some recent media stories on issues of interest regarding the Oglala Sioux Tribe on Pine Ridge Reservation.

Phil Wernisch
FEMA External Affairs
DR-4237-OST
202-826-3160

DR-4237-OST Media Coverage
August 12, 2016

- **Disaster recovery progress at Pine Ridge one year later** – Native Sun News
- **OST Approves Historic Settlement With DOJ-** Lakota Country Times
- **OST COUNCIL IN CHAOS: Wakpamni District left without representation-** Lakota Country Times
- **Wakpamni's Jackie Siers Suspended Without Pay-**Lakota Country Times
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- **Feds rename South Dakota's highest peak to Black Elk Peak-** Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan
- **Activists: Enforce law in Whiteclay or close beer stores** - KBHB Radio
- **When It Comes to the Black Hills, Sacred Pipe Must Be Honored, Elder Say-** Indian Country Today
- **Tribal land grabs outlined in new book** - Sioux Falls Argus Leader

Disaster recovery progress at Pine Ridge one year later

Native Sun News

August 10, 2016

PINE RIDGE — August 7 marked one year since President Obama’s disaster declaration for the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, kicking off the largest housing effort in the Oglala Sioux Tribe’s history. To support this effort, FEMA continues to have staff deployed to the reservation and office space at Ellsworth Air Force Base.

To address the severe housing need on the reservation following the disaster, FEMA initiated a permanent housing construction program used for the first time in the continental United States. Under the effort, more than 300 households were identified as eligible for either repairs to their damaged home, or replacement with a new manufactured home. A total of 196 new manufactured homes were turned over to tribal residents with the final closing occurring on July 11.

The manufactured homes were staged at Ellsworth Air Force Base prior to their final delivery and installation on the reservation. As of August 2, 85 additional homes have been repaired by contractors funded by FEMA. The remaining 23 homes are expected to be repaired by early September.

In addition to the housing construction program, FEMA has provided more than $435,000 in direct financial aid to tribal members. Of that, more than $217,000 was for home repairs and $219,000 was for personal property losses and other emergency needs as a result of the May storm. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved $943,000 in low-interest loans to 58 tribal residents and businesses.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds will also be made available to the tribe, with the amount available based on total disaster response and recovery costs. This program will allow the tribe to develop and undertake projects that will minimize the impact of future disaster events. Projects will be based on priorities established by the tribe, can be done reservation wide, and do not have to be directly related damages caused by the May 2015 storm event.

A federal interagency disaster recovery coordination team has partnered with the (OST) Government to support long-term recovery. Joining FEMA and the tribal government are the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and the Federal Highway Administration.

The recovery coordination team has task forces dedicated to two primary issues, roads and housing. On the housing front, the goal is “One Nation – One Number,” an initiative to get a comprehensive count of both housing structures and their condition as well as the number of occupants. An accurate total will give a true picture of the scope of need and bolster requests for funding to address it.

A similar tack is being taken on the roads side, with “One Nation – One Map” being the result of a months-long survey of all roads within reservation boundaries. The survey is being converted into GIS data to provide the tribe with comprehensive information on all roads and their current maintenance.

OST Approves Historic Settlement With DOJ

Lakota Country Times
By Tom Crash
August 11, 2016

PINE RIDGE—Following a presentation by tribal attorney Mark van Norman, the council voted Tuesday 13-0-1 to approve a long overdue settlement between the OST and he Department of Justice, a settlement that erased millions of dollars of disallowed costs that had strained all relations between the OST and DOJ.

Since as far back as 2004, the tribe had benefited from DOJ grants like the COPS grants. During Clinton's administration, there was direct funding but the DOJ grants were better suited for states and communities not necessarily tribal nations. With BIA self determination funding always short of necessary funds to operate a police force in a land area as large as Pine Ridge with no real tax base to help with resources.

Several of the DOJ programs were designed to put more officers in the field not supplement established programs or pay overtime. Over the years the disallowed cost ended just under $12 million. Over the past few years, documentation and negotiations in Washington DC and a day long negotiation on Monday produced a settlement thaw reducing the disallowed cost from just under $12 million to $2.9 million.

In addition to the reduction, the remaining $2.9 million will not be collected or subtracted from Public Safety's Rama settlement that totals $11 plus million. Over the years, there have been times when the tribe administered public safety. According to Mason Big Crow, Public Safety's business manager, the $2.9 million of questioned costs breaks down as $2.75 million is the tribe's questioned costs with Public Safety's portion at $214,000.

Expressing concern about the need to select a new OST Election Commission, the council decided to wait for the deadline, Aug. 12, for the announcement looking for letters of interest to serve on the commission and hold a special council meeting, only on the election, on Saturday morning, at 10am at the Prairie Wind Casino Hotel conference room.

As of Aug. 9, Cedric Young Bear, Tom Patton Sr., Louella Young Man, Sandra Old Horse, Phyllis Hollow Horn and Julie Two Eagle had submitted letters of interest, Patton and Young Man withdrew their letters. The council is looking for three commissioners and two alternates.

As FEMA renovated or replaced damaged homes, 14 fully furnished units were used to house families until their own home was ready. A resolution was introduced to take advantage of a buy back option to purchase the 14 units for $137,258; after Chauncy Wilson asked just how will we decide who gets the units, the council voted 4-10 to defeat the resolution.

A resolution was made by Mike Her Many Horses to hold a hearing with a special judge to look at all of the complaints and grievances filed against Oglala Lakota College and have board reps there with revised policies and procedures; after no second was offered, a tabling motion passed 8-5. The council voted 12-1 to appoint Dr. Gloria Kitsopolous, Charles Cuny and Diane Zephier to serve on the BIE's negotiated rule making session for the Every Student Succeed Act.

Due to a 3-4 month holdup in the construction of the OST nursing home, $425,000 was needed o pay additional interest costs to Shakopee to keep the process moving to move the first four residents into the home on Aug. 16, 17; the council voted 12-1-1 to use Ramah settlement monies to cover the additional costs. Voting 14-0, the council approved re-directing $1.2 million that had original been delegated to building a tribal store at Wounded Knee to the OST commodity program for a new warehouse.

A resolution to add $10,000 to each council reps and executive board members travel line item to bring their budgets up to original 2015 levels survived a tabling motion 5-8 and was approved 8-5. A resolution asking $180,000 out of the restricted casino account, giving each district $20,000 with $10,000 for elderly and $10,000 for medical emergencies passed 12-0-2. The council voted 12-0-2 to repay BOR $317,104 from Safety of Dams program to cover money that inadvertently had been deposited in an Oklahoma bank and to seek out the funds from the Oklahoma bank.

OST COUNCIL IN CHAOS: Wakpamni District left without representation

Lakota Country Times
By Karin Eagle
August 11, 2016

PINE RIDGE—For the second week in a row the Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST) council has suspended one of their own. With only two council representatives elected the latest suspension of Representative Jackie Siers has created a void in representation for the Wakpamni Lake district.

Wakpamni Lake District, with over 3,000 Oglala Sioux Tribe resident members, saw one of their council members, Sonia Little Hawk-Weston, suspended without pay for 20 days pending a hearing on complaints brought forth by OST Treasurer Melanie Two Eagle Black Bull on August 2, 2016. Just one week later the OST Treasurer brought a complaint to the council floor which was accepted by the necessary two thirds vote and Siers has also been suspended without pay.

Little Hawk-Weston's charge brought by Black Bull was in regards to the work that she had done with the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association (GPTCA). Travel to meetings and the accompanying costs were covered by the GPTCA with reimbursements made to the tribe when available. OST President John Yellow Bird-Steele as well as OST Fifth Member James Red Willow were also part of that work and covered under the same travel and reimbursement arrangements as Little Haw-Weston. Neither Yellow Bird-Steele nor Red Willow have had complaints brought against them.

Siers's charges stemmed from a previous administration term that she had served. Prior to her election to tribal council Siers had served as Director of the Higher Education Program in Pine Ridge. Her salary in that position was somewhat above the set salary for tribal council members. The OST Payroll department had failed to adjust for the change her deduction in salary and she had been over paid for a period of time before the oversight was discovered. According to Siers, the issue had been addressed by the previous administration and arrangements had been made to repay the over payment over a period of time.

For each representative the tribal council took their acceptance of the complaints a step further by voting to suspend both without pay. According to Eagle Nest District Representative Marilyn Charging Crow, the council was not bound to suspend either or both of the representatives following the acceptance of the complaints. According the Charging Crow the action was unwarranted due to the fact that neither representative had been found guilty of any of the formal accusations and that suspension from council should have been allowed as one of the consequences following a hearing in the event they were found culpable.

Pine Ridge Village Representative, Richard Greenwald, posed a question to the council as to the timing of the complaint being filed. Greenwald's question concerned the fact that the complaint came to this council's floor after two years had passed. Charging Crow made a motion to suspend Black Bull pending the hearings of the two suspended representatives which went unaddressed by President Steel.

Following the suspension of Councilwoman Siers a number of Wakpamni Lake District members who had been in the audience came forth to speak to council, many voicing their concerns about the lack of representation the day's action had created. OST member Holly Wilson spoke directly to President Steele asking him "What are you going to do for us now that we have no voice on council?" No response was forth coming from Steele.

During a break in the meeting this writer was able to speak with Treasurer Black Bull and asked her for comment. "I am doing my constitutional duty, and that is all," said Black Bull.

Following strong words of admonition by traditional Headsman and former OST President Mel Lone Hill to the council about their action against the two representatives and calling for council to reinstate the representatives, Little Hawk-Weston appeared before council and was given the floor by President Steele. During her statement, Little Hawk-Weston asserted that she was in the process of completing her resignation notice which she would be submitting to both the OST Treasurer, Rhonda Two Eagle, as well as President Steele.

Little Hawk-Weston stated that she was going to step down from her council seat in order to avoid the twenty days pending her hearing in which her district would be without representation on council floor as well as having no representative to deal with the daily assistance that her constituents seek her out for. Rick Grey Grass was the candidate who came in third during the last general election. If Little Hawk-Weston's resignation is accepted, Grey Grass would be the Wakpamni Lake District representative to complete the current term.

Yellow Bird-Steele quickly set a time to determine who was the next vote getter in the previous election that had been won by Little Hawk- Weston. Saturday, August 13, 2016 is the day set to seat that person in Little Hawk-Weston's absence.

Pine Ridge Village representative Robin Tapio, who had voted to both accept the complaints as well as suspend both Little Hawk- Weston and Siers, spoke up against the actions taken by council and called for reversal of their decisions. Tapio made a motion to reverse the action suspending both representatives which was quickly seconded by Charging Crow. A heated debate was held as to the legality of the motion culminating in President Steele declining to call for a vote on the motion and second and putting the entire meeting into recess.

Wakpamni's Jackie Siers Suspended Without Pay

Lakota Country Times

By Tom Crash

August 11, 2016

PINE RIDGE—On a complaint filed by OST Treasurer Melanie Two Eagles Black Bull, the tribal council voted 12-2- 1 to accept the complaint then voted 10-2- with 2 abstaining and 1 not voting to suspend Siers without pay until a hearing scheduled in no sooner than 20 days.

The council met Tuesday in the council chambers of the Red Cloud building to continue July's regular session that had started a week earlier in Allen. Those voting to accept the complaint included Don Fire Thunder, Ella John Carlow, Rich Greenwald, Ron Duke, CJ Clifford, Chauncy Wilson, Pat Ross, Mike Her Many Horses, Ellen Fills Pipe, Austin Watkins and Robin Tapio while Marilyn Charging Crow and Dave Pourier voted against, Blaine Little Thunder abstained. Wakpamni district's other council representative, Sonia Little Hawk Weston was suspended a week earlier at the meeting in Allen. Several community members asked for the floor to emphasize that the suspensions left Wakpamni district without representation.

Hollie Wilson, a past council representative, Roberta Ecoffey and Mel Lone Hill all spoke about how unfair it was for the district to have representation; you need to put these representatives back in the council, we have no one to speak for us or represent us, added Lone Hill. Last administration, the council suspended five council reps in late November including both LaCreek representatives Craig Dillon and Charles Cummings, 47 days went by before the council dismissed the complaints against the five representatives and put them back in the circle.

Later on in the afternoon as the council was working their way through the agenda, Sonia Little Hawk Weston asked Chairman Steele to address the council, thank you for giving my district no representation, we can't wait 20 days, I'm resigning my seat so you can put in the next highest vote getter, I'm so broken, Weston added as she broke into tears, I've worked so hard for my district and the council.

"For seven months, I've sat and waited after the first threats came out, the finance committee should have dealt with this a while ago," said Robin Tapio, "I make a motion to reinstate both Wakpamni representatives."

Marilyn Charging Crow seconded the motion.

"The tribal council and the people need to be protected, I'm not going to run the vote," said President Steele as several people in the audience yelled for John to run the vote as well as some council representatives, "we have a process that we're going to respect, I can't run the vote."

CJ Clifford who was removed by the council from his position as chair of the education committee and from the committee as well kept asking the council to address his removal without due process.

"We need to respect the process, there will be a hearing in 20 days," said both Dave Pourier and Ella John Carlow, "we have to think of the future, we are losing the respect of the people."

We were looking at staying until 8 or 9pm tonight to get the agenda done but we're going to recess this meeting, concluded Steele.

FRED
CHAMPION
JOCKEY
OGLALA

Lakota Jockey Honored

Lakota Country Times
By Brandon Ecoffey
August 11, 2016

PINE RIDGE—Lakota Country is known for producing great horsemen. One of the all-time greats was honored for his life as a jockey this past weekend in Pine Ridge.

As a jockey riding at racetracks across the region Fred Ecoffey started more than 17,522 races, winning 2,683 of them. Just over 2400 of those wins were earned on tracks located in the state of Nebraska making Ecoffey the winningest jockey in the state's history.

“Since breaking his maiden on a horse named Baby Sweeper in 1957, Ecoffey has ridden horses to more than ten million dollars in winnings, while competing full time on the Nebraska racing circuit 6 times he was leading rider at Columbus and Atokad, five times at Fonner Park, and four times at Lincoln,” wrote the Nebraska Racing Hall of Fame about Fred when he was inducted into the hall in 1981.

The honoring for Fred took place this past Saturday during the Oglala Nation Fair held in Pine Ridge. The honoring was part of an effort by the Professional Indian Horse Racing Association to honor past jockeys who paved the way for the modern emergence of Indian Relay.

“Growing up the daughter of Fred Ecoffey has been amazing. My dad has been my hero all my life. He always made sure my Mom, and my brothers and sisters had a good life,” said his daughter Renae. “His dedication to the sport of horse racing, and his family and friends is remarkable. We want to thank the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Calvin Ghost Bear, family, friends and everyone else who made it possible for him to be recognized and honored.”

Born the son of the late Frank “Posey” Ecoffey, Fred was raised on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation near Wounded Knee. With such stellar career numbers one fails to realize that his totals would have likely been far more prolific had he been allowed to mount a thoroughbred prior to his twentieth-birthday. The reason he hadn’t was because his father prohibited his son from racing until that age.

After retiring in 1984 Fred went on to become a track official, clocker, clerk of scales, paddock judge.

Feds rename South Dakota's highest peak to Black Elk Peak

Yankton Press & Dakotan
August 11, 2016

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A federal board's Thursday decision to rename Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak surprised South Dakota's governor, but vindicated activists who unsuccessfully argued to state officials last year that the peak shouldn't bear the name of a man whose soldiers killed Native Americans.

The decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names will cause "unnecessary expense and confusion," Gov. Dennis Daugaard said Thursday in a statement. The governor said he's heard little support for renaming the peak, which is South Dakota's tallest and stands in the Black Hills National Forest.

"I suspect very few people know the history of either Harney or Black Elk," Daugaard said in a statement.

The federal board determined from the input received that Harney Peak was concerning to Native Americans in the area, said Lou Yost, the board's executive secretary for domestic names. The vote was 12 in favor, none against and one abstaining, he said.

"In this case, the board felt that the name was derogatory or offensive being that it was on a holy site of the Native Americans," Yost said, adding that the change applies to federal usage on new maps or other products.

Army Gen. William S. Harney's men massacred Native American women and children during a battle in September 1855, according to historic records.

People last year argued to the state's Board of Geographic Names that Harney Peak was offensive and should be changed, but the board decided against backing a new name.

Republican U.S. Sen. John Thune said in a statement that the federal board's "unilateral" decision is upsetting and "defies logic" since it goes against state officials' recommendations.

Basil Brave Heart, a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, proposed the change to Black Elk Peak as a tribute to a Lakota spiritual leader who died in the mid-20th century. Brave Heart didn't answer a telephone call for comment Thursday.

"I don't want to see a peak that's named after someone that violated women and children," Brave Heart said in 2015. "Our people had to live under that icon, that man who did that to our people."

Activists: Enforce law in Whiteclay or close beer stores

KBHB Radio Sturgis
August 9, 2016

LINCOLN, Neb. - Advocates who want to end beer sales in Whiteclay are calling on state officials to enforce liquor laws in the Nebraska town or revoke the licenses of its four beer stores.

The group said in a statement Tuesday that Nebraska needs to provide adequate law enforcement if the stores are allowed to remain open.

The stores sold the equivalent of 3.5 million beer cans last year despite having a dozen residents. It's located on the border of South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, where alcohol is banned but alcohol-related problems run rampant.

A task force formed at Gov. Pete Ricketts' urging has suggested possible solutions, including more law enforcement.

Whiteclay activist John Maisch, who produced a documentary about the town, says closing the stores is the cheapest option for taxpayers.

When It Comes to the Black Hills, Sacred Pipe Must Be Honored, Elder Says

Indian Country Today
Sarah Sunshine Manning
August 10, 2016

Arvol Looking Horse stands in front of Mato Tipila, a sacred site in Wyoming. The sacred pipe, or "canupa," must be respected during talks regarding the Black Hills, Looking Horse, a nineteenth-generation pipe carrier, said.

On March 14, John Steele, president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, sent a letter to U.S. President Barack Obama inviting him to “explore innovative solutions to the Black Hills claim.”

The letter was in response to a policy statement made by the Obama campaign in May 2008, proposing government-to-government negotiations to resolve the longstanding Black Hills issue.

Obama, while in the sunset of his presidency, has only months to act on Steele’s invitation to enter into collaborative talks on the sacred Black Hills. Should any negotiations be made, time is of the essence.

However, talk of negotiations for the sacred Black Hills has caused leaders and members of the grassroots Lakota community to grow uneasy. According to many traditionalists, any negotiation of the Black Hills would be a direct violation of the sacred canupa (or ‘sacred pipe’) which was filled and smoked at the signing of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

“I have always respectfully supported positions of tribal government, and most have been my personal kholas (‘friends’),” Arvol Looking Horse, the nineteenth-generation keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe, told ICTMN. “But I have no choice but to stand up in this serious time that is upon us and remind others about our sacred teachings, and the importance of standing together as the Pte Oyate – the Buffalo Nation.”

For generations, the Lakota people have asserted that the Black Hills are not for sale and have refused monetary settlements while holding fast to the conviction that the Black Hills represent the future and wellbeing of the Lakota people. The Black Hills remain a sacred space to many tribes, including the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Assiniboine, Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara nations. Each of which also signed the Fort Laramie Treaty.

A scene from the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 in Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Courtesy Alexander Gardner.

“As Lakota people, we have to remember that there is a sacred canupa here that was brought to us by the Great Spirit and the White Buffalo Calf Woman. It is the center of our nation,” Looking Horse said. “The White Buffalo Calf Woman said, ‘When you stand with the pipe, you can never break it.’ It’s a spiritual law under the Creator. Once the pipe is violated, no longer can we use the intentions of our ancestors that sealed it.”

From an aerial view, the Black Hills take on the shape of a heart, echoing the Lakota understanding that the Black Hills stand as the heart of Mother Earth.

“We, as a spiritual people, have to take care of the heart of Mother Earth,” he said. “The entire place is a very sacred place, and the Black Hills stand as the verified place that goes back to our ceremonies and our sacred sites.”

Looking Horse, who is Cheyenne River Hunkpapa Minicoz'u Iktapzico, cautions that the Black Hills claim should not be negotiated, and that profit should not be made in the name of them. He said this would be no different than extracting gold from the Black Hills. A handful of groups and organizations have emerged in the name of the Black Hills, purporting to fundraise for non-profit causes.

“We shall never have money on our mind when speaking of the heart of Mother Earth, but we should humble ourselves to the sacred space, and protect and uphold that sacredness for our children to come, because this is our way of life,” Looking Horse said. “Things like money and greed don’t even belong there.”

Roger Bird, also Oglala Lakota, stands with Looking Horse, and supports his leadership as the nineteenth-generation keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe.

“The majority of people today don’t know our culture, our history, or spirituality,” Bird said. “So they don’t understand that because the treaty was signed with the pipe, that treaty cannot be undone. They are going against the pipe, the spirits, and they’re going to hurt themselves and the people.”

According to Bird, expecting a positive outcome from negotiating the Black Hills is futile. Bird paralleled the current attempts to negotiate the treaty with Iktomi, the trickster.

“Iktomi fooled the ducks and gave them red eyes. He told them to close their eyes and dance. When they started dancing, he took a club and started killing them,” Bird said. “We are closing our eyes as the people, just to make money. The people that they are fooling all have red eyes today. They are pretty good with their lies.”

Some traditionalists and members of the grassroots community also call into question the authority and legitimacy of elected tribal officials to act on behalf of the Great Sioux Nation when entering into any treaty talks – for those elected officials represent Indian Reorganization Act governments, which are, essentially, an extension of the U.S. government.

“These tribal councils, when they raise their hand and take an oath under the U.S. flag, the moment they do that, they lose their citizenship as Lakota, because they are swearing under the U.S. flag,” said Bird. “Us traditional people, we don’t put a hand on the bible or swear under the flag. We have our treaty, our eagle staff, and the canupa. These are the things we live by. So when it comes to treaty issues, it has to come back down to the grassroots people.”

Looking Horse, along with other spiritual leaders, honor a traditional responsibility which does not allow for serving in political positions, and government officials today tend to consult primarily with elected officials over spiritual leaders. This is antithetical to traditional decision making.

“My position as the keeper of the sacred pipe is very important, and I’ve always respected that position,” said Looking Horse. “At the age of 12 years old, they told me that I could never use foul language, I must stay with the people, and I can never raise my hand under the U.S. flag. They said you always have to represent your people and stand with that canupa in your hand.”

Looking Horse fears that the federal government awaits the moment that the Lakota people make the first move for compromising the Black Hills, ultimately, breaking the treaty on their own accord. Once those negotiations are made, they cannot be taken back.

“As long as we maintain our way of life and our sacred ceremonies, there shall be life,” said Looking Horse. “But when we start negotiating with the mindset of the modern society, it’s not going to work.”

“Once we cut the heart of Mother Earth in half for negotiation and money, we will cut our own hearts,” said Looking Horse. “One day, we will understand how much we are connected to all that is."

Tribal land grabs outlined in new book

Sioux Falls Argus Leader
by John Hult,
August 11, 2016

A longtime lawyer for several South Dakota tribes will visit Zandbroz Variety in Sioux Falls Saturday afternoon to sign copies of a book on land disputes.

Peter Capossela's book "The Land Along the River" chronicles a series of decisions in Washington, D.C. about lands in the Missouri River basin, initially taken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a series of dam projects.

The land at the heart of the book, published by Mariah Press in Sioux Falls, was initially taken after heavy flooding in the 1940s as part of what became known as the Pick Sloan Missouri Basin Program.

Over 200,000 acres of land belonging to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe was flooded as part of the plan, which forced the relocation of the Native American population.

Congress revisited the issue of compensation in the 1990s, including some of land in Corson and Sioux counties.

"With some of these lands, you can't even see the reservoir," Capossela said. "The Corps took a lot more land than they needed."

Capossela's book focuses on a collaboration between then Sen. Tom Daschle and then-Governor Bill Janklow. The Standing Rock and Yankton Sioux Tribes had pushed for the land to be returned to the tribes, with Capossela serving as one representative for the tribes.

Instead of returning the land as initially requested, the deals ended up putting a portion of federal land under the jurisdiction of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, ostensibly to manage fisheries.

Capossela's book argues that the legislative tactics – including tacking provisions onto a must-pass emergency appropriations bill for Los Angeles earthquake relief – echo those used in the 1800s in the Black Hills.

"It was kind of like what happened when the Black Hills were taken from the Sioux," Capossela said.

The lands in question hold historical and cultural significance to the tribes, despite the title transfers, Capossela said. The importance of the Missouri River waters was among the issues that underscores continued tribal opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline.

"Some people don't realize how strongly Indians living on the reservations feel about the land outside of the reservation within their treaty area," Capossela said.

Capossela will be at Zandbroz from 2to 4 p.m. Saturday to sign copies of the book and talk history.

DR-4237-OST Media Coverage

August 12, 2016

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Native Sun News
August 10, 2016

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To address the severe housing need on the reservation following the disaster, FEMA initiated a permanent housing construction program used for the first time in the continental United States. Under the effort, more than 300 households were identified as eligible for either repairs to their damaged home, or replacement with a new manufactured home. A total of 196 new manufactured homes were turned over to tribal residents with the final closing occurring on July 11.

The manufactured homes were staged at Ellsworth Air Force Base prior to their final delivery and installation on the reservation. As of August 2, 85 additional homes have been repaired by contractors funded by FEMA. The remaining 23 homes are expected to be repaired by early September.

In addition to the housing construction program, FEMA has provided more than $435,000 in direct financial aid to tribal members. Of that, more than $217,000 was for home repairs and $219,000 was for personal property losses and other emergency needs as a result of the May storm. The U.S. Small Business

Administration (SBA) has approved $943,000 in low-interest loans to 58 tribal residents and businesses.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds will also be made available to the tribe, with the amount available based on total disaster response and recovery costs. This program will allow the tribe to develop and undertake projects that will minimize the impact of future disaster events. Projects will be based on priorities established by the tribe, can be done reservation wide, and do not have to be directly related damages caused by the May 2015 storm event.

A federal interagency disaster recovery coordination team has partnered with the (OST) Government to support long-term recovery. Joining FEMA and the tribal government are the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and the Federal Highway Administration.

The recovery coordination team has task forces dedicated to two primary issues, roads and housing. On the housing front, the goal is “One Nation – One Number,” an initiative to get a comprehensive count of both housing structures and their condition as well as the number of occupants. An accurate total will give a true picture of the scope of need and bolster requests for funding to address it.

A similar tack is being taken on the roads side, with “One Nation – One Map” being the result of a months-long survey of all roads within reservation boundaries. The survey is being converted into GIS data to provide the tribe with comprehensive information on all roads and their current maintenance.

OST Approves Historic Settlement With DOJ

Lakota Country Times
By Tom Crash
August 11, 2016

PINE RIDGE—Following a presentation by tribal attorney Mark van Norman, the council voted Tuesday 13-0-1 to approve a long overdue settlement between the OST and he Department of Justice, a settlement that erased millions of dollars of disallowed costs that had strained all relations between the OST and DOJ.

Since as far back as 2004, the tribe had benefited from DOJ grants like the COPS grants. During Clinton’s administration, there was direct funding but the DOJ grants were better suited for states and communities not necessarily tribal nations. With BIA self determination funding always short of necessary funds to operate a police force in a land area as large as Pine Ridge with no real tax base to help with resources.

Several of the DOJ programs were designed to put more officers in the field not supplement established programs or pay overtime. Over the years the disallowed cost ended just under $12 million. Over the past few years, documentation and negotiations in Washington DC and a day long negotiation on Monday produced a settlement thaw reducing the disallowed cost from just under $12 million to $2.9 million.

In addition to the reduction, the remaining $2.9 million will not be collected or subtracted from Public Safety's Rama settlement that totals $11 plus million. Over the years, there have been times when the tribe administered public safety. According to Mason Big Crow, Public Safety's business manager, the $2.9 million of questioned costs breaks down as $2.75 million is the tribe's questioned costs with Public Safety's portion at $214,000.

Expressing concern about the need to select a new OST Election Commission, the council decided to wait for the deadline, Aug. 12, for the announcement looking for letters of interest to serve on the commission and hold a special council meeting, only on the election, on Saturday morning, at 10am at the Prairie Wind Casino Hotel conference room.

As of Aug. 9, Cedric Young Bear, Tom Patton Sr., Louella Young Man, Sandra Old Horse, Phyllis Hollow Horn and Julie Two Eagle had submitted letters of interest, Patton and Young Man withdrew their letters. The council is looking for three commissioners and two alternates.

As FEMA renovated or replaced damaged homes, 14 fully furnished units were used to house families until their own home was ready. A resolution was introduced to take advantage of a buy back option to purchase the 14 units for $137,258; after Chauncy Wilson asked just how will we decide who gets the units, the council voted 4-10 to defeat the resolution.

A resolution was made by Mike Her Many Horses to hold a hearing with a special judge to look at all of the complaints and grievances filed against Oglala Lakota College and have board reps there with revised policies and procedures; after no second was offered, a tabling motion passed 8-5. The council voted 12-1 to appoint Dr. Gloria Kitsopolous, Charles Cuny and Diane Zephier to serve on the BIE's negotiated rule making session for the Every Student Succeed Act.

Due to a 3-4 month holdup in the construction of the OST nursing home, $425,000 was needed o pay additional interest costs to Shakopee to keep the process moving to move the first four residents into the home on Aug. 16, 17; the council voted 12-1-1 to use Ramah settlement monies to cover the additional costs. Voting 14-0, the council approved re-directing $1.2 million that had original been delegated to building a tribal store at Wounded Knee to the OST commodity program for a new warehouse.

A resolution to add $10,000 to each council reps and executive board members travel line item to bring their budgets up to original 2015 levels survived a tabling motion 5-8 and was approved 8-5. A resolution asking $180,000 out of the restricted casino account, giving each district $20,000 with $10,000 for elderly and $10,000 for medical emergencies passed 12-0-2. The council voted 12-0-2 to repay BOR $317,104 from Safety of Dams program to cover money that inadvertently had been deposited in an Oklahoma bank and to seek out the funds from the Oklahoma bank.

OST COUNCIL IN CHAOS: Wakpamni District left without representation

Lakota Country Times
By Karin Eagle
August 11, 2016

PINE RIDGE—For the second week in a row the Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST) council has suspended one of their own. With only two council representatives elected the latest suspension of Representative Jackie Siers has created a void in representation for the Wakpamni Lake district.

Wakpamni Lake District, with over 3,000 Oglala Sioux Tribe resident members, saw one of their council members, Sonia Little Hawk-Weston, suspended without pay for 20 days pending a hearing on complaints brought forth by OST Treasurer Melanie Two Eagle Black Bull on August 2, 2016. Just one week later the OST Treasurer brought a complaint to the council floor which was accepted by the necessary two thirds vote and Siers has also been suspended without pay.

Little Hawk-Weston's charge brought by Black Bull was in regards to the work that she had done with the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association (GPTCA). Travel to meetings and the accompanying costs were covered by the GPTCA with reimbursements made to the tribe when available. OST President John Yellow Bird-Steele as well as OST Fifth Member James Red Willow were also part of that work and covered under the same travel and reimbursement arrangements as Little Haw-Weston. Neither Yellow Bird-Steele nor Red Willow have had complaints brought against them.

Siers's charges stemmed from a previous administration term that she had served. Prior to her election to tribal council Siers had served as Director of the Higher Education Program in Pine Ridge. Her salary in that position was somewhat above the set salary for tribal council members. The OST Payroll department had failed to adjust for the change her deduction in salary and she had been over paid for a period of time before the oversight was discovered. According to Siers, the issue had been addressed by the previous administration and arrangements had been made to repay the over payment over a period of time.

For each representative the tribal council took their acceptance of the complaints a step further by voting to suspend both without pay. According to Eagle Nest District Representative Marilyn Charging Crow, the council was not bound to suspend either or both of the representatives following the acceptance of the complaints. According the Charging Crow the action was unwarranted due to the fact that neither representative had been found guilty of any of the formal accusations and that suspension from council should have been allowed as one of the consequences following a hearing in the event they were found culpable.

Pine Ridge Village Representative, Richard Greenwald, posed a question to the council as to the timing of the complaint being filed. Greenwald's question concerned the fact that the complaint came to this council's floor after two years had passed. Charging Crow made a motion to suspend Black Bull pending the hearings of the two suspended representatives which went unaddressed by President Steel.

Following the suspension of Councilwoman Siers a number of Wakpamni Lake District members who had been in the audience came forth to speak to council, many voicing their concerns about the lack of representation the day's action had created. OST member Holly Wilson spoke directly to President Steele asking him "What are you going to do for us now that we have no voice on council?" No response was forth coming from Steele.

During a break in the meeting this writer was able to speak with Treasurer Black Bull and asked her for comment. "I am doing my constitutional duty, and that is all," said Black Bull.

Following strong words of admonition by traditional Headsman and former OST President Mel Lone Hill to the council about their action against the two representatives and calling for council to reinstate the representatives, Little Hawk-Weston appeared before council and was given the floor by President Steele. During her statement, Little Hawk-Weston asserted that she was in the process of completing her resignation notice which she would be submitting to both the OST Treasurer, Rhonda Two Eagle, as well as President Steele.

Little Hawk-Weston stated that she was going to step down from her council seat in order to avoid the twenty days pending her hearing in which her district would be without representation on council floor as well as having no representative to deal with the daily assistance that her constituents seek her out for. Rick Grey Grass was the candidate who came in third during the last general election. If Little Hawk-Weston's resignation is accepted, Grey Grass would be the Wakpamni Lake District representative to complete the current term.

Yellow Bird-Steele quickly set a time to determine who was the next vote getter in the previous election that had been won by Little Hawk- Weston. Saturday, August 13, 2016 is the day set to seat that person in Little Hawk-Weston's absence.

Pine Ridge Village representative Robin Tapio, who had voted to both accept the complaints as well as suspend both Little Hawk- Weston and Siers, spoke up against the actions taken by council and called for reversal of their decisions. Tapio made a motion to reverse the action suspending both representatives which was quickly seconded by Charging Crow. A heated debate was held as to the legality of the motion culminating in President Steele declining to call for a vote on the motion and second and putting the entire meeting into recess.

Wakpamni's Jackie Siers Suspended Without Pay

Lakota Country Times
By Tom Crash
August 11, 2016

PINE RIDGE—On a complaint filed by OST Treasurer Melanie Two Eagles Black Bull, the tribal council voted 12-2- 1 to accept the complaint then voted 10-2- with 2 abstaining and 1 not voting to suspend Siers without pay until a hearing scheduled in no sooner than 20 days.

The council met Tuesday in the council chambers of the Red Cloud building to continue July's regular session that had started a week earlier in Allen. Those voting to accept the complaint included Don Fire Thunder, Ella John Carlow, Rich Greenwald, Ron Duke, CJ Clifford, Chauncy Wilson, Pat Ross, Mike Her Many Horses, Ellen Fills Pipe, Austin Watkins and Robin Tapio while Marilyn Charging Crow and Dave Pourier voted against, Blaine Little Thunder abstained. Wakpamni district's other council representative, Sonia Little Hawk Weston was suspended a week earlier at the meeting in Allen. Several community members asked for the floor to emphasize that the suspensions left Wakpamni district without representation.

Hollie Wilson, a past council representative, Roberta Ecoffey and Mel Lone Hill all spoke about how unfair it was for the district to have representation; you need to put these representatives back in the council, we have no one to speak for us or represent us, added Lone Hill. Last administration, the council suspended five council reps in late

November including both LaCreek representatives Craig Dillon and Charles Cummings, 47 days went by before the council dismissed the complaints against the five representatives and put them back in the circle.

Later on in the afternoon as the council was working their way through the agenda, Sonia Little Hawk Weston asked Chairman Steele to address the council, thank you for giving my district no representation, we can't wait 20 days, I'm resigning my seat so you can put in the next highest vote getter, I'm so broken, Weston added as she broke into tears, I've worked so hard for my district and the council.

"For seven months, I've sat and waited after the first threats came out, the finance committee should have dealt with this a while ago," said Robin Tapio, "I make a motion to reinstate both Wakpamni representatives."

Marilyn Charging Crow seconded the motion.

"The tribal council and the people need to be protected, I'm not going to run the vote," said President Steele as several people in the audience yelled for John to run the vote as well as some council representatives, "we have a process that we're going to respect, I can't run the vote."

CJ Clifford who was removed by the council from his position as chair of the education committee and from the committee as well kept asking the council to address his removal without due process.

"We need to respect the process, there will be a hearing in 20 days," said both Dave Pourier and Ella John Carlow, "we have to think of the future, we are losing the respect of the people."

We were looking at staying until 8 or 9pm tonight to get the agenda done but we're going to recess this meeting, concluded Steele.

FRED
CHAMPION
JOCKEY
OGLALA
ON

Lakota Jockey Honored

Lakota Country Times
By Brandon Ecoffey
August 11, 2016

PINE RIDGE—Lakota Country is known for producing great horsemen. One of the all-time greats was honored for his life as a jockey this past weekend in Pine Ridge.

As a jockey riding at racetracks across the region Fred Ecoffey started more than 17,522 races, winning 2,683 of them. Just over 2400 of those wins were earned on tracks located in the state of Nebraska making Ecoffey the winningest jockey in the state's history.

"Since breaking his maiden on a horse named Baby Sweeper in 1957, Ecoffey has ridden horses to more than ten million dollars in winnings, while competing full time on the Nebraska racing circuit 6 times he was leading rider at Columbus and Atokad, five times at Fonner Park, and four times at Lincoln," wrote the Nebraska Racing Hall of Fame about Fred when he was inducted into the hall in 1981.

The honoring for Fred took place this past Saturday during the Oglala Nation Fair held in Pine Ridge. The honoring was part of an effort by the Professional Indian Horse Racing Association to honor past jockeys who paved the way for the modern emergence of Indian Relay.

"Growing up the daughter of Fred Ecoffey has been amazing. My dad has been my hero all my life. He always made sure my Mom, and my brothers and sisters had a good life," said his daughter Renae. "His dedication to the sport of horse racing, and his family and friends is remarkable. We want to thank the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Calvin Ghost Bear, family, friends and everyone else who made it possible for him to be recognized and honored."

Born the son of the late Frank "Posey" Ecoffey, Fred was raised on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation near Wounded Knee. With such stellar career numbers one fails to realize that his totals would have likely been far more prolific had he been allowed to mount a thoroughbred prior to his twentieth-birthday. The reason he hadn't was because his father prohibited his son from racing until that age.

After retiring in 1984 Fred went on to become a track official, clocker, clerk of scales, paddock judge.

Feds rename South Dakota's highest peak to Black Elk Peak

Yankton Press & Dakotan
August 11, 2016

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A federal board's Thursday decision to rename Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak surprised South Dakota's governor, but vindicated activists who unsuccessfully argued to state officials last year that the peak shouldn't bear the name of a man whose soldiers killed Native Americans.

The decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names will cause "unnecessary expense and confusion," Gov. Dennis Daugaard said Thursday in a statement. The governor said he's heard little support for renaming the peak, which is South Dakota's tallest and stands in the Black Hills National Forest.

"I suspect very few people know the history of either Harney or Black Elk," Daugaard said in a statement.

The federal board determined from the input received that Harney Peak was concerning to Native Americans in the area, said Lou Yost, the board's executive secretary for domestic names. The vote was 12 in favor, none against and one abstaining, he said.

"In this case, the board felt that the name was derogatory or offensive being that it was on a holy site of the Native Americans," Yost said, adding that the change applies to federal usage on new maps or other products.

Army Gen. William S. Harney's men massacred Native American women and children during a battle in September 1855, according to historic records.

People last year argued to the state's Board of Geographic Names that Harney Peak was offensive and should be changed, but the board decided against backing a new name.

Republican U.S. Sen. John Thune said in a statement that the federal board's "unilateral" decision is upsetting and "defies logic" since it goes against state officials' recommendations.

Basil Brave Heart, a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, proposed the change to Black Elk Peak as a tribute to a Lakota spiritual leader who died in the mid-20th century. Brave Heart didn't answer a telephone call for comment Thursday.

"I don't want to see a peak that's named after someone that violated women and children," Brave Heart said in 2015. "Our people had to live under that icon, that man who did that to our people."

Activists: Enforce law in Whiteclay or close beer stores
KBHB Radio Sturgis
August 9, 2016

LINCOLN, Neb. - Advocates who want to end beer sales in Whiteclay are calling on state officials to enforce liquor laws in the Nebraska town or revoke the licenses of its four beer stores.

The group said in a statement Tuesday that Nebraska needs to provide adequate law enforcement if the stores are allowed to remain open.

The stores sold the equivalent of 3.5 million beer cans last year despite having a dozen residents. It's located on the border of South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, where alcohol is banned but alcohol-related problems run rampant.

A task force formed at Gov. Pete Ricketts' urging has suggested possible solutions, including more law enforcement.

Whiteclay activist John Maisch, who produced a documentary about the town, says closing the stores is the cheapest option for taxpayers.

When It Comes to the Black Hills, Sacred Pipe Must Be Honored, Elder Says

Indian Country Today
Sarah Sunshine Manning
August 10, 2016

Arvol Looking Horse stands in front of Mato Tipila, a sacred site in Wyoming. The sacred pipe, or "canupa," must be respected during talks regarding the Black Hills, Looking Horse, a nineteenth-generation pipe carrier, said.

On March 14, John Steele, president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, sent a letter to U.S. President Barack Obama inviting him to "explore innovative solutions to the Black Hills claim."

The letter was in response to a policy statement made by the Obama campaign in May 2008, proposing government-to-government negotiations to resolve the longstanding Black Hills issue.

Obama, while in the sunset of his presidency, has only months to act on Steele's invitation to enter into collaborative talks on the sacred Black Hills. Should any negotiations be made, time is of the essence.

However, talk of negotiations for the sacred Black Hills has caused leaders and members of the grassroots Lakota community to grow uneasy. According to many traditionalists, any negotiation of the Black Hills would be a direct violation of the sacred canupa (or ‘sacred pipe’) which was filled and smoked at the signing of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

“I have always respectfully supported positions of tribal government, and most have been my personal kholas (‘friends’),” Arvol Looking Horse, the nineteenth-generation keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe, told ICTMN. “But I have no choice but to stand up in this serious time that is upon us and remind others about our sacred teachings, and the importance of standing together as the Pte Oyate – the Buffalo Nation.”

For generations, the Lakota people have asserted that the Black Hills are not for sale and have refused monetary settlements while holding fast to the conviction that the Black Hills represent the future and wellbeing of the Lakota people. The Black Hills remain a sacred space to many tribes, including the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Assiniboine, Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara nations. Each of which also signed the Fort Laramie Treaty.

A scene from the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 in Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Courtesy Alexander Gardner.

“As Lakota people, we have to remember that there is a sacred canupa here that was brought to us by the Great Spirit and the White Buffalo Calf Woman. It is the center of our nation,” Looking Horse said. “The White Buffalo Calf Woman said, ‘When you stand with the pipe, you can never break it.’ It’s a spiritual law under the Creator. Once the pipe is violated, no longer can we use the intentions of our ancestors that sealed it.”

From an aerial view, the Black Hills take on the shape of a heart, echoing the Lakota understanding that the Black Hills stand as the heart of Mother Earth.

"We, as a spiritual people, have to take care of the heart of Mother Earth," he said. "The entire place is a very sacred place, and the Black Hills stand as the verified place that goes back to our ceremonies and our sacred sites."

Looking Horse, who is Cheyenne River Hunkpapa Minicoz'u Iktapzico, cautions that the Black Hills claim should not be negotiated, and that profit should not be made in the name of them. He said this would be no different than extracting gold from the Black Hills. A handful of groups and organizations have emerged in the name of the Black Hills, purporting to fundraise for non-profit causes.

"We shall never have money on our mind when speaking of the heart of Mother Earth, but we should humble ourselves to the sacred space, and protect and uphold that sacredness for our children to come, because this is our way of life," Looking Horse said. "Things like money and greed don't even belong there."

Roger Bird, also Oglala Lakota, stands with Looking Horse, and supports his leadership as the nineteenth-generation keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe.

"The majority of people today don't know our culture, our history, or spirituality," Bird said. "So they don't understand that because the treaty was signed with the pipe, that treaty cannot be undone. They are going against the pipe, the spirits, and they're going to hurt themselves and the people."

According to Bird, expecting a positive outcome from negotiating the Black Hills is futile. Bird paralleled the current attempts to negotiate the treaty with Iktomi, the trickster.

"Iktomi fooled the ducks and gave them red eyes. He told them to close their eyes and dance. When they started dancing, he took a club and started killing them," Bird said. "We are closing our eyes as the people, just to make money. The people that they are fooling all have red eyes today. They are pretty good with their lies."

Some traditionalists and members of the grassroots community also call into question the authority and legitimacy of elected tribal officials to act on behalf of the Great Sioux Nation when entering into any treaty talks – for those elected officials represent Indian Reorganization Act governments, which are, essentially, an extension of the U.S. government.

"These tribal councils, when they raise their hand and take an oath under the U.S. flag, the moment they do that, they lose their citizenship as Lakota, because they are swearing under the U.S. flag," said Bird. "Us traditional people, we don't put a hand on the bible or swear under the flag. We have our treaty, our eagle staff, and the canupa. These are the things we live by. So when it comes to treaty issues, it has to come back down to the grassroots people."

Looking Horse, along with other spiritual leaders, honor a traditional responsibility which does not allow for serving in political positions, and government officials today tend to consult primarily with elected officials over spiritual leaders. This is antithetical to traditional decision making.

"My position as the keeper of the sacred pipe is very important, and I've always respected that position," said Looking Horse. "At the age of 12 years old, they told me that I could never use foul language, I must stay with the people, and I can never raise my hand under the U.S. flag. They said you always have to represent your people and stand with that canupa in your hand."

Looking Horse fears that the federal government awaits the moment that the Lakota people make the first move for compromising the Black Hills, ultimately, breaking the treaty on their own accord. Once those negotiations are made, they cannot be taken back.

"As long as we maintain our way of life and our sacred ceremonies, there shall be life," said Looking Horse. "But when we start negotiating with the mindset of the modern society, it's not going to work."

"Once we cut the heart of Mother Earth in half for negotiation and money, we will cut our own hearts," said Looking Horse. "One day, we will understand how much we are connected to all that is."

Tribal land grabs outlined in new book

Sioux Falls Argus Leader
by John Hult,
August 11, 2016

A longtime lawyer for several South Dakota tribes will visit Zandbroz Variety in Sioux Falls Saturday afternoon to sign copies of a book on land disputes.

Peter Capossela's book "The Land Along the River" chronicles a series of decisions in Washington, D.C. about lands in the Missouri River basin, initially taken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a series of dam projects.

The land at the heart of the book, published by Mariah Press in Sioux Falls, was initially taken after heavy flooding in the 1940s as part of what became known as the Pick Sloan Missouri Basin Program.

Over 200,000 acres of land belonging to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe was flooded as part of the plan, which forced the relocation of the Native American population.

Congress revisited the issue of compensation in the 1990s, including some of land in Corson and Sioux counties.

“With some of these lands, you can’t even see the reservoir,” Capossela said. “The Corps took a lot more land than they needed.”

Capossela’s book focuses on a collaboration between then Sen. Tom Daschle and then-Governor Bill Janklow. The Standing Rock and Yankton Sioux Tribes had pushed for the land to be returned to the tribes, with Capossela serving as one representative for the tribes.

Instead of returning the land as initially requested, the deals ended up putting a portion of federal land under the jurisdiction of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, ostensibly to manage fisheries.

Capossela’s book argues that the legislative tactics – including tacking provisions onto a must-pass emergency appropriations bill for Los Angeles earthquake relief – echo those used in the 1800s in the Black Hills.

“It was kind of like what happened when the Black Hills were taken from the Sioux,” Capossela said.

The lands in question hold historical and cultural significance to the tribes, despite the title transfers, Capossela said. The importance of the Missouri River waters was among the issues that underscores continued tribal opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline.

“Some people don’t realize how strongly Indians living on the reservations feel about the land outside of the reservation within their treaty area,” Capossela said.

Capossela will be at Zandbroz from 2to 4 p.m. Saturday to sign copies of the book and talk history.

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: 26 Aug 2016 12:40:14 -0400
To: DR-4237-OST All Hands;R8 External Affairs;(b)(6)@mt-rushmore.net';Wernisch, Phil;'(b)(6)
Subject: Oglala Sioux Recent Media Coverage - August 26, 2016
Attachments: DR-4237-OST MA 082516.docx

Good morning,

Attached and embedded below are some recent media stories on issues of interest regarding the Oglala Sioux Tribe on Pine Ridge Reservation.

DR-4237-OST Media Coverage
August 26, 2016

- **Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city**- Rapid City Journal

- **SD warrior tradition behind donation of code talkers medal earned in WWII**- Capital Journal, Pierre

- **PROTECTOR CAMPS REMAIN PEACEFUL-** Lakota Country Times, Pine Ridge
- **Defender Camps 2,000 Strong-** Lakota Country Times, Pine Ridge

- **Council Approves Election Timeframe-** Lakota Country Times, Pine Ridge

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city

Mike Anderson
Rapid City Journal
Aug 24, 2016

Rapid City will soon hire 15 new firefighters, thanks in large part to a $1 million federal grant awarded to the city fire department last week.

The new hires will fill a staffing shortage that Fire Chief Mike Maltaverne has urged the city council to address since 2014.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant, or SAFER, administered through the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will pay the salaries and benefits of nine new firefighters for the next two years. The other six out of 15 new positions will be paid for out of the city's budget.

"In 2014, we started to identify that, with the way our demands for service were increasing, our resources were starting to spread thin," Maltaverne said on Tuesday. "Our firefighters were going on more and more calls and the staff increases weren't keeping up with the demand for our services."

In a memo to Mayor Steve Allender earlier this year, Maltaverne said that in 1995, the city's fire department had 81 operational firefighters with an annual call volume of 3,600, or 44 calls per firefighter. Rapid City has grown significantly in population and geographical area since the 90s, and with that growth has come more fires.

The department's annual call volumes have grown an average of 7.6 percent since then, Maltaverne said, putting last year's total call volume for the department at 17,012 for its 117 firefighters, or about 145 calls per firefighter.

Maltaverne knew it would require some extra funding to get 15 new firefighters on board to fill the service gap and ease the pressure on existing personnel. So he asked the Rapid City Council to pay for six employees if he could find a grant to pay for nine more.

"We thought that would be more realistic, that the city would be able to fund that," Maltaverne said.

The City Council has already agreed to fund three positions, and the mayor has included another three in next year's proposed budget which will be the subject of a public discussion at 6:30 p.m. today in the city council chamber.

"We clearly articulated the need for additional staffing and our elected officials along with FEMA responded, and for that we are grateful," Maltaverne said.

Though the SAFER grant will only pay the other nine new firefighters through two years of service, Maltaverne is confident that will be plenty of time for the council to figure out how to keep funding those positions indefinitely.

"What would be the point of hiring firefighters for two years and then having the city lay them off?" Maltaverne said. "That doesn't solve the long-term problem."

The grant calls for the new hires to be made within 180 days, a deadline Maltaverne has no worries about meeting. This spring, the Rapid City Fire Department went through a hiring process and compiled a selection of suitable candidates.

"We reviewed that and we feel there are a sufficient number of qualified candidates to fill those positions," he said. "We've got a really good deep list of potential employees."

Maltaverne hopes to have all 15 slots filled by Jan. 1, 2017, which is when the SAFER grant funds will be awarded to the city.

Applying for the grant was a comprehensive and competitive process, Maltaverne said, adding that he sees FEMA's decision to award the funds as a form of validation.

"Getting this grant clearly confirms that the need was there," he said.

SD warrior tradition behind donation of code talkers medal earned in WWII

Stephen Lee
Capital Journal-Pierre
Aug. 25, 2016

Francis Whitebird grew up the descendant of Sioux warriors and was one himself, as were two of his sons and his father, Noah Whitebird Sr., who fought the Germans by using his Lakota language in Europe during World War II.

Noah Whitebird Sr., born in 1908, died in 1980, 35 years after he was a code talker for the U.S. Army Air Corps in Europe, including in the Battle of the Bulge.

Recruited quietly and sworn to secrecy until long after the war was over, Noah Whitebird was paired with another Lakota Sioux soldier from South Dakota to foil the Nazi war plan by using their native tongue to call in artillery strikes.

On Friday, Francis Whitebird and his family will donate the Congressional Code Talker Medal given to his father years after his death, to the State Historical Society in Pierre.

"This is a special case," said Jay Vogt, director of the Historical Society and the state's historic preservation officer. "This is one way for us to recognize the family for their generous contribution and also to lift up the history of the code talkers in the state and how important the Lakota code talkers were in the World War I and World War II war efforts."

The medal will be displayed in the Cultural Heritage Center, which will spur talk and interpretation about the unique role American Indian code talkers played, Vogt said

Noah Whitebird was one of 69 Lakota warriors from the state who served as code talkers for the Army during World War II, said Francis Whitebird, formerly of Pierre. He now lives back on his home Rosebud reservation, in St. Francis.

His father had several friends on the Rosebud after the war who also served as code talkers, Francis Whitebird said.

"They all took an oath and kept their mouth shut and took it to their graves with them," Francis told the Capital Journal on Wednesday. Simon Broken Leg, Charlie White Pipe Sr. and Iver Crow Eagle Sr., all friends of his father.

"I didn't even know Simon was a code talker," he said.

The government wanted nothing said about how well it worked to use American Indian languages, three dozen of them, including Navajo and Lakota Sioux, because Japanese and German armies couldn't crack the code of the languages. And maybe it would be useful again in future wars.

"It was 1968 when they finally lifted the order to keep it quiet and I guess when they said, 'you can talk now that you're a code talker,'" Francis Whitebird said. "It was 1968 when my dad told me he was a code talker. But I didn't know what a code talker was. He kind of laughed."

The next year, 1969, Francis Whitebird became a warrior himself, in the Army, in Vietnam, in battle as a combat medic.

""I spent 19 months over there," he said. Hit by shrapnel as he was helping a wounded soldier in a firefight, he plucked out the hot metal from his leg. He was awarded a Purple Heart.

"That was the most satisfying time I have ever done," he said of his time as a combat medic. "A little hairy…"

"And two of my sons served in Iraq, both in the infantry, both have their combat infantry badges. I have a combat medic badge. Those are the two most primo badges you can wear. You wear one of those things, it tells people you have been in the thick of the fighting."

His sons Brendan Whitebird and Colin Whitebird - wounded by a sniper in Baghdad - carry on on a long family tradition.

Two of Francis Whitebird's grandfathers fought with Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull in the Battle of the Rosebud in the summer of 1876 against Gen. George Crook's troops, and 10 days later, at the Little Bighorn against Gen. George Custer and his troops.

His grandfathers later served as scouts for the U.S. Army.

Home from Vietnam, Whitebird learned a little about his father's code talking in World War II.

"They had to have good map reading skills, " he said.

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His father would scout out to a hill, perhaps, ahead of the troops, and radio back to his Lakota partner, the information, using the Lakota language he knew before he knew English.

"They would call in artillery," Francis said. "The Germans figured the scout was probably on that hill and started bombing the crap out of that hill."

But like so many soldiers from World War II, Noah Whitebird Sr. didn't say much about it.

"He let a few things slip. One story he told was when the met the Russians at the Elbe River." It was April 1945, and the war in Europe was days away from being over.

"A Russian guy came over and . . . pretty soon word came that the Russians had vodka and the Americans had food. So they wound up mixing on the bridge. Somebody had an accordion and there were women in the Russian army, so there was a big dance on the bridge. Americans were getting drunk and the Russians were eating."

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A couple years after his father died in 1980 at 72, Francis Whitebird was in Paris, remembering how his uncle, John Face, had marched down the Champs Elysee in victory in World War I. It was before the Lakota became U.S. citizens.

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Francis Whitebird got his English first name not from his Rosebud town of St. Francis, which he jokes was named after him.

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"When you go to war, you're whole family goes to war," Francis Whitebird said.

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"But I have a younger brother, Albon Whitebird, he also was in Vietnam, with the Fourth Infantry Division. He came back and he had a bad time. They didn't recognize Agent Orange then."

His brother passed away at a too-young age, said Whitebird.

But Albon, too, is part of the family tradition that will be seen as Noah Whitebird's code talker medal that came so late will be donated to his state at the ceremony at event on Friday from 1:30 to 3 p.m. in the Cultural Heritage Center.

Francis Whitebird will speak, as will Sec. Steve Emery of the state Department of Tribal Relations and Sec. Larry Zimmerman of the state's office of Veterans Affairs. The public is invited and refreshments will be served..

Too little is known about the Sioux code talkers and now the stories will come out, Whitebird and Vogt hope.

Francis Whitebird, a trustee of the State Historical Society, is writing an article about the Sioux code talkers.

"This code talker business is part of American history," he said. The Navajo code talkers became better known, including a movie about them.

The Sioux code talkers' story "has never really been talked about," Whitebird said. "It was part of South Dakota history, part of tribal history and part of family history. And national history, too. Without the code talkers, we would all be talking Japanese or German, or both."

PROTECTOR CAMPS REMAIN PEACEFUL

By Brandon Ecoffey
Lakota Country Times- Pine Ridge
Aug. 25, 2016

EVERYONE
WElCOME
Sacred Stone
Camp!

Water protectors remain peaceful despite efforts to cast them in a different level light. PINE RIDGE—Despite efforts by the local North Dakota media and county officials water protectors and Standing Rock Sioux Tribal officials say that the message emanating through the camps is one of peaceful resistance.

Nearly 3,000 water protectors gathered peacefully this past weekend in Cannonball, ND., to speak out against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline that is set to be built near the Standing Rock Reservation and could possibly threaten drinking water for tribal citizens. The gathering has been peaceful as organizers have directed those in attendance to not engage in violent acts.

“There are no weapons within the camp,” said Cody Hall, who is the media spokesperson for the Red Warrior Camp. “We have security in the camp at all hours and when people arrive they are asked what they have in the car. Our security walks the camps at all hours to make sure nothing like that is happening,” said Hall.

Hall says that all entering the camp are made aware that weapons and alcohol are not allowed.

Additionally, LaDonna Allard, Director of the Camp of the Sacred Stone, addressed these same issues in a press release on Tuesday after the Governor of North Dakota declared a state of emergency.

“The gathering here remains 100% peaceful and ceremonial, as it has from day one. We are standing together in prayer. No firearms or weapons are allowed. Why is a gathering of Indians so inherently threatening and frightening to some people,” asked Allard.

Governor Dalrymple declared a State of Emergency last Friday to allow for additional state resources to be directed to the gatherings as he mentioned that he believed “outside agitators” were responsible for committing crime within the camps. The reports have remain unsubstantiated and irresponsible comments from local law enforcement about the possibility of the presence of pipe bombs have contributed to a false narrative about the activities of protectors.

A report from the Bismark Tribune on Tuesday, however, revealed a conflict of interest for Dalrymple as they reported that he owns stock in ExxonMobile. A spokesman for the governor told the Tribune that, “He is not going to discuss the details of his personal finances.”

Early efforts by the local media and the representatives from Morton County Law Enforcement to sensationalize “reports” of weapons including pipe bombs have been quickly dismissed by those present within the camps and several journalists including LCT’s Karin Eagle who spent time embedded in both camps over the weekend.

Sources inside of the office of Standing Rock Sioux President Dave Archambault Jr., have told LCT that from the start of the protest the goal of the administration is to keep the protests peaceful and prayerful. The nonviolent direct action taken by organizers of the camps has been partly credited with the overwhelming show of support from both tribalnations and non-Native allies who flocked to the camps in the thousands this past weekend.

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Lakota Country Times- Pine Ridge
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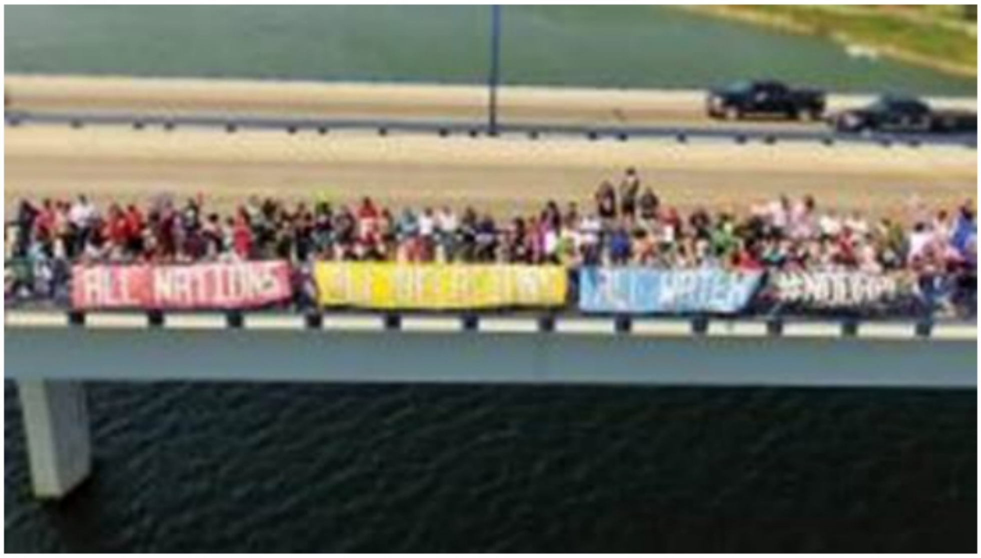

1,000 strong, defenders descended on the Veteran’s Memorial bridge in Bismarck to stress their commitment to stop he pipeline; photo courtesy of Arlo Iron Cloud. BISMARK, ND– On Tuesday, close to 1,000 defenders traveled north to Bismarck to express their commitment against the Dakota Access Pipeline, banners were draped over the restraining walls of the Veteran’s Memorial bridge, prayers were said, songs were shared and tobacco ties were placed. Another 1,000 defenders were back in the Sacred Stone Spiritual camp and the Spirit Camp near the Cannonball River.

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Arvol Looking Horse and Dakota 38 lead a horse ride from the Spirit Camp to the lprotest site on Friday; photo courtesy of Arlo Iron Cloud. Everyone was waiting for the Aug. 24 hearing in federal court in Washington DC, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe had filed a suit against the Dakota Access Pipeline, requesting an injunction to stop the pipeline construction. The Judges Opinion from that Hearing will be issued Sept. 9. Dave Archambault, SRST president, OST vice president Tom Poor Bear and council representative CJ Clifford along with a bus of supporters from Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and a number of additional tribal officials planned to be in DC for Wednesday's hearing.

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Rumors were rampant that the road to Bismarck were blocked but it was law enforcement warning vehicles about events and activities going on throughout the area; photo courtesy of Arlo Iron Cloud. Tuesday, the OST council voted overwhelmingly to continue supporting the activities against the Dakota Access Pipeline and approved looking a filing a suit against South Dakota.

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Council Approves Election Timeframe

Tom Crash
Lakota Country Times- Pine Ridge
Aug. 25, 2016

Authorizes $35-40,000 For Youth Per District

PINE RIDGE—Tuesday, the tribal council finally finished off the July regular session agenda, the council voted 14-0 to approve the timeframe for the 2016 OST primary and general election.

Petition packets are available Wednesday, August 24 and need to be returned by Tuesday, September 6. Council then voted 13-0-1 to approve of the Commission's budget of $271,814.

Some schools started this week, with that in mind, the legislators voted 14-0 to authorize tribal funds for district youth including school clothes, $190,00 from the casino revenue account to be distributed $10,000 per each council rep and $145,000 from the tribal BIA account to be distributed $15,000 per district with $20,000 to Pine Ridge and Medicine Root.

Cheryl Crow's complaint against OST Treasurer Melanie Two Eagle Black Bull was denied by the council 10-1 with two abstentions and one not voting.

With a unanimous vote of 14-0, the council voted to continue support for the protest activities against the Dakota Access Pipeline in Cannonball and support President Steele's letters to Department of Interior, BOR and US Senate and look at filing a suit against South Dakota.

Voting 14-0, the council approved MOA's for waste water systems on Pine Ridge, $3.161 million for 2,654 identified homes on Pine Ridge; 14-0 authorizing monthly payments to Children Therapy Services from July 2016 through June 30, 2017; 13-0-1 for midwife services from Chelsea Iverson and 14-0 for midwife services from Shayla Louis for Native Women's Health Care Program in Rapid City; 14-0 to re-contract Home Improvement Program with the BIA for $582,261; 14-0 to approve Oglala Sioux Lakota Housing's $1 million proposal to the Native American Research Center to create an Oglala Sioux Research Center; 14-0 to take tribal land in Flint Hills south of Hot Springs and put it into trust and renew the lease with the Wild Horse Sanctuary; 13-1 to lease 1,247 acres to the Wild Horse Sanctuary; 13- 0-1 to approve contract for Christy Schultz, a licensed addiction counselor for Anpetu Luta Otipi; 13-0- 1 to authorize the Land and Natural Resources committee to lease land for up to 50 years in five year increments and 12- 0-2 opposing any uranium mining in the southern Black Hills.

The hospital in Pine Ridge has been suffering from a severe nursing shortage, a resolution was presented to waive the Indian preference and look at recruiting 20 Commission Corps nurses to meet the need, the council felt steps could be taken without waiving the Indian preference requirement and voted 3-10 to defeat the resolution; voted 13-0 for a new dangerous drug ordinance that provides the opportunity to exclude and banish offenders; 8-2-3 to renew commitment to have special council meeting on public safety including 638 contract and audits; 8-4- 1 to replace tribal court procedures with federal rules for procedures, federal rules for evidence and federal rules for appellate procedures and voted 14-0 to change quorum requirements for HHS regular meetings and 10-3 to change quorum for the law and order committee from 7 to 5.

The council is set to have their regular session for August on Tuesday, Aug. 30.

Have a great weekend! ☺

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DR-4237-OST Media Coverage

August 26, 2016

- **Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city**- Rapid City Journal

- **SD warrior tradition behind donation of code talkers medal earned in WWII**- Capital Journal, Pierre

- **PROTECTOR CAMPS REMAIN PEACEFUL-** Lakota Country Times, Pine Ridge
- **Defender Camps 2,000 Strong-** Lakota Country Times, Pine Ridge

- **Council Approves Election Timeframe-** Lakota Country Times, Pine Ridge

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city

Mike Anderson
Rapid City Journal
Aug 24, 2016

Rapid City will soon hire 15 new firefighters, thanks in large part to a $1 million federal grant awarded to the city fire department last week.

The new hires will fill a staffing shortage that Fire Chief Mike Maltaverne has urged the city council to address since 2014.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant, or SAFER, administered through the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management

Agency, will pay the salaries and benefits of nine new firefighters for the next two years. The other six out of 15 new positions will be paid for out of the city’s budget.

“In 2014, we started to identify that, with the way our demands for service were increasing, our resources were starting to spread thin,” Maltaverne said on Tuesday. "Our firefighters were going on more and more calls and the staff increases weren’t keeping up with the demand for our services.”

In a memo to Mayor Steve Allender earlier this year, Maltaverne said that in 1995, the city’s fire department had 81 operational firefighters with an annual call volume of 3,600, or 44 calls per firefighter. Rapid City has grown significantly in population and geographical area since the 90s, and with that growth has come more fires.

The department’s annual call volumes have grown an average of 7.6 percent since then, Maltaverne said, putting last year’s total call volume for the department at 17,012 for its 117 firefighters, or about 145 calls per firefighter.

Maltaverne knew it would require some extra funding to get 15 new firefighters on board to fill the service gap and ease the pressure on existing personnel. So he asked the Rapid City Council to pay for six employees if he could find a grant to pay for nine more.

“We thought that would be more realistic, that the city would be able to fund that,” Maltaverne said.

The City Council has already agreed to fund three positions, and the mayor has included another three in next year’s proposed budget which will be the subject of a public discussion at 6:30 p.m. today in the city council chamber.

"We clearly articulated the need for additional staffing and our elected officials along with FEMA responded, and for that we are grateful,” Maltaverne said.

Though the SAFER grant will only pay the other nine new firefighters through two years of service, Maltaverne is confident that will be plenty of time for the council to figure out how to keep funding those positions indefinitely.

“What would be the point of hiring firefighters for two years and then having the city lay them off?” Maltaverne said. “That doesn’t solve the long-term problem.”

The grant calls for the new hires to be made within 180 days, a deadline Maltaverne has no worries about meeting. This spring, the Rapid City Fire Department went through a hiring process and compiled a selection of suitable candidates.

“We reviewed that and we feel there are a sufficient number of qualified candidates to fill those positions,” he said. “We’ve got a really good deep list of potential employees.”

Maltaverne hopes to have all 15 slots filled by Jan. 1, 2017, which is when the SAFER grant funds will be awarded to the city.

Applying for the grant was a comprehensive and competitive process, Maltaverne said, adding that he sees FEMA's decision to award the funds as a form of validation.

"Getting this grant clearly confirms that the need was there," he said.

SD warrior tradition behind donation of code talkers medal earned in WWII

Stephen Lee
Capital Journal-Pierre
Aug. 25, 2016

Francis Whitebird grew up the descendant of Sioux warriors and was one himself, as were two of his sons and his father, Noah Whitebird Sr., who fought the Germans by using his Lakota language in Europe during World War II.

Noah Whitebird Sr., born in 1908, died in 1980, 35 years after he was a code talker for the U.S. Army Air Corps in Europe, including in the Battle of the Bulge.

Recruited quietly and sworn to secrecy until long after the war was over, Noah Whitebird was paired with another Lakota Sioux soldier from South Dakota to foil the Nazi war plan by using their native tongue to call in artillery strikes.

On Friday, Francis Whitebird and his family will donate the Congressional Code Talker Medal given to his father years after his death, to the State Historical Society in Pierre.

"This is a special case," said Jay Vogt, director of the Historical Society and the state's historic preservation officer. "This is one way for us to recognize the family for their generous contribution and also to lift up the history of the code talkers in the state and how important the Lakota code talkers were in the World War I and World War II war efforts."

The medal will be displayed in the Cultural Heritage Center, which will spur talk and interpretation about the unique role American Indian code talkers played, Vogt said

Noah Whitebird was one of 69 Lakota warriors from the state who served as code talkers for the Army during World War II, said Francis Whitebird, formerly of Pierre. He now lives back on his home Rosebud reservation, in St. Francis.

His father had several friends on the Rosebud after the war who also served as code talkers, Francis Whitebird said.

“They all took an oath and kept their mouth shut and took it to their graves with them,” Francis told the Capital Journal on Wednesday. Simon Broken Leg, Charlie White Pipe Sr. and Iver Crow Eagle Sr., all friends of his father.

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“It was 1968 when they finally lifted the order to keep it quiet and I guess when they said, 'you can talk now that you’re a code talker,'” Francis Whitebird said. “It was 1968 when my dad told me he was a code talker. But I didn’t know what a code talker was. He kind of laughed.”

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“A Russian guy came over and . . . pretty soon word came that the Russians had vodka and the Americans had food. So they wound up mixing on the bridge. Somebody had an accordion and there were women in the Russian army, so there was a big dance on the bridge. Americans were getting drunk and the Russians were eating.”

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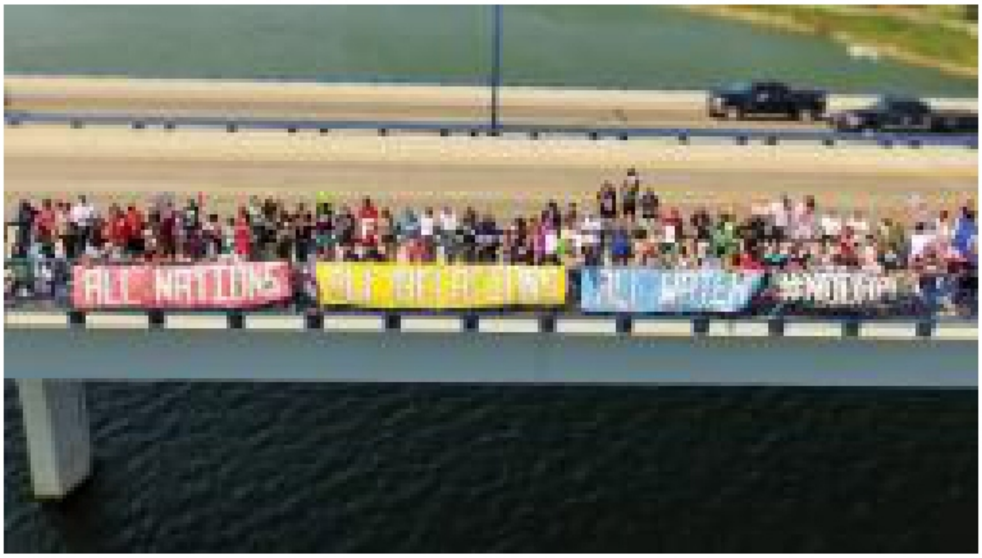

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Construction has halted at two of the sites but the construction on the east side of the Missouri, where preparations are being made to drill under the Missouri, not only continue but have been stepped up going 24 hours a day. Armed security had been added to the site and aerial patrols mark skies.

Council Approves Election Timeframe

Tom Crash

Lakota Country Times- Pine Ridge

Aug. 25, 2016

Authorizes $35-40,000 For Youth Per District

PINE RIDGE—Tuesday, the tribal council finally finished off the July regular session agenda, the council voted 14-0 to approve the timeframe for the 2016 OST primary and general election. Petition packets are available Wednesday, August 24 and need to be returned by Tuesday, September 6. Council then voted 13-0-1 to approve of the Commission's budget of $271,814.

Some schools started this week, with that in mind, the legislators voted 14-0 to authorize tribal funds for district youth including school clothes, $190,00 from the casino revenue account to be distributed $10,000 per each council rep and $145,000 from the tribal BIA account to be distributed $15,000 per district with $20,000 to Pine Ridge and Medicine Root.

Cheryl Crow's complaint against OST Treasurer Melanie Two Eagle Black Bull was denied by the council 10-1 with two abstentions and one not voting.

With a unanimous vote of 14-0, the council voted to continue support for the protest activities against the Dakota Access Pipeline in Cannonball and support President Steele's letters to Department of Interior, BOR and US Senate and look at filing a suit against South Dakota.

Voting 14-0, the council approved MOA's for waste water systems on Pine Ridge, $3.161 million for 2,654 identified homes on Pine Ridge; 14-0 authorizing monthly payments to Children Therapy Services from July 2016 through June 30, 2017; 13-0-1 for midwife services from Chelsea Iverson and 14-0 for midwife services from Shayla Louis for Native Women's Health Care Program in Rapid City; 14-0 to re-contract Home Improvement Program with the BIA for $582,261; 14-0 to approve Oglala Sioux Lakota Housing's $1 million proposal to the Native American Research Center to create an Oglala Sioux Research Center; 14-0 to take tribal land in Flint Hills south of Hot Springs and put it into trust and renew the lease with the Wild Horse Sanctuary; 13-1 to lease 1,247 acres to the Wild Horse Sanctuary; 13- 0-1 to approve contract for Christy Schultz, a licensed addiction counselor for Anpetu Luta Otipi; 13-0- 1 to authorize the Land and Natural Resources committee to lease land for up to 50 years in five year increments and 12- 0-2 opposing any uranium mining in the southern Black Hills.

The hospital in Pine Ridge has been suffering from a severe nursing shortage, a resolution was presented to waive the Indian preference and look at recruiting 20 Commission Corps nurses to meet the need, the council felt steps could be taken without waiving the Indian preference requirement and voted 3-10 to defeat the resolution; voted 13-0 for a new dangerous drug ordinance that provides the opportunity to exclude and banish offenders; 8-2-3 to renew commitment to have special council meeting on public safety including 638 contract and audits; 8-4- 1 to replace tribal court procedures with federal rules for procedures, federal rules for evidence and federal rules for appellate procedures and voted 14-0 to change quorum requirements for HHS regular meetings and 10-3 to change quorum for the law and order committee from 7 to 5.

The council is set to have their regular session for August on Tuesday, Aug. 30.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 16:50:47 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: omg

http://www.myndnow.com/news/bismarck-news/trump-holds-stock-in-dakota-access-pipeline

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 18:26:24 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: PIO Call (10-11) tomorrow in SW Conference Room

Agenda
10:00 a.m. Welcome – Stacie Greff

State reports: **(((SUGGESTED TOPICS)))**

Colorado—Micki finishing Naval Post Graduate School. Project relates to media access.

Montana—Baker disaster. Wildfires.

North Dakota—DES role in pipeline protest.

South Dakota—OEM involvement in Sturgis rally.

Utah—September PIO conference in St. George.

Wyoming—Wildfires. Lusk one year later.

Region VIII reports:

- Status of ARA/RA position. STACIE
- Region VIII IMAT to Louisiana. Daniel Green is the new IMAT EA Advisor, deployed to Livingston Parish. STACIE
- NEMA-FEMA meeting in Chicago. STACIE
- September is Preparedness Month. Be sure to let us know if states have plans. We want to support your efforts. **(((JERRY PLAN TO BRIEF THIS IF YOU ARE ON)))**
- OST wrap. **(((BRIAN or RICKY)))**
- Upcoming Tribal consultation. **(((RICKY or STACIE)))**

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- Upcoming Tribal consultation. **(((RICKY or STACIE)))**

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 26 Aug 2016 14:26:19 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: pipeline clips du jour

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who's Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment.

The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota’s governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country's pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

For breaking news and in-depth reporting, follow @NYTNational on Twitter.

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune
-

Lauren Donovan

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

“They can’t build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe,” Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company’s decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any “Jane and John Doe” from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe’s request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

“Everybody thought they had it (easement),” said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. “This is really important information.”

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

“We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There’s nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court’s injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday’s news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

“The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she’ll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people,” Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

“It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making,” Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

“When this is done, if it’s ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered

Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:

A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.
MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

✖ mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

From: Senator Steve Daines
Sent: 29 Jun 2016 20:43:30 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Pipeline potential

If you are having trouble viewing this message or would like to share it on a social network, you can view the message online <http://daines.enews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1> .
<http://view.icv01.net/view.gif?gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1>

Steve Daines, United States Senator for Montana
<http://daines.enews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1&mailing_linkid=1762>

MEET STEVE
<http://daines.enews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1&mailing_linkid=1763> SERVING YOU
<http://daines.enews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1&mailing_linkid=1764> NEWS
<http://daines.enews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1&mailing_linkid=1765> CONNECT
<http://daines.enews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1&mailing_linkid=1766>

June 29, 201

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 16:21:06 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Pipeline update

Pipeline update:

Yesterday was a big day, Jessy Jackson arrived on site and talked between the protestors and law enforcement broke down.

- I am hearing a lot about treaty rights, this morning on NPR the Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux talked about this land belonging to the tribes based on treaties (NPR and other media sources).
- A new encampment (the 1851 Treaty Camp) has been set up directly on the pipeline path, which is private property (KILI Radio).
- On Wed. Jessy Jackson arrived on site to speak out about the many human and civil rights violations being perpetrated by local police (Indian Country Today).
- Actor Mark Ruffalo was at Standing Rock yesterday showing his support and Leonardo DiCaprio announced today he is on his way (Indian Country Today).
- Everyone is still calling for peaceful protests (multiple media outlets).
- It is being reported there have been between 260 and 300 arrests since the protests began with most of them happening last Saturday and pepper spray being used by law enforcement (multiple media sources).
- FAA has issued temporary flight restrictions over the protest camps. Only response aircraft in support of law enforcement activity are authorized in the airspace (Bismarck Tribune).
- Negotiations broke down between protestors and law enforcement yesterday (Bismarck Tribune).
- This inforum link is to a video that shows clear frustration by law enforcement and that they do not want a confrontation. http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction (InForum)

This is a particularly good story about law enforcement and what happened yesterday.

http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4146041-new-roadblock-emerges-highway-1806-confrontation-between-protesters-law

New roadblock emerges on Highway 1806 as confrontation between protesters, law enforcement looms

By [Amy Dalrymple and Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service](#) Today at 10:22 a.m.

❯ ❮

Dawn breaks over the Oceti Sakowin Camp Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor1 / 2

A roadblock manned by North Dakota National Guard troops blocks North Dakota Hwy. 1806 before sunrise Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor2 / 2

MORTON COUNTY, N.D. — One day after negotiations between Dakota Access Pipeline protesters and law enforcement broke down, the mood was tense but quiet Thursday, Oct. 27, as the sun rose above the resistance camps.

Above, in restricted airspace, a North Dakota Highway Patrol aircraft circled.

Cecily Fong, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Emergency Services, said medical staffing is in place should any injuries occur at the protest sites.

She said law enforcement will likely issue a warning to protesters congregating at a camp along State Highway 1806, where pipeline opponents have set up teepees and staged hay bales, logs and barbed wire to block the road, if necessary.

However, Fong said she didn't know the timing of any law enforcement action planned, and officers want protesters to leave the northern camp, which is on private property recently purchased by the pipeline's developer, Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

Protesters will be encouraged to return to the southern camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.

By Thursday morning, protesters set up an additional "halfway" roadblock on Highway 1806 — between their main barricade and the frontline camp where they've promised to hold their ground.

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6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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He said a plane flew overhead through the night, and it appeared two people were in the surrounding hills to the west and using flashlights to signal back and forth with the plane.

Asked if he expects violence in a confrontation, “from the police, yeah, definitely,” he said.

“All we’re trying to do is protect our people,” Wounded Knee said, adding that women and children were asked to leave the frontline camp Wednesday night. About 200 people are at the frontline camp.

With the new roadblock established by protesters, Highway 1806 has numerous staging areas, camps and road blocks stretched out over several miles, starting with an equipment staging area set up by law enforcement about a mile south of Fort Rice.

Traveling south on 1806, in succession, there is a law enforcement barricade, followed by the protesters’ main barricade, halfway roadblock, frontline camp and main camp.

On Wednesday, negotiations between pipeline opponents and law enforcement officials broke down, setting up a possible clash as hundreds of protesters vowed to hold their ground at a the frontline camp directly in the path of the four-state oil pipeline.

A contingent of law enforcement and National Guard officials met with camp representatives on Highway 1806.

Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney of Fargo, who is helping Morton County coordinate the law enforcement response, made one last plea for protesters to remove their roadblock on 1806 and abandon the roughly 200-person “frontline” camp, where teepees and tents continued to pop up on land where the pipeline is planned

“We’re here telling you this is private property and you have to leave,” Laney told camp coordinator Mekasi Camp-Horinek on Wednesday. “We don’t want a confrontation. Please stand your people down and go back to the main camp.”

Mekasi pointed at the road – “our no surrender line,” he said – and then back at the frontline camp standing in the way of the four-state, $3.8 billion oil pipeline – their “no retreat” line.

“That’s your final word?” Laney asked.

“That’s my final word,” Camp-Horinek said, walking away.

“Good day, gentleman,” Laney said, turning toward the staging area about five miles away near Fort Rice, where a mass of law enforcement and military forces has gathered.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said authorities will continue to do everything they can to resolve the situation peacefully, but he said discussions with camp leaders Wednesday reached an “impasse.”

Kirchmeier emphasized that “the last thing we want to do is do it forcefully.”

“If we have the chance for open dialog, that’s what we want to continue,” he said.

Pipeline opponents say they’ve reclaimed land under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, noting the Sioux never ceded that territory.

But Kirchmeier said Morton County authorities have to enforce existing laws and treaty issues would need to be resolved by the federal government. He added that currently the protesters are infringing on other residents’ rights by blocking the highway.

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

- AP

Protesters set up tepees and tents Monday in southern North Dakota on property owned by the pipeline company.

CHEYENNE — Wyoming has sent six highway patrol troopers to North Dakota to help authorities deal with Indian protesters demonstrating against the construction of an oil pipeline, prompting objections Tuesday from some Wyoming Indian leaders.

Sending the troopers merely extends emergency help to another state and does not signal that Wyoming has taken a position on the pipeline controversy, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said.

But Dean Goggles, chairman of Northern Arapaho Business Council, called on Mead to recall the troopers immediately.

“The North Dakota tribes and tribal members from around the nation are attempting to protect both the environment and sites which have ceremonial, religious and cultural significance to the tribes,” Goggles said.

More than 100 protesters were arrested last weekend in Morton County, North Dakota, in the faceoff between protesters and Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, developer of the four-state Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The $3.8 billion pipeline, most of which has been completed, crosses through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois. Opponents worry about potential effects on drinking water on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s reservation as well as harm to cultural sites.

Col. Kebin Haller of the Wyoming Highway Patrol said six troopers were sent to North Dakota on Saturday and are expected to remain there until Nov. 8.

The troopers volunteered after the governor of North Dakota declared an emergency and asked other states for law enforcement assistance, Haller said.

The six are members of the patrol's Special Services Squad who have additional training and equipment to address large crowds and civil unrest, he said. North Dakota will pay their salaries and the costs they incur while at the protest.

Mead said the decision to send Wyoming troopers happened because "a neighbor state asked for help and Wyoming answered the call."

"North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded," Mead said.

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in Wyoming have expressed formal support for the protesters.

Jason Baldes, a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and staff member at the Wind River Native Advocacy Center, accused Wyoming officials of supporting the pipeline by sending law enforcement officers to face off against protesters.

"It kind of sheds light on really who's running the show here," Baldes said. "The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets."

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

"The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue," he said.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including

emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 15:36:39 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: police begin removing protestors from private land area in ND

Majority of oil pipeline protestors retreat from police (Billings Gazette)

- Associated Press
- 1 hr ago
-

CANNON BALL, N.D. — Armed soldiers and law enforcement officers dressed in riot gear and driving trucks, military Humvees and buses moved in Thursday to force Dakota Access pipeline protesters off private land where they had camped to block construction.

Sirens blared and officials told protesters over a loudspeaker to move out. Two helicopters and an airplane monitored the operation from the air.

The majority of the protesters were retreating from the confrontation on a highway outside the camp but still not leaving the area on private land.

Protesters tried to slow the authorities by parking cars on the highway near the camp in North Dakota and slashing vehicle tires. They also set a small fire at one of two blockades they set up on the highway.

An Associated Press reporter at the scene said there were no clashes between authorities and protesters as the operation began about midday, but some scuffles broke out between protesters who wanted to stay put and those willing to leave.

The operation to push out about 200 protesters began a day after they had refused to leave.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said in a statement that the protesters' actions "forced law enforcement to respond."

"I can't stress it enough, this is a public safety issue," he said. "We cannot have protesters blocking county roads, blocking state highways or trespassing on private property."

Robert Eder, a 64-year-old Vietnam War veteran from the Standing Rock Reservation, said protesters weren't scared.

"If they take everybody to jail, there will be twice as many tomorrow, and every day that passes more will come," he said. "If they raze these teepees, tomorrow we will be back."

The monthslong dispute over the four-state, $3.8 billion pipeline reached a crisis point when the protesters set up camp on land owned by pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners. The disputed area is just to the north of a more permanent and larger encampment on federally owned land where hundreds of protesters have camped for months.

Law enforcement officials demanded that the protesters leave the private land on Wednesday, but they refused. Thick fog and cloudy skies on Wednesday appeared to stall the law enforcement effort, but the sun came out on Thursday with scattered clouds and a light breeze. Officials have frequently monitored protesters by air.

The Federal Aviation Administration is restricting flights over the Cannon Ball area until Nov. 5, allowing only aircraft affiliated with the North Dakota Tactical Operation Center and banning drones.

The activists fear the pipeline could harm cultural sites and drinking water for the Standing Rock Sioux tribe. The company and the state of North Dakota say no sensitive cultural sites have been found.

Protests supporting the Standing Rock Sioux have been ongoing for months, with more than 260 people arrested before Thursday's operation.

The pipeline is to carry oil from western North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa to an existing pipeline in Patoka, Illinois, where shippers can send it on to Midwest and Gulf Coast markets. Energy Transfer Partners has said the pipeline is nearly complete other than the work in south central North Dakota.

The protest has drawn the attention of activists and celebrities, including actress-activist Shailene Woodley and Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein. Civil rights activist Jesse Jackson and actor Mark Ruffalo were at the protest camp Wednesday but departed later in the day.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 13:46:32 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: PROTECTOR CAMPS REMAIN PEACEFUL

The new issue of the Lakota Country Times just came out with a number of stories regarding the pipeline protest in North Dakota. Glenda will put them together for you shortly.

2016-08-25 / Front Page
Print

PROTECTOR CAMPS REMAIN PEACEFUL

By Brandon Ecoffey
Times Editor

EVERYONE
WElCOME
Sacred Stone
Camp!

Water protectors remain peaceful despite efforts to cast them in a different level light. PINE RIDGE—Despite efforts by the local North Dakota media and county officials water protectors and Standing Rock Sioux Tribal officials say that the message emanating through the camps is one of peaceful resistance.

Nearly 3,000 water protectors gathered peacefully this past weekend in Cannonball, ND., to speak out against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline that is set to be built near the Standing Rock Reservation and could possibly threaten drinking water for tribal citizens. The gathering has been peaceful as organizers have directed those in attendance to not engage in violent acts.

“There are no weapons within the camp,” said Cody Hall, who is the media spokesperson for the Red Warrior Camp. “We have security in the camp at all hours and when people arrive they are asked what they have in the car. Our security walks the camps at all hours to make sure nothing like that is happening,” said Hall.

Hall says that all entering the camp are made aware that weapons and alcohol are not allowed.

Additionally, LaDonna Allard, Director of the Camp of the Sacred Stone, addressed these same issues in a press release on Tuesday after the Governor of North Dakota declared a state of emergency.

“The gathering here remains 100% peaceful and ceremonial, as it has from day one. We are standing together in prayer. No firearms or weapons are allowed. Why is a gathering of Indians so inherently threatening and frightening to some people,” asked Allard.

Governor Dalrymple declared a State of Emergency last Friday to allow for additional state resources to be directed to the gatherings as he mentioned that he believed “outside agitators” were responsible for committing crime within the camps. The reports have remain unsubstantiated and irresponsible comments from local law enforcement about the possibility of the presence of pipe bombs have contributed to a false narrative about the activities of protectors.

A report from the Bismark Tribune on Tuesday, however, revealed a conflict of interest for Dalrymple as they reported that he owns stock in ExxonMobile. A spokesman for the governor told the Tribune that, “He is not going to discuss the details of his personal finances.”

Early efforts by the local media and the representatives from Morton County Law Enforcement to sensationalize “reports” of weapons including pipe bombs have been quickly dismissed by those present within the camps and several journalists including LCT’s Karin Eagle who spent time embedded in both camps over the weekend.

Sources inside of the office of Standing Rock Sioux President Dave Archambault Jr., have told LCT that from the start of the protest the goal of the administration is to keep the protests peaceful and prayerful. The nonviolent direct action taken by organizers of the camps has been partly credited with the overwhelming show of support from both tribalnations and non-Native allies who flocked to the camps in the thousands this past weekend.

“The growing support from tribal-nations and others for this movement has partly been brought about by the people’s willingness to remain unarmed and nonviolent.” **(Contact Brandon Ecoffey at editor@lakotacountrytimes.com)**

Phil Wernisch
FEMA External Affairs
DR-4237-OST
202-826-3160

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 7 Sep 2016 17:43:03 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Protest Update

This just got posted.
http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4110236-law-enforcement-beefing-presence-ahead-dakota-access-ruling-friday

Law enforcement beefing up presence ahead of Dakota Access ruling Friday

By Forum News Service Today at 4:25 p.m.

The Dakota Access Pipeline, pictured under construction on Friday, July 29, 2016, in northwest North Dakota, is expected to be complete by the end of 2016. Forum News Service file photo by Eric Hylden

BISMARCK—Authorities are beefing up their presence in the Bismarck-Mandan area in anticipation of a court decision expected Friday on the heavily protested Dakota Access Pipeline, a spokesman for North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple said Wednesday, Sept. 7.

Spokesman Jeff Zent said plans are under way for additional law enforcement officers in the Bismarck-Mandan area and enhanced patrols in Morton County, where hundreds of protesters are camped out near a pipeline construction site along Highway 1806 about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Zent said he didn't have any information on whether the North Dakota National Guard would be on standby, but said, "The governor has always said the National Guard is an option."

Thirty-seven people have been arrested on charges including preventing arrest, disorderly conduct and criminal trespass in connection with protests at pipeline construction sites in Morton County that began in mid-August.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg in Washington, D.C., has said he will rule on or before Friday on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction to halt construction of the pipeline, which will cross the Missouri River less than a mile north of the Standing Rock reservation. The tribe fears the pipeline will leak and contaminate its water supply and sacred sites, and its lawsuit claims the corps failed to consider the historical and cultural significance of that area.

A permitted protest is scheduled from 3 to 6 p.m. Friday on the south end of the state Capitol mall in Bismarck to coincide with the ruling. A Facebook page for the "Peace Rally Against the Pipeline" showed more than 350 people planning to attend and 1,200 interested.

Zent said the governor's office, state Highway Patrol and Morton County Sheriff's Department will continue to monitor the situation and re-evaluate the need for law enforcement to ensure public safety. A roadblock restricting southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to local traffic only remains in place.

Protesters have said they expect the ruling to be appealed regardless of which way it goes, and that they plan to continue protesting until the four-state pipeline project is rerouted or scrapped. The 1,172-mile,

$3.8 billion pipeline will initially carry 450,000 barrels of oil per day from the Bakken oil fields to Patoka, Ill., with a capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

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Region VIII Clips
Monday, August 15, 2016

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STORIES

COLORADO:

Black Forest fire recovery leaders think about next time

By: Ellie Mulder Colorado Springs Gazette

August 13, 2016 Updated: August 13, 2016 at 9:32 pm

About 480 were destroyed, but at this point, "it's slowed down a lot. I don't think we're going to see more than what we have now," said Kenneth Clark, forest director for Black Forest Together.

The nonprofit organization, which has been a resource for those recovering after the fire, is looking to the future.

"It doesn't make any sense to clean up the black sticks if you're not trying to prevent another (fire)," Clark said. "The disaster showed us what's going to happen - it gives you a preview of what can happen at any time."

And Eddie Bracken, co-founder of Black Forest Together, said, "It's not a question of if, but when the next fire will come."

Near the organization's booth at the Black Forest Festival Saturday, Bracken and Clark discussed the progress that's been made since the fire and what more there is to be done.

Until 2016, all of the organization's work projects were completed for free, Clark said. Now, volunteers continue to complete mitigation and cleanup work for a small fee.

Education efforts occur in part to demonstrate the importance of continued mitigation and maintenance, Clark said. There is also a sense that after three years, people in the Colorado Springs area have begun to forget about the Black Forest fire.

"What we need people to understand is that there's still a lot of work to be done, and people in Colorado Springs specifically have become somewhat complacent with, 'The fire happened, it's over, it's fine,'" Clark said. "We get hundreds, if not thousands of volunteers from all over the country, but we're not getting them from home, and we need volunteers here to help us with the projects."

But the work continues. In 2014, the organization gave away about 10,000 seedlings for reforestation efforts, followed by between 6,000 and 7,000 in both 2015 and 2016, Bracken said.

And in 2014 and 2015, the organization completed over 180 work projects, including cleaning up burned land, reforestation, erosion control and green forest mitigation.

"There's a responsibility that you have to the forest to keep it mitigated, to your own home and to other people's homes that are adjacent," Bracken said.

For more information about Black Forest Together, visit blackforesttogether.org.

MONTANA:

New book recounts 1959 Yellowstone-area earthquake

CLAIR JOHNSON For the Star-Tribune

A powerful earthquake that struck the Hebgen Lake area near Yellowstone National Park in 1959 also left a powerful mark on a 7-year-old boy who was asleep in his Idaho Falls home.

Historian and author Larry E. Morris said he didn’t wake up. “My mom certainly did. I think a jar fell and broke,” he said.

The 7.5 magnitude earthquake killed 28 people, including an Idaho Falls family of five who was believed to have been entombed by a massive, quake-triggered landslide that buried a campground and plugged the Madison River about 9½ miles downstream from the Hebgen Lake Dam.

The slide took less than a minute and brought down more than 80 million tons of rock into the river, forming what became Earthquake Lake. At the time, the earthquake was the second-strongest in the lower 48 states in the 20th century, said the Forest Service, which operates the Earthquake Lake Visitor Center.

“It made quite an impression on me from the start,” Morris said.

Morris, who lives in Salt Lake City, is the author of a book released in July and titled, “The 1959 Yellowstone Earthquake,” published by Arcadia Publishing and The History Press.

The book tells the story of the earthquake with a focus on the victims and survivors and those who responded to the emergency.

The book also features a foreword by Lee Whittlesey, Yellowstone National Park historian.

Morris said his parents took him and his siblings to the memorial site on top of the landslide in the early 1960s, before the visitors center was built, heard a Forest Service ranger talk about the earthquake and toured the area.

“All those dead trees and Earthquake Lake. And one cabin tilted squeewampus. But that plaque with the names on it and how the folks were buried there made a powerful impression on me,” Morris said.

Morris has been captivated by the story ever since and has taken his own family to the site.

“It was a natural subject for a book. I find the story so compelling,” Morris said.

Morris initially began research for a book in 1990 but became sidetracked by other projects and put the earthquake story aside. But, he said, he always knew he’d return to it. A few years ago, Morris resumed his research and finished his book.

"I was really thinking of the human interest, both survivors and first responders. It's just one incredible story after another. It's amazing," he said.

One of the first responders was Montana Highway Patrol Trooper Glen Stevens, who was dispatched from his Whitehall home to warn residents in the Madison River Valley of flooding should the Hebgen Dam fail. In the hours after the 11:37 p.m. earthquake, there were conflicting reports about whether the dam had held.

"I had a nice phone interview with him. He seemed to remember it quite well," Morris said. Stevens, now deceased, a deputy sheriff and two others drove up the valley, working their way toward the dam.

"They were one of the first people to reach Cliff Lake," where a boulder dislodged and killed Edgar H. Stryker and his wife, Ethel M. Stryker, who were camping with Edgar's three young sons, Morris said. The boys, who were in a separate tent nearby, were unhurt.

After helping at Cliff Lake, Stevens and his companions drove on toward the Madison River where they encountered the massive landslide. There they helped Irene Bennett and her son, Phil Bennett, who had camped with their family on the downstream side of the slide. Irene's husband, Purley, and their three other children died in the quake.

Morris also interviewed Carole Painter, who was 16 at the time and the daughter of Myrtle L. Painter, who later died of injuries in a Bozeman hospital.

And Morris interviewed Billings, Montana, resident Mildred "Tootie" Greene, a nurse who was camped with her family upstream of the slide. The Greene family survived uninjured, and Greene spent the night and next day aiding others, including Myrtle Painter.

Morris said he spent an afternoon about a year ago with Greene at her Billings home. "She was fantastic and sharp as a tack. She's one of the great heroes. She really stayed cool. I think she probably saved some lives," Morris said.

"She had a healthy attitude toward the tragedy," Morris said. Greene has been "extremely cooperative with anyone who ever asked" about the experience, he said.

Another nurse, Frances Donegan of Ohio, was camped with her husband, Fred, and their children near the dam, Morris said. His book recounts how Donegan rushed to help others who had gathered at what became known as Refuge Point.

Fred Donegan also helped rescue Grover and Lillian Mault, an elderly couple who had clung to a tree for hours as water rose around them.

"They deserve a lot of credit," Morris said. The Donegans went back to Ohio and "didn't make a lot of noise themselves. They really did a great job and deserve to be remembered," he said.

Morris' book features more than 100 photographs from national government archives, from survivors who contributed family photos and Morris' own photographs. The front and back cover photographs, he said, came from the Gallatin History Museum in Bozeman, Montana.

Morris started his research at the museum. "They were really great in helping me," he said.

Morris also credits Joanne Girvin, a Forest Service employee at the Earthquake Lake Visitor Center, with keeping the story alive.

The Forest Service opened the center on top of the slide in 1967. More than 50,000 visitors stop annually at the site, the agency said.

Morris dedicated the book to the memory of Ernest Bruffey, the 29th victim of the earthquake. Morris said Bruffey, a Havre resident, had told others of his plan to hike Granite Peak in the Beartooth Mountains between Aug. 16 and 19. Bruffey was never heard from again.

Strong shocks were recorded in the area after the initial quake and there were slides on Granite Peak, Morris said. Searchers never found Bruffey's body and his name was never included on official victim lists, he said. But evidence suggests Bruffey was a victim of the earthquake and deserves to be remembered, he said.

Morris will speak at the Montana Book Festival in Missoula, from Sept. 20 to 25.

His interest in the region extends beyond the 1959 earthquake. He authored, "The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers after the Expedition," and co-authored, "The Mystery of John Colter: The Man Who Discovered Yellowstone."

Morris is an independent writer and historian and has a master's degree in American literature and a bachelor's degree in philosophy, both from Brigham Young University.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Richland County water board appeals ND approval of diversion dam permit

By Tu-Uyen Tran on Aug 14, 2016 at 8:33 p.m.

FARGO — A month after the state of North Dakota gave a permit to the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority for a dam south of the metro, opponents of the $2.2 billion project have appealed in a lawsuit.

It's the third lawsuit filed by diversion opponents, all three of which are still up in the air.

In a brief filed in state district court Aug. 3, the Richland County Water Resource District accused the State Engineer's Office of infringing on the district's right to regulate flood-control projects within the county and failing to give proper notification.

The dam would temporarily submerge farmland, mostly in Cass and Clay counties, when the Red River floods. But it could also flood 10,400 acres, or 16 square miles, of farmland in Richland County.

The state said in a brief filed Thursday, Aug. 11, that the water district needs to first seek a hearing with an administrative law judge, who presides over a separate court system, and asked the state district judge to dismiss the case for now.

Richland County and its neighbor in Minnesota, Wilkin County, are involved in the other two lawsuits as a joint power authority. The counties sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Diversion Authority in 2013 and was eventually able to convince the judge to require an environmental review from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The DNR has completed the mostly favorable review, but the Richland-Wilkin group appealed in a lawsuit, saying the review isn't good enough.

The state of Minnesota is still reviewing the permit application for the diversion dam.

The North Dakota permit signed by State Engineer Garland Erbele July 8 listed the dam and its various components but allowed immediate construction only of an inlet structure that controls how much water from the dam enters the diversion channel. The dam is meant to reduce the Red River's flows into the diversion channel, which would route floodwater away from the metro area through a massive ditch to its west.

Each of the other components, such as the dam itself, also called an embankment, and inlets on several Red River tributaries, will require separate approval by the State Engineer.

Crucially for the Richland County water board, the only local water district the North Dakota permit mentioned the Diversion Authority must work with is the Southeast Cass County Water Resource District. That district is effectively a part of the Diversion Authority through its membership in Cass County Joint Water Resource District, a voting member on the authority board.

While some water will be stored in Richland County, the dam structures regulated by the State Engineer are all in Cass County. The Richland County district argues it must also be consulted because of the water stored within its jurisdiction.

The permit also mentioned another point of contention for diversion foes. The State Engineer had required that the Diversion Authority show it had the ability to acquire all land needed for the project, including in Richland County. Authority attorneys argued state courts have set precedent that allow entities like the Cass County Joint Water Resource District to exercise eminent domain outside their jurisdiction. The Cass County district is the Diversion Authority member charged with buying land for the project.

The Richland County water district argued that such a simple assertion was insufficient.

In a memo accompanying the permit, the State Engineer noted that the Attorney General's Office has said the state won't take a position on the legal validity of the assertion. Nevertheless, the State Engineer agreed the authority did have a "realistic plan for the procurement of the necessary property rights."

The state district court has not set a hearing date yet. In the meantime, the state has filed for a hearing in front of an administrative law judge.

In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- Updated Aug 13, 2016

NEAR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX RESERVATION, N.D. (AP) — Opponents of a $3.8 billion Midwest oil pipeline are vowing to keep up the pressure after this week's arrests at a construction zone in North Dakota.

The Standing Rock Sioux had quietly opposed the Dakota Access pipeline for months at a "spirit camp" near their reservation, which straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Protesters' resistance heated up this week as at least 18 people were arrested, and a Hollywood actress joined their gathering.

Tribal members say the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and could affect drinking water on the reservation and for people downstream.

The four-state pipeline's path in North Dakota would cross beneath the Little Missouri River once and the Missouri River twice. The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Disaster Declaration Sends Repairs, New Homes To Pine Ridge Reservation

Associated Press, August 14, 2016

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency says roughly 200 manufactured homes have been turned over to tribal residents a year after a federal disaster declaration for the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

FEMA initiated a permanent housing construction program to address the extreme housing need on the reservation after the severe weather disaster. Officials identified over 300 households eligible for repairs or for replacement with a new manufactured home.

The agency says 196 new manufactured homes have been turned over to residents. Eighty five homes had been repaired as of Aug. 2, while a remaining 23 homes are expected to be fixed by early September.

President Barack Obama signed the disaster declaration in August 2015.

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UTAH:

WYOMING:

Little Growth On Wyoming Wildfires

Associated Press, August 12, 2016

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) – Yellowstone National Park firefighters have contained a wildfire burning between Old Faithful and West Thumb and hope to have it controlled by Saturday.

The fire began Wednesday and firefighters immediately attacked it. They have kept it to less than an acre in size.

Better weather conditions have helped firefighters keep several new Wyoming wildfires largely in check Thursday and Friday.

A fire burning in the Shoshone National Forest east of Yellowstone and northwest of Cody grew slightly Thursday. The fire has burned about 2 square miles and is threatening about 95 structures.

Progress was expected Friday on another new fire burning about 20 miles southwest of Meeteetse.

Firefighters Thursday evening attacked a new fire that started in the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway between Yellowstone and Grand Teton parks.

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Intensity of 48-hour rainstorm caught Louisiana flat-footed Associated Press

By The Numbers: A Look At Flooding That Ravaged Louisiana

STORIES

COLORADO:

Wildfire Near Agate In Eastern Colorado Scorches 2,000 Acres

By Kieran Nicholson

Denver Post, August 15, 2016

A wildfire in northeastern Colorado has burned about 2,000 acres, according to firefighters.

The Basin fire is burning about four miles east of Agate in a wide ravine, said Kara Gerczynski, an Elizabeth Fire Protection District spokeswoman.

There were no reports of injuries or structures lost to the fire, Gerczynski said.

About 30 firefighters and 25 trucks were working the fire, which was first reported at about 6:30 p.m. Monday.

“It’s a little hard for the crews to get down into the ravine,” Gerczynski said.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

MONTANA:

Bullock announces funding to rebuild community

AUGUST 12, 2016 IN NEWS ·

Governor Steve Bullock today announced that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding has been made available to the State of Montana to support recovery efforts of Fallon County in the aftermath of a severe tornado on June 11, 2016.

“The community of Baker can now get back on their feet and rebuild to become stronger and create more opportunities for future economic growth and job creation,” said Governor Bullock.

On June 11, the Governor executed the State Emergency Management Plan with the activation of the State Emergency Coordination Center to a level three. A state disaster declaration was declared on July 18, 2016, with an effective date of June 9, 2016, for Fallon County.

A Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) was requested on July 1, 2016, and conducted from July 13 to July 14, 2016. The costs of responding to the storm exceeded the capability of the State of Montana.

On July 20, Governor Bullock requested FEMA evaluate the devastating effects of the tornado and affirm the area as a major disaster eligible for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. Federal funding is now available on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe tornado and the deposit of small and large debris into Lake Baker.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Cass County, Fargo voters will vote on diversion sales tax extensions

By Tu-Uyen Tran on Aug 15, 2016 at 8:47 p.m.

FARGO — City and county leaders have agreed to separate ballot measures extending their three sales taxes for decades to help pay for the $2.2 billion Fargo-Moorhead flood diversion.

"That will be the biggest amount of money that we'll ever vote on in the history of our lives," said Fargo City Commissioner Dave Piepkorn after joining his colleagues in a unanimous vote to put the measure on the Nov. 8 ballot.

The Cass County Commission also voted unanimously to do the same.

Together, the three sales taxes will pay for about half the project, which will protect Fargo-Moorhead from flooding on the Red River. The state and federal government has pledged enough funds for the remaining half.

The decision by the city and county commission didn't come easily though everyone agreed a sales tax extension was needed. Deliberating separately, they both agonized over language that was as restrictive as possible to win over skeptical voters.

Though both ballot measures will extend three half-cent sales taxes as late as Dec. 31, 2084, city and county leaders added language that implores their successors to pay off all debts as early as tax revenues allow. That is, they want to prevent future city and county leaders from making minimal payments and allowing surplus revenue to accrue.

County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling said the county paid off the jail debt early and taxpayers would want to see the same with the diversion.

Making millions

One of the reasons city and county leaders wanted these restrictions is the continuing growth of sales tax revenues, which will far exceed the annual debt payments required. By 2084, for example, the city and county are expected to collect more than $275 million a year while payments would be less than $50 million. This assumes revenue will grow 3 percent, a conservative rate compared to the actual rate of about 4 percent.

But investors don't like to buy government bonds based on money governments think they'll have but on what they have now. 2084 is how long it'll take for the city and county to pay off the debt if revenue doesn't grow at all.

Tom Rousakis, an executive with Ernst & Young who worked on the diversion financing plan, told county commissioners that it's entirely possible they'll pay off the debt by 2059 or 2061.

Cass County voters will be asked to extend the half-cent sales tax dedicated to flood control, which expires in 2031. The money is used to match city diversion funding with whatever's left — about 9 percent of the total — used for flood control elsewhere in the county, according to commissioners.

City voters will be asked to extend two half-cent sales taxes. One is dedicated to flood control and expires in 2029. Another is dedicated to both flood control and infrastructure, and expires in 2032.

City Commissioner Tony Gehrig won praise from his colleagues for proposing to have the second tax dedicated only to flood control, a move meant to assure voters the commission wouldn't try to take advantage of the revenue to pay for streets and sewers.

North Bismarck homeowners see property slipping away

- LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

Aug 14, 2016

Water from an Aug. 10 downpour caused Hay Creek to overflow and flood Pebble Creek Golf Course and a walking trail.

Homeowners along Arizona Drive are questioning the long-term safety of their houses as some backyards dropped as much as seven feet in June.

"It keeps dropping every time there is a rain," said Jim Hopfauf, one of the homeowners affected by the collapsing hill where houses are perched in north Bismarck.

Residents are pointing the blame at overland flooding of Hay Creek below their properties.

The outcome of a Braun Intertec study on the slope above Pebble Creek Golf Course will be presented at 5:15 p.m. Thursday at the Bismarck Park Board meeting at the City/County Building.

Hopfauf and homeowner David Wolf, who cringe when it rains as heavily as it did Tuesday and Wednesday nights, said they have sought help from every local government entity, including the Burleigh County Water Resource District, the Bismarck Engineering Department, city utility services and the Bismarck Park District and consulted with the state. The entities and the homeowners shared in the cost of the study.

Since Hopfauf's home was built in 2004, about one-third of the backyard has sunk with the hill along with a tree line and a walking path — all of which are tumbling into Hay Creek, he said.

The walking path has been blocked off by the Bismarck Park District because it is no longer safe. It is not caused by excess stormwater flowing down his property but by overland flooding feeding Hay Creek from the north of the city, Hopfauf said.

More development has created more pavement and fewer fields to absorb the water before it feeds Hay Creek, according to Hopfauf.

Wolf has experienced the same in the past decade.

"Nobody has come up with a plan, and nobody is spending any money on it," he said. "As homeowners, we can't do anything until the hill is stable."

The problem became serious in October 2013. Noting the park district had installed riprap on the slope, Hopfauf, Wolf and a neighbor invested $20,000 in more riprap. That, too, is failing three years later, Hopfauf said.

Hopfauf suggests that some of the Hay Creek water could be diverted from winding below the hill and further eroding it.

Michael Gunsch, advisory engineer for the Burleigh County Water Resource District, will present the findings of the study at the meeting.

"There are two parts: There is the erosion of the banks near Hay Creek and the falling slopes the landowners are dealing with. They are totally different issues," he said.

The study suggests the rip-rap landscaping the owners placed to secure their land, is actually weighing it down, said Randy Bina, executive director of the Bismarck Parks and Recreation Department.

"The sloping by the residents' homes — that slope failure — is different than what might be happening below by Hay Creek," he said.

Bina said the walking trail, built in 2000, has dropped.

"We are closing that segment of the walking path for the time-being. The two property owners will be removing the rock. After the rock is removed, we'll have to make a determination on that section of trail," he said.

"It appears significant materials were added to the upper slope during the earlier slope repair," said Dave Mayer, operations director for the park district. "They had a direct negative effect with further degraded sloping."

He said water at Pebble Creek Golf Course quickly subsides.

"It's uncommon to close the golf course, but there are days when we do not allow golf carts because the course is wet," Mayer said.

The homeowners said they have been asked to removed the rock because of the study findings. Wolf and Hopfauf said they want to donate it for any future rip-rapping work further below the slope, if it helps.

For the bank stabilization near Hay Creek, the study suggests the city and park district cooperatively seek funding for a $295,000 bank stabilization project, consisting of rock and fabric, from the state Water Commission.

The study recommends a couple of alternatives for the homeowners, Bina said.

"The first is to remove the rock and some is with reshaping the slope. The next is hiring a consultant," he said.

Dakota Access pipeline owners sue North Dakota protesters

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Developers of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline sued in federal court Monday to stop protesters near an American Indian reservation in North Dakota from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

Dakota Access LLC filed a lawsuit against Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II and other protesters, seeking restraining orders and unspecified monetary damages.

The protesters "have created and will continue to create a risk of bodily injury and harm to Dakota Access employees and contractors, as well as to law enforcement personnel and other individuals at the construction site," the company wrote in court papers.

Archambault was among several protesters charged last week with disorderly conduct or criminal trespass at the construction site near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline, which will take crude oil from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota to Illinois and cross the Missouri River just upstream of the reservation. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Dakota Access said in court papers that threats have been made to workers, and rocks and bottles have been thrown, and that Archambault excused tribal employees from work last week to protest the pipeline's construction.

Archambault told reporters Monday that he was arrested for "doing what everybody else was doing: demonstrating." He said he expected more arrests and acts of civil disobedience to continue, calling the pipeline "a black poisonous snake" that "is made from nothing but greed."

Workers accompanied by armed private security guards started construction on the project near the reservation last week.

Several sheriff's deputies and about 30 North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers were on site Monday, and the highway patrol asked motorists to avoid a state highway near the reservation because of the protests.

Texas-based Dakota Access claims the protesters are causing the company "to lose goodwill among its customers" because of delays and are "diminishing" its "opportunity to complete construction of the pipeline's water crossing before its permits expire."

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Great Plains Fire reports several fires over weekend

August 14, 2016

Gary Matthews

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire dispatch reported several wildfires over the weekend.

On Saturday, the Brady Creek Fire burned had burned over 50 acres northwest of Kadoka. Fire crews had the blaze 75-percent contained Sunday afternoon. The fire was sparked by lightning.

The Mathews County Asist Fire burned approximately 35 acres southwest of Fort Pierre on Saturday. Lightning also sparked that fire.

Two small fires were reported in northeast Wyoming as well.

On Sunday, a grass fire was reported near New Underwood Road, north of I-90. It's believed lightning sparked the fire. There was not an estimate on its size as of Sunday evening.

La Nina to replace El Nino

August 15, 2016
By Jack Taylor

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (KELO AM) - Warming of the Pacific, or El Nino, is coming to an end and the long range prediction calls for La Nina to develop.

Acting South Dakota State Climatologist Laura Edwards says La Nina may have an impact in the fall and winter season.

Edwards says the likelihood of La Nina did go down a little bit from the prediction's center which indicates to her that it won't ben especially strong event.

She says La Nina means the Pacific will cool below normal adding that the northern plains may not take the brunt of the change.

She say the impacts in the northern plains may not be as strong as what we saw with El Nino last year.

In most La Nina years, Edwards says, our winters are colder.

But she says it doesn't have an impact on snowfall much. She says La Nina usually brings cooler than average temperatures.

Edwards says the extended forecast calls for cooler temperatures and above normal precipitation this fall.

South Dakota responds to Louisiana flooding

August 15, 2016
By Mark Russo

SIOUX FALLS, SD (KELO-AM) The Red Cross of Eastern South Dakota is sending a larger than usual contingent of volunteers to the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana.

"This is an unusually large disaster that is in need of a large response" says Executive Director Jennifer Ross.

She's sending at least seven volunteers. Two to five volunteers is a more typical response. Ross says that for Red Cross chapters in South and North Dakota combined a total of 15 volunteers are heading to the disaster. The Red Cross is also sending four emergency response vehicles.

"They're going to help assist with the relief, which means working in shelters, providing food and care and casework to the individuals who are affected by this flooding," says Ross.

At least seven people have died and some 20,000 have been rescued from the flooding.

UTAH:

WYOMING:

Progress made on Wyoming wildfires, several new blazes pop up over weekend

- Updated 12 hrs ago
- CHEYENNE — Firefighters have been making progress on battling wildfires in northwest Wyoming.

The Hunter Peak Fire in the Shoshone National Forest northwest of Cody has increased in size to about 3 square miles, but most of that was because of firefighters conducting burnouts to help contain it.

The fire is about 5 percent contained.

Firefighters have gained about 15 percent containment on another fire that is burning about 20 miles southwest of Meeteetse. The Twin Lakes Fire was reported Friday evening and is about 1,000 acres. Firefighters also are making use of burnouts to help contain it.

In Yellowstone National Park, a new fire that started Saturday on the north side the park of is being monitored along with two other remote fires. A fire between Old Faithful and West Thumb was extinguished over the weekend.

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Intensity of 48-hour rainstorm caught Louisiana flat-footed

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, MELINDA DESLATTE and REBECCA SANTANA The Associated Press
First Published Aug 15 2016 05:06PM • Last Updated Aug 15 2016 08:42 pm

Baton Rouge, La. • An act of God is how some are describing it, a catastrophic 48-hour torrent of rain that sent thousands of people in Louisiana scrambling for safety and left many wondering how a region accustomed to hurricanes could get caught off guard so badly.

At least six people have been killed and more than 20,000 have had to be rescued since Friday in some of the worst flooding the state has ever seen.

As of Monday, the rain had mostly stopped, but rivers and creeks in many areas were still dangerously bloated and new places were getting hit by flooding. More than 11,000 people were staying in shelters; a movie studio and a civic center, which usually hosts concerts and ballets, were pressed into service.

"It was an absolute act of God. We're talking about places that have literally never flooded before," said Anthony "Ace" Cox, who started a Facebook group to help collect information about where people were stranded. He was in Baton Rouge to help his parents and grandparents, who were flooded out.

"Everybody got caught off guard," he said.

Forecasters said one reason was the sheer, almost off-the-charts intensity of the storm and the difficulty of predicting how bad it would be.

Meteorologist Ken Graham of the National Weather Service's office in Slidell said forecasters alerted people days in advance of the storms. The forecasts Thursday were for 8 inches of rain, with higher totals expected in some areas. But Graham emphasized that forecasting exactly how much rain is going to fall and where is nearly impossible. "It's one thing to say we're getting set up for a lot of rain. It's another thing to say where is this going to be," he said.

Some areas, such as the town of Zachary, received more than 2 feet of rain in a 48-hour period that ended Saturday morning. Another hard-hit area, Livingston, got nearly 22 inches during the same stretch.

Graham said the odds of that much rain were 1 in 500 in some places and 1 in 1,000 in others.

Unlike during a hurricane when shelters are established well in advance by parish governments and the Red Cross when the threat becomes obvious, shelters for those driven from their homes by the flooding were set up more haphazardly by parish officials.

As the scope of the disaster became clear, churches, schools and other places opened their doors to take in evacuees. Shelters filled up so fast that some people had to sleep on the floor Saturday night because not enough cots had arrived. And some shelters had to shut down when they, too, started to take on water.

Marc and Crystal Matherne and their three children loaded up their cars with their three dogs and drove out of their flooded Baton Rouge neighborhood Sunday before the water got too deep to pass.

"I want to blame somebody because of all the hurt that's going on, but I don't know if anybody knew" how bad the flooding would be, Crystal Matherne said. "It just seemed like a normal event for us, but it wasn't."

Volunteers have also been going out in boats — locally referred to as the "Cajun Navy" — to rescue people, supplementing the efforts of National Guardsmen, state officials and Coast Guardsmen in high-water vehicles, boats and helicopters.

Jared Serigne of St. Bernard Parish said he helped organize volunteer efforts involving roughly 70 experienced boaters who helped hundreds of people from flooded communities. He criticized government officials for closing roads, a move that prevented boats from reaching launch areas.

"You've got all of these people who hunt and fish who have more experience than the average first responder," he said.

But going out on the water carries dangers, too.

Lt. Davis Madere of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, who spent days rescuing people and their animals, said the floodwaters are a potential minefield of submerged vehicles, fences and mailboxes that can trip up boats.

Above the water, he said, snakes trying to escape the deluge have been spotted in trees, and rescuers must be careful of power lines that are close overhead because the water is so high.

National Guard Col. Ed Bush said parish officials want the volunteer rescuers to coordinate more with the authorities overseeing the rescue effort.

"What they're trying to do is prevent overzealous people from getting stuck themselves. We've had a couple of examples of that," Bush said.

By The Numbers: A Look At Flooding That Ravaged Louisiana

Associated Press, August 16, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — A look at the deadly flooding that has ravaged Louisiana:

— 7: The number of storm-related deaths since rain began falling Friday.

— More than 20,000: The number of people who have had to be rescued from their homes as floodwaters rose.

— More than 11,000: The number of people staying in shelters.

— More than 2,000: The number of evacuees staying at a large film studio complex that has been turned into a makeshift shelter.

— More than 500: The number of pets rescued.

— 48 hours: The amount of time a torrent of rain fell across parts of south Louisiana.

— More than 2 feet: The amount of rain that fell in two days in the town of Zachary, Louisiana.

— 8 inches: The amount of rain initially forecast on Thursday, with some higher totals possible in some areas.

— 12 percent: The portion of homes in hard-hit Baton Rouge covered by flood insurance; in Lafayette, which has also been hammered, the number is 14 percent.

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Region VIII Clips

Thursday, September 15, 2016

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Fight For Zika Money Hampered By Partisan Squabbles USA Today

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COLORADO:

U.S. deploys robots to destroy chemical weapons buried under Colorado prairie

Share this:

By Bruce Finley | bfinley@denverpost.com
PUBLISHED: September 14, 2016 at 11:56 pm | UPDATED: September 15, 2016 at 11:01 am

PUEBLO – Destroying the nation’s stash of World War II-era chemical weapons is nasty work, and after decades of delays, the Army is using robots to start the job inside a $4.5 billion plant on the Colorado prairie.

A newly trained human workforce of 1,400 controls the robotic machinery — one canary-yellow, long-armed device is dubbed Inga, another Igor — beginning a mission of emptying 780,000 wine-bottle-shaped projectiles inside sealed chambers behind 24-inch-thick blast walls. The process minimizes human contact with deadly chemicals known as mustard agent, which was used to deny enemies access to land by attacking their eyes, skin and lungs.

“I like the work. This stuff has been sitting around 40, 50 years. It’s about time we got to destroying it,” said Jose Rosario, 33, an Army war veteran who in Iraq found a stash of Saddam Hussein’s weapons.

Joe Amon, The Denver Post
Instrumentation technician Philip Kell washes down his partner Eric Irvinin wash down area at the Pueblo Chemical agent Pilot plant training area on Sept. 14, 2016 in Pueblo.

“These robots were built for precision, all computer programmed. I don’t have any worries that the machines will make mistakes,” Rosario said during training.

The destruction, ordered by Congress in 1986, entered a pilot testing phase last week that, as of Wednesday, has dismantled 80 projectiles at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, located on windswept prairie where tumbleweeds roll and antelope nibble dry grass.

Full-bore destruction of mustard agent cannot begin until state officials issue a permit, expected in January, project manager Rick Holmes said. And the job will be done by July 2020, Holmes said.

“We’re going to make the world cleaner by having this stuff go away, and go away the right way,” he said.

A 1997 international treaty ordered eradication of chemical weapons, outlawed since 1925, and the United States as an original signatory is obligated to comply. Foreign observers are posted at this plant to verify destruction of the weapons. In recent years, concerns about the delay intensified amid cybersecurity threats and evidence that Islamic State and Syrian forces have used chemical weapons.

In 2002, the Department of Defense hired the Bechtel corporation to run and close the nation’s chemical weapons stockpile here, which represents about 8 percent of the nation’s chemical weapons (another 2 percent are sitting in Kentucky). About 90 percent were burned.

Pentagon officials initially planned to install an incinerator in Pueblo. But Congress intervened in 1996, responding to public concerns about safety, ordering a program to demonstrate at least two alternative systems, other than incineration, for destroying chemical weapons.

Project leaders settled on the current low-temperature, low-pressure system that neutralizes the chemicals and then unleashes bacteria – from sludge imported from Pueblo’s wastewater treatment plant – to eat the weapons out of existence.

No liquid waste will remain at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, and a “salt cake” sludge from filters will be hauled to a hazardous waste landfill. Emissions are filtered from a black stack above the facility.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment hazardous materials and waste management officials have inspected the facility to ensure safety. The pilot testing is being done under a research, development and demonstration permit, CDPHE spokeswoman Jeannine Natterman said.

The CDPHE “does not believe the Pueblo Chemical Agent Disposal Plant will have a significant impact on air quality,” Natterman said in an e-mailed response to The Denver Post.

The plant “is considered only a minor source by the air pollution control division,” she said. State inspectors also are “overseeing the collection of air samples from plant emission sources during pilot-testing of the facility.”

Today, an estimated 2,611 tons of the mustard chemical agent is stored in projectiles and mortar cartridges buried in igloos at the 35-square-mile Pueblo Chemical Depot.

In 1952, the Army began storing mustard agent hauled here from a manufacturing plant called the Rocky Mountain Arsenal northeast of Denver. A staff of about 250 guards and maintains the weapons. Guards have detected and dealt with at least 90 leaks over 35 years.

Five of the 12-foot-tall yellow robots, run by workers at keyboards, open the projectiles packed with liquid mustard agent, which freezes at 56 degrees. The robots unscrew and remove caps on each projectile, drain the liquid into titanium containers. Robots later inject 190-degree water and sodium hydroxide. Then the bacteria from sludge is used to eat broken-down chemicals.

The project brings total employment at the Army's depot to nearly 2,000, ranking it among the largest employers on Colorado's economically lagging southern Front Range. New jobs pay $40,000 to $70,000 a year, plus health benefits.

"It means a lot," said Kurtis Wolf, 35, a union worker at the Russian-owned Evraz steel factory until that operation recently ran into trouble.

Wolf said his wife a couple months later lost her job at a dental office, jeopardizing the situation for their three children.

"Now I have a job, stable income," he said. "We'll be able to keep paying for our house, for the vehicles. … Lord willing, I hope to be one of the guys who helps close this place down."

Biggest projects still ahead after Colorado's 2013 floods

http://www.9news.com/news/biggest-projects-still-ahead-after-colorados-2013-floods/318085066

Three years have passed since it happened – since the peak of a week of weather that Coloradans had never seen in their lives.
The scale of the disaster defied description. Rivers were overrun, cities flooded.
The floods of September 2013 still don't have a name.

Photos: 2013 floods

It's been three years since the water came and left.
Since the news crews came and left.
Since the attention came and left.
Here's what we've largely missed in 2016…
This summer has been the busiest period for permanently rebuilding roads and bridges, since the floods of 2013. The single largest reconstruction project is just getting started. Most of the federal aid is still unspent.

The permanent reconstruction of Highway 36 from Lyons to Estes Park was completed this year. The permanent fix for Highway 34 from Loveland to Estes is underway, and won't be complete until 2018 or 2019.

We're finishing the summer of construction - the busiest time since the floods - as highways, roads, bridges, river banks and multi-family housing units were put in place.

You have to remember that federal grant money didn't arrive until 2014.

$350 million is promised.

$80 million of it was spent through the first half of this year.

Spending is about to ramp up. Another $40 million will be spent by year's end.

And while we talk numbers, and remember the number of lives impacted, we pause to remember the 10 lives lost in the floods three years ago this week.

Wildfire Near Kremmling Estimated At Roughly 9 Acres, 35 Percent Contained

By Jesse Paul

Denver Post, September 14, 2016

A wildfire sparked near Kremmling on Tuesday and which has prompted the evacuation of roughly a dozen homes was estimated at about nine acres on Wednesday and 35 percent contained.

A mass of resources have been called to battle the fire, including local, state and federal firefighting crews.

Lt. Dan Mayer of the Grand County Sheriff's Office says a smoke report was called in to authorities about 12:20 p.m. on Tuesday. When the chief of the Kremmling Fire Protection District went to investigate, he found that a person was burning a slash pile that had gotten out of control.

The fire is off Grand County Road 14, about five miles from Kremmling. The blaze is burning in heavy timber on county land.

Mandatory evacuations are in effect within a mile of the blaze and residents within three miles of the burn are on pre-evacuation notice.

MONTANA:

NORTH DAKOTA:

Emergency officials seek up to $6 million to offset costs during pipeline protests

Issues Associated Press · Bismarck, N.D. · Sep 15, 2016

North Dakota emergency services officials are asking for up to $6 million from the state-owned bank to offset costs associated with help provided to law enforcement during protests against the Dakota Access pipeline.

The Bismarck Tribune reports the state Department of Emergency Services would set up a loan with the Bank of North Dakota and repay it with interest.

Emergency Services Department spokeswoman Cecily Fong says the state had never responded to large protests.

- FAQ: The Dakota Access pipeline and protest

Gov. Jack Dalrymple has also asked for federal help. The newspaper reports his office says the state has spent $1.8 million so far policing the protests.

A federal judge declined to block the four-state pipeline Friday, but federal agencies stopped work near Lake Oahe. Federal agencies also asked pipeline operator Energy Transfer Partners to voluntarily stop work on a 40-mile stretch.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

AARP pushed emergency preparation KSFY-TV, Sioux Falls

SOUTH DAKOTA - September is National Preparedness Month and AARP is working with FEMA to share resources to help you.

The agencies are urging people to have an emergency kit and a plan in place for a wide-array of possible situations

To help you prepare, AARP South Dakota will host a call-in show on their website on Thursday with experts who can answer questions about your specific plan.

You can find a link to the website on the right-hand side of this story.

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WYOMING:

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Fight For Zika Money Hampered By Partisan Squabbles

By Ledyard King

USA Today, September 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – Turns out Zika is as much a political quagmire as it is a health crisis.

Finger-pointing and partisan backbiting abound on Capitol Hill, despite pleas from both sides of the aisle to take the politics out of efforts to combat the disease that has infected 805 Floridians and tarnished the state's reputation as a tourist mecca.

Just this week alone:

– Democratic congressman Alan Grayson took GOP Gov. Rick Scott to task for once proposing massive cuts in the state's mosquito control budget.

– Scott blasted the Obama administration for failing to give the state enough help to fight Zika, then accused Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of abandoning his constituents in voting against a controversial Zika bill last week.

– The pro-choice group NARAL lashed Republican Sen. Marco Rubio for missing a bipartisan news conference on Zika to meet with GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump's running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence. The organization is running online ads to highlight the criticism.

Floridians see the partisan squabbles holding up action on Zika as "one more example of a broken Washington," said Susan MacManus, a political science professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa. But she's not surprised at the stalemate or the bickering.

"This issue is arising in the middle of a very contentious, competitive election," she said. "And each party wants to take credit for the good and dis their opponent with the bad. That's what we've seen happening on the Zika issue."

Congressional leaders have reported some progress in reaching a $1.1 billion deal to fund anti-Zika efforts, including vaccine development, insect spraying and distribution of testing kits. If a compromise is reached, it's likely to be attached to a broad spending bill lawmakers will be asked to vote on at the end of the month.

Earlier Zika legislation in the Republican-controlled Congress was blocked by Democrats who objected to unrelated provisions, including barriers to contraception, the display of the Confederate flag at national cemeteries and laxer environmental standards for pesticides. The deal being discussed would not include those.

Rubio and the Democrat running against him this year, Rep. Patrick Murphy, have spent weeks blaming each other for not doing enough to end the stalemate.

They both initially backed Obama's request in February for $1.9 billion, though Rubio also has supported GOP measures that would have provided less money and included provisions Murphy and others found objectionable.

On Wednesday, NARAL pounced on Rubio's absence from the bipartisan press conference the day before, saying he was "putting his own political needs ahead of the needs of women and families in Florida."

Rubio spokesman Olivia Perez-Cubas responded that Murphy "is the only candidate to have voted against every measure to fund Zika – once again putting himself and his political aspirations before Floridians."

Rubio spent part of Tuesday and Wednesday meeting with Scott, who admonished the Obama administration for ignoring Florida.

"Since June 1, I've asked for a plan to work with (the Federal Emergency Management Agency). Haven't given it to me," the governor told reporters. "The White House has not been a good partner."

Administration officials pushed back against Scott's allegations, detailing efforts they've made to help the state:

– A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention team was recently dispatched to Florida to monitor Zika efforts.

– The Health and Human Services Department has provided more than $35 million that can be used for Zika-related activities. In August, Florida received materials for an additional 6,300 lab tests in addition to the 2,000 already provided. CDC also provided on-site technical consultation to Florida's public health laboratories, enabling them to substantially increase testing capacity.

– FEMA officials have been in contact with the state to discuss the role the agency can play, though the White House said FEMA assistance may not be the best option for a mosquito-borne disease like Zika.

“This is why the president put forward a supplemental request in February, to ensure that states like Florida would have the resources they need to effectively response to Zika,” the White House spokesman said.

Grayson, the Democratic congressman from Orlando, said Scott should look in the mirror if there are fingers to be pointed.

Under the governor’s watch, state aid to mosquito control programs around Florida in 2011 was sliced 40% — from $2.16 million to $1.29 million — and he vetoed a $500,000 grant that would have kept a state mosquito lab open in Panama City.

“If the governor would revisit those decisions, that would be a good start in itself,” Grayson said.

Nelson was miffed that Scott singled him out for joining other Democrats in blocking the Zika bill.

“He should know better,” said Nelson. “This is a serious situation, not a time for partisan politics.”

Whom do voters blame? MacManus said the accusations have come in such rapid-fire, head-spinning fashion it’s hard to decide who’s the real culprit.

“There’s enough blame to go around for all officials in the minds of Floridians,” she said. “What they want is action, and there just doesn’t appear to be any out of Washington. That’s what they really find fault with.”

Rubio tried to strike a bipartisan tone Wednesday afternoon as he spoke on the Senate floor. He defended Nelson as an important ally in the push for Zika funding, then implored his colleagues to rally around a compromise.

“We fight about so many things around here,” Rubio said. “We have so many issues we could have a debate over. So let’s have debates about those issues. But isn’t there at least, when it comes to public health and safety, something we can say on this issue that we’re not going to play politics?”

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, October 11, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* Two Colorado groups won grants to work on emergency preparedness and underground mine safety… A nonprofit group is asking for donations to help rebuild Haiti after Hurricane Matthew… A donation center has been set up to help victims of the Beulah Hill Fire…. Estes Park will have a public meeting October 26 to discuss floodplain issues… A follow-up article on the federal investigation in Lyons says the FBI is not pursuing a case, and that HUD is focused on contracts between Lyons and a company called Front Range Land Solutions and its owner, former Lyons planner Rosi Dennett.
- *Montana:* A TV station did a story on a Red Cross volunteer heading to help with Hurricane Matthew.
- *North Dakota:* An ag journal reports on a new disaster application that can help small businesses. It uses information from ready.gov and makes it a fill-in-the-blank app for smartphones and tablets… The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reports on the split between Fargo/Moorhead and the state of Minnesota over the proposed diversion project. The article details the reasons for Minnesota's opposition and notes potential problems in getting congressional approval to go ahead with the project…. Two articles report on the pipeline protest: the courts have denied an emergency injunction to prevent construction, but three federal agencies continue reviewing the issues raised by the protestors and have asked the company to voluntarily suspend construction pending that review. Another article reports on the protests: actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other protestors were arrested Monday, the highest one-day total so far, bringing the total number arrested to 123. The protestors have since been released.
- *South Dakota:* A part of a continuing series looking back at the 2011 flood reports on how the Fort Randall Dam held up.
- *Utah:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Wyoming:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Other FEMA-related stories:*

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

STORIES

COLORADO:

Mine rescue training, emergency preparedness grants awarded (KOAA TV 5)

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) - Six groups will share $1 million in grants to develop training for emergency preparedness and accident prevention in underground mines.

The U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration announced the Brookwood-Sago grants last week.

Receiving grants are the University of Arizona, the Colorado School of Mines, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Rend Lake College in Ina, Illinois, the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, and West Virginia University.

WVU says in a news release that the university will use a grant of nearly $172,000 to integrate fire brigades and mine rescue teams in an emergency involving fire and trapped miners.

The grant program is named in remembrance of 25 men who died in mining explosions in Alabama in 2001 and at the Sago Mine in West Virginia in 2006.

Colorado group helping Haiti rebuild after hurricane (FOX 31 Denver)

LOUISVILLE, Colo. – A Colorado nonprofit dedicated to rebuilding rural Haiti is asking for some emergency donations following Hurricane Matthew.

The Colorado Haiti Project has been doing work in Petit-Trou-de-Nippes for almost 30 years. The group focuses on long term rebuilding projects like education, agriculture, livelihood and clean water.

CHP has one dedicated project manager living in Haiti full-time. The Louisville based organization sends several groups throughout the year to do aid work.

They built a school that serves nearly 400 Haitian children. The school suffered major damage in the storm.

“When you look inside any room everything is just thrown all over the place,” explained CHP’s Teresa Henry. “Now they have no books and everything in the classrooms is gone.”

Her co-worker who is in Haiti right now says about half of the community's homes are gone. She also says almost all of the crops have been leveled and most of the livestock has perished.

"They don't have bank accounts. In Haiti, you consider your bank your goats and cows. That is your income," Henry said. "All their crops have been lost. All of it. They have nothing for their livelihood."

She worries if they can't help Haitians rebuild fast enough, the region will eventually starve.

"We're concerned about making sure they eat enough through the winter so getting the crops back in the ground is huge," she said.

CHP is doing several emergency fundraisers to help their Haitian community rebuild and replant. You can visit their website to donate and find more information about local fundraising opportunities.

The money will go directly to the small rural communities where Coloradan are helping rebuild by hand. Their project manager in Haiti will return to Colorado later this week and CHP will decide within the next two weeks a rebuild plan-of-action for the next 12 months.

The group believes donating to them is a good way for Coloradans to see exactly where their money is going and how it is being used.

"You can be like one degree away from where you make your donation," Henry said

Donation center set up for Beulah Hill Fire victims (Pueblo Chieftain)

October 11, 2016

A donation center for victims of the Beulah Hill Fire opened Sunday morning and plenty of donors had already walked through the doors and dropped items off by Monday afternoon.

Beulah Hill Fire at 95 percent containment; blaze expected to be fully contained by Sunday Free pain/injury screening for firefighters

Kathy Hayden of the Adventist Community Services Disaster Response Team said that by 2:30 p.m. Monday there had already been about 30 community members who had stopped by the donation center to bring items of need.

The donation center, located at the Colorado Building on the Colorado State Fairgrounds, was filled with clothing, kitchenware, blankets, sleeping bags, food, water, cleaning and laundry supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, assorted toiletries, tools, shoes and some toys.

A woman was seen Monday afternoon getting out of her car and bringing numerous bags of items to the donation center for victims of last week's Beulah Hill Fire, which burned 5,232 acres of land, destroyed eight homes and forced the entire Beulah Valley to be evacuated until some residents began returning on Wednesday and Thursday, and the rest on Friday.

Volunteers strolled the inside of the Colorado Building, sorting out donated items and organizing racks and shelves.

"It's wonderful to see so many people helping out and taking care of each other," Hayden said.

Beulah residents have been stopping by the donation center since Sunday morning to pick up needed items and can continue to do so.

"They've been really good about it," Hayden said. "They're just taking what they need."

The donation center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Sunday.

Hayden said the most needed items right now are children's clothing, food and tools.

"A lot of people lost tools," said Robyn Knappe, a voluntary agency liaison for the Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management.

Hayden, who thanked firefighters and emergency crews for their tireless work in battling the blaze, said she's happy the disaster response team can play a role in helping families who lost so much in the wildfire.

"At least maybe we can do something to help put their lives back together," she said.

ryans@chieftain.com

Public encouraged to review new Estes Valley hydrology data Oct. 26 (Estes Park Trail Gazette)

Study contributes to a safer, more resilient community

Town of Estes Park - For the Trail Gazette
POSTED: 10/11/2016 09:38:17 AM MDT

The Town of Estes Park and its consultant, Wright Water Engineers, will present the results of a scientific hydrology study of the Big Thompson River, Black Canyon Creek, Dry Gulch and Fall River on Wednesday, Oct. 26, at 8 a.m. in the Town Board Room of Town Hall, 170 MacGregor Ave. Other topics discussed will be a preliminary map of new floodplain boundaries in the downtown area and how this study impacts floodplain management. The completion of the study is a milestone in the process of ensuring a safer, more resilient Estes Park community. Study results will be available for review at www.estes.org/floodmitigation by Oct. 21.

Educational resources on the hydrology study and other flood mitigation efforts are also posted to this site as they become available.

The Oct. 26 meeting is targeted to both a general interest audience and particularly those concerned with development and flood mitigation opportunities, as the hydrology data is part of the floodplain permitting process. Wright Water Engineers will present the results and be available to answer both general and technical questions. Staff from the Colorado Water Conservation Board will discuss preliminary floodplain maps and staff from the Colorado Resiliency and Recovery Office will be in attendance to answer questions. This meeting will be streamed live on local cable channel 12 and via www.estes.org/videos. It will also be recorded for viewing later via www.estes.org/videos. The Town Board will review the information during a study session the evening of Oct. 25.

The 2013 flood was a stark reminder of flood risk, and the Town is taking action to better understand the hazards Estes Park's residents face. The hydrology study results will serve as the basis of flood mitigation projects and a key part of future flood mitigation decisions. In addition, the new information may help the Town receive grants. It will also provide data for new floodplain maps, which will go into effect in the coming years.

The Town will also host a workshop for realtors, lenders and insurance agents on flood insurance topics presented by FEMA staff Oct. 24, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Estes Park Museum, 200 4th St.

For more information on flood mitigation efforts, please visitwww.estes.org/floodmitigation or contact Floodplain Manager and Planner Tina Kurtz at 970-577-3732 or tkurtz@estes.org.

Lyons residents: 'We're just starting to get it together' (Boulder Daily Camera)

Federal scrutiny stirs concern in town that has struggled

By Amelia Arvesen
Staff Writer

The town of Lyons has submitted to more than one waiting game.

People there have been waiting to rebuild their town and now they're waiting on a federal investigation into the flood-recovery process.

"I'm frustrated because I'd like to know what's going on instead of waiting," longtime resident Craig Ferguson said. "There's been a lot of waiting for three years."

As Lyons entered its fourth year of reconstruction following the devastating September 2013 flood, the FBI and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development stopped by to seize documents and computers to probe the handling of federal flood-recovery funding.

Communities savaged by the rushing waters have been receiving fund allocations, totaling millions of dollars from several federal sources, such as HUD and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Late Friday, Mayor Connie Sullivan released a statement on behalf of the town's Board of Trustees, stating that the FBI had concluded its portion of the investigation and would not be proceeding with a case.

Also posted to the town's website was a copy of a subpoena from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, stating that a focus of its investigation was documents relating to negotiations and grant services contracts between Lyons and Longmont-based Front Range Land Solutions.

The subpoena also seeks all "invoices, bills, receipts, and other documents" reflecting charges or payments with respect to that company and its owner, Rosi Dennett.

Dennett, who could not be reached for comment Friday night, identifies herself on her Linkedin page as having served as Town Planner for Lyons from April 2004 to December 2008.

Ferguson, Planet Bluegrass president, said before the flood the town could only fathom a budget of $1 million per year, and suddenly they were expected to keep track of exponentially more in the midst of disaster.

"To take care of that is a completely different job," Ferguson said. "Mistakes might have been made. Personally, I guess, I'm kind of hoping that things can be corrected quickly and it's not personal."

Apparently as a precaution into the investigation's integrity, both the town administrator and clerk were placed on temporary leave and replaced in the interim. Sullivan has said the move should not be construed as a suspicion of wrongdoing by those employees.

Ferguson said he knows most town officials well after living in Lyons 25 years and he said he has a hard time believing there was any foul play.

A hope 'someone is held accountable'

On Friday, LaVern Johnson sat under a shade of an awning behind her house, where she hosted a yard sale benefitting the Lyons Historical Society.

"Why Lyons?" Johnson asked.

She said many people are upset, saddened and disappointed by the mayor's brief and formal announcement Wednesday night at Town Hall that provided little information.

"I would say they could've made mistakes somewhere," Johnson said. "I don't think they did anything that is illegal as to taking money and those kinds of things. I don't know what they're after. I don't know how they could abscond with any money."

A man who did not provide his name and who lives in Lyons' Confluence neighborhood — an area that was hit hard by the flood — said nobody would be interested in what he has to say on the issue.

"I hope someone is held accountable," he said.

At The Stone Cup in downtown Lyons, employee and resident of 12 years Robin Young said she has worked eight hours five days in a row and that the topic has come up. She said the town chatter is that people are frustrated with the lack of information, but also understand that town officials can't say too much yet.

"There's great, great people here and it's been a long three years," Young said. "But I believe, from what I've heard, people are taking a wait-and-see approach and are just anxious."

Ferguson said while the investigation is somewhat a blemish on trust, he is confident the mayor and town board were doing their best and he would be surprised if it involved criminal behavior.

"We just don't need that right now," he said. "We're just starting to get it together."

Johnson said she trusts the town officials. She is confident they've done everything they can in light of the devastation the community has been through.

"With things like this going on, I don't think we can ever recover," Johnson said. "How can you recover when somebody is going to accuse you? I think it's sad."

Johnson said she is also surprised by how much the town has accomplished, such as designing Bohn Park. She said as the town works on the budget, it's not taking on new project proposals, and sticking to the 2016 budget when planning for next year.

A punch in the gut

The continuous beeping of construction vehicles working on streets nearby echoed through the neighborhoods. Sections of streets were peeled back, revealing the dirt below.

Jenny Voss, out walking her dog near the former Foothills Mobile Home Park, said she did not know more than what has already been revealed.

Carrie Davis-Gonzales, who lost her mobile home near the creek, was watching broadcast news reports about the hurricane in Florida Friday afternoon. She moved three years ago to the only remaining home in the park.

In response to the recent investigation of Lyons, she said she is more unquestioning than maybe she should be. She said as a result of trying to rebuild a mobile home park, she has researched and discovered similar federal investigations into devastated towns — from the benign to the extreme.

"From the outside, I can't really say what's going on in there but it could be so tiny because they are extremely meticulous," she said.

It would be difficult to screw up, she said, and wrongdoing would be even harder.

"It's not back in the day where they'd come in with money bags — this is all done electronically," Davis-Gonzales said, sitting on her front porch with a view of the abandoned mobile homes.

State Rep. Jonathan Singer, the Longmont Democrat whose House District 11 includes Lyons, said over the phone it's just another punch in residents' gut — another reminder that they haven't bounced back 100 percent from where they were more than three years ago.

"People are sort of worn down and worn out," Singer said. "They haven't given up but it's really hard to hear from another person, 'Well I know you don't want to hear this but we need to follow this new process.' Obviously that's going to wear anyone out."

He said some people still haven't been able to return home, and some people may never get to.

And while, Davis-Gonzales has been living in the only home left on the mobile home property, she is living each day thinking the next could be her last in Lyons, since the park owner recently opted for the buyout. Her home for the last three years will eventually be leveled.

Singer said he hopes whatever is under review is as simple as a paperwork error.

"If it is something else, I hope we find out very quickly and then we can move on and we can move forward," he said.

Ferguson said it's been easy for a lot of people to be angry at the slow progress, but he knows realistically the process is complicated.

"I'm sure once they know, they'll want to inform us," he said. "I think when someone comes into your place with a subpoena you need to take three or four days to figure out what it means. I know I would."

Staff writer Charlie Brennan contributed to this report

MONTANA:

Montana Red Cross volunteer helping in wake of Hurricane Matthew (KTVQ-Billings)

Posted: Oct 08, 2016 11:08 AM MST Updated: Oct 08, 2016 11:14 AM MST
By MTN News

KALISPELL - While millions try to escape Hurricane Matthew, Red Cross volunteers are racing into the storm to help with relief efforts, including Joe Kingan with the Flathead County chapter of the American Red Cross.

Kingan had nothing but a cell phone and a bag of survival gear as he waited at Glacier International Airport for his flight.

"Got my headlamp got flashlights, that kind of stuff."

He's been deployed to Hurricane Matthew by the **American Red Cross**, but for the husband and father, perhaps what's most important is his endurance in facing the unknown.

"They want me to go and help, and they're concerned about the safety aspects as well as I am," Kingan said.

The National Weather Service has warned that some places hit by Hurricane Matthew could be uninhabitable for "weeks or months." Kingan will be teaming up with two to four other volunteers to assess the damage.

"We would be recording it and putting it into a database file that actually gets shared with FEMA, other government agencies, Salvation Army, and that data will be used to evaluate future assistant needs," he said.

Kingan said that one tool in particular will play a key role in staying safe as he heads into the danger zone: his smartphone.

"They keep us updated on a regular basis on what's going on in the immediate area where we're located. For example, a while ago I got a text message coming in that alerted us to a tornado warning out in one of the counties in Florida right now with one of the rain bands coming off the hurricane."

Although he leaves a wife and a son behind, he is carrying them with him in spirit.

"We will endure," Kingan concluded. "We like helping other people, so it will be well worth our trip down."

If you would like to join the cause, you can donate blood, text "RedCross to 90-999" to make an automatic $10-dollar or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

NORTH DAKOTA:

New disaster app can help small businesses prepare for the worst (High Plains Journal)

The sprinklers go off by mistake in your office building. A strong wind blows the roof off your lab. You lose all of your computer files in a major crash.

If you own or manage a small business, a disaster like any one of these could put a major dent in your work and your bottom line.

A new phone app won’t fix such problems, but could help a business start operating again more quickly and easily.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app is available free for iOS and Android tablets and smartphones. It was developed by the North Dakota State University Extension Service and Myriad Mobile, Fargo, N.D.

“We used FEMA’s ready.gov information for businesses and the Extension Disaster Education Network’s Ready Business training program to integrate with the functionality of the tablet and smartphone,” said Bob Bertsch, the NDSU web technology specialist who led work on the app’s content. “Yes, there are online templates for business disaster plans, but this app provides portability and functionality.”

The Extension Disaster Education Network is a collaboration of land grant universities focused on reducing the effect of disasters through education. Kansas State University is a part of EDEN and shares preparedness tips on its Prepare Kansas blog.

“There are two things that I have heard small-business owners say repeatedly: The first is they never have enough time. And the second is, ‘Where did I file that?’” said Glenn Muske, NDSU Extension rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app takes on both of those, Muske said, by letting you fill out important disaster plan information, along with supporting photos right from your smartphone or tablet – which you always have with you.

“Of course, you should save the information in the cloud, too, in case your phone or tablet is lost,” he added.

The app lets you enter information for your business, including basic and contact information, emergency planning, evacuation, insurance information and more.

Plans should be reviewed annually, Muske said, so the app uses your phone’s alerts to remind you to review the information at a designated time in the future.

The content can be downloaded as a csv file. The app also encourages you to upload the content to a cloud service such as Dropbox, iCloud, Drop or a similar service for backup.

“Planning is never high on anyone’s list,” Muske said. “But think how easy the process is when the structure is there and you just need to fill in the blanks. That’s exactly what this Small Business Disaster Plan app provides. And because September is National Preparedness Month, it’s a great time to get your business prepared for disasters.”

Development of the Small Business Disaster Plan app for tablets and smartphones was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Minnesota, North Dakota at a standoff over $2 billion Red River project (Star Tribune)

By Josephine Marcotty and Jennifer Brooks Staff writers

A long-simmering fight between Minnesota and North Dakota has broken wide open now that Gov. Mark Dayton has drawn a line down the middle of the Red River by refusing to allow a massive flood diversion project to go forward on his side of the border.

Residents and local leaders in Fargo are outraged at what they say is his administration's cavalier advice to keep sandbagging in the face of ever higher threats of flooding. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and even the mayor of the Minnesota city Moorhead came out swinging last week, vowing to press ahead with the $2.1 billion project.

While proponents say they want to keep talking with Minnesota, the depth of the disagreement about the value and safety of the diversion project is so profound that, other than a legal battle, there is no apparent resolution in sight.

"If there is a confrontation, there will be a confrontation," said Darrell Vanyo, executive director of the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority. He said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has all the authority it needs to build a high-hazard dam and flood thousands of acres of mostly farmland on the Minnesota side of the river in order to protect the Fargo-Moorhead urban areas.

But attorneys for residents who have been fighting the project in federal court say that decision would have to be made in Washington, D.C. And riding roughshod over Minnesota, they say, would require strong congressional support.

"The Army Corps, thankfully, is not the king of the United States," said Jerry Von Korff, the attorney representing upstream communities that would be flooded if the project went forward as planned.

And so far, while Congress has approved the project, it's only provided $5 million of the $450 million in federal funds that are part of the deal.

"Just the fact that you've got a lawsuit going on is going to make it difficult to get federal money," said U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district is bordered by the Red River. "It's hard enough to get things funded without having controversy."

But project supporters didn't seem to heed clear warnings, going back more than a year, that Minnesota was unlikely to grant them the permit they need.

A year ago, Peterson met with diversion officials.

"I asked them, 'What is your Plan B if Minnesota denies the permit?' ”he said.”And they said, 'There is no Plan B.' "

51 floods in 113 years

There is widespread agreement that Fargo needs protection from floods — the question is how.

The Red has flooded 51 of the past 113 years, causing millions of dollars in damage to homes and businesses around Fargo and the region. Across the river, Moorhead sits 4 feet higher and is protected by $130 million worth of walls, dikes and levees that Minnesota has put in place over the years.

After the most recent flood, in 2009, local North Dakota governments asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to come up with a long-term plan. And it came up with a big one.

The Corps would carve a 36-mile ditch around Fargo and build flood control dams across the Wild Rice and Red rivers. In the event of a flood, water from the Red and its five tributaries would be diverted away from Fargo — the region's bustling economic hub — and into miles of North Dakota and Minnesota farmland and prairie.

North Dakota would pay $1.2 billion of the cost and Minnesota would pay $100 million.

If the project goes ahead, a net increase of 2,000 acres in Minnesota would be at risk of flooding. But across the river, many more thousands of acres would be left high and dry and ripe for construction of homes, schools and businesses.

A crucial piece: Construction of what Minnesota officials describe as a "high-hazard" dam across the Red — the kind that would cause catastrophic damage if it fails.

Minnesota officials have been critical of the project for years. They even joined a federal lawsuit to stop preliminary work from going forward while they completed their own environmental review, which was finished last spring.

Then last week Tom Landwehr, commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, announced that the state would not grant a permit for the dam on Minnesota's side of the project. It didn't meet Minnesota's environmental laws or standards, he said. Instead, Minnesota suggested that current and planned flood mitigation projects around Fargo, in combination with emergency measures like sandbagging and evacuation, were more likely to be in the public interest.

'Shifts the burden'

Vanyo said the Diversion Authority and the Army Corps will keep talking with Minnesota officials to try and resolve differences. But the document Landwehr provided to support the DNR's decision suggests they may be insurmountable.

More than half the area that would be protected by the dam and diversion channel is now flood plain that would be open to development in the future, the document says. But dams "can, and do, fail," the DNR said. "Allowing development in vulnerable areas would increase the consequences of a dam failure. ..."

The DNR said the corps has underestimated the number of potential deaths if the dam were to fail and exaggerated the time Fargo would have to evacuate in such an event.

Peterson pointed out that Minnesota hasn't approved a new high-hazard dam in decades. "It's one thing when you've got a flood and it comes up slowly and you can deal with it," he said. "But it's another if you're behind a 20- or 30-foot-high dam and it breaks and water rushes through."

The DNR also noted that the Diversion Authority would be financially liable for a dam failure but questioned whether the quasi-governmental organization has sufficient financial wherewithal to pay.

In addition, the DNR argues that the Army Corps overestimated the financial benefits to the community by at least $41 million. The claimed benefits are "misleading" because they include flood control projects that would occur with or without the diversion project and improperly include temporary economic impacts of constructing the project itself.

In short, the DNR said, "The proposed Project … simply shifts the burden of flooding from one sparsely developed rural area to another."

Melissa Samet, an attorney with the National Wildlife Federation familiar with the Army Corps, said Congress has expressly discouraged projects that alter the natural processes of rivers, result in the unwise use of flood plains, or encourage development into undeveloped areas.

"And this project absolutely does that," she said.

The DNR argues that the vast majority of Fargo's developed area is already protected by existing or planned flood projects and that remaining areas can be protected in an emergency the way Fargo has always done it — with evacuations and sandbagging.

But that's cold comfort to the people of Fargo, who look at every spring thaw with trepidation, said local officials. They say thousands of Fargo's buildings are at risk if rising flood projections come true and relying on a strategy of business as usual is dangerous.

"Are we going to flood this spring?" Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney said, describing residents' mind-set in a radio interview this week. "We think people are tired of sandbagging."

Work to resume on Dakota Access Pipeline near Lake Oahe

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 9:34 a.m.

BISMARCK – The company building the Dakota Access Pipeline said Tuesday, Oct. 11, it looks forward to a “prompt resumption” of construction near Lake Oahe and hopes the federal government will assist local law enforcement officials dealing with protests of the pipeline.

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners released a statement saying it is pleased with a federal appeals court decision Sunday denying the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s request for an emergency injunction to stop construction of the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline that will carry 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day from North Dakota to Illinois.

The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., also lifted a temporary suspension of construction activities within 20 miles east and west of Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River.

“In light of Sunday’s court decision, Dakota Access looks forward to a prompt resumption of construction activities east and west of Lake Oahe on private land. We reiterate our commitment to protect cultural resources, the environment and public safety,” the company said.

Company spokeswoman Vicki Granado declined to specify when the company will resume construction in the 20-mile area, which includes the area along Highway 1806 where protest activities to block pipeline construction began Aug. 10. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 American Indians and other pipeline opponents are encamped along the highway and have drawn international support.

The proposed construction area also includes a stretch west of Highway 1806 that was bulldozed on Sept. 3, the day after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed court documents identifying that part of the route as containing burial grounds and other sacred sites. Angry protesters clashed with the pipeline's private security that day, with both sides claiming injuries, and a joint law enforcement task force is investigating the incident.

Last week, state archeologists concluded that no sacred sites were destroyed, but the tribe disputes that conclusion because its historic preservation officer wasn't allowed to participate in the survey. The tribe's ongoing lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contends the agency didn't properly consult the tribe before granting permits for the project.

Energy Transfer Partners said the decisions by two separate federal courts show otherwise.

"The Army Corps and Dakota Access carefully considered the views of all potentially affected tribes that chose to participate in the consultative process prescribed by Congress, and fully complied with both the letter and the spirit of the National Historic Preservation Act," the company said. "Their careful and sensitive work has been reviewed and approved by highly qualified private and state-employed archeologists."

The pipeline was 87 percent completed in North Dakota at the end of September and is largely completed in South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois.

"We continue to believe that the Army Corps will soon issue the easement for approximately 1,100 feet necessary for the crossing beneath the Missouri River – the sole remaining authorization necessary for completion of the project," the company said.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it won't authorize pipeline construction on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The three agencies asked that the company voluntarily pause construction within 20 miles of the lake.

The company on Tuesday urged that any protests "be undertaken in a peaceful and law abiding manner." Authorities arrested 27 protesters at two construction sites Monday, including actress Shailene Woodley, bringing the total number of arrests to 123.

"All construction efforts will be undertaken in close coordination with state and local law enforcement officials, and we are hopeful their law enforcement efforts will be supplemented by those of the federal government," the company said.

State officials and lawmakers have decried the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the Corps is withholding the lake-crossing easement and allowing protesters to camp on Corps-owned land. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs, and Monday's response involved deputies from Wisconsin – the first time out-of-state officers have been used.

Actress Woodley released from jail after arrest at Dakota Access protests

By Mike Nowatzki on Oct 10, 2016 at 9:59 p.m.

ST. ANTHONY, N.D. – Authorities arrested Hollywood actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other protesters at two Dakota Access construction sites in Morton County on Monday, Oct. 10, as pipeline opponents vowed to keep disrupting the project after an appeals court ruling Sunday that allows work to resume on a 20-mile stretch west of Lake Oahe.

Despite the court's ruling, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Monday it won't authorize construction of the $3.8 billion pipeline on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The Corps also repeated its request that Dakota Access LLC voluntarily pause all construction activity within 20 miles east or west of the lake. A company spokeswoman did not return a message seeking comment.

Monday marked the most arrests in one day since protests of the four-state, 1,172-mile pipeline began two months ago just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, where tribal members fear the pipeline will leak and contaminate their water supply and destroy sacred sites on ancestral lands.

Authorities were notified about 7:15 a.m. Monday that two protesters had attached themselves to construction equipment about 2 miles southwest of St. Anthony, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. Both were arrested for felony reckless endangerment, and a third person filming the event also was arrested, he said.

A few miles south along Highway 6, about 200 protesters converged on the west side of the road where the pipeline is strung but not yet buried, including Woodley, who live-streamed video of the protest on Facebook. The star of the "Divergent" film series was arrested at 12:05 p.m. on suspicion of criminal trespass and engaging in a riot, the same basis for most of the 27 arrests, said Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney, operations chief.

Woodley was released on $500 bond about 3:30 p.m. Her next court appearance will be Oct. 24.

Protesters erected an uncovered teepee in the pipeline corridor, and more than a dozen people who locked arms inside it were arrested. The 27 arrests brings the total to 123 so far. More than 100 law enforcement officers, many of them wearing riot gear, responded to the scene, directing protesters back across the fence line and forming a human barricade to keep them off the construction site. Protesters formed their own line less than 10 feet away, holding signs, pounding drums and yelling refrains such as "Respect our land, respect our water, honor our

treaties." "They plan to continue building, and we plan to continue to disrupt," a protester declared through a bullhorn. No physical violence was reported. But Laney disputed claims that it was a peaceful protest, noting protesters used threatening speech, refused to leave when asked and, at one point, surrounded a deputy who was arresting a protester, forcing another deputy to break up the circle. "This was not a protest," he said. "This was a riot." Watch the video below to see Woodley's arrest. Fast-forward to the last five minutes of the video to see the arrest.

Robby Romero, an Apache from Taos, N.M., criticized what he described as the militarized police response, complete with an armored Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle parked at the top of the hill on Highway 6 overlooking the protest. "This is a crazy response to a peaceful resistance to something that is so dangerous to all life," he said, adding, "We will win this fight, peacefully. We come with prayer and feathers. They come with weapons of destruction." Both protests took place outside the 20-mile zones east and west of the Missouri River at Lake Oahe where a federal appeals court had ordered Dakota Access LLC to pause construction while the court decided on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction. The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., issued a ruling Sunday rejecting the tribe's request and dissolving the 20-mile, no-work zone.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it hopes to conclude its review soon. The agencies said they "continue to respect the right to peaceful protest and expect people to obey the law." "We also look forward to a serious discussion during a series of consultations, starting with a listening session in Phoenix on Tuesday, on whether there should be nationwide reform on the Tribal consultation process for these types of infrastructure projects," they said.

Officers from Wisconsin assisted in Monday's response. Schools in nearby St. Anthony and Flasher went on lockdown. Laney said the 200 to 300 protesters who took part are a "distinct" group within the 2,500 to 3,000 mostly peaceful people camping along Highway 1806 about 25 miles away near the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers. He said protesters' message has been heard "loud and clear" over the last 62 days, but added "the courts have ruled" and the company has a legal right to do construction. "If their determination is that they're going to … do everything they can to stop this work, I guess we're going to be here for a while," he said.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Fort Randall Dam Passed Test Posed By Historic 2011 Flood (Yankton Daily)

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net | 0 comments

EDITORS' NOTE: The following is part of a series of periodic articles on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 Missouri River flood, its aftermath and a look at the present and future.

For Tom Curran, the 2011 Missouri River flooding at Pickstown forced him to take unprecedented action.

The Fort Randall Dam project manager opened up all the flood tunnels to handle the torrent of water.

“We had releases of 156,000 cubic feet per second (cfs),” he said. “It was the first time in the history of the dam that we fully opened all four flood tunnels.”

The 2011 releases – which amounted to one million gallons per second – more than doubled the old record of 67,000 cfs during 1997 flooding.

When it came to moving the flood water, the first preference was to run the flow through the Fort Randall power plant to gain hydropower, Curran said. The eight turbines produce a combined 320 megawatts of power.

Fort Randall produces enough power for a city of 250,000 people, according to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates.

“We continued to run our hydropower (during the flood),” Curran said. “We put out about 40,000 cfs through the power plant. The powerhouse was generating full capacity for those three months.”

Besides hydropower, the alternatives were running the water through the flood tunnels, spillway or a combination of both.

Fort Randall, completed in 1956, stands slightly more than two miles wide, at 10,700 feet, and 165 feet tall with a 140-foot water fall. Lake Francis Case runs for 107 miles behind the dam and backs up to the Big Bend Dam.

Fort Randall forms part of the Missouri River system of dams, Curran said. As such, the six dams need to remain in coordination for moving the flood water.

“The dams work together as a whole. They balance what each reservoir can hold and the flow each one can put through the power plant,” he said.

“Each one is a little bit unique, but they operate as a system. When the upper reservoirs are near their capacity, the rest of the water has to be moved downstream through all the dams.”

LIFE CHANGES

The flood affected all facets of life up and down the river, Curran said.

The Corps provided technical assistance to the Yankton Sioux Tribe amidst its flooding concerns, he said. Charles Mix County and the tribe had sustained $1 million in damages during previous flash flooding, and tribal members were displaced from their homes.

Most tribal members lived in homes on bluffs or other sites protected from the Missouri River flooding in 2011, Curran said. However, the Corps did warn tribal members about the dangers of bank erosion caused by the flooding, he said.

Downstream, the flooding inundated farmland, primarily in Charles Mix and Bon Homme counties on the South Dakota side of the river. On the Nebraska side, the river flooded housing developments such as Lazy River Acres.

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) closed stretches of Highway 12 east and west of Niobrara, Nebraska, throughout the summer. As a result, traffic was diverted and commuters and first responders were forced to find alternative routes.

The flooding didn't shut down Niobrara State Park, Niobrara, Chief Standing Bear Memorial Bridge or the Ohiya Casino. However, a number of travelers avoided the area because they encountered accessibility problems or mistakenly thought those sites were closed.

As a result, the economy – tourism, retail businesses, restaurants and bars – took a major hit.

While traditional tourism may have suffered in some areas, Fort Randall Dam saw an influx of a different type of visitor, Curran said.

"We had people from all over the country who wanted to see what the water looked like (when it was) that high and when it was released," he said. "Our people (with the Corps) were visiting with people every day (about the flood). We had longer hours every day just because people were coming through, looking and asking questions. We also had questions about the reservoirs and parks."

In addition, the Corps worked with conservation agencies on issues dealing with wildlife, Curran said. The Corps also monitored the changing course of the Missouri River and the increased sedimentation caused by the flooding, he said.

Lake Francis Case and Lewis and Clark Lake remained open for recreation, Curran said. However, flooding affected area campgrounds, boat ramps and other sites.

"As a reservoir, we had record pool levels in 2011. We were pretty much a half-foot from being totally full," he said. "A lot of recreational facilities were flooded at that level, and a lot of the recreation areas were closed."

The Missouri River and Lake Francis Case saw a great deal of pent-up demand the following year, Curran said. The boating and fishing numbers soared after the flooding.

"It was really busy in 2012," he said. "Things really picked up and rebounded that year."

LESSONS LEARNED

In 2012, the Corps embarked on a number of projects as part of regular maintenance and from the flooding. The inspections looked at the gates, cables, spillway and embankment.

Curran, who has worked at Fort Randall since 1999, said he has always remained confident about the stability of the dam and reservoir. His confidence was reinforced during and after an unprecedented event such as the 2011 flooding, he said.

Fort Randall handled the stress despite months of intense flood pressure on the dam, he said.

“That was kind of the test. The dam held up great. We did really well with no operation problems,” he said. “Afterwards, we had a really thorough survey of everything, and it was just the normal wear-and-tear items. We worked after the flood to see if everything was in good shape and if we’re ready to go should this (flood) ever happen again.”

In that respect, the flood showed the dam’s capability, Curran said.

“It was interesting to see what would happen during a high-water event,” he said. “The flood pushed everything to its limits, but there really wasn’t anything that stuck out as a problem or issue.”

Col. John Henderson, the Omaha District commander for the Corps of Engineers, visited Fort Randall Dam earlier this year.

Henderson reflected on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 flood and emphasized the importance of two-way communication between the Corps and stakeholders, according to a Corps publication.

“I think the timing of this trip is appropriate since we are only five years removed from the single most significant hydrological event to occur in this basin in the last 100-plus years,” he said.

“One of the key lessons learned following that event was the need for an ongoing commitment to open and frank dialogue throughout the basin. This inspection trip is an example of our efforts to maintain that dialogue.”

Curran still sees and hears about the flood’s impact from those most affected by it.

“I think there are some people who were intimately involved with the high water and flooding who haven’t forgotten about it,” he said. “But there are other areas where things are improving. People are doing some of the things they had always planned to do, and it looks nice.”

Echoing Henderson’s sentiment, Curran said the flood showed the importance of communicating with all people up and down the river.

“As far as what was learned, I would say communication and getting the word out, again and again, to let people know what to expect,” he said.

“We’re working to provide people with a better understanding of how the dams and reservoir system work. We want them to have an understanding if anything like this (flooding) should ever happen again.”

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COLORADO:

Study: Human-caused warming burns more Western forests – Colorado Springs Gazette

By: KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press

Updated: October 11, 2016 at 4:47 pm

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A new study of Western forest fires confirms what is already apparent — wildfire seasons are getting longer and more destructive.

But researchers with the University of Idaho and Columbia University also say humans are to blame.

The study made public Monday says human-caused global warming contributed an additional 16,000 square miles of burned forests from 1984 to 2015.

Researchers say the 16,000 square miles represent half of the forest areas that burned over the last three decades.

"We're no longer waiting for human-caused climate change to leave its fingerprint on wildfire across the western U.S.," John Abatzoglou, the study's lead author and an associate professor of geography at the University of Idaho, said in a statement. "It's already here."

The authors of the study, published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, say it's the first to try to quantify how much human-caused climate change has increased wildfires in Western forests. Some other factors that had to be considered as contributing to the increase, the report said, included a legacy of fire suppression in the West, natural climate variability, and human settlement.

The study found that longer and hotter dry spells are causing Western forests to dry out and become more susceptible to wildfires.

Specifically, researchers said, spring and summer temperatures have warmed by 2 to 2.5 degrees since 1950. Researchers said that warming accounts for 55 percent of what they call "fuel aridity" from 1979 to 2015. The study attributed the other 45 percent to natural climate variations.

The study found that since 2000 there's been a 75 percent increase in forested lands with elevated aridity and nine more days each year with dry forests especially susceptible to wildfires.

"Anthropogenic climate change has emerged as a driver of increased forest fire activity," the report says.

Park Williams of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and a co-author of the study, said the report provides a better understanding of the effects human-caused global warming has on Western forests.

"This knowledge will allow us to make more educated fire and land management decisions," he said.

One of those decision-makers is Idaho Forester David Groeschl, who said the report could offer some help in the future.

"We know that our fire season is getting longer," Groeschl said. "We know that we're seeing more and longer fires, and we know that we have increasing fuels out there as well."

The fuel aridity was particularly bad in Idaho in 2015 when an extended heat and drought left northern Idaho forests parched and in the worst condition since 1926, officials said.

That summer and fall, 600 square miles of U.S. Forest Service land burned. Idaho's bill for fighting wildfires soared to $60 million with some 100 square miles, about three quarters of it forests, burning on state, private and federal lands that are in forest protective districts designated as the state's responsibility.

Idaho has taken a number of steps aimed at the wildfire risk, including increasing the pay of in-demand, experienced firefighters who were leaving to take similar jobs with more money at other agencies. Idaho also recently formed a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to take on landscape-scale projects by using the state's land management expertise that includes selling timber on federal land. The state's first auction of federal timber took place last month.

How successful the partnership will take years to determine.

The study released Monday concluded that the trend of increased forest aridity resulting in large wildfires is likely to continue for decades while there are enough trees to fuel the flames.

MONTANA:

Protesters cause temporary shut-down of pipeline in northcentral Montana- KBZK TV Bozeman

Posted: Oct 12, 2016 8:28 AM MDT

GREAT FALLS -

The battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota came to Montana on Tuesday.

Protesters forced the temporary shutdown of five pipelines carrying oil from Canadian tar sands, including one at Coal Banks Landing south of Big Sandy in Chouteau County.

Spectra Energy confirmed to MTN News that trespassers tampered with a valve on its express pipeline on Tuesday, and that as a precaution it was shut off.

The environmental group Climate Direct Action said Tuesday that it had also successfully shut down express pipelines at locations in Washington, North Dakota, and Minnesota.

The group says it was attempting to shut the pipelines down over concerns about global warming, and in solidarity with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Spectra Energy says it worked with law enforcement officers in its response to the tampering incident in Chouteau County, and that their primary concern was safety of the community and environment.

The website Unicorn Riot posted the following information on Tuesday:

> *Early this morning, five water protectors successfully shut down five pipelines across the northern United States that were delivering tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada. The action was in support of the call for International Days of Prayer and Action for Standing Rock.*
>
> *The individuals used manual safety valves and bolt cutters to access and shut down the flow of tar sands oil into the US. They are "calling on President Obama to use emergency powers to keep the pipelines closed and mobilize for the extraordinary shift away from fossil fuels now required to avert catastrophe."*
>
> *The actions were undertaken by Emily Johnson, 50, and Michael Foster, 52, of Seattle, WA, Annette Klapstein, 64, of Bainbridge Island, WA, Ken Ward, 59, of Corbett, OR, and Leonard Higgins, 64, of Eugene, OR.*

There is no word yet on whether any of the protesters might face charges.

Spectra released the following statement: "Spectra Energy has responded to a situation during which trespassers broke into a locked facility and tampered with a valve on its Express Pipeline Tuesday morning in Montana. We coordinated with law enforcement in this response. Our first concern is for the safety of the community and the environment, and tampering with this important U.S. energy infrastructure will not be tolerated. This pipeline provides a vital source of affordable, reliable energy to fuel the everyday lives of Americans. As a cautionary measure, we temporarily shut down this section of the Express Pipeline."

Butte firefighters teach students about fire safety- KTFM TV News Kalispell

Posted: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 8:46 PM

BUTTE -

Butte firefighters said fire education starts here, in the classroom. After the kids saw firefighters put on their gear and learn about stop drop and roll. Firemen Pat Doherty then spoke about the most common house fires

"Most structure fires in the United States are from cooking materials. It's always best to stay in the vicinity and keep an eye on it," said Pat Doherty, Butte Fire Department.

During the predicted cold snap, families will be turning up the heat. However, Doherty explains to kids to watch out for the dangers that can sometimes come from using space heaters.

Doherty also adds it's never smart to leave them unattended.

"Space heaters are dangerous. In the case of people forgetting to unplug them or they keep them too close to stuff that's going to catch on fire," said Doherty.

NORTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Airport Disaster Exercise Set for Thursday – DRGnews.com

October 12, 2016 (Dakota Radio Group)
By: Press Release

PIERRE, SD- You can expect lights, sirens and a whole lot of activity at the airport later this week.

Thursday evening, from 5:30 – 7:30, the Pierre Regional Airport and Hughes County will conduct a full scale disaster exercise. The mock disaster scenario includes a hazardous materials response on a simulated aircraft. The exercise is required by the Federal Aviation Administration and designed to provide first responders and airport personnel with disaster response experience.

"This is really practice for all the responders," said Mike Isaacs, Pierre Regional Airport Manager. "We do everything we can to avoid aircraft accidents, but we want to be prepared in the event there's one we can't avoid."

Isaacs went on to say that the exercise requires all the activity that a real disaster would require. Those involved in the exercise will be assigned a variety of responsibilities that include everything from information gathering and dissemination to coordination of involved entities to response management to logistics and cost tracking.

"An Emergency Operations Center and Unified Command Post will be set up at the airport for this exercise," said Isaacs. "They will serve as the hubs of all disaster response and recovery efforts.

Approximately 50 people will be involved in the exercise including volunteers, city and county officials, and first responders.

The Federal Aviation Administration requires airports with commercial air service to conduct a full-scale disaster exercise every three years. Additionally, the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management requires counties to conduct a variety of exercises throughout the year.

The Thursday night exercise fulfills requirements for both Hughes County and Pierre Regional Airport.

National Fire Prevention Week (Hot Springs Star)

By John D. Taylor

A closer look at Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department history

HOT SPRINGS – The advent of National Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 9 -15 this year, is a good time to look at the important role firefighters play in the community, and to consider what everyone can do to prevent fires.

Fire Prevention Week

Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, that tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,400 structures.

The fire began on October 8, but did most of its damage on October 9, 1871 – why Fire Prevention Week is held on Oct. 9 annually.

Popular legend holds that while Mrs. Catherine O'Leary was milking a cow, it kicked over a lamp, ignited her barn, then lit the whole city of Chicago on fire. However, recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has debunked this fairy tale – while retaining some elements of truth in the story.

The fire did, indeed, originate near the barn where Mrs. O'Leary kept her five milk cows. But there is no proof that her cow sparked the blaze. O'Leary's testimony says she and her cows were asleep, not milking, when the fire broke out.

Who started it then? Some blame some neighborhood boys who were near the barn sneaking cigarettes, some say a O'Leary's neighbor started the fire, another theory is that a meteorite shower that fell during Oct. 8 all over Michigan and Wisconsin may have started the fire.

Also, while the Chicago Fire is one of the most well known, it wasn't the biggest fire in American history. That notoriety belongs to the Peshtigo Fire, which also occurred on October 8, 1871, in northeast Wisconsin. It burned 16 whole towns, killed more than 1,100 people, and scorched 1.2 million acres. It began when several railroad workers, clearing land for tracks, unintentionally lit a brush fire. Before long, the fast-moving flames were whipping through the area "like a tornado," survivors said. Peshtigo, Wisconsin got the worst of it, within an hour, the entire town was destroyed.

These fires changed the way firefighters and public officials thought about fire safety. And on the 40th anniversary the fires the Fire Marshals Association of North America decided to mark the anniversary in a way to keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed. According to the National Archives and Records Administration's Library Information Center, it is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

Hot Springs VFD

On July 2, The Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) celebrated its 125th anniversary.

The fire company was formed, according to a VFD history by William T. Richer – VFD member Jenni Sotherland shared this with the Star – in January of 1890, when a group of Hot Springs citizens gathered at the Minnekahta Hotel to organize themselves into the VFD. At this meeting, John Gillespie was elected chief; H. C. Venette, first assistant chief; John Mueller, second assistant chief; Kenneth Harris, secretary and Wally Root, treasurer.

In those days, there was no citywide water system, so the only equipment the VFD needed was a large number of leather water buckets. To fight fires, the men formed two lines –Richer calls them "strings" – going to and from the fire and a water source. Usually, Fall River, water holes or cisterns were the water sources. One line of men passed buckets of water from the river to the fire, the other line returned the empty buckets.

In July, when the modern VFD was whooping it up with a masquerade ball at American Legion Post 71 they may not have been thinking about these roots, but they are where the VFD originated.

Early days

Later in 1890, the city began to pipe water into the business district, so it purchased its first fire-fighting equipment: two, high wheeled hose carts, and one hook and ladder wagon. The hose carts were drawn by men, the wagon pulled by a team of horses.

Throughout those early days the city's firefighting ability grew. In 1893, the city bought another high-wheeled hose cart, placed iton College Hill (where the high school is today).

One interesting story from those days is connected to John Mueller, father of the Mueller Center founder. In 1896, when Mueller was the VFD's first assistant fire chief, he bought a white horse, named "Old Granger" from Bill Perry.

Mueller used Old Granger to ride to and from fires, and pull the No. 1 hose cart to fire scenes.

For many years Mueller kept his stable much the same as the city's fire equipment stables, with the bridle bit in Old Granger's mouth, so the horse was ready to go. When an alarm sounded, Old Granger would leave his stall, make a run for the buggy shafts, where the No. 1 hose cart could be hooked up to him with one snap of the harness, and "away he would go," says Richer.

Sometimes, Mueller was able to catch a ride on the horse, other times, Old Granger was the first responder to a fire.

Richer says, “The call of the fire alarm was greater to this noble horse than was the call of the feed box.” Mueller used Old Granger in this fashion for a quarter century, until 1915, when the horse was “pensioned.” The horse was so stiff and lame then he could hardly walk the streets, according to Richer. “But if an alarm came in, one would think he was a mighty young horse. He was able to forget his stiffness and lameness to answer the call.”

Richer says in 1916, when Old Granger was “pensioned” and put out to pasture near town, the horse heard an alarm call and in a few moments showed up in town to answer the call.

Granger answered his last fire call in 1917.

Also during these early days, the VFD sponsored three-day 4th of July celebrations, free to the public. Special trains brought large crowds of people into Hot Springs from surrounding areas and the entertainment included greased pig-catching and greased pole-climbing contests, rodeo-style bucking horses, baseball games, swimming contests, foot races, human wheelbarrow races, tug-of-wars, band concerts and reading the Declaration of Independence.

In 1899, the VFD fire hall became a dual-purpose building, hosting Hot Springs’ first opera hall as well as the fire hall. What happened was that the fire department remodeled their building, adding a small stage to the east end of the room, a set of bleachers in the west, and covering the remaining floor space with folding chairs advertising Happy Bill cigars. Two small dressing rooms were also built outside the building. The Fireman’s Opera House was in operation until about 1909, when the skating rink and theater opened. The opera house never made much money, but it gave city residents a place for entertainment.

Up until the end of World War I (1918), the fire fighting equipment of the city included three hose carts and one hook and ladder wagon or truck. The hose carts were housed in various parts of town: One in the lower end, one on College Hill, one on Minnekahta Ave. The hook and ladder wagon was kept at city hall. Fire alarms were anything that made noise -- train whistles, church bells and “men hollering at the top of their voices,” notes Richer.

There were no telephones in those days, so when fires occurred at night, VFD members “would generally exhaust themselves in running from their homes to the scene of the fire.”

Often, by the time the hose carts got to the scene, the fire was out of control, and the VFD’s efforts focused on keeping the fire from spreading to adjoining properties. “It was quite generally considered those days that if a property caught fires during the night time, there would be nothing left in the morning, except the lot. One example of this is how an April 1891 fire wiped out a whole city block of business buildings in “lower” town, the damage estimated at $35,000 – big money in those days.

Other big blazes of that era the 1891 blaze that took the Minnekahta Hotel, the 1892 blaze that took out several buildings where the Post Office now stands, an 1895 fire that destroyed the Jay

Crane store building, a 1903 fire that took a block of business houses what was People's National Bank and the Riverside Apartments, a 1907 fire that took the Catholican Hotel and bath house and the Siloam bath house, 1910's Gibson Hotel fire and 1915's Gillespie Hotel fire. In 1924, the High School building burned to the ground.

Motorization

In 1918, a movement was started to motorize the VFD. City businessmen, citizens and the fire company made donations of $1,875 which bought a combination Ford chemical and hose truck. This was put into service in June of 1919, when Dave Batchelor was foreman of the fire company. Batchelor's house burned down, a $3,000 loss, in 1908.

An REO Speedwagon Fire Truck equipped with a pump was purchased in 1924, after the high school fire, to increase water pressure, and town founding father F.O. Butler offered the fire company his Pierce-Arrow touring car, which was reworked into a hook and ladder truck. This unit remained in operation until 1938, when it was replaced by a new, Ford V-8 truck.

In 1934, the REO Speedwagon was converted into a smoke extractor, a move made possible by the ingenuity of Vic Englebert, H.C. "Swede" Nelms, and Fire Chief L. J. Bingham. These men added a 25-horsepower Waukesha motor to a large suction fan, salvaged from the State Soldier's Home. This rig was given credit for saving more property than any other equipment in the department, drawing smoke and gas from burning buildings at a rate of 6,500 cubic feet per minute, which made it possible for firefighters to get into burning buildings and extinguish fires.

Growth

Throughout the 1930s the VFDs gear grew, as Hot Springs grew, with horses and carts being replaced by larger and more powerful motorized equipment. In 1936, this enabled Hot Springs to get a 10 percent cut in insurance rates because of the efficiency of the fire department.

By the 1940s, there were 561 people in the VFD, with 65 active members and six living in Fire Hall, on call to fight fires. Engines and other gear were purchased by the city or the VFD via proceeds for insurance money or annual dances. But in 1942, city agreed to begin paying the VFD $200 per month to, with the understanding that the VFD would pay for all equipment, pay their own insurance, water, lights, telephone, gas, oil, fire station upkeep and other incidental expenses.

"Without a doubt the Hot Springs Fire Department is one of the very best strictly volunteer fire departments in the state…the department has brought home the South Dakota State Championship trophy a total of 11 times.

During the late 1940s, the fire chief was conducting "fire drills at both schoolhouses several times each year. These drills are not at regular intervals, but just whenever he takes the notion, giving no notice to teachers, janitors or pupils at the building." A general inspection of "every business house within the city" was also held annually, which revealed any fire hazards.

In 1948, after Frank Fetzner, Deputy State Fire Marshall, saw the VFD in action for the first time, he said the VFD handled themselves like a experts and that the city should feel mighty proud that they have such a group of fire-fighters.

After flood of 1948, a VFD American LaFrance pumper was used to pump out Evans Plunge. This took days. Also, extension ladder truck saved a “kid” marooned on the cliffs at Hot Brook, with two fireman saving the goat.

Also, 800 questionnaires and inspection blanks were sent home with school kids, asking that they report any fire hazards in their homes. Returning this would get the kids a ride on the fire truck. More than 700 of these came back, the kids ratting out their parents bad habits, even in the homes of firemen.

Emergency ambulance was first put into service in November of 1949.

The 1950s

These were high times for the VFD – in more ways that one, according to new VFD scribe Howard McBride. In 1950, Chief Vic Englebert resigned, saying “he had gone on a bender, got himself in jail and fined. Was called on the carpet by his boss and was given an enforced vacation for two weeks from his job.”

That same year the city floated a $15,000 bond issue for new fire station, and it carried 1,098 to 487 votes. The VFD bought three lots (where the Valley Hotel burned in 1946) for $3,500 in the city’s name. Many private citizens gave donations to this, including one widow who gave $100, quite a bit of money then.

In February of 1950, at the annual Fireman’s Masquerade Ball, someone set fire to Wally King’s masquerade suit, which produced 2nd degree burns on his legs, hips, chest and chin, and 3rd degree burns on both hands. King was in hospital for several months, and the masquerade ball ended – until this year.

In 1951, street names in the city were changed, and a new map was prepared showing the new names and locations. Firemen instructed to study this and become familiar with it.

William Watson, of Wind Cave National Park, came to a VFD meeting in April to compliment the VFD on their cooperation. Watson said the park and the state Game, Fish & Parks department couldn’t see eye-to-eye on their cooperative agreement, and he thought VFD should take care of Southern Hills fires. “If the rest of Hot Springs had the getup and go of the fire department, the town would be a hell of a lot better off,” Watson quipped, noting he wouldn’t be at Wind Cave much longer due to a transfer to Hot Springs, Arkansas.

In 1953 a fire at the Minnekahta Building, took the lives of a woman and her two daughters, although the father and his two sons escaped harm. The building was falling into itself when VFD arrived.

The last years of the 1950s brought a new aerial ladder, an Oelrichs chicken hatchery fire that cooked 3,700 of the birds, and a January fire in 20-below temperatures that the fire chief said was the first time he'd see the smoke extractor tube freeze.

1960s and 70s

After the 1961 flood, the VFD was called on to pump basements, but lacked the equipment to do so. It was also called to Angostura Dam for rescue work. In 1963 a new addition was put on the station. School building inspections revealed a few hazards, which were eliminated.

And the 1979's Evans Hotel Fire proved to be a seminal event for the city.

Modern VFD

Most recently, the VFD has had some major fires to contend with.

It fought 2007's Alabaugh Fire, which burned 10,324 acres, destroyed 33 homes, killed one resident, and forced two firefighters to take refuge in a fire shelter. Hot Springs' Mary Goulet lived in one of those homes and wrote a book about the fire, "Cascade of Flames."

In 2015, the Bitter Creek fire started south of Hot Springs, off Highway 71 at the intersection of Maitland and Ash Creek Roads. It burned about 87 acres, and firefighters from Cascade, Hot Springs, and South Dakota State stopped the spread.

And just after their 125th anniversary, in mid-July of this year, the Indian Canyon fire, which began after four days of temperatures topping 90 degrees and a lightning strike touched off a blaze about five miles southeast of Edgemont, scorching 14,133 acres

Today, the VFD has 65 active volunteers led by Chief Jim Stevens, 1st assistant Chief Bob Evans, 2nd assistant chief Wendell Hertel, and Secretary Treasurer Gerald Hanson.

Argyle VFD looking for help

The Argyle Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD) located between Pringle and Hot Springs, SD is seeking new members. Applicants should be over 18 years of age, in good physical health, have a clean driving record, and be able to pass a Law Enforcement Background check. Firefighters will respond to structural and wildland fires as well as assist with search and rescue operations, motor vehicle accidents and other emergencies in our coverage area. First Responders will assist and respond to medical emergencies and assist patients until ambulances arrive on scene. Prior experience is not necessary but certainly welcome. This is a volunteer non-paid position.

The Department provides Fire and EMS response to a 144 square mile area of southwestern Custer County and provides Mutual Aid to Pringle, Minakata, Custer, Hot Springs, Wind Cave, Custer State Park, and other nearby agencies in Custer and Fall River Counties.

Meeting are held at the fire station on the first and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7 p.m.

For more information, call (605) 673-5823; e-mail ArgyleVFD.SD@gmail.com, or check the Argyle Volunteer Fire Department Facebook page.

UTAH:
No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

USDA designates Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area (Northern Wyoming Daily)

CASPER — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area due to a recent drought.

“Our hearts go out to those Wyoming farmers and ranchers affected by recent natural disasters,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “President Obama and I are committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a bright spot in our nation’s economy by sustaining the successes of America’s farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through these difficult times. We’re also telling Wyoming producers that USDA stands with you and your communities when severe weather and natural disasters threaten to disrupt your livelihood.”

Farmers and ranchers in Big Horn, Fremont, Hot Springs, Teton and Washakie counties in Wyoming also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

Farmers and ranchers in Carbon, Gallatin and Park counties in Montana also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Oct. 5, 2016, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program;Livestock Indemnity Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; and the Tree Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online athttp://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

Region VIII Clips

Friday, October 14, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* A researcher from Colorado State University tested cheaper air sampling devices at a controlled burn in Colorado this summer.
- *Montana:* No FEMA-related stories
- *North Dakota:* A flood protection plan for Fox Island in Bismarck has taken a step forward… Senator Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic Senators have asked President Obama to halt construction of the Dakota Access pipeline being protested in North Dakota…. A lengthy piece covers how much time the Cass County sheriff is spending at the protest. … A councilwoman from Madison, Wisconsin, who was arrested Monday describes the protest very differently than the sheriff's office.
- *South Dakota:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Utah:* A Washington, D.C., publication cites criticism by Utah and Wyoming congressional members of the Department of Justice's decision not to prosecute an employee involved in last year's Gold King Mine disaster.
- *Wyoming:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Other FEMA-related stories:* Storms with hurricane-level winds are expected to hit Washington and Oregon over the next few days.

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Don't go chasing wildfires – unless you're Scott Kelleher- Source/Colorado State University

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NORTH DAKOTA

Fox Island residents approve flood protection plan (Bismarck Tribune)

Sen. Bernie Sanders asking President Obama to halt North Dakota pipeline for full review (KFOR TV, Oklahoma City, and AP)

North Dakota sheriff out of town almost constantly as pipeline protest drags on (Fargo Forum News Service, WDAZ TV)

Madison City Council member arrested in North Dakota pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune, Wisconsin State Journal)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

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UTAH:

GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Don’t go chasing wildfires – unless you’re Scott Kelleher

13Oct, 2016 by Anne Ju Manning – Source/Colorado State University

Most people drive *away* from fires burning in the mountains. Scott Kelleher drives straight at them – well, near them, anyway. And it's not for thrill seeking.

For two weeks in September, Kelleher drove the perimeter of a 6,000-acre prescribed burn in southern Colorado to set up 13 outdoor air samplers on steel stakes.

Kelleher's system is suited for monitoring smoke emissions for both controlled burns and wildfires. Field-testing the sensors during an actual, unplanned wildfire would prove challenging. So, Kelleher received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to tag along on a planned, prescribed burn, which are common in the Rocky Mountains and other densely forested areas.

"The long-term goals of this project are very motivating," Kelleher said. "It's applying science and technology in an affordable new way to make the lives of those responsible for monitoring smoke much easier, with the main thought of protecting public health in mind."

Field testing

Kelleher's first field-testing campaign took place in a swath of land between Pagosa Springs and Bayfield, Colorado, near Pargin Mountain. Working closely with his contacts at the forest service, Kelleher set up each of his monitoring checkpoints in strategic proximity to the forest service's monitoring zones.

The sensors Kelleher is testing are based off the principle of an Ultrasonic Personal Aerosol Sampler (UPAS) designed in the lab of his advisor, John Volckens, who is a professor in mechanical engineering and member of the CSU Partnership for Air Quality, Climate, and Health. The UPAS features an ultrasonic pump that draws in air, a sampling filter, rechargeable batteries, and an air flow rate sensor.

Kelleher's master's project involves adapting the UPAS for conditions suitable for prolonged outdoor monitoring. His new version, for which he is quick to point out he received many hours of help from other Volckens lab members, includes a hardened enclosure for weatherproofing; a solar cell for charging an extended-life battery; and a real-time, optical particle sensor that tracks the flow of particles 2.5 microns in diameter and smaller. "PM 2.5" is a standard measure for describing air pollution particles small enough to penetrate human lungs and cause health problems. The optical sampler contained in the device gives live updates.

The sensor also has a gravimetric analysis device that collects particles onto a filter. The filter is later weighed and analyzed for particulate matter concentrations. The entire device can be controlled remotely by smart phone.

The total cost of one of Kelleher's sensors is estimated at about $500, compared with particulate matter monitors used today that cost $10,000 to $20,000. The standard sensors usually require line power, and are large – about the size of a microwave oven.

Kelleher's unusual road trip involved seven rounds of 24-hour sampling. This involved traveling a route of 90 miles, changing out filters on each device and extracting information. In all, he was out in the fire for 14 days.

Automation in rural environments

A graduate of Montana Tech who grew up on a beef cattle, wheat and barley farm near the Canadian border, Kelleher is motivated by his work to bring the power of automation and monitoring to rural environments. Recognizing his penchant for engineering cost-effective solutions, and armed with his CSU master's degree in a couple of years, Kelleher hopes he can make a difference by bringing simple automation technologies to farmers or small businesses. The remainder of Kelleher's thesis will involve organizing and analyzing the data he collected at Pargin Moutain as well as follow-up prescribed burn experiments as needed. He will present his recent findings at the Second International Smoke Symposium (ISS2) in Long Beach, California next month.

"It was very cool to observe such a large-scale event and learn about the processes and effort that go into it," he said. "Hopefully, one day, my technology will enable anyone worried about air pollution to conduct monitoring right in their backyard."

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Fox Island residents approve flood protection plan (Bismarck Tribune)

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 18 hrs ago

A $3.92 million Fox Island flood protection project has been approved 72-18 by property owners, who will pay part of its cost via a special assessment district, the Burleigh County Water Resource District Board announced Wednesday.

The project will involve raising a section of road and adding a levee to safeguard against a 20-foot flood. The Legislature has committed $2.8 million toward its completion, and the Burleigh County Commission has approved funding of $920,000 in yearly installments. Fox Island property owners will pay the balance.

The project was driven by the 2011 Missouri River flooding.

The raising of the road would start at the pump at Tavis Road and move west along Farwest Drive and Gallatin Loop, according to Michael Gunsch of Houston Engineering, consulting engineer for the water resource district. The levee would extend west from Gallatin Loop to the Missouri River bank, then run north to the Whispering Bay accessory channel, he said.

Gunsch said about 80 percent of the 91 property owners who voted favored the project. One submitted a blank ballot.

With the residents' approval on record, the board is moving forward with the project and paying a design fee of $325,000 to Houston Engineering.

Completion is planned during the 2018 construction season, but authorization must first be granted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the North Dakota State Engineer's Office.

Earlier precautions were taken when the county partnered with Bismarck in creating the Tavis Road floodgate after the 2011 flood and Bismarck raised Mills Avenue, according to Larson.

A Dec. 14 hearing has tentatively been set to allow those within the special assessment district to protest.

Sixteen residents in the far western Gallatin Loop area signed a petition saying the construction of the levee would damage their yards, said Greg Larson, a member of the water resource district board.

"We 16 receive none of the flood benefit, but receive 100 percent of the street and yard destruction," he read from the statement.

The homeowners signing the petition also asked that a different street be raised near their properties.

Board members agreed they did not want to change the protection plan or do more study at increased cost to those being assessed.

Each property owner in the assessment district can expect to pay an average of $3,790 toward the construction project, Gunsch said. In addition, he said, some of them will pay $943 each toward the system's operation and maintenance.

Sen. Bernie Sanders asking President Obama to halt North Dakota pipeline for full review (KFOR TV, Oklahoma City, and AP)

Posted 7:17 am, October 14, 2016, by KFOR-TV & K. Querry and AP Wire

BISMARCK, N.D. – Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic senators are asking President Barack Obama to halt construction of the four-state Dakota Access pipeline until a full environmental review can be completed.

In a statement, the senators said Thursday the request is due to a federal appeals court denying the Standing Rock Sioux’s motion for a temporary work stoppage in southern North Dakota

within 20 miles of Lake Oahe. The feds stopped construction on land bordering and under the lake in order to review the permitting process.

An environmental review would likely delay the pipeline, which Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners hopes to complete by the end of the year.

White House spokesman Patrick Rodenbush declined to comment.

The other senators are Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Dianne Feinstein of California, Ben Cardin of Maryland and Ed Markey of Massachusetts.

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

However, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe says the pipeline would come within a half-mile of their reservation and could disturb or destroy sacred historical sites.

Also, tribal leaders are concerned about the consequences the pipeline would have on their water supply.

North Dakota sheriff out of town almost constantly as pipeline protest drags on (Fargo Forum News Service, WDAZ TV)

- By TU-UYEN TRAN Forum News Service
- 18 hrs ago

FARGO — In mid-August, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney headed for southeastern Morton County, the scene of protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and, except for a few breaks, he's been there ever since. Serving as the elected sheriff of what's by far the state's largest county while consumed by policing the ongoing tribal protests of the oil pipeline has been a daily act of priority-balancing, Laney said.

"I'm very blessed to have a command team that I believe is second to none," Laney said. "They can hold the fort with most things, but there are certainly things that need my attention."

Laney, who is halfway through a third term after first taking office in January 2007, said he feels it's important for him to do everything he can to help Morton County in its time of need because Cass County got help during the flood fights of 2009, 2010 and 2011. In the worst of those floods, in 2009, hundreds of law enforcement officers from around the state and country came to Cass County for more than 40 days, he said.

"The fact that we've had to go out of state to bring in assistance," he said, "how do we in-state not help first?"

Hundreds of law enforcement officials from all over the state and other parts of the country have been helping police the protests at the request of Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, whose force is stretched thin. Laney has been the operations chief for the law enforcement presence to the protests.

Last week, a representative from the Western States Sheriffs' Association and the National Sheriffs' Association said members of both groups have pledged to help Morton County. Laney is a board member for the national group.

Cass County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling agreed with Laney's sentiment that pitching in is worth the heavy strain on the sheriff's time.

"When we've had floods, for example, we've relied on many many outside agencies to help us with all of our sandbagging and dike patrols and search and rescue and so on and so forth," she said. "The counties don't live in a bubble. We have to help each other and we're glad to be able to do that."

Scherling said she knows Laney is in "constant communication" with his subordinates in Fargo. Laney said he's been able to take care of business back in Cass County by phone, by email or with scanned documents.

Cass County Chief Deputy Col. Rick Majerus is in charge while Laney is out. The sheriff said he does come back to Cass County when he's absolutely needed.

Marty Johnson, Scherling's opponent in November's County Commission election, didn't return a phone message Wednesday.

The pipeline construction site targeted by protesters is near the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Protesters, many of whom are American Indians, say construction of the $3.8 billion oil pipeline would desecrate burial grounds and other sites sacred to Indians. They also say a rupture would threaten water quality in the Missouri River, which the pipeline must go under as it continues on its way to Illinois.

Laney estimated that there have been 7,000 to 8,000 protesters, though more recently the numbers have dropped to 2,500 to 3,000 who are in it for the long haul. The majority are peaceful but 300 to 400 are "extremely confrontational," he said, accusing them of trying to disrupt construction and intimidating farm workers. As of Tuesday, Oct. 11, the protests had led to 123 arrests.

State officials and lawmakers have criticized the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers surprisingly withdrew its required approval of the pipeline's Missouri River crossing for further review -- an announcement made Sept. 9, just minutes after a federal court ruling in support of the pipeline's construction.

The number of law enforcement officials on the scene has fluctuated based on the need, though Laney said he couldn't say how many because of security concerns. Several of his deputies have rotated in and out of Morton County over the last few months, he said, but it's hard for him to stay away because he's one of three top commanders on the scene.

Cass County taxpayers won't bear the cost of deploying the deputies and Laney to the protest, and patrols in Cass County and jail security haven't been affected, a department spokesman previously told The Forum. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs.

Laney said the days are long there, leaving only enough time to outside of work for him to grab a bite and sleep. Deputies who volunteer to rotate in all work seven days a week with no time off until they rotate out again, he said.

"I'm not going to lie, we're all tired," he said, but law enforcement officers expect that they may have to make sacrifices.

Asked how long he thinks he'll be needed in Morton County, Laney said that depends on the protesters.

The company building the pipeline, which was 87 percent complete in North Dakota as of the end of September, said Tuesday that it intends to resume construction promptly after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's

request to stop work on the pipeline in places where it believes the project will desecrate sacred land was denied Sunday.

Protesters have also said they don't plan to leave anytime soon.

"This currently is a situation that there's no way one agency alone could handle this," Laney said.

Madison City Council member arrested in North Dakota pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune, Wisconsin State Journal)

- Dean Mosiman, Wisconsin State Journal
- Oct 12, 2016

Madison Ald. Rebecca Kemble was arrested and jailed on Monday while acting as a legal observer of the continuing protests over a controversial oil pipeline in North Dakota that a Native American tribe says threatens tribal land.

Kemble's version of events contrasts sharply with statements by law enforcement, who characterized the event as a riot.

Kemble was among more than two dozen people arrested on Monday at two protests, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. She faces tentative charges of misdemeanor criminal trespassing, destruction of evidence, resisting arrest and engaging in riot.

She was taken to Morton County jail and released after posting a $1,250 bond Tuesday morning, Keller said.
Actress Shailene Woodley, who starred in the "Divergent" movie series and most recently in Oliver Stone's film "Snowden," was also among those arrested.

Kemble said Tuesday afternoon that she was wearing a hat that identified her as a legal observer and was videotaping a peaceful prayer ceremony when police arrived and began making arrests. She said she intends to fight the charges.

"I wasn't protesting. It wasn't a protest," she said. "I was legal-observing. I was targeted by law enforcement for my camera."

Kemble, 18th District, traveled with her husband over the weekend to Morton County to present the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe with a parchment copy of a recent City Council resolution expressing solidarity with those protesting the pipeline.

The tribe wants construction halted due to concerns of potential contamination of its water supply and says the pipeline will encroach on tribal burial sites and other cultural artifacts.

On Monday morning, Kemble said she went with others to attend a ceremony that started at an encampment on the reservation. The ceremony, she said, moved to the pipeline site near St. Anthony and featured prayer, drumming and dancing by tribes from Argentina and the Arctic Circle.

She said most people were beginning to leave after the event, except for about 16 people sitting under a tepee, when at least 40 police officers arrived.

A commanding officer, Kemble said, told the protesters they faced arrest if an officer touched them. She said most people backed up but police pursued. She said the commanding officer ran at her, grabbed her while she was holding her camera, put her hands behind her back, bound her with a zip tie, and took her camera as evidence, with police taking her and those arrested to jail. A Morton County's Sheriff's Department press release on Monday afternoon describes a different scene.

On Monday morning, authorities got a call that two protesters had locked themselves to equipment on private property near St. Anthony and were arrested and charged with a felony and misdemeanors, the release said. Another arrest was made and the group disbanded.

About two hours later, authorities were alerted to a convoy of about 100 vehicles assembling near the pipeline site, the release said. Law enforcement closed a road and told the protesters to disband. The crowd refused and 24 more people were arrested, it said.

In the statement, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney said, "While some would like to say this was a protest, this was not a protest — this was a riot."

Kemble rejected the description. "What alternate universe was the sheriff in that day?" she said. "It was so peaceful. The whole day was steeped in prayer and ceremony.

"The police are fear-mongering."

Kemble said she'll present the parchment to tribal leaders Wednesday morning.

Last weekend, the Dane County Sheriff's Office sent 10 deputies from its special events team to the site of the protests, part of a state contingent of 40 members of law enforcement that have gone to provide assistance to the area.

Construction resumed Tuesday on the $3.8 billion, 1,200-mile pipeline on private land about 20 miles from the so-called Red Warrior Camp where thousands of protesters have gathered, The Associated Press reported.

Dean Mosiman covers Madison city government for the Wisconsin State Journal.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

Republican lawmakers are demanding the Department of Justice explain why criminal charges have not been leveled against an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employee allegedly responsible for a massive mine spill in Colorado.

“By not taking up the case, the Department of Justice looks like it is going easy on its colleagues in EPA,” three lawmakers with the House Natural Resources Committee wrote Wednesday in a letter to Attorney General Loretta Lynch.

Republican Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah joined fellow GOP colleagues Chairman Jason Chaffetz, also from Utah, and oversight subcommittee chairwoman Cynthia Lummis, who represents Wyoming, to send out the letter Wednesday afternoon.

“Its lack of action on these charges give the appearance of hypocrisy,” the lawmakers claim, “and seem to indicate that there is one set of rules for private citizens and another for the federal government.”

The Colorado mine spill resulted in three million gallons of dangerous mine waste being dumped into Colorado’s Animus River, turning it yellow and poisoning the drinking water for thousands of residents across three states and the Navajo Nation. The spill also dumped more than 880,000 pounds of toxic elements — like lead and arsenic — into the water.

The EPA had tried to keep the identity of the person responsible for the spill under wraps until June, when The Daily Caller News Foundation reported that EPA worker Hays Griswold was in charge at the Gold King Mine during the spill.

Someone removed Griswold’s name from an “independent” review of the disaster, according to documents obtained by TheDCNF in June.

An EPA inspector announced Wednesday Bishop’s committee wrote the letter that it found evidence an unnamed employee violated the Clean Water Act. The Department of Justice will not pursue the case, a spokesman told reporters, and is instead referring the case to the EPA’s leaders.

The lawmakers added that the “EPA disaster deserves the same level of accountability to which private citizens are held.”

EPA’s failure to hold its employees accountable for last year’s leak has become a standard operating procedure.

Senior EPA officials in 2015, for instance, largely ignored complaints by 16 women, mostly employees, accusing one agency official of sexual harassment. The employee got promoted despite the complaints.

Bishop’s committee held a hearing in May showing that the EPA paid a registered sex offender to retire rather than terminating his employment.

The child molester was a registered sex offender and was fired in 2014 for violating his probation – but the EPA, as its custom, reinstated him under the Merit Systems Protection Board reinstated him. The employee was eventually paid $55,000 to resign in 2015.

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

By Max Blau

CNN, October 13, 2016

Brace yourself, Pacific Northwest. What's left of a typhoon, which has made its way across the ocean, is expected to pummel parts of Oregon and Washington over the next several days.

The National Weather Service has said a pair of strong storms are set to hit the West Coast on Thursday and Saturday.

CNN meteorologist Dave Hennen said parts of Washington and Oregon could see gusts of up to 80 mph near coastal ranges Thursday. According to the weather service, rivers are expected to rise, with flooding remaining most likely in the Olympic Peninsula.

"Areas of ponding on roadways will slow Thursday commutes," the weather service said. "Small creeks and streams will rise and flood as well."

After a brief lull, the fierce winds could whip again through the Northwest at up to 100 mph. Hennen, who described this storm as a "monster," said it has the potential to match the pressure levels of a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. The weather service has cautioned residents to watch out for tree damage due to the high winds.

"Many of the wind-related deaths in western Washington occur when trees topple onto people in cars," it said.

Though it's still too early to tell, the weather service said the Saturday storm could also lead to widespread wind damage, power outages and coastal erosion.

"(There's a chance for) a worst-case scenario leading to a historical and destructive windstorm for the area," it said.

According to Hennen, a third storm may pass through the Pacific Northwest next week.

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the

road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. “The federal government pays for it through FEMA,” said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

“Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request,” said Erickson. “They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request.”

Indiana is acting as a “team player,” as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

“We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc,” said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one’s home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 5 Apr 2016 15:24:14 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us';'(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6) (b)(@utah.gov'(b)(6)@wyo.gov'(b)(6)@nd.gov'(b)(6)@state.sd.us'(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';'(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';'(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark (b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6) (b)(@sba.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse(b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@state.co.us'
Subject: R8 news clips for April 5
Attachments: @

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, April 5, 2016

WYOMING

- Wyoming's watersheds increase after last week's storm – Casper Star Tribune

- New guide shows Wyoming wildfire patterns, includes safety for prescribed burns – High Plains/Midwest AG Journal

MONTANA

- Billings 9-year-old dies after being diagnosed with swine flu

- Bozeman Redraws Flood Maps, Could Cost Property Owners

NORTH DAKOTA

No clips

SOUTH DAKOTA

- Fire crews reach 30-percent containment on Cold Fire - KBHB Radio Sturgis

- Fire burns 1,300 acres near Pringle - Rapid City Journal

- Keystone pipeline shut down after oil surfaces near Freeman - Mitchell Daily Republic

- Sediment Options Weighed At Meeting - Yankton Press & Dakotan

COLORADO

- No clips

UTAH

- No clips

Other FEMA-related stories:

- As The Climate Changes, Risks To Hu

Region VIII Clips

Monday, August 22, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state received an FMAG reimbursement of more than $1 million… An HMGP grant is helping with reconstruction of the Manitou Incline… Fires in the state are now more under control.
- **Montana:** The *Fallon County Times* did another story on recent visits by DES and FEMA officials related to the Baker tornado recovery… The Copper King Fire almost doubled in size Sunday, with red flag conditions expected today.
- **North Dakota:** Three stories focus on the growing protest, led by Native American tribes, against construction of an oil pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security division of the North Dakota DES, estimates state law enforcement, health and transportation costs related to the protest may approach $1 million over the next few weeks. Approximately 1500-2000 protestors are at the site… An attempt to use eminent domain to take some land for the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Project was stalled by a judge who said it had not been properly done.
- **South Dakota:** KELO TV did a story on the flood in Sioux Falls one year ago and the community's response to it, and another story on the Atlas winter storm three years ago that killed many cattle in western South Dakota, and how that area has responded… The TV story on Sioux Falls mentioned local buyouts to prevent flooding issues, and an *Argus Leader* story focused just on the local buyout program in an area with poor drainage.
- **Utah:** Brothers in Pleasant Grove who were born and raised in Louisiana are doing a fundraiser and donations drive for flood survivors in their home state… Southern Utah University will be offering an online master's program in cybersecurity through a partnership with a Vietnamese telecommunications company.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The *Baton Rouge Advocate* says FEMA is improved, but additional federal aid may be needed… Several stories reported on FEMA suspending $30 million in payments to Mississippi for problems with its program retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina; this story from the *Jackson Clarion Ledger* specifies the procedures and employee in question… *The New York Times* reported on a survey of public attitudes by Johns Hopkins University on what criteria should be used to determine who lives or who gets priority for emergency care when medical staff and equipment are overwhelmed in a catastrophic incident.

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MONTANA:

FEMA and Montana Disaster Emergency Services Visit Baker (Fallon County Times)

Officials estimate the Copper King Fire doubled in size Sunday afternoon (NBC TV, Helena)

NORTH DAKOTA:

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests (Bismarck Tribune)

Protesters settle into camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

Water district's eminent domain attempt for F-M diversion stalls, but case not dismissed (Fargo Forum)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

UTAH:

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

STORIES

COLORADO

FEMA awards Colorado $1 million wildfire grant (Loveland Reporter-Herald)

By Dana Rieck

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer
Posted: 08/20/2016 05:25:56 PM MDT

Republican Sen. Cory Gardner's office announced this week that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is awarding $1,194,483.86 to the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Matthew Branch, the Northeast Regional Fire Management officer for the Colorado Department of Public Safety Division of Fire Prevention and Control, said the money is a reimbursement for costs associated with past fires.

It is called a fire management assistance grant, which is something states apply for after responding to large fires.

"Most of these costs are borne by the local fire department and the county," he wrote in an email. "These entities bill the state and we reimburse them out of the state budget. Several years later we get the money back from the federal government."

Once approved, according to Branch, the grants can pay for 75 percent of the costs associated with fighting those fires.

"I welcome more than $1 million from FEMA to assist with wildfire response efforts in Colorado," said Gardner in the news release. "I'm confident the state of Colorado will maximize the federal grant to both preempt and mitigate the destruction caused by wildfires. I'll continue to advocate at the federal level to ensure Colorado receives the resources it needs to keep our communities safe."

Dana Rieck: 970-635-3630, rieckd@reporter-herald.com or twitter.com/DanaRieckRH

Manitou Incline Closed for Construction (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

8/22/16

COLORADO SPRINGS - The Manitou Incline is now closed as the cities of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs start phase 2 of improvements to the popular trail.

Construction is expected to last around 4 months with the main goals of: improving safety, enhancing the hiking experience, improving the long-term sustainability of the trail and increasing accessibility.

They will also clean up debris along the trail and add new drainage structures to protect the trail from eroding away.

Colorado Springs is responsible for the general oversight of the trail, and the improvements are being funded by a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant and Trail, Open Space and Parks Funding.

Beaver Creek fire evacuation order lifted; two Colorado wildfires 100 percent contained (Denver Post)

By Ellis Arnold | earnold@denverpost.com

August 21, 2016 at 4:36 pm

An evacuation order was lifted in the Beaver Creek fire area near Walden and the Wyoming state line yesterday, said John Abernathy, spokesman for the Denver Fire Department.

Some evacuees from 50 total residences have begun to return to their homes, Abernathy said, but low relative humidity and winds up to 25 mph are expected to create critical burn conditions Monday and Tuesday. The fire, which is 53 percent contained, started June 19. Total containment is expected Oct. 21.

Heavy beetle-killed timber in the area has been fueling the fire, which has required continued ground and air efforts. Recent cool, moist weather aided the fight, but warming is expected until Wednesday. Season-ending wet weather is likely the only factor that will put out the fire, Abernathy said.

The fire has burned 36,961 acres, and the cause of the fire is still under investigation. A total of 17 structures, including one residence, have been lost, Abernathy said.

The lightning-caused Spring Creek 2 fire south of Parachute burned 621 acres but was 100 percent contained as of Friday, according to federal agencies. There have been no injuries attributed to the fire, which started Aug. 12, and no primary residences were lost despite the fire moving within a few feet of several homes. Four buildings, three vehicles and three trailers were damaged or destroyed, and evacuation orders covering about 20 homes were lifted Aug. 14.

The Hayden Pass fire southeast of Salida was 60 percent contained as of Aug. 4, according to federal agencies, with recent monsoonal weather dropping moisture in the area. The 16,754-acre lightning-caused fire started July 8, and it may present a runoff issue because of the rain. All evacuations ended as of July 21 after people were ordered to clear out of 140 residences in the area. The fire is expected to be contained Oct. 1.

Fire crews contained the Blair fire 100 percent as of Aug. 1, said David Boyd, spokesman for the federal Bureau of Land Management. Lightning started the fire near Colorado 64 between Rangely and Meeker; about 1,140 acres have burned since June 29.

Crews focused on keeping the fire from moving north and east, where a power-line corridor, oil and gas pipeline and the highway would have been vulnerable. There were no injuries or evacuations, Boyd said, as the fire was in a remote area.

MONTANA

FEMA and Montana Disaster Emergency Services Visit Baker

(Fallon County Times)

SEVERE SUMMER WEATHER

Laurie Hassell and Kent Atwood display a weather map tracking severe weather storms throughout Montana.

Laurie Hassell, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), External Affairs Specialist; Kent Atwood, CFM, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services, Hazard Mitigation Officer and Tim Tennis, Recovery Bureau Chief, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services were in Baker on August 9.

By Sherry Vogel

They were conducting a briefing to Fallon County and City of Baker applicants as they proceed to set-up documentation to receive federal funding after Baker was designated to receive a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Atwood explained how the entire process works. Tennis expounded on how to apply for the funds. They both covered the scope of work for the Project Worksheet (PW) using the actual tornado documentation including cleanup and debris removal reports.

The preliminary final damage assessment is at $1.5 million. This amount surpasses the $1.4 million required for a Presidential Disaster Declaration. This final figure of the disaster damage could actually be more in the final analysis.

Whereas Hassell was in Baker to represent the Response and Recovery standpoint. Atwood was focused on the mitigation perspective of the disaster. **Mitigation meaning to identify and reduce the severity of the next natural disaster.

Officials estimate the Copper King Fire doubled in size Sunday afternoon (NBC TV, Helena)

By: KECI Staff
Updated: Aug 21, 2016 08:07 PM MDT

MISSOULA, Mont. - The Copper King Fire burning near Montana Highway 200 and Thompson River Road in Sanders County is now estimated to have burned over 6,000 acres. The fire had burned just over 3,400 acres as of Sunday morning.

Fire officials tell NBC Montana that the fire expanded to the northeast, chewing through around 3,000 acres. The explosive growth meant a cloud of thick smoke spread as far north as Creston and parts of the Swan Valley as of 8 p.m. on Sunday. The new growth is away from structures immediately threatened by the fire.

Officials with the Lolo National Forest say there is poor road access and firefighters and public safety remains the top priority. Fire crews are busy on the south and west sides of the fire near Highway 200 and Thompson River Road where structures are threatened.

The 297 people working to contain the fire will continue to focus on structure protection and keeping Highway 200 open to traffic. A Red Flag Warning is in effect for the fire on Monday afternoon, meaning more explosive growth is possible due to dry and windy weather.

NORTH DAKOTA

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It's been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Water district's eminent domain attempt for F-M diversion stalls, but case not dismissed

By Helmut Schmidt on Aug 19, 2016 at 2:52 p.m.

FARGO — An East Central District judge has ruled that the Cass County Joint Water Resource District, which is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement for 80 acres of farmland for the Fargo-Moorhead diversion, has not followed the proper procedures for eminent domain proceedings, court documents show.

At the same time, Judge John Irby denied a motion by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to dismiss the water district's attempt to use eminent domain for the Horace-area land, documents show.

According to court records:

The water resource district is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement on 79.34 acres owned by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to build a F-M diversion inlet.

The district extended a final offer of $476,040 for the land on May 18, 2016. That offer was rejected.

Irby ruled the water resource district failed to file a needed petition in the case, provide appropriate public notice and a hearing, allow interested parties to answer the petition, and have the court hear the case, allow the petition to be amended as needed and issue its findings and assess costs.

Irby said the district was also walking a line between taking right-of-way sufficient for its purposes while avoiding a purchase of the land, or fee simple, which is not eligible for "quick take" eminent domain.

Irby ruled that the district will have to amend its eminent domain complaint.

Cossette's attorney, Jonathan Garaas of the Garaas Law Firm in Fargo, said Friday, Aug. 19, that he does not comment on cases still being litigated.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Don Jorgensen
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 19, 2016

Sioux Falls, SD

One year ago, Sioux Falls was inundated by major flooding.

The hardest hit area was in the southwest part of the city where seven inches of rain fell in one hour. It was a night many of us won't soon forget.

The night was August 27th. The skies opened up over Sioux Falls and dumped more rain than the city had seen in recent memory.

Streets flooded quickly. Vehicles stalled out and many businesses flooded out, including the Signature Salon.

When we last met the owner, Jeff From, he was busy cleaning up what mother nature destroyed in minutes.

Today, From is back in business....

"It's hard to believe it's been a year," From said.

....but not without a lot of hard work along the way.

"It was a good eight months of solid; morning, noon and night trying to get things in place," From said.

The downpour and flooding that followed, caught many off guard.

The city had spent millions of dollars upgrading the drainage systems, but in some parts of town, seven inches of rain in a short amount of time was too much for it to handle.

"It was a large event", Public Works director Mark Cotter said.

Cotter says the drainage system worked as well as it could, but following the event, he knew more could be done.

"Probably the first thing and most important thing we did was take a rate case to the city council and they did support us to continually raise rates through 2019," Cotter said.

Cotter says those rate increases will help pay for more improvements; plus conduct more drainage studies.

"So when neighbors call and say 'this just doesn't drain right,' we set aside more dollars now to go out and do an updated hydro study, so we can understand what's happening and ultimately look at some alternatives to improve it," Cotter said.

Plus, the city began taking a closer look at drainage easements around town. It identified a few

where the homeowners, over the years, had made improvements to those easements with landscaping, trees and bushes.

But in reality, those beautification improvements, became obstructions and didn't allow water to flow freely to designated detention ponds.

So, this past year, the city worked with the homeowners to remove those obstructions and regraded the land. That way during a heavy rain storm like last year, the water will go where it's supposed to go.

But in one area of town, around 35th and Duluth which always seems to have water problems during torrential rains, drainage improvements are hard to come by.

So, instead of investing millions of dollars in trying to upgrade the infrastructure, the city bought a number of the homes and is now in the process of tearing them down.

It's going to reclaim the land and turn it into green space with detention ponds.

And finally, the city implemented new building codes, so homeowners shouldn't have to worry about flooding if they live near one of those drainage easements.

Cotter shows us why using this handsketched diagram.

"If this is a drainage way in the backyard, we used to recommend that the water surface, we used to recommend that the lowest floor of the house be two feet above that water surface elevation, now we don't recommend, it's a standard," Cotter said.

Don: Builders know this now? That it's a standard,
Mark: Yes.
Don: They can't wiggle their way around it.
Mark: That's right,"

From has made his own improvements to his salon that he hopes will protect it if the city ever gets hit with another 100 year flood.

Using concrete, he added more height around his window wells and built up around his stairwell leading to his basement, where most of the water came in last year.

"Hopefully if that were to ever happen again, it wouldn't be able to," From said.

Only time will tell, but for now he's just glad to be back in business.

"I try not to even remember and think about it anymore, people ask me about it today and it's like something you want to forget," From said.

From's damages totaled in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He says very little of that was

covered by flood insurance. He hasn't decided yet if he's going to sue the city to try recover some of his money.

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Kevin Woster
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

The Rancher Round-up in Union Center, S.D., is an annual celebration of ranch life. But it's also a testament to survival in a beautiful-but-harsh landscape.

Professional survival skills were tested in unprecedented ways almost three years ago when western South Dakota was hit by an early October blizzard that killed tens of thousands of cattle and other livestock.

Republican state Sen. Gary Cammack of Union Center, who also ranches and owns a ranch-supply store, had to bury more than 100 cattle in a hastily dug pit in his pasture after the storm. Other ranchers lost several times that many cattle.

"If there's anything akin to a gut punch for the whole cattle industry, that was it," Cammack says. "It was just an amazing hit. When the storm broke, within 35 miles there were 20,000 dead cattle. It was just beyond imagination."

Help came from the government, private relief funds, cattle donations from other ranchers and from higher market prices for remaining cattle.

“The generosity of cattlemen from all over the U.S. and neighboring states was overwhelming,” Cammack said. “The stories that will never be told of generosity cattleman to cattleman, just overwhelming.”

A South Dakota Rancher Relief Fund raised and distributed millions of dollars and avoided the kind of questions or controversy that sometimes can plague such efforts.

“That should be a blueprint for fundraising and helping in natural disasters,” Cammack said. “I never heard one bad thing about that. It was just run very smoothly, very fair, the way they put that thing together, and the generosity was overwhelming.”

With a perfect joining of forces and sources of assistance, the recovery came much faster than Cammack expected.

"With the generosity of the markets and some help from the federal government, I'd say, really, within about 24 months, most folks had enough of a boost that they were back and economically viable,” he said.

So the heavy rains in Union Center Friday didn't dampen enthusiasm for the annual rancher rodeo and fair at Cammack's store. They just made it all more complicated. But it was a tiny challenge compared to the big ones faced in ranch country.

Besides, they needed the moisture. They usually do.

Silvia Christen, executive director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, was at the celebration at Cammack's. She said she continues to be amazed at the recovery effort and how ranchers responded after the big blizzard.

"Grit is really the word that describes most of it," she said. "These ranch families at so at the mercy of the weather, and so at the mercy of the elements. And when you have a loss like we did with Winter Storm Atlas, many of them had a 50-percent loss overnight.

"And their faith and their commitment and their dedication and their trust that they can rebuild and then just get to work, that was a lot of it," she said.

Almost three years after Winter Storm Atlas devastated the livestock industry here, the Ranch Round-UP celebrates the land, its people and the spirit of survival.

"There was so much great help that came in in the form of money and prayers and all that," Christen said. "But at the end of the day it came down to these families getting out and getting to work and putting it back together."

Cammack says he has mixed feelings now when he looks at the hilltop in his pasture where more than 100 cattle are buried.

"You can't help but have some memories when you drive past that point," he said. "But having said that, that nob we excavated and buried all those cattle on is recovered and starting to get the native grass back on there. And today when you and I went out there, there's cattle that came right up and they're grazing right on there -- the living standing above the dead. So the country can be cruel, but it heals faster than you think."

So do the ranchers.

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Joe Sneve
Argus Leader, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

City Hall hopes tearing down a group of flood-prone homes in central Sioux Falls will help other houses in the neighborhood stay dry the next time the city gets dumped on with torrential rains.

It's not uncommon for homes in the area around Augustana University to have their basements flooded when Sioux Falls gets rain events. That's despite thousands being spent in recent years to divert the run off into newly constructed holding ponds and other infrastructure upgrades.

So about five years ago, Sioux Falls Public Works set its sights on creating more green space along Covell Avenue between 28th and 33rd Streets. But that meant existing homes would need to come out.

"Based on how steep this particular watershed was, there wasn't an alternative that was a better fit than just to go in and start asking for voluntary buy outs. … But they just weren't ready." said Mark Cotter, director of Public Works.

But after last August's torrential rains, the phone started ringing and Public Works has since acquired nine properties along Covell Avenue, which were demolished last week.

Cotter said once razed, the foundations will be filled in with sand to allow for a more permeable and absorbent surface.

"Over time as we capture more homes that are willing to sell voluntarily, if it makes sense we'll develop a detention pond so we can hold and slowly release (the storm drainage)."

Only time will tell if the program will be enough to dry up the neighborhood. Cotter said engineers will continue to buy more homes if necessary. For now, about 14 other homes on the west side of Covell Avenue have been targeted, with 10 homeowners entertaining the idea of selling.

They can't all be bought at once, though, due to budgetary restriction. Andy Berg, storm water manager in Public Work's environmental division, said about $1.2 million has been spent so far acquiring the nine homes that were demolished last week.

Because Public Works doesn't specifically budget for the project – it's difficult to know how many homeowners will be willing to sell in the following year when the City Council passes its budget – Berg couldn't say how many more homes will come out next year. Instead, Public Works diverts savings from other expenses that come in under expected costs toward the program.

"We've identified three that we're going to have the appraisal process done on. So if we have the dollars … we can do a closing on those."

UTAH

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

by Heidi Hatch |

Friday, August 19th 2016

(KUTV) Today the Red Cross announces -the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana is the worst natural disaster to strike the United States since Hurricane Sandy.

Pleasant Grove's Ben Moak grew up in the Louisiana neighborhoods hit hardest. He moved to Utah 20 years ago with his large family, he set down roots and now owns Firebird Pizza and Pasta on Main Street in the small town.

"I have a friend that posted on Facebook saying only thing he has is his job, his family, and his truck -- and eight feet of water in his house. He lost everything."

The flooding of hurricane Katrina was hard to watch, and now this time, the flooding hits close to home again and that's why he "wanted to do something 1500 miles away --to help our friends and family out."

Some of the worst hit neighborhoods are streets he and his siblings know well.

"We grew up in Louisiana, ,Walker Denham Springs is where we were born and raised."

The southern influence of his youth is evident in his kitchen, with a row of hot sauces and southern spices available to add kick to his Italian eatery.

He will start fundraising Tuesday night with a spaghetti dinner from 6 to 9 p.m. It will be $10 for a large plate of spaghetti , soda and breadsticks. "One hundred percent of the proceeds go to the people down there," he said.

Just across the parking lot from Firebirds is Chubby's Cafe, owned by Moak's brother who will be cooking up a little southern hospitality with a catfish fry next Saturday. The fry money will also go straight to the victims in Louisiana.

Jessica Erin is helping organize the event with the southern brothers and three other area restaurants including Cravings Cupcakes and Cravings Bistro.

"We got this huge trailer donated by Andrews Transportation and we are going to try and fill this baby up."

All of the restaurants involved are accepting monetary donations, food, clothing, diapers --you name it -- for the flood victims. Donations will be accepted during business hours through Saturday Aug. 27 at 9 p.m.

"We are excited to get this thing filled up and take it down to Louisiana."

All the business involved are just off Main Street in Pleasant Grove near the North Shore Shaved Ice shack, also giving a portion of their proceeds from Friday night to the cause. Lorri Jonas who worked at Chubby's and now owns the ice shack said, "I want to help because my heart is full."

Moak looks forward to community participation saying "the more the merrier, if you have to wait -wait, but the more the merrier."

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

August 20, 2016

CEDAR CITY — Southern Utah University classes will soon be taught in Vietnam through an international partnership with FPT Corporation, the largest Vietnamese telecommunication company.

The university will make its Master of Science in cybersecurity and information assurance available to students attending FPT University and its online counterpart, Funix University.

FPT Corporation is to southeast Asia what Verizon Communications Inc. is to the United States.

With many smaller entities comprising the company, FPT University has shown a pioneering spirit and a proactive approach to online student education and an increased international presence.

“This partnership extends the reach of SUU and the CSIS Department into Vietnam,” said Dr. Robert Robertson, department chair and associate professor. “It will bring individuals into the program whose perspectives will enhance and benefit fellow students at an international level.”

As the first online educational opportunity offered in Vietnam, FPT University and Southern Utah University are promoting the process of international cooperation in education.

In May, FPT University leaders and dignitaries from Southern Utah University, including President Scott L. Wyatt, signed the agreement to help increase professional training opportunities available to FPT students. At the end of June, university representatives Dr. Rob Robertson, Dr. Roger LaMarca, director of online admissions, and Dr. Stephen Allen traveled to Vietnam to train FPT University on the structure and implementation of the master’s degree program.

An attractive facet of the program is the online component, allowing students to attend school while still living, learning and working in their country.

“Students will receive the same experience and personalized instruction as a traditional SUU classroom while preparing themselves for the rapidly growing field of cybersecurity,” LaMarca said.

Cybersecurity professionals who battle cyberattacks that bleed companies and governments dry are in high demand. It costs an average $11.6 million per cybercrime incident, according to Info Security. Keeping these facts in mind, it’s no surprise that 42 percent of organizations are actively seeking information technology positions in information security, more than any other job, according to a LinkedIn Talent Search.

“They will receive a wide variety of instruction and coursework from this program,” LaMarca said, “including cybersecurity and IT policy; information, vulnerability and threat assessment; physical, personnel and operational security; and contingency, redundancy, emergency and disaster planning.”

Online Vietnamese students will have access to all the resources and materials available to students in a traditional learning environment. Throughout the program, which will begin this fall, these students will have access to a library, tutor and lecturer. They will be educated by leading experts in the cybersecurity industry and will also have opportunities to study alongside American students at Southern Utah University.

FPT Corporation is a multinational information technology company based in Vietnam, branching out to 19 different countries. Smaller entities of the corporation include software outsourcing, telecommunication, property management, education and financial services.

The Vietnam National Technology Research Institute founded the Food Processing Technology Company – the original full name of FPT – in 1988. In 1990 the company switched its core business to information technology and changed the unabbreviated name to Corporation for Financing and Promoting Technology.

The cybersecurity program has been tailored to achieve the highest efficiency and educational quality available online. This new partnership will help further available education in Vietnam and will increase Southern Utah University's international presence.

With a comprehensive international environment and a wealth of knowledge taught by high profile cybersecurity professionals, including NUIX's Chris Pogue, Southern Utah University is helping to advance all of its students in this fast-growing career field. The university works hard to make it possible for nontraditional students and working professionals to earn a master's degree.

Those who are interested in this program can contact Southern Utah University's online admissions team at 435-865-8665 or onlineadmissions@suu.edu.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 21, 2016

In Louisiana, the emotional and physical impact of what may be a 1,000-year flood event is still being absorbed.

What our leaders cannot afford to do, though, is to let the future take care of itself.

As Gov. John Bel Edwards said Tuesday, the rescue and comfort of the displaced is the first priority. "Saving life is the most important priority we have," Edwards said Tuesday. "We will dedicate every resource to that effort until it is no longer needed."

But he also said he would take the opportunity to talk long-term recovery with Craig Fugate, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

That's smart.

FEMA is under different and we believe much improved management since the hapless Michael Brown at the time of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The high-profile impact of Hurricane Sandy in the northeast in 2012 also refocused attention on the Stafford Act, the federal law governing disaster aid.

Louisiana is better placed than in earlier disasters, but that doesn't mean it's easy sailing.

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, of Baton Rouge — whose district was the hardest-hit — was busy visiting shelters and seeing his constituents. But he said in a telephone interview Tuesday that Congress needs to assess whether existing law is enough to deal with an event of this magnitude.

Graves said he's already talking with U.S. House members of both parties about federal recovery assistance. "We're not going to get there without national attention," Graves said, in an echo of Fugate's comments that the American people generally have probably been more focused on the Olympics and the national election than the Louisiana flood.

Fugate said that FEMA would respond unhesitatingly whether the national media spotlight comes or goes.

That’s encouraging, but we know from the struggles of a decade ago that bureaucratic tangles and the dueling political parties on Capitol Hill can get in the way of help that Louisiana needs.

The spirit of unity and generosity, including from people and institutions across Louisiana and the nation, remains critical in this time of trouble. Job one of the recovery, as Edwards emphasized, is for the affected households to register with disasterassistance.gov. Quantifying the damage is important to achieve appropriate federal response.

But leaders are right to worry about the future, and plan for it.

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

By Therese Apel And Geoff Pender

Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger, August 19, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has halted $29.9 million in reimbursements to the state of Mississippi for retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina, saying the state has failed to provide documentation, overspent and appears to have had lax oversight over the program.

The Department of Homeland Security’s Office of the Inspector General released a report that states that the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has not been able to provide documentation for around $30.5 million that was paid to contractors to retrofit 985 homes on the coast. The original program was approved to retrofit 2,000 homes for $29.9 million.

The OIG has recommended, and FEMA agreed, that the federal government “deobligate” the money until Mississippi can reconcile what it claims it spent. If Mississippi can’t convince the feds its spending was proper, the state could be on the hook for all or part of the spending.

MEMA Director Lee Smithson released a statement Thursday after 6 p.m. stressing that he was not over the agency when the mismanagement occurred.

“We are confident that most of the money will be deemed eligible by FEMA and the remaining funds will be recovered by the state,” he said.

Gov. Phil Bryant in a statement Thursday night said he agrees with Smithson the spending “will be eligible for reimbursement” and “the state will aggressively seek to recover the remainder of the funds.”

“I appreciate director Smithson taking swift action upon discovering the issues outlined in the report,” Bryant said. “It is important to note that the employees repsonsible for the retrofit program for the period OIG examined are no longer at MEMA.

The OIG report says that although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight of the program as early as December 2014, it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

Smithson said the money that was actually put toward the construction should end up being reimbursed by FEMA, and that the state will get the rest of the money out of ARA, the primary contractor on the jobs.

State guidelines and general accounting practices require that more than one person have oversight of similar programs. The state Department of Financial Administration gave oversight to one employee, who came with the program to MEMA when the program was moved over in 2012.

Then-MEMA Director Robert Latham said he was not comfortable with the program having no oversight.

“When the Coastal Retrofit program came to MEMA and I found out there wasn’t any oversight, I said, “I want Horne involved in this, get them to start looking at all the invoices and processing it, and they were doing it as a courtesy because it wasn’t in their contract. They agreed to start looking at it.”

The report states that the employee who had oversight of the program, Deb Biggers, would not turn over some of the invoices to Horne CPA or to investigators.

Smithson said since he took office, Biggers has been terminated and he has hosted conference calls with Horne accountants and the Office of the Inspector General every week in order to keep them up to date with the progress of the audit.

"I don't want to speculate whether there was any graft or corruption on the part of Ms. Biggers or anyone else at MEMA," Smithson said, adding, "Deb Biggers should hace known that the payments that were made to ARA were improper. She modified the scope of work with the original contract with FEMA without getting FEMA permission and allowed ARA to inflate their program costs."

Latham said when he raised questions about the payments and the program, he was assured by his staff that everything was on the up-and-up.

"I'm concerned that if this is in fact true and it shakes out like it sounds, obviously I've got staff that let me down. When I consistently asked questions about these different things I was assured that FEMA was involved and that we were paying in accordance with a contract," he said.

Latham's Chief of Staff was Bill Brown, who he said he went to with any questions about the program.

"When issues would come up I'd get Bill to handle it, and if I thought I wasn't getting answers, I'd bring in Deb" and an employee who handled mitigation, Latham said.

OIG findings:

Some key findings of the OIG audit of Mississippi's spending on the Katrina retrofit program:

Mississippi allowed one employee complete authority over the program, which goes against basic accounting and oversight principles including Mississippi's own agency accounting rules.

The program was approved at $29.9 million to help retrofit an estimated 2,000 homes. The state claims to have spent $31.5 million on 945 homes.

The state has not provided documentation for $30.5 million it says it paid to contractors.

Although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight as early as December 2014, OIG says it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

While working for state DFA and MEMA, the employee in charge approved $31.5 million in payments, more than the amount of the grant, and did not allow a hired accounting firm to reconcile more than $30 million in invoices. "However, no one above the employee's authority questioned the situation," the report says.

Retrofitting 2,000 homes was estimated to cost $14,944 each, but Mississippi spent $33,308 on average, and MEMA "did not provide any substantial evidence to justify the increase in costs.

The employee over the program, the OIG said, would not allow federal or Mississippi officials access to more than $30 million worth of contractors' invoices. This led OIG to question MEMA, whose new director contacted the state attorney general's office.

MEMA contends it has completed work on 945 homes for $31.5 million, but has to date provided invoices for only 12 homes, at $958,000. DFA records as of May only show $20.4 million being spent on the program.

Of the $958,000 in invoices provided so far, only $640,000 represented actual work on homes, with $318,000 in temporary employee salaries and administrative costs.

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

By Sheri Fink

New York Times, August 21, 2016

BALTIMORE — In a church basement in a poor East Baltimore neighborhood, a Johns Hopkins doctor enlisted residents to help answer one of the most fraught questions in public health: When a surge

of patients — from a disaster, disease outbreak or terrorist attack — overwhelms hospitals, how should you ration care? Whose lives should be saved first?

For the past several years, Dr. Lee Daugherty Biddison, a critical care physician at Johns Hopkins, and colleagues have led an unusual public debate around Maryland, from Zion Baptist Church in East Baltimore to a wellness center in wealthy Howard County to a hospital on the rural Eastern Shore. Preparing to make recommendations for state officials that could serve as a national model, the researchers heard hundreds of citizens discuss whether a doctor could remove one patient from lifesaving equipment, like a ventilator, to make way for another who might have a better chance of recovering, or take age into consideration in setting priorities.

At that first public forum in 2012 in East Baltimore, Cierra Brown, a former Johns Hopkins Hospital custodian, said she favored a random approach like a lottery. "I don't think any of us should choose whether a person should live or die," she said.

Alex Brecht, a youth program developer sitting across from her, said he thought children should be favored over adults. "Just looking at them, seeing their smiles, they have so much potential," he said.

"Who's going to raise them?" asked Tiffany Jackson, another participant.

The effort is among the first times, Dr. Daugherty Biddison said, that a state has gathered informed public opinion on these questions before devising policy on them. "I don't want to be in a position of making these decisions without knowing what you think," she told the residents. "We as providers," she said, "don't want to make those decisions in isolation."

Rationing already occurs in delivering medical care in the United States, though some practices are little acknowledged. Committees struggle regularly over policies for allocating scarce organs for transplant.

During widespread drug shortages in recent years, doctors have sometimes chosen among cancer patients for proven chemotherapy regimens and among surgical patients for the most effective anesthetics. And doctors sometimes have to choose among patients who need treatment in intensive care units, which are often filled to capacity.

In emergencies, the choices can have immediate life-or-death consequences. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, doctors made ad hoc decisions about which groups of patients to evacuate from hospitals when floodwaters rose, the power failed and heat climbed. At one medical center, many of the sickest, chosen to go last, died. During the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009, thousands of young people developed severe respiratory distress. For some of the most critical cases, doctors tried treatment on heart-lung bypass machines. Rationing took place because the costly and resource-intensive therapy, which doctors were not sure would help, was available in only about 120 hospitals.

Similar scenarios have developed in other countries, wealthy and poor. After the 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, some patients at nearby hospitals, including babies, were selected for flights to safety, while others languished for days as medical supplies dwindled. At one hospital, dozens of older patients were apparently abandoned, according to a report in The Lancet, and many died.

And during the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, when doctors and nurses could spend only so many minutes inside hot biohazard suits, they struggled with impossible choices over which patients to give care.

Dr. Daugherty Biddison, a vice chairwoman in the department of medicine at Johns Hopkins, said she had first encountered scarce medical resources while doing missionary work overseas. She realized that even Johns Hopkins Hospital, a 1,145-bed facility anchoring the $7.7 billion Johns Hopkins Medicine enterprise, would fail to meet demand in a severe pandemic. When asked to help draw up a plan, she said, she felt uncomfortable with health professionals' making life-or-death judgments without knowing the values of the broader public.

At least 18 states from New York to California, and numerous hospitals, including the 152 medical centers operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, have already developed protocols. Some efforts,

including Maryland's, have received funding from a federal program supporting hospital preparedness. But relatively few people know about the plans for allocating scarce resources, and fewer still have been consulted.

Some of these guidelines are nuanced and flexible to context. But others call for doctors to categorically refuse hospital admittance to older adults and those with certain existing medical conditions, such as kidney failure or advanced cancer, in a severe pandemic.

In Maryland, participants in the forums, designed with the help of Carnegie Mellon University's program for deliberative democracy, tended to favor saving the most lives or years of life by prioritizing people who were expected to survive their current illness or live the longest after being treated. However, many also said that a lottery or first-come-first-served approach would be appropriate for patients who had roughly equal chances of benefiting.

"If you have one ventilator and five people who are good candidates, there's going to have to be a random sort of chance aspect to it," said Dr. Eric Toner, a senior associate at the UPMC Center for Health Security and one of the project's leaders.

Unexpected questions emerged in the discussions: Should an undocumented immigrant be eligible to get a ventilator? What about a drug or alcohol abuser, or a prisoner? After being told by a facilitator that discrimination would not be allowed, one participant asked whether using age, one of the principles under discussion, would not also be a form of discrimination.

Taking ventilators from patients who did not appear to be improving was "the single most contentious issue," Dr. Toner said. Maryland's attorney general released an opinion in December that lifesaving medical technology, including ventilators, could be removed from patients during a catastrophic emergency and reassigned to others who could potentially benefit more from them. Dr. Toner said it would be hard for any system to work without reallocation.

But at the forums, many expressed reservations. One woman said that she had been in a coma, on a ventilator, and that her family had been encouraged to turn it off and let her die. "Health care providers are not God," another said. "I've seen it firsthand where they thought one thing and the outcome was different."

To avoid rationing, a woman proposed a "Susan G. Komen for disaster preparedness," a reference to the ubiquitous fund-raising movement for a breast cancer cure. Some said they would voluntarily refuse a ventilator to save the lives of other people, such as children or family members. A man questioned whether doctors would even have the time in an emergency to engage in formal rationing. Some with lower incomes said that health care rationing was already occurring based on the ability to pay.

Translating all these ideas into recommendations for the state, most likely in mid-2017, will be challenging. The organizers said that despite the complexity, they were now in a better position to provide the guidelines.

"We have a much fuller appreciation of what the community wants," said Howard Gwon, the director of the office of emergency management at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Charles Blattberg, a professor of political philosophy at the University of Montreal, said he worried that the effort could result in overly precise guidelines.

"The kind of judgment that's required to arrive at a good decision in these situations needs to be extremely sensitive to the context," he said. "It's not about just abandoning one lone doctor to their own devices to make it up on the spot, but we can't go the other extreme in thinking we have the solution to the puzzle already; just follow these instructions. That works for technical problems. These are moral, political problems."

Ruth Faden, the founder of Johns Hopkins's Berman Institute of Bioethics, which participated in the project, said she saw value in the exercise far beyond a pandemic.

"It's a novel and important attempt," she said, "to turn extremely complicated core ethical considerations into something people can make sense of and struggle with in ordinary language."

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 23, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state is proceeding with a proposal to buy out landslide properties in Colorado Springs as quickly as possible, Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Marilyn Gally told the Colorado Springs city council Monday. The city has proposed a resolution asking FEMA to "move as quickly as possible."… The Beaver Creek Fire that started in June is believed to have been human-caused… A July hailstorm in Colorado Springs is the sixth-most costly disaster in state history, according to the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association.
- **Montana:** Several stories report about fires in the state. One near Kalispell led to evacuations, one in Yellowstone has made national news, and the Copper King Fire remains dangerous.
- **North Dakota:** Stories appear to reflect more tension at the site of the pipeline protest: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz withdrew trailers and water tanks that had been supplied by the state after reports of criminal activity, including lasers being directed at pilots observing the protest; Governor Dalyrmple said numerous criminal acts had occurred and asked the Army Corps of Engineers to step in (as the protest is on its land, protesting its permit); and tribal officials acknowledged the campers had split into two factions, one pacifist and one that feels "something should be done."… Also: Three Affiliated Tribes approved a letter of support for the protest. About 60 tribes are believed to be represented at the campsite. A federal judge is to rule on a request for an injunction Wednesday. The Morton County sheriff estimates overtime costs for law enforcement may be $100,000 per week. Protesters plan a march at 2 p.m. today and to attend a Morton County Commissioners meeting at 5:30; two actresses will lead a protest outside the federal district court in Washington, D.C., today as well. Former *Grand Forks Herald* editor Mike Jacobs weighs in with an opinion piece on the protest … Xcel Energy is testing large drones that could be used to help identify power problems after a storm…
- **South Dakota:** The state has its first Zika case, a woman who had travelled to the Caribbean. (She is not pregnant.)
- **Utah:** Two new wildfires have broken out. Red flag warnings are out for the northern part of the state, and storms are expected in the south.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The Louisiana flooding, wildfires and the Zika virus continue to dominate national disaster news. No clips are included today.

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COLORADO

On Unsolid Ground: State hustling to help Colorado Springs landslide victims
(Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Billie Stanton Anleu
August 22, 2016• Updated: August 22, 2016 at 6:23 pm

Colorado government is moving as quickly as it can to help Colorado Springs landslide victims, state Emergency Management Director Marilyn Galley assured the City Council during its work session Monday.

But Galley said her agency is completing buyouts of Boulder County homes from the 2013 floods, an indication of the two to three years needed to close out relief efforts after disasters.

"It is a tedious process," Galley said.

The state has submitted Colorado Springs' application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, she said.

Mayor John Suthers and Councilman Keith King are sponsoring a resolution urging FEMA to "proceed as quickly as possible" in moving forward on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application. The resolution promises the council, mayor and city staff members' "full and timely attention" in cooperating with FEMA and the state Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

The costs from the 2015 landslides are high, noted city Grants Manager Jen Vance.

When 27 homes were bought out in 2000 after landslides in Holland Park and on Regency Drive, the total project cost was $6.5 million.

But the 26 homes to be bought out because of last year's landslides have a projected cost of $16.2 million, because the cost of housing has increased, several of the houses are in Broadmoor neighborhoods and $1.9 million alone is attributed to a landslide lot owned by Judy Myklak in the Broadmoor Resort Community.

Meanwhile, Councilmen Don Knight and Tom Strand plan another workshop Monday with developers, builders, geologists and geotechnical engineers, among others, to resolve lingering questions on their proposed rewrite of the city's geological hazards ordinance.

Knight had noted holes in that safety net and wants more due diligence before homes are erected in landslide zones.

Planning and Development Director Peter Wysocki said questions to be resolved are:

- Who proposes and signs off on the geological hazard study?

- Is 14 days enough time for the Colorado Geological Survey to respond on how its recommendations have been implemented in development plans?

- Who verifies that those recommendations are addressed?

The original 1996 geohazards ordinance called for either a geologist or geotechnical engineer to write the studies, Knight noted, but both specialists are needed.

"The biggest issue," he said, "is who certifies that the house was built as designed. There's no guarantee your house isn't going to fall down into a landslide. All we're trying to do is make sure the house is built as designed."

Officials say Beaver Creek fire was caused by humans as crews continue to battle blaze (Denver Post)

The Denver Post

By Jesse Paul | jpaul@denverpost.com
August 23, 2016 at 9:03 am

WALDEN — Officials believe the Beaver Creek fire burning in northwest Colorado since June was caused by humans.

In an incident update Monday, commanders made the announcement, which they have been suggesting since the fire started on June 19. The U.S. Forest Service's law enforcement division is investigating.

The fire, which has scorched more than 37,000 acres in Colorado and Wyoming, is listed as 53 percent contained. Nearly 250 firefighters were assigned to the firefight about 25 miles north of Walden as of Tuesday morning.

"Cooler weather later in the week is predicted to be even more favorable to suppression and containment efforts," officials said in a Tuesday news release.

Total containment is expected Oct. 21. The fire has destroyed one cabin and a handful of outbuildings.

July hail storm in Colorado Springs sixth-most damaging in state history (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman
August 22, 2016 Updated: Today at 6:12 am The July 28 hailstorm that smashed Colorado Springs was the sixth-most damaging event in Colorado history, triggering $352.8 million in claims for damage to homes and vehicles, an insurance industry trade group said Monday.

Described as an "absolute hail bomb" by Brian Bledsoe, chief meteorologist with Gazette news partner KKTV, the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association said the storm featuring up to tennis ball-sized hail resulted in 84,500 auto and homeowner insurance claims filed so far. That includes 51,300 auto insurance claims adding up to more than $164.6 million and 33,200 property insurance claims at more than $188.2 million.

"The difference between this storm and many of the other large storms that have hit Colorado is you typically see one storm travel across the state or along the Front Range causing damage over a wide area," said Carole Walker, the association's executive director. "This storm was concentrated in the Colorado Springs area and the size of the hail resulted in a very high percentage of claims that were total losses."

Renee Larson, a semi-retired homeowner near the Colorado Springs Airport, said the storm did about $60,000 damage to her family's three vehicles as well as the roof, six windows, skylights,

chimney, siding, fence and shed on or near their home. The vehicles were total losses and she hopes repairs to her home will soon be approved by her mortgage company.

"Hopefully, they will get it done before the snow flies," Larson said. "You want to scream and throw your hands up, but it is Mother Nature, just like the floods in Louisiana. We are fortunate it is going as smoothly as it is. At least we are in the process of our claim. Some people I know might have to wait months to see an adjuster."

The estimated damage amount is preliminary and doesn't include any damage to commercial property such as vehicles of dealer lots or office buildings and hotels, or public property, including at least $500,000 in damage at the Colorado Springs Airport and about 40 Colorado Springs police cars as well as damages at Peterson Air Force Base. The total cost of the storm likely will increase as repairs are completed to roofs, siding and windows damaged by the storm that could take months to complete, Walker said.

"This is yet another reminder from Mother Nature of why Colorado is now ranked second in the nation for hail insurance claims," Walker said. "The size and amount of hail that battered Colorado Springs is, unfortunately, part of a pattern of catastrophic events the state has been experiencing during the past several years, so we need to be financially prepared for the unexpected."

The monetary damage of the storm ranks behind three hail storms, the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest fires, the association reported. The storms ahead of it are:

- A July 20, 2009, Denver area hail storm that caused $767.6 million in damages;

- A July 11, 1990, hail storm that caused $625 million in damages statewide;

- The June 2012 Waldo Canyon fire, which resulted in $453.7 million in claims;

- The June 2013 Black Forest fire, which resulted in $420.5 million in claims;

- A series of storms from June 6-15, 2009, in the Denver area with tornado and hail damage totaling $353.3 million.

When adjusted for inflation, the storm ranks as the eighth-worst in the state's history.

Colorado ranked behind Texas in hail claims from 2013-15 with 182,591 claims, according to a National Insurance Crime Bureau report in May. Nationwide, there were 5,412 major hail storms last year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Severe Storms database.

Claims related to wind and hail damage accounted for nearly 40 percent of all insured losses during the past five years, averaging about $15 billion annually, the association said. The July 28 storm was the first catastrophic loss of the year in Colorado, which the association defines as insured damage of $25 million or more (flood damage is not included because it isn't covered by most homeowner's insurance policies).

Many of the state's top insurers, including USAA and State Farm, opened mobile locations along Powers Boulevard and elsewhere in eastern Colorado Springs to handle the large number of vehicle claims. Some body shops reported backlogs of work through December and the wait for getting roof or siding work could be even longer.

MONTANA

Evacuations ordered after Montana fire doubles in size (Associated Press)

KALISPELL — Authorities say homes in a rural area east of Thompson Falls have been evacuated after a wildfire in northwestern Montana doubled in size in one day.

Fire officials say extreme fire behavior is also expected for the Copper King Fire on Monday, with wind gusts of up to 40 mph forecast to blow across the dry, hot terrain.

The Sanders County Sheriff's Office issued evacuation orders early Monday along Little Thompson River Road. Some 20 homes and structures are threatened, and other residents have been put on notice that the evacuation area may spread.

A shelter has been set up at Thompson Falls High School.

Some 317 firefighters are responding to the blaze, which grew 4 ½ square miles Sunday to nearly 11 square miles as of Monday morning.

Wildfire smoke streaming across Montana (KXLH – Great Falls)

By: Julianne Dellorso and David Sherman - MTN News

GREAT FALLS - Many people have noticed a lot of smoke in areas of western, central, and northern Montana.
We have received reports of heavy smoke from residents in and around Helena, Shelby, Heart Butte, and even the Sluice Boxes area of the Little Belt Mountains.

Toole County Sheriff Donna Whitt says from what she's heard, it is smoke from the fires in Western Montana and Idaho.

She says there are no fires or incidents involving smoke in Toole County reported to her office.

The East Glacier Volunteer Fire Department posted the following message on Facebook on Monday morning: "Very windy, smokey day in East Glacier Park. Conditions are ripe for wildfire - a red flag day. Be careful with cigarettes and avoid any outdoor burning or anything that might spark a fire, like driving your car in high, dry grass or using a chainsaw."

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality reports that wildfire smoke in the area is likely due to several large fires to the west:

- The Pioneer Fire near Boise, Idaho, is 87,818 acres and 50% contained with active fire behavior.
- The Copper King Fire in northwest Montana is 3,900 acres and 30% contained with active fire behavior. Satellite imagery indicates a plume coming off the fire this afternoon and heading to the northeast.
- The Buck Creek Fire in central Washington is 1,083 acres and 0% contained with active fire behavior and contributing to the light smoke over Montana.

West Yellowstone residents voice concerns over Tatanka Complex (KTVM – NBC Bozeman)

By: Judith Retana

Posted: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

Updated: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

BOZEMAN, Mont. - The half dozen fires burning in Yellowstone National Park are now called the Tatanka Complex.

Fire officials in West Yellowstone held a community meeting Monday night where residents voiced their concerns about the fire. As black smoke continues to rise from the fires, many residents are worried.

"Oh, I'm saying my prayers like crazy," said Duck Creek resident Jim Criner. He was one of more than 200 residents at a community meeting to learn more about the fire.

Officials presented maps showing people where the fire perimeter was and the direction it's heading.

Strong winds and dry weather have a Montana senator and firefighters on alert.

"We want to make sure we have all the resources to ensure the community stays safe, the road stays open and we can protect these very important assets here around West Yellowstone," said Sen. Steve Daines (R-Montana).

Officials handed out fact sheets and maps to help residents understand more about the fires. They even handed out fire action plans to help them plan for an emergency.

Sasha Jevtich is a seasonal resident who works closely with the fire community. He and others looked at maps of the fire after the meeting.

"We took a ride into the park just to check things out for ourselves. You know, as you look at the maps, it is kind of scary. It does looks like it's rather close to town," he said. As scary as it can look, he said having the fire eat away at what is fueling it now, is good for the future.

Even so, the fire still makes residents like Criner nervous. He was around for the 1988 fires and saw how close those got to his neighborhood.

"The area between where the fire is and where we are in Duck Creek, is nothing but high grass and willows. The fire would move across the area really fast if it reached us," he said.

Although many in West Yellowstone are used to Montana's fire season, seeing dark plumes just a few miles away is always a concern.

Residents who wish to receive emergency notifications about the fire or any other event in the area, can sign up at ready.gallatin.com.

NORTH DAKOTA

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

"We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably," she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

"He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena," he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

"My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not," he said. "This is our land, our people."

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, "I believe there's strength in prayer," and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Our water is sacred,” she said. “I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too.”

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes’ chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock’s opposition.

“We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives,” Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe’s reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe’s water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It’s estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it’s the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead ‘solidarity’ rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county’s emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court

in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

MIKE JACOBS: Pipeline protest shows new dimension in North Dakota politics (Grand Forks Herald)

By Mike Jacobs Today at 6:00 a.m.

North Dakota still responds to an Indian scare. That's one thing we can say about last week's news.

On Friday, Gov. Jack Dalrymple declared a civil emergency in response to a protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The pipeline would cross the Missouri River less than a mile from the boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux nation.

Protests last week brought more than 1,000 people. Arrests were made.

Emergency declarations aren't all that uncommon in North Dakota, but almost all of them address natural disasters. North Dakota knows natural disaster. Hardly a year goes by without natural disaster. This place is flood prone, snow blasted and wind battered.

Civil disturbance is another thing.

The last civil emergency that comes to mind occurred in 1970, when Gov. William Guy sent the National Guard to an anti-war protest at the ABM missile site near Nekoma, N.D. A year before that, Guy called out the Guard when a bunch of college students descended on Zap, N.D., with the express purpose of getting drunk and having a good time. Some damage was done.

Dalrymple didn't send the Guard to the mouth of the Cannonball River. His emergency declaration is just in case local law enforcement needs help, he said.

Besides pointing out that this step is extremely rare, we can say some other things about it.

One is that Native opposition to pipeline projects is becoming a pattern. The Enbridge Company's Sandpiper line is stalled due to opposition from Minnesota's White Earth Band of

Ojibway. Their spokeswoman is Winona LaDuke, who was Ralph Nader's running mate in 1996 and 2000 when he was the Green Party candidate for president.

The partnership between Native people and environmentalists is part of the pattern. We saw this in opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline, and it's evident at the mouth of the Cannonball. The protest there has drawn movie stars as well as environmental activists.

That pretty much makes it the current front line in the war on fossil fuels.

It's easy to suggest (as some bloggers have done) that the tribe is being used.

There are two problems with this. For one thing, it's condescending. For another, it overlooks the growing activism of North Dakota's Native people.

This activism is especially evident at Standing Rock.

Opposition from the elected Tribal Council at Standing Rock doomed UND's nickname and logo. The NCAA said using "Fighting Sioux" would be OK if both of the state's Sioux communities said so. Standing Rock refused.

Another thing to say is that David Archambault, Standing Rock's tribal chair, has warrior blood in his veins. He's been on the front lines at the protest. On the pipeline issue, he's led the tribe to federal court and to the United Nations.

This is no surprise. At the opening of the 2015 legislative session, Archambault delivered the "State of the Relationship" message, a cry from the heart in which he spoke truth to power about Native issues and state jurisdiction.

Then there's the political context.

North Dakota's November ballot has three Native candidates: Chase Iron Eyes for Congress, Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun for Public Service Commission and Ruth Buffalo for insurance commissioner. All are Democrats, and none has much of a chance.

But each of them stepped up to fill slots on a major party ticket.

This has two important implications. First, as major party candidates, they will have media access. Second, they've established that the Democratic Party in the state can't just count on Native voters; it must also promote Native candidates to the white population.

It's also the essence of political organizing, as Mark Trahant pointed out in his blog, at trahantreports.com. Trahant is the nation's best known native journalist, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and a member of the faculty at UND's Program in Communication.

None of this goes to the question of pipeline safety, much less to the future of fossil fuel development.

On these issues, everybody ought to be heard.

So there is one more thing, at least, to say about last week's developments.

Brian Kalk, one of three members of the Public Service Commission that approved a permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline, dismissed the protest. He told the Bismarck Tribune, "These groups didn't come to our hearings."

Well...

They could have been asked.

That's what "public service" means.

Disclaimers: Enbridge has right-of way on property that my partner Suezette and I own in Mountrail County, N.D. I was at Nekoma with the protesters. I was not at the so-called "Zip to Zap."

North Dakota Tests Drones To Be Used For Disaster Response (AP)

HILLSBORO, N.D. (AP) — A 20-foot-long drone that was brought to North Dakota to test precision agriculture methods is now part of a trial run to see if can help crews restore power to areas hit by natural disasters.

The Israeli-manufactured Elbit Systems Hermes 450 aircraft can cover 40,000 acres in an hour and fly up to 17 hours before refueling. Officials involved in the Xcel Energy test program say the larger drone’s ability to cover more ground, collect more data and fly at night is expected to help the company move crews, materials and equipment quickly and safely.

“When you have a storm, when you have fires, getting crews on the ground to identify damage is flat-out dangerous,” Raanan Horowitz, president and CEO of Elbit Systems of America, said Monday when the drone was shown off to public officials at an airport in Hillsboro, about 35 miles north of Fargo.

One of the tests involves a mock disaster using power poles placed in ditches in and around the nearby city of Mayville. Preliminary reports show that the drone is effective in quickly locating the downed poles both day and night, Xcel Energy Vice President Laura McCarten said.

“Apparently those wood poles stay warmer than the surroundings, so the infrared technology is able to spot them at night,” she said.

Xcel Energy is headquartered in Minneapolis and serves customers in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Colorado, Michigan, Texas and New Mexico.

There are still key issues to be ironed out before the drones can be used on a widespread commercial basis, including Federal Aviation Administration approval to operate beyond line of sight, or without the use of a chase plane keeping tabs on the planes. North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said he hopes North Dakota will be flying drones without chase planes by the end of the year.

“You’re covering such big distances. You’re losing the utility of the unmanned aircraft if you have to have a chase plane,” Hoeven said.

Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district borders North Dakota, said the FFA "didn't do too bad of a job" on regulations for small drones, but he expects a much stiffer challenge on rules for larger aircraft.

"The FAA is very slow moving bureaucracy, to say the least," Peterson said.

If larger unmanned aircraft are approved for beyond-line-of-sight operations, Horowitz said the quadcopters and drones that weigh less than 55 pounds would still be used in a complementary role.

"The bottom line is, when you look at the size and the areas that you are trying to cover, when you look at the resolution, when you look at using sensors that can yield data that is actually usable, this is the way to go," Horowitz said of the Hermes drone.

Elbit Systems and Xcel Energy have combined to contribute about $500,000 into flying the Hermes drone. McCarten said the agriculture test program that began in May provided a "ready-made platform" for the Xcel study.

North Dakota State University researcher John Nowatzki said the agriculture test has yielded impressive results on the drone's ability to capture images. Nowatzki has displayed pictures of a shelter belt taken from 4,000, 6,000 and 8,000 feet, with no discernable difference to the human eye.

"The key message here, maybe, is that we get high resolutions at all levels," he said.

Sarah Lovas, an area farmer and crop consultant, said some of her cohorts still want to find out how they can manage the data in an affordable way, but most have embraced the technology.

"There's just no such thing as a dumb farmer anymore," she said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota reports first Zika virus infection (Rapid City Journal)

Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 22, 2016

South Dakota has reported its first Zika virus infection, according to state health officials.

The infected person is a woman who traveled to a country in the Caribbean where Zika virus is transmitted. She later developed symptoms, the Department of Health said today in a press release. The infection was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"This is a good reminder for anyone who travels to Zika-affected areas that it's important to protect themselves from mosquito bites," Dr. Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department, said in the release.

Kightlinger said state officials are not disclosing where the woman infected is from in South Dakota, but did note that she is in her 30s and is not pregnant.

Zika is a tropical mosquito-borne infection. The virus is not known to be carried by the mosquitoes found in South Dakota.

Officials say there are no vaccines or treatment for the virus. To avoid infection, travelers to Zika-affected areas, particularly pregnant women, should follow strict mosquito control precautions — wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, use an EPA-registered insect repellent and ensure that windows and doors have intact screens.

According to the Department of Health, the infection is mild for most healthy adults. About one in five people who are infected will become ill.

The release says symptoms typically occur two to seven days after a bite and include fever, muscle or eye pain and a rash. Pregnant women who are infected run the added risk of having babies with the birth defect microcephaly. Microcephaly means the babies have heads smaller than expected and often have smaller brains that might not have developed properly, the department said.

UTAH

Crews battling new wildfires in northern, central Utah (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published 1 hour ago • Updated 1 hour ago

Two new wildfires had ground crews scrambling in Sevier and Cache counties on Tuesday, as fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft swarmed the flames from above.

The Sand Ledges Fire, first spotted on Saturday just west of Richfield along Highway 24, had blackened 3,022 acres and was 27 percent contained as of Tuesday, said Fire Information Officer Shayne Ward.

Believed human-caused, the blaze was consuming dry grass and sage brush, including valued sage grouse habitat, but no structures were threatened and no evacuations had been ordered.

In all, 70 firefighters were working to hem in the Sand Ledges Fire. It was a slow, often frustrating task with gusty winds periodically fanning the flames through the tinder-dry vegetation, Ward said.

Still, crews hoped to have the blaze 100 percent contained sometime Saturday.

What sparked the Peterson Hollow Fire Sunday afternoon was still under investigation, but it had scorched 150 acres on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest's Logan Ranger District as of

Tuesday. Fire Information Officer MaryEllen Fitzgerald said it was 5 percent contained, with no estimated time for when crews will completely contain it.

The fire is 23 miles northeast of Logan and just north of the Beaver Mountain Ski Area.

"[The resort] is currently not imminently endangered, but is the most important focus at this time. Structure protection is in place and being ramped up as a precaution," Fitzgerald stated.

The Peterson Hollow Fire is one of five active blazes on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest; the other four are being allowed to burn as beneficial to clearing away accumulated undergrowth and dead timber.

About 160 firefighters were battling the blaze, aided by a fleet of air tankers and helicopters. Hot, dry and occasionally windy weather continue to challenge efforts to hem in the flames.

Utah forecast: Midweek weather brings high fire danger north, storms in the south (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune

If Goldilocks grew up to be a meteorologist, she might say of the midweek forecast for the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys, "Ahhh, just right."

If the fabled cabin burglar walked into the forests of the northern Wasatch Front, however, she might toss her porridge and run: from the mountains above Logan stretching south through Salt Lake City and Provo to Nephi, the National Weather Service declared a Red Flag Warning for wildfire danger from noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday.

Potentially too hot, indeed, thanks to low humidity, rain-starved rangelands and forests, and gusty winds.

Southern Utah? Goldilocks might prefer the company of three offended bears, after all. The region expects a cycle of thunderstorms the next several days — and humid, hot weather. High temperatures were forecast to be in the low- to mid-90s Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

No, it will be the balmy weather due in the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys that is best for that post-porridge nap. Sunny to partly cloudy skies will reign through the midweek, with highs ranging from the mid- to upper-80s Tuesday through Thursday, and overnight temperatures in the upper-50s to low-60s making for sweet dreams.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 24, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A rechanneling project through the Garden of the Gods is expected to remove 100 properties from the floodplain… The Colorado Springs Independent interviewed the three colleges in the area about their plans for dealing with disasters, including an active shooter…. Bridges on a county road near the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar were taken out by flooding… The *Denver Post* explains why Colorado mosquitos are not likely to carry the Zika virus.
- **Montana:** An extraordinary outbreak of a parasite killing whitefish caused the state to shut down 180 miles of the Yellowstone River to all recreational uses.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest, including one in the *NY Times*: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz explains the decision to withdraw state-owned resources was because the situation is not an emergency, the protestors are not on state-owned land, plus reports of criminal activity. Water has been supplied by the tribe's road department. Protestors marched over a bridge peacefully and staying on walkways. About 30 people attended a meeting of the Mandan county commissioners; all those who spoke opposed the pipeline, and many spoke against the traffic barrier set up by law enforcement, saying it hurts local businesses and farmers, is humiliating, and prevents people from seeing the protest. Commissioners said the decision was by law enforcement and is not theirs to overturn. The tribe says a leak at the pipeline could contaminate its water supply and sacred sites. The company says construction has only stopped at this one mile of the 1,172 mile pipeline, which would be the largest source for moving Bakken crude oil. Four unions wrote to Governor Dalrymple asking that he make it safe for construction workers to do their jobs. A federal judge is expected to rule today on a request for an injunction to halt the project. Tribal leaders say they will remain peaceful, but will blockade if the ruling goes against them. So far, there have been 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct.
- **South Dakota:** A $1 million FEMA SAFER g rant will pay for nine new firefighters in Rapid City for two years… A new wildfire broke out near Angostura Reservoir.
- **Utah:** An attempt to upgrade the Tibble Fork Dam has resulted in lake sediments being released over the weekend that have contaminated the American Fork River, apparently with toxic mine waste. Environmentalists fear an ecological disaster. The presence of toxic sediments had led to an earlier decision to upgrade the dam rather than dredge the lake – but draining the lake to work on the dam appears to have done the damage.
- **Wyoming:** Several fires were burning in the area of Yellowstone National Park, though all roads within the park remained open. One fire south of the park blocked access to that entrance. The fires were caused naturally and were not being actively suppressed.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: *USA Today* reports on possible hurricanes developing in the Atlantic. … *Inside Radio* says the Louisiana floods show the need to activate FM radio chips in cellphones, which do not work when cell towers are down.

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American Fork fish could contain toxic mine waste (Salt Lake Tribune)

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STORIES

COLORADO

Flood project through Garden of the Gods will reroute Colorado Springs floodplain (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Matt Steiner

Two years after city officials teamed with residents of a West Side Colorado Springs neighborhood to plan flood mitigation and reconstruction of Camp Creek, a project to remove more than 100 properties from the floodplain is about to begin.

On Monday, crews could begin the first phase of the more than $30 million project rebuilding about 5,100 feet of channel through Garden of the Gods Park and the Rock Ledge Ranch.

The work could be potentially lifesaving for residents of the Pleasant Valley neighborhood when heavy rains pound the Waldo Canyon fire burn area in the mountains to the west.

"As a community, we can't let our guard down," said Colorado Springs Emergency Manager Bret Waters. "Even though we're seeing some growth, it doesn't mean the risk will go away."

The Camp Creek mitigation project discussed in the spring of 2014 attracted more than 100 residents who helped choose project priorities. The result was a total rebuild of the deteriorating concrete channel through Pleasant Valley, meaning the creek along 31st Street will be refurbished with grass, shrubs, rocks and a relocated bike path.

But first, the work upstream must be done.

"Reducing the flows (through Garden of the Gods) will allow us to build the rest of the project," said project engineer Mike Chaves.

Construction crews will first install a series of rock steps in the creek, reshape banks and plant vegetation near the channel through the ranch and the park. The cross vanes, Chaves said, are intended to slow water and debris. Erosion has been accelerating each year because of floodwaters pouring off the Waldo Canyon burn scar.

The channel stabilization will cost $1.1 million, said city spokeswoman Kim Melchor. Almost $800,000 of that comes from a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant with the rest of the money coming from the city.

That work will likely be followed by construction of a large sediment detention pond at the north end of the park in early 2017, Chaves said.

That phase will cost almost $8 million, Melchor said. It will include a large berm stretching from 30th Street to the hills in the park that can dam floodwaters.

When the entire project is complete, more than 200 Pleasant Valley residents will no longer be in the floodplain.

"The whole intent is to protect the park, protect Rock Ledge Ranch and the downstream communities," Melchor said.

Colleges and universities put emphasis on planning for disasters, including active shooters: Planning for the worst (Colorado Springs Independent)

By J. Adrian Stanley @JAdrianStanley1

On April 16, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho, a senior at Virginia Tech, killed 32 people and wounded another 17 in two separate shootings.

Until June of this year, when Omar Mateen killed 49 people and wounded 53 others in Orlando's Pulse nightclub, the Virginia Tech shooting was the deadliest by a single perpetrator in U.S. history.

Virginia Tech held sway over the country, leading to widespread grief and fear, changing gun laws, prompting deeper discussions on mental illness and leading many colleges and universities to take a second look at their emergency plans.

Back in 2007, institutions of higher education tended to have procedures for protecting their campus communities from natural disasters like fires, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes, and often some man-made accidents as well, like chemical spills. But most had dedicated less — or no — energy to drafting plans to deal with an active shooter rampaging through the campus.

That changed after Virginia Tech. Just as "duck and cover" was a part of common school instruction during the Cold War, in today's age of mass shootings, students now learn to "run, hide, fight."

What Cho did was an eyeopener for school leaders. The gunman, who had known mental health issues, fatally shot two students in a residence hall, walked away, changed his clothes, and ran errands, then calmly entered an academic hall. At some point, he chained shut the exits.

Police were dealing with the first shooting while Cho entered Norris Hall. The university, suspecting the first shooting was of a personal nature, hadn't instructed students, faculty and staff to prepare for an active shooter. In fact, students in Norris reported being simply curious when Cho peeked his head inside their classroom doors before beginning his massacre.

Once the shooting was underway, Cho's victims were largely at a loss to stop his killing spree. Some died trying to hold classroom doors closed, including Professor Liviu Librescu, an Israeli Holocaust survivor, whose body was riddled with bullets as he held his classroom door shut, allowing his students to climb out windows. All but one of the students in Room 204 survived due to his heroism.

Nevertheless, 30 people died in Norris Hall. Cho shot himself before police located him.

"A lot of the [college and university] emergency plans really stepped up after 9/11," UCCS Police Lt. Marc Pino says. "Using common terminology, working on regional resources, things like that — that sort of were identified as issues after 9/11 for responding to emergencies — I would say around that time is when we really stepped things up."

But asked when UCCS began preparing for an active-shooter scenario, Pino says, "Virginia Tech would be when we really started doing emphasis on active shooter, and also our campus developed a student response team as a response.

"Numerous people at Virginia Tech had dealings with the shooter, and no one was really talking together to find out that some larger issues were going on. So, the [UCCS] student response team was [formed] — very shortly after Virginia Tech — [and it] comprises the dean of students office, the chief of police and the head of the counseling center. We sort of field reports from faculty, staff, students, anybody that has a concern about a student. We can sort of reach them before it gets to a critical level."

The *Independent* spoke to representatives at UCCS, Colorado College and Pikes Peak Community College about their emergency plans. While plans and strategies differ, each campus has a plan, along with one or more employees in charge of preparing for emergencies.

Of the three schools, Colorado College, which has about 2,000 students, is the only one without its own police force. John Lauer, co-chair of CC's emergency preparedness group and the college's associate vice president for student life, explains that the school does have a single Colorado Springs police officer assigned to the campus, as well as a campus safety department.

The safety officers — who carry no weapons — walk the campus and look for anything unusual. If a situation warrants it, they call police, with whom the college works closely. Campus safety officers can also take anonymous tips.

The campus does have an emergency plan, last updated in 2012, and a director of campus safety and emergency preparedness — Maggie Santos, a former Colorado Springs Police lieutenant. The plan will be updated soon.

"We're always focused on continuous improvement," Lauer says.

But, he adds, the college stresses that every person has to take responsibility for knowing how to respond, saying, "We're as prepared as every individual is prepared."

CC performs regular fire drills and has started doing active-shooter trainings with resident advisors, as well as sessions open to anyone, or upon request. Lauer says it's important not to drill too often because it can desensitize people in a real emergency.

The campus does contract with a company that sends emergency texts, emails and phone calls when needed to students, staff and faculty, as well as anyone else who wants to be notified.

While not every classroom has a locking door, placards by doors give instructions on what to do in an emergency — such as barricade the door for an active shooter or go to the nearest marked shelter in case of tornado.

CC has cameras throughout campus and a loudspeaker on Palmer Hall. Lauer says the campus is considering replacing that speaker, as well as placing speakers on campus security cars for use in an emergency. Staff in residence halls also have megaphones.

Jim Barrentine is chief of police at PPCC, where he says he was hired five years ago to develop an emergency preparedness plan.

That plan is now the template for the state's community colleges.

At first, Barrentine says most folks at PPCC didn't know how to perform basic safety tasks, like using a fire extinguisher or helping a person in a wheelchair down stairs. He's focused on giving trainings and providing instructional videos for different emergency skills. The school also does lockdown drills for an active-shooter situation, as well as special training, and four or five tabletop exercises meant to mimic a real emergency.

Interestingly, of the three schools, PPCC is the only one with locks on all classroom doors. The college encourages locking those doors during class hours.

With three campuses and 20,000 students, PPCC faces unique challenges. The 18-person police department is distributed among the campuses, where they patrol during business hours.

Barrentine has set up a system so that the campus community will be notified of an emergency immediately through texts, emails, landlines and a speaker system throughout the campus. Barrentine wants to add light boards for the deaf and buzzers for the blind, to ensure they are notified, and he's working on implementing a buddy system to ensure people with disabilities are cared for in an emergency.

He also has hotlines for anonymous tips.

Barrentine says the statewide system of community colleges is working to improve emergency preparedness. But he says PPCC is lucky because unlike many other schools, police are on the scene here.

"In an active shooter [situation]," he says, "security's going to run like everyone else."

Back in 2012, UCCS' emergency plans were tested. The Waldo Canyon Fire was raging nearby, and the campus suddenly became an unofficial evacuation site.

"We had the Air Force Academy cadets here in 2012, we also housed several hundred evacuees in our campus residence halls," UCCS spokesperson Tom Hutton says. "And then in 2013 [during the Black Forest Fire], we were an official Red Cross evacuation site and I think we had half a dozen people here, so we had more when we were an unofficial evacuation site."

Since UCCS is located on a wildland-urban interface, it not only has the normal risks of a university with around 11,300 students, but it also must be prepared for wildfire. Because of that, the university has done mitigation along its borders and, in summer months, UCCS police carry fire extinguishers with water in them, better for fighting wildfires. They also patrol the campus borders on off-road motorcycles.

Like the others, UCCS has an emergency notification system that hooks up to cell phones and landlines in classrooms. The university does not have a loudspeaker system or locks on every door, but emergency instructions near doors show how to barricade a door in emergencies and find marked tornado shelters. UCCS conducts general evacuation drills.

The UCCS police department, which has 21 officers and patrols the campus 24/7, has an intergovernmental agreement with Colorado Springs police to help each other in emergencies with set enforcement boundaries. Many will remember that UCCS Officer Garrett Swasey was killed last November when he responded to a mass shooting at Planned Parenthood. Just as he responded, CSPD would provide backup to UCCS officers in case of an active shooter on campus.

UCCS police do take tips (though anonymous tips must be made online) and say students are vigilant about filing reports of anything suspicious. Police Lt. Pino says he'll often get several calls within a few minutes about an unattended backpack, for instance. That's important, because it means students spot unusual circumstances and take them seriously.

"The reason why we have a very safe campus," he says, "is because we get those reports."

UCCS has emergency phones throughout campus, and police offer free escorts — no questions asked — to anyone requesting them. UCCS staff say they plan for any emergencies, and the university has an emergency manager and several offices that deal with emergency planning, including conducting regular tabletop exercises.

"I think we have a culture of working together as a university," Dean of Students Steve Linhart says, "whatever the situation."

County Road 40 bridges washed out by flash floods (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

Updated: Aug 23, 2016 10:00 PM MDT
FREMONT COUNTY - County Road 40 is closed after flash flooding in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar, according to Fremont County Sheriff's Office.

The dam on County Road 40 is holding, but Butter Creek and Little Cottonwood Creek are flowing heavy with debris. All homes are intact and all residents in the area are safe.

A reverse 911 notification was sent to residents in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar for a flash flood warning Tuesday evening. The warning was in effect until 9:45 p.m.

Bridges on County Road 40 were washed out by flood water. Fremont Search and Rescue and Fremont Incident Management Team responded as a precaution.

Why Colorado's Mosquitoes Are Not Likely To Spread Zika (Denver Post)

By John Ingold

Denver Post, August 23, 2016

It was an experiment that was part "Outbreak" and part "Trading Places," but researchers at Colorado State University hoped it might answer one of the more pressing public health questions facing the state: Could the Zika virus spread here?

The conventional wisdom was that it couldn't, at least not widely, because the disease's primary vector — a ninja of a mosquito called Aedes aegypti — had no established population in the state. But no one had proved that conventional wisdom true. What if it was wrong? What if the local mosquitoes — particularly those in the Culex genus that already carry the West Nile virus — were also able to transmit Zika?

The mosquito experts at CSU's Arthropod-borne and Infectious Diseases Laboratory decided to put the conventional wisdom to the test. In their lab, they infected Culex mosquitoes with Zika. And then, for a week as the virus incubated inside their study subjects, they held their breath.

Finally, the results:

"We could not get that virus to replicate in the mosquito," CSU professor Brian Foy said of the experiment, the topic of a soon-to-be-published article.

Whew.

When it comes to being disease-carrying menaces, not all mosquitoes are created equal, and that explains why Zika is a public health crisis in Miami and a relative public health trifle in Milliken. There are 54 species of mosquitoes commonly found in Colorado, but none of them are known to be able to transmit Zika — even if they can, like the Culex mosquitoes, transmit other diseases.

"It's still kind of a mystery," Foy said. "There's a very fine-tuning match of virus and mosquito."

The reason is that a mosquito's transmission of a disease is not as simple as taking infected blood in from one person and then backwashing it into another. Instead, the virus must be capable of reproducing inside the mosquito and then making its way into the mosquito's saliva — the real source of contamination since mosquitoes digest the blood they consume as food.

"When a mosquito bites a person, it spits into the bite," Foy said.

With the local-born bugs apparently incapable of carrying Zika, then, the only chance of a mosquito-spread outbreak in Colorado comes from a moonshot: the one-in-a-billion possibility that a Zika-capable mosquito that hitchhiked to the state from elsewhere bites into a Zika-infected person who picked up the virus out of state.

So far, only 21 people in Colorado have tested positive for Zika, and all of them contracted the virus somewhere else.

The only instance of a wayward Aedes aegypti being found in the state came in 2010, in Pueblo County. Another species of mosquito possibly capable of transmitting Zika, Aedes albopictus, has been found sporadically in Weld County, most recently in 2011 and most likely was brought to the state in waste tires disposed of here. But those species are just summer tourists; they can't survive the winter.

"Remember we're in Colorado; we're not in the tropics," said Michael "Doc" Weissmann, the chief entomologist at Colorado Mosquito Control, which does monitoring and eradication for local governments.

Weissmann said none of his company's traps have snagged worrisome Aedes mosquitoes this year.

"It's just the same old, same old," he said.

Eric Aakko of the Weld County Health Department said the county's surveillance efforts have found higher-than-normal levels of West Nile-carrying mosquitoes but no Zika concerns.

That leaves only one other prominent way that the virus can spread within Colorado, and it's one Foy knows a little too well. While conducting research in the African nation of Senegal, Foy contracted Zika in 2008. He then came home and accidentally gave it to his wife, which led to a research article hypothesizing — correctly, it turns out — that Zika can spread through sex.

The experience, though, didn't change his mind about the dangers of Zika in Colorado.

"The risk of all of a sudden having a massive outbreak in Denver is, I would say, infinitesimally small," he said. "From mosquitoes, I can't see it happening."

MONTANA

Yellowstone fish-killing parasite is so prolific it's 'shocking' fish to death (Missoulian)

By BRETT FRENCH Billings Gazette

PARADISE VALLEY — A previously unidentified strain of parasite has grown so prolific in the Yellowstone River that it is overwhelming whitefish, killing thousands and prompting the state last week to close more than 180 miles of the river to all recreation.

"The sheer parasite loading itself is almost shocking the fish, that that's what's killing them," said Eileen Ryce, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' hatchery section chief, during a Tuesday press conference along the banks of the Yellowstone River south of Livingston.

Scientists like Ryce believe that the parasite bloom may be so large and unprecedented in part because the Yellowstone River is experiencing near-record low flows and high water temperatures.

"We could see varying responses (of the parasite) depending on which river it gets into," said Travis Horton, Region 3 fisheries manager in Bozeman.

The nearby Madison River, where flows are dam controlled, may be more resilient to the parasite since the water's temperature is cooler, coming from the bottom of Hebgen Lake, and the flows can be maintained at a steadier rate. Likewise, outbreaks of similar parasites in Idaho that killed

whitefish in 2011 and 2012 may have been more limited because some of the streams are dam controlled, Horton said.

The FWP officials spoke to a crowd of about 50 people — anglers, local lawmakers, the media and business owners — at a fishing access site where the stench of dead whitefish rotting on the riverbank wafted through the air.

Media, business owners, anglers and others gather for a press conference on the banks of the Yellowstone River. CASEY PAGE, Gazette Staff

Acknowledging the effect of the river's closure to anglers, floaters and on all of the many businesses that service such recreationists, Gov. Steve Bullock said "the impact goes far beyond the water's edge." Yet he said "science needs to guide this."

"We need to make sure we are not only protecting this watershed and this water but indeed our entire state," he said, noting that the outdoor recreation industry creates about 64,000 jobs and $6 billion in consumer spending annually in Montana.

When Rep. Alan Redfield, R-Livingston, asked why certain portions of the river couldn't be open to fishing to ease some of the impact on local businesses, Horton said FWP hopes to contain the parasite outbreak to the Yellowstone and make its duration short-lived.

"We want to try to minimize this," Horton said. "We don't want to make this situation worse by rushing ahead."

Horton added that when the Yellowstone River's peak water temperatures drop below 55 degrees and stay there, FWP would consider lifting the river closure.

"We're not looking at it being a permanent closure," said Jeff Hagener, FWP director.

He noted the rule to enforce the closure is a temporary emergency closure good for 120 days. After that time the department is forced to re-examine the issue to decide whether the closure should be extended.

The fish kill has been documented by FWP crews from the Yellowstone National Park boundary about 100 miles downstream to just west of the town of Big Timber, Horton said. Other public reports of dead whitefish and suckers downstream from Big Timber to Laurel have not been confirmed by FWP.

The microscopic parasite that infects the fish needs two hosts to complete its life cycle, Ryce explained. It starts in a Bryozoan, a moss animal similar to a freshwater sponge. The Bryozoan releases the parasite that fish absorb through their gills. Similar parasites have caused internal bleeding and kidney failure in whitefish in other outbreaks, such as the ones in Idaho.

But the Yellowstone outbreak is different, Ryce said. There are so many spores being found inside the fish that the scientists are calling it a naive reaction.

"What we mean by that is that the immune response that the fish are expressing would suggest that they have not been exposed to this parasite previously," she said. "That has concerned us since it would suggest it's a new infection. At least we haven't seen anything on this scale previously."

"The other thing that's concerning is from the histology results there were high numbers of parasites seen in multiple tissues. That suggests to us that the infective load that's currently out in the river is very high. Why that's a concern is that the sheer volume of parasites that's out there makes it very easy for the parasite to be spread to other waters."

That's the reason FWP took the unusual step to close down much of the upper river to recreation, Horton said, calling it a "very dramatic step that we took." It's also why the agency is stressing that the best way to fight the spread of the parasite, along with other aquatic invasive species, is to clean, drain and dry all boats and fishing equipment.

FWP crews will continue to search for dead and dying fish in the Yellowstone River and its tributaries like the Stillwater and Boulder rivers to try to determine the extent of the outbreak.

"I hope we can continue to work together, recognizing that the long-term objective is to protect this valley and the river," Gov. Bullock said.

Yet Ryce noted that FWP staff doesn't expect the parasite to disappear, even with colder water temperatures and higher river flows. However, if the fish are given time to adapt they may build up some immunity to the parasite and recover.

NORTH DAKOTA

Occupying the Prairie: Tensions Rise as Tribes Move to Block a Pipeline (NY Times)

By JACK HEALY

August 23, 2016

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. — Horseback riders, their faces streaked in yellow and black paint, led the procession out of their tepee-dotted camp. Two hundred people followed, making their daily walk a mile up a rural highway to a patch of prairie grass and excavated dirt that has become a new kind of battlefield, between a pipeline and American Indians who say it will threaten water supplies and sacred lands.

The Texas-based company building the Dakota Access pipeline, Energy Transfer Partners, calls the project a major step toward the United States' weaning itself off foreign oil. The company says the nearly 1,170-mile buried pipeline will infuse millions of dollars into local economies and is safer than trucks and train cars that can topple and spill and crash and burn.

But the people who stood at the gates of a construction site where crews had been building an access road toward the pipeline viewed the project as a wounding intrusion onto lands where generations of their ancestors hunted bison, gathered water and were born and buried, long before treaties and fences stamped a different order onto the Plains.

People have been gathering since April, but as hundreds more poured in over the past two weeks, confrontations began rising among protesters, sheriff's officers and construction workers with the pipeline company. Local officials are struggling to handle hundreds of demonstrators filling the roads to protest and camp out in once-empty grassland about an hour south of Bismarck, the state capital.

More than 20 people have been arrested on charges including disorderly conduct and trespassing onto the construction site. The pipeline company says it was forced to shut down construction this month after protesters threatened its workers and threw bottles and rocks at contractors' vehicles.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier of Morton County, who has led the law enforcement response, said at a news conference that he had received reports of weapons and gunshots around the demonstration, and that protesters were getting ready to throw pipe bombs at a line of officers standing between a rally and the construction site.

Leaders from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's path, say the protests are peaceful. Weapons, drugs and alcohol are prohibited from the protest

camp. Children march in the daily demonstrations. The leaders believed the reports of pipe bombs were a misinterpretation of their calls for demonstrators to get out their wooden chanupa pipes — which have deep spiritual importance — and pass them through the crowd.

The conflict may reach a crucial moment on Wednesday in a federal court hearing. The tribe has sued to block the pipeline and plans to ask a judge in Washington to effectively halt construction.

The pipeline runs overwhelmingly along private land, but where it crosses bodies of water, federal rules come into play and federal approvals are required.

The tribe says the pipeline's route under the Missouri River near here could threaten its water supplies if the pipeline leaks or breaks, and it says the United States Army Corps of Engineers failed to do proper cultural and historical reviews before granting federal approvals for the pipeline.

"This is our homeland," said Phyllis Young, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux. "We are Dakota. Dakota means friend or ally. Dakota Access has taken our name."

In legal filings, the corps rejects those claims. It says it consulted extensively with tribes, including the Standing Rock Sioux, and it says that tribe has failed to describe specific cultural sites that would be damaged by the pipeline. Energy Transfer Partners says it has the necessary state and federal permits and hopes to finish construction by the end of the year. The pipeline's route starts in the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota and ends in Illinois.

With the fate of the land here and this $3.7 billion project in the air, people here have decided to take action. They are occupying the prairie.

Echoing protests against the now-scuttled Keystone XL pipeline, environmental activists and other tribes from the Dakotas, the rest of the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest have been arriving to camp in the open fields and protest near the parcel where the pipeline company has secured an agreement with the landowner to build.

The protesters sleep in tents and tepees, cook food in open-air kitchens and share stories and strategies around evening campfires. There is even a day care. At morning meetings, speakers warn parents to keep their children away from the Missouri River at sunset, and remind one another they are camped out in prayer.

"It's a major movement in Indian country," said CJ Clifford, a member of the Oglala Lakota, who drove up from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He saw the protests as part of a historical continuum reaching to Little Bighorn. This battle, he said, was being waged peacefully.

For many, the effort was about reclaiming a stake in ancestral lands that had been whittled down since the 1800s, treaty by broken treaty.

"Lands were constantly getting reduced, shaken up," said Dave Archambault II, the tribal chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux. "I could give you a list of every wrongdoing this government did to our people. All of that is frustration pent up, and it's being recognized."

He added, "It's a tipping point for our nations."

This month, a line of sheriff's officers retreated in the face of riders on horseback circling and yipping through the grass. (Tribal members said that the display was a Lakota gesture of introduction, and that they have no quarrel with law enforcement.)

There have been no moves so far to disband the camp or keep people from demonstrating. But Sheriff Kirchmeier told reporters that the demonstration had become an "unlawful protest," and Gov. Jack Dalrymple, citing "public safety risks," declared a state of emergency on Friday.

Local law enforcement officers set up a barricade on the main road leading to the pipeline site, and officials here in Morton County called a special meeting on Monday to talk about the traffic and how to handle a hundreds-strong protest that could linger for weeks or months.

At the sprawling campsite down the road from the protest site, there had been portable toilets, 500-gallon tanks of drinking water and an air-conditioned trailer with medical supplies provided by the state. But late Monday night, people at the camp said the medical trailer and water tanks had been removed, leaving them to scramble for a new water source for hundreds of people.

After a prayer ceremony at the construction site one recent afternoon, a few young men on horseback opened the gate and rode onto the land. A few days earlier they might have been arrested and accused of trespassing, but that day there were no officers to stop them.

The pipeline company said that it temporarily stopped work here this month while "law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests," but that construction was continuing elsewhere.

Energy Transfer Partners has sued Mr. Archambault and six other people over the protests. In a federal lawsuit filed last week, the company accused them and other protesters of blocking access to the construction site, threatening workers and trespassing onto private land.

Jon Eagle Sr., the historic preservation officer for the Standing Rock Sioux, watched from the side of the road as the young men rode into the grassy field, toward a construction floodlight and heaps of excavated dirt. He did not want the pipeline to breach this land. But he did not seem to approve of this either.

"They need to stay out," he said. "They don't know where the burials are. They don't know where the sacred sites are. I'm trying my best to keep the peace."

Emergency services recalled from Dakota Access Pipeline protest site (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Max Grossfeld |

Posted: Tue 4:19 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 6:24 PM, Aug 23, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. - Demonstrators protesting construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline had been using state resources at their camp until Monday, when the Department of Emergency Services decided to recall them.

Those resources included a mobile command trailer, a medical aid trailer and a water trailer.

A DES official says Tribal Emergency Management requested the resources, which were supposed to be used on tribal land. He says the services brought the trailers back when he heard the trailers were located on land owned by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Reports of unlawful behavior, he says, also influenced his decision.

"This isn't a flood, a fire, an icestorm. This is an event that originally needed some support for the responders dealing with it and at this stage in the game, the event's not an emergency," says Greg Wilz, Homeland Security Division director.

Wilz says all the equipment is back in Bismarck and ready to use in case of emergency.

People concerned with Highway 1806 barricade ask Morton County Commissioners for answers (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Megan Hahn |

Posted: Tue 9:43 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Wed 8:07 AM, Aug 24, 2016

MANDAN, N.D. - The Morton County Board of Commissioners heard public testimony regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline for nearly in an hour at Tuesday's meeting.

All those who chose to speak during the hearing were in opposition of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

County Commissioners say the purpose of the meeting was to give people the chance to weigh-in on the matter in a peaceful manner.

About a dozen people addressed Morton County Commissioners in front of a packed room Tuesday. The recurring frustration for many: removal of barriers along Highway 1806, which restrict access to areas south of Mandan including Cannon Ball and Fort Yates.

"I didn't appreciate it when they put up that block. I have granddaughters and daughters that work at Fort Yates and live in Bismarck. It's humiliating and intimidating when the cops come

up to your car and look in your car like we are doing something wrong," said a speaker who addressed the Commission.

"I am embarrassed for the law enforcement officers that I meet on the road, blocking people from seeing this protest," said a woman who addressed the Morton County Commission.

Highway 1806 was blocked up last Tuesday past the veteran's cemetery because of public safety concerns, according to the Morton County Sheriff's department. Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier didn't speak at Tuesday's meeting.

While many spoke out against the traffic interception point, the Board of Commissioners deferred all questions regarding the barricade to law enforcement. The County Commission says they do not have the authority to remove the barricade.

"We thought it was very important to allow these individuals who are protesting to have a voice in a public forum. I think that's very important. As it relates to the traffic control point itself, that is a question that I'll have to refer back to county sheriff, our incident commander Kyle Kirchmeier," said Chairman Cody Schulz, Morton County Board of Commissioners.

Many of those present say they want answers from government officials.

"I don't want any part of it. I don't think that's right. And it's not fair. And that blockade, that should not be there. That's all I have to say," said another speaker.

The Board of Commissioners says they're working toward creating an open and peaceful dialogue with protesters.

Those who spoke against the blockade say not only does it affect commuters driving to work, but it's reduced business for local shops and reduced access to recreation areas.

Both the North Dakota Highway Patrol and North Dakota Department of Transportation have the authority under North Dakota Century Code to close a highway. This decision to temporarily close Highway 1806 was made by DOT and HP August 17.

Pipeline foes take fight to Bismarck, Washington D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 23, 2016 at 6:38 p.m.

BISMARCK – Waving the flags of their tribes and singing the songs of their ancestors, more than 200 protesters marched across a Missouri River bridge in Bismarck Tuesday ahead of a federal court hearing that will determine the fate of the Dakota Access oil pipeline's route in North Dakota.

“This water belongs to all of us,” Vic Camp, a 41-year-old from South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation, said as he rallied the crowd before the march. “We all know that tomorrow in Washington they're going to make a decision that affects every single one of us.”

The march across the 2,370-foot-long Veterans Memorial Bridge aimed to show solidarity with the 2,000-some protesters encamped about 50 miles south on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, near the pipeline construction site along State Highway 1806 north of Cannon Ball.

Indeed, many marchers were from the campsite, including 25-year-old Kin-sin-ta Joseph and her 16-year-old sister Kis-dya:n-te' Joseph, who got help from a portable PA system so their river song would carry over the wind and traffic noise. The members of northern California's Hoopa Valley Tribe said their chairman urged members to assist Standing Rock, and about 25 made the trip.

While they've taken part in protests before, joining a blockade against logging companies just a few months ago, the older sister said it's never been this big, with so many tribes involved.

"This is really spectacular," she said. "We've been waiting for this kind of gathering."

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline. It would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the reservation and be the largest oil pipeline from the Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day to Patoka, Ill.

Standing Rock members oppose the river crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped construction at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct. But the protest hasn't impacted pipeline construction elsewhere along the four-state route, including in North Dakota, company spokeswoman Lisa Dillinger said via email.

"We have temporarily deferred grading activities across a short section of the right-of-way (less than 1 mile) while law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests in light of the fact that we have the necessary permits and approvals to work at this site," she said.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., will consider Wednesday the tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. A lawyer for the tribe said the judge has indicated he will rule from the bench or shortly after the hearing.

Film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside the courthouse in Washington, and actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the rally, according to a statement.

Protesters on Tuesday blocked traffic only briefly while crossing the street to get to the bridge's pedestrian walkway, and law enforcement reported no problems with the march. Dozens of passing drivers honked their horns in solidarity, though one yelled an expletive aimed at Native Americans.

Camp said protesters will refrain from violence if the judge's ruling doesn't go their way.

“The only way violence will happen is if the cops provoke it and they attack us,” he told Forum News Service, adding, “We have our women and we have our children. We have grandparents here.”

When asked what will happen if the judge denies the injunction and Dakota Access tries to resume construction, Camp said, “Then we’ll start blockading.”

“We’ll do what we can with our bodies to keep the machines from coming in,” he said.

Four labor unions sent Gov. Jack Dalrymple a letter strongly encouraging him to use the power of his office to keep workers safe and ensure protesters are “following the letter of the law.”

The general presidents of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and United Association (UA), said the actions of protesters endanger not only themselves but construction workers and equipment, as well as local law enforcement who’ve bolstered their local presence.

They said the pipeline has created about 4,000 construction jobs in North Dakota along 346 miles of pipeline.

“While they may have a right to protest, we also have a right to do our jobs in a safe environment,” they said.

Protesters, insisting their actions are peaceful, appealed to the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and churches to send observers to the site. They also continued to rail against what they contend is an unnecessarily heavy law enforcement presence, including a checkpoint about six miles south of Mandan that restricts southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to emergency response vehicles and local traffic such as farmers, ranchers and homeowners.

Standing Rock Protestors Find New Resources After State Withdraws Support (KXMB TV, Bismarck)

Published 08/23 2016 04:04PM

Updated 08/23 2016 07:03PM

Protestors of the Dakota Access Pipeline are finding ways to sustain their effort after state officials pulled relief resources from their camp near Cannonball.

Ben Smith has the story.

For nearly a week.

Several state-owned trailers provided water, shelter, and a place to help those sick or hurt.

Monday morning, news came that these resources would soon be gone.

"It was shocking, it was shocking. I didn't expect that,"

"It's a little different now because everything is going to be outdoors where we had the convenience of having everything indoors in case of the rain, weather wind. Resources got taken away from us quick but we got them back," says Joenelle Leingang

As fast as they disappeared, new support came in.

Standing Rock Paramedics erected a tent in which to treat people.

The tribes road department also pitched in, delivering a giant tank of water.

"They keep this full to fill our buffalo tanks with water. We have two, three more possibly coming in from the Cheyenne River who had donated theirs so water supply is going to be back on track again," says Leingang

(Ben Smith, KX News) Not all state-resources have gone. There is one ambulance that is still here, to provide a backup for standing rock paramedics,

"They left the ambulance as an extra resource for us. Because like I said, we still provide services to all the reservation so of course our number of ambulances is limited," says DeAnn Werre, Standing Rock Paramedic

She says it's not your typical day as a Standing Rock paramedic.

"We've been able to bring in extra staff to be able to provide services,"

"We've pulled together and got our resources together and are able to provide the same services for people,"

It seems to be the theme of the effort, pulling together under one cause.

It's very overwhelming, it's great, phone calls, where can I bring it to...

I just would like the public to see for themselves. There is nothing negative going on here at all,

She says for now, this area near the Cannonball river has become a second home.

Protesters attend Morton County Commission meeting (Bismarck Tribune)

CAROLINE GRUESKIN and LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

15 hrs ago

The Dakota Access Pipeline protests returned to the Bismarck-Mandan area Tuesday, as protesters walked across the Memorial Bridge and testified before the Morton County Commission.

Several speakers asked the commissioners to remove a roadblock that prevents drivers from traveling south on Highway 1806 from Mandan to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, though

commission chairman Cody Schulz said after the meeting the commission does not have authority to remove the block.

Speakers told the commissioners and the approximately 30 people who attended the meeting that the block impedes travel, punishes the tribe's economy and can be humiliating to cross.

The highway has been blocked since Aug. 17, when Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the protest had become unlawful and the road unsafe, points the protesters have contested throughout the week.

Marilyn Kary, who works in Fort Yates, said the roadblock makes it difficult for teachers on the reservation who commute.

Chase Iron Eyes, the Democratic candidate for North Dakota's lone U.S. House seat, said the roadblock was intended to punish the tribe and has disadvantaged businesses in the region.

He said Native Americans and white North Dakotans tend to live in separate worlds.

"Interactions should be encouraged," he said, suggesting the block did the opposite by preventing commerce.

Cody Hall of Eagle Butte, S.D., spokesman for the Red Warrior Camp, said the blockade simply sets the wrong tone.

"It felt like what black people felt in the South," he told commissioners, adding that he was questioned at the blockade, while a white friend was not.

Clyde Bellecourt, co-founder of the American Indian Movement, asked members of the Morton County Commission to consider what future generations would think if the water were contaminated.

"I'm 80 years old. I've lived my life. I don't want my grandchildren to ever question," he said. "Grandpa, why didn't you say nothing?"

He encouraged the commissioners to visit the protest camps.

"You have nothing to be afraid of," he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, about 200 protesters took their cause to the Memorial Bridge, staging a peaceful march from Bismarck to Mandan.

Banners, bright regalia and flags of many Native American nations were presented as smart phones and a drone documented the latest chapter in the protest.

At the staging area, multiple speakers encouraged songs and prayers from participants. Drums pounded in support of discontinuing pipeline construction.

Many protesters held up bottled water mixed with oil to represent the contamination they believe the pipeline would cause to their drinking water, reminding everyone present the water had to be safe for future generations.

Shouts of "save our water" could be heard by protesters as they ascended the bridge.

There was little presence of law enforcement for most of the demonstration except for when North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and local police briefly blocked traffic as marchers crossed to Front Avenue to reach the pedestrian portion of the bridge. The protesters kept to the walkway and held up their signs as motorists honked their horns.

Those gathered Tuesday insisted their message has been a peaceful one.

"I am here because of the water, because of the grandchildren," said Nora Old Man, who held up a water bottle and sang with her grandsons.

Sunny Red Bear, of Eagle Butte, S.D., said she was participating in the march for her 7-year-old son who joined her Tuesday.

"This is about our future. This is about thinking generationally. This is about everyone it affects, community after community. They are choosing oil, wealth and money over our future. I want to protect that the best I can and to show my son to stand up for what's right."

SOUTH DAKOTA

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city (Rapid City Journal)

Mike Anderson Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 24, 2016

Rapid City will soon hire 15 new firefighters, thanks in large part to a $1 million federal grant awarded to the city fire department last week.

The new hires will fill a staffing shortage that Fire Chief Mike Maltaverne has urged the city council to address since 2014.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant, or SAFER, administered through the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will pay the salaries and benefits of nine new firefighters for the next two years. The other six out of 15 new positions will be paid for out of the city’s budget.

“In 2014, we started to identify that, with the way our demands for service were increasing, our resources were starting to spread thin,” Maltaverne said on Tuesday. "Our firefighters were going on more and more calls and the staff increases weren’t keeping up with the demand for our services.”

In a memo to Mayor Steve Allender earlier this year, Maltaverne said that in 1995, the city’s fire department had 81 operational firefighters with an annual call volume of 3,600, or 44 calls per

firefighter. Rapid City has grown significantly in population and geographical area since the 90s, and with that growth has come more fires.

The department's annual call volumes have grown an average of 7.6 percent since then, Maltaverne said, putting last year's total call volume for the department at 17,012 for its 117 firefighters, or about 145 calls per firefighter.

Maltaverne knew it would require some extra funding to get 15 new firefighters on board to fill the service gap and ease the pressure on existing personnel. So he asked the Rapid City Council to pay for six employees if he could find a grant to pay for nine more.

"We thought that would be more realistic, that the city would be able to fund that," Maltaverne said.

The City Council has already agreed to fund three positions, and the mayor has included another three in next year's proposed budget which will be the subject of a public discussion at 6:30 p.m. today in the city council chamber.

"We clearly articulated the need for additional staffing and our elected officials along with FEMA responded, and for that we are grateful," Maltaverne said.

Though the SAFER grant will only pay the other nine new firefighters through two years of service, Maltaverne is confident that will be plenty of time for the council to figure out how to keep funding those positions indefinitely.

"What would be the point of hiring firefighters for two years and then having the city lay them off?" Maltaverne said. "That doesn't solve the long-term problem."

The grant calls for the new hires to be made within 180 days, a deadline Maltaverne has no worries about meeting. This spring, the Rapid City Fire Department went through a hiring process and compiled a selection of suitable candidates.

"We reviewed that and we feel there are a sufficient number of qualified candidates to fill those positions," he said. "We've got a really good deep list of potential employees."

Maltaverne hopes to have all 15 slots filled by Jan. 1, 2017, which is when the SAFER grant funds will be awarded to the city.

Applying for the grant was a comprehensive and competitive process, Maltaverne said, adding that he sees FEMA's decision to award the funds as a form of validation.

"Getting this grant clearly confirms that the need was there," he said.

New fire burning near Angostura Reservoir (KBHB radio)

Gary Matthews

KBHB Radio
August 23, 2016

HOT SPRINGS, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire Dispatch says federal, state and volunteer fire crews are battling a wildfire in the southern black hills.

The Maitland CA fire is located approximately 6.5 miles southwest of Angostura Reservoir.

Dispatch says the fire had reached 34.5 acres as of Tuesday afternoon.

They list the fire as human caused.

There is no word on any structures being threatened.

UTAH

American Fork fish could contain toxic mine waste (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 23 2016 05:30PM • Updated 57 minutes ago

Some of the sediments that have turned American Fork River's normally clear waters into a black soup could be loaded with arsenic, lead and other toxic metals associated with historical mining operations at the scenic canyon's headwaters.

Officials from several local, federal and state agencies gathered at Tibble Fork Dam on Tuesday to figure out what to do about the sediment releases, which commenced sometime after the 10-acre lake began draining Saturday as part of $7.3 million project to upgrade the aging earthen structure.

The incident shocked conservationists who fear an ecological catastrophe is unfolding in one of Utah's most popular natural areas, located in the Wasatch Mountains just outside Provo.

"I think it's a $20 million cleanup and it will take years," said Mark Allen, founder of the group Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District sponsored the project with federal matching dollars in an effort to make the dam seismically safe and extend its life for another 50 years. The lake bed is coated with 5 to 10 feet of fine-grained black sediments that have accumulated behind the dam and impaired its ability to store water, though the lake has remained a popular, well-stocked trout fishery.

A sediment release "was not unexpected, given this was a rehabilitation project," said the district's lawyer, John Jacobs. "There may have been a bit more than was anticipated. This is a 60-year-old dam, and it has a lot of sediments behind it."

During the review process, federal officials had considered dredging the lake bed as a way to restore the dam's usefulness, but testing indicated that levels of arsenic and lead exceeded safety

standards and made these sediments too dangerous to move, according to the environmental assessment conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The metals contaminating Tibble Fork originated in Live Yankee, Globe and other abandoned gold and silver mines that perforate the head of American Fork Canyon's northern branch, according to Allen. He says the state is doing too little to hold landowners accountable for these environmental "time bombs." Many of these old mines are located on land now owned by Snowbird Ski Resort in and around its Mineral Basin.

The cost of extracting and disposing of the material accumulated in the Tibble Fork lake bed would be $8.4 million, so the option was abandoned in favor of raising the dam by 9 feet. The environmental assessment insisted the contractor use "best management practices" to ensure the toxic sediments were not pushed downstream.

The measures are detailed in a construction permit issued this year by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which would not immediately provide a copy of the permit. It did send personnel to the dam Tuesday to determine whether the project was in compliance with the permit.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also sent emergency-response personnel to the site.

"It was so damning that they didn't want to touch the sediment," Allen said. "Your project is only as good as your most stupid backhoe operator. It said it was too toxic to remove it, but now it's in the river. How are you going to clean up 10 miles of trout streams?"

The water district hired Provo-based RB&G Engineering to design the project and Whitaker Construction, of Brigham City, to build it. RB&G's project leader, Brad Price, did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

Allen and members of Trout Unlimited spent Monday in the canyon, photographing the sludge pouring down the river channel, which smelled of gunpowder and rotting fish.

"In the main canyon, the water looks like Mississippi mud," said Grant Bench, an officer with a Utah County Trout Unlimited chapter. "I don't know how a cold-water fish is supposed to survive in that."

But federal and state officials were not ready to declare a disaster Tuesday.

"We are taking samples above [the dam] and below to establish baseline and impact below in the water column," said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

Division of Wildlife Resources aquatics biologist Mike Slater zapped the creek in various places with electroshock equipment Tuesday in search of breathing fish.

WYOMING

Wildfires close Yellowstone's south entrance, burn near west entrance (Billings Gazette)

By JORDON NIEDERMEIER jniedermeier@billingsgazette.com

All roads were open in Yellowstone National Park Tuesday despite several fires growing in the area including a blaze blocking access to the Park's south entrance.

The West Entrance remained open. But, the Maple fire has burned more than 27,000 acres about five miles northeast of West Yellowstone and reached within a tenth-mile of the roadway to the west entrance. The fire grew more than 4,600 acres on Monday and is mostly growing on the north side of the burn area. It is not expected to cross the road to the west entrance. If fire activity or smoke increases, pilot cars will be used to guide cars through the area, said a National Park Service news release.

The release said fire activity closed a stretch of U.S. Highway 89 in Grand Teton National Park between Leeks Marina and north to Flaggs Ranch. The closure affects travelers planning to use Yellowstone National Park's south entrance. The road closure is expected to stay in effect until Wednesday. Lizard Creek Campground has also been evacuated.

About 100 people are monitoring the Maple fire. Resources including firefighting aircraft and engines are in the area. However, the fire is not being actively suppressed as it was determined to be caused by a lightning strike and wildfires are an integral part of the Yellowstone ecosystem, said Barbara Dougan, NPS fire information officer.

Dougan said firefighters will work to keep the blaze north of the roadway and east of the Madison River, away from the town of West Yellowstone.

"At this time the fire is doing very well on that side and doing the job of reducing downed debris that's on the ground," she said.

Dougan said officials are still working to determine the cause of the nearby 190 acre Boundary fire but it is believed to have been caused by human activity. Firefighters worked to suppress that wildfire and it was about 85 percent contained as of Tuesday morning.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Tropical System Eyes Florida, Southeast US, May Develop Into Hurricane (USA Today)

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, August 23, 2016

What's now just a disorganized mass of thunderstorms 1,600 miles from Miami could develop into the first hurricane to hit Florida in nearly 11 years late this weekend, forecasters warn.

There's a 60% chance the storm system, known for now only as "99L," could develop into a tropical depression in the Atlantic Ocean later this week. If it swirls into a tropical storm, it will be named Hermine (Her-MEEN).

The system then could rapidly intensify into a large, potentially dangerous major hurricane that would target the Southeast U.S. coast Sunday or Monday, Weather Underground meteorologist Jeff Masters said.

However, as meteorologist John Morales of NBC-6 in Miami notes, "tropical weather forecasting is a very inexact science."

Overall, 6- or 7-day forecasts of tropical cyclone location and intensity are "generally not very good," according to Penn State University meteorologist Jon Nese.

But whether or not the system becomes a tropical storm or hurricane, gusty winds, heavy rains, and possible flash floods and mudslides could occur over the islands of the northeastern Caribbean Sea and the Bahamas, the National Hurricane Center said.

By Sunday, the system could bring deteriorating weather and sea conditions to the east coast of Florida, AccuWeather said.

Most of the computer models meteorologists use to forecast tropical weather show the system hitting the Southeast U.S. between Florida and South Carolina sometime Sunday or later, Masters said.

One computer model, the European, shows the storm crossing Florida and emerging as a major hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico by next week, according to WeatherBell meteorologist Ryan Maue. But the American model, the GFS, does not show that movement.

The most recent hurricane to strike Florida was Wilma in October 2005, AccuWeather said.

A separate system, Tropical Storm Gaston, is projected continue spinning in the central Atlantic. It could become a hurricane later this week, weather officials say. That storm however, is expected to remain over the open Atlantic, though it could stir up strong surf along the eastern shores of Florida, said Scott Spratt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla.

Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

Inside Radio, August 24, 2016

Each natural disaster presents its own challenges, and the floods that have inundated portions of Southern Louisiana are presenting wireless companies and federal regulators with a now-familiar picture. FM radio stepped in to fill a void left by cellphones rendered useless during an emergency.

"I just cannot thank you guys enough for getting the message out," Denham Springs, LA mayor Gerard Landry said in an appearance on Guaranty Broadcasting's "Talk 107.3" WBRP, Baton Rouge. "I haven't seen a newspaper or watched TV for eight or nine days but everybody has a radio—thank goodness for that," he added.

His comments illustrate the emergency role radio plays during natural disasters, one that broadcasters have repeatedly used as an incentive to wireless companies reluctant to activate FM chips already installed in most cellphones. It's been a tough sell.

"We had stations on the air 24/7 giving out information—this has been horrific and I guess people who are not living here don't understand," Louisiana Association of Broadcasters president Polly Prince Johnson said. "Some of these places didn't have electricity and if the FM chip was on their phones they could have been listening to our local broadcasters who were giving lifesaving information."

Helping to strengthen radio's case was the fact that AT&T suffered a massive outage across the region, leaving a large number of residents and the Louisiana State Police with phones that didn't work. Guaranty Media's Baton Rouge market manager Gordy Rush says when flooding closed a 55-mile stretch of Interstate 12 it left thousands of people stranded on the highway for more than 28 hours with radio as

a lifeline after his stations jerry-rigged a connection to the state police to relay critical information to drivers stuck miles from any exit ramp. "This all played out on the radio," Rush said.

Johnson says it wasn't just stuck motorists who were impacted by the cellular outage. It was also families trying to reconnect. "People couldn't make phone calls for three or four days and then it was sporadic at best—so loved ones were calling the radio stations trying to get the information out," he explained.

While the wireless industry points out that the new Emergency Alert System sends alerts to cellphones on a localized basis, last week in Louisiana it seems the messages were having the opposite effect as intended. With frequent alerts around the clock, many people whose phones did work became annoyed and switched them off to preserve battery life. "It was a nuisance," Rush said.

More than a dozen people lost their lives during the Louisiana flooding and while industry lobbyists are likely to tread carefully so as not to appear to be capitalizing on Louisiana's suffering, those high stakes are what many broadcasters say proves the need for radio on smartphones. "If the FM chip was turned on, people are able to tell them that the water is rising and they should get their stuff and get out," Johnson said. "It's in times of disaster when it is so important and it can save lives."

Added Rush, "This is a matter of life or death."

After briefly flirting with the idea of lobbying for a federally imposed chip mandate in 2010, the National Association of Broadcasters quickly backed away from the idea. For the past six years, the NAB has instead pushed the telecom industry to activate FM chips on its own. In the ensuing period, Sprint embraced the NextRadio app—which activates the FM chip—three years ago, and by the end of this year, AT&T and T-Mobile will follow Sprint's lead. The exception is any customer that uses an iPhone since Apple doesn't include FM radio technology inside its handsets.

"NAB continues to support voluntary activation of FM chips by the carriers," spokesman Dennis Wharton said. "This is a no-brainer from a public safety perspective, as FEMA's [administrator] Craig Fugate has noted. We hope all the carriers—along with Apple—will look at the Baton Rouge tragedy as an opportunity to do the right thing and voluntarily light up the chips."

Back in Louisiana, more than 100,000 households remain without power, but some things are beginning to return to normal. Rush is back at his desk after he jumped from market manager to air personality, spending 32 hours on the air from Friday until Tuesday as some staffers were coping with flooded homes.

Guaranty Media began simulcasting "Talk 107" WBRP on its 100,000-watt classic rock sister "Eagle 98.1" WDGL throughout the storm while country "100.7 The Tiger" WTGE relayed WAFB-TV with station cut-ins. Rush says for a time it looked as though WBRP may have been under threat as its transmitter building was six inches from taking on water after drainage canals backed up and overflowed into its industrial part tower site. Fortunately, the water eventually receded.

Rush, who made it through Hurricane Katrina a decade ago, says the two disasters have left him with an unmistakable conclusion. "Twice now, cellular phones have not been dependable; they've failed," he said, adding, "Radio is a lifeline through this stuff."

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.
- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe's stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. ("Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent.") Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve (Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here's a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California's central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire's Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff’s Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana’s largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire’s perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

"The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations," Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

—

WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe’s cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company’s assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small

construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see

that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn’t consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

“The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites,” Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. “The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline.”

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

“The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux,” said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company’s attorney, William Leone, told the court, “This is not a cowboy process.”

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday’s hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can’t begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn’t immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday’s hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

“We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters,” she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group’s arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

“Our message remains the same,” he said. “We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public.”

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

“A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million,” the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

“Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court,” Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe’s historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

“It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them,” Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary
The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary

A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.

Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency’s operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.

Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.

“Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah,” said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job.”

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016
SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):
11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are “not good in the near future” because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

Region VIII Clips

Friday, August 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A "National Cybersecurity Center" in Colorado Springs will hire a CEO next month and host a national conference in November.
- **Montana:** Nine counties are in severe drought status.
- **North Dakota:** More pipeline protest stories: the NY Times details who wants what; the Bismarck Tribune reports the builders do not yet have a written easement from the Corps, though they do have permission to get the easement; the Tribune also reports on camp life among the protesters; National Public Radio did an overview piece. Snopes.com refuted social media reports that the state had cut off water to the protesters.
- **South Dakota:** The Sioux Falls Argus Leader looks back at the flood a year ago.
- **Utah:** Toxic sediments continue to flow into the American Fork River. It is hoped that by today a diversion will have been built around the lake to allow water to continue to flow down the river without continuing contamination. Health officials have not yet finished analyzing the water or issued guidelines as to how to respond.
- **Wyoming:** Maps show where the Yellowstone Park fires stood earlier this week…. *The Billings Gazette* reports that both fire and ice hampered the park yesterday.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: An environmental column in Politico.com today includes several items of interest: environmentalists trying to recreate the coalition that stopped the Keystone pipeline to fight the Dakota Access pipeline; a comment by a judge in the pipeline case that may show he leans toward an injunction; affordable flood insurance becoming an issue in the Louisiana Senate race; a GAO study that supports FEMA's position saying community-based flood insurance won't work; an old Florida dike that may be vulnerable to the approaching storm… Yahoo news reports on competing hurricane forecasts.

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Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

UTAH:

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

WYOMING:

Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

STORIES

COLORADO

Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs to hire CEO and host national conference (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman

The National Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs plans to hire a CEO next month and will host officials from across the country at a three-day conference in November at The Broadmoor.

A four-person search committee from among the center's 12 directors will conduct interviews and make a recommendation to the board, which plans to select the CEO by mid- to late September, said Eric Hopfenbeck, the center's deputy executive director. Hopfenbeck was speaking at a panel discussion Wednesday about the facility held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. The board began the nationwide search process in early July with help from Heidrick & Struggles International Inc., a Chicago-based executive search firm. The company helped create a job description and determine pay and other details about the position.

"The budget, staff and management structure (of the center) will be determined after the CEO is hired," Hopfenbeck said. "We are still in the development stage, so we are collecting contact information from consultants, partners and subject-matter experts who want to support the NCC."

The center's three-person staff is headed by retired Army Lt. Gen. Ed Anderson, who serves as interim executive director and also is executive director of strategic, military, science, space and security initiatives for University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak.

The panel discussion was part of a two-day cybersecurity training and technology forum hosted by the Colorado Springs chapter of the Information Systems Security Association that also included a keynote address by Mark Weatherford, a NCC board member who also is a former deputy undersecretary for cybersecurity of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The newly hired CEO will have a major role in organizing a three-day National Cybersecurity Institute the center will host Nov. 13-15 at The Broadmoor for invited guests that include governors and attorneys general of all 50 states plus an undisclosed number of mayors and county commissioners, Hopfenbeck said. The event will bring real-time information on the latest cyber trends, security, best practices and education resources to the elected officials to help them better protect government computer systems, networks and critical public assets.

The conference will be the center's public launch. A Rapid Response Center to help small- to mid-sized businesses, nonprofits and government agencies combat and recover from cyber attacks, and a Cyber Research, Education and Training Center that will conduct research on cybersecurity threats and develop a cybersecurity workforce through education programs at UCCS and other schools around the state and nation, are expected to begin operations by next summer. UCCS is meeting with other colleges and universities to develop a cybersecurity curriculum, Hopfenbeck said.

The center also will work with the Western Cyber Exchange and Air Force CyberWorx. The exchange is a 5-year-old group started to strengthen local cybersecurity measures, attract more workers to the industry and share information about cyber attacks and how to prevent and defend against them. The exchange also operates the nation's only Information Sharing and Analysis Organization focused on the private sector. CyberWorx, formerly the Air Force Cyber Innovation Center, does research and testing of cyber security issues and technology at the Air Force Academy.

The center has received three proposals from contractors for renovations to a former TRW manufacturing plant at 3650 N. Nevada Ave. Renovations will be funded by nearly $8 million included in legislation signed into law by Gov. John Hickenlooper in May. A contractor is expected to be selected by mid-September. The building is owned by UCCS and will become the center's permanent home when renovations are complete. The center is operating from temporary offices at 1867 Austin Bluffs Parkway, Suite 200, across from the east end of the UCCS campus.

MONTANA

Lewis and Clark among 9 Montana counties in severe drought, 11 more under alert (Helena Independent Record)

TOM KUGLIN Independent Record

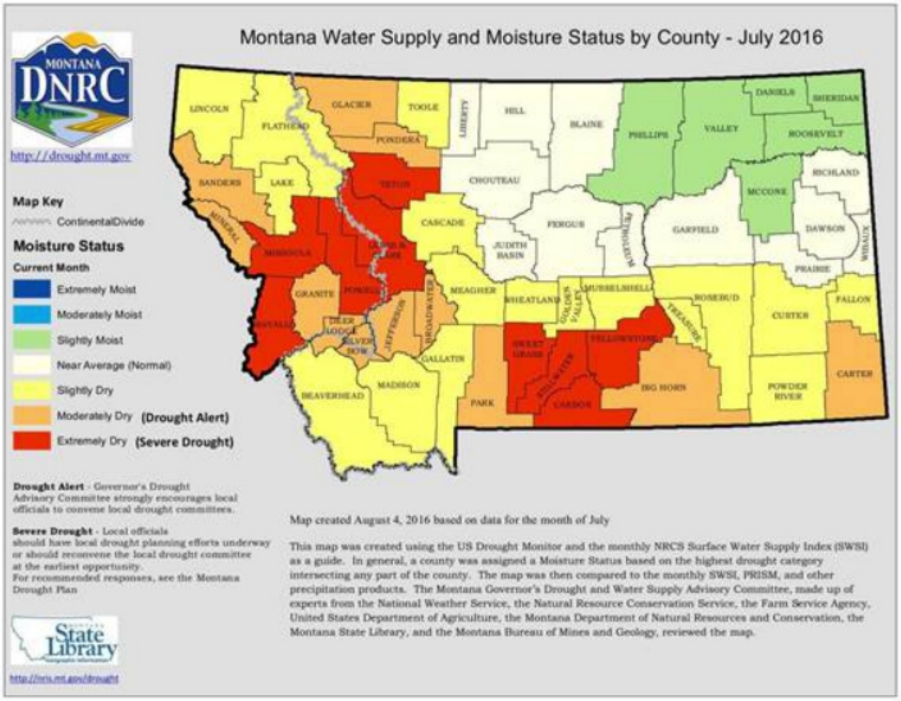
State officials say Lewis and Clark County is among nine in Montana that reached “severe drought” status Thursday, while another 11 counties have hit “drought alert.”

Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney is chairman of the Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee. He says the region has had two years of low snowpack, early runoff and little moisture under the soil.

The alert and severe designation are intended “to give high visibility to the continuing impacts of drought in affected areas, to prompt communication among stakeholders, and to direct state agencies to take the steps identified in the Montana Drought Response Plan to mitigate the impacts of drought,” Cooney wrote in a letter to county commissioners.

The counties in severe drought are Lewis and Clark, Powell, Teton, Missoula, Sweet Grass, Stillwater, Carbon and Yellowstone.

The seven counties put on alert status Thursday are Broadwater, Jefferson, Silver Bow, Granite, Mineral, Park and Big Horn. Glacier, Pondera, Carter and Sanders counties were previously on drought alert.


Montana Water Supply and Moisture Status by County - July 2016
MONTANA DNRC
http://drought.mt.gov
Map Key
ContinentalDivide
Moisture Status
Current Month
Extremely Moist
Moderately Moist
Slightly Moist
Near Average (Normal)
Slightly Dry
Moderately Dry (Drought Alert)
Extremely Dry (Severe Drought)
LINCOLN
FLATHEAD
GLACIER
TOOLE
LIBERTY
HILL
BLAINE
PHILLIPS
VALLEY
DANIELS
SHERIDAN
ROOSEVELT
PONDERA
SANDERS
LAKE
TETON
CHOUTEAU
RICHLAND
MCCONE
MINERAL
MISSOULA
LEWIS & CLARK
CASCADE
JUDITH BASIN
FERGUS
PETROLEUM
GARFIELD
DAWSON
WIBAUX
PRAIRIE
GRANITE
POWELL
MEAGHER
WHEATLAND
GOLDEN VALLEY
MUSSELSHELL
ROSEBUD
CUSTER
FALLON
RAVALLI
DEER LODGE
SILVER BOW
JEFFERSON
BROADWATER
SWEET GRASS
STILLWATER
YELLOWSTONE
TREASURE
GALLATIN
BEAVERHEAD
MADISON
PARK
CARBON
BIG HORN
POWDER RIVER
CARTER
State Library
http://nris.mt.gov/drought

Drought Alert - Governor's Drought Advisory Committee strongly encourages local officials to convene local drought committees.

Severe Drought - Local officials should have local drought planning efforts underway or should reconvene the local drought committee at the earliest opportunity.
For recommended responses, see the Montana Drought Plan

Map created August 4, 2016 based on data for the month of July

This map was created using the US Drought Monitor and the monthly NRCS Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) as a guide. In general, a county was assigned a Moisture Status based on the highest drought category intersecting any part of the county. The map was then compared to the monthly SWSI, PRISM, and other precipitation products. The Montana Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee, made up of experts from the National Weather Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana State Library, and the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, reviewed the map.

DNRC

Neither the alert nor the severe designations carry any official status with respect to state or federal disaster assistance programs.

The severe designation prompts county commissioners and disaster and emergency services coordinators to document any economic, health and safety emergencies that warrant either state or federal dollars, according to DNRC drought coordinator Ada Montague.

The alert status prompts local officials to document crop or livestock loss or impacts that could then trigger federal disaster assistance, she added.

“At the local level, certain watersheds have voluntarily developed local drought response plans, namely the Blackfoot, the Big Hole and the Jefferson,” Montague wrote in an email. “This is where water right holders have worked together to determine proper triggers and response mechanisms for individual water bodies.”

Montana’s drought plan was written in 1995 and the state is currently in the process of updating it, she said.

Lewis and Clark County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Paul Spengler says the driest portions of the county are in the north and along the Rocky Mountain Front. The Helena Valley is also seeing about a 2-inch shortfall on precipitation this year, he said.

The drought does affect irrigators that tap creeks or streams and dry-land farmers, but those on the Helena Valley Irrigation District drawing from the Missouri River are not limited, said Jim Foster with the district.

Irrigators depending on the Sun River, suffering from particularly low snow pack, have seen their water usage cut early this year.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who’s Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline’s charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment. The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota’s governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country's pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

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Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune
-

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

"They can't build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe," Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company's decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any "Jane and John Doe" from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe's request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

"Everybody thought they had it (easement)," said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. "This is really important information."

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

"We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There's nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court's injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday's news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

"The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she'll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people," Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

"It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making," Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

“When this is done, if it’s ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered

Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:

A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.

MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

⊗ mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Michael Klinski
Arugs Leader- Sioux Falls
Aug. 26, 2016

More than half a foot of rain fell on parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, sending flash floods ripping across roadways and pouring into basements. No one was hurt, but the waist-deep waters stranded scores of motorists and left hundreds mopping up wet basements.

Rainfall: More than half a foot of rain fell in parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, but the downpours were extremely localized. The National Weather Service recorded 2.61 inches at the airport, while Hartford had less than a quarter inch.

Vehicles: Scores of drivers were retrieving water-logged vehicles Friday morning. The phones were ringing off the hook at local towing companies. AAA reported 138 tows between 9 p.m. and 10 a.m.

Buildings: Home and business owners were mopping up after the storm. Hardware stores saw a run on sump pump and ShopVacs. HyVee on South Louise Avenue had two inches of water throughout the store.

No injuries reported. Sioux Falls Fire Rescue said Thursday night that it had no reports of injuries from the storm.

11:06 a.m. via reporter Mark Walker: A spokeswoman for the Empire Mall says rumors about a partial roof collapse are false. All but three stores were open for business. Yonkers was expected to reopen by 11:30 a.m.

11:04 a.m. via reporter Jill Callison: People with peaked roofs generally will come through a rainstorm like Thursday’s with good shape, although the torrents of water may saturate the ground and flood the basement.

Homes and business with flat roofs, however, may experience damage since the water had no place to go, said Laura Woods of Woods Roofing of Canton.

“With flat roofs, it just fills up and can’t get off fast enough,” she said.

However, her company had received few phone calls as of Friday morning. In large part, in a catastrophic situation, it takes a few days before a situation is assessed thoroughly, Woods said.

UTAH

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 25 2016 07:30PM • Updated 13 minutes ago

Although "best management practices" were to be used to keep Tibble Fork Reservoir's sediments out of the American Fork River, the Utah water district that is rehabilitating the dam drained the reservoir last weekend in a manner that allowed the river to incise a deep channel through 12 feet of potentially toxic muck and push the filth down one of Utah's favorite trout streams. While the water has since cleared somewhat, the sediment releases have continued virtually unabated because water officials cannot shut off releases without dewatering the river.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District's contractor is now digging a channel and laying pipe to divert the river's flow around 10-acre lake bed, contaminated from a legacy of gold and silver mining in the canyon's headwaters.

"They are working around the clock to do it. We said it would be within four days, and we will beat that schedule," said Brad Price of Provo-based RB&G Engineering, which designed the dam-rehab project. The river's flow should be moving around the lake by the pipe sometime Friday, he said, putting an end to the release of pollution that has been killing fish and fouling the popular canyon outside Provo for nearly a week.

Meanwhile, test results from water samples taken Monday and Tuesday had trickled back, but officials were still analyzing them late Thursday. The Utah Division of Water Quality planned to post the results once analysis was complete. Officials also are awaiting results from sediment and fish samples.

These results are crucial for advising northern Utah County water users how to respond to the crisis. The American Fork River feeds farms and secondary water systems in Highland and surrounding communities where residents were unsure whether they should keep the water off their lawns and gardens. There was enough uncertainty Wednesday that the U.S. Forest Service advised canyon visitors to stay out of the river as a matter of "common sense."

"I chased some kids out of the river [Wednesday] on my way home from work," said Jim Ireland, superintendent of Timpanogos Cave National Monument, which covers about a mile of stream in the lower reaches of the canyon. Monument personnel took water samples Monday that came back showing elevated levels of several metals, according to Ireland.

"We are concerned," he said. "We have a mission to preserve the resources of the monument and this is obviously an impact."

As of Thursday, however, the Utah County Health Department had refrained from advising residents against using the water for irrigating their yards.

Jonny Torrence, an angler who lives in American Fork, is believed to be the first to notice the fouled water when he entered the canyon Sunday evening to take his 3-year-old daughter fishing.

He had fished the canyon three days earlier and pulled 20 brown trout from the river's clear waters. But on Sunday, something was clearly wrong.

"I walked to the river and saw that it was absolutely brown," said Torrence, who snapped photos and alerted a local Trout Unlimited chapter that night. "I walked upriver and saw dead fish everywhere. It was flowing like pudding, it was so thick. By the time I got back to the road, it had gone down 3 or 4 inches because you could see the [deposited sediment] up on the banks that you couldn't see before.

"I was shocked. That's where my dad taught me to fly fish," he continued. "I would have thought it would be managed closer and they would take extreme precautions to prevent something like this."

Officials from the water district and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which helped fund the dam project, say precautions were taken and that it was expected that the reservoir draw-down would release some sediment.

However, the environmental assessment on the project indicated that no sediments should have escaped down the river. This is because levels of toxic heavy metals, such as arsenic and lead, are so elevated in the lake bed that the material could not be used as fill on the dam, whose crest will be raised 15 feet.

"The top layer of soil containing heavy metals would be tested, and any locations that exceed screening levels would not be disturbed," states the document, which the NRCS prepared. "These contaminated soils are not expected to be transported downstream and would therefore not affect the surrounding environment. Proper use of BMPs" — best management practices — "and timing of construction would almost eliminate contaminated soils from moving downstream during earth-disturbing activities."

Critics believe the heavy sediment releases would have been avoidable had the reservoir draw-down been better managed. Water flows into the reservoir at a rate of 12 cubic feet per second (cfs) from American Fork River and another 4 cfs from a side stream called Deer Creek, just a few hundred feet upstream of the dam. The plan was to release water at 40 cfs.

The actual rate of release remains a matter of dispute. But whatever the rate, it was apparently too fast, according to Brian Wimmer, president of the Trout Unlimited chapter that has been monitoring the spill and its aftermath.

A properly controlled release would have slowed the water flowing across the sediment bed once the reservoir emptied.

WYOMING

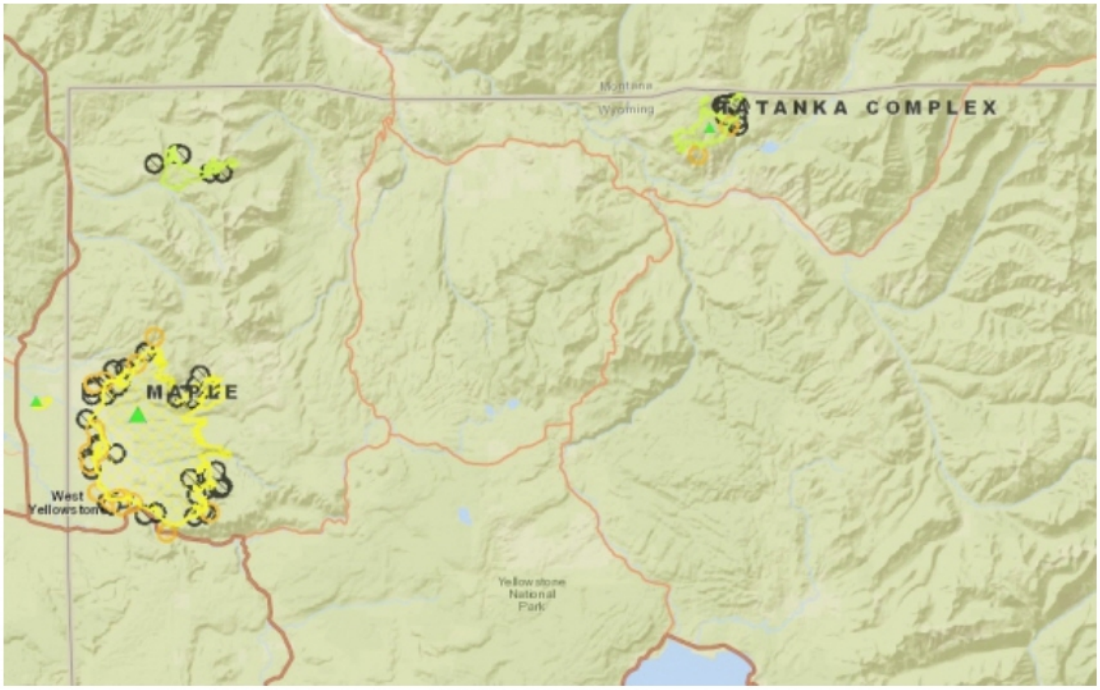
Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

By **Glenn Minnis** (**staff@latinpost.com**)

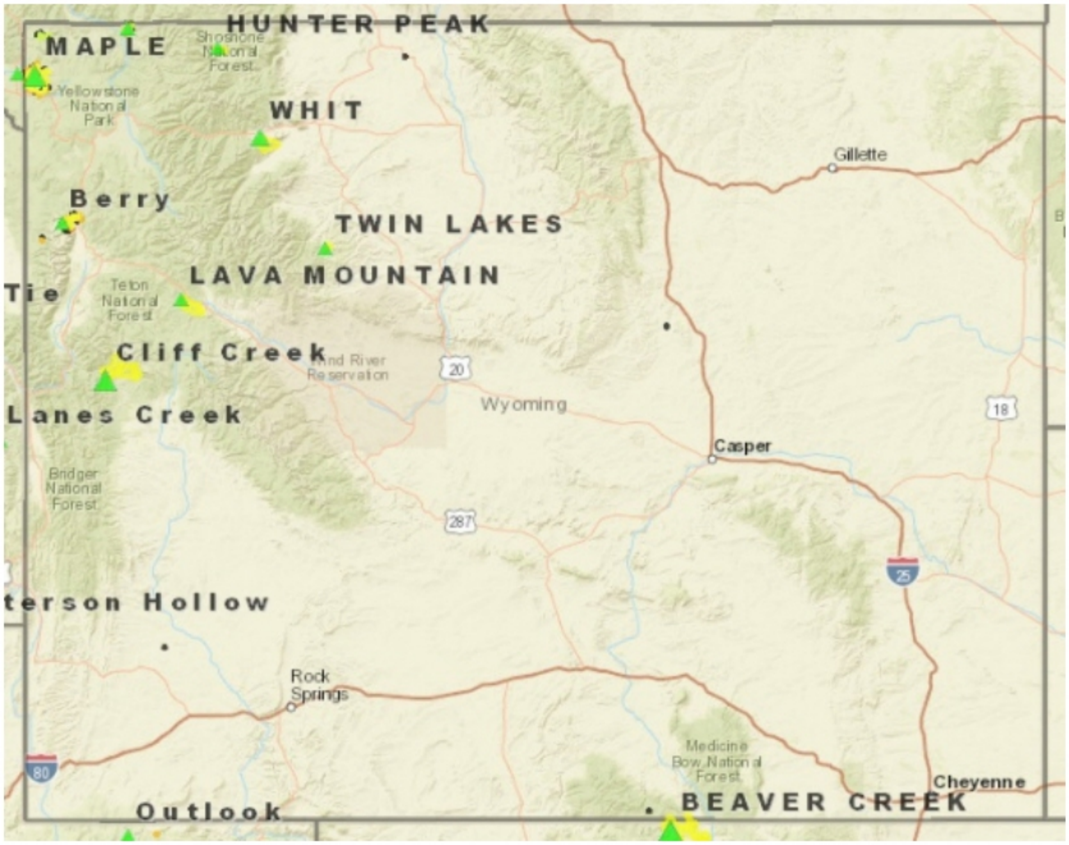
First Posted: Aug 25, 2016 06:45 AM EDT

The largest of four wildfires now simultaneously burning in Yellowstone Park (Maple, Buffalo, Fawn, Boundary fires) has Wyoming fire officials scrambling in a desperate effort to keep it from spreading to areas housing some of the park's tourist attractions.

As of Monday, all of the park's main tourist facilities remained open, even though the **Maple fire** (the biggest blaze among the four fires) is reported to have grown by nearly 10 square miles in a span of a few hours, prompting authorities to order more firefighters to the area. As authorities keep a vigilant eye on the nearby Madison Junction area of the park reserved for hiking, fishing and other activities, firemen are now working around the clock to contain the blaze. A 10-mile stretch of road leading to Yellowstone's South entrance has already been shuttered.



(Photo : Geomac.gov)


HUNTER PEAK
MAPLE
Shoshone National Forest
Yellowstone National Park
WHIT
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Berry
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LAVA MOUNTAIN
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Teton National Forest
Cliff Creek
nd River Reservation
20
Wyoming
18
Lanes Creek
Casper
Bridger National Forest
287
25
terson Hollow
Rock Springs
80
Medicine Bow National Forest
Cheyenne
Outlook
BEAVER CREEK

(Photo : Maple fire and Buffalo fire in Yellowstone National Park - Aug 2016)

Conditions Hampering Firefighters
Thus far, warm and windy weather has hampered efforts to contain the flames, which have charred approximately 35 square miles of primarily remote forest land. The proximity of the fire is reported to be between West Yellowstone, Montana, a town of about 1,300 situated just outside the park's western boundaries, and Madison Junction, a recreational area that sits within the park's confines.

Containment Essential
"As it's pushing off to the north and east, there's not a lot of values at risk as far as infrastructure goes," said Mike Johnson, a spokesman with the National Park Service. "We're going to keep the fire to the north of the West Entrance Road, and we have plans in place that if the fire were to move to the west toward West Yellowstone."

Madison Junction is also home to a campground, some visitor facilities and staff housing. It's described as where West Entrance Road intersects with the park's Grand Loop Road, linking such major tourist attractions as Old Faithful and Yellowstone Lake.

Johnson added firefighters are also busy battling the three smaller fires that have swept across the area.

As of early in the week, the Maple fire remained confined to about three miles away from Madison Junction and about four miles from the West Yellowstone Entrance station. On Sunday, the blaze spread several thousand more acres to now consume roughly 27,000 acres in total.

Meanwhile, authorities are now monitoring the two-week old, lightening caused Fawn fire by both ground and air with the acerage of the blaze currentlyb at around 1,800 acres.

The Buffalo fire in Tatanka Complex about 3 miles northeast of Tower Junction has simmered a bit and is now being managed via monitoring and so-called point-protection strategies.

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Both fire and ice briefly hindered travel into Yellowstone National Park on the National Park Service's centennial anniversary.

Authorities closed a portion of the Beartooth Highway Wednesday night due to snow and ice from a summer snowstorm. Crews cleared the roadway and reopened it Thursday morning.

The popular two-lane mountain highway runs from Red Lodge, Montana, over the Beartooth Pass to Yellowstone's Northeast Entrance.

At the other end of the park, a wildfire has closed a portion of the road leading to Yellowstone's South Entrance since Monday.

Visitors heading to Thursday's celebration and concert in Yellowstone from the south face an hour-long detour into Idaho.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

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FLOOD INSURANCE POLITICS IN LOUISIANA SENATE RACE: With the residents of Baton Rouge desperately trying to recover from flood waters, flood insurance has become a major feature of the state's senate race to replace retiring Sen. David Vitter. Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon endorsed Republican Rep. Charles Boustany for Senate, arguing that he is "the only candidate I trust to fight for affordable flood insurance." Congress faces a September 2017 deadline to reauthorize the government-run National Flood Insurance Program. "I look forward to working with Commissioner Donelon to write common-sense flood insurance policy as Louisiana's next United States Senator when Congress begins work on reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program in 2017," Boustany said in a statement.

…

NO ONE WANTS COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD INSURANCE: The Government Accountability Office on Wednesday backed FEMA's conclusion that community-based flood insurance isn't workable. As Finance Pro's Victoria Guida reports, FEMA was considering the option, under which communities could band together to buy flood insurance plans, but an analysis it released in March found the challenges too great to overcome. Now the GAO is supporting FEMA's conclusion. "The challenges outlined in the study outweigh any potential benefit when considered against limited community interest," GAO wrote. The National Flood insurance Program faces numerous challenges, not least its $23 billion in debt.

DECREPIT FLORIDA DIKE VULNERABLE TO LOOMING STORM: A potential tropical storm or hurricane developing in the Caribbean may be headed for Florida in the coming days, based on last night's outlooks from the National Hurricane Center — posing exactly the scenario the Army Corps of Engineers has feared as it struggles with excessively high water levels in Lake Okeechobee. Earlier this summer, the agency reduced flows from the large inland lake amid pressure from residents and GOP Gov. Rick Scott to stem the flow of nutrient-choked runoff that fed toxic algae along the Treasure Coast. But that means lake levels remain higher than usual going into the busiest part of hurricane season — increasing the pressure on the leaky, decades-old dike that protects the lives of tens of thousands of residents.

Even a weak storm could cause big problems if it dumps tons of rain. As of Wednesday, lake levels were at 14.67 feet above sea level, while 17.5 feet is the level at which the corps believes the dike becomes unstable. The lake is the site of one of the deadliest disasters in U.S. history, a 1928 hurricane that killed more than 2,500 people.

Too little, too late: Today the corps will announce its management plans for the week ahead, but by the time you can see a storm coming it's too late to do much. "We just can't release water that fast," said John Campbell with the corps' Jacksonville district. In fact, a few days out the corps has to stop making releases from the lake so they don't flood communities downstream when the storm comes.

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

By Andrew Freedman

Yahoo! News, August 25, 2016

For days, a war has been raging between two of the premiere computer models used to help predict the weather. On the one side, there's the National Weather Service's Global Forecast System, or GFS, which has maintained that a tropical wave moving across Puerto Rico and Hispaniola will not intensify into a hurricane and strike Florida this weekend.

But other models have consistently outshone the GFS in both routine and high impact, high risk forecast situations.

On the other side of the battle is the European, or Euro model, which is run by the European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasting in England.

The Euro, which gained notoriety by catching on to Hurricane Sandy's unprecedented and catastrophic left hook into New Jersey a week in advance, has rattled Florida with its depiction of an intense tropical storm or hurricane hitting the southern part of the state this weekend.

Run after run, the Euro had stuck to its guns for the past three days, insisting that the area of inclement weather designated as "Invest 99L" would soon become Hurricane Hermine, potentially going on to menace Gulf Coastal states as a major hurricane of Category 3 intensity or greater.

The battlefield may have just changed significantly, though. It's unclear if a peace treaty has been signed, or if this is just a temporary lull in the fighting, but the afternoon run of the Euro model trended toward the GFS solution of a weaker storm.

In other words, it is no longer showing an intense storm hitting Florida on Sunday, and then intensifying over the unusually warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

This news is being met with cautious relief on social media. For example, Miami NBC-TV meteorologist John Morales welcomed the new computer model trend.

Weather Channel meteorologist Justin Abraham comically celebrated what he sees as a potential GFS victory over the top-seeded European model.

However, Floridians shouldn't let down their guard yet, since the swirling cloud mass located north of Haiti could still persevere despite two main challenges.

Invest 99L has been contending with layers of dry air that have stifled the development of thunderstorms near the center of the storm. Such thunderstorms are needed in order for the weather system to form a closed area of low pressure at the surface and intensify.

The wind shear is forecast to diminish starting in about 24 to 36 hours, at which point it's possible both the Euro and GFS will be wrong, and the storm will intensify rapidly.

"Although upper-level winds are not conducive for significant development during the next day or so, they could become a little more favorable over the weekend or early next week when the wave is expected to approach southern Florida or the southeastern Gulf of Mexico," the National Hurricane Center said in a 2 p.m. ET statement on the weather system.

The Hurricane Center lowered Invest 99L's chances of developing into a tropical depression, tropical storm or hurricane to 70 percent through 5 days, down from 80 percent earlier in the day.

For now, Invest 99L looks like a poor excuse for a tropical weather system that is inspiring trepidation in a coastal state like Florida. Its center is exposed and comprised only of low-level clouds, and the largest thunderstorms are displaced several hundred miles away from the center.

In short, it looks like garbage, from a tropical meteorology perspective.

Whether it turns into something more impressive remains to be seen, but for now, it’s encouraging that the great model war of August 2016 may be coming to an end.

Region VIII Clips
Tuesday, August 30, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A hailstorm and flash flood in Colorado Springs made the CBS national news. Some drivers needed rescuing; up to two feet of hail was reported…. The *Colorado Springs Gazette* carried an AP story in which a Florida congressman said FEMA's response in Louisiana, with only one mobile home set up so far, was "pitiful."
- **Montana:** The south entrance to Yellowstone has been reopened after being closed because of wildfire… Two stories report on the economic impact of the fish kill in the Yellowstone River. Governor Bullock declared an emergency, making state unemployment and retraining aid available. Some businesses hope for SBA loans to help them survive the lost tourism…. A roundup of wildfires indicates general stabilization.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from the Christian Science Monitor and one from The Guardian. The Guardian story cites protesters saying their effort might fulfill old Indian prophecies. … United Blood Services will test the blood of only donors who might be at risk for the Zika virus. The FDA had recommended testing all donors, but the disease is rare in North Dakota. … An attorney argues in favor of a proposed safety rule that would require more than one person be aboard some freight trains.
- **South Dakota:** No stories today.
- **Utah:** *The Salt lake Tribune* reports on the status of four major wildfires in the state… The *St. George Spectrum* reports that two Michigan firefighters were killed Saturday in Minnesota on their way to fight the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when their truck left the road. The driver has been charged with criminal vehicular homicide; he allegedly fell asleep while driving, and had used marijuana earlier that day.
- **Wyoming:** *The Teton Valley News* reports on the status of the Berry Fire and, in a separate article, notes another fire and recent earthquake and urges preparedness.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, reported on existing drugs that might help fight the Zika virus.

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Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)

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Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

WYOMING:

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

STORIES

COLORADO

CBS: Colorado Springs Flooding. The CBS Evening News (8/29, story 5, 0:15, O'Donnell, 11.17M) reported, "Heavy rain and hail caused flash flooding today in Colorado Springs. Streets became rushing rivers. It came on so quickly, drivers got stuck. Their cars had to be pulled out of the flood waters."

Wild weather causes flooding, hail on Colorado Springs streets (KKTV news, Colorado Springs)

Posted: Mon 5:38 PM, Aug 29, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 5:46 AM, Aug 30, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (KKTV) Wild weather roared through Colorado Springs Monday afternoon, quickly causing streets to flood and keeping emergency personnel busy.

Several drivers were caught in the rapidly rising water. Just east of downtown on Pikes Peak Avenue, four people inside one car, including a toddler, had to be rescued after the vehicle got stuck in fast-moving water.

"I saw that it only came up to the middle of the hubcap there, so probably up to my knees," said Sgt. Erick Frederic with the Colorado Springs Police Department, who pulled the victims from the car.

No one was hurt in the incident, but were all left pretty shaken up.

"That's always a scary thing because if there becomes more water then the car could be pushed over," Frederic said. "So it's a matter of yes, stay in there until the car stops moving, but you don't want to get stuck in a moving car either."

Plenty of others were left stranded after water came rushing down streets.

“It’s kind of scary, cause you don’t know what might happen," said Susan Kellman.

Near Bijou and Logan, a snowplow that was trying to move nearly 2 feet of hail off the street ended up having to be towed.

Zach Smith faced another obstacle. His car was picked up by moving water and floated down the street.

"I was at work and my neighbor gave me a call and said, 'Hey, your car’s in the middle of the road; you should probably come move it,'" he told 11 News.

When Smith got home, he found the car sitting sideways, literally in the middle of the street.

“It’s pretty crazy. I’ve seen some pretty heavy rains, but not one to float a parked car like that.”

Another problem spot was off Platte Avenue near Tia Juana. A car got stuck near Fargo's Pizza after water quickly overtook the roadway.

Other areas of Platte, just east of Union, were underwater after storm drains got clogged by the amount of water running down the street.

"It's mayhem. You never know what you're going to get in Colorado. First we have hail, then we get some flooding," said Phillip Groskinsky.

HOMES DAMAGED BY FLOODING

Homeowners near Platte and Wahsatch in Colorado Springs say a dog was killed when fast-moving water got into their garage.

The Pikes Peak Red Cross went to more than 60 homes on Monday. Although not all were damaged, some were left unlivable.

Tim and Debbie Hertzog had their fence destroyed by rushing water, their backyard deck lifted up, and thousands of dollars worth of damage to the inside their home.

Debbie said she came home in the middle of the storm and got trapped in her garage.

"I just saw sheets of rain coming down, so I rushed home. ... As soon as I pulled into the garage, the river coming down the alley came into the garage with me," Debbie recalled. "I couldn't open the door without it coming in. So I called 911...they told me to stay sheltered in place in my car, unless [the water] came in the car.

"It did come to about a quarter of an inch, to the bottom of my car, while I was sitting in there. And I was probably in there an hour and a half, or maybe close to that, and I had no idea what was going on with my house. ... I couldn't get out either door without an onslaught of water. There was so much water."

Tim described the outside as chaos.

"She called me, so I came home and I was trying to get her out of the garage, but the water was almost 18 inches over the garage door, couldn't get the garage door open, so we just had to wait for the waters to subside.

"We weren't sure how bad it was going to get; if it was going to get worse."

Near Palmer Park and Union, one family said they worry about flooding -- like what happened Monday -- any time it rains.

"It's not something to mess with," said Jessica Staten. "If you can't see the road, don't go through it, plain and simple."

Staten snapped video of a car and truck stuck in high water at Mount Vernon Street and Tweed Street. Firefighters were eventually able to help both out.

"This intersection is prone to getting flooded pretty bad," Staten said. "It was already up to the wall of my neighbor, the wall where his fencing is, so there's no way you would have been able to clear it with a car. The minute he [one of the drivers] hit the dip, he was gone. He was done."

It was a similar scene near Fountain and Circle. Kellman saw others get trapped trying to plow through standing water. She decided not to chance it.

"It's scary because you don't know what might happen. I mean, there's lots of accidents, too," Kellman said.

"I just pulled over and waited for it to stop."

FEMA criticized as slow on disaster housing aid in Louisiana (Colorado Spring Gazette)

By: MELINDA DESLATTE, Associated Press •
August 29, 2016• Updated: August 29, 2016 at 12:43 pm

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The first out-of-state congressman to survey Louisiana's damage from catastrophic flooding Monday blasted the Federal Emergency Management Agency response as "pitiful."

U.S. Rep. John Mica, a Florida Republican who chairs a subcommittee with jurisdiction over FEMA, toured the destruction with U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, a Republican who represents much of the most heavily damaged region.

Mica said housing aid for the tens of thousands of people displaced by floodwaters two weeks ago has been sluggish and FEMA has been too slow to set up mobile homes that give people somewhere to stay while they repair their houses.

He said FEMA needs more "flexibility" in its programs to make them more adaptable to individual disasters.

"This is one of the biggest displacements of people I've ever seen in the country, and the response is pitiful from the federal level," Mica said.

Only one manufactured housing unit has been set up so far. FEMA regional director Gerard Stolar said the agency is working to speed aid to people displaced by the flooding.

"We're working very closely with the state. We're well aware of the devastation that's out there, that this is an historic event," Stolar said.

He said that FEMA's priority is to get people back into their homes and that 50 to 60 additional manufactured housing units are ready to be set up for homeowners after inspections of their property are complete.

"I'm very confident we're going to be able to ramp up the capacity for this in the very near future," Stolar said.

More than 100,000 homes are estimated to be damaged from flooding described as the worst disaster since Superstorm Sandy, after a storm that started Aug. 12 dumped as much as 2 feet of rain in some areas over two days.

More than 1,400 people remained in shelters Monday.

Entire communities were ravaged by floodwaters, and residents and volunteers have spent the last two weeks ripping out flooring, damaged furniture and drywall to ready homes for repairs. But many people didn't have flood insurance, leaving them dependent on savings and FEMA for rebuilding assistance.

Federal officials say more than $277 million in recovery grants have been approved for households so far and 22 assistance centers are open across the damaged parishes. FEMA said it has more than 1,100 housing inspectors on the ground.

Gov. John Bel Edwards has praised the federal response.

Graves, however, said FEMA needs to quicken the pace of its inspections and grant approval. He also worried about the size of grants. While the cap on assistance to households is $33,000, Graves said the largest grant received is around $8,000 so far.

"People are sitting there, looking at their home and business situation. They've got to make decisions," Graves said.

Edwards' administration opened registration Monday for a new, FEMA-funded "shelter at home" program aimed at providing grants of up to $15,000 to help people make modest repairs that can get them quickly and safely back into their houses while they start work on the larger renovations.

Graves said that program was a "fantastic" concept.

Both congressmen said some of the flexibility they'd like to see in FEMA programs could require congressional action. Edwards was meeting with Louisiana's congressional delegation Monday to discuss a flood relief package.

MONTANA

Yellowstone's south entrance reopens Tuesday morning (Billings Gazette)

The south entrance to Yellowstone National Park reopened at about 7 a.m. Tuesday after a wildfire cut off access for several days, said Larry Helmerick, National Park Service public information officer.

The more than 13,000 acre Berry fire shutdown a stretch of Highway 89/191/287 between Jackson Hole and the south entrance of Yellowstone. Pullouts near the burn area will remain closed, said a National Park Service news release.

The Berry fire cutoff access to the south entrance on Aug. 23 but no roadways inside Yellowstone National Park were affected.

Governor declares state of emergency for Yellowstone River fish kill
(Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

By Michael Wright Chronicle Staff Writer

LIVINGSTON —Montana's governor on Monday signed an executive order declaring the fish kill on the Yellowstone River earlier this month an emergency, a move that makes available millions of dollars for unemployment benefits and other labor programs.

The order frees up $15.4 million in emergency funds for workers and businesses affected by the river's closure, accessible to them mostly through unemployment insurance, retraining programs and planning grants.

Patricia Dowd, a natural resource policy adviser for the governor, announced the order at a meeting here on Monday, where officials from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry tried to offer people guidance on how they could get help in this time where businesses built on the tourism economy are taking a major hit.

"The Yellowstone River is a key contributor to Montana's tourism and outdoor recreation economy," Dowd said.

Earlier this month, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks closed 183 miles of the Yellowstone River and hundreds more miles of its tributaries to all public use in response to the deaths of thousands of whitefish in the river. Dead fish were found as far upstream as Corwin Springs and as far downstream as Springdale. Mostly whitefish have been found dead, and FWP estimates the total death toll to be in the tens of thousands.

Tissue samples showed the culprit to be a parasite that causes proliferative kidney disease, which can decimate trout and whitefish populations. An FWP press release sent Monday said whitefish have tested positive for the parasite as far downstream as Laurel and that the parasite had been confirmed in two brown trout taken from Nelson's Spring Creek.

The river and tributaries were closed as a way to reduce stress on the fish so they might be able to fight off infection. It also was meant to prevent the spread of the parasite to other watersheds in Montana. But the move has significant economic consequences for people who depend on the tourism dollars that the river brings in — like fishing guides, raft companies and hotels and restaurants.

The governor's emergency declaration allows the state to dip into a $16 million fund to offer assistance to people out of work or who have lost money because of the river closure. About $600,000 from that fund has already been spent in response to a heavy winter storm along Montana's Hi-Line and a tornado in eastern Montana.

How much is spent from the fund depends on how many people are able to access the money, which may be tricky. Unemployment insurance, for example, might not be available to fishing guides who work as independent contractors.

For workers to be eligible, they have to work in a job where their employer pays payroll taxes — which might not be the case for all independent guides. But if they work seasonally at another job that does pay those taxes throughout the year and quit to guide in the summer, they may qualify for some benefits.

Paul Martin, who works in unemployment insurance claims processing for the Montana Department of Labor, said people won't know if they qualify unless they apply because each individual case is so different.

“It's like snowflakes,” Martin said.

Some at the meeting on Monday said they weren't interested in being retrained, and others said they would probably try for a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration — which is federal money, not state — to keep their doors open into the next year.

“I think I'm looking at a small business loan,” said Jim Kahl, the co-owner of River Source Rafting Company north of Gardiner.

Kahl said the last few weeks have been “pretty dismal,” and that the final weeks of the season are crucial for his company. A loan would be the way to make sure they are around for next season.

Tina Marshall, the ranch manager at 7 Point Ranch in Emigrant, said she hopes the emergency declaration would help them file a successful loss-of-income claim with their insurance company. The ranch hosts events and offers lodging to travelers, and Marshall said they had lost $43,000 in cancellations since the closure.

“It adds up fast,” Marshall said.

She said an initial attempt at filing a claim was rejected, but that the emergency declaration might help with that. Recovering that income would help her keep her staff intact.

“I don't want to lay anybody off,” she said.

When the river or its tributaries will reopen is unknown. FWP closed the river using an emergency 120-day closure, but that could be extended if river conditions don't improve or if fish don't stop dying. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission would have to approve any extension and solicit public comment.

FWP crews are still regularly surveying the river and the tributaries. The press release from the agency on Monday said that they were starting to find fewer dead fish on the banks of the river.

Yellowstone River's closure worries outdoors industry (AP)

Matthew Brown, Associated Press

Updated 7:01 pm, Monday, August 29, 2016

LIVINGSTON, Mont. (AP) — Tens of thousands of dead fish have closed Montana's Yellowstone River and stirred new worries Monday about lasting impacts to the region's lucrative outdoors industry.

Gov. Steve Bullock declared an "invasive species emergency" over an aquatic parasite blamed for the dying fish. A 183-mile stretch of the Yellowstone and all waterways that drain into it have been closed since Aug. 19 to prevent the deadly parasite from spreading. The unprecedented move came after thousands of dead mountain whitefish started washing up on the river's banks downstream from Yellowstone National Park.

Smaller numbers of other fish species have been killed. That's offered hope that the parasite will spare the trout populations that made the Yellowstone a destination for fly fishers from around the world.

But uncertainty over how long the closure will remain in force — and whether the parasite will crop up again in future years — has unsettled those whose livelihoods depend on the river.

Fishing guide Chase Chapman of Livingston said he's losing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of business as customers cancel previously booked trips. The losses are likely to grow as the closure continues, he said. Yet Chapman is not interested in training for another occupation and foremost wants to know when the river will re-open.

"I don't think anyone wants re-training," Chapman said Monday, during a workshop in Livingston for affected workers that was hosted by the state Department of Labor and Industry. "We all have established businesses. We're not going anywhere.... Now what do we do?"

Monday's emergency proclamation from Bullock will allow Montana to spend up to $15.4 million on worker retention grants and other programs meant to blunt the economic harm of the closure, state officials said.

The number of people and businesses that lost work over the closure has not been tallied, said Scott Eychner, workforce services administrator of the state labor agency. Eychner said officials did not want to wait until that information was tallied before holding Monday's workshop, so that assistance could be given to those who need it as quickly as possible.

Repairing the river's reputation is another matter.

Paul Weamer, who manages a fly fishing shop in the Paradise Valley north of Livingston, said he has no doubt the Yellowstone and its fishery will recover. But Weamer said news reports of the fish kill have left a negative impression among outsiders that will be hard to overcome even when the Yellowstone reopens and fishing resumes.

"You hear dead fish and that freaks people out and I understand that. But I really think our fishery will be good next year," Weamer said.

State officials on Monday said infected fish have been discovered in Laurel, more than a hundred miles downstream from the epicenter of the fish kill. A small number of whitefish that were collected near Laurel have tested positive for exposure to the parasite, officials said.

Whitefish exposed to the parasite also were collected near Columbus, Big Timber and at the mouth of the Boulder River, but officials said all the downstream fish were still alive and appeared healthy.

The rate of fish dying appears to have eased in recent days, said Sam Sheppard, regional supervisor for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Sheppard added that it was too soon to say if the decrease in deaths would prove lasting.

Officials have warned outbreaks of the parasite are possible in future years now that it's been established in the Yellowstone.

Montana Wildfire Roundup For August 29, 2016 (Montana Public Radio)

By MTPR News •

The latest on wildfires around western Montana.

Last Update 5:35 p.m. 08/29/16

The Clear Creek Fire popped up early Saturday morning on tribal land 3 miles northwest of Perma on the Flathead Reservation.

It’s just over 1,200 acres, and zero percent contained, says Tribal Fire Prevention Specialist C.T. Camel.

"Last couple days just been burnout operations, trying to get a hold of it. Because it’s gonna get really warm these next couple days.”

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes’ Division of Fire is fighting the blaze.

It’s cause is still under investigation.

Update: 10:38 a.m., 08/29/16

The Copper King Fire, under the command of Greg Poncin's Type I Incident Management Team, has reached 24,017 acres and remains 15 percent contained.

A community meeting will be held on Monday, August 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sanders County Fairground Pavilion (30 River Road, Plains, MT). Fire and local officials will provide an update on current and project fire activity.

There are 780 personnel working the fire, located eight miles outside of Thompson Falls and one mile north of Highway 200. The Copper King Fire has cost an estimated $15 million so far.

Yesterday aerial resources conducted burnout operations on the northern perimeter while hotshot crews built hand lines around the active southeast edge.

Helicopters dropped 258,000 gallons of water while small planes spread 36,500 gallons of retardant.

Today's weather is expected to bring in a high pressure front, with low humidity and high temperatures. This could result in increased fire activity, though winds are not predicted to be a problem.

Over the next 24-48 hours, officials say the construction of indirect lines and firing operations are crucial. Scoping for additional contingent lines will continue for the benefit of communities to the east.

In Yellowstone National Park, the Berry Fire continues to keep the south entrance to the park closed.

The Maple Fire in Yellowstone National Park, located about four miles north of West Yellowstone, has reached 31,405 acres. All of Gneiss Trail remains closed, including the Cougar Creek cabin.

The Maple Fire has yet to reach the Madison River or Madison Junction, and has not yet required burn out operations near Highway 191. A Red Flag weather warning is in effect throughout today.

Diane Hutton's Wildland Fire Management Team has assumed command of the Maple Fire and is stationed in West Yellowstone.

There will be a Maple Fire community meeting Monday, August 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of Latter Day Saints, 245 Faithful St., West Yellowstone, MT.

The Bierney Creek Fire west of Lakeside is transitioning from a Type 3 team to a smaller Type 4 team as containment operations continue to be successful. The fire is 90 percent contained.

The 60 acre fire, discovered on August 22, has been declared 'human caused' by fire officials.

The Roaring Lion Fire located five miles southwest of Hamilton remains at 8,533 acres and 70 percent contained. Firefighters continue to put out hotspots, evaluate containment lines, protect structures, and monitor for erosion possibilities where they have built defensive lines.

Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft continue to drop water and retardant when necessary. Area closures remain in effect.

NORTH DAKOTA

Oil pipeline protests in North Dakota draw Native Americans, celebrities

(Christian Science Monitor)

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's protests against a four-state oil pipeline have drawn members of other tribes, as well as a few Hollywood stars.

By Jason Thomson, Staff August 29, 2016

Oil pipelines are no strangers to controversy, often courting a wide range of opposing opinions: Witness the years of debate that plagued the Keystone XL project between the United States and Canada, eventually blocked by US President Obama in November 2015.

The latest project to attract the ire of protesters, a 1,100-mile pipeline already under construction, is set to pass through four US states – Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Its aim is to transport Bakken shale from North Dakota directly to US Gulf Coast refineries, the first pipeline to do so.

The core group of opposition is the native American Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which says the pipeline could disturb sacred sites, as well as contaminate water for millions of people. They have been joined by activists from dozens of different tribes, and the protest, which began in April, now boasts upward of 1,000 indigenous participants.

"The things that have happened to tribal nations across this nation have been unjust and unfair, and this has come to a point where we can no longer pay the costs for this nation's well-being," Dave Archambault, chair of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, told Democracy Now last week. "All too often we share similar concerns, similar wrongdoings to us, so we are uniting, and we're standing up, and we're saying, 'No more.' "

The protests have temporarily shut down construction, and about 30 people have been arrested in recent weeks. The group behind the pipeline, Dakota Access, filed a restraining order against Mr. Archambault and other protesters earlier this month in federal court; the tribe subsequently sought a preliminary injunction to halt construction.

As legal proceedings unfolded over the $3.7 billion project last week in the US District Court for the District of Columbia, about 100 members of the native American group protested outside. They were joined by actors Susan Sarandon, Riley Keough, and Shailene Woodley.

"I'm here as a mother and a grandmother," said Ms. Sarandon, an Oscar-winning actress known for social and political activism, "to thank the people of the Standing Rock community for bringing our attention to this horrible thing that is happening to their land, which in turn will endanger all of us... because all of our waters are connected."

As part of their legal case, the protesters say the US Army Corps of Engineers violated historic preservation and environmental laws by giving the pipeline their approval. Supporters counter that the project would, in fact, provide safer and cheaper passage for the Bakken shale, when compared with road or rail transport.

District Court Judge James Boasberg is expected to announce his decision on the preliminary injunction requested by the tribe no later than Sept. 9.

'We're not going home': inside the North Dakota oil pipeline protest (The Guardian, US edition)

Nicky Woolf in Cannon Ball, North Dakota

Monday 29 August 2016 16.16 EDT
Last modified on Tuesday 30 August 2016 10.53 EDT

The Cannonball river flows into the mighty Missouri about 50 miles due south of Bismarck, North Dakota.

At its confluence, a protest encampment – really a series of camps, on both sides of the Cannonball, strewn with kitchens and canteens, portable toilets, stabling for horses, sweat lodges and tall teepees, and stands selling indigenous art – has sprung up.

The inhabitants are there to block the planned $3.7bn Dakota Access Pipeline, which would transport fracked crude from the Bakken oil field in North Dakota to a refinery near Chicago.

Many at the encampment speak of two prophecies, dating back to the 1890s. A leader called Black Elk foretold that in seven generations, the Native American nations will unite to save the Earth; another legend predicted that a zuzeca snake – a black snake – would threaten the world. For many of the protesters here, the pipeline is that black snake. They are the seventh generation: their moment of destiny has come.

The pipeline's planned route takes it close to the northern boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and the town of Cannon Ball within it, which means it would cross the Missouri immediately upstream, endangering, protesters say, the reservation's drinking water and threatening sacred sites. At Standing Rock, they have put their bodies between the water and the oil.

A few days earlier, on 24 August, a federal judge in Washington DC delayed a ruling over whether indigenous rights were violated by the approval of the project. Tribal members say they were not sufficiently consulted about the route and are suing for an injunction.

The population of the camp ebbs and flows. Many have given up jobs and brought their families here, and a core of between 500 and 1,000 people live here semi-permanently. Some, such as Wiyaca Eagleman, a member of the Sicangu Lakota from Rosebud, South Dakota, have been here since the beginning of April. He plans to be here, he said, "as long as it takes".

Hundreds more join when they can, swelling the camp's numbers on weekends. Others come when they get time and bring what supplies they can.

It is an unprecedented gathering. Members of more than 90 Native American nations and tribes have a presence here, according to Eagleman, who has become a sort of unofficial spokesman for the protest camp. Up the road, where the building site was besieged, the flags of many of those nations now fly together. The unity on display here is a dream come true for Eagleman. "There has been no moment like this in history," he said.

On Saturday, a delegation from the Crow nation arrived from Montana, bearing offerings of firewood and 700lb of buffalo meat. That's truly historic: the Crow and the Lakota have been enemies for more than a century. They were at war once; the Crow acted as scouts for Gen George Custer. Buffalo meat has powerful symbolic value: a gesture of solidarity and friendship from longtime former foes.

Dennis Banks, a member of the Chippewa nation of Minnesota and one of the founders of the civil rights group the American Indian Movement in the 1960s, who met the Crow delegation, recounted the meeting. "The main speaker said, 'I know you think of Crow as working with the enemy – but we too struggled for water rights, treaty rights'," Banks said.

Omaka Nawicakinciji of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota participates with his mother Heather Mendoza during a rally on the Dakota Access Pipeline. Photograph: Alex Wong/Getty Images

Then he paused. "The Missouri river starts up there," he added, to indicate that the Crow and the Lakota share more, now, than just food and firewood. The river connects them, too.

Ladonna Allard is a member of the Dakota Sioux. The first protest camp, named Sacred Stone for the perfectly round stones that were formed by a whirlpool where the two rivers met, was erected in April on Allard's land. The whirlpool is gone now, its eddies quieted by a dam built by the army corps of engineers in 1948, which also flooded the lush forest that abutted Allard's birthplace.

"This is sacred land," Allard told the Guardian, speaking by a campfire on which burritos cooked in aluminum foil. Children and dogs played; a brilliant sunset had just turned to dusk. "This is not about trying to be a protester," she said. "I am a mother. My son is buried at the top of that hill. I can't let them build a pipeline by my son's grave."

Looking across the Missouri from the camp, you can see the route of the pipeline on the east bank. Diggers and bulldozers began digging out the turf on the west bank, a mile north of the camp, churning the green prairie to brown clod, in August – accompanied by armed security guards.

They were ordered to stop when protesters, some on horseback, broke on to the site and surrounded the machines on 10 August. Eighteen were arrested, including Standing Rock tribal chairman David Archambault II.

Madonna Antoine Eagle Hawk, a member of the Sicango Rosebud Sioux, arrived last Friday and quickly assumed the role of head chef of the Rosebud camp. The children, she said, call her "Unci", the Lakota word for grandmother. "I'm proud to be here," she said. "It's a powerful feeling."

“Right now, all these different tribes – this will never happen again in our lifetime,” she said. “If we don’t make a stand, who else will?”

Richard Leading Fighter Jr – another member of the Rosebud tribe, a biology student and a distance runner – joined Eagle Hawk in the kitchen tent. He has assumed the role of lifeguard in the camp, keeping an eye on the children who frolic and splash in the Cannonball. He’s been here two weeks now and is preparing to return to university, but like many in the camp, is planning on coming back when he can.

“This feeling is history, right here,” he said. He hunkered down on his shins to grab a handful of soil, grey from the ash of the cooking fire. “We’re doing something that will be in stories told for our grandchildren,” he said, as the earth streamed through his fingers.

“I know we can defeat this,” he said. “I’m hoping the world is with us.”

United Blood Services testing some blood for Zika (Bismarck Tribune)

- JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune
- Aug 29, 2016

United Blood Services is testing the blood of all donors at risk of having contracted the Zika virus.

Zika is spread mostly by infected Aedes species mosquitoes, which are not found in North Dakota. While most people get mild symptoms from the virus, it can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her fetus and can cause birth defects, including microcephaly and other brain abnormalities. There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika.

The Food and Drug Administration last week recommended testing all donated blood nationwide for Zika. The agency previously had recommended deferring anyone at risk of having contracted the virus.

Marni Wild, district director of manufacturing and laboratory services at United Blood Services, said the FDA only is recommending — not requiring — all blood to be tested. UBS, which handles blood donations in North Dakota, has been testing the blood of donors at risk of having contracted the virus since before the FDA made the recommendation as a precautionary measure, she said.

Michelle Feist, epidemiology and surveillance program manager at the North Dakota Department of Health, said active transmission of Zika is not happening in North Dakota, because the types of mosquitos that carry the virus are not found in the state.

However, people can contract the virus if they travel to a place with Zika or if they have sex with someone who has Zika. Wild said UBS asks questions during its pre-donation screening to see if donors are at risk of having Zika; if so, their blood automatically is screened before being used.

Wild did not know how much each Zika test costs UBS, but she said there is a financial hit on the organization each time a new test is added. She asked that anyone healthy and eligible to donate blood do so to help those who may need it.

While people in North Dakota are not at high risk to contract Zika, Feist said it is important for pregnant women or for couples who are planning to become pregnant to talk to their doctor about risk if they plan to travel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintain a list of places where Zika transmission is occurring, which should be consulted before travel, Feist said.

Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)

Posted by Randy Appleton

August 30, 2016 4:27 AM

Automation and budget-cutting have led many freight and passenger railroads across the United States to cut crew sizes. As a logical result of such staff reductions, many of the largest trains moving along the nation's rails have only a single engineer in the locomotive—even those transporting oil and toxic chemicals. As recently as 20 years ago, a standard long-distance train crew consisted of an engineer, a fireman, a conductor and two

Regulators and rail worker unions have raised alarms about train crew reductions for many years. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) responded in 2015 by drafting a rule mandating minimum crew sizes of two people for Class I railroads, a group that includes Amtrak, BNSF, CSX and Norfolk Southern. The rule was published for comment this past winter, and the FRA held a hearing on its provision in July 2016.

FRA experts and representatives of rail employees, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, argued for larger train crews. They cited incidents like a conductor taking over for an incapacitated engineer aboard an out of control engine in North Dakota. The conductor's actions prevented a major derailment and likely explosion.

Arguing against the two-crew person minimum, rail companies said, against actual evidence, that "no evidence" existed to prove that adding crew to one-person trains could prevent accidents, injuries, deaths and property damage. The corporations also claimed that putting more than one person on a train would impose unsupportable costs on their operations.

FRA analysts countered the cost complaint by noting that putting one more person in a locomotive would require a maximum expenditure of $27.7 million over 10 years. That is far below the estimated value of the workers' lives expected to be saved and a tiny fraction of revenues for companies that regularly report annual earnings of several billion.

Having represented railroad employees injured in crashes and derailments for three decades, I know that placing more than one person in a locomotive adds an invaluable safety factor. Even with the (too slow) deployment of braking technology like positive train control, the role of a trained human in preventing tragedies cannot be overemphasized. Should an equipment failure occur or should an engineer suffer an unexpected injury or illness, having a conductor or other crew member present can make the difference between a disaster and a near-miss.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No stories today.

UTAH

Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 29 2016 01:21PM • Last Updated Aug 29 2016 10:30 pm

Aided by fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft, about 50 firefighters worked Monday to keep the 4,000-acre Box Canyon Fire from spreading outside its remote, steep and rugged perimeter in Summit County.

The human-caused, four-week-old blaze continued to consume conifer, aspen and fallen dead timber about 12 miles east of Oakley, and it began Monday at 20 percent containment. Crews were focused on preventing any further spread downslope into Smith and Morehouse Canyon, or toward the Ledgefork Campground, Fire Incident Commander Nick Hillman reported.

No structures were threatened and no injuries had been reported, but the campground, the Smith and Morehouse Reservoir boat ramp and the Mud Lake Flats area, along with some trails in those districts, were closed for public safety reasons.

The Peterson Hollow Fire, now mostly burning toward the Idaho side of the state line, had topped 1,200 acres and was 22 percent contained as of Monday, said Fire Information Officer Sierra Hellstrom.

In all, 311 firefighters battled that blaze of undetermined origin. Crews were concentrating on keeping the flames within the unpopulated and rough terrain where it began Aug. 21, burning mostly timber and grass about 6 miles northwest of Garden City, Utah.

"Despite some tree torching, the Peterson Hollow Fire [has] made no significant runs," Hellstrom reported.

Meanwhile, central Utah's Briggs Fire was being monitored by about 10 firefighters, but otherwise being allowed to burn in the Beaver District of the Fishlake National Forest. In spots, back fires were set to deprive the blaze of uncontrolled fuels.

"Over the last 14 days a lot of progress has been made in firing operations, improving contingency lines and protecting values at risk," said Fire Information Officer Daniel Claessen, adding that it likely will take the onset of winter and snowfall to finally snuff the last of the flames.

The lightning-sparked fire had burned 3,418 acres along the south fork of North Creek since it was first reported on Aug. 9, about 10 miles northeast of Beaver.

Several other, smaller wildfires also were being allowed to burn throughout the state where potential for structural damage was nil, and the benefits to the health of forest lands involved were deemed positive in the long term.

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

Written by Kimberly Scott

ST. GEORGE — A group of firefighters from Michigan on their way to the Box Canyon wildfire in Utah were involved in a crash on Interstate 35W in Anoka County, Minnesota, which left two firefighters dead and multiple others seriously injured.

The driver of the truck was subsequently charged with two counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

At approximately 3 p.m. Saturday, a truck carrying nine members of a wildland firefighting crew left the roadway for an unknown reason, struck the median cable barriers and rolled, according to a statement issued by Minnesota State Patrol.

The wildland fire crew was from the Beartown Firefighters, which is based in Baraga on Michigan's Upper Peninsula and is managed by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

State Patrol officials identified the driver of the truck as 28-year-old Michael Johnson.

Eight of the passengers were identified as 23-year-old James Shelifoe; 25-year-old Alan Swartz; 26-year-old Dave Varline; 33-year-old Ross Jaukkuri; 34-year-old Gavin Loonsfoot and Joseph Jossens, all of Michigan; 29-year-old Shashaywin Sandman, of Minnesota; and 26-year-old Tyler Tolonen, of Wisconsin.

Shelifoe and Swartz were pronounced dead at the scene, according to the State Patrol.

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community released a statement about the crash on its Facebook page Saturday night: "Our hearts are broken and our prayers are with the family members and those injured."

In a separate statement Sunday, the tribal government said that the injured firefighters were expected to recover, but released no details about their conditions.

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred, according to the statement. The wildland fire crews were reportedly traveling in a convoy of three but became separated from the truck that crashed.

"Those firefighters are understandably shaken and are getting much-needed support from local agencies," the statement said.

Officials investigating the crash said Johnson showed "signs of impairment and combative behavior" when officers arrived at the scene of the crash, according to charges filed Monday in Anoka County District Court documents and obtained by ABC News.

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel and that he hadn't slept more than 45 minutes in more than 24 hours, according to a criminal complaint.

Johnson also allegedly admitted to using marijuana early Saturday and to using cocaine two days earlier. Toxicology results are pending.

As a result of the crash and subsequent investigation, Johnson was arrested and charged with two felony counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

The Box Canyon Fire in Summit County east of Park City had consumed 4,000 acres as of Monday.

Unstable weather systems brought heavy winds into the area, increasing the fire's activity, according to a press release from U.S. Forest Service.

Officials said Sunday that the Utah National Guard had been activated to assist in battling the wildfire.

Utah Guard's 97th Aviation Troop Command and 2nd Battalion 211th Aviation responded to the Box Canyon Fire with two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, according to a press release from the Utah National Guard.

The human-caused fire is reportedly 20 percent contained.

Persons arrested or charged are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law or as otherwise decided by a trier-of-fact.

WYOMING

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

Since its discovery, Grand Teton National Park has been actively managing the Berry Fire for ecological benefits. The fire originated in the northern portion of the park, near Berry and Owl Creeks on the west side of Jackson Lake. Extreme fire behavior as a result of high winds and low relative humidity on Monday, August 22 pushed the fire across Jackson Lake and into the Teton Wilderness on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. A Type 2 Great Basin Incident Management Team took command of the fire on August 24th.

Closures:

At this time, fire managers anticipate being able to reopen Highway 89/191/287 tomorrow, Tuesday, August 30. This is subject to change dependent on weather and fire conditions. Until then the highway does remain closed for safety between the South Gate of Yellowstone National Park and Leeks Marina.

While Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and Bridger Teton National Forest all have area closures in effect, both National Parks are open to visitors. This includes Leeks Marina and most visitor destinations and services. Travel times to Yellowstone may be increased depending on planned routes. Check before you go. And please drive carefully, with lights on, due to both visibility concerns from smoke and increased vehicle numbers.

Current Situation:

The Berry Fire was much more active yesterday. Most of the growth occurred on the northeast corner of the fire - in the Teton Wilderness - and the southwest portion of the fire - along Jackson Lake. Firefighters

have completed preparatory actions around Flagg Ranch, as well as on historic cabins and lookouts to minimize impacts from the fire, in the event the fire should reach those locations.

Today's weather will again be warmer and drier with atmospheric instability, which can contribute to rapid fire growth. Temperatures will rise into the mid-80s, and the relative humidity may drop into single digits. Light winds will prevail over the fire area. Despite the shorter days, thermal belts are allowing the fire to burn actively throughout the night.

Western Wyoming is experiencing historical lows for fuel moistures. Currently, no significant moisture is in the extended forecast. The conditions are similar to 2012, when fires burned actively well into September. The Berry Fire will continue to burn in the coming weeks, accomplishing the goal of rejuvenating the ecosystem through the natural process of wildland fire.

Firefighters expect to finish their work along Highway 89/191/287 today. Unless fire behavior or weather conditions change today, the road will reopen to the general public tomorrow.

For more information:

Follow Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton National Forest on social media: @GrandTetonNPS and @BridgerTetonNF on both Facebook and Twitter. Information on other fires in western Wyoming is available at www.TetonFires.com. And information on fires burning in eastern Idaho can be found at www.IdahoFireInfo.com, or by filtering Idaho incidents on InciWeb.

One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

Bruce Mason -- Teton Valley Weather

August 27, 2016. The Tie Canyon fire had been slow the last couple of days, but the wind was forecast to gust up from the west in the afternoon. As that afternoon wind increased, near Hoback in Wyoming there was an earthquake. True story with a happy ending. Our amazing firefighters from Great Basin Team 5 had put down barriers which successfully held the fire from progressing toward Victor. In addition, the earthquake was magnitude 4.8, a light quake. It was felt throughout Teton Valley but no damage was reported. It was a good day.

Saturday is also a good reason to stop and think what might have happened. Not to scare, but because playing the “what if” game in your mind can make you more ready to take action should a number of things go bad at once. When situations turn really dicey, it's usually not just one thing that's gone wrong, but a combination. What if Saturday had gone differently?

Suppose that the wind had picked up more than forecast and pushed the fire toward Victor. And suppose that at the same time, the earthquake had been much stronger and much closer to Teton Valley. Well planned and prepared evacuations would have begun just as the earthquake damaged the roads and bridges making evacuations as planned impossible. Families would be separated. Shelters would have been set up by the Red Cross in Driggs and Alta for the Victor evacuees, but how could they get there with, say, Yellow Bridge gone or Highway 33 buckled and impassable? Are alternate routes available? Do the drivers on the roads in front of you know them? Do you know them? Can those routes handle the traffic? Were they damaged, too? And

what about the fire; is it going to stop at the predesignated evacuation zone or go beyond, further clogging the blocked roads with frightened residents?

This past week was a great drill if it prompted us to make individual and family disaster plans. Where will your family meet up? Do you each have a go bag, jump bag, or 72 hour kit packed with the essentials you'll need away from home a while? Have you thought about what you would grab if you could only take an armload of items with you from your home? Can you easily get from point A to point B by more than one route? Does each family member know how to contact the one person, preferably outside of the valley, who will be your central information point?

Did you know that detailed suggestions for this kind of plan have been made by Teton County Emergency Management? It has been tailored to Teton Valley and the kinds of disasters we are most likely to face here. Part one of this guide can be found at:

These guides are meticulously detailed and will take more than a quick glance by everyone in the family for them to be effective. Make the time now, because as the guide says, when disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed.

And one more thing this week showed, the value of the CodeRED emergency alert system. Should an emergency occur near you, with CodeRED you will be notified by phone, and if you choose, on your smart phone using the app. If you have a land line phone in Teton Valley, you are already enrolled and will get a call should something important come up. If you have a cell phone, you will have to go on line and register with CodeRED to receive notifications on it. You can do that at:

Either way, you will receive word of impending situations faster by phone than if you have to wait for an officer to knock on your door.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

By Maggie Fox

NBC News, August 29, 2016

A drug already on the market to treat worm infections and another being tested against liver diseases may also help treat Zika virus infections, researchers reported Monday.

The findings are a rare bit of good news about Zika, which has caused epidemics across Latin America and the Caribbean, and smaller outbreaks in Florida, the Pacific and southeast Asia.

Zika has caused smaller epidemics of birth defects, notably brain damage that can cause miscarriages or profound developmental injuries in babies. It can also cause a paralyzing condition called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

It’s spread by mosquitoes and by sex. As of now, there is no vaccine or treatment.

The team at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Johns Hopkins University and Florida State University looked first in a library of existing drug compounds for products that might act to stop Zika from killing brain cells and perhaps stop it from replicating itself.

“It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug.”

“It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug,” says Hongjun Song of Johns Hopkins, who worked on the project. “In this sort of global health emergency, we don’t have that kind of time.”

But libraries of existing compounds let researchers use a computer to look for drugs that work in specific ways.

“So instead of using new drugs, we chose to screen existing drugs,” said Dr. Guo-li Ming, a neurology professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. “In this way, we hope to create a therapy much more quickly.”

They were delighted to find a drug already on the market and considered safe to use in pregnant women. “Niclosamide is an FDA-approved drug (trade name Niclocide) that has been used in humans to treat worm infections for nearly 50 years, and it is well tolerated,” the team wrote in their report, published in the journal Nature Medicine.

“It is known to inhibit several viruses in culture systems, including the Japanese encephalitis flavivirus.”

Japanese encephalitis is a relative of Zika and also carried by mosquitoes.

Tests on human brain stem cells in lab dishes showed it could interfere with Zika’s replication in those cells. “Niclosamide is a category B drug, which indicates that no risk to fetuses has been found in animal studies. It has low toxicity in mammals,” they added. “Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events.”

Another drug, called emricasan, helped prevent Zika from killing those cells.

“Emricasan is currently being evaluated in phase 2 clinical trials for the reduction of hepatic injury and liver fibrosis caused by chronic hepatitis C infection,” the team wrote.

“Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events.”

A third compound called PHA-690509 also helped stop Zika replicating and from killing nerve cells, they said.

While the drugs work well in lab dishes full of cells, “we don’t know if they can work in humans in the same way,” Song said.

Niclosamide works in the gut, but it’s not clear if it’s possible to get it into the brain, Song said.

The researchers think the drugs might work best as a cocktail, attacking the virus from several fronts — in much the same way as drug cocktails fight the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS.

“To address these questions, additional studies need to be done in animal models as well as humans to demonstrate their ability to treat Zika infection,” Ming said in a statement. “So we could still be years away from finding a treatment that works.”

The White House has asked for $1.9 billion in federal funding to help pay for studies like these and to keep them going after Zika is no longer making headlines. But Congress could not agree on a funding plan and took a seven-week break without appropriating any cash.

The NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies have taken money from other programs to pay for urgent Zika research.

At the beginning of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, researchers complained that they’d been working on drugs and vaccines for years but that inconsistent funding and a lack of interest from Congress and from drug companies made it impossible to make better progress. More than 11,000 people died in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea before the Ebola epidemic wound down last year.

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 31, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A story follows through on the damage from the recent hailstorm in Colorado Springs. Hail was as deep as three feet in some basements.
- **Montana:** A Bismarck reprint of a Billings Gazette article repeats the call for separate disaster funding for fighting wildfires… A TV story reports on attempts to help economically, including SBA loans, after the closure of the Yellowstone River…. Wildfires remained relatively stable.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from an environmental web site that cites objections to the pipeline from three federal agencies similar to what the tribe is protesting. Also, an Omaha TV station gives an overview of the situation. … Three tornadoes hit eastern North Dakota over the weekend.
- **South Dakota:** Lawrence County officials approved further investigation into whether to do a program to prevent damage from a previous wildfire. They expressed hesitation because of a previous experience with a cost-share with FEMA… A Yankton resident died from West Nile virus.
- **Utah:** State water officials are insisting on a plan to analyze the damage and what to do about the toxic sediment in the American Fork River. The memory of the Gold King Mine spill is a warning of further potential hazards.
- **Wyoming:** The southern entrance to Yellowstone National Park is open again.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, gives an overview of the stormy weather currently threatening parts of the U.S. … The CDC says sit will run out of money to fight the Zika virus in September.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

NBC: Severe Weather.

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

STORIES

COLORADO

Homeowners looking at major losses after hail and flooding in Colorado Springs (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

By Bill Folsom

The people living in areas of Colorado Springs inundated by hail and water on Monday, spent Tuesday cleaning up and assessing damage. “Literally found ourselves homeless overnight,” said John Martin who lived in one of the damaged homes on Logan Avenue. Multiple residents on the street are facing so much damage their homes will be unlivable for some time.

Many homes end up with hail and water in their homes. The basements of several homes filled with hail as deep as three feet. Other rooms show water makes several feet up walls. Where water subsided it left behind a coating of mud.

Erma Medina rents out a home on Logan Avenue. It is one of the homes with hail filling the basement.

There has been flooding in the area before, but never like this. She carried FEMA flood insurance until about a year ago when she says several city storm water drains outside her property were upgraded. With this disaster she see the problem as hail, but she says her insurance company says it is flooding. Sitting on a retaining wall outside the house Medina points to the remaining kneed deep hail, "Look at that hail. You can see the hail in the basement. The windows were broken by hail and they say it was flood. I don't believe it was a flood, no. She will dispute the claim, but says insurance or no insurance help she will find a way to repair the damage.

MONTANA

Western fires take big toll on programs (Billings Gazette, reprinted in Bismarck Tribune)

The late August sun is a smoky red ball, reminding Montanans of the fires that have destroyed homes and curtailed business in the West this summer. It’s so dry in parts of Montana, Wyoming, California and other Western states that big fires are likely to burn until autumn snow falls. If lightning storms and wind persist, the fires will be bigger and more numerous.

The destruction is costly, and so is the firefighting. One year ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on the rising cost of fire operations and how it affected the Forest Service’s other work. The numbers indicate that the Forest Service ought to be called the “fire service” because that’s how the agency spent most of its budget. The USDA summed up the problem of “the depletion of non-fire programs to pay for the ever-increasing costs of fire." This has resulted in:

- Less money for restoration work that would help prevent catastrophic fires.

- Less protection of watersheds and cultural resources.

- Reduced upkeep of programs and infrastructure that support thousands of recreation jobs and billions of dollars economic growth in rural communities.

- Reduced support for the range of multiple uses, benefits and ecosystem services.

- Less research and technical assistance.

Firefighting staff has increased from 5,700 in 1998 to more than 12,000 in 2015. Meanwhile, the non-firefighting forest workers have been reduced by 39 percent — from 18,000 employees in 1998 to fewer than 11,000 last year.

Every non-firefighting program has been slashed. Forest road-building has been reduced 46 percent. Deferred maintenance funding was cut 95 percent despite a backlog of more than $5.1 billion in dam repairs, roads, sewer and water system improvements.

Lack of funding for everything but fires has prevented the agency from doing things that would save money in the long term. Energy efficiency projects have been deferred. Funding hasn’t been available for partnership programs that generate private matching funds.

The report concluded with the solution that Congress has been delaying for years: Change the way we pay for wildfire fighting. Treat wildfires as the natural disasters they are.

In June, Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., spoke on behalf of draft legislation called the Wildfire Budgeting, Response and Forest Management Act. The first thing it would do, according to a Daines news release, is “end the unsustainable practice of fire borrowing by enabling a transfer of limited funds to the Forest Service and the Department of Interior through a budget cap adjustment when all appropriated suppressions funding (100 percent of the 10-year average) has been exhausted.”

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., reaffirmed his support for the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. Both he and Daines are co-sponsors of the act, which would “pay for catastrophic wildfires through separate

emergency funding, allowing the Forest Service to devote more resources to proactive forest management like trail maintenance and timber harvest."

If S.235, which both of our U.S. senators are co-sponsoring, had been enacted and funded last year, the Forest Service would have $1.4 billion more to fight wildfires this year. But it didn't pass, so the Forest Service will again have to rob all its other operations to pay for the fiery disasters this year.

Montana's senators are in a good position to promote this bipartisan solution. Among many proposals for forest management involving timber harvest, recreation and conservation, nothing else is going to work well if the budget continues to be diverted to wildfire.

Lawmakers must stop the "fire borrowing" before another wildfire season begins. We call on Daines and Tester to work together to unite other Western senators and pass wildfire disaster legislation this year.
— *Billings (Mont) Gazette*

Efforts underway to help while portion of Yellowstone River is closed for businesses (KRTV, Great Falls)

By Morgan McKay - MTN News

LIVINGSTON - Governor Steve Bullock scheduled a Rapid Response Training meeting Monday for those affected by the closure of the Yellowstone River.

Many people like Chase Chapman have been left wondering how they will get through a Montana winter, since the closure of the Yellowstone has forced them to close their business.

"I don't need retraining, I'm very good at what I do," said Chapman, who is a fly fishing guide and teacher in Livingston. "When all these Congressman want to go catch a big fish, I go through Yellowstone Angler and we catch some big fish."

"So I came to this meeting today with some hope of maybe there's some grants available for a small business person, because if they opened up the river again tomorrow, I've now sold all my inventory," said Beth O'Neill, owner of SUP Montana.

Earlier today, Governor Bullock signed an executive order proclaiming an invasive species emergency to exist in the State of Montana. This order allows for different organizations to offer relief.

"We heard your concerns and taking a multi agency approach to addressing the immediate needs of workers who rely on the Yellowstone River for their livelihoods," said Bullock.

Local and Park County government officials attended the meeting as well as representatives from agencies such as the Montana Chamber of Commerce and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

"We do everything from helping folks file their unemployment claims to assisting them to potentially go into training folks who may have been impacted by this or a similar event," said Zack Medina, with Job Services.

“This isn't a handout, this isn't an entitlement program,” said Paul Martin, Bureau Chief of Unemployment Insurance. “It's a week to week eligibility program, it's funded by employers through payroll taxes.”

While unemployment insurance was one favorable option, other resources available were loans or a different temporary job placement.

“The last thing you want to do is get into debt, but there are economic injury loans, we can go up to two million (dollars),” said John Donovan, Small Business Administration.

Those businesses affected by the closure of the Yellowstone are encouraged to contact the Institute for Tourism and Recreation at the University of Montana, to help aid them in studying the full economic impact of the closure.

“Montanans I think, what makes us special, is to live here you have to learn to do several things,” said Chapman.

According to latest information released by FWP today, out of 30 trout tested in the upper Yellowstone, only two brown trout tested positive for the parasitic infection.

Officials say there is only evidence of the parasite, but not the disease. FWP also is saying there have been no trout mortalities documented from the disease.

Cloud cover keeps Copper King, Roaring Lion fires quiet (Missoulian)

- KIM BRIGGEMAN kbriggeman@missoulian.com

THOMPSON FALLS – Tuesday turned out to be a good day to fight fires in western Montana, though crews were keeping a lookout for a cool front blowing in from Oregon.

“There’s been a cloud cover over the fire this afternoon that’s kind of kept it subdued during the day,” spokesman Mike Cole said from the Copper King fire east of Thompson Falls.

A red flag warning issued for the afternoon and evening suggested dry thunderstorms might mix with temperatures in the 90s and relative humidity in the low to mid-teens and cause problems at both the Copper King and the Roaring Lion southwest of Hamilton, which turns a month old on Wednesday.

“I’m not sure if they’re actually going to produce over our area,” Lisa Keibler, public information officer at the Roaring Lion, said at 5:30 p.m. “We’ve got a lot of cloud cover and maybe some smoke from Idaho, but right now it’s pretty calm out actually.”

Neither fire is close to being out. An infrared flight in the middle of the night Monday raised the acreage of the Copper King to just under 26,000, up 1,000 acres from an estimate the evening before. It’s Montana’s largest active fire in 2016.

“Our biggest concern and kind of the linchpin of this thing is Munson Creek,” Cole said. “If we can keep this fire out of Munson Creek, that’s going to allow us to get a handle on this. But the weather has to cooperate and we have a lot of ground to cover and a lot of steep ground to try to get buttoned up.”

Munson Creek runs in a southerly direction to Highway 200 and the Clark Fork River 11 miles east of Thompson Falls and 13 miles west of Plains. Cole said crews were out until 2 a.m. Tuesday to complete a burnout operation on the north side of the fire.

During the day helicopters and an occasional fixed-wing aircraft were dropping water and retardant at the top of Munson Creek trying to keep the fire out of the deep canyon to prevent a possible run up the east side.

“We’ve been doing some structure protection work around the residences on Buffalo Bill Road,” Cole said. “If the fire did come down Munson Creek, those would be the first residences threatened, so we want to get ahead of the game.”

Some 220,000 gallons of water and 22,000 gallons of retardant were dropped on the fire Monday, when the fire west of Munson Creek burned back into the main fire toward the Big Hole Lookout. That resulted in a large column that was visible from Plains.

Tuesday’s red flag concern was rooted in an unstable air mass rated 6 on the Haines Index. The Haines Index has been used since 1988 to indicate the potential for wildfire growth. The index can range between 2 and 6, with a 6 being the driest and most unstable conditions in the lower atmosphere.

A total of 840 people are working the Copper King, which has cost an estimated $16.5 million to quell since it broke out on July 31.

Closures and evacuations remain in place. Forty-five homes have been evacuated and another 130 are on pre-evacuation notice. Log hauling is being permitted through the closure area from 4 to 6 a.m. daily.

Air quality in the Thompson Falls area climbed once again into the "very unhealthy" range Tuesday morning, spiking midway toward the top category of "hazardous" at 10 a.m. before dropping two levels to “unhealthy for sensitive groups” by 5 p.m.

"Very unhealthy" air means active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

Roughly 80 percent of hunting district 122 near Thompson Falls was closed indefinitely on Monday by the U.S. Forest Service.

Estimated containment date for the Copper King fire remains the end of October.

In Hamilton at the Roaring Lion fire, air quality remained good all day. Fifty-four people are on the fire, which was caused by unknown sources on July 31. Most of Tuesday’s action consisted of monitoring and checking the 8,533-acre fire with aerial resources to keep it within Ward Bowl, north of Camas Creek and south of Sawtooth Creek. Patrols were active on the ground to suppress spot fires over the fire line.

The Roaring Lion is expected to be contained by the end of September.

NORTH DAKOTA

Dakota Pipeline Was Approved by Army Corps Over Objections of Three Federal Agencies (Inside Climate News)

Sioux tribe's concerns were echoed in official reports by the EPA and two other agencies, but Army Corps of Engineers brushed them aside.

By Phil McKenna

Aug 30, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D.—Senior officials at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and two other federal agencies raised serious environmental and safety objections to the North Dakota section of the controversial Dakota Access oil pipeline, the same objections being voiced in a large protest by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe that has so far succeeded in halting construction.

But those concerns were dismissed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which relied on an environmental assessment prepared by the pipeline's developer, Dakota Access LLC, when it approved the project in July, according to public documents.

The 1,134-mile pipeline would carry approximately 500,000 barrels of crude per day from North Dakota to Illinois along a route that did not originally pass near the Standing Rock reservation, the documents show. After the company rerouted the pipeline to cross the Missouri River just a half-mile upstream of the reservation, the tribe complained that the Army Corps did not consider threats to its water supply and cultural heritage.

The EPA, the Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation echoed those concerns in public comments on the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment. Citing risks to water supplies, inadequate emergency preparedness, potential impacts to the Standing Rock reservation and insufficient environmental justice analysis, the agencies urged the Army Corps to issue a revised draft of their environmental assessment.

"Crossings of the Missouri River have the potential to affect the primary source of drinking water for much of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Tribal nations," Philip Strobel, National Environmental Policy Act regional compliance director for the EPA, wrote in a March 11 letter to the Army Corps.

The current route of the pipeline is 10 miles upstream of Fort Yates, the tribal headquarters of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and the county seat. The Standing Rock Sioux rely on the Missouri River for drinking water, irrigation, and fish.

The EPA shared its concerns and recommended that the Army Corps undertake a new draft environmental assessment and release it for public comment. In that process, the EPA asked the Army Corps to consider "other available routes or crossing locations that would have reduced potential to water resources, especially drinking water supplies," and to carry out a "more thorough" analysis of environmental justice concerns. The other agencies also asked for further assessments and consultation with the tribes.

The Army Corps instead published its final environmental assessment four months later, which constituted final approval of the project. In it, the Corps acknowledged the agencies' comments, but said "the anticipated environmental, economic, cultural, and social effects" of the project are "not injurious to the public interest."

The Army Corps, which has jurisdiction over domestic pipelines that cross major waterways, declined a request for comment, citing ongoing litigation. Energy Transfer, owner of Dakota Access LLC, did not respond to a request for comment. The company has previously said "we are constructing this pipeline in accordance with applicable laws, and the local, state and federal permits and approvals we have received."

Tribe Takes their Complaints Public

The tribe's growing protest has gathered in a camp near Cannon Ball, N.D., and has drawn support from Native Americans from around the country as well as environmental activists. An estimated 1,200 people are camping there and Sioux leaders say 90 tribes are represented among the protesters.

The protest blocked construction equipment two weeks ago and Energy Transfer halted construction on the section of pipeline closest to the Standing Rock reservation. A federal judge said last week he will rule by September 9 on whether to grant the Standing Rock Sioux a temporary injunction. That would bar construction on sections of the pipeline where the ground hasn't yet been disturbed until a suit calling for the Army Corps to redo its permitting process can be heard.

Demographics of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation
The Standing Rock reservation spans 3,600 square miles across North and South Dakota, where 41 percent of its 8,217 residents live below the poverty level, more than triple the national average, according to a 2012 economic development report prepared for the tribe. Nearly a quarter of its population is unemployed.

In its comments calling for a re-do, the EPA said the environmental justice analysis in the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment used county-by-county or state-by-state data when the preferred level of analysis is "census block groups or census tracts."

"A screening level analysis for EJ [environmental justice] indicates there are several census block groups with substantial minority and/or low income demographics that could be potentially impacted by the project," the EPA wrote. "In addition to analyzing potential EJ impacts, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (February 16, 1994) also requires public outreach to potentially affected EJ communities."

In its final environmental assessment, the Army Corps said its analysis "contains an Environmental Justice analysis that conforms with recognized practice."

The agency also said the pipeline does not cross tribal land. "In fact, tribal land was specifically avoided as a routing mitigation measure," it said. "The Project does not anticipate any impact to water supplies along its route, and to the extent a response action is required, federal regulation will be complied with."

Route Became a Moving Target

The original route for the proposed pipeline crossed the Missouri River further north, 10 miles upstream of Bismarck, the state capital. North Dakota Public Service Commission documents show the route upstream of Bismarck in a May 29, 2014 map by Energy Transfer.

The company later rejected this route, citing a number of factors, including more road and wetland crossings, a longer pipeline, and higher costs. Also listed as a concern was the close proximity to wellheads providing Bismarck's drinking water supply.

"They moved it down to Standing Rock, which is a very remote area, but people live at Standing Rock too. There is an environmental justice component here," said Jan Hasselman, an attorney with environmental advocacy organization EarthJustice, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Standing Rock Tribe against the Army Corps of Engineers.

In its public comments, the Department of the Interior, the government agency responsible for the administration and management of Native American lands, called for the Army Corps to conduct an

Environmental Impact Statement, a more comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of the proposed pipeline.

"We believe the Corps did not adequately justify or otherwise support its conclusion that there would be no significant impacts upon the surrounding environment and community," Lawrence Roberts, acting assistant secretary of Indian affairs at the Depart of the Interior, wrote in a letter to the Army Corps in March.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), a federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of the nation's historic resources, also expressed concern over the Army Corps' assessment.

Federal law requires federal agencies to take into account the effect a proposed project will have on historic property. The Army Corps' assessment, however lacked adequate consultation with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and focused on a limited number of water crossings rather than on the pipeline's entire expanse, according to letters ACHP officials wrote to the Army Corps.

"Based on the inadequacies of the tribal consultation and the limited scope for identification of historic properties that may be affected, the ACHP questions the sufficiency of the Corps' identification effort, its determinations of eligibility, and assessments of effect," Reid Nelson, director of the office of federal agency programs for ACHP, wrote in a May 19 letter to the Army Corps.

In its final assessment, the Corps stated there is "no new significant information on environmental effects" as a result of comments from the EPA and others. "As such, neither a supplemental or revised EA [Environmental Assessment] for further public review nor additional NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] compliance actions was required."

"We're talking about a broad overarching and fundamental failure which is the decision to look very narrowly at environmental impacts at a few specific locations rather than the pipeline as a whole," Hasselman said of the Army Corps' assessment.

Having their concerns dismissed by the Corps, the tribe turned next to the courts. Their lawsuit calls for a halt to construction and full consideration of the pipeline's impact on tribal lands and water.

To obtain a preliminary or "emergency" injunction, however, attorneys representing the Standing Rock tribe will have to demonstrate imminent harm to historic sites if construction proceeds.

"To the extent that people are concerned about harm from oil spills, that is still a ways off," Hasselman said. "We can't really seek emergency relief on that front. That is something that we will be seeking in the course of the lawsuit."

5 things to know about the Dakota Access Pipeline (KETV, Omaha)

Native American tribe sued the federal government over project

UPDATED 7:33 AM CDT Aug 31, 2016

(CNN) —In what looks to be a possible sequel to the Keystone XL Pipeline dispute, another fight has begun over a proposed US oil route.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has sued the federal government, saying the Native American tribe was not properly consulted over the project to construct a 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline that extends over four states.

While proponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline tout its economic boost, opponents question its environmental impact.

The US Army Corps of Engineers approved the project, granting final permits in July, to the dismay of environmentalists and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

1. What is the pipeline project?

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois. The pipeline is also known as the Bakken Oil Pipeline, named for the oil-rich area in North Dakota. An estimated 7.4 billion barrels of undiscovered oil is believed to be in the US portion of the Bakken Formation, according to the US Geological Survey.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

2. Why is the pipeline being constructed?

The project developer, Dakota Access, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Crude Oil, says the pipeline would help the United States become less dependent on importing energy from unstable regions of the world. It says a pipeline is the safest, most cost-effective and environmentally responsible way to move crude oil, removing dependency on rails and trucks.

It also estimates the pipeline would bring an estimated $156 million in sales and income taxes to state and local governments as well as add 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs.

The proposal comes as a glut of cheap oil has devastated North Dakota's economy. The state had enjoyed a major boom, but after hitting highs in 2014, it suffered a major economic downturn.

The project developers say the $3.7 billion project will "bring significant economic benefits to the region that it transverses."

3. Who is protesting?

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a complaint in federal court alleging that "the construction and operation of the pipeline ... threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe."

There are also concerns that digging the pipeline under the Missouri River would affect the tribe's drinking water supply. The tribe, represented by Earthjustice, a nonprofit environmental law firm, has asked for an injunction.

Based in Fort Yates, North Dakota, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is a federally recognized Indian tribe, a successor to the Great Sioux Nation. Other Native American tribes and nations have joined its efforts.

"We have laws that require federal agencies to consider environmental risks and protection of Indian historic and sacred sites," Dave Archambault II, the elected chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, said in a statement.

"But the Army Corps has ignored all those laws and fast-tracked this massive project just to meet the pipeline's aggressive construction schedule."

Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota disputes the tribe's chief complaint that the Army Corps did not properly consult it.

"If there is some way for the corps to work to meet the concerns of the tribe, they should certainly do that. But (there) has been a consultation process. If the tribe doesn't feel that that has been sufficient, again, they can protest as long as they do it peacefully and safely, but ultimately their recourse is to the courts," the Republican senator told CNN affiliate KFYR-TV in Bismarck, North Dakota.

About 30 environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, signed a letter to President Barack Obama, slamming the Dakota Access Pipeline as "yet another example of an oil pipeline project being permitted without public engagement or sufficient environmental review."

They appealed to him to reject the project -- as he did with the Keystone XL pipeline.

Protests have been held in North Dakota and Washington.

Construction equipment involved in the pipeline project in Iowa was set ablaze in suspected arson fires, reports say.

4. Who's on which side?

Bernie Sanders spoke out against the pipeline in November 2015, but Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton has not addressed the issue. CNN reached out to the Clinton campaign for comment on the issue and has not yet received a response.

"If candidate Clinton does nothing to address this issue yet continues into November promising Native Americans that she is our champion, then her words will be nothing but false promises -- just more bombast, more white lies to Indians," Simon Moya-Smith, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation and culture editor at Indian Country Today, wrote recently in a CNN op-ed.

Celebrities such as Shailene Woodley, Susan Sarandon and Rosario Dawson have spoken out against the pipeline.

Leonardo DiCaprio tweeted that he was "inspired by the Standing Rock Sioux's efforts to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline."

5. What's next?

The tribe's actions may be the start of a lengthy, legal fight over the Dakota Access Pipeline. Meanwhile, construction work on the pipeline is ongoing.

US District Judge James Boasberg said he wants to absorb both sides of the argument before issuing a ruling, which is expected by September 9, KFYR reported.

Officials Rate 3 Weekend Tornadoes In Eastern North Dakota (AP)

Associated Press, August 30, 2016

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) – A weekend tornado that caused damage in the Hillsboro area had wind speeds up to 140 mph, according to the National Weather Service.

The agency rated the Saturday evening tornado in Traill County an EF-3 on the enhanced Fujita scale. An EF2 or higher rating is considered significant.

The tornado was as wide as three football fields are long and was on the ground for 8 minutes, according to a weather service report. It smashed bins at Rahr Malting Co.'s Taft grain elevator complex and spilled tons of barley onto the ground, destroyed a garage and uprooted trees on one area farmstead. It heavily damaged a home and a metal building at another farmstead.

No one was hurt. The town of 1,600 people was lucky that the tornado missed the heart of the community, said Connor Ulness with the storm damage restoration company Aspen Exteriors.

"The tornado came in just north of the center of town," he told WDAY-TV.

Severe storms in eastern North Dakota on Saturday spawned two weaker tornadoes in neighboring Grand Forks County, according to the weather service. One with wind speeds estimated at 70 mph and rated an EF-0 touched down in an open field near Arvilla. An EF-1 tornado with wind speeds up to 110 mph uprooted trees and demolished a barn in the Pleasant View Township area.

No injuries were reported in either of those tornadoes.

SOUTH DAKOTA

County To Explore Grant Possibilities For Areas Affected By Crow Peak Fire (Black Hills Pioneer)

By Jaci Conrad

Black Hills Pioneer

August 30,2016

DEADWOOD — Disaster prevention due to devastation caused by the Crow Peak Fire is the impetus behind the Lawrence County Commission's recent decision to give the go-ahead to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide an initial assessment of the area.

"We might discover something very important that needs to be done," said Commission Chair Daryl Johnson.

The Emergency Watershed Protection program of the conservation service is designed to help prevent damage to life or property after a natural disasters, like the Crow Peak Fire. A cost-share program, the protection program pays 75 percent of the costs to install practices such as replacing culverts identified in the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) report completed after the fire. If it decides the assessment is worthy of pursuing, the county, upon entering a sponsorship of the emergency grant program, would be responsible for 25 percent of the costs.

Because the county would be responsible for the operation and maintenance of any culverts installed, for the life of the culvert, commissioners were hesitant to commit to the program, asking first for an initial assessment to be brought back and reviewed before a formal commitment is made.

"You understand, our apprehension comes from the fact that we still maintain snow-removal on two bridges because we were a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) sponsor of them at one time," Johnson said.

With a 60-day deadline following the fire, which was put out on July 4, an application letter must be submitted to the conservation service by Friday, starting the information gathering process, beginning with a damage survey report. This report will identify what problems are present, how to fix any concerns, and the cost of repairing the concerns. The application letter does not commit Lawrence County to a contract.

District Conservationist Justin Boerboom addressed the commission, explaining that the NRCS is federal agency with USDA funding and takes measures to help prevent catastrophe after a natural disaster through the Emergency Watershed Program.

"We need a local sponsor to apply for assistance," Boerboom said. "We've proposed the project. The next step is to go out and evaluate what the issues are, what to address, the costs, and come back with a proposal."

NRCS State Engineer Jay Cobb said that once they evaluate, the next determination is if they can mitigate issues to gain benefits greater than the actual cost of construction.

Threats that the protection program addresses are termed watershed impairments and include, for example: debris-clogged stream channels, undermined and unstable streambanks, jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures, wind-borne debris removal, and damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor, such as the county, if they decide to move forward with the program.

Boerboom also presented the critical values table from the BAER report, listing all the concerns on private land. Listed as a very high risk to human life and safety is the Crow Creek Road and the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout, and damage. The BAER team identified Crow Creek as an drainage of Crow Peak that would see an increase of about 50 percent over normal flows since the vegetation on the western slopes were burned.

Listed as a high threat to human life and safety are homes along Crow Creek Road; specifically, two cabins and the threat of flash flooding and debris flows.

Listed as a very high threat to property are: two road crossings with 18-inch culverts on Crow Creek Road; Crumm Driveway Crossing's 24-inch culvert; and Nicholas Cabin driveway, which

crossing 24-inch culvert. The threat here is flash flooding with debris flows, debris blockage, possible failure of crossing structures, and road washout/damage.

Listed as a high threat to property are private road crossings along Higgins Gulch Road in the floodplain, with the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout/damage; and culverts under driveways alongside Higgins Gulch Road.

The BAER team determined the Higgins Gulch drainage would see increased flows of about 10 percent following the fire.

There are other threats that have been identified and listed in the intermediate to low threat categories.

Yankton Co. Resident Dies From West Nile Virus (KDLT News, Pierre)

Aug 29, 2016

KDLT News- Pierre, S.D.

The South Dakota Department of Health today reported a Yankton Co. resident died of West Nile virus associated causes. It is the state's first WNV related death this season. The individual was in the 80 to 89 age group.

To date this season, South Dakota has reported 74 cases of human WNV; 12 percent have had the most serious neruoinvasive disease while 88 percent have had WNV fever. Twenty-five percent of cases have been hospitalized. There has also been a WNV-positive horse in Butte County.

"This unfortunate death is a reminder for us all that while the Zika virus is grabbing headlines, West Nile is the mosquito-borne virus of concern here in South Dakota," said Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department. "We strongly encourage people to protect themselves and their families by using repellent and avoiding the outdoors when mosquitoes are most active."

Kightlinger said South Dakotans can reduce their risk with the following precautions:

- Apply mosquito repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535) to clothes and exposed skin. Limit exposure by wearing pants and long sleeves in the evening.

- Limit time outdoors from dusk to midnight when Culex mosquitoes, the primary carrier of WNV in South Dakota, are most active.

- Get rid of standing water that gives mosquitoes a place to breed. Regularly change water in bird baths, outside pet dishes, and drain water from flower pots and garden containers.

- Support local mosquito control efforts.

UTAH

Next step for American Fork River: Measure the risks with an eye toward spring (KSL TV, Salt Lake City)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue | Posted Aug 30th, 2016 @ 7:02pm

SALT LAKE CITY — State water quality officials will insist on an action plan to prevent further contamination of the American Fork River from lead-laden sediment that killed thousands of fish in a two-mile stretch.

That plan will be put together by the North Utah Water Conservancy District with an eye toward preventing sediment from being stirred up by rain or spring runoff, said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

He said the division also expects to get an estimate from project engineers on the amount of sediment that washed into the river as a result of the Tibble Fork Dam's $7.3 million rehabilitation and expansion project.

"We have moved sediment from point A to point B over a six-mile expanse," Baker said. "There needs to be an assessment of how bad it is and what steps need to be taken to remediate it."

It's the latest plan following completion by project engineers of a diversion channel that placed a 200-foot pipeline to reroute flows into the nearly empty Tibble Fork basin to prevent another sediment flush while work continues on the dam.

Baker said a lot of factors will come into play to mitigate the impacts of the sludge, especially given that high flows from spring runoff.

"Mother Nature is going to come with spring runoff regardless of any planning we do," he said. "We need to know what needs to be done."

Dave Brown, the Utah state conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, said an aerial drone flew over the site Monday to quantify the amount of material that washed into the river.

"There is a very clear mini-canyon that is exposed now," he said. "The engineer indicated they could use survey technology to calculate how much sediment was deposited."

Dam project

The NRCS is the federal agency on the Tibble Fork rehabilitation project, which rose as a priority after a 2004 assessment found that 1960s-era dam did not meet safety standards. Work began in June, with the NRCS advising downstream users that as the reservoir began draining around Aug. 19, people could expect to see elevated levels of sediment in the river.

Brown said continuing inflows into the basin released larger amounts of sediment than anticipated. The result was a two-mile section of the river just below the dam that lost all its fish populations due to suffocation.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources said historically, there are about 1,000 to 2,000 fish per mile in that section of the river.

While water samples taken by the state show metal concentrations within screening values for health, recreation and aquatic life downstream, the sediment showed high levels of lead that likely resulted from legacy mining operations in the Wasatch Mountains.

Several hundred abandoned mines dot the mountains, some experiencing acid mine drainage and an unknown number are within proximity of perennial stream flows.

Baker said his division has worked in partnership with the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, to craft a blueprint of where there may be water quality risks — a concern accentuated with the disastrous Gold King Mine spill of 2015.

In that incident, EPA-led contractors bungled efforts to open a mine portal and sent a 3-million gallon torrent of mustard-colored mine waste into the Animas River above Silverton, Colo. The breach contaminated water in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the Navajo Nation in an environmental catastrophe critics say was avoidable.

Baker said the Gold King mine disaster underscores the need for Utah officials to get a handle on potential problems, sooner rather than later.

"It ought to be enough of a concern that we do some investigation," he said. "My greatest concern is if there needs to be an action plan and if these are time bombs waiting to go off."

Abandoned mines

While state officials over abandoned mine reclamation have mapped the hundreds of mines and their owners — if available — with work done in the 1990s, Baker said it is not clear how many of them pose risks to waterways.

"If, in fact, they do have flows and there are responsible parties, we can issue a permit and get an idea of the water quality of the mines' drainage," he said. "We will be way ahead to know if we have a problem or not."

The mining division closes up abandoned mines if there is a public safety risk, and Baker's division can enforce the Clean Water Act if water is at risk, but there is no state regulatory oversight absent those factors.

"We really don't know the extent," said Steve Fluke, administrator over the state's abandoned mine reclamation program. "We are trying to figure out how many are discharging and may be an environmental issue in light of Gold King."

While there is funding in place to deal with the cleanup of abandoned coal mines, no funding exists for other mines.

"There is no such law for cleaning up hard rock mine sites," Fluke said.

Mark Allen of Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon sees the potential for another Gold King Mine spill in the Wasatch Mountains because he said no one is properly addressing the risks.

"The Wasatch Mountains have a bunch of ticking time bombs and no one wants to talk about them," he said.

Allen said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should step in and declare the Tibble Fork sediment release into American Fork River a Superfund site.

EPA had a response team in Utah County last week, but the federal agency has not disclosed what its employees determined about the Tibble Fork Dam release.

"We will continue to coordinate with Utah and federal agencies to evaluate data, information, and potential next steps related to the sediment release," said EPA spokesman Rich Mylott.

"We’re certainly aware of concerns related to historic mining and metals impacts in the American Fork watershed and have worked with state and local partners on previous assessment and cleanup projects in the basin."

Allen is leading a tour to legacy mine sites mid-month that Baker and Fluke said they plan to attend.

"I have been barking pretty loud," he said. "We're taking everybody up there who has some stewardship and asking them to figure out what to do."

Baker and several members of his staff are touring the New Yankee Mine on Snowbird property Wednesday to assess any downstream impacts.

The division is also looking at the resort's expansion into Mary Ellen Gulch, an approval granted earlier this year that requires water quality monitoring for two years before any construction on ski lifts or other facilities begins.

WYOMING

Route To Yellowstone Reopens, But Fire Danger Remains High (Wyoming Public Radio)

By CAROLINE BALLARD • 16 HOURS AGO

Northwest Wyoming continues to struggle with high fire danger as eleven wild fires currently burn in that part of the state.

Bill Swartley, a public information officer for the Yellowstone fire team, said Phase 2 fire restrictions will likely go into effect in Yellowstone National Park on Wednesday. That means any kind of open flame may be banned in the park.

Swartley said preventing any human caused fires is their top priority.

“These fires are lightning caused and for that reason are being managed for ecological benefits to the park,” said Swartley. “However, human caused fires are a total different type of ignition.” With temperatures reaching into the 80s and low relative humidity, weather conditions are prime for even more fire growth.

Some progress has been made, though. Highway 191/89/287 between Leek’s Marina and Yellowstone’s South Entrance was closed because of the Berry Fire but has now reopened. Highway pull outs along that stretch remain closed.

Swartley said there may be areas of light haze or smoke in the park that could make it hard to see.

“We’re just recommending people adjust their speed and turn on their headlights, increase their visibility as they pass through those areas of smoke,” said Swartley.

He added that people with respiratory sensitivity may want to check air quality at airnow.gov before heading into the park.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (8/30, lead story, 2:30, Guthrie, 16.61M) reported, "Make no mistake, we are in the fall throes of hurricane season now. And if you're a storm watcher at the weather service looking at the US map tonight, there's a lot to keep your eye on. Three big storms threatening the US coastline at this hour. Parts of Florida just placed under a hurricane watch, bracing for up to 10 inches of rain. A tropical storm warning for sections of North Carolina. And Hawaii gearing up for a possible one-two punch. The Big Island facing a hurricane warning at this hour. Gabe Gutierrez starts us off tonight in North Carolina storm zone." NBC (**Gutierrez**) added, "Tonight, the view from the International Space Station is stunning: massive hurricanes swirling across the globe. Hurricane Madeleine in the Pacific, threatening Hawaii. It's followed by Hurricane Lester. Churning in the Atlantic, Hurricane Gaston, not expected to affect the US but now the Carolina and Florida coasts are bracing for separate tropical systems." **Unidentified speaker**: "The storm is an uncertainty, but we are preparing for it." **Gutierrez**: "In Florida, tropical depression number nine is forecast to turn towards the Gulf Coast, bringing heavy rain and even isolated tornadoes over the next few days." **Rick Scott**, Florida Governor: "Everybody has to be careful. We don't want anybody to be injured. We don't want any loss of life." **Gutierrez**: "Another system, tropical depression number eight, is grazing North Carolina's Outer Banks, where a tropical storm warning is in effect. The concern here, rip currents – fast-moving water that moves away from shore. Swimmers are pulled out to sea and panic while trying to swim against current, back to the beach." **Drew Pearson**, NC Emergency Management: "Rip currents are dangerous. They've taken three lives here in the Outer Banks Just this past summer. There's a high threat of them right now." **Gutierrez**: "Young Payton Waller got caught up in one but managed to escape." **Payton Waller**, swimmer: "It's really rough and all these waves just crashing." **Gutierrez**: "Other tourists on this tail end of summer are taking the offshore storm in stride." **Unidentified speaker**: "I mean, one to three inches. Back home, this is what you call a thunderstorm." **Gutierrez**: "Though neither of the storms closest to the eastern US are expected to strengthen into major hurricanes, it has suddenly become a busy season in the tropics." **Rick Knabb**, National Hurricane Center: "Don't focus so much on the strength or the category, because the water hazards might end up being the most dangerous." **Gutierrez**: "As Florida prepares for flooding, here in North Carolina's Outer Banks, things may seem calm. But, there is rough surf and dangerous rip currents up and down the eastern seaboard as far north as New England, possibly extending into the holiday weekend."

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, August 30, 2016

The federal agency leading the public health response to the Zika virus in the United States will run out of funding to combat the mosquito-borne virus by late September, its director said Monday.

"The cupboard is bare," said Tom Frieden, who heads the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Basically, we're out of money, and we need Congress to act to allow us to respond effectively."

Of the $222 million that the CDC was allocated for domestic Zika response this year, about $200 million has been committed, Frieden said during a media roundtable in Washington. "The rest will be gone by the end of September."

The timing further raises the threat for high-risk states along the Gulf Coast, particularly if Congress again fails to act on the Obama administration's emergency funding request when lawmakers return to Washington next month.

"We're in peak mosquito season" – which typically lasts through the end of October in the United States – and if transmission starts occurring more broadly, CDC "might not have the resources" to respond and send teams to support local and state officials, Frieden said.

The CDC has already issued unprecedented travel advisories for two areas in Florida where mosquitoes are actively spreading the virus: a one-square-mile section of Miami's Wynwood neighborhood and a 1.5-square-mile zone in Miami Beach. Pregnant women are urged to stay out of both areas because of the danger Zika poses to a fetus.

Negotiations in Congress over a $1.9 billion Zika spending package fell apart in late June. Federal health officials have shifted money from elsewhere in the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the domestic response. That includes $38 million from fighting Ebola, $44 million from general public health emergency funds and, most recently, $81 million from programs at the National Institutes of Health and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

The money has gone to help states track the virus, provide assistance about birth defects caused by Zika and increase mosquito-control efforts. Within CDC itself, officials also have pulled resources from programs on immunization, disease infection and HIV outreach, including prevention treatment for people at risk of getting HIV, Frieden said.

Researchers continue to detail ever-graver consequences for babies born to mothers infected with Zika. A report from Brazil, published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine, described a newborn in Sao Paolo who had Zika virus in his blood for more than two months. While the baby had no obvious illness or visible birth defects at birth or when doctors examined him at about eight weeks, by six months he had developed severe Zika-related brain damage.

The first trimester of pregnancy is thought to be when Zika infection poses the greatest risk. In this case, however, the baby's mother was infected late in her second trimester.

At the same time, the virus continues to spread to the rest of the world. The latest outbreak is in Singapore, a Southeast Asia travel hub, which typically has 500 full-time inspectors working to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can breed. The fact that Zika is spreading there, with at least 56 cases now confirmed, shows how "it's going to be really tough" for other places to control, he said.

During the coming weeks in the United States, Frieden expects there will be more cases of infants born with Zika-related neurological problems. As of mid-August, 17 babies infected in utero had been diagnosed with microcephaly, a condition defined by an abnormally small head and often serious brain damage.

In hard-hit Puerto Rico, the CDC estimates that 6,000 to 10,000 pregnant women will become infected during this mosquito season and that at least 100 to 270 infants will be born with microcephaly.

Without additional funding, Frieden said, the CDC won't be able to undertake key projects to better understand and control the virus, including Zika's longterm impact on infants and diagnostics to identify if a person has been previously infected.

In Puerto Rico, the agency also won't be able to help the island establish its own vector control program. Without one, the island has not been able to conduct effective surveillance, mosquito control or public engagement, even though Puerto Rico is experiencing a Zika epidemic and has had a history of other vector-borne diseases.

Frieden said the few additional cases that have surfaced in other parts of South Florida are considered single cases that don’t represent a greater spread of the virus.

The travel advisories will be lifted after 45 days with no new cases from local transmission – the equivalent of three mosquito incubation periods. The Wynwood area is about halfway through that period, he said, but Miami Beach is still experiencing new cases.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 18:10:40 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

There was recently an article posted on Facebook from anarchic news that gave this information about a shoot on sight order given in North Dakota.

Here is a summary and direct quote from the article accusing Homeland Security of giving the order:

At the end of the article in question from the Anarchicnews site, there is an unattributed quote forming the last paragraph that does say "Now though homeland security has taken over, legally, and the situation and the level of threat has been bumped up. This means they consider this a terrorist action and have the authority to shot on sight." The first paragraph and headline attribute the order to North Dakota and the governor. I think this particular Snopes article debunking that the governor issued any such order is a good think and valid.
I have searched diligently and not found any reference anywhere else to Homeland Security issuing such an order.

While Snopes debunked the article as it pertained to the Governor, they did not address the Homeland Security reference. This is now under discussion among members of my tribe and people are very disturbed about it.

Please clarify what Homeland Security;s role is regarding DAPL Pipeline and whether a shoot on sight order was issued. What is Homeland Security's policy on shooting perceived protestors. Is the DAPL protest classified as a terrorist action?

Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 18:53:35 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

After reading more closely, it is an inquiry about Homeland Security's role with the protest and a potential shoot on site order.

I googled (b)(6) and found her on Facebook. She is retired, didn't say what she retired from.

I tried to get to the website she mentions below but it is an unsafe site per my iPhone (and I am respecting that since we just heard about cyber security).

If the question is about DHS, and it appeared in a news outlet, plus the national attention the protests have gotten, we may want to might to defer to HQ on.

The most current update:
Lots of national news coverage
Seems to be a significant tension between the tribe and the State.
The Tribe has Declared a State of Emergency to address the impacts from the pipeline.
ND ACLU has asked the State to to protect first amendment rights.
The protestors have set up a school for the kids at the camp.
There are still conflicting reports of violence vs. peaceful protests.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

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Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 16:43:48 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: 915 notes

Hi Stacie -

Just for awareness would any PFTs on our team be considered essential?

This class has already been amazing.

M

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2016 5:00:58 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 915 notes

Darrin Ricketts will be heading to R5 toward end of Oct. Same job. Closer to family
FCO/FDRC meeting next week for those not deployed
Planning in case… Essential personnel list to be reviewed by DDs today. Note: Except CR to go through currently.
Interest from Sen. Hoeven in exploring federal funds (all agencies) for ND to support needed OT on law enforcement related to pipeline
ARA returns late tonight.

Reminder: I leave at about 4:15 today.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 20:27:47 +0000
To: Booth, Milo;Valteau, Margeau
Subject: RE: a few things

Thank you!!!!

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 2:27 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Valteau, Margeau <margeau.valteau@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: a few things

Later this month.

Yes. We can send the documents out for the RTL's to see.

Ok.

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 4:18 PM
To: Booth, Milo; Valteau, Margeau
Subject: a few things

Hi Milo and Margeau –

I wanted to touch base on three things….

1) Are we still looking at tomorrow as the start for consultation for the Tribal Policy? And will we get to see the changes before it goes out?
2) There are significant protests going on just north of the Standing Rock Reservation (southwestern SD) regarding the XL Pipeline. Media is anticipating large busloads of people from other reservations arriving today. We are tracking from here. We haven't gotten any questions on it, but depending on how long it goes on, it could impact some of our travel plans and the availability of tribal EMs and Council as well as their interest in FEMA. The protests have all been peaceful and are expected to stay that way.

Hope you are both doing well!

Megan

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 16:27:20 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Valteau, Margeau
Subject: RE: a few things

Later this month.

Yes. We can send the documents out for the RTL's to see.

Ok.

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 4:18 PM
To: Booth, Milo; Valteau, Margeau
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Hope you are both doing well!

Megan

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:48:54 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

I'll take a crack and get you something to review in a few minutes.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:47 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Brian – Nancy and I spoke this morning. She'd like to send another BLUF up to Beth Z on the situation, it should be pretty tight, just a quick update. Below is what she sent previously. **Given what we know, would you do a quick draft that Megan can then review as she is at OST and heading into a meeting?**

Key items that need to be included for sure (I'm open to other):
**Information is mixed and doesn't fully jive from sources.
**Stop of work.
**Upcoming powwow.
**Ongoing monitoring of media/social media, and communication with the state.
**Again, no FEMA role at this time.

Anything else?

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 3:41 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth <elizabeth.zimmerman@fema.dhs.gov>; Gruber, Corey <Corey.Gruber@fema.dhs.gov>; Coen Jr, Michael <Michael.CoenJr@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>; R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock

Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations, the situation is significant enough for the State EM director and the Adjutant General to cancel their planned participation in the TAG/NORTHCOM seminar August 17-18.

I have spoken with Greg Wilz and we are monitoring the situation. I do not anticipate any role for FEMA; this BLUF is for situational awareness only.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:42:46 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

We are good with the IHS email. Hope you are pushing to Milo for him to push but either way, just give me visibility please.

I'll have Brian do a draft for an update to Beth. You can view once written before we push to Nancy.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:41 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Sounds good as I am heading into a meeting. Are we on with the IHS email? I can send after my meeting.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:38:06 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

I can have Brian do a quick new draft of this for Nancy to push unless you want to draft it for some reason. We'd vet past you once written.

Key points I think we need to hit:
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Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 17:40:50 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

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Office – 303-235-4840
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Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 20:15:55 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

I moved very quickly from meeting to car. I will send when I get down to the Rez. I'll send you Milo and Rocky and you.

M

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:42:46 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

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Regards, Nancy

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Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 17:07:03 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian;Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Brian, if you could look at the last bullet that I added.

Stacie – I could add that there are no current or anticipated requests for HHS/Federal ESF8 assistance – per Ron's report.

Other than that I would be ready to send to Milo and Rocky and then send to Ron for awareness.

I am going to engage in OST shortly and would like to get this out the door before that happens.

Thanks

Megan

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:39 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

This looks good to me, with the addition of the Powwow bullet that is with Brian for proof reading.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:29 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

How is this?

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

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Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

This looks good to me, with the addition of the Powwow bullet that is with Brian for proof reading.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:29 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

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- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
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- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

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Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 16:36:01 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian;Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Additional Bullet regarding the Powow.

September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck, ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this year's Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 16:27:34 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

The Report we got has the wrong information about the Powwow. They are talking about United Tribes that happens over Labor Day, but it happens in Bismarck, not the Reservation. If you are ok with it, I am going to update the information to accurately reflect the name and the location.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:10 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

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I"ll take a quick look at it. And will let nancy know in am.

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Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Hi Stacie -

Got a call from Milo this evening. Apparently, high level people at IHS are looking for Intel on standing rock protests. We have a reputation for knowing what is generally going on so they called Milo. Milo asked me to respond to the email below with what I may be hearing. I told him I would but I would site my sources and make sure that it is clear we have not been in contact with the tribe and this is not our issue.

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Thanks
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Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the
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If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

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To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan
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- This is not the XL Pipeline, this the Keystone Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation.

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- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
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- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
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If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 – Desk
(303) 945-6367 – Cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:48 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I"ll take a quick look at it. And will let nancy know in am.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Hi Stacie -

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Once that is out I'll write the tribal policy summary.

Thanks
M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 3:22:09 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; (b)(6)@ihs.gov'
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the
Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 16:11:00 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I am ok with adding, I just tried to not as to many details. I could write a lot more then I have included.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:10 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

That is a megan call. For your awareness. This is for national indian health and we need to balance providing, but not being a source. Not ours and they have staff on ground

---

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:08 AM
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

OK. In this morning's clips there is a story from Bismarck Tribune that Morton County has declared a state of Emergency. Do you want that included?

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:07 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Also...only contact with state really not correct as we have been talking at operational level. Question calling out ARA/state director so directly in here. Needed? At a mimimum...soften and pull out direct references to ara/state director

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Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:04 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

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Megan -
*Add in that powwow upcoming (ARA requested add)
*send a note to Ron, HHS. He is in SLC at event
*no need to add any fbi info. Do what we have been doing, strictly info gathering and monitoring

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From: Floyd, Megan
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Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 16:09:28 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I have no issue adding it.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:09 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
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To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
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Regards,

Milo

From: Appenrodt, Kathleen
To: Greff, Stacie; Dick, Jennifer
Subject: RE: Boston - potentially relevant info
Date: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 11:48:41 AM

Thanks, I'll stop by this afternoon. It's always fun to hear about political maneuvering.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 11:43:33 AM
To: Dick, Jennifer; Appenrodt, Kathleen
Subject: RE: Boston - potentially relevant info

Thanks, Jen. Also, Katie, happy to fill you in if you are interested in what just came down…

From: Dick, Jennifer
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 11:41 AM
To: Appenrodt, Kathleen <kathleen.appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Boston - potentially relevant info

Interesting article on what unfolded as far as Maryland civil unrest—to include declaration denial and then MD looking for funding through other federal avenues: http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/bs-md-sun-investigates-fema-disaster-denial-20150801-story.html

Jennifer Dick
Regional Counsel
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4903 (office)
(303) 563-9230 (blackberry)

This email and any attachments were prepared by the DHS/FEMA Office of Chief Counsel and are covered by federal and state law governing electronic communications. It may contain confidential, pre-decisional, and/or sensitive attorney client privileged, attorney work-product and/or US Government information, and is not intended for release, review, retransmission, dissemination, or use by anyone other than the intended recipient. Please consult the sender before disclosing any information contained in this email or its attachments.

From: Dick, Jennifer
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 11:11 AM
To: Appenrodt, Kathleen <kathleen.appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Boston - potentially relevant info

just FYI--I heard from HQ OCC declarations attorney that Emergency Declaration for protest activity is unlikely as a request from MD for the civil unrest was denied.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Appenrodt, Kathleen
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2016 1:02:11 PM
To: Dick, Jennifer; Greff, Stacie
Subject: Boston - potentially relevant info

I pulled this from a Serino speech in Boston. I found bullet #3 interesting.

Immediate Aftermath and Recovery

- Two days after the bombing, President Obama issued an Emergency Declaration for Massachusetts to "alleviate the hardship and suffering caused by the emergency on the local population, and to provide appropriate assistance for required emergency measures, authorized under Title V of the Stafford Act, to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, and to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in the counties of Middlesex, Norfolk, and Suffolk."

- This declaration authorized FEMA to identify, mobilize and provide equipment and resources necessary to alleviate the impacts of the emergency. FEMA was authorized to provide Category B emergency protective measures to include items such as police personnel, search and rescue, and removal of health and safety hazards. FEMA also provided Public Assistance to include funding for shelters and emergency care for Norfolk and Suffolk counties, which was primarily used for residents whose homes had been impacted during the blast or could benefit from crisis counseling. That assistance was provided with 75 percent federal funding.

- Additionally, FEMA authorized state and local agencies in Massachusetts to use existing preparedness grant funding to support law enforcement and first responder overtime costs resulting from investigation support activities or heightened security measures, from April 15, 2013 through May 5, 2013. FEMA granted a similar authorization for state and local agencies hosting major special events scheduled during this timeframe.

Katie Appenrodt
Senior Policy Advisor
FEMA Region VIII
303-235-4775 office
720-666-9835 cell
Kathleen.Appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov

From: Dragani, Nancy
To: Graff, Shawn
Cc: Appenrodt, Kathleen; Deal, Timothy
Subject: RE: Invitation to Download a File
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2016 8:50:37 AM

Shawn

Thanks for sending us the analysis of long-term impacts to disruption of pipelines. We'll reach out if there are any additional questions or concerns.

Regards, Nancy

-----Original Message-----
From: Graff, Shawn
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2016 8:16 AM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Appenrodt, Kathleen <kathleen.appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov>; Graff, Shawn <(b)(6) @hq.dhs.gov>; Deal, Timothy <Timothy.Deal@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Invitation to Download a File

Good Morning Nancy,
In response to a Request for Information (RFI) from the NPPD Chief of Staff asking about potential impacts and private sector coordination related to the recent pipeline incidents, our Office of Cyber and Infrastructure Analysis provided the response below. That has been combined with a brief summary of some of the outreach our Protective Security Advisors in the area have done. I am in DC this week, but both Scott Behunin and I are available via email and phone should you or your team need anything from us.

Thank you,
Shawn

Subject: RFI - Potential Long-Term Impacts to Disruption of Pipelines

The Office of Cyber and Infrastructure Analysis (OCIA) assesses that there will be minimal short-term and no long-term damages and/or impacts to the Oil and Natural Gas Subsector stemming from the recent incidents in which activists closed a mainline valve on the Express Pipeline in Eagle Butte, MT and other valves on pipelines which belong to Enbridge in Minnesota and Trans-Canada in North Dakota. SCADA systems belonging to these pipelines notify operators about interruptions which results in a timely dispatch of crews to restore the flow thus mitigating any significant delay in the delivery of product. Further security personnel will likely be dispatched to the site to further deter any more actions by the part of activists. All of the targeted pipelines are fully operational.

DOT regulations require operators to have protection in place to prevent tampering with chain link fences and locks. DOT PHMSA is drafting a Safety Advisory Bulletin to publish for pipeline operators.

An RFI was produced by OCIA and pushed out to the North Dakota State and Local Intelligence Center by the ND PSA. The PSA has been in contact with utility companies (Montana Dakota Utilities; MinnKota; and Otter Tail) to help maintain their awareness of the ongoing situation. Contact information has been gathered for all the major energy stakeholders in the state for communications purposes.

-----Original Message-----
From: Dragani, Nancy

Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 11:05 AM
To: Graff, Shawn <(b)(6)@hq.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Shawn

I'm sharing with you a power point provided by ND Emergency Management Director, Greg Wilz. He asked me to facilitate a conference call with the other R8 state directors to discuss potential EMAC requests. In preparation for the meeting, he provided this update; it is a large file and took approximately 10 minutes to download. You may already know much or all of this but I thought it was a nice rollup.

He has asked to keep distribution to FOUO.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator Office – 303-235-4840 Cell – 202-702-1991 Denver Federal Center, Building 710 Lakewood, CO 80225

-----Original Message-----
From: Wilz, Greg M. [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 6:33 AM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>; Cameron, Guy <(b)(6)@wyo.gov>; tina titze (b)(6)@state.sd.us>;(b)(6)@utah.gov>; Bruno, Delilah (b)(6)@mt.gov>; Gally, Marilyn (b)(6)@state.co.us>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us>
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Region 8 Directors,

I am hoping this all work. Below is a link to a state of North Dakota secure file transfer site. The file is about 190 meg so it was too large to send regular email. It is a briefing that will help explain what is going on in North Dakota. We are providing it all states that have inquired about what is the risk of sending LEO to North Dakota based on our EMAC.

The complete situation here on the ground is very complex almost unbelievable unless you have been here since the beginning. What has started as peaceful protest by concerned citizens and Tribal members has grown to situation that is at times out of control with recent actions bordering on terrorism with state, national , and international implications.

I look forward to talking to you all this morning. If the file transfer works and you get a chance to look at it before the conference call that would be great.

Greg

You can download the file using the following link: https://apps.nd.gov/itd/filetransfer/downloadByInvitation.htm?id=1-cc8f91f7036cb333c3fdef74e22b47ff.

****

For security reasons, please do not forward this email to other persons. Doing so may allow unauthorized persons the ability to download the file as well.

From: Appenrodt, Kathleen
To: Graff, Shawn
Subject: RE: Still Here
Date: Thursday, October 13, 2016 12:40:00 PM

Glad you are still alive and kicking. Heads up, Nancy is probably going to call you soon to give you a broad update on the North Dakota Access Pipeline protests.

From: Graff, Shawn
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 12:15 PM
To: Appenrodt, Kathleen <kathleen.appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Still Here

Hey Katie,

Been a little while since I made it over to FEMA R8. Just wanted you all to know I am still here. Went on leave for a week and will be in DC all next week, hope all is well with you!

v/r
Shawn

Shawn Graff
Regional Director, Region 8
Office of Infrastructure Protection
Department of Homeland Security
720-520-1365
Hometown Security | Homeland Security

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:39:01 +0000
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Coen Jr, Michael;Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan;Deal, Timothy
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but current estimates range from 1500-2000 protesters. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday Aug. 19, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 15:44:26 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Awareness.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
  -
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

Editor's note: As part of the Journal's ongoing coverage of the massive Dakota Access Pipeline protest in North Dakota, staff writer Mike Anderson has been camping in a tent near the protest site. He filed this dispatch from the scene on Saturday.

CANNON BALL, N.D. | A peaceful protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline ended in the arrests of 83 people in North Dakota on Saturday morning amid a chaotic scene in which police in riot gear used pepper spray to break up and subdue a group of 200 to 300 protesters.

It is the highest number of people arrested in a single day in North Dakota during the last several months of protest actions against the oil pipeline, bringing the total number of arrests up to 222.

Though the protesters behaved non-violently and cooperated with the police, North Dakota law enforcement officials described Saturday's events as a riot. Police have offered conflicting reports alleging that one protester either verbally threatened an officer, or tried to physically grab away a can of pepper spray, resulting in the protester and the officer both being pepper sprayed in the face.

Most, if not all, of those arrested after the 5-hour ordeal on Saturday will be charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor, according to Morton County Sheriff spokesperson Rob Keller. Other charges included assault on a peace officer, reckless endangerment, engaging in a riot, resisting arrest, and fleeing an officer on foot.

"It's an unlawful activity," Keller said during phone interview on Saturday afternoon. "The bottom line is it's on private property. It's posted, 'No Criminal Trespass'. It's like you're invading someone's home. Consequently, there were arrests that were made."

The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

A police statement said the four were arrested after they were found, "attached to the vehicle; two attached to the outside of the vehicle, one attached to the steering wheel and another whose body was outside the vehicle with his arm fed through a hole in the door and his hand was in a bucket of hardened concrete."

The call to action went through the main resistance camp around 5:20 a.m. while it was still dark and freezing cold. A man walked through the camp speaking through a megaphone.

"Wake up relatives," he said. "Wake up water protectors. Wake up land defenders. Time to wake up. Time to send our boys to the universe. Time to send our boys to the rising sun."

A convoy of vehicles formed in the camp, a prayer was held, and the assembled were instructed to behave peacefully and respectfully if they encountered police.

“I know it’s hard on the front line,” the prayer leader said in the dark. “But do not cuss, do not holler. If you see someone getting out of hand, tell them to calm down.”

Then the convoy moved out. Parking their vehicles along the highway, the protesters began hiking into the field as the sun rose a little before 8 a.m. Their path took them along a craggy dirt road near the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline on land that tribal members of the Hunkpapa Sioux of Standing Rock said is filled with sacred burial sites.

Some of the protesters remained behind as several hundred others carrying signs and banners began marching into the field, singing, praying, and burning bundles of ceremonial sage as they went.

They walked two to three miles inward when they encountered a line of more than 50 officers from multiple law enforcement agencies. Most of the officers wore riot gear, most held wooden truncheons, and some had shotguns, canisters of pepper spray, and tear gas grenade launchers in their hands. Two armored personnel carriers arrived later while a helicopter circled low overhead.

The protesters and police lines met in the middle of an open field. The protesters remained calm, playing drums and offering prayers in English and Lakota to the officers, who remained stone-faced and uncommunicative.

When the police line began to advance on the protesters, the leaders of the group instructed everyone to fall back and cooperate with the police. They were dispersing when an officer spoke over a loud-speaker from the turret of an armored vehicle.

His only words — and the only words police spoke to the protesters all morning — were, “You’re all under arrest for trespassing.”

The police continued to advance on the fleeing protesters, snatching some of the stragglers, throwing them behind their lines, and pepper-spraying several others in the face as they trod silently forward.

The police eventually surrounded the group, repeating that every one of the 200 to 300 people present would be placed under arrest. The protesters linked arms and tied bandanas to their faces as the officers pressed in, splitting the group and pressing many to the ground. Most, if not all of the men and women taken into custody, did not resist arrest.

A small group managed to retreat over the hill, a few pouring water into the eyes of friends who had been stung by pepper spray and guiding them by hand up the dirt road as they made their way back to camp.

“It was all peaceful. And then the cops showed up," said Harmony Restoule, a young Ojibwe woman from Northern Ontario, Canada. “It was really scary when the police kicked into action.”

Restoule went to the demonstration with her cousin Paige, both of whom participated in mass protests during the Idle No More movement, a grassroots campaign organized in 2012 by the indigenous peoples of Canada against perceived legislative violations of their treaty rights.

“The Canadian police never showed up in riot gear,” Paige Restoule said.

A young man from California who identified himself only as Ahkua said his friend was among the people arrested, and that the police took him after he knelt to the ground to help someone else up.

“There were a few officers who were excessively aggressive and got the others riled up,” he said. “Most cops are pretty chill.”

Saturday’s protest was one of several high profile demonstrations in the Cannon Ball area against the Dakota Access Pipeline in recent months. Police arrested celebrity Shailene Woodley along with more than 20 others on Oct. 10 along the route of the pipeline near St. Anthony, N.D. Police referred to the event as a riot and charged many people with either inciting or engaging in a riot. At the time, it was the highest total number of arrests made in a single day.

The protesters, who now number in the thousands at a main camp near Cannon Ball, want to stop the ongoing construction of the pipeline that will transport oil from the Bakken and Three Forks formations of North Dakota, through South Dakota and Iowa, into southern Illinois. The pipeline would carry 450,000 barrels per day initially and could reach 570,000 barrels a day. The total length of the pipeline across the four states would be 1,134 miles, with 271 miles in South Dakota. The company's estimated cost for the South Dakota segment is $820 million.

On Sept. 3, police and private security forces used pepper spray and dogs to drive protesters away from construction equipment.

"Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful," Kirchmeier said in a press-release about Saturday's events. "This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities. I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protesters. This is about the rule of law."

The protesters may have been peacefully dispersing on Saturday morning, Keller said, but that doesn't change the fact that they broke the law.

"That's the whole purpose of having a police line, to protect the (pipeline) property and their right to commerce," Keller said. "We are protecting the protesters too, and the ranchers as well."

When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, "No."

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 5 Oct 2016 17:09:49 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Subject: FW: Update on Dakota Access protest from Bismarck Tribune

Spoke too soon. Has been quiet...

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2016 9:33:42 PM
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan; Stephenson, James R; Garcia, Carol
Subject: Update on Dakota Access protest from Bismarck Tribune

http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/protesters-diverted-from-st-anthony/article_5bd63f0e-4eaf-5aea-b08a-0b8a7617ca9b.html

Action at St. Anthony.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: 15 Sep 2016 12:41:57 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy;Hudson, Lamont
Subject: FW: ND Protests

Nancy…follow-up from ESF-13 on our conversation this morning.

Lee

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Page 2378

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Depalo, Lee
To: R8 Division Directors
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:25:01 AM

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

FEMA

Referred to Another Agency/Component

FBI Minneapolis (MP) is working to assess the situation and gather intelligence on the ground. They will be moving additional agents to the area over the next 24 hrs. The MP SSRA had no better news to report yesterday, based on their initial engagements with regional partners and the pipeline company. The eight inch in diameter bakken crude pipeline is being constructed along an existing easement, which already includes natural gas and electrical lines; construction is not occurring on reservation land. The incident appears to be more than just an issue of disruption to sacred land or environmental concerns. There is a local assessment this is about much broader political issues for the Sioux bands. Preliminary reporting also indicates there are members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and protesters from Pine Ridge en route or already at the protest site. There are currently three

Page 2380

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of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 14:09:54 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Pipeline update

Pipeline update:

Yesterday was a big day, Jessy Jackson arrived on site and talks between the protestors and law enforcement broke down.

- There was an article today from the Associated Press Regarding WY sending law enforcement to North Dakota: http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming-sends-troopers-to-north-dakota-pipeline-protest/article_2972e493-0b71-5cab-9c7d-3c27fb67542e.html (full article pasted below). Pre the article both tribes in WY are opposed to sending the law enforced support.
- There was a media report yesterday that Indiana is sending law enforcement to support ND. The article references FEMA paying for the support. We have reached out to Region IV for awareness and to let them know that FEMA is not paying for any law enforcement. The article is likely referencing EMAC. http://www.theindychannel.com/news/call-6-investigators/call-6-dozens-of-indiana-officers-deployed-to-north-dakota-pipeline-dispute-but-whos-paying (full article below).
- I am hearing a lot about treaty rights on social media, this morning on NPR the Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux talked about this land belonging to the tribes based on treaties (NPR and other media sources).
- A new encampment (the 1851 Treaty Camp) has been set up directly on the pipeline path, which is private property (KILI Radio).
- On Wed. Jessy Jackson arrived on site to speak out about the many human and civil rights violations being perpetrated by local police (Indian Country Today).
- Actor Mark Ruffalo was at Standing Rock yesterday showing his support and Leonardo DiCaprio announced today he is on his way (Indian Country Today).
- Everyone is still calling for peaceful protests (multiple media outlets).
- It is being reported there have been between 260 and 300 arrests since the protests began with most of them happening last Saturday and pepper spray being used by law enforcement (multiple media sources).
- FAA has issued temporary flight restrictions over the protest camps. Only response aircraft in support of law enforcement activity are authorized in the airspace (Bismarck Tribune).
- Negotiations broke down between protestors and law enforcement yesterday (Bismarck Tribune).
- This inforum link is to a video that shows clear frustration by law enforcement and that they do not want a confrontation. http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction (InForum)

This is a particularly good story about law enforcement and what happened yesterday.

http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4146041-new-roadblock-emerges-highway-1806-confrontation-between-protesters-law

New roadblock emerges on Highway 1806 as confrontation between protesters, law enforcement looms

By Amy Dalrymple and Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 10:22 a.m.

Dawn breaks over the Oceti Sakowin Camp Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor1 / 2

A roadblock manned by North Dakota National Guard troops blocks North Dakota Hwy. 1806 before sunrise Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor2 / 2

MORTON COUNTY, N.D. — One day after negotiations between Dakota Access Pipeline protesters and law enforcement broke down, the mood was tense but quiet Thursday, Oct. 27, as the sun rose above the resistance camps.

Above, in restricted airspace, a North Dakota Highway Patrol aircraft circled.

Cecily Fong, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Emergency Services, said medical staffing is in place should any injuries occur at the protest sites.

She said law enforcement will likely issue a warning to protesters congregating at a camp along State Highway 1806, where pipeline opponents have set up teepees and staged hay bales, logs and barbed wire to block the road, if necessary.

However, Fong said she didn't know the timing of any law enforcement action planned, and officers want protesters to leave the northern camp, which is on private property recently purchased by the pipeline's developer, Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

Protesters will be encouraged to return to the southern camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.

By Thursday morning, protesters set up an additional "halfway" roadblock on Highway 1806 — between their main barricade and the frontline camp where they've promised to hold their ground.

At the halfway roadblock, pipeline opponents staged tires, plywood, sheet metal and logs — all ready to move onto the highway should law enforcement approach. The additional roadblock provides more time for those at the main camp to leave or join the protesters at the frontline camp.

Sam Wounded Knee, from Crow Creek Nation in South Dakota, spent the night at the "halfway" roadblock.

He said a plane flew overhead through the night, and it appeared two people were in the surrounding hills to the west and using flashlights to signal back and forth with the plane.

Asked if he expects violence in a confrontation, “from the police, yeah, definitely,” he said.

“All we’re trying to do is protect our people,” Wounded Knee said, adding that women and children were asked to leave the frontline camp Wednesday night. About 200 people are at the frontline camp.

With the new roadblock established by protesters, Highway 1806 has numerous staging areas, camps and road blocks stretched out over several miles, starting with an equipment staging area set up by law enforcement about a mile south of Fort Rice.

Traveling south on 1806, in succession, there is a law enforcement barricade, followed by the protesters’ main barricade, halfway roadblock, frontline camp and main camp.

On Wednesday, negotiations between pipeline opponents and law enforcement officials broke down, setting up a possible clash as hundreds of protesters vowed to hold their ground at a the frontline camp directly in the path of the four-state oil pipeline.

A contingent of law enforcement and National Guard officials met with camp representatives on Highway 1806.

Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney of Fargo, who is helping Morton County coordinate the law enforcement response, made one last plea for protesters to remove their roadblock on 1806 and abandon the roughly 200-person “frontline” camp, where teepees and tents continued to pop up on land where the pipeline is planned

“We’re here telling you this is private property and you have to leave,” Laney told camp coordinator Mekasi Camp-Horinek on Wednesday. “We don’t want a confrontation. Please stand your people down and go back to the main camp.”

Mekasi pointed at the road – “our no surrender line,” he said – and then back at the frontline camp standing in the way of the four-state, $3.8 billion oil pipeline – their “no retreat” line.

“That’s your final word?” Laney asked.

“That’s my final word,” Camp-Horinek said, walking away.

“Good day, gentleman,” Laney said, turning toward the staging area about five miles away near Fort Rice, where a mass of law enforcement and military forces has gathered.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said authorities will continue to do everything they can to resolve the situation peacefully, but he said discussions with camp leaders Wednesday reached an “impasse.”

Kirchmeier emphasized that “the last thing we want to do is do it forcefully.”

“If we have the chance for open dialog, that’s what we want to continue,” he said.

Pipeline opponents say they’ve reclaimed land under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, noting the Sioux never ceded that territory.

But Kirchmeier said Morton County authorities have to enforce existing laws and treaty issues would need to be resolved by the federal government. He added that currently the protesters are infringing on other residents’ rights by blocking the highway.

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

- AP

Protesters set up tepees and tents Monday in southern North Dakota on property owned by the pipeline company.

CHEYENNE — Wyoming has sent six highway patrol troopers to North Dakota to help authorities deal with Indian protesters demonstrating against the construction of an oil pipeline, prompting objections Tuesday from some Wyoming Indian leaders.

Sending the troopers merely extends emergency help to another state and does not signal that Wyoming has taken a position on the pipeline controversy, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said.

But Dean Goggles, chairman of Northern Arapaho Business Council, called on Mead to recall the troopers immediately.

“The North Dakota tribes and tribal members from around the nation are attempting to protect both the environment and sites which have ceremonial, religious and cultural significance to the tribes,” Goggles said.

More than 100 protesters were arrested last weekend in Morton County, North Dakota, in the faceoff between protesters and Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, developer of the four-state Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The $3.8 billion pipeline, most of which has been completed, crosses through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois. Opponents worry about potential effects on drinking water on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s reservation as well as harm to cultural sites.

Col. Kebin Haller of the Wyoming Highway Patrol said six troopers were sent to North Dakota on Saturday and are expected to remain there until Nov. 8.

The troopers volunteered after the governor of North Dakota declared an emergency and asked other states for law enforcement assistance, Haller said.

The six are members of the patrol's Special Services Squad who have additional training and equipment to address large crowds and civil unrest, he said. North Dakota will pay their salaries and the costs they incur while at the protest.

Mead said the decision to send Wyoming troopers happened because "a neighbor state asked for help and Wyoming answered the call."

"North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded," Mead said.

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in Wyoming have expressed formal support for the protesters.

Jason Baldes, a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and staff member at the Wind River Native Advocacy Center, accused Wyoming officials of supporting the pipeline by sending law enforcement officers to face off against protesters.

"It kind of sheds light on really who's running the show here," Baldes said. "The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets."

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

"The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue," he said.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including

emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 Desk
(303) 945-6367 Cell
megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Dragani, Nancy
To: Wilz, Greg M.
Cc: Hufford, Bradford; Deal, Timothy; (b)(6)@usdoj.gov
Subject: RE: ESF13 info and contact info
Date: Thursday, September 15, 2016 4:20:00 PM

Greg

Understand about SHSP/LETPP. I asked Brad to check with his peers to see if other states' had reprogrammed grants to cover these types of events. Unfortunately, it sounds like even if reprogramming is possible, the pool of available funds will limit this option.

I was pleased to see the potential options regarding JAG grants and/or emergency JAG grants. I hope that proves a solution, even if a partial one.

We'll keep looking around here but to date, no other feasible solutions are coming to the fore.

Take care and stay in touch,

Regards, Nancy

From: Wilz, Greg M. [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2016 12:46 PM
To: (b)(6)@usdoj.gov; Gerhart, Col. Michael T. <(b)(6)@nd.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@usdoj.gov; Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>; Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: ESF13 info and contact info

Thanks Alan for the info. As far as the SHGP grants are concerned, we are a marty minimum state so we don't receive much. Unless there is chance of new or additional/supplemental funding we would be robbing Peter to pay Paul and both are already on the front line of response. Reprograming does not get us much relief.

Greg

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 21:41:02 +0000
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV â€" Daily Operations

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 14:52:26 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Depalo, Lee;Deal, Timothy;Greff, Stacie;Moore, Jkevin;Fisher, Dennis;Jones, Susan K;Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Maria;Rozelle, Jesse
Subject: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe pipeline protest
Attachments: ND LNO Report Standing Rock Event.pptx
Importance: High

Hi Nancy,

As discussed earlier, attached for your review is a collaborative effort on the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) report summarizing details of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe protests against the potential pipeline near Cannonball, North Dakota.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

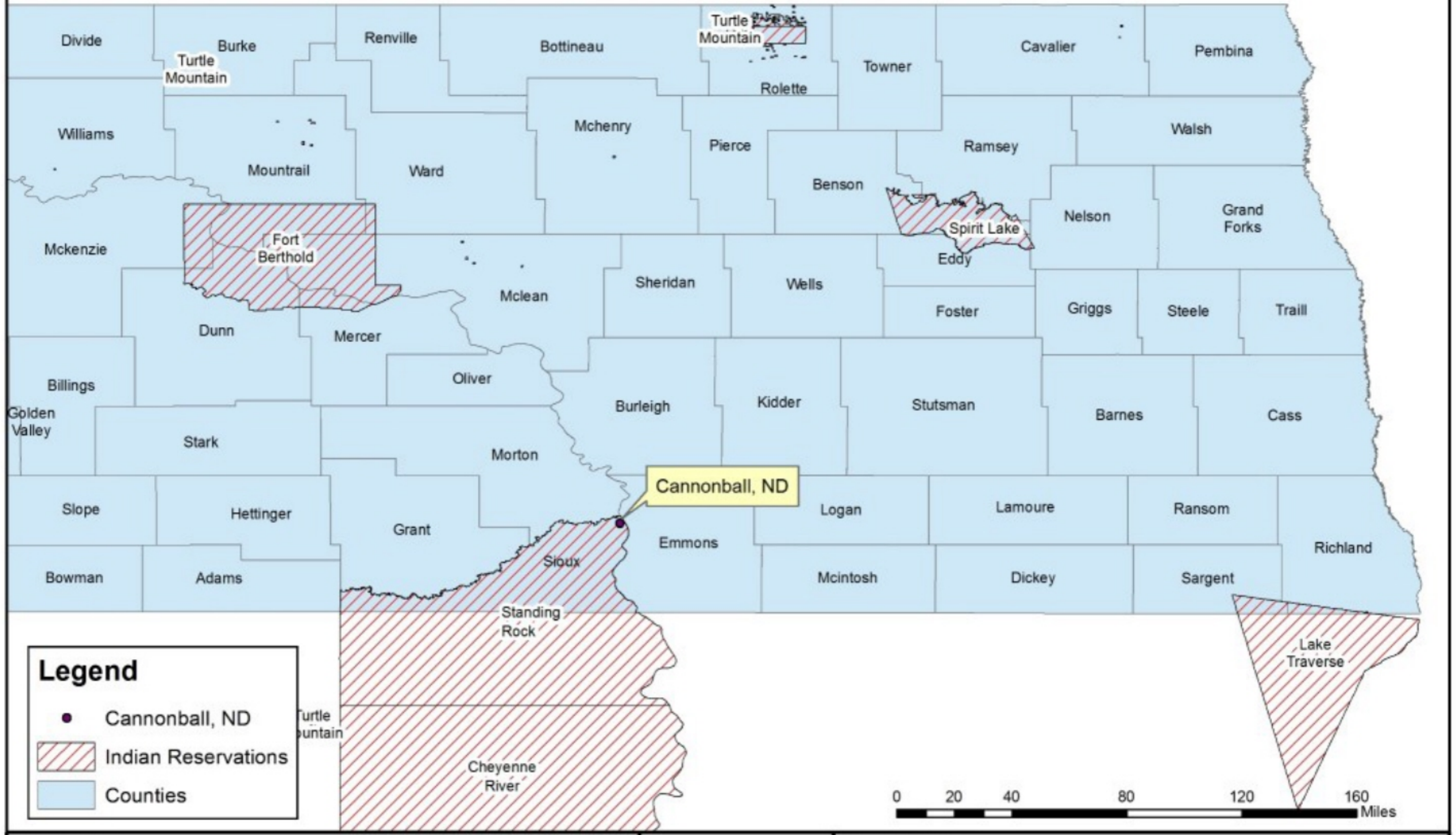
“Teamwork makes the DREAM work.”

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

State of North Dakota

3. Incident Period:
August 16, 2016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Williams
Mountrail
Ward
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Ramsey
Walsh
Nelson
Grand Forks
Spirit Lake
Eddy
Mckenzie
Fort Berthold
Mclean
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Wells
Foster
Griggs
Steele
Traill
Dunn
Mercer
Oliver
Billings
Golden Valley
Burleigh
Kidder
Stutsman
Barnes
Cass
Stark
Morton
Cannonball, ND
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Hettinger
Grant
Logan
Lamoure
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4. Source(s):
FEMA

5. Prepared by:
Region VIII GIS

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 15:26:30 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Depalo, Lee;Deal, Timothy;Greff, Stacie;Moore, Jkevin;Fisher, Dennis;Jones, Susan K;Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Maria;Rozelle, Jesse
Subject: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe pipeline protest
Attachments: ND LNO Report Standing Rock Event.pptx
Importance: High

Hi Nancy,

Please use this revised report. As discussed earlier, attached for your review is a collaborative effort on the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) report summarizing details of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe protests against the potential pipeline near Cannonball, North Dakota.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

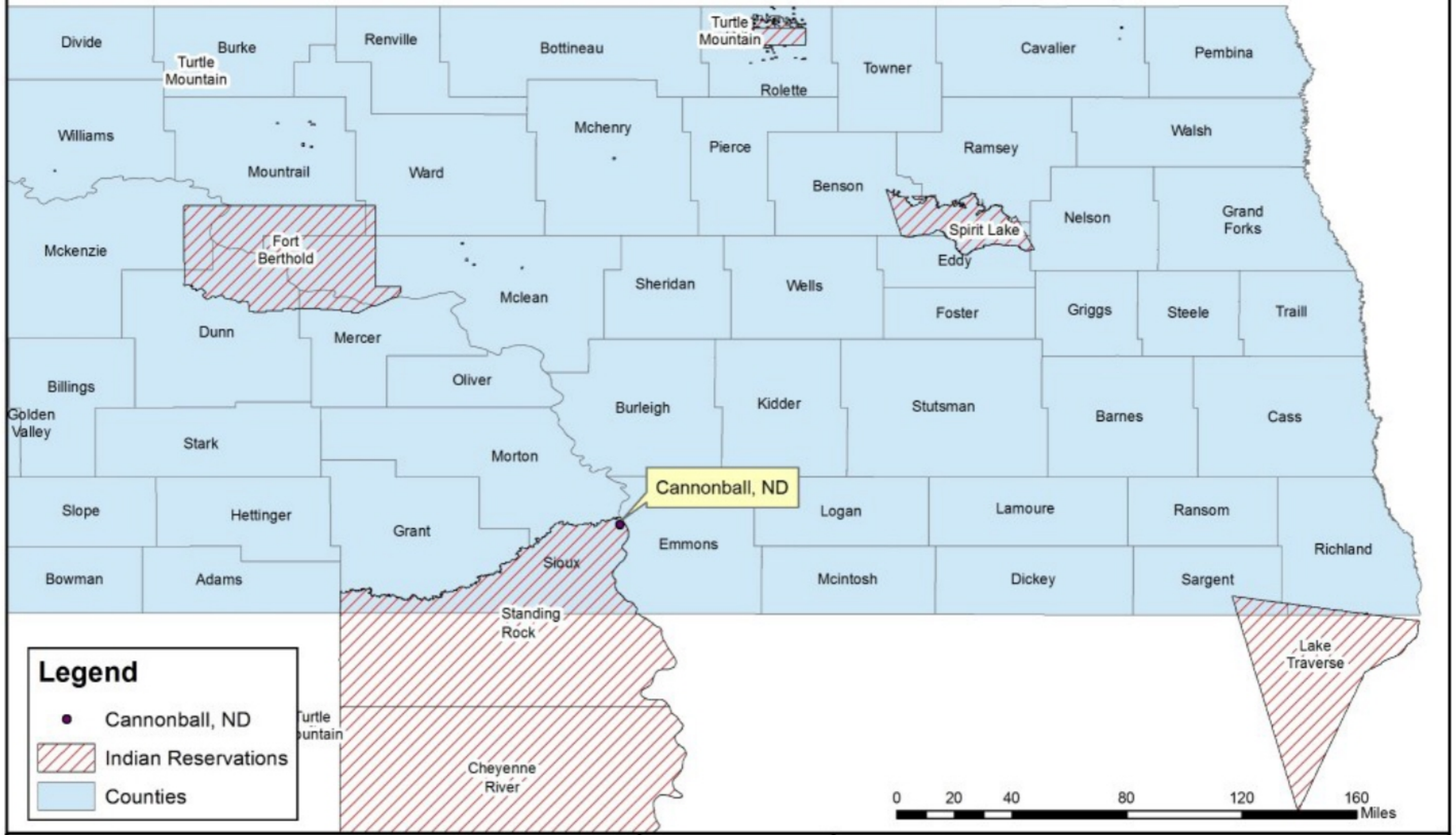
“Teamwork makes the DREAM work.”

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

State of North Dakota

3. Incident Period:
August 16, 2016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Renville
Bottineau
Turtle Mountain
Rolette
Towner
Cavalier
Pembina
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Mountrail
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Mchenry
Pierce
Benson
Ramsey
Walsh
Nelson
Grand Forks
Spirit Lake
Eddy
Mckenzie
Fort Berthold
Mclean
Sheridan
Wells
Foster
Griggs
Steele
Traill
Dunn
Mercer
Oliver
Burleigh
Kidder
Stutsman
Barnes
Cass
Billings
Golden Valley
Stark
Morton
Cannonball, ND
Logan
Lamoure
Ransom
Richland
Slope
Hettinger
Grant
Sioux
Emmons
Mcintosh
Dickey
Sargent
Bowman
Adams
Standing Rock
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Turtle Mountain
Cheyenne River
Legend
● Cannonball, ND
▨ Indian Reservations
🟦 Counties
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80
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160
Miles

4. Source(s):
FEMA

5. Prepared by:
Region VIII GIS

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 20 Aug 2016 15:34:34 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Standing Rock Update

Last night CNN picked up the Standing Rock protests. They printed and editorial written by the editor of Indian Country Today. The article talks about Hillary Clinton needing to do something since she has said she is committed to Native American Indian issues. Thought I would let you know since they are a national news outlet. http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/19/opinions/clinton-dakota-access-pipeline-pipeline-moya-smith/

There are also more protestors arriving today so they are growing to larger then 2,000 – reports yesterday were not correct about the camp starting to disperse – Source: Facebook

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 20 Aug 2016 17:08:21 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors;Andersen, Chris
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Standing Rock Update

Fysa.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Saturday, August 20, 2016 09:34 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Standing Rock Update

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 20 Aug 2016 11:34:38 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Standing Rock Update

Last night CNN picked up the Standing Rock protests. They printed and editorial written by the editor of Indian Country Today. The article talks about Hillary Clinton needing to do something since she has said she is committed to Native American Indian issues. Thought I would let you know since they are a national news outlet. http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/19/opinions/clinton-dakota-access-pipeline-pipeline-moya-smith/

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There are also more protestors arriving today so they are growing to larger then 2,000 – reports yesterday were not correct about the camp starting to disperse – Source: Facebook

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: 2 Sep 2016 18:24:59 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;(b)(6)@ihs.gov'
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 12 Oct 2016 22:27:31 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Cc: Stephenson, James R
Subject: State directors - access pipeline

Greg Wilz asked Nancy for help setting up a call with the other state directors to discuss potential eMac tied to the pipeline issue. I suggested I send out the note versus her to lower it a bit. Wanted you to have awareness. Tomorrow am.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 12 Oct 2016 18:27:31 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Cc: Stephenson, James R
Subject: State directors - access pipeline

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Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Sent: 3 Nov 2016 13:20:48 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: TAC-G

It sounds like this women is crying as she's speaking over Standing Rock, very intense.

This whole issue is fascinating to me.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 14:48:34 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan;DeFelice, Jerome;Stephenson, James R
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest

http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 14:24:01 -0400
To: Hardegen, Steven;Bello, Charles
Cc: Floyd, Megan;DeFelice, Jerome;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: thought you'd be interested in this

This comes from something called “DESMOS – Clearing the PR Pollution that Clouds Climate Science.”

http://www.desmogblog.com/2016/08/29/dakota-access-pipeline-tribal-liaison-army-corps-engineers

I’m not sure if there is any legitimacy to the claims in this article or not. I’ve read that the Corps repeatedly and over some time asked the Sioux to participate in the review but got no response. Would be curious to hear what you guys think.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Dakota Access Pipeline Tribal Liaison Formerly Worked For Agency Issuing Permit To Cross Tribal Land

Steve Horn | August 29, 2016

By Steve Horn • Monday, August 29, 2016 - 16:02

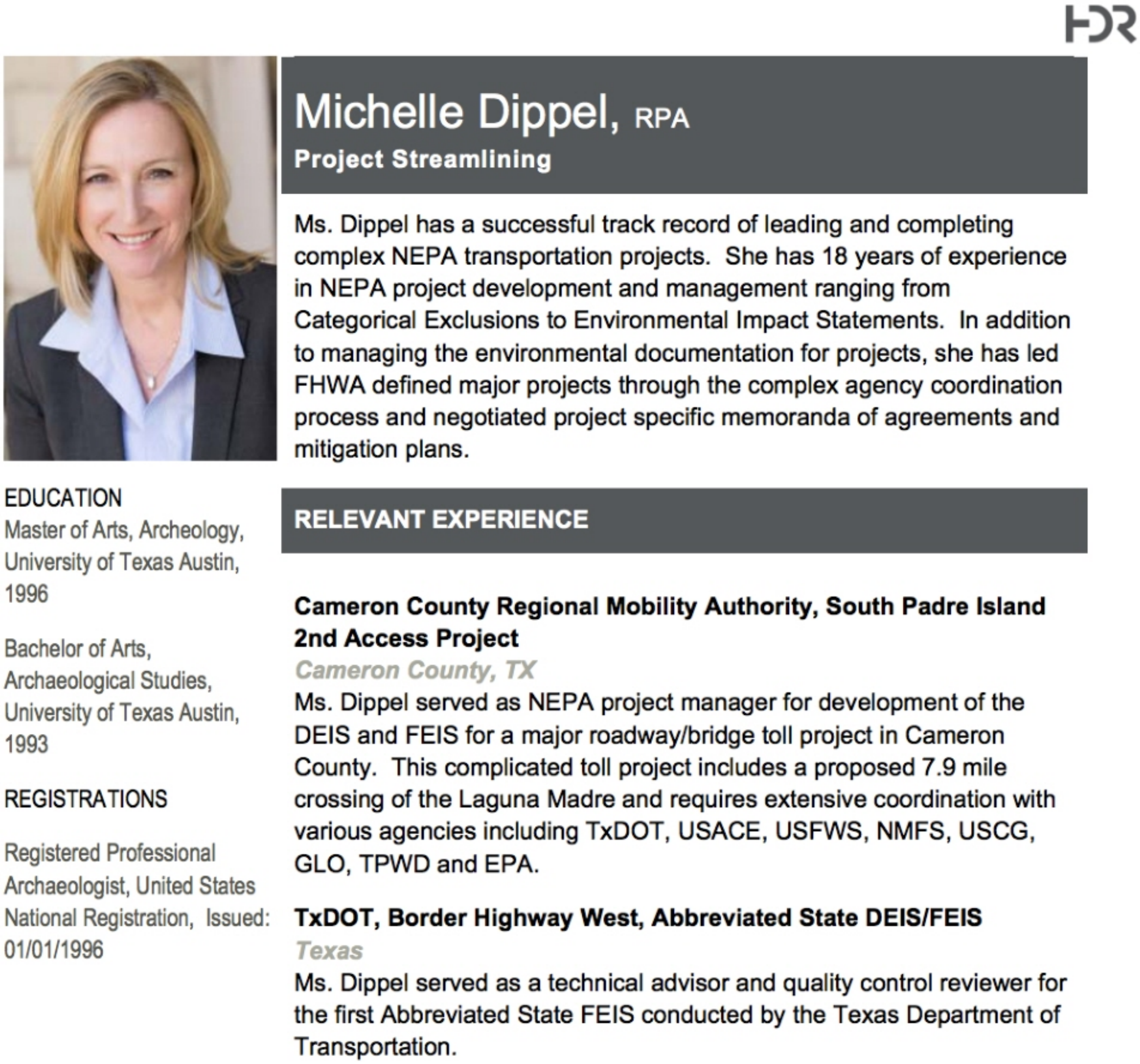
The Standing Rock tribe has filed a lawsuit against the U.S Army Corps of Engineers for using the controversial Nationwide Permit 12 to fast-track authorization of the hotly contested Dakota Access pipeline.

Slated to carry oil obtained via hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) from North Dakota's Bakken Shale basin to Patoka, Illinois, the plaintiffs say not only was the Army Corps' permitting of the Energy Transfer Partners and Enbridge Corporation jointly owned pipeline a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Clean Water Act, but also a violation of the National Historic Preservation Act's (NHPA) Section 106.

A review of court documents for the case currently unfolding in the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. has revealed that the tribal liaison for Energy Transfer Partners tasked with abiding by Section 106 passed through the revolving door and formerly worked for the Army Corps. The finding also raises key ethical questions in the field of archaeology.

That liaison — Michelle Dippel — technically works for a Dakota Access LLC contractor named HDR, a company which helps pipeline companies and other oil and gas industry infrastructure companies secure permits for their projects. Dippel, the South Central Region Environmental Services Lead for HDR, began her career as a project manager for the Army Corps' Fort Worth District and also formerly worked for the natural gas pipeline company Spectra Energy.

An archaeologist by academic training and a member of the Register of Professional Archaeologists, a biographical sketch for Dippel tracked down on the Florida Department of Transportation's website lists her job sub-title as "Project Streamlining" on behalf of the DOT.



Michelle Dippel, RPA

Project Streamlining

Ms. Dippel has a successful track record of leading and completing complex NEPA transportation projects. She has 18 years of experience in NEPA project development and management ranging from Categorical Exclusions to Environmental Impact Statements. In addition to managing the environmental documentation for projects, she has led FHWA defined major projects through the complex agency coordination process and negotiated project specific memoranda of agreements and mitigation plans.

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Archeology, University of Texas Austin, 1996

Bachelor of Arts, Archaeological Studies, University of Texas Austin, 1993

REGISTRATIONS

Registered Professional Archaeologist, United States National Registration, Issued: 01/01/1996

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Cameron County Regional Mobility Authority, South Padre Island 2nd Access Project

Cameron County, TX

Ms. Dippel served as NEPA project manager for development of the DEIS and FEIS for a major roadway/bridge toll project in Cameron County. This complicated toll project includes a proposed 7.9 mile crossing of the Laguna Madre and requires extensive coordination with various agencies including TxDOT, USACE, USFWS, NMFS, USCG, GLO, TPWD and EPA.

TxDOT, Border Highway West, Abbreviated State DEIS/FEIS

Texas

Ms. Dippel served as a technical advisor and quality control reviewer for the first Abbreviated State FEIS conducted by the Texas Department of Transportation.

Image Credit: Florida Department of Transportation

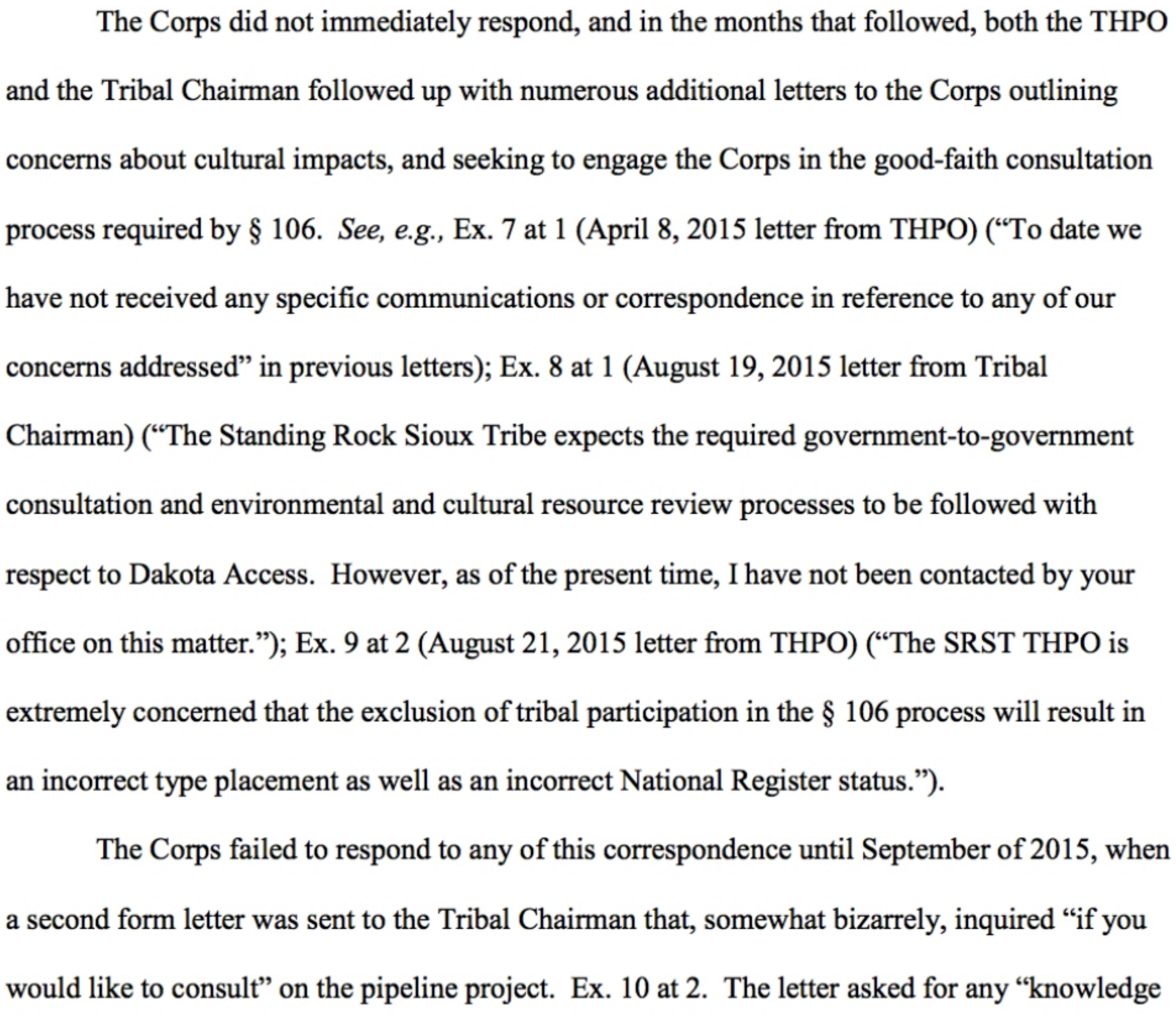
Section 106

Dippel lists Section 106 consultation as an area of expertise on her LinkedIn page.

Section 106, in turn, serves as a major part of the focus of the lawsuit, the recently completed occupation of a Dakota Access Pipeline construction site in Cannon Ball, North Dakota, and the push by the Standing Rock Indian Reservation for a court-ordered injunction to halt pipeline instruction.

"Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation," reads an August 24 op-ed in The New York Times by Standing Rock chairman David Archambault II.

"The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe."
Indeed, the court documents demonstrate that Standing Rock officers' letters to the Army Corps often went unanswered.



The Corps did not immediately respond, and in the months that followed, both the THPO and the Tribal Chairman followed up with numerous additional letters to the Corps outlining concerns about cultural impacts, and seeking to engage the Corps in the good-faith consultation process required by § 106. *See, e.g.,* Ex. 7 at 1 (April 8, 2015 letter from THPO) ("To date we have not received any specific communications or correspondence in reference to any of our concerns addressed" in previous letters); Ex. 8 at 1 (August 19, 2015 letter from Tribal Chairman) ("The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe expects the required government-to-government consultation and environmental and cultural resource review processes to be followed with respect to Dakota Access. However, as of the present time, I have not been contacted by your office on this matter."); Ex. 9 at 2 (August 21, 2015 letter from THPO) ("The SRST THPO is extremely concerned that the exclusion of tribal participation in the § 106 process will result in an incorrect type placement as well as an incorrect National Register status.").

The Corps failed to respond to any of this correspondence until September of 2015, when a second form letter was sent to the Tribal Chairman that, somewhat bizarrely, inquired "if you would like to consult" on the pipeline project. Ex. 10 at 2. The letter asked for any "knowledge

Image Credit: U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia

An intervenor in the case, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, also testified in court documents about the sanctity of the land as it relates to tribal traditions and history. One of those testimonies came from Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe member Joye Braun, an organizer for the Indigenous Environmental Network.

The NHPA's Citizen Guide to Section 106 Review explains that Section 106 mandates that government agencies, such as the Army Corps, “consider the effects of projects they carry out, approve, or fund on historic properties” though it also “does not mandate preservation” because “sometimes there is no way for a needed project to proceed without harming historic properties.”

At issue here in *Standing Rock Sioux Tribe v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*, then, is the alleged lack of thoroughness of the Section 106 review and not the absence of one altogether. Even the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) itself penned a letter in May 2016 to the Corps expressing concern about the lack of rigor in its Section 106 Review.

Like the southern leg of TransCanada's Keystone XL pipeline and Enbridge's Flanagan South pipelines, the Army Corps and Dakota Access LLC by extension utilized Nationwide Permit 12 as an end-run around a more vigorous and NEPA-oriented environmental review.

Code of Conduct

The Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA), of which Dippel is a member, describes itself as a “listing of archaeologists who have agreed to abide by an explicit code of conduct and standards of research performance, who hold a graduate degree in archaeology, anthropology, art history, classics, history, or another germane discipline.” RPA also notes that “Registration is a voluntary act that recognizes an individual's personal responsibility to be held accountable for his or her professional behavior.”

RPA also maintains a Code of Conduct, calling for those in the profession to veer away from archaeology in service to the powerful and to the detriment of the vulnerable.

“An archaeologist shall actively support conservation of the archaeological resource base [and] be sensitive to, and respect the legitimate concerns of, groups whose culture histories are the subjects of archaeological investigations,” it reads. “An archaeologist shall not engage in any illegal or unethical conduct involving archaeological matters or knowingly permit the use of his/her name in support of any illegal or unethical activity involving archaeological matters.”

The Code, paying homage to ethics and the integrity of the profession, calls for archaeologists to disobey orders from their employers if they run contrary to the Code's dictates.

“An archaeologist shall refuse to comply with any request or demand of an employer or client which conflicts with the Code and Standards,” it continues.

Dippel did not respond to a request for comment from DeSmog.

Terry Klein, President of RPA, said that the organization “only responds to a violation of our Code of Conduct or Standards of Research Performance when someone has submitted a formal grievance about the violation to the Register's Grievance Coordinator.”

Though Dippel does not maintain a membership in the American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA), its Code of Ethics also has fairly strict guidelines for work one could or should do on behalf of a client.

“While the definition of the public interest changes through ongoing debate, an ACRA member owes allegiance to a responsibly derived concept of the public interest,” it reads. “An ACRA member shall strive to respect the concerns of people whose histories and/or resources are the subject of cultural resources investigation.”

Archaeology as “Disaster Capitalism”

Critics of the modern-practiced academic discipline of archaeology, such as Richard Hutchings — co-director of the Institute for Critical Heritage and Tourism and a Research Associate at Vancouver Island University — assail it as akin to what author Naomi Klein has referred to as “disaster capitalism.” Hutchings named it as such in a paper titled, “Archaeology as Disaster Capitalism,” co-authored with Vancouver Island University archaeologist and Professor Mariana La Salle.

The authors dub Dippel and those in similar positions in the orbit of commercial archaeology as “archaeobureaucrats,” or people who deploy their professional techniques in service to multinational corporations. Pipeline archaeology and clearing space for pipelines, in particular, has become a major player in the private sector.

“That most archaeologists are employed by and answer directly to transnational development corporations is only the tip of the iceberg,” Hutchings said via email. “More troubling is that while most archaeologists are white (like their employers and their employer’s stockholders), the majority of heritage sites archaeologists permit to be destroyed are Native American, raising the specter of not just environmental racism but a coordinated and systematic human rights violation.”

Thomas King, the former and now-retired Director of the Office of Cultural Resource Preservation for ACHP, has also critiqued cultural resources management work done by U.S. government agencies and corporations as a de facto retired whistleblower, calling the process a form of “whitewashing” in his 2009 book titled, *Our Unprotected Heritage: Whitewashing the Destruction of our Cultural and Natural Environment*.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg will issue a ruling on the Standing Rock tribe's request for an injunction on September 9, with a hearing on the issue set for the day before on September 8. Meanwhile, four miles north of Cannon Ball, an encampment of tribal protesters continues at the Sacred Stone Camp.

From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 18 Apr 2016 13:01:32 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs;Wetherington, Jeffrey
Cc: Stanley, Gary
Subject: Today's South Dakota News Clips
Attachments: @

Please see the attached for today’s South Dakota news clips.

As the two year anniversary of the Wessington Springs approaches in June, a local landmark is re-opening. The Mitchell Republic runs a lengthy piece on local resident’s concerns over pipeline safety in the wake of the Keystone pipeline spill. The Rapid City Journal reports on continued prescribed burns at Custer State Park (posted prior to this weekend’s precipitation). The Capitol Journal reports on last week’s USACE meeting in Pierre where the Corps announced that runoff into the upper Missouri River basin would be roughly 86 percent of normal.

Thanks,

Phil Wernisch

FEMA External Affairs

DR-4237-OST

860-856-3847

South Dakota Clips

Monday April 18, 2016

CONTENTS

- Prairie Lounge to hold grand opening ceremony - Mitchell Daily Republic
- A problem with pipelines - Mitchell Daily Republic
-

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 10 Sep 2016 02:35:48 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Update: ND Dakota Access Pipeline news

Obama blocks pipeline construction after Judge rules in favor of Dakota Pipeline .

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: Saturday, September 10, 2016 12:36:45 AM
To: Depalo, Lee; Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline news

Hi Lee and Megan,

Please follow this link for another update:

http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/09/the-obama-administration-temporarily-blocks-the-dakota-access-pipeline/499454/

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 4 Sep 2016 12:03:42 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee;Floyd, Megan
Subject: Update: pipeline situation

Update on situation far below, then a blog post. It is worth noting that Cody Schultz is a Morton County Commissioner, but he works for ND DES

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 4:39:10 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 12:57:09 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Update on standing rock and the 9 am

Tim wanted an update on standing rock at yesterday 9 am. I kept is short. I am assuming you will calling in and I do not need to attend? If anyone asks today I think the highlights are below and even then this is a lot.

Very different reports from the tribal side and local law enforcement sides.

Tribal Sources:
The tribe issued another statement last night calling for calling for peaceful protest and for people (anyone who cares about water) to exercise their first amendment right.

There is a sense from protestors that they are being misrepresented as violent.

There is also a social media effort to get more nation media coverage.

Local law enforcement press conference:
The primary route from Mandan to the reservation has been blocked off just south of Mandan and only local residents will be allowed south. They can not control people coming in from the south because that route is coming off the reservation.

He also talked about how there have been threats of violence and threats with pipe bombs and weapons.

Describes it as an unlawful protest.

He also reported pipeline construction has stopped for now because of safety. Governor's office has been talking to tribal leaders to keep things peaceful.

The County is estimating 1,500 to 2,000 protestors.

Local law enforcement and highway patrol are on site. National Guard has NOT been activated and has not been requested by local law enforcement.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

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To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee;Floyd, Megan
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To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 16:41:01 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors
Subject: Update: Tribal / Pipeline

As mentioned during 915:

Very different reports from the tribal side and local law enforcement sides.

Tribal Sources:
The tribe issued another statement last night calling for calling for peaceful protest and for people (anyone who cares about water) to exercise their first amendment right.

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The County is estimating 1,500 to 2,000 protestors.

Local law enforcement and highway patrol are on site. National Guard has NOT been activated and has not been requested by local law enforcement.

**Some clips below.
**Sent Governors statement earlier.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 08:39 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; Stephenson, James R; Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Clip: More ND tribal

Construction stops, traffic restricted due to Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune
- 16 hrs ago
-

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier says all work on the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan has been stopped indefinitely.

Construction is being stopped on the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannonball Ranch and law enforcement is routing traffic away from the protest area as safety concerns mount.

“As of this moment, the Dakota Access Pipeline Project is being discontinued for the time being,” Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said Wednesday. “No work is going to be done there for an undetermined amount of time."

Kirchmeier said the protest has become unlawful as a result of criminal activity. He said his officers have been threatened and heard gunshots. The agency has gotten reports of pipe bombs, assaults on private security personnel, fireworks and vandalism.

In the interest of public safety, North Dakota Department of Transportation and Highway Patrol has established a traffic control point on Highway 1806 south of the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery. Only emergency vehicles and local traffic will be allowed through. Other vehicles will be detoured to Highway 6.

Kirchmeier said officers will safeguard workers and equipment as they leave the area. It is not clear whether the equipment will be removed.

Currently, there are no officers on the protest site. They are stationed at the highway barrier.

Kirchmeier said the state national guard has not been asked to intervene.

The sheriff's department will not be providing supplies such as Dumpsters and water to the protesters.

"I don't know if we need to provide them supplies when it has turned into an unlawful protest," Kirchmeier said. "We are just going to make sure that it remains safe."

The plan resulted from discussions with Energy Transfer Partners, the governor's office and tribal leadership, according to Kirchmeier.

About 1,500 to 2,000 people are camping in the area south of Mandan, Kirchmeier said. Twenty-eight people have been arrested in the past week.

Officers from around the state, including Mercer County, Cass County and Mandan, as well as Game and Fish, Highway Patrol and parole and probation, have assisted in policing the area.

During the closure, the Fort Rice boat ramp and campground, Eckroth Bottoms fishing area, Little Heart boat ramp, Little Heart Rifle Range and Graner Park will be closed to the public.

Reach Caroline Grueskin at 701-250-8225 or at caroline.grueskin@bismarcktribune.com

Regulators sound off on pipeline protests

- NICK SMITH Bismarck Tribune
  Nick Smith
  -

North Dakota regulators on Wednesday defended their permit approval for the Dakota Access Pipeline, saying they hope tensions between protesters and law enforcement at a site near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation will cool off in the days ahead.

“I really regret that there’s this much conflict,” said Julie Fedorchak, chairwoman of the North Dakota Public Service Commission. “They have a right to disagree. They don’t have the right to threaten. They don’t have the right to obstruct.”

Hundreds of activists, as well as protesters from various tribes, have descended on the site in Morton County. Construction workers had begun ground work near where a section of the pipeline is intended to go. It will be bored under the Missouri River less than a mile from the tribe’s reservation boundary.

Since last week, at least 28 arrests have been made during the protests for disorderly conduct and criminal trespass.

Work has ceased indefinitely as of Wednesday.

Protesters' concerns include potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture, as well as the disturbance of cultural sites along the route.

After a rumor of human remains being found at the construction site spread, State Historical Society of North Dakota officials inspected the site on Friday but found no evidence of any cultural site or remains.

The Standing Rock tribe has filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the permits issued for the project.

Dakota Access LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, countered on Monday by filing a lawsuit against Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault II and several others, citing threats to the safety of construction workers and law enforcement. Archambault was arrested Friday.

Archambault told reporters on Monday he was simply doing what others were doing during the protest when arrested. Several arrests were made when protesters pushed back against a police line when an attempt was made to block workers from leaving the site.

“The Dakota Access Pipeline project is harmful. It will not just be harmful to my people, but its intent and construction will harm the water of the Missouri River,” Archambault said Monday when urging others to join them.

Fedorchak said the 1,172-mile, 30-inch-wide pipeline project was reviewed over a 13-month period, with hearings in Mandan, Killdeer and Williston last year.

“This was very carefully reviewed by the PSC,” Fedorchak said.

Dakota Access began work on the nearly $3.8 billion project this spring following permit approval by the PSC and regulators in other states along the route. The pipeline is to begin in western North Dakota near Stanley and end near Patoka, Ill. It would transport as many as 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude when finished, with a future capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

“They have a right to build this project,” said Fedorchak, adding that the company went through the proper permitting process and was granted approval.

Commissioner Brian Kalk agreed.

“These groups didn’t come to our hearings,” said Kalk, expressing disappointment that tribal leaders didn't appear at that time to voice their concerns.

Commissioner Randy Christmann said a large portion of North Dakota oil is transported by rail, and accidents can result from that mode of transport as well.

(Reach Nick Smith at 701-250-8255 or 701-223-8482 or at nick.smith@bismarcktribune.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 8:34 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Sioux tribe leader wants political help to halt oil pipeline

- By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press
- Updated 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A tribal leader Wednesday said he contacted the White House and met with North Dakota's senators in an effort to halt construction of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline that crosses the Missouri River near an American Indian reservation in southern North Dakota.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II, in a teleconference with reporters, stressed that the he and the tribe are working to ensure peace among those protesting the Dakota Access pipeline.

"There is no place for threats, violence or criminal activity," Archambault said.

North Dakota transportation officials, meanwhile, closed a several-mile stretch of Highway 1806 on Wednesday because of the protest along the road.

The 1,172-mile pipeline planned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is passing through the Dakotas and Iowa on its way to Illinois. Construction crews with armed private security guards arrived last week just north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where native Americans have been staging a protest for months at a "spirit camp."

Archambault and more than two dozen others have been arrested in the past week for interfering with construction of the project.

On Monday, developers of the project sued in federal court to stop protesters — including Archambault — from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Hovland granted the developer's motion for a temporary restraining order Tuesday.

Archambault said he met Wednesday with North Dakota Sens. John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp to "express concerns" about the pipeline.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Archambault told reporters he also has urged President Barack Obama to step in. The president and First Lady Michelle Obama traveled to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2014 to get a firsthand look at the impoverished living conditions on the reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Archambault said he asked nothing of the president then but is doing so now.

"I believe both he and Michelle Obama were touched," Archambault said. "So now if there's any way he can intervene and move this pipeline off our treaty lands, I'm asking him."

The White House did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 4 Sep 2016 00:51:29 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

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Sent: 4 Sep 2016 00:51:29 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 26 Sep 2016 14:49:52 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: White House Tribal Nation Meeting today

Hi Stacie -

My computer is having major issues this morning but I wanted you to have this I for for the 9:15:

Today starts the White House Tribal Nations Conference.

One topic that looks like it could get talked about is Stafford Act change. However, the White House document says we will roll out the pilot this fall (so probably not today).

There is also a lot of buzz around the pipeline and specially how tribes are consulted on major projects. The discussion is - what is consultation. Some of the issues being talked about in the media both traditional and tribal specific include:

Timeline (may tribes feel they are to short)

Consultation is government-to- and to often federal agencies send form letters but don't do much beyond that which does now met that nation-to-nation commitment.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 26 Sep 2016 10:49:52 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: White House Tribal Nation Meeting today

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Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 15:54:44 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 9 am notes

- Red Flag warning in Utah from noon to midnight.
- Expecting rain on Thursday and Friday in the Dakotas and MT. They are expected to have strong winds with possible hail and tornado activity.
- Region VIII has lost the three FEMA Corps teams that were scheduled to arrive in September. They have been re-routed to LA.
- Lee mentioned that Response is looking for Divisions Supervisors for LA.
- Our IMAT team is working in the hardest hit area in LA.
- Dashboard input is due by COB tomorrow.
- EA Reported that Stacie is with the ARA this morning and teleworking this afternoon. EA was asked for and provided and update on the protests at Standing Rock (work stopped yesterday on the pipeline because of safety concerns, a lawsuit was filed and granted for Dakota Pipeline to keep protestors from coming onto the construction site, 500 to 600 people estimated yesterday with more coming today. The tribe is working with the country and state to keep people safe and the protests peaceful).

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 11:54:46 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 9 am notes

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:56:19 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: 14 was it... all done

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 14 Oct 2016 12:00:58 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 915 notes

ND level 2 partial activation, pipeline

MT. Level 3 No flooding currently. Monitoring

Some red flag today until evening.

R 10 dumped on. Storm system in NW. Potential flooding

SWAT. Not sure if it will happen this weekend. Note from Martin coming in update.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 19 Oct 2016 13:23:48 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 915 notes.

CO (fire) and ND (pipeline) both at level 2
No major weather across R8
Monthly NORTHCOMM brief. Staff are welcome to attend for education purposes. Invite will come to me, which I can share.
State dashboards due tomorrow. *Megan to get tribal policy into bullet to Katie.
Wisconsin and Minnesota declarations are both pending.
RA met with Ron Pinera, HHS yesterday

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 12:00:58 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 915 notes

Darrin Ricketts will be heading to R5 toward end of Oct. Same job. Closer to family
FCO/FDRC meeting next week for those not deployed
Planning in case… Essential personnel list to be reviewed by DDs today. Note: Except CR to go through currently.
Interest from Sen. Hoeven in exploring federal funds (all agencies) for ND to support needed OT on law enforcement related to pipeline
ARA returns late tonight.

Reminder: I leave at about 4:15 today.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 20:17:51 +0000
To: Booth, Milo;Valteau, Margeau
Subject: a few things

Hi Milo and Margeau –

I wanted to touch base on three things….

1) Are we still looking at tomorrow as the start for consultation for the Tribal Policy? And will we get to see the changes before it goes out?
2) There are significant protests going on just north of the Standing Rock Reservation (southwestern SD) regarding the XL Pipeline. Media is anticipating large busloads of people from other reservations arriving today. We are tracking from here. We haven't gotten any questions on it, but depending on how long it goes on, it could impact some of our travel plans and the availability of tribal EMs and Council as well as their interest in FEMA. The protests have all been peaceful and are expected to stay that way.

Hope you are both doing well!

Megan

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 12:04:48 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Brian - there are a few typos in below but I'm having problem with BB copying and I'm in meetings. Please just do a quick edit.

Megan -
*Add in that powwow upcoming (ARA requested add)
*send a note to Ron, HHS. He is in SLC at event
*no need to add any fbi info. Do what we have been doing, strictly info gathering and monitoring

---

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 08:26 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Let me know what you think. This is essentially media monitoring, and HIS could pick that up, they also have people on the ground who should be able to provide them with some visibility. A bit concerning they are coming to us.

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA would engage in, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. The only direct contact we have had with the State has been a call from the State's director of Homeland Security, letting our Acting Regional Administrator know he would not be attending a conference because of the protest. All of our awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the XL Pipeline, this the Keystone Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.

- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the intel could be incorrect. We have not reached out to the tribe or had additional conversations with the State, as this is not a FEMA related issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 – Desk
(303) 945-6367 – Cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:48 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I"ll take a quick look at it. And will let nancy know in am.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Hi Stacie -

Got a call from Milo this evening. Apparently, high level people at IHS are looking for Intel on standing rock protests. We have a reputation for knowing what is generally going on so they called Milo. Milo asked me to respond to the email below with what I may be hearing. I told

him I would but I would site my sources and make sure that it is clear we have not been in contact with the tribe and this is not our issue.

Milo is concerned if we don't address it at this level, Fugate might get asked and it come down to Nancy.

I plan on writing my response first thing. I'll send it to you for review, unless you just want to be copied. I am going to try and get it out as early as possible.

Once that is out I'll write the tribal policy summary.

Thanks
M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 3:22:09 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; (b)(6)@ihs.gov'
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the
Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 18:10:57 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Another DAPL Update

Pipeline protests: The fight goes on against project that could jeopardize Native lands in the Midwest

The pipeline will cross hundreds of rivers, creeks and tributaries, potentially compromising water supplies VIDEO

Alli Joseph
Monday, Aug 29, 2016

MNi WICONI
Respect & Protect our WATER of LiFE
I CAN Live Without OIL
I CAN NOT Live Without WATER

Members of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota participate in a rally to protect water and land from the Dakota Access Pipeline, August 24, 2016 in Washington, DC. (Credit: Getty/Alex Wong)

Kayla Lookinghorse-Smith set out from New York to Washington, D.C. late Tuesday night, driving six hours to attend her first protest on the East Coast against the looming Dakota Access Pipeline, a $3.78 billion, 1,100-mile oil project being built by a group of firms led by Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

Her two young sons, 19 months and 5 years old, slept in the backseat.

“I didn’t know what to expect,” she said, as she drove into the early morning hours. “I just knew that I have to support my tribe, because they are taking a stand for water, an essential to life, in this world.”

The pipeline — already facing immense criticism — will cross hundreds of rivers, creeks and tributaries. And, part of it will run directly under the Missouri River, the only source of water for Lookinghorse-Smith’s tribe, the Standing Rock Sioux. Any leaks could compromise the entire water supply, and tribe members are concerned that sacred sites like burial grounds will be destroyed. DAPL would be the first to transport over 470,000 gallons of fracked, crude Bakken shale per day from North Dakota directly to refineries in the U.S. Gulf Coast, notably Illinois.

Lookinghorse-Smith is a full-blood Hunkpapa Lakota. Her family and thousands of other supportive people from around the world (including members of my tribe, the Shinnecock Nation of New York) have offered support or camped out across from the DAPL construction site near Cannon Ball, North Dakota, since April 1. They are locked in a tense, politicized, very personal yet peaceful struggle against officers of the law and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has overseen the project.

Many people close to the protest camp, like Lookinghorse-Smith, are upset by media reports of violence against police by Native people.

“This peaceful protesting is happening every day in North Dakota,” she said. “Our drum beats are not gunshots, our canupas (peace pipes) are not bombs, and our war cries are not criminal activity — as mainstream news media clearly misleads the public to believe.” Lookinghorse-Smith says the only loaded guns brought to the protest are those carried by the heavy police presence surrounding the area. Instead of weapons, Native protestors are using their voices, and our violent and oppressed collective history as a guide. They are broadcasting radio from a makeshift station at Sacred Stones (Standing Rock Spirit Resistance Radio @ 87.9 FM), and social media is flush with petitions, commentary and live videos from around the world in support of Standing Rock.

Violence and dangerous racist rhetoric is brewing nearby, however, in Bismarck Mandan, North Dakota.

“Tension is high, and the people of Standing Rock are starting to feel uncomfortable going into Bismarck to get supplies … because there are a tremendous number of threats and KKK mentality. People are talking about killing Indians now,” Lookinghorse-Smith said.

Actress Shailene Woodley (who also traveled to the Washington protest on Wednesday) joined the camp at Standing Rock two-and-a-half weeks ago, and has been sitting on the front lines. “If I thought my life was at risk,” she mused in a recent on-site interview, “do you think I would be sitting here like this?” Woodley paused. “The only thing that is happening are messages of love and peace … and unity. I love how mainstream media can spin a story however they want.”

Outside U.S. District Court in Washington on Wednesday, things were also calm. Several hundred supporters gathered, including Susan Sarandon and Standing Rock Tribal Chairman

David Archimbault II. Inside, Judge James Boasberg considered the case of the Standing Rock Sioux, who have filed to halt pipeline production and are asking the US to honor long-ago enacted treaties protecting Native lands and water.

And, for Native people, there is a spiritual element to water that goes far beyond the fear of pollution. Besides being a physical necessity for life, in traditional Native American circles water is the "first medicine" in a complex and environmentally respectful belief system that refers to the earth as the mother of all things.

Randy Ross of the Ponca/Oto tribe in South Dakota, which the pipeline will also cross, recalls a prophecy revealed by his late Cheyenne River Sioux tribal Elder Sidney Keith.

"There are many elements of healing brought by Creator, but water is essential to life, it is sacred," he explained. "Oil, as we discovered after the Gulf Coast BP Oil spill, destroyed so much, and Mother Earth will shake herself to cleanse. Many believe that time is upon us. We see fires, floods, tornados of unheard of frequency and power, earthquakes in greater frequency and power."

As protesters wait for the judge's promised ruling Sept. 9, Lookinghorse-Smith worries for her relatives and the others standing firm in the way of development. "It's starting to get cold in North Dakota right now, and cold weather gear and other essentials are much needed. The camp will sustain as long as they can."

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
Emergency Liasion
605-440-0993
Glenda.redfeather@fema.dhs.gov

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 17:01:31 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: Archambault's opinion piece

It was in the clips, but I wanted to make sure you saw it.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

From: Garcia, Carol
Sent: 14 Sep 2016 12:16:49 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs;Bello, Charles;Americanos, Christopher;Fisher, Dennis;Garcia, Carol;Gelston, Timothy;Betz, George;Taylor, James;Dick, Jennifer;Phillips, (b)(6) (b)(6) Liska, Robert;Floyd, Megan;Hillenburg, Mike;Gray, Patricia;Bakersky, Pete;Rivera, Luisa (b)(6) (b)(6) (DCE Army);Roscoe, Scott;Spino, Courtnee-Evan;Stephenson, James R;Torres, Mariano;Valora, Emily;Vasco, MaryBeth
Subject: Articles related to Tribal activity in R8
Attachments: energytransferpartners091316.pdf

For your awareness: **(attached is memo from Energy Partners)**

Ute Tribe: Utah Republican pushes modern day Indian land grab

Wednesday, September 14, 2016

The following is a statement from the Ute Tribe on H.R.5780, the Utah Public Lands Initiative Act. A hearing on the controversial bill takes place on September 14, 2016.

In the next few weeks Congressman Rob Bishop will attempt to push through the U.S. House of Representatives the first Indian land grab in over 100 years. H.R. 5780, the Utah Public Lands Initiative, proposes to rollback federal policy to the late 1800's when Indian lands and resources where taken for the benefit of others. In a startling lack of transparency, Congressman Bishop plans only one hearing on this 215-page bill with about 129 other land management proposals in the obscure Subcommittee on Federal Lands.

The Ute Indian Tribe strongly opposes H.R. 5780, the devastating effect it would have on our Uintah and Ouray Reservation and precedent that the bill sets for federal Indian policy. The bill is promoted as a local solution to difficult federal land management issues in eastern Utah. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, much of H.R. 5780 was built on the back of the Ute Indian Tribe and our 4.5 million acre Uintah and Ouray Reservation without our knowledge or consent.
The Tribe was shocked to learn that the bill proposes to take more than 100,000 acres of our Reservation lands for the State of Utah. After 4 years and, apparently, more than 1,200 meetings with stakeholders, the Tribe first learned of this proposal when a discussion draft of the bill was released on January 20, 2016. Over these 4 years, the Congressmen never invited the Tribe to a meeting or came to our Reservation to discuss their proposal to take our lands.

This modern day Indian land grab cannot be allowed to stand. The Federal government rejected these devastating policies long ago as tribes prospered under policies of tribal self-determination and restoring and protecting tribal homelands.

H.R. 5780 also proposes to alter the management of another 200,000 acres within our Reservation and without our consent. Among other things, the bill proposes a "Utility Corridor," "Special Management Areas," "Wildernesses," "Wild and Scenic Rivers" and "Recreation Areas" within our Reservation. These changes would directly affect our ability to exercise tribal self-determination, utilize our water rights and manage our Reservation lands for the benefit of our members.

The Ute Indian Tribe is a major economic engine in northeastern Utah. We are currently working with State and local governments to address long-standing issues related to jurisdiction, air quality, preservation of cultural and environmental resources, and responsible energy development. H.R. 5780 threatens to undermine these relationships.

The Congressmen’s election year maneuver to rush H.R. 5780 through the House of Representatives will die in the Senate and 4 years of meetings will be wasted. It did not have to be this way. If the Congressmen had accepted the Ute Indian Tribe as a full partner, we could have developed a Utah Public Lands Initiative capable of passing Congress. With these disastrous proposals off the table, we need a Utah Public Lands Initiative that benefits all of Utah including the State’s oldest residents—the Ute Indian Tribe.

Hundreds rally at White House to block Dakota Access Pipeline
Tuesday, September 13, 2016

Several hundred people rallied in front of the White House on Tuesday to pressure the Obama administration to cancel the $3.8 billion Dakota Access Pipeline.

A key portion of the controversial project is on hold pending further review of issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. But opponents called on President Barack Obama to put an end to the project altogether.

"This pipeline, it's poison. It's poison and it's going to kill us," said Jasilyn Charger, a young member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe who has been at the forefront of the #NoDAPL and ReZpect Our Water movements.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont), who was the first national political figure to oppose the pipeline, echoed the sentiments. He said a "full environmental and cultural impact analysis" will show the true dangers of the project.

Jasilyn Charger, a young member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, speaks at a #NoDAPL rally in front of the White House on September 13, 2016. Photo by Indianz.Com

"We've got to change the federal government's relationship with Native people," Sanders, a former candidate for president, said to applause.
"They've been lied to. They've been exploited," he said. "This has got to change."

The rally came as Energy Transfer Partners, the parent company of Dakota Access, broke four days of silence on the controversy. A memo from chairman and chief executive Kelcy Warren vowed to complete the pipeline despite new obstacles.

"We – like all Americans – value and respect cultural diversity and the significant role that Native American culture plays in our nation's history and its future and hope to be able to strengthen our relationship with the Native American communities as we move forward with this project," Warren wrote.

At the same time, Warren rejected all of the arguments that the tribe and #NoDAPL resisters have raised. He said the pipeline will not harm sacred sites or impact water resources despite its proposed path under the Missouri River at Lake Oahe. "I am confident that as long as the government ultimately decides the fate of the project based on science and engineering, the Dakota Access Pipeline will become operational bringing a safer means of transportation to a much needed supply of oil to communities across the country," Warren said.

Warren promised meetings with "officials in Washington" but otherwise did not explain how Dakota Access will convince the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to approve work at Lake Oahe. Without that easement -- which is on hold as a result of the Obama administration's extraordinary action -- the pipeline cannot transport oil along its current path in North Dakota.

The memo was also noticeably silent on the lawsuit that prompted the administration's intervention. Dakota Access has not filed any papers in court since Friday, when a judge ruled against the tribe's motion for a preliminary injunction against the Army Corps.

"Energy Transfer Partners has demonstrated time and time again that the bottom line for them is money," Chairman Dave Archambault II said in a statement on Tuesday. "The bottom line for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is and will always be protecting our lands, people, water, and sacred sites from the devastation of this pipeline."

The tribe already filed a notice of appeal and asked Judge James Boasberg for an injunction that would have forced Dakota Access to stop all work pending resolution of that appeal. But the request -- which was joined by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe -- was rejected on Monday.
Additionally, Boasberg struck a new filing by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe from the record. A short order noted that the tribe, although it has been allowed to enter the case as a plaintiff, is "not entitled to its own separate complaint."

Key House Democrats call for hearing on Dakota Access Pipeline
Wednesday, September 14, 2016

Two leading Democrats in the House are calling for a hearing on the Dakota Access Pipeline as Republicans continue to maintain silence on the controversy.

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Arizona), the top Democrat on the House Committee on Natural Resources, and Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-California), the top Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, both visited the

#NoDAPL encampment in North Dakota over the weekend. After seeing the struggle first-hand, they want Congress to investigate whether federal agencies properly consulted the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe before approving the pipeline.

"We are very concerned about potential impacts both to sacred sites along the selected route for the pipeline, as well as to the tribe's water source," the lawmakers said in a letter to their Republican counterparts on Tuesday.

"Furthermore, we are disheartened to learn that meaningful consultation with the tribe concerning sacred sites and proposed mitigation plans has still not occurred."

The request is not likely to go far despite widespread and growing support for the #NoDAPL movement. The House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs has all but gone missing in action in the past few months -- Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), the chairman of the panel, has convened just six hearings on Indian issues since the start of 2016.

In comparison, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs holds hearings and meetings just about every week when Congress is in session. Since the beginning of the year, the panel has advanced about two dozen bills, with several becoming law.

The subject matter of the #NoDAPL controversy also poses conflicts for Republicans, whose agenda embraces energy development. No GOP lawmakers sided with Indian Country during the battle over the Keystone XL Pipeline and few are willing to speak about Dakota Access without fear of seeming too pro-tribal.

"It is incumbent upon all parties to move forward peacefully and expeditiously, within the law, to come to a resolution that honors the rights of lawful commerce," Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-North Dakota) said in a statement on Friday, after the Obama administration took the extraordinary step of putting a hold on a key portion of the project.

The hands-off approach to Dakota Access stands in contrast to the GOP's treatment of the Gold King Mine disaster that polluted the waters on three reservations in the Southwest. Republican leaders convened a slew of hearings Navajo Nation, whose leaders have repeatedly expressed solidarity with the #NoDAPL movement and have gone to North Dakota to emphasize their support.

"The position the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is taking to halt the pipeline is one that is common to every Native American tribe. We all must consistently work to protect our land, our natural resources and especially our water," Navajo President Russell Begaye said in a statement on Friday.

Carol A. García
Tribal Affairs – Region VIII
FEMA
Denver Federal Center, Bldg 710
Denver, CO 80225
(303) 202-8959
(720) 415-4816 Cell

ENERGY TRANSFER

Memorandum

To: All Partnership Employees
From: Kelcy Warren, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2016
Re: Dakota Access Pipeline Project Update

I want to provide the entire Energy Transfer family with an update on the Dakota Access Pipeline project. Recent events in North Dakota and Washington, DC have brought the project to the forefront of national media attention. I recognize that many of you are receiving questions about our work and I want to be the first to share with you our commitment to the project, what we know, and where I am focused.

First, I am proud of our work on Dakota Access. As one of the largest U.S. infrastructure companies, our experience in designing, constructing, and operating natural gas, crude oil, and refined products pipelines is extensive. We have designed the state-of-the-art Dakota Access pipeline as a safer and more efficient method of transporting crude oil than the alternatives being used today, namely rail and truck. Today the 1,172 mile project is nearly 60 percent complete, employs more than 8,000 highly trained skilled labor workers who are safely constructing it, and we have spent just over $1.6 billion on equipment, materials and the workforce to date. Once operational, the project will safely move American oil to American markets. It will reduce our dependence on oil from unstable regions of the world and drive down the cost of petroleum products for American industry and consumers.

We are committed to completing construction and safely operating the Dakota Access Pipeline within the confines of the law. On Friday, a federal judge reaffirmed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' previous decision to permit construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Despite the judge's ruling that the project is in compliance with U.S. rules and regulations, the Department of Justice, Department of the Army and Department of Interior later announced that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is determining "whether it will need to reconsider any of its previous decisions" and called on the company to voluntarily halt construction. We intend to meet with officials in Washington to understand their position and reiterate our commitment to bring the Dakota Access Pipeline into operation.

Second, our corporate mindset has long been to keep our head down and do our work. It has not been my preference to engage in a media/PR battle. However, misinformation has dominated the news, so we will work to communicate with the government and media more clearly in the days to come.

In the meantime, I want to share with you information about our work on the Dakota Access Pipeline.

- The right of way for the entire pipeline has been obtained. All four states the pipeline traverses – North Dakota, South Dakota, Illinois, and Iowa – have issued favorable certificates, permits and approvals for construction.
- Nearly the entire Dakota Access pipeline route is across private land. In addition, neither the land abutting nor Lake Oahe itself is subject to Native American control or ownership. Despite this, we worked to meet with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe leaders on multiple occasions in the

past two years and gave the U.S. Army Corps data for their 389 meetings with more than 55 tribes across the project, including nine with The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe at Lake Oahe. We – like all Americans – value and respect cultural diversity and the significant role that Native American culture plays in our nation's history and its future and hope to be able to strengthen our relationship with the Native American communities as we move forward with this project.

- Nearly the entire pipeline route in North Dakota – and the entire portion the protestors are focused on – is located immediately adjacent to an existing natural gas pipeline built in 1982. The route also parallels a high voltage electric transmission line. This land has been studied, surveyed, and constructed upon – at least twice before – over the past several decades.
- Multiple archaeological studies conducted with state historic preservation offices found no sacred items along the route. State archeologists issued a 'no significant sites affected' determination in February on the North Dakota segment of the pipeline. If any potentially sacred objects were to be found, archaeologists, environmental inspectors, or trained construction staff are on site throughout construction to ensure their proper care and that proper notifications are made.
- Concerns about the pipeline's impact on the local water supply are unfounded. Multiple pipelines, railways, and highways cross the Missouri River today, carrying hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil. Dakota Access was designed with tremendous safety factors and redundancies, including compliance with and exceeding all safety and environmental regulations. The pipeline crosses 90 to 115 feet below Lake Oahe with heavy wall pipe and, as we all know, the pipe is inspected, tested and re-tested prior to being placed into service to ensure its long-term integrity.

Third, we respect the constitutional right of all assembled in North Dakota to voice their opinions for or against projects like ours. However, threats and attacks on our employees, their families and our contractors as well as the destruction of equipment and encroachment on private property must not be tolerated.

We appreciate the work of local sheriffs and law enforcement to date. I have directed our team to work closely with local, state and federal officials to ensure the safety and protection of our construction contractors and employees, contractors' equipment, private land and those whose right it is to peacefully protest. Together we must promote a peaceful discourse and path forward. We are committed to protecting and respecting the welfare of all workers, the Native American community, local communities where we operate, and the long-term integrity of the land and waters in the region.

Finally, many of you have asked what you can do. Here are a few ways you can support Dakota Access:

1. Continue to do your jobs in a thoughtful and professional manner. Your conduct and commitment demonstrates to the world that we are playing by the rules and are committed to completing this important infrastructure project.
2. Help explain to your friends and neighbors the facts about the work that you are doing. There has been an enormous amount of misinformation out there and you are our best ambassadors to the public.
3. Contact your elected representatives – all of them – to tell them how important this project is to your livelihood. Remind them that the company fully complied with the regulatory process and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a nationwide permit and other essential permits for our work.

I am confident that as long as the Government ultimately decides the fate of the project based on science and engineering, the Dakota Access Pipeline will become operational bringing a safer means of transportation to a much needed supply of oil to communities across the country. So we will continue to obey the rules and trust the process.

As the situation warrants, I will continue to communicate directly with you so that you can be fully informed of what's going on and what you can do to help.

Thank you again for all that you do.

Kelcy

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 4 Sep 2016 15:24:46 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Automatic reply: Update: pipeline situation

I am out of the office until Sept. 6 and will only be checking email sporadically. For immediate assistance, please contact the region 8 news desk at 303 235 4908.
Thank you!

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 19:01:15 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Awareness: protests

I did not push the email that ARA sent, but I did send the below, which I felt covered it. You can let Milo know that I provided the heads up or forward my note if you'd like.

From: Tennyson, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 3:03 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Batkin, Joshua <joshua.batkin@fema.dhs.gov>; Nadeau, Robert <Robert.Nadeau@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Awareness: protests

Yes – a friend posted online on this. On nontribal land they found a Sioux cultural site while working on the pipeline.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 5:00 PM
To: Batkin, Joshua <joshua.batkin@fema.dhs.gov>; Tennyson, Stephanie <stephanie.tennyson@fema.dhs.gov>; Nadeau, Robert <Robert.Nadeau@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Awareness: protests

Megan gave a heads up to Milo yesterday, but I wanted you to have awareness too as our ARA is sending a note to Beth Z, just for awareness. We have no action.

There are significant protests going on just north of the Standing Rock Reservation (southwestern SD) regarding the XL Pipeline. Media is anticipating large busloads of people from other reservations arriving today. We are tracking from here. We haven't gotten any questions on it, but depending on how long it goes on, it could impact some of our travel plans and the availability of tribal EMs and Council as well as their interest in FEMA. So far, the protests have all been peaceful.

Stacie Greff, External Affairs Director
FEMA Region VIII
Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov
303-235-4774 desk
303-941-8668 cell

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 17:41:02 -0400
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations, the situation is significant enough for the State EM director and the Adjutant General to cancel their planned participation in the TAG/NORTHCOM seminar August 17-18.

I have spoken with Greg Wilz and we are monitoring the situation. I do not anticipate any role for FEMA; this BLUF is for situational awareness only.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 23:02:16 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

FYSA

From: Zimmerman, Elizabeth
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:44 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>; Coen Jr, Michael <Michael.CoenJr@fema.dhs.gov>; Gruber, Corey <Corey.Gruber@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Deal, Timothy <Timothy.Deal@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Thank you

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:39:01 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth; Coen Jr, Michael; Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan; Deal, Timothy
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but current estimates range from 1500-2000 protesters. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday Aug. 19, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement. North Dakota Highway 1806, which runs adjacent to the protest, is closed to through traffic, with detours established. Work at the site is currently halted as legal proceedings initiated by both the Standing Rock and the Dakota Access owners now work their way through the legal system.

On Sept. 9-11 the Annual United Tribes International Powwow is scheduled in Bismarck, approximately 60 miles from the protest site. The powwow normally sees about 5000 visitors, but there is speculation that that number could swell significantly in light of the protest, which is being supported by other tribes around the country.

I still do not anticipate any formal role for FEMA, but Region VIII will continue to monitor the situation via traditional and social media, and continue ongoing communication with the state.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:39:01 -0400
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Coen Jr, Michael;Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan;Deal, Timothy
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

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Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 15:44:26 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Awareness.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
  -
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

Editor's note: As part of the Journal's ongoing coverage of the massive Dakota Access Pipeline protest in North Dakota, staff writer Mike Anderson has been camping in a tent near the protest site. He filed this dispatch from the scene on Saturday.

CANNON BALL, N.D. | A peaceful protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline ended in the arrests of 83 people in North Dakota on Saturday morning amid a chaotic scene in which police in riot gear used pepper spray to break up and subdue a group of 200 to 300 protesters.

It is the highest number of people arrested in a single day in North Dakota during the last several months of protest actions against the oil pipeline, bringing the total number of arrests up to 222.

Though the protesters behaved non-violently and cooperated with the police, North Dakota law enforcement officials described Saturday's events as a riot. Police have offered conflicting reports alleging that one protester either verbally threatened an officer, or tried to physically grab away a can of pepper spray, resulting in the protester and the officer both being pepper sprayed in the face.

Most, if not all, of those arrested after the 5-hour ordeal on Saturday will be charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor, according to Morton County Sheriff spokesperson Rob Keller. Other charges included assault on a peace officer, reckless endangerment, engaging in a riot, resisting arrest, and fleeing an officer on foot.

"It's an unlawful activity," Keller said during phone interview on Saturday afternoon. "The bottom line is it's on private property. It's posted, 'No Criminal Trespass'. It's like you're invading someone's home. Consequently, there were arrests that were made."

The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

A police statement said the four were arrested after they were found, "attached to the vehicle; two attached to the outside of the vehicle, one attached to the steering wheel and another whose body was outside the vehicle with his arm fed through a hole in the door and his hand was in a bucket of hardened concrete."

The call to action went through the main resistance camp around 5:20 a.m. while it was still dark and freezing cold. A man walked through the camp speaking through a megaphone.

"Wake up relatives," he said. "Wake up water protectors. Wake up land defenders. Time to wake up. Time to send our boys to the universe. Time to send our boys to the rising sun."

A convoy of vehicles formed in the camp, a prayer was held, and the assembled were instructed to behave peacefully and respectfully if they encountered police.

“I know it’s hard on the front line,” the prayer leader said in the dark. “But do not cuss, do not holler. If you see someone getting out of hand, tell them to calm down.”

Then the convoy moved out. Parking their vehicles along the highway, the protesters began hiking into the field as the sun rose a little before 8 a.m. Their path took them along a craggy dirt road near the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline on land that tribal members of the Hunkpapa Sioux of Standing Rock said is filled with sacred burial sites.

Some of the protesters remained behind as several hundred others carrying signs and banners began marching into the field, singing, praying, and burning bundles of ceremonial sage as they went.

They walked two to three miles inward when they encountered a line of more than 50 officers from multiple law enforcement agencies. Most of the officers wore riot gear, most held wooden truncheons, and some had shotguns, canisters of pepper spray, and tear gas grenade launchers in their hands. Two armored personnel carriers arrived later while a helicopter circled low overhead.

The protesters and police lines met in the middle of an open field. The protesters remained calm, playing drums and offering prayers in English and Lakota to the officers, who remained stone-faced and uncommunicative.

When the police line began to advance on the protesters, the leaders of the group instructed everyone to fall back and cooperate with the police. They were dispersing when an officer spoke over a loud-speaker from the turret of an armored vehicle.

His only words — and the only words police spoke to the protesters all morning — were, “You’re all under arrest for trespassing.”

The police continued to advance on the fleeing protesters, snatching some of the stragglers, throwing them behind their lines, and pepper-spraying several others in the face as they trod silently forward.

The police eventually surrounded the group, repeating that every one of the 200 to 300 people present would be placed under arrest. The protesters linked arms and tied bandanas to their faces as the officers pressed in, splitting the group and pressing many to the ground. Most, if not all of the men and women taken into custody, did not resist arrest.

A small group managed to retreat over the hill, a few pouring water into the eyes of friends who had been stung by pepper spray and guiding them by hand up the dirt road as they made their way back to camp.

“It was all peaceful. And then the cops showed up," said Harmony Restoule, a young Ojibwe woman from Northern Ontario, Canada. “It was really scary when the police kicked into action.”

Restoule went to the demonstration with her cousin Paige, both of whom participated in mass protests during the Idle No More movement, a grassroots campaign organized in 2012 by the indigenous peoples of Canada against perceived legislative violations of their treaty rights.

“The Canadian police never showed up in riot gear,” Paige Restoule said.

A young man from California who identified himself only as Ahkua said his friend was among the people arrested, and that the police took him after he knelt to the ground to help someone else up.

“There were a few officers who were excessively aggressive and got the others riled up,” he said. “Most cops are pretty chill.”

Saturday’s protest was one of several high profile demonstrations in the Cannon Ball area against the Dakota Access Pipeline in recent months. Police arrested celebrity Shailene Woodley along with more than 20 others on Oct. 10 along the route of the pipeline near St. Anthony, N.D. Police referred to the event as a riot and charged many people with either inciting or engaging in a riot. At the time, it was the highest total number of arrests made in a single day.

The protesters, who now number in the thousands at a main camp near Cannon Ball, want to stop the ongoing construction of the pipeline that will transport oil from the Bakken and Three Forks formations of North Dakota, through South Dakota and Iowa, into southern Illinois. The pipeline would carry 450,000 barrels per day initially and could reach 570,000 barrels a day. The total length of the pipeline across the four states would be 1,134 miles, with 271 miles in South Dakota. The company's estimated cost for the South Dakota segment is $820 million.

On Sept. 3, police and private security forces used pepper spray and dogs to drive protesters away from construction equipment.

"Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful," Kirchmeier said in a press-release about Saturday's events. "This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities. I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protesters. This is about the rule of law."

The protesters may have been peacefully dispersing on Saturday morning, Keller said, but that doesn't change the fact that they broke the law.

"That's the whole purpose of having a police line, to protect the (pipeline) property and their right to commerce," Keller said. "We are protecting the protesters too, and the ranchers as well."

When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, "No."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 10:49:16 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

FYI—Rob Keller is the PIO for Morton County Sherriff Department.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
  -
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

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Though the protesters behaved non-violently and cooperated with the police, North Dakota law enforcement officials described Saturday's events as a riot. Police have offered conflicting reports alleging that one protester either verbally threatened an officer, or tried to physically grab away a can of pepper spray, resulting in the protester and the officer both being pepper sprayed in the face.

Most, if not all, of those arrested after the 5-hour ordeal on Saturday will be charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor, according to Morton County Sheriff spokesperson Rob Keller. Other charges included assault on a peace officer, reckless endangerment, engaging in a riot, resisting arrest, and fleeing an officer on foot.

"It's an unlawful activity," Keller said during phone interview on Saturday afternoon. "The bottom line is it's on private property. It's posted, 'No Criminal Trespass'. It's like you're invading someone's home. Consequently, there were arrests that were made."

The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

A police statement said the four were arrested after they were found, "attached to the vehicle; two attached to the outside of the vehicle, one attached to the steering wheel and another whose body was outside the vehicle with his arm fed through a hole in the door and his hand was in a bucket of hardened concrete."

The call to action went through the main resistance camp around 5:20 a.m. while it was still dark and freezing cold. A man walked through the camp speaking through a megaphone.

"Wake up relatives," he said. "Wake up water protectors. Wake up land defenders. Time to wake up. Time to send our boys to the universe. Time to send our boys to the rising sun."

A convoy of vehicles formed in the camp, a prayer was held, and the assembled were instructed to behave peacefully and respectfully if they encountered police.

“I know it’s hard on the front line,” the prayer leader said in the dark. “But do not cuss, do not holler. If you see someone getting out of hand, tell them to calm down.”

Then the convoy moved out. Parking their vehicles along the highway, the protesters began hiking into the field as the sun rose a little before 8 a.m. Their path took them along a craggy dirt road near the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline on land that tribal members of the Hunkpapa Sioux of Standing Rock said is filled with sacred burial sites.

Some of the protesters remained behind as several hundred others carrying signs and banners began marching into the field, singing, praying, and burning bundles of ceremonial sage as they went.

They walked two to three miles inward when they encountered a line of more than 50 officers from multiple law enforcement agencies. Most of the officers wore riot gear, most held wooden truncheons, and some had shotguns, canisters of pepper spray, and tear gas grenade launchers in their hands. Two armored personnel carriers arrived later while a helicopter circled low overhead.

The protesters and police lines met in the middle of an open field. The protesters remained calm, playing drums and offering prayers in English and Lakota to the officers, who remained stone-faced and uncommunicative.

When the police line began to advance on the protesters, the leaders of the group instructed everyone to fall back and cooperate with the police. They were dispersing when an officer spoke over a loud-speaker from the turret of an armored vehicle.

His only words — and the only words police spoke to the protesters all morning — were, “You’re all under arrest for trespassing.”

The police continued to advance on the fleeing protesters, snatching some of the stragglers, throwing them behind their lines, and pepper-spraying several others in the face as they trod silently forward.

The police eventually surrounded the group, repeating that every one of the 200 to 300 people present would be placed under arrest. The protesters linked arms and tied bandanas to their faces as the officers pressed in, splitting the group and pressing many to the ground. Most, if not all of the men and women taken into custody, did not resist arrest.

A small group managed to retreat over the hill, a few pouring water into the eyes of friends who had been stung by pepper spray and guiding them by hand up the dirt road as they made their way back to camp.

“It was all peaceful. And then the cops showed up," said Harmony Restoule, a young Ojibwe woman from Northern Ontario, Canada. “It was really scary when the police kicked into action.”

Restoule went to the demonstration with her cousin Paige, both of whom participated in mass protests during the Idle No More movement, a grassroots campaign organized in 2012 by the indigenous peoples of Canada against perceived legislative violations of their treaty rights.

“The Canadian police never showed up in riot gear,” Paige Restoule said.

A young man from California who identified himself only as Ahkua said his friend was among the people arrested, and that the police took him after he knelt to the ground to help someone else up.

“There were a few officers who were excessively aggressive and got the others riled up,” he said. “Most cops are pretty chill.”

Saturday’s protest was one of several high profile demonstrations in the Cannon Ball area against the Dakota Access Pipeline in recent months. Police arrested celebrity Shailene Woodley along with more than 20 others on Oct. 10 along the route of the pipeline near St. Anthony, N.D. Police referred to the event as a riot and charged many people with either inciting or engaging in a riot. At the time, it was the highest total number of arrests made in a single day.

The protesters, who now number in the thousands at a main camp near Cannon Ball, want to stop the ongoing construction of the pipeline that will transport oil from the Bakken and Three Forks formations of North Dakota, through South Dakota and Iowa, into southern Illinois. The pipeline would carry 450,000 barrels per day initially and could reach 570,000 barrels a day. The total length of the pipeline across the four states would be 1,134 miles, with 271 miles in South Dakota. The company's estimated cost for the South Dakota segment is $820 million.

On Sept. 3, police and private security forces used pepper spray and dogs to drive protesters away from construction equipment.

“Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful,” Kirchmeier said in a press-release about Saturday's events. “This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities. I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protesters. This is about the rule of law.”

The protesters may have been peacefully dispersing on Saturday morning, Keller said, but that doesn't change the fact that they broke the law.

“That's the whole purpose of having a police line, to protect the (pipeline) property and their right to commerce,” Keller said. “We are protecting the protesters too, and the ranchers as well.”

When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, “No.”

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 13:31:21 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Cc: Hunter, Cynthia;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Panel votes to borrow $6M for costs associated with pipeline protests, blasts feds inaction

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 12:18 p.m.

NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
Native
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Demonstrators against the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan, N.D., gather in opposition early this month. File photo.

BISMARCK — The state Emergency Commission voted Wednesday, Sept. 21, to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to support law enforcement efforts related to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, but not before members blasted the lack of federal support to deal with protesters camped out on federal land.

"I know we have to do it, but it's not right, and the lack of federal involvement is disgusting," said House Majority Leader Al Carlson, R-Fargo. "And we need to protect our North Dakota people, but this is just plain wrong that they're ignoring this issue."

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, said the state has spent $1.88 million on protest-related costs so far, the bulk of it personnel costs for

assistance from the National Guard and law enforcement agencies from across the state. Morton County estimated last week it had spent about $400,000 on top of that.

The $6 million line of credit from the Bank of North Dakota will fund future efforts as authorized by Gov. Jack Dalrymple's emergency declaration Aug. 19. The Legislature will have to make a deficiency appropriation from the state's general fund to pay back the bank after lawmakers convene in regular session in January, Budget Director Pam Sharp said.

Authorities have responded to multiple protests at pipeline construction sites and in Bismarck-Mandan since protests began to ramp up in mid-August. They've also created a traffic checkpoint and increased patrols in Morton County, which they say are necessary for the safety of local residents, farmers and ranchers and the thousands of protesters camped out on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Last Friday, the Corps of Engineers issued a special use permit for protesters to use Corps land south of the Cannonball River but not the land north of the river where the majority of them are camping, because that land is subject to an existing grazing lease.

Carlson said it bothers him that it's "a federal problem that they've ignored" and the Legislature will have to cover the costs at a time of budget shortfalls. Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, agreed.

"The taxpayers shouldn't have to be paying for this," he said.

Dalrymple said he's been in contact with the White House, U.S. Department of Justice, Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior and the state's congressional delegation but is still waiting to hear if they're going to help financially or with in-kind services.

"The problem that we have, of course, is that these public safety needs are imminent every day," Dalrymple said. "We really have no choice but to protect the public with law enforcement. Recovering funds from the federal government is definitely a top priority, but it undoubtedly will take some time."

The commission's other members are Secretary of State Al Jaeger, Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, Sen. Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, and Sen. Ray Holmberg, R-Grand Forks.

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 7 Sep 2016 10:45:10 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Interesting piece…

Treaty issues underlie Dakota Access protests

John Hult, jhult@argusleader.com 9:02 a.m. CDT September 7, 2016

People protesting the construction on a four-state oil pipeline at a site in southern North Dakota gather at campground near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation on Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016. About 300 people were at the campsite where protesters from across the country and members of 60 tribes have gathered in opposition to the $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline that will pass through Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota and South Dakota.(Photo: James MacPherson, AP)

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Protests in Cannonball, North Dakota took an ugly turn over the weekend, when a Dakota Access pipeline security team used pepper spray and dogs to ward off protesters who'd crossed a fence to stop construction work.

By that point, the Sacred Stone Camp's weeks-long protest had grown to historic proportions, as tribes from across the U.S. joined the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in solidarity with its opposition to the 1,200-mile, $3.8 billion pipeline.

Organizers at the North Dakota camp near the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers say the protests represent the largest gathering of tribes since the days of Sitting Bull.

The opposition is concerned about potential oil spill in the Missouri River, which Dakota Access would cross, as well the possibility of damage to historic and cultural sites.

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ARGUS LEADER
Judge grants short stop on 4-state oil pipeline construction

Pipeline supporters maintain that the project was properly vetted and permitted, that tribes had the opportunity to comment, and that Dakota Access will move the U.S. and its oil-consuming population closer to energy independence.

But there's something larger than the pipeline behind the pipeline protests.

The land on which the clash occurred is privately owned and permitted for construction, but it falls within a swath of the Great Plains that once belonged to the tribes. It also lies along the Missouri River, whose bottom lands were subject to a further erosion of tribal territory during the 20th Century.

“Part of the frustration you’re seeing play out at Cannonball are voices that didn’t get heard,” said lawyer and author Peter Capossela. “These are voices that haven’t been heard for a long time, and now they’re insisting that they be heard.”

Capossela has worked for several Native American tribes as a lawyer and wrote a book called "The Land Along the River" about the Missouri River treaties.

Much of what is now South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska and Wyoming was once part of the Great Sioux Reservation, created through the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. That treaty was altered multiple times, shrinking to encompass half of South Dakota in 1868, then pushing the reservation west of the Black Hills in 1877, tightening further in 1889 to create six smaller reservations.

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ARGUS LEADER
Oil pipeline protest turns violent in southern North Dakota

Some of that land was opened to homesteaders in 1915.

Then, after Missouri River flooding in the 1940s, bottom lands were taken by the Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Pick-Sloan plan to dam the river.

Jurisdiction over those bottom lands in South Dakota – which the tribes had hoped to reclaim in the 1990s – was given to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks through the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

Capossela sees a clear line between the treaties of the mid-1800s, failure to honor those treaties and the handling of the pipeline project by state and federal regulators.

Beyond physical boundaries are issues of cultural sites. Even when land is privately held, Capossela said, tribes have the “right of repatriation” for human remains and cultural artifacts found on private land.

That has played out in hearings on the pipeline at the state level, and continues to be one focal point of a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a lawsuit against the Corps of Engineers in late July, alleging that the agency failed to reach out to or adequately consult tribes during the planning process.

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ARGUS LEADER

12 people arrested at Dakota Access Pipeline demonstration

“DAPL claims to have completed cultural resource surveys along the entire pipeline length,” the tribe’s complaint said. “However, the out-of-state, non-Tribal consultants hired by DAPL to do cultural surveys are unable to assess the potential cultural significance of sites in this area to the Tribes.”

The lawsuit says the tribe “participated extensively” during the Corps’ public comment process.

Dakota Access and its supporters disagree. If there’s been a lack of consultation, they say, it’s not for lack of trying.

Dakota Access filed affidavits saying its representatives reached out to Standing Rock officials to ask about tribal surveys on numerous occasions, but that most tribes refused to participate.

“The only response or comments we received from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe were to stop the project categorically avoid the entire western Great Plains Region as that is considered the Greater Sioux Nation’s ‘historical range,’ which is an impossible request to accommodate,” wrote Joey Mahmoud, VP of Dakota Access.

Joel Ames, Tribal Liaison for the Corps of Engineers Omaha District, wrote in the Corps’ response that he first attempted to consult with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in September of 2014. He wrote that a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer named Waste’ Win Young did not attend scheduled meetings and later declined to consult with the Corps, telling Ames in February of 2015 that she intended to work directly with Dakota Access.

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ARGUS LEADER

Judge orders protesters not to interfere with Dakota Access oil pipeline

Ames wrote that he continued trying to work with Standing Rock throughout 2015, but that tribal officials cancelled meetings, failed to return phone calls or sent responses that accused the Corps of trying to circumvent the consultation process.

The Corps presented tribes with a draft environmental assessment in December of 2015. Tribal officials from Standing Rock requested a full environmental impact statement and continued to request a full consultation with tribes to create one until the project was permitted by the Corps in late July.

Such back-and-forth over consultation is a mark of disputes between the federal government and tribes, Capossela said.

“The extent of consultation is something that always gets disputed,” Capossela said.

By April, people had begun to gather at the Cannonball camps. By August, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple had declared a state of emergency, saying the protests constituted a “significant public safety concern.”

The weekend represented the most violent incident. A tribal spokesman said six people were bitten by dogs, including a child, and that at least 30 people were pepper-sprayed. Law enforcement said protesters injured four security guards and two dogs.

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ARGUS LEADER

Native American teens run to protest pipeline

After the clashes, the Corps filed a motion saying it did not oppose a temporary restraining order in the interest of "preserving peace" until a final decision on the Standing Rock lawsuit is reached.

The judge granted a temporary order on Tuesday, but only to stop work on State Highway 1806 and 20 miles east of Lake Oahe in North Dakota. Work on the west side can continue.

"We are disappointed that the U.S. District Court's decision does not prevent DAPL from destroying our sacred sites as we await a ruling on our original motion to stop construction of the pipeline," Standing Rock Chairman David Archambault II said in a statement.

Judge James Boasberg said he intends to issue a decision on the legality of the Corps' permit by Friday.

If history is any indication, however, the decision will not put an end to the opposition.

John Hult is the Reader's Watchdog reporter for Argus Leader Media. Contact him with questions and concerns at 605-331-2301, 605-370-8617. You can tweet him @ArgusJHultor find him on Facebook at Facebook.com/ArgusReadersWatchdog

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 6 Sep 2016 10:35:48 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Protester says take pipeline fight to 'Obama's doorstep'

By Nick Smith / Bismarck Tribune on Sep 5, 2016 at 9:20 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D.—Despite a clash on Saturday between opponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline project and private security officers hired for protection along the construction route, protesters say they're still optimistic the project can be stopped by continued opposition and through the courts.

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Hundreds milled around the protest camps near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation on a cool Monday, contrasting the gloomy weather with continued prayers, mingling with each other and enjoying donated food being cooked.

With the weather beginning to change and a ruling coming by Friday on an injunction sought by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., pipeline opponents see their actions as just beginning.

"I think this has essentially become ground zero for the climate (change) fight," Bill Kitchen of Johnstown, N.Y., said. "What happens if the courts rule in the company's favor? You've got all these people that aren't ready to give up and get out."

Kitchen, who works part-time for the Portland, Maine-based Biodiversity Research Institute and also participates in environmental activism, said the growing visibility of the protests will only help the cause.

If completed on schedule before the end of the year, the Dakota Access Pipeline would transport up to 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude with a future maximum capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

The project originates in North Dakota and ends in Illinois. The pipeline has an overall cost of $3.78 billion.

A section of the pipeline will be bored under the Missouri River and run less than a mile from the tribe's reservation boundary.

Tribal leaders and groups have been staging protests over the pipeline for more than a month, citing concerns over potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture. Concerns over disturbing cultural sites have also loomed large.

Kitchen said the protest is an extension of the Keystone XL fight; the pipeline took years of review and required a State Department review because it would have crossed the U.S. and Canadian border. The project was eventually shelved.

"They need to take this right to Obama's doorstep," Kitchen said, adding he's optimistic the pipeline won't be completely built.

He believes Saturday's clash between approximately 300 protesters and 14 private security officers at a work site shouldn't be a stain on the protest effort.

Tribal officials said cultural sites had been recently discovered in an area where Dakota Access, LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, had begun work on Saturday.

This prompted a march by protesters, who confronted and assaulted several security officers, according to a Morton County Sheriff's Department release. Three security officers were injured. No arrests have yet been made but the incident is under investigation.

"To go plowing through those sites ... it's not going to look good for the company," Kitchen said.

Tonya Hertel, of Mobridge, S.D., agreed.

"I feel that the federal judge made the right decision by waiting," Hertel said, adding that it allowed both sides to be fairly heard before weighing in. "We feel we're going to win this."

Hertel had arrived to visit the camp and drop off donations to the protesters including clothing. She says she's tried to visit at least once a week to provide whatever might be useful for the hundreds that are camping out from dozens of tribes from across the country as they settle in for the long haul.

She declined to speculate on whether or not the court will rule in their favor this week and how protesters might react.

"I think the tribes are doing a great job," Hertel said. "I feel people are hearing us."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 10:48:32 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian;Hunter, Cynthia;Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

NORTH DAKOTA LT. GOV. DREW WRIGLEY Q&A: 'An unlawful protest'

By Tom Dennis on Aug 28, 2016 at 12:09 a.m.

On Tuesday, North Dakota Lt. Gov. Drew Wrigley visited the Herald to talk about the protest near Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline project. The following is a transcript, edited for clarity and length.

Do you agree with the protest against Dakota Access pipeline?

No
Yes
Not sure

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Q. Tell us why you're here.

The evolving situation with Standing Rock is obviously very serious, and I don't know that publicly it's been discussed as broadly as it's going to be. The governor went on the radio, and we'll be talking much more about what is actually transpiring there.

We're dealing with a very significant and challenging law enforcement issue.

It's an important story, it's an evolving story, and there's frankly a lot of misinformation going out.

It's also a complicated situation. It started off as a peaceful protest, although it was being conducted in part on land on which they did not have any permits to go. They were on the Army Corps of Engineers land, and that's where the main encampment is.

But it has become an unlawful protest. And there is no way to peacefully and lawfully participate in an unlawful protest.

I liken it to conspiracy law. When you're involved in an illegal enterprise of some kind, everyone is involved in what's taking place. When someone says, "Well, I've been lawfully standing here on the Corps land the whole time, I've been peaceful, and my intentions are peaceful," that person still is part of an unlawful protest.

Vernon Red Owl, a member of the Siseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe in South Dakota, raises his arm. 8-23-2016

And when you have a situation in which hundreds of people are walking down a state highway, then off in the ditches standing there—and a lot of the people out there at least initially were very young children. That is both a complicated and an extremely dangerous situation.

A chief concern was that the traveling public comes in there, somebody gets spooked, they're going through a crowd—who knows what their reaction is going to be. Very, very concerning.

So the governor had the Highway Patrol and Department of Transportation put that barrier across State Highway 1806, except for people who live there and emergency personnel and law enforcement. Everyone else has to be diverted around and detoured.

And that was purely about public safety and being able to maintain the law enforcement effort, which is now required in view of the unlawful protest.

Q. Why is it being termed an unlawful protest?

There have been hundreds of criminal acts, violating a variety of state and federal laws. They include two substantiated cases of lasers being pointed into the cockpits of aircraft coming over. Those are life-threatening federal crimes, and they're being investigated right now.

There has been talk of weapons that were taken off two of the protesters early on. Also early on, there was a substantiated case of people believed to be members of the protest traveling to Bismarck, going to the home of a member of the North Dakota Highway Patrol, walking around that property, then going back to their vehicle and leaving. Almost like a recon.

Aerial photograph taken Aug. 20, 2016 over protest camp on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. (Tom Stromme/Bismarck Tribune)

Trespasses have been documented. Threats on law enforcement, both on social media and in person.

Crimes committed by people riding horses into a police line. I've spoken with the people who were on that line. They were beyond threatened. You can call what happened a lot of things, but you can look at that situation and say, "That is an assault with a deadly weapon. That horse is no different than a car going into a line of people." Law enforcement retreated at that point.

Q. How many protesters are local?

We've not been able to go through and take a census, of course. But people talk of the Seven Sioux Tribes; they haven't been together and "sharing their campfires," some say, for over 100 years.

But I think it's clear that the tribes are not united down there, and that there is not a united leadership front. There are factions within this illegal protest. And numbers vary on how many members are from the Standing Rock reservation. We just don't know.

I think it could be helpful to the situation if the leadership of the various tribes that are represented recognize that their people are not only involved in an illegal protest action, they are also endangering themselves, the public and law enforcement.

Q. Where do you see this headed?

Tribal veterans stand Aug. 24, at the opposition site near suspended pipeline construction. (Michael Vosburg/Forum News Service)

I don't have a prediction, because it would be easier to predict if it had unified leadership. Then you could size the person or persons up and assess what's been done in the past and what you can expect up ahead.

That's a very complicated thing to do, though, when there are many groups with many leaders involved.

Q. How many people are we talking about?

It varies. There are reports that it could swell to as many as 3,000; I heard rumors that we're already at 2,500 out there. But it varies, because it's not hard to go back to the Standing Rock reservation. Others have further to travel.

Q. What's happening with water and other services?

There were questions recently about some of the items that the state Health Department had provided for what initially was a lawful protest. The governor now has made clear that it has morphed into an unlawful protest, and there will not be the provision of water and other items of comfort out there. There still are ambulance and other services out there for everyone's protection.

There were some reports that people were concerned about there being water. There's plenty of water; it's just not at the protest site. There's plenty of water when people travel back to their homes and access it. So nobody's keeping them from whatever resources they need. But the state is not providing that.

Protesters of the Dakota Access pipeline and officers face off at a work site of the pipeline. (Michael Knudsen of Bismarck)

Q. What's next?

The governor's declaration was the beginning of establishing what the lawful boundaries are for peaceful protest. Meanwhile, every violation accumulates more and more support for our observation that it is an unlawful protest.

And that's why I say, people still have the opportunity to extract themselves.

Anyone who wants to be peaceful, who wants to be law-abiding, still has the opportunity to withdraw from these protests. They got themselves there, they have the capacity to leave. No one is going to stop them as they disperse.

Q. Is the National Guard coming in?

The governor made clear from his declaration the other day that it wasn't a National Guard callout. He has not made that callout. The National Guard is always there as a resource in North Dakota to deal with emergency situations, whatever they might be. But they weren't called out as part of the emergency declaration.

Q. Are there discussions about calling out the National Guard?

You talk about all different options, but there is not a decision to call out the National Guard.

Q. It sounds a little like the Black Lives Matter protests in Minneapolis, where the activists blocked Interstate 94 for a time.

I know people think about examples like that, but I think you're dealing with a different group dynamic. I don't think anybody involved in this would seriously question that a significant number of people went out there with peaceful, law-abiding intent. But now, anyone aware of the facts out there would agree that it is an unlawful protest.

And you can't lawfully participate in an unlawful protest.

Q. Some protesters might respond by saying, "If we lawfully protest, nothing will change, and the pipeline will be built." And their goal is to stop the pipeline. How would you respond?

There's always a lawful way in our society to push your perspective. There has been an extensive, long comment period, opportunity to weigh in, opportunity to be heard, to have your perspective be part of the formal record.

It's been documented out there, too, that those hearings had no representation from people who in many instances didn't have to travel very far to put that perspective out there. And that's not unimportant in this.

But even so, I'd be the last person to say, "Well, you didn't go, now you can't say anything." It's just that you've got to be lawful. And any time when things don't play out your way, it's not OK to resort to violence, threats and obstruction of lawful process.

That is not one of your options.

You can write letters. You can march peacefully. You can call your federal delegation. You can call your state legislator. You can call your community leadership. We have open and transparent and accessible leadership in this state.

But this is not an option: Unlawful, threatening, intimidating, dangerous protest.

Q. Does the fact that this involves Native American tribes make it harder? Given their history with the United States, their tribal leaders might not have much trust that the regular methods would work.

I wouldn't be the right person to ask about that. You'd have to ask them what their perspective is. But I can say that we in North Dakota state government interact with the tribes regularly on matters of central importance to them and us. We have strong relationships—not because we always agree, but because we're dealing with very, very important matters.

Look at the Three Affiliated Tribes. It's the absolute heart of oil country out there, and the tax agreements that were reached between the state and the tribe that led to private enterprise feeling comfortable in going out there and conducting very expensive business and investment—that takes a lot of trust.

That was an opportunity, and look what happened: Benefit to the tribes, benefit to everyone involved, benefit to commerce, job creation, opportunity.

We also interact with the tribes regularly on environmental and other matters. We have regular meetings, and we'll meet any time the tribal leadership wants to come in.

Q. What are the discussions like?

It's like any negotiation or discussion. It never ends in a way that's perfect for either side, but you reach accord.

Someone commented the other day, "Why isn't Sen. Heidi Heitkamp out there? She has good relationships." Why, because she's a Democrat? She does have good relationships with the tribes. And so do we.

We know these folks. Standing Rock Chairman Dave Archambault and the governor speak regularly and comfortably, and they have in this situation, especially early on. There's a friendship there, or a kinship out of understanding that they both represent important interests. So it's not for lack of opportunity to access.

Also, at every legislative session, the tribe comes in; they get their own opportunity to speak to a joint session. The governor gives the State of the State address; they give the State of the Relationship address.

No other other government leaders come in and get an opportunity like that. Sometimes our congressional delegation will address, but it's not the same thing as a joint session.

Also, the tribal leaders come in, there are days of meetings, they're there regularly petitioning the government to interact with them in this fashion or that, or adjust this agreement.

But that has not been accessed in all of this in ways that can be constructive.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 10:34:28 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Sioux tribe leader wants political help to halt oil pipeline

- By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press
- Updated 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A tribal leader Wednesday said he contacted the White House and met with North Dakota's senators in an effort to halt construction of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline that crosses the Missouri River near an American Indian reservation in southern North Dakota.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II, in a teleconference with reporters, stressed that the he and the tribe are working to ensure peace among those protesting the Dakota Access pipeline.

"There is no place for threats, violence or criminal activity," Archambault said.

North Dakota transportation officials, meanwhile, closed a several-mile stretch of Highway 1806 on Wednesday because of the protest along the road.

The 1,172-mile pipeline planned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is passing through the Dakotas and Iowa on its way to Illinois. Construction crews with armed private security guards arrived last week just north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where native Americans have been staging a protest for months at a "spirit camp."

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U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Hovland granted the developer's motion for a temporary restraining order Tuesday.

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Archambault told reporters he also has urged President Barack Obama to step in. The president and First Lady Michelle Obama traveled to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2014 to get a firsthand look at the impoverished living conditions on the reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Archambault said he asked nothing of the president then but is doing so now.

"I believe both he and Michelle Obama were touched," Archambault said. "So now if there's any way he can intervene and move this pipeline off our treaty lands, I'm asking him."

The White House did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 10:43:42 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: CLIP: ND TRIBAL

Work stops at Dakota Access Pipeline site

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

Lauren Donovan

- LAUREN DONOVAN, TRIBUNE

Arvol Looking Horse, a Sioux holy man from the Cheyenne River Reservation, leads hundreds out of a new protest camp set up near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation boundary to a site along Highway 1806 where the Dakota Access Pipeline has been under protest since late last week. The keeper of a sacred pipe led a long prayer session for peace and the safety of all late Tuesday morning. For a gallery of photos, go to bismarcktribune.com.

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Workers were instructed to leave their equipment late Monday after youthful protesters walked onto the work site and surrounded the machinery. Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the mix of people around the machinery caused him to stop work until an improved plan for safety could be developed.

Kirchmeier said he didn’t know whether work would resume Wednesday (today), because some options were still in flux Tuesday evening. One option was the private landowner allowing his fence to be moved back into his property to give protesters more room to assemble off the highway.

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“Basically, what we talked about at the meeting was how to de-escalate tensions between the pipeline workers and the protesters, and us, I guess. One option is to give them more land and more comfort, room for tents, water, a dumpster, that kind of thing,” the sheriff said. Ideally, there would be ample room to move the hundreds of cars, pickups and enforcement vehicles off the roadway, too, he said.

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In a situation of historical irony, after the work shutdown, law enforcement pulled back from the protest site on Highway 1806 to a communication command center set up at Fort Lincoln State Park. The park preserves the fort from which the cavalry and Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer left to never return after a fatal battle against the Sioux. A replica of Custer’s captured flag was flying among others representing some of the 25 to 30 estimated tribes that have arrived to support Standing Rock since the protest started last week.

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Dakota Access did not return calls and emails seeking comment on the work stoppage.

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The prayers, burning sage and sounds of drumming were intended to restore a protest based on prayer and peaceful objection, amidst worries that not everyone can be controlled in such a large, fast-moving situation and as arrests continued to mount. Men, women and children sang the old language and turned as one to the four corners of the universe. Cameras were forbidden during the ceremony.

Tribal member and former councilman Tim Mentz said the prayers were at the request of Archambault. “The chairman asked to go back to prayer, to ask for peace and safety and that we can accomplish what we are here to do,” Mentz said. “It’s for one thing; the safety of everyone. We’re all praying for the same thing.”

After the prayers, the access gates were propped open and the protesters walked the construction route on private land down to the Missouri River below, a hot walk in nearly 85-degree temperatures. Many walked, some rode horse and others rode in the back of pickup trucks, intent of making contact with the water a half-mile away.

(Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 14:38:44 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Carol;Stephenson, James R
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal housing

Turtle Mountain gets housing funds

By Herald Staff Report on Sep 7, 2016 at 7:33 p.m.

Members of North Dakota's congressional delegation announced federal grants totaling $140,000 to help make housing more affordable to rural North Dakotans.

The Turtle Mountain Housing Authority will receive $70,000 of the funds.

The grants were made available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Housing Preservation Grants and will help modernize, repair and make homes more energy efficient.

Jerry DeFelice
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Sent: 17 Aug 2016 14:43:39 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: CLIP: ND TRIBAL

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(Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 11:41:19 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: Standing Rock

This was in today’s clips.

In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- Updated Aug 13, 2016

NEAR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX RESERVATION, N.D. (AP) — Opponents of a $3.8 billion Midwest oil pipeline are vowing to keep up the pressure after this week's arrests at a construction zone in North Dakota.

The Standing Rock Sioux had quietly opposed the Dakota Access pipeline for months at a "spirit camp" near their reservation, which straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Protesters' resistance heated up this week as at least 18 people were arrested, and a Hollywood actress joined their gathering.

Tribal members say the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and could affect drinking water on the reservation and for people downstream.

The four-state pipeline's path in North Dakota would cross beneath the Little Missouri River once and the Missouri River twice. The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 10:34:28 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Sioux tribe leader wants political help to halt oil pipeline

- By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press
- Updated 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A tribal leader Wednesday said he contacted the White House and met with North Dakota's senators in an effort to halt construction of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline that crosses the Missouri River near an American Indian reservation in southern North Dakota.

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The White House did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 10:48:32 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian;Hunter, Cynthia;Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

NORTH DAKOTA LT. GOV. DREW WRIGLEY Q&A: 'An unlawful protest'

By Tom Dennis on Aug 28, 2016 at 12:09 a.m.

On Tuesday, North Dakota Lt. Gov. Drew Wrigley visited the Herald to talk about the protest near Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline project. The following is a transcript, edited for clarity and length.

Do you agree with the protest against Dakota Access pipeline?

No
Yes
Not sure

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Q. Tell us why you're here.

The evolving situation with Standing Rock is obviously very serious, and I don't know that publicly it's been discussed as broadly as it's going to be. The governor went on the radio, and we'll be talking much more about what is actually transpiring there.

We're dealing with a very significant and challenging law enforcement issue.

It's an important story, it's an evolving story, and there's frankly a lot of misinformation going out.

It's also a complicated situation. It started off as a peaceful protest, although it was being conducted in part on land on which they did not have any permits to go. They were on the Army Corps of Engineers land, and that's where the main encampment is.

But it has become an unlawful protest. And there is no way to peacefully and lawfully participate in an unlawful protest.

I liken it to conspiracy law. When you're involved in an illegal enterprise of some kind, everyone is involved in what's taking place. When someone says, "Well, I've been lawfully standing here on the Corps land the whole time, I've been peaceful, and my intentions are peaceful," that person still is part of an unlawful protest.

Vernon Red Owl, a member of the Siseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe in South Dakota, raises his arm. 8-23-2016

And when you have a situation in which hundreds of people are walking down a state highway, then off in the ditches standing there—and a lot of the people out there at least initially were very young children. That is both a complicated and an extremely dangerous situation.

A chief concern was that the traveling public comes in there, somebody gets spooked, they're going through a crowd—who knows what their reaction is going to be. Very, very concerning.

So the governor had the Highway Patrol and Department of Transportation put that barrier across State Highway 1806, except for people who live there and emergency personnel and law enforcement. Everyone else has to be diverted around and detoured.

And that was purely about public safety and being able to maintain the law enforcement effort, which is now required in view of the unlawful protest.

Q. Why is it being termed an unlawful protest?

There have been hundreds of criminal acts, violating a variety of state and federal laws. They include two substantiated cases of lasers being pointed into the cockpits of aircraft coming over. Those are life-threatening federal crimes, and they're being investigated right now.

There has been talk of weapons that were taken off two of the protesters early on. Also early on, there was a substantiated case of people believed to be members of the protest traveling to Bismarck, going to the home of a member of the North Dakota Highway Patrol, walking around that property, then going back to their vehicle and leaving. Almost like a recon.

Aerial photograph taken Aug. 20, 2016 over protest camp on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. (Tom Stromme/Bismarck Tribune)

Trespasses have been documented. Threats on law enforcement, both on social media and in person.

Crimes committed by people riding horses into a police line. I've spoken with the people who were on that line. They were beyond threatened. You can call what happened a lot of things, but you can look at that situation and say, "That is an assault with a deadly weapon. That horse is no different than a car going into a line of people." Law enforcement retreated at that point.

Q. How many protesters are local?

We've not been able to go through and take a census, of course. But people talk of the Seven Sioux Tribes; they haven't been together and "sharing their campfires," some say, for over 100 years.

But I think it's clear that the tribes are not united down there, and that there is not a united leadership front. There are factions within this illegal protest. And numbers vary on how many members are from the Standing Rock reservation. We just don't know.

I think it could be helpful to the situation if the leadership of the various tribes that are represented recognize that their people are not only involved in an illegal protest action, they are also endangering themselves, the public and law enforcement.

Q. Where do you see this headed?

Tribal veterans stand Aug. 24, at the opposition site near suspended pipeline construction. (Michael Vosburg/Forum News Service)

I don't have a prediction, because it would be easier to predict if it had unified leadership. Then you could size the person or persons up and assess what's been done in the past and what you can expect up ahead.

That's a very complicated thing to do, though, when there are many groups with many leaders involved.

Q. How many people are we talking about?

It varies. There are reports that it could swell to as many as 3,000; I heard rumors that we're already at 2,500 out there. But it varies, because it's not hard to go back to the Standing Rock reservation. Others have further to travel.

Q. What's happening with water and other services?

There were questions recently about some of the items that the state Health Department had provided for what initially was a lawful protest. The governor now has made clear that it has morphed into an unlawful protest, and there will not be the provision of water and other items of comfort out there. There still are ambulance and other services out there for everyone's protection.

There were some reports that people were concerned about there being water. There's plenty of water; it's just not at the protest site. There's plenty of water when people travel back to their homes and access it. So nobody's keeping them from whatever resources they need. But the state is not providing that.

Protesters of the Dakota Access pipeline and officers face off at a work site of the pipeline. (Michael Knudsen of Bismarck)

Q. What's next?

The governor's declaration was the beginning of establishing what the lawful boundaries are for peaceful protest. Meanwhile, every violation accumulates more and more support for our observation that it is an unlawful protest.

And that's why I say, people still have the opportunity to extract themselves.

Anyone who wants to be peaceful, who wants to be law-abiding, still has the opportunity to withdraw from these protests. They got themselves there, they have the capacity to leave. No one is going to stop them as they disperse.

Q. Is the National Guard coming in?

The governor made clear from his declaration the other day that it wasn't a National Guard callout. He has not made that callout. The National Guard is always there as a resource in North Dakota to deal with emergency situations, whatever they might be. But they weren't called out as part of the emergency declaration.

Q. Are there discussions about calling out the National Guard?

You talk about all different options, but there is not a decision to call out the National Guard.

Q. It sounds a little like the Black Lives Matter protests in Minneapolis, where the activists blocked Interstate 94 for a time.

I know people think about examples like that, but I think you're dealing with a different group dynamic. I don't think anybody involved in this would seriously question that a significant number of people went out there with peaceful, law-abiding intent. But now, anyone aware of the facts out there would agree that it is an unlawful protest.

And you can't lawfully participate in an unlawful protest.

Q. Some protesters might respond by saying, "If we lawfully protest, nothing will change, and the pipeline will be built." And their goal is to stop the pipeline. How would you respond?

There's always a lawful way in our society to push your perspective. There has been an extensive, long comment period, opportunity to weigh in, opportunity to be heard, to have your perspective be part of the formal record.

It's been documented out there, too, that those hearings had no representation from people who in many instances didn't have to travel very far to put that perspective out there. And that's not unimportant in this.

But even so, I'd be the last person to say, "Well, you didn't go, now you can't say anything." It's just that you've got to be lawful. And any time when things don't play out your way, it's not OK to resort to violence, threats and obstruction of lawful process.

That is not one of your options.

You can write letters. You can march peacefully. You can call your federal delegation. You can call your state legislator. You can call your community leadership. We have open and transparent and accessible leadership in this state.

But this is not an option: Unlawful, threatening, intimidating, dangerous protest.

Q. Does the fact that this involves Native American tribes make it harder? Given their history with the United States, their tribal leaders might not have much trust that the regular methods would work.

I wouldn't be the right person to ask about that. You'd have to ask them what their perspective is. But I can say that we in North Dakota state government interact with the tribes regularly on matters of central importance to them and us. We have strong relationships—not because we always agree, but because we're dealing with very, very important matters.

Look at the Three Affiliated Tribes. It's the absolute heart of oil country out there, and the tax agreements that were reached between the state and the tribe that led to private enterprise feeling comfortable in going out there and conducting very expensive business and investment—that takes a lot of trust.

That was an opportunity, and look what happened: Benefit to the tribes, benefit to everyone involved, benefit to commerce, job creation, opportunity.

We also interact with the tribes regularly on environmental and other matters. We have regular meetings, and we'll meet any time the tribal leadership wants to come in.

Q. What are the discussions like?

It's like any negotiation or discussion. It never ends in a way that's perfect for either side, but you reach accord.

Someone commented the other day, "Why isn't Sen. Heidi Heitkamp out there? She has good relationships." Why, because she's a Democrat? She does have good relationships with the tribes. And so do we.

We know these folks. Standing Rock Chairman Dave Archambault and the governor speak regularly and comfortably, and they have in this situation, especially early on. There's a friendship there, or a kinship out of understanding that they both represent important interests. So it's not for lack of opportunity to access.

Also, at every legislative session, the tribe comes in; they get their own opportunity to speak to a joint session. The governor gives the State of the State address; they give the State of the Relationship address.

No other other government leaders come in and get an opportunity like that. Sometimes our congressional delegation will address, but it's not the same thing as a joint session.

Also, the tribal leaders come in, there are days of meetings, they're there regularly petitioning the government to interact with them in this fashion or that, or adjust this agreement.

But that has not been accessed in all of this in ways that can be constructive.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 6 Sep 2016 10:35:48 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Protester says take pipeline fight to 'Obama's doorstep'

By Nick Smith / Bismarck Tribune on Sep 5, 2016 at 9:20 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D.—Despite a clash on Saturday between opponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline project and private security officers hired for protection along the construction route, protesters say they're still optimistic the project can be stopped by continued opposition and through the courts.

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Hundreds milled around the protest camps near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation on a cool Monday, contrasting the gloomy weather with continued prayers, mingling with each other and enjoying donated food being cooked.

With the weather beginning to change and a ruling coming by Friday on an injunction sought by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., pipeline opponents see their actions as just beginning.

"I think this has essentially become ground zero for the climate (change) fight," Bill Kitchen of Johnstown, N.Y., said. "What happens if the courts rule in the company's favor? You've got all these people that aren't ready to give up and get out."

Kitchen, who works part-time for the Portland, Maine-based Biodiversity Research Institute and also participates in environmental activism, said the growing visibility of the protests will only help the cause.

If completed on schedule before the end of the year, the Dakota Access Pipeline would transport up to 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude with a future maximum capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

The project originates in North Dakota and ends in Illinois. The pipeline has an overall cost of $3.78 billion.

A section of the pipeline will be bored under the Missouri River and run less than a mile from the tribe's reservation boundary.

Tribal leaders and groups have been staging protests over the pipeline for more than a month, citing concerns over potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture. Concerns over disturbing cultural sites have also loomed large.

Kitchen said the protest is an extension of the Keystone XL fight; the pipeline took years of review and required a State Department review because it would have crossed the U.S. and Canadian border. The project was eventually shelved.

"They need to take this right to Obama's doorstep," Kitchen said, adding he's optimistic the pipeline won't be completely built.

He believes Saturday's clash between approximately 300 protesters and 14 private security officers at a work site shouldn't be a stain on the protest effort.

Tribal officials said cultural sites had been recently discovered in an area where Dakota Access, LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, had begun work on Saturday.

This prompted a march by protesters, who confronted and assaulted several security officers, according to a Morton County Sheriff's Department release. Three security officers were injured. No arrests have yet been made but the incident is under investigation.

"To go plowing through those sites ... it's not going to look good for the company," Kitchen said.

Tonya Hertel, of Mobridge, S.D., agreed.

"I feel that the federal judge made the right decision by waiting," Hertel said, adding that it allowed both sides to be fairly heard before weighing in. "We feel we're going to win this."

Hertel had arrived to visit the camp and drop off donations to the protesters including clothing. She says she's tried to visit at least once a week to provide whatever might be useful for the hundreds that are camping out from dozens of tribes from across the country as they settle in for the long haul.

She declined to speculate on whether or not the court will rule in their favor this week and how protesters might react.

"I think the tribes are doing a great job," Hertel said. "I feel people are hearing us."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 7 Sep 2016 10:45:10 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Interesting piece…

Treaty issues underlie Dakota Access protests

John Hult, jhult@argusleader.com 9:02 a.m. CDT September 7, 2016

People protesting the construction on a four-state oil pipeline at a site in southern North Dakota gather at campground near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation on Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016. About 300 people were at the campsite where protesters from across the country and members of 60 tribes have gathered in opposition to the $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline that will pass through Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota and South Dakota.(Photo: James MacPherson, AP)

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Protests in Cannonball, North Dakota took an ugly turn over the weekend, when a Dakota Access pipeline security team used pepper spray and dogs to ward off protesters who'd crossed a fence to stop construction work.

By that point, the Sacred Stone Camp's weeks-long protest had grown to historic proportions, as tribes from across the U.S. joined the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in solidarity with its opposition to the 1,200-mile, $3.8 billion pipeline.

Organizers at the North Dakota camp near the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers say the protests represent the largest gathering of tribes since the days of Sitting Bull.

The opposition is concerned about potential oil spill in the Missouri River, which Dakota Access would cross, as well the possibility of damage to historic and cultural sites.

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ARGUS LEADER
Judge grants short stop on 4-state oil pipeline construction

Pipeline supporters maintain that the project was properly vetted and permitted, that tribes had the opportunity to comment, and that Dakota Access will move the U.S. and its oil-consuming population closer to energy independence.

But there's something larger than the pipeline behind the pipeline protests.

The land on which the clash occurred is privately owned and permitted for construction, but it falls within a swath of the Great Plains that once belonged to the tribes. It also lies along the Missouri River, whose bottom lands were subject to a further erosion of tribal territory during the 20th Century.

“Part of the frustration you’re seeing play out at Cannonball are voices that didn’t get heard,” said lawyer and author Peter Capossela. “These are voices that haven’t been heard for a long time, and now they’re insisting that they be heard.”

Capossela has worked for several Native American tribes as a lawyer and wrote a book called "The Land Along the River" about the Missouri River treaties.

Much of what is now South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska and Wyoming was once part of the Great Sioux Reservation, created through the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. That treaty was altered multiple times, shrinking to encompass half of South Dakota in 1868, then pushing the reservation west of the Black Hills in 1877, tightening further in 1889 to create six smaller reservations.

-
ARGUS LEADER
Oil pipeline protest turns violent in southern North Dakota

Some of that land was opened to homesteaders in 1915.

Then, after Missouri River flooding in the 1940s, bottom lands were taken by the Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Pick-Sloan plan to dam the river.

Jurisdiction over those bottom lands in South Dakota – which the tribes had hoped to reclaim in the 1990s – was given to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks through the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

Capossela sees a clear line between the treaties of the mid-1800s, failure to honor those treaties and the handling of the pipeline project by state and federal regulators.

Beyond physical boundaries are issues of cultural sites. Even when land is privately held, Capossela said, tribes have the “right of repatriation” for human remains and cultural artifacts found on private land.

That has played out in hearings on the pipeline at the state level, and continues to be one focal point of a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a lawsuit against the Corps of Engineers in late July, alleging that the agency failed to reach out to or adequately consult tribes during the planning process.

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ARGUS LEADER
12 people arrested at Dakota Access Pipeline demonstration

“DAPL claims to have completed cultural resource surveys along the entire pipeline length,” the tribe’s complaint said. “However, the out-of-state, non-Tribal consultants hired by DAPL to do cultural surveys are unable to assess the potential cultural significance of sites in this area to the Tribes.”

The lawsuit says the tribe “participated extensively” during the Corps’ public comment process.

Dakota Access and its supporters disagree. If there’s been a lack of consultation, they say, it’s not for lack of trying.

Dakota Access filed affidavits saying its representatives reached out to Standing Rock officials to ask about tribal surveys on numerous occasions, but that most tribes refused to participate.

“The only response or comments we received from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe were to stop the project categorically avoid the entire western Great Plains Region as that is considered the Greater Sioux Nation’s ‘historical range,’ which is an impossible request to accommodate,” wrote Joey Mahmoud, VP of Dakota Access.

Joel Ames, Tribal Liaison for the Corps of Engineers Omaha District, wrote in the Corps’ response that he first attempted to consult with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in September of 2014. He wrote that a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer named Waste’ Win Young did not attend scheduled meetings and later declined to consult with the Corps, telling Ames in February of 2015 that she intended to work directly with Dakota Access.

-
ARGUS LEADER
Judge orders protesters not to interfere with Dakota Access oil pipeline

Ames wrote that he continued trying to work with Standing Rock throughout 2015, but that tribal officials cancelled meetings, failed to return phone calls or sent responses that accused the Corps of trying to circumvent the consultation process.

The Corps presented tribes with a draft environmental assessment in December of 2015. Tribal officials from Standing Rock requested a full environmental impact statement and continued to request a full consultation with tribes to create one until the project was permitted by the Corps in late July.

Such back-and-forth over consultation is a mark of disputes between the federal government and tribes, Capossela said.

“The extent of consultation is something that always gets disputed,” Capossela said.

By April, people had begun to gather at the Cannonball camps. By August, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple had declared a state of emergency, saying the protests constituted a “significant public safety concern.”

The weekend represented the most violent incident. A tribal spokesman said six people were bitten by dogs, including a child, and that at least 30 people were pepper-sprayed. Law enforcement said protesters injured four security guards and two dogs.

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ARGUS LEADER
Native American teens run to protest pipeline

After the clashes, the Corps filed a motion saying it did not oppose a temporary restraining order in the interest of "preserving peace" until a final decision on the Standing Rock lawsuit is reached.

The judge granted a temporary order on Tuesday, but only to stop work on State Highway 1806 and 20 miles east of Lake Oahe in North Dakota. Work on the west side can continue.

"We are disappointed that the U.S. District Court's decision does not prevent DAPL from destroying our sacred sites as we await a ruling on our original motion to stop construction of the pipeline," Standing Rock Chairman David Archambault II said in a statement.

Judge James Boasberg said he intends to issue a decision on the legality of the Corps' permit by Friday.

If history is any indication, however, the decision will not put an end to the opposition.

John Hult is the Reader's Watchdog reporter for Argus Leader Media. Contact him with questions and concerns at 605-331-2301, 605-370-8617. You can tweet him @ArgusJHultor find him on Facebook at Facebook.com/ArgusReadersWatchdog

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 19:43:24 +0000
To: R8 Division Directors
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Awareness.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
  -
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

Editor's note: As part of the Journal's ongoing coverage of the massive Dakota Access Pipeline protest in North Dakota, staff writer Mike Anderson has been camping in a tent near the protest site. He filed this dispatch from the scene on Saturday.

CANNON BALL, N.D. | A peaceful protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline ended in the arrests of 83 people in North Dakota on Saturday morning amid a chaotic scene in which police in riot gear used pepper spray to break up and subdue a group of 200 to 300 protesters.

It is the highest number of people arrested in a single day in North Dakota during the last several months of protest actions against the oil pipeline, bringing the total number of arrests up to 222.

Though the protesters behaved non-violently and cooperated with the police, North Dakota law enforcement officials described Saturday's events as a riot. Police have offered conflicting reports alleging that one protester either verbally threatened an officer, or tried to physically grab away a can of pepper spray, resulting in the protester and the officer both being pepper sprayed in the face.

Most, if not all, of those arrested after the 5-hour ordeal on Saturday will be charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor, according to Morton County Sheriff spokesperson Rob Keller. Other charges included assault on a peace officer, reckless endangerment, engaging in a riot, resisting arrest, and fleeing an officer on foot.

"It's an unlawful activity," Keller said during phone interview on Saturday afternoon. "The bottom line is it's on private property. It's posted, 'No Criminal Trespass'. It's like you're invading someone's home. Consequently, there were arrests that were made."

The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

A police statement said the four were arrested after they were found, "attached to the vehicle; two attached to the outside of the vehicle, one attached to the steering wheel and another whose body was outside the vehicle with his arm fed through a hole in the door and his hand was in a bucket of hardened concrete."

The call to action went through the main resistance camp around 5:20 a.m. while it was still dark and freezing cold. A man walked through the camp speaking through a megaphone.

"Wake up relatives," he said. "Wake up water protectors. Wake up land defenders. Time to wake up. Time to send our boys to the universe. Time to send our boys to the rising sun."

A convoy of vehicles formed in the camp, a prayer was held, and the assembled were instructed to behave peacefully and respectfully if they encountered police.

“I know it’s hard on the front line,” the prayer leader said in the dark. “But do not cuss, do not holler. If you see someone getting out of hand, tell them to calm down.”

Then the convoy moved out. Parking their vehicles along the highway, the protesters began hiking into the field as the sun rose a little before 8 a.m. Their path took them along a craggy dirt road near the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline on land that tribal members of the Hunkpapa Sioux of Standing Rock said is filled with sacred burial sites.

Some of the protesters remained behind as several hundred others carrying signs and banners began marching into the field, singing, praying, and burning bundles of ceremonial sage as they went.

They walked two to three miles inward when they encountered a line of more than 50 officers from multiple law enforcement agencies. Most of the officers wore riot gear, most held wooden truncheons, and some had shotguns, canisters of pepper spray, and tear gas grenade launchers in their hands. Two armored personnel carriers arrived later while a helicopter circled low overhead.

The protesters and police lines met in the middle of an open field. The protesters remained calm, playing drums and offering prayers in English and Lakota to the officers, who remained stone-faced and uncommunicative.

When the police line began to advance on the protesters, the leaders of the group instructed everyone to fall back and cooperate with the police. They were dispersing when an officer spoke over a loud-speaker from the turret of an armored vehicle.

His only words — and the only words police spoke to the protesters all morning — were, “You’re all under arrest for trespassing.”

The police continued to advance on the fleeing protesters, snatching some of the stragglers, throwing them behind their lines, and pepper-spraying several others in the face as they trod silently forward.

The police eventually surrounded the group, repeating that every one of the 200 to 300 people present would be placed under arrest. The protesters linked arms and tied bandanas to their faces as the officers pressed in, splitting the group and pressing many to the ground. Most, if not all of the men and women taken into custody, did not resist arrest.

A small group managed to retreat over the hill, a few pouring water into the eyes of friends who had been stung by pepper spray and guiding them by hand up the dirt road as they made their way back to camp.

“It was all peaceful. And then the cops showed up," said Harmony Restoule, a young Ojibwe woman from Northern Ontario, Canada. “It was really scary when the police kicked into action.”

Restoule went to the demonstration with her cousin Paige, both of whom participated in mass protests during the Idle No More movement, a grassroots campaign organized in 2012 by the indigenous peoples of Canada against perceived legislative violations of their treaty rights.

“The Canadian police never showed up in riot gear,” Paige Restoule said.

A young man from California who identified himself only as Ahkua said his friend was among the people arrested, and that the police took him after he knelt to the ground to help someone else up.

“There were a few officers who were excessively aggressive and got the others riled up,” he said. “Most cops are pretty chill.”

Saturday’s protest was one of several high profile demonstrations in the Cannon Ball area against the Dakota Access Pipeline in recent months. Police arrested celebrity Shailene Woodley along with more than 20 others on Oct. 10 along the route of the pipeline near St. Anthony, N.D. Police referred to the event as a riot and charged many people with either inciting or engaging in a riot. At the time, it was the highest total number of arrests made in a single day.

The protesters, who now number in the thousands at a main camp near Cannon Ball, want to stop the ongoing construction of the pipeline that will transport oil from the Bakken and Three Forks formations of North Dakota, through South Dakota and Iowa, into southern Illinois. The pipeline would carry 450,000 barrels per day initially and could reach 570,000 barrels a day. The total length of the pipeline across the four states would be 1,134 miles, with 271 miles in South Dakota. The company's estimated cost for the South Dakota segment is $820 million.

On Sept. 3, police and private security forces used pepper spray and dogs to drive protesters away from construction equipment.

"Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful," Kirchmeier said in a press-release about Saturday's events. "This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities. I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protesters. This is about the rule of law."

The protesters may have been peacefully dispersing on Saturday morning, Keller said, but that doesn't change the fact that they broke the law.

"That's the whole purpose of having a police line, to protect the (pipeline) property and their right to commerce," Keller said. "We are protecting the protesters too, and the ranchers as well."

When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, "No."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 13:31:21 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Cc: Hunter, Cynthia;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Panel votes to borrow $6M for costs associated with pipeline protests, blasts feds inaction

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 12:18 p.m.

NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
HONOR THE EARTH
UTION
Native

ⓘ Demonstrators against the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan, N.D., gather in opposition early this month. File photo.

BISMARCK — The state Emergency Commission voted Wednesday, Sept. 21, to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to support law enforcement efforts related to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, but not before members blasted the lack of federal support to deal with protesters camped out on federal land.

"I know we have to do it, but it's not right, and the lack of federal involvement is disgusting," said House Majority Leader Al Carlson, R-Fargo. "And we need to protect our North Dakota people, but this is just plain wrong that they're ignoring this issue."

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, said the state has spent $1.88 million on protest-related costs so far, the bulk of it personnel costs for

assistance from the National Guard and law enforcement agencies from across the state. Morton County estimated last week it had spent about $400,000 on top of that.

The $6 million line of credit from the Bank of North Dakota will fund future efforts as authorized by Gov. Jack Dalrymple's emergency declaration Aug. 19. The Legislature will have to make a deficiency appropriation from the state's general fund to pay back the bank after lawmakers convene in regular session in January, Budget Director Pam Sharp said.

Authorities have responded to multiple protests at pipeline construction sites and in Bismarck-Mandan since protests began to ramp up in mid-August. They've also created a traffic checkpoint and increased patrols in Morton County, which they say are necessary for the safety of local residents, farmers and ranchers and the thousands of protesters camped out on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Last Friday, the Corps of Engineers issued a special use permit for protesters to use Corps land south of the Cannonball River but not the land north of the river where the majority of them are camping, because that land is subject to an existing grazing lease.

Carlson said it bothers him that it's "a federal problem that they've ignored" and the Legislature will have to cover the costs at a time of budget shortfalls. Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, agreed.

"The taxpayers shouldn't have to be paying for this," he said.

Dalrymple said he's been in contact with the White House, U.S. Department of Justice, Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior and the state's congressional delegation but is still waiting to hear if they're going to help financially or with in-kind services.

"The problem that we have, of course, is that these public safety needs are imminent every day," Dalrymple said. "We really have no choice but to protect the public with law enforcement. Recovering funds from the federal government is definitely a top priority, but it undoubtedly will take some time."

The commission's other members are Secretary of State Al Jaeger, Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, Sen. Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, and Sen. Ray Holmberg, R-Grand Forks.

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Cc: Hunter, Cynthia;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 10:16:59 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Clip: ND Tribal

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

- AP

Protesters set up tepees and tents Monday in southern North Dakota on property owned by the pipeline company.

CHEYENNE — Wyoming has sent six highway patrol troopers to North Dakota to help authorities deal with Indian protesters demonstrating against the construction of an oil pipeline, prompting objections Tuesday from some Wyoming Indian leaders.

Sending the troopers merely extends emergency help to another state and does not signal that Wyoming has taken a position on the pipeline controversy, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said.

But Dean Goggles, chairman of Northern Arapaho Business Council, called on Mead to recall the troopers immediately.

“The North Dakota tribes and tribal members from around the nation are attempting to protect both the environment and sites which have ceremonial, religious and cultural significance to the tribes,” Goggles said.

More than 100 protesters were arrested last weekend in Morton County, North Dakota, in the faceoff between protesters and Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, developer of the four-state Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The $3.8 billion pipeline, most of which has been completed, crosses through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois. Opponents worry about potential effects on drinking water on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's reservation as well as harm to cultural sites.

Col. Kebin Haller of the Wyoming Highway Patrol said six troopers were sent to North Dakota on Saturday and are expected to remain there until Nov. 8.

The troopers volunteered after the governor of North Dakota declared an emergency and asked other states for law enforcement assistance, Haller said.

The six are members of the patrol's Special Services Squad who have additional training and equipment to address large crowds and civil unrest, he said. North Dakota will pay their salaries and the costs they incur while at the protest.

Mead said the decision to send Wyoming troopers happened because "a neighbor state asked for help and Wyoming answered the call."

"North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded," Mead said.

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in Wyoming have expressed formal support for the protesters.

Jason Baldes, a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and staff member at the Wind River Native Advocacy Center, accused Wyoming officials of supporting the pipeline by sending law enforcement officers to face off against protesters.

"It kind of sheds light on really who's running the show here," Baldes said. "The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets."

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

"The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue," he said.

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From:	DeFelice, Jerome
Sent:	24 Oct 2016 10:49:16 -0400
To:	Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject:	Clip: ND tribal

FYI—Rob Keller is the PIO for Morton County Sherriff Department.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
  -
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

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The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

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When the police line began to advance on the protesters, the leaders of the group instructed everyone to fall back and cooperate with the police. They were dispersing when an officer spoke over a loud-speaker from the turret of an armored vehicle.

His only words — and the only words police spoke to the protesters all morning — were, “You’re all under arrest for trespassing.”

The police continued to advance on the fleeing protesters, snatching some of the stragglers, throwing them behind their lines, and pepper-spraying several others in the face as they trod silently forward.

The police eventually surrounded the group, repeating that every one of the 200 to 300 people present would be placed under arrest. The protesters linked arms and tied bandanas to their faces as the officers pressed in, splitting the group and pressing many to the ground. Most, if not all of the men and women taken into custody, did not resist arrest.

A small group managed to retreat over the hill, a few pouring water into the eyes of friends who had been stung by pepper spray and guiding them by hand up the dirt road as they made their way back to camp.

“It was all peaceful. And then the cops showed up," said Harmony Restoule, a young Ojibwe woman from Northern Ontario, Canada. “It was really scary when the police kicked into action.”

Restoule went to the demonstration with her cousin Paige, both of whom participated in mass protests during the Idle No More movement, a grassroots campaign organized in 2012 by the indigenous peoples of Canada against perceived legislative violations of their treaty rights.

“The Canadian police never showed up in riot gear,” Paige Restoule said.

A young man from California who identified himself only as Ahkua said his friend was among the people arrested, and that the police took him after he knelt to the ground to help someone else up.

“There were a few officers who were excessively aggressive and got the others riled up,” he said. “Most cops are pretty chill.”

Saturday’s protest was one of several high profile demonstrations in the Cannon Ball area against the Dakota Access Pipeline in recent months. Police arrested celebrity Shailene Woodley along with more than 20 others on Oct. 10 along the route of the pipeline near St. Anthony, N.D. Police referred to the event as a riot and charged many people with either inciting or engaging in a riot. At the time, it was the highest total number of arrests made in a single day.

The protesters, who now number in the thousands at a main camp near Cannon Ball, want to stop the ongoing construction of the pipeline that will transport oil from the Bakken and Three Forks formations of North Dakota, through South Dakota and Iowa, into southern Illinois. The pipeline would carry 450,000 barrels per day initially and could reach 570,000 barrels a day. The total length of the pipeline across the four states would be 1,134 miles, with 271 miles in South Dakota. The company's estimated cost for the South Dakota segment is $820 million.

On Sept. 3, police and private security forces used pepper spray and dogs to drive protesters away from construction equipment.

"Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful," Kirchmeier said in a press-release about Saturday's events. "This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities. I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protesters. This is about the rule of law."

The protesters may have been peacefully dispersing on Saturday morning, Keller said, but that doesn't change the fact that they broke the law.

"That's the whole purpose of having a police line, to protect the (pipeline) property and their right to commerce," Keller said. "We are protecting the protesters too, and the ranchers as well."

When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, "No."

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 11:41:19 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clip: Standing Rock

This was in today's clips.

In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- Updated Aug 13, 2016

NEAR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX RESERVATION, N.D. (AP) — Opponents of a $3.8 billion Midwest oil pipeline are vowing to keep up the pressure after this week's arrests at a construction zone in North Dakota.

The Standing Rock Sioux had quietly opposed the Dakota Access pipeline for months at a "spirit camp" near their reservation, which straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Protesters' resistance heated up this week as at least 18 people were arrested, and a Hollywood actress joined their gathering.

Tribal members say the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and could affect drinking water on the reservation and for people downstream.

The four-state pipeline's path in North Dakota would cross beneath the Little Missouri River once and the Missouri River twice. The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 11 Oct 2016 14:25:06 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan
Subject: CLIPS: Dakota Access Pipeline

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The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., also lifted a temporary suspension of construction activities within 20 miles east and west of Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River.

"In light of Sunday's court decision, Dakota Access looks forward to a prompt resumption of construction activities east and west of Lake Oahe on private land. We reiterate our commitment to protect cultural resources, the environment and public safety," the company said.

Company spokeswoman Vicki Granado declined to specify when the company will resume construction in the 20-mile area, which includes the area along Highway 1806 where protest activities to block pipeline construction began Aug. 10. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 American Indians and other pipeline opponents are encamped along the highway and have drawn international support.

The proposed construction area also includes a stretch west of Highway 1806 that was bulldozed on Sept. 3, the day after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed court documents identifying that part of the route as containing burial grounds and other sacred sites. Angry protesters clashed with the pipeline's private security that day, with both sides claiming injuries, and a joint law enforcement task force is investigating the incident.

Last week, state archeologists concluded that no sacred sites were destroyed, but the tribe disputes that conclusion because its historic preservation officer wasn't allowed to participate in the survey. The tribe's ongoing lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contends the agency didn't properly consult the tribe before granting permits for the project.

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"We continue to believe that the Army Corps will soon issue the easement for approximately 1,100 feet necessary for the crossing beneath the Missouri River – the sole remaining authorization necessary for completion of the project," the company said.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it won't authorize pipeline construction on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The three agencies asked that the company voluntarily pause construction within 20 miles of the lake.

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Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clips: ND tribal

Pipeline route moved south of Bismarck partly because of drinking water contamination concerns

By Amy Dalrymple Today at 7:16 a.m.

ⓘ Dakota Access Pipeline crews leave the work site on Monday, Aug. 15, 2016, north of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Reservation. Work has not yet resumed in that area due to safety concerns surrounding the protest. Amy Dalrymple/Forum News Service

BISMARCK — An early proposal for the Dakota Access Pipeline called for the project to cross the Missouri River north of Bismarck, but one reason that route was rejected was its potential threat to Bismarck's water supply, documents show.

Now a growing number of protesters are objecting to the oil pipeline's Missouri River crossing a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, which they argue could threaten the water supply for the tribe and other communities downstream.

Early in the planning process, Dakota Access considered but eliminated an alternative that would have crossed the Missouri River about 10 miles north of Bismarck instead of the route currently under construction.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers evaluated the Bismarck route and concluded it was not a viable option for many reasons. One reason mentioned in the agency's environmental assessment is the proximity to wellhead source water protection areas that are avoided to protect municipal water supply wells.

In addition, the Bismarck route would have been 11 miles longer with more road crossings and waterbody and wetland crossings. It also would have been difficult to stay 500 or more feet away from homes, as required by the North Dakota Public Service Commission, the Corps of Engineers states.

The Bismarck route also would have crossed an area considered by federal pipeline regulators as a "high consequence area," which is an area determined to have the most significant adverse consequences in the event of a pipeline spill.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe argues that consequences would be severe if the 30-inch pipeline carrying 450,000 barrels of oil per day were to leak near the reservation's water intake valves.

The tribe is suing the Corps of Engineers over its approval of the water crossing. A hearing is scheduled for next week in Washington, D.C.

"We are taking all necessary legal steps to curtail construction on the pipeline until our grievances are heard and resolved in court," Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II said Thursday.

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A map included in the Dakota Access application has a May 2014 date on the Bismarck route.

The proposed route was changed in September 2014 to cross the Missouri River near the Standing Rock reservation, according to dates on the PSC documents.

Dakota Access said in a statement that the company conducts extensive surveys of proposed pipeline routes to mitigate the pipeline's impact on the area and determine the safest route.

The corps, which issued a permit for the water crossing, said the pipeline will be installed 92 feet below the riverbed with horizontal directional drilling methods to minimize impacts. The Corps also noted safeguards that will be in place, including remote monitoring of the pipeline and emergency response plans.

"Given the engineering design, proposed installation methodology, quality of material selected, operations measures and response plans the risk of an inadvertent release in, or reaching, Lake Oahe is extremely low," the corps concluded.

Public Service Commissioners defended their approval of the pipeline project this week, saying it was thoroughly reviewed and considered risks to water bodies. The state regulators also said they held a 13-month review process but didn't hear these concerns from the tribe.

Standing Rock leaders have, however, repeatedly objected to the way the corps evaluated the route and now are asking a federal judge to intervene.

Pipeline construction is halted in the protest area until the Aug. 24 hearing on the tribe's court case, Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said Thursday.

Pipeline opponents also demonstrated late Thursday afternoon near the state Capitol, chanting, "We can't drink oil, keep it in the soil."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued his first public statement on the protest Thursday, emphasizing safety and stating that law enforcement and state agency directors would continue to closely monitor the situation.

"While we are concerned about some cases of unlawful activity, we are pleased that no one has been injured and it is our top priority to keep it that way," Dalrymple said.

Pipeline protesters rally in front of N.D. Capitol

By Nick Smith / Bismarck Tribune on Aug 18, 2016 at 8:42 p.m.

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"Even though the oil companies might have the money, they can't subdue the message," Cody Hall of Eagle Butte, S.D., spokesman for the Red Warrior Camp, said. "This is our stand. We all depend on water."

More than 200 protesters initially lined both sides of East Boulevard Avenue while about 60 members of state and local law enforcement looked on at the south entrance of the state Capitol. A city permit for 4 to 6 p.m. was granted for the protest.

East Boulevard Avenue was soon shut down between Fourth Street North and Seventh Street North to traffic, allowing participants to chant, dance and drum in the intersection in front of the Capitol.

"We will win this fight. We have to take a vigorous stance to fight for what's right," Hall said.

Holding signs with phrases including "No Dakota Access Pipeline" and "Rezpect our Water," participants chanted, cheered and were in high spirits.

"We can't drink oil, keep it in the soil," was a popular chant among the crowd.

As the protest wound down, participants invited members of law enforcement to join in the dancing, which a few obliged in doing briefly.

Afterward, protesters formed a line and walked the police line at the Capitol entrance, shaking hands and joking with officers.

Thursday's protest was an extension of the movement that's sprung up off of Highway 1806 near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. From 1,500 to 2,000 protesters are camping near a part of the project site in Morton County.

At the same time as the protest by the Capitol, about 20 people were at the now-closed work site along the Cannon Ball River, where protests have been staged over the past week. As no law enforcement or pipeline workers were there, the protesters walked around both sides of the barricade and up the path towards the construction site.

Construction workers recently had began ground work near where a section of the pipeline will go and a portion is planned to be bored under the Missouri River and run less than a mile from the tribe's reservation boundary.

This week, work temporarily ceased at the site. Oral arguments in a lawsuit filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over the permits issued for the project are set for Wednesday in U.S. district court in Washington, D.C.

Protesters' concerns include potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture as well as the disturbance of cultural sites along the route.

Dakota Access LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, countered the Standing Rock lawsuit earlier this week by filing a lawsuit against several protesters, alleging threats to the safety of construction workers and law enforcement.

At least 28 arrests had been made during the protests near the project site for disorderly conduct and criminal trespass.

Dallas Goldtooth, a member of the Lower Sioux Dakota Nation in Minnesota and of the Indigenous Environmental Network, said Thursday's effort helps put the issue in the spotlight. He said putting it closer to the public in an urban setting also builds momentum.

"It definitely helps to engage and bring this discussion into public spaces. Folks are committed for the long run," Goldtooth said.

Doris Anderson, who lives along East Boulevard Avenue a few doors down from the intersection, said she's neutral on the project but said she understood opponents' concerns.

"I think it's been pretty calm. Respectful and calm," Anderson said as she looked on from her front lawn. "And they've got a lot to say."

Anderson suggested that, if the company altered the design of the project slightly, it might alleviate concerns by opponents. She added she'd never seen a large protest in person before.

The 1,172-mile, 30-inch diameter pipeline when finished would originate in western North Dakota near Stanley and end near Patoka, Ill.

Dakota Access began work on the nearly $3.8 billion project this spring following permit approval by state and federal officials. It would transport up to 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude when finished this year with a future capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

Vicki Granado, a spokeswoman for Energy Transfer Partners, said in a statement the construction timeline remains unchanged.

"We are constructing this pipeline in accordance with applicable laws, and the local, state and federal permits and approvals we have received. This is an important energy infrastructure project that benefits all Americans and our national economy," she said

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 19 Aug 2016 10:38:44 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Clips: ND tribal

Pipeline route moved south of Bismarck partly because of drinking water contamination concerns

By Amy Dalrymple Today at 7:16 a.m.

Dakota Access Pipeline crews leave the work site on Monday, Aug. 15, 2016, north of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Reservation. Work has not yet resumed in that area due to safety concerns surrounding the protest. Amy Dalrymple/Forum News Service

BISMARCK — An early proposal for the Dakota Access Pipeline called for the project to cross the Missouri River north of Bismarck, but one reason that route was rejected was its potential threat to Bismarck's water supply, documents show.

Now a growing number of protesters are objecting to the oil pipeline's Missouri River crossing a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, which they argue could threaten the water supply for the tribe and other communities downstream.

Early in the planning process, Dakota Access considered but eliminated an alternative that would have crossed the Missouri River about 10 miles north of Bismarck instead of the route currently under construction.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers evaluated the Bismarck route and concluded it was not a viable option for many reasons. One reason mentioned in the agency's environmental assessment is the proximity to wellhead source water protection areas that are avoided to protect municipal water supply wells.

In addition, the Bismarck route would have been 11 miles longer with more road crossings and waterbody and wetland crossings. It also would have been difficult to stay 500 or more feet away from homes, as required by the North Dakota Public Service Commission, the Corps of Engineers states.

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From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 4 Sep 2016 11:39:10 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

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Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 14:59:06 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

I haven’t read this yet, just passing for visibility, not use. I’ll look at your IHS note. On NICCL, and heading to 915

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:25 AM
To: R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Page 2538

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 2539

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Page 2542

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: 29 Aug 2016 18:05:30 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Dakota Access Pipeline Update

American Indian tribes unite to protect Missouri River from pipeline

Unknown
Aug. 29, 2016
CAPJOURNAL-Pierre, SD

Standing Rock Reservation, tribal members continue strategic planning and prayers in their fight to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline from crossing the nearby Missouri River.

Different areas of the camp have specific designations, including an area where tribal members participate in sacred rituals, including a sweat lodge, where access is restricted to preserve the sanctity of the ceremonies.

Near the entrance of the campsite, different informational tents are set up to provide demonstrators with advice, supplies and other information prudent to continuing a nonviolent protest while keeping everyone involved safe.

With limited resources, the camp must rely on volunteers and the goodwill of others to provide supplies.

One man’s job is to keep the fires burning with a steady feed of wood.

In another tent, hot food is prepared and given out to anyone who wants a meal.

A Standing Rock Sioux Tribe ambulance stands by in case a medical issue arises, especially since many of the demonstrators do not have access to daily medications in the remote, isolated area.

Despite the hardships, the spirit and will of protesters who want to keep the river safe is abundant.

Members from at least 200 tribes from across the U.S. have joined the protest in an effort to protect both the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s main water source and the rights of the American Indian people. They don’t want the Dakota Access Pipeline to go beneath the river, fearing a leak will contaminate the river with crude oil. The 1,134-mile pipeline would carry as much as 450,000 gallons of crude oil per day from North Dakota’s Bakken oil fields to Illinois.

American Indian Movement official Chief Harry Goodwolf Kindness said this is the first time in more than 150 years that so many members from so many tribes have joined together.

“First time since the Battle of Greasy Grass, so it’s been a long time,” Kindness said.

Known by most white people as the Battle of Little Big Horn, it was in June 1876. Lakota, Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes defeated U.S. Army forces led by George Custer.

“We refer to this pipeline as the black snake. This pipeline affects everybody, not just the Indian Nation. It’s no different than somebody putting it right in downtown Los Angeles,” he said.

Campsite stories

For Standing Rock Sioux Tribe member James Iron Eyes, the protest campsite resembles the tribal campsite stories his grandmother told him about when he was a child.

“My grandma told me a long time ago there were camps along the river near Mobridge, and it’s kind of like that now,” Iron Eyes said.

He has been involved with the protest since it started on Aug. 10.

“I came out here the first day and it felt good. You can just feel the power. It’s a great feeling,” he said.

Iron Eyes took a break from directing traffic at the campsite entrance to visit the nearby pipeline construction site, which workers abandoned on Aug. 15.

Flags from all the visiting tribes fly along the fence surrounding the construction site, exemplifying the solidarity of the Indian Nation in the fight to protect its rights and the water that sustains not only the lives of members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, but all who prosper from the Missouri River.

Land concerns

After working in the Bakken oil fields, Iron Eyes has seen firsthand the destruction crude oil can cause.

“It was a job, you know, but after seeing (the land) get torn up like that ...” Iron Eyes said, shaking his head.

“They can’t guarantee it’s not going to leak. The ground shifts. Why can’t they take (the oil) on railway cars in tanks or something? It’s slowed down up there so much now. The oil business is not as busy it was,” Iron Eyes said.

His frustration was amplified after a judge Wednesday delayed ruling on an injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to stop the pipeline from going under the river.

The lawsuit claims that the environmental assessment permit was approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers without adequate consultation from the tribe regarding the environmental impact and cultural historic preservation.

Dallas Goldtooth, Keep It in the Ground campaign organizer, said the camp is not going anywhere until there is no threat of the pipeline crossing the river.

“There is frustration with the lack of action by the federal judge. Obviously, we believe the arguments the tribe put forth are substantial,” Goldtooth said.

Attorney Michelle Cook, who works in the area of indigenous people’s law and policy in Tucson, Ariz., told demonstrators at the camp that the possibility of an injunction is not why construction stopped.

“The sheriff has said he will not allow them to do construction until it’s safe,” Cook said during a Thursday campsite meeting. “As long as this camp is sturdy and robust and in prayer, that pipeline is going to have a little trouble starting up again. Not because we are violent, but because we are present. We are present to protect the water,” Cook said.

Public safety

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said that from the first day of the protest the No. 1 concern has been public safety, regardless of beliefs.

“We wanted to make sure that it remained peaceful between the protesters, the workers who have the legal right to be there and the law enforcement officers. We have nothing to do with the pipeline. We don’t put in the pipeline. Like I’ve been saying, we’re not pro-pipeline, we’re not pro-protest, but we’re pro-law,” he said.

So far, there have been 29 arrests and 32 charges relating to the protest. All the charges have been misdemeanors, Kirchmeier said.

“They have the right to go there and the right to protest if they remain peaceful. There’s a difference between peaceful and nonviolent, also. They have the right to protest, but they don’t have the right to disrupt traffic, close a road, trespass on private property, disrupt law enforcement or legal activities, and some of those things obviously have been occurring. That is when the whole safety concern comes in that public safety is No. 1,” he said.

Budget impact

Kirchmeier's department's budget has taken a hit due to the overtime officers were required to work because of the protest.

"The numbers we've put together with the people we have now and the overtime, we're at about $100,000 per week," he said.

Kirchmeier said there are 34 sworn officers working in the department to cover Morton County, which has a population of just over 30,000 people.

The Morton County Commission chairman signed an emergency declaration resolution on Aug. 15 to tap outside law enforcement agencies.

Kirchmeier said the sheriff's department is working in cooperation with law enforcement from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Cass County Sheriff's Department, Fargo Police Department, North Dakota Highway Patrol, Stutsman County Sheriff's Department, Dunn County Sheriff's Department, McLean County Sheriff's Department, Grand Forks Police Department and Emmons County Sheriff's Department.

"We want to make sure we still have open communication with the Standing Rock tribal leaders and with the camp leaders. But I believe there are numerous people, the majority of people, who want to keep this protest peaceful. But there are some outside people that have come in that want to make this into a conflict. They want to get the protesters worked up, so there are professional agitators that are out there that want to make this more than, I think, just a pipeline issue," Kirchmeier said.

Other than a small toddler who wriggled in his father's arms, protesting nap time, there was no evidence of anything but peaceful demonstrators at the campsite Thursday.

"Everything is running pretty smoothly. Everybody is happy and visiting and getting to know people," Iron Eyes said.

Key information

- Energy Transfer Partners is building the $3.8 billion, 1,134-mile pipeline that would carry as much as 450,000 gallons of crude oil per day from North Dakota's Bakken oil fields to Illinois.
- Dakota Access is a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Partners.
- The pipeline construction site is less than a mile upstream from the Standing Rock Reservation boundaries on the Cannonball Buffalo Ranch.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a lawsuit seeking an injunction on construction where the line crosses the Missouri River, citing that the project violates the Clean Water Act and fails to assess the environmental and cultural impact on tribal lands. A federal judge delayed a decision on the injunction. A ruling is expected by Sept. 9.
- Opposition against the pipeline gained momentum on Aug. 10 when protesters prevented Michels Corp. workers from beginning construction at the river.
- On Aug. 11, private security hired by the company constructing the pipeline made a report to the Morton County Sheriff's Department of protesters inhibiting construction progress.
- On Aug. 15, Dakota Access moved equipment to the Missouri River crossing site. Demonstrators on horseback pushed back a law enforcement barricade. Work was halted, and pipeline workers evacuated area.
- On Aug. 17, the North Dakota Highway Patrol established a checkpoint on North Dakota Highway 1806 to direct southbound traffic to an alternative route around the protest site.
- On Aug. 19, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration.

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
Emergency Liasion
605-440-0993
Glenda.redfeather@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation
Date: Sunday, September 04, 2016 11:39:11 AM

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Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Draft BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests of Dakota Access Pipeline
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 2:14:00 PM

Here's an initial crack at the BLUF. -- Brian

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but estimates ranging from 1500-2000 protesters and continuing to grow. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday afternoon, Aug. 19 North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended at a special commission meeting called for today at 4 pm CDT. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement. North Dakota Highway 1806, which runs adjacent to the protest signed is closed to through traffic, with detours established. Work at the site is currently halted as legal proceedings initiated by both the Standing Rock and the Dakota Access owners now work their way through the legal system.

On Sept. 9-11 the Annual United Tribes International Powwow is scheduled in Bismarck, approximately 60 miles from the protest site. The powwow normally sees about 5000 visitors, but there is speculation that that number could swell in light of the protest, which is being supported by other tribes around the country.

I still do not anticipate any formal role for FEMA, but Region VIII will continue to monitor the situation via traditional and social media and in communications with the state. (and/or tribe)? This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Short update on OST
Date: Thursday, September 08, 2016 4:13:00 PM

KX has been facebook live at the news conferences. Maybe they will be out at the protest on the capital ground tomorrow.

https://www.facebook.com/kxnews/

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2016 1:53 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Short update on OST

This weekend could likely be a very continuous weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock area.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this is always happened before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline and the protest.
- **The Governor of ND has activated (although no a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling.**
- There are ongoing reports of violence on both sides,
- The chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan; Stephenson, James R
Subject: INFO: Pipeline protest now expanding to march in Bismarck-Mandan, DC offshoot
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 12:30:00 PM

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead 'solidarity' rally in D.C.

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: ND Clips
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:06:00 PM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Attached are the ND clips

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: ND-protest clips
Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 11:06:00 AM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Protest Update
Date: Wednesday, September 07, 2016 5:43:00 PM

This just got posted.
http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4110236-law-enforcement-beefing-presence-ahead-dakota-access-ruling-friday

Law enforcement beefing up presence ahead of Dakota Access ruling Friday

By Forum News Service Today at 4:25 p.m.

The Dakota Access Pipeline, pictured under construction on Friday, July 29, 2016, in northwest North Dakota, is expected to be complete by the end of 2016. Forum News Service file photo by Eric Hylden

BISMARCK—Authorities are beefing up their presence in the Bismarck-Mandan area in anticipation of a court decision expected Friday on the heavily protested Dakota Access Pipeline, a spokesman for North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple said Wednesday, Sept. 7.

Spokesman Jeff Zent said plans are under way for additional law enforcement officers in the Bismarck-Mandan area and enhanced patrols in Morton County, where hundreds of protesters are camped out near a pipeline construction site along Highway 1806 about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Zent said he didn't have any information on whether the North Dakota National Guard would be on standby, but said, "The governor has always said the National Guard is an option."

Thirty-seven people have been arrested on charges including preventing arrest, disorderly conduct and criminal trespass in connection with protests at pipeline construction sites in Morton County that began in mid-August.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg in Washington, D.C., has said he will rule on or before Friday on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction to halt construction of the pipeline, which will cross the Missouri River less than a mile north of the Standing Rock reservation. The tribe fears the pipeline will leak and contaminate its water supply and sacred sites, and its lawsuit claims the corps failed to consider the historical and cultural significance of that area.

A permitted protest is scheduled from 3 to 6 p.m. Friday on the south end of the state Capitol mall in Bismarck to coincide with the ruling. A Facebook page for the "Peace Rally Against the Pipeline" showed more than 350 people planning to attend and 1,200 interested.

Zent said the governor's office, state Highway Patrol and Morton County Sheriff's Department will continue to monitor the situation and re-evaluate the need for law enforcement to ensure public safety. A roadblock restricting southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to local traffic only remains in place.

Protesters have said they expect the ruling to be appealed regardless of which way it goes, and that they plan to continue protesting until the four-state pipeline project is rerouted or scrapped. The 1,172-mile, $3.8 billion pipeline will initially carry 450,000 barrels of oil per day from the Bakken oil fields to Patoka, Ill., with a capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:48:00 PM

I'll take a crack and get you something to review in a few minutes.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:47 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: ACTION: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Brian – Nancy and I spoke this morning. She'd like to send another BLUF up to Beth Z on the situation, it should be pretty tight, just a quick update. Below is what she sent previously. **Given what we know, would you do a quick draft that Megan can then review as she is at OST and heading into a meeting?**

Key items that need to be included for sure (I'm open to other):
**Information is mixed and doesn't fully jive from sources.
**Stop of work.
**Upcoming powwow.
**Ongoing monitoring of media/social media, and communication with the state.
**Again, no FEMA role at this time.

Anything else?

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 3:41 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth <elizabeth.zimmerman@fema.dhs.gov>; Gruber, Corey <Corey.Gruber@fema.dhs.gov>; Coen Jr, Michael <Michael.CoenJr@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>; R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations, the situation is significant enough for the State EM director and the Adjutant General to cancel their planned participation in the TAG/NORTHCOM seminar August 17-18.

I have spoken with Greg Wilz and we are monitoring the situation. I do not anticipate any role for FEMA; this BLUF is for situational awareness only.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:11:00 PM

New intel – Cody Schulz from DES is also the Chairman of the Morton County Commission. Just for internal knowledge and not for this HHS product.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:07 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Also...only contact with state really not correct as we have been talking at operational level. Question calling out ARA/state director so directly in here. Needed? At a mimimum...soften and pull out direct references to ara/state director

---

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:04 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Brian - there are a few typos in below but I'm having problem with BB copying and I'm in meetings. Please just do a quick edit.

Megan -
*Add in that powwow upcoming (ARA requested add)
*send a note to Ron, HHS. He is in SLC at event
*no need to add any fbi info. Do what we have been doing, strictly info gathering and monitoring

---

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 08:26 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Let me know what you think. This is essentially media monitoring, and HIS could pick that up, they also have people on the ground who should be able to provide them with some visibility. A bit concerning they are coming to us.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the intel could be incorrect. We have not reached out to the tribe or had additional conversations with the State, as this is not a FEMA related issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII

(303) 235-4638 – Desk
(303) 945-6367 – Cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:48 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I"ll take a quick look at it. And will let nancy know in am.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Hi Stacie -

Got a call from Milo this evening. Apparently, high level people at IHS are looking for Intel on standing rock protests. We have a reputation for knowing what is generally going on so they called Milo. Milo asked me to respond to the email below with what I may be hearing. I told him I would but I would site my sources and make sure that it is clear we have not been in contact with the tribe and this is not our issue.

Milo is concerned if we don't address it at this level, Fugate might get asked and it come down to Nancy.

I plan on writing my response first thing. I'll send it to you for review, unless you just want to be copied. I am going to try and get it out as early as possible.

Once that is out I'll write the tribal policy summary.

Thanks
M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 3:22:09 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; (b)(6)@ihs.gov'
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the
Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:11:00 PM

Got it.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:10 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

That is a megan call. For your awareness. This is for national indian health and we need to balance providing, but not being a source. Not ours and they have staff on ground

---

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:08 AM
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

OK. In this morning's clips there is a story from Bismarck Tribune that Morton County has declared a state of Emergency. Do you want that included?

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:07 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Also...only contact with state really not correct as we have been talking at operational level. Question calling out ARA/state director so directly in here. Needed? At a mimimum...soften and pull out direct references to ara/state director

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(b)(5)

[redacted]

(b)(5)

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the intel could be incorrect. We have not reached out to the tribe or had additional conversations with the State, as this is not a FEMA related issue.

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From: Greff, Stacie
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To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Hi Stacie -

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Regards,

Milo

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:29:00 PM

How is this?

(b)(5)

[redacted]

(b)(5)

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:08:00 PM

I'm good with the Powwow bullet.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:07 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Brian, if you could look at the last bullet that I added.

Stacie – I could add that there are no current or anticipated requests for HHS/Federal ESF8 assistance – per Ron's report.

Other than that I would be ready to send to Milo and Rocky and then send to Ron for awareness.

I am going to engage in OST shortly and would like to get this out the door before that happens.

Thanks

Megan

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:39 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

This looks good to me, with the addition of the Powwow bullet that is with Brian for proof reading.

From: Hvinden, Brian

Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:29 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

How is this?

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

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Regards,

Milo

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan; Welch, Randy; Stephenson, James R; Garcia, Carol
Subject: RE: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 1:34:00 PM

Yeah. Hard to know where the truth is, although the pilot thing is scary. That doesn't feel like something you would just make up. But with thousands of people it's almost certain to have some bad apples.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:33 AM
To: Welch, Randy <Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

Thanks!

I have been doing shot updates for Stacie every morning. This will be a great resource for the update….. you guys are great.

It is interesting looking at these stories and the other stories that I pick up from native news networks and the different story they are telling.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:25 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Brian and I are keeping you guys informed re the protest

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

“I feel like I just got shot down,” said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe’s emergency response coordinator. “It’s very hurtful.”

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe’s request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

“People are getting overheated now already,” Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline’s river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe’s request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don’t have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, “I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well.”

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

“At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit,” which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

“We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably,” she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff’s Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

“I’ve been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it’s continuing to grow,” he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

"He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena," he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

"My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not," he said. "This is our land, our people."

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, "I believe there's strength in prayer," and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Our water is sacred," she said. "I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too."

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes' chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock's opposition.

"We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives," Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe's reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe's water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It's estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it's the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead ‘solidarity’ rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county’s emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe’s request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota’s Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

Standing Rock tribal leaders represented by former U.S. attorney (Billings Gazette)

By AMY DALRYMPLE Forum News Service
20 hrs ago

BISMARCK – Former North Dakota U.S. Attorney Tim Purdon will represent the Standing Rock Sioux tribal leaders who have been sued by Dakota Access LLC for protesting the pipeline construction.

Chairman Dave Archambault II and council member Dana Yellow Fat are among several defendants named in a civil case filed last week in federal court in Bismarck by Dakota Access. The lawsuit alleges that the defendants are interfering with pipeline construction north of the reservation.

Purdon said he worked closely with Archambault while serving as U.S. attorney and he was asked to represent the tribal leaders.

“This case is about the parameters of the First Amendment in terms of tribal officials protesting here in North Dakota,” Purdon said.

The complaint claims that Archambault, Yellow Fat and others tried to block Dakota Access employees from entering and exiting the construction site. The complaint also claims that Archambault excused all tribal employees from work on Aug. 12 and encouraged them to protest.

About 4,000 people were estimated to be at the protest site on Monday. Pipeline construction has been halted in that area since last week.

Last week, U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland granted a temporary restraining order against the tribal leaders and other defendants that prevents them from unlawfully protesting the pipeline construction.

A hearing was set for Thursday in the case, but has been postponed because Archambault plans to travel to Washington, D.C., for a hearing on Wednesday in the tribe’s lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Purdon said.

The Bismarck hearing is now set for Sept. 8 to determine if a preliminary injunction should be issued. The temporary restraining order has been extended until Sept. 8, though Hovland wrote in his order that the parties are “strongly encouraged to meet and confer in good faith in an attempt to resolve this dispute prior to the hearing.”

Archambault and Yellow Fat are among 29 people who have been arrested during the protest. Each faces a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct in Morton County.

Purdon resigned as U.S. attorney for the district of North Dakota last year. He now works in private practice in Bismarck for national law firm Robins Kaplan, where he is co-chairman of the American Indian Law and Policy Practice Group.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: RE: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation
Date: Sunday, September 04, 2016 1:38:25 PM

Hurricane not looking good either. Think there will be several declarations

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 11:07:23 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Agree. Not good.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 9:39:10 AM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 2:57:00 PM

Hope nothing happens. Will stay in touch. If nothing else, we can take you for a starbucks after work. ☺

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6) [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:48 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday

Yes.

From: Hvinden, Brian [mailto:Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:46 PM
To: (b)(6)@nd.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday

Wow, is it still getting bigger?

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6) [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:45 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday

It's probably not going to work. We are up to our eyeballs with this pipeline protest. Sorry!

From: Hvinden, Brian [mailto:Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:25 PM
To: (b)(6)@nd.gov>
Subject: FEMA Visit next Monday

Hi Cecily.

Cynthia Hunter and I will be in the state next week and were wondering if you would be available for a meeting next Monday around 3:30. We are doing a tour of the congressional offices in the state and will do a few other informal stops. The primary purpose is to just get her more familiar with North Dakota and issues in the state, as we are shifting some duties around in our office. Please let me know if you are available and can meet and if so, I will try to be quiet and let you and Cynthia discuss the equestrian world. ☺

Brian

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 2:46:00 PM

Wow, is it still getting bigger?

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: (b)(6). [mailto (b)(6) @nd.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 12:45 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Visit next Monday

It's probably not going to work. We are up to our eyeballs with this pipeline protest. Sorry!

From: Hvinden, Brian [mailto:Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 1:25 PM
To: (b)(6) @nd.gov>
Subject: FEMA Visit next Monday

Hi (b)(6)

Cynthia Hunter and I will be in the state next week and were wondering if you would be available for a meeting next Monday around 3:30. We are doing a tour of the congressional offices in the state and will do a few other informal stops. The primary purpose is to just get her more familiar with North Dakota and issues in the state, as we are shifting some duties around in our office. Please let me know if you are available and can meet and if so, I will try to be quiet and let you and Cynthia discuss the equestrian world. ☺

Brian

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
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Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Short update on OST
Date: Thursday, September 08, 2016 3:59:00 PM

Made a couple of small edits and one addition. Take a look.

This weekend could likely be a very contentious weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock areas.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this always happens before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline and the protest.
- **The Governor of ND has activated (although not a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling. Guard members will assist in providing security at traffic checkpoints on the state highway leading to the protest site, which is being reopened to traffic this afternoon.**
- There are ongoing reports of violence from both sides.
- The chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 3:00:00 PM
Attachments: 102516 Liaison Reports.pdf
102416 Liaison Reports.pdf

It's interesting. Still don't have a JFO yet, so everything is very disjointed. Hope things tighten up next week. People of pretty good. I'm the liaison manager. Here are our reports from the last couple of days.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 2:55 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

How are things going?

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:49 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest

http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 4:01:00 PM

Wow. He must be helping Donnell Preskey.

Here is the latest from the Tribune http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/human-blockade-crosses-highway/article_ad910e20-06fc-52e3-91af-fae71d8e8685.html

Brian Hvinden
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Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 3:54 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

Did you see that Rob Keller is spokesperson for the Morton County sherriff's office?

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:49 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest

http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
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701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 3:00:00 PM

Yeah. (b)(6) is there too. I think it could really get big before the election.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 2:57 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

Jesse Jackson?!? I saw the picture and thought it looked like him, but thought I must be mistaken.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:49 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest

http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From:	Hvinden, Brian
To:	Floyd, Megan
Subject:	RE: Update: pipeline situation
Date:	Sunday, September 04, 2016 3:44:33 PM

I'm driving most of rest of today and tomorrow morning. Give me a call and I'll give more detail

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 1:24:46 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Update: pipeline situation

I got another request last night from Milo on behalf of IHS requesting any updates we have.

There is nothing to share outside of what the media is saying. Social media has blown up. There are so many different versions and accounts about the protests, it would take a full time person to track it all.

At some point soon I need to call up to Standing Rock. The tribe needs to make a few decisions about EMI training before the end of the month. I am thinking I'll call before the 9th.

I'll send Milo and IHS some clips and let them know that is all we have. No direct information. I'll copy you on the email.

M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 5:03:42 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy; Depalo, Lee; Floyd, Megan
Subject: Update: pipeline situation

Update on situation far below, then a blog post. It is worth noting that Cody Schultz is a Morton County Commissioner, but he works for ND DES

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 4:39:10 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan; DeFelice, Jerome; Stephenson, James R
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest
Date: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 2:48:00 PM

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http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
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701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest
Date: Sunday, September 04, 2016 12:51:30 AM

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https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: last one hopefully
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 12:28:00 PM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: nd clips - dakota access protest
Date: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 11:53:00 AM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
To: Welch, Randy (Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov)
Subject: round 2
Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 11:27:00 AM
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 15:33:16 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Document1
Attachments: Document1.docx

Dakota Access Pipeline Protest updates.

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
Emergency Liasion
605-440-0993
Glenda.redfeather@fema.dhs.gov

PROTECTOR CAMPS REMAIN PEACEFUL

By Brandon Ecoffey
Lakota Country Times
Aug. 25, 2016

EVERYONE
WElCOME
Sacred Stone
Camp!

Water protectors remain peaceful despite efforts to cast them in a different level light. PINE RIDGE—Despite efforts by the local North Dakota media and county officials water protectors and Standing Rock Sioux Tribal officials say that the message emanating through the camps is one of peaceful resistance.

Nearly 3,000 water protectors gathered peacefully this past weekend in Cannonball, ND., to speak out against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline that is set to be built near the Standing Rock Reservation and could possibly threaten drinking water for tribal citizens. The gathering has been peaceful as organizers have directed those in attendance to not engage in violent acts.

“There are no weapons within the camp,” said Cody Hall, who is the media spokesperson for the Red Warrior Camp. “We have security in the camp at all hours and when people arrive they are asked what they have in the car. Our security walks the camps at all hours to make sure nothing like that is happening,” said Hall.

Hall says that all entering the camp are made aware that weapons and alcohol are not allowed.

Additionally, LaDonna Allard, Director of the Camp of the Sacred Stone, addressed these same issues in a press release on Tuesday after the Governor of North Dakota declared a state of emergency.

“The gathering here remains 100% peaceful and ceremonial, as it has from day one. We are standing together in prayer. No firearms or weapons are allowed. Why is a gathering of Indians so inherently threatening and frightening to some people,” asked Allard.

Governor Dalrymple declared a State of Emergency last Friday to allow for additional state resources to be directed to the gatherings as he mentioned that he believed “outside agitators” were responsible for committing crime within the camps. The reports have remain unsubstantiated and irresponsible comments from local law enforcement about the possibility of the presence of pipe bombs have contributed to a false narrative about the activities of protectors.

A report from the Bismark Tribune on Tuesday, however, revealed a conflict of interest for Dalrymple as they reported that he owns stock in ExxonMobile. A spokesman for the governor told the Tribune that, “He is not going to discuss the details of his personal finances.”

Early efforts by the local media and the representatives from Morton County Law Enforcement to sensationalize “reports” of weapons including pipe bombs have been quickly dismissed by those present within the camps and several journalists including LCT’s Karin Eagle who spent time embedded in both camps over the weekend.

Sources inside of the office of Standing Rock Sioux President Dave Archambault Jr., have told LCT that from the start of the protest the goal of the administration is to keep the protests peaceful and prayerful. The nonviolent direct action taken by organizers of the camps has been partly credited with the overwhelming show of support from both tribalnations and non-Native allies who flocked to the camps in the thousands this past weekend.

“The growing support from tribal-nations and others for this movement has partly been brought about by the people’s willingness to remain unarmed and nonviolent.”

Crazy Horse Students Witness History

Brandon Ecoffey
Lakota Country Times
Aug. 25, 2016

#FTP
NO DAPL
MNI W

Crazy Horse School students travelled to ND last week to bear witness to history. Photo courtesy/Sunny Clifford WANBLEE—Nearly forty students from the Crazy Horse School travelled to Cannonball, ND., to witness living history as thousands of water protectors have gathered in the area to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

According to Sunny Clifford, a teacher at Crazy Horse High School, the students were joined by several staff members including Silas Blaine on the day long trip. The school says that the students did not go on the trip to join the protest but to observe this moment in history that will likely reverberate for decades across Indian Country.

The idea for the trip was first introduced by staff members on the school's cultural advisory board who felt that the experience would be beneficial to the students.

Joelle Red Willow, 17, is a senior at Crazy Horse School and had spent her last week of summer inside the protest camps near Cannonball, ND., that have been set up to halt the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline that was supposed to begin being built last week.

"It was an honor to be there and see all the council fires there working to try and find a better way."

Red Willow says that what she had seen in Cannonball was something she wanted to experience with her classmates as it it has motivated to use her voice to address injustices.

"It was an honor to stand with our people," said Red Willow. "When I saw all the elders crying, and to see them all their fighting for everyone it inspired me to speak out even more."

The pipeline is intended to move 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day to hubs further south but construction on the project has been halted after workers were told leave the job site by their employers due to the protests.

The pipeline that had been quietly ushered through the regulation process is set to be built right next to the Standing Rock Reservation and would run under the Missouri River. The route cuts right through lands included in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has opposed the construction due to the inherent risks that pipelines pose to groundwater. Over the past weekend nearly 3,000 from across the country joined the resistance that has swelled near Cannonball, ND.

Defender Camps 2,000 Strong

Judge Will Issue Opinion Sept. 9
Tom Crash
Lakota Country Times-Pine Ridge
Aug. 25, 2016

ALL NATIONS
#NODAPL

1,000 strong, defenders descended on the Veteran's Memorial bridge in Bismarck to stress their commitment to stop he pipeline; photo courtesy of Arlo Iron Cloud. BISMARK, ND– On Tuesday, close to 1,000 defenders traveled north to Bismarck to express their commitment against the Dakota Access Pipeline, banners were draped over the restraining walls of the Veteran's Memorial bridge, prayers were said, songs were shared and tobacco ties were placed. Another 1,000 defenders were back in the Sacred Stone Spiritual camp and the Spirit Camp near the Cannonball River.

Friday, Arvol Looking Horse and the Dakota 38 riders rode from the Spirit Camp to the protest site at the entrance to one of three construction sites while Deb White Plume of Owe Aku led a number of boats, canoes and kayaks on the Cannonball River this past weekend in preparation for possible protests on the Missouri.

There was a pipe ceremony scheduled first thing Wednesday morning followed by a walk at 11am from the Spirit Camp to the protest site. A wacipi was planned for Wednesday evening.

Arvol Looking Horse and Dakota 38 lead a horse ride from the Spirit Camp to the lprotest site on Friday; photo courtesy of Arlo Iron Cloud. Everyone was waiting for the Aug. 24 hearing in federal court in Washington DC, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe had filed a suit against the Dakota Access Pipeline, requesting an injunction to stop the pipeline construction. The Judges Opinion from that Hearing will be issued Sept. 9. Dave Archambault, SRST president, OST vice president Tom Poor Bear and council representative CJ Clifford along with a bus of supporters from Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and a number of additional tribal officials planned to be in DC for Wednesday's hearing.

A separate suit has been filed against the US Army Corps of Engineers for violating several treaties when they approved the Dakota Access Pipeline. The Corps has filed a suit against protectors.

Rumors were rampant that the road to Bismarck were blocked but it was law enforcement warning vehicles about events and activities going on throughout the area; photo courtesy of Arlo Iron Cloud. Tuesday, the OST council voted overwhelmingly to continue supporting the activities against the Dakota Access Pipeline and approved looking a filing a suit against South Dakota.

"The plan to cross he Missouri River in two different places puts tribal members in Lower Brule, Rosebud and Pine Ridge at risk, all of us use Missouri River water and a break in the line near the Missouri would damage water we all use," said John Yellow Bird Steele, OST president. "We have sent hundreds of tribal members to Cannonball and we will continue to fight the pipeline on every level."

Construction has halted at two of the sites but the construction on the east side of the Missouri, where preparations are being made to drill under the Missouri, not only continue but have been stepped up going 24 hours a day. Armed security had been added to the site and aerial patrols mark skies.

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: 26 Aug 2016 13:26:00 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Document1
Attachments: Document1.docx

The included attachment are the Dakota Access Pipeline Updates.

Enjoy!

Glenda Red Feather
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Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement

LAUREN DONOVAN
Bismarck Tribune

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

“They can’t build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe,” Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company’s decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any “Jane and John Doe” from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe’s request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

“Everybody thought they had it (easement),” said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. “This is really important information.”

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

“We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There’s nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court’s injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday’s news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

“The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she’ll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people,” Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

“It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making,” Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

“When this is done, if it’s ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Protesters, officers gird for pipeline ruling, but restarting construction may wait regardless

By Mike Nowatzki
Bismark Tribune
Aug 24, 2016

NEAR CANNON BALL -- Construction won’t immediately restart on a $3.8 billion pipeline if a judge rules against the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe after a court hearing Wednesday, Aug. 24.

Dakota Access LLC, which temporarily stopped construction last week amid growing tribal protests near the pipeline’s planned crossing of the Missouri River, will wait for law enforcement to determine it’s safe to resume construction, Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said Wednesday morning.

That call will depend on how protesters react to the ruling, if it’s favorable to Dakota Access, Kirchmeier said.

“We’ve done everything we possibly could to make sure this stays safe,” he said.

Law enforcement officers met with tribal leaders and protest organizers Wednesday morning and had a “positive dialogue,” the sheriff said. There are 40 officers on site near the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers, which has drawn 2,000-some protesters camped nearby, many from tribes across the region and the country. Fargo police officers and deputies from Cass and Grand Forks counties are among the agencies assisting Morton County deputies.

Standing Rock members oppose the river crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites. The tribe is represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice in the lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over permits issued for the pipeline, which would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the reservation and be the largest oil pipeline from the Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day to Patoka, Ill.

Dakota Access temporarily stopped construction near the river crossing site as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., will consider Wednesday the tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. A lawyer for the tribe said the judge has indicated he will rule from the bench or shortly after the hearing.

Vic Camp, a 41-year-old from South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation, said Tuesday that protesters will refrain from violence if the judge's ruling doesn't go their way.

"The only way violence will happen is if the cops provoke it and they attack us," he told Forum News Service, adding, "We have our women and we have our children. We have grandparents here."

When asked what will happen if the judge denies the injunction and Dakota Access tries to resume construction, Camp said, "Then we'll start blockading."

"We'll do what we can with our bodies to keep the machines from coming in," he said.

A checkpoint on State Highway 1806 about 6 miles south of Mandan has been restricting traffic to the protest area for days, but an additional blockade was added Wednesday. Due to concerns about the safety of protesters who may march from the campsites to the construction site, authorities set up a second checkpoint farther south near Fort Rice and were preventing any vehicles from passing through.

Dakota Access: Billy Mills Supports Water Protectors at Standing Rock Sioux Reservation

By Chelsey Luger & Thosh Collins
Indian Country Today
Aug. 23, 2016

Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota), 1964 Olympic Gold Medalist, expressed his support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in an interview on August 20, 2016 at the Cannon Ball Prayer Camp near the site of the proposed Bakken Oil Pipeline.

Billy Mills, a 1964 Olympic Gold Medalist and citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation, visited the Standing Rock Reservation over the weekend to show support for the youth, leadership and any others who stand with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in opposition to the Energy Transfer Company's Bakken Oil Pipeline, also called the Dakota Access pipeline.

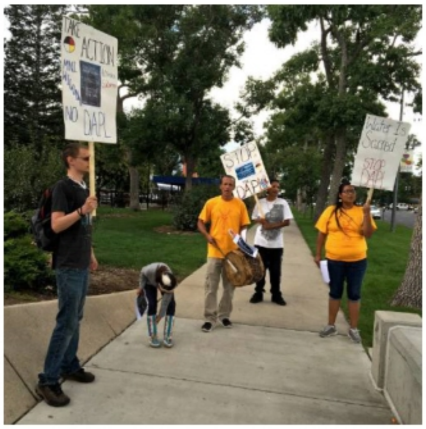
In his message to the people, Mills expresses his sincere respect and appreciation for the leadership of Standing Rock, including Chairman Dave Archambault II, Jodi Archambault-Gillette, and Dave Archambault Sr.

Mills then incorporates his interpretation of a broader historical context which has led to the situation at hand. He notes that due to the sweeping legacy of injustice brought forth through manifest destiny, broken treaties, and white privilege, the rights of Native American people have been undermined and devalued in the American legal system.

As a man of both Native American and white American descent, Mills says that he has both benefited from and been hurt by the invisible force of white privilege. With the gentle tone and spirit of camaraderie that Mills always puts forth, he expresses his wish for Native American children to be afforded the same opportunities as other Americans and to be empowered by information that most schools aren't teaching.

Peaceful pipeline protest held in Colorado Springs park

By: Billie Stanton Anleu
The Gazette-Colorado Springs,CO
August 25, 2016



Donald Little Thunder, a Rosebud Sioux Indian living in Colorado Springs, beats a drum and sings as he leads a group through downtown Acacia Park while protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Like hundreds if not thousands of Indians across the nation, Donald Little Thunder, friends and family members marched in protest Thursday against the controversial $3.7 billion Dakota Access Pipeline.

They chanted, sang and beat drums through downtown Colorado Springs' Acacia Park in an effort to raise awareness and support for the Standing Rock Sioux Nation and others protesting in North Dakota.

The underground pipeline is designed to stretch nearly 1,170 miles, carrying oil from the Bakken fields of western North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa to Illinois. It also is to travel beneath the Missouri River, the sole source of water for the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

"Our ancestors told us that in the seventh generation, the black snake will come through," Little Thunder said, noting that his 8-year-old daughter, Wi Wanbli Win, is from that seventh generation.

"We're just asking everybody to be aware of it and help in some way," Little Thunder said. "We are very spiritual people. This is the most peaceful protest in the U.S. We're sitting and praying and singing to stop the oil pipeline."

Marching with him were Lena Sun Bear, an Oglala and Rosebud Sioux; Donna Marshall, of the Rosebud Sioux Nation; and John Freyta, an Apache veteran of the Gulf War.

Energy Transfer Partners of Texas has said its pipeline will pump millions of dollars into the economy and reduce U.S. reliance on foreign oil.

But the Sioux and other tribes say a leak or break could wipe out water supplies. Iowa landowners have sued, too, to keep the pipeline off their properties.

Construction on the pipeline stopped Aug. 16 as protesters encircled the workers' machinery.

In Washington, D.C., U.S. District Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday to delay a decision until Sept. 9 on whether to grant an injunction stopping work on the project, the Bismarck Tribune reported.

The company argued that delays could cost it more than $100 million.

The tribe is suing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which issued the pipeline permits, saying it violated the National Historic Preservation Act and failed to adequately review environmental and archaeological concerns.

Attorneys for the Army Corps argued that no evidence indicates historic artifacts are in the pipeline's path, and the agency followed proper protocol in consulting with the tribes.

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who’s Fighting and Why

By JACK HEALY
New York Times
AUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline’s charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

Pipes being stacked for the Dakota Access oil pipeline last year at a staging site in Worthing, S.D. Credit Nati Harnik/Associated Press

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment. The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

MNi WICONI
Ungluonihanpi
Respect & Protect
our WATER
of LIFE
I CAN Live without OIL
I CAN NOT Live without WATER
PIPELINE FIGHTER

Omaka Nawicakinciji, 7, of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota, protested the Dakota Access pipeline with his mother, Heather Mendoza, in Washington on Wednesday. Credit Alex Wong/Getty Images

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota’s governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country’s pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

DR-4237-OST Media Coverage

August 19, 2016

- **FEMA homes 'small part' of need on Pine Ridge-** Rapid City Journal
- **Gov. Daugaard: State won't fight renaming of Harney Peak-** Rapid City Journal
- **Q&A on North Dakota pipeline construction, protests-** Rapid City Journal
- **Dull Knife arrested resisting Dakota Access Pipeline-** Native Sun Weekly, Rapid City
- **My Voice: Black Elk Peak is right name-** Argus Leader, Sioux Falls

FEMA homes 'small part' of need on Pine Ridge

Rapid City Journal
Mike Anderson Journal staff
Aug 18, 2016

Native
Nations

In May 2015, Leroy Broken Nose's childhood home on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation was pummeled by hail the size of tennis balls.

The same storm caused extensive flooding and destroyed hundreds of homes on the reservation. President Barack Obama declared it a national disaster on Aug. 7, 2015, marking the first and only time a sovereign Native American tribe independently requested and received a formal disaster declaration from a president.

In the weeks that followed the storms, Broken Nose's battered roof leaked and rotted out, collapsing in certain sections.

Although it took almost 11 months, the 62-year-old disabled man now has a new home on a small plot of land south of Oglala Lake.

"It was a long waiting game," Broken Nose said Wednesday while sitting at his new kitchen table. "But it's here, so I'm happy."

Broken Nose's new roof was provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which has spent more than a year repairing and replacing households damaged during a series of storms in May 2015.

As FEMA finalizes that work, a larger undertaking by multiple federal agencies lies ahead: to continue improving the overall conditions on the reservation.

Since December, FEMA has installed 196 manufactured housing units like the one Broken Nose now occupies. The last was installed on July 11. FEMA has also repaired an additional 107 homes, and another 13 are scheduled to be repaired before FEMA closes its eight disaster recovery centers scattered across the reservation in mid-September. All of the repairs and replacements were provided for free by FEMA, or contractors hired by the agency.

An unfinished job

Having spent more than a year away from his wife, FEMA coordinating officer Gary Stanley is ready to return to his own home, but he harbors no illusions that the work on Pine Ridge is finished.

"What we did here in terms of disaster response is a very small part of what the need is on the reservation," Stanley said.

According to Stanley, FEMA determined there is a shortage of at least 4,000 livable homes on the reservation. "It was imperative that we come up with a solution because it's impacting a lot of young children and the elderly," he said.

The people impacted include Broken Nose, who suffered a stroke in 2004 and has been battling cancer and diabetes for many years.

“I beat one cancer,” Broken Nose said, “but I can’t beat leukemia.”

Broken Nose goes to Rapid City once a month for cancer treatment, but doesn't have a car so he takes a bus to the hospital. He gets a ride from his neighbors to Oglala, where the bus picks him up. It won’t make the drive to his home several miles south of town, he said, partially because the dirt road to his doorstep turns into an impassable trench of mud when it rains.

This is but one small example of how seriously the reservation’s road system is in need of upgrades. FEMA’s workers discovered this first-hand while trying to find certain homes, many of which are remote, like Broken Nose’s. Often, they don't have recorded addresses and are accessible only by barely maintained, dirt roads that haven't been inventoried.

FEMA may be leaving next month, but a disaster recovery team will stay behind to continue working with the tribe on various initiatives, with roads and housing designated as the primary focus areas. A FEMA coordinator — operating out of the Region 8 office in Denver — will be joined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and the Federal Highway Administration, according to a FEMA press release.

Making progress

Some progress has already been made under FEMA’s direction, with more than 460 miles of tribal roads assessed and inventoried. The results will be entered into a Geospatial Information System map. Similar efforts are also underway to better catalog the true extent of the housing needs on the reservation.

Broken Nose's original home was torn down after the storm, and he now lives in a manufactured housing unit provided by FEMA. It has a handicapped accessible ramp, three bedrooms, air conditioning, and is furnished with a couch, bed, and full array of standard kitchen appliances.

While it serves his needs well, Broken Nose worries the housing unit’s energy costs will be too high. He hasn’t received his first bill, but people living in other FEMA-provided units have complained of high electricity bills.

FEMA has heard these concerns as well, and as a result created a program to reduce energy expenses by teaching low-cost weatherization techniques. Other efforts are also underway to educate tribal officials on strategic planning and grant application processes for future infrastructure improvement initiatives.

“There’s a lot of need on Pine Ridge right now,” Stanley said. “I would like to think part of what we did was help focus folks on what those needs are.”

According to Stanley, the housing units are designed to last at least 20 years, provided they are well-maintained.

Broken Nose hopes his new home will be around for his grandson to live in someday, but he has already seen evidence that it might not.

Even though it's new, Broken Nose said, some of the siding has already begun to break off and blow away.

Gov. Daugaard: State won't fight renaming of Harney Peak

Rapid City Journal
Seth Tupper Journal Staff
August 19, 2016

Gov. Dennis Daugaard said the state will not fight the renaming of Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak, and will accept a decision from a federal board that formally changed the name of South Dakota's highest mountain.

In an exclusive interview with the Rapid City Journal, the governor said Thursday he will accept the federal renaming decision, even though South Dakota was under no legal pressure to accept the new name.

With his declaration, Daugaard removed a final obstacle to full implementation of the controversial name change.

“I don’t want the state to have one name and the feds another,” Daugaard said, “so we will make the change.”

His comments end a week of speculation about whether state government will honor the Aug. 11 decision by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to rename the 7,242-foot mountain, which is South Dakota's tallest and is often called the nation's highest point east of the Rockies.

The board said it made the change, which went against the recommendation of a South Dakota naming panel, because Harney Peak could be seen as insensitive to Native Americans.

Daugaard's statement also could end nearly two years of controversy that split South Dakotans, sometimes along racial lines.

William S. Harney, the peak’s former namesake, was an Army officer in the 1800s who was known as an “Indian fighter.” Nicholas Black Elk, the peak’s new namesake, was a Lakota Sioux holy man who was confined to reservation life around the turn of the 20th century.

Daugaard said he spent part of the past week conferring with members of the state congressional delegation about whether the federal board’s decision could be overturned.

While that is possible — congressional legislation could be sought to strike down the decision — Daugaard said neither he nor the state’s members of Congress are willing to prioritize that task over other work.

Daugaard said he will speak with his cabinet secretaries about how to implement the change on signs, maps, websites, tourism literature and any other state-produced references. That work is already under way within the federal government, which manages the peak as part of the Black Elk Wilderness area in the Black Hills National Forest.

Last year, the South Dakota Board on Geographic Names recommended no change to the mountain’s name. The recommendation went unheeded at the federal level, and Daugaard said he remains concerned about the “unilateral” power wielded by the federal board.

U.S. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., was also critical of the federal board and said this week in a Journal interview that he may recommend changes to reduce the board’s power. Those changes, if they happen, will be too late to influence the Harney Peak renaming.

That was welcome news for Lakota elder Basil Brave Heart, of Pine Ridge, who proposed the name change in a September, 2014 letter.

Brave Heart considers Harney's name to be offensive because Harney led deadly campaigns against Native Americans, and because the peak named for him is within the Black Hills, an area of spiritual significance to some tribes.

Modern Native American animosity toward Harney is focused mostly on the Battle of Ash Hollow in 1855 in present-day Nebraska, where he led troops who attacked and killed an estimated 86 Sioux people, including women and children. The attack was launched in retaliation for the so-called Grattan Fight of the previous year, when Sioux warriors killed 29 soldiers.

Black Elk is known worldwide as the subject of the book "Black Elk Speaks," author John Neihardt's 1932 account of stories and spiritual visions related to him by Black Elk. More than 900,000 copies of the book have been sold since its first printing, according to the University of Nebraska Press.

Brave Heart was not immediately available Thursday afternoon by phone, but he spoke to the Journal earlier in the week and said he and many other Native Americans hoped Daugaard would honor the federal board's decision.

"We don't want to be defined by a government that named a sacred Black Hills mountain after someone who committed an atrocity," Brave Heart said. "This could really lift some negative energy off our backs."

Daugaard did not attach the same degree of significance to the name change. In fact, he said, he thought the matter had concluded with the state board's recommendation. He was not aware it was under consideration by the federal board until a staffer informed him of the federal board's decision on the day it happened, Aug. 11.

"I have things that I think are more important to the state than what we name a place," he said.

When asked if he thinks the name change is symbolically important for Native Americans, Daugaard said, "only if they're knowledgeable about history."

The governor sidestepped a question about his personal preference of name for the mountain, but he allowed that "Black Elk Peak" is an acceptable choice.

"If the name had to be changed, I like 'Black Elk' just fine," he said.

Q&A on North Dakota pipeline construction, protests

Rapid City Journal
By JAMES MacPHERSON
August 18, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. | Developers of a four-state oil pipeline have agreed to halt construction of the project in southern North Dakota until a federal court hearing next week in Washington, D.C. The temporary construction shutdown comes amid growing protests and increased tension over the Dakota Access Pipeline that is intended to cross the Missouri River near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Some things to know about the pipeline and the protest:

WHAT IS THE DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE?

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners' Dakota Access Pipeline is a $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile project that would carry nearly a half-million barrels of crude oil daily from North

Dakota's oil fields through South Dakota and Iowa to an existing pipeline in Patoka, Illinois, where shippers can access Midwest and Gulf Coast markets.

WHY THE PROTEST?

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is suing federal regulators for approving the oil pipeline that would be the largest-capacity one carrying crude out of western North Dakota's oil patch. The tribes' lawsuit filed last month in federal court in Washington challenges the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' decision to grant permits at more than 200 water crossings in four states for the pipeline. The tribe argues the pipeline that would be placed less than a mile upstream of the reservation could impact drinking water for the more than 8,000 tribal members and the millions who rely on it further downstream. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of the tribe by environmental group Earthjustice, said the project violates several federal laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act. The tribe worries the project will disturb ancient sacred sites outside of the 2.3-million acre reservation. The hearing on the tribe's request for a temporary injunction is slated for Wednesday.

WHO ARE THE PROTESTERS?

Mostly members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but they've been joined by other American Indians and non-Native Americans from across the country. "Divergent" actress Shailene Woodley was part of the protests last week.

ARRESTS

American Indians have for months been staging a nonviolent protest at a "spirit camp" at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers in the path of the pipeline. More than a dozen young people from the reservation also ran from North Dakota to Washington to deliver 140,000 petition signatures to the Corps to protest the pipeline. The protest took a turn last week when law enforcement was called to keep the peace between protesters and armed security guards hired by the company. Twenty-eight people have been arrested since then and charged with interfering with the pipeline construction, including Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II. Developers on Monday sued in federal court to stop protesters, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

IS THE PIPELINE SAFE?

The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment, and workers monitoring the pipeline remotely in Texas could close block valves on it within three minutes if a breach is detected.

WHY THE NEED?

Energy Transfer Partners announced the Dakota Access pipeline in 2014, a few days after North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple urged industry and government officials to build more pipelines to keep pace with the state's oil production, which is second only to Texas'. Supporters said the pipeline would create more markets for the state's oil and gas, and reduce truck and oil train traffic, the latter of which has been a growing concern after a spate of fiery derailments of trains carrying North Dakota crude, including one near Dalrymple's hometown of Casselton in 2013, and an explosion in Quebec that same year that killed 47 people.

Dull Knife arrested resisting Dakota Access Pipeline

Native Sun Weekly, Rapid City
By Natalie Hand
Lakota Media Project OWE AKU
August 17, 2016

GUY DULL KNIFECANNON BALL, N.D. — On August 24, 2016, a federal judge in Washington, DC will issue his ruling on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). Many water protectors and land defenders have gathered here to show love and respect for our first medicine, the sacred water.

On Monday, August 15 five people were arrested at the site where DAPL is building a road they will use to transport their equipment to the work site. Guy Dull Knife, Oglala Lakota elder of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation was one of the people arrested when he blocked the gate to the DAPL worksite. Many more people have given themselves to be arrested as the days move toward August 24. We have set up our Red Warrior Camp and are holding Non-Violent Direct Action trainings in camp and at the action site. We are entrenched and will protect the Mni Sosi River (Missouri) that we all belong to. Red Nations from all along the river are here. Many citizens of America are here to protect sacred water. This is our Treaty Territory, our Ancestral Homelands.

Our ancestors trusted us to continue to protect our first medicine. We do this in a good way, out of love. We do not bring hate here. We are a spiritual people and we will defend our relative, sacred water. Our Pte San Win (White Buffalo Calf Woman) brought us the sacred pipe, and She also handed us the bow and arrow. We follow Her teachings in this way.

Owe Aku has trained thousands of people through Moccasins on the Ground NVDA training camp held for four years when we were challenging TransCanada, Inc and the KXL Tarsands Pipeline. Communities and families are ready, they are here. This pipeline has the potential to contaminate water forever. This issue is a Human Rights Issue. It affects all of us. To support our NVDA work, please visit our website at www.oweakuinternational.org.

My Voice: Black Elk Peak is right name

Sioux Falls-Argus Leader
John YellowBird Steele
August 17, 2016

MDEWAKANTON

On Aug. 11, the Oceti Sakowin, or Seven Council Fires of the Great Sioux Nation, and the United States took a long stride forward towards justice in the Black Hills. At the request of our Lakota Oyate, the U.S. changed the name of Harney Peak to Black Elk Peak. We thank our Oglala Lakota tribal members, Basil Brave Heart — a lifelong educator — and Myron Pourier, Black Elk's great grandson, who brought this issue forward to the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council and the National Park Service.

Rising from the center of the Black Elk Wilderness, Black Elk Peak is the highest mountain in the Black Hills. The former name of Harney Peak was offensive to Native Americans, because General Harney and 600 U.S. Cavalry and Infantry soldiers massacred 86 Lakota men, women and children of Chief Little Thunder's village as they slept along Blue Water Creek on Sept. 3, 1855. Harney was sent out by the U.S. to "punish" our Lakota for the 1854 Grattan Affair, a U.S. Army attack to "avenge" the loss of a Mormon cow. When confronted by an angry Lt. Grattan ("Give me 20 men and I will ride through the whole Sioux Nation"), Chief Conquering Bear sought to maintain the peace under the 1851 Treaty by offering Grattan three horses to compensate the Mormon family for their lost cow (which had been left wandering on the prairie). Grattan, acting in violation of his orders, chose war. Lt. Grattan and his platoon were wiped out after Grattan ordered them to open fire on Conquering Bear's village and assassinated the Chief. Our Lakota Oyate acted in self-defense. Against this background, General Harney's massacre of our Lakota was pure genocide. The name Harney Peak was truly offensive to Lakota people.

In contrast, Black Elk, our Oglala Lakota Holy Man, is famous worldwide for his beautiful vision of Lakota culture and religion, which he told to Neihardt the Nebraska Poet Laureate in "Black Elk Speaks." Black Elk said: "You have noticed that everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round... . The Sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nest in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours... . Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves." Black Elk went to Black Elk Peak to receive his vision.

Now, the name of the sacred peak has come full circle to be named Black Elk Peak, which reflects a vision of beauty and the sacredness of life. Gov. Dennis Daugaard is confused by the name change. Perhaps upon reading "Black Elk Speaks," he will come to know the beauty, sacredness and unique Dakota perspective that the name Black Elk Peak represents. Black Elk Peak is the right name for the Mountain, which honors the true history of South Dakota and the sacred nature of the Black Hills. After all, we put the "Dakota" in South Dakota.

MY VOICE

John YellowBird Steele, Manderson, is president of Oglala Sioux Tribe. My Voice columns should be 500 to 700 words.

From: Jones, Susan K
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 14:27:49 -0400
To: Fisher, Dennis;Floyd, Megan;Hudson, Lamont
Subject: DRAFT ND LNO Report
Attachments: ND LNO Report Standing Rock Protests.pptx

Susan K. Jones
FEMA Region VIII
Response Division
Denver, CO
O: 303.235.4605
C: 303.263.5415

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 18:01:02 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Cc: Roscoe, Scott
Subject: Elliott Ward comments on Webinar

Hi All –

Elliott Ward (Standing Rock) is on the National Tribal Policy consultation webinar right now. He has asked Milo about using PDM to plan for the braking of the pipeline. He said that FEMA has said they can't help since it is off reservation, even though it was part of the Sioux Nation. He also asked about working with tribes on culturally sensitive areas but when they ask for PDM grants won't cover that so the wording in the PDM grant is wrong. This is of particular concern because of the use of water.

I am going to assume we talked to him at some point on this issue. He will likely be calling or emailing Milo at HQ.

He also asked about doing a National Tribal Emergency Association. Milo told him to look at what tribal associations are doing. ITEMA was used as an example, intertribal recovery foundation, National Congress of American Indians. He may be open to pushing something in our region.

Ricky, do you want to reach out to Elliott on this one?

M.

From: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 14:23:25 -0400
To: Roscoe, Scott
Cc: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R
Subject: Elliott Ward

Hello-

Today I listened in to the first half of the Tribal Policy Listening Session during which Elliott spoke on concerns for PDM grants and the potential pipeline.

Am not sure who else was able to make the call so wanted to share the information for follow-up with him.

Thanks!

Courtnee-Evan Spino
PA Tribal Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
267-319-6335

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:49:22 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: emails coming re Dakota Pipeline
Attachments: NEMA input from Region 8 September 2016 DRAFT.docx

Megan,

I am about to send you a bunch of emails that are mostly clips about Dakota Pipeline that were singled out to send one another, perhaps with a comment.

Also I have attached the comments we sent in for the NEMA briefing packet, which includes one sentence describing the pipeline standoff.

Otherwise, everything I saw related to the pipeline was in our daily clips or the MOC reports.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Frank,

This Region 8 input for the NEMA briefing memo has been reviewed and approved by:

Nancy Dragani, Region 8 Acting Regional Administrator
  Dragani, Nancy nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov
  (303) 235-4840
Jennifer Dick, Regional Counsel
  Dick, Jennifer Jennifer.Dick@fema.dhs.gov
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Stacie Greff, Region 8 External Affairs Officer
  Greff, Stacie Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov
  (303) 235-4840

Region VIII NEMA input for NEMA briefing memo

Colorado:

- Mitigation recently determined that two Boulder County properties were ineligible for buy-out based upon FEMA's policy on the "Limits on Subsurface Uses" associated with hydraulic fracturing and horizontal directional drilling. The properties were deemed ineligible because under Colorado law they would remain subject to potential forced pooling and subsurface activity following acquisition. Throughout Colorado and many other states, mineral rights are often owned separately from surface rights. A further complication is that many states, including Colorado and all Region VIII states, have statutory or forced pooling laws, allowing subsurface activity without owner consent. The Region anticipates an appeal from Boulder County and continues to engage HQ FIMA on the implications of the policy, not only to Colorado and Region VIII, but other states.

- Landslides present acute and/or long-term threats to some 20-80 homes in Colorado Springs. There appeared to be money available from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for earlier disasters as well as perhaps other federal funds to cope with the short-term threat, though the process was seen as slow and the problem could worsen. FEMA's current policy on the "Limits of Subsurface Uses" and its application may also affect eligibility for these landslide acquisitions.

Oglala Sioux DR 4237: This event was the first direct Individual Assistance declaration to an Indian Tribe.

- To address the severe housing challenges faced by the tribe, the Permanent Housing Construction Program was implemented for the first time within the Lower 48 United States. Through September 1, a total of 196 damaged residences had been replaced with manufactured homes and 100 of the planned 107 homes were repaired by FEMA contractors. All repairs are expected to be completed by September 9, 2016.
- This is one of the largest housing missions ever accomplished on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Non-Stafford Act issues: Several non-FEMA issues are of particular concern now to Region VIII state emergency managers.

- In North Dakota, protests by the Standing Rock Sioux and perhaps 90 other tribes against an oil pipeline currently under construction have gained national and international attention.
- In Montana, parasites have killed a large number of fish, prompting the shutdown of 180 miles of the Yellowstone River and causing economic distress to the tourism industry there.

- In Utah, two of this desert region’s water sources have come under threat, one from an extraordinary algae bloom and another from an accidental spread of toxic mine waste from a reservoir.

# # #

Jeanine's edits, though she suggested removing these:

(b)(5)

[redacted]

Randy draft, 8/31/16
Region VIII

(b)(5)

[redacted]

# # #

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 13:45:38 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us'(b)(6)@utah.gov'(b)(6)@wyo.gov';(b)(6)@nd.gov(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';'(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';'(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us';Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA news clips for Wednesday 8-24
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-24-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 24, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A rechanneling project through the Garden of the Gods is expected to remove 100 properties from the floodplain… The Colorado Springs Independent interviewed the three colleges in the area about their plans for dealing with disasters, including an active shooter…. Bridges on a county road near the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar were taken out by flooding… The *Denver Post* explains why Colorado mosquitos are not likely to carry the Zika virus.
- **Montana:** An extraordinary outbreak of a parasite killing whitefish caused the state to shut down 180 miles of the Yellowstone River to all recreational uses.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest, including one in the *NY Times*: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz explains the decision to withdraw state-owned resources was because the situation is not an emergency, the protestors are not on state-owned land, plus reports of criminal activity. Water has been supplied by the tribe’s road department. Protestors marched over a bridge peacefully and staying on walkways. About 30 people attended a meeting of the Mandan county commissioners; all those who spoke opposed the pipeline, and many spoke against the traffic barrier set up by law enforcement, saying it hurts local businesses and farmers, is humiliating, and prevents people from seeing the protest. Commissioners said the decision was by law enforcement and is not theirs to overturn. The tribe says a leak at the pipeline could contaminate its water supply and sacred sites. The company says construction has only stopped at this one mile of the 1,172 mile pipeline, which would be the largest source for moving Bakken crude oil. Four unions wrote to Governor Dalrymple asking that he make it safe for construction workers to do their jobs. A federal judge is expected to rule today on a request for an injunction to halt the project. Tribal leaders say they will remain peaceful, but will blockade if the ruling goes against them. So far, there have been 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct.

- **South Dakota:** A $1 million FEMA SAFER g rant will pay for nine new firefighters in Rapid City for two years… A new wildfire broke out near Angostura Reservoir.
- **Utah:** An attempt to upgrade the Tibble Fork Dam has resulted in lake sediments being released over the weekend that have contaminated the American Fork River, apparently with toxic mine waste. Environmentalists fear an ecological disaster. The presence of toxic sediments had led to an earlier decision to upgrade the dam rather than dredge the lake – but draining the lake to work on the dam appears to have done the damage.
- **Wyoming:** Several fires were burning in the area of Yellowstone National Park, though all roads within the park remained open. One fire south of the park blocked access to that entrance. The fires were caused naturally and were not being actively suppressed.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: *USA Today* reports on possible hurricanes developing in the Atlantic. … *Inside Radio* says the Louisiana floods show the need to activate FM radio chips in cellphones, which do not work when cell towers are down.

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Flood project through Garden of the Gods will reroute Colorado Springs floodplain **(**The Gazette, Colorado Springs)

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Why Colorado's Mosquitoes Are Not Likely To Spread Zika (Denver Post)

MONTANA:

Yellowstone fish-killing parasite is so prolific it's 'shocking' fish to death (Missoulian)

NORTH DAKOTA:

Occupying the Prairie: Tensions Rise as Tribes Move to Block a Pipeline (NY Times)

Emergency services recalled from Dakota Access Pipeline protest site (KFYR-TV Bismarck)

People concerned with Highway 1806 barricade ask Morton County Commissioners for answers (KFYR-TV Bismarck)

Pipeline foes take fight to Bismarck, Washington D.C. (Forum News Service)

Standing Rock Protestors Find New Resources After State Withdraws Support (KXMB-TV Bismarck)

Protesters attend Morton County Commission meeting (Bismarck Tribune)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city (Rapid City Journal)
New fire burning near Angostura Reservoir (KBHB radio)

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UTAH:

American Fork fish could contain toxic mine waste (Salt Lake Tribune)

WYOMING:

Wildfires close Yellowstone's south entrance, burn near west entrance (Billings Gazette)

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Tropical System Eyes Florida, Southeast US, May Develop Into Hurricane (USA Today)

Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

STORIES

COLORADO

Flood project through Garden of the Gods will reroute Colorado Springs floodplain (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Matt Steiner

Two years after city officials teamed with residents of a West Side Colorado Springs neighborhood to plan flood mitigation and reconstruction of Camp Creek, a project to remove more than 100 properties from the floodplain is about to begin.

On Monday, crews could begin the first phase of the more than $30 million project rebuilding about 5,100 feet of channel through Garden of the Gods Park and the Rock Ledge Ranch.

The work could be potentially lifesaving for residents of the Pleasant Valley neighborhood when heavy rains pound the Waldo Canyon fire burn area in the mountains to the west.

"As a community, we can't let our guard down," said Colorado Springs Emergency Manager Bret Waters. "Even though we're seeing some growth, it doesn't mean the risk will go away."

The Camp Creek mitigation project discussed in the spring of 2014 attracted more than 100 residents who helped choose project priorities. The result was a total rebuild of the deteriorating concrete channel through Pleasant Valley, meaning the creek along 31st Street will be refurbished with grass, shrubs, rocks and a relocated bike path.

But first, the work upstream must be done.

"Reducing the flows (through Garden of the Gods) will allow us to build the rest of the project," said project engineer Mike Chaves.

Construction crews will first install a series of rock steps in the creek, reshape banks and plant vegetation near the channel through the ranch and the park. The cross vanes, Chaves said, are intended to slow water and debris. Erosion has been accelerating each year because of floodwaters pouring off the Waldo Canyon burn scar.

The channel stabilization will cost $1.1 million, said city spokeswoman Kim Melchor. Almost $800,000 of that comes from a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant with the rest of the money coming from the city.

That work will likely be followed by construction of a large sediment detention pond at the north end of the park in early 2017, Chaves said.

That phase will cost almost $8 million, Melchor said. It will include a large berm stretching from 30th Street to the hills in the park that can dam floodwaters.

When the entire project is complete, more than 200 Pleasant Valley residents will no longer be in the floodplain.

"The whole intent is to protect the park, protect Rock Ledge Ranch and the downstream communities," Melchor said.

Colleges and universities put emphasis on planning for disasters, including active shooters: Planning for the worst (Colorado Springs Independent)

By J. Adrian Stanley @JAdrianStanley1

On April 16, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho, a senior at Virginia Tech, killed 32 people and wounded another 17 in two separate shootings.

Until June of this year, when Omar Mateen killed 49 people and wounded 53 others in Orlando's Pulse nightclub, the Virginia Tech shooting was the deadliest by a single perpetrator in U.S. history.

Virginia Tech held sway over the country, leading to widespread grief and fear, changing gun laws, prompting deeper discussions on mental illness and leading many colleges and universities to take a second look at their emergency plans.

Back in 2007, institutions of higher education tended to have procedures for protecting their campus communities from natural disasters like fires, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes, and often some man-made accidents as well, like chemical spills. But most had dedicated less — or no — energy to drafting plans to deal with an active shooter rampaging through the campus.

That changed after Virginia Tech. Just as "duck and cover" was a part of common school instruction during the Cold War, in today's age of mass shootings, students now learn to "run, hide, fight."

What Cho did was an eyeopener for school leaders. The gunman, who had known mental health issues, fatally shot two students in a residence hall, walked away, changed his clothes, and ran errands, then calmly entered an academic hall. At some point, he chained shut the exits.

Police were dealing with the first shooting while Cho entered Norris Hall. The university, suspecting the first shooting was of a personal nature, hadn't instructed students, faculty and staff to prepare for an active shooter. In fact, students in Norris reported being simply curious when Cho peeked his head inside their classroom doors before beginning his massacre.

Once the shooting was underway, Cho's victims were largely at a loss to stop his killing spree. Some died trying to hold classroom doors closed, including Professor Liviu Librescu, an Israeli Holocaust survivor, whose body was riddled with bullets as he held his classroom door shut, allowing his students to climb out windows. All but one of the students in Room 204 survived due to his heroism.

Nevertheless, 30 people died in Norris Hall. Cho shot himself before police located him.

"A lot of the [college and university] emergency plans really stepped up after 9/11," UCCS Police Lt. Marc Pino says. "Using common terminology, working on regional resources, things like that — that sort of were identified as issues after 9/11 for responding to emergencies — I would say around that time is when we really stepped things up."

But asked when UCCS began preparing for an active-shooter scenario, Pino says, "Virginia Tech would be when we really started doing emphasis on active shooter, and also our campus developed a student response team as a response.

"Numerous people at Virginia Tech had dealings with the shooter, and no one was really talking together to find out that some larger issues were going on. So, the [UCCS] student response team was [formed] — very shortly after Virginia Tech — [and it] comprises the dean of students office, the chief of police and the head of the counseling center. We sort of field reports from faculty, staff, students, anybody that has a concern about a student. We can sort of reach them before it gets to a critical level."

The *Independent* spoke to representatives at UCCS, Colorado College and Pikes Peak Community College about their emergency plans. While plans and strategies differ, each campus has a plan, along with one or more employees in charge of preparing for emergencies.

Of the three schools, Colorado College, which has about 2,000 students, is the only one without its own police force. John Lauer, co-chair of CC's emergency preparedness group and the college's associate vice president for student life, explains that the school does have a single Colorado Springs police officer assigned to the campus, as well as a campus safety department.

The safety officers — who carry no weapons — walk the campus and look for anything unusual. If a situation warrants it, they call police, with whom the college works closely. Campus safety officers can also take anonymous tips.

The campus does have an emergency plan, last updated in 2012, and a director of campus safety and emergency preparedness — Maggie Santos, a former Colorado Springs Police lieutenant. The plan will be updated soon.

"We're always focused on continuous improvement," Lauer says.

But, he adds, the college stresses that every person has to take responsibility for knowing how to respond, saying, "We're as prepared as every individual is prepared."

CC performs regular fire drills and has started doing active-shooter trainings with resident advisors, as well as sessions open to anyone, or upon request. Lauer says it's important not to drill too often because it can desensitize people in a real emergency.

The campus does contract with a company that sends emergency texts, emails and phone calls when needed to students, staff and faculty, as well as anyone else who wants to be notified.

While not every classroom has a locking door, placards by doors give instructions on what to do in an emergency — such as barricade the door for an active shooter or go to the nearest marked shelter in case of tornado.

CC has cameras throughout campus and a loudspeaker on Palmer Hall. Lauer says the campus is considering replacing that speaker, as well as placing speakers on campus security cars for use in an emergency. Staff in residence halls also have megaphones.

Jim Barrentine is chief of police at PPCC, where he says he was hired five years ago to develop an emergency preparedness plan.

That plan is now the template for the state's community colleges.

At first, Barrentine says most folks at PPCC didn't know how to perform basic safety tasks, like using a fire extinguisher or helping a person in a wheelchair down stairs. He's focused on giving trainings and providing instructional videos for different emergency skills. The school also does lockdown drills for an active-shooter situation, as well as special training, and four or five tabletop exercises meant to mimic a real emergency.

Interestingly, of the three schools, PPCC is the only one with locks on all classroom doors. The college encourages locking those doors during class hours.

With three campuses and 20,000 students, PPCC faces unique challenges. The 18-person police department is distributed among the campuses, where they patrol during business hours.

Barrentine has set up a system so that the campus community will be notified of an emergency immediately through texts, emails, landlines and a speaker system throughout the campus. Barrentine wants to add light boards for the deaf and buzzers for the blind, to ensure they are notified, and he's working on implementing a buddy system to ensure people with disabilities are cared for in an emergency.

He also has hotlines for anonymous tips.

Barrentine says the statewide system of community colleges is working to improve emergency preparedness. But he says PPCC is lucky because unlike many other schools, police are on the scene here.

"In an active shooter [situation]," he says, "security's going to run like everyone else."
Back in 2012, UCCS' emergency plans were tested. The Waldo Canyon Fire was raging nearby, and the campus suddenly became an unofficial evacuation site.

"We had the Air Force Academy cadets here in 2012, we also housed several hundred evacuees in our campus residence halls," UCCS spokesperson Tom Hutton says. "And then in 2013 [during the Black Forest Fire], we were an official Red Cross evacuation site and I think we had half a dozen people here, so we had more when we were an unofficial evacuation site."

Since UCCS is located on a wildland-urban interface, it not only has the normal risks of a university with around 11,300 students, but it also must be prepared for wildfire. Because of that, the university has done mitigation along its borders and, in summer months, UCCS police carry fire extinguishers with water in them, better for fighting wildfires. They also patrol the campus borders on off-road motorcycles.

Like the others, UCCS has an emergency notification system that hooks up to cell phones and landlines in classrooms. The university does not have a loudspeaker system or locks on every door, but emergency instructions near doors show how to barricade a door in emergencies and find marked tornado shelters. UCCS conducts general evacuation drills.

The UCCS police department, which has 21 officers and patrols the campus 24/7, has an intergovernmental agreement with Colorado Springs police to help each other in emergencies with set enforcement boundaries. Many will remember that UCCS Officer Garrett Swasey was killed last November when he responded to a mass shooting at Planned Parenthood. Just as he responded, CSPD would provide backup to UCCS officers in case of an active shooter on campus.

UCCS police do take tips (though anonymous tips must be made online) and say students are vigilant about filing reports of anything suspicious. Police Lt. Pino says he'll often get several calls within a few minutes about an unattended backpack, for instance. That's important, because it means students spot unusual circumstances and take them seriously.

"The reason why we have a very safe campus," he says, "is because we get those reports."

UCCS has emergency phones throughout campus, and police offer free escorts — no questions asked — to anyone requesting them. UCCS staff say they plan for any emergencies, and the university has an emergency manager and several offices that deal with emergency planning, including conducting regular tabletop exercises.

"I think we have a culture of working together as a university," Dean of Students Steve Linhart says, "whatever the situation."

County Road 40 bridges washed out by flash floods (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

Updated: Aug 23, 2016 10:00 PM MDT
FREMONT COUNTY - County Road 40 is closed after flash flooding in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar, according to Fremont County Sheriff's Office.

The dam on County Road 40 is holding, but Butter Creek and Little Cottonwood Creek are flowing heavy with debris. All homes are intact and all residents in the area are safe.

A reverse 911 notification was sent to residents in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar for a flash flood warning Tuesday evening. The warning was in effect until 9:45 p.m.

Bridges on County Road 40 were washed out by flood water. Fremont Search and Rescue and Fremont Incident Management Team responded as a precaution.

Why Colorado's Mosquitoes Are Not Likely To Spread Zika (Denver Post)

By John Ingold
Denver Post, August 23, 2016

It was an experiment that was part "Outbreak" and part "Trading Places," but researchers at Colorado State University hoped it might answer one of the more pressing public health questions facing the state: Could the Zika virus spread here?

The conventional wisdom was that it couldn't, at least not widely, because the disease's primary vector — a ninja of a mosquito called Aedes aegypti — had no established population in the state. But no one had proved that conventional wisdom true. What if it was wrong? What if the local mosquitoes — particularly those in the Culex genus that already carry the West Nile virus — were also able to transmit Zika?

The mosquito experts at CSU's Arthropod-borne and Infectious Diseases Laboratory decided to put the conventional wisdom to the test. In their lab, they infected Culex mosquitoes with Zika. And then, for a week as the virus incubated inside their study subjects, they held their breath.

Finally, the results:

"We could not get that virus to replicate in the mosquito," CSU professor Brian Foy said of the experiment, the topic of a soon-to-be-published article.

Whew.

When it comes to being disease-carrying menaces, not all mosquitoes are created equal, and that explains why Zika is a public health crisis in Miami and a relative public health trifle in Milliken. There are 54 species of mosquitoes commonly found in Colorado, but none of them are known to be able to transmit Zika — even if they can, like the Culex mosquitoes, transmit other diseases.

"It's still kind of a mystery," Foy said. "There's a very fine-tuning match of virus and mosquito."

The reason is that a mosquito's transmission of a disease is not as simple as taking infected blood in from one person and then backwashing it into another. Instead, the virus must be capable of reproducing inside the mosquito and then making its way into the mosquito's saliva — the real source of contamination since mosquitoes digest the blood they consume as food.

"When a mosquito bites a person, it spits into the bite," Foy said.

With the local-born bugs apparently incapable of carrying Zika, then, the only chance of a mosquito-spread outbreak in Colorado comes from a moonshot: the one-in-a-billion possibility that a Zika-capable mosquito that hitchhiked to the state from elsewhere bites into a Zika-infected person who picked up the virus out of state.

So far, only 21 people in Colorado have tested positive for Zika, and all of them contracted the virus somewhere else.

The only instance of a wayward Aedes aegypti being found in the state came in 2010, in Pueblo County. Another species of mosquito possibly capable of transmitting Zika, Aedes albopictus, has been found sporadically in Weld County, most recently in 2011 and most likely was brought to the state in waste tires disposed of here. But those species are just summer tourists; they can't survive the winter.

"Remember we're in Colorado; we're not in the tropics," said Michael "Doc" Weissmann, the chief entomologist at Colorado Mosquito Control, which does monitoring and eradication for local governments.

Weissmann said none of his company's traps have snagged worrisome Aedes mosquitoes this year.

"It's just the same old, same old," he said.

Eric Aakko of the Weld County Health Department said the county's surveillance efforts have found higher-than-normal levels of West Nile-carrying mosquitoes but no Zika concerns.

That leaves only one other prominent way that the virus can spread within Colorado, and it's one Foy knows a little too well. While conducting research in the African nation of Senegal, Foy contracted Zika in 2008. He then came home and accidentally gave it to his wife, which led to a research article hypothesizing — correctly, it turns out — that Zika can spread through sex.

The experience, though, didn't change his mind about the dangers of Zika in Colorado.

"The risk of all of a sudden having a massive outbreak in Denver is, I would say, infinitesimally small," he said. "From mosquitoes, I can't see it happening."

MONTANA

Yellowstone fish-killing parasite is so prolific it's 'shocking' fish to death

(Missoulian)

By BRETT FRENCH Billings Gazette

PARADISE VALLEY — A previously unidentified strain of parasite has grown so prolific in the Yellowstone River that it is overwhelming whitefish, killing thousands and prompting the state last week to close more than 180 miles of the river to all recreation.

“The sheer parasite loading itself is almost shocking the fish, that that’s what’s killing them,” said Eileen Ryce, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks’ hatchery section chief, during a Tuesday press conference along the banks of the Yellowstone River south of Livingston.

Scientists like Ryce believe that the parasite bloom may be so large and unprecedented in part because the Yellowstone River is experiencing near-record low flows and high water temperatures.

“We could see varying responses (of the parasite) depending on which river it gets into,” said Travis Horton, Region 3 fisheries manager in Bozeman.

The nearby Madison River, where flows are dam controlled, may be more resilient to the parasite since the water’s temperature is cooler, coming from the bottom of Hebgen Lake, and the flows can be maintained at a steadier rate. Likewise, outbreaks of similar parasites in Idaho that killed whitefish in 2011 and 2012 may have been more limited because some of the streams are dam controlled, Horton said.

The FWP officials spoke to a crowd of about 50 people — anglers, local lawmakers, the media and business owners — at a fishing access site where the stench of dead whitefish rotting on the riverbank wafted through the air.

Media, business owners, anglers and others gather for a press conference on the banks of the Yellowstone River. CASEY PAGE, Gazette Staff

Acknowledging the effect of the river’s closure to anglers, floaters and on all of the many businesses that service such recreationists, Gov. Steve Bullock said “the impact goes far beyond the water’s edge.” Yet he said “science needs to guide this.”

“We need to make sure we are not only protecting this watershed and this water but indeed our entire state,” he said, noting that the outdoor recreation industry creates about 64,000 jobs and $6 billion in consumer spending annually in Montana.

When Rep. Alan Redfield, R-Livingston, asked why certain portions of the river couldn’t be open to fishing to ease some of the impact on local businesses, Horton said FWP hopes to contain the parasite outbreak to the Yellowstone and make its duration short-lived.

“We want to try to minimize this,” Horton said. “We don’t want to make this situation worse by rushing ahead.”

Horton added that when the Yellowstone River’s peak water temperatures drop below 55 degrees and stay there, FWP would consider lifting the river closure.

“We’re not looking at it being a permanent closure,” said Jeff Hagener, FWP director.

He noted the rule to enforce the closure is a temporary emergency closure good for 120 days. After that time the department is forced to re-examine the issue to decide whether the closure should be extended.

The fish kill has been documented by FWP crews from the Yellowstone National Park boundary about 100 miles downstream to just west of the town of Big Timber, Horton said. Other public reports of dead whitefish and suckers downstream from Big Timber to Laurel have not been confirmed by FWP.

The microscopic parasite that infects the fish needs two hosts to complete its life cycle, Ryce explained. It starts in a Bryozoan, a moss animal similar to a freshwater sponge. The Bryozoan releases the parasite that fish absorb through their gills. Similar parasites have caused internal bleeding and kidney failure in whitefish in other outbreaks, such as the ones in Idaho.

But the Yellowstone outbreak is different, Ryce said. There are so many spores being found inside the fish that the scientists are calling it a naive reaction.

“What we mean by that is that the immune response that the fish are expressing would suggest that they have not been exposed to this parasite previously,” she said. “That has concerned us since it would suggest it’s a new infection. At least we haven’t seen anything on this scale previously.”

“The other thing that’s concerning is from the histology results there were high numbers of parasites seen in multiple tissues. That suggests to us that the infective load that’s currently out in the river is very high. Why that’s a concern is that the sheer volume of parasites that’s out there makes it very easy for the parasite to be spread to other waters.”

That’s the reason FWP took the unusual step to close down much of the upper river to recreation, Horton said, calling it a “very dramatic step that we took.” It’s also why the agency is stressing that the best way to fight the spread of the parasite, along with other aquatic invasive species, is to clean, drain and dry all boats and fishing equipment.

FWP crews will continue to search for dead and dying fish in the Yellowstone River and its tributaries like the Stillwater and Boulder rivers to try to determine the extent of the outbreak.

“I hope we can continue to work together, recognizing that the long-term objective is to protect this valley and the river,” Gov. Bullock said.

Yet Ryce noted that FWP staff doesn’t expect the parasite to disappear, even with colder water temperatures and higher river flows. However, if the fish are given time to adapt they may build up some immunity to the parasite and recover.

NORTH DAKOTA

Occupying the Prairie: Tensions Rise as Tribes Move to Block a Pipeline (NY Times)

By JACK HEALY

August 23, 2016

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. — Horseback riders, their faces streaked in yellow and black paint, led the procession out of their tepee-dotted camp. Two hundred people followed, making their daily walk a mile up a rural highway to a patch of prairie grass and excavated dirt that has become a new kind of battlefield, between a pipeline and American Indians who say it will threaten water supplies and sacred lands.

The Texas-based company building the Dakota Access pipeline, Energy Transfer Partners, calls the project a major step toward the United States' weaning itself off foreign oil. The company says the nearly 1,170-mile buried pipeline will infuse millions of dollars into local economies and is safer than trucks and train cars that can topple and spill and crash and burn.

But the people who stood at the gates of a construction site where crews had been building an access road toward the pipeline viewed the project as a wounding intrusion onto lands where generations of their ancestors hunted bison, gathered water and were born and buried, long before treaties and fences stamped a different order onto the Plains.

People have been gathering since April, but as hundreds more poured in over the past two weeks, confrontations began rising among protesters, sheriff's officers and construction workers with the pipeline company. Local officials are struggling to handle hundreds of demonstrators filling the roads to protest and camp out in once-empty grassland about an hour south of Bismarck, the state capital.

More than 20 people have been arrested on charges including disorderly conduct and trespassing onto the construction site. The pipeline company says it was forced to shut down construction this month after protesters threatened its workers and threw bottles and rocks at contractors' vehicles.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier of Morton County, who has led the law enforcement response, said at a news conference that he had received reports of weapons and gunshots around the demonstration, and that protesters were getting ready to throw pipe bombs at a line of officers standing between a rally and the construction site.

Leaders from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's path, say the protests are peaceful. Weapons, drugs and alcohol are prohibited from the protest camp. Children march in the daily demonstrations. The leaders believed the reports of pipe bombs were a misinterpretation of their calls for demonstrators to get out their wooden chanupa pipes — which have deep spiritual importance — and pass them through the crowd.

The conflict may reach a crucial moment on Wednesday in a federal court hearing. The tribe has sued to block the pipeline and plans to ask a judge in Washington to effectively halt construction.

The pipeline runs overwhelmingly along private land, but where it crosses bodies of water, federal rules come into play and federal approvals are required.

The tribe says the pipeline's route under the Missouri River near here could threaten its water supplies if the pipeline leaks or breaks, and it says the United States Army Corps of Engineers failed to do proper cultural and historical reviews before granting federal approvals for the pipeline.

"This is our homeland," said Phyllis Young, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux. "We are Dakota. Dakota means friend or ally. Dakota Access has taken our name."

In legal filings, the corps rejects those claims. It says it consulted extensively with tribes, including the Standing Rock Sioux, and it says that tribe has failed to describe specific cultural sites that would be damaged by the pipeline. Energy Transfer Partners says it has the necessary state and federal permits and hopes to finish construction by the end of the year. The pipeline's route starts in the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota and ends in Illinois.

With the fate of the land here and this $3.7 billion project in the air, people here have decided to take action. They are occupying the prairie.

Echoing protests against the now-scuttled Keystone XL pipeline, environmental activists and other tribes from the Dakotas, the rest of the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest have been arriving to camp in the open fields and protest near the parcel where the pipeline company has secured an agreement with the landowner to build.

The protesters sleep in tents and tepees, cook food in open-air kitchens and share stories and strategies around evening campfires. There is even a day care. At morning meetings, speakers warn parents to keep their children away from the Missouri River at sunset, and remind one another they are camped out in prayer.

"It's a major movement in Indian country," said CJ Clifford, a member of the Oglala Lakota, who drove up from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He saw the protests as part of a historical continuum reaching to Little Bighorn. This battle, he said, was being waged peacefully.

For many, the effort was about reclaiming a stake in ancestral lands that had been whittled down since the 1800s, treaty by broken treaty.

"Lands were constantly getting reduced, shaken up," said Dave Archambault II, the tribal chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux. "I could give you a list of every wrongdoing this government did to our people. All of that is frustration pent up, and it's being recognized."

He added, “It’s a tipping point for our nations.”

This month, a line of sheriff’s officers retreated in the face of riders on horseback circling and yipping through the grass. (Tribal members said that the display was a Lakota gesture of introduction, and that they have no quarrel with law enforcement.)

There have been no moves so far to disband the camp or keep people from demonstrating. But Sheriff Kirchmeier told reporters that the demonstration had become an “unlawful protest,” and Gov. Jack Dalrymple, citing “public safety risks,” declared a state of emergency on Friday.

Local law enforcement officers set up a barricade on the main road leading to the pipeline site, and officials here in Morton County called a special meeting on Monday to talk about the traffic and how to handle a hundreds-strong protest that could linger for weeks or months.

At the sprawling campsite down the road from the protest site, there had been portable toilets, 500-gallon tanks of drinking water and an air-conditioned trailer with medical supplies provided by the state. But late Monday night, people at the camp said the medical trailer and water tanks had been removed, leaving them to scramble for a new water source for hundreds of people.

After a prayer ceremony at the construction site one recent afternoon, a few young men on horseback opened the gate and rode onto the land. A few days earlier they might have been arrested and accused of trespassing, but that day there were no officers to stop them.

The pipeline company said that it temporarily stopped work here this month while “law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests,” but that construction was continuing elsewhere.

Energy Transfer Partners has sued Mr. Archambault and six other people over the protests. In a federal lawsuit filed last week, the company accused them and other protesters of blocking access to the construction site, threatening workers and trespassing onto private land.

Jon Eagle Sr., the historic preservation officer for the Standing Rock Sioux, watched from the side of the road as the young men rode into the grassy field, toward a construction floodlight and heaps of excavated dirt. He did not want the pipeline to breach this land. But he did not seem to approve of this either.

“They need to stay out,” he said. “They don’t know where the burials are. They don’t know where the sacred sites are. I’m trying my best to keep the peace.”

Emergency services recalled from Dakota Access Pipeline protest site (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Max Grossfeld |

Posted: Tue 4:19 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 6:24 PM, Aug 23, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. - Demonstrators protesting construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline had been using state resources at their camp until Monday, when the Department of Emergency Services decided to recall them.

Those resources included a mobile command trailer, a medical aid trailer and a water trailer.

A DES official says Tribal Emergency Management requested the resources, which were supposed to be used on tribal land. He says the services brought the trailers back when he heard the trailers were located on land owned by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Reports of unlawful behavior, he says, also influenced his decision.

"This isn't a flood, a fire, an icestorm. This is an event that originally needed some support for the responders dealing with it and at this stage in the game, the event's not an emergency," says Greg Wilz, Homeland Security Division director.

Wilz says all the equipment is back in Bismarck and ready to use in case of emergency.

People concerned with Highway 1806 barricade ask Morton County Commissioners for answers (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Megan Hahn |

Posted: Tue 9:43 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Wed 8:07 AM, Aug 24, 2016

MANDAN, N.D. - The Morton County Board of Commissioners heard public testimony regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline for nearly in an hour at Tuesday's meeting.

All those who chose to speak during the hearing were in opposition of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

County Commissioners say the purpose of the meeting was to give people the chance to weigh-in on the matter in a peaceful manner.

About a dozen people addressed Morton County Commissioners in front of a packed room Tuesday. The recurring frustration for many: removal of barriers along Highway 1806, which restrict access to areas south of Mandan including Cannon Ball and Fort Yates.

"I didn't appreciate it when they put up that block. I have granddaughters and daughters that work at Fort Yates and live in Bismarck. It's humiliating and intimidating when the cops come up to your car and look in your car like we are doing something wrong," said a speaker who addressed the Commission.

"I am embarrassed for the law enforcement officers that I meet on the road, blocking people from seeing this protest," said a woman who addressed the Morton County Commission.

Highway 1806 was blocked up last Tuesday past the veteran's cemetery because of public safety concerns, according to the Morton County Sheriff's department. Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier didn't speak at Tuesday's meeting.

While many spoke out against the traffic interception point, the Board of Commissioners deferred all questions regarding the barricade to law enforcement. The County Commission says they do not have the authority to remove the barricade.

"We thought it was very important to allow these individuals who are protesting to have a voice in a public forum. I think that's very important. As it relates to the traffic control point itself, that is a question that I'll have to refer back to county sheriff, our incident commander Kyle Kirchmeier," said Chairman Cody Schulz, Morton County Board of Commissioners.

Many of those present say they want answers from government officials.

"I don't want any part of it. I don't think that's right. And it's not fair. And that blockade, that should not be there. That's all I have to say," said another speaker.

The Board of Commissioners says they're working toward creating an open and peaceful dialogue with protesters.

Those who spoke against the blockade say not only does it affect commuters driving to work, but it's reduced business for local shops and reduced access to recreation areas.

Both the North Dakota Highway Patrol and North Dakota Department of Transportation have the authority under North Dakota Century Code to close a highway. This decision to temporarily close Highway 1806 was made by DOT and HP August 17.

Pipeline foes take fight to Bismarck, Washington D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 23, 2016 at 6:38 p.m.

BISMARCK – Waving the flags of their tribes and singing the songs of their ancestors, more than 200 protesters marched across a Missouri River bridge in Bismarck Tuesday ahead of a federal court hearing that will determine the fate of the Dakota Access oil pipeline's route in North Dakota.

“This water belongs to all of us,” Vic Camp, a 41-year-old from South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation, said as he rallied the crowd before the march. “We all know that tomorrow in Washington they're going to make a decision that affects every single one of us.”

The march across the 2,370-foot-long Veterans Memorial Bridge aimed to show solidarity with the 2,000-some protesters encamped about 50 miles south on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, near the pipeline construction site along State Highway 1806 north of Cannon Ball.

Indeed, many marchers were from the campsite, including 25-year-old Kin-sin-ta Joseph and her 16-year-old sister Kis-dya:n-te' Joseph, who got help from a portable PA system so their river song would carry over the wind and traffic noise. The members of northern California's Hoopa

Valley Tribe said their chairman urged members to assist Standing Rock, and about 25 made the trip.

While they've taken part in protests before, joining a blockade against logging companies just a few months ago, the older sister said it's never been this big, with so many tribes involved.

"This is really spectacular," she said. "We've been waiting for this kind of gathering."

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline. It would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the reservation and be the largest oil pipeline from the Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day to Patoka, Ill.

Standing Rock members oppose the river crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped construction at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct. But the protest hasn't impacted pipeline construction elsewhere along the four-state route, including in North Dakota, company spokeswoman Lisa Dillinger said via email.

"We have temporarily deferred grading activities across a short section of the right-of-way (less than 1 mile) while law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests in light of the fact that we have the necessary permits and approvals to work at this site," she said.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., will consider Wednesday the tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. A lawyer for the tribe said the judge has indicated he will rule from the bench or shortly after the hearing.

Film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside the courthouse in Washington, and actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the rally, according to a statement.

Protesters on Tuesday blocked traffic only briefly while crossing the street to get to the bridge's pedestrian walkway, and law enforcement reported no problems with the march. Dozens of passing drivers honked their horns in solidarity, though one yelled an expletive aimed at Native Americans.

Camp said protesters will refrain from violence if the judge's ruling doesn't go their way.

"The only way violence will happen is if the cops provoke it and they attack us," he told Forum News Service, adding, "We have our women and we have our children. We have grandparents here."

When asked what will happen if the judge denies the injunction and Dakota Access tries to resume construction, Camp said, "Then we'll start blockading."

"We'll do what we can with our bodies to keep the machines from coming in," he said.

Four labor unions sent Gov. Jack Dalrymple a letter strongly encouraging him to use the power of his office to keep workers safe and ensure protesters are “following the letter of the law.”

The general presidents of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and United Association (UA), said the actions of protesters endanger not only themselves but construction workers and equipment, as well as local law enforcement who’ve bolstered their local presence.

They said the pipeline has created about 4,000 construction jobs in North Dakota along 346 miles of pipeline.

“While they may have a right to protest, we also have a right to do our jobs in a safe environment,” they said.

Protesters, insisting their actions are peaceful, appealed to the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and churches to send observers to the site. They also continued to rail against what they contend is an unnecessarily heavy law enforcement presence, including a checkpoint about six miles south of Mandan that restricts southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to emergency response vehicles and local traffic such as farmers, ranchers and homeowners.

Standing Rock Protestors Find New Resources After State Withdraws Support (KXMB TV, Bismarck)

Published 08/23 2016 04:04PM

Updated 08/23 2016 07:03PM

Protestors of the Dakota Access Pipeline are finding ways to sustain their effort after state officials pulled relief resources from their camp near Cannonball.

Ben Smith has the story.

For nearly a week.

Several state-owned trailers provided water, shelter, and a place to help those sick or hurt.

Monday morning, news came that these resources would soon be gone.

"It was shocking, it was shocking. I didn't expect that,"

"It's a little different now because everything is going to be outdoors where we had the convenience of having everything indoors in case of the rain, weather wind. Resources got taken away from us quick but we got them back," says Joenelle Leingang

As fast as they disappeared, new support came in.

Standing Rock Paramedics erected a tent in which to treat people.

The tribes road department also pitched in, delivering a giant tank of water.

"They keep this full to fill our buffalo tanks with water. We have two, three more possibly coming in from the Cheyenne River who had donated theirs so water supply is going to be back on track again," says Leingang

(Ben Smith, KX News) Not all state-resources have gone. There is one ambulance that is still here, to provide a backup for standing rock paramedics,

"They left the ambulance as an extra resource for us. Because like I said, we still provide services to all the reservation so of course our number of ambulances is limited," says DeAnn Werre, Standing Rock Paramedic

She says it's not your typical day as a Standing Rock paramedic.

"We've been able to bring in extra staff to be able to provide services,"

"We've pulled together and got our resources together and are able to provide the same services for people,"

It seems to be the theme of the effort, pulling together under one cause.

It's very overwhelming, it's great, phone calls, where can I bring it to...

I just would like the public to see for themselves. There is nothing negative going on here at all,

She says for now, this area near the Cannonball river has become a second home.

Protesters attend Morton County Commission meeting (Bismarck Tribune)

CAROLINE GRUESKIN and LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

15 hrs ago

The Dakota Access Pipeline protests returned to the Bismarck-Mandan area Tuesday, as protesters walked across the Memorial Bridge and testified before the Morton County Commission.

Several speakers asked the commissioners to remove a roadblock that prevents drivers from traveling south on Highway 1806 from Mandan to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, though commission chairman Cody Schulz said after the meeting the commission does not have authority to remove the block.

Speakers told the commissioners and the approximately 30 people who attended the meeting that the block impedes travel, punishes the tribe's economy and can be humiliating to cross.

The highway has been blocked since Aug. 17, when Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the protest had become unlawful and the road unsafe, points the protesters have contested throughout the week.

Marilyn Kary, who works in Fort Yates, said the roadblock makes it difficult for teachers on the reservation who commute.

Chase Iron Eyes, the Democratic candidate for North Dakota's lone U.S. House seat, said the roadblock was intended to punish the tribe and has disadvantaged businesses in the region.

He said Native Americans and white North Dakotans tend to live in separate worlds.

"Interactions should be encouraged," he said, suggesting the block did the opposite by preventing commerce.

Cody Hall of Eagle Butte, S.D., spokesman for the Red Warrior Camp, said the blockade simply sets the wrong tone.

"It felt like what black people felt in the South," he told commissioners, adding that he was questioned at the blockade, while a white friend was not.

Clyde Bellecourt, co-founder of the American Indian Movement, asked members of the Morton County Commission to consider what future generations would think if the water were contaminated.

"I'm 80 years old. I've lived my life. I don't want my grandchildren to ever question," he said. "Grandpa, why didn't you say nothing?"

He encouraged the commissioners to visit the protest camps.

"You have nothing to be afraid of," he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, about 200 protesters took their cause to the Memorial Bridge, staging a peaceful march from Bismarck to Mandan.

Banners, bright regalia and flags of many Native American nations were presented as smart phones and a drone documented the latest chapter in the protest.

At the staging area, multiple speakers encouraged songs and prayers from participants. Drums pounded in support of discontinuing pipeline construction.

Many protesters held up bottled water mixed with oil to represent the contamination they believe the pipeline would cause to their drinking water, reminding everyone present the water had to be safe for future generations.

Shouts of "save our water" could be heard by protesters as they ascended the bridge.

There was little presence of law enforcement for most of the demonstration except for when North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and local police briefly blocked traffic as marchers crossed to Front Avenue to reach the pedestrian portion of the bridge. The protesters kept to the walkway and held up their signs as motorists honked their horns.

Those gathered Tuesday insisted their message has been a peaceful one.

"I am here because of the water, because of the grandchildren," said Nora Old Man, who held up a water bottle and sang with her grandsons.

Sunny Red Bear, of Eagle Butte, S.D., said she was participating in the march for her 7-year-old son who joined her Tuesday.

"This is about our future. This is about thinking generationally. This is about everyone it affects, community after community. They are choosing oil, wealth and money over our future. I want to protect that the best I can and to show my son to stand up for what's right."

SOUTH DAKOTA

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city

(Rapid City Journal)

Mike Anderson Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 24, 2016

Rapid City will soon hire 15 new firefighters, thanks in large part to a $1 million federal grant awarded to the city fire department last week.

The new hires will fill a staffing shortage that Fire Chief Mike Maltaverne has urged the city council to address since 2014.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant, or SAFER, administered through the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will pay the salaries and benefits of nine new firefighters for the next two years. The other six out of 15 new positions will be paid for out of the city's budget.

“In 2014, we started to identify that, with the way our demands for service were increasing, our resources were starting to spread thin,” Maltaverne said on Tuesday. "Our firefighters were going on more and more calls and the staff increases weren't keeping up with the demand for our services.”

In a memo to Mayor Steve Allender earlier this year, Maltaverne said that in 1995, the city's fire department had 81 operational firefighters with an annual call volume of 3,600, or 44 calls per firefighter. Rapid City has grown significantly in population and geographical area since the 90s, and with that growth has come more fires.

The department's annual call volumes have grown an average of 7.6 percent since then, Maltaverne said, putting last year's total call volume for the department at 17,012 for its 117 firefighters, or about 145 calls per firefighter.

Maltaverne knew it would require some extra funding to get 15 new firefighters on board to fill the service gap and ease the pressure on existing personnel. So he asked the Rapid City Council to pay for six employees if he could find a grant to pay for nine more.

“We thought that would be more realistic, that the city would be able to fund that,” Maltaverne said.

The City Council has already agreed to fund three positions, and the mayor has included another three in next year's proposed budget which will be the subject of a public discussion at 6:30 p.m. today in the city council chamber.

"We clearly articulated the need for additional staffing and our elected officials along with FEMA responded, and for that we are grateful," Maltaverne said.

Though the SAFER grant will only pay the other nine new firefighters through two years of service, Maltaverne is confident that will be plenty of time for the council to figure out how to keep funding those positions indefinitely.

"What would be the point of hiring firefighters for two years and then having the city lay them off?" Maltaverne said. "That doesn't solve the long-term problem."

The grant calls for the new hires to be made within 180 days, a deadline Maltaverne has no worries about meeting. This spring, the Rapid City Fire Department went through a hiring process and compiled a selection of suitable candidates.

"We reviewed that and we feel there are a sufficient number of qualified candidates to fill those positions," he said. "We've got a really good deep list of potential employees."

Maltaverne hopes to have all 15 slots filled by Jan. 1, 2017, which is when the SAFER grant funds will be awarded to the city.

Applying for the grant was a comprehensive and competitive process, Maltaverne said, adding that he sees FEMA's decision to award the funds as a form of validation.

"Getting this grant clearly confirms that the need was there," he said.

New fire burning near Angostura Reservoir (KBHB radio)

Gary Matthews

KBHB Radio
August 23, 2016

HOT SPRINGS, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire Dispatch says federal, state and volunteer fire crews are battling a wildfire in the southern black hills.

The Maitland CA fire is located approximately 6.5 miles southwest of Angostura Reservoir.

Dispatch says the fire had reached 34.5 acres as of Tuesday afternoon.

They list the fire as human caused.

There is no word on any structures being threatened.

UTAH

American Fork fish could contain toxic mine waste (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 23 2016 05:30PM • Updated 57 minutes ago

Some of the sediments that have turned American Fork River's normally clear waters into a black soup could be loaded with arsenic, lead and other toxic metals associated with historical mining operations at the scenic canyon's headwaters.

Officials from several local, federal and state agencies gathered at Tibble Fork Dam on Tuesday to figure out what to do about the sediment releases, which commenced sometime after the 10-acre lake began draining Saturday as part of $7.3 million project to upgrade the aging earthen structure.

The incident shocked conservationists who fear an ecological catastrophe is unfolding in one of Utah's most popular natural areas, located in the Wasatch Mountains just outside Provo.

"I think it's a $20 million cleanup and it will take years," said Mark Allen, founder of the group Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District sponsored the project with federal matching dollars in an effort to make the dam seismically safe and extend its life for another 50 years. The lake bed is coated with 5 to 10 feet of fine-grained black sediments that have accumulated behind the dam and impaired its ability to store water, though the lake has remained a popular, well-stocked trout fishery.

A sediment release "was not unexpected, given this was a rehabilitation project," said the district's lawyer, John Jacobs. "There may have been a bit more than was anticipated. This is a 60-year-old dam, and it has a lot of sediments behind it."

During the review process, federal officials had considered dredging the lake bed as a way to restore the dam's usefulness, but testing indicated that levels of arsenic and lead exceeded safety standards and made these sediments too dangerous to move, according to the environmental assessment conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The metals contaminating Tibble Fork originated in Live Yankee, Globe and other abandoned gold and silver mines that perforate the head of American Fork Canyon's northern branch, according to Allen. He says the state is doing too little to hold landowners accountable for these environmental "time bombs." Many of these old mines are located on land now owned by Snowbird Ski Resort in and around its Mineral Basin.

The cost of extracting and disposing of the material accumulated in the Tibble Fork lake bed would be $8.4 million, so the option was abandoned in favor of raising the dam by 9 feet. The environmental assessment insisted the contractor use "best management practices" to ensure the toxic sediments were not pushed downstream.

The measures are detailed in a construction permit issued this year by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which would not immediately provide a copy of the permit. It did send personnel to the dam Tuesday to determine whether the project was in compliance with the permit.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also sent emergency-response personnel to the site.

"It was so damning that they didn't want to touch the sediment," Allen said. "Your project is only as good as your most stupid backhoe operator. It said it was too toxic to remove it, but now it's in the river. How are you going to clean up 10 miles of trout streams?"

The water district hired Provo-based RB&G Engineering to design the project and Whitaker Construction, of Brigham City, to build it. RB&G's project leader, Brad Price, did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

Allen and members of Trout Unlimited spent Monday in the canyon, photographing the sludge pouring down the river channel, which smelled of gunpowder and rotting fish.

"In the main canyon, the water looks like Mississippi mud," said Grant Bench, an officer with a Utah County Trout Unlimited chapter. "I don't know how a cold-water fish is supposed to survive in that."

But federal and state officials were not ready to declare a disaster Tuesday.

"We are taking samples above [the dam] and below to establish baseline and impact below in the water column," said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

Division of Wildlife Resources aquatics biologist Mike Slater zapped the creek in various places with electroshock equipment Tuesday in search of breathing fish.

WYOMING

Wildfires close Yellowstone's south entrance, burn near west entrance (Billings Gazette)

By JORDON NIEDERMEIER jniedermeier@billingsgazette.com

All roads were open in Yellowstone National Park Tuesday despite several fires growing in the area including a blaze blocking access to the Park's south entrance.

The West Entrance remained open. But, the Maple fire has burned more than 27,000 acres about five miles northeast of West Yellowstone and reached within a tenth-mile of the roadway to the west entrance. The fire grew more than 4,600 acres on Monday and is mostly growing on the north side of the burn area. It is not expected to cross the road to the west entrance. If fire activity or smoke increases, pilot cars will be used to guide cars through the area, said a National Park Service news release.

The release said fire activity closed a stretch of U.S. Highway 89 in Grand Teton National Park between Leeks Marina and north to Flaggs Ranch. The closure affects travelers planning to use Yellowstone National Park's south entrance. The road closure is expected to stay in effect until Wednesday. Lizard Creek Campground has also been evacuated.

About 100 people are monitoring the Maple fire. Resources including firefighting aircraft and engines are in the area. However, the fire is not being actively suppressed as it was determined to be caused by a lightning strike and wildfires are an integral part of the Yellowstone ecosystem, said Barbara Dougan, NPS fire information officer.

Dougan said firefighters will work to keep the blaze north of the roadway and east of the Madison River, away from the town of West Yellowstone.

“At this time the fire is doing very well on that side and doing the job of reducing downed debris that’s on the ground,” she said.

Dougan said officials are still working to determine the cause of the nearby 190 acre Boundary fire but it is believed to have been caused by human activity. Firefighters worked to suppress that wildfire and it was about 85 percent contained as of Tuesday morning.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Tropical System Eyes Florida, Southeast US, May Develop Into Hurricane (USA Today)

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, August 23, 2016

What’s now just a disorganized mass of thunderstorms 1,600 miles from Miami could develop into the first hurricane to hit Florida in nearly 11 years late this weekend, forecasters warn.

There’s a 60% chance the storm system, known for now only as “99L,” could develop into a tropical depression in the Atlantic Ocean later this week. If it swirls into a tropical storm, it will be named Hermine (Her-MEEN).

The system then could rapidly intensify into a large, potentially dangerous major hurricane that would target the Southeast U.S. coast Sunday or Monday, Weather Underground meteorologist Jeff Masters said.

However, as meteorologist John Morales of NBC-6 in Miami notes, “tropical weather forecasting is a very inexact science.”

Overall, 6- or 7-day forecasts of tropical cyclone location and intensity are “generally not very good,” according to Penn State University meteorologist Jon Nese.

But whether or not the system becomes a tropical storm or hurricane, gusty winds, heavy rains, and possible flash floods and mudslides could occur over the islands of the northeastern Caribbean Sea and the Bahamas, the National Hurricane Center said.

By Sunday, the system could bring deteriorating weather and sea conditions to the east coast of Florida, AccuWeather said.

Most of the computer models meteorologists use to forecast tropical weather show the system hitting the Southeast U.S. between Florida and South Carolina sometime Sunday or later, Masters said.

One computer model, the European, shows the storm crossing Florida and emerging as a major hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico by next week, according to WeatherBell meteorologist Ryan Maue. But the American model, the GFS, does not show that movement.

The most recent hurricane to strike Florida was Wilma in October 2005, AccuWeather said.

A separate system, Tropical Storm Gaston, is projected continue spinning in the central Atlantic. It could become a hurricane later this week, weather officials say. That storm however, is expected to remain over the open Atlantic, though it could stir up strong surf along the eastern shores of Florida, said Scott Spratt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla.

Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

Inside Radio, August 24, 2016

Each natural disaster presents its own challenges, and the floods that have inundated portions of Southern Louisiana are presenting wireless companies and federal regulators with a now-familiar picture. FM radio stepped in to fill a void left by cellphones rendered useless during an emergency.

"I just cannot thank you guys enough for getting the message out," Denham Springs, LA mayor Gerard Landry said in an appearance on Guaranty Broadcasting's "Talk 107.3" WBRP, Baton Rouge. "I haven't seen a newspaper or watched TV for eight or nine days but everybody has a radio—thank goodness for that," he added.

His comments illustrate the emergency role radio plays during natural disasters, one that broadcasters have repeatedly used as an incentive to wireless companies reluctant to activate FM chips already installed in most cellphones. It's been a tough sell.

"We had stations on the air 24/7 giving out information—this has been horrific and I guess people who are not living here don't understand," Louisiana Association of Broadcasters president Polly Prince Johnson said. "Some of these places didn't have electricity and if the FM chip was on their phones they could have been listening to our local broadcasters who were giving lifesaving information."

Helping to strengthen radio's case was the fact that AT&T suffered a massive outage across the region, leaving a large number of residents and the Louisiana State Police with phones that didn't work. Guaranty Media's Baton Rouge market manager Gordy Rush says when flooding closed a 55-mile stretch of Interstate 12 it left thousands of people stranded on the highway for more than 28 hours with radio as a lifeline after his stations jerry-rigged a connection to the state police to relay critical information to drivers stuck miles from any exit ramp. "This all played out on the radio," Rush said.

Johnson says it wasn't just stuck motorists who were impacted by the cellular outage. It was also families trying to reconnect. "People couldn't make phone calls for three or four days and then it was sporadic at best—so loved ones were calling the radio stations trying to get the information out," he explained.

While the wireless industry points out that the new Emergency Alert System sends alerts to cellphones on a localized basis, last week in Louisiana it seems the messages were having the opposite effect as intended. With frequent alerts around the clock, many people whose phones did work became annoyed and switched them off to preserve battery life. "It was a nuisance," Rush said.

More than a dozen people lost their lives during the Louisiana flooding and while industry lobbyists are likely to tread carefully so as not to appear to be capitalizing on Louisiana's suffering, those high stakes are what many broadcasters say proves the need for radio on smartphones. "If the FM chip was turned on, people are able to tell them that the water is rising and they should get their stuff and get out," Johnson said. "It's in times of disaster when it is so important and it can save lives."

Added Rush, "This is a matter of life or death."

After briefly flirting with the idea of lobbying for a federally imposed chip mandate in 2010, the National Association of Broadcasters quickly backed away from the idea. For the past six years, the NAB has instead pushed the telecom industry to activate FM chips on its own. In the ensuing period, Sprint embraced the NextRadio app—which activates the FM chip—three years ago, and by the end of this year, AT&T and T-Mobile will follow Sprint's lead. The exception is any customer that uses an iPhone since Apple doesn't include FM radio technology inside its handsets.

"NAB continues to support voluntary activation of FM chips by the carriers," spokesman Dennis Wharton said. "This is a no-brainer from a public safety perspective, as FEMA's [administrator] Craig Fugate has noted. We hope all the carriers—along with Apple—will look at the Baton Rouge tragedy as an opportunity to do the right thing and voluntarily light up the chips."

Back in Louisiana, more than 100,000 households remain without power, but some things are beginning to return to normal. Rush is back at his desk after he jumped from market manager to air personality, spending 32 hours on the air from Friday until Tuesday as some staffers were coping with flooded homes.

Guaranty Media began simulcasting "Talk 107" WBRP on its 100,000-watt classic rock sister "Eagle 98.1" WDGL throughout the storm while country "100.7 The Tiger" WTGE relayed WAFB-TV with station cut-ins. Rush says for a time it looked as though WBRP may have been under threat as its transmitter building was six inches from taking on water after drainage canals backed up and overflowed into its industrial part tower site. Fortunately, the water eventually receded.

Rush, who made it through Hurricane Katrina a decade ago, says the two disasters have left him with an unmistakable conclusion. "Twice now, cellular phones have not been dependable; they've failed," he said, adding, "Radio is a lifeline through this stuff."

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 24, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A rechanneling project through the Garden of the Gods is expected to remove 100 properties from the floodplain… The Colorado Springs Independent interviewed the three colleges in the area about their plans for dealing with disasters, including an active shooter…. Bridges on a county road near the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar were taken out by flooding… The *Denver Post* explains why Colorado mosquitos are not likely to carry the Zika virus.
- **Montana:** An extraordinary outbreak of a parasite killing whitefish caused the state to shut down 180 miles of the Yellowstone River to all recreational uses.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest, including one in the *NY Times*: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz explains the decision to withdraw state-owned resources was because the situation is not an emergency, the protestors are not on state-owned land, plus reports of criminal activity. Water has been supplied by the tribe's road department. Protestors marched over a bridge peacefully and staying on walkways. About 30 people attended a meeting of the Mandan county commissioners; all those who spoke opposed the pipeline, and many spoke against the traffic barrier set up by law enforcement, saying it hurts local businesses and farmers, is humiliating, and prevents people from seeing the protest. Commissioners said the decision was by law enforcement and is not theirs to overturn. The tribe says a leak at the pipeline could contaminate its water supply and sacred sites. The company says construction has only stopped at this one mile of the 1,172 mile pipeline, which would be the largest source for moving Bakken crude oil. Four unions wrote to Governor Dalrymple asking that he make it safe for construction workers to do their jobs. A federal judge is expected to rule today on a request for an injunction to halt the project. Tribal leaders say they will remain peaceful, but will blockade if the ruling goes against them. So far, there have been 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct.
- **South Dakota:** A $1 million FEMA SAFER g rant will pay for nine new firefighters in Rapid City for two years… A new wildfire broke out near Angostura Reservoir.
- **Utah:** An attempt to upgrade the Tibble Fork Dam has resulted in lake sediments being released over the weekend that have contaminated the American Fork River, apparently with toxic mine waste. Environmentalists fear an ecological disaster. The presence of toxic sediments had led to an earlier decision to upgrade the dam rather than dredge the lake – but draining the lake to work on the dam appears to have done the damage.
- **Wyoming:** Several fires were burning in the area of Yellowstone National Park, though all roads within the park remained open. One fire south of the park blocked access to that entrance. The fires were caused naturally and were not being actively suppressed.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: *USA Today* reports on possible hurricanes developing in the Atlantic. … *Inside Radio* says the Louisiana floods show the need to activate FM radio chips in cellphones, which do not work when cell towers are down.

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Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

STORIES

COLORADO

Flood project through Garden of the Gods will reroute Colorado Springs floodplain (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Matt Steiner

Two years after city officials teamed with residents of a West Side Colorado Springs neighborhood to plan flood mitigation and reconstruction of Camp Creek, a project to remove more than 100 properties from the floodplain is about to begin.

On Monday, crews could begin the first phase of the more than $30 million project rebuilding about 5,100 feet of channel through Garden of the Gods Park and the Rock Ledge Ranch.

The work could be potentially lifesaving for residents of the Pleasant Valley neighborhood when heavy rains pound the Waldo Canyon fire burn area in the mountains to the west.

"As a community, we can't let our guard down," said Colorado Springs Emergency Manager Bret Waters. "Even though we're seeing some growth, it doesn't mean the risk will go away."

The Camp Creek mitigation project discussed in the spring of 2014 attracted more than 100 residents who helped choose project priorities. The result was a total rebuild of the deteriorating concrete channel through Pleasant Valley, meaning the creek along 31st Street will be refurbished with grass, shrubs, rocks and a relocated bike path.

But first, the work upstream must be done.

"Reducing the flows (through Garden of the Gods) will allow us to build the rest of the project," said project engineer Mike Chaves.

Construction crews will first install a series of rock steps in the creek, reshape banks and plant vegetation near the channel through the ranch and the park. The cross vanes, Chaves said, are intended to slow water and debris. Erosion has been accelerating each year because of floodwaters pouring off the Waldo Canyon burn scar.

The channel stabilization will cost $1.1 million, said city spokeswoman Kim Melchor. Almost $800,000 of that comes from a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant with the rest of the money coming from the city.

That work will likely be followed by construction of a large sediment detention pond at the north end of the park in early 2017, Chaves said.

That phase will cost almost $8 million, Melchor said. It will include a large berm stretching from 30th Street to the hills in the park that can dam floodwaters.

When the entire project is complete, more than 200 Pleasant Valley residents will no longer be in the floodplain.

"The whole intent is to protect the park, protect Rock Ledge Ranch and the downstream communities," Melchor said.

Colleges and universities put emphasis on planning for disasters, including active shooters: Planning for the worst (Colorado Springs Independent)

By J. Adrian Stanley @JAdrianStanley1

On April 16, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho, a senior at Virginia Tech, killed 32 people and wounded another 17 in two separate shootings.

Until June of this year, when Omar Mateen killed 49 people and wounded 53 others in Orlando's Pulse nightclub, the Virginia Tech shooting was the deadliest by a single perpetrator in U.S. history.

Virginia Tech held sway over the country, leading to widespread grief and fear, changing gun laws, prompting deeper discussions on mental illness and leading many colleges and universities to take a second look at their emergency plans.

Back in 2007, institutions of higher education tended to have procedures for protecting their campus communities from natural disasters like fires, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes, and often some man-made accidents as well, like chemical spills. But most had dedicated less — or no — energy to drafting plans to deal with an active shooter rampaging through the campus.

That changed after Virginia Tech. Just as "duck and cover" was a part of common school instruction during the Cold War, in today's age of mass shootings, students now learn to "run, hide, fight."

What Cho did was an eyeopener for school leaders. The gunman, who had known mental health issues, fatally shot two students in a residence hall, walked away, changed his clothes, and ran errands, then calmly entered an academic hall. At some point, he chained shut the exits.

Police were dealing with the first shooting while Cho entered Norris Hall. The university, suspecting the first shooting was of a personal nature, hadn't instructed students, faculty and staff to prepare for an active shooter. In fact, students in Norris reported being simply curious when Cho peeked his head inside their classroom doors before beginning his massacre.

Once the shooting was underway, Cho's victims were largely at a loss to stop his killing spree. Some died trying to hold classroom doors closed, including Professor Liviu Librescu, an Israeli Holocaust survivor, whose body was riddled with bullets as he held his classroom door shut, allowing his students to climb out windows. All but one of the students in Room 204 survived due to his heroism.

Nevertheless, 30 people died in Norris Hall. Cho shot himself before police located him.

"A lot of the [college and university] emergency plans really stepped up after 9/11," UCCS Police Lt. Marc Pino says. "Using common terminology, working on regional resources, things like that — that sort of were identified as issues after 9/11 for responding to emergencies — I would say around that time is when we really stepped things up."

But asked when UCCS began preparing for an active-shooter scenario, Pino says, "Virginia Tech would be when we really started doing emphasis on active shooter, and also our campus developed a student response team as a response.

"Numerous people at Virginia Tech had dealings with the shooter, and no one was really talking together to find out that some larger issues were going on. So, the [UCCS] student response team was [formed] — very shortly after Virginia Tech — [and it] comprises the dean of students office, the chief of police and the head of the counseling center. We sort of field reports from faculty, staff, students, anybody that has a concern about a student. We can sort of reach them before it gets to a critical level."

The *Independent* spoke to representatives at UCCS, Colorado College and Pikes Peak Community College about their emergency plans. While plans and strategies differ, each campus has a plan, along with one or more employees in charge of preparing for emergencies.

Of the three schools, Colorado College, which has about 2,000 students, is the only one without its own police force. John Lauer, co-chair of CC's emergency preparedness group and the college's associate vice president for student life, explains that the school does have a single Colorado Springs police officer assigned to the campus, as well as a campus safety department.

The safety officers — who carry no weapons — walk the campus and look for anything unusual. If a situation warrants it, they call police, with whom the college works closely. Campus safety officers can also take anonymous tips.

The campus does have an emergency plan, last updated in 2012, and a director of campus safety and emergency preparedness — Maggie Santos, a former Colorado Springs Police lieutenant. The plan will be updated soon.

"We're always focused on continuous improvement," Lauer says.

But, he adds, the college stresses that every person has to take responsibility for knowing how to respond, saying, "We're as prepared as every individual is prepared."

CC performs regular fire drills and has started doing active-shooter trainings with resident advisors, as well as sessions open to anyone, or upon request. Lauer says it's important not to drill too often because it can desensitize people in a real emergency.

The campus does contract with a company that sends emergency texts, emails and phone calls when needed to students, staff and faculty, as well as anyone else who wants to be notified.

While not every classroom has a locking door, placards by doors give instructions on what to do in an emergency — such as barricade the door for an active shooter or go to the nearest marked shelter in case of tornado.

CC has cameras throughout campus and a loudspeaker on Palmer Hall. Lauer says the campus is considering replacing that speaker, as well as placing speakers on campus security cars for use in an emergency. Staff in residence halls also have megaphones.

Jim Barrentine is chief of police at PPCC, where he says he was hired five years ago to develop an emergency preparedness plan.

That plan is now the template for the state's community colleges.

At first, Barrentine says most folks at PPCC didn't know how to perform basic safety tasks, like using a fire extinguisher or helping a person in a wheelchair down stairs. He's focused on giving trainings and providing instructional videos for different emergency skills. The school also does lockdown drills for an active-shooter situation, as well as special training, and four or five tabletop exercises meant to mimic a real emergency.

Interestingly, of the three schools, PPCC is the only one with locks on all classroom doors. The college encourages locking those doors during class hours.

With three campuses and 20,000 students, PPCC faces unique challenges. The 18-person police department is distributed among the campuses, where they patrol during business hours.

Barrentine has set up a system so that the campus community will be notified of an emergency immediately through texts, emails, landlines and a speaker system throughout the campus. Barrentine wants to add light boards for the deaf and buzzers for the blind, to ensure they are notified, and he's working on implementing a buddy system to ensure people with disabilities are cared for in an emergency.

He also has hotlines for anonymous tips.

Barrentine says the statewide system of community colleges is working to improve emergency preparedness. But he says PPCC is lucky because unlike many other schools, police are on the scene here.

"In an active shooter [situation]," he says, "security's going to run like everyone else."

Back in 2012, UCCS' emergency plans were tested. The Waldo Canyon Fire was raging nearby, and the campus suddenly became an unofficial evacuation site.

"We had the Air Force Academy cadets here in 2012, we also housed several hundred evacuees in our campus residence halls," UCCS spokesperson Tom Hutton says. "And then in 2013 [during the Black Forest Fire], we were an official Red Cross evacuation site and I think we had half a dozen people here, so we had more when we were an unofficial evacuation site."

Since UCCS is located on a wildland-urban interface, it not only has the normal risks of a university with around 11,300 students, but it also must be prepared for wildfire. Because of that, the university has done mitigation along its borders and, in summer months, UCCS police carry fire extinguishers with water in them, better for fighting wildfires. They also patrol the campus borders on off-road motorcycles.

Like the others, UCCS has an emergency notification system that hooks up to cell phones and landlines in classrooms. The university does not have a loudspeaker system or locks on every door, but emergency instructions near doors show how to barricade a door in emergencies and find marked tornado shelters. UCCS conducts general evacuation drills.

The UCCS police department, which has 21 officers and patrols the campus 24/7, has an intergovernmental agreement with Colorado Springs police to help each other in emergencies with set enforcement boundaries. Many will remember that UCCS Officer Garrett Swasey was killed last November when he responded to a mass shooting at Planned Parenthood. Just as he responded, CSPD would provide backup to UCCS officers in case of an active shooter on campus.

UCCS police do take tips (though anonymous tips must be made online) and say students are vigilant about filing reports of anything suspicious. Police Lt. Pino says he'll often get several calls within a few minutes about an unattended backpack, for instance. That's important, because it means students spot unusual circumstances and take them seriously.

"The reason why we have a very safe campus," he says, "is because we get those reports."

UCCS has emergency phones throughout campus, and police offer free escorts — no questions asked — to anyone requesting them. UCCS staff say they plan for any emergencies, and the university has an emergency manager and several offices that deal with emergency planning, including conducting regular tabletop exercises.

"I think we have a culture of working together as a university," Dean of Students Steve Linhart says, "whatever the situation."

County Road 40 bridges washed out by flash floods (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

Updated: Aug 23, 2016 10:00 PM MDT
FREMONT COUNTY - County Road 40 is closed after flash flooding in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar, according to Fremont County Sheriff's Office.

The dam on County Road 40 is holding, but Butter Creek and Little Cottonwood Creek are flowing heavy with debris. All homes are intact and all residents in the area are safe.

A reverse 911 notification was sent to residents in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar for a flash flood warning Tuesday evening. The warning was in effect until 9:45 p.m.

Bridges on County Road 40 were washed out by flood water. Fremont Search and Rescue and Fremont Incident Management Team responded as a precaution.

Why Colorado's Mosquitoes Are Not Likely To Spread Zika (Denver Post)

By John Ingold

Denver Post, August 23, 2016

It was an experiment that was part "Outbreak" and part "Trading Places," but researchers at Colorado State University hoped it might answer one of the more pressing public health questions facing the state: Could the Zika virus spread here?

The conventional wisdom was that it couldn't, at least not widely, because the disease's primary vector — a ninja of a mosquito called Aedes aegypti — had no established population in the state. But no one had proved that conventional wisdom true. What if it was wrong? What if the local mosquitoes — particularly those in the Culex genus that already carry the West Nile virus — were also able to transmit Zika?

The mosquito experts at CSU's Arthropod-borne and Infectious Diseases Laboratory decided to put the conventional wisdom to the test. In their lab, they infected Culex mosquitoes with Zika. And then, for a week as the virus incubated inside their study subjects, they held their breath.

Finally, the results:

"We could not get that virus to replicate in the mosquito," CSU professor Brian Foy said of the experiment, the topic of a soon-to-be-published article.

Whew.

When it comes to being disease-carrying menaces, not all mosquitoes are created equal, and that explains why Zika is a public health crisis in Miami and a relative public health trifle in Milliken. There are 54 species of mosquitoes commonly found in Colorado, but none of them are known to be able to transmit Zika — even if they can, like the Culex mosquitoes, transmit other diseases.

"It's still kind of a mystery," Foy said. "There's a very fine-tuning match of virus and mosquito."

The reason is that a mosquito's transmission of a disease is not as simple as taking infected blood in from one person and then backwashing it into another. Instead, the virus must be capable of reproducing inside the mosquito and then making its way into the mosquito's saliva — the real source of contamination since mosquitoes digest the blood they consume as food.

"When a mosquito bites a person, it spits into the bite," Foy said.

With the local-born bugs apparently incapable of carrying Zika, then, the only chance of a mosquito-spread outbreak in Colorado comes from a moonshot: the one-in-a-billion possibility that a Zika-capable mosquito that hitchhiked to the state from elsewhere bites into a Zika-infected person who picked up the virus out of state.

So far, only 21 people in Colorado have tested positive for Zika, and all of them contracted the virus somewhere else.

The only instance of a wayward Aedes aegypti being found in the state came in 2010, in Pueblo County. Another species of mosquito possibly capable of transmitting Zika, Aedes albopictus, has been found sporadically in Weld County, most recently in 2011 and most likely was brought to the state in waste tires disposed of here. But those species are just summer tourists; they can't survive the winter.

"Remember we're in Colorado; we're not in the tropics," said Michael "Doc" Weissmann, the chief entomologist at Colorado Mosquito Control, which does monitoring and eradication for local governments.

Weissmann said none of his company's traps have snagged worrisome Aedes mosquitoes this year.

"It's just the same old, same old," he said.

Eric Aakko of the Weld County Health Department said the county's surveillance efforts have found higher-than-normal levels of West Nile-carrying mosquitoes but no Zika concerns.

That leaves only one other prominent way that the virus can spread within Colorado, and it's one Foy knows a little too well. While conducting research in the African nation of Senegal, Foy contracted Zika in 2008. He then came home and accidentally gave it to his wife, which led to a research article hypothesizing — correctly, it turns out — that Zika can spread through sex.

The experience, though, didn't change his mind about the dangers of Zika in Colorado.

"The risk of all of a sudden having a massive outbreak in Denver is, I would say, infinitesimally small," he said. "From mosquitoes, I can't see it happening."

MONTANA

Yellowstone fish-killing parasite is so prolific it's 'shocking' fish to death (Missoulian)

By BRETT FRENCH Billings Gazette

PARADISE VALLEY — A previously unidentified strain of parasite has grown so prolific in the Yellowstone River that it is overwhelming whitefish, killing thousands and prompting the state last week to close more than 180 miles of the river to all recreation.

"The sheer parasite loading itself is almost shocking the fish, that that's what's killing them," said Eileen Ryce, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' hatchery section chief, during a Tuesday press conference along the banks of the Yellowstone River south of Livingston.

Scientists like Ryce believe that the parasite bloom may be so large and unprecedented in part because the Yellowstone River is experiencing near-record low flows and high water temperatures.

"We could see varying responses (of the parasite) depending on which river it gets into," said Travis Horton, Region 3 fisheries manager in Bozeman.

The nearby Madison River, where flows are dam controlled, may be more resilient to the parasite since the water's temperature is cooler, coming from the bottom of Hebgen Lake, and the flows can be maintained at a steadier rate. Likewise, outbreaks of similar parasites in Idaho that killed

whitefish in 2011 and 2012 may have been more limited because some of the streams are dam controlled, Horton said.

The FWP officials spoke to a crowd of about 50 people — anglers, local lawmakers, the media and business owners — at a fishing access site where the stench of dead whitefish rotting on the riverbank wafted through the air.

Media, business owners, anglers and others gather for a press conference on the banks of the Yellowstone River. CASEY PAGE, Gazette Staff

Acknowledging the effect of the river's closure to anglers, floaters and on all of the many businesses that service such recreationists, Gov. Steve Bullock said "the impact goes far beyond the water's edge." Yet he said "science needs to guide this."

"We need to make sure we are not only protecting this watershed and this water but indeed our entire state," he said, noting that the outdoor recreation industry creates about 64,000 jobs and $6 billion in consumer spending annually in Montana.

When Rep. Alan Redfield, R-Livingston, asked why certain portions of the river couldn't be open to fishing to ease some of the impact on local businesses, Horton said FWP hopes to contain the parasite outbreak to the Yellowstone and make its duration short-lived.

"We want to try to minimize this," Horton said. "We don't want to make this situation worse by rushing ahead."

Horton added that when the Yellowstone River's peak water temperatures drop below 55 degrees and stay there, FWP would consider lifting the river closure.

"We're not looking at it being a permanent closure," said Jeff Hagener, FWP director.

He noted the rule to enforce the closure is a temporary emergency closure good for 120 days. After that time the department is forced to re-examine the issue to decide whether the closure should be extended.

The fish kill has been documented by FWP crews from the Yellowstone National Park boundary about 100 miles downstream to just west of the town of Big Timber, Horton said. Other public reports of dead whitefish and suckers downstream from Big Timber to Laurel have not been confirmed by FWP.

The microscopic parasite that infects the fish needs two hosts to complete its life cycle, Ryce explained. It starts in a Bryozoan, a moss animal similar to a freshwater sponge. The Bryozoan releases the parasite that fish absorb through their gills. Similar parasites have caused internal bleeding and kidney failure in whitefish in other outbreaks, such as the ones in Idaho.

But the Yellowstone outbreak is different, Ryce said. There are so many spores being found inside the fish that the scientists are calling it a naive reaction.

"What we mean by that is that the immune response that the fish are expressing would suggest that they have not been exposed to this parasite previously," she said. "That has concerned us since it would suggest it's a new infection. At least we haven't seen anything on this scale previously."

"The other thing that's concerning is from the histology results there were high numbers of parasites seen in multiple tissues. That suggests to us that the infective load that's currently out in the river is very high. Why that's a concern is that the sheer volume of parasites that's out there makes it very easy for the parasite to be spread to other waters."

That's the reason FWP took the unusual step to close down much of the upper river to recreation, Horton said, calling it a "very dramatic step that we took." It's also why the agency is stressing that the best way to fight the spread of the parasite, along with other aquatic invasive species, is to clean, drain and dry all boats and fishing equipment.

FWP crews will continue to search for dead and dying fish in the Yellowstone River and its tributaries like the Stillwater and Boulder rivers to try to determine the extent of the outbreak.

"I hope we can continue to work together, recognizing that the long-term objective is to protect this valley and the river," Gov. Bullock said.

Yet Ryce noted that FWP staff doesn't expect the parasite to disappear, even with colder water temperatures and higher river flows. However, if the fish are given time to adapt they may build up some immunity to the parasite and recover.

NORTH DAKOTA

Occupying the Prairie: Tensions Rise as Tribes Move to Block a Pipeline (NY Times)

By JACK HEALY

August 23, 2016

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. — Horseback riders, their faces streaked in yellow and black paint, led the procession out of their tepee-dotted camp. Two hundred people followed, making their daily walk a mile up a rural highway to a patch of prairie grass and excavated dirt that has become a new kind of battlefield, between a pipeline and American Indians who say it will threaten water supplies and sacred lands.

The Texas-based company building the Dakota Access pipeline, Energy Transfer Partners, calls the project a major step toward the United States' weaning itself off foreign oil. The company says the nearly 1,170-mile buried pipeline will infuse millions of dollars into local economies and is safer than trucks and train cars that can topple and spill and crash and burn.

But the people who stood at the gates of a construction site where crews had been building an access road toward the pipeline viewed the project as a wounding intrusion onto lands where generations of their ancestors hunted bison, gathered water and were born and buried, long before treaties and fences stamped a different order onto the Plains.

People have been gathering since April, but as hundreds more poured in over the past two weeks, confrontations began rising among protesters, sheriff's officers and construction workers with the pipeline company. Local officials are struggling to handle hundreds of demonstrators filling the roads to protest and camp out in once-empty grassland about an hour south of Bismarck, the state capital.

More than 20 people have been arrested on charges including disorderly conduct and trespassing onto the construction site. The pipeline company says it was forced to shut down construction this month after protesters threatened its workers and threw bottles and rocks at contractors' vehicles.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier of Morton County, who has led the law enforcement response, said at a news conference that he had received reports of weapons and gunshots around the demonstration, and that protesters were getting ready to throw pipe bombs at a line of officers standing between a rally and the construction site.

Leaders from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's path, say the protests are peaceful. Weapons, drugs and alcohol are prohibited from the protest

camp. Children march in the daily demonstrations. The leaders believed the reports of pipe bombs were a misinterpretation of their calls for demonstrators to get out their wooden chanupa pipes — which have deep spiritual importance — and pass them through the crowd.

The conflict may reach a crucial moment on Wednesday in a federal court hearing. The tribe has sued to block the pipeline and plans to ask a judge in Washington to effectively halt construction.

The pipeline runs overwhelmingly along private land, but where it crosses bodies of water, federal rules come into play and federal approvals are required.

The tribe says the pipeline's route under the Missouri River near here could threaten its water supplies if the pipeline leaks or breaks, and it says the United States Army Corps of Engineers failed to do proper cultural and historical reviews before granting federal approvals for the pipeline.

"This is our homeland," said Phyllis Young, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux. "We are Dakota. Dakota means friend or ally. Dakota Access has taken our name."

In legal filings, the corps rejects those claims. It says it consulted extensively with tribes, including the Standing Rock Sioux, and it says that tribe has failed to describe specific cultural sites that would be damaged by the pipeline. Energy Transfer Partners says it has the necessary state and federal permits and hopes to finish construction by the end of the year. The pipeline's route starts in the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota and ends in Illinois.

With the fate of the land here and this $3.7 billion project in the air, people here have decided to take action. They are occupying the prairie.

Echoing protests against the now-scuttled Keystone XL pipeline, environmental activists and other tribes from the Dakotas, the rest of the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest have been arriving to camp in the open fields and protest near the parcel where the pipeline company has secured an agreement with the landowner to build.

The protesters sleep in tents and tepees, cook food in open-air kitchens and share stories and strategies around evening campfires. There is even a day care. At morning meetings, speakers warn parents to keep their children away from the Missouri River at sunset, and remind one another they are camped out in prayer.

"It's a major movement in Indian country," said CJ Clifford, a member of the Oglala Lakota, who drove up from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He saw the protests as part of a historical continuum reaching to Little Bighorn. This battle, he said, was being waged peacefully.

For many, the effort was about reclaiming a stake in ancestral lands that had been whittled down since the 1800s, treaty by broken treaty.

“Lands were constantly getting reduced, shaken up,” said Dave Archambault II, the tribal chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux. “I could give you a list of every wrongdoing this government did to our people. All of that is frustration pent up, and it’s being recognized.”

He added, “It’s a tipping point for our nations.”

This month, a line of sheriff’s officers retreated in the face of riders on horseback circling and yipping through the grass. (Tribal members said that the display was a Lakota gesture of introduction, and that they have no quarrel with law enforcement.)

There have been no moves so far to disband the camp or keep people from demonstrating. But Sheriff Kirchmeier told reporters that the demonstration had become an “unlawful protest,” and Gov. Jack Dalrymple, citing “public safety risks,” declared a state of emergency on Friday.

Local law enforcement officers set up a barricade on the main road leading to the pipeline site, and officials here in Morton County called a special meeting on Monday to talk about the traffic and how to handle a hundreds-strong protest that could linger for weeks or months.

At the sprawling campsite down the road from the protest site, there had been portable toilets, 500-gallon tanks of drinking water and an air-conditioned trailer with medical supplies provided by the state. But late Monday night, people at the camp said the medical trailer and water tanks had been removed, leaving them to scramble for a new water source for hundreds of people.

After a prayer ceremony at the construction site one recent afternoon, a few young men on horseback opened the gate and rode onto the land. A few days earlier they might have been arrested and accused of trespassing, but that day there were no officers to stop them.

The pipeline company said that it temporarily stopped work here this month while “law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests,” but that construction was continuing elsewhere.

Energy Transfer Partners has sued Mr. Archambault and six other people over the protests. In a federal lawsuit filed last week, the company accused them and other protesters of blocking access to the construction site, threatening workers and trespassing onto private land.

Jon Eagle Sr., the historic preservation officer for the Standing Rock Sioux, watched from the side of the road as the young men rode into the grassy field, toward a construction floodlight and heaps of excavated dirt. He did not want the pipeline to breach this land. But he did not seem to approve of this either.

“They need to stay out,” he said. “They don’t know where the burials are. They don’t know where the sacred sites are. I’m trying my best to keep the peace.”

Emergency services recalled from Dakota Access Pipeline protest site (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Max Grossfeld |

Posted: Tue 4:19 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 6:24 PM, Aug 23, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. - Demonstrators protesting construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline had been using state resources at their camp until Monday, when the Department of Emergency Services decided to recall them.

Those resources included a mobile command trailer, a medical aid trailer and a water trailer.

A DES official says Tribal Emergency Management requested the resources, which were supposed to be used on tribal land. He says the services brought the trailers back when he heard the trailers were located on land owned by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Reports of unlawful behavior, he says, also influenced his decision.

"This isn't a flood, a fire, an icestorm. This is an event that originally needed some support for the responders dealing with it and at this stage in the game, the event's not an emergency," says Greg Wilz, Homeland Security Division director.

Wilz says all the equipment is back in Bismarck and ready to use in case of emergency.

People concerned with Highway 1806 barricade ask Morton County Commissioners for answers (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Megan Hahn |

Posted: Tue 9:43 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Wed 8:07 AM, Aug 24, 2016

MANDAN, N.D. - The Morton County Board of Commissioners heard public testimony regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline for nearly in an hour at Tuesday's meeting.

All those who chose to speak during the hearing were in opposition of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

County Commissioners say the purpose of the meeting was to give people the chance to weigh-in on the matter in a peaceful manner.

About a dozen people addressed Morton County Commissioners in front of a packed room Tuesday. The recurring frustration for many: removal of barriers along Highway 1806, which restrict access to areas south of Mandan including Cannon Ball and Fort Yates.

"I didn't appreciate it when they put up that block. I have granddaughters and daughters that work at Fort Yates and live in Bismarck. It's humiliating and intimidating when the cops come

up to your car and look in your car like we are doing something wrong," said a speaker who addressed the Commission.

"I am embarrassed for the law enforcement officers that I meet on the road, blocking people from seeing this protest," said a woman who addressed the Morton County Commission.

Highway 1806 was blocked up last Tuesday past the veteran's cemetery because of public safety concerns, according to the Morton County Sheriff's department. Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier didn't speak at Tuesday's meeting.

While many spoke out against the traffic interception point, the Board of Commissioners deferred all questions regarding the barricade to law enforcement. The County Commission says they do not have the authority to remove the barricade.

"We thought it was very important to allow these individuals who are protesting to have a voice in a public forum. I think that's very important. As it relates to the traffic control point itself, that is a question that I'll have to refer back to county sheriff, our incident commander Kyle Kirchmeier," said Chairman Cody Schulz, Morton County Board of Commissioners.

Many of those present say they want answers from government officials.

"I don't want any part of it. I don't think that's right. And it's not fair. And that blockade, that should not be there. That's all I have to say," said another speaker.

The Board of Commissioners says they're working toward creating an open and peaceful dialogue with protesters.

Those who spoke against the blockade say not only does it affect commuters driving to work, but it's reduced business for local shops and reduced access to recreation areas.

Both the North Dakota Highway Patrol and North Dakota Department of Transportation have the authority under North Dakota Century Code to close a highway. This decision to temporarily close Highway 1806 was made by DOT and HP August 17.

Pipeline foes take fight to Bismarck, Washington D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 23, 2016 at 6:38 p.m.

BISMARCK – Waving the flags of their tribes and singing the songs of their ancestors, more than 200 protesters marched across a Missouri River bridge in Bismarck Tuesday ahead of a federal court hearing that will determine the fate of the Dakota Access oil pipeline’s route in North Dakota.

“This water belongs to all of us,” Vic Camp, a 41-year-old from South Dakota’s Pine Ridge Reservation, said as he rallied the crowd before the march. “We all know that tomorrow in Washington they’re going to make a decision that affects every single one of us.”

The march across the 2,370-foot-long Veterans Memorial Bridge aimed to show solidarity with the 2,000-some protesters encamped about 50 miles south on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, near the pipeline construction site along State Highway 1806 north of Cannon Ball.

Indeed, many marchers were from the campsite, including 25-year-old Kin-sin-ta Joseph and her 16-year-old sister Kis-dya:n-te' Joseph, who got help from a portable PA system so their river song would carry over the wind and traffic noise. The members of northern California's Hoopa Valley Tribe said their chairman urged members to assist Standing Rock, and about 25 made the trip.

While they've taken part in protests before, joining a blockade against logging companies just a few months ago, the older sister said it's never been this big, with so many tribes involved.

"This is really spectacular," she said. "We've been waiting for this kind of gathering."

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline. It would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the reservation and be the largest oil pipeline from the Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day to Patoka, Ill.

Standing Rock members oppose the river crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped construction at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct. But the protest hasn't impacted pipeline construction elsewhere along the four-state route, including in North Dakota, company spokeswoman Lisa Dillinger said via email.

"We have temporarily deferred grading activities across a short section of the right-of-way (less than 1 mile) while law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests in light of the fact that we have the necessary permits and approvals to work at this site," she said.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., will consider Wednesday the tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. A lawyer for the tribe said the judge has indicated he will rule from the bench or shortly after the hearing.

Film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside the courthouse in Washington, and actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the rally, according to a statement.

Protesters on Tuesday blocked traffic only briefly while crossing the street to get to the bridge's pedestrian walkway, and law enforcement reported no problems with the march. Dozens of passing drivers honked their horns in solidarity, though one yelled an expletive aimed at Native Americans.

Camp said protesters will refrain from violence if the judge's ruling doesn't go their way.

"The only way violence will happen is if the cops provoke it and they attack us," he told Forum News Service, adding, "We have our women and we have our children. We have grandparents here."

When asked what will happen if the judge denies the injunction and Dakota Access tries to resume construction, Camp said, "Then we'll start blockading."

"We'll do what we can with our bodies to keep the machines from coming in," he said.

Four labor unions sent Gov. Jack Dalrymple a letter strongly encouraging him to use the power of his office to keep workers safe and ensure protesters are "following the letter of the law."

The general presidents of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and United Association (UA), said the actions of protesters endanger not only themselves but construction workers and equipment, as well as local law enforcement who've bolstered their local presence.

They said the pipeline has created about 4,000 construction jobs in North Dakota along 346 miles of pipeline.

"While they may have a right to protest, we also have a right to do our jobs in a safe environment," they said.

Protesters, insisting their actions are peaceful, appealed to the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and churches to send observers to the site. They also continued to rail against what they contend is an unnecessarily heavy law enforcement presence, including a checkpoint about six miles south of Mandan that restricts southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to emergency response vehicles and local traffic such as farmers, ranchers and homeowners.

Standing Rock Protestors Find New Resources After State Withdraws Support (KXMB TV, Bismarck)

Published 08/23 2016 04:04PM

Updated 08/23 2016 07:03PM

Protestors of the Dakota Access Pipeline are finding ways to sustain their effort after state officials pulled relief resources from their camp near Cannonball.

Ben Smith has the story.

For nearly a week.

Several state-owned trailers provided water, shelter, and a place to help those sick or hurt.

Monday morning, news came that these resources would soon be gone.

"It was shocking, it was shocking. I didn't expect that,"

"It's a little different now because everything is going to be outdoors where we had the convenience of having everything indoors in case of the rain, weather wind. Resources got taken away from us quick but we got them back," says Joenelle Leingang

As fast as they disappeared, new support came in.

Standing Rock Paramedics erected a tent in which to treat people.

The tribes road department also pitched in, delivering a giant tank of water.

"They keep this full to fill our buffalo tanks with water. We have two, three more possibly coming in from the Cheyenne River who had donated theirs so water supply is going to be back on track again," says Leingang

(Ben Smith, KX News) Not all state-resources have gone. There is one ambulance that is still here, to provide a backup for standing rock paramedics,

"They left the ambulance as an extra resource for us. Because like I said, we still provide services to all the reservation so of course our number of ambulances is limited," says DeAnn Werre, Standing Rock Paramedic

She says it's not your typical day as a Standing Rock paramedic.

"We've been able to bring in extra staff to be able to provide services,"

"We've pulled together and got our resources together and are able to provide the same services for people,"

It seems to be the theme of the effort, pulling together under one cause.

It's very overwhelming, it's great, phone calls, where can I bring it to...

I just would like the public to see for themselves. There is nothing negative going on here at all,

She says for now, this area near the Cannonball river has become a second home.

Protesters attend Morton County Commission meeting (Bismarck Tribune)

CAROLINE GRUESKIN and LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

15 hrs ago

The Dakota Access Pipeline protests returned to the Bismarck-Mandan area Tuesday, as protesters walked across the Memorial Bridge and testified before the Morton County Commission.

Several speakers asked the commissioners to remove a roadblock that prevents drivers from traveling south on Highway 1806 from Mandan to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, though

commission chairman Cody Schulz said after the meeting the commission does not have authority to remove the block.

Speakers told the commissioners and the approximately 30 people who attended the meeting that the block impedes travel, punishes the tribe's economy and can be humiliating to cross.

The highway has been blocked since Aug. 17, when Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the protest had become unlawful and the road unsafe, points the protesters have contested throughout the week.

Marilyn Kary, who works in Fort Yates, said the roadblock makes it difficult for teachers on the reservation who commute.

Chase Iron Eyes, the Democratic candidate for North Dakota's lone U.S. House seat, said the roadblock was intended to punish the tribe and has disadvantaged businesses in the region.

He said Native Americans and white North Dakotans tend to live in separate worlds.

"Interactions should be encouraged," he said, suggesting the block did the opposite by preventing commerce.

Cody Hall of Eagle Butte, S.D., spokesman for the Red Warrior Camp, said the blockade simply sets the wrong tone.

"It felt like what black people felt in the South," he told commissioners, adding that he was questioned at the blockade, while a white friend was not.

Clyde Bellecourt, co-founder of the American Indian Movement, asked members of the Morton County Commission to consider what future generations would think if the water were contaminated.

"I'm 80 years old. I've lived my life. I don't want my grandchildren to ever question," he said. "Grandpa, why didn't you say nothing?"

He encouraged the commissioners to visit the protest camps.

"You have nothing to be afraid of," he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, about 200 protesters took their cause to the Memorial Bridge, staging a peaceful march from Bismarck to Mandan.

Banners, bright regalia and flags of many Native American nations were presented as smart phones and a drone documented the latest chapter in the protest.

At the staging area, multiple speakers encouraged songs and prayers from participants. Drums pounded in support of discontinuing pipeline construction.

Many protesters held up bottled water mixed with oil to represent the contamination they believe the pipeline would cause to their drinking water, reminding everyone present the water had to be safe for future generations.

Shouts of "save our water" could be heard by protesters as they ascended the bridge.

There was little presence of law enforcement for most of the demonstration except for when North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and local police briefly blocked traffic as marchers crossed to Front Avenue to reach the pedestrian portion of the bridge. The protesters kept to the walkway and held up their signs as motorists honked their horns.

Those gathered Tuesday insisted their message has been a peaceful one.

"I am here because of the water, because of the grandchildren," said Nora Old Man, who held up a water bottle and sang with her grandsons.

Sunny Red Bear, of Eagle Butte, S.D., said she was participating in the march for her 7-year-old son who joined her Tuesday.

"This is about our future. This is about thinking generationally. This is about everyone it affects, community after community. They are choosing oil, wealth and money over our future. I want to protect that the best I can and to show my son to stand up for what's right."

SOUTH DAKOTA

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city (Rapid City Journal)

Mike Anderson Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 24, 2016

Rapid City will soon hire 15 new firefighters, thanks in large part to a $1 million federal grant awarded to the city fire department last week.

The new hires will fill a staffing shortage that Fire Chief Mike Maltaverne has urged the city council to address since 2014.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant, or SAFER, administered through the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will pay the salaries and benefits of nine new firefighters for the next two years. The other six out of 15 new positions will be paid for out of the city's budget.

"In 2014, we started to identify that, with the way our demands for service were increasing, our resources were starting to spread thin," Maltaverne said on Tuesday. "Our firefighters were going on more and more calls and the staff increases weren't keeping up with the demand for our services."

In a memo to Mayor Steve Allender earlier this year, Maltaverne said that in 1995, the city's fire department had 81 operational firefighters with an annual call volume of 3,600, or 44 calls per

firefighter. Rapid City has grown significantly in population and geographical area since the 90s, and with that growth has come more fires.

The department's annual call volumes have grown an average of 7.6 percent since then, Maltaverne said, putting last year's total call volume for the department at 17,012 for its 117 firefighters, or about 145 calls per firefighter.

Maltaverne knew it would require some extra funding to get 15 new firefighters on board to fill the service gap and ease the pressure on existing personnel. So he asked the Rapid City Council to pay for six employees if he could find a grant to pay for nine more.

"We thought that would be more realistic, that the city would be able to fund that," Maltaverne said.

The City Council has already agreed to fund three positions, and the mayor has included another three in next year's proposed budget which will be the subject of a public discussion at 6:30 p.m. today in the city council chamber.

"We clearly articulated the need for additional staffing and our elected officials along with FEMA responded, and for that we are grateful," Maltaverne said.

Though the SAFER grant will only pay the other nine new firefighters through two years of service, Maltaverne is confident that will be plenty of time for the council to figure out how to keep funding those positions indefinitely.

"What would be the point of hiring firefighters for two years and then having the city lay them off?" Maltaverne said. "That doesn't solve the long-term problem."

The grant calls for the new hires to be made within 180 days, a deadline Maltaverne has no worries about meeting. This spring, the Rapid City Fire Department went through a hiring process and compiled a selection of suitable candidates.

"We reviewed that and we feel there are a sufficient number of qualified candidates to fill those positions," he said. "We've got a really good deep list of potential employees."

Maltaverne hopes to have all 15 slots filled by Jan. 1, 2017, which is when the SAFER grant funds will be awarded to the city.

Applying for the grant was a comprehensive and competitive process, Maltaverne said, adding that he sees FEMA's decision to award the funds as a form of validation.

"Getting this grant clearly confirms that the need was there," he said.

New fire burning near Angostura Reservoir (KBHB radio)

Gary Matthews

KBHB Radio
August 23, 2016

HOT SPRINGS, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire Dispatch says federal, state and volunteer fire crews are battling a wildfire in the southern black hills.

The Maitland CA fire is located approximately 6.5 miles southwest of Angostura Reservoir.

Dispatch says the fire had reached 34.5 acres as of Tuesday afternoon.

They list the fire as human caused.

There is no word on any structures being threatened.

UTAH

American Fork fish could contain toxic mine waste (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 23 2016 05:30PM • Updated 57 minutes ago

Some of the sediments that have turned American Fork River's normally clear waters into a black soup could be loaded with arsenic, lead and other toxic metals associated with historical mining operations at the scenic canyon's headwaters.

Officials from several local, federal and state agencies gathered at Tibble Fork Dam on Tuesday to figure out what to do about the sediment releases, which commenced sometime after the 10-acre lake began draining Saturday as part of $7.3 million project to upgrade the aging earthen structure.

The incident shocked conservationists who fear an ecological catastrophe is unfolding in one of Utah's most popular natural areas, located in the Wasatch Mountains just outside Provo.

"I think it's a $20 million cleanup and it will take years," said Mark Allen, founder of the group Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District sponsored the project with federal matching dollars in an effort to make the dam seismically safe and extend its life for another 50 years. The lake bed is coated with 5 to 10 feet of fine-grained black sediments that have accumulated behind the dam and impaired its ability to store water, though the lake has remained a popular, well-stocked trout fishery.

A sediment release "was not unexpected, given this was a rehabilitation project," said the district's lawyer, John Jacobs. "There may have been a bit more than was anticipated. This is a 60-year-old dam, and it has a lot of sediments behind it."

During the review process, federal officials had considered dredging the lake bed as a way to restore the dam's usefulness, but testing indicated that levels of arsenic and lead exceeded safety

standards and made these sediments too dangerous to move, according to the environmental assessment conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The metals contaminating Tibble Fork originated in Live Yankee, Globe and other abandoned gold and silver mines that perforate the head of American Fork Canyon's northern branch, according to Allen. He says the state is doing too little to hold landowners accountable for these environmental "time bombs." Many of these old mines are located on land now owned by Snowbird Ski Resort in and around its Mineral Basin.

The cost of extracting and disposing of the material accumulated in the Tibble Fork lake bed would be $8.4 million, so the option was abandoned in favor of raising the dam by 9 feet. The environmental assessment insisted the contractor use "best management practices" to ensure the toxic sediments were not pushed downstream.

The measures are detailed in a construction permit issued this year by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which would not immediately provide a copy of the permit. It did send personnel to the dam Tuesday to determine whether the project was in compliance with the permit.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also sent emergency-response personnel to the site.

"It was so damning that they didn't want to touch the sediment," Allen said. "Your project is only as good as your most stupid backhoe operator. It said it was too toxic to remove it, but now it's in the river. How are you going to clean up 10 miles of trout streams?"

The water district hired Provo-based RB&G Engineering to design the project and Whitaker Construction, of Brigham City, to build it. RB&G's project leader, Brad Price, did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

Allen and members of Trout Unlimited spent Monday in the canyon, photographing the sludge pouring down the river channel, which smelled of gunpowder and rotting fish.

"In the main canyon, the water looks like Mississippi mud," said Grant Bench, an officer with a Utah County Trout Unlimited chapter. "I don't know how a cold-water fish is supposed to survive in that."

But federal and state officials were not ready to declare a disaster Tuesday.

"We are taking samples above [the dam] and below to establish baseline and impact below in the water column," said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

Division of Wildlife Resources aquatics biologist Mike Slater zapped the creek in various places with electroshock equipment Tuesday in search of breathing fish.

WYOMING

Wildfires close Yellowstone's south entrance, burn near west entrance (Billings Gazette)

By JORDON NIEDERMEIER jniedermeier@billingsgazette.com

All roads were open in Yellowstone National Park Tuesday despite several fires growing in the area including a blaze blocking access to the Park's south entrance.

The West Entrance remained open. But, the Maple fire has burned more than 27,000 acres about five miles northeast of West Yellowstone and reached within a tenth-mile of the roadway to the west entrance. The fire grew more than 4,600 acres on Monday and is mostly growing on the north side of the burn area. It is not expected to cross the road to the west entrance. If fire activity or smoke increases, pilot cars will be used to guide cars through the area, said a National Park Service news release.

The release said fire activity closed a stretch of U.S. Highway 89 in Grand Teton National Park between Leeks Marina and north to Flaggs Ranch. The closure affects travelers planning to use Yellowstone National Park's south entrance. The road closure is expected to stay in effect until Wednesday. Lizard Creek Campground has also been evacuated.

About 100 people are monitoring the Maple fire. Resources including firefighting aircraft and engines are in the area. However, the fire is not being actively suppressed as it was determined to be caused by a lightning strike and wildfires are an integral part of the Yellowstone ecosystem, said Barbara Dougan, NPS fire information officer.

Dougan said firefighters will work to keep the blaze north of the roadway and east of the Madison River, away from the town of West Yellowstone.

"At this time the fire is doing very well on that side and doing the job of reducing downed debris that's on the ground," she said.

Dougan said officials are still working to determine the cause of the nearby 190 acre Boundary fire but it is believed to have been caused by human activity. Firefighters worked to suppress that wildfire and it was about 85 percent contained as of Tuesday morning.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Tropical System Eyes Florida, Southeast US, May Develop Into Hurricane (USA Today)

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, August 23, 2016

What's now just a disorganized mass of thunderstorms 1,600 miles from Miami could develop into the first hurricane to hit Florida in nearly 11 years late this weekend, forecasters warn.

There's a 60% chance the storm system, known for now only as "99L," could develop into a tropical depression in the Atlantic Ocean later this week. If it swirls into a tropical storm, it will be named Hermine (Her-MEEN).

The system then could rapidly intensify into a large, potentially dangerous major hurricane that would target the Southeast U.S. coast Sunday or Monday, Weather Underground meteorologist Jeff Masters said.

However, as meteorologist John Morales of NBC-6 in Miami notes, "tropical weather forecasting is a very inexact science."

Overall, 6- or 7-day forecasts of tropical cyclone location and intensity are "generally not very good," according to Penn State University meteorologist Jon Nese.

But whether or not the system becomes a tropical storm or hurricane, gusty winds, heavy rains, and possible flash floods and mudslides could occur over the islands of the northeastern Caribbean Sea and the Bahamas, the National Hurricane Center said.

By Sunday, the system could bring deteriorating weather and sea conditions to the east coast of Florida, AccuWeather said.

Most of the computer models meteorologists use to forecast tropical weather show the system hitting the Southeast U.S. between Florida and South Carolina sometime Sunday or later, Masters said.

One computer model, the European, shows the storm crossing Florida and emerging as a major hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico by next week, according to WeatherBell meteorologist Ryan Maue. But the American model, the GFS, does not show that movement.

The most recent hurricane to strike Florida was Wilma in October 2005, AccuWeather said.

A separate system, Tropical Storm Gaston, is projected continue spinning in the central Atlantic. It could become a hurricane later this week, weather officials say. That storm however, is expected to remain over the open Atlantic, though it could stir up strong surf along the eastern shores of Florida, said Scott Spratt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla.

Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

Inside Radio, August 24, 2016

Each natural disaster presents its own challenges, and the floods that have inundated portions of Southern Louisiana are presenting wireless companies and federal regulators with a now-familiar picture. FM radio stepped in to fill a void left by cellphones rendered useless during an emergency.

"I just cannot thank you guys enough for getting the message out," Denham Springs, LA mayor Gerard Landry said in an appearance on Guaranty Broadcasting's "Talk 107.3" WBRP, Baton Rouge. "I haven't seen a newspaper or watched TV for eight or nine days but everybody has a radio—thank goodness for that," he added.

His comments illustrate the emergency role radio plays during natural disasters, one that broadcasters have repeatedly used as an incentive to wireless companies reluctant to activate FM chips already installed in most cellphones. It's been a tough sell.

"We had stations on the air 24/7 giving out information—this has been horrific and I guess people who are not living here don't understand," Louisiana Association of Broadcasters president Polly Prince Johnson said. "Some of these places didn't have electricity and if the FM chip was on their phones they could have been listening to our local broadcasters who were giving lifesaving information."

Helping to strengthen radio's case was the fact that AT&T suffered a massive outage across the region, leaving a large number of residents and the Louisiana State Police with phones that didn't work. Guaranty Media's Baton Rouge market manager Gordy Rush says when flooding closed a 55-mile stretch of Interstate 12 it left thousands of people stranded on the highway for more than 28 hours with radio as

a lifeline after his stations jerry-rigged a connection to the state police to relay critical information to drivers stuck miles from any exit ramp. “This all played out on the radio,” Rush said.

Johnson says it wasn’t just stuck motorists who were impacted by the cellular outage. It was also families trying to reconnect. “People couldn’t make phone calls for three or four days and then it was sporadic at best—so loved ones were calling the radio stations trying to get the information out,” he explained.

While the wireless industry points out that the new Emergency Alert System sends alerts to cellphones on a localized basis, last week in Louisiana it seems the messages were having the opposite effect as intended. With frequent alerts around the clock, many people whose phones did work became annoyed and switched them off to preserve battery life. “It was a nuisance,” Rush said.

More than a dozen people lost their lives during the Louisiana flooding and while industry lobbyists are likely to tread carefully so as not to appear to be capitalizing on Louisiana’s suffering, those high stakes are what many broadcasters say proves the need for radio on smartphones. “If the FM chip was turned on, people are able to tell them that the water is rising and they should get their stuff and get out,” Johnson said. “It’s in times of disaster when it is so important and it can save lives.”

Added Rush, “This is a matter of life or death.”

After briefly flirting with the idea of lobbying for a federally imposed chip mandate in 2010, the National Association of Broadcasters quickly backed away from the idea. For the past six years, the NAB has instead pushed the telecom industry to activate FM chips on its own. In the ensuing period, Sprint embraced the NextRadio app—which activates the FM chip—three years ago, and by the end of this year, AT&T and T-Mobile will follow Sprint’s lead. The exception is any customer that uses an iPhone since Apple doesn’t include FM radio technology inside its handsets.

“NAB continues to support voluntary activation of FM chips by the carriers,” spokesman Dennis Wharton said. “This is a no-brainer from a public safety perspective, as FEMA’s [administrator] Craig Fugate has noted. We hope all the carriers—along with Apple—will look at the Baton Rouge tragedy as an opportunity to do the right thing and voluntarily light up the chips.”

Back in Louisiana, more than 100,000 households remain without power, but some things are beginning to return to normal. Rush is back at his desk after he jumped from market manager to air personality, spending 32 hours on the air from Friday until Tuesday as some staffers were coping with flooded homes.

Guaranty Media began simulcasting “Talk 107” WBRP on its 100,000-watt classic rock sister “Eagle 98.1” WDGL throughout the storm while country “100.7 The Tiger” WTGE relayed WAFB-TV with station cut-ins. Rush says for a time it looked as though WBRP may have been under threat as its transmitter building was six inches from taking on water after drainage canals backed up and overflowed into its industrial part tower site. Fortunately, the water eventually receded.

Rush, who made it through Hurricane Katrina a decade ago, says the two disasters have left him with an unmistakable conclusion. “Twice now, cellular phones have not been dependable; they’ve failed,” he said, adding, “Radio is a lifeline through this stuff.”

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 26 Aug 2016 14:01:54 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)
(b)(@utah.gov';(b)(6)@wyo.gov';(b)(6)@nd.gov';(b)(6)@state.sd.u(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA clips for Friday 8-26-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-26-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Friday, August 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A “National Cybersecurity Center” in Colorado Springs will hire a CEO next month and host a national conference in November.
- **Montana:** Nine counties are in severe drought status.
- **North Dakota:** More pipeline protest stories: the NY Times details who wants what; the Bismarck Tribune reports the builders do not yet have a written easement from the Corps, though they do have permission to get the easement; the Tribune also reports on camp life among the protesters; National Public Radio did an overview piece. Snopes.com refuted social media reports that the state had cut off water to the protesters.
- **South Dakota:** The Sioux Falls Argus Leader looks back at the flood a year ago.
- **Utah:** Toxic sediments continue to flow into the American Fork River. It is hoped that by today a diversion will have been built around the lake to allow water to continue to flow down the river without continuing contamination. Health officials have not yet finished analyzing the water or issued guidelines as to how to respond.
- **Wyoming:** Maps show where the Yellowstone Park fires stood earlier this week…. *The Billings Gazette* reports that both fire and ice hampered the park yesterday.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: An environmental column in Politico.com today includes several items of interest: environmentalists trying to recreate the coalition that stopped the Keystone pipeline to fight the Dakota Access pipeline; a comment by a judge in the pipeline case that may show he leans toward an injunction; affordable flood insurance becoming an issue in the Louisiana Senate race; a GAO study that supports FEMA’s position saying community-based flood insurance won’t work; an old Florida dike that may be vulnerable to the approaching storm… Yahoo news reports on competing hurricane forecasts.

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Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

UTAH:

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

WYOMING:

Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

STORIES

COLORADO

Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs to hire CEO and host national conference (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman

The National Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs plans to hire a CEO next month and will host officials from across the country at a three-day conference in November at The Broadmoor.

A four-person search committee from among the center's 12 directors will conduct interviews and make a recommendation to the board, which plans to select the CEO by mid- to late September, said Eric Hopfenbeck, the center's deputy executive director. Hopfenbeck was speaking at a panel discussion Wednesday about the facility held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. The board began the nationwide search process in early July with help from Heidrick & Struggles International Inc., a Chicago-based executive search firm. The company helped create a job description and determine pay and other details about the position.

"The budget, staff and management structure (of the center) will be determined after the CEO is hired," Hopfenbeck said. "We are still in the development stage, so we are collecting contact information from consultants, partners and subject-matter experts who want to support the NCC."

The center's three-person staff is headed by retired Army Lt. Gen. Ed Anderson, who serves as interim executive director and also is executive director of strategic, military, science, space and security initiatives for University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak.

The panel discussion was part of a two-day cybersecurity training and technology forum hosted by the Colorado Springs chapter of the Information Systems Security Association that also included a keynote address by Mark Weatherford, a NCC board member who also is a former deputy undersecretary for cybersecurity of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The newly hired CEO will have a major role in organizing a three-day National Cybersecurity Institute the center will host Nov. 13-15 at The Broadmoor for invited guests that include governors and attorneys general of all 50 states plus an undisclosed number of mayors and county commissioners, Hopfenbeck said. The event will bring real-time information on the latest cyber trends, security, best practices and education resources to the elected officials to help them better protect government computer systems, networks and critical public assets.

The conference will be the center's public launch. A Rapid Response Center to help small- to mid-sized businesses, nonprofits and government agencies combat and recover from cyber attacks, and a Cyber Research, Education and Training Center that will conduct research on cybersecurity threats and develop a cybersecurity workforce through education programs at UCCS and other schools around the state and nation, are expected to begin operations by next summer. UCCS is meeting with other colleges and universities to develop a cybersecurity curriculum, Hopfenbeck said.

The center also will work with the Western Cyber Exchange and Air Force CyberWorx. The exchange is a 5-year-old group started to strengthen local cybersecurity measures, attract more workers to the industry and share information about cyber attacks and how to prevent and defend against them. The exchange also operates the nation's only Information Sharing and Analysis Organization focused on the private sector. CyberWorx, formerly the Air Force Cyber Innovation Center, does research and testing of cyber security issues and technology at the Air Force Academy.

The center has received three proposals from contractors for renovations to a former TRW manufacturing plant at 3650 N. Nevada Ave. Renovations will be funded by nearly $8 million included in legislation signed into law by Gov. John Hickenlooper in May. A contractor is expected to be selected by mid-September. The building is owned by UCCS and will become the center's permanent home when renovations are complete. The center is operating from temporary offices at 1867 Austin Bluffs Parkway, Suite 200, across from the east end of the UCCS campus.

MONTANA

Lewis and Clark among 9 Montana counties in severe drought, 11 more under alert (Helena Independent Record)

TOM KUGLIN Independent Record

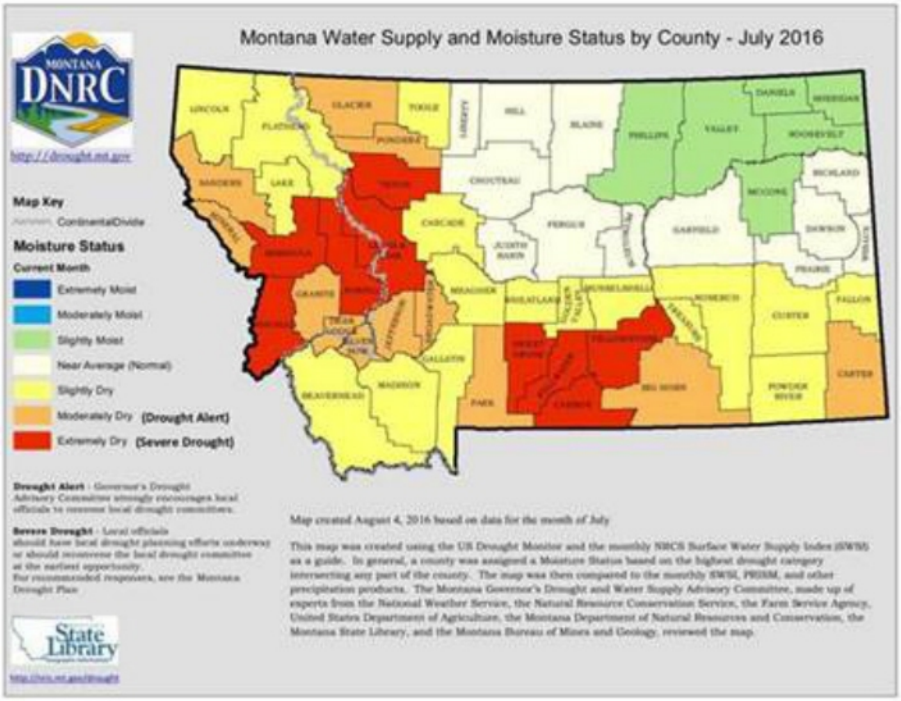
State officials say Lewis and Clark County is among nine in Montana that reached “severe drought” status Thursday, while another 11 counties have hit “drought alert.”

Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney is chairman of the Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee. He says the region has had two years of low snowpack, early runoff and little moisture under the soil.

The alert and severe designation are intended “to give high visibility to the continuing impacts of drought in affected areas, to prompt communication among stakeholders, and to direct state agencies to take the steps identified in the Montana Drought Response Plan to mitigate the impacts of drought,” Cooney wrote in a letter to county commissioners.

The counties in severe drought are Lewis and Clark, Powell, Teton, Missoula, Sweet Grass, Stillwater, Carbon and Yellowstone.

The seven counties put on alert status Thursday are Broadwater, Jefferson, Silver Bow, Granite, Mineral, Park and Big Horn. Glacier, Pondera, Carter and Sanders counties were previously on drought alert.


Montana Water Supply and Moisture Status by County - July 2016
Map Key
Continental Divide
Moisture Status
Current Month
Extremely Moist
Moderately Moist
Slightly Moist
Near Average (Normal)
Slightly Dry
Moderately Dry (Drought Alert)
Extremely Dry (Severe Drought)
Map created August 4, 2016 based on data for the month of July

DNRC

Neither the alert nor the severe designations carry any official status with respect to state or federal disaster assistance programs.

The severe designation prompts county commissioners and disaster and emergency services coordinators to document any economic, health and safety emergencies that warrant either state or federal dollars, according to DNRC drought coordinator Ada Montague.

The alert status prompts local officials to document crop or livestock loss or impacts that could then trigger federal disaster assistance, she added.

“At the local level, certain watersheds have voluntarily developed local drought response plans, namely the Blackfoot, the Big Hole and the Jefferson,” Montague wrote in an email. “This is where water right holders have worked together to determine proper triggers and response mechanisms for individual water bodies.”

Montana's drought plan was written in 1995 and the state is currently in the process of updating it, she said.

Lewis and Clark County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Paul Spengler says the driest portions of the county are in the north and along the Rocky Mountain Front. The Helena Valley is also seeing about a 2-inch shortfall on precipitation this year, he said.

The drought does affect irrigators that tap creeks or streams and dry-land farmers, but those on the Helena Valley Irrigation District drawing from the Missouri River are not limited, said Jim Foster with the district.

Irrigators depending on the Sun River, suffering from particularly low snow pack, have seen their water usage cut early this year.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who's Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment.

The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota’s governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-

mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country's pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

For breaking news and in-depth reporting, follow @NYTNational on Twitter.

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

-

Lauren Donovan

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

“They can’t build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe,” Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company’s decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any “Jane and John Doe” from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe's request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

"Everybody thought they had it (easement)," said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. "This is really important information."

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

"We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There's nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court's injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday's news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

"The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she'll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people," Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

"It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making," Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

"When this is done, if it's ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered
Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:
A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.

MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

⊗ mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Michael Klinski
Arugs Leader- Sioux Falls
Aug. 26, 2016

More than half a foot of rain fell on parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, sending flash floods ripping across roadways and pouring into basements. No one was hurt, but the waist-deep waters stranded scores of motorists and left hundreds mopping up wet basements.

Rainfall: More than half a foot of rain fell in parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, but the downpours were extremely localized. The National Weather Service recorded 2.61 inches at the airport, while Hartford had less than a quarter inch.

Vehicles: Scores of drivers were retrieving water-logged vehicles Friday morning. The phones were ringing off the hook at local towing companies. AAA reported 138 tows between 9 p.m. and 10 a.m.

Buildings: Home and business owners were mopping up after the storm. Hardware stores saw a run on sump pump and ShopVacs. HyVee on South Louise Avenue had two inches of water throughout the store.

No injuries reported. Sioux Falls Fire Rescue said Thursday night that it had no reports of injuries from the storm.

11:06 a.m. via reporter Mark Walker: A spokeswoman for the Empire Mall says rumors about a partial roof collapse are false. All but three stores were open for business. Yonkers was expected to reopen by 11:30 a.m.

11:04 a.m. via reporter Jill Callison: People with peaked roofs generally will come through a rainstorm like Thursday’s with good shape, although the torrents of water may saturate the ground and flood the basement.

Homes and business with flat roofs, however, may experience damage since the water had no place to go, said Laura Woods of Woods Roofing of Canton.

“With flat roofs, it just fills up and can’t get off fast enough,” she said.

However, her company had received few phone calls as of Friday morning. In large part, in a catastrophic situation, it takes a few days before a situation is assessed thoroughly, Woods said.

UTAH

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork
(Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 25 2016 07:30PM • Updated 13 minutes ago

Although "best management practices" were to be used to keep Tibble Fork Reservoir's sediments out of the American Fork River, the Utah water district that is rehabilitating the dam drained the reservoir last weekend in a manner that allowed the river to incise a deep channel through 12 feet of potentially toxic muck and push the filth down one of Utah's favorite trout streams. While the water has since cleared somewhat, the sediment releases have continued virtually unabated because water officials cannot shut off releases without dewatering the river.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District's contractor is now digging a channel and laying pipe to divert the river's flow around 10-acre lake bed, contaminated from a legacy of gold and silver mining in the canyon's headwaters.

"They are working around the clock to do it. We said it would be within four days, and we will beat that schedule," said Brad Price of Provo-based RB&G Engineering, which designed the dam-rehab project. The river's flow should be moving around the lake by the pipe sometime Friday, he said, putting an end to the release of pollution that has been killing fish and fouling the popular canyon outside Provo for nearly a week.

Meanwhile, test results from water samples taken Monday and Tuesday had trickled back, but officials were still analyzing them late Thursday. The Utah Division of Water Quality planned to post the results once analysis was complete. Officials also are awaiting results from sediment and fish samples.

These results are crucial for advising northern Utah County water users how to respond to the crisis. The American Fork River feeds farms and secondary water systems in Highland and surrounding communities where residents were unsure whether they should keep the water off their lawns and gardens. There was enough uncertainty Wednesday that the U.S. Forest Service advised canyon visitors to stay out of the river as a matter of "common sense."

"I chased some kids out of the river [Wednesday] on my way home from work," said Jim Ireland, superintendent of Timpanogos Cave National Monument, which covers about a mile of stream in the lower reaches of the canyon. Monument personnel took water samples Monday that came back showing elevated levels of several metals, according to Ireland.

"We are concerned," he said. "We have a mission to preserve the resources of the monument and this is obviously an impact."

As of Thursday, however, the Utah County Health Department had refrained from advising residents against using the water for irrigating their yards.

Jonny Torrence, an angler who lives in American Fork, is believed to be the first to notice the fouled water when he entered the canyon Sunday evening to take his 3-year-old daughter fishing.

He had fished the canyon three days earlier and pulled 20 brown trout from the river's clear waters. But on Sunday, something was clearly wrong.

"I walked to the river and saw that it was absolutely brown," said Torrence, who snapped photos and alerted a local Trout Unlimited chapter that night. "I walked upriver and saw dead fish everywhere. It was flowing like pudding, it was so thick. By the time I got back to the road, it had gone down 3 or 4 inches because you could see the [deposited sediment] up on the banks that you couldn't see before.

"I was shocked. That's where my dad taught me to fly fish," he continued. "I would have thought it would be managed closer and they would take extreme precautions to prevent something like this."

Officials from the water district and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which helped fund the dam project, say precautions were taken and that it was expected that the reservoir draw-down would release some sediment.

However, the environmental assessment on the project indicated that no sediments should have escaped down the river. This is because levels of toxic heavy metals, such as arsenic and lead, are so elevated in the lake bed that the material could not be used as fill on the dam, whose crest will be raised 15 feet.

"The top layer of soil containing heavy metals would be tested, and any locations that exceed screening levels would not be disturbed," states the document, which the NRCS prepared. "These contaminated soils are not expected to be transported downstream and would therefore not affect the surrounding environment. Proper use of BMPs" — best management practices — "and timing of construction would almost eliminate contaminated soils from moving downstream during earth-disturbing activities."

Critics believe the heavy sediment releases would have been avoidable had the reservoir draw-down been better managed. Water flows into the reservoir at a rate of 12 cubic feet per second (cfs) from American Fork River and another 4 cfs from a side stream called Deer Creek, just a few hundred feet upstream of the dam. The plan was to release water at 40 cfs.

The actual rate of release remains a matter of dispute. But whatever the rate, it was apparently too fast, according to Brian Wimmer, president of the Trout Unlimited chapter that has been monitoring the spill and its aftermath.

A properly controlled release would have slowed the water flowing across the sediment bed once the reservoir emptied.

WYOMING

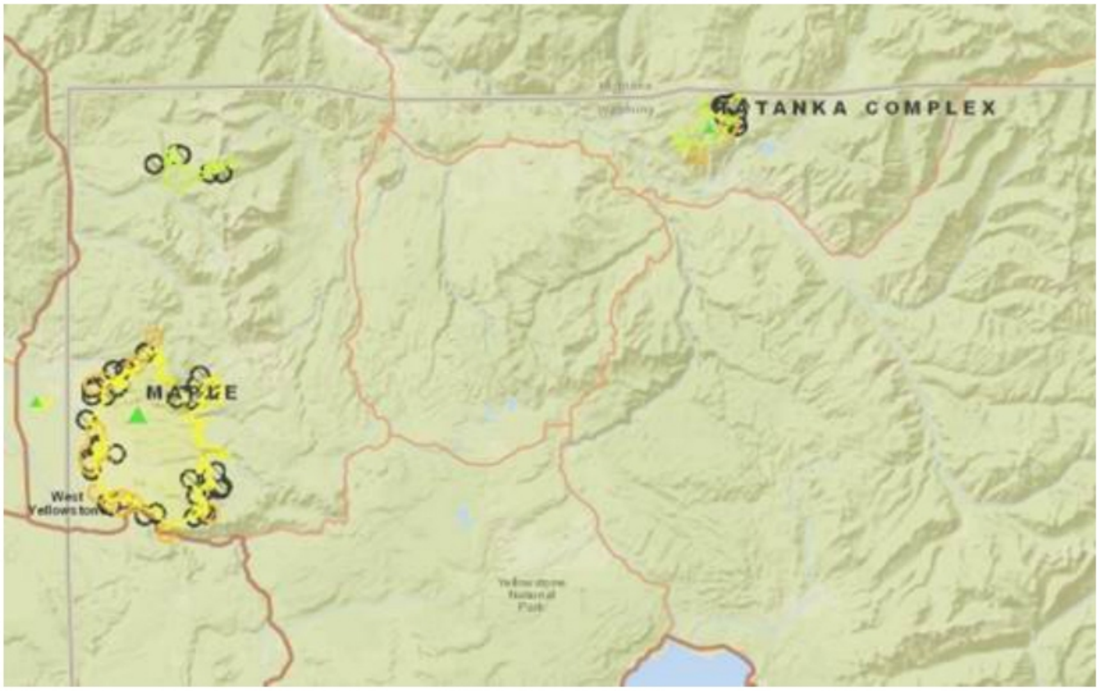
Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

By **Glenn Minnis** (**staff@latinpost.com**)

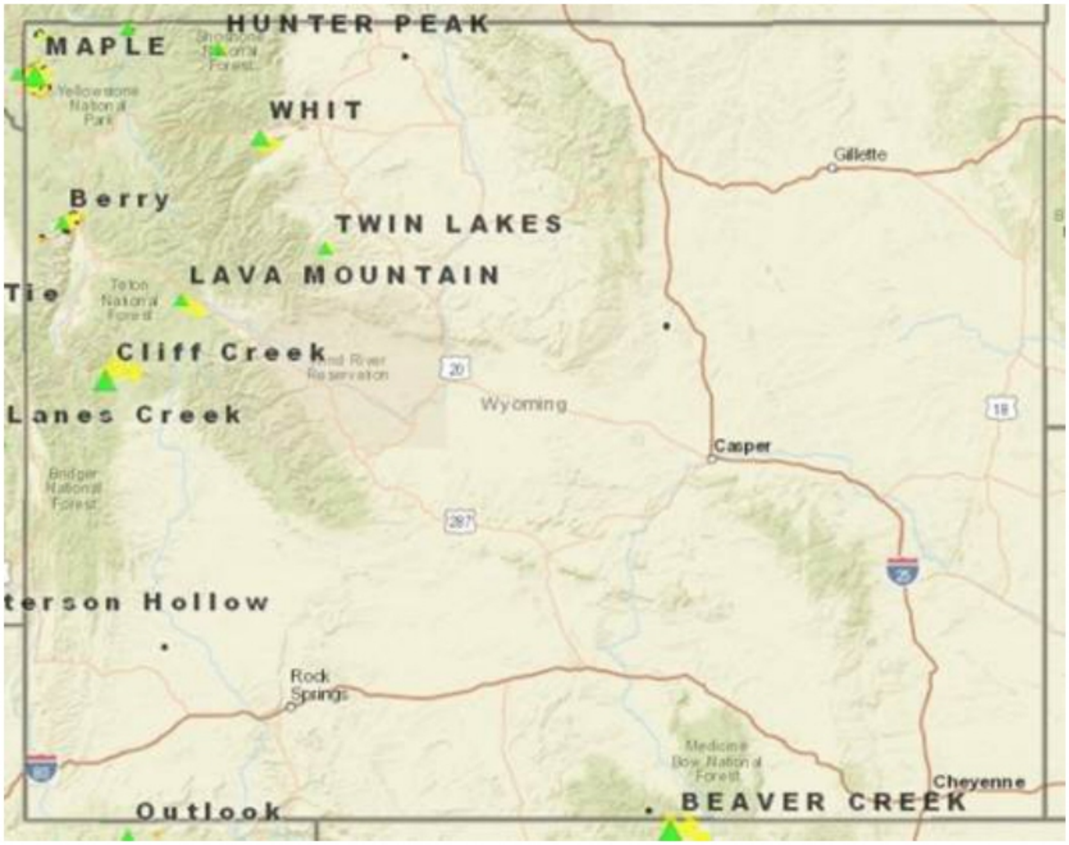
First Posted: Aug 25, 2016 06:45 AM EDT

The largest of four wildfires now simultaneously burning in Yellowstone Park (Maple, Buffalo, Fawn, Boundary fires) has Wyoming fire officials scrambling in a desperate effort to keep it from spreading to areas housing some of the park's tourist attractions.

As of Monday, all of the park's main tourist facilities remained open, even though the **Maple fire** (the biggest blaze among the four fires) is reported to have grown by nearly 10 square miles in a span of a few hours, prompting authorities to order more firefighters to the area. As authorities keep a vigilant eye on the nearby Madison Junction area of the park reserved for hiking, fishing and other activities, firemen are now working around the clock to contain the blaze. A 10-mile stretch of road leading to Yellowstone's South entrance has already been shuttered.



(Photo : Geomac.gov)


HUNTER PEAK
MAPLE
Shoshone National Forest
Yellowstone National Park
WHIT
Gillette
Berry
TWIN LAKES
LAVA MOUNTAIN
Tie
Teton National Forest
Cliff Creek
Wind River Reservation
20
Wyoming
18
Lanes Creek
Casper
Bridger National Forest
287
25
terson Hollow
Rock Springs
80
Medicine Bow National Forest
Cheyenne
BEAVER CREEK
Outlook

(Photo : Maple fire and Buffalo fire in Yellowstone National Park - Aug 2016)

Conditions Hampering Firefighters

Thus far, warm and windy weather has hampered efforts to contain the flames, which have charred approximately 35 square miles of primarily remote forest land. The proximity of the fire is reported to be between West Yellowstone, Montana, a town of about 1,300 situated just outside the park's western boundaries, and Madison Junction, a recreational area that sits within the park's confines.

Containment Essential

"As it's pushing off to the north and east, there's not a lot of values at risk as far as infrastructure goes," said Mike Johnson, a spokesman with the National Park Service. "We're going to keep the fire to the north of the West Entrance Road, and we have plans in place that if the fire were to move to the west toward West Yellowstone."

Madison Junction is also home to a campground, some visitor facilities and staff housing. It's described as where West Entrance Road intersects with the park's Grand Loop Road, linking such major tourist attractions as Old Faithful and Yellowstone Lake.

Johnson added firefighters are also busy battling the three smaller fires that have swept across the area.

As of early in the week, the Maple fire remained confined to about three miles away from Madison Junction and about four miles from the West Yellowstone Entrance station. On Sunday, the blaze spread several thousand more acres to now consume roughly 27,000 acres in total.

Meanwhile, authorities are now monitoring the two-week old, lightening caused Fawn fire by both ground and air with the acerage of the blaze currentlyb at around 1,800 acres.

The Buffalo fire in Tatanka Complex about 3 miles northeast of Tower Junction has simmered a bit and is now being managed via monitoring and so-called point-protection strategies.

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Both fire and ice briefly hindered travel into Yellowstone National Park on the National Park Service's centennial anniversary.

Authorities closed a portion of the Beartooth Highway Wednesday night due to snow and ice from a summer snowstorm. Crews cleared the roadway and reopened it Thursday morning.

The popular two-lane mountain highway runs from Red Lodge, Montana, over the Beartooth Pass to Yellowstone's Northeast Entrance.

At the other end of the park, a wildfire has closed a portion of the road leading to Yellowstone's South Entrance since Monday.

Visitors heading to Thursday's celebration and concert in Yellowstone from the south face an hour-long detour into Idaho.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

…

FLOOD INSURANCE POLITICS IN LOUISIANA SENATE RACE: With the residents of Baton Rouge desperately trying to recover from flood waters, flood insurance has become a major feature of the state's senate race to replace retiring Sen. David Vitter. Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon endorsed Republican Rep. Charles Boustany for Senate, arguing that he is "the only candidate I trust to fight for affordable flood insurance." Congress faces a September 2017 deadline to reauthorize the government-run National Flood Insurance Program. "I look forward to working with Commissioner Donelon to write common-sense flood insurance policy as Louisiana's next United States Senator when Congress begins work on reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program in 2017," Boustany said in a statement.

…

NO ONE WANTS COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD INSURANCE: The Government Accountability Office on Wednesday backed FEMA's conclusion that community-based flood insurance isn't workable. As Finance Pro's Victoria Guida reports, FEMA was considering the option, under which communities could band together to buy flood insurance plans, but an analysis it released in March found the challenges too great to overcome. Now the GAO is supporting FEMA's conclusion. "The challenges outlined in the study outweigh any potential benefit when considered against limited community interest," GAO wrote. The National Flood insurance Program faces numerous challenges, not least its $23 billion in debt.

DECREPIT FLORIDA DIKE VULNERABLE TO LOOMING STORM: A potential tropical storm or hurricane developing in the Caribbean may be headed for Florida in the coming days, based on last night's outlooks from the National Hurricane Center — posing exactly the scenario the Army Corps of Engineers has feared as it struggles with excessively high water levels in Lake Okeechobee. Earlier this summer, the agency reduced flows from the large inland lake amid pressure from residents and GOP Gov. Rick Scott to stem the flow of nutrient-choked runoff that fed toxic algae along the Treasure Coast. But that means lake levels remain higher than usual going into the busiest part of hurricane season — increasing the pressure on the leaky, decades-old dike that protects the lives of tens of thousands of residents.

Even a weak storm could cause big problems if it dumps tons of rain. As of Wednesday, lake levels were at 14.67 feet above sea level, while 17.5 feet is the level at which the corps believes the dike becomes unstable. The lake is the site of one of the deadliest disasters in U.S. history, a 1928 hurricane that killed more than 2,500 people.

Too little, too late: Today the corps will announce its management plans for the week ahead, but by the time you can see a storm coming it's too late to do much. "We just can't release water that fast," said John Campbell with the corps' Jacksonville district. In fact, a few days out the corps has to stop making releases from the lake so they don't flood communities downstream when the storm comes.

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

By Andrew Freedman

Yahoo! News, August 25, 2016

For days, a war has been raging between two of the premiere computer models used to help predict the weather. On the one side, there's the National Weather Service's Global Forecast System, or GFS, which has maintained that a tropical wave moving across Puerto Rico and Hispaniola will not intensify into a hurricane and strike Florida this weekend.

But other models have consistently outshone the GFS in both routine and high impact, high risk forecast situations.

On the other side of the battle is the European, or Euro model, which is run by the European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasting in England.

The Euro, which gained notoriety by catching on to Hurricane Sandy's unprecedented and catastrophic left hook into New Jersey a week in advance, has rattled Florida with its depiction of an intense tropical storm or hurricane hitting the southern part of the state this weekend.

Run after run, the Euro had stuck to its guns for the past three days, insisting that the area of inclement weather designated as "Invest 99L" would soon become Hurricane Hermine, potentially going on to menace Gulf Coastal states as a major hurricane of Category 3 intensity or greater.

The battlefield may have just changed significantly, though. It's unclear if a peace treaty has been signed, or if this is just a temporary lull in the fighting, but the afternoon run of the Euro model trended toward the GFS solution of a weaker storm.

In other words, it is no longer showing an intense storm hitting Florida on Sunday, and then intensifying over the unusually warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

This news is being met with cautious relief on social media. For example, Miami NBC-TV meteorologist John Morales welcomed the new computer model trend.

Weather Channel meteorologist Justin Abraham comically celebrated what he sees as a potential GFS victory over the top-seeded European model.

However, Floridians shouldn't let down their guard yet, since the swirling cloud mass located north of Haiti could still persevere despite two main challenges.

Invest 99L has been contending with layers of dry air that have stifled the development of thunderstorms near the center of the storm. Such thunderstorms are needed in order for the weather system to form a closed area of low pressure at the surface and intensify.

The wind shear is forecast to diminish starting in about 24 to 36 hours, at which point it's possible both the Euro and GFS will be wrong, and the storm will intensify rapidly.

"Although upper-level winds are not conducive for significant development during the next day or so, they could become a little more favorable over the weekend or early next week when the wave is expected to approach southern Florida or the southeastern Gulf of Mexico," the National Hurricane Center said in a 2 p.m. ET statement on the weather system.

The Hurricane Center lowered Invest 99L's chances of developing into a tropical depression, tropical storm or hurricane to 70 percent through 5 days, down from 80 percent earlier in the day.

For now, Invest 99L looks like a poor excuse for a tropical weather system that is inspiring trepidation in a coastal state like Florida. Its center is exposed and comprised only of low-level clouds, and the largest thunderstorms are displaced several hundred miles away from the center.

In short, it looks like garbage, from a tropical meteorology perspective.

Whether it turns into something more impressive remains to be seen, but for now, it’s encouraging that the great model war of August 2016 may be coming to an end.

Region VIII Clips

Friday, August 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A "National Cybersecurity Center" in Colorado Springs will hire a CEO next month and host a national conference in November.
- **Montana:** Nine counties are in severe drought status.
- **North Dakota:** More pipeline protest stories: the NY Times details who wants what; the Bismarck Tribune reports the builders do not yet have a written easement from the Corps, though they do have permission to get the easement; the Tribune also reports on camp life among the protesters; National Public Radio did an overview piece. Snopes.com refuted social media reports that the state had cut off water to the protesters.
- **South Dakota:** The Sioux Falls Argus Leader looks back at the flood a year ago.
- **Utah:** Toxic sediments continue to flow into the American Fork River. It is hoped that by today a diversion will have been built around the lake to allow water to continue to flow down the river without continuing contamination. Health officials have not yet finished analyzing the water or issued guidelines as to how to respond.
- **Wyoming:** Maps show where the Yellowstone Park fires stood earlier this week…. *The Billings Gazette* reports that both fire and ice hampered the park yesterday.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: An environmental column in Politico.com today includes several items of interest: environmentalists trying to recreate the coalition that stopped the Keystone pipeline to fight the Dakota Access pipeline; a comment by a judge in the pipeline case that may show he leans toward an injunction; affordable flood insurance becoming an issue in the Louisiana Senate race; a GAO study that supports FEMA's position saying community-based flood insurance won't work; an old Florida dike that may be vulnerable to the approaching storm… Yahoo news reports on competing hurricane forecasts.

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North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who's Fighting and Why (NY Times)

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

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Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

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Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

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Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

STORIES

COLORADO

Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs to hire CEO and host national conference (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman

The National Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs plans to hire a CEO next month and will host officials from across the country at a three-day conference in November at The Broadmoor.

A four-person search committee from among the center's 12 directors will conduct interviews and make a recommendation to the board, which plans to select the CEO by mid- to late September, said Eric Hopfenbeck, the center's deputy executive director. Hopfenbeck was speaking at a panel discussion Wednesday about the facility held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. The board began the nationwide search process in early July with help from Heidrick & Struggles International Inc., a Chicago-based executive search firm. The company helped create a job description and determine pay and other details about the position.

"The budget, staff and management structure (of the center) will be determined after the CEO is hired," Hopfenbeck said. "We are still in the development stage, so we are collecting contact information from consultants, partners and subject-matter experts who want to support the NCC."

The center's three-person staff is headed by retired Army Lt. Gen. Ed Anderson, who serves as interim executive director and also is executive director of strategic, military, science, space and security initiatives for University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak.

The panel discussion was part of a two-day cybersecurity training and technology forum hosted by the Colorado Springs chapter of the Information Systems Security Association that also included a keynote address by Mark Weatherford, a NCC board member who also is a former deputy undersecretary for cybersecurity of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The newly hired CEO will have a major role in organizing a three-day National Cybersecurity Institute the center will host Nov. 13-15 at The Broadmoor for invited guests that include governors and attorneys general of all 50 states plus an undisclosed number of mayors and county commissioners, Hopfenbeck said. The event will bring real-time information on the latest cyber trends, security, best practices and education resources to the elected officials to help them better protect government computer systems, networks and critical public assets.

The conference will be the center's public launch. A Rapid Response Center to help small- to mid-sized businesses, nonprofits and government agencies combat and recover from cyber attacks, and a Cyber Research, Education and Training Center that will conduct research on cybersecurity threats and develop a cybersecurity workforce through education programs at UCCS and other schools around the state and nation, are expected to begin operations by next summer. UCCS is meeting with other colleges and universities to develop a cybersecurity curriculum, Hopfenbeck said.

The center also will work with the Western Cyber Exchange and Air Force CyberWorx. The exchange is a 5-year-old group started to strengthen local cybersecurity measures, attract more workers to the industry and share information about cyber attacks and how to prevent and defend against them. The exchange also operates the nation's only Information Sharing and Analysis Organization focused on the private sector. CyberWorx, formerly the Air Force Cyber Innovation Center, does research and testing of cyber security issues and technology at the Air Force Academy.

The center has received three proposals from contractors for renovations to a former TRW manufacturing plant at 3650 N. Nevada Ave. Renovations will be funded by nearly $8 million included in legislation signed into law by Gov. John Hickenlooper in May. A contractor is expected to be selected by mid-September. The building is owned by UCCS and will become the center's permanent home when renovations are complete. The center is operating from temporary offices at 1867 Austin Bluffs Parkway, Suite 200, across from the east end of the UCCS campus.

MONTANA

Lewis and Clark among 9 Montana counties in severe drought, 11 more under alert (Helena Independent Record)

TOM KUGLIN Independent Record

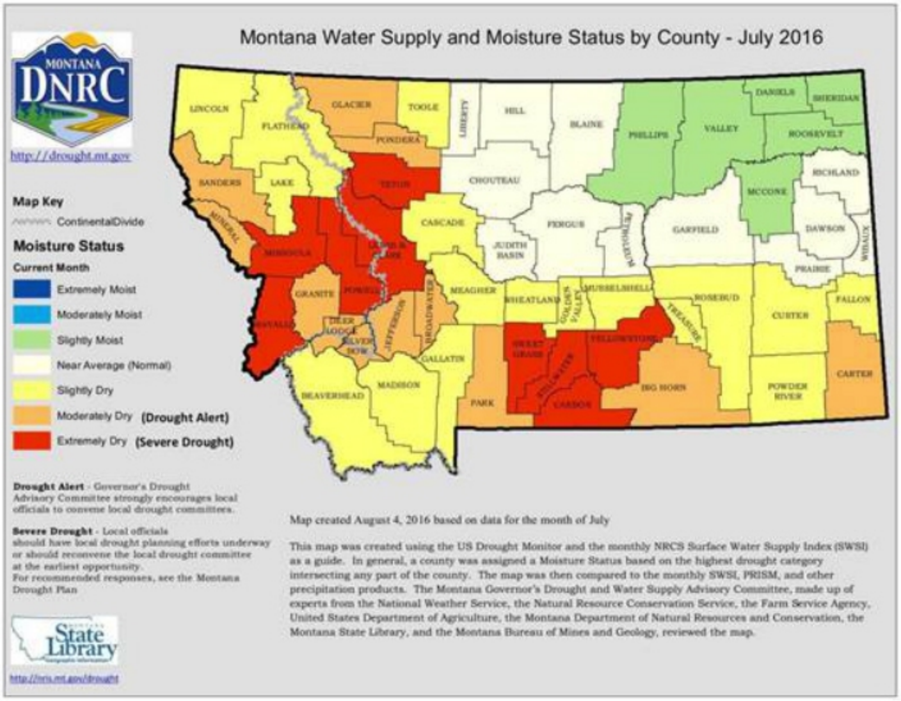
State officials say Lewis and Clark County is among nine in Montana that reached “severe drought” status Thursday, while another 11 counties have hit “drought alert.”

Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney is chairman of the Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee. He says the region has had two years of low snowpack, early runoff and little moisture under the soil.

The alert and severe designation are intended “to give high visibility to the continuing impacts of drought in affected areas, to prompt communication among stakeholders, and to direct state agencies to take the steps identified in the Montana Drought Response Plan to mitigate the impacts of drought,” Cooney wrote in a letter to county commissioners.

The counties in severe drought are Lewis and Clark, Powell, Teton, Missoula, Sweet Grass, Stillwater, Carbon and Yellowstone.

The seven counties put on alert status Thursday are Broadwater, Jefferson, Silver Bow, Granite, Mineral, Park and Big Horn. Glacier, Pondera, Carter and Sanders counties were previously on drought alert.


Montana Water Supply and Moisture Status by County - July 2016
MONTANA DNRC
http://drought.mt.gov
Map Key
ContinentalDivide
Moisture Status
Current Month
Extremely Moist
Moderately Moist
Slightly Moist
Near Average (Normal)
Slightly Dry
Moderately Dry (Drought Alert)
Extremely Dry (Severe Drought)
LINCOLN
FLATHEAD
GLACIER
TOOLE
LIBERTY
HILL
BLAINE
PHILLIPS
VALLEY
DANIELS
SHERIDAN
ROOSEVELT
PONDERA
SANDERS
LAKE
TETON
CHOUTEAU
RICHLAND
MCCONE
MINERAL
MISSOULA
LEWIS & CLARK
CASCADE
FERGUS
PETROLEUM
GARFIELD
DAWSON
WIBAUX
JUDITH BASIN
PRAIRIE
GRANITE
POWELL
MEAGHER
WHEATLAND
GOLDEN VALLEY
MUSSELSHELL
ROSEBUD
CUSTER
FALLON
RAVALLI
DEER LODGE
SILVER BOW
JEFFERSON
BROADWATER
SWEET GRASS
STILLWATER
YELLOWSTONE
TREASURE
GALLATIN
CARTER
BEAVERHEAD
MADISON
PARK
CARBON
BIG HORN
POWDER RIVER
State Library
http://nris.mt.gov/drought

Drought Alert - Governor's Drought Advisory Committee strongly encourages local officials to convene local drought committees.

Severe Drought - Local officials should have local drought planning efforts underway or should reconvene the local drought committee at the earliest opportunity.
For recommended responses, see the Montana Drought Plan

Map created August 4, 2016 based on data for the month of July

This map was created using the US Drought Monitor and the monthly NRCS Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) as a guide. In general, a county was assigned a Moisture Status based on the highest drought category intersecting any part of the county. The map was then compared to the monthly SWSI, PRISM, and other precipitation products. The Montana Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee, made up of experts from the National Weather Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana State Library, and the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, reviewed the map.

DNRC

Neither the alert nor the severe designations carry any official status with respect to state or federal disaster assistance programs.

The severe designation prompts county commissioners and disaster and emergency services coordinators to document any economic, health and safety emergencies that warrant either state or federal dollars, according to DNRC drought coordinator Ada Montague.

The alert status prompts local officials to document crop or livestock loss or impacts that could then trigger federal disaster assistance, she added.

“At the local level, certain watersheds have voluntarily developed local drought response plans, namely the Blackfoot, the Big Hole and the Jefferson,” Montague wrote in an email. “This is where water right holders have worked together to determine proper triggers and response mechanisms for individual water bodies.”

Montana’s drought plan was written in 1995 and the state is currently in the process of updating it, she said.

Lewis and Clark County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Paul Spengler says the driest portions of the county are in the north and along the Rocky Mountain Front. The Helena Valley is also seeing about a 2-inch shortfall on precipitation this year, he said.

The drought does affect irrigators that tap creeks or streams and dry-land farmers, but those on the Helena Valley Irrigation District drawing from the Missouri River are not limited, said Jim Foster with the district.

Irrigators depending on the Sun River, suffering from particularly low snow pack, have seen their water usage cut early this year.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who’s Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline’s charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment. The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota’s governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country’s pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

For breaking news and in-depth reporting, follow @NYTNational on Twitter.

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

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Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

“They can’t build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe,” Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company's decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any "Jane and John Doe" from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe's request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

"Everybody thought they had it (easement)," said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. "This is really important information."

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

"We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There's nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court's injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday's news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

"The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she'll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people," Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

"It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making," Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

“When this is done, if it’s ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered

Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:

A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.

MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Michael Klinski
Arugs Leader- Sioux Falls
Aug. 26, 2016

More than half a foot of rain fell on parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, sending flash floods ripping across roadways and pouring into basements. No one was hurt, but the waist-deep waters stranded scores of motorists and left hundreds mopping up wet basements.

Rainfall: More than half a foot of rain fell in parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, but the downpours were extremely localized. The National Weather Service recorded 2.61 inches at the airport, while Hartford had less than a quarter inch.

Vehicles: Scores of drivers were retrieving water-logged vehicles Friday morning. The phones were ringing off the hook at local towing companies. AAA reported 138 tows between 9 p.m. and 10 a.m.

Buildings: Home and business owners were mopping up after the storm. Hardware stores saw a run on sump pump and ShopVacs. HyVee on South Louise Avenue had two inches of water throughout the store.

No injuries reported. Sioux Falls Fire Rescue said Thursday night that it had no reports of injuries from the storm.

11:06 a.m. via reporter Mark Walker: A spokeswoman for the Empire Mall says rumors about a partial roof collapse are false. All but three stores were open for business. Yonkers was expected to reopen by 11:30 a.m.

11:04 a.m. via reporter Jill Callison: People with peaked roofs generally will come through a rainstorm like Thursday’s with good shape, although the torrents of water may saturate the ground and flood the basement.

Homes and business with flat roofs, however, may experience damage since the water had no place to go, said Laura Woods of Woods Roofing of Canton.

“With flat roofs, it just fills up and can’t get off fast enough,” she said.

However, her company had received few phone calls as of Friday morning. In large part, in a catastrophic situation, it takes a few days before a situation is assessed thoroughly, Woods said.

UTAH

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 25 2016 07:30PM • Updated 13 minutes ago

Although "best management practices" were to be used to keep Tibble Fork Reservoir's sediments out of the American Fork River, the Utah water district that is rehabilitating the dam drained the reservoir last weekend in a manner that allowed the river to incise a deep channel through 12 feet of potentially toxic muck and push the filth down one of Utah's favorite trout streams. While the water has since cleared somewhat, the sediment releases have continued virtually unabated because water officials cannot shut off releases without dewatering the river.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District's contractor is now digging a channel and laying pipe to divert the river's flow around 10-acre lake bed, contaminated from a legacy of gold and silver mining in the canyon's headwaters.

"They are working around the clock to do it. We said it would be within four days, and we will beat that schedule," said Brad Price of Provo-based RB&G Engineering, which designed the dam-rehab project. The river's flow should be moving around the lake by the pipe sometime Friday, he said, putting an end to the release of pollution that has been killing fish and fouling the popular canyon outside Provo for nearly a week.

Meanwhile, test results from water samples taken Monday and Tuesday had trickled back, but officials were still analyzing them late Thursday. The Utah Division of Water Quality planned to post the results once analysis was complete. Officials also are awaiting results from sediment and fish samples.

These results are crucial for advising northern Utah County water users how to respond to the crisis. The American Fork River feeds farms and secondary water systems in Highland and surrounding communities where residents were unsure whether they should keep the water off their lawns and gardens. There was enough uncertainty Wednesday that the U.S. Forest Service advised canyon visitors to stay out of the river as a matter of "common sense."

"I chased some kids out of the river [Wednesday] on my way home from work," said Jim Ireland, superintendent of Timpanogos Cave National Monument, which covers about a mile of stream in the lower reaches of the canyon. Monument personnel took water samples Monday that came back showing elevated levels of several metals, according to Ireland.

"We are concerned," he said. "We have a mission to preserve the resources of the monument and this is obviously an impact."

As of Thursday, however, the Utah County Health Department had refrained from advising residents against using the water for irrigating their yards.

Jonny Torrence, an angler who lives in American Fork, is believed to be the first to notice the fouled water when he entered the canyon Sunday evening to take his 3-year-old daughter fishing.

He had fished the canyon three days earlier and pulled 20 brown trout from the river's clear waters. But on Sunday, something was clearly wrong.

"I walked to the river and saw that it was absolutely brown," said Torrence, who snapped photos and alerted a local Trout Unlimited chapter that night. "I walked upriver and saw dead fish everywhere. It was flowing like pudding, it was so thick. By the time I got back to the road, it had gone down 3 or 4 inches because you could see the [deposited sediment] up on the banks that you couldn't see before.

"I was shocked. That's where my dad taught me to fly fish," he continued. "I would have thought it would be managed closer and they would take extreme precautions to prevent something like this."

Officials from the water district and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which helped fund the dam project, say precautions were taken and that it was expected that the reservoir draw-down would release some sediment.

However, the environmental assessment on the project indicated that no sediments should have escaped down the river. This is because levels of toxic heavy metals, such as arsenic and lead, are so elevated in the lake bed that the material could not be used as fill on the dam, whose crest will be raised 15 feet.

"The top layer of soil containing heavy metals would be tested, and any locations that exceed screening levels would not be disturbed," states the document, which the NRCS prepared. "These contaminated soils are not expected to be transported downstream and would therefore not affect the surrounding environment. Proper use of BMPs" — best management practices — "and timing of construction would almost eliminate contaminated soils from moving downstream during earth-disturbing activities."

Critics believe the heavy sediment releases would have been avoidable had the reservoir draw-down been better managed. Water flows into the reservoir at a rate of 12 cubic feet per second (cfs) from American Fork River and another 4 cfs from a side stream called Deer Creek, just a few hundred feet upstream of the dam. The plan was to release water at 40 cfs.

The actual rate of release remains a matter of dispute. But whatever the rate, it was apparently too fast, according to Brian Wimmer, president of the Trout Unlimited chapter that has been monitoring the spill and its aftermath.

A properly controlled release would have slowed the water flowing across the sediment bed once the reservoir emptied.

WYOMING

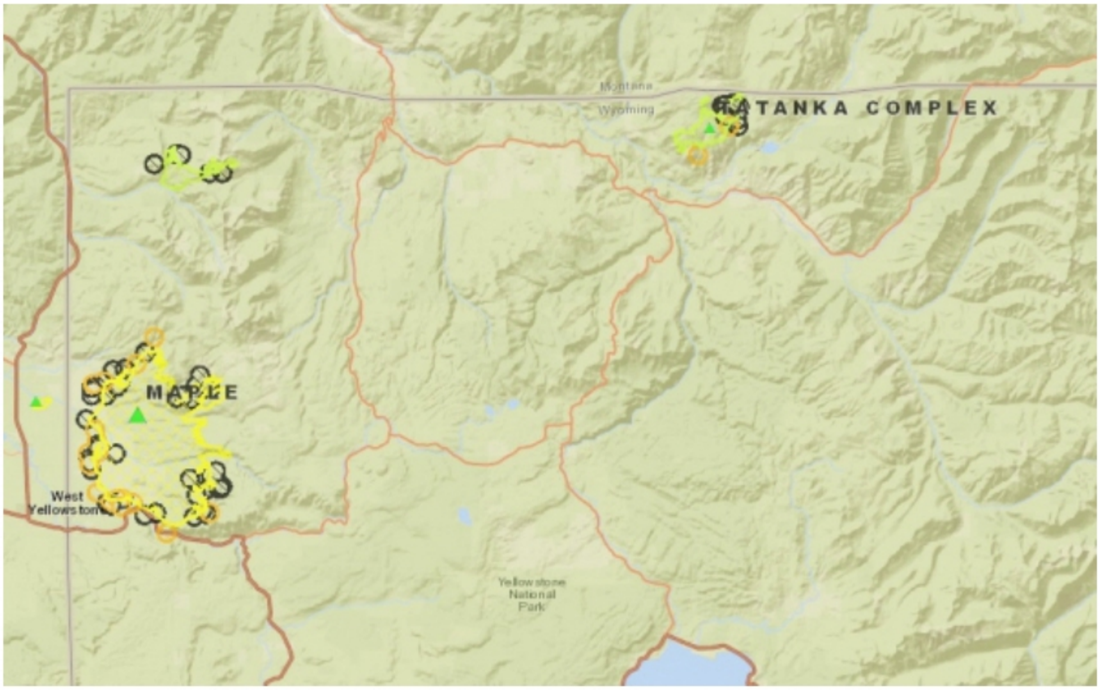
Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

By **Glenn Minnis** (**staff@latinpost.com**)

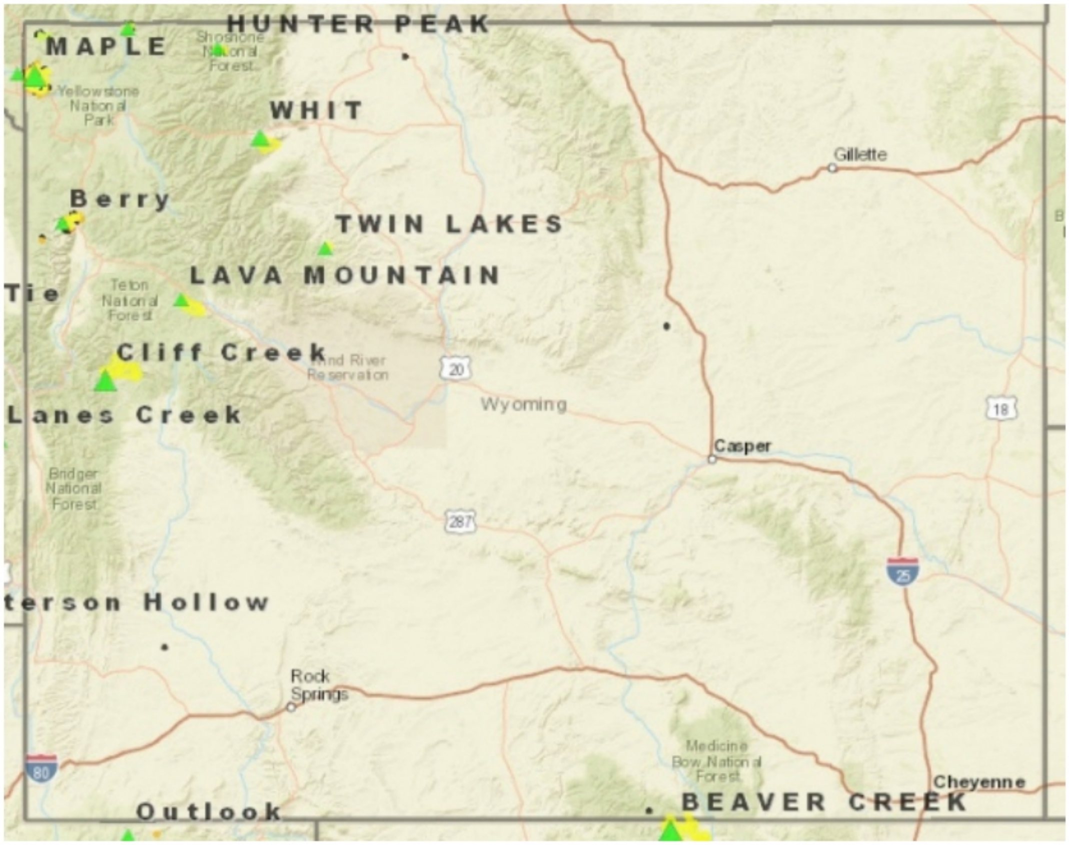
First Posted: Aug 25, 2016 06:45 AM EDT

The largest of four wildfires now simultaneously burning in Yellowstone Park (Maple, Buffalo, Fawn, Boundary fires) has Wyoming fire officials scrambling in a desperate effort to keep it from spreading to areas housing some of the park's tourist attractions.

As of Monday, all of the park's main tourist facilities remained open, even though the **Maple fire** (the biggest blaze among the four fires) is reported to have grown by nearly 10 square miles in a span of a few hours, prompting authorities to order more firefighters to the area. As authorities keep a vigilant eye on the nearby Madison Junction area of the park reserved for hiking, fishing and other activities, firemen are now working around the clock to contain the blaze. A 10-mile stretch of road leading to Yellowstone's South entrance has already been shuttered.



(Photo : Geomac.gov)


HUNTER PEAK
MAPLE
Shoshone National Forest
Yellowstone National Park
WHIT
Gillette
Berry
TWIN LAKES
LAVA MOUNTAIN
Tie
Teton National Forest
Cliff Creek
Wind River Reservation
20
Wyoming
18
Lanes Creek
Casper
Bridger National Forest
287
25
terson Hollow
Rock Springs
80
Medicine Bow National Forest
Cheyenne
Outlook
BEAVER CREEK

(Photo : Maple fire and Buffalo fire in Yellowstone National Park - Aug 2016)

Conditions Hampering Firefighters

Thus far, warm and windy weather has hampered efforts to contain the flames, which have charred approximately 35 square miles of primarily remote forest land. The proximity of the fire is reported to be between West Yellowstone, Montana, a town of about 1,300 situated just outside the park's western boundaries, and Madison Junction, a recreational area that sits within the park's confines.

Containment Essential

"As it's pushing off to the north and east, there's not a lot of values at risk as far as infrastructure goes," said Mike Johnson, a spokesman with the National Park Service. "We're going to keep the fire to the north of the West Entrance Road, and we have plans in place that if the fire were to move to the west toward West Yellowstone."

Madison Junction is also home to a campground, some visitor facilities and staff housing. It's described as where West Entrance Road intersects with the park's Grand Loop Road, linking such major tourist attractions as Old Faithful and Yellowstone Lake.

Johnson added firefighters are also busy battling the three smaller fires that have swept across the area.

As of early in the week, the Maple fire remained confined to about three miles away from Madison Junction and about four miles from the West Yellowstone Entrance station. On Sunday, the blaze spread several thousand more acres to now consume roughly 27,000 acres in total.

Meanwhile, authorities are now monitoring the two-week old, lightening caused Fawn fire by both ground and air with the acerage of the blaze currentlyb at around 1,800 acres.

The Buffalo fire in Tatanka Complex about 3 miles northeast of Tower Junction has simmered a bit and is now being managed via monitoring and so-called point-protection strategies.

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Both fire and ice briefly hindered travel into Yellowstone National Park on the National Park Service's centennial anniversary.

Authorities closed a portion of the Beartooth Highway Wednesday night due to snow and ice from a summer snowstorm. Crews cleared the roadway and reopened it Thursday morning.

The popular two-lane mountain highway runs from Red Lodge, Montana, over the Beartooth Pass to Yellowstone's Northeast Entrance.

At the other end of the park, a wildfire has closed a portion of the road leading to Yellowstone's South Entrance since Monday.

Visitors heading to Thursday's celebration and concert in Yellowstone from the south face an hour-long detour into Idaho.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

…

FLOOD INSURANCE POLITICS IN LOUISIANA SENATE RACE: With the residents of Baton Rouge desperately trying to recover from flood waters, flood insurance has become a major feature of the state's senate race to replace retiring Sen. David Vitter. Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon endorsed Republican Rep. Charles Boustany for Senate, arguing that he is "the only candidate I trust to fight for affordable flood insurance." Congress faces a September 2017 deadline to reauthorize the government-run National Flood Insurance Program. "I look forward to working with Commissioner Donelon to write common-sense flood insurance policy as Louisiana's next United States Senator when Congress begins work on reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program in 2017," Boustany said in a statement.

…

NO ONE WANTS COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD INSURANCE: The Government Accountability Office on Wednesday backed FEMA's conclusion that community-based flood insurance isn't workable. As Finance Pro's Victoria Guida reports, FEMA was considering the option, under which communities could band together to buy flood insurance plans, but an analysis it released in March found the challenges too great to overcome. Now the GAO is supporting FEMA's conclusion. "The challenges outlined in the study outweigh any potential benefit when considered against limited community interest," GAO wrote. The National Flood insurance Program faces numerous challenges, not least its $23 billion in debt.

DECREPIT FLORIDA DIKE VULNERABLE TO LOOMING STORM: A potential tropical storm or hurricane developing in the Caribbean may be headed for Florida in the coming days, based on last night's outlooks from the National Hurricane Center — posing exactly the scenario the Army Corps of Engineers has feared as it struggles with excessively high water levels in Lake Okeechobee. Earlier this summer, the agency reduced flows from the large inland lake amid pressure from residents and GOP Gov. Rick Scott to stem the flow of nutrient-choked runoff that fed toxic algae along the Treasure Coast. But that means lake levels remain higher than usual going into the busiest part of hurricane season — increasing the pressure on the leaky, decades-old dike that protects the lives of tens of thousands of residents.

Even a weak storm could cause big problems if it dumps tons of rain. As of Wednesday, lake levels were at 14.67 feet above sea level, while 17.5 feet is the level at which the corps believes the dike becomes unstable. The lake is the site of one of the deadliest disasters in U.S. history, a 1928 hurricane that killed more than 2,500 people.

Too little, too late: Today the corps will announce its management plans for the week ahead, but by the time you can see a storm coming it's too late to do much. "We just can't release water that fast," said John Campbell with the corps' Jacksonville district. In fact, a few days out the corps has to stop making releases from the lake so they don't flood communities downstream when the storm comes.

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

By Andrew Freedman

Yahoo! News, August 25, 2016

For days, a war has been raging between two of the premiere computer models used to help predict the weather. On the one side, there's the National Weather Service's Global Forecast System, or GFS, which has maintained that a tropical wave moving across Puerto Rico and Hispaniola will not intensify into a hurricane and strike Florida this weekend.

But other models have consistently outshone the GFS in both routine and high impact, high risk forecast situations.

On the other side of the battle is the European, or Euro model, which is run by the European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasting in England.

The Euro, which gained notoriety by catching on to Hurricane Sandy's unprecedented and catastrophic left hook into New Jersey a week in advance, has rattled Florida with its depiction of an intense tropical storm or hurricane hitting the southern part of the state this weekend.

Run after run, the Euro had stuck to its guns for the past three days, insisting that the area of inclement weather designated as "Invest 99L" would soon become Hurricane Hermine, potentially going on to menace Gulf Coastal states as a major hurricane of Category 3 intensity or greater.

The battlefield may have just changed significantly, though. It's unclear if a peace treaty has been signed, or if this is just a temporary lull in the fighting, but the afternoon run of the Euro model trended toward the GFS solution of a weaker storm.

In other words, it is no longer showing an intense storm hitting Florida on Sunday, and then intensifying over the unusually warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

This news is being met with cautious relief on social media. For example, Miami NBC-TV meteorologist John Morales welcomed the new computer model trend.

Weather Channel meteorologist Justin Abraham comically celebrated what he sees as a potential GFS victory over the top-seeded European model.

However, Floridians shouldn't let down their guard yet, since the swirling cloud mass located north of Haiti could still persevere despite two main challenges.

Invest 99L has been contending with layers of dry air that have stifled the development of thunderstorms near the center of the storm. Such thunderstorms are needed in order for the weather system to form a closed area of low pressure at the surface and intensify.

The wind shear is forecast to diminish starting in about 24 to 36 hours, at which point it's possible both the Euro and GFS will be wrong, and the storm will intensify rapidly.

"Although upper-level winds are not conducive for significant development during the next day or so, they could become a little more favorable over the weekend or early next week when the wave is expected to approach southern Florida or the southeastern Gulf of Mexico," the National Hurricane Center said in a 2 p.m. ET statement on the weather system.

The Hurricane Center lowered Invest 99L's chances of developing into a tropical depression, tropical storm or hurricane to 70 percent through 5 days, down from 80 percent earlier in the day.

For now, Invest 99L looks like a poor excuse for a tropical weather system that is inspiring trepidation in a coastal state like Florida. Its center is exposed and comprised only of low-level clouds, and the largest thunderstorms are displaced several hundred miles away from the center.

In short, it looks like garbage, from a tropical meteorology perspective.

Whether it turns into something more impressive remains to be seen, but for now, it’s encouraging that the great model war of August 2016 may be coming to an end.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 31 Aug 2016 13:12:39 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.co.us';'(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';'(b)(6)(b)(@utah.gov';(b)(6)@wyo.gov'(b)(6)@nd.gov';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil'(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;'(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';'(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;'(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';'(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA clips for last day of August
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-31-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 31, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A story follows through on the damage from the recent hailstorm in Colorado Springs. Hail was as deep as three feet in some basements.
- **Montana:** A Bismarck reprint of a Billings Gazette article repeats the call for separate disaster funding for fighting wildfires… A TV story reports on attempts to help economically, including SBA loans, after the closure of the Yellowstone River…. Wildfires remained relatively stable.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from an environmental web site that cites objections to the pipeline from three federal agencies similar to what the tribe is protesting. Also, an Omaha TV station gives an overview of the situation. … Three tornadoes hit eastern North Dakota over the weekend.
- **South Dakota:** Lawrence County officials approved further investigation into whether to do a program to prevent damage from a previous wildfire. They expressed hesitation because of a previous experience with a cost-share with FEMA… A Yankton resident died from West Nile virus.
- **Utah:** State water officials are insisting on a plan to analyze the damage and what to do about the toxic sediment in the American Fork River. The memory of the Gold King Mine spill is a warning of further potential hazards.
- **Wyoming:** The southern entrance to Yellowstone National Park is open again.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, gives an overview of the stormy weather currently threatening parts of the U.S. … The CDC says sit will run out of money to fight the Zika virus in September.

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Route To Yellowstone Reopens, But Fire Danger Remains High (Wyoming Public Radio)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

NBC: Severe Weather.

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

STORIES

COLORADO

Homeowners looking at major losses after hail and flooding in Colorado Springs (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

By Bill Folsom

The people living in areas of Colorado Springs inundated by hail and water on Monday, spent Tuesday cleaning up and assessing damage. "Literally found ourselves homeless overnight," said John Martin who lived in one of the damaged homes on Logan Avenue. Multiple residents on the street are facing so much damage their homes will be unlivable for some time.

Many homes end up with hail and water in their homes. The basements of several homes filled with hail as deep as three feet. Other rooms show water makes several feet up walls. Where water subsided it left behind a coating of mud.

Erma Medina rents out a home on Logan Avenue. It is one of the homes with hail filling the basement.

There has been flooding in the area before, but never like this. She carried FEMA flood insurance until about a year ago when she says several city storm water drains outside her property were upgraded. With this disaster she see the problem as hail, but she says her insurance company says it is flooding. Sitting on a retaining wall outside the house Medina points to the remaining kneed deep hail, "Look at that hail. You can see the hail in the basement. The windows were broken by hail and they say it was flood. I don't believe it was a flood, no. She will dispute the claim, but says insurance or no insurance help she will find a way to repair the damage.

MONTANA

Western fires take big toll on programs (Billings Gazette, reprinted in Bismarck Tribune)

The late August sun is a smoky red ball, reminding Montanans of the fires that have destroyed homes and curtailed business in the West this summer. It's so dry in parts of Montana, Wyoming, California and other Western states that big fires are likely to burn until autumn snow falls. If lightning storms and wind persist, the fires will be bigger and more numerous.

The destruction is costly, and so is the firefighting. One year ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on the rising cost of fire operations and how it affected the Forest Service's other work. The numbers indicate that the Forest Service ought to be called the "fire service" because that's how the agency spent most of its budget. The USDA summed up the problem of "the depletion of non-fire programs to pay for the ever-increasing costs of fire." This has resulted in:

- Less money for restoration work that would help prevent catastrophic fires.

- Less protection of watersheds and cultural resources.

- Reduced upkeep of programs and infrastructure that support thousands of recreation jobs and billions of dollars economic growth in rural communities.

- Reduced support for the range of multiple uses, benefits and ecosystem services.

- Less research and technical assistance.

Firefighting staff has increased from 5,700 in 1998 to more than 12,000 in 2015. Meanwhile, the non-firefighting forest workers have been reduced by 39 percent — from 18,000 employees in 1998 to fewer than 11,000 last year.

Every non-firefighting program has been slashed. Forest road-building has been reduced 46 percent. Deferred maintenance funding was cut 95 percent despite a backlog of more than $5.1 billion in dam repairs, roads, sewer and water system improvements.

Lack of funding for everything but fires has prevented the agency from doing things that would save money in the long term. Energy efficiency projects have been deferred. Funding hasn't been available for partnership programs that generate private matching funds.

The report concluded with the solution that Congress has been delaying for years: Change the way we pay for wildfire fighting. Treat wildfires as the natural disasters they are.

In June, Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., spoke on behalf of draft legislation called the Wildfire Budgeting, Response and Forest Management Act. The first thing it would do, according to a Daines news release, is "end the unsustainable practice of fire borrowing by enabling a transfer of limited funds to the Forest Service and the Department of Interior through a budget cap adjustment when all appropriated suppressions funding (100 percent of the 10-year average) has been exhausted."

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., reaffirmed his support for the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. Both he and Daines are co-sponsors of the act, which would "pay for catastrophic wildfires through separate emergency funding, allowing the Forest Service to devote more resources to proactive forest management like trail maintenance and timber harvest."

If S.235, which both of our U.S. senators are co-sponsoring, had been enacted and funded last year, the Forest Service would have $1.4 billion more to fight wildfires this year. But it didn't pass, so the Forest Service will again have to rob all its other operations to pay for the fiery disasters this year.

Montana's senators are in a good position to promote this bipartisan solution. Among many proposals for forest management involving timber harvest, recreation and conservation, nothing else is going to work well if the budget continues to be diverted to wildfire.

Lawmakers must stop the "fire borrowing" before another wildfire season begins. We call on Daines and Tester to work together to unite other Western senators and pass wildfire disaster legislation this year.
— Billings (Mont) Gazette

Efforts underway to help while portion of Yellowstone River is closed for businesses (KRTV, Great Falls)

By Morgan McKay - MTN News

LIVINGSTON - Governor Steve Bullock scheduled a Rapid Response Training meeting Monday for those affected by the closure of the Yellowstone River.

Many people like Chase Chapman have been left wondering how they will get through a Montana winter, since the closure of the Yellowstone has forced them to close their business.

"I don't need retraining, I'm very good at what I do," said Chapman, who is a fly fishing guide and teacher in Livingston. "When all these Congressman want to go catch a big fish, I go through Yellowstone Angler and we catch some big fish."

"So I came to this meeting today with some hope of maybe there's some grants available for a small business person, because if they opened up the river again tomorrow, I've now sold all my inventory," said Beth O'Neill, owner of SUP Montana.

Earlier today, Governor Bullock signed an executive order proclaiming an invasive species emergency to exist in the State of Montana. This order allows for different organizations to offer relief.

“We heard your concerns and taking a multi agency approach to addressing the immediate needs of workers who rely on the Yellowstone River for their livelihoods,” said Bullock.

Local and Park County government officials attended the meeting as well as representatives from agencies such as the Montana Chamber of Commerce and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

“We do everything from helping folks file their unemployment claims to assisting them to potentially go into training folks who may have been impacted by this or a similar event,” said Zack Medina, with Job Services.

“This isn't a handout, this isn't an entitlement program,” said Paul Martin, Bureau Chief of Unemployment Insurance. “It's a week to week eligibility program, it's funded by employers through payroll taxes.”

While unemployment insurance was one favorable option, other resources available were loans or a different temporary job placement.

“The last thing you want to do is get into debt, but there are economic injury loans, we can go up to two million (dollars),” said John Donovan, Small Business Administration.

Those businesses affected by the closure of the Yellowstone are encouraged to contact the Institute for Tourism and Recreation at the University of Montana, to help aid them in studying the full economic impact of the closure.

“Montanans I think, what makes us special, is to live here you have to learn to do several things,” said Chapman.

According to latest information released by FWP today, out of 30 trout tested in the upper Yellowstone, only two brown trout tested positive for the parasitic infection.

Officials say there is only evidence of the parasite, but not the disease. FWP also is saying there have been no trout mortalities documented from the disease.

Cloud cover keeps Copper King, Roaring Lion fires quiet (Missoulian)

- KIM BRIGGEMAN kbriggeman@missoulian.com

THOMPSON FALLS – Tuesday turned out to be a good day to fight fires in western Montana, though crews were keeping a lookout for a cool front blowing in from Oregon.

“There’s been a cloud cover over the fire this afternoon that’s kind of kept it subdued during the day,” spokesman Mike Cole said from the Copper King fire east of Thompson Falls.

A red flag warning issued for the afternoon and evening suggested dry thunderstorms might mix with temperatures in the 90s and relative humidity in the low to mid-teens and cause problems at both the Copper King and the Roaring Lion southwest of Hamilton, which turns a month old on Wednesday.

“I’m not sure if they’re actually going to produce over our area,” Lisa Keibler, public information officer at the Roaring Lion, said at 5:30 p.m. “We’ve got a lot of cloud cover and maybe some smoke from Idaho, but right now it’s pretty calm out actually.”

Neither fire is close to being out. An infrared flight in the middle of the night Monday raised the acreage of the Copper King to just under 26,000, up 1,000 acres from an estimate the evening before. It’s Montana’s largest active fire in 2016.

“Our biggest concern and kind of the linchpin of this thing is Munson Creek,” Cole said. “If we can keep this fire out of Munson Creek, that’s going to allow us to get a handle on this. But the weather has to cooperate and we have a lot of ground to cover and a lot of steep ground to try to get buttoned up.”

Munson Creek runs in a southerly direction to Highway 200 and the Clark Fork River 11 miles east of Thompson Falls and 13 miles west of Plains. Cole said crews were out until 2 a.m. Tuesday to complete a burnout operation on the north side of the fire.

During the day helicopters and an occasional fixed-wing aircraft were dropping water and retardant at the top of Munson Creek trying to keep the fire out of the deep canyon to prevent a possible run up the east side.

“We’ve been doing some structure protection work around the residences on Buffalo Bill Road,” Cole said. “If the fire did come down Munson Creek, those would be the first residences threatened, so we want to get ahead of the game.”

Some 220,000 gallons of water and 22,000 gallons of retardant were dropped on the fire Monday, when the fire west of Munson Creek burned back into the main fire toward the Big Hole Lookout. That resulted in a large column that was visible from Plains.

Tuesday’s red flag concern was rooted in an unstable air mass rated 6 on the Haines Index. The Haines Index has been used since 1988 to indicate the potential for wildfire growth. The index can range between 2 and 6, with a 6 being the driest and most unstable conditions in the lower atmosphere.

A total of 840 people are working the Copper King, which has cost an estimated $16.5 million to quell since it broke out on July 31.

Closures and evacuations remain in place. Forty-five homes have been evacuated and another 130 are on pre-evacuation notice. Log hauling is being permitted through the closure area from 4 to 6 a.m. daily.

Air quality in the Thompson Falls area climbed once again into the "very unhealthy" range Tuesday morning, spiking midway toward the top category of "hazardous" at 10 a.m. before dropping two levels to “unhealthy for sensitive groups” by 5 p.m.

"Very unhealthy" air means active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

Roughly 80 percent of hunting district 122 near Thompson Falls was closed indefinitely on Monday by the U.S. Forest Service.

Estimated containment date for the Copper King fire remains the end of October.

In Hamilton at the Roaring Lion fire, air quality remained good all day. Fifty-four people are on the fire, which was caused by unknown sources on July 31. Most of Tuesday’s action consisted of monitoring and checking the 8,533-acre fire with aerial resources to keep it within Ward Bowl, north of Camas Creek and south of Sawtooth Creek. Patrols were active on the ground to suppress spot fires over the fire line.

The Roaring Lion is expected to be contained by the end of September.

NORTH DAKOTA

Dakota Pipeline Was Approved by Army Corps Over Objections of Three Federal Agencies (Inside Climate News)

Sioux tribe's concerns were echoed in official reports by the EPA and two other agencies, but Army Corps of Engineers brushed them aside.

By Phil McKenna
Aug 30, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D.—Senior officials at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and two other federal agencies raised serious environmental and safety objections to the North Dakota section of the controversial Dakota Access oil pipeline, the same objections being voiced in a large protest by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe that has so far succeeded in halting construction.

But those concerns were dismissed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which relied on an environmental assessment prepared by the pipeline's developer, Dakota Access LLC, when it approved the project in July, according to public documents.

The 1,134-mile pipeline would carry approximately 500,000 barrels of crude per day from North Dakota to Illinois along a route that did not originally pass near the Standing Rock reservation, the documents show. After the company rerouted the pipeline to cross the Missouri River just a half-mile upstream of the reservation, the tribe complained that the Army Corps did not consider threats to its water supply and cultural heritage.

The EPA, the Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation echoed those concerns in public comments on the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment. Citing risks to water supplies, inadequate emergency preparedness, potential impacts to the Standing Rock reservation and insufficient environmental justice analysis, the agencies urged the Army Corps to issue a revised draft of their environmental assessment.

"Crossings of the Missouri River have the potential to affect the primary source of drinking water for much of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Tribal nations," Philip Strobel, National Environmental Policy Act regional compliance director for the EPA, wrote in a March 11 letter to the Army Corps.

The current route of the pipeline is 10 miles upstream of Fort Yates, the tribal headquarters of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and the county seat. The Standing Rock Sioux rely on the Missouri River for drinking water, irrigation, and fish.

The EPA shared its concerns and recommended that the Army Corps undertake a new draft environmental assessment and release it for public comment. In that process, the EPA asked the Army Corps to consider "other available routes or crossing locations that would have reduced potential to water resources, especially drinking water supplies," and to carry out a "more thorough" analysis of environmental justice concerns. The other agencies also asked for further assessments and consultation with the tribes.

The Army Corps instead published its final environmental assessment four months later, which constituted final approval of the project. In it, the Corps acknowledged the agencies' comments, but said "the anticipated environmental, economic, cultural, and social effects" of the project are "not injurious to the public interest."

The Army Corps, which has jurisdiction over domestic pipelines that cross major waterways, declined a request for comment, citing ongoing litigation. Energy Transfer, owner of Dakota Access LLC, did not respond to a request for comment. The company has previously said "we are constructing this pipeline in accordance with applicable laws, and the local, state and federal permits and approvals we have received."

Tribe Takes their Complaints Public

The tribe's growing protest has gathered in a camp near Cannon Ball, N.D., and has drawn support from Native Americans from around the country as well as environmental activists. An estimated 1,200 people are camping there and Sioux leaders say 90 tribes are represented among the protesters.

The protest blocked construction equipment two weeks ago and Energy Transfer halted construction on the section of pipeline closest to the Standing Rock reservation. A federal judge said last week he will rule by September 9 on whether to grant the Standing Rock Sioux a temporary injunction. That would bar construction on sections of the pipeline where the ground hasn't yet been disturbed until a suit calling for the Army Corps to redo its permitting process can be heard.

Demographics of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation
The Standing Rock reservation spans 3,600 square miles across North and South Dakota, where 41 percent of its 8,217 residents live below the poverty level, more than triple the national average, according to a 2012 economic development report prepared for the tribe. Nearly a quarter of its population is unemployed.

In its comments calling for a re-do, the EPA said the environmental justice analysis in the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment used county-by-county or state-by-state data when the preferred level of analysis is "census block groups or census tracts."

"A screening level analysis for EJ [environmental justice] indicates there are several census block groups with substantial minority and/or low income demographics that could be potentially impacted by the project," the EPA wrote. "In addition to analyzing potential EJ impacts, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (February 16, 1994) also requires public outreach to potentially affected EJ communities."

In its final environmental assessment, the Army Corps said its analysis "contains an Environmental Justice analysis that conforms with recognized practice."

The agency also said the pipeline does not cross tribal land. "In fact, tribal land was specifically avoided as a routing mitigation measure," it said. "The Project does not anticipate any impact to water supplies along its route, and to the extent a response action is required, federal regulation will be complied with."

Route Became a Moving Target

The original route for the proposed pipeline crossed the Missouri River further north, 10 miles upstream of Bismarck, the state capital. North Dakota Public Service Commission documents show the route upstream of Bismarck in a May 29, 2014 map by Energy Transfer.

The company later rejected this route, citing a number of factors, including more road and wetland crossings, a longer pipeline, and higher costs. Also listed as a concern was the close proximity to wellheads providing Bismarck's drinking water supply.

"They moved it down to Standing Rock, which is a very remote area, but people live at Standing Rock too. There is an environmental justice component here," said Jan Hasselman, an attorney with environmental advocacy organization EarthJustice, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Standing Rock Tribe against the Army Corps of Engineers.

In its public comments, the Department of the Interior, the government agency responsible for the administration and management of Native American lands, called for the Army Corps to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement, a more comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of the proposed pipeline.

"We believe the Corps did not adequately justify or otherwise support its conclusion that there would be no significant impacts upon the surrounding environment and community," Lawrence Roberts, acting assistant secretary of Indian affairs at the Depart of the Interior, wrote in a letter to the Army Corps in March.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), a federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of the nation's historic resources, also expressed concern over the Army Corps' assessment.

Federal law requires federal agencies to take into account the effect a proposed project will have on historic property. The Army Corps' assessment, however lacked adequate consultation with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and focused on a limited number of water crossings rather than on the pipeline's entire expanse, according to letters ACHP officials wrote to the Army Corps.

"Based on the inadequacies of the tribal consultation and the limited scope for identification of historic properties that may be affected, the ACHP questions the sufficiency of the Corps' identification effort, its determinations of eligibility, and assessments of effect," Reid Nelson, director of the office of federal agency programs for ACHP, wrote in a May 19 letter to the Army Corps.

In its final assessment, the Corps stated there is "no new significant information on environmental effects" as a result of comments from the EPA and others. "As such, neither a supplemental or revised EA [Environmental Assessment] for further public review nor additional NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] compliance actions was required."

"We're talking about a broad overarching and fundamental failure which is the decision to look very narrowly at environmental impacts at a few specific locations rather than the pipeline as a whole," Hasselman said of the Army Corps' assessment.

Having their concerns dismissed by the Corps, the tribe turned next to the courts. Their lawsuit calls for a halt to construction and full consideration of the pipeline's impact on tribal lands and water.

To obtain a preliminary or "emergency" injunction, however, attorneys representing the Standing Rock tribe will have to demonstrate imminent harm to historic sites if construction proceeds.

"To the extent that people are concerned about harm from oil spills, that is still a ways off," Hasselman said. "We can't really seek emergency relief on that front. That is something that we will be seeking in the course of the lawsuit."

5 things to know about the Dakota Access Pipeline (KETV, Omaha)

Native American tribe sued the federal government over project

UPDATED 7:33 AM CDT Aug 31, 2016

(CNN) —In what looks to be a possible sequel to the Keystone XL Pipeline dispute, another fight has begun over a proposed US oil route.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has sued the federal government, saying the Native American tribe was not properly consulted over the project to construct a 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline that extends over four states.

While proponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline tout its economic boost, opponents question its environmental impact.

The US Army Corps of Engineers approved the project, granting final permits in July, to the dismay of environmentalists and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

1. What is the pipeline project?

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois. The pipeline is also known as the Bakken Oil Pipeline, named for the oil-rich area in North Dakota. An estimated 7.4 billion barrels of undiscovered oil is believed to be in the US portion of the Bakken Formation, according to the US Geological Survey.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

2. Why is the pipeline being constructed?

The project developer, Dakota Access, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Crude Oil, says the pipeline would help the United States become less dependent on importing energy from unstable regions of the world. It says a pipeline is the safest, most cost-effective and environmentally responsible way to move crude oil, removing dependency on rails and trucks.

It also estimates the pipeline would bring an estimated $156 million in sales and income taxes to state and local governments as well as add 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs.

The proposal comes as a glut of cheap oil has devastated North Dakota's economy. The state had enjoyed a major boom, but after hitting highs in 2014, it suffered a major economic downturn.

The project developers say the $3.7 billion project will "bring significant economic benefits to the region that it transverses."

3. Who is protesting?

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a complaint in federal court alleging that "the construction and operation of the pipeline ... threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe."

There are also concerns that digging the pipeline under the Missouri River would affect the tribe's drinking water supply. The tribe, represented by Earthjustice, a nonprofit environmental law firm, has asked for an injunction.

Based in Fort Yates, North Dakota, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is a federally recognized Indian tribe, a successor to the Great Sioux Nation. Other Native American tribes and nations have joined its efforts.

"We have laws that require federal agencies to consider environmental risks and protection of Indian historic and sacred sites," Dave Archambault II, the elected chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, said in a statement.

"But the Army Corps has ignored all those laws and fast-tracked this massive project just to meet the pipeline's aggressive construction schedule."

Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota disputes the tribe's chief complaint that the Army Corps did not properly consult it.

"If there is some way for the corps to work to meet the concerns of the tribe, they should certainly do that. But (there) has been a consultation process. If the tribe doesn't feel that that has been sufficient, again, they can protest as long as they do it peacefully and safely, but ultimately their recourse is to the courts," the Republican senator told CNN affiliate KFYR-TV in Bismarck, North Dakota.

About 30 environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, signed a letter to President Barack Obama, slamming the Dakota Access Pipeline as "yet another example of an oil pipeline project being permitted without public engagement or sufficient environmental review."

They appealed to him to reject the project -- as he did with the Keystone XL pipeline.

Protests have been held in North Dakota and Washington.

Construction equipment involved in the pipeline project in Iowa was set ablaze in suspected arson fires, reports say.

4. Who's on which side?

Bernie Sanders spoke out against the pipeline in November 2015, but Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton has not addressed the issue. CNN reached out to the Clinton campaign for comment on the issue and has not yet received a response.

"If candidate Clinton does nothing to address this issue yet continues into November promising Native Americans that she is our champion, then her words will be nothing but false promises -- just more bombast, more white lies to Indians," Simon Moya-Smith, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation and culture editor at Indian Country Today, wrote recently in a CNN op-ed.

Celebrities such as Shailene Woodley, Susan Sarandon and Rosario Dawson have spoken out against the pipeline.

Leonardo DiCaprio tweeted that he was "inspired by the Standing Rock Sioux's efforts to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline."

5. What's next?

The tribe's actions may be the start of a lengthy, legal fight over the Dakota Access Pipeline. Meanwhile, construction work on the pipeline is ongoing.

US District Judge James Boasberg said he wants to absorb both sides of the argument before issuing a ruling, which is expected by September 9, KFYR reported.

Officials Rate 3 Weekend Tornadoes In Eastern North Dakota (AP)

Associated Press, August 30, 2016

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) – A weekend tornado that caused damage in the Hillsboro area had wind speeds up to 140 mph, according to the National Weather Service.

The agency rated the Saturday evening tornado in Traill County an EF-3 on the enhanced Fujita scale. An EF2 or higher rating is considered significant.

The tornado was as wide as three football fields are long and was on the ground for 8 minutes, according to a weather service report. It smashed bins at Rahr Malting Co.’s Taft grain elevator complex and spilled tons of barley onto the ground, destroyed a garage and uprooted trees on one area farmstead. It heavily damaged a home and a metal building at another farmstead.

No one was hurt. The town of 1,600 people was lucky that the tornado missed the heart of the community, said Connor Ulness with the storm damage restoration company Aspen Exteriors.

“The tornado came in just north of the center of town,” he told WDAY-TV.

Severe storms in eastern North Dakota on Saturday spawned two weaker tornadoes in neighboring Grand Forks County, according to the weather service. One with wind speeds estimated at 70 mph and rated an EF-0 touched down in an open field near Arvilla. An EF-1 tornado with wind speeds up to 110 mph uprooted trees and demolished a barn in the Pleasant View Township area.

No injuries were reported in either of those tornadoes.

SOUTH DAKOTA

County To Explore Grant Possibilities For Areas Affected By Crow Peak Fire

(Black Hills Pioneer)

By Jaci Conrad

Black Hills Pioneer

August 30,2016

DEADWOOD — Disaster prevention due to devastation caused by the Crow Peak Fire is the impetus behind the Lawrence County Commission's recent decision to give the go-ahead to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide an initial assessment of the area.

"We might discover something very important that needs to be done," said Commission Chair Daryl Johnson.

The Emergency Watershed Protection program of the conservation service is designed to help prevent damage to life or property after a natural disasters, like the Crow Peak Fire. A cost-share program, the protection program pays 75 percent of the costs to install practices such as replacing culverts identified in the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) report completed after the fire. If it decides the assessment is worthy of pursuing, the county, upon entering a sponsorship of the emergency grant program, would be responsible for 25 percent of the costs.

Because the county would be responsible for the operation and maintenance of any culverts installed, for the life of the culvert, commissioners were hesitant to commit to the program, asking first for an initial assessment to be brought back and reviewed before a formal commitment is made.

"You understand, our apprehension comes from the fact that we still maintain snow-removal on two bridges because we were a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) sponsor of them at one time," Johnson said.

With a 60-day deadline following the fire, which was put out on July 4, an application letter must be submitted to the conservation service by Friday, starting the information gathering process, beginning with a damage survey report. This report will identify what problems are present, how to fix any concerns, and the cost of repairing the concerns. The application letter does not commit Lawrence County to a contract.

District Conservationist Justin Boerboom addressed the commission, explaining that the NRCS is federal agency with USDA funding and takes measures to help prevent catastrophe after a natural disaster through the Emergency Watershed Program.

"We need a local sponsor to apply for assistance," Boerboom said. "We've proposed the project. The next step is to go out and evaluate what the issues are, what to address, the costs, and come back with a proposal."

NRCS State Engineer Jay Cobb said that once they evaluate, the next determination is if they can mitigate issues to gain benefits greater than the actual cost of construction.

Threats that the protection program addresses are termed watershed impairments and include, for example: debris-clogged stream channels, undermined and unstable streambanks, jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures, wind-borne debris removal, and damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor, such as the county, if they decide to move forward with the program.

Boerboom also presented the critical values table from the BAER report, listing all the concerns on private land. Listed as a very high risk to human life and safety is the Crow Creek Road and the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout, and damage. The BAER team identified Crow Creek as an drainage of Crow Peak that would see an increase of about 50 percent over normal flows since the vegetation on the western slopes were burned.

Listed as a high threat to human life and safety are homes along Crow Creek Road; specifically, two cabins and the threat of flash flooding and debris flows.

Listed as a very high threat to property are: two road crossings with 18-inch culverts on Crow Creek Road; Crumm Driveway Crossing's 24-inch culvert; and Nicholas Cabin driveway, which crossing 24-inch culvert. The threat here is flash flooding with debris flows, debris blockage, possible failure of crossing structures, and road washout/damage.

Listed as a high threat to property are private road crossings along Higgins Gulch Road in the floodplain, with the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout/damage; and culverts under driveways alongside Higgins Gulch Road.

The BAER team determined the Higgins Gulch drainage would see increased flows of about 10 percent following the fire.

There are other threats that have been identified and listed in the intermediate to low threat categories.

Yankton Co. Resident Dies From West Nile Virus (KDLT News, Pierre)

Aug 29, 2016

KDLT News- Pierre, S.D.

The South Dakota Department of Health today reported a Yankton Co. resident died of West Nile virus associated causes. It is the state's first WNV related death this season. The individual was in the 80 to 89 age group.

To date this season, South Dakota has reported 74 cases of human WNV; 12 percent have had the most serious neruoinvasive disease while 88 percent have had WNV fever. Twenty-five percent of cases have been hospitalized. There has also been a WNV-positive horse in Butte County.

"This unfortunate death is a reminder for us all that while the Zika virus is grabbing headlines, West Nile is the mosquito-borne virus of concern here in South Dakota," said Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department. "We strongly encourage people to protect themselves and their families by using repellent and avoiding the outdoors when mosquitoes are most active."

Kightlinger said South Dakotans can reduce their risk with the following precautions:

- Apply mosquito repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535) to clothes and exposed skin. Limit exposure by wearing pants and long sleeves in the evening.

- Limit time outdoors from dusk to midnight when Culex mosquitoes, the primary carrier of WNV in South Dakota, are most active.
- Get rid of standing water that gives mosquitoes a place to breed. Regularly change water in bird baths, outside pet dishes, and drain water from flower pots and garden containers.
- Support local mosquito control efforts.

UTAH

Next step for American Fork River: Measure the risks with an eye toward spring (KSL TV, Salt Lake City)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue | Posted Aug 30th, 2016 @ 7:02pm

SALT LAKE CITY — State water quality officials will insist on an action plan to prevent further contamination of the American Fork River from lead-laden sediment that killed thousands of fish in a two-mile stretch.

That plan will be put together by the North Utah Water Conservancy District with an eye toward preventing sediment from being stirred up by rain or spring runoff, said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

He said the division also expects to get an estimate from project engineers on the amount of sediment that washed into the river as a result of the Tibble Fork Dam's $7.3 million rehabilitation and expansion project.

"We have moved sediment from point A to point B over a six-mile expanse," Baker said. "There needs to be an assessment of how bad it is and what steps need to be taken to remediate it."

It's the latest plan following completion by project engineers of a diversion channel that placed a 200-foot pipeline to reroute flows into the nearly empty Tibble Fork basin to prevent another sediment flush while work continues on the dam.

Baker said a lot of factors will come into play to mitigate the impacts of the sludge, especially given that high flows from spring runoff.

"Mother Nature is going to come with spring runoff regardless of any planning we do," he said. "We need to know what needs to be done."

Dave Brown, the Utah state conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, said an aerial drone flew over the site Monday to quantify the amount of material that washed into the river.

"There is a very clear mini-canyon that is exposed now," he said. "The engineer indicated they could use survey technology to calculate how much sediment was deposited."

Dam project

The NRCS is the federal agency on the Tibble Fork rehabilitation project, which rose as a priority after a 2004 assessment found that 1960s-era dam did not meet safety standards. Work began in June, with the NRCS advising downstream users that as the reservoir began draining around Aug. 19, people could expect to see elevated levels of sediment in the river.

Brown said continuing inflows into the basin released larger amounts of sediment than anticipated. The result was a two-mile section of the river just below the dam that lost all its fish populations due to suffocation.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources said historically, there are about 1,000 to 2,000 fish per mile in that section of the river.

While water samples taken by the state show metal concentrations within screening values for health, recreation and aquatic life downstream, the sediment showed high levels of lead that likely resulted from legacy mining operations in the Wasatch Mountains.

Several hundred abandoned mines dot the mountains, some experiencing acid mine drainage and an unknown number are within proximity of perennial stream flows.

Baker said his division has worked in partnership with the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, to craft a blueprint of where there may be water quality risks — a concern accentuated with the disastrous Gold King Mine spill of 2015.

In that incident, EPA-led contractors bungled efforts to open a mine portal and sent a 3-million gallon torrent of mustard-colored mine waste into the Animas River above Silverton, Colo. The breach contaminated water in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the Navajo Nation in an environmental catastrophe critics say was avoidable.

Baker said the Gold King mine disaster underscores the need for Utah officials to get a handle on potential problems, sooner rather than later.

"It ought to be enough of a concern that we do some investigation," he said. "My greatest concern is if there needs to be an action plan and if these are time bombs waiting to go off."

Abandoned mines

While state officials over abandoned mine reclamation have mapped the hundreds of mines and their owners — if available — with work done in the 1990s, Baker said it is not clear how many of them pose risks to waterways.

"If, in fact, they do have flows and there are responsible parties, we can issue a permit and get an idea of the water quality of the mines' drainage," he said. "We will be way ahead to know if we have a problem or not."

The mining division closes up abandoned mines if there is a public safety risk, and Baker's division can enforce the Clean Water Act if water is at risk, but there is no state regulatory oversight absent those factors.

"We really don't know the extent," said Steve Fluke, administrator over the state's abandoned mine reclamation program. "We are trying to figure out how many are discharging and may be an environmental issue in light of Gold King."

While there is funding in place to deal with the cleanup of abandoned coal mines, no funding exists for other mines.

"There is no such law for cleaning up hard rock mine sites," Fluke said.

Mark Allen of Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon sees the potential for another Gold King Mine spill in the Wasatch Mountains because he said no one is properly addressing the risks.

"The Wasatch Mountains have a bunch of ticking time bombs and no one wants to talk about them," he said.

Allen said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should step in and declare the Tibble Fork sediment release into American Fork River a Superfund site.

EPA had a response team in Utah County last week, but the federal agency has not disclosed what its employees determined about the Tibble Fork Dam release.

"We will continue to coordinate with Utah and federal agencies to evaluate data, information, and potential next steps related to the sediment release," said EPA spokesman Rich Mylott.

"We're certainly aware of concerns related to historic mining and metals impacts in the American Fork watershed and have worked with state and local partners on previous assessment and cleanup projects in the basin."

Allen is leading a tour to legacy mine sites mid-month that Baker and Fluke said they plan to attend.

"I have been barking pretty loud," he said. "We're taking everybody up there who has some stewardship and asking them to figure out what to do."

Baker and several members of his staff are touring the New Yankee Mine on Snowbird property Wednesday to assess any downstream impacts.

The division is also looking at the resort's expansion into Mary Ellen Gulch, an approval granted earlier this year that requires water quality monitoring for two years before any construction on ski lifts or other facilities begins.

WYOMING

Route To Yellowstone Reopens, But Fire Danger Remains High (Wyoming Public Radio)

By CAROLINE BALLARD • 16 HOURS AGO

Northwest Wyoming continues to struggle with high fire danger as eleven wild fires currently burn in that part of the state.

Bill Swartley, a public information officer for the Yellowstone fire team, said Phase 2 fire restrictions will likely go into effect in Yellowstone National Park on Wednesday. That means any kind of open flame may be banned in the park.

Swartley said preventing any human caused fires is their top priority.

"These fires are lightning caused and for that reason are being managed for ecological benefits to the park," said Swartley. "However, human caused fires are a total different type of ignition."

With temperatures reaching into the 80s and low relative humidity, weather conditions are prime for even more fire growth.

Some progress has been made, though. Highway 191/89/287 between Leek's Marina and Yellowstone's South Entrance was closed because of the Berry Fire but has now reopened. Highway pull outs along that stretch remain closed.

Swartley said there may be areas of light haze or smoke in the park that could make it hard to see.

"We're just recommending people adjust their speed and turn on their headlights, increase their visibility as they pass through those areas of smoke," said Swartley.
He added that people with respiratory sensitivity may want to check air quality at airnow.gov before heading into the park.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (8/30, lead story, 2:30, Guthrie, 16.61M) reported, "Make no mistake, we are in the fall throes of hurricane season now. And if you're a storm watcher at the weather service looking at the US map tonight, there's a lot to keep your eye on. Three big storms threatening the US coastline at this hour. Parts of Florida just placed under a hurricane watch, bracing for up to 10 inches of rain. A tropical storm warning for sections of North Carolina. And Hawaii gearing up for a possible one-two punch. The Big Island facing a hurricane warning at this hour. Gabe Gutierrez starts us off tonight in North Carolina storm zone." NBC (**Gutierrez**) added, "Tonight, the view from the International Space Station is stunning: massive hurricanes swirling across the globe. Hurricane Madeleine in the Pacific, threatening Hawaii. It's followed by Hurricane Lester. Churning in the Atlantic, Hurricane Gaston, not expected to affect the US but now the Carolina and Florida coasts are bracing for separate tropical systems." **Unidentified speaker**: "The storm is an uncertainty, but we are preparing for it." **Gutierrez**: "In Florida, tropical depression number nine is forecast to turn towards the Gulf Coast, bringing heavy rain and even isolated tornadoes over the next few days." **Rick Scott**, Florida Governor: "Everybody has to be careful. We don't want anybody to be injured. We don't want any loss of life." **Gutierrez**: "Another system, tropical depression number eight, is grazing North Carolina's Outer Banks, where a tropical storm warning is in effect. The concern here, rip currents – fast-moving water that moves away from shore. Swimmers are pulled out to sea and panic while trying to swim against current, back to the beach." **Drew Pearson**, NC Emergency Management: "Rip currents are dangerous. They've taken three lives here in the Outer Banks Just this past summer. There's a high threat of them right now." **Gutierrez**: "Young Payton Waller got caught up in one but managed to escape." **Payton Waller**, swimmer: "It's really rough and all these waves just crashing." **Gutierrez**: "Other tourists on this tail end of summer are taking the offshore storm in stride." **Unidentified speaker**: "I mean, one to three inches. Back home, this is what you call a thunderstorm." **Gutierrez**: "Though neither of the storms closest to the eastern US are expected to strengthen into major hurricanes, it has suddenly become a busy season in the tropics.” **Rick Knabb**, National Hurricane Center: “Don’t focus so much on the strength or the category, because the water hazards might end up being the most dangerous.” **Gutierrez**: “As Florida prepares for flooding, here in North Carolina’s Outer Banks, things may seem calm. But, there is rough surf and dangerous rip currents up and down the eastern seaboard as far north as New England, possibly extending into the holiday weekend.”

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, August 30, 2016

The federal agency leading the public health response to the Zika virus in the United States will run out of funding to combat the mosquito-borne virus by late September, its director said Monday.

“The cupboard is bare,” said Tom Frieden, who heads the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Basically, we’re out of money, and we need Congress to act to allow us to respond effectively.”

Of the $222 million that the CDC was allocated for domestic Zika response this year, about $200 million has been committed, Frieden said during a media roundtable in Washington. “The rest will be gone by the end of September.”

The timing further raises the threat for high-risk states along the Gulf Coast, particularly if Congress again fails to act on the Obama administration’s emergency funding request when lawmakers return to Washington next month.

“We’re in peak mosquito season” – which typically lasts through the end of October in the United States – and if transmission starts occurring more broadly, CDC “might not have the resources” to respond and send teams to support local and state officials, Frieden said.

The CDC has already issued unprecedented travel advisories for two areas in Florida where mosquitoes are actively spreading the virus: a one-square-mile section of Miami’s Wynwood neighborhood and a 1.5-square-mile zone in Miami Beach. Pregnant women are urged to stay out of both areas because of the danger Zika poses to a fetus.

Negotiations in Congress over a $1.9 billion Zika spending package fell apart in late June. Federal health officials have shifted money from elsewhere in the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the domestic response. That includes $38 million from fighting Ebola, $44 million from general public health emergency funds and, most recently, $81 million from programs at the National Institutes of Health and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

The money has gone to help states track the virus, provide assistance about birth defects caused by Zika and increase mosquito-control efforts. Within CDC itself, officials also have pulled resources from programs on immunization, disease infection and HIV outreach, including prevention treatment for people at risk of getting HIV, Frieden said.

Researchers continue to detail ever-graver consequences for babies born to mothers infected with Zika. A report from Brazil, published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine, described a newborn in Sao Paolo who had Zika virus in his blood for more than two months. While the baby had no obvious illness or visible birth defects at birth or when doctors examined him at about eight weeks, by six months he had developed severe Zika-related brain damage.

The first trimester of pregnancy is thought to be when Zika infection poses the greatest risk. In this case, however, the baby’s mother was infected late in her second trimester.

At the same time, the virus continues to spread to the rest of the world. The latest outbreak is in Singapore, a Southeast Asia travel hub, which typically has 500 full-time inspectors working to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can breed. The fact that Zika is spreading there, with at least 56 cases now confirmed, shows how “it’s going to be really tough” for other places to control, he said.

During the coming weeks in the United States, Frieden expects there will be more cases of infants born with Zika-related neurological problems. As of mid-August, 17 babies infected in utero had been diagnosed with microcephaly, a condition defined by an abnormally small head and often serious brain damage.

In hard-hit Puerto Rico, the CDC estimates that 6,000 to 10,000 pregnant women will become infected during this mosquito season and that at least 100 to 270 infants will be born with microcephaly.

Without additional funding, Frieden said, the CDC won’t be able to undertake key projects to better understand and control the virus, including Zika’s longterm impact on infants and diagnostics to identify if a person has been previously infected.

In Puerto Rico, the agency also won’t be able to help the island establish its own vector control program. Without one, the island has not been able to conduct effective surveillance, mosquito control or public engagement, even though Puerto Rico is experiencing a Zika epidemic and has had a history of other vector-borne diseases.

Frieden said the few additional cases that have surfaced in other parts of South Florida are considered single cases that don’t represent a greater spread of the virus.

The travel advisories will be lifted after 45 days with no new cases from local transmission – the equivalent of three mosquito incubation periods. The Wynwood area is about halfway through that period, he said, but Miami Beach is still experiencing new cases.

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 31, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A story follows through on the damage from the recent hailstorm in Colorado Springs. Hail was as deep as three feet in some basements.
- **Montana:** A Bismarck reprint of a Billings Gazette article repeats the call for separate disaster funding for fighting wildfires… A TV story reports on attempts to help economically, including SBA loans, after the closure of the Yellowstone River…. Wildfires remained relatively stable.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from an environmental web site that cites objections to the pipeline from three federal agencies similar to what the tribe is protesting. Also, an Omaha TV station gives an overview of the situation. … Three tornadoes hit eastern North Dakota over the weekend.
- **South Dakota:** Lawrence County officials approved further investigation into whether to do a program to prevent damage from a previous wildfire. They expressed hesitation because of a previous experience with a cost-share with FEMA… A Yankton resident died from West Nile virus.
- **Utah:** State water officials are insisting on a plan to analyze the damage and what to do about the toxic sediment in the American Fork River. The memory of the Gold King Mine spill is a warning of further potential hazards.
- **Wyoming:** The southern entrance to Yellowstone National Park is open again.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, gives an overview of the stormy weather currently threatening parts of the U.S. … The CDC says sit will run out of money to fight the Zika virus in September.

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STORIES

COLORADO

Homeowners looking at major losses after hail and flooding in Colorado Springs (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

By Bill Folsom

The people living in areas of Colorado Springs inundated by hail and water on Monday, spent Tuesday cleaning up and assessing damage. “Literally found ourselves homeless overnight,” said John Martin who lived in one of the damaged homes on Logan Avenue. Multiple residents on the street are facing so much damage their homes will be unlivable for some time.

Many homes end up with hail and water in their homes. The basements of several homes filled with hail as deep as three feet. Other rooms show water makes several feet up walls. Where water subsided it left behind a coating of mud.

Erma Medina rents out a home on Logan Avenue. It is one of the homes with hail filling the basement.

There has been flooding in the area before, but never like this. She carried FEMA flood insurance until about a year ago when she says several city storm water drains outside her property were upgraded. With this disaster she see the problem as hail, but she says her insurance company says it is flooding. Sitting on a retaining wall outside the house Medina points to the remaining kneed deep hail, "Look at that hail. You can see the hail in the basement. The windows were broken by hail and they say it was flood. I don't believe it was a flood, no. She will dispute the claim, but says insurance or no insurance help she will find a way to repair the damage.

MONTANA

Western fires take big toll on programs (Billings Gazette, reprinted in Bismarck Tribune)

The late August sun is a smoky red ball, reminding Montanans of the fires that have destroyed homes and curtailed business in the West this summer. It's so dry in parts of Montana, Wyoming, California and other Western states that big fires are likely to burn until autumn snow falls. If lightning storms and wind persist, the fires will be bigger and more numerous.

The destruction is costly, and so is the firefighting. One year ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on the rising cost of fire operations and how it affected the Forest Service's other work. The numbers indicate that the Forest Service ought to be called the "fire service" because that's how the agency spent most of its budget. The USDA summed up the problem of "the depletion of non-fire programs to pay for the ever-increasing costs of fire." This has resulted in:

- Less money for restoration work that would help prevent catastrophic fires.

- Less protection of watersheds and cultural resources.

- Reduced upkeep of programs and infrastructure that support thousands of recreation jobs and billions of dollars economic growth in rural communities.

- Reduced support for the range of multiple uses, benefits and ecosystem services.

- Less research and technical assistance.

Firefighting staff has increased from 5,700 in 1998 to more than 12,000 in 2015. Meanwhile, the non-firefighting forest workers have been reduced by 39 percent — from 18,000 employees in 1998 to fewer than 11,000 last year.

Every non-firefighting program has been slashed. Forest road-building has been reduced 46 percent. Deferred maintenance funding was cut 95 percent despite a backlog of more than $5.1 billion in dam repairs, roads, sewer and water system improvements.

Lack of funding for everything but fires has prevented the agency from doing things that would save money in the long term. Energy efficiency projects have been deferred. Funding hasn't been available for partnership programs that generate private matching funds.

The report concluded with the solution that Congress has been delaying for years: Change the way we pay for wildfire fighting. Treat wildfires as the natural disasters they are.

In June, Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., spoke on behalf of draft legislation called the Wildfire Budgeting, Response and Forest Management Act. The first thing it would do, according to a Daines news release, is "end the unsustainable practice of fire borrowing by enabling a transfer of limited funds to the Forest Service and the Department of Interior through a budget cap adjustment when all appropriated suppressions funding (100 percent of the 10-year average) has been exhausted."

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., reaffirmed his support for the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. Both he and Daines are co-sponsors of the act, which would "pay for catastrophic wildfires through separate

emergency funding, allowing the Forest Service to devote more resources to proactive forest management like trail maintenance and timber harvest."

If S.235, which both of our U.S. senators are co-sponsoring, had been enacted and funded last year, the Forest Service would have $1.4 billion more to fight wildfires this year. But it didn't pass, so the Forest Service will again have to rob all its other operations to pay for the fiery disasters this year.

Montana's senators are in a good position to promote this bipartisan solution. Among many proposals for forest management involving timber harvest, recreation and conservation, nothing else is going to work well if the budget continues to be diverted to wildfire.

Lawmakers must stop the "fire borrowing" before another wildfire season begins. We call on Daines and Tester to work together to unite other Western senators and pass wildfire disaster legislation this year.
— *Billings (Mont) Gazette*

Efforts underway to help while portion of Yellowstone River is closed for businesses (KRTV, Great Falls)

By Morgan McKay - MTN News

LIVINGSTON - Governor Steve Bullock scheduled a Rapid Response Training meeting Monday for those affected by the closure of the Yellowstone River.

Many people like Chase Chapman have been left wondering how they will get through a Montana winter, since the closure of the Yellowstone has forced them to close their business.

"I don't need retraining, I'm very good at what I do," said Chapman, who is a fly fishing guide and teacher in Livingston. "When all these Congressman want to go catch a big fish, I go through Yellowstone Angler and we catch some big fish."

"So I came to this meeting today with some hope of maybe there's some grants available for a small business person, because if they opened up the river again tomorrow, I've now sold all my inventory," said Beth O'Neill, owner of SUP Montana.

Earlier today, Governor Bullock signed an executive order proclaiming an invasive species emergency to exist in the State of Montana. This order allows for different organizations to offer relief.

"We heard your concerns and taking a multi agency approach to addressing the immediate needs of workers who rely on the Yellowstone River for their livelihoods," said Bullock.

Local and Park County government officials attended the meeting as well as representatives from agencies such as the Montana Chamber of Commerce and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

"We do everything from helping folks file their unemployment claims to assisting them to potentially go into training folks who may have been impacted by this or a similar event," said Zack Medina, with Job Services.

“This isn't a handout, this isn't an entitlement program,” said Paul Martin, Bureau Chief of Unemployment Insurance. “It's a week to week eligibility program, it's funded by employers through payroll taxes.”

While unemployment insurance was one favorable option, other resources available were loans or a different temporary job placement.

“The last thing you want to do is get into debt, but there are economic injury loans, we can go up to two million (dollars),” said John Donovan, Small Business Administration.

Those businesses affected by the closure of the Yellowstone are encouraged to contact the Institute for Tourism and Recreation at the University of Montana, to help aid them in studying the full economic impact of the closure.

“Montanans I think, what makes us special, is to live here you have to learn to do several things,” said Chapman.

According to latest information released by FWP today, out of 30 trout tested in the upper Yellowstone, only two brown trout tested positive for the parasitic infection.

Officials say there is only evidence of the parasite, but not the disease. FWP also is saying there have been no trout mortalities documented from the disease.

Cloud cover keeps Copper King, Roaring Lion fires quiet (Missoulian)

- KIM BRIGGEMAN kbriggeman@missoulian.com

THOMPSON FALLS – Tuesday turned out to be a good day to fight fires in western Montana, though crews were keeping a lookout for a cool front blowing in from Oregon.

“There’s been a cloud cover over the fire this afternoon that’s kind of kept it subdued during the day,” spokesman Mike Cole said from the Copper King fire east of Thompson Falls.

A red flag warning issued for the afternoon and evening suggested dry thunderstorms might mix with temperatures in the 90s and relative humidity in the low to mid-teens and cause problems at both the Copper King and the Roaring Lion southwest of Hamilton, which turns a month old on Wednesday.

“I’m not sure if they’re actually going to produce over our area,” Lisa Keibler, public information officer at the Roaring Lion, said at 5:30 p.m. “We’ve got a lot of cloud cover and maybe some smoke from Idaho, but right now it’s pretty calm out actually.”

Neither fire is close to being out. An infrared flight in the middle of the night Monday raised the acreage of the Copper King to just under 26,000, up 1,000 acres from an estimate the evening before. It’s Montana’s largest active fire in 2016.

“Our biggest concern and kind of the linchpin of this thing is Munson Creek,” Cole said. “If we can keep this fire out of Munson Creek, that’s going to allow us to get a handle on this. But the weather has to cooperate and we have a lot of ground to cover and a lot of steep ground to try to get buttoned up.”

Munson Creek runs in a southerly direction to Highway 200 and the Clark Fork River 11 miles east of Thompson Falls and 13 miles west of Plains. Cole said crews were out until 2 a.m. Tuesday to complete a burnout operation on the north side of the fire.

During the day helicopters and an occasional fixed-wing aircraft were dropping water and retardant at the top of Munson Creek trying to keep the fire out of the deep canyon to prevent a possible run up the east side.

“We’ve been doing some structure protection work around the residences on Buffalo Bill Road,” Cole said. “If the fire did come down Munson Creek, those would be the first residences threatened, so we want to get ahead of the game.”

Some 220,000 gallons of water and 22,000 gallons of retardant were dropped on the fire Monday, when the fire west of Munson Creek burned back into the main fire toward the Big Hole Lookout. That resulted in a large column that was visible from Plains.

Tuesday’s red flag concern was rooted in an unstable air mass rated 6 on the Haines Index. The Haines Index has been used since 1988 to indicate the potential for wildfire growth. The index can range between 2 and 6, with a 6 being the driest and most unstable conditions in the lower atmosphere.

A total of 840 people are working the Copper King, which has cost an estimated $16.5 million to quell since it broke out on July 31.

Closures and evacuations remain in place. Forty-five homes have been evacuated and another 130 are on pre-evacuation notice. Log hauling is being permitted through the closure area from 4 to 6 a.m. daily.

Air quality in the Thompson Falls area climbed once again into the "very unhealthy" range Tuesday morning, spiking midway toward the top category of "hazardous" at 10 a.m. before dropping two levels to “unhealthy for sensitive groups” by 5 p.m.

"Very unhealthy" air means active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

Roughly 80 percent of hunting district 122 near Thompson Falls was closed indefinitely on Monday by the U.S. Forest Service.

Estimated containment date for the Copper King fire remains the end of October.

In Hamilton at the Roaring Lion fire, air quality remained good all day. Fifty-four people are on the fire, which was caused by unknown sources on July 31. Most of Tuesday’s action consisted of monitoring and checking the 8,533-acre fire with aerial resources to keep it within Ward Bowl, north of Camas Creek and south of Sawtooth Creek. Patrols were active on the ground to suppress spot fires over the fire line.

The Roaring Lion is expected to be contained by the end of September.

NORTH DAKOTA

Dakota Pipeline Was Approved by Army Corps Over Objections of Three Federal Agencies (Inside Climate News)

Sioux tribe's concerns were echoed in official reports by the EPA and two other agencies, but Army Corps of Engineers brushed them aside.

By Phil McKenna

Aug 30, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D.—Senior officials at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and two other federal agencies raised serious environmental and safety objections to the North Dakota section of the controversial Dakota Access oil pipeline, the same objections being voiced in a large protest by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe that has so far succeeded in halting construction.

But those concerns were dismissed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which relied on an environmental assessment prepared by the pipeline's developer, Dakota Access LLC, when it approved the project in July, according to public documents.

The 1,134-mile pipeline would carry approximately 500,000 barrels of crude per day from North Dakota to Illinois along a route that did not originally pass near the Standing Rock reservation, the documents show. After the company rerouted the pipeline to cross the Missouri River just a half-mile upstream of the reservation, the tribe complained that the Army Corps did not consider threats to its water supply and cultural heritage.

The EPA, the Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation echoed those concerns in public comments on the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment. Citing risks to water supplies, inadequate emergency preparedness, potential impacts to the Standing Rock reservation and insufficient environmental justice analysis, the agencies urged the Army Corps to issue a revised draft of their environmental assessment.

"Crossings of the Missouri River have the potential to affect the primary source of drinking water for much of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Tribal nations," Philip Strobel, National Environmental Policy Act regional compliance director for the EPA, wrote in a March 11 letter to the Army Corps.

The current route of the pipeline is 10 miles upstream of Fort Yates, the tribal headquarters of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and the county seat. The Standing Rock Sioux rely on the Missouri River for drinking water, irrigation, and fish.

The EPA shared its concerns and recommended that the Army Corps undertake a new draft environmental assessment and release it for public comment. In that process, the EPA asked the Army Corps to consider "other available routes or crossing locations that would have reduced potential to water resources, especially drinking water supplies," and to carry out a "more thorough" analysis of environmental justice concerns. The other agencies also asked for further assessments and consultation with the tribes.

The Army Corps instead published its final environmental assessment four months later, which constituted final approval of the project. In it, the Corps acknowledged the agencies' comments, but said "the anticipated environmental, economic, cultural, and social effects" of the project are "not injurious to the public interest."

The Army Corps, which has jurisdiction over domestic pipelines that cross major waterways, declined a request for comment, citing ongoing litigation. Energy Transfer, owner of Dakota Access LLC, did not respond to a request for comment. The company has previously said "we are constructing this pipeline in accordance with applicable laws, and the local, state and federal permits and approvals we have received."

Tribe Takes their Complaints Public

The tribe's growing protest has gathered in a camp near Cannon Ball, N.D., and has drawn support from Native Americans from around the country as well as environmental activists. An estimated 1,200 people are camping there and Sioux leaders say 90 tribes are represented among the protesters.

The protest blocked construction equipment two weeks ago and Energy Transfer halted construction on the section of pipeline closest to the Standing Rock reservation. A federal judge said last week he will rule by September 9 on whether to grant the Standing Rock Sioux a temporary injunction. That would bar construction on sections of the pipeline where the ground hasn't yet been disturbed until a suit calling for the Army Corps to redo its permitting process can be heard.

Demographics of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation
The Standing Rock reservation spans 3,600 square miles across North and South Dakota, where 41 percent of its 8,217 residents live below the poverty level, more than triple the national average, according to a 2012 economic development report prepared for the tribe. Nearly a quarter of its population is unemployed.

In its comments calling for a re-do, the EPA said the environmental justice analysis in the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment used county-by-county or state-by-state data when the preferred level of analysis is "census block groups or census tracts."

"A screening level analysis for EJ [environmental justice] indicates there are several census block groups with substantial minority and/or low income demographics that could be potentially impacted by the project," the EPA wrote. "In addition to analyzing potential EJ impacts, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (February 16, 1994) also requires public outreach to potentially affected EJ communities."

In its final environmental assessment, the Army Corps said its analysis "contains an Environmental Justice analysis that conforms with recognized practice."

The agency also said the pipeline does not cross tribal land. "In fact, tribal land was specifically avoided as a routing mitigation measure," it said. "The Project does not anticipate any impact to water supplies along its route, and to the extent a response action is required, federal regulation will be complied with."

Route Became a Moving Target

The original route for the proposed pipeline crossed the Missouri River further north, 10 miles upstream of Bismarck, the state capital. North Dakota Public Service Commission documents show the route upstream of Bismarck in a May 29, 2014 map by Energy Transfer.

The company later rejected this route, citing a number of factors, including more road and wetland crossings, a longer pipeline, and higher costs. Also listed as a concern was the close proximity to wellheads providing Bismarck's drinking water supply.

"They moved it down to Standing Rock, which is a very remote area, but people live at Standing Rock too. There is an environmental justice component here," said Jan Hasselman, an attorney with environmental advocacy organization EarthJustice, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Standing Rock Tribe against the Army Corps of Engineers.

In its public comments, the Department of the Interior, the government agency responsible for the administration and management of Native American lands, called for the Army Corps to conduct an

Environmental Impact Statement, a more comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of the proposed pipeline.

"We believe the Corps did not adequately justify or otherwise support its conclusion that there would be no significant impacts upon the surrounding environment and community," Lawrence Roberts, acting assistant secretary of Indian affairs at the Depart of the Interior, wrote in a letter to the Army Corps in March.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), a federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of the nation's historic resources, also expressed concern over the Army Corps' assessment.

Federal law requires federal agencies to take into account the effect a proposed project will have on historic property. The Army Corps' assessment, however lacked adequate consultation with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and focused on a limited number of water crossings rather than on the pipeline's entire expanse, according to letters ACHP officials wrote to the Army Corps.

"Based on the inadequacies of the tribal consultation and the limited scope for identification of historic properties that may be affected, the ACHP questions the sufficiency of the Corps' identification effort, its determinations of eligibility, and assessments of effect," Reid Nelson, director of the office of federal agency programs for ACHP, wrote in a May 19 letter to the Army Corps.

In its final assessment, the Corps stated there is "no new significant information on environmental effects" as a result of comments from the EPA and others. "As such, neither a supplemental or revised EA [Environmental Assessment] for further public review nor additional NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] compliance actions was required."

"We're talking about a broad overarching and fundamental failure which is the decision to look very narrowly at environmental impacts at a few specific locations rather than the pipeline as a whole," Hasselman said of the Army Corps' assessment.

Having their concerns dismissed by the Corps, the tribe turned next to the courts. Their lawsuit calls for a halt to construction and full consideration of the pipeline's impact on tribal lands and water.

To obtain a preliminary or "emergency" injunction, however, attorneys representing the Standing Rock tribe will have to demonstrate imminent harm to historic sites if construction proceeds.

"To the extent that people are concerned about harm from oil spills, that is still a ways off," Hasselman said. "We can't really seek emergency relief on that front. That is something that we will be seeking in the course of the lawsuit."

5 things to know about the Dakota Access Pipeline (KETV, Omaha)

Native American tribe sued the federal government over project

UPDATED 7:33 AM CDT Aug 31, 2016

(CNN) —In what looks to be a possible sequel to the Keystone XL Pipeline dispute, another fight has begun over a proposed US oil route.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has sued the federal government, saying the Native American tribe was not properly consulted over the project to construct a 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline that extends over four states.

While proponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline tout its economic boost, opponents question its environmental impact.

The US Army Corps of Engineers approved the project, granting final permits in July, to the dismay of environmentalists and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

1. What is the pipeline project?

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois. The pipeline is also known as the Bakken Oil Pipeline, named for the oil-rich area in North Dakota. An estimated 7.4 billion barrels of undiscovered oil is believed to be in the US portion of the Bakken Formation, according to the US Geological Survey.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

2. Why is the pipeline being constructed?

The project developer, Dakota Access, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Crude Oil, says the pipeline would help the United States become less dependent on importing energy from unstable regions of the world. It says a pipeline is the safest, most cost-effective and environmentally responsible way to move crude oil, removing dependency on rails and trucks.

It also estimates the pipeline would bring an estimated $156 million in sales and income taxes to state and local governments as well as add 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs.

The proposal comes as a glut of cheap oil has devastated North Dakota's economy. The state had enjoyed a major boom, but after hitting highs in 2014, it suffered a major economic downturn.

The project developers say the $3.7 billion project will "bring significant economic benefits to the region that it transverses."

3. Who is protesting?

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a complaint in federal court alleging that "the construction and operation of the pipeline ... threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe."

There are also concerns that digging the pipeline under the Missouri River would affect the tribe's drinking water supply. The tribe, represented by Earthjustice, a nonprofit environmental law firm, has asked for an injunction.

Based in Fort Yates, North Dakota, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is a federally recognized Indian tribe, a successor to the Great Sioux Nation. Other Native American tribes and nations have joined its efforts.

"We have laws that require federal agencies to consider environmental risks and protection of Indian historic and sacred sites," Dave Archambault II, the elected chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, said in a statement.

"But the Army Corps has ignored all those laws and fast-tracked this massive project just to meet the pipeline's aggressive construction schedule."

Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota disputes the tribe's chief complaint that the Army Corps did not properly consult it.

"If there is some way for the corps to work to meet the concerns of the tribe, they should certainly do that. But (there) has been a consultation process. If the tribe doesn't feel that that has been sufficient, again, they can protest as long as they do it peacefully and safely, but ultimately their recourse is to the courts," the Republican senator told CNN affiliate KFYR-TV in Bismarck, North Dakota.

About 30 environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, signed a letter to President Barack Obama, slamming the Dakota Access Pipeline as "yet another example of an oil pipeline project being permitted without public engagement or sufficient environmental review."

They appealed to him to reject the project -- as he did with the Keystone XL pipeline.

Protests have been held in North Dakota and Washington.

Construction equipment involved in the pipeline project in Iowa was set ablaze in suspected arson fires, reports say.

4. Who's on which side?

Bernie Sanders spoke out against the pipeline in November 2015, but Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton has not addressed the issue. CNN reached out to the Clinton campaign for comment on the issue and has not yet received a response.

"If candidate Clinton does nothing to address this issue yet continues into November promising Native Americans that she is our champion, then her words will be nothing but false promises -- just more bombast, more white lies to Indians," Simon Moya-Smith, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation and culture editor at Indian Country Today, wrote recently in a CNN op-ed.

Celebrities such as Shailene Woodley, Susan Sarandon and Rosario Dawson have spoken out against the pipeline.

Leonardo DiCaprio tweeted that he was "inspired by the Standing Rock Sioux's efforts to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline."

5. What's next?

The tribe's actions may be the start of a lengthy, legal fight over the Dakota Access Pipeline. Meanwhile, construction work on the pipeline is ongoing.

US District Judge James Boasberg said he wants to absorb both sides of the argument before issuing a ruling, which is expected by September 9, KFYR reported.

Officials Rate 3 Weekend Tornadoes In Eastern North Dakota (AP)

Associated Press, August 30, 2016

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) – A weekend tornado that caused damage in the Hillsboro area had wind speeds up to 140 mph, according to the National Weather Service.

The agency rated the Saturday evening tornado in Traill County an EF-3 on the enhanced Fujita scale. An EF2 or higher rating is considered significant.

The tornado was as wide as three football fields are long and was on the ground for 8 minutes, according to a weather service report. It smashed bins at Rahr Malting Co.'s Taft grain elevator complex and spilled tons of barley onto the ground, destroyed a garage and uprooted trees on one area farmstead. It heavily damaged a home and a metal building at another farmstead.

No one was hurt. The town of 1,600 people was lucky that the tornado missed the heart of the community, said Connor Ulness with the storm damage restoration company Aspen Exteriors.

"The tornado came in just north of the center of town," he told WDAY-TV.

Severe storms in eastern North Dakota on Saturday spawned two weaker tornadoes in neighboring Grand Forks County, according to the weather service. One with wind speeds estimated at 70 mph and rated an EF-0 touched down in an open field near Arvilla. An EF-1 tornado with wind speeds up to 110 mph uprooted trees and demolished a barn in the Pleasant View Township area.

No injuries were reported in either of those tornadoes.

SOUTH DAKOTA

County To Explore Grant Possibilities For Areas Affected By Crow Peak Fire (Black Hills Pioneer)

By Jaci Conrad

Black Hills Pioneer

August 30,2016

DEADWOOD — Disaster prevention due to devastation caused by the Crow Peak Fire is the impetus behind the Lawrence County Commission's recent decision to give the go-ahead to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide an initial assessment of the area.

"We might discover something very important that needs to be done," said Commission Chair Daryl Johnson.

The Emergency Watershed Protection program of the conservation service is designed to help prevent damage to life or property after a natural disasters, like the Crow Peak Fire. A cost-share program, the protection program pays 75 percent of the costs to install practices such as replacing culverts identified in the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) report completed after the fire. If it decides the assessment is worthy of pursuing, the county, upon entering a sponsorship of the emergency grant program, would be responsible for 25 percent of the costs.

Because the county would be responsible for the operation and maintenance of any culverts installed, for the life of the culvert, commissioners were hesitant to commit to the program, asking first for an initial assessment to be brought back and reviewed before a formal commitment is made.

"You understand, our apprehension comes from the fact that we still maintain snow-removal on two bridges because we were a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) sponsor of them at one time," Johnson said.

With a 60-day deadline following the fire, which was put out on July 4, an application letter must be submitted to the conservation service by Friday, starting the information gathering process, beginning with a damage survey report. This report will identify what problems are present, how to fix any concerns, and the cost of repairing the concerns. The application letter does not commit Lawrence County to a contract.

District Conservationist Justin Boerboom addressed the commission, explaining that the NRCS is federal agency with USDA funding and takes measures to help prevent catastrophe after a natural disaster through the Emergency Watershed Program.

"We need a local sponsor to apply for assistance," Boerboom said. "We've proposed the project. The next step is to go out and evaluate what the issues are, what to address, the costs, and come back with a proposal."

NRCS State Engineer Jay Cobb said that once they evaluate, the next determination is if they can mitigate issues to gain benefits greater than the actual cost of construction.

Threats that the protection program addresses are termed watershed impairments and include, for example: debris-clogged stream channels, undermined and unstable streambanks, jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures, wind-borne debris removal, and damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor, such as the county, if they decide to move forward with the program.

Boerboom also presented the critical values table from the BAER report, listing all the concerns on private land. Listed as a very high risk to human life and safety is the Crow Creek Road and the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout, and damage. The BAER team identified Crow Creek as an drainage of Crow Peak that would see an increase of about 50 percent over normal flows since the vegetation on the western slopes were burned.

Listed as a high threat to human life and safety are homes along Crow Creek Road; specifically, two cabins and the threat of flash flooding and debris flows.

Listed as a very high threat to property are: two road crossings with 18-inch culverts on Crow Creek Road; Crumm Driveway Crossing's 24-inch culvert; and Nicholas Cabin driveway, which

crossing 24-inch culvert. The threat here is flash flooding with debris flows, debris blockage, possible failure of crossing structures, and road washout/damage.

Listed as a high threat to property are private road crossings along Higgins Gulch Road in the floodplain, with the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout/damage; and culverts under driveways alongside Higgins Gulch Road.

The BAER team determined the Higgins Gulch drainage would see increased flows of about 10 percent following the fire.

There are other threats that have been identified and listed in the intermediate to low threat categories.

Yankton Co. Resident Dies From West Nile Virus (KDLT News, Pierre)

Aug 29, 2016

KDLT News- Pierre, S.D.

The South Dakota Department of Health today reported a Yankton Co. resident died of West Nile virus associated causes. It is the state's first WNV related death this season. The individual was in the 80 to 89 age group.

To date this season, South Dakota has reported 74 cases of human WNV; 12 percent have had the most serious neruoinvasive disease while 88 percent have had WNV fever. Twenty-five percent of cases have been hospitalized. There has also been a WNV-positive horse in Butte County.

"This unfortunate death is a reminder for us all that while the Zika virus is grabbing headlines, West Nile is the mosquito-borne virus of concern here in South Dakota," said Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department. "We strongly encourage people to protect themselves and their families by using repellent and avoiding the outdoors when mosquitoes are most active."

Kightlinger said South Dakotans can reduce their risk with the following precautions:

- Apply mosquito repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535) to clothes and exposed skin. Limit exposure by wearing pants and long sleeves in the evening.

- Limit time outdoors from dusk to midnight when Culex mosquitoes, the primary carrier of WNV in South Dakota, are most active.

- Get rid of standing water that gives mosquitoes a place to breed. Regularly change water in bird baths, outside pet dishes, and drain water from flower pots and garden containers.

- Support local mosquito control efforts.

UTAH

Next step for American Fork River: Measure the risks with an eye toward spring (KSL TV, Salt Lake City)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue | Posted Aug 30th, 2016 @ 7:02pm

SALT LAKE CITY — State water quality officials will insist on an action plan to prevent further contamination of the American Fork River from lead-laden sediment that killed thousands of fish in a two-mile stretch.

That plan will be put together by the North Utah Water Conservancy District with an eye toward preventing sediment from being stirred up by rain or spring runoff, said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

He said the division also expects to get an estimate from project engineers on the amount of sediment that washed into the river as a result of the Tibble Fork Dam's $7.3 million rehabilitation and expansion project.

"We have moved sediment from point A to point B over a six-mile expanse," Baker said. "There needs to be an assessment of how bad it is and what steps need to be taken to remediate it."

It's the latest plan following completion by project engineers of a diversion channel that placed a 200-foot pipeline to reroute flows into the nearly empty Tibble Fork basin to prevent another sediment flush while work continues on the dam.

Baker said a lot of factors will come into play to mitigate the impacts of the sludge, especially given that high flows from spring runoff.

"Mother Nature is going to come with spring runoff regardless of any planning we do," he said. "We need to know what needs to be done."

Dave Brown, the Utah state conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, said an aerial drone flew over the site Monday to quantify the amount of material that washed into the river.

"There is a very clear mini-canyon that is exposed now," he said. "The engineer indicated they could use survey technology to calculate how much sediment was deposited."

Dam project

The NRCS is the federal agency on the Tibble Fork rehabilitation project, which rose as a priority after a 2004 assessment found that 1960s-era dam did not meet safety standards. Work began in June, with the NRCS advising downstream users that as the reservoir began draining around Aug. 19, people could expect to see elevated levels of sediment in the river.

Brown said continuing inflows into the basin released larger amounts of sediment than anticipated. The result was a two-mile section of the river just below the dam that lost all its fish populations due to suffocation.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources said historically, there are about 1,000 to 2,000 fish per mile in that section of the river.

While water samples taken by the state show metal concentrations within screening values for health, recreation and aquatic life downstream, the sediment showed high levels of lead that likely resulted from legacy mining operations in the Wasatch Mountains.

Several hundred abandoned mines dot the mountains, some experiencing acid mine drainage and an unknown number are within proximity of perennial stream flows.

Baker said his division has worked in partnership with the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, to craft a blueprint of where there may be water quality risks — a concern accentuated with the disastrous Gold King Mine spill of 2015.

In that incident, EPA-led contractors bungled efforts to open a mine portal and sent a 3-million gallon torrent of mustard-colored mine waste into the Animas River above Silverton, Colo. The breach contaminated water in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the Navajo Nation in an environmental catastrophe critics say was avoidable.

Baker said the Gold King mine disaster underscores the need for Utah officials to get a handle on potential problems, sooner rather than later.

"It ought to be enough of a concern that we do some investigation," he said. "My greatest concern is if there needs to be an action plan and if these are time bombs waiting to go off."

Abandoned mines

While state officials over abandoned mine reclamation have mapped the hundreds of mines and their owners — if available — with work done in the 1990s, Baker said it is not clear how many of them pose risks to waterways.

"If, in fact, they do have flows and there are responsible parties, we can issue a permit and get an idea of the water quality of the mines' drainage," he said. "We will be way ahead to know if we have a problem or not."

The mining division closes up abandoned mines if there is a public safety risk, and Baker's division can enforce the Clean Water Act if water is at risk, but there is no state regulatory oversight absent those factors.

"We really don't know the extent," said Steve Fluke, administrator over the state's abandoned mine reclamation program. "We are trying to figure out how many are discharging and may be an environmental issue in light of Gold King."

While there is funding in place to deal with the cleanup of abandoned coal mines, no funding exists for other mines.

"There is no such law for cleaning up hard rock mine sites," Fluke said.

Mark Allen of Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon sees the potential for another Gold King Mine spill in the Wasatch Mountains because he said no one is properly addressing the risks.

"The Wasatch Mountains have a bunch of ticking time bombs and no one wants to talk about them," he said.

Allen said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should step in and declare the Tibble Fork sediment release into American Fork River a Superfund site.

EPA had a response team in Utah County last week, but the federal agency has not disclosed what its employees determined about the Tibble Fork Dam release.

"We will continue to coordinate with Utah and federal agencies to evaluate data, information, and potential next steps related to the sediment release," said EPA spokesman Rich Mylott.

"We’re certainly aware of concerns related to historic mining and metals impacts in the American Fork watershed and have worked with state and local partners on previous assessment and cleanup projects in the basin."

Allen is leading a tour to legacy mine sites mid-month that Baker and Fluke said they plan to attend.

"I have been barking pretty loud," he said. "We're taking everybody up there who has some stewardship and asking them to figure out what to do."

Baker and several members of his staff are touring the New Yankee Mine on Snowbird property Wednesday to assess any downstream impacts.

The division is also looking at the resort's expansion into Mary Ellen Gulch, an approval granted earlier this year that requires water quality monitoring for two years before any construction on ski lifts or other facilities begins.

WYOMING

Route To Yellowstone Reopens, But Fire Danger Remains High (Wyoming Public Radio)

By CAROLINE BALLARD • 16 HOURS AGO

Northwest Wyoming continues to struggle with high fire danger as eleven wild fires currently burn in that part of the state.

Bill Swartley, a public information officer for the Yellowstone fire team, said Phase 2 fire restrictions will likely go into effect in Yellowstone National Park on Wednesday. That means any kind of open flame may be banned in the park.

Swartley said preventing any human caused fires is their top priority.

“These fires are lightning caused and for that reason are being managed for ecological benefits to the park,” said Swartley. “However, human caused fires are a total different type of ignition.” With temperatures reaching into the 80s and low relative humidity, weather conditions are prime for even more fire growth.

Some progress has been made, though. Highway 191/89/287 between Leek’s Marina and Yellowstone’s South Entrance was closed because of the Berry Fire but has now reopened. Highway pull outs along that stretch remain closed.

Swartley said there may be areas of light haze or smoke in the park that could make it hard to see.

“We’re just recommending people adjust their speed and turn on their headlights, increase their visibility as they pass through those areas of smoke,” said Swartley.

He added that people with respiratory sensitivity may want to check air quality at airnow.gov before heading into the park.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (8/30, lead story, 2:30, Guthrie, 16.61M) reported, "Make no mistake, we are in the fall throes of hurricane season now. And if you're a storm watcher at the weather service looking at the US map tonight, there's a lot to keep your eye on. Three big storms threatening the US coastline at this hour. Parts of Florida just placed under a hurricane watch, bracing for up to 10 inches of rain. A tropical storm warning for sections of North Carolina. And Hawaii gearing up for a possible one-two punch. The Big Island facing a hurricane warning at this hour. Gabe Gutierrez starts us off tonight in North Carolina storm zone." NBC (**Gutierrez**) added, "Tonight, the view from the International Space Station is stunning: massive hurricanes swirling across the globe. Hurricane Madeleine in the Pacific, threatening Hawaii. It's followed by Hurricane Lester. Churning in the Atlantic, Hurricane Gaston, not expected to affect the US but now the Carolina and Florida coasts are bracing for separate tropical systems." **Unidentified speaker**: "The storm is an uncertainty, but we are preparing for it." **Gutierrez**: "In Florida, tropical depression number nine is forecast to turn towards the Gulf Coast, bringing heavy rain and even isolated tornadoes over the next few days." **Rick Scott**, Florida Governor: "Everybody has to be careful. We don't want anybody to be injured. We don't want any loss of life." **Gutierrez**: "Another system, tropical depression number eight, is grazing North Carolina's Outer Banks, where a tropical storm warning is in effect. The concern here, rip currents – fast-moving water that moves away from shore. Swimmers are pulled out to sea and panic while trying to swim against current, back to the beach." **Drew Pearson**, NC Emergency Management: "Rip currents are dangerous. They've taken three lives here in the Outer Banks Just this past summer. There's a high threat of them right now." **Gutierrez**: "Young Payton Waller got caught up in one but managed to escape." **Payton Waller**, swimmer: "It's really rough and all these waves just crashing." **Gutierrez**: "Other tourists on this tail end of summer are taking the offshore storm in stride." **Unidentified speaker**: "I mean, one to three inches. Back home, this is what you call a thunderstorm." **Gutierrez**: "Though neither of the storms closest to the eastern US are expected to strengthen into major hurricanes, it has suddenly become a busy season in the tropics." **Rick Knabb**, National Hurricane Center: "Don't focus so much on the strength or the category, because the water hazards might end up being the most dangerous." **Gutierrez**: "As Florida prepares for flooding, here in North Carolina's Outer Banks, things may seem calm. But, there is rough surf and dangerous rip currents up and down the eastern seaboard as far north as New England, possibly extending into the holiday weekend."

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, August 30, 2016

The federal agency leading the public health response to the Zika virus in the United States will run out of funding to combat the mosquito-borne virus by late September, its director said Monday.

"The cupboard is bare," said Tom Frieden, who heads the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Basically, we're out of money, and we need Congress to act to allow us to respond effectively."

Of the $222 million that the CDC was allocated for domestic Zika response this year, about $200 million has been committed, Frieden said during a media roundtable in Washington. "The rest will be gone by the end of September."

The timing further raises the threat for high-risk states along the Gulf Coast, particularly if Congress again fails to act on the Obama administration's emergency funding request when lawmakers return to Washington next month.

"We're in peak mosquito season" – which typically lasts through the end of October in the United States – and if transmission starts occurring more broadly, CDC "might not have the resources" to respond and send teams to support local and state officials, Frieden said.

The CDC has already issued unprecedented travel advisories for two areas in Florida where mosquitoes are actively spreading the virus: a one-square-mile section of Miami's Wynwood neighborhood and a 1.5-square-mile zone in Miami Beach. Pregnant women are urged to stay out of both areas because of the danger Zika poses to a fetus.

Negotiations in Congress over a $1.9 billion Zika spending package fell apart in late June. Federal health officials have shifted money from elsewhere in the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the domestic response. That includes $38 million from fighting Ebola, $44 million from general public health emergency funds and, most recently, $81 million from programs at the National Institutes of Health and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

The money has gone to help states track the virus, provide assistance about birth defects caused by Zika and increase mosquito-control efforts. Within CDC itself, officials also have pulled resources from programs on immunization, disease infection and HIV outreach, including prevention treatment for people at risk of getting HIV, Frieden said.

Researchers continue to detail ever-graver consequences for babies born to mothers infected with Zika. A report from Brazil, published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine, described a newborn in Sao Paolo who had Zika virus in his blood for more than two months. While the baby had no obvious illness or visible birth defects at birth or when doctors examined him at about eight weeks, by six months he had developed severe Zika-related brain damage.

The first trimester of pregnancy is thought to be when Zika infection poses the greatest risk. In this case, however, the baby's mother was infected late in her second trimester.

At the same time, the virus continues to spread to the rest of the world. The latest outbreak is in Singapore, a Southeast Asia travel hub, which typically has 500 full-time inspectors working to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can breed. The fact that Zika is spreading there, with at least 56 cases now confirmed, shows how "it's going to be really tough" for other places to control, he said.

During the coming weeks in the United States, Frieden expects there will be more cases of infants born with Zika-related neurological problems. As of mid-August, 17 babies infected in utero had been diagnosed with microcephaly, a condition defined by an abnormally small head and often serious brain damage.

In hard-hit Puerto Rico, the CDC estimates that 6,000 to 10,000 pregnant women will become infected during this mosquito season and that at least 100 to 270 infants will be born with microcephaly.

Without additional funding, Frieden said, the CDC won't be able to undertake key projects to better understand and control the virus, including Zika's longterm impact on infants and diagnostics to identify if a person has been previously infected.

In Puerto Rico, the agency also won't be able to help the island establish its own vector control program. Without one, the island has not been able to conduct effective surveillance, mosquito control or public engagement, even though Puerto Rico is experiencing a Zika epidemic and has had a history of other vector-borne diseases.

Frieden said the few additional cases that have surfaced in other parts of South Florida are considered single cases that don’t represent a greater spread of the virus.

The travel advisories will be lifted after 45 days with no new cases from local transmission – the equivalent of three mosquito incubation periods. The Wynwood area is about halfway through that period, he said, but Miami Beach is still experiencing new cases.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:43:49 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us'(b)(6)@utah.gov'(b)(6)@wyo.gov';(b)(6)@nd.gov'(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us';Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA clips for Monday 8-22-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-22-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Monday, August 22, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state received an FMAG reimbursement of more than $1 million… An HMGP grant is helping with reconstruction of the Manitou Incline… Fires in the state are now more under control.
- **Montana:** The *Fallon County Times* did another story on recent visits by DES and FEMA officials related to the Baker tornado recovery… The Copper King Fire almost doubled in size Sunday, with red flag conditions expected today.
- **North Dakota:** Three stories focus on the growing protest, led by Native American tribes, against construction of an oil pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security division of the North Dakota DES, estimates state law enforcement, health and transportation costs related to the protest may approach $1 million over the next few weeks. Approximately 1500-2000 protestors are at the site… An attempt to use eminent domain to take some land for the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Project was stalled by a judge who said it had not been properly done.
- **South Dakota:** KELO TV did a story on the flood in Sioux Falls one year ago and the community's response to it, and another story on the Atlas winter storm three years ago that killed many cattle in western South Dakota, and how that area has responded… The TV story on Sioux Falls mentioned local buyouts to prevent flooding issues, and an *Argus Leader* story focused just on the local buyout program in an area with poor drainage.
- **Utah:** Brothers in Pleasant Grove who were born and raised in Louisiana are doing a fundraiser and donations drive for flood survivors in their home state… Southern Utah University will be offering an online master's program in cybersecurity through a partnership with a Vietnamese telecommunications company.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The *Baton Rouge Advocate* says FEMA is improved, but additional federal aid may be needed… Several stories reported on FEMA suspending

$30 million in payments to Mississippi for problems with its program retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina; this story from the *Jackson Clarion Ledger* specifies the procedures and employee in question… *The New York Times* reported on a survey of public attitudes by Johns Hopkins University on what criteria should be used to determine who lives or who gets priority for emergency care when medical staff and equipment are overwhelmed in a catastrophic incident.

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The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

UTAH:

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

STORIES

COLORADO

FEMA awards Colorado $1 million wildfire grant (Loveland Reporter-Herald)

By Dana Rieck
Reporter-Herald Staff Writer
Posted: 08/20/2016 05:25:56 PM MDT

Republican Sen. Cory Gardner's office announced this week that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is awarding $1,194,483.86 to the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Matthew Branch, the Northeast Regional Fire Management officer for the Colorado Department of Public Safety Division of Fire Prevention and Control, said the money is a reimbursement for costs associated with past fires.

It is called a fire management assistance grant, which is something states apply for after responding to large fires.

"Most of these costs are borne by the local fire department and the county," he wrote in an email. "These entities bill the state and we reimburse them out of the state budget. Several years later we get the money back from the federal government."

Once approved, according to Branch, the grants can pay for 75 percent of the costs associated with fighting those fires.

"I welcome more than $1 million from FEMA to assist with wildfire response efforts in Colorado," said Gardner in the news release. "I'm confident the state of Colorado will maximize the federal grant to both preempt and mitigate the destruction caused by wildfires. I'll continue to advocate at the federal level to ensure Colorado receives the resources it needs to keep our communities safe."

Dana Rieck: 970-635-3630, rieckd@reporter-herald.com or twitter.com/DanaRieckRH

Manitou Incline Closed for Construction (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

8/22/16

COLORADO SPRINGS - The Manitou Incline is now closed as the cities of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs start phase 2 of improvements to the popular trail.

Construction is expected to last around 4 months with the main goals of: improving safety, enhancing the hiking experience, improving the long-term sustainability of the trail and increasing accessibility.

They will also clean up debris along the trail and add new drainage structures to protect the trail from eroding away.

Colorado Springs is responsible for the general oversight of the trail, and the improvements are being funded by a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant and Trail, Open Space and Parks Funding.

Beaver Creek fire evacuation order lifted; two Colorado wildfires 100 percent contained (Denver Post)

By Ellis Arnold | earnold@denverpost.com

August 21, 2016 at 4:36 pm

An evacuation order was lifted in the Beaver Creek fire area near Walden and the Wyoming state line yesterday, said John Abernathy, spokesman for the Denver Fire Department.

Some evacuees from 50 total residences have begun to return to their homes, Abernathy said, but low relative humidity and winds up to 25 mph are expected to create critical burn conditions Monday and Tuesday. The fire, which is 53 percent contained, started June 19. Total containment is expected Oct. 21.

Heavy beetle-killed timber in the area has been fueling the fire, which has required continued ground and air efforts. Recent cool, moist weather aided the fight, but warming is expected until Wednesday. Season-ending wet weather is likely the only factor that will put out the fire, Abernathy said.

The fire has burned 36,961 acres, and the cause of the fire is still under investigation. A total of 17 structures, including one residence, have been lost, Abernathy said.

The lightning-caused Spring Creek 2 fire south of Parachute burned 621 acres but was 100 percent contained as of Friday, according to federal agencies. There have been no injuries attributed to the fire, which started Aug. 12, and no primary residences were lost despite the fire moving within a few feet of several homes. Four buildings, three vehicles and three trailers were damaged or destroyed, and evacuation orders covering about 20 homes were lifted Aug. 14.

The Hayden Pass fire southeast of Salida was 60 percent contained as of Aug. 4, according to federal agencies, with recent monsoonal weather dropping moisture in the area. The 16,754-acre lightning-caused fire started July 8, and it may present a runoff issue because of the rain. All evacuations ended as of July 21 after people were ordered to clear out of 140 residences in the area. The fire is expected to be contained Oct. 1.

Fire crews contained the Blair fire 100 percent as of Aug. 1, said David Boyd, spokesman for the federal Bureau of Land Management. Lightning started the fire near Colorado 64 between Rangely and Meeker; about 1,140 acres have burned since June 29.

Crews focused on keeping the fire from moving north and east, where a power-line corridor, oil and gas pipeline and the highway would have been vulnerable. There were no injuries or evacuations, Boyd said, as the fire was in a remote area.

MONTANA

FEMA and Montana Disaster Emergency Services Visit Baker

(Fallon County Times)

SEVERE SUMMER WEATHER

Laurie Hassell and Kent Atwood display a weather map tracking severe weather storms throughout Montana.

Laurie Hassell, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), External Affairs Specialist; Kent Atwood, CFM, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services, Hazard Mitigation Officer and Tim Tennis, Recovery Bureau Chief, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services were in Baker on August 9.

By Sherry Vogel

They were conducting a briefing to Fallon County and City of Baker applicants as they proceed to set-up documentation to receive federal funding after Baker was designated to receive a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Atwood explained how the entire process works. Tennis expounded on how to apply for the funds. They both covered the scope of work for the Project Worksheet (PW) using the actual tornado documentation including cleanup and debris removal reports.

The preliminary final damage assessment is at $1.5 million. This amount surpasses the $1.4 million required for a Presidential Disaster Declaration. This final figure of the disaster damage could actually be more in the final analysis.

Whereas Hassell was in Baker to represent the Response and Recovery standpoint. Atwood was focused on the mitigation perspective of the disaster. **Mitigation meaning to identify and reduce the severity of the next natural disaster.

Officials estimate the Copper King Fire doubled in size Sunday afternoon (NBC TV, Helena)

By: KECI Staff
Updated: Aug 21, 2016 08:07 PM MDT

MISSOULA, Mont. - The Copper King Fire burning near Montana Highway 200 and Thompson River Road in Sanders County is now estimated to have burned over 6,000 acres. The fire had burned just over 3,400 acres as of Sunday morning.

Fire officials tell NBC Montana that the fire expanded to the northeast, chewing through around 3,000 acres. The explosive growth meant a cloud of thick smoke spread as far north as Creston and parts of the Swan Valley as of 8 p.m. on Sunday. The new growth is away from structures immediately threatened by the fire.

Officials with the Lolo National Forest say there is poor road access and firefighters and public safety remains the top priority. Fire crews are busy on the south and west sides of the fire near Highway 200 and Thompson River Road where structures are threatened.

The 297 people working to contain the fire will continue to focus on structure protection and keeping Highway 200 open to traffic. A Red Flag Warning is in effect for the fire on Monday afternoon, meaning more explosive growth is possible due to dry and windy weather.

NORTH DAKOTA

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

"It's been a long time since we all camped together," said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. "It feels natural."

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

"We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties," said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman's executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. "That's essential."

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Water district's eminent domain attempt for F-M diversion stalls, but case not dismissed

By Helmut Schmidt on Aug 19, 2016 at 2:52 p.m.

FARGO — An East Central District judge has ruled that the Cass County Joint Water Resource District, which is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement for 80 acres of farmland for the Fargo-Moorhead diversion, has not followed the proper procedures for eminent domain proceedings, court documents show.

At the same time, Judge John Irby denied a motion by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to dismiss the water district's attempt to use eminent domain for the Horace-area land, documents show.

According to court records:

The water resource district is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement on 79.34 acres owned by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to build a F-M diversion inlet.

The district extended a final offer of $476,040 for the land on May 18, 2016. That offer was rejected.

Irby ruled the water resource district failed to file a needed petition in the case, provide appropriate public notice and a hearing, allow interested parties to answer the petition, and have the court hear the case, allow the petition to be amended as needed and issue its findings and assess costs.

Irby said the district was also walking a line between taking right-of-way sufficient for its purposes while avoiding a purchase of the land, or fee simple, which is not eligible for "quick take" eminent domain.

Irby ruled that the district will have to amend its eminent domain complaint.

Cossette's attorney, Jonathan Garaas of the Garaas Law Firm in Fargo, said Friday, Aug. 19, that he does not comment on cases still being litigated.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Don Jorgensen
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 19, 2016

Sioux Falls, SD

One year ago, Sioux Falls was inundated by major flooding.

The hardest hit area was in the southwest part of the city where seven inches of rain fell in one hour. It was a night many of us won't soon forget.

The night was August 27th. The skies opened up over Sioux Falls and dumped more rain than the city had seen in recent memory.

Streets flooded quickly. Vehicles stalled out and many businesses flooded out, including the Signature Salon.

When we last met the owner, Jeff From, he was busy cleaning up what mother nature destroyed in minutes.

Today, From is back in business....

"It's hard to believe it's been a year," From said.

....but not without a lot of hard work along the way.

"It was a good eight months of solid; morning, noon and night trying to get things in place," From said.

The downpour and flooding that followed, caught many off guard.

The city had spent millions of dollars upgrading the drainage systems, but in some parts of town, seven inches of rain in a short amount of time was too much for it to handle.

"It was a large event", Public Works director Mark Cotter said.

Cotter says the drainage system worked as well as it could, but following the event, he knew more could be done.

"Probably the first thing and most important thing we did was take a rate case to the city council and they did support us to continually raise rates through 2019," Cotter said.

Cotter says those rate increases will help pay for more improvements; plus conduct more drainage studies.

"So when neighbors call and say 'this just doesn't drain right,' we set aside more dollars now to go out and do an updated hydro study, so we can understand what's happening and ultimately look at some alternatives to improve it," Cotter said.

Plus, the city began taking a closer look at drainage easements around town. It identified a few where the homeowners, over the years, had made improvements to those easements with landscaping, trees and bushes.

But in reality, those beautification improvements, became obstructions and didn't allow water to flow freely to designated detention ponds.

So, this past year, the city worked with the homeowners to remove those obstructions and regraded the land. That way during a heavy rain storm like last year, the water will go where it's supposed to go.

But in one area of town, around 35th and Duluth which always seems to have water problems during torrential rains, drainage improvements are hard to come by.

So, instead of investing millions of dollars in trying to upgrade the infrastructure, the city bought a number of the homes and is now in the process of tearing them down.

It's going to reclaim the land and turn it into green space with detention ponds.

And finally, the city implemented new building codes, so homeowners shouldn't have to worry about flooding if they live near one of those drainage easements.

Cotter shows us why using this handsketched diagram.

"If this is a drainage way in the backyard, we used to recommend that the water surface, we used to recommend that the lowest floor of the house be two feet above that water surface elevation, now we don't recommend, it's a standard," Cotter said.

Don: Builders know this now? That it's a standard,
Mark: Yes.
Don: They can't wiggle their way around it.
Mark: That's right,"

From has made his own improvements to his salon that he hopes will protect it if the city ever gets hit with another 100 year flood.

Using concrete, he added more height around his window wells and built up around his stairwell leading to his basement, where most of the water came in last year.

"Hopefully if that were to ever happen again, it wouldn't be able to," From said.

Only time will tell, but for now he's just glad to be back in business.

"I try not to even remember and think about it anymore, people ask me about it today and it's like something you want to forget," From said.

From's damages totaled in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He says very little of that was covered by flood insurance. He hasn't decided yet if he's going to sue the city to try recover some of his money.

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Kevin Woster
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

The Rancher Round-up in Union Center, S.D., is an annual celebration of ranch life. But it's also a testament to survival in a beautiful-but-harsh landscape.

Professional survival skills were tested in unprecedented ways almost three years ago when western South Dakota was hit by an early October blizzard that killed tens of thousands of cattle and other livestock.

Republican state Sen. Gary Cammack of Union Center, who also ranches and owns a ranch-supply store, had to bury more than 100 cattle in a hastily dug pit in his pasture after the storm. Other ranchers lost several times that many cattle.

"If there's anything akin to a gut punch for the whole cattle industry, that was it," Cammack says. "It was just an amazing hit. When the storm broke, within 35 miles there were 20,000 dead cattle. It was just beyond imagination."

Help came from the government, private relief funds, cattle donations from other ranchers and from higher market prices for remaining cattle.

“The generosity of cattlemen from all over the U.S. and neighboring states was overwhelming,” Cammack said. “The stories that will never be told of generosity cattleman to cattleman, just overwhelming.”

A South Dakota Rancher Relief Fund raised and distributed millions of dollars and avoided the kind of questions or controversy that sometimes can plague such efforts.

“That should be a blueprint for fundraising and helping in natural disasters,” Cammack said. “I never heard one bad thing about that. It was just run very smoothly, very fair, the way they put that thing together, and the generosity was overwhelming.”

With a perfect joining of forces and sources of assistance, the recovery came much faster than Cammack expected.

"With the generosity of the markets and some help from the federal government, I'd say, really, within about 24 months, most folks had enough of a boost that they were back and economically viable,” he said.

So the heavy rains in Union Center Friday didn't dampen enthusiasm for the annual rancher rodeo and fair at Cammack's store. They just made it all more complicated. But it was a tiny challenge compared to the big ones faced in ranch country.

Besides, they needed the moisture. They usually do.

Silvia Christen, executive director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, was at the celebration at Cammack’s. She said she continues to be amazed at the recovery effort and how ranchers responded after the big blizzard.

“Grit is really the word that describes most of it,” she said. “These ranch families at so at the mercy of the weather, and so at the mercy of the elements. And when you have a loss like we did with Winter Storm Atlas, many of them had a 50-percent loss overnight.

“And their faith and their commitment and their dedication and their trust that they can rebuild and then just get to work, that was a lot of it,” she said.

Almost three years after Winter Storm Atlas devastated the livestock industry here, the Ranch Round-UP celebrates the land, its people and the spirit of survival.

"There was so much great help that came in in the form of money and prayers and all that," Christen said. "But at the end of the day it came down to these families getting out and getting to work and putting it back together."

Cammack says he has mixed feelings now when he looks at the hilltop in his pasture where more than 100 cattle are buried.

“You can’t help but have some memories when you drive past that point,” he said. “But having said that, that nob we excavated and buried all those cattle on is recovered and starting to get the native grass back on there. And today when you and I went out there, there's cattle that came right up and they're grazing right on there -- the living standing above the dead. So the country can be cruel, but it heals faster than you think."

So do the ranchers.

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Joe Sneve
Argus Leader, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

City Hall hopes tearing down a group of flood-prone homes in central Sioux Falls will help other houses in the neighborhood stay dry the next time the city gets dumped on with torrential rains.

It’s not uncommon for homes in the area around Augustana University to have their basements flooded when Sioux Falls gets rain events. That’s despite thousands being spent in recent years to divert the run off into newly constructed holding ponds and other infrastructure upgrades.

So about five years ago, Sioux Falls Public Works set its sights on creating more green space along Covell Avenue between 28th and 33rd Streets. But that meant existing homes would need to come out.

“Based on how steep this particular watershed was, there wasn’t an alternative that was a better fit than just to go in and start asking for voluntary buy outs. … But they just weren’t ready.” said Mark Cotter, director of Public Works.

But after last August’s torrential rains, the phone started ringing and Public Works has since acquired nine properties along Covell Avenue, which were demolished last week.

Cotter said once razed, the foundations will be filled in with sand to allow for a more permeable and absorbent surface.

“Over time as we capture more homes that are willing to sell voluntarily, if it makes sense we’ll develop a detention pond so we can hold and slowly release (the storm drainage).”

Only time will tell if the program will be enough to dry up the neighborhood. Cotter said engineers will continue to buy more homes if necessary. For now, about 14 other homes on the west side of Covell Avenue have been targeted, with 10 homeowners entertaining the idea of selling.

They can’t all be bought at once, though, due to budgetary restriction. Andy Berg, storm water manager in Public Work’s environmental division, said about $1.2 million has been spent so far acquiring the nine homes that were demolished last week.

Because Public Works doesn’t specifically budget for the project – it’s difficult to know how many homeowners will be willing to sell in the following year when the City Council passes its budget – Berg couldn’t say how many more homes will come out next year. Instead, Public Works diverts savings from other expenses that come in under expected costs toward the program.

“We’ve identified three that we’re going to have the appraisal process done on. So if we have the dollars … we can do a closing on those.”

UTAH

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

by Heidi Hatch |

Friday, August 19th 2016

(KUTV) Today the Red Cross announces -the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana is the worst natural disaster to strike the United States since Hurricane Sandy.

Pleasant Grove’s Ben Moak grew up in the Louisiana neighborhoods hit hardest. He moved to Utah 20 years ago with his large family, he set down roots and now owns Firebird Pizza and Pasta on Main Street in the small town.

“I have a friend that posted on Facebook saying only thing he has is his job, his family, and his truck -- and eight feet of water in his house. He lost everything.”

The flooding of hurricane Katrina was hard to watch, and now this time, the flooding hits close to home again and that’s why he “wanted to do something 1500 miles away --to help our friends and family out.”

Some of the worst hit neighborhoods are streets he and his siblings know well.

“We grew up in Louisiana, ,Walker Denham Springs is where we were born and raised.”

The southern influence of his youth is evident in his kitchen, with a row of hot sauces and southern spices available to add kick to his Italian eatery.

He will start fundraising Tuesday night with a spaghetti dinner from 6 to 9 p.m. It will be $10 for a large plate of spaghetti , soda and breadsticks. “One hundred percent of the proceeds go to the people down there,” he said.

Just across the parking lot from Firebirds is Chubby's Cafe, owned by Moak’s brother who will be cooking up a little southern hospitality with a catfish fry next Saturday. The fry money will also go straight to the victims in Louisiana.

Jessica Erin is helping organize the event with the southern brothers and three other area restaurants including Cravings Cupcakes and Cravings Bistro.

“We got this huge trailer donated by Andrews Transportation and we are going to try and fill this baby up.”

All of the restaurants involved are accepting monetary donations, food, clothing, diapers --you name it -- for the flood victims. Donations will be accepted during business hours through Saturday Aug. 27 at 9 p.m.

“We are excited to get this thing filled up and take it down to Louisiana.”

All the business involved are just off Main Street in Pleasant Grove near the North Shore Shaved Ice shack, also giving a portion of their proceeds from Friday night to the cause. Lorri Jonas who worked at Chubby’s and now owns the ice shack said, “I want to help because my heart is full.”

Moak looks forward to community participation saying “the more the merrier, if you have to wait -wait, but the more the merrier.”

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

August 20, 2016

CEDAR CITY — Southern Utah University classes will soon be taught in Vietnam through an international partnership with FPT Corporation, the largest Vietnamese telecommunication company.

The university will make its Master of Science in cybersecurity and information assurance available to students attending FPT University and its online counterpart, Funix University.

FPT Corporation is to southeast Asia what Verizon Communications Inc. is to the United States.

With many smaller entities comprising the company, FPT University has shown a pioneering spirit and a proactive approach to online student education and an increased international presence.

“This partnership extends the reach of SUU and the CSIS Department into Vietnam,” said Dr. Robert Robertson, department chair and associate professor. “It will bring individuals into the program whose perspectives will enhance and benefit fellow students at an international level.”

As the first online educational opportunity offered in Vietnam, FPT University and Southern Utah University are promoting the process of international cooperation in education.

In May, FPT University leaders and dignitaries from Southern Utah University, including President Scott L. Wyatt, signed the agreement to help increase professional training opportunities available to FPT students. At the end of June, university representatives Dr. Rob Robertson, Dr. Roger LaMarca, director of online admissions, and Dr. Stephen Allen traveled to Vietnam to train FPT University on the structure and implementation of the master’s degree program.

An attractive facet of the program is the online component, allowing students to attend school while still living, learning and working in their country.

“Students will receive the same experience and personalized instruction as a traditional SUU classroom while preparing themselves for the rapidly growing field of cybersecurity,” LaMarca said.

Cybersecurity professionals who battle cyberattacks that bleed companies and governments dry are in high demand. It costs an average $11.6 million per cybercrime incident, according to Info Security. Keeping these facts in mind, it’s no surprise that 42 percent of organizations are actively seeking information technology positions in information security, more than any other job, according to a LinkedIn Talent Search.

“They will receive a wide variety of instruction and coursework from this program,” LaMarca said, “including cybersecurity and IT policy; information, vulnerability and threat assessment; physical, personnel and operational security; and contingency, redundancy, emergency and disaster planning.”

Online Vietnamese students will have access to all the resources and materials available to students in a traditional learning environment. Throughout the program, which will begin this fall, these students will have access to a library, tutor and lecturer. They will be educated by leading experts in the cybersecurity industry and will also have opportunities to study alongside American students at Southern Utah University.

FPT Corporation is a multinational information technology company based in Vietnam, branching out to 19 different countries. Smaller entities of the corporation include software outsourcing, telecommunication, property management, education and financial services.

The Vietnam National Technology Research Institute founded the Food Processing Technology Company – the original full name of FPT – in 1988. In 1990 the company switched its core business to information technology and changed the unabbreviated name to Corporation for Financing and Promoting Technology.

The cybersecurity program has been tailored to achieve the highest efficiency and educational quality available online. This new partnership will help further available education in Vietnam and will increase Southern Utah University’s international presence.

With a comprehensive international environment and a wealth of knowledge taught by high profile cybersecurity professionals, including NUIX’s Chris Pogue, Southern Utah University is helping to advance all of its students in this fast-growing career field. The university works hard to make it possible for nontraditional students and working professionals to earn a master’s degree.

Those who are interested in this program can contact Southern Utah University’s online admissions team at 435-865-8665 or onlineadmissions@suu.edu.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 21, 2016

In Louisiana, the emotional and physical impact of what may be a 1,000-year flood event is still being absorbed.

What our leaders cannot afford to do, though, is to let the future take care of itself.

As Gov. John Bel Edwards said Tuesday, the rescue and comfort of the displaced is the first priority. “Saving life is the most important priority we have,” Edwards said Tuesday. “We will dedicate every resource to that effort until it is no longer needed.”

But he also said he would take the opportunity to talk long-term recovery with Craig Fugate, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

That’s smart.

FEMA is under different and we believe much improved management since the hapless Michael Brown at the time of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The high-profile impact of Hurricane Sandy in the northeast in 2012 also refocused attention on the Stafford Act, the federal law governing disaster aid.

Louisiana is better placed than in earlier disasters, but that doesn’t mean it’s easy sailing.

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, of Baton Rouge — whose district was the hardest-hit — was busy visiting shelters and seeing his constituents. But he said in a telephone interview Tuesday that Congress needs to assess whether existing law is enough to deal with an event of this magnitude.

Graves said he’s already talking with U.S. House members of both parties about federal recovery assistance. “We’re not going to get there without national attention,” Graves said, in an echo of Fugate’s comments that the American people generally have probably been more focused on the Olympics and the national election than the Louisiana flood.

Fugate said that FEMA would respond unhesitatingly whether the national media spotlight comes or goes.

That’s encouraging, but we know from the struggles of a decade ago that bureaucratic tangles and the dueling political parties on Capitol Hill can get in the way of help that Louisiana needs.

The spirit of unity and generosity, including from people and institutions across Louisiana and the nation, remains critical in this time of trouble. Job one of the recovery, as Edwards emphasized, is for the affected households to register with disasterassistance.gov. Quantifying the damage is important to achieve appropriate federal response.

But leaders are right to worry about the future, and plan for it.

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

By Therese Apel And Geoff Pender

Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger, August 19, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has halted $29.9 million in reimbursements to the state of Mississippi for retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina, saying the state has failed to provide documentation, overspent and appears to have had lax oversight over the program.

The Department of Homeland Security’s Office of the Inspector General released a report that states that the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has not been able to provide documentation for around $30.5 million that was paid to contractors to retrofit 985 homes on the coast. The original program was approved to retrofit 2,000 homes for $29.9 million.

The OIG has recommended, and FEMA agreed, that the federal government "deobligate" the money until Mississippi can reconcile what it claims it spent. If Mississippi can't convince the feds its spending was proper, the state could be on the hook for all or part of the spending.

MEMA Director Lee Smithson released a statement Thursday after 6 p.m. stressing that he was not over the agency when the mismanagement occurred.

"We are confident that most of the money will be deemed eligible by FEMA and the remaining funds will be recovered by the state," he said.

Gov. Phil Bryant in a statement Thursday night said he agrees with Smithson the spending "will be eligible for reimbursement" and "the state will aggressively seek to recover the remainder of the funds."

"I appreciate director Smithson taking swift action upon discovering the issues outlined in the report," Bryant said. "It is important to note that the employees repsonsible for the retrofit program for the period OIG examined are no longer at MEMA.

The OIG report says that although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight of the program as early as December 2014, it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

Smithson said the money that was actually put toward the construction should end up being reimbursed by FEMA, and that the state will get the rest of the money out of ARA, the primary contractor on the jobs.

State guidelines and general accounting practices require that more than one person have oversight of similar programs. The state Department of Financial Administration gave oversight to one employee, who came with the program to MEMA when the program was moved over in 2012.

Then-MEMA Director Robert Latham said he was not comfortable with the program having no oversight.

"When the Coastal Retrofit program came to MEMA and I found out there wasn't any oversight, I said, "I want Horne involved in this, get them to start looking at all the invoices and processing it, and they were doing it as a courtesy because it wasn't in their contract. They agreed to start looking at it."

The report states that the employee who had oversight of the program, Deb Biggers, would not turn over some of the invoices to Horne CPA or to investigators.

Smithson said since he took office, Biggers has been terminated and he has hosted conference calls with Horne accountants and the Office of the Inspector General every week in order to keep them up to date with the progress of the audit.

"I don't want to speculate whether there was any graft or corruption on the part of Ms. Biggers or anyone else at MEMA," Smithson said, adding, "Deb Biggers should hace known that the payments that were made to ARA were improper. She modified the scope of work with the original contract with FEMA without getting FEMA permission and allowed ARA to inflate their program costs."

Latham said when he raised questions about the payments and the program, he was assured by his staff that everything was on the up-and-up.

"I'm concerned that if this is in fact true and it shakes out like it sounds, obviously I've got staff that let me down. When I consistently asked questions about these different things I was assured that FEMA was involved and that we were paying in accordance with a contract," he said.

Latham's Chief of Staff was Bill Brown, who he said he went to with any questions about the program.

"When issues would come up I'd get Bill to handle it, and if I thought I wasn't getting answers, I'd bring in Deb" and an employee who handled mitigation, Latham said.

OIG findings:

Some key findings of the OIG audit of Mississippi's spending on the Katrina retrofit program:

Mississippi allowed one employee complete authority over the program, which goes against basic accounting and oversight principles including Mississippi's own agency accounting rules.

The program was approved at $29.9 million to help retrofit an estimated 2,000 homes. The state claims to have spent $31.5 million on 945 homes.

The state has not provided documentation for $30.5 million it says it paid to contractors.

Although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight as early as December 2014, OIG says it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

While working for state DFA and MEMA, the employee in charge approved $31.5 million in payments, more than the amount of the grant, and did not allow a hired accounting firm to reconcile more than $30 million in invoices. "However, no one above the employee's authority questioned the situation," the report says.

Retrofitting 2,000 homes was estimated to cost $14,944 each, but Mississippi spent $33,308 on average, and MEMA "did not provide any substantial evidence to justify the increase in costs.

The employee over the program, the OIG said, would not allow federal or Mississippi officials access to more than $30 million worth of contractors' invoices. This led OIG to question MEMA, whose new director contacted the state attorney general's office.

MEMA contends it has completed work on 945 homes for $31.5 million, but has to date provided invoices for only 12 homes, at $958,000. DFA records as of May only show $20.4 million being spent on the program.

Of the $958,000 in invoices provided so far, only $640,000 represented actual work on homes, with $318,000 in temporary employee salaries and administrative costs.

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

By Sheri Fink

New York Times, August 21, 2016

BALTIMORE — In a church basement in a poor East Baltimore neighborhood, a Johns Hopkins doctor enlisted residents to help answer one of the most fraught questions in public health: When a surge of patients — from a disaster, disease outbreak or terrorist attack — overwhelms hospitals, how should you ration care? Whose lives should be saved first?

For the past several years, Dr. Lee Daugherty Biddison, a critical care physician at Johns Hopkins, and colleagues have led an unusual public debate around Maryland, from Zion Baptist Church in East Baltimore to a wellness center in wealthy Howard County to a hospital on the rural Eastern Shore. Preparing to make recommendations for state officials that could serve as a national model, the researchers heard hundreds of citizens discuss whether a doctor could remove one patient from lifesaving equipment, like a ventilator, to make way for another who might have a better chance of recovering, or take age into consideration in setting priorities.

At that first public forum in 2012 in East Baltimore, Cierra Brown, a former Johns Hopkins Hospital custodian, said she favored a random approach like a lottery. "I don't think any of us should choose whether a person should live or die," she said.

Alex Brecht, a youth program developer sitting across from her, said he thought children should be favored over adults. "Just looking at them, seeing their smiles, they have so much potential," he said.

"Who's going to raise them?" asked Tiffany Jackson, another participant.

The effort is among the first times, Dr. Daugherty Biddison said, that a state has gathered informed public opinion on these questions before devising policy on them. “I don’t want to be in a position of making these decisions without knowing what you think,” she told the residents. “We as providers,” she said, “don’t want to make those decisions in isolation.”

Rationing already occurs in delivering medical care in the United States, though some practices are little acknowledged. Committees struggle regularly over policies for allocating scarce organs for transplant.

During widespread drug shortages in recent years, doctors have sometimes chosen among cancer patients for proven chemotherapy regimens and among surgical patients for the most effective anesthetics. And doctors sometimes have to choose among patients who need treatment in intensive care units, which are often filled to capacity.

In emergencies, the choices can have immediate life-or-death consequences. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, doctors made ad hoc decisions about which groups of patients to evacuate from hospitals when floodwaters rose, the power failed and heat climbed. At one medical center, many of the sickest, chosen to go last, died. During the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009, thousands of young people developed severe respiratory distress. For some of the most critical cases, doctors tried treatment on heart-lung bypass machines. Rationing took place because the costly and resource-intensive therapy, which doctors were not sure would help, was available in only about 120 hospitals.

Similar scenarios have developed in other countries, wealthy and poor. After the 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, some patients at nearby hospitals, including babies, were selected for flights to safety, while others languished for days as medical supplies dwindled. At one hospital, dozens of older patients were apparently abandoned, according to a report in The Lancet, and many died.

And during the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, when doctors and nurses could spend only so many minutes inside hot biohazard suits, they struggled with impossible choices over which patients to give care.

Dr. Daugherty Biddison, a vice chairwoman in the department of medicine at Johns Hopkins, said she had first encountered scarce medical resources while doing missionary work overseas. She realized that even Johns Hopkins Hospital, a 1,145-bed facility anchoring the $7.7 billion Johns Hopkins Medicine enterprise, would fail to meet demand in a severe pandemic. When asked to help draw up a plan, she said, she felt uncomfortable with health professionals’ making life-or-death judgments without knowing the values of the broader public.

At least 18 states from New York to California, and numerous hospitals, including the 152 medical centers operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, have already developed protocols. Some efforts, including Maryland’s, have received funding from a federal program supporting hospital preparedness. But relatively few people know about the plans for allocating scarce resources, and fewer still have been consulted.

Some of these guidelines are nuanced and flexible to context. But others call for doctors to categorically refuse hospital admittance to older adults and those with certain existing medical conditions, such as kidney failure or advanced cancer, in a severe pandemic.

In Maryland, participants in the forums, designed with the help of Carnegie Mellon University’s program for deliberative democracy, tended to favor saving the most lives or years of life by prioritizing people who were expected to survive their current illness or live the longest after being treated. However, many also said that a lottery or first-come-first-served approach would be appropriate for patients who had roughly equal chances of benefiting.

“If you have one ventilator and five people who are good candidates, there’s going to have to be a random sort of chance aspect to it,” said Dr. Eric Toner, a senior associate at the UPMC Center for Health Security and one of the project’s leaders.

Unexpected questions emerged in the discussions: Should an undocumented immigrant be eligible to get a ventilator? What about a drug or alcohol abuser, or a prisoner? After being told by a facilitator that discrimination would not be allowed, one participant asked whether using age, one of the principles under discussion, would not also be a form of discrimination.

Taking ventilators from patients who did not appear to be improving was "the single most contentious issue," Dr. Toner said. Maryland's attorney general released an opinion in December that lifesaving medical technology, including ventilators, could be removed from patients during a catastrophic emergency and reassigned to others who could potentially benefit more from them. Dr. Toner said it would be hard for any system to work without reallocation.

But at the forums, many expressed reservations. One woman said that she had been in a coma, on a ventilator, and that her family had been encouraged to turn it off and let her die. "Health care providers are not God," another said. "I've seen it firsthand where they thought one thing and the outcome was different."

To avoid rationing, a woman proposed a "Susan G. Komen for disaster preparedness," a reference to the ubiquitous fund-raising movement for a breast cancer cure. Some said they would voluntarily refuse a ventilator to save the lives of other people, such as children or family members. A man questioned whether doctors would even have the time in an emergency to engage in formal rationing. Some with lower incomes said that health care rationing was already occurring based on the ability to pay.

Translating all these ideas into recommendations for the state, most likely in mid-2017, will be challenging. The organizers said that despite the complexity, they were now in a better position to provide the guidelines.

"We have a much fuller appreciation of what the community wants," said Howard Gwon, the director of the office of emergency management at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Charles Blattberg, a professor of political philosophy at the University of Montreal, said he worried that the effort could result in overly precise guidelines.

"The kind of judgment that's required to arrive at a good decision in these situations needs to be extremely sensitive to the context," he said. "It's not about just abandoning one lone doctor to their own devices to make it up on the spot, but we can't go the other extreme in thinking we have the solution to the puzzle already; just follow these instructions. That works for technical problems. These are moral, political problems."

Ruth Faden, the founder of Johns Hopkins's Berman Institute of Bioethics, which participated in the project, said she saw value in the exercise far beyond a pandemic.

"It's a novel and important attempt," she said, "to turn extremely complicated core ethical considerations into something people can make sense of and struggle with in ordinary language."

Region VIII Clips

Monday, August 22, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state received an FMAG reimbursement of more than $1 million… An HMGP grant is helping with reconstruction of the Manitou Incline… Fires in the state are now more under control.
- **Montana:** The *Fallon County Times* did another story on recent visits by DES and FEMA officials related to the Baker tornado recovery… The Copper King Fire almost doubled in size Sunday, with red flag conditions expected today.
- **North Dakota:** Three stories focus on the growing protest, led by Native American tribes, against construction of an oil pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security division of the North Dakota DES, estimates state law enforcement, health and transportation costs related to the protest may approach $1 million over the next few weeks. Approximately 1500-2000 protestors are at the site… An attempt to use eminent domain to take some land for the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Project was stalled by a judge who said it had not been properly done.
- **South Dakota:** KELO TV did a story on the flood in Sioux Falls one year ago and the community's response to it, and another story on the Atlas winter storm three years ago that killed many cattle in western South Dakota, and how that area has responded… The TV story on Sioux Falls mentioned local buyouts to prevent flooding issues, and an *Argus Leader* story focused just on the local buyout program in an area with poor drainage.
- **Utah:** Brothers in Pleasant Grove who were born and raised in Louisiana are doing a fundraiser and donations drive for flood survivors in their home state… Southern Utah University will be offering an online master's program in cybersecurity through a partnership with a Vietnamese telecommunications company.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The *Baton Rouge Advocate* says FEMA is improved, but additional federal aid may be needed… Several stories reported on FEMA suspending $30 million in payments to Mississippi for problems with its program retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina; this story from the *Jackson Clarion Ledger* specifies the procedures and employee in question… *The New York Times* reported on a survey of public attitudes by Johns Hopkins University on what criteria should be used to determine who lives or who gets priority for emergency care when medical staff and equipment are overwhelmed in a catastrophic incident.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

STORIES

COLORADO

FEMA awards Colorado $1 million wildfire grant (Loveland Reporter-Herald)

By Dana Rieck

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer
Posted: 08/20/2016 05:25:56 PM MDT

Republican Sen. Cory Gardner's office announced this week that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is awarding $1,194,483.86 to the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Matthew Branch, the Northeast Regional Fire Management officer for the Colorado Department of Public Safety Division of Fire Prevention and Control, said the money is a reimbursement for costs associated with past fires.

It is called a fire management assistance grant, which is something states apply for after responding to large fires.

"Most of these costs are borne by the local fire department and the county," he wrote in an email. "These entities bill the state and we reimburse them out of the state budget. Several years later we get the money back from the federal government."

Once approved, according to Branch, the grants can pay for 75 percent of the costs associated with fighting those fires.

"I welcome more than $1 million from FEMA to assist with wildfire response efforts in Colorado," said Gardner in the news release. "I'm confident the state of Colorado will maximize the federal grant to both preempt and mitigate the destruction caused by wildfires. I'll continue to advocate at the federal level to ensure Colorado receives the resources it needs to keep our communities safe."

Dana Rieck: 970-635-3630, rieckd@reporter-herald.com or twitter.com/DanaRieckRH

Manitou Incline Closed for Construction (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

8/22/16

COLORADO SPRINGS - The Manitou Incline is now closed as the cities of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs start phase 2 of improvements to the popular trail.

Construction is expected to last around 4 months with the main goals of: improving safety, enhancing the hiking experience, improving the long-term sustainability of the trail and increasing accessibility.

They will also clean up debris along the trail and add new drainage structures to protect the trail from eroding away.

Colorado Springs is responsible for the general oversight of the trail, and the improvements are being funded by a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant and Trail, Open Space and Parks Funding.

Beaver Creek fire evacuation order lifted; two Colorado wildfires 100 percent contained (Denver Post)

By Ellis Arnold | earnold@denverpost.com

August 21, 2016 at 4:36 pm

An evacuation order was lifted in the Beaver Creek fire area near Walden and the Wyoming state line yesterday, said John Abernathy, spokesman for the Denver Fire Department.

Some evacuees from 50 total residences have begun to return to their homes, Abernathy said, but low relative humidity and winds up to 25 mph are expected to create critical burn conditions Monday and Tuesday. The fire, which is 53 percent contained, started June 19. Total containment is expected Oct. 21.

Heavy beetle-killed timber in the area has been fueling the fire, which has required continued ground and air efforts. Recent cool, moist weather aided the fight, but warming is expected until Wednesday. Season-ending wet weather is likely the only factor that will put out the fire, Abernathy said.

The fire has burned 36,961 acres, and the cause of the fire is still under investigation. A total of 17 structures, including one residence, have been lost, Abernathy said.

The lightning-caused Spring Creek 2 fire south of Parachute burned 621 acres but was 100 percent contained as of Friday, according to federal agencies. There have been no injuries attributed to the fire, which started Aug. 12, and no primary residences were lost despite the fire moving within a few feet of several homes. Four buildings, three vehicles and three trailers were damaged or destroyed, and evacuation orders covering about 20 homes were lifted Aug. 14.

The Hayden Pass fire southeast of Salida was 60 percent contained as of Aug. 4, according to federal agencies, with recent monsoonal weather dropping moisture in the area. The 16,754-acre lightning-caused fire started July 8, and it may present a runoff issue because of the rain. All evacuations ended as of July 21 after people were ordered to clear out of 140 residences in the area. The fire is expected to be contained Oct. 1.

Fire crews contained the Blair fire 100 percent as of Aug. 1, said David Boyd, spokesman for the federal Bureau of Land Management. Lightning started the fire near Colorado 64 between Rangely and Meeker; about 1,140 acres have burned since June 29.

Crews focused on keeping the fire from moving north and east, where a power-line corridor, oil and gas pipeline and the highway would have been vulnerable. There were no injuries or evacuations, Boyd said, as the fire was in a remote area.

MONTANA

FEMA and Montana Disaster Emergency Services Visit Baker

(Fallon County Times)

SEVERE SUMMER WEATHER

Laurie Hassell and Kent Atwood display a weather map tracking severe weather storms throughout Montana.

Laurie Hassell, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), External Affairs Specialist; Kent Atwood, CFM, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services, Hazard Mitigation Officer and Tim Tennis, Recovery Bureau Chief, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services were in Baker on August 9.

By Sherry Vogel

They were conducting a briefing to Fallon County and City of Baker applicants as they proceed to set-up documentation to receive federal funding after Baker was designated to receive a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Atwood explained how the entire process works. Tennis expounded on how to apply for the funds. They both covered the scope of work for the Project Worksheet (PW) using the actual tornado documentation including cleanup and debris removal reports.

The preliminary final damage assessment is at $1.5 million. This amount surpasses the $1.4 million required for a Presidential Disaster Declaration. This final figure of the disaster damage could actually be more in the final analysis.

Whereas Hassell was in Baker to represent the Response and Recovery standpoint. Atwood was focused on the mitigation perspective of the disaster. **Mitigation meaning to identify and reduce the severity of the next natural disaster.

Officials estimate the Copper King Fire doubled in size Sunday afternoon (NBC TV, Helena)

By: KECI Staff
Updated: Aug 21, 2016 08:07 PM MDT

MISSOULA, Mont. - The Copper King Fire burning near Montana Highway 200 and Thompson River Road in Sanders County is now estimated to have burned over 6,000 acres. The fire had burned just over 3,400 acres as of Sunday morning.

Fire officials tell NBC Montana that the fire expanded to the northeast, chewing through around 3,000 acres. The explosive growth meant a cloud of thick smoke spread as far north as Creston and parts of the Swan Valley as of 8 p.m. on Sunday. The new growth is away from structures immediately threatened by the fire.

Officials with the Lolo National Forest say there is poor road access and firefighters and public safety remains the top priority. Fire crews are busy on the south and west sides of the fire near Highway 200 and Thompson River Road where structures are threatened.

The 297 people working to contain the fire will continue to focus on structure protection and keeping Highway 200 open to traffic. A Red Flag Warning is in effect for the fire on Monday afternoon, meaning more explosive growth is possible due to dry and windy weather.

NORTH DAKOTA

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It's been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Water district's eminent domain attempt for F-M diversion stalls, but case not dismissed

By Helmut Schmidt on Aug 19, 2016 at 2:52 p.m.

FARGO — An East Central District judge has ruled that the Cass County Joint Water Resource District, which is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement for 80 acres of farmland for the Fargo-Moorhead diversion, has not followed the proper procedures for eminent domain proceedings, court documents show.

At the same time, Judge John Irby denied a motion by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to dismiss the water district's attempt to use eminent domain for the Horace-area land, documents show.

According to court records:

The water resource district is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement on 79.34 acres owned by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to build a F-M diversion inlet.

The district extended a final offer of $476,040 for the land on May 18, 2016. That offer was rejected.

Irby ruled the water resource district failed to file a needed petition in the case, provide appropriate public notice and a hearing, allow interested parties to answer the petition, and have the court hear the case, allow the petition to be amended as needed and issue its findings and assess costs.

Irby said the district was also walking a line between taking right-of-way sufficient for its purposes while avoiding a purchase of the land, or fee simple, which is not eligible for "quick take" eminent domain.

Irby ruled that the district will have to amend its eminent domain complaint.

Cossette's attorney, Jonathan Garaas of the Garaas Law Firm in Fargo, said Friday, Aug. 19, that he does not comment on cases still being litigated.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Don Jorgensen
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 19, 2016

Sioux Falls, SD

One year ago, Sioux Falls was inundated by major flooding.

The hardest hit area was in the southwest part of the city where seven inches of rain fell in one hour. It was a night many of us won't soon forget.

The night was August 27th. The skies opened up over Sioux Falls and dumped more rain than the city had seen in recent memory.

Streets flooded quickly. Vehicles stalled out and many businesses flooded out, including the Signature Salon.

When we last met the owner, Jeff From, he was busy cleaning up what mother nature destroyed in minutes.

Today, From is back in business....

"It's hard to believe it's been a year," From said.

....but not without a lot of hard work along the way.

"It was a good eight months of solid; morning, noon and night trying to get things in place," From said.

The downpour and flooding that followed, caught many off guard.

The city had spent millions of dollars upgrading the drainage systems, but in some parts of town, seven inches of rain in a short amount of time was too much for it to handle.

"It was a large event", Public Works director Mark Cotter said.

Cotter says the drainage system worked as well as it could, but following the event, he knew more could be done.

"Probably the first thing and most important thing we did was take a rate case to the city council and they did support us to continually raise rates through 2019," Cotter said.

Cotter says those rate increases will help pay for more improvements; plus conduct more drainage studies.

"So when neighbors call and say 'this just doesn't drain right,' we set aside more dollars now to go out and do an updated hydro study, so we can understand what's happening and ultimately look at some alternatives to improve it," Cotter said.

Plus, the city began taking a closer look at drainage easements around town. It identified a few

where the homeowners, over the years, had made improvements to those easements with landscaping, trees and bushes.

But in reality, those beautification improvements, became obstructions and didn't allow water to flow freely to designated detention ponds.

So, this past year, the city worked with the homeowners to remove those obstructions and regraded the land. That way during a heavy rain storm like last year, the water will go where it's supposed to go.

But in one area of town, around 35th and Duluth which always seems to have water problems during torrential rains, drainage improvements are hard to come by.

So, instead of investing millions of dollars in trying to upgrade the infrastructure, the city bought a number of the homes and is now in the process of tearing them down.

It's going to reclaim the land and turn it into green space with detention ponds.

And finally, the city implemented new building codes, so homeowners shouldn't have to worry about flooding if they live near one of those drainage easements.

Cotter shows us why using this handsketched diagram.

"If this is a drainage way in the backyard, we used to recommend that the water surface, we used to recommend that the lowest floor of the house be two feet above that water surface elevation, now we don't recommend, it's a standard," Cotter said.

Don: Builders know this now? That it's a standard,
Mark: Yes.
Don: They can't wiggle their way around it.
Mark: That's right,"

From has made his own improvements to his salon that he hopes will protect it if the city ever gets hit with another 100 year flood.

Using concrete, he added more height around his window wells and built up around his stairwell leading to his basement, where most of the water came in last year.

"Hopefully if that were to ever happen again, it wouldn't be able to," From said.

Only time will tell, but for now he's just glad to be back in business.

"I try not to even remember and think about it anymore, people ask me about it today and it's like something you want to forget," From said.

From's damages totaled in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He says very little of that was

covered by flood insurance. He hasn't decided yet if he's going to sue the city to try recover some of his money.

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Kevin Woster
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

The Rancher Round-up in Union Center, S.D., is an annual celebration of ranch life. But it's also a testament to survival in a beautiful-but-harsh landscape.

Professional survival skills were tested in unprecedented ways almost three years ago when western South Dakota was hit by an early October blizzard that killed tens of thousands of cattle and other livestock.

Republican state Sen. Gary Cammack of Union Center, who also ranches and owns a ranch-supply store, had to bury more than 100 cattle in a hastily dug pit in his pasture after the storm. Other ranchers lost several times that many cattle.

"If there's anything akin to a gut punch for the whole cattle industry, that was it," Cammack says. "It was just an amazing hit. When the storm broke, within 35 miles there were 20,000 dead cattle. It was just beyond imagination."

Help came from the government, private relief funds, cattle donations from other ranchers and from higher market prices for remaining cattle.

“The generosity of cattlemen from all over the U.S. and neighboring states was overwhelming,” Cammack said. “The stories that will never be told of generosity cattleman to cattleman, just overwhelming.”

A South Dakota Rancher Relief Fund raised and distributed millions of dollars and avoided the kind of questions or controversy that sometimes can plague such efforts.

“That should be a blueprint for fundraising and helping in natural disasters,” Cammack said. “I never heard one bad thing about that. It was just run very smoothly, very fair, the way they put that thing together, and the generosity was overwhelming.”

With a perfect joining of forces and sources of assistance, the recovery came much faster than Cammack expected.

"With the generosity of the markets and some help from the federal government, I'd say, really, within about 24 months, most folks had enough of a boost that they were back and economically viable,” he said.

So the heavy rains in Union Center Friday didn't dampen enthusiasm for the annual rancher rodeo and fair at Cammack's store. They just made it all more complicated. But it was a tiny challenge compared to the big ones faced in ranch country.

Besides, they needed the moisture. They usually do.

Silvia Christen, executive director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, was at the celebration at Cammack's. She said she continues to be amazed at the recovery effort and how ranchers responded after the big blizzard.

"Grit is really the word that describes most of it," she said. "These ranch families at so at the mercy of the weather, and so at the mercy of the elements. And when you have a loss like we did with Winter Storm Atlas, many of them had a 50-percent loss overnight.

"And their faith and their commitment and their dedication and their trust that they can rebuild and then just get to work, that was a lot of it," she said.

Almost three years after Winter Storm Atlas devastated the livestock industry here, the Ranch Round-UP celebrates the land, its people and the spirit of survival.

"There was so much great help that came in in the form of money and prayers and all that," Christen said. "But at the end of the day it came down to these families getting out and getting to work and putting it back together."

Cammack says he has mixed feelings now when he looks at the hilltop in his pasture where more than 100 cattle are buried.

"You can't help but have some memories when you drive past that point," he said. "But having said that, that nob we excavated and buried all those cattle on is recovered and starting to get the native grass back on there. And today when you and I went out there, there's cattle that came right up and they're grazing right on there -- the living standing above the dead. So the country can be cruel, but it heals faster than you think."

So do the ranchers.

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Joe Sneve
Argus Leader, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

City Hall hopes tearing down a group of flood-prone homes in central Sioux Falls will help other houses in the neighborhood stay dry the next time the city gets dumped on with torrential rains.

It's not uncommon for homes in the area around Augustana University to have their basements flooded when Sioux Falls gets rain events. That's despite thousands being spent in recent years to divert the run off into newly constructed holding ponds and other infrastructure upgrades.

So about five years ago, Sioux Falls Public Works set its sights on creating more green space along Covell Avenue between 28th and 33rd Streets. But that meant existing homes would need to come out.

“Based on how steep this particular watershed was, there wasn’t an alternative that was a better fit than just to go in and start asking for voluntary buy outs. … But they just weren’t ready.” said Mark Cotter, director of Public Works.

But after last August’s torrential rains, the phone started ringing and Public Works has since acquired nine properties along Covell Avenue, which were demolished last week.

Cotter said once razed, the foundations will be filled in with sand to allow for a more permeable and absorbent surface.

“Over time as we capture more homes that are willing to sell voluntarily, if it makes sense we’ll develop a detention pond so we can hold and slowly release (the storm drainage).”

Only time will tell if the program will be enough to dry up the neighborhood. Cotter said engineers will continue to buy more homes if necessary. For now, about 14 other homes on the west side of Covell Avenue have been targeted, with 10 homeowners entertaining the idea of selling.

They can’t all be bought at once, though, due to budgetary restriction. Andy Berg, storm water manager in Public Work’s environmental division, said about $1.2 million has been spent so far acquiring the nine homes that were demolished last week.

Because Public Works doesn’t specifically budget for the project – it’s difficult to know how many homeowners will be willing to sell in the following year when the City Council passes its budget – Berg couldn’t say how many more homes will come out next year. Instead, Public Works diverts savings from other expenses that come in under expected costs toward the program.

“We’ve identified three that we’re going to have the appraisal process done on. So if we have the dollars … we can do a closing on those.”

UTAH

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

by Heidi Hatch |

Friday, August 19th 2016

(KUTV) Today the Red Cross announces -the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana is the worst natural disaster to strike the United States since Hurricane Sandy.

Pleasant Grove’s Ben Moak grew up in the Louisiana neighborhoods hit hardest. He moved to Utah 20 years ago with his large family, he set down roots and now owns Firebird Pizza and Pasta on Main Street in the small town.

“I have a friend that posted on Facebook saying only thing he has is his job, his family, and his truck -- and eight feet of water in his house. He lost everything.”

The flooding of hurricane Katrina was hard to watch, and now this time, the flooding hits close to home again and that's why he "wanted to do something 1500 miles away --to help our friends and family out."

Some of the worst hit neighborhoods are streets he and his siblings know well.

"We grew up in Louisiana, ,Walker Denham Springs is where we were born and raised."

The southern influence of his youth is evident in his kitchen, with a row of hot sauces and southern spices available to add kick to his Italian eatery.

He will start fundraising Tuesday night with a spaghetti dinner from 6 to 9 p.m. It will be $10 for a large plate of spaghetti , soda and breadsticks. "One hundred percent of the proceeds go to the people down there," he said.

Just across the parking lot from Firebirds is Chubby's Cafe, owned by Moak's brother who will be cooking up a little southern hospitality with a catfish fry next Saturday. The fry money will also go straight to the victims in Louisiana.

Jessica Erin is helping organize the event with the southern brothers and three other area restaurants including Cravings Cupcakes and Cravings Bistro.

"We got this huge trailer donated by Andrews Transportation and we are going to try and fill this baby up."

All of the restaurants involved are accepting monetary donations, food, clothing, diapers --you name it -- for the flood victims. Donations will be accepted during business hours through Saturday Aug. 27 at 9 p.m.

"We are excited to get this thing filled up and take it down to Louisiana."

All the business involved are just off Main Street in Pleasant Grove near the North Shore Shaved Ice shack, also giving a portion of their proceeds from Friday night to the cause. Lorri Jonas who worked at Chubby's and now owns the ice shack said, "I want to help because my heart is full."

Moak looks forward to community participation saying "the more the merrier, if you have to wait -wait, but the more the merrier."

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

August 20, 2016

CEDAR CITY — Southern Utah University classes will soon be taught in Vietnam through an international partnership with FPT Corporation, the largest Vietnamese telecommunication company.

The university will make its Master of Science in cybersecurity and information assurance available to students attending FPT University and its online counterpart, Funix University.

FPT Corporation is to southeast Asia what Verizon Communications Inc. is to the United States.

With many smaller entities comprising the company, FPT University has shown a pioneering spirit and a proactive approach to online student education and an increased international presence.

“This partnership extends the reach of SUU and the CSIS Department into Vietnam,” said Dr. Robert Robertson, department chair and associate professor. “It will bring individuals into the program whose perspectives will enhance and benefit fellow students at an international level.”

As the first online educational opportunity offered in Vietnam, FPT University and Southern Utah University are promoting the process of international cooperation in education.

In May, FPT University leaders and dignitaries from Southern Utah University, including President Scott L. Wyatt, signed the agreement to help increase professional training opportunities available to FPT students. At the end of June, university representatives Dr. Rob Robertson, Dr. Roger LaMarca, director of online admissions, and Dr. Stephen Allen traveled to Vietnam to train FPT University on the structure and implementation of the master’s degree program.

An attractive facet of the program is the online component, allowing students to attend school while still living, learning and working in their country.

“Students will receive the same experience and personalized instruction as a traditional SUU classroom while preparing themselves for the rapidly growing field of cybersecurity,” LaMarca said.

Cybersecurity professionals who battle cyberattacks that bleed companies and governments dry are in high demand. It costs an average $11.6 million per cybercrime incident, according to Info Security. Keeping these facts in mind, it’s no surprise that 42 percent of organizations are actively seeking information technology positions in information security, more than any other job, according to a LinkedIn Talent Search.

“They will receive a wide variety of instruction and coursework from this program,” LaMarca said, “including cybersecurity and IT policy; information, vulnerability and threat assessment; physical, personnel and operational security; and contingency, redundancy, emergency and disaster planning.”

Online Vietnamese students will have access to all the resources and materials available to students in a traditional learning environment. Throughout the program, which will begin this fall, these students will have access to a library, tutor and lecturer. They will be educated by leading experts in the cybersecurity industry and will also have opportunities to study alongside American students at Southern Utah University.

FPT Corporation is a multinational information technology company based in Vietnam, branching out to 19 different countries. Smaller entities of the corporation include software outsourcing, telecommunication, property management, education and financial services.

The Vietnam National Technology Research Institute founded the Food Processing Technology Company – the original full name of FPT – in 1988. In 1990 the company switched its core business to information technology and changed the unabbreviated name to Corporation for Financing and Promoting Technology.

The cybersecurity program has been tailored to achieve the highest efficiency and educational quality available online. This new partnership will help further available education in Vietnam and will increase Southern Utah University's international presence.

With a comprehensive international environment and a wealth of knowledge taught by high profile cybersecurity professionals, including NUIX's Chris Pogue, Southern Utah University is helping to advance all of its students in this fast-growing career field. The university works hard to make it possible for nontraditional students and working professionals to earn a master's degree.

Those who are interested in this program can contact Southern Utah University's online admissions team at 435-865-8665 or onlineadmissions@suu.edu.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 21, 2016

In Louisiana, the emotional and physical impact of what may be a 1,000-year flood event is still being absorbed.

What our leaders cannot afford to do, though, is to let the future take care of itself.

As Gov. John Bel Edwards said Tuesday, the rescue and comfort of the displaced is the first priority. "Saving life is the most important priority we have," Edwards said Tuesday. "We will dedicate every resource to that effort until it is no longer needed."

But he also said he would take the opportunity to talk long-term recovery with Craig Fugate, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

That's smart.

FEMA is under different and we believe much improved management since the hapless Michael Brown at the time of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The high-profile impact of Hurricane Sandy in the northeast in 2012 also refocused attention on the Stafford Act, the federal law governing disaster aid.

Louisiana is better placed than in earlier disasters, but that doesn't mean it's easy sailing.

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, of Baton Rouge — whose district was the hardest-hit — was busy visiting shelters and seeing his constituents. But he said in a telephone interview Tuesday that Congress needs to assess whether existing law is enough to deal with an event of this magnitude.

Graves said he's already talking with U.S. House members of both parties about federal recovery assistance. "We're not going to get there without national attention," Graves said, in an echo of Fugate's comments that the American people generally have probably been more focused on the Olympics and the national election than the Louisiana flood.

Fugate said that FEMA would respond unhesitatingly whether the national media spotlight comes or goes.

That's encouraging, but we know from the struggles of a decade ago that bureaucratic tangles and the dueling political parties on Capitol Hill can get in the way of help that Louisiana needs.

The spirit of unity and generosity, including from people and institutions across Louisiana and the nation, remains critical in this time of trouble. Job one of the recovery, as Edwards emphasized, is for the affected households to register with disasterassistance.gov. Quantifying the damage is important to achieve appropriate federal response.

But leaders are right to worry about the future, and plan for it.

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

By Therese Apel And Geoff Pender

Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger, August 19, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has halted $29.9 million in reimbursements to the state of Mississippi for retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina, saying the state has failed to provide documentation, overspent and appears to have had lax oversight over the program.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General released a report that states that the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has not been able to provide documentation for around $30.5 million that was paid to contractors to retrofit 985 homes on the coast. The original program was approved to retrofit 2,000 homes for $29.9 million.

The OIG has recommended, and FEMA agreed, that the federal government "deobligate" the money until Mississippi can reconcile what it claims it spent. If Mississippi can't convince the feds its spending was proper, the state could be on the hook for all or part of the spending.

MEMA Director Lee Smithson released a statement Thursday after 6 p.m. stressing that he was not over the agency when the mismanagement occurred.

"We are confident that most of the money will be deemed eligible by FEMA and the remaining funds will be recovered by the state," he said.

Gov. Phil Bryant in a statement Thursday night said he agrees with Smithson the spending "will be eligible for reimbursement" and "the state will aggressively seek to recover the remainder of the funds."

"I appreciate director Smithson taking swift action upon discovering the issues outlined in the report," Bryant said. "It is important to note that the employees repsonsible for the retrofit program for the period OIG examined are no longer at MEMA.

The OIG report says that although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight of the program as early as December 2014, it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

Smithson said the money that was actually put toward the construction should end up being reimbursed by FEMA, and that the state will get the rest of the money out of ARA, the primary contractor on the jobs.

State guidelines and general accounting practices require that more than one person have oversight of similar programs. The state Department of Financial Administration gave oversight to one employee, who came with the program to MEMA when the program was moved over in 2012.

Then-MEMA Director Robert Latham said he was not comfortable with the program having no oversight.

"When the Coastal Retrofit program came to MEMA and I found out there wasn't any oversight, I said, "I want Horne involved in this, get them to start looking at all the invoices and processing it, and they were doing it as a courtesy because it wasn't in their contract. They agreed to start looking at it."

The report states that the employee who had oversight of the program, Deb Biggers, would not turn over some of the invoices to Horne CPA or to investigators.

Smithson said since he took office, Biggers has been terminated and he has hosted conference calls with Horne accountants and the Office of the Inspector General every week in order to keep them up to date with the progress of the audit.

"I don't want to speculate whether there was any graft or corruption on the part of Ms. Biggers or anyone else at MEMA," Smithson said, adding, "Deb Biggers should hace known that the payments that were made to ARA were improper. She modified the scope of work with the original contract with FEMA without getting FEMA permission and allowed ARA to inflate their program costs."

Latham said when he raised questions about the payments and the program, he was assured by his staff that everything was on the up-and-up.

"I'm concerned that if this is in fact true and it shakes out like it sounds, obviously I've got staff that let me down. When I consistently asked questions about these different things I was assured that FEMA was involved and that we were paying in accordance with a contract," he said.

Latham's Chief of Staff was Bill Brown, who he said he went to with any questions about the program.

"When issues would come up I'd get Bill to handle it, and if I thought I wasn't getting answers, I'd bring in Deb" and an employee who handled mitigation, Latham said.

OIG findings:

Some key findings of the OIG audit of Mississippi's spending on the Katrina retrofit program:

Mississippi allowed one employee complete authority over the program, which goes against basic accounting and oversight principles including Mississippi's own agency accounting rules.

The program was approved at $29.9 million to help retrofit an estimated 2,000 homes. The state claims to have spent $31.5 million on 945 homes.

The state has not provided documentation for $30.5 million it says it paid to contractors.

Although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight as early as December 2014, OIG says it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

While working for state DFA and MEMA, the employee in charge approved $31.5 million in payments, more than the amount of the grant, and did not allow a hired accounting firm to reconcile more than $30 million in invoices. "However, no one above the employee's authority questioned the situation," the report says.

Retrofitting 2,000 homes was estimated to cost $14,944 each, but Mississippi spent $33,308 on average, and MEMA "did not provide any substantial evidence to justify the increase in costs.

The employee over the program, the OIG said, would not allow federal or Mississippi officials access to more than $30 million worth of contractors' invoices. This led OIG to question MEMA, whose new director contacted the state attorney general's office.

MEMA contends it has completed work on 945 homes for $31.5 million, but has to date provided invoices for only 12 homes, at $958,000. DFA records as of May only show $20.4 million being spent on the program.

Of the $958,000 in invoices provided so far, only $640,000 represented actual work on homes, with $318,000 in temporary employee salaries and administrative costs.

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

By Sheri Fink

New York Times, August 21, 2016

BALTIMORE — In a church basement in a poor East Baltimore neighborhood, a Johns Hopkins doctor enlisted residents to help answer one of the most fraught questions in public health: When a surge

of patients — from a disaster, disease outbreak or terrorist attack — overwhelms hospitals, how should you ration care? Whose lives should be saved first?

For the past several years, Dr. Lee Daugherty Biddison, a critical care physician at Johns Hopkins, and colleagues have led an unusual public debate around Maryland, from Zion Baptist Church in East Baltimore to a wellness center in wealthy Howard County to a hospital on the rural Eastern Shore. Preparing to make recommendations for state officials that could serve as a national model, the researchers heard hundreds of citizens discuss whether a doctor could remove one patient from lifesaving equipment, like a ventilator, to make way for another who might have a better chance of recovering, or take age into consideration in setting priorities.

At that first public forum in 2012 in East Baltimore, Cierra Brown, a former Johns Hopkins Hospital custodian, said she favored a random approach like a lottery. “I don’t think any of us should choose whether a person should live or die,” she said.

Alex Brecht, a youth program developer sitting across from her, said he thought children should be favored over adults. “Just looking at them, seeing their smiles, they have so much potential,” he said.

“Who’s going to raise them?” asked Tiffany Jackson, another participant.

The effort is among the first times, Dr. Daugherty Biddison said, that a state has gathered informed public opinion on these questions before devising policy on them. “I don’t want to be in a position of making these decisions without knowing what you think,” she told the residents. “We as providers,” she said, “don’t want to make those decisions in isolation.”

Rationing already occurs in delivering medical care in the United States, though some practices are little acknowledged. Committees struggle regularly over policies for allocating scarce organs for transplant.

During widespread drug shortages in recent years, doctors have sometimes chosen among cancer patients for proven chemotherapy regimens and among surgical patients for the most effective anesthetics. And doctors sometimes have to choose among patients who need treatment in intensive care units, which are often filled to capacity.

In emergencies, the choices can have immediate life-or-death consequences. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, doctors made ad hoc decisions about which groups of patients to evacuate from hospitals when floodwaters rose, the power failed and heat climbed. At one medical center, many of the sickest, chosen to go last, died. During the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009, thousands of young people developed severe respiratory distress. For some of the most critical cases, doctors tried treatment on heart-lung bypass machines. Rationing took place because the costly and resource-intensive therapy, which doctors were not sure would help, was available in only about 120 hospitals.

Similar scenarios have developed in other countries, wealthy and poor. After the 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, some patients at nearby hospitals, including babies, were selected for flights to safety, while others languished for days as medical supplies dwindled. At one hospital, dozens of older patients were apparently abandoned, according to a report in The Lancet, and many died.

And during the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, when doctors and nurses could spend only so many minutes inside hot biohazard suits, they struggled with impossible choices over which patients to give care.

Dr. Daugherty Biddison, a vice chairwoman in the department of medicine at Johns Hopkins, said she had first encountered scarce medical resources while doing missionary work overseas. She realized that even Johns Hopkins Hospital, a 1,145-bed facility anchoring the $7.7 billion Johns Hopkins Medicine enterprise, would fail to meet demand in a severe pandemic. When asked to help draw up a plan, she said, she felt uncomfortable with health professionals’ making life-or-death judgments without knowing the values of the broader public.

At least 18 states from New York to California, and numerous hospitals, including the 152 medical centers operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, have already developed protocols. Some efforts,

including Maryland's, have received funding from a federal program supporting hospital preparedness. But relatively few people know about the plans for allocating scarce resources, and fewer still have been consulted.

Some of these guidelines are nuanced and flexible to context. But others call for doctors to categorically refuse hospital admittance to older adults and those with certain existing medical conditions, such as kidney failure or advanced cancer, in a severe pandemic.

In Maryland, participants in the forums, designed with the help of Carnegie Mellon University's program for deliberative democracy, tended to favor saving the most lives or years of life by prioritizing people who were expected to survive their current illness or live the longest after being treated. However, many also said that a lottery or first-come-first-served approach would be appropriate for patients who had roughly equal chances of benefiting.

"If you have one ventilator and five people who are good candidates, there's going to have to be a random sort of chance aspect to it," said Dr. Eric Toner, a senior associate at the UPMC Center for Health Security and one of the project's leaders.

Unexpected questions emerged in the discussions: Should an undocumented immigrant be eligible to get a ventilator? What about a drug or alcohol abuser, or a prisoner? After being told by a facilitator that discrimination would not be allowed, one participant asked whether using age, one of the principles under discussion, would not also be a form of discrimination.

Taking ventilators from patients who did not appear to be improving was "the single most contentious issue," Dr. Toner said. Maryland's attorney general released an opinion in December that lifesaving medical technology, including ventilators, could be removed from patients during a catastrophic emergency and reassigned to others who could potentially benefit more from them. Dr. Toner said it would be hard for any system to work without reallocation.

But at the forums, many expressed reservations. One woman said that she had been in a coma, on a ventilator, and that her family had been encouraged to turn it off and let her die. "Health care providers are not God," another said. "I've seen it firsthand where they thought one thing and the outcome was different."

To avoid rationing, a woman proposed a "Susan G. Komen for disaster preparedness," a reference to the ubiquitous fund-raising movement for a breast cancer cure. Some said they would voluntarily refuse a ventilator to save the lives of other people, such as children or family members. A man questioned whether doctors would even have the time in an emergency to engage in formal rationing. Some with lower incomes said that health care rationing was already occurring based on the ability to pay.

Translating all these ideas into recommendations for the state, most likely in mid-2017, will be challenging. The organizers said that despite the complexity, they were now in a better position to provide the guidelines.

"We have a much fuller appreciation of what the community wants," said Howard Gwon, the director of the office of emergency management at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Charles Blattberg, a professor of political philosophy at the University of Montreal, said he worried that the effort could result in overly precise guidelines.

"The kind of judgment that's required to arrive at a good decision in these situations needs to be extremely sensitive to the context," he said. "It's not about just abandoning one lone doctor to their own devices to make it up on the spot, but we can't go the other extreme in thinking we have the solution to the puzzle already; just follow these instructions. That works for technical problems. These are moral, political problems."

Ruth Faden, the founder of Johns Hopkins's Berman Institute of Bioethics, which participated in the project, said she saw value in the exercise far beyond a pandemic.

"It's a novel and important attempt," she said, "to turn extremely complicated core ethical considerations into something people can make sense of and struggle with in ordinary language."

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 12:59:53 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@utah.gov'(b)(6)@wyo.gov';(b)(6)@nd.gov'(b)(6)@state.sd.us'(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert(b)(6)@usace.army.mil'(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6);@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;'(b)(6)@mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;'(b)(6)@state.co.us';Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel;Stephens, Holly;Castel, Joseph-Richard
Subject: FEMA clips for Thursday, 8-25-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-25-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.
- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe’s stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. (“Dakota Access can’t begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn’t immediately urgent.”) Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.

- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

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Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

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$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

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The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

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Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve (Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here’s a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California’s central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire's Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

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IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

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MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana's largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire's perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

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UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

“The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations,” Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

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WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone’s South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it’s gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America’s prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.
David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn't consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

"The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites," Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. "The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline."

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

"The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux," said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company's attorney, William Leone, told the court, "This is not a cowboy process."

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday's hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday's hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

“We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters,” she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group's arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

"Our message remains the same," he said. "We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public."

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

"A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

"Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court," Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe's historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

"It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them," Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary

The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News
Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary

A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.

Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency's operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.

Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.

“Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah,” said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job.”

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016

SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):

11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are "not good in the near future" because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.
- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe's stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. ("Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent.") Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve (Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here's a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California's central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire's Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

—–

IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

—–

MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana's largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire's perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

—–

UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

"The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations," Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

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WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe’s cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company’s assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small

construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see

that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn’t consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

“The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites,” Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. “The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline.”

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

“The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux,” said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company’s attorney, William Leone, told the court, “This is not a cowboy process.”

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday’s hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can’t begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn’t immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday’s hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

“We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters,” she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group’s arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

“Our message remains the same,” he said. “We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public.”

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

“A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million,” the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

“Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court,” Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe’s historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

“It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them,” Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary
The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary

A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.

Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency's operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.

Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.

"Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah," said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job."

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016
SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):
11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are “not good in the near future” because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 12:50:55 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
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Subject: FEMA News clips for Tuesday 8-23-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-23-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 23, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state is proceeding with a proposal to buy out landslide properties in Colorado Springs as quickly as possible, Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Marilyn Gally told the Colorado Springs city council Monday. The city has proposed a resolution asking FEMA to “move as quickly as possible.”… The Beaver Creek Fire that started in June is believed to have been human-caused… A July hailstorm in Colorado Springs is the sixth-most costly disaster in state history, according to the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association.
- **Montana:** Several stories report about fires in the state. One near Kalispell led to evacuations, one in Yellowstone has made national news, and the Copper King Fire remains dangerous.
- **North Dakota:** Stories appear to reflect more tension at the site of the pipeline protest: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz withdrew trailers and water tanks that had been supplied by the state after reports of criminal activity, including lasers being directed at pilots observing the protest; Governor Dalyrmple said numerous criminal acts had occurred and asked the Army Corps of Engineers to step in (as the protest is on its land, protesting its permit); and tribal officials acknowledged the campers had split into two factions, one pacifist and one that feels “something should be done.”… Also: Three Affiliated Tribes approved a letter of support for the protest. About 60 tribes are believed to be represented at the campsite. A federal judge is to rule on a request for an injunction Wednesday. The Morton County sheriff estimates overtime costs for law enforcement may be $100,000 per week. Protesters plan a march at 2 p.m. today and to attend a Morton County Commissioners meeting at 5:30; two actresses will lead a protest outside the federal district court in Washington, D.C., today as well. Former *Grand Forks Herald* editor Mike Jacobs weighs in with an opinion piece on the protest … Xcel Energy is testing large drones that could be used to help identify power problems after a storm…

- **South Dakota:** The state has its first Zika case, a woman who had travelled to the Caribbean. (She is not pregnant.)
- **Utah:** Two new wildfires have broken out. Red flag warnings are out for the northern part of the state, and storms are expected in the south.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The Louisiana flooding, wildfires and the Zika virus continue to dominate national disaster news. No clips are included today.

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COLORADO

On Unsolid Ground: State hustling to help Colorado Springs landslide victims (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Billie Stanton Anleu
August 22, 2016• Updated: August 22, 2016 at 6:23 pm

Colorado government is moving as quickly as it can to help Colorado Springs landslide victims, state Emergency Management Director Marilyn Galley assured the City Council during its work session Monday.

But Galley said her agency is completing buyouts of Boulder County homes from the 2013 floods, an indication of the two to three years needed to close out relief efforts after disasters.

"It is a tedious process," Galley said.

The state has submitted Colorado Springs' application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, she said.

Mayor John Suthers and Councilman Keith King are sponsoring a resolution urging FEMA to "proceed as quickly as possible" in moving forward on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application. The resolution promises the council, mayor and city staff members' "full and timely attention" in cooperating with FEMA and the state Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

The costs from the 2015 landslides are high, noted city Grants Manager Jen Vance.

When 27 homes were bought out in 2000 after landslides in Holland Park and on Regency Drive, the total project cost was $6.5 million.

But the 26 homes to be bought out because of last year's landslides have a projected cost of $16.2 million, because the cost of housing has increased, several of the houses are in Broadmoor neighborhoods and $1.9 million alone is attributed to a landslide lot owned by Judy Myklak in the Broadmoor Resort Community.

Meanwhile, Councilmen Don Knight and Tom Strand plan another workshop Monday with developers, builders, geologists and geotechnical engineers, among others, to resolve lingering questions on their proposed rewrite of the city's geological hazards ordinance.

Knight had noted holes in that safety net and wants more due diligence before homes are erected in landslide zones.

Planning and Development Director Peter Wysocki said questions to be resolved are:

- Who proposes and signs off on the geological hazard study?

- Is 14 days enough time for the Colorado Geological Survey to respond on how its recommendations have been implemented in development plans?

- Who verifies that those recommendations are addressed?

The original 1996 geohazards ordinance called for either a geologist or geotechnical engineer to write the studies, Knight noted, but both specialists are needed.

"The biggest issue," he said, "is who certifies that the house was built as designed. There's no guarantee your house isn't going to fall down into a landslide. All we're trying to do is make sure the house is built as designed."

Officials say Beaver Creek fire was caused by humans as crews continue to battle blaze (Denver Post)

The Denver Post
By Jesse Paul | jpaul@denverpost.com
August 23, 2016 at 9:03 am

WALDEN — Officials believe the Beaver Creek fire burning in northwest Colorado since June was caused by humans.

In an incident update Monday, commanders made the announcement, which they have been suggesting since the fire started on June 19. The U.S. Forest Service's law enforcement division is investigating.

The fire, which has scorched more than 37,000 acres in Colorado and Wyoming, is listed as 53 percent contained. Nearly 250 firefighters were assigned to the firefight about 25 miles north of Walden as of Tuesday morning.

"Cooler weather later in the week is predicted to be even more favorable to suppression and containment efforts," officials said in a Tuesday news release.

Total containment is expected Oct. 21. The fire has destroyed one cabin and a handful of outbuildings.

July hail storm in Colorado Springs sixth-most damaging in state history (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman
August 22, 2016 Updated: Today at 6:12 am

The July 28 hailstorm that smashed Colorado Springs was the sixth-most damaging event in Colorado history, triggering $352.8 million in claims for damage to homes and vehicles, an insurance industry trade group said Monday.

Described as an "absolute hail bomb" by Brian Bledsoe, chief meteorologist with Gazette news partner KKTV, the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association said the storm featuring up to tennis ball-sized hail resulted in 84,500 auto and homeowner insurance claims filed so far. That includes 51,300 auto insurance claims adding up to more than $164.6 million and 33,200 property insurance claims at more than $188.2 million.

"The difference between this storm and many of the other large storms that have hit Colorado is you typically see one storm travel across the state or along the Front Range causing damage over a wide area," said Carole Walker, the association's executive director. "This storm was concentrated in the Colorado Springs area and the size of the hail resulted in a very high percentage of claims that were total losses."

Renee Larson, a semi-retired homeowner near the Colorado Springs Airport, said the storm did about $60,000 damage to her family's three vehicles as well as the roof, six windows, skylights, chimney, siding, fence and shed on or near their home. The vehicles were total losses and she hopes repairs to her home will soon be approved by her mortgage company.

"Hopefully, they will get it done before the snow flies," Larson said. "You want to scream and throw your hands up, but it is Mother Nature, just like the floods in Louisiana. We are fortunate it is going as smoothly as it is. At least we are in the process of our claim. Some people I know might have to wait months to see an adjuster."

The estimated damage amount is preliminary and doesn't include any damage to commercial property such as vehicles of dealer lots or office buildings and hotels, or public property, including at least $500,000 in damage at the Colorado Springs Airport and about 40 Colorado Springs police cars as well as damages at Peterson Air Force Base. The total cost of the storm likely will increase as repairs are completed to roofs, siding and windows damaged by the storm that could take months to complete, Walker said.

"This is yet another reminder from Mother Nature of why Colorado is now ranked second in the nation for hail insurance claims," Walker said. "The size and amount of hail that battered Colorado Springs is, unfortunately, part of a pattern of catastrophic events the state has been experiencing during the past several years, so we need to be financially prepared for the unexpected."

The monetary damage of the storm ranks behind three hail storms, the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest fires, the association reported. The storms ahead of it are:

- A July 20, 2009, Denver area hail storm that caused $767.6 million in damages;

- A July 11, 1990, hail storm that caused $625 million in damages statewide;

- The June 2012 Waldo Canyon fire, which resulted in $453.7 million in claims;

- The June 2013 Black Forest fire, which resulted in $420.5 million in claims;

- A series of storms from June 6-15, 2009, in the Denver area with tornado and hail damage totaling $353.3 million.

When adjusted for inflation, the storm ranks as the eighth-worst in the state's history.

Colorado ranked behind Texas in hail claims from 2013-15 with 182,591 claims, according to a National Insurance Crime Bureau report in May. Nationwide, there were 5,412 major hail storms last year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Severe Storms database.

Claims related to wind and hail damage accounted for nearly 40 percent of all insured losses during the past five years, averaging about $15 billion annually, the association said. The July 28 storm was the first catastrophic loss of the year in Colorado, which the association defines as insured damage of $25 million or more (flood damage is not included because it isn't covered by most homeowner's insurance policies).

Many of the state's top insurers, including USAA and State Farm, opened mobile locations along Powers Boulevard and elsewhere in eastern Colorado Springs to handle the large number of vehicle claims. Some body shops reported backlogs of work through December and the wait for getting roof or siding work could be even longer.

MONTANA

Evacuations ordered after Montana fire doubles in size (Associated Press)

KALISPELL — Authorities say homes in a rural area east of Thompson Falls have been evacuated after a wildfire in northwestern Montana doubled in size in one day.

Fire officials say extreme fire behavior is also expected for the Copper King Fire on Monday, with wind gusts of up to 40 mph forecast to blow across the dry, hot terrain.

The Sanders County Sheriff's Office issued evacuation orders early Monday along Little Thompson River Road. Some 20 homes and structures are threatened, and other residents have been put on notice that the evacuation area may spread.

A shelter has been set up at Thompson Falls High School.

Some 317 firefighters are responding to the blaze, which grew 4 ½ square miles Sunday to nearly 11 square miles as of Monday morning.

Wildfire smoke streaming across Montana (KXLH – Great Falls)

By: Julianne Dellorso and David Sherman - MTN News

GREAT FALLS - Many people have noticed a lot of smoke in areas of western, central, and northern Montana.
We have received reports of heavy smoke from residents in and around Helena, Shelby, Heart Butte, and even the Sluice Boxes area of the Little Belt Mountains.

Toole County Sheriff Donna Whitt says from what she's heard, it is smoke from the fires in Western Montana and Idaho.

She says there are no fires or incidents involving smoke in Toole County reported to her office.

The East Glacier Volunteer Fire Department posted the following message on Facebook on Monday morning: "Very windy, smokey day in East Glacier Park. Conditions are ripe for wildfire - a red flag day. Be careful with cigarettes and avoid any outdoor burning or anything that might spark a fire, like driving your car in high, dry grass or using a chainsaw."

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality reports that wildfire smoke in the area is likely due to several large fires to the west:

- The Pioneer Fire near Boise, Idaho, is 87,818 acres and 50% contained with active fire behavior.
- The Copper King Fire in northwest Montana is 3,900 acres and 30% contained with active fire behavior. Satellite imagery indicates a plume coming off the fire this afternoon and heading to the northeast.
- The Buck Creek Fire in central Washington is 1,083 acres and 0% contained with active fire behavior and contributing to the light smoke over Montana.

West Yellowstone residents voice concerns over Tatanka Complex (KTVM – NBC Bozeman)

By: Judith Retana
Posted: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

Updated: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

BOZEMAN, Mont. - The half dozen fires burning in Yellowstone National Park are now called the Tatanka Complex.

Fire officials in West Yellowstone held a community meeting Monday night where residents voiced their concerns about the fire. As black smoke continues to rise from the fires, many residents are worried.

"Oh, I'm saying my prayers like crazy," said Duck Creek resident Jim Criner. He was one of more than 200 residents at a community meeting to learn more about the fire.

Officials presented maps showing people where the fire perimeter was and the direction it's heading.

Strong winds and dry weather have a Montana senator and firefighters on alert.

"We want to make sure we have all the resources to ensure the community stays safe, the road stays open and we can protect these very important assets here around West Yellowstone," said Sen. Steve Daines (R-Montana).

Officials handed out fact sheets and maps to help residents understand more about the fires. They even handed out fire action plans to help them plan for an emergency.

Sasha Jevtich is a seasonal resident who works closely with the fire community. He and others looked at maps of the fire after the meeting.

"We took a ride into the park just to check things out for ourselves. You know, as you look at the maps, it is kind of scary. It does looks like it's rather close to town," he said. As scary as it can look, he said having the fire eat away at what is fueling it now, is good for the future.

Even so, the fire still makes residents like Criner nervous. He was around for the 1988 fires and saw how close those got to his neighborhood.

"The area between where the fire is and where we are in Duck Creek, is nothing but high grass and willows. The fire would move across the area really fast if it reached us," he said.

Although many in West Yellowstone are used to Montana's fire season, seeing dark plumes just a few miles away is always a concern.

Residents who wish to receive emergency notifications about the fire or any other event in the area, can sign up at ready.gallatin.com.

NORTH DAKOTA

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

"We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably," she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

"He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena," he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

“My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it’s life-threatening or not,” he said. “This is our land, our people.”

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming’s Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children’s safety at the campsite. But she added, “I believe there’s strength in prayer,” and said it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Our water is sacred,” she said. “I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too.”

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes’ chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock’s opposition.

“We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives,” Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe’s reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe’s water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It’s estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it’s the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead 'solidarity' rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county's emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

MIKE JACOBS: Pipeline protest shows new dimension in North Dakota politics (Grand Forks Herald)

By Mike Jacobs Today at 6:00 a.m.

North Dakota still responds to an Indian scare. That's one thing we can say about last week's news.

On Friday, Gov. Jack Dalrymple declared a civil emergency in response to a protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The pipeline would cross the Missouri River less than a mile from the boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux nation.

Protests last week brought more than 1,000 people. Arrests were made.

Emergency declarations aren't all that uncommon in North Dakota, but almost all of them address natural disasters. North Dakota knows natural disaster. Hardly a year goes by without natural disaster. This place is flood prone, snow blasted and wind battered.

Civil disturbance is another thing.

The last civil emergency that comes to mind occurred in 1970, when Gov. William Guy sent the National Guard to an anti-war protest at the ABM missile site near Nekoma, N.D. A year before that, Guy called out the Guard when a bunch of college students descended on Zap, N.D., with the express purpose of getting drunk and having a good time. Some damage was done.

Dalrymple didn't send the Guard to the mouth of the Cannonball River. His emergency declaration is just in case local law enforcement needs help, he said.

Besides pointing out that this step is extremely rare, we can say some other things about it.

One is that Native opposition to pipeline projects is becoming a pattern. The Enbridge Company's Sandpiper line is stalled due to opposition from Minnesota's White Earth Band of Ojibway. Their spokeswoman is Winona LaDuke, who was Ralph Nader's running mate in 1996 and 2000 when he was the Green Party candidate for president.

The partnership between Native people and environmentalists is part of the pattern. We saw this in opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline, and it's evident at the mouth of the Cannonball. The protest there has drawn movie stars as well as environmental activists.

That pretty much makes it the current front line in the war on fossil fuels.

It's easy to suggest (as some bloggers have done) that the tribe is being used.

There are two problems with this. For one thing, it's condescending. For another, it overlooks the growing activism of North Dakota's Native people.

This activism is especially evident at Standing Rock.

Opposition from the elected Tribal Council at Standing Rock doomed UND's nickname and logo. The NCAA said using "Fighting Sioux" would be OK if both of the state's Sioux communities said so. Standing Rock refused.

Another thing to say is that David Archambault, Standing Rock's tribal chair, has warrior blood in his veins. He's been on the front lines at the protest. On the pipeline issue, he's led the tribe to federal court and to the United Nations.

This is no surprise. At the opening of the 2015 legislative session, Archambault delivered the "State of the Relationship" message, a cry from the heart in which he spoke truth to power about Native issues and state jurisdiction.

Then there's the political context.

North Dakota's November ballot has three Native candidates: Chase Iron Eyes for Congress, Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun for Public Service Commission and Ruth Buffalo for insurance commissioner. All are Democrats, and none has much of a chance.

But each of them stepped up to fill slots on a major party ticket.

This has two important implications. First, as major party candidates, they will have media access. Second, they've established that the Democratic Party in the state can't just count on Native voters; it must also promote Native candidates to the white population.

It's also the essence of political organizing, as Mark Trahant pointed out in his blog, at trahantreports.com. Trahant is the nation's best known native journalist, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and a member of the faculty at UND's Program in Communication.

None of this goes to the question of pipeline safety, much less to the future of fossil fuel development.

On these issues, everybody ought to be heard.

So there is one more thing, at least, to say about last week's developments.

Brian Kalk, one of three members of the Public Service Commission that approved a permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline, dismissed the protest. He told the Bismarck Tribune, "These groups didn't come to our hearings."

Well...

They could have been asked.

That's what "public service" means.

Disclaimers: Enbridge has right-of way on property that my partner Suezette and I own in Mountrail County, N.D. I was at Nekoma with the protesters. I was not at the so-called "Zip to Zap."

North Dakota Tests Drones To Be Used For Disaster Response (AP)

HILLSBORO, N.D. (AP) — A 20-foot-long drone that was brought to North Dakota to test precision agriculture methods is now part of a trial run to see if can help crews restore power to areas hit by natural disasters.

The Israeli-manufactured Elbit Systems Hermes 450 aircraft can cover 40,000 acres in an hour and fly up to 17 hours before refueling. Officials involved in the Xcel Energy test program say the larger drone’s ability to cover more ground, collect more data and fly at night is expected to help the company move crews, materials and equipment quickly and safely.

“When you have a storm, when you have fires, getting crews on the ground to identify damage is flat-out dangerous,” Raanan Horowitz, president and CEO of Elbit Systems of America, said Monday when the drone was shown off to public officials at an airport in Hillsboro, about 35 miles north of Fargo.

One of the tests involves a mock disaster using power poles placed in ditches in and around the nearby city of Mayville. Preliminary reports show that the drone is effective in quickly locating the downed poles both day and night, Xcel Energy Vice President Laura McCarten said.

“Apparently those wood poles stay warmer than the surroundings, so the infrared technology is able to spot them at night,” she said.

Xcel Energy is headquartered in Minneapolis and serves customers in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Colorado, Michigan, Texas and New Mexico.

There are still key issues to be ironed out before the drones can be used on a widespread commercial basis, including Federal Aviation Administration approval to operate beyond line of sight, or without the use of a chase plane keeping tabs on the planes. North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said he hopes North Dakota will be flying drones without chase planes by the end of the year.

“You’re covering such big distances. You’re losing the utility of the unmanned aircraft if you have to have a chase plane,” Hoeven said.

Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district borders North Dakota, said the FFA “didn’t do too bad of a job” on regulations for small drones, but he expects a much stiffer challenge on rules for larger aircraft.

“The FAA is very slow moving bureaucracy, to say the least,” Peterson said.

If larger unmanned aircraft are approved for beyond-line-of-sight operations, Horowitz said the quadcopters and drones that weigh less than 55 pounds would still be used in a complementary role.

“The bottom line is, when you look at the size and the areas that you are trying to cover, when you look at the resolution, when you look at using sensors that can yield data that is actually usable, this is the way to go,” Horowitz said of the Hermes drone.

Elbit Systems and Xcel Energy have combined to contribute about $500,000 into flying the Hermes drone. McCarten said the agriculture test program that began in May provided a “ready-made platform” for the Xcel study.

North Dakota State University researcher John Nowatzki said the agriculture test has yielded impressive results on the drone’s ability to capture images. Nowatzki has displayed pictures of a shelter belt taken from 4,000, 6,000 and 8,000 feet, with no discernable difference to the human eye.

“The key message here, maybe, is that we get high resolutions at all levels,” he said.

Sarah Lovas, an area farmer and crop consultant, said some of her cohorts still want to find out how they can manage the data in an affordable way, but most have embraced the technology.

“There’s just no such thing as a dumb farmer anymore,” she said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota reports first Zika virus infection (Rapid City Journal)

Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 22, 2016

South Dakota has reported its first Zika virus infection, according to state health officials.

The infected person is a woman who traveled to a country in the Caribbean where Zika virus is transmitted. She later developed symptoms, the Department of Health said today in a press release. The infection was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“This is a good reminder for anyone who travels to Zika-affected areas that it’s important to protect themselves from mosquito bites,” Dr. Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department, said in the release.

Kightlinger said state officials are not disclosing where the woman infected is from in South Dakota, but did note that she is in her 30s and is not pregnant.

Zika is a tropical mosquito-borne infection. The virus is not known to be carried by the mosquitoes found in South Dakota.

Officials say there are no vaccines or treatment for the virus. To avoid infection, travelers to Zika-affected areas, particularly pregnant women, should follow strict mosquito control precautions — wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, use an EPA-registered insect repellent and ensure that windows and doors have intact screens.

According to the Department of Health, the infection is mild for most healthy adults. About one in five people who are infected will become ill.

The release says symptoms typically occur two to seven days after a bite and include fever, muscle or eye pain and a rash. Pregnant women who are infected run the added risk of having babies with the birth defect microcephaly. Microcephaly means the babies have heads smaller than expected and often have smaller brains that might not have developed properly, the department said.

UTAH

Crews battling new wildfires in northern, central Utah (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune

First Published 1 hour ago • Updated 1 hour ago

Two new wildfires had ground crews scrambling in Sevier and Cache counties on Tuesday, as fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft swarmed the flames from above.

The Sand Ledges Fire, first spotted on Saturday just west of Richfield along Highway 24, had blackened 3,022 acres and was 27 percent contained as of Tuesday, said Fire Information Officer Shayne Ward.

Believed human-caused, the blaze was consuming dry grass and sage brush, including valued sage grouse habitat, but no structures were threatened and no evacuations had been ordered.

In all, 70 firefighters were working to hem in the Sand Ledges Fire. It was a slow, often frustrating task with gusty winds periodically fanning the flames through the tinder-dry vegetation, Ward said.

Still, crews hoped to have the blaze 100 percent contained sometime Saturday.

What sparked the Peterson Hollow Fire Sunday afternoon was still under investigation, but it had scorched 150 acres on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest's Logan Ranger District as of Tuesday. Fire Information Officer MaryEllen Fitzgerald said it was 5 percent contained, with no estimated time for when crews will completely contain it.

The fire is 23 miles northeast of Logan and just north of the Beaver Mountain Ski Area.
"[The resort] is currently not imminently endangered, but is the most important focus at this time. Structure protection is in place and being ramped up as a precaution," Fitzgerald stated.
The Peterson Hollow Fire is one of five active blazes on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest; the other four are being allowed to burn as beneficial to clearing away accumulated undergrowth and dead timber.
About 160 firefighters were battling the blaze, aided by a fleet of air tankers and helicopters. Hot, dry and occasionally windy weather continue to challenge efforts to hem in the flames.

Utah forecast: Midweek weather brings high fire danger north, storms in the south (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
If Goldilocks grew up to be a meteorologist, she might say of the midweek forecast for the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys, "Ahhh, just right."

If the fabled cabin burglar walked into the forests of the northern Wasatch Front, however, she might toss her porridge and run: from the mountains above Logan stretching south through Salt Lake City and Provo to Nephi, the National Weather Service declared a Red Flag Warning for wildfire danger from noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday.

Potentially too hot, indeed, thanks to low humidity, rain-starved rangelands and forests, and gusty winds.

Southern Utah? Goldilocks might prefer the company of three offended bears, after all. The region expects a cycle of thunderstorms the next several days — and humid, hot weather. High temperatures were forecast to be in the low- to mid-90s Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

No, it will be the balmy weather due in the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys that is best for that post-porridge nap. Sunny to partly cloudy skies will reign through the midweek, with highs ranging from the mid- to upper-80s Tuesday through Thursday, and overnight temperatures in the upper-50s to low-60s making for sweet dreams.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Region VIII Clips
Tuesday, August 23, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state is proceeding with a proposal to buy out landslide properties in Colorado Springs as quickly as possible, Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Marilyn Gally told the Colorado Springs city council Monday. The city has proposed a resolution asking FEMA to "move as quickly as possible."… The Beaver Creek Fire that started in June is believed to have been human-caused… A July hailstorm in Colorado Springs is the sixth-most costly disaster in state history, according to the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association.
- **Montana:** Several stories report about fires in the state. One near Kalispell led to evacuations, one in Yellowstone has made national news, and the Copper King Fire remains dangerous.
- **North Dakota:** Stories appear to reflect more tension at the site of the pipeline protest: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz withdrew trailers and water tanks that had been supplied by the state after reports of criminal activity, including lasers being directed at pilots observing the protest; Governor Dalyrmple said numerous criminal acts had occurred and asked the Army Corps of Engineers to step in (as the protest is on its land, protesting its permit); and tribal officials acknowledged the campers had split into two factions, one pacifist and one that feels "something should be done."… Also: Three Affiliated Tribes approved a letter of support for the protest. About 60 tribes are believed to be represented at the campsite. A federal judge is to rule on a request for an injunction Wednesday. The Morton County sheriff estimates overtime costs for law enforcement may be $100,000 per week. Protesters plan a march at 2 p.m. today and to attend a Morton County Commissioners meeting at 5:30; two actresses will lead a protest outside the federal district court in Washington, D.C., today as well. Former *Grand Forks Herald* editor Mike Jacobs weighs in with an opinion piece on the protest … Xcel Energy is testing large drones that could be used to help identify power problems after a storm…
- **South Dakota:** The state has its first Zika case, a woman who had travelled to the Caribbean. (She is not pregnant.)
- **Utah:** Two new wildfires have broken out. Red flag warnings are out for the northern part of the state, and storms are expected in the south.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The Louisiana flooding, wildfires and the Zika virus continue to dominate national disaster news. No clips are included today.

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STORIES

COLORADO

On Unsolid Ground: State hustling to help Colorado Springs landslide victims (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Billie Stanton Anleu
August 22, 2016• Updated: August 22, 2016 at 6:23 pm

Colorado government is moving as quickly as it can to help Colorado Springs landslide victims, state Emergency Management Director Marilyn Galley assured the City Council during its work session Monday.

But Galley said her agency is completing buyouts of Boulder County homes from the 2013 floods, an indication of the two to three years needed to close out relief efforts after disasters.

"It is a tedious process," Galley said.

The state has submitted Colorado Springs' application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, she said.

Mayor John Suthers and Councilman Keith King are sponsoring a resolution urging FEMA to "proceed as quickly as possible" in moving forward on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application. The resolution promises the council, mayor and city staff members' "full and timely attention" in cooperating with FEMA and the state Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

The costs from the 2015 landslides are high, noted city Grants Manager Jen Vance.

When 27 homes were bought out in 2000 after landslides in Holland Park and on Regency Drive, the total project cost was $6.5 million.

But the 26 homes to be bought out because of last year's landslides have a projected cost of $16.2 million, because the cost of housing has increased, several of the houses are in Broadmoor neighborhoods and $1.9 million alone is attributed to a landslide lot owned by Judy Myklak in the Broadmoor Resort Community.

Meanwhile, Councilmen Don Knight and Tom Strand plan another workshop Monday with developers, builders, geologists and geotechnical engineers, among others, to resolve lingering questions on their proposed rewrite of the city's geological hazards ordinance.

Knight had noted holes in that safety net and wants more due diligence before homes are erected in landslide zones.

Planning and Development Director Peter Wysocki said questions to be resolved are:

- Who proposes and signs off on the geological hazard study?

- Is 14 days enough time for the Colorado Geological Survey to respond on how its recommendations have been implemented in development plans?

- Who verifies that those recommendations are addressed?

The original 1996 geohazards ordinance called for either a geologist or geotechnical engineer to write the studies, Knight noted, but both specialists are needed.

"The biggest issue," he said, "is who certifies that the house was built as designed. There's no guarantee your house isn't going to fall down into a landslide. All we're trying to do is make sure the house is built as designed."

Officials say Beaver Creek fire was caused by humans as crews continue to battle blaze (Denver Post)

The Denver Post

By Jesse Paul | jpaul@denverpost.com
August 23, 2016 at 9:03 am

WALDEN — Officials believe the Beaver Creek fire burning in northwest Colorado since June was caused by humans.

In an incident update Monday, commanders made the announcement, which they have been suggesting since the fire started on June 19. The U.S. Forest Service's law enforcement division is investigating.

The fire, which has scorched more than 37,000 acres in Colorado and Wyoming, is listed as 53 percent contained. Nearly 250 firefighters were assigned to the firefight about 25 miles north of Walden as of Tuesday morning.

"Cooler weather later in the week is predicted to be even more favorable to suppression and containment efforts," officials said in a Tuesday news release.

Total containment is expected Oct. 21. The fire has destroyed one cabin and a handful of outbuildings.

July hail storm in Colorado Springs sixth-most damaging in state history (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman

August 22, 2016 Updated: Today at 6:12 am The July 28 hailstorm that smashed Colorado Springs was the sixth-most damaging event in Colorado history, triggering $352.8 million in claims for damage to homes and vehicles, an insurance industry trade group said Monday.

Described as an "absolute hail bomb" by Brian Bledsoe, chief meteorologist with Gazette news partner KKTV, the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association said the storm featuring up to tennis ball-sized hail resulted in 84,500 auto and homeowner insurance claims filed so far. That includes 51,300 auto insurance claims adding up to more than $164.6 million and 33,200 property insurance claims at more than $188.2 million.

"The difference between this storm and many of the other large storms that have hit Colorado is you typically see one storm travel across the state or along the Front Range causing damage over a wide area," said Carole Walker, the association's executive director. "This storm was concentrated in the Colorado Springs area and the size of the hail resulted in a very high percentage of claims that were total losses."

Renee Larson, a semi-retired homeowner near the Colorado Springs Airport, said the storm did about $60,000 damage to her family's three vehicles as well as the roof, six windows, skylights,

chimney, siding, fence and shed on or near their home. The vehicles were total losses and she hopes repairs to her home will soon be approved by her mortgage company.

"Hopefully, they will get it done before the snow flies," Larson said. "You want to scream and throw your hands up, but it is Mother Nature, just like the floods in Louisiana. We are fortunate it is going as smoothly as it is. At least we are in the process of our claim. Some people I know might have to wait months to see an adjuster."

The estimated damage amount is preliminary and doesn't include any damage to commercial property such as vehicles of dealer lots or office buildings and hotels, or public property, including at least $500,000 in damage at the Colorado Springs Airport and about 40 Colorado Springs police cars as well as damages at Peterson Air Force Base. The total cost of the storm likely will increase as repairs are completed to roofs, siding and windows damaged by the storm that could take months to complete, Walker said.

"This is yet another reminder from Mother Nature of why Colorado is now ranked second in the nation for hail insurance claims," Walker said. "The size and amount of hail that battered Colorado Springs is, unfortunately, part of a pattern of catastrophic events the state has been experiencing during the past several years, so we need to be financially prepared for the unexpected."

The monetary damage of the storm ranks behind three hail storms, the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest fires, the association reported. The storms ahead of it are:

- A July 20, 2009, Denver area hail storm that caused $767.6 million in damages;

- A July 11, 1990, hail storm that caused $625 million in damages statewide;

- The June 2012 Waldo Canyon fire, which resulted in $453.7 million in claims;

- The June 2013 Black Forest fire, which resulted in $420.5 million in claims;

- A series of storms from June 6-15, 2009, in the Denver area with tornado and hail damage totaling $353.3 million.

When adjusted for inflation, the storm ranks as the eighth-worst in the state's history.

Colorado ranked behind Texas in hail claims from 2013-15 with 182,591 claims, according to a National Insurance Crime Bureau report in May. Nationwide, there were 5,412 major hail storms last year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Severe Storms database.

Claims related to wind and hail damage accounted for nearly 40 percent of all insured losses during the past five years, averaging about $15 billion annually, the association said. The July 28 storm was the first catastrophic loss of the year in Colorado, which the association defines as insured damage of $25 million or more (flood damage is not included because it isn't covered by most homeowner's insurance policies).

Many of the state's top insurers, including USAA and State Farm, opened mobile locations along Powers Boulevard and elsewhere in eastern Colorado Springs to handle the large number of vehicle claims. Some body shops reported backlogs of work through December and the wait for getting roof or siding work could be even longer.

MONTANA

Evacuations ordered after Montana fire doubles in size (Associated Press)

KALISPELL — Authorities say homes in a rural area east of Thompson Falls have been evacuated after a wildfire in northwestern Montana doubled in size in one day.

Fire officials say extreme fire behavior is also expected for the Copper King Fire on Monday, with wind gusts of up to 40 mph forecast to blow across the dry, hot terrain.

The Sanders County Sheriff's Office issued evacuation orders early Monday along Little Thompson River Road. Some 20 homes and structures are threatened, and other residents have been put on notice that the evacuation area may spread.

A shelter has been set up at Thompson Falls High School.

Some 317 firefighters are responding to the blaze, which grew 4 ½ square miles Sunday to nearly 11 square miles as of Monday morning.

Wildfire smoke streaming across Montana (KXLH – Great Falls)

By: Julianne Dellorso and David Sherman - MTN News

GREAT FALLS - Many people have noticed a lot of smoke in areas of western, central, and northern Montana.
We have received reports of heavy smoke from residents in and around Helena, Shelby, Heart Butte, and even the Sluice Boxes area of the Little Belt Mountains.

Toole County Sheriff Donna Whitt says from what she's heard, it is smoke from the fires in Western Montana and Idaho.

She says there are no fires or incidents involving smoke in Toole County reported to her office.

The East Glacier Volunteer Fire Department posted the following message on Facebook on Monday morning: "Very windy, smokey day in East Glacier Park. Conditions are ripe for wildfire - a red flag day. Be careful with cigarettes and avoid any outdoor burning or anything that might spark a fire, like driving your car in high, dry grass or using a chainsaw."

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality reports that wildfire smoke in the area is likely due to several large fires to the west:

- The Pioneer Fire near Boise, Idaho, is 87,818 acres and 50% contained with active fire behavior.
- The Copper King Fire in northwest Montana is 3,900 acres and 30% contained with active fire behavior. Satellite imagery indicates a plume coming off the fire this afternoon and heading to the northeast.
- The Buck Creek Fire in central Washington is 1,083 acres and 0% contained with active fire behavior and contributing to the light smoke over Montana.

West Yellowstone residents voice concerns over Tatanka Complex (KTVM – NBC Bozeman)

By: Judith Retana

Posted: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

Updated: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

BOZEMAN, Mont. - The half dozen fires burning in Yellowstone National Park are now called the Tatanka Complex.

Fire officials in West Yellowstone held a community meeting Monday night where residents voiced their concerns about the fire. As black smoke continues to rise from the fires, many residents are worried.

"Oh, I'm saying my prayers like crazy," said Duck Creek resident Jim Criner. He was one of more than 200 residents at a community meeting to learn more about the fire.

Officials presented maps showing people where the fire perimeter was and the direction it's heading.

Strong winds and dry weather have a Montana senator and firefighters on alert.

"We want to make sure we have all the resources to ensure the community stays safe, the road stays open and we can protect these very important assets here around West Yellowstone," said Sen. Steve Daines (R-Montana).

Officials handed out fact sheets and maps to help residents understand more about the fires. They even handed out fire action plans to help them plan for an emergency.

Sasha Jevtich is a seasonal resident who works closely with the fire community. He and others looked at maps of the fire after the meeting.

"We took a ride into the park just to check things out for ourselves. You know, as you look at the maps, it is kind of scary. It does looks like it's rather close to town," he said. As scary as it can look, he said having the fire eat away at what is fueling it now, is good for the future.

Even so, the fire still makes residents like Criner nervous. He was around for the 1988 fires and saw how close those got to his neighborhood.

"The area between where the fire is and where we are in Duck Creek, is nothing but high grass and willows. The fire would move across the area really fast if it reached us," he said.

Although many in West Yellowstone are used to Montana's fire season, seeing dark plumes just a few miles away is always a concern.

Residents who wish to receive emergency notifications about the fire or any other event in the area, can sign up at ready.gallatin.com.

NORTH DAKOTA

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

"We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably," she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

"He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena," he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

"My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not," he said. "This is our land, our people."

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, "I believe there's strength in prayer," and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Our water is sacred," she said. "I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too."

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes' chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock's opposition.

"We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives," Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe's reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe's water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It's estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it's the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead ‘solidarity’ rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county’s emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court

in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

MIKE JACOBS: Pipeline protest shows new dimension in North Dakota politics (Grand Forks Herald)

By Mike Jacobs Today at 6:00 a.m.

North Dakota still responds to an Indian scare. That's one thing we can say about last week's news.

On Friday, Gov. Jack Dalrymple declared a civil emergency in response to a protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The pipeline would cross the Missouri River less than a mile from the boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux nation.

Protests last week brought more than 1,000 people. Arrests were made.

Emergency declarations aren't all that uncommon in North Dakota, but almost all of them address natural disasters. North Dakota knows natural disaster. Hardly a year goes by without natural disaster. This place is flood prone, snow blasted and wind battered.

Civil disturbance is another thing.

The last civil emergency that comes to mind occurred in 1970, when Gov. William Guy sent the National Guard to an anti-war protest at the ABM missile site near Nekoma, N.D. A year before that, Guy called out the Guard when a bunch of college students descended on Zap, N.D., with the express purpose of getting drunk and having a good time. Some damage was done.

Dalrymple didn't send the Guard to the mouth of the Cannonball River. His emergency declaration is just in case local law enforcement needs help, he said.

Besides pointing out that this step is extremely rare, we can say some other things about it.

One is that Native opposition to pipeline projects is becoming a pattern. The Enbridge Company's Sandpiper line is stalled due to opposition from Minnesota's White Earth Band of

Ojibway. Their spokeswoman is Winona LaDuke, who was Ralph Nader's running mate in 1996 and 2000 when he was the Green Party candidate for president.

The partnership between Native people and environmentalists is part of the pattern. We saw this in opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline, and it's evident at the mouth of the Cannonball. The protest there has drawn movie stars as well as environmental activists.

That pretty much makes it the current front line in the war on fossil fuels.

It's easy to suggest (as some bloggers have done) that the tribe is being used.

There are two problems with this. For one thing, it's condescending. For another, it overlooks the growing activism of North Dakota's Native people.

This activism is especially evident at Standing Rock.

Opposition from the elected Tribal Council at Standing Rock doomed UND's nickname and logo. The NCAA said using "Fighting Sioux" would be OK if both of the state's Sioux communities said so. Standing Rock refused.

Another thing to say is that David Archambault, Standing Rock's tribal chair, has warrior blood in his veins. He's been on the front lines at the protest. On the pipeline issue, he's led the tribe to federal court and to the United Nations.

This is no surprise. At the opening of the 2015 legislative session, Archambault delivered the "State of the Relationship" message, a cry from the heart in which he spoke truth to power about Native issues and state jurisdiction.

Then there's the political context.

North Dakota's November ballot has three Native candidates: Chase Iron Eyes for Congress, Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun for Public Service Commission and Ruth Buffalo for insurance commissioner. All are Democrats, and none has much of a chance.

But each of them stepped up to fill slots on a major party ticket.

This has two important implications. First, as major party candidates, they will have media access. Second, they've established that the Democratic Party in the state can't just count on Native voters; it must also promote Native candidates to the white population.

It's also the essence of political organizing, as Mark Trahant pointed out in his blog, at trahantreports.com. Trahant is the nation's best known native journalist, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and a member of the faculty at UND's Program in Communication.

None of this goes to the question of pipeline safety, much less to the future of fossil fuel development.

On these issues, everybody ought to be heard.

So there is one more thing, at least, to say about last week's developments.

Brian Kalk, one of three members of the Public Service Commission that approved a permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline, dismissed the protest. He told the Bismarck Tribune, "These groups didn't come to our hearings."

Well...

They could have been asked.

That's what "public service" means.

Disclaimers: Enbridge has right-of way on property that my partner Suezette and I own in Mountrail County, N.D. I was at Nekoma with the protesters. I was not at the so-called "Zip to Zap."

North Dakota Tests Drones To Be Used For Disaster Response (AP)

HILLSBORO, N.D. (AP) — A 20-foot-long drone that was brought to North Dakota to test precision agriculture methods is now part of a trial run to see if can help crews restore power to areas hit by natural disasters.

The Israeli-manufactured Elbit Systems Hermes 450 aircraft can cover 40,000 acres in an hour and fly up to 17 hours before refueling. Officials involved in the Xcel Energy test program say the larger drone's ability to cover more ground, collect more data and fly at night is expected to help the company move crews, materials and equipment quickly and safely.

"When you have a storm, when you have fires, getting crews on the ground to identify damage is flat-out dangerous," Raanan Horowitz, president and CEO of Elbit Systems of America, said Monday when the drone was shown off to public officials at an airport in Hillsboro, about 35 miles north of Fargo.

One of the tests involves a mock disaster using power poles placed in ditches in and around the nearby city of Mayville. Preliminary reports show that the drone is effective in quickly locating the downed poles both day and night, Xcel Energy Vice President Laura McCarten said.

"Apparently those wood poles stay warmer than the surroundings, so the infrared technology is able to spot them at night," she said.

Xcel Energy is headquartered in Minneapolis and serves customers in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Colorado, Michigan, Texas and New Mexico.

There are still key issues to be ironed out before the drones can be used on a widespread commercial basis, including Federal Aviation Administration approval to operate beyond line of sight, or without the use of a chase plane keeping tabs on the planes. North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said he hopes North Dakota will be flying drones without chase planes by the end of the year.

"You're covering such big distances. You're losing the utility of the unmanned aircraft if you have to have a chase plane," Hoeven said.

Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district borders North Dakota, said the FFA "didn't do too bad of a job" on regulations for small drones, but he expects a much stiffer challenge on rules for larger aircraft.

"The FAA is very slow moving bureaucracy, to say the least," Peterson said.

If larger unmanned aircraft are approved for beyond-line-of-sight operations, Horowitz said the quadcopters and drones that weigh less than 55 pounds would still be used in a complementary role.

"The bottom line is, when you look at the size and the areas that you are trying to cover, when you look at the resolution, when you look at using sensors that can yield data that is actually usable, this is the way to go," Horowitz said of the Hermes drone.

Elbit Systems and Xcel Energy have combined to contribute about $500,000 into flying the Hermes drone. McCarten said the agriculture test program that began in May provided a "ready-made platform" for the Xcel study.

North Dakota State University researcher John Nowatzki said the agriculture test has yielded impressive results on the drone's ability to capture images. Nowatzki has displayed pictures of a shelter belt taken from 4,000, 6,000 and 8,000 feet, with no discernable difference to the human eye.

"The key message here, maybe, is that we get high resolutions at all levels," he said.

Sarah Lovas, an area farmer and crop consultant, said some of her cohorts still want to find out how they can manage the data in an affordable way, but most have embraced the technology.

"There's just no such thing as a dumb farmer anymore," she said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota reports first Zika virus infection (Rapid City Journal)

Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 22, 2016

South Dakota has reported its first Zika virus infection, according to state health officials.

The infected person is a woman who traveled to a country in the Caribbean where Zika virus is transmitted. She later developed symptoms, the Department of Health said today in a press release. The infection was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"This is a good reminder for anyone who travels to Zika-affected areas that it's important to protect themselves from mosquito bites," Dr. Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department, said in the release.

Kightlinger said state officials are not disclosing where the woman infected is from in South Dakota, but did note that she is in her 30s and is not pregnant.

Zika is a tropical mosquito-borne infection. The virus is not known to be carried by the mosquitoes found in South Dakota.

Officials say there are no vaccines or treatment for the virus. To avoid infection, travelers to Zika-affected areas, particularly pregnant women, should follow strict mosquito control precautions — wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, use an EPA-registered insect repellent and ensure that windows and doors have intact screens.

According to the Department of Health, the infection is mild for most healthy adults. About one in five people who are infected will become ill.

The release says symptoms typically occur two to seven days after a bite and include fever, muscle or eye pain and a rash. Pregnant women who are infected run the added risk of having babies with the birth defect microcephaly. Microcephaly means the babies have heads smaller than expected and often have smaller brains that might not have developed properly, the department said.

UTAH

Crews battling new wildfires in northern, central Utah (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published 1 hour ago • Updated 1 hour ago

Two new wildfires had ground crews scrambling in Sevier and Cache counties on Tuesday, as fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft swarmed the flames from above.

The Sand Ledges Fire, first spotted on Saturday just west of Richfield along Highway 24, had blackened 3,022 acres and was 27 percent contained as of Tuesday, said Fire Information Officer Shayne Ward.

Believed human-caused, the blaze was consuming dry grass and sage brush, including valued sage grouse habitat, but no structures were threatened and no evacuations had been ordered.

In all, 70 firefighters were working to hem in the Sand Ledges Fire. It was a slow, often frustrating task with gusty winds periodically fanning the flames through the tinder-dry vegetation, Ward said.

Still, crews hoped to have the blaze 100 percent contained sometime Saturday.

What sparked the Peterson Hollow Fire Sunday afternoon was still under investigation, but it had scorched 150 acres on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest's Logan Ranger District as of

Tuesday. Fire Information Officer MaryEllen Fitzgerald said it was 5 percent contained, with no estimated time for when crews will completely contain it.

The fire is 23 miles northeast of Logan and just north of the Beaver Mountain Ski Area.

"[The resort] is currently not imminently endangered, but is the most important focus at this time. Structure protection is in place and being ramped up as a precaution," Fitzgerald stated.

The Peterson Hollow Fire is one of five active blazes on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest; the other four are being allowed to burn as beneficial to clearing away accumulated undergrowth and dead timber.

About 160 firefighters were battling the blaze, aided by a fleet of air tankers and helicopters. Hot, dry and occasionally windy weather continue to challenge efforts to hem in the flames.

Utah forecast: Midweek weather brings high fire danger north, storms in the south (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune

If Goldilocks grew up to be a meteorologist, she might say of the midweek forecast for the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys, "Ahhh, just right."

If the fabled cabin burglar walked into the forests of the northern Wasatch Front, however, she might toss her porridge and run: from the mountains above Logan stretching south through Salt Lake City and Provo to Nephi, the National Weather Service declared a Red Flag Warning for wildfire danger from noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday.

Potentially too hot, indeed, thanks to low humidity, rain-starved rangelands and forests, and gusty winds.

Southern Utah? Goldilocks might prefer the company of three offended bears, after all. The region expects a cycle of thunderstorms the next several days — and humid, hot weather. High temperatures were forecast to be in the low- to mid-90s Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

No, it will be the balmy weather due in the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys that is best for that post-porridge nap. Sunny to partly cloudy skies will reign through the midweek, with highs ranging from the mid- to upper-80s Tuesday through Thursday, and overnight temperatures in the upper-50s to low-60s making for sweet dreams.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 15 Apr 2016 16:09:41 +0000
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @mail.mil'; (b)(6) @state.sd.us'; (b)(6) (b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov'; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @ (b) (b)(.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil'; (b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J; (b)(6) @hhs.gov'; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov'; (b)(6) (b)(@sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno (b)(6) @mail.mil'; (b)(6) @mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse; (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us';Wetherington, Jeffrey
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for 4-15-16
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Region VIII Clips

Friday, April 15, 2016

ANALYSIS

- Colorado: Colorado Springs OEM hosted a workshop on flash flooding.

- Montana: The Montana-Idaho communications director for Red Cross had a column about first aid for pets in emergencies.

- North Dakota: No FEMA-related stories

- South Dakota: Almost half the state is abnormally dry, according to the U.S. Drought Report. Two areas show moderate drought, the first areas so identified in SD since June… The leak in the Keystone Pipeline near Menno was apparently caused by a bad weld. The leak was about two drops per minute; almost 17,000 gallons of oil leaked. The company is working on where to dispose of the affected soil…. This weekend's massive storm will drop heavy rain from South Dakota south to Texas, including eastern Colorado. The worst day for violent thunderstorms and possible tornadoes should be today. The storm should quiet current fire danger.

- Utah: T

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 14 Oct 2016 12:04:31 -0400
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a.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';Nelson, Jason;Blaylock,(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Friday
Attachments: R8 Clips 10-14-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Friday, October 14, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* A researcher from Colorado State University tested cheaper air sampling devices at a controlled burn in Colorado this summer.
- *Montana:* No FEMA-related stories
- *North Dakota:* A flood protection plan for Fox Island in Bismarck has taken a step forward… Senator Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic Senators have asked President Obama to halt construction of the Dakota Access pipeline being protested in North Dakota…. A lengthy piece covers how much time the Cass County sheriff is spending at the protest. … A councilwoman from Madison, Wisconsin, who was arrested Monday describes the protest very differently than the sheriff's office.
- *South Dakota:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Utah:* A Washington, D.C., publication cites criticism by Utah and Wyoming congressional members of the Department of Justice's decision not to prosecute an employee involved in last year's Gold King Mine disaster.
- *Wyoming:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Other FEMA-related stories:* Storms with hurricane-level winds are expected to hit Washington and Oregon over the next few days.

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GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Don’t go chasing wildfires – unless you’re Scott Kelleher

13Oct, 2016 by Anne Ju Manning – Source/Colorado State University

Most people drive *away* from fires burning in the mountains. Scott Kelleher drives straight at them – well, near them, anyway. And it’s not for thrill seeking.

For two weeks in September, Kelleher drove the perimeter of a 6,000-acre prescribed burn in southern Colorado to set up 13 outdoor air samplers on steel stakes.

Kelleher’s system is suited for monitoring smoke emissions for both controlled burns and wildfires. Field-testing the sensors during an actual, unplanned wildfire would prove challenging. So, Kelleher received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to tag along on a planned, prescribed burn, which are common in the Rocky Mountains and other densely forested areas.

“The long-term goals of this project are very motivating,” Kelleher said. “It’s applying science and technology in an affordable new way to make the lives of those responsible for monitoring smoke much easier, with the main thought of protecting public health in mind.”

Field testing

Kelleher’s first field-testing campaign took place in a swath of land between Pagosa Springs and Bayfield, Colorado, near Pargin Mountain. Working closely with his contacts at the forest service, Kelleher set up each of his monitoring checkpoints in strategic proximity to the forest service’s monitoring zones.

The sensors Kelleher is testing are based off the principle of an Ultrasonic Personal Aerosol Sampler (UPAS) designed in the lab of his advisor, John Volckens, who is a professor in mechanical engineering and member of the CSU Partnership for Air Quality, Climate, and Health. The UPAS features an ultrasonic pump that draws in air, a sampling filter, rechargeable batteries, and an air flow rate sensor.

Kelleher’s master’s project involves adapting the UPAS for conditions suitable for prolonged outdoor monitoring. His new version, for which he is quick to point out he received many hours of help from other Volckens lab members, includes a hardened enclosure for weatherproofing; a solar cell for charging an extended-life battery; and a real-time, optical particle sensor that tracks the flow of particles 2.5 microns in diameter and smaller. “PM 2.5” is a standard measure for describing air pollution particles small enough to penetrate human lungs and cause health problems. The optical sampler contained in the device gives live updates.

The sensor also has a gravimetric analysis device that collects particles onto a filter. The filter is later weighed and analyzed for particulate matter concentrations. The entire device can be controlled remotely by smart phone.

The total cost of one of Kelleher's sensors is estimated at about $500, compared with particulate matter monitors used today that cost $10,000 to $20,000. The standard sensors usually require line power, and are large – about the size of a microwave oven.

Kelleher's unusual road trip involved seven rounds of 24-hour sampling. This involved traveling a route of 90 miles, changing out filters on each device and extracting information. In all, he was out in the fire for 14 days.

Automation in rural environments
A graduate of Montana Tech who grew up on a beef cattle, wheat and barley farm near the Canadian border, Kelleher is motivated by his work to bring the power of automation and monitoring to rural environments. Recognizing his penchant for engineering cost-effective solutions, and armed with his CSU master's degree in a couple of years, Kelleher hopes he can make a difference by bringing simple automation technologies to farmers or small businesses. The remainder of Kelleher's thesis will involve organizing and analyzing the data he collected at Pargin Moutain as well as follow-up prescribed burn experiments as needed. He will present his recent findings at the Second International Smoke Symposium (ISS2) in Long Beach, California next month.

"It was very cool to observe such a large-scale event and learn about the processes and effort that go into it," he said. "Hopefully, one day, my technology will enable anyone worried about air pollution to conduct monitoring right in their backyard."

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Fox Island residents approve flood protection plan (Bismarck Tribune)

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 18 hrs ago

A $3.92 million Fox Island flood protection project has been approved 72-18 by property owners, who will pay part of its cost via a special assessment district, the Burleigh County Water Resource District Board announced Wednesday.

The project will involve raising a section of road and adding a levee to safeguard against a 20-foot flood. The Legislature has committed $2.8 million toward its completion, and the Burleigh

County Commission has approved funding of $920,000 in yearly installments. Fox Island property owners will pay the balance.

The project was driven by the 2011 Missouri River flooding.

The raising of the road would start at the pump at Tavis Road and move west along Farwest Drive and Gallatin Loop, according to Michael Gunsch of Houston Engineering, consulting engineer for the water resource district. The levee would extend west from Gallatin Loop to the Missouri River bank, then run north to the Whispering Bay accessory channel, he said.

Gunsch said about 80 percent of the 91 property owners who voted favored the project. One submitted a blank ballot.

With the residents' approval on record, the board is moving forward with the project and paying a design fee of $325,000 to Houston Engineering.

Completion is planned during the 2018 construction season, but authorization must first be granted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the North Dakota State Engineer's Office.

Earlier precautions were taken when the county partnered with Bismarck in creating the Tavis Road floodgate after the 2011 flood and Bismarck raised Mills Avenue, according to Larson.

A Dec. 14 hearing has tentatively been set to allow those within the special assessment district to protest.

Sixteen residents in the far western Gallatin Loop area signed a petition saying the construction of the levee would damage their yards, said Greg Larson, a member of the water resource district board.

"We 16 receive none of the flood benefit, but receive 100 percent of the street and yard destruction," he read from the statement.

The homeowners signing the petition also asked that a different street be raised near their properties.

Board members agreed they did not want to change the protection plan or do more study at increased cost to those being assessed.

Each property owner in the assessment district can expect to pay an average of $3,790 toward the construction project, Gunsch said. In addition, he said, some of them will pay $943 each toward the system's operation and maintenance.

Sen. Bernie Sanders asking President Obama to halt North Dakota pipeline for full review (KFOR TV, Oklahoma City, and AP)

Posted 7:17 am, October 14, 2016, by KFOR-TV & K. Querry and AP Wire

BISMARCK, N.D. – Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic senators are asking President Barack Obama to halt construction of the four-state Dakota Access pipeline until a full environmental review can be completed.

In a statement, the senators said Thursday the request is due to a federal appeals court denying the Standing Rock Sioux's motion for a temporary work stoppage in southern North Dakota within 20 miles of Lake Oahe. The feds stopped construction on land bordering and under the lake in order to review the permitting process.

An environmental review would likely delay the pipeline, which Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners hopes to complete by the end of the year.

White House spokesman Patrick Rodenbush declined to comment.

The other senators are Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Dianne Feinstein of California, Ben Cardin of Maryland and Ed Markey of Massachusetts.

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

However, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe says the pipeline would come within a half-mile of their reservation and could disturb or destroy sacred historical sites.

Also, tribal leaders are concerned about the consequences the pipeline would have on their water supply.

North Dakota sheriff out of town almost constantly as pipeline protest drags on (Fargo Forum News Service, WDAZ TV)

- By TU-UYEN TRAN Forum News Service
- 18 hrs ago

FARGO — In mid-August, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney headed for southeastern Morton County, the scene of protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and, except for a few breaks, he's been there ever since. Serving as the elected sheriff of what's by far the state's largest county while consumed by policing the ongoing tribal protests of the oil pipeline has been a daily act of priority-balancing, Laney said.

"I'm very blessed to have a command team that I believe is second to none," Laney said. "They can hold the fort with most things, but there are certainly things that need my attention."

Laney, who is halfway through a third term after first taking office in January 2007, said he feels it's important for him to do everything he can to help Morton County in its time of need because Cass County got help during the flood fights of 2009, 2010 and 2011. In the worst of those floods, in 2009, hundreds of law enforcement officers from around the state and country came to Cass County for more than 40 days, he said.

“The fact that we've had to go out of state to bring in assistance,” he said, “how do we in-state not help first?”

Hundreds of law enforcement officials from all over the state and other parts of the country have been helping police the protests at the request of Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, whose force is stretched thin. Laney has been the operations chief for the law enforcement presence to the protests.

Last week, a representative from the Western States Sheriffs’ Association and the National Sheriffs’ Association said members of both groups have pledged to help Morton County. Laney is a board member for the national group.

Cass County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling agreed with Laney’s sentiment that pitching in is worth the heavy strain on the sheriff’s time.

“When we’ve had floods, for example, we've relied on many many outside agencies to help us with all of our sandbagging and dike patrols and search and rescue and so on and so forth,” she said. “The counties don't live in a bubble. We have to help each other and we’re glad to be able to do that.”

Scherling said she knows Laney is in “constant communication” with his subordinates in Fargo. Laney said he’s been able to take care of business back in Cass County by phone, by email or with scanned documents.

Cass County Chief Deputy Col. Rick Majerus is in charge while Laney is out. The sheriff said he does come back to Cass County when he’s absolutely needed.

Marty Johnson, Scherling’s opponent in November’s County Commission election, didn’t return a phone message Wednesday.

The pipeline construction site targeted by protesters is near the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Protesters, many of whom are American Indians, say construction of the $3.8 billion oil pipeline would desecrate burial grounds and other sites sacred to Indians. They also say a rupture would threaten water quality in the Missouri River, which the pipeline must go under as it continues on its way to Illinois.

Laney estimated that there have been 7,000 to 8,000 protesters, though more recently the numbers have dropped to 2,500 to 3,000 who are in it for the long haul. The majority are peaceful but 300 to 400 are “extremely confrontational,” he said, accusing them of trying to disrupt construction and intimidating farm workers. As of Tuesday, Oct. 11, the protests had led to 123 arrests.

State officials and lawmakers have criticized the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers surprisingly withdrew its required approval of the pipeline’s Missouri River crossing for further review -- an announcement made Sept. 9, just minutes after a federal court ruling in support of the pipeline’s construction.

The number of law enforcement officials on the scene has fluctuated based on the need, though Laney said he couldn’t say how many because of security concerns. Several of his deputies have rotated in and out of Morton County over the last few months, he said, but it’s hard for him to stay away because he’s one of three top commanders on the scene.

Cass County taxpayers won’t bear the cost of deploying the deputies and Laney to the protest, and patrols in Cass County and jail security haven’t been affected, a department spokesman previously told The Forum. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs.

Laney said the days are long there, leaving only enough time to outside of work for him to grab a bite and sleep. Deputies who volunteer to rotate in all work seven days a week with no time off until they rotate out again, he said.

“I’m not going to lie, we’re all tired,” he said, but law enforcement officers expect that they may have to make sacrifices.

Asked how long he thinks he'll be needed in Morton County, Laney said that depends on the protesters.

The company building the pipeline, which was 87 percent complete in North Dakota as of the end of September, said Tuesday that it intends to resume construction promptly after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request to stop work on the pipeline in places where it believes the project will desecrate sacred land was denied Sunday.

Protesters have also said they don't plan to leave anytime soon.

"This currently is a situation that there's no way one agency alone could handle this," Laney said.

Madison City Council member arrested in North Dakota pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune, Wisconsin State Journal)

- Dean Mosiman, Wisconsin State Journal
- Oct 12, 2016

Madison Ald. Rebecca Kemble was arrested and jailed on Monday while acting as a legal observer of the continuing protests over a controversial oil pipeline in North Dakota that a Native American tribe says threatens tribal land.

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Kemble said Tuesday afternoon that she was wearing a hat that identified her as a legal observer and was videotaping a peaceful prayer ceremony when police arrived and began making arrests. She said she intends to fight the charges.

"I wasn't protesting. It wasn't a protest," she said. "I was legal-observing. I was targeted by law enforcement for my camera."

Kemble, 18th District, traveled with her husband over the weekend to Morton County to present the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe with a parchment copy of a recent City Council resolution expressing solidarity with those protesting the pipeline.

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

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Someone removed Griswold's name from an "independent" review of the disaster, according to documents obtained by TheDCNF in June.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

By Max Blau

CNN, October 13, 2016

Brace yourself, Pacific Northwest. What's left of a typhoon, which has made its way across the ocean, is expected to pummel parts of Oregon and Washington over the next several days.

The National Weather Service has said a pair of strong storms are set to hit the West Coast on Thursday and Saturday.

CNN meteorologist Dave Hennen said parts of Washington and Oregon could see gusts of up to 80 mph near coastal ranges Thursday. According to the weather service, rivers are expected to rise, with flooding remaining most likely in the Olympic Peninsula.

"Areas of ponding on roadways will slow Thursday commutes," the weather service said. "Small creeks and streams will rise and flood as well."

After a brief lull, the fierce winds could whip again through the Northwest at up to 100 mph. Hennen, who described this storm as a "monster," said it has the potential to match the pressure levels of a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. The weather service has cautioned residents to watch out for tree damage due to the high winds.

"Many of the wind-related deaths in western Washington occur when trees topple onto people in cars," it said.

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According to Hennen, a third storm may pass through the Pacific Northwest next week.

Region VIII Clips

Friday, October 14, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* A researcher from Colorado State University tested cheaper air sampling devices at a controlled burn in Colorado this summer.
- *Montana:* No FEMA-related stories
- *North Dakota:* A flood protection plan for Fox Island in Bismarck has taken a step forward… Senator Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic Senators have asked President Obama to halt construction of the Dakota Access pipeline being protested in North Dakota…. A lengthy piece covers how much time the Cass County sheriff is spending at the protest. … A councilwoman from Madison, Wisconsin, who was arrested Monday describes the protest very differently than the sheriff's office.
- *South Dakota:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Utah:* A Washington, D.C., publication cites criticism by Utah and Wyoming congressional members of the Department of Justice's decision not to prosecute an employee involved in last year's Gold King Mine disaster.
- *Wyoming:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Other FEMA-related stories:* Storms with hurricane-level winds are expected to hit Washington and Oregon over the next few days.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Don’t go chasing wildfires – unless you’re Scott Kelleher

13Oct, 2016 by Anne Ju Manning – Source/Colorado State University

Most people drive *away* from fires burning in the mountains. Scott Kelleher drives straight at them – well, near them, anyway. And it's not for thrill seeking.

For two weeks in September, Kelleher drove the perimeter of a 6,000-acre prescribed burn in southern Colorado to set up 13 outdoor air samplers on steel stakes.

Kelleher's system is suited for monitoring smoke emissions for both controlled burns and wildfires. Field-testing the sensors during an actual, unplanned wildfire would prove challenging. So, Kelleher received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to tag along on a planned, prescribed burn, which are common in the Rocky Mountains and other densely forested areas.

"The long-term goals of this project are very motivating," Kelleher said. "It's applying science and technology in an affordable new way to make the lives of those responsible for monitoring smoke much easier, with the main thought of protecting public health in mind."

Field testing

Kelleher's first field-testing campaign took place in a swath of land between Pagosa Springs and Bayfield, Colorado, near Pargin Mountain. Working closely with his contacts at the forest service, Kelleher set up each of his monitoring checkpoints in strategic proximity to the forest service's monitoring zones.

The sensors Kelleher is testing are based off the principle of an Ultrasonic Personal Aerosol Sampler (UPAS) designed in the lab of his advisor, John Volckens, who is a professor in mechanical engineering and member of the CSU Partnership for Air Quality, Climate, and Health. The UPAS features an ultrasonic pump that draws in air, a sampling filter, rechargeable batteries, and an air flow rate sensor.

Kelleher's master's project involves adapting the UPAS for conditions suitable for prolonged outdoor monitoring. His new version, for which he is quick to point out he received many hours of help from other Volckens lab members, includes a hardened enclosure for weatherproofing; a solar cell for charging an extended-life battery; and a real-time, optical particle sensor that tracks the flow of particles 2.5 microns in diameter and smaller. "PM 2.5" is a standard measure for describing air pollution particles small enough to penetrate human lungs and cause health problems. The optical sampler contained in the device gives live updates.

The sensor also has a gravimetric analysis device that collects particles onto a filter. The filter is later weighed and analyzed for particulate matter concentrations. The entire device can be controlled remotely by smart phone.

The total cost of one of Kelleher's sensors is estimated at about $500, compared with particulate matter monitors used today that cost $10,000 to $20,000. The standard sensors usually require line power, and are large – about the size of a microwave oven.

Kelleher's unusual road trip involved seven rounds of 24-hour sampling. This involved traveling a route of 90 miles, changing out filters on each device and extracting information. In all, he was out in the fire for 14 days.

Automation in rural environments
A graduate of Montana Tech who grew up on a beef cattle, wheat and barley farm near the Canadian border, Kelleher is motivated by his work to bring the power of automation and monitoring to rural environments. Recognizing his penchant for engineering cost-effective solutions, and armed with his CSU master's degree in a couple of years, Kelleher hopes he can make a difference by bringing simple automation technologies to farmers or small businesses. The remainder of Kelleher's thesis will involve organizing and analyzing the data he collected at Pargin Moutain as well as follow-up prescribed burn experiments as needed. He will present his recent findings at the Second International Smoke Symposium (ISS2) in Long Beach, California next month.

"It was very cool to observe such a large-scale event and learn about the processes and effort that go into it," he said. "Hopefully, one day, my technology will enable anyone worried about air pollution to conduct monitoring right in their backyard."

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Fox Island residents approve flood protection plan (Bismarck Tribune)

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 18 hrs ago

A $3.92 million Fox Island flood protection project has been approved 72-18 by property owners, who will pay part of its cost via a special assessment district, the Burleigh County Water Resource District Board announced Wednesday.

The project will involve raising a section of road and adding a levee to safeguard against a 20-foot flood. The Legislature has committed $2.8 million toward its completion, and the Burleigh County Commission has approved funding of $920,000 in yearly installments. Fox Island property owners will pay the balance.

The project was driven by the 2011 Missouri River flooding.

The raising of the road would start at the pump at Tavis Road and move west along Farwest Drive and Gallatin Loop, according to Michael Gunsch of Houston Engineering, consulting engineer for the water resource district. The levee would extend west from Gallatin Loop to the Missouri River bank, then run north to the Whispering Bay accessory channel, he said.

Gunsch said about 80 percent of the 91 property owners who voted favored the project. One submitted a blank ballot.

With the residents' approval on record, the board is moving forward with the project and paying a design fee of $325,000 to Houston Engineering.

Completion is planned during the 2018 construction season, but authorization must first be granted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the North Dakota State Engineer's Office.

Earlier precautions were taken when the county partnered with Bismarck in creating the Tavis Road floodgate after the 2011 flood and Bismarck raised Mills Avenue, according to Larson.

A Dec. 14 hearing has tentatively been set to allow those within the special assessment district to protest.

Sixteen residents in the far western Gallatin Loop area signed a petition saying the construction of the levee would damage their yards, said Greg Larson, a member of the water resource district board.

"We 16 receive none of the flood benefit, but receive 100 percent of the street and yard destruction," he read from the statement.

The homeowners signing the petition also asked that a different street be raised near their properties.

Board members agreed they did not want to change the protection plan or do more study at increased cost to those being assessed.

Each property owner in the assessment district can expect to pay an average of $3,790 toward the construction project, Gunsch said. In addition, he said, some of them will pay $943 each toward the system's operation and maintenance.

Sen. Bernie Sanders asking President Obama to halt North Dakota pipeline for full review (KFOR TV, Oklahoma City, and AP)

Posted 7:17 am, October 14, 2016, by KFOR-TV & K. Querry and AP Wire

BISMARCK, N.D. – Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic senators are asking President Barack Obama to halt construction of the four-state Dakota Access pipeline until a full environmental review can be completed.

In a statement, the senators said Thursday the request is due to a federal appeals court denying the Standing Rock Sioux’s motion for a temporary work stoppage in southern North Dakota

within 20 miles of Lake Oahe. The feds stopped construction on land bordering and under the lake in order to review the permitting process.

An environmental review would likely delay the pipeline, which Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners hopes to complete by the end of the year.

White House spokesman Patrick Rodenbush declined to comment.

The other senators are Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Dianne Feinstein of California, Ben Cardin of Maryland and Ed Markey of Massachusetts.

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

However, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe says the pipeline would come within a half-mile of their reservation and could disturb or destroy sacred historical sites.

Also, tribal leaders are concerned about the consequences the pipeline would have on their water supply.

North Dakota sheriff out of town almost constantly as pipeline protest drags on (Fargo Forum News Service, WDAZ TV)

- By TU-UYEN TRAN Forum News Service
- 18 hrs ago

FARGO — In mid-August, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney headed for southeastern Morton County, the scene of protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and, except for a few breaks, he’s been there ever since. Serving as the elected sheriff of what’s by far the state’s largest county while consumed by policing the ongoing tribal protests of the oil pipeline has been a daily act of priority-balancing, Laney said.

“I’m very blessed to have a command team that I believe is second to none,” Laney said. “They can hold the fort with most things, but there are certainly things that need my attention.”

Laney, who is halfway through a third term after first taking office in January 2007, said he feels it’s important for him to do everything he can to help Morton County in its time of need because Cass County got help during the flood fights of 2009, 2010 and 2011. In the worst of those floods, in 2009, hundreds of law enforcement officers from around the state and country came to Cass County for more than 40 days, he said.

“The fact that we've had to go out of state to bring in assistance,” he said, “how do we in-state not help first?”

Hundreds of law enforcement officials from all over the state and other parts of the country have been helping police the protests at the request of Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, whose force is stretched thin. Laney has been the operations chief for the law enforcement presence to the protests.

Last week, a representative from the Western States Sheriffs' Association and the National Sheriffs' Association said members of both groups have pledged to help Morton County. Laney is a board member for the national group.

Cass County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling agreed with Laney's sentiment that pitching in is worth the heavy strain on the sheriff's time.

"When we've had floods, for example, we've relied on many many outside agencies to help us with all of our sandbagging and dike patrols and search and rescue and so on and so forth," she said. "The counties don't live in a bubble. We have to help each other and we're glad to be able to do that."

Scherling said she knows Laney is in "constant communication" with his subordinates in Fargo. Laney said he's been able to take care of business back in Cass County by phone, by email or with scanned documents.

Cass County Chief Deputy Col. Rick Majerus is in charge while Laney is out. The sheriff said he does come back to Cass County when he's absolutely needed.

Marty Johnson, Scherling's opponent in November's County Commission election, didn't return a phone message Wednesday.

The pipeline construction site targeted by protesters is near the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Protesters, many of whom are American Indians, say construction of the $3.8 billion oil pipeline would desecrate burial grounds and other sites sacred to Indians. They also say a rupture would threaten water quality in the Missouri River, which the pipeline must go under as it continues on its way to Illinois.

Laney estimated that there have been 7,000 to 8,000 protesters, though more recently the numbers have dropped to 2,500 to 3,000 who are in it for the long haul. The majority are peaceful but 300 to 400 are "extremely confrontational," he said, accusing them of trying to disrupt construction and intimidating farm workers. As of Tuesday, Oct. 11, the protests had led to 123 arrests.

State officials and lawmakers have criticized the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers surprisingly withdrew its required approval of the pipeline's Missouri River crossing for further review -- an announcement made Sept. 9, just minutes after a federal court ruling in support of the pipeline's construction.

The number of law enforcement officials on the scene has fluctuated based on the need, though Laney said he couldn't say how many because of security concerns. Several of his deputies have rotated in and out of Morton County over the last few months, he said, but it's hard for him to stay away because he's one of three top commanders on the scene.

Cass County taxpayers won't bear the cost of deploying the deputies and Laney to the protest, and patrols in Cass County and jail security haven't been affected, a department spokesman previously told The Forum. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs.

Laney said the days are long there, leaving only enough time to outside of work for him to grab a bite and sleep. Deputies who volunteer to rotate in all work seven days a week with no time off until they rotate out again, he said.

"I'm not going to lie, we're all tired," he said, but law enforcement officers expect that they may have to make sacrifices.

Asked how long he thinks he'll be needed in Morton County, Laney said that depends on the protesters.

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request to stop work on the pipeline in places where it believes the project will desecrate sacred land was denied Sunday.

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From: Torres, Mariano
Sent: 24 May 2016 16:12:24 +0000
To: R8 All Hands
Cc:
(b)(6) @state.co.us';(b)(6) @mail.mil';(b)(6) @state.sd.us';(b)(6) (b)(6) @utah.gov';(b)(6) @wyo.gov'(b)(6) @nd.gov'(b)(6) @state.sd.us'(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov'(b)(6) @usace.army.mil'(b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert(b)(6) @usace.army.mil'(b)(6) @state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @hhs.gov'(b)(6) (b)(6) @sba.gov';(b)(6) @sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6) @mail.mil';(b)(6) @mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6) @state.co.us';(b)(6) @state.co.us';Wetherington, Jeffrey
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Tuesday 5-24-16
Attachments: @

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Tuesday, May 24, 2016

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Dakota Access Pipeline Construction Begins Despite Standing Rock Sioux Objections (Indian Country Today Media Network)

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Pierre marks five years since the Missouri River flood (KSFY ABC)

Long-time Pierre business survives the 2011 Missouri River flood (KSFY ABC)

Pierre: Five Years After The Flood (KDLT NBC)

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 14:13:39 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
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Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Tuesday
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-30-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 30, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A hailstorm and flash flood in Colorado Springs made the CBS national news. Some drivers needed rescuing; up to two feet of hail was reported…. The *Colorado Springs Gazette* carried an AP story in which a Florida congressman said FEMA's response in Louisiana, with only one mobile home set up so far, was "pitiful."
- **Montana:** The south entrance to Yellowstone has been reopened after being closed because of wildfire… Two stories report on the economic impact of the fish kill in the Yellowstone River. Governor Bullock declared an emergency, making state unemployment and retraining aid available. Some businesses hope for SBA loans to help them survive the lost tourism…. A roundup of wildfires indicates general stabilization.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from the Christian Science Monitor and one from The Guardian. The Guardian story cites protesters saying their effort might fulfill old Indian prophecies. … United Blood Services will test the blood of only donors who might be at risk for the Zika virus. The FDA had recommended testing all donors, but the disease is rare in North Dakota. … An attorney argues in favor of a proposed safety rule that would require more than one person be aboard some freight trains.
- **South Dakota:** No stories today.
- **Utah:** *The Salt lake Tribune* reports on the status of four major wildfires in the state… The *St. George Spectrum* reports that two Michigan firefighters were killed Saturday in Minnesota on their way to fight the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when their truck left the road. The driver has been charged with criminal vehicular homicide; he allegedly fell asleep while driving, and had used marijuana earlier that day.
- **Wyoming:** *The Teton Valley News* reports on the status of the Berry Fire and, in a separate article, notes another fire and recent earthquake and urges preparedness.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, reported on existing drugs that might help fight the Zika virus.

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One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

STORIES

COLORADO

CBS: Colorado Springs Flooding. The CBS Evening News (8/29, story 5, 0:15, O'Donnell, 11.17M) reported, “Heavy rain and hail caused flash flooding today in Colorado Springs. Streets became rushing rivers. It came on so quickly, drivers got stuck. Their cars had to be pulled out of the flood waters.”

Wild weather causes flooding, hail on Colorado Springs streets (KKTV news, Colorado Springs)

Posted: Mon 5:38 PM, Aug 29, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 5:46 AM, Aug 30, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (KKTV) Wild weather roared through Colorado Springs Monday afternoon, quickly causing streets to flood and keeping emergency personnel busy.

Several drivers were caught in the rapidly rising water. Just east of downtown on Pikes Peak Avenue, four people inside one car, including a toddler, had to be rescued after the vehicle got stuck in fast-moving water.

"I saw that it only came up to the middle of the hubcap there, so probably up to my knees," said Sgt. Erick Frederic with the Colorado Springs Police Department, who pulled the victims from the car.

No one was hurt in the incident, but were all left pretty shaken up.

"That's always a scary thing because if there becomes more water then the car could be pushed over," Frederic said. "So it's a matter of yes, stay in there until the car stops moving, but you don't want to get stuck in a moving car either."

Plenty of others were left stranded after water came rushing down streets.

“It’s kind of scary, cause you don’t know what might happen," said Susan Kellman.

Near Bijou and Logan, a snowplow that was trying to move nearly 2 feet of hail off the street ended up having to be towed.

Zach Smith faced another obstacle. His car was picked up by moving water and floated down the street.

"I was at work and my neighbor gave me a call and said, 'Hey, your car’s in the middle of the road; you should probably come move it,'" he told 11 News.

When Smith got home, he found the car sitting sideways, literally in the middle of the street.

“It’s pretty crazy. I’ve seen some pretty heavy rains, but not one to float a parked car like that.”

Another problem spot was off Platte Avenue near Tia Juana. A car got stuck near Fargo's Pizza after water quickly overtook the roadway.

Other areas of Platte, just east of Union, were underwater after storm drains got clogged by the amount of water running down the street.

"It's mayhem. You never know what you're going to get in Colorado. First we have hail, then we get some flooding," said Phillip Groskinsky.

HOMES DAMAGED BY FLOODING

Homeowners near Platte and Wahsatch in Colorado Springs say a dog was killed when fast-moving water got into their garage.

The Pikes Peak Red Cross went to more than 60 homes on Monday. Although not all were damaged, some were left unlivable.

Tim and Debbie Hertzog had their fence destroyed by rushing water, their backyard deck lifted up, and thousands of dollars worth of damage to the inside their home.

Debbie said she came home in the middle of the storm and got trapped in her garage.

"I just saw sheets of rain coming down, so I rushed home. ... As soon as I pulled into the garage, the river coming down the alley came into the garage with me," Debbie recalled. "I couldn't open the door without it coming in. So I called 911...they told me to stay sheltered in place in my car, unless [the water] came in the car.

"It did come to about a quarter of an inch, to the bottom of my car, while I was sitting in there. And I was probably in there an hour and a half, or maybe close to that, and I had no idea what was going on with my house. ... I couldn't get out either door without an onslaught of water. There was so much water."

Tim described the outside as chaos.

"She called me, so I came home and I was trying to get her out of the garage, but the water was almost 18 inches over the garage door, couldn't get the garage door open, so we just had to wait for the waters to subside.

"We weren't sure how bad it was going to get; if it was going to get worse."

Near Palmer Park and Union, one family said they worry about flooding -- like what happened Monday -- any time it rains.

"It's not something to mess with," said Jessica Staten. "If you can't see the road, don't go through it, plain and simple."

Staten snapped video of a car and truck stuck in high water at Mount Vernon Street and Tweed Street. Firefighters were eventually able to help both out.

"This intersection is prone to getting flooded pretty bad," Staten said. "It was already up to the wall of my neighbor, the wall where his fencing is, so there's no way you would have been able to clear it with a car. The minute he [one of the drivers] hit the dip, he was gone. He was done."

It was a similar scene near Fountain and Circle. Kellman saw others get trapped trying to plow through standing water. She decided not to chance it.

"It's scary because you don't know what might happen. I mean, there's lots of accidents, too," Kellman said.

"I just pulled over and waited for it to stop."

FEMA criticized as slow on disaster housing aid in Louisiana (Colorado Spring Gazette)

By: MELINDA DESLATTE, Associated Press •
August 29, 2016• Updated: August 29, 2016 at 12:43 pm

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The first out-of-state congressman to survey Louisiana's damage from catastrophic flooding Monday blasted the Federal Emergency Management Agency response as "pitiful."

U.S. Rep. John Mica, a Florida Republican who chairs a subcommittee with jurisdiction over FEMA, toured the destruction with U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, a Republican who represents much of the most heavily damaged region.

Mica said housing aid for the tens of thousands of people displaced by floodwaters two weeks ago has been sluggish and FEMA has been too slow to set up mobile homes that give people somewhere to stay while they repair their houses.

He said FEMA needs more "flexibility" in its programs to make them more adaptable to individual disasters.

"This is one of the biggest displacements of people I've ever seen in the country, and the response is pitiful from the federal level," Mica said.

Only one manufactured housing unit has been set up so far. FEMA regional director Gerard Stolar said the agency is working to speed aid to people displaced by the flooding.

"We're working very closely with the state. We're well aware of the devastation that's out there, that this is an historic event," Stolar said.

He said that FEMA's priority is to get people back into their homes and that 50 to 60 additional manufactured housing units are ready to be set up for homeowners after inspections of their property are complete.

"I'm very confident we're going to be able to ramp up the capacity for this in the very near future," Stolar said.

More than 100,000 homes are estimated to be damaged from flooding described as the worst disaster since Superstorm Sandy, after a storm that started Aug. 12 dumped as much as 2 feet of rain in some areas over two days.

More than 1,400 people remained in shelters Monday.

Entire communities were ravaged by floodwaters, and residents and volunteers have spent the last two weeks ripping out flooring, damaged furniture and drywall to ready homes for repairs. But many people didn't have flood insurance, leaving them dependent on savings and FEMA for rebuilding assistance.

Federal officials say more than $277 million in recovery grants have been approved for households so far and 22 assistance centers are open across the damaged parishes. FEMA said it has more than 1,100 housing inspectors on the ground.

Gov. John Bel Edwards has praised the federal response.

Graves, however, said FEMA needs to quicken the pace of its inspections and grant approval. He also worried about the size of grants. While the cap on assistance to households is $33,000, Graves said the largest grant received is around $8,000 so far.

"People are sitting there, looking at their home and business situation. They've got to make decisions," Graves said.

Edwards' administration opened registration Monday for a new, FEMA-funded "shelter at home" program aimed at providing grants of up to $15,000 to help people make modest repairs that can get them quickly and safely back into their houses while they start work on the larger renovations.

Graves said that program was a "fantastic" concept.

Both congressmen said some of the flexibility they'd like to see in FEMA programs could require congressional action. Edwards was meeting with Louisiana's congressional delegation Monday to discuss a flood relief package.

MONTANA

Yellowstone's south entrance reopens Tuesday morning (Billings Gazette)

The south entrance to Yellowstone National Park reopened at about 7 a.m. Tuesday after a wildfire cut off access for several days, said Larry Helmerick, National Park Service public information officer.

The more than 13,000 acre Berry fire shutdown a stretch of Highway 89/191/287 between Jackson Hole and the south entrance of Yellowstone. Pullouts near the burn area will remain closed, said a National Park Service news release.

The Berry fire cutoff access to the south entrance on Aug. 23 but no roadways inside Yellowstone National Park were affected.

Governor declares state of emergency for Yellowstone River fish kill (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

By Michael Wright Chronicle Staff Writer

LIVINGSTON —Montana's governor on Monday signed an executive order declaring the fish kill on the Yellowstone River earlier this month an emergency, a move that makes available millions of dollars for unemployment benefits and other labor programs.

The order frees up $15.4 million in emergency funds for workers and businesses affected by the river's closure, accessible to them mostly through unemployment insurance, retraining programs and planning grants.

Patricia Dowd, a natural resource policy adviser for the governor, announced the order at a meeting here on Monday, where officials from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry tried to offer people guidance on how they could get help in this time where businesses built on the tourism economy are taking a major hit.

"The Yellowstone River is a key contributor to Montana's tourism and outdoor recreation economy," Dowd said.

Earlier this month, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks closed 183 miles of the Yellowstone River and hundreds more miles of its tributaries to all public use in response to the deaths of thousands of whitefish in the river. Dead fish were found as far upstream as Corwin Springs and as far downstream as Springdale. Mostly whitefish have been found dead, and FWP estimates the total death toll to be in the tens of thousands.

Tissue samples showed the culprit to be a parasite that causes proliferative kidney disease, which can decimate trout and whitefish populations. An FWP press release sent Monday said whitefish have tested positive for the parasite as far downstream as Laurel and that the parasite had been confirmed in two brown trout taken from Nelson's Spring Creek.

The river and tributaries were closed as a way to reduce stress on the fish so they might be able to fight off infection. It also was meant to prevent the spread of the parasite to other watersheds in Montana. But the move has significant economic consequences for people who depend on the tourism dollars that the river brings in — like fishing guides, raft companies and hotels and restaurants.

The governor's emergency declaration allows the state to dip into a $16 million fund to offer assistance to people out of work or who have lost money because of the river closure. About $600,000 from that fund has already been spent in response to a heavy winter storm along Montana's Hi-Line and a tornado in eastern Montana.

How much is spent from the fund depends on how many people are able to access the money, which may be tricky. Unemployment insurance, for example, might not be available to fishing guides who work as independent contractors.

For workers to be eligible, they have to work in a job where their employer pays payroll taxes — which might not be the case for all independent guides. But if they work seasonally at another job that does pay those taxes throughout the year and quit to guide in the summer, they may qualify for some benefits.

Paul Martin, who works in unemployment insurance claims processing for the Montana Department of Labor, said people won't know if they qualify unless they apply because each individual case is so different.

"It's like snowflakes," Martin said.

Some at the meeting on Monday said they weren't interested in being retrained, and others said they would probably try for a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration — which is federal money, not state — to keep their doors open into the next year.

"I think I'm looking at a small business loan," said Jim Kahl, the co-owner of River Source Rafting Company north of Gardiner.

Kahl said the last few weeks have been "pretty dismal," and that the final weeks of the season are crucial for his company. A loan would be the way to make sure they are around for next season.

Tina Marshall, the ranch manager at 7 Point Ranch in Emigrant, said she hopes the emergency declaration would help them file a successful loss-of-income claim with their insurance company. The ranch hosts events and offers lodging to travelers, and Marshall said they had lost $43,000 in cancellations since the closure.

"It adds up fast," Marshall said.

She said an initial attempt at filing a claim was rejected, but that the emergency declaration might help with that. Recovering that income would help her keep her staff intact.

"I don't want to lay anybody off," she said.

When the river or its tributaries will reopen is unknown. FWP closed the river using an emergency 120-day closure, but that could be extended if river conditions don't improve or if fish don't stop dying. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission would have to approve any extension and solicit public comment.

FWP crews are still regularly surveying the river and the tributaries. The press release from the agency on Monday said that they were starting to find fewer dead fish on the banks of the river.

Yellowstone River's closure worries outdoors industry (AP)

Matthew Brown, Associated Press

Updated 7:01 pm, Monday, August 29, 2016

LIVINGSTON, Mont. (AP) — Tens of thousands of dead fish have closed Montana's Yellowstone River and stirred new worries Monday about lasting impacts to the region's lucrative outdoors industry.

Gov. Steve Bullock declared an "invasive species emergency" over an aquatic parasite blamed for the dying fish. A 183-mile stretch of the Yellowstone and all waterways that drain into it have been closed since Aug. 19 to prevent the deadly parasite from spreading. The unprecedented move came after thousands of dead mountain whitefish started washing up on the river's banks downstream from Yellowstone National Park.

Smaller numbers of other fish species have been killed. That's offered hope that the parasite will spare the trout populations that made the Yellowstone a destination for fly fishers from around the world.

But uncertainty over how long the closure will remain in force — and whether the parasite will crop up again in future years — has unsettled those whose livelihoods depend on the river.

Fishing guide Chase Chapman of Livingston said he's losing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of business as customers cancel previously booked trips. The losses are likely to grow as the closure continues, he said. Yet Chapman is not interested in training for another occupation and foremost wants to know when the river will re-open.

"I don't think anyone wants re-training," Chapman said Monday, during a workshop in Livingston for affected workers that was hosted by the state Department of Labor and Industry. "We all have established businesses. We're not going anywhere.... Now what do we do?"

Monday's emergency proclamation from Bullock will allow Montana to spend up to $15.4 million on worker retention grants and other programs meant to blunt the economic harm of the closure, state officials said.

The number of people and businesses that lost work over the closure has not been tallied, said Scott Eychner, workforce services administrator of the state labor agency. Eychner said officials did not want to wait until that information was tallied before holding Monday's workshop, so that assistance could be given to those who need it as quickly as possible.

Repairing the river's reputation is another matter.

Paul Weamer, who manages a fly fishing shop in the Paradise Valley north of Livingston, said he has no doubt the Yellowstone and its fishery will recover. But Weamer said news reports of the fish kill have left a negative impression among outsiders that will be hard to overcome even when the Yellowstone reopens and fishing resumes.

"You hear dead fish and that freaks people out and I understand that. But I really think our fishery will be good next year," Weamer said.

State officials on Monday said infected fish have been discovered in Laurel, more than a hundred miles downstream from the epicenter of the fish kill. A small number of whitefish that were collected near Laurel have tested positive for exposure to the parasite, officials said.

Whitefish exposed to the parasite also were collected near Columbus, Big Timber and at the mouth of the Boulder River, but officials said all the downstream fish were still alive and appeared healthy.

The rate of fish dying appears to have eased in recent days, said Sam Sheppard, regional supervisor for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Sheppard added that it was too soon to say if the decrease in deaths would prove lasting.

Officials have warned outbreaks of the parasite are possible in future years now that it's been established in the Yellowstone.

Montana Wildfire Roundup For August 29, 2016 (Montana Public Radio)

By MTPR News •

The latest on wildfires around western Montana.

Last Update 5:35 p.m. 08/29/16

The Clear Creek Fire popped up early Saturday morning on tribal land 3 miles northwest of Perma on the Flathead Reservation.

It’s just over 1,200 acres, and zero percent contained, says Tribal Fire Prevention Specialist C.T. Camel.

"Last couple days just been burnout operations, trying to get a hold of it. Because it’s gonna get really warm these next couple days.”

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes’ Division of Fire is fighting the blaze.

It’s cause is still under investigation.

Update: 10:38 a.m., 08/29/16

The Copper King Fire, under the command of Greg Poncin's Type I Incident Management Team, has reached 24,017 acres and remains 15 percent contained.

A community meeting will be held on Monday, August 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sanders County Fairground Pavilion (30 River Road, Plains, MT). Fire and local officials will provide an update on current and project fire activity.

There are 780 personnel working the fire, located eight miles outside of Thompson Falls and one mile north of Highway 200. The Copper King Fire has cost an estimated $15 million so far.

Yesterday aerial resources conducted burnout operations on the northern perimeter while hotshot crews built hand lines around the active southeast edge.

Helicopters dropped 258,000 gallons of water while small planes spread 36,500 gallons of retardant.

Today's weather is expected to bring in a high pressure front, with low humidity and high temperatures. This could result in increased fire activity, though winds are not predicted to be a problem.

Over the next 24-48 hours, officials say the construction of indirect lines and firing operations are crucial. Scoping for additional contingent lines will continue for the benefit of communities to the east.

In Yellowstone National Park, the Berry Fire continues to keep the south entrance to the park closed.

The Maple Fire in Yellowstone National Park, located about four miles north of West Yellowstone, has reached 31,405 acres. All of Gneiss Trail remains closed, including the Cougar Creek cabin.

The Maple Fire has yet to reach the Madison River or Madison Junction, and has not yet required burn out operations near Highway 191. A Red Flag weather warning is in effect throughout today.

Diane Hutton's Wildland Fire Management Team has assumed command of the Maple Fire and is stationed in West Yellowstone.

There will be a Maple Fire community meeting Monday, August 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of Latter Day Saints, 245 Faithful St., West Yellowstone, MT.

The Bierney Creek Fire west of Lakeside is transitioning from a Type 3 team to a smaller Type 4 team as containment operations continue to be successful. The fire is 90 percent contained.

The 60 acre fire, discovered on August 22, has been declared 'human caused' by fire officials.

The Roaring Lion Fire located five miles southwest of Hamilton remains at 8,533 acres and 70 percent contained. Firefighters continue to put out hotspots, evaluate containment lines, protect structures, and monitor for erosion possibilities where they have built defensive lines.

Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft continue to drop water and retardant when necessary. Area closures remain in effect.

NORTH DAKOTA

Oil pipeline protests in North Dakota draw Native Americans, celebrities (Christian Science Monitor)

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's protests against a four-state oil pipeline have drawn members of other tribes, as well as a few Hollywood stars.

By Jason Thomson, Staff August 29, 2016

Oil pipelines are no strangers to controversy, often courting a wide range of opposing opinions: Witness the years of debate that plagued the Keystone XL project between the United States and Canada, eventually blocked by US President Obama in November 2015.

The latest project to attract the ire of protesters, a 1,100-mile pipeline already under construction, is set to pass through four US states – Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Its aim is to transport Bakken shale from North Dakota directly to US Gulf Coast refineries, the first pipeline to do so.

The core group of opposition is the native American Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which says the pipeline could disturb sacred sites, as well as contaminate water for millions of people. They have been joined by activists from dozens of different tribes, and the protest, which began in April, now boasts upward of 1,000 indigenous participants.

"The things that have happened to tribal nations across this nation have been unjust and unfair, and this has come to a point where we can no longer pay the costs for this nation's well-being," Dave Archambault, chair of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, told Democracy Now last week. "All too often we share similar concerns, similar wrongdoings to us, so we are uniting, and we're standing up, and we're saying, 'No more.' "

The protests have temporarily shut down construction, and about 30 people have been arrested in recent weeks. The group behind the pipeline, Dakota Access, filed a restraining order against Mr. Archambault and other protesters earlier this month in federal court; the tribe subsequently sought a preliminary injunction to halt construction.

As legal proceedings unfolded over the $3.7 billion project last week in the US District Court for the District of Columbia, about 100 members of the native American group protested outside. They were joined by actors Susan Sarandon, Riley Keough, and Shailene Woodley.

"I'm here as a mother and a grandmother," said Ms. Sarandon, an Oscar-winning actress known for social and political activism, "to thank the people of the Standing Rock community for bringing our attention to this horrible thing that is happening to their land, which in turn will endanger all of us... because all of our waters are connected."

As part of their legal case, the protesters say the US Army Corps of Engineers violated historic preservation and environmental laws by giving the pipeline their approval. Supporters counter that the project would, in fact, provide safer and cheaper passage for the Bakken shale, when compared with road or rail transport.

District Court Judge James Boasberg is expected to announce his decision on the preliminary injunction requested by the tribe no later than Sept. 9.

'We're not going home': inside the North Dakota oil pipeline protest (The Guardian, US edition)

Nicky Woolf in Cannon Ball, North Dakota

Monday 29 August 2016 16.16 EDT
Last modified on Tuesday 30 August 2016 10.53 EDT

The Cannonball river flows into the mighty Missouri about 50 miles due south of Bismarck, North Dakota.

At its confluence, a protest encampment – really a series of camps, on both sides of the Cannonball, strewn with kitchens and canteens, portable toilets, stabling for horses, sweat lodges and tall teepees, and stands selling indigenous art – has sprung up.

The inhabitants are there to block the planned $3.7bn Dakota Access Pipeline, which would transport fracked crude from the Bakken oil field in North Dakota to a refinery near Chicago.

Many at the encampment speak of two prophecies, dating back to the 1890s. A leader called Black Elk foretold that in seven generations, the Native American nations will unite to save the Earth; another legend predicted that a zuzeca snake – a black snake – would threaten the world. For many of the protesters here, the pipeline is that black snake. They are the seventh generation: their moment of destiny has come.

The pipeline's planned route takes it close to the northern boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and the town of Cannon Ball within it, which means it would cross the Missouri immediately upstream, endangering, protesters say, the reservation's drinking water and threatening sacred sites. At Standing Rock, they have put their bodies between the water and the oil.

A few days earlier, on 24 August, a federal judge in Washington DC delayed a ruling over whether indigenous rights were violated by the approval of the project. Tribal members say they were not sufficiently consulted about the route and are suing for an injunction.

The population of the camp ebbs and flows. Many have given up jobs and brought their families here, and a core of between 500 and 1,000 people live here semi-permanently. Some, such as Wiyaca Eagleman, a member of the Sicangu Lakota from Rosebud, South Dakota, have been here since the beginning of April. He plans to be here, he said, "as long as it takes".

Hundreds more join when they can, swelling the camp's numbers on weekends. Others come when they get time and bring what supplies they can.

It is an unprecedented gathering. Members of more than 90 Native American nations and tribes have a presence here, according to Eagleman, who has become a sort of unofficial spokesman for the protest camp. Up the road, where the building site was besieged, the flags of many of those nations now fly together. The unity on display here is a dream come true for Eagleman. "There has been no moment like this in history," he said.

On Saturday, a delegation from the Crow nation arrived from Montana, bearing offerings of firewood and 700lb of buffalo meat. That's truly historic: the Crow and the Lakota have been enemies for more than a century. They were at war once; the Crow acted as scouts for Gen George Custer. Buffalo meat has powerful symbolic value: a gesture of solidarity and friendship from longtime former foes.

Dennis Banks, a member of the Chippewa nation of Minnesota and one of the founders of the civil rights group the American Indian Movement in the 1960s, who met the Crow delegation, recounted the meeting. "The main speaker said, 'I know you think of Crow as working with the enemy – but we too struggled for water rights, treaty rights'," Banks said.

Omaka Nawicakinciji of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota participates with his mother Heather Mendoza during a rally on the Dakota Access Pipeline. Photograph: Alex Wong/Getty Images

Then he paused. "The Missouri river starts up there," he added, to indicate that the Crow and the Lakota share more, now, than just food and firewood. The river connects them, too.

Ladonna Allard is a member of the Dakota Sioux. The first protest camp, named Sacred Stone for the perfectly round stones that were formed by a whirlpool where the two rivers met, was erected in April on Allard's land. The whirlpool is gone now, its eddies quieted by a dam built by the army corps of engineers in 1948, which also flooded the lush forest that abutted Allard's birthplace.

"This is sacred land," Allard told the Guardian, speaking by a campfire on which burritos cooked in aluminum foil. Children and dogs played; a brilliant sunset had just turned to dusk. "This is not about trying to be a protester," she said. "I am a mother. My son is buried at the top of that hill. I can't let them build a pipeline by my son's grave."

Looking across the Missouri from the camp, you can see the route of the pipeline on the east bank. Diggers and bulldozers began digging out the turf on the west bank, a mile north of the camp, churning the green prairie to brown clod, in August – accompanied by armed security guards.

They were ordered to stop when protesters, some on horseback, broke on to the site and surrounded the machines on 10 August. Eighteen were arrested, including Standing Rock tribal chairman David Archambault II.

Madonna Antoine Eagle Hawk, a member of the Sicango Rosebud Sioux, arrived last Friday and quickly assumed the role of head chef of the Rosebud camp. The children, she said, call her "Unci", the Lakota word for grandmother. "I'm proud to be here," she said. "It's a powerful feeling."

"Right now, all these different tribes – this will never happen again in our lifetime," she said. "If we don't make a stand, who else will?"

Richard Leading Fighter Jr – another member of the Rosebud tribe, a biology student and a distance runner – joined Eagle Hawk in the kitchen tent. He has assumed the role of lifeguard in the camp, keeping an eye on the children who frolic and splash in the Cannonball. He's been here two weeks now and is preparing to return to university, but like many in the camp, is planning on coming back when he can.

"This feeling is history, right here," he said. He hunkered down on his shins to grab a handful of soil, grey from the ash of the cooking fire. "We're doing something that will be in stories told for our grandchildren," he said, as the earth streamed through his fingers.

"I know we can defeat this," he said. "I'm hoping the world is with us."

United Blood Services testing some blood for Zika (Bismarck Tribune)

- JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune
- Aug 29, 2016

United Blood Services is testing the blood of all donors at risk of having contracted the Zika virus.

Zika is spread mostly by infected Aedes species mosquitoes, which are not found in North Dakota. While most people get mild symptoms from the virus, it can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her fetus and can cause birth defects, including microcephaly and other brain abnormalities. There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika.

The Food and Drug Administration last week recommended testing all donated blood nationwide for Zika. The agency previously had recommended deferring anyone at risk of having contracted the virus.

Marni Wild, district director of manufacturing and laboratory services at United Blood Services, said the FDA only is recommending — not requiring — all blood to be tested. UBS, which handles blood donations in North Dakota, has been testing the blood of donors at risk of having contracted the virus since before the FDA made the recommendation as a precautionary measure, she said.

Michelle Feist, epidemiology and surveillance program manager at the North Dakota Department of Health, said active transmission of Zika is not happening in North Dakota, because the types of mosquitos that carry the virus are not found in the state.

However, people can contract the virus if they travel to a place with Zika or if they have sex with someone who has Zika. Wild said UBS asks questions during its pre-donation screening to see if donors are at risk of having Zika; if so, their blood automatically is screened before being used.

Wild did not know how much each Zika test costs UBS, but she said there is a financial hit on the organization each time a new test is added. She asked that anyone healthy and eligible to donate blood do so to help those who may need it.

While people in North Dakota are not at high risk to contract Zika, Feist said it is important for pregnant women or for couples who are planning to become pregnant to talk to their doctor about risk if they plan to travel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintain a list of places where Zika transmission is occurring, which should be consulted before travel, Feist said.

Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)

Posted by Randy Appleton

August 30, 2016 4:27 AM

Automation and budget-cutting have led many freight and passenger railroads across the United States to cut crew sizes. As a logical result of such staff reductions, many of the largest trains moving along the nation's rails have only a single engineer in the locomotive—even those transporting oil and toxic chemicals. As recently as 20 years ago, a standard long-distance train crew consisted of an engineer, a fireman, a conductor and two

Regulators and rail worker unions have raised alarms about train crew reductions for many years. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) responded in 2015 by drafting a rule mandating minimum crew sizes of two people for Class I railroads, a group that includes Amtrak, BNSF, CSX and Norfolk Southern. The rule was published for comment this past winter, and the FRA held a hearing on its provision in July 2016.

FRA experts and representatives of rail employees, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, argued for larger train crews. They cited incidents like a conductor taking over for an incapacitated engineer aboard an out of control engine in North Dakota. The conductor's actions prevented a major derailment and likely explosion.

Arguing against the two-crew person minimum, rail companies said, against actual evidence, that "no evidence" existed to prove that adding crew to one-person trains could prevent accidents, injuries, deaths and property damage. The corporations also claimed that putting more than one person on a train would impose unsupportable costs on their operations.

FRA analysts countered the cost complaint by noting that putting one more person in a locomotive would require a maximum expenditure of $27.7 million over 10 years. That is far below the estimated value of the workers' lives expected to be saved and a tiny fraction of revenues for companies that regularly report annual earnings of several billion.

Having represented railroad employees injured in crashes and derailments for three decades, I know that placing more than one person in a locomotive adds an invaluable safety factor. Even with the (too slow) deployment of braking technology like positive train control, the role of a trained human in preventing tragedies cannot be overemphasized. Should an equipment failure occur or should an engineer suffer an unexpected injury or illness, having a conductor or other crew member present can make the difference between a disaster and a near-miss.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No stories today.

UTAH

Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 29 2016 01:21PM • Last Updated Aug 29 2016 10:30 pm

Aided by fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft, about 50 firefighters worked Monday to keep the 4,000-acre Box Canyon Fire from spreading outside its remote, steep and rugged perimeter in Summit County.

The human-caused, four-week-old blaze continued to consume conifer, aspen and fallen dead timber about 12 miles east of Oakley, and it began Monday at 20 percent containment. Crews were focused on preventing any further spread downslope into Smith and Morehouse Canyon, or toward the Ledgefork Campground, Fire Incident Commander Nick Hillman reported.

No structures were threatened and no injuries had been reported, but the campground, the Smith and Morehouse Reservoir boat ramp and the Mud Lake Flats area, along with some trails in those districts, were closed for public safety reasons.

The Peterson Hollow Fire, now mostly burning toward the Idaho side of the state line, had topped 1,200 acres and was 22 percent contained as of Monday, said Fire Information Officer Sierra Hellstrom.

In all, 311 firefighters battled that blaze of undetermined origin. Crews were concentrating on keeping the flames within the unpopulated and rough terrain where it began Aug. 21, burning mostly timber and grass about 6 miles northwest of Garden City, Utah.

"Despite some tree torching, the Peterson Hollow Fire [has] made no significant runs," Hellstrom reported.

Meanwhile, central Utah's Briggs Fire was being monitored by about 10 firefighters, but otherwise being allowed to burn in the Beaver District of the Fishlake National Forest. In spots, back fires were set to deprive the blaze of uncontrolled fuels.

"Over the last 14 days a lot of progress has been made in firing operations, improving contingency lines and protecting values at risk," said Fire Information Officer Daniel Claessen, adding that it likely will take the onset of winter and snowfall to finally snuff the last of the flames.

The lightning-sparked fire had burned 3,418 acres along the south fork of North Creek since it was first reported on Aug. 9, about 10 miles northeast of Beaver.

Several other, smaller wildfires also were being allowed to burn throughout the state where potential for structural damage was nil, and the benefits to the health of forest lands involved were deemed positive in the long term.

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

Written by Kimberly Scott

ST. GEORGE — A group of firefighters from Michigan on their way to the Box Canyon wildfire in Utah were involved in a crash on Interstate 35W in Anoka County, Minnesota, which left two firefighters dead and multiple others seriously injured.

The driver of the truck was subsequently charged with two counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

At approximately 3 p.m. Saturday, a truck carrying nine members of a wildland firefighting crew left the roadway for an unknown reason, struck the median cable barriers and rolled, according to a statement issued by Minnesota State Patrol.

The wildland fire crew was from the Beartown Firefighters, which is based in Baraga on Michigan's Upper Peninsula and is managed by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

State Patrol officials identified the driver of the truck as 28-year-old Michael Johnson.

Eight of the passengers were identified as 23-year-old James Shelifoe; 25-year-old Alan Swartz; 26-year-old Dave Varline; 33-year-old Ross Jaukkuri; 34-year-old Gavin Loonsfoot and Joseph Jossens, all of Michigan; 29-year-old Shashaywin Sandman, of Minnesota; and 26-year-old Tyler Tolonen, of Wisconsin.

Shelifoe and Swartz were pronounced dead at the scene, according to the State Patrol.

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community released a statement about the crash on its Facebook page Saturday night: "Our hearts are broken and our prayers are with the family members and those injured."

In a separate statement Sunday, the tribal government said that the injured firefighters were expected to recover, but released no details about their conditions.

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred, according to the statement. The wildland fire crews were reportedly traveling in a convoy of three but became separated from the truck that crashed.

“Those firefighters are understandably shaken and are getting much-needed support from local agencies,” the statement said.

Officials investigating the crash said Johnson showed “signs of impairment and combative behavior” when officers arrived at the scene of the crash, according to charges filed Monday in Anoka County District Court documents and obtained by ABC News.

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel and that he hadn’t slept more than 45 minutes in more than 24 hours, according to a criminal complaint.

Johnson also allegedly admitted to using marijuana early Saturday and to using cocaine two days earlier. Toxicology results are pending.

As a result of the crash and subsequent investigation, Johnson was arrested and charged with two felony counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

The Box Canyon Fire in Summit County east of Park City had consumed 4,000 acres as of Monday.

Unstable weather systems brought heavy winds into the area, increasing the fire’s activity, according to a press release from U.S. Forest Service.

Officials said Sunday that the Utah National Guard had been activated to assist in battling the wildfire.

Utah Guard’s 97th Aviation Troop Command and 2nd Battalion 211th Aviation responded to the Box Canyon Fire with two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, according to a press release from the Utah National Guard.

The human-caused fire is reportedly 20 percent contained.

Persons arrested or charged are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law or as otherwise decided by a trier-of-fact.

WYOMING

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

Since its discovery, Grand Teton National Park has been actively managing the Berry Fire for ecological benefits. The fire originated in the northern portion of the park, near Berry and Owl Creeks on the west side of Jackson Lake. Extreme fire behavior as a result of high winds and low relative humidity on Monday, August 22 pushed the fire across Jackson Lake and into the Teton Wilderness on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. A Type 2 Great Basin Incident Management Team took command of the fire on August 24th.

Closures:

At this time, fire managers anticipate being able to reopen Highway 89/191/287 tomorrow, Tuesday, August 30. This is subject to change dependent on weather and fire conditions. Until then the highway does remain closed for safety between the South Gate of Yellowstone National Park and Leeks Marina.

While Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and Bridger Teton National Forest all have area closures in effect, both National Parks are open to visitors. This includes Leeks Marina and most visitor destinations and services. Travel times to Yellowstone may be increased depending on planned routes. Check before you go. And please drive carefully, with lights on, due to both visibility concerns from smoke and increased vehicle numbers.

Current Situation:

The Berry Fire was much more active yesterday. Most of the growth occurred on the northeast corner of the fire - in the Teton Wilderness - and the southwest portion of the fire - along Jackson Lake. Firefighters have completed preparatory actions around Flagg Ranch, as well as on historic cabins and lookouts to minimize impacts from the fire, in the event the fire should reach those locations.

Today's weather will again be warmer and drier with atmospheric instability, which can contribute to rapid fire growth. Temperatures will rise into the mid-80s, and the relative humidity may drop into single digits. Light winds will prevail over the fire area. Despite the shorter days, thermal belts are allowing the fire to burn actively throughout the night.

Western Wyoming is experiencing historical lows for fuel moistures. Currently, no significant moisture is in the extended forecast. The conditions are similar to 2012, when fires burned actively well into September. The Berry Fire will continue to burn in the coming weeks, accomplishing the goal of rejuvenating the ecosystem through the natural process of wildland fire.

Firefighters expect to finish their work along Highway 89/191/287 today. Unless fire behavior or weather conditions change today, the road will reopen to the general public tomorrow.

For more information:

Follow Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton National Forest on social media: @GrandTetonNPS and @BridgerTetonNF on both Facebook and Twitter. Information on other fires in western Wyoming is available at www.TetonFires.com. And information on fires burning in eastern Idaho can be found at www.IdahoFireInfo.com, or by filtering Idaho incidents on InciWeb.

One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

Bruce Mason -- Teton Valley Weather

August 27, 2016. The Tie Canyon fire had been slow the last couple of days, but the wind was forecast to gust up from the west in the afternoon. As that afternoon wind increased, near Hoback in Wyoming there was an earthquake. True story with a happy ending. Our amazing firefighters from Great Basin Team 5 had put down barriers which successfully held the fire from progressing toward Victor. In addition, the earthquake was magnitude 4.8, a light quake. It was felt throughout Teton Valley but no damage was reported. It was a good day.

Saturday is also a good reason to stop and think what might have happened. Not to scare, but because playing the “what if” game in your mind can make you more ready to take action should a number of things go bad at once. When situations turn really dicey, it's usually not just one thing that's gone wrong, but a combination. What if Saturday had gone differently?

Suppose that the wind had picked up more than forecast and pushed the fire toward Victor. And suppose that at the same time, the earthquake had been much stronger and much closer to Teton Valley. Well planned and prepared evacuations would have begun just as the earthquake damaged the roads and bridges making evacuations as planned impossible. Families would be separated. Shelters would have been set up by the Red Cross in Driggs and Alta for the Victor evacuees, but how could they get there with, say, Yellow Bridge gone or Highway 33 buckled and impassable? Are alternate routes available? Do the drivers on the roads in front of you know them? Do you know them? Can those routes handle the traffic? Were they damaged, too? And what about the fire; is it going to stop at the predesignated evacuation zone or go beyond, further clogging the blocked roads with frightened residents?

This past week was a great drill if it prompted us to make individual and family disaster plans. Where will your family meet up? Do you each have a go bag, jump bag, or 72 hour kit packed with the essentials you'll need away from home a while? Have you thought about what you would grab if you could only take an armload of items with you from your home? Can you easily get from point A to point B by more than one route? Does each family member know how to contact the one person, preferably outside of the valley, who will be your central information point?

Did you know that detailed suggestions for this kind of plan have been made by Teton County Emergency Management? It has been tailored to Teton Valley and the kinds of disasters we are most likely to face here. Part one of this guide can be found at:

These guides are meticulously detailed and will take more than a quick glance by everyone in the family for them to be effective. Make the time now, because as the guide says, when disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed.

And one more thing this week showed, the value of the CodeRED emergency alert system. Should an emergency occur near you, with CodeRED you will be notified by phone, and if you choose, on your smart phone using the app. If you have a land line phone in Teton Valley, you are already enrolled and will get a call should something important come up. If you have a cell phone, you will have to go on line and register with CodeRED to receive notifications on it. You can do that at:

Either way, you will receive word of impending situations faster by phone than if you have to wait for an officer to knock on your door.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

By Maggie Fox
NBC News, August 29, 2016

A drug already on the market to treat worm infections and another being tested against liver diseases may also help treat Zika virus infections, researchers reported Monday.

The findings are a rare bit of good news about Zika, which has caused epidemics across Latin America and the Caribbean, and smaller outbreaks in Florida, the Pacific and southeast Asia.

Zika has caused smaller epidemics of birth defects, notably brain damage that can cause miscarriages or profound developmental injuries in babies. It can also cause a paralyzing condition called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

It's spread by mosquitoes and by sex. As of now, there is no vaccine or treatment.

The team at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Johns Hopkins University and Florida State University looked first in a library of existing drug compounds for products that might act to stop Zika from killing brain cells and perhaps stop it from replicating itself.

"It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug."

"It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug," says Hongjun Song of Johns Hopkins, who worked on the project. "In this sort of global health emergency, we don't have that kind of time."

But libraries of existing compounds let researchers use a computer to look for drugs that work in specific ways.

"So instead of using new drugs, we chose to screen existing drugs," said Dr. Guo-li Ming, a neurology professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "In this way, we hope to create a therapy much more quickly."

They were delighted to find a drug already on the market and considered safe to use in pregnant women. "Niclosamide is an FDA-approved drug (trade name Niclocide) that has been used in humans to treat worm infections for nearly 50 years, and it is well tolerated," the team wrote in their report, published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"It is known to inhibit several viruses in culture systems, including the Japanese encephalitis flavivirus."

Japanese encephalitis is a relative of Zika and also carried by mosquitoes.

Tests on human brain stem cells in lab dishes showed it could interfere with Zika's replication in those cells. "Niclosamide is a category B drug, which indicates that no risk to fetuses has been found in animal studies. It has low toxicity in mammals," they added. "Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

Another drug, called emricasan, helped prevent Zika from killing those cells.

"Emricasan is currently being evaluated in phase 2 clinical trials for the reduction of hepatic injury and liver fibrosis caused by chronic hepatitis C infection," the team wrote.

"Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

A third compound called PHA-690509 also helped stop Zika replicating and from killing nerve cells, they said.

While the drugs work well in lab dishes full of cells, "we don't know if they can work in humans in the same way," Song said.

Niclosamide works in the gut, but it's not clear if it's possible to get it into the brain, Song said.

The researchers think the drugs might work best as a cocktail, attacking the virus from several fronts — in much the same way as drug cocktails fight the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS.

"To address these questions, additional studies need to be done in animal models as well as humans to demonstrate their ability to treat Zika infection," Ming said in a statement. "So we could still be years away from finding a treatment that works."

The White House has asked for $1.9 billion in federal funding to help pay for studies like these and to keep them going after Zika is no longer making headlines. But Congress could not agree on a funding plan and took a seven-week break without appropriating any cash.

The NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies have taken money from other programs to pay for urgent Zika research.

At the beginning of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, researchers complained that they'd been working on drugs and vaccines for years but that inconsistent funding and a lack of interest from Congress and from drug companies made it impossible to make better progress. More than 11,000 people died in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea before the Ebola epidemic wound down last year.

Region VIII Clips
Tuesday, August 30, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A hailstorm and flash flood in Colorado Springs made the CBS national news. Some drivers needed rescuing; up to two feet of hail was reported…. The *Colorado Springs Gazette* carried an AP story in which a Florida congressman said FEMA's response in Louisiana, with only one mobile home set up so far, was "pitiful."
- **Montana:** The south entrance to Yellowstone has been reopened after being closed because of wildfire… Two stories report on the economic impact of the fish kill in the Yellowstone River. Governor Bullock declared an emergency, making state unemployment and retraining aid available. Some businesses hope for SBA loans to help them survive the lost tourism…. A roundup of wildfires indicates general stabilization.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from the Christian Science Monitor and one from The Guardian. The Guardian story cites protesters saying their effort might fulfill old Indian prophecies. … United Blood Services will test the blood of only donors who might be at risk for the Zika virus. The FDA had recommended testing all donors, but the disease is rare in North Dakota. … An attorney argues in favor of a proposed safety rule that would require more than one person be aboard some freight trains.
- **South Dakota:** No stories today.
- **Utah:** *The Salt lake Tribune* reports on the status of four major wildfires in the state… The *St. George Spectrum* reports that two Michigan firefighters were killed Saturday in Minnesota on their way to fight the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when their truck left the road. The driver has been charged with criminal vehicular homicide; he allegedly fell asleep while driving, and had used marijuana earlier that day.
- **Wyoming:** *The Teton Valley News* reports on the status of the Berry Fire and, in a separate article, notes another fire and recent earthquake and urges preparedness.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, reported on existing drugs that might help fight the Zika virus.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

STORIES

COLORADO

CBS: Colorado Springs Flooding. The CBS Evening News (8/29, story 5, 0:15, O'Donnell, 11.17M) reported, "Heavy rain and hail caused flash flooding today in Colorado Springs. Streets became rushing rivers. It came on so quickly, drivers got stuck. Their cars had to be pulled out of the flood waters."

Wild weather causes flooding, hail on Colorado Springs streets (KKTV news, Colorado Springs)

Posted: Mon 5:38 PM, Aug 29, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 5:46 AM, Aug 30, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (KKTV) Wild weather roared through Colorado Springs Monday afternoon, quickly causing streets to flood and keeping emergency personnel busy.

Several drivers were caught in the rapidly rising water. Just east of downtown on Pikes Peak Avenue, four people inside one car, including a toddler, had to be rescued after the vehicle got stuck in fast-moving water.

"I saw that it only came up to the middle of the hubcap there, so probably up to my knees," said Sgt. Erick Frederic with the Colorado Springs Police Department, who pulled the victims from the car.

No one was hurt in the incident, but were all left pretty shaken up.

"That's always a scary thing because if there becomes more water then the car could be pushed over," Frederic said. "So it's a matter of yes, stay in there until the car stops moving, but you don't want to get stuck in a moving car either."

Plenty of others were left stranded after water came rushing down streets.

“It’s kind of scary, cause you don’t know what might happen," said Susan Kellman.

Near Bijou and Logan, a snowplow that was trying to move nearly 2 feet of hail off the street ended up having to be towed.

Zach Smith faced another obstacle. His car was picked up by moving water and floated down the street.

"I was at work and my neighbor gave me a call and said, 'Hey, your car’s in the middle of the road; you should probably come move it,'" he told 11 News.

When Smith got home, he found the car sitting sideways, literally in the middle of the street.

“It’s pretty crazy. I’ve seen some pretty heavy rains, but not one to float a parked car like that.”

Another problem spot was off Platte Avenue near Tia Juana. A car got stuck near Fargo's Pizza after water quickly overtook the roadway.

Other areas of Platte, just east of Union, were underwater after storm drains got clogged by the amount of water running down the street.

"It's mayhem. You never know what you're going to get in Colorado. First we have hail, then we get some flooding," said Phillip Groskinsky.

HOMES DAMAGED BY FLOODING

Homeowners near Platte and Wahsatch in Colorado Springs say a dog was killed when fast-moving water got into their garage.

The Pikes Peak Red Cross went to more than 60 homes on Monday. Although not all were damaged, some were left unlivable.

Tim and Debbie Hertzog had their fence destroyed by rushing water, their backyard deck lifted up, and thousands of dollars worth of damage to the inside their home.

Debbie said she came home in the middle of the storm and got trapped in her garage.

"I just saw sheets of rain coming down, so I rushed home. ... As soon as I pulled into the garage, the river coming down the alley came into the garage with me," Debbie recalled. "I couldn't open the door without it coming in. So I called 911...they told me to stay sheltered in place in my car, unless [the water] came in the car.

"It did come to about a quarter of an inch, to the bottom of my car, while I was sitting in there. And I was probably in there an hour and a half, or maybe close to that, and I had no idea what was going on with my house. ... I couldn't get out either door without an onslaught of water. There was so much water."

Tim described the outside as chaos.

"She called me, so I came home and I was trying to get her out of the garage, but the water was almost 18 inches over the garage door, couldn't get the garage door open, so we just had to wait for the waters to subside.

"We weren't sure how bad it was going to get; if it was going to get worse."

Near Palmer Park and Union, one family said they worry about flooding -- like what happened Monday -- any time it rains.

"It's not something to mess with," said Jessica Staten. "If you can't see the road, don't go through it, plain and simple."

Staten snapped video of a car and truck stuck in high water at Mount Vernon Street and Tweed Street. Firefighters were eventually able to help both out.

"This intersection is prone to getting flooded pretty bad," Staten said. "It was already up to the wall of my neighbor, the wall where his fencing is, so there's no way you would have been able to clear it with a car. The minute he [one of the drivers] hit the dip, he was gone. He was done."

It was a similar scene near Fountain and Circle. Kellman saw others get trapped trying to plow through standing water. She decided not to chance it.

"It's scary because you don't know what might happen. I mean, there's lots of accidents, too," Kellman said.

"I just pulled over and waited for it to stop."

FEMA criticized as slow on disaster housing aid in Louisiana (Colorado Spring Gazette)

By: MELINDA DESLATTE, Associated Press •
August 29, 2016• Updated: August 29, 2016 at 12:43 pm

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The first out-of-state congressman to survey Louisiana's damage from catastrophic flooding Monday blasted the Federal Emergency Management Agency response as "pitiful."

U.S. Rep. John Mica, a Florida Republican who chairs a subcommittee with jurisdiction over FEMA, toured the destruction with U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, a Republican who represents much of the most heavily damaged region.

Mica said housing aid for the tens of thousands of people displaced by floodwaters two weeks ago has been sluggish and FEMA has been too slow to set up mobile homes that give people somewhere to stay while they repair their houses.

He said FEMA needs more "flexibility" in its programs to make them more adaptable to individual disasters.

"This is one of the biggest displacements of people I've ever seen in the country, and the response is pitiful from the federal level," Mica said.

Only one manufactured housing unit has been set up so far. FEMA regional director Gerard Stolar said the agency is working to speed aid to people displaced by the flooding.

"We're working very closely with the state. We're well aware of the devastation that's out there, that this is an historic event," Stolar said.

He said that FEMA's priority is to get people back into their homes and that 50 to 60 additional manufactured housing units are ready to be set up for homeowners after inspections of their property are complete.

"I'm very confident we're going to be able to ramp up the capacity for this in the very near future," Stolar said.

More than 100,000 homes are estimated to be damaged from flooding described as the worst disaster since Superstorm Sandy, after a storm that started Aug. 12 dumped as much as 2 feet of rain in some areas over two days.

More than 1,400 people remained in shelters Monday.

Entire communities were ravaged by floodwaters, and residents and volunteers have spent the last two weeks ripping out flooring, damaged furniture and drywall to ready homes for repairs. But many people didn't have flood insurance, leaving them dependent on savings and FEMA for rebuilding assistance.

Federal officials say more than $277 million in recovery grants have been approved for households so far and 22 assistance centers are open across the damaged parishes. FEMA said it has more than 1,100 housing inspectors on the ground.

Gov. John Bel Edwards has praised the federal response.

Graves, however, said FEMA needs to quicken the pace of its inspections and grant approval. He also worried about the size of grants. While the cap on assistance to households is $33,000, Graves said the largest grant received is around $8,000 so far.

"People are sitting there, looking at their home and business situation. They've got to make decisions," Graves said.

Edwards' administration opened registration Monday for a new, FEMA-funded "shelter at home" program aimed at providing grants of up to $15,000 to help people make modest repairs that can get them quickly and safely back into their houses while they start work on the larger renovations.

Graves said that program was a "fantastic" concept.

Both congressmen said some of the flexibility they'd like to see in FEMA programs could require congressional action. Edwards was meeting with Louisiana's congressional delegation Monday to discuss a flood relief package.

MONTANA

Yellowstone's south entrance reopens Tuesday morning (Billings Gazette)

The south entrance to Yellowstone National Park reopened at about 7 a.m. Tuesday after a wildfire cut off access for several days, said Larry Helmerick, National Park Service public information officer.

The more than 13,000 acre Berry fire shutdown a stretch of Highway 89/191/287 between Jackson Hole and the south entrance of Yellowstone. Pullouts near the burn area will remain closed, said a National Park Service news release.

The Berry fire cutoff access to the south entrance on Aug. 23 but no roadways inside Yellowstone National Park were affected.

Governor declares state of emergency for Yellowstone River fish kill (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

By Michael Wright Chronicle Staff Writer

LIVINGSTON —Montana's governor on Monday signed an executive order declaring the fish kill on the Yellowstone River earlier this month an emergency, a move that makes available millions of dollars for unemployment benefits and other labor programs.

The order frees up $15.4 million in emergency funds for workers and businesses affected by the river's closure, accessible to them mostly through unemployment insurance, retraining programs and planning grants.

Patricia Dowd, a natural resource policy adviser for the governor, announced the order at a meeting here on Monday, where officials from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry tried to offer people guidance on how they could get help in this time where businesses built on the tourism economy are taking a major hit.

"The Yellowstone River is a key contributor to Montana's tourism and outdoor recreation economy," Dowd said.

Earlier this month, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks closed 183 miles of the Yellowstone River and hundreds more miles of its tributaries to all public use in response to the deaths of thousands of whitefish in the river. Dead fish were found as far upstream as Corwin Springs and as far downstream as Springdale. Mostly whitefish have been found dead, and FWP estimates the total death toll to be in the tens of thousands.

Tissue samples showed the culprit to be a parasite that causes proliferative kidney disease, which can decimate trout and whitefish populations. An FWP press release sent Monday said whitefish have tested positive for the parasite as far downstream as Laurel and that the parasite had been confirmed in two brown trout taken from Nelson's Spring Creek.

The river and tributaries were closed as a way to reduce stress on the fish so they might be able to fight off infection. It also was meant to prevent the spread of the parasite to other watersheds in Montana. But the move has significant economic consequences for people who depend on the tourism dollars that the river brings in — like fishing guides, raft companies and hotels and restaurants.

The governor's emergency declaration allows the state to dip into a $16 million fund to offer assistance to people out of work or who have lost money because of the river closure. About $600,000 from that fund has already been spent in response to a heavy winter storm along Montana's Hi-Line and a tornado in eastern Montana.

How much is spent from the fund depends on how many people are able to access the money, which may be tricky. Unemployment insurance, for example, might not be available to fishing guides who work as independent contractors.

For workers to be eligible, they have to work in a job where their employer pays payroll taxes — which might not be the case for all independent guides. But if they work seasonally at another job that does pay those taxes throughout the year and quit to guide in the summer, they may qualify for some benefits.

Paul Martin, who works in unemployment insurance claims processing for the Montana Department of Labor, said people won't know if they qualify unless they apply because each individual case is so different.

"It's like snowflakes," Martin said.

Some at the meeting on Monday said they weren't interested in being retrained, and others said they would probably try for a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration — which is federal money, not state — to keep their doors open into the next year.

"I think I'm looking at a small business loan," said Jim Kahl, the co-owner of River Source Rafting Company north of Gardiner.

Kahl said the last few weeks have been "pretty dismal," and that the final weeks of the season are crucial for his company. A loan would be the way to make sure they are around for next season.

Tina Marshall, the ranch manager at 7 Point Ranch in Emigrant, said she hopes the emergency declaration would help them file a successful loss-of-income claim with their insurance company. The ranch hosts events and offers lodging to travelers, and Marshall said they had lost $43,000 in cancellations since the closure.

"It adds up fast," Marshall said.

She said an initial attempt at filing a claim was rejected, but that the emergency declaration might help with that. Recovering that income would help her keep her staff intact.

"I don't want to lay anybody off," she said.

When the river or its tributaries will reopen is unknown. FWP closed the river using an emergency 120-day closure, but that could be extended if river conditions don't improve or if fish don't stop dying. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission would have to approve any extension and solicit public comment.

FWP crews are still regularly surveying the river and the tributaries. The press release from the agency on Monday said that they were starting to find fewer dead fish on the banks of the river.

Yellowstone River's closure worries outdoors industry (AP)

Matthew Brown, Associated Press

Updated 7:01 pm, Monday, August 29, 2016

LIVINGSTON, Mont. (AP) — Tens of thousands of dead fish have closed Montana's Yellowstone River and stirred new worries Monday about lasting impacts to the region's lucrative outdoors industry.

Gov. Steve Bullock declared an "invasive species emergency" over an aquatic parasite blamed for the dying fish. A 183-mile stretch of the Yellowstone and all waterways that drain into it have been closed since Aug. 19 to prevent the deadly parasite from spreading. The unprecedented move came after thousands of dead mountain whitefish started washing up on the river's banks downstream from Yellowstone National Park.

Smaller numbers of other fish species have been killed. That's offered hope that the parasite will spare the trout populations that made the Yellowstone a destination for fly fishers from around the world.

But uncertainty over how long the closure will remain in force — and whether the parasite will crop up again in future years — has unsettled those whose livelihoods depend on the river.

Fishing guide Chase Chapman of Livingston said he's losing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of business as customers cancel previously booked trips. The losses are likely to grow as the closure continues, he said. Yet Chapman is not interested in training for another occupation and foremost wants to know when the river will re-open.

"I don't think anyone wants re-training," Chapman said Monday, during a workshop in Livingston for affected workers that was hosted by the state Department of Labor and Industry. "We all have established businesses. We're not going anywhere.... Now what do we do?"

Monday's emergency proclamation from Bullock will allow Montana to spend up to $15.4 million on worker retention grants and other programs meant to blunt the economic harm of the closure, state officials said.

The number of people and businesses that lost work over the closure has not been tallied, said Scott Eychner, workforce services administrator of the state labor agency. Eychner said officials did not want to wait until that information was tallied before holding Monday's workshop, so that assistance could be given to those who need it as quickly as possible.

Repairing the river's reputation is another matter.

Paul Weamer, who manages a fly fishing shop in the Paradise Valley north of Livingston, said he has no doubt the Yellowstone and its fishery will recover. But Weamer said news reports of the fish kill have left a negative impression among outsiders that will be hard to overcome even when the Yellowstone reopens and fishing resumes.

"You hear dead fish and that freaks people out and I understand that. But I really think our fishery will be good next year," Weamer said.

State officials on Monday said infected fish have been discovered in Laurel, more than a hundred miles downstream from the epicenter of the fish kill. A small number of whitefish that were collected near Laurel have tested positive for exposure to the parasite, officials said.

Whitefish exposed to the parasite also were collected near Columbus, Big Timber and at the mouth of the Boulder River, but officials said all the downstream fish were still alive and appeared healthy.

The rate of fish dying appears to have eased in recent days, said Sam Sheppard, regional supervisor for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Sheppard added that it was too soon to say if the decrease in deaths would prove lasting.

Officials have warned outbreaks of the parasite are possible in future years now that it's been established in the Yellowstone.

Montana Wildfire Roundup For August 29, 2016 (Montana Public Radio)

By MTPR News •

The latest on wildfires around western Montana.

Last Update 5:35 p.m. 08/29/16

The Clear Creek Fire popped up early Saturday morning on tribal land 3 miles northwest of Perma on the Flathead Reservation.

It's just over 1,200 acres, and zero percent contained, says Tribal Fire Prevention Specialist C.T. Camel.

"Last couple days just been burnout operations, trying to get a hold of it. Because it's gonna get really warm these next couple days."

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Division of Fire is fighting the blaze.

It's cause is still under investigation.

Update: 10:38 a.m., 08/29/16

The Copper King Fire, under the command of Greg Poncin's Type I Incident Management Team, has reached 24,017 acres and remains 15 percent contained.

A community meeting will be held on Monday, August 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sanders County Fairground Pavilion (30 River Road, Plains, MT). Fire and local officials will provide an update on current and project fire activity.

There are 780 personnel working the fire, located eight miles outside of Thompson Falls and one mile north of Highway 200. The Copper King Fire has cost an estimated $15 million so far.

Yesterday aerial resources conducted burnout operations on the northern perimeter while hotshot crews built hand lines around the active southeast edge.

Helicopters dropped 258,000 gallons of water while small planes spread 36,500 gallons of retardant.

Today's weather is expected to bring in a high pressure front, with low humidity and high temperatures. This could result in increased fire activity, though winds are not predicted to be a problem.

Over the next 24-48 hours, officials say the construction of indirect lines and firing operations are crucial. Scoping for additional contingent lines will continue for the benefit of communities to the east.

In Yellowstone National Park, the Berry Fire continues to keep the south entrance to the park closed.

The Maple Fire in Yellowstone National Park, located about four miles north of West Yellowstone, has reached 31,405 acres. All of Gneiss Trail remains closed, including the Cougar Creek cabin.

The Maple Fire has yet to reach the Madison River or Madison Junction, and has not yet required burn out operations near Highway 191. A Red Flag weather warning is in effect throughout today.

Diane Hutton's Wildland Fire Management Team has assumed command of the Maple Fire and is stationed in West Yellowstone.

There will be a Maple Fire community meeting Monday, August 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of Latter Day Saints, 245 Faithful St., West Yellowstone, MT.

The Bierney Creek Fire west of Lakeside is transitioning from a Type 3 team to a smaller Type 4 team as containment operations continue to be successful. The fire is 90 percent contained.

The 60 acre fire, discovered on August 22, has been declared 'human caused' by fire officials.

The Roaring Lion Fire located five miles southwest of Hamilton remains at 8,533 acres and 70 percent contained. Firefighters continue to put out hotspots, evaluate containment lines, protect structures, and monitor for erosion possibilities where they have built defensive lines.

Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft continue to drop water and retardant when necessary. Area closures remain in effect.

NORTH DAKOTA

Oil pipeline protests in North Dakota draw Native Americans, celebrities
(Christian Science Monitor)

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's protests against a four-state oil pipeline have drawn members of other tribes, as well as a few Hollywood stars.

By Jason Thomson, Staff August 29, 2016

Oil pipelines are no strangers to controversy, often courting a wide range of opposing opinions: Witness the years of debate that plagued the Keystone XL project between the United States and Canada, eventually blocked by US President Obama in November 2015.

The latest project to attract the ire of protesters, a 1,100-mile pipeline already under construction, is set to pass through four US states – Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Its aim is to transport Bakken shale from North Dakota directly to US Gulf Coast refineries, the first pipeline to do so.

The core group of opposition is the native American Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which says the pipeline could disturb sacred sites, as well as contaminate water for millions of people. They have been joined by activists from dozens of different tribes, and the protest, which began in April, now boasts upward of 1,000 indigenous participants.

"The things that have happened to tribal nations across this nation have been unjust and unfair, and this has come to a point where we can no longer pay the costs for this nation's well-being," Dave Archambault, chair of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, told Democracy Now last week. "All too often we share similar concerns, similar wrongdoings to us, so we are uniting, and we're standing up, and we're saying, 'No more.' "

The protests have temporarily shut down construction, and about 30 people have been arrested in recent weeks. The group behind the pipeline, Dakota Access, filed a restraining order against Mr. Archambault and other protesters earlier this month in federal court; the tribe subsequently sought a preliminary injunction to halt construction.

As legal proceedings unfolded over the $3.7 billion project last week in the US District Court for the District of Columbia, about 100 members of the native American group protested outside. They were joined by actors Susan Sarandon, Riley Keough, and Shailene Woodley.

"I'm here as a mother and a grandmother," said Ms. Sarandon, an Oscar-winning actress known for social and political activism, "to thank the people of the Standing Rock community for bringing our attention to this horrible thing that is happening to their land, which in turn will endanger all of us... because all of our waters are connected."

As part of their legal case, the protesters say the US Army Corps of Engineers violated historic preservation and environmental laws by giving the pipeline their approval. Supporters counter that the project would, in fact, provide safer and cheaper passage for the Bakken shale, when compared with road or rail transport.

District Court Judge James Boasberg is expected to announce his decision on the preliminary injunction requested by the tribe no later than Sept. 9.

'We're not going home': inside the North Dakota oil pipeline protest (The Guardian, US edition)

Nicky Woolf in Cannon Ball, North Dakota

Monday 29 August 2016 16.16 EDT
Last modified on Tuesday 30 August 2016 10.53 EDT

The Cannonball river flows into the mighty Missouri about 50 miles due south of Bismarck, North Dakota.

At its confluence, a protest encampment – really a series of camps, on both sides of the Cannonball, strewn with kitchens and canteens, portable toilets, stabling for horses, sweat lodges and tall teepees, and stands selling indigenous art – has sprung up.

The inhabitants are there to block the planned $3.7bn Dakota Access Pipeline, which would transport fracked crude from the Bakken oil field in North Dakota to a refinery near Chicago.

Many at the encampment speak of two prophecies, dating back to the 1890s. A leader called Black Elk foretold that in seven generations, the Native American nations will unite to save the Earth; another legend predicted that a zuzeca snake – a black snake – would threaten the world. For many of the protesters here, the pipeline is that black snake. They are the seventh generation: their moment of destiny has come.

The pipeline's planned route takes it close to the northern boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and the town of Cannon Ball within it, which means it would cross the Missouri immediately upstream, endangering, protesters say, the reservation's drinking water and threatening sacred sites. At Standing Rock, they have put their bodies between the water and the oil.

A few days earlier, on 24 August, a federal judge in Washington DC delayed a ruling over whether indigenous rights were violated by the approval of the project. Tribal members say they were not sufficiently consulted about the route and are suing for an injunction.

The population of the camp ebbs and flows. Many have given up jobs and brought their families here, and a core of between 500 and 1,000 people live here semi-permanently. Some, such as Wiyaca Eagleman, a member of the Sicangu Lakota from Rosebud, South Dakota, have been here since the beginning of April. He plans to be here, he said, "as long as it takes".

Hundreds more join when they can, swelling the camp's numbers on weekends. Others come when they get time and bring what supplies they can.

It is an unprecedented gathering. Members of more than 90 Native American nations and tribes have a presence here, according to Eagleman, who has become a sort of unofficial spokesman for the protest camp. Up the road, where the building site was besieged, the flags of many of those nations now fly together. The unity on display here is a dream come true for Eagleman. "There has been no moment like this in history," he said.

On Saturday, a delegation from the Crow nation arrived from Montana, bearing offerings of firewood and 700lb of buffalo meat. That's truly historic: the Crow and the Lakota have been enemies for more than a century. They were at war once; the Crow acted as scouts for Gen George Custer. Buffalo meat has powerful symbolic value: a gesture of solidarity and friendship from longtime former foes.

Dennis Banks, a member of the Chippewa nation of Minnesota and one of the founders of the civil rights group the American Indian Movement in the 1960s, who met the Crow delegation, recounted the meeting. "The main speaker said, 'I know you think of Crow as working with the enemy – but we too struggled for water rights, treaty rights'," Banks said.

Omaka Nawicakinciji of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota participates with his mother Heather Mendoza during a rally on the Dakota Access Pipeline. Photograph: Alex Wong/Getty Images

Then he paused. "The Missouri river starts up there," he added, to indicate that the Crow and the Lakota share more, now, than just food and firewood. The river connects them, too.

Ladonna Allard is a member of the Dakota Sioux. The first protest camp, named Sacred Stone for the perfectly round stones that were formed by a whirlpool where the two rivers met, was erected in April on Allard's land. The whirlpool is gone now, its eddies quieted by a dam built by the army corps of engineers in 1948, which also flooded the lush forest that abutted Allard's birthplace.

"This is sacred land," Allard told the Guardian, speaking by a campfire on which burritos cooked in aluminum foil. Children and dogs played; a brilliant sunset had just turned to dusk. "This is not about trying to be a protester," she said. "I am a mother. My son is buried at the top of that hill. I can't let them build a pipeline by my son's grave."

Looking across the Missouri from the camp, you can see the route of the pipeline on the east bank. Diggers and bulldozers began digging out the turf on the west bank, a mile north of the camp, churning the green prairie to brown clod, in August – accompanied by armed security guards.

They were ordered to stop when protesters, some on horseback, broke on to the site and surrounded the machines on 10 August. Eighteen were arrested, including Standing Rock tribal chairman David Archambault II.

Madonna Antoine Eagle Hawk, a member of the Sicango Rosebud Sioux, arrived last Friday and quickly assumed the role of head chef of the Rosebud camp. The children, she said, call her "Unci", the Lakota word for grandmother. "I'm proud to be here," she said. "It's a powerful feeling."

“Right now, all these different tribes – this will never happen again in our lifetime,” she said. “If we don’t make a stand, who else will?”

Richard Leading Fighter Jr – another member of the Rosebud tribe, a biology student and a distance runner – joined Eagle Hawk in the kitchen tent. He has assumed the role of lifeguard in the camp, keeping an eye on the children who frolic and splash in the Cannonball. He’s been here two weeks now and is preparing to return to university, but like many in the camp, is planning on coming back when he can.

“This feeling is history, right here,” he said. He hunkered down on his shins to grab a handful of soil, grey from the ash of the cooking fire. “We’re doing something that will be in stories told for our grandchildren,” he said, as the earth streamed through his fingers.

“I know we can defeat this,” he said. “I’m hoping the world is with us.”

United Blood Services testing some blood for Zika (Bismarck Tribune)

- JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune
- Aug 29, 2016

United Blood Services is testing the blood of all donors at risk of having contracted the Zika virus.

Zika is spread mostly by infected Aedes species mosquitoes, which are not found in North Dakota. While most people get mild symptoms from the virus, it can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her fetus and can cause birth defects, including microcephaly and other brain abnormalities. There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika.

The Food and Drug Administration last week recommended testing all donated blood nationwide for Zika. The agency previously had recommended deferring anyone at risk of having contracted the virus.

Marni Wild, district director of manufacturing and laboratory services at United Blood Services, said the FDA only is recommending — not requiring — all blood to be tested. UBS, which handles blood donations in North Dakota, has been testing the blood of donors at risk of having contracted the virus since before the FDA made the recommendation as a precautionary measure, she said.

Michelle Feist, epidemiology and surveillance program manager at the North Dakota Department of Health, said active transmission of Zika is not happening in North Dakota, because the types of mosquitos that carry the virus are not found in the state.

However, people can contract the virus if they travel to a place with Zika or if they have sex with someone who has Zika. Wild said UBS asks questions during its pre-donation screening to see if donors are at risk of having Zika; if so, their blood automatically is screened before being used.

Wild did not know how much each Zika test costs UBS, but she said there is a financial hit on the organization each time a new test is added. She asked that anyone healthy and eligible to donate blood do so to help those who may need it.

While people in North Dakota are not at high risk to contract Zika, Feist said it is important for pregnant women or for couples who are planning to become pregnant to talk to their doctor about risk if they plan to travel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintain a list of places where Zika transmission is occurring, which should be consulted before travel, Feist said.

Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)

Posted by Randy Appleton

August 30, 2016 4:27 AM

Automation and budget-cutting have led many freight and passenger railroads across the United States to cut crew sizes. As a logical result of such staff reductions, many of the largest trains moving along the nation's rails have only a single engineer in the locomotive—even those transporting oil and toxic chemicals. As recently as 20 years ago, a standard long-distance train crew consisted of an engineer, a fireman, a conductor and two

Regulators and rail worker unions have raised alarms about train crew reductions for many years. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) responded in 2015 by drafting a rule mandating minimum crew sizes of two people for Class I railroads, a group that includes Amtrak, BNSF, CSX and Norfolk Southern. The rule was published for comment this past winter, and the FRA held a hearing on its provision in July 2016.

FRA experts and representatives of rail employees, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, argued for larger train crews. They cited incidents like a conductor taking over for an incapacitated engineer aboard an out of control engine in North Dakota. The conductor's actions prevented a major derailment and likely explosion.

Arguing against the two-crew person minimum, rail companies said, against actual evidence, that "no evidence" existed to prove that adding crew to one-person trains could prevent accidents, injuries, deaths and property damage. The corporations also claimed that putting more than one person on a train would impose unsupportable costs on their operations.

FRA analysts countered the cost complaint by noting that putting one more person in a locomotive would require a maximum expenditure of $27.7 million over 10 years. That is far below the estimated value of the workers' lives expected to be saved and a tiny fraction of revenues for companies that regularly report annual earnings of several billion.

Having represented railroad employees injured in crashes and derailments for three decades, I know that placing more than one person in a locomotive adds an invaluable safety factor. Even with the (too slow) deployment of braking technology like positive train control, the role of a trained human in preventing tragedies cannot be overemphasized. Should an equipment failure occur or should an engineer suffer an unexpected injury or illness, having a conductor or other crew member present can make the difference between a disaster and a near-miss.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No stories today.

UTAH

Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 29 2016 01:21PM • Last Updated Aug 29 2016 10:30 pm

Aided by fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft, about 50 firefighters worked Monday to keep the 4,000-acre Box Canyon Fire from spreading outside its remote, steep and rugged perimeter in Summit County.

The human-caused, four-week-old blaze continued to consume conifer, aspen and fallen dead timber about 12 miles east of Oakley, and it began Monday at 20 percent containment. Crews were focused on preventing any further spread downslope into Smith and Morehouse Canyon, or toward the Ledgefork Campground, Fire Incident Commander Nick Hillman reported.

No structures were threatened and no injuries had been reported, but the campground, the Smith and Morehouse Reservoir boat ramp and the Mud Lake Flats area, along with some trails in those districts, were closed for public safety reasons.

The Peterson Hollow Fire, now mostly burning toward the Idaho side of the state line, had topped 1,200 acres and was 22 percent contained as of Monday, said Fire Information Officer Sierra Hellstrom.

In all, 311 firefighters battled that blaze of undetermined origin. Crews were concentrating on keeping the flames within the unpopulated and rough terrain where it began Aug. 21, burning mostly timber and grass about 6 miles northwest of Garden City, Utah.

"Despite some tree torching, the Peterson Hollow Fire [has] made no significant runs," Hellstrom reported.

Meanwhile, central Utah's Briggs Fire was being monitored by about 10 firefighters, but otherwise being allowed to burn in the Beaver District of the Fishlake National Forest. In spots, back fires were set to deprive the blaze of uncontrolled fuels.

"Over the last 14 days a lot of progress has been made in firing operations, improving contingency lines and protecting values at risk," said Fire Information Officer Daniel Claessen, adding that it likely will take the onset of winter and snowfall to finally snuff the last of the flames.

The lightning-sparked fire had burned 3,418 acres along the south fork of North Creek since it was first reported on Aug. 9, about 10 miles northeast of Beaver.

Several other, smaller wildfires also were being allowed to burn throughout the state where potential for structural damage was nil, and the benefits to the health of forest lands involved were deemed positive in the long term.

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

Written by Kimberly Scott

ST. GEORGE — A group of firefighters from Michigan on their way to the Box Canyon wildfire in Utah were involved in a crash on Interstate 35W in Anoka County, Minnesota, which left two firefighters dead and multiple others seriously injured.

The driver of the truck was subsequently charged with two counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

At approximately 3 p.m. Saturday, a truck carrying nine members of a wildland firefighting crew left the roadway for an unknown reason, struck the median cable barriers and rolled, according to a statement issued by Minnesota State Patrol.

The wildland fire crew was from the Beartown Firefighters, which is based in Baraga on Michigan's Upper Peninsula and is managed by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

State Patrol officials identified the driver of the truck as 28-year-old Michael Johnson.

Eight of the passengers were identified as 23-year-old James Shelifoe; 25-year-old Alan Swartz; 26-year-old Dave Varline; 33-year-old Ross Jaukkuri; 34-year-old Gavin Loonsfoot and Joseph Jossens, all of Michigan; 29-year-old Shashaywin Sandman, of Minnesota; and 26-year-old Tyler Tolonen, of Wisconsin.

Shelifoe and Swartz were pronounced dead at the scene, according to the State Patrol.

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community released a statement about the crash on its Facebook page Saturday night: "Our hearts are broken and our prayers are with the family members and those injured."

In a separate statement Sunday, the tribal government said that the injured firefighters were expected to recover, but released no details about their conditions.

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred, according to the statement. The wildland fire crews were reportedly traveling in a convoy of three but became separated from the truck that crashed.

"Those firefighters are understandably shaken and are getting much-needed support from local agencies," the statement said.

Officials investigating the crash said Johnson showed "signs of impairment and combative behavior" when officers arrived at the scene of the crash, according to charges filed Monday in Anoka County District Court documents and obtained by ABC News.

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel and that he hadn't slept more than 45 minutes in more than 24 hours, according to a criminal complaint.

Johnson also allegedly admitted to using marijuana early Saturday and to using cocaine two days earlier. Toxicology results are pending.

As a result of the crash and subsequent investigation, Johnson was arrested and charged with two felony counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

The Box Canyon Fire in Summit County east of Park City had consumed 4,000 acres as of Monday.

Unstable weather systems brought heavy winds into the area, increasing the fire's activity, according to a press release from U.S. Forest Service.

Officials said Sunday that the Utah National Guard had been activated to assist in battling the wildfire.

Utah Guard's 97th Aviation Troop Command and 2nd Battalion 211th Aviation responded to the Box Canyon Fire with two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, according to a press release from the Utah National Guard.

The human-caused fire is reportedly 20 percent contained.

Persons arrested or charged are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law or as otherwise decided by a trier-of-fact.

WYOMING

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

Since its discovery, Grand Teton National Park has been actively managing the Berry Fire for ecological benefits. The fire originated in the northern portion of the park, near Berry and Owl Creeks on the west side of Jackson Lake. Extreme fire behavior as a result of high winds and low relative humidity on Monday, August 22 pushed the fire across Jackson Lake and into the Teton Wilderness on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. A Type 2 Great Basin Incident Management Team took command of the fire on August 24th.

Closures:

At this time, fire managers anticipate being able to reopen Highway 89/191/287 tomorrow, Tuesday, August 30. This is subject to change dependent on weather and fire conditions. Until then the highway does remain closed for safety between the South Gate of Yellowstone National Park and Leeks Marina.

While Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and Bridger Teton National Forest all have area closures in effect, both National Parks are open to visitors. This includes Leeks Marina and most visitor destinations and services. Travel times to Yellowstone may be increased depending on planned routes. Check before you go. And please drive carefully, with lights on, due to both visibility concerns from smoke and increased vehicle numbers.

Current Situation:

The Berry Fire was much more active yesterday. Most of the growth occurred on the northeast corner of the fire - in the Teton Wilderness - and the southwest portion of the fire - along Jackson Lake. Firefighters

have completed preparatory actions around Flagg Ranch, as well as on historic cabins and lookouts to minimize impacts from the fire, in the event the fire should reach those locations.

Today's weather will again be warmer and drier with atmospheric instability, which can contribute to rapid fire growth. Temperatures will rise into the mid-80s, and the relative humidity may drop into single digits. Light winds will prevail over the fire area. Despite the shorter days, thermal belts are allowing the fire to burn actively throughout the night.

Western Wyoming is experiencing historical lows for fuel moistures. Currently, no significant moisture is in the extended forecast. The conditions are similar to 2012, when fires burned actively well into September. The Berry Fire will continue to burn in the coming weeks, accomplishing the goal of rejuvenating the ecosystem through the natural process of wildland fire.

Firefighters expect to finish their work along Highway 89/191/287 today. Unless fire behavior or weather conditions change today, the road will reopen to the general public tomorrow.

For more information:

Follow Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton National Forest on social media: @GrandTetonNPS and @BridgerTetonNF on both Facebook and Twitter. Information on other fires in western Wyoming is available at www.TetonFires.com. And information on fires burning in eastern Idaho can be found at www.IdahoFireInfo.com, or by filtering Idaho incidents on InciWeb.

One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

Bruce Mason -- Teton Valley Weather

August 27, 2016. The Tie Canyon fire had been slow the last couple of days, but the wind was forecast to gust up from the west in the afternoon. As that afternoon wind increased, near Hoback in Wyoming there was an earthquake. True story with a happy ending. Our amazing firefighters from Great Basin Team 5 had put down barriers which successfully held the fire from progressing toward Victor. In addition, the earthquake was magnitude 4.8, a light quake. It was felt throughout Teton Valley but no damage was reported. It was a good day.

Saturday is also a good reason to stop and think what might have happened. Not to scare, but because playing the “what if” game in your mind can make you more ready to take action should a number of things go bad at once. When situations turn really dicey, it's usually not just one thing that's gone wrong, but a combination. What if Saturday had gone differently?

Suppose that the wind had picked up more than forecast and pushed the fire toward Victor. And suppose that at the same time, the earthquake had been much stronger and much closer to Teton Valley. Well planned and prepared evacuations would have begun just as the earthquake damaged the roads and bridges making evacuations as planned impossible. Families would be separated. Shelters would have been set up by the Red Cross in Driggs and Alta for the Victor evacuees, but how could they get there with, say, Yellow Bridge gone or Highway 33 buckled and impassable? Are alternate routes available? Do the drivers on the roads in front of you know them? Do you know them? Can those routes handle the traffic? Were they damaged, too? And

what about the fire; is it going to stop at the predesignated evacuation zone or go beyond, further clogging the blocked roads with frightened residents?

This past week was a great drill if it prompted us to make individual and family disaster plans. Where will your family meet up? Do you each have a go bag, jump bag, or 72 hour kit packed with the essentials you'll need away from home a while? Have you thought about what you would grab if you could only take an armload of items with you from your home? Can you easily get from point A to point B by more than one route? Does each family member know how to contact the one person, preferably outside of the valley, who will be your central information point?

Did you know that detailed suggestions for this kind of plan have been made by Teton County Emergency Management? It has been tailored to Teton Valley and the kinds of disasters we are most likely to face here. Part one of this guide can be found at:

These guides are meticulously detailed and will take more than a quick glance by everyone in the family for them to be effective. Make the time now, because as the guide says, when disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed.

And one more thing this week showed, the value of the CodeRED emergency alert system. Should an emergency occur near you, with CodeRED you will be notified by phone, and if you choose, on your smart phone using the app. If you have a land line phone in Teton Valley, you are already enrolled and will get a call should something important come up. If you have a cell phone, you will have to go on line and register with CodeRED to receive notifications on it. You can do that at:

Either way, you will receive word of impending situations faster by phone than if you have to wait for an officer to knock on your door.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

By Maggie Fox

NBC News, August 29, 2016

A drug already on the market to treat worm infections and another being tested against liver diseases may also help treat Zika virus infections, researchers reported Monday.

The findings are a rare bit of good news about Zika, which has caused epidemics across Latin America and the Caribbean, and smaller outbreaks in Florida, the Pacific and southeast Asia.

Zika has caused smaller epidemics of birth defects, notably brain damage that can cause miscarriages or profound developmental injuries in babies. It can also cause a paralyzing condition called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

It’s spread by mosquitoes and by sex. As of now, there is no vaccine or treatment.

The team at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Johns Hopkins University and Florida State University looked first in a library of existing drug compounds for products that might act to stop Zika from killing brain cells and perhaps stop it from replicating itself.

“It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug.”

"It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug," says Hongjun Song of Johns Hopkins, who worked on the project. "In this sort of global health emergency, we don't have that kind of time."

But libraries of existing compounds let researchers use a computer to look for drugs that work in specific ways.

"So instead of using new drugs, we chose to screen existing drugs," said Dr. Guo-li Ming, a neurology professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "In this way, we hope to create a therapy much more quickly."

They were delighted to find a drug already on the market and considered safe to use in pregnant women. "Niclosamide is an FDA-approved drug (trade name Niclocide) that has been used in humans to treat worm infections for nearly 50 years, and it is well tolerated," the team wrote in their report, published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"It is known to inhibit several viruses in culture systems, including the Japanese encephalitis flavivirus."

Japanese encephalitis is a relative of Zika and also carried by mosquitoes.

Tests on human brain stem cells in lab dishes showed it could interfere with Zika's replication in those cells. "Niclosamide is a category B drug, which indicates that no risk to fetuses has been found in animal studies. It has low toxicity in mammals," they added. "Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

Another drug, called emricasan, helped prevent Zika from killing those cells.

"Emricasan is currently being evaluated in phase 2 clinical trials for the reduction of hepatic injury and liver fibrosis caused by chronic hepatitis C infection," the team wrote.

"Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

A third compound called PHA-690509 also helped stop Zika replicating and from killing nerve cells, they said.

While the drugs work well in lab dishes full of cells, "we don't know if they can work in humans in the same way," Song said.

Niclosamide works in the gut, but it's not clear if it's possible to get it into the brain, Song said.

The researchers think the drugs might work best as a cocktail, attacking the virus from several fronts — in much the same way as drug cocktails fight the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS.

"To address these questions, additional studies need to be done in animal models as well as humans to demonstrate their ability to treat Zika infection," Ming said in a statement. "So we could still be years away from finding a treatment that works."

The White House has asked for $1.9 billion in federal funding to help pay for studies like these and to keep them going after Zika is no longer making headlines. But Congress could not agree on a funding plan and took a seven-week break without appropriating any cash.

The NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies have taken money from other programs to pay for urgent Zika research.

At the beginning of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, researchers complained that they'd been working on drugs and vaccines for years but that inconsistent funding and a lack of interest from Congress and from drug companies made it impossible to make better progress. More than 11,000 people died in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea before the Ebola epidemic wound down last year.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 12:00:13 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6) (b)(6)@nd.gov';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@utah.gov';(b)(6)@wyo.gov';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26
Attachments: R8 Clips 10-26-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline. The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

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- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform’s glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the

road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a “team player,” as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

“We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc,” said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one’s home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Phan, Minh
Sent: 2 Aug 2016 11:23:15 -0400
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @mail.mil;(b)(6) @state.sd.us;(b)(6) @utah.gov(b)(6) @wyo.gov;(b)(6) @nd.gov(b)(6) @state.sd.us;(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov(b)(6) @usace.army.mil(b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov;Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6) @usace.army.mil;(b)(6) @state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark J(b)(6) @hhs.gov(b)(6) hhs.gov(b)(6) @hhs.gov(b)(6) @sba.gov;(b)(6) @sba.gov;Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6) @mail.mil;Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse(b)(6) @state.co.us;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel
Subject: FEMA Region 8 Clips Tuesday August 2, 2016
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Have a Terrific Tuesday!

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 2, 2016

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COLORADO:

Colorado Springs homeowners clean up after "catastrophic" hail storm

(KOAA-Pueblo)

Lena Howland | August 1, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS - The cleanup continues in the aftermath of last week's hail storm on the south end of Colorado Springs. Insurance companies say they've seen so much damage, they are now calling it a catastrophic weather event.

“It just sounded like literally someone was throwing baseballs at my house!" Sharon Navarrette said.

This house on the eastern edge of Colorado Springs took a beating during the storm.

"I started running from room to room and the hail was just hitting and I was expecting every window to shatter," she said.

A family room window, a skylight, a car, and even her sunflowers, destroyed.

"It wasn't a tornado but the damage that it did to homes was almost as devastating," she said.

A storm so big, insurance companies have now classified it as a catastrophe.

"Anytime that there's a significant number of claims like this, it will reach a threshold between a storm and the number of claims in a given area in which we categorize a catastrophe," Rich Johnson, a spokesman for USAA said.

That's why USAA has deployed its Catastrophe Response Team in the JCPenny parking lot off of Powers. The last time they needed this type of response in Colorado Springs was after nearly 500 homes were destroyed in the Black Forest Fire three summers ago.

"We want a convenient place for them to be able to drive up, maybe have a cold drink, bottle of water and start their claim," Johnson said.

USAA alone has already received more than 15,000 hail damage claims.

"Auto body shops, glass shops, roofing repair companies, they're going to see an influx in volume, and so really having that patience, materials are going to get low," he said.

With an estimated $40,000 worth of damage done to Navarette's house, she says she's just grateful she has the insurance to cover it.

"We will rebuild, they will get the new roof on and repaint our house and everything and have it looking like it's supposed to be when we bought it," she said.

Moving forward, insurance companies recommend you file your claims online whenever possible, do what you can to prevent further damage to your property, make sure you document those repairs and be patient along the way.

They say it could still be a matter of several weeks before the entire city has cleaned up.

MONTANA:

New DES director survives 1st trial by fire (Billings Gazette)

Mike Ferguson | July 31, 2016

Last week's Fritz fire may have been his baptism by fire, but Brad Shoemaker has emerged unsinged from that significant early test in his new job as the county's director of disaster and emergency services.

"The key to success" in such a large, cooperative effort to save lives and property, he said this week, "is getting everyone to operate toward the same goal, and in this case, I think all the agencies did an excellent job doing that."

Shoemaker, 29, began work April 1 after previous stints with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. He said he had an idea last winter that the current fire season would be a challenge after taking a look at the area snowpack. That suspicion was confirmed in May, "when we started looking at fuel numbers and how things were trending, that we'd have an above-average year," he said.

He began meeting with fire chiefs around the county "so we'd all be on the same page and so we could do some preseason preparation."

Others charged with protecting the public in Yellowstone County say they appreciate Shoemaker's openness and proactive approach, as well as his ability to communicate — both among fire and law enforcement agencies and with the public.

"The Fritz Fire was a pretty big deal here in Yellowstone County, and for him to be able to make the call for graders and dozers and other county resources and to work with the DNRC to start mobilizing equipment from surrounding counties, that sure took a lot of the load off me," said Rick Cortez, chief of the 20-member Blue Creek Volunteer Fire Department and the incident commander for the fire west of Billings. "That freed me up to concentrate on the incident at hand."

“He is very knowledgeable and easy to talk to,” said Yellowstone County Sheriff Mike Linder. “He’s proactive, which doesn’t surprise me based on the experience he’s had from previous positions. He’s enthusiastic about the job, and from what I’ve seen, I think he will work out very well.”

“He is engaged, especially as a public information officer,” said Billings Fire Chief Paul Dextras. “That makes a real difference when all kinds of people are calling him at once or he’s dealing with the media. His job is to let people know there’s a plan in place and the progress that's being made, and from that aspect he’s doing a stellar job. It’s more than a full-time job, but he seems to be managing and prioritizing things well.”

Shoemaker earned his undergraduate degree in forestry from Virginia Tech University and a master’s degree in emergency management from Anna Maria College in Paxton, Mass. He and his wife have a 15-month-old daughter. During the weekend of the Fritz fire July 22-24, he got home once, for five hours, which he spent, understandably, sleeping.

“We’re used to the summer busy season, so we do our traveling around Thanksgiving and Christmas,” he said.

Everything in its place

Even an initial glance at his third-story office in the Yellowstone County Courthouse proves Shoemaker prefers order over chaos. The office is full of thick three-ring binders and maps — even a couple white boards with columns of what Shoemaker refers to as “my half-baked ideas" — but not turnout gear or self-contained breathing apparatuses.

There’s a reason for that, he said.

“Credit for the actual responsibility of saving all those homes goes to the guys in the engines, trucks and helicopters who are doing the hard work,” he said. “My job is to coordinate it and get it moving in the same direction.”

The list of agencies involved in the Fritz fire response is extensive, including “nearly every fire district in the county,” the sheriff’s office, Montana Highway Patrol, DNRC fire and air personnel, private aircraft providers, Red Cross, contract U.S. Forest Service firefighters — even the Yellowstone County Extension Service, which helped gather and protect livestock, among other duties.

“What I try to do is fit together individuals and groups with different skill sets,” he said. “I did very little of the actual work” of dousing the Fritz fire, he said. “They get all the credit for getting the work done.”

Where Shoemaker can take credit, fire chiefs and law enforcement officials say, is in upgrading the county's disaster planning.

“The plan itself is important, but it has to be written in a flexible way,” Shoemaker said. “You can’t predict every input.”

He’s worked to involve all the fire agencies and districts as well as law enforcement in the planning process.

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“The quick way to go is to ask for money and then spend it out your ears if you want to,” he said. But a better route is to develop a long-term communications plan “that’s well thought-out and well written, stretched out over a timeline. There are federal and state funds to get that paid for out of other pockets. I want to pursue those grants to be as responsible as we can be.”

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Roaring Lion fire claims one life, 14 homes near Hamilton (Montana Standard)

Rob Chaney | August 2, 2016

The Roaring Lion fire has claimed one life, but the scores of people who fled the flames Sunday were still waiting Monday night to learn the fate of their homes as officials kept the area off limits.

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Bruce Lee Robinson, 64, died of cardiac arrest during the mandatory evacuation from the fast-moving fire southwest of Hamilton.

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“We expect to upgrade to red flag warnings on Tuesday afternoon, when a strong cold front moves in,” National Weather Service meteorologist Genki Kino said Monday. “A cold front this strong for this time of year is unusual.”

The front should bring winds with gusts between 25 and 35 mph through the Bitterroot and Missoula valleys on Tuesday afternoon, with speeds in the mountain ridges topping 50 mph around Tuesday evening. That’s likely to make firefighting on the 3,505-acre Roaring Lion fire 5 miles southwest of Hamilton even more challenging.

About 150 firefighters have been deployed to the blaze, with a Type I incident command team – deployed on the most serious fires — expected to take over operations Tuesday morning. The Roaring Lion fire has triggered evacuations of at least 500 people, with another 1,000 residents on pre-evacuation notice. The fire threatens about 400 primary homes as well as about 100 secondary homes near Hamilton.

Rick Potts has spent the summer at the St. Mary Peak fire lookout, about 23 air miles from Roaring Lion Canyon. Although he served on an initial attack team during the catastrophic Yellowstone National Park fires of 1988, he said he’d never witnessed fire behavior like Sunday’s in the Bitterroots.

“Watching that go from a thin plume of smoke to a roaring inferno within half an hour – I’ve never seen that,” Potts said. “It went from something you might handle with initial attack to something you couldn’t get close to. And the Forest Service and Hamilton Fire (Department) moved on it almost instantly. They had engines and a helicopter up there but by the time they got to it, it exploded up the hill, spotted and started a second fire. It just engulfed the whole mouth of the canyon.”

Many observers noticed the fire and smoke column rotating as it rose on Sunday evening. Kino said that’s because a regular down-canyon evening wind created spinning vortexes as the fire’s uphill heat pushed the opposite direction. The effect is similar to whirlpools that form between the main downstream current of a river and the upstream flow of a streamside eddy. In the Roaring Lion fire, the wind shear also created fire whirls that lifted tornadoes of flame hundreds of feet into the air.

Tuesday’s cold front should pass out of the Bitterroot Mountains area by Wednesday morning. But it will be followed by persistent hot weather leading to a weekend of potential dry thunderstorms. Those storms carry lightning that could trigger more wildfires.

Missoula County fire officials raised the local fire danger status “very high” on Monday.

“All fuels both live and dead have dried to the point that fires will become very active quickly,” said Jordan Koppen, spokesman for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. “We can’t afford for anyone to be careless during activities that have the potential to start a fire, so we urge the public to be extremely cautious with fire.”

Koppen added that equipment operators and motorists towing trailers should be especially careful about controlling hot metal and friction sparks while outdoors. More information on fire-safe tactics is available at http://firesafemt.org/.

On Monday afternoon, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced Roaring Lion firefighting efforts were eligible for federal assistance. Federal Emergency Management Agency funds can be used to cover 75 percent of state and local firefighting costs. However, the grants do not provide assistance for individual home or business owners affected by the fire, or other infrastructure damage related to the fire. FEMA spokesman Randy Welch said the money would pay for field camps, equipment use, repairs and replacement, tools materials and supplies.

The increased tempo of fire activity has forced state and federal fire crews to prioritize their resources. Lolo National Forest spokesman Boyd Hartwig said three 20-person Hotshot crews have been released from the 13-acre South Tamarack fire 6 miles north of St. Regis after reaching mop-up status on Monday. A Type-II initial attack crew remains on the scene, where the fire is 20 percent contained.

The Northern Region Geographic Area, which includes Montana, shifted to Preparedness Level 3 on Monday. That reflects the changing tempo of fire starts and need for personnel, equipment and aircraft. The Northern Region remains ranked fourth out of seven geographic areas as fires in Colorado and parts of the Southwest demand higher priority. As dry weather shifts to the Northwest, that priority will shift as well.

Statewide, Montana fire observers reported 15 new fires including two large incidents (Roaring Lion and Copper King). Those come on top of five existing large fires and dozens of smaller blazes.

The Copper King fire 8 miles east of Thompson Falls should move to a Type II incident command management on Tuesday. It has burned about 700 acres. As of Monday, it had a crew of 33 backed up by a helicopter on the line.

While no evacuations have been ordered, residents in the Copper King and Snider communities have been warned to prepare their structures for fire defense.

Several roads along the west side of the Thompson River have been closed for fire safety, as have the Copper King and Clark Memorial campgrounds.

Zero containment on Copper King Fire (ABC-FOX Montana)

Mackenzie Allen | August 1, 2016

KALISPELL - Officials with the Lolo National forest say the Copper King Fire, burning just outside of Thompson Falls has grown to 700 acres.

The fire broke out Sunday afternoon and a cause has not been identified.

According to spokesman John Hamilton there is no containment on the fire and personnel have begun notifying the 10-15 nearby residents of the situation, but he says he's "very confident" an evacuation will not be necessary at this point.

A Type II Incident Management Team is on their way and is scheduled to take over firefighting operations early Tuesday morning.

Currently 33 personnel, a helicopter and several engines are on scene.

A public meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday night at the Thompson Falls Community Center.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Lightning causes fire, spill at oilfield facility (Forum News Service)

Aug 1, 2016

NEW TOWN, N.D. – A lightning strike is blamed for a fire at a saltwater disposal well that occurred Sunday in Mountrail County, the North Dakota Oil and Gas Division said.

Whiting Oil and Gas Corp. reported that 400 barrels of produced water, or 16,800 gallons, were released, contained and recovered from a fire at a disposal well about 10 miles north of New Town.

Saltwater is a waste byproduct of oil production.

The fire, which involved five tanks at the location, is extinguished, said Alison Ritter, spokeswoman for the Oil and Gas Division. A state inspector visited the location.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Flood Of 2011 Gavins Point Withstood Historic River Surge (Yankton Daily)

Brayton Hagge | August 1, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of a series of stories this summer to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Missouri River flood of 2011.

In comparison to the repairs needed after the Missouri River flood in 2011, this year's Gavins Point Dam repairs are relatively minor.

"We've had really major stuff going on with the flood repairs from 2011 to 2015," said Dave Becker, operations project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Gavins Point. "Now we're just doing minor repairs out there. Things are in good working order."

This year's projects include installing new safety railings on the spillway and completing gate maintenance.

"Each year they bring (the gates) up and down to do maintenance on them," Becker said. "They clean them, power wash them and inspect the rollers on them to make sure they are functioning well. They are making sure those gates are ready to use when we need them."

He said none of this year's projects are related to the damages caused by the 2011 flood.

"The repairs of the flood damages were all completed last year," he explained.

After the flood, the dam was left in need of nearly $20 million worth of repairs. Becker said the damages were to be expected considering the record amounts of water which passed through the spillway gate, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers did face public concern on the matter.

"The public was in a very heightened state," Becker said. "They were very aware of the flood going on, so they were very watchful and concerned."

However, he maintained that the damages the dam sustained were in no way reflective of its ability to handle the flood.

"We had no concerns (about the dam), although we were monitoring it very closely," he said. "We had no big warning signs or anything like that (indicating) there were any major problems. Any time something is working hard, you just watch it closely."

After water levels lowered, crews began commencing work on major repair projects.

"One of the big (projects) was the repair of the spillway gates," Becker said. "(Workers) redid a fair number of the welds on the gates and inspected them. They repainted them and put new cables on them to lift and lower them. They also did maintenance on the gear boxes for the gates."

Repairs on the spillway apron, which consists of the concrete below the gates, comprised another large repair project.

"There was a tremendous amount of debris that was removed," he said. "We had issues with our frost blanket drains that needed to be corrected, and we had a very thorough underwater inspection done of the spillway slab."

The Corps also installed 35 new relief wells and brought in 75,000 tons of riprap to replace the rock that had been swept away by the fast flowing waters.

Becker felt some of the adjustments made during the flood repairs could decrease the amount of work required to rehabilitate the dam in the case of another record flood.

"I would think our damages would be less than that because we went in with a bigger size of stone (riprap) that doesn't wash away as readily," he said. "But any time something gets a real hard workout like that, there's something that needs to be repaired."

According to Becker, now that all the flood repairs have been finished, the maintenance projects being completed this year are all the dam currently requires to stay in peak condition.

The only other projects currently in the works involve resurfacing Crest Road this summer and updating the power plant throughout the next five years.

"We've been able to keep up with routine things because we have good funding and support, and because of that, we don't really have any real major work on the horizon," he said.
Becker predicted the 59-year-old dam could be kept in good working condition for many more years.
"Really as long as the public is supportive of the dam being here, we can continue to do the necessary operations and maintenance on it," he said.

Following the South Dakota drought online (KELO-Sioux Falls)

Mark Russo | August 1, 2016

PIERRE, SD (KELO-AM) South Dakota now has a website with updated drought information.

The website: drought.sd.gov,

Governor Daugaard says the website will help keep farmers and ranchers in the know.

"The website will include information such as the latest U.S. Drought Monitor, fire conditions, weather reports and agricultural information," says the Governor. "We know many people are impacted by the dry conditions and we want to provide the best information we can."

Other features on the website include a map comparing this year's drought to the 2012 drought and a fire map showing the number of acres burned and the perimeter of the fires on state jurisdictional land.

While there has been recent rainfall in some areas, extremely dry conditions exist in other parts of the state. An emergency fire declaration earlier had been declared for 13 central and western South Dakota counties impacted by the drought conditions. Those counties are Butte, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Hughes, Jackson, Jones, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins and Stanley.

UTAH:

Some evacuated areas open back up as Tokewanna Fire continues to burn 1,300 + acres (KUTV-Salt Lake City)

Cimaron Neugebauer | August 1, 2016

(KUTV) A wildfire that has been burning for the past 5 days near the Utah/Wyoming border has charred 1,300 acres and is 24 percent contained, as of Monday morning.

About 500 firefighters have been fighting the blaze, primarily on private land, located near the Meeks Cabin Dam about 15 miles south of Mountain View, Wyoming in Uinta County. The cause of the fire is unknown and still under investigation.

A few residents who were evacuated will be allowed to return to their homes today.

At noon on Monday residents living north of the intersection of Blacksfork Drive and County Road 271 (Meeks Cabin Dam Road) and the intersection of Wapati Road and East Wapati Road (including East Wapati Road itslef) will be allowed to return to their homes. These areas include Meeks Ridge and Aspen Springs subdivisions north of Cattle Guard 7. The Burearu of Land Management noted that residents may not have electrical power when they return. At this point, a few other areas remain closed to the public while firefighting efforts continue.

STILL CLOSED:

- The Uinta County Youth Camp
- Tokewanna and BlacksFork River Estates
- County Road 271 south to Meeks Cabin remain closed

The area of primary attention and concern has been protecting structures in the Tokewanna and Blacks Fork River Estates areas.

Continued hot temperatures and low relative humidity combined with the possibility of thunderstorms in the area will bring potential for increased fire activity in the area.

There will be a community meeting on Aug. 2 at 7 p.m. at the Mountain View High School located at 330 7th Street, Mountain View, Wyoming to give an update and discuss the state of the Tokewanna Fire.

WYOMING:

Beware of rattlesnakes this time of year (Casper Star-Tribune)

Kelsey Dayton | August 1, 2016

It feels like a slap and sounds like a pop. It’s the shimmying sound of the rattle afterward that’s terrifying.

Zack Walker, now non-game supervisor with Wyoming Game and Fish, was once working near Waltman studying rattlesnakes as the state herpetological coordinator. He jumped off a rock and had barely landed when he felt something hit him in the leg and heard the warning rattle.

“I jumped right back out of there,” he said.

It’s not a sound anyone wants to hear.

If you spend time in snake country, be especially careful this time of year, Walker said. While rattlesnakes usually spread across the landscape, they congregate to breed in mid-summer. If you see one, there’s probably more around, Walker said.

The snakes are found throughout the state, usually staying within 3 or 4 miles of where they hibernate.

“When you are in that pocket, you know you are in that pocket,” Walker said.

Despite emerging from hibernation a couple of weeks earlier than normal in the beginning of May, anecdotally, this year's snake sightings seem to reflect a normal season, Walker said.

Eugene DuQuette, an emergency room doctor at Wyoming Medical Center, said in the hospital's health news service that during one particularly wet spring and summer, he saw eight bites. Wyoming Medical Center reported only one bite so far this year.

Snake bites are rarely fatal in the United States. According to Wyoming Medical Center, without antivenin, snake bites have a 2 percent mortality rate and only .2 percent with it. In Wyoming there are even fewer as the rattlesnake isn't as poisonous as some breeds.

The seriousness of a bite depends on the amount of venom the snake injects. Between 10 percent and 20 percent of snake bites are dry, meaning they don't inject venom, Wyoming Medical Center reported.

Rattlesnake bites might cause heart arrhythmias, nose bleeds, bloody stools or vomit and, more rare in Wyoming, neurological changes like paralysis and weakness. They are treated with antivenin.

Walker has been struck more than once by rattlesnakes, but snake-proof gaiters protected him from ever being bitten.

"I've had many close encounters, but I've never had one get their fangs in me," he said.

It doesn't stop the jolt of adrenaline whenever he feels one strike and he wonders if it broke through.

Avoid a bite

- Make noise while walking in snake country, especially in grass where snakes are hard to spot. Wyoming snakes are not aggressive and usually strike because they are startled.
- Know where to look. Snakes are often in grassy areas where they are hard to see.
- Leave snakes alone. Don't dig in burrows where snakes may live. Don't try to catch a rattlesnake, even if you are trying to confirm a friend was bitten by one.
- Wear high-legged boots and gloves. Boots can prevent fangs from puncturing the skin, or minimize the amount of venom the snake can inject. Gloves will protect your hands.
- Watch the kids. Venom travels faster in smaller bodies.

What to do if you're bitten

- Call 911 immediately.
- Note the size. The smaller the snake, the more concentrated the venom.
- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Do not attempt to suck out the venom. You can poison yourself if it gets in the mouth and you can cause tissue damage around the bite.
- Keep bitten limb in a neutral position --- do not elevate.
- Do not ice the bite area.

- Stay calm. If you aren't in cell range, send someone else to get help. You have four to five hours before the venom has time to fully circulate.

Source: Dr. Eugene DuQuette and Wyoming Medical Center

Minh Phan
DHS/FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs
Phone: (303) 235-4943

Region VIII Clips
Tuesday, August 2, 2016

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

STORIES

COLORADO:

Colorado Springs homeowners clean up after "catastrophic" hail storm

(KOAA-Pueblo)

Lena Howland | August 1, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS - The cleanup continues in the aftermath of last week's hail storm on the south end of Colorado Springs. Insurance companies say they've seen so much damage, they are now calling it a catastrophic weather event.

“It just sounded like literally someone was throwing baseballs at my house!" Sharon Navarrette said.

This house on the eastern edge of Colorado Springs took a beating during the storm.

"I started running from room to room and the hail was just hitting and I was expecting every window to shatter," she said.

A family room window, a skylight, a car, and even her sunflowers, destroyed.

"It wasn't a tornado but the damage that it did to homes was almost as devastating," she said.

A storm so big, insurance companies have now classified it as a catastrophe.

"Anytime that there's a significant number of claims like this, it will reach a threshold between a storm and the number of claims in a given area in which we categorize a catastrophe," Rich Johnson, a spokesman for USAA said.

That's why USAA has deployed its Catastrophe Response Team in the JCPenny parking lot off of Powers. The last time they needed this type of response in Colorado Springs was after nearly 500 homes were destroyed in the Black Forest Fire three summers ago.

"We want a convenient place for them to be able to drive up, maybe have a cold drink, bottle of water and start their claim," Johnson said.

USAA alone has already received more than 15,000 hail damage claims.

"Auto body shops, glass shops, roofing repair companies, they're going to see an influx in volume, and so really having that patience, materials are going to get low," he said.

With an estimated $40,000 worth of damage done to Navarette's house, she says she's just grateful she has the insurance to cover it.

"We will rebuild, they will get the new roof on and repaint our house and everything and have it looking like it's supposed to be when we bought it," she said.

Moving forward, insurance companies recommend you file your claims online whenever possible, do what you can to prevent further damage to your property, make sure you document those repairs and be patient along the way.

They say it could still be a matter of several weeks before the entire city has cleaned up.

MONTANA:

New DES director survives 1st trial by fire (Billings Gazette)

Mike Ferguson | July 31, 2016

Last week's Fritz fire may have been his baptism by fire, but Brad Shoemaker has emerged unsinged from that significant early test in his new job as the county's director of disaster and emergency services.

"The key to success" in such a large, cooperative effort to save lives and property, he said this week, "is getting everyone to operate toward the same goal, and in this case, I think all the agencies did an excellent job doing that."

Shoemaker, 29, began work April 1 after previous stints with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. He said he had an idea last winter that the current fire season would be a challenge after taking a look at the area snowpack. That suspicion was confirmed in May, "when we started looking at fuel numbers and how things were trending, that we'd have an above-average year," he said.

He began meeting with fire chiefs around the county "so we'd all be on the same page and so we could do some preseason preparation."

Others charged with protecting the public in Yellowstone County say they appreciate Shoemaker's openness and proactive approach, as well as his ability to communicate — both among fire and law enforcement agencies and with the public.

"The Fritz Fire was a pretty big deal here in Yellowstone County, and for him to be able to make the call for graders and dozers and other county resources and to work with the DNRC to start mobilizing equipment from surrounding counties, that sure took a lot of the load off me," said Rick Cortez, chief of the 20-member Blue Creek Volunteer Fire Department and the incident commander for the fire west of Billings. "That freed me up to concentrate on the incident at hand."

"He is very knowledgeable and easy to talk to," said Yellowstone County Sheriff Mike Linder. "He's proactive, which doesn't surprise me based on the experience he's had from previous positions. He’s enthusiastic about the job, and from what I’ve seen, I think he will work out very well.”

“He is engaged, especially as a public information officer,” said Billings Fire Chief Paul Dextras. “That makes a real difference when all kinds of people are calling him at once or he’s dealing with the media. His job is to let people know there’s a plan in place and the progress that's being made, and from that aspect he’s doing a stellar job. It’s more than a full-time job, but he seems to be managing and prioritizing things well.”

Shoemaker earned his undergraduate degree in forestry from Virginia Tech University and a master’s degree in emergency management from Anna Maria College in Paxton, Mass. He and his wife have a 15-month-old daughter. During the weekend of the Fritz fire July 22-24, he got home once, for five hours, which he spent, understandably, sleeping.

“We’re used to the summer busy season, so we do our traveling around Thanksgiving and Christmas,” he said.

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Rob Chaney | August 2, 2016

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“Watching that go from a thin plume of smoke to a roaring inferno within half an hour – I’ve never seen that,” Potts said. “It went from something you might handle with initial attack to something you couldn’t get close to. And the Forest Service and Hamilton Fire (Department) moved on it almost instantly. They had engines and a helicopter up there but by the time they got to it, it exploded up the hill, spotted and started a second fire. It just engulfed the whole mouth of the canyon.”

Many observers noticed the fire and smoke column rotating as it rose on Sunday evening. Kino said that’s because a regular down-canyon evening wind created spinning vortexes as the fire’s uphill heat pushed the opposite direction. The effect is similar to whirlpools that form between the main downstream current of a river and the upstream flow of a streamside eddy. In the Roaring Lion fire, the wind shear also created fire whirls that lifted tornadoes of flame hundreds of feet into the air.

Tuesday's cold front should pass out of the Bitterroot Mountains area by Wednesday morning. But it will be followed by persistent hot weather leading to a weekend of potential dry thunderstorms. Those storms carry lightning that could trigger more wildfires.

Missoula County fire officials raised the local fire danger status "very high" on Monday.

"All fuels both live and dead have dried to the point that fires will become very active quickly," said Jordan Koppen, spokesman for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. "We can't afford for anyone to be careless during activities that have the potential to start a fire, so we urge the public to be extremely cautious with fire."

Koppen added that equipment operators and motorists towing trailers should be especially careful about controlling hot metal and friction sparks while outdoors. More information on fire-safe tactics is available at http://firesafemt.org/.

On Monday afternoon, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced Roaring Lion firefighting efforts were eligible for federal assistance. Federal Emergency Management Agency funds can be used to cover 75 percent of state and local firefighting costs. However, the grants do not provide assistance for individual home or business owners affected by the fire, or other infrastructure damage related to the fire. FEMA spokesman Randy Welch said the money would pay for field camps, equipment use, repairs and replacement, tools materials and supplies.

The increased tempo of fire activity has forced state and federal fire crews to prioritize their resources. Lolo National Forest spokesman Boyd Hartwig said three 20-person Hotshot crews have been released from the 13-acre South Tamarack fire 6 miles north of St. Regis after reaching mop-up status on Monday. A Type-II initial attack crew remains on the scene, where the fire is 20 percent contained.

The Northern Region Geographic Area, which includes Montana, shifted to Preparedness Level 3 on Monday. That reflects the changing tempo of fire starts and need for personnel, equipment and aircraft. The Northern Region remains ranked fourth out of seven geographic areas as fires in Colorado and parts of the Southwest demand higher priority. As dry weather shifts to the Northwest, that priority will shift as well.

Statewide, Montana fire observers reported 15 new fires including two large incidents (Roaring Lion and Copper King). Those come on top of five existing large fires and dozens of smaller blazes.

The Copper King fire 8 miles east of Thompson Falls should move to a Type II incident command management on Tuesday. It has burned about 700 acres. As of Monday, it had a crew of 33 backed up by a helicopter on the line.

While no evacuations have been ordered, residents in the Copper King and Snider communities have been warned to prepare their structures for fire defense.

Several roads along the west side of the Thompson River have been closed for fire safety, as have the Copper King and Clark Memorial campgrounds.

Zero containment on Copper King Fire (ABC-FOX Montana)

Mackenzie Allen | August 1, 2016

KALISPELL - Officials with the Lolo National forest say the Copper King Fire, burning just outside of Thompson Falls has grown to 700 acres.

The fire broke out Sunday afternoon and a cause has not been identified.

According to spokesman John Hamilton there is no containment on the fire and personnel have begun notifying the 10-15 nearby residents of the situation, but he says he's "very confident" an evacuation will not be necessary at this point.

A Type II Incident Management Team is on their way and is scheduled to take over firefighting operations early Tuesday morning.

Currently 33 personnel, a helicopter and several engines are on scene.

A public meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday night at the Thompson Falls Community Center.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Lightning causes fire, spill at oilfield facility (Forum News Service)

Aug 1, 2016

NEW TOWN, N.D. – A lightning strike is blamed for a fire at a saltwater disposal well that occurred Sunday in Mountrail County, the North Dakota Oil and Gas Division said.

Whiting Oil and Gas Corp. reported that 400 barrels of produced water, or 16,800 gallons, were released, contained and recovered from a fire at a disposal well about 10 miles north of New Town.

Saltwater is a waste byproduct of oil production.

The fire, which involved five tanks at the location, is extinguished, said Alison Ritter, spokeswoman for the Oil and Gas Division. A state inspector visited the location.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Flood Of 2011 Gavins Point Withstood Historic River Surge (Yankton Daily)

Brayton Hagge | August 1, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of a series of stories this summer to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the Missouri River flood of 2011.

In comparison to the repairs needed after the Missouri River flood in 2011, this year's Gavins Point Dam repairs are relatively minor.

"We've had really major stuff going on with the flood repairs from 2011 to 2015," said Dave Becker, operations project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Gavins Point. "Now we're just doing minor repairs out there. Things are in good working order."

This year's projects include installing new safety railings on the spillway and completing gate maintenance.

"Each year they bring (the gates) up and down to do maintenance on them," Becker said. "They clean them, power wash them and inspect the rollers on them to make sure they are functioning well. They are making sure those gates are ready to use when we need them."

He said none of this year's projects are related to the damages caused by the 2011 flood.

"The repairs of the flood damages were all completed last year," he explained.

After the flood, the dam was left in need of nearly $20 million worth of repairs. Becker said the damages were to be expected considering the record amounts of water which passed through the spillway gate, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers did face public concern on the matter.

"The public was in a very heightened state," Becker said. "They were very aware of the flood going on, so they were very watchful and concerned."

However, he maintained that the damages the dam sustained were in no way reflective of its ability to handle the flood.

"We had no concerns (about the dam), although we were monitoring it very closely," he said. "We had no big warning signs or anything like that (indicating) there were any major problems. Any time something is working hard, you just watch it closely."

After water levels lowered, crews began commencing work on major repair projects.

"One of the big (projects) was the repair of the spillway gates," Becker said. "(Workers) redid a fair number of the welds on the gates and inspected them. They repainted them and put new cables on them to lift and lower them. They also did maintenance on the gear boxes for the gates."

Repairs on the spillway apron, which consists of the concrete below the gates, comprised another large repair project.

"There was a tremendous amount of debris that was removed," he said. "We had issues with our frost blanket drains that needed to be corrected, and we had a very thorough underwater inspection done of the spillway slab."

The Corps also installed 35 new relief wells and brought in 75,000 tons of riprap to replace the rock that had been swept away by the fast flowing waters.

Becker felt some of the adjustments made during the flood repairs could decrease the amount of work required to rehabilitate the dam in the case of another record flood.

“I would think our damages would be less than that because we went in with a bigger size of stone (riprap) that doesn’t wash away as readily,” he said. “But any time something gets a real hard workout like that, there’s something that needs to be repaired.”

According to Becker, now that all the flood repairs have been finished, the maintenance projects being completed this year are all the dam currently requires to stay in peak condition. The only other projects currently in the works involve resurfacing Crest Road this summer and updating the power plant throughout the next five years.

“We’ve been able to keep up with routine things because we have good funding and support, and because of that, we don’t really have any real major work on the horizon,” he said.

Becker predicted the 59-year-old dam could be kept in good working condition for many more years.

“Really as long as the public is supportive of the dam being here, we can continue to do the necessary operations and maintenance on it,” he said.

Following the South Dakota drought online (KELO-Sioux Falls)

Mark Russo | August 1, 2016

PIERRE, SD (KELO-AM) South Dakota now has a website with updated drought information.

The website: drought.sd.gov,

Governor Daugaard says the website will help keep farmers and ranchers in the know.

“The website will include information such as the latest U.S. Drought Monitor, fire conditions, weather reports and agricultural information,” says the Governor. “We know many people are impacted by the dry conditions and we want to provide the best information we can.”

Other features on the website include a map comparing this year’s drought to the 2012 drought and a fire map showing the number of acres burned and the perimeter of the fires on state jurisdictional land.

While there has been recent rainfall in some areas, extremely dry conditions exist in other parts of the state. An emergency fire declaration earlier had been declared for 13 central and western South Dakota counties impacted by the drought conditions. Those counties are Butte, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Hughes, Jackson, Jones, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins and Stanley.

UTAH:

Some evacuated areas open back up as Tokewanna Fire continues to burn 1,300 + acres (KUTV-Salt Lake City)

Cimaron Neugebauer | August 1, 2016

(KUTV) A wildfire that has been burning for the past 5 days near the Utah/Wyoming border has charred 1,300 acres and is 24 percent contained, as of Monday morning.

About 500 firefighters have been fighting the blaze, primarily on private land, located near the Meeks Cabin Dam about 15 miles south of Mountain View, Wyoming in Uinta County. The cause of the fire is unknown and still under investigation.

A few residents who were evacuated will be allowed to return to their homes today.

At noon on Monday residents living north of the intersection of Blacksfork Drive and County Road 271 (Meeks Cabin Dam Road) and the intersection of Wapati Road and East Wapati Road (including East Wapati Road itslef) will be allowed to return to their homes. These areas include Meeks Ridge and Aspen Springs subdivisions north of Cattle Guard 7. The Burearu of Land Management noted that residents may not have electrical power when they return. At this point, a few other areas remain closed to the public while firefighting efforts continue.

STILL CLOSED:

- The Uinta County Youth Camp
- Tokewanna and BlacksFork River Estates
- County Road 271 south to Meeks Cabin remain closed

The area of primary attention and concern has been protecting structures in the Tokewanna and Blacks Fork River Estates areas.

Continued hot temperatures and low relative humidity combined with the possibility of thunderstorms in the area will bring potential for increased fire activity in the area.

There will be a community meeting on Aug. 2 at 7 p.m. at the Mountain View High School located at 330 7th Street, Mountain View, Wyoming to give an update and discuss the state of the Tokewanna Fire.

WYOMING:

Beware of rattlesnakes this time of year (Casper Star-Tribune)

Kelsey Dayton | August 1, 2016

It feels like a slap and sounds like a pop. It's the shimmying sound of the rattle afterward that's terrifying.

Zack Walker, now non-game supervisor with Wyoming Game and Fish, was once working near Waltman studying rattlesnakes as the state herpetological coordinator. He jumped off a rock and had barely landed when he felt something hit him in the leg and heard the warning rattle.

"I jumped right back out of there," he said.

It's not a sound anyone wants to hear.

If you spend time in snake country, be especially careful this time of year, Walker said. While rattlesnakes usually spread across the landscape, they congregate to breed in mid-summer. If you see one, there's probably more around, Walker said.

The snakes are found throughout the state, usually staying within 3 or 4 miles of where they hibernate.

"When you are in that pocket, you know you are in that pocket," Walker said.

Despite emerging from hibernation a couple of weeks earlier than normal in the beginning of May, anecdotally, this year's snake sightings seem to reflect a normal season, Walker said.

Eugene DuQuette, an emergency room doctor at Wyoming Medical Center, said in the hospital's health news service that during one particularly wet spring and summer, he saw eight bites. Wyoming Medical Center reported only one bite so far this year.

Snake bites are rarely fatal in the United States. According to Wyoming Medical Center, without antivenin, snake bites have a 2 percent mortality rate and only .2 percent with it. In Wyoming there are even fewer as the rattlesnake isn't as poisonous as some breeds.

The seriousness of a bite depends on the amount of venom the snake injects. Between 10 percent and 20 percent of snake bites are dry, meaning they don't inject venom, Wyoming Medical Center reported.

Rattlesnake bites might cause heart arrhythmias, nose bleeds, bloody stools or vomit and, more rare in Wyoming, neurological changes like paralysis and weakness. They are treated with antivenin.

Walker has been struck more than once by rattlesnakes, but snake-proof gaiters protected him from ever being bitten.

"I've had many close encounters, but I've never had one get their fangs in me," he said.

It doesn’t stop the jolt of adrenaline whenever he feels one strike and he wonders if it broke through.

Avoid a bite

- Make noise while walking in snake country, especially in grass where snakes are hard to spot. Wyoming snakes are not aggressive and usually strike because they are startled.
- Know where to look. Snakes are often in grassy areas where they are hard to see.
- Leave snakes alone. Don’t dig in burrows where snakes may live. Don’t try to catch a rattlesnake, even if you are trying to confirm a friend was bitten by one.
- Wear high-legged boots and gloves. Boots can prevent fangs from puncturing the skin, or minimize the amount of venom the snake can inject. Gloves will protect your hands.
- Watch the kids. Venom travels faster in smaller bodies.

What to do if you're bitten

- Call 911 immediately.
- Note the size. The smaller the snake, the more concentrated the venom.
- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Do not attempt to suck out the venom. You can poison yourself if it gets in the mouth and you can cause tissue damage around the bite.
- Keep bitten limb in a neutral position --- do not elevate.
- Do not ice the bite area.
- Stay calm. If you aren’t in cell range, send someone else to get help. You have four to five hours before the venom has time to fully circulate.

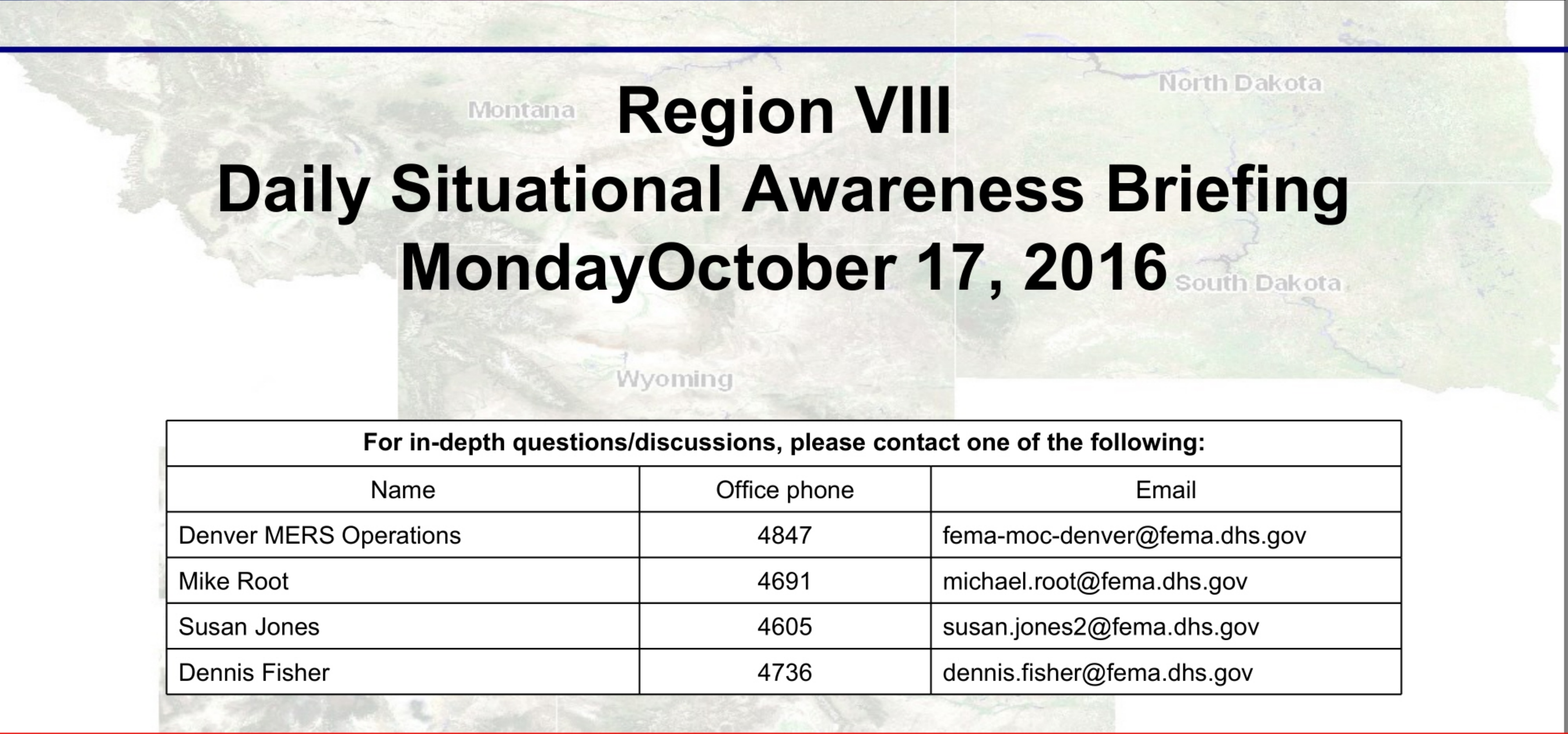
Source: Dr. Eugene DuQuette and Wyoming Medical Center

From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: 17 Oct 2016 10:43:10 -0400
To: (b)(6)@nd.gov;Alexander, Daniel;Americanos, Christopher;Andersen, Chris;Appenrodt, Kathleen;Carey, Bob;Bakersky, Pete;Brazelton, James;Bruce Holloman (b)(6)@state.co.us);Bush, Tom;Chris Sorensen - CO SEOC;Claiborne, Ari MAJ;Darabaris, John;DCE R VIII Operations (usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.dco-region-viii-ops1@mail.mil);DCE-(b)(6) (b)(6) SFC (b)(6)@mail.mil);DCE-(b)(6)@us.army.mil);DCE-(b)(6) SFC (b)(6)@mail.mil);(b)(6);Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee;Dragani, Nancy;Espinosa, Adam;Feighert, Dan;Copen, Larry (FEMA CORPS);FEMA-NWC;Fisher, Dennis;Garcia, Maria;Gina Cristiano (Denver EPA);Graff, Shawn;Gray, Patricia;Helland, Kevin(b)(6) (b)(6)@wyo.gov;Holmes, Lanney;Hudson, Lamont;Jason Bauder;Jones, Susan K;Watanabe, Judy;Kimble, Kerry;Lawley, Charles;Longenecker, Herbert;Lyman, AJ;McCool, Thomas;McCown, James;McNeese, Colleen;Moore, Jkevin;Moreno, Paul;(b)(6)@nd.gov);Nyquist, Daniel;Pendergrass, Michael M;Poore, Stephanie;R8 Division Directors;R8 External Affairs;Papp, Nickolas;Richey, Sharon;Rockabrand, Ryan;Root, Michael;Rothe, Marschal G;tina titze;Settle, Sean;Stensgaard, Theresa;Traynor, Janice;Victor P.;Volkman, Jeff;Watkins, David
Cc: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Subject: FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Brief Slides for 17 Oct 2016
Attachments: Stand Up Consolidated Brief 17 Oct 2016.pptx

Good Morning,

Today's FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Briefing slides. Have a great day!

Elizabeth Nakai
Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC), Region VIII Watch &
FEMA Alternate Operations Center – West (FAOC-West)
800-311-7021



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
MondayOctober 17, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: FYSA SD-Cottonwood FireFYSA CO-Custer County Wildfire MOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: Deployed ISO DR-4277-LARVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	🟨 LEVEL III (MONITORING)
Utah	🟩 NORMAL
S. Dakota	🟩 NORMAL
N. Dakota	🟨 LEVEL II (PARTIAL)
Wyoming	🟩 NORMAL
Montana	🟨 LEVEL III (MONITORING)

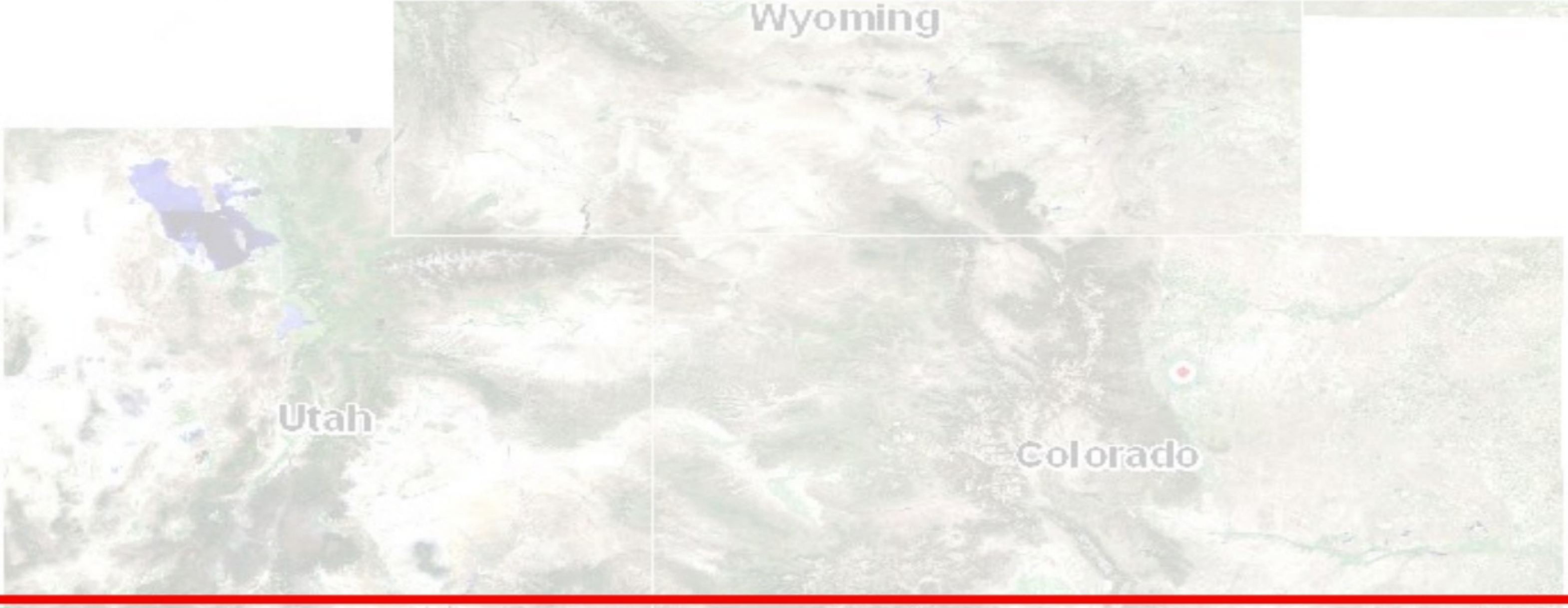
Events

- Tue 1:00-2:00 Sr Leadership VTC-Region 8, RA Conf RmThu 1:30-3:00 R8 Division Directors Meeting, RA Conf Rm

Exercises and Training

Region Active Fires updated as of 0815, 17 Oct 2016

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 17 Oct 2016)				
Cottonwood Fire	Cottonwood, South Dakota	5,000 - 6,000 acres	0%	Source: kotatv.com
Junkins Fire	Custer County	100	0%	Evacuations underwaySource: Local media reports/WebEOC



FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

No Activity Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as “Major” by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟨	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟨	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟩	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state’s population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3	🟥	
CIR 4	🟥	
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11		
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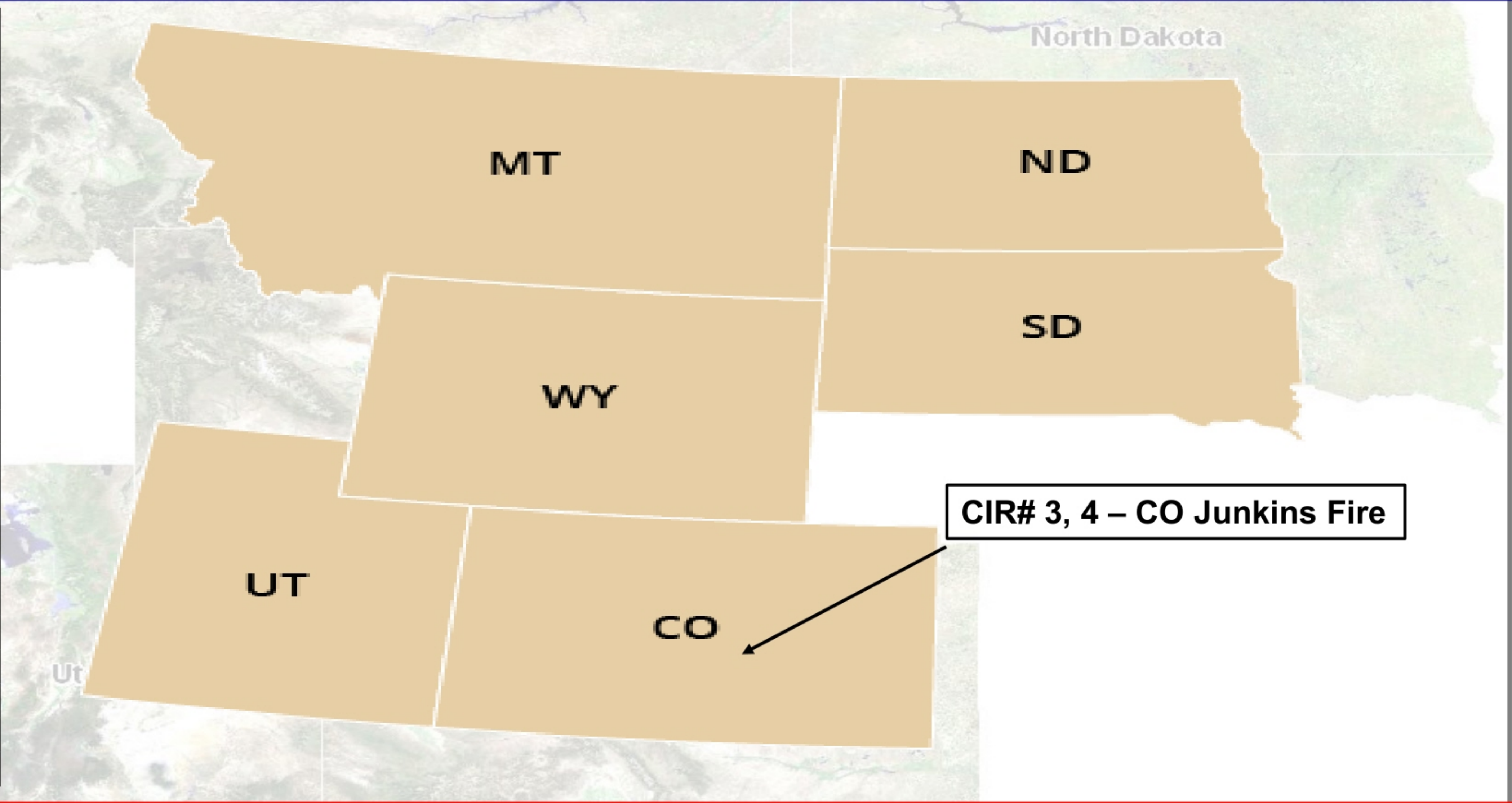
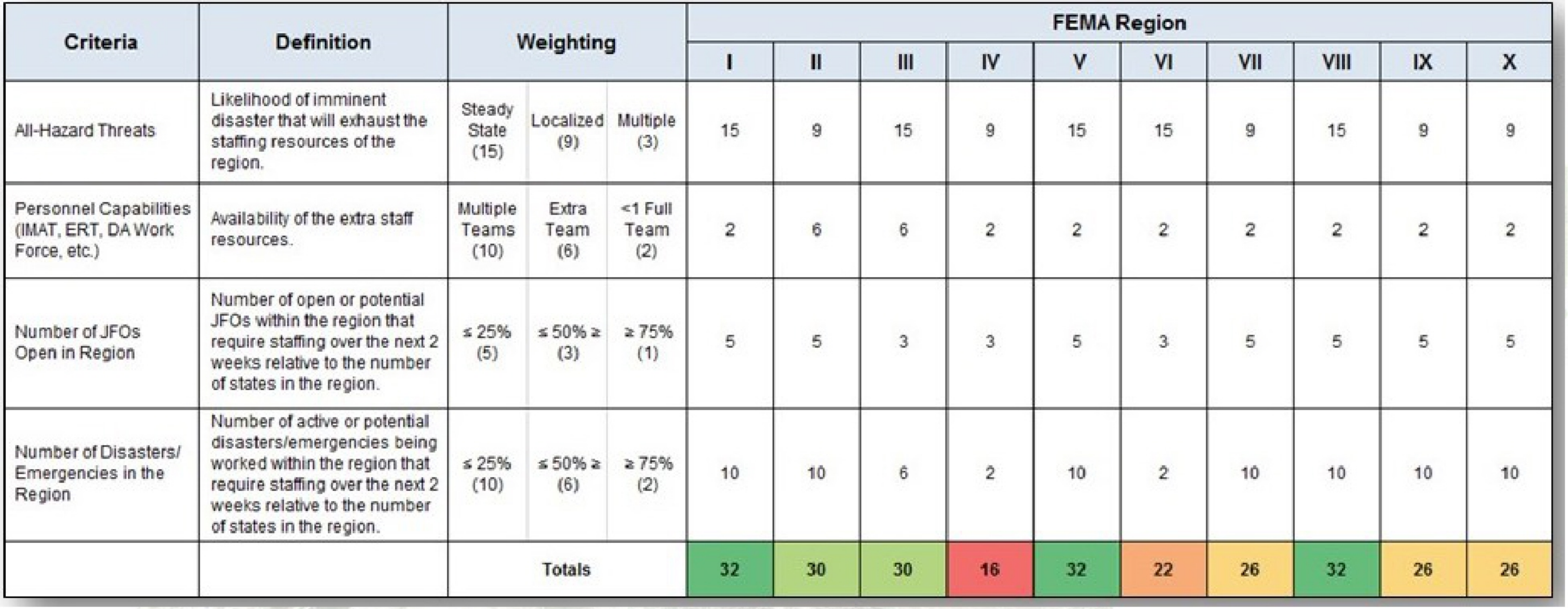
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 4 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 17 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	9	15	9	15	15	9	15	9	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	10	2	10	10	10	10
		Totals			32	30	30	16	32	22	26	32	26	26

Backup Regions I, V, VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations		
Level	**Reason for Activation**	**Activated Times**

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations		
State	**Activation**	**Event/Incident**
MT	Level III Monitoring	Flooding
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level III Monitoring	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations		
State	**Activation (Event)**	**Supporting**
LA	Flooding	DR-4277-LA

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status		
FCO	**Deployed Location**	**Declaration Number**

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)		
RCO	**Deployed Location**	**Declaration Number**
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

R8 PDA Summary

State	Event	Type	Counties / TribesRequested	Completed	(Estimated) Start / End Date

Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

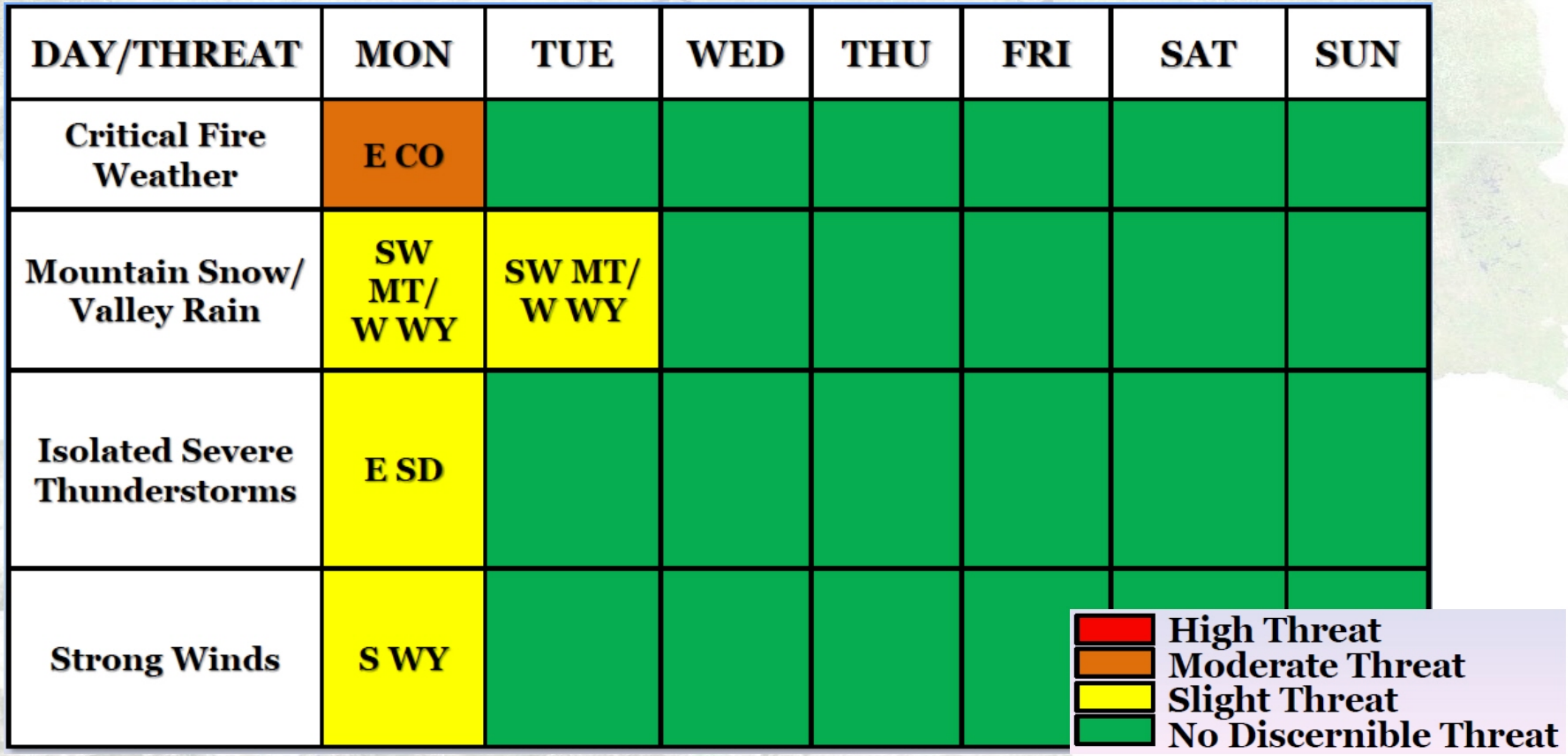
Today-Wednesday

- Critical fire weather conditions will continue across eastern CO through this evening. Ongoing fires will have the potential to continue to grow quickly
- A marginal risk for severe thunderstorms exists across E SD this afternoon. Primary threats will be gusty winds and large hail
- Strong winds will continue across southern portions of WY which could result in impacts to transportation along Interstates 25 and 80
- Periods of valley rain and mountain snow will continue through mid-week across portions of the Intermountain West and Northern Rockies
    - Impacts to travel across mountain passes are possible but should lessen after tomorrow

Thursday-Sunday

- A ridge of high pressure is expected to build across the area late in the week and into the weekend keeping the threat for widespread impactful weather low

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

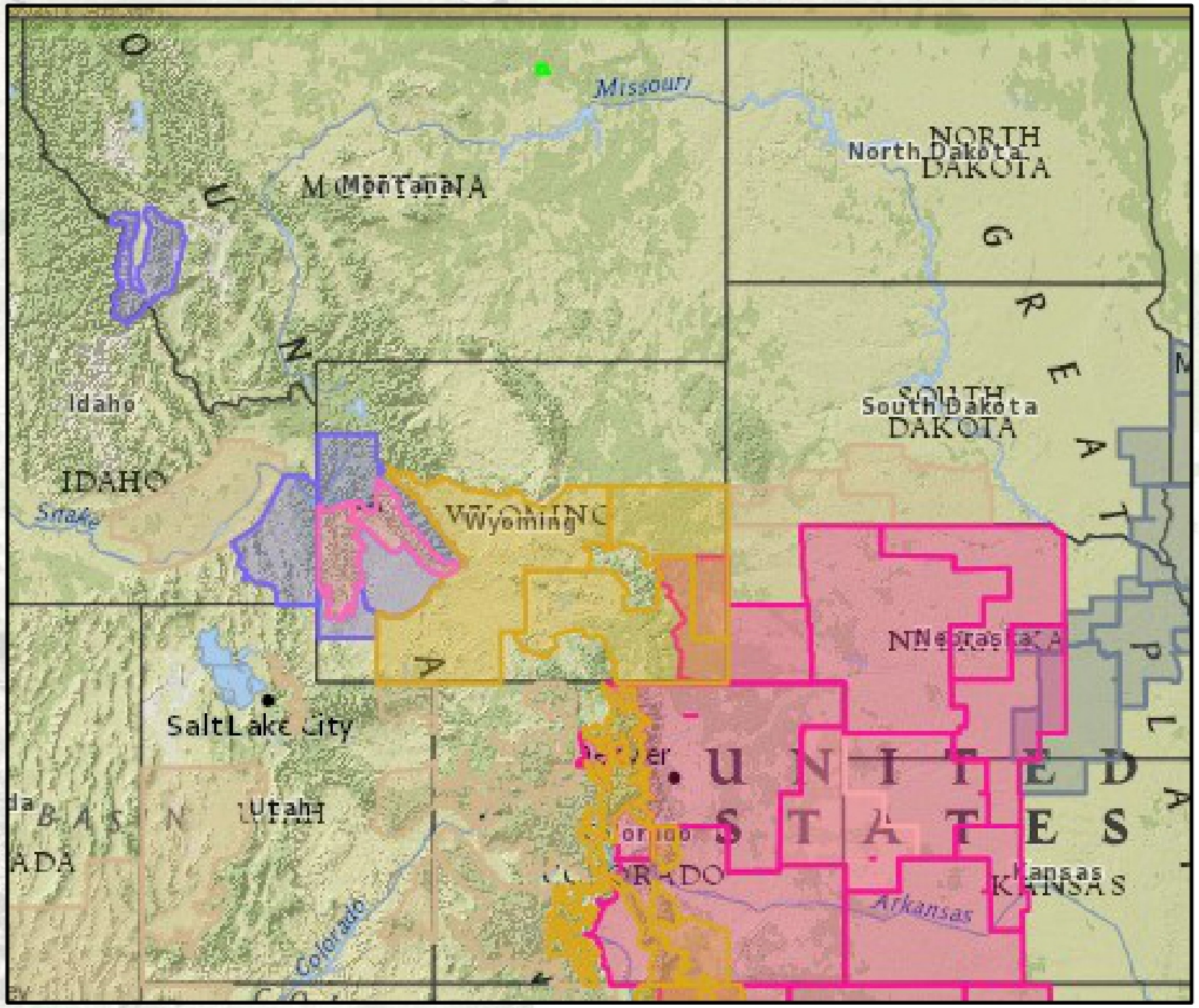


DAY/THREAT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Critical Fire Weather	🟧 E CO	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snow/ Valley Rain	🟨 SW MT/ W WY	🟨 SW MT/ W WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Isolated Severe Thunderstorms	🟨 E SD	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Strong Winds	🟨 S WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

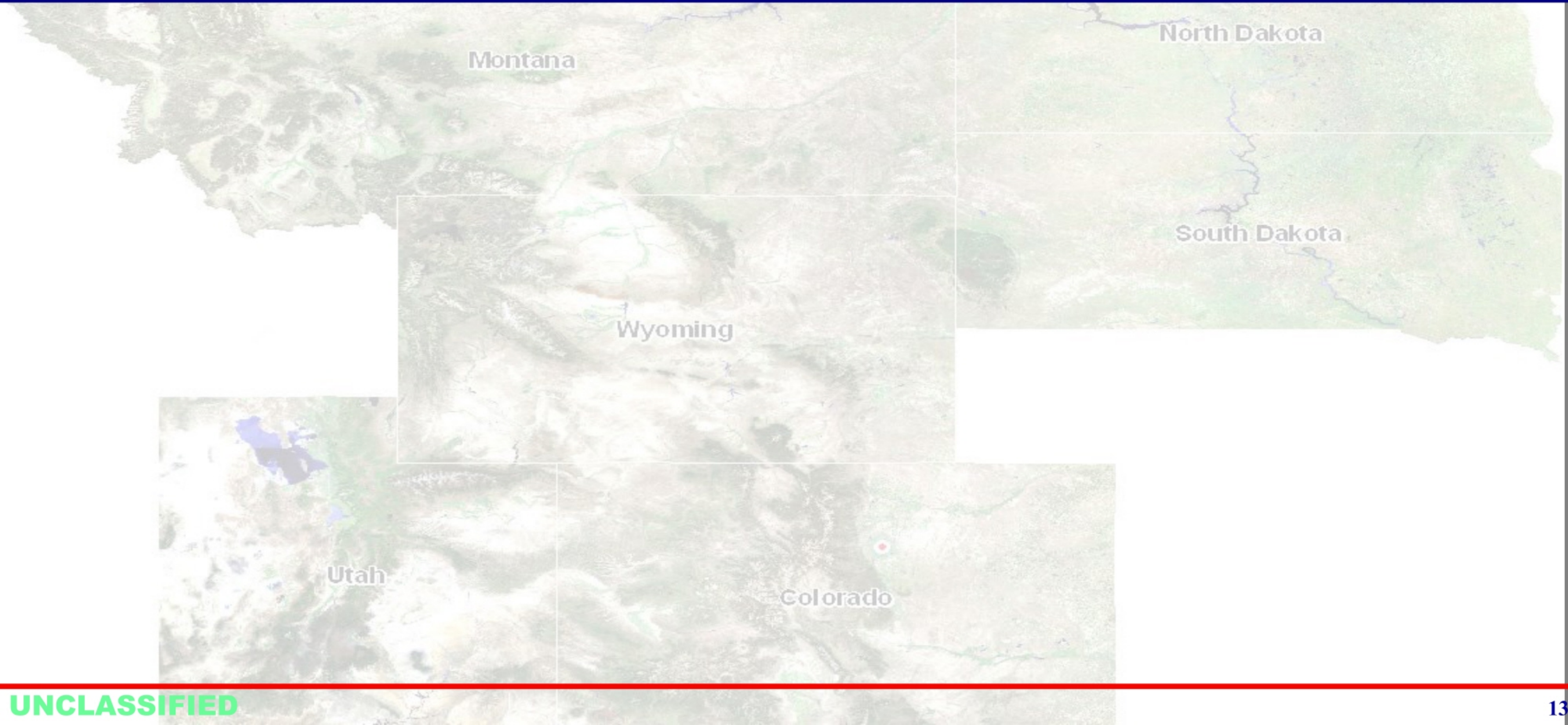
🟥 High Threat
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

Regional Weather Hazards

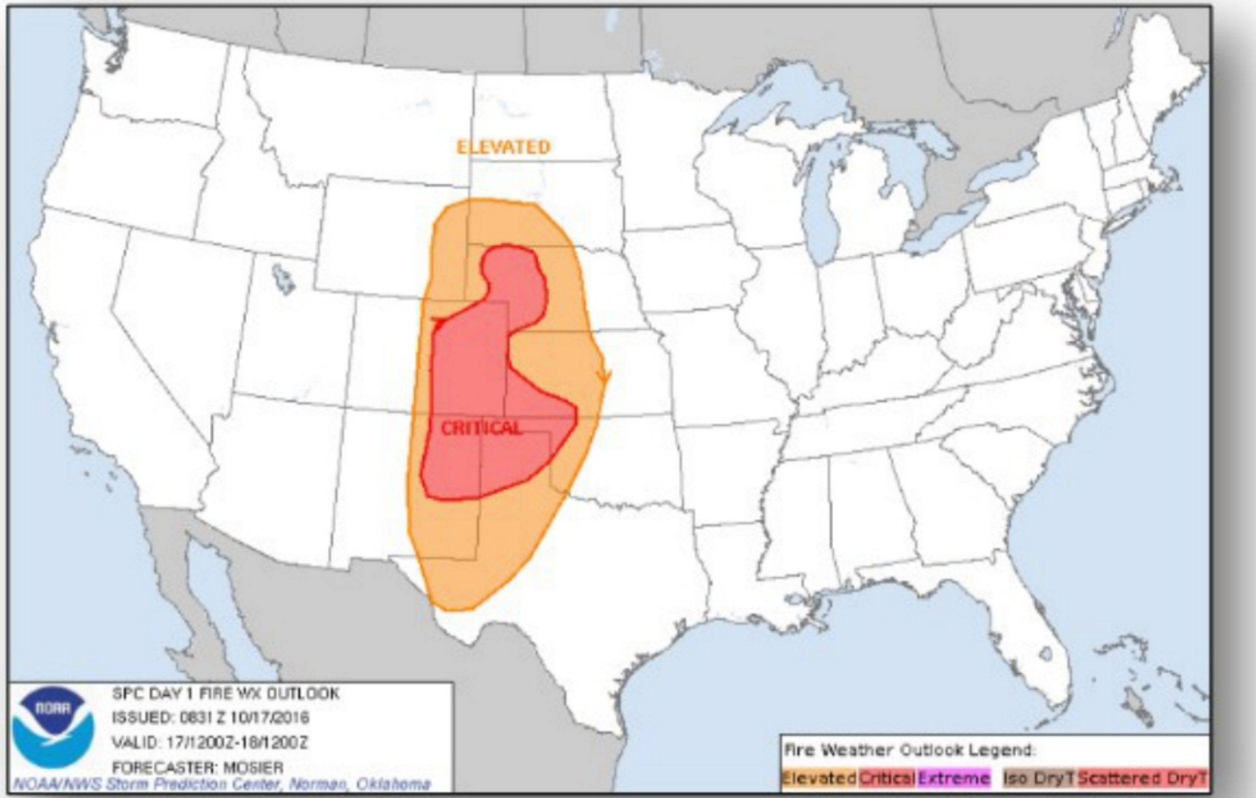
CO: High Wind Warning until noon for central valley and mountain areasRed Flag Warning until 9 PM for all of eastern plainsMT: Winter Weather Advisory until noon for part of southwestSD: Wind Advisory from 11 AM to 6 PM for portion of southwestWY:Winter Storm Warning until 6 PM across west; significant snowfall expected 9-16 inchesHigh Wind Warning until 6 PM across portions of central and south central areasWinter Weather Advisory until 6 pm across western areas


Missouri
Montana
MONTANA
North Dakota
NORTH DAKOTA
GREAT
South Dakota
SOUTH DAKOTA
Idaho
IDAHO
Snake
Wyoming
WYOMING
Salt Lake City
Utah
UTAH
BASIN
ADA
Nebraska
NEBRASKA
Denver
Colorado
COLORADO
UNITED STATES
Kansas
KANSAS
Arkansas
Colorado

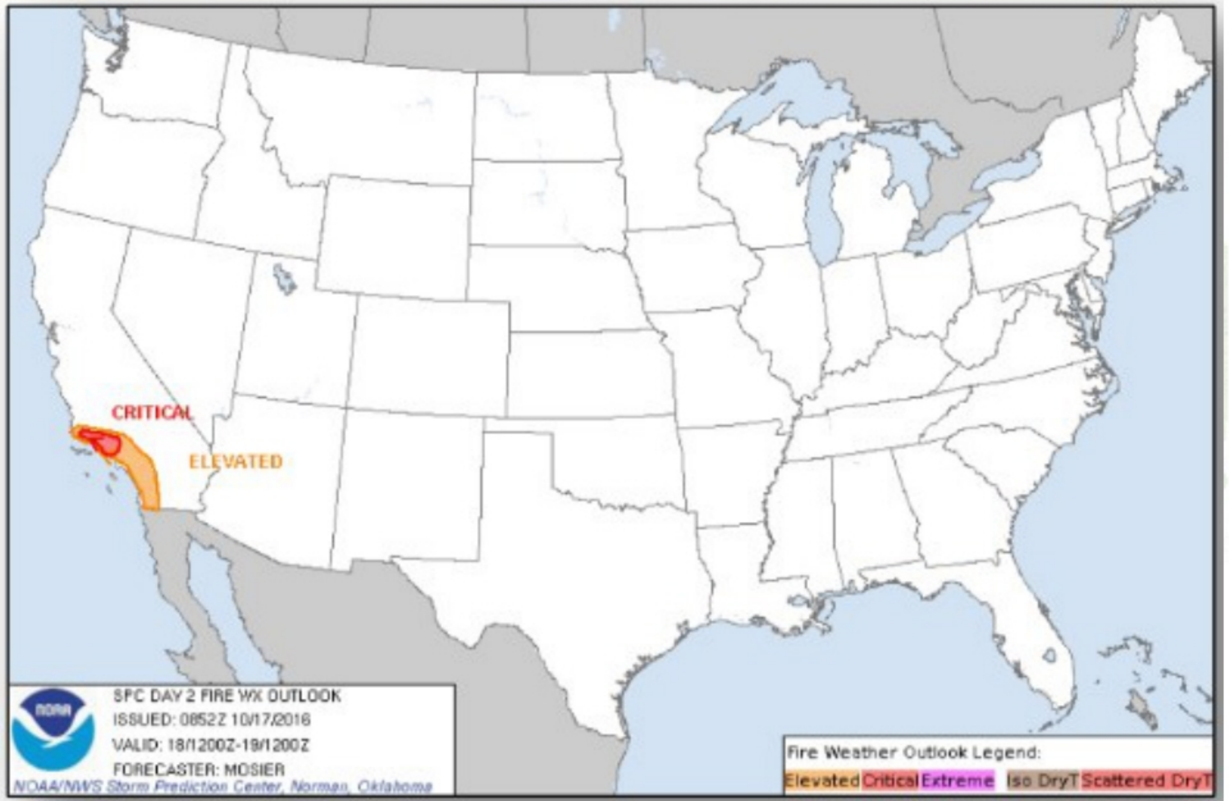
Precipitation Outlook


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

Fire Weather Outlook


ELEVATED
CRITICAL
NOAA
SPC DAY 1 FIRE WX OUTLOOK
ISSUED: 0831 Z 10/17/2016
VALID: 17/1200Z-18/1200Z
FORECASTER: MOSIER
NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center, Norman, Oklahoma
Fire Weather Outlook Legend:
Elevated Critical Extreme Iso DryT Scattered DryT

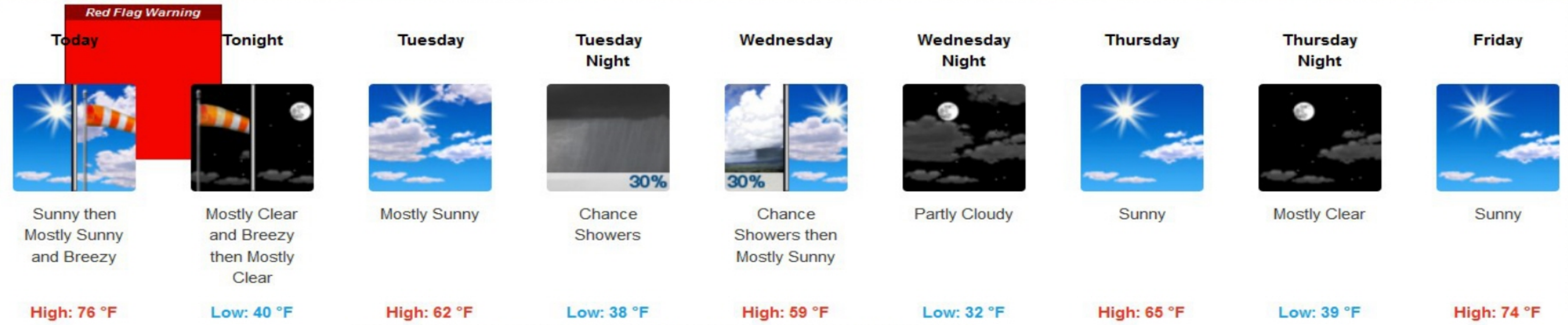
Day 1


CRITICAL
ELEVATED
NOAA
SPC DAY 2 FIRE WX OUTLOOK
ISSUED: 0852Z 10/17/2016
VALID: 18/1200Z-19/1200Z
FORECASTER: MOSIER
NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center, Norman, Oklahoma
Fire Weather Outlook Legend:
Elevated Critical Extreme Iso DryT Scattered DryT

Day 2

State Weather Forecast

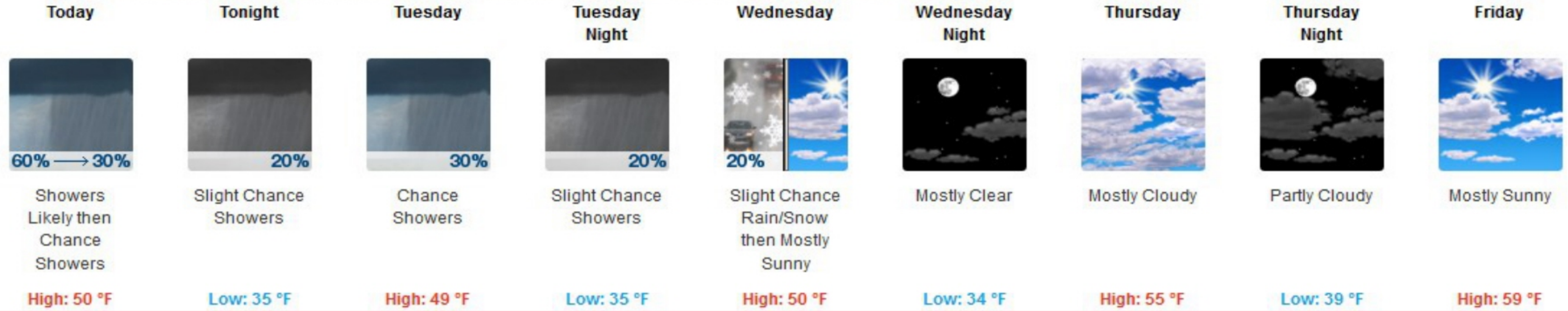
Denver, CO



Red Flag Warning

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
			30%	30%				
Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Chance Showers	Chance Showers then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 76 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 62 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 59 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 74 °F

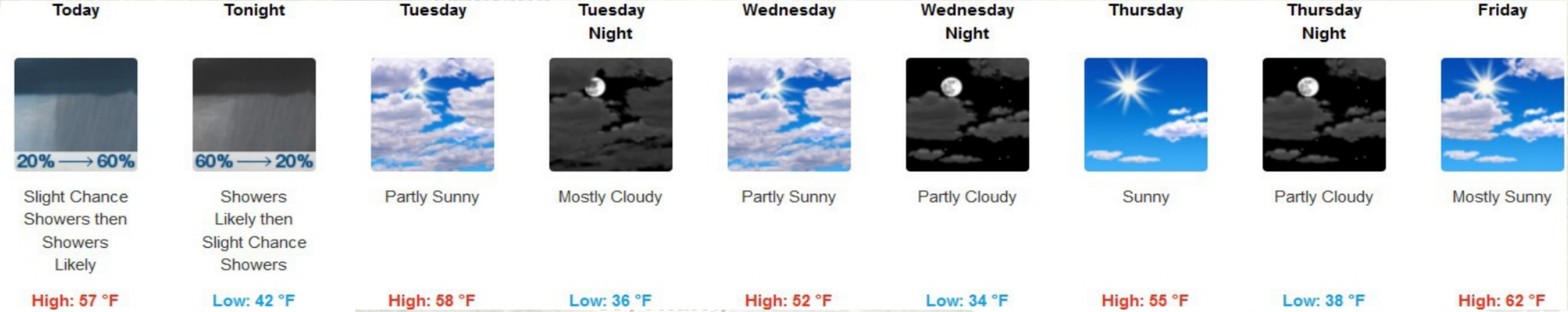
Helena, MT



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
60% → 30%	20%	30%	20%	20%				
Showers Likely then Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Rain/Snow then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 50 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 49 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 50 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 59 °F

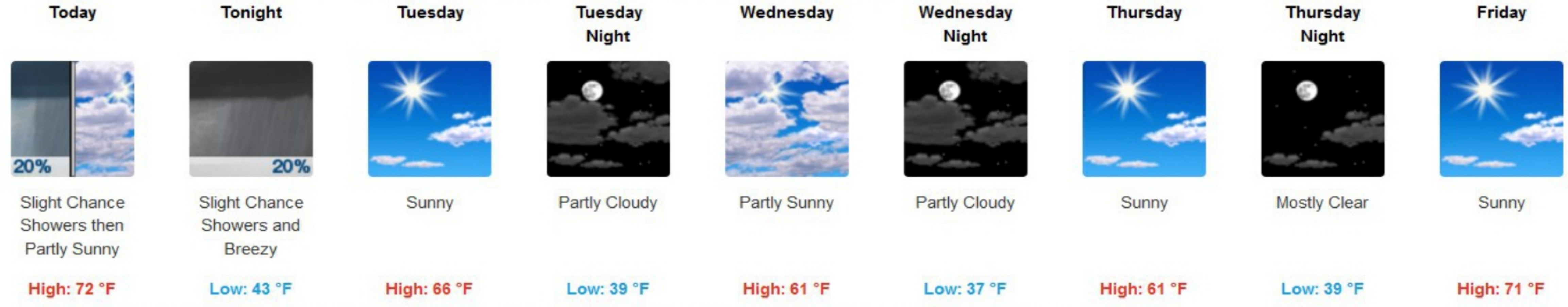
State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
20% ⟶ 60%	60% ⟶ 20%							
Slight Chance Showers then Showers Likely	Showers Likely then Slight Chance Showers	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 57 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 52 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 62 °F

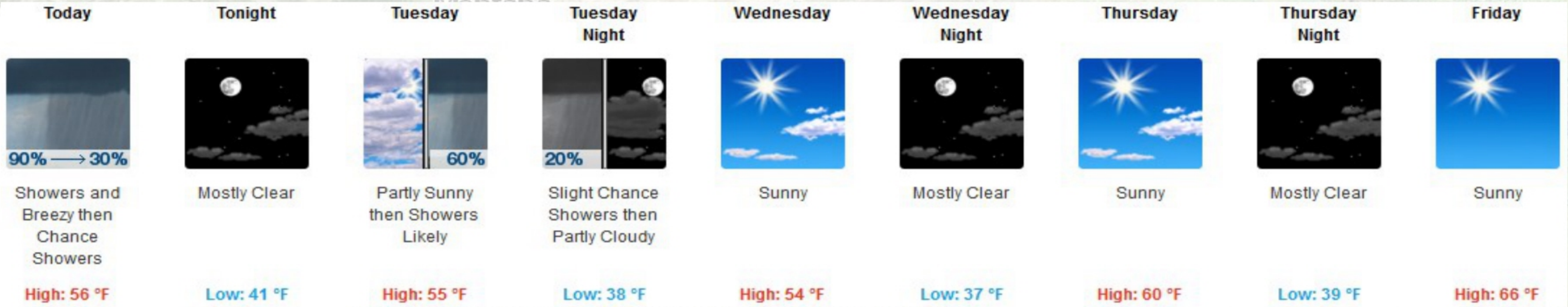
Pierre, SD



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
20%	20%							
Slight Chance Showers then Partly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers and Breezy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 72 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 71 °F

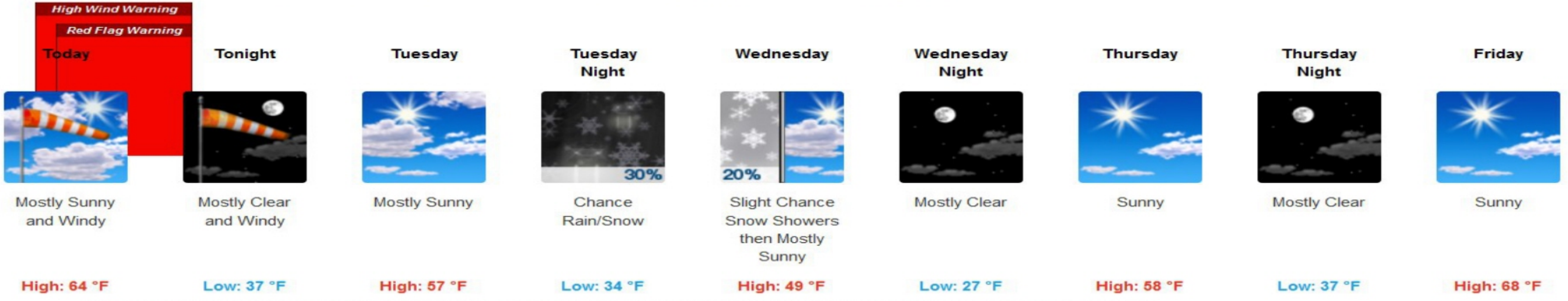
State Weather Forecast - Cont

Salt Lake City, UT



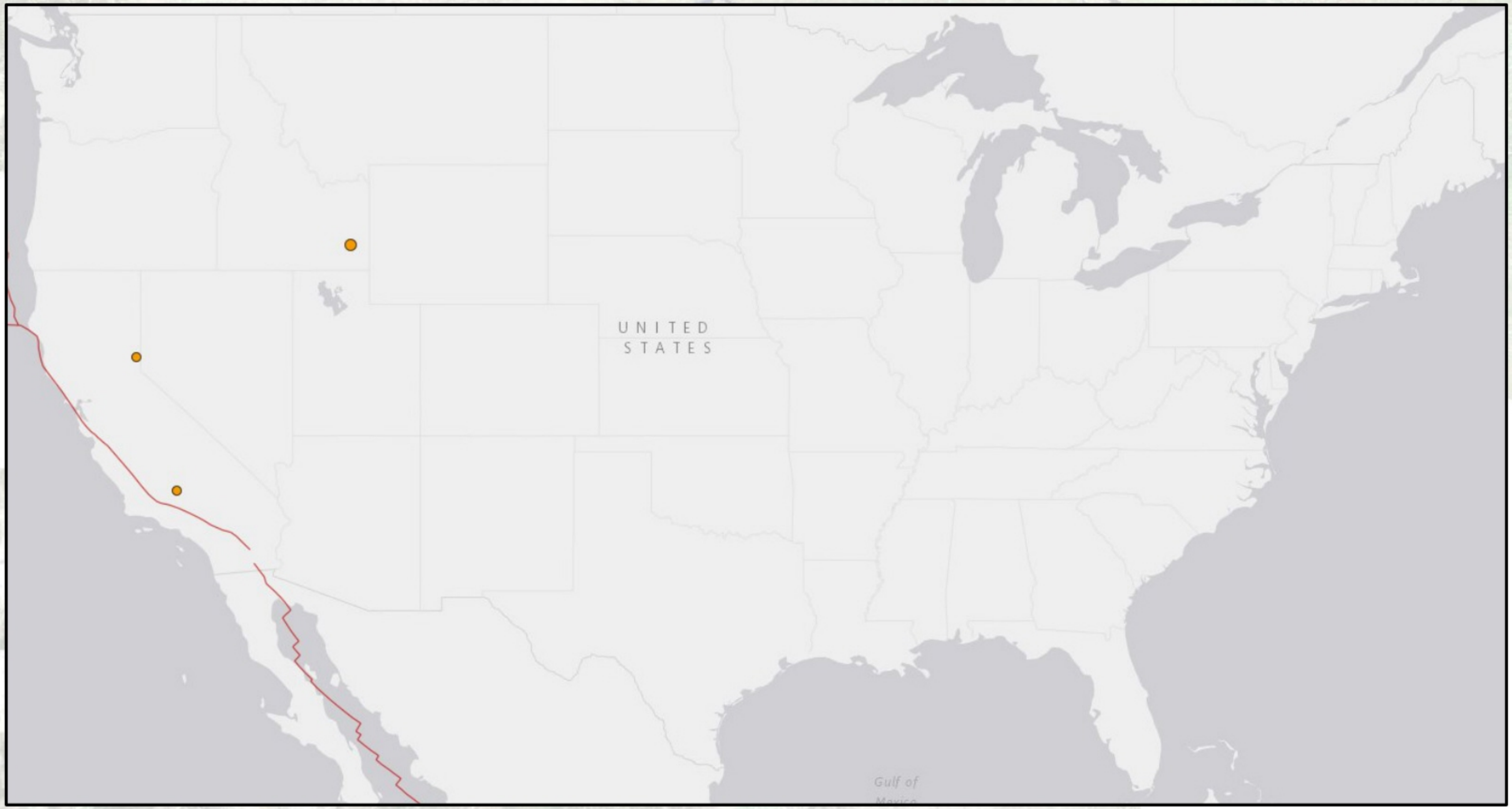
Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
Showers and Breezy then Chance Showers	Mostly Clear	Partly Sunny then Showers Likely	Slight Chance Showers then Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 56 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 66 °F

Cheyenne, WY

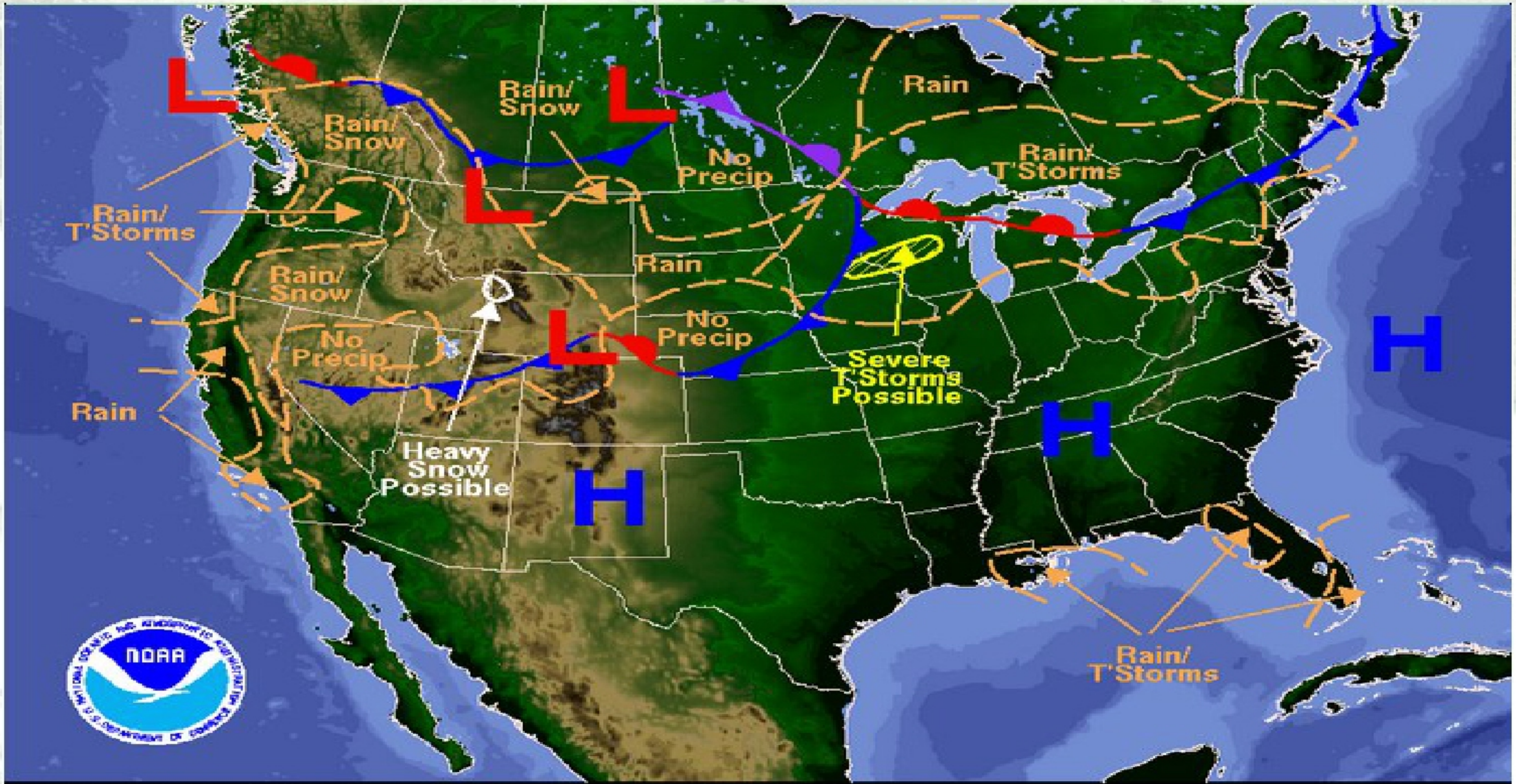


Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
Mostly Sunny and Windy	Mostly Clear and Windy	Mostly Sunny	Chance Rain/Snow	Slight Chance Snow Showers then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 64 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 57 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 49 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 68 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity


UNITED STATES
Gulf of Mexico

Today's National Weather Forecast


L
L
L
L
Rain/
Snow
Rain/
Snow
Rain
Rain/
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No
Precip
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T'Storms
Rain
Rain/
Snow
No
Precip
No
Precip
Severe
T'Storms
Possible
Heavy
Snow
Possible
Rain
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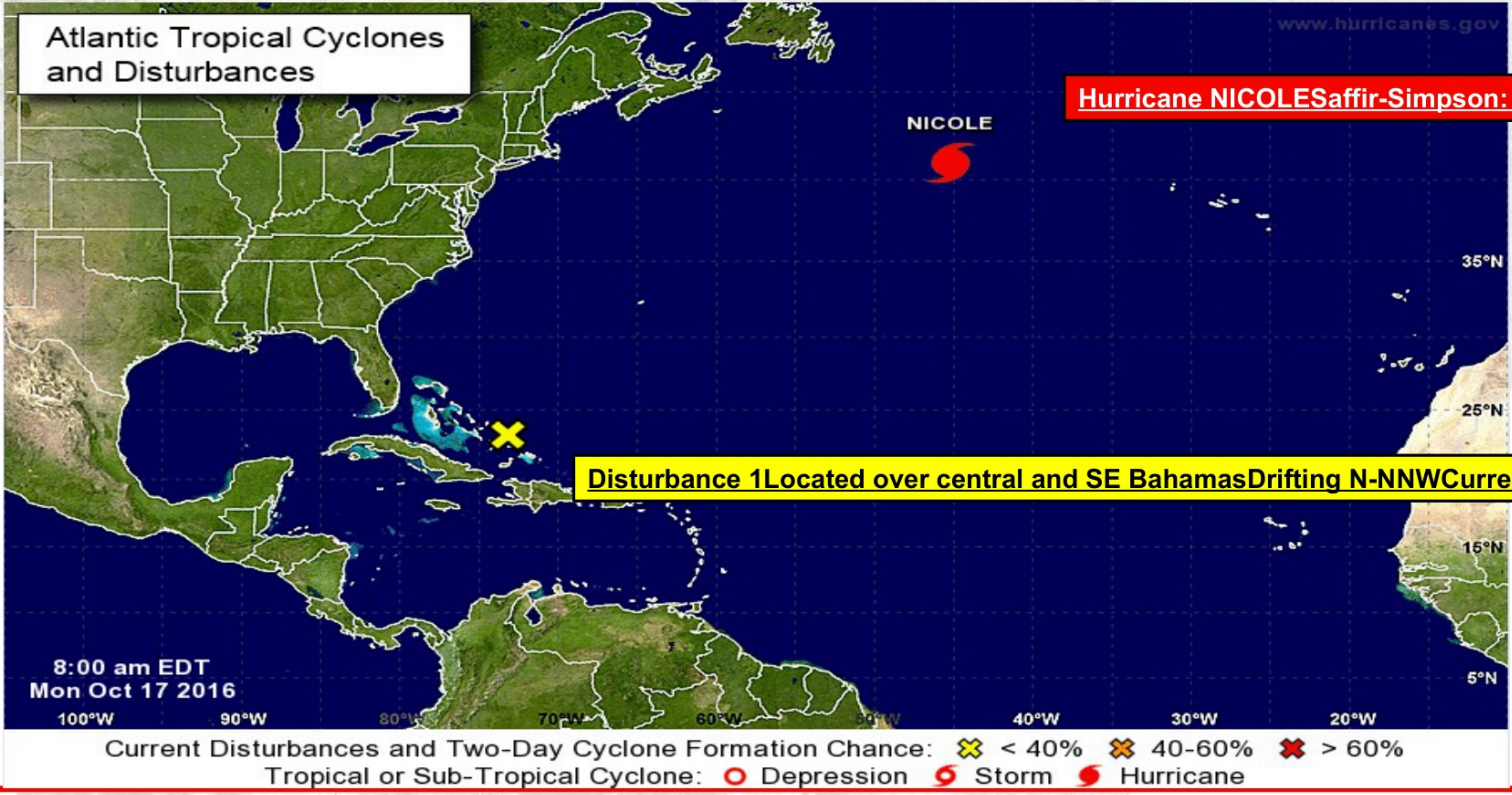
H
H
Rain/
T'Storms
NOAA

Weather Forecast for Mon. Oct 17, 2016, issued 4:17 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

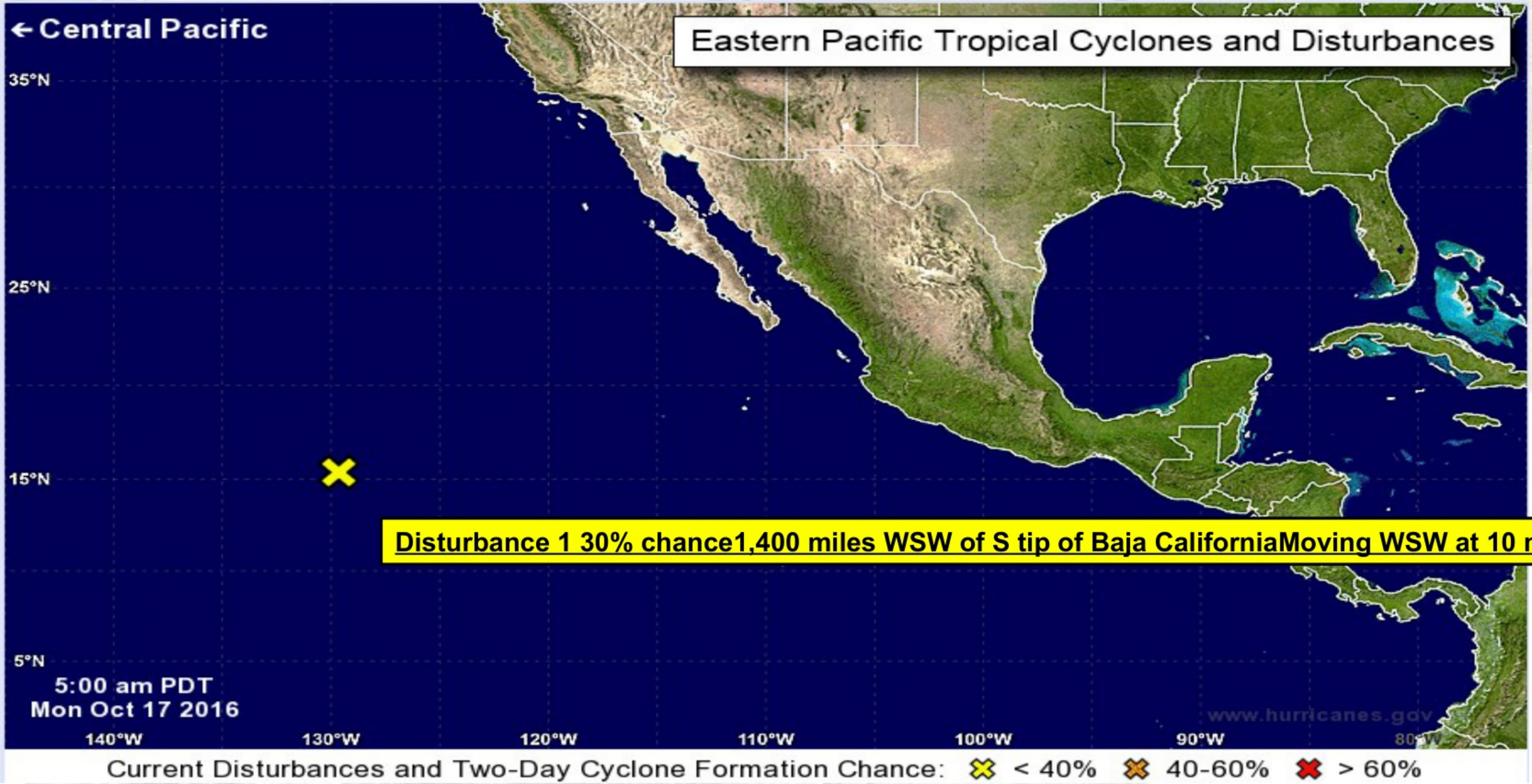
Atlantic Tropical Assessment


Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
www.hurricanes.gov
NICOLE
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W
8:00 am EDT
Mon Oct 17 2016
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: < 40% 40-60% > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: Depression Storm Hurricane

Hurricane NICOLESaffir-Simpson: Category 1

Disturbance 1Located over central and SE BahamasDrifting N-NNWCurrently unfavor

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment


← Central Pacific
Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
www.hurricanes.gov
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance:
< 40%
40-60%
> 60%

5:00 am PDT
Mon Oct 17 2016

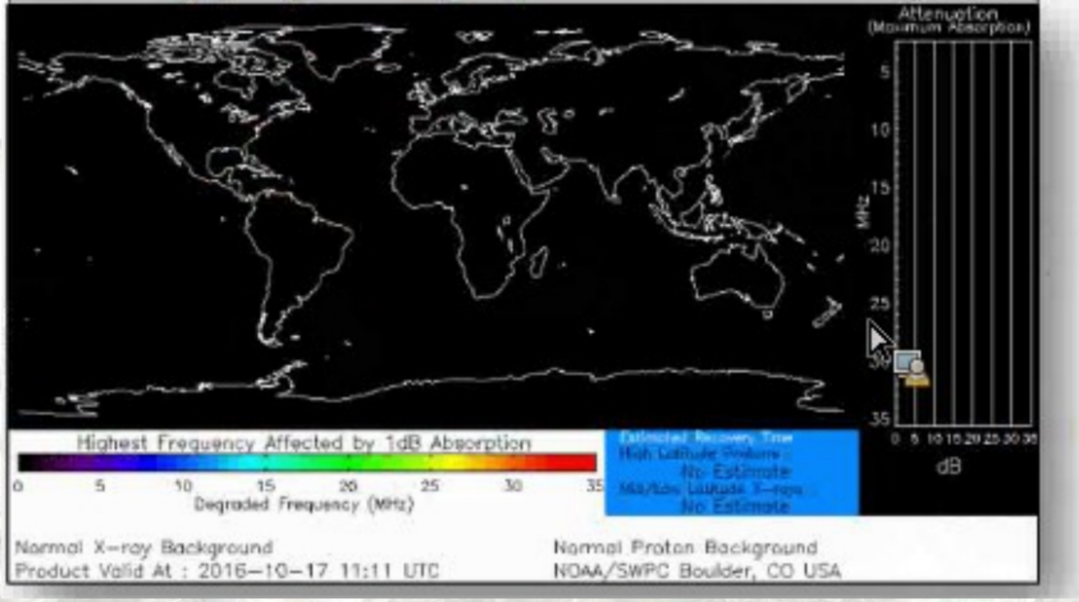
Disturbance 1 30% chance1,400 miles WSW of S tip of Baja CaliforniaMoving WSW at 10 mphSome s

Space Weather

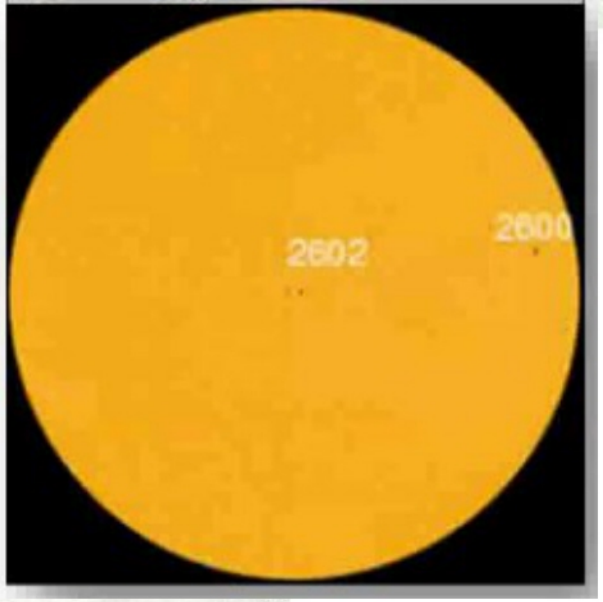
	Space Weather Activity	Geomagnetic Storms	Solar Radiation	Radio Blackouts
Past 24 Hours	Minor	G1	None	None
Next 24 Hours	Moderate	G2	None	None

For further information on NOAA Space Weather Scales refer to http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/noaa-scales-explanation

HF Communication Impact

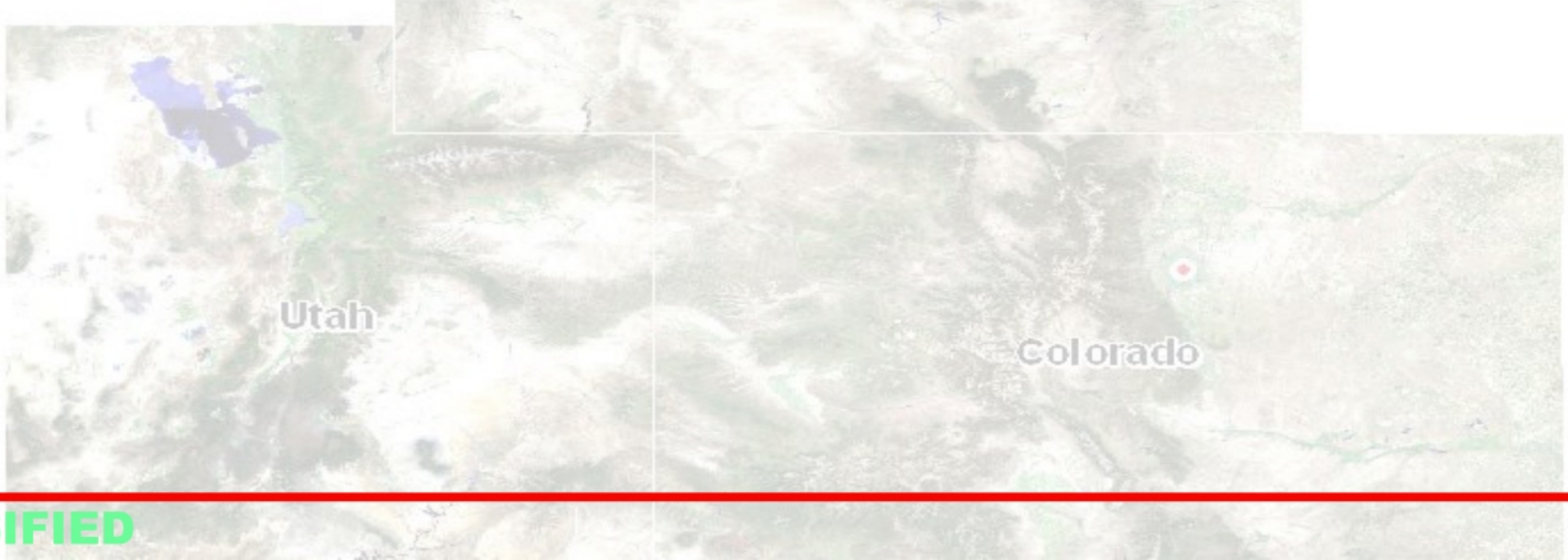

Attenuation (Maximum Absorption)
MHz
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
dB
Highest Frequency Affected by 1dB Absorption
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
Degraded Frequency (MHz)
Estimated Recovery Time
High Latitude Proton
No Estimate
Mid/Low Latitude X-ray
No Estimate
Normal X-ray Background
Product Valid At : 2016-10-17 11:11 UTC
Normal Proton Background
NOAA/SWPC Boulder, CO USA

Sunspot Activity



National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
2	**Date Requested**	**0**	**0**
KS – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 10, 2016		
WI – DR Severe Storms, Flooding and Mudslides	October 11, 2016		



IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 03, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Darrin Ricketts	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Tracy McCauley (Until 30 Oct)	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

Stand-by Team Roster *(Updated: Oct 6, 2016 / 1000)*

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Kevin Moore	303-941-2113
Operations Sec Chief	AJ Lyman	303-350-0412
Infrastructure Branch Director	Leigh-Andrea Phillips	720-398-7531
Ind Asst Branch Director	Brannen Ulrick	303-681-4988
Planning Section Chief	Mike Pendergrass	303-746-3640
Situation Unit Lead	Susan Jones	303-263-5415
Resource Unit Lead	Bob Schroder	303-453-9482
Logistics Section Chief	Lamont Hudson	303-842-4682
Service Branch Director	Josh Turner	720-415-6353
Support Branch Director	Cedric Corney	303-515-1928
External Affairs Officer	Brian Hvinden	303-681-1454
Finance/Admin	Bonnie Garfias	303-884-7049

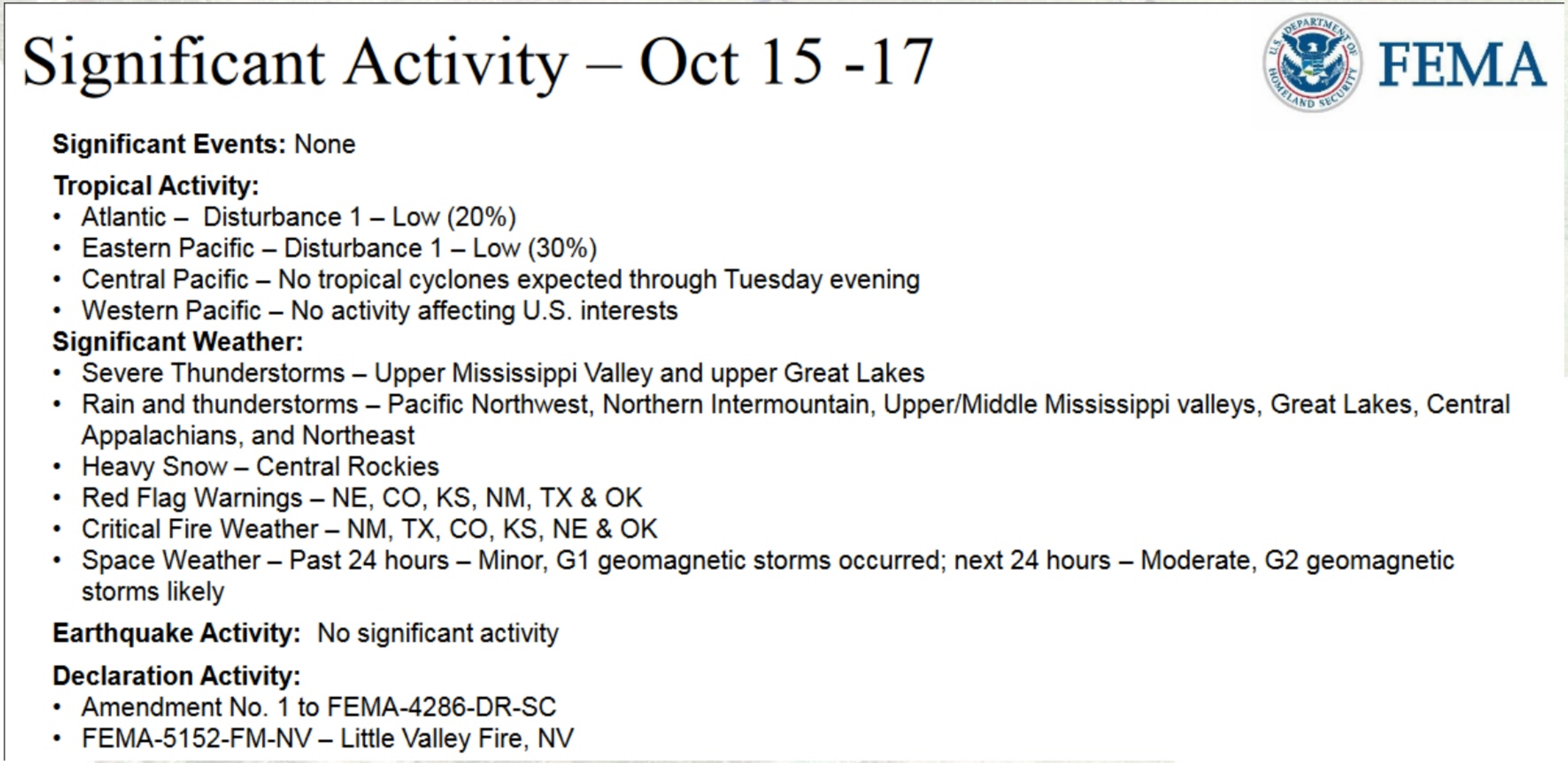
October RRCC Standup Roster (Orange Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Kevin Moore
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	AJ Lyman
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Mike Ordonez
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 13, 2016 / 0600)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	John Holub (14 Oct – 17 Oct)Michael Pendergrass	720-315-0651303-746-3640	303-235-4864303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	David Watkins	720-683-2565	303-235-4359
WY	AJ Lyman (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton	303-350-0412303-495-0051	303-235-4319303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity



Significant Activity – Oct 15 -17

FEMA

Significant Events: None

Tropical Activity:
- Atlantic – Disturbance 1 – Low (20%)
- Eastern Pacific – Disturbance 1 – Low (30%)
- Central Pacific – No tropical cyclones expected through Tuesday evening
- Western Pacific – No activity affecting U.S. interests

Significant Weather:
- Severe Thunderstorms – Upper Mississippi Valley and upper Great Lakes
- Rain and thunderstorms – Pacific Northwest, Northern Intermountain, Upper/Middle Mississippi valleys, Great Lakes, Central Appalachians, and Northeast
- Heavy Snow – Central Rockies
- Red Flag Warnings – NE, CO, KS, NM, TX & OK
- Critical Fire Weather – NM, TX, CO, KS, NE & OK
- Space Weather – Past 24 hours – Minor, G1 geomagnetic storms occurred; next 24 hours – Moderate, G2 geomagnetic storms likely

Earthquake Activity: No significant activity

Declaration Activity:
- Amendment No. 1 to FEMA-4286-DR-SC
- FEMA-5152-FM-NV – Little Valley Fire, NV

Region VIII Duty Officers

Region 8 External Affairs	
Effective Dates	10 - 17 Oct
Name	Carol Garcia
Cell	720-415-4816
Personal Cell	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4715

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon	
Effective Dates	17 – 24 Oct
Name	Courtnee-Evan Spino
Cell	267-319-6335
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-8905

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY

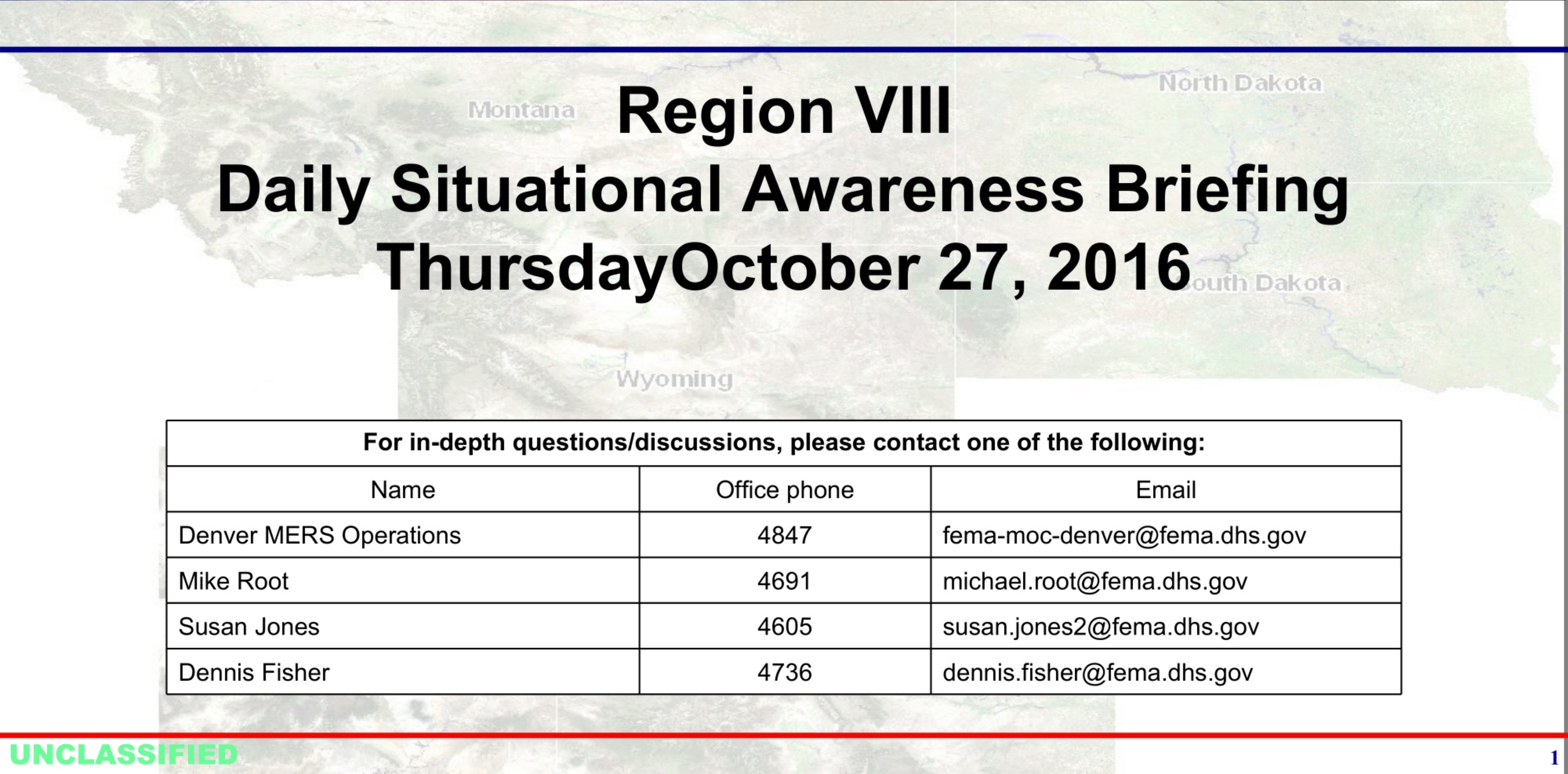
From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 10:03:28 -0400
To: (b)(6) @nd.gov;Alexander, Daniel;Americanos, Christopher;Andersen, Chris;Appenrodt, Kathleen;Carey, Bob;Bakersky, Pete;Brazelton, James;'Bruce Holloman (b)(6) @state.co.us)';Bush, Tom;'Chris Sorensen - CO SEOC';Claiborne, Ari MAJ;Darabaris, John;'DCE R VIII Operations (usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.dco-region-viii-ops1@mail.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) (b)(6), SFC (b)(6) @mail.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) @us.army.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) SFC (b)(6) (@mail.mil)';Chase, David;Chew, George;Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee;Dragani, Nancy;Espinosa, Adam;Feighert, Dan;Copen, Larry (FEMA CORPS);FEMA-NWC;Fisher, Dennis;Garcia, Maria;'Gina Cristiano (Denver EPA)';Graff, Shawn;Gray, Patricia;Helland, Kevin;(b)(6) (b)(6) @wyo.gov';Holmes, Lanney;Hudson, Lamont;Jason Bauder;Jones, Susan K;Watanabe, Judy;Kimble, Kerry;Lawley, Charles;Longenecker, Herbert;Lyman, AJ;McCool, Thomas;McCown, James;McNeese, Colleen;Moore, Jkevin;Moreno, Paul;'(b)(6) @nd.gov)';Nyquist, Daniel;Pendergrass, Michael M;Poore, Stephanie;R8 Division Directors;R8 External Affairs;Papp, Nickolas;Richey, Sharon;Rockabrand, Ryan;Root, Michael;Rothe, Marschal G;tina titze;'Settle, Sean';Stensgaard, Theresa;Traynor, Janice;'Victor P.';Volkman, Jeff;Watkins, David
Cc: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Subject: FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Brief Slides for 27 Oct 2016
Attachments: Stand Up Consolidated Brief 27 Oct 2016.pptx

Good Morning,

Attached are today's FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Briefing slides.

Have a great day!

Mike Root
Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC) &
FEMA Alternate Operations Center - West (FAOC-West)
Fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
800-311-7021 or (303) 235-4847



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
ThursdayOctober 27, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: FYSA UT-Hicks Creek Fire 100% ContainedMOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: DEPLOYED ISO DR-4277-LARVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	LEVEL III (Monitoring)
Utah	NORMAL
S. Dakota	NORMAL
N. Dakota	LEVEL II (Partial)
Wyoming	NORMAL
Montana	NORMAL

Events

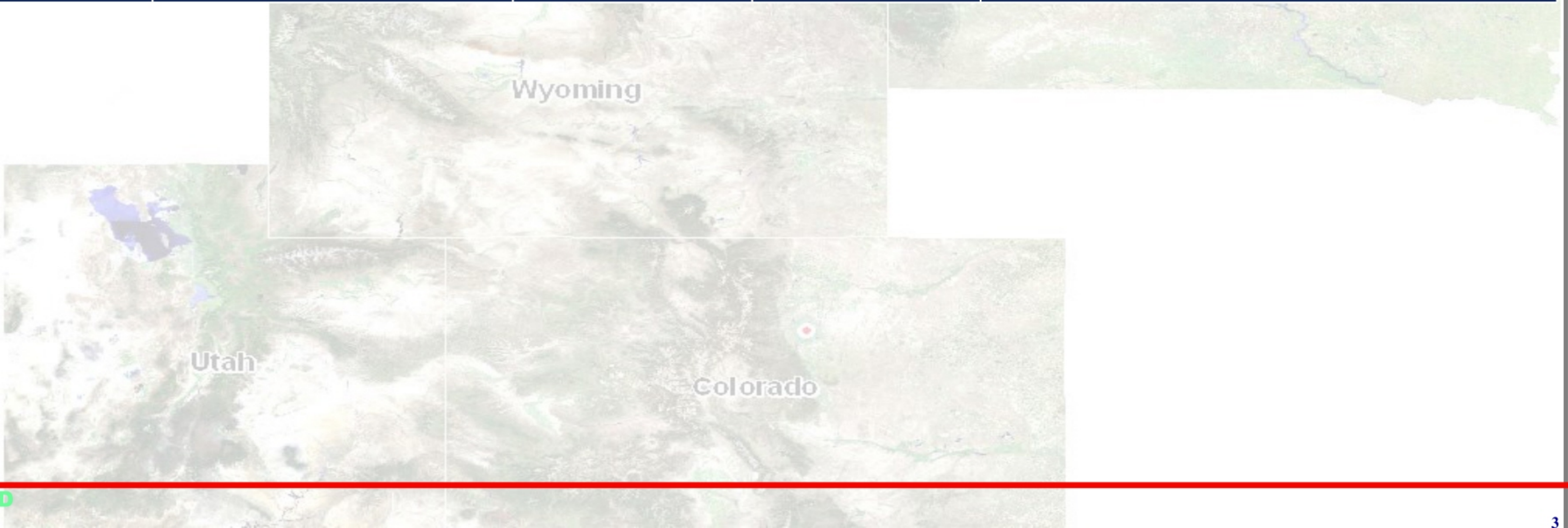
- **Thu 7:30-11:00 Ms. Dragani-CFEB QTRLY MTG- Delivering Outstanding Customer Service, CFEB Trng RmThu 11:00-2:00 CFC Kick-Off, Long's Peak Conf RmThu 1:30-3:00 R8 Div Dir Meeting, RA Conf Rm**

Exercises and Training

- None

Region Active Fires

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 27 Oct 2016)				
Junkins FireFEMA-5175-FM-CO10/17/2016	Custer & Pueblo Counties	17,675 (- 457)	80%(+10)	All evacuations lifted; only those with homes destroyed remain displaced.Est. containment: Nov 15, 2016Source: Inciweb



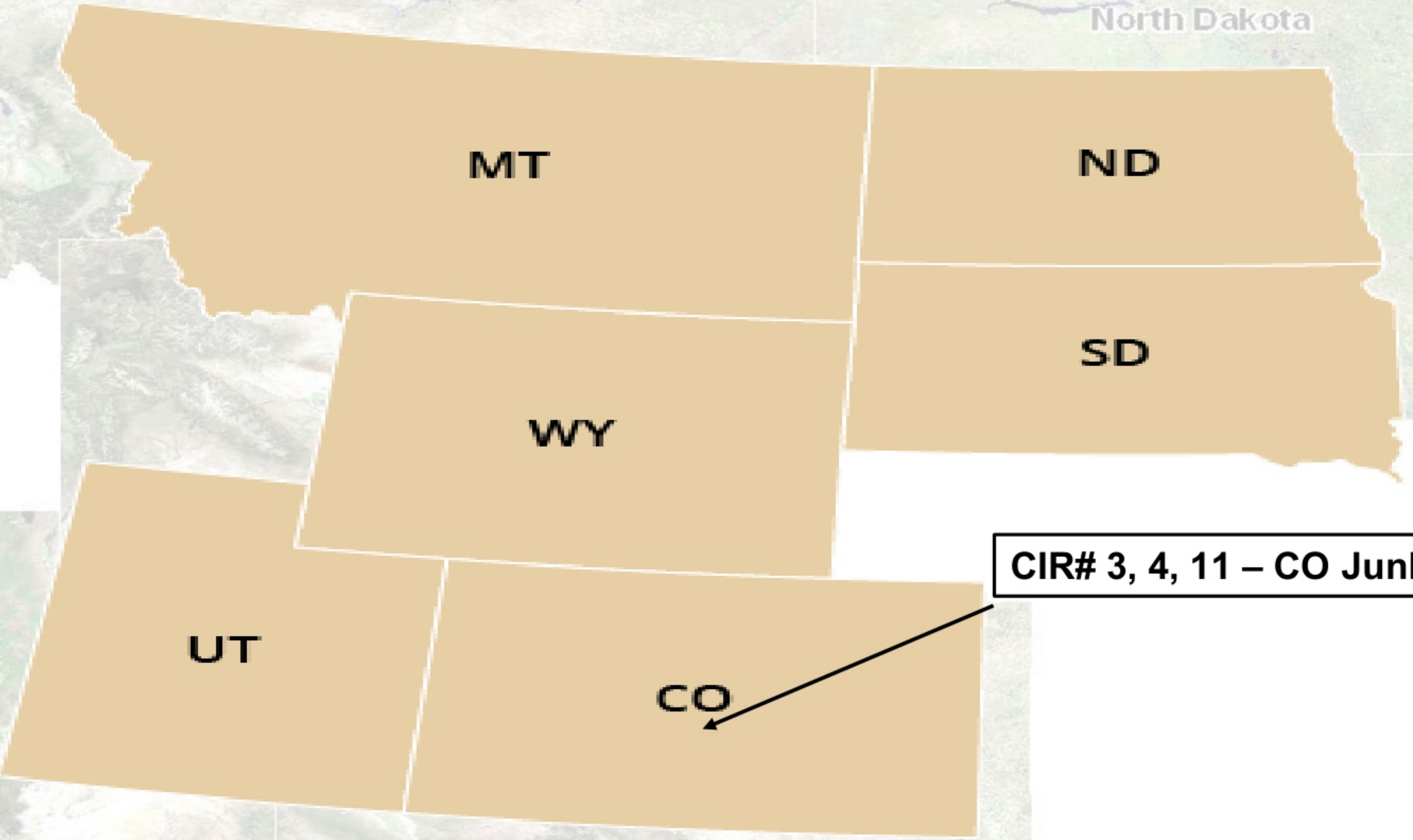
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

No Activity Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as “Major” by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟥	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟩	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟥	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state’s population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

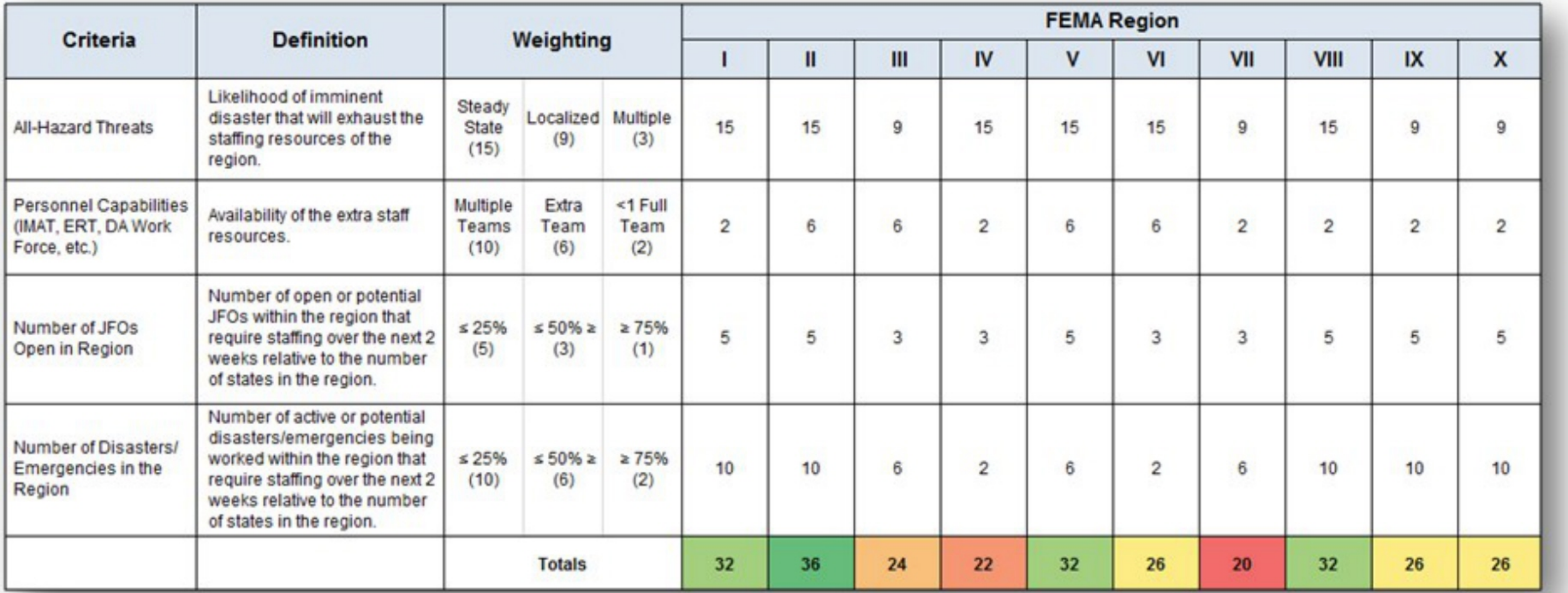
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3		🟥
CIR 4		🟥
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11		🟥
CIR 12		
CIR 13		
CIR 14		
CIR 15		
CIR 16		
CIR 17		
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 4, 11 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 24 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	15	9	15	15	15	9	15	9	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	6	6	2	2	2	2
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	3	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	6	2	6	10	10	10
		Totals			32	36	24	22	32	26	20	32	26	26

Regions II, I, V, & VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations		
Level	**Reason for Activation**	**Activated Times**

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations		
State	**Activation**	**Event/Incident**
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level III Monitoring (0800-1700)	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations		
State	**Activation (Event)**	**Supporting**
LA	Flooding	DR-4277-LA

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status

FCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)

RCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

Today-Saturday

- An elevated fire danger risk for Wyoming this afternoon
- A storm system will cross the northern Rockies Friday
  - Valley rain/mountain snow for southern Montana and western Wyoming
  - Strong winds are possible across northern Utah

Sunday-Wednesday

- A stronger storm system will cross northern Rockies/Northern Plains
  - Mountain snow for western Wyoming and southwestern Montana Sunday into Monday
  - Strong winds in Colorado and Wyoming Sunday then in Wyoming Monday

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

DAY/THREAT	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
Heavy Rain	🟩	🟨 SW MT/ W WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snow	🟩	🟨 SW MT/ NW WY	🟩	🟨 NW WY	🟨 W WY/ SW MT	🟩	🟩
Strong Winds	🟩	🟨 N UT	🟩	🟨 CO/WY	🟨 WY	🟩	🟩
Fire Weather	🟨 WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

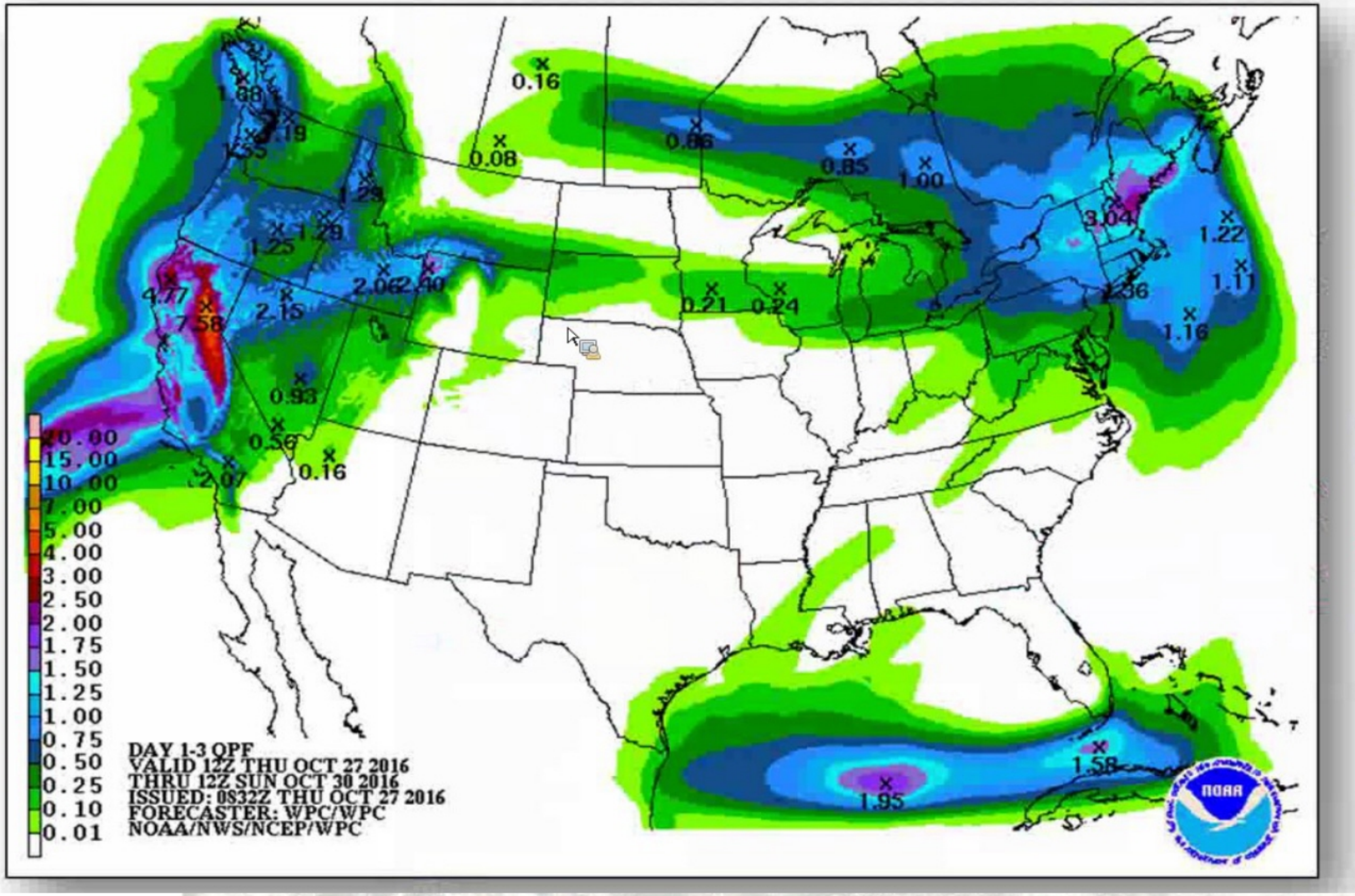
- 🟥 High Threat
- 🟧 Moderate Threat
- 🟨 Slight Threat
- 🟩 No Discernible Threat

Regional Weather Hazards

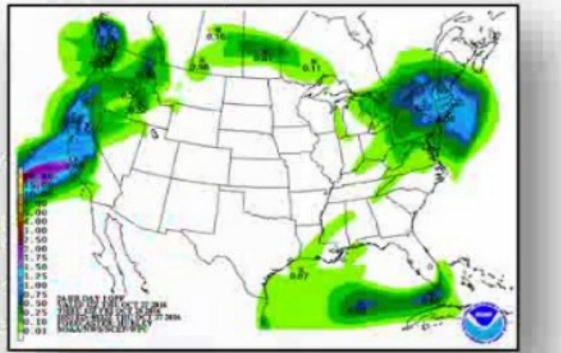
- NSTR

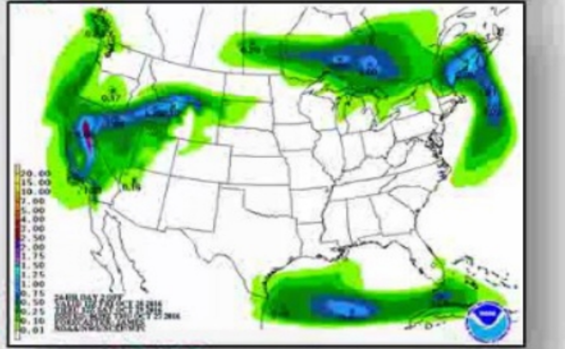
MONTANA
Helena
Billings
Missouri
Lake Sakakawea
NORTH DAKOTA
Bismarck
Lake Oahe
Pierre
SOUTH DAKOTA
IDAHO
Boise
Idaho Falls
Snake
WYOMING
SAND HILLS
NEBRASKA
Cheyenne
Lincoln
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
UTAH
BASIN
Denver
UNITED STATES
Colorado
COLORADO
KANSAS
Arkansas
Rio Grande
Wichita

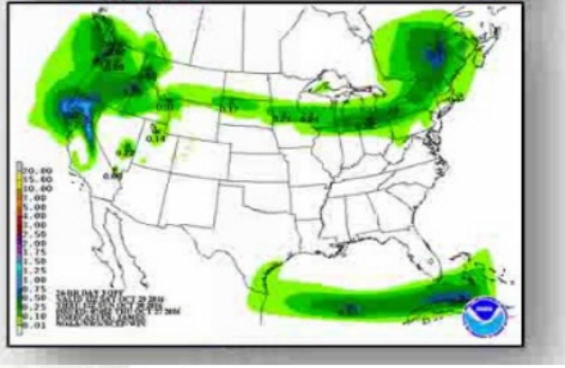
Precipitation Outlook


0.16
0.08
0.86
0.85
1.00
3.04
1.22
1.11
1.16
1.36
0.21
0.24
1.88
1.19
1.55
1.29
1.29
1.25
2.06
2.40
2.15
4.77
7.58
0.93
0.56
0.16
2.07
1.95
1.58
20.00
15.00
10.00
7.00
5.00
4.00
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.75
1.50
1.25
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.10
0.01
NOAA

DAY 1-3 QPF
VALID 12Z THU OCT 27 2016
THRU 12Z SUN OCT 30 2016
ISSUED: 0832Z THU OCT 27 2016
FORECASTER: WPC/WPC
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WPC


Day 1


Day 2


Day 3

State Weather Forecast

Denver, CO

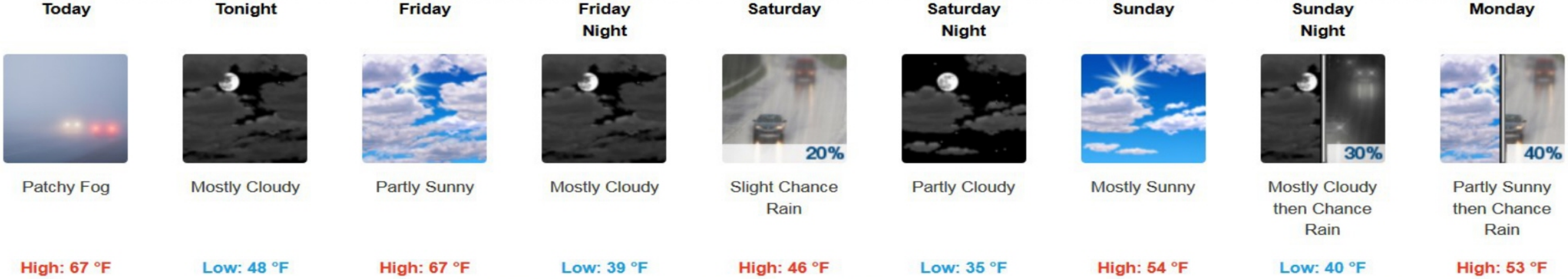
Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 81 °F	Low: 50 °F	High: 80 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 75 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 71 °F

Helena, MT

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
	20%	20%	30%		30%	20%		
Mostly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Partly Sunny	Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers
High: 67 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 48 °F

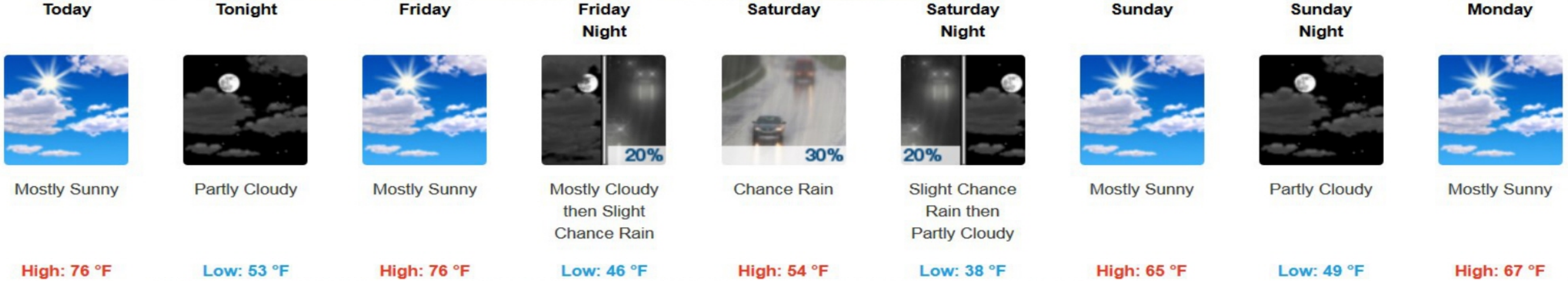
State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND



Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				20%			30%	40%
Patchy Fog	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Rain	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Rain	Partly Sunny then Chance Rain
High: 67 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 67 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 46 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 53 °F

Pierre, SD



Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
			20%	30%	20%			
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Rain	Chance Rain	Slight Chance Rain then Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 76 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 67 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont

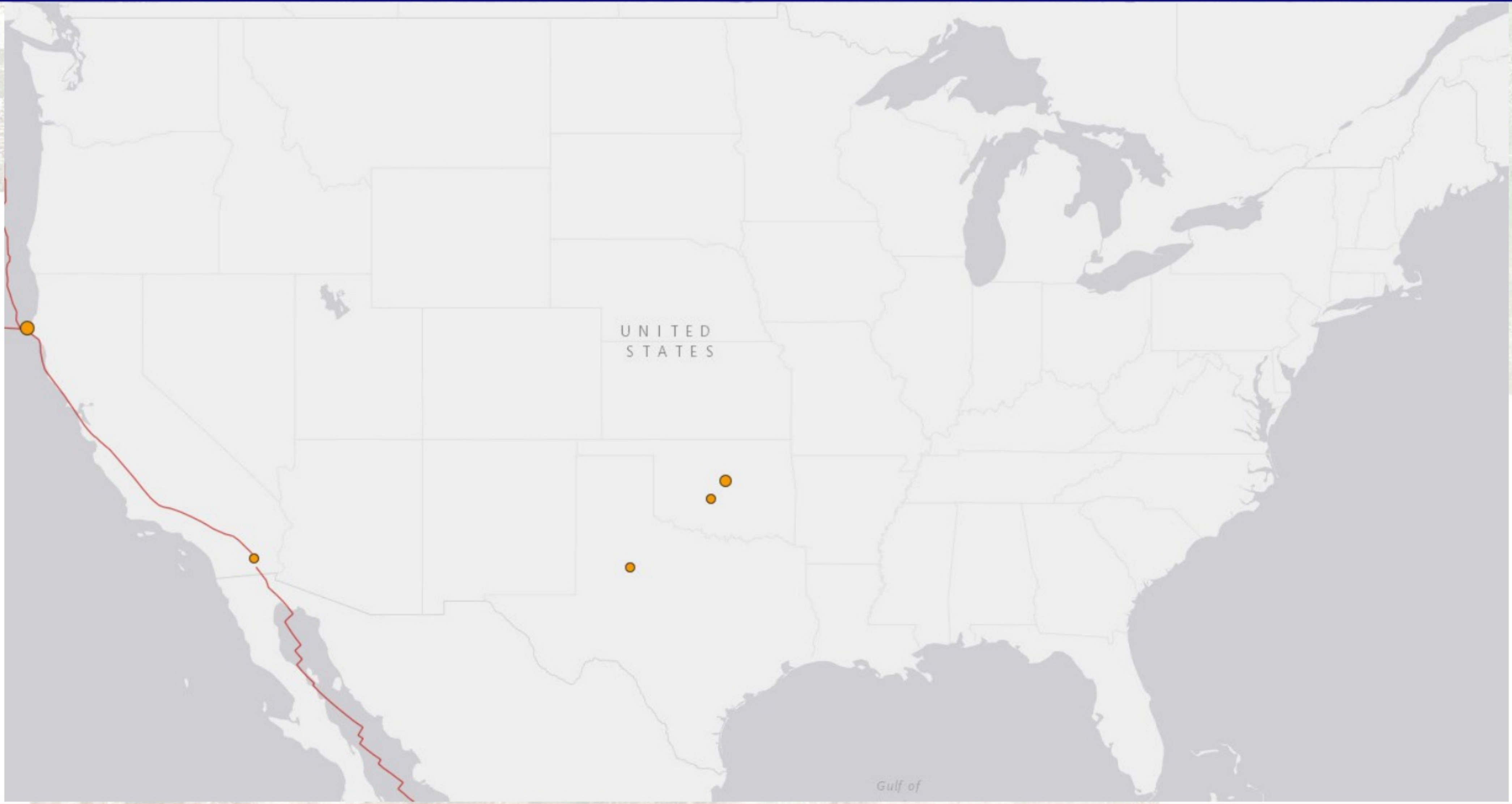
Salt Lake City, UT

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
		30% → 70%	70% → 20%		20%	40%		
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Chance Showers then Showers Likely	Showers Likely then Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers
High: 76 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 63 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 60 °F

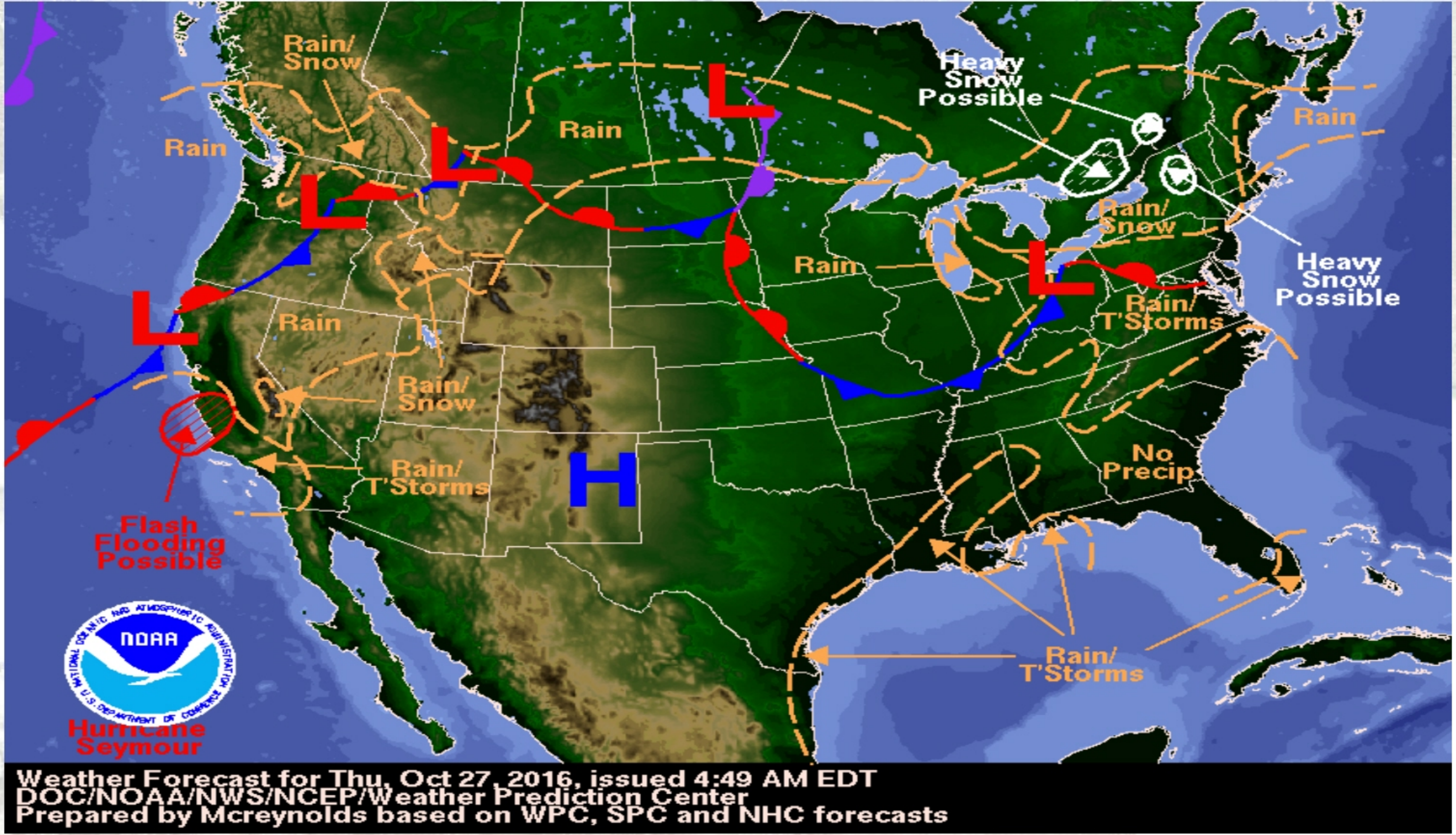
Cheyenne, WY

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Partly Cloudy and Breezy	Sunny and Windy
High: 75 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 60 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity


UNITED STATES
Gulf of

Today's National Weather Forecast


Rain/ Snow
Rain
Rain
L
L
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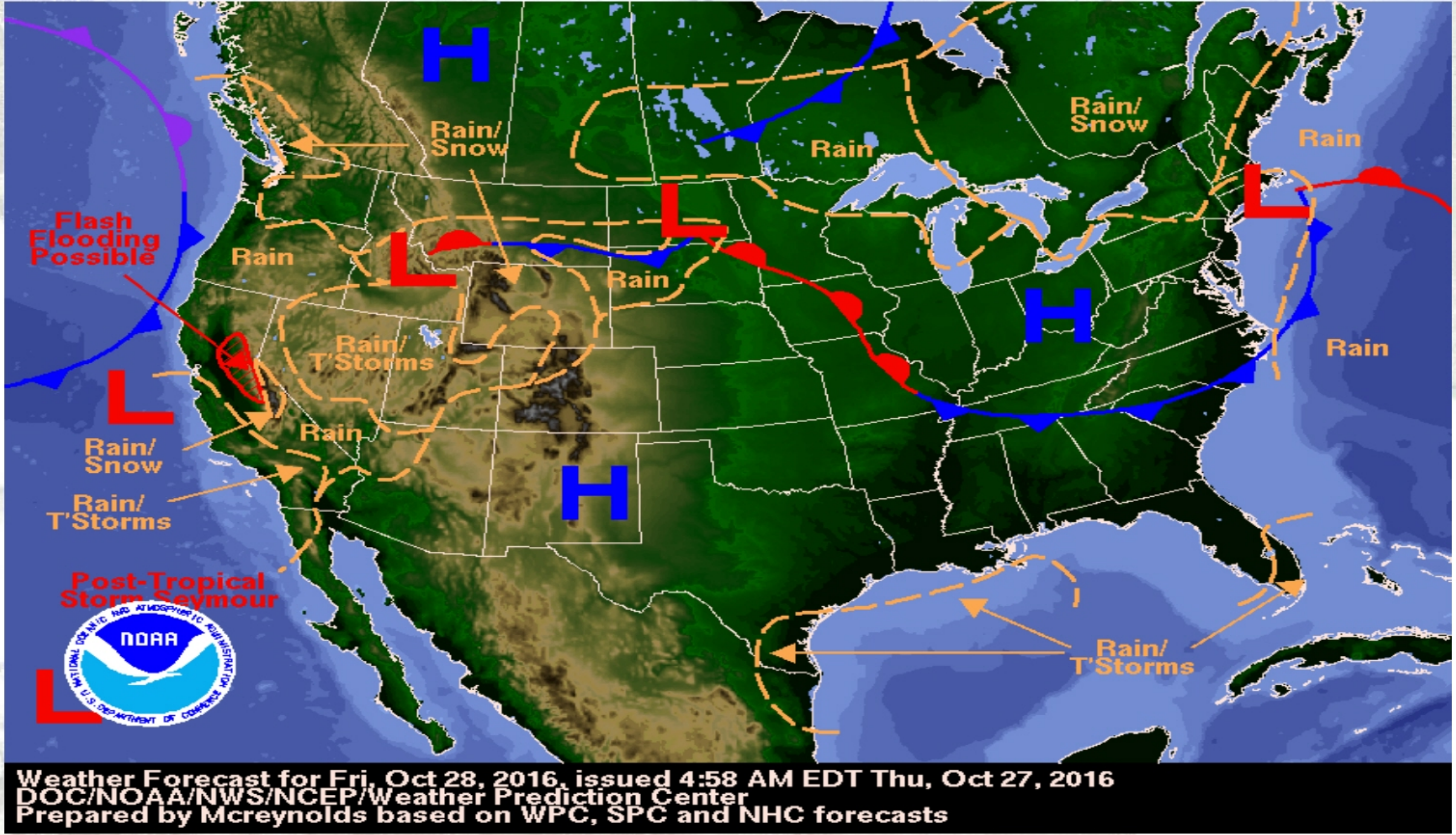
L
Heavy Snow Possible
Rain
Rain/ Snow
Rain
Heavy Snow Possible
Rain/ T'Storms
Rain
Rain/ Snow
Rain/ T'Storms
H
No Precip
Flash Flooding Possible
Rain/ T'Storms
NOAA
Hurricane Seymour

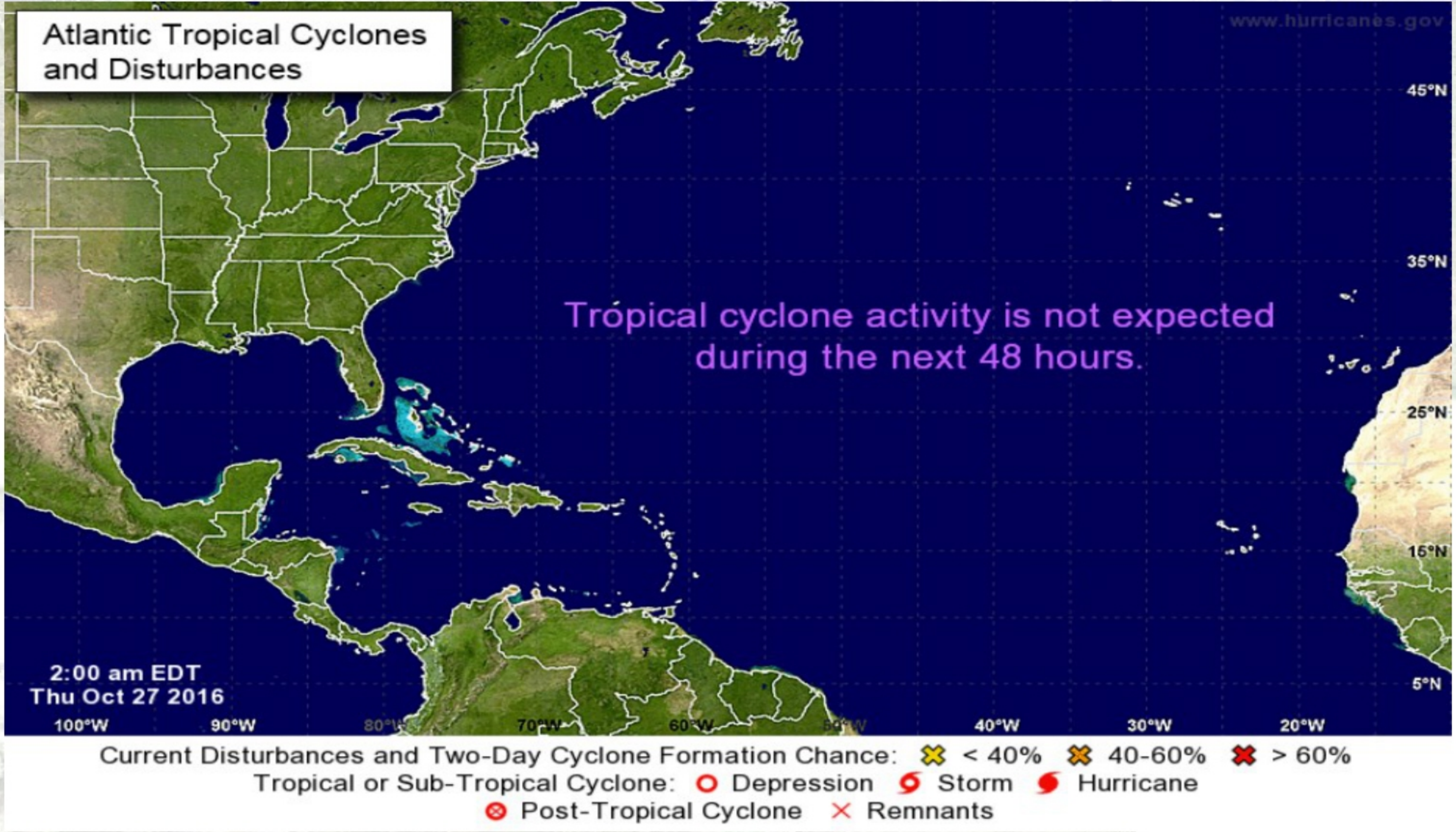
Weather Forecast for Thu, Oct 27, 2016, issued 4:49 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Tomorrow's National Weather Forecast


H
Rain/
Snow
Rain
Rain/
Snow
Rain
Flash
Flooding
Possible
Rain
L
L
Rain
L
H
Rain/
T'Storms
Rain
L
Rain/
Snow
Rain/
T'Storms
Rain
H
Post-Tropical
Storm Seymour
L
Rain/
T'Storms
NOAA

Weather Forecast for Fri, Oct 28, 2016, issued 4:58 AM EDT Thu, Oct 27, 2016
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Atlantic Tropical Assessment



Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances

Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours.

2:00 am EDT
Thu Oct 27 2016

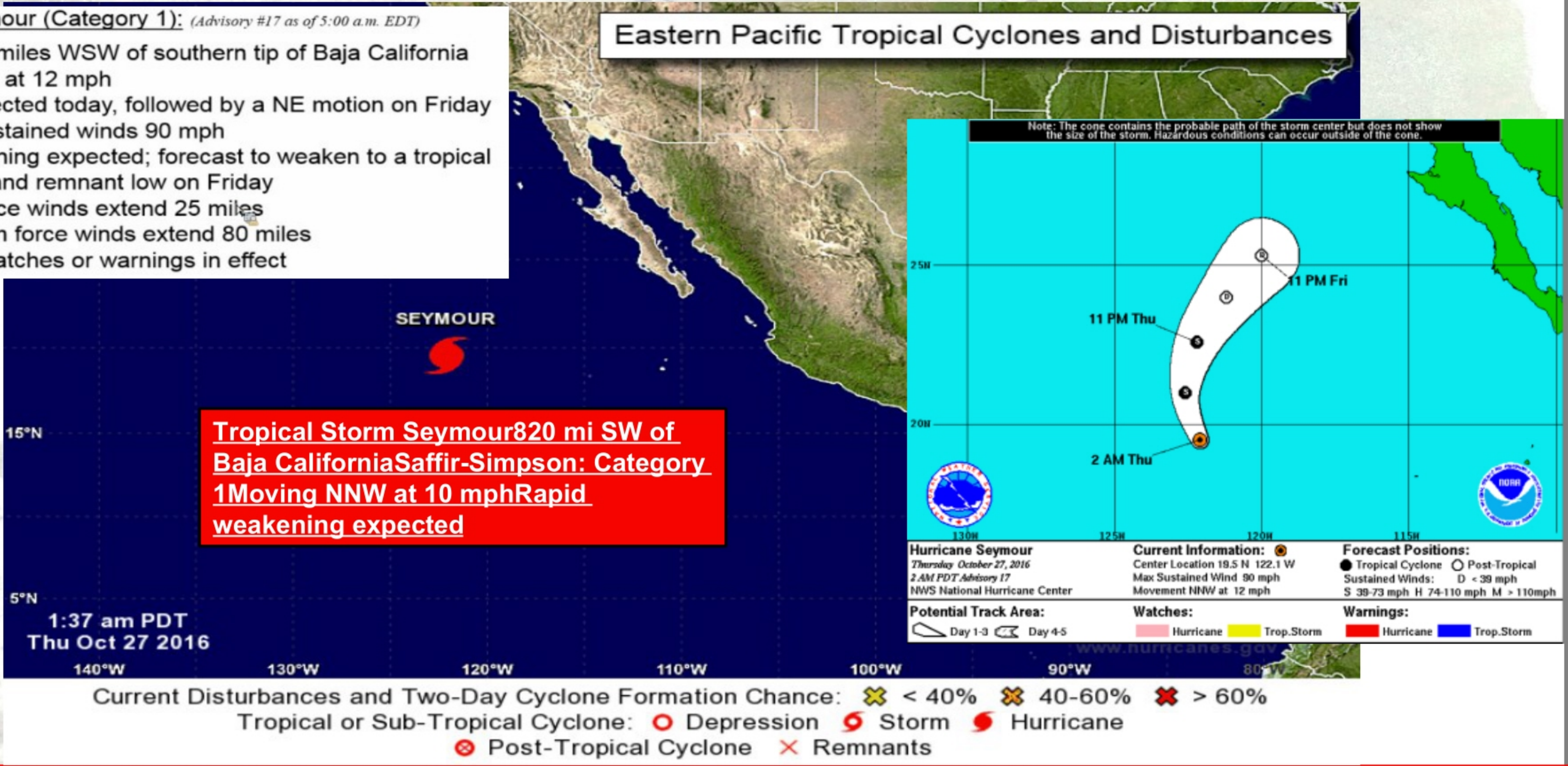
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression 🌀 Storm 🌀 Hurricane
⊗ Post-Tropical Cyclone × Remnants

www.hurricanes.gov
45°N
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment

Hurricane Seymour (Category 1): *(Advisory #17 as of 5:00 a.m. EDT)*

- Located 820 miles WSW of southern tip of Baja California
- Moving NNW at 12 mph
- A turn N expected today, followed by a NE motion on Friday
- Maximum sustained winds 90 mph
- Rapid weakening expected; forecast to weaken to a tropical storm today and remnant low on Friday
- Hurricane force winds extend 25 miles
- Tropical storm force winds extend 80 miles
- No coastal watches or warnings in effect


Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
SEYMOUR
15°N
5°N
1:37 am PDT
Thu Oct 27 2016
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
www.hurricanes.gov
Note: The cone contains the probable path of the storm center but does not show the size of the storm. Hazardous conditions can occur outside of the cone.
25N
20N
130W
125W
120W
115W
11 PM Fri
11 PM Thu
2 AM Thu
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: < 40% 40-60% > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: Depression Storm Hurricane
Post-Tropical Cyclone Remnants

Tropical Storm Seymour820 mi SW of Baja CaliforniaSaffir-Simpson: Category 1Moving NNW at 10 mphRapid weakening expected

Hurricane Seymour
Thursday October 27, 2016
2 AM PDT Advisory 17
NWS National Hurricane Center

Current Information:
Center Location 19.5 N 122.1 W
Max Sustained Wind 90 mph
Movement NNW at 12 mph

Forecast Positions:
● Tropical Cyclone ○ Post-Tropical
Sustained Winds: D < 39 mph
S 39-73 mph H 74-110 mph M > 110mph

Potential Track Area:
Day 1-3 Day 4-5

Watches:
Hurricane Trop.Storm

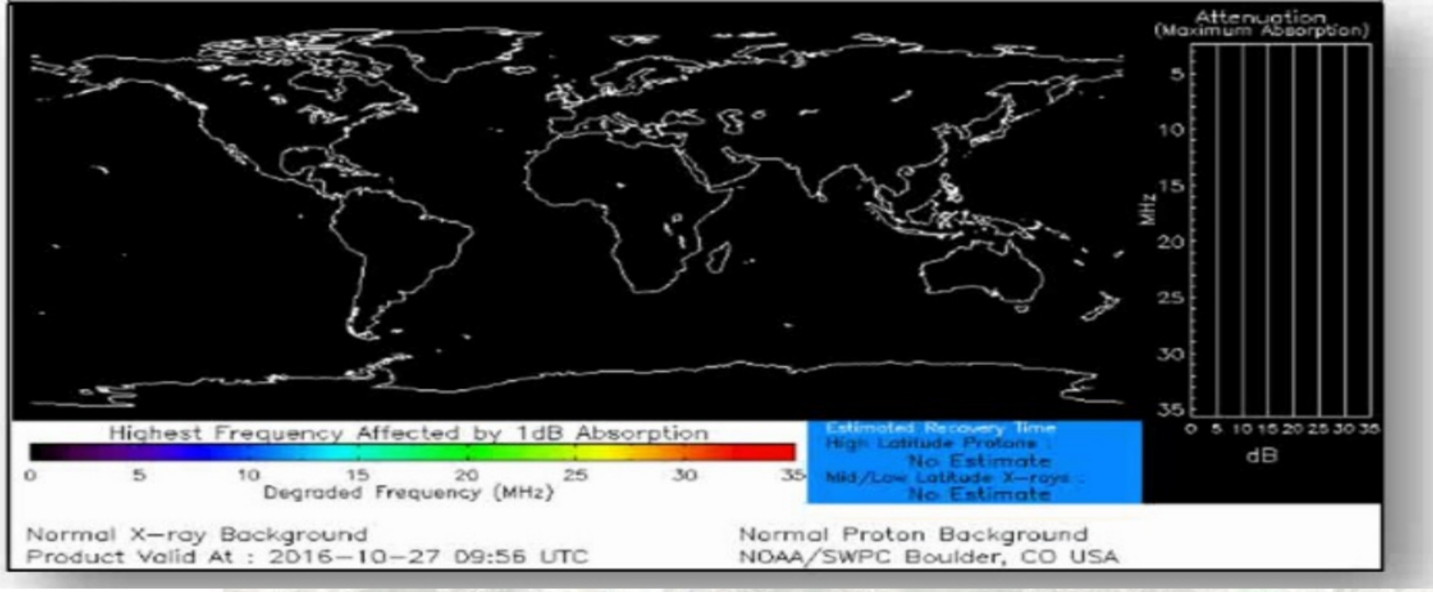
Warnings:
Hurricane Trop.Storm

Space Weather

	Space Weather Activity	Geomagnetic Storms	Solar Radiation	Radio Blackouts
Past 24 Hours	Moderate	G2	None	None
Next 24 Hours	Minor	G1	None	None

For further information on NOAA Space Weather Scales refer to http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/noaa-scales-explanation

HF Communication Impact


Attenuation (Maximum Absorption)
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
MHz
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
dB
Highest Frequency Affected by 1dB Absorption
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
Degraded Frequency (MHz)
Estimated Recovery Time
High Latitude Protons :
No Estimate
Mid/Low Latitude X-rays :
No Estimate
Normal X-ray Background
Product Valid At : 2016-10-27 09:56 UTC
Normal Proton Background
NOAA/SWPC Boulder, CO USA

Sunspot Activity

National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
5	**Date Requested**	**0**	**0**
Bad River Band Tribe – DR (Appeal) Severe Storms and Flooding	October 15, 2016		
Spokane Tribe – DR Cayuse Mountain Wildfire	October 18, 2016		
MN – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 19, 2016		
IA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016		
VA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016		

Utah
Colorado

IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 25, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Kevin Moore (UFN)	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Tracy McCauley (Until 30 Oct)	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

October RRCC Standup Roster (Orange Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Dennis Fisher
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	Kevin Moore
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Mike Ordonez
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 18, 2016 / 1240)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	Michael Pendergrass	303-746-3640	303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	Paul Moreno (24 – 28 Oct)David Watkins	720-315-5647720-683-2565	303-235-4668303-235-4359
WY	Carita Ricley (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton (Deployed)	720-315-6931303-495-0051	303-235-4322303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity

Significant Events: None

Tropical Activity:

- Atlantic – Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours
- Eastern Pacific – Hurricane Seymour (Category 1)
- Central Pacific – No tropical cyclones expected through Friday evening
- Western Pacific – No activity affecting U.S. interests

Significant Weather:

- Flash flooding possible – central CA
- Rain and thunderstorms – central to southern CA; Gulf coast; Tennessee Valley to Mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes
- Rain and snow – Northern Intermountain to Northern Rockies; Great Lakes to Northeast
- Heavy snow possible – Northeast
- Rain – Pacific Northwest to Northern Plains, Central Great Basin & CA; New England
- Space Weather – Past 24 hours: moderate with geomagnetic storms reaching G2 level occurred; next 24 hours: minor with geomagnetic storms reaching G1 level expected

Earthquake Activity: No significant activity

Declaration Activity: None

Region VIII Duty Officers

Region 8 External Affairs	
Effective Dates	24 – 31 Oct
Name	Jerry DeFelice
Cell	303-941-5088
Personal Cell	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4948

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon	
Effective Dates	24 – 31 Oct
Name	Timothy Gelston
Cell	303-476-8180
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4806

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY

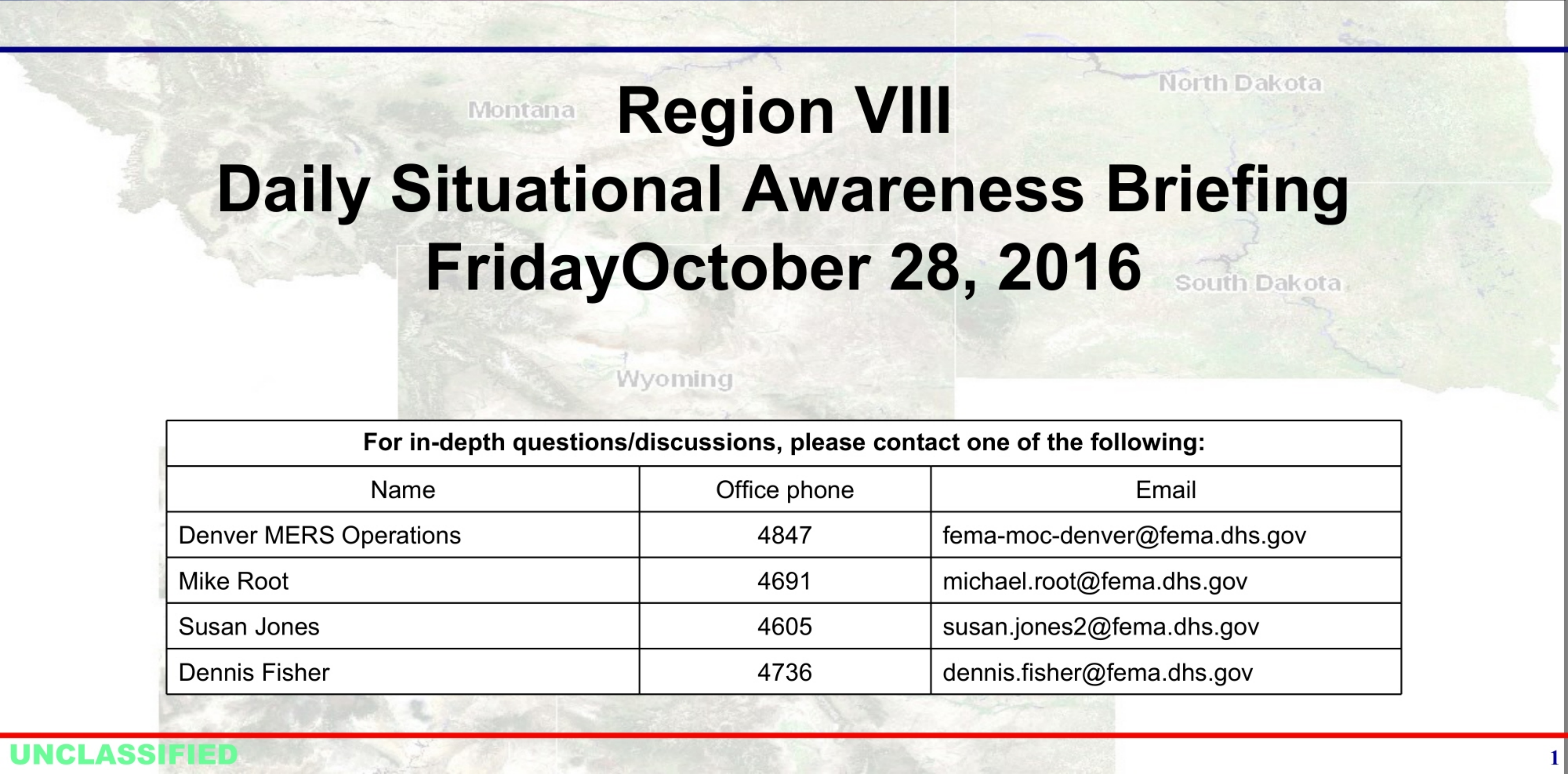
From: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Sent: 28 Oct 2016 10:53:12 -0400
To: (b)(6) @nd.gov;Alexander, Daniel;Americanos, Christopher;Andersen, Chris;Appenrodt, Kathleen;Carey, Bob;Bakersky, Pete;Brazelton, James;'Bruce Holloman (b)(6) @state.co.us)';Bush, Tom;'Chris Sorensen - CO SEOC';Claiborne, Ari MAJ;Darabaris, John;'DCE R VIII Operations (usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.dco-region-viii-ops1@mail.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) (b)(6) SFC (b)(6) @mail.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) @us.army.mil)';'DCE-(b)(6) . SF(b)(6) @mail.mil)'(b)(6) Deal, Timothy;Depalo, Lee;Dragani, Nancy;Espinosa, Adam;Feighert, Dan;Copen, Larry (FEMA CORPS);FEMA-NWC;Fisher, Dennis;Garcia, Maria;'Gina Cristiano (Denver EPA)';Graff, Shawn;Gray, Patricia;Helland, Kevin;(b)(6) (b)(6) @wyo.gov';Holmes, Lanney;Hudson, Lamont;Jason Bauder;Jones, Susan K;Watanabe, Judy;Kimble, Kerry;Lawley, Charles;Longenecker, Herbert;Lyman, AJ;McCool, Thomas;McCown, James;McNeese, Colleen;Moore, Jkevin;Moreno, Paul;'(b)(6) @nd.gov)';Nyquist, Daniel;Pendergrass, Michael M;Poore, Stephanie;R8 Division Directors;R8 External Affairs;(b)(6) Rockabrand, Ryan;Root, Michael;Rothe, Marschal G;tina titze;'Settle, Sean';Stensgaard, Theresa;Traynor, Janice;'Victor P.';Volkman, Jeff;Watkins, David
Cc: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Subject: FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Brief Slides for 28 Oct 2016
Attachments: Stand Up Consolidated Brief 28 Oct 2016.pptx

Good Morning,

Attached are today's FEMA RVIII 0915 SA Briefing slides.

Have a great day!

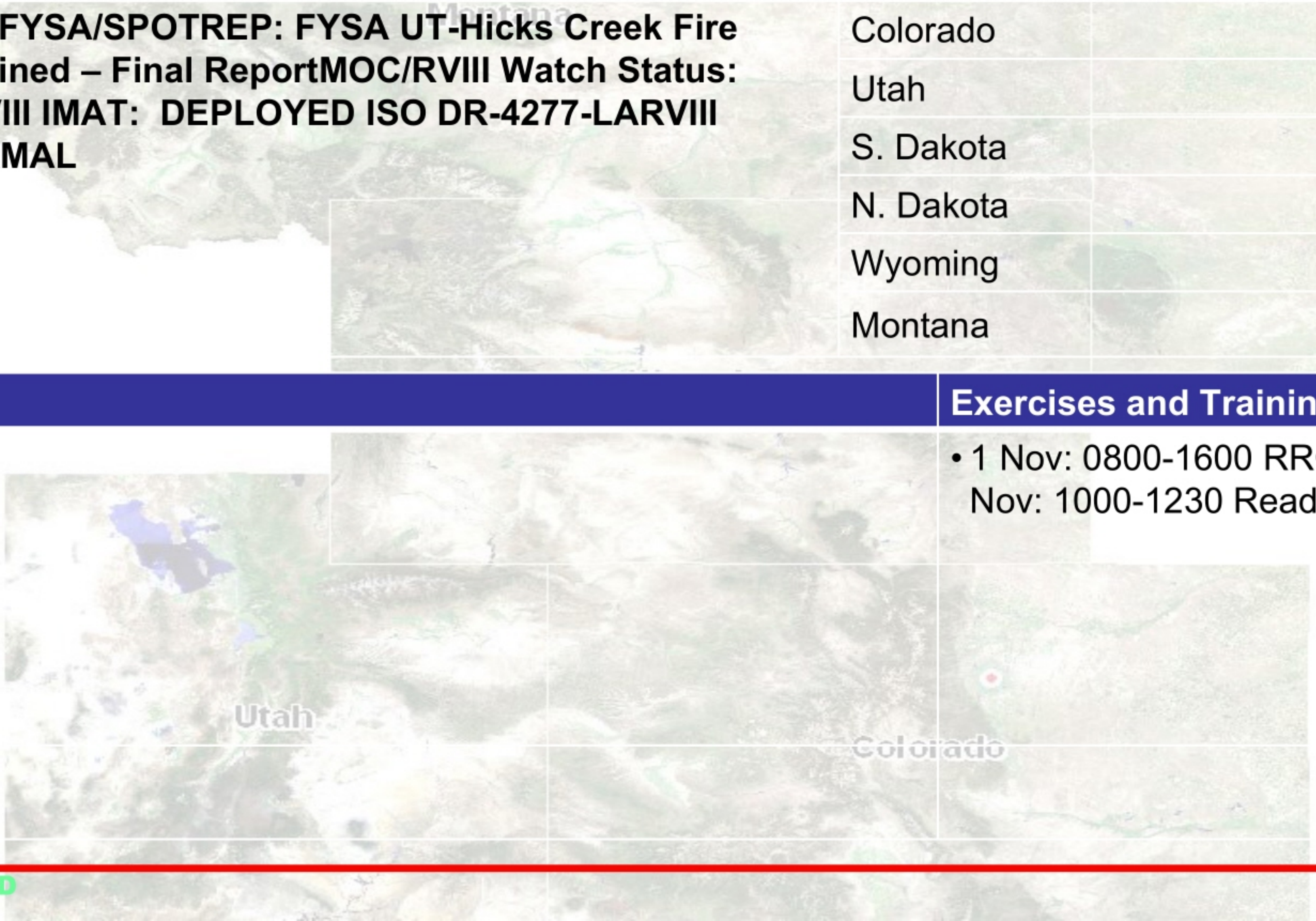
Mike Root
Operations Watch Officer
Denver MERS Operations Center (MOC) &
FEMA Alternate Operations Center - West (FAOC-West)
Fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
800-311-7021 or (303) 235-4847



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
FridayOctober 28, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status



Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: FYSA UT-Hicks Creek Fire 100% Contained – Final ReportMOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: DEPLOYED ISO DR-4277-LARVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	LEVEL III (Monitoring)
Utah	NORMAL
S. Dakota	NORMAL
N. Dakota	LEVEL II (Partial)
Wyoming	NORMAL
Montana	NORMAL

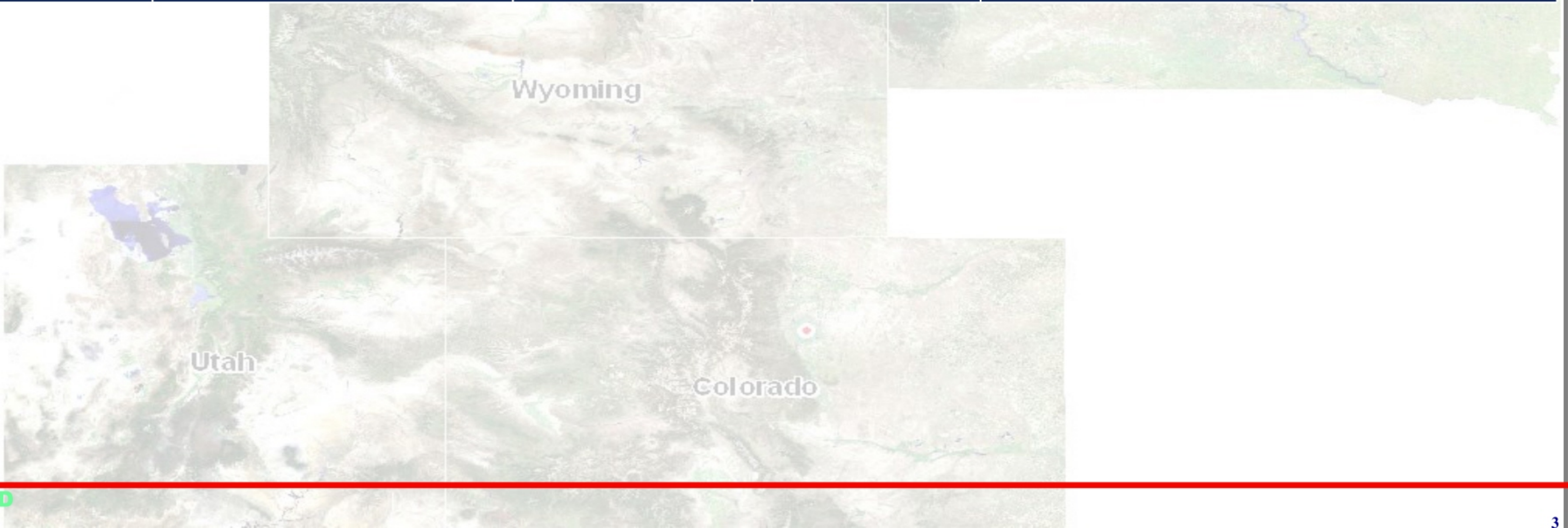
Events

Exercises and Training

- 1 Nov: 0800-1600 RRCC Exercise, Long’s Peak Conf Rm3
  Nov: 1000-1230 Readiness Day, Long’s Peak Conf Rm

Region Active Fires

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 27 Oct 2016)				
Junkins FireFEMA-5175-FM-CO10/17/2016	Custer & Pueblo Counties	17,741 (+66)	80%(+10)	All evacuations lifted; only those with homes destroyed remain displaced.Est. containment: Nov 15, 2016Source: Inciweb



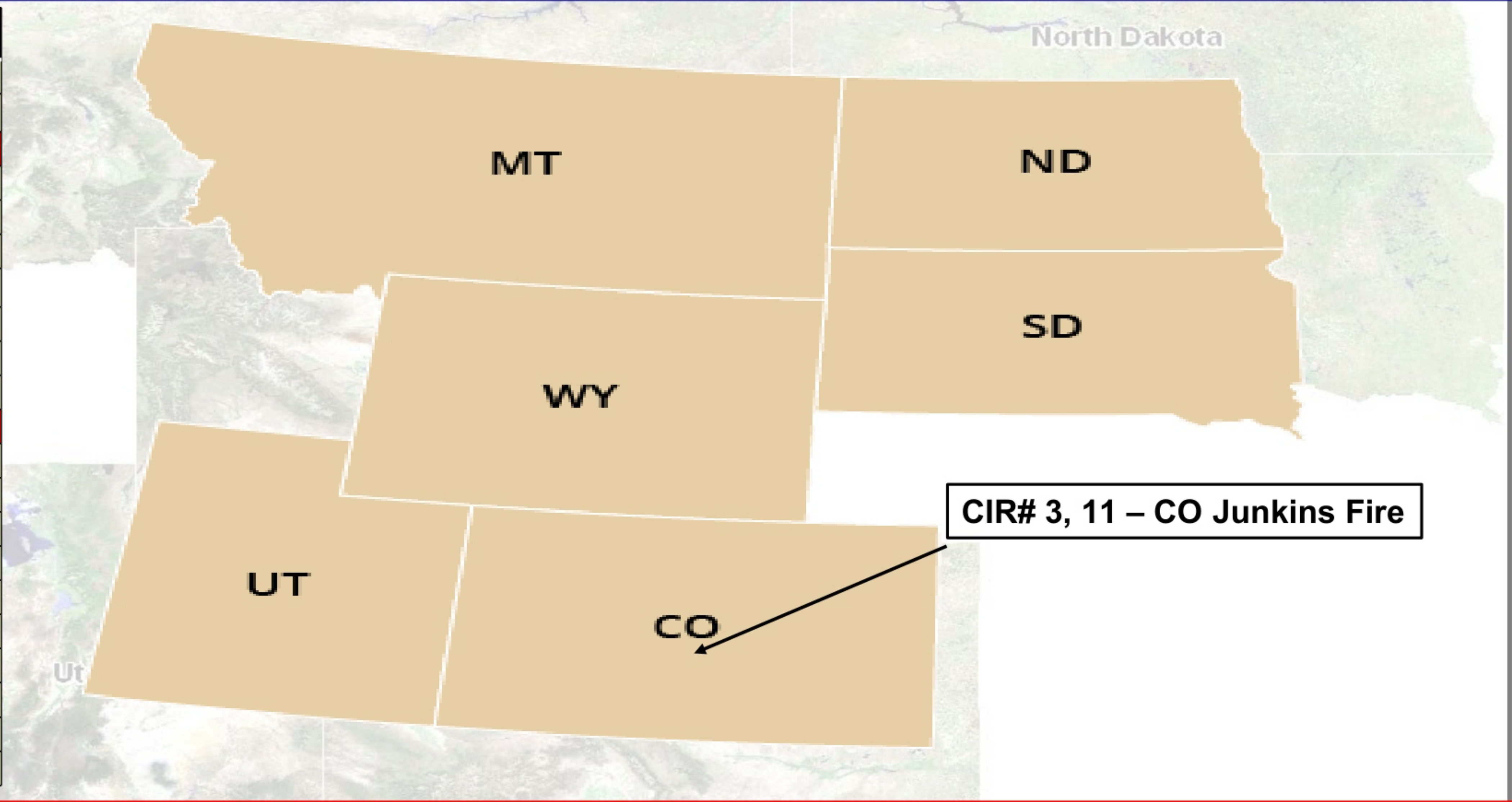
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

No Activity   Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less)   Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as "Major" by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟥	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟩	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟥	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state's population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

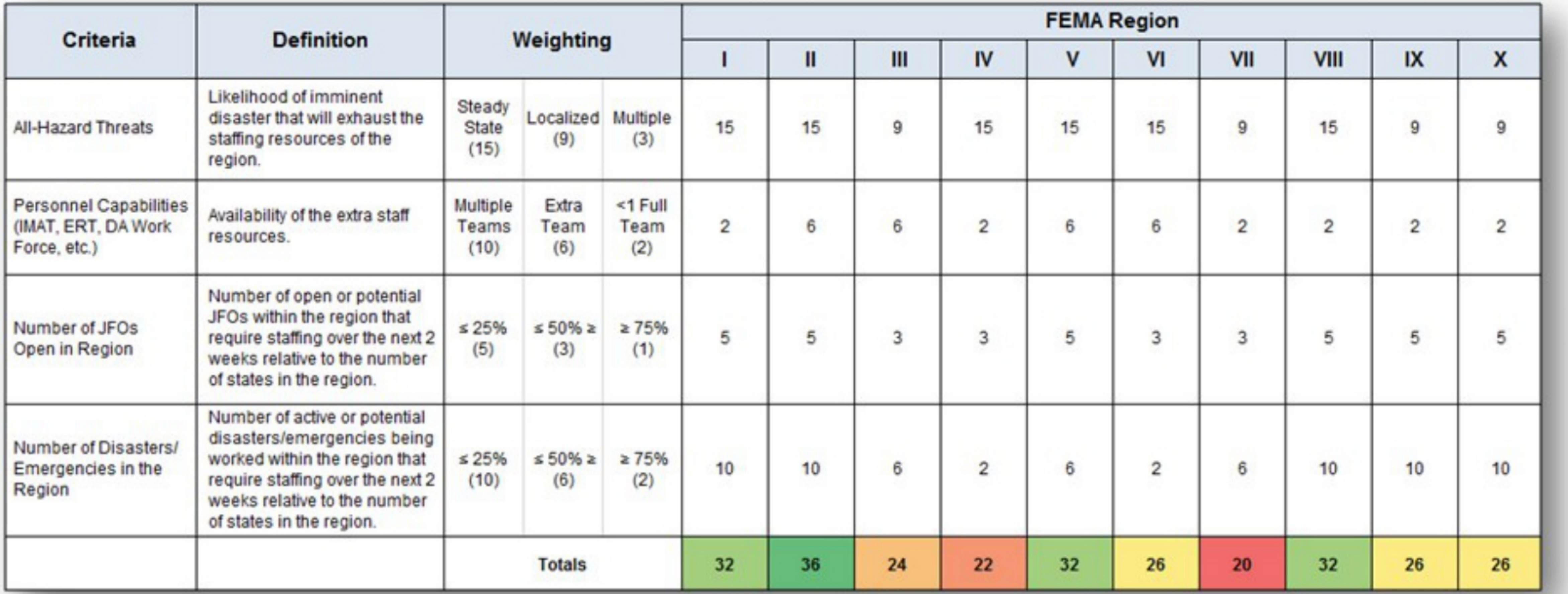
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3		🟥
CIR 4		
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11		🟥
CIR 12		
CIR 13		
CIR 14		
CIR 15		
CIR 16		
CIR 17		
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 11 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 24 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	15	9	15	15	15	9	15	9	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	6	6	2	2	2	2
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	3	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	6	2	6	10	10	10
		Totals			32	36	24	22	32	26	20	32	26	26

Regions II, I, V, & VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations

Level	Reason for Activation	Activated Times

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations

State	Activation	Event/Incident
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level III Monitoring (0800-1700)	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations

State	Activation (Event)	Supporting
LA	Flooding	DR-4277-LA

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status

FCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)

RCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

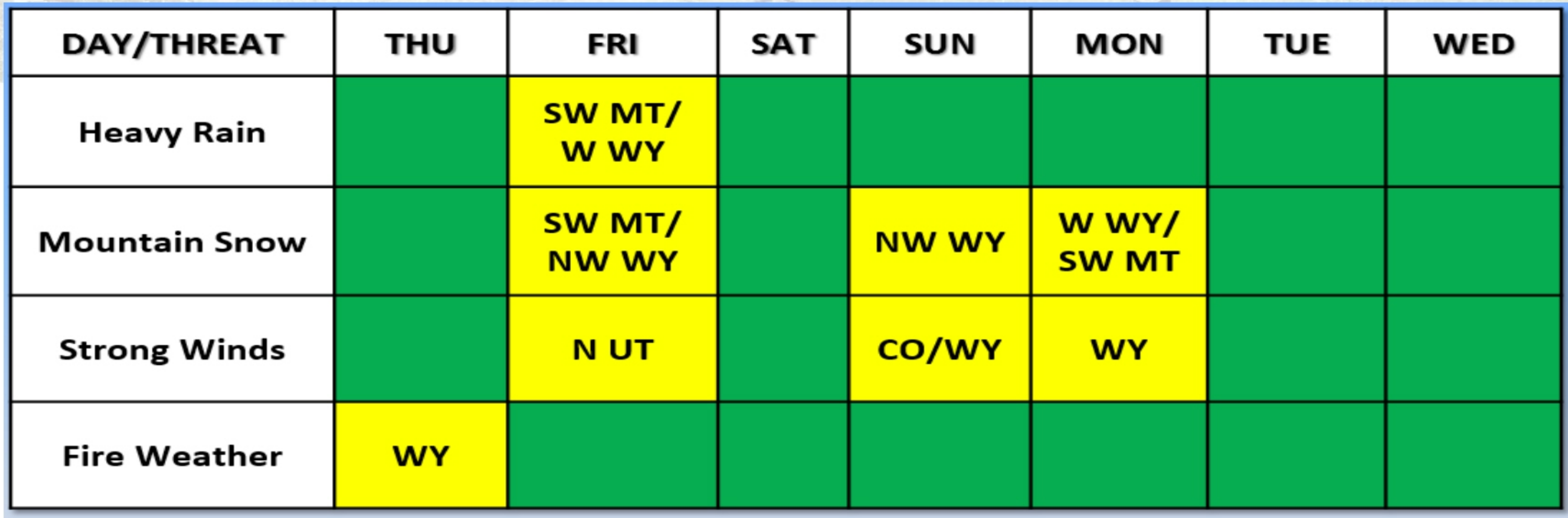
Today-Saturday

- An elevated fire danger risk for Wyoming this afternoon
- A storm system will cross the northern Rockies Friday
  - Valley rain/mountain snow for southern Montana and western Wyoming
  - Strong winds are possible across northern Utah

Sunday-Wednesday

- A stronger storm system will cross northern Rockies/Northern Plains
  - Mountain snow for western Wyoming and southwestern Montana Sunday into Monday
  - Strong winds in Colorado and Wyoming Sunday then in Wyoming Monday

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

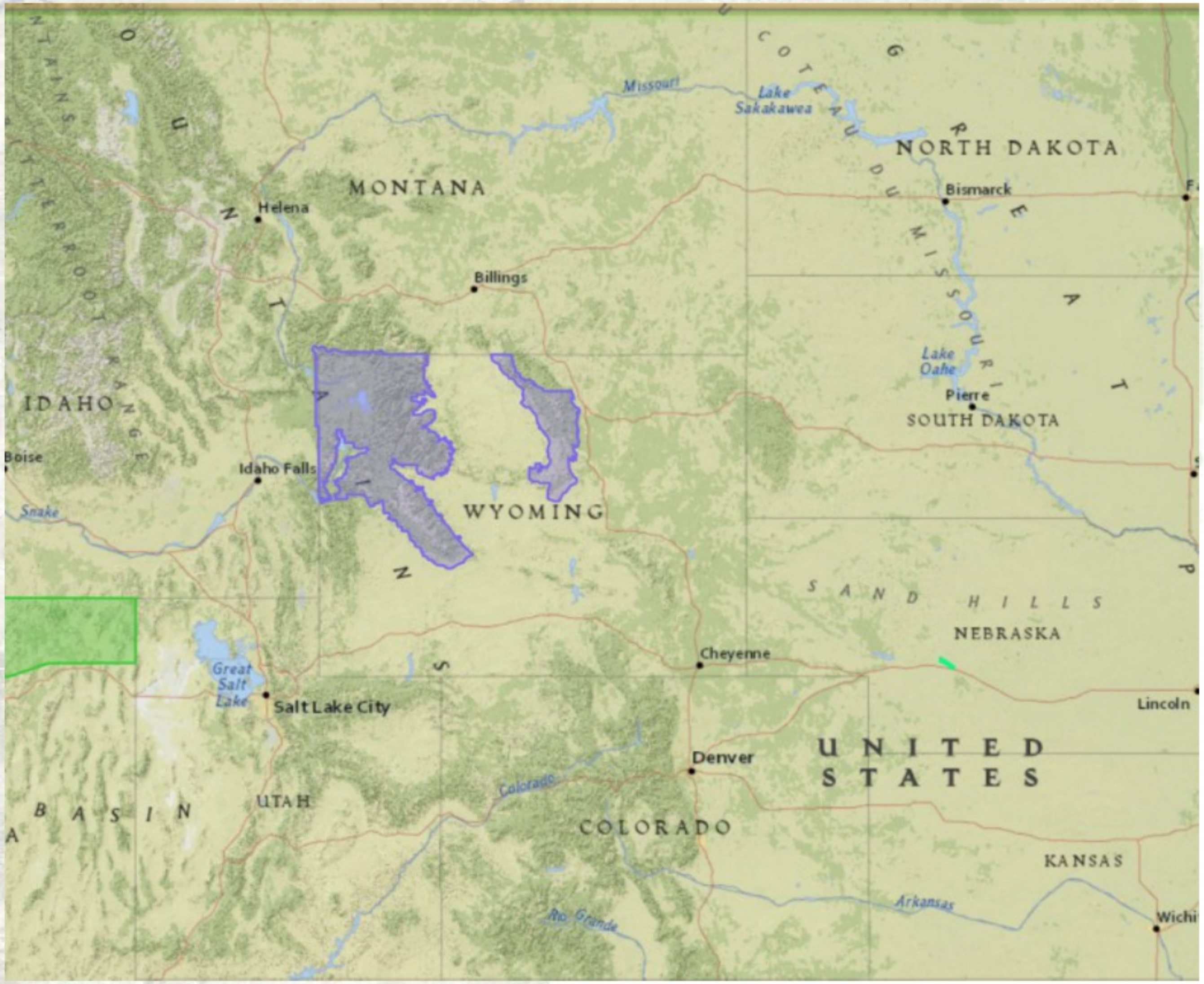


DAY/THREAT	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
Heavy Rain	🟩	🟨 SW MT/ W WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snow	🟩	🟨 SW MT/ NW WY	🟩	🟨 NW WY	🟨 W WY/ SW MT	🟩	🟩
Strong Winds	🟩	🟨 N UT	🟩	🟨 CO/WY	🟨 WY	🟩	🟩
Fire Weather	🟨 WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

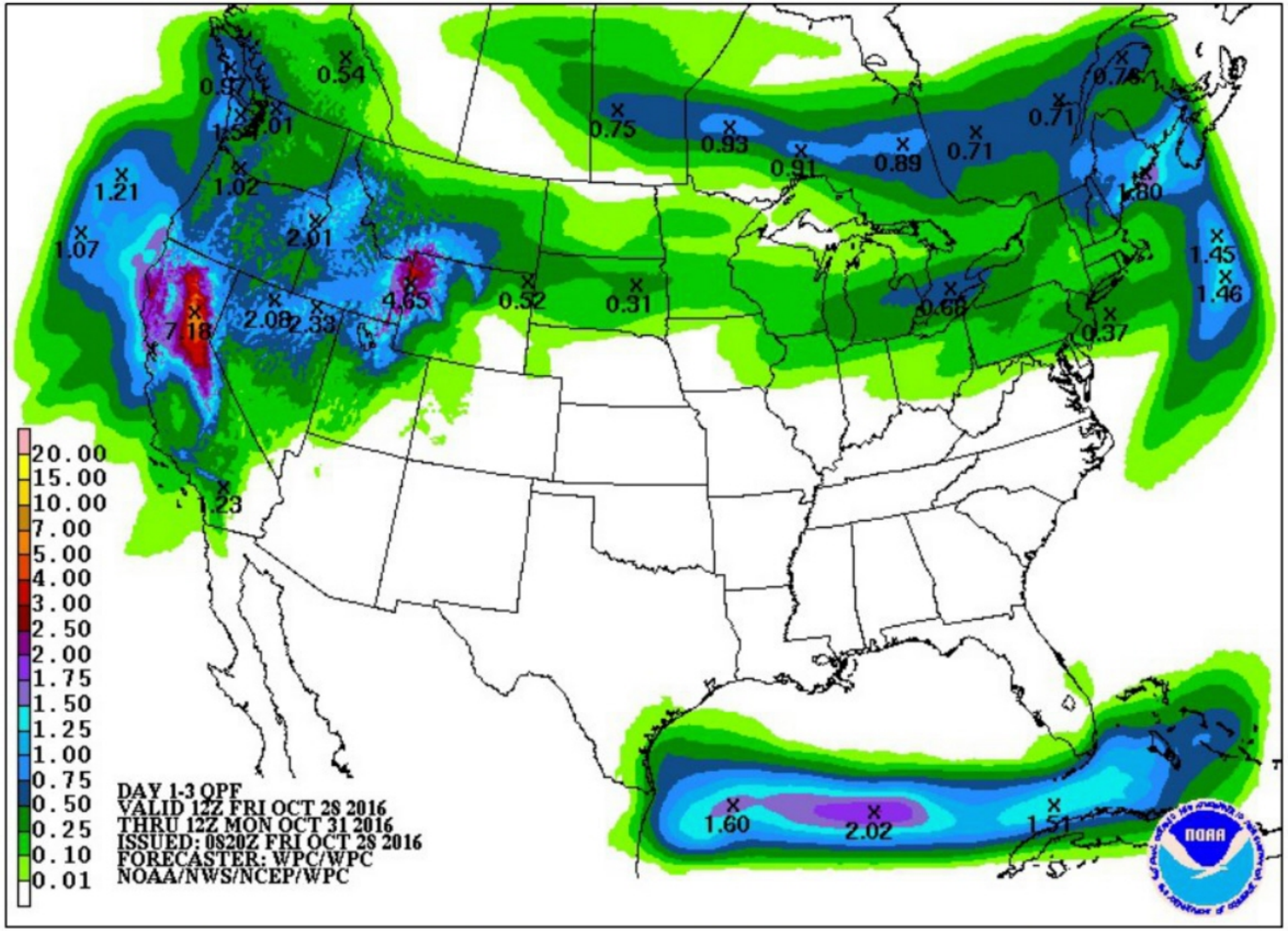
🟥 High Threat
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

Regional Weather Hazards

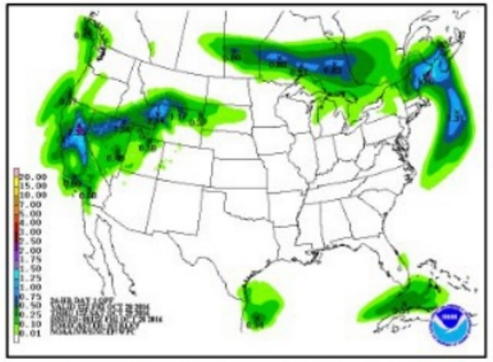
- WY – Winter Weather Advisory remains in effect through portions of Western, Central and Northern Wyoming from 6 PM this evening to noon MT SaturdayUT, CO, SD, ND, MT - NSTR


MONTANA
Helena
Billings
NORTH DAKOTA
Bismarck
Lake Sakakawea
Missouri
Lake Oahe
Pierre
SOUTH DAKOTA
IDAHO
Boise
Idaho Falls
Snake
WYOMING
Cheyenne
NEBRASKA
SAND HILLS
Lincoln
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
UTAH
Denver
COLORADO
UNITED STATES
KANSAS
Arkansas
Colorado
Rio Grande
Wichi

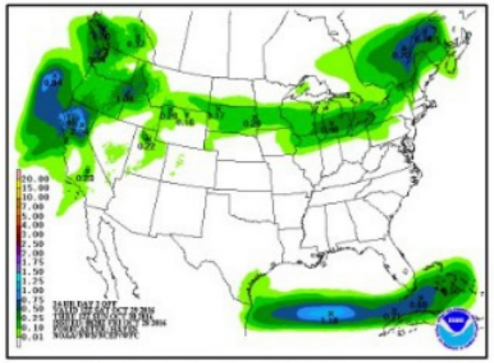
Precipitation Outlook


0.54
0.97
1.54
1.01
1.21
1.02
1.07
2.01
7.18
2.08
2.33
4.65
0.52
0.31
0.75
0.93
0.91
0.89
0.71
0.71
0.78
1.80
1.45
1.46
0.68
0.37
1.23
1.60
2.02
1.51
20.00
15.00
10.00
7.00
5.00
4.00
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.75
1.50
1.25
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.10
0.01
NOAA

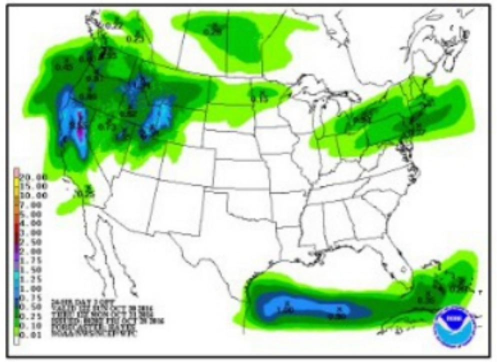
DAY 1-3 QPF
VALID 12Z FRI OCT 28 2016
THRU 12Z MON OCT 31 2016
ISSUED: 0820Z FRI OCT 28 2016
FORECASTER: WPC/WPC
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WPC



Day 1



Day 2



Day 3

State Weather Forecast

Denver, CO

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 82 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 75 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 66 °F

Helena, MT

State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
					40%	30%		
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Rain	Chance Rain	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 70 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 47 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 56 °F

Pierre, SD

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
	20%	50%						
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 81 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 53 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 64 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont

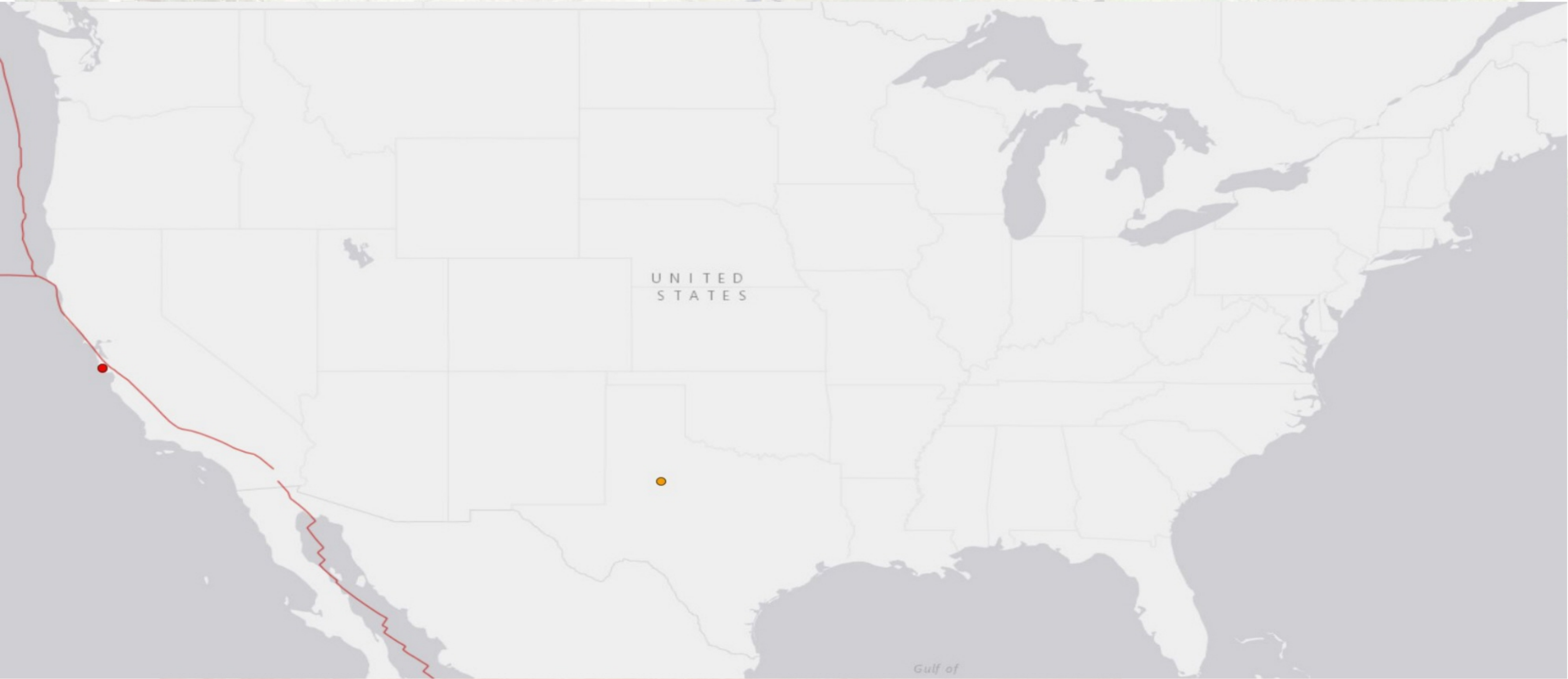
Salt Lake City, UT

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
20% → 50%	50%	30%	20%	40%	60%	60%		
Isolated Showers then Scattered Showers	Scattered Showers	Scattered Showers then Mostly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Showers Likely	Showers Likely then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 71 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 71 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 62 °F

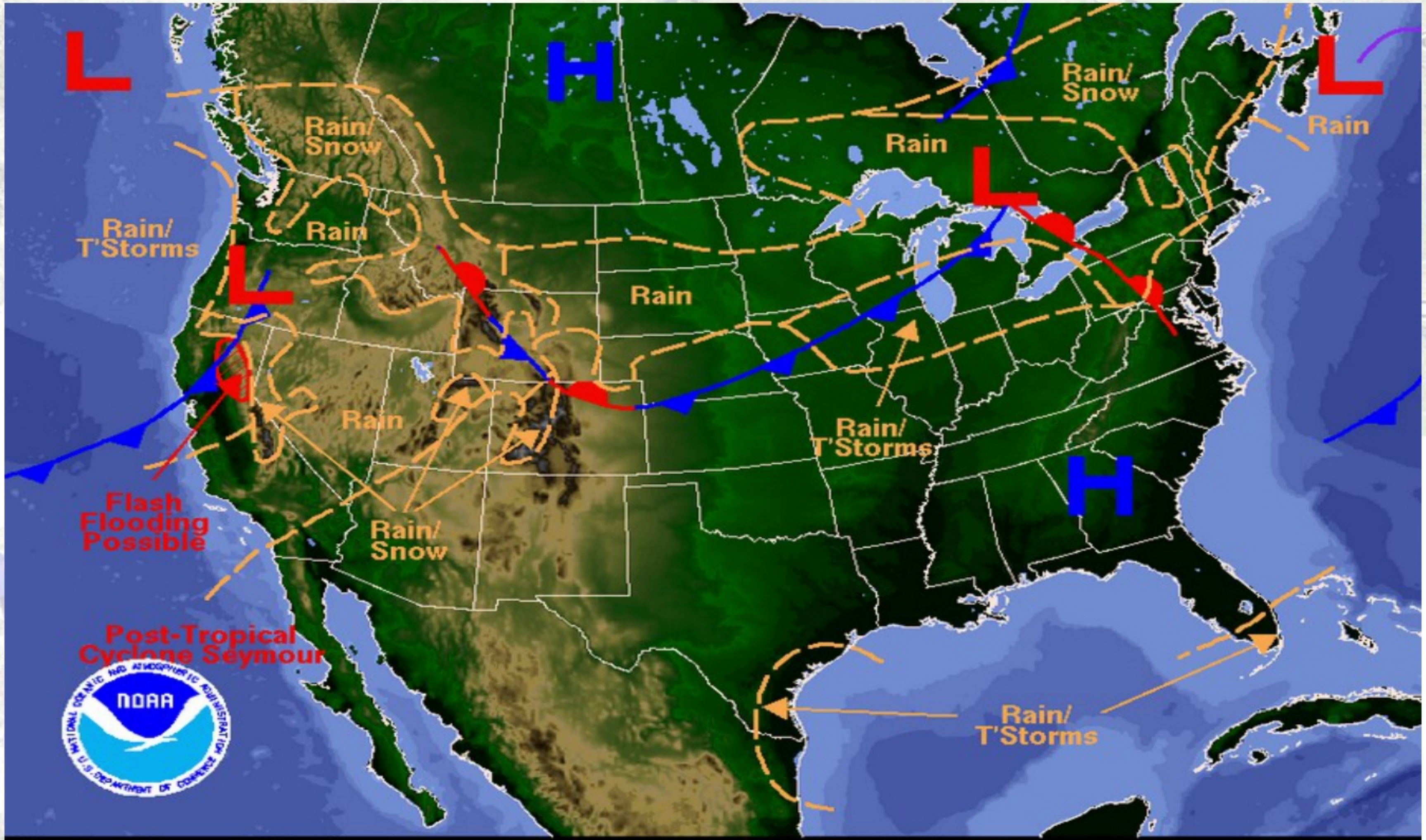
Cheyenne, WY

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny and Windy	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 74 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 59 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity


UNITED STATES
Gulf of

Today's National Weather Forecast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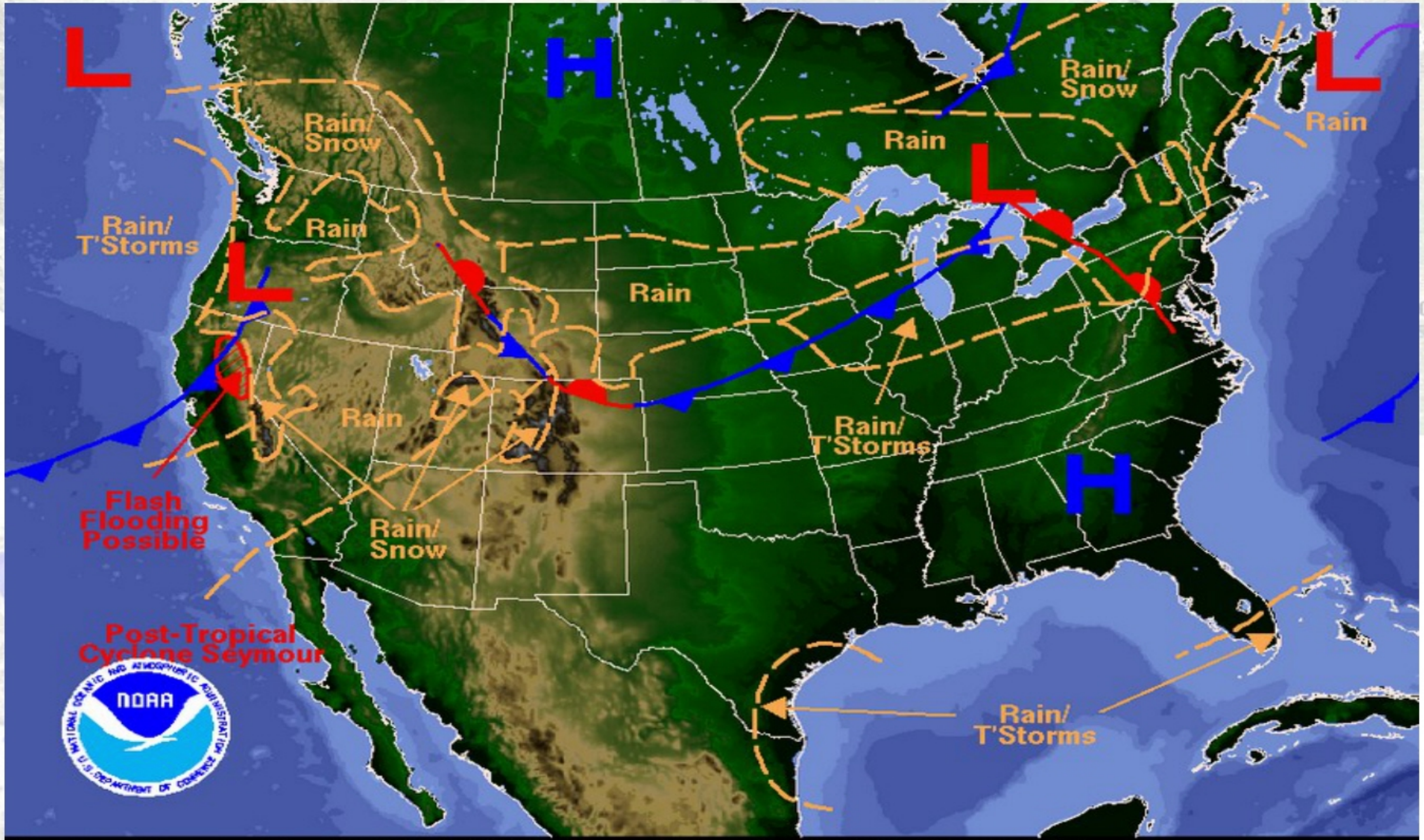
Flash
Flooding
Possible
Rain/
Snow
Post-Tropical
Cyclone Seymour
NOAA
Rain/
T'Storms

Weather Forecast for Sat, Oct 29, 2016, issued 4:57 AM EDT Fri, Oct 28, 2016
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Tomorrow's National Weather Forecast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Rain/ Snow
Rain/ Snow
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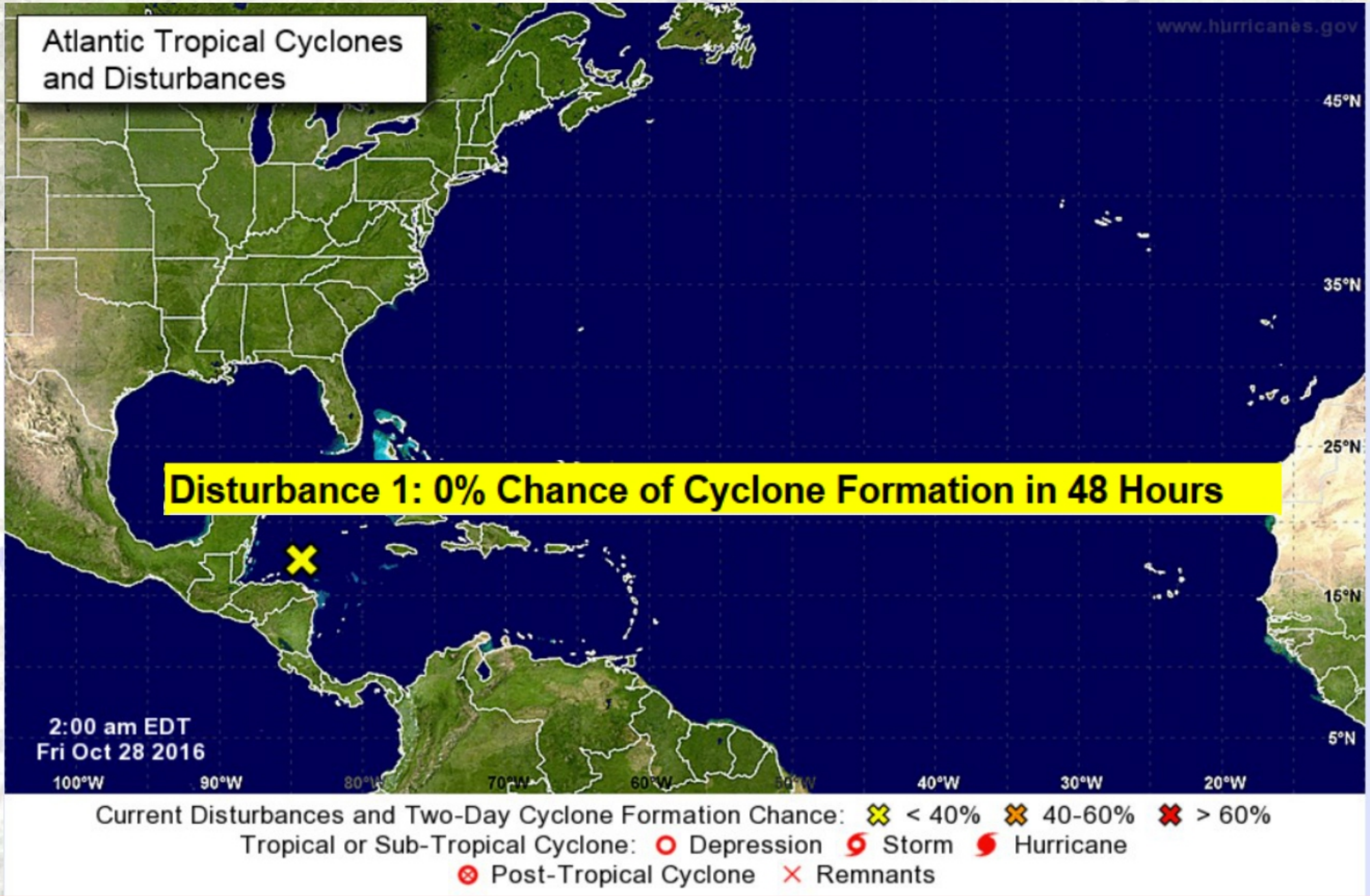
Rain/ T'Storms
Rain
L
Rain
Rain
Flash Flooding Possible
Rain/ Snow
Rain/ T'Storms
H
Post-Tropical Cyclone Seymour
Rain/ T'Storms
NOAA

Weather Forecast for Sat, Oct 29, 2016, issued 4:57 AM EDT Fri, Oct 28, 2016
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

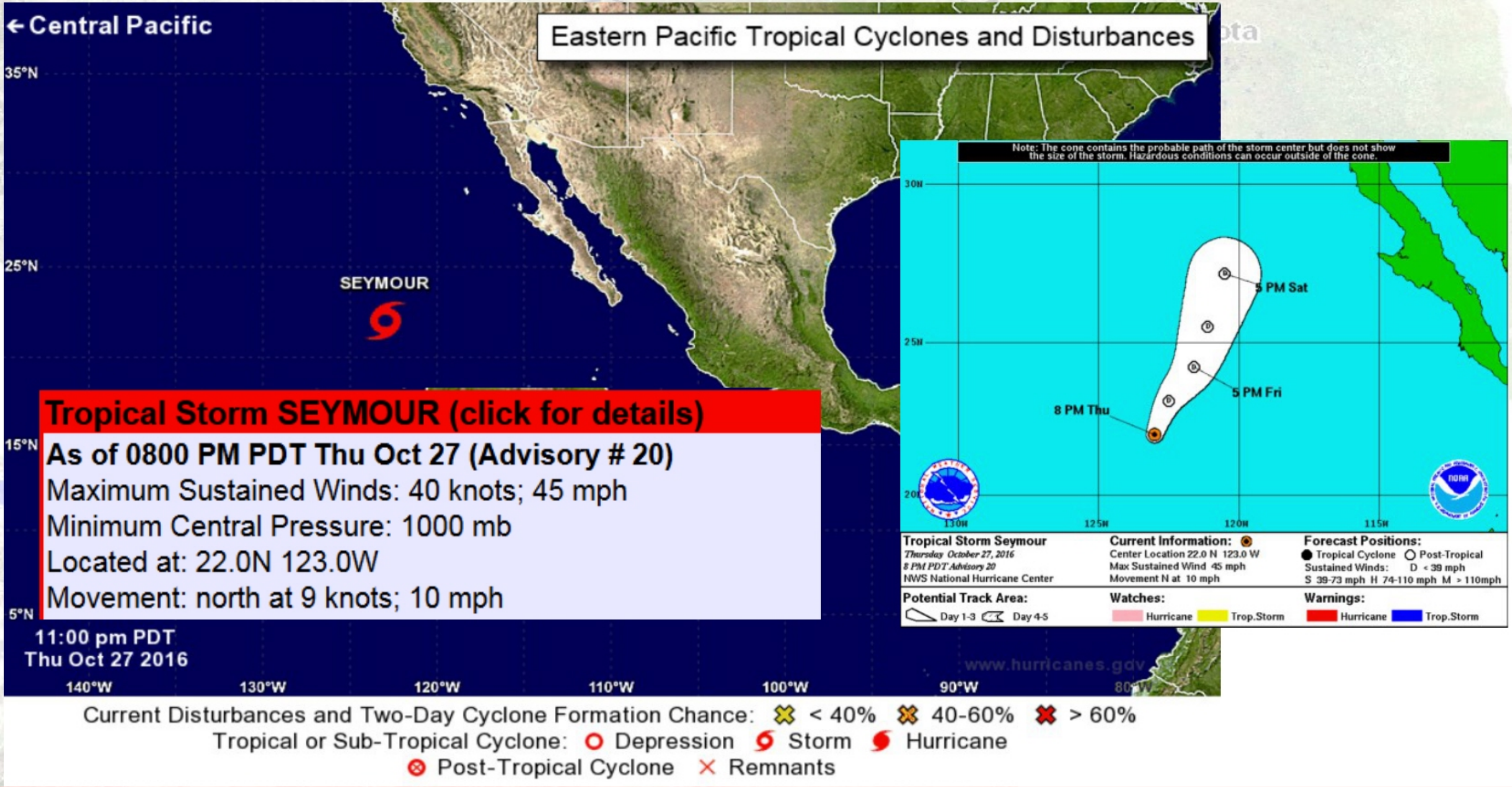
Atlantic Tropical Assessment



Disturbance 1: 0% Chance of Cyclone Formation in 48 Hours

Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
www.hurricanes.gov
45°N
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
2:00 am EDT
Fri Oct 28 2016
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: < 40% 40-60% > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: Depression Storm Hurricane
Post-Tropical Cyclone Remnants

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment


← Central Pacific
Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
SEYMOUR
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
www.hurricanes.gov
30N
25N
20N
130W
125W
120W
115W
5 PM Sat
5 PM Fri
8 PM Thu

Tropical Storm SEYMOUR (click for details)

As of 0800 PM PDT Thu Oct 27 (Advisory # 20)
Maximum Sustained Winds: 40 knots; 45 mph
Minimum Central Pressure: 1000 mb
Located at: 22.0N 123.0W
Movement: north at 9 knots; 10 mph

11:00 pm PDT
Thu Oct 27 2016

Note: The cone contains the probable path of the storm center but does not show the size of the storm. Hazardous conditions can occur outside of the cone.

Tropical Storm Seymour
Thursday October 27, 2016
8 PM PDT Advisory 20
NWS National Hurricane Center

Current Information: ◉
Center Location 22.0 N 123.0 W
Max Sustained Wind 45 mph
Movement N at 10 mph

Forecast Positions:
● Tropical Cyclone ○ Post-Tropical
Sustained Winds: D < 39 mph
S 39-73 mph H 74-110 mph M > 110mph

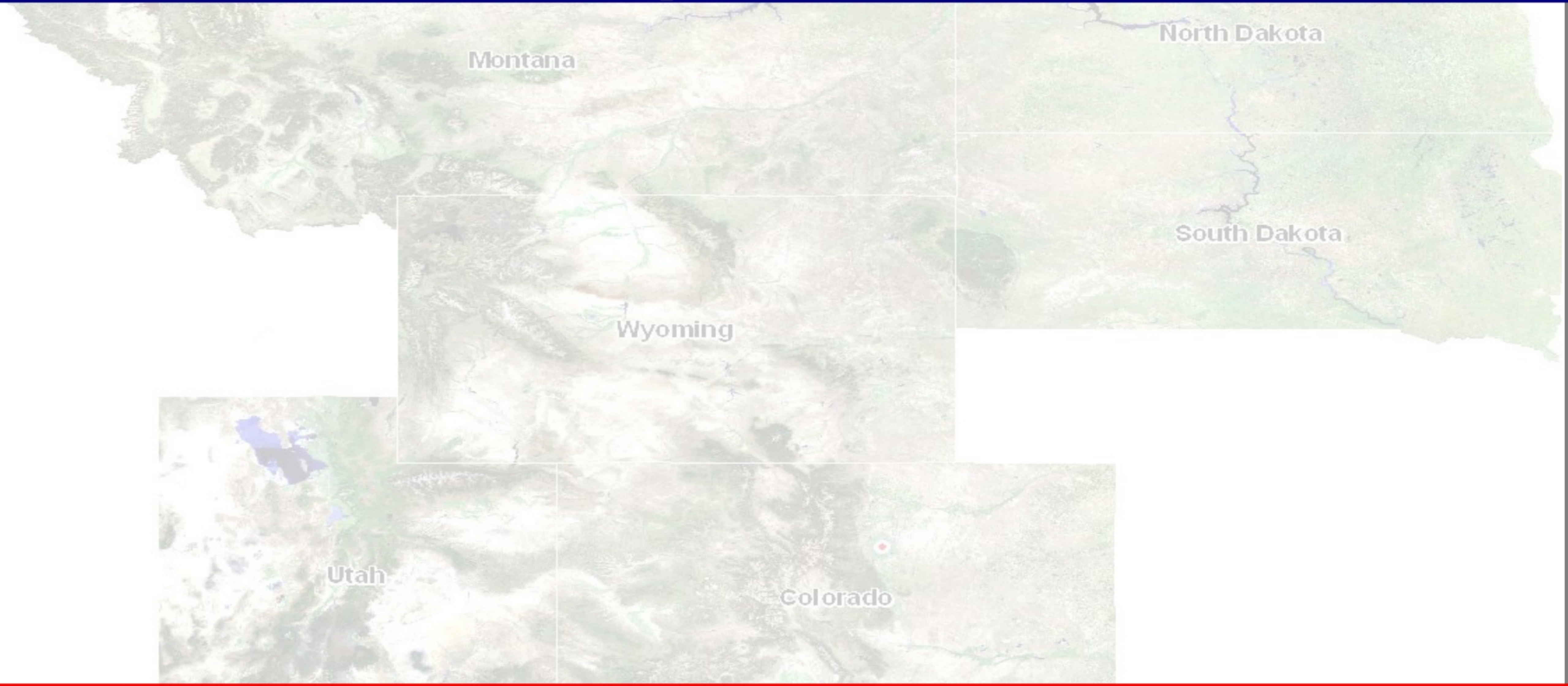
Potential Track Area:
Day 1-3 Day 4-5

Watches:
Hurricane Trop.Storm

Warnings:
Hurricane Trop.Storm

Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression Storm Hurricane
⊗ Post-Tropical Cyclone × Remnants

Space Weather


North Dakota
Montana
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
6	**Date Requested**	0	0
Bad River Band Tribe – DR (Appeal) Severe Storms and Flooding	October 15, 2016		
Spokane Tribe – DR Cayuse Mountain Wildfire	October 18, 2016		
MN – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 19, 2016		
IA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016		
VA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016		
DE – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 27, 2016		

Utah
Colorado

IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 25, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Kevin Moore (UFN)	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Tracy McCauley (Until 30 Oct)	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

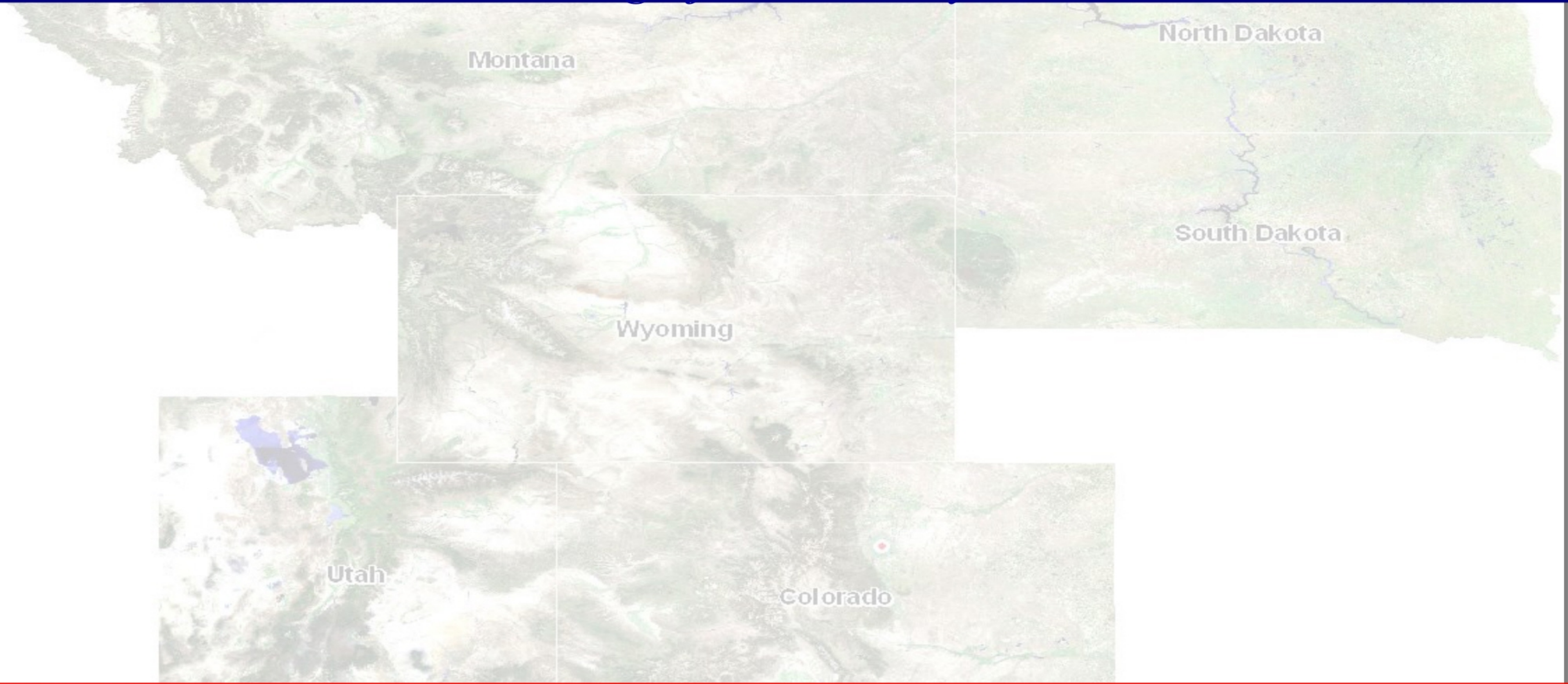
October RRCC Standup Roster (Orange Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Dennis Fisher
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	Kevin Moore
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Mike Ordonez
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

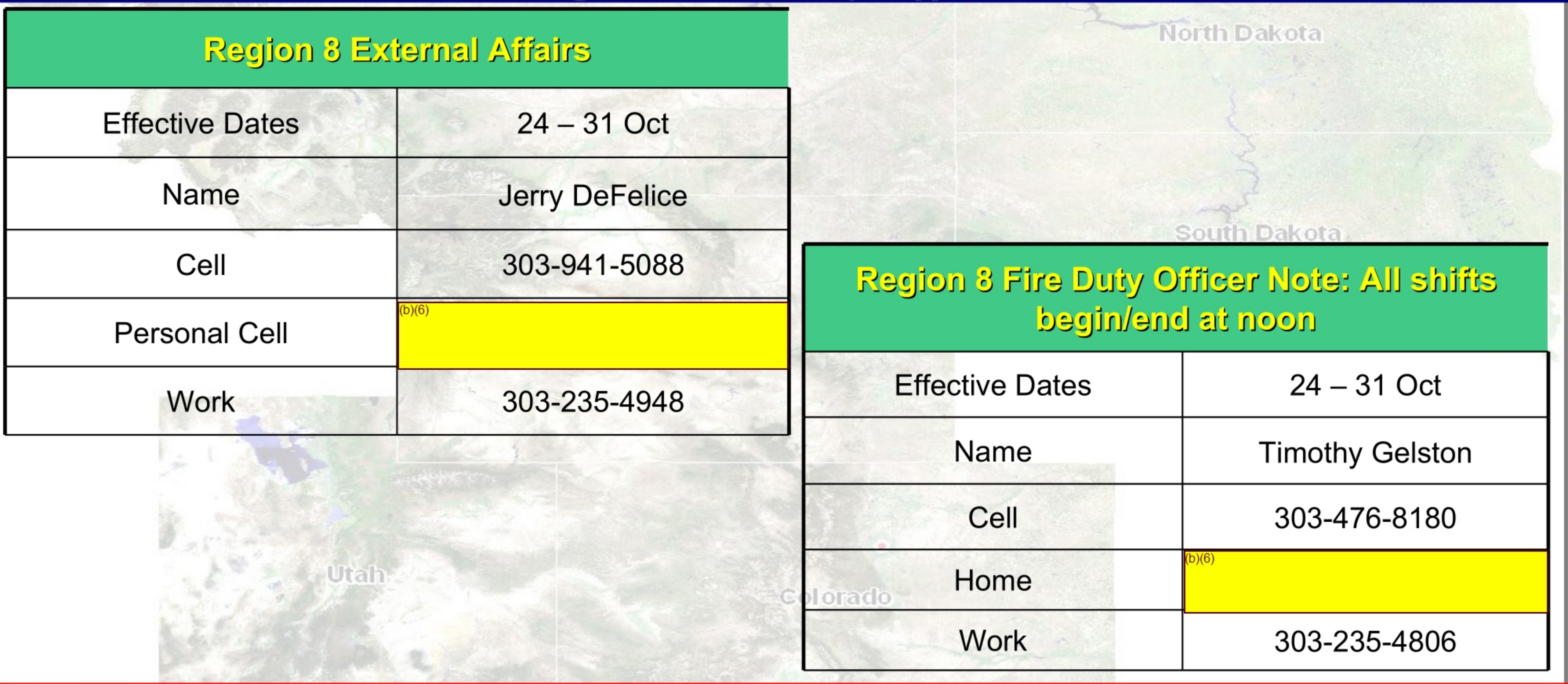
Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 18, 2016 / 1240)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	Michael Pendergrass	303-746-3640	303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	Paul Moreno (24 – 28 Oct)David Watkins	720-315-5647720-683-2565	303-235-4668303-235-4359
WY	Carita Ricley (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton (Deployed)	720-315-6931303-495-0051	303-235-4322303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity


North Dakota
Montana
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

Region VIII Duty Officers



Region 8 External Affairs

Effective Dates	24 – 31 Oct
Name	Jerry DeFelice
Cell	303-941-5088
Personal Cell	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4948

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon

Effective Dates	24 – 31 Oct
Name	Timothy Gelston
Cell	303-476-8180
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4806

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY

FEMA NEWS SUMMARY & CLIPS

PREPARED BY THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY DIVISION OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
HTTP://WWW.BULLETININTELLIGENCE.COM/FEMA

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2016

(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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NATIONAL NEWS

Obama Declares Disaster In 12 Texas Counties

Associated Press, June 11, 2016

HOUSTON (AP) – President Barack Obama has declared a major disaster in 12 Texas counties throughout the state that suffered severe flooding last month during heavy rainfall.

The declaration, approved on Saturday, covers Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington counties.

It enables residents to received federal grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover.

The declaration also approved funding for local and state response costs and sheltering.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott thanked Obama and said the declaration lets Texans "begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Abbott says more counties could be added to the declaration.

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Some Residents Of Flood-evacuated Texas Checking Damage

Associated Press, June 12, 2016

ANGLETON, Texas (AP) – Floodwaters are receding in parts of South Texas and residents of some areas evacuated since last week are getting a chance to check their damaged property.

Brazoria County has begun limited re-entry, via boat or land vehicle, to formerly flooded areas as some evacuation orders remain. Some roads remained closed Sunday due to lingering high water or damage.

County Judge Matt Sebesta, in a statement Saturday, said people must show proof of residency to be allowed in to evaluate property or retrieve supplies.

President Barack Obama on Saturday declared 12 Texas counties federal disaster areas due to heavy rain and flooding since late May.

The declaration covers Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington counties. Residents are eligible to seek federal assistance.

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Rookie Firefighters Test Mettle Ahead Of Wildfire Season

By Nathan Brown

Associated Press, June 12, 2016

FAIRFIELD, Idaho (AP) – More than 40 rookie wildland firefighters spent the past week learning about their new trade at a camp in the Sawtooths north of Fairfield.

On Thursday, they put out a fire for the first time.

Crew boss Adam McKean knelt down and drew a diagram in the dirt path, explained to his crew what they were about to do and gave them tips like paying attention to the wind and weather and trying to chat and get to know their colleagues as they worked. The firefighters, some wearing the Bureau of Land Management's black helmets and others from the U.S. Forest Service and wearing yellow or light blue ones, leaned on their tools – some with shovels, some with combis – a tool that combines a pick and a shovel, some carried a pulaski – a combination cutting/digging implement named after Ed Pulaski, the northern Idaho forest ranger who invented it a century ago – and listened.

They headed up the nearby hill into the woods, where a few test fires had been set. Walking in a line – a technique known as gridding, where firefighters find small fires in an area by walking in a grid and covering the ground systematically – they practiced building fire lines, which is when firefighters dig a trench around a fire to contain it by cutting it off from any nearby fuels.

"This is where they put everything they've learned all week long," said B.J. Stauffer, an engine captain with the BLM and one of the co-leaders of this year's rookie school.

Then, they put the fires out, practicing techniques such as bone piling – piling up branches, logs and other flammable materials that have been left within the fireline so they burn up and out faster.

"It's important to get down to where there's no material that'll burn in there," said Kurt McDonald, field training officer with the BLM.

One of the values in this training, which is held every year at the Sawtooth United Methodist Camp, is that it brings Forest Service and BLM crews together, Stauffer said. Fire crews from both agencies frequently work together and respond to fires on each other's land, and the training lets them meet and practice working together.

For 19-year-old Tristan Kulhanek, who graduated from Kimberly High School, his new job, which he intends to make a career of, puts him on the path to fulfill a lifelong dream. He has family members who are firefighters both with the BLM and with city departments.

"It's always been a passion of mine ever since I was little," he said.

Kulhanek and the others came to the camp last week, waking up at 6 a.m. and starting their days with an hour of physical training before breakfast. Then, they would take classes until dinner, learning about firefighting and fires. Much of Wednesday was spent outside, practicing gridding and other techniques without an actual fire so they would be ready for Thursday's practice. When Kulhanek and the others are done, they will be Firefighter Type Twos.

"After tomorrow, we'll be available to be on fires," he said.

The National Interagency Fire Center's Predictive Services released its fire outlook for the summer last week, predicting a normal June fire season for Idaho, but above-normal risk in much of southwestern Idaho and northern Nevada in July and August, due to more rain than normal earlier this year, which has led to an above-average grass crop in the region.

Stauffer said the rookies will likely spend most of fire season in south-central Idaho, but they could also be sent to other states if there's a big fire and their help is needed.

This area includes both hilly, wooded environments like the Sawtooths north of Fairfield and sagebrush deserts, and they pose different challenges to firefighters. Generally, forest fires move more slowly but take more time and effort to put out, while in the desert you get "light, flashy fires" that consume the sage brush and desert grasses quickly, said Chris Anthony, fire operations specialist with the BLM.

"They move faster," he said. "But they don't take near as much effort to extinguish."

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High Waves During Storm? New Forecast Model Tries To Predict

By Martha Waggoner

Associated Press, June 11, 2016

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) – When John Couch is certain a storm will hit Hatteras Island, he goes into action, moving merchandise in his auto parts store from bottom shelves to top ones and hauling away the most valuable items.

But at 64 years old, Couch is less and less enamored of spending eight hours packing up his property. So his ears perked up when he learned about a new forecasting model from the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Association that's intended to give a better idea of how much ocean water will overrun an area.

"Any and all information is always helpful," says Couch, who owns the Lighthouse Service Center and Lighthouse Auto Parts along North Carolina's Outer Banks. "You don't want to put up stuff unless you really have to."

The USGS is running its coastal change forecast model to predict how far a storm's waves will push water up the beach – whether it will go just to the dunes, over the dunes, or even farther onto roads and property. Oceanographers are in the pilot stages of a new implementation of the model that would predict beach changes in all weather conditions.

As part of the pilot program, hour-by-hour forecasts of potential beachfront changes caused by wave conditions are underway in some areas of North Carolina, Massachusetts and Florida, said USGS research oceanographer Hilary Stockdon. The pilot program runs all the time for all sorts of weather, not just big storms such as hurricanes and nor'easters. Eventually, the forecasts – which give details for the coming days – will be available for all Gulf and Atlantic states up to 102 hours before storms.

The pilot program was running in North Carolina during recent Tropical Storms Bonnie and Colin, but the forecasts aren't yet available publicly. Officials hope the information for the three states will be online in three months.

"In places like the Outer Banks, there could be a high tide and winds from a particular direction that are going to overwash Highway 12 and cut off transportation," Stockdon said, referring to the narrow road that provides the only nonferry access to Hatteras Island. "Those are the kind of events we want to be able to help locals with."

Since 2011, the model has been used to forecast coastal change during storms that make landfall. USGS used it most recently when Colin made landfall in Florida; researchers are studying the results to determine the accuracy of their forecasts. Those are available to the public through the USGS coastal change hazards portal.

The model adds data about what's called wave run-up to information on storm surge and tides. That results in a total on the amount of water that will come ashore in any kind of storm, said USGS research oceanographer Joseph Long. Storm surge measures how high the ocean will rise; wave run-up determines how big the waves will be at the shoreline, on top of the rising ocean.

"It's the addition of the two," he said. "They're both important. In the past the forecasts have only given us the storm surge. ... A lot of times, they're equally important."

The new model could save lives on vulnerable barrier islands such as the Outer Banks by advising residents of when escape routes might be cut off, said Jeff Masters, meteorology director of the private Weather Underground.

For example, Masters wrote in an email, during Hurricane Ike in 2008, residents of Texas' Bolivar Peninsula had their only route cut off nearly 24 hours before the storm arrived. Seven people died on the peninsula from storm surge – several while attempting to escape, he said.

Last fall, Hurricane Joaquin stayed well to the east of the Outer Banks. Yet the USGS model accurately forecast dune erosion that occurred in Duck and overwash on a road in Kitty Hawk, Long said.

"Water levels got pretty high, but there wasn't a big surge," he said. "That's the kind of event you would miss if you're only forecasting storm surge."

The USGS uses a camera that takes before and after photos at the Army Corps of Engineers field station in Duck to check the accuracy of its forecasts. Officials also want to install cameras on the northeast coast of Massachusetts; in Jupiter, Florida; and on the Gulf of Mexico at Tampa Bay.

On the Outer Banks, Dare County didn't issue a mandatory evacuation before Sandy struck in 2012, buckling part of N.C. Highway 12. Drew Pearson, now emergency management director for the county, said, "This product may have told us what we were going to get, and we may have been able to make a different decision."

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Minor Flooding Continues In Central And Southeast Wyoming

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) – Flood warnings have been posted for areas of central and southeast Wyoming as rivers and streams overflow their banks with runoff from the melting mountain snowpack.

So far, flooding has been limited to low lying areas along the rivers and streams in Fremont, Carbon, Albany and Lincoln counties.

In Fremont County, the North and Middle Forks of Popo Agie (pah-POE'-shuh) river were running near flood stage Friday in the Lander area.

The Wind River at Riverton has been rising but has remained below flood stage so far.

In Carbon County, minor flooding is occurred along the North Platte River at Saratoga, where sandbags are protecting the town. Minor flooding also is occurring at Laramie from the Laramie River.

In southwest Wyoming, the Green River at LaBarge is near flood stage.

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The Latest: Some Evacuated Yarnell Residents To Return Home

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

YARNELL, Ariz. (AP) – The Latest on a wildfire that has led to evacuations near Yarnell, Arizona. (all times local):

6:30 p.m.

Some residents of Yarnell and Peeples Valley who were evacuated by a brush fire are being allowed to go back home.

At 4 p.m. Friday, authorities reopened a 7-mile stretch of Highway 89 that has been shut down since Wednesday when the blaze began.

About 250 Yarnell residents were evacuated Wednesday night and 30 residents of nearby Peeples Valley were evacuated Thursday afternoon after winds fanned the flames.

Fire officials say Peeples Valley residents and evacuated residents from the west side of Yarnell are being allowed to return home Friday night.

Homes on the east side of town closest to the fire remain under mandatory evacuation, but authorities say that order could be lifted sometime Saturday.

______

5:15 p.m.

Some residents evacuated by a brush fire near in the north-central Arizona town of Yarnell are being allowed to go back home.

At 4 p.m. Friday, authorities reopened a 7-mile stretch of Highway 89 that has been shut down since Wednesday when the blaze began.

About 250 Yarnell residents were evacuated Wednesday night and 30 residents of nearby Peeples Valley were evacuated Thursday afternoon after winds fanned the flames.

Fire officials say residents on the west side of Yarnell are being allowed to return home Friday night.

Homes on the east side of town closest to the fire remain under mandatory evacuation, but authorities say that order could be lifted sometime Saturday.

The human-caused fire remains 10 percent contained. It has charred more than 5 square miles, but officials say the fire continues to move away from the towns.

______

4 p.m.

Authorities have reopened a major road that has been shut down by an Arizona brush fire near Yarnell.

Highway 89 was reopened at 4 p.m. Friday.

A 7-mile stretch through Yarnell was shut down Wednesday after the blaze began.

The fire forced roughly 300 people to evacuate. It has grown to roughly 5 square miles and remains 10 percent contained.

There is no immediate word when evacuees can return to their home.

_____

1:08 p.m.

Officials are weighing whether to reopen a major road that has been shut down by an Arizona brush fire.

Fire spokesman Gerry Perry says firefighters will determine Friday afternoon whether to reopen part of State Route 89 near Yarnell.

A 7-mile stretch through Yarnell was shut down because of the blaze, which started Wednesday and is 10 percent contained.

The fire forced roughly 300 people to evacuate and grew overnight to roughly 5 square miles.

Overcast clouds will bring slightly cooler temperatures as firefighters continue efforts to control the fire.

Forecasts predict the weather will stay mostly the same as Thursday, which had light winds of 5-10 mph, but with a slight increase in humidity.

Arizona Public Service is working to fix power outages caused by the fire.

8:10 a.m.

Firefighters are hoping to gain control of an Arizona brush fire that has forced the evacuation of about 300 people and has since more than doubled in size.

Fire officials said Friday that overnight mapping determined the blaze is now burning roughly 5 square miles.

Officials are scheduled to hold a morning news briefing on the blaze that broke out close to Yarnell, a community where a 2013 wildfire killed 19 members of an elite firefighting crew.

The fire is currently 10 percent contained.

It has not damaged any homes but three structures such as sheds have been burned.

Firefighters are hopeful the fire will not grow out of control and containment could happen by early next week.

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Crews Box In Juab County Desert Wildfire Ahead Of Wind Gusts

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

EUREKA, Utah (AP) – Fire crews are trying to box in a relatively small desert wildfire that could grow Friday as winds push the flames through dried up sagebrush and grass.

Fire spokesman Adam Solt says no structures or people are threatened by the fire burning in central Utah's Juab County but crews are working to reign it in.

Solt said Friday afternoon that the lightning-caused fire was a little larger than 2 square miles. It's burning about 25 miles southwest of Eureka.

Officials said Thursday they would evacuate the nearby Cherry Creek camping area, but Solt says no campers were there at the time.

Solt says officials have not closed off any areas near the fire.

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5.2 Quake Near Borrego Springs Gives The Southland A Jolt

By Times Staff

Los Angeles Times, June 10, 2016

A shallow magnitude 5.2 earthquake was reported Friday morning 13 miles from Borrego Springs, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The temblor occurred at 1:04 a.m. Pacific time at a depth of -0.6 miles.

According to the USGS, the epicenter was 16 miles from La Quinta, 19 miles from Palm Desert, and 20 miles from Rancho Mirage. There were several aftershocks.

Borrego Springs is a community of about 3,000 people in eastern San Diego County, near the Imperial County line. The quake was felt throughout the Southland. A Downey woman called KNX 1070 and said it struck with "a soft roll," then later "hit again stronger." A caller from Costa Mesa described a "back and forth" sensation.

As of 1:30 a.m., there were no reports of damage.

Earthquake: 3.1 Quake Strikes Near Borrego Springs, Calif.

By Quakebot

Los Angeles Times, June 10, 2016

A shallow magnitude 3.1 earthquake was reported Friday afternoon 13 miles from Borrego Springs, Calif., according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The temblor occurred at 4:42 p.m. Pacific time at a depth of 5.6 miles.

According to the USGS, the epicenter was 15 miles from La Quinta, Calif., 17 miles from Palm Desert, Calif. and 19 miles from Rancho Mirage.

In the last 10 days, there have been eight earthquakes of magnitude 3.0 or greater centered nearby.

This information comes from the USGS Earthquake Notification Service, and this post was created by an algorithm written by the author.

'Like A Disney Ride': Southern California Shakes From Quake

Associated Press, June 11, 2016

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. (AP) — Doriel Wyler was asleep at her home outside Palm Springs when her cats bolted off the bed and things started jolting and swaying early Friday — turning her room into a surreal theme park ride.

The magnitude-5.2 earthquake that struck near the desert city woke up people across much of Southern California but reportedly caused no significant damage.

"It became like a Disney ride," said Wyler, who lives in La Quinta, a resort city near Palm Springs. "I love earthquakes!"

The breakfast restaurant she owns, called the Egg Cafe, escaped without damage, but she said the liquor store at the end of the street smelled "like vodka" from its broken bottles.

And one La Quinta couple had mirrors fall off the wall and shatter, news station KESQ-TV reported (http://bit.ly/1UGQ1bI).

People in San Diego and Los Angeles, about 100 miles to the west, posted on Facebook and other social media that they felt the shaking.

Saum Yermian, a longtime Los Angeles resident who has been through his share of quakes, posted video on Instagram of a chandelier still swaying after the ground stopped moving.

He was in bed getting ready to go to sleep when he felt the jolt.

"Within the first 2 seconds or so, I noticed this was a large-size quake," he said. "The jolt was strong enough for me to recognize this wasn't a (magnitude) 3 or 4."

It touched off dozens of smaller aftershocks, including a magnitude-3.8 less than a minute later, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department said they had no reports of damage. But it shook nerves.

Dudley Detamore was working at Domino's Pizza in La Quinta when he felt the store vibrating.

"I felt like I wanted to get sick," he told KESQ.

The quake struck in a region covered by the rugged expanse of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, which sprawls over more than 900 square miles.

Veteran seismologist Lucy Jones, who recently retired from the Geological Survey, tweeted that the earthquake occurred near the San Jacinto Fault, which is historically the most active in Southern California.

The quake was near the locations of a magnitude-6 in 1937 and a 5.3 in 1980, she said.

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Deadly But Little-known: Why Scientists Are So Afraid Of The San Jacinto Fault

By Rong-Gong Lin Ii, Shelby Grad And Joseph Serna

Los Angeles Times, June 10, 2016

The 5.2 magnitude earthquake that hit the desert southeast of Los Angeles on Friday was centered along the San Jacinto fault, which is one of the region's most active and potentially dangerous fault lines.

The fault runs through populated areas such as San Bernardino, Colton, Moreno Valley, Redlands, Loma Linda, Hemet and San Jacinto, as well as near Riverside, Rialto and Fontana. The epicenter of Friday's quake was in a more isolated area near Borrego Springs in eastern San Diego County.

The quake, which struck at 1:04 a.m., triggered more than 450 aftershocks but caused no major damage.

Experts have been warning for some time, however, that the San Jacinto fault — while less well known than the San Andreas — poses a major threat to the region.

Globalized Economy More Susceptible To Weather Extremes, Scientists Warn

By Megan Rowling

Reuters, June 10, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Still Waiting For A Monster El Niño Storm? Forget It

By Hector Becerra

Los Angeles Times, June 9, 2016

Remember those monstrous storms that bore down on Southern California this year courtesy of El Niño, and how they caused mudslides, mass flooding and general pandemonium on the freeways?

Neither do we.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has declared El Niño, the climate pattern that can bring powerful rains to the region, over – and after a rather anemic showing.

"We're sticking a fork in this El Niño and calling it done," NOAA said in a statement. "The king is dead!"

Though the ocean-borne El Niño helped conjure strong rain and snow in Northern California, it did very little in this regard for the Los Angeles area. From October 1 to midnight Wednesday, downtown L.A. had 6.88 inches of rain. That was even less than the 7.71 inches that fell during the same stretch the year before.

The average rainfall in downtown L.A. during that period is 14.59 inches.

"We're still in an extreme drought situation … for Southern California," said Stuart Seto, a weather specialist for the National Weather Service in Oxnard.

Southern California would need about three years of substantially above-normal rainfall – as much as 10 inches each year – to climb out of that situation, Seto said. And nothing in L.A.'s recent history would suggest that that is going to happen.

"The last five years we've been getting half of the normal rainfall," Seto said.

Hopes had been high that El Niño would be a force in Southern California this year. February was expected to be one of the wettest on record. Instead, by one measure at least, it became the hottest. Many weather experts said the conditions in the Pacific appeared similar to the El Niño of 1997-98, which dumped double the average amount of rain in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Instead, the amount of warm water under the surface was less this time around and the atmospheric response was generally weaker.

"In short … no two El Niños are alike," the NOAA said.

The National Weather Service said it now appears that come the late fall and winter, Southern California could be in the grip of La Niña, which could bring drier-than-average conditions. And the summer is expected to have above-normal temperatures, Seto said.

"Everybody that was looking at it was expecting a 'Godzilla' El Niño," he said. "But nature has its way."

El Nino Has Runs Its Course. But Did It End California's Drought?

By Lucy Schouten

Christian Science Monitor, June 10, 2016

El Niño has passed on its merry way after 17 months of unusual warmth, wet weather, and unusual storms from the Pacific Ocean around the world.

The big story for this El Niño has been whether it would aid dry California's comeback from a drought. The answer is mixed.

"In California, it's all about location, location, location," Jan Null, San Francisco meteorologist said, according to USA Today.

The wet-weather patterns certainly helped the state, filling some low reservoirs and showering rain on dry land, but after years of drought, California needs more than one good winter – even an unusually wet one – to solve its problems completely.

The power was there, as it was one of the largest patterns in history, but the question was where it went. This El Niño was "very strong," comparable to only two others in the 60 years since the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has made records of these patterns, according to analysis by Mr. Hull. The two previous El Niño patterns to receive "very strong" ratings – one in 1982-1983 and the other in 1997-1998 – drenched the entire state of California with rainfall 4 to 10 inches above the average.

This El Niño was equally generous in its rainfall but somewhat different in its allocation. Northern California still received the customary, well-above-average rainfalls this winter, as did the Pacific Northwest to an unusual degree. Southern California did not, and rainfall throughout the Southwest was disappointingly average to low. For this reason, Hull gave the pattern an A- for northern California, a C for the central part of the state, and failing marks in its southern climes.

Peter Gleick, president of the California-based think tank Pacific Institute, was also unimpressed.

"[El Niño] was not enough water to bail us out of the drought, but it was enough water to make many people believe, wrongly, that the drought has ended," he told USA Today.

The weather pattern's rain-giving focus was so far north that for southern regions where a long-term drought was in place before the El Nino, long-term drought remains, according to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln-based US Drought Monitor.

The early-June record heat blast – with temperatures up to 12 degrees F. above average in the West – suggests a hot, dry summer has begun, although the Drought Monitor predicts summer monsoons will begin soon.

El Niño affected the country's southern coasts more typically, offering the Southern states and Texas unusual tornadoes and flooding throughout the winter, as The Christian Science Monitor reported:

El Niño patterns typically hit the Deep South with cool, wetter-than-average weather during the late winter and spring months when the jet stream shifts, leaving an unusually deep trough of air pressure to transport storms from the Gulf of Mexico. The likelihood of extreme, wet weather between January and March increases by twofold during an El Niño year, according to the National Weather Service's Jackson, Miss., office.

As the Golden Gate Weather Services meteorologist and top El Niño tracker Null has said, the 2015-2016 El Niño has been a "poster child" for his mantra, "All El Niños are not the same!"

Humans Caused 5-square-mile Arizona Wildfire

By Ricardo Cano And Ron Dungan

USA Today, June 10, 2016

PEEPLES VALLEY, Ariz. — Residents of Yarnell, Ariz., learned Thursday that a fire, which erupted the day before across a major highway from the fatal 2013 Yarnell Hill wildfire, didn't come from a lightning strike but instead came from human activity.

Exactly who started the Tenderfoot Fire, which has been burning between slopes southeast of Yarnell since about 3:15 p.m. MST Wednesday, and whether it was arson or unintentional is not yet known, said Dolores Garcia, a federal Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman. Fire officials have set up their command center in Peeples Valley, Ariz., about 5 miles from the fire's origin.

Aerial infrared photo mapping overnight showed the blaze at a little more than 5 square miles and 10% contained.

So far, the fire is posing no eminent threat to homes or structures and has not crossed any containment lines, Garcia said late Thursday.

Wildfires tend to calm down as evening approaches but often grow in the heat of the day when vegetation is at its driest and windy conditions propel flames. The fire is about 80 miles northwest of Phoenix and less than a mile southeast of Yarnell, a community of about 700 residents best known for a lightning-caused wildfire in which 19 members of the Granite Mountain Hotshots firefighting team were killed June 30, 2013.

About 300 people who had been evacuated from the potential path of the fire were hoping to return home Thursday if only to retrieve necessities but ultimately were not allowed back in the area, Garcia said.

“The last thing we want to do is have residents go back into unsafe situations,” she said.

Friday’s forecast calls for a high of 92 degrees with no chance of rain and winds from the southwest at 10 mph, weather often duplicated in the summer in the high desert.

On its first day, the fire burned three structures — all out buildings — and appeared to move northeast, burning upslope just east and away from Yarnell, on the east side of Arizona 89. A photo showed flames moving up Y Mountain, just beyond a monument honoring the firefighters who died in 2013. By nightfall, the fire had reached the top of the ridge, destroying cellphone towers there, said Dwight D’Evelyn, a Yavapai County Sheriff’s Office spokesman.

Conditions in central Arizona are extremely dry with a high fire danger, Garcia said.

The last measurable rainfall in the area was in Prescott, Ariz., about 30 miles to the northeast, which had 0.04 inches May 17 and traces of rain May 18. The highest temperature was 69 degrees both days. Since then, the area has seen warmer temperatures and high winds in the afternoon, drying up plants, said meteorologist Hector Vasquez of the National Weather Service.

“The vegetation has gotten dryer,” Vasquez said. “That’s why it’s fire season. Everything is bone dry. Any moisture that fell in the spring is gone by now until the July monsoon season.”

The Latest: FEMA Authorizes Funds To Help Fight Arizona Fire

Associated Press, June 9, 2016

YARNELL, Ariz. (AP) — The Latest on a wildfire burning near Yarnell, Arizona. (all times local):

3:45 p.m.

Federal authorities have authorized the use of federal funds to assist the Arizona Department of Forestry fight a brush fire burning near Yarnell.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide funding for up to 75 percent of eligible firefighting costs.

The fire is believed to be human-caused and already has burned about 2 square mile of brush and grass.

The flames broke out Wednesday, leading about 250 people to evacuate their homes close to Yarnell, a community about 60 miles northwest of Phoenix where a 2013 blaze killed 19 members of an elite firefighting crew.

Authorities ordered additional evacuations Thursday, including about 30 homes in the Peeples Valley Area, as they feared the fire might make its way down to Highway 89.

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2:30 p.m.

Authorities have ordered additional evacuations for a brush fire near Yarnell, an Arizona community where a June 2013 blaze killed 19 members of an elite firefighting crew.

About 30 homes in the Peeples Valley area were evacuated Thursday afternoon as authorities fear the fire might make its way down to Highway 89.

That brings the total of evacuees to near 300 in the area. But authorities remain confident that the fire won’t grow out of control and containment could still be made by sometime early next week.

Fire officials on Thursday put the fire near Yarnell at roughly 2 square miles, up from the square mile estimated late Wednesday.

They say the fire is 10 percent contained and still burning away from Yarnell.

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12:35 p.m.

A brush fire burning outside an Arizona town near where 19 firefighters died in a 2013 wildfire has been mapped as being twice as large as previously estimated.

Fire officials on Thursday put the fire near Yarnell at roughly 2 square miles, up from the square mile estimated late Wednesday.

Bureau of Land Management spokesman Delores Garcia says the fire continues to burn but that the doubling in its estimated size is a result of GPS mapping.

Containment remains at 10 percent, and Garcia says the fire continues to burn away from Yarnell.

She says authorities now believe State Route 89 through Yarnell can be reopened Thursday evening.

There had been talk of reopening the highway Thursday afternoon but Garcia says fire managers want to avoid any congestion for movement of firefighting equipment during the heat of the day.

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7:45 a.m.

Officials say weather conditions are favorable for fighting a brush fire burning outside an Arizona town near where 19 firefighters died in a 2013 wildfire.

The fire has burned nearly a square mile but incident commander RobRoy Williams says its growth slowed overnight. He says light winds Thursday morning are blowing the fire away from Yarnell and that the weather forecast is favorable for several days.

Around 200 firefighters and other personnel are assigned to the fire, which is 10 percent contained.

Williams says the origin of the fire is under investigation but a human cause is suspected.

About 250 to 300 residents left their homes but Williams say the evacuation order could be lifted as early as Thursday afternoon if favorable conditions continue.

The fire has not burned any homes but three structures such as sheds have burned.

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6:55 a.m.

Calm weather near an Arizona community allowed firefighters to get some sleep overnight as they resume the fight against a wildfire that has burned nearly a square mile of brush and grass.

The fire is burning near Yarnell, where a 2013 blaze killed 19 members of an elite firefighting crew.

Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman Dolores Garcia says 250 to 300 people left their homes in Yarnell about 60 miles northwest of Phoenix.

Garcia says winds may pick up late Thursday but calm and cooler conditions with higher humidity overnight helped firefighters.

There have been no reported injuries. The fire has burned close to Yarnell but so far the only structures reported to have burned are three unoccupied buildings such as sheds.

The cause of the fire isn't known.

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Grand Isle Gets $3.4M To Elevate Houses; More Sought

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

GRAND ISLE, La. (AP) — The federal government is providing almost $3.4 million to elevate houses on Grand Isle, but officials said that money will help only a fraction of the island homeowners whose structures are subject to flooding.

The latest funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency funds are enough for about 20 houses, far less than the number of homeowners who are seeking the funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, The Times-Picayune (http://bit.ly/1YdM3Nm) reported.

Jefferson Parish's floodplain management director Michelle Gonzales said 390 repeat-flood houses on Grand Isle have filed a total of 1,200 flood claims with FEMA. The payments total $26.4 million.

There are 42 houses that have either been approved to receive FEMA money for elevation or are in the process of being approved. The Jefferson Parish Council approved the houses after seeking and approaching property owners whose homes best met FEMA's requirements.

Gonzales estimated that an additional 100 to 150 homes are still in need of elevation.

She said the process of distributing funds can be challenging, as federal money usually becomes available in connection with natural disasters.

"It gets difficult, if your house has 4 feet of flood water in it and you need to elevate it before you rebuild, to wait on grants to come down 12 to 24 months later," she said.

Gonzales urged homeowners who are still awaiting elevations to maintain flood insurance because the federal government wants to see that homeowners who have previously been given federal money have kept up with regulations. She also recommended homeowners file claims if their homes get flooded.

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Responders Hone Parachuting, Other Skills At Doomsday Drill

By Rachel La Corte

Fairfield (CT) Citizen, June 10, 2016

SHELTON, Wash. (AP) — The parachutes slowly float down from Chinook helicopters, first carrying boxes of supplies and then the paratroopers who set up a field operations center as part of a readiness drill for a megaquake and tsunami.

Chief Warrant Officer James Pierce packed up his parachute and grabbed his gear shortly after hitting the ground Thursday at Sanderson Field, an airfield in the small city of Shelton on the west side of Puget Sound.

Parachuting in may be the only option for some responders following a massive earthquake, especially to get to remote locations that are rendered undriveable.

"It's a good, effective way to get gear to the ground," Pierce said.

Thursday's exercise was part of a four-day event that ends Friday, called Cascadia Rising, built around the premise of a 9.0 magnitude earthquake 95 miles off the coast of Oregon that results in a tsunami. Both events would likely destroy buildings, roads and buildings and disrupt communications.

For the drill, the airfield and adjoining Mason County Fairgrounds have been converted into a staging area with hundreds of members of the National Guard, a tactical operations center where officials communicate directly with officials at Camp Murray and a trauma center.

Emergency officials believe Shelton — about 70 miles east of the Washington Coast — will be the closest airfield to the coast to survive the disaster.

"After a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, we fully anticipate that roads are going to be cut off, bridges are going to be down and we're going to have isolated pockets of people that are going to need some help and support," said Major General Bret Daugherty, commander of the Washington National Guard.

Research suggests that the Cascadia Subduction Zone — a 600-mile-long fault just off the coast that runs from Northern California to British Columbia — on average produces magnitude 9.0 quakes every 500 years. Big quakes have been separated by as few as 200 years and as many as 1,000, so it's impossible to predict when the next monster quake occurs. However, tectonic stresses have been accumulating for more than 300 years and seismologists say it could rupture any time.

Officials say about 20,000 people have been involved in the disaster drill throughout the Pacific Northwest, representing federal agencies, the U.S. military, and state and local emergency response managers from Washington, Oregon and Idaho, Native American tribes and emergency management officials in British Columbia. More than 8 million people live in the zone, which includes the population centers of Portland and Seattle.

One main goal is to test how well they will work together to minimize loss of life and damages when a mega-quake unleashes a tsunami. They're also testing their ability to communicate without the internet or phones; delivering services in emergency conditions; and search and rescue, decontamination and evacuation abilities.

On Wednesday, one exercise showed the Navy's capability to deliver personnel and equipment to a disaster zone where ports would be destroyed by tsunami waves.

The Navy sent the USNS Bob Hope with about 500 sailors to build a temporary camp on a Naval Magazine Indian Island, a munitions depot in the Puget Sound.

It took the Navy four weeks from loading the Bob Hope to setting up the camp — a similar timeline would be expected after the earthquake.

In Port Angeles, a shoreline city on Washington's Olympic Peninsula, members of the Washington National Guard practiced decontaminating vehicles and first responders. Tsunami waves hitting this area would pick up biohazards while surging through land.

First Sgt. Kent Keller of the Washington National Guard said that these drills allow them to make mistakes now, so they don't make them later during the real thing.

"We are going to learn, and we're going to change the way we behave based on the lessons learned in this training," he said.

FEMA's 2016 National Preparedness Report Shows Health Care On Right Path

By Jamie Morgan

Health Facilities Management, June 10, 2016

FEMA's 2016 National Preparedness Report shows health care on right path

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released its 2016 National Preparedness Report, which evaluates emergency preparedness among individuals, communities, private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations and all levels of government. FEMA reported on key findings in five areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery.

Regarding health care and public health sectors, the report states, "Planning; public health, health care and emergency medical services; and risk and disaster resilience assessment are three core capabilities in which the nation has developed acceptable levels of performance for critical tasks, but that face performance declines if not maintained and updated to address emerging challenges."

FEMA cites the United States' 2014 Ebola response as an example, stating that although federal, state and local health partners began addressing challenges such as personal protective equipment for health care workers and medical countermeasures, the presence of the outbreak itself highlights the need to sustain and build capabilities to counter other infectious outbreaks.

ASPR issues Zika planning resources for health care providers, coalitions

The Department of Health & Human Services' Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response has issued resources to help health care providers and coalitions plan for a real or potential Zika virus outbreak.

"A Zika outbreak is unlikely to result in large numbers of acutely ill patients needing simultaneous care, making surge planning for Zika unique from that of conventional disaster events, including those with an infectious disease component (e.g., pandemic influenza, Ebola)," the resource guide states. "In contrast, the known and suspected complications of Zika infection (including Guillain-Barré syndrome, microcephaly and other neurological disorders) are likely to disproportionately affect certain patient populations, most notably pregnant women and their developing fetuses. Treatment of these complications will likely require the participation of health care specialties and social services that may have limited experience with preparedness activities."

CDC releases toolkit to reduce risk of Legionella

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a new toolkit to prevent Legionnaires' disease outbreaks. The toolkit builds off of ASHRAE 188: Legionellosis: Risk Management for Building Water Systems.

The toolkit provides an easy-to-understand interpretation of ASHRAE Standard 188, as well as worksheets, checklists and scenarios of common water-quality problems. It also contains special sections and considerations for health care facilities.

In the last year, about 5,000 people were diagnosed with Legionnaire's disease and more than 20 outbreaks were reported to the CDC. The most common source of building-associated Legionnaires' disease outbreaks was drinkable water (56 percent), such as water used for showering, followed by cooling towers (22 percent), and hot tubs (7 percent).

House members call for flexible payment rule for hospital outpatient facilities

A bipartisan group of 235 House members urged the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to provide flexibility in the implementation of the Medicare payment reductions for new off-campus hospital outpatient departments (HOPD) under the Bipartisan Budget Act to protect patients' access to care. Specifically, they said the site-neutral payment reductions under Section 603 of the Act should not affect existing off-campus HOPDs that relocate, rebuild, change ownership or types of services, and should not affect services provided by a dedicated emergency department. They also urged the agency's regional offices to use the rule of "reasonable proximity" when evaluating on-campus status.

Preparedness bill clears House panel with AHA-backed provision

The House Energy and Commerce Committee approved the Strengthening Public Health Emergency Response Act (H.R. 3299) with a provision supported by the American Hospital Association (AHA) that would require the Government Accountability Office to report on state, local and hospital preparedness programs. The Department of Health & Human Services' Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) is the primary federal program for hospital emergency preparedness.

The AHA also urged Congress to fully fund the program at the authorized level of $374.7 million, noting that appropriations have been reduced by more than 50 percent since the program began.

Visual triggers increase hand-hygiene compliance, study says

Unpleasant images may motivate hospital staff to comply with hand-hygiene guidelines, according to a new study that will be presented at the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology's annual conference June 11.

The infection control team at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit used images of bacterial growth to provoke feelings of disgust. They tested the images on hospital units that had low hand-hygiene compliance rates. Compliance in these units increased by between 11 and 46 percent in units in which the study was conducted.

"Hospital staff wanted to wash their hands after looking at the book and picturing similar contamination on their own skin," said Ashley Gregory, MSL (ASCP), an infection prevention specialist who co-led the project.

NFPA releases updated Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) released the second edition of its Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities. The guide is free and accessible online, and features updated statistics, graphics, photos and links. It also includes an expanded and more detailed checklist for planning an evacuation process.

"Accessibility among the disabled community is a relatively recent subject that we've begun to address in fire and building codes, but it's one we must continue to proactively focus on, so that we can fully meet the safety needs of people with disabilities," says Allan Fraser, senior specialist for NFPA's Building Fire Protection division. "Moving forward, we plan to update the guide more frequently with timely updates and information that reflect the continually changing and evolving built environments in which we all work and live."

FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants Axed In DHS Funding Bill

By Brandon Ross

Bloomberg BNA, June 10, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's funding for its pre-disaster mitigation grant program would be slashed nearly in half to about $55 million under a bill approved by a House Appropriations Committee panel.

The Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee in bipartisan fashion advanced the Department of Homeland Security's fiscal year 2017 spending measure on a June 9 voice vote without any amendments.

But Rep. Nita Lowey (N.Y.), the full committee's top Democrat, criticized the cut in pre-disaster mitigation spending, echoing complaints from insurers, real estate interests, wildlife advocates and others. She said widespread evidence shows that spending on such measures, such as the establishment and enforcement of stricter building codes, yields savings compared with the money spent on post-disaster recovery (See previous story, 04/06/16) (See previous story, 02/23/16).

Lowey also noted that the bill would cut $12.5 million from FEMA's flood zone mapping functions compared to FY 2016, bringing funding to $177.5 million for mapping.

"The more we invest in mitigation, the more we save when disasters inevitably strike," Lowey said, calling the cuts "troubling."

Insurers: Savings a 'Mirage.'

The mitigation cuts represent a "backwards approach" to the goal of saving taxpayers' money, Jimi Grande, senior vice president of federal and political affairs for the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC), told Bloomberg BNA in a June 9 e-mail statement.

"Any savings for taxpayers from these cuts are just a mirage, because the inevitable—and inevitably much, much bigger—disaster aid bill following the next catastrophe will come off-budget," Grande said in the statement.

Despite the criticism from Grande and Lowey, the subcommittee and President Barack Obama had other priorities. The pre-disaster mitigation cut falls in line with what Obama requested for the DHS's FY 2017 budget.

Overall, the subcommittee-approved budget would boost funding $432 million over the White House request.

Several Injuries Reported After Tornado Hits Eastern Montana

Associated Press, June 12, 2016

BAKER, Mont. (AP) – Several people were injured and one person had to be rescued after a tornado destroyed several homes and damaged a dozen others Saturday night in Baker in eastern Montana.

National Weather Service meteorologist Wright Dobbs says it happened about 7 p.m. Authorities say everyone in the town of about 1,900 people near the North Dakota border has been located.

Electricity was out and phone service was limited after the storm hit.

Dobbs says severe weather, including hail up to 2 inches in diameter, was reported near Miles City, 80 miles west of Baker.

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ABC: Severe Weather. ABC World News Tonight (6/12, story 8, 0:30, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "And we're seeing severe weather across the nation. Here are some of the pictures coming in this evening. A tornado in Montana hitting late Saturday destroying several homes, even lifting an RV right off the ground. In the heartland, heavy rain and flash flooding forcing water rescues like this one. And look at the map, this weekend's heat will continue. Temperatures topping 90s from Texas to the Carolinas."

NBC: Arizona Wildfire. NBC Nightly News (6/10, story 10, 0:20, Holt, 16.61M) reported, "Firefighters in Arizona are still trying to contain a big wildfire tonight. Some 400 of them now involved in that effort. The Tender Foot Fire near Yarnell, Arizona, has burned more than 3,000 acres and forced the evacuation of several hundred people. This is the same area where a wildfire killed 19 firefighters back in 2013."

FEMA HOUSING

No stories for this edition

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

On The Move: What Newcomers Need To Know About Flooding, Flood Insurance

By Michelle Sandlin

Houston Chronicle, June 10, 2016

The Houston area has taken quite a beating over the past several weeks, as rain and flooding have continued to take their toll on the city and its residents.

Unfortunately, many Houstonians have learned the hard way, that although history has a way of repeating itself, it isn't always reliable. So, just because their home or neighborhood hasn't fallen victim to flooding in the past, doesn't mean that they are safe from flooding in the future.

That is why obtaining a flood insurance policy is strongly urged for people who are moving to Houston and buying a home, even if that property is located in a low-risk flood zone.

Ed Wolff, president of Beth Wolff Realtors Real Living, shares both his professional advice and personal experiences with his relocation clients when it comes to the importance of having flood insurance. As a two-time flood victim himself, he knows first-hand what flooding can do to a home.

He said that for people who have been through a flood, that it is the psychological ramifications of that experience that leaves a much deeper and lasting impression than the actual effects on a property's value in the marketplace.

"Houston is a city that is very resilient, and from a property value standpoint, we consistently see, even in neighborhoods that have flooded repeatedly, that value and market memory is substantially shorter than the psychological effects on people who have been through a flood," said Wolff.

He added that the consistency of the rainfall has prolonged the marketing time for many properties that might have otherwise been sold over the past several weeks.

This is a result of that psychological effect, which he said has instilled some fears in home buyers about the properties and neighborhoods that they might have been considering.

While that fear might have hindered a number of home sales, Wolff said, "Value will rebound and value will come back, and anybody who mitigates their damage will see a return on that investment, but it's just going to be a matter of time and distance from past, current and future events."

He said that because no property is immune to flooding, he recommends flood insurance for all home buyers and current homeowners and warns his clients against making rash decisions. He tells them to take their time and carefully consider how to best put their homes back together.

Chris Badger, owner of Badger Insurance, said that the recent flooding, compounded by the threat of hurricane season, has many new and current Houston residents taking out flood insurance policies. Ideally, he said that homebuyers should obtain a flood insurance policy when they buy a new home.

"I always tell Realtors that as soon as their clients find a house that they like, that they need to call an insurance agent and have them run a Flood Zone Determination," Badger said. "This will tell them exactly where the property is mapped, and give them an idea of what the rate is going to be for flood insurance for that location."

According to Badger, the cost for flood insurance is relatively low when compared to the potential risk posed by flood damage, and the subsequent loss of property and personal belonging.

"For example, if the home is your primary residence, and you are in Flood Zone X, which is the lowest premium zone, you can obtain a preferred risk policy for $450 through FEMA. That covers you for $250,000 on the structure, and $100,000 on contents with a $1,250 deductible per clause. So, if you have a loss that encompasses both sides of the policy, your total out-of-pocket expense will only be $2,500," Badger said.

He added that FEMA wants to prevent property owners from jumping in and out of policies if they are in lower-risk areas, so there is a 30-day waiting period before a flood insurance policy can go into effect, and the premiums for those policies must be paid in full and in advance each year.

For properties that are in a higher-risk flood zone, home buyers should also be aware that mortgage companies do require flood insurance, and as such the policy would be effective at the time of closing.

Michelle Sandlin is an award-winning writer, journalist and global mobility industry expert. She is a frequent contributor to Worldwide ERC's Mobility magazine, and is vice president of creative strategies at AMBER Lodging Co. Follow her on Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheMichelleSandlin and on Twitter: @MichelleSandlin. Also visit "On the Move" at blog.chron.com/onthemove.

6.8 Million U.S. Homes At Risk Of Hurricane Storm Surge Damage In 2016

By Michael Gerrity

World Property Journal, June 10, 2016

Total Reconstruction Cost Value for All Homes Over $1.5 Trillion

According to CoreLogic's 2016 Storm Surge Report, more than 6.8 million homes on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts are at potential risk of damage from hurricane storm surge inundation with a total reconstruction cost value of more than $1.5 trillion.

In addition to the number of homes at risk, the analysis also provides the reconstruction cost value (RCV), which is the cost to completely rebuild a property in case of damage, including labor and materials by geographic location, assuming a worst-case scenario at 100-percent destruction. Using more advanced and granular data than in previous years, the 2016 analysis shows an increase from 2015 in the overall number of homes at risk of storm surge as well as an increase in the reconstruction value of these homes. Despite the overall increases, the 2016 analysis shows a decrease in the most extreme category for both the number and value of homes at risk.

The CoreLogic analysis examines risk from hurricane-driven storm surge for homes along the Atlantic and Gulf coastlines across 19 states and the District of Columbia, as well as for 88 metro areas. Homes are categorized among five risk levels, including Low, Moderate, High, Very High and Extreme.

"Using more granular-level data has given us an even clearer picture of which homes are at risk of storm surge damage," said Dr. Tom Jeffery, senior hazard risk scientist for CoreLogic. "Despite the overall increases in risk, we were glad to see that the number and value of homes in the most extreme, and dangerous, category actually declined. It just goes to show the power of how advanced data can improve risk assessment at the property level."

At the regional level, the Atlantic Coast has just under 3.9 million homes at risk of storm surge with an RCV of $953 billion, and the Gulf Coast has just over 2.9 million homes at risk with $592 billion in potential exposure to total destruction damage (Table 2).

At the state level, Texas and Florida, which have the longest coastal areas, consistently have more homes at risk than other states. Florida ranks first with 2.7 million at-risk homes across the five risk categories and Texas ranks third with 531,169 at-risk homes (Table 3). Since the number of homes at risk strongly correlates with the accompanying RCV, these two states rank first and fifth, respectively for having the largest RCV (Table 4). States with less coastal exposure but lower-lying elevations that extend farther inland, such as Louisiana (ranked second at 800,521 at-risk homes) and New Jersey (ranked fourth at 468,823 at-risk homes), tend to have more total homes at risk because of the potential for surge water to travel farther inland. Louisiana and New Jersey are also near the top of the list for RCV, with Louisiana totaling $184 billion (ranked second) and New Jersey totaling $139 billion (ranked fourth).

At the local level, 15 Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) account for 67.3 percent of the 6.8 million total at-risk homes and 68.3 percent of the total $1.54 trillion RCV (Table 5). This disproportionate distribution of homes suggests that the location of hurricanes that hit land is often a more important factor than the number of storms that may occur during the year. The Miami CBSA, which includes Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, has the most homes at risk totaling 780,482 with an RCV of just under $144 billion. By comparison, the New York City CBSA has slightly fewer homes at risk at 719,373, but a significantly higher total RCV totaling $260 billion.

The CoreLogic storm surge analysis also complements Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone information to provide a snapshot of potential damage exposure at the property level since many properties located outside designated FEMA flood zones are still at risk for storm surge damage. Standard FEMA flood zones are designed to identify areas at risk for both freshwater flooding, as well as storm surge, based on the likelihood of either a 100-year or 500-year flood event. They do not differentiate risk based on storm severity, and as a result, do not accurately reflect the total extent of potential risk along coastal areas. Homeowners who live outside designated FEMA flood zones often do not carry flood insurance, given that there is no mandate to do so, and therefore may not be aware of the potential risk that storm surge poses to their properties.

East Gloucester Waterfront Rezoning Meetings Begin

By Sean Horgan

Gloucester (MA) Times, June 12, 2016

The city is embarking on the public process for developing a new zoning district for the East Gloucester waterfront properties removed in 2014 from the Designated Port Area (DPA).

The Planning Department, in conjunction with consultants from the Urban Harbors Institute at the

University of Massachusetts at Boston, will hold the first public meeting Thursday, June 16, at 6:30 p.m. at Maritime Gloucester to explain the process, which will include several more public meetings and is expected to last into the fall.

In April 2014, the state approved the redrawing of the city's DPA boundaries within the inner harbor, removing from the DPA all but two East Gloucester and Smith Cove waterfront parcels — the East Gloucester Cold Storage site and the Gloucester Marine Railways parcel at the end of Rocky Neck.

Those changes, designed to spur a more diverse and increased development along the city's historic waterfront, also generated the need for developing a new zoning district. It was the first modification of the city's DPA footprint since it was established in 1978.

Currently, according to city Planning Director Gregg Cademartori, the neighborhood of East Gloucester primarily is zoned marine industrial, but includes a mix of uses such as residential, commercial, marine industrial and marine commercial.

The city, he said, is considering the formation of a new water-dependent zoning district that could preserve existing uses while embracing a future mix of residential, commercial and marine uses.

The Urban Harbors Institute has been tasked with creating zoning recommendations within the parameters of state and federal regulations associated with public access, flood risk, the existing Chapter 91 and FEMA floodplain regulations.

Selectmen Say Door Not Shut On North Attleboro Joining Federal Program To Save Residents Money On Flood Insurance

By Andrew Doerfler

Attleboro (MA) Sun Chronicle, June 10, 2016

NORTH ATTLEBORO — Before Monday's Town Meeting rejected a $13,600 proposal to join a federal program that would save residents money on flood insurance, one Representative Town Meeting member had an idea: The 327 households affected by FEMA's expanded flood plain could pay for the town to enter the program — at about $41 each.

Cindy Desisto of Phillips Street took his advice.

At Thursday's board of selectmen's meeting, she held up her $41.60 at the lectern and wondered whether the money could truly be allocated to join the FEMA's Community Rating System, or if it would just fall into the general fund.

She denounced RTM's decision as "short-sighted."

Later in the meeting, selectmen and the town administrator assured residents that the door was not shut on joining the program, which rewards municipalities with reductions on flood insurance if they exceed standards on flood mitigation.

FEMA's updated flood maps took in many new households, requiring them to buy expensive flood insurance for the first time. Residents protested, but North Attleboro's appeals of the expanded flood plain were denied by FEMA.

The town accepted the flood maps so that it would remain eligible for certain grants.

The proposal before RTM would have directed $12,000 to consultants and $1,600 to the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District, a planning agency that would help North Attleboro and other communities join the program.

Town Administrator Michael Gallagher said that the town could look into joining the system without SRPEDD, and possibly save money in the process.

Joining the program, he said, is "something we definitely need to pursue."

Selectmen, who had all previously voiced support for joining the program, agreed. More residents and businesses, they suspected, should expect to be affected as FEMA expands the flood plain.

Selectwoman Anne Lonzo said that high flood insurance costs would risk driving off homeowners and businesses.

"We're going to be losing income," Lonzo said.

As for Desisto's $41.60, Selectman John Rhyno encouraged her to hold onto it for the time being.

Austin's Flood-prone Home Buyouts Puzzle Locals, Leaders

By David Barer

KXAN-TV Austin (TX), June 10, 2016

AUSTIN (KXAN) — An ongoing city program to buy out swaths of homes in flood-prone parts of South Austin has puzzled some homeowners and raised questions from a city leader about inflated appraisals.

City council pushed along $50 million in non-voter approved debt, in the form of certificates of obligation, Thursday, for the ongoing buyout programs in neighborhoods along Onion and Williamson creeks, where multiple floods have devastated homes and killed residents in recent years.

City officials told KXAN some home appraisals in flood-prone areas have increased year over year due to high demand, desirable creek frontage and remodeling done with insurance money. The purpose of the buyouts is to ultimately remove people and property from danger. The Austin Watershed Protection Department oversees the buyout program.

City councilwoman and realtor Ellen Troxclair said she's seen appraisals for certain homes that appear inflated, and the city has sought to buyout homes that have never flooded. Russell Julian points to the ground floor of his home, which was elevated four feet to avoid flooding. He has refused a city buyout offer. (KXAN Photo)

"I certainly understand the need to help people who have found themselves in a bad situation," Troxclair said. "But the reality is, when you look at the average market value the average sale price of homes in these areas versus what the city of Austin is paying for them, there is a significant difference."

When KXAN visited Onion and Williamson creek neighborhoods Friday, several homeowners still living in buyout areas unburdened themselves with a mix of concerns about the programs. One Onion Creek resident said the city did not offer him enough money to justify selling his home.

Another resident, Russell Julian, who lives next to Williamson Creek, said city-hired appraisers placed significantly divergent values on neighboring Heartwood Drive properties. Julian said he turned down city requests for a buyout. Years ago, Julian hired an engineer and paid to have his home elevated by four feet, which took it out of flood danger.

"The discrepancies are incredible in buyout appraisals," Julian said.

Overall the city has so far bought 715 homes, and it plans to buy 138 more. Buyouts along the two creeks have cost the city $125.6 million, including $8 million from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, according to records provided by the Austin Watershed Department.

At an Austin City Council meeting on Feb. 4, 2016, Troxclair said she was concerned about average appraisals for some homes jumping nearly $100,000 in a single year. At the meeting, Alex Gale with Austin Real Estate Services, said appraisal averages for those homes increased from $276,000 to $360,000 from 2014 to 2015.

In an interview with KXAN on Thursday, Gale said the concerns over inflated appraisals have originated more in Williamson Creek rather than Onion Creek.

Gale said values of many properties have gone up, despite being in danger of flooding.

Homeowners "took their flood insurance money and completely renovated and remodeled their homes. So, that led to these homes, the fair market value of these homes, being a little bit higher," he said.

The Onion Creek buyout program got its start after the historic Halloween floods of 2013. In September of 2014, the city approved $60 million in funding for the watershed department to spend on buyouts. In March of 2015, City Council approved purchasing 232 homes in the 100-year floodplain. The city is purchasing those homes in two phases, placing priority on higher-risk homes, according to the city.

In addition to buying properties, the city gives assistance money to help homeowners afford to purchase and move into comparable homes. The city also pays for demolition of the homes it purchases, which can include asbestos abatement. The program has assisted moving families out of harms way and into new homes.

We Are On Way To Water Solutions

By Larry Kiker, Lee County Commissioner District 3

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, June 11, 2016

Dirty water, red drift algae, too much water release, too little water release, brown water, algae bloom, dead fish, big sugar, too much fertilizer, clean water, Lake O, and land purchases – if it took a long time to get it this way, how long will it take to get if fixed?

Recently in Washington, D.C., Lee County Commissioner Frank Mann, county staff and I were able to meet with our senators, Congressmen and/or their staff in addition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the federal Everglades projects. There is little doubt that our Congressmen are keenly aware of the issues and opportunities surrounding water quality, FEMA Flood insurance, flood maps, Restore funding and transportation.

Some highlights:

FEMA continues to be on the front burner, considering that it was a short program that requires re-authorization next year; it affects many business and homeowners in Lee County.

Flood maps are behind schedule, and the product does not live up to the needs of our communities when it comes to how the new ones are being produced and how much it could cost a property owner if he or she ever needs to challenge them.

Transportation is an exciting subject on its own. We have asked for them to prioritize existing funds for communities that have a fast growth rate and are willing to participate with the funding; we are making progress.

On the water front, our elected officials have written bills, co-sponsored bills and been proponents of buying conservation lands; they also support the water quality initiatives for this year. Our meetings exhibited among our Congressmen an unusual acceptance of how best to work with the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure all of this happens in the now and future; they were all supportive of the Corps efforts, with an emphasis on budgeting.

As it turned out, our last scheduled meeting was with the Corps' civil deputy chief. We discussed a master schedule for federal projects, noting the need to help facilitate and articulate expectations for everyone. We offered that an opportunity may exist here in Lee County to sponsor a "town hall" regarding Corps work and efforts.

Authorizing and budgeting by our federal administration is key to the success for the 20-year plan. Much of the discussion postured projects differently than I have ever had it explained before, giving a truth about what is actually being done to remedy the age-old problems that plague our environment, economy and quality of life. Some of the information was a bit difficult to digest since many of the projected completion dates seem so far away. The first major deliverable is targeted to be finished in 2024: Complete the Herbert Hoover Dam project. As you have heard, the safety of those who live near the dam is critical to the Corps' major role as well as expanding the functionality of the dam for water retention.

In that perspective, the conversation shed a different light on the "other" projects that seem to come out of nowhere and – according to local critics – appear to be just another band aid for our serious situation. There are three major intermediate projects, two of them are designed to send more water south, which most agree needs to happen, and one is the much talked about C-43 reservoir, which will be designed for additional water storage. We strongly recommended that the Corps add a water-quality component to that project now, not later.

After a detailed explanation of the steps that need to occur and how budgeting affects the outcome, we had two questions: Is there a chance to speed up that project? (Answer: Yes); and, what can we do in the meantime?

Along with the work in federal and state-funded programs, local projects continue to be a focus in Lee County. Our projects include $316 million spent on 25,000 acres of Conservation 20/20 land, $25 million already spent on water quality projects in the past 10 years with another $12.2 million planned for the future, plus another $60 million in estimated capital expenditures during the next 15 years for state-mandated Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) compliance. Overall, Lee County has spent approximately $96 million during the last five years for stormwater-related activities, not including land purchases. Lee County Commissioners have placed a referendum for the continuation of a conservation program on the ballot for this year.

It is time to re-think how individuals and groups intend to work with each other because this problem only becomes more difficult when the words being used are as toxic as the water that we are trying to clean. Our environment is one of the only things that we all share together as we put our collective best foot forward.

NJOP To Lead Discussion, Workshops During Sandy Memorial Wall Tour Stop At Stafford Town Hall June 23

Surf City (NJ) Sandpaper, June 10, 2016

The New Jersey Organizing Project, based in Southern Ocean County and "standing together for community solutions," brings its message – that more than 3½ years after Superstorm Sandy, some 5,000 families are still struggling to get home – and a memorial wall to Sandy-affected residents on Thursday, June 23, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Stafford Township municipal building; and the following week, Tuesday, June 28, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Tuckerton Seaport. The organization urges the public to take action against private insurance companies that take advantage of policy holders in the National Flood Insurance Program.

The presentation is one of several the organization is holding in the area while on tour with its Sandy Memorial Wall, created in Trenton during a three-night campout at the statehouse to mark the three-year anniversary, last October.

"We use our Sandy Memorial Wall to bring people together and bring out the best in our communities."

The public is invited to add photos and mementos to the wall and "hear from groups on the front lines, community leaders and elected officials (speakers list in development) on how we recover, protect, prepare and thrive. Connect with resources that are available if you're still struggling to get home, and compare notes with fellow Sandy survivors."

The wall was recently featured on PBS Frontline's "The Business of Disaster," according to Amanda

Devecka-Rinear, the head of the organization. "Speakers will talk about whether we've recovered from Superstorm Sandy or not, and if we're ready for the next storm, and what kind of action we can take to help us recover and get ready. Nonprofit organizations that assist Sandy survivors will be tabling. All community members (are) welcome."

Part of taking action is signing an online petition to tell Congress to cut the private insurance companies from the NFIP.

The Frontline program brought to light some important details, as pointed out by NJOP spokeswoman Krista Sperber: The insurance companies made more than $400 million in profits just from the flood program after Sandy; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (i.e. taxpayers) pays all the legal bills for the private insurance companies when homeowners sue them over unfair settlements.

"It's by standing shoulder to shoulder and fighting for our homes and communities that we set things right," Sperber said. —V.F.

FEMA Set To Change Flood Maps At Lake Of The Ozarks

KOLR-TV Springfield (MO), June 12, 2016

LAKE OF THE OZARKS, Mo- FEMA has decided to change the flood maps they made for Lake of the Ozarks in 2011. The change comes after complaints by lake area stakeholders and two major floods that happened last year.

The properties on the main channel will not be affected by the new map, only these tributaries off the main channel of the lake:

- Niangua River
- Little Niangua River
- Grand Glaize River
- Linn Creek
- Gravois Creek

Property owners up there have to wait for the FEMA calculations to depend on if they have to pay for flood insurance, according to Brian Myers of Schultz Surveying and Engineering. Mortgage lenders require borrowers to pay flood insurance, if the property is designated by FEMA to be in a flood hazard zone.

Flood Insurance can cost anywhere from $800 to $3,000.

Myers recommends property owners conduct a new survey, once the final map is released, to see if they can lower their insurance premiums, or in some cases, eliminate the need for insurance all together.

The news of the change was released during a FEMA Flood Risk Review Meeting on Wednesday, June 8, attended by lake area surveyors, engineers, government officials and realtors at Wilmore Lodge in Lake Ozark.

FEMA Risk Analysis Branch Chief Richard J. Leonard discussed the revised flood mapping at the meeting, saying the new map was a result of a new Flood Insurance Study.

According to FEMA, they are committed to sending officials the preliminary revised flood insurance rate map panel by the end of June. The revised rate map is anticipated by the end of calendar year 2017.

Another community meeting will be scheduled in July to discuss the findings. Then, a 90-day appeals period. An appeal can be submitted, if it can demonstrate that a change is needed in the map, because it is incorrect.

FEMA will then have to send community officials a "letter of final determination" declaring the final map changes. Once the letter is sent, there will be a six-month compliance period before the new maps become effective. "The entire process will take approximately 18 months," Leonard said. This timeline can change according to how many appeals are submitted and how long it takes to resolve the appeals.

"While there is still much work to be done, the Congressman is encouraged by the progress that has been made on the new Flood Assessment Risk map that was presented at yesterday's meeting," said Luetkemeyer's Communications Director Kristina Weger.

"This will also affect the housing industry because people will be willing to purchase homes that were once considered in the flood plain, that are now out of the flood plain, according to the new map," SSE Survey Technician Brian Myers said. Myers advises property owners in the new floodplain map area get a new survey to see if they can lower their insurance cost. "A lot of people previously denied a LOMA certificate will now be eligible by just reapplying," Myers said.

"Camden County property owners who were previously turned down for a construction permit by Camden County Planning and Zoning may now be able to build," Myers added.

Carpentersville Creek Restoration Could Reduce Flood Insurance Costs

By Erin Sauder

Elgin (IL) Courier News, June 12, 2016

Carpentersville is continuing to make progress on the Carpenter Creek restoration project that could reduce flood insurance costs on as many as 40 properties, including businesses and residences, located along Sedgewick and Brook streets.

At Tuesday's board meeting, Kevin Gray, assistant director of public works and village engineer, gave board members an update.

Construction began last fall on the $1.1 million project to address erosion and establish more accurate base flood elevations around Carpenter Creek in Old Town, as well as stabilize 9,200 feet of stream bank in the area north of Carpenter Park.

As of late May, construction activities have been substantially completed, Gray said.

Representatives of HR Green, which the village partnered with on the project, are having the land surveyed. They will then send their findings to the Federal Emergency Management Agency in order to revise the existing flood plain and potentially remove existing structures from the flood plain, Gray said.

It will take about 12 months before the new flood plain maps go into effect, he said.

Property owners taken out of the flood plain are still urged to get a low-cost, preferred-risk flood insurance policy.

"So they still have the full benefits of having flood insurance but not having to pay a large premium," Gray said.

"Instead of paying $3,000 a year, it's typically $80 a year, depending on the property value."

Omaha-area Flood Plains Might Recede On New FEMA Maps

By Roseann Moring

Omaha (NE) World-Herald, June 11, 2016

Flood plains in the Omaha area could shrink when the Federal Emergency Management Agency issues new maps next year.

Preliminary information shows that new data and new reservoirs are likely to produce smaller flood plains, said John Winkler, general manager of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District.

The NRD's board on Thursday approved a $167,000 study to produce final data. The board voted 10-0. Director Scott Japp abstained.

If FEMA agrees to use the new data, the district will pay Fyra Engineering to study water patterns in the area.

Winkler said the flood plain could shrink along the Big, Little and West Papio Creeks.

He said that over 40 years, flood plains in this area have only increased.

"This would truly be a reversal," he said.

If the data comes in as expected, the next step would be another study — at a cost of about $500,000 — to create a flood plain map from the data. The NRD expects to pay about $300,000 of the cost of that study, if it happens, Winkler said.

The district hopes to use new rainfall intensity and distribution data from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to build the new flood plain map.

And officials want to take into account four new reservoirs. One has been built in Papillion, one is being built near 168th and Fort Streets, and the district is in the process of acquiring land in Sarpy County for two more.

Voters denied the district a bond issue that would have allowed it to quickly build six new dams. But the district already has the funds to move forward with the three sites in progress.

One member of the public spoke about the vote. The woman, Shawn Melotz, asked that the district seek bids on the contract.

Winkler responded that Fyra Engineering already has done work in the area and has the data needed to move forward.

Japp asked why the district didn't ask state legislators to help fund the project. Winkler said the study would be specific to the Papio-NRD and wouldn't be as useful to other entities.

The information is due to FEMA in mid-October, Winkler said.

Papio-Missouri River NRD Board To Update Floodplain Data

KETV-TV Omaha (NE), June 10, 2016

OMAHA, Neb. —The Papio-Missouri River NRD Board of Directors has approved contracting for an update of Papillion Creek Watershed hydrology to provide new flood hazard information which could potentially factor into floodplain mapping due for release by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2019. Much of the Omaha metro area is within this watershed.

The contract with FYRA engineering will total $167,000 and will cover FYRA's study of the watershed that will incorporate new rainfall data and the flood protection benefits being realized by the recently completed Prairie Queen Reservoir, Dam Site 15A now under construction and two additional reservoirs being designed for construction in the watershed.

"We hope that the new FEMA floodplain maps, due to be published in 2019, take into account all the latest flood protection efforts by the NRD in the watershed," said John Winkler, NRD General Manager. "We also have new rainfall intensity and distribution data, recently published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which could show a significant reduction in peak flows within the watershed," he said.

Rainfall frequency and distribution was last published for this area by NOAA during the 1960s.

"This process has the potential to remove thousands of homes and businesses from currently designated floodplains and to keep countless others from being placed in floodplains," said Winkler. "This effort represents one of the main benefits of Nebraska's Natural Resources District system in that we stay abreast of the most current information and technology available and we deploy these resources when appropriate to protect lives, property and the economic well-being of our constituents."

The NRD, along with the Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership, recently completed Dam site WP-5 west of Papillion, now known as Prairie Queen Recreation Area. Dam Site 15A is now under construction near 168th and Fort Streets in Omaha. Two additional sites in Sarpy County are being designed.

"If preliminary results hold true, this will demonstrate without a doubt, that these new reservoirs will have a dramatic impact in protecting our floodplains and reducing flood potential," said Winkler. "Without question, the new data and new floodplain conditions present today should be considered."

A preliminary study by FYRA Engineering of the West Branch Papillion Creek Watershed showed much-improved protection for the Papillion and Millard areas produced by the new reservoirs, floodplain mapping techniques, and other updated data.

MITIGATION

Coan Lake Seawall Reconstruction Begins At Heritage Park

By Dave Herndon

Southgate (MI) News Herald, June 12, 2016

It's been several years since the seawall at Coan Lake, inside Taylor's Heritage Park, has been in effective working order.

Thanks to a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that wall will soon be in perfect working order. The grant is not to exceed $229,845.

Work on replacing the seawall began after Memorial Day when workers from Cross Lake Construction began tearing out the old wall. Temporarily the damaged old wall is being stacked in the parking lot near Maggie's Sweet Shop, residents are asked to use caution near the debris pile.

The seawall repair is just part of the Heritage Park renovations that Mayor Rick Sollars recently talked about.

"We recognize that Heritage Park is one of the most beautiful parks in the entire region," Sollars said. "It is heavily used, not only for recreation purposes, but for literally anything you can think of during the warm-weather months. Wedding and prom photos, fishing – you name it, Heritage Park-goers are interested in it. We know that we need to spend some time and give the park some TLC."

Beyond the seawall construction, the city also will be taking on repairs to the bridge and the deteriorating areas surrounding it in the historical area of the park, the white wooden fencing at the Petting Farm and the walking path.

The Downriver campus of WCCCD also is partnering with the city, working on starting up the waterwheel, adding decorative lighting and creating a space that is similar to carnival wheels like in other parks across the country.

Through another partnership with WCCCD, the park's walking/jogging/cycling path will be connected to the college campus, creating a serene pathway from points in Heritage Park, through the wooded areas, into the back lots of WCCCD and back out to the sidewalks along North Line Road that reconnect with the park.

Right now, the pathway is unfinished along the northern boundary of the park and WCCCD. City leaders hope this will entice local runners and cyclists to bring their athletic and leisure activities to the center of the community.

"Runners and walkers will have a long-distance route without having to cross city streets, and it will be a boon for the ever-increasing cycling crowd," Sollars said.

Penfield Pavilion Project Cost Increases As Town Forgoes State Grant

Fairfield (CT) Patch, June 12, 2016

Fairfield, CT — The town's share of the cost of the project to rebuild the Penfield Pavilion will increase from about $1.5 million to $2 million after the Penfield Building Committee voted to forgo a $500,000 state grant, according to the Fairfield Citizen.

The Citizen reports First Selectman Mike Tetreau said the state grant came with some strings attached, mainly that the building would need to be raised another foot and it presented too many challenges at this point in the project.

Also, while the state DEEP was reviewing plans for the grant, it notified the town that a bulkhead that was installed in front of the pavilion several years ago wasn't properly permitted, according to the Citizen.

Rather than risk the 75-percent FEMA reimbursement for the $7.4 million project, the town removed a portion of the bulkhead, according to the Citizen.

City Park Volunteer Cleanup Day A Big Success

By J. Michael Ross

Stephenville (TX) Empire-Tribune, June 11, 2016

As most city residents know, Stephenville City Park was hit hard by the recent thunderstorms and park maintenance crews needed some extra hands for the cleanup. They got plenty of that from volunteers on a foggy Bosque River Saturday morning in the park.

Community Services Director Jeremy Allen and his staff put the word out earlier in the week that there would be a volunteer workday on Saturday and Allen says it turned out to be a real success.

The E-T caught up with him next to the tennis courts that sit very close to the river and were badly flooded.

"It's hard to tell how many people turned out at the moment because they're spread out all over the park right now. But Allsup's sent a crew of 25, and most of them are here cleaning up the courts," Allen said. "I can't believe how much silt was on these courts, but the Allsup's people are doing a great job of scraping and sweeping it all up and getting it in piles outside the fence. We really appreciate them and everybody that turned out for this."

City Council members in attendance that we spotted were Sherry Zachary, Carla Trussell and Allen said Mayor Kenny Weldon was out in the weeds somewhere. That doesn't mean there weren't other council members and city staff there, but as Allen said, folks were spread out all over the park and we didn't find all of them.

Stephenville Parks and Cemeteries Supervisor Jesus Coronado and his son, Dasiel, were cruising the Bosque River Trail in a four-wheeler and we managed to hitch a ride back to the center of the park.

Oh, and there was also a pair of geese with their little gosling in tow doing their part to serenade the volunteers with a cacophony of quacks and honks.

Here's a list of damage and debris areas that were addressed:

- Large, eroded portions of the trail next to the river
- Downed trees
- General debris all over the park.
- Tennis courts [as mentioned]
- Main city park parking lot and parking areas on both sides of the Graham Street Bridge.
- The RV park [electrical damage]
- Lights under the Washington Street Bridge
- The fishing dock [a total loss]
- Downed light pole on the Bosque River Trail

This by no means implies that repairs and cleanup are complete, as much of it – electrical, asphalt, concrete, etc. – will require licensed contractors as well as City of Stephenville and FEMA funding.

Counties Receive Emergency Funds

Dalton (GA) Daily Citizen, June 12, 2016

Whitfield and Murray counties have been awarded federal funds made available through the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency under the emergency food and shelter national board program.

Whitfield County will receive $51,863 and Murray County will receive $21,740 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in each county.

The selection was made by a national board that is chaired by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities USA, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, the Jewish Federations of North America, the Salvation Army and United Way Worldwide. Each county local board is charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

Each local board reflects the makeup of the national board and includes representation from the county and will determine how the funds awarded to each county are to be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area. Each local board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds and any additional funds made available under this phase of the program.

Under the terms of the grant from the national board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must be private voluntary nonprofits or units of government; be eligible to receive federal funds; have an accounting system; practice nondiscrimination; have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs; and if they are a private voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board. Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

Whitfield County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously with Dalton Organization of Churches United for People (DOCUP), the Salvation Army, Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Center, Oak Haven, City of Refuge, Dalton Greater Works, Soul Station Ministries and Family Promise.

Murray County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously with the Dalton-Whitfield Community Development Corp., Murray County Next Step, the Salvation Army and the Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Center.

Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds and receiving the phase 33 application must contact Margaret Zeisig, director of community solutions for the United Way of Northwest Georgia, at (706) 876-1599 or at margaret.zeisig@ourunitedway.org for an emailed application. Completed applications must be emailed to Zeisig no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, June 17.

EYE ON JEFFERSON: County To Consider Monday Undi Road Repair

Peninsula (WA) Daily News, June 11, 2016

The three Jefferson County commissioners will discuss options for Undi Road when they meet Monday.

The discussion will be at the commissioners' briefing session at 1:30 p.m. in commissioners' chambers at the Jefferson County Courthouse, 1820 Jefferson St., Port Townsend.

The regular meeting will begin at 9 a.m. in the same location.

The commissioners will consider whether to continue repairs of the West Jefferson County road. Repair of the washed-out road is estimated at $1.8 million.

At 10 a.m., commissioners will interview two applicants — Jean Ball and Michael Nilssen — and possibly appoint one to the District 3 seat on the county planning commission.

They plan an executive session at 10:30 a.m. to discuss potential litigation.

At the afternoon briefing, they will hear reports on the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Endangered Species Act, Beckett Point's potential request for special historic shoreline community designation, a comprehensive plan update and amendments to the Unified Development Code.

Items on the consent agenda include:

■ An agreement terminating the employment of interim Department of Community Development David Goldsmith, who served in that position for nine months until a permanent director was hired.

■ The appointment of Malloree Weinheimer to a two-year term on the Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Port Townsend city

The Port Townsend hearing examiner will consider a conditional use and height variance for a personal wireless installation Monday.

The hearing will begin at 1:30 p.m. in council chambers at historic City Hall, 540 Water St.

The council workshop scheduled for Monday has been canceled.

Council office hours, during which members of the public can discuss any topic with a member of the City Council, take place from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday in the mayor's office at 540 Water St.

Port Townsend schools

The Port Townsend School Board will consider agreements with companies involved in the replacement of Grant Street Elementary when it meets Monday.

The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. in the Gael Stuart Building, 1610 Blaine St.

The board will consider approving a fee proposal from Integrus Architecture of Seattle and an interim agreement with Robinson Co. of Seattle for project management services for the school project.

It will review its policy on effective communication in light of a settlement agreement between a blind parent and Seattle Public Schools and hear a preliminary budget report.

Jefferson Healthcare

Jefferson Healthcare commissioners will hear the results of a 2015 financial auditor report when they meet Wednesday.

The meeting will begin at 3:30 p.m. in the Jefferson Healthcare conference room at 2500 W. Sims Way, Port Townsend.

Peninsula College

Peninsula College trustees will meet at 2 p.m. Tuesday.

The meeting will be in the Cornaby Center at Peninsula College, 1502 E. Lauridsen Blvd., Port Angeles.

The full agenda will be available 24 hours prior to the meeting at www.pencol.edu/aboutpc/board/agendas.

Steele County's Public Works Building Phase 1 On Track To Begin This Month

By Ashley Stewart

Owatonna (MN) People's Press, June 10, 2016

OWATONNA — Nearly all the pieces have fallen into place for construction to begin on the first phase of Steele County's new public works building this month.

Anita Benson, Steele County engineer and Public Works division director, said the county is in the process of gathering paperwork from the contractors awarded the project and expects work to begin within the next week or two.

"We're on track for Phase 1 to be completed by end of this year, which was the deadline given by [Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management]," she said.

Meeting that deadline, she said in March, was dependent on the completion of the environmental assessment and the approval of the improved project application, both of which were completed in May.

"There's always a light at the end of the tunnel, but sometimes there's a longer tunnel that's more circuitous," Benson said.

The $12.6 million public works building will be built on land north of old Highway 14, also known as County Road 2, and west of 28th Avenue that Steele County purchased after its old highway maintenance operations complex on Hoffman Drive was damaged in the 2010 flood.

The cost and scope of the project was determined in August when the Steele County Board of Commissioners in a 3-2 vote moved the project forward for the first time since June 2012, when it was halted because of public outcry about the county board's original building proposal, which carried a $13.6 million price tag.

Prior to that decision, however, the county board unanimously voted to construct the public works project in two phases to retain the $1.5 million Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursement, which requires work to be completed by Dec. 31, 2016.

The first phase includes the construction of a salt and shed, fueling station, parking lot and building pad as well as all the site work that will be funded through FEMA and county reserves.

The second phase includes the construction of the 71,094 square-feet precast building that will be funded through state bonds, reserves and bonding from the county.

And because of that, the two phases have different timelines.

In March, the Steele County Board approved the authorizing of bids for Phase 1 of the building, and on May 24, the commissioners unanimously awarded a total of six bids totaling about $1.8 million for the project, contingent on notification from Homeland Security and FEMA's funding obligation.

Benson said that week, Steele County was notified its improved project application had been approved and it'd be reimbursed $1.6 million for Phase 1, which is a little more than originally stated.

The county also received favorable low bids for Phase 1 of the project, which was anticipated to cost $2.5 million, and because of that Benson said it'll cost about $2.2 million, including general conditions, contingency and construction management.

For the second phase of the project, the county board unanimously authorized the submission of the county's grant application to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, or DEED, which is required to secure the $4 million in state bonds it was awarded last spring, earlier this year.

The grant submission was one of Steele County's first steps in receiving the bond dollars it's been allocated, according to the Minnesota Capital Grants manual.

The application — and the project — will also be reviewed by the Minnesota Department of Administration, DEED and Minnesota legislative committees.

According to a tentative schedule created by Benson, she anticipates the state grant agreement process to be completed by this fall.

In the meantime, the county is continuing work on the building's design for the second phase as well as its capital improvement plan and bond authorization.

Steele County Treasurer Cathy Piepho said a timeline for the capital improvement plan and bonding will be discussed at Committee of the Whole at 4 p.m. on Tuesday.

According to the proposed time schedule document in the Committee of the Whole packet posted online Friday afternoon, the commissioners will vote on the capital improvement plan and schedule a public hearing on Nov. 15 — a week after the general election.

Project To Install Northend Pump Station Advancing As Planned

By Andrew Parent

Shore News Today (NJ), June 10, 2016

OCEAN CITY — City business administrator Jim Mallon told City Council Thursday, June 9 that the city will move forward with plans for a pump station on Sixth Street after several months of discussions with state representatives.

Plans for the estimated $8.7 million project, which officially say will help improve drainage between First to Eighth streets from Asbury Avenue to the bay, were presented to the public in a November 2015 meeting.

Mallon said the location for the pump's outfall pipe will stay at Sixth Street on the bay as planned. Officials had explored moving the outfall to the city's Bayside Center in response to complaints from residents in the area of Sixth Street who did not want the outfall put there.

According to a press release sent Friday by officials, the city has spent the last six months trying to get permission to move the outfall pipes to the Bayside Center. Talks have included discussions with Cape May County, which owns the property.

Pending final permits and a public construction bid for the job, work could begin in late 2016, according to the release.

Mallon added that sticking with a new plan to move the outfall to the Bayside Center would have added "significant time and expense to the project," and that it would have been a "long uphill battle with no guarantee of approval."

"The people who lived at the end of Sixth Street asked, 'You own city property just down the way. Why don't you consider it there instead of the end of our street?'" Mallon said Thursday.

Some residents openly complained about the plan when the city proposed it in a November 2015 public meeting, and were afraid the work on the project would damage their homes. They also feared the additional water flowing out at the street end would cause problems, with one resident saying the water flowing out of the outfall after heavy rain "sounds like it's going to be a waterfall."

"We're just supposed to support this because the city says so? I don't think so," another commenter said at that meeting.

Another resident suggested the city had been keeping the project a secret, and that the city should expect a lawsuit.

On Thursday, Mallon said the agencies that have worked with the city on possibly moving the outfall to the Bayside Center which include the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the state Green Acres program and the Division of Land Use Regulation and Coastal Regulation, understood the residents' concerns.

"All of our government partners in this project acted professionally … and were open to the request to consider the Bayside Center, while honestly portraying the requirements facing the city," Mallon said. "Ultimately we decided that, along with facing time restrictions related to the permitting and the grant requirements, the residents of this entire neighborhood have waited long enough for this project to move forward. If the neighborhood wants to see relief any time in the foreseeable future, the city will have to stick to the initial plan."

The project will be funded in part by a $5 million Federal Emergency Management Agency grant, the largest grant received in the city's history.

Mallon said the city's request for a CAFRA permit has been deemed complete for final review, and that the city expects to hear from the DEP on whether the permit will be approved by August.

"This fits the timeline we outlined in the public meeting, that the CAFRA permit would take six to nine months," Mallon said.

The city is also waiting hear back on a Green Acres permit, required because a small portion of the underground station would be located directly under the soccer field on Sixth Street and Bay Avenue, a Green Acres property, city public information officer Doug Bergen said. Bergen said he couldn't give an estimate on when Green Acres may notify the city of the permit's status, but he said that process will likely take longer than that of the CAFRA permit.

The city allotted $17.4 million on road and drainage projects in its 2016 capital plan, and has set aside $34.6 million total over the next five years.

A $1.6 million drainage replacement and road paving project was recently completed from 14th to 16th streets on the bayside of the island, while the city has set aside $4 million for a paving and drainage project involving most of the area between 26th and 34th streets from Bay to West avenues.

Drainage systems between 28th and 33rd streets would be reconfigured, and three pump stations are planned as part of that project, which officials have said should start in the fall.

Ocean City North End Drainage Project Moves Forward

Cape May County (NJ) Herald, June 11, 2016

OCEAN CITY – Following several months of discussions with representatives of permitting agencies, including the N.J. Department of Environmental

Protection administration, the state Green Acres program and the Division of Land Use Regulation and Coastal Regulation, the city has decided it is prudent to move forward with its north-end pump station project with the outfall located at Sixth Street, where it was originally proposed.

Based on feedback from neighbors, the city spent six months trying to get permission to move the outfall pipes to the Bayside Center, including discussions with Cape May County, owner of that property.

"Although not completely impossible, this change would have added significant time and expense to the project, and would have been a long uphill battle with no guarantee of approval," Ocean City Business Administrator Jim Mallon said.

"All of our government partners in this project acted professionally, understood the public's concerns, and were open to the request to consider the Bayside Center, while honestly portraying the requirements facing the city. Ultimately, we decided that, along with facing time restrictions related to the permitting and the grant requirements, the residents of this entire neighborhood have waited long enough for this project to move forward. If the neighborhood wants to see relief any time in the foreseeable future, the city will have to stick to the initial plan."

The plan calls for a new stormwater pumping station near Sixth Street and Bay Avenue to improve drainage from 1st Street to 8th Street from Asbury Avenue to the bay. The estimated $8.7 million project will use a $5 million FEMA grant, the largest Ocean City has ever received.

The project remains on the schedule outlined at a public meeting in Nov. 2015. Pending final permits and successful bid submissions, construction could begin in late 2016.

Santa Clara Seeks Funds To Help FEMA Landslide Grant

By Kevin Jenkins

St. George (UT) Spectrum, June 11, 2016

Santa Clara is hopeful that federal funding will soon be available to help it move residents out of a Heights neighborhood that is regarded as a critical area for controlling a years-long landslide, and approved a loan application this week to provide some of the needed project money.

The City Council agreed Wednesday to seek a state loan-grant mix from the Community Impact Fund Board that would help it in turn qualify for a matching grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to buy four properties on Truman Drive.

"The engineers have said the weight of the homes is causing pressure that makes the hillside move," City Councilman Ken Sizemore said. "The intent is to remove homes from willing sellers."

Mayor Rick Rosenberg said Santa Clara is asking for $351,000 as a half-and-half loan-grant combination from the state CIB fund.

The $351,000 would serve as the 25 percent community match FEMA requires for its "Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant."

Rosenberg said Thursday that the city is "very close" to obtaining the federal grant, having completed an environmental review and other preliminary steps necessary to satisfy the grant's requirements.

"They're pretty detailed when it comes to property acquisition," he said.

If the grant is approved, the city will buy and destroy three homes in the Heights and leave the property, as well as an undeveloped fourth lot, empty.

The city acquired one home at the base of the slide zone in 2013 with the same intent. It had already been vacated due to damage from the shifting land.

City officials removed some land from the top of the slide zone that year to help reduce some of the weight on the hillside, using the soil for repairs on the washed-out Laub Wash detention dam and Santa Clara river banks damaged during flash flooding the previous September.

After the Hillside Commission determined in 2013 that there were new signs of instability in the sloping land of the Heights, commission member David Black informed the council that the three primary solutions for tackling the blue clay slide were to reduce the weight at the top of the slide zone, create a buttress at the foot of the slide to restrain downward movement, and remove as much water feeding the slide as possible, primarily through drains that intercept and carry the water away.

Rosenberg and Sizemore said Thursday that the city is pursuing all three options.

"We're obtaining the maximum-risk properties, relocating the people that are there, and lessening the risk for adjoining properties in the process," the mayor said.

"The rest of the money will be used to grade the slope so it's not so steep, and to build a buttress at the foot of the hill so it doesn't slide," Sizemore said.

"There will be some additional geotechnical work … some drainage work," Rosenberg added.

Rosenberg said there are no signed sales agreements yet, but the property owners in question on the south rim of the Heights overlooking Santa Clara

Drive and the now-dead end Chapel Street have signed "willing seller" agreements.

"We're hoping to be able to go to work later this summer, but until we get formal notice from FEMA, I don't know (when it will be)," he said.

Some Heights rim residents who aren't in the impacted Truman Drive area that have nonetheless suffered slide damage have complained about not being similarly compensated for damages by the city.

During a 2014 community meeting about the FEMA grant proposal, Patricia Nunnely said her 4,315-square-foot Crestview Drive home has seen an increasing degree of damage during the two decades she has lived there.

"We fell in love with the area, and got gypped on the house," she said. "I've watched the hill slide down. ... We're not on Truman Drive, but we have a lot at stake."

Food, Shelter Funds Made Available

By Kristy Carter

Sampson Independent, June 12, 2016

While many people aren't aware of the need for food and shelter across Sampson County, the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency have recognized that need and provided local funds to be used to supplement emergency food and shelter programs.

According to Nancy Carr, chair of the Emergency Food and Shelter program for Sampson County, $27,849 in federal funds has been made available to Sampson County, that will be used in situations where there is a need to assist with providing food and shelter.

"We have a significant need in Sampson County on all levels that EFSP provides," Carr said. "This assistance can make a difference in someone being homeless or not."

The local EFSP board will be charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in the high-need areas across the county.

Under the terms of the grant, Carr said local agencies who receive funds must be a private voluntary non profit or unit of government, eligible to receive federal funds, have an accounting system, practice nondiscrimination, have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter and have a voluntary board.

The funds must be utilized in providing food, shelter, rent/mortgage and utility assistance.

The selection for federal funds, Carr said, was made by a national board that is chaired by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.; The Jewish Federations of North America; The Salvation Army; and United Way Worldwide.

According to Carr, the local board has representatives from City of Clinton, County of Sampson, The United Way of Sampson County, The Salvation Army, the Catholic church, American Red Cross, Department of Social Services, Coharie Indian Tribe, a local physician, dentist, banker and local churches. The local board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds under this program.

Sampson County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously with U-Care Domestic Violence Shelter, First Baptist Church 900 College Street Food Pantry, Rock Ministry, Inc. (Garland), Mr. Window Soup Kitchen, Backpack Buddies – First United Methodist Church, Enlighten the World Ministries Community Assistance Program, Harrells Community Center, and First Baptist Church 408 College Street Soup Kitchen. Last year in Sampson County there was $28,965 in funds distributed under this program.

Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact Nancy Carr c/o United Way of Sampson County, P.O. Box 1677, Clinton NC 28329; 910-592-4263 for an application. The deadline for applications is Tuesday, June 21.

Union Pacific Investing In Kansas Project

By Ray Scherer

St. Joseph (MO) News-Press, June 12, 2016

Later this month, Union Pacific will deploy from 120 to 140 laborers in Atchison, Kansas, for the replacement of track segments in northeast Kansas.

The Atchison Globe said public works and utilities director Justin Pregont told the city commission about the project on June 6.

Hotels are expected to host the workers, bringing a temporary boost to the economy.

The railroad plans to invest more than $70 million in the state this year to improve its infrastructure. Officials said the work is designed to improve employee, community and customer safety and increase operational efficiency.

Taken alone, the improvements between Atchison and Huron will represent more than $6 million of investment to replace 12 miles of rail.

Summit Street work begins in Smithville

Activity has started on a $450,000 project for West Summit Street.

The Smithville Herald reported the work seeks to keep the road and additional ground from sliding down a hillside.

Problems began surfacing about a year ago, city officials said, when ground on the north side of the street loosened and a two-story house slipped partially off its foundation. Large fissures appeared in the ground, including one that reached up to West Summit.

The affected area is located south of downtown.

Missouri Gas Energy is relocating its lines. Meanwhile, Pyramid Excavating has undertaken the task of relocating impacted water lines.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is covering 75 percent of the project, with the city providing the remaining 25 percent.

New Hiawatha postmaster settling into new duties

Mark Hoffman is the new postmaster for Hiawatha, Kansas.

The Hiawatha World said Hoffman comes to the city following a transfer from St. Mary's Post Office.

He began his U.S. Postal Service career in 1999 as a clerk and carrier in Blue Rapids, Kansas. He later transferred to Seneca, Kansas, before returning to Blue Rapids.

He was chosen for the Hiawatha post from among several applicants last fall.

Jacksonville Accepts Bid For Work On Reservoir Dam Spillway

By Tony Boom

Medford (OR) Mail Tribune, June 10, 2016

JACKSONVILLE — Enlargement of the spillway at Jacksonville's reservoir on Jackson Creek will probably start in July after the City Council voted Tuesday to accept the low bid of $73,825 from Kogap Enterprises for the project.

Without the spillway work, a catastrophic flood in Jackson Creek might cause the dam to collapse, imperiling life and property downstream, officials said. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers issued a permit authorizing the work in January.

"We are tickled to death. We can't believe how cheap it is," said City Administrator Jeff Alvis. The city looked at a number of options, some costing nearly $800,000, before the spillway proposal was developed and approved.

Work in the stream must be done between June 15 and Sept. 15 to prevent impact to fisheries. The work can't proceed until the reservoir water level drops.

"We are probably looking at the latter part of July," said Alvis. "We had a pretty wet season. Last year, we could have worked in there at this time."

KOGAP will construct a couple of roads into the site and clean up the top of the dam so that operations can be conducted from there. Work to enlarge the spillway is estimated to take about two weeks, Alvis said.

The next lowest bid was $110,620 from Pilot Rock Excavation. Ledford Construction Company bid $157,320, and LaDuke Construction bid $166,048. City Engineer Scott Pingle reviewed the bids to ensure they met proposal requirements and recommended the award go to Kogap. Pingle had estimated the work would cost $80,000.

In 2012, the city set aside $200,000 from the sale of land in the watershed above the reservoir to fund the work. Kogap will compact material that is removed to enlarge the spillway in an area below the dam. The city will plant trees and vegetation this fall on the material to prevent erosion.

While much of the dam will remain in place, the project is considered a breeching. The old concrete spillway will be demolished and replaced with a 10-foot-wide channel that exceeds FEMA's 500-year flood flow estimates. The new spillway will be about 12 feet below the current dam face slope. Up to 873 cubic yards of riprap can be used for the spillway.

Patience in exploring alternatives over a two-year period resulted in a plan the city could afford, said Alvis.

"You have to wait on all these things," said Alvis. "Don't take the first option."

Keith Mills, dam safety engineer with the state Water Resources Department, deserves credit for helping devise the plan, said Alvis. Mills and Alvis met several times and visited the site to explore options.

"We are very happy that they are moving forward. It is making the dam safe," said Mills. As a high-hazard dam, it is subject to annual inspection until the correction is completed, he said.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Marine Fisheries Service and Oregon's Division of State Lands were all consulted on the project. Those agencies will be notified that work will proceed.

In 1999, a state study classified the dam as a high hazard. Constructed in 1910 to provide water for the town, use was discontinued in the 1950s when the city connected to the Medford Water Commission system.

Sediment has filled much of the reservoir. The city no longer has water rights in Jackson Creek.

Federal Aid Is Needed For Our Lake Michigan Bluffs

By Journal Times Editorial

Racine (WI) Journal Times, June 12, 2016

When we talk about "federal assistance" for disater relief, we obviously mean money and personnel subsidized by federal taxpayers. That includes those of us living here in Wisconsin. We didn't personally deliver the federal aid in times of need. But indirectly, through the taxes we pay, we did.

We haven't had a full-fledged disaster here along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Racine County. But in the erosion of the bluffs along the lakeshore in Mount Pleasant and Caledonia, we do have a crisis which requires federal assistance. Put simply, it's our turn to be helped by the federal government.

Late last month, Racine County Executive Jonathan Delagrave issued a declaration of emergency due to the erosion. Such a declaration better positions the county to get state and federal assistance and gives the county authority to make personnel and resources available, according to a news release.

The declaration also allows the county to close public streets and, if necessary, evacuate residents from their homes, Delagrave said.

High Lake Michigan levels have eroded the bluffs, putting homes in Mount Pleasant and Caledonia in danger. One home has already been removed and officials say 10 to 12 other homes in Mount Pleasant and multiple properties in Caledonia are threatened.

In addition to homes, officials are worried about public utilities and streets, Delagrave said, and fear a strong storm could move through and erode more of the bluffs. "We don't want homeowners to lose their houses unnecessarily and we're also concerned about erosion encroaching on public utilities," Delagrave said.

State Rep. Peter Barca, a member of the Federal Emergency Management Agency National Advisory Council, said he has also contacted federal and state entities and hopes for a quick solution.

"There are people in Wisconsin right now who could wake up tomorrow without a home. We need to take action as quickly as possible," said Barca, D-Kenosha, whose district includes the Lake Park neighborhood of Mount Pleasant. "For the people of Mount Pleasant, time is of the essence."

This is most definitely true, in Mount Pleasant and in Caledonia.

During Tuesday night's meeting at the Mount Pleasant Village Hall, several residents called for the state and Gov. Scott Walker to get more involved. Walker has not issued an executive order regarding the erosion, but has directed staff to provide support in the area, said Pat O'Connor, director of the Bureau of Response and Recovery for Wisconsin Emergency Management.

Apparently, Racine County got the governor's attention, and he responded: On Friday, he made public a letter he sent to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, requesting assistance under Section 14 of the 1946 Flood Control Act, which gives the corps emergency authority.

During his June 3 visit with the Journal Times Editorial Board, House Speaker Paul Ryan said that his office is working with the Army Corps and local officials, including Delagrave and Mount Pleasant Village Administrator Kurt Wahlen.

The Army Corps is determining whether the issue fits under the agency's Section 14 emergency authority, Ryan said. Under Section 14, the Army Corps "is authorized to construct bank protection works to protect endangered highways, highway bridge approaches, and other essential, important public works, such as municipal water supply systems and sewage disposal plants, churches, hospitals, schools, and non-profit public services and known cultural sites that are endangered by flood-caused bank or shoreline erosion."

"We're moving as fast as can be done, meaning we've gotten this moving faster than I've ever seen it," said Ryan, whose district includes all of Racine County. "The question is, how long will it take for them to study this situation, and what resources are available there."

We don't seem to have reached the higher threshold required for Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance, but we definitely have an issue with regard to local infrastructure: It's a short trip north along the shoreline from the worst of the existing Caledonia erosion to We Energies' Oak Creek Power Plant.

Our situation isn't at the level of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, or the New York-New Jersey area after Superstorm Sandy in 2012. But with our shoreline erosion crisis, we have an issue which calls for a remedy from an arm of the federal government; in this case, it's the Army Corps of Engineers.

To our fellow federal taxpayers, we say: We helped you then. You must help us now.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

NFPA S Firefighter Fatalities Report Shows 68 On Duty Firefighter Deaths In 2015

By Lorraine Carli

KCSG-TV St. George (UT), June 12, 2016

NATIONAL – The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has released its annual U.S. Firefighter Fatalities report, which showed that a total of 68 firefighters died while on duty in the United States in 2015. This represents the fourth time in the past five years that the total number of deaths has been below 70. The number of deaths of volunteer firefighters was the second lowest total ever reported (32 deaths).

The largest share of firefighter deaths occurred while firefighters were operating at fires (24 deaths), accounting for just over one-third of the on-duty deaths last year. This is the fourth time in the last six years that the total has been fewer than 25 deaths.

“For several years, the number of on-duty firefighter deaths averaged around 100 deaths per year, but recently there’s been a fairly consistent decrease in the annual totals,” said Rita Fahy, NFPA’s manager of fire databases and systems. “The 10-year average has now dropped from approximately 100 firefighter deaths to 81.”

Of the 68 firefighter fatalities last year, 32 were volunteer firefighters, 24 were career firefighters, six were employees of federal land management agencies, three were federal contractors, one was an employee of a state land management agency, one was a civilian employee of the military, and one was a state prison inmate.

Overexertion, stress and medical issues accounted for by far the largest share of firefighter deaths. Of the 40 deaths in this category, 35 were classified as sudden cardiac deaths, usually heart attacks, with onset while the victim was on duty. This reflects only one less death than the 2014 total, reinforcing last year’s finding, which showed that the general downward trend in on-duty sudden cardiac deaths since 2007 has stopped. Cardiac-related events accounted for 51 percent of the deaths in 2015, and 42 percent of the deaths over the past 10 years.

“While it’s encouraging to see an overall decline in the number of firefighter fatalities, areas of concern remain, particularly sudden cardiac deaths,” said Fahy. She also noted the significant number of cancer deaths and suicides among current and former firefighters that are not captured in the report that only tracks on-duty deaths.

The firefighter fatality study is made possible by the cooperation and assistance of the United States Fire Service, the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits Program of the Department of Justice, the CDC National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the United States Fire Administration, the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Land Management of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Founded in 1896, NFPA is a global, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach and advocacy; and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission.

For more information visit www.nfpa.org.

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

Officials Pin Hopes On Grant To Cover Long List Of Fire Rescue Needs

By Livi Stanford

Leesburg (FL) Daily Commercial, June 12, 2016

TAVARES — Citing the need to increase manpower, Lake County officials have made it abundantly clear that Lake County Fire Rescue has glaring staffing deficiencies, outdated fire stations and equipment.

There have also been concerns raised about the department’s inability to meet National Fire Protection Association standard 1710, a metric calling for the assembly of 15 firefighters to the scene in eight minutes.

A sampling of nine fire reports over the last year in outlying areas shows it takes an average of 36 minutes to assemble 15 firefighters to the scene.

The majority of the 24 fire stations in the county are staffed with just two firefighters on each shift, making it particularly difficult to respond adequately to emergencies in outlying areas such as Pine Lakes, Astor and Sorrento without jeopardizing the safety of firefighters and citizens, according to the local fire union.

But when the county’s Public Safety Deputy Director John Molenda presented his budget to county commissioners this week, he did not ask for a budget increase to address those issues. Instead, he presented a status quo budget at $23 million.

County officials, who long spoke of increasing manpower, believe the budget request is adequate at this time because plans are still being ironed out to implement a timeline for funding the fire department's needs.

Those officials say there are missing pieces preventing the completion of that timeline such as: the results of a study to evaluate whether EMS should partner with Lake County Fire Rescue to provide medical transport services in certain geographic areas to improve response times; and whether the county will receive a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant to hire 15 firefighters.

"I think if we don't explore the SAFER grant we are doing an injustice to the taxpayers of Lake County," Commissioner Tim Sullivan said. "It is a wise use of dollars …"

But this means the hiring of more firefighters will not occur for at least another year. The fire department has not received or asked for a budget increase in years, leaving the department limping along with the limited resources they have.

The county has put on hold a plan to replace aging and dilapidated stations and has slowed the purchase of equipment to a trickle because of budget constraints. Half of the firetrucks in service are more than 10 years old, and 27 percent have more than 150,000 miles on them.

But a draft of a strategic plan — obtained through a public records request and written by a committee consisting of three firefighters, three lieutenants, a battalion chief and an assistant chief — lists six goals in order of importance for the department, including staffing, an apparatus replacement plan, operational effectiveness, advanced life support, fire stations and firefighting personal protective equipment.

The committee cites many weaknesses in the department: It is understaffed and underfunded in comparison to other similar fire departments in the Central Florida area; Fire Rescue needs to increase firefighter and paramedic staffing to meet the 26 percent increase in call load; and it is experiencing an increased turnover rate of experienced personnel.

In year one, the committee suggests implementing 24 new firefighter positions, six new lieutenant positions, two new fire inspector positions, three new battalion chief positions and one new division chief of training.

"The staffing has not increased to match the community needs," according to the plan.

Over the years, the county has a history of delaying action on fire stations. Station 90 in Clermont will finally be completed in July after an eight-year wait for firefighters who were staying in the Value Place Hotel off of State Road 50.

Further, in Altoona, the building continues to deteriorate. A portion of the ceiling has fallen through in the last year. A new station was expected to be completed at the end of 2015 but did not occur. Now, four years later, fire officials say they will finally put in a new station.

Lt. Brian Gamble, vice president of the Professional Firefighters of Lake County, said it was certainly disappointing the manpower shortage was not addressed this budget season.

"It seems we are counting on the SAFER grant to go through," he said. "We are all hoping it does."

Even if the grant is approved, it will only meet a fraction of the manpower needs in the department, Gamble said.

County officials bristle at the notion that they are once again delaying improvements in the fire department, stating they have faith the grant will come through.

"We should be able to obtain the grant for much-needed manpower, but if it doesn't come through then we will regroup and address what needs to be done as quickly as possible," Commissioner Leslie Campione said.

Commissioner Sean Parks agreed, stating he was also confident.

But the grant is competitive, according to Danon Lucas, FEMA Region IV external affairs spokesman.

He added for fiscal year 2014 there were "1,335 applications for the $340 million appropriated for the program nationwide." Out of those applicants, 254 were awarded the grant.

What happens if the grant is not approved? Officials are vague on this answer, stating they will weigh different options.

Sullivan said one of those options would be looking at the fire assessment and other revenue sources. County staff recommended this year the assessment remain the same at $175.

But Sullivan also said the fire department is doing well, particularly in receiving an improved Insurance Service Organization rating.

However, that same ISO rating cited problems with water supply and manpower issues.

Public Safety Director Molenda said the department is making progress, particularly in expanding ALS services over a three-year period beginning with fire station 53, Lady Lake and harbors. It is also certifying six firefighters to paramedics.

In addition, he said the department is purchasing property for future fire stations for Lake Yale and the Seminole Springs area.

"The key is appropriating the money and having a timeline when to implement certain steps in the plan along the way," he said.

Asked about why the strategic plan had not been implemented, Molenda said it had yet to be finalized.

Diverse Native Landscapes Are Best Bet For Fire Safety In The East Bay Hills

By Michelle Myers, Director of the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay chapter

East Bay (CA) Times, June 11, 2016

We all cherish the Bay Area's open space and parklands, and it is the Sierra Club's mission to protect these areas for wildlife and public enjoyment. Because the stakes are so high, any changes to how these lands are managed and maintained will understandably raise questions and concerns.

That's the case with an ongoing debate over vegetation management for fire safety in the East Bay hills. But especially when there's so much at stake, it's important to get the facts right.

The Sierra Club has urged FEMA to allow three East Bay agencies – the city of Oakland, the East Bay Regional Park District, and the University of California – to use promised grant money to carry out a well-considered and scientifically approved fire-mitigation plan in our hills.

This preferred strategy entails removing the most highly flammable trees like eucalyptus – in phases, and only in select high-risk areas.

When the most flammable trees are selectively cut and mulched, they rapidly deteriorate and return to the soil. Species like oaks and bays in the eucalyptus understory are preserved during the selective tree removal, and in the restored landscape they can get the sunlight and water they need to thrive.

This restoration process will take place slowly, over time, giving native ecosystems the opportunity to rebound.

Under our preferred approach, many thousands of acres of eucalyptus and other non-natives will remain in the East Bay hills.

Our proposal only covers areas near homes and businesses where a fire would be most costly to lives and property. In fact, removing monoculture eucalyptus groves and providing for the return of native ecosystems will create a much richer landscape than the alternative – the thinning of eucalyptus groves – which requires regularly scraping away the forest floor to remove flammable debris.

Our approach has many benefits, most notably fire prevention and greater biodiversity. Eucalyptuses are among the most flammable trees on Earth.

They are notorious for quickly spreading canopy fires and for releasing flammable gases and long-burning embers; this is what made the Oakland Hills fire of 1991 so devastating. And today's hotter, drier climate means fire is a greater concern than ever.

Native plants, on the other hand, are generally far less of a fire hazard. They also support greater biodiversity. Oak woodlands support the richest wildlife community of any habitat in California – ecosystems estimated to be ten times more diverse than eucalyptus forests.

We also understand and share concerns over broadcasting herbicides. We should always be alert to their misuse and overuse. In this case, herbicides have been proposed as a solution to stopping the rapid regrowth of eucalyptus suckers.

We encourage the land-management agencies to explore all viable, natural solutions. In the event that herbicides are the most effective remedy available, we insist on a full environmental review and the strictest controls to prevent possible negative effects.

Fortunately, work by environmental professionals shows that the careful use of herbicides can assist in the successful restoration of native habitat, whether it be nesting sites for the endangered California least tern along the San Francisco Bay shoreline, or important dune habitats at Point Reyes's Limantour Beach.

The Sierra Club has worked on this issue for 25 years – ever since the Oakland Hills fire of 1991 – and in that time we have listened to all sides and considered a wide range of views.

While cutting down any tree is a painful thing to consider, selective removal and restoration will make our hills safer, more sustainable, and richer in native plants and wildlife.

Read more at www.sierraclub.org/sfbay/hillsfacts.

FIRE GRANTS

Gary Fire Department Looking To Upgrade Equipment

By Ed Bierschenk

Times of Northwest Indiana, June 12, 2016

GARY — Millions of dollars worth of improvements may be made at the Gary Fire Department over the next year.

The fire department recently bought some new ambulances and officials hope over the next year to add several new fire engines and an aerial ladder truck to its inventory, according to Fire Chief Paul Bradley.

The department recently received a $758,044 grant that will be used to buy 133 self-contained breathing apparatus devices, which supply air to firefighters when fighting fires.

The money came from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance of Firefighters Grant program. Bradley said the city is also seeking another grant from that program to buy a new aerial ladder truck, which can cost between $700,000 and $1 million.

The department currently has three trucks in service while one is being overhauled.

"We need to have four in service every day, but you always need to have a spare," Bradley said.

Equipment and personnel shortages have been an issue for some time, but things seem to be improving, according to some observers.

In December 2010, under the administration of former Mayor Rudy Clay, 35 positions were eliminated in the fire department, which went from 236 to 201 firefighters. Firefighters joined police officers in 2014 and again early last year in picketing over inadequate equipment and salaries, which was said to be responsible for personnel leaving for other departments that paid more money.

The city now has 187 firefighters, but raises were approved last year and Lt. Adam Friday, vice president of Gary Firefighters Association Local 359, believes things are improving. In addition to raises that are expected to eventually increase annual salaries by $10,000, Friday said equipment has gotten a lot better.

"It's better, but we have a ways to go," said Friday.

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson said "it's all about dollars and cents."

She said when she came into office "there were some large gaps with equipment. They (the firefighters) were grossly underpaid. So every year we've worked with the chiefs (including past chief Teresa Everett) to find more dollars. But they have also been very active in finding dollars for themselves," she said.

For instance, Bradley said a new company is doing a better job now of collecting fees for ambulance service. The money collected is being used to help get new ambulances.

One of the issues still remaining, according to Friday, is a new fire station to permanently house Station 5 firefighters, who have been working out of temporary quarters for the last several years. Bradley said the city has been approved for federal assistance for a new fire station that will be located in the 4900 block of Pennsylvania Street. He hopes to break ground on it this year. Bradley also said he has improved furnishing at the stations.

Friday said another issue the union and administration are working on has to do with obtaining additional personal protective equipment and additional cleaners for that gear. The equipment helps protect firefighters against hazardous chemicals they might encounter when responding to a call.

Freeman-Wilson also is working with department heads, union officials, and the council to create public safety positions. These employees would be trained to perform both police and firefighting duties to some degree.

Bradley and Freeman-Wilson said it will be up to employees to decide whether they want to apply for these positions. Bradley said some firefighters have expressed interest in the positions.

In addition to paying a higher salary, Bradley said employees might be attracted to the position because of the opportunity to learn new skills.

$900K Federal Grant Will Allow Paulding To Buy New Ladder Fire Truck

Marietta (GA) Daily Journal, June 10, 2016

Paulding's fire department has received a major injection of funds to allow it to buy a new aerial ladder truck without using money from county taxpayers.

Paulding County Fire and Rescue Department announced Thursday it received a federal grant totaling $909,091. The funds, earmarked to purchase a new aerial ladder truck, will help improve emergency response and save lives, department officials said.

"Grants like this are crucial for departments like ours," said Paulding Fire Chief Joey Pelfrey.

"We rely on our firefighters to function on a limited budget to get the job done. This federal grant will allow the men and women of our department to have the most up-to-date, lifesaving equipment without having to make harmful budget cuts or add to local taxes.

"With continued growth in the county this vehicle acquisition will enhance fire suppression and rescue capabilities to the citizens of Paulding. We are extremely happy to have earned this grant, and appreciate the federal government's contribution back to our taxpayers," Pelfrey said.

The funds came form the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters Grant

(AFG) program. They are designed to help communities meet their emergency response needs without placing an additional burden on their local budgets, a news release stated.

U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson said, “This grant is important to the safety and well-being of my constituents in Georgia. Funding will enable the department to purchase an aerial apparatus for its fleet to replace aging equipment and increase the ability to respond to incidents involving taller structures.”

The federal grant program awards more than $300 million annually to fire departments and EMS organizations nationwide in an effort to improve public safety and responsiveness in times of emergency.

West Sac Firefighting Grant Aids County Agencies

Woodland (CA) Daily Democrat, June 11, 2016

A consortium of regional fire agencies led by the West Sacramento Fire Department has been awarded a $1.1 million grant through FEMA’s Assistance to Firefighters program.

Other cities and agencies that will benefit include Davis, and fire protection districts in Madison, Yolo, Zamora, Esparto, Knight’s Landing, West Plainfield, and Elkhorn, and the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.

Grant funds will be used to purchase Self Contained Breathing Apparatus, air compressors, and related equipment that will improve interoperability and firefighter safety throughout the region.

Congresswoman Doris Matsui was instrumental in securing the grant. “Our firefighters are true heroes in our communities, and are so deserving of this great news,” said the Congresswoman. “This federal funding will ensure our first responders are supplied with up-to-date equipment and gear as they protect us from fire and other natural disasters, which ultimately strengthens our efforts to keep our entire region safe.”

West Sacramento Mayor Christopher Cabaldon said, “It is comforting to know that our front line emergency crews will now be better equipped to protect our community. Thank you to all of our Yolo County partners as well as the OES for assistance in developing the Grant.”

Training on the new equipment will be provided by the West Sacramento Fire Department and Davis Fire Department.

TOP STORIES

Mariposa County Fire Department Call Log: May 23

Sierra (CA) Sun Times, June 11, 2016

Monday, May 23 thru Sunday, May 29
EMS – 8
Fires – 1
Public Assists – 1
Auto Collisions – 3

Mariposa County Fire Department supports the county with 14 volunteer stations located throughout the county. If you are 18 years of age and possess a valid CA driver’s license, we would love to hear from you! Positions are available for fire, medical, and various support duties. No experience necessary – we will train you! – Please call (209) 966-4330 today for more information!

Safety Tip: Toddler Fire Safety

Children are curious about fire and do not understand the dangers of fire. FEMA shares that new parents and others who care for babies and small children need to pay special attention to fire safety.

Children under age 5 are twice as likely to die in a fire than the rest of us. In fact, toddlers age 3 to 4 actually cause a large number of home fires by playing with lighters and matches. And, when fire breaks out, babies and toddlers can’t escape without your help. Practice and teach fire safe behavior in your home.

- Calmly but firmly explain to your child that matches and lighters are tools for adults to use carefully. Teach young children to tell an adult if they see matches or lighters.
- Always store matches and lighters out of children’s reach and sight, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Purchase only child-resistant lighters. Remember: no lighter is child proof!
- Never use lighters or matches as a source of amusement. Children may imitate what you do.
- Always supervise young children closely.
- Prevent fires by practicing and teaching fire safe behaviors in your home. Keep children 3 feet away from the stove when cooking, don’t overload outlets, have your heating systems checked annually and use deep ashtrays and soak the ashes in water, if you smoke.

Helpful Information from Mariposa County Fire Department

Special Note:

Mariposa County Fire Department would like to remind you of the dangers in leaving children, animals and the elderly in closed vehicle, especially as the weather gets hotter. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a locked car sitting in the summer sun quickly turns into an oven, and temperatures can climb from 78 degrees to 100 degrees in just three minutes, to 125 degrees in 6-8 minutes. Parking in the shade, cracking windows open and tinted windows do not make a difference in the interior temperature of a closed car, according to pediatric researchers.

Kids and Adults are at great risk for heat stroke, which can lead to a high fever, dehydration, seizures, stroke and death. Animals do not sweat so their body temperature heats up quickly making them at risk of overheating (hyperthermia), heatstroke and death. Think that quick trip back into the house to get that forgotten item will be ok?... Think again... Even five minutes locked in a car when it's hot outside endangers children, adults and pets.

PLEASE USE CAUTION!!!

Vegetation fires are preventable if you follow some basic safety rules:

Do your property clearing before 10 A.M.

When driving, if you need to pull off the road, do not park in dry vegetation.

Don't leave candles unattended.

Make sure to properly dispose of all cigarette butts.

And remember, fireworks are illegal throughout Mariposa County year round.

Driving Reminder

Mariposa County Fire Department would like to remind you to limit possible distractions that could take your attention away from driving. When driving at high speeds on our mountain roads it is of the utmost importance you concentrate on the roads, your vehicle and the weather conditions. A distraction of just a split second can be disastrous.

Thank You

Still 1,930 Acres, 44 Percent Contained; Cooler Weather Is A Help

Bend (OR) Bulletin, June 9, 2016

Cooler weather helped firefighters make "solid progress" Thursday on the Akawana Fire burning 13 miles north of Sisters.

The fire on private land protected by the state remained at 1,930 acres and was 44 percent contained, according to a news release Thursday night from the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Burning in grass, brush and timber, the fire moderated and crews were able to fight it right at its edge,

The evacuation level for the Three Rivers area near the blaze was lowered to 1 ("get ready"), but the Forest Park, Air Park and Rim Park subdivisions and outlying properties are still at Level 2 ("get set"). That's a total of 262 structures at level 2, according to the release. No residences have burned.

There were spot fires in a few areas Thursday, but they were quickly contained. Planes and helicopters played a big part in getting the fire further under control, according to the release.

Firefighters plan to mop up hot spots Friday and strengthen fire lines along the northeast corner of the blaze.

The fire caused by a lightning strike was first reported Tuesday afternoon and is named for nearby Akawana Butte.

About 3,000 people live in the area immediately threatened by the fire, which is near Lake Billy Chincook, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is paying some firefighting costs associated with the fire. Most of the homes in the area are secondary homes, although about 250 are primary homes. FEMA approved using federal funds to assist in paying for firefighting costs Wednesday night.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Hilton Head Beach Renourishment Project Comes Summer After Record Tourism Year

By Rebecca Lurye

Hilton Head Island (SC) Packet, June 10, 2016

Each year, Hilton Head Island's calm tides and cool waters attract millions of dollars in tourism. And each year, those same waters cost the island millions of dollars, sweeping at least 150,000 cubic yards of sand out to sea.

This week, likely Wednesday, work will begin on a $20.7 million project to restore much of what Hilton Head has lost since its last beach renourishment in 2007 — about 2.2 million cubic yards of sand along eight miles of shoreline.

It's a rebuild that town officials and hospitality representatives had hoped would start earlier in the year instead of in June, the start of the island's tourism season.

But inclement weather and a backup in the contractor's schedule delayed the February start date. Town engineer Steve Liggett said contractors hope to begin Wednesday, although there is still some flexibility in the schedule.

Most hotels reached for comment this week said they're not worried the project will stymie revenues, which are on track to beat last year's record tourism season.

The most optimistic are those located along Hilton Head's central shoreline, which won't see any work until late August to October.

"I don't doubt we may have another record year again," said Jay Wiendl, general manager of the Sonesta Resort. "The way I look at it is, I can't wait for our Visitor's Convention Bureau to be able to say, 'Come see our new beautiful beaches.' "

Hilton Head saw 2.65 million visitors in 2015, up from nearly 2.62 million the year before.

There were other indicators of a record tourism year in 2015:

- Hotel occupancy rates were up 1.6 percent from 2014 and by a total of 4.6 percent from 2013, according to the University of South Carolina Beaufort Lowcountry and Resort Islands Tourism Institute.
- The hotels' average daily rate also rose by 4.9 percent and by 12.5 percent from 2013.
- Together, those figures gave the island a 17.6 percent jump in revenue per available room between 2013 and 2015.

Those gains translated into big money for the town. Last year, Hilton Head had a record-breaking haul of nearly $3.1 million from its local accommodations tax, which is money collected on overnight lodging from visitors. That's up from about $2.8 million the year before. As of April, the town had already received nearly $2.1 million, up from $1.9 million at the same point last year.

In March, some business owners expressed concerns that the project could hurt tourism. Leaders of Sea Pines Resort, which declined to comment this week, said that it would face a slew of cancellations if the town moved forward with the project in the summer rather than delaying the work until next winter.

Ariana Pernice, vice president of the visitor and convention bureau of the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, said at the time that the project would be a "pretty substantial hit," as the chamber would need to spend five to 10 times more to change someone's mind about a negative experience as it would to attract a new visitor.

While only 1,000 feet of beach is restricted at a time, and the project moves about 300 feet each day, it will be moving through the heel of the island in June and July and through Sea Pines' South Beach from mid-July to mid-August.

Rob Jordan, of the island's biggest employer, SERG Restaurant Group, said he thinks the town was smart to rework the project schedule to avoid the central shoreline during the summer months. And while SERG does not operate any restaurants on the beach, Jordan doubted the island would see fewer visitors because of the months of loud, noisy work.

"I think (visitors will) just move 50 yards down the beach and enjoy the day," Jordan said. "(The rebuild) is important. It's our lifeblood. We'll get through it."

The five-month-long project involves submerging pipelines into underwater sandbars, or shoals, to pump the material onto the beach. Trucks then spread the sand to recreate the shape of the shoreline.

To date, the town has spent about $50 million to renourish and protect its beaches through regular rebuilds. This year's is especially timely, as severe storms last October washed away about 150,000 cubic yards of sand at once.

The lost sediment alone is worth about $1.7 million, and the town hopes to be reimbursed for up to $6-7 million for the total cost of replacing the sand. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is processing Hilton Head's claim that the damage was associated with a declared disaster, Hurricane Joaquin, said town engineer Scott Liggett.

Surveyors have been using high-tech equipment to scan the dredging area for any sub-par sand, such as overly muddy material, or obstacles, including old anchors or shrimp trawler doors and chains.

"We're obviously not trying to dredge up an old ship wreck or something like that," Liggett said.

The project will begin at Mitchelville Beach Park, and the town will post daily updates about the location of the work on its beach renourishment website.

Those who want to walk or bicycle on the beach can access temporary walkways past the dunes once they reach a worksite, Liggett said.

More likely to be impacted than tourists are sea turtles that are in the middle of their nesting and hatching season.

Volunteers with the Hilton Head Island Sea Turtle Protection Project have been on the beach daily since mobilization for the project began and, as of Thursday, have moved about 70 nests out of about 130 nests on the island's beaches, according to Liggett.

"They've been up to their eyeballs with turtle-nesting activities," he said. "It's a very active and demanding time for them."

FLOODS

Obama Approves Federal Money For Flooded Texas Counties

By Staff Report

Houston Chronicle, June 11, 2016

President Barack Obama on Saturday approved a request from Gov. Greg Abbott for federal aid for the Texas counties hardest hit by the latest run of storms that flooded thousands of homes and streets with reckless force.

Obama declared a major federal disaster in the 12 counties, including Brazoria, Fort Bend and Montgomery, where the powerful storms and flooding swamped cars, ruined houses and businesses, washed out roads and snapped trees and power poles.

The president already had declared disasters in many of the same places after flooding in April – an unfortunate fact that Abbott highlighted in his letter requesting another round of federal help.

ON THE MOVE: What newcomers need to know about flooding, flood insurance

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," Abbott said Saturday in a statement. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

The president granted money for sheltering and local and state response costs. Additional money for debris remains on hold as water continues to recede and pending additional damage assessments.

Other counties may be added to the request once they meet the threshold required by the federal government.

With a presidential declaration, people whose homes were damaged or destroyed can apply for a grant up to $33,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The amount will depend on the severity of the reported damage.

In addition to repair costs, some aid can be used for certain medical expenses, funeral costs and damage to clothing or household items, among other losses.

Abbott has declared a disaster state in 46 counties since June 1, but his request for federal aid only covers those with storm-related damage "of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments."

Abbott wrote that the most recent storms, which began May 26, dumped up to 20 inches of rain in parts of Southeast Texas that typically receive between 40 and 50 inches of rain a year.

Brenham alone had 16 inches on the first day of the storms, shattering the Washington County city's one-day rainfall record by more than 6 inches.

At least 20 deaths

To make matters worse, the region has been pounded with heavy rain for weeks, so the ground already was saturated, the rivers, bayous and creeks already brimming. This latest rain had nowhere to settle.

By the time the Brazos River crested June 4 near Rosharon, it was nearly 10 feet above flood stage, the Nation Weather Service said. Officials expected the river to remain out of its banks through at least Wednesday as the high water makes its way to the Gulf of Mexico.

Cypress Creek and the Colorado, San Jacinto and Trinity rivers also reached major flood stages.

The severe storms were blamed for at least 20 deaths, including nine soldiers who were killed when their truck was overturned by swift water near Fort Hood, north of Austin.

READ MORE: Family uses boat to rescue area pets stranded by flood waters

A Montgomery County man, 77, was swept away while walking outside. In Washington County, the body of a 21-year-old Guardsman was found downstream from where his overturned truck had been located earlier.

"Texas is suffering from disaster fatigue," wrote Abbott, who promised to push for federal relief after an aerial tour of flooded areas near Houston a week ago. "There seems to be nowhere safe from the most recent severe weather."

In all, Abbott said the flooding threatened nearly 90,000 homes and forced mandatory evacuations in Bastrop, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Hood, Parker and Wharton counties.

Officials estimated that the flooding destroyed or damaged more than 5,500 houses and nearly 300 businesses.

Montgomery County Judge Craig Doyal said in a statement that he is "very hopeful" that the federal government will move quickly with disaster aid, "given the extent of the damage" from the floods, which ruined nearly 900 homes in the suburban county.

Fort Bend County Judge Robert Hebert said the county was "very pleased" by the governor's request.

"Those folks are going to need all the help they can get," he said.

While a majority of Fort Bend County residents have returned to life as usual as the floodwaters receded this week, Hebert said as many as 30,000 people are continuing to confront the aftermath of "real disaster."

The county reported damage to more than 1,200 homes. There also was roughly $14 million in damage to roads, bridges and water systems, "and that number will only grow," Hebert said.

Water receding

In Brazoria County, the flooding has affected at least 100,000 residents, or roughly one-third of its population, officials said. Floodwaters inundated or cut off hundreds of homes in a slow rise that spread from near Rosharon to Lake Jackson.

The water continued to recede Friday, but officials expected levels to remain high in the south county for days.

"There are areas that are going to have water for several days," said Sharon Trower, spokeswoman for Brazoria County's Office of Emergency Management. "Weeks, possibly."

Harvey Rice and Emily Foxhall contributed to this report.

Obama OKs Disaster Aid For 12 Texas Counties

By Brian Rogers

Houston Chronicle, June 11, 2016

President Barack Obama on Saturday approved a request from Gov. Greg Abbott for federal aid to the Texas counties hardest hit by the latest run of storms that flooded thousands of homes.

Obama declared a major federal disaster in 12 counties, including Brazoria, Fort Bend and Montgomery, where powerful storms washed away cars, swamped houses and businesses and flooded roads.

"It's needed. We've seen widespread devastation," said Brazoria County Judge Matt Sebesta. "There's going to be millions of dollars, and probably hundreds of millions of dollars, in damage."

Sebesta said the process to determine which homes, businesses and roads are seriously damaged, and how much it will take to fix them, will take months.

The president already had declared disasters in many of the same places after flooding in April – an unfortunate fact that Abbott highlighted in his letter requesting another round of federal help.

"Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face, and this time will be no different," Abbott said Saturday in a statement. "With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Other counties may be added to the request for assistance once they meet the threshold required by the federal government to request federal disaster aid, Abbott said.

With a presidential declaration, people whose homes were damaged or destroyed can apply for a grant up to $33,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The amount will depend on the severity of the damage.

In addition to repairs, some money can be used for certain medical expenses, funeral costs and damage to clothing or household items, among other losses.

Abbott has declared a disaster state in 46 counties since June 1, but his request for federal aid only covers those with storm-related damage "of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments."

Abbott wrote that the most recent storms, which began May 26, dumped up to 20 inches of rain in parts of Southeast Texas that typically receive between 40 and 50 inches of rain a year.

Authorities estimated that the flooding destroyed or damaged more than 5,500 houses and nearly 300 businesses. The severe storms were blamed for at least 20 deaths.

In addition to the large counties around Houston, the other counties that will benefit are Austin, Brazos, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington. Harris County was not included in the request for federal dollars.

Abbott Seeks Federal Aid For Recent Storms, Flooding

By Matthew Tresaugue

Houston Chronicle, June 10, 2016

Gov. Greg Abbott is seeking federal aid for the Texas counties hardest hit by the latest run of storms that flooded thousands of homes and streets with reckless force.

In a letter dated Thursday, Abbott asked President Obama to declare a major federal disaster in 12 counties, including Brazoria, Fort Bend and Montgomery, where the powerful storms and flooding swamped cars, ruined houses and businesses, washed out roads and ripped apart trees.

The other counties earmarked by Abbott are Austin, Brazos, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington.

The governor's action is a necessary first step before Obama decides whether to release funds to the counties as they clean up from the storms. U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady tweeted that the state's congressional delegation had written Obama in support of Abbott's request. Officials said they expect a decision within days.

The president already had declared disasters in many of the same places after major flooding in April — an unfortunate fact that Abbott highlighted in his letter requesting more federal help. Major storms and flooding have hammered the Houston area on the last two Memorial Day weekends.

"The last year has taken a terrible toll on the people and the property of this state," he wrote Thursday. "Texans are resilient, but few can recover without assistance when disaster after disaster hits in the middle of recovery."

With a presidential declaration, people whose homes were damaged or destroyed can apply for a grant of up to $33,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The amount will depend on the severity of the reported damage.

In addition to repair costs, some aid can be used for certain medical expenses, funeral costs and damage to clothing or household items, among other losses.

Although Abbott has declared a disaster in 46 counties since June 1, his request for federal aid only covers those with storm-related damage "of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments."

Abbott wrote that the most recent storms, which began May 26, dumped up to 20 inches of rain in parts of Southeast Texas that typically receive 40 to 50 inches of rain a year.

Brenham alone had 16 inches on the first day of the storms, shattering the Washington County city's one-day rainfall record by more than 6 inches.

To make matters worse, the region had been pounded with heavy rain for weeks, so the ground already was saturated, the rivers, bayous and creeks already brimming. This latest rain had nowhere to settle.

The severe storms were blamed for at least 20 deaths, including nine soldiers who were killed when their truck was overturned by swift water near Fort Hood, north of Austin.

President Grants Disaster Request For All Counties Affected By Flooding

Houston Community Newspapers, June 11, 2016

The President today granted Governor Greg Abbott's federal disaster request for individual assistance for all 12 counties affected by the recent flooding, including: Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington.

Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) for local and state response costs and sheltering was also granted. Category A (Debris) remains on hold as water continues to recede, and pending additional damage assessments.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," said Governor Abbott. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Additional counties may be added to the Governor's request for assistance once they meet the threshold required by the federal government to request federal disaster aid.

Texas Congressional Delegation Asks Obama To Declare Flood Disaster For Second Time Since April

By Stephen Green

Houston Community Newspapers, June 11, 2016

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and 25 Texas members of Congress are asking President Barack Obama to issue a disaster declaration to help residents affected by the late May and early June floods.

Abbott sent in his request to the White House Thursday; and, led by U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady, R-The Woodlands, the delegation of congressmen followed up with a bipartisan letter.

"This month's severe weather and flooding devastated the properties and lives of thousands of Texans across the state," Abbott said in a statement. "Today's disaster declaration is the first step in helping these Texans rebuild their lives. Texans are resilient by nature, and with the proper resources, we will together overcome the challenges we face."

If Obama gives his OK, residents of Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington counties could be eligible for Individual

Assistance grants of up to $33,000 from the federal government, and low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

"We write to express support for Governor Abbott's request for a major disaster declaration on behalf of Texas counties impacted by severe storms and flooding beginning on May 26, 2016," the congressional delegation wrote in its letter. "These storms caused widespread flooding and damage to numerous areas including many impacted by the Tax Day floods just over one month ago.

"Texas has experienced six major disasters over the past 13 months, including three major flood events this year. These most recent storms occurred just as many of our local communities and residents were beginning the recovery process from the Tax Day floods. Residents, emergency responders, local governments and volunteer agencies have shown tremendous fortitude in their response; however, the seemingly continual storms and flooding have taken their toll. The continued response and long-term recovery from this round of storms will require federal assistance."

More than 800 homes, including 20 businesses, were damaged or destroyed in the recent bout of flooding — by far eclipsing the damage from April's storms, according to Montgomery County Judge Craig Doyal.

FEMA officials toured flood-damaged homes in Montgomery County Monday, a key step toward clearing the way for a federal disaster declaration and the federal aid that would flow to residents, Doyal stated in a release Monday afternoon.

"Given the extent of the damage from May's floods, I am very hopeful that the federal government moves quickly to support a disaster declaration for the county," Doyal stated.

According to data from the National Weather Service, some areas of the county received more than 20 inches of rain between May 26 and June 6. The average annual rainfall for Conroe is 48 inches.

The storms led to more than 200 water rescues, downed trees in homes, and a tornado. At one point, more than 35,000 residents were without power, due to destroyed power lines from high winds, until Sunday, May 29.

Doyal signed a disaster declaration for Montgomery County May 27 — the second such declaration in two months. Abbott issued his declaration soon after.

12 Texas Counties Granted Federal Disaster Declaration After...

KPRC-TV Houston, June 11, 2016

HOUSTON – President Barack Obama granted Governor Greg Abbott's federal disaster request for Individual Assistance for all 12 counties affected by the recent flooding, including: Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington.

Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) for local and state response costs and sheltering was also granted. Category A (Debris) remains on hold as water continues to recede, and pending additional damage assessments.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," Abbott said.

"Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Federal Disaster Declaration Granted For Texas Counties

KTVT-TV Dallas, June 11, 2016

AUSTIN (CBSDFW.COM) – President Barack Obama granted Governor Greg Abbott's federal disaster request Saturday for assistance in 12 counties that were affected by recent flooding.

The counties affected are Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington.

Public Assistance Category B, which are emergency protective measures, for local and state response costs and sheltering were also granted.

Category A, which is debris assistance, remains on hold as water continues to recede and damage is assessed.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," said Governor Abbott. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Additional counties may be added to Governor

Abbott's disaster request once they met the threshold required by the federal government to request aid.

Federal Disaster Declaration Granted For Travis, Other Texas Counties

Austin (TX) American Statesman, June 12, 2016

President Barack Obama approved on Saturday Gov. Greg Abbott's request seeking federal assistance and funding for a dozen Texas counties, including Travis, that suffered from flooding and other damage during recent storms.

Abbott asked Obama for a federal disaster declaration Thursday.

The preisdent granted individual assistance for 12 counties affected by the recent flooding, including: Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington, according to a media release from the governor's office.

Assistance for local and state response costs and sheltering was also granted, which is classified as Public Assistance Category B for Emergency Protective Measures, officials said. Category A, for debris, remains on hold pending additional damage assessments as water continues to recede, officials said.

"I would like to thank the president and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," said Abbott in the statement. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Additional counties may be added to the governor's request for assistance once they meet the threshold required by the federal government to request federal disaster aid, officials said.

President Grants Disaster Request For 12 Texas Counties

By Nadine Bonewitz

KXAN-TV Austin (TX), June 11, 2016

AUSTIN (KXAN) — President Obama granted a federal disaster request for all 12 counties affected by recent floods on Saturday.

Individual assistance will be available to flood victims in Travis County, along with Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Waller and Washington counties.

The federal funding will also cover local and state response costs and sheltering. Funding to help with debris remains on hold as water continues to recede. The grant could be approved after damages are assessed.

Governor Greg Abbott said in a statement that he was thankful to the President and to FEMA for quickly responding to the needs of Texas flood victims.

"Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different," he said. "With this latest development Texas can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Additional counties could be added to the disaster request once they meet the federal requirements needed to request for aid.

Federal Disaster Declaration Granted For 12 Texas Counties

KHOU-TV Houston, June 11, 2016

On Saturday, President Barack Obama granted Texas Governor Greg Abbott's federal disaster declaration request for all 12 counties affected by recent flooding.

Those counties include Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller and Washington.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," Governor Abbott said in a statement. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) for local and state response costs and sheltering was also granted by President Obama.

Category A (Debris) remains on hold as water continues to recede and pending additional damage assessments.

Other counties may be added to the request for assistance once they meet the threshold required by the federal government to request federal disaster aid.

The Brazos River Flood Recovery Center is the central hub for flood victims seeking immediate help. It's located at BF Terry High School in Rosenberg. It will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. everyday until July 3rd.

Texas Counties Granted Federal Funds After Recent Floods

KEYE-TV Austin (TX), June 11, 2016

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President Obama has granted Texas Governor Abbott's federal disaster request for assistance to all 12 counties affected by flooding.

The counties named in the federal disaster request were Austin, Brazoria, Brazos, Fort Bend, Grimes, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, Waller, and Washington County.

Emergency protecting actions for local and state response costs were also funded.

"I would like to thank the President and FEMA for their quick response in granting assistance to those affected by the severe weather and flooding of the past couple weeks," said Governor Abbott. "Texans have always risen to meet the challenges they face and this time will be no different. With this latest development Texans can now begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Obama Declares State Of Disaster For 12 Texas Counties

Bryan College Station (TX) Eagle, June 12, 2016

HOUSTON — President Barack Obama has declared a major disaster in 12 Texas counties — including Brazos, Grimes and Washington — that suffered severe flooding last month during heavy rainfall.

The declaration, approved on Saturday, also covers Austin, Brazoria, Fort Bend, Hidalgo, Hood, Montgomery, San Jacinto, Travis, and Waller counties.

It enables residents to receive federal grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover.

The declaration also approved funding for local and state response costs and sheltering.

According to Brazos County officials, those affected by the storm can register for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency by calling 1-800-621-3362 or visiting www.disasterassistance.gov. Those who have already registered with FEMA do not need to register again.

FEMA inspectors will begin making appointments with residents that applied for assistance after insurance documentation is submitted, according to Michele Meade, Brazos County emergency management coordinator. When an applicant registers with FEMA and becomes eligible for a damaged housing inspection, a FEMA inspector contacts the applicant to set up an appointment and reviews what documentation is required, officials said.

Texas Task Force 1 and the Texas Military Department made 1,444 evacuations statewide, 40 rescues, 520 acts of assistance and victim recovery, 618 welfare checks and hundreds of animal rescues, a press release from State Rep. John Raney's office sent earlier this week stated. In Brazos County, five homes were determined to be destroyed, according to the American Red Cross, and more than 100 suffered major damage.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott thanked Obama and said the declaration lets Texans "begin the process of rebuilding their lives after experiencing some of the worst flooding in recent history."

Abbott says more counties could be added to the declaration if a threshold requirement is met.

Subdivision Never Flooded, Until It Did, And Residents Want Answers

By Mike Tolson

Houston Chronicle, June 11, 2016

Something was wrong – that was obvious to everyone who looked at the flooded streets around them. For most of the morning, water had steadily flowed toward the creek behind the neighborhood, as it had done after countless other storms. Now it was going the other way. And rising.

Hank Rennar stood on his corner lot in the Stable Gate subdivision in Cypress and knew they were in trouble. Neither Rennar nor his neighbors had seen anything like it. Cars parked at the bottom of driveways were doomed by the suddenly about-face muddy torrent.

A day that had begun with the promise of brighter skies and no more rain was about to turn into a frantic rush to shut off the power, find the family photos, move the antiques, locate the pets. Within the hour, Rennar was standing in water over his ankles. Down the street and across the way, some had it worse, with water rising to several feet. By the time the so-called Tax Day Flood was over, about 90 percent of the community's 250 or so homes had flooded.

Like residents across the western third of the county, those in Stable Gate view their lives – and the place they call home – a bit differently after the events of April 18. Occasional heavy rains may be a given in Greater Houston, flat and bathed in moist Gulf air, but to see widespread flooding in newer precincts, supposedly built to modern drainage standards and with keen awareness of geographic vulnerability, was shocking.

Angry flood victims pointed fingers at the generic "upstream," not buying official explanations of an unforeseeable, extreme rain event. For the first time, people were suspicious of the boomtown growth mania they had long taken for granted. Developers had cut corners, they insisted. And those charged with overseeing them must have just rubber-stamped their plans, they said.

Another twist of the knife came about five weeks later. On the Friday evening leading into Memorial Day weekend, the skies let loose once more. Cypress Creek flooded – again – and Little Cypress as well. A number of Stable Gate residents who were in the middle of repairs saw water return to their homes. So did some of the neighborhoods to the south.

Asking questions

The head of the Stable Gate homeowners association, Greg Bowen, summarized the fear that now pervades communities that previously had been preoccupied with traffic congestion and school taxes.

"You know something is wrong when sewage is coming out of your shower drain," Bowen said. "This is an ongoing condition. Unless the county does something, this will keep happening."

But what something?

"I have no idea," he said. "Until somebody steps up, all I can think of doing is to keep asking questions."

The answers, of course, likely will not satisfy him, his neighbors, or much of Harris County for that matter. They complain that phone calls to elected representatives and relevant agencies may yield expressions of sympathy but little more. If there is anything like a consensus among flood victims, it's that government at every level does not consider their problems a priority once the waters recede.

Built 15 years ago, Stable Gate is a relatively small, modestly aspirational upper-middle-class neighborhood off Telge Road, home to a healthy contingent of baby boomers for whom the large, two-story homes represent a lifetime of hard work. For many of them, such as travel business owner Tina Hearn, it figured to be the last house they would own. Now they say they couldn't sell if they wanted to, certainly not for the appraised values, which typically exceed $400,000.

"Everything I worked for in my whole life is in this house," said Hearn, whose home flooded a second time last month. "We moved here from Baytown because we were concerned about hurricanes. We never dreamed a rainstorm could come in and take it all away."

All it took was a single night of rain, pounding and relentless, for the entire Little Cypress Creek watershed to be overwhelmed. Massive rainfall upstream slowly made its way down the narrow floodway to the southeast, where the creek eventually connects with its bigger brother, Cypress Creek. As it did, water flowing into it from a variety of sources, including Stable Gate's pipes and ditch, had no outlet. Seeking equilibrium, it spread out and in some cases pushed back in the direction from which it had come.

It's as simple as that, says the Harris County Flood Control District: too much rain. More, in fact, than the agency had ever recorded at any of its rain gauges in the Little Cypress watershed back to 1989, when it started keeping track.

"I know that's not what the residents want to hear," said Matt Zeve, chief operations officer for the agency and a drainage engineer by trade. "But our design criteria is the 100-year flood."

The record rainfall, which exceeded 15 inches in some places, was felt through much of west and northwest Harris County and surpassed even once-a-century expectations. The result was more than 7,000 flooded homes and plenty of stunned residents who never figured they had a water problem, only to spend the next few days ripping out waterlogged carpet and tearing out saturated drywall. Some of them were in so-called 100-year floodplains, some in 500.

Not all of the flood victims are ready to accept Zeve's simple explanation. Instead, they see the crazy quilt of the county's western development – booming for more than two decades – as the likelier culprit. In Stable Gate, the second storm convinced them that the combined effect of runoff from newer construction, including new highways, may not be fully understood.

"It is the freaking flood that keeps happening in Cypress," said Hearn, who said rising water got close to her home on two earlier occasions. "There is not enough retention and detention ponds around this area, and they keep building more and more concrete. Telge Road gets completely flooded when it rains hard. It never used to be."

'No rise' policy

Unlike Tax Day, the May deluge was not off the charts. According to a report compiled by the flood control district, rainfall amounts in the Little Cypress watershed, while far above normal, for the most part were well under 10 inches. That provided ammunition to Stable Gate residents who claim that something has changed over the years, whether because of the completion of a section of the Grand Parkway immediately to the north, or from the construction of newer subdivisions around them.

Zeve, however, insists development in the watershed should not make a difference. The district has a strict "no rise" policy, meaning developers cannot build in a way that pushes more water into creeks and bayous than went there when the land was undeveloped. All construction plans are reviewed to make sure drainage elements are adequate to ensure that, he said.

While sympathetic to calls for new detention basins that could protect downstream residents, Zeve said there is nothing that can be done along the lower stretches of Little Cypress Creek because all the property adjacent to it is fully developed. Instead, he said, the flood control district is concentrating on the creek's upper reaches, where its "frontier program" calls for regional detention facilities to be built to keep storm runoff from rapidly entering the creek.

"We have no plans to modify or make changes to Little Cypress Creek," he said, pointing out that adjacent communities would vigorously fight any attempt to remove trees or deepen the channel even if the district wanted to.

As for Stable Gate, if water is intruding into the neighborhood because of inadequate drainage ditches along Telge Road or because of some feature belonging to a nearby subdivision, that is not the flood control district's responsibility, Zeve said. Its concern is limited to the water in the creeks and bayous and how development may affect that. His review of the neighborhood's original construction plans found nothing irregular, he said.

The head of the flood control district, Mike Talbott, has said that problems in some areas reflect engineering strategies made many decades ago. A comprehensive solution to ongoing flooding woes would require major building and widening projects as well as buyout programs, he said.

The current flood control system was not designed to handle the infrequent "monster" storm, he said. The consequence of not building in excess capacity, especially as growth intensified and density increased, was ever-more-expensive and damaging floods.

"A lot of engineering was done before people understood the risks," Talbott said, pointing to the countless residencies that sit uncomfortably close to floodways.

Re-engineering it to a higher standard might cost $26 billion, he said.

Devising own solutions

In other words, nothing is going to change anytime soon. After the April floods, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner appointed Steve Costello, a former city council member, as his flooding "czar." Costello acknowledged straightaway he had no idea what the job entailed or what authority, if any, he would have. With a background in residential development, the engineer by trade has said that a reflexive desire to blame new, upstream development, while understandable, fails to appreciate the complicated nature of storm runoff in a relatively flat environment.

As neighborhoods in Houston and surrounding areas are learning, it may be for the residents themselves to devise solutions. Stable Gate, for example, could deepen its drainage ditch, install gates to prevent water from flowing back through the storm drains, or build its own detention pond on 26 wooded acres it owns at the back of the neighborhood.

Environmental lawyer Charles Irvine, who frequently consults with neighborhoods on flooding matters, senses rising frustration across the area and foresees a likely increase of improvised solutions such as "decorative" garden walls that may serve as mini-levees when waters rise. He faults those in leadership, including the flood control district, for not embracing the need for a more assertive approach to dealing with apparent weaknesses in the system, especially in those areas that recently have begun to flood but don't have a history of doing so.

"When you have 6 or 8 inches of rain, you cannot always use the excuse of excessive rain amounts," Irvine said. "What people want is honesty and transparency, not silence and willful blindness."

Irvine said the regulations imposed on new development need to be enhanced in light of more – and more intense – storm systems. Likewise the mandatory review of construction plans should be much more rigorous, he said. He said his own reviews of such plans have revealed shoddy data, dubious hydrological modeling, and countless simple and "horrific" mistakes that somehow never were corrected.

What Irvine argues for most vigorously is a change in attitude. He believes local residents are willing to pass bond projects and endorse stricter controls if the payoff is a significantly more robust system of flood control.

"Why is it unreasonable to spend $10 billion on a flood control project when one flood alone causes $5 billion in damage?" he said.

Ever fearful

In Stable Gate, homeowners are confused and ticked off. They sense that something has changed with respect to local drainage patterns, but unless they hire an engineering firm to analyze their problems, they are not likely to get answers beyond what they already know: Houston is flat; it can rain a lot; the watersheds cannot handle all the runoff.

Rennar and his wife, like most of his neighbors, are dealing with contractors on a daily basis as they try to get about $50,000 worth of repairs completed. If they were confident it was a unique event, unlikely to be rivaled anytime soon, the unpleasantness would be easier to tolerate. But every time the skies get cloudy and it looks like rain, they wonder whether the repairs will have been made in vain.

Tucked away in the trees, close to trails that run along a creek that they believed rarely flooded in a serious way, Stable Gate residents had exactly what they wanted – reasonable solitude in an urban environment and a small community that actually felt like one, where neighbors were friendly and looked after each other.

Hearn, who had left her longtime Baytown home in search of security, said Stable Gate "just looked like home" as soon as she passed through the front gates. Rennar seconds her opinion, saying he thought it was a "perfect place" that offered an antidote to road congestion and urban hurly-burly.

"We thought we had discovered a little paradise," he said. "I guess not."

Impact Of Flood Still Being Assessed After 'Five Lake Granbury's' Of Rain, Deemed 'Extremely Dangerous' By BRA

By Kelsey Poynor

Glen Rose (TX) Reporter, June 9, 2016

GLEN ROSE- Approximately 205 billion gallons is enough to fill Lake Granbury five times.

It is also the estimated amount of rainfall that fell during last week's historic flooding around Somervell, Hood and Erath counties, according to officials with the Brazos River Authority.

A spokesperson for the BRA estimated that enough rain fell to fill the lake – which according to Waterdatafortexas.org has a maximum capacity of 125,756 acre-feet – just north of Somervell County five times. A simple conversion with the help of a conversion table brings the estimated total rainfall to a mind-boggling 204,888,860,269.06003 gallons of water.

Because of last week's historic flooding, homes, businesses and families are now facing a time of trouble – both big and small.

Outside of Gov. Greg Abbott's declaration of 46 counties to be in a state of emergency – up 15 from the original June 1 declaration and now includes Somervell County, representatives of the BRA, Somervell County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Coordination Dwayne Griffin, and county residents recently gave their re-cap of the week-long rain.

US Senator Ted Cruz also endorsed Abbott's efforts earlier this week during a speech while on the US Senate floor.

Brazos River Authority, 'It is extremely dangerous'

Judy Pierce from the Brazos River Authority reported the De Cordova Bend Dam of Lake Granbury would still need to release water at a higher-than-usual rate over the next several days, but the release during last week's rain was jaw dropping

"The most the dam let out was at one point was 69,900 CFS," Pierce said. "It stayed there for about a two hour time period and then it came back down pretty quickly. It was the fourth largest amount of water we've released at one time."

"From May 27 to June 7 the total volume of water released was about 650,000 acre-feet," Pierce noted. "Releases are expected to continue the next couple of days where we currently are at. For every day we're releasing about 40,000 acre-feet a day."

According to Price, the gauge located in the Somervell County portion of the Brazos River crested on the morning of Friday, June 3, and it was then that the river entered into the category of a major flood stage.

"After cresting, it immediately moved down. On average, the gauge is 7 feet deep and at the peak of the flooding on June 3 the depth of the water was 35.3 feet," Price explained. "It was about 28 feet deeper than it normally would be."

On June 4 around noon the gauge hit it's lowest part of the action stage and on June 7 at 1PM it measured in at 20.5 feet, which is below the action stage, according to the BRA.

"The action stage is a period designated at what appears to be approximately 25 feet," Pierce added. "What it is made for is to give people time going into a flood situation to have time to move cattle and equipment that might be in the floodplain zone around the river. It is out of that stage now and is predicted to stay at this stage now through the weekend."

Pierce advises for those who may want to brave the cool waters this weekend to stay off the Brazos, and other rivers and lakes, until the water has time to return to normal levels.

"It is going at about 23,000 [cubic feet per second] right now and I know that most tube rental places in Glen Rose cut [rentals] off at about 3,000 CFS," Pierce said. "It is extremely dangerous."

Griffin updates conditions of Somervell County

Somervell County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Coordinator Dwayne Griffin reported that there were indeed a few areas of the county that sustained major flood damage over the five-day period from June 3-7.

"County Road 1008 was damaged quite severely out on the 5000 block, it got scoured down to the road base," Griffin said. "County Road 1007 had a couple of areas that got tore up also. CR 413 had road damage that occurred down the sides of the road."

According to one county official, roughly 98% of all roads in Somervell County are paved. While this is normally a benefit a vast majority of the time, conditions such as those experienced last week can leave those roads in dire need of repair.

Not only were there roads damaged, but also there was also confirmed damage to a bridge at Squaw Valley Golf Course and the river walk along the Paluxy River a few blocks off the downtown Glen Rose square.

"The golf course lost a bridge and the city had a major loss with the river walk," Griffin said. "It got tore up a lot. As far as I know, those are the only ones that have sustained major damage. However, there are other roads here and there that are beginning to show signs of water damage."

According to Griffin, once a full report is created for the flood damage it will be sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Since the county was under a state of emergency, FEMA should cover up-to-75 percent of the total damage costs, Griffin noted.

"Right now we're just discussing what we're going to do with the golf course bridge, Griffin said. "The bridge itself is used for utility for moving their equipment back and forth. If we get some FEMA money, we may be moving it to higher ground to where it won't get washed out again."

A full report of personal property loss was not available as of press time.

20 years and it's 'never been this high'

Roughly three miles from the historic Glen Rose downtown square, Cedars on the Brazos Bed and Breakfast is located quite a bit closer to the bank of the Brazos River than it was last week.

The owner, Janice Lewis, who also lives in the bed and breakfast with her husband, has yet to see anything like this flood while residing on the property.

"We bought the land in 1997, it's been almost 20 years, and I have never seen the water as high as it is right now," Lewis said

The bed and breakfast opened 16 years ago. The cabin the bed and breakfast is in has no damage, but an area on the bank of the river that many baptisms and other events have taken place is now underwater.

According to Lewis some of the picnic tables, benches and chairs were washed away and whatever items were left are now submerged in water.

"Most of the old-timers here in Glen Rose know this property 'the garden spot,'" Lewis said. "It's a lower area that we call 'the meadow.' It has never had water in it and now it is flooding."

Sen. Cruz backs flood recovery efforts

The reach of pleas for assistance has gone beyond those immediately affected. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz delivered a speech Tuesday, June 7 on the Senate floor, where he pledged to work closely with state and local government officials to ensure a speedy recovery, backed Gov. Greg Abbott's for federal assistance to help those affected, and asked for condolences to be sent to the 16 families who lost a loved one – which included nine soldiers stationed at Fort Hood – during the historic flooding.

"Mr. President, my home state of Texas is strong and resilient. Texans aren't people who tire easily, and we certainly don't give up when the going gets tough," Cruz said. "But that doesn't mean that the State of Texas hasn't faced its share of adversity. Over the last few weeks, the resolve of our great state has been tested with historic flooding that has taken at least 16 lives across Texas.

"[...] Heidi and I right now, along with millions of Americans, are lifting up in prayer those Texans who have lost their lives, who have lost their homes, the families that are suffering due to this flooding," Cruz added.

"And we're also lifting up the first responders who so bravely risk everything to keep us safe. In particular, I want to take a moment to praise the Red Cross," the former GOP presidential candidate continued. "I had the privilege yesterday of speaking with the CEO of the Red Cross to thank them directly for their efforts on the ground – helping people who are suffering, helping people who have lost their home, who are struggling. And you know, she and I shared what we've seen in tragedy after tragedy after tragedy, which is in the face of disaster, in the face of adversity, Texans and Americans come together.

"[...] As the water continues to recede and the wreckage is being cleared, my office will continue to work very closely with local and state government officials, along with the entire Texas delegation, to help ensure a smooth recovery process, including offering, as I already have, my full support and assistance when Gov. Abbott requests federal aid for those afflicted by this disaster," Cruz concluded. "And while Texas continues to rebound from these torrential floods, our nation is also flooded with circumstances that require the very same strength and resolve that we face in the face of tragedy."

Cruz took time during his speech to individually thank and pay remembrance to the nine Fort Hood soldiers who tragically lost their lives when their truck overturned into a flooded creek. Those nine included Spc. Yingming Sun, Staff Sgt. Miguel Angel Colonvazquez, Spc. Christine Faith Armstrong, Pfc. Brandon Austin Banner, Pfc. Zachery Nathaniel Fuller, Pvt. Isaac Lee Deleon, Pvt. Eddy Raelaurin Gates, Pvt. Tysheena Lynette James, and Cadet Mitchell Alexander Winey.

Fort Bend Officials Implementing Long-term Recovery Efforts

Houston Community Newspapers, June 11, 2016

Fort Bend County officials are planning long-term flood recovery efforts and have begun coordinating with the county departments and voluntary agencies involved In recovery. Personnel are currently conducting flood damage assessments and evaluating closed roads as water levels recede. Numerous previously closed roadways have reopened.

Contractors will be picking up debris starting Monday, June 13 through Friday, June 24.

Residents are encouraged to separate debris by kind and pile as close to the road as possible without impeding traffic or blocking fire hydrants and meters.

Please do not relocate deceased animals to roadways, they will not be retrieved. Fort Bend County has a strategic plan in place to address environmental hazards during the recovery process. For further information about the handling of debris, including deceased animals, please call the Emergency Operations Center at 281-342-6185.

Household trash service has resumed in most areas however residents are encouraged to contact their provider to ensure service has resumed.

Residents may apply for FEMA assistance at www.disasterassistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-3362. Residents requiring immediate assistance with disaster clean-up should call the Clean Up Assistance hotline at 1-800-451-1954. Residents unaffected by the floods and wishing to volunteer may visit the Brazos River Flood Multi-Agency Recovery Center located at BF Terry High School in Rosenberg.

Donation receiving and distribution sites have been established throughout the county and monetary donations are currently being managed by the American Red Cross. Residents and businesses wishing to donate manpower, money, or materials should reference the "How can I help?" page on the Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management's website or by calling the Emergency Operations Center at 281-342-6185.

For more information about what to do next, how to get help, or how to offer help, plus the most accurate and up to date flood and recovery information, please visit fbcoem.org website or call 281-342-6185.

The Next Step: Recovery

Fort Bend (TX) Herald, June 10, 2016

The Memorial Day flood devastated West Fort Bend County.

Water engulfed homes, parks, roadways, and farm land.

It destroyed property, killed animals and forever changed lives.

The river has finally fallen below flood stage and the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg are attempting to get back to normal.

The community is doing its part. The American Red Cross is set up at B.F. Terry High School. Numerous groups have sprung up to help those in need and those helping with recovery: Fort Bend Strong, Rosenberg-Richmond Helping and Hands, Inc.

The next step for residents who were affected by the flood is debris pickup and Federal Emergency Management Agency assistant pre-registration.

The Fort Bend County Office of Emergency Management has outlined the guidelines for collecting flood debris into specific categories: normal household waste, vegetative, construction/demolition, appliances, electronics, and hazardous waste debris.

Construction and demolition materials include building materials, carpet, drywall, furniture, lumber, mattresses and plumbing.

Household hazardous waste debris includes cleaning supplies, batteries, lawn chemicals, oils, oil-based paints and stains and pesticides.

Make sure to put debris as close to the curb as possible without blocking the sidewalk or lean on trees, poles or other structures including fire hydrants and meters.

OEM announced that debris pick-up will begin on Monday and run through June 24. Normal household trash pickup has already started for most areas.

FEMA per-registration will help speed the process for federal assistance when the federal government stops dragging its feet on the disaster declaration.

Residents can pre-register at with FEMA at www.disasterassistance.gov or call 800-621-3362. Fill out the residential report form at www.fbcoem.org.

FEMA was quick to step in for the Tax Day Floods in April, but for some reason has taken over two weeks to help with the even more destructive Memorial Day flooding.

But there's no need to sulk about it. Instead, take the next step to getting back to normal.

Texans Have Only A Few Days Left To Register For Disaster Assistance For April Storms

Eastex (TX) Advocate, June 10, 2016

Texans who suffered damage or loss from the April storms and flooding in 12 counties have only until Friday, June 24, to register for FEMA disaster assistance.

Assistance can include money for rental assistance, essential home repairs, personal property loss and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

Texans with disaster-related damage or loss from the April 17-24 storms may be eligible for assistance if they live or work in the following 12 counties: Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Fort Bend, Grimes, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, Parker, San Jacinto, Waller and Wharton.

Texans can register the following ways:

- online at DisasterAssistance.gov
- by phone at 800-621-3362 (FEMA). Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. Applicants who use 711 or Video Relay Service may also call 800-621-3362. The toll-free numbers are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Multilingual operators are available.

FEMA grants do not have to be repaid. FEMA assistance is nontaxable and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits.

Survivors should register even if they have insurance. FEMA cannot duplicate insurance payments, but underinsured applicants may receive help after their claims have been settled.

Tax Resources For Disaster Victims; Special Webinar June 30

Gilmer (TX) Mirror, June 10, 2016

DALLAS – The tax law may help you recover financially from a disaster, especially if you are located in a presidentially declared major disaster area. Depending on the circumstances, the IRS may give you additional time to file your return and pay taxes. Also, individuals and businesses in a presidentially declared disaster area can get a faster refund by claiming losses related to the disaster on the previous year's tax return, usually by filing an amended return.

A federally declared disaster is a disaster that took place in an area declared by the President to be eligible for federal assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. A list of areas warranting public or individual assistance (or both) is available at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) web site at www.fema.gov.

"Reconstructing records after they were lost or destroyed in a disaster may be vital for tax purposes, getting federal assistance or insurance reimbursement," said Clay Sanford, an IRS spokesman in Dallas. "You may need to reconstruct your records to prove you have a casualty loss and the amount of the loss."

You can file IRS Form 4506, "Request for Copy of Tax Return," to request copies of the previous four years of income tax returns. If you need additional federal tax forms or publications, there are several ways you can obtain them. You can download forms fromwww.irs.gov. You can also order forms or publications at no cost by calling 1-800-829-3676. If you need additional tax assistance, please call 1-800-829-1040. Assistors are available Monday through Friday to provide explanations on filing and payment relief that may have been provided by IRS due to a disaster. You may call the Disaster Assistance Hotline at 1-866-562-5227, between 7:00 am and 7:00 p.m., local time. IRS personnel may be able to provide face-to-face assistance on disaster related issues at your local IRS office. Access http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html to find a Taxpayer Assistance Center in your area. For more information, see IRS Publication 2194, "Disaster Resource Guide for Individuals and Businesses," available on IRS.gov.

The IRS will host a webinar on June 30 at 1:00 p. m. (Central Time) for those dealing with disasters such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and more. This webinar will give information on what to do if you are involved in a disaster and the tax implications. To register visit the Internal Revenue Service Webinar Registration. If you are unable to connect by computer, send an email to sl.southwest@irs.gov. Enter "Disaster Webinar" in the subject line. Information on how to attend will be forwarded to you.

Several Residents Still In Need From March Flooding

By Robert Magobet

Delta (MS) Democrat Times, June 12, 2016

GREENVILLE — Although most folks' lives are back to normal after March's high water event, there are still several residents who are trying to recover from the flooding.

The slow, low-pressure weather system that dumped more than a foot of rain in some areas from March 10-12 destroyed 14 homes, caused major damage to 241 structures and minor damage to another 245 structures, affected 48 and left 13 inaccessible, according to reports conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, Small Business Administration and local officials.

Monday Is Deadline To Seek FEMA Help

By John Walton

KTAL-TV Shreveport (LA), June 12, 2016

Monday is the deadline for Louisiana residents impacted by the March flooding to register for disaster relief.

To register for FEMA assistance, call the helpline at 800-621-3362. Lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Residents are asked to have the following information ready:

Your Social Security number
Your current and pre-disaster address
A telephone number where you can be contacted
Insurance information
Total household annual income
A description of your losses caused by the disaster.

Or you can register online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or www.fema.gov/disaster/4263.

Registering by phone or online are the only ways you can register for disaster relief.

All the Disaster Recovery Centers in Louisiana have closed.

Deadline Is Monday To Seek FEMA Flood Relief

Monroe (LA) News Star, June 12, 2016

Louisiana residents who suffered losses to the flooding that ravaged the region face a Monday deadline to register for disaster relief.

Maria Padron, media relations specialist with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is urging those who think they might qualify for help from FEMA for losses suffered from March 8 to April 8 to register before the deadline expires Monday.

So far, 39,740 people throughout Louisiana have filed for FEMA assistance, and FEMA has approved the allocation of $175,588,240, Padron said.

Of those, about 25 percent were applicants from Ouachita Parish. In the parish, 10,484 have registered for aid, and FEMA so far has approved $51,888,367.

To register for FEMA assistance, call the helpline at 800-621-3362 or (TTY) 800-462-7585. Lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.The phone conversation will take about 20 minutes if you have the following information available:

Your Social Security number
Your current and pre-disaster address
A telephone number where you can be contacted
Insurance information
Total household annual income
A description of your losses caused by the disaster.

Or you can register online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or www.fema.gov/disaster/4263.

All FEMA disaster recovery centers in the state closed as of Friday.

Those with losses have until Dec. 13 to apply for a low-interest disaster SBA loan for economic injury.

Call SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955, email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visit SBA's website at SBA.gov/disaster. If you are deaf or hard-of-hearing you can call 800-877-8339.

Louisiana Disaster Survivors Are Reminded To Register For FEMA By June 13 Deadline

KALB-TV Alexandria (LA), June 10, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La.(FEMA) – The people of Louisiana have had a rough time. Almost everyone knows someone who is still getting their life back on track after the March 8 through April 8 floods. You may be one yourself.

You owe it to yourself to see if you qualify for help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency before the deadline to register expires Monday, June 13.

Don't miss out. If you live in one of the 36 designated parishes and had disaster related damage or loss, here's how you can find out what may be available. Be sure to do it by June 13:

- Call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362 or (TTY) 800-462-7585. Lines are open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. The phone conversation will take about 20 minutes if you have the following information available:
  - Your Social Security number
  - Your current and pre-disaster address
  - A telephone number where you can be contacted
  - Insurance information
  - Total household annual income
  - A description of your losses caused by the disaster
- Cuando llame al 800-621-3362 marque el 1 y escuche las instrucciones en español. Favor llamar antes del lunes 13 de junio.
- If you use 711/VRS call 800-621-3362.
- Register online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or www.fema.gov/disaster/4263. You have until June 13 to do so.
- All FEMA disaster recovery centers in the state closed as of Friday, June 10.

If you have questions about how you may qualify for a low-interest disaster SBA loan for property damage, make sure you apply before Monday, June 13. You have until Dec. 13, 2016 to apply for a low-interest disaster SBA loan for economic injury.

- Call SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955, email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visit SBA's website at SBA.gov/disaster. If you are deaf or hard-of-hearing you can call 800-877-8339.

Group To Help With Flood Assessments

By Monte Miller

Missourian, June 11, 2016

Months after devastating winter floods hit Franklin County, the cleanup and recovery process is still in its infancy and may take years to be fully complete.

Next week, the faith-based group World Renew will be in the Pacific area helping residents with flood assessments in an effort to fill voids that haven't already been addressed by other agencies.

Franklin County EMA Deputy Director Stephanie Norton, who also serves on the Long Term Recovery Committee, said the group, which specializes in disaster recovery, will be in Franklin, Jefferson and St. Louis counties June 13 to June 24.

"They will focus mainly on Pacific and perform site assessments with flood victims to see what needs they may still have," Norton said. "Not every home will be assessed due to time constraints. Based on information from FEMA, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and the local long-term recovery committees, they will visit as many sites as possible. Their assessments will help to prioritize disaster case management."

Norton added the assessments will focus on primary private residences only.

Rental properties and businesses will not be included.

The work done by World Renew volunteers will help residents fill gaps and acquire household items that were not covered by FEMA, private insurance, or other charitable organizations.

"We are all working together on this," Norton said. "There are several charitable groups that have different items to give out.

These site assessments will help us know which group to contact to help fill needs."

Since some residents are not living in their flood-affected homes, there will be a walk-in center available at the First Baptist Church of Gray Summit, 2705 Highway 100, Gray Summit.

Hours for the walk-in center are:

- Thursday, June 16, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Friday, June 17, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Saturday, June 18, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Norton added if World Renew stops at a home and no one is there, a note with the walk-in center information will be left at the residence.

They also will include a Red Cross phone number residents can call to schedule a site assessment, or talk with a case specialist. That number is 314-516-2754.

Although it already has been half a year, and the flooding has moved out of the "emergency" phase, the recovery process can drag on for months and years before cases are fully resolved.

"The case management portion doesn't move very quickly," Norton said. "Right now, we are only about two weeks into it. This process could take two to three years for Franklin County residents."

Norton added there are FEMA disaster cases still pending from Hurricane Katrina that have yet to be resolved more than a decade later.

According to their website, this is the opportune time for World Renew to come into the area and assist residents with their claims, because at this point in the process they may have received larger items but are still in need of things like backpacks for their children that weren't a priority right away.

According to FEMA, there were 391 homes affected by the winter flooding in Franklin County and 374 have filed claims with the federal agency.

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Eight Years After The Flood

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, June 12, 2016

In 2008 the Iowa and Cedar Rivers reached water levels Iowans had never seen before or since.

Across the state, flooding forced 85 of Iowa's 99 counties to be declared as federal disaster areas and total statewide damage ultimately was estimated at $10 billion, according to the National Weather Service.

Three communities among the hardest hit by flooding were Cedar Rapids and the combined metropolitan area of Iowa City and Coralville, according to NWS.

Some areas within these communities battled 500-year flooding — that is, flood levels were so high, they have a .2 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in a given year or should statistically only occur once every 500 years, according to Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Other areas experienced 100-year flooding, meaning they have a 1 percent chance of reaching or exceeding those heights in a given year.

In the months after the flood, discussions began in all three cities on securing riverfronts to ensure such an event never repeat itself.

Now eight years later, Iowa City is embarking on a massive flood mitigation effort in the Gateway Project, Cedar Rapids officials are about to take on the first piece of a $625 million flood protection system and, in Coralville, the final piece of the city's flood mitigation is nearly underway.

Iowa City

Just as the city of Iowa City embarks on one of its largest flood mitigation projects, the University of Iowa is crossing the finish line with its 2008 recovery.

The Iowa River crested at 31.53 feet on June 15, 2008, with at-times 500-year flood stage levels. Since then, the University of Iowa and the city have been working to rebuild, repair and protect themselves from future flooding.

Iowa City has spent almost $138 million in flood mitigation projects. Ron Knoche, Iowa City's director of public works, said flood recovery and mitigation for Iowa City took the form of two major projects — the wastewater plant relocation and the Gateway Project.

The larger project, relocation of the city's north wastewater plant and consolidation with the south plant, cost about $63.4 million and is complete.

"I would say we're further along than half today, from a project standpoint. From number of projects, we're 90 percent complete," Knoche said of flood-recovery overall. "From a dollar-amount standpoint, we're probably closer to about 75 percent complete."

The city began construction on May 31 on its other major mitigation project, the Gateway Project — an effort to raise Dubuque Street and the Park Road bridge up to a height that would protect against 100-year flood levels.

The city initially planned to raise the roads to protect it against 500-year floods but, Knoche said, the city changed the plan to only protect against 100-year levels after residents expressed concern over the potential height of Dubuque Street.

Construction on the $59.5 million Gateway Project is not scheduled to be complete until 2018.

Knocke said the city still hopes to work on more small mitigation projects, such as flood-proofing City Park, when money becomes available.

The UI saw $230 million in flood damage and cleanup costs. One-sixth of the UI's campus closed while 20 of its major buildings — including Mayflower Residence Hall and the 300,000-square-foot Hancher-Voxman-Clapp music and art building — sustained damage.

The university finished all its flood protection and repair projects. This summer the school is scheduled to complete the last of the replacement projects supported by FEMA, including Hancher Auditorium, a new art studio building and the Voxman Music Building.

More Flood Info: Iowa City

Day river crested: June 15, 2008

High water mark: 31.53 feet

Total cost of damage: $6.5 million (city property) and $230 million (university property)

Total cost of mitigation: $137.8 million (city) and $150 million (university estimate)

Cedar Rapids

Eight years after the 2008 flood, Cedar Rapids is preparing to install the first pieces of a $625 million flood protection system with levees, walls, gates and pump stations to protect property along the east and west banks from the Cedar River.

Two separate projects are slated to begin later this year at roughly the same time the contract process for two 2017 projects gets rolling.

"The reason you will see construction now is because the money is starting to come in," said Rob Davis, Cedar Rapids flood control program manager. "We didn't have a way to pay for it before."

Funding hasn't been fully identified for the entire 7.5-mile flood system, which includes 81 separate projects and may take 17 years to complete — by 2033 — Davis said. In light of funding uncertainty, the city shifted gears from a north-to-south construction plan to taking on what the city can tackle as it can pay for it, while addressing the most vulnerable areas first, he said.

That's not to say Cedar Rapids hasn't protected itself. The city has spent $79 million raising and repairing 45 wells so they don't get inundated with water, which consumed all but one in 2008, making critical levee repairs, designs, moving key facilities out of harm's way, and fortifying the wastewater pollution plant, Davis said. Another $52 million went for buyouts of flooded properties.

Projects this fall will be centered on the NewBo District and Czech Village.

Cedar Rapids signed a contract this spring for the first phase of the Parking Lot 44 pump station at 10th Avenue SE. It is one of four pump stations planned for the east side of the river and 11 total in the flood protection system.

The system with a brick housing, three pumps — one for redundancy — and a backup generator eventually could pump 36,000 gallons of water per minute. The initial $5.9 million project, which is scheduled to begin in October and end by early 2018, would erect the brick housing, install one pump and a backup generator.

Next up, the city plans to hire a contractor this summer to build a half-mile levee 100 feet wide at the base and standing 13-feet tall — in place of the existing six-foot-tall berm, Davis said. The levee, which would have a trail built on top, would separate the old Sinclair meatpacking plant site and the river, and run from the African-American Museum of Iowa to near the Alliant Energy substation. Tree clearing and building removal has already occurred, but additional site preparation is needed, Davis said.

The $11 million project due for construction from November 2016 to November 2017 will protect NewBo from a 40-year flood, Davis said. In a 40-year flood, the river reaches 21 feet, which still would be 10 feet below the record 2008 flood level, Davis said.

This fall, city officials will lay the groundwork for two additional projects.

The city will seek a company for a $4.1 million project to relocate sanitation, stormwater and water main pipes on the west side of the river in Czech Village. Utilities under a levee could compromise the system, Davis said.

A $5 million second phase of the Sinclair site system, which build about half of an eventual 10-acre stormwater detention basin and a second pump station, also is in queue for the fall.

Both projects are scheduled for construction from spring to fall 2017, according to city documents.

"We are starting on the downstream ones first because those projects will offer some interim protection for the east and west side of the river," Davis said.

As part of a five-year plan, a Quaker Oats flood wall and Union Pacific Railroad floodgate, and a Time Check utility relocation project are slated for 2018. Levees for Czech Village and Time Check are scheduled to begin in 2019.

More Flood Info: Cedar Rapids

Day river crested: June 12, 2008

High water mark: 31.18 feet (gauging station near Eighth Avenue Bridge)

Total cost of damage: $2.4 billion

Total cost of mitigation: $131 million spent so far including $52.6 million for buyouts. The first pieces of a $625 million (adjusted for inflation) flood protection system is going up this year

Sources: City of Cedar Rapids, except damage cost comes from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Coralville

As with so many other communities along the Iowa River, Coralville was slammed by record level flooding in 2008.

On June 15 of that year, the Iowa River in nearby Iowa City crested at a record 31.53 feet. Major flood stage is 25 feet.

Ellen Habel, Coralville's assistant city administrator, recalled the frustration felt by community members after efforts to sandbag went in vain.

"It was a strange time, we became so focused on trying to protect everything we could," Habel said.

The flood caused $21 million in damage to more than 200 businesses and another $4.5 million to 400 households. City infrastructure took on another $7 million in damage.

As floodwater receded, Coralville officials decided to not let such an event happen again.

"We decided, 'We're going to build back better and we're going to put in permanent flood protection,'" Habel said.

Since then, Coralville has embarked on close to $63 million in flood mitigation work, excluding flood buyout or FEMA public-assistance dollars.

Work has involved a number of efforts, including reconstructing and raising First Avenue Bridge over Clear Creek, reconstructing and elevating Fifth Street across Biscuit Creek and constructing flood protection along the Iowa River from Rocky Shore Drive to the north end of the Iowa River Power Company Restaurant. A number of earthen berms and flood stations also have been built.

Later this summer, Coralville officials plan to begin the final piece — an $8.6 million flood wall along the south side of Clear Creek from First Avenue to Highway 6 — which will close the city's eight-year effort.

When the Clear Creek wall is finished, Coralville will be protected to one foot above a 100-year flood level. With the ability to add temporary walls in some places, the city easily will reach one foot above the 500-year level.

Habel said the city's aggressive approach to flood protection has resonated with businesses and residents, who have returned to and reinvested in the area that sat underwater eight years ago.

"It's something that really impacts the community as a whole, just our economy, our continued vibrancy," she said. "You had to give people reassurance that they could reinvest or could go into those properties and not flood."

TORNADOES

Woman Sentenced For Filing False Disaster Claim

By Emily Caussulo

WCBI-TV Columbus (MS), June 10, 2016

WINSTON COUNTY, Miss. (WCBI) — A year and a day is how much time a Winston County woman will spend in federal prison for filing a false disaster claim.

Judge Sharon Aycock handed that sentence to 35-year-old Kourtnee Triplett, Friday.

Triplett admitted she lied when she told FEMA her apartment was damaged in the April 2014 tornado.

A FEMA investigation discovered the Beal Avenue home was not Triplett's primary residence.

Triplett must also pay back more than $10,000, and serve five years probation.

Relief Crews Working To Help Baker After Tornado

KRTV-TV Great Falls (MT), June 12, 2016

Relief agencies and personnel are headed to Baker after a tornado tore through the town in southeastern Montana on Saturday evening.

The tornado hit at about 7 p.m. in the small town of less than 2,000 people.

There were no fatalities, and no life-threatening injuries. One man was sent to a hospital in Billings for a broken hip; other injuries were relatively minor, such as cuts and bruises.

The National Weather Service in Billings still has a team assessing the full extent of the damage, but what they have found so far indicates that an EF-3 tornado lasted for about 10 minutes. An EF-3 tornado translates to wind speeds of between 135 and 165 miles per hour.

The tornado started on Baker Lake and moved into a nearby subdivision where six homes were destroyed. In addition, at least 30 homes were severely damaged.

Officials estimate the storm has caused more than one million dollars in damages, and expect that figure to rise.

Responding agencies include the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"Whenever there is a disaster in Montana, we have about 400 volunteers across the state, they will get up in the middle of the night to make sure that anybody who has been impacted by the disaster does not have to face it alone," said Anna Fernandez-Gevaert of the Montana Red Cross.

Four volunteers with the American Red Cross are currently in Baker to help provide shelter for those without family or friends in the area.

"They housed two families, arranged for hotel rooms for two families, and then generally they met with every single family to asses their needs, and they will be checking in again with these families as they recover," said Fernandez-Gevaert.

A shelter is not set up right now, however if there are more people that need assistance and lodging, the Red Cross will be setting up a shelter in one of the schools or churches.

"Anyone who needs the Red Cross can call 1-800-272-6668, that's anywhere in the state, they should ask for the duty officer on call who is a volunteer, and that volunteer is going to make sure that they alert the local team that there are needs in the community and they will deploy or they will come to somebody's house, they will do this in the middle of the night," said Fernandez-Gevaert

Financial donations can be made to the Red Cross to provide assistance for those in Baker and also future disasters in Montana.

Montana typically sees several tornadoes every year at this time, particularly in the eastern part of the state.

Unlike those in "Tornado Alley" in the central part of the country, most Montana tornadoes are relatively small and usually touch down in sparsely-populated areas – but not always.

Last year, a small tornado hit near Sidney in Richland County in eastern Montana, injuring one person and causing damage; click here for details.

In June 2010, a tornado hit Billings, causing significant damage to the MetraPark facility; click here to see video.

Just several weeks later, two people were killed when a tornado struck a family ranch near Reserve in northeastern Montana.

Click here for a list of Montana tornadoes recorded between 1950 and 2012.

Relief Efforts Organize For Baker Residents, NWS Releases Report On Tornado

By Morgan McKay

KBZK-TV Butte (MT), June 12, 2016

Relief agencies and personnel are headed to Baker after a tornado tore through the town in southeastern Montana on Saturday evening.

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WILDFIRES

UPDATE: Evacuation Orders Lifted In Tenderfoot Fire; Fire Now 30 Percent Contained

By Jennifer Thomas

KPHO-TV Phoenix, June 11, 2016

YARNELL, AZ (KPHO/KTVK) –

All evacuation orders have been lifted in the Tenderfoot Fire burning near Yarnell.

The fire has burned more than 4,000 acres, but is now 30 percent contained.

On Saturday at 5 p.m., the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office announced that home and business access has now opened on the east side of Highway 89. YCSO also says there are no further evacuation restrictions or road closures in Yarnell.

The Red Cross shelter at the Yavapai college campus has now been closed.

More than 350 fire personnel are battling the wildfire, which started Wednesday afternoon.

Fire officials said the fire was human-caused and is under investigation. As of Saturday morning, the fire had scorched 4,040 acres.

Authorities remain confident the fire will not grow out of control and containment could still happen by sometime early next week.

"I am very happy with the progress crews are making in the field," said Alan Sinclair, incident commander. "Weather conditions and good planning allowed firefighters to put together a good strategy to fight this fire while ensuring the safety of our crews."

At 4 p.m. Friday, authorities reopened a 7-mile stretch of Highway 89 that had been shut down since the blaze began.

APS restored power to the town of Yarnell and some residents who had to evacuate were allowed to go back home.

About 250 Yarnell residents were evacuated Wednesday night and 30 residents of nearby Peeples Valley were evacuated Thursday afternoon after winds fanned the flames.

Federal authorities have authorized the use of federal funds to assist the Arizona Department of Forestry fighting the wildfire.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide funding for up to 75 percent of eligible firefighting costs.

No homes have been damaged or destroyed but three "outbuildings" were damaged, according to the Arizona Bureau of Land Management.

[Photos: Tenderfoot Fire near Yarnell]

The Arizona State Forestry said the Tenderfoot Fire started near the south side of Yarnell. The wildfire is burning on the east side of the town. The 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire burned on the west side of Yarnell.

Officials said brush clearing and other preventative work done in the community since the 2013 fire helped firefighters keep the latest fire out of the town by connecting areas already cleared of brush with new fire lines and burnout areas.

Air crews dropped water and retardant to slow fire growth to the northeast.

Fire crews from multiple agencies are battling the fire, including those from the U.S. Forest Service, Arizona Bureau of Land Management, the Yarnell Fire Department and the Congress Fire Department.

Resources include nine hot shot crews, 22 engines, five helicopters, two air attack fixed-wing aircraft platforms, two bulldozers, and various overhead and support personnel.

No injuries have been reported.

Yavapai County has a phone bank open for residents to call, 928-442-5103.

The brush fire comes nearly three years since the Yarnell Hill Fire took the lives of the 19 Granite Mountain hotshots. The men died on June 30, 2013, trying to protect the community from fast-moving and erratic flames that trapped them with nowhere to go. It was the largest loss of life for U.S. firefighters since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The fire burned 127 homes.

Tenderfoot Fire Near Yarnell Estimated At 3,300 Acres; Fire Was Human-caused

By David Baker, Jennifer Thomas

KPHO-TV Phoenix, June 8, 2016

YARNELL, AZ (KPHO/KTVK) –

The Tenderfoot Fire burning near Yarnell is now at 3,300 acres after aerial mapping, according to officials. The wildfire is still about 10 percent contained.

The fire had been reported to be about 5,000 acres Thursday night, but that number was adjusted around 6 a.m. Friday after the fire was mapped by infrared flight. It will be mapped again later in the morning and acreage could change at that time.

Fire officials now say the fire was human-caused and is under investigation.

Authorities remain confident the fire will not grow out of control and containment could still happen by sometime early next week.

"It's still a situation where we want to err on the side of safety for residents," said Mike Reichling, a state fire official. "We want to make sure that they are out of there just in case."

Around 250 firefighters are battling the fire that started at about 3:15 p.m. Wednesday. Two more hot shot crews and 12 engines were brought in on Thursday.

"We're one of the highest priorities in the United States right now," said Mike Reichling with the Arizona State Forestry.

At 4 p.m. Friday, authorities reopened a 7-mile stretch of Highway 89 that has been shut down since Wednesday when the blaze began.

Some residents who had to evacuate are being allowed to go back home.

About 250 Yarnell residents were evacuated Wednesday night and 30 residents of nearby Peeples Valley were evacuated Thursday afternoon after winds fanned the flames.

Fire officials say residents on the west side of Yarnell are being allowed to return home Friday night.

Homes on the east side of town closest to the fire remain under mandatory evacuation, but authorities say that order could be lifted sometime Saturday.

APS crews worked throughout the night and power has been restored to half of the community. Once the area is safe for personnel to enter, APS will work on the damaged poles.

Federal authorities have authorized the use of federal funds to assist the Arizona Department of Forestry fighting the wildfire.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide funding for up to 75 percent of eligible firefighting costs.

Light winds of 5-10 mph Thursday were blowing flames away from Yarnell, said Dolores Garcia, a Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman.

The weather forecast calls for favorable conditions over the next several days, said RobRoy Williams, the incident commander. “We’re looking very good,” he said.

Helicopters were dipping in small ponds in the area Thursday, filling up with water and dumping it on the flames along the ridge tops.

No homes have been damaged or destroyed but three “outbuildings” were damaged, according to the Arizona Bureau of Land Management.

[Photos: Tenderfoot Fire near Yarnell]

The Red Cross opened an evacuation center at Yavapai College at 1100 E. Sheldon St. in Prescott for those who evacuated due to the Tenderfoot Fire.

“We’re prepared to shelter them for as long as it takes,” said Diana Rodriguez with the Red Cross.

“We’re praying our houses don’t go again,” said Yarnell resident Jane Sanderson, who was packing up and preparing to evacuate. “We just want everybody to be safe and have our homes safe and trust that our firefighters will be safe also.”

[Raw video: Aerial view of Tenderfoot Fire near Yarnell]

The Arizona State Forestry said the Tenderfoot Fire started near the south side of Yarnell. The wildfire is burning on the east side of the town. The 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire burned on the west side of Yarnell.

Officials said brush clearing and other preventative work done in the community since the 2013 fire helped firefighters keep the latest fire out of the town by connecting areas already cleared of brush with new fire lines and burnout areas.

Sanderson said she is always prepared for something like this to happen.

“We keep defensible space,” she said. “We always have the ability to pack and be ready to leave within a few minutes. We have medicines, we have important papers; we have clothing. That’s about all you can do.”

You can see a map of the area by clicking/tapping here.

Yarnell resident Shannon Smith, who lost her home in the 2013 fire, was one of the few on her street who decided not to follow mandatory evacuations this time around after seeing the fire was at least a mile away. Her car is packed just in case.

She said neighbors have been in constant contact and offered to help each other pack, ensure doors are locked and deliver food and water.

“That is just a beautiful aspect of tragedy, how close we as a community have grown and healed through what we all went through,” she said. “And this, I’m sure, is stirring it up for a lot of people.”

Fire crews from multiple agencies are battling the fire, including those from the U.S. Forest Service, Arizona Bureau of Land Management, the Yarnell Fire Department and the Congress Fire Department. Several aircraft, including a helicopter and a large jet, are dropping water on the flames.

Resources include:

1– Air Attack
2 – Helicopters
4 – Type 1 Hotshot Crews
2 – Type 2 Hand Crews
20 – Engines
4 – Water Tenders

There are no injuries reported.

Yavapai County has a phone bank open for residents to call, 928-442-5103.

The brush fire comes nearly three years since the Yarnell Hill Fire took the lives of the 19 Granite Mountain hotshots. The men died on June 30, 2013, trying to protect the community from fast-moving and erratic flames that trapped them with nowhere to go. It was the largest loss of life for U.S. firefighters since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The fire burned 127 homes.

Tenderfoot Fire Updates

KNAU-FM Flagstaff (AZ), June 11, 2016

UPDATE, 6/11/16, 8 a.m.:

Yarnell residents east of State Route 89 are still under mandatory evacuation due to the Tenderfoot Fire. Residents of Peeples Valley on the west side of SR 89 are still under a precautionary alert. The highway has also been reopened by the Arizona Department of Transportation. The Tenderfoot Fire is at 4,040 acres and remains at 10 percent. The incident commander says crews are making progress fighting the blaze.

http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4774

UPDATE 6/10/16, 9 a.m.:

The evacuation orders for more than 250 people in Yarnell and the residents of 30 homes in Peeples Valley are still in effect Friday morning as a result of the Tenderfoot Fire. The blaze was mapped by a morning infrared overflight and its current size is 3,300 acres. It was downgraded from an earlier estimate of 5,000 acres. The fire is still at 10 percent containment.

A type 2 incident command team assumed control of the firefighting operations this morning. Officials say the Tenderfoot Fire was human-caused and the blaze remains under investigation. State Route 89 also remains closed between mileposts 275 and 282.

UPDATE, 6/9/16, 3 p.m.:

Officials have ordered the mandatory evacuation of 30 additional homes in Peeples Valley near Yarnell because of the Tenderfoot Fire. It affects the eastside of State Route 89. They say the order is for precautionary reasons and not because of any imminent threat. Officials also report increased activity on the north side of the fire.

In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has authorized federal funds for fighting the Tenderfoot Fire. It'll assist the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management and cover up to 75 percent of firefighting costs for field camps, equipment repair, materials, and supplies. FEMA officials determined the fire has the potential cause significant destruction and could represent a major disaster. The Tenderfoot Fire is currently burning on private and state land.

UPDATE, 2 p.m.:

The evacuation of 250-300 people in Yarnell remains in effect Thursday afternoon as a result of the Tenderfoot Fire. Officials say personnel on scene have made progress fighting the fire.

Fire officials surveyed the blaze from the air earlier today, and say it's now 1,237 acres in size and 10 percent contained. No homes have been burned, but three small structures were destroyed by the flames. In addition, State Route 89 remains closed between mileposts 275 and 282.

For the latest information, see. http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4774/

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The Tenderfoot Fire prompted Yavapai County Sheriff's officials Wednesday to evacuate between 250 and 300 residents from the town of Yarnell. The American Red Cross established an evacuation center at Yavapai College in Prescott, and Yavapai County has set up a phone bank open for public phone calls at (928) 442-5103.

Fire managers are hopeful, however, that the evacuation order could be lifted by noon Thursday. In addition, the Arizona Department of Transportation has closed State Route 89 between mileposts 275 and 282. ADOT says there is no estimated time yet for the the highway to reopen.

The fire began Wednesday afternoon and has burned more than 600 acres and three structures, though no homes have been lost. Fire managers say crews have made progress fighting the Tenderfoot Fire, and now have it 10 percent contained. Crews are conducting burnout operations and utilizing helicopters and planes to douse the flames. They say the it could be fully contained by next week.

The Tenderfoot Fire is burning on the east side of Yarnell. The June 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire that claimed the lives of 19 Granite Mountain Hotshots took place on the west side of the town.

Animal Disaster Services is on site to take small pets, and larger animals can be taken to the Prescott Rodeo Grounds. The fire is under investigation and no cause has yet been identified. For more information on the Tenderfoot Fire, see http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4774/.

WINTER STORMS

Newtown Ambulance Squad Updates Township On Emergency Calls; Township Supervisors Accept Bids To Repave Roads

By D.E. Schlatter

Bucks Local News (PA), June 12, 2016

NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP >> The Newtown Ambulance Squad (NAS) on May 11 updated the Newtown Township Board of Supervisors on its emergency calls for the first few months of 2016.

According to the squad's chief of operations Evan Resnikoff, the squad had about the same number of emergency responses as it did for the same period last year.

"About 70 percent of our calls are in Newtown Township," explained Resnikoff, noting that the average age of those needing medical assistance is 69, with about 30 percent being over 85.

He also explained that the three top medical emergencies are: respiratory complaints, falls and cardiac incidents.

"We've seen a huge increase in cardiac complaints with people between 40 and 60 years old," Resnikoff told the board.

Opioid overdoses also increased from five to 15 compared to this same last year, according to the ambulance squad chief.

Resniknoff also said that because of the high call volume on Sundays, the rescue squad is going to add another ambulance during that 24-hour period.

In addition, he said that the NAS just retired a 2005 ambulance with 169,000 miles on the odometer, and purchased a used 2015 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter with about 8,500 miles.

"The vehicle is expected to have a seven to ten-year live span," Resnikoff pointed out. "It has good fuel mileage and low maintenance costs."

He also said that the ambulance squad is replacing four cardiac monitors with new ones at a cost between $92,000 and $108,000.

Because of the high cost, the squad is considering leasing the devices.

Newtown Township helps fund the NAS.

For the current fiscal year beginning Jan. 1, it was allocated $110,000, which is $7,000 less than for the 2015 budget year ending Dec. 31.

However, funding is dependent on Local Service Tax (LST) receipts which may be more or less than actual budgets.

In other news, the supervisors in a 5-0 vote accepted $536,228 in low bids from Harris Blacktopping, Inc. in Yardley for repaving about 1.2 miles of the 71 miles of township-owned roads.

Liberty and Justice Drives will be completely repaved, as will portions of Linton Hill and Upper Silver Lake Roads.

The supervisors also agreed to resurface three of the four alternate roads outlined on the township's 2016 road improvement list: Richboro Road, Walnut Avenue and Swamp Road.

Those three added projects will cost a combined $38,313 with Harris Blacktopping also doing the work.

According to the township manager, about $509,000 of the total cost will come from the state's liquid fuels fund, with the township responsible for roughly $64,811.

The supervisors also unanimously approved designating township manager Kurt Ferguson as the point man to seek as much as $100,000 in reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the heavy snowstorm that hit the area January 23 and 24.

The township had declared a state of emergency, and according to Ferguson, FEMA will offset Newtown's added costs for employee overtime, equipment and materials needed to plow and salt the roads.

With the resolution, Ferguson now can prepare the required documents to submit to the agency within the next few weeks.

The board also designated the Pottstown-based Cedarville Engineering Group, LLC to handle building inspections for the township. Boucher & James, Inc, of Doylestown will still be in charge of code and zoning enforcement.

And the supervisors have scheduled a work session for Monday, May 16 at 8:00 p.m. during which several proposed developments will be discussed.

The meeting's focus includes the renovation of a good portion of the Village at Newtown Shopping Center.

The Brixmor Property Group, which owns most of the center, is scheduled to be at the work session to answer questions.

Acme Plans Frosted Mug Cafe At Newtown Store; Township Supervisors Approve Liquor License Transfer To Allow Beer, Wine Sales At Store

By D.E. Schlatter

Bucks Local News (PA), June 11, 2016

NEWTOWN TOWNSHIP >> Sales of beer, and possibly bottles of wine, will soon be coming to the Acme Market in the Newtown Shopping Center off of Route 413.

At the June 8 supervisors' meeting, the board voted 4-1 to approve the transfer of a liquor license from a restaurant at 727 Second Street Pike in Upper Southampton Township to the Newtown Acme store.

Voting for the resolution were: Chairman Kyle Davis and Vice Chairman Ryan Gallagher, along with Supervisors Jennifer Dix and Phil Calabro.

Supervisor Mike Gallagher opposed the liquor license transfer.

"We're on the cusp of the past and the future," said Supervisor Ryan Gallagher who supported the transfer. "Pennsylvania is an antiquated system ... I hear it from a lot of people around town that they want more convenience in terms of alcohol sales."

Unless a local government can show that transferring a liquor license raises serious health, safety and welfare issues for the municipality, it must be approved, according to township solicitor Jeffrey Garton.

With the township's go-ahead, the supermarket will now be able to formally ask the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) to approve the transfer of the restaurant liquor license, which could take between 90 to 120 days.

After the license is in place, Acme will build a 2,500 square foot dedicated section inside the store which will have tables and 30 seats, the minimum required under state law to sell beer for in-store consumption and take out, as well as wine by the glass.

In keeping with the other seven Acme locations in Pennsylvania currently selling beer, the new area will be called The Frosted Mug Café.

The name was chosen because customers can use frosted mugs provided by the supermarket for in-store consumption.

According to Acme's attorney Mark Kozar, the café will offer more than 400 varieties of beer, as well as prepared foods and sandwiches to either eat in or take out.

"This is not where people come to just hang out and drink," he explained. "There is no entertainment or games there."

Kozar, who is with the Pittsburgh-based firm of Flaherty & O'Hara which specializes in beverage alcohol law, said that selling beer at supermarkets and convenience stores has been growing in popularity around the country in recent years.

Acme shoppers will be able to purchase up to two six-packs of beer totaling 192 ounces for takeout at any one time. Several varieties of beer can be mixed and matched in a six pack.

There is no limit on the number of six packs a person can buy, according to Kozar, as long as sales are limited to two at a time.

Purchases will be paid for at a dedicated cash register in the café where IDs will also be checked to ensure that customers are over 21 years old.

The same day that Acme asked the supervisors to approve the liquor license transfer, Gov. Tom Wolf (D) signed into law a measure permitting establishments holding a restaurant liquor license to apply for a new enhanced permit allowing them to sell up to four bottles of wine at any one time for takeout.

The new law takes effect in 60 days.

"Acme will also be pursuing this," said Kozar about applying for the new enhanced liquor license.

Supervisor Mike Gallagher, who opposed the license transfer at this time, said that he first wanted to know more about the new wine-sale law before he would vote to allow it in Newtown.

"I'm still not comfortable with it," he said, also questioning whether there are enough safeguards in place to keep alcohol out of the hands of minors.

Acme, which operates 176 stores in six states, has more than 19,000 employees, 158 of them at the Newtown township location.

"Of the 159 stores in Pennsylvania, seven already have beer sales," according to Dan Croce, president of the Malvern-based Acme Markets. "It's another opportunity for our customers to get what they want at Acme, they've been asking for this.

"We're also putting in a Starbucks," he added.

The supermarket chain already has beer sales at its South Philadelphia location, as well as in Doylestown, Flourtown, Devon, Granite Run, Concordville and Paoli.

There is no hard liquor or mixed drinks sold at Acme, according to Croce.

When asked whether the Newtown café will need more parking spaces, the Acme president told the supervisors that other stores with beer sales have not seen an increase in the number of space needed and that many of the customers using the beer area are already shopping for other items in the store.

The café at the Newtown store will be open from 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday.

Under state law, beer can be sold until 2 a.m. seven days a week, but the supermarket does not plan to extend its hours past 10 p.m.

All servers at The Frosted Mug Café will be 21 years or older, as will the area manager, even though that is not required under PLCB regulations.

As far as any liquor code violations, including illegal sales to minors, Croce said, "We've been checked and audited at our other stores and we haven't had any problems."

If all goes well, the Newtown Acme plans to start beer sales this year.

The Minnesota-based SuperValu, Inc. sold Acme Markets and four other supermarket chains in 2013 for $3.3 billion to a consortium called AB Acquisition LLC.

Last year, that company merged with Safeway Inc. to form the nation's second-largest grocery store chain.

The parent company plans to remodel more than 115 locations throughout the country and invest more than $1 billion to improve its stores, manufacturing facilities and distribution centers.

In other news, township manager Kurt Ferguson said that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved giving the township $92,000 of the estimated $124,000 that Newtown requested in reimbursement for overtime and other costs associated with the late-January blizzard.

Going into the storm, the township already spent all of the money allocated for this winter's snow removal and other storm-related costs, according to Ferguson.

"This [FEMA] money will go a long way in restoring the budget," he pointed out.

On another matter, Ferguson said that renovations of the township-owned house at the Clarke Nature Center is complete and the building ready to rent.

He explained that the Clarke House has been painted, as well as a new natural-gas heater and cabinets installed.

"It's quite a unique house," the township manager maintained, noting that the 1,450 square-foot structure will be ready to rent this summer, and will soon be advertised.

Ferguson said that the township will be seeking about $2,000 a month in rent and has already had several interested inquiries.

“It will be nice to get that money back into the township budget,” he said.

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

Despite Quakes, Most California Homeowners Don’t Have Earthquake Insurance

By Daniel Goldstein

MarketWatch, June 10, 2016

On Oct. 17, 1989, Arthur Reyes was in his dorm room at Stevenson College, on the picturesque hilltop campus of the University of California at Santa Cruz, when his bed started to shake violently.

“I looked across my dorm room to see books flying off the shelf, the door swung open and the light fixture fell from the ceiling,” he recalled.

It was 5:04 p.m. From its epicenter just 10 miles north of Reyes, near the Loma Prieta Peak, the 7.1 magnitude quake roared along a 22-mile stretch of the San Andreas fault through the Bay Area, collapsing a portion of the Bay Bridge and the Cypress Freeway in Oakland, and crushing homes in the Marina District in San Francisco and the Pacific Garden Mall in Santa Cruz.

When it was over, 63 people were dead, more than 11,000 homes destroyed and $6 billion in damage done.

See Photos: Loma Prieta earthquake, 25 years later.

Today Reyes is a biologist married with three children, but he’s still struggling with the Loma Prieta quake, in a different way.

For many of Reyes’ generation, who are now entering their peak earning years and looking to purchase bigger homes to accommodate families, the aftershocks of the Loma Prieta quake, as well as the 1994 Northridge quake in Southern California, are financial. He paid $1,200 in 2014 on top of his homeowner insurance for an earthquake rider on his Palo Alto house, and the price increases every year. The average premium in Santa Clara County was $1,447 in 2014, according to the California Earthquake Authority (CEA), which writes about 76% of earthquake insurance policies in the state. Still, of the close to 7 million single-family homes in California, there are only 879,000 CEA earthquake policies in force.

“As a homeowner, it’s frustrating dealing with these insurance premiums,” he said. “We might get priced out of our home if our premiums keep increasing.”

The likelihood of a severe quake for Californians is never far away either, a major quake with a magnitude of 7.0 or more strikes ever ten years, according to the CEA and a moderate earthquake of 5.5 or more strikes about four times a year. All told, there are more than 2,000 earthquake faults in California, the CEA said.

Early Friday a 5.2 magnitude quake rocked the Southern California desert in San Diego County, about 14 miles northwest of Borrego Springs. Monica Reichl, a drama teacher at Tahquitz High School in the town of Hemet, about 60 miles away from the epicenter said the 1:05 a.m. temblor, which was about 150 miles southeast of Los Angeles, was still strong enough to wake her and her dogs. “It was a noisy quake. Long but not too bad,” she said. Still, like a veteran of the London Blitz in World War II, she was unfazed. “My Labs woke up but we didn’t want to get out of bed for it,” she said.

Even though Californians like Reichl and Reyes live with quakes as a near daily occurrence, earthquake insurance often isn’t a priority. The expensive deductible related to earthquake insurance are sometimes as high as 15% of the value of the home, which has many homeowners giving the insurance a second thought.

Premiums are determined by a combination of a home’s replacement value and its proximity to a high-risk fault. And for homeowners in Northern California, where some of the most valuable real estate in the country lies in an earthquake hot zone, that makes for an expensive financial double whammy. An expensive one-two punch

The CEA was set up in the aftermath of the 1989 and 1994 quakes to help provide low-cost insurance, after many property and casualty insurance companies pulled out following the quakes. According to the CEA, average earthquake insurance premiums statewide rose from about $540 a year in 1998 to $830 in 2005. The CEA instituted a decrease in premiums later that year, but they have been rising ever since, averaging about $800 a year in 2014.

But the average figures don’t really illustrate the cost in some of the highest-risk and most populous areas. The average premium in 2014 on earthquake insurance in San Francisco County was $2,156; it was

$1,800 in Alameda County (along the Hayward Fault) and nearly $1,000 in Los Angeles County, according to the CEA. The areas of greatest earthquake risk in the San Francisco Bay Area. (Map by Risk Management Solutions.)

In contrast to Florida, where hurricane insurance is often mandatory, earthquake insurance is entirely optional in California. And as premiums have gone up, more homeowners have opted out. The number of earthquake insurance policies in California has dropped to just 10% of homes statewide, down from 34% in 1994, according to Risk Management Solutions, a Hayward, Calif.-based company.

Newcomers to the Bay Area who haven't experienced a big quake and are put off by the insurance price are partly responsible for the low numbers of home buyers signing up for earthquake insurance, according to Patricia Grossi, senior director of global earthquake modeling at RMS.

"A lot of young people who are here today, just weren't around during the 1989 quake. They also see it as a low probability event. And they see earthquake insurance doubling their premiums. All those things are working together" to reduce insurance purchases, Grossi said.

Andy Doran is one of those Californians considering the cost of insurance coverage. He was a senior at Berkeley High Schoo in Berkeley, Calif. in 1989 when the quake hit. "I remember turning on the TV after riding it out in the doorway and finding static on all the channels except one," he recalls. "'The Cosby Show' was somehow happily humming along so I knew everything would be all right."

Now a scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, in the East Bay hills, Doran bought a house in Berkeley in 2011 (where the median home value today is more than $1 million and up 12% in the past year) and is looking to add earthquake insurance, but premium payments in the realm of $4,000 a year and a $70,000 deductible are putting him off.

"The fact that it is a separate policy and so expensive with such a huge deductible, it's difficult to impossible to accurately assess," he said. "I've been convinced we should get it, but figuring out how to afford it is hard." Another 'big one' is inevitable

The most recent major quake in the Bay Area occurred on Aug. 24, 2014 quake in Napa, just north of San Francisco, and was a 6.0 magnitude quake, causing more than $250 million in damage while killing one person and injuring more than 100.

The reticence of California homeowners to buy earthquake insurance has many state and federal officials worried. The U.S. Geological Survey predicts that there is a 68% chance of a 7.0 magnitude earthquake in the Bay Area in the next 30 years, either along the San Andreas fault, which ruptured in 1989 and 1906, or the Hayward or Calaveras fault. The chance of a 6.7 magnitude quake over the next 30 years is now predicted at 99%, the USGS says.

The insurance "gap" in the Bay Area, as the CEA sees it, is more than $600 billion as of 2014, assuming $690 billion in reconstruction costs and having only about $90 billion in earthquake insurance in force as of 2014. The CEA says it has the ability to pay $12 billion worth of claims.

"California is completely uninsured," given the risk of a major quake along the faults, said David Schwartz, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park, southeast of San Francisco. "I can't tell you which (fault) will be the first to go, but we know that these faults have to move. You can run, but you can't hide." Emergency workers prop up a collapsed building in the Marina district.

A 7.9 magnitude quake (The estimated size of the Great San Francisco Earthquake along the San Andreas fault on April 18, 1906) in the Bay Area could potentially cause as much as $200 billion in damage and $25 billion in insurance claims, and have a regional and national impact as bad as Hurricane Katrina's aftermath, according to RMS. The CEA said in April, on the 110th anniversary of the 1906 quake that it would cost about $555,000 to rebuilt a single family home in the nine-county Bay Area if a similarly-sized temblor struck.

In addition to the San Andreas fault, the Hayward Fault runs under much of the East Bay and directly under the University of California at Berkeley's Memorial Stadium (which was upgraded to be more earthquake resistant in 2012 at a cost of more than $300 million and has halves designed to move independently in a quake). Both RMS and the USGS predict that the Hayward fault is most likely to experience an earthquake of a 7.0 magnitude.

A quake of that magnitude could severely disrupt the Port of Oakland, one of the West Coast's biggest ports alongside Seattle and Long Beach, Calif. Oakland handled more 2.3 million containers in ship traffic, or 1,400 vessels a year in 2015, nearly 100% of the Bay Area's containerized import and export traffic.

"Our real concern is the Hayward Fault: It's got the highest population density, and it's heavily industrialized," said Schwartz.

Indeed, the Bay Area has added nearly 8 million new residents since 1989, and seen the value of its residential real estate go up 50%, to $1.2 trillion, in that time. "The good thing about a financial boom is it creates money to do seismic upgrades," says Lewis Knight, regional director of planning and urban design with the architecture and design firm Gensler in San Francisco. "We've made so many advances in the 25 years since Loma Prieta."

Knight noted that dozens of warehouses in the Bay Area—now home to tech companies and dot-coms—that were dangerous in 1989 have been rehabbed. "Any time you do 20% or more floor rehabilitation you must do a seismic upgrade per California code," he said.

The CEA has also tried to convince Californians to buy more earthquake insurance.

CEA chief executive Glenn Pomeroy,has implored residents to buy insurance and not to be put off by premium prices, which on average was $803 a year as of Dec. 31, 2014 and is as little as $100 a year in less vulnerable regions of California, like Sacramento or Fresno. (Of course, one reason earthquake insurance is inexpensive in those areas is that they're far from active faults.)

"The insurance premiums aren't the culprit," he said in an interview. "There's a mis-perception out there that insurance is based on market value and not the reconstruction cost. The problem is that the reconstruction costs keep going up," he said. Pomeroy, a former state insurance commissioner in North Dakota and the former president of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) says he hopes to roll out earthquake insurance products later this year with as little as a 5% deductible. "Some people don't like the high deductible, but if you're uninsured for earthquake damage, you have a 100% deductible."

Ibrahim Almufti, a structural engineer at Arup in San Francisco, says given the sizable deductible for most insurance policies, either offered through the CEA or elsewhere, it makes better sense for homeowners in the most vulnerable areas to spend the money upgrading their home seismically. Search and rescue support workers embrace after rescuing a survivor at Oakland's Cypress Freeway.

"My advice to my clients is not to buy earthquake insurance but invest it in your home yourself," he said.

Hemant Shah, the founder of RMS, who was a student at Stanford University during the 1989 quake, disagrees, but he's not surprised to hear the advice. "It's a classic dilemma for homeowners," he said. "The costs are here and now and the benefits are in the future."

That's just what Melissa Clyde Baylis, who lives in Pleasanton, just east of the Bay Area, is thinking.

A teenager living in Oakland at the time of the quake, she now lives in a home built in 1994, after both the Loma Prieta and Northridge quakes led to stronger building codes. As for earthquake insurance, she and other family members have opted to skip it entirely given the expense.

"We will just take our chances," she said.

'It Will Happen Here': Washington Coast School Builds Nation's First Tsunami Refuge

By Sandi Doughton

Emergency Management Magazine, June 10, 2016

(TNS) – The first students to race up the stairs at Ocosta Elementary School's new gym and tsunami refuge were so excited, it took teachers a while to corral them into orderly lines on the rooftop.

"It's really cool to finally see kids up here," Paula Akerlund said, as the third-graders jostled and joked and tried to peer over the tall parapet on a sunny spring afternoon.

Akerlund is superintendent of the Ocosta School District, headquartered near Westport in Washington state a scant half-mile from the Pacific Ocean. On Saturday, she will preside over a dedication ceremony for what — on the outside — looks pretty much like any modern school complex.

What's unique about this gym is mostly hidden from view: tons of concrete and steel that make it the first structure in the nation designed to withstand a tsunami and provide a safe haven from the rushing waters.

"This is a historic building, in this little town on the coast of Washington," Akerlund said. "All the best science we know today and all the best structural engineering that we have are in that building."

With the junior-senior high school on the same campus, all the district's 700 students and staff can take shelter on the roof.

The structure was designed to accommodate 1,000 people comfortably, and is strong enough to hold at least twice that many.

"It could easily fit 2,000 packed in shoulder to shoulder," said Cale Ash, principal at Degenkolb Engineers in Seattle and lead structural engineer on the project.

The new school and gym are anchored by 169 pilings sunk up to 50 feet deep. Each corner of the flat-roofed gym is dominated by a massive staircase constructed of 14-inch-thick concrete with 50,000 pounds of rebar. Steel beams 3 feet wide crisscross the gym's ceiling for extra strength.

Engineers factored in safety margins to withstand battering by the immense loads of trees, rubble and other debris tsunamis can carry.

The pilings are deep enough to hold firm even if the water scours out the soil and breaks through the lower portion of the building.

Extra-wide stairs

The staircases are extra wide, so people will be able to get to safety quickly, Ash said.

The roof sits 53 feet above sea level. That's well above the 40-foot surges predicted in the vicinity by worst-case tsunami models. The 6-foot parapet provides an additional layer of protection to prevent the water from sweeping people off the roof — as happened in Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Akerlund took charge of the district shortly after the Japan disaster. Images of the tsunami tossing cars like toys, pulverizing homes and sweeping ships inland were fresh in everyone's minds.

"You just think: Well, that could happen here," she said. "It will happen here."

The Ocosta school complex sits on a peninsula surrounded by water with no high ground nearby.

A magnitude 9 Cascadia megaquake, which is predicted to hit the area someday, will destroy roads and bridges and cause the ground to drop by 6 feet or more. The tsunami will roll ashore about 20 minutes later.

"You're not going to be able to drive anywhere," Akerlund said.

The district's old evacuation plan was to herd the students to the second floor of the high school. But that building opened in the late 1980s and might not survive the earthquake, let alone the tsunami.

"That's the thing that wakes you up at 3 in the morning," Akerlund said.

So she turned to the community.

It was clear the old elementary school needed to be replaced, she said. Modern building codes require any new school to be earthquake resistant. Reinforcing a portion of the complex — the gym — to also serve as a tsunami-evacuation structure had never been done before.

"Everybody was worried the cost was going to be astronomical," said Chuck Wallace, deputy director of emergency management for Grays Harbor County.

But the premium proved to be only about $2 million, or less than 15 percent of the total project cost of $16 million.

"When you consider that the building is designed to save a thousand people or more, the cost per person is not very high," Ash said.

Despite the region's stagnant economy, residents overwhelmingly approved a levy to pay for the project.

"People made a big sacrifice of their tax dollars to make this happen," Akerlund said.

The refuge is not just for students and staff, she added. It's intended to be accessible by anyone nearby when the quake and tsunami strike.

"We would never, ever turn anyone away," Akerlund said. "It's actually the reverse: Get as many people as you can here, as quickly as you can."

The external stairway doors are normally locked, but several triggers will open them automatically, including a tsunami alert or power outage. School personnel can also open them with the push of a button.

If all else fails, there's a "break-glass-in-emergency" lever mounted outside each entrance, with battery-powered backup and lights.

And teenagers take note: Video cameras are positioned to capture evidence of late-night mischief.

Emergency stash

The district also plans to stash enough emergency supplies on the roof to last for several days.

The Ocosta dedication comes on the heels of this week's four-day exercise organized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to practice for a Cascadia megaquake and tsunami.

FEMA estimates 10,000 people or more could die in the tsunami, depending on what time of year the quake strikes.

The Ocosta tsunami haven is a good start, but thousands of people remain at risk across the region, Akerlund said.

The city of Long Beach is considering construction of a 30-foot-tall berm, or artificial hill, for tsunami evacuation. And the Quinault Indian Nation plans a four-story parking garage at its Quinault Beach Resort and Casino in Ocean Shores that could also serve as a tsunami refuge.

But according to one analysis, it would take more than 50 tsunami-evacuation structures to provide safe havens for everyone in the highest-risk zones of Grays Harbor and Pacific counties.

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ZIKA VIRUS

Officials Preparing For Zika Virus To Spread In The U.S.

By Sabrina Tavernise

New York Times, June 10, 2016

WASHINGTON — The federal government is preparing to release a proposal for responding to the first homegrown cases of the Zika virus, health officials said Friday.

The 60-page document is a blueprint for action when the first cases of locally transmitted Zika occur in the continental United States. Officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention could not say when it would be made public and emphasized that it was a working draft that could change based on input from state officials.

Sylvia Mathews Burwell, the secretary of Health and Human Services, and Dr. Thomas Frieden, the director of the C.D.C., spoke by video conference on Thursday with state governors about the plan. On Friday, experts with the C.D.C. planned to talk with state health departments.

The Zika virus is transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito — a bug that is found in the United States mostly in the South and Southwest, though its range can spread in summer. So far no one has been infected with Zika by a mosquito in the continental United States, but health experts expect it to happen.

The health experts do not expect there to be an explosive Zika virus transmission like the recent one in Brazil because many homes in the United States are air-conditioned and keep their windows closed. Many also have screened windows that keep mosquitoes out. The United States is also much less densely populated than the areas of Brazil where the outbreak of the Zika virus occurred.

Many health experts worry, however, that a Zika virus outbreak could be difficult to fight because 80 percent of the people infected with it experience no symptoms.

"If we have a homegrown case, that's a game changer," said Dr. Thomas E. Dobbs III, Mississippi's epidemiologist, in a telephone interview. "The real challenge," he said, is that "if only 20 percent of people have notable symptoms, what about the 80 percent who don't?"

Zika causes debilitating birth defects, including abnormally small heads and damaged brains from a condition called microcephaly. Health officials are focusing on protecting pregnant women from exposure to mosquitoes or people infected with the Zika virus. The disease can be sexually transmitted, too.

The government's response plan includes helping states define the geographic boundaries where transmission of the virus has occurred and making sure that states reach pregnant women and their doctors in the infected areas to warn them. The C.D.C. will also make sure that any Zika-infected pregnant women are entered into the agency's registry so the cases can be monitored and tracked after the babies are born.

The C.D.C. will also deploy multidisciplinary rapid response teams. Those teams will provide technical and logistical expertise, epidemiology, laboratory services and vector control, which is the term for controlling animals or insects that transmit disease.

The C.D.C. has used rapid response teams for years to track diseases of all sorts, from E. coli outbreaks in fast-food restaurants to hospital infections.

Many states have been actively preparing already. This winter, Florida declared a state of emergency in the counties that had Zika cases in people who had become infected while traveling abroad. In Mississippi, health experts have been gathering mosquito samples in five places in every county since May, Dr. Dobbs said. So far, no Aedes aegypti mosquitoes have turned up, he said.

"This has really jarred people out of any type of complacency they had," said Joseph M. Conlon, a retired Navy entomologist who is a technical adviser to the American Mosquito Control Association, based in Mount Laurel, N.J. "They've gotten into planning mode big time."

In states like Mississippi, where poverty and modest tax bases make mosquito control spotty, contracts with private vector-control companies are being put in place. These companies are commonly used in states that are plagued by hurricanes, Dr. Conlon said.

Dr. Dobbs of Mississippi said the state was currently negotiating with two private vector-control companies.

CDC Director Visits Puerto Rico Amid Zika Outbreak

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is in Puerto Rico to discuss the U.S. territory's response to an outbreak of the Zika virus.

Tom Frieden met with Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla behind closed doors Friday. It is his second visit to the island in recent months.

Puerto Rico is reporting 149 new cases of the mosquito-borne virus in the past week. The island has more than 1,500 cases, including 182 in pregnant women. A total of 40 people have been hospitalized.

Zika can cause fetal death and severe brain defects in the children of women infected during pregnancy. The World Health Organization has recommended that women living in areas where Zika is spreading consider delaying pregnancies.

The outbreak has also hurt tourism in Puerto Rico.

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CDC: Map Zika In States To Prepare For Outbreaks

By Tom Howell Jr.

Washington Times, June 12, 2016

The Obama administration says it doesn't expect the Zika virus to blanket whole states if and when mosquitoes begin to spread the virus on the U.S. mainland, though it wants state officials to map outbreaks so locals can protect themselves.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recorded nearly 700 travel-related cases in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, including nearly a dozen through sexual transmission. Yet the agency expects Zika to circulate on its own this summer, when Aedes mosquitoes flourish and start biting.

In a conference call, CDC officials said transmission in the continental U.S. should be "geographically limited" to relatively small areas, compared with Latin America and the Caribbean.

The CDC has recorded more than 1,300 locally acquired cases in the U.S. territories, mainly in Puerto Rico, and an outbreak in Brazil has been linked to an uptick in the rate of babies born with abnormally small heads, a condition known as microcephaly.

Local transmission will most likely hit Texas, Florida and other states along the Gulf of Mexico, based on previous outbreaks of dengue and chikungunya, which are ferried by the same type of mosquito as Zika.

But Zika is the first mosquito-borne illness to be linked to birth defects, and it has never hit the U.S. mainland before, officials said.

"There's a lot we still don't know about Zika virus," said Peggy Honein, a CDC epidemiologist.

The agency urged local officials Friday to report positive Zika tests right away and determine whether the infection is related to travel or sexual transmission. If those can be ruled out, local surveillance teams should monitor family members and surrounding households to see if the virus spreads.

The CDC said it is issuing fact sheets in multiple languages to make sure people who don't speak English are aware of Zika and ways to avoid mosquito bites.

The government wants to be prepared for the emerging threat, particularly after the Ebola scare of 2014, when the death of a Liberian man at a Texas hospital exposed gaps in reporting and forced states to scramble to set up quarantine rules.

Dr. Robert Quigley, senior vice president at International SOS, a company that advises clients on global medical and security issues, said the government seems to be ahead of the private sector in its response to Zika.

"I would have to say that typically, on any issue, the government tends to lag behind, just because of the bureaucracy," he said.

He cited a February report in the Military Times that said pregnant family members of Defense Department employees or active-duty personnel stationed in affected areas could relocate voluntarily.

Private-sector clients, meanwhile, are still trying to hammer out policies that protect pregnant women and other employees, while remaining competitive in their respective markets.

"What they all want to know is, 'What is the benchmark, what is everyone else in our sector doing?'" Dr. Quigley said.

While the federal government outlines its policy, lawmakers on Capitol Hill have not agreed on the amount of funding needed to prepare for Zika and implement the administration's plans.

President Obama in February requested nearly $2 billion to combat the virus at home and abroad, yet congressional Republican leaders have forged plans that offer much less.

The Senate approved $1.1 billion in emergency funding that isn't offset with cuts elsewhere in the federal budget, and the House moved to take $622 million from the lingering Ebola response in West Africa and other health accounts to address the emerging threat.

Sen. Marco Rubio, Florida Republican, urged negotiators from both chambers to fund what Mr. Obama requested.

"As you know, I supported fully funding the fight against Zika with emergency funds to the amount of $1.9 billion, which was calculated by experts in federal public health agencies as the appropriate amount of funds to successfully protect the public health of our country against the imposing threat of Zika," Mr. Rubio wrote Thursday in a letter to all 33 conferees. "I urge you to consider these specific requests as you negotiate the final legislation through this conference as quickly as possible."

WHO Clarifies Zika Pregnancy Guidance – Again

By Sandee Lamotte

CNN, June 11, 2016

(CNN)Are you considering getting pregnant and live in an area where Zika is actively circulating? Then the World Health Organization wants you to do the following:

"Seek counseling from your country's health services about the risks of a pregnancy, what your options are, what support services are available, and so on," WHO spokesperson Nyka Alexander told CNN. "Women and their partners should be provided with evidence-based information to enable them to make informed choices about delaying a pregnancy or becoming pregnant."

Contrary to news reports last Friday, including that of CNN, the WHO says it is not advising couples living in Zika hot zones to delay having children.

"Whether and when to become pregnant should be a personal choice, made on the basis of information and access to affordable, quality health services," Alexander said.

Clear as mud?

Corrections are meant to clarify, not confuse. And that's exactly what the World Health Organization says it meant to do last week when it sent media an email updating the previous week's guidance on Zika and sex.

"Men and women of reproductive age living in affected areas should be informed and orientated to consider delaying pregnancy," said the email, with bolding as shown.

"This was the original intention of the guidance," the email continued. "The correction makes this more clear."

Based on that language, CNN, The New York Times and other international news outlets released stories saying the WHO was advising couples living in one of the 50 countries and territories where Zika is active to consider delaying pregnancy.

The World Health Organization is now saying media misunderstood that statement.

"Some have interpreted the language as meaning that WHO is recommending that couples living in areas of Zika should delay pregnancy," said Alexander. "Instead, WHO is advising that they receive counseling from health care providers about risks of sexual transmission of Zika, and risks of Zika for pregnant women."

"Women should be informed about the options to consider before conceiving, including delaying pregnancy," Alexander continued. "The misinterpretations are understandable and we will be clarifying the language in the guidance."

Guidance for travelers

On May 30, the WHO updated its guidance on sex and Zika for travelers. Men or women who visit any country with a current outbreak of Zika should wait a full eight weeks, instead of four, after their return to have unprotected sex or attempt to conceive a baby.

That holds true even if there are no active symptoms of the disease, as only one out of five people with Zika experience symptoms.

Men with known Zika-like symptoms should wait a full six months before attempting to conceive, said the WHO.

Couples Living In Zika Areas Should Delay Pregnancy, WHO Advises

By Steven Reinberg

HealthDay, June 10, 2016

FRIDAY, June 10, 2016 (HealthDay News) – Couples who are trying to have children and live in Zika-affected areas should consider delaying pregnancy to avoid having babies born with birth defects, U.N. health officials now recommend.

The new guideline replaces an earlier one that suggested women planning to become pregnant should wait at least eight weeks before trying to conceive if they or their partner live in – or are returning from Zika-affected regions.

Mosquito bites remain the most common source of infection of the virus that causes the severe birth defect microcephaly, which results in babies with abnormally small heads and brains. But transmission of the virus through sex is more common than previously thought, World Health Organization officials have said.

In the United States, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has refrained from recommending that couples delay pregnancy in Zika-affected areas, although Puerto Rico's Health Secretary has issued advice that is similar to the new WHO guideline, The New York Times reported.

Although the new WHO recommendation doesn't specify how long couples should delay pregnancy, the recommendation "means delaying until we have more answers, more evidence, more science," WHO spokeswoman Nyka Alexander told the Times.

However, she added that WHO is only suggesting, and not telling, couples in Zika-affected areas to delay pregnancy.

The vast majority of Zika infections have occurred in Latin America, with Brazil the hot zone with an estimated 5,000 cases of microcephaly. There have been no reports of Zika-induced microcephaly contracted in the United States, although Zika is now circulating in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa.

And U.S. health officials have said they expect to see Zika infections in Gulf Coast states such as Florida, Louisiana and Texas as mosquito season picks up.

Last month, U.S. health officials reported that the number of pregnant women in the United States infected with the Zika virus had tripled because cases were now being counted in a more comprehensive way.

So far, an estimated 280 infected women are being followed in the United States and its territories, according to two registries that have been created by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Previously, only cases of pregnant women who had Zika-related symptoms or pregnancy complications were being tallied, CDC officials said. But recently published reports have found that some pregnant women show no symptoms of Zika infection, yet still give birth to babies with microcephaly.

To limit any potential spread of Zika virus via mosquitoes, health officials on the federal, state and local level are deploying a three-pronged strategy: improving mosquito control; expanding their ability to test for Zika; and urging the public to protect themselves against mosquitoes.

Women of child-bearing age who live in an active Zika region should protect themselves from mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, using mosquito repellent when outside, and staying indoors as much as possible, according to the CDC.

President Barack Obama has asked Congress to allocate $1.9 billion to combat the Zika threat, but lawmakers have yet to agree on a spending package.

White House Rolls Out Zika Crisis Plan

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, June 10, 2016

The White House is amplifying its efforts to contain the chaos from a nearly inevitable outbreak of Zika virus in the U.S. in upcoming weeks.

Senior health officials outlined the national Zika response plan for the first time Thursday during a video briefing with officials from nine states deemed most vulnerable to an outbreak.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is arming the states with a step-by-step emergency plan to respond to the first locally transmitted cases of Zika. The virus, which is spread by mosquitoes, is expected to begin hitting Southern U.S. states later this month.

The document, which the CDC says is still a draft, includes "detailed guidance" about the protocol for federal and state officials when Zika spreads to the U.S. for the first time.

The document has not yet been made public, according to a CDC spokeswoman, though some details were included in a release from the Obama administration late Thursday.

The up-front coordination on Zika is a clear attempt by the administration to avoid the 2014 crisis that stemmed from the first U.S. case of the Ebola virus.

Ebola was an international disaster for more than a year when a U.S. nurse became infected by a patient living in Texas — a situation that exposed massive communication gaps between federal, state and local health officials. For months afterward, government officials on all levels took part in finger-pointing about the outbreak.

States like Florida have already made clear they are anxious about the impending spread of the disease. The National Governors Association recently declared that "the nation is on the threshold of a public health emergency."

Zika has already arrived in droves in the U.S. Many states are dealing with dozens, if not hundreds of Zika cases. U.S. states have reported 691 known cases of Zika, according to CDC data from June 8. Puerto Rico has more than 1,300 cases.

So far, the majority of the White House's communication about Zika has been urging Congress to approve new funding to help speed up testing, vaccine development and mosquito-fighting efforts. Senate and House leadership began talks this week to create a joint funding package.

Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell did make a pitch for Congress to approve funding during the call but focused on what states needed to do to prepare themselves.

Burwell urged states to quickly step up their anti-mosquito efforts while also boosting public outreach, diagnostics and ensuring the safety of the blood supply.

The call included six governors as well as officials from three additional states, all but two of them led by Republicans. The states are Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Georgia, Hawaii and California.

Senators: Bill Will Give States, Cities Tools To Fight Zika

By Associated Press

Associated Press, June 11, 2016

PORTLAND, Maine — A group of senators, including Maine's Angus King, has introduced a bill they say will give states and municipalities tools to fight the Zika virus.

King, an independent, submitted the bill along with Democrat Bill Nelson of Florida and Republican Richard Burr of North Carolina. The senators say the Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health Act would reauthorize public health tools that help control mosquitoes.

The senators say up to $130 million in grants to support state and local mosquito control work will be authorized every year under the bill.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says more than 1,700 cases of the mosquito-borne Zika virus have been reported in the country and its territories. Zika is linked to neurological disorders and the birth defect microcephaly.

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Congress Spars As Zika Threat Grows

By Columbus Dispatch Editorial Board

Columbus (OH) Dispatch, June 12, 2016

It's disappointing that congressional Republicans are holding up federal funding needed to stop the spread of the Zika virus. Every day that passes without a full-on assault in the research lab and with education allows a frightening health threat to grow.

Just as federal response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic was slowed by an abdication of leadership, political ideology is trumping public health with Zika funding. With 14 confirmed cases in Ohio, including one woman from central Ohio who tested positive in late May after a trip to the Dominican Republic, there's no time to waste in combating the mosquito-borne virus.

Republicans say they are worried about handing President Barack Obama a "blank check," which he could use for other purposes. This president has acted autocratically when he can't get his way with Congress. But in this case, the president is right: His request to Congress is based on public-health assessments to prevent the virus from spreading extensively in the U.S. A vaccine appears likely within the year.

"We didn't just choose $1.9 billion from the top of our heads," Obama said.

It would cost much more to educate and provide medical care should thousands of babies be born with microcephaly, a birth defect linked to Zika that causes an abnormally small head and brain. For most people, Zika is a mere annoyance. Some people don't even experience symptoms, while others report a mild fever, skin rashes, muscle and joint pain, malaise headaches or conjunctivitis. But for women who are pregnant or hope to be, Zika is terrifying.

The House allocated only $622 million (most transferred from Ebola funds), while the Senate in late May approved $1.1 billion — this after four months of wrangling with the White House. Congressional Republicans said these dollars are sufficient to get efforts started on a rapidly approaching emergency. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell promises House and Senate negotiators will work to reconcile their legislation to provide up to $1.1 billion.

Congress should follow the guidance of public-health experts in allocating the proper amount of money and not allow partisanship and ideological budget differences to let Zika advance. Congress can and should hold Obama accountable for properly spending the money. But if Congress dithers, the public can and should hold its members accountable, too.

Congressman Skimps On Zika Funding, Then Complains About Needing More Money

By Jennifer Bendery, White House And Congressional Reporter, The Huffington Post

Huffington Post, June 10, 2016

WASHINGTON – Rep. Ted Poe (R-Texas) complained this week that his district isn't getting enough federal grant money to combat the Zika virus from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – the same agency he's repeatedly voted to underfund as it tries to prevent an outbreak.

"We are vulnerable to the threat of Zika virus for several reasons," Poe said in a statement on Tuesday, referencing a letter he recently sent to the CDC. "Both mosquito vectors that carry Zika virus are present in Harris County. Located on the Gulf Coast, we have experienced high flood waters in recent months. In addition, there are also areas of our community that are poverty stricken. Each of these factors create conditions that are ideal for mosquitoes to breed."

"The CDC must work with our community both now and in the future to address this flawed grant system and help allocate federal dollars for Harris County's public health response," he added.

But Poe was among those who voted last month to give the CDC just one-third of the $1.9 billion it requested to protect the public from a Zika outbreak. The bill he voted for, which came three months after the CDC asked for aid, also provided just one-fifth the amount the agency requested for its overall public health activities.

Beyond that, the Texas congressman has voted six times to block the full $1.9 billion in emergency resources for Zika. Those votes were tied to his support for the GOP's transportation and housing spending bill; a chemical regulation bill; a separate Zika funding bill; a defense spending bill; a scholarship reauthorization bill; and a bill related to privacy for angel investors.

For good measure, Poe also voted against letting Washington D.C. use local funds to combat Zika.

A spokeswoman for Poe did not respond to a request for comment.

Neither the House nor the Senate fully funded the CDC's request. House Republicans passed their bill to give the agency $622 million, while the Senate passed a $1.1 billion bill. They'll be hashing out the differences between their two bills in the coming weeks.

The CDC has activated a Level 1 response to a possible Zika outbreak, the highest response level at the agency. Top public health officials warned in April that the mosquito-borne virus is "scarier than we initially thought," and CDC Director Tom Frieden made an emotional plea to Congress last month to fully fund the prevention efforts.

"Imagine that you're standing by and you see someone drowning, and you have the ability to stop them from drowning, but you can't," Frieden said at a National Press Club event. "Now, multiply that by 1,000 or 100,000. That's what it feels like to know how to change the course of an epidemic and not be able to do it."

The lifetime cost of care for just one baby with microcephaly, the birth defect caused by the Zika virus, is estimated at as much as $10 million.

House Passes Puerto Rico Rescue Bill; McConnell's Trump Frustrations; Blunt To Push For Full $1.1 Billion In Zika Funding

By Kelsey Snell

Washington Post, June 10, 2016

HOUSE PASSES PUERTO RICO RESCUE PACKAGE: In a rare bipartisan move on Thursday the House voted 297-127 to approve a financial rescue package for Puerto Rico. The legislation allows the troubled island territory to accept new government regulation in exchange for a $72 billion debt restructuring plan. Power Post's Mike DeBonis has more:

Thursday's House vote came ahead of a crucial July 1 deadline, when the territory is poised to default on $2 billion in bond payments. The Senate, however, has yet to act.

Lead sponsor Rep. Sean Duffy (R-Wis.) said that unless the rescue bill becomes law, "the Puerto Rican government is likely to collapse, participants in public pension plans will be terribly damaged, and almost all bondholders could lose their investments.

"Absent this bill," he said, "almost nobody wins and nearly everybody loses."

McCONNELL'S RAW TRUMP ASSESMENT: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has been growing increasingly frustrated when reporters ask him about the latest controversies over the presumptive GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump and he seemed to let loose this week in an interview with Bloomberg Politics. McConnell said that while he's still okay with the nominee, he's got a lot of concerns about Trump's understanding of policy.

"He needs someone highly experienced and very knowledgeable because it's pretty obvious he doesn't know a lot about the issues," McConnell said. "You see that in the debates in which he's participated. It's why I have argued to him publicly and privately that he ought to use a script more often—there is nothing wrong with having prepared texts."

The Kentucky Republican's frustration with Trump has been clear, especially this week after Trump's tarring of Judge Gonzalo Curiel as biased against him because the Indiana-born former prosecutor is "Mexican." Still, McConnell said he remains "comfortable" backing Trump.

"For all of his obvious shortcomings, Donald Trump is certainly a different direction, and I think if he is in the White House he'll have to respond to the right-of-center world which elected him, and the things that we believe in. So I'm comfortable supporting him," McConnell said.

BLUNT TO PUSH FOR FULL $1.1 BILLION IN ZIKA FUNDING: The Senate voted this week to formally begin working out a compromise with the House on how to fund the battle against Zika. Both chambers have already passed funding bills but the House legislation provides $622 million through the end of 2016 while the Senate plan would provide $1.1 billion through Sept. 2017. Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), one of the top negotiators on the Senate side, told Morning Consult that he plans to make sure the House gets on board with the extra money.

Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) said Thursday he thought it would be possible to convince House Republicans to agree to the Senate's $1.1 billion legislation, in part because it would settle the question of how to fund the fight against Zika, a topic of discussion on Capitol Hill for the past four months. And the Senate bill comes with the added bonus of funding that fight until September 2017.

"The difference in the two numbers is their number only went through September the 30th of this year, and our number goes through Sept. 30 of next year," Blunt said. "I'm hopeful that everybody will decide it's better to deal with this right now rather than continue to deal with it for the rest of the summer."

Rubio Calls On GOP To Support Obama's Nearly $2 Billion Zika Plan

By Juliegrace Brufke

Daily Caller, June 9, 2016

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio urged 33 of his Republican colleagues in the upper chamber to support President Barack Obama's call for $1.9 billion in funding to fight the Zika virus.

The Senate had approved $1.1 billion in funding while GOP members in the House were calling for $622 million, which reallocates funding left over from the Ebola outbreak.

"As you know, I supported fully funding the fight against Zika with emergency funds to the amount of $1.9 billion, which was calculated by experts in federal public health agencies as the appropriate amount of funds to successfully protect the public health of our country against the imposing threat of Zika," Rubio wrote in the letter sent Thursday. "I urge you to consider these specific requests as you negotiate the final legislation through this conference as quickly as possible."

Rubio argued Florida and Puerto Rico will be hit the hardest, therefore he believes they need the funding as summer mosquito season reaches its full force.

The Senate is slated to vote on a larger spending bill, which includes funding for the virus, in the coming days.

Zika has been linked with serious birth defects and was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organization earlier this year.

Ted Cruz Didn't Bother To Vote On A Bill To Fight The Zika Virus As Texas Scrambles To Prevent An Outbreak

By Bethania Palma Markus

Raw Story, June 10, 2016

Texas is scrambling to stop a potential Zika emergency after floodwaters left pools of standing water — but when it came time for Texas Sen. Ted Cruz to vote on federal funding to fight the virus, he was no where to be found, according to RealClearPolitics.

Gov. Greg Abbott this week asked President Barack Obama for a disaster declaration because of widespread storm damage and flooding, Bryan College Station Eagle reports. The Republican governor's request comes as local officials worry resulting pools of stagnant water could create a Zika virus outbreak.

KBTX reports that while no declaration has yet been issued, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) workers were on the ground this week. And while Texas officials are scrambling to deal with the Zika threat, Republicans on Capitol Hill have been blocking a federal bill aimed at fighting the virus.

Cruz was one of three senators who did not vote on a bill to spend $1.1 billion to fight it.

"With all of the flooding, all of the rainfall in our area, this is a state of emergency," Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said, according to the Houston Press. "What we don't want to do, we don't want to wait like we did with AIDS and HIV, assuming that it impacted people on the other side of the globe, were slow to respond, and then it became a global epidemic. We want to get out in front of this."

Turner is urging Abbott to declare a public health emergency to counter spreading of the virus.

Twenty-three Republicans voted to join Democrats to pass the Zika bill and 29 voted against it. Cruz and two others, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and Wyoming Republican Mike Enzi did not case votes.

Abbott, in turn, is asking Obama to declare a disaster to release funding to help the state cope with the storm fallout.

"I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments, and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary to save lives; to protect property, public health and safety; or to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster," Abbott wrote in a letter to Obama.

Severe storms and flooding in Texas have resulted in a large amount stagnant water — which attracts mosquitoes that potentially carry and spread Zika.

Abbott's request comes amid 1,444 evacuations along with hundreds of other rescue and emergency actions statewide, including fatalities.

U.S. Senate Republicans blocked a stand-alone $1.9 billion bill requested by Obama to fight the Zika virus, the Hill reported.

Weeks later, little progress has been made.

"Republicans and Democrats worked together to pass a bill here in the Senate to provide funding and resources," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Wednesday, according to the Hill. "The House passed its own version. We're ready to go to conference and complete a final bill. I'll have more to say on that soon."

According to Patch, the state is working with the federal government to secure funding to help communities fight the virus.

"Texas is working with our local and federal partners to ensure Texans are protected from the Zika virus," the governor said in a prepared statement. "With the recent floods, and as we enter the height of mosquito season, I encourage Texans to take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito exposure and heed all warnings and recommendations from health officials."

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, Democrats have set a floor of $1.1 billion in funding to fight Zika while Republicans have agreed to $622 million. The Hill reports it remains unclear how the two parties will work out their differences.

Official Map Finds Zika-transmitting Mosquitoes In Much Of U.S.

By Sebastien Malo

Reuters, June 10, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Florida Health Warriors Deploy In War On Zika

By Leila Macor

AFP, June 11, 2016

Miami (AFP) – Carlos Varas inspects the front yards of Miami homes armed with larvicide, pesticide and what looks like a long-armed eyedropper. His mission: destroy the Aedes aegypti mosquito that spreads the Zika virus.

Varas reaches into a leafy garden and sucks up water from tiny pools drop by drop. He examines the sample and grins: inside, tiny critters wiggle around nervously.

They are the larvae of the feared Aedes aegypti.

"We look for standing water or flying mosquitoes," Varas told AFP.

If they find larvae they spread out grain larvicide with a scoop. "If we find adult mosquitoes in the area we spray, and we try to eliminate the sources where they are breeding," he said.

The mosquito-borne Zika virus has been linked to a surge in cases of the birth defect microcephaly – babies born with abnormally small heads and deformed brains – after their mothers were infected with the virus. There is no vaccine for Zika.

Zika has spread rapidly across Latin America and the Caribbean in the past months, and experts warn that the continental United States will likely see an increase in cases as summer begins in the northern hemisphere.

Florida's hot, wet climate "has all the environmental conditions for an epidemic," said Carlos Espinal, head of the Florida International University Global Health Consortium and an expert in tropical diseases.

– Primed for an epidemic –

The best way to stop the spread of Zika is to kill off Aedes aegypti mosquitos, which breed in even tiny pools of stagnant water – the mammoth task facing Varas and his fellow inspectors.

But given the size of Florida "there will not be enough inspectors to cover the territory," Espinal told AFP.

"This is a job that has to be done not only by the health service, but by the community."

Coordinated work between community leaders and county health officials to destroy the Aedes aegypti larvae is "very important," he said.

Health authorities are especially frustrated by Washington's delay in releasing more federal funds to fight the virus.

Tom Frieden, head of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is working feverishly to convince Congress to approve the $1.9 billion to fight Zika that President Barack Obama asked for in February.

"Imagine this: You're standing by a lake and you see someone drowning. You have the ability to save that person, but your hands are tied," Frieden wrote recently on the White House blog.

"The ability to prevent dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of severe birth defects creates a special responsibility – every child protected is a tragedy prevented."

In Brazil, some 1.5 million people have been infected with the virus, and nearly 1,300 babies have been born with microcephaly since the outbreak of Zika began there last year.

The virus, which usually causes only mild, flu-like symptoms, can also trigger adult-onset neurological problems such as Guillain-Barre Syndrome, which can cause paralysis and death. In an added complication, there is limited, but growing evidence that Zika can be transmitted sexually.

As of June 1 the CDC had registered 618 cases of Zika infection in the continental United States – all of them people who contracted the virus abroad.

The Florida Health Department as of June 3 registered more than 170 Zika cases in the state, nearly 40 of them in pregnant women.

Governor Rick Scott said that Florida residents must prepare for a Zika outbreak with the same diligence that they prepare for a hurricane.

"We don't yet know for certain what will happen with this virus, but we owe our citizens a vigorous and thorough preparation effort at the federal level to best protect their health," he said.

"Washington must put politics aside and agree to a comprehensive plan to protect and respond to the spread of Zika in America."

4th Case Of Zika Reported In Delaware; Man Had Been Abroad

Associated Press, June 10, 2016

DOVER, Del. — Public health officials say a fourth case of Zika infection has been confirmed in Delaware resident who had traveled abroad.

The Division of Public Health said in a news release Friday that the Kent County man had traveled abroad in May and acquired the mosquito-borne virus.

International health officials say Zika can cause fetal death and severe brain defects in the children of women infected during pregnancy. Zika can also be spread by men via vaginal, anal, and oral sexual activity.

Health officials recommend condom use for men who have been diagnosed with Zika virus.

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OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Quake Simulation Exposes Cracks As City Prepares For The Big One

By Bianca Pahl

Portland (OR) Tribune, June 10, 2016

Fallen bridges, collapsed buildings, downed utility lines and thousands of casualties are just some of the things that will occur when a massive earthquake hits the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the Northwest coast and reduces most of the Willamette Valley to rubble.

Are we ready for that?

"We're really not ready," said Carmen Merlo, director of Portland's Bureau of Emergency Management.

At 9 a.m. Wednesday, June 8, representatives of several city bureaus took part in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Cascadia Rising quake simulation to help local agencies and officials get ready for The Big One. More than two dozen agencies across Oregon were part of the exercise designed to prepare first-responders and others to deal with the effects of a massive quake.

The simulation took place in PBEM's emergency coordination center, which was built to withstand a 9.0 magnitude quake, making it the most logical place for city officials to gather after a disaster.

Goals for the two-day simulation were to test emergency plans, identify gaps in policies and procedures, better understand where limited resources should be focused, train staff and provide "situational awareness," Merlo said.

Where the city failed to meet Merlo's expected level of preparation was building codes, old infrastructure, training and drills, tracking resources, communication to the public and the lack of "culture preparedness."

"There's always room for improvements," Merlo said. "I'm pleased with what I saw, but clearly the fact that we don't get to do this often for a real emergency, there is a lack of common understanding around protocols and processes."

Merlo said the simulation emphasized the downtown area because she predicts it will be most vulnerable during an earthquake, mostly because of the density of high-rise buildings and because it's the "economic engine of the city." It focused on everything that could go wrong in the city during a major disaster.

"Every part of the city has its own unique challenges," Merlo said.

'Small incremental improvements'

In the coordination center, four long rows of desks with computers and landline phones were ready for staff. Large television monitors with maps and status updates were mounted on each wall. Ten teams of bureau members were assigned to different responsibilities. One of the teams was in charge of planning, another handled finances and another was a liaison to other agencies.

As the simulation began, chaos unfolded. Monitors communicated the amount of the dead and the wounded. The map lit up with colored dots indicating which buildings and bridges had collapsed. Areas were marked as inspected, restricted and unsafe.

The scenario: Within the first hour, the nearly 500,000-square-foot Mall 205 had collapsed in Southeast Portland, 300 people were injured, some hospitals were being evacuated and building damage was estimated at $197.8 million.

Merlo said the exercise also assumed that all Portland-area bridges, except for the new Tilikum Crossing and the rebuilt Sellwood Bridge, would be unusable.

Team members walked the room and hovered over computers, talking with one another. Their faces displayed concentration and focus. Phone calls were made, plans were discussed and communication seemed strong. The room remained calm and productive.

During the exercise, Merlo's agency tested some new technology. A smartphone app "collector," which the agency customized to Portland's Geographic Information System, was used to quickly assess the location of damage throughout the city and help city officials communicate that location.

Merlo said the app became so "noisy with information" it was distracting. Other agencies didn't have the same customized app as PBEM, which produced another complication, said Merlo.

The other piece of technology tested was the Basic Earthquake Emergency Communication Node. Merlo mentioned there weren't enough people in the communications department using the BEECN to relay messages to the public.

It wasn't all bad, though. Merlo was impressed with all of the bureaus capability to work together and be creative in their problem solving. Merlo said, as information came in they were acting, tracking and following up "very quickly." She also said they were comfortable with the technology they used.

"We're making small incremental improvements and making progress, but it will be years, if not decades, before we can say, with a straight face, that we're ready for the kind of earthquake we're expecting," Merlo said.

Banding Together In Quake City

By Steve Duin

Oregonian, June 10, 2016

Almost a year ago, Kathryn Schulz dropped the Really Big One on those of us still napping aside the Cascadia subduction zone.

Her Pulitzer Prize-winning piece in The New Yorker described the jaw-breaking havoc that will ensue when the Earth buckles once again along "the continent's worst fault line."

There was the delicious brunch quote: "Our operating assumption," Kenneth Murphy, of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, told Schulz, "is that everything west of Interstate 5 will be toast."

There was the wrenching image of the Gearhart elementary school, which offers no escape route from the ensuing tsunami for students and teachers.

There was a fresh, and refreshing, sense of urgency regarding the catastrophic earthquake that is, roughly, 70 years overdue.

Carmen Merlo, director of the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, called the Schulz essay "a game-changer. A watershed moment. She was able to do in 10,000 words what we've been trying to do for 15 years."

Assemble the masses. Apply the cattle prod. FEMA projects the 9.0 earthquake and ensuing tsunami will kill 13,000 along the 700-mile fault line. As many as ten Portland bridges will collapse into the rivers below. It may take three months to restore electricity in the city.

"Even those numbers do not fully reflect the danger," Schulz wrote, "or, more to the point, how unprepared the Pacific Northwest is to face it."

In other words: Our move, bucko.

In the past week, 20,000 emergency responders in the Northwest were out in force for Cascadia Rising, a training exercise in the chaotic triage that will occur after the fall.

But an equally significant seismic event unfolded last Sunday when the Willamette Heights neighborhood celebrated earthquake preparedness at the Friendly House Community Center.

Five hundred 5-gallon water containers disappeared into the night. Newcomers to the party were schooled in retrofits and gas shut-off valves.

Steve Eberlein of the American Red Cross delivered his 90-minute presentation, "Prepare Out Loud."

"Two hundred and fifty people showed up," says Val Aitchison, the chief organizer of the event. "Not bad for a 100-degree day."

Willamette Heights is one of the city's more responsive and organized communities.

Two years ago, residents gathered to stop Google exec Kevin Rose from demolishing an 1892 home to build his Deku Tree Retreat. They sent the neighborhood mailman off with a $10,000 gift when he retired after 25 years.

And they're setting the pace in an arena where neighborhoods matter.

"Social influence is more impactful than media influence," Eberlein argues, and when it comes to earthquake preparedness, your friends and neighbors are the catalytic converters.

You can argue, of course – and several emergency-planning experts quietly do – that public officials could contribute far more to the cause.

Gov. Kate Brown is tweeting about Cascadia Rising, but the state is still approaching building codes and retrofits on the cheap.

Tilikum Crossing and the Sellwood Bridge will survive the quake – "Two years ago, I wouldn't have known how we would ferry people across the river," Merlo says – but the city still has 1,200 people on its waiting list for Neighborhood Emergency Teams training.

And while Portland Public Schools is rebuilding its schools to ensure they will be safely evacuated when the quake hits, Beaverton is holding its seven new schools to a higher seismic standard, making them safe for reoccupation.

Yet most of what people do or don't do to prepare for the Cascadia quake, Eberlein says, will be based on what they see and hear on their daily rounds.

"It's difficult for a government body to influence culture," Eberlein says, "and preparedness is a cultural issue. Seeing our peers change their behavior is a message that we should change ours, especially when we know better."

That's why the Red Cross wants your neighborhood, like Willamette Heights, to "Prepare Out Loud."

Don't be subtle in your stockpiling. Don't go quietly into that Go kit. Make sure you're not the only one on your block with the essential reserve in flashlights, sleeping bags, first-aid kits, water, and ham radios.

Because when the tremors end, you will lean on your neighbors and they will depend on you.

"Driving won't be an option. Phone calls won't be an option," Eberlein says. "Our ability to access the services, utilities and goods we rely on daily will be vanquished."

In the last five years, Aitchison and her friends have organized three earthquake events. Sunday was the finale, she says: "We announced to our neighbors that we're going to stop pestering you."

Willamette Heights is relatively ready for the Really Big One. If you live in Ashcreek or Alameda, Woodlawn or Woodstock, Parkrose or the Pearl, can you say the same?

No Emergency Hubs In Capitol Hill For Cascadia Rising; Organizer Hosting Disaster Preparedness Meeting

Capitol Hill (WA) Times, June 10, 2016

Capitol Hill has been left out of the region's largest regional training exercise simulating a 9.0-magnitude earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone, reportedly due to a lack of volunteers to support an emergency hub in the neighborhood, prompting Charlette LeFevre to quickly put together her own informational event on Saturday.

Led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Cascadia Rising is testing the readiness of local, state and federal agencies for a catastrophic earthquake predicted to occur anytime within the next 50 years or so. The 4-day drill will end Saturday, with residents encouraged to go to their respective community hubs 9 a.m. to noon to participate and learn what they will need to do when the big quake occurs.

Capitol Hill, First Hill and the Central District are devoid of community hubs. LeFevre, who is one of the organizers for the Capitol Hill Pride Festival, plans to use the event as a springboard for forming a Seattle Neighborhood's Actively Prepare (SNAP) group in Capitol Hill.

"Currently Capitol Hill has NO SNAP groups although in the past there were Hubs at Cal Anderson Park, Volunteer Park and Miller Playfield," according to a news release from LeFevre.

Since Capitol Hill won't be involved in Cascadia Rising, LeFevre is providing disaster preparedness information 9:30 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 11, at the Cal Anderson Park shelter house, as well as engaging with community members about forming a SNAP group and making the park a hub again.

The Big Quake Is In Our Future

Daily News (WA), June 12, 2016

Editor's note: Today's editorials appeared in The Wenatchee World. Editorial content from other publications is provided to give readers a sampling of regional and national opinion and does not necessarily reflect positions endorsed by the Editorial Board of The Daily News. We naive human beings spend such a short time on earth that we get a twisted concept of time. When we hear something bad happened 300 years ago, we think it ancient. When we hear it might happen again in 200 years, we shrug. When we hear it might happen in 200 years or next week, we assume 200 years is more likely.

In geologic time, that 500 years is a beat faster than a ticking clock. It is a frequent event. Our complacency is all too human and dangerous, yet we seek comfort in ignorance. Geologic disasters like massive earthquakes or volcanic eruptions are not here and now, we think. They are in history books. If they do strike, they hit the unfortunate poor in some distant and exotic land and we will watch on CNN. Even when Mount St. Helens was smoking and bulging we thought volcanic eruptions were someone else's problem. Curious people now no longer with us crept in for a closer look. We knew it could happen. We could see it. Still, we were surprised and unprepared.

The quake geologists are certain is coming will be perhaps a magnitude 9.0, more than 1,000 times stronger than the Nisqually quake of 2001 that nearly knocked down the state Capitol, or the 1872 quake near Lake Chelan that triggered slides so massive they blocked the mighty Columbia. The quake will be followed in minutes by a speeding tsunami 30- to 60-feet high that will devastate coastal communities and rip across the North Pacific. The last Cascadia megathrust hit Jan. 24, 1700, the date determined by civic records in Japan, where the resulting tsunami washed away entire villages. Geologists say such quakes occur here every 300 to 500 years.

So it is slightly comforting that this week the many agencies with responsibility in emergencies are part of an earthquake drill called Cascadia Rising. Headed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the event has as many as 20,000 participants, making it perhaps the largest disaster preparedness drill in the nation's history. They are testing command, control and coordination in a world without communication, without passable roads, without water, power, food distribution, functioning hospitals, where tens of thousands are dead or injured or missing, hazardous materials are everywhere spilled, where waves have washed much away and thousands of bridges and buildings are laid waste or sunk in the quake-liquified soil. How many of us will die in the quake?

FEMA is testing community cooperation and coordination in the face of unimaginable catastrophe. The exercise will certainly be helpful. It is a useful to consider what may happen, and what will happen. The catastrophe will bring chaos, and days and weeks when our modern, comfortable life will be forgotten.

Then again, even in relatively small disasters, almost nothing goes as expected. In this coming quake, which may be the largest natural disaster to strike North America in our history, the best of plans will likely disappear. That does not mean planning has no value, or preparing for what we think might happen will do no good.

'Any Type Of Structure Will Be Damaged' After A Mega-quake, Official Says

By Kipp Robertson

KIRO-FM Seattle (WA), June 10, 2016

The most damage done to inland cities during a massive earthquake will be from the shaking itself, and Regional Administrator of FEMA Kenneth Murphy says no structure is safe.

Scientists predict a magnitude-8.7 or higher earthquake — which is what Washington agencies have been training for all week — will shake for about five minutes. There isn't much that will go undamaged from so much shaking, Murphy told KIRO Radio's Dave Ross.

Many houses in the Northwest are woodframed. Murphy says they will have moderate damage. Older homes will have even more damage.

"Really, any type of structure will have damage," Murphy said. "A lot of things don't do well being shook for five minutes."

On the coast, a tsunami will cause even more devastation. Concerned with the safety of people in Seattle, Dave asked Murphy how far up James Street he needs to run to escape a tsunami.

"In all honesty … I don't think the power of a tsunami will reach [Seattle]," Murphy said. "The tsunami will hit the coast and islands and lose its power."

However, Murphy says it might not be a bad idea to go about a half-mile away from the Seattle waterfront, just in case.

Cascadia Tsunami Evacuees Leave All Behind

By Brian Walker

Bonner County (ID) Daily Bee, June 10, 2016

Editor's note: This story is not real.

The earthquake and tsunami didn't happen — not yet, anyway. But experts say it's only a matter of time until Cascadia Fault sets off a disaster of historic proportions on the coast that will also have a dramatic impact throughout the Northwest, including North Idaho.

Numerous agencies are responding to the fictional disaster in region-wide training exercises. The Hagadone News Network is treating these exercises as an actual news event to try to relay the importance of efficient and effective response.

COEUR d'ALENE — Audrey Hammons wept as she recounted evacuating her Seattle assisted living facility due to the earthquake and tsunami that has devastated the West Coast.

Hammons, who is battling Lou Gehrig's disease, was among about 40 seniors who arrived at a medical needs shelter on Thursday afternoon at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds after a six-hour bus ride to Coeur d'Alene.

"I'm so scared and don't have my wheelchair," she said. "I'm in pain."

Hammons said she had to leave all of her belongings behind — including her medications — as she was unexpectedly rushed to a bus.

Hammons said she didn't see any of the destruction because she was whisked from the senior facility so rapidly.

"It all happened so fast," she said. "A lot of us were just put on the bus, and that's all I really remember."

Tuesday's earthquake, which measured 9.0 on the Richter scale, was centered 95 miles east of Eugene, Ore. It caused a tsunami that has crippled the coast from northern California to British Columbia. About 13,000 people have died.

Government officials on Thursday released the latest estimated number of evacuees expected to arrive in Kootenai County at 40,000 and in Idaho 140,000. Bonner County officials estimated 3,000 evacuees would be arriving there by Thursday night, while 750 were estimated for Boundary County.

The influx of people to the area has wreaked havoc on local resources as scattered power and cellphone outages have been reported across the region. A team of ham radio operators is assisting with communication during the crisis due to cellphone problems.

The crisis is also causing heavy traffic on local roads and lines at gas stations and grocery stores as some local residents fear the influx could cause fuel and food shortages.

"Please do not travel unless needed, fuel supplies are limited," an Office of Emergency Management press release states.

Most local hotels are booked up and have increased their rates by 50 percent.

"People are looking for shelter for their pets and sleeping in cars," said Sandy Von Behren, Kootenai County's OEM director.

An estimated one million people on the coast have been displaced.

There are almost no working hospitals west of Interstate 5. It may be months before areas on the coast have power again and it may take up to a week for some residents to have power back here.

About 40 percent of the police and fire stations on the coast have been destroyed, and roughly half of the bridges have either been damaged or knocked out.

No aftershocks or damage have been reported in Idaho.

The catastrophe was caused by the rupturing of the 700-mile Cascadia Subduction Zone.

The zone averages a quake every 300 to 500 years. The last one prior to this occurred 316 years ago.

The emergency operations center (EOC) at the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office was activated on Thursday morning to coordinate relief services.

"Having enough shelter, food and water is our priority," said Jim Lyon, public information chief at the center, adding that the Idaho Army National Guard is assisting in that effort. "We want to direct people to the shelters whenever possible so we don't overwhelm our local hospitals."

Most Idaho counties, along with the states of Washington, Oregon and California, have declared a state of emergency.

Hundreds of local volunteers are staffing relief operations ranging from the EOC to the medical needs shelter organized by the Panhandle Health District and the general population shelter at the fairgrounds organized by the American Red Cross. There is also a section at the fairgrounds dedicated to pet care.

Melanie Collett, public information officer at the shelters, said the medical needs shelter is for people with non-acute medical conditions, but require medical assistance beyond what is available at the adjacent Red Cross shelter.

Hammons said she's thankful for the help.

"Everybody here has been so nice, but I don't know when I'll be able to go home," she said. "I feel lost."

While sitting beside Hammons, Shauna Miller, a volunteer with the Medical Reserve Corps, said she wanted to be a part of the relief efforts due to the magnitude of the crisis. The tsunami was comparable to the one that hit Japan in 2011 when nearly 16,000 people were killed.

"Sometimes people just need comforted," she said. "They're having emotional distress, and it's important that their needs are met."

Cascadia Rising: Days After Quake, Military Aid Would Arrive By Air

By Natalie Johnson

Centralia (WA) Chronicle, June 10, 2016

A day after local emergency responders and community members discussed how they would respond in the first three days after a catastrophic earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone, the Army and Air National Guard on Thursday rehearsed their response in the days after the last rumbles subside.

Specifically, troops roved through Western Washington looking for places to land helicopters and airplanes in order to bring food and water to stranded residents.

"We're looking for farmers' fields," said Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Rikstad, of the Army National Guard. "What they're really using us for is to make our way through the rubble."

In the event of a major disaster, Rikstad's cavalry reconnaissance squad would make its way through heavily damaged areas, reporting what it sees to headquarters.

"With that information, we're able to bring in the big … planes and transports that are going to bring in food and water," he said.

About two dozen members of the Army and Air National Guard gathered Thursday to practice landing a UH-60 helicopter in a field south of the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds. Both exercises were a part of the week-long Cascadia Rising exercise, coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is designed to plan emergency responses to a predicted 9.0 magnitude quake affecting western portions of Washington, Oregon, California and British Columbia.

The Cascadia Subduction Zone stretches 800 miles from California to British Columbia. Earthquakes have historically occurred along the fault every 200 to 500 years, with the last major earthquake occurring about 300 years ago, according to FEMA.

Agencies throughout the region conducted exercises under a scenario of a 9.0 magnitude earthquake with an epicenter off the coast of Oregon.

"Think of it as a pre-planned operation. You plan it and you put in on a shelf," said Staff Sgt. Jimmy Takach, of the Air National Guard.

Sometime down the line, when an actual disaster occurs, leaders can take the plan off the shelf and use it to inform their response, he said. That doesn't mean everything will go according to plan.

"It's going to be a hodgepodge," Takach said.

While the National Guard conducts regular exercises around the country to prepare for natural disasters, Lt. Col. Chris Blanco, of the Army National Guard, said this exercise particularly gives the troops "proof of principle" of their skills.

"Being able to train in an environment like this is really important," he said. " … It's kind of neat the whole state is united in this effort."

In the event of a catastrophic earthquake, National Guard members would be expected to report to their posts in three to five days, Rikstad said, after they've taken care of their own families.

"My job starts in my community," he said.

After that, reconnaissance squads will move through damaged areas sending information back to headquarters, which will be in Spokane, outside the radius of the earthquake's damage.

"They're trying to get out in the community," Rikstad said. "That's how you start calming the community down."

Takach said civilians can expect the scale of damage and aftermath to be similar to that of Hurricane Katrina.

"There's no cellphones, there's no power, there's no running water, there's no running sewage," he said.

He said people should expect looters and general disorder following a large-scale disaster in an urban area.

Officers said people in rural areas will likely be more resilient after a disaster.

Residents should consider stockpiling water and non-perishable food, and rotating their stock to ensure freshness, Takach said. People can also take part in Community Emergency Response Team training to prepare for disaster response of any kind.

Most importantly, Takach said, people need to remember that help will come.

"You're not alone in this thing," he said.

Bonner County Daily Bee – State News, Lessons Are Learned In Cascadia Drill

By Mary Malone

Bonner County (ID) Daily Bee, June 12, 2016

Lessons were learned during the four-day "Cascadia Rising" drill, resulting in a successful exercise for the region's emergency responders, local officials, health and medical staff, private industry and emergency operations center personnel who participated in the drill.

"Events like this are useful in that you can plan for it, but when you actually run it you can see what worked and what didn't work, and what would become critical quickly and what doesn't," said Kootenai County Commissioner Marc Eberlein.

The large-scale exercise drill took place throughout Idaho, Washington, Oregon and British Columbia with the epicenter of the "9.0 earthquake" to have taken place along the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the coast of Oregon and causing a "tsunami." In North Idaho, the efforts focused on the wave of evacuees who would seek shelter away from the coastal areas that would be devastated by the earthquake and subsequent events.

Sandy Von Behren, director for the Kootenai County Office of Emergency Management, said the exercise took a year and a half to plan, and "has been well worth every minute."

"The whole purpose of an exercise is testing plans and procedures, so that's what we did," Von Behren said. "We all had plans that we needed to test and we all had exercises that we were required to do, and we designed one huge exercise and came together to do one to test all of the different plans."

Von Behren said the OEM had their systems and processes in place, but sometimes things don't quite go as planned. She said the county's Emergency Operations Center was set up three days prior to the exercise to make sure everything was up and running, ensuring that all the telephones and computers were working properly. Once the training began, they still had real-life trouble with the equipment and during an emergency, "information sharing is key," Von Behren said.

One test for the agencies involved was finding the best way to share information, the quickest and most efficient way. Von Behren said they utilized WebEOC, an incident management website where they could communicate with states and counties and all the different partners, and found there were "some good things about it and some bad things about it." So one thing they will look at is whether there is a way to improve it.

"That's one of the things that we want to work on is identifying our best means of communication so that it's efficient and effective, and getting to the right people," Von Behren said.

Eberlein said one of the first things they noticed was a shortage of fuel, which is especially needed for emergency services to keep running — fire trucks, ambulance, police — and is something they would need to address more quickly in a real emergency.

Fuel and supplies would quickly run short, and Von Behren said they do not want to wait until they find out the stores and gas stations are running out of fuel and supplies.

"We learned in this exercise we are going to think immediately about getting food and getting fuel in here before it gets to be a problem and being ahead of the game — being proactive instead of reactive," Von Behren said.

If more supplies and fuel are not available locally, she said they would immediately request assistance from the state and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. In a real situation with such a far-reaching effect, the resources would be limited, so the sooner the county orders what it needs, the more likely it would be to receive the fuel and supplies in a timely manner.

The briefings began Tuesday, with a conference call on Wednesday. On Thursday, Panhandle Health District set up a medical needs shelter alongside Red Cross at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds as the "evacuees" began to arrive.

Melanie Collett, spokeswoman for Panhandle Health, said several members of the medical staff from Panhandle Health, Kootenai Health and Heritage Health helped out, as well as about 50 volunteers who acted as evacuees, some in need of medical attention.

She said the Panhandle Health District's official after-action report will be published soon, but said there were a lot of good things shared in their reports. She said nurses felt prepared for the "surge" of patients and various scenarios they practiced.

"It was our first time practicing this in a full-scale, fully functional exercise, and it was very successful," Collett said.

Dean Keck, director of training and exercise for Panhandle Health District, acted as the lead controller and exercise director during the airplane "crash" at the Coeur d'Alene Airport Friday. He said the drill tested the airports response plan and the county mass casualty and mass fatality plans. He described the scenario — a passenger plane carrying about 30 evacuees was diverted from Spokane to Coeur d'Alene. As it landed, the plane struck a small commuter plane carrying two people. The fuselage of the larger plane broke in half and caught fire.

Northern Lakes Fire District was the first to respond to the scene, activating an alarm that brings in more resources, including more EMS and Life Flight as well as several fire departments from throughout the county.

With all of the volunteer "passengers" covered in blood, eight were transported to Kootenai Health, one by Life Flight, Keck said.

Kim Anderson, spokeswoman for Kootenai Health, said the drill went as planned as far as taking in "patients" from the airplane drill, and Kootenai Health did not identify any need for process changes.

"Conducting process drills like this help us ensure that our processes work correctly, and enables us to have good responses in emergency situations," Anderson said.

Keck, as well as Northern Lakes Fire personnel, said they are still working on putting together the after-action report, but Keck said there were areas for improvement and overall the drill went "very well."

"There was really great, participation, cooperation, communication and teamwork amongst all those agencies," Keck said.

Northern Lakes Division Chief, Mike Mather, said they did a quick hotwash, or after-action discussion, Friday to identify some key points regarding protocol and procedure during the "crash."

"Dealing with different response protocols from different agencies, everybody thinks a little different in the different guidelines on how to respond to various incidents," Mather said. "When you put that all together under one command structure it can be difficult."

Being the largest exercise they have ever done and working with agencies they don't work with on a regular basis, Mather said the bottom line is the it went well and was "very beneficial" for the responders and the community.

Jim Lyon, deputy fire marshal and public information officer with Northern Lakes, is also a lead PIO for EOC when needed, so he worked both sides during the exercise. Lyon said he was "inundated with information" on the first day, following news agencies that simulated real footage of the tsunami and social media coverage.

"It was a lot of frustration at first, as incidents usually are, whether they are real or simulated," Lyon said, adding that they had some technology problems, such as the phones. "From that point of view, it was kind of a controlled chaos at the beginning."

He said those involved slowly got into a rhythm and by Thursday things were running "pretty smoothly." During Friday's airplane "crash," Lyon said there was a security breach when a man who was not supposed to be there got inside the perimeter. He also said, in a real-life scenario, the Hagadone News Network would not have been allowed on the scene.

One thing that was noticed by all the personnel involved in the training was the amount of people who volunteered their time to help — a good indication of how the community would come together in a real emergency.

Eberline said the community is "very fortunate" to have so many people willing to participate to make the scenario work.

According to an email to the Hagadone News Network from Idaho Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter, 850 Idaho responders participated in the exercise.

"I was extremely impressed by the level of professionalism and dedication that our civilian and military emergency personnel brought to this training exercise," Otter stated in the email. "We hope it never happens, but if it does, Idahoans should feel some comfort knowing we have very capable men and women trained to deal with such catastrophic events."

Von Behren said volunteers came from Bonneville, Bonner and Spokane counties. Agencies volunteered their time in planning the exercise and conducting the exercise, and Von Behren said the outside agencies coming in to help allowed the local agencies to play a part rather than being the ones running the exercise.

All the agencies involved spread the word of volunteers needed as extras to play the part medical patients and evacuees.

"It's really cool to see how the community has come together and how the partnerships that we work to build really do work," Collett said. "And we have been lucky that we haven't had a disaster like this, but it is important that we practice."

If there is ever a real disaster in the region, whether it is an earthquake or other catastrophic event, it would directly affect North Idaho, Von Behren said.

"We are very fortunate to live here in Kootenai County, because in Coeur d'Alene we have a lot of resources that are right here," Von Behren said.

County Greets Cascadia Rising

By Keith Kinnaird

Bonner County (ID) Daily Bee, June 10, 2016

SANDPOINT — Bonner County's emergency management plans and abilities were put to the test

Thursday as it took part in Cascadia Rising, a massive interstate disaster exercise.

The exercise's name is drawn from the Cascadia subduction zone, which stretches 700 miles from Medocino, Calif., to Vancouver, British Columbia. The exercise contemplated a magnitude-9.0 earthquake and attendant tsunami.

Such an event has the capacity to destroy the Interstate 5 corridor and inundate it with water, potentially pushing a wave of humanity east to escape the devastation.

"It wiped out a lot of the coastal areas," Matt Klingler, a Bonner County Public Works director who served as director of emergency management director during the exercise.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency said such an event could cause as many as 3,000 people to seek refuge in Bonner County, which would place a significant amount of strain on local shelter, food and fuel resources.

"That's one of the priorities for us to figure out," Klingler said of the sudden influx of displaced citizens.

An Emergency Operations Center established at the Bonner County Administration Building, which was staffed with employees from across various departments who have been undergoing EOC training since the start of the year, said Emergency Management Director Bob Howard, who served as an evaluator during the training exercise. Howard said EOC trainees were subjected to increasingly complex scenarios in the training leading up to the massively complex Cascadia Rising exercise.

Logistics and planning sections at the EOC grappled with the demands of sheltering and feeding earthquake refugees.

Throughout the day, mock disaster planners would throw out curve balls the EOC would then have to react to.

"We had food shortage concerns. We had gasoline/fuel shortage concerns and they dealt with those issues, too," said Howard.

There were even scenarios involving rowdy situations at local grocery stores and rolling power outages as the disaster unfolded.

Howard said Bonner General Health conducted its own functional exercise to take part in Cascadia Rising.

"They had volunteers to be patients and so they were triaging those patients," he said.

The Bonner County Amateur Radio Emergency Service also took part in the exercise. The volunteer group served as backup communication.

"Our amateur radio people were fantastic. They were able to communicate with Washington, Oregon and Boise," said Howard.

Bonner County ARES' role in the exercise grew when radio actual radio trouble flared up elsewhere.

"Bonner County picked it up and carried it. They did relay for other states," said Howard.

Howard said he was pleased with Bonner County's performance during the exercise and said he would have no qualms with activating the EOC in an real-life emergency. He also plans to have EOC disaster exercises at least twice a year.

"We're going to continue to train and exercise as often as we can. We want to get better at what we're doing and be ready for when the big one happens," said Howard.

Megaquake Rehearsal Highlights Prominence Of Northwest Command Center

By Andy Hobbs

Stars And Stripes, June 11, 2016

OLYMPIA, Wash. (Tribune News Service) — The largest earthquake and tsunami drill in Northwest history continued Thursday at a critical command post in Shelton that will serve five Washington counties when "the big one" strikes.

The Mason County Fairgrounds will host the main operations for Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor, Lewis and Pacific counties. The site includes Sanderson Field, which is the five-county area's largest aircraft runway that is near the coast but less likely to suffer tsunami damage.

If the Shelton site is out of commission, the backup airfield would be Bremerton National Airport, said Lt. Col Clay Braun of the Washington National Guard.

"Shelton is a very critical place for us," he said.

Thursday's Cascadia Rising drill in Mason County included a mix of National Guardsmen, Army soldiers and Air Force airmen — and offered a snapshot of the bases that will spring up statewide in the case of a major natural disaster.

Service personnel manned tents for medical care and X-rays. Helicopters dropped supplies via parachute while a handful of paratroopers practiced their landings. These airdrops will be critical when trying to reach isolated pockets of people.

The Shelton operations center will coordinate efforts alongside the state's other bases. Military personnel will check roads and bridges while also assisting local law enforcement and rescue workers.

The base will house a mobile high-frequency radio system that can keep communication alive when cell towers and phone lines are down.

Some of the soldiers at Thursday's drill in Shelton have assisted in past natural disasters such as the 2014 Oso mudslide and 2005's Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast.

Lt. Col. Adam Iwaszuk of the 96th Troop Command said his experience in New Orleans revealed at least one key survival tip for the public in any disaster — whether it's a flood, storm, earthquake or tornado.

"You should know an escape route," he said. "The citizens need to be prepared for what they're likely to be subject to."

Washington National Guard Maj. Gen. Bret Daugherty urges the public to stock up on emergency supplies such as food, water and medicine to help make the military's job easier. He said the Guard will continue to train and ensure a proper disaster response.

"Our intent is to keep revisiting this until an actual earthquake strikes us," he said. "Hopefully, that's not for a long time."

Co-sponsored by FEMA, the Cascadia Rising drill began Tuesday and wraps up Friday. It was designed to allow the area to practice emergency response to a disaster involving the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a faultline that stretches between Northern California and Vancouver Island.

The zone has produced earthquakes with a 9.0 magnitude or higher at intervals of 400 to 600 years — with the last one occurring in January 1700, according to the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network.

And the stakes are high. Washington state alone could face thousands of deaths and injuries. Emergency responders also estimate that at least 1.27 million people could end up without adequate food and water in a worst-case scenario.

Hospitals and nursing homes could see a combined 80,000 medical evacuees. Main roads such as Interstate 5 and U.S. 101 would likely be unnavigable.

"It could happen right now. It could happen 500 years from now," said Lt. Col. Braun about the possible large-scale disaster. "This is our rehearsal."

Megaquake Minded

By Erick Bengel

Daily Astorian (OR), June 10, 2016

Clatsop County isn't as far along in prepping for a Cascadia earthquake and tsunami as Tiffany Brown, the county's emergency manager, would prefer. But that's nothing to be ashamed of, given that the region only realized the full magnitude of the threat within the last decade.

"We've known about it for 20 years or so, but it's really that additional study that has occurred since 2011 that has left us with a greater understanding of how big the threat is, and that's why everybody is really paying attention to: What are we doing, and how ready are we?" she said. "Relative to how long we've understood the enormity of this hazard in our community, we are where I would expect us to be."

Brown took stock of the county's disaster readiness this week during Cascadia Rising, a Tuesday-through-Friday focus on preparing agencies in Oregon and Washington state for the Cascadia Subduction Zone megaquake, a rare but cataclysmic event that could cause a humanitarian crisis in the Pacific Northwest.

At Camp Rilea in Warrenton, the staff at the County Emergency Operations Center practiced communicating and coordinating efforts with local agencies and military personnel.

The team leveraged social media for the first time during an exercise, and conducted successful ham radio operations with everyone they'd intended to — including Arch Cape and a citizen in Lewis & Clark — plus some they hadn't: Federal Emergency Management Agency Region X headquarters in Bothell, Washington, and Pacific County Emergency Management.

In addition, they used the county mass notification system, ClatsopALERTS!, to communicate with other participants in the training exercise, notify community leaders that the EOC had been activated, and advised Arch Cape and Falcon Cove residents that the military would be conducting aerial assessments in their area.

These latest measures follow steps the county has taken to raise awareness of Cascadia, including the installation of signs directing people out of the tsunami zone and local high schools adding Community Emergency Response Team training to the curriculum.

"We only have so many resources to throw at this, and I think we're moving in the right direction in terms of whole community planning," she said.

"There's also no end to the list of things that we need to be looking at, improving upon."

'Cycle of improvement'

How did communication between the county's emergency operations center and military personnel go during Cascadia Rising?

"It went great," Brown told a group of local officials and community leaders touring the military base Thursday. "Did it go like we thought it was going to? Yes and no. We knew there would be problems talking to one another, systems that didn't jive. But that's the nature of exercising."

Most of those problems happened on the first day, before the teams had found their "battle rhythm," she said.

"When it came time to send our requests to the state, the way we had practiced and understood that it would be happening was not the way it ended up happening, and it took us several hours to sort of readjust and get that moving in the right direction," she later elaborated. "And it's no one's fault, it's just the way things played out that morning that weren't anticipated."

Sometimes a communication hiccup boiled down to human error. Other times it was a technical difficulty, like a nonfunctioning fax machine.

"You can have all the systems and the plans and the latest and greatest equipment, but, at the end of the day, you still have human beings running it," she said.

Making mistakes and figuring out how to correct them is precisely the point of training exercises, she said: "Mistakes are good in this world. And it's counterintuitive to a lot of people, but mistakes are what we're looking for."

"We write a plan, we exercise it to identify the gaps and vulnerabilities, we take corrective action, we update our plan, we exercise our plan, and we continue that," she said, "and, in this way, it's a continuous cycle of improvement."

Meanwhile, the agencies build relationships and get used to working together under pressure.

"If you participate in an exercise, you always have the opportunity to improve relationships," she said. "That may be the most important thing that comes from them in many cases."

Disaster relief

During Cascadia Rising, about 800 soldiers comprising a dozen military teams assembled at Camp Rilea and ran through a series of simulated rescue operations, including saving people in a collapsed inner city.

After touring the County Emergency Operations Center, some local leaders — and a few international dignitaries from partner agencies in Vietnam and Bangladesh — headed to the training site to observe the mechanics of a relief effort.

The VIPs witnessed National Guard soldiers moving and breaking up heavy boulders from a rubble pile to reach victims; attending to the wounded or deceased (played by actors in Hollywood-style makeup) at a casualty collection site; checking the area for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive materials while decontaminating people suspected of facing exposure; and triaging and treating the survivors.

Maj. Gen. Michael Stencel, the adjutant general of Oregon, told local leaders — including Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear, Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop and Cannon Beach Mayor Sam Steidel — that under the worst-case scenario, a 9.0 earthquake, most life-saving efforts in the first 36 to 72 hours will depend on local responders, able-bodied citizens and well-prepared neighbors.

"We expect that the casualty rate's going to be phenomenal, and even a lot of your firemen ... aren't going to be there right away," he said. "We don't know what the condition's going to be for your hospitals and their ability to take patients."

Though outside forces will come, the mobilization may take a while, he said. "They're going to be anxious to get here, but it's going to be a struggle."

Stencel asked the officials to do everything they can to help their citizens prepare for Cascadia.

Compared to Japan — a country that had spent about 50 years preparing for an earthquake and tsunami, yet lost more than 15,000 people during the 2011 disaster — "we're behind the curve," Brown said.

"We just need to do more of this," she said. "And my hope in all of this, despite what anyone did or didn't learn in the exercise, is that it helps them recognize the importance of it, and makes them want to do more of it."

Editorial: Cascadia Rising Offers Chance To Plan For Earthquake

By Corvallis Gazette-Times Editorial Board

Corvallis (OR) Gazette-Times, June 12, 2016

The big one hit the Pacific Northwest this week — the massive 9.0 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Oregon that will trigger a deadly tsunami and widespread devastation far inland.

Well, not really. Not yet. But what did begin on Tuesday is a four-day event called "Cascadia Rising," a three-state drill to rehearse scenarios on how the region would deal with the double-fisted punch of the quake and tsunami. The working assumptions Cascadia Rising organizers are using include these sobering estimates: The quake will kill about 1,100 people. The tsunami will be deadlier, with an estimated toll of 13,000. Some 24,000 people will be injured.

The quake and tsunami will cut off coastal communities and collapse phone and internet service. Roads may be impassable in the wake of the quake, and it could be weeks before emergency services can get to neighborhoods to render aid.

Not to mince words, but that's all bad.

The good news is Cascadia Rising itself, an event of unprecedented scope: This week's exercise will involve about 20,000 people, representing various federal agencies, the U.S. military and state and local emergency response managers from Oregon, Washington and Idaho, Native American tribes and emergency management officials in British Columbia.

The city of Albany will get involved in the exercise on Friday: Officials are planning to test the capabilities of their emergency coordination center as well as disaster management. The city of Corvallis has nothing that elaborate planned, but some employees plan to participate in Cascadia Rising events throughout the state.

At the heart of all of this is the Cascadia subduction zone, a 600-mile-long fault just off the coast that runs from Northern California to British Columbia. Geologists say that the zone on average produces magnitude 9.0 quakes every 500 years, but big quakes have been separated by as few as 200 years and as many as 1,000. The last big quake occurred about 300 years ago. No one knows for sure when the next big quake will occur, but it's a sure bet that it will happen.

So it makes sense to prepare for it now — and to review those preparations from time to time.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, standing in front of military and other federal vehicles brought into Washington's Camp Murray for the exercise, put it well when he said that "Cascadia Rising is about making sure we're as prepared as we can be. The hope is to identify those areas where we perform well. But obviously we also want to identify our weaknesses." In fact, identifying those weaknesses — and they will emerge — may be the most important part of the entire exercise.

There's a role for the rest of us to play in this. Cascadia Rising gives us a chance to update our own disaster plans, which likely have grown a little dusty since the flurry of publicity about the subduction zone last summer. Taking steps now to be prepared is a great way to shake off the fatalism that can often take root in the face in such powerful natural forces.

In fact, the one thing we don't like about Cascadia Rising is its name, which sounds like the title of the first book in a young-adult series of novels set in a dystopian future. When the quake comes, though, it'll bring plenty of real-life drama. It's best to get ready now.

North Marion Participates In Cascadia Rising Event With Evacuation, Reunification Drill

By Lindsay Keefer

Woodburn (OR) Independent, June 10, 2016

What would happen if an 8.2 magnitude earthquake hit the Northwest? That's what North Marion School District is trying to find out.

The district expounded on an October emergency preparedness drill on Friday, taking part in the statewide Cascadia Rising event. The four-day exercise June 7-10 is for governments and other entities to train, practice and collaborate on how they would best coordinate and organize in the aftermath of an earthquake, the disaster most likely to strike Oregon.

At North Marion, this not only included a regular earthquake drill, evacuation and reunification process with parents, but also meant assigning roles to staff and high school students and collaborating with local emergency personnel, namely Aurora Fire District, Woodburn Fire District and Marion County Sheriff's Office. Additionally, more than 100 parents arrived to take part in the reunification exercise.

Friday's imagined scenario involved a boiler room fire in the high school (which was contained) and a beam falling down, blocking freshman English teacher LINDSAY KEEFER – Firefighters Morgan Whaley (left) and Blake Julian strap ninth-grader Keila Dubikin to a stretcher as part of Friday's emergency preparedness drill at North Marion School District.

Maureen Davis' classroom door. Davis' students each had an index card taped to their shirts to tell the search and rescue team, made up of staff members who have been getting basic medical training, what injuries they have. Injuries varied from a lacerated forehead to a collapsed lung.

"It's a good thing to have, being prepared," Davis said. "For the most part, my kids have been really good and are taking it seriously."

Not only that, but the day's events really unnerved some "injured" students.

"It was well-run, but they took more time than I thought (to rescue all the students)," said junior Kyia Brooks. "But I thought the fact we did this drill was cool.

"In the time it took to find me, I would probably have died," said sophomore Anna Allison, who suffered multiple pretend injuries, including internal bleeding. "It concerns me because people react slower when they're frantic, when the real thing happens."

That's why practice makes perfect, and why the district will continue working with community partners and on its internal response time, Superintendent Boyd Keyser said.

"We need to be working closely together here in north Marion County, because we're not going to be able to get fully involved services right away," he said. "So over the next six months to a year, you'll see the majority of these entities continuing with this collaboration."

The district is also using funds for a generator, a long range antenna and a ham radio, among other emergency kit items.

"We consider it a long-term investment," Keyser said. "We wish there were funds from the state or elsewhere specifically for this."

He added that the district has applied for a FEMA grant to purchase a diesel generator that would back up a freezer in the middle school, since the North Marion campus is considered a Red Cross shelter site in case of disaster and would need to provide food for several days.

Though, as the students pointed out, there are still issues to work on, Aurora Fire District Lt. Bill Hansen observed that the district's preparedness is continuously improving.

"They've definitely come a long way," he said. "They're reaching out to us a lot more. They realize they need to learn how they can become more self-sufficient because we might take a while to get to them."

Quakes Shake Ring Of Fire After FEMA Launches Doomsday Drills

Trunews, June 10, 2016

(TRUNEWS) In the last 24 hour two major earthquakes struck along the ominous 'Ring of Fire', a week after FEMA started doomsday quake drills.

A 6.1-magnitude hit Nicaragua and a 5.2 -mag. shook Borrego Springs in San Diego County, California.

The U.S. Geological survey said the Nicaraguan earthquake hit Thursday night, with an epicenter 16.1 miles northeast of Chinandega and a depth of 6.2 miles. No casualties were recorded but the newspaper La Presna reported that the walls of a church collapsed in Chinandega.

The quake was felt strongly in Nicaragua's capital, Managua, 84 miles away, and Reuters reports it was also felt strongly as far away as Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, 167.7 miles away.

As for the California earthquake, the USGS said it hit around 1:05 am with its epicenter 13.7 miles northwest of Borrego Springs. About 3,000 people reported feeling the earthquake, with residents feeling the earthquake in northern Los Angeles County, Orange and Ventura counties, and the Inland Empire.

These recent quakes along the Ring of Fire — a string of volcanoes and sites of seismic activity or earthquakes around the edges of the Pacific Ocean — come after FEMA began the "Cascadia Rising" drill on June 7th, a drill to simulate the effects of a magnitude-9.0 earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone and an accompanying west coast tsunami dozens of feet tall.

According to the official public statement for the event, more than "50 counties, plus major cities, tribal nations, state and federal agencies, private sector businesses, and non-governmental organizations across three states—Washington, Oregon and Idaho" participated.

In addition to "Cascadia Rising," U.S. Northern Command held five other exercises simultaneously. According to the final draft of the Cascadia Rising drill plan, those five exercises are entitled "Ardent Sentry 2016,″ "Vigilant Guard," "Special Focus Exercise," "Turbo Challenge" and "Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore." The primary scenario that of all of these participants focused on was one that involves a magnitude 9.0 earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone followed by a giant tsunami that could displace up to a million people from northern California to southern Canada.

Read more at http://www.trunews.com/quakes-shake-ring-of-fire-after-fema-launches-doomsday-drills/#vFwcSpGvMOhx1CXw.99

Is The US Prepared To Tackle Natural Disasters?

By Caroline Diana

Inquisitr, June 10, 2016

A shallow magnitude 5.2 earthquake woke up the residents of California near Borrego Springs on early Friday morning. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the earthquake occurred at 1:04 a.m. Pacific time at a depth of -0.6 miles. The epicenter was 16 miles from La Quinta, 19 miles from Palm Desert, and 20 miles from Rancho Mirage, reported the Los Angeles Times.

Seismologist Lucy Jones on her Twitter feed reported that several aftershocks were felt. Jones said that the earthquake occurred along the San Jacinto Fault, the most active fault in Southern California.

Meanwhile, social media is abuzz with status updates from the residents of San Diego and Los

Angeles, reporting that they felt the tremors of the earthquake.

Amy Vaughan, a USGS geophysicist, pointed out that the earthquake has resulted in a series of aftershocks, according to Fox News. Vaughan said that the earthquake was strong enough to have woken up the sleeping residents.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department said that the earthquake has not caused casualties so far.

The largest of the earthquakes occurred at 1:05 a.m. and was centered 13 miles north of Borrego Springs, according to River Side County News Source.

According to NBC News, the quake was followed by three aftershocks over the next three minutes. These earthquakes measured between magnitude 2.8 and 3.5. Another two aftershocks of the earthquake of similar magnitudes were recorded over the next 40 minutes. The epicenter was around 13 miles north of Borrego Springs, which has a population of around 3,500. The local police department told NBC News there were no reports of damage caused by the earthquake.

Paratroopers prepared for earthquake

Science Alert reported that this week, more than 20,500 personnel from the government and healthcare agencies took part in Cascade Rising, a huge training exercise designed by the U.S. government to prepare the Pacific Northwest for a catastrophic earthquake. Paratroopers also took part in the readiness drill.

Chief Warrant Officer James Pierce said that parachuting may be the only option to get to remote locations that are rendered undrivable.

“It’s a good, effective way to get gear to the ground,” Pierce told U.S. News.

While no evacuations are taking place, Cascadia Rising is using various emergency scenarios to test communication capabilities, medical supply routes, and transportation issues, reported Science Alert.

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In a press release issued on June 6, Ken Murphy, the regional administrator for FEMA Region 10, said, “A 9.0 Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake will be a disaster unlike anyone has ever seen. Cascadia Rising will test our own preparedness. It is exercises like this, ahead of a disaster, that foster coordination and help build relationships before a real world event occurs.”

“Oregon is looking forward to strengthening the partnerships with our local, tribal, state and federal partners through the Cascadia Rising exercise,” said Oregon Emergency Management director Andrew Phelps in the news release.

“This exercise gives Oregon, Washington, Idaho and FEMA Region 10 an invaluable opportunity to validate and improve upon the planning initiatives, training and other exercises we’ve undertaken over the past several years to prepare for the threat of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami. This exercise should also serve as a reminder to all Oregonians that individual and family emergency preparedness is key to augment an effective response to an earthquake or any disaster and begin the recovery process. Ultimately, the work we do leading up to the exercise and the lessons we learn in a controlled and evaluated environment will translate into lives saved during what could be the country’s biggest disaster,” Phelps said.

“We’ve worked tirelessly in Washington state to work with our partners and develop a response plan so we can immediately coordinate assistance and provide help following a catastrophic disaster,” said Major General Bret Daugherty, the director of the Washington Military Department and commander of the Washington National Guard, in the recently issued press note.

“Every exercise teaches us something and improves our response. I’m pleased so many partners are participating and are eager to collaborate with us so we can effectively carry out our mission to protect lives and property,” Daugherty said.

Earthquake in Canada

Meanwhile, natural Resources Canada, which records earthquakes in Canada, posted on its Earthquakes Canada section of the website Thursday evening that a 3.0 magnitude earthquake took place around 19 km north of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

On the Yarmouth Vanguard Facebook page, residents said that they heard a loud rumble. Some even said they felt their house shake or vibrate as a result of the earthquake.

“My husband and I were both sitting at our kitchen table in Amirault’s Hill and heard what sounded like a big truck going by and looked around and seen no trucks headed down the road. My husband said, ‘I bet that was an earthquake,” Alanna Fitzsimmons-Bourque told the Vanguard.

Read more at http://www.inquisitr.com/3188521/earthquake-in-california-is-the-us-prepared-to-tackle-natural-disasters/#mGlzx0xivEsDRyPP.99

New Photo Exhibit Honors September 11 First Responders

By Thomas Urbain

AFP, June 10, 2016

New York (AFP) – They were among the heroes of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the first responders who rushed to the World Trade Center site to search for survivors.

But they worked mostly in anonymity.

Now, photographer Andrea Booher pays tribute to the men and women who toiled at "the pile," with a showcase of her work in the "Hope at Ground Zero" exhibition opening Friday at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum which now occupies the site in downtown New York. It runs through May 2017.

"In the beginning it was firefighters, volunteers, search and rescue, police. Everybody had sort of a different approach to how they were searching for survivors," she said. "The only goal was trying to find survivors in the pile."

Booher, a photographer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), had arrived at the site the evening of September 11 and was assigned along with colleague Michael Rieger to document the aftermath of the deadliest terror attack on US soil.

She ended up staying two and a half months.

"I really felt that it was an incredible honor but it was a lot of responsibility," she said. "I pushed myself to my limit workwise and in every aspect."

In the early days, the work was frantic as rescuers searched for survivors.

But around September 20, "I showed up at the site. Nobody said anything, but it was just like this very depressing feeling, very heavy feeling at the site," Booher said.

"It was kind of rainy, and it was just... there was no energy. You had just the feeling that it was over, that the hope was gone. We weren't going to bring (out) anyone else. It kind of switched to a recovery mission at that point."

Twenty people were found alive in the rubble, the last one September 12. In all, the attack in New York claimed 2,753 victims.

– "The best in humanity" –

Booher, a veteran of many major disasters, initially had access to the World Trade Center site but not the pile that was the remains of the Twin Towers.

But over time, the firefighters who were running the site began to trust Booher and Rieger after seeing them working "every day, all hours."

The firefighters, who lost hundreds of their comrades in the attack, noticed that the pair always put their cameras down and didn't take photos when bodies were recovered, out of respect.

"So there was a certain trust that was built up. That was why we were able to gain access to the pile. There was this bond," she said.

Her subjects posed amid grotesque tangles of giant steel beams, alone or in groups, with blackened faces like those of coal miners.

"To this day, I have that bond with so many of the people that are in those photographs," Booher said, noting that she and Rieger later sent more than 600 CDs of images to the people they met. "We keep in touch, we check on each other."

"Most people think of disaster as just this traumatic experience, but ... as horrific as it was you also saw this incredibly human side of people come forward," she said. "I think it's when you see the best in humanity."

IBAT Tips: Natural Disaster Preparedness And Insurance

Pasadena (TX) Citizen, June 10, 2016

Independent Bankers Assoc. of Texas

AUSTIN — Texans live in a state with the potential for many types of natural disasters — flash floods, hurricanes, windstorms, tornadoes and wildfires, to name the most common. While we may never know for certain when a natural disaster will strike, you can minimize damage and risk of harm by being prepared. The following tips discuss preparedness for any natural disaster and explore insurance coverage in this unfortunate situation.

Disaster Supply Kit

Every household should have an emergency supply kit ready and easily accessible in case of a disaster. This kit should include a flashlight with extra batteries, a first aid kit, a crank or battery operated radio with NOAA weather radio capabilities, necessary prescription medications, an emergency whistle to signal for help, a gallon of water per person and pet for at least three days, and several days' worth of nonperishable food. Other items to consider including are pet food, a list of emergency phone numbers and a cell phone with a battery powered charger. If possible, it's also helpful to include three to five days' worth of cash in the instance that ATMs are either unavailable or damaged.

Family Emergency Plan

Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, and this can cause increased panic if you haven't prepared for this situation. A family disaster plan that includes how you will contact each other, where you will meet and identifies a safe place to gather as an alternative to your home is extremely important. This plan will ensure your children know what to do, where they can go and who they can stay with in the event of an emergency.

The FEMA website includes a family emergency plan that can be printed to help assist families with developing their individual plans. Experts agree that developing a disaster plan ahead of time reduces fear and anxiety in children, which means they have a better chance of staying safe until help arrives.

Safeguard Documents

Prepare a vital records kit with copies of important documents to store in a waterproof and fireproof container in a safe place in your home. Another option is to scan and store these documents in a cloud-based application so that it will be protected even if your home is destroyed. Yet another good option is a safe deposit box at your local community bank. Documents and items for this kit include copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records, proof of vaccinations for pets, mortgages, birth and marriage certificates, and irreplaceable photos.

Homeowners Insurance

While it's difficult to think about losing your home due to a natural disaster, it's important to understand what your homeowners insurance policy does and does not cover. Since policies vary by insurance company, you shouldn't make any assumptions as to what may or may not be covered. Most basic homeowners policies cover fire and lightning, explosion, smoke, and damage caused by the weight of ice, snow or sleet. Perils of hail, windstorm, vandalism, theft and water damage may be restricted or even excluded by many policies. In coastal regions or in areas prone to windstorm or hail, it's likely that your policy will have specific conditions, restrictions or full exclusions regarding coverage. Flood is always excluded and must be purchased through the Federal Flood Insurance Program. Other perils that are likely excluded include earthquake, water damage if related to flood or an otherwise excluded peril, sewer back-up and nuclear accidents.

All policies have exclusions, even if you have an "all risk" policy. If your policy contains an exclusion of coverage, ask your insurance agent to provide an option for the coverage through another carrier or specialty policy. Often windstorm coverage for Texas coastal locations must be obtained through TWIA – the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association.

While putting together your disaster kit, family plan and other preparations, it's helpful to know the available resources. The FEMA website (www.ready.gov) and the American Red Cross website (www.redcross.org/prepare) are good resources. Being prepared will help you and your family remain calm and rational when a disaster strikes, which can also save lives. Being educated about your specific homeowners insurance, what is covered and what isn't will help you make an informed decision about any additional coverage to purchase before a disaster hits. The bottom line is that being prepared for a natural disaster, on several fronts, will help ensure your family recovers and gets back to normal life as quickly as possible.

The information above is provided with the understanding that the association is not engaged in rendering specific legal, accounting or other professional services. This information is intended to be a helpful guide. If expert assistance is required, the services of a professional person should be sought.

About the Independent Bankers Association of Texas

Formed in 1974, the Independent Bankers Association of Texas (IBAT) represents Texas community banks. The Austin-based group is the largest state community banking organization in the nation, with membership comprised of more than 2,000 banks and branches in 700 Texas communities. Providing safe and responsible financial services to all Texans, IBAT member bank assets range in size from $10 million to more than $20 billion with combined assets statewide of nearly $165 billion. IBAT member banks are committed to supporting and investing in their local communities.

Area Health Departments Will Participate In Statewide Emergency Exercise

Bureau County (IL) Republican, June 10, 2016

Bureau, Putnam and Marshall County Health Departments, joined by area law enforcement agencies, emergency management agencies, the Bureau-Putnam and Marshall County Medical Reserve Corps, Liberty Village in Princeton, St. Margaret's Hospital and the Marshall County Highway Department, will participate in the exercise to test the ability of the state public health system to receive and distribute medicine and medical supplies during a public health emergency.

As part of the exercise, Bureau, Putnam and Marshall County Health Departments will receive shipments of medical supplies and simulated medications, sort them and redistribute them to points of distribution where they will practice dispensing the simulated medication to volunteers.

Volunteers are needed to participate in the exercise in the role of citizens needing to receive the medication. They will be asked to arrive at a point of distribution and go through the process of filling out a short form then receiving a package of simulated medication. Depending on the number of volunteers at each site, they may be asked to repeat the process a few times in order to give the health departments sufficient numbers to measure the time needed and ability to dispense to large numbers of people.

The public points of distribution will be at Henry-Senachwine High School in Henry beginning at 9 a.m. Wednesday, June 15, and at Putnam County High School in Granville beginning at 1 p.m. Wednesday, June 15. Volunteers may be needed for up to 90 minutes.

It is not necessary to pre-register as a volunteer. For more information, or to let the health departments know you are interested in volunteering to help this important exercise, contact Terry Madsen or Kurt Kuche at 815-872-5091 or Kaylee Halberg at 309-525-1833.

Bretagne, Last Living Ground Zero Rescue Dog, Passes At 16

By Chris Boyle

Long Island (NY), June 10, 2016

Bretagne, last of the 9/11 Search & Rescue Canines who helped find countless victims trapped in the rubble of Ground Zero, died peacefully in Cypress, Texas on Monday, June 6 at the age of 16.

The Golden Retriever, who was suffering badly in recent months due to the effects of old age, was euthanized at Fairfield Animal Hospital in Cypress, Texas. Over a dozen emotional firefighters lined up outside of the Hospital, all standing at full attention, and respectfully saluted Bretagne as she was brought inside; they remained as such when she left, motionless and covered with an American Flag, an honored and courageous hero to one and all.

Bretagne (pronounced “Brittney”), along with her handler, Denise Corliss, was a member of Texas Task Force 1 (TX-TF1), one of the 28 teams under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) who worked at the site of the World Trade Center for 10 days in 2001, searching for survivors and, later, remains of those less fortunate. Ground Zero was the 2 year-old Bretagne’s her first-ever assignment as a Search & Rescue Canine after having been certified as such by FEMA, and was truly a trial by fire if there ever was one.

Bretagne and Corliss first met when the pup was but a mere 8 weeks old; a Cy-Fair Fire Department volunteer, Corliss had been on the lookout for the right dog to train for Search & Rescue work, and noted that Bretagne’s determination, drive, and personality made her the idea candidate for the tough assignment. The two quickly became best friends.

After spending ten days assisting in the search & rescue efforts at Ground Zero after 9/11, Bretagne continued to distinguish herself over the years with Texas Task Force 1, bravely responding to nearly a dozen other disasters, including Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ivan, and was responsible for saving many lives during that time.

Despite the harrowing assignments that she would regularly have to contend with, Bretagne nonetheless is remembered as a warm and affectionate dog whose special ability to seek out those who needed emotional support made her as much a helpful therapy animal as it did a courageous First Reponder, according to a statement released by Texas Task Force 1.

“If you ask anybody whoever knew or trained with Bretagne, they would tell you ‘Oh she just loves me!’ That’s the kind of dog she is, affectionate to everybody, and fiercely devoted, never takes her eyes off her handler,” they said. “She has always taken her job as a search dog seriously, but herself not so much. Always ready for a belly rub, or a treat. In remembering her first deployment at the World Trade Center, there are images of her going to where she was directed to search, the unknown, the chaotic environment. But even then, she knew who needed the comfort of a dog, which firefighter needed to hold her close and stroke her fur.”

Bretagne eventually retired from Search & Rescue at the age 9, but don’t think she slowed down during her Golden Years; she continued to serve as a goodwill ambassador for the Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department in Harris County, Texas, as well as a reading assistance dog.

“Bretagne’s calm demeanor and warm heart helped the young and old through their own difficult moments,” said the Cy-Fair Fire Department in a statement.

"Each week she would visit a first grade classroom and listen to young readers, providing a non-judgmental ear and soft paw. She also visited students with special needs, such as autism. Her calm demeanor and warm heart helped the young and old through their own difficult moments."

Bretagne was also featured in a non-fiction book about senior dogs and has held audiences with Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott and former President George H.W. Bush. Later, at the age of 15, Bretagne, and her longtime handler Denise Corliss, returned to the site of her very first assignment – New York City – to visit the 9/11 Memorial Museum, and was later "interviewed" by Tom Brokaw of NBC News.

In 2014, the American Humane Association nominated Bretagne for their illustrious "Hero Dog Award," and last year she made headlines as she celebrated her "Sweet 16" birthday in New York City .

Bretagne – just shy of her 17th birthday – had begun to experience a host of health problems, a lack of energy, kidney failure, and a loss of appetite; it was then that Denise Corliss noted that it was time for her beloved partner to finally rest after a lifetime of hard, dedicated work for others.

Clinton CERT Inc. To Hold Second Mass Casualty Exercise

By Bobby Jones

DC Military, June 10, 2016

"People don't think about preparedness until it's too late," Paula M. Hughes, president of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) of Clinton, said. "So we prepare ahead of the incident, then we're ready."

Hughes is referring to the upcoming Functional Exercise, CERTEX PGC 2016 FE being held June 18 at Clinton Baptist Church in Clinton. Sponsoring the event for the second year, the training also ensures that CERT team members refresh their skills during the mass casualty exercise. Hughes noted the hope is to eventually provide the community-based training quarterly.

The training provided is between 16 to 20 hours long. The CERT program is a national program because the protocol taught is standardized. Participants learn about basic first aid, psychological first aid, terrorism, how to shut off the utilities at home, the three basic killers, airway obstruction, excessive bleeding and how to treat for shock.

Nationally, CERT has been around for the last 15 years, but CERT of Clinton, a 501c3 non-profit organization, was established in 2014.

Hughes said Clinton CERT is unique because it is incorporated, unlike other CERTs' located in townships and cities like Berwyn Heights, College Park and Laurel – all organizations that work under their local municipal governments.

"We don't have a mayor or town council to answer to," Hughes said.

Operating off a limited budget, Clinton CERT solicits private donations, but the county supports the exercises by providing food.

"The Prince George's County Police Department is donating their time and we hope to get participation from the fire department as well," Hughes said.

However, Clinton CERT funding is paid through FEMA grants and Prince George's County Office of Homeland Security is the overarching sponsor of CERT in the county.

With terrorism always being a constant threat to the nation, Hughes stressed there's a greater need for this particular training – especially when lives are on the line.

"And the thing is, if there is a real big disaster, the police and the fire department cannot rescue everyone," Hughes said. "So, we need to be prepared to do the best we can to help ourselves. The training is valuable, and once people go through it they think 'oh my goodness.' There's other training they can benefit from like CPR, AED, shelter management and hand radio classes which are all free."

Hughes mentioned Maryland's Emergency Management Agency's slogan – "A resilient Marylander makes a resilient citizen." She explained that the community has been receptive to the training as she has reached out to AARP, who participated last year as victim-actors, the NAACP and Clinton Baptist Church with inclusion of their Spanish congregation who meet there on Saturdays.

"This is training for the local community. It's like neighbors helping neighbors. Clinton CERT is taking the lead and hopefully other CERT teams will follow suit," Hughes said. "The importance of this training is that it's the basic start for getting prepared. When you take the training you get a backpack, which includes a hat, a safety vest, some tools, some gloves; and from that moment on when you receive that backpack you can fill it with what you need for you."

Additionally, Clinton CERT is looking for victim-actors to play injured people at the mass casualty exercise during the training event. The actors are not required to be CERT-trained. All participants must sign a waiver. The exercise will be held rain or shine.

Those interested in participating in the exercise please register on Eventbrite at: http://www.eventbrite.com/e/certex-pgc-2016-fe-exercise. A continental breakfast and a light lunch will be provided. Community service hours are available for high school students accompanied by an adult. For more information on the national FEMA CERT program visit: https://www.fema.gov/community-emergency-response-teams.

For additional information on CERTEX 2016, contact Hughes at pgcert.pmhughes@gmail.com or at (443) 474-3239.

Last-minute Budget Tweaks, Not Dog Parks, Spark Debate In Warrenton Work Session

By Michael Melkonian

Fauquier (VA) Times, June 10, 2016

Last-minute budget tweaks and a final review of dog park plans highlighted a Warrenton Town Council work session Thursday night, June 9 – just days before a meeting to approve the measures on Tuesday.

Ironically, the dog park provoked little discussion.

But the Council voiced split opinions on a $20,000 budget placeholder for an emergency planning grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The grant application is due at the end of the month, and Town Manager Brannon Godfrey expects another 60 to 90 days to find out if they will get the funds.

While Fauquier County has similar groundwork in place, the grant would help pay for developing an emergency operations plan to cover Warrenton specifically.

Yakir Lubowsky, Ward 3 councilperson, said emergency planning is an essential function of government and funding needs to be approved now.

"(Emergency planning) is ultimately the thing that citizens expect us to do: to prepare for emergencies and be prepared to recover from disasters," Lubowsky said.

Sunny Reynolds, at-large councilperson and Warrenton vice-mayor, said although she agreed it was "extremely important," she also wondered if we need to budget the money now before talking to the county government.

"We need to have this meeting with the county and sit down with them, which we have not done, and find out what they suggest the town's role is in this," Reynolds said.

Once we have that discussion, we can amend the budget later, Reynold suggested.

"The county seems to have abdicated its responsibility frankly, until they get their house in order," Lubowsky said, referencing the search for a new fire chief. "This is a fairly token amount (of money)."

The $20,000 line item represents less than .001 percent of the $20 million dollar fiscal year budget (embedded below).

Manager Godfrey pushed to amend the budget before the vote on Tuesday.

"It would be a more affirmative commitment to change the numbers now," Godfrey said. "It's still contingent on funding from FEMA, but it would then be adopted as part of the budget and we wouldn't have to go back."

Robert H. Kravetz, Ward four councilperson, agreed with Reynolds about conferring with the county first, but Lubowsky pressed on.

"If this is not important, what is important?" Lubowsky said.

At-large councilperson Sean Polster, a firefighter and paramedic by day, had another question: If town hall catches fire tonight or if Warrenton loses their water supply, what's the plan?

"How do we maintain our essential functions?" Polster said. "I think we have a great opportunity in front of us to take a small step forward. I'd like to build that roadmap before anything happens downtown."

Chief Louis Battle of the Warrenton Police Department said an emergency plan is a "living, breathing document, consistently and continuously under review and testing." And if we go down that road, we're responsible for (the plan) and anything that happens.

"That means we have to have the manpower, the resources and the assets to implement that plan," Battle said.

Lubowsky stood his ground again.

"But it starts with an inquiry," Lubowsky replied "You can always decide. At the moment, there's nothing."

And Battle's concerns about creating a new infrastructure with evergreen obligations depends on council action in the future, not this budget item, Lubowsky said.

"If it becomes a big bureaucracy, shame on the folks sitting up here," Lubowsky said.

We've been talking about this for a while now, but this is the first time we've really heard about money, Ward 1 councilperson, Jerry Wood, said. And he's not in favor of the surprise spending this close to approving the budget.

"I don't see any reason to not do it and I see many reasons to do it," Lubowsky said. "I mean, this is the group that had seven or eight meetings about a dog park, but we still haven't had a meeting about how to prepare the town for a disaster."

Godfrey said he will apply for the grant either way and as Kravetz noted, "it's not a commitment to spend" the money.

After 30 minutes of discussion, Godfrey said the best choice was to include it in the budget now.

"Please tell me you're not going to defeat the budget on Tuesday over this item," Godfrey said Wood as the group chuckled.

Wood had earlier voiced concerns with excess spending and tax increases in the proposed budget.

"To start off, I do plan to vote for this budget, there is nothing that would stop me from doing it," he said from the outset. "Still, I would like to see the property tax raised to 3 cents instead of 5 cents."

Though the $300,000 gained by the extra 2-cent increase will be needed to balance the budget, he added.

"I think we need to keep taxes as low as possible, services as good as possible and spending in check," Wood said. "I also think we need to separate our needs from our wants."

This $20,000 budget item seemed to straddle that line for Council members Thursday.

"Sounds like we're close enough," Mayor Powell Duggan said.

The item will be included in the budget to be approved by a Council vote at the next meeting on Tuesday night, June 14. The Council will also vote to approve a proffer-funded dog park on a vacant lot off of 5th Street in Old Town, near the Warrenton Branch Greenway trailhead.

At that meeting, the Council will also hold a public hearing on town code amendments about unsightly weed growth on undeveloped properties and to add hotels, inns and bed and breakfasts to permitted uses and remove motels.

The Beckoning Beauty Of The Waffle House

By Lisa Frame

WFAE-FM Charlotte (NC), June 10, 2016

There is something intrinsically beautiful about the Waffle House. Every building is identical, the decor and layout don't change, and the meal tastes the same every single time.

Called by many a "Southern Cultural Phenomenon," the Waffle House is where you go to hear yourself called "Darlin'" and "Sugar." Where regular customers aren't allowed to leave without hugging all of the waitresses goodbye. If you're road tripping, it's always just off an exit, inviting you in for a warm meal, no matter the time of day.

It's been this way since Labor Day 1955, when the first Waffle House restaurant opened its doors in Avondale Estates, an Atlanta suburb, with no plans to build another unit. Seventeen-hundred plus restaurants later, customer loyalty, friendly service, and menu favorites including Bert's Chili and Alice's Iced Tea, keep a steady stream of regular and new customers looking for that friendly, yellow Scrabble-tile sign.

The mission of the Waffle House is "...to deliver a unique experience to our customers through delivering great food, friendly, attentive service, excellent price and a welcoming presence." That's part of the beauty. It's a modern day corner pub where folks go to sober up after a night of revelry. People from all walks of life go to the Waffle House looking to feed bellies, but more often or not, their spirit is filled. I don't know if it's the smell of the coffee brewing, the glistening syrup floating in the crevices of the pecan waffles, or the sizzle of the hash browns as they are scattered, covered, smothered, and chunked on the grill.

Maybe it's the waitresses lining up to hug their regulars, cajoling them to stay and have one more pot of coffee. Everyone talks and laughs, yet the people at Waffle House also recognize that sometimes you need to be alone with your cup of coffee and think. No matter what you need today, the Waffle House is there for you, comforting you in the way that only a hot meal and people who have joined together in the common act of eating can offer. It's a temporary family, always changing, but when you're sitting in your booth, you realize this is exactly what you needed.

But Waffle House isn't just for everyday folks. One of the Carolina Panthers reportedly called Waffle House an "advantage" for his team. James Beard Award winner Sean Brock took Anthony Bourdain to visit while the TV personality was covering Charleston for his show Parts Unknown. In fact, on their Pinterest board, the Waffle House maintains a list of celebrities who have dined in the restaurants.

Every day of the year, 24 hours a day, the lights stay on at the Waffle House. That's something the company prepares for when Mother Nature comes knocking at their door. FEMA even relies on the Waffle House as an indicator of damaging storms. The "Waffle House Index" isn't scientific, but if the Waffle House is closed it's an indicator of how things are in different areas. When the Waffle House is fully operational, that's a green condition; when it's operating with a limited menu, that's yellow. Red means the restaurant's closed.

Now that it's hurricane season, my local Waffle House is green, but prepared for yellow – that would mean no bacon (takes up too much grill space) and no waffles (uses too much energy when operating on a backup power source). But no matter what, the friendly faces at the Waffle House will be there cooking meals, keeping the community fed, and giving everyone who walks in the door service with a smile.

Waffle House is a brightly-lit beacon of all things cooked on a well-seasoned griddle. It doesn't matter what your socioeconomic status is, nor the color of your skin, or how inebriated you are, or aren't; the Waffle House is where you go to find more than griddle cooked food and a bottomless coffee cup, it's where you go to find what makes the South and Waffle House beautiful – the people inside.

Lisa M. Frame is a writer and social media manager who lives in Belmont, NC. She works for Atlanta-based Everywhere Agency and is currently working on her first novel. Visit her at www.adailypinch.com.

Emergency Kits For Sale

eCatalina (CA), June 11, 2016

AVALON, CATALINA ISLAND – In a "worst case scenario" such as a natural disaster or large scale emergency (earthquake, flood, fire, biological attack) Catalina with its geographical location could be cut off from the mainland for days. Emergency services from overtown may be unable to assist Catalina residents because of concentrating resources in their own population centers. Catalina and its residents could very well be "on their own."

Through Catalina Island Medical Center's Disaster Preparathon last November over 100 households were provided with their own home kit of emergency supplies.

Now CIMC is offering a new chance for islanders to purchase these premium preparedness kits at a great discount. The backpacks available for sale have a 3-day supply of emergency provisions for a family of four. They are valued at over $100 and CIMC is offering them for only $40.

These "go bags" contain 16 lbs of items in a backpack easy to grab in case of evacuation. Contents include: emergency food rations, emergency water, a First Aid Kit, LED Flashlight, 12-hour glowsticks, Ponchos for severe weather, 24-hour Body Warmer blankets, a temporary shelter tent, an emergency whistle with compass, a 4 in 1 Dynamo Radio Flashlight, medical grade face masks for dust and more---Everything you need for 72 hour emergency survival is in this one complete, portable backpack.

FEMA, the Red Cross, and the State of California recommend you have these supplies on hand for personal needs, shelter, warmth and much more. This survival kit has a 5 year shelf life and is packaged in a durable backpack that is easy to carry and store. It is ideal for smaller living spaces.

A batch of Disaster Kits were sold at the April 28 Community Health Fair and now there are only 15 left. The purchase of these additional emergency bags was made possible by the generous support of CIMC's community partners: Southern California Edison who provided a $5000 grant. The CIMC Foundation donated $1500, the Catalina Island Women's Forum gave $1000, as did the Lions Club and Rotary.

Supplies won't last, so those interested should leave a message with Judy Hibbs (310) 510-1264 or pick up their emergency kit at the hospital reception area soon. Get a backpack and be safer and more prepared for an emergency or disaster.

Catalina Island Medical Center is committed to provide quality health care to each individual and improve the overall health of our community. For more information about medical services or disaster preparedness please call (310) 510-0700.

Heat Can Strike Down The Unwary

By Jessica Imbimbo

Columbia (SC) State, June 10, 2016

FLORENCE, SC

Coward resident Lisa Shaw was enjoying the summer sun with her daughter two years ago. Hours later, she had to be rushed to the hospital.

Heat exhaustion had set in after less than three hours in the 100-plus degree weather.

"When it got too hot we came inside and tried to cool off, but I could not get cooled off," Shaw said. "I was nauseated, couldn't catch my breath, felt almost like my whole body was on fire."

After a few bags of fluid from an area emergency room, Shaw made a full recovery.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, heat disorders occur when people have been overexposed to high temperatures or have overexerted themselves for their age or physical condition. As temperatures and humidity levels rise, evaporation slows and the body is forced to work harder to maintain a normal temperature.

Extreme heat is most likely to affect young children, older adults and those who are overweight.

Shaw said her weight may have been a factor in her susceptibility to the heat.

"I believe I suffered more than she (her daughter) did because I am overweight," Shaw said. "I am 5 feet 10 and at the time I weighed about 305 pounds."

Elderly individuals are also vulnerable when it comes to heat-related health issues. On June 9, Chief Danny Watson of the Darlington Police Department initiated a challenge to other Darlington organizations to collect small box fans for older people.

Watson's challenge will run through the end of the month. Donated box fans can be taken to either the Darlington Police Department or the Darlington Fire Department at 400 Pearl St.

Watson said something as simple as a small fan can prevent heat-related ailments during the summer.

"As a person advances in age, the ability to regulate their body temperature as well as they did when they were younger degrades significantly," Watson said. "This is why it is especially important for seniors to have access to fans and air conditioning."

People living in more urban areas are also at greater risk, due to poor air quality and stagnant atmospheric conditions. Areas covered with concrete and asphalt will stay hot longer and release heat during nighttime hours, which produces higher temperatures throughout the day.

Michael Miller, the S.C. Department of Transportation district safety coordinator, said the asphalt can reach temperatures upwards of 150 degrees when employees are working. The department provides coolers full of water and ventilated clothing to prevent heat-related health problems.

"We tell everybody to please be careful," Miller said. "If the guys work as a team, trade off and take breaks, it's not as bad as it could be."

Miller said department employees are encouraged to drink at least a quart of water per hour and take breaks from the heat every 45 minutes or so.

"I don't think we've had any significant heat-related issues for the past couple of years and that's primarily because our folks know what the symptoms are," Miller said. "We make sure everybody knows the differences."

There are different levels of heat-related illness: heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat cramps are often the first sign that the body is struggling with hot temperatures. Heavy exertion in hot conditions can cause muscular pains and spasms.

Heat exhaustion is the next phase. It typically occurs when body fluids are lost through sweating heavily. Blood flow becomes concentrated in the skin, and by doing so, decreases blood flow to vital organs. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include fatigue, rapid pulse, shallow breathing, dizziness and nausea. If not treated, the person's body temperature will continue to rise and heat stroke may occur.

Heat stroke, or sun stroke, is a life-threatening condition. A person's temperature control system stops functioning, causing the victim to stop perspiring. A person suffering from heat stroke will have skin that feels hot, but will not be sweaty. Other warning signs include confusion, headaches, trouble breathing, vomiting and loss of consciousness. A heat stroke victim's body temperature can rise so high that brain damage or death may occur.

"Heat kills by pushing the human body beyond its limits," according to a media advisory from the Florence Fire Department. "These conditions can be hazardous for people who do not take the proper precautions."

Dr. Iris D. Ignacio, a family medicine physician with Pee Dee Family Physicians, said that although certain groups of people may be more susceptible to heat-related illness, heat stroke can affect people of any age or fitness level.

"Don't underestimate the danger," Ignacio said. "Be extra careful when the heat index is 90 degrees or above and always drink plenty of water or fluids with electrolytes when the heat index is high."

"Virtually all heat-related illnesses are preventable," he said.

To prepare for extreme heat, the Florence Fire Department recommends checking air-conditioning ducts for insulation problems and making sure window air-conditioning units are installed properly. To keep the cool air inside the home, weather-strip doors and window sills.

Windows that receive morning or afternoon sun should be covered with drapes or shades. Outdoor awnings or louvers can reduce heat from entering the home by up to 80 percent, according to the Florence Fire Department.

In extreme heat, people are advised to stay inside and limit their sun exposure. If a person must go outside, the Florence Fire Department recommends wearing loose-fitting, light-colored clothing, avoid working during the warmest parts of the day and drinking plenty of water.

For more resources about extreme heat safety, visit ready.gov/heat.

Commission Discussed Grant, PDA

By Chance Hoener

Pittsburg (KS) Morning Sun, June 10, 2016

GIRARD — The Crawford County Commission discussed animal control, fairgrounds maintenance and emergency planning at its regular meeting Friday.

The commission agreed to renew a $2,500 grant to Pawprints on the Heartland after much discussion. The original grant was given in November of last year and helped Pawprints on the Heartland to maintain a Trap, Neuter and Release program for feral cats in the county.

Pawprints provides spaying and neutering services at a more affordable price, but uses donations and grants like this one to control feral cats in the area. Pawprints President Mary Kay Caldwell said that since the grant was issued in November, Pawprints has spayed or neutered 62 stray cats in Crawford County.

"If we look at just those 62 cats with four litters and four kittens to a litter," Caldwell said. "Then we have prevented over 15,000 homeless cats being born in Crawford County."

According to City Clerk Don Pyle, the first grant came from the county's miscellaneous fund. Caldwell reported that they had asked the City of Pittsburg for funding as well, but were denied. She said they would be returning to Pittsburg and requested that the county bump the grant up to $4,000.

The County Commission settled on just renewing the grant for $2,500.

"I know you guys do good work," Commission Chairman Tom Moody said. "We want to help you out."

Emergency Manager Eldon Bedene also addressed the commission to make them aware of changes to emergency management and disaster assessment policies on the state level. Bedene said that Kansas is the first state in its region that will follow a new Preliminary Damage Assessment manual.

The new assessment process will require photos of damaged properties as well as maps and addresses of damaged locations before being assessed by FEMA. Bedene said there are also new Emergency Management Performance Grant changes that are being talked about.

"Whoever you pick is going to have a lot to do, and I'll have a lot to do to train them," Bedene said.

Bedene plans to retire when a new Emergency Manager is found. Applications for the position close June 17.

The commissioners also discussed mowing the fairgrounds and fixing power lines and poles that are down in that area. They also discussed mowing tractor maintenance.

Exercise Set For Cooper Station

St. Joseph (MO) News-Press, June 10, 2016

KANSAS CITY — The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency has announced plans for a one-day preparedness exercise next week at the Cooper Nuclear Station in southeast Nebraska.

Missouri and Nebraska officials will participate on Tuesday, joining with agencies in Atchison, Richardson and Nemaha counties.

Officials said the exercise is a biennial requirement aimed at protecting the health and safety of those living and working in the station's vicinity.

The exercise will measure the adequacy of state and local radiological emergency readiness and response plans, and will require the activation of emergency facilities.

A public meeting to describe and explain the exercise will be held at 10 a.m. Thursday at the Nebraska Public Power District's emergency operations facility in Auburn, Nebraska. The utility owns and operates the plant.

Weathering The Storm: What's Your Emergency Action Plan?

By Elliott Falcione

Bradenton (FL) Herald, June 12, 2016

It's that time of year where we need to prepare our community and ourselves for Hurricane Season, a season that if not prepared, can cause devastation and loss of life if a major storm impacts our area.

Although our community has not experienced catastrophic devastation from a major storm, we must find the time to prepare ourselves, our families and our businesses now. A complacent mindset will, no doubt, be detrimental to our area, so let's take Hurricane Season seriously.

If we take the time to develop and implement an emergency preparedness plan, then our businesses can survive when any kind of disaster strikes.

American businesses form the backbone of the nation's economy. Small business alone employs half of all private sector workers and provides nearly 45 percent of the nation's payroll. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, 40 percent of businesses do not reopen after a disaster and another 25 percent fail within one year. The U.S. Small Business Administration statistics suggest that over 90 percent of businesses fail within two years following the impact of a disaster.

These odds are not very comforting and are extremely eye-opening. But these statistics can be shifted.

How quickly your business can get back after a terrorist attack, fire, flood, tornado or hurricane often depends on emergency planning done today. Though each situation is unique, your business can be better prepared if you plan carefully, put emergency procedures in place and practice for all kinds of disasters.

To survive, business owners must take steps to minimize and weather the effects of a disaster. The first step is understanding your business's vulnerabilities. Disasters such as wide area flooding or a hurricane certainly make the top list. However, smaller events such as burglary or water damage due to a faulty roof or plumbing can have the same catastrophic result. The second step is to determine the varying impacts to your business. This will support your third step of developing a plan.

I urge you to take the time to conduct your own research for information that supports your unique business safety and security. At the start of every Hurricane Season, various businesses including grocery stores, building supply or home improvement centers, pharmacies, and insurance carriers produce volumes of literature to assist your personal and home preparations.

Unfortunately, complacency is common in today's society, so let's not allow complacency to cost us our lives and businesses. Please, dedicate time now to prepare for the next six months.

For more information, please visit: www.mymanatee.org/emergency, www.floridadisaster.org, www.ready.gov and www.tbrpc.org.

One Month At A Time: Preparing To Survive Stress-free In An Emergency

By Bill Lynch

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, June 12, 2016

The tent stayed up in the yard for the rest of the week, while I nursed a cold indoors and slept in my own bed.

Keeping with living unplugged for the month, I avoided using power. I continued to eat cold food, mostly fresh fruit and bagels with peanut butter. I didn't open my refrigerator, didn't use my stove or microwave.

The television stayed off. The only time I heard the radio was in the car.

At home, I showered by candlelight and read books using a gadget I could clip to the back cover that provided just the barest amount of illumination.

"What are you going to do when you run out of clothes?" one of my editors asked. "You need to get a washboard."

That sounded like a pretty good idea. I told him I'd check the local flea market, but if worse comes to worst, I guess I'll be in the creek down the road beating my boxer shorts on rocks.

In the meantime, I worried about caffeine withdrawal. My supply of Neuro Fuel energy drinks from Smith's Food Fair (a bargain at $1.19 each) was running low. Because I wasn't using electricity, I hadn't been able to brew coffee.

I was also not brewing coffee at my desk or buying it elsewhere. My logic is if the power was down, I wouldn't be able to get coffee.

So no coffee, except for a tiny, glass jar of instant I got at Wal-Mart for $2.

This was always my backup in case nothing else worked.

Finally, five days in, I broke out the small burner and propane tank, carefully assembled the thing (which was really easy), turned the knob, lit a match and did not set myself on fire.

Almost five days since I'd pitched the tent, I made coffee and had a hot breakfast on my front porch. I had oatmeal with raisins. It tasted much better than it deserved to.

Clearly, I needed some advice on how to do this. So I went to Keller's Survival in Cross Lanes.

Bob Keller has been in business since 2012. Before he opened his store, he was an engineer and an engineering teacher.

He opened the store because there really wasn't anything like it around.

"It was just something I saw as a need here," he said

So, just over four years ago, Bob opened a tiny place in North Charleston selling a mix of camping equipment, hunting apparel and paramilitary gear.

That summer, the derecho blew through, knocking some people in the area off the grid for over two weeks.

"Then we had the Halloween snowstorm and the chemical leak from Freedom Industries," he said.

People come looking for him now, and Keller's Survival has expanded.

He and his wife moved to a larger building, and the space he had set aside for classes has been turned into more retail floor space with shelves of merchandise for help living off the grid. That includes everything from portable water purification systems and tiny, alcohol-fueled stoves to bulk dried foods and solar panels.

"I'm not really a big fan of whole house solar," Bob said. "But I do like it for a backup generator. They're silent. If the power goes out and you fire up your generator, what you have there is a beacon.

He added, "If the power stays off, you could end up with some company."

Keller's Survival can be a starting point for someone interested in prepping for a disaster, but most of what he has on the shelves is designed for relatively short-term interruptions — at maximum, a few months.

He is glad to talk about what is necessary for the long haul, for what you might need to do if the lights go off and they don't come back on.

Bob described "prepping" as a kind of journey. No one is required to go the whole distance, whatever that might be, but instead, people can choose where they want to stop.

At the minimum, he thought, people need to be able to get through three days of interruption. This is not his number, Bob pointed out, but the government's.

"[The Federal Emergency Management Agency] wants you to have a bug out bag and three days supplies," he said.

Bob said he meets people all the time who don't even have three days worth of non-perishable food in their home, let alone three days worth of drinkable water.

"And what if the government can't get here in three days?" Bob asked and then added, "You think of it in the rule of threes. What can you not have? Three minutes without air, three days without water, three weeks without food."

That's what everyone should think about at the very beginning of the journey, he said, but it's only the beginning.

"You start off with trying to replace things or an activity," Bob said.

"You keep spare food and water. You make sure you have candles, flashlights and firewood.

"Then you move on to the self-reliance phase," he said. "That's when we get into urban agriculture and self-sustaining."

Some of this is as simple as just doing what our grandparents did. They kept gardens, raised chickens and dug wells.

From there, prepping moves on to being in a state of preparedness, working to be ready for whatever comes.

Bob acknowledged being ready for anything is probably impossible, but you could be absolutely ready for what is likely (power outage caused by storms or water contamination caused by industry), and try to prepare for what seems possible somehow, but is probably unlikely (zombie uprising or full scale invasion by Luxembourg).

Being prepared is not incredibly expensive, though it can be, if you really want to put out the money.

"You'll find a lot of slick guys selling garbage online," he said. "The thing about prepping is you spend 50 bucks or $5,000 or more. That's all up to you."

Good prepping is about managing stress and maintaining balance. Preparing for trouble in and of itself helps to reduce anxiety.

Stress is a killer.

Bob said, "When the water crisis happened, my wife called me and asked me, 'What should we do?'"

Bob said he told her, "Nothing."

They were already ready.

Where people go wrong with prepping is when they don't think through what they've done. They'll lay up a couple of weeks worth of non-perishable canned goods.

"The good news," Bob said, "is if the cans aren't dented or rusted, they'll last practically forever."

The bad news is you get what you pay for, literally.

"You can probably get a case of green beans for about six bucks," he said. "But what if your wife isn't a big fan of green beans? That's going to raise her stress level, which I assure you will raise yours, too."

I told him that I'd only been going without power at home for about a week, but already missed leafy green vegetables. I'd tried keeping them in a cooler, but without regularly replacing the ice, my salad had quickly turned to mulch.

He shook his head.

"Maybe you could do that in winter," he said. "Look where you are. You'll have to adjust your diet."

A longer-term solution might be to have a garden, which could provide fresh vegetables, but that probably wouldn't be year-round.

Without getting into specifics, Bob acknowledged that some of the people who come into his store have some unusual ideas.

"I've heard some really interesting things over the years," he said.

Some of these ideas lead people to obsessively hoard guns.

Bob said he supports the right to bear arms, believes having adequate protection is a core part of survival preparation and thinks if you have guns, you ought to know how to use them.

But … some people put a lot more resources into their guns than into the rest of their survival plan.

"If my plan is survival, and your plan is to have enough weapons to take from me," he said, "the only thing you're prepping for is to be a criminal."

The key, he said, to getting through a crisis might sound a little corny, but it's faith.

"There's definitely a spiritual side to this," he said, but then added, "But I also think it's more than just religion. You have to have a reason bigger than yourself to keep going. It could be your family, but you have to have something to latch onto."

Bob didn't think that was profound, just common sense, but then again, a lot of prepping, to him, was about rigidly applying logic and common sense.

I told him he'd given me a lot to think about, but that I was doing better than I expected. At least, I was doing better than I did in 2012. I told him about my little burner, which I'd used to make coffee and oatmeal.

Keller said he had one, too.

"They're pretty handy," he agreed. "But what are you going to do when the gas runs out?"

I wasn't sure. Also, while I'd successfully made coffee and oatmeal, I'd had less success with making plain old white rice, a major staple in my house.

The rice had come out gritty and undercooked.

I tried eating it anyway, but then tossed it out and had another bagel with peanut butter.

– See more at: http://www.wvgazettemail.com/life-columns/20160612/one-month-at-a-time-preparing-to-survive-stress-free-in-an-emergency#sthash.LmpzLC3h.dpuf

'Full Measure': Coming To Cleveland

KUTV-TV Salt Lake City, June 12, 2016

WASHINGTON (SBG) — Republicans and Democrats finally have presumptive presidential nominees and are headed toward their summer conventions.

For Democrats, with Bernie Sanders still in the race, there could still be fireworks inside the convention center in Philadelphia.

For the GOP, the action may be outside the convention in Cleveland, where the Republican National Convention is being held next month. Some violent protests have followed Donald Trump on the campaign trail. "Full Measure" correspondent Lisa Fletcher went to Cleveland to see if the city is ready for the political rumble.

Two years ago when the City of Cleveland bid, and won, the right to host the RNC Convention, it had no way of knowing that some of today's GOP rallies would be so violent.

Next month, the LeBron James posters will come down and the GOP banners rise, as the Quicken Loans Arena will be transformed. Donald Trump and thousands of GOP luminaries and delegates will flood into the highly secured zone.

Fletcher: "We are at Quicken Loans Arena, where the RNC is going to be. What's it going to be like with 50,000 people here?"

Steve Loomis: "It's going to be crazy busy, crazy busy."

The area inside and surrounding the arena will be closely guarded by Secret Service. It's the area outside the zone that keeps Loomis, the president of the Police Patrolmen's Association, up at night.

Loomis: "You know, I would love to be able to tell you guys that we're in a good place right now, and that we're ready for this. And I can't, I can't."

Loomis' union represents 1,400 Cleveland "rank-and-file" officers, 600 of whom will be on convention duty manning checkpoints, monitoring traffic, and trying to keep a lid on violence.

Fletcher: "Are you afraid your guys are going to get hurt?"

Loomis: "Yeah, there's definitely going to be guys that are going to get hurt. But the city has a responsibility and a duty to make us as safe as possible by providing us the gear that we need to do the job, the training we need to do the job, and the numbers we need to do the job."

Loomis says with just five weeks to go, "rank-and-file" officers feel unprepared. He says the city has failed to communicate logistics, and has provided very little specialized training.

Loomis: "We have 600 police officers, 500 of them haven't been through one minute of training after the three-day FEMA course they went through last year. Not one day."

FEMA is the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It provides on-site training to cities hosting national security events.

Loomis: "I'm concerned when I have FEMA instructors telling me personally that they have never been to a city that has been so non-responsive to their recommendations as the City of Cleveland."

Both the Cleveland mayor and chief of police declined "Full Measure's" request for an interview. At a recent press conference, Police Chief Calvin Williams insisted the city is in good shape.

Williams: "So, we are prepared, we are ready. And our partners are out there prepared and ready.

There are going to be officers and individuals and things that you will never see, but they'll be here making sure this city is safe."

Matt Zone is a city councilman who has been overseeing the preparations.

Zone: "Some of the stuff that is happening behind the scenes, the rank-and-file officers, they're not even aware of."

Fletcher: "Enlighten me a little bit on what's going on behind the scenes, because I think these officers would, too, like to be enlightened, because they feel like, 'We are not prepared yet, we haven't seen the gear, we haven't had the training.'"

Zone: "FEMA, which is an elite entity of the federal government that does massive training around issues, they've been in our city for over nine months. So, there's been extensive training that's been happening with not only certain leadership of the Cleveland Police Department, but our county sheriffs, the National Guard, our state troopers, and many jurisdictions throughout northeast Ohio."

Fletcher: "Now, Cleveland P.D. tells us they've had three days of training with FEMA, and that's it."

Zone: "So, did you hear that from FEMA, or did you hear that from the police union?"

Fletcher: "The Union."

Zone: "See, of course. Now you're only getting one perspective."

We contacted FEMA, and it confirmed it had provided a three-day course for the Cleveland Police Department, and a one-day executive course for the city managers. Hardly the "nine months" the councilman claimed.

FEMA declined to comment on the preparedness of the city, stating, "We are in no position to offer official recommendations or guidance to the City of Cleveland or Cleveland Police Department, and have not done so."

Loomis: "You know, police departments from all over the country are backing out of this thing right now in large scale."

Milwaukee, Denver, Cincinnati, and Greensboro, North Carolina all had originally pledged manpower, but are now pulling out.

Fletcher: "Why are these police agencies that had been committed, in some cases for months, Greensboro had been committed since October, why are they now pulling out?"

Zone: "You know, I've heard stories that they are concerned about depleting their rank and file in their hometowns. I'm not privy to the Greensboro situation."

It wasn't a privileged conversation.

In fact, in a widely publicized letter, the Greensboro Deputy Police Chief cites conversations with other police administrators, "Who expressed a lack of confidence in the City of Cleveland and their preparedness for the RNC," and noted that, "We have a responsibility to ensure that we are sending our officers to an event that is well planned."

Chicago in 1968 was a historical example of how things can go wrong when police, protesters, and political turbulence come together.

Across the country this year, protests at Trump rallies are a clear prediction of what Cleveland is likely to face.

Zone: "Let's face it, most of these police officers, they're gonna be just shepherding and ushering crowds in."

Fletcher: "True, but you don't know which officers are going to be confronted by violent protesters in any part of the city."

Zone: "Sure, but we're going to have such mobility throughout our city, where our police officers are going to be able to move not only on bike, and foot, and horse but also be enabled to set up motorcades that will just roll through the city."

While most of the city's 300 mountain bikes have arrived for the Cleveland Police Cycle Squads, as well as upper-body protection, officers we talked to say much of the other equipment they're expecting, like ballistic helmets, vests, and emergency transport vehicles, are yet to be seen.

Fletcher: "But why the photo finish? The city has known for two years that the RNC is coming here, why wait until the last two or three months to really get the ball rolling?"

Zone: "I mean, that is certain people's opinions. What is happening here in Cleveland is happening in Philly as well. There are different --"

Fletcher: " – Philly's had their equipment for seven months."

Zone: "No, no, no, no, no, not all their equipment."

"Full Measure" contacted the Philadelphia Police Department, and with the exception of sophisticated radio equipment that is still on order, its union president told us they are flush with gear, and have been training on it daily in preparation for the DNC.

Civil rights attorney Jacqueline Greene has been critical of Cleveland Police and says more training is exactly what they need.

Greene: "We have a police department that has been found to have previously engaged in a pattern and practice of unconstitutionally use of excessive force."

Force so excessive the city is currently under federal oversight.

According to a 2014 Department of Justice report, the Cleveland Police “Use unnecessary and unreasonable force, at a significant rate, and in a manner that is extremely dangerous to officers, victims of crimes, and innocent bystanders.

The review also found inappropriate use of Tasers and pepper spray.

Fletcher: “Are you concerned that the previous lack of restraint that has been demonstrated is going to show itself during the protest of the RNC?”

Greene: “Yes, we are concerned about that. We’re concerned not only because of the reputation of Cleveland Division Police themselves, but also because there are other law enforcement agencies that are brought in to assist.”

Fletcher: “Are you concerned about the reputation that’s been laid on the Cleveland Police Department going into something as potentially volatile as the RNC?”

Loomis: “Sure. We’re always concerned about reputation, but we’d ask people to look at the facts.”

As for the protesters, Loomis says their actions will dictate how this convention plays out.

Loomis: “Speak your mind, do whatever it is that you’re going to do for protesting, don’t throw a rock at my guys. Don’t break a window. Don’t burn a car. That just brings a negative light to whatever you’re trying to sell, and everything will be fine.”

Zone: “We have a very good police department and I’m proud of them. They work very hard every single day, and so I know that they’re going to be up for the task. This convention is going to come and go, and people are going to look back and say, you know Cleveland? Job well done.”

To complicate things even more, because the Cleveland Cavaliers are in the NBA Finals, and game six is in the same arena as the convention, they are going to lose about two weeks out of the six weeks’ prep time that the RNC usually has.

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Cumberland Matters: Public Hearing Planned On County Budget

By Jon Soles

Fayetteville (NC) Observer, June 11, 2016

The Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the Cumberland County Fiscal Year 2017 recommended annual budget Monday at 7 p.m. in Room 118 of the Courthouse. The recommended budget has $430 million in total expenditures and maintains the property tax rate at 74 cents per $100 valuation.

Anyone interested in signing up to speak should contact the clerk’s office at 678-7771 or cwhite@co.cumberland.nc.us. Residents can watch the meeting live through the County’s website at co.cumberland.nc.us or on Time Warner Channel 5 (Fayetteville/Cumberland County Educational TV).

Care Center donation

The Department of Social Services received a donation on May 25 to help the Care Center. The Daughters of Penelope of Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church, Chapter 416, presented a $1,500 check and hygiene kits for the Care Center, which provides holistic domestic violence-related services to victims, children and abusers.

The Care Center’s most sought-after services are counseling and shelter for women and children in imminent danger. The Care Center 24-hour crisis telephone line is 677-2532.

Emergency training

Cumberland County Emergency Management Coordinator Gene Booth recently graduated from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s National Emergency Management Advanced Academy, which provides strategic-level training, education and essential skills needed to manage dynamic and resilient emergency management programs.

Earlier this week, Booth and the county’s Emergency Services Department were carefully monitoring Tropical Storm Colin and reminding residents to be ready for severe weather by creating disaster-preparedness kits in their homes. A kit should contain enough nonperishable food and a gallon of water per person, per day, to last three to seven days. Other essential items include a first-aid kit, a weather radio and batteries, hygiene items and changes of clothes. Learn more about emergency preparedness by visiting readync.org. To sign up for the free emergency and severe weather notification service CodeRED, visit co.cumberland.nc.us or call 910-678-7641 or 910-321-6676.

Canning class

You can save on your grocery budget by growing and preserving your own fruits and vegetables. The Cooperative Extension offers the workshop “Basic Water Bath Canning” June 23 from 9 a.m. to noon. The workshop, from the Extension’s Better Living Series, will teach the basics of canning produce from the garden. Participants will learn hands-on techniques for preserving high-acid foods. Class size is limited, so apply early. The $10 workshop fee is due by June 20. To register, call Susan Johnson at 321-6405.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

No stories for this edition

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

No stories for this edition

FEMA CORPS

Health Center Celebrating National Men's Health Week

Farmington (MO) Daily Journal, June 11, 2016

St. Francois County Health Center in Park Hills is celebrating National Men's Health Week this year with free walk-in screenings from 8-11 a.m. June 17.

Located at 1025 W. Main St., the health center is offering cholesterol, A1C, weight, and blood pressure checks at no charge — as well as PSA, a blood test used primarily to screen for prostate cancer for $10. No physician order or appointments are required for any of the tests.

National Men's Health Week is celebrated June 13-19, which is the week leading up to Father's Day. During this week, individuals, families, communities and others work to promote healthy living among men and boys.

The health center received the 2015-2016 Medical Reserve Corps Challenge Award from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to work on chronic disease prevention and health promotion. The funding from this grant is helping to provide the cholesterol and A1C tests for free on Men's Health Day.

"When it comes to prevention and early detection, men's health often takes a back seat to women's health," said Jessica McKnight, SFCHC assistant director. "Research, however, shows that, compared to women, men are more likely to smoke and drink alcohol and generally lead less healthy lifestyles. In addition, men are more likely to put off routine checkups and also delay seeing a healthcare provider for symptoms of a health problem.

"There are several health conditions that only affect men, such as prostate cancer and low testosterone. Many of the major health risks that men face — like colon cancer or heart disease — can be prevented and treated with early diagnosis. It is recommended for men to visit their medical provider for checkups, even if they are not sick. Certain diseases and conditions may not have symptoms, so checkups and preventive screenings help identify issues early or before they can become a problem."

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, chronic diseases are responsible for 7 of 10 deaths each year and treating people with chronic diseases accounts for 86 percent of the nation's health care costs.

For more information on the steps men can take to improve health visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Men's Health Day website www.cdc.gov/men/nmhw/ or call SFCHC at 573-431-1947.

Much Work Went Into Planning Walkway Marathon

By Dr. Henry M. Kurban, Commissioner of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health

Poughkeepsie (NY) Journal, June 10, 2016

The months of preparation are over, and today is race day. Runners from around the county and around the globe have descended on Dutchess County to take part in the second annual Walkway Marathon race series.

The Walkway Marathon event is a great example of the activities that are helping Dutchess County reach its goal of becoming New York's healthiest county over the next decade. It's also a chance for visitors to come to our county and discover what makes us unique.

More than just several hours on the course, the Walkway Marathon race series is the culmination of months of preparation from the Walkway Over the Hudson organization, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and various county departments, all with participants' health, safety and enjoyment in mind – responsibilities we all take seriously.

Most of the miles covered – be they part of the 5K race, half-marathon or full marathon – will traverse the Dutchess Rail Trail, showcasing the work the Dutchess County Department of Public Works' Parks Division performs to keep the linear park pristine.

This weekend's event, though, is an example of several county departments working together, all with the benefit of keeping both competitors and spectators as safe and healthy as possible. Seemingly as soon as last June's race weekend concluded, Dutchess County and its partners began working to make today as successful – both from a running standpoint and in terms of health and safety – as the inaugural race series.

Our Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH) has played several key roles in helping plan the weekend, and you'll see our staff throughout the day at various locations, there to aid runners should a medical emergency occur. Between first-aid stations and medical tents set up along the race route, the department will support everyone from athletic trainers and podiatrists to nurses, paramedics and physician assistants.

Behind the scenes, DBCH officials have met regularly with their colleagues in the Dutchess County Department of Emergency Response, working on a comprehensive plan for today which offers quality medical care, as needed for those involved in the races – runners, spectators and volunteers. If an unforeseen situation arises, DBCH and Emergency Response representatives have formulated guidelines to keep everyone informed. Officials with DBCH will use the Walkway Marathon as a drill and will be evaluated on several objectives to gauge our strengths.

Alongside with local volunteer groups, the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) of Dutchess County will line the race route at all eight medical tents and the Marist Medical Tent, providing healthcare assistance and logistical support such as documentation and communications. Supporting both DBCH and Emergency Response when responding to various incidents, MRC of Dutchess County is a partner of a national network of volunteers dedicated to supporting public health infrastructure and disaster preparedness and response in local communities.

Just like last year, officials from Emergency Response will man both the central command center and a mobile command vehicle, all to stay abreast of up-to-the-minute conditions on the course and in the surrounding areas in real time, providing warnings of potential predicaments.

Dutchess County's Division of Public Transit will again shuttle runners, utilizing hybrid buses to cut down on carbon emission, which affects air quality. The Division of Solid Waste helped the inaugural Walkway Marathon become New York's first certified "green race" ever and will likewise support organizers' pledge of sustainability, providing recycling bins and supporting the Walkway Green Team.

Having worked and planned with their counterparts in Ulster County, as well as local police agencies, representatives from the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office will provide safety, security and law enforcement throughout the day. You'll see a visible presence – on foot, bikes and ATVs, and in patrol cars and boats – to protect runners, volunteers and spectators.

This collaboration among several Dutchess County departments and divisions has been critical in developing plans to make the Walkway Marathon as safe, healthy and successful as possible for all involved.

Whether you're running in a race, volunteering or watching the excitement from the sidelines, we hope you enjoy the Walkway Marathon and the fruit of our months of preparation. You likely won't see many of the measures we've undertaken, but rest assured our department and several others have worked tirelessly to keep you healthy and safe.

Be sure to like Dutchess County Government's Facebook page and follow Dutchess County Government on Twitter (@dutchesscogov) for updated photos throughout the day, as well as from Saturday's first-ever Think Differently Dash.

MCPHD Opens Substance Abuse Treatment Program

Macoupin County (IL) Enquirer Democrat, June 9, 2016

Though it has only been operating for about three weeks, Macoupin County Public Health Department's new outpatient, medicine-assisted opioid drug treatment program, operating out of Maple Street Clinic in Gillespie, already has 18 participants.

At a press conference held Tuesday morning in the county board room at Macoupin County Jail, MCPHD Administrator Kent Tarro announced that the organization is partnering with Addiction Treatment Strategies out of Edwardsville to provide the program, which is funded for the first two years through a $325,000 federal grant. After that, if the program is successful, MCPHD will receive funding for it along with the rest of its federal funding, which is awarded on a competitive basis every three years.

Also speaking at the press conference were ATS Director John Crum, Macoupin County Sheriff Shawn Kahl, Macoupin County State's Attorney Jennifer Watson and moderator Angela Weidner, RN and chief operating officer at Maple Street Clinic.

Tarro said there are three priorities for the program: helping people who are addicted to heroin and other opiates stop using, saving the lives of people who are currently addicted, and supporting and working with people who are currently addicted to change their lives to lead happier, healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives.

"The problems of heroin and other opiates has continued to grow in Macoupin County and the surrounding areas," Tarro said. When the funding proposal for the proposal was being put together, MCPHD researched drug statistics in Macoupin, Madison, Jersey, Montgomery and Sangamon counties. For the five-year period from 2010 to 2014, those counties had a total of 501 opioid overdose deaths, increasing year-to-year to a high of 165 in 2014, and a total of 4,843 opioid-related arrests, also gradually increasing until 2014, which had 1,581.

Crum noted that in the United States, about 120 people per day die of heroin overdoses, which amounts to about 44,000 people per year — the population of Macoupin County. In Macoupin County, Kahl said, there are typically three to five opiate overdose fatalities each year.

Watson pointed out that 43 percent of the felonies that were filed in her office in 2015 were drug-related, and that number doesn't include other crimes that were committed due to addiction, such as larceny. "With this program, we're hopeful that this will reduce the number of felonies that are being committed in Macoupin County and that these people will be able to get the treatment that they need," she said, noting that for users, prosecution tends to lean more toward probation and treatment rather than incarceration, which is more of a priority for dealers.

Kahl pointed out that his department typically tries to hit 30-60 homes per month where drugs are suspected, in order to get the drugs out; homes are targeted based on information received from the general public. "The biggest issue now is that they're spread out, they're everywhere," said Kahl. "They're in your neighborhoods, they're around your children. There's needles laying all over the streets anymore. It's getting out of hand. With this kind of treatment, it's going to help us tremendously. At least we have a resource now to direct these people to, to try to get help if they truly want it — which most of them we talk to do want it, but there was really no resource to do it."

Locally, Kahl said users are typically in their late teens to earliy 20s, but heroin has been prevalent long enough that people who started using it 5-10 years ago are now in their 30s. "The sad thing is, it's family members, it's moms and dads and they've got young children in these houses," he said. "We don't have a lot of big-time drug dealers here. There are a lot of users." Kahl noted that locals typically go to the North City/St. Louis area or Springfield and bring the drugs back to the county. "It would probably shock you to know how many people take a trip to Springfield or St. Louis from this county on a daily basis to bring the drug back," he said.

"We see everyone," said Weidner. "We see moms, we see dads, we see teenagers, we have some people that are in their 60s. Addiction does not discriminate. It's a disease, and it does not discriminate."

"Some of the statistics are absolutely alarming," said Tarro, noting that the United States consumes 99 percent of the world's supply of Oxycontin and 80 percent of the world's supply of prescription opiates overall. In addition, 85 percent of people who use heroin began with prescription opiates. "Right now it is so much easier and [there's] such less bureaucracy to prescribe opiates than it is to get Suboxone," said Tarro; Suboxone is the prescription used to treat opioid addiction. "That is absolutely insane when you think about where this problem came from."

Tarro said Crum will be working with health care providers throughout the counties to let them know the current guidelines for opiate prescriptions. "The hard line from the Centers for Disease Control is that, yes, it needs to be used during cancer therapy and end-of-life hospice care," said Tarro. "Then there's debate about post-surgery, acute injury, etc., but the hard line is just cancer treatment and end-of-life hospice care. We need to reduce the supply."

According to Tarro, about 20 years ago hospitals started making pain a vital statistic, similar to temperature and blood pressure, which he believes is part of the problem. "We need to teach both children and adults that your goal should not be to live a pain-free life," he said. "Pain is a part of living, it's a part of healing, and it's a part of growing."

Tarro noted that Macoupin County communities have been working on solutions to the growing drug problem, such as by having town meetings regarding heroin and other opiates and their "addictive, destructive and fatal consequences". In addition, MCPHD is working to expand the Macoupin County Medical Reserve Corps and has recently received funding to recruit and train additional volunteers to provide outreach in the communities, including education and awareness to help people prevent their loved ones from becoming addicted and making sure people know where to seek treatment for addiction.

The program is based on the idea that addiction is a disease. "It is not a choice, it is not poor willpower," said Tarro. "It is very comparable to diabetes, heart disease, and cancer." He also noted that there is a large genetic component to addiction, as much as 50-60 percent. “That is a fair warning for people who have had that in their families in a big way.”

Tarro said there are four “pillars of community action” for dealing with the problem of addiction: prevention, education, treatment and enforcement. “We intend to attack all four at the same time,” he said. “A public health department’s supposed to address the biggest health problems in their community and work with everyone else to make that problem either disappear or at least reduce it as much as possible and help people live a healthy, self-actualized life.”

For now, the program is limited to 30 participants due to federal regulations concerning the number of patients a health care provider can prescribe Suboxone. After Maple Street Clinic’s psychiatrist has had her Suboxone license for one year, which will be in November, they will be able to apply to expand to 100 patients. Until that time, if there is more demand than the clinic can meet, the additional patients will be referred to the ATS program, which has open spots.

Crum said that long-term outpatient programs such as this one are far more successful than 30-day inpatient programs. “The outcome of 30-day treatment is zero, but that’s the current model,” he said. “They’re usually high on the plane ride home.” However, insurance companies will typically pay for at least two hospitalizations or two residential treatment programs — which can cost $25,000 to upward of $90,000 per 30-day stay — per year, but are not as willing to fund outpatient programs such as ATS, which Crum said has a much higher success rate as most patients are involved in it for a minimum of two years. “At the end of the two-year period of time, about 63 percent of our patients are no longer using anything and haven’t used anything for over a year,” he said. “Most of my patients aren’t ever going to use again, but it takes an extended period of time to get to that point. Thirty days of treatment is a myth; treatment on a residential basis is a myth. It has to be in the environment in which the addiction occurs.”

“You go away for 30 days, you’re isolated, you’re not having to deal with your kids, your family, your parents, work, legal problems. You get out of inpatient and all those problems hit you. In outpatient, you’re dealing with all of those problems, and we’re helping you deal with them step-by-step,” said Weidener, who pointed out that even if inpatient programs worked, there aren’t any available in this area due to the state budget crisis. “I had a patient come to us in tears last week. She was told by two inpatient places just to keep using for three months until a bed became available.”

Medicaid pays for Suboxone, but that is not the case with most insurance companies. “We currently have to fight with every insurance company for them to pay for it,” said Weidner. “We are billing insurance for what we can bill for, but, again, the rate of what they pay for outpatient services isn’t near enough. That’s why we needed the grant.” Like all of the clinic’s services, the substance abuse program fees are offered on a sliding scale based on income. No patients will be denied based on their inability to pay.

The program also will treat underlying problems of addiction, such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. “First we do an extremely careful assessment, then we go to the medical system, which impacts on the cravings for the drug,” Crum said. “Then we look at the psychological component of the cravings. Why do people continue to use? We can treat that on a psychological basis that supports the medical component.” Patients will be required to attend group and individual therapy sessions every week, as well as keep a journal and stay in regular contact with the therapist.

“Success is in small steps,” Crum said. “We have had patients who had been using 140 milligrams of Vicodin on a daily basis that are down to four milligrams a month. That’s extremely significant change. What that means is the neurobiology of the brain is changing back and the patients are gaining control of their lives. For the most part, our patients are using to stay alive. They don’t use to get high; that’s a myth. They use to be functional.” He added, “It’s not necessarily the cravings that get them, which we can address with medication. It’s the compulsion to do something. It’s not atypical for our patients to shift one compulsion to another; they may shift from heroin to gambling. Gambling’s not a drug, but it works exactly the same way.”

Farmington Hills Teen Picked For FEMA Youth Council

By Brad Kadrich

Hometown Life (MI), June 11, 2016

Preston Buszka thinks young people need to become more aware of safety and emergency preparedness.

Now the 15-year-old, just completing his sophomore year at Farmington High School, is going to be in an even better position to help make that happen.

Buszka, already a member of the Mayor’s Youth Council and one of two youth representatives to Farmington Hills’ Emergency Preparedness Council, has been named to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's 2016-2018 Youth Preparedness Council.

"I'm very excited," Buszka said. "I'm really looking forward to making our region, and the country, safer."

Created in 2012, the council brings together youth leaders from across the country who are interested in advocating on behalf of preparedness and making a difference in their communities by completing preparedness projects.

The council supports FEMA's commitment to involve youth in preparedness-related activities. It also provides an avenue to engage youth by taking into account their perspectives, feedback, and opinions.

Buszka, the son of Shelly and Dan Buszka of Farmington Hills, has already been involved in safety measures. As a freshman, he became the safety captain for the school's robotics team, a position he's continued.

He was honored at recent competitions in Traverse City and at the world competition for his work setting up the team's safety program.

"I enjoyed doing that job," Buszka said. "Our safety program really improved, and I really enjoy it."

Tim Tutak, the vice-chair of the Farmington Hills Emergency Preparedness Council, said Buszka will provide a great deal of insight to FEMA.

"Over the years we have had a number of youths from our communities provide input to the EPC," Tutak said. "They have provided us with insight from the youth in our communities. Preston has a sense for safety and preparedness that provides us with insight from that his group that most of his peers do not."

Farmington Hills Mayor Ken Massey said Buszka's selection for the FEMA honor is "very impressive."

"Yet again, Farmington Hills stands out and leads the way, and this time it's one of our youth doing it," Massey said. "Preston is a very outgoing young man. He's bright, he's motivated and I think he's got a very bright future ahead of him."

PRIVATE SECTOR

No stories for this edition

CITIZEN CORPS

County Launches Volunteer Database Website

By Brendan Denison

Danville (IL) Commercial News, June 12, 2016

DANVILLE — The Vermilion County Board recently launched a website its chairman calls a "one-stop shop" where organizations can easily link up with volunteers.

County Board Chairman Mike Marron said board members gathered a lot of grassroots input from people across the county, asking residents about the local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the county.

Marron said that one recurring strength the county has is its people, who always want to get involved and donate time and money.

"We tried to come up with a plan to harness those assets and make it more effective," Marron said.

So far, the following organizations have signed up with the website: CRIS Senior Services, Big Brother Big Sisters of Vermilion County, Vermilion County Emergency Management Agency, Vermilion County Health Department and Danville Public Library foundation.

The website can be accessed at the following address: www.vcvolunteer.net.

Marron also said another part of the plan is about trying to coordinate efforts.

"We need to try to get everybody to work together to the greatest extent possible," Marron said.

Melody Ehrlich, director of the Danville Public Library foundation, commended the county for getting the website launched, and said it will be a valuable tool for various non-profit organizations.

"We have a book sale three times a year and we rely heavily on volunteers," Ehrlich said. "We have a group of volunteers that have been supportive and steadfast for many years, but we are always looking for new volunteers to help with the book sale."

She also mentioned the foundation sponsors an annual fundraiser, From Page to Stage, where volunteers are needed as well. Other volunteer opportunities with the foundation include office duties, help with mailings and data entry.

Ehrlich said individuals interested in volunteering for the foundation can call 477-5220.

Melissa Rome, emergency preparedness coordinator with the Vermilion County Health Department, said the department doesn't have as much staff as it used to, and it has to heavily rely on volunteers if there's a public health emergency.

According to Rome, the Vermilion County Medical Reserve Corps would respond to events such as a large pandemic or bioterrorism incident, or help with dispensing medicine or vaccinations to large numbers of people. Rome said the Medical Reserve Corps is part of a nationwide organization, and there are quite a few throughout Illinois.

She also said they have had few volunteers signed up, and they try not to take on spontaneous volunteers who show up during a major event. Rome said they need to make sure volunteers are trained and know how to give shots, and normally need nursing staff, pharmacists and doctors.

Rome also said they need individuals who aren't medical professionals to help with registration, traffic control and helping greet people.

"We need people from all different areas to help," Rome said.

According to Rome, interested volunteers would need to fill out an application through the health department, which also goes through the Illinois Health program. The volunteers also would also be asked to take a few online courses.

"Because we are so limited, really the only reason we would use our volunteers is for drills, exercises and a real event," Rome said.

Volunteers

Lowell (MA) Sun, June 12, 2016

Email information for this listing 10 days in advance to jdeegan@lowellsun.com.

DISASTER VOLUNTEERS: The Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps. seeks both medical and non-medical members to be trained for public health initiatives and emergency service in their community. See www.UMVMRC.org for examples of activities. Call Nancy at 978-399-2549 for information.

STRAIGHT AHEAD MINISTRIES: Christian non-profit looking for men and women of faith interested in visiting incarcerated teens in detention facilities, including Merrimack Revocation in Lowell, to build relationships, bring hope and share their faith. Trainings are scheduled according the each volunteer's location and schedule; commitment is one hour, once a week. For information, visit www.straightahead.org or email marc@straightahead.org.

TUTORS NEEDED: Seeking volunteer tutors in Math, English, Arts/Comprehension for high school seniors to prepare for MCAS tests. Those eligible are: current/retired teachers, teachers' assistants, education students, experienced tutors. Call Lauri Murphy, 781-932-5520.

UPPER MERRIMACK VALLEY MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS: Medical and non-medical volunteers who would like to join the local MRC unit are invited to call Nancy Burns, Coordinator, at 978-399-2549 or Sandy Collins, Director, at 978-399-2908; or e-mail

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

OPINION: Time To Flip The Federal Disaster Equation

By Garret Graves, US Rep. from Louisiana's 6th district

Gonzales (LA) Weekly Citizen, June 11, 2016

June is upon us, bringing with it the things we love about summer in South Louisiana: longer days, snowballs, cicadas buzzing in the background and maybe a family trip to the beach. It's also the time of year to keep a watchful eye on the Gulf of Mexico as we're making plans to beat the heat – June 1 is the official start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season. Despite the unusual, 9 year drought of Category 3 storms making US landfall, Louisiana natives know that the run of luck can't hold forever.

The Congressional Budget Office recently released a report predicting that federal costs associated with hurricane damage could rise 39% in coming decades, attributing the increase to climate conditions and development trends along our nation's coast. Regardless what the exact figures turn out to be, we know it won't get cheaper – that's why I've been outspoken about shifting the federal paradigm on disaster management and community resilience.

We've spent hundreds of billions of dollars on disaster response as a country, but a fraction of that could have been spent to prevent damages. Multiple government and independent reports show that every one dollar invested in prevention and resiliency saves as much as four dollars in disaster response costs. But our government is stuck on stupid: instead of making these investments on the frontend, it's dead-set on this broken process of coming in after a disaster and spending exponentially more dollars. We have to break this cycle and redesign policies around resiliency to stop hemorrhaging billions of dollars after the fact – that approach is wasteful and leaves our communities, economies and ecosystems just as susceptible as they were before the event.

Earlier this year, I supported House passage of a bill reauthorizing the programs and activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and we worked hard to ensure that it included language to lay the groundwork for a paradigm shift. The bill commissions an assessment of trends in disaster losses—their causes and amounts—and requires the agency to submit recommendations to Congress on how to reduce losses and produce savings for taxpayers. Last month, we advanced legislation authorizing US Army Corps of Engineers programs and included provisions to accelerate completion timelines for water resources development projects critical to the structural resiliency of our communities. The bill also empowers local entities and cuts costly bureaucratic barriers that impede the progress of these projects – like the 44-year study of the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Project, which is now finally set to be authorized.

Despite advancements in the world around them, agencies like FEMA and the Corps of Engineers largely operate today the same way they have since their inception. For example, FEMA was established at the end of the 1970's to coordinate response efforts in the wake of disasters and mostly applies the same, decades-old mentality in 2016. But static solutions will never fix dynamic problems – like the rapidly changing conditions along Louisiana's coast. Coordinating relief efforts is absolutely important, but it's only one component of how we ought to be thinking about disaster management and should not be the core mission of our federal disaster agency. Its core mission should be prevention, i.e., "how can we best invest today to prepare for and reduce the severity and expense of inevitable natural occurrences?"

Why is changing the approach so difficult? You know the answer: government is change averse. Self-preservation and bureaucratic complacency have a vice grip on the status quo. But the status quo is preventing better service for taxpayers who want and should demand better – and it's putting people in harm's way.

Unlike what's brewing in the Gulf, a disturbance in Washington is exactly what we need, and being an agent of that change gets me out of bed in the morning. We're going to untangle this bureaucracy and make government work – one agency at a time.

How Hillary Clinton And Chuck Schumer Are Teaming Up With The NYPD To Push Police Militarization

By Sarah Lazare

AlterNet, June 9, 2016

Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton are teaming up with the NYPD to request high levels of funding for a federal "counter-terror" program that is directly bankrolling the militarization of police forces nationwide. To secure the funds, they are invoking the threat of terrorism and exploiting the climate of fear and incitement that has come to define the 2016 election cycle.

At issue is the the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), which was created in 2003 as a Department of Homeland Security grant program aimed at assisting "high-threat, high-density Urban Areas in efforts to build and sustain the capabilities necessary to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism." From 2003 through 2015, at least $8.9 billion from taxpayers have been distributed in the form of UASI grants.

In reality, the program funds initiatives that contribute to blatant law enforcement overreach, including a police militarization and weapons expo known as Urban Shield and the training of SWAT teams across the country. According to the War Resisters League, which contributed research to this report, UASI effectively "strengthens and unifies state repression."

In his proposal for next year's federal budget, President Obama requested cuts to DHS's funding of UASI from $600 million in fiscal year 2016 to $330 million in 2017, arguing that counter-terror funds are sufficiently provided elsewhere. A broad coalition of human rights organizations called this move a "step in the right direction."

The Obama administration's call for reductions provoked a fierce backlash, with the mayor of New York, Bill de Blasio, joining with NYPD police commissioner Bill Bratton to demand high levels of funding by casting the city as a "top terror target."

Buoyed by support from Clinton, Schumer announced in a press statement in late May that he has successfully restored the UASI funds to the proposed Homeland Security budget. Schumer declared, "UASI is the cornerstone of effective preparedness and prevention against terror attacks and in an era of rising terror threats, our support for anti-terror programs should not be falling."

The tussle over funding comes amid mounting concerns over police impunity. At a time when Black Lives Matter protests have forced public scrutiny of police militarization and killings of African Americans, politicians and police leaders are using the supposedly imminent threat of terror to bulk up their budgets and subvert a national conversation about the proper allocation of public resources.

"Ticking Time Bomb Mentality"

UASI grants do not exclusively fund police; they also finance first responders like firefighters when they can show that a "nexus to terrorism exists." A FEMA spokesperson told AlterNet that the agency is unable to immediately provide a breakdown of what percentage of the recipients are law enforcement agencies.

Lara Kiswani, executive director of the Arab Resource and Organizing Center, explained in an interview with AlterNet: “If you want to fund emergency response, fund emergency response. We do not believe UASI is intended for that at all.”

Kiswani’s suspicion is understandable. A 2011 report from the National UASI Association, which describes itself as a “nonprofit composed of UASI Programs,” notes that, “From 2003 to 2010, Urban Areas spent approximately $623 million to support terrorism prevention capabilities. Much of this funding has focused on enhancing intelligence collection, analysis and sharing with fusion centers playing a key role in the process.”

Such centers, which operate as ill-defined counter-terrorism spying and intelligence gathering hubs, have conducted warrantless surveillance on Occupy activists and Muslim-American communities. “Fusion centers have long been an issue that Congress keeps pouring money into without comprehensive oversight or accountability,” Michael German, a fellow for the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law School, told AlterNet. “Because their focus is on intelligence, their threat to civil liberties is enormous and the ability to check abuse is almost nonexistent.”

But it gets worse. Craig Dziedzic, general manager for the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative, noted this year that the funds continue to bankroll Urban Shield, which he described as “an annual full-scale exercise, which is conducted throughout the Bay Area UASI region for 48 hours.” Urban Shield brings together international SWAT teams, weapons manufacturers and police agencies to Alameda County, Calif. for a war games and arms sales extravaganza human rights campaigners say illustrates the epitome of state violence. The event has met such stiff resistance from local residents and activists that in 2014 its weapons expo was kicked out of Oakland.

UASI is also funneling money into SWAT teams across the country, from Macomb, Michigan to Boston, Massachusetts. According to a 2012 report from Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), “Keene, New Hampshire, with a population just over 23,000 and a police force of 40, set aside UASI funds to buy a BearCat armored vehicle.” Coburn pointed out that UASI funds bankrolled first responders’ $1,000-per-person attendance at a training that included a workshop where actors dressed as zombies were gunned down “to simulate a real-life terrorism event.”

FEMA says that, in fiscal year 2016, 29 urban areas were deemed eligible for funds according to “an analysis of relative risk of terrorism.” The New York City area is by far the largest recipient of UASI funds, which finance the NYPD’s 500-officer Critical Response Command, a permanent counter-terror unit whose cars are “fitted to hold Colt M4 semiautomatic assault rifles,” according to New York Times reporter David Goodman.

UASI is helping expand and arm “counter-terror” policing in a city whose top police officer, Bratton, used public fear over terrorism in the wake of the Paris, Brussels and San Bernardino attacks to press for the expansion of police powers, including access to phone data. Some complain that his department has treated Black Lives Matter protesters like a terrorist threat. According to Josmar Trujillo, a writer and organizer with New Yorkers Against Bratton, “They are using this ticking time bomb mentality, where the mysterious threat of terrorism is always there and at any moment we could all die, so you have to rush to make decisions and bypass civil rights and human rights.”

AlterNet reached out to DHS but was unable to locate an official willing to speak on the record. The NYPD did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

“Nexus to Terror”

What is the system-wide impact of financially incentivizing disaster response rooted in counter-terror measures, in a country that has been fighting a nebulous war on terror for nearly 15 years?

In a letter to U.S. senators, 35 grassroots groups, including the American Friends Service Committee, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and Center for Constitutional Rights, argued that “by requiring training supported by these federal funds to contain a ‘nexus to terrorism,’ UASI serves to fuel the dangerous culture of aggression so rampant in U.S. police departments. UASI also creates a structural bond between militarized law enforcement and vital emergency response resources and workers.”

Notably, the congressional fight over UASI funding comes at a time when social movements are demanding accountability for police violence and racism and calling for alternatives to mass incarceration. Even Clinton claims to be disavowing her track record of supporting “tough on crime” and “war on drugs” policies, yet she is invoking the threat of terror to back high levels of UASI funding. “We need it, we need it, I want it,” Clinton said of UASI funding in an April interview with reporters for the

New York Daily News. “I don’t agree with the Obama administration on that.”

Kiswani claimed that “politicians are exploiting the climate of fear of Muslims and racism against Arabs in order to further programs like UASI so that they can use them to further exploit other communities of color. I think the war on terror has consistently been used to further the already-existing oppressive structures in the United States. This is no different than the way that the war on drugs has been used.”

Data shows that there is already tremendous overlap between the war on terror and the war on drugs. Of the wiretaps granted by state and federal courts in 2013, nearly 90 percent were used for drug investigations, with drug wiretaps almost tripling between 2003 and 2013.

UASI is just one piece of a much larger patchwork of federal initiatives that militarize police departments, including the 1033 program, which allows the Department of Defense to transfer weapons of war to state and local law enforcement agencies.

“Time after time we’ve seen how programs like UASI feed on cultures of fear to further militarization around the country and the world,” Tara Tabassi, national organizer for the War Resisters League, told AlterNet. “But we’ve also learned how being SWAT raided or teargassed by law enforcement, compels us to build movements across communities—working together to build a demilitarized world.”

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

ABC: Severe Weather. ABC World News Tonight (6/23, lead story, 2:50, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "And we begin tonight with the urgent water rescues now under way. Families trapped in rising waters. An entire community under water. And now fears that a toddler, a little boy, was swept away. These pictures coming in near Richwood, West Virginia. You can see the shopping center there. Water several feet high. Cars nearly disappearing. Also tonight, the new number just in. At least 10 confirmed tornadoes. This one touching down in Illinois. Chief Meteorologist Ginger Zee with the track as this system now moves into the East. But first, ABC's Alex Perez with the rescue efforts and the state of emergency just declared." ABC (**Perez**) added, "Tonight, torrential rains sending a muddy wall of water down a Richwood, West Virginia, street. Evacuations under way. The entire town engulfed. Officials declaring a state of emergency. Worries that a nearby dam could breech." **Leslie Rubin**, WCHS-TV: "They are looking for a four-year-old boy. He was washed away." **Perez**: "Reports of a four-year-old child swept away by floodwaters. All part of the same powerful storm that brought hours of fear to the Heartland." **Unidentified speaker**: "Just a thin snake coming out of the sky." **Perez**: "Truckers forced to pull over in Buckley, Illinois." **Unidentified speaker**: "We've got to get off the highway. Big tornado." **Perez**: "A storm chaser in the thick of it, pummeled with debris. Multiple confirmed tornadoes, including this EF2, with winds up to 125 miles per hour, tearing an 11-mile path through Pontiac, Illinois. Mary Johnson says this mobile home flipped over three times. Luckily, everyone safe." **Unidentified speaker**: "It could have been so much worse." **Perez**: "At Chicago's Soldier Field, 50,000 fans at the Chile versus Columbia soccer match, scrambling for cover. And back here in Pontiac, even though the tornado crushed this gas station building, officials say several people who were seeking shelter here were lucky enough to walk away without any serious injuries. David?" **David Muir**: "All right, well, that's good news, but we are thinking about that family and that toddler tonight. Alex, thank you. Let's get right to Ginger, because unfortunately these next few hours could be very dangerous." **Ginger Zee**, ABC News Chief Meteorologist: "Every time I refresh the storm reports, I'm coming up with something up with something new. So a landslide now on Interstate 79, just out of Charleston, is the very latest. You can see the tornado watch and severe thunderstorm watches that stretch from parts of Kentucky to North Carolina. The flash flooding is the imminent threat, for sure, along with those damaging winds. And of course, the isolated tornado that could come out of this. You see the flash flood watch because this area has already had upwards of eight inches of rain. These trailing thunderstorms, the ones that keep coming, line after line, David, is what we're concerned about tonight. West Virginia finally starts clearing out after midnight. But that's not good for Knoxville, all the way to parts of North Carolina. And look, tomorrow, the low does the same thing. Another severe weather day." **Muir**: "All right, watching it again tomorrow. Ginger, thank you."

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (6/23, story 4, 0:20, Holt, 16.61M) reported, "A state of emergency has just been declared in two West Virginia counties, where heavy rains are causing devastating floods, rock slides, and mudslides. Much of Richwood, a city about two hours east of Charleston, is under water. The storms also took down trees and power lines, knocking out service to tens of thousands."

CBS: Severe Weather. The CBS Evening News (6/23, story 3, 0:20, Pelley, 11.17M) reported, "Well, severe storms pounded the middle Atlantic states today. In Ravenswood, West Virginia, a toddler was swept away by flood waters. The governor declared a flood emergency. 40,000 homes and businesses lost power. In Allegheny County, Virginia, streets turned into rivers. Police were warning people to stay off the roads."

At Least 6 Tornado Touchdowns Confirmed In Northern Illinois

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

CHICAGO — Illinois officials and residents began assessing damage Thursday after eight tornadoes damaged rural communities in the northern part of the state amid powerful storms that swept across the Upper Midwest.

The National Weather Service said an EF2 tornado with estimated top wind speeds of 115-125 mph cut a path more than 11 miles long and about four football fields wide into the city of Pontiac on Wednesday night. Officials said at least seven people were injured in that tornado.

An EF2 tornado with top wind speeds of 116 mph cut an 8-mile path from Marseilles to Seneca. Weaker tornadoes struck Cissna Park, Ottawa, Troy Grove, West Brooklyn, Mazon and a rural area 5 miles northwest of Ottawa. No injuries resulted from those storms.

"We are fortunate things are not worse and are thankful there were no fatalities," Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner said in a Thursday morning statement.

In the Pontiac area, about two dozen homes — 10 to 15 outside of the city and 13 within the city limits — and nine commercial businesses were damaged, according to Pontiac Fire Chief Scott Runyon.

"Most of the residential reports ranged from minor shingle damage and tree damage, to pretty extensive window repair and holes, but trees did most of the damage to the residential homes," Runyon said during a news conference, The Daily Leader newspaper in Pontiac reported.

"Some of the commercial buildings were reporting relatively minor damage, but the majority of the reports are fairly severe. It's going to take a great deal of money to get these repaired," Runyon said.

The storm system produced dime-sized hail in some areas, and its high winds snapped trees, blew roofs off buildings and downed power lines. The weather service reported winds from 80 mph to 100 mph in some parts of northern Indiana.

The northwestern Indiana town of Brookston, among those buffeted by the high winds, declared a state of emergency Thursday after the entire town lost power. WLFI-TV reported two state highways in the town were blocked by storm debris, and authorities were warning people to avoid the area.

"The wind was so ferocious you couldn't have stood out in it at all," Brookston resident Steve Hall told WLFI. "This tulip (poplar) tree behind me was a healthy young tree and (the wind) just twisted it and laid it over like a pretzel."

A 100 mph wind gust was recorded in the nearby town of Battle Ground, the weather service said.

Firefighters responded to reports of people trapped in a house in Seneca, Illinois, after a tornado moved through the village about 70 miles southwest of Chicago. No injuries were reported.

Jeff Maierhofer said he huddled in a basement with his wife, two children and seven neighbors when the storm arrived. He said his farm was badly hit.

"Nobody's hurt. Everybody's fine. All the neighbors are fine. Everybody checked in with everybody. But there's a lot of damage," Maierhofer told WLS-TV.

In nearby Serena, Nate Hermann said he drove his pickup truck around 10 square miles and found farmland "wiped out everywhere."

"Lines are down, trees are down, corn is flat everywhere," he told the Chicago Tribune.

A strong band of thunderstorms forced a two-hour delay in Chile's 2-0 victory over Colombia in the Copa America semifinal at Soldier Field, the home of the Chicago Bears football team. Fans sheltered beneath the stands until the danger passed. Fans also were told to take shelter at Target Field, home of the Minnesota Twins, before their game against the Philadelphia Phillies resumed after a 70-minute delay.

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Heavy Rains, Severe Storms Damage Some North Dakota Crops

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

FARGO, N.D. (AP) – Another week of heavy rainfall has drowned out some crops in northeastern North Dakota, while the southwestern part of the state received some much-needed moisture.

The Agriculture Department says in its weekly crop report that up to 4 inches of rain was reported in the northeast. The impact of the flooding won't be known until later.

The report also says that while the southwest got needed rain, storms also brought strong winds and hail, damaging some crops.

The condition of the state's staple spring wheat crop is still rated 82 percent good to excellent.

Pasture and range conditions statewide are rated 66 percent good to excellent. Stock water supplies are 87 percent adequate to surplus.

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Flash Flooding Damaged Woodbury County Spans, Engineer Says

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

SIOUX CITY, Iowa (AP) – Authorities say flash flooding has damaged one Woodbury County bridge beyond repair and heavily damaged another.

County engineer Mark Nahra told county supervisors Tuesday that creek flooding moved the Haskel Avenue bridge three feet off its abutments, according to the Sioux City Journal (http://bit.ly/28QGjWf).

"Even though it didn't go anywhere, it's a total loss. It cannot be repaired," Nahra said.

He estimated the replacement cost will be between $600,000 and $650,000 for that bridge and between $650,000 and $700,000 to repair the heavily damaged 170th Street bridge.

Some area farmers reported up to a foot of rain from Friday's storms, which swelled McElhaney and Wolf creeks.

Nahra estimated the county sustained between $1.5 million and $1.6 million in storm damage and cleanup and restoration costs.

"I would say it's going to take us two weeks to get the road tops completely restored," he said.

Emergency management coordinator Michelle Skaff said she's asked all 15 county cities about damage to public property so she can determine whether the county would qualify for a presidential disaster declaration and funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

For such aid, Skaff said, two thresholds must be met: The county must have sustained at least $365,000 in damage, and the state must have sustained at least $4.3 million in damage.

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Floodwatch Underway At Metro's Cleveland Park Stop After Earlier Rushing Water Problem

By Dana Hedgpeth

Washington Post, June 23, 2016

With heavy rains hitting Washington Thursday morning, there was a flood watch of sorts underway at the Cleveland Park Metro stop after the station experienced heavy flooding from another storm earlier this week.

On Twitter, Michael Marriott was tracking the morning commute at the stop, as crews were seen trying to unclog a drain and a worker used a squeegee to keep the water back. The Cleveland Park stop's flooding issue has its own hashtag — #ClevelandParkFloodWatch.

On Tuesday, the station had what many riders described as a 'Noah's Ark'-like experience when water gushed into an escalator and stairwell at the station during a heavy rain storm.

The stop closed for nearly two hours Tuesday until the water was drained and cleared. Metro officials had said the station was "prone to flooding because it is at the bottom of a hill."

"In these extreme weather conditions, we get flash flooding," according to Metro spokeswoman Sherri Ly.

On Thursday morning, Marriott joked on Twitter that crews were on hand to "handout life vests as needed" at the stop.

After Station Flood, D.C. Moves To Improve Drainage Near Cleveland Park Metro

By Faiz Siddiqui

Washington Post, June 23, 2016

The District will make efforts to improve drainage near the Cleveland Park Metro station, after storms Tuesday swept a cascade of rain inside, flooding the upper level, city officials said Thursday.

D.C. Council member Mary M. Cheh (D-Ward 3), who represents Cleveland Park, outlined plans Thursday for the District to examine drainage and recommend ways to reduce runoff in the Connecticut Avenue corridor where the Metro station is located. Puddling and minor flooding has long been a problem in the area, which is replete with concrete surfaces that are impermeable to rainwater, but Tuesday's unprecedented flash flood prompted officials to act, Cheh said.

"This is something that I've been working on for some time, but the challenges of coordinating between three entities—DDOT, DC Water, and (Metro)– frustrated the process," Cheh said. "But, at long last, I think we're going to see some significant movement to address the problem."

The first phase of a design process for improvements, led by the District Department of Transportation, is set to begin within two months. The plans, which are expected to be devised over the next year, are expected to result in a better drainage system, rebuilt drainage structures and improved stormwater retention, according to Cheh, who chairs the council's Committee on Transportation and the Environment.

DDOT spokesman Terry Owens said the design phase of the project is estimated to cost about $600,000. The project is not new; DDOT has already met with the community and conducted a study of the area, Owens said, and the nine-month phase is part of a larger streetscape plan.

Cheh said the project also would involve raising Metro's vent shafts to levels less susceptible to flooding, adding that DDOT would work with Metro to assess any other design improvements that can be made.

Metro said Wednesday that it had federal grant money to raise the vent shaft at Cleveland Park, but the project is in the midst of an approval process involving regional planning commissions, and no timeline has been set.

This post has been updated.

100-acre Wildfire Contained In North Central Nevada

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

GABBS, Nev. (AP) — Fire crews in north-central Nevada have fully contained a 100-acre wildfire burning in a remote area north of Gabbs about 120 miles east of Carson City.

The Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center said Thursday a fire line has been drawn completely around the blaze that was burning in grass and brush near Lodi Valley.

The fire was reported shortly after 4 p.m. Wednesday.

Crews halted the advance of the flames overnight and remained on the scene Thursday mopping up and putting out hotspots.

No homes or structures were threatened. But fire officials cautioned that a "red flag warning" remains in effect until 9 p.m. Thursday due to gusty winds and low relative humidity.

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Central California Fire Burns Structures, Spurs Evacuation

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

LAKE ISABELLA, Calif. (AP) — A wildfire broke out Thursday and exploded in size, consuming at least 50 to 60 homes as it tore through several rural communities in Central California northeast of Bakersfield, authorities said.

The blaze broke out near Lake Isabella in late afternoon amid heat in the 90s and single-digit humidity, climbing over at least three ridges into hillside neighborhoods, Kern County fire Capt. Tyler Townsend said.

The fire has burned nearly four square miles, and about 1,000 homes are under threat.

Live video from fire officials at the scene showed hillside homes along dirt roads consumed by heavy flames in Squirrel Mountain Valley, a community of about 500 people. Some houses were already little more than embers on the ground, while others were deep in flames.

Smoky haze could be seen for miles around, and orange flames lit the evening air as planes and helicopters made drops on the blaze.

"I've never been in a wildland fire where I've seen so many homes burn," said Townsend, who has been in the area for nearly a decade. "It's one of the most devastating I've ever seen."

Many of the houses in the area have propane tanks, adding to the danger, he said.

The small rural communities of South Fork, Weldon, Onyx, Lakeland Estates, Yankee Canyon and Mountain Mesa were also under evacuation orders.

Some residents were refusing to evacuate, Townsend said.

There are also power and cellphone outages in the area.

Elsewhere in the state, cooler weather helped crews fighting two fires that burned more than 8 square miles of chaparral and brush in the Angeles National Forest and foothill communities northeast of Los Angeles. The fires were 15 percent contained.

More than 1,300 homes were evacuated during the 4-day-old blaze, but around half have been allowed back.

On Thursday, authorities let hundreds of evacuated residents return briefly to homes in Azusa and Duarte to gather belongings. Residents might not be allowed back permanently for several more days, officials said.

One of the fires broke out Monday when a car ran off a highway. No homes have burned.

Near the San Diego County border with Mexico, an 11-square-mile fire was 35 percent contained after burning five homes. A majority of evacuees were cleared to return at 6 p.m. Thursday.

A heat wave coupled with nightly wind gusts drove the fires earlier in the week before slightly cooler weather took hold. But National Weather Service forecasts warned red-flag conditions of extreme fire danger could return by evening.

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Red Flag Conditions Ahead For Southern California Amid Several Wildfires

By Joseph Serna And Nina Agrawal

Los Angeles Times, June 23, 2016

A short respite from triple-digit heat allowed crews battling several wildfires in Southern California to block the flames from destroying homes this week, but dangerous red flag fire conditions have returned, the National Weather Service said Thursday.

Temperatures in the Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara county mountains and valleys were expected to hover in the 90s Thursday, but they could climb into the 100s by the weekend while coinciding with a drop in humidity and strong wind gusts, NWS meteorologist Todd Hall said.

A red flag warning — meaning weather conditions are prime for a fast-moving, destructive wildfire — was in effect for the those three counties, while a heat advisory was expected in Orange, San Diego and Riverside counties, the weather service said. It will get worse through the weekend, Hall said.

Several wildfires have broken out across Southern California since a heat wave settled over the region late last week.

The San Gabriel Complex fire, a pair of wildfires burning in the San Gabriel Mountains above Duarte, began Monday and forced hundreds of evacuations.

"When we drove away, I thought we had a 50-50 chance of seeing our house again," said Roger Bosch, a Duarte resident.

On Wednesday, relief washed over the 73-year-old: He got to go home. Evacuations were lifted as conditions improved and firefighters increased containment of the two fires.

Of the 858 homes evacuated in the foothills areas, 534 households were allowed to return, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Capt. David Halm said. Mandatory evacuations remained in place for other parts of Duarte and Azusa, authorities said.

The fires have burned 5,235 acres and were 15% contained, officials said Thursday.

The battle against the flames was aided by cooler temperatures and higher humidity in the days following Monday's record-breaking heat, authorities said. Steep, challenging terrain presented a problem, said Mike Wakowski, the commander for the multiagency wildfire effort.

"We're trying to secure as much as possible before the next heat wave comes," Los Angeles County Fire Department Deputy Chief Vince Peña said Wednesday.

Conditions improved enough this week in Santa Barbara County that crews began leaving the Sherpa fire burning in the Santa Ynez Mountains and Los Padres National Forest. That fire has burned 7,486 acres and was 93% contained, the U.S. Forest Service said.

Three hot shot crews dropped onto the mountain earlier this week to help build defenses at the fire's most isolated points deep in the forest, the Forest Service said.

In San Diego County, firefighters have increased containment of the Border fire just north of the U.S.-Mexico border that prompted mandatory evacuations for the entire east county community of Potrero. The Border fire was about 20% contained and has burned 6,840 acres, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The Border fire has destroyed four outbuildings and left three firefighters with minor injuries. The cause is under investigation.

How Aerial Mapping Has Helped Contain San Gabriel Complex Fire

By Lucy Schouten

Christian Science Monitor, June 22, 2016

Reports called it "firenado" and a "heat wave blitzkrieg," but by Tuesday evening, firefighters had the information they needed to start containing the San Gabriel Complex Fire.

The weather helped, as firefighters took advantage of clear skies on Tuesday to employ aerial mapping and chart the fire's movement in real time, the Associated Press reported.

The Reservoir and Fish fires have been burning through the rugged foothills near Los Angeles since Monday, evolving quickly into a twin fire system that that firefighters are now combatting as a single, 4,900-acre wildfire as they work to keep the blaze away from people and property, the US Forest Service reported.

The wildfire shrank for the first time on Tuesday night, and firefighters ended the day with 10 percent containment on both fires.

Although private drones have been cited as a hazard to firefighting – California's legislature passed a bill punishing drone fliers who interfere with firefighting last year, although the governor vetoed the measure – aerial tools aid the efforts in significant ways. Jets and helicopters are flying hotshots into tough areas such as the California foothills while others pour gallons of red fire retardant on stubborn blazes.

Satellite and drone images are aiding firefighting strategy for the fires blazing throughout California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, providing both information about the fire's current location and the geographical detail to estimate where it could go next.

To this end, NASA developed a Rapid Response system in 2001. The system provides a way to connect satellite images from its Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) instrument on board the Terra research satellite with the firefighting work of the National Interagency Fire Center and the US Forest Service.

"By 2007, the Rapid Response System was producing data globally and had incorporated data and imagery from the MODIS instrument on the Aqua satellite," according to a NASA news release. "Users quickly realized that the imagery and data products produced by Rapid Response could be used for other tasks that required low latency products, including imagery for monitoring air quality, floods, dust storms, snow cover, agriculture, and for public education and outreach."

NASA has used MODIS to create satellite images of the San Gabriel Complex, which the forest and fire officials then use when deciding how to employ over 1,000 personnel currently working on the fire.

The aerial mapping strategy gives firefighters an extra edge toward containing the large fires, especially when they burn through steep or even inaccessible terrain.

"They are working so hard, it's excruciating with the heat, and up and down these hills, they're steep," Los Angeles County fire Capt. Mike McCormick told CBS News.

Despite the progress, evacuations will continue for at least one more night while firefighters work toward greater containment.

"We're looking at another night at least," US Forest Service spokesman Nathan Judy told CBS News. "We understand the stress it puts on families if you displace them from their homes, and we want to get them back as soon as we can."

Millions Of Dead Trees Pose Massive Wildfire Risk. What Can Be Done?

By Ben Rosen

Christian Science Monitor, June 23, 2016

Because of a historic five-year drought, warmer temperatures, and beetle infestation, 66 million trees have died in California since 2010, increasing the risk for disastrous wildfires, the US Forest Service said Wednesday.

In its announcement, the Forest Service demanded Congress allocate more money for firefighting so it doesn't have to.

"Unless Congress acts now to address how we pay for firefighting, the Forest Service will not have the resources necessary to address the forest die-off and restore our forests," said Tom Vilsack, secretary of the Department of Agriculture, the parent agency of the Forest Service, in a statement Wednesday.

"Forcing the Forest Service to pay for massive wildfire disasters out of its pre-existing fixed budget instead of from an emergency fund like all other natural disasters means there is not enough money left to do the very work that would help restore these high mortality areas. We must fund wildfire suppression like other natural disasters in the country."

The Forest Service spent 56 percent of its budget last year on fire management, compared to 16 percent in 1995. The Forest Service said 2015 was the most expensive fire season in its history, costing them more than $2.6 billion, according to The Sacramento Bee.

The Forest Service expects the combination of drought and bark-eating beetles to ravage more trees near California's Yosemite National Park and Lake Tahoe in the near future. As natural disaster attributed to climate change intensifies, the Forest Service's plea to Congress underscores a question the federal government has wrestled of late: Who is responsible (and should pay for) forest and wildlife management?

As firefighters contend with several early season wildfires across California, the Forest Service said it has found 26 million dead trees across 760,000 acres in the southern portion of the Eastern Sierra since October 2015. This is in addition to the 40 million trees it estimates died there from 2010 and late 2015. There are an estimated 3.9 billion trees in California.

The prevalent death of trees, in particular the death of pines and fires, is a straightforward story. The five-year drought and warmer temperatures have stressed the trees, even though California experienced historic rains this winter. The needles of drought-stricken pines weakened, leaving them incapable of secreting the sticky resin they need to fight off bark beetle infestations. Mild winters don't kill off as many insects. Bugs burrow beneath bark and into the tree's soft innards, which larvae feed on.

Officials expect more trees to die in the near future, and the rampant mortality to reach the northern Sierras.

"Tree dies-offs of this magnitude are unprecedented and increase the risk of catastrophic wildfires that puts property and lives at risk," said Mr. Vilsack, in his statement.

For years, the Forest Service has asked that fire management be funded like other natural disasters. Last year, a bipartisan coalition supported legislation that would have prevented the Forest Service from "cannablizing" its budget to fight wildfires, wrote Ryan Sabalow for The Sacramento Bee. But lawmakers couldn't agree on how much logging should be allowed in national forests.

Fire suppression isn't the only wildlife management service. At Yosemite National Park alone, more than half a billion dollars worth of repairs have been neglected, reports David Iaconangelo for The Christian Science Monitor.

Meanwhile, President Obama has overtaken former President Theodore Roosevelt, protecting 256 million acres of public land and water under the federal Antiquities Act, the Monitor's Josh Kenworthy reported.

However, more national parks, forests, and monuments comes with a price, one the Forest Service has said it pays for, drawing away from its ability to manage forests and plant trees.

Agency Enlists High-tech Help Keeping Drones From Wildfires

By Keith Ridler

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

BOISE, Idaho — When Brian Cresto and his fellow firefighters fly toward a wildfire at just a few hundred feet off the ground, he's scouting for the best spot for them to land when they parachute down.

Lately, he's also been keeping an eye out for hobby drones that could take out their twin-engine propeller craft before it climbs to 1,500 feet, where the eight smokejumpers exit.

"It's dangerous anytime you drop an aircraft down to a certain level," said Cresto, a smokejumper with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. "Drones are starting to be a part of that conversation."

Hobby drone ownership has spiked in recent years, and more and more of the devices have been spotted flying illegally over active wildfires, where they can endanger the airplanes and helicopters being used to battle the blazes.

It's a high-tech problem, and federal authorities are thinking high-tech to stop it: The U.S. Interior Department is working with drone makers and mapping companies to create a system that uses smartphone apps already on the market to quickly alert drone fliers to temporary flight restrictions at wildfires.

Initial attacks on a wildfire are crucial, but firefighting aircraft can't fly if a drone is in the restricted area because a collision could be catastrophic, officials say.

Retardant bombers and helicopters typically fly even lower than smokejumpers, at just above the trees or rooftops, and have little time to react in an emergency. A drone collision could take out an engine or break a windshield. The devices also can get sucked into a helicopter's intake or hit a rotor.

In just the past week, drone sightings have grounded aerial firefighters on three different days at a Utah blaze that has forced the evacuation of 100 homes. Utah Gov. Gary Herbert governor said those evacuations might have been avoided if not for the drones.

According to Federal Aviation Administration rules, hobby drones are limited to 400 feet above ground level and within sight of the operator. But internet videos show a stream of violators, including at wildfires.

"I've heard sometimes that at a wildfire, there might be 20, 30 guys out there flying their quadcopters," said Patrick Harper of the Meridian-based Idaho Drone Co.

Wildfires tend to attract spectators, including drone pilots who can use their devices to capture stunning aerial footage from a unique perspective.

Authorities across the U.S. recorded 20 incidents in which drones flew too close to wildfires last year, with more than half hindering firefighting efforts. It has happened again at least nine times so far this year.

In Utah, a helicopter pilot refused an assignment after one of the recent near-drone collisions, fire spokeswoman Carissa Silvis said. A $1,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the drone pilot's conviction.

On Thursday, hobby drones grounded flight operations at an Arizona fire where more than 15,000 people are under pre-evacuation notice.

The Interior Department hopes the new smartphone notifications will keep drone fliers at a safe distance. Its plan is to post data online that companies can start using in August to keep the notification apps up-to-date.

"It will be successful if we are able to provide real-time information and have it depicted on those mapping programs," said Brad Koeckeritz, the department's division chief for unmanned aircraft systems.

The next step is asking drone builders to make it possible for drone operators to activate systems that would automatically prevent a drone from entering temporarily restricted airspace, Koeckeritz said.

Idaho drone maker xCraft has a website intended to help drone fliers stay out of permanent no-fly zones, said JD Claridge, company co-founder and CEO. That kind of system likely is also possible for temporary flight restrictions at wildfires, he said.

"For safety concerns, I agree that it would be a good step forward to start creating some shield-fence algorithm inside the drones that would prevent them from flying where there are wildfires," he said.

But it should be an option for the drone flier, as some drones legally fly at wildfires, Claridge noted. Federal agencies are looking at drones for mapping fire perimeters, and are even developing drones to fight wildfires.

There's urgency to the Interior Department's plan because the FAA predicts 1.9 million hobby drones will be sold this year and as many as 4.3 million by 2020. Their popularity is due to falling prices and increasingly sophisticated onboard computer systems that make the devices easier to pilot, Harper said.

The FAA in December required drone operators to register crafts weighing between about half a pound and 55 pounds, meaning recovered drones could potentially be matched with their owners. And on Tuesday, the Obama administration created a new category of rules designed specifically for drones weighing less than 55 pounds, allowing commercial operators such real estate agents, farmers, filmmakers and others to fly them without special permission.

Those are steps in regulating drones, but Claridge and Harper said technology is still advancing faster than oversight.

Harper said hobby drone operators would do well to keep in mind some commonsense rules.

"If you're going to fly someplace that causes somebody danger," he said, "that's not a hobby anymore."

Dar Schmid works for Missoula, Montana-based Leading Edge Aviation and transports smokejumpers as a BLM contract pilot. He said pilots who fly into wildfires at low levels, including retardant bomber and helicopter pilots, often are navigating near mountains and dealing with heat and smoke.

They have too much going on in the cockpit to worry about drones and risk what he called task overload.

"You wouldn't know it was coming," Schmid said. "You'd just hit one, and the damage would be done."

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Lack Of Preparation For Massive Earthquake Could Bring Catastrophe, Report Says

By Rong-Gong Lin

Los Angeles Times, June 23, 2016

Southern California's smaller cities and large businesses must take the threat of a crippling earthquake far more seriously than they have been, a committee of business, public policy and utility leaders said Thursday, saying action is needed to "prevent the inevitable disaster from becoming a catastrophe."

Despite strides made by the city of Los Angeles to focus on earthquake safety, Southern California still faces significant threats that haven't been resolved.

One of the most ominous is the looming threat on the edge of Southern California's sprawling metropolis — the Cajon Pass. It's a narrow mountain pass where the San Andreas fault — California's longest and one of its most dangerous — intersects with combustible natural gas and petroleum pipelines, electrical transmission lines,train tracks and Interstate 15 north of San Bernardino.

A huge earthquake on the San Andreas could move one side of the fault as much as 30 feet from the other. Such an earthquake would rupture flammable pipelines and lead to a catastrophic explosion so powerful it leaves behind a crater.

And if utilities aren't able to shut off the flow of petroleum or natural gas, firefighters could be helpless to keep a raging wildfire from spreading across the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountains, just as the rest of Southern California staggers from the worst earthquake it has seen in more than 150 years.

There are solutions to these problems, said seismologist Lucy Jones, who advised the Southern California Disaster Risk Initiative Committee. But little has been done precisely because many people don't know the extent of the problems, and, if they do, fixing them seems so daunting.

"Don't fall into the trap of, 'It's so impossible, so we can't do anything,' or, 'We have to do everything.' Take a piece. Get it done. You're now better off. Go on to the next one," Jones said. "There's plenty that can be done."

Among those pushing for fixes are executives for Southern California Edison, the Southern California Gas Co., the Walt Disney Company, and Wells Fargo, along with the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, USC, the Port of Los Angeles and the Southern California Assn. of Governments.

Their pitch: create a Southern California Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative, intended to highlight the unresolved earthquake risks and convince decision makers to fix them. The group issued a report with recommendations on Thursday.

"It's easier to bury your head in the sand, but that's no longer an acceptable answer," said John Bwarie, the committee's project coordinator.

Here are five major threats Southern California faces that could imperil our ability to recover after a massive earthquake strikes the San Andreas fault, and how they could be fixed:

One way to reduce the risk of catastrophe at the Cajon Pass would be to put shutoff valves on both sides of the San Andreas fault on petroleum and natural gas pipelines. If the pipelines are automatically turned off during the earthquake, it could prevent huge amounts of fuel from being ignited if the pipelines break, Jones said. Officials say a big quake on the San Andreas is overdue.

Small changes can make a big difference. Jones recalled the meltdown of a Japanese nuclear power plant after a 9.0 earthquake and tsunami hit in 2011.

A meltdown might've been avoided had the backup cooling system's diesel fuel was stored at a higher elevation, keeping it functioning even after the tsunami hit, she said.

The reality is disturbing — burst water pipes could leave parts of Southern California without running water for six months. Natural gas pipelines can fuel dangerous city fires.

Some experts point out that it's impractical to retrofit all of Southern California's water pipes with earthquake-resistant, flexible versions in our lifetime. But even some retrofitting would help.

"Not every pipe in the systems needs to be quake-proof, but by targeting key lengths of pipe in the system, enough can be in place to address the firefighting needs of the region," the report said.

Installing more remote-control gas shut-off valves for natural gas transmission and high-pressure distribution pipelines would also help.

Many people don't know how bad the aftermath of a huge earthquake can be: "Water and power delivery systems could be off for weeks, housing for tens of thousands could be damaged," the report said, an event far worse than experienced by veterans of the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

Large businesses need to develop a plan for getting back to work as quickly as possible. The worst-case scenario would be that major industries, such as aerospace, give up and leave Southern California if the region remains dysfunctional for too long.

That means businesses like banks need to know how to get their branches running as quickly as possible, perhaps by installing backup generators and keeping caches of emergency supplies on site.

If it's too hard to have a home improvement chain keep all of its branches open in, say, Granada Hills, Northridge and Chatsworth, perhaps one plan would be to keep just the Northridge store operational, Bwarie said.

A key factor that could determine what neighborhoods survive and which ones are abandoned after an earthquake is how well the neighborhood works together to recover, instead of giving up and leaving town.

Southern California, unfortunately, has a reputation for neighbors not knowing each other.

But things can be done to help establish a sense of community, such as cities encouraging block parties or organizing people to check in on each other after an earthquake.

One idea Jones is working on at her own church is creating a system in which people are assigned to check on each other after an earthquake hits, and complete a drill on that annually.

The city of Los Angeles has moved ahead on requiring apartments and concrete buildings at risk of collapse to be retrofitted, but most of Southern California's vast suburbs have not followed suit.

In fact, there are cities that haven't even done what Los Angeles began in the 1980s: requiring the retrofit of deadly brick buildings, whose bricks turn into projectiles in even slight shaking. The two women who died in the 2003 San Simeon earthquake in Paso Robles died as the facade of an unretrofitted brick building collapsed.

Another problem: The minimum standard for new buildings permits them to be so severely damaged in an earthquake that it might need to be torn down. The only requirement is that people not be killed by that building in an earthquake.

"Cities have to ask themselves: Are you approving buildings that are designed to fail — but won't kill anyone? That doesn't do much for our economy," Bwarie said.

The committee suggests creating a uniform standard that would make it easier for building owners to choose higher levels of minimum safety, such as a building that would remain in operation even after a significant earthquake.

"Southern California's vulnerability to natural disasters demands that we look forward and prepare," Hasan Ikhrata, executive director of the Southern California Assn. of Governments, said in a statement. "It is critical to our economy, and to the 18 million residents in the region."

11:25 a.m. Updated with more information about San Andreas.

FEMA HOUSING

No stories for this edition

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

No stories for this edition

MITIGATION

N.J. River Town Finds Relief In Completion Of $100M Flood Control Project

By Dave Hutchinson

New Jersey Local News, June 23, 2016

BOUND BROOK — Nearly 17 years after deadly flooding from Hurricane Floyd decimated Bound Brook, a massive $100 million system of levees, flood gates and pumping stations in the small borough has finally been deemed finished.

The completion of the Bound Brook portion of the $330 million Green Brook Flood Damage Reduction Project brings both a sense of security to the town and has financial implications for homeowners, said Mayor Robert Fazen.

"This is a great thing for Bound Brook," Fazen said. "The entire borough is going to benefit. Developers will look at Bound Brook differently."

As of July 18, roughly 500 residences and businesses once located in flood zones will no longer be required to have flood insurance, said Fazen. The annual insurance cost to homeowners was between $4,000 and $5,000 a year, he said.

Fazen said the change in flood zone designation could result in an increase of 15 to 20 percent in property values and spark a renewed interest in development for the 1.7 square-mile borough.

Fazen said plans for 300 new apartments have been approved by the zoning board and another 700 new apartments are in the planning stages. He said expects the population to grow 10 to 20 percent from its approximately 10,000.

"We're going to need new restaurants and stores to serve our new population," he said. "This is an exciting time for Bound Brook."

Flood project keeps Hurricane Irene from becoming another Floyd

The borough is hosting a public meeting on Monday at 7:30 p.m. at Bound Brook High School to review the project with representatives from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The federal officials will release a revised flood map and answer any questions.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Somerset County Engineering and Public Works and Bound Brook officials will also attend the meeting.

Columbia City Council Approves 2016–2017 Budget And Receives Update On Flood Recovery

By Josh Cruse

Columbia (SC) Star, June 24, 2016

The Columbia City Council held its monthly meeting Tuesday, June 21.

Council approved the second reading of the 2016/2017 budget, which takes affect July 1. The second reading included a budget without the proposed four percent rate increase to water and sewer.

Council chose at the previous meeting to not include the rate hike. While he voted in favor of the budget, Mayor Steve Benjamin did not agree with council's decision not to include a rate increase.

"It's short sighted; it's misguided. It's a mistake," Benjamin said.

Councilman Moe Baddourah, who voted against the rate increase, commented it was Benjamin's opinion that doing away with the increase was a mistake.

Without the rate increase, the amount of funding for water capital improvement projects was decreased from $60 million to $ 40 million. The sewer capital improvement projects funds remained at $ 80 million. To reduce the amount to $40 million, staff had to cut projects to Chapin, Longtown Road, and Horseshoe BPS improvements. The funds for unforeseen projects were also cut from $1.3 million to $100,000.

Missy Gentry, assistant city manager, said developers on some of the sites cut from the budget may express their concerns to council in the future.

Benjamin said $312,000 has been allocated to Hospitality Tax.

Keely Thibideaux, with Landmark Consulting, provided an update on the historic flood recovery.

Thibideaux said the current funding sources being explored are the FEMA Public Assistance Grant, the FEMA 406 Hazard Mitigation Grant, the CDBG-Disaster Recovery Grant, the 404 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the NRCS Waterway Debris Removal Grant, and the Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program. The State of South Carolina is also responsible for a 25 percent match for large projects.

Other potential funding sources include the Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant Program and the Five-year Hazard Mitigation Plan. The estimated total for the 404 Mitigation is $165 million.

The city can access a $ 19.89 million HUD grant for repairs. A risk analysis and implementation plan must be submitted by July 22. Council also has to submit a final action plan to HUD by September 15. Approval of the plan takes no longer than 45 days after it has been submitted. All the funds from HUD must be expended within six years of the grant execution.

The estimated total for the NRCS is $1.2 million. The cost is for six sites, including Trenholm Road to Woodlake Road and Smith Creek– upstream of Sunset Drive. A 25 percent funding match is required. A project agreement and a detailed update will be provided to council at the July meeting.

Thibideaux said the Lost Creek Bridge will reopen Wednesday, June 22.

She reported over 200 property owners sent in letters of interest for property acquisition based on repetitive loss. So far, 61 property owners have responded to letters of interest involving acquisition or elevation; 34 acquisition applications have been submitted and 21 elevation applications.

Thibideaux anticipates eight to ten FEMA obligated projects by the end of the month.

The 404 Mitigation application has to be submitted by August 18.

She also anticipates the start of the design process for the canal.

In other news, Hernan Villalba has been appointed to the Climate Protection Action committee.

Council approved a resolution designating the Wheeler Hill Neighborhood as a residential parking permit district. Council also approved the first reading of an ordinance granting a franchise to Keyser Concessions for operation of a stationary sidewalk vending car on the northwest corner of Main and Washington Streets.

The second reading of a zoning map amendment for 1829, 1859, and 1863 West Buchanan Drive was approved by a vote of 4-2. Baddourah and Benjamin voted against the ordinance, while Reverend Ed McDowell Jr., Howard Duvall, Sam Davis, and Tameika Isaac Devine voted for the amendment.

The next Columbia City Council meeting will be Tuesday, July 19 at 1737 Main Street, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Engineer: Two County Bridges "Total Loss" After Friday's Storm

By Ian Richardson

Sioux City (IA) Journal, June 23, 2016

SIOUX CITY | Flash flooding during Friday's severe storms has damaged two bridges in northern Woodbury County beyond repair, according to county officials.

On Tuesday, County Engineer Mark Nahra told county supervisors that flash flooding in McElhaney and Wolf creeks permanently damaged two county bridges, one on 170th Street between Jewell and Jasper avenues and another on Haskel Avenue.

That area of the county received 7 to 12 inches of rainfall, according to local farmers.

"The Haskel Bridge has been moved about three feet off of its abutments," Nahra said Tuesday. "Even though it didn't go anywhere, it's a total loss. It cannot be repaired."

Nahra said the estimated cost to rebuild the bridges would be between $650,000 and $700,000 for the 170th Street bridge and between $600,000 and $650,000 for the Haskel Avenue bridge. Repairing the bridges would require an amendment to the county's fiscal year 2017 program, he said.

Nahra said he and county supervisor Larry Clausen surveyed the bridge damage Wednesday.

In all, Nahra estimates the county sustained between $1.5 million and $1.6 million in damages from the Friday night storm. Along with the bridges, the estimate includes loss of gravel, debris cleanup and worker overtime hours. Nahra said county crews are continuing their work to clean up.

"I would say it's going to take us two weeks to get the road tops completely restored," he said.

Woodbury and Plymouth counties are continuing to assess the damage to see if they qualify for a presidential disaster declaration and funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

For Woodbury County to qualify for funding, Emergency Management Coordinator Michelle Skaff said two thresholds must be met: The county must have sustained at least $365,000 in damage, and the state must have sustained at least $4.3 million in damage.

Skaff said she has asked all 15 cities within the county about any significant damage sustained to public property and is working on collecting the information.

"We're On Our Own": Sutton Residents Take Matanuska River Erosion Into Their Own Hands

By Daniella Rivera

KTVA-TV Anchorage (AK), June 23, 2016

SUTTON –

A neighborhood in Sutton has watched their properties wash away for years, as the Matanuska River inches closer to their homes. It's a decades-old problem they say grows more urgent by the day, and they want help from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the state. But changing a natural force like a meandering glacial river is complicated.

"The last two years, previous, it's been terrible," said Donnah-Rae Devernon-Pearson.

She says the Matanuska River used to be at least half a mile away from her home, but over the years it's moved in closer, carrying pieces of her upstream neighbors' lives with it.

Wednesday, an old pickup truck showed up in the river in front of her house. Another piece of debris the river has picked up along the way and carried with it.

"It's just difficult to live with it," said Devernon-Pearson.

And the borough says it's complicated to fix because it's a state-owned river, meaning anyone who wants to clean it up or move debris has to have a special permit.

Any changes made to protect homes like Devernon-Pearson's could hurt someone else downstream.

"So what do you do?" asked Devernon-Pearson. "Come up with something creative. That's what my husband did."

They can't legally touch the river, but the couple decided they could build a makeshift dike — a long wall to prevent flooding — on their private property. Her husband placed four large metal boxes filled with rocks on land upstream. As the water has eroded that land, the boxes have helped redirect the water away from several homes. But even those boxes are moving under the force of the current.

A little farther upstream from the boxes is another reminder of the river's power. Rushing water has eaten away what was once a yard behind a now empty home, carving out the bank and carrying it downstream.

Devernon-Pearson says she never knows what to expect to see in the river.

"There is, two years ago, there was actually a roof that was out down by our house that had floated down."

Hot summer days make glacial rivers rise. The borough says that river has already been at flood levels this summer.

Borough spokesperson Patty Sullivan said the borough emergency manager is constantly watching for dangerous conditions. She also said it's difficult for the borough to get involved because the land is privately-owned, and the river is state-owned.

She says they've been able to use funds from FEMA to buy out residents losing their land in the past but wasn't able to say if that is a current option for residents.

KTVA wasn't able to immediately reach someone with the state for comment.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

House Panel OKs $41B Homeland Security Discretionary Budget For FY 2017

By Jane Edwards

ExecutiveGov, June 23, 2016

The House Appropriations Committee has passed by a voice vote a bill that would allocate $41.1 billion in discretionary funds to the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2017.

The committee said Wednesday the DHS appropriations bill would authorize $7.3 billion in funds to help the Federal Emergency Management Agency perform emergency response and disaster relief operations.

The proposed legislation shows a $100 million increase from the enacted discretionary budget for FY 2016 and contains five amendments approved by the full panel through a voice vote.

One of the amendments was introduced by Rep. John Carter (R-Texas) and seeks to provide FEMA with $49 million in additional funds to support a local grant program that aims to counter violent extremism and terrorist attacks.

The vote comes two weeks after the House committee introduced the bill.

The proposed legislation would authorize $11.2 billion in funds for the Customs and Border Protection, $10.3 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard, $5.9 billion for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and $7.6 billion for the Transportation Security Administration, according to the bill's summary.

The bill also includes $1.8 billion in budget for the National Protection and Programs Directorate's cybersecurity programs, $1.9 billion for the U.S. Secret Service and $119.1 million for the Citizenship and Immigration Services' E-Verify platform.

Public Transportation Safety Challenged By Funding Issues

By Belle Hillenburg

Homeland Security Today, June 23, 2016

Time limits on grant funding have left several organizations within the US public transportation sector unable to continue to increase safety procedures and emergency preparedness across public transit systems.

Panelists spoke Tuesday at a field hearing held in New Jersey by the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications to address concerns surrounding grant requirements for major surface transportation systems and to discuss the importance of increasing the safety of surface transportation systems, specifically in the New York and New Jersey areas.

US surface transportation systems serve over 28 million riders daily and over 10 billion riders annually. Surface transportation includes mass transit systems, pipelines, passenger and freight railroads, motor carrier operators, highways and maritime facilities.

Training emergency responders to respond to attacks on these systems is increasingly important to counter potential threats posed by terrorists, active shooters and natural disasters.

Richard Sposa, Chief of EMS Operations at Jersey City Medical Center and RWJBarnabas Health, testified that funding from grants has increased the capability of Emergency Medical Services and hospitals to respond to mass casualty events, pandemic events and acts of terrorism.

"We are cognizant of the limited resources available and the difficult decisions that you must make in Congress on how to allocate resources," Sposa said. "However, because of the changing landscape, we are hopeful that the recent trend to reduce homeland security grants, is reversed."

Subcommittee Chairman Dan Donovan (R-NY) cited the March 2016 terrorist attacks in Brussels--which left 32 dead in a metro station and international airport--as an example of the increasing need for public transportation safety procedures and enhanced first responder training in the United States.

"Since 2002, authorities have thwarted six terrorist plots against mass transit systems in the United States," Donovan said. "Alarmingly, five out of those six plots were against systems serving the New York metropolitan region."

Surface transportation system safety protocol is most often the responsibility of system owners and operators, unlike the aviation sector, which is heavily federally regulated.

Thomas Belfiore, Chief Security Officer of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, said the timeline for grant funding prohibits the ability to create and implement large scale projects that would increase public transportation safety.

Public awareness campaigns and security equipment such as cameras are often funded by grants. These grants are awarded with timelines for implementation preventing organizations from executing larger scale planning and projects.

Belfiore said the period of performance for grants is currently three years and would be more effective if increased to five years to allow industry officials to create more effective security projects.

“A critical resource is the federal grant funding program. This funding source is essential to help us continue to protect our facilities from evolving threats,” Belfiore said.

Furthermore, Director of the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security of Jersey City, New Jersey Sgt. W. Greg Kierce said surface transportation cannot be protected in the same way commercial aviation is protected due to the need to keep costs low and accessibility and convenience high.

“The deployment of metal detectors, X-ray machines, explosive sniffers, and armed guards, which have become features of the landscape at airports, cannot be transferred easily to subway stations or bus stops,” Kierce said. “The delays would be enormous and the costs prohibitive – public transportation would effectively be shut down.”

In order to ensure passenger safety without prohibiting access, many public transportation systems encourage passenger involvement through public awareness campaigns.

Director of the Surface Division of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Sonya Proctor said TSA works to analyze funding opportunities from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to ensure organizations with the greatest need receive grants.

TSA has implemented campaigns supported through DHS funding, such as the If You See Something Say Something campaign. The campaign encourages civilians to reach out to local law enforcement if they encounter suspicious activity.

Similarly, TSA’s Not On My Watch program is an awareness campaign designed to make employees of surface transportation systems more cognizant of threats targeting the transportation community.

“TSA also works with industry to identify emerging security training needs, develop new training modules, and refresh existing training,” Proctor explained.

FIRE GRANTS

Hamilton Firefighters Get $140K Grant For New Gear

By Cristina Rojas

New Jersey Local News, June 23, 2016

HAMILTON — One of Hamilton’s nine fire districts has been awarded a $140,908 federal grant that will allow it invest in new respirators and other gear.

U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-4th Dist.) made the announcement Thursday.

Fire District 4 will use the money to buy 22 self-contained breathing apparatus and a thermal imaging camera that can be used to help find downed firefighters and bring them to safety.

“This grant will help protect those who are willing to put their lives on the line every day and to run into burning buildings to save lives,” Smith said. “This federal support will help them obtain more substantial equipment to keep them as safe as possible.”

The new SCBA gear, which will have face pieces and air cylinders, will replace its inventory of obsolete or damaged equipment.

Smith, in his letter of support, referenced a recent risk analysis that found the department’s current SCBAs are either approaching or have exceeded their recommended replacement dates.

District 4, which is led by Chief Thomas Gribbin, has 16 career staff and 20 volunteer firefighters. It provides mutual support to the township’s eight other fire districts as well as to neighboring Trenton.

The grant was awarded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Assistance to Firefighters program.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

No stories for this edition

FLOODS

County Still Waits Word From FEMA; Red Cross Shelters Begin Closing

By Roy Reynolds

Liberty County (TX) Vindicator, June 23, 2016

Liberty County officials were still in limbo Wednesday morning, waiting for word from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that the county would – for the fourth time in a year – qualify for federal disaster assistance from the last round of rain and floods in May.

"I expect to hear from them today," said Tom Branch, emergency management coordinator for the county said on Tuesday, but he was still without word the next morning.

Liberty County officials fully expect to be added to the rolls with FEMA for federal funding, something that has become fairly routine with floodwaters inundating the county numerous times in the past year.

As of Wednesday morning, the Trinity River in Liberty County stood at 27.39 feet, still above the 26-foot flood stage, but down considerable over the past couple of weeks. Officials announced Wednesday that the discharge from the dam in Livingston would increase to 42,700 cubic feet per second from 39,400 cubic feet per second, which will increase levels downstream in Liberty.

In past disaster declarations, Liberty County has been one of initial round of announced areas for help. This time, officials hope to be one of the "add-on" counties, even if they have to wait a while.

"Hey, someone has to be last," joked Branch.

Signs that Liberty County and other areas of the state are getting close to full recovery from the earlier April flooding are appearing with regularity. FEMA announced Tuesday that it will close three Disaster Recovery Centers in Houston and Cypress Saturday, while many of the Red Cross shelters installed for the Tax Day Floods are also shifting their focus.

The Disaster Recovery Center for Liberty County, in Cleveland, will close Friday.

Disaster Recovery Centers are facilities or mobile office where survivors may go for information about our programs or other disaster assistance programs, and to ask questions related to their case.

The Red Cross, on the other hand, provides immediate assistance for disaster victims, including shelter for those displaced from their homes.

According to Betsy Moore, a public affairs volunteer with the Red Cross' Texas flood efforts, the Liberty facility, in the Hartell Building near downtown, housed 12 people after the Tax Day Floods.

Five remained in the shelter last week, when word came down that it would shutter those operations on Friday.

"They started to close on Monday, but they hadn't yet coordinated with us," Branch said. Red Cross officials delayed the closure to allow for two more days notice, rather than the 36-hour advance notice originally given.

The Red Cross worked with local and regional charities such as Catholic Charities of Houston for housing appraisals and referred clients to the United Way of Greater Houston's 211 service.

"They addressed the needs of the folks who were there," Branch said.

According to Moore, during the sheltering period, the agency had mental health workers at the shelter multiple times, had caseworkers meet with each individual/head of family and worked with a humane officer in Dayton to offer kennels for dogs and guidance for caring for animals and accessing resource, among other efforts.

"One caseworker, who also is a social worker when not with the Red Cross, went repeatedly to the shelter to try to interest clients in services such as women's programming services for transitional housing," Moore said in an e-mail.

Overall, in three shelters across Liberty, San Jacinto and Polk counties, the Red Cross served more than 7,000 meals to residents who spent a total of 375 nights in the shelters.

"For the Trinity River flooding, 37 shelters were opened by the Red Cross and partner agencies," Eric Jones, Assistant Director of External Relations, Red Cross Texas Spring Floods Response, said. "While sheltering is an important interim step for many people, it is only the first step in rebuilding lives after a disaster.

"The goal is to make sure people have been offered the resources they need to plan and manage their own recoveries and return to conditions which are similar to their pre-disaster lives."

Recent Heat Among Factors Causing County Roads To "Disintegrate"

By Josh Kellams

KOLN-TV Lincoln (NE), June 23, 2016

LINCOLN, Neb.-- The recent extreme heat in Lancaster County is among the factors that caused county roads to "disintegrate" this week, according to county engineers.

Local officials are also trying to find a way to keep costs down while maintaining, and fixing, the roads.

A stretch of 40th St. near Rokeby Rd. is one of the county roads concerning Pam Dingman, the Lancaster

County Engineer. N. 14th St. has had similar problems, too.

Dingman said the heat and heavy construction-related traffic over-burdened the roadway on 40th.

"We've really seen the edge of it just completely disintegrate," Dingman said.

"So, it did reach the point [Wednesday] where I did have to shut the road down."

Dingman said this part of 40th St. has an estimated lifespan of 20 years and is currently on year 28. She also said it is a candidate to be overlaid in the 2016-2017 budget, but right now, the road is too dangerous for motorists.

Crews are supposed to put new asphalt down Friday and reopen the road by the evening, but these patchwork solutions are one of several issues currently facing county engineers.

For example, Dingman is responsible for monitoring 270 miles worth of county roads. But, many of the roads need to be fixed.

"Of that 270," Dingman said, "we have about 90 miles that need to be overlaid right now."

Essentially, the top layer of asphalt needs to be removed and have new asphalt put down.

However, Dingman said the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners informed her Thursday that the county needs to trim roughly $700,000 from their budget, and they've asked her to make some cuts. Realistically speaking, she said they may only be able to overlay 20 miles of road in the next year.

She said she's also still waiting for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to reimburse the county for the cost of repairing flooded roads during the last two years.

"I had to fix all the damage from the [recent] flooding," Dingman said.

"So, Lancaster County has spent, in this year's budget, oh, probably $3.2 to $3.7 million in flood repair."

Dingman said she'll have to do the best she can while they wait for reimbursement.

The new county budget is supposed to start in July.

"I'm going to have to really aggressively maintain these [roads] in the years to come because of how far behind we are," Dingman said.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

Officials: Drones In Arizona, Utah Hamper Firefighters Battling Wildfires

By Graig Graziosi

Arizona Republic, June 23, 2016

Firefighters battling the Arizona wildfires have a new threat to worry about: drones.

A pair of drones were heard Wednesday in airborne crews' operating area at the southern end of the Cedar Fire, which is burning about 10 miles south of Pinetop-Lakeside and Show Low, officials said.

Anyone determined by law enforcement to have endangered manned aircraft with their drone or interrupted a firefighting operation can be fined and even jailed, officials said.

Despite their size, drones, sometimes known as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or Unmanned Aerial Systems, can substantially damage a helicopter or airplane in a collision. As a result, firefighters cannot operate in airspace where drones are flying.

Jennifer Jones, public affairs spokeswoman for the U.S. Forest Service, said she has seen a substantial rise in the number of reported cases of drone flights over firefighting operations.

"There's no centralized method for tracking incidents, but we started to notice the trend of seeing UAVs over fire suppression operations in 2014," Jones said.

In 2015, there were 21 reported cases of public drones flying in air zones where firefighters were operating," she said. "In nine of those instances, the firefighters had to suspend their work due to the presence of the drone."

In 2016, there have been nine reported cases, at least three of which forced fire managers to ground their air crew, Jones said.

According to firefighting officials in Utah, a drone came within feet of a firefighting helicopter there. Drone appearances have been so frequent in Utah this week that fire crews fighting the Saddle Fire have been forced to ground their aircraft three days in a row. Utah Gov. Gary Herbert visited nearby Pine Valley on Wednesday, saying that some evacuations may not have been necessary had the drones not stymied the efforts of the firefighters.

The Washington County Sheriff in Utah was offering a $1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the individual or individuals flying the drones.

Firefighters in California are also contending with the problem. The Federal Aviation Administration has issued a temporary flight restriction over the San

Gabriel Complex fire to ensure drones do not interfere with the fire suppression efforts.

Small aircraft and drones caught violating the temporary flight restriction will face serious criminal charges.

No data were available to explain why people fly their drones over wildfires, but Jones believes the drone pilots likely just are trying to get photos and video of the fire.

"That's what's dangerous and unfortunate about this. You have people who probably just want to have some fun with their drone and get neat images of the fire unknowingly putting firefighters' lives in danger and interfering with their ability to put out these destructive fires," Jones said.

In an attempt to prevent future incidents with drones, the U.S. Forest Service and partner agencies have launched a publicity campaign with the slogan "If you fly, we can't."

The campaign aims to educate the public about the dangers of flying drones near wildfire suppression operations.

Jones expects as the prevalence of drones in society continues to grow, the need for public education campaigns about their safe use will continue to grow. Likening the campaign to the Smokey Bear wildfire prevention campaigns, she anticipates the drone safety campaign likely will be necessary for decades.

The Cedar Fire is now 24 percent contained according to a report from fire officials Thursday morning, although winds were expected to increase in the area. According to officials, the pre-evacuation notice for the communities of McNary, Hon-dah, Pinetop-Lakeside, Show Low and Cedar Creek was still in effect.

Includes information from Associated Press.

Southbound I-17 Open After Brush Fire

By Ryan Santistevan

Arizona Republic, June 23, 2016

A brush fire that consumed six acres forced authorities to close a portion of southbound Interstate 17 early Thursday afternoon.

The Arizona Department of Transportation reported that the southbound lanes of I-17 were closed about 1 p.m. Thursday. At least one lane had reopened by 2:40 p.m., according to an ADOT representative.

Drivers were being asked to use caution as traffic resumed, as firefighters remained in the area.

The closure was reported near milepost 255, eight miles south of Cordes Junction, according to ADOT.

Northbound lanes of I-17 remained open throughout.

A Bureau of Land Management Arizona fire representative said resources, including a trio of engines and a type-2 crew, were working to tame the wildfire. Fire retardant was also being dropped by air.

A BLM representative said the agency was working with ADOT to evaluate when I-17 could reopen completely.

35-acre Fire Contained In Lee County

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, June 23, 2016

A 35-acre brush fire south of FGCU has been contained.

The fire burned for at least two hours Thursday.

According to tweets posted by the Florida Forest Service, the fire grew from 5 acres to 35 acres.

The fire was located off of Ben Hill Griffin Parkway, just south of the university.

No structures were threatened, said Samantha Quinn, spokeswoman for the Florida Forest Service.

"Wildfires are a year-round occurrence for Florida, a couple days of no rain can quickly dry out dry, dead vegetation," Quinn said. "This allows for a wildfire to quickly ignite."

Quinn said it's important for people to remove any dry vegetation surrounding homes.

"This will increase the safety of your home during a wildfire," she said.

Mandatory Evacuations Lifted For Pine Valley Residents

By DJ Bolerjack

KUTV-TV Salt Lake City, June 23, 2016

Washington County public safety officials and fire managers lifted the mandatory evacuation for Pine Valley residents in the Lloyd Canyon area Thursday.

Affected campsites, roads and recreation areas will remain closed.

Acreage burned in the Pine Valley Saddle Fire has stayed at a steady 823 acres, according to Mike Ferris with the National Interagency Fire Center.

Ferris said the aerial attack started early Thursday morning and due to the low wind speeds, only reaching 18 mph, the attack has been successful so far.

The Saddle Fire is said to be moving up the mountain still keeping distance from evacuated homes in Lloyd Canyon the area.

More than 400 firefighters are currently out fighting the fire and setting a perimeter around the evacuated community.

Christian Venhuizen, media spokesman, said so far with all the personnel in Pine Valley fighting the fire they're estimating a cost of $1.2 million coming from the state FEMA budget.

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

2015 Landslides Caused $7 Million In Damage To Colorado Springs, Assessor Reports

By Maria St. Louis-Sanchez

Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette, June 23, 2016

Damage to homes from 2015 landslides in Colorado Springs is totaled at a little more than $7 million, according to the El Paso County Assessor.

Assessor Steve Schleiker announced the total at a Tuesday Board of El Paso County Commissioners meeting. He said his office has assessed 53 properties for landslide damage and, of those, 34 have had adjusted property values.

Of those 34 homes:

– Three properties reduced in value by 100 percent

– 11 properties reduced in value by 75 percent

– Four properties reduced in value by 50 percent

– 15 properties reduced in value by 15 percent

– One property reduced in value by 10 percent

The homes damaged by landslides are within Broadmoor Bluffs, Broadmoor Hills, Broadmoor Resort and Skyway neighborhoods. Schleiker said the damaged homes amount to a small percentage of the total homes in those neighborhoods.

The city has applied for grants to help 26 homeowners buy out their damaged properties. The victims initially were only eligible for a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant worth about $3 million. The Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management announced recently that other grants, totaling between $6 million and $9 million, may be available as well. Homes that are bought out will be torn down and building will no longer be allowed on those sites.

This is the third time the city has applied for federal grants to aid landslide victims since the 90s. A Gazette investigative report found that Colorado Springs has allowed continued building in landslide-susceptible areas despite decades of warnings from geologists.

The total property loss from these recent landslides could change, Schleiker said.

"This is a moving target," Schleiker said. "My staff members have been out there every time we have a rain. We visit with property owners and see if there is any new damage. We have not added any new properties to our list for quite some time."

Property owners who believe their homes were damaged by the landslides but have not contacted the assessor's office may call 520-6600 or email asrweb@elpasoco.com to set up an appointment to have the property inspected.

ZIKA VIRUS

Zika Spending Bill Faces Likely Senate Rejection, Certain Veto

By Ryan McCrimmon, Paul Krawzak And Kellie Mejdrich

Congressional Quarterly, June 23, 2016

The Zika response package and fiscal 2017 Military Construction-VA appropriations bill passed by the House early Thursday appears to lack the votes to make it through the Senate amid strong Democratic opposition.

Even if the Republican-crafted product somehow reaches the 60 votes needed to avoid procedural hurdles in the Senate, it faces rejection from the Obama administration. A White House aide told CQ that President Barack Obama would veto the measure over objections to its offsets, restrictions on contraceptive services and rolling back of certain clean water protections.

It's unlikely the conference report will get to that point.

The measure is likely to receive a procedural vote early next week. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., filed cloture Thursday, setting up a vote to limit debate as early as Monday, though no timeline has been announced. A GOP leadership aide said McConnell needed to file cloture due to Democratic opposition to the conference report.

Majority Whip John Cornyn, R-Texas, estimated the cloture vote on the appropriations package will be next week. "I think it's certainly ripe for action," he said. "We need to get that done pronto, but my guess is it will be next week."

As soon as the proposal was announced Wednesday night, Senate Democrats unleashed a flurry of statements denouncing it. They stepped up their criticism Thursday and predicted Senate Republicans will face a steep climb to reach the 60 votes needed to proceed.

"I think it's going to have an extremely difficult time being positively considered or finding 60 votes," Senate Democratic Whip Richard J. Durbin of Illinois said.

In a statement released by her office, Patty Murray, D-Wash., slammed House Republicans for choosing "partisanship and tea party pandering over working together on a comprehensive response to the Zika virus." She urged House Republicans to "come back and work with us to pass the Senate proposal that received overwhelming bipartisan support."

The conference report for the appropriations package (HR 2577) was filed by House Republicans late Wednesday night and passed by the House early Thursday on a 239-171 vote, mostly along party lines.

Contraception Criticism

Much of the criticism from Democrats centered around language that they say would roll back women's access to health care services.

The conference report provides $95 million in Social Services Block Grants for areas with active Zika transmission, like Puerto Rico. But Republicans specified that the funds must be used for public health departments, hospitals and Medicaid managed care clinics — and not for family planning clinics that focus on contraception.

Democrats claim that omission is problematic given that the Zika virus can be transmitted sexually.

Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., accused Republicans of "trying to turn an attempt to protect women's health into an attack on women's health."

Murray said Republicans were "using women's health as a political football by restricting access to women's health care, like contraception, which is especially critical to preventing the spread of this virus."

Democrats also objected to the absence of $50 million requested by the administration for maternal and child health programs.

Debate Dispute

House Democrats on Thursday also complained that no debate on the conference report was allowed under the rule adopted for floor consideration.

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter of New York, the top Democrat on the House Rules Committee, told CQ she was not pleased with the decision by House Republicans to move the Zika conference report without the customary hour of debate.

"I hope that doesn't catch on," she said. "I was equally distressed that the bill itself had no debate as well."

When a bill comes to the House floor via the Rules Committee, there is typically an hour of debate on the rule, evenly divided between the two parties, and an hour of general debate on the bill itself, also evenly divided.

But none of the four Democrats on the panel showed up to the late-night Rules meeting to draft the rule for the Zika conference report, allowing the nine Republicans on the committee to craft a closed rule without any debate.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan defended the closed process, pointing to House Democrats' sit-in demanding action on gun legislation as a clear sign they weren't willing to have a legitimate debate on Zika.

"To the point of last night, do you think we were going to have a civilized debate about the Zika virus? Do you think they were interested in coming to the mike and debating Zika? Of course not. They were screaming and shouting over each other. So we were going to get our job done," the Wisconsin Republican said at his weekly news conference.

He urged senators to adopt the plan, noting the $1.1 billion funding level was the same as what was agreed to in the Senate: "This is a good compromise, it meets an urgent need," he said.

The conference report was the result of an agreement between House and Senate Republicans that left out Democrats. The White House has issued a very negative statement about it, though stopping short of a veto threat.

Durbin confirmed to reporters he expects a strong veto message from the White House on the package.

But Cornyn cast doubt on Democrats' ability to maintain opposition to the package, which provides $1.1 billion in partly offset funding for Zika, the same amount Democrats voted for when the Senate passed its measure on May 19.

"I don't think that's a sustainable position," Cornyn said. He said he hopes there are enough votes for cloture, adding, "Everybody wants to deal with this before it becomes an even more serious problem."

In comments on the floor Thursday, McConnell urged Democrats to support the conference report. "Senators debated that $1.1 billion compromise on the floor and voted to pass it," the Kentucky Republican said. "Every single Democrat voted for it."

The Senate passed its version of the legislation with $1.1 billion for Zika on an 89-8 vote. Forty-three Democrats voted for it and none voted against it. The funds were not offset.

Earlier, the Senate voted 68-30 for the amendment offered by Roy Blunt, R-Mo., to provide $1.1 billion for Zika. All 44 Democrats voted for the amendment.

Durbin said this deal is not acceptable, though. “It’s almost as if the House was daring us by putting together a proposal that is so outrageously one-sided,” Durbin said.

First posted June 23, 2016 12:35 p.m.

Topics

Zika

State of Play

At the end of May, appropriators and congressional leaders in the House and Senate were poised to confront discrepancies in the Zika virus response packages each chamber had recently passed.

The House passed a supplemental appropriations package (HR 5243) crafted by GOP appropriators that provided $622 million in new resources to confront the virus. The funds were set to expire on Sept. 30, the end of fiscal 2016, and the Zika spending was fully offset by rescinding previously appropriated dollars for the 2014 Ebola response and other administrative purposes.

The Senate’s $1.1 billion emergency spending package, passed as an amendment to a broader appropriations package (HR 2577), provided fresh funding without any offsets or expiration date. The compromise measure was reached by top Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Democrats have said neither option is adequate. The administration has maintained it still needs the full $1.9 billion it requested earlier this year.

The administration’s request would provide $828 million to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to enhance mosquito control programs. Officials say eradicating mosquitos is one immediate action that can be taken in the absence of a vaccine but emphasize how difficult it can be to control indoor mosquitoes.

Another challenge is diagnostic testing. Though there are ample tests to detect an active infection, tests to detect a prior infection are more limited. Public health officials say it takes more steps to diagnose a prior Zika infection because of the condition’s similarities to other viruses. Obama’s request includes money to boost the supply of diagnostics, as well as develop more accurate testing methods.

Prospects for a funding package also hinge on the politically sensitive issue of contraception policy. Congressional Democrats are pressing for additional contraception and family planning services for women in affected countries — a request that is meeting resistance from key Republicans. The House-passed legislation would subject Zika funding to the same restrictions included in the most recent omnibus package (PL 114-113), which includes a prohibition on the use of funds to pay for abortions.

The request contains $250 million to assist pregnant women in Puerto Rico, who are being encouraged to wear long sleeves, use bug repellent and stay in air conditioned or screened-in areas.

Reid: House-passed Zika Deal A “Disgrace”

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, June 23, 2016

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) ripped a GOP deal to provide $1.1 billion to fight the Zika virus hours after it passed the House.

“It’s a disgrace. It’s a mockery of how Congress should treat an emergency,” he said from the Senate floor. “This is something that I’m sorry to say is part of the McConnell-Trump tactics we’ve found lately.”

Reid’s comments come after House Republicans approved the plan in an early morning vote over the protest of Democrats.

The Zika deal — which is attached to a larger military and veterans spending bill — would be partially paid for by using money from other health department proprieties, including the Ebola virus fund.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) tried to temper Democratic opposition, saying the House-passed deal “represents our only chance to put Zika control money to work right now.”

“The House did its part. Now the Senate needs to do its part,” he added.

The Senate also approved $1.1 billion in Zika funding earlier this year, but Democrats quickly dismissed the deal from the conference committee because of how it is paid for.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) who helped spearhead the Senate’s Zika proposal, ripped the conference committee report as “hyper-partisan” and “more about throwing red meat to the Tea Party than actually tackling the crisis.”

Senate Democrats have pushed for Congress to pass the Obama administration’s full $1.9 billion request, a move that has found little support among Republicans.

Senate Sets Up Zika Vote

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, June 23, 2016

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.)

is turning the Senate toward a fight over funding to combat the Zika virus.

McConnell on Thursday filed cloture on the House-Senate deal on a military and veterans funding bill, which includes the Zika money. The move sets up a procedural vote for next week.

The House passed the $1.1 billion for Zika funding early Thursday morning over the protest of Democrats, who were waging a sit-in to demand votes on gun control.

But Senate Democrats argue the House-Senate agreement is all but doomed to fail in the upper chamber, where it will need support from Democrats to be sent to President Obama's desk.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) called the GOP-backed deal a "disgrace."

"It's a mockery of how Congress should treat an emergency," he said from the Senate floor Wednesday. "This is something that I'm sorry to say is part of the McConnell-Trump tactics we've found lately."

The Senate previously passed $1.1 billion in funding to combat the Zika virus, but Senate Democrats have denounced how the House-Senate compromise pays for the bill.

In addition to taking money currently earmarked to fight the Ebola virus, the GOP bill would also likely restart a fight over Planned Parenthood because it includes language that prevents funding from going to it and other family planning groups.

Democratic opposition is throwing the Zika funding package into flux, making it increasingly likely Congress won't be able to get an agreement to Obama's desk by the July 4 recess.

McConnell tried to temper Democratic criticism earlier Thursday, arguing the current deal "represents our only chance to put Zika control money to work right now."

"The House did its part. Now the Senate needs to do its part," he added.

Congress Headed For Recess Without Zika Funding Deal

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, June 23, 2016

The fate of a $1.1 billion package to fight the Zika virus has been thrown into flux after the abrupt collapse of bipartisan talks Wednesday.

The breakdown between Republicans and Democrats in both chambers has delayed any action on Zika until after the Fourth of July recess.

GOP leaders announced late Wednesday they had reached a deal on Zika, but without the support of the dozen or so Democrats who had previously been involved. The GOP's bill passed the House in a hurried vote around 3 a.m. Thursday amid a dramatic Democratic gun control protest.

The sharply partisan proposal bill is now headed to the Senate, where Democrats say it is doomed in its current form. The bill is expected to prompt a formal veto threat from the White House later Thursday.

The House is out of session until after the Fourth of July. The Senate's holiday recess begins next Thursday.

Among the biggest concerns with the Republican bill is that it injects specific language to prevent funding from going to Planned Parenthood and other family planning groups — a move that one women's health group called "a slap in the face."

While the House-passed bill includes the same amount of total funding as the Senate's initial bipartisan bill, most comes from existing funds in the administration's health department.

It takes about $500 million from an existing ObamaCare fund for state health exchanges and redirects it for the Zika effort. About $100 million in the administration's Ebola fund would also be repurposed for Zika — a move strongly opposed by federal health officials.

The failure to pass a Zika funding bill before the holiday — a self-appointed goal for GOP leaders — could be politically troubling for both parties.

Public health experts as well as state and local leaders have been intensifying their warnings about a disease outbreak in the U.S. The virus is known to cause severe birth defects, and about 400 pregnant women in the U.S. states and territories have already tested positive.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which would receive the most funding under any Zika bill in Congress, has declined to specifically comment on the latest House-passed bill other than to apply pressure for swift action.

"CDC remains hopeful that Congress will quickly finalize and pass a comprehensive bill that meets critical needs without exposing Americans to other dangerous health threats," the CDC wrote in a statement Thursday.

Democrats say one of their biggest concerns about the bill — and one that would be expected to prompt a White House veto — is that Republicans are targeting women's health groups.

"Preventing funding from going to Planned Parenthood? That's a poison pill," Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) told reporters Thursday.

Schumer, the No. 2 Senate Democrat, said the GOP's plan had become "a hard-right wish list" that had no chance of landing on the president's desk.

The bill appears doomed to fail in the Senate. Even with support from all 54 Senate Republicans, the bill would fall short of the 60 votes needed to proceed.

When asked about the next step for the bill, Schumer said: "Don't know, we'll have to see."

But he left the door open to a move by Senate Republicans to tweak the language of the House-passed Zika bill before it reaches the upper chamber: He said the final bill hasn't been released yet.

"It hasn't come out yet, but it has all the things that they put in it, all these external poison pills, I don't see how it would pass," Schumer said. "We have to see the bill first."

It's unclear whether the House's bill — which was a conference committee report — could still be amended before reaching the Senate.

The Zika bill's primary source of funding for healthcare is allowed only to go to health departments, hospitals or other providers that are "reimbursed through public health plans," according to the House-passed bill's text.

"Family planning clinics are excluded, which is simply nuts," said Donna Crane, vice president of policy at NARAL Pro-Choice America.

"[The Republican bill] significantly hampers America's ability to respond to the Zika virus by cutting off the very clinics in the neighborhoods that are going to need these services."

White House Threatens Veto Of GOP's Zika Bill

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, June 23, 2016

The White House on Thursday officially rejected a $1.1 billion Zika funding package from Republicans that would have forced the administration to pull most of the money from existing healthcare programs.

"The president would veto it if it ever got to his desk," White House spokesman Eric Schultz told reporters, though he said the bill "doesn't look like it could even pass the United States Senate."

The GOP bill passed the House along party lines early Thursday, and faces an uncertain fate as it heads to the Senate next week.

Senate Democrats say the bill is all but doomed in the upper chamber, where it will need support from members of their party to pass. Lawmakers and aides say that would be extremely unlikely after Democratic lawmakers were dropped from the previously bipartisan talks.

The Senate had agreed to $1.1 billion in funding to combat the Zika virus — a bill that earned support from Democrats because it created new funding, rather than looking to existing accounts.

The House bill takes about $500 million from an existing ObamaCare fund for state health exchanges and redirects it to the Zika effort. About $100 million of the administration's Ebola fund would also be repurposed for Zika.

The GOP's bill passed the House in a hurried vote around 3 a.m. Thursday, amid a dramatic Democratic gun control protest.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell tried to temper Democratic criticism earlier Thursday, arguing the current deal "represents our only chance to put Zika control money to work right now."

"The House did its part. Now the Senate needs to do its part," he said.

Obama Would Veto Republican-backed Zika Funding Bill: White House

By Roberta Rampton

Reuters, June 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Obama Threatens To Veto GOP-backed Bill On Zika Virus Aid

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – The White House Thursday promised that President Barack Obama would veto the long-delayed response of the Republican-controlled Congress to the president's request for fighting the Zika virus, saying it provided too little money and contained too many partisan provisions.

The $1.1 billion measure had already appeared sure to die in the Senate next at the hands of filibustering Democrats backing Obama's $1.9 billion request and opposing spending cuts that House Republicans added to the measure.

White House spokesman Eric Schultz says if the measure does pass the Senate, Obama will veto it.

"One party doesn't just huddle in the corner, come up with an ideological bill and then throw up their hands," Schultz said.

The bleak fate of the compromise worked out by House and Senate Republicans seemed certain, and it was unclear what alternative might emerge, given the hard feelings surrounding the issue and the short timetable ahead.

The Zika plan came out late Wednesday and won approval in the House hours later. That vote came amid a Democratic floor protest of GOP inaction on gun legislation. Republican leaders called the Zika vote abruptly, permitted no debate and immediately adjourned through July 4.

The result was more of the partisanship that has dogged the Zika proposal from the start and raised questions about whether lawmakers will manage to approve any assistance in the short time left before they leave Washington in mid-July for the political conventions.

The measure matches a bipartisan $1.1 billion figure adopted by the Senate last month to fight the virus, which can cause grave defects and can be transmitted by mosquitoes and sexual contact.

The House was largely satisfied in their demand to pair Zika aid with about $750 million in offsetting cuts to spending, including $543 million in unused funds from implementation of Obama's health care law and $107 million in cuts to leftover Ebola money.

Democrats objected. They made inflated claims about restrictions the measure would place on Planned Parenthood and they complained about a watered-down version of a provision backed by the House that would ease rules on pesticide applications to battle the mosquitoes that can spread Zika.

Obama requested $1.9 billion four months ago to fight the virus. Republicans initially displayed little urgency to respond to the request and forced the administration to devote more than $500 million of unspent Ebola money on Zika.

Democrats also said it was wrong to require spending cuts to pay for a response to a public health crisis while not requiring them for past emergencies such as wildfires, floods and Ebola.

Republicans said the cuts were relatively innocuous. For instance, the $543 million cut to Obama's health law was to a pot of money aimed at helping territories set up health insurance exchanges under the law. None did so, and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that cutting the program won't actually save any money. Also, Democrats privately indicated they could live with the additional $100 million-plus cut to overseas Ebola aid.

While some Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee believed any deal with Republicans would have to have some cuts, party leaders such as Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., took a harder line that ultimately prevailed.

The Zika money was added to an $82 billion measure covering the Department of Veterans Affairs and military construction projects. That measure is among the most popular of the 12 annual appropriations bills, and Republicans held out hope that its popularity might break free enough Democrats to squeak through the Senate.

More than 2,200 cases of Zika infection have been reported in the U.S. and its territories. In Puerto Rico, more than 400 pregnant women were at risk of having babies with major deformities such as microcephaly, a condition in which newborns have smaller brains that might not have developed properly.

The virus is spread mainly through the bite of a tropical mosquito called Aedes aegypti. It can be found in the southern United States, but there's no evidence that they've been spreading the virus in the mainland U.S. yet.

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The Price Of Congressional Inaction On Local Response To Zika

Huffington Post, June 23, 2016

Congress is finally answering the call to address the alarming infectious disease threat of the Zika Virus. However, the level of funding included in their recent votes is not close to enough. The effect will be particularly disastrous for local governments across the country.

By refusing to fully support President Obama's request for $1.9 billion to fight the Zika virus, Congress is forcing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to shift nearly $45 million from state and local public health emergency preparedness (PHEP) funds to pay for Zika preparedness at the federal level. In turn, cities and counties are now facing substantial cuts to essential emergency preparedness funds--a deep irony, because these are the very funds that allow local health departments to prepare and respond to disease outbreaks and other emergencies.

The implications for cutting emergency preparedness funding go far beyond Zika. When Baltimore was shaken by unrest last April, PHEP funds allowed us to take a lead role in coordinating the public health response for our city. Because of our emergency planning and response capabilities, the Health Department worked with city and state partners to create a security plan for Baltimore hospitals. When over 13 pharmacies were burned down or closed, we set up a prescription delivery program for older adults and vulnerable citizens. Our staff mobilized volunteers to canvas dozens of senior buildings and over 150 churches, and served more than 3,000 emergency meals to those affected in the community. With partners across the city, we developed and implemented a Mental Health/Recovery Plan that included an around-the-clock mental health crisis line along with teams of licensed mental health professionals who were deployed in affected neighborhoods for group counseling and debriefing.

More recently, when our region was crippled by nearly three feet of snow in a historic storm this past January, it was again emergency preparedness funds that enabled Baltimore City to be the only jurisdiction in Maryland to ensure transportation to life-sustaining dialysis and chemotherapy treatment for critical patients by knowing how to triage available resources. Like last April, we were again able to deploy frontline workers to go to where our residents were, quickly direct a multi-sectoral response in the face of a unique emergency situation, and act swiftly to protect our most vulnerable. Without these federal funds we could not have provided these critical emergency services to our residents during times of extreme need.

This is the necessary role of local public health: to implement effective, agile strategies to address emerging threats to public welfare. Health departments across the country serve on the frontlines of public health emergencies. It was local public health that coordinated immediate trauma-based mental health services for a city reeling from the September 11th terrorist attacks. Local public health organized a drop-in center following the Boston marathon bombings to provide support to thousands of stranded runners and coordinated with area hospitals to connect patients with family members. And when Hurricane Katrina devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast, including health facilities, local health departments provided direct health services to the region out of mobile vans and tents.

Though my counterparts and I are proud to take a lead role in coordinating these efforts and providing direct services during emergencies, sustained federal funding is critical to ensuring that local health departments remain prepared to respond to evolving public health threats. The Baltimore City Health Department employs a small team to coordinate our public health emergency response and engage the community and health care sector in preparedness planning. Under these anticipated cuts, we will have to reduce that team by a third--from six to four people. This will severely limit our ability to serve a population of over 620,000 residents, in a time of increased threat of Zika and other emerging infections. When it comes to protecting the health and safety of our citizens, this is an untenable ratio.

The World Health Organization and the CDC have declared Zika virus to be a public health emergency. We support full supplemental funding to prepare for this disease. It is particularly important to ensure capacity for our urban centers. The Aedes mosquito that carries Zika is a “container breeder” that proliferates in densely-populated urban areas. Cities like Baltimore with high rates of vacant housing and concentrated poverty will be the hardest hit, and generations of our children will suffer the consequences.

Public health services need to be there when we need them most. Congress must strengthen, not limit, local capacity to respond to this emerging public health threat.

Lena Wen, M.D.

Health Commissioner Of Baltimore City; Emergency Physician

Follow Leana Wen, M.D. on Twitter: www.twitter.com/drleanawen

It’s Us Against Zika — Whose Side Is Congress On?

Washington Post, June 23, 2016

IN THE very early morning hours Thursday, Republicans who control the House pushed through a bill to combat the Zika virus that is a totem to their favored causes and a poke in the eye of Democrats. More than four months after President Obama requested nearly $1.9 billion in emergency funding to deal with a public-health emergency, the House voted for $1.1 billion but saddled it with unnecessary partisan baubles. This may further delay action against the mosquito-borne virus that can cause severe fetal birth defects.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers (R-Ky.) declared that the bill, approved along party lines 239 to 171, was the product of “careful and thorough deliberations.” But in fact, the Republicans compromised only with themselves and took to the House floor a bill that lacked bipartisan support.

The legislation would limit payments for birth-control services, an indirect way of defunding Planned Parenthood, long a GOP talisman. At this moment, it seems terribly punitive, coming as the nation faces a virus that puts pregnant women at risk and is spread through sexual contact as well as by mosquitoes. Republicans must have known this controversial provision would provoke howls of protest from Democrats. As Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) noted, House Republicans were playing to a very narrow segment — the tea party wing of the GOP — with "a hyperpartisan proposal that doubles down on using women's health as a political football." The cost of this will probably be more wrangling. Are these the same Republicans who took control of Congress promising to break the partisan gridlock?

There is no known cure or effective therapy for the Zika virus, which has already hit Latin America and the Caribbean hard in places, including Puerto Rico. If it begins to spread on these shores — so far it has not, but the probability is high that transmission will begin — then pregnant women across the South and Southwest will be at risk of giving birth to children with abnormally small heads and brain damage, a condition known as microcephaly, while other people may face Guillain-Barré syndrome, which can lead to paralysis.

The House, which had earlier approved $622 million for the Zika response, has now agreed to the $1.1 billion approved earlier by the Senate. That is promising because it would provide money for fighting mosquitoes, for carrying out vaccine research, for finding new diagnostics and for public education. But the downside is that the House bill funds the Zika battle by cutting $750 million from other programs, including Obamacare and the Ebola virus response effort. There is probably insufficient support in the Republican-controlled Senate to pass the House version, which means back to the drawing board, more delay and more of a chance that Zika will lead to birth defects in the United States.

To both parties in Congress, we say: The tiny Zika organism doesn't care one whit about your acrimony, your blame-throwing, your delays. All Zika knows is how to infect and cause human suffering when it can. Who is going to win this battle: the virus, or us?

No Help From DC? Florida To Spend Millions On Zika Fight

Associated Press, June 23, 2016

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) – Saying he was "profoundly disappointed" with the ongoing federal stalemate over the Zika virus, Florida Gov. Rick Scott on Thursday ordered the state to spend millions in an effort to stop its potential spread.

Scott used his emergency powers to authorize spending up to $26.2 million on everything from killing mosquitoes, training mosquito technicians and purchasing Zika prevention kits.

The Republican governor has been calling on the federal government for weeks to approve money to fight the Zika virus, which can cause grave birth defects and can be transmitted by mosquitoes and sexual contact. The U.S. House this week approved a $1.1 billion measure. But President Barack Obama is threatening to veto the legislation, saying it provides too little money and contains too many partisan provisions.

"We are in the middle of hot, rainy weather which is when mosquitoes are most prevalent," Scott said in a statement. "It is clear that allocating this funding is necessary if we are going to stay ahead of the spread of this virus. I am profoundly disappointed that Washington does not share in our commitment and has continued to play politics with the health and safety of our families."

Florida currently has more than 200 cases of Zika virus, including 40 pregnant women. All of the cases involve residents infected outside the country, but Scott has predicted that it would be a "disaster" if mosquitoes in the state started transmitting the disease.

The Scott administration says that so far the federal government has only allocated $153,844 for epidemiology and lab support, $500,000 for seven counties for mosquito control and $40,856 in lab supplies and personnel.

Scott said that more than 40 counties, cities and mosquito control districts have asked for $19 million in assistance. He has declared a state of emergency in 23 counties because of the virus, a move that allows Scott to bypass the Florida Legislature and take money from the state's main bank account.

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Zika Virus: Florida Gov. Rick Scott Says State Can Spend $26.2 Million On Prevention

By Michael Auslen

Miami Herald, June 23, 2016

Gov. Rick Scott declared Thursday he would use his executive powers under a public health emergency to spend up to $26.2 million in state money to fight the Zika virus.

The money will be used for mosquito control, lab equipment and to purchase "Zika prevention kits" from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. According to the CDC website, the kits include a bed net, insect repellant, standing water treatment tabs and condoms.

It will be released as needed, the governor's office said. Scott has given state Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip the authority to spend the money.

"We are in the middle of hot, rainy weather, which is when mosquitoes are most prevalent," Scott said in a statement. "It is clear that allocating this funding is necessary if we are going to stay ahead of the spread of this virus."

Until Thursday, Scott had resisted expanding an emergency declaration he signed in February to give himself the authority to spend state money. Instead, he has called on the federal government to fund Zika prevention programs.

In a statement Thursday, he again called out "Washington's inaction."

Asked earlier this month about why he hasn't tapped into state reserves, he told Fox News that Florida has been spending money to fight the disease but that it would "rely on our federal partners."

"This is a national issue," he said. "This is not just affecting Florida."

There are 213 documented cases of Zika in Florida, according to the Department of Health, and they are all travel-related. There are no known cases of people being infected with the virus after being bitten by a mosquito in Florida.

Rick Scott Gives State Power To Spend $26.2 Million On Zika

By Michael Auslen

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, June 23, 2016

Gov. Rick Scott declared Thursday he would use his executive powers under a public health emergency to spend up to $26.2 million in state money to fight Zika virus.

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People Previously Infected With Dengue May Be More Vulnerable To Zika Virus

By Liz Szabo

USA Today, June 23, 2016

New research points the way toward a potential vaccine against Zika, and may explain why the formerly mild virus exploded with such fury when it arrived in Brazil.

A pair of studies published Thursday focus on Zika's complex relationship with a related virus called dengue, a common illness in Latin America and the Caribbean that causes flu-like symptoms. Dengue is spread by the same mosquito species as Zika, and the two viruses are so similar that blood tests sometimes can't tell the two apart.

When people are infected with dengue, or any virus, the immune system releases key proteins called antibodies to neutralize the invaders. Authors of a study published Thursday in Nature found that two of the antibodies the body makes to fight dengue also prevent Zika infections.

That finding could help scientists develop vaccines against Zika and dengue, said study coauthor Juthathip Mongkolsapaya, a researcher at Imperial College London. Scientists also might be able to use these antibodies to treat Zika, she said.

Several groups are already working on Zika vaccines.

Inovio Pharmaceuticals announced this week that it has received Food and Drug Administration permission for a small, early clinical trial of a Zika vaccine it's developing with GeneOne Life Science. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases is pursuing four types of Zika vaccines; officials there say they expect to begin clinical trials in August.

Yet the close relationship between dengue and Zika has a dark side.

In a second paper, published in Nature Immunology, researchers found that the vast majority of dengue antibodies do nothing to stop Zika infection. In fact, a lab experiment showed that most dengue antibodies actually helped Zika viruses proliferate and invade cells. That suggests that people previously infected with dengue, whose antibodies against dengue remain in their blood, might have a more severe reaction to Zika, said Gavin Screaton, chair of medicine at Imperial College London.

These results lend support to similar findings from Florida Gulf Coast University and the University of Pittsburgh Center for Vaccine Research.

Mother Jusikelly da Silva holds her 7-month-old daughter Luhandra, who was born with microcephaly, as she wears her new glasses while waiting for a bus on June 2, 2016 in Recife, Brazil. (Photo: Mario Tama, Getty Images)

There are four varieties of dengue virus. People infected with the virus one time may develop relatively mild symptoms. But people who get a second round of dengue, caused by a different variety of the virus, can develop severe, life-threatening complications, said Amesh Adalja, a senior associate at the Center for Health Security at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Although scientists first discovered Zika in 1947, it was never known to cause birth defects until Brazil experienced an alarming increase last year in microcephaly, a condition in which babies are born with abnormally small heads and incomplete brain development.

Brazil has reported 1,660 cases of microcephaly, about 10 times more than usual, according to the World Health Organization. Microcephaly linked to Zika has been reported in 11 other countries or territories, including Puerto Rico, Panama, El Salvador, Colombia, Martinique, the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia and Cape Verde.

These locations have different varieties of dengue viruses, Adalja said. It's possible that some varieties of the virus are more likely to be associated with Zika complications than others.

Researchers have looked at a number of possible explanations for Zika's explosive growth, said Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. It's possible Zika's spread has been aided by environmental factors, such as climate change, poverty and urbanization. It's also possible the virus has mutated.

To really understand Zika's relationship with microcephaly, researchers will need to study pregnant women, said Ernesto Marques, scientific director of Cura Zika, an international alliance between the University of Pittsburgh and Brazil's Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, known as Fiocruz.

The National Institutes of Health announced this week that it will partner with Fiocruz in a study of up to 10,000 pregnant women in areas with Zika outbreaks, beginning with Puerto Rico and expanding to Brazil and Colombia.

Leaders of the new study will study whether a past dengue infection increases the risk of complications on pregnant women and their babies. Researchers also will compare the health of babies born to mothers infected with Zika virus and those who were not, recording rates of miscarriage, premature birth, microcephaly, malformations of the nervous system and other complications.

Researchers will study whether these problems are more common in women who had symptoms of Zika compared to those with no symptoms. Only about 20% of Zika patients develop symptoms, which include rash, fever, joint pain and pink eye. Researchers also will study whether complications are more common in women infected early in pregnancy compared to those infected later. Doctors will follow women throughout pregnancy and for six weeks after delivery.

A New Must For Your Medicine Cabinet: Bug Spray

Washington Post, June 23, 2016

If the makers of bugs pray and U.S. health officials get their way, insect repellents will take up permanent space alongside toothpaste in America's medicine cabinets.

Drugstores and local health agencies are doing their part in the marketing push by issuing warnings about Zika, a virus that causes devastating birth defects in babies infected in the womb. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the species of mosquito that carries Zika has been found across most of the nation.

"If you are going outside, wear mosquito repellent," said Michael Beach, deputy incident manager for the CDC's Zika response team. "It needs to be the same as putting on sunscreen or brushing your teeth."

Game change

The goal of health experts isn't to overwhelm or scare people but to prepare the public for the likelihood that Zika infections may start to transmit locally, Beach said. Several hundred pregnant women in the United States who contracted Zika contracted through travel or infected partner are being monitored. There is already widespread local transmission in Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, and officials expect that about 20 percent of the island's 3.5 million residents could become infected with Zika.

"This virus is a game-changer from a reproductive-health standpoint because the birth defects are horrendous in nature," Beach said.

New York City launched a three-year Zika-control program in April that expands testing, monitoring and eradication. The city is tapping its experience from previous bouts with West Nile, a virus transmitted by a mosquito different from the one that carries Zika.

West Nile doesn't produce symptoms in most people, but it can cause serious symptoms such as paralysis and vision loss in about 1 in 150 infected people. The virus appeared in the Western Hemisphere in and around New York in 1999, causing dozens of serious illnesses and seven deaths that year. The city employed large-scale pesticide spraying, including by air.

Subway advisories

Today, it's Zika that's getting the attention in New York. "Reduce your risk of Zika virus," says a sign accompanying an Off Deep Woods bug-spray display near the checkout of a Manhattan drugstore. Signs in the city's subway system and elsewhere urge New Yorkers to "Fight Back" against Zika by using repellent and dumping standing water.

It's not enough for people to be vigilant only from dusk to dawn, when most mosquitoes bite, the CDC says. Aedes mosquitoes, the species that transmits Zika, are active in the daytime. They can live inside homes and often bite each member of a family, taking sips of blood from each.

Manufacturers are working to ensure they have enough insect repellent to meet a spike in demand. Spectrum Brands Holdings, which makes Cutter products, has seen a 19 percent surge in sales of personal bug sprays over the past six months compared with the same period last year, said John Pailthorp, a spokesman for the Middleton, Wis.-based company.

Spectrum expects to increase capacity of its spray repellents by almost 60 percent when a new production line debuts this year. The company, which is updating its packaging, displays and websites to include Zika information, is working with federal officials to get language approved in record time, Pailthorp said.

SC Johnson & Son, maker of Off sprays, boosted production in Latin America starting in November as reports of local cases started to trickle in, said spokesman Jeff McCollum. It started ramping up U.S. production early this year, running its largest facility — near the company's headquarters in Racine, Wis. — around the clock. Peak demand in the United States has been about 50 percent higher than last year, he said.

"We're working with a real sense of urgency," said McCollum said.

Other viruses

Several other infections carried by mosquitoes strike thousands of Americans each year. While they don't create the same fear as Zika, which is still poorly understood and impossible to treat, they can produce devastating symptoms.

Dengue, which can cause a high fever, severe pain, rash and mild bleeding, has already been reported this year in the Florida Keys. The virus can also cause dengue hemorrhagic fever, which can kill if not recognized early. Chikungunya can cause fever, joint pain and muscle aches. There's no prevention or cure for either, with patients getting supportive care to help their bodies fight the infection.

"We have multiple viruses that are spread by mosquitoes," Beach said. "It's not just about avoiding nuisance mosquitoes any more. It's about disease."

— Michelle Fay Cortez And Lauren Coleman-Lochner

Bloomberg News

Best Bug Sprays For Fighting Zika

By Mary Brophy Marcus

CBS News, June 23, 2016

Mosquito season is here, and as the threat of Zika virus rises in the U.S., people in affected areas need to arm themselves, health officials say. The illness is spread by mosquitoes and some bug sprays can help.

According to Consumer Reports, a number of insect repellents on the market can stop the mosquitoes that transmit the dangerous virus, as well as another mosquito-borne illness, West Nile virus. They put 16 insect repellents to the test to see which ones are the most effective.

"In a laboratory, very brave volunteers put their arms into a cage full of 200 disease-free mosquitoes and we use two types of mosquitoes," Trisha Calvo of Consumer Reports told CBS New York. "One is the Culex mosquito that carries West Nile and the other is the Aedes mosquito that carries Zika."

The results? "We found three ingredients that are safe for everyone to use, even pregnant women, and are very effective. And those are Deet, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and Picaridin," Calvo said.

Sawyer's Fisherman's Formula Picaridin got top results in Consumer Reports testing, keeping mosquitoes away for up to eight hours.

Other top performing repellents on the list include:

Ben's 30% DEET Tick & Insect Wilderness Formula

Natrapel 8 Hour, with 20 percent picaridin

Off! Deepwoods VIII, with 25 percent DEET

Repel Lemon Eucalyptus, with 30 percent lemon eucalyptus

Repel Scented Family, with 15 percent DEET

Consumer Reports advises skipping most repellents made with natural plant oils such as lemongrass or citronella, which were not very effective in their testing.

Zika risk in the U.S.

As of June 15, a total of 756 cases of Zika have been reported across the U.S. – all in people who contracted it abroad or through sexual contact with someone who traveled abroad. Forty-seven states have reported cases.

So far there have not been any cases in the U.S. of mosquitoes transmitting Zika from one person to another, but experts say there's a risk of local outbreaks, especially in some southern areas like Florida and Texas, as the season progresses.

In states that are home to the type of mosquitoes known to transmit Zika, the virus can be spread if an infected person is bitten and then that mosquito then goes on to bite other people. That's the way the disease spread from Brazil throughout Latin America and the Caribbean over the past year.

It's especially important for pregnant women to protect themselves because Zika has been linked to severe birth defects called microcephaly, where babies are born with abnormally small heads.

More mosquito-fighting tips

If you use bug sprays proven to deter them, or purchase clothing with insect repellent already built in, the critters may still try to bite. But bug sprays can kill or incapacitate the bugs when they land. "And hopefully that happens before the mosquitoes bite you," Calvo said.

Experts recommend applying sunscreen first, then bug spray, not the other way around. And even if you wear bug repellent clothing, Consumer Reports recommends also using bug spray for greater protection.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing long-sleeve shirts and long pants, and staying in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside.

An experimental vaccine for the Zika virus is due to begin human testing soon, after getting the green light from U.S. health officials.

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OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

DHS CIO Touts Tech Transformation

By Mark Rockwell

Federal Computer Week, June 23, 2016

An increased focus on agile development and contracting is helping the Department of Homeland Security move ahead on a host of technical fronts, DHS CIO Luke McCormack said.

"We're transforming, using modern techniques to modernize" the department, he said during a panel discussion at AFCEA's Homeland Security Conference on June 22.

He added that the increasingly close collaboration with DHS Chief Procurement Officer Soraya Correa though programs such as the Procurement Innovation Lab, which lets contracting officers try out new ideas, is helping to shift the agency's culture toward "taking risk to eliminate risk."

Michael Palmer, a member of the DHS Digital Service team, said the department is working on an agile procurement vehicle that will enhance its digital capabilities. A request for information was released in May.

Palmer declined to comment on how the Flexible Agile Support for the Homeland (FLASH) contract would interact with other digital services such as those offered by the General Services Administration's 18F. But he did say contractors should be familiar the

Digital Services Playbook and incorporate its concepts into their work.

McCormack said FLASH could be a significant building block for the agency's acquisition efforts. Although no date has been set for a formal request for proposals, DHS plans to hold an industry day on June 29 to explain the project in more detail.

DHS is conducting five IT pilot projects designed to showcase the pivot to agile: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' verification system, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood insurance and grants management programs, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Student and Exchange Visitor Information System and the Transportation Security Administration's Technology Infrastructure Modernization Program.

McCormack said the projects are using modern development techniques in real-world applications with the goal of modernizing aging, ineffective systems more quickly and efficiently than traditional acquisition techniques allow.

Local Family Still Living In A Tent 10 Months After Soudelor

By Bryan Manabat

Marianas Variety, June 24, 2016

ALMOST a year after Typhoon Soudelor devastated the island and destroyed their home, Marilyn Ada Taitano and her family still live in a tent.

She said the construction of their new house in Dandan remains unfinished due to a lack of workers and high labor costs. She said they are having difficulty finding skilled individuals and those who can be hired charge $9 to $10 per hour which they can't afford.

Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance, she said, did not include funds for building the house because they are staying on land that doesn't belong to them. The property belongs to an aunt who lives nearby.

"The FEMA assistance was actually only for our family belongings that were destroyed or damaged by the typhoon," Taitano said.

But she said she asked FEMA if she could use the monetary assistance to buy construction materials to rebuild their home. "They told me, yes."

She said she is hoping that three months from now, their home will finally be built.

In the meantime, she said they depend on "happy labor" — those constructing their house do so if they have time.

"Two people are helping us right now, one actually said not to worry about paying him, but I can't do that," she added.

As for the tent that her family uses, she said it came from AmeriCorps.

"They came in and gave us this tent, and also helped us with the temporary shelter."

Taitano is a full-time housewife, and her husband Jessie works for the Department of Public Works. They have two children — 21 and 14 years old — and two grandchildren.

What worries her is the coming typhoon season.

"That's my concern now — if there's another typhoon," Taitano said.

"I was really scared when Soudelor came, and I feel hopeless because our house is gone. I don't want to go through that again."

Needy Fund Launches Disaster Response Arm

By Ethan Genter

Cape Cod (MA) Times, June 23, 2016

HYANNIS — The Cape Cod Times Needy Fund has launched a disaster response organization "to provide humanitarian aid to local individuals and families," according to a statement from the organization.

The Cape Cod and Islands Major Crisis Relief Fund has been in the works for a few years, and the process was sped up after the devastation from Hurricane Sandy, said Judy Scarafile, the managing director of the relief fund and former president of the Cape Cod Baseball League.

"On the Cape and Islands we have experienced fierce hurricanes, epic winter storms, and significant beach erosion," Scarafile said.

The fund's goal is to raise $1 million, and it plans to work with other agencies who do similar work, like the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross.

"We will continue to collaborate with our many colleagues as part of an integrated approach to crises," Scarafile said. "At the same time, we realize that significant needs of many local individuals and families are now unmet by traditional forms of public and private disaster aid and that's where we step in."

A committee formed to create the fund has been meeting for nearly three years, Scarafile said. During those meetings, Hilary Greene, the executive director of the Cape, Islands and Southeast Massachusetts chapter of the Red Cross, and other agencies went over what is already done for disaster relief so the Major Crisis Relief Fund could learn their roles.

"The Red Cross is the first people there," Greene said about disaster response.

After the initial efforts, the Red Cross could send people in need to organizations like the new fund, she said.

"They're really trying to fill a gap," he said.

The fund plans to provide assistance in the form of financial aid for food, transportation, housing, medical services, child care and other needs. That could mean helping someone pay for a rental car get to and from work if, for example, a flood washed theirs away, Scarafile said.

The organization's board of directors includes Needy Fund board members, local emergency response professionals and an advisory committee, according to Peter Meyer, president and publisher of the Cape Cod Times.

The use of the fund will be considered when 50 or more families or 100 or more individuals are affected by a crisis, according to the statement. The crises need to either have been declared a local, state, or federal disaster; require multiple hospitalizations; or trigger the opening of all Cape Cod evacuation shelters.

"This is just in case, or when, the big one hits," Greene said. "Here's a local funding arm."

Movement Detected On Both Sides Of San Andreas Fault

By Max Gelman

New York Daily News, June 23, 2016

Large sections of southern California are slowly rising or sinking, a groundbreaking new study shows.

Researchers have observed for the first time that, along portions of the San Andreas fault, land on both sides is moving vertically by a few millimeters each year. Such motion had been theorized but never proven.

Vertical movement of tectonic plates is difficult to track compared with horizontal movement, which is much easier to predict and the cause of most earthquakes in California. GPS sensors helped the scientists study large, southern areas of the state that included the Los Angeles Basin, San Diego County and Santa Barbara, Calif.

"Using this technique, we were able to break down the noisy signals to isolate a simple vertical motion pattern that curiously straddled the San Andreas fault," Samuel Howell, lead author of the study, said in a statement.

Previously, vertical movement had been difficult to detect because of groundwater levels, Howell told the Los Angeles Times. As California's large agriculture industry flushes out groundwater for irrigation, parts of the state sink.

However, the study won't help predict when the next big earthquake will take place. Rather, it is supposed to help researchers understand more about the San Andreas fault itself and how its behavior will affect the adjacent areas.

Howell said quakes along the southern San Andreas happen once every 150 years on average. The last major earthquake along the southern San Andreas fault occurred in 1857 — a 7.9 magnitude quake, according to the study.

The San Andreas fault forms the boundary between the tectonic plates for most of North America and the Pacific Ocean and sits on the infamous "Ring of Fire," where a large number of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur. It is also classified as a "strike-slip" fault, meaning the plates move alongside each other horizontally.

Vertical movement is more common in "subduction zones," where tectonic plates instead press against each other and one side is forced into the Earth's mantle over time. The Cascadia fault, which sits just north of the San Andreas and stretches into Canada, is a known active subduction zone.

Local Canine Team Certified By Urban Search & Rescue Foundation

By Jennifer Rogers

WKRG-TV Mobile (AL), June 23, 2016

Year of training has paid off for a woman from Mobile and her lab. Debra Wright and Chance are civilian team members of Alabama Task Force One: Urban Search and Rescue. The team recently traveled to Tennessee to be recertified by the Urban Search & Rescue Foundation and passed a rigorous Federal Emergency Management Agency test, putting them among some of the most highly trained canine resources in the U.S.

To pass the certification, Wright had to show knowledge in search strategies and tactics, mapping, and other skills.

Chance also had to demonstrate his skills, including command control, agility, and a willingness to search for live victims even with distractions like other animals, food, excessive heat and noise. Chance also had to show his confidence in searching independently, negotiate different surfaces and move through dark spaces.

During their testing last week, Wright and Chance used all of their training and knowledge to find victims in two large rubble piles.

Alabama Task Force 1 is sponsored by Mobile-Fire Rescue, the City of Mobile and the State of Alabama.

Wright and Chance are volunteers and continue to train weekly, to be ready in the event of any emergency. They've also responded to calls to assist Mobile Fire-Rescue, when necessary.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

No stories for this edition

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

No stories for this edition

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CITIZEN CORPS

No stories for this edition

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No stories for this edition

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

West Virginians Turn To Federal Government For Help After Devastating Floods

By Rebecca Hersher

NPR, June 28, 2016

As the water recedes in West Virginia, residents are taking stock of their losses. At least 23 people died in massive floods that swept across the southeastern part of the state on Friday.

According to state authorities, the water damaged or destroyed more than 1,200 homes, and thousands of people who lost power are just getting it back.

President Obama has declared three counties — Kanawha, Nicholas and Greenbrier — disaster areas, which gives residents there access to emergency funds for housing and medical care.

On Tuesday, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin requested a federal major disaster declaration for an additional seven counties in the central part of the state. In a statement, Tomblin said, “As cleanup continues in so many communities across West Virginia, we are seeing the overwhelming damage that has been left behind.”

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is already on the ground in the three disaster-designated counties, surveying the damage and meeting with individuals whose homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed.

One of the hardest-hit towns is Rainelle in Greenbrier County. All of the downtown area next to the Meadow River was washed away.

Linda Rhodes has lived there for 55 years. Driving down Main Street, she says she doesn’t know how the town will rebuild.

“There aren’t any jobs here. None at all,” she says. “Now, everything’s gone. God help us.”

The mayor of Rainelle, Andy Pendleton, is hoping the federal government will help. Pendleton says she met Monday with FEMA representatives, and says that all this week she and other local leaders will hand out packets to residents, explaining how to apply for federal money to rebuild homes and businesses and to replace cars and other personal items that were destroyed.

“I worry the most about the people who don’t have anything to go back to,” she says. “All those people who lost their homes, who lost people in their families in the flood. They need help.”

At least a dozen people in Greenbrier County died, according to the West Virginia medical examiner.

The National Guard helped with the search and rescue operation and continued to be on call as more rain fell on areas where the soil was already saturated, prompting the National Weather Service to issue flash flood warnings. Some areas where water had receded were flooded anew, but no further fatalities were reported, according to the state police.

The National Guard says it expects to be on the ground at least until the end of the week, removing debris and assisting the local and state police in cleanup efforts.

WV Governor Adds 7 Counties To Disaster Request

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

LEWISBURG, W.Va. (AP) — Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has added seven counties to his request for a federal disaster declaration for flood-ravaged West Virginia.

The counties added by Tomblin in a statement Tuesday are Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster.

The three hardest-hit counties — Greenbrier, Kanawha and Nicholas — already have received approval for a federal declaration. That allows residents to apply for individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Those affected can apply for aid online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by phone at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or (TTY) 1-800- 462-7585 for the deaf or hard of hearing.

West Virginians needing assistance should contact their local offices of emergency management. Contact information for each county office can be found at www.dhsem.wv.gov/Important%20Contact%20Numbers/Pages/default.aspx.

Flash flooding last week damaged thousands of homes and businesses and killed 23 people. Tomblin previously issued a state of emergency in 44 counties, which authorizes the mobilization of state resources for flood-relief efforts.

As of 8 a.m. Tuesday, 7,077 residents still are without power across the state. More than 400 Red Cross workers are responding across West Virginia, distributing more than 10,000 meals and 2,000 cleanup kits so far.

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The Latest: 5 More West Virginia Counties Get Disaster Nod

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

LEWISBURG, W.Va. (AP) — The Latest on flooding that has devastated parts of West Virginia (all times local):

5:40 p.m.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin says a federal disaster declaration have been approved for five more flood-ravaged counties in West Virginia.

Tomblin announced on his Twitter feed that the Federal Emergency Management Agency granted the state’s request for Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Roane and Summers counties. It allows residents to apply for individual assistance from FEMA.

Previously, federal disaster declarations were approved for the three hardest-hit counties — Greenbrier, Kanawha and Nicholas.

Tomblin says he's waiting word on disaster requests made earlier Tuesday for Pocahontas and Webster counties.

Flash flooding last week damaged thousands of homes and businesses and killed 23 people. Tomblin previously issued a state of emergency in 44 counties, which authorizes the mobilization of state resources for flood-relief efforts.

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5:30 p.m.

Police have arrested a man on charges of stealing items from flooded properties in southern West Virginia.

Fayette County Sheriff Steve Kessler says in a news release that 53-year-old Mark Anthony Moore of Russellville was charged Tuesday with burglary, petit larceny and possession of a controlled substance.

Kessler says beer and bottles of liquor were stolen from a home, vehicle registration and state inspection stickers were taken from an abandoned vehicle, and a tire and rim had been removed from a truck. The release says the stickers allegedly were found on Moore's vehicle.

Kessler says the area where the theft occurred had extensive damage in last week's flooding and many residents lost their homes and personal possessions.

Moore was taken to the Southern Regional Jail. Bond was set at $50,000. Jail records didn't list if he had an attorney.

___

2:30 p.m.

Tetanus vaccines are available to West Virginia residents who have been exposed to floodwaters.

The tetanus bacteria can be contracted through an open cut or wound. The state Department of Health and Human Resources recently suggested the vaccines to residents who are have not received tetanus booster shots in the past 10 years.

The Greenbrier resort says free tetanus vaccines are being administered Tuesday at two locations in White Sulphur Springs.

On the other side of the county, Rainelle Medical Center CEO Kristi Atha-Rader says 600 tetanus vaccines were already given to residents and the hospital has received 600 more.

The Clendenin Volunteer Fire Department says tetanus shots are available at two sites in that Kanawha County community, while the Summersville Regional Medical Center is offering the shots at its clinics in Ansted in Fayette County and Summersville in Nicholas County.

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12:45 p.m.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has opened disaster centers for residents in two flood-ravaged West Virginia counties.

The centers opened Tuesday in Greenbrier and Kanawha counties. They were part of a federal disaster declaration issued last week that also included aid for Nicholas County after floods killed at least 23 people in the state.

FEMA says Greenbrier County residents can apply for federal assistance at the Emmanuel United Methodist Church in White Sulphur Springs. Kanawha County residents can apply at the Crede Warehouse in Charleston.

___

12:30 p.m.

Procter & Gamble is helping flood-ravaged West Virginia residents wash their clothes.

The company says in a news release that a mobile laundry unit is providing full-service laundry to residents starting Tuesday. The first mobile unit is being set up at Elkview Middle School in Kanawha County.

Residents can bring clothes to the mobile unit to be washed, dried and folded free of charge. Up to 100 loads of laundry per day will be collected from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. All washable clothing and other items will be accepted with the exception of heavy bedding.

The company says personal care kits will be distributed containing items such as deodorant, toothpaste, shampoo and household cleaning products.

Floods last week killed at least 23 people in West Virginia.

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11:20 a.m.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has added seven counties to his request for a federal disaster declaration for flood-ravaged West Virginia.

The counties added by Tomblin in a statement Tuesday are Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster.

The three hardest-hit counties — Greenbrier, Kanawha and Nicholas — have already received approval for a federal declaration. That allows residents to apply for individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Those affected can apply for aid online or by phone.

Flash flooding last week damaged thousands of homes and businesses and killed 23 people. Tomblin previously issued a state of emergency in 44 counties, which authorizes the mobilization of state resources for flood-relief efforts.

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This item has been corrected to show that seven counties were added to a federal disaster declaration request. There are 44 counties included in a separate state of emergency declaration by the governor.

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10:45 a.m.

Actress Jennifer Garner is urging support for a charity she is involved with that is assisting families following devastating flooding in West Virginia.

Garner grew up in Charleston and is a member of the Save the Children board of trustees. The group offers early education, literacy, activity and nutrition programs for children.

It partners with local schools to help nearly 2,000 children in West Virginia. Three of the counties it serves have been ravaged by flooding: Roane, Calhoun and Nicholas. Garner says her "heart is breaking" for the state.

The group's West Virginia director, Anna Hardway, says it has been unable to make contact with half of the families in its programs due to flood-related power and phone outages.

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7:15 a.m.

Jim Justice, the Democratic nominee for governor of West Virginia, says he will pause his campaign for at least two weeks so he can concentrate on helping flood victims.

Justice says he has started a relief fund called Neighbors Loving Neighbors to help those who lost their homes or other possessions in last week's devastating floods that killed 23 people.

He says "politicking is the last thing that's on my mind," and though his headquarters will remain open, he won't personally campaign.

Thousands of homes and businesses across the mountainous state were damaged or destroyed when up to 9 inches of rain fell in a short span, causing perhaps the worst flooding West Virginia has seen in three decades. More than 400 people are living in shelters statewide.

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4 a.m.

Like the other business operators on Main Street in Rainelle, Pamela Wallace Arnold is slowly cleaning up from West Virginia's worst flooding in decades. She's also preparing to help bury the dead.

She runs Wallace and Wallace, one of two funeral chapels in this rain-soaked West Virginia town of 1,500 residents. Wallace is doing double duty drying out her business started by her great-great-grandfather in 1926 while planning the funerals of flood victims in the coming days.

Rainelle is in Greenbrier County, where 15 of the state's 23 deaths from last week's devastating floods have occurred.

Where the visitations will be held, not even Wallace knows. She's also not sure whether she can ever reopen at the same location.

She just understands the community needs her.

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Flood Carves A Path Of Destruction At Historic Resort

By Jonathan Mattise

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.Va. — At West Virginia's usually immaculate Greenbrier resort, the grandstands set up for a PGA tournament that was supposed to start the week of July Fourth now look out on a muddy, gouged-out golf course strewn with trash, tires, refrigerators and severed trees.

The devastating floods that swept through West Virginia last week and killed at least 23 people statewide carved a path of destruction unseen in generations at the historic Greenbrier.

Running through the Old White TPC golf course, Howard's Creek raged over its banks during the pounding storms Thursday. When the worst of it was over, Greenbrier employees came upon two bodies on the resort grounds, and they are draining a lake on the 16th fairway to search for more.

Dating back to 1778, the 700-room resort with an iconic white facade has long been one of the jewels of West Virginia's tourism industry, hosting presidents and royalty and holding a once-secret underground bunker built for Congress in case of nuclear attack during the Cold War.

But on Tuesday, 300 of the neediest victims from the flood-ravaged area occupied the rooms, and the hotel was closed for business while it fed and sheltered the disaster refugees.

"West Virginians are tough, loving, prideful, good people. They'll bond together, and I've said this many times, they'll get through this," said billionaire Greenbrier owner Jim Justice, who threw open the place for use as a shelter.

"We won't forget it, and we're not supposed to forget it. And we'll be scarred with it forever, but we'll survive it, and we'll figure it out."

Fifteen people died in the resort's namesake county, Greenbrier, where many were swept away by swift, mucky floodwaters. A dead 14-year-old boy washed up against a maintenance shed at the resort, and the body of an elderly man was pulled from of a lake on the grounds.

The Old White had been manicured to host some of golf's biggest names at a tournament starting July 7. The event was going to be free for the first time, and about 300,000 fans were expected. But then the rains began, and the water rose and kept rising.

On Thursday evening, pro golfer Bubba Watson, who has a home at the resort, tweeted a video that showed that the course had become a flowing river of brown water.

After the rain stopped, Justice checked out a high-water mark on the 15th hole, a record that was set in 1915. This flood topped it by 5 feet.

The tournament has been canceled.

The Greenbrier's newly built chapel was filled with 4 feet of mud. At the tennis complex, mud coated a few levels of seats around the year-old center court. Water spilled into several areas of the resort's main building, but Justice said it might be able to reopen in a month or two.

The golf course is another story. It might take a full year to bring Old White back into proper shape so the PGA Tour can come back in 2017 as expected, Justice said.

"In all honesty, the course will probably have to be completely redone," he said.

The Greenbrier is also set to host the New Orleans Saints' training camp starting in late July. The NFL team said it is still coming.

Justice, a coal and agriculture magnate who is the Democratic nominee for governor in November, has put the campaign on hold for at least two weeks.

"Honest to Pete, that's the last thing that I need to be doing today," he said.

Instead of campaign checks, money to help the victims is starting to roll in. Justice's flood-relief charity, Neighbors Loving Neighbors, has received $600,000 in commitments in just a few days, include five-figure pledges from former NBA star and West Virginia native Jerry West, Rite Aid and a FirstEnergy executive, he said.

As they grabbed a free lunch Tuesday, flood victims staying at the Greenbrier said they were grateful.

Kenneth Hoke, 45, fled his home Thursday in Monroe County to stay at the Greenbrier with his wife, Melanie. By the time he left, water had crept up to the bottom of the stairs and was rising quickly. He hasn't been home since.

"We were hit pretty hard in the hollow," Hoke said. "We lost everything we had."

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Evacuations As Fire Spreads Near Northern California River

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

FORESTHILL, Calif. (AP) — People living in a rural subdivision 50 miles northeast of Sacramento were evacuated Tuesday as firefighters braved triple-digit temperatures to battle a wildfire that climbed out of a steep canyon along the middle fork of the American River.

Placer County Sheriff's spokeswoman Dena Erwin said homes near Todd Valley between the cities of Foresthill and Auburn were evacuated as a 20-acre fire quickly grew to 300 acres.

Erwin did not know how many homes were affected, but said the fire was approaching a subdivision with large lots and a scattered population.

"It's all hands on deck...we have everyone up there working on evacuations," she said.

The fire began Tuesday afternoon in El Dorado County before jumping the river and climbing out of the canyon and into neighboring Placer County.

Firefighters on the ground and in the air were working in 101-degree heat against the fire in a remote, rugged area that is difficult to access, said California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection spokeswoman Lynnette Round.

"It's in some really steep terrain. We have air and ground units out there working really, really aggressively to put this fire out," Round said.

Sacramento television station KCRA-TV reported a drone spotted over a section of the fire grounded aircraft in the area for about an hour as the Placer County Sheriff's Office worked to find the owner. Air attacks resumed Tuesday evening with a D-10 Airtanker making drops over the flames.

No injuries or structure damage had been reported by Tuesday night.

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Firefighters Turn Corner Against Deadly California Wildfire

By Steve Gorman

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Husband Appeared To Be Shielding His Wife As Wildfire Reached Their Home. Both Died

By Brittny Mejia And Alexia Fernandez

Los Angeles Times, June 28, 2016

Bill Johnson always knew he was getting close to home when he saw the distinctive red barn-style house from across Lake Isabella.

The two-story home belonged to Byron McKaig, 81, an Anglican priest, and his 90-year-old wife, Gladys.

On Friday morning, after the Erskine fire tore through the area, Johnson ventured into a neighbor's yard, and from there, spotted the couple's two cars next to the burning stubs of their home.

"They didn't get out," Johnson thought. Then he spotted the McKaigs lying against a corner of their fence, a tree near their bodies smoldering like their house.

Their clothes did not appear to have been touched by flames. Johnson said Byron looked like he died trying to protect his wife.

"He was like on top of her, and they were together, like he was blocking her from the fire," Johnson said. "It made me sick because immediately I saw and knew exactly what had happened — that they were alive and ran out of this burning inferno and got stuck, and that was where they ended. I thought it was terrible for those people to go like that. Just horrible. They didn't deserve it."

The McKaigs are the two confirmed casualties of the worst wildfire so far this year in California. The blaze has burned more than 46,000 acres and destroyed more than 200 structures. Many residents ran for their lives as the fire raced toward them, but the McKaigs appeared unable to escape.

The fire all but wiped out the community of South Lake, where the majority of residents are retirees living on fixed incomes. Many lived alone.

Officials have long said this population was especially vulnerable when fast-moving fires move in.

Last September, a monster fire in Lake County killed four people, at least three of whom were elderly people who could not escape. Others who did survived arrived at shelters in wheelchairs and using oxygen tanks.

Around Lake Isabella, many wondered whether the elderly victims there could rebuild their lives.

Louis Reyes, 59, moved to South Lake to care for his 95-year-old mother. To him, South Lake always felt more like a retirement community. After the fire broke out, Reyes' brother helped evacuate neighbors who didn't have cars — driving up and down Goat Ranch Road several times until the flames and smoke became too much to bear.

The home Reyes shared with his mother and wife burned down. He said he would like to buy the land from the owner.

"It was a beautiful mobile home with a built-in porch and big yard," he said. "We'll have to rebuild it ourselves. We're not going anywhere."

On Tuesday, an acrid, burning smell hung in the air outside the foundation of the McKaig's home. Ash littered the ground, and the trees on the property were blackened like used-up matches.

In the ruins Johnson could make out a desk, a freezer and a washing machine. Other items were so twisted and warped by the fire that they were difficult to identify.

Johnson said he remembered how Gladys used to drive around in an old pickup, her red hair tucked under a bonnet.

"She was just a sophisticated lady," he said. "She was like a tough country woman."

He recalled that when singer John Denver died in 1997, Byron McKaig played his music loudly and belted out songs like "Take Me Home, Country Roads."

"Gladys' house — I don't know if her daughter will want to rebuild," he said. "It'll probably be an empty lot now, so it'll be a big hole in our community. … You always expect to see Gladys' home sticking out. You'd always see it."

Geralin Montgomery lived across from the McKaigs for nine years. She didn't know them well, though she said "they were very, very, very religious."

Montgomery said Gladys would pass out religious pamphlets and used to often play the organ.

“The whole neighborhood could hear,” Montgomery said.

Ray Conner lives along McCray Road, where the McKaigs also lived.

“They never went anywhere without each other,” Conner said. “And that’s the best way I’m going to describe them. They were just together all the time. Through it all, they were together.”

On Friday morning, Conner and his wife had taken a drive to check on a friend’s home, when his wife wondered aloud if the couple had made it out.

When news came out about bodies being found, they were sure it was the McKaigs.

“We knew right away who it was because we knew the location of the house,” Conner said.

Though he lamented their deaths, he said he was relieved there wasn’t a greater loss, considering how quickly the fire moved.

“It’s a miracle more people didn’t lose their lives,” he said.

“Knowing that a lot of my friends have lost their homes and lost everything, you don’t know where to begin,” he said. “The one thing I can say about the Kern River Valley is that we came together as a community to help everybody we possibly could.”

The couple would visit Nelda’s Diner in Lake Isabella a couple of times a week, choosing a booth on the right side near the windows facing out on Lake Isabella Boulevard.

They would stay for a couple of hours, enjoying cups of coffee and conversation.

“They were really nice people,” said waitress Suz Humphers. “Been coming here for years.”

Humphers said the McKaig’s got around slowly. When Gladys would get her food, and it was arranged to her taste she would exclaim: “Oh this is just lovely,” Humphers recalled with a smile.

Frank Brassell, who co-owns the diner with his wife, called Byron a “sharp guy” and said Gladys was very proud that Byron had studied at a seminary and was an ordained minister.

“He was devoted to her,” Brassell said. He said he wouldn’t have been surprised if Byron had tried to protect Gladys from the fire.

“He would have stayed past the last minute in order to save her,” Brassell said. “I know he would have.”

This post was updated with details about last year’s Lake fire.

: This post was updated with comments from a fire official.

: This post was updated with comments from the co-owner and waitress of a diner.

This post was updated with comments from neighbors.

This story was originally posted at 1:01 p.m.

Deadly California Wildfires Spark Debate About Development

By Scott Smith

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

FRESNO, Calif. — A speeding wildfire in California that turned hundreds of homes near Lake Isabella to piles of twisted rubble has forced a conversation about how to minimize destruction in the most populous state experiencing the effects of climate change.

Wildfires in the last years have killed several people in California, a drought-prone state experiencing a five-year dry spell.

Weather is one factor, but more critical is the state’s exploding population, spawning communities in the once sparsely inhabited ranch and timberland regions long known to burn, experts say.

“We know this is going to happen,” said Kevin Ryan, a former U.S. Forest Service fire scientist, now a consultant with FireTree Wildland Fire Sciences. “We need to manage to take the crisis out of it.”

Judy and Ken Brown were among hundreds who narrowly escaped the firestorm last week that swept down a mountainside and through their community beside Lake Isabella, an hour east of Bakersfield.

They’ve seen wildfires in the past, but none like this one that quickly consumed their mobile home and dozens in the neighborhood largely made up of retirees.

Judy Brown said she and her husband received an automated call telling them to leave. They soon heard exploding propane tanks and neighbors screaming.

With their two dogs loaded in their car, the couple drove to safety through thick smoke as their home burned behind them. Judy Brown said they were lucky to survive.

“It was like a tornado, but it was fire,” she said. “I thought it was the end of the world.”

The fire, driven by strong winds across mountains covered with dry grass and trees, travelled 11 miles in its first 13 hours, which firefighters say is fast. It killed and elderly couple and destroyed more than 200 homes.

California’s wildfire season typically starts in August, raising concerns about the June fire at Lake Isabella sparking so early.

It also follows 2015’s voracious wildfire season marked by six deaths. Four people died in a Lake

County fire north of San Francisco that destroyed 1,300 homes. A fire in Amador and Calaveras counties destroyed more than 800 buildings and killed two people. Both fires rapidly spread.

Climate change will continue to make wildfires more severe throughout the western states, including California, according to a report by the Climate Central, a nonprofit organization of scientists.

An estimated 11 million Californians live in areas with a high risk of wildfire, the report says, and by 2050 California's wildfire season is expected to increase from 120 days to 144 days.

Bill Patzert, a climatologist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, says changing weather patterns are one factor. Winter temperatures have risen 2 to 3 degrees in the last century, he said, and California's snowpack is more fleeting. Millions of trees in the Sierra Nevada have died in drought.

The weather, however, is not solely to blame for the highly destructive wildfires, said Patzert, who blames poor planning that allowed communities to be built in risky places.

"Putting it all in the climate change bin is like throwing in the towel," Patzert said. "Let's not forget a lot of it is our misbehavior and our decisions how we zone and where we zone."

The areas throughout California, where cattle grazed and loggers harvested trees, have given way to subdivisions of homes in the last 50 years, said Bill Stewart, co-director of the Center for Fire Research and Outreach at the University of California, Berkeley.

Residents in these places must be aware of the danger, and not rely on the local fire department to tell them when to clear the grass and trees that could easily spread fire to their homes, he said.

"That's the issue — more people living right next to wildland," Stewart said of the wildfire near Lake Isabella. "If no one lived there, this wouldn't have been a big story."

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California Land Officials Sign Off On Closing Nuclear Plant

By Alison Noon

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California land officials dropped their longstanding environmental objections to the state's last nuclear power plant and signed off Tuesday on a deal to close the Central Coast facility nearly 20 years ahead of its previously planned termination.

The State Lands Commission approved a lease allowing Pacific Gas and Electric Co. to continue operating the Diablo Canyon twin-reactor plant through August 2025, a date the company and environmental groups agreed to last week. Members turned down a proposed environmental impact assessment, which can take years, in part to meet the earlier termination date.

Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom said keeping the plant open for nine years allows PG&E to avoid the mistakes of Edison International, which terminated its San Onofre nuclear generator in 2013 after hundreds of abrupt layoffs. The company largely replaced the nuclear power with climate-changing natural gas plants.

"Let's not fail the plant," Newsom said. "Let's have the conversation now about what that means to the workforce, what that means to the community, what that means to our efforts to provide alternative energy sources at a competitive price."

Tom Dalzell, business manager of a union that represents 600 of the plant's employees, said the agreement promises to retrain and transition employees away from Diablo Canyon, avoiding a precipitous change.

Friends of the Earth President Erich Pica, whose organization participated in the negotiation to terminate the plant, said the agreement is fair to workers while eliminating two decades of seismic risks.

"This is the way you do it," Pica said. "You have time, you can bring on the right resources and you can treat people right."

Not all conservationists back the plan, though. Dozens of activists, including some who have been fighting nuclear energy for 40 years, argued Tuesday against the plant's continued operation near major earthquake-causing fault lines.

John Geesman of the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility said the state should have conducted one of its strict environmental reviews before approving the lease, however short.

Geisha Williams, PG&E president of electric operations, said the nine years are a gift and the company will use the better part of that time to build and prepare an alternative energy facility in California.

Williams said PG&E could pivot to wind, solar, biomass, geothermal or hydropower to replace the energy Diablo Canyon currently provides — about 9 percent of the state's power.

PG&E President Tony Earley told reporters last week the utility will save more money closing Diablo Canyon than running it through 2044 as planned.

The commission's vote is the first of multiple regulatory hurdles facing the agreement to shut down the 31-year-old plant.

Diablo Canyon's twin reactors hug a Pacific Ocean bluff midway on the coast between Los Angeles and San Francisco, in San Luis Obispo County.

Fears about the seismic faults running through the area have dogged the project since its conception in the 1960s, and fostered opposition nationally to nuclear power within the country's then-fledgling environmental movement.

PG&E maintains the plant could withstand the strongest likely earthquakes, but growing scientific knowledge about the seismology has heightened worries.

The state's largest utility and environmental groups agree that California no longer needs the electricity from Diablo Canyon, given increased energy efficiency in the state and the growing availability and affordability of solar and wind power and other renewable energy.

Nationally, the nuclear-power industry is caught in a debate between those who call nuclear power an essential alternative to climate changing fossil fuels, and those who question the growing costs of maintaining the country's decades-old nuclear plants.

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Hail, Flooding Cause Delay At Coors Before Jays-Rockies

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

DENVER — Rain and hail came down on Coors Field in a fierce, hour-long downpour that forced officials to delay the start of an interleague game Tuesday night between the Toronto Blue Jays and Colorado Rockies.

Heavy runoff poured into the Rockies' dugout and tunnel leading into the clubhouse, causing some flooding. Grounds crew workers were able to clear the water away by sandbagging the tunnel entrance and clearing debris over the drains, allowing the pooled water to dissipate.

Other members of the crew used shovels, squeegees and large brooms to scrape the water and pea-sized hail from the field.

An air blower also was driven across the field to help dry it out and an absorbent mix was thrown onto the infield to soak up additional moisture.

First pitch was thrown at 9:21 p.m., which was 2 hours, 41 minutes after the scheduled start time.

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A Massive Storm Completely Flooded The Rockies' Stadium

By Andrew Joseph

USA Today, June 28, 2016

Let's hope fans attending Tuesday's Rockies game found somewhere comfortable and dry because a massive hailstorm is not ideal baseball conditions.

About an hour before Tuesday's scheduled first pitch, the sky started falling in Denver. The entire stadium had to take cover as outrageous amounts of hail and rain poured down.

It didn't stop.

It got worse.

This is fine. Nothing to see here.

The world might be ending.

Estimated time of first pitch: Never. The world has ended. No more baseball. Melvin Upton Jr. robs home run by reaching over the wall for ridiculous catch

24m agoHouston Police pulls out all the stops for Running Man Challenge video with Astros, Bun B

1hr agoAnthony Rizzo dove over tarp for an outrageous catch, then got up like it was nothing

1hr ago

Colorado Rockies, Hail, MLB, Rain, so much rain, MLB Andrew Joseph

Andrew Joseph is a writer at For The Win. He's the proud owner of a Johnny Estrada bobblehead, and he once shared an elevator with Matthew McConaughey.

FEMA HOUSING

No stories for this edition

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

45 Moorhead Properties Removed From Flood Plain

Forum of Fargo-Moorhead (ND), June 28, 2016

MOORHEAD — Another 45 properties will be removed from the 100-year flood plain in the Moorhead Country Club area, the city of Moorhead announced Tuesday, June 28.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency informed the city that the Flood Insurance Rate Map for the area will be revised to reflect the flood protection measures put into place. The revised map will take effect Nov. 11, the city said in a news release.

The 45 properties are generally from 18th Avenue North to Country Club Parkway between 11th Street North and the Red River. Twelve of the properties had one or more structures touched by the 100-year flood plain (including one structure with eight residential condominium units).

A Letter Of Map Revision will eliminate a FEMA requirement for mandatory flood insurance for those properties with federally insured mortgages.

Property owners will still be able to buy voluntary flood insurance at preferred rates.

Since 2009, the city has removed 240 homes from the flood plain through buyouts and 199 properties through map revisions for accredited flood protection projects in the Horn Park, Woodlawn Park and Moorhead Country Club neighborhoods.

MITIGATION

No stories for this edition

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

FEMA Funds For Roads Approved

By Nicole Bradford

Nacogdoches County (TX) Daily Sentinel, June 28, 2016

Still with a lengthy list of county roads to be oil-coated and otherwise maintained, Nacogdoches County Commissioners accepted the eighth of 10 FEMA grants on Tuesday.

Funds Available For Food, Shelter Program

Muskogee (OK) Phoenix, June 29, 2016

Muskogee County Emergency Food & Shelter Program has been awarded federal funds made available through the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP). Muskogee County EFSP is slated to receive $26,584 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in Muskogee County, according to a media release.

Each area's awarded amount is partially based upon unemployment data as it compares to overall unemployment data.

The National Board chaired by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency consists of representatives from American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; The Jewish federations of North America; The Salvation Army; and, United Way Worldwide. The Local Board is charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

The Local Board comprised of local representatives reflective of those on the National Board and local non-profit organizations of a similar nature will determine how the funds awarded to Muskogee County are to be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area. The Local Board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds and any additional funds available under this phase of the program.

Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must:

- Be private voluntary non-profits or units of government.
- Be eligible to receive Federal funds.
- Have an accounting system.
- Practice nondiscrimination.
- Have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs.
- If a private voluntary organization, it must have a voluntary board.

Muskogee County Emergency Food & Shelter Program has distributed EFSP funds previously for meals, food and utility distribution, or other related temporary shelter. Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact Terry Beutelschies at Lake Area United Way, 311 Court St., (918) 682-1364 for an application. The deadline for applications to be received is July 15.

FIRE GRANTS

No stories for this edition

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

No stories for this edition

FLOODS

FEMA Disaster Center, Laundry Facilities Now Open In Kanawha

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, June 28, 2016

More facilities have opened in northern Kanawha County to help those affected by last week's flooding.

Kanawha County officials say a Disaster Recovery Center run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency now is open at the Kanawha County Schools warehouse in Crede, 300 Pennsylvania Ave., by Elk Elementary Center. A center is also open at 65 W. Main St. in White Sulphur Springs through Friday.

People can go to those centers from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. to apply for disaster assistance. Disaster Recovery Centers are one-stop shops for eligible storm survivors to provide one-on-one, face-to-face help.

The three hardest-hit counties in West Virginia – Kanawha, Greenbrier and Nicholas – have already been declared a federal disaster area by President Obama. On Tuesday, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin asked that seven additional counties – Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster – be added to the disaster declaration.

People do not have to visit a Disaster Recovery Center to register with FEMA. Those who have not yet registered are encouraged to do so as soon as possible by visiting DisasterAssistance.gov. FEMA also accepts registrations through your smartphone at m.fema.gov. For those without access to the internet, FEMA has a toll-free number at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or (TTY) 1-800-462-7585 for the deaf or hard of hearing.

"The most important thing for them to remember is that if they're a victim of flooding, they have to register with us to receive FEMA assistance," said Candace Cleveland, the manager for the FEMA center in Crede. "It's very important, and the only way you register — because sometimes people go to town meetings and different things and walk away thinking they've registered for FEMA — is by calling the 1-800 number."

Cleveland said FEMA can provide several forms of support for flood victims, including crisis counseling, unemployment assistance and child care services. The center will also direct victims to local resources available to them, Cleveland said.

Kanawha County residents with significant damage to property as a result of flooding can call the county planning office at 304-357-0570, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., to report the damage. The Planning Office will log all property damage, officials said in a news release Tuesday.

Kanawha Metro 911 spokeswoman Brooke Hylbert said in the news release that clothing donations received in recent days have been greatly appreciated, but are no longer needed at this time. Instead, cleaning supplies, such as bleach and also tarps to lay items out on, are especially needed.

The Tide "Loads of Hope" mobile laundry unit will be providing free full-service laundry to residents affected by the flooding.

A news release from the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management says residents from directly affected areas can bring clothes to the mobile unit to be washed, dried and folded free of charge. All washable clothing types can be accepted with the exception of heavy bedding.

In addition, Procter & Gamble will be providing personal care kits containing items such as deodorant, toothpaste and shampoo as well as household cleaning products.

Tide "Loads of Hope" and the P&G product distribution program is planning to visit multiple areas affected by the floods, but initially will be located at Elkview Middle School, at 5090 Elk River Road N., in Elkview.

Shower facilities also are available at Elkview Middle School, and will be open each day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

American Red Cross has opened up the Safe & Well website for concerned friends and family to search for individuals that have registered themselves as Safe & Well with Red Cross. To register on the site, visit https://safeandwell.communityos.org/cms/index.php.

The Kanawha County Emergency Operations Center will remain open throughout today to assist the public with questions. It can be reached at 304-746-8828.

Optum, a health and behavioral health services company, is offering a free emotional-support help line for flood victims. The toll-free number, 866-342-6892, will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for as long as necessary and is free and open to anyone, according to a release.

FEMA Mobile Unit Arrives In Greenbrier County After Floods Wreck The Region

By Annie Moore

WVVA-TV Bluefield (WV), June 28, 2016

White Sulfur Springs (WVVA) A community that took decades to build, washed away by the rain. FEMA's mobile disaster assistance unit arrived in White Sulfur Springs on Tuesday to help those impacted by the floods.

"I was always the person who said, that's never going to happen to me. Right now, I'm in shock," said Laura Bare, one of hundreds who will be able to receive assistance at the new unit located on Tressel Street.

Bare was at work at The Greenbrier; her toddler at daycare, when floodwater ripped through her street. "It was so fast there would have been no getting out, and that's what scares me the most. I just keep thinking, what if we had been in there? It weighs on me."

In the days and weeks ahead, Bare and other families of the flood will be working with FEMA officials in White Sulfur Springs to get back on their feet.

"Candidly, getting FEMA in here this morning was a pretty significant development. We're trying to put the word out over the last 24 hours to get people to call the 1-800-621-FEMA number. If you've been impacted in any way, you need to register," said Rep. Evan Jenkins, who is helping residents sign up for assistant.

FEMA spokesman Peter Herrick said officials are currently working on a more permanent location in White Sulfur Springs to coordinate assistance. In the meantime, he is encouraging residents to call or visit the mobile until at the Emmanuel United Methodist Church between 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

As of Tuesday afternoon, only Greenbrier, Kanawha, and Nicholas counties are FEMA disaster areas, but Herrick is encouraging anyone affected to register as some counties could be added as officials survey the state.

To help Laura Bare and her 3-year-old daughter, visit https://www.gofundme.com/2b8vqpxg

FEMA Opens Mobile Disaster Recovery Center In Greenbrier County

WSLS-TV Roanoke (VA), June 28, 2016

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.Va. (WSLS 10) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency now has a Mobile Disaster Recovery Center open to help those affected by the recent West Virginia flooding.

It's located at the Emmanuel United Methodist Church (31 Tressel Street, White Sulphur Springs, WV 24986) in Greenbrier County.

It will be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday and 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday.

People do not have to visit a Disaster Recovery Center to register with FEMA.

FEMA urges those who have not yet registered to do so as soon as possible by visiting DisasterAssistance.gov. For those without access to the internet, FEMA has a toll-free number at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or (TTY) 1-800-462-7585 for the deaf or hard of hearing.

Federal disaster assistance for individuals and families can include money for rental assistance, essential home repairs, personal property loss and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

Rep. Mooney On Middle East Trip During Floods

By David Gutman

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, June 28, 2016

Most of West Virginia's federal elected officials have been out in force since last week, coordinating, helping out and trying to keep the public informed as southern parts of the state have been hit with the worst flooding in at least a generation.

All except one — Rep. Alex Mooney, who represents Kanawha County and some of the hardest hit areas.

Mooney, R-W.Va., who has made no public appearances during the flooding, is on a previously scheduled congressional trip to the Middle East, his office said.

"The trip has included meetings with American military leadership and troops fighting terrorists in the Sinai Desert region of Egypt," Mooney spokeswoman Meredith Jones said. "He is working with the American military liaisons through the Department of Defense to return as quickly as possible without putting a strain on our service members. He is receiving regular briefings on the flooding in West Virginia and is eager to return home to continue to help his constituents."

Asked repeatedly when Mooney left for the trip — before or after the flooding began — Jones did not respond.

Mooney was in Washington on Wednesday of last week, the night before the flooding began.

Jones noted that Mooney's offices were open and providing services.

Every member of West Virginia's congressional delegation, Mooney included, has signed letters to President Barack Obama asking him to provide federal disaster assistance to the regions hardest hit by the flood.

Obama approved the first request, dated Saturday. The second request was sent and approved (in part) on Tuesday.

Three of eight counties — Kanawha, Roane and Clay — where a federal disaster has been declared are in Mooney's district.

West Virginia's other federal representatives have crisscrossed the state in the days since the flood, providing assistance in any way possible.

Sen. Joe Manchin, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito and Rep. Evan Jenkins all did a fly-over with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, viewing the scale of the damage in Clendenin, Richwood, Rainelle and at the Summersville Dam.

All have also had their staffs fan out across the most affected areas to provide assistance.

Manchin, the lone Democrat, visited Elkview, Clendenin, Richwood, Craigsville, Boggs, Walnut Grove and Birch River.

Capito visited similar locations and also met with people taking shelter at Capital High School.

Jenkins held a news conference at White Sulphur Springs, visited Richwood, Ansted, Charmco, Ronceverte, Cowen, Rupert and Fairlea, among others.

All three were briefed by the West Virginia National Guard, and other emergency officials.

Mooney's political opponents have often made hay of his relatively scant presence in the western portion of his 2nd Congressional District — Mooney lives in the Eastern Panhandle.

He attended his first Kanawha County Commission meeting in May, leaving shortly after it began to attend a Donald Trump rally.

Marc Savitt, Mooney's opponent in the Republican primary, dubbed him "congressman no show," and criticized him for missing the groundbreaking of the new Procter & Gamble facility in Berkeley County and President Barack Obama's visit to Charleston. (Congress was in session during the president's visit.)

"This job isn't about photo ops, it's about putting on your jeans and work boots and getting out in the district to help the people who trusted you to improve their lives," Savitt said in February.

Mooney handily defeated Savitt, winning more than 70 percent of the vote, in the May primary.

Mooney's general election opponent has also been critical of his non-presence.

"Alex Mooney is an absent congressman," Mark Hunt, his Democratic challenger, said in April. "His office is in my building, 405 Capitol St.; I've never seen him."

Hunt spent Monday and Tuesday helping and handing out supplies in Clendenin, Elkview and Clay.

Gov. Tomblin Expands FEMA Assistance Requests To Seven Additional Counties

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), June 28, 2016

Charleston, W.Va. – On June 28, 2016, Gov. Tomblin expanded his request for a federal Major Disaster Declaration from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide assistance for Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster counties.

Greenbrier, Kanawha and Nicholas counties have already received federal declaration and FEMA teams are on the ground working with residents and providing individual assistance.

If Gov. Tomblin's request is approved by FEMA, these additional seven counties would also be eligible for federal assistance, which includes individual assistance, Damage-Frequency Assessment (DFA), Emergency Protective Measures and Debris Removal.

"As cleanup continues in so many communities across West Virginia, we are seeing the overwhelming damage that has been left behind," Gov. Tomblin said. "To ensure all those affected by these devastating floods have access to the assistance they need to rebuild their homes, businesses and communities, I have expanded my request for federal aid to include seven additional counties. I appreciate the continued support of our congressional delegation as we work with federal partners to provide critical resources to West Virginians in need as quickly as possible."

West Virginians needing assistance should contact their local offices of emergency management.

Contact information for each county office can be found at:

http://www.dhsem.wv.gov/Important%20Contact%20Numbers/Pages/default.aspx.

Those who need cleanup assistance, are available to volunteer or want to donate should visit https://wvvoad.communityos.org/cms or connect with an agency in their local community.

Individuals and businesses in counties that have been declared federal disaster areas should visit www.disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

5 Counties Added To FEMA Disaster Declaration

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), June 28, 2016

Earlier today, Gov. Tomblin expanded his request for a federal Major Disaster Declaration from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide assistance for Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster counties.

According to Governor Tomblin's Twitter Page, FEMA has added five counties to the list of counties able to receive federal disaster aid. The counties FEMA has approved are Clay, Fayette, Monroe, Roane, and Summers.

He also tweeted that declaration status is still pending for Webster and Pocahontas counties. According to his Twitter page, the WV Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management continues to work with FEMA to provide additional assistance.

It is unknown at this time when residents of these counties can begin applying for aid. However, these are the current links and contact numbers concerning FEMA assistance:

West Virginians needing assistance should contact their local offices of emergency management.

Contact information for each county office can be found at:

http://www.dhsem.wv.gov/Important%20Contact%20Numbers/Pages/default.aspx.

Those who need cleanup assistance, are available to volunteer or want to donate should visit https://wvvoad.communityos.org/cms or connect with an agency in their local community.

Individuals and businesses in counties that have been declared federal disaster areas should visit www.disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

Stay with 13 news for the latest updates.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

No stories for this edition

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

Napa County Ends Earthquake Emergency Status

By Barry Eberling

Napa Valley (CA) Register, June 28, 2016

It took almost two years, but Napa County is officially no longer under a local emergency proclamation linked to the Aug. 24, 2014, South Napa earthquake.

The county Board of Supervisors last week terminated the emergency proclamation initiated on the day of the earthquake. County Executive Officer Nancy Watt called attention to what might have otherwise been a routine item passed along with other routine items.

"It's somewhat anticlimactic," she acknowledged.

But up to 20 seconds of shaking during the earthquake yielded plenty of long-range, bureaucratic chores for the county. The immediate, chaotic signs of a major emergency — sirens, buckled roads, toppled bricks, collapsed buildings — were only the beginning.

A world of flashing red emergency vehicle lights yielded to a world of red tape. Napa County government's slow-motion recovery included securing federal reimbursements to help pay for government building and rural road damage, tasks that required emergency status.

Now Napa County has reached a point in its dealings with the Federal Emergency Management Agency that it felt comfortable terminating its local emergency proclamation.

"We still have a lot of work to do to get back to pre-earthquake life," Napa County Risk and Emergency Services Manager Kerry John Whitney said late last week. "But we're in recovery now, not response."

The county still has building repairs to make. Most notably, the oldest section of its historic courthouse remains closed and braced on the outside by giant metal beams.

FEMA has tentatively agreed to pay more than $500,000 toward the $635,000 earthquake insurance deductible on the building, Whitney said.

Napa County might be as long as two years away from holding a grand reopening for the damaged courthouse, Whitney said. It will reassemble a building shaken to its core by the quake while also paying attention to Victorian Italianate architecture and other historic details.

"That's an absolute priority," Whitney said. "We have a historical expert on our team to make sure that happens."

The need to maintain the building's historic integrity is one reason it took so long for the county to work with FEMA on a repair strategy. Only in late November 2015 did the parties agree on how to shore up the courthouse enough to begin an in-depth damage assessment.

Ultimate repair costs for the 1878 courthouse are still unknown. Much will depend on to what degree the building is strengthened to withstand future earthquakes.

"That building was very, very severely damaged and it has to be done right," Whitney said.

FEMA has also agreed to pay about $1.2 million toward the $1.4 million insurance deductible for the county Hall of Justice on Third Street. Whitney said the county should soon know the cost for repairs that remain to be done there.

Another factor allowing the county to end its earthquake emergency status involves the downtown jail. Because of earthquake damage to the jail, the county signed a contract with Solano County that allowed it to house as many as 125 inmates in the Solano County jail.

The county in early April stopped housing inmates in Solano for earthquake-related reasons. However, it still is housing inmates in Solano because of a remodeling project at the Napa County jail that has closed an inmate housing unit.

Napa County last August announced that total earthquake damage to its government buildings, roads and infrastructure was near $15 million. The county has long expected costs to top $20 million when all the bills are known and tallied. Much of the cost is to be reimbursed by insurance, and federal and state governments.

The city of Napa also declared a state of emergency that the City Council terminated on April 21, 2015. City officials said at the time that they had worked with the federal and state governments on an estimated $12 million in city earthquake-related damage costs.

ZIKA VIRUS

Zika Sets Off Urgent, Complex Communications Effort From CDC

By Bradley Johnson

Advertising Age, June 28, 2016

A blood-engorged female Aedes albopictus mosquito feeding on a human host. Credit: CDC/ James Gathany

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is pushing hard to spread the word about Zika, the first new cause of birth defects identified by the CDC in 50 years and the first time ever that the cause has been spread by mosquitos.

CDC communications professionals are working side-by-side with scientists and emergency responders as the Zika hazard grows. And even though the agency still has to protect against all other hazards, anyone who can spare time from their normal duties is helping through the CDC's Emergency Operations Center.

The center is running at its highest state of activity, Level 1, under which the CDC says it assigns the most staff possible to work around the clock. It is the fourth Level 1, following the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the H1N1 outbreak in 2009 and Hurrican Katrina in 2005.

The work is complicated by the multiple fronts on which Zika transmission must be fought, apathy among those who don't feel at risk and a still-evolving understanding of the threat.

"This is probably one of the most complex communication responses the CDC has ever faced," said Katherine Lyon Daniel, associate director for communication at the Atlanta-based government agency.

"We know we can't stop every mosquito from coming here, and we know this is a terrible outcome, so we feel we have to do everything we can to be as ready as we can be," she added, calling Zika a "global crisis" that can potentially affect tens of thousands of babies.

There were 820 reported cases of Zika infection in the U.S. as of June 22.

To reach health professionals around the country, the CDC is hosting thousands of clinician calls where doctors and nurses can learn how to answer patient questions substantively and in an understandable manner.

It is sending messages through its Health Alert Network, or HAN, to its priority recipient list, which includes about 1,200 public information officers, health practitioners from the federal to local level, clinicians and public health laboratories. All HAN messages are also distributed through the CDC's Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity listserv of 36,500 subscribers and 155 partner organizations, posted on CDC.gov and Facebook, and distributed via

GovDelivery to HAN professional and media partners and individual subscribers.

But the agency is emphasizing the media as well. That's partly just another route to medical professionals. "We know physicians and clinicians are people too and they also consume the news, so that's one way were trying to get out the correct information," Ms. Lyon Daniel said.

It can also provide a more direct line to people concerned about the virus. The CDC's communication team is reaching out to mommy bloggers with suggested talking points for their audiences.

The organization recently created a Spanish-language PSA about Zika for Puerto Rico, which will run in movie theaters, on the radio and on social media.

On Facebook and Twitter, the CDC has been regularly posting relevant Zika-related infographics, videos and podcasts, focusing on vacation and travel themes as summer got underway. A post last week urged people to protect themselves if they are going to the Summer Olympics in Rio.

And the CDC website separates Zika information into sections for specific audiences, such as pregnant women or healthcare providers.

Because partner organizations are key to getting the word out to both health professionals and the general public, the CDC has also been working with the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists around Zika.

And the agency has hired Abt Associatates to help with productions, marketing and communcations.

Part of the challenge is "getting people prepared for something they're not really worried about yet," Ms. Lyon Daniel said, citing those who are neither pregnant nor thinking about having children soon, she said.

There's also still plenty of uncertainty about the virus itself. "We're sharing all the information we have as quickly as we can, but things will change and people's personal risk may be uncertain," she said.

And Zika's many facets, including sexual transmission and travel, complicates matters further.

The CDC is trying to get people to act now when possible, which means not leaving sitting water outside that could attract mosquitos and wearing insect repellent for three weeks after returning from countries with Zika to prevent mosquitos from spreading it in the U.S.

"We're trying to drive behavior change in a way we haven't tried to communicate before," said Ms. Lyon Daniel.

Dems-GOP Squabble Stalls Zika Funding

By Ted Barrett

CNN, June 28, 2016

Washington (CNN) Efforts to combat the Zika virus stalled in the Senate Tuesday when Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion House-passed funding bill, escalating the political battle between the parties over how to respond to the looming public health crisis.

The bill – which was put into final form in negotiations between House and Senate Republicans but not Democrats – fell eight votes short of the 60 it needed to advance. Congress now has just a narrow window to find a compromise before departing Washington in mid-July for a lengthy recess.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, said it was "absurd" Democrats filibustered the bill and said he hoped they would feel pressure as they explained to their constituents this weekend why they voted against the money.

McConnell said he would schedule a vote on the bill again next week.

Democrats said they opposed provisions blocking funds for Planned Parenthood and freezing some environmental regulations to allow for spraying of the mosquitoes that carry the virus. They accused Republicans of inserting those "poison pills" to secure the backing of far-right Republicans in the House at the expense of being able to pass it in the Senate.

Top Democrats sent a letter to GOP leaders seeking fresh negotiations on the bill. While McConnell appeared wary of new talks, others GOP senators, like Roy Blunt of Missouri, who has been heavily involved in the issue, acknowledged they would be necessary.

"We have to deal with this. Everybody understands that this has to be dealt with," Blunt said.

Republicans argued that they had met the funding level acceptable to Senate Democrats and charged that Democrats backed off the bill because of pressure from special interests, like Planned Parenthood.

"This is purely and simply about politics on the part of the Democrats. And worse yet, special interest politics that has gotten in the way of what's in the best interest of the safety and health of the American people," said Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota.

The rhetorical attacks were surprisingly harsh – even for this divided Congress – as each side blasted the other's handling of the issue as motivated more by base politics than the health care needs of women who if infected with Zika can have children with serious birth defects.

"Republicans decided they'd leverage a national health emergency and a public health crisis to sneak in special interest poison pills," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-New York.

"It is completely unacceptable, actually shameful, hypocritical, cynical for the Democrats to block this funding at this time," said Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who earlier gave a lengthy floor speech while standing next to a blown up photo of a baby with a shrunken head due to microcephaly, the birth defect linked to Zika.

"We all realize what a threat this is to the public health and safety of women in the United States," he said.

Democrats Block $1.1 Billion Zika Bill

By Ted Barrett

CNN, June 28, 2016

Washington (CNN) Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a Zika funding measure over the objections of Republicans, and both sides are trying to figure out a path forward to find a compromise.

The vote, which needed 60 to advance, failed 52-48. Democrats on Monday vowed to defeat the $1.1 billion package that was agreed to by House and Senate Republican negotiators – and approved in the GOP-controlled House last week – because it contained what Democrats called "poison pills" inserted in the measure.

Democrats opposed a provision easing Environmental Protection Agency regulations but were especially frustrated by a measure that would have prevented funding for Planned Parenthood.

"They restrict funding for birth control provided by Planned Parenthood. Can you believe that?" Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said Monday. "And the Zika problem, who does it affect? Women and especially pregnant women."

Republicans argued the EPA changes were temporary and designed to make it easier to spray pesticides to kill mosquitoes. They also say that while funds are denied to Planned Parenthood, there are no actual cuts to women's health funding. The money is redirected to community health centers and other organizations.

Republicans cautioned Monday that Democrats will be blamed if children are born with the birth defects caused by the dangerous mosquito-borne virus.

"I think there's going to be a heavy price to pay when this virus hits our shore and women start having babies with terrible birth defects," said Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican leader. "I wouldn't want to be in their position."

Lawmakers have debated how to respond to the public health crisis caused by Zika for months but Republicans made clear if Democrats block the GOP compromise, it could be weeks before the chamber – which will soon break for party conventions and summer recess – can vote again.

A Reid spokeswoman sought to put blame on Republicans if the Senate leaves town before voting on a Zika funding measure.

"It would be a tragic mistake if Republicans give up and skip town for a two month summer recess without forging a bipartisan agreement to protect American mothers, babies and families from the rapidly-rising threat of the Zika virus," Kristen Orthman in a statement Monday.

Tuesday's measure was part of a larger spending bill for veterans' programs and military construction.

Senate Dems Block Zika Funding

CBS News, June 28, 2016

WASHINGTON – Senate Democrats have blocked a GOP-drafted measure to provide $1.1 billion to fight the Zika virus, accusing Republicans of packing the measure with partisan provisions and unfair spending cuts.

The nearly party-line 52-48 vote Tuesday left the Senate short of the 60 votes required to advance the measure. What happens next is unclear since the White House is adamant in dedicating $2 billion to fight the Zika virus, which, scientists say, causes severe birth defects in children if the mother contracts the disease during pregnancy.

Democrats say they also oppose the provision because of offsets attached to the drafted measure, which would take away $95 million in federal grants from vital services such as providing birth control to women in Puerto Rico where the disease is rampant.

"They restrict funding for birth control provided by Planned Parenthood. Can you believe that?" Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said. "And the Zika problem, who does it affect? Women and especially pregnant women."

On the other side of the aisle, however, Senate Republicans warned their liberal counterparts prior to Tuesday's vote not to block the measure because they will have to bear the responsibility of children born with microcephaly, one of the birth defects caused by the virus in which the a baby's head and brain is smaller than normal.

"Putting politics before a public health crisis is about as irresponsible as it gets," House Speaker Paul Ryan said in a statement following the vote. "So much for all those lectures about doing your job."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms more than 2,500 of Zika cases in the United

States and its territories. In February, the CDC issued travel notices in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. Just this past April, the first Zika-related death was reported in Puerto Rico.

Though no formal vaccine exists, vaccine trials to prevent the virus are set to begin this September, nearly seven months after the virus hit the U.S. mainland.

Senate Democrats Block GOP's Zika Funding Bill

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a Republican proposal to provide $1.1 billion to fight the Zika virus, faulting the GOP for packing the measure with restrictions on Planned Parenthood money and changes to policies on pesticide spraying.

The nearly party-line 52-48 vote Tuesday left the Senate short of the 60 votes required to advance the measure. What happens next is unclear, though neither side is looking forward to leaving Washington next month for a seven-week vacation without having acted to address the health threat.

Zika is spread mainly by a tropical mosquito and is causing an epidemic in Latin America and the Caribbean. The virus can cause horrible birth defects and is likely to spread further this summer. So far, there's been no transmission by mosquitoes in the continental U.S.

Democrats pressed to resume negotiations while Republicans insisted, for now at least, that the measure negotiated by House and Senate Republicans is the best the Obama administration is going to get. The administration had requested $1.9 billion in emergency funds in February.

"There's not going to be another opportunity to deal with this in the near future," promised No. 2 Senate Republican John Cornyn of Texas.

The White House has threatened to veto the legislation.

The House-Senate measure matches the $1.1 billion measure that passed the Senate last month on a sweeping vote, but Democrats oppose a handful of provisions designed to mollify GOP conservatives in the House and the attachment of companion spending cuts to defray its cost.

Democrats particularly oppose a provision that restricts the use of $95 million worth of federal grants to provide services such as birth control to women in Puerto Rico threatened by the virus. Democrats charged that the restrictions were targeted at Planned Parenthood, a group loathed by many anti-abortion Republicans.

In addition to the limits on Planned Parenthood, the bill would temporarily lift permitting requirements on pesticide spraying.

Even as Democrats pressed for compromise, they crowed that Republicans controlling Congress would soon reconsider.

"They come back with their tail between their legs saying 'Let's pass something,'" said Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y.

Republicans controlling Congress have been slow to act on Obama's request, instead forcing the administration to redirect more than $500 million in unspent Ebola-fighting funds to combat Zika.

In a letter Tuesday morning, top Senate Democrats reiterated their opposition to the partisan provisions, but offered relatively mild objections to the inclusion of spending cuts to finance the Zika package.

"We stand ready to work cooperatively with you," the Democrats' letter said.

The measure is an agreement between House and Senate Republicans who say they drafted it in hopes of finding a compromise that could somehow satisfy both tea party Republicans and Obama's Democratic allies in the Senate. It did nothing of the sort. The House passed the measure along party lines last week.

Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., reacted with outrage that GOP negotiators dropped a House provision to ban the display of the Confederate flag at federal veterans' cemeteries a day or so each year. Democrats did not seek to address the issue during Senate debate last month.

Each side already has begun the blame game. Cornyn appeared on the Senate floor with a poster of a baby born with microcephaly, a severe deformity in which children are born with poorly developed brains and small skulls.

"I wonder what the senators who voted against this bipartisan Zika funding bill would tell the mother of this child," Cornyn said.

"What a cynical and hypocritical thing to do," Schumer said. "All Democrats have ever asked for on Zika was to give the (Centers for Disease Control) and the other agencies to protect the American people, pregnant mothers, and their babies from this dangerous virus."

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Funding To Combat Zika Fails To Advance In Senate

By Susan Cornwell

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Zika Funds Fail In Senate As Democrats Decry "Poison Pills"

By Steven Dennis

Bloomberg Politics, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked Republicans' plan to partially fund President Barack Obama's request for funding to tackle the Zika virus and attach it to other items Democrats dismissed as partisan, setting off a bitter round of sniping ahead of the July 4th recess.

Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn of Texas called Democrats "sore losers" and said they, not Republicans, will pay a political price for blocking the $1.1 billion Zika funding package, which was to be attached to a funding bill for veterans and military construction.

"Here we are in an utterly absurd position, playing political games as this public health crisis mounts here in our country," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said after the vote. "Pregnant women all across America are looking at this with dismay, utter dismay.''

The measure was blocked on a 52-48 vote, short of the 60-vote threshold needed to advance it. Democratic leaders called for a new round of negotiations to produce a bipartisan bill.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said Democrats "have been trying for months" to pass President Barack Obama's request for $1.9 billion to fund Zika control efforts. The Republican measure blocked Tuesday would take away funding from birth control, veterans and combating Ebola, he said.

"It is unbelievable that somebody would have the audacity to come to the floor and say it's Democrats' fault," said Reid of Nevada. "A significant amount of American women, especially young women, go to Planned Parenthood," he said. "The Republicans said you can't do that."First Case

Shortly before the vote, the Florida Department of Health announced the first Zika-linked case in the state of a baby born with microcephaly, to a Haitian woman who contracted the virus abroad.

McConnell said the measure was senators' last chance to provide Zika funding "for weeks" because the chamber will be off next week for the July 4 holiday. But Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the third-ranking Democrat, said the package was "a bill designed to fail."

Democrats say the package is filled with "poison pills," forcing them to vote against the Republican-written plan.

Among the items Democrats objected to were limits on family-planning services, which Democrats called a "back door" cut to Planned Parenthood; a suspension of Clean Water Act rules on use of some pesticides without EPA approval; funding for veterans that was $500 million below what the Senate passed; and the deletion of a provision sought by Democrats to stop flying the Confederate battle flag at veterans' cemeteries.Veto Threat

The White House has said Obama would veto the measure, H.R. 2577, if it reached his desk.

Reid also said it would set a bad precedent to require funding for emergencies to be offset by cutting federal spending elsewhere. Typically, emergency spending is paid for by borrowing.

Cornyn said Monday that Democrats "want to spend $1.9 billion in emergency spending with no offsets." He added, "Busting the budget caps is more important to them than the public health and women who might suffer from birth defects."

Cornyn didn't sound open to renegotiating the bill.

"This is their shot. I think there is going to be a heavy price to pay when this virus hits our shore and women start having babies with terrible birth defects," Cornyn said. "I wouldn't want to be in their position."

Obama requested $1.9 billion to fight the virus in February, but Republicans didn't act for months and ultimately balked at the price tag. A $1.1 billion emergency plan passed the Senate as an amendment to a spending bill last month on a 68-30 vote, with most Republicans, including Cornyn, voting against it because it would add to the deficit.Florida Focus

Democrats have been pounding Republicans for failing to act for months, particularly in the key battleground state of Florida.

Senator Marco Rubio, who changed his mind and decided to seek re-election this year, has been the most visible Republican pushing for Congress to act. He now faces the unwelcome prospect of going home for another recess and explaining why his party was unable to enact any funding yet again.

"I'm frustrated that we haven't dealt with this, quickly, effectively, weeks ago, before the middle of the summer, middle of mosquito season," Rubio told reporters Monday.

Rubio said he had hoped the measure would be the full $1.9 billion on its own, as the president requested.

"I wish it didn't have all these strings attached, because it would have been easier to pass a long time ago, but not doing anything is no longer an option," he said.

Bill To Provide $1.1 Billion Zika Funding Dies In Senate Vote

By Erin Kelly

USA Today, June 28, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Tuesday blocked a $1.1 billion bill to combat the Zika virus, giving Congress just two weeks to try to reach a new deal before lawmakers leave for a seven-week recess in the midst of mosquito season and a growing public health crisis.

Senators voted 52-48 to advance the bill, falling eight votes short of the 60 needed. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., immediately made a motion to reconsider the vote, raising the possibility of another vote on the same bill next week.

"We'll address this matter again (next week) and hopefully respond...to this pending health care crisis," he said.

Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate, warned before the vote that there would be no negotiations on a new Zika bill if the legislation failed Tuesday. But Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., predicted that Republican leaders would relent and return to the negotiating table at the last minute to seek a compromise rather than go home for the summer with nothing to show their constituents.

"Republicans will come back in a few weeks with their tails between their legs," Schumer said. "Why they don't avoid that embarrassment is beyond me."

McConnell blamed Democrats for playing partisan politics and dooming Zika funding.

"Our friends across the aisle can try to come up with a line of excuses as to why they are blocking funding to address the Zika crisis," McConnell said. "But here's what it all boils down to: partisan politics."

Democrats opposed the bill, which they complained was negotiated between Senate and House Republicans with little input from them and was loaded with "poison pill" riders that cut health programs, restricted funding for birth control services from Planned Parenthood, weakened clean water laws and blocked a ban on displaying the Confederate flag at U.S. military cemeteries.

Democratic leaders sent a letter Tuesday to McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., calling for an immediate round of new talks to try to produce a bipartisan compromise.

Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., whose state has been hit hardest by the Zika virus, warned his colleagues that the public health crisis is poised to become much worse if Congress doesn't act soon.

Florida has 223 Zika cases, including 40 pregnant women. The Florida Department of Health announced Tuesday the first confirmed case of microcephaly in an infant born in Florida. Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby is born with an unusually small head, often due to abnormal brain development.The Florida baby's mother contracted Zika while in Haiti.

"If you don't think the Zika crisis is an emergency, just wait," Nelson said. "These numbers are just going to increase...We need to stop playing these political games."

The bill, passed by the House at about 3 a.m. Thursday with no debate, would have cut $750 million from other health programs to fund anti-Zika efforts. The bill also would have cut $543 million in unused funds from the implementation of Obamacare, $107 million from leftover funds used to fight Ebola, and $100 million in administrative funds from the Health and Human Services Department.

The legislation would have provided $230 million for the National Institutes of Health to develop a vaccine and $476 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help pay for mosquito control efforts.

President Obama asked Congress in February to provide $1.9 billion to fight the Zika virus, a mosquito-borne illness that can cause devastating birth defects.

The Senate passed legislation in May to provide $1.1 billion in funding. Unlike the bill that came to the floor Tuesday, it did not require any budget cuts to fund it and did not include controversial provisions. The House passed a bill last month to provide $622 million in funding, drawing a veto threat from the White House, which called it woefully inadequate.

The legislation that the Senate voted on Tuesday was an attempt by House and Senate negotiators to try to find a compromise between those two bills.

Zika Bill Is Blocked By Senate Democrats Upset Over Provisions

By David Herszenhorn

New York Times, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a federal spending bill that would have provided $1.1 billion to fight the mosquito-borne Zika virus, saying Republicans had sabotaged the legislation with politically charged provisions. The move raised the possibility that no new money would be available soon to fight the disease as Southern states brace for a summer outbreak.

The stalemate, accompanied by an sharp war of words on the Senate floor, raised the prospect that the fierce partisan divide in Congress was hindering the government's ability to respond effectively to a pressing public health emergency. Democrats blocked the bill because they were upset with cuts to programs and changes in policy they have long supported.

Democrats and the White House have been pushing since February for the Republican majorities in Congress to approve $1.9 billion in emergency financing to fight Zika, which can cause microcephaly and other serious defects in infants born to infected mothers.

The Democrats reacted with disbelief on Tuesday as Republicans tried to turn the tables and blame Democrats for delaying the money because they had blocked the legislation.

"We have a public health crisis descending on our country," Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky and the majority leader, said moments after the vote. "Pregnant women all across America are looking at this with dismay, utter dismay, as we sit here in a partisan gridlock manufactured by the other side."

The Senate Democratic leader, Harry Reid of Nevada, was incensed. "I don't know what universe my friend is living in," Mr. Reid said, referring to Mr. McConnell. "What does he think? Does he think we're all stupid? The American people are dumb?"

The sniping continued as Senator John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican declared, "Our Democratic friends block it because they are sore losers."

In May, the Senate approved $1.1 billion in funding after months of partisan brinkmanship, during which the Obama administration ultimately redirected nearly $600 million previously approved to fight the Ebola virus so that federal health agencies could get a start on working against the Zika virus.

House Republicans, in turn, adopted legislation providing $622 million, with most of the money cut and redirected from other federal programs supported by Democrats. Democrats were willing to go along with the Senate version, but in talks controlled strictly by Republicans, House and Senate negotiators agreed last week to provide $1.1 billion, with $750 million in cuts and policy changes.

Democrats charged that Republicans had booby-trapped the legislation by adding provisions that included a ban on any direct government financing for Planned Parenthood, the women's health organization, to provide contraceptive services related to fighting the Zika virus, which is also transmitted sexually.

The Democrats also said Republicans had inserted a provision cutting $500 million in financing for the Affordable Care Act, President Obama's signature health care law, and that they had stripped a House provision that would ban the flying of the Confederate battle flag in federal cemeteries.

Another provision of the bill that Democrats disliked was a further reallocation of money from Ebola programs, totaling $107 million. While Democrats have long maintained that money previously appropriated to fight Ebola is vitally needed, it does indicate that the Obama administration still has some flexibility in reapportioning funds among different health programs — in addition to the nearly $600 million already taken from Ebola programs — while waiting for Congress to act.

The White House has been reluctant to specify how much money it might be able to temporarily redirect to fight Zika — or how long it would be able to make do — because that could ease pressure on Congress to approve the new money.

Whichever side is more to blame, it was clear that no new government funds would be approved to fight the Zika virus until after Congress returned from a recess for the Fourth of July holiday. And even then, the prospects of an agreement are uncertain.

With Southern states expected to be hit hardest by Zika, lawmakers representing Florida have been among those pushing hardest for bipartisan action. But even Senator Bill Nelson, Democrat of Florida, said Republicans had poisoned the chances for moving ahead by blocking money for Planned Parenthood, knowing Democrats would never agree.

"They're just not living in the real world, and they're just not facing the fact that this is an emergency," Mr. Nelson said. He noted that at least five babies had been born with microcephaly in the United States — the most recent one in Florida — but said he expected the disagreements to continue.

"We go until enough of these horrible cases are born that it is finally beginning to penetrate their hard heads," he said.

Democrats on Tuesday morning urged renewed negotiations, but Mr. Cornyn, speaking to reporters off the floor, said matter-of-factly, "There's not going to be another opportunity to deal with this for the near future."

The vote on Tuesday morning was 52 to 48, with Republicans falling short of the 60 votes needed to overcome a Democratic filibuster and advance the bill to a final vote.

Democrats said they had no choice but to block the legislation as it was written.

"If there was ever a bill obviously designed to fail, it was this one," Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York, said in a statement on Monday evening. "Loading up the bill with poison pills was the only way Republican leadership could pass a bill without Democratic support, and it is a cynical strategy."

But Senate Republicans were unapologetic and said Democrats were now to blame. "Here we are in an utterly absurd position, playing political games," Mr. McConnell, the majority leader said, "as this public health crisis mounts here in our country."

Senate Democrats Block Zika Funding Bill

By Tom Howell

Washington Times, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion deal Tuesday that uses Obamacare and Ebola funds to combat the mosquito-borne Zika virus, throwing negotiations into disarray even as the nation racks up 800-plus cases and insects begin to bite on the U.S. mainland, sparking fears of widespread infection.

All but one Democrat filibustered a military construction bill that contained the money, saying Congress should rewrite the package because GOP drafters included "poison-pill" provisions on women's health and the environment.

"This conference report is the most irresponsible legislation I have ever seen in my 34 years in Congress," Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, Nevada Democrat, said. "That says a lot. I can't think of anything that's close."

The legislation needed 60 votes to advance but fell short, 52-48, with two Republicans voting "no" because drafters only paid for $750 million of the package by taking funds from elsewhere in the budget.

Furious Senate Republicans accused Democrats of playing election-year games with the bill, which also funds veterans programs, after GOP negotiators agreed to the $1.1 billion spending level that Senate Democrats supported in May.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the filibuster could spoil Congress last shot to fund mosquito control and the pursuit of a vaccine for Zika, which causes birth defects, before a seven-week break for July conventions and the August recess.

"We need to act and we need to act right now," the Kentucky Republican said.

Mr. McConnell changed his vote to "no" after the measure fell short, a parliamentary maneuver so that the chamber could try again after the July 4th holiday.

The standoff comes amid increasing worry over local outbreaks of Zika in the states and D.C.

Mosquitoes are spreading the disease in Puerto Rico and Latin America, where Brazilians first noticed an uptick in both Zika and microcephaly, a condition in which babies are born with abnormally small heads.

Meanwhile the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recorded more than 820 travel-related cases of Zika in the states and D.C., a handful of them through sexual transmission, though experts say the virus could puncture the mainland further once summer ramps up and Aedes mosquitoes flourish.

President Obama in February requested $1.9 billion in new spending for the fight, but House GOP leaders balked, saying there was plenty of money in other accounts to combat the disease in the near term.

Four months later, House and Senate negotiators melded competing plans, option to use the Senate's $1.1 billion funding level while paying for part of it with money from the Ebola fight in West Africa, unobligated funds at the Health and Human Services Department and funds earmarked for territories to set up Obamacare exchanges.

It also included measures that would appeal to House Republicans, such as excluding Planned Parenthood from its pipeline of grant funds and temporarily rolling back clean-water rules on pesticides to kill mosquitoes.

Democrats accused Republicans of locking them out of conference negotiations and then crafting a package that was doomed to fail.

"They did everything they could to make sure the result we saw today would happen," said Senate Minority Whip Richard J. Durbin, Illinois Democrat.

Democrats said the GOP must explain why it took four months to land on a plan that falls $800 million short of Mr. Obama's request and takes money from other health accounts.

The administration hadn't bothered to look for funding offsets elsewhere in the massive federal budget, saying it would set a bad precedent in funding emergencies.

Mr. McConnell, in response to the Democrats' complaints, said there are benefits to being in the majority. He also said the conference report cannot be amended at this point, anyway.

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, Wisconsin Republican, also said he doesn't want the Senate to send the package back to his chamber, after he muscled the bill to passage in predawn votes Thursday. He said he had no choice at the time, because Democrats disrupted the chamber with a sit-in over gun control.

"This is ridiculous. Senate Democrats, after demanding Zika funding for months and supporting this exact funding level for weeks, now block it to create a political issue," Mr. Ryan said Tuesday. "Putting politics before a public health crisis is about as irresponsible as it gets. So much for all those lectures about doing your job."

Zika Funding Bill Defeated In US Senate

By Todd Ackerman

Houston Chronicle, June 28, 2016

Houston politicians and public health leaders have complained about inadequate funding in congressional proposals to fight the Zika virus, but it's beginning to look like no legislation of any amount is going to be passed.

Senate Democrats Tuesday blocked a $1.1 billion Zika package drafted by their Republican colleagues, just two weeks before lawmakers are scheduled to leave for a seven-week recess. Both parties cited partisan politics by the other side for the bill's defeat.

"It's distressing," said Dr. Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital. "At some level, Congress doesn't seem to think the Zika threat is real. There's certainly not much urgency to get something through."

Experts fear the Zika threat could become reality in the U.S. in the next two months, the height of mosquito season. The mosquito-borne virus has been linked to a broad array of birth defects and neurological disorders, mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean. There, thousands of babies have already been born with microcephaly, a condition in which an infant is born with an abnormally small head and brain.

There has been no "local transmission" of Zika in the U.S. yet, but more than 800 Americans have acquired the virus traveling to Zika-affected countries. Forty-eight such cases have been reported in Texas.

The bill blocked Tuesday was an attempt to merge a Senate bill that would allocate $1.1 billion toward the Zika fight and a House bill that would have allocated $622 million. The vote to advance the bill was 52-48, eight votes short of the 60 needed.

Democrats complained the Senate bill was loaded with "poison pill" riders, which included cutting health programs, restricting funding for Planned Parenthood birth control services, relaxing clean water laws and blocking a ban on Confederate flag displays at military cemeteries. Republicans responded that the bill opposition was politics as usual for Democrats, more interested in attacking Republicans than passing legislation to provide funding.

The bill's fate is still uncertain. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said lawmakers would address the matter again after the July 4 holiday next week, but neither side appeared inclined to budge.

Sen. John Cornryn, R-Texas, issued a statement saying he couldn't "imagine a more disgraceful vote than what some of our colleagues across the aisle have cast." Meanwhile, Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he couldn't "remember anything as outrageous, as shameful as this piece of legislation."

Senate Vote On Zika Money Fails, Leaving Funding Future Uncertain

By Dylan Scott

STAT, June 28, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Senate failed Tuesday to advance a Republican-negotiated plan to fund the US response to the Zika virus, leaving no end in sight for the Zika funding fight in Congress that has dragged on for more than four months.

The procedural vote failed 52 to 48, 126 days after President Obama first requested a $1.9 billion package to address the virus. It needed 60 votes to advance.

The failure leaves the Zika funding effort in an increasingly bitter standoff.

GOP leaders do not appear willing to reopen negotiations on the Zika funding proposal, and Democrats showed Tuesday that they would not support the $1.1 billion deal reached by House and Senate Republicans. With mosquito season in full swing, both parties resorted to attacking the other over the impasse.

"This is the one shot we have to resolve this, and it'd be a shame if people refused the opportunity," Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn of Texas told reporters before the vote. "There's not gonna be another opportunity to deal with this in the near future."

Senate Democrats derided the GOP plan as a partisan proposal filled with poison pills because it included spending cuts to the Affordable Care Act and a provision meant to stop funding for Planned Parenthood.

"What we want them to do is negotiate. We're willing to compromise," Senator Chuck Schumer of New York told reporters after the vote. "What they're doing is going to kill any chance of Zika, and anyone who thinks that is not the case, just look at the words Planned Parenthood. That has been a poison pill on every issue."

Republicans, meanwhile, tried to shift the blame to the Democrats, arguing that the final bill has the same funding level that Senate Democrats already endorsed when they voted for the original Senate bill — and that the House has already moved in their direction.

Cornyn called the Democratic minority "a sore loser" on the floor after Tuesday's vote while standing alongside a poster of a baby with microcephaly, the birth defect linked to Zika that causes babies to be born with abnormally small heads.

"Today, Democrats have a choice: continue pushing thinly veiled partisan arguments and block the Zika control funding, or join with us to advance a serious solution and send critical funding to the president's desk right now," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said in a floor speech shortly before the vote.

Congress has now left itself a narrow window to pass a Zika funding bill before its long August break. Lawmakers will leave Washington in mid-July ahead of their party's presidential conventions and won't return until after Labor Day.

At this point, though, it's not clear what Republicans' next move will be — if there will be one at all. Senator John Thune of South Dakota, a member of the GOP leadership, demurred when asked if the GOP would be willing to undertake talks again.

Senator Bill Nelson of Florida, a Democrat, told STAT that Republicans had given no indication that they would be open to continuing talks on the issue.

"They're just not living in the real world," he said, "and they're not facing the fact that this is a real emergency."

Frustrations were equally high on the other side of the aisle.

"It's not good," said Senator Marco Rubio of Florida. "If you can't come together on an issue of public health and safety, a disease, whose impact we have seen graphically, you start to wonder if you can do it on anything."

The original Senate-passed bill, negotiated by Republican Roy Blunt of Missouri and Democrat Patty Murray of Washington, had provided $1.1 billion for Zika with no accompanying spending cuts. But the House had fully paid for its $622 million plan with spending cuts, and the final deal negotiated by House and Senate Republicans included $750 million in cuts to offset the $1.1 billion in funding. Even if the Senate had approved the new funding plan, the White House has pledged that Obama would veto it.

Shortly after the vote, a coalition of 30 health organizations sent a letter to congressional leadership urging them to scrap the GOP plan and start negotiating a new funding bill. Senate Democrats were urging the same course.

"Hopefully calmer heads will prevail now and we can go back and do a bipartisan bill and do our job," Murray said.

But she declined to comment when asked if there had been any sign from Republicans that they would do so.

Democrats Block Zika Funding Bill, Blame GOP

By Burgess Everett And Jennifer Haberkorn

Politico, June 28, 2016

Congress is poised for an epic failure in its efforts to combat Zika before lawmakers leave Washington for a seven-week vacation — and it could come back to bite Republicans at the ballot box if there's an outbreak of the mosquito-borne virus in the United States this summer.

Senate Democrats rejected the GOP funding measure on Tuesday, 52-48, arguing that it would rob Obamacare of funding, impose new restrictions on Planned Parenthood and provide some $800 million less than the Obama administration is seeking. They're also miffed that the measure, part of legislation to finance the Veterans Affairs Department, would allow the Confederate flag to fly at veterans cemeteries.

The stalemate carries real political risk: In 2014, Republicans blasted the Obama administration and Democrats' response to Ebola, contributing to a public perception in the midterm election of feckless Democratic rule. Republicans gained control of the Senate that year — but now find their playbook is being used against them.

Republicans "taught us with Ebola," said Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.). "A public health crisis? Take it seriously. I don't believe they've taken it seriously at all."

The attack ads this time write themselves: Faced with months of dire warnings from health experts, the Republicans who control Congress failed to provide money to stop the spread of Zika to the United States. Bracing for such a message, Republicans began the week spinning the expected defeat of the House-passed bill as politics as usual for Democrats, alleging that the minority party would rather attack Republicans over the issue than pass a funding bill.

Indeed, in the short term, Democrats are more open to criticism: After clamoring for new Zika funding for months, they are set to vote against a bill at funding levels they've already agreed to. They've offered myriad objections: That the bill is paid for irresponsibly, inordinately relaxes clean water regulations and was constructed with no Democratic input. On Tuesday morning, Planned Parenthood wrote all Senate offices opposing the bill, arguing that "a vote against this bill will be seen as a vote for women's health care."

"The first TV picture of an American woman bearing a child with a birth defect caused by this virus will be on [Democrats]," said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas). "I wouldn't want to be in their position."

Democrats are now calling for the GOP to reopen the Zika negotiations entirely, but Republicans say there will be no do-over: Once the bill fails on Tuesday, the Senate will not revisit Zika funding, Cornyn said. They say Democrats got what they wanted and won't take yes for the answer.

But given the history on legislative impasses, Democrats are betting that the majority party will be held responsible by voters.

"They have to be responsible. It falls on Republicans," said Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), a Senate leader and former top campaign strategist. "We're just supposed to say yes? That's not how we do things responsibly around here."

The stalemate comes in the midst of the summer mosquito season, when the Zika threat is strongest. So far, there has been no local transmission of the Zika virus in the continental United States. But federal health officials warn that it is coming, this summer or in the future. The virus has been scientifically proven to potentially cause microcephaly, a severe brain abnormality, when a woman is infected during pregnancy. The Centers for Disease Control lists eye problems, hearing loss and slow growth as other birth defects caused by the virus.

Health officials don't know exactly how strong the link is between Zika and microcephaly, but studies indicate up to a 13 percent chance that a woman infected with Zika can give birth to a baby with the severe birth defect. Already, there are 265 pregnant women in the continental United States with the virus; all of them got the virus while in other countries or through sex with a man who had it.

Given those dire statistics, the lack of congressional action is alarming, said Cindy Pellegrini, a lobbyist for March of Dimes, which advocates for maternal and fetal health. She said the GOP's bill was "doomed from the start."

"We have a hard time imagining an issue that could be more of an emergency than an infectious disease transmitted by mosquitoes that destroys babies' brains in utero," Pellegrini said. "The package looked like it was not designed to be successful and that was deeply troubling for us."

The impasse began in the House. Democrats held the floor for more than a day last week to advocate for more gun control legislation. Eager to end what he deemed a "publicity stunt," House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) moved to pass Zika legislation in the middle of the night last week and recess the House until after July 4, leaving Democrats who had withdrawn from the bicameral negotiations with a bill they say they could not support.

No Democrats signed the bicameral conference report on Zika funding and just six supported the House legislation. But the failure to complete the negotiations with Republicans is on Democrats, GOP leaders say. AshLee Strong, a spokeswoman for Ryan, said Democrats' opposition is "not only irresponsible but dangerous."

"It's really bad politics for them," said Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the GOP's No. 3 leader. "It's going to be hard to defend."

Still, it was difficult to find a single Democratic supporter on Monday, even among the most moderate members. That suggests the minority party is comfortable with the politics of blocking the Zika bill, particularly since the White House is threatening a veto, anyway. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) said he is "skeptical" of the funding apparatus and Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, who also runs the Democrats' campaign arm, said he probably could not support the legislation.

"I don't know why anyone would vote for it," Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said in a brief interview. "Look at what they gave us. How about the Confederate flag thing? Is that about the clincher."

The failed vote will have special political and practical resonance in Florida, the presidential battleground state and site of a competitive Senate race this fall, as well as home to hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans. As Puerto Ricans have fled the island for the sunnier economic outlook in Florida, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) went so far as to join Democrats pushing for $1.9 billion requested by Obama to fight the disease.

He'll vote for the compromise Tuesday — but did not hide his irritation with the impasse.

"I wanted it to happen two months ago. I'm not pleased," he said.

Zika Funding Stalls In The Senate Amid Partisan Rift

By Kelsey Snell And Mike Debonis

Washington Post, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a $1.1 billion Zika virus funding package drafted by congressional Republicans, citing politically motivated language aimed at Planned Parenthood and environmental regulations.

The partisan clash casts serious doubt on whether Congress will be able to heed increasingly dire warnings from public health officials and provide new funds to combat the virus before lawmakers leave Washington next month for an extended congressional recess.

Top Senate leaders appeared to be sharply at odds after the vote failed on a 52-to-48 vote, with 60 votes needed to advance the legislation. Both sides charged the other would be responsible if money isn't approved and the virus, which causes birth defects, begins to spread in the United States over the summer.

"This is the one shot," Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) told reporters. "There's not going to be another opportunity to deal with this in the near future."

"I don't remember anything as outrageous, as shameful as this piece of legislation," said Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) on the Senate floor a few minutes later.

Cornyn then retorted on the floor, standing next to a large photo of an infant with microcephaly, a developmental defect involving abnormally small heads linked to Zika.

"I'll tell you what shameful is," he said. "That's allowing more women of child-bearing age to contract the Zika virus so their babies can end up looking like this."

Cornyn called Democrats "sore losers" and accused them of betraying their previous calls for action, which date back to President Obama's February request for $1.9 billion: "I frankly do not understand how Senate Democrats, having taken this position previously, can come in here and engage in a partisan filibuster to stop funding for this impending public health crisis."

Not all Republicans were willing to abandon the talks completely. Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) told reporters that he spoke with Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) on Tuesday morning, leaving the door open for further talks.

"We'll see what happens," Blunt said. "I know we have to do something, and someone has to figure out how to do it."

Blunt and Murray co-sponsored a bipartisan funding package that passed the Senate in May. That measure provided the same $1.1 billion funding level without the added restrictions and cuts opposed by Democrats.

The package that failed Tuesday was negotiated between House and Senate Republicans after Democrats left bipartisan talks due to spending cuts included in the legislation and what they viewed as "poison pill" political provisions, according to Democratic aides.

The House passed the bill early Thursday morning without debate, as GOP leaders sought to short-circuit a Democratic floor protest over gun control.

Republicans' decision to try to advance a GOP-only package was a setback after weeks of optimism that Congress would be able to fund measures to combat the spread of Zika before leaving for an extended summer break next month.

Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said Tuesday the Republican bill was "filled with poison pills" and a "cynical maneuver" that stood no chance of being accepted by Democrats.

"What we want them to do is negotiate," he said. "We're willing to compromise. We already showed that in the previous bill that the Senate passed… But what they're doing is going to kill any chance of Zika [funding]."

Lawmakers in both parties could face blowback at home for failing to craft a consensus measure. Zika is linked to severe birth defects in babies of pregnant women who are infected with the virus. Three women on the U.S. mainland have given birth to infants with birth defects related to Zika, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is currently monitoring 265 women on the U.S. mainland and another 189 with Zika in Puerto Rico.

The House-passed measure would provide $1.1 billion to fight the mosquito-borne virus through Sept. 2017, including funds to help develop a vaccine. The spending would be offset by $750 million in savings, including $107 million in unused Ebola funds, $100 million in cuts to administrative funding for the Department of Health and Human Services and $534 million from unspent Obamacare money for health care exchanges in U.S. territories.

The package also loosens Environmental Protection Agency restrictions on pesticides and strikes a measure that would have banned display of the Confederate battle flag at cemeteries run by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On Monday, Reid called the bill “nothing more than a goodie bag for the fringes of the Republican party.” The White House has threatened to veto the legislation and Democrats argue the additions were politically motivated and intended to kill the entire funding package.

“It’s like we’re being dared to oppose this legislation,” Reid said. “We have no choice.”

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) charged Democrats on Monday with quibbling over minor provisions and standing in the way of spending that could help avert a public health crisis.

“There is no reason Democrats should reverse course now and block funding for Zika control in the midst of mosquito season,” McConnell said, noting the final legislation contains the same amount of funding as an earlier bipartisan Senate agreement. “There’s no reason they should put partisan politics above the health of pregnant women and babies.”

Reid (D-Nev.) shot back that GOP leaders were catering the extreme wing of their party by including language in the package that would put restrictions on how the funding could be used by Planned Parenthood and by offsetting the cost of the legislation through spending cuts to the Affordable Care Act and to Ebola readiness efforts.

Following the vote, neither McConnell nor Reid gave any public indication that they were ready to begin a new set of negotiations. Senate Democrats made a last-minute attempt to salvage the legislation Tuesday morning by sending a letter to McConnell and House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wisc.) requesting that they reopen negotiations.

“We stand ready to work cooperatively with you to address this national public health emergency,” they wrote.

Republican leaders have not formally responded, but any chance of new negotiations is slim. The House left town last week and will not return until after the July 4 holiday. Both chambers will be in for two weeks before heading out on a seven-week recess.

Efforts To Fight Zika Fail As Lawmakers Play Politics With Looming Health Crisis

By Katie Zezima

Washington Post, June 28, 2016

Congressional efforts to fight the Zika virus failed Tuesday, as lawmakers accused each other of playing politics with a looming public health crisis while doctors and medical experts warned of the risk of an outbreak on the U.S. mainland.

Senate Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion funding package to fight the mosquito-borne virus because of “poison pill” measures added by Republicans on other issues. The clash raised serious doubts about whether Congress will heed warnings and allocate funds to fight Zika before lawmakers leave for an extended recess next month.

Each side said the other would be responsible if the money isn’t approved and the virus spreads in the country this summer. The issue could also become a factor in the November elections, particularly in states such as Florida and Texas where the mosquitoes that transmit the disease flourish.

The inaction came amid dire warnings from medical experts about Zika, which can cause devastating birth defects in babies whose mothers are infected while pregnant. Public health experts said money is desperately needed to develop a vaccine, educate the public and learn more about the virus, which can be spread through mosquitoes and through sexual activity.

“This is the ultimate playing politics with the public’s health and it’s really shameful and just unfortunate,” said Irwin Redlener, a pediatrician and director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University.

The package that failed was negotiated between House and Senate Republicans after Democrats left bipartisan talks due to spending cuts included in the legislation and provisions to, among other things, block funding for Planned Parenthood and curb environmental regulations. President Obama originally asked for $1.9 billion to fight Zika in February.

“I don’t remember anything as outrageous, as shameful as this piece of legislation,” said Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.).

Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Tex.) responded by standing on the Senate floor next to a large photo of an infant with microcephaly, a developmental defect linked to Zika that causes unusually small heads and often incomplete brain development.

"I'll tell you what shameful is," he said. "That's allowing more women of child-bearing age to contract the Zika virus so their babies can end up looking like this."

While Democrats have pushed for new negotiations, Cornyn told reporters this was the only chance to pass a measure to fight Zika. "This is the one shot," Cornyn said. "There's not going to be another opportunity to deal with this in the near future."

Florida Sens. Marco Rubio (R), who is seeking reelection, and Bill Nelson (D) have both pushed for Zika funding, although Nelson voted against Tuesday's package because of the Republican provisions. In a statement, Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) blasted Congress and said the state allocated more than $26 million in funds last week for preparedness and prevention of the virus.

"It is time for Congress to stop playing politics with the health, safety and well-being of families in Florida and come together to address the serious threat of the Zika virus," Scott said in a statement.

Jason Kander, who is running against Missouri Republican Roy Blunt, said in a statement that "Washington dysfunction has stopped Congress from responding to a public health crisis."

Last month, Blunt helped orchestrate a bipartisan deal to fund Zika response efforts. But on Tuesday, he stood with other GOP leaders and urged Democrats to vote for the Republican deal instead.

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton called on Congress to pass a deal and said funding is needed. She retweeted a message from her senior policy advisor, Ann O'Leary, that read: "Senate Dems are right: Public Health emergencies are not the place to inject harmful partisan policies."

Clinton dispatched O'Leary and political director Amanda Renteria to meet with doctors and officials in Puerto Rico, and directed policy staff to focus on the issue.

The White House also blasted congressional Republicans.

"You would think that at some point the safety and well-being of pregnant women in the United States would be more important than politics to Republicans," said White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest. "But unfortunately it's not."

Presumptive Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has not talked about Zika and his campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

The virus has infected thousands of people in Puerto Rico and is lapping at the mainland's shores: women in 46 Latin American and Caribbean countries where the virus is circulating have been advised by the World Health Organization to consider delaying pregnancy.

While no localized transmission has yet occurred in the continental United States, three women on the U.S. mainland have given birth to infants with Zika-related birth defects. The Centers for Disease Control is monitoring 265 pregnant women infected with the virus on the U.S. mainland and 189 in Puerto Rico.

"This is a public health emergency," said Benard Dreyer, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

He said of Congress: "They just need to get their act together and act in a responsible way, in a bipartisan way, on an issue that is clearly extraordinarily impactful to children and their families, and do it immediately."

Public health officials warned that even if funding were to pass Congress within the next week, much of it wouldn't get to states and municipalities before September at the earliest. In most parts of the country, peak mosquito season is between June and early October.

"We're not happy with it, obviously, because the more resources we can put toward preventing this disease rather than reacting to it . . . the more protected the American public will be," said Joseph Conlon, technical adviser to the American Mosquito Control Association.

A coalition of nearly 40 groups — including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and Easter Seals — sent a letter this week urging Congress to pass a measure that would not place restrictions on Zika funding and that would allow the budget to be expanded in subsequent years.

"The fact that it is already almost July and Congress has failed to act would seem to reflect an appalling indifference to the lives of infants and their families," it read.

The letter cited an April summit where Centers for Disease Control Director Thomas Frieden said caring for a single child with birth defects can cost at least $10 million.

"There's a real aspect here of being penny wise and pound foolish," said Cynthia Pellegrini, senior vice president of public policy at the March of Dimes, which signed the letter.

"We can pay now and do prevention or we can pay later," she said.

Why Congress Is Probably Not Approving Any Zika Funding This Summer

By Amber Phillips

Washington Post, June 28, 2016

Summer is here and so is the threat of the Zika virus in the United States. But Congress will probably not do anything about it after a debate over $1.1 billion to fight it collapsed in the Senate on Tuesday thanks to — you guessed it — partisan bickering.

The Washington Post's Mike DeBonis reports that Senate Democrats blocked a funding package that had already passed the House of Representatives, saying the bill was filled with other political goodies for Republicans that Democrats simply couldn't support.

The end result will probably be that Congress leaves town for most of July and August without approving any funding that government health officials say they badly need to keep Americans safe from the Zika virus — and, by extension, Zika could become a campaign issue this November on both sides.

Here's what happened. First, a debate over money

In May, with summer approaching, we asked what was taking Congress so long to send a check to government agencies to start developing a Zika vaccine and launch prevention measures. The Obama administration wanted $1.9 billion in new funds, and I explained why they were most definitely not going to get it:

The reason is the same it always is with Congress: money. Specifically, different ideas between Republicans and Democrats about what's worth going further into debt for.

Republicans are hesitant to approve more than a billion taxpayer dollars to fight Zika. And they control both chambers of Congress, so any funding increase that's not offset by savings somewhere else in the budget is squarely on them

The House proposal for $620 million that doesn't extend any cash beyond this fall, when the fiscal year we're in comes to a close.

But lawmakers did find a compromise: They settled on $1.1 billion. The Senate passed a version last month, and House lawmakers passed their own version last week that was offset by some $750 million in savings – including cuts to the Affordable Care Act and yet-unused money for the now-passed Ebola scare. Depending who you're talking to, the additions to the House bill would end up derailing the entire thing. Sidetracked by other issues

As the funding package was passing the House of Representatives last week, Senate Democrats actually walked away from the negotiations.

As is often the case in Congress, this funding bill was attached to a larger, unrelated bill — this one funding veterans and the military. And as often the case in Congress, House leaders shaped the bill so that a majority would vote for it; in a conservative House, that meant making the bill more amenable to conservatives.

The end result was a proposal Democrats said was untenable. They accused Republicans of adding on a bunch of unrelated extras that Republicans knew would be red lines for the other side.

DeBonis reports Democrats weren't happy about the idea of voting for a bill that cut President Obama's signature health-care achievement. They also didn't like that the bill proposed loosening government regulations on pesticides.

And they definitely didn't like that the bill restricted $95 million of federal grants to provide services like birth control to women in Puerto Rico. Democrats — and the president of Planned Parenthood — called it a direct attack on the women's health-care organization that's been the target of conservative Republicans' ire for a year now:

The bill also dropped a provision to ban the Confederate flag at federal veterans' cemeteries — a ban that the House, including 84 Republicans, voted in favor of just a month earlier..

"It's like we're being dared to oppose this legislation," Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said on Monday. "We have no choice." A loss for Zika help, a win for partisanship

Senate Democrats tried to reopen negotiations at the last minute, but it didn't work. The bill came to the floor and Democrats voted no, with Reid calling it "outrageous," and "shameful."

It failed Tuesday 52-48. (Even though a majority voted for it, the Senate needed 60 votes to pass it — the bar for pretty much any controversial legislation these days.)

Republicans hit back that Democrats were the ones playing politics.

"This is ridiculous," House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) said in a statement.

"I'll tell you what shameful is," said Sen. John Cornyn (R-Tex.) after the vote, standing alongside a blown-up picture of a baby with a disease thought to be caused by Zika. "That's allowing more women of child-bearing age to contract the Zika virus so their babies can end up looking like this. That's shameful."

Cornyn also said this was probably the "last shot" to approve Zika funding this summer, and he's probably right: The House is already on a week-long break, and when members return after July 4, both chambers have nine days in session before they're out for seven weeks.

There's still a slim chance Congress will find a last-second compromise. Both sides are loath to go back home to constituents, especially in Southern states that are most at-risk, and try to explain this. The takes are already starting when it comes to which party will fare worse for this Zika fail.

Senate Democrats Block Zika Spending Bill Over Exclusion Of Planned Parenthood

By Siobhan Hughes And Stephanie Armour

Wall Street Journal, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

The Zika Democrats

Harry Reid blocks money to fight the virus as an election ploy.

Wall Street Journal, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Senate Democrats Block Zika Agreement Ahead Of Recess

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a deal providing funding for the fight against the Zika virus, virtually guaranteeing that Congress won't get legislation to President Obama's desk this month.

In a 52-48 vote, the Senate fell eight votes short of moving past a procedural hurdle against the House-Senate conference report on a military and veterans spending bill, which includes $1.1 billion to fund the Zika virus research.

Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) broke with his party and backed moving forward with the deal. GOP Sens. James Lankford (R-Okla.), Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) voted against the Zika deal. McConnell's "no" vote allows him to bring the measure back up for another vote.

The vote leaves the current fight over the Zika virus at a standstill with days left before the July 4th recess.

Democrats criticized the legislation for including "poison pills" that they said made it difficult for their party to support.

The legislation would take money now earmarked for the fight against the Ebola virus to use against Zika.

It also would restart a fight over Planned Parenthood with language that prevents funding from going to the group, which provides abortion services, and other family planning groups.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said the agreement is "the most irresponsible legislation I have ever seen in my 34 years in Congress."

"I don't know what planet my friend the Republican leader is living on," he added. "[The] conference report is nothing more than a goody bag for the fringes of the Republican Party."

Even if the legislation had made it to President Obama's desk, the White House said he would veto it.

McConnell slammed Democrats on Tuesday, saying their current position is "partisan politics."

"They might like to pretend this Zika control measure is woefully inadequate, but Senate Democrats are all on record supporting this level of funding," he said. "It's really puzzling to hear Democrats claim to be advocates for women's health measures when they are the ones trying to block the Zika legislation."

The House approved the legislation last week.

The next steps on the Zika legislation are unclear. Lawmakers in both parties pointed fingers ahead of Tuesday's vote on who is responsible for breaking the current stalemate on funding legislation.

Reid and other Democrats sent a letter to McConnell and Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) ahead of Tuesday's vote calling for a new round of negotiations.

"We are writing to urge your cooperation in quickly negotiating an agreement that rejects politicizing disaster response with extreme and unnecessary partisan priorities," the Senate's four top Democrats added in the letter.

But the House left Washington last week for the July 4th recess, and GOP leadership have given no indications they are willing to rethink the current agreement.

McConnell said lawmakers would vote again on the Zika deal once senators return from the July 4th recess.

"When we get back after we've had time to think about it all, we'll address this matter again and hopefully respond, as our constituents all across America are asking us to respond, to this pending health care crisis," he said after the vote.

The stalemate comes after a bipartisan Senate agreement — negotiated by Murray and Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) – began to crack open in late April as Democrats said they were frozen out of the talks.

The deal finally collapsed last week after GOP leaders in the House and Senate agreed to a $1.1 billion deal comprised mostly of healthcare dollars pulled from elsewhere in Obama's health department.

The U.S. has a total of 2,680 Zika cases, including 481 pregnant women, according to the most recent data from CDC.

McConnell Pledges Redo Vote On Zika After Break

By Jordain Carney

The Hill, June 28, 2016

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) warned lawmakers Tuesday they would vote again on a $1.1 billion package to fight the Zika virus after their July Fourth recess.

"I'd like to call on my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to think about this, to think about where they have left this issue for the American people," McConnell said from the Senate floor Tuesday. "So when we get back after we've had some time to think about it all, we'll address this matter again."

On Tuesday Senate Democrats blocked the Zika funding — attached to a larger military spending bill — from overcoming a procedural hurdle.

Arguing they weren't consulted on the current House-Senate deal, Democrats balked at how the agreement would offset its costs.

McConnell was one of three Republicans who voted against the deal during Tuesday's vote, allowing him to bring it up again.

GOP senators quickly blasted their colleagues for being unable to find a deal to fight the virus heading into the summer months.

Zika has been shown to cause severe birth defects when contracted by pregnant women, and health officials are expecting more cases in the U.S. as mosquito populations grow.

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), who announced last week that he would run for reelection, said "shame on Washington."

"I realize this was not a perfect Zika bill, but getting this plan approved now is absolutely better than nothing," he said.

But Democrats are giving no early indication the holiday recess will be enough to make them reconsider the current House-Senate conference deal on Zika funding.

"What we want them to do is negotiate. We're willing to compromise," Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said after Tuesday's vote. "What they're doing is going to kill any chance" of passing an anti-Zika measure.

Asked about next steps, Schumer said Republicans need "to get rid of this cynical sham bill and start negotiating with us."

Schumer, Minority Leader Harry Reid (Nev.), and Democratic Sens. Dick Durbin (Ill.) and Patty Murray (Wash.) have sent a letter to McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) asking for a new round of talks.

Blame Game Begins On Zika Funding

By Peter Sullivan

The Hill, June 28, 2016

Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a funding bill to fight the Zika virus, infuriating Republicans and raising real doubts about whether Congress will approve an emergency response before the summer recess.

Both parties agree that the virus is a real and growing health crisis; each blames the other for the failure to act.

Republicans slammed Democrats for voting down the $1.1 billion bill, arguing the party is standing in the way of funding it has claimed for months to desperately want.

Democrats countered that the bill was not a serious effort at bipartisan compromise and was loaded with unacceptable riders, including limiting funding to Planned Parenthood and loosening Clean Water Act rules for pesticides. They also objected that the measure was paid for with cuts to Ebola-response funding and ObamaCare.

They called for a new round of negotiations to produce a bipartisan bill, but Republicans rejected that demand, saying that they would instead hold another vote on the same measure after the Fourth of July recess to give Democrats another chance.

At a press conference Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) repeatedly said no changes would be made to the bill to address Democratic concerns. He said that as a conference report, the product of negotiations between the House and Senate, no amendments could be made.

Asked if he is willing to reconsider the Planned Parenthood provision, given that it is the focus of the Democratic objections, McConnell said: "Well, it's an interesting discussion, but it's irrelevant. This is a conference report. It's not amendable. It's not amendable."

He rejected Democratic calls to go back to the drawing board and produce a new bill with Democratic input. "The negotiations have already occurred," he said.

McConnell called Democrats' actions "inexplicable and unacceptable."

Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), the Senate's No. 2 Democrat, dismissed suggestions that Democrats might get the blame for the lack of Zika funding, saying that Republicans knew their bill was doomed to fail but had no choice but to appease hard-line conservatives in the House.

"It's all going to be on the Republican shoulder," he said. "It's obvious what they're doing."

The Senate previously reached a bipartisan Zika deal to provide $1.1 billion in funding that would not be paid for, but House Republicans insisted that the cost of the measure be fully offset.

Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), the top Senate Republican on health spending, acknowledged the problems bridging the gap with the House.

"The big obstacle here is clearly is that the House appropriately wanted to do everything possible to pay for this, and Democrats in the Senate don't," Blunt said.

"They'd like it not paid for at all," he added. "The House would like it all paid for, so to get a bill that the House would pass and the Senate would pass, some of it needs to be paid for. Democrats don't want to do that, and that becomes a needless obstacle to getting this money available."

Blunt, who has taken the lead in negotiating with Democratic Sen. Patty Murray (Wash.) on Zika funding in the past, took a softer line than McConnell. "We have to get a solution," he said.

Blunt spoke with Murray about Zika on the Senate floor Tuesday, an aide said, though it is unclear what, if anything, came of that conversation. In fact, Blunt pointed to McConnell's stance that negotiations would not be reopened.

"We have to get to a solution on this, and it has to be a solution that both the House and the Senate can pass, and you heard the leader explain what his view of the next step was," Blunt said.

Democrats say House Republicans and Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) will have to answer to voters if the Zika outbreak worsens.

"People need to look no further than Speaker Ryan's office if Zika develops into the problem that we're all concerned that it might be," said Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.).

Ryan, meanwhile, called it "ridiculous" that Senate Democrats would block the Zika funding bill after stressing the urgency of the crisis.

Health experts warn that transmission of Zika within the continental United States will begin this summer and that the unpredictable virus carries serious dangers for pregnant women, given that it can cause major birth defects and developmental problems in children.

The virus is generally mild and carries lower risks for people who are not pregnant. Its spread is expected to be contained to small clusters in the Southern United States, though experts emphasize that they cannot be certain and that Puerto Rico will be hit particularly hard.

Athletes are already dropping out of the Olympics in Brazil for fear of contracting Zika. There are already 2,680 cases of Zika in the U.S. states and territories and 481 cases in pregnant women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A range of health groups, including the March of Dimes and the American Academy of Pediatrics, wrote to congressional leaders on Tuesday urging them to reopen negotiations to find a bipartisan deal.

"If this does not take place, Congress will bear the full responsibility for Zika-related birth defects across the nation in the coming years," the letter states.

Zika Funding Up In The Air After Senate Blocks Moving Ahead

By Ryan McCrimmon

Congressional Quarterly, June 28, 2016

The Senate on Tuesday voted to block a final $1.1 billion Zika virus spending package, scrambling plans to provide much-needed resources for public health agencies to combat the mosquito-borne disease this summer.

The vote occurred just as the Florida Department of Public Health confirmed the first Zika-related case of microcephaly, a birth defect, in a child born in Florida. The mother, a citizen of Haiti, delivered the baby in Florida.

Senators voted 52-48, short of the 60-vote threshold needed to invoke cloture, stymieing progress on the conference report (HR 2577) to the Zika and Military Construction-VA appropriations package. All Democrats except Sen. Joe Donnelly of Indiana voted against cloture, objecting to the levels of spending and offsets in the package as well as policy provisions they deemed "poison pills."

Two Republican senators, James Lankford of Oklahoma and Mike Lee of Utah, voted with Democrats.

Following the vote, Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn, R-Texas, said he did not expect Republicans to reopen negotiations with Democrats on Zika funding.

"No," he said. "We're done."

However, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell entered a motion to reconsider the Zika vote and said lawmakers would take another crack at the conference report following the July Fourth recess.

"When we get back after we've had time to think about it all, we'll address this matter again and hopefully respond, as our constituents all across America are asking us to respond, to this pending health care crisis," McConnell, R-Ky., said.

Conference reports are not amendable, so the vote would be on the exact same materials considered Tuesday.

The House-passed measure also faced a presidential veto if it passed the Senate. Congress adjourns for a seven-week recess on July 15, so little time is left for additional negotiations.

The Obama administration on Tuesday said it would "welcome" renewed talks by lawmakers to find a compromise Zika funding bill. "Congress still has time to act before they leave for their summer recess," a White House official said shortly after Senate Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion House version.

But the official signaled that the White House is sticking to its stance that only a $1.9 billion bill that matches its initial request will get Obama's signature. The official urged lawmakers to pass "a fully funded Zika supplemental request – unlike the irresponsible, underfunded and purely partisan bill currently making its way through Congress."

Ahead of the vote, Republicans warned Democrats that this would be the last chance to approve the anti-Zika legislation ahead of the long summer recess.

"They might like to pretend this Zika control measure is woefully inadequate, but Senate Democrats are all on record supporting this level of funding and the CDC director has testified that this $1.1 billion funding level is sufficient," said McConnell, referring to the bipartisan Senate approval of a different $1.1 billion Zika package in May and testimony from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Remember, this legislation is the last chance we have to get a Zika-control funding [measure] to the president's desk for weeks."

"Democrats have apparently decided to engage in their favorite game of late — refusing to take yes for an answer," added John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 3 Senate Republican.

"Here's what I see today: I see Republicans ready to pass a Zika bill and send it to the president this minute, right now. And I see Democrats who are more interested in pacifying a Democrat special interest group than actually doing anything about Zika," Thune said.

Democrats were adamant that the GOP-written proposal was not an adequate response to the crisis, and they objected to policy language related to environmental protections and access to contraception. Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., called the conference report "nothing more than a goody bag for the fringes of the Republican Party."

"This conference report is the most irresponsible legislation I have ever seen in my 34 years in Congress," Reid said. "That says a lot. I can't think of anything that's close."

Sen. Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., added, "This bill is not only going to fail, it was designed to fail from the very beginning."

Reid, Schumer and other Democratic leaders sent a letter Tuesday morning to McConnell and House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, R-Wis., calling for another round of conference negotiations. Democrats claimed they were frozen out of the previous round, which led to the GOP-produced conference report the Senate rejected.

Several senators lamented the inability of Congress to perform one of its most basic duties to prevent against a public health threat.

"Why can't we grow up and get to the point where we don't have to play partisan politics?" lamented Florida Democrat Bill Nelson, whose state has recorded the highest number of cases of Zika so far.

A House Republican from Florida also expressed his outrage. "The Senate needs to put aside partisan politics and get the job done," said Rep. Vern Buchanan of Florida, one of the few Republicans in Congress to support the full $1.9 billion request from the Obama administration. "Summer's here, Zika's here, and that means people are at risk. It's beyond frustrating that Washington can't agree on funding to stop this public health crisis."

State of Play

At the end of May, appropriators and congressional leaders in the House and Senate were poised to confront discrepancies in the Zika virus response packages each chamber had recently passed.

The House passed a supplemental appropriations package (HR 5243) crafted by GOP appropriators that provided $622 million in new resources to confront the virus. The funds were set to expire on Sept. 30, the end of fiscal 2016, and the Zika spending was fully offset by rescinding previously appropriated dollars for the 2014 Ebola response and other administrative purposes.

The Senate's $1.1 billion emergency spending package, passed as an amendment to a broader appropriations package (HR 2577), provided fresh funding without any offsets or expiration date. The compromise measure was reached by top Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Democrats have said neither option is adequate. The administration has maintained it still needs the full $1.9 billion it requested earlier this year.

The administration's request would provide $828 million to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to enhance mosquito control programs. Officials say eradicating mosquitos is one immediate action that can be taken in the absence of a vaccine but emphasize how difficult it can be to control indoor mosquitoes.

Another challenge is diagnostic testing. Though there are ample tests to detect an active infection, tests to detect a prior infection are more limited. Public health officials say it takes more steps to diagnose a prior Zika infection because of the condition's similarities to other viruses. Obama's request includes money to boost the supply of diagnostics, as well as develop more accurate testing methods.

Prospects for a funding package also hinge on the politically sensitive issue of contraception policy. Congressional Democrats are pressing for additional contraception and family planning services for women in affected countries — a request that is meeting resistance from key Republicans. The House-passed legislation would subject Zika funding to the same restrictions included in the most recent omnibus package (PL 114-113), which includes a prohibition on the use of funds to pay for abortions.

The request contains $250 million to assist pregnant women in Puerto Rico, who are being encouraged to wear long sleeves, use bug repellent and stay in air conditioned or screened-in areas.

After Senate Stalls, White House Digs In On Zika Funding

Roll Call, June 28, 2016

Shortly after Senate Democrats blocked a $1.1 billion Zika funding measure from advancing, a White House official urged lawmakers to send President Barack Obama "a fully funded Zika supplemental request."

White House aides and Senate Democrats spent much of Tuesday accusing Republicans of "playing politics" with a virus that is spreading throughout the U.S. and its territories — especially Puerto Rico — and can cause major birth defects. GOP members returned the charge in kind.

The procedural vote continued a standoff over how much is needed to counter the virus and what those funds should be used for, and over provisions congressional Republicans inserted into the package limiting funding for birth control and allowing Confederate flag displays on certain days at Veterans Affairs facilities.

The White House continued to signal it is in no mood to compromise, making it difficult to see how lawmakers will strike an accord that satisfies enough of them and Obama.

Underscoring the bad blood, the White House official called the House-passed measure, which the Senate attempted to move toward a final vote, an "irresponsible, underfunded and purely partisan" effort.

That comment came via an email received minutes after Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn of Texas blasted Democrats on the floor in front of a large picture of a child with a misshapen head due to Zika-caused birth defects.

"It should go without saying that now on the front lines of this major public health concern, we need to respond at the federal level," Cornyn said. "That's why it's shocking and shameful to see so many Senate Democrats oppose this bipartisan effort to guard against the virus."

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest was unable to predict when existing Zika funding would run out. But he did say the proposed new spending is "insufficient."

"Republicans don't take this particularly seriously," Earnest said, adding that he is unsure what a pro-Confederate flag provision "has to do with Zika funding." Later, he said, given the disease's impact on pregnant women and unborn babies, Republican lawmakers seem to "have no shame."

Earlier Tuesday, a source who closely follows budget matters said "there is no Plan B" after the House-passed measure.

Asked if there would be additional Zika floor votes in the Senate, Cornyn told reporters, "We're done." But Maryland Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski , the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, said Tuesday of reviving negotiations: "We are looking at how to keep hope and help alive."

"Our backup plan already has been deployed," Earnest said, referring to the administration's initial Zika request. "Why should the president be in a position of twisting arms in Congress ?"

The Senate vote came around the time a Florida hospital reported its first case of a baby born with Zika-related birth defects. The child's mother apparently contracted the virus in Haiti before traveling to Florida.

White House Chides Congress For Failing To Fund Zika

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Is "Complete Protection" Against The Zika Virus In The Near Future? Scientists Make Progress On Two Vaccines

By Melissa Healy

Los Angeles Times, June 28, 2016

Just five months after the Zika virus was declared a global public health emergency, a scientific team's feverish efforts to create a vaccine against the viral threat have borne promising fruit: With a single shot of two different types of vaccine, experimental mice gained near-total immunity to Zika for at least two months.

Writing in the journal Nature on Tuesday, a U.S.-Brazilian team of scientists reported that two distinct vaccine candidates conferred powerful protection from Zika infection when they were delivered by intra-muscular injection to mice.

"We were very surprised--and quite impressed--that a single shot of either of these vaccines provided complete protection," said study co-author Dr. Dan H. Barouch, who after years of work on vaccines against the HIV virus pivoted in late January to work on Zika.

"Of course, we need to be cautious about extrapolating" from a study that has so far only shown success in mice, said Barouch, who directs vaccine research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

But several of the study's findings "certainly raise optimism that the development of a safe and effective vaccine against Zika virus for humans may be successful," he added.

The Zika vaccine effort is a race against time. Since its arrival in Brazil in 2013, the Zika virus has marched steadily north. Carried by the Aedis egyptii mosquito, the virus is already spreading vigorously in Puerto Rico and is expected to circulate inside the continental United States this summer.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has concluded that Zika infection in pregnant women is the cause of grievous brain abnormalities in the infants they bear. For those who are not pregnant, Zika infection is generally not dangerous. But it can, in rare cases, cause Guillain-Barre syndrome, a life-threatening condition in which the immune system attacks the peripheral nervous system, causing partial paralysis that is generally temporary.

The Boston-based team also discerned how the tested vaccines worked to provide protection—an important milestone in building a vaccine. Soon after their first shot of either vaccine, the immune systems of lab mice quickly mounted an army of circulating antibodies that recognized and attacked Zika virus as soon as it began replicating.

Such "antibody protection," produced by the immune system's B-cells, is not generally as enduring as the long-term immune memory produced by T-cells. But "it's good: it makes a vaccine that's nice and neat and simple," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergies and Infectious Diseases.

Fauci called the vaccine candidates' early success "an important step on the road to getting vaccines into humans." He confirmed that several other Zika vaccine candidates are being tested in animals, and that very early testing in humans could begin as early as late August.

The two vaccine candidates described in Nature represent two very different approaches to training the immune system's killing power on the Zika virus. One takes the whole of a single Zika virus, inactivates it by removing the machinery that makes it replicate, and shows it to the immune system. The other candidate shows the immune system only the distinctive outer sheath of the Zika virus in a bid to prompt attacks on anything enclosed in such an envelope.

Both approaches worked in several different strains of laboratory mice. But while "inactivated virus" vaccines are already in wide use, so-called "DNA vaccines," which show the immune system small pieces of a virus, have never been approved for use in humans in the United States.

"Some call them vaccines of the future," said Barouch of the DNA vaccines. Whether they lend themselves to large-scale production and distribution remains unclear, he said. "But they do have a variety of…technological advantages compared to the traditional approaches"—not least that vaccine designers can make rapid changes in the mix of puzzle-pieces shown to the immune system.

Given the uncertainties of developing vaccines for emergency use, "a diversity of approaches is always beneficial," he added.

In the experiments, the mice cleared Zika virus from their bloodstreams even when their army of antibodies was “relatively modest,” said Barouch. With an additional booster shot or two, he said the experimental vaccines could prompt an immune response a hundred times as strong, if needed.

One other factor should prompt optimism that this early success might lead to a timely vaccine, said Barouch: Immunologists have had success in building vaccines against viruses in the same family as Zika, including those that cause yellow fever, dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis.

In a related development reported Tuesday in the journal Nature Communications, scientists concluded that macaque monkeys, which have become a mainstay of nonhuman primate research with the diminishing use of chimpanzees, respond to Zika virus infection in ways that strongly mimic humans’ reactions.

That finding means scientists will have a highly reliable stand-in for testing the safety and effectiveness of vaccines and other new therapies against Zika before they are administered to humans. The ability to use macaques to approximate a human’s response to the two vaccine candidates already tested, as well as to test other vaccines under development, will be key to speeding the development of such medications.

Still, many hurdles remain.

Among the challenges for a Zika vaccine, says Mayo Clinic immunologist Dr. Gregory Poland, is that it will likely be used to protect diverse populations with very different risks, and must be found acceptably safe in all.

A vaccine that is safe for younger women—who could be pregnant or become pregnant—may not be the same as a vaccine that protects older patients, who are at greatest risk of developing Guillain-Barre syndrome following infection, said Poland. As testing proceeds, he added, researchers and regulators will also have to find a vaccine safe for use in populations that span the spectrum of age, gender, ethnicity and medical history.

“Under the normal course of events, it could take years,” said Poland. “There’s just a whole lot of complexity here.”

Zika Vaccines Prove 100 Percent Protective In Mice; Monkey Study Shows Promise

By Julie Steenhuysen

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Two New Zika Vaccines “Show Complete Protection” In Lab Tests

CNBC, June 28, 2016

A group of researchers said Tuesday that vaccines for Zika offered protection against both Puerto Rican and Brazilian strains of the virus in mice.

The scientists working on the research came from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and Harvard University.

“Our data demonstrate that a single dose of a DNA vaccine or a purified inactivated virus vaccine provides complete protection against the ZIKV-challenge in mice,” said study author Dan H. Barouch, director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, and a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, in a news release. “Importantly, we showed that vaccine-induced antibodies provided protection, similar to existing vaccines for other flaviviruses.”

One of the vaccines was a DNA vaccine — an injection made up of genetically engineered cells based on a Brazilian strain of the virus. The other was a purified inactivated virus vaccine — a vaccine containing a “dead” or inactive virus — from Puerto Rico.

Both vaccines created antibodies in the bodies of mice.

The scientists published the results of their research Tuesday in the peer-reviewed journal Nature.

In a news release, scientists from Walter Reed said they will be ready to begin testing the vaccine on humans by the end of the year.

Flaviviruses are a group of viruses, often carried by mosquitoes and other insects, which are closely related and produce some of the same symptoms. Along with Zika, they include West Nile virus, dengue, yellow fever and others.

The virus has been widespread in several countries, especially in Latin America. Recent reports have confirmed that nearly 2,000 people have been infected with the virus in Puerto Rico, and Brazilian officials have linked 1,400 cases of microcephaly, a condition that stops brain development, in children born to infected mothers.

Other teams have been racing to develop vaccines for the virus.

Earlier in June, another group of researchers from pharmaceutical company Inovio was reportedly the first team to win approval from the Food and Drug Administration to begin testing its vaccine on human subjects.

However, some public health experts have expressed skepticism that a vaccine for the drug will be able to pass regulatory tests in the next several years.

Peter Hotez of the Baylor College of Medicine told CNBC last week that he believes "we are not going to have a vaccine in time for this epidemic."

Correction: This version corrects the day the researchers announced their findings and the spelling of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Zika Vaccine Shows Promise In Mice

By Alexandra Sifferlin

TIME, June 28, 2016

A new vaccine for the Zika virus showed "complete protection" against the virus in recent testing in mice, adding support for testing the vaccine in humans in the future.

The vaccine is being developed by The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) and researchers at the University of São Paulo, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical School. The researchers tested two versions of a Zika vaccine in mice and found that both were safe and spurred the creation of antibodies, which can offer protection against the virus.

Mouse studies are not directly translational to humans, but they are the first step in confirming that a vaccine has potential to work and not cause health complications. The new findings were published Tuesday in the journal Nature.

The race is on when it comes to developing a vaccine for the Zika virus, which is spreading in the Americas. Other research and pharmaceutical groups are developing their own versions. Earlier in June vaccine developers at Inovio Pharmaceuticals and GeneOne Life Science announced they had received the green light from U.S. health regulators to move forward on an early clinical trial for a Zika vaccine in humans. One of the greatest concerns for researchers is protecting pregnant women, since the virus is known to cause birth defects.

Two New Zika Vaccines Prove Successful In Mice

By Steve Sternberg

US News & World Report, June 28, 2016

The race to create a vaccine that can guard against Zika virus reached a new milestone Tuesday with reports that two experimental Zika vaccines have fully protected mice against infection and may prove similarly effective in humans.

"The protection was striking and very robust," says Dr. Dan Barouch, of Harvard University and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, a leader of the research team.

Developing an effective Zika vaccine is a global health priority. A vaccine would be the least expensive and most reliable way to protect women of child-bearing age and others against the mosquito-born Zika virus, declared a global emergency after researchers in Brazil linked it to an epidemic of birth defects in fetuses of women infected during pregnancy.

One vaccine was made using a technique on the frontier of vaccine research, using DNA snipped from a virus strain found in Brazil. The virus has been shown to cause birth defects in mice just as it does in humans. The other was made using a more traditional approach, by taking live virus from Puerto Rico, inactivating and purifying it.

Although the new vaccines were formulated in different ways, they appeared to be similarly protective, researchers report Tuesday in the journal Nature. "All of the vaccinated animals showed no virus in their bloodstream, [while] all unvaccinated animals had high levels of virus in their blood, after challenge by virus from Brazil and Puerto Rico." Barouch says,

Both vaccine prototypes are likely to begin Phase I safety tests in humans in a matter of months, says Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which supported the research and is developing its own DNA vaccine.

"The DNA [vaccine] is going into phase I in late August or early September," Fauci says. "The other one a little later."

Any experimental vaccine must first surmount another hurdle: It must be shown to prevent infection in non-human primates, which are more like humans and harder to protect than mice. Those trials are now under way, Fauci says. "The proof of the pudding is nonhuman primates."

Researchers didn't start from scratch. Vaccines have previously been developed to protect against West Nile, dengue and tick-borne encephalitis viruses, all of which are in the same flavivirus family as Zika. "Taken together, our findings provide substantial optimism that the development of a safe and effective Zika vaccine for humans will likely be feasible," the researchers write.

The experiments were carried out in stages. First, Barouch's team demonstrated that the DNA vaccine could provoke an immune response that directly targets the virus.

Next, the researchers injected additional groups of mice with single doses of either the DNA vaccine or the inactivated vaccine, which was developed by Dr.

Stephen J. Thomas and his colleagues at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Four weeks after the injection, mice given the DNA vaccine were exposed to live Zika virus. In an unvaccinated individual, mouse or human, the virus will multiply. In the vaccinated mice, however, no virus replication was detected. Mice given the inactivated vaccine were also challenged with live virus and remained infection-free, researchers say.

In addition, the mouse antibodies produced by vaccination were potent enough to fight off infection when they were transferred into unvaccinated mice. "That is essentially proof that the vaccine antibodies themselves were able to protect against infection," Barouch says.

DNA vaccines are appealing to researchers, because they would be easier to manufacture than vaccines made from whole virus, which must be cultivated in large quantities. Once researchers know the formula, they can churn out high volumes of vaccine. "DNA can be up scaled much much more easily and more quickly," Fauci says.

But scientists have not yet conquered many of the scientific challenges inherent in using DNA to create vaccines. No DNA vaccine is yet licensed for use in humans, Barouch says. "DNA vaccines have been explored experimentally for HIV, malaria and TB, vaccine targets that have not been [conquered] by traditional vaccines," Barouch says, "I wouldn't call that a failure of DNA vaccines. I still remain optimistic that they will have an important role to play in the future. That's why, in addition to exploring a next-generation vaccine, we also used a tried-and-true approach."

As many as a dozen other Zika vaccine candidates are in the works, experts say. The U.S. biotech firm Inovio announced in February that a prototype Zika vaccine produced a robust immune response in mice.

Fauci noted that the NIH's vaccine candidate, also made of DNA, is slated for its first human safety tests in late summer or early fall, in a trial involving 80 volunteers. That will take three months, likely ending in early 2017, he says. Next come the most critical trials, required to demonstrate that the vaccine is not only safe in humans but effective.

"The more effective a vaccine is, the quicker you can prove it," Fauci says, because fewer people in an at-risk population will become infected. Another determining factor, he says, is the rate of infection in a population. The higher the infection rate, the easier it is to determine whether a vaccine works.

"If you've got a high infection rate, you can get your answer pretty quickly," Fauci says. "If the infection rate begins to tone down, it can take longer."

So far, so good, Barouch says. "One shot and they're all protected."

Success In Mice Shows Zika Vaccine "Feasible"

By Dennis Thompson

HealthDay, June 28, 2016

Studies involving mice support the effectiveness of two vaccine candidates against the Zika virus, scientists say.

This "critical first step" is leading to trials in monkeys and humans, "and gives us early confidence that development of a protective Zika virus vaccine for humans is feasible," said researcher Col. Nelson Michael.

He is co-leader of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) in Silver Spring, Md., and one member of a team involved in the search for a vaccine against the mosquito-borne virus.

Zika infection during pregnancy can cause a devastating birth defect known as microcephaly, where an infant is born with an abnormally small head and brain. In Latin America, thousands of babies have already been born with microcephaly, and health officials are scrambling to help prevent cases in the United States as the summer mosquito season arrives.

At least 10 pregnant women in the Dallas area have been infected with Zika, Texas officials confirmed last week. All of the women contracted the mosquito-borne virus while traveling abroad.

A vaccine effective against Zika would be invaluable. Reporting June 28 in the journal Nature, researchers said one of the new shots was developed at Harvard Medical School in Boston and is partly based on a Zika strain isolated in Brazil.

The other vaccine, using a strain isolated in Puerto Rico, has been developed by Michael's team at WRAIR.

Both vaccines shielded mice against Zika infection with just a single shot required, the researchers said.

The two vaccines are similar to other shots already in use against flaviviruses, which include dengue fever, West Nile and others.

"We showed that vaccine-induced antibodies provided protection, similar to existing vaccines for other flaviviruses," said Dr. Dan Barouch. He directs the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

"The effectiveness of these vaccines ... provide substantial optimism for a clear path forward for the development of a safe and effective ZIKV vaccine for humans," Barouch said in a Beth Israel Deaconess news release.

Clinical trials in humans are scheduled to begin later in 2016, the scientists said.

In related news, federal funding the United States needs to help fight the Zika threat could be stalled, according to reports.

According to the Associated Press, President Barack Obama requested $1.9 billion for the effort four months ago, and last week a Republican-drafted measure offered $1.1 billion.

But the news agency said Senate Democrats blocked that $1.1 billion proposal Tuesday, arguing there were too many spending cuts and restrictions on which groups could provide health care and contraception to women in Zika-endemic Puerto Rico.

Further action may not occur until Congress returns from a seven-week hiatus that begins in July, the AP said.

The Zika threat to the United States is real, according to Dr. Tom Frieden, who directs the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Speaking earlier in June, he warned, "in coming months it's possible that thousands of pregnant women in Puerto Rico could become infected with Zika. This could lead to dozens or hundreds of infants being born with microcephaly in the coming year."

So far the CDC says there have been no local transmissions of Zika reported in the United States. However, the number of cases of infection among pregnant women keeps climbing.

As of June 16, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported there are 265 cases of pregnant women on the U.S. mainland who have been infected with Zika, which typically involves relatively mild symptoms in most adults. However, it can cause devastating birth defects in babies that include microcephaly.

In Latin America, thousands of babies have already been born with microcephaly. And researchers reported last Wednesday that fears of Zika-related birth defects may be driving up abortion rates in Latin American countries affected by the virus.

No nation has been more affected than Brazil. As a result of the Zika epidemic, almost 5,000 babies have been born with microcephaly there.

Zika is typically transmitted via the bite of the Aedes aegypti mosquito. But, transmission of the virus through sex is more common than previously thought, World Health Organization officials have said.

Women of child-bearing age who live in an active Zika region should protect themselves from mosquitoes by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, using mosquito repellent when outside, and staying indoors as much as possible, according to the CDC.

U.S. health officials have said they expect to see Zika infections in Gulf Coast states such as Florida, Louisiana and Texas as mosquito season ramps up.

More information

Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for more on the Zika virus.

This Q&A will tell you what you need to know about Zika.

To see the CDC list of sites where Zika virus is active and may pose a threat to pregnant women, click here.

SOURCES: June 28, 2016, news releases, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, and the U.S. Military HIV Research Program, Silver Spring, Md.; Associated Press; June 17, 2016, media briefing with Tom Frieden, M.D., MPH, director, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; June 17, 2016, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

First Baby With Zika-related Microcephaly Is Born In Florida

By Emily Cochrane

Miami Herald, June 28, 2016

A baby with Zika-related microcephaly was born in Florida, Florida Department of Health officials confirmed Tuesday.

The baby is the first child to be born in Florida with the defect, which causes abnormally small heads and incomplete brain development, as a result of the Zika virus. The mother, a Haiti citizen, had a travel-related case of Zika and came to Florida to deliver her baby, officials said. Previous cases, where mothers with travel-related cases of the virus gave birth to babies with microcephaly, were reported in Hawaii and New Jersey.

The announcement comes a day after the health department officials confirmed three new cases of the virus — one in Broward, one in Collier and one in Miami-Dade counties. As of now, all 213 Florida cases are travel-related. Of those cases, 40 involve pregnant women, regardless of whether they exhibit symptoms.

Babies with microcephaly often have a series of developmental problems, including intellectual disability, hearing loss and vision problems and problems with movement and balance. Researchers established a connection between the birth defect and the Zika virus, which is primarily transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito, earlier this year.

Following the announcement, Florida Gov. Rick Scott called on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to host a call with Florida medical professionals to discuss precautions for pregnant for new and expecting mothers.

"It is heartbreaking to learn that a baby has been born with Zika-related microcephaly in our state and my thought and prayers are with the mother and child," he said in a statement.

Last week, Scott announced he would use executive powers to spend up to $26.2 million in state money to fight the Zika virus. He had previously called for immediate federal action.

President Barack Obama asked Congress earlier this year for $1.9 billion to combat the spread of the virus; Congress has held up his request.

Department officials said they are working to connect the mother and her child with the department's Early Steps program, which establishes support for families with infants and toddlers who have developmental delays, or a condition that could result in a developmental delay.

First Baby Delivered In Florida With Zika-related Microcephaly

By Kathleen McGrory

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, June 28, 2016

Doctors have delivered the first baby in Florida with Zika-related microcephaly, state health officials said Tuesday.

The child's mother is a Haitian citizen who contracted the mosquito-borne virus while in her home country, the health department said. She came to Florida to give birth.

It was not clear where in the state the baby was born.

As of Monday, 223 people in Florida, including 40 pregnant women, have been diagnosed with Zika. All of the cases are travel related, meaning the person contracted the virus while traveling overseas or had sexual intercourse with someone who had recently traveled abroad.

Most people who contract the Zika virus don't know they have it. If a pregnant woman passes the virus to her developing fetus, however, it can cause the baby to be born with microcephaly, an irreversible condition marked by a small head and underdeveloped brain.

Tuesday's news prompted Republican Gov. Rick Scott to seek additional guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

"I have requested the CDC to immediately host a call with Florida health care professionals to discuss the neurological impacts of Zika and how this virus impacts new and expecting moms," he said in a statement. "The Olympics will begin in less than 40 days and millions of Americans will travel through our state to and from Brazil, a country where the Zika virus is rapidly spreading, and we must be prepared."

Scott also renewed his call for Congress to release additional funding for Zika prevention. Senate Democrats on Tuesday blocked a $1.1 billion Zika virus funding package because they contended it did not provide enough spending and includes politically motivated language aimed at Planned Parenthood and environmental regulations.

The funding package, which was passed by the House last week and attached to a larger bill providing funding for veterans and military construction programs, was negotiated by House and Senate Republicans in recent weeks after Democrats abandoned bipartisan talks due to the spending cuts included in the legislation and what they viewed as "poison pill" political provisions, according to Democratic aides.

"Now that a baby has been born in our state with adverse impacts from Zika, it is clear that every available resource is needed to prevent local transmissions in our state," Scott said.

Last week, the governor signed an executive order dedicating more than $26 million in state funding for mosquito control and abatement and other readiness measures.

Florida's First Zika-related Birth Defect Reported

By Frank Gluck

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, June 28, 2016

Florida public health officials have confirmed the state's first case of Zika-related microcephaly, a crippling birth defect, affecting an infant born to a woman infected in her home country of Haiti.

Gov. Rick Scott has called on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to work with Florida's medical community on the case and further discuss what precautions other new and expecting mothers should take.

"It is heartbreaking to learn that a baby has been born with Zika-related microcephaly in our state and my thoughts and prayers are with the mother and child," Scott said in a written statement Tuesday. "The Olympics will begin in less than 40 days and millions of Americans will travel through our state to and from Brazil, a country where the Zika virus is rapidly spreading, and we must be prepared."

Scott, who calls the Zika threat a "national emergency" has allocated more than $26 million in state funds to combat it. He has also supported the Obama administration's call for $1.9 billion in federal funds to fight the disease.

Congress has so far failed to reach a deal on Zika funding. This confirmed case in Florida is could sharpen criticism of the deadlock and put increasing pressure on lawmakers to reach a deal.

Florida's Department of Health did not immediately identify the county in which the baby had been born. Department spokeswoman Mara Gambineri also would not comment on the severity of the microcephaly affecting the baby.

But she said it is working to connect baby and mother with the state's Early Steps program, which helps infants and toddlers with developmental delays.

Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby is born with an abnormally small head and, as a result, an under-developed brain, according to the CDC.

Problems for such babies can last a lifetime and include: seizures; developmental delays, such as speech problems; intellectual disabilities; problems with movement and balance; feeding problems, such as a difficulty swallowing; hearing loss; and vision problems.

As of Tuesday morning, Florida had confirmed 183 cases of Zika infections. All involved people who were infected while outside the country, according to the Florida Department of Health. Five cases involved people living in Lee County. Another three live in Collier.

At least 40 people statewide contracted Zika while pregnant. State officials have not said where they live currently.

Florida Confirms Birth Defects After Mom Gets Zika Abroad

Associated Press, June 28, 2016

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) – Florida confirmed its first Zika-related case of microcephaly, in a child whose mother contracted the virus in Haiti, officials said Tuesday.

In a statement, Republican Gov. Rick Scott called the diagnosis "heartbreaking" and asked federal health experts to talk with Florida medical professionals about what precautions pregnant women should take.

The mother is a Haitian citizen who came to Florida to give birth, and the family would be connected with a state program for infants and toddlers with developmental delays, according to a statement from Florida's Department of Health.

The extent of Haiti's Zika outbreak is unknown due to the country's lack of routine data collection systems. Its health ministry hasn't reported any Zika-related microcephaly cases, though it has reported about a dozen suspected cases of the neurological disorder Guillain-Barre, including two definitively linked to Zika by lab tests.

The virus is primarily spread by tropical mosquitoes. It's linked to birth defects, including microcephaly, which causes babies to be born with abnormally small heads and incomplete brain development.

Federal health officials have tracked four babies born in the U.S. with Zika-linked birth defects. The defects were also seen in four other pregnancies that ended in miscarriage, stillbirths and terminations.

All the cases stem from travel primarily Latin America and the Caribbean. There's been no local spread of Zika in the U.S.

Frustrated by an ongoing federal stalemate over Zika funding, Scott used his emergency powers last week to authorize spending up to $26.2 million to try and stop its spread in Florida.

Senate Democrats, including Bill Nelson of Florida, on Tuesday blocked a GOP proposal to provide $1.1 billion to fight the Zika virus, faulting Republicans for including restrictions on Planned Parenthood money and changes to policies on pesticide spraying. Nelson said that bill was an effort to "further extremist political agendas."

Republican Florida Rep. Vern Buchanan said in a statement that Senate Democrats were putting "politics ahead of public health."

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First Baby With Zika-related Birth Defect Microcephaly Born In Florida

By Colleen Jenkins

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Gov. Rick Scott To Congress On Zika: "Do Your Part"

By Ryan Benk

WJCT-FM Jacksonville (FL), June 28, 2016

Florida Governor Rick Scott stopped in Jacksonville Tuesday to warn residents about the Zika virus epidemic and meet with local officials.

Scott also took the opportunity to slam congressional leaders for failing to pass a funding bill to combat the virus.

In West Palm Beach earlier in the day, Scott said it was "heartbreaking" to learn Florida has its first confirmed case of Zika-related microcephaly — the condition causing a newborn's head to not fully form.

In Jacksonville, Scott praised local officials for following his administration's lead and "stepping up" their response where the federal government failed.

He said he was disappointed to learn a billion-dollar Zika funding bill was shot down in the U.S. Senate.

"So the federal government needs to show up and do their part. Congress and the White House need to come together and provide the funding to make sure we don't see the spread of Zika," he said.

Senate Democrats say they would've backed the legislation but last-minute amendment cutting funding for Planned Parenthood made it a poison pill.

As of Tuesday afternoon, there have been 230 confirmed cases of Zika in more than 20 Florida counties.

Factbox: Why The Zika Virus Is Causing Alarm

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

How An Electric Shock Could One Day Protect You From Zika

By Michaeleen Doucleff

NPR, June 28, 2016

This summer, it's not just athletes that are looking to set world records. Scientists are also trying to break a record — for how quickly they can make a vaccine for a new virus.

It's for Zika. And one team is leading the pack.

The biotech company Inovio just got the first approval from the Food and Drug Administration to test an experimental vaccine in people. They've already shown the virus protects monkeys from Zika, says the company's president, Joseph Kim. And a small study begins in people in a few weeks.

"We'll be testing 40 people at three locations on the East Coast," he says. From that study, they'll be able to see if the vaccine is safe. If so, they'll start a larger a trial in South America or the Caribbean by the end of the year, Kim says.

In many ways, Inovio has done what seemed impossible a few years ago: They've created a promising vaccine in just a few months. And they're not the only ones to do it.

Today researchers at Harvard Medical School report in the journal Nature two experimental vaccines that completely protect mice from Zika.

"The protection was shocking," says Dr. Dan Barouch, who led the study. Usually the Zika virus replicates to high levels in these mice, he says. But when they gave the animals the vaccines, they couldn't detect any virus.

One reason scientists have created these experimental vaccines so quickly is they're using a relatively new technology. It's called DNA vaccines.

"It is really the vaccine trend of the future," says Dr. Anthony Fauci, who leads the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases.

Traditional vaccines — like for the flu or measles — contain whole viruses. They're crippled or inactivated. But to make the shots, you have to grow up batches of live virus. That can be dangerous and usually requires special permits.

By comparison, a DNA vaccine contains just a tiny piece of a virus's genetic code. It's harmless and easy to work with.

"So it's a simpler, more efficient and ultimately a safer approach," Fauci says.

So far, no DNA vaccines have made it through clinical trials and been approved by the FDA. But in recent years, the vaccines have improved quite a bit, both Kim and Fauci say.

In particular, researchers had to develop a new way of delivering the vaccine. For these vaccines to work, they have to get inside cells — which is much harder for a piece of DNA than a whole virus.

In one delivery system, Fauci says, there's a device that that actually shoots the DNA vaccine in through the skin without necessarily using a needle. "It's kind of like a jet stream that puts the virus the vaccine right through the skin into the tissue," he says.

Inovio has made another system, Kim says. It actually gives the person a low voltage electrical shock to coax the vaccine into cells. "That happens very quickly, like in millisecond or a hundredth of a second," he says, "so the pain level is similar to that of a regular needle."

Researchers at NIH are also working on a DNA vaccine for Zika, Fauci says. They hope to begin clinical trails in a few months.

That means there are at least four Zika vaccines are showing promise. And with a little luck, one of these could make it through approval sometime in early 2018.

"Nobody Is Immune": Bracing For Zika's First Summer In The US

NPR, June 28, 2016

The mosquito-borne Zika epidemic is headed for its first summer in the United States. New York Times reporter Donald G. McNeil Jr. tells Fresh Air's Terry Gross that if the virus is ever going to hit hard in the U.S., 2016 will be the year.

"No one in the population has had the disease before, so nobody is immune to it, nobody has antibodies to it," McNeil says. "After this year, a fair number of people will be immune, and each year immunity will grow."

In his new book, Zika: The Emerging Epidemic, McNeil explores the origins of the Zika virus, as well as how it spreads and the best means of protecting ourselves from it.

When it comes to the virus' transmission in the continental U.S., McNeil notes the Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, which carry the Zika virus, are mostly concentrated in Florida and the Gulf Coast. But, he adds, the fact that the virus can be transmitted sexually means that Zika has the potential to spread more broadly.

"Scientists are just gobsmacked" by the virus' sexual transmission, McNeil says. "Viruses mutate like crazy, but one thing they don't normally change is how they're transmitted. ... You don't expect a mosquito-borne virus to become something that can be transmitted through an act of unprotected sex. But this one is."

Interview Highlights

On where the Aedes aegypti (Zika-carrying) mosquitoes are now, in relation to the U.S.

They're all over Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands and American Samoa. The mosquitoes that can transmit Zika are the Aedes aegypti mosquito, the yellow fever mosquito, is strong or numerous all over Florida and the Gulf Coast, and there have been previous small outbreaks of dengue virus and chikungunya virus in Key West and Marin County, Florida, and Texas and in a few places like that.

The mosquitoes in very hot, wet summers can range as far as New York City and a touch north. It's not like they're very numerous up here and it's not like they're here every month, and it's not even like they're here every summer. But they have been found up this far north, so the potential for transmission is there, although it's low outside of the tropical Southeast.

On if mosquitoes can fly long distances

There is no mosquito that typically flies far distances. They're really inefficient fliers, and one of the best ways to keep mosquitoes off you if you're having a barbecue is to keep a fan blowing on everybody, because most mosquitoes are lucky if they make it a mile in their lives. I mean, once in a while they fly onto a jet and they make it from Africa to Paris, and that's why you have occasional cases of airport malaria in Paris, but most of the time mosquitoes only get a few blocks.

On the World Health Organization's recommendation to not cancel the Olympics

The World Health Organization is not paying attention to the polluted bays, and not paying attention to the crime rate or anything like that, they're paying attention only to Zika. And their decision — it's only a recommendation on their part — but what they're saying is they don't think that [the threat of] Zika is so great that anybody ought to avoid going to the Olympics, or that the Olympics ought to be canceled, unless you're a pregnant woman, in which case pregnant women should avoid that, or unless you're somebody who is having sex with a pregnant woman or a woman who wants to get pregnant. ...

The basis for this is that August is winter in Rio and even though winter in Rio means temperatures of 70 to 80 degrees, it is the low mosquito season. If you look at the transmission of dengue or chikungunya in Rio, you see that it's roughly 5 percent of what it is at its height in January and February and March. So they figure the risk is fairly low, and the Brazilians have convinced them that they're going to do everything they can to empty standing water. ... I think fogging is mostly a semi-useless exercise, but they're going to do what they can. The recommendation is that it's OK to go unless you're pregnant or having sex with somebody pregnant.

On how Zika is mostly a mild disease

Zika is a mild disease in 99.9 percent of cases, so it's not as bad as dengue or chikungunya for example. It's not nearly as bad as malaria. It's one that if you're an otherwise healthy person, you shouldn't worry about. There's about 1 in 4,000 to 5,000 chance that somebody will get Guillain-Barre syndrome.

On seeing Zika cases pop up in the U.S. from being sexually transmitted

We don't have to wait for the Olympics for that to happen, it's happening right now. It happened in Texas in January. The virus can be transmitted sexually. That's a game-changer.

It's not clear how often it happens, but it happens often enough so that it's the second most common form of transmission. Right now, in New York City, despite all those subway posters saying "watch out for mosquitoes," frankly, those subway posters ought to have good-looking guys on them, because good-looking guys who have just come back from Puerto Rico or Brazil or the Virgin Islands or any place else are a bigger risk factor for Zika in New York City than mosquitoes are right now. There are no aedes aegypti mosquitoes here, but there are good looking Puerto Rican guys who might, in remote chances, be carrying the virus.

On how Zika can be sexually transmitted

We know it can be transmitted through vaginal sex. We also know it can be transmitted through anal sex. ... There is some suspicion that it can be transmitted through oral sex, because there's one case of a couple in France and it looks like she was infected through oral sex, so that may be a possibility too. So basically any sex involving mucus membranes is dangerous. ...

It's only transmitted from men to women, or from men to other men. There is no known known instance of a woman transmitting the disease to a man or a woman. The assumption is that the virus gets into either the prostate or the testes and sets up an infection there, and it can persist for a long time. We learned this with Ebola, that once a virus breaks into the immunologically privileged parts of the body, which are separate from the rest of the body and have their own sort of fluids — the eyes are immunologically privileged and the testes are immunologically privileged — once a virus gets in there, it's hard for it to break in, but once it gets in, it's hard for the body to get rid of it, because antibodies and white blood cells can't get in there to kill it.

On microcephaly, a birth defect caused by the Zika virus

It means a tiny head and generally a very underdeveloped brain. The babies have tiny, smooth brains and there are varying degrees of microcephaly. In the most severe, the baby dies or the baby is born unable to swallow, may have repeated seizures, and may die from those seizures and may never learn to walk, never learn to talk, never learn to control his or her bowels.

There's a whole range of ills that come out of it, and also along with that comes, since it's a virus that attacks the growing brain, things like the nerves that connect the eyes to the brain or the ears to the brain are often damaged along the way, so the baby will end up blind or deaf, but you may not know that when the baby is born, the eyes will look normal, but you suddenly realize they're not following objects or they're not hearing noises.

On the development of a Zika vaccine

It'll probably two, three, four years until there's a vaccine. Most scientists who know vaccines say this is a disease that will be relatively easy to make a vaccine for because we have one for yellow fever, we have one for Japanese encephalitis, there's a new one for dengue. These are all related viruses. You could literally take the spines of those vaccine viruses and snip out the genes that code for the outside of the yellow fever virus and attach with DNA technology, the genes for the outside of the Zika virus, and make a pretty good vaccine. Some of those vaccines have already been made, but now the testing process begins, and testing takes pretty close to two years at the minimum.

On the Roman Catholic Church's position on contraception because of Zika

The Church isn't speaking with one voice entirely on this issue. ... We have to draw a distinction between abortion and contraception here. No Catholic bishop and the Pope ... are [ever] going to come out in favor of abortion, and their argument would be it's better to suffer from raising a child with severe handicaps than it is to take an innocent life.

On the other hand, there's been a fair amount of disparate statements within the Church about contraception, in this case. The archbishop of Puerto Rico quickly spoke out against contraception when the health secretary of Puerto Rico suggested that women might want to delay pregnancy and say women should practice self-discipline. ...

But the Pope, in a conversation with reporters ... was asked a question about Zika and said that under the doctrine of the lesser of two evils, it might be possible that contraception could be acceptable in a case like this, because it would prevent a great evil, like deformity and suffering of a child. He drew the parallel to Pope Paul VI allowing the use of contraceptives by Belgian nuns in the Belgian Congo, because so many of them were being raped during the liberation struggle of the 1960s. ... It was kind of shocking, but it opened the door to the possibility that contraception might be OK in what would be considered an extreme case like this.

Lethal Buzzers: America's Six Most Dangerous Mosquitoes

By Emily Rueb

New York Times, June 28, 2016

With the spread of the Zika virus, the threat posed by the tiny mosquito has been magnified into shark-sized proportions.

But among the more than 3,000 species of the insect worldwide, only two in the Americas are actually known carriers of the virus: the yellow fever mosquito (Aedes aegypti) and the Asian tiger mosquito (Aedes albopictus).

The potential range of the two species in the United States helps explain where Zika could be a threat. The yellow fever mosquito, for instance, prefers the hot and humid climate in Florida and the southeastern part of the country. But it has colonized states as far west as California and Hawaii, and has the potential to live as far north as Connecticut in warmer weather, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Asian tiger mosquito, meanwhile, also favors tropical and subtropical locales but can withstand cooler temperatures, so it can range farther. In summertime, the insect can sometimes even be found in northern states like Maine and Minnesota.

Maps showing where the species might survive, notably, exempt the Northwest, the Mountain West and northern parts of the Midwest.

But Zika is not the only disease that mosquitoes can carry. Other threats include West Nile virus, dengue fever and various types of encephalitis.

In all, there are about 174 species of mosquitoes in the United States, according to Joseph M. Conlon, a retired Navy entomologist who is a technical adviser to the nonprofit American Mosquito Control Association. Texas has the most species with about 85, and West Virginia has the least, with roughly 24. New York City alone has more than 50 species.

A vast majority of these species in the United States, Mr. Conlon said, actually do not transmit any disease.

Whether or not they do depends, in part, on their physiology. Most viruses (and other microorganisms) are simply digested in the mosquito gut along with the blood. But other viruses have evolved to penetrate the mosquito's body cavity and migrate to the salivary glands, from which they are injected with salivary fluid when the mosquito feeds. Those are the diseases that mosquitoes can transmit. Certain bacteria, like Wolbachia, have also been shown to interfere with transmission. Other factors that affect their disease-spreading potential include feeding habits, where they lay eggs and the density of the infected population compared with the human population.

And only female mosquitoes bite.

Here are six of the most common disease-spreading offenders endemic to the United States.

An intensely black mosquito, distinguishable by its pointed abdomen and two white stripes in the shape of a lyre on its back (the dorsal thorax), and white bands on its legs.

They primarily bite humans, rather than other animals, and they like to feed indoors. The combination makes them particularly dangerous when it comes to spreading disease.

They're also fidgety. They'll eat several partial meals on multiple victims, called sip-feeding. It is one way they pass pathogens.

Females draw blood to nourish their eggs. They prefer to lay them in clean water, including birdbaths, clogged gutters, pet bowls, bottle caps and even shower drains. The eggs stick to the sides of containers and can survive drying out.

Most cases of Zika, which can cause debilitating birth defects including microcephaly, have been transmitted through this aggressive insect. It can also carry the viruses that cause dengue fever, chikungunya and yellow fever.

The species rarely flies more than a block in its lifetime. It is mostly found in the South and the Southwest. But it has been found in New Jersey, southern Connecticut and New York City, though not necessarily in large populations.

Experts theorize that the areas at greatest risk for a Zika outbreak are poor urban areas along the Gulf Coast. But the C.D.C. is focusing its mosquito control efforts more broadly in areas of Texas, Florida, Hawaii, Arizona and Louisiana, California and Los Angeles County, which have high population densities and a high number of travelers coming in from areas with Zika, two factors that increase the likelihood of local transmission.

While no one has yet contracted the Zika virus from a mosquito in the continental United States, experts expect it to happen this summer.

The insect is usually larger and more intensely black than aedes aegypti, but with the same pointed abdomen. It has striking white stripes, including one white stripe down the middle of its back.

They have a nasty habit of feeding on the lower extremities, so they can be difficult to spot. And their bites are barely perceptible.

They are most likely to come out during the day. And they feed on pets and wild animals as well as humans.

"They're ambush predators," said Mr. Conlon. "Whenever you invade their territory, you're on the menu."

They lay eggs in potted plants, buckets, tires, tin cans, or wherever there's a small pool of standing water.

The Asian tiger mosquito is known for spreading dengue and chikungunya viruses. It has also tested positive for Zika, West Nile, Eastern equine encephalitis and Japanese encephalitis. But it is not clear how efficiently it transmits the Zika virus.

The species first hitchhiked to the southern United States in the 1980s, probably as stowaways in shipments of used tires. And since then, it has colonized the entire Eastern Seaboard up to Maine. In all, it has been sighted in about 30 states, including Hawaii.

A nondescript brownish insect, with a rounded abdomen.

This is usually the one you'll hear buzzing in your ear at night. It will overwinter in your attic if it can.

This species feeds on humans, other mammals and many types of birds, which are the main carriers of West Nile virus. The mosquitoes typically lay their eggs in dirty water, in ditches and shallow ruts.

Dozens of species have been known to carry West Nile, but the Culex pipiens is the primary culprit.

Most healthy people don't even know they have been infected. But West Nile can cause flulike symptoms and, in rare cases, permanent neurological damage or death. The virus first arrived in New York City in 1999 and spread slowly west. Three years later, the United States experienced one of the largest outbreaks of a mosquito-borne virus ever recorded. The virus is now endemic in the lower 48 states and has killed more than 1,700 people. The greatest numbers of incidents per capita are in North and South Dakota and Colorado, said Mr. Conlon.

The species is found in urban areas across the country.

Distinguishable by its rounded abdomen and light-colored band around its proboscis.

They breed in "enormous numbers," said Mr. Conlon, typically in agricultural runoff and in ditches.

In western states, this species is the primary carrier in rural areas for West Nile virus. They have also been associated with Western equine encephalitis (W.E.E.), St. Louis encephalitis (S.L.E.) and California encephalitis.

The species is abundant in California, Utah and the western half of North America.

The dark brown insects are recognizable by long palpi, tasting organs, which are almost the same length as its proboscis, or mouthparts. It rests on surfaces diagonally, with its head down and abdomen jutting into the air.

Females feed on humans and other mammals, usually in the evening. They prefer to lay eggs in freshwater ponds, streams and lakes.

Only the Anopheles genus carries malaria. In Africa, Anopheles gambiae is the primary offender. In the eastern United States, it is the Anopheles quadrimaculatus.

Although malaria was eradicated decades ago in the United States, about 1,500 cases are still reported a year, primarily on the East Coast, from travelers who were infected outside the country. Last year, 438,000 people died worldwide from malaria, mostly in Africa and Southeast Asia, according to the World Health Organization.

The common malaria mosquito is found in large numbers in the southeastern states, but it inhabits a wide swath of the east, from Mexico to southern Canada.

These straw-color insects are noted for the way their abdomens lift into the air when they sit. Their wings are dotted with dark spots. The female's clear belly will turn red and swell when full of blood.

Females usually come out at dusk, and fly farther than other species. They'll travel from rural areas into homes or barnyards to feed. They prefer to lay eggs in leafy, sunlit pools and drains, rice fields and ponds.

They were once the primary carriers of malaria in agricultural areas on the West Coast, especially California. While malaria is gone, health officials worry that local mosquitoes could pick it up again from an infected human and trigger anoutbreak.

In New York City, low-flying helicopters have sprayed larvicide over nonresidential areas of Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx to stop the West Nile virus. But the tactic is not considered particularly effective against the yellow fever mosquito, the primary carrier of Zika, because it breeds in gardens and homes.

There have not been any instances of mosquitoes in New York City transmitting the Zika virus in the area, according to the city's Health Department. But

West Nile virus was detected in the northern house mosquito in Staten Island this month.

Health officials offer some advice: Make sure gutters or any containers that could collect water are emptied or turned upside down. Check for holes or tears in window screens, too.

Mr. Conlon recommends using repellents registered with the Environmental Protection Agency, ones that contain DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus and para-menthane-diol.

"Don't listen to your Aunt Ethel who puts toad pee on her arm," he said.

Wristbands and ultrasonic devices are worthless against mosquitoes, too, he said. And despite all of the testimonials on the internet for repellents made of natural, organic or essential oils, he said the E.P.A. has not deemed them effective.

"It's an important consideration," Mr. Conlon said. "It could be a matter of life and death."

Cuba Reports No Zika Transmission Since March; Dengue All But Eliminated

By Marc Frank

Reuters, June 28, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

First Day Of FEMA Training Briefs Participants On Emergency Plans, Procedures

By Elizabeth Meyer

Hawk Eye (Burlington, Iowa), June 28, 2016

EMMITSBURG, Md. — Much like the uncertainty and anxiety that consumes people during an emergency, the Integrated Emergency Management Course is designed to test a community's ability to respond effectively when faced with a large-scale disaster.

"Everybody's got a plan until they get punched in the mouth," said Joe Goldsberry, an Integrated Emergency Management training specialist.

Goldsberry's words early Monday morning when Des Moines County began day one of the 4-day training course, foreshadowed the week ahead for business leaders, public officials and safety officers participating in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's training program.

Seventy-seven participants arrived on the Emergency Management Institute's campus Sunday afternoon with little knowledge of what the next few days would bring.

The college campus-turned-federal institute was founded in 1809 as an all girls Catholic school and has been used by FEMA since 1981 to educate civilians through an emergency management curriculum, with over 500 courses available.

After check-in at the front desk and settling into their individual rooms, many participants flocked to the campus Command Post Pub to socialize and unwind after a long day of travel.

But by 8 a.m. Monday morning, everyone was settled into a classroom and ready to learn. Much like days of their youth spent taking notes and listening to an instructor, the first day in Emmitsburg comprised mostly of reviewing course objectives, learning about the Des Moines County Emergency Management Agency and hearing from members of the group about the role various agencies in the county would play in responding to an emergency.

"Every disaster is local," Goldsberry emphasized throughout the day.

In the event of an emergency, communities must be prepared to fend for themselves before outside help from state and federal agencies arrives. With that mentality in mind, Goldsberry stressed the importance of the "whole community" approach to disaster preparedness and relief. One of the benefits of the course is the ability to bring together a wide variety of people from different sectors of the community to better understand how they can work together when disaster strikes and foster working relationships so the line of communication is established well before an emergency occurs.

The Mississippi River flood of 2008 was referenced throughout the day as an example of a large-scale disaster that required local, state and federal agencies to respond. Des Moines County emergency management coordinator Gina Hardin said 2008 was the only time in the last 20 years the county officially activated its Emergency Operating Center (EOC), even though a federal state of emergency has been declared 12 times in the county over that same period. Located in the conference room of the Des Moines County Sheriff's Office in Burlington, Hardin said the EOC is activated only when multiple agencies need to coordinate face-to-face continuously and for an extended period of time during an emergency. It is the job of an EOC to visualize the big picture response to a disaster and prioritize the community's needs accordingly.

In the afternoon, participants were broken up into four groups based on the role their agency would play during an emergency: EOC management and support, public information officials, emergency support functions and policy makers.

As the groups analyzed Des Moines County's comprehensive emergency management plan, though most aspects of the plan were agreed upon and self-explanatory, discussion arose about a community's expectations for long-term recovery in the wake of mass devastation. Is it reasonable to expect a city will be able to fully restore its facilities and services to pre-disaster conditions? Lack of clarity on that point was discussed and tabled for officials to work toward clarifying during the week.

Looking forward to the rest of the week, Greater Burlington Partnership CEO Jason Hutcheson said he was impressed by the wide cross-section of community members brought together for the training.

"I didn't completely know what to expect, and certainly emergency response is not my area of expertise," Hutcheson said. "But I really was impressed with how well most of the people here know each other and have worked with each other already, so that shows good cooperation between community groups. And I think it really speaks to the importance of having so many people out here because it really does take a whole community to respond to a major disaster."

Two men with a wealth of emergency response experience pointed out the responsibility course participants have to their communities when attending training like this, so they can bring what they learned back to their agencies and apply it effectively.

"I think, overall, with the size of the group that you have out here – the diversity of the group – the take back is really going to be something that's going to be advantageous for the county for any future, either plan development or any disasters that might happen," said West Burlington Fire Department chief Shaun Ryan. "I just think the ability to put this many different walks of life, entities into one room – getting the same message – it's going to be a great thing. And the fact that we were able to include private and public sectors ... that helps a lot."

Jesse Logan, assistant police chief in West Burlington, noted the ability of various agencies within Des Moines County to work well together compared with other communities he has observed.

"Going to different conferences throughout the state, you can tell, you just talk to other agencies where there's no cooperation between the city or county organizations," Logan said.

"Unlike Des Moines County where everybody works together," Ryan added. "It's been getting better and better every year."

Mediapolis city councilman Jimmie Spence said the first day was "very informative" and a good introduction to the next three days. The community-wide approach to emergency management was an aspect of the training Spence was glad to see emphasized.

"It takes everybody in a community to take care of these problems, you know. You can't just sit down and say, 'Huh, the city will take care of me.' The citizens have to contribute."

Hardin noted the county's recently launched emergency messaging system – Des Moines County/Alert Iowa! – as a way for residents to easily stay involved and informed in the event of an emergency or severe weather. By signing up for the free service, an alert will be sent to the phone number or email address provided to Des Moines County Emergency Management. County residents can sign up for the alerts by visiting the Emergency Management page on the Des Moines County website, dmcounty.com.

Agencies Conducting Emergency Simulation At Prairie Island Nuclear Plant

Red Wing (MN) Republican Eagle, June 28, 2016

Residents near the Prairie Island nuclear plant may notice extra activity Tuesday June 28 in response to an emergency simulation. The exercise allows the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and other Minnesota and Wisconsin agencies to test their response in the event of an incident at the Red Wing plant.

A variety of field activities involving emergency responder vehicles will take place in proximity to the plant in Dakota and Goodhue counties of Minnesota and Pierce County in Wisconsin, according to a news release.

The exercise and preparedness plans will be reviewed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Xcel Energy operates the two-reactor facility located on the Mississippi River adjacent to the Prairie Island Indian Community.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

No stories for this edition

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No stories for this edition

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No stories for this edition

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NATIONAL NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (7/14, story 6, 0:25, Holt, 16.61M) reported, "A severe weather alert for millions tonight as fast-moving storms like one here in New York today sweep across the Northeast. And in the Midwest, powerful thunderstorms blew through the region. Wichita, Kansas—strong winds tipped over a semi-truck on the highway. Gusts up to 70 miles per hour also knocked down a number of trees and power lines."

ABC: Severe Weather. ABC World News Tonight (7/14, story 11, 1:30, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "Next here this evening, to severe weather on the move from Texas to Maine, and extreme heat warnings and advisories for much of the East. Some of the most dangerous weather in New York City a short time ago. Take a look at this storm from over Manhattan not long ago. ABC's Gio Benitez on the severe weather and the scorching heat." ABC (**Benitez**) added, "Tonight, severe storms hitting hard in the Northeast. Downing trees, forcing a ground stop at JFK Airport. Here in New York City, we are getting those ferocious winds, that rain, that lightning, that thunder. This is what's been moving all across the country. Blinding rain in Kansas. A semi overturned in Wichita, firefighters struggling to rescue the driver. More than 400 severe weather reports in the past 24 hours. A water rescue in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Even cows are forced to escape the rushing floodwaters. They got out. Outside St. Louis, a man electrocuted by a downed power line. This, as straight-line winds up to 100 miles an hour hit Cincinnati neighborhoods." **Jason Adams**, Meteorologist, WCPO-TV: "You can see the roofs have been almost completely torn off of two units." **Benitez**: "More than two dozen residents out of their homes." **Unidentified Speaker**: "I heard a big whoosh of wind and the next thing you know it was blowing out our windows." **Benitez**: "And in DC, extreme heat, the heat index reaching 104 degrees. And David, here in New York, those storms have moved through and now here comes the heat. Tomorrow's highs will feel like the mid-90s. David?" **Muir**: "Gio Benitez with us tonight. Gio, thanks."

ABC: Weather Tracking. ABC World News Tonight (7/14, story 12, 0:30, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "Let's get right to Chief Meteorologist Ginger Zee, who is tracking this system on the move tonight." ABC (**Zee**) added, "David, the heat advisories go from North Carolina to New York City. And you can see the excessive heat warnings for Philadelphia, even northern Delaware—well, that's because we're not going to cool down overnight. So cumulative heat—day after day, morning after morning—that's what we're dealing with. It feels like 81 when you wake up in Virginia tomorrow morning. And then the afternoon comes and it feels like it's above 100 in a lot of spots. We'll finally break this heat, David, as we go through the weekend." **Muir**: "All right, relief on the way. Ginger, thank you."

ARRL CEO, Emergency Preparedness Manager Visit FEMA Headquarters

eHam, July 15, 2016

ARRL CEO Tom Gallagher, NY2RF, and Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, KI1U, recently visited Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA http://www.fema.gov/) headquarters in Washington, DC, to further explore areas of cooperation and partnership, in line with the Memorandum of Agreement http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Public%20Service/FEMA/FEMA-ARRL-2014.pdf that ARRL and FEMA signed in 2014.

During the June 29 visit, Gallagher and Corey met with FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, KK4INZ. FEMA Chief Technology Officer Ted Okada, K4HNL, also attended the meeting.

"Administrator Fugate's detailed knowledge of Amateur Radio is impressive, and his support for the amateur community is very encouraging," Gallagher said afterward. He went on to say that he was most impressed by Fugate's observation that "any mode of RF that will connect across the continent is valuable; we don't have enough backups to the public switched network."

Report: State Does Little To Protect Schools From Quakes

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

SEATTLE — More than 380,000 students in Washington state live in earthquake-prone areas and attend schools built before seismic construction standards were adopted statewide, according to a Seattle Times report.

The newspaper, analyzing state data, also reports (http://bit.ly/29x9MDQ) that more than 31,000 students attend schools that are in or near tsunami danger zones.

However Washington doesn't mandate seismic evaluations or upgrades of school buildings and doesn't keep an inventory of unsafe schools. California, Oregon and British Columbia have all mandated seismic examinations of schools in earthquake-prone areas. And each has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to strengthen vulnerable buildings.

In Washington local school districts must raise their own funds before the state contributes money, creating disparities in school safety between wealthy and poor districts.

"By law, we make kids go into buildings that may not be as safe as they should be," said Jim Mullen, Washington's top emergency-management official from 2004 to 2013. "Safe schools are a moral and legal obligation of the state Legislature, the governor and every other public official."

A magnitude 9 earthquake and tsunami could kill up to 7,600 students and staff and cause $4 billion in damage and losses to schools, according to a 2014 study commissioned by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates almost 75 percent of coastal schools and one in five schools along the I-5 corridor could suffer extensive damage, including collapse.

A seismic evaluation for every school in the state would cost between $10 million and $13 million, a federally funded study found in 2011.

In a statement, Tara Lee, a spokeswoman for Gov. Jay Inslee said: "Safety in our schools and communities is always a high priority" but that "more work needs to be done."

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State Does Little To Protect Schoolkids From Earthquake, Tsunami

By Sandi Doughton And And And Daniel Gilbert

Seattle Times, July 14, 2016

This is part of a continuing series about Washington state's lack of preparation for a major earthquake.

All that separates Long Beach Elementary from the Pacific Ocean is a half-mile expanse of flat, sandy ground dotted with restaurants, hotels and shops catering to tourists. When the next Cascadia megaquake strikes, the 250 students at the school will face a choice Washington officials would rather not think about.

They can try to outrun the inevitable tsunami and reach high ground two miles away. Or they can hunker down in a two-story building that wasn't designed to withstand an unstoppable wall of water. "It's a nightmare I hope I never have to face," said Principal Todd Carper. "Our current plan is a 'go upstairs and hope' situation."

When it comes to protecting Washington schoolchildren from earthquakes and tsunamis, hope often substitutes for dollars and steel, The Seattle Times has found.

No state faces a greater threat from the offshore fault called the Cascadia Subduction Zone than Washington. But none has done less to ensure that kids in school buildings will be safe when the disaster hits.

More than 31,000 students attend schools like Long Beach that are in or near tsunami danger zones, according to a Times analysis of state data. Across Washington, roughly 386,000 pupils — one in every three enrolled — live in earthquake-prone areas and attend schools built before seismic construction standards were adopted statewide.

Yet Washington doesn't mandate seismic evaluations or upgrades of school buildings. It doesn't keep an inventory of unsafe schools. Even earthquake and tsunami drills, routine in many schools, are a suggestion and not a requirement under Washington law.

For decades, the state has shrugged off the recommendations of its top earthquake-safety advisers.

As a result, Washington is an outlier along the seismically active West Coast.

California, Oregon and British Columbia have all mandated seismic examinations of schools in earthquake-prone areas. Each has anted up hundreds of millions of dollars to strengthen vulnerable buildings.

In Washington, by contrast, local school districts must raise their own funds before the state kicks in any cash, creating disparities in school safety between wealthy and poor districts.

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A magnitude 9 earthquake and tsunami could kill up to 7,600 students and staff and cause $4 billion in damage and losses to schools, according to a 2014 study commissioned by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates almost 75 percent of coastal schools and one in five schools along the I-5 corridor could suffer extensive damage, including collapse.

No single entity in Washington is responsible for ensuring that schools are structurally sound. The state superintendent of schools oversees all public-education matters, but school districts own the buildings. Neither the Legislature nor the governor's office has taken steps to make money available for seismic evaluations or retrofits.

The last legislation focusing on earthquake safety in schools was offered 25 years ago, before today's high-school seniors — and some teachers — were born.

Reluctance to study buildings

A seismic evaluation for every school in the state would cost between $10 million and $13 million, a federally funded study found in 2011. That's about 0.02 percent of Washington's operating budget.

But some lawmakers have been reluctant to sanction a seismic survey of schools, fearing it would uncover deficiencies that would be costly to fix.

"Then the pressure will be there to do something," said state Sen. Dean Takko, whose district includes Long Beach. And if legislators have evidence of structural problems and fail to act, he wondered, "Now are we liable for not doing anything?"

Takko favors such a survey, but believes it has little chance of passing.

Gov. Jay Inslee declined an interview request. In a statement, spokeswoman Tara Lee said, "Safety in our schools and communities is always a high priority" but that "more work needs to be done." She wouldn't elaborate.

Randy Dorn, Washington's schools superintendent, acknowledged that seismic safety is not a high priority.

He has been consumed in recent years with trying to increase state funding for education to comply with the McCleary ruling, a state Supreme Court order. His office requested $500,000 from the Legislature in 2011 to help school districts identify their structural weaknesses, but the money was left out of the budget.

Dorn believes the state's system for doling out school funds puts poorer districts at a disadvantage, because it's harder for them to raise money for upgrades.

"The system is slanted and it's an advantage to the property-rich districts," he said. "It's a civil-rights issue."

Many of Washington's older school buildings have been renovated, but state officials do not collect enough data from districts to know which ones are likely at risk.

OSPI has such data for just 17 districts — of 295 in the state — that participated in a federally funded study. The 2014 study's preliminary results show that more than 100 buildings, 6.4 percent of those surveyed, had high seismic risk.

The peril varies considerably by district — and by wealth. In Everett, where household income is above the state median, less than 3 percent of school buildings were deemed high-risk and many have been retrofitted or replaced. The district has approved nearly $350 million in school bonds over the past decade.

In Port Angeles, which hasn't passed a bond or capital levy since 2001, about 43 percent of school buildings were found to be high-risk, and none have been seismically retrofitted. Median household income is about 20 percent less than the statewide figure of $60,300.

"There's an unfairness here," said Port Angeles schools superintendent Marc Jackson. "I believe students should attend safe schools and that school safety should not be compromised by where a student lives or by their zip codes."

"Enormous and reasonably foreseeable"

Washington schools built before 1949 were designed under the assumption that the state had little or no earthquake hazard — an assumption proved profoundly wrong on April 13 of that year. A magnitude 7.1 quake struck near Olympia, damaging 30 schools and killing two students.

The toll could have been worse had many schools not been closed for spring break.

It wasn't until the mid-1960s that basic seismic building codes were adopted in several parts of the state. The codes weren't implemented statewide until 1975 and have since been strengthened several times.

Mandating a study of seismic vulnerabilities in schools, and a plan to fix them, was one of the first recommendations of Washington's Seismic Safety Council.

"The potential for injury and loss of life among students and school personnel," the council warned the Legislature in a 1986 report, "is enormous and reasonably foreseeable."

Beginning in the early 1980s, more than a dozen bills were proposed to improve seismic safety in schools. None passed the Legislature. The last such legislation offered was in 1991, seeking $49,000 to help schools assess seismic stability.

A legislative report noted the opposition: "The amount of money appropriated will not go very far and there will be intolerable pressure to fix both nonstructural and structural school earthquake hazards."

The bill failed.

By then, the full scope of the Northwest's earthquake dangers was coming into sharper focus. Scientists had uncovered evidence that magnitude 9.0 quakes and tsunamis slammed the coast, on average, every 500 years — but sometimes only 200 years apart. The last such event was in 1700.

A coastal megaquake would be hundreds of times more powerful than any quake in recent state history, roiling the ground for five minutes or more across an area stretching from British Columbia to Northern California. Shallow faults under cities like Seattle, Tacoma and Everett can also trigger locally destructive quakes.

"We like to bury our heads in the sand about the risk of seismic events," said Phil Talmadge, a former lawmaker and state Supreme Court justice who pushed for school earthquake-safety reforms while in the state Senate in the 1980s and 1990s.

… If children die and you have not taken action as public policymakers, the liability is going to be ungodly." – Oregon state Sen. Peter Courtney

In 2012 the seismic safety committee again called on the state to prioritize schools in its Resilient Washington State report — again, with no action.

California took a different lesson from a close call in 1933.

On a Friday evening in March, an earthquake struck Southern California just a few hours after classes were dismissed. More than 230 school buildings were severely damaged, 70 of them flattened. Within 30 days, California's Legislature mandated that new schools be constructed to strict earthquake safety standards. Soon after, it added a requirement that existing schools be upgraded.

In British Columbia, a coalition of parents, students and structural engineers pushed the government to evaluate and upgrade schools in earthquake-prone areas. Since 2004, the province has spent or committed $1.7 billion to retrofit 214 schools.

In Oregon, state Sen. Peter Courtney led the way.

With vivid memories of a 1993 quake near the Capitol that knocked him out of bed, Courtney was receptive when state geologists first briefed him on the Cascadia threat. In 2002, Courtney and his allies won voter approval for the state to issue bonds for school seismic upgrades. The Oregon Legislature ordered a survey that identified more than 1,100 school buildings at high risk of collapse.

Oregon has provided almost $210 million in grants to retrofit 79 school buildings. Courtney, president of the Senate since 2003, is pushing for more.

"Given what we know about this monster, you better hope it doesn't hit in your lifetime," he said, of a Cascadia megaquake. "Because if it does, if children die and you have not taken action as public policymakers, the liability is going to be ungodly."

And it's not just a matter of saving lives, he pointed out. After a major earthquake, schools will be vital as shelters and community centers. Business can't resume until kids are back in school.

In Oregon, "It's the state's responsibility to make sure every school is taken care of," Courtney said. "We're not going to leave it up to the school districts."

Leaving it to districts

Seattle Public Schools owns some of the oldest, most vulnerable school buildings in the state.

But it has the biggest property-tax base of any school district, and it has successfully passed every bond and capital levy it has proposed since 1996 — a haul of at least $2 billion. Since 2010, the district has earmarked $100 million from levies for seismic retrofits at more than 50 schools, while others are getting upgrades as part of larger renovations.

The Highline School District shares a border, and many of the same seismic risks, with Seattle. But it's one of the poorer districts in King County.

While Highline has about a third as many students as Seattle, its property-tax base is less than one-tenth of its wealthier neighbor's. Individual homeowners in Highline would have to pay about 10 times as much as those in Seattle to raise the same amount of money.

Highline's last two attempts to issue a school bond were rejected by voters in 2014 and 2015. Its most recent successful bond election was 10 years ago.

So children continue to spend their days in Des Moines Elementary, one of the district's oldest schools and a priority for replacement. The original building was constructed in 1924, and other than additions in subsequent decades, it has never been modernized.

"We would never put students in a building deemed to be unsafe, but making seismic and other safety improvements in our schools is a top priority," said Catherine Carbone Rogers, a spokeswoman for the Highline School District. The district plans to propose another bond in the coming year.

The disparities are even starker in communities along the coast like Aberdeen, a faded logging hub where the Chehalis River spills into the Pacific and where grunge rocker Kurt Cobain, of Nirvana, grew up.

In 2011, structural engineers examined 12 school buildings in the city to see how they would perform in a powerful earthquake. The federally funded study found that seven buildings had a greater than 95 percent chance of extensive to complete damage.

Tom Opstad, Aberdeen's superintendent, walked through one of those buildings, Hopkins Preschool Center, on a recent spring day, pointing out the warped floors caused by shifting soil. The 60-year-old building also houses a day care and alternative high school — and has a 99.8 percent chance of major damage in a quake.

That means chunks of debris could rain down on schoolchildren and parts or all of the sprawling complex could collapse, said Cale Ash, a structural engineer at Degenkolb who helped with the study. The entire structure could slump when shaking liquefies the loose soil, causing more damage and trapping students if doors jam shut.

Opstad is laying the groundwork for a bond, but expects it will take more than one try to gain voter approval. The district hasn't approved a bond since 2003.

"There's not a lot of industry here to help support taxes, like there would be in Seattle," he said.

"We should be screaming"

Aberdeen is ringed with hills that offer tsunami escape routes for all of the district's schools. But along parts of Washington's outer coast, including the 25-mile-long sand spit called the Long Beach Peninsula, high ground could be out of reach for all but a few.

In the open ocean, a tsunami travels at the speed of a commercial jet. The surge slows and builds as it approaches land, muscling ashore faster than most humans can run. Scientists estimate the first waves will slam into Long Beach in as little as 20 minutes after the earthquake.

Local cross-country standout Ben Brownlee recently ran the 2-mile evacuation route from his former school, Long Beach Elementary, at The Seattle Times' invitation.

After a megaquake, children at Long Beach Elementary could have just 20 minutes to run to higher ground. We asked a local track athlete to see if he could make it before the tsunami. (Katie G. Cotterill & Ellen Banner / The Seattle Times)

The 17-year-old Ilwaco High student cut through the rodeo grounds and sprinted past cranberry bogs. He pulled up panting at the city's garbage transfer station, more than 100 feet above sea level, in just under 15 minutes.

In an actual quake, it will take several minutes for those who aren't injured to get their bearings and run. Then they'll face an obstacle course of downed power lines, toppled trees and buckled pavement.

There's no way teachers would be able to shepherd 250 terrified children, many with special needs, to safety in time, said Carper, the principal.

So Long Beach hopes to build a tsunami refuge on the school's old play field. City officials landed a $2 million federal grant to design and build a berm, essentially a man-made hill of hard-packed earth reinforced with concrete and steel.

The flat-topped structure would stand about 30 feet high, placing it nearly 50 feet above sea level. It would cover three-quarters of an acre and have room for more than 850 people to escape the water — including all of Carper's kids.

But it's not certain the structure will be built. Cost estimates are coming in at more than $3 million, with no obvious source of funding to make up the shortfall. Even if the city comes up with the money, the berm won't help the 170 youngsters who attend the district's other elementary school, 10 miles up the peninsula in the town of Ocean Park.

On another vulnerable spit of land about 40 miles north of Long Beach, the Ocosta School District faced a similar threat.

When Paula Akerlund took over as superintendent in 2011, she was haunted by the devastation from Japan's earthquake and tsunami earlier that year.

"That's the thing that wakes you up at 3 in the morning," she said.

The district, which includes Westport, is ailing from slumps in the fishing and timber industries. Household income is barely half the statewide median. The previous two school bonds had failed.

Animated graphic: The state's only school building constructed to provide shelter during a tsunami. (Zach Walker/The Seattle Times)

Working with scientists, engineers and emergency managers, Akerlund and the school board turned to the community again, with a proposal to replace the crumbling elementary school and add a gym that could double as a tsunami-evacuation structure. With room for 2,000 people on the roof, the structure could shelter all students, staff and nearby residents with room to spare.

The district and its allies sought support for the project from local residents at every opportunity: Every sports event, every concert and every school activity. A friends group set up a Facebook page. A local Realtor offered prizes for people who registered to vote.

The $13.8 million bond passed with 70 percent support from voters. The state provided an additional $2 million in matching funds. Earlier this month, the new gym opened.

State officials are eager to talk up Ocosta's success. But the fact that so many kids across the state remain at risk from quakes and tsunamis leaves Akerlund frustrated with the Legislature, the governor and other officials who refuse to take responsibility.

"You cannot fool around with children's safety," she said. "All of us in education are so polite. We should be screaming: This is not ethical."

Colorado Wildfires Continue, More Than 35,000 Acres Burned

By Kieran Nicholson

Denver Post, July 14, 2016

Several wildfires in Colorado, totaling more than 35,000 acres burned, remain active as firefighters work to control and extinguish the blazes.

The biggest blaze, the Beaver Creek fire, has burned 20,981 acres in northern Colorado along the Wyoming state line about 24 miles north of Walden, according to state and federal fire officials.

The Beaver Creek fire was detected June 19 and is burning through heavy beetle-killed timber. The fire is about 5 percent contained, and 286 firefighters are working on the blaze. The fire remains active and is expected to continue to spread to the north and east, according to the Western Colorado Interagency-Type 3 Incident Management Team.

The Hayden Pass fire continues to burn in the Colorado mountains about 20 miles southeast of Salida. It has scorched 14,788 acres and remains active, The wildfire is crowning and accelerating in the Mosher Creek area as it moves toward the Sangre de Cristo ridge line, according to fire officials. The fire, burning mostly through timber, heavy logging slash and chaparral, was first reported on July 8.

The Cold Springs fire is burning in Boulder County about 2 miles northeast of Nederland. It started Saturday on private property, has burned more than 528 acres and is 100 percent contained. At least eight homes have been torched, and about 1,000 residents were forced to evacuate. All roads were open, and all residents were allowed to return home.

Two men face criminal charges for allegedly starting the blaze.

Jimmy Andrew Suggs, 28, faces four charges, including two counts of fourth-degree arson and one count each of possession of a weapon by a previous offender and criminal trespass. Suggs is being held on $150,000 bail.

Zackary Ryan Kuykendall, 26, is facing two charges of fourth-degree arson and one count of criminal trespass. He is being held on $5,000 bail.

Both are scheduled to appear in court Sept. 1.

The Cold Springs fire continues to creep and smolder, according to firefighters. Crews continue to work on eliminating hot spots and protecting homes and structures within and near the fire perimeter.

Endangered Trout Feared To Be Impacted By Colorado Wildfire

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS — State wildlife officials are concerned that an endangered fish may be extinct now that a wildfire burning in the southern Colorado mountains has reached a creek home to the thriving habitat of cutthroat trout.

The Gazette reports Greg Policky with Colorado Parks and Wildlife says the fish in a 3-mile stretch of Hayden Creek are "one of a kind." He says they're related to greenbacks but have DNA not known to be in any other fish.

Policky estimated the population of trout to be about 2,000. He says there's been ongoing efforts to sustain the fish, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Officials say the Hayden Pass fire in the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness has spread across 13,000 acres. More than 100 homes have been evacuated. A helicopter continues efforts to keep the Hayden Pass fire away from structures near Coaldale, southeast of Salida on Wednesday, June 13.

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Information from: The Gazette, http://www.gazette.com

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78-acre Black Ridge Wildfire Near Durango Is 40 Percent Contained

By Jesse Paul

Denver Post, July 14, 2016

A 78-acre wildfire sparked Wednesday in the mountains south of Durango is 40 percent contained as crews work to keep the burn from spreading toward nearby homes.

Durango Fire Rescue said in a tweet Thursday morning that the fire has been 80 percent surrounded with retardant to keep it from moving outside its current lines.

The fire is burning in the Black Ridge area. Durango firefighters are working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the firefight.

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe says the fire is on their land and was reported at about 4 p.m. on Wednesday.

“Southern Ute Tribal Rangers are notifying residents in the area of the fire to be ready to evacuate should conditions change,” the tribe said in a bulletin.

La Plata County says flames are surrounded by 304 structures — including homes — but that so far residents are safe to stay put. Residents are on pre-evacuation notice, however, as a precaution.

“The fire is laying down as relative humidity is increasing in the area,” the county said in a news release Wednesday night. “Air crews dropped retardant around most of the perimeter of the fire and the fire has burned into the 2005 Black Ridge fire burn scar. Crews will remain on scene throughout the night.”

Aerial resources are expected to join the battle Thursday.

Exploding Propane Tanks Hinder Reporting Of Wildfire Damage

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

TIMBERON, N.M. — Exploding propane tanks Thursday kept firefighters from confirming the extent of damage in and around a southern New Mexico mountain village of Timberon where authorities said a wildfire apparently burned multiple homes.

Firefighters’ operations also were hindered by downed power lines in the area, according to state officials.

There are no reported injuries, the fire’s cause hadn’t been determined and there was no estimate when the fire would be contained.

The blaze led Gov. Susana Martinez to activate the state’s emergency operations center to help coordinate the response. Federal officials approved her request for funds to help cover the cost of firefighting efforts.

Martinez was briefed by incident commanders Thursday after flying over the fire, which had charred nearly half of a square mile.

“Sadly, the fire may have already destroyed more than a dozen homes, and many more are at risk,” she said. “I ask New Mexicans to join me in praying for the residents of Timberon.”

Otero County Sheriff Benny House told The Associated Press during a telephone interview that he saw about 15 burned structures while viewing just the fire’s perimeter Wednesday night and that many appeared to have been homes. There may have been additional burned structures in the interior of the fire area, he said.

The area consisted of wooded hilly terrain, House said. Timberon is 25 miles southeast of Alamogordo.

A multiagency team was arriving to take command of the incident by late Thursday night or early Friday morning.

Deputies went door to door Wednesday to recommend that residents evacuate, House said. Many homes in Timberon are not owners' primary residences, he said.

Several dozen Timberon residents spent the night in an evacuation shelter in Cloudcroft. But House said many people had other places to stay or weren't in the area.

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The Latest: Federal Funding Approved For New Mexico Wildfire

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

TIMBERON, N.M. — The Latest on a wildfire burning in part of a mountain village in southern New Mexico (all times local):

5:25 p.m.

Gov. Susana Martinez says federal funding will help cover the costs associated with fighting a blaze that has destroyed homes and burned nearly a half square mile in southern New Mexico.

Martinez was briefed Thursday by fire officials on efforts to corral the blaze, which forced the evacuations the night before of dozens of residents who live in and around the community of Timberon.

The governor says the fire may have destroyed more than a dozen homes and that many more are threatened. Conditions have prevented firefighters from confirming damage reports.

Martinez also activated the state emergency operations center to help coordinate the response to the fire in Otero County.

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12:50 p.m.

Gov. Susana Martinez plans to be briefed by fire officials leading efforts to corral a blaze that has destroyed homes in southern New Mexico.

Martinez will be visiting the Timberon area Thursday afternoon. She's expected to catch a glimpse of the fire as she flies in on a National Guard helicopter.

Fire officials say the blaze has burned about 290 acres and an unknown number of structures. Exploding propane tanks have kept firefighters from confirming any damage reports.

Otero County Sheriff Benny House told The Associated Press early Thursday that he saw approximately 15 burned structures while viewing the fire's perimeter Wednesday night and that many appeared to have been homes.

Some roads are closed in the area.

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Noon

Authorities say exploding propane tanks are keeping firefighters from confirming how many structures have been destroyed by a wildfire burning in and near the southern New Mexico mountain village of Timberon.

A multiagency fire information service also reports Thursday morning that there are downed power lines in the area.

According to the service's update on the Timberon fire, it has burned an estimated 290 acres of private lane and that an interagency team will take over command of the incident by late Thursday night or early Friday morning.

Otero County Sheriff Benny House told The Associated Press early Thursday that he saw approximately 15 burned structures while viewing the fire's perimeter Wednesday night and that many appeared to have been homes.

There are no reported injuries.

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11:10 a.m.

A wildfire that destroyed a dozen homes and scorched 28 square miles in the Manzano Mountains southeast of Albuquerque has been declared fully contained.

Fire officials say that means crews have completed a control line around the perimeter of the blaze, which was sparked a month ago by a wood-chipping machine being used to clear brush and forest debris as part of a federally-funding project.

Officials warned Thursday that 100 percent containment doesn't mean the fire is out.

There are still engines patrolling the area and watching for any fire activity.

The blaze forced residents from several small communities along the eastern edge of the Manzanos to flee their homes. Gov. Susana Martinez also declared an emergency after the fire ballooned to more than 19 square miles in two days.

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9:10 a.m.

A southern New Mexico sheriff says he believes homes are among the 15 or so structures burned by a wildfire burning in and near the mountain village of Timberon.

Otero County Sheriff Benny House says many of the burned structures he saw when he viewed the fire's perimeter Wednesday night appeared to have been homes and says there could be more in the fire's interior.

House says the fire burned 250 acres of wooded hilly terrain as of Thursday morning. Its cause isn't known.

The sheriff says deputies went door to door Wednesday to recommend that residents evacuate. He says many homes in Timberon are not owners' primary residences.

Local fire departments are fighting the fire with help from the Forest Service.

Timberon is 25 miles southeast of Alamogordo.

___

8:30 a.m.

A wildfire is threatening a village in mountains of southern New Mexico.

The Otero County Sheriff's Office says the fire near Timberon has burned an estimated 200 acres as of Thursday morning and destroyed a dozen structures and a fire engine since being reported Wednesday afternoon.

Timberon is 25 miles southeast of Alamogordo.

Sheriff's dispatcher Chris Patton says no injuries have been reported and that it's not immediately known what type of structures burned. She says they could include homes, sheds and garages.

Patton says cause of the fire isn't yet known.

Officials say several dozen Timberon residents spent the night at an evacuation shelter in Cloudcroft.

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Providence, Cranston To Get $18M Total To Hire Firefighters

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

Rhode Island's congressional delegation has announced a total of $17.8 million in federal funding to help Providence and Cranston hire and train new firefighters. The Providence Fire Department says eight firefighters were injured battling this house fire on Orms Street, Thursday, June 30, 2016. (WJAR)

Rhode Island's congressional delegation has announced a total of $17.8 million in federal funding to help Providence and Cranston hire and train new firefighters.

A spokesman for U.S. Sen. Jack Reed, a Democrat, says the funding will help fill a total of 95 firefighter positions that were vacated due to normal attrition and left empty because of economic hardship.

Providence will receive approximately $15 million to hire 80 firefighters. The rest will go to Cranston to hire 15 firefighters.

The funding is provided through the competitive Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration.

The federal grants will cover the cost of the new hires for the next two years.

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Third Victim Dies In Wisconsin Flood Waters

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

HAYWARD, Wis. — A third person has died in the floodwaters in northern Wisconsin.

The Ashland County Sheriff's Office says an 82-year-old man was found dead early Thursday in a pickup truck in the floodwaters of the Marengo River. Authorities say the truck was found in the water near the bridge over the river in the Town of White River.

The sheriff's department says Elmer Lippo was an elected supervisor for the Town of Marengo. Two others have died in northern Wisconsin flooding since severe weather washed out roads and caused other damage earlier this week.

Highway 2 between Ashland and Hurley remained closed as well as other roads in the region. In the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, the Beaver Lake Campground near Mellen is closed due to flood damage.

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West Virginia's Money Woes Could Affect Flood Recovery

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

West Virginians who are trying to rebuild their lives from last month's severe floods could be almost completely reliant on federal agencies.

Slumping tax revenue and budget constraints mean the state's role in helping homeowners, businesses and local governments rebuild from last month's deadly floods could be limited, The Charleston Gazette-Mail reported (http://bit.ly/29KnVkq).

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said at a news conference Wednesday that he hopes the state's rainy day fund will be used to cover 25 percent of the costs of reconstructing public buildings and other infrastructure. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will cover the other 75 percent.

"Obviously, we do have the money there," Tomblin said of the rainy day fund. "Hopefully, the Legislature, at the appropriate time, will allow us to take that money."

In terms of repairing the estimated 2,500 damaged houses, though, Tomblin said he is not considering spending any additional money to supplement the federal disaster relief funding.

The June 23 floods killed 23 people and caused more than $55 million in damage to roads and bridges.

For businesses without flood insurance, owners are going to be reliant on loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration or private lenders, which, in some instances, can be insured by the West Virginia Economic Development Authority. That money needs to be paid back, with interest.

Homeowners without insurance will have to rely on the federal grants that FEMA provides through the agency's individual disaster assistance. Homeowners can receive a maximum of $33,000.

"When FEMA was created, it was created to give folks a step towards recovery — to get them safe, to get them sheltered — but it was never really meant to make them whole again, like they were pre-disaster" said Albie Lewis, the federal coordinating officer for FEMA, who spoke with the governor.

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Money Woes Could Hamper Flood Recovery

Associated Press, July 15, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginians who are trying to rebuild their lives from last month's severe floods could be almost completely reliant on federal agencies.

The Charleston Gazette-Mail (http://bit.ly/29KnVkq) reports that the state's role in helping homeowners, businesses and local governments rebuild from last month's deadly floods could be limited by slumping tax revenue and budget constraints.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said at a news conference Wednesday that he hopes the state's Rainy Day Fund will be used to cover 25 percent of the costs of rebuilding public buildings and other infrastructure. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will cover the other 75 percent.

In terms of repairing the estimated 2,500 damaged houses though, Tomblin says his administration is not considering spending any additional money to supplement the federal disaster relief funding.

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West Virginia's Money Woes Could Hamper Flood Recovery

By Andrew Brown

Charleston (WV) Gazette, July 14, 2016

Nearly four weeks after severe flooding hit several counties in West Virginia, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and his administration said the Mountain State is moving into the long-term response phase.

But with an estimated 2,500 houses damaged and more than $55 million in road and bridge repairs needed — according to numbers provided by West Virginia Transportation Secretary Paul Mattox —the state's role in helping homeowners, businesses and local governments that are recovering from the flooding could be limited — or impossible — because of slumping tax revenue and budget constraints in the state government.

As a result, West Virginians who are trying to rebuild their lives will be almost completely reliant on federal agencies and the limits of the disaster recovery programs that they administer.

For the county and city governments, the costs of rebuilding public buildings and other infrastructure might be solved. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will cover 75 percent of the costs under the agency's Public Assistance program. Tomblin suggested that state lawmakers might be asked to appropriate the other 25 percent of those costs through the state's Rainy Day Fund.

At a news conference Wednesday, Tomblin said he anticipates calling the Legislature back to Charleston for a special session, but wasn't sure when that might occur.

"That's one of the reasons that we have a Rainy Day Fund," Tomblin said. "Obviously, we do have the money there. Hopefully, the Legislature, at the appropriate time, will allow us to take that money."

But for the average West Virginian, whose home or business was damaged or destroyed by the flooding, Tomblin said his administration is not considering any additional money to supplement the federal disaster relief funding.

For businesses without flood insurance, it means owners are going to be reliant on loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration or private lenders, which, in some instances, can be insured by the West Virginia Economic Development Authority. That money, obviously, isn't free, and needs to be paid back, with interest.

For homeowners without insurance, they are going to have to live with the federal grants that FEMA provides to them through the agency's individual disaster assistance. The max you can get through that program is $33,000 and, if homeowners or renters need any more to rebuild, they'll have to rely on the SBA for a loan or seek out private lending.

Tomblin made it clear Wednesday that the West Virginia government can't afford to fund other financial assistance for the people who lost their homes, clothes, furniture and cars to the surging floodwater that swept through parts of the region.

"We're not considering it at this time," Tomblin said. "Obviously, we're under some tight budget constraints ourselves."

The underlying financial problem is largely a result of the lack of flood insurance among many of the communities that found themselves awash on June 23. In some instances, homeowners in a floodplain dropped their insurance after they paid off their mortgage. Others weren't in the floodplain and weren't eligible for discounted insurance, but found their home under water anyway.

In Richwood, there were only 40 policyholders under the National Flood Insurance Program, as of May of this year. Clendenin had 60 insurance plans. Rainelle had 40. White Sulfur Springs had 84. And in Clay, there were only 6 flood insurance policies in place.

That means most of the people in those communities who were hit are reliant on whatever money FEMA decides they are entitled to.

While some are frustrated with the grant total they are qualifying for, federal officials made it clear that FEMA was not created to pay for everything that people lost. And after national flood events, like Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy, federal lawmakers have called for the agency to rein in the cost of major flooding events.

"When FEMA was created, it was created to give folks a step towards recovery — to get them safe, to get them sheltered — but it was never really meant to make them whole again, like they were pre-disaster" said Albie Lewis, the Federal coordinating officer for FEMA, who spoke with the governor Wednesday. "So we are just one part of that entire process. That is why it's so important that we partner with all the other agencies and volunteer agencies to bring people back to normalcy."

During Wednesday's news conference, Tomblin and members of his administration also said the warning systems for the major flooding event that killed 23 people worked properly and that it is too early to know what types of polices need to be reviewed or changed to help prevent or limit flooding damage of this magnitude in the future.

When questioned about a state Flood Protection Plan that is more than a decade old but not fully implemented, Jimmy Gianato, the director of the state's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, said his agency has adopted some of the recommendations laid out in the 365-page report but that much of that plan required legislative action that never took place.

Gianato specifically cited the adoption of better warning systems for flooding, which now includes cellphone alerts, radio and television announcements and, in some cases, reverse 911 alert systems.

He also said additional gauges that track water levels have been installed in streams and rivers throughout the state over the past 10 to 15 years.

Neither Tomblin or Gianato directly stated during the news conference whether they will review the unadopted portions of the Flood Protection Plan. Tomblin spokeswoman Jessica Tice said that decision would have to be made later.

"A final decision has not yet been made regarding a review of the flood protection plan," Tice said. "Additionally, the need for a potential after-action review is still being assessed.

"Any additional factors or considerations will be up to the administration in place at that time."

Homeowner Sued For $25 Million Over California Wildfire

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

LOS ANGELES — The federal government sued a homeowner for nearly $25 million on Thursday, contending his negligence sparked a 2013 fire in the mountains east of Los Angeles that forced 5,000 people from their homes.

The lawsuit says that a short in a poorly maintained electrical junction box sparked a blaze in the San Jacinto Mountains above Palm Springs that charred more than 27,500 acres of brush and timber —

about 43 square miles — and at one point threatened the town of Idyllwild.

Investigators determined that the lid of the plastic box containing wires was warped and ajar, the lawsuit said.

"As a result, an electrical discharge inside the box shot sparks and hot material out of the box and onto dry ground vegetation below," according to the lawsuit.

"Property owners and their agents have a responsibility to ensure that property under their control is maintained in a safe fashion," U.S. Attorney Eileen M. Decker said in a statement.

The fire endangered "countless lives, including those of firefighters who battle these large-scale blazes," she said.

The fire burned for more than two weeks in and around San Bernardino National Forest. More than 3,000 firefighters, 250 fire engines and 30 aircraft fought the blaze.

The U.S. Forest Service spent more than $15 million on firefighting, and the blaze caused in excess of $9 million in damage to resources, ranging from wildlife and timber to eroded soil, according to the lawsuit. More than $300,000 was spent on emergency rehabilitation of the area.

The lawsuit, which alleges negligence and violations of California law, was filed in Los Angeles one day before the third anniversary of the fire's eruption. It names Tarek M. Al-Shawaf and two caretakers he employed at his home, known as Gibraltar West, in the community of Mountain Center.

The lawsuit was filed after Al-Shawaf and the caretakers failed to pay the costs of firefighting and fire damage demanded by the government, according to the lawsuit.

Messages for Al-Shawaf's attorney, James Lance of San Diego, weren't immediately returned.

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Severe Weather, Power Outages In Oklahoma

WRC-TV Washington, July 15, 2016

Former Presidents George W. Bush, back right, and Bill Clinton, back second from left, speak on stage alongside former United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair, back second from right, at the Presidential Leadership Scholars graduation on July 14, 2016. The three presidents were hustled away after winds began breaking windows.

A strong storm sent powerful winds through Arkansas and Oklahoma, forcing the evacuation of a high school graduation and leaving thousands without power, NBC News reported.

Former Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair were whisked away from an Arkansas high school graduation Thursday after severe winds began breaking windows. It wasn't known where they were taken.

The storm brought as much as 2 inches of rain that fell in six hours. There were also reports of scattered flaw floods. Sustained winds above 50 mph were recorded in many parts of the state, with hurricane force gusts above 70 mph in spots.

Electric utilities reported almost 130,000 people in Oklahoma and 63,000 in Arkansas were left without power because of the severe weather.

According to the National Weather Service, significant wind damage was possible across southeastern Oklahoma into western Arkansas as the system moves toward the mid-Atlantic region.

Weather Advisories Issued For Southwestern Pennsylvania

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, July 14, 2016

Numerous weather advisories were issued in southwestern Pennsylvania this evening after strong storms made their way through the region.

Officials reported numerous trees and wires down throughout Allegheny County this evening after heavy thunderstorms began pounding the region around 8 p.m.

Earlier tonight, the National Weather Service announced a flood advisory for parts of Allegheny and Westmoreland counties. The weather service also issued a severe thunderstorm warning for northern Fayette County and southeastern Westmoreland County.

Up to an inch of rain hit the area, according to weather service meteorologist Brad Rehak.

Pittsburgh River Rescue responded to two overturned watercraft on the Allegheny River about 8:15 p.m., city public safety spokeswoman Sonya Toler said.

A boat with six people inside capsized near Washington's Landing Marina, Ms. Toler said. A canoe with two people inside overturned underneath the 31st Street Bridge, she said.

All of the boaters were rescued, and none of them required medical attention.

Duquesne Light reported that 350 customers in Monroeville were without power as of 10 p.m. Another

50 customers were without power in Castle Shannon, according to Duquesne Light.

The Pittsburgh Riverhounds game at Highmark Stadium was delayed during the thunderstorm as power went out in the stadium.

The Riverhounds said on their Twitter account that the power outage appeared to affect the entirety of Station Square.

Tornado Warning Over, But Counties Warned Of Thunderstorms

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

PHILADELPHIA – A tornado warning is no longer in effect for a county in eastern Pennsylvania and one in northwestern New Jersey but thunderstorms are still bearing down in some areas.

The National Weather Service had said a severe thunderstorm Thursday afternoon was capable for producing a tornado in Northampton County in Pennsylvania and in central Warren County in New Jersey. The warning passed at 3:15 p.m., but severe thunderstorm watches and warnings were in effect for several counties in New Jersey. Union County, eastern Passaic County, Essex County, southeastern Bergen County and Hudson County were all under a thunderstorm warning until 4:30 p.m.

The agency urges people in those areas to take cover until about 3:15 p.m.

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DNR Grant To Stabilize Trails, Aquatic Habitats Along Vermillion River

By Natalie Daher

Minneapolis Star Tribune, July 14, 2016

A Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant will help stabilize eroding trails along the Vermillion River in Farmington and improve the habitat for its aquatic species.

The $225,000 grant is expected to preserve the riverbank in Rambling River Park, a popular site for biking and trout fishing, between Schmitz-Maki Arena and the County Road 50 bridge. The city and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization, made up of Dakota and Scott County commissioners, will lead the project, and construction will begin in 2017 or 2018, planners say.

"We wanted to mitigate the erosion issue, because if we didn't, eventually it would eat away the trail," said Randy Distad, the city's parks director. "Down the road, we would have had to address reconstructing the trail because of the erosion."

During a recent site visit, officials with the DNR, the watershed group and the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District detected three areas with "considerable erosion," Distad said, along the trail. The project's other goals include providing refuge areas for trout and other aquatic species, restoring vegetation along the trail and mitigating future flooding.

The City Council approved an agreement with the watershed group at its latest meeting and will contribute $20,000 in staff time and in-kind services. The watershed group will contribute $30,000 for project design and management as well as $5,000 for construction.

The DNR requires construction to occur in April and September to protect trout spawning season. The city will next finalize designs and select a contractor, Distad said.

Residents Stranded, Roads Remain Closed After Torrential Rains

By Maggie Angst

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, July 15, 2016

Residents in northern Wisconsin are grappling with the aftermath of extreme storms and flooding that swept through the area earlier this week, leaving three people dead, roads washed out and some residents still stranded in their homes.

Authorities on Thursday confirmed that a third person had died as a result of the flooding.

Elmer Lippo, 82, of Marengo, was found early Thursday in a pickup truck in the floodwaters of the Marengo River in the Town of White River.

The Ashland County Sheriff's Office said Lippo was an elected supervisor for the Town of Marengo.

Meanwhile, authorities said Thursday that main roads in several counties are still closed, including U.S. Highway 2 between Ashland and Hurley, state Highway 13 and U.S. Highway 63. And chances are they will not reopen anytime soon.

State and county engineers will be out evaluating damage to bridges and roads over the next few days.

"We want to make sure we're making these roadways as safe as possible, as soon as possible," said Diana Maas, spokeswoman for the state Department of Transportation's northwest region. "We're out there actively working to resolve as many issues as possible, and many other roadways are open already."

Gov. Scott Walker on Tuesday declared a state of emergency in eight northern Wisconsin counties — Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Sawyer, Washburn and Price counties — after torrential rains flooded parts of the area, causing three fatalities, closing roads, destroying a harbor and washing out multiple roads.

Maas said the main corridors of U.S. Highway 2, state Highway 13 and U.S. Highway 63 are a major concern.

Repairs on state Highway 13 in Ashland County will take the longest, up to five months, she said. Two bridges near Highbridge were washed out and significantly damaged. The agency is hopeful an alternate route on county trunk roads can be used in a couple of weeks until the bridges on the highway can be replaced.

A bridge on U.S. Highway 63 also was significantly damaged near Grand View in Bayfield County. The state is working on terms to hire an emergency contractor by Monday. The highway will be closed for about a month, and there are no reasonable alternative routes in that area, according to Maas.

Water levels on U.S. Highway 2, which passes through Ashland, Bayfield and Iron counties, are too high to assess the damage right now, she said. Officials suspect the damage is minimal and that the road will reopen in a few weeks.

"We're hopeful the water will go down by the end of the week and we'll be able to fully assess the damage," Maas said.

The closures come at the height of region's busy tourist season. And local businesses and state Department of Tourism are encouraging visitors not to cancel their vacation plans. Many businesses and parks remain open, they say. But they urged travelers to call the local chamber or tourism office, or check state web sites for road closings and park and trail conditions.

Claire Rupnow of the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Bureau, said the annual Bayfield Festival of Arts is still on for this weekend, but some people will have to make a significant detour to attend.

"Roads to the west are open, so people coming from that direction, like Duluth will be fine," Rupnow said. "People from Michigan's Upper Peninsula or southeast Wisconsin will have about a three-hour detour."

High waters and road closures continued to strand some residents in Bayfield and Iron counties on Thursday.

In the Town of Lincoln in Bayfield, about 26 people were isolated in their homes, and authorities were using boats to get supplies to them "on a road that is now a river," said Jan Victorson, director of emergency management for Bayfield County.

Washed-out roads in the Town of Gurney in Iron County had left four families stranded in their rural homes off state Highway 169 as of Thursday morning. Town Chairman Tom Innes said authorities were hoping to reach them through a back channel by the end of the day.

Elsewhere, the U.S. Coast Guard continued to patrol Saxon Harbor in Ashland County and monitor stranded boats, which were destroyed by the storms. Local and county officials are meeting with the U.S. Coast Guard to determine a damage estimate to the facilities and develop a repair plan for the harbor.

About 85 boats and 100 boat slips were damaged or destroyed, according to the Wisconsin Emergency Operations Center. As of Thursday morning, 40 of those were displaced, some ending up miles off shore. Six were unaccounted for, and four had sunk, said Christopher Yaw, public affairs specialist with the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Pollution is the main concern because most of those vessels have fuel and oil on board," Yaw said. "We don't want any of that leaking and getting out into the environment so we're helping to get that cleaned up and mitigate those posing a threat."

Also Thursday, Sawyer County authorities were assuring residents that the Nelson Lake Dam is not in danger of failing. They continue to monitor water levels in Hayward, they said. And inmates from the Department of Corrections' Gordon Correctional Facility are helping to fill sandbags through Saturday.

The extent of the damage across the region is still being assessed. The Department of Transportation is working with the governor's office and the state Department of Administration, as well as the Federal Highway Administration, in an effort to secure relief funds.

U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy and Sen. Ron Johnson sent a letter to President Barack Obama on Thursday seeking disaster assistance.

Below are the preliminary damage estimates for counties assessed so far by the Wisconsin Emergency Management Center.

■ Burnett County: about $375,000 in damage to roads, bridges and other public infrastructure.

■ Douglas County: about $602,800 in damage and repair costs from flooding of roads, bridges and public buildings.

■ Sawyer County: about $70,000 in minor damage reported to 15 homes, and $365,000 to public infrastructure, including roads and bridges. County officials are reassuring the public the Nelson Lake Dam is not in danger of failing.

■ Chippewa County: About $25,000 in damage was reported to one home. The damage was caused by a tornado that touched down near the O'Neil Creek Campground.

U.S. Weather Forecaster Sees Likelihood Of La Nina August-October

By Marcy Nicholson

Reuters, July 14, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Hurricane, Emergency Prep Are Key For Area Communities

By Jill Narciso, Senior Living Correspondent

Houston Chronicle, July 14, 2016

Despite a record 33 inches of rain in April, May and June, local retirement communities state they are more than prepared for this year's hurricane season.

Buckner Parkway Place and Holly Hall take the necessary precautions each year to make sure residents are safe at the time of an emergency.

"The time to prepare for an emergency is before you have one," said Carol Klappenbach, director of performance improvement at Holly Hall.

Accoding to Klappenbach, Holly Hall has enough emergency supplies to sustain its 216 residents for at least a week, including food, water, medication, flashlights, batteries and an emergency generator. At the start of hurricane season, Holly Hall updates inventory, adds extra supplies and updates its staff phone list. While Holly Hall facilities have not been impacted by recent floods, its surrounding streets have flooded and prevented staff from coming to work and relieving the prior shift.

Part of Holly Hall's disaster plan involves determining which staff realistically would be available in an emergency so they can better organize responsibilities. Klappenbach said while she is currently not seeing patients, she is a licensed RN and can help in an emergency if necessary.

"You just don't know," Klappenbach said. "In Texas, a storm comes out of nowhere and drops a lot of water."

Holly Hall residents are also notified in a written letter each year signifying the start of hurricane season, and staff helps residents register on the 211 emergency management database.

The retirement community at Buckner Parkway Place follows a similar emergency plan.

Sunny Chatagnier, executive director of Buckner Parkway Place, said the community will never run out of food for its 400 residents. Besides canned goods, Parkway Place has a contract with its suppliers to have extra food delivered if necessary, or to have a refrigerated truck available on site. In an emergency, residents will continue to have "real meals," Chatagnier said.

Other emergency supplies at Parkway Place include a large emergency generator, batteries, flashlights and medical supplies. There is also enough water set aside for drinking water, and water to flush toilets.

In addition, Parkway Place staff is trained on disaster response each year by the Office of Emergency Management. This month, Parkway Place also will hold an informational session for residents about hurricane preparedness.

However, Chatagnier said during a hurricane, most independent living residents like to stay with their families if possible, and they mainly track who remains on or off the site. Assisted living and skilled nursing residents remain at Parkway Place, and staff is directed to those who need the most care.

Both Parkway Place and Holly Hall are "shelter-in-place" communities, which means they only will be evacuated if they are notified by the state of Texas. In this scenario, Parkway Place residents will be transported to a sister community in the cities of Austin or Longview, while Holly Hall has facilities in town and out of town for residents to be transported if necessary.

Chatagnier said even with the recent floods, Parkway Place operations ran "as smoothly as normal" thanks to its staff, and at the time, residents were more concerned about their families.

With hurricane season stretching to Nov. 30, Chatagnier is confident in the community.

"With hurricanes we have advance warning," Chatagnier said. "For the most part, the safest place to be is here. Residents will be provided for and kept safe to the best of our abilities."

Emotional Healing After A Flood Can Take Just As Long As Rebuilding

NPR, July 14, 2016

A small memorial marks the former homestead of the Nicely family, who died in the June flooding of White Sulphur Springs, W. Va. Kara Lofton/West

Virginia Public Broadcasting hide caption toggle caption

Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting

A small memorial marks the former homestead of the Nicely family, who died in the June flooding of White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.

Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting

Most of the front door of Rachel Taylor's little yellow house in White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., is pasted with paw prints where her dog struggled to get inside during the flood last month. He was too big to carry through the rising waters.

Across the street, nestled between two battered houses, an empty lot is marked by a cross with an array of flowers and photos — a small memorial for a family washed away by the torrent.

Taylor's dog survived and is now with some of her family members in Kentucky. But those neighbors across the street, the Nicelys, were swept away when their house collapsed; they have since been confirmed dead.

"When I start feeling overwhelmed with this," Taylor says from her front porch, "I just look across the street at that memorial and I think, there's nothing that we have lost that can't be replaced or mended."

She and her husband spent seven years renovating this 1930s Craftsman house, room by room. They were just about done with renovations when their house flooded a few weeks ago. Today the living room is gutted.

"You know, the first couple of days it was very intense," Taylor says. "It was kind of 'crisis mode.' Maybe that's the way I would describe it, because you didn't really have time to think about it and process it."

But once the full extent of the damage set in, Taylor says, she developed severe nausea and carsickness to the point of not being able to drive.

A number of people, she says, have chalked up her symptoms to nerves. "You know, the stress level. You don't realize your body is just having a response to this."

Taylor worries that the houses in her neighborhood will remain abandoned and that she, her husband and her 14-year-old daughter won't feel safe at home anymore. She plans to rebuild, but says her family will likely sell the house and move.

Rachel Taylor surveys the flood damage from her front porch in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va. Muddy paw prints on the front door still mark her dog's panic as the waters rose. He survived, but others didn't. Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting hide caption toggle caption

Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting

Rachel Taylor surveys the flood damage from her front porch in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va. Muddy paw prints on the front door still mark her dog's panic as the waters rose. He survived, but others didn't.

Kara Lofton/West Virginia Public Broadcasting

"The words we use when we talk about it are 'I don't know if I have it in me;' 'I'm not sure if I can do it again,' " she says. "Things like that. And then we just say, 'Well, we'll take it one day at a time.' "

Psychologists say this kind of response is normal following natural disasters.

"It's a physical aspect of the stress response — it will affect the body's ability to concentrate, to rest and to be able to function," says Marcie Vaughan, leader of the state-funded West Virginia Community Crisis Response Team. "Cognition is slowed and impaired," she adds.

Vaughan's team offers support, counseling and referrals for further mental health care at local behavioral health centers.

"From the behavioral health perspective, we find we are more in need after the tenth [or] twelfth day," Vaughan says, "just because immediate needs of food, clothing and shelter take precedence."

In the first few days following the flood, Vaughan's team members split their time between helping people replace lost psychiatric medications and looking for signs of mental distress in people at shelters or feeding stations.

"We see fatigue, problems with cognition," she says. "You have individuals who walk into a supply center and they have no idea what they need."

A 2012 study published in the journal Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology found that while most people bounce back a few months after a disaster, if their ongoing stressors aren't addressed — such as a lack of permanent shelter, financial challenges and repeated exposure to the trauma — affected residents will continue to struggle.

In addition to Vaughan's team, church disaster-assistance teams and Hope Animal-Assisted Crisis Response — a support organization that uses trained therapy pets for comfort — stepped in to help.

"As the fatigue sets in and the frustration, we see an increased need for behavioral health intervention," says Vaughan.

Unfortunately, that's just when the work becomes hardest, Vaughan says, and it's often after national organizations and media have lost interest. Very real, tough problems persist, though only local groups and neighbors remain to extend helping hands.

This story is part of NPR's reporting partnership with West Virginia Public Broadcasting and Kaiser Health News.

FEMA HOUSING

FEMA Unveils 'Last Resort' Mobile Home Housing For Flood Victims

By Matt Maccaro

West Virginia MetroNews, July 14, 2016

QUINCY, W.Va. — For those unable to find temporary housing as they rebuild from last month's flood, FEMA unveiled temporary mobile homes in eastern Kanawha County Thursday.

About a dozen mobile homes were lined up, which can be used for up to 18 months in Greenbrier and Kanawha counties.

"This is housing of last resort," said FEMA Public Information Officer Bob Howard. "What we're trying to do is get people into more permanent housing, either rental units or other long term housing while they're repairing and rebuilding their homes. As has been identified in those two counties, there's a shortage of rental units."

The homes were available in one, two and three bedroom units, as well as accessible units for those who are disabled.

"The first thing we're trying to do is encourage people to find housing," Howard said. "There is a housing website that people can go on and check on that. Then we look at other options in the area; local hotels; these kinds of things."

Howard explained that even if the mobile units are being used long term, FEMA would still keep tabs on the rebuild of the residents' homes.

"People are evaluated on a regular basis what's the progress on rebuilding their home, what's their recovery plan. But it can extend up to 18 months."

For those still looking for flood relief assistance, Howard said the first step is to register with FEMA online at disasterassistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-3362.

FEMA Seeks Landlords With Vacant Properties To House Flooding Victims

By Amanda Barren

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), July 14, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. – Those left without a home because of the June 23 flooding will be eligible to apply for a temporary trailer to call home from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The units are fully furnished and come with utility hook-ups.

The mobile homes are actually a last resort for FEMA. The agency is trying is to get people into already standing apartments and homes. That is preferred because the trailers cannot go into the flood zones where the people once lived.

"There are combined units of state and federal people looking at all these accessible sites," said Thomas Kempton with FEMA. "They are working with the local community leaders to identify these sites. We have specialists. That's their job, to go out and search for those kind of sites."

Landlords with vacancies can email FEMA if they think they can help with housing needs. Send emails to: FEMA-Housing@fema.dhs.gov and include your name, contact number, and property location.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Flood Zone Changes Could Impact Thousands Of St. Johns County Structures

By Bakari Savage

WJXT-TV Jacksonville (FL), July 14, 2016

ST. JOHNS COUNTY, Fla. – The Federal Emergency Management Agency will be reconfiguring flood zone designations for thousands of structures in St. Johns County, which will affect how much homeowners pay for insurance.

About 10,000 buildings will be moved out of the flood zone and 1,600 will be moved into the flood zone, according to the preliminary map.

Properties in the coastal areas will be moving off the flood zone list, largely because of dunes. But low-lying spots in Ponte Vedra Beach, mainly Sawgrass, will be added to the flood zone list, the preliminary map shows.

Insurance agent Matt Carlucci said he has seen these changes happen before.

"The big myth is, 'Oh, I'm not in a flood zone.' Everybody is in a flood zone," Carlucci said. "People would be surprised at how little the retention ponds actually hold the rain. A lot of people in low-risk flood zones do get flooded."

Carlucci said anyone who lives in the Sawgrass area or in one of the neighborhoods being added to the flood zone list could see a change in the price of insurance.

"The premiums are going to go up because they're at high risk," Carlucci said.

The preferred rate for high-end flood insurance is about $250,000, Carlucci said. That would break down to about $500 per year.

He recommended that anyone who lives in a high-risk flood zone should get an elevation certificate, which will give an exact measurement of how high the property is above the base flood elevation.

That will help calculate the rate and could save money, according to Carlucci.

"Oftentimes, getting the elevation certificate will help you. If you don't, it'll go to the standard rate. That can run from about $2,000," Carlucci said.

Anyone interested in getting an elevation certificate will have to get in touch with a land surveyor, who will then come out to the home and do it.

People living in the affected areas can also call their insurance agent to discuss rate changes.

To find out if a home is impacted by the flood zone changes, check out the St. Johns County's flood map viewer.

FEMA said it will be holding public outreach meetings in the near future, which will provide additional information on any insurance impacts and the appeal process. The dates of the meetings have not yet been announced.

Palo Alto Considers Bracing Now For Sea Level Rise

By Jacqueline Lee

San Jose (CA) Mercury News, July 15, 2016

PALO ALTO – Many more Palo Alto homes and businesses than the 2,700 estimated to be vulnerable in a 100-year flood of San Francisquito Creek could be inundated if sea levels rise at least a foot, according to federal flood maps.

In an attempt to ward off such a disaster, the City Council has directed staff to plan for a 55-inch sea level rise by 2100. Staff requested that course at a May study session.

A 55-inch sea level rise would endanger properties from the Bay to Middlefield Road, between Embarcadero and San Antonio roads, according to maps from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Such flooding would cut off the Palo Alto Airport, Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course, the Regional Water Quality Control Plant serving multiple cities and the city's Municipal Services Center, thus limiting some emergency response capabilities.

Bayfront levees from San Francisquito Creek to the Mountain View border do not meet today's height and construction standards set by FEMA for 100-year floods, let alone for more potentially damaging sea level rise.

The local San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority is studying the feasibility of proposals for new levees and results should be available this summer.

"The levee has to be rebuilt, but also raised," said Phil Bobel, the city's assistant director of public works.

A typical levee in Palo Alto stands about 10 feet high, Bobel said. Consequently, a 100-year flood in the area, or a tidal wave of 11 feet, would wash over an estimated 2,700 properties in Palo Alto, even if the sea level does not rise.

More Peninsula properties will be included in the floodplain if sea levels continue to rise.

Experts agree that the rate of sea level rise is expected to accelerate in the next century, but predictions range from 1 foot to 6 feet and beyond.

The Bay has seen 0.63 feet of sea level rise over the last century.

"We've got to protect our facilities," Bobel said. "But it actually makes sense to do things incrementally given the level of uncertainty."

One proposal would have the new levees built up to 18 feet, which assumes a mid-range estimate of sea level rise of 3 feet and takes into account higher waves from wind, Bobel said.

A 3.28-foot rise in sea level would put 220,000 Bay Area residents at risk, according to an estimate by the Pacific Institute. It's unclear how many Palo Alto residents that figure includes.

FEMA flood maps do not currently account for sea level rise, but the 3 feet was included to begin planning for sea level rise projections for the next 50 years.

"We don't know for sure how much it's going to rise, so you probably wouldn't design these levees at the extreme," Bobel said. "You would build them to that maximum height, but what probably makes the most sense is to build a big firm base for them ... so you can add height over time."

A feasibility study to be released this summer related to the Strategy to Advance Flood protection, Ecosystems and Recreation along the Bay, or SAFER Bay, project will include options for boundaries and height of the new levees.

The jurisdictions affected by the levee update project – Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Santa Clara Valley Water District and San Mateo County Flood Control District – will have to agree on where to place the levees.

Then, “hundreds of millions of dollars” will have to be secured locally and federally for the multi-year project, Bobel said.

In coming months, Palo Alto officials could be deciding what resources to pour into the effort and how much research to devote toward developing new zoning codes and building restrictions for areas potentially impacted by sea level rise.

Vice Mayor Greg Scharff said sea level rise is a concern, but it’s important to weigh it against the city’s other priorities. He anticipates other agencies will provide more data and clarity in the next two years, so the city may be in a better place then to help address this regional issue.

“We talk about a lot of stuff at council ... and then there’s no staff resources to do it,” Scharff said. “Should we be spending city time to do this at this time? Do you have the bandwidth?”

Councilman Cory Wolbach said he shares Scharff’s concerns about staff limitations and priorities, but sea level rise is too important of an issue.

“I’m not willing to drop this one,” Wolbach said. “We’re talking about an existential threat to large parts of Palo Alto, essentially irreplaceable, mission critical utilities equipment and other infrastructure.”

Some properties could potentially be affected by flooding from the Bay as well as San Francisquito Creek.

About 40 percent of the creek floodplain is also in the Bay floodplain, according to Len Materman, executive director of the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority.

The agency was formed following a combination of creek and tidal flooding in 1998 that caused millions of dollars of damage in Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and Palo Alto.

New Dorp Beach Houses To Be Acquired By Build It Back

Staten Island (NY) Live, July 14, 2016

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. – A new city pilot program is poised to scoop up possibly dozens of abandoned properties in New Dorp Beach that have been badly damaged in Hurricane Sandy and left to rot.

Amy Peterson, director of the city’s Housing Recovery Office, announced the pilot, taking place in that neighborhood and in Brighton Beach in Brooklyn and Edgemere in Queens.

With her was Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis, who, along with state Sen. Andrew Lanza and Councilman Steven Matteo, last year asked the city to consider acquiring the abandoned properties through its Build It Back program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Malliotakis and then-Councilman James Oddo had penned letters to the city since 2012, asking them to help with abandoned properties.

Peterson announced Thursday that the city is using its funds to buy houses, as long as owners are willing to sell.

Standing in front of an abandoned house at 32 Topping St., Malliotakis said residents have their property values lowered by neighboring abandoned and dilapidated houses that attract rodents and sometimes squatters.

The Topping Street house sits between two elevated houses — one rebuilt and elevated and the other in the process. The one-story home sits low to the ground, left abandoned for years. There are a handful of houses on the street that are elevated or in the process of being elevated. They sit beside houses like the one at No. 32 — close to the ground and vacant.

Nicole Romano, president of New Dorp Civic Association, is in an attached house and can’t elevate hers without her neighbors agreeing to raise their houses too. Plus there are other logistical issues. She is hoping she won’t have to elevate her house — once a planned seawall is built, it will protect homes in the area and flood insurance rates will decrease and she will be able to afford it.

“The wall is my saving grace,” she said.

There are many people who are finally coming home, back to the neighborhood they left after Hurricane Sandy “only to see there’s still a lot of devastation here,” she said.

The neighborhood has a slightly eerie feeling — pretty, newly reconstructed homes sitting next to destroyed, abandoned houses.

“The reminders of Sandy are still here,” Romano said.

Build It Back officials will canvass New Dorp Beach and the Brooklyn and Queens neighborhoods to identify which houses are abandoned. They will contact the homeowner or bank that owns the property and try to convince them to sell.

Once the city buys the properties, it will demolish the houses and sell the land to a developer who will build according to FEMA standards.

Peterson said the city would offer to purchase properties at post-storm values.

Malliotakis and Romano have already created a working list of many abandoned properties in the neighborhood, estimating there are between 40 and 50.

It's not the only community on Staten Island to see abandoned houses pepper its streets but it's the one selected by the city for the pilot.

Malliotakis expects the bank-owned properties to be eagerly sold to the city. After all, since the state passed a law recently battling "zombie" properties, banks have to care for and maintain houses they own once the foreclosure process begins, not once it's completed, which can take years.

"There's going to be really no reason for them to hold onto these properties and I hope they will sell so we can" get people into these homes.

Bloomingdale Bar's Kitchen Open For Business

By Deborah Walsh

North Jersey (NJ) Media Group, July 14, 2016

BLOOMINGDALE – The borough has had a new pub on Main Street for about nine months where residents can quench their thirst with a variety of tap beers and other libations, and now they can have "Soule food" too at River of Beer.

In celebration of the kitchen being open at River of Beer (aka "The River"), the public is invited to a grand opening on Tuesday, July 18, at 4:15 p.m. There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and local and county dignitaries have been invited as well.

The River is run by the Soule family of Kinnelon. Fred Soule said business has been good, with his taproom getting busier and busier every day. The establishment began serving food two weeks ago, and the fare is drawing rave reviews. Those attending the grand-opening ceremony can taste for themselves as free samples will be provided.

Soule said The River gets its beef fresh from a Sussex County rancher, which is compatible with his aim to provide locally-sourced food and beverage options. The beef, used in The River's hamburgers and roast beef sliders, is from grass-fed cattle.

Soule's wife Nancy also came up with the recipe for "turkey gobblers," which consists of turkey wrapped in stuffing that is then fried and topped with cranberry sauce. That item is becoming a fast favorite, he said.

All the food is made from fresh ingredients and prepared from scratch, he said.

The holdup of the kitchen opening was the result of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations. Because the basement of the establishment is located in the floodplain, FEMA would not allow food storage in refrigeration boxes in the basement unless the units met certain specifications. The owners of The River had to install watertight flood-proof units that had to be certified. Now that The River has received its certifications, it received its permanent certificate of occupancy, and the eagerly-awaited dining experience has begun. A new menu will be published shortly, Soule said.

The pub, which has a capacity of 86 patrons, prides itself in providing a fun atmosphere complete with eight TVs and games, like a giant Jenga. Young patrons routinely play with the pub's board games, and even put down their cell phones to do so, said Soule.

The interior features dark wood and a touch of antique furnishings, and the exterior draws customers to a fire pit and a corn hole game. The bar has 20 taps of beer from local craft breweries or microbreweries in the taproom. The beer inventory includes several selections of Ramstein beer from the High Point Brewery in Butler, which brews year-round and creates seasonal varieties. The beers are rotated, with patrons routinely getting the chance to try something different from microbreweries in the area.

The Main Street establishment also includes a whiskey bar that stocks craft whiskies. The pub has rear parking available, and patrons are permitted to park in the Wells Fargo lot.

For more information on River of Beer, visit riverofbeer.com or call 973-750-1820.

New FEMA Floodmaps Drawn For Lake Of The Ozarks; Some Homeowners To See Insurance Savings

By Nathan Bechtold

Lake Expo Online (MO), July 14, 2016

CAMDEN COUNTY, Mo. — New floodplain maps drawn by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will spell big savings for many homeowners at Lake of the Ozarks. The preliminary versions of the new maps were recently completed. Click to view.

The maps, known as "Flood Insurance Rate Maps" (FIRM) are used by insurance companies to set rates based on projected flood risks.

Camden County Presiding Commissioner Greg Hasty says the main areas affected by the new maps are mainly on the Niangua Arm, but some other areas are included too. He says the new maps are far more accurate than previous versions, and that they properly represent areas that genuinely do flood as well as areas that don't. None of the areas affected by the two floods in 2015 have been moved outside the flood zones, Hasty noted.

FEMA will be sending a consulting officer to discuss some of the specific ways the redrawn maps will affect county government and citizens.

Hasty says he has been working on seeing the flood maps redrawn for four years.

"These maps are a vast improvement and will remove thousands of homes in Camden County from a special flood hazard area," Hasty said, adding, "It's a great day for Camden County.

Climate Action Business Assoc. Shares Resiliency Plan With Scituate Businesses

By Kristi Funderburk

Scituate (MA) Mariner, July 14, 2016

Three interns with the Climate Action Business Association went store-to-store along Front Street on Friday to help get local merchants thinking about the dangers of rising sea levels.

The Boston-based non-profit organization identified areas that are vulnerable to storms and flooding to target for its Businesses Acting on Rising Seas campaign.

The college students' goals were to provide businesses with information on the effects of sea level rise and promote climate adaptation and resiliency planning.

"We think it's really important, but people don't take it into account when they're running a business," said Pete Hoegler, a Walpole resident and junior at George Washington University. "Economic development is really important in the state of Massachusetts and climate change is really going to effect that going forward."

Sea level rise has already been part of the conversation in recent years in Scituate, which has gone back and forth with the Federal Emergency Management Agency over its latest proposed flood maps. Town officials hope to keep working with the federal agency on flaws in the maps, though the maps are up for adoption at the special town meeting this fall.

According to a 2013 study that examined the effect of sea level rise in Scituate, an extra foot by 2038 wouldn't heavily impact the harbor businesses, putting mostly the docks off the harbor below water. Sea level rise of 1 foot with a storm surge from a Category 1 hurricane is expected to flood Cole Parkway through to Front Street, the study showed.

The town has also been working with Applied Coastal Research and Engineering to determine ways it can better protect its shoreline. In late June, a company engineer proposed options ranging from beach nourishment to managed retreat.

More recently, town officials made contact with the Dutch consulate, which has been connecting with Boston, to discuss with officials there ways Holland has been successful in preventing flooding, Public Works Director Kevin Cafferty said.

"We hope to have future meetings on it. We can share technologies and ideas back and forth," he said.

In spreading word of the Businesses Acting on Rising Seas, the Climate Action Business Association interns initially had some brush off from businesses that thought of them as a sort-of marketing team, but of the 20 shops they visited, every one ultimately accepted their Small Business Resilience Guide.

The guide offered tips on what the businesses could do to better prepare themselves. That included knowing your risk, such as by reviewing flood maps; planning for different scenarios from sea level rise to extreme heat; developing an emergency plan, including getting a disaster supply kit ready; and engage the community to drive climate awareness.

Some of the shop employees even joked with the students that if they were talking about flooding, they came to the right place, noting portions of the harbor are susceptible to flooding under certain tides and during bad storms.

"Raising awareness is great," Cindy Vogel, who works at The Welch Company, said of the association's effort.

She said while many who live in Scituate already know the flood risks, she thought it was a good idea the group was spreading the word for anyone who wasn't aware.

One message the group wanted to make clear was the harsh impact of a bad storm, and how preparation can help. Sam Morales, a Boston College senior from Washington D.C., said a quarter of the businesses affected by superstorm Sandy in New Jersey and New York didn't re-open.

"We're trying to take steps to help small businesses help prepare for that kind of disaster, which is expected to hit the region in the next six years or so," he said.

The trio of interns—including Hoegler, Morales, and Chris Burnham, a Connecticut College senior from Needham—asked some of the businesses if they had an emergency plan and most often heard no. The team ran into several stores where the manager wasn't in, but were able to verify Vision Source did have an emergency plan, Hoegler said.

Less than 5 percent of the businesses in any town they've visited, including Gloucester, New Bedford, and the Back Bay neighborhood of Boston, have had one, Hoegler said.

"That's really concerning considering these places are so vulnerable," he said.

Council Gives Stamp Of Approval On Hwy. 53 Consultant, Floodplain Relief

By Jourdan Vian

La Crosse (WI) Tribune, July 14, 2016

The city of La Crosse will get started developing its vision for the Rose Street corridor after the La Crosse Common Council Thursday approved a $200,000 contract with a group of planning consultants.

The council also delayed changes to the make-up and duties of the Aviation Board and put the final stamp of approval on the floodplain relief program.

Perkins + Will, ISG and Toole Design Group will assist a city committee as they work to develop a master plan for the Highway 53 gateway into downtown, from Exit 3 to the La Crosse River.

The design group also has experience framing corridor plans in Rochester, St. Paul and Minneapolis. Their proposal for La Crosse calls for a consultant team to focus on open access, redevelopment and new investment.

Council member Ryan Cornett, who chairs the highway 53 steering committee, said the group chose the consultant in part because of their ability to offer a working document, rather than one that would sit on a shelf somewhere gathering dust.

"We couldn't make a bad decision on this one and we're going to have a document in the end that will actually give us something practical to work with," Cornett said.

Council members Gary Padesky, Jai Johnson and Martin Gaul voted against the contract, with Padesky saying he didn't approve of the expense.

"I'm opposed to this. I don't know where everyone feels we have this money tree, but we can put that money to a lot better use," Padesky said.

Cornett disagreed, saying the plan would be "very important," as the Wisconsin Department of Transportation continues its road construction down the state highway, citing last year's controversy surrounding the differing viewpoints between the DOT and city when it came to the Exit 3 revamp planned for next year.

The city and DOT were at odds when it came to a number of details in the DOT redesign, which is part of its larger Interstate 90 project, before eventually finding an agreement in September 2015.

Cornett said the plan would prevent similar disagreements in the future.

"This will give us the tools to direct the city, and we will have a back-up document to show the way for it," Cornett said.

The contract was approved in a 13-3 vote.

The council voted to wait a month before deciding on changes to the Aviation Board membership and powers after council member David Krump raised concerns that the ordinance changes would delete language requiring council approval for contracts related to the operation of the La Crosse Regional Airport.

The proposed ordinance change strikes one instance of language requiring council oversight, but leaves another. Krump asked that it be clarified before approval.

In other business, the council unanimously gave the planning department final approval to move forward with the floodplain relief program, which will give financial assistance to home-owners attempting to raise their homes out of the floodplain.

Under the program, the city will offer 50 percent up to $20,000 for projects that result in a successful letter of map revision which states that FEMA agrees the structure is no longer in the high-risk flood area. To be eligible, a property would need to have an assessed value of more than $50,000 and be located within the city of La Crosse.

An estimated 1,800 structures are in the floodplain.

MITIGATION

County Adopts Updated Hazard Mitigation Plan

By Melissa Crockett Meske

Jersey County (IL) Journal, July 15, 2016

Ensuring eligibility for funds in case of a natural disaster was top of mind with Jersey County Board members on Monday night.

With updates made through December 2015, the board unanimously voted to adopt a revised Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan that meets the requirements set forth by FEMA for funding from state and federal levels if any natural disasters occur in the county.

The entire plan is available for viewing on the county's website under the "Code Enforcement" section.

According to Mary Kirbach, one of the board members serving on the Legislative Committee, Cindy Cregmiles completed most of the work needed to bring the document up-to-date since its first publication in February 2008.

Patti Thompson, communications manager for Illinois Emergency Management Agency, had recently shared with Journal staff that local governments would still be eligible for public assistance funding in the absence of a local hazard mitigation plan.

However, if a state plan was not in place that had been approved by FEMA, then local governments would only be eligible for emergency work such as debris removal and emergency protective measures. Permanent repairs would not have been eligible, according to Thompson. The state has a FEMA-approved plan in place through 2018.

Jersey County Board members also approved adoption of the 2016 Prevailing Wage Act resolution, with Roger Newberry casting the only dissenting vote. In a phone interview on Tuesday morning, Newberry explained his reason for voting against adopting the prevailing wage resolution.

"It seemed to me to be that wages would be set for workers such as mechanics and laborers based on the work they would be doing for the county rather than a set wage for anyone needing that type of work. For example, if a mechanic is working on a county vehicle, why pay them any more just because it is a county vehicle?" Newberry explained.

Chairman Don Little recommended the adoption of the resolution that would form the Jersey County Citizens Corps Council being organized through Larry Mead, ESDA coordinator. This group would consist of volunteers identified throughout the county that could be called upon as needed in the event of a countywide emergency.

An addendum presented by Gary Krueger, board member, to add a further definition of what constitutes a meeting and how that impacts board member compensation was referred to the Legislative Committee for further discussion.

The board also passed a resolution of sympathy for the family of Monica Goetten Brennan, daughter of former board member Willie Goetten.

In other county business, the audit for fiscal year 2015 was accepted and the list of election judges was approved. Also approved was the closing of the road for a fireworks display on July 30 for the New Piasa Chautauqua Community.

The animal control report for June was accepted, and County Clerk Pam Warford briefly described two new database tools developed in her office.

The board then adjourned into closed session to discuss mediation activity regarding the labor contracts with the United Steel Workers and Teamsters bargaining units, with no further action taken.

Escambia To Spend $4.5M To Buy Property For New County Jail

By Drew Buchanan

The Pulse, July 14, 2016

Escambia County commissioners voted Thursday to spend $4.5 million to purchase a 14-acre property in West Pensacola to construct and expand the county jail complex.

The purchase of the property on the southeast corner of Fairfield Drive and Pace Boulevard, commonly known as the McDonald Shopping Center, paves the way to develop the site for the new jail facility in the wake of the explosion that destroyed the jail's central booking facility.

The April 2014 explosion killed two people, injured more than 180, and destroyed the jail facility on Leonard Street. Federal Emergency Management Agency officials concluded last year that replacement of the jail was preferred over repair, which led to county officials pursuing sites where a new facility could be built.

As part of the plan, the county will retain a consultant to develop a master plan to assist with economic development and neighborhood revitalization within a 12-block diameter of the intersection of Pace Boulevard and Fairfield Drive in West Pensacola. The redevelopment would include reserving approximately 300 feet of road frontage for economic development, with an emphasis on small businesses and businesses owned by minorities and women.

"Today's decision helps move the construction of a new jail facility forward significantly," the county said in a statement. "The commission vowed to work with current tenants and leaseholders in their transition as the project progresses. Property owners will not be expected to vacate until six to 12 months from now."

Additionally, the county will build a youth center in the vicinity of the property that is similar in size, design and facilities as the Wedgewood Community Center.

Commissioners unanimously agreed the design of the expanded jail complex will be "street-friendly" and not institutional like the current complex design.

The property was originally appraised at $3 million, $1.5 million under the purchase price commissioners agreed to.

Despite the cost, commissioners agreed that rebuilding at the current site will allow the county to resolve stormwater issues surrounding the county complex and keep the sheriff's office and jail facilities consolidated in one central location.

Outside consultants hired by Escambia County have said that with the acquisition of the shopping center property up to 40 percent of the land will have to be used as a stormwater pond to mitigate flooding impacts in the flood-prone areas surrounding the jail.

As the county moves forward to rebuild the jail, the county is paying nearly half a million dollars per month to house inmates in out-of-county detention facilities.

Early estimates put the cost of building a new jail at more than $160 million, with FEMA and the state expected to contribute about $50 million for jail demolition and construction. County officials have said it could take up to four years to construct the facility.

Alachua County Commissioner Looks For Solution To Collapsed Northeast 96th Avenue Crossing

WUFT-FM Gainesville (FL), July 14, 2016

Alachua County Commissioner Looks For Solution To Collapsed Northeast 96th Avenue Crossing

Almost a year since the bridge on Northeast 96th Avenue in Gainesville collapsed after a storm, area residents are still parking their cars and walking across the collapsed bridge to their homes every day.

Alachua County Commissioner Robert Hutchinson said he is continuing to search for a temporary solution to the problem, namely the use of a Bailey bridge, a type of portable, pre-fabricated, truss bridge used by the military, to allow vehicles to cross the creek.

Hutchinson, who proposed the idea at the May 24 County Commission meeting, said he wrote to Gov. Rick Scott on June 14 thanking him for his offer to help Alachua County residents. In the letter, Hutchinson wrote that an 80-foot Bailey bridge or equivalent military surplus item would be a simple solution. As of last week, the Governor's office had not responded.

Area residents said they are disheartened by the situation.

Lisa Franklin, who lives on Northeast 96th Avenue, said she was waiting to hear if Hutchinson would meet with someone from Camp Blanding in Starke to find out if there are surplus bridges, and what the cost would be to get one.

Franklin said she has not heard anything since the Alachua County Commissioners meeting in May. While she said she understands the commissioner's hands are tied, she believes a declaration of an emergency early on would have provided aid from FEMA or a grant to cover the cost of a bridge.

She said the residents are still looking for a solution.

Roxanne Eckles-Macdonald, another Northeast 96th Avenue resident, said everyday activities like bringing in groceries have been made difficult.

"You don't realize how lucky you are when you have a driveway you can just drive up into," she said.

But the most difficult part, according to Eckles-Macdonald, is that emergency services cannot reach them.

"If we needed an ambulance, if we needed fire, how would they reach us and in a timely manner?" she said. "Someone could die before they could get to us."

If there is a Bailey bridge available, the best route is to get the military to transfer the bridge to the Florida National Guard since Gov. Scott could then declare the bridge as surplus, Hutchinson said.

"I think if that happens, we would be able to get some military guys or even ex-military guys to construct that bridge or assemble that bridge," said Hutchinson, who has been searching the Internet for surplus Bailey bridges. "That's, hopefully, if not a permanent solution, at least a solution that will last us for many years."

Hutchinson said the county might be looking for two Bailey bridges — the second one for Northeast 108th Avenue, where the crossing has also collapsed. But residents living on Northeast 108th Avenue have another way into their neighborhood, while Northeast 96th Avenue residents have only one road into their subdivision.

"It's not the public's bridge, and that's the problem we're dealing with here," Hutchinson said. "We're looking for a public solution, but at the end of the day, we can't do this for everybody, and we'll do the best we can."

Voters To Decide On Raising Building Heights And Density In Treasure Island

By Jennifer Rich

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, July 14, 2016

TREASURE ISLAND — Despite protests by some residents, the City Commission has decided to give voters the chance to decide whether there can be increases in height and density for some Gulf Boulevard development.

The commission voted last week to put proposed changes to its land use regulations and comprehensive plan to a vote in November.

In 2002, Treasure Island voters made it clear that all future increases in building height and density must be approved in a referendum vote.

The changes, if approved, would establish a planned development zoning district on the east and west side of Gulf Boulevard north of 127th Avenue and on the west side of Gulf Boulevard between 104th and 119th Avenues.

New structures in the district could take advantage of higher density and height in order to encourage redevelopment, city officials said.

The northern end of Gulf Boulevard, which would be included in the new zoning district, is the "gateway to the city," Community Improvement Director Paula Cohen said, and the proposed zoning changes would benefit redevelopment.

Properties on the west side of Gulf Boulevard between 104th and 119th have the greatest concentration of transient lodging in the city.

If approved by voters, density could increase from 50 to 75 units per acre in resort facilities high zoning and up to 60 units per acre in commercial general zones from the current 22 units.

The changes would also mean a possible increase in height from five stories to seven.

State and local agencies reviewed the proposed changes and found the suggested increases in density would not present significant problems related to water and air pollution, evacuation, sanitation, sewer and traffic.

"It's the voters decision," said Mayor Robert Minning, who plans to vote for the issue in November. "We are doing it because we are a 50-plus-year-old city in need of upgrades. With the (Federal Emergency Management Agency) restrictions we have now, if the hotels or condos needed to rebuild, they could not be built to current densities."

But some residents don't want the city to open the door to possible density and height increases.

"This plan is illegal because it doesn't comply with state statutes," said Shelley Eckert, a Key Capri condo owner. "The way they are setting this up, a person could go in and ask for a planned development district in places like Sunset Beach or Paradise Island."

Ella Solomons, a Sunset Beach resident, told commissioners that the assertion that increased density won't make for more traffic congestion "is ludicrous. One doesn't need a study to see the congestion that already exists during tourist season and is starting to become a problem year round."

She said the zoning changes, if approved, "would make Treasure Island look like every other overdeveloped town in Florida."

Former planning and zoning board member Heidi Horak said any increases in density "conflicts with the statewide policy of strategic retreat from our coastal barrier islands."

Some of the "loudest voices of protest" seem to be from residents of Key Capri Condominiums near Johns Pass, Minning said.

"That is a seven-story building, so I don't understand why they can have seven stories and the rest of the city can't," he said.

Eckert said Key Capri was built in the 1970s when the island's population was much less than today.

Minning said he would support the voters' decision.

"Whatever the vote, I will be happy to endorse it," he said.

Technical, Financial Assistance For Property Owners Among Flood Mitigation Options In Centralia

By Justyna Tomtas

Centralia (WA) Chronicle, July 15, 2016

The Centralia City Council on Tuesday night received an update on a flood mitigation program currently under development by the city.

Community Development Director Emil Pierson said the council is working with Kahle Jennings, public works director, and the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority to come up with ways to help reduce flooding in the area.

"Sometimes we forget in the middle of summer what can happen at any time of the year," Pierson said. "One thing the council is charged with is using the toolbox in front of us and finding ways to mitigate the flooding that occurs in our community."

French Wetmore, of French and Associates, has been working with the Flood Authority and other agencies to come up with a variety of solutions.

He said historically Centralia's weak spot is helping individuals protect their properties in existing floodplains.

The program aims to help in that effort with six proposed approaches.

Wetmore said the city could get rid of buildings in harm's way, although that solution is not appropriate everywhere. Other perhaps more viable solutions include elevating buildings above the floodplain and creating flood walls or barriers.

Other options include dry floodproofing homes by converting the walls of structures into waterproof barriers, and wet floodproofing the inside of homes by placing valuables above the height of potential floodwaters. The least expensive option protects utilities by placing electrical components higher in a structure.

"That's the range of options for any particular property," Wetmore said. "Which one works on which building depends on the flood hazards being faced, but the area around here is very conducive to these measures."

He explained the program is currently in its draft form. The next steps would be to propose a program to be run by the city that would provide technical and financial assistance to property owners.

"The goal is to try to find funding opportunities so we don't have to wait till right when a flood occurs when we go to FEMA," Pierson said. "It doesn't matter what time of year, there would be funding available to protect homes and residences in a cost-effective manner."

French and Associates is funded through the Flood Authority, and since the money for this biennium is already spoken for, any financing would have to come out of the 2017-19 biennium.

Wetmore said he expects to have a draft program vetted by the Department of Ecology and ready to present as an option for the city to pursue at the next council meeting on July 26.

Highland Village Council Approves First Read For Age-restricted Development

By Laurie Mullens

Flower Mound (TX) Leader Star, July 14, 2016

Tuesday, the Highland Village City Council conducted a public hearing and approved the first read of an ordinance amending the zoning of a 26-acre tract of land on the east side of Chinn Chapel to allow for an age restricted (55-and-older) planned development.

The planned development would allow for a detached residential condominium development consisting of approximately 100 homes.

The applicant, G&A Consultants, on behalf of the Integrity Group, is proposing a maintenance-free, gated community integrated with quality amenities to enhance the quality of life for active adults seeking a maintenance free lifestyle.

Also at the meeting, the council approved a resolution awarding the bid for the Canyon Creek Drive drainage improvement project to SJ&J Construction, LLC in the amount of $260,572. Previously, the council approved the engineering design of the project in May 2015. Due to erosion around the culverts in the creek under Canyon Creek, the culverts are exhibiting failure causing damage to the pavement on Canyon Creek.

The project will consist of removing the existing 72-inch corrugated metal pipe, constructing approximately 60 linear feet of reinforced concrete boxes, the removal and replacement of approximately 45 linear feet of 6-inch water line, as well as 85 linear feet of asphalt.

Funding for this project comes from the 2016 tax note as well as FEMA reimbursements.

The council also approved a resolution supporting the Lewisville Independent School District in seeking fair and appropriate methods for educating local students. LISD has uncovered grading errors in a significant sample of the state standardized tests that were administered to local students during the 2015-16 academic year. At its own expense, tests were regarded.

Officials said the council supports LISD in their efforts to promote fairness and consistency in the state testing system, as well as in their efforts to seek restitution for the expenses incurred attempting to correct grading errors made on the state standardized tests.

During the mayor's comments, Mayor Charlotte Wilcox presented the winners of the Highland Village Balloon Festival Poster Contest.

Following the mayor's comments, Police Chief Doug Reim spoke about the recent tragedy in Dallas where four Dallas Police Officers and one DART Police Officer was killed in the line of duty.

The city is looking for ways to help the families and friends as they cope with the loss of their spouse, parent, child or sibling.

The city, Highland Village Business Association and the Highland Village Police Department are showing their support for the Texas Police Chiefs Association's Fallen Officer Fund.

The Fallen Officer Fund provides monetary assistance to Texas families of fallen heroes within 24 hours following an officer's line-of-duty death. Currently, the TXFallenPD shirt with the names of each Texas Police Officer killed in the line of duty since 2008 is available for purchase at bonfirefunds.com/txfallenpd. All proceeds go directly to the Fallen Officer Fund.

The HVTV Update informed residents that July is Parks and Recreation month. The Parks and Recreation Department has many athletic leagues and community education classes, check out www.hvparks.com to sign up.

The update also encouraged residents to “Be a Hero” and volunteer to be on a board or commission. Deadline to apply is July 29.

City officials encourage residents to fill out a vacation watch request with the police department. They also reminded residents to leave their pets at home and not in a hot car.

The council early work session and regular session is available on HVTV (Time Warner 16; Frontier 43) and via the website streaming by clicking HVTV. The meetings are also available for on-demand viewing on highlandvillage.org.

Kiawah Council Hears About High-tech Trash, Alligators

By Gregg Bragg

Kiawah (SC) Island Connection, July 14, 2016

Lengthy debates marked the July 5, 2016 meeting of The Town of Kiawah Island Town Council. Roll call confirmed all council members were in attendance for those who forgot their glasses, and remaining routines were quickly dispatched. Council shaved a full hour off last month’s three hour and 40 minute meeting with the help of a relatively thin agenda.

Citizens’ Comments

Wendy Kulick opened the first round of “agenda related” citizens’ comments by suggesting the town wait to act on hiring a new attorney until after this year’s election. Council should instead seek permission to use Young, Clement, and Rivers in the interim, she added. Such a move would enable the town to avoid “tying the hands of future councils,” an oft stated goal. However in this instance, council seems inclined to fill the vacancy during the current term.

Kiawah resident Dennis McGill asked if terms on the Board of Zoning Appeals were staggered, and if the current opening was restricted to the remaining term (end of this year]. He was informed, yes they were, and yes it was.

New Business

There was no old business, so council began a discussion on the amount of coverage the town receives from the Charleston County Sheriff’s office. The motion was made to extend the existing arrangement until Aug. 2, allowing time for a review. The town currently engages four deputies at a time, divided between the island itself and Freshfields 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The contract has a budget of $622,131. Changes in the amount of coverage and method of payment were being floated but hadn’t been resolved by the time the “current” contract expired at the end of June.

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With the direction from the Public Safety Committee, staff is reviewing the current contract with the CharlestonCounty Sheriff’s Office and other community stakeholders to evaluate the town’s law enforcement needs. We anticipate completing this evaluation and bringing forth the Charleston County Sheriff’s Office Contract at the July Ways and Means Committee meeting,” said the town administrator in a memo to the mayor and council members. The temporary extension was approved unanimously, although there wasn’t as much discussion on this topic as some others.

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As a means controlling and monitoring the amount of calls the town receives, Carolina Waste (trash and recycling) has proposed installing a RFID (radio-frequency identification system) that would log service real time through a barcode system when the containers are brought to and emptied at the truck.

The contractor as well as the town would have live-time access to this information through a web-based system, “said Rusty Lameo in a memo to the mayor and members of council.

This could help resolve a variety of issues, for example, mixups with cans being placed at the wrong house. “This system will also give us the ability to locate missing containers through its GIS system and send photos of problem areas such as: blocked streets, cans locked in garages and yard debris placed out improperly.”

He pitched the time savings staff could enjoy without the burden of monitoring and following up on collections. Carolina Waste Systems would also save time and effort by eliminating return trips to the island, and would front the estimated $60,000 for the system. However, CWS is asking for an additional $4.50/household [minimum] increase in the rate the town pays, and an extension of their contract until 2020 to recoup the investment.

Questions followed Lameos’s presentation for some time but resulted in unanimous approval of the agreement.

Debris removal, however, is a separate issue from trash and recycling. The contract with Phillips and Jordan for debris removal expired on June 1, 2016.

TOKI requested bids from five different companies but All South Consulting Engineers was the only firm to respond with a completed form. Given the lack of options and considering the Federal Emergency

Management Agency requires a mechanism in place for the removal of storm debris, debate was relatively short.

All South Consulting Engineers received unanimous support for services the town will only have to pay for in the event of a natural disaster. The quick pace of discussions on this topic would not extend to the next agenda item, however.

Board of Zoning Appeals member Jack Braden resigned his seat in late May. The town solicited candidates and ended up with a list consisting of Kiawah residents Wendy Kulick and Barbara Howell. Preparations for the council meeting included a memo from the town administrator to council which read, "I announced at the June Town Council meeting that due to Mr. Braden's resignation that we have one opening on the BZA. In addition, we sent out an e-blast to the community with same information that we have one opening. The Chair (Randy Gilmore) and members of the BZA reviewed the bios of both candidates, and after careful consideration recommend Mrs. Barbara Howell as the next appointee to the Board of Zoning Appeals."

The majority of council members said they didn't know Howell, despite her stint on the Public Service Commission.

Everyone on council knew Kulick though, if for no other reason than her seven years previous experience on the BZA, and they began questioning the recommendation.

Council member Wilson pushed back hard saying he had spoken with Gilmore and was certain Howell was the consensus candidate. Resumes of both candidates were detailed at length by each council member, and while they unanimously felt both candidates qualified, they unanimously voted to appoint Kulick to the position.

The subject of new employees was on the agenda after being tabled for 90 days {along with the purchase of an additional truck} in the course of last month's budget process.

Two council members (Weaver and Wilson) said including two positions in the budget represented an obligation to hire. They didn't feel there was a case for the positions, but neither wanted to delay the budget process. It didn't take 90 days for the town administrator to re-tool her pitch.

The great debate from last month resumed with renewed vigor and went on for some time. Each council member and several staff members had plenty to say about each position. Both positions were approved despite it all, with Wilson voting no on the communications position, and Weaver voting against the new permitting clerk.

The final item of new business on the agenda was a "Request to Proceed with Search for New Town Attorney." This wasn't a matter of making a motion so much as setting a policy direction. The town has formed an ad hoc committee which includes members of council, some residents and Charleston area attorney Dwayne Green. Three options fell out of the committee's discussions: hire someone, contract with someone or, retain a firm on an as needed basis.

The three options were discussed with every council member offering pros and cons. Green had advised the committee a rate of $160 per hour and 10 hours a week (about $80,000 per year), would both garner interest and produce viable candidates. The amount the town's current attorney is paid annually has been a confused issue for some time now. The town expects to begin immediately and make a decision before the end of the current term.

Reports

The town administrator has been busy working toward a new website and updating the town's "alligator protocol."

It seems the recent incident at Disney in Orlando, where a 2-year-old was taken by an alligator, has prompted a lot of calls about aggressive animals on Kiawah.

The mayor talked about legal action against the town's former treasurer and administrator but had little to report.

The town's attorney contacted both U.S. senators and U.S. Congressman Mark Sanford only to be informed there was nothing they could do. The attorney then defended the response saying there was a constitutional prohibition against representatives "appearing to interfere in legal matters." He continued by offering to contact others in law enforcement but no clear directive was given. There is still time for a civil suit, he concluded.

The mayor continued his report saying he and Wilson had been working aggressively to get the Cross Island Parkway on the county's list of priority projects. He even went to the trouble of paying consultant Mike Touhill $600 to produce a presentation to deliver during last month's meeting at St. John's High School, sponsored by the county and city of Charleston. He remembered it wasn't "that kind of meeting" only after he arrived.

"

It has to be Johns Island groups that make it (CIP) happen, if at all," the mayor said. Meetings with other groups (e.g. Johns Island Community Association and Johns Island Task Force) have shown more promise. He said the Coastal Conservation League and Lowcountry Land Trust were on board with the project in exchange for $125 million in conservation considerations. Colin Cuskley of Johns Island Task Force, couched his position in slightly different terms in an email to The Island Connection.

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The Johns Island Task Force had been discussing the proposed upcoming Charleston County transportation sales tax referendum. The County has been soliciting groups and individuals for their priorities for potential road projects to be funded by the sales tax. The sales tax is also to include funding for the County Greenbelt program.

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The Task Force supports including $125 to $200 million in the sales tax for Greenbelt programs. (The wide range depends upon whether you are looking at the net funds available from bonding the sales tax or the gross amount of sales tax needed to pay off the bonds over years.)

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The Task Force supports four Johns Island road projects to be funded by the sales tax, in order of priority:

1. Flyover at intersection of Main Rd and Rt. 17
2. Widening of Main Rd. to four lanes, two each way, from Maybank to Rt. 17.
3. A more comprehensive solution to the Maybank corridor traffic problems beyond the current short term widening project from the Stono Bridge to River Rd.
4. Additional capacity from Betsy Kerrison and River Rd up to Maybank corridor, NOT to be widening of Bohicket or River.

This must include conservation and recreational components. In other words, yes, ‘Cross Island Parkway’

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Natalie [Olson] from CCL attends our meetings. She has not opposed these priorities. I would not take that as CCL’s endorsement. So there is some basis for Mayor Lipuma’s assumption. But I think it is a bit of a stretch.”

Natalie Olson, Esq., Land Use Program Director & Staff Attorney with CCL also responded to a request for follow up information from The Island Connection.

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We are advocating for $210 million for the greenbelt fund with that conservation component. However, we are supportive of a number of transportation projects in the region – especially the bus rapid transit on I26 and the Flyover at Main Rd and US17 (and widening Main Rd from US17 to Maybank). The other projects mentioned by the task force are also good considerations, and our position (especially [and] specifically on the “Cross Island”) is that first and foremost, a comprehensive study of Johns Island needs to be completed to determine what is the most efficient and effective use of funds for transportation and conservation. With this information, we will be able to justify and support the capacity improvements needed on Johns Island, but without that information, we cannot be supportive of a blanket statement or assumption on project design that hasn’t been fully studied [or] vetted with the community.”

Citizens’ Comments, round two

Kiawah resident Wendy Kulick took to the podium for the last installment of citizens’ comments. She hesitated for a moment and then thanked council for their strong show of support and for appointing her to the BZA.

Kiawah resident Dennis McGill reminded council about the details of an FOIA request filed with the town of Seabrook. The request revealed Kiawah spent more in any one of the last five years on their in-house attorney than the total Seabrook spent in five and a half years.

McGill added that this comparison of legal expenses did not include costs of TOKI’s arrangement with YCR, which handles the town’s human resource functions and any litigation. He suggested the town contact peers to see how they manage it.

Kiawah resident Marilyn Larach expressed her frustration with the additional taxes proposed by the City of Charleston for which “we get nothing in return.” She suggested the town council members take representatives from both the county and city on driving tours of Johns Island. She specified some of the worst choke points on and off of Johns Island (Maybank and River, Main and 17) and added the tours should be conducted during rush hour as a way to demonstrate the need for funds.

Herbert Hoover Students To Begin School Year Splitting Time In Elkview Middle Building

By Jeff Jenkins

West Virginia MetroNews, July 14, 2016

ELKVIEW, W.Va. — Herbert Hoover High School students will begin the new school year on a half-day schedule in the building that houses Elkview Middle School.

The state Board of Education approved the plan presented by Kanawha County School Superintendent Dr. Ron Duerring at its meeting Thursday morning.

The Hoover building at Falling Rock was hit hard in the June 23 flood. The Elk River exceeded its banks and flooded the school's first floor including two gymnasiums, a band room, administrative offices and other rooms. FEMA must still complete an assessment of the building.

When the school year begins Aug. 8 Hoover students will attend Elkview Middle School from noon to 4:30 each day. The Elkview Middle students will be in the building from 7:30 a.m. until noon, Duerring said.

Portable buildings will be constructed on the football field at Elkview Middle to house Herbert Hoover students.

"This is only going to be a temporary situation until we get a portable high school set up," Duerring said.

When those are completed Hoover students will return to a full school schedule. It's unclear when the Herbert Hoover building will be ready for students to return.

"At this time we do not have that kind of information. We are still in the emergency cleanup phase," Deurring said.

A meeting between Kanawha County school officials and the company with the modular buildings have a meeting scheduled for later Thursday, Duerring said.

The split schedule will involve feeding Elkview Middle students lunch before they leave and feeding Herbert Hoover students lunch when they arrive. Herbert Hoover students will practice sports in the mornings and Elkview Middle students in the afternoons.

Bus schedules are being worked out, taking into consideration a number of roads were damaged by the flood.

Duerring said he's not overly concerned about logistics.

"It's an issue of mobilizing everybody and getting the plan together and being proactive instead of reactive when the time comes," he said.

County Signs On For Island View Project

By Richard Johnson

International Falls (MN) Daily Journal, July 13, 2016

The Koochiching County Board this week approved a project partnership agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for design and construction assistance for the $17 million Island View sewer project.

The project, near Voyageurs National Park and Rainy Lake, will extend service to about 162 residences and some resorts along Highway 11 East, from Tilson Creek to Sha Sha Point.

The county will receive $4.5 million from the Army Corps. County Environmental Services Director Dale Olson has said the project has just more than $13 million in state and federal funding, and the rest will come from assessments to property owners.

Olson said he hopes bids can be let this fall and construction can start in 2017. The project will take one-and-a-half to two construction seasons.

"We just have to kind of wait and see how the bids come in, and see how close we are," he told The Journal. "It's one of the biggest projects in the five-state area. When we asked how close bids were coming in, they said there are no projects this big to compare them to."

Olson said he will present information at next Tuesday's board meeting that will establish the property cost assessment policy and schedule a public hearing to take input on creation of the sewer system.

Commissioner Wade Pavleck said he hopes cost estimates can be available for homeowners at the hearing.

He said the county still has funding tied up in the state Legislature, as this year's legislative session ended without an approved bonding bill.

"I'm hoping that the Legislature will hold a special session and wrap things up," Pavleck said. "But if they don't, we're probably looking into next year to get the final money. In essence, we're moving forward without all of the funding that we would be able to get. But we're in pretty good shape. A lot depends on the bids, and how they come in."

Olson said the county can seek reimbursement from the grant for design work done to date.

The Island View work is part of a larger project, known as the Voyageurs National Park Clean Water Project, that would bring sewer solutions to communities that surround the park (see www.sehinc/online/namakan for more information).

In other business, the board authorized a budget adjustment of $14,000 to nominate the 1904 Williams Township school building for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, and approved spending $8,000 to hire a consultant to evaluate the building.

Commissioners set aside restoration funding in 2009, but delayed spending it until an assessment of the building's historic significance could be determined for placement on the National Register.

The building is on county land in the northwest corner of the county. It is the only remaining one-room school building of its kind in the county.

Its foundation needs repair in order for the building to be used as a community center and historic visiting site, said Ed Oerichbauer, director of the Koochiching Museums.

He said the building would probably be used more if it was renovated. Any work would probably be done in 2018.

"I certainly believe it's worth preserving," Oerichbauer said.

Many people in the township area believe the school building should be preserved, Commissioner Wayne Skoe said.

"My sentiment is, this is the only way to do this," he said.

Commissioners reviewed Federal Emergency Management Agency road projects in which FEMA awarded funding for repairs and mitigation due to flooding in 2014.

The board accepted a low bid of just more than $49,000 from Reierson Construction, Bemidji, for a repair project on County Road 146 at Littlefork, and a low bid of of just more than $64,000 from Redstone Construction, Mora, for work on a bridge on County State Aid Highway 22 at Beaver Brook, on the north end of Littlefork.

A contract was awarded to Gladen Construction, Laporte, for a low bid of just more than $467,000 for bridge and culvert replacement projects on Unorganized Township Road 17, between County Road 27 and Highway 6, east of Northome.

Also Tuesday, commissioners in committee began drafting a plan to study implementation of buffer zones.

The Department of Natural Resources this week released a map of Minnesota public waters and ditches requiring permanent vegetative buffers or alternative water quality practices, as part of its commitment to protecting clean water.

The map shows landowners and local governments where protective vegetative buffers of 16.5 feet or an average of 50 feet are required, as approved by the state Legislature in 2015 and revised this year. More than 90,000 miles of Minnesota waters require buffers or alternative water quality practices, according to the DNR.

Minnesota's buffer law establishes new perennial vegetation buffers along rivers, streams, lakes, public ditches and some wetlands. Buffers protect water resources by helping filter phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment.

The county board will discuss buffer requirements, the role of the county and the Koochiching Soil and Water District, and related information during its Aug. 9 meeting.

EPA Responds To Certification Story

By Frank Lewis

Portsmouth (OH) Daily Times, July 14, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has responded to a recent story in the Daily Times concerning the certification of the floodwall levee in the city of Portsmouth. The story related that there was no concern on the part of Wastewater Director Rick Duncan that the certification will take place. FEMA does not give any reason to believe it will be otherwise.

"Regarding the status of the levee accreditation process: our team has been working closely with the City of Portsmouth and the Village of New Boston regarding their levee accreditation packages within Scioto County, Ohio," Cassie Ringsdorf of FEMA Region-5 in Chicago, said in an email. "These levee accreditation packages were just recently submitted for FEMA review at the end of June 2016. We are currently reviewing them for completeness and will continue working with these communities to move the accreditation process forward."

The story expressed concern by insurance agent Dan Cassidy of Berndt-Murfin Insurance agency, that if decertification took place, FEMA might tell the city they would not issue flood insurance to people in the city.

"Regarding the availability of flood insurance in these areas: when levees meet Federal standards for protection, flood maps show them as accredited levees and show the land facing the levee as a moderate-risk area (Zone X) on the map," Ringsdorf said. "Flood insurance is not federally required by lenders, but it is strongly recommended and available for purchase by residents and business owners if that community participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)."

Ringsdorf said, in situations when levees do not meet Federal standards, they are considered non-accredited, and flood maps show the levee-affected area as a high-risk area. She said the scenario does not mean federal flood insurance is no longer available.

"In these high-risk areas, most mortgage holders will be required to carry flood insurance by their lender. Residents and business owners can learn more about the NFIP and living behind levees by visiting www.FloodSmart.gov, and if they need to find an insurance agent in their area, estimate their insurance premiums or rate their flood risk, they can do so on this site," Ringsdorf said.

She said it is important to note that neither certification nor accreditation guarantees protection. All flood hazard maps showing levees will carry a warning that overtopping or failure is possible, and that flood insurance and adherence to evacuation procedures are strongly recommended.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

New Jersey Firefighter Dies Following Call

Fire Engineering, July 14, 2016

Chief Engineer Richard N. Zadorozny of the Eatontown (NJ) Engine, Truck and Hose Co. #1 died earlier this week following a fire department response, according to the U.S. Fire Administration.

Along with other firefighters from his fire department, Chief Engineer Zadorozny, 66, was dispatched for an odor of natural gas at a local apartment complex on July 10. Operating the first responding apparatus, Zadorozny and his crew arrived on scene to investigate the incident. The odor was eventually unfounded and the apparatus returned to quarters.

Chief Engineer Zadorozny returned to his home for the evening and, a few hours later, suffered a medical event (likely cardiac). EMS responded to Zadorozny's home, but were unable to revive him. Zadorozny was pronounced dead a short time later.

Illinois Firefighter Collapses During Training, Dies

Fire Engineering, July 14, 2016

A 52-year-old volunteer firefighter has died after collapsing during training in Illinois.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, on July 12, Captain Eric Kohlbauer of the Freeport Rural Fire Protection District was working with other members of his fire department on a pumper relay drill when he suddenly collapsed and fell face forward into a dump tank of water.

Fellow responders immediately placed Kohlbauer on the ground and rendered medical aid, including AED. Within minutes, Captain Kohlbauer was transported to the hospital where, despite all best efforts, he succumbed to his injury reported to have been an aortic rupture.

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

Houses Passes Four Critical Homeland Security Bills

By Amanda Vicinanzo

Homeland Security Today, July 15, 2016

The House of Representatives on Monday passed four homeland security bills to protect the United States against the wide array of ever-evolving threats facing the homeland today. The bills include measures to curb foreign fighter and terrorist travel to the United States, enhance airport security, and improve internal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) practices and procedures.

"We face an unprecedented pace of terror worldwide," said Rep. Mike McCaul (R-Texas), Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security. "To fully understand and defend against the growing threat, the United States must learn from our past actions, defend against current plots, and actively protect potential future vulnerabilities."

McCaul continued, "The bills passed by the House today do just that. These bills bolster security at airport entry points, preemptively defend against evildoers attempting to travel to our homeland, and improve DHS's internal operations to constantly find ways to improve safety and efficiency."

HR 4404, the Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel Exercise Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Martha McSally (R-AZ), requires DHS to conduct an exercise to evaluate the nation's preparedness against all phases of foreign fighter and terrorist planning and travel to the United States.

The last major government exercise on terrorist travel was conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2009 and focused primarily on terrorists attempting to infiltrate the United States rather than on Americans leaving the country to train overseas with terrorist groups as foreign fighters.

The bill is the result of the Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel, which investigated the threat pose by ISIS. The report includes 32 findings and 50 recommendations.

"In our findings, the Task Force found that the growing complexity and changing nature of the foreign fighter phenomenon may be creating unseen gaps in our defenses, yet it has been years since any large-scale stress test has been conducted," said Rep. McSally. "Carrying out such a test would be beneficial in understanding how partners at all levels of government, and abroad, are currently responding to these scenarios."

HR 4785, the DHS Stop Asset and Vehicle Excess Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA), seeks to improve management of DHS's vehicle fleet. The bill directs the Under Secretary for Management to, among other things, provide Departmental components with a standardized vehicle allocation methodology.

Rep. Perry introduced the bill in response to several DHS Office of the Inspector General (IG) reports, including a 2015 report revealing that the vehicle fleet of the Federal Protective Service (FPS) has not been managed effectively, potentially costing DHS $2.5 million in FY 2014.

As Homeland Security Today previous reported, FPS's fleet consists of 1,059 SUVS – 93 percent of its total fleet—even though the National Protection and Programs Directorate Fleet Manual states that midsize sedan is the preferred vehicle, and an SUV only an exception.

A law enforcement SUV costs on average $1200 more annually than a sedan. Consequently, if sedans had been used instead of SUVs, FPS could have saved more than $1.1 million annually, according to the report.

"To ensure it has the optimal fleet necessary to meet its mission, FPS needs to develop and use a sound methodology instead of making ad hoc, undocumented decisions," IG auditors concluded. "Without better oversight and accurate data, FPS cannot ensure it is effectively managing its fleet, and it is also missing opportunities to identify cost savings."

HR 5385, the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) Technical Correction Act of 2016, introduced by Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ) revises the requirements of the QHSR in an effort to improve the quality and timeliness of the review that DHS carries out.

This entails including more stakeholder engagement, conducting a regular risk assessment, and maintaining all documents regarding the Quadrennial Review.

In April 2016, GAO released its review of DHS's second QHSR, which was issued in 2014, and reported that, despite some progress in addressing weaknesses in the first review, there were several areas for improvement for future reviews.

The bill would make mostly technical changes to the current requirements for that quadrennial review implementing various GAO recommendations.

HR 5056, the Airport Perimeter and Access Control Security Act of 2015, introduced by Rep. William Keating (D-MA), requires the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to update airport security risk assessments, specifically along airport perimeters and points of access to secure areas.

As Homeland Security Today reported earlier this year, weaknesses in TSA's oversight of airport perimeter security and access controls may be putting the nation's civil aviation system at grave risk, according to a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report.

"The intense scrutiny placed at checkpoints in airports, but not on the perimeter, is the equivalent of locking your home's doors while leaving your windows wide open. The GAO found that in many instances, the windows are open at our airports," said Rep. Keating.

McSally Bill To Prevent Foreign Fighter Travel Passes House

By Alex Murtha

Homeland Preparedness News, July 14, 2016

The U.S. House of Representatives passed U.S. Rep. Martha McSally's (R-AZ) legislation on Monday to require a stress test of U.S. government protection and prevention programs against terrorist travel.

The bill, the Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel Exercise Act, is the result of a task force on combating terrorist and foreign fighter travel into U.S. security that investigated vulnerabilities and threats posed by ISIS. After a six month investigation, the task force released a report containing 32 key findings and more than 50 different recommendations to strengthen the nation's safety.

"In our findings, the task force found that the growing complexity and changing nature of the foreign fighter phenomenon may be creating unseen gaps in our defenses, yet it has been years since any large-scale stress test has been conducted," McSally said. "Carrying out such a test would be beneficial in understanding how partners at all levels of government, and abroad, are currently responding to these scenarios."

The U.S. government last conducted an exercise of this nature with its Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2009. The exercise focused primarily on terrorists attempting to infiltrate the United States through a variety of means.

McSally noted that the task force should also focus on homegrown terrorists leaving the country to train overseas with terrorist groups as foreign fighters.

Rogers: National Security Agency Becoming 'FEMA Of The Cyber World'

By Yasmin Tadjdeh

National Defense Magazine, July 14, 2016

Following major cybersecurity breaches nationwide, the National Security Agency is increasingly being called upon to advise both government offices and the private sector, said the head of the United States' spy agency.

"Over the course of the last decade or so, increasingly NSA in its information assurance mission is being called upon to provide defensive insight as to how you stop penetrations — and once a network is penetrated — how do you drive the opponent out and then how do you configure structures so they can't get back in," said Adm. Mike Rogers, commander of U.S. Cyber Command and director of the National Security Agency.

Rogers said he often jokes with colleagues that, "we find ourselves becoming the FEMA of the cyber world."

During the infamous Sony hack — in which the motion picture company suffered a major data breach in 2014, allegedly at the hands of North Korea — NSA was called in to help, he said July 14 during remarks at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

"If you had told me as a military leader, as the director of the NSA, that I was going to be involved in supporting a motion picture company in responding to how it was going to deal with a significant penetration I'll be honest and tell you 'Boy, I don't think that's going to come up during my time as the director.' I failed to anticipate that one miserably," he said.

The NSA also was part of a team that provided expertise following the Office of Personnel Management breach in 2015, Rogers said. During that incident, millions of government employee's personal data was compromised.

Within Cyber Command, officials are working to increase its capacity and capability, Rogers said. Working alongside the Defense Department, the command is generating a "cyber mission force."

"It's a force of dedicated, focused, trained and organized cyber professionals" designed to provide the department with high-end cyber warriors, he said.

There are about 6,200 individuals within the force currently, he said. That is about half of the total goal, he added. Full operational capability is slated for late September 2018. Initial operating capability is scheduled for Sept. 30.

"That's only three months away so I'm focused right now on making sure … that we meet that timeline," he said. "I'm comfortable that we're going to meet those milestones."

Of the 6,200 individual currently in the cyber mission force, they are divided into 133 specialized teams. Some are defensive and some are offensive, he said.

Demand for these types of cyber warriors is high and exceeds capacity, he noted. "We're not even waiting until a team is fully constructed," he said. "As soon as we get a cadre we are putting teams on targets."

"Think about what that means," he said. "In DoD we don't take a fighter squadron and say, 'Well, you've got five of your 24 aircraft. We're sending you to Afghanistan.' We don't say, 'Hey, we've got a brand new carrier coming out of the yards. You've done your builders acceptance trials, but you haven't done your workups. We are forward deploying you to the Persian Gulf.' The reality is because of the dynamics of cyber, we need to apply capacity as soon as we're generating it."

Meanwhile, Rogers said that U.S. Cyber Command is working alongside the rest of the military to help destroy the Islamic State. "We are doing offensive actions right now against ISIL in cyber in the fight in Syria and Iraq," he said.

He declined to go into any further details.

FIRE GRANTS

Trumansburg And Ovid Fire Departments Receive Federal Grants

By Tom Reed

Lansing (NY) Star, July 15, 2016

Congressman Tom Reed announces the Trumansburg and Ovid Fire Departments will be awarded a regional federal grant through the Department of Homeland Security in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"As a community, we care about demonstrating our appreciation by recognizing the men and women who are committed to keeping us safe," said Reed. "These individuals devote hours of hard work to protect us and it is only right we give them the resources they need to do their jobs."

The Trumansburg and Ovid Fire Departments will receive a $224,400 regional grant which will be used to purchase new self contained breathing apparatuses and replace old units. This will allow the department to update their units to ones that are up to current NFPA standards.

"As the Fire Chief of the Trumansburg Fire Department I would like to say thank you to Tom Reed and his staff for their efforts and to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Committee for awarding us our Regional grant with the Ovid Fire Department," said Trumansburg Fire Chief Jason Fulton. "These funds of $224,400.00 will give us the opportunity to purchase new self contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) for both departments to replace old, broken, and out dated units that are not up to the current NFPA standards. The new SCBA will allow us to meet the current NFPA standards and will serve both of our communities for years to come."

Sandwich Selectmen Consider Grant, Fire Station Renovations

By George Brennan

Cape Cod (MA) Times, July 14, 2016

SANDWICH – With a potential $1.2 million federal grant pending that would allow the fire department to hire eight additional firefighters for two years, the Board of Selectmen held off on deciding what to do about renovations to the East Sandwich Fire Station.

Voters in May supported renovating that building, but rejected a $750,000 Proposition 2½ override to fund the positions.

But a grant Fire Chief William Carrico applied for could provide the funds, at least temporarily.

The potential of the town getting the grant "looks good," Carrico told selectmen Thursday night, noting that he had been contacted by a key official with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which is awarding the so-called SAFER grant. "I could know as soon as (Friday)."

The grant isn't a complete solution because it only provides salary and related costs for two years. The town would still have to come up with $80,000 for equipment for the firefighters, as well as health care costs, Town Manager George "Bud" Dunham said.

But the grant would buy the town time to secure the funding, Selectman Patrick Ellis said, potentially spreading out some of the costs over three fiscal years by the time the firefighters are hired and trained.

Selectman Peter Beauchemin urged his fellow board members to move forward with the $1.2 million renovation of East Sandwich, regardless of the grant.

"We've got the money, let's do the fire station," he said.

But Selectman Frank Pannorfi was unconvinced it was a good idea without a plan to staff the building.

"Building a building for the sake of building a buiding makes absolutely no sense," Pannorfi said.

When Carrico floated the idea of rotating staff among the three stations – closing a fire station for a week at a time – Pannorfi liked that idea as a stop gap measure if the grant isn't funded.

"I don't think it's fair to people of East Sandwich to have half a plan," he said.

The board is expected to tackle the issue at its next meeting July 28.

Carrico said if the town receives the grant, it has 30 days to approve or reject it.

"If you decide to refuse the grant, I can never go back to the well again," he said.

Meanwhile, the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved a $1.2 million contract with architect Kaestle Boos to do the architectural drawings and engineering for a new police station, fire station and the renovations for East Sandwich.

If the board decides not to do the renovation, Dunham said there will be money returned to the town from the Kaestle Boos contract.

Amherst Seeks Grant To Add Firefighters

By Scott Merzbach

Amherst (MA) Bulletin, July 14, 2016

AMHERST — As fire tore through an apartment building on Belchertown Road last month, the first firefighter who responded to Alpine Commons was the only person on board the fire engine.

That firefighter from the Central Fire Station was unable to begin any work on combating the blaze.

"There's nothing we can do with one guy on one fire truck," said Fire Chief Walter "Tim" Nelson.

Even though eight firefighters were on duty June 4, four were already handling medical calls on two ambulances at the time the fire broke out, while three other firefighters arrived a short time later on a second fire engine from the North Fire Station, Nelson said.

Though Nelson acknowledges the lack of personnel to battle the fire did not change the outcome, noting that the fire had "a good head start," he said the apartment fire illustrates the challenges the department faces with a minimum staffing of seven firefighter paramedics on duty when the University of Massachusetts and two colleges are not in session, and a minimum staffing of eight career firefighters during the school year.

"Getting our staff up is a goal so that we can better serve the public," Nelson said.

To that end, Nelson said the department has applied for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, also known as SAFER. If selected, the two-year, $1.08 million grant would add eight professional personnel, six who would join the 42 firefighter paramedics currently "on line," as well as one firefighter whose focus would be on prevention and another who would be dedicated to training.

"That would brings us up to 48 on the line," Nelson said. "This is a labor intensive business, and one of the major resources we need right now are people."

The grant, which will be awarded in late summer or early fall, would cover the full pay and benefits of those hired for the two-year period, at which time the town would determine whether it could absorb these costs into the department's $4.5 million budget.Annual calls at 6,200

Amherst firefighters respond to about 6,200 calls a year, with call volume rising at about a 2 percent annual rate. Nelson said nearly 80 percent of the calls are for medical reasons at an average of 90 minutes each due to ambulance trips to out-of-town hospitals such as Cooley Dickinson in Northampton.

The ambulances also serve four surrounding towns — Hadley, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury, encompassing 125 square miles and 80,000 people, Nelson said.

A study 13 years ago revealed that minimum staffing should be 11 firefighters.

Nelson said runs have been climbing steadily for 15 to 20 years. With the exception the weekends when UMass provides the town money to have at least 13 firefighter paramedics on duty during peak times, roughly 20 hours on Friday and Saturday nights, "we're barely keeping our heads above water," he said.

But firefighters are getting tired and can't get to all the work that needs to be done. "Our people are showing signs of stress," Nelson said. "There's a lot more work being done by the same pool of folks."

Meantime, the town is about to learn what the department needs through a staffing study to be done by The Carlson Group of Andover.

"We think this company will do well in giving our staffing an objective look," Nelson said.

Besides making recommendations about minimum staffing, the study may determine whether the department should have someone who directs, manages, supervises and coordinates the activities and operations of each shift.

"Another thing we'd like to see down the road is a shift commander," Nelson said.

Peter Hechenbleikner, the interim town manager, said in an email that the staffing and deployment study, which will be complete in three to four months, will inform the town as to what, if any, need there is for additional staffing.

Martinez Activates State Emergency Operations Center, Federal Funding Approved To Assist In Response

KRWG-FM Las Cruces (NM), July 14, 2016

Santa Fe, NM — Today, Governor Susana Martinez directed the activation of the New Mexico Emergency Operations Center to assist in the coordinated response to the Timberon Fire in Otero County. The Governor also announced that federal funding to help cover costs associated with fighting the fire has been approved.

"First and foremost, our priority is protecting the people of Timberon and surrounding areas," said Governor Martinez. "I've directed our state agencies to work together to ensure that all resources are available to assist in fighting the fire. Sadly, the fire may have already destroyed more than a dozen homes, and many more are at risk. I ask New Mexicans to join me in praying for the residents of Timberon."

The state has been approved for a Fire Management Assistance Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to cover 75 percent of the cost of suppressing the fire. Eligible costs include pre-positioning of resources, evacuations and sheltering, traffic control, and fire equipment.

Additionally, the Governor has directed state agencies such as the New Mexico State Police, the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Department of Transportation, New Mexico State Forestry, and others to assist in the response to the fire.

Earlier today, the Governor joined the New Mexico National Guard for a flyover of the affected areas to survey the damage, and received a briefing from incident commanders and first responders on the fire. The Timberon Fire has burned an estimated 290 acres so far. State, local, and federal partners involved will continue to monitor and respond to the fire in a coordinated manner.

New Mexico State Forestry and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management urge all state residents and visitors to do their part in preventing and being prepared for wildfire. Should evacuations because of wildfire become necessary, remember the "Five Ps" you need to have ready to go: People, important Papers, Prescriptions, family Pictures and Pets.

For current information about the Timberon Fire, active wildland fire in New Mexico or information on wildfire preparedness and prevention, log onto www.nmfireinfo.com or www.inciweb.org.

Jailer David Moss Wants To Arm All 38 Of His Officers

By Janie Slaven

Somerset (KY) Commonwealth Journal, July 14, 2016

Pulaski County Judge-Executive Steve Kelley opened yesterday's fiscal court meeting with a moment of silence in remembrance of "all the tragedies this country has faced this week."

While one would like to think the turmoil won't spread to this community, the possibility that it might has weighed on many local officials' minds.

In his departmental report, Jailer David Moss advised the court that he wants to arm each of the jail's 38 sworn officers. Currently the jail has six weapons, which are used primarily during transports such as to hospitals or other prisons.

"With what's happened across the country, our officers have the same powers as every police officer in the state of Kentucky," Moss said. "Our officers are wearing uniforms; they're unarmed…We're just trying to make it safe for them. That's just another officer in the county that's going to be able to help someone out if we need to."

Magistrate Glenn Maxey asked if the deputy jailers would be safer if they changed into their uniforms after arriving at work.

"I can see where you're going with that," Moss responded, "but they're officers…We don't allow them to be off-duty wearing their uniforms [but] they're on duty, to us, coming to work and going home."

The jailer also announced that the Pulaski County Detention Center has averaged 377 inmates over the past month — prompting the jail to stop accepting inmates from other counties for the time being.

Moss went on to say that overcrowding is an issue statewide with the Department of Corrections preparing to open up two private facilities to house approximately 1,600 state inmates.

While there were no planned speakers during the Citizens Comments portion of the meeting, Judge Kelley opened the floor for questions from the latest Leadership Lake Cumberland class.

Court officials gave a brief overview of the duties for a judge-executive and magistrates as well as discussed the budgeting process.

Judge Kelley also spoke about the new economic development initiative known as SPEDA (Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority) as well as the current financial crisis for the Pulaski County Alzheimer's Respite Center.

"We are close to making that new organization," Judge Kelley said of SPEDA. "We've got a lot of people who care but we don't have one entity that's driving that…I think it's going to be a great tool moving forward for Pulaski County, Somerset and this region."

Regarding the Alzheimer's center, Judge Kelley said the county provides the building, utilities and maintenance in addition to a $7,500 annual stipend. While the county, he said, couldn't take over the center from the Lake Cumberland Area Development District, Kelley is hopeful the ADD can work with the center toward a resolution.

"Hopefully we'll be able to buy another 4-6 months to figure out how to go forward," Judge Kelley said. "We want it to stay open; it's a great program that's needed."

In other business, the court:

- heard from the Lake Cumberland District Health Department, whose board had approved property tax rates in the amount of three cents per $100 for both real and personal properties. The rates have not changed since 2011.
- approved a $2,500 Grand Slam sponsorship for the upcoming Ohio Valley Regional Tournament for 10-year-olds which will be hosted by the Lake Cumberland Cal Ripken League. Local coach Steve Acton estimated that the July 20 event (featuring 12 teams from six states) would bring up to 700 people into Somerset.
- approved a resolution to apply for a $419,000 Kentucky Department of Local Government/FEMA grant toward collecting LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data for Pulaski and portions of three other counties. Judge Kelley said the aerial pictography and topographical data would be helpful for flood control and other development projects.
- heard from Community Development Director Tiffany Bourne regarding a successful Master Musicians Festival this past weekend. Bourne estimated the festival has a $3 million impact on the local economy.
- authorized bidding for a utility tractor.

- approved a list of state-approved building and electric inspectors able to work on projects in Pulaski County.

The next meeting of Pulaski County Fiscal Court is scheduled for July 26 at 10 a.m.

Federal Grants Will Enable Rhode Island Cities To Hire 95 Firefighters

By Gregory Smith

Emergency Management Magazine, July 15, 2016

The City of Providence will receive a $15,011,440 federal grant to hire 80 firefighters and stanch the bleeding from a mass loss of Fire Department personnel over the past 18 months.

And the City of Cranston will receive a $2,765,310 federal grant to hire 15 firefighters, increasing the possibility that the Fire Department will hire its first female firefighter.

Rhode Island's congressional delegation, Providence Mayor Jorge O. Elorza and Cranston Mayor Allan W. Fung announced Wednesday that FEMA has made the grants under the SAFER program. SAFER means Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response.

Providence will receive the largest SAFER award being made this year nationally, according to U.S. Sen. Jack Reed.

Providence has seen more than 100 uniformed personnel retire over the past 18 months, because, Public Safety Commissioner Steven M. Paré said, the department had a work force that skewed older and beyond the age of retirement eligibility. A significant factor in the exodus, he acknowledged, was the controversial change in the department's work schedule.

A SAFER grant carries the full cost of firefighters with fringe benefits for two fiscal years, after which the municipality must pick up the cost.

Providence has allocated money for an 80-person training academy, scheduled to begin in January or February. Receiving the grant creates an operating budget surplus of about $7.5 million for the 2016-2017 fiscal year because the city will not have to spend its own money initially.

On paper, the department has an authorized uniformed force of 438, is budgeted for 422 and has an actual head count of 342. Filling the 80 vacancies will bring it back up to 422.

In the 2015 calendar year, the department had 41,783 calls for service, of which 29,739 were for emergency medical services.

Cranston Fire Chief William McKenna could not be reached for comment.

The Cranston department has no members of racial or ethnic minority groups in its 195-member uniformed force and never had a female. A female is ranked number 18 on a hiring eligibility list, so as more retirements occur, it appears likely that her spot will be reached for hiring before the list expires and is replaced with a fresh list of recruits.

If Cranston did not land a SAFER grant, it planned to hire and train seven firefighters at its own expense. Now it can bring on 15.

Cranston has an annual average of 15,000 calls for service, according to the announcement.

Since 2005, fire departments and other first responders in Rhode Island have won more than $30 million in SAFER grants.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Schoharie Man Sentenced For Defrauding FEMA

Oneonta (NY) Daily Star, July 14, 2016

A 31-year-old Schoharie man was sentenced to prison Thursday in Albany for defrauding the Federal Emergency Management Agency for benefits after Hurricane Irene, according to a media release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Scott A. Clapper, Jr. was sentenced to 18 months incarceration for making false statements and submitting false documents.

The announcement was made by United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian and Giovanni Tiano, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, Detroit Field Office.

Senior U.S. District Judge Thomas McAvoy also ordered Clapper to serve 3 years of supervised release, to begin upon Clapper's release from prison; to pay $16,426 in restitution to FEMA; and to pay a $1,300 special assessment to the court. Clapper will serve the 18-month prison sentence concurrently with state prison sentences he is serving for burglary convictions unrelated to his defrauding of FEMA. He becomes eligible for state parole in March 2019.

As part of his guilty plea in January, Clapper admitted to making false statements and submitting false documents to FEMA following Hurricane Irene, which struck New York in August 2011 and made uninhabitable the Schoharie County home in which Clapper was living at the time.

Clapper told FEMA that his monthly rent at his new home, in Westerlo, was $1,200, when it was really $500. In an effort to document the $1,200 monthly rent, Clapper also submitted to FEMA fake lease agreements and rent receipts containing the forged signature of his landlord. Clapper received $16,426 from FEMA as a result of the falsehoods, the release said.

This case was investigated by the Detroit Field Office of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael Barnett.

Man Sentenced To 18 Months For Defrauding FEMA Following Hurricane Irene

WTEN-TV Albany (NY), July 14, 2016

A judge sentenced 31-year-old Scott Clapper Jr. to 18 months in prison for defrauding FEMA.

Clapper's sentence will be served concurrently with another sentence he is currently serving.

He will also have to pay $16,426 in restitution to FEMA and pay a $1,300 special assessment to the court.

Clapper admitted to making false statements, submitting false documents, and lying about how much he paid in rent in order to receive more than $16,000 in benefits from FEMA following Hurricane Irene.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Clapper pleaded guilty in January.

He faces a maximum of 30 years in prison.

Man Sentenced For Post-Irene FEMA Fraud

Oneonta (NY) Daily Star, July 14, 2016

A Schoharie man has been sentenced to 18 months in prison for defrauding the federal government after Hurricane Irene, a media release said.

Scott A. Clapper Jr., 31, pleaded guilty in federal court in January to making false statements and submitting false documents to FEMA following Hurricane Irene, which struck New York in August 2011. Clapper received $16,426 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a result of the falsehoods, the release said.

In the sentencing, Senior U.S. District Judge Thomas J. McAvoy for the Northern District of New York also ordered Clapper to serve three years of supervised release, to begin upon Clapper's release from prison; to pay $16,426 in restitution to the FEMA; and to pay a $1,300 special assessment to the Court.

Clapper's sentence was announced Thursday by U.S. Attorney Richard S. Hartunian and Giovanni Tiano, special agent in charge of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, Detroit Field Office.

Clapper will serve the 18-month prison sentence concurrently with state prison sentences he is serving for burglary convictions unrelated to his defrauding of FEMA, according to the release, and Clapper becomes eligible for state parole in March 2019.

The FEMA case was investigated by the Detroit Field Office of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, and it was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael Barnett.

Schoharie Man Sentenced For Defrauding FEMA During Hurricane Irene

WNYT-TV Albany (NY), July 14, 2016

A Schoharie man is sentenced for defrauding FEMA after Hurricane Irene.

The U.S. Attorney's office says Scott Clapper Jr. submitted false documents after the storm made his home uninhabitable.

Clapper told FEMA his monthly rent was $1,200, when it was really $500.

He also submitted fake lease agreements and rent receipts in the amount of more than $16,000.

Clapper will serve 18 months in prison, concurrent with time he's serving for burglary convictions.

Schoharie Man Who Stole FEMA Money Heads To Prison

By JP Lawrence

Albany (NY) Times Union, July 14, 2016

ALBANY — A Schoharie man was sentenced 18 months in prison for lying to get more Tropical Storm Irene recovery money, federal prosecutors said.

Scott A. Clapper, 31, pleaded guilty to making false statements and submitting false documents to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Clapper admitted to telling FEMA he paid more money for rent on his home than he actually did.

The storm hit New York in August 2011 and destroyed Clapper's home. He told FEMA he paid $1,200 rent a month at his new home in Westerlo, when it was actually $500. Clapper sent FEMA fake lease agreements and rent receipts containing the forged signature of his landlord.

Clapper received $16,426 from FEMA, the U.S Attorney's Office said. Clapper will have to pay back the $16,426 he received and a $1,300 special court assessment.

He will serve the 18-month sentence concurrently with state prison sentences he is currently serving for burglary convictions, the U.S Attorney's Office said. The burglary convictions are unrelated to his defrauding of FEMA.

Elgin Approves Bin Rules, Senior Housing Zoning, Firefighter Contract

By Mike Danahey

Chicago Tribune, July 15, 2016

The Elgin City Council Wednesday evening moved along approving new rules for putting up collection boxes in town, gave approval to conditional use zoning for a senior apartment complex and signed off on a new contract with the firefighters union — all by unanimous vote.

The new rules would have it that such outdoor bins may "only be located in conjunction with uses to which such receptacles are customary and traditional: units of local government, churches and not-for-profit organizations."

Where permitted, and before placing the collection bin, the bin's owner would have to obtain a $75 annual license, which would be waived for units of local government and not-for-profit organizations.

The application would require the property owner's written permission to locate the bin. The bin must display the name and contact information of the associated organization and whether the organization is for-profit or not-for-profit, the meeting material states.

A bin would not be allowed in a vacant lot, within a right-of-way, or within the area between a building and the street. Bins would have to be placed upon a hard surface, but not within a parking space.

A license sticker would have to be attached to the bin, and the bins would be required to be serviced regularly, with no overflow of items allowed.

Maintenance failure would mean the bin license holder would be given 48 hours notice to address the issue. Failure to do so, would mean city staff would remove the bin and any contents and hold such for seven days.

Bins could be retrieved after the city receives payment of a $100 administrative penalty, plus $25 per day penalty charged for storage and other reasonable removal costs must also be paid. Citations in the amount of $50 to $750 per day per offense, could be issued to both the collection bin owner and the property owner.

Council member Rich Dunne said he noticed how bins were being dealt with when on the East Coast in 2012 in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy for his job with FEMA. Council member Terry Gavin said he and a resident spotted a bin near an east side grocery store almost a year ago. And Council member John Prigge paid compliment to Community Development Director Marc Mylott for staff being proactive addressing a spate in recent months where dozens of such bins have sprouted up across the city.

After the meeting, Mylott said one man had recently been written a citation for leaving such bins on private property and violating existing rules. However, the city still was unsure for whom the man was working, Mylott said.

The new rules are set for final approval at the Aug. 10 City Council meeting.

The unanimously approved request for conditional use zoning was granted to the developers of Fox River Crossing, a new, affordable apartment complex for those 55-and-older being planned for the northwest corner of Route 31 and Lawrence Avenue.

The Ohio-based Buckeye Community Hope Foundation project calls for a 94,583 square-foot, 4-story residential apartment building that would have indoor parking on the first floor and 60 residential units on the second through fourth floors. The indoor parking would have 60 spots, and there also would be outdoor parking for 12 vehicles.

Council members noted the need for more senior housing in Elgin and that the building will bring life to a corner not far from downtown that has been an empty lot for more than almost a quarter century.

Council member Carol Rauschenberger, though, asked the city and developer to see if anything can be done to help make it easier for pedestrians to get from where the building would be across busy Route 31. The Gail Borden Public Library and The Centre of Elgin are just across the Fox River from the site.

The vice president of the foundation's housing division, David Petroni, told the City Council funding for the project would come through a highly competitive program using federal money run through the Illinois Housing Development Authority.

As such, Petroni said that if all goes well work probably wouldn't start until 2018 — or late 2017 at the earliest on the project, which will house income-qualifying residents.

As for the fire contract, with no comments offered, the council unanimously approved the agreement.

The last contract with the International Association of Firefighters Local 439 expired in 2013, and the new one covers 2014 to 2017. Per recession-related concessions, the old contract had no annual salary increases. The one the council OK'd has 2.5 percent annual pay hikes built into it.

According to the contract document, effective Jan. 1, 2017, the base pay range for union firefighters would range from $67,181 for those starting to $132,338 for those at the highest level of base pay for captains. The union ratified the agreement last Friday.

Q And A: Laguna Niguel Fire Captain Scott Ashbach Talks About Hurricane Katrina, Saving Kids And Battling The San Gabriel Complex Fire

By Marie Ekberg Padilla

Orange County (CA) Register, July 13, 2016

Aliso Viejo resident Scott Ashbach, a Laguna Niguel fire captain from Station 39, is among the hundreds of firefighters who recently battled the more than 9,500-acre San Gabriel Complex fire in Angeles National Forest.

The fire included the Reservoir fire and the Fish fire, which is nearly contained. Ashbach, 48, a logistics manager, is part of the incident management team consisting of several agencies and hosted by the U.S. Forest Service fighting the fire.

"Although we all wear different uniforms, I truly feel that our varied background, experiences and diversity is one of our greatest assets," he said. "The experience we bring back to the home agency is invaluable. It's the kind of training and experience that will help keep us safe and make better decisions when the next large incident strikes the O.C."

Here's what Ashbach had to say.

Q. How has the experience been battling the San Gabriel Complex fire?

A. With the exception of the extreme heat at the beginning of the fire, this has been like battling a typical wildland fire. Air and ground resources worked very well together to suppress the main bulk of fire movement in the first couple of days. Once most of the smoke faded away … several days of mop-up put firefighters on the ground throughout the perimeter to assure there are no residual fires at the parameters edge to about 100 feet into the burned area. This process requires lots of manpower, and lots of manpower requires lots of support. That's where the logistics section comes in – my forte.

Q. What was your role during this fire?

A. Almost every large emergency incident has four major sections that come into play – operations, finance, planning and logistics. The section that I've been a part of for the last 15 years is the logistics section. I like to think of this section as the backbone of the incident. The section provides important aspects of the incident that include radio communications, food, intraincident medical response, supply, vehicle mechanics, a central ordering point, office trailers, electricity, fuel, telephones, copy services and the list goes on. On this fire, I'm feeding the troops.

Q. What other large fires have you worked during your career?

A. I've been to many large incidents, including the Station fire in the Angeles National Forest, the North Pass fire in the Mendocino and dozens of others from the Klamath, Six-Rivers, Inyo and Sequoia to the San Bernardino and Cleveland national forests. Our team has traveled a couple of times out of state as well, including responses to large fires in Nevada and just last year to Washington. As a member of California US&R Task Force 5, a FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Task Force, I was a part of the response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008.

Other interesting experiences during the first part of my career include the Los Angeles riots in 1992 and the Laguna fire in 1993. Of course, I can't forget some of the more local fires, like Santiago in 2007 and the Freeway fire in 2008.

Q. Why did you want to become a firefighter?

A. When a high school friend of mine showed up at my house wearing a fire department uniform, I started asking about it. I started as a paid-call firefighter in 1987. They were typically called to the station via pager, then jumped on "big red" and responded to the incident as needed. At $7 per call, it wasn't much of a career, but at the time it was a great way to jump-start a career while going to college, paramedic school and the fire academy. In 1996, I was hired as a full-time firefighter by the Laguna Beach Fire Department. One year later, I was picked up by the Orange County Fire Authority. I've been there ever since. It's the best job in the world.

Q. What is the biggest challenge working as a firefighter?

A. A lighthearted conversation was interrupted by a call to respond to a cardiac arrest victim. We've responded to many of these before. The challenge comes when you're faced with the unexpected. Just as soon as I stepped off the engine, I was handed a lifeless, 3-week-old child who had succumbed to meningitis.

Of course, I didn't know what had caused this child's condition, so instinctively I started CPR. By the end of the event, the child had passed and I had been exposed to meningitis, requiring treatment. Emergency calls involving children are always challenging to first responders. As your career advances and your own children begin to enter the picture, these types of events become more and more difficult to rationalize.

Q. What is the biggest reward working as a firefighter?

A. The rewards come with a big dose of perspective. Medals or monetary packages don't really mean much after a while, so I'd like to think that the rewarding part of this career is served up by an uncommon, experienced and firsthand appreciation for the life we've been empowered and honored to lead as a public servant. It's a perspective most folks don't have and it's one that provides a framework for the appreciation of relationships, talents and energy-expending efforts that make life meaningful.

FLOODS

FEMA Disaster Registration Assistance Still Available

By Jeff Schrock

WBOY-TV Clarksburg (WV), July 14, 2016

WEBSTER COUNTY – FEMA is still working in Webster County to help residents with disaster assistance.

They are going door to door asking residents if they've registered or not. FEMA members are equipped with IPads to help people register, rather than having them go to disaster recovery centers or call in.

"We want to make sure we have teams that go door to door as we're doing today, catching anybody that may slip through the cracks because that's something we don't want to happen," said Jerry Cooper, of FEMA.

People have 60 days from the day of the disaster to register.

You can apply by phone by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or online at www.disasterassistance.gov

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Hoover High Students To Temporarily Attend Elkview Middle

By Ryan Quinn

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, July 14, 2016

Kanawha County Schools Superintendent Ron Duerring said Thursday that Herbert Hoover High students will temporarily attend classes in the Elkview Middle building in the upcoming school year, until they can move into portable classrooms on Elkview's football field.

Duerring also told the Gazette-Mail on Thursday that he couldn't say if the existing Hoover building in Clendenin, which received about 7 feet of water in the late-June flooding, will ever reopen. He said damage assessments of Hoover's building are ongoing. It is about a mile and a half from Elkview Middle.

As of late last week, he said it was still his goal to open all four of the county's flood-damaged schools on time for the Aug. 8 start date that applies to almost all Kanawha public schools. That start date is West Virginia's earliest.

When asked what new information has put into question whether Hoover will reopen at all, he said, "Plans change, and that's all I can tell you."

He said he couldn't say how long the school sharing period will last.

"We hope it's for a very short period of time," Duerring said.

He said there are about 700 Elkview Middle students and 800 Hoover High students.

Duerring's statements came after the West Virginia Board of Education, in a voice vote with no nays heard, approved a waiver of its policy regarding instructional time, to allow Elkview students to attend their school in the morning and Hoover students to attend it in the afternoon.

Betty Jo Jordan, executive assistant to state schools Superintendent Michael Martirano, said the policy waiver was required, to allow the school system to drop below the state-required minimum daily instructional minutes: 315 for elementary schools, 330 for middle schools and 345 for high schools.

Lou Maynus, Kanawha's assistant superintendent over middle and alternative schools, said Hoover students will have 205 daily instructional minutes during the school-sharing period, while Elkview students will have 240. Duerring said students will get more instruction time than the minutes indicate through digitally delivered assignments.

Elkview students, whose bell schedule last school year was 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., are set to attend their school from 7:30 a.m. to noon each day, while Hoover students, whose bell schedule last school year also was 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., will attend from noon to 4:30 p.m.

Hoover students will have sports practice in the morning, while Elkview students will have it in the afternoon. When asked where practices and games will take place, with the football field hosting portables, Maynus said the plans are still being developed and should be finalized in the next few days.

Duerring said he didn't yet know what form of portable classrooms — which can range from single-classroom portables to large ones with inside hallways — Kanawha will receive or how much they will cost, but he said it's possible the Federal Emergency Management Agency will cover a significant amount of the cost.

He said putting them on Elkview's field will allow that school's cooking facilities to serve Hoover students.

During the school sharing, Elkview students will have when they arrive in the morning and lunch from 11:30 a.m. to noon. Hoover students, who won't get school breakfast, will have lunch from noon to 12:40 p.m.

Hoover will have 45-minute-long classes on an alternating schedule, with one set of classes one day and the other set the next day.

Maynus said that, during the temporary period, Elkview will go from two daily periods of "related arts" classes, like chorus, current events and health, to one daily related arts period that would alternate from one course to the other each day.

She also said there will be weekly, instead of daily, "developmental guidance" periods for most Elkview students. She said these periods, also called "Herd Time," provide time for things like career exploration and anti-bullying lessons.

Duerring said all students would return to full-day schedules when the Hoover students move into the portable classrooms.

Some of Hoover's senior band students said Thursday that they're glad to have a place for classes, although they're not looking forward to going back to middle school.

"I'm eager, but I'm not," Marie Good said during a break in marching band practice Thursday. "I'm just happy I have some place to go and take my courses. [But] I just left middle school."

Good said she and her classmates have to be understanding of the situation.

Wesley Monk said he is disappointed that he'll spend at least a portion of his last year of high school away from the school he attended.

"It's OK, for a short time," he said, "but I don't really want to spend an entire year going to Elkview."

DOT: Flooding Shouldn't Affect Road Projects

Morgantown (WV) Dominion Post, July 15, 2016

MORGANTOWN — West Virginia Department of Transportation (DOT) Spokesperson Carrie Jones said the DOT's efforts in flood-ravaged southern West Virginia will not result in less funding or fewer projects for the rest of the state.

Jones said the latest estimates put damages to transportation infrastructure at $52 million in the wake of historic flooding that claimed more than two dozen lives and damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and businesses.

While Jones didn't specify what percentage of the cost will be covered, she explained that the state "will be reimbursed by FEMA and the Federal Highway Administration for a majority of the costs."

Regarding manpower, Jones said DOH personnel from across the state were sent to the impacted areas to remove debris and slides from roads, stabilize embankments and clear ditches and culverts.

Aside from the personnel, Jones said projects planned for this summer in other parts of the state will not be impacted.

"As far as the impact to funding for projects, that shouldn't be affected," Jones said, adding that the temporary mobilization of DOH personnel shouldn't impact paving as the vast majority of paving projects are contracted out.

Flood Relief Continues As Residents Of Southern West Virginia Are Still In Need

By Victoria L. Cann

Clarksburg (WV) Exponent-Telegram, July 14, 2016

CLARKSBURG — A little over three weeks after the flooding occurred in southern West Virginia, disaster relief efforts are ongoing with various organizations helping those affected.

Ricky Eads, volunteer coordinator for Mountain Mission in Charleston, said it is still the first stage of disaster relief. They are no longer looking for clothing or cleaning supplies at the moment.

"We are trying to get supplies so people can start cleaning and repairing things right now. Hopefully, we will be starting a new phase of relief in the upcoming weeks," he said.

Mountain Mission is looking for donations of batteries, flashlights, rakes, work gloves and undergarments such as socks and underwear.

Eads said they have an abundance of clothes and cleaning supplies.

"We have received a lot of food donations. The only problem is that people no longer have a place to cook meals. So we are asking for can openers and grills, things people can make food with," Eads said.

Carissa Collins, executive director of the Northeast West Virginia chapter of the American Red Cross, said that even in the beginning while the Red Cross was providing emergency relief, they had trained case workers out providing support for survivors.

"Red Cross case workers have met one-on-one with those impacted to learn what kind of care might be needed in the coming days and weeks to help them maintain their independence," she said.

So far they have opened at least 1,200 cases to assist those affected. Something what takes only hours to cause destruction can take months and years for people to recover and rebuild, and she said the Red Cross will be there.

"On July 6 the emergency relief efforts were estimated to cost them $5-$6.5 million. We have raised approximately $940,000 in designated donations and pledges that will stay and go directly to the West Virginia flood relief efforts," said Krista Farley Raines, regional communications and marketing director for the American Red Cross.

She said the financial stipulations and estimates are bound to change as they continue to respond and identify people's needs and continue to enhance their efforts.

"The amount of costs estimated include providing food, shelter, blankets, cots, emotional support, and health services, case work efforts, relief supplies, and the people and things such as vehicles and technology that make it possible," Raines said.

The Red Cross has provided 190,000 meals and snacks as well as distributing over 7,700 cleanup kits. Raines said they have had 585 Red Cross workers from all over the nation respond for relief efforts.

"Disaster assistance grants have exceeded $28 million for the West Virginia storm survivors. That includes $24.2 million just in housing assistance," said John Homstad, FEMA media relations officer at the West Virginia field office.

He said their efforts are focused on housing and that their emphasis is making sure individuals have safe, secure, and sanitary places to stay.

"Our goal is to keep people in their homes if we can. For people who have had homes destroyed and need a place to stay, FEMA offers housing assistance. We try to always utilize already existing housing," he said.

Homstad said the housing assistance entails money for rentals and repairs to be done in homes. Greenbrier and Kanawha counties are declared for a particular housing mission, meaning they will be utilizing manufactured housing units.

"People can also fill out an application for a low interest disaster loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration. They're our federal partner and provide these loans to businesses of all sizes, homeowners, and renters," he said.

Anyone looking to volunteer can sign up at bit.ly/WVFloodVol with the American Red Cross. Information regarding what donations are needed can be found at wvvoad.communityos.org.

Morgantown Salvation Army Assists In Flood Relief

WAJR-AM Morgantown (WV), July 14, 2016

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — The Salvation Army of Morgantown has returned from flooded southern West Virginia but expects to be needed for weeks to come.

Lt. Allen Adkins served as incident commander for Salvation Army operations for two weeks shortly after the June 23 disaster.

He said when first arriving, volunteers have to focus on logistics.

"Drinks and snacks and supplies, cleaning kits and hygiene kits, we make sure those items are staged when we need them so we can have access to them."

The Salvation Army remains in the flooded regions rotating incident commanders every two weeks.

According to Adkins, the organization has provided disaster relief since early 1900's beginning in Galveston, Texas in 1900 when a hurricane ripped through the town killing up to 8,000 people.

In West Virginia, FEMA $29.4 million has already been approved in individual assistance along with $24.9 million in housing assistance.

"Everything you have is there one moment and then it's gone. Not only is yours gone, but also your neighbor's, your neighbor's neighbor. These communities, some of the devastation is pretty intense," Adkins assessed.

Adkins noted there are two stages of response in a disaster.

First, The Salvation Army addresses immediate needs in the disaster mode stage.

Next, volunteers are there for necessities and emotional support.

"We go in, we help not only to bring food, clothing and shelter and those sorts of things. We're also there to try to help to bring hope to people knowing there is a tomorrow. We just try to bring needed aid to them," Adkins said.

Adkins explained that canteen work continues in a number of counties.

He will share more on The Salvation Army flood relief efforts and needs on WAJR's Morgantown AM Friday at 9:20 a.m.

Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams Working Across State

Clay County (WV) Free Press, July 14, 2016

Twelve teams of disaster survivor assistance (DSA) specialists are now working in affected areas across West Virginia, helping survivors of the devastating floods, mudslides and landslides that began June 22.

The teams are made up of disaster specialists from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Using the latest mobile technology, DSA teams can register survivors with disaster assistance, update their records and make referrals to whole community partners. Team members tailor the information and services they provide to the individual survivor's needs.

Like all FEMA field personnel, team members carry official identification. Residents are encouraged to ask for official identification before providing personal information.

In addition to the registration opportunity offered by recovery teams, survivors can register for assistance by the following methods: Visit DisasterAssistance.gov or call 800-621-3362. TTY users can call 800-462-7585. Those who use 711 or Video Relay Services can call 800-621-3362 to register.

By registering with FEMA, survivors may qualify for federal disaster assistance such as: Grants to rent a temporary place to live; Grants for essential home repairs not covered by insurance.; Grants for disaster-related needs not covered by insurance — such as medical, dental, transportation, funeral expenses, moving and storage fees, personal property loss and child care.

Registering with FEMA is also the first step in qualifying for help from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Low-interest disaster loans from SBA are available to businesses of all sizes (including landlords), homeowners, renters, and private non-profit organizations to cover losses not fully compensated by insurance. Low-interest disaster loans help fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged real estate and personal property. Economic injury disaster loans are available to businesses and private non-profits to assist with working capital.

Business owners can find an electronic loan application on the U.S. Small Business Administration's secure website at disasterloan.sba.gov/ela. Questions can be directed to the SBA Disaster Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955/ (TTY) 800-877-8339 or by visiting sba.gov.

West Virginians seeking information about disaster-related services and unmet needs should call West Virginia 211, a statewide information and referral service. Contact 211 for help finding food, childcare, crisis counseling, and many other resources in your local community

The West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) has set up a hotline for flood survivors needing free cleanup services: 800-451-1954. Volunteers who wish to help with flood response and recovery may sign up at www.volunteerwv.org or www.wvvoad.org. To make a financial donation, visit https://wvvoad.communityos.org/cms/home

To find current shelter locations for displaced survivors who need a place to stay overnight, please call the American Red Cross at 800-RED-CROSS or download the FEMA App on a mobile device.

Herbert Hoover, Elkview Middle To Go Half Day Due To Damaged Schools

By Anna Baxter

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), July 14, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. – With the start of the school year less than a month away in Kanawha County, a plan is officially in place for where students of the badly damaged Herbert Hoover High School will go for classes.

The school will have a split schedule with middle school students at Elkview Middle School. The middle school will go from 7:30 a.m. to noon, and the high school will go from noon to 4:30 p.m. It's a schedule Kanawha County Superintendent Dr. Ron Duerring says took a lot of planning.

"On a split schedule we met with both principals, we developed a schedule," Duerring tells WSAZ. "We looked at transportation, we looked at food services, and we got all of that ready to go because we wanted to be proactive rather than reactive when the time had come. It just took planning but it worked out really well."

Duerring says getting students back into the classroom by the Aug. 8 start date, and giving them a since of normalcy back into their lives after going through so much, is really important.

"That's what we're trying our best to do here," Duerring said. "And that's why we devised a schedule so we could get our kids in on the first day of school and bring some normalcy to them, to help them, be able to feed them. If somehow they were looked over we can help them and provide services, like a clearing house. Our counselors I know will work with these students if something has been missed or they need help with an outside agency. So that we can help take care of our children after all this is their school, this is their school system and we need to take care of our children."

Duerring says breakfast and lunch will be available for the middle school students and lunch will be available to the high school students.

Tim Clifton is a teacher at Herbert Hoover and he says it's great to see a plan in place, and he's ready to get back to any classroom setting and see his students again.

"That first day we'll get a chance to talk, to talk it out," Clifton said. "The kids are gonna cry when they have a chance and the pressure's off, and when there's people caring, they often cry, and talk. And I think it'll be a good thing not a bad thing to get them started again."

The schools will operate under the split schedule until a modular campus is in place on the Elkview Middle School football field. Once everything is in place, the Hoover students will then use the modular campus and both schools will go back to a normal all day schedule. No time frame of when the modular campus will be ready has been determined.

The future of the current Herbert Hoover building is still up in the air, but Clifton says he's positive that they will return "home."

"It'll happen. It's not 'if' it's 'when.' I don't know when," he said.

Duerring says all subjects will still be covered during the shortened schedule. Last year more than 700 students each attended both Elkview Middle and Hoover High.

WSAZ reached out to FEMA to get a comment on their assessment of the damage to the school, however they said all updates will have to come from the school board.

ORIGINAL STORY 7/14/16 @ 10 a.m.

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) – Herbert Hoover High School will not open for the first day of school after floodwaters severely damaged the school.

Students at Hoover will start the school year with a shortened schedule and attend classes at Elkview Middle School.

The West Virginia State Board of Education unanimously voted Thursday to grant Kanawha County a waiver which will allow for a shortened school day for both Elkview Middle School and Herbert Hoover High School students due to the recent flooding, according to a spokesperson.

That way students at both schools can attend classes in the same building, but only go half days.

Students at Elkview Middle will attend class from 7:30 a.m. until 12 p.m. Herbert Hoover attend classes at Elkview Middle from 12 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. Students at Elkview Middle will still be served breakfast and lunch while operating under this temporary schedule. Hoover students will be served lunch at the beginning of their school day.

A spokesperson with the state board of education says the two schools will operate under this schedule until a modular campus is constructed for Hoover students. She also says the campus would be built at Elkview Middle School.

No date was released on when the modular campus would be operational. However, during the meeting Kanawha County Superintendent Dr. Ron Duerring told the board the modular campus will be constructed as quickly as possible, but did not provide an exact date for completion.

According to a news release, Hoover will still have seven periods, but they will be on a rotating schedule from day to day. However, students will attend 7th period every day. That's the period students have classes like choir and band. Classes will be 45 minutes.

The contingency plan at Elkview Middle School will focus on the four core subjects.

701 students attend Elkview Middle School. 770 attend Hoover.

During the June 23 flood, more than two dozen schools were damaged. Herbert Hoover suffered some of the worst damaged.

The first day of school is August 8.

You can read more about the plans for these two schools by clicking the link.

Chamber To Offer Grant Help To Flooded Small Businesses

By Shauna Johnson

West Virginia MetroNews, July 14, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — At least $100,000 in grant funding will initially be available through the

West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Foundation for qualifying small business owners trying to recover from the devastating June 23 flood.

Shauna Johnson/WVMetroNews.com

The Clendenin Dairy Queen, known for its hot dogs, was destroyed in flooding along the Elk River. This photo was taken on June 25, 2016.

"What we need to do is help get some of these small businesses back on their feet as soon as possible," said Steve Roberts, president of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

"Many small businesses really are the fabric of a community, particularly in a small town."

The Chamber, he said, is trying to fill a need with the grant program, funded with donations, since so many affected business owners did not have flood insurance and assistance options for flooded businesses from the federal government are largely limited to low-interest loans through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Individuals can qualify for grant assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, businesses cannot.

Helping businesses with flood recovery helps communities, in Roberts' view.

"Imagine if you're a small hardware store or you're a small lumber company, right now, people want to get to you to get the supplies and materials they need," he said. "The sooner we get them back on their feet, the sooner we get them open, the sooner those communities begin to recover."

As of Thursday, about $100,000 had been raised for the Chamber's grant effort and, Roberts said, that amount was growing each day. During a preliminary survey, about 50 applications for or interest in the direct mini-grants for small businesses had been identified.

The West Virginia Bankers Association is working with the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce on the effort.

More information on grant donations or applications is available by calling the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce at 304-342-1115 or by clicking here.

During an expected Special Session later this year, state lawmakers could be asked to approve additional grant funding from the state for small businesses in flood recovery.

Though the Chamber has not yet taken an official position on the possibility, "This is a case where just a little bit of money can help many of these businesses," Roberts said on Thursday's MetroNews "Talkline."

"A very small public investment would yield huge dividends in terms of quality of life, in terms of allowing people to be able to stay in their community because the goods and services that they depend on would then be available."

More Counties Eligible For Federal Flood Assistance

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, July 14, 2016

The U.S. Department of Labor has approved a $3.5 million grant to Workforce West Virginia to create temporary cleanup and recovery jobs in the wake of last month's floods.

The National Dislocated Worker Grant will be used to target in Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Kanawha, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster counties, according to a news release from the Department of Labor.

The money, according to the release, will provide for temporary employment on projects to help clean up, demolish, fix, renovate and rebuild public structures, facilities and land that were affected by the flood. The temporary workers may also work on the homes of people who qualify for the federal weatherization program, with priority given to elderly or disabled residents.

Also, several more counties have been approved for "public assistance" to help with recovery from last month's floods.

Braxton, Gilmer, Lewis, Randolph, Upshur and Wayne counties have been approved for the assistance, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. That money can go to public or nonprofit agencies to fix, rebuild or replace public facilities and infrastructure destroyed by a disaster.

In addition, Lincoln County — which was previously approved for assistance to pay for "emergency protective measures" as a result of the disaster — is now eligible for all forms of public assistance.

Counties previously approved for public assistance included Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Jackson, Kanawha, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster.

Volunteer organizations are making a final push to get support to families cleaning out their homes after the floods.

The AmeriCorps disaster response teams arrived in West Virginia this week.

They will help organize volunteers for the next 10 days.

Health officials have urged getting homes cleaned out as quickly as possible to help avoid the spread of black mold.

Herbert Hoover High School Location Closed To Start School Year

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), July 14, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, WV –

Kanawha County Board of Education approves a temporary schedule for flood damaged schools until all repairs can be made.

Elkview Middle School Students will be in class from 7:30 AM – 12 PM at Elkview Middle School and Herbert Hoover High School students will attend classes at Elkview Middle School from 12 PM – 4:30 PM. They will use this schedule until portables are placed at Herbert Hoover High School.

Kanawha County Superintendent Duerring says 45 portables will be placed on Herbert Hoover High School's football field. He doesn't think it will take a long time to get them.

Duerring says that, at this time, he has no idea how long it will be before Hoover is back open.

Fundraising Ongoing For Shared-use Path

By Carrie McDermott

Wahpeton (ND) Daily News, July 14, 2016

Organizers of Breckenridge's planned shared-use walk/bike path along Highway 75 on the city's north side have reached 86 percent of their fundraising goals.

The entire project will cost approximately $750,000, with the local share of $103,000 still needed.

The city's Economic Development Director, Stan Thurlow, gave an update on fundraising efforts to the Breckenridge Port Authority Board Wednesday afternoon.

He explained The Minnesota Department of Transportation had $550,000 available for project grants and the city received $150,000 of that, or about one-third available for the entire state. A Transportation Alternatives Plan grant netted the city $468,000 toward the project, and locally, the city's Active Living Committee has helped raise $29,000.

To be able to use the grants received, the project has to be completed by June 2018, Thurlow said, which means a call for bids would need to go out this winter.

He said the city has also applied for a $75,000 Bremer grant to help with the local share.

The shared-use path would run along Highway 75/Fifth Street North from the old Dairy Queen north to CHI St. Francis Health.

Those interested in donating to the bike path fund are asked to contact City Hall at 218-643-1431.

In other news, the board's executive committee recommended approving a $49,000 Minnesota Investment Fund loan to Scott Tischer and his wife for building improvements at Tischer Therapeutic Services on Nebraska Avenue, the former River of Church building across the street from City Hall. After some discussion, the board agreed to approve the loan.

Resident Bernie Koch attended the meeting and requested a Port Authority sign, located on property he recently purchased from the board, be moved to allow for construction of a building. The sign is along Highway 75 South. Public Utilities will help move the posts and the board gave Koch permission to dismantle the sign so he can begin construction.

Two outlots in the Gewalt Addition, purchased as part of the flood levy project, were discussed. The lots are between the levy and Tangen Addition. They can be sold but there is a drainage easement that goes through the lot so no permanent structures can be built on them.

Adjacent landowners Dean Jirak and Darren Leinen have brought in fill to level the lots out, seeded grass and have been maintaining them, according to minutes from the June 22 meeting. Leinen put a movable shed on the lot next to his. The shed conforms with the 200 square-foot maximum size in the Tangen Addition covenants, although he did not receive prior authorization from the city to put up the shed.

The board had offered to sell the lots to the adjacent landowners for 25 cents per square foot with the understanding they must conform to the Tangen covenants. The property owners rejected the offer. The board approved requesting a counter offer from the landowners and invited them to the next meeting, scheduled for July 27.

Mayor Cliff Barth reminded the board that representatives from FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be at the July 18 city council meeting to discuss flood work around the city. The public is invited to attend. Representatives of the office of Minn. Rep. Collin Peterson are expected to attend, as well.

FEMA Approves $28 Million For Disaster Assistance

By Liz McCormick

WMKY-FM Morehead State University (KY), July 14, 2016

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin says it will be some time before the state has fully recovered after devastating floods in late June. He says he anticipates the damage to well-exceed $100 million.

Governor Tomblin held a press conference Wednesday to update the state on the status of recovery efforts in West Virginia.

Tomblin says 12 counties have been approved for FEMA assistance, and more than 7,000 residents have applied for individual assistance. FEMA has approved more than $28 million for individuals and households.

More than 3,300 visitors have stopped by at recovery centers. More than 400 disaster-related unemployment claims have been filed.

Roadways impacted by the flooding have reached about $55 million worth of damages.

"Obviously this, you know, as big as it is, it's going to take some," Tomblin said, "and you know, it will be expensive and ongoing for some time to handle all the cleanup of this event."

Tomblin says he's planning to schedule a special session sometime soon to see what the state Legislature can do to help in the relief efforts.

Walker Directs Agencies To Assist In Northern Wisconsin Flooding

WEAU-TV Eau Claire (WI), July 14, 2016

MADISON, Wis. – On Tuesday, Governor Scott Walker participated in a storm damage tour to assess the need for assistance in northern Wisconsin following heavy storms in the area, which led to his declaration of a State of Emergency. Governor Walker released the following statement today after his briefing on the situation:

Wisconsin Emergency Management briefed us today about the ongoing flooding situation in northern Wisconsin, and we continue to gather information from local emergency management staff regarding the severity of the damage so we can prepare a request for a federal disaster declaration. We are working diligently to ensure services and resources are made available to all citizens and communities impacted by this event.

The following state agencies have resources available to assist local communities:

- Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) continues to work with local, tribal, and county officials assessing the damage and coordinating state resources. WEM is also working closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal agencies to provide situational awareness and review all possible disaster resources.
- The Department of Administration (DOA) will work with communities to make Community Development Block Grant Emergency Assistance Program (CDBG-EAP) funds available. The funds may be used to assist eligible, low to moderate income homeowners for housing rehabilitation; business assistance; and/or repair local public infrastructure and community centers. Local communities should work with the Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources to apply. Please visit our web page or call (608) 266-7531.
- The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will connect affected farmers with crop damage and livestock shelter needs for assistance and counseling through its Farm Center and Animal Health Division. The connection can be made by dialing 800-942-2474. Major storms bring transient (temporary) home improvement workers and scams to Wisconsin communities. Contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection to find out if there are complaints on file against the contractor. The Consumer Protection Hotline can be reached at 800-422-7128 or via email: datcphotline@wisconsin.gov. Additional information is available at http://datcp.wi.gov.
- The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) is working directly with the American Red Cross on emergency housing for residents displaced by the flooding. Homeowners with a WHEDA mortgage that have been negatively impacted by the flooding should contact WHEDA at 800-562-5546.
- Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will monitor groundwater issues in regards to flooded wells, monitor and inspect dams in the affected area, and work with local communities to expedite the permitting process for necessary repairs.
- The Department of Transportation (WisDOT) staff are inspecting and documenting the impacts and damages to existing infrastructure and looking into what type of funding may be available for repairs. Road closures and detours are available at www.511wi.gov.
- The Public Service Commission (PSC) will continue to monitor utility infrastructure, local grid reliability, and fuel supply to the region.

The Department of Health Services (DHS) has been, and will continue to be, in contact with local health departments and is providing resources and assistance as requested. One of the resources available is the Wisconsin Flood Toolkit, designed to aide local leaders in offering clear and accurate information about keeping people and property safe before, during, and after a flood. You can find the Wisconsin Flood Toolkit here.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center At Palestine Mall

Jacksonville (TX) Daily Progress, July 14, 2016

PALESTINE – Starting July 12, FEMA will open a Disaster Recovery Center at the Palestine Mall, according to a release issued by City Communications and Best Practices Officer.

The center, located at 1920 S. Loop 256 inside the former pain management clinic, will help and check the status of applications for disaster relief and help applicants write letters of appeal from the April 30 flooding.

The Disaster Recovery Center will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

FEMA recently declared Anderson County, along with Cherokee, Smith, and Wood counties, to be part of a federally-declared disaster area and available for individual relief. The disaster area encompasses counties in Texas affected by heavy rains and major flooding from April 17 to April 30.

To apply for disaster assistance online, visit disasterassistance.gov, or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). Representatives from the Small Business Administration will also be on hand to help with federal disaster loans for businesses, nonprofits, homeowners, and renters.

Texans Have Two Weeks Left To Register For April Flood Disaster Aid

Tomball (TX) Potpourri, July 14, 2016

Texans who suffered damage or losses from the April storms and flooding have only two more weeks to register with FEMA for federal disaster assistance.

Residents of 16 counties who experienced damage or losses between April 17 and 30 have until July 29 to register for assistance after FEMA – at the request of the state – extended both the deadline to register as well as the period of time during which damage is eligible.

Residents of Anderson, Austin, Cherokee, Colorado, Fayette, Fort Bend, Grimes, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, Parker, San Jacinto, Smith, Waller, Wharton and Wood counties as well as those who work in those counties are encouraged to register with FEMA if they have not already done so.

Disaster assistance for homeowners and renters may include grants to help pay for temporary housing and essential home repairs, as well as other serious disaster-related needs such as medical and dental expenses.

Applying for disaster assistance is essentially a two-step process, which ensures consideration for all FEMA programs and the U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans. First, register with FEMA, then complete and return the no-obligation SBA loan application, if one is offered. There is no charge to apply for the loan and if approved, no obligation to accept it.

Disaster survivors may register the following ways:

Online at DisasterAssistance.gov.

By phone at 800-621-3362 (FEMA). Applicants who use 711 or Video Relay Service may also call 800-621-3362. Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. The toll-free numbers are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Multilingual operators are available.

At a disaster recovery center. To find the nearest one, go online to the disaster recovery center locator at asd.fema.gov/inter/locator.

FEMA grants do not have to be repaid. FEMA assistance is nontaxable and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits.

Survivors should register even if they have insurance. FEMA cannot duplicate insurance payments, but underinsured applicants may receive help after their claims have been settled.

A free multilingual guide to the types of assistance available can be found at fema.gov/help-after-disaster.

For more information on the Texas recovery, visit the disaster webpage for the April storms at fema.gov/disaster/4269; or visit the Texas Division of Emergency Management website at txdps.state.tx.us/dem.

$975,000 In Storm Aid Approved In County

By Arthur Hahn

Brenham (TX) Banner-Press, July 14, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved almost $1 million in storm recovery payments in Washington County.

FEMA officials said Wednesday that $975,271 for 217 applications has been paid out, an average of about $4,500 for each.

What Texans Are Asked When Applying For FEMA Assistance

Spring (TX) Observer, July 14, 2016

Residents of 24 Texas counties affected by storms and flooding that occurred in May and June are encouraged to register with FEMA for federal disaster assistance. Having the information they need ready when they call or go online to register will speed the process.

Applicants will be asked for the following information:

- Social Security number
- address of the damaged primary residence
- description of the damage
- information about insurance coverage
- a current contact telephone number
- an address where they can receive mail
- a bank account and routing numbers for direct deposit of funds

Eligible individuals and households of the 24 declared counties have until Aug. 10 to apply for assistance for damage that occurred between May 26 and June 24.

The affected counties are Austin, Bastrop, Brazoria, Brazos, Burleson, Eastland, Fayette, Fort Bend, Grimes, Harris, Hidalgo, Hood, Kleberg, Lee, Liberty, Montgomery, Palo Pinto, Parker, San Jacinto, Stephens, Travis, Tyler, Waller and Washington.

Applying for disaster assistance is essentially a two-step process, which ensures consideration for all FEMA programs and the U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans. First, register with FEMA, then complete and return the no-obligation SBA loan application, if one is offered. There is no charge to apply for the loan and if approved, no obligation to accept it.

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- at a disaster recovery center. To find the nearest one, go online to the disaster recovery center locator at asd.fema.gov/inter/locator.

FEMA grants do not have to be repaid. FEMA assistance is nontaxable and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits.

Survivors should register even if they have insurance. FEMA cannot duplicate insurance payments, but underinsured applicants may receive help after their claims have been settled.

A free multilingual guide to the types of assistance available can be found at fema.gov/help-after-disaster.

For more information on the Texas recovery, visit the disaster webpage for the May-June storms at fema.gov/disaster/4272; or visit the Texas Division of Emergency Management website at txdps.state.tx.us/dem. Follow FEMA on Twitter @femaregion6.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

31 Homes Among 60 Buildings Destroyed Or Damaged In Timberon Fire, Now At 290 Acres

By Blair Miller And Caleb James

KOB-TV Albuquerque (NM), July 14, 2016

Thirty-one homes are completely destroyed and among 60 total buildings damaged or lost after a fire burned through Timberon, a community southeast of Alamogordo, Wednesday and Thursday.

Gov. Susana Martinez announced 31 homes had burned at a Thursday afternoon press conference, where she also declared a state of emergency in order to free up federal funds to help in the emergency response. One firetruck for Timberon's volunteer fire department was also lost to the flames.

"I've directed our state agencies to work together to ensure that all resources are available to assist in fighting the fire. Sadly, the fire may have already destroyed more than a dozen homes, and many more are at risk. I ask New Mexicans to join me in praying for the residents of Timberon," Gov. Martinez said in an afternoon news release after she toured the site in a National Guard helicopter.

The approval of a Fire Management Assistance Grant from FEMA means 75 percent of the cost of suppressing the fire and evacuations will be covered.

The fire was estimated as being 290 acres in size Thursday night. Though flames and smoke had dissipated since the fire first started Wednesday evening, it continues to burn and is 0 percent contained.

Exploding propane tanks had kept firefighters from getting close enough to the fire to confirm the number of damaged or destroyed properties earlier Thursday.

160 personnel are at the site of the fire.

Many who are now realizing they have lost their homes remain at a Red Cross-sponsored evacuation center around an hour away at Cloudcroft High School.

"It's like something you'd see in Iraq or something: cars melted down and stuff. It's crazy," said evacuee Jake Yancy.

The entire community of Timberon was evacuated Wednesday night. The junction of State Road 6943 and Sunspot Road and the area south of it is closed.

The entire area is part of a "no entry" zone. A fire line has been established around the perimeter of the fire and is holding, crews said Thursday night.

Timberon Fire At 290 Acres; 60 Structures, 16 Vehicles Burned

By Jacqueline Devine

Las Cruces (NM) Sun-News, July 14, 2016

TIMBERON, N.M. – Mandatory evacuations are still in effect after a wildfire swept through private and public lands in Timberon that destroyed 60 structures and burned 16 vehicles during the estimated 290-acre fire.

Otero County with several state and federal fire fighters responded to the fire at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday in the isolated town about 30 miles south of Cloudcroft.

No injuries have been reported. One Timberon VFD fire engine was also damaged

Timberon's power lines were knocked down during the fire. Air tankers from Alamogordo's White Sands Regional Airport continue dropping slurry on the fire and hot spots.

Gov. Susana Martinez toured the most damaged areas of the fire Thursday afternoon.

Martinez said she was shocked that the damage was much worse than expected.

"We have four homes that have mild to medium damage to them, 16 vehicles have been destroyed as well. I flew over the fire earlier, I could see the retardant that was dropped in order to keep the perimeter," Martinez said. "I could see the homes from up above, it's just a white ashy pile that you see. I've met volunteers that are helping feed firefighters that are here. I met a lady that actually lost her home in the last fire but she's here cooking and making sure everyone gets fed that are here at the management center."

She said she met and talked to a former Timberon fire chief during her tour.

"There's another gentleman I met who was the previous fire chief in Timberon along with his wife and he left his home to go fight fires. He is 80-years-old," Martinez said.

She said she learned the Federal Emergency Management Agency is helping with the cost of fighting the fire.

"We're making everything available that the community needs from the state government," Martinez said. "We have received a federal grant that has now been approved that will pay 75 percent of the costs of containing and fighting this fire. That means 75 percent will go to paying firefighters, they will be reimbursed and the costs to the county will also be reimbursed for the fighting of this fire. The state will be able to pick the rest of the 25 percent."

U.S. Forest Service spokesman Caleb Finch said firefighters continue to work on containing the fire at this time.

"As of right now there is zero percent containment. We expect containment to increase in the next few days, the control lines are holding and they have been holding throughout the day but we want to ensure the resources on the ground continue to establish a good control with those lines as that happens," Finch said. "When we get through the burning periods, we will be able to increase containment."

He said 160 personnel are assisting with the fire that includes state, county and federal units and they expect more soon.

"Currently we have 160 personnel and that's a combination of engines and crews, state, county, volunteer fire departments and federal units," Finch said. "We expect another 40 to 60 to arrive in the next 24 hours that will help extinguish the hot spots which will help us wrap it up sooner than anticipated."

He said the cause of the fire is undetermined at this time.

"The cause of the fire is still under investigation, we have fire investigators on scene right now. Some of the evacuees are able to come look at their homes as we make containment with the fire according to the Sheriff's Office, New Mexico State Police and New Mexico State Forestry regarding the coordination of bringing those homeowners in to look at their homes and retrieve valuables," Finch said. "We do our best not to allow anyone to come in to the perimeter of the fire because we still have 160 people working the fires."

He said fire personnel continue to determine the exact acreage of the fire.

"The number of acres may increase with more accurate mapping. The monsoon rains are late this year and so we are abnormally hot and dry. We still can have fires in July but it is abnormal this time of year. If the public can just be cognizant of how they're treating their camp fires and their barbecues that will help reduce the risk of wildfires," Finch said. "I think it's great that there's a lot of inter-agency coordination among numerous agencies like state, local and federal. It's a great way to show support for the residents of Timberon and what they've experienced and also the firefighters have also received support."

The Cloudcroft High School gym is being used as shelter for evacuees until the fire is fully contained.

The American Red Cross confirmed that a total of 21 people stayed overnight when the fire started and 15 people have registered with them making it a total of about 40 Timberon residents who have stayed at the shelter.

"We are providing warm blankets and everyday essentials. We also have extra meals for people that get hungry in between meals. Residents have also donated towels so evacuees could take showers here," said American Red Cross Disaster Chair James Gutierrez. "We also heard from a lot of outside agencies like the Presbyterian Medical Group that is willing to assist with mental health counseling or if they just need to see a doctor. Unfortunately we do not allow pets unless it is a service animal. Livestock is being set up at the Otero County Fairgrounds."

Communities from around the area have also come together to show support for Timberon residents on Facebook and they encourage anyone that needs help to speak up. Assistance can be found on the following Timberon Facebook pages, https://www.facebook.com/groups/126788310437/ and https://www.facebook.com/groups/274514549576721/

Some Butte Fire Property Owners Unhappy With Tree Removal Plan

By Courtney McKinney

Calaveras (CA) Enterprise, July 14, 2016

Some property owners in the Butte Fire burn area Wednesday voiced concerns about the number of purportedly hazardous trees that county officials seek to remove from private properties.

The remarks came during a public meeting in Mountain Ranch hosted by Calaveras County Public Works Department personnel. Officials are asking owners of more than 260 parcels with hazardous trees on their properties to provide right-of-entry releases by July 22. The right-of-entry forms will allow the county's contractor, Tetra Tech Inc., to access private property to cut down the trees.

One man who spoke at the meeting called the tree plan "overdone, expensive and excessive," while others said that there are trees marked for removal that could potentially survive.

"We have lost thousands upon thousands of trees in the fire, so if we can save one, do it," another man said. Neither man identified himself and both left before the meeting ended.

The federally funded tree removal program targets trees deemed to pose threats to Calaveras County roads. County officials estimate that 6,500 dead trees that are on private property stand close enough to county roads to endanger motorists if they fall.

Typically, the Federal Emergency Management Agency pays 75 percent of the cost for such post-disaster projects, while state and local agencies pay for the rest. But because of the high risk posed by the hazardous trees, the federal and state governments have stepped in to pay for removal, which means it will not come out of county coffers or out of the pockets of county residents.

The professional arborist for the project, William Butler of Butler Enterprises, told residents that although some trees may seem OK from the outside, there are many secondary issues for trees with fire damage that are not easy to see. He and the program manager of Tetra Tech, Will Mcgowen, both assured residents that only trees deemed unsafe for county roads will be removed. "We are working in your best interests," Mcgowen told the crowd. "We are personally accountable to the county."

Another concern raised by some property owners is the requirement that they bill their insurance for the tree removals. According to Earl Seaberg of the Public Works Department, FEMA requires homeowners with insurance for tree removal to submit bills to their insurers for reimbursement while those without insurance will not be required to do anything.

Landowners who have trees cut down on their properties through this program can keep the logs if they wish. Otherwise, Tetra Tech will place the trees in storage. Another point of contention at the meeting came when residents were told that they are not allowed to receive double benefit from the removals, meaning they cannot sell or barter the felled trees.

Landowners with hazardous trees on their properties who do not participate in the removal program will be liable for any trees that fall onto county roads and for damage caused by the trees.

The meeting ended with county officials reiterating how important it is to public safety for the trees to be removed. They said landowners can and should call the designated hotline with any questions or concerns about tree removal on their properties. That number is 754-6767. The questions and answers from Wednesday's meeting will also be available on the county website.

Meanwhile, Tetra Tech personnel on Wednesday began posting right-of-entry permits at the entrances to properties where owners have agreed to cooperate with the tree removal program. The permits are displayed on small wooden stakes.

Santa Clarita's Sage Fire Burns 1,100 Acres; 92 Percent Contained

By Debbie Sklar

My News LA (CA), July 14, 2016

The Sage Fire, which has scorched 1,110 acres west of Santa Clarita, was 92 percent contained Thursday was firefighters patrolled the area putting out hot spots, authorities said.

Two patrols of firefighters were assigned day and night through tomorrow night to put out hot spots, said Inspector Gustavo Medina of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Since the blaze was reported about 12:05 p.m. Saturday, three firefighters have been injured and at least one building damaged. The cause of the fire was still under investigation, as was the issue of whether the house fire was related to the Sage Fire, Medina said.

After the fire was reported on Saturday, residents were evacuated from 700 homes but were told about 9:30 that night that they could go home.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced that it has authorized the use of federal funds to assist with the firefighting effort, which has involved personnel from Los Angeles County, the city of Los Angeles, the U.S. Forest Service and the Orange County Fire Authority. Fire Management Assistance Grants provide federal funding for up to 75 percent of eligible firefighting costs.

Winners And Losers Of The Week

By Kenneth Quinnell

AFL-CIO, July 14, 2016

Each week, we take a look at the biggest friends and foes of labor. We celebrate the workers winning big and small battles, and we shame the companies or people trying to deny working people their rights.

Winners: Home care workers, now that nearly 2 million of them have overtime protections.

Runners-Up: Fire Fighters (IAFF), for assisting locals apply for FEMA grants to improve firefighter safety and effectiveness, totaling $500 million.

Losers: Manufacturers that pay low wages, as a new report shows that one-third of working people in nonsupervisory positions in manufacturing are on public assistance.

Runner-Up: U.S. District Judge Sam R. Cummings in Texas, for blocking the "Persuader Rule," which would have increased transparency for those attempting to influence union elections.

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

Lawmakers To Go On Recess Without Addressing Zika

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, July 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – Congress is about to leave for a seven-week vacation without giving the Obama administration any of the $1.9 billion it's seeking to battle the Zika virus, and a Senate effort to revive the nuts-and-bolts process of passing agency budgets was dealt a significant setback at the hands of Democrats.

Meanwhile, House Republicans are poised to pass a $32 billion spending bill for the Interior Department and the Environmental Protection Agency as lawmakers exit Washington for a seven-week recess, though the move would do little to advance GOP leaders' hopes of fixing the Capitol's shattered budget process.

The House measure, laced with a wish-list of GOP provisions to roll back Obama administration clean air and water regulations, faces a White House veto threat – as does a $1.1 billion GOP-drafted Zika measure that's been grounded by abortion politics and other problems.

GOP efforts in both the House and Senate to restart the annual budget process hang by a thread, pointing to yet another take-it-or-leave-it trillion-dollar-plus bill this fall to keep the government open weeks before the election. The House Interior measure would be just the fifth of the 12 spending measures to clear the House. In the Senate, an effort by majority Republicans to revive debates on the measures – which had languished under Democratic control of the chamber – hasn't gone as well as hoped.

Senate Democrats on Thursday again filibustered the advance of an annual Pentagon spending measure over fears that Republicans would boost defense while keeping domestic programs frozen. And a much-needed bill to battle the Zika virus faces a Democratic filibuster on Thursday, as well, over a GOP provision that would block Planned Parenthood from receiving anti-Zika funding.

"When they were in the majority, they didn't want to pass appropriations bills. When they were in the minority, they don't want to pass appropriations bills," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who has been frustrated in his efforts to move the measures through. "I gave it every opportunity this year to succeed. We have spent weeks and weeks and weeks trying to get a regular order of process on appropriations through the Senate."

The House measure, likely to pass late Wednesday, is red meat for conservatives seeking to take a whack at the Environmental Protection Agency. But its passage would run into a veto threat from President Barack Obama and a certain filibuster from Senate Democrats.

The Interior and EPA funding bill is part of the $1 trillion-plus budget to bankroll day-to-day agency operations. In the past, Congress has devoted much of the spring and summer to passing the 12 individual spending bills that are a part of that process. But divided government between the Obama administration and Republicans controlling Congress has produced lowest-common-denominator catchall spending bills that offended lawmakers on both the political right and left.

The House measure would block EPA rules on coal-fired power plants and clean water rules involving coal operations. The Obama administration has successfully used veto threats to strip such provisions in the past. The GOP measure also cuts the budget of the EPA, an agency loathed by many Republicans.

Meanwhile, Senate Democrats are poised to vote Thursday to again block bills to finance the fight against the Zika virus and fund the Pentagon for the upcoming budget year. The Zika measure has been hung up over Democratic objections to GOP language that would block Planned Parenthood clinics in Puerto Rico from receiving money to fight the virus.

At the same time, Senate Democrats have blocked action on a huge Pentagon spending bill over a move by House Republicans to use accounting moves to add $18 billion to the measure. Democrats say the GOP move would unravel last year's hard-fought budget deal, which reversed curbs on both Pentagon and domestic accounts.

McConnell has called for re-votes Thursday on both the Pentagon and Zika measures as the final major action before the chamber adjourns until after Labor Day.

In one bit of progress, the House was on track to clear for Obama's signature legislation requiring labels on foods containing genetically modified ingredients.

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Congress Takes A Vacation Without Doing Anything About Zika

New York Times, July 14, 2016

Members of Congress are about to leave Washington for seven weeks without passing a bill to pay for the fight against Zika. Their failure to do so will delay the public health response to the mosquito-borne virus that causes birth defects, unnecessarily putting thousands of people at risk.

As of June 30, nearly 600 pregnant women appeared to be infected with Zika in American states and territories and seven babies had been born with birth defects linked to the virus. Public health experts believe these numbers are likely to increase in the coming weeks as mosquitoes become more prevalent, especially in Florida, Hawaii and Texas. This calls for swift action by the government, but instead the Republicans who control Congress are trying to exploit this crisis to advance ideological causes.

The House last month passed a bill that would allocate $1.1 billion to fight Zika by funding vaccine development, mosquito control efforts and other programs. But Republican lawmakers attached so many objectionable provisions to the measure that Democrats have effectively blocked the bill in the Senate where 60 votes are needed to cut off debate and bring legislation to a vote.

The biggest problem with the bill is that it would provide funds for contraception and maternal care only through public health departments and Medicaid-run clinics. This provision is designed to freeze out private providers like Planned Parenthood, which Republicans love to hate. For no good reason, it would deny many women in Puerto Rico and Southern states who do not live near public health centers the care they need. It should not be lost on anyone that Republicans insisting on this condition are usually eager to embrace the private sector and to criticize government programs.

Another troubling aspect of the bill is that, to offset costs, it would rob other important programs of about $750 million; funding for Ebola, for example, would be cut by $107 million. The bill would also relax environmental laws by allowing businesses to spray pesticide near lakes, rivers and other waterways without notifying the Environmental Protection Agency. Republicans say that this would make it easier for local governments to control mosquitoes — even though the law on pesticide spraying already has an exception for health emergencies.

The absence of funding, however temporary, is expected to cause major problems. Many local governments need federal assistance to control mosquitoes in the coming weeks. And researchers at the National Institutes of Health may be forced to stop tests on a potential vaccine as well as efforts to develop tools that can quickly diagnose Zika infections, which in most people do not cause any visible symptoms.

It's always troubling to see good legislation hijacked to score political points. In this case the timing could not be worse.

GOP Calls Out Obama For Millions Of Unspent Dollars Amid Zika Fight

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, July 14, 2016

Top Republicans in Congress are demanding to know why the White House is holding onto more than $400 million that they say could have already gone to fighting the Zika virus.

Six leading GOP appropriators wrote to President Obama on Thursday, voicing strong concerns about the administration's slow pace in exhausting its existing resources on Zika, as Democrats dig in their heels to demand a $1.1 billion emergency spending bill.

"This money is available immediately to prepare for and combat Zika, yet is seemingly not being spent," the letter reads, echoing remarks by House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-Ky.) on Wednesday.

Lawmakers remain at a standstill over Zika funding as members of both chambers departed Thursday for a record seven-week recess. A last-ditch move to approve the funding by Senate Republicans on Thursday failed after Democrats blocked the GOP's bill for a second time.

A once-promising Zika compromise bill, which had been backed by both parties in the Senate, collapsed late last month after House GOP leaders decided to advance their own version in protest of a Democratic sit-down over gun controls bills. The most recent version, which has earned no Democratic support, also faces a veto threat from the White House.

Officials from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) told reporters last week that about $112 million of the roughly $589 million from the Ebola funding has gone out the door to fight Zika as of July 5.

That would mean the White House has drained only about one-sixth of its half-billion dollar funding pool for Zika amid vocal calls from Democrats to approve $1.9 billion in emergency spending.

Federal health officials have rejected the GOP's claims that Democrats are choosing not to spend the money they have on hand. An HHS official argued that the process for spending federal dollars "takes time," and that the president made his $1.9 billion request knowing it would be a lengthy process.

"The suggestion that repurposed Ebola funds are sitting unused is misleading," the HHS official said. "We have gone through the standard process for awarding that money, and much of it will move in July and August."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is planning to give states and territories nearly $100 million over the next month to fight Zika.

Last Friday, the CDC doled out another $25 million in state and local government grants.

HHS has also warned that its vaccine work — undertaken by the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority — "is in the middle of vaccine-related negotiations that will exhaust all of its repurposed Ebola funds."

Congress Will Go The Rest Of The Summer Without Passing Anything On Zika

By Michael Mcauliff, Senior Congressional Reporter, The Huffington Post

Huffington Post, July 14, 2016

WASHINGTON — The political conventions, followed by a long summer break, proved a higher priority for Congress on Thursday than funding the nation's response to Zika, as the Senate failed again to pass legislation dealing with the mosquito-borne illness.

With Congress leaving this week to pick presidential candidates, and then staying on recess until after Labor Day, the rest of the summer will pass before there's another chance for lawmakers to fund the efforts to prevent Zika from becoming an epidemic in the United States.

The virus is linked to severe birth defects, including microcephaly, and was recently blamed for the death of a Utah man. According to the most recent count from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 3,600 people in the United States and its territories have been diagnosed with the disease, including 599 pregnant women.

The White House sought $1.9 billion for anti-Zika efforts in February. The House passed just $622 million in May on a party-line vote, and the Senate passed a bipartisan bill for $1.1 billion soon thereafter. In working out the differences between the measures, a Republican-led conference committee kept the Senate's spending levels, but added riders restricting birth control, promoting the Confederate flag, cutting Obamacare and relaxing clean water rules. It also included a provision to cut funding for the ongoing response to Ebola, which would run out of money in October.

The resulting measure again passed the House, but Democrats in the Senate objected to the "poison pill" riders that were added, and blocked it. It is that same measure, offered again by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), that failed again Thursday on a procedural vote, with Democrats preventing it from getting the necessary 60 supporters.

The vote was preceded by finger-pointing from each party's leader, who each said that everything the other guy claimed was false.

"The idea that it would underfund Zika. The idea that it would prohibit funding or deny access for birth control. The idea that it would actually weaken clean water protections... We've shown how these claims just don't stand up to scrutiny," McConnell said.

"I would like to echo the words of the senior senator from Texas, who said that our Democratic colleagues seem to be operating in a 'logic-free zone' when it comes to Zika," he added. "It's time to get back to reality. This is a serious crisis that demands serious solutions."

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) mocked McConnell's claims, since the provisions that have angered Democrats are, in fact, included in the bill.

"I assume that my Republican friend feels if you say just the opposite of [what] is valid and true, that some people will believe it," Reid said. "You talk about a logic-free zone, as my friend mentioned. We've got one in the last half-hour here."

Not only did the Zika bill come laden with partisan riders, it was attached to a much larger measure to fund military construction and veterans affairs.

The failure of the bill came just two days after the White House and the Department of Health and Human Services warned in a letter to McConnell that efforts to curtail the Zika virus would suffer if lawmakers did not act.

"It is imperative that Congress act to pass a bipartisan Zika supplemental bill before departing for summer recess," wrote budget director Shaun Donovan and HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell. "Failure to do so will significantly impede the administration's ability to prepare for and respond to possible local transmission in the continental United States and Hawaii, and address a growing public health crisis in Puerto Rico."

Delaying funding would slow the development of a vaccine and hinder the CDC's ability to track the spread of the disease and control mosquitoes, the letter said.

CDC head Tom Frieden has estimated that preventable cases of babies born with birth defects from Zika will each cost an average of $10 million over a lifetime to treat.

At least eight babies have already been born in the continental United States to mothers who are believed to have contracted the virus while traveling.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) denounced the outcome of Thursday's vote.

"It's been more than five months since President Obama put forward his proposal to combat Zika, and more than two months since the Senate passed a strong, bipartisan downpayment on that proposal," Murray said in a statement. "But instead of staying the bipartisan course, Republicans have unfortunately chosen to put their ideological battles against Planned Parenthood and women's health providers ahead of the health needs of women and children nationwide."

Senate Rejects Zika Package Again, No Signs Of A Deal

Roll Call, July 14, 2016

The 52-44 vote on the motion to limit debate on the $1.1 billion anti-Zika funding bill amounted to a last-minute attempt by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to move the legislation to the president's desk with the chamber set to leave for a seven-week summer recess Thursday afternoon. Sixty aye votes were required to advance the measure.

"It's time for our friends to start worrying less about pleasing outside political groups and start worrying about actually helping the Americans who are counting on all of us," McConnell, R-Ky., said, during floor remarks Thursday morning.

Democrats have repeatedly criticized Republicans for including language in the conference report that Democrats say would prevent funds from going to

Planned Parenthood clinics in Puerto Rico. Republicans have shot back at Democrats by saying their position on the conference report represents a lack of support for pregnant women throughout America.

Minority Leader Harry Reid critiqued House Republicans during his floor speech, calling them "crazies." The Nevada Democrat also said not allowing funds to go to Planned Parenthood's Pro Familias clinics in Puerto Rico would limit the ability of women to prevent pregnancy while Zika continues to be a threat.

"How could anyone in good conscience vote for that [bill]?" Reid asked, referring to provisions in both the Military Construction-VA and the Zika sections of the conference report. "We can't and we aren't going to."

House Speaker Paul D. Ryan , R-Wis., slammed Senate Democrats for blocking the Zika aid package at his weekly press conference Thursday.

"They need to drop politics and pass the bill," Ryan said. He specifically objected to Democratic criticisms of offsets: "They wanted no offsets, we partially offset it with what I would call extremely vanilla offsets."

"They need to drop the politics and pass the bill so we can respond to this real need," Ryan added.

As the clock ticked down to the vote, House Appropriations Committee Democrats sent a last-minute letter to Ryan, encouraging Republicans to take a vote on a bill that would allocate the $1.9 billion in emergency funding that President Barack Obama requested in February. Democrats have made numerous attempts to do the same thing during committee meetings on the fiscal 2017 spending bills. All of those proposals have failed.

The letter followed a final plea from the White House on Wednesday that did not cite a specific dollar amount or the so-called poison pills, but encouraged Congress to pass anti-Zika funding before leaving for recess.

Ranking member of the Appropriations Committee Barbara A. Mikulski , D-Md., said on Wednesday that her "optimism is shrinking" when asked about the prospects for a last-minute Zika deal.

Republican Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri, who negotiated the Senate's $1.1 billion emergency compromise with Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington in May, said on Wednesday that the "meaningful conversations" are taking place at the leadership level. He named McConnell, Reid, Ryan and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi , D-Calif.

The inability of the Republican-led Congress to pass the legislation is a politically risky move ahead of the seven-week summer recess. The number of infants born with microcephaly linked to the Zika virus will continue to grow in the coming weeks and months.

As lawmakers from both political parties return to their districts to fundraise and run for reelection, additional funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health will be held off for at least a couple of months.

Congress is slated to return in September and while the political parties could hash out a deal then, they may likely feel less pressure to act with summer over, unless Zika becomes a larger public health problem. Without any of the 12 fiscal 2017 appropriations bills enacted, they will only have four weeks to negotiate and vote on a stopgap spending measure known as a continuing resolution to keep the government funded past the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30.

However, there is a possibility that bill could include additional money for the CDC and NIH to continue their research and vaccine trials.

Zika Funding Bill Fails As Congress Is Unable To Reach Compromise

By Will Drabold

TIME, July 14, 2016

After months of negotiation and national calls to action, Congress will not provide any money to fight the spread of Zika in the United States this summer. The final chance this summer to fund the White House's February request evaporated in the form of a failed Thursday vote in the Senate.

The White House did not immediately provide comment on the stalemate and how it will impact efforts to combat the spread of the virus. President Barack Obama previously blasted Republicans in May for not allocating money to fight Zika and criticized their proposal to spend funds left over from fighting Ebola on Zika, something the administration started doing in April.

Both Democrats and Republicans said they wanted to spend money to prevent the spread of Zika, but political disagreements ultimately trumped numerous health warnings. Senate Democrats refused to support House Republican additions to the legislation that would reduce funding for Planned Parenthood, defund parts of the Affordable Care Act and reversed a ban on flying Confederate flags in military cemeteries.

[Read more from TIME: 10 Zika Facts You Need to Know Now]

After this week, Congress will recess till September. That punts funding for research and prevention of a virus that is proven to cause severe birth defects in infants and has already infected more than a thousand travelers in the continental United States.

Zika has infected more than a million people in Central and South America. Hundreds of babies have been born with shrunken heads, a disease called microcephaly, from mothers infected with Zika.

When Ebola ravaged Africa and fears rose that the deadly disease could spread in the U.S., Congress allocated $6 billion to fight the virus. So far, the White House has reportedly spent more $700 million

in leftover Ebola funding to fight Zika.

There are over one thousand Americans in the U.S. with travel-associated cases of Zika, including 320 pregnant women. There are also 2,534 people in U.S. territories who are infected, including 279 pregnant women. In the U.S. there have been at least three reported cases of infants born with Zika-related microcephaly. On Wednesday, it was confirmed

a baby born with microcephaly in Texas received the defect from the Zika virus. The child's mother traveled to Latin America during her pregnancy.

"We are disappointed," says Dr. Umair Shah, executive director of Harris County Public Health. "We confirmed the first travel associated case of Zika in Texas in January, and yesterday we confirmed the first travel-associated case of microcephaly."

"It would be a lot better if we had those resources," Shah adds. "I have to be honest, our team is stretched quite a bit."

Shah says he hopes that should funding be passed after the recess, he hopes the funds could go towards retrospectively covering costs incurred by health departments during the outbreak response.

[Read TIME's Cover Story About Zika and How to Beat It]

Before the vote, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell attacked Senate Democrats for blocking the bill. "

This is a serious crisis that demands serious solutions," McConnell said on the Senate floor. "It's time for our friends to start worrying less about pleasing outside political groups and start worrying more about actually helping the Americans who are counting on us."

In a floor speech Thursday, Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid fired back, accusing Republicans of making the bill impossible to vote for.

"The Republicans are choosing vacation over protecting pregnant women and their babies from these terrible birth defects that can be prevented," Reid said.

Zika is transmitted by mosquito bites or through sex. More than 1,110 Americans now have Zika they contracted while traveling. Whether Zika has transmitted between people in the U.S. is unknown. But public health experts have told TIME they believe local transmission may have already happened and would be difficult to track. Local transmission is expected to be worse in Florida and Texas where the type of mosquito that carries Zika is abundant while travel to Central and South America is high.

There is no drug or vaccine for the virus.

Partisan Split Delays Zika Bill

By Shannon Firth

MedPage Today, July 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – As partisan rancor around stalled Zika legislation continues, the chances of reconciling the bill before the Senate's 7-week recess vanished.

On Thursday, the House version of the Zika bill failed a test vote in the Senate with a 52-44 tally. The vote signaled that the bill would not come to an up-or-down vote.

"The problem is only getting worse," said Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues in his opening remarks at a hearing a day earlier, speaking of the Zika virus epidemic.

"It is our duty to act now while we can still get ahead of this disease and before it is simply too late," he said.

Physician and health policy groups were disappointed with Congress's inaction.

"Without ensuring there are sufficient resources available for research, prevention, control and treatment of illnesses associated with the Zika virus, the United States will be ill-equipped to deploy the kind of public health response needed to keep our citizens safe and healthy – especially since the spread of mosquito-borne illness is accelerated during the summer months," said Andrew Gurman, MD, president of the American Medical Association, in a press release on Thursday.

"By the time Congress returns in a couple of months, the damage to our nation from Zika will likely be irreversible. This failure to act severely hampers the full response that is greatly needed," said Richard Hamburg, interim president and CEO of Trust for America's Health, a health advocacy non-profit.

Democrats continue to oppose the latest version of the Zika bill, while acknowledging that the politicking in Congress has inflamed the public.

"This is why people hate Congress. This is why people hate Washington," said Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) at Wednesday's hearing.

Kaine, who has emerged as a potential pick to be Clinton's running mate, argued that the bipartisan $1.1 billion bill the Senate passed was originally a "clean bill."

"It was about one thing: fighting Zika," he said, but then the House revisions loaded the bill with other provisions targeting Planned Parenthood and the Affordable Care Act.

A visibly irritated Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) said the new bill could do more harm than good by undercutting family planning services.

"Birth control should not be controversial and it's part of the first line of defense," she said, reminding the committee that Zika is sexually transmissible.

The House version of the bill also "eviscerates" the Clean Water Act, she said.

Under current law, pesticides from an approved list can be sprayed near water sources without a permit in emergencies, but the Environmental Protection Agency must be notified.

Under the Zika bill, however, "[t]here's no more right to know ... you may not get the Zika but your kid could get cancer from swimming in water that's laden with a pesticide that's very harmful."

Senators on both sides tried to bully witnesses over to their camp.

"Does the House bill take money away from Planned Parenthood?" Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) asked CDC Director Tom Frieden, MD, MPH, point-blank.

Frieden parried, saying he didn't know the "exact funding allocations."

"I believe the answer is 'no.' And if you can, get back to me on that," Gardner shot back.

Boxer badgered Irene Koek, acting deputy assistant administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development, who struggled to get her words out without interruption.

Boxer asked whether specific countries in Latin America and the Caribbean where women had been warned to postpone pregnancy actually had the infrastructure to provide free contraception.

Koek said that in most cases supplies were available but delivering them was sometimes a challenge.

Boxer also questioned Frieden about rumors that Olympic athletes would be tracked after the events to see whether or not they contracted Zika.

Frieden confirmed that the CDC has a "memo of understanding" with the U.S. Olympic Committee and said that a university in the U.S. would be testing the athlete volunteers to see who was infected and who wasn't.

"If the risk is so great that you're going to spend money following them maybe they ought to know it," she said.

Rubio pressed Frieden to explain how delaying funds would impact his agency.

Frieden said delaying funding meant delaying long-term research into understanding how to effectively protect pregnant women from the virus. He noted that the CDC had already borrowed emergency funding from states and that those monies needed to be repaid.

"This is not the way to fight epidemics," he said.

But Frieden didn't stop there. He also lobbied for a public health fund similar to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) where resources could be tapped during health emergencies like this one. Boxer, who has a bill outlining plans for such a fund, made a similar pitch during her opening statement.

Kaine also backed the idea.

"We don't know where a hurricane will hit. We don't know where there will be a forest fire, where there will be a flood but we do know from experience that there will be these items and so we budget for them. And then we deal with them. We don't do that with respect to infectious disease," he said.

Shannon Firth's sister works for USAID.

Zika's Spread Can't Be Stopped, Study Argues, But It Will Burn Out In 3 Years

By Nick Miroff

Washington Post, July 14, 2016

Trying to stop the Zika virus from spreading in Latin America is probably pointless, according to a new study by medical modeling experts at Imperial College London, who predict the epidemic is likely to fizzle out on its own within three years.

The findings, published Thursday in the journal Science, used Zika data collected across Latin America, where the outbreak erupted last year in Brazil. The study concludes that attempting to prevent Zika by eliminating the mosquitoes that spread the virus is a largely futile endeavor, because those methods haven't eliminated dengue fever, which is carried by the same vector.

In February, after Brazilian officials linked Zika to surging numbers of fetal deformities, U.N. health officials declared Zika a "public health emergency of international concern." Nations across Latin America sent out brigades of soldiers and sanitation workers to battle mosquitoes, while urging women to avoid or delay pregnancy for up to two years.

But the study argues that Zika is simply "not containable" and will simply fade away on its own once enough people develop antibodies to the virus.

"The current explosive epidemic will burn itself out due to a phenomenon called herd immunity," according to Neil Ferguson, the lead author and a professor at Imperial College's School of Public Health.

"Because the virus is unable to infect the same person twice — thanks to the immune system generating antibodies to kill it — the epidemic reaches a stage where there are too few people left to infect for transmission to be sustained," he said.

More than 1,100 Americans have been infected with Zika, mostly while traveling abroad, but mosquitoes are not spreading the virus on the U.S. mainland, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A $1.1 billion bill to increase funding for Zika prevention and research has stalled in Congress, after Democrats rejected Republican attempts to attached provisions that would restrict funding for abortion, birth control and other programs.

According to U.N. officials, the epidemic already appears to be declining in South America. In Colombia, the nation with the second-largest number of reported infections after Brazil, authorities say Zika has peaked.

Still, experts caution that it is too early to declare any sort of victory. Many Zika-infected patients do not seek medical attention because they experience relatively mild symptoms, or no symptoms at all. There is no cure for the virus either, and many Latin Americans in areas with a lot of Zika know that doctors have little to offer beyond pain relievers, so they simply grit it out at home.

Ferguson and the study's other authors argue that efforts to slow the spread of the virus through mosquito control may, in fact, prolong the current epidemic: "Slowing transmission between people means the population will take longer to reach the level of herd immunity needed for transmission to stop. It might also mean that the window between epidemics — which we predict may be over a decade — could actually get shorter," he said.

One concern raised by the study's authors is that by the time a Zika vaccine is ready for testing, "by the end of the year if not sooner," there may not be a community left in Latin America with enough cases of the virus.

Zika Outbreak May Have Peaked In Brazil, Researchers Say

By Liz Szabo

USA Today, July 14, 2016

Brazil's Zika outbreak, which grew explosively after the virus first appeared in the country a year ago, appears to have peaked, with fewer new infections and cases of birth defects, new research suggests.

Zika cases hit a high of nearly 8,000 suspected new infections in Brazil in March and have declined steadily since then to fewer than 200 a week.

It's possible that the Zika outbreak — which has spread to 40 countries in the Americas — is burning itself out in Brazil as a large portion of the population survives infection and becomes immune to the disease, said Neil Ferguson, co-author of a study published online Thursday in Science.

"The epidemic is probably at least more than halfway through in Brazil," said Ferguson, director of the MRC Centre for Outbreak Analysis and Modelling, School of Public Health at Imperial College London.

Not all experts are convinced Zika is on its way out of Brazil.

The declining number of cases is more likely caused by the change of seasons in the Southern Hemisphere, said Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy.

Brazil and the rest of the Southern Hemisphere are heading into winter, when the weather is cooler and drier, which tends to make the mosquitoes that spread Zika less active, Osterholm said.

While it's possible Zika cases will pick up again when spring returns, Ferguson said infections are unlikely to be as numerous as when the virus first hit Brazil. New diseases tend to spread explosively when they arrive in an area with no previous exposure, he said.

A Zika outbreak in French Polynesia, for example, infected 66% of the population in the six months between October 2013 and April 2014. Studies suggest Zika first entered Brazil between May and December 2013. The first official diagnosis of the virus wasn't made in Brazil until April 2015, largely because

Zika's symptoms — which include rash, fever and joint aches — are similar to those of dengue, a disease that's common throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

As a population develops immunity and there are fewer susceptible people left to be infected, outbreaks tend to wind down. That appears to be happening in Brazil, Ferguson said.

Doctors have been concerned about Zika's spread because it can cause devastating birth defects, including microcephaly, in which babies are born with abnormally small heads and incomplete brain development. Brazilian health officials have confirmed more than 1,600 cases of microcephaly since the Zika outbreak began, about 10 times more than usual. Seven babies in the U.S., whose mothers were infected due to travel, also have been born with microcephaly or other birth defects.

Researcher Karin Nielsen, who is conducting a study of pregnant women infected by Zika in Rio de Janeiro, said she and her colleagues haven't diagnosed the virus in a pregnant woman since April.

"We were getting 20 to 40 pregnant women a week with Zika in January and February," said Nielsen, director of the Center for Brazilian Studies at the University of California-Los Angeles. "We just don't have those numbers anymore."

Zika seems to have been replaced in Rio by another mosquito-borne virus, called chikungunya, Nielsen said. Although chikungunya can cause fever and severe joint pain, it doesn't cause birth defects. Mosquitoes can also spread chikungunya more quickly than Zika.

Mosquitoes need to incubate chikungunya for only three days before they can spread it to a person, Nielsen said. In contrast, mosquitoes need to incubate Zika for 10 days. That means that mosquitoes, which only live about a month, are much more likely to live long enough to spread chikungunya than Zika, she said.

Ferguson predicts the Zika outbreak in the Americas will be largely over in about three years. But that doesn't mean the disease will disappear.

Viruses tend to return when there are enough susceptible people, such as children, to sustain a new outbreak, Ferguson said. So even if Zika fades in the short term, it could cause regular outbreaks among children who've never been infected by it before. This phenomenon explains why viruses such as chickenpox tend to be diseases of childhood.

Zika is still spreading in many other parts of the Americas. Doctors in Puerto Rico, which reported its first case of the virus in December, have now diagnosed nearly 2,500 cases of the virus. The true number of cases could be much higher, given that 80% of people with Zika have no symptoms.

Health officials in the U.S. are worried the disease could spread here, as well, although they note that American's use of air conditioning and window and door screens are likely to prevent massive outbreaks by reducing the number of people exposed to mosquito bites.

Zika Epidemic In Latin America May Have Peaked, And Scientists Predict It Will Be Over In 3 Years

By Melissa Healy

Los Angeles Times, July 14, 2016

Researchers modeling the rampant spread of the Zika virus say that, like a wildfire consuming a parched landscape, the epidemic that has caused a plague of birth defects in Brazil is already showing signs of slowing and is likely to largely burn itself out in three years.

Peak Zika spread may already have passed, said researchers writing in the journal Science. At a slower rate and with seasonal ebb and flow, the Zika virus' march across the Americas, they reckon, will likely grind to a halt.

After Latin America's current Zika epidemic goes to ground, the group's epidemiological model suggests that another epidemic spread of Zika in the Americas is unlikely for "at least a decade."

"The current epidemic is not containable; at best, interventions can mitigate its health impacts," wrote a group of researchers led by Imperial College London epidemiologist Neil M. Ferguson. "More optimistically," they added, "the natural dynamics of the epidemic are now likely to give a multiyear window to develop new interventions before further large-scale outbreaks occur."

Discovered in 1947 and introduced into Brazil in 2013, the Zika virus has brought mild illness to the populations of 65 countries, and has become epidemic throughout South and Central America. Since 2014, more than 1,400 babies with grievous birth defects have been born to women in Brazil who were infected with Zika during their pregnancies. And Zika, which has been determined to cause brain abnormalities in gestating fetuses, has been blamed.

Until at least 2026, the researchers said, the virus' prodigious spread will be its undoing: having infected and thus inoculated most in its path, Zika would be deprived of the kindling that allows a viral outbreak to gain a foothold and march across a human landscape it has trodden before.

With much of Latin and South America having already been exposed to Zika virus and thus immune to further onslaughts, researchers said Thursday that "herd immunity" is likely to take over by 2019. Herd immunity takes hold when a dwindling slice of the population remains vulnerable to becoming ill and sustaining the transmission of virus to others who have not yet been exposed.

Under those circumstances, small, localized outbreaks of Zika will occur, the group acknowledged. But the viral epidemic's opening volley in the Americas will have ended.

The conditions for an epidemic's resurgence do not return until a new generation of never-infected children repopulates the landscape with potential victims, and elderly people's immunity to Zika begins to wane.

In Zika's case, that process will take a decade or more, the authors of the new report project.

Future epidemics of Zika infection, the group said, will likely affect a younger and younger population, as the probability rises that most older people in the virus' path have been exposed before and developed immunity. Even so, they wrote, future outbreaks will continue to take hold in areas where women of childbearing age have not yet been exposed to the virus. As a result, "substantial risk to pregnant women in future Zika epidemics" is highly likely.

Those projections came in two articles published Thursday in the journal Science. To make them, a respected team of epidemiologists collected data on the rate at which the Zika virus, which incubates in the bellies of biting mosquitoes, spread through Brazil and marched northward through Latin America.

They measured Zika's rate of spread as it waxed and waned with the seasons and different mosquito populations. And they gauged the deceleration of its spread as large swaths of the populations in Zika's path were infected and gained immunity against the bug.

Finally, in a bid to sketch the likely future of the epidemic, they projected those observed patterns onto a map of the areas into which Zika is now spreading, and allowed those patterns to play themselves out.

The results are subject to many caveats, and to assumptions that could be unique to the circumstances from which the model's data were collected. But modeling results like these allows researchers to make informed estimates of epidemic patterns, and often to highlight factors that could accelerate or delay a viral epidemic's resolution.

Mosquito-control efforts were one such factor flagged by the authors of the latest study.

Evidence from other outbreaks of mosquito-borne illness has suggested that battling Zika by reducing mosquito populations could slow the population's path to herd immunity, wrote Ferguson and his colleagues.

By protecting more of the population in Zika's path from becoming uninfected, aggressive mosquito control could also leave a larger share of people uninoculated. That, in turn, could shorten the time window during which there exist too few potential victims for a Zika epidemic to stage a resurgence.

A delay in reaching the threshold for herd immunity, wrote the researchers, could make it particularly hard for women who have delayed pregnancy to remain patient.

The new analyses are not without detractors.

"I think this model is a real overreach of the data we have," said Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy. Osterholm pointed to the four-year spread across the United States of the West Nile virus — which is in the same family of viruses as Zika. Because only mosquitoes and not birds are implicated in its spread, Zika, he said, likely spreads far less fast. Yet Zika is thought by the researchers to have covered far more ground in much less time than West Nile took to spread.

"I really believe the worst is yet to come with Zika throughout the Americas," said Osterholm. "It has not peaked."

Safe sex without condoms? With drugs keeping HIV in check, infected partners didn't spread virus

Zika Outbreak To End In 2 To 3 Years, Scientists Predict

By Julie Steenhuysen

Reuters, July 14, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Zika Epidemic In Latin America May Be Subsiding But U.S. Still Could See A Spike

NPR, July 14, 2016

A sitting duck. That's what South America was a few years ago when Zika first struck. The continent had never recorded a case of the mosquito-borne virus. And everyone was susceptible.

"So you get this huge raging epidemic that blows through the population, usually very fast and infects a pretty high percentage of the population," says Justin Lessler, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

That's exactly what happened. Millions of people across South and Central America have been infected with Zika. More than a thousand babies have been born with birth defects caused by the virus.

But now the worst might be over.

Lessler and his colleagues report evidence Thursday that the epidemic has peaked and started to subside. The virus has spread so quickly and infected so many people that it's actually burning itself out, the team writes in the journal Science.

By graphing the number of Zika cases over time, it easy to see cases have been declining rapidly over the past few months. But Lessler and his team couldn't tell if this decline was because the epidemic is waning or because the mosquito season is South America has finished for the year.

To figure that out, Lessler and his team built a simple computer model of Zika spreading across the Western Hemisphere. The model predicts the epidemic will probably last another 1.5 to 2 years and will likely peter out by spring 2018.

Then Zika will lay low for years, the team predicts. There could be small outbreaks, but "the disease is going to appear for all intents and purposes to have gone away," Lessler says. "It could be five years or even a decade before we have another significant epidemic."

The reason for this is pretty simple: A large portion of the population in Latin America will have been exposed to Zika and become immune to the virus.

"You can think of it like the forest after a giant fire," Lessler says. "All of the extra brush is gone, and it's going to take a while before enough brush — or in the case of a disease, enough susceptible people — can build back up to support another fire."

Clearly this is good news for South America. But what does it mean for the U.S.?

"That's an interesting question," says Bryan Lewis, a disease modeler at Virginia Tech.

The new study suggests Zika will be a threat in the U.S. for a few summers to come, Lewis says. But this summer will likely be the worst in terms of the number of imported Zika cases we get."Because the spike in Latin America is probably the highest it's going to be this current season," he says. "This summer is probably the big one."

All these predictions need to be taken with a big grain of salt, cautions epidemiologist Alex Perkins at the University of Notre Dame, because they are based on computer models — which aren't great at making long-term forecasts.

"It's much like when you watch the nightly weather," he says. "The weather people usually do a very good job of saying what the weather is going to be like tomorrow. But the longer time horizon you look at, the harder it is to predict what's going to happen."

Zika Outbreak Could Last 3 Years, Scientists Estimate

By Alexandra Sifferlin

TIME, July 14, 2016

The Zika virus outbreak spreading through the Americas could go on for three years, according to a new study published in the journal Science.

Scientists from Imperial College London and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health estimate that the current Zika epidemic will be "largely over" in Latin America in three years. That's because so many people are being infected, and therefore become immune to the virus. "Herd immunity will likely then cause a delay of over a decade until further large epidemics are possible," they write in the study.

The Zika virus is confirmed to cause the severe birth defect microcephaly, and it's estimated millions of people are infected in the Americas. In the continental U.S. there are over 1,000 people infected due to travel, including 320 pregnant women. There are also 2,534 people in U.S. territories who are infected, including2 79 pregnant women. On Wednesday it was reported that the first baby in Texas with Zika-related microcephaly was born. The U.S. Congress on Thursday failed to pass the $1.9 billion in funding to fight Zika that was requested by the White House in February.

The researchers note that some countries where the virus is spreading have advised people to avoid pregnancy, which the study authors write "has been criticized for being infeasible for many women—especially long term." Understanding a country's local context through monitoring could be helpful, they suggest. Mosquito control can also help prevent some spread, but the authors argue that expectations should be realistic, and that traditional insecticide use has not necessarily prevented other serious mosquito-borne diseases like dengue from spreading in the past.

"Like Ebola, Zika is a public health crisis in which policymakers have had to make decisions in the presence of enormous uncertainty," the study authors conclude. "The current epidemic is not containable; at best, interventions can mitigate its health impacts. More optimistically, the natural dynamics of the epidemic are now likely to give a multiyear window to develop new interventions before further large-scale outbreaks occur."

Latin America Zika Outbreak Should 'Burn Out' Within 3 Years, Scientists Say

By Mary Elizabeth Dallas

HealthDay, July 14, 2016

A team of British experts in disease outbreaks believes that the Zika epidemic afflicting Latin America will end within three years.

They based their estimate on modeling using available data on the outbreak, which has so far involved thousands of cases of Zika-linked birth defects, mainly in Brazil.

The Zika virus is typically spread by mosquito bites. For most people the health risks are mild. But, maternal infection in pregnancy can trigger microcephaly, a condition where babies are born with too-small heads and neurological issues.

The new analysis uses "all available data to provide an understanding of how the disease will unfold – and allows us to gauge the threat in the imminent future," lead researcher Neil Ferguson said.

"Our analysis suggests that Zika spread is not containable, but that the epidemic will burn itself out within 2-3 years," Ferguson, of Imperial College London's School of Public Health, said in a college news release.

Reporting July 14 in the journal Science, Ferguson and his team pulled together all the existing data on Zika transmission throughout Latin America. They then used this data, along with information on outbreaks of similar viruses, such as dengue, to create a model that represented the current outbreak and future patterns of transmission.

Because people who have already been infected with Zika are unlikely to be re-infected, the epidemic should burn itself out within three years, the study authors estimated.

"The current explosive epidemic will burn itself out due to a phenomenon called herd immunity," Ferguson explained. "Because the virus is unable to infect the same person twice – thanks to the immune system generating antibodies to kill it – the epidemic reaches a stage where there are too few people left to infect for transmission to be sustained."

That will mean Zika can't gain a foothold again in the Latin American population for at least a decade, when a new generation without exposure will emerge, the researchers said. "This mirrors other epidemics, such as chikungunia – a similar virus to Zika – where we have seen explosive epidemics followed by long periods with few new cases," Ferguson said.

As for the current Zika outbreak, it may already be too late to do much to curb case numbers, he said.

"Efforts to contain the epidemic would have needed to have been implemented much earlier in the current Zika epidemic to have a major effect – but by the time we realized the scale of the problem it was too late," Ferguson said.

He added that all of this means that efforts to find a vaccine should be encouraged, while Zika is still highly active.

Another study published in the same issue of Science looks to the future of epidemic control, as well. Researchers in the United States believe new strategies are needed to prepare for unexpected mosquito-borne epidemics, such as the recent outbreak of the Zika virus.

The history of Zika, which was discovered in Uganda in 1947, may provide valuable lessons for the current crisis in Brazil, Colombia, Puerto Rico and other parts of the Americas, said scientists from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore.

"The rise of Zika after its long persistence as a disease of apparently little importance highlights how little we truly understand about the global spread of mosquito-borne viruses and other lesser-known diseases," said the study's co-leader, Justin Lessler, an associate professor of epidemiology.

"Over the past decades, dengue, chikungunya, West Nile virus and now Zika have emerged or re-emerged across the globe. Yet why these viruses have expanded their range and others have failed to invade areas potentially ripe for their spread remains a mystery," Lessler said in a university news release.

Most people infected with Zika have few or minor symptoms. But since early 2015 thousands of women – largely in Brazil – exposed to the virus in pregnancy have had babies with serious birth defects. Many of the infants have smaller heads and brains associated with microcephaly.

The Hopkins researchers analyzed existing studies on Zika to assess its global threat. They came up with two main theories that could help explain why Zika has become such a risk.

One theory is that the virus mutated and became more dangerous and infectious.

The alternative theory is that the virus previously spread among just a small group of people, so its effects were less obvious. But once Zika spread to Brazil – a country with 200 million people having no immunity to the virus – the complications became more apparent.

"Despite knowing about this disease for nearly 70 years, we were completely surprised and rushing to discover the very basic things about it when it invaded the Americas," Lessler said.

"We have been completely unable to stop its spread. That is a problem for how we approach public health," he added.

Better preparation is essential, Lessler said. "We will always be in this situation when something new comes about or something little-known re-emerges unless we do a better job planning for threats more generally instead of always fighting the last battle," he said.

There is currently no vaccine or cure for Zika. The Hopkins review called for more research to assess the effectiveness of mosquito-control methods.

Zika Epidemic Should Fizzle Out Within 3 Yrs: Study

AFP, July 14, 2016

The outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus, blamed for a surge in birth defects, has likely reached its peak in Latin America and the epidemic should be over within three years, researchers said Thursday.

The study by scientists at Imperial College London appears in the US journal Science.

"The current explosive epidemic will burn itself out due to a phenomenon called herd immunity," said Neil Ferguson, a professor at Imperial's School of Public Health.

"Because the virus is unable to infect the same person twice – thanks to the immune system generating antibodies to kill it – the epidemic reaches a stage where there are too few people left to infect for transmission to be sustained."

This should happen within two to three years, he added.

Then, this herd immunity "will likely delay the next large Zika epidemic for more than a decade."

The virus, though first discovered in 1947, largely took public health officials by surprise when it began spreading through the Americas last year and causing birth defects.

The rise in infants born with irreversible malformations has been most acute in Brazil, where some 7,438 suspected microcephaly cases have been reported as of May and 1,326 cases confirmed, the study found.

Typically, Brazil saw fewer than 200 annual cases of microcephaly – in which the infant is born with an unusually small head and brain.

Zika infections have been reported in dozens of countries throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.

The United States has seen a rise in travel-associated cases, but so far no local transmission has been observed.

– Vaccine too late? –

Ferguson also warned that efforts to slow the spread of Zika, by increasing mosquito-control measures, could actually prolong the epidemic.

And efforts underway to design a vaccine – which officials have said could take several years – may come to fruition too late, he said.

"If our projections are correct, cases will have dropped substantially by the end of next year, if not sooner," said Ferguson.

"This means by the time we have vaccines ready to be tested, there may not be enough cases of Zika in the community to test if the vaccine works."

Amid concerns about the potential spread of Zika during the upcoming Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, a separate report out Wednesday by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that the risk of transmission is low.

As many as 500,000 international visitors and athletes from 207 countries are expected to travel to Rio, but "this travel volume represents a very small fraction –- less than 0.25 percent –- of the total estimated 2015 travel volume to Zika-affected countries," said the CDC.

"Visitors to the Games are expected to have a low probability of mosquito-borne Zika infections because the Games will occur during the winter season in Rio de Janeiro (August 5-21 and September 7-18, respectively) when the cooler and drier weather typically reduces mosquito populations."

The US agency did raise particular concern, however, about Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea and Yemen. It said "these four countries do not have substantial travel to any country with local Zika virus transmission, except for their participation in the Games, and have environmental conditions and population susceptibility to sustain mosquito-borne transmission of Zika virus."

Pregnant women should not travel to the Olympics, and all visitors should take steps to avoid mosquito bites and prevent potential sexual transmission of the virus, the CDC urged.

The CDC Wants Your Semen (If You've Had Zika)

By Elizabeth Cohen, Senior Medical Correspondent

CNN, July 14, 2016

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is collecting semen from hundreds of men in the United States in order to figure out how long the dreaded Zika virus lasts in the bodily fluid.

The virus can be transmitted sexually, and it's been known to linger in semen long after a man's fever, rash and itchy eyes have gone away.

If a man has the virus in his semen and has sex with a woman who is pregnant or becomes pregnant, the baby could be born with devastating neurological birth defects.

After about two months of recruiting, some 40 men who've had Zika have volunteered to donate their semen. The CDC hopes to bring in about 210 more.

The men are asked to make about a dozen donations in their homes every other week for six months after their illness, and each time are given a $50 multi-use gift card.

A courier picks up the donations, which are then delivered to the CDC's labs in Fort Collins, Colorado.

"I'm happy to say patients really have been quite receptive about volunteering their specimens," said Dr. Paul Mead, the senior epidemiologist at the CDC who is running the study. "They seem to understand the importance of the study."

So far, there have been more than a thousand cases of Zika in the United States, and that number is expected to grow.

There have been 14 cases of sexual transmission of the virus, according to the CDC, although some experts think the actual number is higher.

The CDC currently recommends that men who've had Zika use a condom or abstain from sex for six months after their illness.

That advice is based on studying the semen of just three men who had Zika, which is why the CDC is doing the larger study.

Separately, the CDC is doing a study in Puerto Rico that will examine the semen of men who contracted Zika but never actually had symptoms of the disease – an important group since many who become infected have only mild symptoms or none at all, according to the CDC.

In addition to looking at the virus in semen, the Puerto Rico study will also be examining blood, saliva and vaginal secretions.

The CDC plans to recruit 300 men and women in Puerto Rico who've had Zika and 1,000 people who live in the same households.

"The response has been amazing. People have welcomed strangers to come and get their bodily fluids," said Dr. Gabriela Paz-Bailey, the investigation's lead researcher.

She said the Puerto Rico study is the largest collection ever of bodily fluids from Zika patients.

"Nearly everyone we've approached has agreed to participate," Paz-Bailey said. "They understand that many things are not yet known."

CDC Going After Your Zika Semen, Report Says

By David Oliver

US News & World Report, July 14, 2016

If you're a man who's had the Zika virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will pay you for your semen.

The agency has gathered about 40 volunteers to donate semen for a new study but is looking for approximately 210 more, according to CNN. Those who volunteer will receive a $50 multi-use gift card after providing a dozen samples every other week for half a year.

Each participant's samples will be picked up by a courier and sent for testing at the CDC's labs in Fort Collins, Colorado, where scientists will study how long the virus survives in bodily fluid. Though the virus spreads primarily through infected mosquitoes, it can also be transmitted through sexual contact, but it's unclear how long virus particles remain in the body after symptoms disappear. This research will help shed light.

The CDC has not yet responded to a U.S. News request for more information about the study.

Fears about Zika are at a fever pitch leading up to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which kick off August 5.

CDC data shows there have been 1,133 cases of Zika in the U.S., 14 of which were sexually transmitted. Travel-associated cases tallied at 1,132, with just one laboratory-acquired case.

Only 20 percent of those infected with Zika will show symptoms, which include fever, rash, red eyes and aching joints.

The CDC recommends men who live in or have traveled to active outbreak areas either abstain from sexual activity or use condoms during sexual contact.

Had Zika Virus? CDC Is Offering Men Who Have Been Infected $50 Gift Cards To Provide Sperm Donations

By Stephanie Castillo

Medical Daily, July 14, 2016

Hey, guys who have been infected with the Zika virus — want a $50 gift card you can use just about anywhere? Donate your sperm to the The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

For the past two months, the organization has been recruiting men to donate their semen samples in order to figure out how long Zika stays in the bodily fluid, CNN reported. So far about 40 men have signed up to make donations every other week for six months after they've recovered from the virus. The CDC is hoping to recruit at least 210 more, and yes, guys are given a gift card for every donation.

It's convenient, too. CNN reported that a courier picks up the donations so that they can be delivered to the CDC's lab in Fort Collins, Colo.

"I'm happy to say patients really have been quite receptive about volunteering their specimens," Dr. Paul Mead, the senior epidemiologist at the CDC who is running the study, told CNN. "They seem to understand the importance of the study."

The CDC reported 14 cases of sexually transmitted cases of Zika virus, with experts anticipating many more.

John Moore/Getty Images

Maybe you're wondering why sperm — isn't Zika contracted through a mosquito bite? Typically, the answer is yes. If humans are bitten by an infected mosquito from the Aedes genus family, the same mosquitoes that carry dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever, they can develop symptoms. But there are a number of cases that have been contracted through sexual contact. In fact, the CDC reported 14 cases of sexually transmitted viruses, with experts bracing for a higher number of cases in the future.

The donation program has inspired a separate study in Puerto Rico, where Zika has been spreading more rapidly compared to other countries. Some believe the country's crippling debt has hampered its response, especially when it comes to getting women contraceptives. Reuters reported that only a small fraction of methods to prevent Zika-related birth defects were expected to get to women in June. Long-term birth control isn't on the table either (think of an intrauterine device) since many local doctors are not trained to implant them, according to Reuters.

CNN reported a fraction of Puerto Rican men and women have contracted the disease, but did not experience any symptoms; in which case, they'll sample blood, saliva, and vaginal secretions on top of men's sperm.

Zika has been spreading across South America at an alarming rate, as well as parts of the United States and western Europe. The World Health Organization (WHO) is even facing pressure to postpone next month's Rio Olympics due to the fact this latest outbreak originated in Brazil. While the virus usually only amounts to a week-long mild fever, skin rash, and muscle aches and fatigue, it can pose a special threat to pregnant women, namely microcephaly — a condition that affects fetuses in utero so they're born with severely small heads and develop neurological issues.

The CDC is regularly updating its Zika and sexual transmission page with the latest information, which at this point includes transparent insight into how little we still know. For now, condoms are considered the best way to reduce the chance of getting Zika from sex, as is the case for all sexually transmitted diseases. And for pregnant couples with male partners who live in or travel to areas affected by the virus, the advice to "use a condom every time they have sex or not have sex" is in bold. Couples trying to get pregnant should talk to their health care provider, the CDC said.

Study Finds Zika In Woman's Genital Tract

Can Women Spread Zika Sexually, Too?

By Julie Beck

The Atlantic, July 14, 2016

So far, all known cases of sexually transmitted Zika have involved a man spreading it to a partner. The virus thrives in semen, and lives there longer than it does in blood, which is why experts recommend that men use condoms if they've been in areas where Zika is spreading—for six months if they've had symptoms, and eight weeks even if they haven't.

Currently, the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states, "We don't know if a woman with Zika can pass the virus to her partners, during vaginal or oral (mouth-to-vagina) sex." But now there's reason to suspect that women might be able to.
Related Stories

In a new case study published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases, doctors at Pointe à Pitre University Hospital, in Guadeloupe, treated a woman with Zika in May, and detected the virus in her genital tract. When she first came in, her blood tested positive for Zika, though her urine did not. Three days after the onset of her symptoms, doctors did a genital swab, a swab around the opening of the cervix, and also took a sample of cervical mucus. All three samples tested positive for Zika virus RNA. They did another round of tests 11 days after her symptoms started—of blood, urine, and cervical mucus—and while the blood and urine were clear, the virus was still in the mucus.

This doesn't prove anything, but it does raise the possibility that sexual transmission of Zika could come from anyone. And it seems there's something about sexual fluids that helps Zika survive longer in the body. How long is unclear; apparently at least 11 days in a woman is possible.

The researchers speculate that this discovery could open the door to a much more serious one. "Our findings raise the threat of a woman potentially becoming a chronic Zika virus carrier, with the female genital tract persistently expressing the virus RNA," the study reads. For women hoping to have children, given the risks of Zika to fetuses, that could be a huge threat.

Pa. Giving Out Zika Prevention Kits For Pregnant Women

Philly (PA), July 14, 2016

The Wolf administration is distributing free kits for pregnant women to protect against the Zika virus.

The kits contain small amounts of federally approved insect repellent for skin, permethrin spray repellent for treating clothing and shoes, standing water tablets for killing mosquito larva, condoms to prevent sexual transmission of Zika, and educational materials in English and Spanish, the state Department of Health said Thursday.

They will be available in "limited quantities" to pregnant women from local health departments, community health centers, offices of the Women, Infants, and Children federal nutrition program, and non-profit organizations that primarily serve low-income or homeless women, the state said in a news release.

The kits at this point are mainly an educational campaign since no infections in the continental United States have been transmitted via local mosquitoes. But more than 1,300 cases have been acquired by Americans traveling in areas where mosquitoes that carry the virus are circulating and another 14 via sexual transmission, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The totals include 39 cases in Pennsylvania and 50 in New Jersey. The CDC said 346 of the cases in U.S. states and another 303 in American territories such as Puerto Rico, where mosquitoes currently are carrying the virus, involved pregnant women as of July 7.

"While Zika is spread primarily by mosquitoes that are infected with the virus, it also can spread through sexual contact with individuals who have the disease," Pennsylvania Health Secretary Karen Murphy said in the release. "Because Zika poses serious health risks for babies born to women who contracted the virus during pregnancy, the kits include health education materials and prevention tools to avoid mosquito bites and sexual transmission of the disease to pregnant women. Using the products in the Zika Prevention Kit can help protect you and your loved ones from the virus."

New Jersey is considering a similar measure, a spokesperson for the state health department said.

Some women who were infected during pregnancy have miscarried or given birth to babies with abnormally small heads and other serious birth defects. Some health authorities have advised women traveling in areas where the virus is circulating – much of South and Central America and the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico – to temporarily postpone becoming pregnant.

The mosquito species that is mainly responsible for spreading millions of cases of the virus does not thrive in the mid-Atlantic region even in summer. But another species that is among the biggest nuisances locally, known as the Asian Tiger mosquito, has been shown to be capable of transmitting Zika in laboratory settings, although in temperate regions it has been an inefficient transmitter of related viruses like Dengue.

Zika is far from the only disease carried by mosquitoes, however. The New Jersey Department of Health on Thursday confirmed the state's first human case of West Nile virus this year, in a 48-year-old Camden County man who remains hospitalized; information about the disease is posted here.

Pennsylvania has had one case so far this year, in Indiana County.

West Nile, while typically causing mild symptoms, if any, is most dangerous for people who are elderly or have compromised immune systems, and can be fatal in some cases.

Zika, by contrast, almost never causes serious harm – except for pregnant women and, in rare cases, others who are stricken with a temporary paralysis known as Guillain-Barre syndrome.

Pa. Offering Zika Prevention Kits For Pregnant Women

By Adam Smeltz, Pittsburgh Post-gazette

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, July 14, 2016

Zika prevention kits designed to safeguard pregnant women from the mosquito-borne virus will be available across Pennsylvania, the state Department of Health announced this morning.

The department will begin distribution today for the kits, which include insect repellents, water tablets for killing mosquito larva and condoms to prevent sexual transmission of the virus, the department said in a news release. Pregnant women can pick up the kits at no charge from local health departments, federally qualified health centers, community health centers, nonprofit organizations and offices for the Women, Infants and Children assistance program.

A complete list of kit providers is posted at www.zika.pa.gov. The cost of the effort wasn't immediately clear.

"Because Zika poses serious health risks for babies born to women who contracted the virus during pregnancy, the kits include health education materials and prevention tools," state health secretary Karen Murphy said in a statement.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed 40 Zika cases in Pennsylvania since the winter, all in people who contracted the virus while visiting an outbreak-affected area abroad, according to the health department. While no Zika cases have been tied to mosquitoes in the continental United States, health authorities are monitoring domestic populations of the insect.

Most Zika cases are thought to arise from mosquito bites, but the disease can spread through blood transfusions and sexual contact, as well. About 20 percent of infected people show symptoms, most recovering within several days from fever, joint pain or other mild ailments.

But researchers have linked the infection in pregnant women to serious birth defects, such as microcephaly. Children with the neurological condition often have developmental issues, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Alabama Lab Gets Almost $1 Million For Zika Research

By Amy Yurkanin

Birmingham (AL) News, July 14, 2016

An Alabama drug development lab will receive almost $1 million to expand research into Zika virus, which is carried by mosquitoes and has been linked to serious birth defects.

The grant to Birmingham-based Southern Research from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases could grow to $3.9 million over the next two years, according to a press release.

Scientists at Southern Research have studied mosquito-borne illnesses including dengue, chikungunya and West Nile Virus. The grant will fund efforts to develop non-human primate models that can be used to test Zika virus treatments, according to the statement.

"Our ultimate goal with this project is to establish a model of Zika virus infection that can be used for the evaluation of new vaccines and therapeutics in optional efficacy studies sponsored by NIAID," said Jonathan Rayner, principal investigator on the project, in a statement.

Zika virus has been linked to an increase in cases of microcephaly, or unusually small heads and brains, in newborns. The condition can cause lifelong disability. Public health officials have warned women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant to avoid travel to areas where the virus is prevalent.

Zika virus only causes symptoms in about one out of every five cases. Symptoms include fever, rash, red eyes and joint pain.

Zika can be spread by mosquitoes or by sex with an infected person. Eleven people in Alabama have tested positive for Zika virus, but all have been associated with travel to an affected area. No locally or sexually-transmitted cases have been reported in the state, according to the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Southern Research Gets Nearly $1M Grant To Study Zika Virus

By Peyton Shepard, Editorial Intern

Birmingham (AL) Business Journal, July 14, 2016

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases of the National Institutes of Health have given Southern Research a government contract worth nearly $1 million for use in its research on the Zika virus.Southern Research's Drug Discovery and Drug Development divisions have worked for the past year to develop a vaccine for the virus, which the World Health Organization has determined to be an epidemic.The contract will allow the institute to broaden their research as they attempt to develop a non-human primate model for antiviral drug testing, which will help inform other research into potential vaccines."Our ultimate goal with this project is to establish a model of Zika virus infection that can be used for the evaluation of new vaccines and therapeutics in optional efficacy studies sponsored by NIAID," said Jonathan Rayner, head of drug development and a principle investigator, in a statement. "There is an understanding that the virus may continue to spread into new regions over the summer. Therefore, this contract from NIAID is timely and will help us to expedite efforts to understand the pathogenesis of this virus, and support the search for new vaccines and therapeutics."

Related: How Southern Research is working to limit the spread of Zika

The company's infectious disease research team has conducted studies on six strains of the virus, and created an antiviral test that will allow other researchers to gauge the efficacy of the drugs they develop.While the initial contract is worth $901,048, it could expand to almost $4 million over the course of the next two years."Southern Research has a long history of pivotal work on infectious diseases, including mosquito-borne illnesses including dengue, chikungunya, and West Nile Virus," said Art Tipton, president and CEO of Southern Research, in a statement. "Our team is uniquely positioned to support the growing body of global research on the Zika virus through translational science, and we're grateful for the solid partnerships we've developed over the years with the NIH and NIAID."

Zika Virus Worries Pregnant Women As Mosquito Season Approaches

By Maggie Fox

Today Show Online, July 14, 2016

It was Christmas, and Victoria Eljach was visiting her family in Colombia. Zika was all anyone talked about on the television news, she said. The virus had by then been carried from Brazil to Colombia — and suspicions were growing that it was causing a horrendous birth defect called microcephaly.

Eljach went home to Houston after the holidays. Zika was making news in the U.S., too, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention alerted pregnant women to stay away from Brazil and Colombia. Even women who might become pregnant should consider staying away, the CDC warned.

"Then, two months later, I learned I was pregnant," Eljach said. "I was very scared."

Now 22 weeks pregnant, Eljach is thriving. But she's not relaxed.

"I thought I was going to be safe here in Houston but there's Zika in Houston," said Eljach. Just last week, three patients getting pregnancy care at Legacy tested positive for Zika virus. Now they are being monitored closely to see if the virus will affect their babies.

So far, all 1,300 known cases of Zika in the continental United States — and all 340 pregnant women affected— are related to travel. Either the women were infected in another country where Zika is spreading, or they were infected by their husbands or partners who had traveled.

Jennifer Weiss / NBC News

Victoria Eljach, who is 22 weeks pregnant, watches as Dr. Juan Franco performs an ultrasound on her Friday, July 8, 2016, in Houston. Two months after visiting family in Colombia, Eljach learned she was pregnant. "I was very scared," she said.

One baby has been born with microcephaly in the Houston area. Nine babies have been born in U.S. states with Zika-linked defects, and another six died, miscarried or were aborted, the CDC says.

"The mother, who traveled from Latin America, was tested for Zika, but had received inconclusive test results. Since the infant received a definitive positive lab result for Zika, it is suspected that the mother probably carried the virus while pregnant, and presumably was infected in Latin America," the county health department said in a statement.

It's just a matter of time before someone who brings the virus to Houston is bitten by a mosquito and the virus starts to spread locally, experts agree. While no one predicts an all-out epidemic like in Brazil or Puerto Rico, it's enough to make Eljach and her medical providers nervous.

Victoria Eljach takes notes on her cell phone as she and her husband, Jorge Varón, wait to check out after a routine prenatal checkup.

"I thought it was in Central and South America. That's why I felt safe here," Eljach said. "But with summer coming, I saw there were some cases here in Houston."

She made another trip to Bogota after doing some research and seeing that Bogota's elevation made it an unlikely home for the Aedes aegypti mosquito that spreads Zika. The virus is more common in low-lying, humid, tropical areas — like Houston. At 8,600 feet, Bogota's higher above sea level than Denver.

Nonetheless, the trip troubled her doctor Dr. Juan Franco at Legacy Community Health, a network of not-for-profit clinics in the Houston area. Eljach, a behavioral analyst specializing in developmental disorders, had been Franco's patient for eight years.

He had her tested for possible Zika infection, just to be sure: She was clear.

"We screen every patient who comes through Legacy," said Franco. "We are testing people who have recent travel [to Zika-affected areas].

No one knows what percentage of women infected with Zika go on to have babies with birth defects. As with other infections that cause birth defects, the most dangerous time appears to be earlier in the pregnancy — when damage to just a few cells has big consequences.

Victoria Eljach, who is 22 weeks pregnant, has her blood pressure taken by nurse Cindy Lozano during a routine prenatal checkup Friday, July 8.

But the evidence is building that infection at any point during a pregnancy can endanger the baby. And women who don't have symptoms from their Zika infections do not appear to be safe; babies with severe birth defects have been born to women who do not remember any symptoms of a rash or fever.

Since Zika does not appear to cause symptoms in most people it infects, this worries doctors who fear an invisible epidemic of birth defects.

"It's a delayed catastrophe," says Dr. Peter Hotez, dean of the school of tropical medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "It is every parent's worst nightmare."

Dr. Juan Franco confirmed to patient Victoria Eljach that she is having a boy while performing an ultrasound. Eljach's pregnancy is doubly high risk because of her travel and her husband's.

At 36, Eljach is considered at moderately high risk to be having her first baby, anyway. And she's doubly at risk. Her husband, Jorge Varón, lives in Panama, traveling frequently around the region for his work in the retail industry.

Eljach is worried about sexual transmission of Zika.

"We are sleeping together but nothing is happening," she said, laughing.

"The other night, my husband came to visit me. We left the balcony door open," she said. They fell asleep but in the middle of the night she got a rude awakening.

"He heard a mosquito in his ear and he took the OFF and started spraying me all over," she said.

Eljach's taking every precaution she can. "I love to go to the pool in the summer but I am scared," she said. "My doctor tells me to always wear pants and to cover up and to use repellent. I am using OFF every day and I try to stay indoors."

Zika fears have cramped her style in other ways, also. "I had to cancel some trips to Mexico and Colombia that I had scheduled," said Eljach, who likes to visit family frequently and who also had hoped to fit in one last Caribbean vacation before she gave birth.

But with the Zika risk so high this summer, Caribbean resorts are off-limits for pregnant women.

'Mosquitoes are everywhere'

Every pregnant woman at Legacy gets a Zika kit: a ziplock bag with a bottle of repellent containing DEET; condoms; and a card with information about how to avoid mosquito bites.

"There are patients who ask us about mosquito repellent. We just assure them it is safe during pregnancy," Franco said. The CDC says DEET is safe for pregnant women and children alike and is more effective than some "natural" formulations that can irritate the skin.

Franco also tested a woman from El Salvador who did test positive for Zika and whose baby so far is healthy. "The patient came to us at 36 weeks," Franco said. So far, the news is good.

"She delivered in late May. The baby is doing well," he said.

Eljach talks to nurse Cindy Lozano during a routine prenatal checkup.

He's treating a patient from Brazil who had the symptoms of Zika infection and who tested positive for infection at 16 weeks. She's now 20 weeks pregnant.

"I think it is just a matter of time before we see these numbers increase," Franco added. "There are lots of women with husbands who travel back and forth."

And he doesn't doubt there could be local outbreaks. "Mosquitoes, as we are aware, are everywhere in Houston," Franco said.

Dr. Ann Barnes, chief medical officer for Legacy, agrees.

"I think there is significant concern, and justified, on that. Houston is notorious for being a place where there are lots of mosquitoes in summer," she said.

Excited and concerned

When treating women who have evidence of Zika infection, the team at Legacy will follow the CDC protocols, which include regular ultrasounds to check the baby's development.

"What we are looking for is any changes in the circumference of the head. We are looking for microcephaly," Franco said. "When the baby is born, we test the placenta." If the virus is in the placenta, that indicates it's also been in the baby's body and could have done damage.

Not all of Zika's destruction immediately apparent. Sometimes babies miscarry or die shortly after birth, and some have normal-sized heads but scans indicate extensive brain damage. Some have hearing and vision abnormalities. So all babies born to women who had Zika while pregnant need close scrutiny.

And if there are problems, they could end up being expensive for parents, taxpayers or both.

"It would be very difficult for most of our patients to care for a sick baby. Most are indigent," Franco said. While Medicaid covers the children, it's not always easy to find the care. "The problem is finding physicians to care for them," Franco said.

Eljach had her latest ultrasound just last week, and everything looks fine. The scan confirmed that she is having a boy.

"I am excited but at the same time I am a little concerned," she said.

There is one area of disagreement — the baby's name.

"I like Santiago. I like Emilio. My husband likes Valentino," she said, smiling.

Stop Using The Zika Virus To Attack Planned Parenthood

By Dawn Laguens

STAT, July 14, 2016

Imagine a virus for which there is no vaccine that can be sexually transmitted and lead to devastating birth defects. Imagine also that a powerful tool is available to combat it. You would expect — even demand — that policymakers immediately make that tool as widely available as possible.

That virus, the Zika virus, is here today. But Republicans in Congress are ignoring medical science by trying to restrict access to family planning, a proven form of protection from Zika's harms, as part of their ongoing and dangerous crusade against women's health care providers.

The Zika virus, transmitted by mosquitoes and by sex, is a global public health crisis. It puts the health of pregnant women and families in jeopardy. Medical science and common sense would dictate that family planning services like contraception that help prevent sexual transmission of the virus and prevent or delay pregnancy should play a central role in combating this epidemic. Yet Republicans in Congress are recycling age-old political attacks on birth control and Planned Parenthood to try to justify their indefensible position on Zika.

The scientific and public health communities speak with one loud and urgent voice: Zika poses its greatest threat to pregnant women and babies, and so family planning and maternal health care must be a central part of combatting the virus. It is the primary strategy recommended by the World Health Organization, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and many others.

Republicans in the House of Representatives want to cut off reproductive health care providers from receiving Zika emergency funds. They also want to go further — their goal is clearly to limit family planning access at every turn. The House Fiscal Year 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services bill would eliminate all funding for Title X, the nation's family planning program. Title X provides essential services to 4.1 million people every year; Planned Parenthood centers provide preventive health care to 1.5 million of those women, men, and families.

Similarly, a House committee approved on Tuesday the Fiscal Year 2017 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill, which imposes severe cuts to international family planning funding.

As Republicans in Congress have done before, this legislation puts politics before science and excludes critical reproductive health organizations that are uniquely suited to address the Zika crisis. Under the new legislation, qualified health care providers like ProFamilias in Puerto Rico, the first organization there to publicly discuss the connection between Zika and reproductive health, would not receive any funds to fight the epidemic simply because they are affiliated with the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

In a public health emergency, it is illogical and unethical to prevent the people and organizations who are best qualified to help, and who are already making a difference, from doing more.

Women in Latin America and the Caribbean face immense difficulty accessing reproductive and maternal health services. In this region, which is the hardest hit by the Zika virus, more than half of women who need pregnancy-related medical care do not receive it. An estimated 23 million women in the region have an unmet need for contraception.

In the US and Puerto Rico, women are fortunate to have Planned Parenthood, ProFamilias, and other organizations that strive to bridge this gap. But the weak Zika-response plan proposed by Republicans in Congress would endanger those who are most vulnerable to this epidemic — pregnant women and their developing babies. It blatantly disregards the facts from the public health community, and throws common sense out the window.

In the face of a public health emergency, in defiance of advice from countless health experts, and against the wishes of 65 percent of Americans who have called for the government response to Zika to include reproductive health care, Republicans in Congress still refuse to drop their dangerous crusade against women's health care providers and instead adopt common sense to pursue an attainable solution.

At the end of this week, Congress will break for its summer vacation. Approximately 600 pregnant women in US states and territories have already been infected with the Zika virus, and many more are likely to get it before Congress returns to work on Sept. 6. Congress should act now to pass a bill that includes funding for expanded family planning services as part of the US response to the Zika outbreak.

We cannot afford congressional inaction. We cannot afford one more life altered irrevocably and senselessly by the preventable outcomes of the Zika virus. We need a real response that empowers women.

Congress must step up now to defend the women and families counting on them to address and prevent this public health crisis while there is still a window to do so. Republicans' political games will mean loss and heartache to families in the US and around the globe.

Dawn Laguens is executive vice president of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Vermont Needs 'Actors' For Emergency Exercise

Brattleboro (VT) Reformer, July 14, 2016

WILMINGTON – The town is seeking actors to participate in Vermont's Vigilant Guard catastrophic exercise on July 29.

Volunteers are needed to help prepare emergency responders in Vermont for future disasters. About 36 people are needed to spend a day at a shelter, have simulated injuries or illnesses, and other roles. Volunteers will be given a role to play and instructed on what needs they should present to responders. They will then play out the scenario in order for evaluators to record how fire, police, rescue, and other responders react. Those observations will then be used to identify gaps and improve responses. Before the event, actors will be given a complete orientation to the incident site and what actions are expected of them. Food will be provided.

Six volunteers are needed from 8 to 10:30 a.m. and 30 volunteers from 4 to 6 p.m. Actors must be 18 or over with the following exceptions: 16-17 year-olds may participate with parents' permission. Younger children can participate if part of a "family" at a shelter.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact Jessica DeFrancesco at the Town Offices at jdefrancesco@wilmingtonvt.us or 802-464-8591. The state is also looking for participants. For more information, email brittany.marquette@vermont.gov.

Three years in the making, the state-wide Vigilant Guard exercise will include 5,000 people and evaluate the effectiveness of state and local responses to a number of crises. The exercise is being organized by the Vermont Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security, in collaboration with the Vermont National Guard, and is scheduled for July 25 through Aug. 2.

Vigilant Guard is Vermont's largest ever emergency exercise and will play out in 50 locations throughout Vermont, to include state agencies, local communities, 16 hospitals, the Burlington Airport, and the Vermont National Guard among many others. The goal of the exercise is to evaluate performance and identify gaps that may exist in the state's response to a catastrophic event.

Emergency Operations Centers at several state agencies and the National Guard will be activated at different times during the week, and the exercise will culminate with a 53 hour around-the-clock activation at the State Emergency Operations Center involving all agencies.

"We've designed this exercise to pose as many real challenges as possible," DEMHS Director Christopher Herrick said. "Urban search and rescue teams will work with the National Guard to clear tons of debris, the Health Department will receive and distribute Strategic National Stockpile medicines and supplies, and actors will inundate hospitals and shelters needing assistance. This degree of realism will help us hone our response by identifying not only what went right, but what went wrong and rectifying those mistakes in the future."

National Guard vehicles will be on the road and in the sky during the event, and hundreds of members of the Guard will perform emergency tasks for which they have trained.

The Vermont Department of Health will play a major role during the exercise. A simulated health emergency will test that department's ability to respond and distribute life-saving medications.

Should a real emergency occur the public will be notified through traditional means like Vermont Alert (http://vtalert.gov), the Emergency Alert System, or through the media.

Specific details of the exercise will remain confidential as some participants cannot know those details before being evaluated during the exercise.

Communities that are participating include Colchester, Guilford, Lyndon, Newport, Wilmington and Windsor. Agencies, departments and other state entities participating include the Department of Public

Safety, the Division of Fire Safety, Urban Search and Rescue, the Vermont State Police, the Agency of Agriculture, the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Agency of Transportation.

In addition, 16 hospitals around the state will be involved, as well as Civil Air Patrol, the National Weather Service, the Red Cross, Vermont Electric Cooperative, Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control.

Activities include natural disaster response and recovery, a medical surge and a cyber attack.

'Largest Ever' Emergency Drill To Test Vermont Responders

By Elizabeth Hewitt

Bennington (VT) Banner, July 14, 2016

COLCHESTER – A series of simulated incidents over the course of nine days this summer will test Vermont's emergency responders.

The event, called Vigilant Guard, will take place in 50 places around the state and involve some 5,000 emergency responders, according to the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, part of the Department of Public Safety.

State law enforcement, multiple state agencies, 16 hospitals, the Burlington International Airport, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Vermont National Guard and others will participate in Vigilant Guard, which will begin July 25.

Several municipalities — including Colchester, Guilford, Lyndon, Newport, Wilmington and Windsor — are also part of the plan.

At a news conference Wednesday at Camp Johnson, the Vermont National Guard base in Colchester, Gov. Peter Shumlin invoked the experience of the state during Tropical Storm Irene in discussing the significance of emergency response training.

Shumlin stood in front of a simulated disaster site featuring concrete rubble, upside-down cars and shipping containers, which will be used for practicing urban rescues.

DEMHS Director Christopher Herrick speaks about Vigilant Guard. Photo by Elizabeth Hewitt/VTDigger

"It's important when we're trying to save lives and deal with crises to have rehearsed, to have figured out who does what when, to have figured out how we minimize loss of life and loss of property," Shumlin said.

He and others said Vermonters are likely to see some activity during the course of the drill, including movement of the Vermont National Guard by land and air.

State officials characterized the event as the "largest ever emergency exercise" in Vermont. It has been in the works for three years. The federal government, which requires such tests of the state's emergency response system, is footing the estimated $570,000 bill, according to Christopher Herrick, director of the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

Herrick said he could not share many details of the event, in part because he does not know the details, but that simulations will test cybersecurity as well as urban search and rescue.

The response effort will be headquartered at an operations center in Waterbury, he said. It will test the coordination of responses across multiple agencies.

"Vigilant Guard is designed to challenge us, and when I say 'us' I mean the entire state, to handle situations with which we may be familiar and, more importantly, those we haven't seen," Herrick said.

Organizers of the simulation are seeking 200 actors to participate in the drill to "inundate" hospitals and emergency shelters around the state to test preparedness, Herrick said.

Evaluators and monitors will be on site to observe and gather data from each simulation, he said. Agencies will analyze the results and draw on them to make changes to the system.

If at any point during the simulation there is an actual disaster, the exercise will be halted, Herrick said.

Health Commissioner Harry Chen said he expects "nearly every" employee of the department will be involved with the simulation in one way or another.

"This is an important exercise because we must be ready for anything, whether it be a natural disaster like (Tropical Storm) Irene, an actual disease threat like H1N1, a cyberattack, or any combination of these catastrophes. We must have a system ready to respond immediately and effectively to any threat of the health and lives of Vermonters and visitors," Chen said.

Some secondary roads in certain locales may be temporarily closed, but detours will be made clear, according to Jessica Stolz, of the emergency management division.

Planners for the event have contracted with local and regional businesses for services during it, according to Stolz.

Emergency Preparedness Solutions, a private business, is helping to organize the evaluators for the event, and Norwich University is assisting with the cybersecurity element. There are also contracts with local food providers for meals and with hotels to house personnel coming to the state for the event, she said.

Emergency Preparedness Workshop July 26

The Catholic Messenger, July 14, 2016

Faithful Readiness: An Emergency Preparedness Workshop for Faith Communities will be held July 26 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, 4097 18th St., Bettendorf.

It is a collaborative effort between FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Center for Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships, and state and local partners. The event is free, but registration is required.

Participants will meet FEMA Region VII liaisons to discuss the Faithful Readiness Initiative involving faith communities throughout the region, be introduced to FEMA's booklet, "Developing a High Quality Emergency Operations Plan for your House of Worship" and connect with new partners ready to help support your house of worship's members prepare for emergencies.

Please register at: http://goo.gl/forms/dWb72AXfz84ej09C3 or email dave.donovan@scottcountyiowa.com with subject line "RSVP-Iowa" and include name(s) of participants, organization(s), title within the organization, e-mail address and phone number. Seating is limited. Lunch will be provided by the Red Cross.

Preparing For The Unpredictable

By Carolin Jones

Tacoma (WA) Weekly, July 14, 2016

Imagine you are on your way to work, and the earth starts shaking. Bridges collapse, I-5 turns into a massive sinkhole, and if you make it out alive, you are now stuck in your car in the middle of chaos, injuries and no option of receiving help anytime soon. Are you prepared to be stuck in your car without help for days? Living on air and sunshine won't be an option as the human body can go without water for about four days. Now, what?

The Center for Disease Control estimates that half of adults in the U.S. are unprepared for emergencies. But, the solution is closer than you think. American Preparedness, a Burien-based company, has made it its goal to keep people safe, and started packing emergency preparedness kits that have all things you need once disaster strikes.

"We offer the insurance we hope you never have to use," says Jeff Guite, American Preparedness president, who founded the company in 1981. Guite, who is a disabled veteran and whose company employs service-disabled veterans, wanted to keep serving his country after he left the Army in 1969.

Guite's military background inspired him to start emergency kits. "Military people are ready to go before anything happens. I thought: How about a survival package for people before a disaster occurs?" Guite says.

American Preparedness' ready-to-go kits come in a variety of sizes. A one-person kit at $54.95 includes a first aid pack, hygiene pack, emergency drinking water pouches, food packets, a thermal blanket, flashlight and batteries, whistle, poncho, lightsticks, and hand warmers. Items essential when waiting for help during a three-day period – or riding along in the backseat for five years until it's time for a replacement.

Guite, who is also Native American and a member of the Huron Tribe, has partnered with various tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest to outfit members for disasters. The company was able to partner with the Puyallup Tribe and supply backpacks for seniors on the reservation.

About 9,000 injuries are expected just along the Washington coastal regions and I-5 during an earthquake according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Guite urges residents to take personal responsibility when it comes to preparing for disaster. "There isn't any cavalry to the rescue. If you don't have the supplies in place before the disaster happens, you're in deep trouble," Guite says.

American Preparedness has taken the plan-ahead mindset a step further and donated emergency kits to groups especially vulnerable to the aftermath of a disaster. Seniors, low-income families, and school children are often the ones least prepared for an emergency.

Guite and his team started the "Kits for Kids" program in 1991 and have since distributed several thousand kits to ensure safety in schools. In July 2015, American Preparedness partnered with King County Senior Services and Swedish Hospital to donate 1,500 emergency kits to seniors receiving Meals on Wheels services.

"If you're ready for a big earthquake, or volcanic eruption – you're ready for anything," says Sarah Foster, Public Information Officer at Pierce County Department of Emergency Management. She says residents should consider what essentials they need to survive for a few days as every situation is unique, and special medications or pets should be considered when putting a kit together.

"What does your routine look like? What supplies do you need if you were cut off and the roads are closed? How would you make sure that you, your family and your pets are safe?" Foster says. She recommends to assemble kits for at least five to seven days and place them at home, work and inside the car. Adding a written list of important phone numbers to the kit, as cell phone batteries won't last forever and contact information might become unavailable, is essential when coordinating with families and friends.

The Pierce County Department of Emergency Management offers courses for residents that want to learn more about their individual neighborhoods and what potential hazards they can encounter during an emergency. The free training aims to prepare residents to help their community during a disaster and act as an effective first responder.

Emergencies can come in many forms, ranging from natural disasters, man-made catastrophes, and terrorist attacks. Guite says he used his emergency kit's light sticks to highlight his damaged vehicle and ensure safety for himself and other drivers. He also heard about his light sticks finding their way to rock concerts, heat packs going to sporting events and flashlights randomly disappearing. But no matter where the kit ends up, it is essential to be prepared. "Education and training never produce fear. Take personal responsibility for your family's safety," Guite says. American Preparedness is always looking for volunteers to help with the emergency kit assembly.

Pet Health: Emergency Preparedness Helps Animals During Wildfires

By Dr. Ragan Adams

SOURCE at Colorado State University, July 14, 2016

As the hot, dry summer envelops Colorado and wildfires burn across the state, the news fills with horrifying images, heartfelt evacuation stories and heroic emergency responses. The steady flow of fiery reports is a stark reminder that natural disaster could suddenly disrupt any of our lives.

Rather than dreading a potential fire, use your energy to prepare. Friday, July 15, is National Pet Fire Safety Day – a perfect time to make sure you and your pets are ready for evacuation and emergency shelter, should the need ever arise.

Preparing for your pets' welfare in an emergency will help first responders, evacuation groups and emergency animal shelters better care for the animals, and will give you peace of mind. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has a comprehensive Family Emergency Guide, but for the 60 percent of households with pets, preparation must be made for animals as well.

Effective emergency planning involves backup help from other people; a basic understanding of emergency response and resources in your community; setting aside needed animal feed and supplies; compiling health records and care instructions; and clearly communicating this information in written plans and simple signage. Planning for pets

CSU veterinary students treat a horse evacuated from the 2012 High Park Fire at The Ranch, Larimer County Fairgrounds. Photo: William A. Cotton, CSU Photography

Start by making with friends, family and neighbors a "buddy plan" that addresses the needs of your pets, horses or livestock. You may be at work and unable to access your animals when a fire, flood or other disaster unfolds. As part of the plan, make sure your buddies have written permission to care for your animals and have access to your pet emergency kit and kennels.

Know evacuation routes. Fires can blow up quickly, so it is best to identify multiple evacuation route options.

Put a sticker or sign on your house to inform fire personnel that there are animals inside. It's a good idea to place this kind of emergency sticker adjacent to entrances, such as the door from your garage to home, where the information would be easily visible to responders.

The Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management urges residents to sign up for emergency alerts on county websites. The division offers a list of local emergency management websites, and other ways to stay updated on local emergencies. Create a "ready-go" bag for your pets that includes:

Food, water and medications for three days

Copies of vaccination records and medical histories

List of important animal emergency contacts, such as the names and locations of veterinary offices

Collars with tags and microchip information

Photos of you with your pet

Bowls, can openers, spoons

Cat litter, scoop and pan

Pet first-aid kit

Bedding, crate or carrier

Leashes, harnesses

Toys, grooming supplies

Paper towels, trash bags, disinfectant

Towels, gloves and hand sanitizer

Learn more about pet preparations in Ready Colorado's Plan for Pets guide. Planning for non-commercial livestock

Many families own acreage on which they keep small numbers of horses, goats, chickens, sheep and/or cattle whose emergency needs also must be considered. The above readiness tips may be revised for larger animals, with preparation on a different scale.

For instance, rather than crates, you might need a trailer; instead of dog food, you might need to set aside hay and grain. When identifying evacuation routes, you might need to make sure they will accommodate a horse or livestock trailer. Prepare for larger animals with:

Three days of food, water and medication

Registration papers and brand inspection cards

Copies of veterinary records

List of animal emergency contacts, such as animal control, animal shelter, veterinarians

Halters, lead ropes

First-aid kit

Grooming tools

Water and feed buckets

Fly spray

Tack

Muck bucket, rake and shovel

Learn more about livestock preparations in Ready Colorado's Plan for Livestock guide. Taking these steps may help calm your anxiety about the potential for natural disaster – and will provide concrete help to ensure animal safety when time is of the essence.

Dr. Ragan Adams is a veterinarian and coordinator of Colorado State University's Veterinary Extension team. She is a senior research associate in the Department of Clinical Sciences and produced "Saving pets, saving people," a video about how two Colorado counties developed animal disaster response plans.

FEMA, Lowe's To Offer Tips, Methods To Prevent, Lessen Future Disaster Damage

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, July 14, 2016

As West Virginians repair or rebuild their homes damaged by last month's storms, floods, landslides and mudslides, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and local Lowe's Home Improvement stores have teamed up to provide free information, tips and literature on making homes stronger and safer.

FEMA mitigation specialists will be on hand, this week and next, at in-store information centers in five area locations to answer questions and offer home improvement tips and proven methods to prevent and lessen damage from future disasters. Most of the information is geared for do-it-yourself work and general contractors.

FEMA advisers will be available July 14-19 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily at Lowe's stores in:

Fayette County: 46 Fayette Town Center Road, Fayetteville

Nicholas County: 5200 W. Webster Road, Summersville

Kanawha County: 1000 Nitro Marketplace, Cross Lane

Cabell County: 700 Mall Road, Barboursville

Free reference booklets, in English and Spanish, with information on protecting your home from flood damage, will be available at all locations. More information about strengthening property can be found at fema.gov/what-mitigation.

West Virginians who have questions about their flood insurance policies and coverage should contact the National Flood Insurance Program call center at 800-621-3362 (Option 2) between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Specialists can help service claims, provide general information regarding policies, and offer technical assistance to aid in recovery.

Additional information on West Virginia's disaster recovery can be found by visiting fema.gov/disaster/4273, twitter.com/femaregion3, twitter.com/FEMA, facebook.com/FEMA, fema.gov/blog and the flood information pages at http://wvflood.com

Senate Passes FAA Funding Bill With Drone Directives

Radio Magazine, July 15, 2016

WASHINGTON – A bill authorizing continued funding for the Federal Aviation Administration lays out several directives pertaining to drones with regard to firefighting, air traffic control, research and mid-air collisions with manned aircraft.

On Wednesday, the Senate voted 90-4 to pass the ''FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016

" to extend funding for the agency through Sept. 30, 2017. The bill represents the third extension to reauthorize the FAA after the full, six-year reauthorization choked on a provision to privatize air traffic control. This latest 14-month extension is needs the president's signature by July 15, when current authorization ends and both the House and Senate adjourn for summer break.

The bill includes provisions for drones, or "unmanned aircraft systems," as they are referenced in the text. These provisions build on rules

for operating drones that the FAA established last month, most of which cover basic flight parameters such a altitude, line-of-sight operation, piloting qualification, restricted airspace and registration.

The FAA extension bill further directs the FAA to coordinate with the Department of the Interior and Agriculture Department to expedite the authorization of drones in firefighting. It also instructs the FAA to work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to do the same for drones used in efforts to restore utilities in the event of a major outage.

Also on the firefighting front, the bill authorizes the FAA to go after drone operators who interfere with wildfire suppression efforts with a fine of up to $20,000. Drones have become an increasingly common sight for pilots flying in flame retardant and fire jumping teams. Aircraft were temporarily grounded last month because of drone interference during efforts to contain a wildfire in the San Gabriel Mountains in Southern California, ars technica

reported. Firefighting aircraft were grounded last week after drones were spotted over the Saddle Fire in Utah, according to KSL

.

The bill further calls on the FAA to team up with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to continue developing an air traffic control system for drones, and figure out how to integrate it into the national airspace system, including the use of "decision-making by adaptive systems, such as sense-and-avoid capabilities and cyber-physical systems security."

NASA and the FAA also are directed to create comprehensive "testing or modeling" of drones colliding with jets, propeller and rotary aircraft of various sizes, speeds and points of contact.

Finally, the FAA will have to deliver a study to the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on "the potential use of probabilistic assessments of risks by the administration to streamline the integration of unmanned aircraft systems into the national airspace system, including any research and development necessary."

Kara Calvert, director of the Drone Manufacturers Alliance, released the following statement after the Senate vote: "The Drone Manufacturers Alliance is pleased the House and Senate have passed a short-term FAA extension bill. We applaud the inclusion of provisions to protect emergency responders from unauthorized drones, while also encouraging the use of drones to save lives and property in emergencies.

"However, new requirements for mandatory reporting statements and identification standards could end up limiting the benefits of drone technology, and these provisions will require careful coordination with the FAA to ensure they are implemented without stifling innovation.

"We look forward to working with congress and the FAA to advance a streamlined regulatory process for low-risk 'micro' drones and preserve the FAA's sole authority over unmanned aerial operations."

A Futuristic Marriage: Spy Satellites And Virtual Reality Could Pair To Aid Field Agents

FedTech Insider, July 14, 2016

U.S. government diplomats, officials and soldiers are often deployed to far-flung regions of the world and need to relay to officials back in Washington what they are seeing on the ground. Often, this is done via secure cables and electronic communications.

However, at some point in the future, those in the field could send back images that their stateside counterparts can access via virtual reality — letting them get a realistic look at what conditions are like on the ground using a VR headset. The agency that uses spy satellites to gather information and images from around the globe could be a key part of that effort.

Though it's in the early stages, Nextgov reported last month that conversations "have just started" between National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) immersion researchers and the agency's mobile application developers to merge VR and mobile apps, according to Joe Wileman, a researcher at NGA.
Bridging the Gap with VR

At NGA's headquarters in Springfield, Va., emerging technology developers are experimenting with Oculus Rift VR headsets and other gadgets to push the boundaries of the agency's tech ambitions.

Before, as Nextgov notes, those in the field could use a tripod-mounted scanner to take images that would then be composited into a 3D-panoramic view. However, using a smartphone camera and mobile apps, users can take photos of wherever they are —perhaps a streetscape somewhere, which could then be loaded into a generic building model at NGA. "We can then take those images and then overlay them on top of the building, so that our model becomes now the actual building," an unnamed agency researcher who spoke on background told Nextgov.

Wileman said an American embassy employee based in Nepal, for example, could use such technology to bring a Federal Emergency Management Agency official into a disaster zone if another earthquake shook the country, as occurred in April 2015.

Or perhaps, “we can’t afford to send somebody to Mogadishu [who can] walk around and see what it really looks” like, but “we may have somebody in a consulate who is in there who can take the day and take photos” to send those images back, another unnamed researcher told Nextgov.

What are the practical implications of such technology? Beyond relaying information about, and conditions of, a foreign location, it could help intelligence analysts assess whether or not it is safe for certain individuals to be in a specific area, or how intelligence officers could avoid detection, Nextgov notes.

In June, Lenovo released the PHAB2 Pro, billed as the world’s first Tango-enabled smartphone to enable augmented reality experience. Project Tango, which Google first unveiled in early 2014, lets mobile devices quickly and easily make a 3D map of an indoor space using 3D motion tracking and depth sensing.

Yet, as Nextgov notes, it’s unlikely that NGA will be rolling out similar gadgets in the near future, thanks to rigorous data security requirements imposed by the Department of Defense and the intelligence community. Still, it seems possible VR and spy satellites could be married at some point in the future.

Hospitals Prep To Treat Protesters And Delegates At Upcoming Conventions

By Dr. Mary Carr

WBT-AM Charlotte (NC), July 14, 2016

(CLEVELAND) – With thousands of people expected to pour into the cities of Cleveland and Philadelphia for the upcoming Republican and Democratic conventions, hospital health officials are prepping for any kind of medical emergency, both large and small.

In Cleveland, the three major health systems have been working out a coordination plan to ensure they can handle a mass casualty event and also everyday medical needs like helping a delegate get prescription drugs they forgot.

Dr. Michael Anderson, Chief Medical Officer University Hospitals Case Medical Center in Cleveland, told ABC News a hotline is being set up so all attendees can get easy access to medical help. He said if people need help getting medication or finding an urgent care center they can call the number. Additionally at the hospital – one of two Level-1 trauma centers in the city – the staff has been prepping for over a year to handle various crises.

“We said no vacation for trauma surgeons,” that week, Anderson said. In case of a mass casualty event, Anderson said the health system would be able to quickly accommodate multiple patients.

He said all staff have been warned to “have your cellphone, have a full tank of gas,” in case of emergency.

Anderson also said they’ve been consulting with experts about how to treat tear gas or pepper spray injuries if needed. He pointed out that all hospitals in the region must have enough supplies to be self-sufficient for 72 hours in case of emergency.

At Cleveland Clinic, officials have put into place 200 surge plans in place to address everything from an increased number of dehydration cases to mass disaster responses.

“We’ve been planning for this for the past year-and-a-half in concert with the other health systems here in Cleveland,” a spokeswoman for Cleveland Clinic told ABC News in a statement. “We have done numerous drills in preparation for the upcoming convention with the city of Cleveland and others.”

MetroHealth System, which runs the other Level-1 trauma center in Cleveland, said they expedited construction on a new ICU center to ensure they had extra beds before the convention and all staff are expected to be ready to respond.

“We have been preparing for a while and will be adequately staffed,” Hospital spokeswoman Tina Arundel told ABC News. “There are no vacations and people are expected to be here.”

Hospital team members also take part in FEMA training regularly in order to prepare for large-scale events.

“They learned how information flows, who makes what decisions when coordinating with cities, counties, etc. and even went through full scale exercises,” at the training, a Arundel told ABC News.

In Philadelphia, officials said past events like the papal visit have helped them prep for the upcoming influx of visitors.

Mark Ross, Regional Manager of Emergency Preparedness for the Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania, said they have planning for the Democratic National Convention for months.

“This is a big city, we do big events, we’ve had a few recently here with the papal visit and the unfortunate events around Amtrak 188,” said Ross. “We routinely meet plan, exercise, and coordinate between healthcare and all our other partners in emergency management, law enforcement, fire, EMS."

Tom Runkle, Associate Administrator at Hahnemann University Hospital, administrators have been prepping different responses for a variety of disaster events.

"We have an administrative team that will be on standby that week and will be on call in the event something occurs," said Runkle. "If we have large crowds we're expecting to see a lot of dehydration, heat exhaustion, so we're stocked up with cases of bottled water that we'll have available. We have 150 cases of bottled water."

In case of a major event the medical staff has been going through multiple drills to prepare.

"We normally do seven to nine drills a year," he said. "We just change the scenarios to kind of reflect what's going on in the environment. We just did a mass casualty drill three weeks ago."

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

No stories for this edition

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

No stories for this edition

FEMA CORPS

No stories for this edition

PRIVATE SECTOR

No stories for this edition

CITIZEN CORPS

No stories for this edition

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Tears And Laughter: Wilcox County

By Amanda Walker

Alabama Live, July 14, 2016

As I have said before, not everything here is beautiful. Headlines that make it across the county line are seldom positive. During the past week we have had three gang related shootings that reportedly stem back to the fatal May 29 shooting at the Flip Flop Club. The shootings have had everyone's attention.

A lot of people also turned their attention to the hearing Thursday evening that finalized the EMA director being relieved of her position. Anytime there is a job opening in Wilcox County involving a salary and a car, it always creates somewhat of a hustle and shuffle.

Still others were angry that there are county commissioners who have had time to already begin trying to sabotage reelection campaigns of fellow commissioners two years from now, but who did not have the leadership ability to make sure employees in positions the commission supervises were meeting important deadlines. The state EMA Director had to make a special trip to a commission meeting in order to spell out the problem. As a result of the incompetence, the county lost out on just over $400,000 in disaster assistance relief from FEMA.

Maybe it is the heat and humidity that has everyone so sensitive, but anyone not upset over the shootings, or the lost money or worried over who will replace the EMA director, seemed to be offended by a picture that was on the back page of last week's Wilcox Progressive Era. It was a picture of a couple of young guys playing around at the river the way young guys play around in 2016, but it was perceived by some readers as being distasteful.

This was amusing to me. I found it interesting that a silly picture truly offended people, but for about three weeks straight the facts about the Commission Chairman having a sexual relationship with a student while he was teacher were spelled out in great detail and it didn't seem to overly offend too many. It didn't even seem to bother local advocates of abused women and children...partly, I suppose, because so many of them already knew. And I think that speaks a lot about a person's character. It's the type of thing you can genuinely judge someone on. So rationally, it would seem a man disqualified by the state to teach children should be by default no longer qualified to lead an Alabama County. But...I guess there needed to have been pictures.

So it is true that Wilcox County can often look a bit like a disaster area from a distance, but what we have now is the opportunity to learn from one another. We have a mingling of races and cultures and ages. We are all imperfect and have all fallen short of the glory. There has to be some hope of finding harmony and moving forward, as the alternative serves no one well.

When a destructive storm blows through all you can do in the aftermath is what is directly in front of you. Whatever is within your reach and ability, and in doing that, you arrive at something more that needs to be done and then you do that too. It's the same with cleaning up your own act or cleaning up the county's image and reputation. If we all to the best of our being do over and over, the things we are individually charged with doing, and if we will do them truthfully and in accordance with what best serves our community as a whole, we should shortly find ourselves better than we thought us to be. We owe it to our children to at least try and set a functional example for the future.

We Are Stronger After Hurricane Dennis

By Lisa Newell

Gulf Breeze (FL) News, July 14, 2016

It passed without much fanfare, but back in 2005, it was front page news. Jim Cantore from the Weather Channel was setting up to broadcast live from Pensacola Beach in what was anticipated to be a direct hit by Hurricane Dennis, just 10 months after Hurricane Ivan shocked us with its power.

Many people were still living in FEMA trailers, many houses were still sporting "blue roofs" or tarps to cover damage from the previous storm.

The MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) were still in the pantry, a reminder of the situation we were in after Ivan.

People were still experiencing post traumatic stress disorder from Ivan's impact. Some lost everything, down to the concrete slab. Others found everything ruined by rising water.

Others had minimal damage but were still affected by the losses in their community, the disruption of services and the disruption of routines. Schools were canceled for months. The high school gym was still not repaired. Churches became makeshift care centers, providing sandwiches and kindness while people applied for benefits from the Federal Emergency Management Association.

Many others were still negotiating settlements with their insurance companies.

Now, here was another storm gathering strength in the Gulf, ready to threaten whatever we had rebuilt in the previous 10 months.

Hurricane Dennis made landfall near Navarre on July 10 and the impact was most intense to the east. However, as a "dry storm," Hurricane Dennis knocked out power to many Gulf Breeze homes for many days.

Although Dennis didn't find much to destroy in Gulf Breeze that wasn't already destroyed by Hurricane Ivan, Dennis packed quite a punch economically.

Several families decided enough was enough and sold their homes to move inland and a housing glut took the place of the housing shortage that Ivan caused. Investments in our area remained down through the Great Recession and the Deepwater Horizon disaster in 2010.

We are turning the corner now, and most of our homes are built to withstand strong storms but we've also endured higher insurance premiums and a bit of cynicism over what your policy will cover. We are wiser and stronger but we must remain vigilant against the next storm.

Bay Area Leaders, Community Members Discuss Obama Town Hall

KGO-TV San Francisco, July 14, 2016

SAN FRANCISCO –

The conversation continued online following President Barack Obama's historic town hall on ABC7. We gathered Bay Area leaders and community members for perspective where you live.

This local event, that took place at 9 p.m. on abc7news.com and ABC7 News on KOFY-TV 20, will be available to watch online on Friday.

Our guests included:

Allwyn Brown – Richmond Police Chief

Chief Allwyn Brown has been a sworn member of the Richmond Police Department for over 30 years, serving as assistant police chief between July 2015 and January 2016, and then he was appointed interim police chief. He was promoted to sergeant in 1994 – then later served as acting lieutenant for one year helping to institute a new policing system before being promoted to captain in January 2008. He served as one of two deputy chiefs in the Department between 2010 and 2015. Chief Brown attended POST's Supervisory Leadership Institute (Class 86), and he is a graduate of Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute for Police (SMIP). He holds a Master's Degree in HR Management and an undergraduate degree in Business/HR Management.

http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/82/Police-Department

Antwan Wilson – Superintendent of Oakland Unified School District

Before serving as Superintendent of Oakland Unified School District, Antwan Wilson was the Assistant Superintendent for Post Secondary Readiness in Denver Public Schools for six years where he led

Denver's Middle, High, and Intensive Pathway Schools.

Under his leadership in Denver, there were significant improvements in graduation rates, reductions in drop-out rates, increases in students entering college, a doubling of enrollment and qualifying score rates in Advanced Placement courses, tripling of Concurrent Enrollment college-level courses, and a revamping of the district's Intensive Pathway Options.

Prior to this role, Antwan served as a high school principal in a high poverty neighborhood and as a middle school principal in Denver Public Schools and Wichita Public Schools respectively. Antwan has also worked as an assistant high school principal and as a middle and high school classroom teacher in Wichita, KS, Lincoln, NE, and Raleigh, NC.

Antwan graduated with Distinction from Nebraska Wesleyan University with a Degree in History-Social Science Education with Minors in Women's Studies and Minority Studies. In addition to an advanced degree in School Leadership Degree from Friends University, Antwan is a graduate of The Broad Academy class of 2014.

Antwan and his wife – a career educator – have been married for 18 years and have three children – a middle school student, and two elementary school students who attend public schools.

www.ousd.org

Arash Daneshzadeh – Communities United For Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)

Dr. Arash Daneshzadeh is a scholar-activist, and former war-displaced refugee, whose research in the UC Davis School of Education, centers around the decriminalization of historically dehumanized youth of color. He is the author of scholarly articles, books, and op-eds that focus on youth incarceration including: How Whiteness Stole Justice, Dismantling The School To Prison Pipeline: An Anthology of Solutions, Unhooking From Whiteness: Volume 3, Hip Hop & Dismantling The School To Prison Pipeline. He is the editor for the Journal of Peace Studies, and serves as an editor for the Journal of Culture and Education. The crux of his praxis converges on the intersections between youth incarceration, indigenous incarnations restorative justice, hip hop pedagogy, identity formation, and organizational theory. Dr. Daneshzadeh is a faculty member at the University of San Francisco-- School of Education, as well as faculty for the Prison University Project at San Quentin State Penitentiary. He currently serves as the Director of Programs at CURYJ (Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice) in Oakland, California. Learn more about his work at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw9tD6sdH24 and curyj.org.

Carroll Fife – Oakland Alliance

Carroll Fife is an organizer, educator and mother who has lived and worked in Oakland for the past 30 years. As founder and co-chair of Oakland Alliance, Carroll works to increase access to jobs, housing, and quality education for disenfranchised Oakland residents. As an educator, Carroll focuses on the impacts of race and income inequality on student achievement, developing holistic, culturally affirming curriculum to engage urban students in life saving education. As an activist, Carroll is a leader in the Oakland Alliance, OaklandWORKS, Oakland Justice Coalition, the State of Black Oakland Central Coordinating Committee, and the Post Salon Community Assembly, just to name a few. In 2014, Carroll served as the Campaign Coordinator for Dan Siegel for Mayor of Oakland, which ultimately became the moral compass for all other mayoral candidates that year. She was also a delegate to the DNC's 2016 Platform Committee where she held the line for radical, grassroots values. Carroll is currently employed as a legal assistant and apprentice at Siegel & Yee, a prestigious Oakland civil rights law firm that primarily represents whistleblowers and victims of police violence and employment discrimination.

www.oaklandalliance.org

Casey Griffin – Parent Activist from The Village Method (Union City)

I am a career public servant for 25 plus years and enjoy serving others through leadership. I am happily married with a blended family of five children and five grandchildren. In my spare time, I support my local community in a few ways. I serve as President of a local actors guild and, serve as a Parent Ambassador for The Village Method (TVM) initiative.

www.thevillagemethod.org

Chris Copeland – Retiree

I spent my childhood moving around the world (Turkey and Germany, and many US stations) with my family, being an Air Force brat.

I spent 38 years in the insurance industry, and retired five years ago as a Vice President and Executive General Adjuster in the claim department of a Major insurance company. My father was an officer in the USAF, and he taught me to shoot, from the age of seven. I have been a competitive shooter in various disciplines for all of my adult life. I am now 66 years old, and still competing.

I am an alumnus of the FBI Citizens Academy, and have been a volunteer role player for SF FBI SWAT on many occasions. I have also been a role player for FEMA training, including being trapped in a collapsed building for two hours. The fire fighters who tried to rescue me were finally told to "black Tag" ,me on the grounds that it was unlikely that I would survive for the additional two hours it would have taken to get me out. Black Tag, means administer a large dose of morphine and leave to die. This was all simulated in the actual collapsed building located at the FEMA training site at Moffett Field.

I have been the photographer for more than a dozen Community Theatre productions, and acted in one, playing Wiley Post in "The Will Rodgers Follies". I have one magazine cover, and dozens of published photos .I live on two acres of redwood forest in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Christopher (Chris) Bridges – Equal Justice Society

Chris is a graduate of Northeastern University School of Law, where he served as an active member of the Black Law Students Association, the Asian Pacific Law Students Association, and the Latin American Law Students Association. He also holds an MS in Criminal Justice from Michigan State University and a BS in Political Science and BA in Criminal Justice, both from North Carolina Central University. Chris began his legal career in 2012 with the ACLU of Northern California as the Racial Justice Project Fellow, where he worked on school to prison pipeline issues as a member of the Education Equity team. Chris began his work at the Equal Justice Society in Oakland as the Butler Koshland Fellow and is currently focusing on school discipline and education issues as well as inequities within the criminal justice system. To aid in these efforts, Chris is using social science, structural analysis, and real life experiences to help broaden conceptions of present-day discrimination to include implicit bias.

www.equaljusticesociety.org

John Dennis – Republican Party

John Dennis is Nancy Pelosi's 3-time former opponent for Congress. He is the former chairman of the Republican Liberty Caucus of California, currently serves on the national board of the RLC, is a member of the San Francisco Republican Central Committee and is a California Republican Party delegate.

www.sfgop.org

Joseph Jackson – Richmond Youth Council

I am a native of Richmond, CA and product of my environment, I am a community leader, advocate and believer in change in our communities. I am a Police Explorer with a local police department and what many called an endangered race with having the status of being a young black man.

http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/1074/Richmond-Youth-Council

Kamau Walton – Black Lives Matter

Kamau Walton is a member of Black Lives Matter Bay Area and Critical Resistance. Since the Black Friday 2014 BART Shutdown they have supported and participated in several Black-led direct actions across the Bay Area. In 2014 they were the lead coordinator in the fight to stop Urban Shied and increased militarization in communities of color in the Bay Area. Kamau has also worked against the violence of policing as one of many leaders in the successful fight to stop civil gang injunctions in Oakland, as well as worked to abolish solitary confinement during and following the historic prisoner hunger strikes in California in 2011 and 2013.

www.blacklivesmatter.com

Reverend Kurt Kuhwald – Bay Area SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice)

Rev. Kurt A. Kuhwald is a Unitarian Universalist Community minister and a member of the Coordinating Committee of Bay Area SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice). He has served as an anti-racist trainer and workshop leader for the national Unitarian Universalist Association and within a California-wide Community College Counseling professional group. Trained as a psychotherapist, mediator, Special Ed. teacher and liberal minister, his passion is racial and climate justice and Conscious Eldering.

www.showingupforracialjustice.org

Laurie Valdez – Concerned Parent from Silicon Valley DeBug

•Partner Antonio Guzman Lopez shot and killed by police two years ago, and she has since become a powerful and compelling voice around police and race issues in San Jose.

•Son Josiah suffers in the shadows of trauma and aftermath

www.siliconvalleydebug.org

www.Justice4Josiah.org

Mandela Schumacher-Hodge – Kapor Capital

A former public school teacher, education policy researcher, and PhD candidate, Mandela Schumacher-Hodge began her career in tech as startup founder. After raising funds from Kapor Capital, 500 Startups, and Imagine K12, Mandela's company, Tioki, went on to build technology that helped hundreds of schools across the country secure great teachers for their students. Thereafter, she was recruited to Startup Weekend Education (SWEDU). In just two years, Mandela and her team successfully scaled the organization from three to six continents, officially establishing it as the largest initiative in the world focused on teaching people how to use entrepreneurship to improve education.

In October 2015, Mandela joined Kapor Capital as its founding Portfolio Services Director. At the Oakland-based venture capital firm, Mandela oversees a portfolio of 114 tech startups, helping them make progress on their business, social impact, and diversity goals. Most recently, Mandela helped launch a first-of-its-kind venture-backed diversity pledge titled the Founders' Commitment. 77 companies in the Kapor Capital portfolio have already signed on, and over the next year, Mandela will work alongside acclaimed diversity expert and Kapor Capital Partner, Dr. Freada Kapor Klein, to develop diversity workshops and resources to help founders make progress on their Commitment.

Over the past five years, Mandela has advised hundreds of aspiring entrepreneurs and her writings on Medium and Forbes are a reflection of those lived experiences. To-date, Mandela has presented on over 50 stages and has received several recognitions, including being named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 in Education list, presenting at TEDx, and publishing three Top 20 Medium articles.

www.kaporcapital.com

Maria Poblet – Causa Justa::Just Cause

María Poblet is Executive Director of Causa Justa :: Just Cause. She is Chicana and Argentine, with extensive experience in Latino community organizing, connecting the provision of services to organizing and leadership development. She led the merger between St. Peter's Housing Committee and Just Cause Oakland that created Causa Justa :: Just Cause, and the subsequent merger integrating POWER (People Organized to Win Employment Rights). This strategic growth aggregated the power of neighborhood-based Latino & African American organizing, creating a single, regional, multi-racial powerhouse for racial and economic justice. Next City named her a US Vanguard Fellow -one of 40 leaders under 40 inspiring better cities. Under her leadership, CJJC's work addressing racialized displacement has earned a number of Awards, including the Patiño-Moore Legacy Award for breaking down barriers between Latino and African American communities, and building a national movement to ensure the well-being of all America's families. Within and beyond her role at Causa Justa, María is active in social movements, serving in the leadership of the US Social Forum, the Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, and various progressive formations. She is a founder of the US chapter of the World March of Women. Maria had the privilege of being mentored by June Jordan, and was the Artistic Director of Poetry for the People before she fell in love with community organizing.

www.cjjc.org

Michelle Meow – SF Pride Board President

Michelle Meow, host and producer of "The Michelle Meow Show," is your A-Z, covering the LGBT, LMNOP, and everyone in between. She attended San Francisco State University and received a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism and shortly after, started her career in radio. Michelle's show can be heard in San Francisco and nationally on the Progressive Voices Network. The local TV show can be seen on KOFY TV, Ch 20/ Cable 713 Sunday nights at 930pm. Michelle has also been a co-host of the San Francisco Pride Parade broadcast since 2006. She is currently the President of the San Francisco Pride Board of Directors. She is a self-described LGBT history geek, information sponge, and a lover not a fighter. On the weekends, she can be found laying around with her cat and partner humming a song she's never heard of.

www.michellemeow.com

www.sfpride.org

Rachel Williams – Yelp

Rachel Williams returned to Yelp in 2014 to assume the role of Head of Diversity and Inclusion. She is currently focused on building Yelp's diversity initiatives to accelerate action. Having grown up in San Mateo, CA, Rachel often found that she was one of only a couple faces of color in her classrooms. This early awareness of her own differences inspired her thirst for increased diversity and inclusion at a young age.

With a B.A. in Psychology from UC Berkeley and more than 15 years of human resources experience in a variety of industries including technology, life sciences, consumer products and retail, Rachel has honed her expertise in recruitment, organizational development, and strategic change activities. She is thrilled to be able to narrow her focus on Diversity and Inclusion, a very important element of the employee experience and a passion for Rachel. She returns to Yelp after most recently serving as the Head of Talent Acquisition for ClearSlide. She has also held talent acquisition roles at SolarCity, Peet's Coffee & Tea as well as an executive search consultant for venture capitalists.

www.yelp.com

Ronald Shaw – Richmond Youth Service Bureau

Dr. Susan DeMersseman – Child Psychologist

Susan DeMersseman, Ph.D. is a psychologist and writer in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she has worked with children and families for more than 30 years. This has given her a backstage pass to the wonderful and challenging world of parenting.

Dr. DeMersseman grew up in South Dakota and has shared that experience and the rich community of the Bay Area with her husband and her now grown children. When she appears on local media or at parent workshops she is often introduced as a "parenting expert," a label she describes as her favorite oxymoron (followed closely by sweet "sixteen").

Dr. DeMersseman's writing has appeared in many national publications and in several books. This book and her website offer a sensible and sometimes humorous approach to being a parent. Her blog includes articles on raising children, gardens, and awareness.

www.thegoodenoughparent.org

Tur-Ha Ak – Community READY Corps

www.crc4sd.org

Walter Katz – San Jose Independent Police Auditor

Walter Katz is the Independent Police Auditor for the City of San José. He is an attorney who was appointed by Mayor Sam Liccardo and the City Council in November of 2015 and he assumed his responsibilities this past January. Previously, Mr. Katz served as a Deputy Inspector General for the County of Los Angeles Office of Inspector General (OIG) which oversees the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. In that role, he led the Inspector General's effort in monitoring the LASD's body-worn camera implementation program and developed a framework for increased transparency by the LASD to disclose use of force and civilian complaint information to the public through open data. Prior to the Inspector General, he was an attorney at its predecessor agency, the Office of Independent Review, where he monitored and reviewed the LASD's investigations of deputy-involved shootings and disciplinary investigations. Mr. Katz has also advised other police agencies and municipalities in their reform efforts.

Mr. Katz is active in the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), where he serves on the Training, Education and Standards Committee and has frequently been a panelist or moderator on open data, accountability and transparency issues. He has written about police accountability in the Harvard Law Review Forum and The New York Times. Prior to his work in civilian oversight of law enforcement, he served a deputy public defender in Southern California for seventeen years.

He received his law degree from the McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento and his undergraduate degree from the University of Nevada, Reno.

Are Elected Officials Doing Enough For Flood Relief?

By Rachel Ayers

WOAY-TV Bluefield (WV), July 14, 2016

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS-- White Sulphur Springs is working hard to rebuild after flood waters destroyed much of the town. While residents work tirelessly to rebuild, some feel elected officials like Congressman Evan Jenkins aren't doing enough.

"When I would get home from volunteering all day long I would get on Facebook. I've heard people talking about Mr. Jenkins coming and helping them, but I would get on Facebook and almost every hour he was able to be on there posting things and taking pictures. That's great to let everyone know what is going on, but then it goes a little deeper and you realize is he really helping. It's more than just taking a picture of where you are. It was upsetting to be out here working all day while he is on his phone being escorted around with his staff taking pictures," Nick Irvine said.

Irvine claims that Jenkins came to homeowners and offered them little help, but not before snapping a photo.

"He came to visit my neighbor who is currently pregnant and her house was destroyed," Irvine said. "He said FEMA will help you and we will get you taken care of. Later FEMA compensated her less than two thousand dollars and he took a picture and was gone. It's really upsetting for someone in that situation to get a hey I'm here and see you are doing pretty bad but let me get a picture with you."

Some of the photos Jenkins posted were from Emmanuel United Methodist Church in White Sulphur. Pastor Shari Stilgenbaur says his visit there was a positive one.

"We had a truck come with supplies for the people in need and he happened to be here. He and two of his assistants just jumped right in. They grabbed dusk masks and started unloading the truck. I got kinda tickled. That truck has Lyme in it that had made a mess and they grabbed some brooms and started sweeping that truck out," Stilgenbaur said.

But Jenkins' Facebook posts aren't the only thing that has Irvine concerned.

"He posted mobile office hours and they aren't really neat any disaster hours and they are only open for an hour," Irvine said. "He claims he can cut through all this red tape with FEMA, but how many people are you actually going to help that need it in one hour?"

We reached out to Congressman Jenkins' press secretary and received no response at the time of this story. We also reached out to Jenkins' current political rival Matt Detch. His press manager who also happens to be his sister said they cannot comment on Mr. Jenkins' involvement in flood relief, but did say "I need to point out something people may not realize about my brother – he is HIGHLY allergic to mold. Even though he can barely breathe, and his eyes are red and swollen, he has been out cleaning. It would have been very easy for him to say he couldn't clean. He, however, hasn't complained or made any excuses."

We will see how the floods have impacted this political race come November, but Mr. Irvine says he probably won't be voting for Jenkins' re-election.

Should State Bail Out Flooded Businesses?

By Hoppy Kercheval

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, July 15, 2016

Dozens of West Virginia business men and women who were flooded out in the June 23 storm face the difficult and life-changing decision of whether or not to rebuild.

Individual flood victims can qualify through the Federal Emergency Management Agency for direct cash grants, with a maximum of $33,000, to help them get back on their feet.

Businesses do not qualify for cash assistance. Instead, they can receive loans from the Small Business Administration.

However, many business owners, especially if they are older, are reluctant to take on a big loan at 4 percent interest for up to 30 years. If they don't or can't, many of these flooded businesses will never reopen, causing even greater economic hardship in communities that were struggling before the flood.

Should the state step in and help out? House Speaker Tim Armstead, R-Kanawha, whose district includes hard-hit Clendenin, believes it should. "I think we've got to," Armstead said.

"I'm not for handouts, [but] this is make or break for them. In the long run, it's a sound investment."

Gov. Tomblin is open to the idea, but cautious. "We want to do everything to get these businesses open again, but how far can we go? There is a finite amount of money that the state would have available to put into a program like that."

It's a conundrum.

On one hand, what is the taxpayers' obligation to help out an unfortunate victim of the flood? Some of the businesses in the flood plain are protected because they bought flood insurance from the federal government, while others rolled the dice or never imagined the water would reach their doors.

But on the other hand, one could argue the government has a moral obligation to provide assistance to all those impacted by a historic natural disaster.

Additionally, the state has an interest in helping maintain the health of communities.

Bill Ore owns and operates the Clendenin Pharmacy. The store, which has been a business landmark in the town for decades, was destroyed by the flood. He's operating temporarily out of a trailer, but doesn't know if he wants to take on massive new debt to stay in business.

"We are devastated," he told me. "We have no churches, we have no bank, no grocery store. We have nothing. I just think they should be putting more help in here to get people started again, but it doesn't look like they are going to."

Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper supports the concept of cash grants from the state to damaged businesses. "It wouldn't take that much to take care of the businesses in the entire flooded area of the county."

Maybe not for one county, but there are a dozen counties that had flood damage with perhaps a couple hundred businesses that need immediate assistance to keep their doors open.

How much can an already cash-strapped state afford to hand out? How do you administer such a program to determine which requests are legitimate? Are some businesses more worthy or viable than others?

Under normal circumstances, free market principles should apply with businesses rising or falling based on their merit with the government acting as a neutral observer. But these are not normal times.

This is a historic disaster that will alter the nature of communities forever. Public policy makers must give that serious consideration as they decide what investment the state should or should not make rebuilding devastated businesses.

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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National News

11 Years After Katrina, FEMA Has Learned From Its Failures

By Richard Rainey

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 27, 2016

After striding among piles of broken drywall, soggy carpets, and mud-stained sideboards on a sun-drenched street in Zachary early this week, President Barack Obama did to FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate what George W. Bush did 11 years ago to his own disaster chief, Michael Brown, in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Obama praised him.

"Somebody who I can't brag enough about," he said of Fugate. "One of the best hires I made as president."

By most accounts, Fugate has steered a seamless federal response to the Louisiana flood of 2016, earning Obama's plaudits but also praise from local officials and residents who say the agency has responded quickly to immediate needs.

But Bush's words in early September 2005, spoken from an airplane hangar in Mobile, Ala. — "And Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job" — became a sarcastic catchphrase for FEMA's botched response to the costliest hurricane ever to hit the Gulf

Coast. Aid was late or non-existent, locals complained of confusion and obstruction. Brown would resign days after accepting his boss' praise.

Approaching the 11th anniversary of Katrina's landfall Monday (Aug. 29), those two scenes between a president and his emergency manager bookend a startling evolution of a federal agency from maligned incompetence to a well-coordinated disaster response team. And Louisiana, once the stone on which FEMA stumbled, is now the beneficiary of that transformation as it recovers from a deluge.

It's unfair, admittedly, to compare this month's flood to the one that followed Katrina. Central Louisiana was struck by a massive rain event that forced rivers and bayous over their banks and into towns. Thirteen people died. Katrina's waters were from a man-made disaster, wrought by faulty levees that left houses underwater for weeks. St. Bernard Parish and swaths of the North Shore were swamped and flattened. More than 1,800 people died.

Katrina became FEMA's crucible, one that it did not quickly rise to meet.

"It was probably one of the largest disasters they had to work on, and I've got to say — and I know that they had a lot of great people back then — they weren't really organized for a large-scale operation. That was pretty obvious," said Kevin Davis, former St. Tammany Parish President and director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness under Gov. Bobby Jindal.

After levees failed across New Orleans and water poured into the streets, disarray marked the response. With faint understanding of the city's topography, Brown and FEMA's top brass weren't aware of the magnitude of the flood. They dismissed reports from Marty Bahamonde, FEMA's only staffer on the ground, that the 17th Street Canal wall had broken and later that 80 percent of New Orleans was underwater. Brown told CNN that FEMA didn't know for three days that hundreds of people were trapped at the Convention Center with no food or water.

After rescues were well underway, FEMA turned away offers of personnel and supplies from the Department of Interior and denied a request from the state Wildlife & Fisheries agency for 300 rubber boats. It was slow to provide food, shelter, and supplies to first responders and stranded residents alike. Its leaders bickered with Gov. Kathleen Blanco and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin over who was in charge.

And when the response switched to recovery, there were the infamous FEMA trailers, those glorified recreation vans, hastily built and steeped in toxic resins, that populated yards and vacant lots for years after the storm.

They were only supposed to be in place for up to 18 months. The last one purportedly left New Orleans in February 2012, more than six years into the recovery. By then it was the wrong kind of icon: a symbol of FEMA's grinding, inept bureaucracy.

Brown and others were hauled before Congress in the days and weeks after Katrina. From those testimonies grew an eventual overhaul of the way the agency responds to large-scale disasters.

FEMA hadn't always been in disarray. Dinged for a similarly slow response to Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the agency had improved during the Clinton years. It's director, James Lee Witt, earned praise from Democrats and Republicans for his response to the Oklahoma City bombing and other disasters.

Then the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 changed the world. FEMA was rolled into the newly created Department of Homeland Security, and terrorism threats replaced natural disasters as the catastrophes warranting the most attention.

"If you look at the history of FEMA, we tended to grow and get resources after a bad response, and when we were doing well, resources got pulled away," said Fugate, who was director of Florida's emergency management in 2001. "And so, when you look at 9/11, nobody questioned FEMA's response, from deployment of the Urban Search and Rescue Teams to the recovery. By and large, FEMA did its job. But in the creation of what I like to refer to as an era, when almost everybody went to look at terrorism attacks, I was kind of looking around going, 'Last time I checked, hurricanes didn't stop.'"

Rather than stand up a new state homeland security department, Fugate's boss at the time, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, instead pumped federal funding into Florida's emergency management programs.

"Quite honestly, we were able to maximize the infusion of homeland security dollars and the attention on terrorism to build a much more robust, capable response that then paid off in the '04 hurricane seasons and again in '05," Fugate said.

Fugate carried that fundamental understanding — that states and local governments are best suited to be the first responders in a disaster — with him when Obama hired him to run FEMA in May 2009. By then FEMA had undergone a dramatic revamp to reconcile its failures during Katrina. Its role as a secondary, support organization was more clearly defined. It was given more autonomy within DHS to manage a response to a disaster. And Its budget was increased.

During Katrina, Brown testified Katrina ran on about $1 billion. In 2016, that budget was $13.9 billion.

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"It's a 180-degree turn," said Davis, who had testified before Congress after the 2005 storm. "We got through Katrina. It was very lengthy and bureaucratic, and people were being moved in and out of the organization regularly so you had no continuity of knowledge at the time ... but I think it awakened on the federal level the need to reevaluate their response to a state when a call is made. And I have to say they've done a great job."

Congress also put aside a $2 billion disaster relief fund that FEMA can tap to get ready for a disaster, even before an official declaration. It's that tranche that Fugate tapped to spend $127 million in the immediate wake of this month's floods.

Out of that 2005 catastrophe, FEMA eventually emerged as a bright spot. Fugate credited major overhauls of federal law after Katrina and the Obama administration's willingness to overreact to a potential disaster rather than wait for it to unfold.

"Previously, you're always pretty much waiting for the governor to ask before you did it, and the problem with that is you're maybe a day or two or three days into something by the time you get asked, and we're not that nimble," he said. "So we're fortunate that President Obama has made it very clear that he'd rather err on getting there and not being needed than not being there at all."

One outward sign of FEMA's new approach are the temporary homes it plans to deploy in the 20 parishes drenched in the August floods. These are prefabricated, modular homes with two or three bedrooms and access ramps for those with physical disabilities. While they cost more — between $59,000 and $69,000 — than the glorified RV trailers that dotted lawns and landscapes after Katrina, they signal FEMA's pivot in philosophy from "What can we afford to do?" to "What do people need?"

"I'm proud to call these FEMA trailers," Fugate said in an interview Thursday. "They're not the RVs we were using. And again, it shouldn't be taken that the RV industry doesn't have a good product, it's just a product that's not designed for long-term housing."

The change is also evident in the push, learned during Superstorm Sandy in 2012, to gut homes quickly to reduce the need for temporary housing and preserve stricken communities. But more subtly it is a refashioned attitude at FEMA — what Obama called a "change of culture" — that has improved its ability to respond, Fugate said. The agency now recognizes that residents, business owners, local police, paramedics, firefighters are the best resources in the first minutes and hours of a disaster.

"While everybody from the Coast Guard to the state Fish & Wildlife, they get the press releases out about how many people they saved, you and I know that most people got saved because a neighbor knocked on a door or showed up in a boat," Fugate said. "If we'd waited for all the official stuff to kick in, we'd have lost more people.

"So I'm of the mind to look at the public as a resource, not a liability. Yeah, there are some crazy people out there doing stupid stuff, but we shouldn't use that to then frame the whole thing as 'We shouldn't have engaged the public because there's risk.' There's always going to be risk."

La. Congressional Delegation: Raise Federal Cost Share; Include Both Floods

Monroe (LA) News Star, August 27, 2016

Louisiana's congressional delegation has joined Gov. John Bel Edwards in asking for the federal government to take on a bigger share of the cost for flood response and recovery for both the August disaster in southern Louisiana and the March deluge in northern, central and southern Louisiana.

The delegation — Republican Sens. David Vitter and Bill Cassidy and Reps. Ralph Abraham, R-Alto, Steve Scalise, R-New Orleans, John Fleming, R-Minden, Cedric Richmond, D-New Orleans, and Charles Boustany, R-Lafayette — made the request in a letter sent to Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Craig Fugate on Friday.

They asked for the feds to bump up their share of the costs from 75 percent to 90 percent and include both floods as one.

Abraham has seen 22 of the 24 parishes in his 5th District declared major disasters in the March and August floods.

"We've been hurt mightily by these two disasters," said Abraham in an interview Saturday with USA Today Network of Louisiana. "We are all Louisianians. We want to make sure nobody gets left out of the box."

Thirty-six parishes were declared federal disasters in the March flood. Twenty have been declared in the

August flood, but the summer flood affected higher populated areas, thus causing more damage.

Each of the six congressional districts has had at least one parish flood this year. Some parishes have been affected by both flood events.

FEMA uses a formula to determine its share of disaster recoveries. To reach a 90 percent share, damage must reach the level of $137 per capita. With 4.6 million people in Louisiana, the total would have to reach $637 million. "We'll shatter that in both events," Abraham said.

"Louisiana has suffered tremendously this year, experiencing two federal disasters within just six months," Cassidy said in a statement. "More than half of our state has been somehow affected. That's why Rep. Abraham and I are asking FEMA to consider both of these disasters as one and to recommend a cost-share adjustment to the president."

The letter specifically requests FEMA consider both the flooding from March that affected northern, central and southern Louisiana and the current flood in southern Louisiana as a single disaster when making its cost-share reduction determination.

"I've seen the devastation up close — both from the flood in March and this historic recent flooding," Fleming said in a statement. "Given the magnitude of the damage, FEMA should reduce their cost share to help Louisianians get back on their feet again."

"The road to recovery for Louisiana will be long and costly, and we will need all the assistance we can get," Boustany said in a statement. "I urge the consideration of these devastating disasters together in order to provide timely relief for the thousands of flood victims throughout our state who desperately need it."

Jay Dardenne, Edwards' commissioner of administration, said the "request to consider the floods as a singular event is appropriate. It makes sense to roll them together," he said Saturday.

"It will make a huge difference for us as a state if we can reduce our cost share to 10 percent, particularly on the front end because we have to spend it first before we can be reimbursed," Dardenne said.

– Greg Hilburn, USA TODAY Network

Greg Hilburn covers state politics for the USA TODAY Network of Louisiana. Follow him on Twitter @GregHilburn1

Louisiana Will Need Congress' Help After Flooding

By Melinda Deslatte

Associated Press, August 28, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. – Insurance payments and traditional federal aid programs won't be enough to respond to the catastrophic flooding that ravaged tens of thousands of homes across south Louisiana, wrecking entire subdivisions and devastating entire cities.

Louisiana, once again, will be asking Congress to lend a hand to an ailing state.

But the state delegation lacks some of the seniority it once had, and stalemates in Congress have made it difficult to even get funding for a Zika virus response to final passage, raising worries that flood disaster aid may be hard to get.

Plus, several of Louisiana's congressional members voted against a Superstorm Sandy relief package only a few years ago, which could make it an uncomfortable ask of colleagues to help their state now.

The full scope of the flood's destruction is only starting to become clear as people rip out the insides of homes and deposit moldy carpets, soaked drywall, water-damaged furniture and heaps of personal belongings onto their front lawns.

Gov. John Bel Edwards estimates well over 100,000 homes took damage from the floodwaters. That doesn't count ruined businesses, fire stations, schools and other public buildings.

State officials first will need a better tally of the devastation to make a case for congressional assistance. As a preliminary request, Edwards asked President Barack Obama during his Tuesday visit to push Congress for federal block grant aid.

"This was a one in a thousand year flood event, and most of the affected homeowners did not, nor were required to, have flood insurance," the governor wrote in a follow-up letter handed to the President. "The (FEMA) individual assistance funds that will be available, while critical, will simply not be sufficient to allow our citizens to rebuild their homes."

Obama said he'll support the recovery effort, both through his oversight of existing federal aid programs and in urging further action from Congress.

"The whole country is going to continue to support you and help you until we get folks back in their homes and lives are rebuilt," the President told Louisiana residents.

In trying to negotiate a relief package, Louisiana should be helped by the clout of U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise, R-Metairie, the third-ranking GOP member of the House. In a statement, Scalise called making sure that assistance is available to flood victims his "top priority."

Congress isn't currently in session, but members of the Louisiana delegation say they've started laying the groundwork for aid requests.

"We're going to need some supplemental help," said U.S. Rep. Charles Boustany, R-Lafayette, whose district had widespread damage. "I just don't see any way out of it, when you have communities where 90 percent of homes were flooded."

Beyond block grant money, Boustany expects the agriculture industry will need specific aid. He's also looking at possible tax relief Congress could offer storm victims, like easing penalties for tapping into certain retirement accounts if people need the money to repair and rebuild.

Boustany, running for a Senate seat against U.S. Rep. John Fleming and 22 other opponents, said he's concerned a vote that Fleming, Scalise and U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy took against Sandy relief in 2013 may make it tougher for Louisiana to win support for flood aid.

"I warned members of our delegation and others who have experienced disaster that if you oppose Sandy relief you're going to come across as being hypocritical and the next time we need help, we may not have it," Boustany said.

Cassidy, R-Baton Rouge, said he voted for Sandy aid and has a track record of supporting disaster relief for states, but couldn't support legislation bulked up with "pure pork which was unrelated to Sandy." He said if his colleagues "vote against our folks" because of his Sandy vote, they are "deliberately misunderstanding" his position.

Fleming, R-Minden, offered a similar defense, saying he didn't support final passage of some Sandy aid because a long list of spending unrelated to direct storm response was added.

"I support the appropriate use of federal funds to help when disaster strikes," Fleming said in a statement.

Thousands of Louisiana residents will be waiting to see Congress' reaction.

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In Louisiana, The Political Mess May Outlast The Flood

By Andrew Vanacore

Politico Magazine, August 27, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — Imagine everything you own, dunked in dirty water and mounded on the curb outside your house. Old VHS tapes, the piano, the wardrobe, the family photos. The water came up so quickly you couldn't save anything. Now, imagine the same thing at the house next door and the one across the street. All the way down the block and the block after that. Ramparts of debris, piled head-high in front of every home. That's how things look right now across whole neighborhoods of Baton Rouge and the surrounding counties, or parishes as they're called in Louisiana. It's all the more breathtaking because it wasn't supposed to happen here. This isn't below-sea level New Orleans caught in the path of a hurricane. This is the high-and-dry state capital. This is where people fled after Hurricane Katrina, and, ironically, where many stayed, thinking they were finally out of harm's way.

And yet here we are, with 13 dead and perhaps 40,000 homes damaged (the estimate keeps climbing) after a storm that dropped more than 20 inches of rain in some areas over the space of a few days. Meteorologists pegged the odds of seeing an event like that in a given year at between 0.2 percent and 0.1 percent—a once-in-a-1,000-years storm. Nearly a third of the state has been declared a federal disaster area.

Two weeks after the rain finally stopped and the flooding began to recede, a reflexive need to help has taken hold. Co-workers, church groups and perfect strangers are still turning up to help stunned flood survivors tear out sodden drywall and insulation. Neighbors downriver, who have done all this before, are eager to lend a hand. As are the nonprofit groups that sprang up in Katrina's wake, with intimate knowledge to pass along about battling the red tape of the recovery bureaucracy and the black mold endemic to water-logged houses. While the flood was still rising around people's homes, a fleet of good Samaritans with fishing boats, known locally as the Cajun Navy, came to the rescue. In Lafayette, a city to the west of Baton Rouge where low-lying neighborhoods had been swallowed by the Vermilion River, I ran into a couple who had driven a half hour from Opelousas with a boat in tow. They were sick of watching the disaster unfold on Facebook and the TV news. "People need help," they said.

But this kind of goodwill is going to do only so much for beleaguered flood survivors. And that's where the politics of America's latest natural disaster will get dicey. Start with the local officials in charge of hauling off all of that putrid debris—the contractor in charge in Baton Rouge says he has enough trucks; we'll see—and go all the way up to Louisiana's new Democratic governor and the Washington lawmakers holding on to the federal purse strings. Data from the local chamber of commerce show there were twice as many homes inundated in the region as active flood insurance policies. Local officials estimate that nearly half the homes that took on water in East Baton Rouge weren't even inside areas where mortgage companies require flood coverage. If these people are going to fully recover, it will be up to state or federal taxpayers to bear the burden.

First, the good news. The man in charge at the Federal Emergency Management Agency these days is Craig Fugate and not Michael Brown, who became the face of a botched federal response after Katrina. Brown still argues—as recently as last year in this magazine, actually—that he was not to blame for the ghastly suffering that took place in the Superdome and elsewhere, saying the important decisions were out of his hands. But it's hard not to feel better about the new guy's track record. We learned in 2005 after Katrina that Brown, before his time at FEMA, used to work for the International Arabian Horse Association. Fugate's résumé is basically just a list of dozens of storms that he helped respond to while he was an emergency manager in Florida, first at the county level and then for the state. So far, he hasn't had a "heck of a job" moment damage his career the way Brown did.

A speedy, competent response on Fugate's part may redound to the benefit of his boss, although President Obama has already caught criticism for deciding not to cut short his vacation when the flooding hit. Donald Trump beat him to the ground and got his picture taken handing out supplies from the back of a truck. House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, who represents a congressional district near New Orleans, promptly issued a statement calling on Hillary Clinton to make the trip as well. And he made sure to point out that Clinton at the time was on a fundraising swing through "Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Silicon Valley and the Hamptons."

Scalise may have more of a role to play than issuing partisan news releases, however, which brings us to some of the problems Louisiana might run into should the state come to Congress for extra recovery dollars. The FEMA response is just a first step. The agency helps shelter flood survivors in the immediate aftermath of a storm and pays for some other incidentals. But up to only about $33,000 per person. The average is typically much less, say around $8,000. That won't cut it for people trying to replace a house without flood insurance. So it may not help that Scalise and two of his Republican colleagues from Louisiana voted against the $50 billion that Congress set aside for survivors of Hurricane Sandy in early 2013. They opposed the Sandy bill on grounds that it was stuffed with "pork barrel" spending unrelated to the storm. And granted, the package certainly did stretch the definition of emergency aid. Millions of dollars were set aside, for example, for projects aimed at mitigating the impact of future storms. And conservative groups were aghast at the $2 million earmarked to repair the roof at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

But the dust-up also reflected a new political reality. In 2005, a similarly-sized aid package for the states walloped by Katrina passed the Senate with a unanimous vote and drew opposition from only 11 House members. President George W. Bush was signing it a little more than a week after the storm. The states hit by Sandy, which killed 117 and did $70 billion in damage, had to wait three months, in part because Scalise and others pushed amendments to offset the relief by cutting other areas of federal spending. More than 200 Republicans voted against the final bill. (A year later, the conservative Heritage Foundation came out with a report bemoaning how often the states have come to rely on the federal government to pick up the recovery bill, and recommending the feds cut back on how frequently they declare official disasters.) No one from the New York or New Jersey delegations is threatening to derail future aid for Louisiana, but things could certainly get awkward in the next few months. Our state's Democratic governor, John Bel Edwards, has already presented Obama with a wish list, and it includes forgiveness for the money the state owes the federal government for improvements to the levees around New Orleans.

Here's another potential problem for Louisiana. By any definition, the flooding that hit Baton Rouge and other parts of Louisiana was a major event. But the storm—there doesn't seem to be another way to put it—has a bit of an image problem. For starters, it didn't have a name. Andrew, Sandy, Katrina. These are monikers that strike fear, at least for people of a certain age from certain parts of the country. What happened in Louisiana this month was an anonymous rainstorm. There was no edge-of-your-seat buildup as it crossed the Gulf of Mexico and took aim. There were no dramatic cable news images of sandbags being dropped into a breach in the levee. The New York Times got a scolding from its own public editor for failing to devote more resources to the coverage. It must have been hard for the rest of the country to sense any kind of emergency going on in the first place. And it will be the rest of the country devoting tax dollars to the cleanup, if Congress steps in.

Which, as anyone who lived through Katrina or Sandy knows, is only the start of what can go wrong. If Louisiana's delegation in Washington steps up and wrangles the extra money, it's likely to be the state's governor who handles getting it to the right people, a job that could be legacy-defining for him. Edwards pulled off a stunning upset to win office last year. He is the only Democrat elected to statewide office in Louisiana, a state whose shade of red has been deepening for a generation. And so far, his time in office has been devoted almost entirely to the state's woeful budget situation. Now, the governor's office is likely to be consumed by recovery efforts for the foreseeable future. The potential pitfalls are legion, and familiar in New Orleans: contractor fraud, grants that don't cover the real cost of repairs, confusion about the strings attached to federal dollars. Louisiana's last Democratic governor, Kathleen Blanco, was widely criticized for the headaches that plagued the Road Home program after Katrina. She declined to even run for a second term. If Edwards wants one, he may have to do better.

Andrew Vanacore is a New Orleans-based editor for the Advocate.

Louisiana, Its Floods, And The Presidential Question

By Douglas McCollam

The New Yorker, August 27, 2016

In Louisiana, the history of rain and flooding flows through the culture. Whether from the skies, the rivers, or the encroaching ocean, the people of the southern half of this subtropical state are pitted in a constant contest against water. Indeed, but for seasonal flooding through geologic history, much of the very land they live on would not exist.

But even for the Bayou State, the deluge that began on August 11th was extraordinary. More than two feet of rain fell in seventy-two hours across a wide band of the state north and west of New Orleans, causing local tributaries to reach flood stages never before recorded. More than sixty thousand homes and businesses were inundated. A sixty-mile stretch of Interstate 12 was shut down, stranding more than a hundred motorists in their cars. In all, more than a hundred thousand residents had to be evacuated out of the flood zone. And unlike the traditional televised countdown that precedes the arrival of hurricanes—complete with B-roll footage of cleared-out store shelves and boarded-up windows—the 2016 flood appeared more or less out of nowhere, a slow-moving low-pressure system conjured seemingly overnight.

The combination of the sudden onset of disaster and the perceived lack of attention to their plight by the national media produced strong feelings of aggrievement among the state's residents. And it didn't take long for that anger to home in on the figure of President Obama, who, for reasons that perplexed many victims, opted to ride out the disaster on Martha's Vineyard instead of visiting the flood zone or even tossing on a jacket and making some televised statement of support. Soon enough the meme of Obama in golf shorts squeezing in another eighteen holes juxtaposed with images of evacuated refugees and flooded communities began to circulate widely on social media. Matters weren't helped when Donald Trump showed up near Baton Rouge with a semi-trailer full of supplies. ("I think Obama just had a par on 16," one Baton Rouge friend texted me from the flood zone during Trump's visit).

The issue of federal response to natural disasters is, for obvious reasons, a touchy one in South Louisiana. It's been more than a decade, but memories of the federal government's botched response to Hurricane Katrina still vex many residents. In President Obama's seemingly nonchalant attitude, many saw a reminder of President George W. Bush's ineptitude in the days following that deadly hurricane. The comparison seems unfair based on the facts. Obama apparently stayed in close contact with Louisiana's Governor John Bel Edwards, who, concerned about diverting resources to cope with the Presidential entourage, said he was O.K. with Obama holding off on a visit. In stark contrast to the delays, red tape, and managerial incompetence that snarled the federal response to Katrina, Louisiana officials of both parties have praised the initial federal response to this month's flood. Craig Fugate, the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, was on site almost immediately, and more than a thousand FEMA staff members were deployed in the days after the storm. Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security, also toured the region.

Given that the federal government seems to have supplied all the requested help, worked closely with state officials, and been attentive to the needs of victims, it can be asked, What difference would it have made if the President had shown up earlier? Not that much, Obama seemed to say when addressing the criticism surrounding his delayed visit during a tour of the flood zone, earlier this week. "One of the benefits of being five months short of leaving here," he said at a curbside press conference in a Baton Rouge neighborhood, "is I don't worry too much about politics."

Part of the local criticism of Obama is certainly political. Louisiana is among the reddest states in the country, and many of the rural parishes north of New Orleans that were hit hardest by the flood are decidedly conservative. "You have to remember that in a poll taken just a few years ago a majority of Louisiana Republicans blamed Obama, not Bush, for the response to Katrina," John Barry, whose book "Rising Tide" is a definitive history of the great Mississippi River flood of 1927 that devastated Louisiana and other Southern states, says. Still, Barry thinks that Obama probably should have come South sooner. "Symbols are important. Physical presence matters," Barry says, noting that, for raising donations and drawing national attention, little competes with a Presidential visit. "This event didn't really register in a huge way in the national psyche."

The politics of disaster response can be unpredictable. During the 1927 flood, President Calvin Coolidge designated Herbert Hoover, his Secretary of Commerce, to head flood-relief efforts, declining to get personally involved or even to visit the flood zone despite a national clamor that he do so. Hoover used the publicity he garnered as flood savior as a springboard to the White House the following year. The decision at the time by local political and financial power brokers to dynamite the levees south of New Orleans to save the city from potential flooding gave rise to a populist backlash among rural voters who got flooded instead; their anger fuelled Huey P. Long's rise in Louisiana.

The Advocate, in Baton Rouge, likened Obama's reserve to that of "Silent Cal" Coolidge—Louisianans have long memories—and raised the example of Lyndon Johnson, who, after Hurricane Betsy, in 1965, prowled the still darkened and flooded blocks of the city's Ninth Ward by flashlight, announcing, "This is your President! I'm here to help you!"

While no one would confuse President Obama's contained persona with L.B.J.'s backslapping bonhomie, the President did show respect for symbolism when Hurricane Sandy blasted the East Coast, in late October, 2012. Touring the devastated coastal region, comforting victims, winning praise from New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, Obama received an approval bump from his handling of the disaster in the week leading up to the Presidential election. Meanwhile, his Republican opponent, Mitt Romney, seeking to avoid the perception of political opportunism, could only sit on the sidelines and stew, holding small donor events far from the disaster zone. Some inside Romney's campaign came to see the storm as the final turning point that sealed the 2012 race for the incumbent.

Oddly, the politics of the Sandy response may yet have an impact on Louisiana's recovery effort. Though the final tab for flood damage is still being added up, it's likely that the state will need to go to Congress to request more money to aid in the recovery. In 2012 a similar request by the states affected by Sandy was opposed by several members of Louisiana's congressional delegation, including the Republican Steve Scalise, who is currently the House majority whip. The Louisiana representatives complained that the final Sandy relief bill was larded with projects unrelated to the disaster and demanded that the funds be offset by spending cuts elsewhere in the budget. The bill passed over their opposition, but now the Louisiana politicians are at pains to explain why their votes shouldn't be held against their state's flood victims. The situation is "apples and oranges," a spokesman for Scalise told the Los Angeles Times, noting that the congressman actually voted for the initial disaster-relief bill before voting against the more expensive final package. Maybe, but that's the kind of political distinction that can easily get lost in a flood.

– Douglas McCollam is a writer living in New Orleans.

A Mom's Life, Rebuilt After Katrina, Wrecked By Baton Rouge Floods

By Eve Troeh

NPR, August 27, 2016

"It was wonderful to feel like I'd never have to be homeless again."

Myra Engrum is sitting in a McDonald's in Louisiana, steeling herself for another day of mucking out her flooded home. The parking lot is full of construction trucks and cars with a insurance company logos. A lot of meetings are happening here.

"I had over four and a half feet of water in my home, on the inside and outside," she says. "This is my first home that I ever purchased. I got the home right after Katrina."

Engrum, like many of those who lost everything in the recent floods around Baton Rouge, La., is a veteran of disaster. She lost everything when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans 11 years ago, and like thousands of others moved north to rebuild her life, bringing along her pregnant daughter.

Her daughter died soon after childbirth, and Myra

Engrum became the baby's mother. Jeremiah is now ten; she's 61.

The two of them were in their small brick ranch house earlier this month when the flood came.

"I call him my hero," she says, "because that Saturday, it was not raining. We were in the living room; he looked through the mail slot and said, 'Mommy there's water in the street.' "

They drove out, just in time. That night, around midnight, Engrum sat in her car with her son in the dark, and something clicked. Her disaster experience from a decade ago kicked into gear.

"All of a sudden I said 'Jeremiah, do you have a tablet? '" Engrum says. " 'I need a tablet to write on, I've gotta make some notes.' "

Her son pulled a notebook from his backpack. Now it's on the McDonald's table, full of lists, phone numbers, names of FEMA reps and insurance agents.

"Because of my experience with Katrina, I knew that people were gonna be asking things like 'What did you lose in the house?' " Engrum says.

Eventually she's ready to face the day, She heads out to her house on Acacia Street to meet her contractor, who says he's going to spend the day gutting her kitchen.

Engrum had taken the precaution of buying flood insurance, but it only pays for home repairs. She couldn't afford the more expensive policy to cover contents — the kitchen appliances that are now piled in a mountain out front, for instance.

The list of things Engrum may have to pay for out of pocket is endless: "Everything I owned — pots and pans, cabinets, you name it, mattresses, Jeremiah's camping stuff, his Boy Scouts uniform."

Engrum won't let Jeremiah see the house — health officials want kids to stay away from moldy homes and slippery debris, and she worries it would be traumatic for him.For now, they're staying with one of Jeremiah's former teachers, an hour's drive away.

Each day Engrum makes the trip to Baton Rouge to drop her son at day camp, while she deals with house stuff. Today, she stops in to check on him.

It's hard to tell if he understands the extent of what's been lost. He lists off the library books he had checked out when the water rose, and Engrum tells him they're gone. He says he hopes they'll be understanding about not getting them back.

As he runs off to return to day camp it starts to rain. Standing beneath the concrete overhang, Engrum starts to sing an old spiritual, "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen."

It feels like a momentary break from the huge tasks ahead — finding work and a place to live, providing a stable life for Jeremiah. She's starting all over again.

She's done it before, but that doesn't make it any easier.

Donald Trump Has Now Given More To Charity In The Last Four Months Than In The Previous 10 Years Combined

By David Fahrenthold

Washington Post, August 26, 2016

On Friday afternoon, Greenwell Springs Baptist Church in Louisiana confirmed that it had received a $100,000 personal check from Donald Trump.

Trump had promised the donation a week earlier, after he'd visited the church during a tour of flood-damaged areas of the state. The church's interim poster is Tony Perkins, who is also the head of the Family Research Council, an influential social-conservative group.

The church itself, located near Baton Rouge, has coordinated volunteer efforts and provided hot meals to victims and those working on the cleanup. Before Trump's visit to the state, Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) had suggested a "sizable donation" to another charity, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's Louisiana Flood Relief Fund. Trump gave that group nothing. A spokeswoman said he'd given to the church instead.

In a statement, Perkins said that Trump's donation would be used only for disaster relief, and kept separate from the church's general operating fund.

"The funds will not be used for normal church expenses, nor will the funds be used for cash grants to individuals," Perkins said. "Any funds not used in this initial relief phase will be used for subsequent efforts to support and/or directly restore and rebuild homes and church facilities impacted by the flood."

That was at least the second time this year that Trump has given a personal check to a charity. Both of those donations were entwined with his campaign.

In May, under pressure from the media, Trump made good on a promise he'd made at a campaign event four months earlier: to give $1 million to a veterans' charity. And now, after a high-visibility trip to Louisiana with his running mate, Trump gave from his own pocket again.

Now, it appears that Trump has given more of his own money to charity in the last four months than he gave in the last decade combined.

Since 2006, Trump has given $675,000 to the Donald J. Trump Foundation, a charity he founded in the late 1980s. The bulk of that money was given in 2006, when he donated $610,000.

Trump's donations fell off sharply in 2007 and 2008. Then they stopped completely. Tax records show no gifts from Trump to his own foundation since a $30,000 gift in 2008. The foundation's coffers have been filled, instead, by gifts from other donors.

The Post has made a months-long effort to identify instances where Trump made personal donations to other charities — surveying more than 270 nonprofits with some past ties to the GOP nominee. But that effort has turned up only a handful of other gifts, the most recent of which was in 2009.

In all, the total of all the donations that The Post has discovered between 2006 and this May — to the Trump Foundation and other charities — appears to be less than $800,000.

It is impossible to give an exact number, because in some cases organizations disclosed only a range of dollar figures, not the exact value of Trump gift.

Hope Hicks, a spokeswoman for Trump's campaign, did not immediately respond to an inquiry asking why Trump's generosity had apparently increased so sharply since the spring.

What changed in the spring? Trump locked up the GOP nomination, for one thing.

For another, The Washington Post and other media outlets began looking into Trump's charitable giving, after Trump had made that public promise to give $1 million to veterans — and then delayed paying it off.

Trump has not released his tax returns, which would show exactly what he had given to charity. He has, however, said publicly that his net worth is over $10 billion.

Florida Donors Favor Clinton Over Trump

By Ledyard King

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, August 27, 2016

WASHINGTON – Floridians have given three times as much to Democrat Hillary Clinton as they have to Republican Donald Trump, the latest campaign finance figures show.

Of the $40.5 million Sunshine State donors have shelled out to all presidential campaigns so far, Clinton has gotten one-third: $13.3 million.

Trump has received about $4 million, less than the amount raised in-state by either of Trump's two former GOP rivals — former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush ($6.6 million) and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio ($5.5 million), according to Federal Election Commission records.

It's not a surprise. Clinton is a prolific fundraiser with deep-pocketed support in Florida. Trump made little effort during the primary to solicit contributions, touting his independence from special interests he said couldn't buy him.

More than half Clinton's haul — $7.2 million — came from South Florida: Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe counties.

Other places that gave to her include the Orlando area ($1.2 million), the Tampa-St. Pete metro area ($1.05 million), Sarasota/Bradenton ($773,000), Southwest Florida ($630,000), greater Jacksonville ($434,000), the Space and Treasure coasts ($375,000), and the Big Bend region ($337,000).

Trump, on the other hand, has drawn fairly evenly throughout the state.

Palm Beach County donors gave him the most ($581,000), but there were no standouts among the other areas — Southwest Florida ($466,000), Miami-Dade ($432,000), Orlando area ($392,000), the Space and Treasure coasts ($300,000), Tampa-St. Pete ($244,000), the Panhandle ($185,000), and greater Jacksonville ($157,000).

The number and size of campaign contributions isn't necessarily a sign of voter support, though most recent polls have Clinton leading Trump by percentage points in Florida.

Breaking pledge not hurting Rubio much

It looks like Florida voters have largely gotten over Marco Rubio's decision to break his pledge not to run for re-election.

Most voters (53 percent) responding to a Monmouth University poll said Rubio decided to run for a second term after losing his bid for the White House (despite his repeated insistence he would return to private life in January) more to improve his chances for a future presidential run than to serve the public (25 percent).

Despite that, more Florida voters approve (47 percent) than disapprove (39 percent) of the job Rubio has done as a senator, and a plurality (40 percent) hold a favorable opinion of Rubio compared to 33 percent who don't.

The poll, issued last week, also showed Rubio with a 5-point lead over Rep. Patrick Murphy, the Jupiter congressman expected to win the Democratic Senate nomination in Tuesday's primary.

The telephone poll of likely voters has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.9 percentage points.

Carlos Beruff, Republican businessman running against Rubio for the GOP nomination, has hammered the incumbent for breaking his promise. But Patrick

Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute, said Rubio's large lead over Beruff suggests the argument isn't sticking.

"People just personally like Rubio in Florida enough that it's overcoming those negatives," Murray said.

Florida is ground zero for TV ads

Here's a shocker to any Floridian with a television: The Sunshine State boasts three of the nation's top five media markets when it comes to number of presidential campaign ads on TV.

Tampa has seen 6,553 ads aired from June 8 through Aug. 18, the single most saturated media market in the nation, according to the Wesleyan Media Project, a nonpartisan center that tracks political advertising.

The Orlando media market followed with 5,723 ad airings. West Palm Beach, with 4,623, was fifth.

Those are among the more than 2 million TV spots for all political races that have aired so far nationwide during the election cycle, according to the center. The cycle officially began Jan. 1, 2015 but most of the ads have been running in recent weeks.

At this point during the last presidential cycle in 2012, there had been about 1.87 million total airings.

An estimated $1.56 billion has been spent to date, according to Wesleyan.

About one-third of that total ($517 million) was spent on nearly 610,000 ad airings in the presidential race, while spending on campaigns for U.S. Senate came to $247 million for more than 280,000 airings.

Spending on races for governor and U.S. House lag behind, clocking in at a little over $80 million apiece. Just over $34 million has been spent on ballot measures so far.

"Judging by where advertisers are putting their money, Florida, Ohio and North Carolina are the biggest presidential battlegrounds in 2016," said Michael Franz, co-director of the Wesleyan Media Project. "These swing states have not changed much, if any, from four years ago."

Obama heaps praise on Fugate

President Obama believes a Floridian was one of his best hires.

That's how he described Federal Emergency Management Agency Director Craig Fugate during a trip to flood-ravaged Louisiana on Tuesday.

Obama said Fugate "has done such an outstanding job not just in dealing with this particular incident, but has really rebuilt FEMA so that there's a change of culture," the president said. "And everybody knows that when a disaster happens, FEMA is going to be there on the ground, cooperating with state and local officials rapidly and with attention to detail, and keeping the families who've been affected uppermost in their minds. So we very much appreciate everything Craig has done."

Not everyone is that impressed with the agency, tarnished by its sluggish response to Hurricane Katrina more than decade ago. It's accused of responding too slowly or too ham-handedly at times. But Fugate has won praise from both sides of the aisle for being a straight shooter — no easy task in Washington.

Obama hired the former Alachua County paramedic in 2009, after Fugate had spent eight years running Florida's Department of Emergency Management.

During the news conference in Baton Rouge, Obama conceded it wasn't easiest of visits for his crisis czar, and not just because of the floods that killed 13 and left tens of thousands homeless.

"It's hard, by the way, for Craig to be here because he's a Florida Gator — (laughter) — and he's been seeing a lot of LSU T-shirts as we've been passing by," the president said.

In Louisiana Flooding, It's Neighbor Helping Neighbor

Voice of America, August 27, 2016

Graham Kinchen had an emergency when a sandbag wall near his home began to fall apart.

The wall was protecting his house in Baton Rouge, Louisiana from the recent flooding.

He let people know about his problem on Facebook and by telephone. Within five minutes, friends gathered to help rebuild the wall.

The incident shows how neighbors have helped each other in response to the recent flooding in Baton Rouge and nearby communities. Baton Rouge is the capital of the southern state of Louisiana.

Storms and flooding hit the area from August 8th to 14th. Thirteen people were killed and about 100,000 homes were damaged. Thousands of people are homeless. Many are staying in shelters or the homes of friends or family.

Spirit of Cooperation

"We have seen a great spirit of cooperation, with neighbors, churches and friends pitching in," said Peter Kovacs, editor of The Advocate, the daily newspaper in Baton Rouge." Many of us have unexpected houseguests, and we're making a great adventure of it."

Kinchen and his wife, Denise, use a boat to get from their front door to the road. Sandbags have been keeping most of the flood waters out of their house.

Louisiana has suffered severe flooding before. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 killed 1,833 people and heavily damaged or destroyed 300,000 homes.

Many residents of New Orleans left their flooded homes behind and moved to other cities, including Baton Rouge. Eleven years later, many former New Orleans residents remain in Baton Rouge.

Obama: Confident Rebuilding Will Move Forward

“Sometimes when these kinds of things happen, it can seem a little bit too much to bear,” said President Barack Obama. Obama was in Baton Rouge Tuesday, noting that he had visited New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina when he was a U.S. senator.

Obama said he is confident flooded communities in Baton Rouge and nearby communities will recover, just as many neighborhoods in New Orleans did after Hurricane Katrina.

“And the reason I can say that with confidence is because that’s what Americans do in times like this,” Obama said. “I know how resilient the people of Louisiana are, and I know that you will rebuild again.”

By resilient, Obama means having the ability to overcome problems, no matter how tough.

Dustin Clouatre is a member of the self-named “Cajun Navy.” It is a group of residents who use Facebook to organize private boat owners to rescue people and move food and other aid where it is needed.

‘Love Is All You Need’

He soon became popular on social media.

“Me and my uncle had just gotten a family out of a house and something got caught in the motor,” he said. It was a sign that said, “Love is All You Need.” The photo quickly spread on social media.

David Vitter is a Republican senator from Louisiana. He visited flooded communities with the president on Tuesday.

“There’s a spirit of helping folks and it really was in full display when the president visited the neighborhood,” Vitter said.

Vitter calls the rain that brought the floods a 1000-year event, meaning it has a one-in-1,000 chance of happening in any year. The Red Cross said it is the biggest natural disaster in the United States since Super Storm Sandy in 2012.

Despite this, Vitter and others said the Louisiana disaster has not received much news coverage outside the state.

Competition for News Coverage

“I think people are a little disaster weary, plus there are other competing stories,” Vitter said.

Both Vitter and Obama praised the willingness of people to help each other.

They spoke to a young African-American man, who was helping his father clean out his flooded home. The man was also helping his dad’s elderly white neighbor, who lives alone.

The work of removing flooded walls, floors and furniture is not easy.

Kevin White has been working on flood relief for the past week in Saint Amant, Louisiana. He said the smells at the water-damaged houses are terrible.

White is housing a family of four who were flooded out of their own home. He and the family spent the past few days tearing out walls and throwing out everything else damaged in his guests’ flooded house. The damaged things represent almost everything the family owned, he said.

I’m Bruce Alpert.

Marissa Melton reported this story for VOA. Bruce Alpert adapted the story for VOA Learning English.

We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments Section and share your views on our Facebook Page.

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sandbag – n. bag filled with sand and used as a weight or to build temporary walls to protect homes and businesses

pitching in – v. offering help

houseguests – n. people who are invited to stay at a person’s house

confident – n. having a feeling or belief that people can do something well or succeed at something

resilient – adj. having the ability to overcome problems

display – n. put out so people can see it

weary – adv. tired, lacking interest because you have seen it often before

furniture – n. chairs, tables, beds, etc., that are used to make a room ready for use

Filing, Payment Extensions For Those Affected By Flooding

Associated Press, August 27, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — State tax extensions are available to Louisiana taxpayers whose homes, business and critical tax records are located in 20 parishes designated as federal disaster areas following recent flooding.

The Louisiana Department of Revenue says for sales, severance and excise taxes due on or after Aug.

11 and on or before Oct. 31, the extended deadline is Nov. 15.

For withholding tax returns and remittances due on or after Aug. 11 and on or before Nov. 15 the extended deadline is Nov. 30.

For individual income, corporation income, franchise and other income taxes, along with estimated tax payments due on or after Aug. 11 and on or before Jan. 17, 2017, the extended deadline is Jan. 17, 2017.

For items submitted by extended deadlines, the department will waive penalties and interest.

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Dukes Of Hazard Actor's Louisiana Home, Studio Swamped

By Chevel Johnson

Associated Press, August 27, 2016

Actor, writer and director John Schneider, known for his past role on the "Dukes of Hazzard" and current role on "The Haves and the Have Nots," thought the first flood he experienced at his Louisiana production studio was bad.

Now, he knows there are different levels of what's considered "bad."

Schneider's Livingston Parish-based studio — which includes his home, offices, cars, wardrobe, sound stages, and more — flooded in mid-March but the water didn't get into his 116-year-old home. This time around, he wasn't as lucky.

He says overflow from the Tickfaw River this month inundated all of his property in Holden, flooding his home with about 4 feet of water as well as another house in which his mother lives. He says he's lost a lot of memorabilia and equipment but his situation is not unique. About 90 percent of the homes in the parish were flooded.

Still he says the response by friends and strangers has been amazing.

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CNN Segment On Flooding Leads To $1 Million Donation

By A.J. Katz

AdWeek, August 27, 2016

CNN anchor Ashleigh Banfield was conducting a live, in-studio segment on her program Legal View last week about the horrific flooding in Louisiana. Heart breaking photos of a flooded-out local Salvation Army were shown in the background during her report. Banfield then held a remote interview with Captain Brett Meredith, head of the that Salvation Army of Baton Rouge, who was speaking from a temporary office. This doesn't end up being your typical conversation. How so? An anonymous donor went on to pledge $1 million to the Salvation Army for Louisiana relief efforts, citing this exact interview in the process. Here's Banfield's conversation with Captain Meredith:

An Inconvenient Truth: Few Signs Of Global Warming In Antarctica

By Michael Bastasch

Daily Caller, August 27, 2016

Antarctica has confounded scientists, defying the dire predictions of scientists the South Pole would shrink and exacerbate sea level rise in the coming decades.

Climate models predicted Antarctic sea ice would shrink as the world warmed, and that warming would boost snowfall over the southern continent. Neither of those predictions have panned out, and now scientists say "natural variability" is overwhelming human-induced warming.

"Truth is, the science is complex, and that in most places and with most events, natural variability still plays a dominant role, and undoubtedly will continue to do so," Chip Knappenberger, a climate scientist with the libertarian Cato Institute, told The Daily Caller News Foundation.

"This applies to goings-on in Antarctica as well as in Louisiana," Knappenberger said, referring to the recent flooding in Louisiana activists have already blamed global warming for.

What recent studies have shown is that natural variability in the climate system plays a big role in the South Pole, and there are few signs of man-made global warming in Antarctica.

Shouldn't There Be More Snow?

Antarctica is a tricky topic for scientists. It has a long history of chaotic weather and dramatic changes in its ice sheet, and scientists are realizing just how difficult it is to predict future behavior down under.

A recent study seemed to sum up what Knappenberger said should be the "consensus" of mainstream scientists: global warming has exerted little to no detectable influence in Antarctica.

Scientists with Columbia University's Earth Institute found there's been little change in Antarctica's annual snowfall, which flies in the face of what climate models predicted would happen as the planet warmed.

They blamed strong "natural variability" for the models' failures.

"This new paper affirms these other recent findings showing that the expected signal from climate change has been struggling to rise above the noise of natural variability over recent decades, but expects the signal to eventually become noticeable," Knappenberger said of the study.

Columbia scientists, however, said global warming's influence on the South Pole should become apparent "by the middle of the current century, thus mitigating future increases in global sea level."

This is just one of several recent papers suggesting natural variability is still dominant in the South Pole. So why don't we hear more about supposedly good news?

"When it comes to 'good' expectations, such as increase in the surface mass balance of Antarctica, activists prefer to ignore the projections, and instead claim that recent trends indicate the situation is 'worse than expected,'" Knappenberger said.

The Ice Is Melting … Maybe

Scientists have also been warning for years that, on net, Antarctica has been losing 147 gigatons of ice per year for the last decade or so, mostly from melting on the northern Antarctic Peninsula and its western ice sheet.

There's seems to be a news story every day about how things are looking worse in the Antarctic. The Washington Post, for example, recently warned a long crack in western Antarctica' ice was growing. Sounds scary, but sort of obscures what's happening overall with Antarctica.

A 2015 study by NASA found Antarctica's ice sheet increased in mass from 1992 to 2008. The study found ice gains in Eastern antarctica more than offset ice loss from melting glaciers in the west.

Zwally's study was controversial and challenged years of assumptions about what was happening in the South Pole. But months later another study was published showing a "pause" in warming on the Antarctic Peninsula due to a recovering ozone hole and shifting wind patterns.

"The ozone hole contributed to a warming of the Antarctic Peninsula, but has given a small cooling around the rest of the Antarctic," John turner, a variability climatologist with the British Antarctic Survey, told The Daily Caller News Foundation.

Turner, one of the paper's co-authors, found the ozone hole and wind patterns created a cooling trend over the Antarctic Peninsula, masking the warming trend predicted by climate models.

"It's recently been published that the level of stratospheric ozone has been slowly recovering since the late 1990s, which has played a part in the cessation of the 'peninsula warming' that we reported in our recent Nature paper," said Turner.

"Parts of the ice sheet are certainly melting, but as a result of relatively warm waters getting under the ice shelves and melting the ice from below," Turner said.

Turner and his colleagues noted that even in a warming world Antarctic temperatures can go up or down in a given year, such is the power of natural variability over the region.

Ice, Ice, Baby!

Climate models predicted Antarctic sea ice would shrink as a result of global warming, but the opposite happened. Antarctic sea ice actually increased in the last two decades.

Chinese scientists compared climate model sea ice predictions to actual observations from 1979 to 2005 and found "the main problem of the [climate] models is their inability to reproduce the observed slight increase of sea ice extent."

As it turns out, natural variability plays a big role here as well.

"Sea ice extent is strongly influenced by the winds and these have increased from the south over the Ross Sea, contributing to a small increase in total Antarctic sea ice since the late 1970s," Turner said. "The increase in ice seems to be within the bounds of natural variability."

Had Chinese researchers gone beyond 2005, they would have found more than just a slight increase. 2014 was the first year on record that Antarctic sea ice coverage rose above 7.72 million square miles. By Sept. 22, 2014, sea ice extent reached its highest level on record — 7.76 million square miles.

Antarctica also had unique ocean currents that keep surface waters cooler than the rest of the world.

A June 2016 study found Antarctica has a unique current pulls cold water from the Southern Ocean's depths to the surface, causing the surface water to be colder than, say, in the Arctic. Cold water has helped sea ice hit record levels in 2014.

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FEMA HOUSING

Much Like Post-Katrina, A Major Homeowner Aid Package Could Make Or Break Flood Recovery

By Gordon Russell

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Drop the phrase "Road Home" around New Orleans and other parts of southern Louisiana, and you're likely to hear groans, followed by horror stories about interacting with the suits who ran a homeowner-aid program that became synonymous with government inefficiency.

But dig deeper, and many people will tell you the money that flowed through the Road Home — even if it was too little and very late — was the difference between rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina or walking away.

"The Road Home was the key to the region's recovery," says former Gov. Kathleen Blanco, who traveled to Washington nine times to seek money for the program and then opted not to seek a second term in the wake of its frustrating launch.

Now, after historic flooding in Baton Rouge and other areas of the state, Louisiana may have arrived at another moment where a decision by lawmakers in Washington on how generously to respond will be make-or-break for a whole region.

It's no stretch to say that the Road Home, warts and all, saved New Orleans after the disaster that struck 11 years ago this week. In the months after the storm, the scale of the damage, the realization that many devastated homeowners lacked flood insurance and the fact that many of the hardest-hit survivors were among the region's poorest led to a surreal debate about whether New Orleans would ever recover, or whether parts of it should simply be abandoned.

In the end, Congress and the George W. Bush administration doled out $13.4 billion to underwrite the Road Home program. Affected homeowners, about 130,000 of them, got an average of $70,000 apiece.

Were it not for the Road Home, most experts believe the New Orleans of today — not to mention Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes — would look very different.

Vera Triplett, an educator who after Katrina led the Gentilly Civic Improvement Association, shudders to think about it.

"Even now, you see blocks and blocks of homes that are unfinished, or where more work still needs to be done," Triplett said. "I imagine we'd have that on a much more massive scale had it not been for the infusion of those funds."

There's no guarantee the great flood of 2016 will attract a federal care package. It will be up to Congress to decide that.

But in New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu's view, getting Congress on board with a program that bridges the huge gap between the losses suffered by property owners and the amount they'll receive from their insurance claims is more than crucial. It's the "whole ballgame," the mayor said in a recent interview.Going beyond the basics

For now, Louisiana is receiving the basics that come with every federally declared disaster: temporary housing assistance and help with debris removal and other short-term needs, including "individual assistance" grants handed out by the Federal Emergency Management Agency that top out at $33,000 but are usually a fraction of that amount.

But larger bailouts of affected property owners have become increasingly common in recent years, starting with a special package aimed at helping lower Manhattan after the 9/11 terrorist attacks of 2001 and continuing four years later with grant programs for those whose homes were ruined by hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma.

Congress sent a similarly massive pile of money to help the Eastern seaboard recover from 2012's Superstorm Sandy, but even more modest disasters, such as last year's devastating floods in Texas and South Carolina, have been deemed worthy of special appropriations.

Typically, money to support homeowners' recovery comes through a supplemental appropriations bill that is passed by Congress, allocated to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and then sent to the affected state in the form of block grants. It's up to the state to design the program, though HUD must sign off on the rules.

Not surprisingly, there's a consensus among Louisiana's largely Republican congressional delegation and its Democratic governor that plenty more aid will be needed this time. The Obama administration is also showing clear signs of support.

Julian Castro, the HUD secretary, said Thursday after touring the flooded region that the administration sees "a real need for significant investment in getting people back to where they were before."

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, R-Baton Rouge, called the standard off-the-shelf aid "wholly insufficient" and said a much bigger aid package will be needed.

So did U.S. Rep. John Fleming, R-Minden, one of three members of Louisiana's delegation who voted against the omnibus bill for Sandy victims in 2013 — a stand that has drawn criticism recently as Louisiana's delegation prepares to rattle the cup for money for the Pelican State.

Several members of New Jersey's delegation have said they still have a sour taste in their mouths over the Sandy votes, but they promised not to hold it against Louisiana in 2016.

Edwards will meet with Louisiana's entire congressional delegation Monday in Baton Rouge to make sure everyone's on the same page, according to a spokesman. U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise, R-Metairie, who as majority whip is the third-ranking member of the House, is expected to carry the ball on an appropriations bill.

No one has yet begun to float specific amounts of aid that will be needed, in part because damage estimates — and estimates of uninsured losses — are still all over the map.

They've been changing steadily as the floodwaters slowly recede. Some reports — such as one by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber — have estimated there could be as many as 145,000 flooded homes across the region, a number that would put this unnamed rainstorm within an order of magnitude of Katrina. (The federal government's final estimates for Katrina damage in Louisiana were 515,000 housing units damaged, 204,682 of them severely or totally.)

In a letter delivered to the president during his visit to Baton Rouge on Tuesday, Edwards said he expects to provide the Obama administration with "clear information about the damage assessments and specifics about the necessary federal assistance" by Sept. 2.Worse than Katrina?

The numbers that have emerged so far suggest that a request for several billion dollars could be in the offing.

While the scope of damage is certainly less, the insurance picture could be much worse, at least proportionally, than it was after Katrina. Whereas only about one-quarter of the owner-occupied homes ruined in Katrina lacked flood insurance, early estimates are that at least two of every three homes inundated in the 2016 storm were not covered by flood policies.

Many of those who got swamped had good reason to think they'd never see water in their homes — another reason there could be broad support for an aid package.

New data released by East Baton Rouge city-parish officials, for instance, indicate that about half of the homes inundated in this month's floods were not considered to be in "high-risk" areas, meaning their risk of flooding was less than once per 100 years — and their banks therefore didn't require the owners to carry flood insurance.

"Most of the people affected by this disaster received advice through their lenders that they didn't need insurance," said Walter Leger, a lawyer and native of St. Bernard Parish who headed the Housing Committee for Blanco's Louisiana Recovery Authority after Katrina. "And that advice was given indirectly by the federal government through the development of the (federal) flood maps.

"You can't accuse homeowners in these areas of being irresponsible. The federal government basically said, 'Don't worry about it.' Does the federal government now have an obligation to help? A legal obligation, maybe not. But a moral obligation? Probably yes."

In such large-scale events, refusing to help the uninsured punishes the insured as well, Blanco pointed out. "Their properties are devalued when they're living next to blight," she said. "There's a common good here we need to look for."

If there's a consensus that a homeowner-aid program is needed for the Baton Rouge region, that doesn't mean the lamented Road Home model must be re-created exactly.

There's no reason to think it would be. The Road Home was the first such effort of its kind and thus presented a raft of unique challenges. There was endless debate over rules: how much money was required; how to give it out; what steps homeowners should be forced to take to reduce future risk.

Then, an entire bureaucracy had to be built from the ground up to oversee the dispensing of the money and make sure it was being spent as intended. The rules were constantly being rewritten as problems arose.

Most significantly, the program was changed at HUD's insistence from one based on reimbursements for completed renovations to straight-up grants.

The Blanco administration had designed the program so that homeowners would be reimbursed as they rebuilt, figuring that more people would actually renovate that way, and that it would be harder for unscrupulous contractors to take advantage of unwary homeowners. The Bush administration wanted to get the money moving more quickly, and it forced the change to a lump-sum grant.Learning from experience

That dust-up was one of many signs of partisan tension between the Blanco and Bush administrations — tension that appears to be mostly absent so far in this disaster, with Edwards and Obama belonging to the same political party.

Also in the plus column for Louisiana this time: Residents and officials now have a much better idea about what to do, and what not to do, after such an event.

That's been obvious even in the immediate response to the storm, with volunteer gutting crews from around south Louisiana ripping out sodden drywall and insulation as soon as the waters receded.

As Leger put it: "Unfortunately, we have gained a tremendous amount of experience and expertise."

Leger, who has been involved in discussions about what a new homeowner aid program might look like, said Louisiana will benefit both from its history with the Road Home and from the experiences New York and New Jersey have had with dispensing Sandy aid.

"We have the benefit of both the achievements and the failures of various programs," he said. "Certainly there are things that we'll model."

In Sandy, for instance, the aid programs that policymakers built managed to avoid the accusations of built-in racial discrimination that dogged the Road Home, according to James Perry.

Perry, a New Orleans fair housing advocate who successfully sued the Road Home over its practice of awarding grants based on a house's pre-storm value rather than the cost of rebuilding it — effectively punishing people in poor neighborhoods — said HUD has since "universally agreed" that the cost of rebuilding should govern the size of the grant.

All of this was uncharted territory 11 years ago, when Leger recalled acquiring a copy of the Marshall Plan — the American blueprint for reviving Western Europe after World War II — because there didn't seem to be another prototype.

"I'd put it under my pillow at night, hoping I'd learn by osmosis," he said.

One common element among all large-scale disasters, in Leger's view, is that people will be reluctant to reinvest in their communities without robust government intervention. That's especially true in the most damaged areas, like Livingston Parish this time.

Leger said: "I used to tell people all the time, 'When a house burns down, it's a terrible tragedy. But when a whole community floods, you lose everything that makes a community your home: your dentist, your favorite restaurant, the grocery store. Until you know they're coming back, it's hard to come back, and until they know you're coming back, they might not come back.' "

Rule Could Limit Where FEMA Mobile Homes Are Set Up In Ascension Parish

By Kevin Frey

WAFB-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

GONZALES, LA (WAFB) –

Some leaders are worried that one regulation on FEMA's new mobile homes could greatly limit where they are set up in Ascension Parish, forcing people to live far away from their own property.

The "Manufactured Housing Units" can be installed on people's property, in commercial parks, or – as a last case scenario – in parks established and maintained by FEMA.

Under the rules, however, the units cannot be located in places deemed as "Special Flood Hazard Areas" – a specific type of flood plain.

Much of Ascension Parish is designated as this particular type of flood zone, according to maps posted online by the parish government. That includes the communities of St. Amant and Sorrento, which were severely impacted by the flooding.

"When you put that designation and put that blanket over where it can't go. Well, it's basically it can't go in Ascension Parish, in 70 percent of Ascension Parish," said Parish Council Chairman Randy Clouatre.

The historic flooding had a wide impact in the parish, with between 17,000 and 19,000 homes impacted. Possibly more than 50,000 people are now left to rebuild.

Many of them could be forced to live in those FEMA mobile homes.

Clouatre said the restriction could force many Ascension Parish residents to set up their mobile homes far from their own property, thereby serving as a hindrance to the rebuilding process.

"It's not feasible for a person trying to rebuild their home, rebuild their lives, and get back in working in the community, to send them away," Clouatre said.

He is calling on Louisiana leaders at the national level to ask FEMA for an exception to the rule.

"We need them to go, beat up somebody, get the red tape removed," he said.

A spokesman for FEMA said the reason mobile homes cannot be placed in those areas is largely a safety precaution for the people inside. He also said letting the homes get flooded would be a waste of taxpayer money.

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First Look Inside New FEMA Housing Units For Flood Victims

WAFB-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 25, 2016

BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) –

On a mobile device? Click here to take a look at the HUD-approved trailers.

The first set of FEMA temporary housing units are expected to arrive in south Louisiana Friday.

So far, 56 people have been approved to get one of the manufactured housing units or MHUs as they are called.

"We have 100,000 registered for FEMA. 56 people vetted now. 214 in the queue that been approved but we need to inspect," said Willie Nunn with FEMA.

FEMA is first looking at people who can keep one of their own property. It would be placed in either the front or back yards and they would have to have access to power, water, and sewage as well as be out of a flood zone.

The options available for the mobile homes include one, two or three bedroom or a handicap accessible.

Some have wondered if these are the same from Hurricane Katrina.

"In Katrina, I would say it was travel trailers, it was all hands on deck," Nunn said. "These are the trailers that come from qualified, safe and secure. These are federally-inspected mobile homes that we can rest assured are safe for the inhabitant."

FEMA said they are also looking at commercial RV and mobile lots. Beyond that, it is up to the state and local officials to decide whether there will be specific parks set aside to house groups of the mobile homes.

Click here for more information about the interim housing assistance.

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NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

After Superstorm Sandy Missteps, FEMA Touts Flood Insurance Reforms, Lessons Learned

By Chad Calder

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

If the Federal Emergency Management Agency dealt itself a black eye with the poor job it did responding to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the horror stories that came out of the flood insurance claims process after Superstorm Sandy gave the agency another nasty shiner seven years later.

And for tens of thousands of victims of this month's Louisiana floods who actually had flood insurance coverage, the reports of widespread denials and low-balling of claims, altered engineering reports and a Kafkaesque appeals process that came out of New York and New Jersey after Sandy are hardly encouraging as they begin trying to collect for damages.

FEMA, however, points to new leadership at the National Flood Insurance Program and a series of reforms either enacted or underway as evidence that it has learned valuable lessons from the experience that still has some Sandy victims seething.

"We are working closely with survivors to make sure they are paid and that every dollar that is owed is paid out," FEMA spokesman Rafael Lemaitre said. "We are committed to that, and that applies to Louisiana as well."

The NFIP, which is now part of FEMA, was created in 1968 after decades of flood losses caused private insurers to exclude flood coverage from the typical homeowner's policy and later drove them out of the market almost entirely.

About 80 percent of the country's 5.1 million flood insurance policies are so-called "write your own" policies that originate with and are serviced by private insurers, who were kicked out of the program in the 1970s but came back in in the 1980s. Even those policies that are purchased directly from the NFIP are farmed out to contract companies.

Essentially, the government holds the bag and is responsible for the program, but it uses the private sector to market, write and service the policies.

But the underlying economics of flood insurance remained deeply flawed, and the NFIP took a giant hit from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, forcing it to borrow $17 billion from the U.S. Treasury.

Then Sandy cost the program another $7 billion, and as the claims process for that storm began, consumer complaints and news reports about problems began to emerge.

Adjusters were invoking an obscure clause in flood policies known as the "earth movement" exclusion and using it to deny claims based on cracks in foundations and in basements that they said were evidence of structural problems before the storm.

Some adjusters' reports were found by an NPR "Frontline" investigation to have been edited by managers who simply inserted the word "not" before "covered" in their conclusions, and some former adjusters spoke of pressure to deny claims to keep the losses down.

Exasperated policyholders said they filled out the same forms multiple times and repeatedly had to start over with the various representatives who took their calls. Thousands of cases ended up in court.

FEMA has avoided publicly getting into the reasons why there were problems with the program, but it denies they were as widespread as news reports suggested.

Roy Wright, who was promoted to director of the program in June 2015, has only gone so far as to characterize some of the work by Sandy adjusters, who report to the private insurers, as "sloppy."

FEMA spokesman Lemaitre stressed last week that most of the Sandy claims were handled fairly, a point he said was validated by a review by the Senate Banking Committee.

He also said the program's financial straits are neither a threat to policyholders' chances of getting paid what they're entitled to nor an incentive to underpay claims.

"The answer is unequivocally 'no,' " Lemaitre said about that question, noting that FEMA has $3 billion cash on hand to deal with disasters. "There is a $23 billion debt. But that does not preclude FEMA from paying every dollar of every claim."

Nevertheless, Lemaitre said FEMA is clear-eyed about the fact there were problems after Sandy.

"People were underpaid, yes," he said. "I'll leave the legal stuff to the courts, but what I can tell you is that after Hurricane Sandy, there were people who were underpaid by their insurance company."

Lemaitre said FEMA has stepped up its efforts to make changes to the program and make sure the private insurance companies that participate in the program "share our values and put policyholders and survivors first."

When Wright came in as director, allegations of wrongdoing were referred to the appropriate state attorneys general, and the agency began settling the more than 1,500 lawsuits it was still facing for underpayment of claims.

FEMA set up a claims review process to invite any of the 144,000 flood insurance claimants to challenge their awards. About 20,000 came forward, and FEMA has worked through about 91 percent of those reviews and has paid out another $93.8 million.

It has settled 1,618 of the 1,632 suits and paid out another $163.9 million, though some Sandy victims have complained they still don't have enough to rebuild and resent that FEMA paid the legal bills of insurers but not of policyholders.

Lemaitre said FEMA has taken several steps to right those wrongs.

He said it has increased its scrutiny over contract engineers, whose bills used to be paid automatically but now must first be reviewed and approved. It launched a hotline for policyholders who had issues with their insurer, and it hired a full-time flood insurance advocate who works directly with private insurers to "make sure they share our values," Lemaitre said.

In May, FEMA overhauled the appeals branch and separated it from the claims branch in order to make it more independent and transparent, he said.

Wright also has begun the process of trying to make FEMA's arrangements with private insurers easier to alter, add oversight provisions and generally keep up with changes since private insurers came back into the system in 1983.

However, Amy Bach, director of the consumer advocacy group United Policyholders, said that while FEMA has instituted some reforms since Sandy, "there have not been any of the kind of deep reforms that are needed to make the flood program more fiscally efficient."

She said the flood insurance advocate is a good idea but should be far more than a single position, and that there should be penalties for companies that underpay claims.

Lemaitre pointed to the response to floods in Texas, West Virginia and South Carolina since Sandy as evidence that things have gotten better. "We have not seen widespread challenges with regard to flood insurance claims in those disasters," he said.

In South Carolina, the state's Department of Insurance and its Department of Natural Resources, which includes the agency that handles flood mitigation, said they didn't hear many complaints of denied or low-balled claims stemming from the major flooding around Columbia last fall.

"I'm usually the first one who is skeptical about federal involvement, and I know about the debacle and the experiences (people had) with Sandy," state Insurance Commissioner Ray Farmer said. "I was prepared for that. What I was not prepared for was the excellent service we got for our consumers. As far as the NFIP, there were no coverage issues that arose, and whatever was a covered claim was a covered claim."

Lemaitre said that for the March flooding that hit more than 30 Louisiana parishes, the NFIP has paid 5,000 claims a total of $228 million, an average of about $46,000.

Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon, who said he remembers watching a particularly damning post-Sandy report on “60 Minutes,” said he has met with NFIP Director Wright and was assured claims here would be handled properly. He said he asked whether backwater flooding might not be covered and was told that it would be.

“Call me naïve,” he said, “but I just don’t believe that our federal government would take advantage of victims of these events for the alleged purpose of diminishing the costs of the program.”

Donelon said that while his department doesn’t regulate flood insurance, “if we find there are any violations, we will certainly report them.”

With Insurance Claims In The Balance, Flooded Homeowners Fed Up With Debris Pickers

By Amy Wold

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

The piles of debris lining the streets of many flooded neighborhoods now come with their own signage – “Our crap, not your’s,” or “you loot, we shoot,” or even more to the point, “do not touch.”

The signs written on plywood or messages painted on appliances started popping up soon after the flooding subsided and residents had a chance to start cleaning out their homes.

“Right after we put our stuff out, we had people asking if they could take the washer and dryer,” said Kim Halphen, 46, from Walker, who had large “do not touch” signs in front of the house debris. “We can’t get rid of it until the (insurance) adjusters come.”

The problem has received a lot of attention in neighborhoods and on social media where people with pickups or even trailers are going through the piles of debris and taking anything of worth. It has riled many homeowners who are concerned it’s hurting their chances of collecting from insurance or FEMA aid.

“They’re rummaging through everybody’s worldly possessions,” said Don Gerard, 60, of Walker.

One evening, Gerard said he drove to his house and saw four men in a pickup loading material from the debris pile and had made it to his house. Gerard asked the men to leave the stuff alone, but they told him they were going to keep looking anyway.

That could be a problem for people, he said, because insurance companies are asking homeowners to save certain things such as pieces of carpet or wood trim.

Andrew Haley, 32, filmed a number of trucks taking away just appliances while he was helping his insurance adjuster parents work in East Baton Rouge Parish Monday

The workers identified themselves as working with FEMA or the city-parish, but Haley said after working a number of flood disasters with his parents, he knew that wasn’t true.

“They’re not cleaning anything up. They’re just taking the appliances,” Haley said. “The insured has no way to get these items paid for.”

Haley said he decided to post the video on Facebook to bring attention to the problem.

“People shouldn’t take advantage of other people in need,” Haley said.

Central’s Mayor Jr. Shelton took a much more firm approach.

“If we catch them, we will arrest them,” Shelton said. “They’re profiting off the backs of tragedy of people.”

Residents should document what is coming out of their homes for insurance purposes, but the piles don’t have to remain intact for FEMA, he said.

“FEMA is not looking at your piles,” he said.

However, trash pickers coming through a neighborhood looking for anything valuable out of people’s yards are like vultures, Shelton said.

It also becomes a safety hazard because people will dismantle piles to get at the stuff they want, leaving material in the streets, he said.

“It’s going to become a bigger problem the longer it (debris) stays on the street,” Shelton said.

Reimbursement for lost household items can follow a couple paths and each has different requirements for documentation depending on whether a homeowner has flood insurance or is going to be applying for FEMA grants.

“Make sure you take your pictures because debris pick up is going on now,” said Karen Khonsari, city-parish director of environmental services in East Baton Rouge Parish.

For insurance purposes, including the National Flood Insurance Program, documentation of household items with photos, serial numbers, makes and models is important and should be done before or directly after something is moved to the curb for disposal, said Kurt Pickering, FEMA media relations manager for the Louisiana flooding recovery.

For those without flood insurance, photos are always a good safety net, but claims can be made even without the documentation, he said. The adjuster can see where the appliances were hooked up and see imprints in the floor along with the water level in the house. Unlike insurance, FEMA grants and assistance would pay the same for a high end dryer as a low end one, so serial numbers are less important.

Not having a photo won't impact a FEMA grant, he said.

A misconception is that FEMA grants are supposed to cover losses, but it's not insurance. The FEMA grants are instead meant to help people get back on their feet in a habitable home, but not replace the value of what was lost, Pickering said.

Having appliances taken from yards by people other than the debris contractor is not something he said they've seen a lot, but it does happen. However, that has little to do with how much or whether a homeowner can get FEMA assistance, he said.

"The idea that we need to look through a pile is not true," Pickering said. "It's not a good idea to have it (debris) sitting outside the house."

Follow Amy Wold on Twitter, @awold10.

St. Charles Dodged Historic Flood, But Not Residents' Attention

By Anna Thibodeaux

St. Charles (LA) Herald-Guide, August 27, 2016

Since Louisiana's historic flood, the telephone has been ringing steadily at local insurance companies to buy policies, inquiry about coverage and ensure flood insurance is current.

"It was expected," said Lisa Clark, staff assistant at State Farm in Luling who's been in the insurance business 30 years. "We might average one to two a month, but I've written policies for four people already this week. I expect more actually."

Their phones also have steadily remained busy with calls from people asking for insurance quotes, as well as from those who want to ensure their policies are current.

This isn't a surprising trend considering one in eight East Baton Rouge businesses and residents have flood insurance, although it wasn't required for their area hit by a disaster some have compared to Superstorm Sandy. Their houses are located in an area identified by FEMA as Zone X, which meant mortgage providers did not require they have flood insurance.

FEMA has announced a grant program for those affected that would provide up to $33,000 assistance if they lived in Zone X.

Statewide, an estimated 21 percent of Louisiana residents have flood insurance, a number that even the state's Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon deemed low.

Earl Matherne, St. Charles Parish's planning administrator, said FEMA uses the 100-year flood level to designate flood zones, but the Great Flood of 2016 exceeded it possibly reaching the 500-year level in an area where water rose five to six feet.

In St. Charles Parish, Matherne reported flood insurance policies were down by 1,047 as of June of this year.

"Regardless of what zone you're in, I think it's urgent to carry flood insurance," said Jason Noto, agent for Farm Bureau Insurance. "I think the biggest thing is that we live in Louisiana – the whole state is a flood zone."

Noto questioned how anywhere in the state can be designated as Zone X, which he maintained has "put people in financial crisis in Baton Rouge because they weren't required to have the insurance."

At his office in Luling, the phone has been ringing about flood insurance, too.

They're averaging a dozen calls a day from people who want to buy it, get quotes or update policies.

"We are absolutely seeing an increase in demand for flood insurance," Noto said. "There's a lot more people looking to review their policies to ensure their coverage is up to date."

People are a lot more receptive to discussing their coverage, he said. And, even with levee construction underway in the parish, Noto said flood insurance is a necessity because there is no way to predict what nature will do.

Bottom line, he added, "History can be made in one day."

MITIGATION

Denham Springs, Central Residents Worried About Federal Requirements To Elevate Homes

By Heidi Kinchen And Timothy Boone

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Denham Springs residents, anxious to rebuild their homes and lives after the devastating floods earlier this month, packed a church sanctuary Saturday to find out whether they will have to elevate their homes before they set about getting permits to make the needed repairs.

The answer they received was as unsettling as the question: "That is one of the issues we are trying to address," Mayor Gerard Landry told an audience of about 250 people at the New Covenant Baptist Church.

Homes built before latest flood hazard maps were adopted in 2012 largely avoided having to comply with federal and local requirements that they stand at or above the Federal Emergency Management Agency's most recent base flood elevations. Existing structures were "grandfathered in," and homeowners were allowed to make minor improvements without triggering the new standards.

But that all changes when a home sustains damage equal to half or more of its value.

Then it must be built at or above the base flood elevation, according to minimum standards set by the federal government and adopted by local governments in order to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

In a city like Denham Springs, where more than 3,000 of its 4,200 homes saw 18 inches or more of floodwater this month, the number of people who may now be required to elevate their homes or find somewhere else to live has put city officials on edge.

Landry said he has talked to numerous officials at the state and federal levels – including Gov. John Bel Edwards, Louisiana's congressional delegation and the U.S. secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

"That issue has to be solved at the federal level," Landry told residents, "but we here in the city of Denham Springs are going to do whatever we can to get you back into your homes."

Similar concerns were expressed Friday night in Central at a FEMA town hall at Zoar Baptist Church that Mayor Jr. Shelton said more than 1,200 people attended.

"There are citizens coming to me literally with tears in their eyes," Shelton said. "They're helpless. And we can't get anybody other than (U.S. Rep.) Garret Graves or (U.S. Sen.) Bill Cassidy to acknowledge a problem on the federal level."

Shelton said widespread house raising would cost more than most Central residents can afford. He said FEMA needs to allow people to rebuild at the level their house currently stands, with the understanding they will have to pay more for flood insurance. "We can't have whole subdivisions raised," he said.

Shelton said if people walk away from their homes because of rebuilding costs, it will hurt the local and national economy. "What will happen to the mortgage companies and the finance companies?" he said. "People are so frustrated. I'm begging for the federal government to come through and come through quickly."

In Denham Springs, the answers were less than soothing to Paul Wesley, who said his neighbor recently received a permit to rebuild but was told by FEMA that he would have to raise the home 6 feet. Newer homes in the subdivision also were built up 6 feet, he said.

"Us having to raise our houses 6 feet off the ground to rebuild them would undo any help we would get from anybody to rebuild," Wesley said. "We need something done before we can rebuild our houses."

FEMA representatives at the meeting avoided similar questions about elevation requirements by punting back to the city and parish.

"They lay out those ground rules," said Carl Ray, a mitigation specialist. "You'll have to be in line with the city or parish ordinance. Contact your floodplain manager for requirements."

Landry said after the meeting that the city adopted its flood prevention ordinance, which mirrors federal regulations, out of necessity.

"They kicked it back to us, saying, 'It's not our standards. It's the city's standards,' but guess what? If we didn't adopt those standards, they wouldn't be able to get flood insurance," Landry said.

Landry urged residents to remain calm, register for federal assistance and work with the city's permits department as he and other officials worked on possible solutions.

In the meantime, Landry said debris removal efforts continue. Ceres Environmental had 16 trucks on city streets, as of Friday, and had covered about 25 percent of the city so far.

"The contract says they will make two or three passes, but in all reality, it will probably be eight, nine or 10 times because it takes time to get everything out of your homes," Landry said.

Debris removal is expected to continue for about 45 to 60 days, he said.

The city's contract covers only city streets, with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development being responsible for state highways, Landry said.

The contract also does not address commercial debris, which has caused problems in the city's Antiques Village, where waterlogged furniture and other items are stacked in precarious piles that tumble out onto Range Avenue anytime someone picks through the trash, Landry said.

The mayor said he is working with Mark Harrell, the parish's emergency preparedness director, to address that issue.

Livingston Parish Residents Seek Flood Answers At Community Meeting

By Earl Phelps

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 27, 2016

DENHAM SPRINGS – Livingston Parish residents attempted to get answers concerning how to begin the rebuilding process at a community meeting Saturday.

Many of the residents were looking to find out whether home elevation would be necessary or required.

"This is a question that's going to have to be answered at the federal level," Denham Springs Mayor Gerard Landry said. "That's why I reached out to our U.S. senators and congressmen as early as I did."

Paul Wesley attended the town hall meeting. His home is included in the 90 percent of Denham Springs homes that were damaged by flood waters. Wesley says he did not have flood insurance.

"We need help, and we need help now," Wesley said.

Wesley says his biggest problem is not knowing if, or how much he was have to elevate his home before he can start major renovations.

"If this FEMA regulation is in affect," he says, "us having to raise our house 6 feet to rebuild them would undo any help we can get from anybody. We wouldn't be able to rebuild them. We need some so we can rebuild out where they are."

FEMA has yet to set a requirement on any possible elevation requirement. The mayor says it could be a year or more before a decision is made.

US Rep. Abraham Says Louisianians "Take Care Of Each Other"

By Raymond Daye

Avoyelles (LA) Journal, August 28, 2016

With the nation's eyes on Louisiana and the record-breaking floods that have displaced thousands and killed at least 13, U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham said the country also sees the character of the Bayou State's people.

"We do circle the wagons to deal with adversity," Abraham told the Marksville Chamber of Commerce Aug. 18. "We take care of each other."

Abraham said what sets Louisiana's response to disasters apart from other states' is the widespread reaction of communities reaching out to help those in need.

"In other states, there are individuals who want to help, but it's different here," Abraham said.

The Mangham Republican said that communities in South Louisiana responded to floods in North and Central Louisiana earlier this year.

"It's what we do," he added.

Most of Abraham's other remarks dealt with national issues – including the national debt, Obamacare, illegal immigration and terrorist threats on the nation's southern border.

Abraham said there is a known Hezbollah command center within a few miles of the U.S.-Mexico border.

"In the front of the building, it operates a legitimate taxi cab business," he said. It operates a counterfeiting operation in the back half of the building, he added.

ISIS also has a presence near the Mexican border, Abraham said.

"We know what they are doing," he continued. "We are watching them, but we cannot strike."

Abraham said the issue "that keeps me up at night" is the staggeringly high national debt, which is now almost $20 trillion.

Congress can "kick the debt down the road" and not deal with it, but it must pay the interest on that debt.

In 2016, the interest is $230 billion "which is twice what we give our veterans in a year, including all programs for veterans."

Abraham said he has heard complaints that Congress doesn't do anything.

He said members of the House – where the GOP has a working majority – have passed 350 "good bills," but only 26 made it through the Senate to become law.

During the question and answer period, Marksville Mayor John Lemoine told Abraham that the city and Police Jury had wanted to work together to clear out a drainage canal behind the Garan plant in Marksville.

"We met with FEMA and the Corps of Engineers a couple of years ago to present ways to relieve flooding in the city," Lemoine said. "The Corps flatly rejected the idea. They said they didn't want us digging back there because it's wetlands. We told them we wouldn't be digging. We only want to clear out the debris and trees blocking up the canal."

Lemoine said about 50 houses flooded in Marksville, and he believes some of that flooding could have been avoided had the city and parish been given permission to move forward with the clearing project.

"That canal drains 60 percent of Marksville," Lemoine said.

Abraham said he would contact the Corps concerning the issue.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

No stories for this edition

FIRE GRANTS

No stories for this edition

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Film Recalls Katrina's "Cajun Navy": Heroic, Unselfish Despite Orders To Turn Away

By Patricia Gannon

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

The "Cajun Navy" that swung into action during the recent flooding got a much different reception from those who tried to help out in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

"From my limited observation, the big difference was that in this recent flood event, it was the local governments that stepped to the front of the line, especially the sheriffs' offices," said Allan Durand, a St. Martinville attorney and filmmaker. "They didn't wait for federal or state guidance … and after Katrina, who would reasonably expect them to wait for it anyway."

In 2005, as New Orleans lay roof-deep in water from the Category 3 storm, hundreds of civilians and their boats were turned away by police. Some from the Acadiana area, later dubbed the "Cajun Navy," stayed the course and saved an estimated 10,000 lives.

"This was magnificently unselfish," said Durand. "Heroic in the traditional sense. And I'm a sucker for heroes and hero stories."

Now, he's telling of their bravery in "The Cajun Navy," a documentary Durand started in 2012 and only recently finished. The film is making the rounds of film festivals, where Durand hopes it will garner the attention its subjects deserve. The documentary premiered at the Newport Beach International Film Festival and won the Remi award at the Worldfest Houston International Film Festival.

Durand conceived the project after talking with St. Martinville resident Doug Bienvenu, one of the stubborn few who circumvented law enforcement and subsequently rescued 797 people.

"I was so fed up, completely fed up," said Durand. "A lot went wrong with Katrina, a blame marathon. No one got credit for anything."

It was Bienvenu's story that hooked him.

"Even if I just have a Doug, I can do a short (film)," he said. "If there are others like this — and there were — that's the icing on the cake."

A filmmaker since 1981, Durand is, perhaps, best-known for his feature-length film with Glen Pitre "Belizaire the Cajun," which was the official 1986 Sundance selection. In it, Durand himself played a priest. He had produced 90-minute documentaries before, among them "Texas Rangers" and "Willie Francis Must Die Again."

"I knew it was work, and I needed help," he said. "So I went to the film department at UL-Lafayette and told them I'd teach a class in advanced documentary filmmaking in exchange for grunt work."

The student recruits located the interviews for Durand and acted as his research assistants, associate producers, sound technicians and editors.

"Kids in the class found everyone," he said. "Half of the students were originally from New Orleans."

A UL-Lafayette graduate himself, Durand credits the entire film to the university.

He says it's not as though there was an abundance of rescuers to choose from.

"The first weeding out was done by police — they turned back most of them," said Durand.

What was left were the few dozen that said, "We're not turning around," and sneaked past the perimeter. Those who pushed their way through took alternative routes, shortcuts and detours and even posed as part of a penitentiary bus convoy.

"Cajuns follow all laws that make sense and none that don't," Durand explained.

"Cajun Navy" utilizes stark black-and-white headings to separate segments and move the story forward. Photos of the aftermath were supplied by the documentary subjects themselves, some of whom took cameras with them on their rescue missions with the intent of documenting bodies for identification purposes. Actual aerial and ground footage used in the film was supplied by KLFY TV- 10 and KATC TV- 3.

"They were very generous with their pictures," said Durand.

Other than the photographs — as visually compelling now as they were then — there are only the words of those who were there: longtime New Orleans anchor Garland Robinette; then-Mayor Ray Nagin's press secretary Sally Foreman; Opelousas resident Frank Angelle, who told his wife he "wanted to go" after seeing the city in distress; and Bryan Smelker, who disguised himself as part of a prison escort.

"We could look off into the distance and see people hanging out of the windows," Smelker says in the film. "There was no way I was going back to Lafayette.

"Anarchy is the best word I can think of."

There is no narrator, no one to buffer the images for the viewer.

"Narrators say things people don't say in interviews. After trimming and moving things around as it evolved, it came together without one," said Durand, who used Danny Glover to voice over "Willie Francis." "You get a lot of surprises. It came together smoothly, and I went with first-person. It was more evolution than director's decision."

Despite Foreman's unflattering picture of FEMA and Bienvenu's none-too-stellar portrait of the National Guard, "Cajun Navy" is not a rebuke to state agencies but rather a tribute to the heroism of ordinary lives.

"There are national events that there is no preparation for," said Durand. "I thought someone needed to say 'Doug, Bryan — someone give them a hand.' The people from around here needed to be congratulated."

While he encountered no inherent problems making the film, Durand regrets his law practice prevented him from having the film ready for Katrina's 10th anniversary. He also wishes he could have included the rescuer who picked up what appeared to be gang members when no one else would, due to their appearance and the implied possibility of violence.

"One guy had nothing," he said, "but felt he needed to give something in return and offered his shirt."

Durand has submitted "Cajun Navy" to all 24 film festivals in the 40-minute-or-less category and is awaiting a reply from half of them.

"Oscar nominations come out of the festivals," explained Durand, who won the 2012 Nicholl Award for Screenwriting from the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences for "Willie Francis."

"You just find a really good story," he said, "and get out of the way."

FLOODS

Louisiana Flood Victims Can Get Sales Tax Refunds On Damaged Property

By Jennifer Larino

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 27, 2016

Louisiana flood victims can claim refunds for state sales taxes paid on clothing, furniture, electronics and other items that were destroyed by the floodwaters. Refunds are available only for damaged property not covered by insurance or disaster relief funds.

The Louisiana Department of Revenue said in a Friday (Aug. 26) news release that refunds are available for flood victims who lost property after severe storms and flooding in August as well as earlier this year in March. Eligible taxpayers must live in a parish declared a federal disaster area after one or both of the flooding events.

The state said it will refund the value of the sales tax paid on the original purchase of the destroyed property. Victims will not be able to get a refund for sales taxes paid on replacement property, according to the release.

Only individuals are eligible for refunds. Property owned by corporations, partnerships or any type of business does not qualify.

State law requires damaged property to meet the following criteria to be eligible for a refund:

A Louisiana taxpayer must have suffered the loss on property used in or around the individual's home, apartment or homestead in the state.

The destroyed property must have been moveable at the time of purchase and at the time of its destruction. That includes furniture, clothing, and electronics, but not cars, trucks, ATVs or other motor vehicles.

The taxpayer must have paid Louisiana state sales tax on the purchase of the destroyed property.

Moveable property eligible for a refund also includes recreational equipment used at home and appliances not attached to a house or building. Examples of items that are not eligible include central heating or cooling systems, lighting fixtures, hot tubs and spas, boat trailers, water or snow skis and golfing or tennis equipment.

Damaged property that is reimbursed by insurance, disaster relief funds or any other source is not eligible for a refund.

Parishes declared federal disaster areas after the August floods include Acadia, Ascension, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermillion, Washington and West Feliciana.

Parishes declared federal disaster areas after the March 2016 floods include Allen, Ascension, Beauregard, Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Calcasieu, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, DeSoto, East Carroll, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Sabine, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Union, Vernon, Washington, Webster, West Carroll and Winn.

Bret Bielema, Arkansas Sending Water, Supplies To La. Flood Victims

By Jim Kleinpeter

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 27, 2016

Add Arkansas and football coach Bret Bielema to the list of SEC schools helping victims of the Louisiana Flood of 2016.

Bielema and the Razorbaacks program loaded up on supplies to send to the relief effort in South Louisiana. South Carolina and Alabama have also contributed truckloads of supplies in the past two weeks.

Louisiana Republican Party Has A "Cash Flow" Problem In Wake Of Floods

By Julia O'Donoghue

New Orleans Times-Picayune, August 27, 2016

The Louisiana Republican Party's quarterly meeting closed Saturday (Aug. 27) with a plea from its chairman, Roger Villere, to donate to the organization.

Villere said the state political party is strapped for cash, though he wasn't specific about numbers. He said some of the issues may be connected to the impact of recent flooding on donors.

This is a busy and expensive season for the organization, with the presidential election and an open Louisiana Senate seat on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Villere said the party spent money in August based on some promises of donations that haven't materialized. Supporters had committed money before massive flooding hit Baton Rouge, Lafayette, and the surrounding areas. And some of those contributions never materialized.

The Republicans were also forced to cancel a major party fundraiser in August because of the flood. The event was supposed to be held at the Celtic Media Centre, which was being used as a shelter for thousands of people displaced from their homes at the time.

In an interview, Villere said the fundraiser has been rescheduled for Sept. 29, but the political party is hoping some donations come in before that time as well.

"It's really just about cash flow," he said.

Flooding Poses Challenges, Opportunities For Baton Rouge Mayoral Candidates

By Andrea Gallo

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

For the third time this summer, Baton Rouge's mayor-president race has a new issue at its forefront as residents look to rebuild from recent flooding and search for a vision of how the city-parish can heal after multiple tragedies over a short time span.

The flooding in East Baton Rouge parish alone is estimated to have swept through nearly 55,000 homes and leaves a long list of questions about how to rebuild when at least half those homeowners were not required to have flood insurance.

The city-parish's next mayor will have to address underlying infrastructure and drainage problems that some have blamed as part of the reason floods became so widespread. Some are already worrying that people will flee Baton Rouge permanently unless leaders act quickly to prevent future flooding.

The floods have presented new challenges for candidates on the campaign trail seeking to become the next mayor.

Mayoral candidates have seen their campaign headquarters flood, canceled fundraisers and been forced to rethink how they can get people to show up at the polls.

"A local mayoral race is heavily dependent on people having a mailbox," said Martin Johnson, a political communication professor at Louisiana State University, who pointed out the physical and geographical implications the floods will have on the mayoral race. Campaign mailers are usually one of the most widely used tools to reach prospective voters.

"The idea that you're going to door knock on somebody in high boots and gloves taking their stuff out to the door — that's just not a practical vision," Johnson said.

Further complicating the campaign dynamic are the other tensions and tragedies that have arisen in Baton Rouge this summer.

The campaigns had already switched directions twice in the past few months — first when Baton Rouge Police Department officers killed Alton Sterling and protests began in early July; second when a gunman killed three Baton Rouge law enforcement officers and critically injured a fourth later that month.

Questions about inequality, race, police distrust and other emotional topics were laid bare on Baton Rouge's table before the floods rushed in.

"In spite of what has happened with the flooding, we can't lose sight of those issues that were before us before the flooding happened," said Rev. Lee Wesley, pastor of Community Bible Baptist Church and one of the leaders of faith-based community group Together Baton Rouge.

Johnson said it's also possible the disaster will inspire residents to vote en masse because they are especially worried about the future of Baton Rouge. But he said such a dynamic often occurs when an incumbent is in the race.

Term-limited Mayor-President Kip Holden is running for U.S. Congress, leaving a crowded field of 12 trying to succeed him. Many of the leading candidates have already been especially visible helping in their communities, trying to distribute aid and more.

They've mostly said the city-parish will need to lean on Congressional and state leaders to tap federal funding for rebuilding. They also hope Congressional leaders can help lower the city-parish's match for FEMA reimbursement from 25 percent to 10 percent at the most.

Xavier University pollster and sociologist Silas Lee said the role of local government right now is to advocate for the resources to help people that local government cannot provide itself.

CANDIDATES CHART NEW TERRITORY

Mayoral candidate and former Democratic State Sen. Sharon Weston Broome is among the thousands of residents whose homes flooded. Around 18 inches of water entered her home in Baton Rouge's Park Forest neighborhood. She did not have flood insurance, and is staying with family while she rebuilds.

Since then, Broome has been volunteering around Baton Rouge and trying to make people aware of the resources available for them when they try to recover and rebuild.

"I don't see a mass exodus because of the floods," Broome said. "What I see are many people who paid for their homes and they say, 'I didn't have flood insurance before but I'm going to get some now.' And I hear people saying they want to stay in their homes as they rebuild. It could be for many of us the worst times in our lives, but most of the people I talk to see the end of the rainbow."

Republican State Sen. Bodi White, who lives in the especially hard-hit city of Central, is more worried about whether people will flee and he wants incentives for them to stay. White sent a letter to President Barack Obama earlier this week requesting help with finishing the Comite River Diversion Canal, which advocates say could have prevented floodwaters from reaching many homes.

Along with the Comite River Diversion Canal, White said he's interested in projects that would divert floodwaters from Bayou Manchac, Wards Creek, Jones Creek and other sources of backwater in East Baton Rouge.

Earlier in the week, White held the first of what he said could be several briefings on the flood recovery through the Senate Select Committee on Homeland Security that he chairs in the state Legislature. The committee received updates from FEMA, GOHSEP, law enforcement, the Louisiana National Guard, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the state Department of Transportation and Development.

"So far, this mayor-president race, you have so many different things that happened that kind of shaped the race to me," White said. "The Sterling shooting and then the assassination of police officers, and then the education and the crime and the streets, which are still major issues. But another big issue now is bringing East Baton Rouge back together and keeping our citizens here."

Republican Metro Councilman John Delgado also said local waterways need to become a major priority. Delgado said the city-parish needs to tap its "rainy day" funds to help pay for rebuilding.

"That's something the local government has to get on the stick about, is the maintenance of these water ways in the parish that are within our control," he said.

Delgado predicted that Baton Rouge will not see a mass exodus of people but that jobs created by the need for construction in the city-parish will attract some new residents.

Democratic State Rep. C. Denise Marcelle said she is especially worried about the FEMA cap of $33,000 to help people without flood insurance rebuild their homes. Marcelle said she is afraid it will feed into blight problems that already affect the city-parish.

Marcelle said she's already seen a sign advertising six houses that flooded off Winbourne Avenue being sold at $90,000 for the batch. She expects that more will pop up if people cannot afford to gut and rebuild their homes, exacerbating the blight problem.

"If we don't get that funding, we're going to see a lot of people walk away from these houses and leave a lot of blighted houses," Marcelle said. "I'm hearing the same thing in all of these neighborhoods — how do I survive for this? This is not going to be enough money for me to repair my house. A lot of people have spent a lifetime building their homes and (acquiring) all of the stuff that's inside of their homes."

Independent mayoral candidate Darryl Gissel is a realtor, and he is already seeing the real estate implications the flooding has created. Experts have predicted major shifts in Baton Rouge's real estate market because a low number of homes were on the market before the floods and demand for new homes and rental housing has skyrocketed.

"It's going to change the direction in which we build," Gissel said. "Should we rebuild some of these inner city neighborhoods that are high and dry?"

Gissel said Baton Rouge needs to look closely at the successes and failures in rebuilding New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, and that those can instruct how the city-parish should bounce back.

Lee, the Xavier University pollster and sociologist, cautioned about buying into any candidate who says they could have responded better to the natural disaster than the existing government leaders.

He said New Orleans voters gave their former Mayor Ray Nagin, later convicted on corruption charges, the benefit of the doubt when he ran for re-election after Hurricane Katrina because Nagin was trying to manage an unprecedented disaster.

"You can't try to exploit it because nobody can predict what impact it will have, a natural disaster," Lee said. "The minute someone tries to exploit it, that's seen as a cheap method of campaigning because you are exploiting people's misery."

None of Baton Rouge's mayoral candidates were ready to commit to asking for a bond issue or tax plan to pay for major drainage and infrastructure projects, though none of the candidates ruled it out, either.

HOW LONG WILL UNITY LAST?

The mayoral candidates have insisted that the unity seen across Baton Rogue in recent weeks should carry through in the future, despite analysts and academics predicting more fights over how flood relief aid is distributed and about how the city-parish is rebuilt.

Related

"Baton Rouge held together as a community better than anyone could have expected given where we were just a month ago," Delgado said.

Marcelle and Broome both said the barriers in Baton Rouge have fallen to the side since the storm, and that people have rallied together. Marcelle said the storm put residents "on an equal playing field," while Broome said the same mentality of "oneness" in the city needs to be carried into the future.

The candidates all pledged to distribute any storm aid to where it is needed the most, regardless of the ZIP code or the demographics there.

"A fair distribution of resources is what we have to do," White said. "You can't forget Baywood, you can't forget Pride, you can't forget north Baton Rouge and you can't forget south Baton Rouge."

As people rebuild, Wesley said, the mayoral election should become even more important in people's minds. But Johnson and political consultant Roy Fletcher both predicted that voter turnout could drop.

From a physical standpoint, Johnson said people who are not in their homes and in their communities will not be as easily able to vote. But the elections could be affected from a psychological standpoint as well.

"They're not paying attention, they're not going to pay attention and they shouldn't pay attention," Fletcher said of Baton Rouge voters who are rebuilding their homes. He said the mayor's race is far from many of their minds.

"Too many people are fighting for the lives and their futures."

Obama Administration Cabinet Officials Talk About SBA Loans Available

By Mark Ballard

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 26, 2016

Over jambalaya and catfish strips, Dr. Franklin Johnson told the head of the U.S. Small Business Administration that he has seen a 60 percent drop off in patients in the two weeks since intense rains led to massive flooding in the Baton Rouge area.

Two of his Dermatology Associates locations were open, but the offices in Central and Denham Springs would be closed well into the future, Franklin told SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet at luncheon Thursday put together by U.S. Sen. David Vitter so that Obama administration cabinet members could hear the personal stories of area businessmen and professionals impacted by the historic flooding earlier this month.

A couple of Franklin's offices had property damage. But that was not the real worry. He couldn't predict when his patients could focus on anything but ripping out water-soaked carpets and drywalls and getting their lives back in order. In the meantime, he had staff and loan payments to consider. And the business interruption insurance he had bought excluded flooding events.

Contreras-Sweet repeated what had become something of mantra for her visit to the Baton Rouge area: enroll for federal disaster assistance programs and start the process.

"A lot of people think, 'Oh, I'll be alright'," Contreras-Sweet said. "What they don't realize is that what happens is it takes a while to recover. They will lose customers over time."

In some parts of the 20 parishes inundated by floodwater and declared a disaster by President Barack Obama, as many as 80 percent of the homes and businesses were impacted to some level. That translates to customers hoarding dollars to get their lives back in order and suppliers being unable to fulfill their obligations, which could impact businesses not this month or next but several months out, said Contreras-Sweet, a banker by trade.

Even if in the end Johnson – and other small business owners – choose not to accept an SBA loan, the paperwork would be complete and the trigger, ready to be pulled, if they find they need the assistance, she said.

Businesses can borrow up to $2 million for physical damage and economic injuries in loans with interest rates below 4 percent.

The SBA also has loans available to cover uncompensated losses for homeowners – up to $200,000 to repair a disaster damaged residence or buy a new one – at interest rates from 1.56 percent to 3.13 percent.

Renters can borrow up to $40,000 to replace possessions.

Julian Castro, secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, made the point to Dr. Johnson that congressmen would rely on the registration numbers to help calculate how much additional aid – above what is set aside for disasters – would be available, should they vote to award a supplemental appropriation, as was done after hurricanes Katrina/Rita and Sandy.

The impact of the flood with no name is still being calculated, Castro said. But fly-over imaging shows about 150,000 properties were damaged and FEMA indicates about 120,000 people have filed for assistance.

The lunch meeting hosted by Vitter, chairman of the Senate Small Business & Entrepreneurship, was at Mason's Grill, a Baton Rouge restaurant that had flooded, repaired itself with the aid of an SBA loan and reopened.

The meal was midway through two separate tours the cabinet officers made of disaster areas.

After viewing demolished public housing for the elderly in Denham Springs, Castro said he understood the need for aid.

"There's no question this is one of the worst natural disasters that we have seen in quite awhile," he said. "We see a real need for significant investment in getting people back to where they were before."

SBA District Director Michael Ricks announced Friday that the SBA had approved more than $35 million in federal disaster loans for Louisiana businesses and residents impacted by the flooding. The SBA had approved 20 business disaster loans for $1.3 million and 456 disaster loans for homeowners and renters totaling $34.8 million to help rebuild and recover from this disaster.

"This isn't just for business owners. A lot of times, if you're a renter you don't think to call on us," Contreras-Sweet said while Secretary of State Tom Schedler showed her around a SBA disaster assistance center set up in the State Archives.

Renters may be eligible for grants from FEMA to help with such disaster-related expenses as: renting a new place to live; medical and dental expenses; replacement or repair of personal property lost, such as vehicles, appliances and furniture, textbooks and computers used by students, and work equipment or tools used by the self-employed.

FEMA grants are not loans, are not taxable and do not have to be repaid.

Additionally, renters may qualify for a low-interest loan of up to $40,000 from the SBA to repair or replace personal property.

Eric Donaldson left one of the repurposed archives offices with a packet in his hand.

Floodwater rose almost to the ceiling of the ground floor of the Denham Springs apartment Donaldson and his wife rented while their home was being built. They lost all their furniture, appliances, and technology. Only their clothes survived, but the garments had to be soaked, washed and rewashed.

Donaldson retreated to his father's home and applied for assistance online. He was referred to the SBA and had come to the State Archives Thursday to talk with an SBA agent and receive the terms of the loan, which he has 60 days to consider. He'll probably accept the loan. "There are not many other options," Donaldson said.

William A. Tryon, of Pensacola, a SBA counselor, said the agents had handled the applications for 70 businesses and 69 homes in three days at the SBA center located at the State Archives. Tryon had become an agent after going through the process after Hurricane Ivan in 2004 washed over the island off Pensacola and destroyed his home. "I've been on the receiving end of this," he said.

Contreras-Sweet spent the morning with Vitter, U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy and U.S. Rep. John Fleming and other officials touring St. Amant.

Speaking from the command center in St. Amant still set up with tables and cots for the National Guardsmen, firefighters and deputies who had worked around the clock pulling people from flooded homes, Ascension Parish Sheriff Jeff Wiley pointed out that most of the property owners did not have flood insurance. That was largely because they weren't in flood zones and their properties hadn't flooded in 1983, the last major event.

A suburb of Baton Rouge, Ascension is one of the wealthiest parishes in the state. Local government had spent money on pumps and levees, he said. But the amount of water overwhelmed the systems.

"This is a parish that takes care of itself," Wiley said. "But, we got knocked to our knees."

Now that the water had gone down, the rescuers were gone and the focus turned from Wiley's command center to recovery, most of the action was taking place next door at The Church, where trucks were stopping with food and water.

Driving down the streets of newly-built subdivisions, American flags flew from piles of rubble, many of which had spray painted "Romans 8:31" – "if God is for us, who could be against us?" Hanging in the air was that fetid smell of waterlogged carpets and drywalls, well known to many on the Gulf Coast but new to Contreras-Sweet and her SBA entourage.

Fleming, a Minden Republican, said he was struck by the photographs, knick-knacks and stuffed animals tossed onto the piles of ruin.

"It wasn't just appliances. Their entire lives were completely gutted and thrown out on the streets," Fleming said.

The U.S. Small Business Administration has opened seven Business Recovery Centers to serve as one-stop assistance sites for businesses and homeowners.

Visit http://sba.gov/laflood or call (800) 659-2955.

Businesses and residents who sustained damages are encouraged to register prior to the October 13 deadline with the Federal Emergency Management Agency by calling (800) 621 FEMA (3362) or (800) 462-7585 (TTY) for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"Gut Check Saturday" Helps Flood Victims Begin Rebuilding

By Timothy Boone

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

For the second Saturday in a row, volunteers organized by Together Baton Rouge were out helping people gut and clean up homes that were damaged in the recent flooding.

"I'm doing a happy dance with these people here today," said Brenda Jackson, who lives in the hard-hit Monticello subdivision. "It's truly a blessing from God that these people gave up their time."

Korey Jarmon, Jackson's son, signed her up for the cleanup last week. Jackson, who is retired, said she doesn't know how she would have gotten her home gutted without the volunteers. "I don't know anything about this," she said. Some family members were helping her clean up, but they became exhausted at the sheer volume of work.

Jackson said her goal was to get all of the drywall and flooring torn out of her home Saturday. "Those people are working like worker bees," she said, standing in her front yard before, while hammers clanged in the house behind her. "Put that in the paper."

More than 60 people took part in Together Baton Rouge's "Gut Check Saturday". They gathered at St. Mary's Baptist Church Saturday morning, put on matching light blue t-shirts and picked up cleaning supplies such as bleach, garbage bags and paper towels before heading out to the flooded homes.

"There are people out there waiting for you," said retired Lt. Gen. Russel Honoré, who helped organize the cleanup. "Do what you can to help them."

Honoré said getting houses gutted quickly is important, so mold growth doesn't set in and give homeowners another expensive headache to deal with.

Valarie Oliver said the help will make her Park Forest home ready for rebuilding. Oliver is temporarily living with family members. "I was just coming over here and doing a little bit of cleanup by myself," she said. Most of her family and friends are either too busy with work or cleaning up their own damage to help her.

"This is the major part of the process, to get everything gutted out," she said.

Together Baton Rouge has set up a website at togetherbr.nationbuilder.com/gutcheckla that allows people who need help gutting their property to put their home on a master list.

Tens of thousands of homes need to be gutted. Broderick Bagert, lead organizer with Together Baton Rouge, said the coalition of churches and community groups is working on ways to increase its capacity to clean up more houses.

A few streets over from Oliver's house in Park Forest, Toye Hebert, Charlie Whinham, Eva Windhoffer and Andy Johnson took a breather in the driveway of a Ridgemont Drive home. Whinham said the volunteers had just torn the water-logged carpet out of the house, a heavy, stinky task that took four people and a wheelbarrow to accomplish.

"It's one thing to see this on social media, it's another to actually see it in person," said Windhoffer, a student at Nicholls State University.

Red Stick Rumble Robotics Competition Delivers Welcome Respite For Flood-weary Students

By Samuel Carter Karlin

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Piles of donated backpacks filled with school supplies, toiletries and toys lining the floor of Woodlawn High School's gymnasium Saturday underscored a day of robotics competitions that, for many, served as a respite from rebuilding flood-ravaged homes and a sense of normalcy for students whose schools remain closed.

The Dow Red Stick Rumble, a competition for 22 teams – around 400 students from Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas – showcased student-built and operated robots navigating an arena of obstacles and throwing gray dodge balls at castle towers they were bent on destroying. The event doubled as a flood relief effort, with dozens of the competitors bringing donations to support fellow students throughout the state.

The items donated included essentials such as paper towels, as well items like teddy bears for children. And some, said Woodlawn Robotics Coach Daniel Eiland, were things like posters for high school classrooms, to replace those added to debris piles in the aftermath of the floods.

Eiland said students and parents have been quick to help out the community by gutting homes and donating. Last week, the school hosted parents and restaurateurs who cooked around 1000 meals for flood victims.

Eiland said the competition was a good way to get students out of the stressful, difficult environment of clearing out flood ravaged homes at least for a time.

"It's been a long slog," Eiland said.

After the flood earlier this month, Eiland asked Scott Travis, third year principal of Woodlawn, whether the event should still go on. Students had spent six weeks working on their robots ahead of the competition.

"I said, 'We're still doing this,'" Travis recalled as robots in the arena behind him catapulted dodge balls across the gym. "Our folks need something to get their minds off of what is going on. And our students don't want to hang out at home anymore."

Woodlawn, like other East Baton Rouge Parish schools, has been closed in the aftermath of the floods and is set to reopen September 6.

Travis said there are still a handful of students and parents the school has not heard from. He estimates at least 10 Woodlawn families lost everything in the flood, and dozens more took on water.

Lafayette High School senior Burke Bolinger watched as his teammates tinkered with the inner-workings of their 120-pound robot following one of their matches. Bolinger said in the past couple of weeks he and his teammates have helped tear out the interiors of flooded houses in their city of Lafayette, which was particularly hard-hit.

"There's a lot of positive vibes out here," he said. "We're trying to make a difference, as small as it may be."

Rebekah Travis, a junior at Benjamin Franklin High School, a charter school in New Orleans, remembered sharing a bus with Hammond High Magnet School on the way to the world robotics competitions last year.

When Travis and her teammates heard Hammond High took on water in the floods, they immediately wanted to help. So Travis and her teammates organized the donation of dozens of backpacks full of food, toiletries and school supplies.

"There are people who lost everything," said Wytni Widmeier, a 20-year-old Woodlawn alumna who was on the robotics team in high school and now serves as a mentor. "And backpacks are expensive."

Carnival Aids Flood Relief, Encourages Cruise Guests To Do Same

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Carnival Corporation Chairman Micky Arison and his wife Madeleine have matched the $250,000 donation made recently by Carnival Cruise Line and parent company Carnival Corporation to aid organizations assisting victims of the Louisiana floods.

The additional $250,000 donation was made through the Micky and Madeleine Arison Family Foundation and raises the total contribution from Carnival Cruise-related organizations to $500,000.

Recipients include the American Red Cross, Louisiana Association of United Ways and Save the Children.

In addition, guests sailing on Carnival cruises from New Orleans have the option to donate when they check in for their cruise and Carnival employees are being encouraged to donate, as well.

The American Red Cross is sheltering thousands of residents displaced by the flooding in southern Louisiana and delivering food, relief supplies and emotional support to flood victims. Donations to the Louisiana Association of United Ways will be dispersed among regional United Way organizations in communities affected by the floods to support long-term needs. Save the Children has deployed an emergency response team to Louisiana and is focused on meeting the critical needs of flood affected children and families and moving forward will be working to restore services essential to children's well-being.

Carnival has operated from the Port of New Orleans since 1994.

Edwards Asks For Patience On Recovery At Legis-Gator

By John Guidroz

Lake Charles (LA) American Press, August 27, 2016

As tens of thousands of residents in southern Louisiana shift from response to recovering from the recent historic flooding, Gov. John Bel Edwards asked for patience as government officials do their part in assisting them.

"Our primary goal right now is getting people back to their homes, back to their communities," Edwards told a sold out crowd at the 11th annual Legis-Gator luncheon, hosted by the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance. "(But) this doesn't happen overnight. We have a long way to go."

Edwards spoke of the three new housing assistance programs announced this week. The one officials are pushing the most is the Shelter At Home Program, which seeks to invest money in residents' permanent homes. It would cover the cost of work like removing carpet and insulation; repairing air conditioning and hot water heaters; and inspecting electrical and plumbing lines. The program, he said, will be open to the public Monday.

"If we can go into somebody's home and, with $15,000, make it secure, habitable and safe, then that's what we are going to do," Edwards said.

It's the first time the program is being rolled out in Louisiana. Other states, like New York and New Jersey, used a similar program after Hurricane Sandy's landfall in 2012, but that effort was criticized by some because of a lack of good-quality repair work.

Edwards said the state will work to make sure the program uses "our contractors (and) laborers."

Another program will provide temporary manufactured homes, including mobile homes approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The third is a Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program that seeks to find available rental properties for displaced families.

Edwards also spoke of the record flooding in March that occurred "in every corner of the state." While residents affected by both floods are going through difficult times, he assured them that officials will work to help them recover.

"We know we are going to do everything we can to make them have a better life as soon as possible," Edwards said.

He spent time touring Lake Arthur on Thursday, visiting with residents and officials and praising them for using measures to prevent additional flooding from the Mermentau River.

During the flooding, Edwards said nine weather stations around the state recorded more than 21 inches of rainfall in less than 48 hours. Flood gauges stopped reporting because they were washed away.

The flooding claimed 13 lives. Edwards said the death toll could have been higher if not for residents quickly responding to rescue more than 30,000 people who were in danger.

"We saw people being neighbors to one another, not just neighbors to people who happen to live next to them ... but neighbors to strangers," he said.

When describing how Louisiana residents responded to the flooding, Edwards said the one word that came to mind was "resilient."

"Let me tell you what makes the state of Louisiana great; it's the people," he said.

Edwards also praised the working relationship the state has had with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies in the wake of the flooding. He said he has asked the federal government to reduce the state match from 25 percent to 10 percent and include the March flooding when seeking relief.

The flooding has damaged 125,000 homes, with less than 20 percent of homeowners having flood insurance. While FEMA is not an insurance program, Edwards said he is meeting Monday with federal lawmakers to "fashion a program that doesn't currently exist" to help residents.

"The worst thing we can have is people walking away from their businesses (and) homes," he said. "We're going to have to think outside the box."

Edwards said there are plans to use hazard mitigation funding to pay for drainage projects instead of elevating homes.

Awards

Senate President John Alario, R-Westwego, received the Legis-Gator of the Year award. His career as a state lawmaker dates back to 1972.

Freshman Rep. Stephen Dwight, R-Moss Bluff, received the Fusion Five award. Sen. Ronnie Johns, R-Sulphur, received the Governmental Affairs award.

The event was held at L'Auberge Casino Resort.

Governor Addresses Flood Recovery At LegisGator Luncheon

By Maranda Whittington

KPLC-TV Lake Charles (LA), August 26, 2016

LAKE CHARLES, LA (KPLC) –

Friday's LegisGator luncheon had a wide variety of speakers, but their focus was the same – flooding and flood recovery.

The heavy rains created heavy flooding that left many with damaged homes.

"Our primary goal is to get people back in their homes, and back in their communities, so they can go to their schools, to their churches and go to their jobs," said Gov. John Bel Edwards.

Edwards announced that he has created three new housing assistant programs for flood victims. Two are temporary but the third one, Edwards believes, will be the most beneficial because it will invest money in people's permanent homes.

"It's called 'Shelter at Home' and it will be open to the public starting Monday," said Edwards.

"Shelter at Home will grant $15,000 to making homes secure, habitable and safe. Edwards also addressed FEMA and the role it plays in the state.

FEMA is not designed to make people whole," said Edwards. "FEMA is designed to give you assistance and to stabilize your life so that you can recover from there."

Edwards called on congressmen to come together to help.

"If you all will work with me, I know that we would be successful on behalf of the people of Louisiana," he said.

Edwards ended his speech thanking those who have united together to help one another. He remains hopeful for our state.

"We are gong to be stronger and better than ever, and I want you to know, I have no doubt that our best days are ahead," he said.

For more information on the Shelter at Home program click HERE.

The application, phone number and websites for the program will be available starting Monday.

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Governor Addresses Flood Recovery At LegisGator Luncheon

KSLA-TV Shreveport (LA), August 26, 2016

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– Maranda Whittington

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FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Opens In Denham Springs Saturday

By Kevin Dupuy

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

BATON ROUGE – FEMA will open a disaster recovery center in Denham Springs Saturday after historic flooding ravaged much of Livingston Parish last week.

The FEMA disaster recovery center will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the following location:

North Park Recreation Center (At the corner of Lockhart)
30372 Eden Church Road
Denham Springs, LA 70726

Represenatives from GHSEP, FEMA, the Small Business Administration, and volunteer groups will be available to answer questions about disaster aid and low interest disaster loans. Residents can also apply for federal disaster aid.

It is not necessary to visit a center to register for and receive federal disaster assistance. Disaster Survivor Assistance teams are canvassing many affected areas to register people for federal aid.

If possible, residents should register with FEMA online at DisasterAssitance.gov before visiting a recovery center.

Renters May Be Eligible For Federal Disaster Aid

By Kevin Dupuy

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

BATON ROUGE – Renters who experienced losses from last week's historic flooding may be eligible for federal disaster aid.

According to a FEMA statement Friday, renters may be eligible for grants from FEMA to cover certain disaster related expenses, including:

Disaster related medical and dental expenses

Replacement or repair of necessary personal property (appliances and furniture, textbooks, computers used by students and work equipment for the self-employed)

Repair or replacement of vehicles damaged by the disaster

Disaster related funeral and burial expenses

FEMA grants are not loans and do not need to be repaid. FEMA says the grants are also not taxable income and will not affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid, welfare assistance, SNAP benefits or other programs.

Renters may also qualify for a low-interest loan up to $40,000 from the SBA to repair or replace personal property.

Residents can apply for aid online with any computer, smartphone or tablet at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362. . The toll-free telephone numbers are open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

FEMA Encourages Residents To Read Determination Letters Carefully

By Brock Sues

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

BATON ROUGE – If you're a survivor of recent flooding and receive a letter that says your application for federal assistance is "ineligible" or "incomplete," be sure to read the letter all the way through to the end to find out why.

FEMA officials point out that all applicants have the right to appeal and, in many cases, a quick fix can remedy the situation.

FEMA listed some common reasons why people receive an ineligible determination:

The most common reason for ineligibility is you didn't provide FEMA with a copy of a letter verifying your insurance coverage and detailing your settlement. FEMA needs this to process your grant application.

Your insurance company will be able to provide you the documents. Find your insurance company's information online at the Louisiana Department of Insurance's website: www.ldi.la.gov/onlineservices/ActiveCompanySearch

Other reasons for ineligibility may include:

-You did not sign the required documents.

-You did not prove occupancy or ownership.

-Your identity may not have been verified.

-The damage is not to your primary residence, but to a secondary home or a rental property.

-Another member of your household may have applied and received assistance.

-Your disaster-related losses could not be verified.

What to do next:

You may take copies of the documents to your closest Disaster Recovery Center where a FEMA specialist can help you.

Find DRC locations by going online at fema.gov/disaster-recovery-centers or by downloading and using the FEMA app. You may also call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362. If you use TTY, call 800-462-7585. If you use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362.

Or mail copies of the needed documents within 60 days of receiving your letter to the address below:

FEMA – Individuals & Households Program
National Processing Service Center
P.O. Box 10055
Hyattsville, MD 20782-7055

You can also fax the documents to:

800-827-8112

Attention: FEMA – Individuals & Households Program

It's important to write the registration number that FEMA gave you after applying for help on all the documents. Write the federal disaster declaration number, DR-4277-LA, too.

If you have more questions:

If you registered, you should have received a booklet called "Help after a Disaster" that details how FEMA determines what's eligible for assistance. You can access the booklet online at www.fema.gov/help-after-disaster.

If you have questions about your application or about filing an appeal, call the FEMA helpline at If you use TTY, call 800-462-7585. If you use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362.

Visit a DRC to speak with a FEMA specialist who can help you appeal.

Tullier Family On Deputy's Condition, Loss Of Home During Flood

By Trey Schmaltz

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

BATON ROUGE – As his neighbors toss flood debris and heirlooms to the curb, the soaked belonging of James Tullier's family remain locked in the first floor of his two story home in Livingston Parish.

Before the flood, Tullier and his wife were rarely home since their lives were upended by a gunman who shot their son, an East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's deputy, three times in July. The Tulliers rarely leave Our Lady of the Lake where their son, Nick, is under the care of doctors and nurses.

"He's hanging in there. He's fighting," James said in an exclusive interview first televised on WBRZ News 2 at 6:00 Friday. "He's fighting everyday."

Friday was the fortieth day the Tulliers have spent in the hospital. The family told WBRZ anchor Michael Shingleton, they don't count days – instead, they count blessings and miracles.

"Every day, to us, has been a miracle." James Tullier said doctors weren't optimistic about his son's survival, though, at the end of August, he still clings to life.

"He wasn't suppose to live longer than a day. Then he wasn't suppose to live longer than two days. Then five days. Then it became a 21 day forecast."

As the family listened, prayed, and hoped, they missed the sound of severe weather moving across the region. When Baton Rouge, Livingston and Ascension began flooding, the Tulliers were flooding heaven with prayers from inside the hospital, oblivious to what was happening outside.

Michael Shingleton asked, "You didn't know it was raining?"

"No," James Tullier answered."

"Not a clue?"

"No."

It is believed, the Tulliers' neighborhood took 92 inches of flood water. As their neighbors work to recover their homes and lives, the Tulliers pray for their son's recovery.

"Our priority has been with Nick. The house is an object. We know that it's a process that has to be dealt with, but to us, it's on the back burner."

James has been able to meet with both the Vice President and the President. This week, President Obama streamlined the process with FEMA and flood insurance inspectors. Vice President Biden set up the family with the nation's top doctor. The doctor is now familiar with Nick Tullier's condition.

And, the Tulliers ask people stay focused on their son's condition and not the condition of the family's home.

"People have offered to come and clean out our house. No, pray for Nick," Tullier said.

The Tulliers ask for prayers, hope and support. Nick Tullier's condition is updated frequently on this Facebook page, organized to share information on his health. James Tullier routinely posts. Social media hashtags #TullierStrong #TeamNick are used to share thoughts, support and messages, too.

Watch the exclusive report by clicking the attached video link.

STORY UPDATE: The Tullier's thank everyone for their calls to the Sheriff's Office. The family does not need help cleaning out or gutting their home. They have already been in touch with FEMA and their insurance company, and they're making progress. Keep praying for Nick. – Michael Shingleton – Twitter: @ShingletonWBRZ

Annual Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival Cancelled

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), August 26, 2016

GONZALES – Officials in Ascension Parish say that this year's Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival is cancelled due to recent historic flooding and in anticipation of any further weather events.

"We are hurting, but on the mend, in Ascension Parish. Over 50% of our annual attendees at the Hot Air Balloon Festival are folks from the affected areas," said Ascension Parish President Kenny Matassa. "I want them to know we are experiencing this trial together, and next year we will bring the Hot Air Balloon Festival back for everyone to enjoy."

The festival was scheduled for Sept. 23 and 24 at the center off Louisiana Highway 30 and Interstate 10.

The usual site of the festival, the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center, remains fully operational and has served as a center for recovery activities in the parish. The expo center has been used as a shelter, a staging spot for debris and also is playing host to a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center.

Parish and state officials said they are also in discussions concerning the use of Lamar-Dixon for any future weather events that may threaten south Louisiana through the remainder of hurricane season.

Longview Citizen And Red Cross Veteran Travels To Louisiana For Flood Relief

By Hayat Norimine

Daily News (WA), August 28, 2016

Longview resident Julia Bishop is a veteran when it comes to disaster relief.

Bishop, 64, travels to disasters as a Red Cross volunteer three or four times a year. She will spend the next week working 12- to 15-hour shifts, every day, assisting flood victims in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

According to Red Cross official Brad Kieserman, the catastrophic flood devastating Louisiana is now the worst natural disaster to strike the United States since Hurricane Sandy four years ago.

Piles of garbage, damaged furniture and other belongings were left lining the streets after a prolonged rainfall overwhelmed the state. More than 20 inches of rain fell in less than three days. FEMA declared a major disaster in Louisiana on Aug. 14, the second time in just a few months that it had done so.

"If you drive down the streets, everybody's life is laying out there in the road," Bishop said.

Tens of thousands of homes have been damaged. More than 100,000 individuals and households have asked for FEMA assistance, and Bishop said the economic hardship is apparent. Small business owners often close their stores permanently from such disasters, unable to recuperate from such a financial loss.

As a shelter manager in Baton Rouge, Bishop assists in organizing shelters' needs and preparing supplies. Bishop said there are 15 shelters that hold anywhere from less than 100 people to as many as 1,300. Five of those shelters are for the staff, she said. Over 2,000 Red Cross volunteers are currently stationed in Louisiana.

Bishop is the only remaining Red Cross volunteer in Cowlitz County after its Longview office closed. She said many of them retired, others moved away or moved on.

But Bishop has "the disaster bug," she said, and while she works at Janus Youth in Portland, she said the organization allows her to fuel her passion for disaster relief on the side. She has assisted in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in the Northeast, tornadoes in the Midwest, wildfires in California, and several disasters in Texas.

For Bishop, it all started back in 2005 with her first trip (with 100 church volunteers from Longview) to Louisiana to assist with reliefs after Hurricane Katrina that August. Seeing how thankful the people were for the help, she said, made her realize that trip wouldn't be her last.

"When you can do what you can to help people in their worst time, it changes their lives," she said.

She is also inspired by people's survival stories. Sometimes, she said, it hits close to home. In 2011 a devastating tornado hit Joplin, Missouri, a town that reminded Bishop of her own hometown.

It looked "like a bomb went off there," Bishop said. She drew parallels between the Midwestern area to Longview, as if it had hit the Highlands, took out hospitals, fire departments and schools, and wiped out every business on Ocean Beach Highway.

"There was a lot of death there, that was hard," she said. "It seemed too much like Longview."

Bishop said in the process of being exposed to such tragedies, she also developed bonds and it makes her grateful for her own life. She has friends all over the country that she still keeps in touch with.

"It makes me very appreciative of everything I have," she said.

"I'm So Lucky": Homeowner Thankful Following Harrowing Louisiana Flood Experience

By Sara Smith

WCAU-TV Philadelphia, August 27, 2016

Kyung Kim was home with her dog when the flood waters began to rise in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Within a few hours, more than 2 feet of water filled the first floor of the home along Bourque Road. The lights went out and for three days she sat in the dark, watching snakes and catfish swim by her door.

At one point, people came by with a boat offering her a way out, but she didn't want to leave. Her husband, Steve, was away in Colorado and she was worried about the house.

"I told them no, I was staying," she said. They did help her charge her phone, though, so she could keep in touch with relatives.

Knowing the dire situation at home, Steve jumped on a plane for Baton Rouge – about 60 miles west of Lafayette.

He took a cab from the airport, but while the water had receded from the Kims' neighborhood, the road leading there was still inundated.

Desperate to get home, Steve waded, for a mile, through snake-infested waters.

"I saw him coming," Kyung explained, holding up her arms over her head, "with water up to here," she said gesturing to her chest.

The Kims moved to the United States from South Korea in 1999. Kyung runs a salon nearby. It's the couple's only source of income.

She says as soon as the water receded, she began scrubbing the house.

"I had no idea you had to do all that," she said pointing to the pile of debris on the side of the street. Thing is, if you don't rip out everything touched by the flood water, mold can take over the home.

On this Friday, the Kims have extra help in the clean up. Volunteers from Samaritan's Purse, a North Carolina-based Christian disaster relief organization buzz around like bees in bright orange shirts.

It's just one job site of more than 3,500 that have been requested by those affected by the flooding across the state.

Helping Louisiana Flood Victims

Volunteers from our region are helping victims of the disaster in Louisiana. NBC10.COM's Sara Smith tells us what kind of work Samaritan's Purse offers. (Published Saturday, Aug. 27, 2016)

Among the volunteers were Drew and Pat Alexander from Aldan, Pennsylvania, a small suburb in Delaware County.

"We both have a spirit for serving people in a time of need," Pat says of why she and Drew drove 20 hours south to help. "Some people run from disaster, we seem to run to disaster."

The Alexanders have been married 34 years and volunteer with multiple organizations together.

"We're at just about every disaster we can get ahold of," Drew explains. "We know the need is there and we have some ability to be able to help to ease people through those difficult times they're experiencing. That's our mission in life."

The Kims also met with a FEMA adjuster this day. They hope for some help from the government to rebuild. They, like so many others, don't have flood insurance.

Standing among the mess, Kyung feels grateful.

"I'm so lucky, look at all those cars, all those people helping us," she said.

Her thoughts about the volunteers is heartfelt, but unfortunately the work won't be over once they leave.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

No stories for this edition

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

No stories for this edition

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

No stories for this edition

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

No stories for this edition

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

No stories for this edition

FEMA CORPS

No stories for this edition

PRIVATE SECTOR

No stories for this edition

CITIZEN CORPS

No stories for this edition

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Jeff Sadow: Obama Shows Hypocrisy In Answering Flood

By Jeff Sadow

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

President Barack Obama finally came to Baton Rouge last week, prodded by this newspaper and other, mainly Republican, critics. Meanwhile, Louisiana's elected Democrats did their best to cover for his hypocrisy on presidential crisis visits.

Regarding what relief agencies describe as the largest American disaster since Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast nearly four years ago, at its start Obama authorized relief but didn't shorten his vacation to toney Martha's Vineyard in order personally to assess the situation. Obama's reluctance prompted a call-out from The Advocate on its editorial page, joined by many others, for him to visit Baton Rouge. Eventually he assented and appeared almost two weeks after the waters began invading structures and washing out infrastructure.

Apparently, flooding of such severity believed typically to occur every thousand years did not give Obama a sufficient chance to advance his ideological or electoral agenda. Just as April showers bring May flowers, so do mass shootings attract Obama, as during his terms in office nine times he quickly visited locations of such tragic events and the families of victims — although not last summer's unfortunate killings in a Lafayette theater that occurred while he traveled to Africa. At these gatherings, he demanded more gun control, although nothing short of disregarding the Second Amendment and turning the country into a police state might have prevented any of these lamentable occurrences.

Obama had graced Baton Rouge with his presence earlier this year — when he came to celebrate Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards' unwise order to implement Obama's signature expansion of Medicaid. But it proved too much for him to help the city heal by coming soon after last month's unfortunate Alton Sterling shooting by police and the subsequent retaliatory assassinations of three officers.

Regarding water-caused natural disasters, shortly after Hurricane Sandy struck Obama managed to survey from above the damage. Broadcast media for several hours portrayed him acting presidentially, viewed by voters there and in swing states.

But Obama is not on this fall's ballot; Louisiana will vote overwhelmingly Republican; and, since floods don't lend themselves for use as ideological tools, when the waters rose Obama couldn't be bothered to sacrifice even one of the nine rounds of golf he played among the well-off in order to commiserate with the less fortunate. In the process Obama hung out Edwards to dry, leaving the state's most prominent flood victim to mumble about what stellar attention Obama's underlings paid to rescue and recovery matters and how a presidential drive-by would be too distracting.

One such underling, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, during his own trip to Baton Rouge noted Obama had "a very busy schedule;" after all, Obama paused during his vacation to headline a fundraiser for Democrat presidential candidate Hillary Clinton — the day after the disaster declaration. New Orleans Democratic Rep. Cedric Richmond, running for reelection, didn't mind Obama's absence for this or any reason, declaring "the federal government has our back."

As laughable as such excuses might be, at least they don't display Obama's own hypocrisy. As a candidate eight years ago, Obama criticized his predecessor, former George W. Bush, who traveled to the Gulf Coast five days after Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005 with rescues ongoing, as "a president who only saw the people from the window of an airplane instead of down here on the ground trying to provide comfort and aid."

Thanks for stopping in, Mr. President, even if we can't serve as a prop for your agenda.

Jeff Sadow is an associate professor of political science at Louisiana State University Shreveport, where he teaches Louisiana Government. He is author of a blog about Louisiana politics at http://www.between-lines.com, where links to information in this column may be found. When the Louisiana Legislature is in session, he writes about legislation in it at http://www.laleglog.com. Follow him on Twitter @jsadowadvocate. Write to him at jeffsadowtheadvocate@yahoo.com. His views do not necessarily express those of his employer.

Political Horizons: Congressman Argues Katrina Relief Is Related To Flooding Disaster

By Mark Ballard

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

Congressman John Fleming last week scratched his chin for a moment, wondering who Rahm Emanuel was paraphrasing when the president's then-chief of staff said, "You never let a good crisis go to waste."

Emanuel, now Chicago's mayor, said it a couple times but importantly when he was talking about an effort to aid the victims of Superstorm Sandy. Fleming ultimately opposed the effort — a now-uncomfortable position as Louisiana's delegation puts together a similar congressional request to aid the approximately 140,000 victims of the flood with no name.

Some internet commentators nodded to Winston Churchill as a source of the quote. But, other than a bunch of readers "liking" it, the sourcing on Churchill is rather scarce for a quote that has come to mean that a disaster could be exploited to find money for projects that otherwise wouldn't be approved.

The Freakanomics website tracked the quote down to a 1976 Medical Economics journal article, in which M.F. Weiner argued that a health crisis should be used to motivate healthier habits in the patient's lifestyle.

That's an origins story that Fleming and U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, both physicians who opposed the Sandy supplement, might appreciate.

Fleming, a Minden Republican, was using the quote to explain why he voted in 2013 against the final bill that provided Superstorm Sandy victims more financial aid than was set aside for "regular" disasters. He's being pummeled by opponents in the U.S. Senate campaign about the vote. Public Service Commissioner Foster Campbell said Fleming's political orthodoxy might haunt Louisiana's congressional delegation's efforts to find additional funding for south Louisiana flooding victims.

Fleming said he backed the bill when it was just for Sandy victims. He opposed the final measure because it was chock-a-block full of projects that, while tangentially related to disaster mitigation, had little to do with getting New Jersey and New York homeowners and businessmen back on their feet.

For instance, Fleming tried to strike as unrelated the $1.55 million for upgrading the emergency generator backup system at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia.

"Disaster funds must go directly to needed areas with no added pork," Fleming said.

So last week when Obama arrived to tour north Baton Rouge neighborhoods, Gov. John Bel Edwards pressed the president with his "ask." The four-page letter included all the expected stuff — please lower the portion the state would have to pay, and would you mind covering the full cost for temporary shelter and shelter-in-home assistance?

Perhaps under the theory of asking for the stars in the opening gambit, down there near the bottom of page three, Edwards requested that Obama forgive the state's portion to improve the levees around New Orleans after the 2005 Hurricane Katrina.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is putting the finishing touches on a $14.5 billion storm protection system that installed pumps and improved levees. Under a complex formula, the state this year had to start paying $100 million a year until 2048 as Louisiana's match.

"These obligations are crippling to the state as we attempt to fund Master Plan projects designed to save the Louisiana coast," Edwards wrote the president. "A full waiver will allow Louisiana to spend these needed funds on coastal projects to prevent future disasters."

U.S. Sen. David Vitter said that Louisiana's congressional delegation always had argued for the federal government to pick up the tab.

"It's not particularly related (to this disaster), but it is and has been a priority for the delegation," Vitter said.

As the longest-serving member of Louisiana's delegation to Washington, Vitter is leading the effort to gather the statistics that support a request for federal appropriations above what is set aside for disasters. Louisiana's congressmen already are putting together ideas for the supplemental bill and Edwards hopes to meet with them this week or next to cobble out the details.

"Forgiving the $100 million debt is a big ask," Fleming said. "I don't think the president can do that without support from Congress."

He agreed that the Katrina levees protect a population not directly affected by this month's flooding. But he gamely argued that this request has a better link to the problem at hand than, say, relocating damaged roads in unspecified wildlife refuges or development projects in cash-strapped Puerto Rico — both in the Sandy supplemental legislation.

Every time south Louisiana gets hit hard by Mother Nature, and it happens frequently, new pain comes on a variation of the same theme — levees breaking, coastal erosion, water backing up, etc. "So, in that sense it's all part of the same problem, just a different verse of the same song," Fleming said.

At Random: Flood Makes Simple Question More Profound

By Danny Heitman

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 27, 2016

As a scholar who had studied the 19th century remarked some years ago, when people asked you how you were doing back then, they really wanted to know how you were doing. At a time when death and loss were all too common, a friend or neighbor's well-being couldn't be taken for granted. Inquiring after someone wasn't a rhetorical question; it was how you gauged whether a person in your life might truly be in need.

"How are you doing?" has that kind of emotional resonance these days in much of south Louisiana in the aftermath of a flood that's disrupted so many lives. When people ask about each other this month, the words usually come with a furrowed brow of concern. It's a natural response in communities where just about everyone either has a flooded home or knows someone who has.

My house stayed dry, but my sister-in-law and her 10-year-old son evacuated their neighborhood by boat, and they're staying with us until their place is fixed. In emptying the mess from their home after the flood, they came across a bowl of loose change. Last week, we wanted to do something frivolous as a respite from our troubles, so my nephew and I took his bowl of money to a grocery store that had one of those mechanical coin counters — the kind that sort nickels, dimes, pennies and quarters, spitting out a receipt that can be redeemed for paper cash.

There was a line at the coin sorter, something I'd never seen before. In front of us were customers for whom the counting of pennies didn't seem like a casual pastime. They looked poor, and I suspected that the flood had forced them to look with fresh eyes at every nickel to their name.

Pain is palpable throughout south Louisiana, as I tried to explain last week in an essay I wrote for The Wall Street Journal. Some friends wanted extra copies of the piece, so I stopped by a local newsstand to buy some. The owner hadn't answered his phone the day before, and I soon found out why. His house had flooded, and he felt relieved that his home could be repaired, with insurance covering most of the cost. But then fouled wiring sparked a fire, burning his place to the ground. On the day I had called, he'd closed his shop to rush to the fire. He arrived in time to see it reduced to cinders.

That's the story I got when I asked something so simple that many of us utter it from reflex: "How are you doing?"

There are thousands of answers to that question in south Louisiana this week, many of them tragic.

Many years ago, a Bosnian refugee described her newfound life in Louisiana to me as boring and happy. After enduring the destruction of war, she'd learned that the little dull things in life — a safe home on a quiet street — were blessings too easily overlooked.

In south Louisiana this month, those dull days before the flood can seem like chapters from a distant time.

Aid, Yes, But Talk Changes

Lafayette (LA) Daily Advertiser, August 26, 2016

Lafayette Parish residents got a cold splash of reality from Gov. John Bel Edwards this week.

Visiting flood-ravaged Youngsville, Edwards told residents there — more than 600 in that town had water in their homes — that the Federal Emergency Management Agency can't make them "whole."

No, it can't. Most Louisianans affected by the flood did not have flood insurance. That's at least understandable, because so many who were flooded were not living in what the government believes are flood zones.

"It's very similar to stories we've heard all over South Louisiana," Edwards said of his Youngsville visit. "Historic, unprecedented flood. Homes here have never flooded before. They don't live in a flood zone."

Flood zone or not, though, Louisiana is a water-rich environment. There are 5,000 miles of navigable water. It borders the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River, one of the major water systems in the world. Flood possibilities shift with every development.

The Red River bisects Louisiana and other, robust rivers cut across and through it. We have bayous and canals, swamps and wetlands.

When it comes to water, Louisiana is a geographic wonder. It is the stuff of legends, too. Evangeline and Gabriel might tell you that, if those fictional characters could.

The hard truth that Edwards delivered is that without flood insurance, affected homeowners may have to depend on the slow, uncertain wheels of government for additional help. FEMA can help some — up to $33,000, but likely less.

The unnamed flood that beset 20 Louisiana parishes from Aug. 11-13, America's largest natural disaster since Superstorm Sandy, has changed lives here, and not for the better.

Edwards has made a pitch directly to President Obama for help additional to that which FEMA routinely provides; Louisiana's congressional delegation, which is not without skills and influence, must make the case to their colleagues for supplemental help.

That may be out of character for some of our delegation, which oftentimes preaches limited, not robust, government. It comes during the political campaign season, too. Flood insurance and coastal management are campaign issues that may have moved up — should have moved up — the political pecking order.

The state seems to be functioning at a high level for affected citizens. The federal government, too, is established on the ground and distributing good information as quickly as possible. That's not easy, especially with so many people displaced.

But when it comes to help, a federal government that's $20 trillion in debt seems an unlikely bet to solve every citizen's need in times of high water.

Louisianians need solutions for the flood effects now, but the country needs more planning and options for offering flood insurance and protections later. It's campaign season: What better time to talk?

Hurricane Irene Popular Again — Louisiana Flood? "Eh"

By Antonio Newell

Inquisitr, August 27, 2016

Five years after Hurricane Irene's damage, it still gets more coverage than Louisiana's flood. Sad.

Interestingly enough, Louisiana's flood crisis has been labeled the "worst natural disaster since Hurricane Sandy," according to Washington Post.

You know who made that statement? Brad Kieserman, vice president for disaster services operations and logistics for the Red Cross.

And mind you, Sandy's damage was estimated around $50 billion, with 200,000 homes lost — "second only to Hurricane Katina," notes Live Science.

Yet, Louisiana's massive flood has received nowhere near the coverage, support, or national outcry as Sandy or Irene. Why is Hurricane Irene Trending?

As mentioned, Hurricane Irene made landfall in 2011; it's the five-year anniversary.

Yes. There was definitely catastrophe. Actually, New York Daily News reports that — after a year of evaluation — the total damage was an estimated cost of $15.8 billion.

Now, if Louisiana's flood devastation is as bad as authoritative representatives say, why aren't flood headlines doing as well as "Hurricane Irene" headlines?

Is it not weird how the nation seemingly continues forgetting about Louisiana in its time of need? The same happened during Katrina.

This flood happened in and around the same city and region where Alton Sterling was murdered, where there was massive coverage in our faces day in and day out.

So, what's different now?

The Real Reason Why Louisiana's Flood Gets Little Love

What spurs your emotion? What makes you, as a reader, search for something informative? What catches your attention?

Here's a little secret. In large, news media outlets only report what you find interesting.

Take Hurricane Irene for example. What was significant about 2011 that had many people around the world on edge?

In 2011, people were concerned with natural disasters because the world was supposed to experience horrific devastation in 2012. Remember the infamous "Mayan calendar"?

Shortly before that time, but definitely during the "calendar" watch, Hurricane Sandy had also made its round of disaster wrath. The world was primed and ready for "natural disaster" news.

And now? Police brutality — as can be seen from Alton Sterling's coverage.

Five years later, after the Mayan calendar mayhem, we're still here. Disasters aren't "trending" now.

Louisiana Struggles for 'Likes' and Life

Hurricane Irene is currently trending because people remember its devastation and the feelings they had about it — just like Hurricane Katrina and Sandy victims.

However, also like Katrina survivors, victims of Louisiana's flooding will surely remember how alone they felt as the rest of the country went on about its life — wondering, rather, when Kylie Jenner's sextape will release, or if Donald Trump will finally release his tax returns.

This was — and is — a statewide catastrophe which should've gained more national concern. It wasn't some small flash flood.

According to National Public Radio (NPR), over 40,000 Louisiana homes have been found damaged, and the investigation is ongoing. Likewise, as concerns residents, at least twice that number are awaiting response from FEMA. The source mentions that the disaster stretches over 20 parishes (counties).

Do you realize the magnitude of this flood? That's an entire state in other parts of the country. Some states don't even have enough land for 20 counties.

The report notes that some people closely compare it to the devastation experienced during Hurricane Katrina.

Honestly, if you look at aerial shots from the hurricane and the flood aftermaths, it's difficult to tell which photos belong to what disaster.

But, does the rest of the United States care?

While these concerns have always been at the forefront of news reporting, social media integration has not. Now, with just a click of a few pages, research organizations, television crews, etc. can see exactly what you like to watch or read via your timeline.

Not so? Look at your personal timeline.

See anything regarding contributions you've made to flood victims? If you haven't even spoken about it in a week, the fact is you've moved on.

It's a harsh reality of these United States.

La. Floods Should Be Wake-up Call

By Amy Goodman

Albuquerque (NM) Journal, August 27, 2016

The floodwaters are receding in Baton Rouge, La., and the scale of the damage is revealing itself. It has been described as a 1,000-year flood, leaving at least 13 people dead and close to 60,000 homes ruined.

According to Weather Underground meteorologists Jeff Masters and Bob Henson, August has been the wettest month in Baton Rouge in 174 years, when records were first kept. They added, "Since June 1, Baton Rouge has picked up an amazing 40.95 inches – more rain in three months than downtown Los Angeles has recorded over the last five years (38.79 inches)!"

President Barack Obama traveled there Tuesday. "I think anybody who can see just the streets, much less the inside of the homes here, people's lives have been upended by this flood," he said after walking through part of the devastated city.

While Obama was criticized by his political opponents for not visiting Baton Rouge earlier, it's what happened one day later, in nearby New Orleans, that should have everyone concerned.

The Obama administration conducted a massive auction of offshore oil and gas drilling leases in the Gulf of Mexico.

The irony was not lost on Antonia Juhasz. She is a journalist and energy analyst who has long tracked the multinational petroleum corporations engaged in deep-water oil extraction.

"Following Obama #LouisianaFlood visit, Interior Dept to auction offshore drilling leases to 24 million acres in Gulf on 8/24 at Superdome," she tweeted, followed by, "After protests nearly shut down lease sale in March at Superdome, for first time, BOEM closes sale to public, makes viewing available online."

The BOEM is the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. The agency was auctioning 23.8 million acres in the western section of the Gulf of Mexico, for deep-water oil and gas exploration and extraction.

We spoke to Juhasz on the "Democracy Now!" news hour, just before the auction began: "The timing of all of these events couldn't be more devastating," she said. "You have this historic flood. You have the president there to offer assistance from FEMA and to hopefully try and assist those on the ground, while at the same time the Interior Department is continuing the problems that help accelerate this storm in the first place, help make it more ferocious, help make these storms more frequent. And that, of course, is the burning of fossil fuels, leading to climate change."

Adding to the irony is the site of the auction: the Superdome. After Hurricane Katrina inundated most of New Orleans, this sports stadium became a refuge of last resort for an estimated 15,000-20,000 stranded residents.

While any one extreme weather event can't be directly attributed to climate change, storms, droughts, wildfires, floods and hurricanes all are expected to become more frequent and more severe as the planet warms. Those thousands in the Superdome after Katrina should be considered climate refugees. For this building now to house the auctions for drilling for more fossil fuels only adds insult to the injury.

There is growing grass-roots activism directly confronting the extraction and transport of fossil fuels, from communities in the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Plains in the northern U.S. and Canada.

On Tuesday, hundreds protested the planned auction. A huge banner floated beneath a balloon, reading "Another Gulf is Possible." Four demonstrators were arrested after refusing to leave the Interior Department office in New Orleans.

Last March, a similar auction of offshore Gulf drilling leases was almost canceled, as hundreds protested in the Superdome. That protest occurred just weeks after another massive flood hit southern Louisiana.

Meanwhile, in North Dakota, more than a thousand indigenous activists at the Sacred Stone Spirit Camp are blocking construction of the proposed $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline. They say the pipeline could contaminate the Missouri River, which provides water for the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and for millions more downstream.

Also on Wednesday, an action was held outside the federal District Court in Washington, D.C., where the Standing Rock Sioux tribe has filed suit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the pipeline.

Rather than enabling more dangerous deep-water oil extraction off the shores of the Gulf Coast, President Obama should be spending his remaining months in office doing everything in his power to reduce our national dependence on fossil fuels.

– Amy Goodman | Syndicated Columnist

Distributed by King Features Syndicate.

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather-Hermine. NBC Nightly News (9/5, lead story, 2:25, Snow, 16.61M) reported, "For millions of Americans up and down the East Coast this holiday, wasn't quite what they hoped. Churning surf, dangerous rip currents and high winds from Hermine closed down beaches and forced a lot of vacationers to leave the water on this Labor Day. It's the latest impact of a deadly storm that has lingered for days and the effect on businesses that rely on summer tourist dollars is still being tallied. Gabe Gutierrez is on New York's Long Island." NBC (**Gutierrez**) added, "Tonight, the stubborn storm is stalling off the northeast coast. Hermine now a post tropical cyclone that just won't quit, bringing fierce waves and rip currents." **Unidentified speaker**: "The wind's coming from the north and when you're out on the beach, it's hard to keep your head up and look." **Gutierrez**: "Though Hermine is 200 miles offshore, but a tropical storm warning is still under effect." **Unidentified speaker**: "I had taken the 9:30 ferry over and it was canceled." **Gutierrez**: "After Hermine made landfall in Florida on Friday, it's been blamed for two deaths, hundreds of thousands of people are left without power. Emergency declarations in eight states. On its way to Birmingham, the cruise ship Anthem of the Seas rocked by Hermine's waves." **Unidentified speaker**: "I ate in the restaurant, dishes going all over the place, it was pretty exciting." **Gutierrez**: "The choppy water kept people out of the water." **Unidentified speaker**: "When they start giving out the warnings, but Montock people are different, they go out anyway." **Gutierrez**: "In Ocean City, Maryland, the financial hit already stinging, several cancellations at this hotel on this last summer holiday weekend." **Unidentified speaker**: "This is our last hurrah, so to speak. This is our last big weekend to really make lasting memories." **Gutierrez**:

"In New Jersey, some business owners in Seaside Heights say their business was slashed in half." **Unidentified speaker**: "There was lots of people on the boardwalk, but people were on stand by, people going back to their homes and staying in town, and it hurt business a whole lot." **Gutierrez**: "This might be the best view of Hermine's strength off the coast of Long Island. Treacherous rip currents are expected along with beach erosion in the next few days."

NBC: Hermine-Forecast. NBC Nightly News (9/5, story 2, 1:00, Snow, 16.61M) reported, "Meteorologist Dylan Dreyer is joining us with more on where this stubborn storm is going next and the new hurricane that's out there now. Dylan?" NBC (**Dreyer**) added, "We'll talk about that one in just a second, but let's start with Hermine, which has been producing some heavier bands of rain across southeastern Massachusetts. It still has winds right now of 70 miles an hour. And it is still moving to the west-northwest. It will take a turn to the northeast tomorrow, then weaken as it passes very close to Nantucket Wednesday into Thursday. We are looking at sustained winds across eastern Long Island and Nantucket up around 40 miles an hour. Tomorrow, sustained winds around 30 miles an hour with even higher gusts, that will lead to more coastal flooding around high tide and beach erosion and those dangerous rip currents. Out in the Pacific, we have Hurricane Newton making landfall along Baja California tomorrow. Could produce some flash flooding Tuesday into Wednesday across the western United States."

ABC: Severe Weather-Hermine. ABC World News (9/5, story 5, 2:05, Vega, 14.63M) reported, "We want to turn now to the extreme weather. Hermine packing a punch this Labor Day weekend. Look at the high surf off Rhode Island. Coastal flood threats and tropical storm warnings tonight along the coast of New England. At least two people killed, including the driver of this tractor trailer, blown over by a gust of wind on a North Carolina bridge. And in Florida, where Hermine made landfall as a hurricane, tonight tens of thousands of residents still without power. ABC's Ginger Zee with the storm track in a moment, but first, ABC's Gio Benitez on the Jersey Shore." ABC (**Benitez**) added, "Tonight, winds from Hermine still packing a punch in parts of the Northeast. In Cape Cod, Massachusetts." **Unidentified speaker**: "Whipping across the beach, waves are picking up. No swimming ban in effect. But a surprising number of people are actually out here." **Benitez**: "Royal Caribbean's Anthem of the Seas got caught in the rough waters. They got out of it safely, but on the shore, rough, dangerous surf. And lifeguards warn, it could be deadly." **Unidentified speaker**: "As soon as you get waist deep, you are swept down the beach." **Benitez**: "And all of those businesses along the eastern coast; Fire Island already saying they've lost millions. And look at these empty beach chairs on the Jersey Shore. The beach itself, even more barren. And small businesses, like The Gables Hotel and Restaurant, taking a hit worth tens of thousands." **Sondra Beninati**, The Gables owner: "The phones were ringing like crazy and there was a mass exodus from the island." **Benitez**: "A mass exodus. And so, here are you, left with all these open tables that would have otherwise been filled." **Beninati**: "I know. I know. And people miss their holiday." **Benitez**: "And Cecilia, in the next few days, expect those dangerous rip currents and those big, rough waves are going to keep tearing down these massive dunes. Of course, they're going to need some repair for nor'easters in the fall and winter. Cecilia?"

ABC: Hermine-Forecast. ABC World News (9/5, story 6, 0:55, Vega, 14.63M) reported, "I want to bring in Ginger Zee. You have been tracking this for so long, and it's not over yet." ABC (**Zee**) added, "Feels like forever. And, yes, we've been tracking this system for weeks, Cecilia. Let's look at it. Hermine, still a post-tropical cyclone with max sustained winds of 70 miles an hour. It will weaken as it keeps turning back towards eastern Long Island, all the way through Cape Cod. And that's why we are still paying attention to this. You pile on water for two, three days, and you are going to erode those beaches, major rip currents. I wanted to show you this. We will see some rain bands coming out of this, 20 to 40-mile-an-hour gusts with it, and the shield of clouds makes it all the way back into parts of New Jersey. Then, we go to the middle of the nation, we've had big issues with severe weather the last 24 hours. Now flash flood warnings for Minneapolis. A quick look, Hurricane Newton, headed for Cabo San Lucas."

CBS: Severe Weather-Hermine. The CBS Evening News (9/5, story 3, 1:45, Quijano, 11.17M) reported, "Tonight, Hermine is still causing trouble after ruining a lot of Labor Day plans. They're still cleaning debris along the Florida Panhandle. Thousands are still in the dark. At least three people were killed in the South. The Northeast was spared the high winds as the storm headed out to sea. But Hermine is still sending large waves crashing in New England. Here's Demarco Morgan." CBS (**Morgan**) added, "As

Hermine turned up the northeast, she put a fizzle on the unofficial last day of summer. Thrashing waves and dangerous rip currents kept most beachgoers from New Jersey to Cape Cod out of the water. Geraldine Dry spent the weekend at Coney Island." **Geraldine Dry**, beachgoer: "No ocean for us. You step on to the water but the lifeguards were looking at us so we had to run off." **Morgan**: "Hermine kicked off with a punch, a category one hurricane that came ashore early Friday morning in Florida with 80 mile per hour winds and dumped up to 18 inches of rain. It quickly lost steam as it veered through the Carolinas. Still, tropical storm warnings were issued for shore towns up the East Coast. Overnight, rough waters brought to this Royal Caribbean cruise ship headed from New Jersey to Bermuda. Passenger Derek Peterman." **Derek Peterman**, passenger: "When you see the crew on a cruise ship starting to get dizzy and sick you know it has gotten pretty bad." **Morgan**: "The owner of the Beachcomber restaurant in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, is relieved to be spared by the brunt of the storm. Any concern when it was moving up Florida?" **Unidentified speaker**: "Pretty much from the beginning they thought it would stay east of us, which was fine with me." **Morgan**: "This slow-moving system is packing 60 mile per hour winds off the coast of New England, and could make landfall by Wednesday. Elaine, it's expected to head back out to sea later this week."

CBS: Severe Weather-Hermine.

The CBS Weekend News (9/4, lead story, 2:50, Quijano) reported, "Hermine is gaining strength and threatening to become a hurricane again. The slow moving system has already killed at least two people including a homeless man hit by a falling tree in Florida, and a truck driver blown off the road in North Carolina. Storm warnings and watches are posted along the Atlantic coast from North Carolina to Massachusetts. Tony Dokoupil is on the jersey shore." CBS (**Dokoupil**) added, "After mowing through Florida as a hurricane, tropical storm Hermine chewed the coast of Georgia and the Carolina Saturday bringing heavy rain and punishing wind. Rough seas rocked this Royal Carribbean cruiseship en route to New Jersey to Bermuda. Now Hermine may crash a five foot wall of water into the mid Atlantic. The storm is menacing picturesque coastline from Maryland to Massachusetts, much of it newly rebuilt after superstorm Sandy tore through in 2012. Tony Voz is the mayor of hard hit Seaside Heights, New Jersey. How bad was the damage when Sandy came through?" **Tony Voz**, Seaside Heights Mayor: "Devastating, devastating. This has all been rebuilt over the last four years. Approximately four years. The icon of it was destroyed. It was devastating." **Dokoupil**: "Sandy damaged thousands of homes in Ocean county. Residents are aren't taking any chances with Hermine which could bring record floods. Emergency coordinator Bill Hibell." **Bill Hibell**, Emergency coordinator: "Just out here making sure what is on the other side of the boardwalk but when the wind shifts I'm concerned with the bay area." **Dokoupil**: "New Jersey Governor Chris Christie put Hermine in context." **Chris Christie**, New Jersey Governor: "I want to make this clear, this is certainly not Sandy. Nowhere near that." **Dokoupil**: "But he warned against complacency." **Christie**: "The biggest thing today is for people not to be lulled by the nice weather that nothing is going to what, something is going to happen." **Dokoupil**: "The storm was already washing out holiday weekend plans." **Unidentified speaker**: "We didn't think it would be this bad with the waves being this, you know, tall. But I would imagine the undertow would take you right out, so yeah, I can understand their concern." **Dokoupil**: "Instead of one last weekend of summer fun, beaches for hundreds of mile as long the Atlantic coast are closed and swimming is forbidden. Farther south storm cleanup continued as officials tried to restore power to thousands of homes from Florida to Virginia. So far the mid Atlantic impact is economic. Adir Gallani runs Sea Side Eatery in the boardwalk in New Jersey." **Adir Gallani**, restaurant owner: "Today we were expecting a lot more people but because of the storm, a lot of people...we had a lot of cancellations from the hotel people." **Dokoupil**: "As it continues to churn up the Atlantic coast officials warning residents to secure loose items so they don't become project aisles, Elaine, in seaside heights many homes were elevated after sandy. For those that weren't, the fire department here has handed out about 500 sand bags."

CBS: Hermine-Forecast.

The CBS Weekend News (9/4, story 2, 1:05, Quijano) reported, "Meteorologist Pamela Gardner is tracking the storm at WBZ." CBS (**Gardner**) added, "The storm continues to churn up rough seas and some strong winds. Max winds 70 miles per hour moves east northeast at six miles per hour but it is soon to take a turn towards the mid-Atlantic states and that is where we have warnings and watches in place also across south eastern New England. The storm will continue to push slowly north, northwest and then linger to our south and west here. Tuesday morning, 75 mile per hour winds. That is equal to hurricane strength, Tuesday into Thursday, the storm exits out to sea and then we're done with it. But prior to this, we could pick up some beneficial rain in south eastern Massachusetts. One to two inches of rainfall, with the heaviest rain staying offshore and those max wind gusts, 50 miles per hour from time to time, right during labor day. And we're also dealing with some intense wind gusts of 35 to 60 miles per hour all along the coast, primarily lieu Tuesday morning with major erosion likely across the beaches."

ABC: Severe Weather-Hermine. ABC World News (9/4, lead story, 3:00, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "We start again with the powerful and deadly storm, Hermine. The system making its mark up the eastern seaboard, killing two people since making landfall on Friday, including taking the life of the driver of this big rig in North Carolina. Hermine triggering a new state of emergency tonight. And dangerous rip currents and severe erosion. And a rocky ride for some cruise ship passengers heading to Bermuda. Ginger Zee in breezy points, queens, has been tracking the system for weeks now." ABC (**Zee**) added, "It seems like the storm that will never end, and for some, it's like the storm that never happened. So it's been sunny and beautiful Sunday for many folks because Hermine is still 350 miles south and east of me. It kept moving east, so some people got away from it. But that does not take away the impact at beaches from Virginia all the way to Nantucket. Tonight, big breakers taking a bite out of New Jersey beaches, eroding this shoreline in Holgate. In Ocean City, large waves, dangerous rip currents, and blustery winds busting beachgoers' labor day weekend. Rough waters rocking passengers aboard the Royal Caribbean's Anthem of the Seas, bound for Bermuda from New Jersey. And further south, in parts of Poquoson, Virginia, neighborhoods under water." **Unidentified speaker**: "We've dealt with this our whole lives, we just don't take our cars out in it." **Zee**: "Hermine first making landfall as a category one hurricane early Friday. It's been a night of tornado warnings, torrential rain. The eye just a couple of miles away. I was in the eye as it made landfall, tracking it all as 80-mile-per-hour winds battered the gulf coast, tossing trees. The gusting winds exploding and igniting power lines, leaving thousands without power. More than 60,000 in Florida still without service tonight. And claiming one life." **Unidentified speaker**: "Ferocious. Absolutely ferocious." **Zee**: "Pasco County, just north of Tampa, still under siege with flood waters after more rain from a different system fell on the already saturated land. The governor urging people to evacuate their homes. Not done yet, Hermine marching north, hitting Georgia and the Carolinas with tropical storm strength winds, gusts toppling this tractor-trailer in Columbia, North Carolina, killing the driver. And in Hatteras, the storm spawning a tornado, dumping these trailers into a creek and injuring four. I want to articulate again, this is not a rainstorm any longer. So, many will not see a drop of rain let alone clouds. But the beach erosion and advisories through Maryland, New Jersey, through parts of southern new England, that's what we're concerned about. As the waves push down the shoreline."

ABC: Hermine-New Jersey. ABC World News (9/4, story 2, 1:10, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "And let's go to Long Beach Island, New Jersey. As some residents are taking no chances. Here's Eva Pilgrim." ABC (**Pilgrim**) added, "Tonight, Hermine taking aim at the same coastal communities devastated by Superstorm Sandy." **Glenn Knigge**, resident: "We've been here for some storms but it has never been anything like that." **Pilgrim**: "Glenn Knigge still remembers returning to the Jersey Shore, homes toppled, entire neighborhoods destroyed. Belongings turned into piles of trash. Four years later, rebuilt, but not willing to take any chances." **Chris Christie**, New Jersey Governor: "Our mode right now is sort of a wait and watch mode." **Pilgrim**: "Governor Chris Christie declaring a state of emergency, emptying out beaches that should be packed this holiday weekend. The biggest threats, coastal flooding, rip currents, and beach erosion. Crews working through the weekend to shore up sand dunes to keep the storm surge at bay. Knigge, cutting his weekend short, leaving tonight before high tide." **Knigge**: "I'll take a storm like this any day." **Pilgrim**: "Take a look. The dune here already taking a beating from the crashing waves this weekend. Tonight, the beach here is closed. Tom?"

ABC: Hermine-Forecast. ABC World News (9/4, story 3, 0:55, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "We'll get back to Ginger Zee with more on the forecast and what to expect from Hermine." ABC (**Zee**) added, "That forecast includes Hermine taking a bit of a north and northwesterly track back towards say Eastern Long Island and parts of Nantucket. Again, it's still going to stay out to sea. This is no direct hit, there is no direct anything. You can see the coastal part of it will just be the piling of wind and waves. We put on the futurecast, you can see, very little rain makes it way on to the continental part of our states. As we go through even Monday, 7:00 pm, you'll start to see some rain bands in eastern Long Island and again right along the Connecticut and parts of the Rhode Island coast. Wind gusts could top 40 miles an hour. Some places could see 50. It's just, we don't get rid of Hermine until

Thursday. So, piling of waves and water, that's going to be the issue. Tom?"

CBS: Pacific Hurricane. The CBS Evening News (9/5, story 4, 0:15, Quijano, 11.17M) reported, "A new hurricane formed today in the Pacific. Newton is about 200 miles southeast of Cabo San Lucas, tracking toward the Baja Peninsula. Remnants could hit Arizona by Wednesday."

ABC: Oklahoma Earthquakes-Fracking. ABC World News (9/4, story 8, 1:35, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "Next, a significant earthquake striking Oklahoma this weekend. Wells linked to fracking now shut down. With the frequency of these quakes on the rise, there's worry about new tremors. Here's Lauren Lyster." ABC (**Lyster**) added, "This sudden shaking sending stone plunging from the top of this building. The sides of homes crumbling right off. Food thrown from the shelves of this grocery store. The quake felt from Texas to Nebraska. The question tonight, was this 5.6 magnitude earthquake, the most powerful to hit the state in years and tied for the strongest ever, man made?" **Daniel McNamara**, US Geological Survey: "Several of the larger earthquakes in Oklahoma the last couple of years have been linked to waste water disposal from oil and gas production." **Lyster**: "Scientists say a lot of that water comes from a process called fracking. Much of the water injected back into deep wells in the ground, linked to tremors. More than 900 3.0 or larger quakes hitting the state last year. Jumping from just over 100 in 2013. And in response to the earthquake, dozens of wells ordered to be shut down around the epicenter."

CBS: Oklahoma Earthquake-Fracking. The CBS Weekend News (9/4, story 8, 2:10, Quijano) reported, "A powerful earthquake rattled central Oklahoma Saturday. The magnitude 5.6 quake centered near the city of Pawnee tied a state record and was felt in seven states. It also renewed concerns about the disposal of waste water from oil and gas production which has been linked to the recent outbreak of quakes in Oklahoma. Here's Mireya Villarreal." CBS (**Villarreal**) added, "Bricks and debris from historical buildings in Pawnee, Oklahoma, cover the sidewalks. This small city is the latest epicenter of concern over Oklahoma's oil and gas industry." **Unidentified speaker**: "It was bad, the whole thing was just going like this. It was bad." **Villarreal**: "In 2015 Oklahoma averaged 2.5 earthquakes a day with a magnitude of 3.0 or higher, a total of 907 at that rating shook the state last year compared to just two in 2008. Oklahoma geological survey experts have connected the increase of quakes from waste water from an oil and gas production known as hydraulic fracturing or fracking. Saturday's quake prompted the state to initiate the fastest shutdown of waste water wells in state history; 37 are scheduled to be closed." **Susan Hough**, US Geological Survey: "If we stopped all the activity tomorrow it is not like all the earthquakes would stop tomorrow." **Villarreal**: "Seismologist Susan Hough said induced earthquake mainly caused by waste water injection wells aren't as severe as naturally caused ones but that could change if Oklahoma and other states where fracking is booming don't take note. Is there a chance things could get worse?" **Hough**: "We expect that the regulatory steps are going to help overall, the rates are going go down and the hazard will go down. But we don't have an exact crystal ball so there is the potential certainly for more earthquakes. There is the potential for bigger earthquakes than what we have seen." **Villarreal**: "The 37 waste water wells set to be shuts down are just a small fraction of the 4,200 currently permitted by the state. Elaine, the Oklahoma governor has declared a state of emergency for the affected area."

CBS: Oklahoma-Earthquake. The CBS Evening News (9/3, story 4, 0:20, Morgan, 11.17M) reported, "An earthquake rattled central Oklahoma overnight. It was magnitude 5.6, centered near the city of Pawnee, and it was felt in seven states. Minor damage was reported, but no one was hurt. This is believed to be the strongest quake to hit the state since 1952. Oklahoma has seen a surge in earthquakes, blamed on the injection into the earth of waste water from fracking."

NBC: Oklahoma-Earthquake. NBC Nightly News (9/3, story 4, 1:50, Diaz-Balart, 16.61M) reported, "In the middle of the country, it was a jolting morning in parts of at least seven states as an earthquake in Oklahoma rattled millions and caused at least some damage there. The quake was the latest and the most powerful in a huge increase of earthquake activity in the region. Gadi Schwartz has that story." NBC (**Schwartz**) added, "Nearly a full minute of shaking in Oklahoma, a state now rivaling California as earthquake country." **Unidentified Speaker**: "It was the biggest one I've ever felt." **Schwartz**: "Today, a 5.6 quake in the small town of Pawnee. Emergency crews dousing fires while other areas saw 100-year-old stone facades come crashing down. And in grocery stores, aisle after aisle in shambles." **Unidentified Speaker**: "Right away, you could tell this was something different." **Schwartz**: "The quake fanning out across the country, felt in Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, Arkansas, Texas, and as far as Illinois and Colorado. But more alarming than the shaking, an upward trend documented by the US Geological Survey showing a spike in Oklahoma earthquakes, a region with heavy oil and natural gas production. This year, for the first time, geologists putting out a map highlighting areas prone to human-caused earthquakes. They're linked to the practice of fracking and injecting waste water at high pressure deep into the earth." **Dan McNamara**, US Geological Survey: "There's a pretty strong chance this is also related to waste water injection." **Schwartz**: "Before 2000, the Sooner State saw about 2 quakes a year larger than a 3.0; in 2011, the number up to 63, and last year a staggering 890 quakes. The state recently ordered a cutback in waste water injection sites to reduce the number of earthquakes." **McNamara**: "Today, specifically, they're shutting down up to 40 wells within a five-mile radius of the epicenter." **Schwartz**: "Growing concern as the Heartland finds itself on increasingly shaking ground. Gadi Schwartz, NBC News."

Hermine Drifts Past Northeast, Threatening Storm Surge And 70 MPH Winds

By Alastair Jamieson, Alex Johnson And Elisha Fieldstadt

NBC News, September 5, 2016

Storm warnings were in effect Monday from Long Island to Nantucket as post-Tropical Cyclone Hermine drifted slowly up the Atlantic, promising near hurricane-strength winds, floods and beach erosion.

The National Weather Service said large waves will pound the East Coast from the mid-Atlantic states to southern New England through the end of Labor Day. Life-threatening rip currents are expected at least into the middle of the week, it added.

At 11 a.m. ET, Hermine was about 230 miles southeast of the eastern tip of Long Island, N.Y. The storm was moving northwest at 6 mph and expected to will "meander slowly offshore of the New England coast through Tuesday," according to the National Weather Service.

It said a storm surge of up to two feet was expected around the time of high tide late Monday along the coast of Long Island.

"The combination of a storm surge and the tide will cause normally dry areas near the coast to be flooded by rising waters moving inland from the shoreline," the NWS said in an advisory. "Along the immediate coastline, the surge will be accompanied by large and dangerous waves."

Connecticut's Gov. Dannel Malloy partially activated the state's Emergency Operation Center at the Hartford Armory at 6 p.m. Sunday to monitor conditions as Hermine churned to the south.

"We must keep our guard up," he said, according to NBC Connecticut. "I want to caution residents that weather conditions can change quickly. Especially with a slow-moving storm."

Tropical storm warnings were in effect Monday for the eastern seaboard from New Haven, Connecticut to Massachusetts's Sagamore Beach, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Warnings were also in effect for Block Island and Long Island — from Fire Island Inlet to Port Jefferson.

Hermine was packing maximum sustained winds of 70 mph, just short of hurricane strength — and expected to remain near hurricane strength through Monday evening.

Beaches in Nantucket were closed for the Labor Day holiday, and New York City announced Monday that all beaches would be closed to swimmers for a third day Tuesday.

Boaters, meanwhile, were busy retrieving their vessels or making sure they were secure for Monday's holiday.

Hermine has been moving east since it battered Florida and the Carolinas on its way up the coast beginning Friday. But updated NWS projections indicated that its eastward motion is ending and that Hermine is likely to slowly veer northwestward through Tuesday back toward the Northeast coast.

Vacationers who fled the beaches Friday and Saturday kept business owners busy figuring out just how much revenue they'd lost.

"We live by the weather and we die by the weather," said Louis Gouvas, who's owned Louie's Pizza in Rehoboth Beach, Del., for almost 60 years.

A voluntary evacuation from Long Island's popular vacation destination Fire Island was lifted Monday, leaving some business owners on the narrow barrier island feeling that they had suffered from an overhyped forecast.

"Fire Island's small businesses from Davis Park to Kismet lost millions of dollars in lost revenue in what was supposed to be one of the most profitable weekends of the summer because of timid politicians who were slow to realize that the threat of Tropical Storm Hermine had dissipated," a Long Island Citizens for Good Government statement said.

But the storm, because it is slow-moving, remained unpredictable. Even under sunny skies, rip currents and storm-surges posed a threat, and the storm had a track-record of wreaking lasting havoc.

When it first made landfall as a hurricane in Florida Friday, the storm knocked out power to hundreds of thousands. Gov. Rick Scott said Monday that nearly 21,000 customers were still without power.

Just north of Tampa in Florida's Pasco County, residents were forced from their homes two days after the storm hit as run-off from flooded northern parts of the state washed over roads and through houses. About 2,500 residents were still displaced Monday.

Lenny Panzitta joined friends and neighbors who spent Sunday sawing up downed trees that were blocking the roads on Whitemarsh Island, off the Georgia coast.

Then "the electricity went off, and I said I hope another tree didn't come down where they were clearing, and it did," Panzitta told NBC station WSAV of Savannah.

"It knocked the transformer down," he said. "Nobody was hit, but now we have wires hanging over the road so you can't get through."

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory and other state officials spent the day touring farm damage in the eastern part of his state, where thousands of acres of crops remained under water.

Two deaths — one in Florida and one in North Carolina — have been blamed on the storm.

Editor's note: An earlier version of this story attributed three deaths to the storm, but a fatality in South Carolina has not been confirmed to have been Hermine related.

Truncated Hermine TV Alert Wrongly Airs Evacuation Order

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

ISLIP, N.Y. (AP) — Federal officials in New York are investigating an emergency alert system after a mistakenly truncated message about storm system Hermine wrongly advised TV watchers on Long Island of an ordered evacuation, authorities said Sunday.

The Saturday night confusion started after Suffolk County emergency officials used an aspect of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's alert system for the first time since gaining access to it after Superstorm Sandy. They had hoped to advise viewers that a voluntary evacuation had been ordered for Fire Island, a thin strip of land off of Long Island's southern shore and a popular summertime destination.

Instead, somehow only the first part of the message — that an evacuation order had been issued — was broadcast to viewers. That the order was voluntary and only applied to those on Fire Island didn't make it onto TV screens.

"It caused obvious and expected questioning," said Gregory Miniutti, chief of communication for Suffolk County's Department of Fire Rescue.

Lauren Lefebvre, a spokeswoman for the FEMA region that covers New York, said officials are investigating what caused the message to be shortened.

It wasn't immediately clear how many TV viewers saw the wrong alert. Nearly 3 million people live on Long Island, with 1.5 million people in Suffolk County and another roughly 1.3 in Nassau County, census records show.

After county officials realized the misleading alert had been sent to the public around 7:30 p.m. Saturday from FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, a clarifying alert was subsequently issued, Miniutti said.

Emergency officials gained access to the FEMA broadcast system after 2012, when Superstorm Sandy caused major devastation, flooding and even deaths across Long Island and throughout New York and New Jersey.

Suffolk County normally uses another system that sends out emergency messages and mass notifications through text messages or reverse 911 calls to landlines, Miniutti said. But on Saturday evening officials decided to use the FEMA broadcast system because most of the people on Fire Island are tourists and visitors who don't have landlines or sign up for emergency alerts on their phones, he said.

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This story has been corrected to show that 1.3 million people live in Nassau County, not 321,000, and that the Suffolk County Department of Fire and Rescue chief's last name is Miniutti, not Miniutto.

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Hermine Launches Waffle House Storm Team

By Jennifer Leslie

WXIA-TV Atlanta, September 2, 2016

NORCROSS, GA. – The Waffle House storm team left company headquarters in Norcross early Friday to roll to restaurants impacted by Tropical Storm Hermine in South Georgia, Florida and South Carolina.

By noon, Waffle House had 14 restaurants without power. It was able to open two stores that had to close in the morning.

"If we have running water and gas, we can stay open and cook even when the power goes out," said Pat Warner, Vice President of Culture at Waffle House. "We're there 24/7 the rest of the year, so we want to be there when a storm goes through. We owe it to our customers and associates."

Warner said company officials have already been in touch with FEMA to help monitor the "Waffle House Index."

That's a term coined by FEMA Director Craig Fugate when he led emergency operations in Florida.

"If a Waffle House restaurant is open or on generator, emergency workers can keep moving," explained Warner. "If it's closed, they need to stop and start working."

Warner said the company began developing its emergency response plan in 1989 when Hurricane Hugo made landfall near Charleston, South Carolina.

"Katrina was the biggest test," Warner said. "We had to shut down 107 restaurants because of evacuations. We lost 7 restaurants."

Waffle House now has a mobile command center to help restore communications between headquarters and restaurants impacted by a storm like Hermine.

Warner said power is the main issue with this storm. The company's first priority is getting generators to restaurants that lost power.

"Staying open helps everyone get back that sense of normalcy," he added.

(© 2016 WXIA)

Hurricane Newton Heads Toward Resorts In Mexico's Baja

By Ignacio Martinez

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

CABO SAN LUCAS, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Newton soaked Mexico's western Pacific coast Monday and took aim at Baja California's twin resorts of Los Cabos, where residents and officials braced for a possible direct hit two years after they were slammed by a major storm.

Newton's maximum sustained winds increased to 75 mph (120 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami, making it a Category 1 hurricane. The storm was centered about 215 miles (350 kilometers) southeast of Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo and was moving northwest at 16 mph (26 kph) on a forecast path that would bring it near or over the area Tuesday morning.

Some foreign tourists were still walking the streets of Cabo San Lucas on Monday even as workers began nailing plywood over the windows of businesses.

Los Cabos Mayor Arturo de la Rosa Escalante said storm shelters were being opened and low-lying areas would be evacuated.

"There is no need for mass buying," he said. "There is enough food and fuel for the next 20 days."

Los Cabos police were stationed at shopping malls to guard against the kind of looting that occurred after Hurricane Odile struck the area in 2014 as a Category 3 storm, with 125 mph (205 kph) winds.

Earlier Monday, as a tropical storm, Newton dumped torrential rains that prompted some 100 people to evacuate their homes and damaged residences in Uruapan in the Pacific coast state of Michoacan, the city government reported.

Some roads were blocked by flooding and mudslides in the neighboring state of Guerrero, where some people were evacuated by helicopter. No deaths were reported in either state.

A hurricane warning was in effect for Cabo San Lucas and the nearby coastline. Coastal portions of five Mexican states could see 5 to 10 inches of rain, with isolated maximums of 15 inches, the hurricane center said.

Newton was expected to cross over the peninsula and enter the Gulf of California, also known as the Sea of Cortez, on Wednesday. The hurricane center said the storm was likely to continue north into Arizona as a tropical depression later in the week.

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Nearly $9 Billion In Damage After Catastrophic Louisiana Flooding, Gov. John Bel Edwards Tells President Barack Obama

Associated Press, September 3, 2016

BATON ROUGE (AP) — Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards says his state had more than $8.7 billion in damage from catastrophic flooding in August, and the figure will increase as officials finish assessing damage to roads and other public infrastructure.

The governor's office Saturday released a letter Edwards sent Friday to President Barack Obama.

Edwards asks that Congress this month approve $2 billion in federal aid for Louisiana for housing, economic development and infrastructure. He says it's a "very reasonable request," adding to other federal programs assisting in Louisiana's flood recovery.

Edwards says damage has been documented to more than 55,000 houses, and that could double as aid applications and inspections continue. More than 80 percent of damaged homes lacked flood insurance because most were outside the flood plain. More than 6,000 businesses flooded.

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Analysis: Flood Recovery Programs Complex, Require Patience

By Melinda Deslatte

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

BAKER, La. (AP) – FEMA. SBA. NFIP. To navigate the complex world of flood recovery takes not only an acronym dictionary, but patience, persistence – and a binder to keep track of the applications.

People have to sift through local, state and federal regulations that range from home permitting requirements to elevation standards.

Since flooding ravaged south Louisiana more than three weeks ago, thousands of storm victims can't live in their houses. Transportation, jobs and children's school plans were disrupted. On top of that hair-pulling stress, add in the complexity of available assistance programs, and it's easy to see how discouraging the recovery can be.

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, a Republican who represents much of the most heavily damaged region, said aid has been too sluggish so far.

"People need to know what type of assistance is going to be available to them. That's something that's key," Graves said after taking a Florida congressman on a tour of the damage. "You have people sitting around that don't have a home, that don't have cars, that don't have wardrobes. In some cases, their employers are under water."

At a Tuesday night meeting in Baker for flood victims, representatives of at least eight state and federal agencies – a myriad of acronyms – offered information about disaster programs and recovery tips in a pile of handouts so numerous they covered a long table.

Mayor Darnell Waites, in office only since July, had questions of the agencies assembled, as did a dozen flood victims who arrived at the local school seeking information.

One man talked of seeing a flood insurance adjuster, then hearing nothing. A woman worried her flood insurance wouldn't cover her losses and wanted to know what else is available. Another woman wanted to get a FEMA mobile home while she repaired her house.

People scribbled down phone numbers and websites in notebooks and on scraps of paper trying to keep track of the programs and agencies they should contact.

For the homeowners who had flood insurance, their path to recovery started by filing claims with the National Flood Insurance Program, NFIP for short. But fewer than one in five homeowners with damage is estimated to have paid for the flood coverage.

The main stop for anyone with flood damage, with or without insurance, is the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in aid has been approved so far, with more than 130,000 households registered for assistance. But the grants offered there max out at around $33,000 and the average that people have received in past disasters falls far short of that amount.

FEMA aid is aimed at helping people get more stable, not at making them whole.

"It's not an insurance program. It's to get people back on their feet," said Gov. John Bel Edwards. He said even with available FEMA aid, people are "still going to have a hard time."

That's where the U.S. Small Business Administration steps in. The SBA offers low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, renters and businesses for repair and replacement of damaged property. Repayment terms can be up to 30 years. Applications are separate from FEMA registration.

For housing help, the Edwards administration has set up a FEMA-funded "shelter at home" program that offers up to $15,000 in modest, quick repairs to help people get back into their houses while they do larger reconstruction work. That requires a separate registration beyond the FEMA application, and the aid doesn't count against other available FEMA assistance.

Homeowners with more severe damage who aren't able to tap into the "shelter at home" program could be eligible to set up a FEMA-issued mobile home in their yards.

At the meeting in Baker, it quickly became clear that some folks were farther along in cleanup and recovery than others.

One man spoke of an elderly neighbor who didn't leave during the flood, hadn't gutted his home and refused to leave even as mold climbed up the walls and onto the ceiling. Officials with state and federal agencies rushed to get the address, saying they'd send someone to his home.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Melinda Deslatte covers Louisiana politics for The Associated Press. Follow her at http://twitter.com/melindadeslatte

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People And Governments In More Parishes Can Get FEMA Help

Associated Press, September 2, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Individuals who suffered flooding damage in St. James and West Baton Rouge parishes in the August floods are now eligible for federal disaster assistance.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency made the announcement Thursday, adding them to a list of 20 other south Louisiana parishes that have been declared federal disaster areas.

People can go to www.DisasterAssistance.gov to register or call 1-800-621-3362 any day from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Residents of the parishes who have already registered don't need to act again.

The agency also says that governments in Assumption, Cameron, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist and West Baton Rouge parishes are now eligible for FEMA assistance in repairing damage to public assets or cleaning up, joining a list of 20 other parishes.

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FEMA Offers Temporary Work To Louisianians To Help In Flood Recovery

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana residents looking for temporary work have an opportunity to help in the flood recovery process by working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

FEMA is advertising through the Louisiana Workforce Commission to fill open positions at its disaster recovery offices in the state.

These are full-time jobs, but of temporary duration, with benefits including health insurance, sick leave and holiday pay.

To apply, visit www.laworks.net, the website for Louisiana Workforce Commission – Helping Individuals Reach Employment.

FEMA is seeking a variety of skilled workers, including administrative assistants, construction cost estimators, construction trade workers, drivers, environmental experts, historic preservation specialists and travel agents.

Candidates must be U.S. citizens, 18 years or older and have a valid government identification card, such as driver's license or military ID.

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FEMA Hiring Temporary Workers For Disaster Recovery Aid

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Louisiana residents looking for temporary work have an opportunity to help in the recovery process by working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

WAFB-TV (http://bit.ly/2bRrlyR) reports FEMA is advertising through the Louisiana Workforce Commission to fill open positions at its disaster recovery offices in the state.

These are full-time jobs, but of temporary duration, with benefits including health insurance, sick leave and holiday pay.

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The Latest: Red Cross Casework Starting For $125/person Aid

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The Latest on Louisiana flooding (all times local):

3:15 p.m.

The American Red Cross says it's beginning recovery casework to help people connect with services other than the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Senior vice president Harvey Johnson says the Red Cross can also provide $125 per person to people who have major damage to their homes but don't qualify for federal disaster assistance. That would mean $500 for a family of four.

The agency says the recovery casework is starting even as volunteers continue to operate shelters, serve meals and distribute relief supplies in south Louisiana.

Regional executive Joshua Joachim says "People in Louisiana are ready to take the next step, to try to get back to a normal life, to have a home again instead of staying in a shelter."

He says anyone affected for the floods should apply to FEMA.

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10 a.m.

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The Federal Emergency Loans Louisiana Isn't Getting

By Danny Vinik

Politico, September 2, 2016

Fifteen miles outside of Baton Rouge, on a road washed out by the flooding that submerged a nearby highway, Robert Formeller is rebuilding his property, or trying to. An insurance agent and sole proprietor of the real estate company Formeller Investments LLC, he owns three small office buildings in Denham Springs, Louisiana. Having lived through the disastrous Louisiana floods in 1983, Formeller invested almost $100,000 raising the office buildings above historic flood levels.

But the torrential rains that struck the Baton Rouge region in August flooded the buildings anyway. He's been spending days and nights since working to recover his business before mold sets in and his tenants move out. "He's tapping into every loose dollar he can find to get things moving and get on top of the recovery," said his daughter, Nicole Gould.

As millions in disaster-relief money pours into Louisiana, you might think a good federal disaster policy would get money to people like Formeller almost immediately, giving them enough short-term cash to keep their businesses afloat. And you'd be right: experts on disaster recovery think getting money quickly to small-business owners is crucial not just for the owners, but letting the community around them recover. One oft-cited study by the Federal Emergency Management Agency found that 40 percent of small businesses that close for even a day after a disaster never reopen.

"[Small businesses] are so much the part of a fabric of a community," said Robin Keegan, the former executive director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, which was created following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to oversee the recovery. "In most cases, the recovery of a community is almost a mission rather than a profit-making endeavor. They need the resources to be part of that recovery."

After Katrina, Congress passed a new law designed to do just that. The Immediate Disaster Assistance Program, 1 of 3 emergency loan programs created under a 2008 law, was supposed to funnel money to small businesses within 36 hours of a disaster, with a government guarantee for the lender. But as POLITICO reported last year, that program — which was supposed to be piloted in 2010 — had never actually managed to secure a loan for any small business.

Congress held a hearing on the problem last summer, but today, as Louisiana faces its worst disaster since Katrina, the emergency loan program still hasn't secured a single loan. What has happened, instead, is a bit of buck-passing. Last year, Congress was pointing the finger at the Small Business Administration, which was supposed to administer the loans but had never actually helped issue one. This year, Congress has the agency's feedback on what went wrong — but it's unclear what, if anything, lawmakers plan to do about it.

So far the SBA has spent $3 million on the program. Its eight-year history has become a story of slipshod reporting and missed deadlines. And it still hasn't funneled a dollar to people like Formeller.

"That would be critically important, especially getting it up in 36 hours," said Charles D'Agostino, executive director of the LSU Innovation Park, a research complex in Baton Rouge. "We don't have a week. We don't have two weeks."

The emergency loan program was invented to fill a gap. Businesses actually can get disaster relief from Washington, but it takes a while — after Superstorm Sandy, the Government Accountability Office found it took nearly 40 days for SBA to review disaster loan applications from small businesses. In that time, they can lose inventory, miss payroll, lose all their customers, and usually need short-term cash to keep the doors open. The Small Business Disaster Response and Loan Improvements Act was supposed to do that, offering loan guarantees to local banks, with a goal of approving the money for businesses within 36 hours.

Congress appropriated $3 million in the 2010 fiscal year for the SBA to pilot the program, and the agency actually released rules for it the same year. But the pilot never happened, with the agency repeatedly pushing back its projected launch date. The GAO investigated the delays and delivered a scathing report against the agency in 2014. The watchdog pinpointed two main problems: faulty computers and an unwillingness among lenders to participate.

Last summer, despite the GAO report, the program still hadn't made a loan, and POLITICO reported that lawmakers were increasingly concerned with SBA's ability to get it up and running. The agency said it had solved its computer problems but had been unable to persuade banks to take part in the program under the strict financial terms required by law. It reiterated that complaint this summer, sending a letter in July to Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-N.Y.), the ranking member of the House Small Business Committee, outlining comments it had received from lenders who refused to participate in the program.

Is the program doomed because banks simply won't help? The National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders, a trade association for banks and other institutions, sent detailed objections to the loan rules in a comment to the SBA, and went so far as to argue that disaster funding shouldn't be their job, writing: "providing loans to assist such individuals and entities is an inherently governmental function and is a role unsuited to private commercial lenders."

But on the ground, it's not clear how big an obstacle that really is. In Baton Rouge, Nicole Gould said that a local bank quickly said it could lend her father the emergency money he needed — even without the government guarantee. She'd originally tried to help her father apply for disaster loans from the SBA, but gave up on trying to fill out the forms after spending hours on them and getting only halfway through. "There's not enough time to spend on a 10-hour application," she said. "We just talked to the banker and he promised us the lending is on and their rate is going to be very close to 4 percent anyway. They already have the first mortgage on the property. They have a vested interest in the property succeeding."

The state of Louisiana has had good luck working with local banks as well. After Katrina, the state set up a temporary bridge loan program to help small businesses recover. Like the Immediate Disaster Assistance Program, the Louisiana program worked through private-sector lenders. Its terms were slightly better than the federal program: The SBA law offers banks an 85 percent repayment guarantee; Louisiana offered 100 percent. The program delivered $10 million in loans to 407 small businesses within three weeks.

The idea does require some community spirit on the part of banks: Even with a 100 percent loan guarantee, "It's not going to make the banks any money," said Adam Knapp, who was the policy director for the Louisiana Economic Development agency at the time and now is the CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber,. "They are doing it out of their goodwill."

The NAGGL did not respond to a message asking for further comment on its objections to the loan program.

By all accounts, the SBA has improved its processes for responding to natural disasters in recent years. It has been quick to set up field offices in the region and put out information for how affected businesses can apply for loans. But the flooding in Louisiana is putting the agency to its first major test since Sandy. Through Thursday, the agency had received 801 applications for its traditional business disaster loans. So far it has approved only 92 for a total of $7.9 million; it declined 243, with 415 still pending. (51 were withdrawn.) Carol Chastang, a spokesperson for the agency, said the applications are being processed within five days — not quite 36 hours, but far better than the SBA's processing times after Sandy. However, keeping up that pace will be critical as more small-business owners file their applications. The agency received nearly 15,000 applications after Sandy. While the numbers aren't expected to reach that high in the Baton Rouge region, Knapp estimates that 12,000 small businesses were affected, so the number of applications could rise considerably in the coming weeks.

"Getting cash out within about a week is really the time frame you want," said Michael Hecht, the president of Greater New Orleans, a regional economic development group.

So the complaints do seem to have improved at least one part of the disaster lending program. As for the quicker emergency loan program launched in 2008? The short answer is that it's been punted: The SBA has told Congress what the problems are, so in theory the impetus for fixing them falls on Congress. Potential solutions to make it more appealing to banks include increasing the loan guarantee and loosening restrictions on the loan term and associated fees, which would require changes to the law. In November, Congress passed legislation, sponsored by Velázquez, that made small changes to the traditional disaster loan program and gave businesses affected by Sandy another chance to apply for aid, but did not address the loan programs created under the 2008 legislation.

In response to questions about whether Congress was considering changes to the program, Velázquez said in a statement, "We should look carefully at potential changes to improve these other disaster loan initiatives, encourage private sector involvement and create more options for businesses impacted by disasters. It is inexcusable that the agency has taken 8 years and still hasn't been able to get this program off the ground. If legislative changes are necessary, we can look into them and I would hope my Republican colleagues would be open to such an effort, but regardless the agency needs to make this initiative a priority." Any changes will ultimately be up to the committee chairman, Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), and Republican leaders in Congress. Chabot's staff said they were awaiting another GAO report in October.

Meanwhile, in Baton Rouge, the community is coming together to help each other in any way it can. D'Agostino, who has worked with small businesses in the region for almost 30 years, said he and his staff drove around handing out Visa gift cards and household goods like toothbrush and toothpaste—the small items that are critical for people to get their lives back on track but are easily overlooked. He offered small businesses a computer with Internet and a phone to call suppliers, cancel deliveries and inform customers their orders would not arrive on time.

"It's a monumental thing," he said, adding, "This is not going to be a short process."

After publication, Rep. Velázquez's office provided an additional statement on the need for the Small Business Administration to prioritize the emergency loan program. The story has been updated to include it.

Louisianans Spurn Government And Crowdsource Aid In Wake Of Floods

Cajun Army harnesses power of social media to rescue people and locals have turned to sites such as Amazon to raise necessities and distribute them

By Matthew Teague

The Guardian (UK), September 2, 2016

The flooded people of southern Louisiana are losing a race against mold, hunger and homelessness, driving an already insular region into deeper mistrust of the federal government and other outside agencies.

The flood in mid-August was one of the first natural disasters of its scale in the US to unfold in the fully connected world of social media, and many residents are finding that the response of the Red Cross and federal groups has not kept up with the speed of the internet. So residents are turning to technology to organize themselves and, to some extent circumvent the government.

More than 150,000 houses were affected by the flood. On Wednesday, state lawmakers blasted the response from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema) in a House homeland security committee meeting. Congressman Clay Schexnayder said Fema's mobile home program has set up just one mobile home in his district.

"We're not expediting it fast enough to get these trailers in place. I'm confused as to why it's taking us so long to do that," he said. "Having one trailer set up so far out of all of this, one trailer – where I'm from I don't call that satisfactory at all."

Julie Ralph of Saint Francisville, Louisiana, said: "I know there are some people who lost everything and are getting pretty much peanuts from Fema. It's a drop in the bucket compared to what they lost."

So people are crowdsourcing, she said, bypassing Fema and the government. Ralph created a page on Amazon for donations of supplies such as toilet paper and toothbrushes, which she then distributes through the affected area.

The social media bypass began in the immediate aftermath of the flood, with the instant formation of the "Cajun Navy", a group of hunters and fishermen who used their boats to rescue tens of thousands of stranded residents.

They used Facebook and Google maps to pinpoint where people needed help, with locations and detailed information for rescuers like: "Rescue urgency:

Moderate as of 2am Aug 15. Personal Information: 2 are elderly, 1 has alzheimers and diabetes … They are in room over garage."

It's impossible in these still-early days to measure the exact impact of social media on the recovery in Louisiana – say, how many Twitter posts resulted in rescues or donations or volunteer hours – but government agencies are scrambling to get a sense of it; they're realizing dialing 911 for help isn't the only option now, or even the fastest.

Emergency responders are studying a group called Louisiana Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue Team, or LATF-1, an emergency response team that realized the importance of social media during the floods while others didn't. "LATF-1 was a governmental entity that could help, and in many cases, it was the only one responding via social media," team members wrote in an industry debriefing.

During the floods the taskforce started receiving requests for help via Facebook messages, which was unprecedented. "After the first message was received LATF-1 leadership made the decision to respond to all messages as they were received," they wrote. That created a logistical nightmare, but along the way they started to develop new tools for social media: ways of streamlining requests, feeding them to other agencies and weeding out false alarms.

On a larger, national scale, technologists are now puzzling over how to use all that data. "This year's Louisiana flood was one of the first attempts to leverage data from the population and then integrate that data back to a place where the public could use it," according to Government Computer News, a publication for technology experts. "The next generation of citizens and community leaders will have the skills and tools to be able to make better informed decisions."

Meanwhile, in Louisiana, people continue to make it up as they go.

Ralph, who distributed supplies via Amazon, said people are now crowdsourcing demolition and repairs. As floodwaters receded and rescue turned to recovery, the Cajun Navy evolved to become the Cajun Army.

"As it stands, the boots on the ground are the Cajun Army," Ralph said, "and anyone who can be summoned through Facebook or Twitter by people sharing how bad things are to get people to come over and help."

The Cajun Army's volunteers have created a website and its Facebook page has more than 5,000 members, who post requests and responses like this one Wednesday, from Todd Rossnagel in Baton Rouge: "Greetings Army. I have someone who needs a hand pulling wet insulation out from under her raised house. It's in Baton Rouge on S Tiger Bend. Please let me know if you can come help out and I can share the contact info."

Three hours later he wrote: "I received a phone call – thanks."

Together Baton Rouge is a collective of community groups now focused on tearing out damp home interiors.

The group said in a statement Wednesday: "Fifteen of the 288 house-gutting requests we've received so far on gutcheckLA.com, or 5% of the total, are living – literally sleeping – in mold-infested homes. All of those 15 are elderly women, most with medical issues. Projecting that percent out, there are probably between 1,600 and 2,600 people, mostly seniors, in that situation. That's a public health crisis."

In response, Together Baton Rouge is hiring 100 people for one month, at $15 an hour, to gut 2,000 homes. Donations will cover the quarter-million-dollar cost, they said, and as more donations come in they will hire more people.

Among those affected is Amber Cassady, whose home in Denham Springs has black mold that has bloomed across her ceiling, making the youngest of her five children sick, she said, and her car is completely flooded. Fema said on Wednesday that it is essentially handing out money as fast as it can – $202m so far. But Cassady said she was denied a Fema grant because although the water came up to her threshold it didn't enter at the ground floor; instead the rain, pouring at a rate up to 3in an hour, leaked in through her roof.

Now she stays home with the children, ranging in age from two weeks to seven years, because school and daycare are all canceled for the foreseeable future. Her husband, Shane, does auto body work and hitches rides every day.

"Fema told me to get a small loan, but I don't have credit. I have a low income," Cassady said on Wednesday. "I get depressed because I can't take my kids anywhere and I'm scared this mold is going to get us all sick."

Louisiana Residents Weigh Options For Temporary Housing

NPR, September 2, 2016

Louisiana residents displaced by the recent floods started registering for state and federal programs to provide a way to live in or near their flood damaged homes.

ARI SHAPIRO, HOST:

Tens of thousands of people are still homeless in Louisiana because of last month's floods. Many moved in with relatives when their homes were damaged. Others went to shelters. Federal and state officials are offering other housing options. None is a quick fix, as WWNO's Ryan Kailath reports.

RYAN KAILATH, BYLINE: After her house took on 4 feet of water, Maura Lewis and her family were rescued by boat and taken to a shelter. Now she's at a federal disaster center in Baton Rouge, where contractors are on hand to advise homeowners on how long restoring their home might take.

MAURA LEWIS: Four to six months and maybe even closer to a year's what I'm thinking because it's just so many homes that have been destroyed.

KAILATH: Lewis and her three kids are staying with her in-laws, but they can't stay there forever. She wants a place of her own by next week. At another disaster center, Arthur Williams is in line at 8 a.m. in a Chicago Bulls shirt and basketball shorts. He learns that FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will spring for a hotel room. Here's the catch.

ARTHUR WILLIAMS: All the hotels are booked around here forever, booked all the way up to Lafayette.

KAILATH: The Chicago native lives and works in a suburb of Baton Rouge, 90 minutes from Lafayette.

WILLIAMS: And our kids go to school here so that would be – and I work here – and that would be impossible.

KAILATH: There is another option – one of FEMA's new manufactured housing units. These mobile homes have built-in sprinklers and other safety measures to distinguish them from the notorious trailers used after Hurricane Katrina. Idea is, park the trailer on your lawn and live there while you rebuild. Arthur Williams doesn't qualify for one because his property is in a flood zone. Maura Lewis does qualify, but...

LEWIS: How long is it going to take, you know? You're talking about thousands and thousands of people who – a trailer would fit on their lot, too.

KAILATH: So far, exactly one family has gotten a trailer. One. The state is now touting another program called Shelter at Home. It pays for basic fixes to make your home livable – if you're approved. Even then, as Richard Carbo of the governor's office cautions, it's not a home makeover.

RICHARD CARBO: This will not make your home the way it was before the storm. This is not a rebuild. It is a repair.

KAILATH: This program was first tried after Superstorm Sandy. Rapid Repairs, as it was called, was beset with problems like shoddy construction and lost paperwork. Jimmy Oddo helped implement the program. At the time, he was a New York City councilman. He says when he read that Louisiana is trying something similar...

JIMMY ODDO: Just reading this has made me slightly nauseous and raised my blood pressure significantly. Good luck, Louisiana.

KAILATH: So far, more than 14,000 Louisianans have signed up. Not Maura Lewis.

LEWIS: Shelter at Home? It could be an option, but with the requirement of no more than 2 feet, it probably will not be.

KAILATH: The requirement she's referring to says if your home took on more than 2 feet of water, it has to be reviewed before you're eligible. And the list of other eligibility requirements is two pages long. When I asked Arthur Williams if he was interested in Shelter at Home...

WILLIAMS: This is my first time hearing about that. So where do you suggest we have to go for that?

DARLENE TULLIER: Unfortunately, FEMA and the state are both trying to help, but they aren't working together so...

KAILATH: That's Darlene Tullier. She shuttles between disaster centers now, playing emergency case manager for 13 family members.

TULLIER: I wish there were a person that each of these families could go to who could handle their process.

KAILATH: Maura Lewis finally found a solution. She's renting an apartment. FEMA will defray a good chunk of her rent, and she'll need that. She's still paying the mortgage on her flooded house. But that FEMA assistance only lasts for two months. For NPR News, I'm Ryan Kailath in Baton Rouge.

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La. Lawmakers Will Seek More Flood Recovery Money

WWL-TV New Orleans, September 2, 2016

WASHINGTON — Louisiana lawmakers plan to push for more federal aid to speed flood recovery efforts when they return to Congress next week.

Congressional, state and local officials are still assessing damage from last month's flooding that killed 13 people and destroyed tens of thousands of homes and businesses. But congressional lawmakers say they're working on legislation and met Monday with Gov. John Bel Edwards to discuss early needs.

"It's going to require a tailored response," said Republican Rep. Garret Graves, whose district includes hard-hit Baton Rouge. "The needs are pretty extraordinary."

With less than five weeks before Congress breaks for elections, Louisiana lawmakers vow to step up pressure to get colleagues to act.

"I certainly appreciate that this (effort) is going to have some challenges associated with it just because of the schedule, elections and everything else," said Graves. "But I'll tell you there's no doubt that these funds are needed yesterday."

Graves said the legislative wish-list will likely include Community Development Block Grant disaster recovery aid. Lawmakers also hope to create a task force of state, federal and local officials to coordinate and track recovery efforts.

To bolster their case, Louisiana members of Congress will invite colleagues in key positions to tour damaged communities. Rep. John Mica, R-Florida, who chairs a subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Federal Emergency Management Agency, toured Monday with Graves. California Rep. Maxine Waters, top Democrat on the Financial Services Committee, visited last Friday.

"You can't understand the gravity of this unless you see it," Graves said.

Last week, Democratic Rep. Cedric Richmond, who also represents parts of Baton Rouge, and Waters called for a field hearing in the city. Republican Sen. David Vitter, chairman of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, will hold a hearing Sept. 15 in Washington.

Lawmakers are also looking to tap economic aid and housing-repair programs and explore U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects to stabilize the Amite and Comite rivers.

Steve Ellis, vice president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, predicts there will be bipartisan support.

"I don't think anybody wants to appear to be hard-hearted," he said. "I would be surprised, considering the level and the scale of the loss, that there wouldn't be something."

Ellis said Congress could attach recovery aid to a continuing resolution to fund government operations, to emergency legislation to fund anti-Zika efforts, or to some other legislative vehicle.

"If they needed to do anything more with the flooding in Louisiana, they certainly could," he said. "But that's going to be more short-term, and what we really need is some systemic changes in how we approach disasters."

One possible complication, Ellis said, is that lawmakers who represent areas outside Louisiana that also have been hurt by recent flooding may push "to get a piece of the pie.''

President Barack Obama, who recently visited the state, urged Louisiana Republicans to press GOP leaders on recovery measures. That would include Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise, the majority whip and the No. 3 Republican in the House.

Obama said federal disaster relief funds will cover short-term cost, but "the issue is going to be less what we need to do in terms of paying for the short term — it's going to be the medium-term and the long-term rebuilding."

Obama declared 20 parishes major disaster areas. More than 128,000 households have registered for FEMA aid.

FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate said the state may also need help from other federal agencies to fund emergency road repairs and provide housing aid. He said it's too early to determine final costs, but FEMA already has approved $385 million in aid to flood victims.

"That should be some indicator ... this is not going to be a small event; it's going to be rather large," he said.

Graves said he expects most of the recovery efforts can be funded with existing pots of money or by shifting funds.

Lawmakers are looking to model legislation introduced after other disasters, including Superstorm Sandy, which hit New Jersey and New York in 2012.

"That storm absolutely deserved a recovery package," Graves said.

Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-New Jersey, called on Congress to cut short its recess to help flood victims, even though some Louisiana lawmakers voted against a Sandy disaster aid package.

Pascrell said the lawmakers "found the dumbest reasons to vote against" the package, but that shouldn't count against them.

"I'll have a Jersey moment with those guys, believe me," Pascrell said. "But retribution has no place in politics. It's petty politics when I'm being asked, why help these people when these three congressmen didn't help you in your state."

Republican Sen. Bill Cassidy was still a member of the House when lawmakers voted in January 2013 on the Sandy aid package. He, Scalise and Republican Rep. John Fleming opposed an amendment offered by Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, R-New Jersey, that provided nearly $34 billion for block grants. The Louisiana lawmakers said some of the Sandy aid measures included funding unrelated to the 2012 storm.

Their votes against Sandy aid may come back to haunt them now that their state faces similar needs, said Pearson Cross, a political scientist at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

"There may be some people who have longer memories and look at that and say, payback time,'' he said. "One would hope not."

Graves said most communities will be affected in some way by a disaster.

"Disasters happen, and folks need to know that when you have a catastrophic disaster, something on the scale of a 1,000-year event, that your government is going to be there to provide some degree of a safety net," he said.

– Deborah Barfield Berry, USA TODAY , WWL

Benchmark Used To Gauge Flood Size Can Muddy The Water

By Jo Craven McGinty

Wall Street Journal, September 2, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Flooding Of Coast, Caused By Global Warming, Has Already Begun

By Justin Gillis

New York Times, September 3, 2016

Huge vertical rulers are sprouting beside low spots in the streets here, so people can judge if the tidal floods that increasingly inundate their roads are too deep to drive through.

Five hundred miles down the Atlantic Coast, the only road to Tybee Island, Ga., is disappearing beneath the sea several times a year, cutting the town off from the mainland.

And another 500 miles on, in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., increased tidal flooding is forcing the city to spend millions fixing battered roads and drains — and, at times, to send out giant vacuum trucks to suck saltwater off the streets.

For decades, as the global warming created by human emissions caused land ice to melt and ocean water to expand, scientists warned that the accelerating rise of the sea would eventually imperil the United States' coastline.

Now, those warnings are no longer theoretical: The inundation of the coast has begun. The sea has crept up to the point that a high tide and a brisk wind are all it takes to send water pouring into streets and homes.

Federal scientists have documented a sharp jump in this nuisance flooding — often called "sunny-day flooding" — along both the East Coast and the Gulf Coast in recent years. The sea is now so near the brim in many places that they believe the problem is likely to worsen quickly. Shifts in the Pacific Ocean mean that the West Coast, partly spared over the past two decades, may be hit hard, too.

These tidal floods are often just a foot or two deep, but they can stop traffic, swamp basements, damage cars, kill lawns and forests, and poison wells with salt. Moreover, the high seas interfere with the drainage of storm water.

In coastal regions, that compounds the damage from the increasingly heavy rains plaguing the country, like those that recently caused extensive flooding in Louisiana. Scientists say these rains are also a consequence of human greenhouse emissions.

"Once impacts become noticeable, they're going to be upon you quickly," said William V. Sweet, a scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Silver Spring, Md., who is among the leaders in research on coastal inundation. "It's not a hundred years off — it's now."

Local governments, under pressure from annoyed citizens, are beginning to act. Elections are being won on promises to invest money to protect against flooding. Miami Beach is leading the way, increasing local fees to finance a $400 million plan that includes raising streets, installing pumps and elevating sea walls.

In many of the worst-hit cities, mayors of both parties are sounding an alarm.

"I'm a Republican, but I also realize, by any objective analysis, the sea level is rising," said Jason Buelterman, the mayor of tiny Tybee Island, one of the first Georgia communities to adopt a detailed climate plan.

But the local leaders say they cannot tackle this problem alone. They are pleading with state and federal governments for guidance and help, including billions to pay for flood walls, pumps and road improvements that would buy them time.

Yet Congress has largely ignored these pleas, and has even tried to block plans by the military to head off future problems at the numerous bases imperiled by a rising sea. A Republican congressman from Colorado, Ken Buck, recently called one military proposal part of a "radical climate change agenda."

The gridlock in Washington means the United States lacks not only a broad national policy on sea-level rise, it has something close to the opposite: The federal government spends billions of taxpayer dollars in ways that add to the risks, by subsidizing local governments and homeowners who build in imperiled locations along the coast.

As the problem worsens, experts are warning that national security is on the line. Naval bases, in particular, are threatened; they can hardly be moved away from the ocean, yet much of their land is at risk of disappearing within this century.

"It's as if the country was being attacked along every border, simultaneously," said Andrea Dutton, a climate scientist at the University of Florida and one of the world's leading experts on rising seas. "It's a slow, gradual attack, but it threatens the safety and security of the United States."

One night eight years ago, Karen Speights, a Norfolk resident, was sitting at the dinner table with her mother, eating crab legs dipped in butter and a tangy sauce. She felt a tingle.

"Ma!" she cried. "My feet are wet!"

Her mother laughed, but then she felt it, too: a house that had not flooded since the family moved there in 1964 was soon awash in saltwater. Ms. Speights initially hoped that flood was a fluke. Instead, it turned out to be the first of three to hit their home in less than a decade.

Nowadays, Ms. Speights, an administrative worker at a utility company, is wondering how to get her and her mother out of the neighborhood before the water comes again, without taking too much of a financial hit. And she pays more attention to problems that once seemed remote, like warnings from scientists about the rising sea.

"I believe it because we're living it," Ms. Speights said as she sat on her sofa, nodding toward the nearby tidal marsh that sent water into her living room. "The water has to be rising if we never flooded, and all of a sudden we've flooded three times in eight years."

Because the land is sinking as the ocean rises, Norfolk and the metropolitan region surrounding it, known as Hampton Roads, are among the worst-hit parts of the United States. That local factor means, in essence, that the region is a few decades ahead in feeling the effects of sea-level rise, and illustrates what people along the rest of the American coast can expect.

The biggest problems involve frequent flooding of homes and roads. As the sea rises, hundreds of tidal creeks and marshes that thread through the region are bringing saltwater to people's doorsteps.

This summer, on a driving tour of Norfolk and nearby towns, William A. Stiles Jr. pointed to the telltale signs that the ocean is gradually invading the region.

He spotted crusts of dried salt in the streets, and salt-loving marsh grasses that are taking over suburban yards. He pointed out trees killed by seawater. He stood next to one of the road signs that Norfolk has been forced to install in recent years, essentially huge vertical rulers so people know the depth of floodwaters at low-lying intersections.

"There's just more and more visible impacts: water on the street, water that won't clear from the ditch, these intense rain events, higher tides," Mr. Stiles said.

"It's beginning to catch the attention of citizens, restaurant owners, business people, politicians. There's just much more of a conversation, and it's not just in the politically safe places. It's everywhere."

Mr. Stiles, known as Skip, heads a local environmental group, Wetlands Watch. At his suggestion, students at two local universities began looking at the neighborhood where Ms. Speights lives, Chesterfield Heights. It has had little history of flooding, but that is starting to change as the water rises.

The plan the students developed has morphed into an ambitious program to safeguard the neighborhood, and another nearby, for decades. The Obama administration recently gave Virginia more than $100 million to carry the plan out. The administration has also enlisted one of the universities, Old Dominion in Norfolk, to spearhead a broad effort at better planning.

But the size of that grant illustrates the scope of the problem confronting the region, and the country: protecting a single neighborhood from rising water can easily cost tens of millions of dollars. Sea walls and streets may have to be raised, or movable gates built along waterways so they can be closed at times of high water.

While the Obama administration is trying to create a few showcase neighborhoods, there is no sign Congress is prepared to spend the money that cities and states say they need: tens of billions of dollars just to catch up to the current flooding problems, much less get ahead of them. Norfolk alone, a town of 250,000 people, has a wish list of $1.2 billion — or about $5,000 for every man, woman and child in the city.

As the national response lags, experts warn that the flooding is putting the country's defense at risk.

Several studies have concluded that Naval Station Norfolk, the world's largest naval base, is profoundly threatened by rising seas, as are other coastal bases. The Pentagon has managed to build floodgates and other protective measures at some facilities. But attempts by the military to develop broader climate change plans have met fierce resistance in Congress.

That was the case this summer, when an effort by the Pentagon to appoint officers to take charge of climate resilience led to a House vote prohibiting taxpayer money from being spent on the plan.

"When we distract our military with a radical climate change agenda, we detract from their main purpose of defending America from enemies" like the Islamic State, said Mr. Buck of Colorado, the Republican congressman who sponsored the measure. His amendment passed the House 216 to 205, though the Senate has yet to agree to it.

Many people in Congress, almost all of them Republicans, express doubt about climate science, with some of them promulgating conspiracy theories claiming that researchers have invented the issue to justify greater governmental control over people's lives. So far, this ideological position has been immune to the rising evidence of harm from human-induced climate change.

The Obama administration has been pushing federal agencies, including the Pentagon, to take more aggressive steps. But without action in Congress, experts say these efforts fall far short of what is required.

"In the country, certainly in the Congress, it hasn't really resonated — the billions and perhaps trillions of dollars that we would need to spend if we want to live on the coast like we're living today," said David W. Titley, a retired rear admiral who was the chief oceanographer of the Navy, and now heads a climate center at Pennsylvania State University.

"I haven't seen any evidence that there is serious thought about this: what does a world of three, four, five feet of sea-level rise look like?"

Deep in a thicket of trees on an out-of-the-way island in the Florida Keys, a diesel engine roared to life. Soon a drill bit was chewing through ancient limestone, pulling up evidence from the geological past that might shed light on the future of the planet.

On a sultry day in March, Dr. Dutton, the University of Florida scientist, stood watch over the drilling operation, inspecting her samples as they emerged from the ground. She spotted fossilized corals, proof that what is now the dry ground of Lignumvitae Key was once underwater.

With taxpayer funding from the National Science Foundation, Dr. Dutton is chasing what might be the most urgent question in climate science: How fast is the ocean going to rise?

"Is it going to happen in decades, or centuries, or a thousand years?" Dr. Dutton asked as she took a break to eat lunch on a tarpaulin spread under the trees. "This will give us an example to say, 'Well, the last time this happened, here is how long it took.'"

The opponents of climate science in Congress, and the tiny group of climate researchers allied with them, have argued that the concerns of thousands of mainstream scientists about the future are based on unproven computer forecasts.

In reality, their concerns are based in large part on mounting evidence of what has happened in the past.

Through decades of research, it has become clear that human civilization, roughly 6,000 years old, developed during an unusually stable period for global sea levels. But over longer spans, coastlines have been much more dynamic.

During ice ages, caused by wobbles in the Earth's orbit, sea levels dropped more than 400 feet as ice piled up on land. But during periods slightly warmer than today, the sea may have risen 70 or more feet above the current level.

Dr. Dutton and other leading scientists are focused on the last sea-level high point, which occurred between the last two ice ages, about 125,000 years ago.

After years of surveying ancient shorelines around the world, scientists determined that the sea level rose by something like 20 to 30 feet in that era, compared with today. But how long did it take to make that jump? That is the question Dr. Dutton, using improved research techniques, wants to answer.

Large parts of the Florida Keys are simply ancient coral reefs that grew during the period of high seas, and were exposed when the levels fell. Trees, roads and houses now sit atop the old reefs. By recovering samples, Dr. Dutton hopes to date a sequence of corals as they grew along with the rising sea, potentially revealing the rate at which the water rose.

The research, likely to take years, may supply a figure for how quickly the ocean was able to rise under past conditions, but not necessarily a maximum rate for the coming decades. The release of greenhouse gases from human activity is causing the planet to warm rapidly, perhaps faster than at any other time in the Earth's history. The ice sheets in both Greenland and West Antarctica are beginning to melt into the sea at an accelerating pace.

Scientists had long hoped that any disintegration of the ice sheets would take thousands of years, but recent research suggests the breakup of West Antarctica could occur much faster. In the worst-case scenario, this research suggests, the rate of sea-level rise could reach a foot per decade by the 22nd century, about 10 times faster than today.

In 2013, scientists reached a consensus that three feet was the highest plausible rise by the year 2100. But now some of them are starting to say that six or seven feet may be possible. A rise that large over a span of decades would be an unparalleled national catastrophe, driving millions of people from their homes and likely to require the abandonment of entire cities.

In essence, by revealing how sensitive the ice sheets have been to past warming, Dr. Dutton's research may answer the question of whether such a rapid jump is possible.

Along those parts of the United States coast that are sinking at a brisk clip, including southern Louisiana and the entire Chesapeake Bay region, including Norfolk, the situation will be worse than average. On the Pacific Coast, a climate pattern that had pushed billions of gallons of water toward Asia is now ending, so that in coming decades the sea is likely to rise quickly off states like Oregon and California.

Along the East Coast, scientists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration say that many communities have already, or will soon, pass a threshold where sunny-day flooding starts to happen much more often.

"When you look at the historical record, there's no trend saying the flooding is going down," said Dr. Sweet, the NOAA expert. "The trends are all very clear. They're going up, and they're going up in many of these areas in an accelerating fashion."

Late last year, in Paris, nations reached a landmark global agreement to cut emissions. It is fragile, and might not survive if Donald J. Trump is elected president in November; he has vowed to scrap it.

But the air is already so full of greenhouse gases that most land ice on the planet has started to melt. So even if the deal survives, it will, at best, slow the rise of the sea and perhaps limit the ultimate increase. Many climate scientists, including Dr. Dutton, believe a rise of at least 15 or 20 feet has already become inevitable, over an unknown period.

As Brad Tuckman walked the piece of land in Fort Lauderdale where he is building a grand new house, he pointed toward the canal that wraps around three sides of the property.

It is scenic, with yachts plying the water, yet as the sea has risen, street flooding in the area has become a recurring nuisance. So before starting construction, Mr. Tuckman said he spent nearly a half-million dollars to raise the sea wall and truck in dirt to elevate the land.

"The predictions of what's going to happen over the next 20, 30, 40 years — it's real," said Mr. Tuckman, the founder of a company offering creative services to the retail industry.

In South Florida, among the worst-hit parts of the country for sunny-day flooding, people are not waiting for state or federal help. Those who can afford it are starting to act on their own. A company, Coastal Risk Consulting, has cropped up to advise them, and is offering its services nationally.

Cities and counties in the region have formed an alliance and enlisted professors to help them figure out what to do. They are hiring "chief resilience officers," an idea pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, which is paying some of the salary cost.

In Miami Beach and Fort Lauderdale, as well as in older Northern cities like Boston and New York, tidal marshes and creeks were filled in a century or more ago to make new land, and it is in these areas — "back bays," as some of these spots are called — where the flooding is happening first.

That is because they remain the lowest spots in the landscape, vulnerable to the rising water nearby. Old drain pipes empty into the tidal creeks, and at high tide the water can back up through these pipes, bubbling into the streets seemingly from nowhere.

In Miami Beach, the city engineer, Bruce A. Mowry, has come up with a plan for combating the flooding. He rips up problematic streets, raises them with extra dirt and repaves them, installing new drains and giant pumps that can push water back into the bay. The approach has already been shown to work in several neighborhoods.

A controversy has erupted about whether Miami Beach is polluting Biscayne Bay with the water, but the city is pushing ahead. Miami Beach plans to spend at least $400 million on its plan by 2018, raising the money through fees imposed on homes and businesses.

The huge county government for the region, Miami-Dade County, is developing its own resilience strategy, one likely to cost billions. It has committed to rebuilding some of its decaying infrastructure, like a sewage plant, in a way that safeguards against sea-level rise and storm surges.

"I don't see doom and gloom here; I see opportunity," said Harvey Ruvin, the clerk of courts for Miami-Dade County, who has been a leading voice on the environment in Florida for a half-century, and who recently led a county task force on sea-level rise. "We're talking about the most robust possible jobs program you can think of, and one that can't be outsourced."

Many of the Republican mayors in the region are on the same page as Democrats in requesting national and state action on climate change, as well as pushing local steps. James C. Cason, the Republican mayor of Coral Gables, has convened informational sessions that draw hundreds of residents, and he has received no complaints for his stance.

"I hope in coming years when we have to spend a lot of money, the citizens will still support it," Mr. Cason said in an interview.

Still, his city, and others in South Florida, have some hard decisions to make.

Some property owners cannot afford to raise their sea walls, putting their neighborhoods at increased risk of flooding. Will they be held legally responsible when floods do occur? A strict policy could force some people from their homes. Conversely, should public money be spent to do the work, even if it largely benefits private property?

Just for streets, storm drains and the like, South Florida governments will need to raise billions, and they have yet to figure out how. Moreover, if the rise of the sea accelerates as much as some scientists fear, it is doubtful the cities will be able to keep up.

The region has one mayor, Philip K. Stoddard of South Miami, who is a scientist himself — he studies animal communication at Florida International University — and has been a close reader of scientific papers about climate change since the 1990s.

"I remember lying in bed at night thinking, 'I hope this isn't real,'" Dr. Stoddard, a Democrat, recalled. "I hope other data comes in that contradicts it. It took me several years to get my head around it and say, 'Oh, God, it is real.'"

Now he is focused on easing the pain for South Miami, with a $50 million system of sewer pipes to replace septic tanks threatened by the rising water table.

"You can play it really badly and let unpleasant things happen earlier," he said. "Or you can push them off by doing some infrastructure repairs and some thoughtful planning."

He is, though, under no illusions about the long-term fate of the region he calls home.

"We're putting enough heat in the ocean to send water over us, no question," Dr. Stoddard said. "Ultimately, we give up and we leave. That's how the story ends."

Jackson Considers $1.67 Million Grant To Hire 9 Firefighters

Associated Press, September 4, 2016

JACKSON, Mich. (AP) — A southern Michigan city that has sharply reduced the number of firefighters over the past decade is trying to determine the financial ramifications if it accepts a $1.67 million grant to hire nine firefighters for two years.

Jackson public information officer Will Forgrave told the Jackson Citizen Patriot (http://bit.ly/2ccnj7V) the concern is pension costs. He says even though the firefighters could only be employed two years, they would still pay into the pension plan.

City Councilman Daniel Greer says officials don't want to hamstring taxpayers with unanticipated costs.

The grant is from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The city accepted a $1.9 million grant in 2012. It has since eliminated all the positions it created.

The city had nearly 40 firefighters in 2006. It now has 15.

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Yakama Tribal Members Evicted In Push To Clean Up Housing

Associated Press, September 5, 2016

WAPATO, Wash. (AP) — For the past few weeks, Stephanie Shippentower and Billie Shoulderblade have been helping renovate homes at a Yakama Nation housing project they were recently kicked out of.

Shoulderblade was long behind on her rent. Shippentower had been caught living there with her dad after she was evicted two years ago because of repeated police calls to her house.

Both women are among a wave of evictions that began in June, the largest the tribe has seen in recent history, with more than 270 tribal members kicked out of housing across the 1.2 million-acre reservation for violating lease agreements.

Yakama Nation Housing Authority officials acknowledge that rules have long been ignored in at least one housing project, where overcrowding from unauthorized tenants for years fostered drug use, crime and unkempt properties. While the push to clean up housing projects is sudden and drastic, housing officials say something has to be done to improve the quality of life.

Many of those evicted — more than 50 families and 130 people, including Shoulderblade and Shippentower — have taken refuge at the tribe's RV park in Toppenish, where they are living in tents and are allowed to use restrooms, showers and laundry facilities. The tribe is providing food daily.

"My kids aren't used to sleeping in tents," said Shoulderblade, who's living in a tent with her seven children and husband. "It broke my heart to see my kids suffer."

A bulk of the evictions have been at the Apas Goudy housing project in east Wapato, where a massive $14 million project to refurbish the tattered homes there is underway.

But funding requirements for the project prompted Housing Authority to step up enforcement of rules that had largely gone ignored for years at Apas Goudy, where crime and drugs have been common, said Housing Authority Director Craig Dougall.

That funding comes from a state housing program, in which investors fund the project upfront and reap tax credits for 10 years. Those investors set requirements to ensure that the property is maintained, and the requirements are more stringent than regulations set by the Federal Housing Authority, Dougall said.

"I'd say my position is we're running into extreme social conditions, social problems with crime, with overcrowding. A number of these issues come with a housing park with no rules being enforced," Dougall said. "The Housing Authority has had a hand in these poor conditions. Hopefully (we're) honest enough to admit our own failures and strong enough to address them."

Now Shoulderblade and Shippentower have taken jobs with the Housing Authority as a way to make up for past problems and get back into permanent housing.

On this recent afternoon, both women labored on demolition work inside one home at the project.

"My hope is to get back on my feet and take care of my kids," said Shippentower, mother of five children ages 2 through 19. "It's going good now — I'm learning a lot. It's temporary, but they said (the job) could go into a permanent position."

Providing a safe and clean environment for children is the thrust behind refurbishing the housing project, Dougall said.

"There are many good tenants and we owe them the protections provided by our policies and mission for safe, decent and affordable housing," he said. "We are not judging our membership, but we are responsible for the conditions of our housing parks. We need to take this responsibility more seriously."

But the move hasn't come without controversy. Several evicted tribal members who refused to be identified, saying they feared retaliation from the Housing Authority, said they were given little notice and that the enforcement action was too sudden and harsh.

Not so, says grants and housing coordinator Debra Whitefoot. Letters were sent to tenants early last year informing them of the refurbishing project, funding requirements and what would be expected to meet those requirements and community meetings were held, she said.

"They knew over a year ago that this was coming," she said.

Big challenge

The Yakima Housing Authority is a tribal agency that operates 750 homes and duplexes stretching across the Lower Yakima Valley from Toppenish to White Swan. It also provides repairs and other services to more than 3,000 homes occupied by tribal members on the reservation. Housing employs about 120 workers, most of them tribal members.

Apas Gaudy, a project of 58 homes and duplexes on Larena Lane on Wapato's east side, has been one of its biggest challenges.

Meth labs were discovered at four houses during the evictions, each costing some $40,000 to clean up, Housing Director Dougall said, largely blaming outsiders who found tribal members and the project easy prey for drug operations because of lax policing.

"This one housing project is not reflective of Yakama culture at all," said Dougall, who was hired by the tribe a year and a half ago. "This is a complete collapse. I said we've got to address the drug culture here because we've got too many good people, children and elders living here too."

The housing project has a capacity of about 180 residents, but the housing authority found more than 500 people living there. For example, 18 people were found living in one three-bedroom home, Dougall said.

"We can't blame tribal members who take in family in need, as is customary within the Yakama culture. We can blame ourselves for not having the discipline to build more housing for our membership over the years."

Of the authorized tenants at Apas Goudy, 178 were evicted, he said.

There's also an accumulation of about $1.5 million in unpaid rent at all housing projects, he said.

But the neighborhood hasn't always been that way, said Whitefoot, who lived there as a child in the early 1970s. "Years ago, Apas Goudy was a nice housing project," she said. "The park was nice — everyone had nice yards, lawns."

Lease agreements require tenants to pass drug tests, remain current on rent and take care of the property. But Whitefoot said changes in tribal leadership over the years as well as differences in philosophy over how to run the Housing Authority led to less enforcement.

Now, current tribal leaders want to change that.

Tribal leaders couldn't be immediately reached for comment before leaving for North Dakota, where they've joined other tribes in protest of a proposed oil pipeline.

"They see a need to send a different message to the people, provide a positive environment for the children," Whitefoot said.

Controversial move

Evictions were triggered in the process of relocating tenants in the housing project to temporary housing elsewhere while homes are being refurbished, Dougall said.

Those who are current on their rent and pass drug tests will be placed temporarily in alternative housing until their homes are rebuilt, while those who don't meet the requirements are evicted, he said.

"But there was no initial plan to launch a mass eviction," Dougall said.

If anyone in a family failed a drug test, the entire family was evicted, he said.

A combination of unpaid rent and failed drug tests was responsible for most evictions, Whitefoot said.

But a group of seven evicted tenants who met with a Yakima Herald-Republic reporter argue otherwise. They wouldn't provide their names for publication, citing a fear of being blacklisted from future tribal housing programs.

They complained of unfair drug tests, and accused the Housing Authority of training staff "on the spot" to conduct urinalysis drug test. They also say collection cups were used by more than one tenant, and merely rinsed after each use.

Evicted tenants say Housing refused to accept the negative test result from a professional drug treatment facility of a woman who was contesting Housing's results. Tenants disputing screenings had the option of getting tested by an outside professional, and Housing would pay for it if the results were negative.

Housing Director Dougall said two tenants were tested again by a local drug treatment provider. Results of one test were overturned after learning the tenant was on prescribed painkillers while the other was upheld because of cocaine use, he said.

Dougall said he has staff that are certified by a national drug test supplier in administering drug screens.

Evicted tenants also blame housing for not fulfilling its side of lease agreements, letting homes fall into disrepair.

Residents described homes where people had to use chains for door locks; where asbestos was common in the walls and flooring; where, no matter how much they cleaned, cockroaches would manage to get inside through the connecting pipes between structures.

"Housing allowed the homes to go down the way they did," one evicted tenant said. "They never took care of Apas. They knew about the problem; they knew about the situation in the homes."

Dougall said often tenants refused to allow Housing Authority staff into the homes to conduct annual inspections and that overcrowding led to much of the wear and tear.

"As a result, the home deteriorates far more than you would expect," he said.

Tenants can appeal evictions before a board appointed by the Yakama Tribal Council. Although several tenants challenged the evictions, none were overturned. Dougall said.

Controversy often surrounds efforts to clean up housing projects, said U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development spokesman Leland Jones in Seattle.

"My impression would be the Yakama Housing Authority isn't the first to face this challenge and it won't be the last," he said. "To its credit, I think what the Yakama Housing Authority is saying 'We're not going to take it anymore,' and that's a tough thing for a housing authority to do. They're putting their foot down."

Cultural change

Standards have to be met if living conditions are to improve in the housing project, Dougall said. To that end, Housing is offering those evicted employment, education programs and even access to substance abuse recovery programs.

Displaced tenants who commit to substance abuse treatment or any other needed services to help them improve will be allowed into transitional housing and eventually into permanent housing, Dougall said.

In January, the tribe purchased a 41-unit apartment complex at 310 S. Ahtanum St. in Wapato that's now being used as transitional housing for the homeless as well as housing for homeless veterans.

The tribe also purchased the former armory on Division Street in Toppenish that it plans to use as a homeless shelter, and has applied for 100 trailers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that will be used for transitional housing.

Dougall said tenants who have been evicted will be allowed into the shelter when winter comes. If they commit to treatment or agree to begin working off any unpaid rent, they will be allowed into transitional housing, and eventually into permanent housing if they stay the course, he said.

"Our sincere hope is that people who are affected by this get help and get all the services the tribe provides and develop a sustainable lifestyle," Dougall said. "If we can develop a generation of sustainable parents, then the children will see that and follow."

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Information from: Yakima Herald-Republic, http://www.yakimaherald.com

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FEMA HOUSING

Louisiana Flood Did More Than $8 Billion In Damage

By T. Becket Adams

Washington Examiner, September 6, 2016

The Louisiana floods last month caused a $8.7 billion in damage, a number that is expected to increase as officials continue to take stock of the damage, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced this week.

Edwards' office revealed the estimated cost of the flooding damage Saturday when it released a copy of a letter the governor sent President Obama earlier this week.

The governor's letter to Obama asked for a "very reasonable" $2 billion in federal aid, and said it would be the bare minimum necessary to help the state recover from a flood that claimed the lives of 13 Louisianans.

"While short-term relief for immediate needs available through [Federal Emergency Management Agency] for items such as temporary rental assistance, essential home repairs and other disaster-related needs are greatly needed and greatly appreciated, our full recovery will not be realized without additional help," Edwards' letter read.

The storm has drawn a national response from relief organizations and other good Samaritans. It has even caught the attention of the two 2016 presidential candidates.

On the left side, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton tweeted her sympathies and directed social media users to donations pages belonging to groups specializing in offering aid to disaster victims.

On the other side of the aisle, GOP nominee Donald Trump and his running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, went to Baton Rouge personally to assess the damage and speak with the victims.

At the time, Edwards caught some heat for seemingly referring to Trump's visit as a shameless photo-op. The Democratic governor later claimed he was not attacking the GOP nominee.

"I didn't dismiss his trip as a photo op. Before he came down I said I — we welcome him here," the governor said last month on CNN. "We want him to be helpful and we hope that doesn't turn into a mere photo op. So you got the story backwards," he added.

"Okay. So, was he helpful? Now that it's come and gone, was he helpful? Was it a good thing that he came down?" the CNN reporter continued. The Democratic governor agreed that, yes, Trump's visit was indeed helpful to the state.

"Yes, for the reasons that I stated earlier because it helped to shine a spotlight on Louisiana and on the dire situation that we have here, that it was helpful," he said.

"And I will tell you that I also appreciated the good phone call, the conversation that I had with [Indiana] Gov. Pence," he added in reference to Trump's running mate, "who was sincere and genuine when he called, and we spoke for a long time on Friday morning about their desire to be helpful."

As of Friday, there were a reported 50,000 houses in Louisiana damaged by the flood waters, Edwards' letter to Obama said.

"More than 80 percent of damaged homes lacked flood insurance because most were outside the 100-year flood plain," the Associated Press reported, adding "the majority of flooded households were for people with low to moderate incomes, and 20 percent were renters."

The governor said that number of houses damaged by the heavy rains will undoubtedly increase as additional applications pour in and state officials continue to inspect the damage.

"The majority of these citizens did not carry flood insurance, and I impress upon you that they will not be able to make critical decisions on rebuilding their homes and their lives without the availability of CDBG-DR funds," Edwards wrote to the president. "This additional assistance is critical to Louisiana's full recovery from these floods."

He also said that more than 6,000 businesses were damaged, and that more than 1,400 bridges are now in need of inspections. Edwards also told the president that approximately 30 state roads were washed away, and that there is roughly $110 million in damage to agriculture.

The storm, which began on Aug. 12, poured nearly 2 feet of rain in some parts of Louisiana during a 48-hour period, the AP noted, adding, "and the flooding has been described as the worst disaster in the U.S. since Superstorm Sandy struck the East Coast in 2012."

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

No stories for this edition

MITIGATION

No stories for this edition

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

No stories for this edition

FIRE GRANTS

City Council Considering Acceptance Of $1.67 Million Federal Grant To Hire Firefighters

By Danielle Salisbury

MLive (MI), September 3, 2016

JACKSON, MI – Jackson has been awarded a $1.67 million grant to hire nine firefighters for two years beginning in February.

The City Council has to decide by October whether to accept the award, distributed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response program. It would bolster a shrinking firefighting force in Jackson, but any long-term financial impact on city taxpayers has to be considered, city officials said.

At issue is a "rapidly unsustainable increase in pension costs," according to a statement from city public information officer Will Forgrave. "The city believes it's critical to consider the city's future and make sure the decisions made today do not negatively impact citizens years down the road."

Though the grant, awarded Aug. 19, would pay the firefighters' wages and they might only be employees for two years, they would still pay into the city retirement plan, Forgrave said.

Resources are limited and the city has to be careful about adding employees to any department, City Councilman Daniel Greer said. "We don't want to hamstring the taxpayers into an unanticipated cost."

Firefighters have, in the past, supported the grant-funded hires, saying dwindling numbers affect services and safety.

It would be the second time the city collected such an award. The city accepted a $1.9 million, two-year grant in 2012 and has since eliminated all the positions it created.

The firefighter union president, when reached Friday night, said the union contests some of the figures contained in the city's Friday statement.

It highlighted a steadily dropping number of building fires from 2012 to 2015. Response times to home fires remained steady during that same period and in 2012 and 2013, just 4.5 and 2.5 percent of department calls were fire-related, according to the statement.

The union is to release its own statement next week.

Talk of the grant come as contract negotiations between the city administration and firefighters are underway. "Just like the SAFER grant before it, we want to have a contract before we accept the grant," Forgrave said.

Layoffs early this year brought the number of city firefighters to 15. As late as 2006, there were almost 40 department firefighters and until 2011, there were three operating fire stations. Now, there is one.

In the meantime, a fluctuating tax that funds firefighter and police pension costs has increased from 0.4 mills in 1974 to 7.2 mills, costing city property owners $4.1 million annually, Forgrave reported.

If accepted, the city, even if there is a fiscal emergency, could not lay off any firefighters during the period of the grant.

Jackson hired 13 firefighters using the last SAFER grant; four of them were able to move into permanent positions made available by retirements and one left to take a job in Summit Township.

The city was able to extend the employment period for about a year because it still had about $719,000 left in the grant when it expired in 2014.

Two firefighters were allowed to remain employed until early this year, but they too were laid off as a plan to collaborate with the Summit Township Fire Department never got off the ground.

Federal Grant Of $167,522 Will Help Firefighters

By Sherry Kuyt

MLive (MI), September 2, 2016

Thornapple Township Emergency Services has been selected to receive an Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of $167,522 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The grant will be used to replace all scuba units currently in service in the department, according to a department press release. Using the grant and a matching amount of $8,376, the department will be able to replace current scuba units that have reached the end of their life expectancy and have become costly to maintain.

This is the fourth time in six years the department has been successful in receiving the grant to assist in purchasing critical fire and EMS equipment.

Thornapple Township provides fire-rescue and ambulance (advanced life support) transport response for residents of Thornapple Township through a voted fire millage and service fees. In addition, a portion of Irving Township contracts with Thornapple Township for fire-rescue services.

The Emergency Services Department Building is located at 128 High St. in downtown Middleville. The building includes the apparatus bay, living quarters and office/administration space, including a state-of-the-art training room. In addition, the department owns an offsite training facility for flashover training, which was obtained through a previous federal grant.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Mobile Homes Take A Beating From Hermine. And It Wasn't The Wind

Miami Herald, September 4, 2016

When Larry Johnson and his wife moved to Bradenton three years ago, it was a dream come true to get waterfront property in Braden Castle Park. Most days, they have breakfast on their back deck while watching the sun rise over the Braden River.

But on Friday, the 68-year-old Johnson woke up hours before the sun would rise, although it would never make an appearance.

He, like others, worried what high tide would mean for the already rising water onto his property.

"I wanted waterfront not 'watertop,'" Johnson said.

At high tide, the water, far surpassing the seawall, was one third of the way up the ramp to his back deck. The deck and home are raised four feet above the water level.

"It came up into carport yesterday afternoon and then even higher last night," Johnson said.

The street in front of his home was completely underwater.

"It was knee-high when I walking down the street yesterday afternoon," Johnson said.

From his driveway, he could no longer see the boat launch and the dock, normally about four feet above the water level, was now about one foot above the water.

Manatee County Emergency Management officials are still working to assess the overall damage caused by Hermine.

"Mobile home parks seemed to take the biggest beating," Emergency Management Chief Don Hermey said Saturday.

Anna Maria Island also took a strong hit, with streets still flooded as of Saturday afternoon.

Hermey said residents need to report any structural damage to their homes to enable him to provide state and federal officials with the most accurate estimate of local damage.

In order for a disaster declaration to include Manatee County and get the Federal Emergency Management Agency to respond to the area, Hermey said he will have to be able to show impact with total damage estimates of about $1.3 million. Statewide, counties affected by Hermine are working to estimate the damages that will have to reach $25 million for it to be declared a disaster.

Hermey anticipates there are still some stragglers who have been unable yet to access damage to their homes, but they likely will do so this weekend.

Flooding wasn't the only problem experienced by mobile home residents during Hermine. In Swan Lake

Village, wind gusts damaged roofs of some mobile homes on Thursday.

Back in Braden Castle Park on Saturday, the flooding was receding, leaving a mess of vegetation debris behind. Johnson was out pressure cleaning the mess left on his driveway.

Johnson said that in the three years he has lived in Braden Castle since he and his wife moved from Minnesota, they had never seen flooding quite that bad. Sometimes the water behind his home will even recede out a good 25 feet, he said, exposing the river bank.

"That even makes this more impressive," Johnson said.

Post-Hermine Scams Reported In Taylor County

By Michael Moline

Saint Peters (FL) Blog, September 5, 2016

First comes the natural disaster. Then come the scam artists.

Someone is going around Taylor County claiming to represent the Federal Emergency Management Agency and demanding $150 to help people file Hurricane Hermine-related insurance claims, the state Department of Financial Services said Monday.

"There is no fee to file a FEMA claim and Floridians who encounter this scam should report it by calling the Department's Consumer Insurance Helpline at 1-877-693-5236," the department said in a news release.

"Consumers can also utilize this helpline to get free help with the filing of hurricane-related insurance claims," the agency said.

"It's unconscionable to think that someone would lie and cheat their way into profiting off of catastrophe but, unfortunately, it happens," state Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater said.

"I strongly urge all Floridians to remain vigilant against such scams, and to report all suspicious activity to authorities immediately. My office will thoroughly investigate reports of insurance and financial fraud and will prosecute the offenders to the fullest extent of the law."

The department's Division of Investigative and Forensic Services has dispatched fraud investigators to the county.

Officials expect that this is just the beginning, and urged policyholders to contact insurers directly to report storm damage.

"Be wary of strangers who call on the telephone or who knock on your door asking for personal information," the department said. "Ask for a telephone number so can you call back to verify that the entity is legitimate; hang up on anyone who refuses to coordinate in providing such information."

Demand to see contractors' credentials before you sign anything, the department said. Check them out with the state Department of Business and Professional Regulation, here.

"Beware of fly-by-night repair companies and hire only licensed and reputable people," the agency said.

Read everything carefully. Ask questions — like, who is responsible for paying, you or your insurer?

Understand that only a licensed public adjuster or attorney can file an insurance claim on your behalf. You can check credentials here. And you can find more information here.

When in doubt, call the department's insurance consumer hotline at 877-693-5236.

FLOODS

More Parishes Added To Disaster Declaration

Monroe (LA) News Star, September 2, 2016

Six parishes have been added to the federal disaster declaration from the August flood, U.S. Rep. Charles Boustany said in a press release late Friday afternoon.

Boustany, R-Lafayette, said St. James and West Baton Rouge were added to individual assistance designated parishes, which means flood victims are eligible for help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Assumption, Cameron, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist and West Baton Rouge were all added to the public assistance designated areas, which means those governments can qualify for federal aid for response and recovery expenses.

Twenty south Louisiana parishes were already included in the disaster declaration.

Greg Hilburn covers state politics for the USA TODAY Network of Louisiana. Follow him on Twitter @GregHilburn1

Understanding FEMA Flood-recovery Programs, Why You're Not Getting "Thousands Of Dollars" Immediately

By Mark Ballard

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 2, 2016

Unrealistic expectations are leading to a lot of questions, and sometimes anger, about the disaster assistance available and how the programs work, said officials with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"A lot of survivors think they'll get thousands and thousands of dollars," said Alberto Pillot, FEMA's media information manager. "They think replacement value. But it's not. It's immediate needs … What do you need right now to get into safe and sanitary shelter? There are programs available that can get closer back to whole."

FEMA gives out tax-free grants of up to $33,000, regardless of income levels, as part of the Individuals and Households Program, or IHP.

Victims from catastrophic flooding from the storm that began the night of Aug. 11, living in one of the 20 parishes declared a disaster by President Barack Obama, can get money to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs, medical and dental needs, new clothing, furnishings, appliances and a number of other expenses.

Counts are not complete but the federal government estimates about 160,000 properties were flooded.

Gov. John Bel Edwards and the Louisiana congressional delegation are preparing a bill to ask Congress to approve money over and above what is set aside for disasters. The supplemental money would go to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which would send the money to Louisiana in form of grants for storm victims to rebuild.

In the meantime, however, the basic federal aids available for people without insurance are loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration and the IHP.

Survivors must apply with FEMA for disaster assistance online or over the phone.

Their damaged residence will be inspected.

From the inspector's report of specific damages, the family structure and a predetermined amount for a minimal replacement, FEMA calculates a grant.

For instance, if a family of four had damage to four bedrooms, one which is used as a guest room and the other is for a child who is away at college, leaving husband and a wife and one child using two bedrooms, FEMA would give enough to replace the bedding for three people. It would be up to the applicant to go out and purchase the beds — three singles or a single bed and double bed.

Depending on the damage, FEMA also will replace chairs, couches, tables and lamps. The thing to remember, Pillot said, is that the replacement is minimal. The money won't be enough to replace a ruined leather couch and love seat set. "You may not get a leather couch, but you'll have something to sit on, something to get you going," Pillot said.

FEMA will buy what's necessary: washing machines, window air-conditioning units, televisions and refrigerators are on the list. Dishwashers are not, at least for the young and the healthy.

"It's a matter of what is necessary to get back up and running," Pillot said.

If one vehicle was flooded and the other was not, then chances are no money will be set aside for a second car, he said.

The letter outlines basically what the money is for: this much for repairs, that much for appliances.

"You'll have to come back and explain why it was spent. You have to justify why you need more," Pillot said.

If the survivor spends the money dedicated to hiring an electrician to buy a stainless steel sub-zero refrigerator, rather than something much simpler inexpensive, chances are very good that FEMA will not give more money for the electrician.

"What you do with the grant and how you choose to spend the money, well, be wise," Pillot said.

Damage From Flood Is At Least $8.7B, Governor Says

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 3, 2016

Baton Rouge, La.

Damage from flood is at least $8.7B, governor says

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards says his state had more than $8.7 billion in damage from catastrophic flooding in August, and the figure will increase as officials finish assessing damage to roads and other public infrastructure. The governor's office Saturday released a letter Edwards sent Friday to President Barack Obama. In it, the Democratic governor asked that Congress this month approve $2 billion in federal aid for Louisiana for housing, economic development and infrastructure. He said it's a "very reasonable request," adding to other programs assisting in Louisiana's flood recovery, such as aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "While short-term relief for immediate needs available through FEMA … are greatly needed and greatly appreciated, our full recovery will not be realized without additional help," Edwards wrote.

Los Angeles

Shooting at county jail wounds 2 employees

A Fresno, Calif., man was taken into custody Saturday after shooting two correctional officers in the lobby of the Fresno County Jail. Thong Vang, 37, entered the jail lobby shortly after 8:30 a.m. Saturday, saying he wanted to visit someone and trying to get to the front of the line, Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims told reporters. When he was ordered to wait his turn, Vang began to exhibit “bizarre behavior,” pacing back and forth around the lobby, Mims said. During the confrontation that ensued, Vang pulled out a gun and shot correctional Officers Juanita Davila and Toamalama Scanlan, neither of whom were armed, Mims said. Another correctional officer fired several shots at Vang, who then retreated into a hallway before ultimately dropping his weapon and saying that he wanted to be arrested, Mims said. Vang, who had been previously convicted of rape, was held at gunpoint while the two injured officers were taken to ambulances outside.

Atlanta

Giant female panda delivers twins, again

Atlanta’s zoo said a 19-year-old giant panda gave birth to a set of twins Saturday. Zoo Atlanta said giant panda Lun Lun delivered the twin cubs at 7:20 a.m. and 8:07 a.m. It’s Lun Lun’s second pair of twins. Officials said Lun Lun was artificially inseminated in March. Lun Lun and 18-year-old male panda Yang Yang have seven offspring together, all resulting from artificial insemination.

Bangladesh

Islamist party leader is executed for role in 1971 war

A senior Islamist party politician was hanged Saturday for crimes committed during Bangladesh’s 1971 war of independence against Pakistan, an official said. The execution of Mir Quasem Ali, 64, a leader of the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami party, was carried out three days after the Supreme Court dismissed his plea for a review of his death sentence. Jail officer Prashanta Kumar Bhoumik said Ali was hanged at Kashimpur jail in central Bangladesh. Ali, also a business tycoon and financier of the party, was sentenced to death in November 2014 by a tribunal set up to prosecute people who worked with the Pakistani military during the war. Both the Pakistan army and its local agents were responsible for atrocities on unarmed civilians during the nine-month conflict in what was then the eastern wing of Pakistan. The defendant received the death sentence for crimes including abductions and killings.

Turkey

Turkish forces expand intervention in Syria

Turkey launched a new incursion into Syria on Saturday, dispatching additional tanks and troops across the border to support Syrian rebels fighting the Islamic State, expanding the scope and reach of its 10-day old military intervention. The private Dogan news agency reported at least 20 tanks and five armored personnel carriers crossed at the Turkish border town of Elbeyli, across from the Syrian rebel-held town of al-Rai. The incursion is unfolding about 35 miles west of Jarablus, where Turkish forces first crossed into Syria last month.

Hong Kong

Voting gets under way in a crucial election

Hong Kong voters headed to the polls today for the specially administered Chinese city’s most crucial election since the hand-over from Britain in 1997. The vote for lawmakers in the Legislative Council is the first since 2014 pro-democracy street protests rocked the Asian financial hub, and the outcome could lead to a fresh round of political confrontations over Beijing’s control of the city.

Times wires

FEMA Inspectors Make Rounds In Baton Rouge Area

By Kevin Frey

WAFB-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 2, 2016

BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) –

FEMA has completed more than 65 percent house inspections after August’s historic floods in the Baton Rouge area.

The organization has 1,100 inspectors on the ground, each completing about five inspections each day. Overall more than 130,000 people have signed up with FEMA after the flood.

“We’re looking at the amount of damage to the home itself, the real property, and then what is required to bring it back to that safe, habitable, sanitary condition,” said Darrell Habisch, a FEMA representative.

Wait times for FEMA inspectors to visit homes have dropped in recent days from about three weeks to now seven days.

While waiting, FEMA encourages flood victims to clean out their homes, removing mold and other water-logged items.

“We want you to document, take photos, and document the damage, but don’t wait for a call from FEMA – you can’t live in that environment,” Habisch said.

On Friday, Brenda Roberts visited her home for the first time since it took on more than three feet of water. The rising waters forced her to evacuate by airboat.

"I couldn't imagine. It didn't seem real. This is not happening. Maybe the water won't get high, maybe nothing will be damaged. It was in disbelief," Roberts said.

Outside her home, however, sits evidence of a devastating, inescapable truth. Piles of memories dot every curb in her neighborhood off Greenwell Springs Road.

"When I came down the street and I saw everybody's life on the street, it was heartbreaking," Roberts said.

A FEMA inspector joined Roberts at her home, documenting the skeletal remains of what was once her home.

"It was totaled, everything in this house was totaled," she told the inspector.

Her piano, a side table from her great-grandparents, her computer and more were destroyed in by the water. In their place now sit piles of sheetrock and paneling.

The trials of the past weeks have been difficult, but Roberts said they have brought out the best in so many.

"You'll see things, and it chokes you up, and then someone will respond with a tremendous amount of kindness," Roberts said.

Some important tips:

FEMA will call to set up an appointment

The inspector will have a FEMA ID

If they seem suspicious, it is okay to turn them away

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Northshore Homeowner Said Flood Relief Option Set Her Up For Foreclosure

By Jennifer Crockett

WDSU-TV New Orleans, September 5, 2016

Hammond, La. – As people across Louisiana work to save their flooded homes, some are having trouble catching a break from their bank.

Cathleen Dell and her husband William live in Hammond. Floods spared their home in March, but in the two were not so lucky in August.

The couple and their pets were rescued from the flood by boat. They lived with a friend while their home sat in water for a week. It's now stripped and drying out, but the panic they felt as the water was rising still keeps them up at night. This time, it's mounting bills for repairs that's swamping them.

Cathleen is a teacher. William retired from the U.S. Army. The home they bought two years ago is not in a designated flood zone, and they did not have coverage. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is helping a little, but the couple contacted their mortgage company to apply for forbearance on their mortgage, so they could use that money for repairs.

Instead of getting temporary relief, she said the terms their private mortgage company laid out could have easily made things worse and possibly led to foreclosure. According to her paperwork, all of the payments would come due at once, including fees. Dell thought she was signing up to have her payments suspended for 90 days and repaid at the end of her loan.

"Our house payment is basically is almost $1,300 a month," Cathleen said. "So, there was no way that we were going to be able to afford a $10,000 house note on March 1."

Cathleen wants other homeowners to read their paperwork carefully before agreeing to any new terms.

"I contacted you guys because I want people to make sure that they're reading their information," Cathleen said. "I don't want anybody to have to lose their home again over paperwork."

Kemberley Washington is a certified public accountant practicing in New Orleans. She said terms for forbearance on conventional mortgages vary, and that the Dell's aren't alone.

"It's really actually to the discretion of the lender, so the lender really has control," Washington said.

She said there are more protections in place on government-backed mortgages, such as an FHA loan, but there is no way to know what you're signing up for unless you call and ask.

"Ask, 'When will I have to make this payment?' 'Is there interest that will be accrued on this payment?' There are so many different terms and things that an individual needs to know, but those questions need to be asked right there in the beginning," Washington said.

Washington put together the following information to help guide homeowners through the rebuilding process. She also said the Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, can be a good resource to council homeowners about their different options, even with private mortgages.

Tips from Kemberley Washington, CPA:

According to HUD, if you are unable to pay your mortgage because of a natural disaster, there may be relief available to you. Lenders can stop or delay foreclosure for 90 days and also waive any fees.

What type of mortgage do you have?

First, the type of assistance that may be available depends on the type of mortgage you have. According to the Home Buyer Institute, there are different types of loans, which includes government backed mortgages and conventional loans.

A government backed mortgage protects lenders against losses. These loans include an FHA or VA loan, which provides certain relief options after a natural disaster. A conventional (regular) loan may provide options; however, these may differ based on the lender.

What type of assistance is available for government loans?

For government insured loans, lenders can evaluate your loan for mitigation assistance to help you keep your home. Also, lenders may execute a loan modification, temporarily suspend mortgage payments up to six months and waive late charges or other options to help the homeowner. Keep in mind, for conventional loans, you must reach out to the lender to see what relief may be available.

What steps should a homeowner take?

A homeowner should contact their lender immediately if they are unable to make the payments. Before signing any documents, get an understanding of the new terms of your payments. For instance, you should ask questions such as:

When will the amounts be due in full?

Will interest incur on the amounts suspended?

What are the new terms of the modification?

If homeowners are not satisfied with the options provided by the lender, they are encouraged to contact HUD's National Servicing Center at 800-569-4287. In addition, they can also contact FEMA for financial assistance.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

No stories for this edition

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

CDC Grants $2.4 Mln To Five US Jurisdictions To Fight Zika

By Dipika Jain

Reuters, September 2, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Poll: Amid Zika Fears, Support For Funding

By Susan Page

USA Today, September 5, 2016

WASHINGTON — Nearly a third of Americans say fears of the Zika virus are affecting travel or other plans by members of their families, a broad impact that is fueling support for Congress to pass funding to curb spread of the disease in the United States.

In a USA TODAY/Suffolk University poll, those surveyed by more than a 3-1 margin — 62%-19% — said Congress should approve additional funding to fight the virus rather than continue to divert funds from other programs. The Senate could vote on a $1.1 billion measure on Zika as early as Tuesday, when lawmakers return after a seven-week recess.

Senate Democrats have blocked a version passed by the House because it includes provisions they say would bar funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides health-care services to pregnant women and others most affected by the mosquito-borne virus. Dozens of cases of Zika, which can cause devastating birth defects, have been diagnosed in Florida and elsewhere since Congress left town.

"It does scare me," said Carol Fisher, 56, a nurse from Teaneck, N.J., who was among those called in the poll. "It has the potential to blow up in a world-wide problem with the way people travel, the idea of containing this to a neighborhood in Miami is just ridiculous. It's almost like that movie, Contagion, where it keeps going and going and going." (The 2011 medical thriller tracked a mysterious and deadly disease that spread worldwide after a Minnesota woman returned from a business trip to Hong Kong.)

The poll of 1,000 likely voters, taken Aug. 24-29, has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

The other most pressing item of business for Congress during its final four-week session before the election is a short-term funding bill to keep the federal government operating after the new fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

Last week, Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, warned that the health agency is almost out of money to fight Zika's spread. "The cupboard is bare," Frieden told reporters.

Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of health gives a presentation about the Zika virus at the Georgetown University Law Center on Aug. 31. (Photo: Chip Somodevilla, Getty Images)

Three in 10 Americans, including 36% of those who live in the South, the most affected region, say concern about Zika has affected travel or other plans by themselves or family members. There's no partisan profile to the reported impact, which is roughly the same among Republicans and Democrats.

Both Democrats and Republicans were inclined to back additional funding to combat Zika. Democrats supported the idea by an overwhelming margin, 78%-11%. Republicans also backed the new funding, but by a narrower 44%-27%; another 28% said they were undecided.

"Personally, I don't think it's something to worry about," said Joe Thomas, 64, of Trinity, N.C., who was among those surveyed. Thomas, in a follow-up interview, said other priorities were more important. "We need to get to the matters at hand."

Florida GOP Ready To Retreat From Planned Parenthood Fight

By Sarah Ferris

The Hill, September 3, 2016

Several House Republicans in Florida say they're willing to concede defeat in their party's months-long battle over Planned Parenthood if that's what it takes to pass a $1.1 billion funding package for the Zika virus.

With Zika spreading rapidly in south Florida, even some of the most conservative members of Congress say GOP leaders should strike a deal with Democrats to get emergency money to their home state.

"Take everything out of it except Zika funding, and don't put any riders in it," Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla.), a member of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, said in an interview Thursday.

Another Freedom Caucus member, Rep. Curt Clawson (R-Fla.,) is urging the Senate to reconsider the House's earlier Zika funding bill — which did not pick a fight over Planned Parenthood — even if it means providing less money overall.

"It is time for members to pull all levers in both chambers of Congress to get a funding measure to the president's desk," Clawson wrote in a letter to GOP Leaders, along with another Florida Republican, Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart.

Other Florida Republicans — including Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Rep. Dennis Ross — have hinted recently at relenting in the fight over Planned Parenthood by urging GOP leaders to drop political issues from the bill.

The two parties have been deadlocked over a Zika response since February. Democrats have pressed for more money, while Republicans have argued the White House should use existing funds, like those from the Ebola virus or ObamaCare.

In June, the fight intensified as House and Senate Republicans put forward a new bill that targeted Planned Parenthood — ditching the upper chamber's previous deal with leading Democrats.

The bill's language does not mention Planned Parenthood. Specifically, it says that only health services "provided by public health departments, hospitals, or reimbursed through public health plans" can receive the Zika funding from Congress.

Republicans, including the top health appropriator Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), have acknowledged that the bill targets Planned Parenthood, while stressing that they are willing to pay almost as much money as the Obama administration has asked for.

"We do have provisions, obviously, to make it more difficult for Planned Parenthood. But in divided government, it's a pretty fair compromise," Cole said in a recent interview.

Eight months later, lawmakers from Florida are feeling the pressure as their home state deals with the first outbreak of Zika in the continental U.S.

Florida's Republican Gov. Rick Scott is planning to make his second trip to Congress this year to lobby for Zika funding. He will be waiting when Congress returns from its seven-week recess next Tuesday, and plans to meet with Senate GOP leadership, according to one lawmaker.

More than 600 people in Florida have tested positive for the Zika virus, which can cause birth defects in newborns. Eighty of those cases are in pregnant women, according to data from the Florida Department of Health on Thursday.

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) has said he is committed to passing Zika funding by Sept. 30, the deadline when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says it will run out of funds.

Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla), who faces a close election race in his South Florida swing district this fall, asked Ryan about Zika funding on a House GOP conference call last week.

“Speaker Ryan assured me that this was going to get done,” Curbelo said in an interview Thursday. He added that he is urging his GOP colleagues to support a Zika bill even if it means dropping the Planned Parenthood provisions.

When asked about a scenario in which the Zika bill was not approved, he said: “I’m unwilling to even consider the possibility.”

“This Planned Parenthood clinic in Puerto Rico, is that really worth killing Zika funding over?” Curbelo said. “The question that comes, is Zika funding a chief priority for you or not? I certainly hope that at the very least, for every representative or senator for the state of Florida it would be.”

Outlook: Congress Returns To Fights Over Spending, Zika

By Alex Rogers

National Journal, September 6, 2016

House Re-pub-lic-an lead-ers will be faced with two no-win de-cisions this week, as the House Free-dom Caucus looks to force a vote to im-peach IRS Com-mis-sion-er John Koskin-en and the con-fer-ence meets to dis-cuss the length of an im-pend-ing con-tinu-ing res-ol-u-tion.

The House Free-dom Caucus is ex-pec-ted to re-sume its quest to im-peach Koskin-en as soon as Wed-nes-day by bring-ing to the floor a priv-ileged mo-tion for-cing a House vote. If they do so, the House must vote on the meas-ure by Fri-day.

GOP lead-ers have been care-ful to stay pub-licly neut-ral on the top-ic be-cause the vote puts them and many of their mem-bers in a tough polit-ic-al po-s-i-tion. Al-though most likely do not be-lieve that Koskin-en de-serves to be im-peached and fret set-ting a pre-ced-ent of im-peach-ing mid-level ad-min-is-tra-tion of-fi-cials, there is little polit-ic-al up-side among the Re-pub-lic-an base to de-fend-ing the IRS.

The meas-ure is sure to be dis-cussed at a Wed-nes-day morn-ing con-fer-ence meet-ing. But the Free-dom Caucus is be-ing bolstered by re-ports this week that the IRS did not tell tax-pay-ers that their So-cial Se-cur-ity num-bers were stolen by un-doc-u-mented im-mig-rants, so it is un-likely that lead-er-ship or oth-er mem-bers can talk them out of push-ing the im-peach-ment.

On Fri-day, the House is ex-pec-ted to hold a second con-fer-ence meet-ing to dis-cuss the length of a con-tinu-ing res-ol-u-tion, which could again put lead-er-ship at odds with the House Free-dom Caucus. Lead-ers are look-ing to a CR through Decem-ber in or-der to give the ap-pro-pri-ations com-mit-tees more time to fin-ish a po-ten-tial om-ni-bus bill. The Free-dom Caucus, however, wants to can-cel the lame-duck ses-sion and pass a CR through March.

Sen-at-ors, mean-while, will re-turn to Wash-ing-ton on Tues-day night fa-cing an acute sense of deja vu, as they vote again on pre-vi-ously blocked spend-ing bills.

The Obama ad-min-is-tra-tion has pleaded Con-gress for months to pass le-gis-la-tion to help fight the spread of the Zika vir-us, as the num-ber of cases in Flor-ida and Pu-erto Rico pre-dict-ably jumped over the sum-mer. But Sen-ate Demo-crats have blocked a bill sup-por-ted by Re-pub-lic-ans, primar-ily over con-cerns that it would pre-vent some fund-ing for Planned Par-ent-hood. Re-pub-lic-ans con-tin-ue to counter that the $1.1 bil-lion bill ad-equately provides for wo-men’s health through com-munity health cen-ters.

After its pro-ced-ur-al vote on that bill, the Sen-ate ex-pects to vote on ad-van-cing a $575 bil-lion pack-age fund-ing the De-fense De-part-ment. Demo-crats have blocked it be-fore, while ur-ging Re-pub-lic-ans to pub-licly pledge that ap-pro-pri-ations bills will have par-ity between de-fense and nondefense spend-ing. While the Sen-ate agreed to that concept in its de-fense bill, House Re-pub-lic-ans have pushed to spend bil-lions more in a sep-ar-ate war-time ac-count, which many Demo-crats op-pose.

Here’s what else is on tap this week:

EN-ERGY AND EN-VIR-ON-MENT

A week after vis-it-ing the site of Louisi-ana’s dev-ast-at-ing floods, Rep. John Mica will con-vene a hear-ing on the Fed-er-al Emer-gency Man-age-ment As-so-ci-ation’s re-sponse. After his trip, Mica raised con-cern about the speed with which FEMA was de-liv-er-ing claims checks to flood vic-tims and the tem-por-ary hous-ing struc-tures the agency had brought in. Fri-day’s hear-ing in the House Over-sight sub-com-mit-tee on trans-port-a-tion and pub-lic as-sets could also touch on what the fed-er-al gov-ern-ment can do to en-sure that af-fected res-id-ents can re-build their homes.

The bid to pass the first com-pre-hens-ive en-ergy bill in more than a dec-ade re-sumes Thursday, when House and Sen-ate lead-ers open a form-al con-fer-ence on the bill. Ne-go-ti-at-ors will have to strip veto-bait pro-vi-sions—in-clud-ing lan-guage on Cali-for-nia’s drought, en-ergy de-vel-op-ment on tri-bal lands, and re-search fund-ing—from the House-passed bill, while fa-cing a crowded and nar-row work cal-en-dar to move a fi-nal product.

The House En-ergy and Com-merce Com-mit-tee will con-tin-ue a long-term re-view of the na-tion's elec-tri-city grid with a hear-ing on the cre-ation of today's de-reg-u-lated en-ergy mar-ket. The Wed-nes-day hear-ing in the En-ergy and Power sub-com-mit-tee will be the first without chair-man Ed Whit-field, who is resign-ing at the start of the week.

HEALTH

The polit-ic-al fight over Zika fund-ing will dom-in-ate the Sen-ate's health care agenda this week, while in the House, the Ways and Means health sub-com-mit-tee will hold a hear-ing Wed-nes-day about how to in-centiv-ize bet-ter qual-ity care with-in Medi-care's hos-pit-al cov-er-age. The En-ergy and Com-merce Com-mit-tee's health care pan-el meets Thursday to dis-cuss five pub-lic-health bills, in-clud-ing meas-ures that would deal with dia-betes, con-gen-it-al heart fail-ure, and end-of-life care.

TECH-NO-LOGY

A meas-ure to im-prove call qual-ity in rur-al areas will get a hear-ing in the House on Thursday. The bill put forth by a bi-par-tis-an group of le-gis-lat-ors would hold ser-vice pro-viders to a new set of stand-ards and pro-ced-ures to ad-dress the un-re-li-able call qual-ity mem-bers say is af-fect-ing their rur-al con-stitu-ents. The hear-ing will be held by the Com-mu-nic-a-tions and Tech-no-logy sub-com-mit-tee of the En-ergy and Com-merce Com-mit-tee.

An-oth-er House hear-ing will look at the state of the com-mer-cial re-mote-sens-ing in-dustry—the space-based sur-vey-ing of earth for map-ping, crop mon-it-or-ing, weath-er fore-cast-ing, and oth-er ap-plic-a-tions. Mem-bers of the Space sub-com-mit-tee of the Sci-ence, Space, and Tech-no-logy com-mit-tee will hear from in-dustry lead-ers and aca-dem-ics.

WHITE HOUSE

Pres-id-ent Obama will spend the bulk of this week over-seas, par-ti-cip-at-ing in three sum-mits at-tract-ing more than 50 world lead-ers. He starts in Hang-zhou, China, site of the G-20 sum-mit. That meet-ing wraps up Monday with a press con-fer-ence. From there, the pres-id-ent flies to Vi-en-tiane, be-com-ing the first U.S. pres-id-ent ever to vis-it Laos. He will at-tend the U.S.-ASEAN and East Asia sum-mits, with a speech planned Wed-nes-day on the im-port-ance of the Trans-Pa-cific Part-ner-ship trade deal. On Wed-nes-day he will take a side trip to the cul-tur-al cen-ter of Lu-ang Pra-bang for a speech on un-ex-ploded ord-nance re-main-ing from the Vi-et-nam War and a town-hall meet-ing. The ASEAN and EAS sum-mits take place on Thursday back in the cap-it-al city of Vi-en-tiane. On Fri-day, he heads back to the United States.

The Day Zika Deal Died: A Cautionary Tale Of Congressional Gridlock

By Lindsay Wise

McClatchy, September 2, 2016

Democrats and Republicans were tantalizingly close to a deal on funding Zika prevention measures this summer when it all fell apart in the final 48 hours, according to interviews with a half-dozen senior congressional staffers involved in the talks.

The staffers, three Democrats and three Republicans, spoke to McClatchy anonymously because of the sensitivity of the negotiations. They described a week of intense talks thwarted, in the end, by political entrenchment and unfortunate timing.

"I thought we were really close," said one staffer who was in the room the last time negotiators from both parties met in June.

Had there been more time, more space, had the atmosphere been a little different, maybe progress could have been made.

Republican staffer involved in Zika negotiations

But outside that room, partisan rhetoric was heating up. And time was running out.

The House of Representatives had to pass a bill in time for the Senate to take it up before the July Fourth recess. After that, members of Congress would be out of Washington for the rest of the summer.

This was the last chance to boost funding to fight Zika before peak mosquito season hit and the country registered its first locally transmitted cases of the disease.

The story of how Congress missed that chance is a cautionary tale about the politics of gridlock: In an election year, it's more tempting to beat up your opponents for intransigence than make concessions you have to sell to your own base.

"The closer you get to the election, the more the whole thing gets tied up in the politics of the election coming up," said Bill Hoagland, senior vice president of the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington.

"This year in particular," he said, "the degree of polarization is very, very high."

The parties' presidential conventions were just days away, and it was becoming increasingly clear that control of the Senate was on the line in November.

Further complicating matters was a Democratic sit-in in the House of Representatives to demand votes on gun control that began shortly before noon on June 22, the same day that Republicans presented their final draft of the bill to Democrats.

"It was not a good situation for Kumbaya," as one Democratic staffer put it.

Pressure to fund a response to the Zika virus begin in February, when President Barack Obama requested $1.9 billion to boost vaccine research and ramp up testing and mosquito control efforts. Evidence was growing that Zika could cause debilitating brain damage in unborn children, as were fears of an outbreak in the continental United States.

On May 18, the House passed a bill that provided $622 million for Zika through September, only about a third as much as Obama had requested. The spending was entirely offset by budget cuts, with half of the money coming from unspent Ebola funds.

The bill also included grant funding language for states and U.S. territories that was so restrictive that even Republicans admitted it likely would prevent the use of the money for contraception, which was crucial to preventing Zika-related birth defects.

The White House threatened to veto it.

The Senate passed its own bill the next day. The bipartisan compromise worked out by Republican Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri and Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington sailed through by a vote of 89-8. That legislation would have provided $1.1 billion in emergency funds, which by definition did not have to be financed by any spending cuts.

There were no provisions about how states could spend grant money or language about lifting environmental regulations to spray for mosquitoes, even temporarily.

There's no question the sit-in didn't help. It just threw that gasoline on that fire. . . . Would it have made a difference? Who knows? But it certainly didn't help.

Bill Hoagland, senior vice president, Bipartisan Policy Center

Blunt and Murray were among 32 members of Congress from both parties who were appointed to a special "conference" committee to reconcile the House and Senate versions of the bill.

That committee met only once, on June 15.

The real work got underway afterward, at the staff level.

Staffers broke into teams to tackle different sections of the bill, hashing out details face-to-face, by phone and email. By all accounts, the negotiations were intense but made progress for nearly a week until coming to loggerheads over the final three issues: funding cuts, Planned Parenthood and pesticides.

Two senior Democratic staff members and two senior Republican staff members from the House and Senate appropriations committees led the talks in the final stages. The four have decades' worth of experience on the Hill and a tradition of working together across party lines on everything from emergency funds for Ebola to massive omnibus spending bills.

It was clear from the outset that Democrats were unwilling to compromise on funding. They wanted what they had agreed to in Blunt and Murray's bipartisan Senate bill: at least $1.1 billion in emergency funds, no offsets.

There is a definition in the law of what constitutes an emergency, Democrats said, and Zika meets the definition by any standard. Accepting cuts would create a terrible precedent, they said.

Republicans directly involved in the talks agreed that their counterparts had no leeway to negotiate the matter.

"They just didn't have license at whatever level, I don't know what level," a Republican staffer said. "It was a theological issue."

Although cuts were off the table, there was some back and forth on the language about block grants and pesticides, with each side making offers and counteroffers.

On pesticides, Republicans decided to lift the pesticide rules for 180 days, thinking the time limit might be palatable to Democrats.

Republicans also dropped the original House language on grants and ended up with an alternative they considered to be a compromise. The grants could go to health services provided by public health departments or reimbursed through Medicaid. At the last minute they added hospitals, too.

But since Planned Parenthood isn't eligible for Medicaid reimbursement in Puerto Rico, this was a no-go as far as Democrats were concerned.

From Blunt's perspective, House Republicans' insistence on including block grant language to keep funds from Planned Parenthood distracted from the more serious obstacle to an agreement: How to pay for new Zika spending?

Had that language not been included, he said, "then it would have become more clearly a fight about would you pay for an emergency" instead of a partisan battle over Planned Parenthood.

Believing they were at an impasse with

Democrats, House and Senate Republicans withdrew to confer among themselves on June 21.

That morning, Democratic lawmakers began to imply publicly that they weren't happy.

At 10:03 a.m. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid tweeted, "Republicans should not turn Zika health emergency into a partisan game by siphoning money from Ebola or Affordable Care Act."

Murray went on the floor of the Senate two hours later to warn against taking money from one public health priority to support another.

"With the health and well-being of women and babies on the line – now is not a time for nickel-and-diming," she said.

The next day, at about 11:30 a.m. on June 22, Georgia Rep. John Lewis and other Democratic House members walked onto the floor of the House and sat down. What began as a hastily planned gesture quickly escalated into a full-fledged sit-in to demonstrate Democratic frustration over the Republican refusal to hold votes on gun control.

When House Republicans turned off the chamber's cameras, Democrats switched on their cellphones to broadcast images of the sit-in via the internet and C-SPAN. Within hours, a sympathetic crowd started to gather outside the building, adding to the pressure on Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan to bring the legislature back to regular order or adjourn.

Elsewhere in the Capitol, Republican staffers presented Democrats with their final draft of the Zika bill. It would cut $750 million from Obamacare, Ebola and the Department of Health and Human Services to pay for $1.1 billion in spending on Zika.

By far the largest chunk of cash came from $543 million intended to set up Affordable Care Act exchanges in the U.S. territories. In a quirk of the budget, the money couldn't be used for the purpose originally intended and so was "dead money" that enabled both parties to avoid cutting programs they really cared about.

Democratic staffers made it clear they hadn't been posturing. They weren't empowered to talk about offsets or accept the riders as proposed.

The feeling among staffers involved in the negotiations was that the differences could be worked out eventually. But time was not on their side.

Although there were two more working days on the calendar that week, Republicans were eager to end the sit-in that had roiled the House floor that day.

And they had to get a bill to the Senate with enough time for that chamber vote before the summer recess or risk getting blamed for missing the window to act.

Republicans filed the bill at 10:04 p.m. on June 22. It had none of the customary Democratic signatures that characterize a bipartisan agreement.

Ryan brought the bill to a vote at 3:11 the next morning, amid deafening shouts of "shame" and boos from Democratic protesters. It passed on a party-line vote as Democrats sang "We Shall Overcome" and waved papers with the names of gun victims on them.

Ryan then adjourned the House until July 5, effectively ending the sit-in.

Outraged Senate Democrats vowed to block the bill.

They did so before the summer recess and are expected to do so again Tuesday, when Congress returns to Capitol Hill.

Editorial: Zika Spread Should Spur Congress To Act

Palm Beach (FL) Post, September 3, 2016

After a seven-week hiatus, Congress returns to Washington on Tuesday to a list of must-do legislation. One item that should be at the top of the list: a vote to provide crucial emergency funding to fight the spread of the Zika virus.

The time for partisan excuses and political dysfunction is long past. The virus, which can cause serious birth defects, continues to spread while money dedicated to preventing it dwindles.

"Basically, we're out of money," Tom Frieden, who heads the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said last week. "… and we need Congress to act to allow us to respond effectively."

Frieden said of the $222 million that the CDC was allocated for domestic Zika response this year, about $200 million has been committed. "The rest will be gone by the end of September."

By the way, we're in the peak of mosquito season — which typically lasts through the end of October in the United States. As reports of virus infections broaden, the CDC "might not have the resources" to respond and send teams to support state and local officials, Frieden said.

How pathetic has been Congress' response to this burgeoning public health threat? When the lawmakers folded their tents on July 15, the total number of Zika infections in Florida — ground zero for the virus in the U.S. — was 276, including 43 pregnant women. None local.

As of Thursday, Florida had 49 locally transmitted cases, 576 travel-related cases and 80 infections involving pregnant women, according to the state Department of Health website.

Palm Beach County now has three locally acquired cases of Zika virus. And 33 cases of travel-related Zika.

That's as many non-travel-related Zika cases as the entire island of Cuba. Officials there also say they've diagnosed just 30 people with cases of the virus they got outside the island. That's because they've taken what The AP calls "a militarized nationwide campaign of intensive mosquito spraying, monitoring and quarantine."

Even casting a suspicious eye toward the Cuba figures does not diminish the plain good sense of our making a similar full-fledged attack. Especially after the state Department of Agriculture announced Thursday that it had detected Zika in three mosquito samples from an area of Miami Beach where the virus has been transmitted. Those were the first mosquitoes that have tested positive for the virus in Florida.

The news prompted Gov. Rick Scott to direct state health officials to "aggressively expand testing and outreach efforts in the areas around the traps that caught the positive mosquitoes." This aggressive expansion will take money. More than the $26.2 million that Scott has earmarked for the fight. And obviously, more than the CDC and U.S. Department of Health Human Services have on hand.

Zika is an economic, as well as health care, threat to Florida. So we were heartened to see all 27 members of the Florida congressional delegation put their names on a letter to Frieden last month demanding a bigger share of $16 million in emergency money set aside by the agency.

Scott has taken an unhelpfully partisan approach by steadily blaming the Obama administration for not responding swiftly enough to the growing threat. This, despite the fact that the White House recommended $1.9 billion to fight the virus in February.

The governor, when he travels to Washington this week, needs to direct his ire toward his party brethren in the Republican-led Congress who, in a silly game of chicken, refused to support the $1.9 billion allocation and then failed to reach agreement on a $1.1 billion plan before heading home for summer recess.

Scott should tell them to stop playing politics with the lives of Floridians and pass a straightforward Zika bill that, this time, isn't laden with "poison pills" that, for example, punish Planned Parenthood and honor the Confederate flag.

On Aug. 3, Scott said: "We will continue to do everything possible to keep our residents and visitors safe."

We're holding you to that, governor.

As of Thursday, Florida had 49 locally transmitted cases, 576 travel-related cases and 80 infections involving pregnant women.

Our Views: We Are All In The Front Line In Mosquito War

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 2, 2016

Even if you are among those fortunate enough to avoid drastic home repairs in the wake of last month's flooding, there is still work for you to do: mosquito prevention.

The record-breaking deluge of August is only going to worsen the chronic problem of mosquitoes in southern Louisiana. God forbid that there are more heavy rains or a tropical storm, but even regular showers will continue to collect in basins of all types, from ponds to flower pots to old tires.

These are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and in recent years, Louisiana has been challenged by infections from the West Nile virus. The disease can lead to deadly consequences for infants and the elderly, or others with compromised immune systems.

The potential for Zika to come to Louisiana is also there, although there are no reports of mosquito-borne cases.

Rebecca Christofferson, an assistant professor at the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine, has been awarded a research grant provided by the National Institutes of Health for $1.2 million to study the mosquito-borne viruses, Zika and chikungunya. Both viruses have recently emerged in the Western Hemisphere.

That's a big grant, and one that shows how valuable to everyday life is the intellectual talent in Louisiana's universities. But if the heavy brain work must be done by specialists, Christofferson recently told the LSU Science blog that every resident can help prevent the spread of these potentially lethal diseases.

"Flood waters flush out mosquito larva that have already been there but leave behind lots of standing water that is prime real estate for mosquito breeding. People cleaning up can help mitigate this by getting rid of any sources of standing water they see in or around their homes," Christofferson said. "So to everyone: Wear a mosquito repellent with DEET. The EPA has a website that will match you with the appropriate repellent. Re-apply as you sweat and dump out standing water around your homes."

We are fortunate that Zika has not found its way here yet, but Louisiana has seen more than a dozen cases of West Nile this year. Standing water is where the pests proliferate.

As Christofferson advises, mosquito repellent is vital during a long Labor Day weekend when many people are out and about. But in yards and ditches, flower pots or other containers, the battle lines against infection are within reach of ordinary citizens.

Tending to the yard and eliminating mosquito breeding grounds — indeed, factories for their production — is a basic public health battle that can be done by everyone.

Zika Virus Is Spreading And Remains Global Emergency, According To The WHO

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, September 2, 2016

The World Health Organization said Friday that the growing spread of Zika around the world and basic gaps in knowledge about the virus's devastating complications in babies continue to make Zika a global health emergency.

After convening its expert committee this week, the U.N. health experts said that more research needs to be focused on what other factors beside the mosquito-borne virus could be causing severe birth defects, such as microcephaly.

One of the most fundamental questions in this current epidemic is why countries like Brazil, the epicenter of the current epidemic, have reported nearly 2,000 cases of microcephaly and other brain abnormalities, while countries like Colombia have reported fewer than three dozen cases.

Scientists need to examine possible factors that could affect Zika's damage, including genetic factors, environmental contaminants, and other co-infections, said David Heymann, the committee's chair and an infectious disease professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

"A whole range of co-factors must be eliminated to say, with certainty" that the only culprit is the Zika virus, he said.

Peter Salama, WHO's executive director for outbreaks and health emergencies, said researchers need to understand whether the time lag between when an outbreak occurs to when birth defects show up nine months later could account for country-by-country differences, or "is it truly something to do with cofactors."

Meanwhile, the virus continues to infect new countries, including most recently Singapore, which reported 189 confirmed cases Friday.

"An extraordinary event is becoming, unfortunately, an ordinary event," Heymann said.

WHO officials also said Brazil reported no confirmed cases of Zika following the Rio de Janeiro Olympics. That data is based on information collected by authorities on people who sought treatment at health facilities who were athletes or spectators.

Most people with Zika don't have symptoms, but Salama said enhanced surveillance by WHO of the Olympic delegations shows no large-scale transmission of Zika, confirming the earlier assessments of WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that the Olympics posed no significant additional risk of spreading Zika.

A study published Thursday identified eight countries in Asia and Africa that researchers say are at the greatest risk of Zika virus transmission.

The countries — India, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Nigeria, Vietnam, Pakistan and Bangladesh — all have hot and humid climate conditions; the type of mosquitoes that primarily spread the virus; a high volume of travelers returning from Zika-affected areas in the Americas; and large, dense populations. And several have limited health-care resources.

With the geographic expansion of Zika, one of the most urgent questions is whether the virus will cause the same kind of brain damage and other complications to babies in Asia and Africa.

A big unknown is the extent to which communities in Asia and Africa might have immunity to Zika, because the virus has sporadically been reported on both continents. The virus occurs in two different strains, the Asian strain and the African strain. It's unclear whether infection with one strain will protect people with the strain now circulating in the Americas, which is the Asian strain.

Zika was first identified in Uganda in 1947 in a monkey. But in Africa, "it's not even known how large outbreaks have been in the past in humans," Heymann said. "They've not come on the radar screen. They've never been reported in outbreaks."

Singapore authorities are still determining which strain of the Zika virus is causing its outbreak.

In Guinea Bissau in West Africa, the Zika virus reported in four cases suggests it is the African strain, which has not previously been associated with birth defects. Guinea Bissau also had detected five cases of microcephaly before its outbreak of Zika.

"Is that reporting bias or were they epidemiologically connected?" said Salama, of the WHO. "We don't know the answer."

Previous infections with Dengue, a related virus that is widespread in Brazil, may also amplify the damage from Zika, according to lab studies.

Olympics Had No Zika Cases, WHO Says

By Peter Sullivan

The Hill, September 2, 2016

The World Health Organization (WHO) said Friday that there have not been any confirmed cases of Zika among people who attended the Olympics.

The announcement comes despite concerns preceding the games that the Olympics could provide a dangerous opportunity for the virus to spread.

The WHO said the Emergency Committee on Zika "congratulated Brazil on their successful application of appropriate public health measures during the Olympic Games."

"To date, there have been no reports of confirmed cases of Zika virus among people who attended the Games, both during the games and since their return," the statement continued.

International health authorities had said that the Olympics would not be a danger for furthering spread of the virus.

A group of 150 health experts had called on the Olympics to be postponed or moved because of Zika concerns.

Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said in May that "there is no public health reason to cancel or delay the Olympics."

He said travel to the Olympics would make up "less than 1 percent" of all travel to South American countries affected by the Zika virus.

Zika Count Rises To 215 In Singapore

By Maggie Fox

NBC News, September 4, 2016

Singapore reported another big batch of Zika virus cases Sunday, bringing its total count in just a week to 215, and World Health Organization officials said the spread of the virus definitely still constitutes a global health emergency.

Zika's apparent quick spread out of Latin America and in Asia and Africa has WHO officials worried. They have no idea if the virus will spread as explosively as it has in the Americas, and they cannot predict if it will cause a fresh wave of birth defects and side-effects such as the paralyzing Guillain-Barré syndrome.

Miami-Dade mosquito control worker Carlos Vargas looks for the Aedes aegypti mosquito larvae at a home in Miami, Florida, on June 8. Rhona Wise / AFP – Getty Images

They don't even know if they can keep track of it if it spreads into countries with poor healthcare systems and little facility to test people for the virus.

"There's still an urgent need to continue global research and this still does remain an emergency of international concern," said Dr. David Heymann, chairman of WHO's emergency committee. "Zika is beginning to spread, continuing to cause outbreaks in many countries around the world."

"This extraordinary event is rapidly becoming, unfortunately, an ordinary event. And Zika is beginning to spread, continuing to cause outbreaks in many countries around the world," Heymann told reporters.

Tiny Singapore — the city-state is only about two-thirds the size of Washington, D.C. — only first saw Zika a week ago. It's moved quickly to try to contain local spread of the virus, carried by the same mosquitoes that spread dengue virus. It has also quickly reported every case it finds to WHO.

"The way the government of Singapore has handled the outbreak really represents a role model," said Dr. Peter Salama, executive director of WHO's Health Emergency Program.

It's not entirely certain that the strain is the same one that swept across Latin America, causing at least two outbreaks in south Florida, Salam added. Singapore's Ministry of Health said genetic sequencing had shown the virus spreading there was of Asian lineage and that it was not from South America. But the South American strain was also shown to have originated in Asia and not directly from Africa, so it was not clear precisely what the ministry meant.

Experts are worried because they cannot predict what Zika will do. The virus was first identified back in 1947 and seemed relatively innocuous. When it did infect people, which appeared to be rarely, it didn't even cause symptoms in most of them and appeared to cause, at worst, a rash, muscle aches and fever.

But when it showed up in Brazil, authorities immediately noticed a giant increase in cases of microcephaly, a severe birth defect defined by a small head. It's caused when the virus attacks the brain cells in a developing fetus, killing them off and stunting the growth of the skull.

Now Zika has been shown to cause a range of other, sometimes less-visible birth defects. There's no doubt it's the virus causing them — it's been found in the damaged brain tissue of miscarried babies and lab experiments have shown that the virus zeros in on immature brain cells.

It's also causing a rare paralyzing side effect seen with other infections called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

The question no one can answer is whether all this is new. "A year ago, there wasn't a test for Zika," says U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Tom Frieden. Zika is closely related to dengue and chikungunya and tests mix them up.

There had not been a good test that could tell if someone was infected with Zika in the past, and no one can say how many people in Asia or Africa have been infected with Zika previously — or whether they will be immune if it comes around again. There are two known strains of Zika: One that originated in Africa, and the one that spread from Asia to Latin America.

"This is a new manifestation of an old disease," Salama said. "This is a new manifestation of an old disease."

Added to all that, Zika is difficult to prevent. Most people don't show obvious symptoms when they are infected, making it hard to track. They can unknowingly spread it through sex, or infect mosquitoes that can then bite someone else.

The Aedes mosquitoes that spread Zika are very hard to kill, and the steady march of the virus illustrates just how easily travelers can carry it from one country to another.

"Even if they do not feel sick, travelers returning to the United States from Singapore should take steps to prevent mosquito bites for three weeks so that they do not spread Zika to uninfected mosquitoes," the CDC advises.

The same advice goes for any country or territory with active Zika outbreaks — including parts of Miami.

"Travelers returning from Singapore who have a pregnant partner should either use condoms or not have sex for the rest of the pregnancy," the CDC adds.

"People who have traveled to Singapore should use condoms for at least eight weeks after travel to protect their sex partners. Men who have Zika symptoms or are diagnosed with Zika should use condoms for at least six months after symptoms start; women with symptoms should use condoms for at least eight weeks after symptoms start."

People in Zika zones should use mosquito repellent, cover up and stay inside behind screens as possible, the CDC and WHO both advise. And women who might become pregnant need full access to birth control, they both added.

Singapore Should Brace For Long-term Battle With Zika: Experts

By Aradhana Aravindan And Marius Zaharia

Reuters, September 2, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Zika Researchers Work To Crack Virus's Genetic Secrets

By Daniela Hernandez

Wall Street Journal, September 5, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Study Finds Rumors Hurting Zika Efforts

By Maggie Angst

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, September 4, 2016

The Zika virus is not spreading from vaccines or chemicals. It's not a part of some big scheme by the U.S. Congress or pharmaceutical companies. Yet, rumors and conspiracy theories like these fill the screens of Facebook users.

Medical researchers are raising concerns that this public health misinformation could impede efforts to limit the spread of the virus.

Megha Sharma, a senior pediatrics fellow in neonatal-perinatal medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin, led a team analyzing Facebook as a social media health information platform, specifically for the Zika disease pandemic.

Sharma, an expecting mother, spends most of her days treating infants with diseases and counseling expecting mothers.

"In my practice, I've seen many mothers misinformed about a lot of things— especially the Zika virus," Sharma said. "A lot of false beliefs are finding their ways into the minds of patients."

In the last several years, Facebook has become a news powerhouse, and it has the potential to play a decisive role in times of public health crises.

Roughly two-thirds of U.S. adults use Facebook, and 30% of the general population obtains news from the website, according to Pew Research Center.Misleading posts

Sharma's study consisted of searching Facebook using the keywords "Zika virus" for posts and videos in the past month containing public health information about the disease.

The top 200 posts were selected for analysis by two independent physician reviewers and then classified as relevant or misleading. The classification was based on the quality of scientific information, emphasis on prevention and citations of credible sources.

One of the most popular misleading posts Sharma found was a video called "10 reasons why Zika virus fear is another fraudulent medical hoax and vaccine industry funding scam." The video has more than 690,000 views, 35,000 shares and 700 supportive comments on Facebook.

It claims that the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "fabricated the science linking Zika to microcephaly," that Congress used Zika to "remove bans on other toxic pesticide chemicals" and that microcephaly cases in Brazil "were caused by larvicide chemicals, not by Zika."

Microcephaly means that an infant is born with a small head, which is the biggest symptom of Zika. This condition causes brain malformations that can lead to long-term cognitive issues.

Sharma said Facebook posts claim larvicidal chemicals created by multinational conglomerates are causing birth defects like microcephaly rather than the virus itself. This claim was also shared on social media in an article from The Wall Street Journal, which emphasized that mosquito larvicide might be responsible for the birth defect rather than Zika. This claim is an unfounded rumor, according to Sharma.

Yet, the Brazilian government shut down a larvicidal factory in February because of this conspiracy, Sharma said.

"This is undermining the efforts to control disease," Sharma said.

During her time as a pediatrician, Sharma frequently saw a tendency for patients to blame major public health issues on vaccines.

"As someone who has taken care of babies for a while, I know that vaccines have no role in the risk of autism, the risk of behavior problems, and the risk of the Zika virus," Sharma said.

On the other hand, the World Health Organization, one of the most prominent organizations for health information dissemination, received only about 43,000 views for its video briefing on the facts about Zika.

Sharma concluded that posts with credible information about Zika are not as popular or widely viewed as misinformation and conspiracy theories.

Sharma hopes her research will encourage public health authorities to monitor the information on Facebook.

Two physicians at Tulane University School of Medicine, Kapil Yadav and Keith Ferdinand, were co-authors on the study with Sharma. The team's research study has been accepted for publication in the American Journal of Infection Control and should be available online in about a month.

"It's most important during a time of public health crisis or epidemics that the right information gets through, so patients and people are aware of the effects and the preventative measures that need to be taken," Yadav said.

The misleading information leads expecting moms to disregard the true measures for limiting Zika, such as avoiding travel to certain areas and watching for certain symptoms, Sharma said. That contributes to the spread of ZIka, according to Sharma.

"Every single day that I go to the hospital, I have a fear that this (Zika) is something we will see in a patient in Wisconsin," Sharma said. "But this misinformation spreads farther and is more contagious than the disease itself."

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Officials: Automated System Caused False Evacuation Alert For Hermine

By David Schwartz

Newsday (NY), September 5, 2016

A countywide evacuation order that crawled ominously — and falsely — across Suffolk television screens Saturday night as Tropical Storm Hermine approached was caused by the federal alert system that automatically generated a summary of the county's warning but cut off the longer message, federal and county officials said Monday.

A spokeswoman for the Federal Emergency Management Agency said its officials are investigating why the message, sent by Suffolk County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services, was shortened. County officials said they wouldn't use the Emergency Alert System again until they had answers.

Sent from county emergency offices in the basement of a county building in Yaphank, the message that was supposed to appear was for a voluntary evacuation of Fire Island. Instead, what showed up on television screens at 7:40 p.m. on Saturday night read, "Civil Authorities have issued an Evacuation Immediate for the following New York counties: Suffolk. Effective until September 04-07:10 AM EDT. This is an emergency message from." It ended there.

The partial message sparked a flood of 911 calls from concerned residents and agencies, said Greg Miniutti, chief of communication for the Department of Suffolk Fire and Rescue.

"It was controlled chaos," Miniutti said. "The phone was ringing off the hook."

While Bellone's team took to Facebook to correct the alert and the police sent their own messages that county residents didn't need to leave, Miniutti and his team scrambled. They couldn't cancel the message. But they tried to send another.

They guessed a shorter version might go through, rather than the 600-character advisory originally sent. And it did.

About 10 to 15 minutes after the first message, the original warning reappeared with the new message — "UPDATED Message — Voluntary evacuation of Fire Island ONLY by 1 pm Saturday 9/4/16" — tacked onto the end.

Miniutti said the dispatch supervisor who sends the alert typed in the message correctly through the county's Code Red system, which it buys through a vendor to interact with the federal systems, including the Emergency Alert System.

FEMA spokeswoman Lauren Lefebvre said the original message that appeared on television is generated automatically by the computer system. The agency is investigating why the rest of the county's message wasn't broadcast.

"We've formally asked New York State Emergency Management to find out what happened," Suffolk Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services Commissioner Joseph Williams said. "Not to point fingers, but to find out what happened. We want to make sure what happened doesn't happen again."

The county will continue to use other aspects of the federal notification system, which allows it to send messages in other ways, including text messages to mobile phones near specific cell towers — as it did on Saturday night when the voluntary evacuation of Fire Island was enacted.

Lefebvre said she did not know of another instance when an abbreviated automated alert was sent in error. She said the public should continue to pay attention to local officials, newscasts and emergency alerts.

"It's peak hurricane season. Alerts will go out if needed and are critical and contain lifesaving messaging," she said.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

FEMA: September Is Nat'l Preparedness Month

By Alex AuBuchon

Alabama Public Radio, September 5, 2016

September is National Preparedness Month, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency is urging Alabamians to be prepared for disasters.

FEMA is partnering with the Ad Council to encourage people to take time to develop a plan in the event of a disaster. The agency says families should think about things like supplies to have on hand, locations of local shelters and where to go in the event of an emergency.

Rafael Lemaitre is the director of public affairs for FEMA. He says flooding is the most common and costly disaster the agency encounters, which means having flood insurance is crucial.

"This is not something that is covered under standard homeowner insurance policies, but it's important that folks just take time to protect themselves, because if something were to happen, FEMA assistance isn't designed to make you whole. Insurance, however, can replace what you lose."

Lemaitre also encourages people to download FEMA's app, with readiness checklists and built-in alerts from the National Weather Service. The app is free on Apple's App Store and Google Play.

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

No stories for this edition

FEMA CORPS

No stories for this edition

PRIVATE SECTOR

No stories for this edition

CITIZEN CORPS

No stories for this edition

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Our Views: Labor Day Closes Summer Of Sadness In South Louisiana, Hopefully Brings A Page Turn

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 4, 2016

The arrival of Labor Day brings the unofficial end of summer, concluding a season in the life of Louisiana that no one could have envisioned when schools closed for the vacation break last May.

This has been a summer of sadness in south Louisiana, the timing made all the more ironic because summer, of all the seasons on the calendar, is supposed to be the most carefree time of the year.

Instead, cares crowded the summer of 2016 like hordes of locusts in some biblical plague. The July 5 shooting of a black man during a struggle with police at a Baton Rouge convenience store prompted protests in Louisiana and across the country. The July 17 shooting of six Baton Rouge law enforcement officers by a gunman bent on revenge left three lawmen dead, bringing even more international attention to an already wounded city. Then came last month's historic flooding in south Louisiana, a tragedy that displaced thousands of homeowners and killed 13 people.

Although Labor Day is typically devoted to backyard barbecues and time off the clock, this won't be a day of rest for many south Louisiana residents. They'll be working hard to clean out and repair flood-damaged homes, a drudgery others confronted after hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Labor Day began as a celebration of the American capacity for hard work, a reality made evident here in the aftermath of the August flood. Thousands of homeowners, taking their destinies in their own hands, are gutting their homes and reclaiming their lives, affirming the basic resilience of Louisiana's people.

Louisiana is known around the world as a place to have a good time, a reputation we embrace. But when crisis calls, our people work harder than anyone to fix what is broken, to heal what is hurting, to restore what's been lost. The labor of recovery that so many undertake this Labor Day is a hard job, but it's a labor of love for a state that will rebound, better than ever.

With Labor Day, a page turns. We hope the holiday signals a slow return to routine after an anguished summer. May we once again enjoy cooler temperatures, football, calmer skies. And may more of us be settled in our own homes again – maybe by Halloween.

Our Views: A Bipartisan Stand On Louisiana Recovery

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 4, 2016

In a deeply partisan presidential campaign season, a natural disaster has reminded Louisiana residents that in times of crisis, petty party politics should have no place in relief and recovery.

Shortly after the flood, Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, asked Republican Lt. Gov. Bill Nungesser to help local officials in flooded areas navigate the federal bureaucracy for aid. As president of Plaquemines Parish, Nungesser gained lots of experience in disaster management, leading the parish through five hurricanes and the BP oil spill. Edwards' willingness to cross party lines and enlist Nungesser in the recovery is a healthy sign that when trouble calls, the state's leaders can be grown-ups.

The governor's meeting with Louisiana's congressional delegation to chart the state's recovery needs was another welcome development. The delegation includes outgoing Republican U.S. Sen. David Vitter, Edwards' rival in the governor's race last fall, as well as other members of the GOP who have disagreed with the governor on basic matters of public policy.

But the issue of disaster assistance for Louisiana should inspire bipartisan unity, and we hope the apparent cooperation among members of the delegation and the governor proves durable. "The meeting was very productive, and as we continue to get a clearer picture of the damage sustained in this historic flood, we will continue to fight together for a stronger Louisiana," Edwards said of his session with the delegation.

The delegation has lost seniority in recent years — the coin of the realm in congressional influence — so working together will be especially important in getting Louisiana the recovery resources it needs.

We urge the state's senators and congressmen to work with the governor to develop a coherent request for the extra federal help only Congress can approve.

The basic ingredients of such an aid package should include housing assistance for displaced residents and funding for long-delayed flood control projects for the region.

National attention for the flood's aftermath is already fading. Given the narrowly closing window of opportunity to gain congressional support for Louisiana's recovery, the state's leaders must act quickly and decisively to press Louisiana's case.

They can boost their chances of success — and

Louisiana's prospects for recovery — by acting together, Republicans and Democrats united.

Our Views: It's Not Enough To Finish The Comite Canal

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 2, 2016

If there's a convenient scapegoat for the flooding of recent weeks, it is the Amite River Basin Commission, principally charged with building the Comite River diversion canal that might have mitigated some of the damages from floods in the Amite basin.

This week, the commission met for the first time since the floods, mostly to mostly to sign off on some emergency contracts.

The diversion canal is not the only project of the 13-member commission, a board with represenatives from the six parishes in the Amite basin. But in light of disaster, there is a lot of focus on failure to complete the canal, which has faced challenges for years: a lack of state and federal funding even as taxpayers in four parishes have been chipping in property taxes since 2001; what commissioners say is a low estimate of the benefits of the project from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; debates over property "takings" for the canal – a politically controversial matter in conservative suburbs.

What cannot be denied, though, is the evidence that the lack of a diversion canal is not a plausible scapegoat for all of last month's flooding.

State Climatologist Barry Keim told the Press Club of Baton Rouge this week of the almost unbelievable readings of rainfall from the storm, including the amazing 33 inches-plus at Watson in Livingston Parish.

At the Amite commission meeting, Executive Director Dietmar Rietschier noted that the dimensions of the disaster were such that no single project could have saved all those engulfed by flood waters.

Indeed, many of the neighborhoods damaged in East Baton Rouge Parish suffered from flash floods because of past neglect of more basic drainage projects that were smaller than the Amite canal but certainly expensive.

The cost of the diversion canal remains an issue, but as Rietschier said, the floods may prod the Corps and Congress into a crash program to complete the project.

It would be after the fact, that's true. But if the canal can perform as projected, future floods that are less severe can be mitigated and damage sharply reduced downstream of the Comite project.

We encourage policy makers at the state, federal and local level not to regard the Comite canal as a magic bullet. Even if completed, it won't make up for a long-term failure to invest in more drainage projects throughout our generally low-lying area.

These aren't the sexiest public works projects in the world, and and they're costly – but far less costly than the flooding pain that so many of our families are enduring now.

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

No stories for this edition

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(FIRST EDITION – 5:30 AM EDT)

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

ABC: Iowa Flooding. ABC World News (9/25, story 8, 1:30, Llamas, 14.63M) reported, "Now to the flood emergency in Iowa. Rivers rising, forcing evacuations in Cedar Rapids. And families facing some of the worst flooding in years. The danger expected to grow worse during the week. Here's Rob Marciano in the flood zone." ABC (**Marciano**) added, "Tonight, the major flooding disaster in Iowa is only getting worse. Up to seven feet of water submerging homes. Entire neighborhoods swamped by rivers. The only way in or out, by boat." **Unidentified speaker**: "We built what we thought was good enough, but it wasn't. We'll rebuild back." **Marciano**: "This baby deer getting caught in the water surge, a good Samaritan rushing to rescue it from the dangerous currents. In cedar rapids, they're scrambling to fill thousands of sandbags to protect against the growing threat. Evacuations begin tonight as residents brace for one of the worst floods in the city's history." **Ron Corbett**, Cedar Rapids Mayor: "We really need to push hard these next days to be fully prepared for that crest." **Marciano**: "The water coming up to street level, which is why they built these temporary barriers. Forecasts have the crest at 23 feet. A long duration event they haven't seen since 2008. Tom?"

CBS: California-Wildfire Airdrop Plane. The CBS Evening News (9/24, story 7, 1:50, Ninan, 11.17M) reported, "At least five large wildfires are burning in California, and the worst part of the fire season is actually just beginning. With red flag warnings posted across the state, tonight Chris Martinez takes us aboard California's top weapon for battling its biggest fires." CBS (Martinez) added, "Firefighters battling California's largest wildfires call this their 'big gun.'" R.K. Smithley, pilot: "When you're up there trying to save lives and property, it's pretty intense." Martinez: "R.K. Smithley is the pilot of a DC-10 passenger aircraft that's been transformed into a powerful weapon against flames." Smithley: "Somebody that was very, very smart — way smarter than me — decided, 'Let's put three tanks on a DC-10.'" Martinez: "Together, those tanks carry more than 11,000 gallons of fire retardant, about nine times more than any other plane in the fleet. All three tanks can be rapidly refilled." Smithley: "Twelve to 15 minutes, these babies are full and we're going." Martinez: "What makes this plane unique isn't just its payload but also how it's flown, making fighter-style turns just 250 feet above the ground. You don't expect that of an aircraft like this." Smithley: "No. We fly this in some amazingly tight spaces." Martinez: "Spaces firefighters often can't reach from the ground. Without that air support…" Unidentified Speaker: "We'd see a lot bigger fires. We'd see a lot more rapid growth. We'd see fires lasting longer, consuming more ground resources." Martinez: "Smithley says he knows how critical his job is." Smithley: "People on the ground are relying on us doing it right. That's what it's about, right there." Martinez: "That thought is top of mind, he says, every time he makes a drop. Chris Martinez, CBS News, Sacramento."

ABC: Severe Weather-Storms. ABC World News Tonight (9/23, story 4, 0:50, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "We are tracking a severe storm threat as we begin this weekend, tonight from Texas all the way north. Two confirmed EF1 tornadoes now in Utah, this one in Washington Terrace. Heavy rain in the Midwest, severe flooding in Greene, Iowa. The system is moving east at this hour. So let's get right to meteorologist Rob Marciano, tracking it all. Rob?" ABC (Marciano) added, "Hi, David. That storm that spawned the tornadoes in Utah, as you mentioned, is on the move. We've got severe thunderstorm watches posted for eastern Wyoming, for Nebraska, South Dakota. By tomorrow, strong storms expected from Minnesota all the way into Texas. And for California, our first big Santa Ana wind event. It's going to peak on Sunday, hot, dry winds over 50 miles per hour, fire watch posted there. And here in the East, the summerlike heat is over, a fall cool finally coming this weekend. David?" Muir: "All right, Rob Marciano with us on a Friday. Rob, thank you."

NBC: Severe Weather-Storms. NBC Nightly News (9/23, story 4, 1:35, Guthrie, 16.61M) reported, "States of emergency are in effect tonight in parts of the Midwest, where 48 hours of relentless rain triggered deadly floods. The National Guard is now being called in to help, while out west, tornadoes have struck hard. We get details now from NBC's Gadi Schwartz." NBC (Schwartz) added, "Across the country, weather systems so powerful that rain-heavy wind gusts swept sideways. In Utah." Unidentified Speaker: "Look at that!" Schwartz: "Dark storm clouds brought out onlookers with cameras." Unidentified Speaker: "There goes the transformer." Unidentified Speaker: "Oh, my gosh!" Schwartz: "A small twister damages homes. This one knocked clean off its foundation and cracking its roof in half. While men in chest-high waters built up walls with sandbags. In the Midwest, monster rain totals. Parts of Wisconsin and Iowa seeing over a half-a-foot of rain in 48 hours. And in Minnesota, a whopping 13 inches in some areas. Rivers overflowing into towns across those states. A dock with a boat swept into a dam. A train derailment spilling diesel fuel into the Mississippi. The damaging flood waters killing at least two men in Wisconsin. And the death toll from these storms may have been even higher if not for quick-acting Minneapolis police officers." Unidentified Speaker: "Yeah, we're going to try to yank him up." Schwartz: "Their body cameras capturing a daring nighttime rescue of a man being swept away in a flood channel." Unidentified Speaker: "My partner was hanging on to the back of my belt so I wouldn't fall over the edge." Schwartz: "A reminder of the dangers of torrential downpours that can threaten lives with each storm." Unidentified Speaker: "There it goes." Schwartz: "Gadi Schwartz, NBC News."

State Of Emergency Declared For Wright County

By Kacey Ginn

Wright County (IA) Monitor, September 25, 2016

In a special meeting this morning, the board of Supervisors unanimously voted to declare a state of emergency for Wright County due to a high accumulation of rainfall and flooded rural roads.

So far, flooding has been found to be particularly affecting the northern half of the county, prompting Belmond-Klemme Community Schools to dismiss class at 11:30 a.m. Heavy rainfall in Hancock County overnight is expected to continue affecting Wright County as the water flows downstream.

"We've got several areas of rural roads that are under water," said Jim Lester, County Emergency Management Coordinator. Board Chairman Stan Watne also wanted to urge drivers to be cautious.

Roads superintendent Chase Pruismann reported that they've closed 50 roads so far, with 100 more flagged and coned. Problem areas include the grove southeast of Belmond and various roads near the Iowa and Boone Rivers in Boone, Belmond, and Pleasant townships.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency also released a statement today urging Iowans to be prepared for flooding. "Additional rainfall, even in smaller amounts, when combined with an already saturated ground, could quickly lead to hazardous conditions," said FEMA Region VII Administrator Beth Freeman. "It's critical that Iowans prepare now to do what's needed to be safe in the wake of current and near-term flooding, as well as other severe weather."

The emergency declaration will allow state assistance and for county emergency funds to be used for road repair and barricading, if needed.

24 Tips From FEMA That Will Prepare You For Flooding

Des Moines (IA) Register, September 23, 2016

With active flooding underway in parts of Iowa and the threat of more to come, FEMA is urging Iowans to be ready to take life-saving actions on short notice.

"Additional rainfall, even in smaller amounts, when combined with an already saturated ground, could quickly lead to hazardous conditions," said FEMA Region VII Administrator Beth Freeman. "It's critical that Iowans prepare now to do what's needed to be safe in the wake of current and near-term flooding, as well as other severe weather."

Haylie Wasem, 18, (in gray) was evacuated from her home on the southeast side of Waverly as floodwaters continue to rise through northern Iowa. Neighbor Elizabeth Bluhm, 19, said floodwaters are about two feet from her home.

FEMA's Region VII office in Kansas City, Missouri has been in regular contact with emergency management officials in Iowa as both agencies actively monitor severe weather and flooding in many parts of the state.

"This flooding is a serious situation for many Iowans," Freeman added. "We can't stress enough how important it is for citizens to stay informed of ever-changing conditions, to follow official emergency instructions, to have an emergency plan for all members of the family, including pets, and to be ready to quickly put that plan into action."

Flooding is not unfamiliar to many Iowans but it helps to refresh on the immediate steps to stay safe:

Be Informed and Know the Danger:

Keep track of severe weather and flood forecasts, and take them seriously. To do that:

Plan for the Worst:

Severe weather can strike suddenly so have a plan to stay safe and take life-saving action if needed. The plan should include:

For more information on creating an emergency plan, visit Ready or www.beready.iowa.gov.

Be Ready:

Gather essential items in one place if evacuation is needed. Those should include:

Wallets, purses, car/house keys, eyeglasses, cash, credit cards;

Medicine and basic first-aid supplies;

Daily living supplies for infants/young children, family members who are elderly or have access and functional needs, and pets;

Important information such as numbers for bank accounts, insurance policies (health, auto and property) and credit cards;

Important phone numbers of relatives, employers, schools and medical professionals such as pharmacies, physicians and veterinarians;

Chargers for mobile devices;

One or more changes of clothes. Include long pants, socks, boots and/or sturdy shoes;

Bottled water and high-protein, non-perishable food such as a peanut butter, tuna and nuts.

Talk through the emergency plan with all family members so that everyone knows what to do.

If there is time, consider making a more complete emergency supply kit for homes and cars. To learn how, visit Ready or Ready Iowa.

FEMA Won't Change Maps After Floods; Some Worry Of Consequences

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 24, 2016

Daniel Champton didn't buy flood insurance for his home in the Ascension Parish town of Galvez. Based on federal flood maps, he wasn't required to.

In August, he became one of the tens of thousands of south Louisianians living outside of federally designated high-risk flood zones whose houses took water.

Yet Federal Emergency Management Agency officials — tasked with not only responding to those victimized by floods but also with helping prevent the damage to begin with — have made it clear over the past month they won't revisit the accuracy of those maps.

Even more recently, officials doubled down on that promise, saying that not only would the flood maps stay the same, the widespread devastation won't prompt increases in flood insurance premiums. The reason is simple, FEMA officials have said: The rain that brought on the flood was so unprecedented it won't force a re-examination.

Leaders in the hard-hit Baton Rouge area have welcomed FEMA's assurances as needed continuity for their constituents.

But some researchers and critics of the flood-map process are raising questions about that approach, saying the scale of the flooding is actually a reason to take another look at the maps. They argue that inspection should not only reflect on the conclusions the maps come to but dig deep into the way they are developed and how construction throughout the region over the past couple of decades has altered drainage.

Craig Colten, an LSU historical geography professor, urges revising the maps. He noted the August flood was Louisiana's second major flood caused by rain in 2016. Severe rain in March brought high water to Livingston and Tangipahoa parishes and elsewhere. But he said he understands why people might be glad to hear FEMA doesn't plan to change the maps, which could lead to higher insurance costs or even pricey elevation of homes.

"I'm always sympathetic. If my house was out there and been flooded, I'd be in the same boat, and I would be basically facing extraordinary expenses, but I think in the long run, what's really unfair is to force these people who've suffered damage to face the risk again and face the peril that that they'd have to rebuild again," said Colten, who has written about Louisiana's efforts to tame its swamps and coastal environment. "Which is more expensive? Raising a house now or relocating now, which might be a big financial burden, but if they have to do this again in five or 10 years, it's an even bigger burden, to say nothing of the emotional cost."Bigger storms?

Meanwhile, nationally, experts are rethinking the FEMA maps relied on by the National Flood Insurance Program. Some see the current map methods as out-of-date, painting with too broad of brush that, in combination with local building rules, fails to adequately convey the risk of flooding to property owners.

Sally Ann McConkey, who coordinates hazard assessment and mapping for the Illinois State Water Survey and has advised FEMA on updating its maps, said the flood maps are designed for a bigger picture purpose than what's needed for local growth planning. They're created to manage the financial risk for national flood insurance and don't provide the kind of safety standard that the public or even local government officials might expect, she said.

The threshold used by FEMA on those maps is the 100-year flood. Where such a disaster is likely to strike drives who must have flood insurance if they have a mortgage on a property.

Despite the name, the 100-year flood is statement of probability — a flood that has a one-in-a-hundred chance of happening in a given year, though also a more than one-in-four chance of happening over the life of a 30-year mortgage.

Further, the models behind the FEMA maps don't take into account additional levels of uncertainty from the growing effects of incremental sea level rise and the prospect of even more severe increases due to global climate change, floodplain experts say.

Chad Berginnis, executive director for the Association of State Floodplain Managers and a former Ohio hazard mitigation officer, said the nation's flood modeling, which relies on statistics from years of past rainfall and flooding, has the built-in assumption that the future will be the same as the past. But floodplain managers across the nation are seeing that storms are increasingly more intense than the statistical data used to create flood maps had predicted, he said.

"We are seeing change in our atmospheric events, and so what does that mean for the future?" Berginnis asked.

Flood maps also might not adequately reflect changes in drainage because of construction. McConkey said FEMA chronically has lacked the funding to consistently update flood maps to account for new development and other changes. She suggested the best solution to avoid future flooding is to tightly control and limit development in the 100-year floodplain.

"That's really the key, is to get of out high risk areas because the rains are going to come. You can't build enough reservoirs; you can't build enough levees," McConkey said.

East Baton Rouge, Ascension and Livingston parishes all have flood maps that are 9 years old or newer, but important studies of the hydrology that underlie those maps mostly date from 2005, before periods of strong home construction in the parishes.

However, Shannon Dupont, East Baton Rouge's floodplain manager, said he believes with the flood mitigation the city-parish has long required on new development, the map is still current. FEMA also updated parts of the parish map in 2012.Elevation requirements

FEMA maps define the breadth and depth of a 100-year flood, designating the area that would be affected as a "floodplain" that is at highest risk of inundation. Researchers create the maps by combing through historical river and rainfall data, using airborne laser surveying equipment and tapping other information. When interpreted by local building codes, the 100-year-floodplain sets the mark for how high new properties must be built at a minimum, also known as the "base flood elevation."

In most of East Baton Rouge and Ascension parishes, new structures and subdivisions generally must be built 1 foot above the 100-year flood elevation determined by FEMA. In Livingston Parish, they must be built at or above that elevation.

Local officials around Baton Rouge said any bid to remap based on the August flood could deal a death blow to their communities. The governments of East Baton Rouge and Ascension parishes, as well as the city of Central, actually took steps post-flood to ease elevation regulations, which in some cases had previously been set higher than federal minimum requirements.

The exact toll of the flood across south Louisiana is still being tallied, but state officials estimate waters swamped 150,000 homes and businesses in at least 25 parishes. Thousands of homeowners are now awaiting damage assessments that will determine if they have to bear the added expense of elevating their homes, in addition to the repairs. Those within the 100-year floodplain that incurred damage adding up to 50 percent or more of the value of the home might have to elevate, depending on how high the structure is already raised.

"If they were to take this flood event that was so much of an anomaly and change the base flood elevation, you decimate the city, and folks are going to want to leave this city," Central Mayor Jr. Shelton said.

FEMA says it ultimately will use the data from this flood for regular map revisions, but the agency does not typically change the maps after one major flood. And, in any event, the process of making the map changes probably wouldn't be finished soon enough to affect rebuilding, local officials say.

But the idea of quickly putting in new elevation standards after a major event is not without precedent. After Huricane Katrina in 2005, FEMA established advisory elevation standards for New Orleans when the levee failures called into question what a safe elevation would be in the future. Communities had to adopt the advisory elevations to get access to money through the Road Home, the state rebuilding program funded by federal dollars.

Some have speculated that the Augst storm wasn't just a 100-year flood but in fact a 1,000-year flood — an event that has a 0.1 percent chance of happening in a given year and is 10 times less likely than FEMA's benchmark.

Local officials point to that fact, and the record-breaking river levels, to suggest the flood shouldn't prompt map changes.

"This thing that we just experienced in this parish, by any stretch of the imagination, whether you ask any meteorologist that's an expert on this type of an event, is exceedingly rare," Metro Councilman Trae Welch said. "To the point to where — I don't know where the 1,000-year number came from, but we don't base base-flood elevations on 1,000-year events and we shouldn't base base-flood elevations on 1,000-year events."

FEMA officials themselves have said part of the reason they aren't remapping is the enormous scale of the flood.

"All we administer to is the 100-year. So there are not going to be any advisory base flood elevations or map changes," Mark Lujan, FEMA's top mitigation expert for the South, told Sorrento residents in a meeting last month.

While the recent flood was a big one, it may not hit that 1,000-year mark. Climatologists have documented that a 1,000-year rain occurred in several places hit by the flooding. But soil conditions and other factors can affect runoff, making the official "size" of the flood less than the rain storm.

Todd Baumann, data chief for the United States Geological Survey in Baton Rouge, said recently that his agency has not yet determined the extent of the flood, but early data showed flooding was "routinely higher than a 1 percent event and, in multiple locations, approaching the 0.2 percent (500-year) range."

Insufficient data

Put down in various shades and tied to an entire architecture of local building regulations, FEMA flood maps have an air of certainty to them. Like road maps, they are marked with lines, abbreviations and numbers, showing where and how high the 100-year flood will reach with an implied level of precision that filters down to local building rules.

But Bob Jacobsen, a consulting environmental engineer and hydrologist for the Amite River Basin Commission, argues that the maps, while they achieve what Congress has mandated, don't paint an accurate enough picture of how flooding happens in the basin. Instead, federal, local and state officials should come together to devise better models, he said.

One problem with the maps is they are based on a limited historical record, even though it can take several hundred years worth of data to establish the true extent of a 100-year flood, Jacobsen said.

With that range of uncertainty, the flood height at the Denham Springs gauge on the Amite River for a 100-year event could vary by plus or minus 4 feet, Jacobsen estimated. The gauge saw its record height exceeded by 4.7 feet last month, still falling within the 100-year flood range that Jacobsen believes exists.

A written statement from FEMA did not dispute Jacobsen's assertions but did say the agency works with local officials to improve the maps' accuracy, continually evaluates the maps in light of new data and scientific methods, and strives to improve communication of the maps' findings to the public.

Insurance implications

Roy Wright, FEMA deputy associate administrator for insurance and mitigation, told a Congressional committee earlier this month that flood insurance claims filed over the August floods in Louisiana already had totaled 29,000, making it the fourth biggest storm since the creation of the program.

Only Katrina in 2005, Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and Hurricane Ike in 2005 were higher, he said.

While exact numbers are still uncertain, preliminary data suggests the flood touched thousands of homes in the Baton Rouge region outside the zones FEMA designated as at high risk of flooding — the areas where mortgage holders must have flood insurance.

For years, federal officials, joined by local and state leaders across Louisiana, have urged people to buy flood insurance whether they live in a high-risk zone or not.

But Jacobsen and Wright agreed that by using hard thresholds like the 100-year flood, the insurance program often creates a binary choice with the homeowners: In the plain, you need insurance; out of it, you don't.

Champton, the homeowner in Galvez, got 6 inches of water. Unknown to him, more than half of the lots in the Twelve Oaks of Galvez subdivision, including his, had been in the 100-year floodplain at the early stages of development a decade ago and would have been required to have flood insurance.

But, under parish rules, dirt had to be added to raise those lots above the floodplain before they could be sold, said developer Michael Boies. The lots were built up 2.4 to 3.6 inches above the projected level of inundation from a 100-year flood, according to FEMA map amendments.

Boies then was able to get the flood map amended under a legal process through FEMA to exclude those lots from insurance requirements.

Champton said he wasn't told about the map change when he bought his house. But the St. Amant native also said he never would have thought the Galvez area was vulnerable. "I never ever considered flooding until ... right after we flooded," he said.

In October, a committee that reviews FEMA's flood mapping procedures recommended the agency move away from the 100-year-flood threshold for insurance rating purposes. Instead of looking at swaths of homes, individual structures would be examined.

But Wright said that while he agrees with the goal, it's a "transformative" leap that will require lots of new data, major changes in what FEMA does for insurance underwriting and revamping local development rules.

"It will take us years to get there, and it's not exactly clear what we're moving toward," Wright said.

Meanwhile, local officials who oppose map changes, like Central's Mayor Shelton, said this flood offers a succinct lesson: Buy flood insurance.

"If you're somebody who flooded, I don't care if it's the first time your house flooded, if you see that possibility and don't do something to minimize that issue, then shame on you," Shelton said.

Louisiana Officials Ramp Up Shelter At Home Program

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — A top aide to Gov. John Bel Edwards says the Shelter at Home program has "ramped up" in recent days.

The Advocate reports (http://bit.ly/2csRPv9) Julie Baxter Payer and others, including officials of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, issued an update on the flood recovery.

Payer touted the Shelter at Home program, which allows families to stay in damaged homes during repairs if the work needed to remain there costs less than $15,000.

Single-family homeowners are eligible for work like repairs to kitchen sinks, shower tubs, exterior door replacements and bathroom privacy walls.

About 19,000 people have applied for the assistance.

Payer says the program began less than three weeks ago and is moving faster than any previous such aid after a storm.

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West Virginia County School Board Lands $1.5m Flood Grant

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — A West Virginia county school board has landed a $1.5 million federal grant for flood recovery efforts.

On Friday, U.S. Sens. Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito announced the grant for the Kanawha County Board of Education.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency grant will help the board address flood-related issues in Kanawha County schools.

Five schools across the state, including two in Kanawha County, are being rebuilt because of extensive flood damage.

The June 23 floods killed 23 people and devastated homes, businesses and infrastructure.

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Cedar Rapids Begins Evacuations Ahead Of Major Flood

Water from last week's storm to north hits city that has been preparing since 2008 event

By Joe Barrett

Wall Street Journal, September 25, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Iowans Leave Homes As Floodwaters Rise

By William Petroski

USA Today, September 25, 2016

DES MOINES — As the Cedar River continued to rise Sunday, residents were asked to leave low-lying areas of Cedar Rapids that are in danger of flooding.

The National Weather Service predicts the river will reach a crest of 23 feet in Iowa's second-largest city Tuesday morning. Officials have asked those in downtown areas of the city near the river to leave by 8 p.m. Sunday. They expect it could be a week before people will be able to return home.

Jen Winter, Cedar Rapids public works director, cautioned that despite the revised flood projection to 23 feet, "this is still a major flood event" and floodwaters may still seep out of areas where steps have been taken to hold back flood waters.

Cedar Rapids City Manager Jeff Pomeranz says the city has been preparing to deal with a major flood since a major flood that hit the area in 2008, and that those preparations should help.

"All this work is coming together. You can see the benefits of planning and preparation in the various streets and infrastructure improvements and the protection systems in order to make sure that our city is safe," Pomeranz said. "That could not have happened without tremendous preparation by our city, our county government, our private sector and most importantly our citizens."

Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett said that city officials learned Wednesday that they had four days to react to the flood, and he praised residents for taking ownership of their community in the flood fight.

"This is the last day to get all the work done that needs to be done, and people have been working very hard," Corbett said. "I know that there have to be a lot of sore backs and sore arms and shoulders for all the work that has been done. It was citywide, really."

Corbett also said that all areas of Cedar Rapids were the subject of efforts to establish flood defense, unlike plans for flood control developed by federal officials that only would have protected the east side of the river.

MidAmerican Energy said Sunday that 890 Cedar Rapids properties had been identified for natural gas service disconnection because of flooding. Affected customers would be contacted by phone, the company said. In Plainfield, natural gas was being shut off to 20 homes in low-lying area due to high water levels from the runoff.

Police Chief Wayne Jerman said a curfew will be imposed from 8 p.m. Sunday until 7 a.m. Monday and police officers will patrol flood affected areas. He said 300 to 400 Iowa National Guard troops will be assisting police and 60 additional sworn law enforcement officers will be arriving to assist Cedar Rapids police with their operations.

Officials said that as of Sunday morning, no looting had been reported and that National Guard troops who assist law enforcement officers will not be armed.

In Palo, a small community in Cedar Rapids, city officials said no water use was mandatory for all local residents. Officials said the sewer system had been taking on a large amount of water and a sewer line had possibly been severed. The water system remained operational, however. In addition, a mandatory evacuation was in effect for parts of Palo, and a curfew in the evacuation area had been declared from 8 p.m. Sunday to 6 a.m. Monday.

In Charles City, the Cedar River was slightly under 16 feet late Sunday morning after cresting Saturday at 20.95. Flood stage is 12 feet in Charles City, and the river was forecast to fall below that level sometime late Sunday night.

In Waverly, the Cedar River was at 12.79 feet late Sunday morning, which was just above flood stage of 12 feet.

In the Waterloo and Cedar Falls area, where the Cedar River crested Saturday morning, local officials were keeping their fingers crossed that flood damage will be significantly less than the devastation experienced in the 2008 flooding.

"I am so proud of the towns we have here," said Black Hawk County Emergency Management Coordinator Lorie Glover. "Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Evansdale and some of the others were extremely pro-active — two and three days ahead of the flood, using lessons learned from 2008. They did a phenomenal job."

At least four bridges were still closed in Waterloo on Sunday, and Fletcher Avenue was shut down from University Avenue to Highway 63 because of flooding on Black Hawk Creek. However, bridges on U.S. Highway 63 and several other roads remained open.

The river peaked Saturday in Waterloo at 22.65 feet, which was well above flood stage of 13 feet, but less than the 2008 record crest of 27 feet.

"We do have pockets of damage in some areas that we will be looking at, but the water is still very high," Glover said. "We need to wait until it goes down a little bit before we can get into some areas to look at what damage there will be."

Local residents "sandbagged and sandbagged" around businesses in an effort to mitigate flood damage, so damage totals to businesses aren't clear yet. Glover said she already knows that some residents have water in their basements and some houses may have water on the first floor, but she can't get a better idea until flooding recedes.

However, it appears there has not been any catastrophic damage in Black Hawk County, unlike 2008, when a railroad bridge collapsed in downtown Waterloo under enormous pressure from the swollen Cedar River.

"This time the bridge was battered pretty good by the water, but it has held up and it is doing well," Glover said.

Residents Evacuate Cedar Rapids Homes Ahead Of Flooding

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Several thousand residents of Cedar Rapids left their homes Sunday as floodwaters began to spill out of the rising Cedar River, and Iowa's second-largest city worked to apply the lessons officials learned after the record 2008 flood.

The river crested Saturday night in Waterloo and Cedar Falls, which are about 55 miles (90 kilometers) upstream from Cedar Rapids, which is Iowa's second-largest city, with about 130,000 people.

The water levels in Cedar Falls and Waterloo were slightly lower than had been expected, but they still reached levels that were second only to those in 2008, when a major flood devastated the region.

The National Weather Service predicted that the river will crest at 23 feet (7 meters) in Cedar Rapids on Tuesday morning — well below the 2008 record of 31.12 feet (9.5 meters). Officials asked those living in about 5,000 downtown homes near the river to evacuate. They said it could be days before people can return home.

The Cedar Rapids school district said Sunday that it is canceling classes through Wednesday because of the flooding. District officials will reevaluate the situation by Wednesday afternoon.

Cedar Rapids City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said the city has been preparing to deal with a major flood since that of 2008, which caused billions of dollars of damage. City workers and volunteers have been working for days to build a temporary system of levees to try to contain the floodwaters.

"All the work is coming together, and you can see the benefit of planning and preparation," Pomeranz said.

After the 2008 flood, about 1,350 homes near the Cedar River were bought out and destroyed to reduce the amount of damage that future floods could inflict. About 45 acres of green space sit in that area today.

On Sunday morning, more than 100 volunteers helped remove the seats from the restored Paramount Theater in Cedar Rapids and move them up to the second floor to protect them from floodwaters. The theater was heavily damaged in the 2008 flood because it is one block from the Cedar River, and it cost $35 million to restore.

Unlike in 2008, residents have had more time to prepare for a flood. The benefit of that extra time was clear in the small town of Palo upstream where residents of more than 80 homes evacuated.

Kim Hutchins, whose home in Palo is about 10 miles upstream from Cedar Rapids, told the Des Moines Register that she spent Saturday packing up her kitchen while some friends unhooked her furnace in the basement and moved it up to the garage. Most of her furniture was piled onto trailers to move.

"They've been telling us it was coming for days. Last time, we had eight or 10 hours to get out," said Hutchins, 53, who planned to go stay with her mother.

Palo residents were being urged not to use water on Sunday because of a sewer line break and area flooding. Officials said they were working to repair the sewer line quickly. In the meantime, they were providing bottled water to residents.

Officials in Waterloo and Cedar Falls hope their communities will sustain less damage in this flood because of steps taken since 2008, but Black Hawk County Emergency Management Coordinator Lorie Glover said the extent of the damage won't be clear until the water recedes.

In Waterloo, the Cedar River crested at 22.95 feet (7 meters) Saturday. That's well below the 2008 record of 27 feet (8.2 meters), but still caused major flooding. It remained at 22 feet Sunday afternoon.

"We do have pockets of damage in some areas that we will be looking at, but the water is still very high," Glover said. "We need to wait until it goes down a little bit before we can get into some areas to look at what damage there will be."

Parts of southern Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin experienced flooding over the past few days, but it appeared that most of the threat of major flooding had passed in those states by Sunday.

In the southern Minnesota town of St. Clair, eight to 10 homes remained evacuated Sunday. Assistant Blue Earth County Emergency Manager Eric Weller said Sunday that "we were very lucky overnight" that not much rain fell.

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The Latest: Iowa Cities Donate Sandbags To Cedar Rapids

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — The Latest on flooding along rain-swollen rivers in Iowa (all times local):

4:20 p.m.

Nearby communities are donating several thousand filled sandbags to Cedar Rapids as the city prepares for flooding.

Waterloo and Cedar Falls endured the crest of the Cedar River Saturday evening.

So on Sunday those cities sent their extra sandbags about 55 miles (90 kilometers) downriver to Cedar Rapids.

Forecasters say flooding is expected to begin in Cedar Rapids Sunday night and reach its height by Tuesday.

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3:05 p.m.

Brady Coleman spent most of the days before his wedding filling sandbags, but the flooding didn't derail Saturday's ceremony in Shell Rock, Iowa.

Coleman and his bride, Abby Rundle, thought about moving the ceremony to another town because of the record flooding on the Shell Rock River in northeast Iowa.

But some of the main routes into that other town were blocked by flooding.

Rundle told the Des Moines Register (http://dmreg.co/2cDzNVr) the couple took a chance and had the wedding in Shell Rock, as planned.

Most family members were able to attend even if they had to take detours to get there.

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1:55 p.m.

Residents in the northeast Iowa town of Palo are being urged not to use water on Sunday because of a sewer line break and flooding in the area.

About 80 homes were evacuated Saturday in Palo because of the rising Cedar River.

Officials said they were working to repair the sewer line quickly. In the meantime, they were providing bottled water to residents.

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1:45 p.m.

About 10 homes remain evacuated in the southern Minnesota town of St. Clair, but the flooded Le Sueur (leh soor) River is receding.

Assistant Blue Earth County Emergency Manager Eric Weller said Sunday, “We were very lucky overnight” that not much rain fell. But he says crews are still pumping at the wastewater treatment plant’s lift station, and residents of the town of 870 are still advised not to take showers or use toilets.

Weller says two bridges remain closed because of high water, but schools are expected to reopen Monday.

Meteorologist Bill Borghoff at the National Weather Service in Chanhassen, Minnesota, says the threat of major flooding is over for southern Minnesota.

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1 p.m.

The Cedar Rapids school district has cancelled classes for three days and closed its offices because of the flooding expected in Iowa’s second largest city.

The district said Sunday that no classes will be held through Wednesday.

The flooding along the Cedar River is expected to reach its peak on Tuesday, but it may take several days for the water to recede.

District officials will reevaluate the situation by Wednesday afternoon.

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11:35 a.m.

The National Weather Service has revised its forecast for the Cedar River near Iowa’s second-largest city of Cedar Rapids.

The river is expected to crest there on Tuesday morning at 23 feet. That level will cause significant flooding in Cedar Rapids, but it has been reduced since earlier forecasts for a crest above 25 feet.

But officials are preparing for the worst flooding since 2008.

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As River Rises, Iowans Apply Lessons From 2008 Floods

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — Volunteers filled sandbags and homeowners began moving things out of their basements on Saturday, and one small town evacuated about 100 homes in preparation for flooding along the Cedar River in Iowa.

The river is expected to crest Tuesday in Cedar Rapids, Iowa’s second-largest city with a population of about 130,000. But with more rain expected Saturday night, officials there warned people to evacuate downtown areas of the city near the river by 8 p.m. today.

“We have emergency personnel that can help you if needed,” Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett said Saturday. “They’ll risk their lives for you. But we don’t want them to risk their lives.”

At the Cedar Valley Montessori School in downtown Cedar Rapids on Friday, about 100 volunteers from area high schools helped move all the school equipment above the ground floor.

Stacy Cataldo, head of the Montessori school, told television station KCRG that many remember how flooding damaged the school in 2008 and don’t want that to happen again.

“We’re applying those lessons as we move forward,” she said.

Just upriver in the small town of Palo, about 100 homes in low-lying areas were evacuated on Saturday.

City Clerk Trisca Dix said that the mandatory evacuation in the town of about 1,000 took place Saturday afternoon before the river was expected to crest tonight at 24.5 feet.

Mayor Tom Yock told the Des Moines Register that volunteers and work crews scrambled Saturday to protect as much of the town as possible. Palo was devastated by record flooding in 2008.

Many people moved their belongings to the upper levels of their homes and built sandbag barriers before evacuating, he said.

“We’re just trying to be more proactive than we were in ‘08, trying to save as many homes as we can,” Yock said.

In Cedar Rapids, Fire Chief Mark English asked the curious to stay out of the flooded areas, saying that some heavy equipment used to build earthen dams and erect flood barriers has been hindered by gawkers. He said an estimated 1,500 properties near the river were expected to get at least some flooding.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad and other state officials toured flood-damaged areas Saturday in the Cedar River basin.

Officials warned that residents who have been asked to evacuate should plan to remain out of their homes and businesses for up to a week. A curfew in Cedar Rapids also was to go into effect today beginning at 8 p.m.

There was some good news on Saturday: When the Cedar River crests Tuesday, it's expected to be at 24.5 feet — nearly a foot lower than projected earlier.

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Floods Force Mandatory Evacuations In Iowa

By Kelly McGowan

USA Today, September 24, 2016

Residents are being told they must evacuate their homes in Palo near Cedar Rapids due to flooding, a TV station tweeted Saturday morning.

People who live in the southeast corner of the Linn County town were evacuating at 10 a.m. CT Saturday, according to KGAN-TV.

Evacuations in Cedar Rapids are set to begin at 8 p.m. Sunday. Officials, including the Iowa National Guard, will enforce an 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. curfew in evacuated areas along the Cedar River.

"We know it's a very stressful event for someone to have to leave their home, their belongings, and walk away," Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett said at a news conference Saturday morning. "Our home is our castle."

The city released maps showing areas that are predicted to be inundated by floodwaters if the Cedar River reaches a flood level of 24 feet or more. Current forecasts call for that level to be exceeded by at least a foot.

Cedar Rapids announced the evacuation decision to give residents time to plan, Corbett said.

"We want you to today take care of your belongings and your pets," Corbett said. "Tomorrow, we want you to take care of yourself."

The Cedar Rapids evacuation is not mandatory, Fire Chief Mark English said, but is very strongly recommended.

"I hope next week ... I can proclaim that no lives were lost," Corbett said.

Cedar Rapids officials are helping with sandbagging and evacuation efforts in Palo, and encouraged anyone who is not volunteering to avoid the affected areas.

The Red Cross opened a shelter Saturday at Cedar Hills Community Church in Cedar Rapids, organization spokesman Peter Teahen said.

Red Cross has plans to open more shelters in the coming days.

Teahen also urged people to check on their neighbors, especially those who are disabled.

As of 11:30 a.m. Saturday, the National Weather Service forecasted that the Cedar River would crest at 99.5 feet at 1 a.m. Sunday in Cedar Falls, at 25.5 feet at 1 a.m. Sunday in Waterloo, and at 24.5 feet at 7 a.m. Tuesday in Cedar Rapids.

Harvest Halts, Processors Close As Rains Swamp Upper Midwest

By Karl Plume

Reuters, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Heavy Rains In Midwest Flood Roads, Cause Two Deaths In Wisconsin

Iowa officials prepare for flooding of the Cedar River with more rain to come

By Kris Maher

Wall Street Journal, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Rains Wash Away Once-promising Crops In Western Wisconsin

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

MADISON, Wis. — Floods and mudslides are washing away promising-looking corn and soybean crops in western Wisconsin.

Before the recent flooding, farmers were looking at a potentially record-setting harvest after a near-perfect growing season, the Wisconsin State Journal (http://bit.ly/2cU9BFN) reported.

But farmers hit by mudslides in the valleys "are basically in hell right now," said Vance Haugen, the agriculture agent for the UW Extension in Crawford County.

Farmers whose fields are covered in water or mud may have to wait until the ground freezes before they can harvest whatever is left, Haugen said.

"Farmers are getting psychologically worn down," Haugen said.

He said farmers are in the middle of harvesting corn silage used for animal feed, "and the quality goes down the longer you take to harvest it. And if you go into the fields too soon with your machinery you can squash the soil structure and it can take years — sometimes decades — to repair some of that damaged soil."

Corn already is showing signs of poorer quality in wet areas, Haugen said. Farmers worry that the quality of their corn will dip so low that it won't meet the standards to make ethanol, he said.

Adam Hady, the ag agent for the UW Extension in Richland County, said corn stalks also are weakening in some areas. That will lead to machinery breakdowns during harvest, he said.

"The crops were so beautiful and a lot of guys went from believing that this was going to be one of the best harvests ever to wondering if they'll even get into their fields for the harvest," Hady said.

Because the flooding has happened in just one region and a bountiful harvest is still expected in most grain-producing states, prices for corn futures have not risen, analysts say.

"So now they're going to get poor prices with less of a crop. That's tough to take," Haugen said.

After last week's heavy rains, forecasts call for a dry week ahead in southwestern Wisconsin.

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Information from: Wisconsin State Journal, http://www.madison.com/wsj

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The Latest: About 100 Homes In Palo, Iowa, Evacuated

Associated Press, September 24, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa — The Latest on flooding along rain-swollen rivers in Iowa (all times local):

5:30 p.m.

About 100 homes in low-lying areas of the small Linn County town of Palo along the Cedar River have been evacuated.

City Clerk Trisca Dix tells The Associated Press that the mandatory evacuation in the town of about 1,000 took place Saturday afternoon before the river was expected to crest Sunday night at 24.5 feet.

Mayor Tom Yock told the Des Moines Register that volunteers and work crews scrambled Saturday to protect as much of the town from flooding as possible.

Yock said the town, which was devastated by record flooding in 2008, is trying to be more proactive this time around.

He says many people moved their belongings to the upper levels of their homes and built sandbag barriers before evacuating.

4:10 p.m.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad and several other state leaders on Saturday toured flood damage in Clarkesville and Shell Rock and assessed flood preparedness plans underway in Cedar Rapids.

Branstad was joined by Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, Iowa National Guard Adjutant General Tim Orr and Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Mark Schouten.

Branstad and Reynolds also expect to assess flood damage next week.

On Friday, Branstad signed a disaster proclamation for 13 northeast Iowa counties affected by flooding. It activates the Iowa National Guard to assist in preparedness and in response when there's damage.

3:30 p.m.

Cedar Rapids officials are asking curious residents to stay out of downtown and flooded areas.

City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said Saturday that people wanting to get a glimpse of rising Cedar River have been getting in the way of workers trying to protect property.

Pomeranz says heavy equipment brought in to build earthen dams and erect flood barriers was hindered Friday because of heavy traffic from gawkers.

Officials also don't want traffic from onlookers clogging streets for those trying to evacuate areas around the river before it's expected to crest on Tuesday.

11:10 a.m.

Officials have lowered their estimate of where the swollen Cedar River will crest in Cedar Rapids, but they are still asking people to stay out of the Iowa city's downtown on Sunday night.

City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said Saturday at a news conference that the river is expected to crest at 24.5 feet on Tuesday, which is nearly a foot below the earlier expected crest of 25.3 feet.

Downtown Cedar Rapids is still expected to see flooding that will affect an estimated 1,500 properties.

Fire Chief Mark English asked those living in an area outlined on a flood map posted on the city's website to evacuate their homes by 8 p.m. Sunday. A curfew will be in place from then until 7 a.m. Monday.

Police chief Wayne Jerman says 73 checkpoints will be set up to ensure that residents and their properties remain safe.

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This item has been corrected to reflect that it's the Cedar River, not the Mississippi River, that is threatening to flood Cedar Rapids.

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10 a.m.

Iowa officials are pleading for volunteers to help fill sandbags and scrambling to erect earthen dams and berms to stave off flooding.

Cedar Falls officials issued calls Friday night and Saturday morning for volunteers, ahead of heavy rains forecast for Saturday night. Volunteers have been asked to bring work gloves, appropriate footwear and shovels.

Flooding has already forced road closures and evacuations in several communities upstream.

The National Weather Service has issued a flood warning for the area, including Waterloo, Waverly, Hampton and Eagle Grove in Iowa. While sunny skies were expected for much of Saturday, the weather service says storms Saturday night into Sunday are expected to bring more heavy rain to the area.

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This item has been corrected to remove reference to the Mississippi River, which is not near Cedar Falls. It is the Cedar River that flows through the city.

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The Latest: Iowa Governor Signs Disaster Proclamation

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Latest on flooding along rain-swollen rivers in Iowa and Wisconsin (all times local):

5:20 p.m.

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad has signed a disaster proclamation for 13 northeast Iowa counties affected by flooding. It activates the Iowa National Guard to assist in preparedness and in response when there's damage.

The proclamation also enacts a grant program for homeowners meeting poverty guidelines to apply for up to $5,000 in financial aid to repair damage to a home or car or to replace food or clothing lost in the flood.

The Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has coordinated the delivery of state resources to the affected communities, including more than 120,000 sandbags, 22 water pumps and 400 flood cleanup kits.

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5 p.m.

Gov. Scott Walker plans to tour flood damage in a southwestern Wisconsin village.

Walker's office announced Friday that the governor would visit Gays Mills on Saturday afternoon.

The village of about 500 people sits on the Kickapoo River. Dozens of homes in the village were damaged by flooding in 2007 and 2008. The floods drove part of the village to relocate to higher ground.

WXOW-TV reports (http://bit.ly/2d4O3nG) flooding over the last few days has left Gays Mills' downtown underwater, forcing village officials to reschedule the annual Apple Fest.

State emergency officials said Friday that state Highways 131 and 171 in Gays Mills were closed due to water over the roadway and a washout.

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3 p.m.

Sandbagging is underway in the southern Minnesota town of St. Clair, where the Le Sueur River continues to rise after torrential rains earlier this week.

Officials say the floodwaters have already far surpassed the levels they saw in 2010, and the river isn't expected to crest until Saturday at the earliest.

The floodwaters are threatening sewer lift stations, which officials say will likely cause basement flooding. The town's more than 800 residents have been encouraged to cover their drains, remove valuables from their basements, and not to flush their toilets or run water.

While more than 7 inches of rain fell on St. Clair from Wednesday night into Thursday, the main problem is that even more fell upstream in the Waseca area, and that water is now making its way downriver.

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This story has been corrected to state that 7 inches of rain fell on St. Clair, not St. Cloud.

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10:50 a.m.

Authorities say a second person has died in the storms and flooding hitting western Wisconsin.

Vernon County sheriff's officials say 79-year-old Joseph Menne attempted to drive through floodwater on a road near his home on Thursday.

Investigators say he was in a pickup truck pulling a trailer that got stuck in six feet of water. The flood water eventually filled the pickup compartment. Menne was reported missing about 7 p.m. His body was found about two hours later.

The torrential rain and flooding also killed 53-year-old Michael McDonald in the same western Wisconsin county on Thursday, when his home slid down the side of a bluff and onto a highway.

The flooding and mudslides heavily damaged the small community where McDonald lived near the base of a bluff along the Mississippi River.

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10:30 a.m.

Authorities in several eastern Iowa cities and counties are mobilizing resources to handle flooding from the rain-swollen Cedar River.

The river has already left its banks upstream, forcing evacuations in several communities upstream along its path through northeastern Iowa. More rain fell Thursday night and earlier Friday, and the National Weather Service says the flash-flooding threat remains high.

The weather service says more rain could change forecasts, and local officials say at least moderate flooding seems a certainty.

Just across the Mississippi River in southwest Wisconsin, residents of the tiny community of Victory are recovering from storms and flooding that caused one death. Authorities say local resident Michael McDonald died Thursday when his house slid onto state Highway 35.

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6:30 a.m.

Residents of a tiny Wisconsin community along the Mississippi River are recovering after torrential rain and flooding ripped through the town and caused one death.

Heavy rain, flooding and mudslides have caused widespread damage in Victory, an unincorporated community in the Town of Wheatland. Authorities say 53-year-old resident Michael McDonald died after his house slid onto Highway 35 on Thursday.

Vernon County Sheriff John Spears says the community has been devastated and torn apart by the flooding.

The landslides and flooding closed roads throughout the area and contributed to a train derailment in Crawford County. Although the storms have moved away, the National Weather Service extended a flooding warning for Crawford, Vernon and Richland counties through Friday morning.

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Utah Hit By Tornados, Flooding

Thousands of residents remained without power, schools canceled

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

SALT LAKE CITY—People across Utah were reeling Friday after storms ripped through the state, including two tornados that damaged more than a dozen buildings hundreds of miles apart.

Thousands of people remained without power after the severe weather that also flooded streets and dropped golf-ball-sized hail.

No serious injuries have been reported, but at least 12 homes were badly damaged by a tornado in the northern city of Washington Terrance, the Standard-Examiner of Ogden reported.

A garage was lifted from its foundation, trees were ripped from the ground and cars were dented by hurtling chunks of debris. Authorities say the cleanup is just beginning, but could take days or weeks.

Classes were canceled Friday at several area schools.

Another twister tore roofs off buildings in the southern Utah town of Panguitch, marking the second touchdown there in less than a month, officials said.

Severe weather also caused extensive flooding in southern Utah and dropped hail near the Great Salt Lake. In the town of Roosevelt, several homes were affected by the rising water, which also filled part of State Street. STT -0.59 %

Up north, hail pelted Antelope Island on the Great Salt Lake and the winds ripped the roof off a building.

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2 Tornados Touch Down Hundreds Of Miles Apart In Utah

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

SALT LAKE CITY — Two tornados touched down hundreds of miles apart in Utah, damaging about two dozen buildings and knocking out power to thousands of people.

The severe weather also flooded streets and dropped golf-ball-sized hail in some areas.

No serious injuries were reported, but damage from one tornado left 21 homes unlivable the

Washington Terrace area, sheriff's Lt. Nate Hutchinson told the Deseret News.

Resident Gaelynn Sewell's lost her home in the storm, leaving her without as much as a toothbrush or clean clothes.

"We lost things that can never be replaced," Sewell told The Salt Lake Tribune.

A garage was lifted from its foundation, trees were ripped from the ground and cars were dented by hurtling chunks of debris, officials said.

About 50 families were evacuated due to the tornado, and damages were expected to top $1.5 million. Classes were canceled at several schools.

A group of students from Utah Military Academy was nearly caught in the twister while running a 5K race. Pelted by flying debris, the group tried to hang onto trees — some of which snapped in half.

"If felt like there was a huge, almost like a slingshot bringing you back toward the tornado," Jacob Hite told the Deseret News. "It was pretty much like trying to run away from a huge vacuum cleaner."

Authorities say the cleanup could take weeks. Utah Gov. Gary Herbert planned to survey the area.

Another twister tore off a roof as it damaged two buildings in the southern Utah town of Panguitch. It was the second time in less than a month that a tornado touched down there, officials said.

Severe weather also caused extensive flooding in southern Utah and dropped hail near Great Salt Lake.

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Flooded Roads In Southeastern Minnesota Reopening

Associated Press, September 24, 2016

ROCHESTER, Minn. — Roads are reopening in southeastern Minnesota as flood water recede.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation says Highway 105 near the Iowa border south of Austin reopened early Saturday after being closed because of flooding from the Cedar River.

Highway 250 north of Lanesboro also reopened Saturday morning. But Highway 65, which is Main Street in Albert Lea, remains closed with a local detour in place.

MnDOT says rivers in southeastern Minnesota remain at high levels. Motorists should not try to drive through standing water on roads.

North of Minneapolis, parts of Highway 169 remain closed in both directors on the border of Maple Grove and Brooklyn Park because of flooding. The Star Tribune reports the road is expected to remain closed until Sunday. More rain is forecast for the area.

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Heavy Rain Leads To Flood Warning In Northwestern Oklahoma

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

SEILING, Okla. – Forecasters have issued a flood warning for parts of northwestern Oklahoma following thunderstorms that dropped more than 2 inches of rain in some areas.

The National Weather Service in Norman said Sunday a flood warning for the North Canadian River near Seiling in Dewey County is in effect until this evening.

Forecasters say that at 9 a.m. Sunday the river's level was slightly higher than its 11-foot flood stage and minor flooding was occurring. River levels were expected to fall later Sunday and will fall below flood stage late Sunday afternoon.

The flooding could inundate croplands, pastures, oil wells and rural roads. Affected areas include Major County downstream to the headwaters of Canton Lake in Dewey County. Forecasters say livestock should be relocated to places higher than nearby river banks.

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N. Carolina Flooding From Julia Closes Schools, Spews Sewage

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

WINDSOR, N.C. — Damage from flooding in eastern North Carolina approached the level of destruction left behind by Hurricane Irene in 2011, Gov. Pat McCrory said Friday.

But instead of the hurricane's storm surge, the cause of this week's flooding was days of rain.

"We literally have water up to people's waist and above, and many houses have been flooded," McCrory said at a news conference.

About 63 people across northeastern North Carolina have had to be rescued from their homes by fast-water rescue teams. Another 61 were taken to safety from threatened nursing homes.

For much of this week, the remnants of Tropical Storm Julia sat spinning off the coast, dropping anywhere from a foot of rain in parts of North Carolina to nearly 18 inches in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia.

Schools canceled classes, a downtown was submerged and overwhelmed sewers spewed untreated wastewater.

McCrory said the Bertie County seat of Windsor appeared to suffer the worst, although floodwaters appeared to be receding. The town of about 3,000 along the Cashie River received more than a foot of rain.

Windsor Police Chief James Lane asked people to stay out of downtown. He said business owners need a chance to assess damage after flood waters inundated the business district. The Cashie River reached 15 feet (5 meters) on Thursday, 2 feet (2/3 meter) above major flood stage.

Windsor Fire Chief Billy Smithwick said the river was dropping “pretty quickly” and that 35 homes had been damaged. The American Red Cross put that number at around 60 homes.

But other parts of northeastern North Carolina were also flooded.

A news release from Elizabeth City reported that 1 million gallons of untreated wastewater flowed into the Charles Creek and the Pasquotank River.

City manager Rich Olson told the Virginian-Pilot (http://bit.ly/2d61wxB) that floodwaters had overloaded manholes, sending sewage into the city’s storm water system and on into the waterways. The leakage began Wednesday and continued for about 24 hours, the city said.

School district websites in several counties also reported closings for a second day or more, including Bertie, Currituck and Hertford.

Media outlets reported that Pender County schools are operating on a two-hour delay Friday after the area received 7 inches of rain, with more on the way.

Gov. McCrory had declared a state of emergency in 11 counties Thursday.

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California Wildfire In Sonoma County Sends Residents Fleeing

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

CLOVERDALE, Calif. — A wildfire that erupted amid hot, dry conditions and gusty winds in Sonoma County north of San Francisco has sent about 90 people fleeing from their homes.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection says the blaze in rural Cloverdale began Sunday morning and spread to 1,500 acres (607 hectares), or more than 2 square miles (5.2 square kilometers).

Fire spokesman Paul Lowenthal says about 90 people in 36 homes were evacuated, and that the fire was threatening the Geysers geothermal field.

Firefighters were battling the blaze in steep terrain, temperatures in the high 90s, and strong winds in the higher elevations of northern Sonoma and northern Napa counties.

The fire is about 10 percent contained.

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Moderate Earthquakes Recorded Off Oregon, California Coasts

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

PORTLAND, Ore. — Scientists say two moderate earthquakes occurred off the Oregon and California coasts late Saturday and early Sunday but neither triggered a tsunami warning.

The U.S. Geological Survey says a 5.0 earthquake occurred in the Pacific Ocean about 93 miles southwest of Gold Beach, Oregon, at about 10 p.m. Saturday.

Scientists say a 4.6-magnitude quake in the ocean about 97 miles west of Brookings, Oregon, followed at about 3 a.m. Sunday.

Neither quake prompted a warning from the National Tsunami Warning Center.

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Haitians Gathered In Tijuana Awaiting Entry To U.S. Now Face Likely Deportation

By Sandra Dibble

Los Angeles Times, September 23, 2016

Hundreds of Haitians in Tijuana preparing to present themselves to U.S. officials at the San Ysidro Port of Entry face an unpleasant surprise: the probability of detention — and eventual deportation to their impoverished country — under a new policy by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

A day after the new policy went into effect, Haitian men who gathered in small groups on Friday morning outside the Padre Chava soup kitchen said they had heard nothing of the changes and asked anxiously for details.

“I don’t believe it,” Miterson Derisseau, a 25-year-old tile-setter from Port-au-Prince, said in French.

“Did Obama’s party decide this? He has a generous heart; he cannot deport us to our country,” added Derisseau, who hopes to join his sister in Boston.

Announced Thursday by Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, the new policy entails the resumption of regular, noncriminal deportations to Haiti, more than six years after these were suspended on the heels of the country's devastating 2010 earthquake. Haitians without visas now face the same treatment as most foreigners who show up at the border without permission to enter the United States: detention and deportation, unless they express fear of persecution upon being sent back.

The changes have come on the heels of an unprecedented and unexpected flow of Haitians to the San Diego border, more than 4,346 in the first 11 months of the current fiscal year — out of a total of 4,844 nationwide. Last year's total for San Diego was 315, while the national total was 795. The figures were released Friday by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

In congressional testimony on Thursday in Washington, the director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Sarah Saldaña, called it "an emergency situation" and said she had learned of "40,000 Haitians who are en route to the United States," through South and Central America.

Most of the Haitians in Tijuana have come by land from Brazil, where they moved after the 2010 earthquake to find work, but found survival increasingly difficult as the South American country has suffered a severe economic downturn.

The Haitians usually obtain safe passage through Mexico with a document called "oficio de salida" that allows them in the country for a limited time period, usually about 30 days, enough time to make it to the U.S. border.

Until Thursday, when the new policy went into effect, most Haitians presenting themselves at the San Diego border were allowed into the United States under humanitarian parole, and typically released with notices to appear before an immigration court at a later date.

But as of Thursday, the reception changed: Haitians seeking entry now are subject to a fast-track process called Expedited Removal that entails immediate detention.

It is unclear how soon the deportations to Haiti would take place, said Faye Hipsman, an analyst with the Washington-based Migration Policy Institute.

"The big factor is cooperation with Haiti," Hipsman said. "My understanding is that this was a unilateral decision made by DHS," she said, adding that the Haitian government has yet to publicly respond.

Until now, many Haitians have been traveling to established Haitian communities in New York City and Miami, where activists have been closely following news of the Haitians in Tijuana. Marleine Bastien, executive director of FAMN Haitian Women of Miami, was part of a group from Miami who came to the San Diego-Tijuana border recently to understand the situation.

"My heart really bleeds for them. I saw their faces. I saw their hope, such hope," said Bastien, who has been collaborating with members of the San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium.

Tijuana government officials have worked to distance themselves from the situation, privately stressing that the migrants are a federal matter, not a municipal one. Requests for interviews went unanswered this week.

As they have attempted to serve the rising numbers of Haitian migrants, Tijuana's four main shelters have found themselves overwhelmed. Of 2,823 people receiving shelter at Padre Chava since May 27, a total of 1,831 have been Haitians, according to the center.

Near the U.S. border, at the Desayunador Salesiano Padre Chava, a shelter and soup kitchen, the news of the policy had yet to fully hit on Friday morning. And the few who had an inkling of the changes remained undeterred, said Margarita Andonaegui, the shelter's administrator.

"Up to now, everyone has decided to go ahead" and keep their appointments with U.S. Customs and Border Protection at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. "Only one person asked me, 'What do you recommend?'"

Costa Rica Gets 100 Illegal Immigrants A Day Hoping To Get To U.S.

By Hugh Bronstein

Reuters, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Children From Central America Flood U.S. Border--Again

By Alan Gomez

USA Today, September 23, 2016

The number of Central American children fleeing to United States is booming once again, as security and economic troubles continue to grip El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

The rush of minors across the southwest border became a political firestorm in the summer of 2014, prompting the Obama administration to enact emergency measures to stem the flow and drawing intense scrutiny from critics of the president's immigration policies.

Last year, the efforts seemed to work as the number of unaccompanied minors from those three countries entering the U.S. dropped from nearly 70,000 in 2014 to 39,970.

Now the exodus to the USA is back on the rise. In the first 11 months of the 2016 fiscal year, which ends in September, 54,052 children made the journey.

There are many reasons for the surge:

--In El Salvador, people are fleeing a staggering level of violence that has made the country the murder capital of the world. It recorded a homicide rate of 104 people per 100,000 in 2015, the highest for any country in nearly 20 years, according to data from the World Bank.

--In Honduras, violence has come down in recent years, with a 15% drop in homicides in 2015, meaning many people leaving there are seeking better economic opportunities in the United States.

--In Guatemala, pockets of intense violence are driving some to the U.S. But Guatemalan officials said at the United Nations this week that their migrants are leaving mostly for economic reasons and should not be considered refugees.

And in all three, U.S. politics are at play. Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has made a crackdown on illegal immigration a central tenet of his campaign, vowing to build a giant wall along the southwest border and deport millions of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, a group that advocates against illegal immigration, said the prospect of a Trump presidency is a terrifying one for would-be immigrants, and is spurring the current rush of minors.

Krikorian said the Obama administration's "policy of deterrence" — warning Central Americans that they will be deported if they make the voyage — has fallen flat.

"Eighty percent of the people (Customs and Border Protection) catches are released," Krikorian said. "That's not deterrence. You'd be an idiot not to get into the United States now while you can."

The countries are making some progress in addressing their problems. In Honduras, the government created a commission to review all 14,000 members of the national police force, which has long been plagued by corruption. In the past few months, the commission has interviewed nearly 300 high-ranking police officers and dismissed 110 of them, according to a report from the Wilson Center, a Washington-based think tank.

In El Salvador, the government passed a law that's made it more difficult for gang members to continue running their operations from prisons. Before, people could easily smuggle cell phones into jail and even set up WiFi networks near the prisons so leaders could stay in contact with their gangs. But the new law has slowed that, according to Reuters.

President Obama requested $1 billion to help the so-called Northern Triangle countries improve their economies, security institutions and immigration enforcement capabilities. Congress approved $750 million in December, but most of that money hasn't arrived.

Nebraska Town Considers Banning Smoking In Apartments

By Margery A. Beck

Associated Press, September 25, 2016

Some leaders in a blue-collar Nebraska suburb that's home to Offutt Air Force Base are borrowing an idea from a vastly more liberal state: Ban apartment renters from smoking cigarettes and e-cigarettes inside.

The proposal, which would be one of the few such restrictions outside of California and is similar to federal rules for public housing across the U.S., isn't meant to protect the health of the city's 50,000 residents, but instead to prevent fires.

Councilman Don Preister proposed the ban, which wouldn't affect duplexes and single-family homes, in August after cigarette smoking at a single Bellevue apartment complex led to two fires a month earlier. The second fire destroyed the building, displacing dozens of people, and injured four, including a firefighter.

"We had firefighters in the building … when the floor started giving way," Preister said. "Had they not evacuated, we could have lost lives in the fire. I want to prevent that going forward."

But some residents in the city that borders Omaha set in a deeply conservative state see the proposal – set for a vote by the City Council on Monday – as an example of government overreach.

"I don't see how you're going to tell people what they can do in their homes," Brent Clatterbuck, who owns three apartment complexes in Bellevue, told the City Council earlier this month. "You're messing with somebody's home."

Even some anti-smoking advocates noted that Nebraska would seem an odd choice for the proposal.

"It would be surprising, if it had come up in isolation," said Pat McKone of the American Lung

Association, an anti-smoking group. "But there was a fire. We all understand – no matter what our political persuasion – that fire kills."

The ban, which Preister acknowledged would have secondary benefits of reducing health problems caused by secondhand smoke, is similar to those in dozens of California cities. Federal officials have adopted similar rules in public housing nationwide, but cities have rarely taken up the effort.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees the anti-tobacco group SmokeFree Nebraska, said it couldn't find any local ordinances in Nebraska or surrounding states that are similar to the Bellevue proposal.

"Smoking is both a health and safety issue," McKone said. "I'm not sure why we separate the issues of secondhand smoke and fire safety. Both are a danger to those living in multifamily dwellings."

Preister, who said he has nothing against smokers, argues that such a ban would also lower insurance premiums by preventing expensive fires. U.S. Fire Administration statistics show smoking is the No. 1 cause of home fire deaths.

Opponents of the proposal said officials haven't thought through the proposed change.

Margie Guy, a smoker who also rents four apartments located above her bridal boutique, recently told council members that three of her four renters smoke and two live on fixed incomes.

"Who are we to tell them they can't smoke in their own homes?" Guy asked. "What are the costs of actually enforcing these laws? Has anybody looked at that?"

James Hardy, a smoker who lives in an apartment, argues the measure would violate a state law that says people have a reasonable expectation of privacy in their own homes. He also contends it relegates apartment dwellers, who are often poorer than homeowners, to second-class citizens.

"By passing this law, you're effectively saying to the whole country, 'If you're a private property owner, you may still exercise your personal liberties and still have a reasonable expectation of privacy within your own dwelling' … you're saying to the denizens of all apartments that this new class of citizen must surrender their civil liberties by virtue of where they chose to live."

David Sutton, a spokesman for Richmond, Va.-based Altria Group Inc., which owns the nation's biggest cigarette maker, Philip Morris USA, said in an email there are places where smoking should be banned, such as in small enclosed areas, such as elevators, and places where children primarily are, such as schools.

"Complete bans go too far," he said. "Owners of private residences and other private places should determine the smoking policy for that particular location."

Preister understands the arguments against his proposal. He's not backing down.

"I can empathize with smokers who are continually feeling put upon," he said. "However, smoking is a choice. It's not a protected class. … They just need to go outside or to a safe place."

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FEMA HOUSING

For Disabled Flood Victims, Answers On Housing Take On Special Urgency

By Andrea Gallo

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 23, 2016

Julie Harvey has been sleeping in her wheelchair since last month's floods swallowed up her home, her handicap accessible van, the red curtains she just bought and the souvenirs from a trip to Hawaii before a degenerative disease took hold.

She and her husband, Roy, both 55, have been trying for more than a month to receive a manufactured housing unit from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Harvey is battling Lou Gehrig's disease, also called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS.

As they stay in a Baton Rouge hotel, they wonder why Harvey's condition did not place them at the top of the list to receive a FEMA housing unit and how many other disabled people are living in similar circumstances. FEMA estimates that 15 percent of Louisiana's flood victims will need some form of accessible housing to accommodate a disability.

Advocates for people with disabilities say they should be prioritized for housing after disasters.

"Not only do they have special needs but sometimes they don't have the resources both physical and monetary to help themselves," said Lois Simpson, executive director of the Advocacy Center of Louisiana, which serves disabled people and senior citizens. "They should go to the front of the line."

After The Advocate asked FEMA specifically about Harvey's case on Friday, the Harveys received a call from the agency saying that they would survey their property in Central and that they should be receiving a housing unit. But prior to the newspaper's inquiry, Harvey had spent weeks calling FEMA and asking about whether she could receive one of the units and never received answers.

Related

In determining whether people are eligible for mobile homes, disabilities may not be a reason why somebody is moved up on the list.

"We aim to treat all eligible survivors equally, as our assistance is based on a case-by-case basis," a FEMA representative said in response to a specific question as to whether disabled people are given preference for mobile housing units.

The statement said FEMA encourages "all survivors — regardless of their specific situation — to call us and let us know about their situation. We will work with them and help them find solutions that fit their individual needs."

FEMA has made strides in recent years to try to ensure that their disaster responses include accommodations for people with disabilities, and Simpson said she has seen the improvements. The agency has an Office of Disabilities Integration and Coordination, which was created after their response to Hurricane Katrina did not include enough accommodations for disabled people.

Related

Instead of working directly with disabled people impacted by floods, the office works mostly within FEMA to make sure that their responses and protocols are inclusive for disaster survivors with disabilities. They send interpreters for sign language to FEMA town hall meetings and make sure that disaster recovery centers have signs and equipment for people hard of hearing or with bad vision.

They also meet frequently with a group called Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition, which makes use of Louisiana's existing agencies and advocacy groups for disabled people and senior citizens.

Marcie Roth, director of FEMA's Office of Disabilities Integration and Coordination, encouraged disabled flood victims looking for help to reach out to FEMA directly and to make use of advocacy groups for people with their particular disability.

Roth also encouraged people to mention their disability every time they reach out to FEMA.

Harvey said she tried to do just that, but FEMA never referred her to anyone who could speak to her about the complications her disability presented.

ALS attacks cells that control muscles until it kills those who have it. Along the way, people with ALS lose their ability to walk, to eat, to use the bathroom and to breathe on their own. ALS has no cure, but medicine can help to slow down the progression of the disease.

Related

"If I had to live in a trailer for the rest of my life, I'd be fine with that," Harvey said. "I don't want to spend the rest of my life in hotel rooms."

She and her husband both grew up in Baker and have been married for 35 years. They had been living in their home in Central for 25 years before it flooded, and stayed with a cousin before moving earlier this month to the Homewood Suites on Corporate Boulevard.

Harvey was diagnosed with ALS in 2012. She can still use her arms, talk and eat on her own. But she needs her husband's help to screw open bottles and has started needing his help over the past few weeks to wash her hair in the shower — something she could do by herself before the floods.

They worry that the stress from the floods is making her worse.

Sleeping poses one of the biggest challenges. She's on a breathing machine that requires her to be elevated when she sleeps, and the beds in the hotel where the Harveys have been staying for nearly a month do not adjust or elevate her the way she needs to be.

Harvey needs lots of specialized pillows to prop her up and keep her elevated, which the hotels do not have even in their handicap accessible rooms.

Their specialized bed was lost to the flood. She now spends all day, every day, in her wheelchair. She watches TV during the day, attempts to sleep at night and struggles too much to open the hotel doors to let her dog, Buck, play outside no matter how much he whines.

She was thrilled when FEMA finally contacted her late Friday afternoon saying they were working on a mobile housing unit for them, after unsuccessfully trying for weeks to get a response.

Related

Roth said FEMA has multiple housing unit options for people with disabilities. They have handicap accessible units, which have bigger bathrooms where wheelchairs can spin around, but they can also modify newer units with wheelchair ramps, grab bars or other accommodations for people who need them.

Other units need simpler fixes, like visual fire alarms for people who are deaf.

"We're not simply saying, everybody who has a wheelchair gets this unit," Roth said. "What we're doing is supporting a good match."

Other people trying to work through the system and find FEMA manufactured housing units for disabled people are still going through the same frustrations Harvey experienced.

Elizabeth Chapoton, a volunteer advocate for people with disabilities, has been working with a few families staying in hotels.

She said she constantly gets conflicting information about what people need to do to receive a housing unit. FEMA says people requesting units need to stay in touch with the agency and make sure to send them the proper paperwork.

"I need to know if these mobile units are real, if they're happening, and an actual timeline," Chapoton said. "If these people are not eligible for them, they need to be told so and moving on. Because they're holding onto a lot of hope here."

Related

The Harveys envision putting a housing unit on their property in Central, which is in a floodplain.

Local officials have to provide permits for people to place FEMA housing on their property. FEMA says mobile units can only be placed on a floodplain if there are no other housing resources, like commercial sites or rental properties nearby.

FEMA also says that people can stay in mobile housing units for up to 18 months.

"The first week, possibly two weeks, we cried more than anybody I've ever seen," Julie Harvey said, trying to fight back tears. Her husband rubbed her back and brought her tissues.

"But we're not complaining," she added. "We've had a lot of help."

Permit Office Sees Renovations Flurry

By Lauren Langlois

Hammond (LA) Daily Star, September 25, 2016

Tangipahoa Parish Permit Office processed more than 180 permits from Aug. 16 to Sept. 23 for residential renovations.

Many of those sought the free permits to rebuild after their homes being flooded in August.

Many of the renovations are happening in Ponchatoula, with permits for residential renovations in Robert, Hammond, Tickfaw and Independence coming up frequently as well.

The parish permit office has also processed permits for Federal Emergency Management Agency mobile homes provided to flood victims. So far, 10 permitted mobile homes are on private lands and 18 are in a trailer park on Miller Lane off Airport Road in Hammond.

Parish President Robby Miller said residents have not yet moved in to the emergency mobile homes inside the trailer park, but they should be moving soon as the mobile homes are about ready.

The permit office began seeing requests for FEMA mobile home permits starting last Friday. Six FEMA mobile homes went to residences in Ponchatoula, while one went to a home in the Village of Tangipahoa, two went to Hammond and one went to Independence.

For the period Aug. 16 through Sept. 23, there were 70 new construction permits for residential homes in the parish.

Parish President Denies Trailer Politics

By John Dupont

Livingston Parish News (LA), September 24, 2016

LIVINGSTON — Parish President Layton Ricks on Wednesday denied a Baton Rouge TV station's allegations that political pull put his daughter and son-in-law first in line to receive a FEMA trailer.

The report Tuesday on WBRZ said some parish employees requested the station's investigation after they questioned the issuance of a FEMA trailer to Ricks' daughter.

"I have zero control over FEMA," Ricks told The News. "A parish president gets no control over something like that."

More than 1,400 displaced residents have applied for the mobile housing units in the flood-affected areas. Approximately 40 had moved into the MHUs as of Wednesday.

FEMA grants top priority to first-responders.

He said his son-in-law – a war veteran – works as a first-responder with the Denham Springs Police Department. His daughter also works for DSPD.

"What you have is a war veteran trying to work as a policeman all the while his home is flooded and he's trying to work around the clock, while getting a few hours of sleep while he tries to rebuild their home," Ricks said.

The parish president said his daughter is eight months pregnant and falls into a "high risk" stage.

"I have another daughter who is flooded and she is staying with friends," Ricks said. "She doesn't have a FEMA trailer and she's not married to a first responder.

"It's a sad day when people begrudge first responders," he said.

Ricks does not believe his family members should receive preferential treatment.

He does not believe, however, that they should be "punished" for their association with him if they go through the same application process.

Ricks is also working to repair his home, which received floodwater and damage to newly purchased furniture.

"I don't have a FEMA trailer, yet I'm still slammed and snowed under," he said.

SpayMart Founder Comes To Rescue Of Kitties From Louisiana Flood

New Orleans Times-Picayune, September 24, 2016

When I talked to Lynn Chiche on Wednesday morning, she was getting medical records together for the 10 cats she was taking from her SpayMart Sanctuary in Picayune, Miss., to Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans. She was thrilled because they were on their way to new forever homes.

"It's going to be awesome," she said. "Alaskan Airlines is doing once-a-week transports, taking flood dogs and cats to the Northwest. The Cat Adoption Team in Portland , Ore., has agreed to take 10 of our cats."

I was not surprised when she told me about the days she had spent in late August, visiting overstressed and overcrowded shelters from Denham Springs to Opelousas, leaving supplies and picking up kitties – a whole lot of kitties, as it turned out.

"I never intended to take so many," she said, which made me laugh.

Once, a long time ago, Chiche told me she was like an alcoholic, except it wasn't another drink she craved.

"I just always have to save one more cat," she said.

That could be her motto.

She and Pam Casey founded SpayMart in 1998 with the mission of promoting spaying and neutering to help solve the pet overpopulation crisis in southeast Louisiana. They settled on saving cats after visiting local shelters and asking, 'What can we do to have the biggest effect on euthanasia rates?" The answer was always the same: Educate people about the need to spay and neuter their pet cats. Educate people about the need to spay and neuter feral cats, too.

"Most shelters were killing five cats for every dog they euthanized," Chiche said. "That number has stayed about the same over the years."

Shortly before Katrina, the nonprofit group was getting ready to open a low-cost, high-volume spay-neuter clinic, but the storm tore the roof off the building and destroyed everything inside.

It flooded Chiche's house in Metairie, too, and she and her husband ended up in a FEMA trailer in rural Mississippi. The property included a 17,000 square-foot building that would become the SpayMart cat sanctuary.

Eventually, the FEMA trailer was replaced by a double-wide, and Chiche has been there ever since, caring for hundreds of cats. She brings adoptable cats to the SpayMart Thrift Shop on Veterans Boulevard in Metairie, adopts out senior cats to senior humans, and has a Community Kitten Foster Program in southeast Louisiana, where volunteers foster litters of kittens until they're ready to be adopted.

She takes in special-needs cats, older cats rescued from hoarder cases, cats left behind when people move out of apartments, kittens found in parking lots. She has always told me she wants to keep her numbers at "no more than 250," but when I ask her how many she has at the sanctuary, she usually admits to "almost 300."

I knew she would be rescuing cats after the August flooding, and I was happy to learn that Patty Hegwood had been with her. The two animal advocates are longtime friends.

"Patty brought money and support from Best Friends, and I told her, 'Why don't you and I get in the car and see where the help is needed most,'" Chiche said.

Hegwood was the business partner of Dr. Rollie Norris at Ark Animal Hospital on Jefferson Highway until 10 years ago. She left Metairie in 2006 and went to work for Best Friends Animal Society in Angel Canyon, Utah, so she could "help animals on a national level."

After the historic flooding, she came back to Louisiana to assess the situation.

"She talked them into letting her come," Chiche said.

Everywhere the two women went, they were moved by the devastation.

"It just pulled at your heart," Chiche said. "The shelter in Denham Springs was completely destroyed. It looked like after Katrina. The Companion Animal Alliance in East Baton Rouge got it really, really bad, too."

They visited one shelter and rescue group after another and left behind donations of dog and cat food, bowls, blankets, leashes and other supplies.

"I had put out a plea through the Thrift Shop," Chiche said.

As they went from place to place, they saw members of other familiar New Orleans area rescue groups, like ARNO, the St. Francis Animal Sanctuary, and Zeus's Place. And as they made their way west, they met others who shared their mission.

"Like Cat Haven and Companion Animal Alliance and Acadiana Animal Aid," she said.

It wasn't until they got to their last stop on Aug. 28 – the St. Landry Parish Animal Control in Opelousas – that Chiche felt the full impact of the disaster.

"I'd never seen so many dogs in my life. It was just row after row after row of them," she said.

The St. Landry shelter takes in dogs and cats from several rural areas where strays are handled by police departments, and there's no other animal control.

"It's just an endless stream of dogs and cats, puppies and kittens coming in," Chiche said.

She had already grabbed six older cats from Lamar-Dixon that day – pets whose families could no longer keep them because they had lost their homes – but when she entered the cat holding area at St. Landry, she knew she had to take more.

"The whole area was full, and cats were spilling out into the annex," she said. "It was mommas and babies and half-grown kittens. You see those little faces, and your heart just breaks."

She started walking up and down the rows, looking for the friendliest cats, the prettiest kittens, the most adoptable ones.

"I spent 30 minutes trying to make selections," she said.

Then she spied a pitiful tabby kitten with a look of total defeat on his face.

"He had his head down, and one arm was hanging outside the cage," Chiche said. "He had obviously given up hope."

She told Hegwood "I don't think I can do this," and Hegwood said, "Do you want me to pick?"

"I told Patty, 'No, I think I'm just going to take them all,'" Chiche said.

The room got very quiet, and the director said, "What did you say?" wondering if she had heard correctly. And then the director was crying and Chiche was crying, and they were loading up 59 cats and kittens. She named the sad little kitten "Reggie," and he is now a beautiful, playful 5-month-old ready to be adopted.

"I named every single one of them," Chiche said. "They're already all of our children."

When I asked her how many cats she'd have at the sanctuary after the 10 left for their new homes in Oregon, she said, "Over 300."

But that's all right. She did what Reggie's sweet little face inspired her to do.

What heartens Chiche is knowing how many other rescues in south Louisiana are passionate about saving animals.

"That's the little silver lining in all the sadness," she said. "I met so many people who are doing what we're doing. We're making progress. It's just going to take some time."

To learn more about SpayMart or about adopting a SpayMart cat, visit SpayMart.org.

Lake County's Recovery: South Lake County Fire Continues Commitment To Protect, Rebuild Community

By Elizabeth Larson

Lake County (CA) News, September 25, 2016

SOUTH LAKE COUNTY, Calif. – The year 2015 will be remembered by many for the personal destruction it brought in the form of the Valley fire.

Tens of thousands of people were driven from their homes, thousands were left homeless.

The southern Lake County landscape – known for its pine forests as well as oak-studded vistas – was drastically changed and is unlikely to recover fully within the lifetimes of many those who loved it.

The 2015 wildland fire season and the damage it did across Northern California as a whole is likely to be remembered for one horrifying fact, according to Los Angeles-based Fire Family Foundation Executive Director Robin McCarthy.

"This is the largest loss of property since the 1906 earthquake for firefighters," she told Lake County News.

McCarthy said that, altogether, 33 firefighters across Northern California lost their homes while they were simply out doing their jobs on the lines of the Butte and Valley fires.

Of those firefighters, 16 were in the South Lake County District. Dan McCabe, president of the South Lake County Firefighters Association, said that number included current or past South Lake County Fire and Cal Fire personnel – both paid and volunteer, as well as a board member – and their families.

The third most damaging wildland fire in California's history, the fire began on Saturday, Sept. 12, 2015, on Highway Valley Road in Cobb and peaked seven days later, according to Cal Fire.

It burned approximately 76,067 acres, primarily in Lake County, but with some of that acreage also in neighboring Napa and Sonoma counties.

The fire resulted in four confirmed fatalities, with authorities unable to confirm if a fifth man who disappeared during the fire also ultimately perished in it.

There also were four significant firefighter injuries when Cal Fire Copter 104's crews were caught in a burn over within the first hour of the fire. Cal Fire said one of those firefighters' injuries were serious enough that he did not return to work.

Cal Fire said the effort to fight the fire involved 4,400 personnel, 437 fire engines, 22 helicopters, 56 bulldozers, two airtankers, 100 hand crews, 75 water tenders, and more than 200 cooperating local government and volunteer agencies assisting from throughout the nation.

Based on Cal Fire's final damage assessment on the fire, released in January, the fire destroyed approximately 1,955 structures, including 1,308 residences, 66 commercial buildings, 558 outbuildings and 23 other structures. Another 93 structures were damaged.

All but eight of the destroyed or damaged structures were in Lake County. Two were in Napa and six in Sonoma, Cal Fire said.

This summer, Cal Fire released its final determination that the fire had been sparked by faulty wiring to a hot tub at a Cobb residence.

Cal Fire reported that it paid $59 million out of its emergency fund to fight the fire, with the state seeking additional assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

State Sen. Mike McGuire said the fire resulted in $1.2 billion in damage in Lake County alone.

More than 50 percent of acres burned in the State Responsibility Area in 2015 were in Lake County, according to Cal Fire.

And in 2015, the South Lake County Fire Protection District – one of the state's largest fire districts by land area, according to district Board President Jim Comisky – was hit especially hard.

Cal Fire said 63 percent of the district's footprint burned between the Jerusalem and Valley fires in 2015.

As a result, the men and women of the South Lake County Fire Protection District would suffer devastating losses that mirrored those endured by the community members they serve.

Help from the state, Fire Family Foundation, local friends

The Fire Family Foundation became a nonprofit in 2008, and is the charitable hand of the Firefighters First Credit Union, headquartered in Los Angeles but covering the entire state of California, McCarthy said.

She explained that it was formed in response to needs that arose from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack.

Firefighters, she explained, are part of a larger brotherhood.

The credit union had created a fund to help the firefighters' families impacted by the attack, and ultimately led to a desire to create a foundation to provide financial assistance to departments, firefighters and their families impacted by disaster.

When the Valley fire first hit early last September, the foundation decided to open a relief fund specifically for Middletown, and issued a challenge by the California Credit Union League, McCarthy said.

The foundation also partnered with Redwood Credit Union and Mendo Lake Credit Union, which already were part of fire-related fundraising efforts. "They know the community much better than we do," she said.

Ultimately, the foundation – in partnership with the California Credit Union League – provided $167,800 for care, counseling, housing and community support to assist children and families in recovering from the fire, McCarthy said.

Another piece of the funding, about $18,000, went specifically to help firefighters and came about through a separate fund called "Helping Firefighters Heal" through which Northern California fire departments could adopt the impacted firefighters, McCarthy said.

She said that funding effort – a partnership of the Fire Family Foundation and the Oakland Firefighters Random Acts – determined immediate needs and provided up to $1,000 per impacted firefighter.

McCarthy said the foundation doesn't provide cash, but offered gift cards to cover needs such as appliances, fencing, tools and, in one firefighters' case, paid for training because of loss of training paperwork.

In some cases, she said fire departments that adopted the firefighters who lost homes went out shopping and delivered the items to the individuals they were designated to help.

"It really varied depending on the individuals and where they were," she said.

McCarthy added, "This is literally what we do."

Among the foundation's efforts on the ground in Lake County, it donated money to help rebuild local youth sports programs, including the Middletown Colts, soccer boosters, Clear Lake Youth Soccer, Middletown Youth Little League and Middletown Youth Basketball, McCarthy said.

She said the foundation also donated funds to help with South Lake County Fire's Christmas event, which handed out toys to hundreds of children in December, and hosted Santa and Mrs. Claus.

The foundation also provided funding to repair the Pine Summit Recreation and Social Club, gave funds to support school garden programs – "dirty therapy" for children – throughout the burn area as well as money to help the Cobb Mountain Lions Club Relief Center.

"They've been a key player," Cal Fire Division Chief Greg Bertelli said of the Fire Family Foundation.

There also was an effort by other local firefighters to assist.

In October, the Northshore Fire Association held a pancake breakfast benefit for firefighters who lost homes in the Valley fire.

That event may well have been the most successful pancake breakfast in memory. Northshore Fire Chief Jay Beristianos said it generated $10,000 to assist the impacted firefighters.

The toll on employees

Bertelli was a battalion chief the day he responded to the Valley fire last year. Since then he's been promoted to division chief, and also is South Lake County Fire's chief.

He said the district's employees who were affected are moving forward with their lives. There is a fair amount of turnover among the district's professional firefighters, with some moving on to other jobs. But he's not aware of anyone leaving strictly due to the fire.

Bertelli acknowledged, "Everybody's a little shell-shocked."

Add to that, they're working longer hours in response to the area's wildland fires.

"And the anticipation of another one, it does hang over people's heads," Bertelli said.

It was tough enough just recovering from the Valley fire, but so see the Clayton fire impact another community so heavily, and so soon afterward, was difficult, he said.

The main thing, he said, is the health and welfare of the district's employees and their families.

Bertelli said fire seasons are getting longer every year, and it could be another few months before the 2016 fire season is over. Over the last few years, fire seasons have extended deeper into the fall months, finally being called closed at the start of December.

The months of September and October also pose particular challenges, as they're when catastrophic fires normally occur, Bertelli said.

There are concerns that the winter may not have enough wet weather. "I don't see any rain in the forecast," said Bertelli, noting that Northern California will need a lot of rain to get onto the ground to alleviate its fire conditions.

Amidst the concerns of fires here in Lake County, Bertelli said the district's Cal Fire firefighters, crews, engines and bulldozers have continued to travel to other areas to work on major incidents, such as the Sobranes, Gap and Saddle fires.

"We constantly are moving resources around," he said.

Financial realities and project planning

South Lake County Fire contracts with Cal Fire each year for service at a cost of $2.2 million. However, with 70 percent of its property tax dollars lost primarily due to the Valley fire, officials said it has required financial assistance.

McGuire and Assemblyman Bill Dodd obtained funds to backfill those obligations from the time of the fire through June, at which time Gov. Jerry Brown's new budget included another $2.2 million to cover the district's budget through the end of June 2017.

"There is no way the district can afford this contract, which is why the state is stepping in to continue to ensure there is not a blip in coverage," McGuire told Lake County News.

In addition, McGuire and Dodd managed to get another $1.3 million included in the state's 2016-17 budget to help the county cover lost revenue from property, sales and bed tax lost as a result of the Valley fire.

"The full financial impact hasn't yet been felt," Bertelli said of the Valley fire, explaining that the district is still trying to project out the budgetary impacts.

Comisky, himself a firefighter for 38 years, said one of the immediate impacts is that the district's call volume dropped significantly in the fire's wake.

He said the district is now working on a strategic plan to assess its future and what it will require to meet the needs of its community in the years to come.

Part of the focus is on fiscal responsibility – including putting as much money into reserves as possible – and creative thinking. Both will be needed as Comisky does not expect a third year of funding from the state to cover the Cal Fire contract after having received two years of that support.

Comisky estimated the district's annual budget totals between $2.6 million and $2.7 million. Of that amount, $2.4 million annually goes to the contract with Cal Fire.

In March, Comisky – along with Sheriff Brian Martin and Comisky's high school classmate and longtime friend, Board of Supervisors Chair Rob Brown – testified before a state legislative committee on behalf of fire relief assistance legislation put forward by McGuire and Dodd seeking assistance for the county.

Without Cal Fire, the district couldn't on its own afford the level of service currently offered to the community, he said.

Rob Bostock, the board's vice president, said that along with Comisky he works to keep an eye on the money.

At the open house the district and Cal Fire held on Sept. 11 to mark the fire's one-year anniversary, Bostock said that dollars and cents "is the issue."

Beyond that, speaking of his community of Cobb, he believes people will rebuild because it's a special place.

The district's roadmap for the days to come includes creating a strategic plan and finding sustainable funding, Comisky said.

While he said the situation is a "scary thing," he added, "I think we're going to be OK."

In the short-term, as rebuilding is under way, he said the district has brought on Chris Vallerga to fulfill fire captain and fire marshal duties. Vallerga will be devoted full-time to signing off permits for new construction.

"The codes have changed significantly," said Comisky, so having a staffer devoted to working with the community to meet those changes is critical.

Comisky also wants to push forward on a plan for emergency sirens – a total of seven in the district's coverage area – which will cost more than $184,000.

Sirens – one each – would be located in Loch Lomond, Cobb, Anderson Springs and Middletown, with three in HVL, he said.

Cal Fire Battalion Chief Mike Wink said Loch Lomond has siren equipment that needs to be replaced.

An overarching plan that's under way calls for a total of 28 sirens all over the county, according to Supervisor Rob Brown.

"We hear loud and clear from the community, this is what we want," Comisky said of the siren project.

There used to be sirens on stations to notify volunteers. "We quit using them years ago," said Comisky.

A question still to be answered is how many of the burned structures will be rebuilt.

For Comisky, the hope is that the community's population won't just return but will grow beyond what it was before.

Bertelli said one of the key lessons to emerge from the fire is relevant to firefighters and everyday community members alike.

Whether in business or in one's personal life, "We're all vulnerable to the effects of fire."

How Louisiana Property Owners Can Help Disaster Survivors

Gonzales (LA) Weekly Citizen, September 26, 2016

If you own a multi-family dwelling that needs repairs and are willing to lease to eligible FEMA applicants, then you may be interested in the Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program (MLRP). This FEMA program provides funds to make rental units habitable again, and at the same time helps survivors of the severe August storms and floods.

Here's how it works: After you and FEMA agree on the work that needs to be done and the associated costs, you may choose your own contractor and start the repairs. The repairs or improvements do not need to be storm- or flood-related. The value of the work will be deducted from the value of the lease agreement, but may not exceed its total value.

To qualify for MLRP funds your property must meet certain criteria. First, it must have five or more units to qualify as a multi-family dwelling. Second, it must have been previously used as a rental unit. And third, it must be located in one of the following parishes: Acadia, Ascension, Avoyelles, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. James, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Vermilion, Washington, West Baton Rouge, or West Feliciana.

In addition, the property must be accessible to community services like schools and grocery stores, and not be located in a flood-prone area. FEMA will require a lease of exclusive use of the property as temporary housing for a period of at least 18 months. The property owner must provide all property management services, and repairs must comply with local building codes, standards, permitting, inspection requirements and other laws.

Contact the Multi-Family Lease and Repair Program at (225) 382-1464 or email FEMA-ia-dhops@fema.dhs.gov if you are a property owner interested in having your rental property repaired and assisting disaster survivors.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Central Officials Say Inspection Process Moving Along In City Hit Hard By Floods

By Amy Wold

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 25, 2016

The now-familiar piles of debris look exactly the same in front of two neighboring homes along Elkhorn Drive in Central.

Both homes got the same amount of flooding, about 40 inches or so. Both have been cleaned out of drywall and carpet, with air conditioning humming at all hours to help dry out the interiors.

However, the path forward toward rebuilding will be different for each because one is in the 100-year flood zone and one is not.

"It's in a holding pattern until a valuation can be done," said David Ratcliff, program director of Central Municipal Services, pointing to the house on the left, the one in the flood zone, on a recent trip down through parts of Central to look at home inspection progress.

The home in the 100-year-floodplain, what FEMA designates as the area at highest risk of flooding, will need an evaluation to determine if it has to be elevated. The house just a few feet to the right will only require an inspection and free permit before the homeowners can start rebuilding.

"People don't understand that," Ratcliff said.

In Central, homes fall into three categories for what homeowners need to do before rebuilding.

Home owners outside the FEMA flood zone just need to get a permit and inspection before they rebuild.

Related

A home in the flood zone that received 36 inches or less of water will need a permit and inspection and then it's ready to go, Ratcliff said. The city has determined those houses are unlikely to lend themselves to substantial damage, which is part of the threshold that provokes an evaluation of whether a structure needs to raised.

But owners of homes in a flood zone that got more than 36 inches of water are going to need an elevation certificate, which is a determination of whether the house is above the base flood elevation on FEMA maps. If the home is above the base flood elevation, then the owner just needs to get a permit from the city, which are free for rebuilding work, and then can start rebuilding.

If the home is found to be below base flood elevation, the owner will need to get a contractor estimate for repairs. If that estimate shows that repairs will cost less than 50 percent of the value of the home, the owner can get a permit and rebuild. However, if the damage estimate comes back as costing more than half of the home's value, there will be additional requirements before a home can be repaired, such as elevation.

That isn't the final say since homeowners can appeal a decision, Ratcliff said. So far, out of 1,500 or more homes that have been evaluated so far, only one has met that description of being below base flood elevation, got more than 36 inches of water and had more than 50 percent damage, he said.

The home inspections are moving along in a city where Ratcliff estimates at least 90 percent of the damaged homes have already been cleaned out.

When people are ready to go, they come in for a permit and an inspector makes an appointment for a home inspection before people can get started putting up drywall and generally rebuilding.

The city services, run by the private company IBTS, called in additional inspectors who have come in from all over the country to help out for two-week stints. They are doing building inspections of the estimated 6,000 to 8,000 Central homes that were damaged in the August floods.

Inspections include moisture tests, checking out electrical and plumbing systems, along with giving some helpful advice.

"We're doing a lot of instruction of what to do," said Jack Gleason, building official for Central.

Some of the tips include replacing the electrical inlets if they had been underwater, placing a small metal plate over studs where water pipes go through to avoid puncturing them when putting up drywall and to keep the air conditioning running to prevent the house from building up moisture.

Currently, there are four to six inspectors working during the week with six to eight working on the weekends when more people are at home. Each inspector can do about 30 homes a day, Ratcliff said. Once that is done, the city gives a certificate for occupancy.

Mayor Jr. Shelton said it can be frustrating for people to go through all the steps, but it's necessary not only to make sure homes are safe for people to start rebuilding, but for larger reasons as well.

"I've got a letter from FEMA saying if we don't make people get permits our National Flood Insurance Program is in question for the whole city," Shelton said. “It is something being done for their protection and it’s mandated by FEMA.”

One other tip city officials have is for those residents getting FEMA manufactured housing units set up on their property while they work on their homes. As soon as a person knows they’re going to get one of the mobile homes, Ratcliff said, they need to call the utility company to get a power hookup in place since it can take seven to 10 days for the necessary equipment to get set up.

So far, the city has received 138 pre-applications for the temporary housing units, a bit of a frustration for city officials. Rules have been set up by FEMA to get permits, but then FEMA contractors don’t seem to be following those rules all the time, Shelton said.

Just Wednesday morning, Radcliff said he called the FEMA temporary housing liaison to get help for a woman looking for a temporary shelter where she and her ailing husband could stay, only to be told that the FEMA representative had been reassigned.

The person didn’t know who the new representative was but said he would get the person to make contact with the city. FEMA did not respond to requests for comment about the criticism.

“FEMA is too large to operate in an emergency,” Shelton said. “It’s obvious they try to use one template for every disaster.”

Shelton said he’s had to spend large parts of his time using “common sense” to address FEMA rules that he doesn’t find logical.

For example, a renter who was flooded out wanted to get a mobile home placed at her mother’s house so she could stay in Central and her children could stay in school instead of being moved out of the area.

Related

There was concern from FEMA officials that if the trailer was placed at the mother’s home, the mother would end up living in it, Shelton said. No one, Shelton said, would want to live in these temporary homes if they had any other choice, but that’s the type of thing that has been taking up a lot of his time.

“This event could happen anywhere in the United States,” Shelton said. “You would think they’d have a procedure just for this kind of event.”

FEMA Addresses Survivor Concerns, Updates Deadlines

Donaldsonville (LA) Chief, September 24, 2016

The TSA checkout date has been extended to Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2016. FEMA will contact applicants who are eligible for the extension to notify them of their new checkout date.

National Flood Insurance Program considerations

Rates

Flood losses in Louisiana will not cause flood insurance rates to rise above scheduled annual rate

increases. Properties located in a floodplain that have federally backed mortgages are required by law

to be properly insured against known hazards, such as flooding. Anyone can purchase a flood insurance

policy if they live in a community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Coverage

The NFIP offers two types of coverage — building and contents. The mortgage lender may only

require you to purchase flood insurance for the structure. Contents coverage will cover items such as

personal belongings and furniture for an additional premium. To find your approximate flood insurance

costs and the hazard level of your area, visit FloodSmart.gov and enter the property address.

Contact your insurance agent for questions about a specific property.

Help paying for flood insurance in Louisiana

You may have to obtain flood insurance as a condition of receiving federal disaster assistance

following Louisiana’s recent severe storms and floods, but FEMA can help. FEMA may pay for three

years’ worth of premiums if you’re a homeowner or renter who receives federal disaster help and didn’t

have flood insurance. Keep flood insurance once FEMA stops paying your premiums to be considered

for certain recovery grants after future disasters.

NFIP Deadline extended

Policy holders now have 120 days from the date of loss to file a flood insurance claim. The extension

doubles the 60 day deadline NFIP usually requires.

NFIP Milestones

As of Sept. 16, the NFIP authorized and issued more than $373 million in payments to 28,900

policy holders so they can repair and rebuild.

Other survivor concerns

Re-internment: FEMA disaster assistance may be available for re-internment efforts in Louisiana

cemeteries, where floodwaters have dislodged or destroyed caskets, vaults, and mausoleums.

In privately owned cemeteries, assistance may be available if the costs are the legal responsibility of an individual and not the cemetery. Individuals seeking assistance in a privately owned cemetery should register at (800) 621-3362. For publicly owned cemeteries, assistance may be available through our Public Assistance program which reimburses local governments for infrastructure repairs. The owner and/or operator of the public cemetery must apply via Louisianapa.com.

Flood Protection May Lower Insurance

By Zita Fletcher

Rio Rancho (NM) Observer, September 24, 2016

Thanks to efforts of county floodplain managers and their team, Sandoval County property owners might get a break on flood insurance rates.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which oversees the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), provides community flood insurance in return for local government's adoption and enforcement of a floodplain management ordinance.

The ordinance creates safe standards for structures built in flood hazard areas.

Flood-prone areas are rife throughout the county – rivers, streams, arroyos, watercourses and steep topography create dangers for homeowners during and after heavy rains.

A recent FEMA inspection found county floodplain management has gone above and beyond federal standards, creating safety conditions that earned the county a special commendation from FEMA Branch Chief Lisa Jennings.

"Sandoval County is commended for adopting this higher regulatory standard for new or substantially improved structures, which protects property from flood loss and reduces potential for human loss in all areas of the community," Jennings wrote in a letter to County Manager Phil Rios.

County floodplain managers Maria Martinez-Encinias and Brad Stebleton worked to ensure NFIP building requirements in floodplain areas surpassed federal standards. They took FEMA officials on a tour of the county's floodplain last fall.

"What they told us when they audited us is that we were doing a bunch of things that the program already does," said Stebleton, "so we should apply to become part of that so our people can get lower insurance rates."

The county has since been invited to participate in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS), which results in a reduction in premiums for the community's flood insurance policyholders.

"They basically told us, 'You guys are doing these things, anyway. You might as well get credit for it. And it saves your residents' money,'" said Stebleton.

The CRS is similar to ISO ratings for fire protection.

"They (FEMA) are showing us how we can better educate the community through the CRS program," said Martinez-Encinias.

Martinez-Encinias, whose in-laws suffered property damage from an unexpected flood, said the county seeks greater public engagement in flood safety education.

"We have ideas," she said, describing plans to put signage on common and hazardous floodways. She also wants to arrange visits with schools to educate youth about flood safety.

"What better way is there to reach out to the community than to reach out to children and do projects with them?" said Martinez-Encinias, suggesting the creation of tiny floodway models as a teaching option.

Flooding affects both rural and urban communities across the county.

"Rio Rancho is surprisingly very flood prone," Stebleton said.

He said most common deaths in flood events are caused by people attempting to drive their cars through floodwater in the road.

"Water is more powerful than people think it is," he said.

Both managers attended CRS training courses. They hope to partner with members of the community to increase flood education and enhance their CRS rating to lower insurance rates.

"CRS is voluntary. It's not something we have to do," said Martinez-Encinias. "It's something we're doing for the community."

Commission To Comment On Convention Center Annexation

Las Cruces (NM) Sun-News, September 24, 2016

LAS CRUCES – Doña Ana County commissioners on Tuesday will weigh in on a proposed annexation of land by the city of Las Cruces for an expansion of the Las Cruces Convention Center and the construction of a hotel.

Commissioners don't have authority to interfere with annexations by the city but are given the chance to comment on them in state law, county officials have said.

The city's proposed annexation covers 7.165 acres to the south and west of the city-owned Las Cruces Convention Center, 680 E. University Ave., Las Cruces.

The Development Review Committee and county staff recommended commenting that the acreage is in a high-risk flood zone area under Federal Emergency Management Agency flood zone maps and rules pertaining to development in those zones should be followed, according to county documents.

In addition, county commissioners are set to:

The meeting starts 9 a.m. Tuesday at the Doña Ana County Government Center, 845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces.

–

If you go

What:

Doña Ana County commission meeting

When:

9 a.m. Tuesday

Where:

Doña Ana County Government Center, 845 N. Motel Blvd., Las Cruces

Info:www.donaanacounty.org; 575-647-7200

Tsunami Inundation Zones Not The Same As Flood Zones

Maui (HI) Now, September 25, 2016

Mayor Alan Arakawa answers some of the questions submitted to his office staff.

Submit your own questions about County of Maui programs, services, operations or policies to Mayor Alan Arakawa via email at AskTheMayor@mauicounty.gov, call 270-7855 or send them by mail to 200 S. High St., 9th Floor, Wailuku, HI 96793. Questions submitted will be considered for inclusion in the "Ask the Mayor" column.

Aloha Readers,

Recently in this column, I answered a question about flood insurance and mentioned that you could find out if you are in a flood zone by looking at the maps in the white pages of your phone book.

I have since been reminded that these are not technically flood maps, but rather tsunami inundation maps. The difference is that a flood doesn't need to originate from the ocean, as does a tsunami.

Floods can occur near streams, rivers, gulches, ditches, roads or anywhere fast-running water can flow.

The 'Īao Valley flood last week is a perfect example, as that flood came from the Wailuku River overflowing.

For viewing flood maps, you can use FEMA's map service center at https://msc.fema.gov/portal.

For information on flood insurance, premiums, flood risks and other related information, go to www.floodsmart.gov.

Please note that these FEMA flood maps do not include parcel boundaries on properties. You may need to compare FEMA maps with county property tax maps.

Also, you can use the State of Hawai'i flood hazard assessment tool, which will give an approximate location of the property.

To find a particular flood zone, log on to http://gis.hawaiinfip.org/FHAT. Using the "TMK Search" on the right, you can enter the Tax Map Key or the address on the upper left "Search" window.

Once you locate the property, the tab labeled "Map Legend" on the right gives an explanation of what color is associated with which flood zones and what it means.

I apologize for the mistake last week, but hopefully with the Īao flood still fresh on everyone's mind, this expanded explanation will be both relevant and useful.

FERC Notice Starts Clock Ticking

By Melinda Stotts

Miami (OK) News Record, September 25, 2016

MIAMI – Despite great efforts by local and tribal governments to stop any changes in the operations of the Pensacola Dam Project at Grand Lake for hydroelectric power generation, the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) has filed an application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to permanently amend its re-licensure and the process continues to move forward.

On Sept. 22, FERC issued a public notice of the application for GRDA's amendment of license soliciting comments, motions to intervene and protests.

"GRDA believes that if granted by the Commission, the change in the rule curve under this Application will result in significant improvements to public recreation and safety during the peak recreation period each year, and eliminate the need for stakeholders to consult yearly on temporary variance to the rule curve for the remainder of the license term," Sullivan wrote, in a May 6 letter to FERC's Secretary Kimberly D. Bose, accompanying the application.

GRDA's formal request to FERC is asking for permanent amendment of the project's Article 401 reservoir elevation rule curve of Grand Lake from Aug. 16 through Oct. 31 each year as part of its renewed license.

Under GRDA's proposal, between Aug. 16 and Sept. 15 the reservoir would be maintained at 743 feet

Pensacola Datum (PD), which is up to 2 feet higher than the current rule curve.

Between Sept. 16 and Sept. 30, the elevation would be lowered from 743 to 742 feet PD.

Between Oct. 1 and Oct. 31, the reservoir would be maintained at 742 feet PD, which is up one foot higher than the current rule curve.

After Oct. 31, reservoir elevations would follow the project's current rule curve.

GRDA's application was filed on May 6, and supplemented on June 2, and again June 30 in regards to the Pensacola Hydroelectric Project. The project affects Craig, Delaware, Mayes and Ottawa counties in Oklahoma.

The City of Miami and the nine tribes of the Northeastern Oklahoma Inter-Tribal Council — the Quapaw, Peoria, Wyandotte Nation, Miami, Modoc, Seneca-Cayuga, Shawnee, Eastern Shawnee and Ottawa — have intervened directly to FERC to halt any efforts by GRDA to make amendment to their operations of the Pensacola Dam and Grand Lake levels without proper notice, input and relevant studies being completed and considered.

These intervening governments have alleged GRDA's operations of the project historically have caused backwater effect flooding, or have increased flooding in Ottawa County along the watershed upstream.

These governments also allege proper easements have never been purchased by GRDA to operate the lake at current levels, let alone with any increases.

During a consultation with the Inter-Tribal Council, tribal leaders spoke passionately about the adversity, devastation and hardships created by backwater flooding to tribal lands, homes, businesses, services, culturally and historically important property, economic revenues and tribal members.

The City of Miami makes similar arguments against the proposed rule curve changes.

Both the City of Miami and tribes have intervened to ask that no further changes be granted to GRDA until proper studies occur.

"The City of Miami intends to be a very active participant in the process to address the flooding issues that have been experienced by our community for years," Miami City Manager Dean Kruithof said in response to FERC's recent notice.

Miami's Flood Mitigation Advisory Board is meeting at 7 p.m. on Sept. 26 at the Miami Civic Center to discuss GRDA's re-application for license and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) flood risk maps.

The tribes are asking FERC to consider the Federal Power Act and the National Historic Preservation Act responsibilities of both FERC and GRDA required for the purpose of operation a hydroelectric facility on tribal lands.

These requirements were not met according to ITC's legal counsel. Nor was any or adequate compensation been made to the tribes.

GRDA's 786-page re-license application filing on May 6 includes a letter to FERC from GRDA CEO and General Manager Dan Sullivan outlining reasons for the amendment request.

Sullivan states in his letter the request is for purposes of promoting public safety, water quality, and recreational enhancement through a peak public recreation period at Grand Lake.

Sullivan's letter to FERC with the application states the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined the application request would not adversely affect any listed species under the Endangered Species Act and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is in full support of the proposal.

GRDA advised the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality asked for water quality certification, which GRDA applied for on April 16.

Sullivan's letter states that the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office recommended plans for storm and drought management.

Along with GRDA's application, a Storm Adaptive Management Plan to address high water conditions upstream and downstream of Grand Lake during major precipitation events has been included.

GRDA also included a Drought Adaptive Management Plan to be followed to determine project operation if certain drought conditions occur.

According to Sullivan's letter, GRDA included in their filing comments from agencies and stakeholders, a complete record of consultation.

GRDA was granted a temporary variance by FERC on Aug.12 for this year, again despite protests form both the City of Miami and individual tribes of the NEO Inter-Tribal Council.

"In determining the appropriate action to take, the Commission will consider all protests or other comments filed, but only those who file a motion to intervene in accordance with the Commission's Rules may become a party to the proceeding," FERC Secretary Kimberly D. Bose states in the public notice.

All interested and effected parties now have 30 days from the date of the notice to file comments, motions to intervene, or protest.

According to FERC's notice adherent to the Federal Power Act, 16 USC 791(a)- 825 (r), all documents may be filed electronically via FERC's website at http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/efiling.asp.

Commenters can submit comments up to 6,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at http;//www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/ecomment.asp. and include name, and contact information at the end of the comments.

All filings and comments must bear in all capital letters the title " COMMENTS," "PROTEST," or " MOTION TO INTERVENE," as applicable.

FERC may be contacted for assistance toll free at 1-866-208-3676,but strongly encourages electronic filing. Documents may also be paper-filed to Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington DC 20426. All comments should include the project number (P-1494-437).

Dewberry Proceeds With FEMA Task Order For Louisiana Rainfall And Flash Flooding Event Analysis

Sensors & Systems, September 23, 2016

Dewberry is proceeding with a task order from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for imagery and data interpretation of the recent Louisiana floods under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's strategic source indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity, remote sensing to support incident management and homeland security contract.

The firm will determine impacts from the heavy rains, flash floods, and inland riverine flooding in the state. Imagery and other source materials regarding the areas of interest will be interpreted to provide flood extents; an enumeration and typing of damaged buildings; a classification of individual building damage levels; and an analysis of infrastructure damage, isolated communities, and debris accumulation resulting from the flooding events. Imagery and relevant data will range from Civil Air Patrol geotagged digital images, Synthetic Aperture Radar, field reports, and other damage observations.

Within 48 hours of the task order award, initial assessments were available and will continue to be updated as new ones are completed or as imagery is further processed. Damage assessment progress maps will be updated and sent daily until the task is complete.

Dewberry has already used National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service (NOAA AHPS) to analyze the peak crest dates and elevations and found that historic flood crest records have been exceeded. NOAA AHPS will continue to be used to assist in the data planning and acquisition. As more information is collected, the firm will refine the flood extent boundaries created during initial assessments. Dewberry will also create a grid based on the U.S. National Grid over the areas of interest, analyzing damages to each section. This will indicate damage assessment progress and be provided to FEMA every day.

MITIGATION

Richwood Turns To Watergate For Help In Solving Middle School Location Issues

By Rick Steelhammer

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 25, 2016

RICHWOOD — Land made available for public use by the owner of Richwood's Watergate Inn, following talks with Richwood Mayor Bob Henry Baber, could help ensure that Richwood's middle school students remain in town until a new school is built, rather than be relocated to a site outside the community.

Land already has been cleared for the lot, and a liner and crushed rocks were being put in place on Thursday following an agreement with Andreas Karas, owner of the long-shuttered inn, damaged by floods in June and in years past, and scheduled for eventual demolition, Baber said. Work is being done by United Coal Co., which has donated at least $50,000 in labor, according to the mayor.

Richwood Middle School and Richwood High School were deemed unfit for use by Federal Emergency Management Administration officials after the buildings were battered and deluged by floodwaters that swept through the Nicholas County town in late June. Richwood High School students temporarily have relocated to the former Beaver Elementary School near Craigsville, while the middle school students have been sharing space with students at Richwood's Cherry River Elementary School, which was not damaged in the flooding.

By developing a second parking lot at the lower end of the school, the existing parking lot, which lies above the floodplain, can be used to locate temporary pods for additional teaching space to reduce crowding within the middle school building. The added parking area also would eliminate concerns about a shortage of parking space, now that teachers and staff from two schools are sharing the existing lot, and include a loop road for buses to access the school.

During the last Nicholas County School Board meeting, Superintendent Donna Burge-Tetrick said the lack of adequate parking at Cherry River Elementary could result in Richwood Middle School being relocated in modular classrooms at Craigsville, according to the Nicholas Chronicle.

So far, FEMA has turned down proposals to build a new Richwood High School on the grounds of the former Richwood Area Community Hospital, and vetoed a pair of other prospective sites.

Last week, the Legislature approved an $85 million appropriation for matching funds to capture FEMA flood recovery grants totaling an estimated $339 million. Of that sum, flood-ruined Richwood High School, Richwood Middle School, Summersville Middle School, Clendenin Elementary School and Herbert Hoover High School would be allocated a total of about $130 million to rebuild.

In other flood recovery developments, Baber said the town's Rite-Aid and Dollar General stores should reopen by the end of next month, and that all of the town's flood-damaged sewer mains that once ran along the bottom of the Cherry River, have been patched and temporarily relocated under shore rocks along a bank of the stream. The repairs dramatically decreased the flow of river water entering the pipes and needlessly passing through the town's treatment plant, making it more difficult to process sewage.

The town still lacks a supermarket, and the town's emergency pantry is nearly empty, Baber said.

State Officials Tour Shell Rock Flood Damage

By Stefanté Randall

KIMT-TV Rochester (MN), September 24, 2016

SHELL ROCK, Iowa – State officials toured the town of Shell Rock as residents picked up the pieces after the flooding.

Governor Terry Branstad, Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds along with leaders from the Iowa National Guard and Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management got a firsthand look at the damage.

Mayor Larry Young says he appreciates the support his town is getting.

He also says the city took steps to make sure they were prepared.

"Well, we continued the FEMA buyout program where instead of having 35 houses that were damaged we could have had another 20 or 25 that were taken out, so that relieves some tension and we've upgraded our lift station as much as we can. That's an expensive proposition," says Young.

Dumpsters will be brought in on Monday for residents to throw away flood debris items.

Governor Branstad also made stops in Clarksville and Cedar Rapids.

Illinois Says Levee District Raised Heights Without Permit

By Jacob Barker

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, September 25, 2016

A large Illinois levee district north of St. Louis accused of building its Mississippi River levees too high has until next month to give the state a plan to mitigate flood impacts on its neighbors.

The action from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is the latest from government agencies who say the Sny Island Levee and Drainage District hasn't complied with state and federal rules meant to manage flooding and levee districts along the river.

The Sny stretches from Quincy to Belleview in Illinois. For years, officials with the politically and financially powerful agricultural levee district have argued about levee heights with regulators who have struggled to enforce their rules.

Residents across the river in Missouri worry the Sny is illegally pushing floodwater onto their communities, but Sny officials have denied they raised levees above authorized levels. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates the Sny could push an additional 2.5 feet of water onto some areas in the Missouri counties of Marion, Pike, Lincoln and St. Charles.

According to an IDNR letter to Sny superintendent Mike Reed dated Aug. 23, the Sny Island Levee and Drainage District's work to maintain its height after flooding in 2008 was done without a state permit.

The department gave the levee district until Oct. 15 to submit a plan and a schedule to fix what it says are unauthorized levee modifications.

Except for a permit issued in 1996, no work has been authorized on the Sny levees in recent years, the state letter says.

Sny attorney Karin Jacoby of Husch Blackwell said in an email that the district is "firm in our conviction the Sny acted in accordance with applicable regulations."

"The sharing of preliminary, inaccurate or incomplete information, particularly concerning impacts of the Sny on others, has generated much unnecessary confusion," Jacoby wrote.

It's not just Illinois that has raised issues with the Sny's management of its huge levee. The corps has said the Sny's levees are built above authorized levels, something the Sny denies.

River advocates worry the Sny isn't alone and that there's little enforcement or incentive for levee districts to follow the law.

"It's really, really shocking to us to see such blatant activities, by the Sny levee district in particular, to just ignore state and federal rules at the peril of the neighbors across the river in Missouri," said Olivia Dorothy, associate director of Mississippi River management at advocacy group American Rivers.

While the corps has authorized the nearly 60-mile-long Sny District to maintain 50-year flood protection, the district has managed to win 100-year protection from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The FEMA accreditation means the farmers who own the fertile 115,000 acres of floodplain protected by the Sny levees don't have to buy flood insurance.

It's not entirely clear how the Sny attained 100-year accreditation from FEMA despite being authorized for 50-year flood protection from the corps. FEMA representatives have said documentation the Sny submitted to them indicated it met the agency's standards, and the corps has said it assisted with engineering work despite not authorizing higher levee heights.

"The Sny just made the modifications without telling anybody," Dorothy said. "We're not quite sure what broke down to allow that accreditation to happen, because they should have been required to provide to FEMA all necessary approvals for that accreditation."

A FEMA representative didn't immediately return a call and email requesting comment. A corps spokesman said there's little the agency can do to enforce its rules beyond making the district ineligible for federal flood repair funds, an action it took last year.

"Our final authority would be to remove them from that program," corps spokesman Allen Marshall said.

Mike Klingner, an engineer who does work for the Sny and is board president of a group representing flood control agencies in the region, said IDNR appears to have "misplaced" permitting documentation for the Sny work.

"It's quite clear they don't have all the information," he said.

The Sny plans to present more information at a meeting with the state in October, Klingner said.

Based on the information Illinois has now, it appears the Sny will have to mitigate its flood impact somehow, said Loren Wobig of IDNR's water resources office. It could purchase flood easements or engineer its levees so certain areas store water, which would allow the Sny to maintain levee height at other locations.

"There's still options for them," Wobig said.

Business Briefing from St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Make it your business. Get twice-daily updates on what the St. Louis business community is talking about.

Marion County Beats Bridge Project Deadline

By Danny Henley

Hannibal (MO) Courier-Post, September 23, 2016

Marion County is one big step closer to getting a new bridge built on County Road 104 after securing formal state permission to use federal funds on the project. The county was facing a Saturday, Sept. 24, deadline to submit the proposal for the alternate project to the state of Missouri Emergency Management Agency (SEMA).

"It's a relief," said Lyndon Bode, presiding commissioner of Marion County, of meeting the deadline.

Bode applauded the efforts of Teya Stice, Marion County coordinator, for getting everything to the state well advance of the deadline.

"Teya let us know it was a firm deadline and the county needed to have that turned in by the 24th. She was able to get that secured and turned in ahead of time," he said. "Now we're just waiting for FEMA's response. We don't anticipate any problems because everything they've asked for has been turned in. If they have any questions we can answer them and hopefully keep the project moving along."

The proposed project is like none the county has attempted before since the bridge being replaced — on County Road 104 — is not in the same location as the span for which the county is receiving federal compensation — on County Road 117. The County Road 117 bridge was swept away during July 2015 flooding.

Because of the low volume of traffic the 124-foot structure had seen on a daily basis before it was destroyed, and the projected cost of replacing the bridge (between $800,000 and $1 million), the County Commission decided not to have a new span put up on County Road 117.

If FEMA follows through and gives its blessing, as is expected, "roughly $90,000" in federal dollars will go toward the cost of the new bridge. The remaining cost of the new structure will be covered by county capital improvement sales tax funds.

Whatever amount the county winds up paying to complete the County Road 104 bridge, Marion County will be able to apply for "soft match" credits for the Bridge Replacement Off-System (BRO) program, which is administered by the Missouri Department of Transportation.

When a county pays for all or part of the cost of a replacement bridge that expense is considered "soft match" money which can then be applied as the 20 percent local match required by the BRO program, provided the "soft match" bridge is built to state specs.

Because the County Commission had already identified the County Road 104 bridge as its next span to replace, regardless of the availability of federal funds, MECO Engineering has already been doing design work on the new structure. That opens the door to starting the replacement phase sooner than later.

"There is a chance if everything works right it could be built during the winter," said Bode.

If federal funds are used the county will face a construction deadline in February 2017. Unlike the September deadline, however, an extension could be sought for the project if everything has not yet been finalized.

According to Bode, Marion County will have to build and pay for the new bridge before it will see a dime of federal reimbursement money.

Bertie County Commisioners Hold Emergency Meeting On Recovery Efforts

By Tamara Scott

WNCT-TV Greenville (NC), September 25, 2016

WINDSOR, N.C. – An emergency Bertie County Board of Commissioners meeting held Sunday shed light on the next steps of recovery.

After days of flooding, the water in Bertie County has finally receded, and now it's time to move forward.

Bertie County Board of Commissioner Chairman John Trent said their first concern is citizen safety.

"There's 42 businesses that have been affected by this flood, not including people who have been uprooted from their home which is over 50 and these numbers are gonna grow," said Trent.

Home owners, residents of Bertie County, and commissioners discussed what needs to be done in order for everyone to get back on their feet.

Many residents, like Douglas and Annette Jernigan, are currently experiencing their 3rd flood clean up.

"It's still devastating regardless it makes it hard on everybody," said Douglas Jernigan.

Annette Jernigan added, "No matter how much water you get, you still have to move out and relocate with jobs and everything like that, so it's really hard."

Emergency Services Director Mitchell Cooper said they are working hard to get people back in their homes.

"We have damage assessment teams coming in and we'll split them up to be with our county folks so we can do this as swiftly as possible and get a number back to the state to figure out how this declaration will work," said Cooper.

Once assessment results are sent in, there will be a decision on how much money can be brought in to help residents rebuild their town.

Annette said they got what they needed out of the meeting, but still have some questions. "Mainly was FEMA going to buy us out, but of course we don't know anything on that yet until they get their calculations."

Cooper said the mental health of residents who have been affected is also a growing concern.

Public health and Trillium Health officials will be available later this week.

Some commissioners will be in the state's capital later this week to vouch for the residents on recovery funds.

Governor Pat McCrory will be in Windsor on Monday with North Carolina Emergency Management Director Mike Sprayberry to assess the damage.

Tornado Alley Dead-ends Before Lake County

By Dan Moran

Lake County (IL) News-Sun, September 23, 2016

Jinx. Knock on wood.

Having established that, let's talk about a dirty little secret that really shouldn't be aired out, lest the fates be tempted: Lake County sits in a sweet spot when it comes to avoiding severe weather.

Sure, we get our thunderstorms that rip off branches and knock out power from time to time, as more than one Waukegan resident reported just this Wednesday. And ask anyone in Grayslake about the small but memorable tornado that skipped through town last year.

But, generally and most likely unscientifically speaking, Lake County — roughly 50 miles north of the undefined end of tornado alley — isn't known as the primary Chicagoland target when it comes to spring and summertime events like biblical downpours or the phrase "tornado warning."

A measure of proof is provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which has a Storm Events Database that dates back to June 1950. Searching specifically for tornadoes over the last 76 years in Lake County, we find that the "number of days with an event" (which we can assume means "a tornado") is 15. Eleven of those caused damage, four caused death or injury and one resulted in death.

For the record, that fatal event was the April 1967 F4 tornado that ran from North Barrington through Mundelein and Lake Zurich, killing two motorists near Route 59 and Cuba Road. But even that dark day, we got off relatively lightly: 57 people were killed in Belvidere and Oak Lawn by other F4 twisters in the outbreak.

Now let's run, say, Will County through that same database: Between June 1950 and June 2016, there were 44 days with a tornado event — four times that of Lake County. Thirty-six caused damage, 11 resulted in injury and five recorded fatalities, including the infamous 1990 Plainfield tornado, which occurred on a sunny afternoon in our end of the region.

A little farther south, the tornado numbers since 1950 are also way up for Kankakee County (29) and Iroquois (36). In the collar counties, the same higher result is true for DuPage (22), Kane (17) and even McHenry (16).

Looking strictly at Lake vs. Will, we find our not-so-southern cousins also outpace us in severe warm-weather events like "thunderstorm wind" (171 for Will, 101 for us) and floods (35 for Will, 18 for us).

All told, there's almost a sense of guilt when Lake County residents are invited to participate in the All Hazards Mitigation Plan by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As the name probably doesn't imply, this is a routine exercise FEMA requires counties to perform every five years so they can remain eligible for Disaster Assistance Grants, according to information currently posted at the city of Waukegan's website (www.waukeganweb.net).

The posting includes a SurveyMonkey link for residents to complete a short Q-and-A to gauge community-disaster preparedness.

"Public input and comments are important to the (hazards) plan update," the post reads. "Survey responses provided will help Lake County prioritize natural hazards that could impact residents and property owners, and to determine how to be better prepared for natural hazard emergencies."

It is duly noted that "surveys may only be taken once," so don't even bother trying to pump up our disaster resume and squeeze more dollars out of the feds.

After clicking on our respective community name, we're asked if, "in approximately the past 15 years, you or someone in your household, while living in Lake County, experienced a natural disaster? (Check all that apply)" Along with tornadoes and severe summer storms, our choices include everything from flood and drought to "sewer backup."

They also include "earthquake," so those of us who felt the 2.0-magnitude temblor that reflected into Lake County from the 5.8-magnitude quake that hit Virginia in August 2011 can go ahead and check the box, even if all it did was rattle our dish rack in a modest way.

A similarly long and varied list of disasters large and small is included twice when we're asked which ones raise concern for our family and then for our community. Feel free to check everything, up to and including "dust storm," because this is all about getting bang for the buck.

All of us, no matter where we live, will be visited at some point by the extreme wrath of Mother Nature, so an ounce of prevention could be worth a pound of federal aid.

In fact, when it comes to the cold-weather months, Will and Lake are almost tied in the number of winter storms over the last 76 years (around 23 each) and blizzards (around 4) — so those of us living in the tranquil north shouldn't whistle too much as we pass the graveyard.

Another One Off The List: Second And Niblack Project To Start Soon

By Jenny McNeece

Vincennes (IN) Sun-Commercial, September 25, 2016

First came the Second Street project, a six-block upgrading of a major thoroughfare connecting more downtown to Vincennes University more than a decade in the making.

Then came the long-awaited River Walk, a sprucing up of Culbertson Boulevard complete with new lighting, some covered benches and an observational point over the Wabash River.

Both projects were on the city's books for years, but only recently have officials managed to get them moving. Second Street opened to traffic a year ago thanks to a federal-for-state money trade, and the River Walk is expected to open to pedestrians next month.

But there was another at the bottom of the city's list of unfinished projects — the raising of the intersection of Second and Niblack streets.

It's a major project, and because the flood gate there hasn't fit for years, it's one now being mandated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

So that after nearly four years of waiting, that project is finally getting underway.

"It's the last on our list," said Mayor Joe Yochum. "And I'm very excited to see it get moving."

The project is one of dozens that ensures the city will keep its flood protected status with FEMA.

Most of the needed repairs and updates have been done already. Raising the intersection and fixing the gate at Second and Niblack is one of the last on the list.

To pay for it, the city is using money left over from a $5 million federal grant secured during former mayor Terry Mooney's administration that was initially to be used to study relocating the railroad tracks to outside the city.

The money was later switched by mayor Al Baldwin to the possibility of building a railroad overpass on North Sixth Street.

After that project derailed because of a lack of community and city council support — and after another municipal election — Yochum announced he had received permission from federal officials to use what was left (about $1.75 million) to completely redo the railroad crossing at Second and Niblack.

But federal money can sometimes be difficult to spend; the process comes with much red tape to cut through.

And city officials, too, have experienced significant delays — not to mention cost overruns — in trying to communicate with CSX Corp.

But things have picked up pace over the last month, the mayor said, and he expects work could begin early next year.

City engineer John Sprague said much of the utility work has already been done, and he expects to the let the bulk of the project — the actual raising of the intersection and railway — out for bid sometime next month.

Sprague said, if all goes well with the bidding process, that crews will likely begin mobilizing in November.

And the crossing will be closed, he said, for an entire year once they do.

But Sprague said this project, as opposed to the Second Street and River Walk projects, has actually moved rather swiftly, at least as far as federal projects go.

The city signed its first contract regarding work on the intersection in May of 2013.

"So it's been in the works for just three-and-a-half years," he said. "And I'd say that's an average amount of time for a federal-aid project like this. In fact, it's probably faster than normal.

"If you think about the other two projects, those had been in the works for a decade or more," Sprague said. "So you could definitely make the argument that this one has moved rather quickly."

Sprague said the entire intersection will be closed for the duration of the project, and specific detours will be posted for motorists.

And in the end, the flood gate — which to the mayor's knowledge has never had to be installed — will be abandoned in favor of a smaller sandbag gate instead.

"It's just taken a long time to get through all this stuff," the mayor said. "It's tedious. There's a lot to it, and it can be a bit aggravating.

"But this is the last one, and it's one of the last projects having to do with our levee, too," he said. "So this is a good thing, a very good thing."

The Saints Are Coming: An Oral History

By Doug Tatum

New Orleans Saints, September 24, 2016

Drew Brees: I would have been in San Diego, California. I was playing for the San Diego Chargers. We would have been getting ready for our first game of the season.

Sean Payton: I was coaching in Dallas and we would have been in our preseason training camp.

Edge: I was in my house in France. We were between two legs of a tour and we were recuperating after a long and hard first leg and first caught the news that there was this hurricane on its way to New Orleans. Then turned on the news channels and just watched as this horror unfolded.

Mike Tirico: I was doing a full season of college football on Thursday nights and Saturdays. We were getting our season started. Like many, not in the Gulf Coast area, you were a prisoner to cable news and what was going on. It was hard to go to sleep because you were just watching and waiting and wondering with everyone else. As we know, we didn't find out really until the next day began how bad the night was.

Steve Gleason: The team had just evacuated a day or two before that. So we were in the San Francisco Bay area ahead of the preseason game against the Raiders.

Quint Davis: I was in a fetal position in a hotel room in New York City.

Doug Thornton: I remember waking up that morning at about 5 A.M. and looking out my window and seeing the trees bent over double and the rain pouring down, so that was a day that I will never forget.

Hurricane Katrina, which started out as a tropical wave off the western coast of Africa, passed over South Florida as a Category 1 hurricane, moved into the Gulf of Mexico and then came ashore at Buras, Louisiana at 6 a.m. Aug. 29, 2005. After reaching category 5 status in the Gulf, it was a Category 3 storm when it slammed into the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts with 125 mph winds, laying waste to everything in its path.

New Orleans was buffeted with hurricane-force winds and heavy rains but because it was on the western side of Katrina's eye the area was spared the full force of the storm. The initial reports were that the city had dodged a major bullet.

It hadn't.

Dennis Lauscha: When I got word that the levees had broke and the streets were flooding and neighborhoods were completely flooding, that's when we got really scared. There was a lot of concern. A lot of concern for our employees, a lot of concern obviously for our fans and the neighbors and everything else. Like everyone else, it was beyond comprehension.

Mike Tirico: To see that really as a place of survival and the shredding of the top, the skin of the roof. Those pictures. Of course, the other ones were haunting. But for me, having spent a lot of time in the Dome, covering sports, as a sports fan as well, those were the ones that allowed me to understand the enormity of what was going on here.

For the Edge, it triggered memories of U2's Super Bowl 36 performance at the Superdome in 2002 and how, in a twist of fate, being in New Orleans for that gig saved most of his key instruments from being lost in a flood that swamped the band's storage facility in Dublin.

Edge: So in some ways New Orleans saved my most precious guitars and amps because had I not been there performing at the Super Bowl in the Superdome, I would have lost them all. So here I'm looking at New Orleans and it's going through a flood and I couldn't help but think, "Oh my God. This is, in my mind and many people's minds, the city. The music city of the United States America, maybe one in the world. Maybe the most important music city in the world." What's happening here is like a thousand times worse and I just couldn't help but think about all the musicians that left their instruments behind that were destroyed in this flood.

Halfway across the country, Saints players and coaches were trying to come to grips with what they were watching on TV.

Steve Gleason: The morning after the storm hit we were getting ready for practice in the hotel there near Oakland. We had the TVs on as we were getting taped up. I remember coming down the hotel stairs and hearing that the levees had broken. Everyone was trying to contact their families and figure out what the status of their houses were. It was pretty much chaos from that point and the chaos continued for several months.

Mickey Loomis: You know, we had finished the 2004 season 8-8 but we had won our last four games, three on the road. So, we went into this 2005 season feeling like, "Hey, we've got a chance to be a decent, good football team." Then all of a sudden we're practicing on a high school field. There's concern about families, about people, our friends in New Orleans and all the things that happened that were very distracting to our football team. It was really kind of an unfair circumstance for our team, difficult.

Somehow, the Saints won their first game in Carolina when John Carney drilled a winning field goal with three seconds to play. Carney's embrace with quarterback Aaron Brooks was immortalized on the cover of that week's Sports Illustrated.

Then, they went to New York to play in a "home" game against the Giants.

Jay Rothman, MNF executive producer: We meet with the team's coaches and players for every game, you know and the meeting with Jim Haslett, I'll never forget how distraught he was about not that. San Antonio welcomed the team, but the circumstances in which they were welcomed and what they had to deal with. You know, practicing on the concourse of the Alamodome, I remember. Going to a local gym to train and workout. Practicing on high school fields and never having a home game.

The team had two five-game losing streaks, with half-attended "home" games at Tiger Stadium and lackluster efforts at the Alamodome in San Antonio.

Matters weren't helped when Deuce McAllister, star running back and locker room leader, tore his ACL in a loss to the Green Bay Packers.

The season ended with a 27-13 loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Jan. 1. The Saints were 3-13. General Manager Mickey Loomis took quick action, firing Coach Jim Haslett, who had the impossible task of trying to lead a team that had no home, no real training facilities and was missing its best player.

Steve Gleason: It was a long, unsuccessful year.

The Superdome dominates the New Orleans skyline.

The brain child of visionary Dave Dixon and the creation of the architectural firm of Curtis and Davis, the Superdome came to life on Aug. 3, 1975, a state-of-the-art domed structure that appeared had descended from outer space and taken up residence at the end of Poydras Street.

Frank Supovitz: It was just a magnificent looking structure. It was an indoor hard- walled and hard-roofed building. It was very much ahead of its time when it was built. It wasn't an air-supported dome. It just had this sense of permanence and wonder about it.

The Superdome immediately became the home of the Saints, Tulane football, the Sugar Bowl and more. And, while it was truly a multi-purpose stadium — baseball and basketball games were played under its expansive roof—for New Orleanians it was the home of the Saints.

Dennis Lauscha: It's so much more than a building. It's really a temple, if you will, for the community. Everyone comes together. There's a handful of landmarks in town, the cathedral, the Superdome. When you look up the definition of a landmark, it really is a landmark for us. Both, I think, emotionally and spiritually and community-wise."

Trombone Shorty: It's like a heart to the city, you know if you're flying from the sky or whatever it may be and looking down, I look at the Superdome as a heart to the city.

But the savage beating the Superdome took from the winds of Katrina and the resulting floodwaters caused by the failure of levee system combined with the horror experienced by the thousands of people who eventually took refuge there, caused many to question whether the building could—or should—be repaired.

Mike Tirico: I think if you're on the outside looking in, you don't know the spirit of the place, and the spirit of the people more importantly, I think you should have had doubts.

Doug Thornton: As we did the damage assessment, we realized that the mechanical systems and the electrical systems were fairly well intact. It was just the interior spaces that needed to be replaced. We brought in a team of engineers, 16 specialty consultants from around the country, took them over a month to crawl through this building with flashlights to determine that it could be salvaged. I remember the day very well. It was Sept. 30 when Paul Greismar with Ellerbe Beckett, the architectural firm we had brought in, said to me "It probably can be saved. It's going to take over two years, it will take well over $200 million, but that's assuming you don't have severe damage to your mechanical systems and that you can get rid of the mold." So that was our first glimmer of hope.

Governor Kathleen Blanco turned hope into reality.

Kathleen Blanco, former governor of Louisiana: I just kept thinking that the people of New Orleans deserved a symbol of hope, a demonstration that this city could be brought back and brought back more quickly than anyone ever imagined. I was willing to take the chances that if we invested that kind of commitment, that the Saints would also make that commitment.

That commitment was affirmed by NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue.

Kathleen Blanco, former governor of Louisiana: He said, "If you can get the building up for the first regular game in the 2006 season on Sept. 25," he said. "I will guarantee you that Tom Benson won't even think about leaving."

Doug Thornton: We asked Governor Blanco to sign an executive order in early December 2005 and that was critical to this project. Without that executive order, we wouldn't have been able to fast-track the construction.

Dennis Lauchsa: It was gigantic. There was so much discussion prior to the hurricane, on whether or not the Saints would be here in the long-term.

The Superdome was going to be re-built. Now the Saints had to build a new and improved team.

On Jan. 6, 2006, the Saints and the NFL held a joint press conference announcing plans for the 2006 season.

On Jan. 19, Loomis and owner Tom Benson introduced Sean Payton as the franchise's 10th full-time head coach.

Tom Benson: Well the organization, where he was, they were praising him so much, I was a little concerned.

While Payton came with a strong endorsement from Bill Parcells no one knew if the fresh-faced offensive play-caller would work.

And the hire almost didn't happen.

Payton: At the end of the season I had an interview with Green Bay and then had spoken to Mickey about taking an interview with the Saints afterwards, and then I was going to Buffalo after New Orleans.

Mickey Loomis: That was an interesting process we went through because first of all, there were a lot of jobs open that year, 10 as I recall, and you know if you lined up in order of attractiveness, we were probably 10th given the circumstances. But I knew we needed a lot of energy so I felt like we wanted to go with a young coach that had a lot of energy. I was looking on the offensive side of the ball. We had dinner and it was a quick three-hour visit and yet I remember after that meeting, 'This is our guy.'

Once Payton came on board the real work began— hiring a staff and building the team. Gary Gibbs was the first hire as defensive coordinator. Then veteran Joe Vitt signed on to be the assistant head coach and oversee the linebackers.

Sean Payton: There's a scene in Jerry Maguire where the main character Tom Cruise leaves the law firm and grabs the fish and he says "Who's coming with me?" and it was like crickets. It's quiet. Then at some point, Renee Zellweger says "I'll go," it was a little bit like that.

Mickey Loomis: There were a number of coaches who saw the condition of the city and didn't want any part of it. Yet, there was a number who wanted to come and felt like, "Hey, this is not just coaching a football team but there was a little higher purpose in coming to New Orleans and helping the city recover.

With the staff in place the next order of business was finding a quarterback to replace Aaron Brooks. Payton and Loomis quickly focused on Drew Brees, who just had his shoulder severely mangled in the final game he played in the 2005 season for the San Diego Chargers.

With his shoulder—which had recently been repaired by noted orthopedic surgeon James Andrews—Brees had a limited market. The Saints and the Miami Dolphins, coached by Nick Saban, were the only two serious players.

Mickey Loomis: Well, we were really concerned and we had a lot of doctor's reports. We did a lot of due diligence on that. Not just on the injury but on Drew himself and what we found was a young man who always defied the odds to be successful. We know it wasn't going to be matter of lack of effort. He was going to do everything he could to get his shoulder back to where he could play again.

Payton was able to convince Brees and his wife Brittany to visit New Orleans. But the recruiting visit didn't go entirely as planned.

Sean Payton: I'm driving the car, Drew in the front seat, Brittany in the back seat. I'm driving like I've been a resident for 10 years and I've only been here for a couple of months. So we went over to the North Shore to look at some housing. We came back and somewhere off the Causeway I ended up, spun around. And I was heading toward Baton Rouge. Now just over and back from the North Shore would take an hour and a half. So there's that point I look in the rear-view mirror and I see Brittany kind of nodding off and I'm thinking, "I might as well drive them to the airport and put them on the Miami Dolphins plane."

Drew Brees: "I remember looking to my left and seeing a house that was really just a concrete slab and no house. And then seeing another house that was halfway off the foundation with a truck upside-down in the living room. Then we had to stop because there was a tug boat sitting in the middle of the road upside-down and it was that moment where I looked at Brittany and I remember our eyes met and we knew that this was so much bigger than football. I think we both felt the calling there to New Orleans. That this was just not the resurgence of a football team or an organization, but that it was about the rebirth of a city.

With a quarterback in place that made preparing for the 2006 draft that much easier. Mario Williams, an imposing pass rush specialist from North Carolina State and Reggie Bush, a Heisman Trophy winning tailback from USC, were the top two non-QBs on most draft boards. A day before the draft the Texans announced they were going to draft Williams, leaving the dynamic Bush available for the Saints at No. 2.

Paul Tagliabue, NFL Commissioner: Reggie Bush

Sean Payton: It was a 9.0 on the Richter scale.

While the Saints were putting their team together, the state of Louisiana, SMG and a small army of contractors were working nearly round-the-clock to rebuild the Superdome. The state and SMG had re-financed the Dome's debt and used that extra money, along with FEMA and insurance payments, to make sure the re-built Superdome wasn't going to be the same-old building.

At the same time the NFL was working on plans to make the pregame entertainment before the re-opening game Super Bowl-worthy.

Charles Coplin: There was a guy that was working for me named David Saltz, he was a consultant, and he kept saying to me, "I can get U2 to do this." And I was like, "If you can get U2 to do this, I'll put myself on a line and basically, and say to everybody we're getting in the way, we're going to interfere because we think we can do a much bigger show."

Ezrin, a legendary music producer, became involved because he and a group of his friends in the music industry had formed a charity, Music Rising, to help all of the New Orleans musicians and bands who had lost their instruments to the flood waters of Katrina. The group's immediate goal was to raise $1.2 million to help replace instruments for 1,200 musicians.

Bob Ezrin: A few weeks after the flood, U2 are coming through Toronto they were actually playing and I was there. So we were there and I was sitting next to the Edge and being the brazen guy that I am, I said to him, "Hey, look we're going to be replacing a lot of instruments that were lost in the Gulf South, do you have any guitars you don't need?" I figured, rock star. He's going to say, "Sure" and then I'll never hear from again but he said, "I can do better than that." I said, "Here's my home number. If you come up with anything, give me a call." Sure enough, that weekend, just a few days later, I got a call from Edge, he said, "Okay, I've spoken to Yamaha. I've spoken to this one. I've spoken to that one. I've spoken to Live Nation. I've gotten these people to agree to put this money in, this company to agree to sell us instruments." He kept saying, "We, us, we." And I thought, "Okay, partner, here we go."

Edge: We started Music Rising and we're very proud to say within six months we'd started to get a lot of equipment replaced and lot of musicians back to work which was our original phase one, the music had to continue. Not just because, where music is, hope abounds. If the music is silenced it just feeds into people's sense of desperation. So bringing back music had an important role to play we felt in the regeneration of the city, but it was also the continuity. We just wanted to make sure that this wonderful tradition and music culture of New Orleans was maintained, supported, that it survived and we didn't look back in 20 years and say, "Well, the great music culture of New Orleans pre-Katrina and then afterwards had been dissipated."

Bob Ezrin: So both Edge and I made separate trips in the fall and winter of 2005 to see what was going on and it was astounding. Honestly like visiting the dark side of the moon when you went down to the 9th Ward and beyond moving. It strengthened my resolve that this was something that we had to fix. And what our thought was, was, "If they play it, others will come." If the music is playing, people will come back. Without the music, there is no heart to the Gulf. So that became our mission, put the music back.

And then Ezrin and Edge were approached by the league about playing the re-opening game.

Edge: So the initial idea was that they'd like us to put together an event that was inspired obviously by New Orleans and the music of New Orleans but might include some international artists. I thought on this for a while and said, "Well, definitely we should do something." I'm not sure what it should be at first and then Bob says, "You know maybe we could bring in a guest or two and you could perform with maybe another singer. Maybe Billie Joe from Green Day might do it." I know Billie Joe so I reached out and said, "Would you be interested?" It's a kind of pretty amazing opportunity to perform at such an event. So Billie Joe reaches out and says, "I'm in. Great. What are we going to do?"

Bob Ezrin: So Edge came up with this song called "The Saints Are Coming" by a little known band called the Skids, a little known punk band. I vaguely knew the song but the minute I played it again, I went "Oh, my God this is perfect."

Edge: I thought for a couple of days and then it just came to me. This song. My favorite song when I was like 17 years old, written and performed by a band called the Skids from Ayrshire in Scotland was this song called "The Saints Are Coming." I thought, wow that's obvious because Billie Joe was so inspired by music of punk rock and we started out as a band kind of post that musical movement so a lot of our roots are punk rock roots. It's the perfect combination for us to sing that song.

So I called Billie Joe and said, "What about the 'The Saints Are Coming?'" I'd sent him the song and he loved it. So that was our first idea and we're very happy about that. Then I was playing the tune and I shared this idea with Bono and Adam and Larry and the idea, "Well you know, maybe we could get the whole band to come along. That would be really cool." So I asked them what they thought. … They said, "Okay, it sounds like it could work." With one of these things it's kind of once you get one little piece of the puzzle in place, you can start to get the other things. I talked to Billie Joe, I said, "Billie Joe, I think maybe U2 might come on board. What about Green Day? What about the whole band?" He said, "I think that would be really cool. Let me go and check."

So bit by bit, we got everyone on side for this idea. Then we happened to be recording in London at Abbey Road with Rick Rubin so we looked at diaries and it turned out that Green Day were free. So they flew over and spent like three days in Abbey Road in the same room that the Beatles recorded all their most important studio recordings and we had two days of amazing time playing together and recording. Of those sessions, that song was the strongest thing that we came out with. It seemed like at that point a no-brainer to lead with that track and of course we made it a benefit for Music Rising, so it earned a lot of money for our charity. Then that came out to a lot of attention and we knew then that was absolutely had to be part of our performance at the Superdome.

Quint Davis was brought on board to help stage the production and legendary Grammy's producer Ken Ehrlich was hired to run the TV production of the performances.

Quint Davis: We had two or three days of run-throughs to stage because we had this giant thing that we built that had to roll in and out. We didn't just have U2, we had U2 and Green Day. And then we had like Trombone Shorty and Kermit Ruffins. We had two whole brass bands. We had two whole Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs.

Charles Coplin: This was one of those shows where everybody was pushing in the right direction. Everybody's hearts were in the right place. And seeing these musicians on stage and the way things were being planned and the music that Bob Ezrin, the producer, put together, the rehearsals were really, really special. When Bono started to improvise "Beautiful Day" and after the flag and the colors come out, you really started to get goose bumps.

Edge: You know, it's funny, we showed up at the Superdome and I think we were all kind of a little nervous because there was so much that had to be done in that rehearsal you know, integrating Trombone Shorty and the other musicians and two bands that hadn't really played together that much so the sound check and all was quite a high, an intense moment.

Trombone Shorty: I don't think I ever captured that emotion again, years later, it was just a monumental thing – that moment let us know that if we had any doubt of coming back to New Orleans, we are here now and from this moment we can build and make sure this city is OK."

The 2006 Saints gathered for training camp at Millsaps College in Jackson, Miss., about three hours north of New Orleans. Practices were hard, temperatures were hot and the Saints looked like a team a long ways away from being a playoff contender.

Sean Payton: Obviously, it was going to be a tough camp. We were going to try and to really challenge the players and build a foundation and really create an environment where toughness was going to be what made it. There weren't many restrictions then. We were going two-a-day. It was hot, obviously. I would say it was one of the more difficult training camps in our league's history.

Drew Brees: You could maybe relate it to the weeding out period of a boot camp or of a military training where you are trying to find the best of the best and you're trying to set the tone and you're trying to break everybody down and to a point where you can build them back up together as well as a unit and truly build a foundation on what will be our organization moving forward and I think that was the vision that Sean Payton had in his mind when we went to Jackson.

Mickey Loomis: Man, it was tough but the players that came through that I think they would all say, "As tough as that was, it made us better."

Sean Payton: Honestly, the season started off in training camp and I would say average to poor. We struggled in some of those preseason games, Deuce was still recovering from an ACL. Drew still wasn't 100 percent.

Drew Brees: We were abysmal during the preseason and listen, a part of that was because we were gassed. That training camp was so physical and so tough and so long and so draining, by the time you got to the games, you didn't have anything left. Guys were fighting for survival really. In general terms, you were each day, at some point during practice, you just went in survival mode, which is like how do we get through this?

The Saints started the season at Cleveland and scratched out a victory.

Sean Payton: That was an important win, it was a low-scoring game. Then we go to Green Bay and we fall down 13-0, but we bounce back and are able to get back in the game.

Mickey Loomis: I felt like that Green Bay game was pretty important to us.

But nothing was going to be more important than the re-opening game, which pitted the Saints against their longtime rival, the Falcons, also undefeated.

Drew Brees: I think one of the best things Sean did was he took the entire team to have our Friday practice which took place on a Saturday in the Superdome prior to the Monday night game. This, for many of us was our first time in the Dome, ever and certainly post-Katrina for the guys that had been there. It was a bit eerie and we got through the practice and sitting there just imaging all that had taken place over the past six months or certainly year. Then, at the end of practice he calls us all up and the lights go out and then up on the JumboTron he plays a video for us just kind of documenting the storm, the devastation, what had happened in the Dome. Then what this game represented for so many people and there wasn't a dry eye amongst the team as we watched that video. We all knew right then and there that we were going to win this game because we had to.

Sean Payton: I remember our focus being just on the routine and making sure players knew how to get to the stadium, more than 50 percent of the team hadn't played the year before. And so, we had valet parking, we had the hotel we were staying at, making sure they beat traffic. There were all these steps in place just to make sure on Monday they were ready to play the game.

Steve Gleason: The two things I remember that were unique to my experience were, they wanted every player to use the red carpet valet service that was right in the middle of the arriving crowd. I didn't want to do that. So, I drove in the back entrance and parked in my spot. The other moment was during the National Anthem, minutes before kickoff. I vividly remember looking across the field and seeing the Falcons and looking up at the crowd in the Dome and seeing the fans thinking, 'It is impossible for us to lose tonight.

Sean Payton: It was only going to be a special night if we won. In other words, we did not want to have the re-opening and the nationally televised game and lose the game. It had to be with us winning, because it was one of those once in a lifetime moments that was much bigger than the sport itself.

Mike Tirico: Never seen a stadium for a regular season game like that, a Super Bowl-type energy in the building. But it was different because it was real passion. It came from the heart. It wasn't just hey our team is playing. No, our city is playing.

Frank Supovitz: One of the things that I thought was important was to do some form of a reveal. Something that said, "Okay, now the Superdome is open," and we did that with the big banner reveal on the outside of the building.

Archie Manning: I get a call; I don't recall if it was from the Saints or the Superdome people. They were going to have a countdown; people were going to be out there. They weren't going to open the dome until 5:30 or something. "We're going to have a countdown, we'd like for you to get up on this big deal and count it down." I said, "Shoot yeah, I'm honored. I'll be there."

Frank Supovitz; Once inside when the preshow started, pregame show started, the U2 and Green Day performance was just one of these things where even during the rehearsal, when we were watching rehearsal, we were looking at each other and saying, "This was an important thing to do. This is not something you even have to pay us for, I would do this for free."

Robin Roberts: Now, please welcome two of the world's greatest rock and roll bands, U2 and Green Day, ushered in by some of New Orleans' finest brass musicians.

Bob Ezrin: Billie Joe comes out and starts singing 'House of the Rising Sun.' And of course this a room where just one year before people had been dying and the smell of that was still in the air.

Keith Spera: When Billy Joe Armstrong sang, 'There is a house in New Orleans, they call the Superdome,' I mean I still get chills when I think about it now. Incredible, how they tailored that moment and it couldn't have been more effective and more powerful."

Bob Ezrin: Then, the came the statement of defiance: the saints are coming. And everyone had come to this Saints game. This was, in a way, this was New Orleans standing up. This was New Orleans getting off its knees and standing up and saying to the world, "We're back."

Trombone Shorty: You can hear when we're walking up, the people that ran on the field, oh my God, this is amazing to play with U2 and Green Day and represent the city and that part, when he mentioned the names, that wasn't part of the rehearsal, so I had no idea that he was going to do that. But, I do remember being on stage, all of those people and when he mentioned each one of our names, you can hear like a big roar in the crowd and that was a very, very proud moment for all of us to be able to be representatives in our hometown on that stage.

Edge: I think when we saw the response of the crowd at the event, I think we realized that this was a coming together of so many things and it was, it's significance started to dawn on me particularly. After the show, it was really getting out and talking to people. The locals, Quint, Trombone Shorty, his cousins and musician friends and guys from Preservation Hall started to realize that this actually, this is big. This is big, bigger than I thought.

Dennis Lauscha: It was almost like an alarm clock. For the last year, year and a half, since Katrina had hit, we'd been living in a nightmare and the alarm was going off. The song was waking us up.

Bob Ezrin: When the show was over we had a big gathering in the dressing room of U2 and Bono, unaccustomed as he is to public speaking, gave a little speech about the meaning of this thing. And acknowledged everybody that was involved and there was a feeling of kind of solidarity in the room. We had just made history.

Charles Coplin: Another cool thing was when the show was over and pregame was over, I remember just walking towards the stage and Larry Mullen, the drummer of U2 who I had not spoken with at all, slapped me five and I slapped him five and we went on our way.

Edge: And well I had no idea was that the song “The Saints Are Coming” was going to be adopted in the way it has been and I have to say that I was very proud to realize that that has happened. It was great fun to talk to some of the guys from the Skids and kind of explain to them because they were like had no idea what was going on so suddenly for them to have one of their songs be such an important part of a sports team on another side of the world. It was kind of mind-blowing for them.

Music: are coming. I say no matter how I try I realize there’s no reply. The saints are coming.

Sean Payton: We were in the locker room when that took place. So now when you see the video of it and you hear it, you just think of that night. I think every one of us felt fortunate and blessed to be in a position to be a part of the recovery. If you didn’t at the beginning, you quickly got on board and recognized this was more than we got into this sport for. I wanted to become a coach, but this was about a bigger thing than just winning games.

Two of the main icons of New Orleans music, Irma Thomas and Allen Toussaint, came onto the field to perform the anthem.

Irma Thomas: Normally I do the anthem acapella, but this particular time they decided to pair me up with along with Allen Toussaint. We did a quick rehearsal backstage, well backstage as the Dome is backstage, and that was the first time I actually sung it with accompaniment.

Irma Thomas: Oh say can you see, by the dawn’s early light.

Sean Payton: One of the challenges for any artist singing a national anthem was you got a lot to lose and not a lot to gain. We hear about the mistakes made during anthems. Every once in awhile you hear about Whitney Houston hitting out of the park. Irma Thomas hit it out of the park. At that moment, that was the person who should have been singing the anthem. You have goose bumps, you’re numb, you’re trying to stay in the moment, but it was special.

Irma Thomas: And the rockets’ red glare, the bombs bursting in air.

Irma Thomas: It was odd because once finished singing it, normally they start applauding, but for some reason on that day, if there wasn’t a good 30-second pause, which 30 seconds on TV is a long time, a good 30-second pause before everybody started applauding. There wasn’t a dry eye in the house, including mine. For some reason it just meant, we were home. There’s a big difference when you realize you’re in a place where you think you would not be and it hits you. For 30 whole seconds, we just stood there and went wow, we are home.

Trombone Shorty: She was singing from a different place. She was singing to make sure the city, this was the beginning to us rebuilding. You can hear it in her voice how touching it was for her to be able to be there and represent at that level. And then for us to come along, it just captured everything that New Orleans has from football to music to the queen of soul.

Drew Brees: It still gives me chills to hear the U2 and Green Day ‘The Saints Are Coming ‘and it’s awesome. So many New Orleans legends in and around that as well. Like you said, Irma Thomas and Allen Toussaint. We knew that it was going to be a spectacle. We knew that “Monday Night Football,” two undefeated teams, the re-opening of the Dome, I mean just all the festivities that come along with that and yet there was a laser focus on our team and we knew we had to take care of business and we knew we had to start fast, too. And I don’t think we could have started that game off any better than we did.

Mike Tirico: A moment, almost unimaginable 13 months ago is here. The NFL, the Saints, back in New Orleans. Back in the Superdome. Russell from the five. And a nice return to the 25-yard line. That brings Michael Vick and the Atlanta Falcons out to the field. Vick lost the football! Goes out of bounds, New Orleans did not have possession. It’s still Atlanta ball, but it’s fourth down. Fujita came in and freed it out of Vick’s hands.

Sean Payton: The plan wasn’t to rush the first punt. I don’t know if we had a plan in regards to when we were going to rush the punt. Typically, you rush six. When you rush it you rush eight. John Bonamego, our special teams coordinator, just as third down had been run, he said, “Do you want to rush this first one?” So my reaction was “Yeah!” But it’s not like we spent all week deciding that we were going to rush the first punt. But where the ball was on their side of the field, we did and Steve did a great job. He timed it up.

Steve Gleason: I was a little surprised to hear the block call after the first series, especially in the field position, which usually calls for a return. The scheme is an interior stunt where I cross from the right A-gap to the left A-gap. Sure enough, the Falcons had some confusion on their assignments. They tried some bizarre slide scheme which I’d never seen in eight seasons. So, I actually didn’t hit the A-gap like it was drawn up. Because they used the slide technique, I actually ended up unblocked and the B-gap opened up for me.

Drew Brees: I remember we had it in the plan and it was one of those, hey right moment and hey we got the look that we wanted on that first punt. So as I'm standing there, I'm trying to act cool. It's kind of one of those acting jobs where you don't want to act too excited about what's happening down there with the punt, you know I kind of look like I'm getting locked in for the drive but in the back of my mind I'm thinking alright we've got the punt block on. Come on Steve-o, come on Gleason. And then sure enough it sets up perfectly and he blocks that punt and it was like a shotgun blast.

Mike Tirico: to punt and it's blocked! It's rolling inside the five and it's going to be covered by the Saints for a touchdown. Oh baby! What a moment, just listen to this croud!

Mike Tirico: In the back of my mind I had thought later on that afternoon as I was kind of going to the game that if the Saints do score the first thing I want to say is 'Touchdown New Orleans.' It wasn't 'Touchdown Saints,' it was a New Orleans moment. With the energy that was in the building, it had built up through the music and then that play, it was just the perfect time. I remember saying 'Touchdown New Orleans.' I've done that in other places, just kind of put my hands out to make sure nobody said anything. There was nothing any human alive could say that could be better than that moment.

Jay Rothman: I give Tony Kornheiser credit because words in the moment were priceless, I thought.

Tony Kornheiser: You could not have scripted this any better than it just happened for the New Orleans Saints. Everybody thought that the wave of emotion would come in with the Saints. If you were the Falcons, the first thing you had to be afraid of was being swept away in that particular wave of emotion and that is exactly what happened. Now those people that look to the New Orleans Saints as something that would uplift them, uplift the city, uplift the entire Gulf region, they just had it.

Zach Strief: But that moment to me was the defining moment in the city's rebirth. It was a belief that the city could be better than it was before and that is such a rare and unusual thing to be part of as an athlete.

Quint Davis: It was transcendent. What happened, in our experience, was that what we did in the music and the song was tied to the punt block from 'The Saints are Coming.' They came. They blocked the punt. They scored a touchdown. They won the game.

Sean Payton: I just remember the noise. I remember Curtis DeLoatch scoring and spiking it. But I can't recall Steve's reaction because it was just so loud. It was kind of a we scored. We aren't going to get shut out in this game. Scoring first with that crowd was significant in that, it was as loud a stadium that night that we, that I've ever experienced.

Mickey Loomis: You're just pumped up and excited and the crowd has never been that loud ever. Then, there's tears being shed. Man, it's just a perfect play at a perfect time.

Kathleen Blanco, former governor of Louisiana: I don't think I've been to any ballgame or any other event with a crowd of people that were more joyful and just shouting for joy when Steve Gleason blocked that ball.

Dennis Lauscha: All of the times that there seemed to be that we could have turned a corner as an organization and we went the wrong way. For some reason, that night it felt like we finally turned the corner and we were heading in the right direction.

Jay Rothman: It's the most impactful, it's the most impactful game I've done on literally over a thousand events, not just football – baseball, basketball and just because of the responsibility we had that night and the meaning. The meaning of what that game was for the people. The game was secondary to the event and the rebirth of a city. So that made that night, more than anything, super special for all of us.

Steve Gleason: There was so much emotion and passion in the Dome that night. The people of New Orleans had spent the previous 12 months being devastated and frustrated and angry. This was their chance to release all those emotions and to let the world know the city of New Orleans was back. Because I had been in New Orleans for the previous six seasons, at least to some degree, I understood the culture and mentality of New Orleanais. I was dating, and would later marry into a New Orleanais family. I also endured the chaos of the previous 13 months. As a result, the significance of the block, even in the moment immediately after the play, was not lost on me.

Drew Brees: Complete elation. It was an eruption. It was such a bang bang. If you didn't know that we were going to win prior to that moment, then you knew that there was going to be from there on in and basically it was a resounding, not only are we going to win this game but New Orleans, we are back.

Sean Payton: I can't split this ball up five hundred thousand ways. I can't do that. I can't cut it up into five hundred thousand pieces to give to everybody in this city. But, this game ball is going to everybody in this city. This city is getting this game ball from our organization, this team. This game ball is going to the city of New Orleans.

The impact of Sept. 25, 2006 – the performances of U2 and Green Day, Irma's national anthem, Steve Gleason's block – still resonates today, 10 years later.

Irma Thomas: To be at the Dome, back in the Dome, no matter what the situation was outside. It was a way to get away from thinking about, "Well I gotta get my house together. I gotta do this, I gotta do that." You can forget it. For whatever time you were spending in that Dome, all of that just went away for that moment. It was a come together. It was just special.

Trombone Shorty: It was bigger than the football game for us, for the city, for the team, for the musicians, it represented more than just football.

Kathleen Blanco, former governor of Louisiana I think that a lot of credit goes to the Saints. Drew Brees was fairly new at the time and he took the city to heart, he became the symbol of a winning team and that was the other thing that happened. The Saints transformed themselves, from a team on the margins to a winning team. That elevated the whole state.

Sean Payton: You didn't realize it at the time, but all of a sudden you found yourself in this event at this period of time, that you realized it was going to be something you remembered long after you were here.

Dennis Lauscha: I think it was a sign that hey, we can do it. We can be a championship organization. We can deliver a championship. We can be a championship city. We can be a championship community. We are different. That's what makes New Orleans so great. We do things a little bit differently, but that doesn't mean we can't be successful and can't be champions. That night again was the first step in our journey to winning a championship and it was one heck of an experience.

Edge: Well, I have to say for me personally it's probably the pinnacle because this was an initiative that I started. The idea, the genesis of this song was something that came to me in response to that request to perform so you know, it was very personal to me. In the sort of U2 context, I think it's way up there because it's everything that U2 are about as a band. You know, we were so proud to being able to give back in this way. And so the fact that the song lives on in this way was totally unforeseen and just an incredible, I would say an honor.

Brees: I'd say my lasting memory from the Monday night game, the re-opening of the Dome, the Atlanta Falcons was just the feeling that we can really accomplish anything. I mean who would have thought, a year earlier after everything that had transpired, that we would be sitting here doing this? Certainly just go back six weeks prior to that during training camp. Who would have thought that we would be sitting here having this moment? I mean, we felt like we can do anything, we can accomplish anything. I'm not just talking about the team, scoring touchdowns, winning football games. I'm talking about the city, the people, like New Orleans is not just going to come back, we're going to come back stronger than ever."

Resiliency And Affordability Focus Of Edgemere Planning Study

By Katie Honan

DNAinfo, September 24, 2016

EDGEMERE — A new supermarket, increased resiliency measures, and better streets and sidewalks are part of a plan to reinvigorate the bayside Queens neighborhood of Edgemere, officials said.

City officials released their report on the Resilient Edgemere Community Planning Initiative on Saturday, which completes a year of planning workshops in the neighborhood on the low-lying Rockaway peninsula.

Around 250 people attended the workshops, and questionnaires were sent to the neighborhood's 1,700 households, according to the city.

The plan features a five-year timeline of work that's focused on protecting the area from future flooding, creating more commercial opportunities and building affordable housing, according to the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

The city nearly 20 years ago designated Edgemere as an urban renewal area, but work and progress has since stalled, according to City Councilman Donovan Richards.

Residents lack resources, and even the streets and sidewalks need major work. At the workshops, officials found residents desired basic improvements like better transportation, stores and flood protection.

"Many of their ideas in particular is stuff that was promised," he said.

Major issues found through the workshops included protection from the flooding that's common during rain storms and high tides — with an eye towards future storms similar to Hurricane Sandy.

"We want to find ways to alleviate tidal flooding as we wait for FEMA funding" for larger projects, he said.

Part of the resiliency measures include long-term buyout options for homes closest to Jamaica Bay, officials said. So far, five homeowners have agreed to be relocated. While the city won't force anyone out, they "wanted to make sure that there were options," according to Richards.

Throughout the Urban Renewal process, residents were promised more commercial development, but the plans never came to fruition, he said.

A new supermarket on NYCHA-owned land by the Beach 41st Street Houses will be built over the next two years, officials said.

In addition to better streets — which recently underwent a massive rebuilding and repaving project — residents spoke about better traffic signals and more green spaces.

And a major component to the study was maintaining residential affordability, even as major investment comes through.

"We want to make sure that even as property values go up we're not pricing people out," Richards said.

Superintendent Lauds Support Of VB Voters

By Kenneth Fry

Van Buren (AR) Press Argus-Courier, September 23, 2016

The support of voters in Tuesday's school election was overwhelming, according to Dr. Harold Jeffcoat, superintendent of the Van Buren School District.

By a margin of 681 for to 313 against, voters approved a three-mill increase, which would generate roughly $1 million per year for much needed facility improvements, including replacing the district's aging bus fleet, updating classroom technology and building a more competitive salary schedule.

Voters also approved the restructuring of four bonds, which would generate one-time revenue totaling approximately $8 million for facility improvements.

"Now, the work begins," Jeffcoat said. "While it will take some time for all pieces to fall into place, we are well on our way to making significant improvements throughout the district."

He said the district will initiate the process of restructuring the four bonds with funds expected sometime after the Christmas break

"These dollars will be paired with funds made available through the Arkansas Facilities Partnership program," Jeffcoat said. "At this point, all projects have been approved by the state but funding amounts have yet to be determined. We should know the degree of financial support from the state by the end of this school year."

In addition to state aide, he said the district will begin the process of applying for partnership funds through Federal Emergency Management Agency for two tornado shelters, one at City Heights Elementary School and the other at Northridge Middle School.

The millage increase will allow the district to begin work on improving the district's certified and classified salary schedules.

"Our personnel policy committees definitely have their work cut out for them this year," Jeffcoat said. "Any changes made to the salary schedules will be reflected in contracts for the upcoming school year."

Jeffcoat said the election results were the result of a team effort.

"With nearly 1,000 votes cast, we had 69 percent in support of our school district's vision for progress," he said. "We are truly blessed to live in a community that is confident in us as educators and willing to invest in the future for our kids."

Jeffcoat also congratulated Carman Young on being re-elected to the school board. She will serve a five-year term for Zone 4. Young received 156 votes to 95 for Bob Robinson.

"I would like to thank the school board for its continued support and vision throughout this process," Jeffcoat said. "We would not be where we are today if it wasn't for their bold leadership and desire for greater success for our school district and community. When they publicly voted 7-0 to pursue this campaign, they set the stage for a very bright future for the Van Buren School District.

Jeffcoat said the result of this election is further proof that Van Buren is on the rise.

"What an exciting time to be a Van Buren Pointer," he said.

Also Tuesday, Mulberry voters voted 157 to 6 to continue the district's current millage, Mountainburg continued its millage 11 to 2, Alma continued its millage 41 to 13 and Cedarville its millage 6 to 1.

Candidates for Alma Position 2, Alma Position 6, Cedarville Position 2, Mountainburg Position 2, Mulberry Position 5 and Mulberry Position 1 ran unopposed.

Bellevue Joins Effort To Fix Levees

By Eugene Curtin

Bellevue (NE) Leader, September 26, 2016

The Bellevue City Council voted 6-0 Sept. 12 to contribute $3 million to an almost $28 million fund that will be used to strengthen 19 miles of levee that protects the base from the Missouri River.

The levees also protect thousands of developable acres south of the base.

The Sarpy County Board Aug. 30 made the same $3 million commitment Aug. 30.

Other contributors are the State of Nebraska, which will contribute $13.7 million, and the City of Omaha, which will contribute $3 million.

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District will contribute $5 million, a contribution that might climb to $7 million, potentially raising the total cost to almost $30 million.

John Winkler, general manager of the Papio-Missouri River NRD, has said he hopes construction will begin next year.

The work should take two years to complete, he said.

The work is being conducted by order of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which has threatened to decertify the levees if the improvements are not made.

That would leave Offutt, and thousands of developable acres, listed as sitting in a floodplain.

Decertification would put the base at greater risk of closure, and would make the area south of the base undevelopable.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

Millard To Be Honored At National Memorial Service

Portage (WI) Daily Register, September 25, 2016

The 35th annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service will honor four Wisconsin firefighters who died in the line of duty. They are among the 79 firefighters who died in 2015 and 33 firefighters who died in previous years who will be remembered at the official national service at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, on Oct. 9.

Firefighter Lawrence W. Millard will be among those honored. Millard, 56, of the Endeavor Moundville Fire Department, died after he was struck while directing traffic at the scene of a motor vehicle accident on Dec. 11, 2015.

Others from Wisconsin include Firefighter Leslie W. Fryman, 58, of the Rosendale Volunteer Fire Department; Lt. Michael P. Miller, 45, of the Green Bay Metro Fire Department; and Firefighter Dale J. Wege, 59, of the Pine Lake Volunteer Fire Department.

Their names will be added to the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial on the Academy grounds. The national tribute is sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Fire Administration.

Families will receive flags flown over the U.S. Capitol and the National Memorial. Members of the fire service, honor guard units and pipe and drum units from across the country will participate in this national tribute.

For a complete list of fallen firefighters being honored, visit www.firehero.org.

Tax-lien Sales Can Ignore Charleston's Most Neglected Properties

By Elaina Sauber

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 24, 2016

This is the first of a two-part story about the system of tax lien sales in West Virginia and how they're connected to the growing problem of vacant and blighted properties in the capital city.

Three years ago, Janie Hamilton moved back to her childhood home on Woodland Drive, only to discover the prominent, Colonial-style house next door that once anchored the hilly neighborhood had become a living nightmare.

In the 1960s, she remembers, its previous owners lovingly tended to the home and grew flowers and vegetable gardens in the backyard.

The charming home from Hamilton's youth has now been vacant for more than a decade. What remains now is a kudzu-covered ghost of Hamilton's memories. She refers to it as "the jungle."

The large front porch is completely inaccessible — the weeds and brush render the front door invisible.

The side entrances aren't boarded up, creating easy access for the homeless and trespassers.

The inside, Hamilton said, is just as bad. What hasn't been pilfered over the years is strewn around the house. The kitchen has been all but gutted. An upstairs bedroom is filled with stacks of newspapers and magazines reaching toward the ceiling. Mold grows up the walls from where water made its way inside over the last decade. Tufts of feathers and fur from curious animals litter the floor.

"There's just filth all over the house," said Hamilton, who admitted to trespassing in the house shortly after moving back home.

As the home's physical state worsened, its owner Kenneth Nicholas, a relative of the previous owners, stopped paying property taxes.

Eventually, the property's liens were auctioned off at a Kanawha County tax sale in 2014 for $2,000.

The lien purchaser, an Atlanta-based limited liability company, took title to the property in April after Nicholas failed to redeem it. It remains to be seen whether the new owners will make improvements to the property.

"I'm here alone, 60 years old, and I'm here fighting a jungle," Hamilton said.Investing in debt

Hamilton's story is just one example of West Virginia's tax lien system and its trickle-down effect across the capital city's neighborhoods.

Proponents of tax lien sales, which are used in at least 30 states, argue that the process is a tool for cash-strapped local governments to quickly collect on debt. The county receives the amount it's owed for property taxes immediately after the liens are sold — and it also gets to pass off the burden of collection to a private third party.

Critics argue that the practice perpetuates the cycle of delinquency that frequently accompanies long-vacant, low-value properties because there's no way to ensure investors will make them safe and habitable.

As Charleston's Building Commission scrambles to consistently update its vacant building registry — a list of roughly 400 empty, blighted properties in the city — it's losing the battle of addressing those that have been cycled through the tax lien system.

A Gazette-Mail investigation found that nearly 170 of those vacant properties — more than 40 percent — have gone through the tax lien system at least once in the past decade. Many of these properties are clustered on the West Side flats around Mary C. Snow Elementary, and also in various neighborhoods on the West Side hill.

The county collects between $1.5 and $2 million at each tax sale, according to Kanawha County Tax Deputy Allen Bleigh.

West Virginia state code declares that selling tax liens provides for the transfer of delinquent properties "to those more responsible to, or better able to bear, the duties of citizenship than were the former owners;" and for the reduced cost to the state and local governments.

Each November, the Kanawha County Sheriff's Office holds two-day tax lien sales, where scores of investors, local attorneys and representatives of out-of-state hedge funds bid on liens for at least the amount due in property taxes. In some cases, that's as little as a few hundred dollars.

The most savvy investors buy hundreds of liens at each sale. Per state code, the lien buyers become the collectors of the debt they purchase. Over the next 18 months, they're responsible for contacting the owners or heirs to give them a chance to pay back the debt and redeem the property.

The economic incentive for buying tax liens has little, if anything, to do with the real estate itself. Rather, the industry is driven by the high interest rates owners must pay to keep their property — that's how investors turn a profit.

During the redemption period, the buyer collects 1 percent interest on their investment monthly for up to an 18-percent return if the property is redeemed. If it's not, the lien buyer has a legal right to take title to the property.

The identity of the Woodland Drive property's new owner is murky at best. The deed was granted to Christiana Trust, a subsidiary of Delaware-based WSFS Bank. Christiana Trust is actually the custodian for a Georgia-based hedge fund, GSRAN-Z, LLC, which is also named on the tax deed application.

A custodian is a third party that oversees an investors' assets to ensure the lender receives its money if the investor defaults.

Like most tax sale investors, Christiana Trust profits from collecting on the liens it purchases in bulk at tax sales.

It makes sense, then, that investors benefit from researching property tax liens before the sale to determine which ones are most likely to be redeemed by the owners.

It's a familiar practice that real estate attorney Frank Alexander, a co-founder of the national Center for Community Progress, has studied over the years. He believes selling tax liens to private investors is damaging to communities in the long run.

"How do they maximize revenue? They want to buy the tax liens with the highest probability of redemption," he said. And the longer investors wait to collect on the debt, he said, the more interest they accumulate.

More than 2,000 liens were sold at the 2015 Kanawha County tax sale. About 25 percent of those properties are within Charleston city tax districts, Bleigh said.

During the 2014 tax sale, Christiana Trust purchased 206 liens as custodian for GSRAN-Z — for more than $1.5 million.

After the 18-month redemption period concluded, only eight of those properties — 3 percent — weren't redeemed by their owners, including the one next to Hamilton's house.

But what happens to the 3 percent of properties that aren't redeemed — and why would an investor take title to them?

"The rational reason is that it's convinced the value of the property is greater than the lien amount, and can sell it immediately," Alexander explained.'Common misconception'

Shawn Means, executive director of Habitat for Humanity for Kanawha and Putnam, first learned about tax lien sales years ago, when people would offer to donate their properties to the organization to get tax write offs.

But there was a problem: Many of those people offering to donate properties didn't own them.

"After chasing down numerous potential donations and finding out that either they had purchased a lien and never had a deed issued, or the lien had been resold, I started learning more and more about the process," Means said.

A major issue with tax lien sales, he said, is that many people don't understand what they're buying.

"There's a very common misconception that if you go to a sheriff's tax sale and buy a lien, you're actually buying the property," Means said.

Habitat works to build safe, affordable homes for area families, but Means said it's not realistic to build new homes in neighborhoods peppered with blighted, tax-delinquent structures.

"We have these neighborhoods that become huge tracts of delinquent properties, [which] tends to degrade neighborhoods even more," Means said. "Habitat's mission is to provide decent shelter

... it's very difficult to accomplish that when most properties in a community are decimated by time [and] neglect, with no incentives for owners to take care of their property." 'A crude instrument'

Georgia attorney and investor John Ramsey heads GSRAN-Z, the investment fund that bought the lien on the property next to Hamilton's home.

Barely a month after GSRAN-Z, via its custodian Christiana Trust, took title to 1240 Woodland, it filed a quitclaim deed in the Kanawha County Clerk's Office, transferring the title to NR Deed, LLC, another company linked to Ramsey — its listed address is identical to his Atlanta law office.

Local attorney John Kennedy Bailey, who does due diligence and legal work for Ramsey's investment groups, said it's common for investors to use one company to purchase tax liens, and another to take ownership over the few that aren't redeemed.

"Generally, the entities that lend money to buy liens are not interested in owning houses at the end," Bailey said. "There's basically a separation between raising money to go to these sales, and then dealing with whatever property might come out of the process."

Bailey said Ramsey's business practice is to rehabilitate and sell the properties his firms acquire via tax liens, but said finding reliable construction crews poses issues.

"It's just very hard to get people to do rehab work that are both affordable [and] show up every day and work," Bailey said. "[They] struggle to find someone in between who will get it fixed at a reasonable price."

Numerous calls to Ramsey for this story were not returned.

A similar scenario played out last year when GSRAN-Z took title to 837 Watts St., after the lien it bought for $2,700 at a 2013 tax sale wasn't redeemed. The firm immediately transferred it via quitclaim deed to NR Deed.

Today, 837 Watts is still empty, untouched and barely visible from the street. No one cuts the grass or trims back the weeds, which keeps the property concealed.

In other cases, local investors who become owners of unredeemed properties have no interest in dealing with the headache of housing and building code violations that frequently accompany such buildings, so they transfer them to someone who does.

"That's a problem inherent in the tax sale," Bailey said. "Most of the houses that [aren't] redeemed have some underlying problem or issue that makes it more likely they'll be vacant properties."

Because investors tend to buy only the most valuable and low-risk liens, Alexander argues local governments are actually losing money in the long run.

"If a tax lien investor bought $10 million in tax liens, they're probably going to make between $1.8 and $2 million in 12 months," he said. "[Local governments] get the base taxes paid as of the day of sale, but they're

... giving up a positive income stream."

But the problem goes further than governments losing out on interest to the private sector — it also means they're still burdened with the worst properties that no one wants to bid on.

"The local government is stuck with the properties the market doesn't want to buy liens on," Alexander said. "It hurts neighborhoods because nothing is done on the weakest properties."

By selling the most valuable liens, Alexander argues, local governments end up keeping the problem of low-value, blighted properties.

In 2013, nearly 700 of the 2,030 properties, or 34 percent, whose liens went to the Kanawha County tax sale received no bids.

Over the past three years of tax lien sales, on average, more than one-third of the listed properties received zero bids.

In those cases, the no-bid properties are then certified to the state Auditor's Office, where they sit for another 18 months before being sent off to the Deputy Land Commissioner for another public auction.

"It's a crude instrument for reducing the number of vacant properties," Bailey said.'We've been neglected'

Some of Charleston's bleakest examples are clustered around the West Side hill, especially west of Garvin Avenue. The steep, unforgiving terrain quickens foundation issues.

Livingston Avenue is just half a dozen blocks north of Washington Street, but the sound of traffic is replaced by the roar of insects. The occasional car rolls slowly by. Bits of trash, food and condom wrappers sprinkle the roadside beneath power lines weighed down by years of untrimmed vines and ivy.

Margaret Wilkinson moved into a house on the 1500 Block of Livingston Avenue recently, and is familiar with the West Side's reputation as crime ridden. The slew of vacant homes surrounding her own doesn't put Wilkinson's mind at ease.

Another neighbor, who owns her home, worries that someone will break into the empty house next door and start a fire. The owner of the neighboring structure, NAJ LLC, is headed by local attorney Bob Johns.

Johns is listed as a member or manager for nearly half a dozen LLCs that have purchased more than 1,000 tax liens since 2012.

During the 2013 tax lien sale, NAJ paid the county more than $438,000 for 227 liens. Roughly 75 percent were redeemed by their owners during the subsequent 18 months.

Attempts to reach Johns for comment were unsuccessful.

A while back, Wilkinson said, she walked to another vacant house at 1544 Livingston — what's left of it, anyway. The house's charred remains are still visible from the street, but a shed that sits on the property was untouched.

Inside the shed was evidence of squatters — just a few hundred yards from Wilkinson's home.

"I went up there and just looked around. I saw an electric cord. There was a book bag, a bed and everything," she said.

A 2015 report from the U.S. Fire Administration found that 7 percent of all residential building fires occur in vacant structures, based off data from 2010 to 2012.

At 37 percent, "intentional fires" were the leading reported cause of fires in vacant, residential buildings.

Several of the houses on Livingston have been demolished, but someone still owns the empty lots that have since grown into thick, invasive tangles that completely block out the view of the city below.

Because the owners don't cut the weeds back, they grow up and down — and through — the power lines that criss-cross above the street. Power outages are common, Wilkinson says.

Shawn Little, a 20-year veteran with the Charleston Fire Department, is also working with tax lien opportunities.

He owns five lots in the 1500 Block of Livingston. Just one still has a house on it — shuttered and empty. The rest have melded in with the other empty lots that seem forgotten by their owners.

"I don't want to comment, period, on what I do on my days off," Little said.

Wilkinson said she thinks the city could be doing more to address vacant and problem properties.

"I don't think it's fair — people going in these abandoned houses, doing their drugs or staying there. They [could] catch it on fire, then the next house will catch on fire," Wilkinson said. "It feels like we've been neglected."

Coming Monday: One property's long line of questionable ownership, loopholes in West Virginia's tax lien system and possible solutions to address them.

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

UA Seeks Gift To Start Cybercrime Institute

By Jaime Adame

Arkansas Democrat Gazette, September 24, 2016

FAYETTEVILLE – A proposal for a new University of Arkansas at Fayetteville research institute devoted to cyberterrorism and cybercrime has been submitted to an anonymous donor, according to the university.

UA would create a cybercrime database for the state attorney general's office as part of the proposal. For the attorney general, the project would be "a resource for investigators to easily access a database containing names and in particular cyber crime information," Judd Deere, a spokesman for Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, wrote in an email.

Deere said the attorney general's office has committed $100,000 to support the proposal, with the money coming from settlements in previous litigation involving the office.

The proposed UA cyberterrorism/cybercrime institute hinges on additional funding from the anonymous donor, based on university documents.

The university declined to name the donor or release the proposal. Mark Rushing, a UA spokesman, in an email said the donor is a foundation.

A document from UA's Terrorism Research Center, on campus since 2003, stated the center "submitted a proposal to an anonymous donor to create a specialized 'institute' focusing on cyberterrorism and cybercrime."

The proposal calls for "interdisciplinary, undergraduate and graduate certificate programs in cybersecurity and intelligence analysis," according to the document prepared by the center.

The document that discussed the proposed institute was a summary of center activity that was put together to help UA's ongoing planning process under new Chancellor Joe Steinmetz. Other departments submitted similar documents.

UA released the departmental summaries in July.

The center's summary stated the proposal "was accepted for funding, but a delay in obtaining matching money" halted the donor's gift. The document continued: "We expect this opportunity to remain available this year and are hopeful of receiving these funds later this fall."

Rushing, in an email, said the donor is now reviewing the proposal with no timetable for a decision.

The Terrorism Research Center, led by Brent Smith, hosts what's known as the American Terrorism Study.

The project "provides a comprehensive record of persons indicted in federal courts as a result of FBI 'terrorism enterprise' investigations," according to the center's website. It's also described as "the nation's longest running research project on terrorism in the United States."

The center has collaborated with other UA centers. The proposed cyberterrorism and cybercrime institute would include researchers from the university's Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies and computer scientists from the university's Center for Information Security and Reliability, according to the document prepared by the center.

Smith did not respond to email and phone requests for an interview.

Top U.S. officials have warned about the dangers of cybercrime and cyberterrorism.

"The nation's networks, communications, and data are increasingly at risk from diverse and persistent threats," Adm. Michael Rogers, chief of the National Security Agency, told Congress last year.

The threat of cyberterrorism in part depends on how the term is defined, said Meg King, director of the Digital Futures Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.

"We haven't had an incident connected to cyber that is a massive loss of life," King said. She said she'd estimate the number of true cyberterrorism attacks at "very, very few."

Terrorist groups thus far have not been making cyberattacks a priority, she said.

"Those capabilities are fairly low for now," King said.

UA, in declining to release the proposal, cited an exemption in the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act for records that give an advantage to competitors or bidders.

"The requested proposal, if released, would harm the University's ability to compete with other entities for scarce funding resources, including disclosure of craft knowledge developed by the University," a university spokesman said in declining a request for disclosure.

The university cited Arkansas Code Annotated 25-19-105 (b)(9)(A), which says files that shall not be made public include those "that if disclosed would give advantage to competitors or bidders and records maintained by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission related to any business entity's planning, site location, expansion, operations, or product development and marketing, unless approval for release of those records is granted by the business entity."

The search for a sponsor comes as public universities are receiving less money from state and federal governments, said Jennifer Victor, an associate professor of political science at George Mason University.

Schools "are pretty much forced to look for other types of funding," said Victor, who serves on the board of the Center for Responsive Politics. The nonprofit organization tracks the influence of money in politics and public policy.

She said a donation broadly earmarked for counterterrorism research would be appropriate.

"But what you want to be suspicious of are restrictions on donations that would restrict academic freedom in some way," Victor said.

Rushing, in an email, said "it wouldn't be appropriate to speculate about any potential restrictions" associated with the donor's gift.

Before UA establishes a new institute, a review takes place involving faculty, academic deans, Steinmetz and UA System officials, including the university's board of trustees, Rushing said.

Thomas Holt, a criminal justice professor at Michigan State University, said in an email that several universities have research centers devoted to cybercrime and cybersecurity issues, including the City University of New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

"With respect to research on cybercrime/terror, it is increasing, especially in the social sciences as criminologists and sociologists are increasingly interested in these issues. So it is a hot area of study," Holt wrote.

UA and Michigan State have partnered on a proposal to the National Institute of Justice. The project would involve studying policing and terrorist plots, according to the Terrorism Research Center document.

Elsewhere in Arkansas, the National Cybersecurity Preparedness Consortium, formally established in 2014, consists of five members that include the Little Rock-based Criminal Justice Institute, part of the UA System. The consortium has received various federal grants, including $3 million last year from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

DHS Testing Mobile, Attribute-based Identity System For First Responders

By Zack Martin

SecureID News, September 23, 2016

The need to properly identify first responders at incident sites has been an ongoing challenge for more than a decade. Federal, state and local governments have been trying to figure out the best way to know who has arrived at a scene while also ensuring that they have the proper qualifications to be there.

For years Homeland Security and FEMA wanted smart cards issued to first responders. Multiple programs were launched, but complications led to the majority being scrapped.

The logical next step – as with most identity projects these days – seems to be the leveraging of the first responders mobile devices. One such project is being piloted by the Kantara Initiative and the Command, Control and Interoperability Center for Advanced Data Analysis (CCICADA). Based at Rutgers University in New Jersey, CCICADA is a Homeland Security Center of Excellence.

Called Mobile Device and Attribute Validation (MDAV), the system enables a first responders smartphone to send encrypted information about their credential to another smartphone used by local authorities managing a response operation. In this manner, the credentials can be instantly verified and access granted to the scene.

The identity and access management system enables local management to access a certificate authority database containing current status and other information about emergency responders. Responders' smartphones hold their credentials or attributes, and once verified, local authorities can be assured of who is onsite and their expertise. Examples of expertise can include hazardous material training, fire fighting or medical training.

Currently, first responders present badges or other forms of ID to check-in with local authorities in a disaster situation. This is a time-consuming process and doesn't truly verify the individual, the agency they represent or their expertise.

"This isn't an identity problem, it's about attributes and how you get someone on the ground who is qualified and has the necessary skills," says Steve Wilson, founder of Lockstep Technologies, the company developing MDAV.

What sets this system apart from others is that it provides only the necessary attributes and nothing more, Wilson says. With the Homeland Security grant, Lockstep wants to build a proof of concept, show how it can work and then add use cases.

Two particular areas of interest are age verification and mobile driver licenses, Wilson says. Typically when someone needs to have their age verified they pull out a driver license or passport, which displays date of birth plus a variety of additional data elements that are not necessary. With this system a mobile device could communicate that the individual is the appropriate age without giving up excess personal data. The same use case would be relevant for mobile driver licenses. Instead of showing an address the system could just confirm residency or age.

MDAV uses x509 digital certificates, Wilson says. "The cryptography is pretty standard, you can go into the phone and sign stuff with the certificate once you put the credential on the phone," he explains.

Rutgers University in New Jersey is home to the Command, Control and Interoperability Center for Advanced Data Analysis (CCICADA), a group that is looking at different areas of identity and access management as well as privacy for Homeland Security, says Dennis Egan, assistant director at CCICADA.

CCICADA is a Homeland Security Center for Excellence and will be searching for and funding different projects. The Kantara Initiative is helping to find worthy projects that the center might be able to help get off the ground, Egan says.

The projects work in three phases. The first is a six-month project where an organization will produce a design for a system, identify customers and partners and submit it for assessment by Homeland Security and CCICADA. Phase two is building a prototype – which has a longer time span and involves more money – while the final phase is a full-blown pilot, Egan explains.

The center has been open for a little more than a year, and to date only has projects in phase one. Egan expects some to move forward shortly as others in the pipeline begin the process.

Someone Revived The Baltimore Gazette To Spread Fake News

Baltimore City Paper, September 23, 2016

The Baltimore Gazette, a newspaper that existed very briefly just after the Civil War, has returned online as a site to spread fake news stories and other nonsense.

One article in particular, "ATLANTA OFFICER KILLS BLACK WOMAN, INJURES CHILD, FOLLOWING BREASTFEEDING ARGUMENT," caught the attention of the online sleuths at Snopes.com after it apparently went viral. Search "Baltimore Gazette" on Facebook and you'll find a number of people who have been deceived by the breastfeeding story or are trying to prevent others from doing the same.

The Gazette's "article" is a rehash of a bogus story that ran in a bogus source, the National Report, in 2014, Snopes reported yesterday in a post that has been shared more than 20,000 times.

Other stories on the site appear to be similarly fake, even though the innocuous, newspaper-ish name, basic web design, and dry tone of the prose could lead some—particularly people who don't live here—to be easily deceived. But there are plenty of signs that the site is full of it.

Most of the articles are written by "BG Staff," with no proper byline given, and it appears the earliest article was published a few days ago, on Sept. 20.

A local story about an 11-year-old girl hit by a minivan in Woodberry is riddled with falsehoods. It says she was hit near a school at 4041 W. 41st St., Ridley Elementary, that does not exist and says she is a student at Dwyer Middle School, another made-up school. The site also "reports" the incident was being investigated by the "County Sheriff's Office," despite it happening in the city.

In other big local news, according to the Gazette, a man made off with Sudafed from a Walgreens on East Fayette Street. Reporter "Dan Stevens" learned from a "Baltimore Police Department media release" the pharmacist thought the man was "casing the place." The suspect, not surprisingly, in light of the racial undertones of some of the articles, is described as an "unknown black man."

BPD spokesman T.J. Smith says the story "doesn't appear to be true" and notes that the phone number listed for anyone with information to contact is not affiliated with the department.

The other two national news stories on the site are related to the rioting in Charlotte, and both—that "anyone caught looting will have welfare and food stamps revoked for life" and that Charlotte will receive $80 million from FEMA—are unsubstantiated. The FEMA food stamps one was debunked by Snopes too.

They are positive about one thing, though: "Here's How Homeschooling is Changing America."

The URL for the website was registered in July 2015 through Domains By Proxy, a company started by GoDaddy.com founder Bob Parsons that keeps owner information marked private. An email inquiry to the totally legit-sounding BALTIMOREGAZETTE.COM@domainsbyproxy.com was not immediately returned.

Interestingly enough, the site did just put up a post about a police-involved shooting in Baltimore County this afternoon, a story that is developing right now in real time—perhaps an attempt to look more credible. But the three-sentence post is aggregating the reporting of WBAL-TV.

Also, the Baltimore Gazette lists its offices at 612 E. Pratt St. There is no such address—the entire 600 block of E. Pratt is occupied by Lockwood Plaza, at 600 E. Pratt, the home of Marshall's, Panera Bread, Fogo de Chão, and other retail stores.

In sum, the Baltimore Gazette is basically your conservative wingnut uncle's email chain trying to masquerade as a credible news source. Don't buy into it.

FIRE GRANTS

Alle-Kiski Valley Fire Departments Get $1.2M From FEMA For New Equipment

By Jodi Weigand

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, September 25, 2016

Seven fire departments in the Alle-Kiski Valley will be able to replace aging gear and air packs thanks to recently awarded federal grant money.

The volunteer fire departments are New Kensington, Upper Burrell, Brackenridge's Pioneer Hose, West Deer Company No. 2 and No. 3, Vandergrift No. 1 and Lower Burrell No. 1 (Kinloch).

Each received a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters program.

The grants total nearly $1.2 million. Each department must provide 10 percent of their grant in matching funds.

The primary goal of the program is to help firefighters and other first responders obtain equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources.

Pioneer Hose Co. Chief Rick Jones said the $68,000 grant the departments received will replace their 12 air packs.

He said the department bought the breathing apparatus used from another department and they're at least 20 years old.

"They have to be certified every so many years, and they get costly to repair," Jones said.

He said this is the first time the department has gotten a FEMA grant in the 17 years he's been chief.

"I'm very excited," Jones said. "I don't know how we would have afforded to replace them if we didn't get it."

New Kensington Assistant Fire Chief Ed Saliba Jr. said they applied for a departmentwide grant. The $441,000 the department is getting will benefit each of the city's five fire companies.

The money will be used to replace all 52 breathing apparatuses, which includes the tank, harness and mask; and 36 sets of gear, which includes coat, pants, boots, gloves, helmet and a hood.

The breathing masks are 14 years old, just one year shy of the recommended replacement date, and the gear is about 10 years old.

Breathing apparatus cost about $7,000 each, and a set of gear is about $3,000, Saliba said.

He said without the grant money, the department couldn't afford to buy this much equipment at once.

"For us to spend that kind of money, we'd basically go broke," Saliba said, "because on top of that we have vehicles to maintain, rescue tools to maintain and upgrade, and everyday expenses.

"What we will be purchasing will be an upgrade to what we currently have and be able to provide good protection for the firefighters and for the people we're there to help."

Applying for a departmentwide or regional grant appears to have been a common way to seek money.

Ted Hereda, Lower Burrell (Kinloch) Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 chief, said the federal government encouraged multi-department grants.

"The more product you buy, the better price you get," he said.

"It's easier for the government to approve one large grant rather than five or six individual ones — especially if it's in the same area," said Bryan Fitch, chief of the Upper Burrell Volunteer Fire Department.

West Deer Volunteer Fire Company No. 3 applied for a regional grant for its department, West Deer No. 2 and Richland and North Hampton volunteer fire departments.

The $436,000 grant will be divided between the departments based on the amount of gear that each needs to replace.

"We were all faced with the same need at the same time," said Jim Wiegand, chief of West Deer No. 3. "Finances are tight, and, with the cost of the equipment going up, budgets buy less and less."

Upper Burrell VFD applied for the grant along with Kinloch.

Their $145,000 grant will buy 28 full sets of turnout gear for each department.

Fitch said their current gear is about 12 years old.

"(The grant) saves us from having to get a loan or spending money that we could use on other equipment," Fitch said.

Tom Schaeffer, chief of Vandergrift Fire Department No. 1, said that without grant money his department wouldn't be able to afford to replace its 14 breathing apparatuses. The department received about $99,000.

"The ones we have now were purchased with a federal grant in 2002," he said. "It's a nice program."

Desert Hills Fire District Awarded $71,810 Grant

River Scene Magazine (AZ), September 25, 2016

The Desert Hills Fire District has been awarded a $71,810 Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for the replacement of their protective clothing commonly known as "turnouts" and helmets.

The National Fire Protection Standards (NFPA) calls for the complete replacement of firefighters protective clothing every 10 years and protective clothing currently in use is at their maximum useful life as described in NFPA 1971 standards.

According to FEMA, the primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants is to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire-related hazards by providing direct financial assistance to eligible fire departments for the purchase of new equipment.

Interim Fire Chief Pat Dennen said, "We are very excited to receive this grant. It will allow us to provide the best possible protective clothing for our personnel when they encounter environments that are in immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH) atmospheres – and we would like to publicly thank FEMA for considering and funding our grant applications."

Captain Steve Bunn and Captain Jason Sayre were credited with writing the grant application.

ICYMI: Antonia Fire Gets $1.6 Million Grant To Hire 14 Firefighters

By Tracey Bruce

Jefferson County Leader, September 25, 2016

The Antonia Fire Protection District will nearly double its staff thanks to a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The $1,597.826 grant will be used to hire 14 firefighters and pay their salaries for the next two years to allow the district to meet safety standards set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Assistant Chief Glenn Nivens said.

Currently, the district has 17 employees but cannot meet NFPA standards that require four firefighters on a truck.

Currently, Antonia sends two firefighters on each truck.

"They call it two in and two out," Nivens said.

When four firefighters are on a truck responding to a fire, two can go in the structure (if they determine it to be safe) and two can remain outside the building to monitor the situation or relieve the firefighters, Nivens said.

"It will increase the safety of our people (firefighters) and of citizens," Nivens said.

Nivens said most smaller fire departments and districts cannot meet the NFPA standards because of the cost.

"It's something all districts strive for, but how do you finance it and make it happen?" he said.

Fire Chief John Newsome wrote the grant, and this is the second time the district has applied for it, Nivens said.

Once the 14 firefighters are hired, Antonia's staff will swell to 31 employees. The district will strictly follow federal guidelines in the hiring process, Nivens said.

"We will be dotting the i's and crossing the t's," he said. "There's a lot of paperwork to read. We don't want to violate the grant contract and be responsible for that money."

Nivens said the district hopes to hire firefighters by the end of the year.

Two years after receiving the federal grant, however, the additional staff will no longer be supported.

"It's something the district will have to look at," Nivens said.

"There is no way the budget can support 14 additional people and maintain it."

He said the board will have to decide at that time whether to ask residents for a tax increase to maintain the additional staff.

BFD Gets $633,746 Federal Grant

By Randy Patrick

Kentucky Standard, September 26, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has awarded a $633,746 grant to the Bardstown Fire Department for hiring and training volunteer firefighters.

"This grant is a huge win for the city of Bardstown, its citizens and the Fire Department," said Capt. Todd Spalding, who handled the grant application. "The grant is 100 percent funded. No matching contributions have to be made by the city."

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

City To Get Storm Damage Update

By Buster Thompson

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle, September 26, 2016

The Crystal River City Council will get another update Monday on the city's recovery from Hurricane Hermine. As of Saturday, Florida was still awaiting a federal disaster declaration from President Barack Obama, which would allow the Federal Emerge

The Crystal River City Council will get another update Monday on the city's recovery from Hurricane Hermine.

As of Saturday, Florida was still awaiting a federal disaster declaration from President Barack Obama, which would allow the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist the state and affected counties.

Crystal River officials approved $1 million Sept.

10 for two rounds of storm debris pickup prior to a presidential declaration.

Pikes Peak Observatory Would Further Solar Science, Education

By Billie Stanton Anleu

Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette, September 24, 2016

A new scientific endeavor in Colorado Springs could help safeguard the nation's electric grid, satellites, aircraft, spacecraft and radio transmissions and save hundreds of billions of dollars.

The first step is a biggie at 14,115 feet. It requires putting an observatory atop Pikes Peak – perhaps the only high-altitude site in the world with year-round access, a continual power source and hundreds of thousands of visitors a year.

The mountaintop observatory has been a two-decade quest by Dimitri Klebe, founder of the Pikes Peak Observatory and space content specialist for the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

But he and Robert Sallee, board chairman of the National Space Science & Technology Institute, remain undeterred.

"We understand that the process may take (another) three or more years, but we are willing to stay the course," Sallee said last week.

The proposal has been lauded as a way to lure more people to the city's most famous icon, to spur more science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, to enlighten and entertain visitors and to complement the impending new Summit House.

But it could do so much more.

Scientists will be able to test instruments and learn how the sun affects the Earth.

When a big storm on the sun sends magnetized clouds through the atmosphere to Earth, for example, currents shoot through the ground and endanger everything from electrical grids to oil pipelines, said NSSTI board member Mark Miesch, a scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research High Altitude Observatory (HAO).

The potential effect is billions of dollars in losses. But hundreds of billions would be lost if a large solar storm hit, Miesch said.

Compare that with the $108 billion tab for Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster in the U.S.

That's why space weather – the HAO's focus – is so important to the $1 billion-a-year satellite industry, utilities, airlines and others.

It's so important that the federal government has created a National Space Weather Strategy and Action Plan.

And in June, U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., introduced the Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act to the Senate to better predict and mitigate the effects of space weather. Co-sponsors are U.S. Sens. Cory Gardner, R-Colo. Gary Peters, D-Mich., and Cory Booker, D-N.J.

Forecasts are critical. A solar flare can disrupt radio transmissions, which are very important to the military.

Flight attendants traveling between London and Colorado can build up significant amounts of radiation, but planes can dodge a solar storm by changing routes or flying lower.

"But you don't want to do that unless you're sure. It costs a lot of money," Miesch said. "In order to improve forecasts, you need to increase understanding."

And that's a primary aim of the observatory, which would start with an 18-foot-diameter dome that can withstand 200 mph winds. It will be equipped with a viewing deck, a main 1-meter PlaneWave telescope for various kinds of research and a Lunt 6-inch H-Alpha Solar Telescope geared for sun studies. The entire installation would cover only 900 square feet.

Small telescopes, particularly with the sensors used today, collect more light than the older, bigger telescopes did, so they're more efficient for their size, Klebe said.

They also fill a niche for research needing a big view of the sky, such as finding planets around other stars. That can't be done through bigger telescopes, which only observe a smaller slice of sky, he said.

The 1-meter telescope will be the largest in Colorado, and it will be used by Colorado College, the Air Force Academy, the University of Denver and the University of Colorado at Boulder, among other educational and scientific institutions. It will be the biggest telescope in the Air Force Academy's international Falcon Telescope Network.

The solar telescope will be equipped with a camera, with images displayed in the Summit House, the city or on the Internet. And both scopes can be operated remotely.

Another instrument, an All Sky Visual and Infrared Analyzer, will record atmospheric conditions and phenomena, providing a 180-degree hemispheric perspective. A modified version of the instrument will identify smoke and ash particles in the atmosphere to help the Forest Service with swift response to wildfires.

The push will be to increase understanding not only among scientists, but also among students – including undergraduates from tribal colleges.

"We appreciate that Pikes Peak is a sacred space for Native Americans (including the Utes) and would not build anything there without their blessing," Miesch said. "We want them to be a partner in this. We want to inspire individuals of all backgrounds to pursue science and technology careers."

Construction of the observatory first requires obtaining a permit from the U.S. Forest Service. The observatory team will request a 15-year permit. An environmental impact statement also is needed, and the scientists would like to establish a private-government partnership to accomplish the EIS.

In 2019, the new Summit House is to be erected and the Army's High Altitude Research Laboratory on the peak will be moved. The following summer, the original research lab will be demolished, the site prepared and the observatory installed, if all goes according to plan.

Use of that site for the observatory reduces impacts on the fragile permafrost and is scientifically advantageous in relation to prevailing winds.

The Pikes Peak Observatory is expected to greatly enhance the new Summit House's destination value.

But tourism wasn't the motive for Klebe, who incorporated the observatory as a nonprofit in 1997 with a group of astronomers, astronauts, engineers and educators.

As a researcher at the University of Denver, whose telescope on Mount Evans closes in winter, he saw Pikes Peak as the ideal site for infrared astronomy and education.

In addition to the observatory, the group plans to deploy mobile science labs to remote schools to advance science and technology education.

Its mission, in addition to advancing scientific research, is "to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the universe through education at all levels, media presentations, environmental studies, historical preservation, cultural exhibits and the expansion of tourism to benefit the community."

FLOODS

Evacuations To Begin In Cedar Rapids

By Chelsea Keenan

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, September 24, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS — As the city braces for the Cedar River to crest at about 24 feet early next week, city officials are asking residents in flood-affected areas to evacuate their homes and businesses by 8 p.m. on Sunday.

The evacuations, while not mandatory, are highly recommended and strongly encouraged, said Mayor Ron Corbett during a 10 a.m. news conference on Saturday at the Ice Arena.

"We know it is a very stressful event for someone to leave their home, leave their belongings and walk away," Corbett said. "Our home is our castle, a sacred place, our sanctuary — and to walk away is difficult."

Evacuations are a necessary safety precaution, and those who choose to stay in their homes are not only risking their lives, Corbett said, but the lives of emergency crews who will have to rescue them.

"Mayor (Kay) Halloran was able to proclaim in 2008 that there were no fatalities," Corbett said. "When you look at flooding around the country, not every mayor and community can say that. I hope next week, a week from today, I can stand before the people of Cedar Rapids and proclaim the same, that there were no lives lost."

Earlier projections were for the Cedar River to crest at 24.5 feet. But the National Weather Service lowered that forecast to 24 feet at 5 p.m. Saturday.

A curfew will be put into effect from 8 p.m. on Sunday until 7 a.m. Monday. Seventy-three check points will be put up throughout areas expected to be affected by the flood. Several hundred Army National Guard members as well as state law enforcement are standing by for additional help.

Some 5,800 parcels are included in the evacuation plan, which covers homes and businesses in areas that could be hit if waters crest at 28 feet. City officials said those impacted should anticipate to be out of their homes and businesses for up to one week until water recedes and inspection teams are able to ensure their is no danger.

To see a list of the area to be evacuated, go to www.cedar-rapids.org.

Cedar Rapids Animal and Control has asked pet owners to use its services only as a last resort. Pet owners evacuating their homes should seek to board pets at animal day cares, veterinary offices or with friends and family to save space for pet owners with no other options, officials said during the news conference.

Alliant Energy plans to keep power on as long as possible. Crews will evaluate on a block-by-block basis, giving advance notice to residents when they can. Home and business owners also can call to request their power be shut off.

Elderly and disabled residents who are evacuating can schedule transportation services and help through Linn County Emergency Management, (319) 892-6500.

The American Red Cross opened a shelter Saturday at Cedar Hills Community Church, 6455 E. Ave. NW. A second shelter tentatively is scheduled to open on Sunday, with more to open as needed.

Individuals may stay at the shelter until they are able to get back in their homes. The shelters can accommodate individuals with special needs, officials added.

City officials have asked residents to stay clear of the downtown area and other affected neighborhoods, including NewBo, Time Check and Czech Village, so that crews are able to get around more easily and work to secure the areas with HESCO barriers, berms and sandbags.

Entrances into downtown closed, including Fifth Street SE and Sixth Street SE, and from First Ave. E to Eighth Ave. SE. Bridges on First, Second and Third Avenues also are closed.

The city is working with Iowa Department of Transportation and will restrict Interstate 380 on and off ramps into downtown.

‘Ready and willing’

Also on Saturday, city and county officials briefed Gov. Terry Branstad, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, Sens. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst, and U.S. Rep. Rod Blum on the community’s efforts to mitigate floodwaters.

“We stand here ready and willing to do whatever we can to help in this effort,” Branstad told the Linn County Board of Supervisors.

The supervisors on Saturday unanimously declared a state of emergency for the county, which allows the board access to emergency funds, opens up mutual aid possibilities and the potential for Federal Emergency Management Agency funds. The amount would depend on actual damage costs.

Branstad on Friday issued a proclamation of disaster emergency for 13 counties, including Linn, Black Hawk, Buchanan and Cedar. The proclamation allows state resources to be used and activates the Iowa National Guard — something he has not done since 2011.

Branstad said on Saturday while in Cedar Rapids that he learned early on in his tenure as governor to be proactive and assure that assistance is given in a timely fashion.

“In this case, we’re being really proactive and proclaiming a disaster before the water gets here,” he said.

Reynolds said they are receiving updates two to three times a day and will likely be back next week.

“This is never a good situation, but there is a stark difference from 2008, from a preparation standpoint,” she said.

The federal and state officials spoke with Corbett and other city officials in Kingston Village, on the west side of the river and across from the McGrath Amphitheatre. At the same time, city crews were working diligently to put up a temporary barrier in front of the amphitheater.

Blum told Corbett he was impressed by the organization and dedication of city employees and volunteers working together to prepare the city. It was a sentiment echoed through out the day by city leaders and other elected officials.

“Iowans helping Iowans,” Blum said.

Cedar Rapids Residents Flee Homes Ahead Of Expected Floods

By Mahita Gajanan

Fortune, September 25, 2016

Residents are evacuating low-lying parts of Cedar Rapids, Iowa following a request from authorities to leave the area by Sunday night due to a flooding risk from the rising Cedar River.

KCRG reports that evacuation and curfew starts at 8:00 PM Sunday the evacuation will begin at Sunday at 8:00 pm with a curfew starting at that time, too. “Even if you do not expect to take on water, the fire department warns water may prevent emergency services from reaching you,” KCRG noted.

Water levels rose in Cedar Falls and Waterloo, both about 55 miles upstream from Cedar Rapids. The rise was slightly lower than expected, but still reached large enough levels to create a flood. CNN reports that flooding already claimed two lives this week in western Wisconsin’s Vernon County.

The National Weather Service predicted the Cedar River will crest 23 feet in Cedar Rapids, Iowa’s second-largest city, on Tuesday morning. If that crest comes to bear, this will be the second worst flood in Cedar Rapids history. Residents living in about 5,000 downtown homes near the river were asked to leave. Officials said it could be days before they can return home.

The city has been preparing for a second major flood ever since 2008. According to the Gazette, that flood crested at 31,12 feet, which qualified as a 500 year flood and caused billions in damages. The New York Times noteded that Cedar Rapids was once known as "the city would never flood" after near misses in 1851, 1966, and 1993 when the Cedar River swelled dangerously but stayed the course.

The Associated Press reports city workers and volunteers have worked for days to build a temporary system of levees to hold the floodwater. KCRG also reported that local utilities were working on rerouting or cutting off gas and electricity in anticipation of the flood and "could not guarantee service" as the situation unfolds. Animal services have ale been accepting pets ahead of time, according to KCRG.

The Midwest flooding comes a little over a month since devastating floods struck Baton Rouge, Louisiana and surrounding parishes. Some 86,500 people filed for federal aid and 40,000 homes were damaged, with many homeowners lacking flood insurance. The Wall Street Journal reports that, a month later, recovery has been slow as residents rebuilt not only homes, but small businesses and infrastructure. Cedar Rapids has been similarly struggling even eight years after the previous record-breaking flood.

Gov. Branstad Activates Iowa National Guard For Flood Response; Disaster Declarations Issued For 13 Counties

By Erin Murphy

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, September 23, 2016

JOHNSTON — Gov. Terry Branstad on Friday afternoon activated the Iowa National Guard and issued disaster declarations for 13 northern and Eastern Iowa counties experiencing flooding.

The proclamation allows for state resources to be used toward flood mitigation efforts.

"In a situation like this, in major cities like Waterloo and Cedar Rapids, obviously we have a little time to prepare, and we want to do everything we can for the state to assist the communities and do the best job we can to avoid and mitigate damage," Branstad said in a news conference at Iowa National Guard Joint Forces headquarters in Johnston.

The disaster proclamation makes grant money available for low-income families affected by flooding. The grants are available through the state Department of Human Services.

Branstad said the state has dispatched more than 120,000 sandbags and four dump truck loads of sand, deployed or staged 22 water pumps, placed or staged 48 pallets of flood barriers, and placed 50 traffic barricades.

He added that he spoke with Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett on Thursday.

Adjutant General Tim Orr said the Iowa National Guard will begin its work by sending liaison teams to communities in the affected region to determine further resources.

"This really is to try and assess what the needs and requirements are," Orr said. "Right now we have no missions that have been tasked to the Guard for soldiers or equipment.

"... The key to any successful operation is getting out in front of it. And that's what we're really trying to do now, is identify potential needs so we have time to respond."

Branstad, Orr, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds and Homeland Security and Emergency Management director Mark Schouten on Saturday will tour Cedar Rapids as well Clarksville and Shell Rock. Reynolds said they also likely will tour more areas in the coming days.

This is the first time the governor has activated the National Guard since flooding on the Missouri River in 2011, Branstad said.

U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, of Iowa, said the federal Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service also are involved in flood response efforts.

Branstad Meets With Linn County About Flood Efforts

By Mitchell Schmidt

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, September 24, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS — Gov. Terry Branstad, along with Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, U.S. Sens. Joni Ernst and Chuck Grassley and other state officials, met Saturday with the Linn County Board of Supervisors for a briefing on local flood efforts and offer words of encouragement.

"We stand here ready and willing to do whatever we can to help in this effort," Branstad said.

The supervisors on Saturday unanimously declared a state of emergency for the county, which allows the board access to emergency funds, opens up mutual aid possibilities and the potential for Federal Emergency Management Agency funds. The amount would depend on actual damage costs.

The state of emergency will be for yesterday through next Thursday, Sept. 29.

Steve Estenson, the county's incident commander, expressed his confidence in the county's efforts, considering the lessons learned in 2008.

"In 2008, if you would have said 24.5 (feet of water), we wouldn't have really known what that meant," he said. "We feel that with the resources available now, we're very much prepared and we have a great respect for when the water gets here, there's not much you can do but wait it out until the water goes away."

Branstad Issues Disaster Proclamation For 13 Counties In Flood Path

By Erin Murphy

Waterloo-Cedar Falls (IA) Courier, September 24, 2016

JOHNSTON – Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad on Friday activated the Iowa National Guard and issued disaster declarations for 13 northern and eastern Iowa counties experiencing flooding, including several in the Cedar Valley.

The proclamation allows for state resources to be used toward flood mitigation efforts.

Heavy rains in recent days caused rising levels on the Cedar, Shell Rock and Maquoketa rivers in Northeast Iowa, causing flooding in some communities and the likelihood of flooding in more across eastern Iowa.

Officials expected the flooding to be significant, although not to the extent of the 2008 floods in eastern Iowa.

Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds visited Clarksville on Saturday, along with U.S. Sens. Charles Grassley and Joni Ernst, to survey damage there. A levee breach overnight Thursday caused significant flooding and some evacuations in that community overnight Thursday and early Friday. The nearby Butler County city of Greene also was hard hit, as was Waverly in Bremer County.

Cities from Mason City all the way to the Mississippi River have seen flooding or could feel its effects by early this week.

In a news conference at Iowa National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters on Friday, Branstad said the river is expected to crest in Cedar Rapids on Monday night, and in communities south of Cedar Rapids in the days that follow.

"We just have to deal with whatever situation comes our way. We need to be as well-prepared as possible," Branstad said. "In a situation like this, in major cities like Waterloo and Cedar Rapids, obviously we have a little time to prepare and we want to do everything we can for the state to assist the communities and do the best job we can to avoid and mitigate damage."

Branstad said the state already is working with communities to address flooding. He said the state dispatched more than 120,000 sandbags and four dump truck loads of sand, deployed 22 water pumps, 48 pallets of flood barriers and placed 50 traffic barricades.

Adjutant General Tim Orr said the Iowa National Guard sent liaison teams to communities in the impacted region to determine what resources are needed.

"I think the key to any successful operation is getting out in front of it," Orr said. "And that's what we're really trying to do now, is identify potential needs so we have time to respond."

Branstad, Orr, Reynolds and Homeland Security and Emergency Management director Mark Schouten on Saturday also toured Shell Rock and Cedar Rapids. Reynolds said they likely will visit more areas in coming days.

Branstad said it is the first time he has activated the National Guard since flooding on the Missouri River in 2011.

The disaster proclamation makes grant money available for low-income families impacted by flooding. The grants are available through the state Department of Human Services.

Grassley said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service also are involved in flood response efforts.

Linn County Supervisors Declare State Of Emergency

By Mitchell Schmidt

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, September 24, 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS — The Linn County Board of Supervisors declared a state of emergency for the county due to impending flooding.

The board on Saturday unanimously approved the declaration, which allows the board access to emergency funds, opens up mutual aid possibilities and the potential for Federal Emergency Management Agency funds. The amount would depend on actual damage costs.

The state of emergency will be for yesterday through next Thursday, Sept. 29.

Updated projections put the Cedar River's crest at 24.5 feet on Monday evening, and Linn County incident commander Steve Estenson said the latest forecast shows high floodwater lingering in the county longer than first anticipated.

"Now it looks like after it spikes, it's going to plane off slower, so we may have water here for a longer duration, based on the model," he explained.

The Linn County Sheriff's Office closed Friday and has been surrounded by eight feet of HESCO barriers to protect the building up to as much as 29 feet of water, Estenson added.

Linn County Jail also has closed, with inmates being relocated to neighboring counties. The County Courthouse and Juvenile Justice Center are preparing to close Monday.

The Jean Oxley Public Services Center, 935 Second St. SW, also will be closed on Monday, with many services relocated temporarily to the Community Services Department, 1240 26th Avenue Ct.

Estenson added that the county is working closely with the city of Cedar Rapids and other communities such as Palo — which began some mandatory evacuations Saturday — to coordinate sandbagging efforts and provide aid.

Flood Summary: Sandbagging, Evacuations In Eastern Iowa

KCCI-TV Des Moines (IA), September 23, 2016

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad has signed a disaster proclamation for 13 northeast Iowa counties affected by flooding. It activates the Iowa National Guard to assist in preparedness and in response when there's damage.

Authorities say flash flooding is occurring across several counties in Iowa after a second night of heavy rains.

View video | Current weather alerts

The National Weather Service says storms are impacting the areas that saw downpours on Wednesday night. A flash flood warning has been issued for parts of Story, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Franklin and Bremer counties until early Friday morning.

Authorities in Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids and other cities are mobilizing resources to handle flooding from the Cedar River.

The rain-swollen river already has left its banks upstream, forcing evacuations at several communities along its path through northeastern Iowa.

On Friday the National Weather Service was predicting less-than-record crests, but officials say at least moderate flooding seems a certainty.

Officials were contacting people in the North Cedar area of Cedar Falls, telling them about the rising water and offering aid in evacuation. Officials closed floodgates in Waterloo, and Cedar Rapids officials deployed portable dams, barriers and pumps in preparation for flooding before Monday's expected crest at 24 feet. That's 7 feet below the June 13, 2008, record of just over 31 feet.

Sen. Chuck Grassley today met with top staff for Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad to discuss preparation efforts for expected flooding in the Cedar Valley. Grassley also has talked with Cedar Rapids Mayor Ron Corbett. Grassley made the following comment on the flooding preparation efforts so far.

"The governor's office is working with counties and cities on flood preparation, mitigation and response. Federal agencies including the Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the National Weather Service are involved. Communities including Cedar Rapids that were struck by prior floods, including the devastating 2008 floods, have done a lot of work to protect their residents from flooding. As I have before, I'm ready to help the state and communities with whatever they need from the federal government, whether it's disaster assistance or making sure farmers have their federal crop insurance needs fulfilled. The flooding is coming at a critical time for farmers with many crops still in the field and not yet ready to be harvested.

"Emergency management officials urge drivers to be careful and follow road closure alerts as closely as possible. Tree limbs hidden under water can be a safety concern. Shelter is an important need to keep in mind, and volunteer agencies are anticipating areas where people can be housed. Schools may not be option since school is in session."

CHARLES CITY

People in Charles City are being asked to stop all water use that goes down a drain or toilet.

KCRG reports a water pump at the Sewer Wastewater Treatment Plant failed on Friday, causing the issue. This comes after significant rainfall and flooding in that area earlier in the week.

Water from the tap is still safe to drink.

AMES

Four to five inches of rain fell in Ames Thursday night, causing flash flooding around the city.

Video submitted to KCCI from T.J. Kleckner showed 2 to 3 feet of water standing in city streets.

Several cars near Jack Trice Stadium were submerged up to the windows. A total of 14 vehicles were damaged there.

Grand Avenue and Lincoln Way were just two of the streets affected.

By around 3:00 a.m., most of the water had gone down. The city did issue an alert that low-lying areas around Squaw Creek could experience flooding.

They warned residents of apartments on South 4th and 5th streets to move their vehicles to higher ground.

City officials said lightning caused damage to equipment at two Ames Municipal Electric Services substations, interrupting service to several hundred customers. Power was restored by 12:45 a.m.

CLARKSVILLE

The police chief says several people have been forced from their Clarksville homes by floodwater from the swollen Shell Rock River.

Chief Barry Mackey said Friday morning that water overtopped the levee that runs down the east side of the river west of the Butler County community of about 1,400 people. The chief says several homes are surrounded by water, including his. He spoke from the home of another police officer that sits on higher ground.

Mackey says Clarksville Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and Westside Assisted Living Suites has been evacuated as a precaution.

The National Weather Service has issued a flash flood warning for parts of Story, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Franklin and Bremer counties.

GREENE

About 60 homes in the northeast Iowa town of Greene took on waist-deep floodwaters from the Shell Rock River.

Butler County Emergency Manager Mitch Nordmeyer said this reminded him of the devastating 2008 flood that caused extensive damage.

People in the towns of Clarksville and Shell Rock filled sandbags in preparation for the river's crest there Friday.

Audrey Smith's husband had to be rescued after the tractor he used to try and retrieve a freezer of meat from the couple's home in Butler County was swamped.

Smith told the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier they'd worked all night to remove items from their home, but they didn't finish before floodwaters arrived.

Water was 4 feet high during the 2008 flood and the Smiths rebuilt. Smith said: "Guess what? We aren't rebuilding again."

MASON CITY

Authorities say about 100 people are being evacuated from two apartment complexes in Mason City in northern Iowa.

Cerro Gordo County emergency management spokesman Michael Groesbeck says Chelsea Creek has left its banks, forcing the evacuations.

The National Weather Service says more than 2½ inches of rain has fallen in the past 12 hours at Mason City and more is in the forecast. The Winnebago River sits 2 feet over flood stage of 10 feet and is expected to crest at 14.2 feet early Friday morning, near the top of the dike on the north side of Mason City.

The city says an emergency shelter has been set up for those who've been evacuated.

FEMA Urging North Iowans To Prepare For Another Round Of Rains And Flooding

By AJ Taylor

KIOW-FM Forest City (IA), September 24, 2016

With active flooding underway in parts of Iowa and the threat of more to come, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is urging Iowans to be ready to take life-saving actions on short notice.

"Additional rainfall, even in smaller amounts, when combined with an already saturated ground, could quickly lead to hazardous conditions," said FEMA Region VII Administrator Beth Freeman. "It's critical that Iowans prepare now to do what's needed to be safe in the wake of current and near-term flooding, as well as other severe weather."

FEMA's Region VII office in Kansas City, Missouri has been in regular contact with emergency management officials in Iowa as both agencies actively monitor severe weather and flooding in many parts of the state.

"This flooding is a serious situation for many Iowans," Freeman added. "We can't stress enough how important it is for citizens to stay informed of ever-changing conditions, to follow official emergency instructions, to have an emergency plan for all members of the family, including pets, and to be ready to quickly put that plan into action."

Flooding is not unfamiliar to many Iowans but it helps to refresh on the immediate steps to stay safe:

Be Informed/Know the Danger:

Keep track of severe weather and flood forecasts, and take them seriously. To do that:

Monitor newspaper, radio and TV reports of current and predicted weather conditions;

Keep a NOAA Weather radio turned on and charged up to get alerts around the clock;

Set mobile devices to alert with the latest weather information. Make it easy by downloading and using afree

FEMA app, which provides real-time weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations anywhere in Iowa or the nation. The app also provides valuable safety tips to help families prepare for, and recover from, more than 20 natural and man-made hazards, including how to make a family communication plans, a customizable checklist of emergency supplies and maps of open shelters and disaster recovery centers. The app is available on the Apple App Store and on Google Play.

Plan for the Worst:

Severe weather can strike suddenly so have a plan to stay safe and take life-saving action if needed. The plan should include:

Actions to take if it's necessary to shelter-in-place;

Where each person/pet will go to get out of danger;

How each person/pet will get to a place of safety;

How family and friends will communicate with one another if evacuation to or from different locations becomes necessary.

For more information on creating an emergency plan, visit

www.Ready.gov or

www.beready.iowa.gov.

Be Ready:

Gather essential items in one place if evacuation is needed. Those should include:

Wallets, purses, car/house keys, eyeglasses, cash, credit cards;

Medicine and basic first-aid supplies;

Daily living supplies for infants/young children, family members who are elderly or have access and functional needs, and pets;

Important information such as numbers for bank accounts, insurance policies (health, auto and property) and credit cards;

Important phone numbers of relatives, employers, schools and medical professionals such as pharmacies, physicians and veterinarians;

Chargers for mobile devices;

One or more changes of clothes. Include long pants, socks, boots and/or sturdy shoes;

Bottled water and high-protein, non-perishable food such as a peanut butter, tuna and nuts.

Talk through the emergency plan with all family members so that everyone knows what to do.

If there is time, consider making a more complete emergency supply kit for homes and cars. To learn how, visit www.Ready.gov or

www.beready.iowa.gov.

Know What to Do:

Understand severe weather terms and know what to do for each.

Watch means a specific type of threat (flooding, tornadoes) could be forming;

Warning means take action. Life/property threatening conditions are occurring or imminent.

Heed emergency instructions. If told to evacuate, go immediately!

Move immediately to higher ground if flash flooding is possible. Don't wait to be told. DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOOD WATER, even if you know the road. Turn around, don't drown!

Abandon mobile homes. They offer little to no protection, even if tied down.

Don't touch downed power lines or objects in contact with downed lines. Report electrical hazards, downed lines and gas leaks to the police and utility companies.

Don't re-enter damaged structures without first checking to see if they are safe.

Henderson County Holding Special Meeting To Address FEMA Debt

By Elizabeth Meyer

Hawk Eye (Burlington, Iowa), September 24, 2016

OQUAWKA, Ill. — Henderson County officials will meet in a special session Tuesday to discuss a near half-million-dollar debt the Federal Emergency Management Agency claims it is owed.

Following the record-breaking 2008 flood, FEMA distributed money for the county's cleanup efforts. Though the grant was awarded by FEMA, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency was tasked with administering the funds.

Henderson County officials received notification earlier this month it owes IEMA — which then would reimburse FEMA — $471,791 due to mismanaging flood relief funds.

Based on a 2011 audit by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the county received $3.7 million worth of ineligible funds from FEMA, according to the Galesburg Register-Mail.

The administrative ruling filed in July by IEMA argued "Henderson County did not comply with all applicable federal ... laws and regulations," thus rendering some work ineligible for reimbursement.

"It is not the type of work, but the failure to comply with Federal laws and regulations, that renders the work ineligible," the document stated.

The audit specifically referenced 23 "small" demolition projects and asbestos testing on 13 properties, in which federal funds were "not expended on eligible work."

Henderson County appealed in 2013, which reduced the debt to its present cost.

FEMA has requested the debt be repaid by next June, nine years after the historic flood. But if the money is not repaid, the county may face halting several vital agencies, including the health department, sheriff's office and transportation services.

"We're continuing to work with them (Henderson County), and we're hopeful that it will work out in a way that works for everyone involved." IEMA communications manager Patti Thompson told The Hawk Eye Friday.

"These are things that happen during difficult times, but when there has been public assistance granted, there is a lot of review and everything to try and help them work through it."

FEMA Says Important Deadline Approaching For Flood Victims

By Sabrina Wilson

WVUE-TV New Orleans, September 23, 2016

HAMMOND, LA –

FEMA is reminding flood victims that the deadline for registering for assistance related to the August flooding is fast approaching.

"The deadline to register is October 13 and we've had 146,000-plus individuals register for federal assistance," said FEMA External Affairs Specialist Steven Solomon.

But flood victims who have registered said they are still waiting to hear back from FEMA.

"I need help around here to help me get all of this stuff out of here," said Bobbie George, a widow who has mold growing in her flood-damaged home in Independence.

She moved to the small town after losing her home to flooding 11 years ago during Hurricane Katrina. There is a gaping hole in her roof and ceiling, as well. Plastic bins catch water when it rains. George said she had a small flood policy when the flooding happened last month, but not enough coverage to pay for all of the damage her home sustained. Now, her carport is filled with clothes and other items she has tried to salvage.

"I have some comforters, blankets," said George.

FEMA said it is working hard to process applications for assistance.

"Working to do everything we can to ensure eligible survivors get the federal assistance they're entitled to," said Solomon.

He said once flood victims sign up, an inspection typically follows. H said they have made great progress.

"We've completed 99.3 percent of those inspections. We have nearly 100 inspectors still out in the field," Solomon said.

But the agency has taken a lot of criticism from flood victims, as well as members of Congress over the pace of getting manufactured housing units to the people who need them. They are not the same as the tiny, travel-type trailers doled out in the New Orleans area after Katrina.

"As a last option, nothing else is working, and the individual is eligible, we bring in what we call a manufactured housing unit. So these are not trailers like you see pulled by car, these are like single-wide homes with rooms and doors and windows," said Solomon.

He said FEMA is assisting people who have been forced to take shelter in hotels and motels.

George said she would welcome a FEMA trailer while repairs are made to her home. Solomon could not say how many flood victims have received the manufactured housing so far.

"I don't have numbers for that," said Solomon.

Solomon urges flood victims to sign up with FEMA if they have not already, and he also warned against scam artists. He said all FEMA workers have identification, and victims should ask to see it before providing any information.

He also warned against people showing up stating that they are third-party contractors who can help speed up the assistance process.

"There are also folks who pretend that they can facilitate the process between the survivor and FEMA for a fee, that's an out-and-out scam. No one can make the process go any quicker, or any better," Solomon said.

Louisianans Can Get Smithsonian Preservation Advice

Donaldsonville (LA) Chief, September 23, 2016

Experts from The Smithsonian Institution will be on hand in Baton Rouge to demonstrate how to salvage valued possessions that got wet in the flood.

The event will be held on Saturday, Sept. 24 at 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the FEMA Disaster Recovery Center at Celtic Studios, 10000 Celtic Drive, Baton Rouge.

Baton Rouge Mayoral Candidates Address Traffic, Public Safety And Flood Recovery During Forum

By Annie Ourso

Baton Rouge (LA) Business Report, September 23, 2016

Five candidates running for Baton Rouge mayor tackled traffic, public safety, education and flood recovery topics during a forum hosted today by several architecture, engineering and construction groups.

The candidates discussed their vision for the parish, with some laying out specific plans or programs to support and, of course, reiterated their campaign platforms during the forum that took place at Drusilla Seafood.

"The mayor has to bring people together," said Darryl Gissel, a realtor and former head of the state Republican party who is running as an independent. Asked how he plans to unite the parish, Gissel said it's not that difficult: learn to work with the Metro Council.

Every section of the parish has felt at some point that it hasn't been well served, Gissel said. The divides are visible, and they affect every issue the parish encounters, he said.

State Sen. Mack "Bodi" White focused on flood recovery efforts as he addressed the crowd. It's difficult to get federal attention, White said, but the parish must have the help of Congress and the Federal Emergency Management Agency if it hopes to recover.

White, a Republican, also touched on education, an issue he's passionate about. He mentioned the high rate of males in East Baton Rouge Parish who don't graduate high school. Along with flood recovery, White said, his top issues would be education, transportation and crime.

"This mayor's race is a very important turning point in the parish and city of Baton Rouge," White said.

Metro Councilman John Delgado also touted a message of uniting Baton Rouge. Delgado, a Republican, laid out some specific plans for public safety, traffic and education.

He said he would increase the number of law enforcement officers and give them the tools they need to protect the parish. Delgado supports the city-parish's Green Light Plan for road improvements, and for alternatives to interstate travel, he supports the BUMP plan, a northern loop and a southern bypass down Nicholson Drive. Delgado also advocated for the council and mayor to have more of a role in creating a stronger education system.

"For too long, it's been someone else's job," he said.

Greg LaFleur, a Democrat and former LSU and NFL player, shared his past job experiences as an athletic director at colleges such as Texas State University and Southern University. He also worked for a while at the Baton Rouge Marine Institute and said he would implement some of its program in parish schools.

LaFleur also addressed his arrest in Houston for allegedly soliciting a prostitute. He was later acquitted of that charge. He related his run-in with police to the Alton Sterling shooting and explained how having one bad officer can lead to problems. LaFleur also listed his top concerns as traffic, jobs and education.

Former Metro Councilman Smokie Bourgeois, a Republican, discussed traffic issues, saying that he would implement a rapid response motorcycle team to tend to wrecks, and he criticized the money spent on the oft-maligned Capital Area Transit System.

After candidates addressed the audience, they were assigned to separate tables, each with their own moderator, to answer 17 questions prepared beforehand by the organizations hosting the event. The organizations included local chapters of Louisiana Engineering Society, the American Institute of Architects, Louisiana Associated General Contractors, American Planning Association, American Society of Landscape Architects, American Council of Engineering Companies and American Society of Civil Engineers.

Seven candidates did not attend the forum: former state Sen. Sharon Weston Broome, state Rep. C. Denise Marcelle, Beverly "B.J." Amador, Braylon Hyde, Rufus Craig, Byron Sharper and Cade Williams.

Complaint Filed Against Opelousas Mayor Over Mayor's $13k Paycheck

By Holly Duchmann

Opelousas (LA) Daily World, September 24, 2016

A formal complaint was filed with the District Attorney's office alleging Opelousas Mayor Reggie Tatum illegally paid himself nearly $13,000 in overtime for working after the flooding in August, despite being a salaried public official.

The complaint was filed by former Opelousas police officer Paul Gennuso after a preliminary payroll document for some of the executive department of city workers was leaked onto Facebook last Wednesday showing Tatum received a check for $12,972.96.

Gennuso said the mayor illegally paid himself for the time Tatum spent running the shelter at the Civic Center in Opelousas after the heavy flooding in August.

"It's common knowledge in the city of Opelousas, that Mayor Tatum is using his authority as Mayor to defraud the City and (Federal Emergency Management Agency) by receiving an illegal payment from the City of Opelousas, for events that took place during the recent flooding," said Gennuso in his letter to District Attorney Earl Taylor.

Gennuso said it is against city ordinance for the mayor to receive overtime payment. He is also alleging that the funds Tatum used to pay himself with require city council approval before being spent.

Tatum contests that he's been following FEMA regulations word-for-word, and that during the disaster under FEMA guidelines city employees can be repurposed, and it was after he was repurposed as the shelter director that he was eligible for overtime. He also denied that the funds used had to be cleared by the city council first.

"Normally a salaried employee, a mayor, does not receive overtime, but according to these FEMA (regulations), you can get overtime because it says that if you are salaried in an emergency, you can be repurposed," said Tatum.

FEMA was unable to be reached in time for publication.

His pay rate was converted to an hourly scale from his normal mayoral salary by a payroll clerk, and once he hit more than 40 hours, he became eligible to be paid time and a half like any other employee, Tatum said.

Tatum said he worked at the shelter, day and night, for 21 days, which is the entire length of time the shelter was open.

Tatum also said the city and local law enforcement, including the FBI, is investigating who leaked the preliminary payroll document because it showed employees full names and last four digits of their Social Security number, which Tatum insists in very dangerous.

"This document they posted on social media, first of all, is illegally obtained and an incomplete document because it's not something I approved to be sent out of our office and has city employees names and Social (Security numbers) on it, and that's just illegal to post it all over social media," said Tatum.

The Daily World has requested copies of any and all documents showing the mayor's time sheets, requests for payment and salary/payroll checks for the month of July, August and September, including his regular salary and any and all overtime.

The DA's office was unable to be reached for a comment in time for publication.

Flood Recovery Damage Assessment

By Brittany Kemmerer

KEYC-TV Mankato (MN), September 23, 2016

WASECA, Minn. –

Flood recovery efforts continue over in Waseca.

Senator Amy Klobuchar and Representative Tim Walz visit Waseca to assess the flood damage in the area.

"First of all the number one thing is to keep people safe. It's been so fortunate that no one has died yet and then the second thing is to start cleaning people out assessing the damage so we can see if it meets the federal requirements to get FEMA help," U.S Senator Of Minnesota, Amy Klobuchar said.

If it doesn't quite make the federal requirements after the assessment is reviewed, the state kicks in.

Klobuchar says over the years the state has done a better job at making this a more orderly process.

"It used to be just a mess and now while it's a mess from the rain we at least have a process in place to try to get federal funding," Klobuchar said.

Federal requirements are based on public infrastructure damage.

You've got culverts, you've got bridges, you've got roads closed, you've got a library roof that fell in in Waseca. There are tons of crops and farms," Klobuchar said.

As a member of the agriculture committee, Klobuchar says it's important to look at the long term effects.

"A lot of these fields are going to be damaged; it's going to kick in the crop insurance, hard time for our farmers because they were just ready to harvest," Klobuchar said.

Waseca County may face more flooding issues.

"And that's really the unfortunate part. Maybe we could deal with this but if there's a lot more rain it's going to be tougher because the ground is so saturated already," Klobuchar said.

Some Waseca County residents have been forced out of their homes due to the flooding.

Waseca County is working on open up a school for certain hours to allow people to come take showers.

Rice County Staying Alert As Flooding Mitigates; Klobuchar Visits Faribault

By Philip Weyhe

Faribault (MN) Daily News, September 24, 2016

Though Waseca, Owatonna, and other cities farther south saw the worst of the damage, Rice County is getting plenty attention, as it attempts to deal with and recover from flooding concerns over the last few days.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., Sen. Vicki Jensen, D-Owatonna, and Rep. Brian Daniels, R-Faribault, paid a visit to the Faribault Wastewater Treatment Plant Saturday afternoon to get a look at what the city is dealing with at the site. On Thursday, Public Works Director Travis Block led an effort to get a berm built up on the river side of the facility for the third time in six years.

In 2014, upon the second time of building the berm, the city looked to build it permanently. However, due to funding rules from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the berm had to be taken down, in order for the city to receive $120,000 in reimbursement.

Klobuchar was on site Thursday to learn. She said she was impressed by the efforts to allay any flood damage in the city, but her message seemed to be that it might be time for Faribault to look at a longer-term situation at the wastewater site.

“We’ve seen, during this flooding, that there are multiple federally-funded projects that can provide aid,” Klobuchar said. “There are mitigation projects that make a big difference.”

Klobuchar also visited the flooded site at the Faribault Woolen Mill.

The 2016 flooding has yet to impact the treatment facility with the berm providing a more-than-effective barrier. Block said Saturday that the rains expected Saturday evening weren’t likely to raise the Straight River to levels any more dangerous to the facility.

According to Rice County Sheriff Troy Dunn, flood levels in Faribault started slowly decreasing by Friday evening.

However, in Northfield, the Cannon River continued to rise, slowly, over Friday night and into Saturday morning. The river in Morristown also continued to rise slowly over that time, according to Dunn.

“We’re definitely hoping for less, rather than more, rain Saturday night,” he said. “We have three or four county roads that are going to need some more work.”

The Northfield Police Department issued a press release Friday evening and again Saturday morning, providing details on the flooding status in the town. According to the Saturday release, the river reached its highest point early Saturday at 900.88 feet above sea level, which is 7.5 feet above levels from the previous Wednesday.

Police Chief Monte Nelson also expects the Cannon’s levels to remain high for “quite some time.” Sechler and Babcock parks have both been closed in the city. The downtown walk bridge, bicycle bridge and Fourth Street bridge are all closed to vehicle traffic, though the latter is open to foot traffic.

In Faribault, the Woolen Mill continues to be surrounded by water, as Alexander Park remains flooded. Second Street Northwest was still closed Saturday afternoon from Fairgrounds Drive to 14th Street Northwest, due to water in the road, in front of the Alexander Park entrance.

Sheriff Dunn is asking all residents, throughout the county, to exercise caution near flooded areas, and to stay out of the river waters.

“I try to be proactive in telling people not to go kayaking, tubing, whatever,” he said. “That’s not a smart thing to be doing. Right now, I just don’t think being on the water is safe.”

The National Weather Service is predicting a 90 percent chance of rain late Saturday and early Sunday, with potentially 0.5 to 1 inches coming down in Rice County. City and county departments will continue to monitor flood levels and road conditions through the weekend.

Sandbagging Continues Friday In Faribault

KSTP-TV Minneapolis-St.Paul (MN), September 23, 2016

With the potential for more rain, businesses and residents are ready for whatever Mother Nature and the river throw at them in the coming days.

For residents like Sarah Stradler, it meant sandbagging and getting everything off the ground in the basement. Businesses, like the Caves of Faribault, are protecting property with berms and sandbags.

Meanwhile, the city has built a berm to protect the wastewater treatment plant.

Sandbagging efforts are continuing Friday with help from Shattuck-Saint Mary’s students.

The state of emergency is the city’s third for flooding since 2010. The emergency declaration will allow the city to seek reimbursements from the state and FEMA if a spending threshold is met.

Flooding isn’t just causing problems in Faribault. Schools in St. Clair and Waseca remain closed Friday as cleanup from the heavy rain continues in those areas.

St. Clair School Resumes Monday

By Brittany Kemmerer

KEYC-TV Mankato (MN), September 25, 2016

ST. CLAIR, Minn. –

The city council met this morning to discuss the cleaning up process.

“We’re going to get in contact with blue earth county and see if they can assist in removing and dealing with the sand,” St. Clair Mayor, Marvin More said.

The city also shows concerns with the landfill.

"People are going to have carpets furniture hazardous things and how we're going to deal with all of that," More said.

Blue Earth County is having a board meeting tomorrow to discuss FEMA help.

The city hopes to fix the sewer plant within the next few days.

"We're waiting for the water to get a little lower so we can get inside the buildings and then the engineers will assess of all the damage that's done," More said.

The city also shows concerns for the people and what they can do to prevent this from happening again.

"Some of them have been through this three times in six years. It's a tough, tough deal. We're hoping we can get other government agencies to help us figure out how we can prevent this from happening. It's an uphill battle," More said.

But part of the city's normal routine returns tomorrow, with school resuming.

"There will be some inconveniences, but there are no showstoppers. We should be able to have class as usual," Superintendent, Tom Bruels said.

Students will have a two hour late start.

"We want to be able to give them a little time to get things back in order before the students come in. We anticipate this to be the only two hour late start," Bruels said.

The food service staff has prepared lunches that require a minimal amount of water.

"We're not allowed to use the showers or the restrooms so we've brought in trailer based toilet facilities and we'll be using those. We don't anticipate a major problem," Bruels said.

Sunday Brings Little Rest To Waseca, St. Clair

By Mark Fischenich

Mankato (MN) Free Press, September 25, 2016

From Waseca to St. Clair, residents were feeling a bit blessed Sunday after days of rain-driven misfortune. Predicted storms came, but they didn't drop heavy torrents on areas already struggling after several-months-worth of typical rainfall dropped in less than 24 hours.

"I didn't even see it on my rain gauge," said Marvin Moore, mayor of flood-ravaged St. Clair. "So we lucked out there."

Mankato, which has plenty of wet basements but not the major problems of areas to the east and southeast, had four-tenths of an inch overnight. Waseca, where overflowing lakes have collapsed basements and where 14 inches of rain has affected hundreds of homes, received less than two-tenths of an inch of new rain.

Road work

For highway workers keeping an eye on inundated roads and overwhelmed bridges, it's mainly about waiting for water to recede and inspections to begin.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation was able to reopen the last closed section of Highway 14 near Janesville at 9 a.m. Sunday.

Highway 83 remained closed just north of St. Clair at a bridge over the Le Sueur River, and Highway 30 east of Mapleton had nearly a half-mile stretch that remained at least partly under water Sunday, said Jed Falgren, a district maintenance engineer for MnDOT.

The hope is to get both of those roads reopened sometime Monday, but that can happen only after the water drops and the roads and bridges can be checked for problems under daylight, Falgren said. Avoiding another major downpour helped.

"It might slow its retreat," Falgren said of the relatively light rains effect on the Le Sueur River. "But it shouldn't bring it up much."

In fact, the level at the Highway 83 bridge dropped about two inches from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday.

Enough water was surging under the bridge late last week that crews put 60,000 pounds of weight on the span, using portable concrete median barriers, to keep the bridge in place. That appeared to be successful and the weight was removed on Sunday.

Nine other sections of state highway in the area were also impacted by the storm but were reopened to traffic earlier. Dozens of county and township roads also remain closed.

Water-logged junk

In Waseca, water receded enough for clean-up operations to begin on many properties over the weekend. Waseca opened a debris collection site at the fairgrounds for people looking to get rid of flood-soaked appliances, electronics and general waste such as carpet, wood and damaged personal possessions. The collection site will be open from noon to 7 p.m. until further notice.

Janesville also set up a site near the water tower at Teal and Front Streets for the disposal of demolition waste and other garbage but is not accepting appliances and electronics. New Richland has a waste disposal drop-off site near its public works building, and Waldorf, starting today, has one west of the local school.

In each case, hazardous waste is not accepted and residents are asked to fill out paperwork to help the municipality obtain potential reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

A lengthy agenda

St. Clair held an emergency City Council meeting Sunday morning, officially declaring a disaster and beginning the planning for clean-up.

The city's wastewater treatment plant is underwater, meaning sewage and other waste water from homes is going directly to the Le Sueur River. That, along with concerns that the city's one remaining lift station could be overwhelmed, has prompted the importation of dozens of portable toilets.

Residents have water service but are asked not to flush toilets, take showers or put any water — even from hand-washing — down the drain. Instead, people are using basins for tooth-brushing and washing before tossing the water on to their lawns.

On Sunday a trailer full of portable toilets arrived at the St. Clair school, and classes will resume Monday — albeit with a two-hour-late start — for the first time since Wednesday. A week's worth of school lunches have been planned that require very little water usage.

Moore also asks potential volunteers from the region to keep St. Clair in mind in the days ahead. The city was flooded with kindness late last week, but the mayor said help will be needed again once the clean-up starts — including helping people carry heavy, water-logged items from homes and scrubbing up basements.

"I'm dreading the clean-up process," he said.

Cyclones in the forecast

St. Clair residents will have an opportunity to cheer for inclement weather Monday night. The St. Clair High School Cyclones ("Fear The Wind") will be taking on the visiting United South Central Rebels at 7 p.m. in a football game rescheduled after being postponed by the flood.

Moore expects many St. Clair residents will be ready for some high school football despite their exhaustion.

"It's got to be better than sitting at home thinking about this," he said.

And the Cyclones on the field are the only nasty weather in the forecast. As recently as last Friday, the long-range forecast showed a chance of storms for each of the ensuing 10 days.

The revised forecast from the National Weather Services shows not even a hint of rain on Monday, with sunny skies and dry nights through the entire week.

County, Townships Continue To Fight To Get FEMA Aid

By Julie Clements

Butler County (KS) Times-Gazette, September 24, 2016

What's happening: Find out what the townships are doing after being denied FEMA assistance for the flooding in May.

The townships in Butler County are continuing to battle to get assistance to repair their roads damaged by flooding back in May.

Several townships, especially those in the southwest part of the county, saw significant damage to their roads during May and have continued to deal with heavy rains since then, but FEMA is denying assistance to the townships.

"FEMA sent down a group of inspectors," said Emergency Management Director Jim Schmidt of the May flooding event. "We've never had any of our officials treated the way they were treated. I was very disappointed in their attitude and demeanor. The state folks were great. They kind of got blindsided that these other folks were showing up."

Schmidt said FEMA had given them unrealistic demands.

"We've been doing this for a long time," he said. "We know when we turn in a preliminary damage estimate we might be off by 5, maybe 10 percent at the most."

He said they knew what was required in the past, but FEMA changed those rules on them without telling them.

"None of us knew this had even happened," Schmidt said of the changes. "We found out that over half a million in what we would consider normally eligible damage had been reduced to $9,000. We weren't the only ones."

Darryl Lutz, public works director, said they were being required to document the condition of the road before the disaster and after it happens. They also are requiring the roads to be barricaded until they are repaired.

Schmidt added if it was just rock washed off that was not allowable damage.

Lutz said there were just a lot of things from a practical standpoint that aren't feasible when a township is trying to respond to an emergency with minimal resources.

Lutz said they had material washed off of the roads, ditches eroded and water ways that don't have the capacity to handle the amount of water that fell.

"Several townships have been hit four times with major rainfall events," Lutz said.

One of those townships hit hard was Augusta Township.

Nick McClure, Augusta Township trustee, said the biggest thing was not getting the help they have depended on in previous years.

"Now FEMA doesn't want to apply any of their grants," he said. "Everything they say was caused from the flooding, they don't want to take care of anymore."

But he said their township budget only takes care of the maintenance each year, not replacing all of the material that was washed down the river three times for them this year.

"It is a challenge," he said.

While some of their roads saw a lot of damage, others had less damage, but in all, 50 percent of the roads in Augusta Township saw some type of damage.

"What's hardest on the roads is the damage when it rains six inches at one time," McClure continued. "It is hard on the roads and ditches."

During the May rain, the roads in Augusta Township were impassable for two days, blocking people in their homes.

"This year is worse than any we have had in the past and they (FEMA) don't want to participate in it," he said. "We really, really need it now and they don't want to help."

Since mid-May, Butler County has seen from 20 inches up to 40+ inches depending on where you are in the county.

The county has not given up though. They have filed an appeal with FEMA with the help of the State of Kansas.

One problem with the first time FEMA came down was that it was during harvest season so it was hard to have township people spend two days going through the process.

"We worked with the state and they came back down," Schmidt said. "We got a meeting with our townships and they spent an entire Monday morning in here with the state going back out and re-looking at some of the things so we could do an appeal. Now one of the requirements is we have an impact statement. There is just a number of new hoops.

"It is really making it hard on these townships."

Most townships are represented by volunteers with maybe one person hired to grade the roads.

The biggest challenge would have been barricading all of the roads. Townships don't have that many barricades or enough manpower.

Schmidt pointed out people also still need to get through to feed cattle and do other tasks.

"These are people who have really no idea of how we do things in the heartland," Schmidt said. "There was actually a comment made on one of the other visits: 'Well, you guys ought to pave all of these roads'."

Schmidt has heard there have been conversations that maybe the barricading requirement is not going to be enforced, but there are still other issues they are fighting.

FEMA has 60 days to respond to the appeal, which was filed about a month ago. Schmidt also has heard from Rep. Mike Pompeo and Sen. Pat Roberts' offices.

"Our fear is for us in emergency management if this is the new standard of what we're going to be looking at to get a disaster declaration," Schmidt said. "When you have a half million in damages and your townships are going to have to absorb that, that's the whole point of having FEMA."

So now, the county and townships are waiting to hear back from the appeal.

"If we lose the appeal it is a whole new ball game," Schmidt said.

While the townships have done what is necessary to keep the roads passable, they are waiting to see if they get FEMA assistance to do the major repairs.

"It's kind of scary," Schmidt said. "This is taxpayers' money, whether FEMA or local, but when you are sharing it with 30 people it is a lot more expensive than when sharing it with a few million."

Just one township had more than $100,000 in damage.

Now they are waiting and hoping they win the appeal.

"One of the things that gets lost is people say it's FEMA money, but it's tax money," Schmidt said. "Let's be smart about how we spend it but let's not kick the whole support system out without saying we're going to do this slowly."

Schmidt's biggest concern is if this request is denied, they may never qualify again for flooding assistance on their township roads.

"We just hope and pray it's not going to set a precedent," he said.

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Kanawha County W. Va. Schools Gets $1.5 Million Grant For Flood Relief

By Mike Kennedy

American School and University, September 23, 2016

The Kanawha County (W.Va.) district is receiving a $1.5 million federal grant for flood recovery efforts.

The funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency will help Kanawha County repair and replace facilities damaged or destroyed in June flooding, as well as other flood-related issues, according to a news release from West Virginia's two U.S. senators.

The flooding caused serious damage to several Kanawha County schools. District officials have determined that Hoover High School and Clendenin Elementary School sustained too much damage and will have to be rebuilt.

Earlier this month, FEMA approved the district's plan to place portable classrooms at Elkview Middle as a temporary home for Hoover High School and at Bridge Elementary to accommodate students who attended Clendenin Elementary School.

TORNADOES

Massive Cleanup Underway Following Two Tornadoes In Utah

By Pat Reavy

Deseret (UT) News, September 23, 2016

WASHINGTON TERRACE, Weber County — As emergency officials continued Friday to add up the damage caused by a destructive tornado in Washington Terrace, the massive cleanup also got underway.

As of Friday afternoon, 21 homes in Weber County — primarily in Washington Terrace, Riverdale and South Ogden — were determined to be "uninhabitable" because of major structural damage, and building inspectors were still counting, said Weber County Sheriff's Lt. Nate Hutchinson.

About a dozen of those homes are total losses, Hutchinson said.

"The damage is so extensive that we're talking major, major overhaul just to get them back up and working. Some of them are without roofs, or have shifted off their foundations," he said.

The total damage from Thursday's storm, Hutchinson said, was expected to grow into the millions.

"We're looking at well over $1.5 million at this point, and to be honest, I think that's going to be pretty low," he said.

That early estimate is based on homes "that will need major renovations," and not the hundreds of others that suffered some type of property damage. It also doesn't include cars and other vehicles damaged in the storms, Hutchinson said.

"Most of these cars are total losses. We've had cars tipped over. We had one camping trailer picked up and moved several houses in the air and landed in the neighbor's yard down the street," he said.

Weber County Emergency Management Services has been in contact with officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to begin the process of applying for federal aid, Hutchinson said.

On Friday afternoon, Gov.Gary Herbert walked through neighborhoods that suffered the worst devastation. He called the scene “a little bit stunning.”

“We’re not used to tornadoes,” Herbert said, calling the “sporadic” damage in the neighborhoods “kind of unsettling.”

Herbert praised county and city officials, saying the response to the disaster was fast and thorough.

“I came here expecting to see a lot of debris, kind of a war zone, that we’ve seen at other times,” he said. “I come here and it’s mostly all cleaned up. And so it just tells me that the people in charge here are really doing good things.”

The governor said disasters frequently bring communities closer together.

“It gives us an opportunity as people to serve our neighbors,” Herbert said.

Cleanup was also underway Friday in southern Utah, where the National Weather Service confirmed that a tornado with 110 mph winds ravaged a 25-yard area in Garfield County near Panguitch, causing heavy damage to several structures and minor damage to several more homes.

Yardley Insurance Agency, 609 N. Main, Panguitch, was the hardest hit. A house next to it also suffered damage when the roof from the insurance business was blown off.

“It pretty well touched down here and wiped us out for the time being. But honestly, we feel mighty blessed because it could have been worse,” owner John Yardley said.

In northern Utah, Thursday’s tornado initially touched down in the southwest section of Washington Terrace and moved northeast. A five-block area from about 5200 South on 50 West to 4700 South and 300 West was hardest hit, Hutchinson said.

From there, the tornado “skipped like a rock,” he said, leaving the ground and touching down again in the 4600 block of 200 East.

“It really took a toll on the homes in that neighborhood,” he said.

Approximately 50 residents were evacuated Thursday night either because of damage or for safety precautions because of a teetering tree or power pole that could fall, or a gas leak.

Of the 21 homes that were determined to be uninhabitable, Hutchinson said, “it’s gonna be awhile” before those people will be able to return to their homes.

In Riverdale, a couple of mobile homes were blown over and destroyed by the wind, he said.

Most of the 50 displaced residents stayed with other family members Thursday night, Hutchinson said. The Red Cross put up four families in local hotels.

Other areas of Weber and Davis counties also suffered damage from strong winds associated from the storm front. The National Weather Service recorded a gust of 81 mph in South Ogden on Thursday, and 101 mph at Ogden Peak.

Hutchinson said “dozens” of extra sheriff’s deputies began patrolling those neighborhoods Thursday night and would continue to do so until further notice to deter potential looters.

The Weber County Landfill, he said, is accepting all green items for free while the cleanup effort is ongoing.

Although a tornado did not hit Antelope Island, the storm produced strong enough winds that the roof of a barn was blown off. Fielding Garr Ranch, which survived a wildfire in July, will be closed until further notice, according to Utah State Parks officials, because of damage caused to several structures.

“The ranch will reopen after park staff have assessed the situation and determined it is once again safe,” the Park Service said in a prepared statement.

The damage forced at least four school closures Friday: Bonneville High School, T.H. Bell Junior High, Washington Terrace Elementary and Roosevelt Elementary. Hutchinson said the schools were closed mainly for safety, particularly for students who would have had to walk through the tornado-ravaged neighborhoods to get there. But he expected all schools to be open again Monday.

At the height of the storm, approximately 38,000 people were without power in Davis and Weber counties. By late Friday night, approximately 1,130 customers remained without power in Ogden, South Ogden, South Weber, Riverdale and Washington Terrace. And about 930 customers were without power in Clearfield, Clinton, Hooper, Layton, Syracuse and West Point.

“We still have lines going down, poles catching on fire, and there’s just a lot of cleanup,” said Rocky Mountain Power spokesman Paul Murphy.

There was no time estimate as to when power would be fully restored to all customers, Murphy said. Extra crews were being brought in from Wyoming and Idaho to help fix the damaged lines, he said.

The power outage indirectly contributed to a mobile home fire in Clearfield about 9:10 a.m. Friday when a generator being used to power the home caught fire. The fire was determined to be accidental, though the mobile home likely is a total loss, fire officials said.

Emergency officials say despite the widespread damage, they were extremely thankful that no major injuries were reported. Hutchinson said there was one report of a resident who suffered a broken arm, and another report of a person who suffered a foot injury when a car he was standing next to was lifted by the tornado and landed on his foot.

WILDFIRES

Extreme Weather Cost U.S. Taxpayers $67 Billion

By Erin Auel And Alison Cassady

EcoWatch, September 24, 2016

One of the most visible and immediate ways climate change has affected—and will continue to affect—Americans is through extreme weather exacerbated by rising global temperatures.

Aerial image of flooding in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Between 2005 and 2015, the annual average temperature in the U.S. exceeded the 20th-century average every year, with increases ranging from 0.15 degrees Celsius to 1.81 degrees Celsius above normal. Moreover, the federal government's most recent National Climate Assessment concludes that as temperatures continue to rise, extreme weather events and wildfires will increase in frequency and intensity.

Climate change will worsen heat waves, winter storms, and hurricanes. It will exacerbate extremes in precipitation, leading to more severe droughts and wildfires in some areas and heavier rainfall and flooding in others. And when the damage is done, taxpayers will be left to pick up the bill.

When extreme weather strikes and state and local governments are overwhelmed, the federal government must often intervene. In the worst cases, the president can declare an emergency or a major disaster, which releases federal funds for the damaged areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides financial assistance to local, tribal and state governments, as well as individual households, after the president declares an emergency or major disaster.

The Center for American Progress (CAP) examined FEMA data on weather- and wildfire-related disaster declarations between 2005 and 2015 to identify trends in FEMA disaster spending, which is funded by U.S. taxpayers. CAP found that:

Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA issued more than $67 billion in grants to assist communities and individuals devastated by extreme weather and wildfires. Overall, FEMA spent about $200 per U.S. resident for disaster assistance during that time period.

FEMA provided the most disaster assistance to Louisiana and New York, which, combined, received more than half of the agency's total assistance over the 10-year period due to damage caused by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy, respectively. Texas, Mississippi, and New Jersey rank third through fifth for FEMA disaster spending between 2005 and 2015.

The states that received the most FEMA disaster assistance spending per capita were Louisiana ($4,345), Mississippi ($1,607), North Dakota ($843), and New York ($807). In North Dakota, unprecedented flooding events in 2009 and storms in 2011 caused substantial damage, driving up per-person costs among a smaller state population.

These findings likely underestimate the true federal cost—and thus the cost to taxpayers—of extreme weather. FEMA provides assistance in response to the worst natural disasters—those that triggered emergency and major disaster declarations. As a result, the findings do not include the costs of smaller but still destructive storms, costs borne by private insurers, and other government spending, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's disaster assistance program.

As the climate warms, these types of extreme weather and wildfire events could impose an even greater burden on American communities and taxpayers. In order to prepare for this reality, communities must invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and integrate climate considerations into their development plans.

Findings: FEMA Is Spending Billions on Natural Disasters

Between 2005 and 2015, the president issued 832 separate emergency or disaster declarations for which FEMA provided either public assistance—defined as funding for state, tribal, and local governments—or individual assistance in the form of grants typically made to homeowners and renters whose home damage was not covered by homeowners insurance.

Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA spent $67.7 billion on household and public assistance in response to presidentially declared emergencies and major disasters. Of this amount, $14.36 billion was spent on individual and household assistance, and public assistance outlays to state, tribal and local governments made up the rest—$53.31 billion.

During this 10-year period, there were extreme weather and wildfire events in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories and throughout all seasons. Severe storms were the most frequent cause of disaster declarations, with 470 distinct declarations across the examined time period.

Although less common than severe storms, hurricanes caused the most damage. Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA spent $49.5 billion on public and individual assistance to help communities recover from hurricanes. FEMA spent $12.7 billion for assistance related to severe storms over the same 10-year period.

Hurricanes accounted for eight of the top-10 costliest disaster declarations between 2005 and 2010, including hurricanes Katrina, Sandy, Ike, Wilma, Rita, Gustav, Irene and Isaac.

Accordingly, although the total assistance by state varied widely, FEMA directed significant disaster spending to states that experienced historic hurricane damage during the period examined. These states include Louisiana and Mississippi, where Hurricane Katrina hit hardest in 2005, and New York and New Jersey, where Hurricane Sandy landed in 2012.

Nationwide, FEMA spent more than $22 billion in assistance responding to Hurricane Katrina, including allocations for states that provided assistance related to evacuations. The agency provided nearly $16 billion in household and public assistance grants in response to Hurricane Sandy.

Non-hurricane events can cause significant and costly damage as well. In August 2016, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, experienced historic flooding from torrential rainfall. As of Aug. 23, the floods had killed 13 people, and more than 100,000 people had applied for federal assistance. Preliminary analysis from Climate Central and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found that increased temperatures due to climate change increased the likelihood of intense downpours in Louisiana by 40 percent.

Floods are among the most costly extreme weather events that can hit an area, as they can destroy large areas of property and can take a long time to recede. Between 2005 and 2015, flooding caused eight of the 10 costliest non-hurricane disaster declarations and occurred across several different regions.

Looking at the per-capita costs of extreme weather reveals that these disasters have a profound impact on individuals and communities. Louisiana received $4,345 per person in FEMA disaster spending between 2005 and 2015, the most of any state. Mississippi received the second-highest amount per capita—more than $1,600. Overall, FEMA spent about $200 per U.S. resident for disaster assistance between 2005 and 2015.

Damage is not just limited to coastal areas. States in the central U.S. with relatively small populations have been hit hard by extreme weather and subsequently received significant assistance from FEMA. North Dakota, for example, ranks third for per-capita FEMA assistance over the analyzed decade due largely to eight distinct flooding events. Iowa ranks fifth for per-capita FEMA spending and seventh for total spending because of severe storms that caused major statewide flooding in 2008. Of the 10 states with the highest per-capita spending, half are located in the central U.S.

Conclusion

Extreme weather is already costing taxpayers and the federal government valuable public dollars and resources. Americans have recognized these costs; in a 2015 New York Times survey, 83 percent of respondents said that unmitigated climate change poses "a very or somewhat serious problem in the future."

Because of the damage already caused to the climate, communities in the U.S. and around the globe will experience more frequent and intense extreme weather events, even if world leaders take immediate action to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Faced with this reality, FEMA has proposed a rule that would establish a deductible for disaster assistance in order to encourage states to make investments in resilience measures before disasters occur. This rule could incentivize states to invest in climate-smart infrastructure to minimize the financial and human toll of extreme weather.

The FEMA proposal is one among many efforts to push communities to better prepare for storms, floods, and other natural disasters—an effort made even more urgent because of climate change—rather than focusing only on responding to a disaster's aftermath. Resilience, however, is only one prong in a coordinated response to climate change. The world must also focus on mitigating the worst impacts of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning the global economy to cleaner, low-carbon forms of energy.

Methodology

CAP examined FEMA data on presidential declarations of major disasters and emergencies between 2005 and 2015. The data reflect the two primary disaster declaration types: major disaster and emergency. CAP analyzed FEMA data on public and individual/household assistance spending in response to these declarations. The data were last updated on July 12.

For the per-capita analysis in Table 3, CAP used population data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. To calculate the per-capita costs by state, CAP averaged the state population totals from 2005, 2010 and 2015. The national per-capita figure in Table 3 reflects FEMA disaster assistance to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories.

CAP developed a methodology for excluding and including disasters to ensure the analysis only includes declarations that reflect the types of events that could become more common with unmitigated climate change.

We included public and individual assistance payments made in response to major disaster declarations and emergency declarations for the following types of incidents: coastal storms, drought, flooding, freezing, hurricanes, mudslides from flooding, severe ice storms, severe storms, snow, tornadoes, typhoons and wildfires. We excluded public and individual assistance payments made for the following types of incidents that occurred between 2005 and 2015: water main breaks, terrorism, explosions, earthquakes, chemical spills, tsunamis, the 2009 presidential inauguration, bridge collapses and volcanoes.

WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

Miami Neighborhood's Zika Outbreak Likely Curtailed By Aerial Spraying

New Zika cases in Wynwood have apparently stopped, but transmission continues in Miami Beach

By Melanie Evans

Wall Street Journal, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Double Dose Of Pesticides Stops Zika Mosquitoes, CDC Says

Two pesticides were needed to stop Miami's Zika-carrying mosquitoes

NBC News, September 23, 2016

It took a double dose of pesticides that kill both adult mosquitoes and their larvae to stop the first outbreak of Zika virus in Florida, health officials said Friday.

They said while aerial spraying of pesticides may be controversial and frightening to some people, they've shown it's safe when done right and that it killed off the mosquitoes that were spreading the virus.

An aerial banner is flown over the South Pointe Park pier on Sept. 6, 2016, in the South Pointe Park area in Miami Beach, Fla. Aerial spraying of the insecticide naled is scheduled over South Beach, where more mosquitoes have tested positive for the Zika virus. In a statement Tuesday, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez said the flights recommended by Florida health officials and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will begin Thursday and continue for a month. Alan Diaz / AP

"Aerial spraying is an effective addition to mosquito control on the ground. In fact, it's been the most effective tool," Dr. Tom Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told NBC News.

Florida is still fighting a second outbreak in Miami Beach. There are also individual cases across the state. Three new local cases were reported Friday, bringing Florida's total count to 105 cases — 95 in residents and 10 among people infected while visiting the state. "As soon as aerial spraying was done, mosquitoes plummeted and transmission slowed."

The CDC and Florida's department of health on Monday declared the Zika outbreak over in Miami's Wynwood neighborhood. Thirty people who lived, worked or visited there had tested positive for Zika. Most had been in or around a work zone with many areas of standing water.

It took several weeks to get the outbreak under control, and aerial spraying of the pesticide naled, plus use of ground sprays that disperse larva-killing bacteria, is what ended the outbreak, the CDC says.

Officials started out using sprayers loaded with Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (Bti), a species of bacteria that can kill developing insect larvae in water. It is sold in mosquito dunks and pellets that homeowners can buy to treat ponds or other standing water. It's effective but takes time to work.

Related: Activists Protest Mosquito Spraying in Miami Beach

"Despite extensive ground-based efforts, Zika continued to spread among people. As soon as aerial spraying was done, mosquitoes plummeted and transmission slowed," Frieden told reporters in a telephone briefing.

"Aerial application appears to be our strongest tool. Aerial spraying with Bti that controls the young mosquitoes and naled is currently the most effective tool in the Zika prevention toolbox."

But aerial spraying alone doesn't work, either, Frieden said. "In the areas that only used naled, mosquito populations rebounded," he said. "So the one-two punch is important."

The Aedes aegypti mosquito that carries Zika is especially hard to kill. Frieden likes to call it the "cockroach of mosquitoes" because it's so difficult to control. It lives in and around houses and can breed in tiny amounts of water.

Aedes spreads not only Zika, but dengue, yellow fever and chikungunya viruses. No one's been able to eradicate populations since governments stopped spraying DDT in the 1970s.

Related: Study Rules Out Birth Defect Doubts

The CDC and state health department officials said the naled spray that was used is not dangerous to people when sprayed in ultra-low doses.

"Less than one ounce of naled per acre is used for aerial spraying, which might explain the absence of observed negative health effects during and after aerial spraying," they wrote in a joint report. Other studies have tested people after naled has been sprayed and find little evidence of it in their bodies. "In the areas that only used naled, mosquito populations rebounded."

Zika is a threat mostly because of what it does to developing babies. It attacks their brains and nervous systems, causing a wide range of birth defects, from horrific brain damage to subtler effects on vision. There's no way to protect a fetus if the mother is infected.

Travelers from other Zika-affected areas carry the virus with them — often unwittingly, because most people infected don't have symptoms. Zika can cause a rash, headache and fever and, rarely, it can cause neurological side-effects.

Zika can spread sexually but it only causes outbreaks where Aedes aegypti mosquitoes live.

CDC: Aerial Spraying Curbed Zika Transmission In Wynwood

Fox News, September 23, 2016

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced Friday that aerial spraying with the controversial pesticide naled in Wynwood helped curb the region's mosquito population, thereby halting active local transmission of the Zika virus. In a press release, the CDC declared that ground spraying to fight Zika was not sufficient to suppress active transmission in the arts hub of Miami, which was the first area of local transmission in the continental United States.

Health officials identified 29 people, including one in Broward County and 28 in Miami-Dade County, who were infected with Zika via local transmission from late June to early August. A cluster of those cases occurred in Wynwood.

Naled, which can be toxic to humans in large quantities, elicited protests from locals who were concerned about its dangers. Europe has banned the use of naled. However, active transmission did not stop until Florida health officials began an aerial spraying plan that included naled and bacillus Thuringensis, according to the CDC.

"After mosquitoes persisted and infections continued despite ground-based spraying, aerial spraying knocked down mosquitos rapidly and was associated with interrupting transmission of Zika in Wynwood," CDC director Dr. Tom Frieden said in the release. "When faced with the potentially devastating outcomes of microcephaly or other serious brain defects that Zika can cause during pregnancy, we must use the best available tools to prevent infection. According to EPA assessments, when used properly, aerial spraying with naled for mosquito control doesn't pose a risk to people or the environment."

Officials cleared Wynwood of active local transmission in Zika on Monday, as no new local cases have surfaced in the region since early August.

Zika Virus: CDC Hails Aerial Spraying In Killing Wynwood Mosquitoes

By Daniel Chang

Miami Herald, September 23, 2016

Aerial spraying of insecticides over Wynwood in August was so successful at interrupting the spread of Zika that federal health officials on Friday heralded the approach as "a new era" in the fight against mosquito-borne diseases — even as a local biologist who reviewed Miami-Dade surveillance data said that the air attack did not work as well as advertised.

As Zika continued to spread in a 4.5-square-mile area of Miami Beach, where the health department reported three more local infections on Friday, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Tom Frieden delivered a cautiously enthusiastic endorsement of aerial spraying with two different pesticides — one that takes out adult mosquitoes, the other that kills eggs and larvae.

In a teleconference with State Surgeon General Celeste Philip, Frieden highlighted a new CDC report co-authored by Florida scientists showing that the combined aerial approach delivered results that on-the-ground efforts alone, such as truck spraying and backpack fogging, could not have accomplished in Wynwood.

"We cannot know with certainty that the control measures ended transmission, and of course the virus could come back tomorrow," Frieden said, noting that the CDC report was not based on a controlled study but rather "a rigorous analysis" of mosquito surveillance data from Wynwood.

"But, having said that," he said, "the findings are clear. Despite extensive ground-based efforts, there remained large numbers of mosquitoes, and Zika continued to spread among people in the area. As soon as aerial spraying was done, mosquito populations plummeted and monitoring found no more people infected in the weeks after the aerial application."

On Sept. 19, the CDC lifted a travel advisory that warned pregnant women to avoid the area because the Florida Department of Health had not found any new mosquito-borne Zika infections in 45 days — meeting the federal agency's standards for suggesting that mosquito-borne transmission of the disease is no longer occurring.

30 Number of people with mosquito-borne Zika infections linked to Wynwood

Though no new Zika infections have been reported in Wynwood since early August, Philip Stoddard, a Florida International University biology professor and the mayor of South Miami, said the evidence that aerial spraying significantly reduced mosquito counts in the area is not so clear cut.

Stoddard said he had not yet seen the CDC report on Friday. But he has reviewed Miami-Dade mosquito surveillance data for Wynwood gathered during roughly the same period — July 27 through Sept. 9 — examined in the CDC's report.

He produced a study, which has yet to be published, and found that four rounds of aerial spraying of the pesticide naled over Wynwood did not have a lasting effect.

"If they can find something that works, God bless them," he said. "But the naled started showing a lot of promise and then it stopped working. This is a problem."

Stoddard said there was a decline in Wynwood's mosquito counts associated with spraying of the larvacide BTI. But he added that other efforts, such as a door-to-door campaign to remove standing water and other mosquito breeding grounds, may have had a bigger impact.

"I'm encouraged by the BTI findings," he said. "But you can't be sure the BTI is what was doing it."

As soon as aerial spraying was done, mosquito populations plummeted.

CDC Director Tom Frieden

For the uncertainty, Stoddard blamed federal and state health officials for not designing a more rigorous study of the ongoing public health crisis, which has led to more than 105 local mosquito-borne infections, most of those in Miami-Dade. An additional 773 travel-related Zika cases also have been reported in Florida, including 90 pregnant women.

"They dropped the ball," he said. "They did not design a controlled test. These data are extremely important, and you would think they would have a statistician to help them design a study that would have given them the information they needed. But they did not do that."

During the news conference, Frieden repeatedly stated that the CDC report produced by Florida officials was not a controlled study. He also emphasized that what worked in Wynwood may not work in other areas, including Miami Beach. Stoddard said his review found naled alone "never worked in Miami Beach."

Still, Frieden said the data strongly suggested that the combination of naled and BTI had emerged as a new weapon in the fight against Zika and other mosquito-borne diseases.

"In the balance between protecting pregnant women and the next generation against devastating birth defects, we're encouraged that there is now a new tool that appears to have had such dramatic results in Wynwood."

Zika cases reported in Florida as of Sept. 23

* Counties of pregnant women are not disclosed.

** Does not include local cases

Source: Florida Department of Health

It Takes Two Chemicals To Knock Out Mosquitoes That Carry Zika

'One-two punch' shows promise in knocking out mosquitoes that carry Zika, CDC reports

By Helen Branswell

STAT, September 23, 2016

Aerial spraying of the insecticide naled, followed by a product that targets mosquitoes when they are in the larval stage, may be responsible for a sharp drop in Aedes aegypti mosquitoes in a part of Miami where local transmission of the Zika virus was first found, the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Friday.

CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said the apparent success of the combination in the Miami neighborhood of Wynwood may represent a new standard for control of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes.

"It appears that the aerial application of this one-two punch has the ability to rapidly interrupt transmission," Frieden said during a media conference Friday.

article continues after advertisement

"The findings are quite striking," he added. "Those who've worked in the field of arbovirology and control of diseases spread by Aedes aegypti and have looked carefully at this data are struck that we haven't seen similar control in other diseases spread by this particular mosquito species."

Aedes aegypti mosquitoes are extremely difficult to control. The females, which need a blood meal to procreate, prefer to bite humans. As a result, they live close to people, in or around homes. They need only small amounts of water to lay their eggs — as little as the amount that a discarded bottle cap could hold — which adds to the difficulty of getting rid of this species.

The bugs are resistant to some of the chemicals that have been used against them in the past, which is why public health officials turned to the combination of naled and a biological product called Bacillus thuringiensis subspecies israelensis — Bti — that kills larvae.

Naled alone didn't appear to knock down the mosquito populations as successfully, Frieden said. It was tried in a different part of the city.

The CDC's report noted that local hospital admission records were checked to see if people came in complaining of respiratory problems or skin rashes followed spraying of the chemicals. There was no evidence that happened.

A number of protesters in Miami objected to the spraying. And earlier, Puerto Rico dropped a plan to use this approach there over public objections.

Duane Gubler, an expert in mosquito transmitted diseases, was cautious about interpreting the results, saying several methods of mosquito control were used in the Wynwood neighborhood, and it's not clear the drop in mosquitoes can be attributed to the aerial spraying.

A former head of the CDC's dengue branch in Puerto Rico, Gubler had been skeptical of the aerial spraying plan before the work was undertaken.

Insecticide Spraying Working Against Florida's Zika Mosquitoes: Officials

By Steven Reinberg

HealthDay, September 23, 2016

Aerial spraying of insecticides seems to be stopping the spread of the Zika virus in south Florida, health officials said Friday.

Seventy-four confirmed cases of the mosquito-borne infection that causes devastating birth defects have been reported in the state, the only state in the nation to report any local infections.

A combination of insecticides was needed to beat back the Aedes aegypti mosquito that carries the virus, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Florida Department of Health.

While ground spraying was ineffective, aerial spraying with the insecticides naled and Bti (bacillus Thuringensis) dramatically reduced the mosquito population and local transmission of Zika, CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said during an afternoon media briefing.

"This really heralds in a new era of [mosquito] control," Frieden said. "It appears that the aerial application of the one-two punch has the ability to rapidly interrupt transmission. It doesn't mean that the area is immune from future spread, but the findings are quite striking," he added.

These pesticides kill both the insect and its larvae, preventing the birth of new mosquitoes, Frieden said.

Aerial spraying is part of a comprehensive mosquito-control program that also includes encouraging people to get rid of standing water on their property and protect themselves against mosquito bites as well as using ground spraying in hard-to-reach areas, Frieden said.

This breed of mosquito has been particularly hard to control, Frieden said. And it's impossible to know if spraying will work in the long run, he added. But after spraying, the mosquito population in the Miami area dropped significantly, as evidenced by the low numbers of insects found in mosquito traps, he said.

The initial Florida outbreak started in late June and ran through early August. In Miami's Wynwood neighborhood, 30 people were identified as having been infected with Zika virus through local mosquito-borne transmission. In Miami Beach, 44 confirmed cases have been reported so far, according to Dr. Celeste Philip, Florida's surgeon general, who also spoke at the briefing.

Transmission of the virus in Wynwood stopped quickly after aerial spraying with both chemicals, Philip said. Since early August, no new cases of locally transmitted Zika have been reported in Wynwood, the health officials said.

Any new cases of Zika infection have been among people who brought the infection with them from areas outside the United States, Philip said.

The Zika epidemic has been centered in Latin America and the Caribbean, with Brazil reporting the largest numbers of infections and the birth defect microcephaly, which causes babies to be born with extremely small heads and underdeveloped brains.

In Miami Beach, aerial spraying stopped only recently, so it's too early to know if it will be as effective as it was in Wynwood, Frieden said. However, early results appear to mirror those seen in Wynwood.

Despite concerns about the effect of these pesticides on humans, Frieden said they are safe when used as directed, and no short-term health problems have been reported.

To reduce the risk of local Zika transmission within the United States, the CDC recommends that people returning from places with ongoing infections should use mosquito repellent every day for three weeks and follow the CDC's guidelines to prevent sexual transmission of Zika.

The Zika virus doesn't pose a significant health threat to most people, except pregnant women and fetuses.

The virus can be spread by infected men and women to their sex partners. There is no vaccine or treatment for Zika.

The CDC advises that partners of pregnant women use a condom to guard against sexual transmission during pregnancy.

The results of the aerial spraying efforts were reported Sept. 23 in the CDC publication Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

SOURCES: Sept. 23, 2016, media briefing with: Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., director, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and Celeste Philip, M.D., M.P.H., Florida Surgeon General and Secretary; Sept 23, 2016, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

Mayors Say State Told Them To Keep Zika Mosquito Sites Secret

By Daniel Chang

Miami Herald, September 25, 2016

The mayors of Miami-Dade County and Miami Beach on Sunday accused the Florida Department of Health of lying after the state agency said last week that it never told local officials to hide the locations in Miami Beach where mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus were captured.

Florida's health department strongly denied instructing local officials to keep the information confidential — and said the decision was entirely up to Miami-Dade — after the Miami Herald reported on Friday that a county attorney said the state agency had ordered them to keep it a secret.

The statement was made during a court hearing for the Miami Herald's lawsuit against Miami-Dade seeking the locations of traps in Miami Beach where mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus were captured this month. The suit seeks disclosure of the locations on grounds that the information would help the public make decisions about precautions to take if they live or work nearby, and also inform the community debate on the use of the controversial insecticide naled.

On Sunday, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez, who is facing a runoff election in November, pushed back against the Florida health department's denial with a written statement repeating that the agency had ordered secrecy in regards to the locations.

"During multiple meetings, phone calls and conversations, officials from the Florida Department of Health explicitly stated to county officials that information identifying the addresses of traps containing mosquitoes positive for the Zika virus is confidential during active, ongoing epidemiological investigations," Gimenez said in the statement.

At least five traps in Miami Beach have captured mosquitoes that tested positive for Zika, but Florida officials have identified only one place: the Miami Beach Botanical Garden, which had been closed three days prior to the announcement.

"It is disturbing that the Florida Department of Health is denying previous directives to maintain confidentiality of the trap locations," Gimenez said in the statement. "At the end of the day, this is about the health and safety of our community, and we have been carrying out the express orders of the Florida Department of Health as it relates to disclosure of mosquito-trap information."

Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine corroborated Gimenez's statement, which added that the state health department had ordered the information kept secret to protect the privacy of residents living in the areas where Zika-positive mosquitoes were captured.

Levine said he was present when Florida health department officials, including Miami-Dade Director Lillian Rivera and state Surgeon General Celeste Philip, instructed county and city officials not to disclose the locations. He said Florida Agriculture

Commissioner Adam Putnam also told him that the health department had ordered the information remain confidential.

"Mayor Gimenez is only doing what the state told him, his staff, me and my entire staff, specifically, that they would not permit the county to release the information on the locations," Levine said Sunday. "Lillian Rivera said it multiple times that she has been instructed and the department of health will not permit the locations of the traps to be released. That's No. 1. No. 2, I remember hearing the state surgeon general saying it directly to us, Celeste Philip. And No. 3, Adam Putnam told me and the city manager directly in my office that. In fact, I reaffirmed it with Commissioner Putnam on the phone the other day, and he was dumbfounded."

Mayor Gimenez is only doing what the state told him, his staff, me and my entire staff, specifically, that they would not permit the county to release the information on the locations.

Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine

Representatives for Florida's department of health and agriculture did not immediately respond to the Herald's request for comment on the mayors' statements. Jennifer Meale, a spokeswoman for the agriculture department, replied to the Herald's request in an email Sunday.

Meale's statement: "In consultation with the Department of Health, we believe the locations of the traps are exempt per 381.0031(6), F.S.," a state statute governing information gathered during epidemiological investigations.

On Friday, the health department issued a written statement denying the agency ever muzzled the county.

"The statements made by the county today are completely false," Mara Gambineri, a health department spokeswoman, said in an email. "At no time did the Florida Department of Health instruct Miami-Dade County to withhold the location of mosquito traps. This is solely the decision of the county."

Miami-Dade remains the only place in the nation identified as having active spread of Zika by mosquitoes, specifically in a 4.5-square-mile area of Miami Beach between Eighth and 63rd streets from the ocean to the bay.

As of Friday, Florida's health department reported a total of 105 local mosquito-borne Zika infections, most of those in Miami-Dade. An additional 773 travel-related Zika cases also have been reported in Florida, including 90 pregnant women.

At least five traps in Miami Beach have captured mosquitoes that tested positive for Zika, but Florida officials have identified only one place: the Miami Beach Botanical Garden, which had been closed three days prior to the announcement.

Adult, Larval Insecticides Pack Deadly Punch To Mosquitoes, Zika: U.S.

By Ransdell Pierson

Reuters, September 23, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Metro Health Confirms Two New Cases Of Zika In San Antonio

By Silvia E Foster

San Antonio Express-News, September 23, 2016

Two new Zika cases have been confirmed in Bexar County, the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District announced Friday.

The number of reported cases in Bexar County was 13 at 11 a.m. on Friday, but later in the day the district had identified two more, bringing the total to 15 confirmed cases in San Antonio. All the cases were contracted outside the country, officials said.

The virus travels through mosquitoes. While relatively harmless for the average person, it has been linked to birth defects. — pregnant women infected with Zika could give birth to children with microcephaly, or abnormal brain development.

On Feb. 1, the World Health Organization declared Zika an international public health emergency.

In June, there were only eight reported cases of Zika in San Antonio. Last week, three more cases were identified. Also last week, a mosquito was found in Bexar County with a different virus: West Nile.

Metro Health recommended residents take preventative measures to deter mosquitoes from their home by frequently cleaning out or upending containers that hold water, which are often breeding grounds for mosquito eggs. The agency suggests covering up exposed skin and using repellent to avoid getting bitten. Pregnant women are discouraged from traveling to Zika-affected areas, including much of Latin America.

The Texas Department of State Health Services updates its Zika count by county every day. Friday, there were 201 confirmed cases of Zika on the statewide list; that didn't include the two new San Antonio cases reported Friday afternoon.

There have been 3,358 cases of Zika in the United States and of those only 43 were locally acquired, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Puerto Rico Reports 2nd Death Tied To Zika-related Condition

Associated Press, September 23, 2016

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) – Health officials in Puerto Rico say a 75-year-old man infected with Zika has become the second person to die from a paralysis condition linked to the mosquito-borne virus.

Authorities said Friday that the man died this month after developing complications from Guillain-Barre. They noted he had previous health issues including diabetes, asthma and a history of cancer.

The first victim was a man between 35 and 45 years old who died in July after contracting Zika and developing Guillain-Barre.

There are 22,358 people with Zika, including 1,871 pregnant women. This is of concern to health officials who anticipate babies being born with severe birth defects.

A total of 170 people infected with the virus have been hospitalized. Two people who had Zika coupled with other unrelated medical conditions have died.

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Singapore Considers Monitoring Program For Babies Born To Women With Zika

By Saeed Azhar

Reuters, September 23, 2016

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OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Great Central ShakeOut Coming Up

Washington (IN) Times-Herald, September 24, 2016

The Great Central U.S. ShakeOut is four weeks away – Oct. 20 at 10:20 a.m. – and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security is encouraging Hoosiers to register and participate in this drill promoting earthquake safety preparation and awareness.

Indiana is exposed to a serious threat of earthquakes along the New Madrid Seismic Zone – located 180 miles southwest of Evansville – and the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone, which encompasses parts of Southeastern Illinois and Southwestern Indiana.

The ShakeOut is an opportunity to practice proper safety measures in the event of an earthquake, and participating is simple and only takes a few minutes. Here's how it works: on Oct. 20 at 10:20 a.m., participants should drop to the ground, take cover under a table or desk and hold on as if a major earthquake were happening.

The days leading up to the ShakeOut are a great time to check houses, workplaces or schools for potential earthquake hazards and to create a preparedness kit that can be used for a variety of situations, not just earthquakes. Disaster kits should include water and food for all household members, first-aid supplies, flashlights and batteries, medication, items for pets, and extra clothing. For information on disaster kits and emergency preparedness, visit GetPrepared.in.gov.

To learn more about how individuals, families or organizations can participate in the 2016 Great Central U.S. ShakeOut and to register, visit GetPrepared.in.gov. Registration is free and open to everyone.

The ShakeOut is the largest earthquake drill in the Central United States, and it's led by local emergency management agencies, IDHS, the Indiana Geological Survey, the Indiana Department of Education, the Central United States Earthquake Consortium, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey.

A total of 2.3 million people in the Central U.S. region have registered so far, and Indiana is currently in the lead with more than 561,000 registrants. Other states participating include Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Iowa, Nebraska, Louisiana, Kansas and Tennessee. Last year, Indiana had nearly 700,000 Hoosiers register for the drill.

Missouri's Annual Earthquake Drill To Be Oct. 20

Liberty (MO) Tribune, September 26, 2016

JEFFERSON CITY — Registration is open for the 2016 Great Central U. S. ShakeOut earthquake drill in October. More than 450,000 Missourians are already registered to participate in the annual drill, which teaches people how to protect themselves in an earthquake.

More than 2 million people are signed up in 14 central U.S. states that could be impacted by a major New Madrid Seismic Zone earthquake.

At exactly 10:20 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 20, participants will practice Drop, Cover, Hold On:

- Drop to your hands and knees, under a table or a desk if you can;
- Cover your head and neck with your hands and arms; and
- Hold on until the shaking stops.

Experts say this method is the best way to protect yourself from falling debris, which is the most likely cause of injury during an earthquake in developed nations with modern building standards.

"It's very important for people to immediately know what to do to protect themselves because earthquakes occur without warning," said State Emergency Management Agency Director Ron Walker in a press release. "If you and your family know in advance how react and take cover, it could prevent serious injury."

To sign up for the ShakeOut, visit www.shakeout.org/centralus. Once registered, participants receive regular updates on the drill, as well as information on earthquake preparedness and safety. The ShakeOut website also includes many resources, including manuals, videos, audio drill broadcasts and earthquake scenarios.

From 1811 to 1812, the New Madrid Seismic Zone, which includes southeast Missouri, produced some of the largest earthquakes ever in the continental U.S. A major earthquake in this area could result in damage in much of southern and eastern Missouri, including the St. Louis area.

To learn more about earthquakes in Missouri and how to prepare, visit www.sema.dps.mo.gov/earthquake_preparedness. The site includes brief videos that show how to conduct a ShakeOut drill.

American Red Cross Volunteers Are Ready; Volunteers Teaching Public How To Prepare For Cascadia Earthquake

By Peter Madsen

Bend (OR) Bulletin, September 25, 2016

Theresa and Richard Grimes keep their emergency suitcases packed and ready to go. As on-call American Red Cross disaster service volunteers, the husband and wife — together and individually — have deployed many times with less than 24 hours' notice.

"If they call me today at 3 o'clock, I'm ready to go tomorrow morning," Theresa said.

Among The Red Cross Cascades — which serves Oregon and Southwest Washington — the Grimeses are two of approximately 2,500 regional volunteers and 1,400 disaster relief volunteers who drop everything to help survivors. Responsibilities are wide-ranging yet typically involve food and water distribution and sheltering concerns.

However eerily, the Grimeses — and the Red Cross — know their next deployment may be in their own backyard in response to Cascadia Rising, the catch-all term for the earthquake and tsunami that seismologists say are poised to strike the Pacific Northwest.

"It's easy to think, 'It'll never happen to me,'" she said. "Even I think that — it's human nature. But Mother Nature has no boundaries."

As a way to spread awareness about Cascadia Rising, the Red Cross has launched its Prepare Out Loud presentation throughout Western and Central Oregon.

The presentation, which began in June and has reached 2,000 people, is a Cascadia earthquake crash-course. It covers the science and history of the Cascadia subduction zone, human behavior during disasters, what to expect during and after an earthquake, how to locate loved ones and how much food, water and supplies a person will need.

Steven Eberlein, a Red Cross foundations director and the presentation's creator, is particularly concerned about what he calls the culture of preparedness.

"The cultural problem we have with preparedness is we don't expect each other to prepare. It's not part of our social dynamic yet," he said. Cascadia earthquake preparation will catch on the same way people quit smoking and began wearing seat belts — when people see their peers changing their behaviors.

Based in Portland, Eberlein, 39, said Prepare Out Loud was inspired by his relief work in Sri Lanka after the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. He was already there, working as a teacher for a different international aid organization, when a subduction zone earthquake off the coast of Indonesia — more than 1,000 miles away — sent a massive wave rolling westward. Sri Lanka didn't feel the 9.0-magnitude earthquake but its tsunami killed more than 30,000 people on the island alone.

The pending Cascadia earthquake, if it's a full rip along its 700-mile fault line, will also register around 9 on the Richter Scale. Earthquakes this strong shake for four to six minutes. Eberlein said Cascadia Rising will be on par with the earthquakes and tsunamis that originated near Indonesia and, in 2011, Japan — two of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded.

Cascadia's fault

The Cascadia subduction zone, located 80 miles from the Pacific Northwest coast and running parallel, stretches from Northern California to Vancouver Island. Along this fault line, the Juan de Fuca oceanic plate is sliding gradually under the North American tectonic plate. Over time, pressure has gradually accumulated, which unleashes a massive earthquake and resultant tsunami, on average, every 243 years. As scientists have recently learned, the Cascadia subduction zone is 76 years overdue.

From California to Canada, 7 million people will be directly impacted by just the shaking, said Eberlein. This makes it a much more difficult relief operation than, say, a San Francisco earthquake where the damage is relatively isolated and relief is more easy brought from the outside.

According to a 2015 Pulitzer Prize-winning New Yorker article, the Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates 13,000 people will die in the Cascadia earthquake and tsunami. The odds of a Cascadia earthquake and tsunami happening in the next 50 years are about 1 in 3.

"Right now we have a situation where millions of us will directly impacted by the largest natural disaster to ever hit North America," Eberlein said.

Richard Grimes, 74, who is also a Red Cross Cascades board member and head of sheltering, said he was briefed about Cascadia Rising years ago during his 26-year tenure as a police officer in Eugene. Now living in Bend (he said the move had nothing do with Cascadia Rising), the Grimeses attend the Red Cross Cascades Disaster Academy in Salem twice a year where they take refresher courses. Volunteers learn how to administer relief to the survivors of a variety of disasters, including floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes and wildfires.

"We've taken every class you can take. On paper we're qualified to do anything the Red Cross wants us to take," Richard said. He also attended a weeklong Cascadia Rising exercise a few months ago that simulated disaster scenarios in Central Oregon. In one simulation, the Wickiup Dam ruptured, and he and his team were responsible for sheltering 10,000 people displaced from the La Pine area.

"That was an eye-opener," Richard said. "We thought we would use the fairgrounds as a sheltering spot for refugees, but they said 'No, you can't use that area because FEMA is going to be using it.'"

Eberlein said preparation for a natural disaster ultimately comes down to the individual. He recommends visiting "Aftershock," an Oregon Public Radio's interactive online feature, where users punch in their zip code and learn about their area's seismic risks and what they can do to prepare. Of Bend, the site says: "The shaking here is moderate. You feel it. It wakes up anyone who's sleeping. Books and knick-knacks are falling off shelves. Windows and dishes are breaking." It may take several weeks for Bend to repair damages to its natural gas lines, according to the site.

Eberlein said, "No one has power over time and space. After an emergency, we expect help, but there is no magic button to get you everything you need. Today is when you have power over time and space."

Answering a call

The Grimeses have responded to numerous natural disasters, including the December 2015 floods in Portland and Seattle. In 2005, Theresa helped out in Louisiana for 31 days after Hurricane Katrina. She recently deployed to the area again; this time to Baton Rouge, where she served meals to flood survivors from a Red Cross emergency response vehicle. It was her eighth deployment in 14 months.

"You have to take a break," said Theresa, 64, adding that between the heat, humidity and the physical and emotional toll "it was the hardest work I ever did."

Theresa described a lasting memory serving meals in a Baton Rogue apartment complex. She met parents of two young children who lost their jobs because of flooding, and they were in the process of losing their apartment, too, which was succumbing to mold. Being able to provide sustenance to their two young children was the parents' top priority. Theresa said she was gratified to guarantee them two hot daily meals. Before she returned to Bend, Theresa said she made it clear to the survivors there would be a Red Cross volunteer to take her place.

"Being there, (showing) affection, understanding, giving a hug, a smile" goes a long way, she said. "I would do it again in a heartbeat."

Small Business Disaster Plan App Helps Prepare For The Worst

Kansas City (MO) infoZine, September 23, 2016

Small Business Disaster Plan App Helps Prepare for the Worst

Follow Monday, September 26, 2016 Kansas City infoZine

Manhattan, KS – infoZine – If you own or manage a small business, a disaster like any one of these could put a major dent in your work and your bottom line.

A new phone app won't fix such problems, but could help a business start operating again more quickly and easily.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app is available free for iOS and Android tablets and smartphones. It was developed by the North Dakota State University Extension Service and Myriad Mobile, Fargo, N.D.

"We used FEMA's ready.gov information for businesses and the Extension Disaster Education Network's Ready Business training program to integrate with the functionality of the tablet and smartphone," said Bob Bertsch, the NDSU web technology specialist who led work on the app's content. "Yes, there are online templates for business disaster plans, but this app provides portability and functionality."

The Extension Disaster Education Network is a collaboration of land grant universities focused on reducing the effect of disasters through education. Kansas State University is a part of EDEN and shares preparedness tips on its Prepare Kansas blog.

"There are two things that I have heard small-business owners say repeatedly: The first is, they never have enough time. And the second is, 'Where did I file that?'" said Glenn Muske, NDSU extension rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app takes on both of those, Muske said, by letting you fill out important disaster plan information, along with supporting photos right from your smartphone or tablet – which you always have with you.

"Of course, you should save the information in the cloud, too, in case your phone or tablet is lost," he added.

The app lets you enter information for your business, including basic and contact information, emergency planning, evacuation, insurance information and more.

Plans should be reviewed annually, Muske said, so the app uses your phone's alerts to remind you to review the information at a designated time in the future.

The content can be downloaded as a csv file. The app also encourages you to upload the content to a cloud service such as Dropbox, iCloud, Drop or a similar service for backup.

"Planning is never high on anyone's list," Muske said. "But think how easy the process is when the structure is there and you just need to fill in the blanks. That's exactly what this Small Business Disaster Plan app provides. And because September is National Preparedness Month, it's a great time to get your business prepared for disasters."

Development of the Small Business Disaster Plan app for tablets and smartphones was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Nationwide Test Of Emergency Alert System To Take Place September 28

Newtown (CT) Bee, September 24, 2016

On Wednesday, September 28, at 2:20 pm EDT, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in collaboration with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Weather Service, will conduct a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS).

The test is scheduled to last approximately one minute. An alert message will clearly indicate that the alert is a test of the EAS.

The message of the test will be similar to the regular monthly test message of the EAS, normally heard and seen by the public: "This is a national test of the Emergency Alert System. This is only a test."

The alert will be transmitted in English and Spanish and will include both audio and the text of the test message, which can be used to populate an accessible video crawl.

All EAS participants — radio, television, cable, and direct broadcast satellite system providers — are required to participate in this nationwide test.

The nationwide test will assess the reliability and effectiveness of the EAS, with a particular emphasis on testing FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), the integrated gateway through which common alerting protocol-based (CAP-based) EAS alerts are disseminated to EAS participants.

These improvements will help ensure that all members of the public, including non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities, will receive emergency information.

According to the FCC, the test will provide an opportunity to evaluate this and other measures that the FCC has adopted to address issues identified in connection with the 2011 Nationwide EAS Test.

EAS participants are required to file reports with the FCC after the test, which the commission will analyze to determine how the test performed.

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) will not be part of the test; the public will not receive test alerts over their mobile devices.

General information about the Emergency Alert System and the test is available on FEMA's website at fema.gov/emergency-alert-system.

Okmulgee County Firefighters Train In Swift Water Rescue

By Christina Good Voice

KOTV-TV Tulsa (OK), September 24, 2016

OKMULGEE COUNTY, Oklahoma –

Okmulgee County Emergency Management sponsored two days of Swift Water Rescue Training for 22 firefighters Friday and Saturday.

The training was held at Okmulgee Lake and taught the firefighters the "skills necessary to effect safe rescues in high water emergencies," the OCEM stated in a news release.

The training was held in coordination with Tech ResQ.

The funding to purchase safety equipment and to conduct the training was provided for by an SLA funding grant from FEMA.

"Over the last several years there are now nearly 50 firefighters trained in our county," said Mark Conklin with OCEM.

Nationwide Emergency Alert Tests Set Sept. 28

Dyersburg (TN) State Gazette, September 25, 2016

On Wednesday, Sept. 28, at 1:20 p.m. CDT, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in collaboration with the FCC and the National Weather Service, will conduct a nationwide test of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). The test is scheduled to last approximately one minute. All EAS Participants include radio, television, cable and direct broadcast satellite system providers – are required to participate in this nationwide test. The nationwide test will assess the reliability and effectiveness of the EAS.

During the first test a text message will be sent out clearly stating that the alert is only a test of the EAS. The test is scheduled to last approximately one minute. The message of the test will be similar to the regular monthly test message of the EAS. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) will NOT be part of the test; the public will not receive test alerts over their mobile devices.

Big Bear Valley C.E.R.T. Training In October

Inland Empire Weekly (CA), September 25, 2016

Big Bear Lake, California – WHAT IS CERT? The objective of the Big Bear Valley Community Emergency Response Team or BBV-CERT is to provide public education, training and opportunities for volunteers to support community and family safety. To educate citizens to be better prepared to take care of themselves, family, friends and neighbors in the event of a disaster of any type until emergency responders can arrive.

The next CERT class is scheduled for the week of October 17th thru October 21th from 5:45 pm to 9:45 pm at the Paradise Training Center located at 417 Grenfal in Big Bear City (Corner of Grenfal and Paradise). There is no fee to attend this 20 Hour CERT training class. There is a pre-requisite for this basic CERT training course, individuals need to complete the FEMA ICS-100 and ICS-700 training series by going to http://training.fema.gov.is/ Those wanting to attend this CERT class must be at least 18 years old.

CERT team members are trained in disaster preparedness with basic disaster response skills such as light search and rescue, disaster medical operations, fire safety, First Aid, CPR, and much more. Our CERT team members can assess structure safety after a disaster, whereas they can ask you to remain outside your home because of safety concerns. CERT team members can also do basic medical assessment and get quicker medical treatment from the triage units that will be set up. This is Big Bear Valley's way of making sure you, and our community is safe and gets medical evaluation and basic lifesaving treatment.

Those wishing to attend the upcoming 20-hour CERT training can register by emailing Kristin Saukel, CERT President, at k.saukel@verizon.net. Check out the Big Bear Valley CERT website at www.bbvcert.org.

NASA's 'Daily Minor Planet' Warns Of Impending Asteroid Collisions

By Coburn Palmer

Inquisitr, September 24, 2016

Scientists agree the Earth is vulnerable to killer asteroids, and although NASA has identified thousands of the dangerous space rocks, there hasn't been a way to notify the public of an impending collision until now.

The Minor Planet Center, the NASA-funded organization responsible for tracking asteroids, comets, and other near-Earth objects, now has a news service dedicated to releasing information on dangerous space rocks.

Dubbed the Daily Minor Planet, the news service is dedicated to educating the public on the latest asteroid facts, said Matt Holman, astronomer and director of the Minor Planet Center.

“Most people don’t realize how common asteroid flybys are. We want the Daily Minor Planet to educate readers in an entertaining way, so the next time they see a doom-and-gloom asteroid headline, they’ll know where to go to find the facts.” [Image by Mode-list via iStock]

The name of the asteroid news service comes from a mashup of Clark Kent’s newspaper in Superman, the Daily Planet, with the names of asteroids and celestial objects.

Almost every day the Earth is threatened with an asteroid collision, and on those days the Daily Minor Planet will publish information on the passing space rock including its name and distance to our planet. When there’s no imminent threat, the news service will feature a newly discovered asteroid.

Sign up for the asteroid newsletter.

The planet was forced to acknowledge the danger of falling space rocks in 2013 when a previously undiscovered asteroid exploded over the Russian city of Chelyabinsk injuring 1,000 people.

Russia responded by cobbling together an untested planetary defense system made from Cold War-era ICBMs the country plans to fire off at incoming asteroids.

An international group of scientists led by astrophysicist and Queen guitarist Dr. Brian May, along with Apollo 9 astronaut Rusty Schweickart, responded by creating Asteroid Day.

Asteroid Day is celebrated every year on June 30, the day of the largest asteroid impact in modern history, the Tunguska event. In 1908 a space rock believed to measure almost 330 feet wide exploded over a Siberian forest, destroying more than 1,200 square miles with an explosive force 185 greater than the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima during WWII, former astronaut Dr. Thomas Jones told the Observer.

“Big answer, big picture is we are 100 percent positive Earth is going to be struck again by an asteroid, and those range from small to large. If we do nothing, we are bound to be hit eventually by an asteroid that is damaging enough to destroy civilization.”

An asteroid would need to measure at least half a mile in diameter to threaten the future of mankind, but even a small space rock could do considerable damage if it managed to strike the Earth, Jones told the Observer.

“The largest hazard remaining is the smaller ones, those that are about 100 to 150 meters across, and those could do regional damage. One could destroy several states in the U.S. for example.”

NASA’s Planetary Defense Coordination Office is responsible for notifying the president and managing FEMA’s response to any asteroid emergency. [Image by Aunt_Spray via iStock]

There are currently only a few ways to protect the Earth from falling space rocks, not including the untested Russian idea of shooting nuclear missiles at them. One idea is a gravity tractor where a spacecraft flies over an asteroid and the mutual gravity between the two objects gradually moves the dangerous space rock away from its collision course over several months.

A more popular theory, the impact deflection method, basically involves shooting an object at the asteroid at such a high speed the velocity changes the speed of the space rock and makes it miss its appointment with Earth.

Another possible deflection method involves shooting lasers at the incoming asteroid to vaporize part of it; the destruction of the rocks moves the asteroid off its collision course.

Ambulance Company Closings Directly Impact EDM

By Allison G. S. Knox

EDM Digest, September 24, 2016

On August 31, 2016, The Journal of Emergency Medical Services (JEMS) reported that the Johnston Ambulance Service in Goldsboro, NC abruptly closed its doors, leaving hundreds of people without employment.

JEMS reported that the ambulance service was the largest private ambulance service in the area and thousands of patients who used this service would need to find another ambulance company for their non-emergency transportation needs.

It is devastating any time an organization closes its doors for the hundreds of people suddenly without employment. Despite the fact that Johnston Ambulance Service was not running emergency 911 calls, the idea that they would no longer be serving the public is a matter of emergency management concern.

Ambulance companies having financial trouble is not news, though, and is an issue that affects ambulance agencies throughout the country. An ambulance company closing its doors may not have a big influence on local level emergency response if they do not answer 911 calls. It can, however, affect large scale emergencies if the federal government needs to step in to assist in the emergency. Emergency Support Functions

The federal government has included "emergency support functions," which are essentially, packages of resources based on needs and based on the scope of the emergency. FEMA lists these emergency support functions in detail on their website.

Ambulances are part of this function and serve as a vital component of federal level response to a major disaster. Without this assistance, and without the resources in a region, the management of an emergency can become complicated as this important resource isn't available. Disaster Management Plans, Revisited

Emergency managers are tasked with the important job of making sure their emergency plans are functional, updated and have the appropriate resources to effectively manage a disaster. When ambulance companies close down because of financial reasons, it can be devastating to an area for the loss of employment for hundreds of people.

Because ambulance companies like Johnston do not respond to 911 calls, it can be easy for lawmakers to forget about their direct impact to emergency management. Emergency managers, though, need to carefully revisit their emergency management plans when ambulance companies are dismantled for how they may affect their emergency responses–even when those companies are not responsible for managing 911 emergencies.

Whenever an organization is no longer in business, it can be hard for a community to recover from the loss. Where ambulances are concerned, emergency managers need to take how their loss affects their community and the resources they plan to use in an emergency. At the federal level, emergency management officials will need to figure out how to make up for this type of loss in regions throughout the country.

Mashpee Senior Center

Falmouth (MA) Enterprise, September 23, 2016

Arts & Crafts Class: Create A Decoupage Vase

Create beautiful vases to showcase your favorite fall arrangements using wine bottles and colorful scrapbook paper! It is fun and easy to design these lovely pieces, and all materials will be provided. This class will be held on Monday, September 26, at 1 PM. There will be a small fee. A reservation (required) may be made at the front desk or by calling 508-539-1440.

Talking With Your Doctor Workshop

Take an active role in your health care. How well you and your doctor talk is one of the most important parts of getting good health care. But, talking to your doctor isn't always easy. It takes time and effort on your part as well as your doctor's. On Tuesday, September 27, at 2:30 PM, Betty Blackham from the Visiting Nurse Association of Cape Cod will be presenting a free workshop offering some tips and tools to use to prepare for a doctor visit and get the most from the visit. Reservations are appreciated and can be made at the front desk or at 508-539-1440.

Cape Cod Senior Appreciation Picnic

This event is sponsored by the Barnstable County Deputy Sheriff's Association. Join them on Wednesday, September 28, from 11 AM to 1 PM for a K-9 demonstration, a free lunch for seniors, and bingo games with prizes. Location: Bass River Beach Parking Lot (aka Smuggler's Beach), Yarmouth. For more information, call Joseph Gordon 508-563-4319.

CARES Program: Hope Dementia & Alzheimer's Services

This program is specifically for people with memory impairment and their care partners. CARES provides an opportunity for families affected by memory impairment to participate in two separate support groups—held simultaneously—that provide information, guidance, and respite to care partners; and, conversation and socialization for those with memory impairment. The sessions are available at Mashpee Senior Center on the second and fourth Wednesday each month, from 1:30 to 3:30 PM; the next meeting will be September 28. To register or for more information, call Hope Dementia & Alzheimer's Services at 508-775-5656.

Drivers are needed to provide transportation to medical appointments on Cape for ambulatory seniors. We ask that the volunteer drivers accept a minimum of two trips per month. A typical trip is three hours. A volunteer would need a reliable vehicle, automobile insurance and a good driving record. Drivers must have a congenial rapport with seniors.

Reception desk/secretarial workers are also needed. These volunteers must be able to handle phone calls, follow the procedures for handling appointments, be able to handle several things at the same time, and be a friendly presence for people coming in to ask questions.

Newsletter preparation: The day before the newsletter mailing takes place, we need volunteers to help set up and organize the newsletter stations for the volunteers the next day.

If you have any special skills, talents, or interests you would like to share with other seniors at Mashpee Senior Center, call Deborah Converse, volunteer coordinator, at 508-539-1440.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), more commonly known as the Fuel Assistance Program, is administered by South Shore Community Action and provides low income households with help in paying heating bills. The Mashpee Senior Center will assist residents in completing a fuel assistance application. Appointments will be available on Mondays from 1 to 3 PM beginning September 27. The program officially starts November 1. Income eligibility for a family of one is $34,001; a family of two is $44,463. Once the application and documentation are complete, they will be sent to South Shore Community Action in Plymouth, who will determine eligibility.

Please note that the following documents should be brought to the appointment: all sources of gross income for all members of the household; a heating bill showing the account number; electric bill; copy of a mortgage statement or front page of the lease agreement; homeowners insurance; real estate tax bill; photo identification; Social Security numbers; and birth dates. Call the Mashpee Senior Center to set up an appointment at 508-539-1440.

Telephone, e-mail, and door-to-door scams are continuing at a rapid rate.

Asked to pay back taxes with an iTunes gift card? It's a scam!

Scammers have come up with yet another way to get people to part with their hard-earned money. This time they are getting people to buy iTunes gift cards and share the code on the back of the card.

Are you oversharing on public WiFi?

Connecting to the Internet in a public space like a coffee shop, the library, or an airport is a wonderful modern convenience, but it comes with significant risk. Public WiFi is never private, so we're asking for your help in preventing WiFi fraud!

Now is the time to prepare in case Mother Nature pays us an unwelcome visit. You can find detailed preparedness information on the National Weather Service website, www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/ready.php, and at FEMA's ready.gov site for hurricanes at www.ready.gov/hurricanes. To prepare for a hurricane, here are some of the following measures to take to protect you and your family:

Build an emergency kit and make a family communications plan; learn community hurricane evacuation routes and how to find higher ground; determine where you would go and how you would get there if you needed to evacuate; make plans to secure your property; be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed so they are more wind resistant; clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts; plan to bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans, and anything else that is not tied down.

Don't forget about your pets! Check out Cape Cod DART at www.capecoddart.org for complete details, but here are some basics: Know which shelters in your area are pet-friendly. If you go to a shelter, if possible bring a crate for your pet. Prepare an emergency go-kit for your pet including at least three days of food in an airtight, waterproof container, at least three days of water specifically for your pets, and an extra supply of your pet's meds in a waterproof container. List the name and contact information for your pet's veterinarian. Keep up-to-date copies of your pet's registration information, adoption papers, vaccination documents, and medical records in a clean plastic bag or waterproof container in your kit.

Local shelters are at Barnstable Intermediate School, 895 Falmouth Road, Hyannis; Falmouth High School, 874 Gifford Street, Falmouth; Sandwich High School, 365 Quaker Meetinghouse Road, Sandwich. (Those designated as pet-friendly will be determined at the time of the emergency.)

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH: The Communication Plan

By Leandra McLean

Walpole (MA) Times, September 25, 2016

Editor's note: This is the second in a three-part series submitted by the Walpole Health Department.

The basic theme behind preparedness is to be ready for an emergency, and there are a number of different ways to accomplish this. The next time a disaster strikes, you may not have much time to act. Planning ahead reduces anxiety!

Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to think about the following situations and plan just in case. Consider the following questions when making a plan:

- How will my family/household get emergency alerts and warnings?
- How will my family/household get to safe locations for relevant emergencies?

- How will my family/household get in touch if cell phone, internet, or landline doesn't work?
- How will I let loved ones know I am safe?
- How will family/household get to a meeting place after the emergency?

Before a disaster happens, it is a good idea to have a conversation with those in your support network: your friends, family and neighbors. Let them know your needs in an emergency situation; ask them how they could assist with your plan and whether they would be willing to help. Consider that during some emergencies travel is severely limited and they may not be able to get to you.

Have a family communication plan! A family communication plan includes a local contact and an out of state contact and meeting places if you have to evacuate from your home or from the area.

- Carry family contact information in your wallet (both home and cell numbers)
- Make sure to choose an out-of-town contact person, in case you need to evacuate your area
- Post emergency numbers near all of your phones. Include the numbers of those in your support network and consider having alternative plans for contacting those in your network
- Keep a list of important school and business numbers with you

Please take your dogs and cats with you if you have to evacuate!

National Preparedness Month

Marshfield (MO) Mail, September 24, 2016

While most people don't like to think about worst case scenarios, giving them their proper consideration can ultimately offer peace of mind.

September is National Preparedness Month and it is a great time to get your home and family ready for a range of emergencies. Here are three steps to take.

STOCK UP

Every home should contain a supply kit that includes a surplus of nonperishable food items, as well as fresh bottled water. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends one gallon per person in your household per day for three days.

FEMA also recommends that the kit include prescription medications for everyone in the family, personal hygiene items, a flashlight, extra batteries and matches, amongst other items. For a complete list, visit fema.gov.

FREE YOURSELF FROM YOU PHONE

While we all know that smartphone technology and other mobile devices offer us useful information, in an emergency scenario these devices may lose their signal or their battery life. Stay prepared and informed no matter what happens with wearable technology that is not at the mercy of a cellphone tower or a battery that needs to be recharged every few hours.

For example Casio's PRO TREK PRG300 timepieces feature functions like an altimeter, compass and barometer (great for staying aware of changes in temperature or air pressure). They also deliver this information hands-free, which can be useful any day of the week but extra valuable in an emergency.

GEN INSURED

Is your home and property properly insured? Know what your homeowners insurance covers and determine whether it is sufficient to meet your needs. For example, homeowners insurance policies do not typically cover flooding, which requires separate coverage. Learn more about your home's primary risks and get covered now, before it's too late.

No one has a crystal ball that can see into the future, so to best protect your family and your home, get prepared for everything.

ORV Chapter Of American Red Cross Offers Tips For National Preparedness Month

By Stephanie Stanley

Pike County (OH) News Watchman, September 24, 2016

September is National Preparedness Month, and the Ohio River Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross reminds locals to "prepare your home, make a plan, and be informed", not just in September, but throughout the entire year.

"Everyone needs to be prepared. You never know when an emergency might occur," said Debbie Smith, community executive for the ORV Chapter of the American Red Cross. "With September being National Preparedness Month, this is a perfect time to begin creating a kit, establishing a plan and making sure you're ready for any of the emergencies that might strike at a moment's notice."

The Red Cross has put together "a few helpful tips" to assist locals in being prepared for the unexpected when disaster strikes.

To keep preparedness and disaster information at their fingertips, locals are encouraged to download a free Red Cross mobile app.

"A great place to begin is with the all-inclusive emergency app which covers 17 different types of emergencies, quizzes, alerts, and information on what to do before, during, and after an emergency," said Smith. "Or, the Red Cross offers 17 individual apps that range from first aid to hurricanes to wildfires or earthquakes."

According to Smith, children and adults will equally enjoy the Monster Guard app, which helps to teach preparedness for real-life emergencies at home "with the help of friendly monsters."

"Monster Guard and all Red Cross apps can be found in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store for Android, or by searching redcross.org," said Smith.

To be prepared before an emergency strikes, locals are encouraged to have an emergency kit containing a three-day supply of non-perishable foods and water (one gallon per person, per day, for drinking and hygiene), a battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible), a flashlight and extra batteries, first-aid kit, medications, and medical items, copies of important documents (proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, and insurance policy information), and extra cash.

"Having things in one place and close at hand can make a difference for everyone in the household," said Smith. "Store your kit in an easy-to-carry container that someone can use at home or take with them in case they have to evacuate."

The Red Cross also recommends people have a two-week supply of supplies available at home at all times.

"The Red Cross Store has items available, ranging from a hand-crank radio to a fully-stocked deluxe emergency preparedness kit," said Smith.

According to Smith, seven people perish each day and another 36 are injured in house fires. For this reason, locals are reminded of the importance of installing a working smoke alarm in the home.

"Home fires are the biggest disaster that people face. Your chance of survival can be doubled by one simple move — installing smoke alarms," she said. "If there's a fire, a smoke alarm will alert you long before you smell the smoke or see the flames, giving you precious time to escape. The Red Cross will install them for free. Just make an appointment by calling (740) 354-3293."

In addition to installing smoke alarms, Smith says "the other vital part of surviving a home fire" is developing a fire escape plan and practicing it with your family.

"Walk through your home and locate all exits and escape routes, and do not forget to include windows," she said. "Always pick a place to meet outside. Make sure your family practices a fire escape plan at least twice a year."

The key to safety is being informed, said Smith.

"Know what situations may occur where you live. Make your families familiar with what to do during tornadoes, floods, and extreme heat and cold," said Smith. "Winter is right around the corner, so now is the time to learn what to do during a winter storm. Remember that emergencies like fires and blackouts can happen anywhere, so everyone should be prepared."

The Red Cross also offers first aid/CPR/AED classes "to help everyone recognize and respond appropriately to cardiac, breathing, and first-aid emergencies.

"Learn first aid and CPR/AED so that you have the skills to respond in an emergency before help arrives, especially during a disaster when emergency responders may not be as available," said Smith.

The Red Cross' CPR/AED program offers the following benefits: two-year certification with free digital course, free downloadable digital course materials or affordable print course materials, free access to digital course materials, branding images and materials, easy access to certificate printing and tracking, and a "concise learner-centered course" designed "to emphasize hands-on skills."

For more information, visit the Ohio River Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross, located at 1801 Robinson Avenue, in Portsmouth, or visit redcross.org.

As Potential Peril Approaches, Be Prepared And Connected

By Glenn Rolfe

Sussex County (DE) Post, September 24, 2016

GEORGETOWN – Sussex County is not immune to natural or man-made disasters.

Flooding precipitates evacuations.

High wind knocks out power.

Snowstorms and blizzards can deal a paralyzing punch.

When disaster strikes, be like Boy Scouts: Be prepared.

That is the timely reminder from the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center, during the county's observance of National Preparedness Month in September.

Disaster kits, planning ahead with a game-plan and social media connections are vital ingredients in the recipe for public safety and safe-sledding through emergencies, says Sussex County EOC Director Joseph Thomas.

Sussex County Emergency Operations Center

Director Joe Thomas monitors weather updates at the EOC in Georgetown.

"I am a firm believer everyone should have a disaster kit. Although we typically talk about flooding in this county, the fact is that anything could happen at any given time. I know we don't see a lot of them in this area but there could be a potential for a tornado," said Mr. Thomas. "Out west, they deal with wildfires and you see people's homes destroyed, and when they are told to evacuate they have to evacuate very quickly. So having that kit at the ready is probably very important, actually, because now you don't have to take the time to put everything together."

Disaster kits should include a three-day provision of essentials: food and water, prescriptions and medicines, a flashlight with batteries, a battery-powered radio and money – as in cold cash.

"People think of food and water. You don't think about the fact that you need to have cash because nine times out of 10 power is out. You can't use ATMs if the power is out," said Mr. Thomas. "We tell people to put your insurance documents in some sort of plastic; something that won't get damaged or wet."

Kits are designed to "help you get through after a storm. FEMA, the federal assistance is typically two to three days getting to us. So if you've got three-days' worth of supplies that you can be self-sufficient, then when help does arrive you just go from one transition to another," said Mr. Thomas.

Stay connected

Before and during an emergency event, Mr. Thomas urges people if possible to stay in touch with social media, including those at the county level as well local media.

"We do a very robust social media posting. We typically will post on Facebook and Twitter; that is continuously updated all of the time," said Mr. Thomas.

Information would encompass weather conditions, forecasts, road closures and shelter openings and locations.

When sufficient information warrants, press releases are sent to all local media outlets.

During the Superstorm Sandy event in the fall of 2012, Sussex County launched another informational element: You Tube.

During the height of that storm that hammered New Jersey and impacted Sussex County, notably its coastal communities, Sussex County Director of Communications Chip Guy recommended the county climb another rung up the ladder.

"Chip said need to 'up our game.' We did You Tube videos," Mr. Thomas said. "That really got a good response. One of our first responses was from the governor (Jack Markell). He came down. He and I did one, about two or three minutes along."

Emergency Preparedness

On the county's website – www.sussexcountyde.gov – in the "Citizens" tab is information on emergency preparedness, hurricane information, shelters, evacuation plans.

Also on the county website is the Sussex County Emergency Operations Center, which includes local weather advisories, hurricane and flood safety, Smart911 and the emergency notification system.

The Delaware Emergency Notification System (DENS) is a notification system designed to notify Delaware residents in the event of an emergency in their area.

The Sussex County Emergency Operations Center, along with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency, encourages residents who exclusively use mobile telephones to register their numbers in a statewide database that will be used for the Delaware Emergency Notification System.

To register your mobile telephone, call or log on to http://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/BF1D885328BF.

Sussex County's EOC can be followed on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/SussexCountyEOC) and Twitter (https://twitter.com/sussexctyde_eoc).

AMERICA'S PREPAREATHON!

Community Briefs

Aurora (IL) Beacon-News, September 25, 2016

ESO performs score to Chaplin's 'City Lights'

The Elgin Symphony Orchestra will present Charlie Chaplin's silent film masterpiece "City Lights" with the orchestra, led by Resident Conductor Stephen Squires, performing the movie score live on Friday, Oct 7 to Sunday, Oct. 9.

Even though silent films were on their way out, Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights" was an instant success when released in January 1931, according to a news release. It has consistently been listed as one of the most influential films of all time and directors like Orson Welles, Stanley Kubrick, George Bernard Shaw, Federico Fellini and Woody Allen rate "City Lights" as one of their favorite movies, the release stated.

Squires has conducted for many artists, including Frederica von Stade, Samuel Ramey, Janos Starker, Pinchas Zuckerman, Shmuel Ashkenasi, John Browning, Leon Bates, Stewart Goodyear, Richard Stoltzman, Ani Kavafian, Wendy Warner, James Tocco, Kevin Cole, Vadim Gluzman and most of the principal players of the Chicago Symphony and Lyric Opera orchestras, according to a release. He has premiered over 80 new works.

Squires received his musical training at the Preparatory School of the Eastman School of Music and the Crane School of Music, in New York, and he earned his master's degree in instrumental conducting/trumpet performance at California State University, Northridge, the release stated.

The film runs 90 minutes without an intermission. Popcorn is provided by Mama Lee's Gourmet Popcorn. Sponsors are WDCB Radio, The Palmer Foundation and EFS Foundation.

For tickets, which start at $30, call 847-888-4000 or go to ElginSymphony.Org.

The ESO City Lights performance and film screening is part of A Celebration of Music from the Golden Age of Cinema and Radio, a project of the ESO, Chamber Music on the Fox and the Gail Borden Public Library.

For information, go to gailborden.info/BernardHerrmann.

Emergency management program in Aurora

In partnership with America's PrepareAthon, the city of Aurora Emergency Management Agency will host its first Aurora PrepareAthon to help residents prepare for potential emergencies and disasters.

The Aurora PrepareAthon will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Oct. 3 at the Aurora Police Department, 1200 E. Indian Trail.

Attendees will learn how to create a family disaster plan, assemble an emergency kit and prepare for specific hazards through group discussions, drills and exercises, event organizers said.

The Aurora PrepareAthon is free and open to the public, but space is limited and registration is mandatory. To reserve a seat, go to https://aurora.seamlessdocs.com/f/PrepareAthon

The biggest trees in Kane County

A guided hike to see some of the biggest trees in Kane County will visit the sites of some of the local champions in the Kane County Big Tree Program. During the walk, there will be a little tree identification and how trees are measured in the Big Tree Program.

- Saturday, Oct. 8, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Bliss Woods Forest Preserve, located at 5S660 Bliss Road, Sugar Grove.
- Wednesday, Oct. 12, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at Hannaford Woods Forest Preserve, located at 5S002 Merrill Road, Sugar Grove.
- Saturday, Oct. 22, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Glenwood Park Forest Preserve, located at 1644 S. River St., Batavia.

Advance registration is required for this free program. Call 630-444-3190 or e-mail programs@kaneforest.com.

To view a full roster of Forest Preserve District nature programs, go to www.kaneforest.com.

'Coffee with a Cop' in St. Charles

Participants can enjoy complimentary coffee and talk with St. Charles Police Chief Jim Keegan and St. Charles police officers at the inaugural "Coffee with a Cop" event at McDonald's at 915 W. Main St. Thursday.

The event will run from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

"We have so many ways to communicate these days, between smartphones, apps and social media. But sometimes face-to-face conversation is best," said Keegan. "We look forward to getting out and meeting St. Charles residents. This gives them a chance to get to know us in a casual atmosphere."

FEMA CORPS

No stories for this edition

PRIVATE SECTOR

$376 Million In Loans Approved For Homeowners, Renters And Businesses

Gonzales (LA) Weekly Citizen, September 25, 2016

WASHINGTON – Maria Contreras-Sweet, the Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), issued the following statement before a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship examining the federal response to recent floods in Louisiana.

"The SBA's commitment to provide disaster assistance to our fellow citizens in their greatest hour of need is one of our most important duties. I have made it my priority to ensure that our services are delivered as quickly and effectively as possible.

Right now, SBA team members are providing financing, resources and counseling to Americans facing devastation and despair in 20 different states, including the 22 parishes in Louisiana. Day and night, the SBA's committed professionals are on the ground in unfamiliar places, manning hotlines, setting up disaster recovery centers, assessing damage, and processing loan applications. I am proud and inspired by their compassion and dedication.

Recently in Ascension Parish, I saw home after home bearing the mark of high water lines, as families piled their ruined possessions out front, a lifetime of hard work and memories washed away by the rising waters. In Denham Springs, I walked down North Range Avenue to visit the city's famous antique stores – entire inventories of irreplaceable treasures lined the roadway, destroyed.

It's one thing to see photographs or videos of the devastation, it's quite another to see the loss of so much reflected in people's eyes. These are images I will never forget.

I visited two of our eight business recovery centers, where homeowners and business owners are able to talk with SBA staff and apply for federal disaster assistance. In the month since the flooding began, SBA has deployed 356 staff members to Louisiana, who are working in concert with FEMA. We have received more than 21,000 loan applications and approved more than $376 million in financing.

This is our largest disaster since Superstorm Sandy hit in 2012. As part of our disaster recovery work, we continually apply lessons learned and endeavor to make the process simpler for the survivors who depend on it. In the 11 years since Hurricane Katrina, we have been working hard to automate and streamline our application, approval and disbursement processes – shaving weeks off the time it takes for homeowners and small business owners to get the help they need to rebuild.

When the rains hit Louisiana in August, we implemented many of these advancements and improvements – which meant that we didn't have to wait for the water to go down before rolling up our sleeves and getting to work.

Throughout the first month of this disaster, 97 percent of SBA disaster loan applications have been submitted online through our newly updated, secure website. In addition, our loss verification teams have been using the latest advances in technology to make desktop assessments of damaged properties by downloading the footprints of affected homes and businesses.

Based on our experience in Superstorm Sandy, we revised our regulations to increase the unsecured loan limits for both physical damage and economic injury loans to $25,000. This change allows SBA to ensure that those first, crucial funds get into the hands of renters, homeowners and business owners in Louisiana more quickly. And we've called in our reserves to make sure there are enough trained professionals in our call centers, in our processing centers and on the ground.

We have made significant progress in reducing our processing and disbursement times. We will continue to do everything we can to further streamline our process, without sacrificing the integrity and compassion that we aim to include in everything we do.

The SBA and our team of tireless men and women will do everything we can to give the people of Louisiana the tools and resources they need to rebuild. And we will keep working until the job of recovery is done. Even after losing nearly everything and facing desperate and tragic conditions, Louisianans continue to step forward to offer help to neighbors and strangers alike. I remain in awe of their mettle, resiliency, and generosity."

FEMA Help Is Still Available

Eunice (LA) Today, September 24, 2016

Baton Rouge, La. –

It is now more than a month since the record flooding and storms of August.

If you or anyone you know is still having problems finding suitable accommodations, it is not too late to register with FEMA for assistance with your housing needs.

FEMA cannot duplicate insurance payments, but survivors should register even if they have insurance because underinsured applicants may receive help after their claims have been settled. And remember that FEMA grants do not have to be repaid. FEMA assistance is nontaxable and will not affect your eligibility for Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits.

Applying for disaster assistance is essentially a two-step process – registering with FEMA and completing a U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loan application. This process ensures that you will be considered for all programs you may be eligible for. There is never any charge for registering or applying. If approved for the loan, you are under no obligation to accept it. But the examination of your SBA application will determine what other types of assistance you may be eligible for.

Disaster survivors may register the following ways:

Online at DisasterAssistance.gov with any computer, smartphone or tablet.

By phoning Applicants who use or Video Relay Service may also call .Persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY may call 800-462-7585. The toll-free numbers are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. Multilingual operators are available.

At a disaster recovery center. To find the nearest one, go online to the disaster recovery center locator at asd.fema.gov/inter/locator.

A free multilingual guide to the types of assistance available can be found at fema.gov/help-after-disaster.

CITIZEN CORPS

County Officials Satisfied With Drive-through Flu Clinic Results

By David Danzis

New Jersey Herald, September 25, 2016

HOPATCONG – Although county health officials may have wanted to attract larger numbers, Saturday's drive-through flu clinic was an operational success.

Emrick G. Seabold, acting administrator/health officer of the Sussex County Department of Environmental and Public Health Services, said the three-hour exercise in the parking lot of the Hopatcong Public Works was very well organized and proved that the county's health department could distribute vaccines on a large-scale in the event of an emergency.

"We're satisfied that we could handle a large-scale event," Seabold said. "The clinic's success is a testament to the Emergency Preparedness Team staff and all our volunteers."

Several service areas allowed for motor vehicle access and vaccinations were administered through the window. Patients were encouraged to bring along signed consent forms to expedite the process, but paperwork was available at the site.

Sixty-six vaccines were distributed on Saturday, according to Tracy Storms-Mazzucco, health educator for the county's Emergency Preparedness Team.

"As an exercise, we were still satisfied," she said. "We're pleased with the results."

The drive-through point of distribution plan was developed by the Emergency Preparedness Team with the assistance of the state Department of Health. The exercise was an attempt to simulate operations in the event of a public health emergency.

The plan is adaptable and may also be used by Sussex County Office of Public Health Nursing as an annual flu clinic in the future.

Seabold said, "lots of credit," should be given to the volunteers and to the Borough of Hopatcong for organizing and executing the event.

"It takes a lot to put something like this together," he said. "We very much appreciate Hopatcong and the students from the college (Sussex County Community College) who helped today."

Several organizations participated in the exercise, including the state Department of Health, Sussex County Department of Environmental and Public Health Services, Sussex County Sheriff's Office and Bureau of Emergency Management, county government and administration, Board of Chosen Freeholders, Medical Reserve Corps, Warren County Health Department, Warren County CERT, Hopatcong Borough Police Department, borough government and administration, Hopatcong Community Emergency Response Team and Sussex County Community College.

Latah County Receives FEMA Funds For Local Emergencies

By Taylor Nadauld

University Of Idaho's (ID) The Argonaut, September 25, 2016

Four local organizations will receive funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its 33rd distribution phase, said Cretia Bunney, executive director of United Way.

The news came after an announcement that Latah County was chosen to receive $11,812 in federal funds by the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program. It is down from the $12,683 the county received during the last phase, Bunney said.

Frances Trevisan of St. Vincent De Paul, a nonprofit Catholic organization that received a portion of the FEMA funds, said she writes grant applications that her organization can use to give back to the Moscow community.

The organization relies solely on outside donations, Trevisan said. As a Catholic agency, members come from both St. Augustine's and St. Mary's Catholic churches in Moscow, where collections are held four times a year for the agency.

"That's our only regular money that we know we're going to do every year," Trevisan said.

Trevisan recently submitted an application on behalf of the agency asking for $5,500 worth of FEMA funds. She said she was not yet aware how much the organization will actually be allocated. In the last phase, Bunney said St. Vincent De Paul received $4,179.

Other agencies receiving funds include Latah County Community Action Partnership, Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse and JK Good Samaritan Food

Bank. They were the only agencies to apply, Bunney said.

The local agencies that applied were required to meet certain conditions, said Elizabeth Prasil, account executive at Appearances and Marketing Promotions, in a press release. This included being a private voluntary nonprofit or unit of government, having an accounting system, practicing nondiscrimination, having demonstrated the capacity to deliver emergency food or shelter programs and having a voluntary board if they are a private voluntary organization.

Bunney said the application process can be a lot of work, though Trevisan said FEMA applications are actually easier to submit than others.

An agency's application must include a narrative with the amount they are requesting and an explanation for the request, a capacity statement that includes references to an accounting and service delivery system, a statement agreeing to educate staff and volunteers about available referral resources and a list of the organization's board of directors, Prasil said in the press release.

Agencies can apply to use the money for several categories including served meals, mass shelter, supplies and equipment, rent and mortgage, other food, other shelter, rehabilitation and utility assistance, Bunney said. Most applications are submitted for mass shelter, other shelter and food.

St. Vincent De Paul volunteers spend the funds on other shelters, including hotel rooms for people or families who have nowhere to stay, Trevisan said.

"You get inspired by people, too. It's amazing," Trevisan said. "There's nothing like making you feel like, whenever you feel like your life is hard, and then you see what some people are going through, with their illnesses, or their disabilities, or their mental health issues or whatever, and you just realize how blessed you are because they have such challenges."

Trevisan was one of the founding members of the Moscow conference of St. Vincent De Paul. She and several others have remained active volunteers ever since. Trevisan said she was president of the conference for 10 years before she began writing grant applications and the role was turned over.

The organization works to help those who are poor or in a crisis by distributing money, meeting with people in need and running a hotline that Trevisan said gets anywhere from five to 25 calls a day. She said the organization has an estimated 20 active members and 50 associate members.

"It's good work. We like it," Trevisan said.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Our Views: Homeowners Need Federal Help Now

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 24, 2016

As flood victims across south Louisiana plummet toward possible financial ruin, Congress cannot offer them a parachute long after they've crashed.

It's a simple reality of life that if help doesn't arrive when it's needed, then it can be little or no help at all. That is why we're heartened by news that some $500 million — what's billed as a "down payment" on flood relief for Louisiana — has been included in a larger bill to fund the federal government. We urge members of Congress to approve the provision.

Much federal aid has already flowed to the state through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal agencies. But given the scale of the flooding, Louisiana needs a lot of extra federal help that only Congress can approve. President Barack Obama has come out in favor of a more than $2 billion aid package. It would include help for infrastructure, other recovery needs and, perhaps most importantly, housing assistance.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, a Baton Rouge Republican, said he's confident that Louisiana will get a flood aid package, although the timing is uncertain. Congress could approve the package before it recesses or when it returns in December, or perhaps approve some parts of the aid now and other parts later. Louisiana native and National Public Radio congressional correspondent Cokie Roberts, in a Baton Rouge speech on Tuesday, also predicted that an aid package would eventually be approved.

But around kitchen tables right now, flooded homeowners are putting pencil to paper to determine if they can afford to rebuild. In many cases, part of that calculation involves what help, if any, they might receive from Washington. As Congress dithers — and the prospect of long-term uncertainty looms — those homeowners might opt to walk away from distressed properties and start over somewhere else.

"For folks who are struggling now, the same amount of money has a greater impact now than it does later," Cassidy told The Advocate. "That's what I'm stressing to people."

The future of many south Louisiana neighborhoods —and the health of local businesses and tax bases they support — are at stake.

That is why Washington must act now rather than later to advance Louisiana's recovery.

Louisiana Flood Of 2016 Made Worse By Growth-focused Policies

By JR Ball

New Orleans Times-Picayune, September 23, 2016

There's nothing new about flooding in southeast Louisiana. But in the Baton Rouge area, at least, the devastation wreaked by heavy rains is getting worse.

Suburban growth into areas with a history of flooding is putting more houses, businesses and lives at risk. Every new road, bridge, levee or other human-made structure further obstructs — and slows — the natural drainage patterns within the Amite River Basin, where the Amite and Comite rivers flow into Lake Pontchartrain. And long-discussed projects intended to mitigate flood damage in and around Baton Rouge remain under-funded and far from finished.

"Damage from these natural disasters is only going to get worse because we've overbuilt our capacity to manage existing risks," said professor Edward Richards, who has written extensively on coastal and floodplain issues as director of the program in law, science and public health at LSU's Law Center. "Our drainage system is blocked up."

The Louisiana Flood of 2016 killed 13 people, displaced tens of thousands of others, caused an estimated $8.7 billion in damage and destroyed some 60,000 houses. Gov. John Bel Edwards is requesting $2.8 billion in federal recovery money, and more than 73,000 households across 20 parishes have been approved for Federal Emergency Management Agency aid.

Louisiana hasn't seen a natural disaster of this magnitude since 2005, when storm surge from Hurricane Katrina or the failure of levees and floodwalls submerged much of New Orleans and St. Bernard Parish and parts of St. Tammany and East Jefferson. The causes of the two events were different, and the damage inflicted by Katrina was far more tragic and extensive. But both share this bond: Decisions by human beings to allow development in known flood areas, and their failure to complete flood mitigation projects, increased the devastation.

"We keep saying this won't happen again, but it does keep happening and it will continue to happen," said Craig Colten, the Carl O. Sauer professor of geography at LSU and a longtime student of why communities expand in harm's way. "After each one of these events we say we've learned our lesson, but then we ignore what we've learned."

No one is suggesting that rainfall totals seen in mid-August— when some spots saw more than two feet of rain in 72 hours— will become the norm. But flooding in the Baton Rouge area and across the Capital region, as it has for centuries, will happen again. And rapid and largely unchecked growth in the suburbs of Baton Rouge and neighboring Livingston and Ascension parishes, coupled with a degraded natural drainage system, is putting more people in harm's way.

Absent drastic measures to make suburban growth safer and to improve watershed drainage, the widespread destruction caused by these floods will almost certainly become more common, more expensive and more deadly. "We keep rolling the dice hoping disaster won't strike twice," Colten said, "and we keep losing."

What's troubling is how much damage was done to property outside the "100-year flood zone," where there is a 1 percent chance of flooding in any given year. No doubt that's partly due to the freak nature of the August storm, considered a "1,000-year event."

Yet experts warn it's a mistake to chalk up this as a once-in-a-millennium happening. The accuracy of FEMA's flood-prediction maps is not perfect, and a recent study by the nonprofit Resources for the Future found someone living in the 500-year flood zone was as likely to be flooded as someone living in the 100-year flood zone. Those inside the high-risk 100-year flood zone are predicted by FEMA to have a 26 percent chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage.

"It's wrong to create a false sense of security by saying this flooding only happened because it was a 1,000-year rain," Richards said. "There's been numerous flooding in this area in the past, and it won't take a 1,000-year rain to do it again.

"If you got two or three feet of water in your home, it doesn't matter if the next storm is a 100-, 500- or 1,000-year event; your house is going to flood again."

Moreover suburban sprawl is pushing deeper into the floodplain. In the city of Central, incorporated in 2005, 75 percent of the property is in the 100-year flood zone, Colten said. The mayor, Jr. Shelton, said as much as 90 percent of the houses and businesses sustained flood damage.

In neighboring Livingston and Ascension, two of the fastest-growing parishes in the state, real estate developers are racing to build along the Comite and Amite rivers and in the area where the two waterways converge and spill into Bayou Manchac during floods.

These are all areas that have repeatedly flooded in the past, yet local officials are doing little either to slow the growth — in fact, they're encouraging it— or impose stricter safety standards within the 500-year flood zone.

"This was a huge rainfall, but it didn't have to be such a huge flood with so much devastation," Colten said. "So much development has been allowed since 1983. We have created this situation."

The year 1983 is important. That's when much of the same area suffered extensive flooding, causing damage of $344 million – $831 million in today's economy. It was the fourth flood along the Amite River in 11 years, prompting Rod Emmer, long-time director of the Louisiana Floodplain Managers' Association, to call for tougher flood zone construction standards, including elevation standards above FEMA's minimum requirements, and flood-reduction projects. Significant flooding in the Baton Rouge area also occurred in 1990 and 1993, and in 2001 Tropical Storm Allison dropped 19 inches of rain over a two-day period, swamping much of the region.

After the 1983 flood, local officials adopted a series of measures to improve water flow and better manage backwater flooding, which is water building up faster than it can be drained. By 1990, planning departments in Baton Rouge and Denham Springs had upgraded floodplain construction standards above the FEMA baseline, and Ascension Parish and Central largely followed that lead.

Those tougher standards are why Frank Duke, the Baton Rouge planning director, disputes blanket statements that explosive suburban growth everywhere amplified the flood damage. "Growth didn't contribute to the flooding," said Duke, citing post-1990 developments that did not flood in Baton Rouge. "I do agree that anything built prior to 1990 did have an impact."

That's not the case elsewhere in the region. A residential development under construction in Watson, in Livingston Parish, flooded badly in August, and much of hard hit Central was built after 1990. Duke acknowledged that suburban growth in areas prone to flooding "does complicate issues if you don't provide for the proper mitigation."

One of those is the Comite Diversion Canal, designed to carry water surge from the Comite River west across East Baton Rouge Parish to the Mississippi River. It would reduce flooding risks, especially outside the 100-year flood zone – if it's ever completed.

The project was authorized in 1986, and voters in East Baton Rouge, Ascension and Livingston parishes approved a property tax in 2000 to help fund construction. But much of it remains unfinished. U.S. Rep. Garrett Graves of Baton Rouge said 20 percent to 25 percent of homes that sustained flooding in August would have been spared if the canal were operational.

Even the diversion canal is no magic bullet solution, however. Some members of Louisiana's congressional delegation, already committed to securing an estimated $211 million in federal money to finish the canal, are now pushing to expand the project to include overflow from the Amite River.

Others, including Colten, wonder why local government officials gave the OK to new developments in floodplains near the Comite when it was clear that completion of the diversion canal was nowhere in sight? "Everyone understands the importance of growth and new tax revenues," he said, "but those decisions put lives at risk."

Rather than raising building standards to account for repeated flooding in the presumably lower-risk 500-year flood zone, officials now are scrambling to relax standards for rebuilding flooded houses.

The Baton Rouge Metro Council on Sept. 14 voted to waive existing regulations and exempt some 32,000 households outside the 100-year flood zone from having to elevate their flood-damaged homes. The night before, frustrated residents of Denham Springs, the region's hardest-hit city, packed a public meeting to complain about regulations that could require them to elevate their homes before securing a permit to repair or rebuild.

In Central, the mayor and City Council members vowed to roll back rebuilding standards to the FEMA minimum. "If we have to start elevating our houses and demolishing them, Central's going to turn into a ghost town," said Shelton, the mayor.

Colten argues these officials shouldn't be easing standards, but, rather, expanding them to make the 500-year flood zone the baseline at-risk designation. "It's a tough job because they're trying to protect the financial resources of their constituents, but long-term safety is more important than short-term finances."

Elected officials also are pushing to have FEMA not count the August flood when determining the region's base flood elevation, which is the height that inundation waters are expected to reach in a 100-year flood. New buildings and those significantly damaged by storms must be constructed one foot above that base elevation. "I don't want it to count," said Baton Rouge Metro Councilman Trae Welch, asserting it would be unfair for such a "rare event" to have such a significant impact moving forward.

"We just had a 1,000-year flood that literally was 6 feet above the 100-year base flood elevation," said Central City Councilman Jason Ellis. "It would be ridiculous if every single one of us had to go raise our houses above a 1,000-year flood event."

Colten, however, said those who want to exclude the August event as the flood of record are ignoring reality. "If you don't, then it's likely these homes will flood again in the future. People don't want to deal with the truth of the situation."

When Congress approved the Disaster Relief Act of 1950, enabling the federal government to provide relief and recovery funds, Colten said, it gave the region a false sense of security and a willingness to allow development in higher risk areas. Making the risk even more tolerable is the National Flood Insurance Program, created in 1968 after Hurricane Betsy flooded New Orleans three years earlier. The intent of the insurance program was to provide affordable, government-subsidized flood coverage for homes already at risk of flooding. In exchange, local communities are supposed to prevent new development in high-risk areas.

Not only have local governments largely ignored their role, but also local officials routinely threaten lawsuits whenever FEMA attempts to expand the 100-year flood zone, where homeowners must carry private flood insurance. Most of the houses damaged in the Louisiana Flood of 2016 did not carry flood insurance because they were located outside FEMA's high-risk zone. And instead of limiting development, the flood insurance program has opened the door for more expensive homes, constructed on concrete slabs, to be built in areas likely to flood.

"It's been 50 years of unintended consequences," said Richards, the LSU law professor. "A program designed to help has made the problem worse."

Louisiana leads the country in severe repetitive loss properties, according to FEMA records, with more than 7,200 of the National Flood Insurance Program's 30,000 multi-flood homes. One house in Batchelor, in Pointe Coupee Parish, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, has flooded 40 times over the past four decades, collecting $428,379 in insurance payments. Since 1978, repeat loss properties in the state have received $1.22 billion in flood insurance payments — 22 percent of all repetitive loss claims in the U.S., according to the council's research.

"We need to change the emphasis of the NFIP from a rebuilding program to a risk mitigation program," said Rob Moore, a flood policy analyst at the council. "It currently addresses people's short-term need to get their life back in order, not the long-term risk."

The flood insurance program is $23 billion in debt, much of that due to massive payouts after hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and Sandy in 2012, prompting some to wonder whether federal officials will do what those at the local level will not: impose higher elevation rules on development, expand at-risk flood zones and broaden private insurance mandates.

"Why should the federal government keep bailing us out if we're not willing to build safer communities in areas that we know will experience flooding," asked Richards. "People are right saying what happened in August was rare, but what they won't acknowledge is a 100-year rain, which is common, may do 90 percent as much flooding. Are we ready for that?"

Hurricane Rita: Lessons Learned

Lake Charles (LA) American Press, September 24, 2016

Today, Sept. 24, marks the 11th anniversary of the day that Hurricane Rita made landfall between Holly Beach, Louisiana and Sabine Pass, Texas with 120 mph winds and an enormous storm surge.

Rita did $12 billion damage and about 120 deaths were attributed to the hurricane throughout its existence. Seven of those deaths were directly storm related, such as winds, storm surge, floods and other oceanic events. Other deaths attributed to the hurricane were the result of traffic accidents, fires, crimes and other incidents.

Southwest Louisiana was particularly hard hit in the storm because it was in the northeast quadrant, known as the "dirty side" of tropical event. Rainfall from the hurricane peaked in Central Louisiana at 16 inches.

Studying such historic events have great value to us today and to future generations, because the teach us lessons that can help us survive future disasters.

Here are some of the lessons learned:

Local officials had been practicing for such disasters for years, and had been dealing with evacuees from Hurricane Katrina for weeks. Local government was much more efficient than federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The large-scale evacuation was largely successful. Officials learned it was better to call for an evacuation too early than too late.

Evacuation routes needed to be improved. It took some people 13 hours and more to get through the traffic jam between Lake Charles and Alexandria and other destinations north.

Rita's straight-line winds did much damage, as did tornadoes, explaining why some streets saw horrific damage, and other homes a block or two away escaped unscathed.

Residents who remained at home during the storm spent nerve-racking hours huddled in an interior closet or lying in a bathtub. Many who survived that experience said, "Never again."

Residents who live along waterways received unexpected damage from the storm surge.

Roofs, buildings and furnishings can be replace, lives cannot.

It takes weeks to repair ravaged electrical substations, transformers, poles and lines. People also learned life without electricity is miserable.

Help from neighbors and volunteers are a vital to the recovery of individuals, families and getting life back to normal.

We've still got another month left in this hurricane season, so here are some additional tips: stay alert, keep informed by the

American Press

and other news media; make sure you know the evacuation routes; have personal plans for evacuation; have emergency, supplies ready, such as food, water and medicine; keep your vehicle in good running order, and help elderly relatives or friends if needed.

Learning the lessons of history is always a good idea, particularly from great natural disasters such as Hurricane Rita.

SAFER Grant Will Make City Residents, Businesses Safer

By Anna McCann, Merritt Machinery LLC President

Lockport (NY) Union Sun Journal, September 25, 2016

As the owner of a city business near the recent HTI fire, I was disappointed to read the Union-Sun & Journal's negative opinion concerning the Common Council's approval of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant, which will provide funds to hire four additional firefighters at no cost to the city. Your editorial board may have agreed with the council and firefighters had you done some research on fire standards.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the SAFER grant was created to help fire departments increase or maintain the number of "trained, 'front line' firefighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association."

In the case of the HTI fire, Lockport Fire Department was unable to bring its aerial ladder truck to the fire scene due to being understaffed. This fact was confirmed by Chief Brady at the recent meeting of residents affected by the HTI fire. The ladder truck would have required a minimum of seven men, but the department's current staffing level is six men.

NFPA Standard 1710 is based on the review of many studies, evaluations and reports citing empirical data on fire department response time and fire mitigation. The NFPA technical committee's review of this data clearly demonstrates that for safe, effective and efficient fire suppression and rescue operations, each responding fire apparatus must be staffed with four firefighters, and "requires five to six personnel for high tactical hazards (high-rises, large commercial occupancies, industrial complexes, large multi-dwellings, geographical restrictions, etc). If the ladder truck crew is expected to perform both engine and truck work simultaneously, they should be staffed with additional personnel."

That means more than six men are required for the Initial Rapid Intervention Crew when responding to a fire in a typical 2-story house. The NFPA recommendation for fighting the typical house fire is 17 men. How many firefighters do you think are required for initial response to an industrial tire fire?

Standard 1710 further states "given that the progression of a structure fire to the point of flashover generally occurs in less than 10 minutes, two of the most important elements in limiting fire spread are the quick arrival of sufficient personnel, and equipment to attack and extinguish the fire as close to the point of its origin as possible."

City firefighters responding to the HTI fire lacked the two most important elements, sufficient personnel and equipment. This was proven by their inability to obtain adequate water source immediately upon arrival. The ladder truck is a more effective platform than an engine for a large fire.

I commend Alderman Anita Mullane for supporting the four-man SAFER grant application in 2015. Unfortunately, the mayor did not agree, and broke a 3-3 tie vote of the council by voting against it. Had the city applied for and received the grant last year, the firefighters' initial response to the HTI fire would have included the ladder truck.

Could that have prevented the fire from spreading? Most likely, and it may have prevented the smoke and soot damage to not only neighboring residences, but homes like mine 7 miles from the fire scene that were also affected, along with the endangerment of city firefighters and some 200 volunteer firefighters that responded to the mutual aid call.

Those calls work both ways, as was the case in the deployment of city firefighters to the Badger Drive house fire in the town of Lockport. An extra man on a platoon would save city overtime costs by eliminating the need to call in off-duty firefighters during mutual aid calls.

Your opinion stated "accepting the SAFER grant ends up insulting to the city Fire Board, which has stood by its decision that a six-man minimum shift staffing level is adequate to keep city residents safe." I find it interesting that four of the five members of the Fire Board — Dr. Jeffrey Schratz, Christopher Prucha, former alderman Pat Schrader and current Alderman David Wohleben — all live in the 4th Ward. The fifth member, former alderman Kitty Fogle, was appointed to the board in January by Mayor McCaffrey despite being voted out of office last November. Why aren't members appointed from all regions of the city? Perhaps the fire board and your editorial board would have a different opinion of the SAFER grant if their homes and offices were located in the vicinity of the HTI fire.

In March, the new council voted 5-1 to apply for the four-man grant. Alderman Wohleben cast the only "no" vote and the mayor also voiced her opposition during discussions prior to the vote. It's sad that it took a major fire to change their minds at last week's vote, most likely because voting "no" would have been political suicide.

As a business owner, I pay city taxes and do my part in supporting local organizations and keeping my property neat and orderly. In return, I expect to be protected in the event of an emergency, whether it's a fire, accident or medical event. As Alderman Abbott stated while running for office last year, "We are paying a premium tax rate; so therefore, we need to provide quality services to our residents. Quality services is not a perk, it is an obligation."

The SAFER grant will make Lockport residents and businesses safer, at no cost to taxpayers, for the next 2 years. As for the city's long-term financial future, given the legacy costs of the 10-year police contract negotiated by the mayor and corporation counsel just before last year's elections, the city may be bankrupt in 10 years, waiting for another state bailout but that's another story. When do you plan on printing that one?

Minimize Risk, Have Emergency Plans On Farms

By Anita Deming

Plattsburgh (NY) Press Republican, September 25, 2016

Farm Safety Week is dedicated to reminding rural communities that agriculture is one of the most dangerous occupations in the U.S., and farm injuries and fatalities are preventable through implementing safety plans and using common sense.

The most recent data from the U.S. Department of Labor indicates that farming accounted for 568 fatalities, with an estimated 70,000 injuries. Farming is particularly dangerous as people (including seniors and children) live on farms 24 hours, so any accident is counted as farming related.

Other factors include large unpredictable animals, large hardened steel equipment sometimes operated on hills, chemicals, increased potential for fires and long, exhausting hours during planting and harvest.

Planning and preparation can help farmers and homeowners minimize risk on their property and protect their loved ones and employees. There are many places to find information on preventing accidents and minimizing their impact. I recommend the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN): http://eden.cce.cornell.edu. They have lists for emergency kits, "go bags" and training videos.

In addition to accidents and weather disasters to prepare for, there are several occupational hazards such as hearing loss, repetitive joint damage, lung impacts from breathing dust and zoonotic diseases. For information on these hazards, contact New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (www.nycamh.org). They can come to your farm to audit for your risk factors.

Minimizing risks using personal protective equipment and doing jobs the right way every time can help workers avoid illness and injury. Still, emergency situations can happen when you least expect it, and the first few minutes are crucial.

It's important to have a plan and ensure that everyone knows what to do in a fire, power outage, pesticide exposure, illness, injury or other sudden emergencies. This plan should include: evacuating procedures, steps to ensure the safety of others, who to contact and a safe meeting area. Things such as an emergency phone call list for emergency services, hospitals, power and repair services. Also designate an emergency contact person to coordinate communications within your family.

Just a little bit on our emergency response system: When you contact 911 they will ask you for details of the emergency to determine the level of response needed and whether it is a potential terrorist or mass casualty problem. Providing 911 GPS addresses will help tremendously in finding the accident site.

In certain cases, they may activate special teams, such as the high angle rescue team for silo rescues or the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) team for entering certain manure storages. If the incident is widespread as were the Irene washouts, the State Emergency Management System (SEMO) or even the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be activated.

The first steps in a disaster are to rescue injured people, if there are too many for the town to handle then they will activate the Mutual Aid Plan. As the disaster goes on we move to identifying the impact on people, roads and other public systems with an eye toward evaluating if this disaster qualifies for state or federal funding. This means you will be asked for estimates of the economic value of your losses over and above personal losses.

Phones will likely be out, so if you have access to phones, please find out how your neighbors are doing and relay that information as well. If you have to relocate, each town has emergency shelters, and there are county animal response teams for your animals. Be sure to include resources for your pet in your go bag.

So remember that "Safety is No Accident," and your time preparing and insuring against disaster may save lives in addition to money. Contact your local CCE office for more information on what you can do to prevent and minimize accidents.

Anita Deming is the executive director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Essex County, and is the coordinator for Adirondack Harvest. Reach her at 962-4810, Ext. 409, or ald6@cornell.edu.

Commentary: State Response To Hoosick Falls Has Echoes Of Love Canal

As with earlier environmental crisis, state looks to feds for money to clean up mess

By Bruce W. Dearstyne, Author

Albany (NY) Times Union, September 24, 2016

Recent state Senate hearings in Hoosick Falls about PFOA contamination of drinking water have featured an effort by state officials to put some of the responsibility on the federal Environmental Protection Agency. State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker accused the agency of shifting its standards on what constitutes an unsafe level of the chemical.

It's not the first time the state has tried to draw the federal government into a state environmental crisis. That happened in 1978-1980 during the health crisis at the Love Canal area in Niagara Falls.

In 1978, residents there discovered their homes had been built at the site of an abandoned canal used by Hooker Chemical to dump toxic chemicals, some of them carcinogenic. The long-buried chemicals were leaching into people's basements and bubbling out in backyards. The state responded slowly but began buying up homes and relocating people closest to the site. There was at that time no dedicated federal funding for cleaning up toxic sites.

In August 1978, Gov. Hugh Carey convinced President Jimmy Carter to declare Love Canal a federal disaster area. After months of negotiation, the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (predecessor of today's Federal Emergency Management Agency) agreed to provide limited funding only to partially reimburse the state for the cost of demolishing homes closest to the site.

In May 1980, the EPA conducted what was supposed to be a confidential study of the health effects at Love Canal. It found many people suffering from "supernumerary acentric chromosomes," which sounded frightening. Leaked to The New York Times, the report set off a new round of panic and demand for more government action at Love Canal.

The new federal report documented "extraordinary exposure to cancer, birth defects, and crippling and possibly killing diseases," the governor said. Permanent relocation was "the only reasonable way to deal with the trauma being experienced by area residents," he said. The state had already spent more than $40 million; now the federal government needed to step in because the EPA report had caused so much fear.

At about the same time, the Love Canal Homeowners' Association, which had been organized to demand government help, invited two EPA officials who happened to be visiting Niagara Falls to meet with residents to discuss the EPA study. Once they were inside, the citizen activists refused to let them leave. They listened to citizens' complaints. Media representatives were allowed into the building to report the event. An angry crowd gathered outside. Someone outlined the letters "EPA" with gasoline on the grass and set it on fire.

In the evening, FBI agents and U.S. Marshals from Buffalo, and Niagara Falls police, escorted the EPA men safely out of the building. Love Canal people demanded answers and action from Washington;

otherwise, said Homeowners' Association President Lois Gibbs as the federal officials were driven away, "this will look like a Sesame Street picnic."

Carey's demand and Gibbs' direct action shifted the focus to Carter, who was running for re-election. In late May, he announced the EPA would provide enough funding to relocate all affected residents, on a matching basis with New York funds. On Oct. 1, Carter flew into Niagara Falls to sign the legislation authorizing the promised funds and also money to clean up another waste site in the region. "I don't believe Governor Carey has ever overlooked an opportunity to remind me of the problems of Love Canal," he told the crowd.

Federal largesse was enough to get the job done. Affected families were relocated, their homes and other buildings were razed, the landfill was capped, and a facility was built to monitor, collect and treat any additional runoff.

But New York's gratitude was limited. In the November 1980 election, Jimmy Carter carried Niagara County but lost New York, and the election, to Reagan.

The Love Canal crisis led to stronger state and federal restrictions on dump sites and to the creation of the Superfund for cleanup of sites contaminated by hazardous materials. (Some of those funds may help Hoosick Falls and other towns with PFOA issues.)

Though Hooker Chemical denied responsibility, asserting that the dumping had been legal under the lax state and federal rules in the 1940s and early 1950s, its successor company, Occidental Petroleum, ended up paying large fines to the federal and state governments. The company also paid undisclosed amounts to residents who sued, and agreed to assume responsibility for the treatment facility that the state had built to deal with chemicals still seeping out at the site.

Saint Gobain, the company allegedly responsible for the contamination at Hoosick Falls (and possibly other sites), has so far picked up much of the tab for remedial work, such as installation of filters.

But New York officials seem to be setting up the case to tap federal resources, much as Carey did back then.

In an Aug. 30 letter to EPA, the health and environmental conservation commissioners said the state had already spent $25 million and anticipates at least $50 million more. Asserting that the EPA's "changing, conflicting guidance" on what constitutes a safe level of PFOA had caused "undue public confusion" and has "aggravated the situation, causing undue expense to our agencies," they asked for federal reimbursement of state expenses.

Federal EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy responded that her agency's health advisories were clear and consistent and implied that New York officials may have misunderstood them. She urged the New Yorkers to "move beyond accusatory letters" and work with EPA to resolve the crisis.

Like the residents of Love Canal, the people of Hoosick Falls and other affected areas want answers and help from government health experts. They may also expect someone to pay for their health risks and ordeal. The Rensselaer County Legislature just passed a resolution asking for a federal tax credit for residents of Hoosick Falls and Petersburgh, one of the other communities affected by PFOA contamination.

"Regarding the missing link of liability, if health-related dangers are detected, what are we as a people willing to spend to correct the situation? How much risk are we willing to accept? Who's going to pick up the tab?"

Those were the words of an EPA administrator discussing Love Canal 37 years ago. But they could just as easily describe the outstanding questions in Hoosick Falls today.

Bruce W. Dearstyne is the author of "The Spirit of New York: Defining Events in the Empire State's History."

Fallen Firefighters Define True Heroism

Wilmington (DE) News Journal, September 24, 2016

As is too often the case, it has taken a tragedy to remind us that heroes are not comic book or movie characters. They do not seek or bask in any spotlight.

They seek only to help others. To them, it is not a job. It is their life's passion.

Heroism is not a physical gift. It is an all-too-rare psychological strength – the ability to recognize when others are in danger and confront that danger head-on. Most of us flee danger. Heroes face it with calm and poise, all in the name of holding suffering and sadness at bay.

They do not need to be told that others need help. It is their instinct. And when the work is done and the danger has passed, the heroes retreat quietly, knowing full well that danger will emerge in another form or fashion within hours or even minutes.

Christopher Leach and Jerry Fickes are heroes. We will not use "were" because the sacrifice Christopher Leach and Jerry Fickes made will not soon be forgotten.

The two died early Saturday when a floor collapsed above them as they looked for residents in a burning Wilmington rowhome. According to the

Wilmington Fire Department, firefighters became trapped some 20 minutes after arriving on the scene. Four other WFD firefighters were injured.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, Christopher Leach, Jerry Fickes were the 64th and 65th American firefighters to die in the line of duty in 2016. The previous two died in separate incidents on Wednesday.

How Saturday's tragedy happened is under investigation.

Why it happened is less of a mystery. Christopher Leach, Jerry Fickes and their comrades entered 1927 Lakeview Road because their minds were fixed on saving people. On helping. On putting others' lives ahead of their own.

If you've met a firefighter, you know that a passion for the vocation is woven through the fabric of their being. They love their comrades. They love the equipment. They love life at the station. They love being on the job. The members of Ladder Co. 2 and Squad 4, like their counterparts around the world, did not become firefighters on a whim. Nor do they often leave the service to find "more rewarding work."

Christopher Leach and Jerry Fickes will always be members of the Wilmington Fire Department. They will always be firefighters.

May they always inspire others to be heroes.

SOCIAL MEDIA

No stories for this edition

SPANISH MEDIA

Guardia Nacional Comienza Distribución De Plantas Eléctricas

Telemundo, September 26, 2016

Guardia Nacional comienza distribución de plantas eléctricas

Por CYBER NEWS

Publicado sábado 24 de septiembre de 2016

La Guardia Nacional de Puerto Rico (GNPR) informó el sábado que comenzaron este fin de semana con la distribución de generadores de electricidad suministrados por la Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA).

En un parte de prensa, la GNPR detalló que en la noche del viernes escoltaron a la Policía con tres camiones tácticos hasta las instalaciones de FEMA en Caguas para recoger tres plantas generadoras, que fue luego transportadas hacia Gurabo y Yabucoa.

La planta que tenían sufrió una avería, por lo que el Municipio de San Juan les suplió una. (Publicado viernes 23 de septiembre de 2016)

"Con este apoyo de nuestra Guardia Nacional reafirmamos el compromiso y deber de ayudar a alivianar la situación de emergencia que enfrenta Puerto Rico. Estoy muy orgullosa y agradecida de mis ciudadanos-soldados que siempre están presentes para actuar en cualquier situación de emergencia arriesgando de alguna forma sus vidas", expresó la ayudante general de Puerto Rico, Marta Carcana.

El jueves a través de una Orden Ejecutiva, el gobernador Alejandro García Padilla activó a la GNPR para la distribución de estas plantas generadoras de energía.

Mientras defendía las cifras oficiales ofrecidas por la AEE, se interrumpió el servicio de energía eléctrica. (Publicado viernes 23 de septiembre de 2016)

El director de FEMA en Puerto Rico, Alejandro de la Campa, manifestó el jueves que el gobierno federal puso a disposición del país unas 77 plantas de energía tras el apagón masivo del miércoles que dejó a 1.5 millones de abonados sin luz y a miles sin servicio de agua.

Publicado sábado 24 de septiembre de 2016

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NATIONAL NEWS

Presidential Disaster Approved For 19 Iowa Counties

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — President Barack Obama has approved a major disaster declaration for 19 Iowa counties because of storms and flooding in September and October.

That makes federal funding available to state and local government agencies and some nonprofit organizations.

The money will help perform emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding that occurred between Sept. 21 and Oct. 3.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency says additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Most of the counties are in northeast and north-central Iowa but Des Moines County is southeast Iowa also is included.

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Obama Declares Federal Disaster In Iowa

Quad-City (IA) Times, November 1, 2016

DES MOINES — President Barack Obama designated 19 Iowa counties as eligible for federal assistance to help repair and rebound from at least $22 million that results when severe storms caused extensive flooding along the Cedar River from Sept. 21 to Oct. 3.

Obama signed a presidential disaster proclamation Monday declaring that a major disaster exists in parts of Iowa and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the affected areas of Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek and Wright counties.

Federal funding is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding in the designated counties. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

W. Craig Fugate, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, named James N. Russo as the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

FEMA said additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Last month Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad signed a letter asking Obama to issue a presidential disaster declaration for public assistance as a result of damage sustained in 19 Iowa counties. However, the governor's request did not include activation of the federal Individual assistance program as the damage incurred to private homes during flooding did not meet FEMA's criteria.

The governor requested funding under FEMA'S public assistance program, which is used to rebuild damaged infrastructure that may include roads, bridges, culverts and other public facilities, or to cover costs of emergency work during, and debris removal after, the storms.

A joint federal, state, and local preliminary damage assessment of the 19 counties found the severe weather caused an estimated $22 million worth of damage that could be eligible under the public assistance program. The governor also requested funding to conduct hazard mitigation activities for the entire state.

In Linn County, the damage estimated at $12,742,469 includes about $11.3 million for the city of Cedar Rapids, about $630,000 for the county, $314,000 for the city of Palo and $373,000 for the Mercy Medical complex, Benson said. Damage to infrastructure in upstream Black Hawk County totaled at least $3,423,005 and Butler County's damage assessment totaled $1,633,164.

In conjunction with Iowa's latest severe weather event, Branstad announced the creation of a flood recovery task force — comprised of state and local agencies — to address the unmet needs of impacted residents as part of an effort to assist Iowans in their recovery from flooding and severe weather. The task force will focus on working with communities to develop long-term housing recovery options, according to the governor's office.

– Rod Boshart

Obama Declares Federal Disaster In Iowa, Makes Aid Available

By Rod Boshart

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, November 1, 2016

DES MOINES — President Barack Obama designated 19 Iowa counties as eligible for federal assistance to help rebound from at least $22 million in damages caused by extensive flooding along the Cedar River from Sept. 21 to Oct. 3.

Obama signed a presidential disaster proclamation Monday declaring that a major disaster exists in parts of Iowa and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the affected areas of Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek and Wright counties.

Federal funding is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private non-profit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding in the designated counties. Federal funding also is available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Craig Fugate, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, named James N. Russo as the federal coordinating officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

FEMA said additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Last month, Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad signed a letter asking Obama to issue a presidential disaster declaration for public assistance as a result of damage sustained in 19 Iowa counties. However, the governor's request did not include activation of the federal Individual assistance program as the damage incurred to private homes during flooding did not meet FEMA's criteria.

The governor requested funding under FEMA's public assistance program, which is used to rebuild damaged infrastructure that may include roads, bridges, culverts and other public facilities, or to cover costs of emergency work during, and debris removal after, the storms.

A joint federal, state, and local preliminary damage assessment of the 19 counties found the severe weather caused an estimated $22 million worth of damage that could be eligible under the public assistance program. The governor also requested funding to conduct hazard mitigation activities for the entire state.

In Linn County, the damage estimated at $12,742,469 includes about $11.3 million for the city of Cedar Rapids, about $630,000 for the county, $314,000 for the city of Palo and $373,000 for the Mercy Medical complex, Benson said. Damage to infrastructure in upstream Black Hawk County totaled at least $3,423,005 and Butler County's damage assessment totaled $1,633,164.

Steve Estenson, Linn County risk manager, said flood insurance should cover any damage to the interior of the county courthouse and sheriff's office, which saw some water damage.

Anything after that would be submitted to FEMA, he said.

Cedar Rapids City Manager Jeff Pomeranz said expenses in a "typical disaster" are covered by 75 percent federal money, 10 percent state and 15 percent local. FEMA must still write project worksheets to identify costs, he said.

"The declaration is good news, and will help Cedar Rapids as we work towards recovery," Pomeranz said. "We appreciate the quick response of the Governor, FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security, as well as the President for signing the declaration."

In conjunction with Iowa's latest severe weather event, Branstad announced the creation of a flood recovery task force — comprised of state and local agencies — to address the unmet needs of impacted residents as part of an effort to assist Iowans in their recovery from flooding and severe weather. The task force is to focus on working with communities to develop long-term housing recovery options, according to the governor's office.

Obama Disaster Declaration Includes North Iowa

Mason City (IA) Globe Gazette, November 1, 2016

North Iowa counties are among 19 in the state that are now eligible for federal assistance to help rebound from extensive flooding along the Cedar River from Sept. 21 to Oct. 3.

President Barack Obama signed a proclamation Monday declaring a major disaster exists in parts of Iowa and ordering federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the affected areas. At least $22 million in damage was caused by the storms and flooding.

Counties in the proclamation are Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek and Wright.

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Branstad also announced the creation of a flood recovery task force with state and local agencies to address unmet needs of affected residents to assist them in their recovery from flooding and severe weather.

The task force will focus on working with communities to develop long-term housing recovery options, according to the governor's office.

– Rod Boshart

Hurricane Matthew Took A Big Bite Out Of Southeastern States' Beaches

By Greg Allen

NPR, November 1, 2016

Beaches in the Southeastern U.S. took a tremendous beating last month from Hurricane Matthew. The U.S. Geological Survey has found that the storm washed over and damaged 15 percent of sand dunes on Florida's Atlantic Coast, 30 percent along Georgia's coastline and 42 percent of the dunes on South Carolina beaches.

In Florida, few coastal areas were hit harder by the hurricane than the 18 miles of dunes and beaches in Flagler County. County Administrator Craig Coffey says, "What Matthew did to us essentially [was] eat about 30 feet of coastline all the way along the county, and created a bunch of breaches through that dune system."

Matthew also washed out a big chunk of coastal highway A1A in Flagler Beach. The state and county are working to have that road repaired and open within 45 days. Fixing that highway is important, Coffey says. But he is equally worried about damage to the county's beaches and dunes, which provide the community with important protection from tides, wave action and storm surge.

When Hurricane Matthew overtopped and breached Flagler County's beaches, some 800 homes were flooded. Coffey says, "We're trying to figure out how can we protect those for next hurricane season so we don't have more breaches. We literally were fighting breaches in about 10 locations." Flagler County is hoping federal money will be available to help it begin restoring the dunes, which provide protection for hundreds of coastal homes.

Many other communities are facing similar problems. The USGS says 53 miles of dunes were damaged and overtopped in Florida. In Georgia, 32 miles of shoreline were affected. Seventy-seven miles of dunes were damaged in South Carolina.

Hilary Stockdon, a research oceanographer at USGS, says a survey of the beaches compared aerial photos taken before and after the storm. It showed extensive beach erosion all along the Southeast Atlantic coast, Stockdon says, "where waves removed sand from beaches and sharply eroded sand dunes. There were locations where houses were undermined or roads were undermined. And we also saw locations where the sand was pushed inland."

After small storms, Stockdon says, beaches and dunes can recover naturally. With major storms like Hurricane Matthew, though, sand is washed inland and bulldozed away, she says. Restoring sand dunes after those events often requires big engineering projects.

Haley To Visit Lowcountry To Discuss Hurricane Matthew

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

RIDGELAND, S.C. (AP) – Gov. Nikki Haley is heading to the Lowcountry to talk about recovery from Hurricane Matthew.

The governor's office said Haley will be in Ridgeland on Wednesday as part of a relief event. The event is set from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Jasper County Farmers Market.

Federal, state and nonprofit organization officials will be available to answer questions from residents of Beaufort, Jasper, Colleton and Hampton counties about help families and businesses after the storm.

Those who visit the event can register for financial help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They can also apply for disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency will also be on hand to provide information for farmers about crop losses and damage.

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Kinston Remains Short On Hotel Rooms After Hurricane Matthew

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

KINSTON, N.C. (AP) — The impact of Hurricane Matthew continues to be felt in Kinston's hotel market.

WITN-TV in Greenville reports (http://bit.ly/2ekuHyu) four of the city's six hotels were flooded. The Hampton Inn on U.S. 70 Bypass had 21 inches of water on the first floor, where 26 guest rooms were destroyed.

General manager Travis Baker says the hotel still has no power and is awaiting an inspection of flooded transformers so they can get temporary power back into the building.

Baker said the goal is to reopen by the middle of next month.

Visit Kinston director Jan Parson estimates the city will lose between $70,000 and $95,000 in occupancy taxes due to the loss of hotel reservations. The money helps market the area to attract visitors and help with tourism.

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Information from: WITN-TV, http://www.witntv.com/

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McCrory: Hurricane Relief Timetable Includes Special Session

By Gary Robertson

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Gov. Pat McCrory said Tuesday he expects to call lawmakers to a special session next month on Hurricane Matthew relief for eastern North Carolina, looking to Congress for supplemental aid first and developing policy based on recommendations from committees his administration created.

Addressing the first meeting of one panel assigned to examine the damage and pinpoint unmet needs, McCrory and other administration officials told participants the actual recovery will be long and hard.

"It won't be a sprint. It will be a marathon," said McCrory Chief of Staff Thomas Stith, who is also the panel's chairman.

The storm raked the eastern half of the state 3½ weeks ago, dumping up to 17 inches of rain and leading to record flooding along rivers and in the towns and cities adjoining them. Authorities said there were 28 storm-related deaths. While federal damage assessments are continuing, state officials earlier estimated $1.5 billion in damage to 100,000 homes, businesses and government buildings. That doesn't count agricultural losses.

"Our state has gone through a very traumatic, violent and emotional disaster," McCrory told the Hurricane Matthew Recovery Committee, but "now we need to reinvent ourselves on how do we recover from this."

McCrory laid out a plan that in which the bipartisan committee — comprised of elected leaders, business people, government officials and citizens — would tour hard-hit areas. In early December the panel would fashion recommendations for recovery assistance that wouldn't be covered with existing funds. A separate panel of emergency management officials would consider more technical issues related to federal and state assistance and address immediate needs.

The governor said he would turn in the state's request for federal disaster assistance on Nov. 14 and wait for Congress to approve it. The state would have to provide matching funds and cover items not included in supplemental federal funds. McCrory said he envisioned calling a special legislative session for early December, although the date could move up depending on the speed of Congress.

"I am confident that we'll be able to recover and rebuild even stronger than what we had before in many of these areas impacted," he said.

The General Assembly likely would be asked to create state recovery programs and permit spending from the state's reserve fund, now close to $1.6 billion. Laws also would be amended to exempt some schools from the required minimum number of days or instructional hours they must be open.

State Budget Director Drew Heath told the committee the state has enough disaster funds to meet immediate needs through January, when the legislature convenes its two-year session. But McCrory told reporters waiting until then to act would hamper long-term recovery planning.

The governor said he wanted the recovery committee to raise private and corporate funds to address permanent housing and small business aid. State officials said 250 people are still in shelters and more than 1,500 displaced households are still living in hotels.

The committee's members include former Gov. Beverly Perdue, ex-McCrory budget director Art Pope and current University of North Carolina system President Margaret Spellings.

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McCrory Suspends Non-essential Travel For State Workers

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) – The Latest on the Alabama pipeline explosion and its impact on North Carolina: (all times local):

6:45 p.m.

Gov. Pat McCrory has signed an executive order waiving some requirements to allow trucks to deliver gasoline and to protect consumers from price gouging.

McCrory's latest executive order is an extension of an order issued for Hurricane Matthew. The order waives maximum hours of service for drivers and temporarily suspends vehicle size and weight restrictions to allow transport of gasoline. Extending the state of emergency also extends price gouging laws to help protect North Carolinians from excessive gas prices at the pump. The governor took similar action during an earlier disruption to the pipeline in September.

The governor has suspended non-essential travel for state employees. McCrory also directed the Department of Environmental Quality to work with the Department of Agriculture to use different gasoline formulas to increase access to supplies from northern states.

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4:20 p.m.

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory said his administration was monitoring the explosion at an Alabama pipeline for possible disruptions to the state's gasoline supply.

McCrory said Tuesday that his office is preparing for all options in response. He later urged citizens not to participate in panic buying, saying it would only make the situation worse.

The governor said the pipeline provides 70 percent of North Carolina's gasoline supply.

Earlier. North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper announced the state's law regarding price gouging was still in effect. It was initially implemented after the same pipeline was disrupted by a leak in September. It was triggered again after Hurricane Matthew struck the eastern part of the state.

McCrory, a Republican, and Cooper, a Democrat, are opposing each other in the 2016 governor's race.

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3:58 p.m.

North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper is reminding residents that the state's price gouging law remains in effect in the wake of a fatal explosion in Alabama that shut down a pipeline supplying gasoline across the Southeast.

A previous shutdown of the same gas pipeline in September triggered the law, which went into effect again in October by Hurricane Matthew and remains in effect statewide.

Cooper's office is currently investigating businesses for possible price gouging related to Hurricane Matthew as well as for alleged gas price gouging due to problems with the pipeline in September. He advised residents that if they see excessive prices at the pump, they should call his office.

Cooper is the Democratic candidate for governor in North Carolina, challenging Republican incumbent Pat McCrory.

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Largest US Oil Pipeline Shut Off After Deadly Blast

AFP, November 1, 2016

The largest gasoline pipeline in the United States remained shut off Tuesday in the southern state of Alabama following an explosion that killed one and injured five, as crews battled to control the resulting wildfire.

The blaze broke out Monday afternoon in Shelby County after an excavator being used by contractors hit the Colonial pipeline and sparked an explosion, the company said in a statement.

"After the incident occurred, Colonial shut down its two main lines, which traverse Shelby County," the company said.

Fuel Prices Up And Down East Coast Spike After Ala. Pipeline Explosion

By Steven Mufson

Washington Post, November 1, 2016

For the second time in less than two months, a major breach closed down a key gasoline pipeline, driving up fuel prices and demonstrating the vulnerability of the entire Eastern Seaboard to an accident on a single piece of infrastructure.

Just before 3 p.m. Monday, a track hoe used for excavation struck Colonial Pipeline's Line No. 1 in Shelby County, Ala., breaking the 53-year-old steel pipe and igniting the gasoline inside. One worker was killed and five severely injured. The fire sent flames and black smoke billowing high into the sky and was still burning Tuesday afternoon.

The accident took place just a few miles from the site of a Sept. 9 leak from the same pipeline. The leak closed down the pipeline for 12 days, sparking long lines for gasoline in Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama.

Colonial's Line No. 1, 36 inches in diameter, carries approximately 1.3 million barrels a day of gasoline from Houston to Linden, N.J., branching off along the way to provide more than a third of the supplies for the entire East Coast.

"I think the issue of pipeline safety is important, given several recent high-profile accidents," said Jason Bordoff, director of Columbia University's center on global energy policy. "It certainly is a reminder of the vulnerability of East Coast gasoline supply."

Bordoff said the Energy Department had considered creating a reserve for refined products after Hurricane Sandy, in part because of the East Coast's dependence on limited pipeline infrastructure. Hurricane Katrina also caused gasoline shortages in places such as Atlanta because refineries along the Gulf of Mexico could not supply the southeastern portion of the pipeline network. But no reserve has been created.

Gasoline prices before taxes and fees soared Tuesday more than at any time since 2008. Early in the day, prices jumped 15 percent but finished the day up 4.6 percent at $1.4841 a gallon after the company said it hoped to reopen the pipeline Saturday afternoon. But Barclays analysts said the outage could last longer. “In an optimistic scenario,” they wrote, “Line 1 remains shut for at least another month, as the fire is put out and repairs and safety inspections take place.”

“It’s a very fragile system,” said Andre LeBlanc, vice president of Petroleum Marketing Group, which supplies more than 1,400 gas stations, from Maine to Tidewater, Va. “As we’ve seen over the past two months, this can be very impactful to us.”

Michael O’Connor, president of the Virginia Petroleum Convenience and Grocery Association, said that 70 percent to 80 percent of the gasoline and diesel for the state’s 5,000 fuel stations come through the Colonial pipelines. Colonial’s line No. 2, which parallels line one, carries diesel.

“That is a lot of dependence on one source,” he said, adding “you have to look at the 99.5 percent of the time when things are working like finely tuned Swiss watch.”

Throughout the Mid-Atlantic, wholesalers made plans for trucks to pick up supplies in ports such as Baltimore and in northern New Jersey. O’Connor said Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) had not lifted emergency measures imposed during Hurricane Matthew. Those measures eased limits on truckers and also relaxed weight restrictions on trucks carrying fuel.

In addition to concerns about the reliability of supplies, the latest pipeline accident exacerbates anxiety about pipelines in general. Environmental groups have been opposing both oil and natural gas pipelines from North Dakota to New England.

Colonial, founded in 1962, is owned by a group that includes Koch Industries, an affiliate of the KKR buyout firm, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, and a Royal Dutch Shell affiliate. The company’s two pipelines form a 5,500-mile network.

The Sept. 9 leak occurred in the original pipeline construction and dumped about 7,370 barrels of gasoline into man-made ponds about 460 yards away, according to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The ponds were once used for waste from strip mining.

The PHMSA, recently given expanded authority to order pipeline closures, said later that a crack was discovered on a buckle in the pipe. PHMSA regulators ordered Colonial to limit the volume of gasoline flow so that pipeline pressures did not exceed 80 percent of ordinary levels.

To restore the pipeline to service, Colonial used a stretch of pipe to bypass the leak.

Then on Monday, a crew working for a contractor was excavating the pipeline in preparation for the removal of the bypass when it hit the gasoline line.

For now, Colonial is literally focusing on getting the smoke to clear. The company said about 4,000 barrels of gasoline had burned or leaked since the explosion. Fire departments from three counties and two cities have teamed up with state and federal agencies to put out the fire. The firefighters had already been busy battling wildfires after weeks of drought.

The company said it also had laid containment booms at two locations along the Cahaba River. It said it did so “out of an abundance of caution.”

Firefighting crews built a 75-foot-long earthen dam to contain burning fuel, Reuters reported. Two wildfires caused by the explosion burned across 31 acres of land, officials said.

“Given these two recent disasters, we call for the federal government to conduct an immediate investigation into the Colonial Pipeline Company so that those impacted are fully compensated and no community is forced to face the risks Shelby County and so many like it around the country do on a daily basis, “ Lena Moffitt, director of Sierra Club’s Dirty Fuels campaign, said in a statement.

In North Carolina, Attorney General Roy Cooper told residents that the state’s anti-price-gouging law remains in effect, ABC News reported. Gov. Pat McCrory (R) urged citizens not to indulge in panic buying that could create artificial shortages.

Watch This Rare “Medicane” Tropical Storm Take Shape In The Mediterranean

By Angela Fritz

Washington Post, November 1, 2016

A rare, ostensibly bizarre storm formed in the Mediterranean over the weekend. It was a tropical storm, which is uncommon for that region simply because the Mediterranean Sea is usually too cold.

This odd storm started as an average low-pressure system on Saturday, east of Malta. What made it different was the exceptionally warm water in the Mediterranean Sea. The water temperature there is running 5 to 6 degrees above average for this time of year, which means it was around the special 80-degree mark that tropical storms usually need to develop.

Strong thunderstorms bubbled up in the system on Saturday and Sunday, and the pressure dropped. The atmosphere was moist and warm enough for the storm to become “warm core” — the signature difference between something like a hurricane and the day-to-day storms we get in the mid-latitudes.

Scott Bachmeier, a research meteorologist at the University of Wisconsin, has been tracking the storm since the weekend. He said "it developed over the Ionian Sea between Italy and Greece, initially moved southwestward, and then turned to the east where it eventually produced a wind gust to [60 mph] and caused some damage on the Greek island of Crete on 31 October. A wind gust to [57 mph] was also seen from a ship report at [1 p.m. local time Friday]."

The storm didn't have a name because the National Hurricane Center doesn't cover the Mediterranean Sea. However, it did reach tropical storm status, according to the Weather Channel.

The last time a storm like this occurred in the Mediterranean was in November 2011. The satellite division of NOAA designated it "Rolf."

The storm dissipated on Monday — though not before it slammed Malta with strong winds. Giant waves crashed on the shoreline in St. Julian's Bay and other east-coast locations, which experienced the strongest winds. The waves stopped traffic and damaged hotels, according to the Times of Malta:

Vicious winds are lashing the Maltese islands leaving a trail of damage, especially at the Radisson Hotel in St Julian's which was flooded after strong waves smashed through its windows.

The police today issued a warning advising the public to avoid coastal areas and seafronts such as Triq Borg Olivier in St Julian's due to high waves crashing onto land. Seawater had flooded one side of the Strand in Sliema.

A resident said the strong sea waves even smashed cars into the Park Towers Mall in St Julian's.

The Times of Malta even reported a strange slimy substance washing ashore. People blamed local fish farms, which denied responsibility:

Meanwhile, a glutinous slime was washed into Portomaso but fish farms have categorically denied it had anything to do with them.

Joseph Caruana, Fish & Fish director, said: "This slime has absolutely nothing to do with us. We have asked the government to carry out an investigation to establish this once and for all, and we're going to keep putting pressure until it's resolved."

Still, a reader reported seeing amounts of "strange slime like big snowflakes or foam from a washing machine being washed up by the waves" along the Coast Road, making the roads slippery and dangerous to drivers.

Wednesday's Forecast: Soggy Central, Warm East

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, November 1, 2016

Showers will dampen the central U.S. on Wednesday while the East sees another warm day.

Central U.S.: Showers and thunderstorms will fall along a slow-moving cold front from the southern Plains to the Upper Midwest. Some of the heaviest rain will be in Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan.

East: Warmer than normal temperatures will dominate the eastern half of the U.S., with temperatures as much as 20 degrees above normal through Thursday in some areas.

West: Other than some afternoon rain in western portions of Washington and Oregon, most of the western U.S. will be clear and dry on Wednesday.

Weather history for Nov. 2: In 1743, the first tropical storm in America to be measured accurately by scientific instruments was detected by Harvard professor John Winthrop in Cambridge, Mass. In 1989, almost four feet of lake-effect snow piled up in Ironwood, Mich.

Flood Of Weather Warning Terms Fuels Confusion

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, November 1, 2016

When you hear there's a "flood watch" in your town, do you know what that means? What about a "flood warning"? And what in the world is a "flood advisory?"

Do you have to think about which one is worse?

The National Weather Service is aware there is confusion around the watches, warnings and advisories it issues and is considering making small to potentially dramatic changes to how the agency lets Americans know when and where dangerous weather threatens.

The rampant befuddlement over the terms prompted the launch a few years ago of the hazard simplification project, an endeavor that's continually seeking input from the public, said Eli Jacks, chief of the agency's forecast services division. In the next few weeks, a survey asking for comments on winter weather and flooding hazard terms will be available on the project's website.

So what, exactly, do the names mean? At the most basic level, a watch means there's the potential for hazardous or dangerous weather, while a warning indicates hazardous or dangerous weather is imminent or occurring, the weather service said. Meanwhile, an advisory is issued for hazardous weather that is also imminent or occurring but is "less serious than a warning."

Therefore, a watch is typically the first product issued, followed by either an advisory or a warning, depending on the severity of the weather hazard.

Baffled yet?

One simple reason for the confusion is that both watch and warning start with the letters "wa," while another is that advisory "doesn't have any specific connotation," Jacks said.

Not only are the three levels befuddling, there are also too many of them: In all, the weather service transmits a whopping 122 different watches, warnings and advisories, all the way from Air Quality Alert to Winter Weather Advisory. Some of the more obscure ones include Ashfall Warning, Freezing Spray Advisory and Lakeshore Flood Watch.

"If you look at the current suite of flood watches and warnings, there are more than even I was aware of," said University of Georgia meteorologist Marshall Shepherd.

"With so many types of warnings, it is not surprising that some might downplay a deadly flood threat like we saw in Louisiana earlier this year," he added, recalling the disaster that killed 13 people and destroyed nearly 150,000 homes.

The impetus for the project was partly due to twister outbreaks in Alabama and Missouri in 2011 that killed hundreds of people despite widespread tornado warnings, Jacks said.

"What can we do better?" he wondered.

Shepherd said the KISS principle (Keep It Simple Stupid) still works. "I learned this as a child and think it can apply with our weather warnings," he said.

If the entire system is overhauled, what should the terms be replaced with? Jacks said the weather service is looking at many options, such as switching to the color-coded (yellow, orange, red) warnings some European countries use, or possibly different wording, such as warning of low, medium or high impact events.

But a switch isn't necessarily simple or easy, Jacks said, as some emergency managers and municipalities have the watch, warning and advisory terms already baked into their systems.

Though a widespread change could still be a few years away, Jacks said, tweaking or reducing the confusing terms could happen sooner. "This is a very complex issue," he said. "We've got to get it right."

A tornado moves through Tuscaloosa, Ala. Wednesday, April 27, 2011. Hundreds of Americans were killed by tornadoes in 2011 despite widespread warnings. (Photo: Dusty Compton, AP)

U.S. Top Court Skeptical Toward State Farm Hurricane Fraud Appeal

By Lawrence Hurley

Reuters, November 1, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

State Farm, Whistleblowers Facing Off At U.S. Supreme Court

Chicago Tribune, November 1, 2016

Two whistleblowers from Ocean Springs, Miss., are headed to the U.S. Supreme Court Tuesday to defend the guilty verdict they won against State Farm Fire & Casualty Co. for defrauding the National Flood Insurance program after Hurricane Katrina.

The Supreme Court is set to hear oral arguments on State Farm's appeal Tuesday — 11 years and two months after the hurricane.

The court has agreed to consider one question in the case a federal jury decided in Gulfport: whether attorneys for the whistleblowers, Cori and Kerri Rigsby, violated federal law by disclosing the lawsuit to members of the media while it was under seal in 2006. A whistleblower lawsuit is sealed, so federal prosecutors have time to investigate the alleged government fraud and decide whether to undertake prosecution.

The Rigsbys, who worked as State Farm claims adjusters after Hurricane Katrina, proceeded with the case after the government decided against intervening. The sisters proved at trial in 2013 that State Farm charged policy limits of $250,000 to the federal flood program while minimizing wind losses the insurance company owed on the claim of Biloxians Thomas and Pamela McIntosh.

The case included an infamous sticky note in the McIntosh file, attached to an expert report blaming wind for the loss, that said, "'Put in Wind File. DO NOT Pay Bill. DO NOT discuss.'"

Ozerden ordered Bloomington-based State Farm to pay $750,000 in damages in the case, with the Rigsbys set to receive 15 percent. However, the Rigsbys have not been compensated for pursuing the claim because of the appeal.

The Supreme Court's decision to consider the case will not necessarily change the jury's verdict. If the question is resolved in State Farm's favor, an attorney for the Rigsbys has said, the court could allow the fraud verdict to stand or set it aside.

The federal trial judge and the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals found early disclosure had not harmed the case and also that the Rigsbys previous legal team, not the women, had leaked the lawsuit.

The 5th circuit also upheld the jury's verdict and directed the judge in the case, Sul Ozerden, to allow the Rigsbys to examine other State Farm claims for evidence of fraud. State Farm has denied any wrongdoing. The broader fraud investigation also has put on hold pending the appeal's outcome.

The Supreme Court calendar shows that New York attorney Kathleen M. Sullivan is set to argue the case for State Farm, while Tejinder Singh of Bethesda, Maryland, is the attorney for the Rigsbys. Both attorneys are experienced appellate practitioners.

Supreme Court Hears Last-ditch Appeal From State Farm In Katrina Case

By Lydia Wheeler

The Hill, November 1, 2016

The Supreme Court grappled Tuesday with whether to let State Farm off the hook for the more than $3 million it's been ordered to pay for fraudulently billing the government in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The company says a lawsuit that two contracted insurance adjusters filed against it on behalf of the government in 2006 should be dismissed because their attorney, who is no longer on the case, violated a court-ordered seal when he leaked case evidence to three media outlets.

Justice Stephen Breyer said it's a serious thing when someone deliberately breaks a court seal and delivers the contents of a lawsuit to the press.

But Tejinder Singh, the attorney for the two whistleblowers, argued that the information given to the media was not for attribution. He told the justices Tuesday that journalists have ethics and are not allowed to quote material that's been given to them on background.

If your goal is to tar and feather the defendant, Sighn said, you do that by leaking the lawsuit to the press, not by leaking evidence.

But Chief Justice John Roberts countered that the press could easily put two and two together and realize that a complaint has been filed.

Under the False Claims Act, whistleblowers can sue on behalf of the government and receive a portion of the damages awarded. But the act requires the lawsuit to be kept sealed from both the public and the defendant for at least 60 days to give the government time to decide if it wishes to intervene.

A lower court awarded the sisters who brought the lawsuit, Cori and Kerri Rigsby, a 30 percent share of the $7358,250 award against State Farm and $2.9 million in attorney's fees and expenses.

Justice Anthony Kennedy asked whether State Farm was seeking any other sanction other than dismissal.

The attorney for the company, Kathleen Sullivan, argued that dismissing the case is the only appropriate way to punish whistleblowers who violate a court ordered seal when suing on behalf of the government.

"If you affirm, you are sending a message to every relator in the country: Leak away," she said.

The Extreme Unwisdom Of Burning Forests For Fuel

By Jane Maslow Cohen And Cindy Morris

The Hill, November 1, 2016

A bipartisan coalition in the U.S. Congress is pressing hard to advance a dangerously destructive environmental policy. It would require the Environmental Protection Agency to define biomass—energy obtained from wood-- as a carbon-neutral, renewable fuel, like solar power and wind. The EPA and its Science Advisory Board are opposed. They should be.

The idea is to kindle a mass market in the incineration of forests to generate electricity. If it succeeds, biomass technologies will be eligible for new funding in the race inspired by the 2015 Paris Agreement toward carbon-neutral fuels. Representatives of forest-rich states seek to wedge their desired mandate into three major bills now pending before Congress. One, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act, is up for reconciliation now: Only the Senate bill includes the provision.

If this move becomes national policy, it will displace decades of international efforts to reduce forest loss from the use of wood for fuel, inviting emulation world-wide. Biomass combustion has been a source of serious atmospheric pollution. It releases 150 percent more greenhouse gases per unit of electricity than coal; and 400 times more than natural gas. Forest-destruction generates a double loss: Forests are the earth's largest terrestrial carbon sinks. As policy analyst Mary S. Booth observes, "From the atmosphere's point of view, decreasing a carbon sink has the same effect as increasing pollution from another source."

Proponents claim that biomass combustion would be carbon-neutral: While forests' combustion would release their carbon dioxide stores, newly-planted trees would restore carbon sinks in a repeating cycle.

Opponents respond that the carbon sinks that new trees provide could not occupy the same time-frame as the atmospheric carbon that would be released. The lag is non-trivial: Saplings take 40 to 50 years to absorb the carbon released by mature trees, leaving their heat-trapping gases in the air. A study commissioned by Massachusetts caused the state to abandon biomass subsidies for this cause.

But the most pervasive mistake the biomass enticement represents is that it is framed by a carbon-centric mindset that ignores the essential relationship between forests and the hydrological and energy cycles. Forests are not merely convenient closets for carbon storage. An outpouring of international research has been discovering and validating the unique, irreplaceable influence of forests on the natural regulation of the earth's climate through their generation of the land-atmosphere circulation of water and their maintenance of the patterns that distribute solar energy, with coolant effects. Forests play these interdependent roles through the atmospheric transport of moisture across land masses at regional and continental scales; the evapotranspiration of vast quantities of water from the earth's surface to the lower atmospheric boundary layer, where liquid water is converted to rain and snow; the filtration and storage of moisture, which forests' diverse structures pull from the atmosphere and guide underground, thereby mitigating drought and moderating floods; and the modulation of solar energy, through the natural cooling systems that forests are.

Until forests' crucial roles in the generation of planetary well-being can be reliably handed off to other natural or humanly-designed agents, it will be dangerous-- and perverse beyond measure-- to destroy forest placement and function in the misguided production of yet another heat-trapping fuel. Because such a move by the United States would put the Paris Agreement at grave risk, it is hard to imagine a worse signal to send-- or a worse time to send it.

If need be, the President should veto any bill that would cripple the unique capabilities of forests, on which all life depends.

Jane Maslow Cohen is a law professor at the University of Texas at Austin. Cindy E. Morris is a senior scientist at the French National Agricultural Research Institute (INRA) in Avignon and an Affiliate Professor at Montana State University in Bozeman. Both belong to an international science network that studies the interaction of landscapes with atmospheric processes.

The views expressed by authors are their own and not the views of The Hill.

Small Earthquakes Recorded In New Hampshire On Halloween

Associated Press, November 1, 2016

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) – Seismologists say small earthquakes were recorded in the New Hampshire towns of Salisbury and Andover on Halloween.

The United States Geological Survey says a 1.8-magnitude earthquake was centered in Salisbury at 2:47 a.m. Monday.

At 2:58 a.m., a 1.6-magnitude earthquake was registered in Andover.

There were no reports of any damage or injuries.

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Early Los Angeles-area Quakes Linked With Oil Production

By Steve Gorman

Reuters, November 1, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Heads Up! How NASA's Super Fast New Asteroid Detector Works

NBC News, November 1, 2016

Earthlings, always trust a Scout to have your back.

NASA's new asteroid detector, a computer program aptly named Scout, is the celestial equivalent of the person who yells "heads up" as a baseball comes barreling toward the stands.

Scout is a computer program designed to detect Near Earth Objects that could be on track for impact with Earth in a matter of days or weeks.

Scout works by scanning data from NASA's network of telescopes and assessing the likelihood of a Near Earth Object's slamming into Earth. It's then able to have other telescopes around the world confirm its findings.

"We can get a heads-up immediately, within an hour of the data being reported," Paul Chodas, manager of NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object (NEO) Studies at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, told NBC News. Cholas has been part of the team working on refining Scout over the past year.

A Near Earth Object is a comet or asteroid with an orbit that brings it within 30 million miles of Earth's orbit. NASA and its partners have a catalogue of around 15,000 Near Earth Objects that don't appear to pose threats to Earth any time soon.

Scout has already proven to be useful spotting the smaller objects as they near Earth. Chodas compared them to "a dot moving in the sky."

A Scout report issued Tuesday shows that a tiny rock will whiz by Earth on Wednesday at a distance of 58,500 miles. When it looked like an asteroid would make a close pass with Earth last weekend, Scout was able to determine that it would pass 310,000 miles away, giving Earth a roomy buffer zone.

Finding Threats Early

Scout also has a big brother, Sentry, which is designed to keep track of objects over the course of the century.

Kelly Fast, program manager for Near Earth Objects Observations at NASA, told NBC News that tools like Sentry and Scout are part of the first line of defense, allowing the space agency and its partners to "find them and keep track of them."

"The goal would be to have decades of lead time if there is something that could be a problem in the future," she said.

Anything larger than 30 to 50 meters could survive entering Earth's atmosphere and have the potential to inflict damage around its impact site, according to NASA.

Rob Landis, program executive for the Planetary Defense Coordination Office, told NBC News there's a mantra that sums up the work they do detecting Near Earth Objects: "Find them early."

"There is probably no greater gift that the space agencies of the world can provide humanity than to know the time and place of an impact event and to plan a response to it," he said.

Managing the Risk of an Impact

Whether it's decades or days, NASA has conducted a few simulations with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Landis said, allowing them to outline how they would respond to a potential close call.

NASA has never needed to mitigate a threat from a Near Earth Object. However, the agency has a number of concepts in the works so it's ready if the need ever arises.

One of those is set to be demonstrated as part of the Asteroid Redirect Mission, which is slated for 2021. While the scope of the project is intended to test tech to be used on a future Mars mission, it will also demonstrate a key planetary defense method call the "gravity tractor."

After capturing a boulder from the surface of an asteroid, NASA hopes to use the spacecraft's gravitational force to slowly alter the rock's trajectory.

Another possibility is the kinetic impactor method, which would work by sending one or more large, high-speed spacecraft into the path of a Near Earth Object, with the goal of changing its path.

Still, NASA says decades or more may be needed to successfully deflect a potential thread from a large asteroid using the kinetic impactor method.

"It's like having a reasonable insurance policy," Landis said. "God forbid you ever have to use it, but you can plan ahead as best as one can."

Asteroid Warning System Found "City-Killer" Object Heading Toward Earth

By Andrew Follett

Daily Caller, November 1, 2016

NASA's new asteroid warning system detected a large "city-killer" asteroid hurtling toward Earth less than a week before it narrowly missed.

The rock, officially named 2016 UR36, was first detected Oct. 25 by a telescope in Hawaii and passed by Earth five days later. The asteroid missed by a distance of only 310,000 miles, around 1.3 times further away than the Moon. That's incredibly close in space terms.

2016 UR36 could be up to 82 feet across, roughly comparable in size to the meteor that exploded over Russia in February 2013, causing hundreds of injuries.

If 2016 UR36 had slammed into Earth, it would have struck with a force 55 times stronger than the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima near the end of World War II. That's more than enough force to level a city.

NASA director Charles Bolden told reporters in 2013 that the only response to a such a late detection of an asteroid set to collide with Earth was to "Pray."

Global asteroid detection programs found more than 15,176 near-Earth objects of all sizes with 1,562 new near-Earth objects being identified this year alone, according to International Astronomical Union's Minor Planets Center. These newly discovered near-Earth objects are part of a much larger population of more than 700,000 known asteroids in our Solar System.

NASA and its European partners are now focused on finding objects that are 450 feet in diameter or larger, which could devastate a city or country if they struck Earth.

In the event an asteroid couldn't be prevented from hitting Earth, the Planetary Defense Coordination Office would work with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Defense, and other federal agencies to coordinate disaster response.

The federal "omnibus" budget approved last month includes $50 million for near-earth object observations and planetary defense, up from just $4 million in 2010.

Four asteroids came uncomfortably close to Earth early last month, according to NASA's Asteroid and Comet Watch.

A different asteroid came disturbingly close to Earth in March, and was 16 times closer to Earth than the Moon. It actually passed closer to the world than many communications satellites. Though Earth is safe for now, NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object Studies identifies a 1-in-250-million chance the asteroid could impact Earth on Sept. 28, 2017.

NASA created the anti-asteroid Planetary Defense Coordination Office in January, to defend Earth from impacts that could potentially end humanity.

FEMA HOUSING

Berkeley Residents Approved For FEMA Assistance Following Hurricane Matthew

Goose Creek (SC) Gazette, November 1, 2016

Residents in Charleston and Berkeley counties who suffered significant damages to their property during Hurricane Matthew can apply for individual assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Gov. Nikki Haley's office reported Tuesday that the two counties join 22 others that have been approved. Dorchester County was approved last week.

The federal program will provide money for temporary rental assistance, home repairs, low-cost loans and other needs.

Survivors can register at www.disasterassistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362. The toll-free numbers will operate every day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. until further notice.

FEMA Offers Help To Renters

Walterboro (SC) Press and Standard, November 1, 2016

With so much attention given to businesses and homeowners, survivors who are renters may think they are not eligible for disaster assistance even though they suffered losses from the storms and floods spawned by Hurricane Matthew. But they are.

Like homeowners, renters must first register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):

Go online to DisasterAssistance.gov. Call toll-free 800-621-3362 (711, voice or video relay services) or 800-462-7585 (TTY). Lines are open daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. until further notice.

Visit one of the nine Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) operating in Beaufort, Dorchester, Florence, Horry, Marion, Orangeburg and Williamsburg counties. Find the DRC closest to you at "Quick Links" on DisasterAssistance.gov. Representatives from FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration and various state agencies are on hand to answer questions.

Registering with FEMA is the first step toward qualifying for disaster assistance, which may include grants to help renters and homeowners pay for temporary housing, personal property replacements and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

After registering with FEMA, renters may also be eligible for low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). SBA offers such loans to businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, and homeowners as well as renters. SBA loans to renters may cover the cost of repairing or replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property.

For more information on SBA loans, call SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800 659-2955 or 800 877-8339 for TTY; email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov or visit http://www.sba.gov/disaster. Applicants may also apply online at https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela for the Electronic Loan Application on SBA's secure website.

More Than 15,000 Claims Made To FEMA

By Bob Shiles

Robesonian (NC), November 1, 2016

.LUMBERTON — The Robeson County Board of Commissioners was told Monday night that more than 15,000 claims totaling have been made to FEMA by people who have suffered damage to Hurricane Matthew, and that number is growing.

The commissioners met with representatives of FEMA and other government agencies providing recovery assistance to discuss what the county's role should be in helping residents and businesses rebound from destruction resulting from Hurricane Matthew.

"We need to get everyone on the same page," Jerry Stephens, chairman of the county board, said during Monday's special meeting of the commissioners and federal and state agencies. "Every one has their own regulations and requirements. I'd like to see us develop some way to track the progress that we all are making."

Stephens requested that county officials be given updates from agencies as they move forward with efforts to help those who lost their homes and personal property and need assistance to get back on their feet.

In addition to FEMA, those present at Monday's meeting included representatives of such agencies as the U.S. Small Business Administration, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Lumberton Housing Authority, and state emergency management officials. All agreed that disaster recovery in Robeson County is going to take years.

Jan Stout, a FEMA spokesperson, told the commissioners that there are 587 Robeson County families temporarily being sheltered in hotels and other temporary accommodations. She said that 15,361 individuals have registered with FEMA to receive some kind of financial and housing assistance totaling $16 million in claims.

FEMA and the Small Business Association have set up at one-stop shop at the former Kmart building on Roberts Avenue in Lumberton. Those who believe they have a claim to make can file it there.

The commissioners listened to presentations by the different agencies outlining what they hope to accomplish in both the short- and long-term recovery processes.

Commissioners David Edge and Roger Oxendine told the FEMA representatives that they are hearing complaints about how FEMA determines eligibility for long-term and short-term housing.

Stout said every claim is addressed individually and every letter explaining ineligibility needs to be read carefully. Ineligibility can be for numerous things, including a wrong Social Security number listed on the individual's registration, she said.

Tract Aupperlee, individual assistance branch director for FEMA, said that eligibility for assistance from her agency is currently running at 40 percent. She said that a single household potentially could receive up to $33,300 in FEMA assistance.

Commissioner Tom Taylor said that small business owners like himself are not receiving assistance that they deserve.

"We're not getting help," he said. "We had money lost because people are not spending."

Tamara Jackson, with the U.S. Small Business Administration, told Taylor that her agency provides loans to businesses of 4 percent. Loans are also available for qualifying individual homeowners and renters for as low as 1.563 percent, she said.

"Four percent is not helping us as small businesses," Taylor said. "We can do better than that at a bank."

Stephens told Taylor that the county's first priority needs to be addressing issues related to residents who have been displaced from their homes.

"I'm more concerned with the folks in the hotels and their mental state," he said. "I don't want to focus first on those who just lost money."

Ed Ellis, the leader of the HUD team working to getting displaced families in public housing back in their homes, said his agency is working closely with local public housing providers to get public housing available as soon as possible. He also said his agency is working closely with those disaster survivors from public housing to meet their housing needs.

Ellis said that those individuals living in public housing should contact their individual providers or HUD so that it can be determined how their needs can best be addressed.

Those who choose to contact HUD should call the agency's field office in Greensboro at 336-547-4000, said Ellis.

Larry Russell, executive director of the Lumberton Housing Authority, said that 375 of the authority's 729 apartments, located in five locations throughout the city, suffered damage during the hurricane.

FEMA Struggles To Find Housing For Hurricane Matthew Victims

WRAL-TV Raleigh (NC), November 1, 2016

Goldsboro, N.C. — Three weeks after Hurricane Matthew tore through North Carolina, three shelters remain open, including one in Goldsboro.

As of Tuesday, about 250 people remained in shelters across the state following the storm, according to FEMA.

Teresa King and her 17-year-old son have been staying at the School Street Learning Center for three weeks.

"All of us who are still here really want to get out of here," she said. "I can't take it no more. It's just too much."

A FEMA representative came by Tuesday to help King and the others who have called the shelter home since Matthew, but a manager said it has not been easy finding housing.

Deborah Roberson, her husband and brother have been living in a shelter since the flood waters destroyed their home. The family was renting the home and did not have flood insurance. They lost everything.

This week, Roberson and her family finally found a new place to rent.

"FEMA gave me some money so it's alright though. I'm going to find me somewhere to stay so it's alright," she said.

Officials were working through different options in an effort to house the remaining families as soon as possible. Mobile homes could possibly be brought in to help.

Brunswick County Now Eligible For FEMA Assistance

WECT-TV Wilmington (NC), November 1, 2016

NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NC (WECT) –

Brunswick County was added to the list of counties available for FEMA assistance in southeastern North Carolina on Tuesday.

Residents living in Pender, Columbus, and Bladen counties were already elligible for FEMA assistance

New Hanover and Brunswick counties are designated to receive public assistance for things such as damage to roads and bridges. Those with flooding damage in counties not named can still register with FEMA.

Disaster assistance for homeowners from FEMA may include grants to help pay for temporary housing, essential home repairs, and uninsured and under-insured personal property losses.

Debra Young joined WECT's First at Four on Monday to explain how FEMA could help residents.

Businesses of all sizes can obtain a low-interest disaster loan from the U.S Small Business Administration.

In order to apply for federal disaster assistance you can register online, by phone at 800-621-3362, or apply via the FEMA app which you can download on your mobile device. Make sure to have your social security number, address of the damaged residents along with a description of the damage, information about insurance coverage, a current telephone number, a mailing address and a bank account along with routing numbers for direct deposit of funds.

After registering, if there is house damage, you may receive a call from a FEMA inspector who will make an appointment to come to your home and inspect the damage. FEMA does not charge for any service whether it is the inspection or help filling out your application. They also do not endorse any commercial businesses, products or services. There is no such thing as a FEMA contractor. If you suspect fraud, call the North Carolina consumer hotline at 877-566-7226. FEMA employees wear an official identification badge, so make sure to ask to see it.

Once the inspection is complete you will receive a determination letter from FEMA. Be sure to read the letter in its entirety. Some people do not immediately qualify for help and the letter will tell you the reason. It may just mean that you are missing one of the required pieces of information.

Even if you had minor damage or losses be sure to register. Many times structural and other types of home damage do not show up until months after the event.

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FEMA Opening Center Downtown To Process Hurricane Matthew Claims

By David Chapman

Jacksonville (FL) Daily Record, November 1, 2016

Duval County residents quickly responded after being made eligible last week for post-Hurricane Matthew federal assistance.

Of the 33,000 people in Florida who have registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, almost 3,400 were from Duval County.

It's an "impressive" start, said retired Gen. Montague Whitfield, a local liaison with the federal agency.

Starting today, that local number could swell even larger.

The agency is opening its first Duval County Disaster Recovery Center with experts available to assist residents and register them for financial help, if they're eligible.

The center is open 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday at the Prime Osborn Convention Center.

Winfield told the City Council Neighborhoods, Community Investments and Services Committee on Monday that additional centers could open later.

Experts at the center are not available on the agency's website or over the telephone.

Possible financial assistance is available to residents who are uninsured or underinsured. Those with the proper level of insurance are not eligible for FEMA assistance.

"We will be here until the job is completed," Winfield told the committee.

"Completed" in this instance is when it's deemed all citizens in a disaster-declared area have been reached.

Winfield told the group flooding often is a common issue, but it depends on the level of severity.

Major damage might mean flood water has reached a dwelling's subfloor.

Other major damage might be a tree through a roof. Even food spoilage at a business or employer that impacts an ability to work could merit assistance.

FEMA grants will help homeowners and renters pay for those types of repairs, temporary housing or replacing personal property.

Additionally, the U.S. Small Business Administration is offering low-interest loans to all businesses hindered by the storm.

Prior to today's center opening, FEMA officials were going door-to-door in impacted areas to help residents register.

People also have been calling in or using the agency's website, disasterassistance.gov.

As of Monday afternoon, there was $12.5 million in total individual and household program funding approved for Hurricane Matthew-impacted areas. To date, 4,212 applications have been approved.

As for the city's application, the expanded declaration also made harder-hit area infrastructure — like the Jacksonville Beach public pier and Huguenot Memorial Park — a possibility for funding.

Deadline Approaching For FEMA Assistance From August Floods

WGNO-TV New Orleans, November 1, 2016

NEW ORLEANS (WGNO) – Louisiana residents affected by the widespread flooding in August have two weeks left to file for assistance.

The cutoff for all Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance is November 14.

Assistance ranges from grants to cover rent to temporary housing, home repair, medical and dental expenses, and even funeral and burial costs.

Disaster assistance submissions go to the U.S. Small Business Administration, which handles the loans.

Anyone displaced or affected by the flooding can register with FEMA online at disasterassistance.gov, by phone at (800) 621-3362, or through the FEMA app.

You can also register for assistance at any FEMA disaster recovery center. To find a disaster recovery center near you, call the FEMA helpline or text DRC and your zip code to 43362.

For more information, contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955, disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or SBA.gov/disaster.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Mohave County To Receive FEMA Grant Funding

By David Louis

Havasu (AZ) News-Herald, November 2, 2016

As part of its ongoing efforts to update floodplain and risk maps throughout Mohave County, the flood control district plans to put $650,000 in Federal Emergency Management Agency grant funding to use.

The FEMA Cooperating Technical Partner grant will be presented as a consent agenda item during Monday's Mohave County Board of Supervisors meeting.

Through this grant funding a new risk analysis and mapping will be conducted in Lake Havasu City in the coming months. Similar projects also will benefit the cities of Kingman and Bullhead City.

In these fiscally challenging times, the FEMA grant – with a 25 percent matching grant split – will give the county a big bang for the $215,000 it will spend, said Nick Hont, chief engineer for Mohave County flood control district, and director of development services.

"Lake Havasu definitely has risks and the hydrologic studies were done way back in the '60s when they built the levies that protect the city," Hont said. "I am very proud of this program. I believe we are the only county in Arizona that gets this funding almost consistently every year."

The CTP program is designed to improve the floodplain mapping, as well as to create risk map that pinpoints areas that need to be addressed, said Shannon Summers, floodplain programs manager.

"This is intended to help communities update their floodplain maps or identify risks and potential solutions," Summers added. "Projects that could fall under this grant include a flood warning plan, a master drainage plan or just finding out where the water goes."

The CTP grant helps identify problem areas that other grant money can be used to correct.

With more than 20,000 communities in the National Flood Insurance Program, there is a significant challenge keeping flood hazard maps current.

The CTP Program is an innovative approach to creating partnerships between FEMA and participating NFIP communities, regional agencies, state agencies, tribes and universities that have the interest and capability to become more active participants in the FEMA flood hazard mapping program.

"This is a very powerful tool that we started using in 2010 when we received $350,000 to do floodplain mapping in Fort Mohave, north Lake Havasu and Golden Valley areas," Summers said.

The result of the mapping removed more than 2,400 parcels from FEMA high hazard area designation.

"The maps here had been fairly rough," Summers said. "They hadn't been looked at by FEMA for a long time – some of them were as old as 1980. We've been working really hard in the past six years to completely overhaul our mapping system and make sure they are all accurate and the residents are getting a fair assessment of their risks."

Not only is flooding one of the most common and costly disasters, flood risk also can change over time because of new development, weather patterns and other factors. FEMA is working with federal, state, tribal and local partners across the nation to identify flood risk and help reduce that risk.

In late 2014, Mohave County started incorporating the cities into the CTP grant application.

"There are a lot of benefits to this grant program," Summers said. "For the cities of Kingman and Bullhead they received LIDAR mapping at one foot intervals that was paid for through the CTP grant, which provided updated topographic data for their entire city. Not only can they use this data for hydrologic analysis – finding problem areas and solutions – but land developers can use the information to make good decision about future development."

In 2015, FEMA embarked on a multi-year project to update floodplain risk maps throughout the nation.

The FEMA Risk Mapping, Assessment and Planning — or Risk MAP program — helps communities such as Lake Havasu identify areas of potential flooding and provides information to enhance mitigation efforts.

County Approves Flood Report

Lebanon (TN) Democrat, November 1, 2016

As a part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System program, the Wilson County/Watertown floodplain administrator must make an annual report of activities that were undertaken to fulfill the requirements of the federal CRS program.

The report was presented to and accepted by the Wilson County Commission on Oct. 18. Watertown's annual report was presented to and accepted by the Watertown City Council on Oct. 11.

Wilson County has maintained membership in FEMA's Community Rating System program since 2013.

The program rewards local communities for continued compliance with their locally adopted flood management prevention programs and for adopting heightened regulatory, record keeping, outreach and mitigation efforts regarding flood hazard in their communities.

CRS is a voluntary program for NFIP-participating communities. The intended goals of the program are to reduce flood losses, facilitate accurate insurance ratings and to promote the awareness of flood insurance. For more information on the NFIP's CRS program, visit fema.gov/business/nfip/crs.shtm. For more information about the NFIP, a program administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, visit floodsmart.gov.

Wilson County has participated in the National Flood Insurance Program since Aug. 27, 1975 in the emergency program and since June 15, 1984 in the regular program, making flood insurance available to its citizens and property owners. Since entering the NFIP, FEMA has witnessed Wilson County make increased strides in the administration and enforcement of its floodplain management program. The results of these efforts have been a safer, more disaster-resistant community.

As a part of the program, Wilson County is required to maintain and update a locally approved Flood Damage Prevention Resolution and Program. The Wilson County Flood Damage Prevention Resolution, or "Floodplain and Floodplain Management Ordinance" as it is commonly referred to, is maintained within the context of the Wilson County zoning resolution. The flood damage prevention resolution was last updated May 18, 2009.

The CRS program positively affects the flood insurance rates for 548 policy holders in unincorporated portions of Wilson County and an additional 13 within the city of Watertown as a result of their like enrollment.

For a complete copy of either report, contact the Wilson County Planning Office at 228 E. Main St. in Lebanon or Watertown City Hall at 8630 Sparta Pike in Watertown.

Wilson County planning director Tom Brashear may be reached at the Wilson County Courthouse in room 5 or at 615-449-2836.

MITIGATION

President Signs Iowa Disaster Declaration To Make Aid Available

Cedar Rapids (IA) Gazette, November 1, 2016

President Barack Obama has declared a major disaster exists in Linn County and 18 other Iowa counties and has ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding during the period of Sept. 21 to Oct. 3.

Federal funding is available to state and eligible local governments and certain private non-profit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe storms and flooding.

The presidential declaration applies to the counties of Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek, and Wright.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

FEMA said additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

UPDATE: Obama Declares Federal Disaster For NE Iowa

By Pat Kinney

Waterloo-Cedar Falls (IA) Courier, November 1, 2016

CEDAR FALLS — A federal flood disaster declaration is good news for local governments in 19 Iowa counties but does little to help as many as 700 homeowners and businesses in Black Hawk and Butler counties damaged by flooding, local officials said Tuesday.

President Obama designated 19 Iowa counties as eligible for federal assistance to address least $22 million in damage from flooding in late September and early October.

The assistance will help local governments with damage to public facilities and cleanup, not individual property owners. That may leave some home and business owners in a lurch.

"When we applied for this presidential declaration we knew we were not going to get individual assistance. We just didn't have the numbers," said Mitch Nordmeyer, Butler County emergency management coordinator. About nine of the 19 counties unsuccessfully tried to get individual assistance.

The fall flood was nearly as bad as 2008 in Butler County, Nordmeyer said. Butler County had 521 private properties affected, from minimal damage to homes that were destroyed. Most were in Clarksville, Greene and Shell Rock. About 79 of those were rated as being in the "major damage" to "destroyed" category, below the federal threshold for individual assistance.

"It's going to be a big deal here. We're working a number of angles with the state of Iowa to figure out ways to help people with unmet needs. ... It's a slow process," Nordmeyer said.

Cedar Falls officials estimated estimated about 165 properties in that city sustained some kind of flood damage — about 60 percent of some 270 properties the city inspected. Those properties are in the flood-prone northern part of the city, many of them in the North Cedar area.

"This was a little bittersweet," Mayor Jim Brown said of the disaster declaration. "The city's getting reimbursed for its expenses, but nothing we saw related to the folks affected in northern Cedar Falls." Like Butler County, Brown said Cedar Falls officials are looking at all avenues to help affected individual residents and businesses.

One avenue Nordmeyer and Cedar Falls officials mentioned is a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant program that allows for acquisition, relocation or elevation of buildings in a flood area. Grant requests would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and depend on funds available.

Black Hawk and Butler counties had the second- and third-largest losses of the $22 million in damage incurred by public entities in the 19 counties. Black Hawk had $3.4 million damage and Butler $1.6 million. Linn County had the most at $12.4 million.

U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley's office also noted individual home and business owners may apply for low-interest loans through the U.S. Small Business Administration. Call Grassley's Waterloo office at 232-6657 with any concerns or questions.

Waterloo had the largest amount, at $1.9 million, of the $3.4 million in flood damage in Black Hawk County.

"Our early estimates are $840,000 for emergency protective measures and debris removal and approximately $1 million in repairs needed to streets, city parks and trails," Waterloo chief financial officer Michelle Weidner said.

Cedar Falls incurred nearly $900,000 including sandbagging and installing Hesco barriers on the Cedar River flood control levee.

Mayor Brown said city officials met with U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst's office for assistance in expediting federal U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approval of a plan to raise the downtown levee by three feet. Grassley already has written a letter to Corps officials requesting expedited approval since the city secured funding though the state two years ago.

Counties included in the presidential disaster declaration Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek and Wright counties.

Benton County Part Of Federal Disaster Aid Declaration

Iowa City (IA) Press-Citizen, November 1, 2016

Benton County is among 19 in Iowa that were declared eligible for federal disaster aid, the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced Tuesday, Nov. 1.

The aid will supplement state and local recovery efforts in the area affected by severe storms and flooding during the period of Sept. 21 to Oct. 3. More than 10 inches of rain fell in those storms, in some instances coming in a few short hours. Vinton, Benton County's seat, was among the hardest-hit areas.

The President's action makes federal funding available to state and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by severe storms and flooding.

Also part of the disaster declaration were Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Des Moines, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Howard, Linn, Mitchell, Winneshiek, and Wright counties.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

James N. Russo has been named as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Russo said that additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Haley To Visit Conway For Hurricane Matthew, Flood Relief Event

South Strand News (SC), November 1, 2016

Gov. Nikki Haley will visit Conway this week as part of a statewide tour promoting assistance and relief for survivors of Hurricane Matthew and the flooding of the Waccamaw River that followed.

On Friday, Nov. 4, Haley will arrive in Conway as part of the Team South Carolina Hurricane Matthew relief event, scheduled to take place between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the Conway Recreation Center, 1515 Mill Pond Road.

Haley will be joined by other state and federal officials to help those residents affected by the storm and the subsequent flood. Residents will be able to register for financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, apply for disaster assistance loans with the U.S. Small Business Administration, apply for food and financial assistance with the S.C. Department of Social Services, discuss insurance options with the S.C. Department of Insurance, learn about unemployment options through the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, and receive free well water testing kits and tetanus shots from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Governor Nikki Haley will visit Conway on Friday, November 4, for a Team South Carolina Hurricane Matthew relief event. Team South Carolina Waccamaw River Day will serve residents impacted by the storm from Horry and Georgetown counties and will be held from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM at the City of Conway Recreation Center.

For those impacted by river flooding in the Waccamaw River area caused by Hurricane Matthew, the Team South Carolina event will serve as a one-stop where residents can find out about resources available to families and businesses to aid recovery. Team South Carolina events bring together representatives from state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations to assist those in need in the wake flooding and other destruction caused by Hurricane Matthew.

At the Team South Carolina Waccamaw River Day residents can:

Register for financial assistance from FEMA

Apply for disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration

Learn more about repairing and flood proofing their home from FEMA

Get information about assistance for farmers with crop losses or damage from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency

Apply for unemployment benefits from the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

Apply for food and financial assistance from the S.C. Department of Social Services

Get information about mental health and other healthcare services from the S.C. Department of Mental Health and the S.C. Department of Health and Human Services

Get help with insurance claims from the S.C. Department of Insurance

Receive a free kit to test well water from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control

Receive a free tetanus shot from the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control

WHO: Gov. Nikki Haley, state and federal officials, and non-profit organizations

WHAT: Team South Carolina Waccamaw River Day

WHEN: Friday, November 4, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

WHERE: City of Conway Recreation Center, 1515 Mill Pond Road, Conway, SC 29527

Fort Worth Considers Buying Flood-Prone Homes

KTVT-TV Dallas, November 1, 2016

FORT WORTH (CBSDFW.COM) – The City of Fort Worth is looking into purchasing a number of homes that are prone to flash flooding. The idea is to turn those properties into green spaces, maintained by the city and designed to allow floodwaters to flow through them without causing serious damage or injury.

The houses are all located in the Arlington Heights area, near the intersection of Interstate-30 and Hulen Street, southwest of the Fort Worth Cultural District. There are at least 30 homes that might be eligible for the program. Those flood-prone homes would be purchased and then promptly demolished.

According to city press secretary Cheraya Pena, the Arlington Heights neighborhood was built upon a creek bed half a century ago, and flooding has been a major problem for its homeowners. Those residents have been dealing with high water for years, and city officials have spent just as long searching for a solution.

Millions of dollars were spent on drainage improvements that should have eased the flooding concerns. And yet, just this past June, people found themselves under four feet of water. “It did not work,” resident Karen Abrams said over the summer. “It is rapid and rolling through backyards and driveways.”

“They need to get this crap fixed,” Abrams continued. “Period.”

At the time, Fort Worth city council member Dennis Shingleton explained that the drainage repairs were only designed to stop flooding during normal rains, and that no fix was available for torrential downpours. “When you get 3.7 inches of rain in one hour, very difficult to plan for that,” he said.

The idea of the city buying these high-value homes, tearing them down and repurposing the property was discussed back then too, with a decision on this matter fast approaching.

Money for purchasing the homes would come from FEMA grants. The Fort Worth City Council will decide on November 15 if they should apply to receive this financial assistance. Pena explained that other options are being explored by officials as well, however, she did not offer further details.

A similar plan was discussed eight years ago, but residents at the time refused to sell. According to the proposed plan, only the homeowners who choose to accept the offer will be included in the program. City officials will not force any residents to vacate their homes.

There has already been some debate between neighbors, with opinions coming from both sides. A number of homeowners are happy to see the city take action, but others are worried about what it would mean for the overall look of the Arlington Heights neighborhood.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

No stories for this edition

FIRE GRANTS

No stories for this edition

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Legal Aid Extended To Nassau

Fernandina Beach (FL) News-Leader, November 1, 2016

Gov. Rick Scott announced Friday that the federal government has expanded Disaster Unemployment

Assistance for residents of Nassau and Seminole counties who have lost jobs as a result of severe storms and flooding during Hurricane Matthew, according to a news release.

In a separate announcement Tuesday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said free legal aid is available for eligible low-income survivors in the 17 counties affected by both hurricanes Hermine and Matthew, including Nassau County.

On Oct. 17, the federal government approved a limited part of Scott's request for a major disaster declaration for Flagler, St. Johns, Volusia and Putnam counties, allowing the use of Disaster Unemployment Assistance funds for individuals affected by the storm. The declaration has since been expanded to include Brevard, Indian River, Duval, Nassau and Seminole counties.

Federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance, administered by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, assists individuals who become unemployed as a direct result of a federally declared disaster and who do not qualify for regular re-employment assistance benefits. The program also covers self-employed individuals, owners of farms and ranches, farm and ranch workers, as well as fishers and others who are not normally covered by state re-employment assistance benefits.

The deadline for Disaster Unemployment applications varies by county:

- Nov. 18: Flagler, St. John, Volusia and Putnam
- Nov. 21: Indian River and Brevard
- Nov. 23: Duval
- Nov. 28: Nassau and Seminole

Applicants must be legal U.S. residents and must have been working in or residing in the counties listed above. The individual must:

- Have become unemployed as a direct result of the disaster;
- Be unable to reach the place of employment as a direct result of the disaster;
- Have been scheduled to begin work and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of the disaster;
- Have become the major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of the disaster; or
- Be unable to work because of an injury caused directly by the disaster.

To file a Disaster Unemployment claim, call (800) 681-8102 or go to https://connect.myflorida.com/Claimant/Core/Login.ASPX.

Legal assistance

Free legal assistance is available to eligible low-income survivors in the 17 counties affected by hurricanes Hermine and Matthew, including Nassau County, according to a FEMA news release.

This service is a partnership among The Florida Bar, The Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division and FEMA. Examples of the legal assistance available include:

- Assistance with securing FEMA and other benefits available to disaster survivors;
- Assistance with life, medical and property insurance claims;
- Help with home repair contracts and contractors;
- Replacement of wills and other important legal documents destroyed in the disaster;
- Assistance with consumer protection matters, remedies and procedures;
- Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems;
- Counseling on landlord/tenant problems.

Survivors may call the legal assistance hotline at (866) 550-2929, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Those who qualify for assistance will be matched with Florida lawyers who have volunteered to provide free, limited legal help. Although consultations with attorneys are confidential, survivors should be aware that there are some limitations on disaster legal services.

For example, assistance is not available for cases that will produce a fee (i.e., those cases where fees are paid as part of the settlement by the court). Such cases are passed to a lawyer referral service.

Other entities providing free legal aid are:

- National Disaster Legal Aid Online (DisasterLegalAid.org);
- Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida Inc. (800-405-1417);
- Three Rivers Legal Services Inc. (1-866-256-8091).

For more information on Florida's disaster recovery visit fema.gov/disaster/4280, fema.gov/disaster/4283, twitter.com/femaregion4, facebook.com/FEMA, and fema.gov/blog, floridadisaster.org or #FLRecovers. For imagery, video, graphics and releases, see fema.gov/Hurricane-Matthew.

Free Legal Help Available For Low-Income Survivors Of Hurricanes Matthew, Hermine

By Jessica Palombo

WJCT-FM Jacksonville (FL), November 1, 2016

Free legal assistance is available to eligible low-income survivors affected by hurricanes Hermine and Matthew, provided by the Florida Bar and FEMA.

In Northeast Florida, the counties where it's offered are Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns and Volusia.

People affected by the hurricanes can get free:

Assistance with FEMA benefits;

Assistance with life-, medical- and property-insurance claims;

Help with home-repair contracts;

Replacement of wills and other important legal documents destroyed in the disaster;

Counseling on mortgage-foreclosure problems or landlord/tenant problems.

Hurricane survivors may call the Florida Bar's legal assistance hotline at 866-550-2929 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Those who qualify will be matched with Florida lawyers who have volunteered to provide free, limited legal help.

SBA Representatives In Vass Through Thursday

By Laura Douglass

Southern Pines (NC) Pilot, November 1, 2016

Representatives with the U.S. Small Business Administration are working in Moore County this week – alongside FEMA's efforts – to provide information about low interest federal disaster assistance loans to businesses and homeowners impacted by Hurricane Matthew.

FEMA has established a Disaster Recovery Center at the Crain's Creek Volunteer Fire Department at 4525 Lobelia Road. Hours of operation will be Monday – Saturday, Nov. 5, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. SBA representatives are at the same location, Tuesday – Thursday only.

Small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and homeowners or renters may apply for low interest SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans. Businesses can apply for loans to repair or replace real estate, machinery, equipment, inventory, and other business assets. Homeowners can apply for up to $200,00 to repair or replace disaster damaged real estate; and homeowners and renters can apply for up to $40,000 to repair or replace damaged personal property, including automobiles.

Interest rates are as low as 4 percent for businesses, 2.6 percent for private nonprofit organizations, and 1.5 percent for homeowners and renters, with terms up to 30 years. The SBA customizes loan amounts and terms based on each applicant's circumstances.

"Some homeowners and renters may receive a SBA application when they seek aid from FEMA. These are low interest loans but there is no obligation to accept them. But, depending on circumstances, completing the paperwork may be essential to continuing the federal disaster process," said Tamara Jackson, a SBA public affairs specialist. "We want to let people know we are here and can answer any questions they may have."

Visit the Disaster Recovery Center for more information. Online loan applications are available through SBA's secure website at https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela, or call SBA Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955.

City Of Charleston: 46,000 Cubic Yards Of Debris Removed Since Hurricane Matthew

WCSC-TV Charleston (SC), November 1, 2016

CHARLESTON, SC (WCSC) –

In an update Tuesday, the city of Charleston reported that 46,645 cubic yards of FEMA-measurable debris were collected in the city over the last three weeks in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

"Though there's still much to do, we're proud that our hard-working city employees and staff have so far been able to match the standard of excellence set by the city of Charleston in previous hurricane recoveries," Mayor John Tecklenburg said. "And our task moving forward is clear – it's to keep moving faster, to keep bringing more resources to bear, until this job is done and our streets and neighborhoods are even cleaner and clearer than they were before the storm."

The city also announced that \ it is working with the FEMA-certified contractor to add more local debris-removal subcontractors.

"With almost fifty percent more debris than we saw after Hurricane Floyd in 1999, this a big job, and we need to have all hands on deck," Tecklenburg said. "We are grateful for the tremendous efforts of everyone who's worked so hard up to this point, and we appreciate the willingness of our local small businesses to add their resources to the effort. Even more, we're grateful to our citizens, who've done so much over the past few weeks to assist with the cleanup, and whose patience and understanding throughout this process has been so remarkable."

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FEMA Disaster Recovery Center To Open In Georgetown Tuesday

WCSC-TV Charleston (SC), November 1, 2016

GEORGETOWN, SC (WCSC) –

FEMA will open a disaster recovery center in Georgetown County Tuesday.

According to a statement from Georgetown County, the center is slated to open at 1 p.m. at the Beck Recreation Center, 2030 Church St. in Georgetown.

Going forward, the center will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, according to a county official.

There, residents affected by Hurricane Matthew and related flooding can meet with FEMA representatives and get information on how to apply for aid.

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Georgetown Gets A FEMA Disaster Recovery Center

By Gabrielle Ware

WBTW-TV Florence-Myrtle Beach (SC), November 1, 2016

GEORGETOWN, SC (WBTW) – A FEMA disaster center is now open in Georgetown County. The center is a one stop shop for victims of Hurricane Matthew.

Tuesday officials cleared up some confusion about FEMA assistance.

Many people are referred to the Small Business Administration after registering for FEMA automatically, even if they don't want a loan. But FEMA officials say that's all part of the process.

When that happens you must go through the process or you won't receive assistance.

Renee Bafalis is a FEMA representative and said, "that is just a process you must go through. You may not think you want a loan through SBA but it's very possible that if you go through the process you may not be eligible for the loan."

If you aren't eligible for SBA then you get bounced back to FEMA to see if you qualify for grant assistance. But if you don't go through SBA that stops the whole process.

FEMA is also encouraging renters to stop by. Home and business owners are not the only people who can get help.

"Renters also have the same eligibility as a home owner, Bafalis said. "But it's not for their domicile it's actually for their personal property damages that they may have."

And you don't have to do anything differently to apply.

"Same process… same process, anyone that may be out of their home because of the storm has the same rights, homeowner or renter.

SBA also offers loans to both home and renters at lower than average interest rates.

So far 1,052 people have registered for FEMA assistance in Georgetown County.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center To Open In Whiteville

WECT-TV Wilmington (NC), November 1, 2016

COLUMBUS COUNTY, NC (WECT) –

Columbus County residents who suffered losses and damage as a result of Hurricane Matthew will be able to get information about available state and federal assistance at a Disaster Recovery Center opening Wednesday in Whiteville.

According to officials, the center will be located at 913 Jefferson Street, and will be open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

DRCs are staffed with representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, North Carolina Emergency Management and the U.S. Small Business Administration. You can receive help applying for federal disaster assistance, learn about the types of assistance available, learn about the appeals process and obtain updates regarding your application.

If you have phone and/or internet access, you may register in one of the following ways:

Online at DisasterAssistance.gov.

Call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 for voice, 711 and Video Relay Service (VRS). If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY, call 800-462-7585.

Download the FEMA Mobile App and apply.

Recovery centers are open throughout the disaster-affected counties in the state. To locate the center nearest to you, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362.

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LIRR: Sandy Repairs Progressing, But Much Work Still Ahead

By Alfonso Castillo

Newsday (NY), November 1, 2016

The Long Island Rail Road is making progress on repairing, rebuilding and hardening its system devastated four years ago by superstorm Sandy, officials said.

However, they say some projects are still years from completion, including several along the LIRR's vulnerable Long Beach branch.

The railroad's post-Sandy improvement efforts have been focused on the four areas hit hardest by the October 2012 storm — rail yards in Long Island City and on Manhattan's West Side, the East River Tunnels leading into and out of Penn Station, and the Long Beach branch, which residents and officials say may never fully be out of harm's way. StorySome upset with post-Sandy buyout programStorySandy victims wait for payment 4 years laterStoryRunners mark Sandy anniversary with 5k race

"When Superstorm Sandy roared across the New York/Long Island region . . . the effects were devastating, but preparation paid off," said LIRR spokesman Salvatore Arena, adding that the railroad's pre-emptive shutdown before the worst of the storm allowed it to move trains to higher ground to protect them. "However, although LIRR personnel planned carefully for Superstorm Sandy, there was substantial damage to the infrastructure due to greater-than-expected storm surge."

Some efforts have already made considerable progress.

New electrical substations — elevated to protect them from flooding — have already been installed in Long Island City, near the East Rockaway station and in the Oil City section of Oceanside. A contractor has finished 13 of 15 new elevated platforms, which will protect new signal and communication huts from flooding.

Improvements to the Wreck Lead Bridge, which carries the LIRR over Reynolds Channel, are well underway and expected to be finished by April. The bridge has already gotten a new emergency generator, walkway lighting, high-tension poles and other electrical equipment.

Other improvements, however, are far from being finished.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board on Friday awarded a $2.4 million contract for new signal equipment for the Long Beach line — part of a broader effort to replace signal, switch, communications and third rail equipment along the line that isn't expected to be completed before September 2019.

"There's still a lot of work that needs to be done. But then again, a lot of work has been done," said John Molloy, the Nassau County representative on the MTA Board. "I think the MTA has done nice work moving this thing along . . . You just can't do it overnight. It's a lot of work, and a lot of pieces that have to be put together. "

Nowhere did the LIRR's system get hit harder by Sandy than on the Long Beach line, where tracks and delicate electrical components were submerged under 4 feet of corrosive saltwater and sewage, three electrical substations were damaged, and nearly two dozen boats and personal watercraft washed up on tracks.

It took nearly a month for the LIRR to restore full service on the line, used by more than 20,000 riders each weekday.

"It was very difficult. We were the last [LIRR line to be restored.] It's highly insulting, but what can you do about that?" said Island Park Mayor Michael McGinty, who commended the LIRR for its work modernizing electrical substations on the line, but said the agency hasn't done enough to seek input from local government on the problems facing local commuters, including over drainage. "The line is very important to the residents of Island Park, as well as Long Beach, Lido Beach, Point Lookout and, believe it or not, some from Oceanside."

Fran Kravitz, who commutes from Island Park for acting classes and jobs in Manhattan, recalls her husband having to move into Manhattan for weeks after Sandy because of the service problems on the Long Beach line.

Four years later, Kravitz, 56, said the branch remains particularly susceptible to flooding.

"If we get a storm on a full moon in high tide, those train tracks are under water . . . The tracks are still on the ground, so it's still going to flood, just like the rest of Island Park."

William Henderson, executive director of the MTA's Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee, which includes the LIRR Commuter Council, said although the MTA has done substantial work to repair and fortify its system over the last four years, the work may never be fully done, in part because it will have to keep up with rising sea levels and other major weather events.

"I think they're going to be doing hardening for years — probably for our lifetime," said Henderson, who singled out the Long Beach line as a particular challenge. "At the end of the day, you've got tracks that are going over and basically next to water. If there's a storm that comes up and across the water, there's going to be impacts."

Other flood-prone parts of the LIRR's territory are also in line for improvements. The LIRR is putting $100 million in Federal Transportation Administration grant funding toward several planned projects to fortify its West Side Yard, the Queens portals of the East River Tunnels, and the tunnels themselves. Those efforts are in their early stages, with the MTA currently working out cost estimates, officials said.

The LIRR has also begun flood-protection work on its Atlantic Avenue tunnels along its Brooklyn line and at the Long Island City yard.

The Federal Transportation Administration also in June awarded the MTA $432 million to make critical repairs inside the East River Tunnels, which were badly damaged by corrosive saltwater from Sandy flooding. Amtrak, which owns the tunnels and is responsible for the repairs, has said the work won't begin until the end of this decade, and take several years to complete.

Superstorm Sandy Walk-in Legal Clinic Wednesday In Lindenhurst

By Emily Dooley

Newsday (NY), November 1, 2016

The Touro Law Center Disaster Relief Clinic and Adopt-a-House are hosting a superstorm Sandy walk-in legal clinic Wednesday in Lindenhurst.

The free clinic will be open from 4 to 7 p.m. in the board room at Babylon Town Hall, at 200 Sunrise Hwy.

Staff of the clinic will provide free one-on-one legal consultations for any residents of Nassau or Suffolk county who were affected by the 2012 storm. Experts can help people with many legal issues, such as flood insurance claims, Federal Emergency Management Agency recoupments, problems with New York Rising and contractor disputes. Story'Sandy not over' as LIers struggle to make lives whole

People seeking legal advice should organize their paperwork — such as flood insurance declaration pages, denial letters, photographs, award letters, contracts — in advance for review and consultation.

The Touro Law Clinic also has a hotline at 631-761-7198.

Carnival Brings Fantasy Ship To Mobile For Mexico Cruises

By Anita Lee

Biloxi (MS) Sun Herald, November 1, 2016

Carnival Cruise Line is returning to Mobile, dredging up memories of another ship's service as an emergency shelter after Hurricane Katrina and the voyage from hell when passengers were stranded on the "poop cruise" before being towed into Mobile.

Carnival has committed to service for 13 months from Mobile to Mexico beginning Nov. 9. The company says it will offer a four-day cruise to Cozumel and five-day cruises to Cozumel and Progreso.

The Carnival Fantasy can carry 2,056 passengers. The maiden cruise is sold out, Carnival says. A number of restaurants and bars are housed on the ship, including Guy's Burger Joint, developed with the Food Network's Guy Fieri.

It also offers a spa, water park and Egyptian-themed piano bar, the Carnival website says.

Mississippi Coast residents will remember that Carnival's Holiday cruise ship temporarily served as a Federal Emergency Management Agency shelter, housing more than 6,000 Katrina refugees in Mobile.

And then there was the infamous "poop cruise" in 2013, when the Carnival Triumph drifted in the Gulf of Mexico for four days after an engine fire. The cruise got its ignominious moniker because toilets on the ship overflowed. The ship, which had sailed out of Galveston, Texas, was eventually towed into Mobile.

The Associated Press reported that Carnival is returning to Mobile after a five-year absence and $4 million in improvements to the Alabama Cruise Terminal located downtown.

Carnival service also runs to the Caribbean out of New Orleans, which doesn't see the Mobile service as competition.

"We see our market as a different market," said Don Allee, director of cruise and tourism and the Port of New Orleans. "We're selling two different features, so to to speak. When we sell and market New Orleans, we're selling two vacations in one. New Orleans is one of the most popular destinations in the world."

" . . . When you put a cruise on top of that, it enhances the New Orleans experience."

Allee was previously director at the state port in Gulfport, which over the years has flirted on and off with cruise services.

Allee was in Gulfport when the Carnival Conquest docked temporarily in Gulfport for 18 weeks because of navigation problems in the Mississippi River. Back then, Allee had hoped to steer cruise lines to Gulfport.

FLOODS

Edwards, Congressmen Press Obama On Flood Aid For N. La.

Alexandria (LA) Town Talk, November 1, 2016

Local governments in Bossier, Caddo and Ouachita parishes alone would save at least $1.5 million if Gov. John Bel Edwards and the state's congressional delegation can convince FEMA to increase its share of flood recovery costs to 90 percent.

Edwards, through his Governor's Office of Homeland Security Secretary Jim Waskom, sent a letter to President Barack Obama this week appealing FEMA's ruling to keep the federal share for the spring flooding in northern Louisiana at 75 percent. FEMA has already agreed to take on a 90 percent share for the southern Louisiana flooding in August.

"The inequity of the cost share adjustment will saddle millions of dollars of burden on these parishes simply because their disaster happened first," Waskom wrote in the letter to Obama.

Edwards and the delegation have argued that the two flood events should be counted as one disaster because they occurred during the same year. That would allow the March flood damage to meet the threshold for the 90 percent federal cost share.

Fifth District U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham, R-Alto, coordinated a delegation letter sent to Obama Tuesday in support of Edwards' appeal.

"It's certainly a good step that FEMA has rightfully granted a cost-share adjustment for the victims of the August flood, but March victims cannot be forgotten during this recovery process," Abraham said. "We're still assessing damage, and people are still hurting. They need the support of their federal government. They're still suffering."

Abraham said he believes "we stand better than a 50-50 chance" of ultimately convincing FEMA to raise the federal cost share to 90 percent.

– Greg Hilburn covers state politics for the USA TODAY Network of Louisiana. Follow him on Twitter @GregHilburn1

Governor Asks To Lessen Louisiana's Cost For Share Of March Flooding

By Juan Sanchez

WDSU-TV New Orleans, November 1, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. —

Gov. John Bel Edwards is asking President Barack Obama's administration to reconsider its refusal to lessen Louisiana's share of disaster response costs after March flooding that inundated north and central Louisiana.

The governor's office released the appeal letter Monday.

Louisiana's share of the federal disaster response to the August flooding that ravaged south Louisiana is 10 percent. The Federal Emergency Management Agency denied a request to lessen the state's costs for the earlier March flooding from 25 percent to 10 percent.

Edwards' Homeland Security secretary, James Waskom, wrote to the White House that the two floods should be considered together because they have caused "significant economic hardship" to state and local government.

Waskom wrote that lessening the match rate for the March flooding could save the state an estimated $28 million.

Disaster Assistance Briefings Scheduled For This Week

Jackson County (WI) Chronicle, November 1, 2016

Local governments and private nonprofit agencies that sustained damage during the Sept. 21-22 flooding in Western Wisconsin are encouraged to attend briefings this week to learn about applying for federal disaster assistance.

Gov. Scott Walker recently announced that 10 Wisconsin counties were approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for disaster assistance to help with costs associated with debris removal, emergency protective measures and damage to public infrastructure such as roads and bridges. The counties in the declaration are Adams, Chippewa, Clark, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland and Vernon.

Two teams of specialists from Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency will explain how state and local agencies and certain private non-profit groups can apply for federal Public Assistance to help recover from flooding. Under the cost-share program, FEMA funds 75 percent of the cost for eligible work and 25 percent is shared equally between state and local applicants.

The program is not for businesses or homeowners as the level of damage in these areas does not currently meet requirements for FEMA assistance.

Applicant briefings will be held at the Jackson County Courthouse in Black River Falls in the county board room this Thursday from 8-9:30 a.m. Monroe County's is scheduled for Thursday from 12:30-2 p.m. at room 500 of the Justice Center in Sparta.If a local government or private nonprofit organization cannot attend the briefings, they should contact their county emergency management director.

TORNADOES

No stories for this edition

WILDFIRES

More Georgia Burn Bans As Rocky Face Mountain Fire Continues

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, November 2, 2016

Two more metro Atlanta counties came under outdoor burn bans Tuesday, and a North Georgia wildfire burned on as the state's fire situation continued.

The fire on Rocky Face Mountain in Whitfield County could continue into next week, the Dalton Daily Citizen reported. Georgia Forestry Commission crews said more than 200 acres have been "blackened or are actively on fire" since the fire began Thursday.

Crews have been hampered by the rugged nature of the terrain.

"It is a very labor-intensive fire," GFC ranger Pat Stockett told the Daily Citizen. "Our hand crews at times are having to hike an hour or an hour and a half in just to get to the fire. The terrain is posing a very unique obstacle, and bulldozers don't like rocks. Our operators are doing exceptional work. This is a very technical operation."

There have been seven new fires since midnight, GFC spokeswoman Wendy Burnett said. Fire crews are active from Cherokee County north to the state line.

The ongoing drought conditions are a factor everywhere.

The GFC has included Gwinnett County in a temporary suspension of all outdoor burning, according to the Gwinnett County Fire Marshal website.

"Outdoor burning will resume once conditions are within an acceptable range and the suspension has been lifted by the Georgia Forestry Commission," the website said.

On Tuesday, Henry County joined the list of metro Atlanta counties with self-imposed burn bans, along with Paulding County, Cobb County and Douglas County.

Significant rain is not in the near-term forecast for North Georgia.

"Mother Nature is not looking too good as a helper," Stockett said. "She got tired from Hurricane Matthew."

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No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

In The Wake Of Hurricane Matthew — To Spray Or Not To Spray?

By Shahir Masri

The Hill, November 1, 2016

Confronted by devastating Hurricane Matthew, Florida residents and city officials have even more to deal with than the obvious destruction and loss at hand.

When floods and rain subside, stagnant puddles and newly formed ponds persist — a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes. What this has meant previously is aerial spraying of highly toxic organophosphate pesticides (OPs).

Just recall Hurricane Isabel in 2003, or Charley, Jeanne, Frances, and Katrina in 2004 and 2005. Don't forget Hurricane Irene in 2011. In all instances, flooding resulted in real or anticipated increases in mosquito abundance, and aerial spraying of toxic OPs ensued.

Out went the hurricanes and in came the pesticides. Will this be the story again following hurricane Matthew? It's only been weeks since Miami Beach experienced repeated aerial spraying of the insecticide Naled in spite of much protest by locals. Yet history would suggest Florida may be in for another spray.

Naled is a potent neurotoxin being used to kill mosquitoes in order to combat the spread of Zika virus. It is also a chemical the European Union banned in 2012. Meanwhile in the U.S. Naled remains the weapon of choice come virus or natural disaster, with nearly 6 million acres of land sprayed in Florida in 2014 alone. As a public health scientist specialized in chemical exposure assessment, I provide a word of caution against this frequent aerial OP spraying.

OPs affect cholinesterase inhibition in the body, and is toxic to the nervous system. While they have been widely used since WWII, their use has not been without consequence.

Rather, a number of scientific studies have shown an association between OP exposure and neurological outcomes such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, and neuro-developmental impacts to the unborn fetus. Studies have also shown pre-natal OP exposure linked to premature birth, reduced birth weight, and cardiovascular abnormalities. One study showed childhood exposure linked with reduced lung function. OPs can cause toxicity through all routes — inhalation, consumption, and physical skin contact.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), aerial spraying of Naled is inconsequential to human health because the quantities used are very low. This assertion, however, neglects that low dose exposure, particularly repeated exposure, can be problematic if you're someone prone to chemical intolerance.

As we say, "dose plus host" determines toxicity. This is because people's ability to detoxify OPs and other chemicals varies greatly from person to person. For some, exposure may go unnoticed. For others, the consequence can be severe and long lasting. Unfortunately, there is no easy way to know which child or adult is genetically susceptible—until it's too late. That is, until they've been exposed.

Chemical intolerance afflicts many people and can be triggered by repeated low level OP exposure. Dr. Claudia Miller, a physician and research scientist with three decades of experience studying the health effects of OPs and other chemicals, has investigated numerous exposed populations and established a strong link between OP and other low level exposures and chronic health problems. She coined the term Toxicant Induced Loss of Tolerance, or TILT, to describe the two-stage physiological process of an initial chemical exposure followed by subsequent intolerances to many other chemicals.

People who get "TILTed" lose their capacity to tolerate common, chemically unrelated substances such as fragrances, cleaning products, nail polish, and vehicle exhaust. Once TILTed by an initial chemical exposure, these substances can trigger serious health problems such as fatigue, headache, weakness, mood changes, difficulties with memory and concentration, as well as respiratory and skin problems. Symptoms from even a single exposure leave some people debilitated for life.

In the last decade TILT has become increasingly well documented and studied worldwide by doctors and medical researchers. A validated questionnaire called the Quick Environmental Exposure and Sensitivity Inventory (QEESI) has been developed to help patients and doctors identify this elusive disease process. The QEESI is now being used in more than a dozen countries.

Of great concern in Florida and elsewhere are the repeated OP exposures among susceptible individuals in the spray zones. They and their doctors must be aware of the two stages of TILT, which can develop in the days and weeks following a salient exposure event, such as the recent sprayings in Florida and potentially another in the wake of Hurricane Matthew. Early diagnosis and avoidance of symptom triggers is essential to getting well — similar to when someone develops an allergy to a food or drug.

However, TILT differs from usual allergies in that the specific antibodies that characterize allergic sensitization are largely absent. Consequently most diagnoses are missed by doctors and allergists. Nor are there accepted lab tests for TILT. The QEESI questionnaire is currently the most reliable tool for screening.

Disaster relief efforts are undoubtedly of utmost importance following devastating hurricanes. The routine accompaniment of aerial OP spraying to such efforts, however, must be questioned and suggests the impacts of low level OP exposure are underappreciated. Naled, like many OPs, affects more than just mosquitoes—with every man, woman, and child in the spray zone at risk of developing TILT. And let's not forget the prenatal impacts during pregnancy.

Without question, Zika represents a public health threat that necessitates urgent action. Indeed this will complicate the post-Matthew response efforts. We can be sure, however, that resorting again to aerial spraying of highly toxic OPs is simply opting for one of two evils — replacing mosquitoes with yet another problem. Given our current inability to identify OP-susceptible individuals, spraying cannot be carried out with necessary prudence.

As a precautionary measure, residents should therefore be made aware of the risks and be encouraged to remain inside with closed windows during aerial spraying; something the CDC currently deems "not necessary" on its website. Meanwhile, alternative vector control strategies by CDC and other agencies should be thoroughly investigated and funded accordingly by Congress. Aerial OP spraying should be an infrequent resort, if ever a resort at all.

Shahir Masri is an assistant specialist in air pollution exposure assessment and epidemiology. He has his Doctor of Science degree from the Department of Environmental Health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The views expressed by contributors are their own and not the views of The Hill.

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NATIONAL NEWS

ABC: Millennium Tower Lawsuit.

ABC World News Tonight (11/3, story 8, 1:25, Muir, 14.63M) reported, "Back here at home tonight, and to new concern at this hour over a skyscraper, a high rise, now teetering. The city's attorney in San Francisco taking legal action, and tonight, families who live there showing us the video that they say proves that their building is, in fact, leaning. ABC's Kayna Whitworth is there." ABC (**Whitworth**) added, "The Millennium Tower soars over the San Francisco skyline, 645 feet high. The problem is, it's getting shorter. Sinking 16 inches already, and now it's tilting two inches. Tonight, the city is suing, claiming the problem was never disclosed to potential buyers and now these cracks in the sidewalk, rattling homeowners." **Unidentified speaker**: "We really don't feel safe in this building." **Whitworth**: "Frank Jernigan says this marble rolling and even changing direction across the floor of his high rise apartment shows the tilt in the building. Your life's hard work is now leaning this way and someone could have told you that before you bought it." **Unidentified speaker**: "Before we bought. Absolutely." **Whitworth**: "The building's developer, Millennium Partners, says the city's lawsuit has no merit." **PJ Johnston**, Millennium Partners spokesman: "The building is safe, it's seismically sound, its structural integrity has not been compromised." **Whitworth**: "David, not only is this tower sinking and leaning, but it's in a major earthquake zone. So, when residents walk out their front door and see this, they're fearing for more than just their investment, but their safety, as well. David?" **Muir**: "Kayna Whitworth from San Francisco. Kayna, thanks."

President Obama Signs Disaster Declaration For Hampton Roads

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (AP) — President Barack Obama has signed a Virginia disaster declaration that will provide federal aid to Hampton Roads cities affected by Hurricane Matthew.

Local news organizations report that the order was signed Wednesday and will provide funding for Chesapeake, Newport News, Norfolk and Virginia Beach. The funds will be used for programs including temporary housing, home repairs and low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses.

Residents and businesses that were affected by the storm can apply for assistance by registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 1-800-621-3362.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will establish a local disaster recovery center to help people register and get answers about available resources. Federal, state and local agencies will staff the center.

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McCrory: Mobile Homes On Way For Some Homeless After Matthew

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) – Families in four North Carolina counties forced from their homes after flooding from Hurricane Matthew could be moving into mobile homes soon.

Gov. Pat McCrory said Thursday the Federal Emergency Management Agency approved the help for people displaced from their homes in Columbus, Edgecombe, Robeson and Wayne counties. The help could be extended to more counties.

The state signed contracts last month to start providing mobile homes in areas where hotels and rental homes were flooded, or didn't exist before the storm.

About 240 people are living in four shelters and more than 1,700 families are living in temporary housing after Matthew, which drenched the state a month ago.

The McCrory administration also revised the storm's death toll back up to 28 with the death of a Pitt County man.

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Governor Says Pitt County Man Dies Cleaning Up Storm Debris

By Jason Boyd

WCTI-TV Greenville (NC), November 3, 2016

RALEIGH – Governor Pat McCrory said a Pitt County man has died following Hurricane Matthew and the flooding that followed.

In a press conference Thursday morning to update the storm recovery process, McCrory said the additional fatality had been attributed to the storm, bringing the total to 28. A Pitt County man passed away as a result of injuries sustained while cleaning up storm debris.

No further information has been released at this time. NewsChannel 12 is working to confirm the incident.

While the state continues to work with FEMA, the governor is seeking approval of additional assistance for Carteret, Perquimans, Scotland, Richmond, Anson, Chatham and Northampton counties. McCrory's request for federal direct temporary housing assistance has been approved to help people displaced from their homes in Columbus, Edgecombe, Robeson and Wayne counties following his meeting with FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. The governor said the state hopes to add additional counties to the declaration in the coming days.

"Moving people out of shelters and into temporary and permanent housing continues to be one of our immediate priorities," McCrory said. "I want to thank our federal partners and my team for their incredible work, but we still have a lot of work to do. As our weather continues to be pretty, sunny and hot, many people are still facing dire circumstances in our state and we will continue to do all we can to help them recover."

Temporary housing has proven challenging because many hotels and rental homes in the impacted communities were also flooded. Currently, 240 people remain in four shelters across the state and more than 1,700 families are living in temporary housing.

Last week, the governor requested direct temporary housing authorization from the federal government to help provide manufactured homes as a temporary housing solution. The state signed contracts last month to ensure that once the request was approved work could start immediately.

According to FEMA officials, manufactured homes are just one of many options available for temporary housing. Other options include rental homes, apartments and hotels. Based on the FEMA contract, more than 165 manufactured homes are now available in North Carolina with others on the way. Officials are continuing to assess the need for these homes in impacted areas.

Governor McCrory noted that his team continues to monitor water system issues in Robeson and Brunswick counties. The good news is that the water system in Lumberton should be repaired this week. Additionally, a bypass line should be completed and operational this week in Brunswick County.

The governor has encouraged individuals and groups to help in the relief efforts by making a financial or other contribution. Monetary contributions to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund for Hurricane Matthew can be made by texting NCRECOVERS to 30306 or by visiting NCDisasterRelief.org. This is one of the best ways to help fund long-term recovery efforts.

Gov. McCrory's press office contributed to this story.

1,400 Added To Georgia's Voter Rolls During Extension

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

ATLANTA (AP) — More than 1,400 Chatham County residents have been added to Georgia's voter rolls after they took advantage of an extended registration deadline last month due to Hurricane Matthew.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (http://on-ajc.com/2f5yAFN) reports a federal judge had ordered the county to reopen registration after voting rights advocates argued that the storm had prevented would-be voters from signing up. Local government offices were closed in Chatham for what would have been the last six days of the voter registration period that ended Oct. 11.

U.S. District Judge William Moore extended the period for county residents until Oct. 18 even though Secretary of State Brian Kemp had encouraged residents in the storm's path to take advantage of the state's online and mobile voter registration access points.

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Information from: The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, http://www.ajc.com

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Flood Debris Costs Top $13 Million In Livingston Parish

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

LIVINGSTON, La. (AP) — Livingston Parish officials say the removal of August flood debris has topped the $13 million mark, with the final pickup set to begin.

Mark Harrell, the parish's emergency preparedness director, says the parish's contractors had picked up about 660,000 cubic yards of debris, 17,000 white goods and about 15,000 pounds of putrid food.

The Advocate reports (http://bit.ly/2e57n9r) Finance Director Jennifer Meyers said the parish recently received about $4.2 million in reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the parish's first round of debris removal. That figure represents the federal 90 percent cost share of the $4.7 million in invoices submitted for the work up to that point.

Harrell says Ceres Environmental Services' final pass through the parish could begin this week.

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Information from: The Advocate, http://theadvocate.com

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Oklahoma Regulators Close Wells, Reduce Volumes After Quake

Associated Press, November 3, 2016

PAWNEE, Okla. (AP) — Oil and natural gas regulators in Oklahoma are ordering the operators of 70 disposal wells to either shut them down or reduce disposal volumes after a 4.5 magnitude earthquake shook northern Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission said Thursday the new guidelines affect 38 disposal wells within 15 miles of the quake's epicenter that are under its jurisdiction and another 32 wells under the sole jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The earthquake was recorded Tuesday night in the Pawnee area, where a record-setting 5.8 magnitude quake struck two months ago. The commission says 15 wells included in its latest directive were ordered closed following the Sept. 3 quake.

Scientists have linked Oklahoma's increase in earthquakes to the underground disposal of wastewater from oil and gas production.

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Friday's Forecast: Soggy Southwest, Texas

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, November 3, 2016

The Southwest is in for a wet Friday while a few light showers dampen the Northwest and Florida.

West: Widespread showers and thunderstorms are forecast across the Southwest and west Texas on Friday. The heaviest rain is likely in New Mexico. Some flooding is possible. Light afternoon showers are expected along the Pacific Northwest coast.

East: Most of the eastern third of the country will see a dry and cool Friday thanks to Thursday's cold front that's pushed off the coast. A few showers are forecast in southern Florida.

Central U.S.: A mild to warm day is expected Friday for most of the central U.S. as highs soar into the 70s as far north as the Dakotas.

Weather history for Nov. 4: In 1927, heavy rain led to terrible flooding in New England, in which 200 people died. In 1956, Phoenix had its earliest freezing temperature on record.

13 Urgent Science And Health Issues The Candidates Have Not Been Talking About

Scientific American, November 3, 2016

In this election season science and health have taken a backseat. Worse, presidential candidate Donald Trump dismissed climate change as a Chinese hoax. His opponent, Hillary Clinton, vowed to dig up what the government knows about UFOs. Science is hardly getting its due.

Meanwhile in labs and institutions around the country, scientists are hard at work: inventing technologies to make guns safer, developing antibiotics to quell treatment-resistant infections and searching for more efficient forms of renewable, clean energy. This research addresses complex scientific and social issues that require thoughtful policy-making and debate. The country's next Congress and president will have much to consider.

To that end, Scientific American corralled some of the key scientific issues that U.S. politicians should be paying attention to, but aren't—from the threat of nuclear Armageddon to the ethics of medically assisted suicide. We spoke with top thinkers in each field—policy experts at universities, members of foundations and nonprofits, and the scientists themselves. What, our reporters asked, should government be doing to keep Americans healthy, safe and productive?

To learn the answers, read on. We hope those who would be our leaders will do the same.—Emily Laber-Warren The End of Antibiotics

Tuberculosis. Gonorrhea. Pneumonia. All these infections were once readily cured but overuse of antibiotics has created "superbugs"—bacteria that are resistant to even last-resort medicines.

Twenty-three thousand people die in the U.S. each year from antibiotic-resistant infections, and by 2050, experts estimate that rogue bacteria will kill more people than cancer. The United Nations recently held an unprecedented conference on how to combat superbugs. Here in the U.S. experts endorse a three-pronged approach: Congress should invest in drug development, ban the wanton feeding of antibiotics to cows and pigs, and attempt to reduce the number of patient infections. Hopefully, says Kathy Talkington, director of the Antibiotic Resistance Project at The Pew Charitable Trusts, "we can move something in the near future through Congress while the iron is hot."

Unlike medicines for heart disease or diabetes, a good antibiotic is usually used by patients for just a single occurrence of an illness, which makes pharmaceutical companies reluctant to pour money into developing new ones. Congress could help by funding some of the research as well as by enacting legislation that eases the economic burden of testing new antibiotics.

Meanwhile 80 percent of all antibiotics sold in the U.S. are given to cattle and other food animals, so legislators like Rep. Louise Slaughter (D–N.Y.) are turning their attention to the farmyard. Antibiotics make animals grow faster, and poultry, beef and pork farmers include regular doses in their animals' feed. Slaughter has proposed legislation that would prohibit the use of antibiotics in healthy animals.

Experts say we should also try to prevent the spread of infections in the first place—by encouraging hand washing and safe cooking practices.—Elyssa Bernfeld Clean Drinking Water

In Flint, Mich., thousands of children live with brain damage because lead from aging pipes leached into their drinking water. More than 360,000 underground water reserves have been polluted by waste from industrial processes. Severe droughts in the western states threaten water supplies for some 43 million people.

Of all the services Americans depend on, clean drinking water is the most precious. But crumbling infrastructure, contamination from fracking and farming, and climate change–related drought are depriving many Americans of this essential resource. Experts say Congress must take a range of actions—from helping cities identify toxins in their water systems to setting stricter limits for the dumping of industrial waste. "Drinking water is a basic human need," says Erin Derrington, a Pacific Northwest–based environmental consultant who specializes in wetlands. "Without wise management—a goal that does not seem to be at the top of either the Republican or Democratic nominees' agenda—we face real risks of degraded drinking water quality."

Experts say Congress should close a loophole in the Safe Drinking Water Act that allows energy companies to inject wastewater into the ground, where it contaminates underground water supplies that could be useful in the future. In addition, they say, the federal government needs to invest more than the $5.4 billion it spent in 2014 to help states replace old water mains and pipes—an investment that will pay off by preventing costly public health crises like the recent one in Flint.—Nicole Lewis Making Guns Safer

When the automobile was introduced, it was a death trap. But in the 1950s universities began crash testing—research that ultimately led to safer cars, better driver education and speed limits—and that slashed vehicular fatalities by 90 percent.

Now public health experts—including the American Medical Association, which put out a statement in June—want the government to take a similar approach to gun violence, which is responsible for more than 30,000 deaths a year.

The question of whether to regulate guns has become polarized, quelling progress on reducing deaths. But scientific research could liberate the issue from politics. Instead of debating whether people should have guns, science can suggest ways to make people safer: For example, how to prevent accidents and suicides in the 22 percent of U.S. homes where there are guns—by understanding how to best keep loaded guns out of the hands of children and distraught people who might act impulsively. Everytown.org, a leading gun violence prevention organization, wants Congress to fund research into technology such as biometric gun locks and safeties that would make it impossible for anyone but a gun's owner to fire it. "The truth is, whether you want gun rights or you support gun control, you should want these kinds of detailed academic, scientifically rigorous studies," says Adam Winkler, a constitutional law expert at the University of California, Los Angeles. "That is what a public health approach takes."—Stephanie Daniel Keeping Our Technological Edge

U.S. scientists and engineers produced the defining technologies of the modern era: the car, the airplane, the atom bomb, the iPhone. But the nation is quickly losing its edge. Foreign-born scientists and engineers are filling key slots at universities and in private labs, in part because of a dearth of qualified Americans.

Most experts trace the problem to the U.S. educational system. Our students rank far below other industrialized countries in math and science. The average American 15-year-old has difficulty solving an equation using pi. But there is a huge variation in how students fare depending on the state they live in; some Bible belt states shirk teaching evolution science or present it as a competing theory with religious creationism whereas states like New Hampshire offer excellent math and science instruction.

The solution, policy experts say, is for the federal government to create uniform, up-to-date requirements for the science and math concepts students should know at each grade level, as is done in other countries. But recent attempts at implementing national curricular conformity such as the Common Core have met resistance.

For now, experts say, the best approach is to suggest, not require. The Next Generation Science Standards, led by educators from nonprofits, philanthropies and state governments, are an attempt to codify a national baseline of math and science achievement. But so far only 18 states and the District of Columbia have signed on. The standards are optional but their authors hope that more state legislatures will sign them into law.—W. Harry Fortuna Protecting National Parks

America's national parks and forests are facing many challenges. In recent years legislators have stymied attempts to increase park funding and pushed for privatization of publicly owned lands. The National Park Service is some $11 billion behind on repairs and maintenance. Meanwhile, Arizona's congressional representatives support new uranium mines on public land near the Grand Canyon—and legislators from other states have similar projects such as oil and gas development in the lands around Arches National Park in Utah. "There's constant pressure to develop the land surrounding parks," says Kristen Brengel, vice president of government affairs at the National Parks Conservation Association.

But Pres. Barack Obama has taken steps to protect public lands. Earlier this year the U.S. Bureau of Land Management created a plan to protect Utah's public landscapes from energy developers. The Department of the Interior also recently canceled an oil-and-gas lease that threatened wildlife-rich regions around Montana's Glacier National Park.

Meanwhile private groups are taking their own steps to protect the nation's public lands. The nonprofit Trust for Public Land recently worked with a philanthropist to add 282 acres to Arizona's Saguaro National Park.

But whether the money comes from Congress or private pocketbooks, some advocates say it would be better spent readying parks for the impacts of climate change or fixing trails and roads at heavily-visited sites like Yellowstone. "We shouldn't be expanding our parks. We should be maintaining them," says Bonner Cohen, senior fellow at The National Center for Public Policy Research.—Samantha Lee Meeting Our Climate Change Promises

Last year in Paris the U.S. was one of 191 countries to sign a global agreement to slash the emissions that fuel climate change. It was an historic moment, but the hard work is yet to come: figuring out how to reduce the country's greenhouse gases to at least 26 percent below 2005 levels within the next nine years.

Climate change has gotten little attention during this presidential election season. Although Democrat Hillary Clinton has called climate change an "urgent threat" and pledged to carry on Obama's climate initiatives, GOP candidate Donald Trump has openly denied climate change and said he would withdraw the U.S. from the Paris agreement.

Part of the Obama administration's solution—dubbed the Clean Power Plan—would require power plants to limit their emissions, but it has been blocked both by the Republican-controlled Congress and the Supreme Court. Most policy experts agree that Obama's power plan is the best tool to meet the nation's emissions reduction target.

If Democrats win the presidency and control of both houses of Congress, the Clean Power Plan might get new legs. Other solutions include taxing carbon or allowing companies to profit when they reduce emissions more than required, says Daniel Fiorino, director of the Center for Environmental Policy at American University.

If Republicans remain in control, experts say, Congress might do better to focus on investing in renewable energy sources such as wind and solar power, an approach that might appeal to the GOP because it could stimulate the economy by adding new jobs.—Suzanna Masih Genetically Enhanced Humans

Scientists are inching closer to the holy grail of genetic engineering—the ability to add or remove DNA from an organism to change specific traits.

Genetic engineering, also known as gene editing, has been used for years to enhance agriculture and treat disease. But a new technology that harnesses the CRISPR–Cas9 gene–protein complex makes it possible to add and remove genes with unprecedented speed and precision, bringing designer babies and other sci-fi capabilities closer to reality.

Scientists are testing whether gene editing can help treat diseases such as HIV and hemophilia. But CRISPR opens the door to editing for human enhancement—such as adding genes for bigger muscles or whiter teeth—possibilities that are "soon to be on the horizon," says Fyodor Urnov, a geneticist at the University of California, Berkeley.

There are as yet no laws regulating gene editing for enhancement. Bioethicist Jonathan Moreno of the University of Pennsylvania says that's proper, because the technology is not yet developed, and "once you legislate, it's very hard to unlegislate [sic]."

For now experts are wrestling with the ethical implications of gene editing and making recommendations: In December a committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, comprising specialists in health, science and bioethics, will publish their recommendations on how to legislate as the technology develops.—Michael R. Murphy Nuclear Safeguards

Nuclear war is no longer a two-player game, as it largely was during the cold war, with the U.S. and NATO facing off against the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. The geopolitical nuclear landscape has grown more fraught and complex than ever. China, India, Pakistan and Israel all have nuclear weapons. North Korea's dictator is conducting missile tests with great fanfare. These new configurations multiply exponentially the rivalries and passions, global and regional, that could ignite a regional or global nuclear conflict.

Experts are divided over how the U.S. should act to minimize the threat. Some say we should publicly embrace a "no first use" policy, solidifying our implicit vow never to be first to push the button. But Obama's advisers maintain that any change of policy could upset the status quo—and hence the safest action is no action at all.

Another issue is how to respond to a perceived nuclear attack. The current policy is "launch on warning," meaning that we will fire as soon as we learn that another country has attacked us. This policy has led several times to near-catastrophe, when our warning systems were mistakenly tripped by a satellite, a faulty computer chip and even the moon.

A safer doctrine, say experts including former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry, is to avoid mistakes by retaliating only after being struck. Once nukes have been launched against us, there's nothing we can do to stop them. But we can strike back—even after being hit—using our fleet of nuclear subs and bombers. "We're not going to change," Perry says, "until people understand what those dangers are."—Michael O'Brien The Right to Die

Two years ago, a 29-year-old woman named Brittany Maynard who was dying of brain cancer decided to end her life. But she did not want to swallow a bunch of pills. She wanted to die safely and without pain, under a doctor's supervision. That meant Maynard had to move from California to Oregon, one of the few states where medically assisted suicide was legal at the time.

Maynard's story made the cover of People magazine. Suddenly the "right to die" had become a national issue—a far cry from the 1990s, when physician Jack Kevorkian was nicknamed "Dr. Death" and convicted of murder for helping his dying patients end their lives.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1997 that the right to medically assisted death is not constitutionally protected, leaving legislation up to the states. Assisted suicide is now legal in Montana, Vermont, Washington State and California as well as Oregon—and 20 other states and the District of Columbia are considering the move. But as right-to-die legislation gains traction, it is becoming as polarizing as the abortion debate, raising similar religious and ethical questions about an individual's rights and who should have authority in matters of life and death.—Alyssa Pagano The Threat of Microplastics

In 2013 the U.S. threw away more than 32.5 million tons of plastic waste, up from around 390,000 tons in 1960. Much of this plastic litter reaches rivers and makes its way to the sea. Plastic bags, balloons and six-pack rings pose known dangers to birds, sea turtles and other wildlife. But recent research suggests that once in the ocean, plastics degrade into microscopic particles that can be hazardous not only to animals and the environment but to humans as well. These so-called microplastics—particles smaller than one fifth of an inch—are ingested by fish, then by people if they eat the affected seafood. A new study by researchers at Plymouth University in England found that a single washing machine cycle can release hundreds of thousands of microplastic particles from fleece and other synthetic fabrics. The U.N. has singled out microplastics for their potential to cause infertility and other health issues.

One approach to the problem has been to institute bans or taxes on plastic shopping bags, but only three of 77 such proposals have passed in recent years, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Similar efforts are being made to ban so-called microbeads—tiny plastics manufactured for use in soaps and cosmetics. Conservation groups also organize beach and road cleanups, to prevent plastics from lingering in the environment.—Michael H. Wilson Tackling Obesity

Obesity now affects more than a third of American adults. It's associated with myriad diseases—the treatment of which costs over $147 billion a year. And almost one in five children are now obese, detracting from their self-esteem, emotional well-being and health. "If we continue on this course, this generation of children could be the first in U.S. history to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents," Donald Schwarz, vice president, Program, of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest public health philanthropy, said during a telephone press conference.

Experts say there is no single way to reduce obesity, because so many factors can impact weight—income, education, access to healthful food, physical activity. This is confounded by the fact that weight is not necessarily an indicator of overall health.

States and even city governments have introduced policies aimed at changing people's exercise and eating habits and fighting the hold fast food has on the U.S. diet. For example, the cities of Philadelphia and Berkeley, Calif., recently instituted a tax on sugary sodas—something that New York City tried and failed to do several years ago. Critics reject such programs as government overreach, calling them behavior taxes, but a similar program in Mexico has curbed soda consumption substantially. "We know it works," says spokesperson David Goldberg of Healthy Food America, a science-based nonprofit.—Kazi Awal Abandoning the Coasts

Hurricane Matthew, which devastated Haiti and deluged huge swaths of North Carolina earlier this month, was the latest in a barrage of catastrophic storms to hit U.S. coastlines in recent years. With storms and flooding along the coasts intensifying due to climate change, experts say it is time for a paradigm shift in how we think about our coasts, home to nearly 40 percent of the U.S. population. "I wouldn't put my money in investing in real estate at the coast, certainly not in the long term," says Jeff Williams, a coastal marine geologist and scientist emeritus at the U.S. Geological Survey.

The most sensible strategy, however difficult to stomach, is for the government to buy damaged property so that it never gets built on again, and people need to move inland. "Basically coastal communities in this country are staring down the loaded gun of climate change," says Shiva Polefka, an ocean policy analyst with the liberal-leaning think tank, the Center for American Progress. "Due to sea level rise, we're going to have to pull back from the coast."

Instead, the approach that towns and cities have been taking, with financial support from the federal government, has been to build walls around their shorelines or dump tons of sand on eroding beaches.

Experts say Congress should reallocate money into large-scale programs to buy property from coastal homeowners. Buyout programs do exist, but they are tiny. After Hurricane Sandy in 2012, for example, New York City helped rebuild more than 10,000 houses, but bought fewer than a thousand.—Meaghan Lee Callaghan Cleaner Energy

The next president will inherit a national patchwork of renewable energy policies. Only 30 states mandate renewable energy. Top on the list are Maine and Idaho, which derive 100 percent of their energy from renewable sources such as biomass and hydropower. But Pennsylvania produces a paltry 4 percent of its energy from renewables. And the states that have set no requirements lag even further behind. Wyoming, for instance, generates less than 1 percent of its energy from renewables.

The U.S. has around 4 percent of the world's population but emits some 25 percent of global CO2, the main driver of climate change. Yet only about 13 percent of the nation's electricity comes from renewable sources like wind, solar, hydropower and biomass.

Many believe it is high time for Congress to create a national standard. The Union of Concerned Scientists, a nonprofit advocacy group, points out that half of U.S. wind production between 2001 and 2006 was the result of state energy standards. Others contend that, given the huge differences in natural resources around the country, it makes sense for states to retain flexibility on how to meet their energy needs. A Great Plains state like Iowa, for example, may be well situated to harness energy from windmills whereas sunny Arizona would do better to rely on solar. Most attempts at national renewable energy policy take this geographic variability into account, allowing states to develop individualized portfolios while adhering to strict standards that increase over time.

Standards aside, experts say the federal government needs to modernize the energy grid. Renewable energy is not evenly distributed across the country. For example, lots of wind is collected in the western plains, and most solar energy is generated in the Southwest, but the areas with highest energy demand are on the coasts. Territorial battles among the states hold up necessary permits, leading to delays in connecting the isolated segments of the energy grid, according to policy expert Jules Kortenhorst, CEO of the Rocky Mountain Institute, a nonprofit research center in Colorado.

Kortenhorst suggests that a future president could institute a "federal override" that would allow the government to step in and force the integration of various regional grids, as it currently does with pipelines.—Roshan Abraham

The reporters are students in Emily Laber-Warren's science journalism class at the C.U.N.Y. Graduate School of Journalism.

FEMA HOUSING

Obama Declares Newport News Eligible For FEMA Disaster Grants And Loans

By Reema Amin

Newport News (VA) Daily Press, November 4, 2016

President Barack Obama declared Wednesday that residents of Newport News and three South Hampton Roads cities are eligible for disaster grants and loans related to damage from Hurricane Matthew.

The declaration makes residents of Newport News, Virginia Beach, Norfolk and Chesapeake eligible to apply for federal assistance, which could come in several forms based on damage, according to an statement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Kim Lee, Newport News spokeswoman, said that the city was aware of at least eight properties that were damaged by the hurricane. City Line Apartments had about 100 damaged units, causing some kind of displacement for those families, Lee said. She did not know the status of the repairs, and a representative for City Line could not be reached for comment.

The assistance, administered through FEMA, can include rental payments for temporary housing; grants for home repairs and replacements of essential items that aren't covered by insurance; grants to replace personal property and pay for medical or transportation bills; and unemployment payments for up to 26 weeks for those who temporarily lost their jobs because of the hurricane and don't qualify for benefits.

They can also apply for low-interest loans to pay for losses in a home that aren't covered by insurance. Loans up to $200,00 for residences and $40,000 for personal property. Loans up to $2 million are available for business property damage.

Loans up to $500,000 are available for farmers, ranchers and aquaculture operators.

Those wanting to apply can go to www.disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-FEMA. Those who have a speech disability or hearing loss should call 1-800-462-7585.

Lee said there will be a FEMA disaster assistance center set up in Newport News soon, but she didn't know the exact date on Thursday.

Planning commission OKs laser tag business

TagTime Laser Tag, a Yorktown-based business hoping to open a location in Denbigh, got the OK for a conditional-use permit on Wednesday from the Newport News Planning Commission.

The family-owned business had requested a permit to operate as an amusement establishment at DW Center, formerly known as Denbigh Village Shopping Center. It would be one of at least three entertainment businesses opening at the new plaza.

The laser tag business would be located at 14346 Warwick Blvd., Suite 420. Brad Drummond, one of the owners, said they also set up laser tag events for birthday parties, many of those in Newport News.

"We have a huge customer base in Newport News," he said. "Every weekend we find ourselves in someone's backyard."

FEMA Trailers Coming To Robeson, Columbus, 2 Other N.C. Counties

By Bill Kirby

Fayetteville (NC) Observer, November 3, 2016

Hurricane-displaced residents in four North Carolina counties will be moving into manufactured homes, Gov. Pat McCrory announced Thursday.

He said the Federal Emergency Management Agency has approved the state's request to set up mobile homes in the four worst-hit counties by Hurricane Matthew: Robeson, Columbus, Edgecombe and Wayne.

More counties could be added in the coming days for FEMA mobile homes, McCrory said, in an effort to provide direct temporary housing assistance to those who can't yet go back to their homes.

Some of the worst flooding from the Oct. 8 storm, McCrory said, occurred in communities with few hotels, and in the case of Kinston in Lenoir County, several of the hotels were also flooded.

"Moving people out of shelters and into temporary and permanent housing continues to be one of our immediate priorities," McCrory said at a news conference in Raleigh.

The governor said there are 240 people remaining in four shelters across the state, and more than 1,700 families are living in temporary housing, mostly hotels and motels.

McCrory: Mobile Homes On Way For Some Homeless After Matthew

WITN-TV Greenville (NC), November 3, 2016

Families in four North Carolina counties forced from their homes after flooding from Hurricane Matthew could be moving into mobile homes soon.

Gov. Pat McCrory said Thursday the Federal Emergency Management Agency approved the help for people displaced from their homes in Columbus, Edgecombe, Robeson and Wayne counties. The help could be extended to more counties.

The state signed contracts last month to start providing mobile homes in areas where hotels and rental homes were flooded, or didn't exist before the storm.

About 240 people are living in four shelters and more than 1,700 families are living in temporary housing after Matthew, which drenched the state a month ago.

FEMA Offering Temporary Jobs, Has Approved $1.6M For Bladen County

Elizabethtown (NC) Bladen Journal, November 3, 2016

RALEIGH –- North Carolinians looking for temporary work now have an opportunity to be part of the team to help their state recover from Hurricane Matthew and to learn first-hand about the recovery process. North Carolina Works, in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is advertising open temporary positions.

Individuals interested in working with FEMA can visit the NC Works workforce office serving their area, visit www.ncworks.gov to find available job opportunities, or call 919-560-6880. Positions are posted as the need arises.

Applicants seeking a job with FEMA must be a U.S. citizen 18 years of age or older and have a valid government identification card, such as a driver's license or military ID. Before hiring, candidates will be subject to a complete background investigation and fingerprinting. FEMA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Thursday, FEMA released the following numbers reflecting the number of applications received and money approved for Bladen County and neighboring counties:

— Bladen: 2,519 applications, $1,584,343.49

— Columbus: 4,324 applications, $4,317,191.38

— Cumberland: 12,021 applications, $11,358,473.30

— Pender: 668 applications, $1,432,039.08

— Robeson: 15,918 applications, $17,368,158.77

— Sampson: 1,716 applications, $1,353,116.32

To date, 38 North Carolina counties have been approved for federal disaster assistance. On Oct. 28, FEMA opened a Disaster Recovery Center in Elizabethtown, stationed at the agricultural center on Smith Circle, where staff are accepting applications and offering assistance in person.

"We continue to encourage people to go ahead and register," said FEMA Media Relations Specialist Rita Egan. "Don't delay; register today — that's my mantra."

FEMA Individual Assistance is designed to help survivors get back on their feet and covers essential needs not covered by insurance, including assistance with essential home repairs and temporary rental assistance.

The state and FEMA work closely with state, federal, private sector, faith-based and voluntary agency partners to help match survivors who have remaining needs with other sources of assistance.

Egan encouraged residents who receive notices beginning with "Your application has been denied" to continue reading, as additional action on the part of the applicant may resolve the issue. She noted that rejection letters are often sent for issues like a phone number being inactivated or an adult not being on site when the inspector showed up. Such issues can be quickly and easily corrected, and will result in the application process moving again. Additionally, application decisions can be appealed if done so within 60 days of receiving the letter.

For more information on the North Carolina's recovery, visit the disaster webpage at fema.gov/disaster/4285 or visit the North Carolina Emergency Management website at ncdps.gov/.

FEMA Assistance Expanded To Wakulla, Taylor

Tallahassee (FL) Democrat, November 3, 2016

FEMA now is offering individual assistance to Hurricane Hermine victims in Taylor and Wakulla counties.

The grants can help with temporary housing, home repair and low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses.

Previously, Leon County was the only county in the Big Bend to be offered individual assistance. U.S. Rep. Gwen Graham had asked relief be extended to Taylor, Wakulla and Franklin counties after the Sept. 1 storm devastated the Big Bend.

"Now all those affected by Hurricane Hermine will be able to receive the assistance they deserve," Graham said.

Did Hurricane Hermine Damage Your Property? The Government May Be Able To Help.

By Mark Young

Bradenton (FL) Herald, November 3, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has designated residents of Manatee County as eligible for individual assistance under its disaster relief program in the aftermath of Hurricane Hermine.

The storm hit well north of Manatee County on Sept. 2, but its outer bands brought drenching rains to the county for two days, dropping up to 13 inches in some areas and causing flooding in some areas.

The federal disaster assistance designation applies for uninsured or under-insured homeowners, renters and business owners. FEMA funding does not replace existing insurance claims.

In addition to Manatee County, 22 Florida counties received the designation prior to Thursday's announcement. Two other Florida counties, Taylor and Wakulla, were also added to the list this week.

To be eligible, storm damage and losses must have occurred as a direct result of Hurricane Hermine. Those eligible are encouraged to register with FEMA as soon as possible. If you have already applied to the Individual Assistance Program, you do not have to do so again.

Those seeking assistance can apply online at DisasterAssistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362. For those who have hearing or speech disabilities may call 800-462-7585.

According to a FEMA press release, "Assistance for eligible survivors can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, and for other serious disaster-related needs, such as medical and dental expenses or funeral and burial costs."

Long-term, low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also may be available to cover losses not fully compensated by insurance.

Federal Aid Now Possible For Hermine Damage In Taylor, Wakulla Counties

By Brittany Bedi

WCTV-TV Tallahassee (FL), November 3, 2016

WAKULLA COUNTY, Fla. (WCTV) – It's been nearly two months since Hurricane Hermine slammed the Big Bend of Florida.

Coastal communities in Taylor and Wakulla counties had to deal with storm surge, flooding, and debris.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has now designated Taylor and Wakulla county for individual assistance. This means that residents and small businesses that were damaged by Hermine are eligible for federal aid.

Assistance may include grants for temporary housing, home repairs, medical needs, or funeral or burial costs.

Residents from both counties were left out of the first round of financial aid eligibility back in September, so residents are now breathing a sigh of relief.

Cypress Rudloe is the director of the Gulf Specimen Marine Lab in Panacea. He says that the marine lab suffered flooding and damage to their "Living Dock."

"Well I'm really happy FEMA decided to include Wakulla County.," says Rudloe. "We did get hurt down here, and as a community, if one of us get hurt, all of us hurt."

Residents in counties designated for federal aid must register with FEMA .

Registration can be completed online here, on the FEMA mobile app, or by calling 800-621-3362 between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

What's Next For Homes Affected By Pender Flooding

By Ashley Morris

Wilmington (NC) Star News, November 3, 2016

PENDER COUNTY – Street corners in Currie and Canetuck this week were lined with heaps of home interiors tossed out after historic flooding condemned dozens of homes and damaged dozens of others.

Sofas, chairs, tables, rugs, carpets, books and draperies were lumped into mountains until county officials collect the treasured items that are now garbage.

Steven Woodcock and Kristee Spearman lost everything in their home after just living there for one year. Monday they were still waiting for their FEMA application to be approved. Two weeks ago Woodcock said he entered in his information and started a ticket with FEMA in hopes to recover some of what they lost.

Family photos of Christmas, his kid's school photos and antique family portraits hanging on the wall – those were among the only items salvageable from their house right off N.C. 210 that filled with two feet of water.

"It was pretty heartbreaking the first time going back in the house and seeing all the damage," Woodcock said. His two children's toys were scattered everywhere and covered in the silt the rising Black River left behind.

So far Pender County officials have counted 18 homes around the Black River Basin that are considered total losses and have been condemned, said Emergency Management director Tom Collins. More than 650 Pender homes experienced damage to their homes and property. As of Wednesday, FEMA had spent $1.3 million in funds on Pender residents for rental costs and food.

Collins expects the FEMA numbers to go up as people are approved for disaster assistance loans. He also expects the number of homes condemned to rise.

For several weeks Woodcock and his family have stayed in Ivanhoe with friends, about 30 minutes away.

"It's tough not having a home of your own to sleep in," he said. "When you get off work, you know you aren't getting to go home."

Residents from Ivanhoe, Atkinson and down through Currie were told if the water came up to two feet in their home, they have to take out everything below four feet, Collins said.

"If they had flooding pretty soon they will have a mold problem and their home won't be safe to live in," Collins said, explaining why not only sheetrock and insulation have to be thrown out, but even items like coffee tables.

Anything the water touched was ruined.

Once the county is able to clear debris and ruined interiors, Collins said the biggest struggle remains finding temporary housing for those displaced and waiting to get back into their homes. The next issue is disseminating information to those affected about where they can seek help and what programs they are eligible for.

For residents rebuilding like Ervin Ezzell, each day he can work on his home he says he has more hope. The inside of his ranch house was filled with three feet of water. Monday he had fully gutted the interior walls, his brand-new cabinets and all the furniture. Only the exposed brick walls and brick fireplace with two deer trophies remained as he used fans to dry out the crawlspace and floorboards.

"The worst part was waiting for the water to stop rising, because we didn't know how high it would get," Ezzell said. "Waiting to come back and see the damage in your house and waiting for FEMA – the suspense is what is so bad."

FEMA Registration Deadline Is Nov. 14

Eunice (LA) Today, November 3, 2016

Baton Rouge, La. –

Louisiana disaster survivors affected by August flooding have two weeks left to register for disaster assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The deadline to register is Nov. 14.

Survivors may register with FEMA by going online with any computer, smartphone or tablet to DisasterAssistance.gov, calling the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362, or downloading the FEMA mobile app. Survivors who use a TTY may call 800-462-7585 to register.

Survivors can also register for assistance at any FEMA disaster recovery center. To find a disaster recovery center near you, call the FEMA helpline or text DRC and your zip code to 43362. You can also find a center near you by downloading the FEMA mobile app or going online to fema.gov/drc.

FEMA assistance for homeowners and renters may include grants for rent, temporary housing and home repair to their primary residence, as well as other serious disaster-related needs, such as medical and dental expenses or funeral and burial costs.

Survivors should also be sure to submit their disaster loan application to the U.S. Small Business Administration by Nov. 14. Submitting a loan application does not imply acceptance of a loan, but it is a necessary step to being considered for other forms of disaster assistance.

For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling 800-659-2955, emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visiting SBA's website at SBA.gov/disaster. Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals may call 800-877-8339. SBA representatives are also available at any disaster recovery center, disaster loan outreach center, or business recovery center.

Flood Victims Reminded About Approaching Deadline

WVUE-TV New Orleans, November 3, 2016

AMITE, LA (WVUE) –

Tangipahoa Parish President Robby Miller reminds survivors of the August flood event that Monday, Nov. 14 is the deadline to register for disaster assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Miller said residents may register with FEMA by going online with any computer, smartphone or tablet to DisasterAssistance.gov, calling the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362, or downloading the FEMA mobile app. Survivors who use a TTY may call 800-462-7585 to register. Survivors can also register for assistance at any FEMA disaster recovery center.

FEMA assistance for homeowners and renters may include grants for rent, temporary housing and home repair to their primary residence, as well as other serious disaster-related needs, such as medical and dental expenses or funeral and burial costs.

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For more information, applicants may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling 800-659-2955.

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NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

No stories for this edition

MITIGATION

Workshop On Area Disaster Planning Set For Nov. 14

Charlottesville (VA) Daily Progress, November 3, 2016

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission will hold a public workshop to discuss updating the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The workshop will be held from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Nov. 14 at the commission's Water Street Center at 407 E. Water St. Participants will be able to generate ideas to enhance the region's ability to be prepared for emergency responses and to bounce back after a natural disaster.

The prior plan was adopted by all jurisdictions in the planning district — Charlottesville and the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson — and was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2012. The plan is required to be updated every five years for localities to be eligible for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

No stories for this edition

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

No stories for this edition

FIRE GRANTS

Frederick County Fire & Rescue Are Asking For A $4 Million Grant

WHAG-TV Hagerstown (MD), November 3, 2016

FREDERICK COUNTY, Va.

The Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department and its 11 volunteer fire and rescue companies are asking for a $4 million dollar grant to replace over 330 self-contained breathing apparatuses.

Right now, none of the department's breathing apparatus units meet the current national Fire Protection Association's standards due to new changes.

The department applied for an assistance to firefighters grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency and it was approved by the Board of Supervisors to replace all units within the Frederick County Fire and Rescue system.

The life span of the units is typically between 15 and 20 years.

Dan Sova, Assistant Fire Chief Gainesboro Volunteer Fire & Rescue explained why getting new appartuses are so important.

"We use the self contained breathing apparatuses. It's kind of like a backpack that you see kids wearing to school, when you see firefighters on the fire ground, we're wearing our S-C-B-A's as call them and what they have is air in a tank that allows us to breathe air as we're inside of a fire."

The Frederick County Fire and Rescue Department will know if they got the grant between the spring and fall of next year.

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NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

1,400 Added To Georgia's Voter Rolls During Registration Extension

By Kristina Torres

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, November 3, 2016

Advocates are celebrating the addition of more than 1,410 Chatham County residents to Georgia's voter rolls after they took advantage of an extended voter registration deadline last month due to Hurricane Matthew.

A federal judge had ordered the county to reopen registration after voting rights advocates argued that the storm —including a mandatory evacuation and related power outages —had prevented would-be voters from signing up. Local government offices were closed in Chatham for what would have been the last six days of the voter registration period that ended Oct. 11.

Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp, who has embraced technology including a pilot program this year allowing voter registration via text message, had encouraged residents in the storm's path to take advantage of the state's online and mobile voter registration access points. U.S. District Judge William Moore, however, still extended the period for county residents until Oct. 18.

Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the national Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, noted that the number of those submitting applications during the extension would have represented more than 10 percent of all voters who registered in 2012 before that year's presidential election. Advocates were also encouraged nearly half of the group were black or Latino —groups traditionally underrepresented on the rolls.

The Lawyers' Committee brought the suit along with Atlanta law firm Bryan Cave on behalf of the Georgia NAACP, the Georgia Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda and the New Georgia Project.

FEMA To Pay For Private Roads Debris Removal In Beaufort County, But Tells Chatham County "No"

By Lou Phelps

Savannah (GA) Business Journal, November 4, 2016

Last week, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved Beaufort County's request for reimbursement for the cost of removing private property debris from both roads and rights-of-way under FEMA's 'Public Assistance Program.'

The news added confusion for those in Chatham County living in large private communities such as The Landings at Skidaway Island after property owners of the almost 4,000 homes there learned this week that Chatham County will not be reimbursed by FEMA to remove their enormous levels of debris. But, Chatham County officials announced Wednesday that the County will assist in debris removal.

Contractors being used around the County, funded by FEMA, were sent to The Landings on Wednesday to remove some of the debris, as several elected officials held a press conference to explain their intention to appeal FEMA's decision.

Residents there maintain that they pay County property taxes, and should receive supportive services, despite the fact that all roads at The Landings are 'private,' and are maintained by The Landings Association's capital fund year-around.

Paul Kurilla serves as Director of Public Works for The Landings Association. At Wednesday's press conference, and through emails to residents, he stated that workers have removed 80,000 cubic yards of tree and branch debris from the area, but have at least 280,000 cubic yards left to be picked up.

FEMA informed County Manager Lee Smith this week that The Landings and 20 other private residential neighborhoods are not eligible for debris removal reimbursement.

And, Smith said that the Thunderbolt municipality also received notice this week that FEMA had also denied reimbursement for cleanup of its streets that are 'private.'

The County intends to file an immediate appeal of FEMA's decision within six days. Congressman Buddy Carter's office stated today that he is "working with Chatham County officials to form that appeal."

At this Friday's County Commission meeting, Smith will update County Commissioners on the appeal, progress in cleaning up the County to date, and projected costs and funding sources to deal with non-FEMA reimbursed expenses.

FEMA denied pickup based on their analysis of the volume of debris to be removed, which differs widely from the estimates of local officials.

According to State Rep. Jesse Petrea, Sen. David Perdue, Sen. Johnny Isakson, as well as Congressman Carter, are all pressuring FEMA to re-evaluate their decision. Petrea adds that The Landings is not looking for assistance with debris on golf courses, etc, but debris on public rights of way, debris that poses a fire danger and issues related to mosquito control.

FEMA Denies Request For Reimbursements On Private Roads In Chatham County

WJCL-TV Savannah (GA), November 3, 2016

Chatham County, GA —

FEMA sent a notice to Chatham County on Monday, informing them that FEMA would not reimburse the county for costs associated with debris removal in private communities.

A decision that left local leaders stunned.

"We're disappointed," said County Commissioner Pat Farrell.

Farrell, Commissioner Helen Stone, County Manager Lee Smith, and State Representative Jesse Petrea held a press conference Tuesday in the Landings, a private community in unincorporated Chatham County.

Among a pile of debris as big as a mobile home, they discussed frustration with FEMA.

County Manager Smith said FEMA's reasoning for not paying for pickup was due to the volume of debris in the 20-plus gated communities.

"But we believe their estimates are severely, severely minimized," said Smith.

Commissioner Farrell said FEMA also failed to understand the legal and financial responsibilities the county has to the private neighborhoods.

"There's a long precedent in this county for treating all those communities equally," he said.

Commissioner Helen Stone said residents in the gated neighborhoods pay local taxes to Chatham County, and should get the same amount of assistance from FEMA.

"And I believe that they should be treated accordingly and treated differently because of the fact that they live behind a gate," said Stone.

The county, along with the state are appealing the FEMA decision. Smith said another pressing issue is the amount of mosquitos brought on by the piles of debris in the gated areas. Making removal a public health necessity.

Smith said the county is working on getting the debris picked up in all of unincorporated Chatham County, despite the denial from FEMA.

He cautioned that residents need to be patient while crews move throughout the county.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Open On Hilton Head Island

By Georgiaree Godfrey

WTOC-TV Savannah (GA), November 3, 2016

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SC (WTOC) –

FEMA representatives are present throughout the Coastal Empire helping in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

We saw how they've been responding here in Georgia, but this week they're also very active in the Lowcountry.

The centers are a way for residents and small business owners alike to get face to face interaction with FEMA representatives. Earlier this week, they were in the northern part of the county, and now they've made their way south.

A center is set up at Hilton Head Town Hall, and it will be open through Saturday evening. Consider it a one-stop shop for everything you need to know to recover from the storm.

This is the second step to the assistance process. Residents should have already created a profile with FEMA and applied online for assistance. From there, you're given an applicant number which is used throughout the process to keep track of your needs and assistance you have received. With more than 35,000 people statewide already signed up, these recovery centers are essential in making sure all needs are met.

"The collaboration of that face to face is immense to be able to sit down and have someone discuss your individual needs. It's immense as far as expediting your recovery. However, you don't have to come in here once you register. You don't have to come to a DRC, but if you have a need, or if there is a breakdown in communication, this is why we're here," said William Lindsey, FEMA.

Representatives will be there until 7 p.m. Thursday night and until 6 p.m. on Saturday. So far, they've seen more than 50 people with needs related to Hurricane Matthew.

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FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Opens In Burgaw

WECT-TV Wilmington (NC), November 3, 2016

PENDER COUNTY, NC (WECT) –

Pender County residents who suffered losses and damage as a result of Hurricane Matthew will be able to get information about available state and federal assistance at a Disaster Recovery Center opening Thursday in Burgaw.

According to officials, the center will be located at Malpass Corner Elementary School, 4992 Malpass Corner Road, and will be open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

DRCs are staffed with representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, North Carolina Emergency Management and the U.S. Small Business Administration. You can receive help applying for federal disaster assistance, learn about the types of assistance available, learn about the appeals process and obtain updates regarding your application.

If you have phone and/or internet access, you may register in one of the following ways:

Online at DisasterAssistance.gov.

Call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 for voice, 711 and Video Relay Service (VRS). If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability and use a TTY, call 800-462-7585.

Download the FEMA Mobile App and apply.

Recovery centers are open throughout the disaster-affected counties in the state. To locate the center nearest to you, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362.

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Federal Aid Now Available To 7 More NC Counties Impacted By Matthew

WAVY-TV Norfolk (VA), November 3, 2016

NORTH CAROLINA (WAVY) — Disaster assistance has been approved to help individual residents in an additional seven North Carolina counties as they clean up from Hurricane Matthew.

Carteret and Perquimans counties had already been approved for federal public assistance to help local governments and non-profits. Thursday's approval means individuals are now also eligible to apply for aid.

With the addition of these counties, 45 counties have now been approved for federal individual and public assistance. Two counties have been approved for public assistance only. Nearly $64 million has already been approved for individuals who have been affected by the storm.

The 45 counties currently eligible to apply for individual assistance are: Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chatham, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Harnett, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Martin, Moore, Nash, Northampton, Onslow, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Tyrrell, Wake, Washington, Wayne and Wilson.

To apply for federal aid, go to DisasterAssistance.gov, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 or download the FEMA Mobile App.

FEMA has set up a disaster recovery center which will move throughout Dare County to help give all residents affected by Matthew a chance to get help.

The center will be set up in Kill Devil Hills from Tuesday, Nov. 8, through Thursday, Nov. 10, in the north parking lot of the Kill Devil Hills Fire Station, located at 1634 N. Croatan Highway.

The center will then move to Manteo and will be open on Saturday, Nov. 12, Monday, Nov. 14 and Tuesday, Nov. 15. It will be closed Sunday. The Manteo location will be located at the Dare County officer, 954 Marshall C. Collins Drive.

The recovery center's regular hours are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Looking for a recovery center near you? They are set up all over the disaster-affected counties of North Carolina. To find one close by, call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 or go online.

If you'd like to donate to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund for Hurricane Matthew, text NCRECOVERS to 30306 or visit NCDisasterRelief.org.

FEMA: Disaster Assistance Does Not Affect Government Benefits

By Matt Corpening

WMBF-TV Myrtle Beach (SC), November 3, 2016

COLUMBIA, SC (WMBF) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced Thursday disaster assistance does not count as income, and therefore will not affect recipients' Social Security checks or other government benefits.

According to a FEMA news release, Medicare benefits and eligibility for food stamps or Medicaid are also unaffected by disaster relief funds. Eligibility for FEMA assistance is not dependent on outcome, but is based on the amount of damages incurred as a direct result of Hurricane Matthew.

The number of registrants for individual assistance in designated counties totals 35,690. The total amount of individual and household assistance disbursed is $23,324,413. FEMA has completed 22,613 of 24,308 inspections issued. The Small Business Administration has approved 159 applications totaling $5,642,400 of 1,062 applications received.

Survivors of Hurricane Matthew have until December 13 to register with FEMA for disaster assistance by one of the following methods:

Call 800-621-3362 (voice, 711 or video services) or 800-462-7585. Lines are open daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and multilingual operators are available.

Apply online here.

Visit a Disaster Recovery Center. To find the one nearest you, click here and check "Quick Links." DRCs are accessible to people with disabilities. The centers have tools to amplify sound, magnifiers and materials in alternative formats along with video remote interpretation. Sign language interpreters are available upon request at the center.

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No stories for this edition

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WILDFIRES

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WINTER STORMS

No stories for this edition

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

No stories for this edition

ZIKA VIRUS

Zika Causes A Unique Syndrome Of Devastating Birth Defects

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, November 3, 2016

The birth defects caused by Zika have been described in heartbreaking detail as the virus has spread to more than 45 countries, infecting hundreds of thousands of people, including tens of thousands of pregnant women. Now researchers have concluded that a Zika infection during pregnancy is linked to a distinct pattern of birth defects that they are officially calling congenital Zika syndrome.

In a report released Thursday in JAMA Pediatrics, researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describe five types of birth defects that are either unique to Zika or occur rarely with other infections during pregnancy:

Severe microcephaly (abnormally small head size) with partly collapsed skull.

Decreased brain tissue with a specific pattern of calcium deposits indicating brain damage.

Damage to the back of the eye with a specific pattern of scarring and increased pigment.

Joints with limited range of motion, such as clubfoot.

Too much muscle tone, restricting movement soon after birth.

Researchers at the CDC, along with colleagues elsewhere in the United States and Brazil, analyzed publicly available reports about defects among infants and fetuses whose mothers had either confirmed or presumed infection with Zika virus during pregnancy. Most of the clinical descriptions of Zika-affected infants are from Brazil, the heart of the epidemic.

The most common timing of infection that led to birth defects is late first and early second trimester, although third-trimester infections were also reported among infants with birth defects.

The five features described in the report are an initial list of clinical findings. It's becoming increasingly clear, however, that the full spectrum of health problems caused by a Zika infection won't be known for months and even years after birth.

At a conference in September on Zika's effect on children, sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, researchers described an array of problems associated with Zika exposure beyond microcephaly, mostly stemming from the virus's harm to the nervous system.

Children born to Zika-infected mothers will need to be regularly monitored because some problems don't show up until months later, said Catherine Spong, an obstetrician-gynecologist and the institute's acting director.

"Although the severe cases are teaching us a lot, the impact is likely much more broad, and these impacts, although less striking, may be much more widespread and may need more monitoring and interventions," she said.

Researchers say the purpose of the latest report is to describe what is known about the congenital syndrome. The description is intended to help health-care providers "better recognize the pattern of birth defects associated with congenital Zika virus infection," said Cynthia Moore, a clinical geneticist and birth-defects expert for the CDC and lead author of the report.

Doing that will help providers evaluate and coordinate care for affected babies and their families, she said.

At least 1,005 pregnant women have Zika infections in the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 25 U.S. infants have been born with Zika-related birth defects and an additional five pregnancies are known to have resulted in miscarriage, stillbirths or terminations with evidence of birth defects.

Zika-related Symptoms In Infants Get A Name

By Margarita Cambest

York (PA) Dispatch, November 3, 2016

Researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have put a name to a distinct pattern of birth defects associated with the Zika virus.

Eight states, including Pennsylvania, have reported more than 100 cases of travel-related Zika as of Oct. 26. The mosquito-borne virus is especially problematic for pregnant women because of the possibility of birth defects in unborn children.

According to a report in the Journal of American Medicine Pediatrics, the five types of birth defects that most commonly occur from contracting the virus during pregnancy — severe microcephaly, thin cerebral cortices, scarring of the eye, congenital contractures and a reduced ability of muscles to stretch — are now officially called congenital Zika syndrome.

Researchers said the recognition of the defects as a syndrome in infants and children will help providers evaluate, investigate and define affected patients and determine ongoing care.

The Zika outbreak began in Brazil in May 2015, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and has spread rapidly. In response, the CDC has issued travel notices to regions where the Zika virus is being transmitted locally, including parts of Florida and Puerto Rico.

Pregnant women are advised to postpone travel to parts of Miami-Dade County, including Miami Beach and another 1-square-mile area of the county, as no vaccine or treatment is currently available.

The DOH updates confirmed cases on its website each Monday. As of Oct. 31, there were 127 confirmed Zika infections and 38 probable cases in Pennsylvania. While all of the cases are travel-related, the CDC has cautioned the species of mosquito responsible for the infection could travel as far north as southeastern Pennsylvania.

Most people infected with Zika do not have symptoms, but fever, rash, joint pain, red eyes, muscle pain or headache could last for several days to a week after infection.

Anyone who develops these symptoms and has visited an area with Zika is encouraged to see a doctor or health care provider, especially if pregnant.

CDC Defines Congenital Zika Syndrome

By Laurie Barclay

Medscape, November 3, 2016

Recognizing the congenital Zika syndrome (CZS) phenotype defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) allows clinicians to provide comprehensive workup and management for infants and children, according to a literature review published online November 3 in JAMA Pediatrics.

"[Zika virus (ZIKV)] infection in pregnancy appears to be the cause of a recognizable pattern of congenital anomalies that is consistent and unique," write Cynthia A. Moore, MD, PhD, from the Division of Congenital and Developmental Disorders, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, and colleagues. "Although many of the components of this syndrome, such as cognitive, sensory, and motor disabilities, are shared by other congenital infections, 5 features differentiate CZS from other congenital infections."

Distinctive features reported in CZS are:

severe microcephaly (>3 SD below the mean), with findings consistent with fetal brain disruption sequence, including partially collapsed skull, overlapping cranial sutures, prominent occipital bone, redundant scalp skin, and neurologic impairment;

brain anomalies, including cerebral cortex thinning, abnormal gyral patterns, increased fluid spaces, subcortical calcifications, corpus callosum anomalies, reduced white matter, and cerebellar vermis hypoplasia;

ocular findings, such as macular scarring, focal pigmentary retinal mottling, structural anomalies (microphthalmia, coloboma, cataracts, and posterior anomalies), chorioretinal atrophy, and optic nerve hypoplasia/atrophy;

congenital contractures, including unilateral or bilateral clubfoot and arthrogryposis multiplex congenita; and

neurological impairments, such as pronounced early hypertonia/spasticity with extrapyramidal symptoms, motor disabilities, cognitive disabilities, hypotonia, irritability/excessive crying, tremors, swallowing dysfunction, vision impairment, hearing impairment, and epilepsy.

Diagnostic Workup Needed

Many of these features can also occur in other congenital infections, such as congenital cytomegalovirus, rubella, varicella, and coxsackie B, mandating thorough workup. Brain anomalies may also occur in genetic syndromes, such as Aicardi-Goutières syndrome, pseudo-TORCH syndrome, and gene mutations in JAM3, NDE1, and ANKLE.

Congenital infections with HIV, varicella-zoster, and rubella virus may cause microcephaly, but distinctive findings such as hepatomegaly and rash help differentiate these from ZIKV infection. To date, hematologic, hepatic, or renal laboratory abnormalities have not been reported in infants with congenital ZIKV infections.

Clinical, epidemiologic, and laboratory evidence thus far is sufficient to determine that ZIKV infection can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to the fetus, resulting in microcephaly and serious brain anomalies. As with other newly recognized teratogens, these characteristics most likely reflect only the tip of the iceberg, and underlying pathogenetic mechanisms are incompletely determined. This is the first review characterizing the full spectrum of congenital abnormalities related to prenatal ZIKV infection.

"In particular, more data are needed on infants with congenital ZIKV infection who do not have microcephaly at birth and the brain findings in these infants," the reviewers conclude. "In addition, knowledge about the frequency in which the various components co-occur in an infant, as well as whether any component(s) are mandatory features, is lacking at this time."

The authors note that most congenital anomalies associated with Zika infection appear to be related to the neurotropic nature of the virus. However, other sporadic reports of anomalies, such as congenital heart defects, will need further investigation in epidemiologic studies to exclude coincidental associations and define a more complete CZS phenotype.

The authors developed the current definition of CZS based on a comprehensive English literature search using Medline and EMBASE from inception through September 30, 2016. They identified 34 published reports of congenital anomalies occurring in fetuses or infants with presumed or laboratory-confirmed intrauterine ZIKV infection.

After considering these in light of presumed, underlying pathogenesis related to the neurotropic characteristics of ZIKV, the reviewers conclude that CZS is a distinctive pattern of structural anomalies and functional disabilities caused by damage to the central and possibly peripheral nervous system.

On the basis of maternal symptoms, the most common timing of infection is late first and early second trimester, but third trimester infection can also cause CZS.

ZIKV infection has been reported in at least 45 countries in the Americas, three US territories, and Florida, with spread to other US states possible based on the estimated range of the Aedes mosquito vectors. Sexual transmission has also been reported.

Limitations of this review include the lack of testing for ZIKV infection and incomplete description of the full range of anomalies in most reported infants.

The authors have disclosed no relevant financial relationships.

JAMA Pediatr. Published online November 3, 2016. Full text

Battling Zika...and Armchair Critics With Wacky Suggestions

By Alan Gomez

USA Today, November 3, 2016

MIAMI — Soon after the USA's top disease prevention official said the Zika virus could not be contained using "existing technologies," the Internet disagreed.

Some people argued the technology did exist, but the feds – stuck in the Middle Ages – failed to grasp it. Others suggested the government unleash genetically-modified mosquitoes to wipe out the Zika-transmitting mosquitoes. Still more contended the U.S. was ignoring groundbreaking vaccines and mosquito sprays used with success in other mosquito-infested countries. Even a veterinarian weighed in, saying a good shot of Vitamin C would do the trick.

The surge of suggestions came after Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Tom Frieden gave a grim assessment of the virus' trajectory, explaining during a conference in Miami last month that it would eventually become endemic throughout the continental U.S.

While armchair critics had some pretty wacky ideas, infectious disease experts say Frieden was, unfortunately, right.

"What he's talking about is the fact that Aedes aegypti have been a plague on the human race for centuries," Amesh Adalja of the Infectious Diseases Society of America said of the mosquito species that carries Zika. "These mosquitoes are very hard to stop, they're evolutionarily adaptive and they're hard to eradicate."

Infectious disease experts also agreed that they all get a constant stream of unsolicited, and usually unproven, advice.

"All the time," said Daniel Olson, an assistant professor of pediatric infectious diseases at the University of Colorado. "You hear about treatments they read about on the Web. Or they'll say, 'I heard this thing works. Can we try it?'"

Despite the depressing conclusion of Frieden and others, infectious disease experts say some of the proposed solutions could develop into realistic answers down the road.

Vitamin C may not cure Zika. As Olson explained: "There's not a lot of evidence behind a lot of these claims."

But Adalja points to genetically-modified mosquitoes as one mosquito-control technique that has been widely tested and could be ready for deployment in the U.S.

Oxitec, a British company, has tested a procedure to alter the genetic code of male mosquitoes. When those modified mosquitoes mate with females, the offspring die before reaching adulthood, reducing the number of mosquitoes in the area.

Oxitec has tested such mosquitoes in Brazil, Panama and the Cayman Islands, and reported dramatic drops in the mosquito populations there. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a controlled test of the mosquitoes in the Florida Keys, but that is on hold after residents there protested.

Adalja said people need to accept that kind of technology, which he said has been carried out "elegantly" and could become a common mosquito eradication technique in the very near future.

"Absolutely, that should be pursued," said Adalja, a senior associate at the Center for Health Security at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Olson said the U.S. also needs to invest more in improving surveillance technology so that local medical officials can better track where Zika, and future mosquito-borne viruses, spread. He said the initial response to Zika from public health officials was slow because they rely mostly on doctors and hospitals to report patients they see, a process that is voluntary and does not include penalties for failing to participate.

"If you can't see it, you can't study it," he said.

Allowing citizens to self-report their symptoms – known as "participatory syndromic surveillance" in the scientific world – helped Olson and a team of researchers closely track the spread of dengue in Guatemala last year. Citizens used a smartphone app to report their symptoms, which Olson said allowed researchers to more closely monitor where dengue flourished.

The infectious disease experts said there are other technologies in development that could help, from vaccines that can be produced more quickly, to mosquito sprays that can help eradicate the virus-carrying mosquitoes.

Hagai Levine, a communicable disease expert at the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical Center School of Public Health in Jerusalem, said the U.S. has simply lacked the will to pursue those possible solutions.

Levine said the proliferation of mosquito-borne diseases in recent decades is obvious to anybody paying attention. But since those viruses did not tear through developed nations, Levine said those governments didn't spend much time finding solutions. Zika, for example, first appeared in Brazil in 2015, several months before it surfaced in South Florida.

"Then we wake up," he said. "Any country focuses on issues that are relevant to its own population. But we live today in a world of global health."

That requires collaboration among scientists in countries around the world, he said.

"Once we put our effort to such problems, I'm sure we will come up with more solutions," he said.

Miami-Dade To Consider Deploying GMO Mosquitoes In Fight Against Zika

By Daniel Chang

Miami Herald, November 3, 2016

Entering their fourth month of fighting a local outbreak of Zika, Miami-Dade officials are considering releasing thousands of genetically engineered mosquitoes in Miami Beach and Miami's Little River neighborhood to reduce the numbers of insects and help stop the virus's spread, county officials said this week.

Miami Beach commissioners were the first to propose using genetically engineered mosquitoes in September, when they were faced with throngs of protesters opposed to the county's aerial spraying of the pesticide naled over sections of the city to reduce the number of insects that carry the virus.

Since then, Miami-Dade officials, who oversee mosquito control in Miami Beach and Miami, also have taken an interest in the genetically engineered insects bred and sold by the biotechnology company Oxitec, which has been collaborating with the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District for a potential trial release in Monroe County. The proposed trial release became so controversial in the Florida Keys that the question was placed on the Nov. 8 ballot for a non-binding county vote.

Oxitec representatives are scheduled to meet with county mosquito control and Miami Beach officials on Nov. 17, said Mike Hernandez, a spokesman for Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez, who is running for re-election on Tuesday.

"We need to listen to any potential solution or vehicle that could mean fewer mosquitoes in Miami-Dade County, which means we would have a lower risk of disease transmission again next season," Hernandez said, adding that county officials want to understand the regulatory requirements, costs and public opinion on the possible use of Oxitec's mosquitoes.

If Miami-Dade and Oxitec decide they want to collaborate, the company will submit an application, including an environmental assessment, to the Food and Drug Administration for a trial release.

"We are eager to discuss our solution with any Florida county that is seeking alternate solutions," Derric Nimmo, Oxitec's project coordinator in the Keys, said in a written statement.

Oxitec researchers say their genetically engineered mosquitoes have helped reduce mosquito populations by as much as 90 percent during trial releases in regions of Brazil, Panama and the Cayman Islands. Any release of genetically engineered mosquitoes would be integrated with more traditional methods of mosquito control, including spraying and reducing breeding sites, Nimmo said.

For the proposed trial in Monroe, Oxitec would breed mosquitoes from eggs in the company's laboratory in Marathon and then release the non-biting males in the designated area about three times a week, Nimmo said. Once released, the genetically engineered mosquitoes mate with females, producing offspring that die before reaching adulthood.

Before moving ahead with a release, however, Monroe County residents will vote Tuesday in a straw poll to determine the level of support for a trial in Key Haven, an affluent island east of Key West. Key Haven residents also will vote in their own local poll.

Three of the five members of the local mosquito control district board have pledged to act in accordance with the results, which aren't binding, Nimmo said.

Miami-Dade mosquito control has been spraying pesticides — by air, truck, and handheld foggers — reducing breeding sites and raising public awareness about the local spread of Zika since August, after state officials identified a one-square-mile area of Miami's Wynwood neighborhood as the first place in the continental United States with mosquito-borne transmission of the virus.

Since then, local cases have also been reported in Broward, Palm Beach and Pinellas counties, but Miami-Dade remains the only county with sustained outbreaks of the disease, including in most of South Beach and Middle Beach, and in the newest Zika zone, a one-square-mile section of Miami's Little River neighborhood identified in October.

Miami Beach Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez first proposed using Oxitec's genetically engineered mosquitoes in September, sponsoring a resolution authorizing the city manager to begin exploring the possibility.

Gonzalez also has proposed releasing bats, a natural predator of mosquitoes, and said she wants to exhaust all options for ridding Miami Beach of Zika.

Aerial spraying of naled hasn't done the job, she said.

"People would like a solution and they would like a non-toxic solution," Gonzalez said. "I wouldn't like to use naled anymore given the fact that even after we sprayed we still continue to have locally transmitted cases. I would prefer to find another option."

The county has said it expects spend up to $12 million combating Zika by the end of mosquito season in December.

In September, Miami Beach City Manager Jimmy Morales sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requesting that the FDA approve the "emergency use" of Oxitec's genetically engineered mosquitoes.

Aedes aegypti mosquitoes are a non-native species in the United States that spread diseases such as Zika, dengue fever and chikungunya, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

FDA Commissioner Robert Califf responded that any local governments in Florida interested in a trial release of Oxitec's mosquitoes should contact the company so it could submit the required information.

The FDA in August cleared the way for Oxitec and the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District to release genetically engineered mosquitoes in Monroe County after finding that a field trial would not significantly harm the region's environment. But the plan has met significant resistance from Florida Keys residents and others opposed to the release, including Mila de Mier, a realtor and mother of three who lives in Key West.

De Mier led a petition drive that she said has gathered about 170,000 signatures opposing the release. She said she doesn't trust Oxitec's data and that the FDA should require the consent of residents before allowing a trial release.

De Mier said she also worries that genetically engineered mosquitoes could open the door to unforeseen consequences, like antibiotic resistant bacteria

"It could really be opening a huge problem that's not even talked about," she said.

Miami-Dade officials said they will be watching results of the Monroe County referendum to inform their decision about whether to use Oxitec's mosquitoes in Miami Beach and Miami.

"The county is not taking a position for or against," Hernandez said. "We're listening."

Hernandez said mosquito counts have remained relatively low in the sections of Miami-Dade where health officials have confirmed local spread of Zika, with per trap averages of 4.8 in Wynwood; 1.6 in Little River; 0.47 in South Beach; and 1.25 in Middle Beach — all as of Wednesday.

Still, Zika continues to spread in other areas of Miami-Dade. On Thursday, the Florida Department of Health reported two more mosquito-borne Zika infections outside of the transmission zones in Miami Beach and Miami, requiring an epidemiological investigation to determine the source of exposure.

A total of 1,120 Zika infections have been confirmed in Florida this year, with 207 mosquito-borne cases and 907 travel-related cases, including 131 pregnant women. An additional six cases have been ruled "undetermined" after state investigators failed to identify the source of exposure.

Zika cases confirmed in Florida as of Nov. 3

* Counties of pregnant women not disclosed

** Does not include local cases

Source: Florida Department of Health

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

Crews Repairing Storm Damage In Michigan's Upper Peninsula

Associated Press, July 19, 2016

IRONWOOD, Mich. (AP) — Crews are working to repair millions of dollars in damage in Michigan's western Upper Peninsula after a tornado and flooding hit the area.

Gov. Rick Snyder took an aerial tour Monday of part of Gogebic County and said afterward that the National Guard is working with the county on the recovery effort. Snyder says costs will be sorted out later, but for now "the job is getting done."

Gogebic County Road Commission Manager Darren Pionk tells the Daily Globe of Ironwood (http://bit.ly/29RL17n) it could cost around $6 million to repair some roadways.

Snyder declared a state of disaster Friday for Gogebic County, accompanied by an order activating the Michigan National Guard to assist response and recovery efforts. The moves stem from severe storms that moved through the region July 11-12.

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Information from: Daily Globe, http://yourdailyglobe.com

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Storms Bring Golf Ball-sized Hail, Tornado Warnings

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

A line of thunderstorms moving across northern New England has left thousands of people in the dark.

The line of thunderstorms had strong wind gusts on Monday. There also were reports of hail and even a pair of tornado warnings.

Tom Hawley from the National Weather Service said golf ball-sized hail was reported in northern New Hampshire.

In Maine, about 10,000 homes and businesses lost power. About 2,000 customers were in the dark in new Hampshire.

Tornado warnings are rare New England, and at least three were issued in Maine and New Hampshire on Monday. There were no reports of a twister touching down.

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Weekend Storms Wreak Havoc In Northeastern South Dakota

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) – Weekend storms in northeastern South Dakota damaged buildings, caused power outages and led to at least a couple of injuries.

National Weather Service reports show wind gusts on Saturday in the region in the range of 75 mph. The American News reports the wind downed power poles and trees, damaged a machine shed near Bath and a hangar at Aberdeen's airport. Heavy rain also led to street flooding in Aberdeen.

The Daily Republic reports that winds estimated at up to 80 mph knocked over a camper at Lake Poinsett. JL Dye of Sioux Falls was knocked unconscious and suffered a cut on his nose. His wife, Chrissy, was taken to a Sioux Falls hospital with a back injury.

Dye says the camper and several others were heavily damaged.

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Woman Dies After Driving Around Road Barricades In Wisconsin

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

GRAND VIEW, Wis. (AP) — Authorities say a woman has died after driving her car around barricades on a washed-out highway in flooded northwestern Wisconsin.

A Wisconsin Department of Transportation official called 911 around 9:30 a.m. Monday to report the crash on U.S. Highway 63 just north of Grand View.

The official said the car drove around two sets of "road closed" signs and into the washed-out part of the highway, which goes down about 50 feet. The car came to rest at the bottom of the washout.

Bayfield County sheriff's authorities say the woman had to be extricated from her car and brought to the surface using ropes. WDIO-TV (http://bit.ly/29QAGX9) reports she was airlifted to a hospital in Duluth, Minnesota, where she died.

The name of the woman was not immediately released.

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Information from: WDIO-TV, http://www.wdio.com

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Tornado Touchdown Confirmed In Kankakee County On Sunday

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

DWIGHT, Ill. — The National Weather Service has confirmed one tornado touched down Sunday night as storm moved across northern Illinois.

Forecasters at the weather service office in Romeoville on Monday said the tornado ranked an EF-1 with estimated peak wind speeds of 100 mph. It touched down near Cabery in Kankakee County at 200 yards wide and traveled for about 2.2 miles. Survey crews on Monday also were surveying a possible tornado touchdown in northern Livingston County.

Strong storms moved across the region Sunday evening bringing lightning, high winds, pea-sized hail and heavy rain.

The weather service reported two destroyed grain bins and a shed near Herscher in Ford County along with downed power lines.

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Garland County To Buyout Home That Repeatedly Floods

Associated Press, July 18, 2016

HOT SPRINGS, Ark. (AP) — The Garland County Quorum Court has adopted a voluntary buyout policy that would allow the county to use Federal Emergency Management Agency funds to purchase of private property prone to repeated flooding.

The Hot Springs Sentinel-Record (http://bit.ly/29PSYK) reports that the policy was adopted last week. It'll be used to purchase a home near Lake Catherine that regularly floods when water is released from Carpenter Dam.

Garland County Department of Emergency Management Director Bo Robertson told the quorum court that it's more cost effective for FEMA to buy the property than pay repeated claims made on the owner's federal flood insurance.

The property will be transferred to the county, but no new structures can be built on it. According to FEMA policy, it will be maintained for uses consistent with open space, recreation or wetlands management practices.

According to Robertson, the funds will be used to demolish the structure and remove a septic tank.

Robertson said the county used a FEMA template to formulate the policy. Under the policy, property owners are allowed 45 days to accept the county's offer, which will be based on the state-established pre-flood fair market value of the residential structure, underlying real property and outbuildings.

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Information from: The Sentinel-Record, http://www.hotsr.com

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Sandoval To Attend Memorial For Firefighters Killed In Crash

Associated Press, July 19, 2016

WINNEMUCCA, Nev. (AP) — Gov. Brian Sandoval is attending a memorial service for two federal firefighters killed when their fire truck crashed on the way home from wildfire spotting patrol.

The service remembering 27-year-old Jacob O'Malley and 22-year-old Will Hawkins will be held Tuesday at the Winnemucca Events Complex Exhibit Hall.

A statement from the Bureau of Land Management says the O'Malley family in Zephyr Cove and Hawkins family in Reno are planning private funerals in their towns.

A 23-year-old firefighting colleague, Zachery McElroy of Reno, is recovering after he was hospitalized for injuries he received in the July 10 crash about 40 miles north of Winnemucca.

The Nevada Highway Patrol says a tire blow-out apparently caused their fire truck to roll over several times.

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Conference On Church Preparedness Planned In Bettendorf

Houston Chronicle, July 18, 2016

BETTENDORF, Iowa (AP) — A conference on church preparedness for various events such as tornadoes, fires, floods and mass shootings is to be held in Bettendorf.

The Quad-City Times (http://bit.ly/29JcxkT) reports that the first-ever Faithful Readiness: An Emergency Preparedness Workshop for Faith Communities is planned for July 26 at John Vianney Catholic Church.

The conference was initiated by Scott County emergency management coordinator Dave Donovan after he attended a Federal Emergency Management Agency conference. Donovan reached out to FEMA representatives to help with the event.

The conference aims to give participants an "Emergency Management 101" course that'll focus on personal, family and congregational preparedness. It'll also cover disaster mission decisions, such as being a shelter, feeding site or center for bulk distribution of emergency supplies.

The conference will have a panel discussion on the various issues, and the Bettendorf Police Department will lead an active shooter presentation.

Police Capt. Keith Kimball said there will be information option about what to do if active shooter situation were to arise during a church service or event.

Marcus Coleman with the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the White House will be the keynote speaker. Coleman will provide an overview on emergency operation planning.

Organizers say they hope 100 or more representatives of churches, synagogues, mosques and temples in the region will attend.

Jordan Schneider, emergency coordinator at the Muslim Community of Quad-Cities, said that houses of worship would ideally network in response to a disaster.

"One church can provide food, one clothes, maybe another one has shelter for others. We want to find the strengths of the congregations and help them to be more prepared," she said.

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Information from: Quad-City Times, http://www.qctimes.com

Series Of Earthquakes Hits California's Central Coast Area

By Shelby Grad

Los Angeles Times, July 18, 2016

A series of small earthquakes have been recorded in the last day along California Central Coast.

The quakes hit roughly between Hollister and Cambria. The largest, which measured magnitude 3.8, was centered near the town of Ridgemark. A 3.7 magnitude quake occurred in Hollister early Monday morning.

There were five quakes greater than 3.0 and more than a dozen smaller quakes in the area.

The temblors were felt over a relatively small area, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, and no damage was reported.

The "Earthquake" Off Florida's Coast Was Likely Navy Testing

Associated Press, July 19, 2016

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — An apparent 3.7 magnitude earthquake off the coast of Florida was likely triggered by a man-made explosion to test the seaworthiness of a new U.S. Navy vessel.

Seismographs detected the earthquake Saturday afternoon about 168 nautical miles northeast of Daytona Beach Shores.

The Daytona Beach News-Journal (http://bit.ly/2a7apZl) reports a similar 3.7 magnitude "earthquake" on June 10 off of Ormond-by-the-Sea happened about the same time the Navy reported conducting a shock trial on the USS Jackson for testing. The Navy notified the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service that another shock trial would be conducted between July 16 and July 20.

The Navy's Sea System Command spokesman Dale Eng tells the newspaper the Navy is working on a statement to release this week.

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Information from: Daytona Beach (Fla.) News-Journal, http://www.news-journalonline.com

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How TIDES Can Trigger The San Andreas Fault: Researchers Find Earthquakes Can Be Caused By The Gravitational Tug Of The Sun And Moon

By Cheyenne Macdonald

Daily Mail, July 18, 2016

The gravitational pull of the sun and moon is tugging on Earth's crust, causing it to stretch and compress.

And in certain phases of the cycle, this can even trigger earthquakes deep underground.

In a new study, researchers analysed thousands of these 'low-frequency earthquakes' along California's San Andreas Fault, and found that they are more likely to occur when the tide is waxing.

As the surface of the Earth rises and falls with the tides, it influences activity at the faults, either promoting or inhibiting fault slip deep at the roots.

When the moon is pulling in the same direction of the slip, the effect is far more dramatic, Nicolas van der Elst, a U.S Geological Survey geophysicist and lead author of the study, explained to the L.A. Times.

In the study, published recently to Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the researchers investigated roughly 81,000 low-frequency earthquakes from 2008 to 2015 along the Parkfield section of the San Andreas Fault.

These are small in magnitude, often less than 1.0, and occur between nine and 19 miles below the surface.

The researchers compared the earthquake data to the 'fortnightly tides,' the two-week cycle that occurs as the sun and moon change their positions in the sky in relation to each other.

This revealed that the low-frequency earthquakes were more likely to occur when the tides were waxing.

And, more of these quakes will happen if the tidal amplitude is greater than the day before.

In the paper, the researchers explain that 'deep, small earthquakes on the San Andreas Fault are most likely to occur during the waxing fortnightly tide – not when the tidal amplitude is highest, as might be expected, but when the tidal amplitude most exceeds its previous value.

'The response of faults to the tidal cycle opens a window into the workings of plate tectonics.'

The tides are strongest when the sun and moon are in line with each other, the L.A. Times explains, similar to the ocean tides.

When they are 90 degrees apart, they've reached their weakest point.

These findings provide new insight on the behaviour of the fault's deeper regions.

'They tell us that the fault continues down below where the regular or typical earthquakes stop on the San Andreas, about 10 or 12 km [about six to seven miles],' David Shelly, one of the authors on the study, told the L.A. Times.

'And they tell us a lot of things about that deep part of the fault that before, we had no idea existed at all.'

And, the researchers say the data indicates that the Parkfield region of the San Andreas Fault is creeping constantly.

The study provides a way for researchers to measure the fault's recharge time in some areas – but, they still don't know if this will help provide warnings when an earthquake is set to hit.

CALIFORNIA IS 'NOT READY' FOR THE BIG ONE

Beyond the sunshine, the palm trees and Hollywood, if there is one certainty in California, it's that a massive earthquake will strike at some point.

But when the Big One hits, a recent report says, the western state is ill-prepared and local officials as well as major businesses need to face that reality to 'prevent the inevitable disaster from becoming a catastrophe.'

Drafted by a group of business and policy leaders, the report identifies several key areas that need to be addressed before a quake as strong as a magnitude 8 happens, notably aging infrastructure, water supplies and the risk of catastrophic fires.

One of the biggest vulnerabilities, the report states, relates to the Cajon Pass, a narrow mountain pass where the mighty San Andreas Fault intersects with key lifelines, including freeways, railway lines, gas and petroleum pipelines as well as electric lines.

A major earthquake on the San Andreas, one of California's most dangerous faults, would cut most lifelines in and out of southern California, preventing critical aid from reaching some 20 million people and hampering recovery efforts, experts say.

It is commonly referred to as the 'Big One' a hypothetical earthquake of magnitude 8 or greater that is expected to happen along the San Andreas fault.

Such a quake is expected to produce devastation to human civilization within about 50-100 miles of the quake zone, especially in urban areas like Palm Springs, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Connecticut Park Damaged By Superstorm Sandy Reopens

Associated Press, July 19, 2016

STAMFORD, Conn. (AP) — A portion of a Connecticut park severely damaged by Superstorm Sandy nearly four years ago has finally reopened.

The southern point of the seven-acre Kosciuszko Park in Stamford was reopened Monday by Mayor Kevin Martin after a more than $286,000 renovation project. The city got a $120,000 relief award from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The project included restoration and re-pavement of about 700 feet of the walking path and reinforcement of the embankment at the waterfront park.

A portion of the path used by walkers and cyclists collapsed into the harbor after strong waves caused erosion during the 2012 storm.

City engineer Lou Casolo tells the Stamford Advocate (http://bit.ly/2a5H12P) the park is now better able to withstand extreme weather.

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Information from: The Advocate, http://www.stamfordadvocate.com

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CHRISTIE Praises Trump's Imaginary Sandy Giving – MANAFORT Disputes "Livid" Comment – PRO-FULOP Super PAC Donor Disclosure Cheered

Politico, July 19, 2016

Good Tuesday morning in Cleveland! It's day 2 – and the night of Gov. Christie's big speech.

QUOTE OF THE DAY: ""From a young age, my parents impressed on me the values that you work hard for what you want in life, that your word is your bond and you do what you say and keep your promise, that you treat people with respect. They taught and showed me values and morals in their daily lives. That is a lesson that I continue to pass along to our son. And we need to pass those lessons on to the many generations to follow. Because we want our children in this nation to know that the only limit to your achievements is the strength of your dreams and your willingness to work for them" — Melania Trump last night and, basically, Michelle Obama in 2008 http://politi.co/29ISEP3

HAPPY BIRTHDAY – Fox Rothschild's Brian McGinnis

WHERE'S CHRISTIE: Cleveland

NEWS

GENEROSITY — "Christie spokesman: Governor 'misspoke' about Donald Trump's gift for Hurricane Sandy relief," by The Washington Post's David A. Fahrenthold: "On Monday morning, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie told a group of Republican convention delegates a story about Donald Trump's generosity. After the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, Christie said, his wife Mary Pat Christie had asked Trump for a donation to a New Jersey disaster-relief fund. 'He said, 'How much does the check need to be? Just tell me and I'll send it,' ' Christie told the crowd ... But then, Monday afternoon, a spokesman said Christie 'misspoke.' The spokesman, Brian Murray, appeared to be indicating that Trump had not donated anything to the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund, which was run by Mary Pat Christie. 'Mr. Trump has given to other New Jersey charities, including the Drumthwacket Foundation,' Murray said. He was responding to questions from The Washington Post, which noted that the New Jersey disaster-relief fund did not list Trump among its major donors. The Drumthwacket Foundation, which cares for New Jersey's historic governor's mansion, has received at least $40,000 since 2010 from the Donald J. Trump Foundation — a charity which Trump controls, but which is stocked with other people's money." http://wapo.st/29UjHqf

—"Christie praises Pence pick over 'big mouth from Congress'" http://politi.co/29R7dMG

'I DON'T BELIEVE THE LIBERAL MEDIA' — "RNC 2016: Trump campaign manager dismisses report Christie was 'livid' over VP snub," by NJ Advance Media's Matt Arco: "A top aide to presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump on Monday denied a report that claimed he said Gov. Chris Christie was 'livid' about being passed over as running mate. 'I never said that,' Paul Manafort, Trump's campaign manager, told NJ Advance Media just hours before the start of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. 'That's totally misrepresented.' 'And I don't think he was livid,' Manafort added about Christie. According to The Weekly Standard, a conservative magazine, Manafort was overheard telling someone in Cleveland that Christie was 'livid' that Trump tapped Indiana Gov. Mike Pence as his vice presidential pick instead of him." http://bit.ly/2a30t1w

—"N.J. sends state troopers to Cleveland for RNC 2016 security" http://bit.ly/29QJvA9

CODEY DID IT FIRST —"Chris Christie now officially a bobblehead" http://bit.ly/2a2ZzlG

** A message from the Fair Share Hospitals Collaborative: New Jersey's Charity Care funding formula is unfair to patients and to a majority of the hospitals that provide the care. People who are uninsured live in ALL of the cities and towns in ALL of New Jersey's 21 counties — not just in a few of the State's urban centers. Get the facts: Health Care Cuts Hurt All NJ Hospitals **

BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS IS WHITE HOUSE SUBS ARE DELICIOUS — "This year, Atlantic County playing a role in the presidential race," by POLITICO's Matt Friedman: "At every GOP convention since 1984, Atlantic County Republicans have brought trays of submarine sandwiches from the White House Sub Shop in Atlantic City to the New Jersey delegation's hotel. Usually, that's been about the extent of Atlantic County's involvement in the presidential race. This year is different. The subs were there at the hotel outside Cleveland — Italian, turkey or cheese. But Atlantic County — and in particular struggling Atlantic City — finds itself with a real role in the race." http://politico.pro/29R6zi1

VEEPSTAKES — "Could Christie prevent Booker from being Clinton's choice for vice president?" by NJ Advance Media's Jonathan D. Salant: "if Booker (D-N.J.) is nominated for vice president and wins, Christie will get to appoint his temporary replacement. That would cost the Democrats a Senate seat, making it even harder for a President Hillary Clinton to move her agenda through Congress. 'It's a very important consideration,' said Jim Manley, a former top aide to Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada. 'Every vote will help the next president to move their agenda.'" http://bit.ly/29QLyEt

LONEGAN HOME AGAIN — "Lonegan says failed effort on roll call vote 'shows the power of the gavel'" by The Record's Herb Jackson: "Steve Lonegan began working to stop the Republican Party from nominating Donald Trump almost from the time his preferred presidential candidate, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, dropped out of the race in May. But the firebrand former mayor of Bogota and 2013 Republican nominee for U.S. Senate was not there Monday as the effort came to a final end in a chaotic scene on the floor of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. He'd gone home on Monday, he said, expecting the worst." http://bit.ly/29UmTSM

IF HE STILL FLEW PRIVATE PLANES NO ONE WOULD'VE SEEN THIS — "Chris Christie would rather watch sports than Donald Trump," by The New York Post's Carlos Greer: "While on a flight to Cleveland to attend the Republican National Convention, Christie flew first class, a spy told us, and was 'watching sports or some game show. Half of the TVs were tuned to the interview, but he wasn't interested.'" http://pge.sx/29R5bfq

THEY CAN IMAGINE THE CAMPAIGN LIT — "Few N.J. Republican lawmakers show up to Trump's convention," by POLITICO's Matt Friedman: "According to the Republican State Committee, there are more than 250 Republicans from New Jersey in Cleveland for the party's national convention. They have prime seats for the proceedings, in the front row of the Quicken Loans Arena. But while Gov. Chris Christie may be one of Donald Trump's biggest surrogates, few other New Jersey GOP lawmakers are taking advantage of the view. " http://politi.co/29RU59V

—"Bramnick, in Cleveland, isn't ready to endorse Trump" http://politico.pro/29R70Jv

—"Hamilton Mayor Kelly Yaede attends Donald Trump's RNC nomination party in Cleveland" http://bit.ly/29RLTsO

—"Which GOP Convention speaker said it? Chris Christie or Scott Baio?" http://bit.ly/29RUwRw

JOB CHANGE — "Wirths leaving office for new post," by The AP: "A longtime member of Gov. Chris Christie's cabinet is leaving for another state post. The Republican governor announced Monday night that Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner

Harold Wirths will step down next month. Christie says he will nominate Wirths to serve on the state parole board. Wirths, a Republican who lives in Hardyston Township, has served in Christie's cabinet since 2010." http://on.app.com/29RTm8Q

GARRETT EFFECT — "Gottheimer boasts GOP support with new website, endorsements," by POLITICO's Ryan Hutchins: "Democrat Josh Gottheimer, a Microsoft executive and former speech writer for former president Bill Clinton, won the endorsement Monday of 12 local Republicans who support him in his race to unseat GOP Rep. Scott Garrett in New Jersey's Fifth District. Along with the endorsements, Gottheimer launched a new website to promote support from the other side of the aisle: RepublicansForJosh.com. His campaign boasts in a press release that it has 'the backing of more than 100 Republicans nationwide over his Tea Party extremist opponent.'" http://politico.pro/29R7miU

TRANSPARENCY — "Watchdogs cheer disclosure of $1M donor to super PAC linked to Fulop," by The Jersey Journal's Terrence T. McDonald: "A nonpartisan ethics watchdog is taking credit for Friday's revelation that a $1 million donation to a super PAC linked to Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop came from a co-founder and co-owner of local hospital system CarePoint Health. Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, which filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission in February after super PAC Coalition for Progress initially declined to identify the person behind the $1 million donation, said in a statement today that it's important for voters to know the origin of big-money political contributions. 'We're glad that this super PAC finally disclosed the true source of the million dollars, but it shouldn't have taken legal action from us to get them to do it,' said CREW Executive Director Noah Bookbinder. 'A million dollars goes a long way — New Jersey residents should know who is trying to influence their elections.'" http://bit.ly/2a2ZuOP

—"CarePoint Health's Garipalli has given $40k to Hudson Dems since 2010" http://bit.ly/29UHqH2

#TELLINGITLIKEITIS — "Christie, a onetime rising star, now just part of Trump's supporting cast," by The Record's Charles Stile: "When Christie was on the rise in 2012 — and considered by nominee Mitt Romney as a possible running mate — Christie struck some themes and phrases that would be out of sync with Trump's vision and tone, and would be probably unwelcome. Four years ago, it was Christie who was offering up himself to the nation as a battle-tested leader, who guided New Jersey through a catastrophic storm and landmark reforms through a hostile, Democratic-controlled Legislature. He was selling experience — an attribute that has held little sway with angry anti-establishment voters. 'It takes leadership that you don't get from reading a poll,' Christie said in his keynote speech in Tampa. "You see … real leaders don't follow polls. Real leaders change polls." Now, Christie is taking marching orders from Trump, who constantly cites polls as a validation of his success. In Tampa, Christie asserted that it was time to consider cuts to Social Security, the so-called third rail of politics. His new boss says he won't tinker with Social Security benefits if elected." http://bit.ly/29UGZfG

YOU CAN TAKE THE REPORTERS OUT OF NEW JERSEY — I caught a ride back to the NJ GOP delegation's hotel in Cleveland with a few New Jersey reporters. On the way we stopped for gas. It didn't go well. http://bit.ly/29UcHd9

AAAAAAWKWARD — "Bramnick, in Cleveland, isn't ready to endorse Trump" http://politico.pro/29R70Jv

YOU CAN SAIL THE SEVEN SEAS — "Critics cast doubt on N.J. mayor's military service. Here's the truth," by Steve Novak for LeHighValleyLive.com: "An embattled mayor in Warren County raised eyebrows earlier this year when he said he could not remember details of his time in the U.S. Navy, and refused to show proof that he had been in the service, as he had claimed during his election bid. The mayor, Tom McKay of Lopatcong, was already facing a recall effort. And now, his evasiveness fueled speculation among critics that he might be lying. But records obtained by lehighvalleylive.com solve the mystery. After numerous inquiries and federal Freedom of Information Act requests, the National Archives on Thursday produced a document showing McKay served in the Navy as an enlisted reservist from 1968 to 1970 in the New York City area." http://bit.ly/2a1YBpA

MASTRO CARD — "Murphy: Christie should pick up tab for Bridgegate investigation," by PolitickerNJ's J.T. Aregood: "The first official candidate in New Jersey's 2017 gubernatorial race called on Governor Chris Christie to foot the bill for the investigation into the Bridgegate scandal instead of drawing on tax coffers. The investigation into whether Christie knew about two appointees' plot to close down lanes on the George Washington Bridge in retaliation against the mayor of Fort Lee has cost the state over $10 million." http://bit.ly/2a2ZCxQ

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS — "Proposed N.J. law would ban prior restraint of student newspapers," by NJ Advance Media's Sallie Graziano: "State legislators have re-introduced a bill that would prohibit school districts and public universities from authorizing prior restraint of school-sponsored media. The legislation is backed by Tom McHale, an English teacher at Hunterdon Central Regional High School. ... McHale resigned as adviser of the award-winning school newspaper The Lamp in 2013 after trying, but failing, to get the board to amend its policy that requires the administration's review of The Lamp's content prior to publication. He had held the post for a decade. McHale, who is also a Garden State Scholastic Press Association executive board member, said he is aware of journalism students … self-censoring out of fear of administration backlash." http://bit.ly/29KCa4M

THE HORROR — "Trenton is one of only 4 U.S. capital cities without a Starbucks," by The Trentonian's David Foster: "No venti, non-fat, Caramel Macchiatos are served in the capital city. And it's become a bit of a joke on social media throughout the years that Trenton has not landed a single Starbucks within its city limits. 'I had to do today's argument without my morning Starbucks...risky,' one attorney wrote on Facebook in 2011. 'Apparently, there are no Starbucks in Trenton, NJ.' 'Can Trenton get it together so I don't have to travel so far for a Starbucks?" another man tweeted in 2012.'" http://bit.ly/29TSa8F

IT WILL TAKE BRRRRRAAAINS TO FIX THIS PROBLEM — "'Zombie' houses in foreclosure can sit vacant, haunt neighbors for years," by the Record's Kathleen Lynn: "On Cumberland Avenue in Teaneck, weeds grow through the patio behind a vacant brick ranch; inside, paint is peeling off the walls in sheets. Neighbors call these homes eyesores. Real estate experts have another name: "Zombie" houses — homes in foreclosure that stay empty and neglected for years. A decade after the housing market began its slide into the worst downturn in generations, New Jersey still has about 4,000 homes left empty because of foreclosures, according to RealtyTrac, which follows the foreclosure market nationwide. That's about 6.2 percent of the total number in foreclosure in the state, higher than the national rate of 4.7 percent. … Under New Jersey law, the properties have to be maintained by the mortgage lender while they're in the foreclosure process, but neighbors say the maintenance usually doesn't go beyond mowing the lawn and making sure the doors are locked." http://bit.ly/29R2Rrh

DO IN AC — "Fitch: As states consider casino expansion, Atlantic City most at risk," by POLITICO's Ryan Hutchins: "Even with the casino gambling market beyond the point of saturation in the Northeast, with some resorts struggling to keep the lights on, a number of states have moved forward with efforts to expand their offerings. Fitch Ratings service says none stands to lose more than New Jersey, where voters will decide in a November ballot referendum whether casinos should be opened outside of Atlantic City for the first time in the state's history. As many as four of the eight remaining casinos there could close, Fitch says." http://politico.pro/29R6pXX

TTF — "Christie balks at Sweeney gas tax compromise, calls offer 'ridiculous'" by POLITICO's Ryan Hutchins and Katherine Landergan: "Gov. Chris Christie rejected Senate President Stephen Sweeney's latest attempt at a compromise on gas tax legislation and says he doesn't know how the crisis over the nearly broke Transportation Trust Fund will end. In his first public remarks on the topic since meeting privately with Sweeney last Tuesday, Christie told reporters in Ohio on Sunday night that he already had ruled out the proposal. That's despite repeated statements from both sides that the concept remained under review. 'It was ridiculous and I rejected it,' Christie said, according to audio of the exchange. 'Myself and the [Assembly] speaker have passed a bipartisan plan to fund the Transportation Trust Fund and to cut the sales tax significantly for the people of New Jersey. And the Senate president needs to come along with a plan. And what he proposed to me the other day was unacceptable. He knows it.' … In a statement, Sweeney spokesman Richard McGrath said it was the first the Senate president had heard that the governor was not willing to support the offer." http://politi.co/2abIwiD

—"Is Sweeney playing coy about his gubernatorial ambitions?" http://bit.ly/29UGQJj

FAIRNESS CODE — "In New Jersey, ZIP code is a cruel indicator of life expectancy," by NJ Spotlight's Lilo H. Stainton: "A new analysis reveals that the difference between living in Trenton and nearby Princeton Junction isn't just quality of life, it's 14 years. When it comes to living a long and healthy life, it turns out that few miles or a few digits in a ZIP code can mean a decade or more. Or 14 years, when it comes to the life-expectancy difference between those who reside in Princeton Junction and those who call Trenton home, according to a new analysis released today." http://bit.ly/29UH4QE

THE NEXT DRUMTHWACKET — "Thumbelina's secret architect, creating fairy houses on a New Jersey trail," by The New York Times' Tara George: "Intricate little fairy houses started appearing in the woods of South Mountain Reservation here about five years ago. They were delicate creations made largely of the natural materials one might find in the woods: a chair seat made of an acorn, a ladder of twigs, a seat back fashioned from a fungus fan, a sofa cushioned with moss. And they mainly dotted a part of the Rahway Trail in Locust Grove, a short walk from downtown Millburn that draws dog walkers and runners from the surrounding towns. There were 20 to 30 of them, new ones replacing old ones over the years, discreetly tucked in a tree hollow or artfully incorporated into a root. They all had a similar enchanting style and looked like the work of one person, but nobody seemed to know exactly who." http://nyti.ms/2a2YPNd

NAUGHTY BY NATURE. LUXURIOUS BY DESIGN. — "Is $12M real estate sale sign that East Orange could become millennial hot spot?" by NJ Advance Media's Jessica Mazzola: "When millennials searching for walkable, transit-oriented communities are priced out of high rises in Hoboken and Jersey City, will they head to East Orange? A recent $12 million land sale seems to suggest it might be." http://bit.ly/2a2YBWG

COP SHOT — "Questions mount in shooting death of retired cop," by The Asbury Park Press: "Details remain scant in a police shooting that left a retired police lieutenant dead in the woods near his Sycamore Drive home Saturday. What authorities have said so far is that 57-year-old Patrick Fennell, known in his neighborhood for hosting street parties for children and helping neighbors, fled with a handgun into the woods near his home on Saturday evening. He was shot to death by a SWAT officer around 10:30 p.m." http://on.app.com/2a2YPwI

HE MUST ALSO LISTEN TO ME SING 'TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART' FOR 24 HOURS STRAIGHT — "A once prominent figure in North Jersey's Korean-American community was spared a prison term Monday when a judge sentenced him to home confinement and a $50,000 fine for soliciting a bribe for a Palisades Park official in exchange for approvals to open a karaoke business." http://bit.ly/29Uk2Jx

PULITZER ALERT — "Plainfield man pooped his pants to avoid arrest, police say," by NJ Advance Media's Jessica Remo: "Arriving officers found Kyle Chambliss talking loudly on his cell phone while sitting in a car, Sarnicki said. The officers smelled alcohol on Chambliss and asked him to step out of the car, the captain said. Sarnicki said that after being told to end his call, Chambliss became aggressive towards the officers. When told he was being placed under arrest, Chambliss responded that he had to defecate and proceeded to do so to keep the officers at bay, Sarnicki said." http://bit.ly/29RTIvX

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** A message from the Fair Share Hospitals Collaborative: 59 hospitals in New Jersey receive only 17 percent of Charity Care funding, even though these 59 hospitals care for roughly HALF of all Charity Care patients in the state.

During Trenton's annual budgeting process, the Governor tossed out the proposed plan for Charity Care funding and decided to redirect 82 percent of the Charity Care funding to only 12 New Jersey hospitals.

The Governor's budget cuts resulted in many hospitals being reimbursed LESS THAN ONE CENT for each dollar spent on health care for the uninsured, compared with the 12 hospitals in the state that are being reimbursed 96 cents on the dollar. All of New Jersey's hospitals – not just 12 of them – are part of the state's safety net and provide care to those in need.

Our state's leaders shouldn't be playing games with New Jersey's health care system. Get the facts: Health Care Cuts Hurt All NJ Hospitals **

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The Daily 202: Seven Things To Watch At The Republican Convention In Cleveland

Washington Post, July 18, 2016

THE BIG IDEA:

CLEVELAND—Hurricane Gustav in 2008 and Hurricane Isaac in 2012 upended the first nights of the Republican National Convention. In 2016, a man-made tempest is making landfall here on the shores of Lake Erie: Hurricane Donald.

In what might be interpreted as a metaphor, a bad storm swept through town overnight – briefly knocking out power at some hotels.

The coming days will undoubtedly be awkward. Exactly one year ago today, Donald Trump declared in Iowa that John McCain was not a war hero because he got captured by the North Vietnamese. As recently as last week, Trump reiterated his refusal to apologize for saying that and even attacked the 2008 GOP nominee for not doing enough to help veterans. (Ironically, Trump being at the top of the ticket has imperiled the Arizona senator's reelection hopes.)

We know McCain is one of many luminaries – including Mitt Romney and the Bush clan – who will skip the festivities to celebrate Trump officially completing his hostile takeover of the Republican Party.

Partly because Trump values and thrives on unpredictability, there's a lot we still don't know. Organizers said at a briefing last night that there will be "plenty of surprises."

Here are seven questions we will know the answers to by the end of the week:

1. How many speakers don't say his name?

Chris Christie was widely lampooned in Tampa for delivering a self-aggrandizing convention keynote that did not mention Romney until 16 minutes in and, even then, made him seem lukewarm about the then nominee.

That could happen again in several of this week's highest-profile speeches.

Respecting the adage that "if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all," many leading Republicans are not going to take the stage – including home-state Gov. John Kasich and Sen. Rob Portman.

One of the drollest neologisms this cycle comes from GOP members of Congress who say they "support the nominee" but steadfastly refuse to say Trump's name and insist that "supporting" him is not the same as "endorsing" him – a distinction without a difference, as far as the dictionary is concerned.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Speaker Paul Ryan and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy are speaking Tuesday night. All have been lukewarm about Trump; will they do the same awkward dance that their members do in the corridors of the Capitol?

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) – one of the most vulnerable congressional incumbents up for reelection this year – is also speaking Tuesday in prime-time. It's hard to imagine a full-throated endorsement, unless he's looking to commit political suicide…

It's also difficult to envision Ted Cruz heaping too much praise on Trump, whom he has still not endorsed, when he talks Wednesday night. (See the full schedule here.)

2. Do the protesters make bigger headlines than the speakers?

The city is jittery, and security is tight. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson testified last week that he's "concerned about the possibility of violence in Cleveland."

A major skirmish could occur as early as today when pro-Trump demonstrators hold a midday rally. Local hospitals have opened up extra bed space in case of mass casualties, and battalions of police officers on bikes are prepared to swarm protest areas, Joel Achenbach reports. The chief says the city has brought in "thousands" of officers from "hundreds" of other police departments across the country.

While there are widespread fears that Cleveland in 2016 could become like Chicago in 1968, but there's also a very good chance that the planned protests are being over-hyped and will stay relatively peaceful. It's impossible to know at this hour. Importantly, unlike Mayor Richard J. Daley in the Windy City, local leaders here seem eager to do everything possible to diffuse tensions.

Ohio has an open-carry law that permits people to walk around with loaded handguns or long guns. A man with a long rifle slung over his shoulder attracted a cluster of cameras and curious onlookers yesterday, Achenbach reports. And some members of the New Black Panther Party, a black militant group, have said they plan to carry weapons around the streets of Cleveland.

After the horrifying murder of three Baton Rouge police officers yesterday, the president of the local police union publicly called upon Kasich to temporarily suspend open carry in Cuyahoga County for the week. The governor quickly rejected the request.

"He could very easily do some kind of executive order or something," Stephen Loomis, president of Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association, said Sunday. "I don't care if it's constitutional or not at this point. They can fight about it after the RNC, or they can lift it after the RNC, but I want him to absolutely outlaw open-carry in Cuyahoga County until this RNC is over."

A spokeswoman for the governor said he does not have "the power to arbitrarily suspend federal and state constitutional rights or state laws as suggested."

3. How thin is the veneer of party unity?

"The Never Trump agitators have been defeated, but they say they're not going away," Ed O'Keefe reports. "Republicans who failed to change party rules (last week) are threatening to cause chaos on the floor … to draw at least some political blood … The options are limited, and attempts to cause trouble at political conventions are usually quickly thwarted. But anti-Trump activists who spent weeks trying to play within the party structure now say they will do what Trump hates the most — find a way to embarrass him."

How could they do that? Upset delegates might attempt to officially register their opposition to Trump on the floor or to force an hours-long roll call of the states, which would upend a schedule aimed at prime-time television coverage, O'Keefe explains. They could also stay away: "Some senior RNC officials worry that delegates might start leaving Cleveland before Trump is scheduled to formally accept the nomination on Thursday night, possibly forcing the campaign to scramble to fill seats inside Quicken Loans Arena. The lack of prominent speakers on most nights of the convention might also compel delegates to reconsider their plans."

RNC Chairman Reince Priebus yesterday called on anti-Trump Republicans to "give up." "If they want to delay the proceedings, all they're doing is delaying the evening and helping Hillary Clinton," he said on ABC's "This Week." "There is no [alternative] candidate. … What is your goal other than to distract and cause problems?"

Mike Pence's speech on Wednesday night could excite some rank-and-file delegates, especially religious conservatives who view the thrice-married Trump warily because of his brash lifestyle and apostasy on abortion. "One of the big reasons that I chose Mike … is party unity, I have to be honest," Trump said Saturday. "So many people have said, 'party unity.' Because I'm an outsider. I don't want to be an outsider."

4. Can Trump's family members sandpaper his rough edges?

A fresh Washington Post/ABC News poll finds Clinton leading Trump by 4 points among registered voters, 47 percent to 43 percent. That's down from 12 points last month, a reminder that he has some momentum coming into the convention. But there is a notable gender gap: Trump leads among men by 8 points (49-41), while Clinton leads among women by 14 points (52-38).

Trump's campaign wants to make inroads with women by softening his image, and they're leaning on his family to do that.

"I think people actually want to like him," Priebus told Karen Tumulty and Philip Rucker. "They're intrigued by him. They're interested in him. And him becoming likable will make him unstoppable."

Trump's wife Melania, who very rarely speaks in public and usually says little when she does, is tonight's headline speaker. Tomorrow his children Donald Jr. and Tiffany speak. His son Eric speaks Wednesday. And then Trump's daughter, Ivanka, will introduce him Thursday night.

It will be amusing to listen to what Melania and all the children say about Trump as a dad in the context of his past comments about parenting. The business mogul has boasted about never changing diapers and bragged about refusing to take his kids out for walks in Central Park. "I won't do anything to take care of them," he told Howard Stern in 2005. "I'll supply funds and she'll take care of the kids." Ivana Trump said earlier this year that she deserves the credit for raising Don Jr., Ivanka and Eric because they were very little when Donald divorced her.

5. What does Donald do?

Trump originally wanted to speak every night, which is at odds with decades of precedent in both parties. He's only officially on the schedule for Thursday, but campaign chairman Paul Manafort said last night that there is a good chance he will appear more than once. "Donald Trump will be Donald Trump. Scripted is the wrong word," Manafort said. "He will probably be making a couple of appearances."

How exactly he appears is unknown. Does Trump do some TV interviews? Provocative tweets? Appearances on the Jumbotron by satellite?

Trump's unpredictability could be great for ratings. Real people hate stage-managed conventions, and they love reality TV. "Overall, viewership for the national political conventions dropped 26% after 1968," USA Today reports, citing Nielsen ratings. "The drop became even more pronounced after the 1980 conventions. The average ratings for the 1984 to 2004 conventions were 30% lower than the previous 20-year period. There was a dramatic jump in viewers for the 2008 GOP convention, driven largely by interest in … Sarah Palin. … (Pence) isn't likely to generate the same level of interest as Palin did in 2008, but many people will be tuning in to get their first look at the Indiana governor. The real draw, of course, will be Trump himself. He brought record numbers of viewers to the GOP primary debates, and it's likely he'll have a similar effect on interest in the convention."

6. Does Trump seem plausible as a president?

Though he's only trailing Clinton by 4 points in our new poll, 64 percent of Americans view Trump unfavorably as he enters the convention – more than twice as many as view him positively. "The Post-ABC poll found that nearly six in 10 registered voters say he is not qualified to serve as president — with 49 percent saying they strongly believe that," Scott Clement and Dan Balz note. "Meanwhile, Clinton is seen as qualified to serve as president by 56 percent of voters."

The attempted coup in Turkey and the Bastille Day attack in France are reminders that the world is a tinderbox and unexpected challenges confront a president.

Today's theme is "Make America Safe Again" and will focus on foreign policy. Among the speakers are Rudy Giuliani, who has criticized the Black Lives Matter movement, retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn and Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst (a combat veteran). Two Americans who were present during the attacks on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi will also appear.

"Because of events, Republicans this week and Democrats a week from now will be judged on far more than whether their conventions are well run and well produced, on whose video biography of the nominee is more compelling or whether the balloon drop works smoothly," Balz writes in his column. "Both Trump and Clinton will be measured by more exacting standards than usual. Can either speak in language strong enough to break through the wall of polarizing rhetoric with which both political parties seem most comfortable? … The rewards for success could be significant. Which candidate will be seen as more suited for the demands of the Oval Office in an uncertain time? Which candidate can voters imagine responding effectively to terrorist attacks? Who will be judged as equipped to bridge racial divisions and ease racial tensions? There will be nothing abstract about all these questions. The videos from around the world will be a constant reminder of the stakes of this election."

As CNN puts it, "Trump enters the convention under pressure to show more discipline, gravitas, and sobriety."

7. How big is Trump's post-convention bounce?

If Trump does not blow it and violence does not overshadow it, the next four days could be a made-for-TV infomercial about how great he would be as president —with 15,000 credentialed journalists on hand to chronicle it all.

"Presidential candidates historically have seen a median increase of five percentage points in their support in preference polls among registered voters after their party's nominating convention," Gallup found in a 2012 study. (Check out a cool breakdown going back to 1964 here.)

It will be political malpractice if Trump's image and standing do not improve. But, but, but: Clinton gets her own coronation next week in Philadelphia. And she is expected to announce her running-mate this Friday, partly to blunt any momentum Trump might get coming out of Thursday night.

THE LONG, HOT SUMMER OF DISCORD AND DISCONTENT:

– A lone gunman killed three police officers and injured three others in Baton Rogue. From Mark Berman, Matt Zapotosky and Peter Holley: "The shootings occurred when police responded to a 911 call that a man dressed in black and armed with what appeared to be an assault-style rifle was walking near a shopping plaza about a mile from police headquarters. Alton Sterling was fatally shot by officers outside a convenience store in the city two weeks ago.

– The gunman, who was shot and killed, was Gavin Long, an African American resident of Kansas City, Mo. "He turned 29 on Sunday and was in Baton Rouge celebrating his birthday. ... In the spring of 2012, Long was named to the dean's list at the University of Alabama, which he attended for one semester. ... (He was) a Marine who achieved the rank of sergeant and had been deployed to Iraq before leaving the service in 2010." Under a pseudonym, Long had posted videos on YouTube advocating for violence instead of protests. (Matt Zapotosky has more.)

– The victims:

Montrell Jackson, 32, an African American, was married and had a baby. "It's coming to the point where no lives matter," his sister said last night, "whether you're black or white or Hispanic or whatever." (Theresa Vargas)

Matthew Gerald, 41, a white officer with two daughters, had served in the Marines and the Army before joining the Baton Rouge police force last year. (Jessica Contrera)

Brad Garafola, 45, who served with the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office, was working extra duty at the B-Quik convenience store on Airline Highway and was headed home to begin vacation when he was gunned down. (Jessica Contrera)

– Thirty officers have now been shot and killed in the line of duty since 2016 began, nearly double the toll at this time last year. (William Wan and Kimberly Kindy)

– President Obama condemned the assault as "cowardly and reprehensible": "These are attacks on public servants, on the rule of law, and on civilized society, and they have to stop." He also pleaded with the presidential candidates not to politicize the shootings: Describing the upcoming conventions in Cleveland and Philadelphia as "a time when our political rhetoric tends to be more overheated," Obama broadly urged public officials to temper divisive words. "We don't need careless accusations thrown around to score political points or to advance an agenda," he said. (Greg Jaffe)

Here's how Trump responded to the plea:

– "We must all stand together to reject violence and strengthen our communities," Clinton said in her statement.

– Leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement strongly condemned any form of violence against the police: "We don't value any life more than any other life," said Ada Goodly, an attorney and activist with the National Lawyers Guild in Baton Rouge. "This is a huge loss for a community that is already grieving." "Shooting police is not a civil rights tactic," said longtime civil rights leader Jesse Jackson. "The shooting in Dallas had nothing to do with the civil rights struggle, and neither does the shooting in Baton Rouge." (Wesley Lowery)

GET SMART FAST:

French authorities detained three more suspects in connection with the Bastille Day truck attack, including

two Albanians who they believe supplied the weapons and a third man who the attacker texted with. Seven others had been detained earlier. ISIS declared on Saturday that Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, 31, was "a soldier of the Islamic State." (Sudarsan Raghavan)

U.C. Berkley confirmed that one of its students was among the 84 who died in Nice. The 20-year-old was participating in a summer entrepreneurship program. (LA Times)

Leaders of Nice's Muslim community fear an anti-immigrant backlash will make people such as the attacker even more disconnected from French society, sharpening the risk of more attacks. (Michael Birnbaum)

Anti-doping officials from more than 10 nations will request that the entire Russian delegation be banned from participating in the Rio Olympics, highlighting revelations of a state-sponsored doping program. The request comes just three weeks before the summer games are set to begin. (New York Times)

Obama calls on Republicans to confirm Merrick Garland in a Wall Street Journal op-ed, calling the gridlock “much more serious than [a] typical case of Washington dysfunction.” “If we allow it to continue, the consequences of congressional inaction could weaken our most important institutions, erode public trust and undermine our democracy,” he writes.

Venezuela temporarily opened its border with Colombia this weekend, allowing more than 100,000 people across the border to shop for food and medicine amid nationwide shortages. (AP)

A 20-year-old survivor of gang rape in India was sexually assaulted again by the same five men who had previously attacked her. The men were out on bail and allegedly wanted to punish the girl and her family for refusing to withdraw charges against them. (Max Bearak)

The brother of a slain Pakistani model admitted to strangling his sister for “family honor” after she posted photos on social media that he found embarrassing. “I was determined either to kill myself or kill her,” he told reporters. (AP)

The FBI has found “no evidence” that Orlando gunman Omar Mateen chose to target the Pulse nightclub because of its gay clientele. (Adam Goldman)

Mick Jagger, 72, announced that he is expecting his eighth child. The legendary rocker, who has children ranging in age from 45 to 17, is expecting a baby with his 29-year-old girlfriend. (Ellen McCarthy)

A 26-year-old Pennsylvania man faces criminal charges after police found a stolen human brain under his porch, which he and his friends were using to get high. (Peter Holley)

PENCE’S ROCKY ROLLOUT:

– Trump and Pence appeared on CBS’s “60 Minutes” last night. It quickly turned awkward when Donald was confronted with Pence’s vote to authorize the use force of Iraq in 2002: “I don’t care,” he told host Lesley Stahl, effectively giving his running-mate a pass for the exact same thing he has long slammed Clinton for doing. “It’s a long time ago. And he voted that way and they were also misled.”

Trump said Pence is “entitled to make a mistake every once in a while.” Lesley Stahl asked if that meant Clinton, who voted for the war as a New York senator, is too. “No,” Trump said. “She’s not.” (Sean Sullivan has more.)

– Trump totally domineered the interview. During the 21-minute segment, Trump uttered 2,160 words to Pence’s 900. “When Pence did get the chance to speak, Trump would often cut him off with a correction or answer of his own,” Jenna Johnson notes. In one example, “as Pence tried to explain why he was at first opposed to Trump’s ban on foreign Muslims, he began by pointing out that Trump ‘clearly...is not a politician’ and ‘doesn’t speak like a politician.’ ‘He speaks from his heart,” Pence said earnestly. Trump cut in: ‘Is that a good thing? I think that’s a good thing. Well, I speak from my heart and my brain. Just so we understand.’”

In another awkward moment, Stahl asked Pence about Trump saying McCain is “not a war hero.” “I have a great deal of respect for John McCain,’ Pence said carefully. ‘And...’ Stahl pressed: ‘Do you think he went too far?’” Trump jumped in: “You could say yes... That’s okay. That one, you could say, ‘yes.’” (Watch the full interview here.)

– It came after a terrible event Saturday to unveil Pence. The lighting and sound were bad. Trump came on stage to “You can’t always get you want.” He rambled for 28 minutes alone on stage before calling Pence up. “You’re amazing,” Pence whispered to him. Then Trump left the stage. The interaction lasted six seconds. (Jenna Johnson and Robert Costa)

– What was he thinking? In 1999, Pence attacked the family film “Mulan” as the work of a “mischievous liberal” and said it was obviously designed to “influence the debate over women in the military”: “Despite her delicate features and voice, Disney expects us to believe that Mulan’s ingenuity and courage were enough to carry her to military success on an equal basis with her cloddish cohorts,” Pence wrote in an op-ed. “Obviously, this is Walt Disney’s attempt to add childhood expectation to the cultural debate over the role of women in the military … I suspect that some mischievous liberal at Disney assumes that Mulan’s story will cause a quiet change in the next generation’s attitude about women in combat and they just might be right.” (Read more from Buzzfeed)

– “Pence used campaign funds to pay his mortgage — and it cost him an election,” by Rosalind S. Helderman, Tom Hamburger and Alice Crites: “Campaign finance records from the 1990 effort showed that Pence, then 31, had been using political donations to pay the mortgage on his house, his personal credit card bill, groceries, golf tournament fees and car payments for his wife. The spending had not been illegal at the time.”

– Manafort confirmed that Christie was “livid” he wasn’t picked. From the Weekly Standard’s John Mccormack: “While minding my own business at the Starbucks inside the Westin hotel this morning, I saw a man engage (Trump’s chairman) in conversation about the VP selection process. The man … suggested that Pence was a smart pick and Gingrich would’ve been a disaster. ‘Christie was livid, right?’ the man said at one point. ‘Yeah,’ Manafort replied.”

– New York Magazine, "Trump May Have Fired Corey Lewandowski, But He's Still Taking His Advice," by Gabriel Sherman: "Advisers and allies of Trump are increasingly concerned that ousted campaign-manager-turned-CNN-pundit Corey Lewandowski could play a wild-card role in Cleveland. Their principal worry: Lewandowski will give Trump hard-edged advice that goes against the campaign's stated plan to soften and humanize the candidate. Although Trump fired Lewandowski last month, the power struggle between Lewandowski and … Manafort continues … Lewandowski is said to have lobbied hard for Trump to pick Christie for vice-president. Lewandowski's enduring presence in Trump's orbit is frustrating to allies like [Roger] Stone, who believe that Lewandowski doesn't have the political experience to warrant his access to the candidate."

THE DAILY DONALD: On the eve of any convention, media outlets tend to publish deep dives on the presumptive nominee. Here's a sampling of the best stories in this vein that have popped in the past 24 hours:

– "Trump doesn't read much. Being president probably wouldn't change that," by Marc Fisher: "Presidents have different ways of preparing to make decisions. Some read deeply, some prefer to review short memos. … But Trump, poised to become the first major-party presidential nominee since Dwight Eisenhower who had not previously held elected office, appears to have an unusually light appetite for reading. He said in a series of interviews that he does not need to read extensively because he reaches the right decisions 'with very little knowledge other than the knowledge I [already] had, plus the words 'common sense.' ... Trump said he is skeptical of experts because 'they can't see the forest for the trees.' He believes that when he makes decisions, people see that he instinctively knows the right thing to do: 'A lot of people said, 'Man, he was more accurate than guys who have studied it all the time.'"

– The New Yorker, "Trump's Ghostwriter Tells All," by Jane Mayer: Tony Schwartz ghostwrote Trump's 1987 book "The Art of the Deal." "The book expanded Trump's renown far beyond New York City, making him an emblem of the successful tycoon. … [A]s Trump defied predictions by establishing himself as the front-runner for the Republican nomination, Schwartz's desire to set the record straight grew. It wasn't because of Trump's ideology—Schwartz doubted that he had one. The problem was Trump's personality, which he considered pathologically impulsive and self-centered. 'I put lipstick on a pig," he said. "I feel a deep sense of remorse that I contributed to presenting Trump in a way that brought him wider attention and made him more appealing than he is.' He went on, "I genuinely believe that if Trump wins and gets the nuclear codes there is an excellent possibility it will lead to the end of civilization."

"If he were writing 'The Art of the Deal' today, Schwartz said, it would be a very different book with a very different title. Asked what he would call it, he answered, 'The Sociopath.'"

– Boston Globe, "Trump's drive to surpass his father's success," by Matt Viser: "Fred Trump couldn't understand it. His son Donald was building a new Manhattan skyscraper, and in the process blowing huge sums on exotic materials. … Donald's glitzy vision for what would become Trump Tower was a dramatic departure in sensibility for the senior Trump, who built tens of thousands of middle-class apartments in Queens and Brooklyn using boring, solid brick. Fred Trump would tour the building site … finding fault and declaring, 'You guys don't know what you're doing.' Donald Trump ultimately prevailed. And the midtown Trump Tower stands as tribute to the son's obsessions with glitz and showmanship, which can seem like a direct repudiation of his father's determinedly practical approach to life."

– Politico, "The Executive Mr. Trump," by Michael Kruse: "Based on [many conversations] … the reality of Trump as an executive—his methods and his manner—bears little resemblance to the man viewers saw on ("The Apprentice"). Rather than magisterial and decisive, Trump the actual boss swings wildly between micromanaging meddler and can't-be-bothered, broad-brush, big-picture thinker. He is both impulsive and intuitive, for better and for worse. He hires on gut instinct rather than qualifications; he listens to others, but not as much or as often as he listens to himself. He's loyal—'like, this great loyalty freak,' as he once put it—except when he's not. "He went from one kind of person to another," says Barbara Res, who was his project manager on Trump Tower and later played an important role in the refurbishment of the Plaza Hotel under Trump. And what might surprise people most about Trump, Res said, is this: 'He didn't like firing people.'"

– BuzzFeed, "Confessions Of A Dishonest Slob: How The Haters Got Trump This Close To The White House," by McKay Coppins: "Trump stood on a debate stage in downtown Detroit, surrounded by haters he was determined to dispatch: Liddle Marco to his right, Lyin' Ted to his left … About 30 minutes into the debate, Kelly asked Trump to respond to a recent

BuzzFeed News report about his position on immigration. 'First of all, BuzzFeed?' Trump said … 'They were the ones that said under no circumstances will I run for president — and were they wrong.' Trump was referring to a profile I'd written two years earlier in which I chronicled a couple of days spent inside the billionaire's bubble and confidently concluded that his long-stated presidential aspirations were a sham. What had most struck me during my two days with Trump was his sad struggle to extract even an ounce of respect from a political establishment that plainly viewed him as a sideshow … But what I didn't realize at the time was that he'd felt this way for virtually his entire life — face pressed up against the window, longing for an invitation, burning with resentment, plotting his revenge."

– David Maraniss has written a hilarious piece about Trump's affinity for one-syllable words – entirely in one-syllable words. (Read it here.)

CONVENTION COVERAGE:

– Only one of Virginia's eight Republican House members is coming to Cleveland: Rep. Rob Wittman, a 2017 gubernatorial candidate who got behind Trump only when his last rival dropped out, will attend to hob knob with activists. (Laura Vozzella)

– Trump punished Ohio delegates in their own state (because he lost the March 15 primary and Kasich is a holdout) by reassigning the delegation to a conspicuous spot in the back of the arena. It's a breathtaking act of pique against a state that he needs to win the presidency. (Front Row at the Circus)

– It took an intervention by Priebus to stop Don King from speaking at the RNC. "Trump was told, no, it was not sensible to have ... the flamboyant boxing promoter, address the Republican convention. But Mr. Trump, who has repeatedly boasted of having Mr. King's support, kept pressing the matter. Finally, officials [including Priebus], firmly explained to Mr. Trump why Mr. King should not be invited: He once stomped a man to death and was convicted of manslaughter," Jonathan Martin and Jeremy W. Peters report. "The party could not associate itself with someone convicted of a felony. Mr. Trump eventually relented. Mr. King, a Cleveland native, will not take the stage. But the exchange, relayed by three Republican strategists familiar with the conversations, highlights the difficulties that planners have had building a program for a presidential candidate who is as much an entertainer as a politician."

– "She's a lifelong Democrat who's voting for Trump. And she's Dennis Kucinich's sister," by Karen Tumulty in Cleveland: "For nearly her entire life, Teresa Sikorski has been active in Democratic politics, starting as a 12-year-old who overcame her shyness to knock on doors for her big brother's Cleveland City Council race in 1966. He lost that time. But her brother Dennis Kucinich went on to become Cleveland's mayor and congressman, a two-time presidential candidate and one of the most passionate liberal voices in the his party. This year, Sikorski and her husband, Marty, quietly changed their party registration to Republican so they could vote in Ohio's GOP primary. Their choice: Donald Trump. Sikorski, 63 … remains a staunch supporter of her brother and the underdog causes for which he has fought. But the couple no longer sees the Democratic Party — or Washington, under the influence of monied interests — looking out for ordinary people. The whole system, they believe, should be kicked over. 'I listened to everything he had to say. I understood it. I got it,' Teresa Sikorski added. 'Everybody else — they're liars.'"

– Great essay: "One street in Cleveland tells the immigrants' story," by Mary Jordan: "In the 1970s, when I was growing up in Cleveland, the city had twice the national average of foreign-born people. Many worked in the steel mills along the river or in the giant Ford plant. … After Soviet tanks smashed the 1956 uprising in Hungary and refugees streamed out, it was often said that there were more Hungarians in Cleveland than anywhere outside Budapest. In fact, welcoming immigrants was how a politician got elected in those days. Ralph Perk was elected mayor of Cleveland in the 1970s three times, casting himself as the 'ethnic candidate,' the one to represent all the blue-collar workers from so many different faraway places. That was a winning slogan for the Republican. Now instead of from Europe, those coming are from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The jobs are more biomedical than blue-collar."

– Priebus said Trump has "pivoted" away from his Muslim ban: "If you have seen the last few weeks, his position that he's put on the table in his position papers that are on his website and what he's been talking about is a temporary ban of immigration from countries that harbor and train terrorists," Priebus said on CNN's "State of the Union." "There is no religious test on the table."

– The RNC chair also announced a special Hispanic "engagement tour" aimed at shoring up support among Latinos – after the convention: "I know [Trump] is going to be doing a Hispanic engagement tour coming up soon," he said on "Fox News Sunday." "He is going to be talking about those issues. He understands we need to grow the party." (Elise Viebeck)

MORE NEW POLLING:

– From our Post/ABC poll: 58 percent of Americans are dissatisfied with their choices in the election.

Three-quarters of voters say Clinton is "too willing to bend the rules," while 56 percent called Trump biased against women and minorities.

Independents lean toward Trump 47-41, while Clinton leads among moderates 52-36. Meanwhile, white voters with college degrees are evenly divided, with 43 percent for Trump and 42 percent for Clinton.

– Clinton topped Trump by 7 points (49-42) in a head-to-head CNN/ORC matchup. She leads him on likeability (43 percent to 39 percent) and experience (64 percent to 32 percent), while Trump has the advantage on the economy and terrorism.

– Clinton holds a 5-point national lead (46-41) in the new NBC/WSJ poll. (Janet Hook's analysis)

– A new NBC/WSJ/Telemundo poll shows Clinton leads Trump 76 percent to 14 percent among Latinos. She is viewed positively by 64 percent of Latino voters, compared to 11 percent for Trump.

– Large majorities of Americans and Mexicans on BOTH sides of the border oppose building a wall dividing the two countries, according to a survey from Cronkite News/Univision/Dallas Morning News. 72 percent of Americans living near the southwestern border said they are against a border wall, while 86 percent in Mexico's northernmost cities said the same. Both parties believe the tone of the presidential campaign is hurting U.S.-Mexican relations, with 59 percent of Americans and 69 percent of Mexicans agreeing.

– Nearly HALF of Republicans say their party has gone astray, according to a Morning Consult poll: 46 percent of Republicans said they think their party has "pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track." (40 percent said they believe it's on the right track, and 14 percent don't know or are undecided.)

Only 27 percent of voters 55-64 said they believe the party is on the right track. Meanwhile, that number doubles among voters between the ages of 30 and 44 (54 percent) who view the party in a more positive light.

Two-thirds of Republicans believe the party is "stale."

One in five Republican voters believe the Republican Party does not accurately represent their views.

HILLARY'S VEEPSTAKES:

– "A liberal firebrand who could stoke the passions of the Democratic base. A Hispanic who could fire up one of the country's fastest-growing population — and make history. Someone with governing experience who might also help with a key group where Demo-crats lag: white men." From John Wagner, Abby Phillip and Ed O'Keefe: "With less than a week to go before Clinton is expected to select a running mate, these are among her choices. She has focused intensely on the task in recent days … And she is looking for the best partner in the White House more than the best campaign asset, they said. So while her highly anticipated announcement could telegraph crucial electoral calculations, it may signal even more how she plans to run the presidency." Clinton's pick could also reveal something about how she wants to be viewed. Others say relationship is key: "For her, it may literally be a matter of who she wants to work with," said veteran Democratic operative Joe Trippi.

– V.P. contender Tom Vilsack compared Trump to Bernie Madoff: "He is selling something that people don't fully understand and appreciate what it actually means." (NBC)

– A West Virginia lawmaker says he regrets tweeting that Clinton should be "hung on the mall in Washington, D.C." as punishment for her private email server. "But Michael Folk, a member of West Virginia's House of Delegates, said he still believes Clinton should be tried for treason after an FBI investigation determined she handled classified information on the server," CNN reports.

TURKEY

– Turkish authorities fired 8,000 police officers today, raising fears of an "all out purge" of President Recep Erdogan's dissenters as he continues to concentrate power. Arrest warrants have also been issued for at least 2,745 judges and prosecutors across the country. (Hugh Naylor and Erin Cunningham)

As many as 3,000 Turkish members of the military have also been detained: "Among those arrested was the commander at Incirlik Air Base, which is used by U.S. forces to launch raids against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria … The base is a major NATO installation hosting U.S. forces that control a stockpile of nuclear weapons."

– John Kerry this morning urged the Turks to uphold democratic principles as it goes after the alleged plotters.

SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:

— ZIGNAL VISUAL: Over the weekend, our analytics partners at Zignal Labs tracked more than 200,000 mentions of the Republican convention online.

Here were the most discussed topics among those writing and tweeting about the convention:

Mentions spiked when it was announced that Scott Baio – who played Chachi on "Happy Days" – will speak in Cleveland. "I actually was at a fundraiser for Mr. Trump the other night with my wife, and he invited me to speak at the convention, which was completely unexpected and out of left field," Baio explained on Fox News.

The most popular RNC-related Tweet of the weekend came from Wall Street Journal reporter Byron Tau, who highlighted this awkward sign in the convention hall:

More sights from Cleveland:

From a CNN reporter:

A joke from our colleague, Wes Lowery:

Trump switched his campaign logo from this:

To this:

Samantha Bee's gif illustrates the unintentional humor (click to watch):

Political Twitter had plenty to say:

A flashback to Pence's literature for a failed 1988 House campaign:

Many are making fun of the Melania Trump biography that the RNC sent out:

Trump's official bio notes that he had lunch at the Pentagon ... in 1996.

The California delegation in Cleveland is staying 60 miles – yes, 60 miles – from the city:

(The Plain Dealer has maps of where every delegation is sitting here.)

Carl Paladino brings new meaning to the term "hyperbole":

A blast from GOP conventions past:

House Republicans drew criticism for this selfie of an almost exclusively white 2016 intern class, which starkly highlights the party's diversity problem.

Here's Kevin McCarthy with Lynyrd Skynyrd:

Finally, a shot capturing a gorgeous D.C. night sky over the Nats game:

DAYBOOK:

On the campaign trail: Republicans kick off their convention with a day focused on national security, including speeches by retired Lt. General Michael Flynn, Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), Jason Beardsley of Concerned Veterans for America and Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.).

Clinton is at the NAACP Convention in Cincinnati and the American Federation of Teachers Convention in Minneapolis.

At the White House: Obama presents the Medal of Honor to Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Charles Kettles, U.S. Army. Joe Biden is in Australia.

On Capitol Hill: The Senate and House are out.

NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

– Another day of humidity to kick off the week. The Capital Weather Gang forecasts: "It's a steamy one. Under a mix of sun and clouds, highs head for the mid-90s, but humidity is up noticeably compared with the weekend. The combination of heat and humidity makes it feel close to 100 at times this afternoon.

– The Nationals lost to the Pirates 2-1.

– A Baltimore rape suspect who took four people – including a seven-year-old girl – hostage at gunpoint in a Burger King surrendered after a dramatic, five-hour negotiation with police. (Peter Hermann)

VIDEOS OF THE DAY:

In 1964, Lyndon Johnson ran an ad called "Confessions of a Republican" that gave voice to fears about Barry Goldwater being rash and impulsive. The Clinton campaign tracked down the same guy, Bill Bogert, and got him to make the same case about Trump. Watch the 1-minute web video:

If you missed it on Saturday, here's a 3-minute highlight reel from the Trump-Pence announcement event:

Seth Meyers previewed the RNC:

Stephen Colbert wrapped up the week in politics:

Here are clips from Colbert's time on the convention floor yesterday:

John Oliver offered a few endorsements in the spirit of the season:

Gay Talese, his credibility damaged, defended his journalistic integrity on Seth Meyers's show. "Talese now says reports about flaws in his new book are themselves flawed," Paul Farhi reports. "In interviews to promote 'The Voyeur's Motel' over the past week, Talese has defended his reporting about his subject, Gerald Foos, who said he spied on guests of his Colorado motel from an attic perch for decades. Talese initially disavowed the non-fiction book amid questions about an eight-year gap in Foos' ownership of the motel during the 1980s. But he then reversed himself, saying he had over-reacted when he first learned about the ownership gap late last month. ... Talese's pushback comes as new questions concerning the veracity of 'The Voyeur's Motel' have come to light."

Finally, in honor of the Apollo 11 lunar landing anniversary this week, check out these rare panoramas and gifs from the mission ...

... And this video of Buzz Aldrin punching a moon landing denier who was harassing him (hat tip to David Frum):

These Truckers Are With Trump For The Long Haul

By Nina Burleigh

Newsweek, July 18, 2016

Truckers Jim and Lorraine Morrison started out from Southern California last week, hauling a load of tires to drop off at different points across the West and Midwest. They got a picture taken in front of the Trump casino in Las Vegas before heading off to Utah, Colorado and Nebraska and then up into Minnesota, where they did their last drop. They then turned south and east, planning to reach Cleveland in time for Monday's Citizens for Trump rally.

The Morrisons are founders of Truckers for Trump, which has 18,000 Facebook likes and a Go Fund Me site that states: "We campaign for Trump in all 48 States as we truck drive across this Great nation of ours. We would like to have 1 million truckers with Truckers for Trump bumper stickers T shirts and signage to Unite all Truckers to support Trump for President. Please help us to go to all the possible rallies to show the protesters we will stand strong for America."

They had hoped to organize a convoy of truckers to the Republican National Convention this week, and at one point were talking about a thousand truckers converging at Cleveland. But they say the city put a kibosh on that idea, banning an influx of large rigs. So they set off themselves, stopping in towns and at truck stops along the way, handing out red and white Truckers for Trump bumper stickers and hats and campaigning for their candidate.

Lorraine Morrison, 47, a mother of six (five with a previous husband who died), was born in Mexico. Her mother brought her up into the El Norte of Southern California on a visa when she was 3. She isn't bothered by Trump's call for a Mexico wall.

"I know about people coming over and leaving their families behind. But I do feel we need to close our borders. There has to be a stopping point, in order to make America great again.... You used to work and be able to get a car and a house and go on vacation. Now you can bust your ass and not get anywhere."

The former executive assistant forgives Trump's impolite comments about Mexican criminality, too. "I grew up Hispanic, I understand their heritage and struggles and I understand their concerns,' she says. "I speak to people differently. But I know that he's not hateful and not racist. He's just like all other Americans—he's fed up."

Jim Morrison, 48, was born in El Paso, Texas, and spent the last three decades driving a truck. "Why do I support Donald Trump?" he says. "It's real simple: You gotta look at a man, look in his eyes, eyes are windows to the soul. I was a sheriff once and I've got some experience in looking into eyes. The guy is not gaining anything from this. He already has power and money and you can see the care in his eyes."

Lorraine and Jim have an 8-year-old daughter together, and for the last few years they have been home-schooling the child on the road, in the truck. Lorraine says she made the decision to take her child out of school and move into the truck after hearing a theory that President Obama could institute martial law and send people like her or her husband to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) camps. What would happen, she thought, if her husband was across the country and her child in school when they came for her or them? "I don't want to sound like a conspiracy theorist," she said, "But then again, I don't want to be stupid when it happens either."

Jim shares Lorraine's expectation that Obama still has time to install martial law: "You look at Barack Hussein Obama, look at what he's done what he stands for and what he protects. First, let me say not all Muslims are terrorists, but isn't it funny that all terrorists are Muslims? Every time there's a mass shooting he comes on tv and scolds us and doesn't even say the words 'radical islam.'"

Morrison also says he's heard Obama talk about a third term, although a fact-check doesn't come up with any source for the claim. "Add that to the things he's defended and I believe if he could impose martial law, he would. All he needs is two of his generals to sign off, and some kind of big problem to happen," he says.

Whatever Obama does and whatever comes down the pike in these uncertain times, Lorraine Morrison reckons Trump will take care of them. "I've admired him since I was 23," she says. "I believe in him and the words he's saying and he does love America, he does want to save America. And I am going to feel safe with him. I look at the way he takes care of his household and takes care of his children. He will run us like that. He will keep us safe and self-sufficient and prosperous. I want that, the way he takes care of his family."

10 Things To Know About Florida's Harmful Algae Blooms

By Pam Wright

Weather Channel, July 18, 2016

The enormous harmful algae bloom that has blanketed Florida's Treasure Coast waterways with a "guacamole-like" blue-green sludge is a man-made affliction and one that periodically plagues the Sunshine State to the chagrin of residents, tourists and officials alike.

Earlier this month, Gov. Rick Scott declared a state of emergency in four Florida counties after a bloom reached Florida's beaches this spring. On Friday, the Obama administration denied his request for a federal emergency declaration, according to TCPalm.

In the letter to Scott, FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate wrote the request was denied because "supplemental federal assistance under the Stafford Act is not appropriate for this event."

Scott's press secretary said Saturday that he would appeal FEMA's decision.

As the county officials and the governor wait to hear the decision on the appeal, here are 10 things you should know about the crisis:

1. What It Is and Where It Came From

The algae is a cyanobacteria found in Lake Okeechobee, which comes from the runoff containing human waste and fertilizers from nearby farms and ordinary neighborhoods, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Nitrogen and phosphorus, as well as other nutrients in the polluted runoff, can act like fertilizer for the algae, creating large and extensive blooms.

2. Eager Developers Changed Florida's Waterways

In an attempt to spur the economy years ago, Florida land developers and government officials broke up the natural flow of the state's rivers, Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades to redirect water south from central Florida, according to the Associated Press. The economy did grow as the land was reclaimed from the Everglades for development, but now the unnatural water flow has periodically left rivers and lagoons so toxic with HAB that fish die off, residents become ill and tourists are turned off.

3. The Risks to Humans

If ingested, water contaminated with toxic cyanobacteria can cause nausea, vomiting and, in severe cases, acute liver failure, according to Florida's FWCC. While there have been no documented cases of anyone becoming ill from drinking water containing these toxins, it remains a concern. The Centers for Disease Control says coming in direct contact with the algae can cause a rash and some research indicates a link between long-term inhalation of toxic algae fumes and neurological disorders like Parkinson's and Lou Gehrig's diseases.

4. The Risks to Wildlife and Pets

Florida's wildlife and pets are exposed to the same risks as humans if the toxic water is ingested or contacted, according to the CDC. Pets are particularly vulnerable and owners should be cautious about letting pets near algae-ridden waters. In addition, HABs can deplete the oxygen and block the sunlight that other organisms need to live.

5. Why It Has Reached the Beaches

In January, record rains prompted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to start releasing the polluted water into rivers and estuaries in an attempt to keep Lake Okeechobee from overflowing. The algae bloom became so extensive that it reached area beaches.

6. The Economic Impact

The impact is great. Health care costs from hospital and doctor visits, beach clean-up activities following fish kills, and losses in tourism revenues are some of the costs associated with these harmful algae blooms, according to the Florida Department of Health. While the total loss associated with Florida's most recent outbreak in unknown at this point, on average, $22 million dollars are lost annually in health care costs alone during HAB events.

7. The Short-Term Solutions

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District, which control much of the flow through levees and gates, stopped releasing water into the rivers in an attempt to curb the outbreak, according to AP. That alleviated the immediate outbreak, at least in the river, but it will take much more to alleviate the problem entirely.

8. The Long-Term Solutions

According to AP, Scott wants to "spend unspecified millions to get homeowners off septic tanks and onto sewer lines, reducing nutrient runoff." He also wants to hurry along an $880 million project to strengthen a dike which surrounds Lake Okeechobee, which controls its water flow. The 18-year project is scheduled for completion in 2025, but Scott is calling on federal authorities to help get the job completed faster. The political debate between Democrats and Republicans over who should allocate the extra funds is heeding the progress.

9. What the Florida Environment Protection Agency Says

Dee Ann Miller, spokeswoman for the state Department of Environmental Protection, said that predicting future algae blooms and preventing them are daunting and complicated tasks.

"The nature of most freshwater algal bloom events makes it difficult to predict where and when a bloom will occur or how long it will last," Miller told the Miami Herald. "However, lessening the negative effects of algal blooms is possible through restoration work to improve water quality by reducing nutrients. By reducing nitrogen and phosphorous levels, we can help decrease the intensity and duration of algal bloom events."

10. Precautions Should You Take

According to the CDC, people should avoid exposure to cyanobacterial HABs. The center recommends that people refrain from swimming, water skiing or boating in areas where the water is discolored or where foam, scum, or mats of algae are visible on the water.

If you do swim in water that might have algae, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible. The same goes for pets and livestock.

The CDC also says to avoid irrigating lawns or golf courses with pond water that looks scummy or smells bad and recommends that any "musty" smell or taste in your drinking water be reported to your local water utility.

Florida Can Pay For Algae Recovery On Its Own, FEMA Says

By Isadora Rangel

TC Palm (FL), July 18, 2016

Florida has enough money to handle the Treasure Coast algae crisis on its own and without federal help, a Federal Emergency Management Agency spokesman said Monday.

Gov. Rick Scott failed to prove the state isn't able to handle the "severity and magnitude" of the blooms in his request for a federal emergency declaration, which the Obama administration denied Friday.

"The state of Florida is the (fourth) largest state in the nation with a population of almost 20 million people," FEMA spokesman Rafael Lemaitre said. "The state has robust capability to respond to emergencies and disasters."

Scott himself has boasted the state's economy has grown 2.3 percent and revenue was up by $1.3 billion this year, Lamaitre pointed out.

Scott will appeal the denial but his office on Monday didn't say when. He has 30 days from July 15 to do so.

Florida's Department of Environmental Protection and Martin County have been testing the algae for toxicity, but neither have spent any money to clean it up. Both are monitoring the work of Stuart-based Ecosphere Technologies, which conducted a free demonstration of its method to clean algae from the water earlier this month.

BASIS OF DENIAL

States that request a federal state of emergency must meet the following requirements, Lemaitre said:

Is an effective response to the event beyond the capability of the state and the affected local governments?

Does it require supplementary federal emergency assistance to save lives and to protect property, public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster?

FEMA's denial letter said the federal government already is helping the state, FEMA Administrator W. Craig Fugate wrote. The Environmental Protection Agency is testing St. Lucie River water. Also, the Small Business Administration is offering loans to businesses affected by the algae and opened a Stuart application office last week.

It's unclear what kind of federal funding would become available with a declaration and whether it would make a difference, said Julie Hill-Gabriel, Audubon Florida's deputy policy director. She said she hoped Friday's denial for assistance doesn't hamper coordination between the state and federal governments to address the algae. U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio said he believes those federal dollars could pay companies to remove algae from the water.

FEMA has approved about 85 percent of almost 400 disaster declaration requests since 2011, Politifact reported in June. Disaster standards are unclear and often ignored, and decisions seem arbitrary and politically motivated, according to a Pew Charitable Trusts 2013 report. President Barack Obama, for example, denied a 2013 request from Arizona's Republican governor after a wildfire killed 19 firefighters and destroyed 109 homes at an estimated cost of $6.8 million.

George W. Bush denied a 2002 request from his brother, Gov. Jeb Bush, to help 2,400 Apalachicola Bay workers who lost their jobs because of red tide, a toxic microscopic algae. FEMA said the situation was not severe enough for such a declaration. Jeb Bush's appeal was denied too.

A STATE ISSUE

Scott repeatedly has blamed Obama for the algae crisis, saying the federal government has failed to fund restoration projects and a Herbert Hoover Dike improvement project around Lake Okeechobee.

Scott is expected to challenge Democratic U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson in 2018.

Scott is wrong to blame the federal government, said Audubon Florida Executive Director Eric Draper. The algae blooms are flowing into the St. Lucie River, Indian River Lagoon and Atlantic Ocean beaches with water discharged from Lake Okeechobee. Pollution entering the lake from the north is causing the blooms in the lake.

"Water quality is 100 percent a state issue," Draper said.

TCPalm Trending: Why Did FEMA Reject Emergency Declaration?

By Gil Smart

TC Palm (FL), July 18, 2016

So maybe someone else should have asked?

On Friday, the Obama administration denied Gov. Rick Scott's request for a federal emergency declaration in the wake of the Treasure Coast's blue-green algae crisis.

In typical cryptic bureaucratic style, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Craig Fugate wrote that the request was denied because "supplemental federal assistance under the Stafford Act" — which gives the president authority to determine where and when to declare an emergency — "is not appropriate for this event."

What, exactly, does that mean? Fugate didn't say and FEMA officials weren't available for comment.

But for the record, this was the 11th time Scott has asked for federal money from FEMA since he took office in 2011. FEMA has rejected seven of those requests.

That rejection rate, PolitiFact Florida reported last month, is far higher than the national average.

So what gives? Are Florida disasters somehow less worthy of federal assistance than disasters elsewhere? Does it have more to do with politics than it does the disaster itself?

Or are we just doing it wrong?

As PolitiFact reported last month, there are two types of declarations a governor can request: emergency declarations, like the ones Scott made for the algae crisis and the Orlando nightclub shooting, and major disaster declarations.

Emergency declarations are designed to save lives and property immediately before or after a disaster occurs by providing up to $5 million for generators, national guard evacuations or other specific forms of aid.

FEMA records show Scott has made one other emergency declaration since 2011, following severe storms that slammed Panhandle counties earlier this year. That request also was denied, meaning all three of Scott's requests for an emergency declaration have been nixed.

Nationwide, PolitiFact reported, FEMA grants the vast majority of emergency declaration requests, signing off on 61 of 67 since 2011.

Scott's press secretary, Lauren Schenone, said the Obama administration's decision to nix the request was "frustrating."

"He's clearly not making this a priority," she said, adding that Scott likely would appeal the decision, but Schenone wasn't sure when.

But U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy blamed Scott for the denial, saying the governor's initial request "only sought to point fingers at the federal government and away from the state's responsibilities."

And Murphy kind of has a point.

In Scott's request to Obama, the governor blamed "the federal government's lack of appropriate maintenance" of the Herbert Hoover Dike around Lake Okeechobee as the reason for the discharges that have fouled our waterways. "Consequently," Scott wrote, "any damage caused by the unnecessary water releases ... is the federal government's responsibility."

In other words: It's your fault. Now give us money.

So maybe there's a reason this didn't fly.

Unless pleas from area legislators and Scott's appeal can change FEMA's mind, it looks like we're on our own. The calvary is not on the way.

But while we can't know whether wording the request in a more conciliatory way would have produced a different outcome, we also can't help but think it might have been better to say "please" — rather than, "You OWE us."

About Gil Smart

Gil Smart is a columnist for Treasure Coast Newspapers and a member of the Editorial Board. His columns reflect his opinion. Readers may reach him at gil.smart@tcpalm.com, by phone at 772-223-4741 or via Twitter at @TCPalmGilSmart.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Flood Maps May Change For Some, Not All, Areas

By Pamela Pritt

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, July 19, 2016

A significant number of state residents who were flooded last month didn't have flood insurance, mainly because they were not in the flood zone, according to maps produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

But that doesn't mean the FEMA maps were wrong, said Kevin Sneed, West Virginia's floodplain management assistant coordinator.

The maps encompass areas likely to be flooded in 100-year flood events. June's devastating flash flooding is said to be in the 1,000-year flood range.

A 100-year flood has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year; the probability decreases for a 500-year event to 0.2 percent and a 0.1 percent annual chance for a 1,000-year flood.

It's highly unlikely that the larger maps will change, Sneed said, although certain map panels may be revised. "It's hard to get a study redone, but it might be necessary in Rainelle."

In western Greenbrier County, nearly all of Rainelle's businesses were flooded, as were hundreds of residents, who live between Sewell Creek and Little Sewell Creek.

"There will be community meetings in Rainelle about mitigation and how to rebuild Rainelle the right way," Sneed said.

Sneed said his agency is out collecting high water marks, and new map panels could come out of the data collected.

FEMA requires that homes and businesses be elevated above the 100-year mark, but most communities in the state have enacted ordinances that require a 2-foot elevation above that mark.

Sneed said homeowners with a mortgage who live in the "Special Flood Hazard Area" have a 26 percent chance of flooding during the life of a 30-year mortgage.

"The chances of flooding in a Special Flood Hazard Area are far greater than your house catching fire," he said.

Open House Being Held To Introduce New Chatham County FEMA Flood

WTOC-TV Savannah (GA), July 18, 2016

SAVANNAH, GA (WTOC) –

An open house concerning new flood maps will be held Tuesday for residents and business owners of Chatham County.

The event will offer the community a chance to learn how and why the local risk of flooding has changed, how the proposed new flood maps will be used, and steps they can take to protect themselves from the extensive damage that flooding often causes.

The open house will be Tuesday, July 19 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at Savannah Technical College (Savannah Campus).

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MITIGATION

FEMA Assessing Storm Damage In Northern Wisconsin

By Bill Novak

Wisconsin State Journal, July 18, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will begin assessing storm damage in northern Wisconsin next week to help officials determine if the state should apply for federal relief.

Gov. Scott Walker asked for FEMA's damage assessment after storms ripped through eight counties and a reservation, washing out highways and bridges, with some roads expected to take weeks to repair.

The Wisconsin Emergency Operations Center said more than $30 million in damage has been reported, with over $28.8 million in damage to public infrastructure and almost $1.8 million to private property.

"Communities throughout northern Wisconsin were hit hard by flooding last week," Walker said Monday. "We are doing everything we can to help them."

The governor declared a state of emergency for Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer and Washburn counties.

FEMA will look at public infrastructure damage in those counties, as well as on reservations for the Bad River Band and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

FEMA is expected to begin assessing damage on July 25. The assessment will be forwarded to Walker to help determine if the state will request a federal disaster declaration, the first step to requesting federal disaster assistance.

FEMA To Begin Northwoods Flood Inspections Next Week

WHBL-AM Sheboygan (WI), July 19, 2016

UNDATED (Wisconsin Radio Network) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency will look at northern Wisconsin's storm damage next week to see if it's enough to qualify for possible disaster aid.

Governor Scott Walker has asked FEMA to assess the damage to government and tribal facilities — including roads and bridges. Many roads remain closed one week after as much as eleven inches of rain fell in the region – which includes Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer, and Washburn counties. Walker already declared a state of emergency in the area last week.

Preliminary estimates put the damage to public facilities and infrastructure at almost $29 million. That figure could grow as crews continue to inspect areas impacted by flooding.

The FEMA assessment begins next Monday. Walker's office says it will take several days to complete.

Walker Seeks Fed Assessment

WTAQ-AM Green Bay (WI), July 18, 2016

MADISON, WI (WTAQ) – Governor Scott Walker is seeking a federal assessment to conduct a damage estimate in the wake of storm damage to roads and bridges in northern Wisconsin.

"Communities throughout northern Wisconsin were hit hard by flooding last week. We are doing everything we can to help them," Governor Walker said in a statement. "I saw the damage firsthand and have worked with Wisconsin's federal delegation and my cabinet to provide immediate assistance to the effected communities."

The storm and flooding caused more than $28 million in damage to those roads, bridges and trails. Walker has declared a state of emergency for Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer, and Washburn counties.

According to a release by state emergency management officials, the storms caused nearly $1.8 million to homes and businesses in the affected counties.

Teams from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will begin assessing damage the week of July 25. The assessment is expected to take a few days to complete.

Information gathered will be provided to Governor Walker to help determine if the state will request a federal disaster declaration. It is the first step to request federal disaster assistance.

– Jeff Flynt

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Flood Victims And Volunteers Invited To Town Hall Meeting In Fayette

By Sarah Plummer

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, July 19, 2016

Fayette County flood victims, volunteers and residents are invited to a Town Hall meeting at 6:30 p.m. today at Midland Trail High School.

FEMA and county code enforcement will be on hand to answer questions as residents begin to rebuild after the June floods.

Items to be discussed range from individual assistance, hazard mitigation, flood plain management, building permits and grant programs.

Time will be set aside for questions and discussion.

St. Albans Directs Flood Damage Reports To FEMA

By Emily Rice

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, July 18, 2016

St. Albans City Council opened session with a public hearing regarding a code ordinance regarding floodplains and protocol for reporting flood damages.

The city requested that all damage reports be made to the Federal Emergency Management Agency and not the city itself. Council also made a resolution authorizing participation in the hazard mitigation grant program, which was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Council also approved second readings of four ordinances all by unanimous voice vote and read by Charles Riffee, city attorney.

A second reading of the ordinance to vacate and abandon a portion of a 20-foot right of way between Second and Third Streets to make way for the CVS project was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Councilman-at-large Jerry Cogar asked that questionnaires regarding street lights be returned and asked his fellow council members to report any non-burning lights in their wards.

Ward 3 Councilman Jason Philabaun presented the Finance committee report and council approved payment of current invoices in the amount of $20,891.81 and purchase of a zero-turn mower for the Parks department from Pile Hardware in the amount of $4,249.

"This thing is phenomenal," Kevin Pennington, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, said in regard to the new lawnmower. "It will cut our grass cutting time in half and we are really looking forward to it."

Ward 4 Councilwoman Cheryl Thomas announced St. Albans Night Out Against Crime from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on August 2, in Mayberry's parking lot. The event is free to the public. Thomas also mentioned that there will be about 50 different exhibitors including Batman from Heroes for Hire.

Kevin Pennington, superintendent of Parks and Recreation, made multiple reports of events from his department including a Family Pool Party on July 29 with Marco's pizza provided at the city pool and movie night at dusk July 30 at Roadside Park where the movie "Zootopia" will be shown. Other events include Super Hero day at the City Park on August 13. The time will be announced at a later council meeting.

Pennington commented on the damage the city's dock sustained during the recent flooding.

"We are trying to get some funding to repair that," Pennington said. "We are going to fix it the best we can right now, to try to get us through this summer and should be completed by next week so our boaters will be able to use the ramp."

Council then opened the floor to a public forum.

A group of residents from Edgehill Drive in Ward 2 attended the meeting and addressed council regarding a condemned house in their neighborhood that allegedly had been raided for methamphetamine production and has attracted vermin.

They requested assistance from the council to have the house demolished or remediated. The group addressed council one by one, each pleading or demanding help from council.

Riffee told the group that there were some hold-ups in the Building Department about the city's interest for remediation because of funding or demolition because of toxins that may be present in the structure.

The group asserted that it would continue to attend city council meetings requesting assistance in this matter until it was resolved.

All members of council attended Monday's meeting.

Council's next meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 1 on the second floor of the Municipal Building at 51 Sixth Avenue.

Santa Clara Wins FEMA Grant For Blue Clay Slide

By Julie Applegate

St. George (UT) News, July 18, 2016

SANTA CLARA – Santa Clara City has finally been awarded a federal grant which will allow the city to stabilize a landslide which has been plaguing residents for decades.

City officials received word Monday that a $1.17 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency had been granted, Mayor Rick Rosenberg said.

"It's good news, good news," Rosenberg said. "We're excited about it."

The hillside near Truman Drive on the edge of Santa Clara Heights has been sliding for decades; the first instability was noticed by the Utah Geological Survey in 1981 and the first major landslide happened in 1992.

This is the second year in a row the city has applied for a FEMA hazard mitigation grant.

Read more: City seeks grant to stabilize blue clay slide area, purchase homes for demolition

At least 26 homes have been impacted by the slide, Rosenberg said. Movement is believed to be caused by a combination of blue clay and underground water. Attempts to pinpoint the source of the water have been unsuccessful, and repeated efforts have been made to stabilize the hillside. A slow-moving landslide in Santa Clara destroyed homes and forced the closure of Truman Drive, Santa Clara, Utah, Dec. 23, 2015 | Photo by Julie Applegate, St.

In 1993 large cement shafts were installed above the slide area behind affected homes on Cinnamon Circle, in an effort to stabilize the slope.

The shafts extended between 20 and 40 feet into the shale bedrock under the hill, but in 2002, the hill moved again, forcing residents to vacate two homes and displacing most of the cement shafts.

The FEMA grant will be combined with a $351,000 loan from the Community Impact Board and $40,000 in cash and in-kind contributions from the city, Rosenberg said. The FEMA pre-disaster mitigation grant requires Santa Clara to fund 25 percent of the project.

The total of $1.56 million will allow Santa Clara to purchase five properties including three homes that are affected by the slide but still occupied, Rosenberg said. Two vacant lots will also be purchased.

The homes will be torn down and the top of the hillside will be graded to remove weight from the top of the slide area. In addition, ground water drains will be installed in the unstable hillside and a buttress will be built at the base of the hill.

The work is expected to reduce the risk to adjacent homes, Rosenberg said.

Affected homeowners will be contacted by city officials with more detailed information, and meetings with homeowners and appraisers will be set up within the next few weeks, Rosenberg said.

The homes being considered for purchase are those considered to be at highest risk. If purchased, the homes would be demolished and the area would become open space.

"No one would be able to buy it, purchase or build on those lots," City Manager Ed Dickie said in an earlier interview. "Ever."

Hopefully, the hillside mitigation efforts will stop the slide, make property in the area safer and prevent future problems, Dicke said.

"So that's what we hope to do, is stop this so it doesn't affect any other property owners."

Production Schedule Delays Saltillo Storm Shelter

By William Moore

Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, July 19, 2016

SALTILLO – Local officials hoped the large, community storm shelter beside Saltillo City Hall would be completed and in place by mid-April.

But it now looks like it will be some time in August before the $47,000 shelter that will house up to 96 people will be ready.

"We are waiting for the manufacturer," said Saltillo zoning administrator Brian Grissom. "We did a purchase order. It will be prefabricated in Decatur, Alabama.

"It hasn't really been delayed, it's just the company had several other projects ahead of ours."

Officials accepted the bid from Supercell Shelter late February. The 10-foot wide arched building will be

48 feet long and have benches along both sides and the center. It's designed to house 96 people.

"There are a lot of residences and businesses in the immediate downtown area," Grissom said. "They tried to look at people who could make it there within five minutes."

The bulk of the funding for the project will come from federal funds through a Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant. The grant will pay 75 percent, just more than $35,000. The city's matching funds will be $11,695. That can include in-kind services such as preparing the site.

The city will handle the dirt work for the site. The manufacturer will come in and pour the concrete slab and let it cure. The bulk of the shelter will be prefabricated and shipped to Saltillo. An 80-ton crane will then hoist it into place – at the south end of the city hall parking lot, between the fire department and the railroad tracks.

Saltillo already has two small, prefabricated concrete and steel tornado shelters at City Park that are available to the public. The desire for a large safe room to serve the community grew out of the April 2014 tornado that hit Tupelo.

U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

FEMA Releases New Guide On Radio Communications For Fire Service

Radio Resource Magazine, July 18, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) released a new guide on radio communications for the fire service. The 97-page guide offers 10 sections covering from why the fire service is different from other first responders to the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet).

The USFA worked with labor union International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to develop the second edition of the "Voice Radio Communications Guide for the Fire Service." The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), First Responders Group, Office for Interoperability and Compatibility (OIC) supported the partnership.

"The USFA is committed to using all means possible for reducing the incidence of injuries and deaths to firefighters," the guide's acknowledgements said. "As a labor union, the IAFF has been deeply committed to improving the safety of its members and all firefighters."

Sections also cover basic radio technology, digital and analog technology, conventional and trunked radio systems, portable radios, system design and implementation, interoperability and spectrum licensing.

The guide is available here.

FIRE GRANTS

Great Barrington Fire Department Snags Grant For New Oxygen Tanks

Pittsfield (MA) Berkshire Eagle, July 18, 2016

GREAT BARRINGTON — U.S. Rep. Richard Neal, D-Springfield, congratulated members of the Great Barrington Fire Department on Monday for winning what he termed a "handsome" $160,477 award from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Neal was in town to announce the grant, which will be used to purchase 28 new self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) units — commonly known as air packs, according to Fire Chief Charles Burger.

"The units we have now are 11 years old, and some are in poor condition," Burger said. In fact, he said, the manufacturer who used to make the Great Barrington units has gone out of business, making it impossible to get replacements.

Neal said FEMA grants of this nature are extremely hard to get.

"These applications are scrutinized very carefully," he said. "A $160,000 grant is a handsome award to a small community like Great Barrington. I'm assuming that like any small community, you have expenses."

Burger confirmed that his department "has a number of capital projects we're looking at. This grant will help tremendously."

He said the new air bottles that are the principal part of the air packs will be 45-minute bottles, as opposed to 30-minute bottles.

In addition, he said, the new air bottles will sound an alarm when they are two-thirds depleted. Formerly, he said, the new bottles would sound an alarm when they are three-quarters depleted.

"That's a help for us," he said. "Earlier warning is always a help."

The new air packs will also be easier to maintain and have face plates that will not fog up. Visibility, he said, is especially essential in fighting fires.

The new air packs also have better communication equipment, Burger said.

The packs are used an average of 20 to 25 times a year, the chief said.

He expects to get the new equipment in about three months. Firefighters also will need a few weeks to train with it, he said.

Rep. Neal Highlights FEMA Grant For Great Barrington Firefighters

WAMC-AM Albany (NY), July 18, 2016

Congressman Richard Neal was in Great Barrington today to celebrate a federal grant upgrading the town's firefighting equipment.

The Democrat met with Great Barrington Fire Chief Charles Burger at the fire station to highlight the $160,000 FEMA award.

"This grant is going towards replacing our self-contained breathing apparatus or what most people know of as air packs," Burger said. "It's the cylinders we wear on our backs in order to breathe clean air in a hazardous environment."

Neal says part of the determination to bring about this type of funding stemmed from a 1999 warehouse fire in Worcester that killed six firefighters.

"In Worcester in particular the building was old and the firefighters ran out of oxygen," Neal said. "They were lost in the building. They were trapped."

Chief Burger expects to have 28 new air packs in the next three months, followed by a month of training before they are put in use.

"You have to be able to operate them flawlessly with your eyes closed at 3 o'clock in the morning," said Burger.

Burger says the new air packs are made by a company called Scott which has 60 percent of the market share. They contain 50 percent more oxygen than the current "30-minute packs," which provide about 12 minutes of working time. He says firefighting packs have universal air connections among the manufacturers.

"There are operating improvements with regards to communications," Burger said. "Obviously speaking through a mask is very difficult particularly when speaking through a mask over a radio. These new units transmit sound through them almost as clean as speaking without a face piece on."

Burger says the existing 32 packs are 11 years old — made a manufacturer that is out of business.

"The plastic is becoming more and more brittle and stuff is breaking," he said. "Every time we use them we take multiple packs out of service that then need to be repaired."

He adds that the new masks don't have to be completely taken apart to clean them, unlike the current set.

"Despite the fact that's just water that dried on there that creates such a strong seal, you physically cannot exhale," Burger said. "You have to then take the thing apart – you hope the building's not burning down at that point – break the seal, stick it back together and go to work."

Burger says the town's 35 active volunteer firefighters train with the equipment all the time, using it 20 to 30 times a year for fires, carbon monoxide and hazardous materials calls. He says the new equipment holds up better to modern firefighting because today's building products release heat energy at three times the rate as materials used in the 1970s. Burger says when the current masks are scratched they can absorb heat energy and potentially fail.

"It looks like it glazes over and your first instinct is 'Well, what's wrong?'" Burger explained. "So you go to touch it and you just wipe your face piece right off your face. So the way we have to train people to do it is as soon as you think that something might be wrong you have to get out."

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

Councilman Eric Ulrich Blasts Mayor De Blasio Over "Inefficient" Sandy Relief, Build It Back Program: "It's A Bureaucratic Nightmare"

By Erin Durkin

New York Daily News, July 18, 2016

City Councilman Eric Ulrich blasted Mayor de Blasio for his handling of the Build It Back program, saying hundreds of families have been left hanging years after Hurricane Sandy.

The Queens Republican, who is considering running against de Blasio for mayor next year, said the program's director Amy Peterson should resign or be fired.

"It's broken. It's not working. It's inefficient. It's a bureaucratic nightmare. It's a boondoggle," Ulrich said.

Speaking outside a Rockaway Park home that is still waiting for construction, Ulrich cast doubt on de Blasio's promise that all work on homes in the program will be done by the end of 2016.

"There's just no way that's going to happen," he said.

De Blasio appointed Peterson in March 2014 and pledged to turn around the program after it launched under former Mayor Bloomberg but did not fix up a single home.

"Amy Peterson has very good intentions. I'm sure that she gives 100% to her job, but she is simply in over her head and she is not able to effectively turn around the program," Ulrich said. "She's just not able to get the job done."

The Queens lawmaker has created an exploratory committee to look at a run against de Blasio.

"This is not a griping session. It's not an opportunity to do political grandstanding. It's not a chance just for me to take potshots at the mayor — although I'm happy to do that," he said Monday.

He said the city also is counting homes as under construction when a fence has been erected but no actual work has been done, and counting them as completed when families are still not allowed to move back in.

Ellen Nichtern, 59, said the city asked her to move out of the Beach 117th St. home she shares with her elderly mother in February to make way for Build It Back construction — but still hasn't started work.

Her mother, also named Ellen Nichtern, 86, bought the home in 1968.

"She's very depressed and she just wants to get home. This is killing her," Nichtern said.

Officials have told her issues with permits are holding up the construction, as the house sits empty waiting for elevation and repairs to a damaged bedroom and her family rents an apartment nearby.

"I've done everything," she said. "I talked to everybody and I'm just getting nowhere."

Nearly 20,000 homeowners applied for help from the program, though thousands have withdrawn in part because of long delays.

Out of 8,729 active applicants, construction has started on 3,000 homes and finished on 2,000 homes, while other families have received reimbursement checks for work they paid for themselves, the mayor's office said.

"When Mayor de Blasio took office and appointed Amy Peterson to run the program, not one homeowner had received a check or seen construction. That is why this administration immediately overhauled the program and took over direct management — resulting in 80% of homeowners served to date. Further, $120 million in reimbursement checks have been issued to residents," said de Blasio spokesman Raul Contreras. "We are continuing to elevate and rebuild homes across the City and Staten Island to complete the program — as the Mayor committed — by the end of this year."

FLOODS

NW Wisconsin Flood Damage Estimate Tops $30 Million

By Andrew Krueger

Duluth (MN) News Tribune, July 18, 2016

Damage from last week's major flooding in parts of Northwestern Wisconsin is now estimated at more than $30 million, and the state is considering whether to request a federal disaster declaration.

Assessments of flood damage also are continuing in parts of east-central and Northeastern Minnesota, which also were hit by rainfall in excess of 8-10 inches a week ago. The rain sent creeks and rivers out of their banks, and caused damage to highways, local roads and some homes.

Wisconsin emergency management officials reported Monday receiving preliminary estimates of nearly $29 million in public infrastructure damage from eight counties, as well as the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

That total includes more than $11.5 million in Iron County — where the campground and marina at Saxon Harbor were devastated by floodwaters — as well as more than $5.8 million in Ashland County, more than $5.4 million in Bayfield County and more than $3.4 million on the Bad River Reservation.

Damage to homes and businesses across those jurisdictions is estimated at nearly $1.8 million so far. The Bad River band reported the most serious damage, with 10 homes destroyed by floodwaters and two others sustaining major damage.

Bayfield County reported 10 homes with major damage and 20 others with some effects from flooding; Ashland County reported two with major damage and 140 others at least affected; and Sawyer County reported 112 with minor damage or affected by the storms.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker has requested that the Federal Emergency Management Agency conduct a preliminary damage assessment, starting next week, to determine if the state should request a federal disaster declaration; state officials said that's the first step toward requesting federal disaster assistance.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is being assisted by eight teams of Wisconsin Army National Guard engineers in assessing flood-damaged roads.

“Local authorities requested the Guard and DOT to assess damaged town roads in rural and isolated areas where local resources are limited,” state officials reported Monday.

Work continued Monday to fully reopen U.S. Highway 2 between Ashland and Hurley. The road is open to car and light truck traffic using a detour around a washout near Odanah, but semi traffic still is being directed to use a lengthy detour. Repair work on Highway 2 is slated to be finished Friday.

Meanwhile, U.S. Highway 63 remains closed near Grand View, and State Highway 13 is closed near Highbridge; detours are in place for what officials have said will be long-term closures because of major washouts.

In Iron County, state officials reported, “based on new sonar information from the U.S. Coast Guard, a dive team will arrive in Saxon Harbor (Tuesday) in an attempt to locate and recover two boats and two vehicles still unaccounted for.”

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest crews are making progress on reopening roads and trails damaged by flooding. Crews are working to clear or repair nearly 100 separate obstructions — such as damaged bridges and culverts, and washouts. A large-area closure has been lifted, and a new closure order is in place affecting individual areas.

Closures include the Beaver Lake, Lake Three, Mineral Lake and Namekagon campgrounds and the St. Peter’s Dome/Morgan Falls area. Find the full list at fs.usda.gov/CNNF; click on the “Flash Flooding Affects Forest” link.

In other news:

The Bad River band will open a multi-agency resource center Tuesday and Wednesday to help connect residents with available resources. The center at 72772 Elm St. in Odanah will be open from 2-8 p.m. Tuesday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday.

Douglas County is collecting flood damage reports from residents; call (715) 395-1636 during business hours.

Sawyer County ((715) 638-3355) and Washburn County ((715) 468-4601) also are collecting flood damage reports.

The American Red Cross has set up a dedicated phone line — (715) 563-6188 — for people whose homes have suffered damage from flooding.

Ashland County has established a disaster relief fund to cover long-term recovery efforts not covered by other funding sources. Donations can be made at Northern State Bank branches in Ashland, Mellen, Glidden or Butternut. For more information, call (715) 682-2772.

MINNESOTA

In Minnesota, where parts of Aitkin, Carlton and Pine counties saw flooding from last week’s heavy rain, state officials still are working to determine if the damage qualifies for state disaster assistance.

All three counties have issued emergency declarations and completed initial damage assessments, which now are under state review.

Carlton County emergency management director Brian Belich said Monday that initial estimates are $480,000 in public infrastructure damage in the county — but that’s not counting some jurisdictions where officials still have not been able to reach damaged areas because of high water.

At least eight homes in the county suffered measurable damage from flooding, with assessments still underway.

Carlton County is seeking state aid for infrastructure damage, Belich said, but so far has not qualified for state aid for homeowners. Residents with flood damage should contact Volunteer Services of Carlton County, (888) 419-1235.

The Pine County Sheriff’s Office reported Monday that many county roads have reopened, but County Highway 61 near the dam in Willow River remained closed, along with Government Road between Sandstone and Hinckley.

Pine County officials asked that residents who suffered damage report it to (320) 591-1634 so the damage can be assessed.

Iron County Seeks Federal Help For Storm Recovery

KBJR-TV Duluth (MN), July 18, 2016

Hurley, WI (NNCNOW.com) – Much of Northwestern Wisconsin is still reeling from last week’s storms. Iron County was one of the hardest hit areas and the community is just starting to rebuild.

Like many people who have been through northwestern Wisconsin recently, Stacy Ofstad, Iron County Emergency Management Director, said that flooding and damage in the area is worse than anything he’s ever seen and it’s especially bad in the place he calls home.

“That’s where I live,” he said. “I live in Saxon I grew up in Gurney the harbor’s been a part of my life for many years.”

The destruction of Saxon Harbor has been one of the most striking images to come out of the storms and the recovering has only just begun.

Ofstad listed the damages and said it will take at least two or three years before the harbor will be like it once was.

"The creek being not in its channel anymore and the damages to the harbor and the extent of the repairs and the environmental work that's going to be done there," he said.

Representatives from the state are currently assessing Saxon Harbor to get some hard numbers they can use to apply for a federal disaster declaration. If that happens FEMA would be on site for three months.

For Ofstad though, it's all about making sure Iron County works as a community to rebuild.

"As far as I'm concerned, we're all in this together," he said. "We're one big family throughout the county."

And they're a family that's recovering from more than just physical damage. In Hurley, a memorial has been set up for Montreal firefighter and former county board member Mitch Koski, who died in the flooding in Saxon Harbor.

"We lost a very important individual," Joe Pinardi Chairman of the Iron County Board said. "We can't recoup that one. The harbor I guess we can rebuild."

Governor Scott Walker ordered all flags in Wisconsin to be flown at half staff today in memory of Mitch Koski.

Bayfield Co. Authorities: Woman Dies After Driving Around Barricades

WDIO-TV Duluth (MN), July 18, 2016

The Bayfield County Sheriff's Office says a woman died after driving around a barricade on a washed-out highway.

A Wisconsin Department of Transportation official called 911 at about 9:30 a.m. Monday to report the incident on U.S. Highway 63 north of Grand View. The official reported that a car drove around two sets of "road closed" signs and into the washed-out portion of the highway, which goes down about 50 feet. The vehicle came to rest in the bottom of the washout.

The driver was airlifted to a Duluth hospital, where she died from her injuries.

The woman's name is not being released because family members are still being notified.

Besides the sheriff's office, the U.S. Border Patrol, Mason EMS, and fire departments from Grand View, Mason, Drummond, and Ashland responded to the scene.

The woman is the fourth person to die in northern Wisconsin in relation to the July 11 storm. One person was killed during the storm, and two others died after their vehicles became stuck in floodwaters.

$2.5 Million Going To Repair Road Damage

WSAU-AM Wausau (WI), July 18, 2016

UNDATED (WSAU) – The Wisconsin Department of Transportation announced that $2.5 million in emergency federal funding is being released to assist in the repair of roadways damaged during heavy rains and flooding last week in northern Wisconsin.

Emergency assessments, operations and repairs have been ongoing since the storms that brought more than eleven inches of rain to some areas overnight between July 11th and 12th, causing a state of emergency as declared by Governor Scott Walker.

Multiple roadways were overtaken by water and some sections were completely washed away. Several highways in Bayfield, Iron, Sawyer, and Washburn Counties have been already been reopened thanks to repairs and detours.

"After a week of working around the clock to help restore Northern Wisconsin's vital transportation links, this funding will enable us to accelerate efforts to make emergency repairs and reopen roadways as soon as possible," said WisDOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb. "We recognize the important role these highways play in tourism, freight movement and daily life for thousands of people, and we are doing everything we can to help restore normalcy."

The funding announcement came upon receipt of a letter from Secretary Gottlieb to the Federal Highway Administration. WisDOT so far has identified nearly $10 million in repair needs for state and federal highways.

– Zach Hagenbucher

Emergency Response To Northern Wisconsin Flooding Continues

By Haleema Shah

Wisconsin Public Radio, July 18, 2016

FEMA announced today that it will be doing a preliminary assessment in northern Wisconsin where Governor Scott Walker declared a state of emergency after severe flooding last week. The torrential rain has caused damage in eight northern Wisconsin counties as well as tribal lands of the Bad River and Red Cliff bands of the Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe. We talk to the secretary of the Department of Administration about the ongoing emergency response in the region.

Host:

Rob Ferrett
Guest(s):
Scott Neitzel
Producer(s):
Haleema Shah

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County Awaiting Federal Assessment Of Storm Damage

Durham (NC) Herald Sun, July 18, 2016

DURHAM – County and state officials are evaluating the damage caused by severe weekend storms and flash flooding to see how residents and business owners were impacted by the storms.

Right now the numbers aren't clear, but Durham County Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Director Jim Groves said more than 50 people were directly impacted by flooding and storm damage – including 30 one-person units at the Econo Plaza at 3115 Fayetteville Street and 24 more at the Eagle Point apartments at 412 Pilot Street.

Groves said on Sunday afternoon county officials conducted a tour of the properties prior to having state officials come in on Monday to validate the damage reports.

"It sounds like they've already reached out to FEMA region four," Groves added, saying federal officials will be in town Wednesday morning. Officials hope by that night the county will know whether it will be able to set up a disaster recovery center where residents and businesses can apply for low-interest loans or grant opportunities to help with the clean up.

He said several homes also had damage from trees, including some on Fayetteville Street and Duke Street. One house on Schrewsbury Street had a load-bearing wall wash away, which was "pretty significant damage because of the moving water."

Over the weekend the Durham Fire Department responded to 28 water rescue calls, most of which were for people trapped in their vehicles by high water. More than 20 streets flooded and were impassable during the storm.

On Saturday about 5 to 6 inches fell in a short time period – just over an hour – and that contributed to the flash flooding.

Flooding has caused the city of Durham's Parks and Recreation Department to close Long Meadow Park and White Oak Park until further notice.

Michael Webb, with the county's Fire Marshal and Emergency Management Department, on Monday was assisting the the assessment teams throughout the affected areas to see how much damage was done.

So far no monetary estimate of the damage is available.

Webb said damage wasn't confined to the apartment complexes, which are just a few blocks from each other, but rather spread throughout the city.

"We've had some where the ceilings are falling in," Webb said. "A lot of It was just the creeks not being able to keep up, just minor flooding that comes through crawl spaces."

However, even with all of the flooding there is a silver lining – so far no injuries have been reported from the flooding and no fatalities.

Webb, a 16-year veteran of the department, said he hasn't seen anything like this since Hurricane Fran which hit the area in September 1996.

Over the weekend a shelter was set up at Hillside High School to help those displaced by the flooding. But by Sunday afternoon only 10 people had used the shelter. The Red Cross is helping out those people as well.

Groves said Monday the shelter is still open for people if they need a place to stay at night.

While storms have calmed down, Durham isn't in the clear. Tuesday has a 50 percent chance of having thunderstorms roll through. While the National Weather Service is reporting less than a tenth of an inch of new rain could fall, it also has a caveat, adding higher amounts of rainfall could be seen if thunderstorms appear.

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center Opens In Tyler

By Paul Rivera

KLTV-TV Tyler (TX), July 18, 2016

TYLER, TX (KLTV) –

FEMA officials say a disaster recovery center was opened Monday to help those affected by flooding.

The center is located at Wise Elementary School at 10659 TX-64 in Tyler and will help those in Smith County affected by any flooding, wind, or water damage from the April 17-30 storms. The center is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Officials say they will be at that location accepting applications until July 29, but may close early if the need is not there.

They say two other centers have also been opened in Cherokee and Anderson Counties. The Cherokee County Location is at the A. Frank Smith Methodist

Church at 131 Cooper St. in Alto and the Anderson County location is at the Palestine Mall.

Those who were affected in these areas can apply at any of the centers that are open. Those applying will need a photo ID, proof of residential ownership, Social Security Card and proof of citizenship.

Those not able to make it to the centers can also apply online.

They can also call 202-368-7966.

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KXXV-TV Waco (TX), July 18, 2016

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– Paul Rivera

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County, City Gets Ready For FEMA Reimbursement

KSWO-TV Lawton (OK), July 18, 2016

COMANCHE COUNTY, OK (KSWO) – Now that FEMA has approved counties and cities disaster assistance, Comanche County and Lawton city officials are getting their damage estimates ready. The county could be reimbursed for part of the cost it took to repair this once washed out road in the eastern part of the county on 120th Street.

FEMA could reimburse the city for almost the entire cost it took to repair this road just off Cache in west Lawton. The city had to remove the road to replace the damaged pipes below. City officials say they can receive money for the debris clearing, and removing blockage from sewage pipes.

The city has an estimate of one-point-five million dollars in damages, and the county has nearly 2 million.

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OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

Rubio Returns To Algae Front Lines After FEMA Funding Fails

WPEC-TV West Palm Beach (FL), July 18, 2016

STUART (CBS12) — U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-Florida) is trying to rebound from the Federal government's failure to come to the aid of the toxic Treasure Coast with any real relief from the algae.

Now, the toxic algae covers 30 miles of waterways and beaches.

The question now, as the layoffs continue, is what can be done to save the river and the way of life.

This time for Rubio's return to the Treasure Coast, there is no grand entry on a million dollar yacht at Central Marine, a marina still coated in a foot of manure-like algae.

There is also no talk of hope that this environmental financial disaster will end.

"If businesses do need to close for a day or week or two until this subsides, that they are going to give us reimbursement, that would be wonderful but until then we are stuck and subjected to this," manager Mary Radabough said during his first visit.

Today she tells CBS 12, no one private or public has offered them funding nor help.

So yes, the protesters will again line up to shout at the Senator for taking money from major political donors like the Sugar Industry--who often back pump dirty water into the already-polluted Lake Okeechobee.

But, we now know FEMA is not coming to the rescue.

The Army Corps of Engineers confirms discharges will continue

And scientists confirm the toxic algae isn't going away, even when it dies and sinks to the bottom of the waterway and Lake. It will then be waiting for the next perfect heat wave to rebound and bloom again, taking an entire ecosystem and economy down with it.

Democratic Congressman Patrick Murphy is now urging Governor Rick Scott to "immediately submit an appeal to the President providing the necessary information to justify an emergency declaration" without the insults. In the initial request for FEMA relief for the toxic region, Governor Scott blamed the President for creating this disaster due to a lack of federal funding for the Herbert Hoover Dike.

Rubio is expected to arrive and meet with local leaders on what options remain for the region before addressing the media shortly after at 4:45 pm.

ZIKA VIRUS

Family Member Of Utah Zika-patient Infected With Zika Virus, Puzzling Health Officials

By Adam Shrier

New York Daily News, July 18, 2016

Authorities are scratching their heads over how a family member who helped care for the elderly Utah man who died of a Zika-related death in late June was infected with the virus, state and federal officials announced Monday.

The infected family member helped care for the deceased patient — the first Zika-related death in the continental U.S. — but had not traveled to a Zika-affected region or had sexual relations with the deceased, presenting the alarming possibility that the infection spread through a new route, health officials said.

“This is a unique situation,” CDC Director Tom Frieden told the Washington Post. “This is the first time where there is a suspected spread of one person to another” outside of sexual transmission.

The infected person, who recovered quickly according to officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was in close contact while providing care for the deceased patient. During that time, he “could have been exposed to that individual’s sweat or tears or bodily fluids,” Frieden said.

But Frieden described the transmission of the virus as “unusual.” There are currently 1,306 travel-related Zika cases in the continental U.S. If this unexplained transmission was occurring regularly, “it’s likely we would have seen it before,” he said.

“There is uncertainty about how this new case contracted Zika,” said Gary Edwards, a health official with the Salt Lake County Health Department. “But we do not believe that there is risk of Zika transmission among the general population in Utah based on what we know so far.”

The Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquito species capable of carrying Zika virus are not present in Utah, Edwards said. CDC scientists are investigating the possibility that the virus mutated or that an infected mosquito may have returned to Utah from a Zika-affected region in the deceased Zika patient’s clothing or luggage.

Health officials are also investigating the elevated levels of the virus present in the deceased patient’s blood. The deceased, who traveled to a Zika-affected region, had concentrations of the virus 100,000 times higher than samples of other infected people, the CDC said.

The newly infected person showed symptoms of Zika but did not exhibit the same high concentrations of the virus, officials said.

Health officials are currently interviewing and collecting samples from family members and health-care workers who were in contact with the deceased patient.

The Utah person’s infection is the fifth case of Zika virus reported in Utah, according to CDC data.

As of July 13, the CDC has documented 1,306 cases of Zika virus related to travel in the continental U.S, including 285 cases in New York State and 14 instances of sexual transmission.

There are 2,916 documented cases of Zika virus in U.S. territories, the vast majority of which were acquired locally. Send a Letter to the Editor Join the Conversation: facebook Tweet

Georgia, Augusta Preparing For Zika

By Tom Corwin

Augusta (GA) Chronicle, July 18, 2016

A “unique” case of Zika infection in Utah that might have spread to a family contact is being investigated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the agency reported Monday. Meanwhile, Augusta and Geor-gia are preparing for the mosquito-borne virus.

CDC officials say they are looking into the case of a man who died in late June and was found to be infected with Zika, with levels of the virus in his body that were 100,000 times what would normally be expected.

A family contact who cared for the patient was later found to have contracted Zika without the primary ways it is normally transmitted, said Satish Pillai, the CDC’s deputy incident manager for Zika response.

That person had not traveled recently to an area where Zika is actively spreading and had not had sex with a returning traveler. Also, Utah does not appear to have the two mosquito species known to transmit the virus, he said.

“This is a very unique situation with these elevated viral loads (in the deceased patient) that we haven’t previously seen,” Pillai said. “There’s a lot we don’t know about Zika virus, and we are still doing a lot of investigation to understand whether Zika can be spread from person to person through contact with a sick person."

He stressed that there is no evidence Zika can be spread by casual contact with an infected person and that the primary way of spreading is through a mosquito bite or sex with an infected person.

Of the 1,306 cases of Zika in the U.S., "none of these have been the result of local spread by mosquitoes," Pillai said.

How the deceased patient got such a large amount of virus in his body is a "chicken-or-the-egg question," said Michael Bell, a medical epidemiologist for the CDC.

"Someone who is extremely ill and debilitated from another disease process could have a diminished immune system that doesn't fight the virus as well. That might allow more virus to have proliferated in the bloodstream."

Or it could be the primary infection, he said. For now, the CDC has not changed its recommendations, and health care workers should use standard precautions to prevent infection, Bell said.

The virus has not made it to Georgia, but officials in the state are getting ready, said Fred Koehle, the special projects manager for Richmond County Mosquito Control. The state Department of Public Health holds a weekly conference call on Mondays devoted solely to Zika, he said.

"We have pediatricians and mosquito control people and health people (on the call)," Koehle said. "It covers any new scientific information that comes up during the week and also covers the numbers and what's going on in the state as far as programs, what we're doing in different areas to get ready, just in case."

There are only two major mosquito control programs in the state, in Augusta and Savannah, he said. The counties in the Atlan-ta area put out larvicides but are not part of the health departments, Koehle said.

"Whatever they have is small and tied to public works or roads and bridges or something like that," he said.

Savannah has a much lar-ger program, with a budget of $3.5 million and aircraft, compared with Augusta's budget of $225,000, he said.

For now, Augusta is continuing its normal program of treating storm drains, putting out larvicides, and investigating and responding to complaints, he said.

"We're as prepared as we can be (for Zika)," Koehle said.

Manatee County Reacts To First Travel-related Confirmed Case Of Zika Virus

Bradenton (FL) Herald, July 18, 2016

With the first confirmed case of Zika in Manatee County, officials are taking extra precautions to keep residents safe.

"It is important to note the case of Zika in Manatee County is travel-related, meaning the person acquired the virus overseas," Mara Gambineri, the communications director for the Florida Department of Health, said in an email. "All cases of Zika in Florida are travel related. There has been no local transmission."

Manatee County has now been added to the "declaration of public health emergency," which prompts more action and cooperation from local officials, including mosquito control.

Mosquito control has been working closely with the Department of Health to make sure the area around the first confirmed case gets some extra attention, said Mark Latham, director of Manatee County Mosquito Control.

"We'd already been out to where the confirmed case was, but we went back out and did a little bit of extra, just to be extra sure," Latham said.

Prior to the confirmed case, there were some suspect or possible cases that mosquito control responded to, and the affected area with the confirmed case had been sprayed before it was confirmed. Mosquito control was back out early Friday afternoon, after the case was confirmed.

Typically, mosquito control covers a 300 to 500 foot area near the contaminated area. There are only two types of mosquitos in Manatee County that can carry the disease, and Latham said they aren't strong fliers. The particular mosquito loves dark, shady areas, Latham said, so mosquito control makes sure to pay close attention.

They also knock on doors and talk to residents, trying to get into backyards and make sure there's no standing water or other breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Latham said people should continue to take precautionary measures, making sure they are not leaving standing water and protecting themselves from mosquitoes by using repellants.

The CDC recommends testing for any person with two of the four most common symptoms — fever, joint pain, rash and red eyes — and a travel history to a Zika-infected area. The federal agency also recommends testing for all pregnant women with a travel history, or a partner with travel history, to any area where Zika is transmitted by mosquito bites.

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists and CDC released a new case definition for Zika that now includes reporting asymptomatic and symptomatic cases of Zika. Prior to this change, states reported only symptomatic non-pregnant cases and pregnant cases regardless of symptoms. This change comes as a result of increased availability for testing in commercial laboratories, according to the Florida Department of Health website.

According to CDC, symptoms associated with the Zika virus last between seven to 10 days. The Florida Department of Health issues a Zika virus update each at 2 p.m. each weekday.

On Saturday, after the case in Manatee was confirmed, U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Sarasota, called Washington's failure to approve Zika funding a "national disgrace."

"Communities in Manatee County and elsewhere in Florida needed federal resources weeks ago to stop this deadly virus," he said in a statement. "The health of thousands of lives are now at stake because Congress and the president could not overcome their political differences."

In June, Buchanan hosted a forum on the Zika virus at University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee with other community partners.

We All Can Use Congress' Vacation

Tyler (TX) Morning Telegraph, July 18, 2016

Once again, we must come to the defense of the do-nothing Congress. Or to be more precise, the do-nothing part, not necessarily the Congress bit.

Congress has adjourned for a lengthy vacation, to allow each member to avoid his or her party convention. And predictably, some critics are stepping forward to chide Congress on work left unfinished.

"Last week, Congress recessed for a 7-week summer vacation with little to show for it," Environment Texas wrote on Monday. "There are important issues still on the table that have not been addressed, including the Zika virus and gun reform. In addition, there's one other thing that Congress still needs to get done this year and that's dealing with the crisis surrounding our drinking water infrastructure."

That group is focusing its harshest criticisms on water quality.

"The devastating lead contamination that has been discovered in Flint, Mich. has highlighted how bad our water quality infrastructure really is, with 18 million Americans living in communities where the water systems are in violation of the law," Environment Texas wrote. "We have major problems with water contamination here in Texas. In fact, over 5 million Texans have been drinking water with reported lead violations."

Now, let's look more closely at those claims. First, the problem in Flint wasn't a lack of federal government involvement – federal government involvement was at the root of the problem.

"Local public officials have called on the federal government to intervene," the Huffington Post reported. "In her successful mayoral bid this past fall, Karen Weaver campaigned in part on that demand. In fact, the federal government was already deeply involved. It took the efforts of private citizens to expose the threat to public health, as it had in Washington, D.C., when that city suffered a major water lead crisis a decade ago."

The problem was that Flint started buying Flint River water, rather than purchasing treated water from Detroit's extensive system. When confronted with increasing reports of health problems, the EPA investigated – and then quashed its own report.

The issue was quickly remedied, once government officials stopped working so hard on the cover-up, by switching back to Detroit water. It will take some time for lead levels in Flint residents go down, but that's not something that Congress can fix.

Nor is it a budgetary issue. The state of Michigan is spending millions of dollars on Flint's water system (including $165 million to replace lead pipes). And President Obama has declared Flint a federal emergency, which frees up federal funds. The real point here is that Congress isn't here to fix Flint. It's a state matter, and the state is handling it. The EPA has a role, of course, as does FEMA. But not Congress. Congress would mostly just get in the way and politicize matters.

The truth is that when the former swampland that makes up D.C. is drained of politicians, we're really better off. Gridlock, in fact, is good.

Let's not begrudge members of Congress their vacations. They can do less harm when they're at the beach.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Open-carry AK-47 In Cleveland Plaza

By Kyle Rowland

Toledo (OH) Blade, July 19, 2016

CLEVELAND — Jesse Gonzales didn't come downtown to disturb the peace. But his appearance in Cleveland's Public Square caused a circus-like atmosphere.

The 26-year-old from nearby Lakewood, donning a camouflage Make America Great Again hat and a Nintendo Duck Hunt T-shirt, had an American-made AK-47 slung over his shoulder. Mr. Gonzales said he brought the firearm "because I can."

"In my lifetime, there's been a gradual, social push for more gun control, specifically for firearms like the one I'm carrying," he added. "All you have to do is listen to the rhetoric on TV every day. There's a lot of emotional language, and it doesn't accomplish anything. No one talks about the actual statistics about homicides with firearms. Specific instances of crime are maintained to fit an agenda."

RELATED: Convention speakers line up to support Trump | Toledoans join protests | Ohio delegates committed to Kasich | Australian enjoy: 'America is great' | Ohio Hometowns Left Behind: Marietta | Clinton speaks to NAACP | ToledoBlade.com/RNC2016

The weapon was unloaded and the safety was on, though Mr. Gonzales did have 30 rounds in his pocket. Mr. Gonzales, who supports Donald Trump because of his Second Amendment beliefs and views on the economy and immigration, does not agree with the notion that there is rising gun violence in the United States, even after several high-profile gun deaths in recent weeks.

Instead, he says it's a media creation and that gun deaths have actually declined dating to the 1990s.

More than 50,000 people are expected to descend on Cleveland this week and none of them can bring a tennis ball or metal-tipped umbrella into the 1.7-square-mile area near Quicken Loans Arena. They can, however, carry an assault rifle under Ohio's open-carry laws.

The Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association asked Ohio Gov. John Kasich to temporarily ban open-carry weapons in the wake of gun violence in Baton Rouge and Dallas, which included the shooting deaths of eight police officers.

In response, Mr. Kasich said he did not have the authority to arbitrarily suspend constitutional rights or state laws.

"An AR-15, a shotgun, multiple handguns. It's irresponsible of those folks, especially right now, to be coming downtown with open-carry ARs or anything else," Stephen Loomis, the head of the police union, said Sunday. "I couldn't care less if it's legal or not. We are constitutional law enforcement, we love the constitution, support it, and defend it, but you can't go into a crowded theater and scream fire. And that's exactly what they're doing by bringing those guns down there."

Security is the topic du jour of the moment after a spate of police shootings across the country. Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson said there is no credible threat on the city. But it is still overrun with law enforcement as violent encounters remain a possibility — the city has a $50 million protest insurance policy.

There's $48.9 million in federal money being spent on security, 4,000 federal personnel from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, FBI, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Secret Service, and other agencies, and 3,000 police officers, with many coming from out-of-state.

Mr. Gonzales said he understands the concerns for public safety. He also countered with questions of why it's OK for police to carry weapons, but it's menacing if he does so.

He owns five guns and said protection is his primary reasoning.

"You can't coerce an armed man," Mr. Gonzales said. "The biggest, strongest man can try and do you harm. But it doesn't matter how big or how strong he is if you have a firearm. It's an equalizer. If you don't have them anymore, it reduces us back to the medieval age where the strongest, fastest men get to do whatever they want."

Information from The Blade's news services was used in this report.

CTX Delegates Notice Heightened Security At RNC

KXXV-TV Waco (TX), July 18, 2016

CENTRAL TEXAS (KXXV) –

The heightened security at the Republican National Convention has not gone unnoticed by delegates from our area.

According to Toby Marie Walker, a Texas alternate delegate at large from China Spring, said it was noticeable even when her group arrived to Cleveland on Saturday night.

"Normally that's a 20-30 minute ride, it's only 13 miles. But it took us an hour and a half with all of the security and the checkpoints and everything to get to our hotel. It was a little interesting because they closed streets and later on those streets may be open but a different is closed," Walker said.

She added it was difficult navigating the streets when going in a vehicle.

In terms of security when going to the convention, she said buses are checked before they go to the convention center. At the location, they go through Secret Service security and security similar to the one at airports.

Walker has noticed a heavy police presence throughout the convention.

"There is Capitol Hill Police all the way down to local. They're everywhere and so it's a little different than being in Waco. There is a police officer every five feet. You see them everywhere," Walker said.

District 17 Alternate Delegate from Lorena Christine Turpin said on their way to an RNC welcome party on Sunday night, they ended up on the route for a parade, where people had a permit to protest.

"It wasn't a very large group of protestors but there was a huge police presence. It looked like there were 10 law enforcement police officers per protester that was there," Turpin said. "It went smoothly, there were no problems. No issues. They were doing their first amendment rights and they were marching down the street as they are welcome to do," Turpin said.

On Monday, Turpin reported seeing people protesting against GOP presumptive nominee Donald Trump.

According to CNN, 3,000 police officers were tasked with guarding the RNC. In addition, 4,000 federal personnel, including 3,000 agents from Secret Service, Transportation Security Administration were expected to be present. Agents from Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Federal Bureau of Investigation, FEMA and elsewhere planned to be there.

Republican National Convention kicked off on Monday in Cleveland, Ohio with approximately 2,470 delegates and 2,302 alternate delegates from all 50 states.

The Texas Republican Party of Texas listed 108 delegates, alternates and 47 delegates and alternates at large from Texas.

Three of the delegates and alternates from District 17 are from McLennan County, two are from Travis County, one is from Brazos County and one is from Freestone County.

This is the first time both Walker and Turpin have been at a national convention.

Walker who supported Sen. Ted Cruz in the primary said her vote had been assigned to Trump, as a delegate at large.

Turpin who is proud to represent Central Texas even as an alternate was paired with a delegate throughout the convention. She anticipates being on the floor throughout the convention but doesn't anticipate voting.

Turpin said the party is not yet unified for the presumptive nominee.

"Is there complete unity? Absolutely not. Was that expected? Absolutely not. [The delegates] are trying to have voices hear. I don't know what the percentage is. We'll find that out on Thursday when the actual vote is for the nominee," Turpin said.

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Teachers Receive New Active-shooter Protocol

By Caitlin Conrad

KSBW-TV Monterey (CA), July 18, 2016

Administrators and staff with Monterey Peninsula Unified School District are going through an intensive active-shooter training this week.

Teachers spent Monday morning in the classroom and ran simulations in the afternoon. Several active-shooter scenarios were simulated using a pellet gun as the weapon and an air horn to simulate gunshots.

The training program is called ALICE, which stands for Alert Lockdown Inform Counter Escape.

"ALICE is providing a different variety of issues, and at the same time, empowering the teachers and the students inside the classroom to take action," school resource officer Patricia Perez said.

Perez has taken the ALICE training and said it goes beyond the shelter-in-place training of the past.

"It is very important. Not just giving you the option of lockdown, it's giving you several options of counter, as well as evacuation," she said.

ALICE trainers got teachers mentally prepared for an active-shooter situation so they know what to do and when to do it. Instructors told them if they have the option to escape and get their students out, it's often the best option. But in the event they come face to face with the shooter, they need to counter.

Counter does not mean fight, it means distract and, if possible, disarm.

Teachers had to think about how to distract a shooter and practiced yelling and throwing things at the person.

Staff members also practiced taking shooters on in groups and disarming them.

"We are training them on ALICE protocol to make sure that students and staff are safe in the event we have an unforeseen violent intruder on campus," Assistant Superintendent Tony Shah said.

Shah said this is the first time district staff members have gone through ALICE.

"So we have had violent intruder drills. We haven't been as consistent as we should be. This is the first that I know of that the district is receiving uniform training," Shah said.

The educator said that while a shooting is unlikely, in this day and age he wants teachers to have the best training possible.

ALICE is validated by research. It is supported by 2,300 law enforcement agencies and complies with the new standard of care developed by the U.S. Department of Education, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

FEMA, FCC Look To Second EAS Test For Clues To Progress.

Inside Radio, July 19, 2016

A second-ever national test of the Emergency Alert System will be held Sept. 28. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Federal Communications Commission have made the previously announced tentative test date official. They've also scheduled Oct. 5 as the date for a secondary test if one is required.

All stations will be required to take part in the test; it comes five years after the first national test and will provide FEMA and the FCC with real-world data on whether changes it has implemented will fix some of the glitches discovered during the first national activation.

The agencies say they're especially interested in determining if the next-generation common alerting protocol-based or "CAP-based" alerts are properly disseminated to stations, as they were designed to be. Since it is one potential solution to the problem of how to send alerts in multiple languages, the national EAS test will be transmitted in both English and Spanish and will include both audio and the text of the test message. "These improvements will help ensure that all members of the public, including non-English speakers and individuals with disabilities, will receive emergency information," the FCC says in a statement.

The other area of special interest for EAS managers is how the test alert is distributed to cellphones and other wireless devices.

As it prepares for the national test, the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau has been deploying an improved feedback portal known as the EAS Test Reporting System, or ETRS, during the past several months. That system is now ready to begin receiving reports from stations. As a result, each station must create an account and submit identifying information to the FCC by Aug. 26. Stations will then have until Sept. 26 to correct any errors in the ETRS system.

Then on Sept. 28 when the next national EAS test is conducted, broadcasters will have 24 hours to log into ETRS to file an initial report about whether they were able to receive and send the alert. Stations will then have 45 days to file a more detailed set of post-test data notes regarding the national test.

You can see the ETRS webpage HERE.

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2016

(SECOND EDITION – 8:30 AM EDT)

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

Louisiana Gov. Requests $2 Billion In Federal Funding For Flood Recovery

By Gretel Kauffman

Christian Science Monitor, September 12, 2016

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards appealed to Congress on Friday to approve $2 billion in federal funding for flood recovery efforts, telling lawmakers that the state "cannot recover without it."

Speaking at a House subcommittee hearing on the federal response to the August flooding that displaced thousands and caused $8.7 billion in damage, Governor Edwards said the money was needed for housing, economic development, and public works. He also urged the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to speed up the delivery of manufactured housing units, part of efforts to shelter people who were living in the more than 55,000 homes now destroyed.

"While the response with manufactured housing units has been quicker than any other Louisiana disaster, it has not been fast enough for the families in Louisiana who have lost their homes and have no place to go," Edwards said.

But while the governor praised the federal response to the flooding thus far, a number of local mayors who spoke said that it was not enough, and lamented a lack of communication between local and federal officials.

One mayor, Jr. Shelton of Central, La., said that he did not directly speak with FEMA for three weeks after the flooding.

"That debris that's out there? That's not debris, it's people's lives," Mr. Shelton said. "We have suicides, we have mental breakdowns, we have families being torn apart."

Some have argued that the slow federal response could be due, in part, to a lack of national media coverage of the disaster.

"It's not just water that's rising," Mike Scott, of the New Orleans Times-Picayune, wrote on August 16. "So is the frustration level of many observers who can't help but notice a key absence amid the tragedy: the national media." And such complaints "aren't trivial," he said.

"As Louisiana well knows, the loosening of the recovery purse strings is directly commensurate to the number of people who are made aware of the scope of the devastation," Mr. Scott wrote. "In this case, where national news coverage has been scarce, locals have every reason to worry that recovery funds will be just as scarce."

While displaced residents wait for FEMA housing units to arrive, a number of local Airbnb hosts have offered to let flood victims stay in their homes for free, as Winston Ross reported for The Christian Science Monitor last month.

"The generosity, compassion and caring, to take from their own income and welcome strangers into their property. There are just no words for that," Kim Stewart, a Baton Rouge resident staying in an Airbnb property while her home is repaired, told the Monitor. "There are no words. I truly believe it's a Southern thing."

This report contains material from the Associated Press.

WH Challenges Republicans On Aid For Louisiana, Flint

By Devin Henry

The Hill, September 12, 2016

The White House on Monday challenged congressional Republicans to provide new funding for the Flint, Mich., water crisis, as well as recovery efforts following severe flooding in Louisiana.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest defended the Obama administration's response to Flint and Louisiana when asked whether funding for the crises will come up during budget meetings with Republicans.

He noted, for example, that 63,000 Louisiana families have received federal assistance and that there's been $260 million in insurance payments there since last month's flooding in and around Baton Rouge.

Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) last week asked federal officials for more than $2 billion to help further recovery efforts. Earnest said Congress would have to address that request.

"Theres a lot of moralizing about how the president should do his job," he said during a press briefing Monday.

"Well he's done it. The question now is, are Republicans in Congress going to do their job? ... Are they going to do their job for the people of Louisiana? I think we're going to find out."

Earnest said the White House "would support congressional action to offer additional assistance" to Flint, which is suffering from elevated levels of lead in its drinking water.

Lawmakers have long tried to cut a deal on aid for Flint. Senators agreed over the summer to include $220 million in funding for Flint and cities with other drinking water problems in a water infrastructure bill, legislation that is set to receive a vote this week.

"It's clear that the problems in Flint are deeply entrenched and the administration would certainly be supportive of an effort in Congress to offer additional assistance," he said. "We'll just add it to the long list of things that Republicans in congress have failed to make progress in."

President Obama and congressional leaders will meet on Monday afternoon to discuss funding the government after the fiscal year ends on Sept 30.

Overnight Energy: Senate Advances Water Bill With Flint Aid

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 12, 2016

WATER BILL, FLINT AID MOVE FORWARD: The Senate inched closer on Monday to wrapping up work on $9.4 billion waterways bill that that provides emergency funding for lead-contaminated communities like Flint, Mich.

The Senate voted 90-1 to end debate on a substitute amendment to the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which authorizes dozens of waterways projects around the country.

Bill sponsors are putting together a package of bipartisan amendments for the bill, but they're likely to steer clear of any controversial provisions in an effort to swiftly advance the legislation this week.

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, said they considered around 35 provisions for the package and "hope to get consensus to adopt [the package] shortly after the cloture vote tonight."

The measure provides $220 million in emergency assistance to address drinking water crises in communities such as Flint, where water from the Flint River corroded the city's pipes, contaminating the water supply with lead.

"We are pleased that after months of working with Republicans and Democrats, our bipartisan agreement to help Flint and other communities is now before the Senate as part of the Water Resources Development Act," Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.) said in a statement.

"In the coming days, we will continue our effort in the Senate to finally pass this urgently-needed help for Flint families."

Read more here.

WHITE HOUSE PRESSURES CONGRESS ON AID: Hours before the Senate's waterways vote, the White House challenged congressional Republicans to do more for Flint and victims of last month's flooding in Louisiana.

White House press secretary Josh Earnest defended the Obama administration's response to Flint and Louisiana when asked whether funding for the crises will come up during budget meetings with Republicans.

In fact, he said, it was time for Republicans to do something the victims – whether it's the WRDA aid package for Flint or the $2 billion Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) wants to help recover from the flooding near Baton Rouge.

"There's a lot of moralizing about how the president should do his job," he said during a press briefing Monday.

"Well he's done it. The question now is, are Republicans in Congress going to do their job? ... Are they going to do their job for the people of Louisiana? I think we're going to find out."

He also knocked Congress for moving slowly on Flint.

"We'll just add it to the long list of things that Republicans in Congress have failed to make progress in," Earnest said.

Read more here.

WH: PIPELINE DECISION CAME FROM OTHERS: The White House on Monday downplayed its influence on an administration decision Friday to block construction on a pipeline project in North Dakota.

The Department of Interior and the Army Corps of Engineers decided Friday to halt construction on a crucial stretch of the Dakota Access Pipeline while it decides whether the project needs a new, tougher environmental review. The decision came moments after a federal court ruled Army Corps officials conducted a proper assessment of the pipeline project's impact on Native American cultural lands in North Dakota.

"I think they're trying to do the right thing here in terms of making sure that everybody's interests are

taken into consideration," Earnest said at his briefing. But he declined to say what role, if any, President Obama had on the decision from Interior and the Army Corps.

"This was a decision that they made." Earnest said.

"I can't speak to the discussions they may have had with the White House. This was ultimately their decision, and they made this decision to ensure that the interests and concerns of everybody who is affected by the construction of this project were properly taken into account."

FIGUERES DROPS OUT OF UN RACE: Christiana Figueres, who led the United Nations' efforts toward last year's Paris climate agreement, is ending her campaign to lead the UN.

Figueres sent a letter Monday to the UN's general assembly and Security Council notifying them, and tweeted it out.

"Out of loyalty to the United Nations and in order to facilitate the advance [sic] of the selection process I hereby inform you that today I withdraw my candidacy to the position of secretary-general," the Costa Rican diplomat wrote.

A poll of UN diplomats last week had Figueres in ninth place out of 10 candidates, according to the Associated Press.

Join The Hill on Wednesday, September 14 for "Preparing for the Next Disaster: A Policy Discussion on Community Resilience," featuring Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.), and Timothy W. Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness at FEMA. Topics of discussion include preparedness efforts to increase community resilience and the role of federal, state & local government in pre-disaster mitigation. RSVP here.

ON TAP TUESDAY I: Sen. Bernie Sanders and others hold a rally outside the White House, protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline. Sanders had asked the Obama administration to block the pipeline, and introduced an amendment in the Senate last week to slow down its construction. The protest is one of dozens around the country.

ON TAP TUESDAY II: A House Oversight Committee panel will host a hearing on conservation efforts.

Rest of Tuesday's agenda ...

The Senate Agriculture Committee will meet to discuss a forestry bill.

AROUND THE WEB:

A mining firm is suing the federal government over its decision to review its lease renewal request for precious metal mining in Minnesota, the Duluth News Tribune reports.

The Alaska Railroad will soon become the first railroad in North America to haul liquefied natural gas, the Alaska Dispatch News reports.

Enbridge, which last week delayed its planned Sandpiper pipeline, is still moving forward with a replacement for it's 1,097-mile Line 3 pipeline running from Alberta to Wisconsin, Forum News Service reports.

BONUS AROUND THE WEB: Web comic XKCD looks at historic deviations in Earth's temperature from the 20th century average. It's fun, until the end.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Check out stories from Monday and this weekend...

-Water bill with Flint aid moves ahead in Senate

-Feds to halt red wolf recovery program

-WH challenges Republicans on aid for Louisiana, Flint

-India challenges US renewable energy programs at WTO

-Brazil ratifies Paris climate deal

-Feds move to protect orchids

-Greens move to dismiss EPA lawsuit over airplane emissions

-Obama eyes big finish on climate

-Week ahead: Senate poised to pass $220M in Flint aid

Melanie Zanona contributed. Please send tips and comments to Timothy Cama, tcama@thehill.com; and Devin Henry, dhenry@thehill.com. Follow us on Twitter: @Timothy_Cama, @dhenry, @thehill

Overnight Finance: Obama, Leaders Huddle On Budget | McConnell Tees Up Short-term Spending Bill | Trump Says Yellen Trying To Help Obama

By Sylvan Lane

The Hill, September 12, 2016

Budget powwow at the White House: President Obama on Monday urged congressional leaders to avert a government shutdown ahead of the Oct. 1 deadline, with election politics looming large over the discussion.

Obama encouraged leaders to move forward on an emerging compromise to keep the government open through mid-December and provide more money to fight the Zika virus.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) attended the White House meeting in what has become a familiar ritual before a funding deadline.

But the dynamic of the meeting was different than in the past, when leaders often engaged in combative negotiations. The Hill's Jordan Fabian has the details: http://bit.ly/2cjOz19

McConnell tees up short-term spending bill: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is turning the Senate toward a short-term spending bill as lawmakers face an Oct. 1 deadline to avoid a government shutdown.

"I expect to move forward this week on a continuing resolution through Dec. 9 ... that includes funds for Zika control and for our veterans," the Senate Republican leader announced Monday on the Senate floor.

McConnell filed cloture on proceeding to a House legislative appropriations bill, which is expected to be the vehicle for the short-term continuing resolution (CR). The move sets up the Senate to take an initial procedural vote this week, once it wraps up work on a water infrastructure bill.

Wrapping up the CR ahead of the Oct. 1 deadline could allow McConnell to get his conference out of Washington and back on the campaign trail. The Hill's Jordain Carney has the latest: http://bit.ly/2cm7j1j.

Cruz throws cyber curveball: Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) is meeting with conservative lawmakers in both chambers to build support for a showdown with the White House over funding the government and power over the internet.

Cruz wants a stopgap measure to fund the government to include a rider that would block the administration from relinquishing the special oversight role the United States has had over the internet since its inception.

The prospect of Cruz leading rank-and-file House Republicans – including members of the House Freedom Caucus – into a last-minute fight with President Obama over a government funding resolution would be a rerun for the Texas senator, who was blamed by his colleagues for causing a 2013 government shutdown over an ObamaCare fight.

It's also a headache for Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), who both want to avoid even the slightest chance of another government shutdown. The Hill's Alex Bolton tells us more: http://bit.ly/2cSjDGi.

Bill would extend foreign investor visa program: Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) said Monday that a short-term spending bill will include an extension of a visa program set to expire at the end of the month, even as negotiations remain deadlocked.

Asked if the EB-5 investor visa program would be a part of the government funding bill, the Senate's No. 2 Republican told reporters "I think that will be part of the [continuing resolution], yeah."

Cornyn's comments come as talks about how to reauthorize the program have stalled in Congress, with senators split on how to determine where money under the program is sent. Jordain Carney surveys the battlefield: http://bit.ly/2cEjXsQ.

Trump: Yellen's doing Obama's bidding: Donald Trump accused Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen on Monday of doing President Obama's bidding by keeping interest rates low.

In an interview with CNBC, the Republican presidential nominee charged that the Fed was no longer politically independent and instead was pursuing policies to boost Obama in his final months in office.

"She's obviously political, and she's doing what Obama wants her to do," he said in a phone interview. "As soon as [rates] go up, your stock market is going to go way down, most likely. Or possibly."

While Yellen was Obama's pick to lead the Fed, the central bank prizes itself as a politically independent institution and strongly rebuts any claims that outside politicians weigh on its efforts to steer the U.S. economy. Here's more on the madness from The Hill's Peter Schroeder: http://bit.ly/2czbmJP.

Fed official urges caution in raising rates: Lael Brainard, a member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, made the case Monday for the Fed holding off on rate increases, arguing that inflation remains lower than normal and there remain economic risks looming abroad. That combination of factors "counsels prudence in the removal of policy accommodation," she said.

Brainard's speech had been closely monitored by financial markets for any indications that the central bank could be preparing to raise interest rates again at its September meeting. The Fed has only raised rates once since the financial crisis, back in December, but Fed watchers are expecting another hike could be coming soon.

But Brainard's speech appeared to suggest such a hike could still be a ways off, as she contended that there was still more the Fed could do to boost the labor market while keeping rates low to protect the U.S.

economy from potential disruptions from foreign economies: http://bit.ly/2cqzQRx.

Happy Monday and welcome to Overnight Finance, where we're also feeling a bit better after this weekend, thank you for asking. I'm Sylvan Lane, and here's your nightly guide to everything affecting your bills, bank account and bottom line.

Tonight's highlights include more anger over the Iran settlement, congressional heat on Wells Fargo, more Fed rate hike delays and a vision for a new financial regulatory system.

See something I missed? Let me know at slane@thehill.com or tweet me @SylvanLane. And if you like your newsletter, you can subscribe to it here: http://bit.ly/1NxxW2N.

On tap tomorrow:

House Financial Services Committee: Markup of the Financial CHOICE Act of 2016, 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cA1i0l.

House Small Business Committee: Hearing entitled "The Cumulative Burden of President Obama's Executive Orders on Small Contractors," 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2c5X1pT.

House Ways and Means Committee: Hearing on tax-exempt college and university endowments, 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cLDuv1.

Senate Banking Committee: Hearing on National Flood Insurance Program mapping, 10:30 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cr3pq4.

House Judiciary Committee: Hearing on Oversight of the Patent and Trademark Office, 1 p.m. http://bit.ly/2czNymh.

Amplifying U.S.-Africa Trade, Investment, and Economic Relations: From Obama to the Next Administration, 2 p.m. http://bit.ly/2cSpvzs.

Chamber calls for overhaul of financial regulatory system: While Congress mulls how to replace Dodd-Frank financial regulation, the United States' largest business advocate is looking to reshape the system around it.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce on Monday called for a complete reboot of how the United States regulates financial institutions and banks, insisting that the current framework is outdated and cumbersome for businesses of all sizes.

Top Chamber officials panned the country's "1930s regulatory system," arguing it stifles economic growth and capital access with redundant, overbearing regulations.

The Chamber's Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness (CCMC) outlined potential fixes in a report released Monday that it said was meant to start an "honest debate" about the country's regulatory future.

The release comes a day before the House Financial Services Committee marks up the panel's sweeping overhaul of Dodd-Frank. I'll take you inside the Chamber's proposal here: http://bit.ly/2cHWw0v.

Senate Dems call for investigation into Wells Fargo's fake accounts: Five Senate Democrats are calling for hearings to investigate the actions of Wells Fargo employees who created millions of fake bank and credit card accounts to boost their sales.

Led by Sen. Robert Menendez (N.J.), the Democrats sent a letter on Monday to Senate Banking Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) urging him to hold immediate hearings to delve into what happened at one of the nation's largest banks and to determine whether more consumer protections are needed.

"The magnitude of this situation warrants thorough and comprehensive review," the senators wrote in the letter. The Hill's Vicki Needham explains: http://bit.ly/2cRJS3F.

Coalition urges SEC to require disclosure of more tax info: The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) should update its rules to require U.S. multinational corporations to disclose more tax information, a financial-transparency coalition argued in a report released Monday.

"As multinational corporations have increasingly relied upon complex, international tax strategies to affect their bottom lines, the SEC's disclosure framework has not kept pace," the Financial Accountability & Corporate Transparency Coalition wrote in the report. "It's time for the SEC's disclosure rules to catch up."

The report was issued shortly after the European Commission ruled last month that Apple owes Ireland $14.5 billion in back taxes because Irish authorities gave the company an unfair advantage over other businesses. The Hill's Naomi Jagoda breaks it down: http://bit.ly/2c6mL44.

Top Dem urges Labor Dept. to investigate Chipotle for wage theft: Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) is calling on the Labor Department to investigate allegations that Chipotle Mexican Grill is failing to pay employees overtime.

According to media reports, nearly 10,000 workers from the fast casual Mexican restaurant chain have joined a class action lawsuit against the company for allegedly forcing employees to work "off the clock" hours without compensation.

The workers claim in the suit that Chipotle uses timekeeping technology that automatically punches workers off the clock, even if they are required to continue to work

In a letter Monday to the David Weil, the director of the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division, DeLauro demanded an investigation into the corporation's labor practices and policies. The Hill's Lydia Wheeler has it all here: http://bit.ly/2cmb7Q5.

GOP lawmaker wants answers on Iran payment: A Republican congressman is asking the Treasury Department whether a recent cash payment to Iran could be used to fund terrorism, and how the department plans to keep that from happening.

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) said he's "gravely concerned with the nefarious possibilities" of what Iran could do with $1.7 billion in cash from the United States. He sent a letter sent Tuesday to the Treasury under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, outlining his fears.

At issue is a payment made to Iran by the U.S. earlier this year to settle part of a 1970s lawsuit between the countries. The payment, converted into European cash and airlifted to Iran, preceded a prisoner swap between Iran and the United States.

Republicans have since accused the Obama administration of paying ransom for American prisoners and funding Iran's terror sponsorship with untraceable money.

"By providing this regime with billions [sic] of dollars in untraceable foreign currency, the Administration is aiding the regime and criminals across the world in their perpetuation of financial crimes," wrote Wilson: http://bit.ly/2cjFsxn.

India challenges US renewable energy programs at WTO: India has filed a new dispute against the United States at the World Trade Organization (WTO) challenging domestic content requirements and subsidies in renewable energy programs across eight states.

The complaint, highlighted by the WTO on Monday, argues that renewable energy programs in Washington, California, Montana, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Michigan, Delaware and Minnesota are getting favorable treatment compared with imported products to the United States.

India's case charges that the energy program measures are inconsistent with WTO's rules "because they provide less favorable treatment to imported products than to like domestic products, and because the subsidies are contingent on the use of domestic over imported goods," the trade group said.

The new case comes a few days ahead of an expected WTO Appellate Body decision on a U.S. challenge to India's domestic content requirements for solar cells and solar modules under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission. Here's more from Vicki Needham: http://bit.ly/2cqBqDf.

Flood risk: SmarterSafer, A coalition of dozens of environmental, business and fiscal groups are urging Congress to act on flood insurance. The Hill has an exclusive excerpt of a letter to be sent to lawmakers tomorrow:

"Congress should invest in proven mitigation strategies--both at a community and property level--for those areas most at risk to future disasters. Mitigation should include multiple options including strengthening natural features that help buffer storms, buyouts and preservation of green space, and elevation and other property-level interventions. In addition to shifting to additional pre-disaster spending, Congress should make changes to disaster assistance including strengthening requirements for communities and states--those states and communities that plan for and mitigate risks would be 'rewarded' with the full share of federal disaster assistance, while those that do not plan for known risks, would get less in federal assistance. In addition, federal disaster assistance funds should only be spent on resilient projects--on building smarter and safer-- and not spent on construction that is not resilient and not safe. This will protect people, communities, and scarce federal resources.

Congress must also strengthen the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and reduce regulatory burdens to private sector competition. Too few people purchase flood insurance, even those at risk. While there are numerous reasons for this, many people do not trust NFIP, and many people mistakenly believe the federal government will step in and disaster assistance will make them whole. Given the average award of disaster assistance ($8,016 for Superstorm Sandy), without flood insurance, many families are unable to rebuild."

Join The Hill on Wednesday, September 14 for "Preparing for the Next Disaster: A Policy Discussion on Community Resilience," featuring Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.), and Timothy W. Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness at FEMA. Topics of discussion include preparedness efforts to increase community resilience and the role of federal, state & local government in pre-disaster mitigation. RSVP here.

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Weathering The Storm

By Scott Burns

U.S. News & World Report, September 12, 2016

Anna Johnson didn't have to go to church on Sunday, Aug. 14 to hear prophetic stories about the dead being raised from their graves. That morning, the Denham Springs, Louisiana native awoke to an eerie sight: a procession of coffins uprooted from a nearby cemetery by the rushing floodwaters steadily floating down her street. Her community was buried beneath six feet of floodwater. "We've never seen anything like it," she said.

What's most extraordinary about this story isn't the haunting imagery of the floating dead casually drifting through the streets or the enormous magnitude of the damage that resulted from what the Red Cross called "the worst natural disaster since Hurricane Sandy." It's what people like Johnson and her husband did next. Undeterred by the floating coffins and raging current, Johnson's husband immediately set out on his boat to help the local sheriff's department rescue those in jeopardy.

He was just one of thousands of Good Samaritans who risked their lives to save their neighbors. Louisianans affectionately refer to this armada of hunters, fisherman and ordinary citizens from all across the south who deployed their own motorized boats to rescue thousands of people and pets stranded by the flood as the "Cajun Navy."

Not everyone has been so supportive. Some state senators have tried to propose legislation that would require members of the Cajun Navy to receive formal training and certification from the government.

This precautionary impulse is not uncommon. Even in dire circumstances, many lawmakers are very hesitant to cede any authority over to private citizens. Their first instinct is to rely on the top-down efforts of formal authorities.

This proposal was immediately met a flood of backlash from members of the Cajun Navy. As Dustin Clouatre, a Cajun Navy member from St. Amant, Louisiana, said: "How can you regulate helping people?"

The heroic actions of these community members doesn't just capture the spirit and tenacity of the people of Louisiana, it also provides a vivid illustration of how the bottom-up efforts are at the heart of a community's revival after a disaster. The ordinary men and women who formed the Cajun Navy didn't wait for the National Guard or ask for permission from any top-down authority. Instead, they took the response into their own hands. Clouatre said it best: "These people are not going to wait for assistance. They're doers."

Many Louisianans learned this lesson the hard way over a decade ago during Hurricane Katrina when authorities tried to prevent private citizens from conducting rescue missions for safety reasons. More than 1,800 people lost their lives.

The death toll could've been much higher had it not been for the thousands of original Cajun Navy members who defied government edicts and launched their boats to rescue neighbors. Their courage provided a stark example of the how the power of civil society shined through despite rampant government failures.

As Mercatus Center scholars documented in their book "Community Revival in the Wake of Disaster," in many cases it was these private citizens and businesses that helped spur the post-Katrina recovery. Many local entrepreneurs, charitable and religious organizations also banded together to donate goods and keep their doors open through the recovery. Even large corporations like Wal-Mart and UPS were among the first on the scene delivering much-needed supplies.

Louisianans didn't wait for the government's permission this time around either. They jumped into action. As one member told ABC News, "We are a people that stick together. [We] take care of our own." As a result, thousands of lives were saved, and an entire community was able to unite around their courage and resilience.

This inspiring story provides an important lesson for policymakers. The first responsibility of federal and state authorities after a disaster should be to "do no harm" – removing barriers to recovery and allowing for, and even encouraging, private relief efforts in response to disaster. These bottom-up relief efforts are superior precisely because they empower local citizens to use their intimate knowledge of their area and its unique needs rather than top-down authorities whose actions are all-too-often bogged down by politics and red tape.

Some lawmakers might not fully appreciate the efforts of the thousands of volunteers who risked their lives to rescue their neighbors. But the people of Louisiana most certainly do. These local efforts, not the

action of governmental authorities, provide the bedrock of society that make communities like Louisiana so resilient in the wake of disaster.

Scott Burns is a Mercatus Center PhD fellow in economics at George Mason University, a graduate of the E.J. Ourso College of Business at LSU and a Baton Rouge native.

Woman In Viral Flood Rescue Video Meets Her Rescuer

By Michael Kunzelman

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

(DENHAM SPRINGS, La.) — Millions of people have seen and shared the video of a good Samaritan jumping off a boat to rescue Hailey Brouillette and her dog from a car sinking into south Louisiana floodwaters

last month. Brouillette isn't one of them, but she finally got to meet the man who saved her life.

Although she heard David Phung's voice during the rescue, Brouillette never saw her rescuer's face before their reunion Monday at a Denham Springs home where she is temporarily staying.

"I know I don't know you, but I love you," Brouillette, 53, said as she hugged and thanked the man she called her "angel" and "savior."

"It was nothing," Phung, 27, replied before Brouillete introduced him to Sassy, the poodle mix he also saved.

A Red Cross volunteer who befriended Brouillette at a shelter arranged Monday's meeting. Brouillette lost her trailer home and all of her belongings in the flooding

. Phung brought her a load of supplies, including dog food.

"It's just who we are in Louisiana. We help people in times of need," he said. "I was put in that place to help her out."

The Aug. 13 rescue video shot by WAFB-TV has millions of YouTube views. It shows floodwaters

swallowing Brouillette's red convertible as David Phung and two of his relatives arrive in a boat and urge her to get out of the car.

"I'm trying! I can't!" she replied. "Oh my God! I'm drowning!"

Phung tried to smash a car window from the boat, then jumped into the water and used his hands to rip open a hole on the top of the car. Phung grabbed Brouillette by her arms as the car disappeared in the murky waters. She remained submerged for several seconds before Phung finally pulled her out of the water.

"Get my dog!" she immediately shouted.

The poodle appeared to be underwater for at least 20 seconds before Phung took a deep breath, dipped below the surface and emerged with the dog cradled in his arms.

"I got your dog!" he yelled. "Swim to the boat."

Phung said he lost count of how many people that he helped save from the floodwaters, but none was more dramatic than Brouillette's.

"I didn't actually see the tape until two days later because I was working from sun up late into the night, just helping people," he said. "I was actually amazed at how calm and collected I was. I guess it was just the adrenaline took over."

Before getting caught in the floodwaters, Brouillette said she had been released from a hospital that morning after being treated for a kidney ailment. She was on her way to a pharmacy to get prescriptions filled when the car she borrowed from a friend was overcome by the water.

"It still seems like a dream," she said.

She believes "divine intervention" also played a part in her survival.

"He saved my life," she said. "I don't even know if I'm worth saving. I guess God said, 'Yeah.'"

Carolyn Perry, a Red Cross volunteer, said she watched the rescue video several times from her home in Kern County, California, before she was deployed to Louisiana.

"I was drawn to it," she said. "I just had this strange feeling I'm going to meet this woman."

Within three days of seeing the video, Perry recognized Brouillette at a Baton Rouge shelter that provided refuge to hundreds of flood victims. Perry said she hugged Brouillette and explained how the rescue had struck a chord with her.

"She was very, very humble, and we just struck up a friendship," Perry said. "For the next three days, we had a lot of heart-to-heart talks about life."

Before Perry returned home to California, Brouillette asked her new friend for help in connecting with the man who had saved her. Perry contacted an Associated Press reporter, who provided her with a telephone number for Phung. Perry called Phung and arranged for him to meet Brouilette and her dog.

At the end of their meeting, Brouillette gave Phung her phone number and embraced him one more time.

"And if I can ever do anything for you, let me know," she said.

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Senate Boosts Bill For Water Projects, $220M For Flint

By Matthew Daly

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

WASHINGTON — The Senate voted to move forward Monday on a $10 billion water projects bill that includes $220 million in emergency funding for Flint, Michigan, and other communities beset by lead-contaminated water.

Senators advanced the bill 90-1 on a procedural vote, with approval expected later this week.

The bipartisan measure would authorize 29 projects in 18 states for dredging, flood control and other projects overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The measure includes $100 million in grants and loans to replace lead-contaminated pipes in Flint and other cities with lead emergencies, as well as $70 million toward loans to improve water infrastructure across the country. It also includes $50 million to bolster lead-prevention programs and test water for lead in schools.

Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., said lawmakers finally "have a pathway to success" on Flint after months of effort. Senators have twice reached a bipartisan deal to help Flint but were blocked after Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah objected.

Flint's drinking water became tainted when the city switched from the Detroit water system and began drawing from the Flint River in April 2014 to save money. The impoverished city was under state control at the time.

Regulators failed to ensure the water was treated properly and lead from aging pipes leached into the water supply. Elevated lead levels have been found in at least 325 people, including 221 children. Lead contamination has been linked to learning disabilities and other problems.

Peters urged his colleagues to support the bill "to show the American people that we can continue to work together to address urgent needs across the country" and "deliver much-needed support to Flint families."

A spokesman said Lee remains opposed to the bill, which he said increases spending without offsetting budget cuts.

Several proposed amendments to the bill are still being negotiated, including one to resolve a dispute over dredging in Long Island Sound that pits Democrats in Connecticut and Rhode Island against Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y.

The issue involves dredging near a submarine base outside New London, Connecticut, to make room for the U.S. Navy's newest Virginia-class submarines. Gillibrand and other New York officials fear the project could violate the state's stringent water quality standards.

Gillibrand secured language in the water-projects bill aimed at blocking any disposal that violates water quality standards. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and other lawmakers are trying to block the provision or amend it to apply only to standards in the state where the disposal occurs.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., welcomed the Flint measure, but said it comes months too late.

"For the people of Flint, this has taken way too long," Stabenow said in an interview. City residents are still using bottled water nearly a year after officials declared a public health emergency.

Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, called the water-projects bill crucial, not just for Flint but for the rest of the nation.

The bill includes about $1.9 billion for projects to restore Florida's Everglades and combat algae blooms that have fouled the state's beaches and rivers. Inhofe said in a newspaper column last week that fellow Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida had convinced him to back the project after years of opposition.

Rubio's Democratic opponent, Rep. Patrick Murphy, has accused Rubio and Republican Gov. Rick Scott of not doing enough to find a long-term solution for algae blooms caused by polluted water flowing from Lake Okeechobee.

If approved by the Senate, the bill would go to the House.

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Follow Matthew Daly: https://twitter.com/MatthewDalyWDC

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WVU Alumnus Challenge Hits $1M In Flood Relief Donations

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia University says more than $1 million in donations will help West Virginia flood victims through a challenge

match from Arizona Diamondbacks owner Ken Kendrick.

Kendrick is a WVU alumnus. He had said after devastating floods in late June that he would match contributions to the WVU Foundation dollar-for-dollar up to $500,000.

The university says in a news release that more than 1,600 donors have given more than $502,000.

The floods killed 23 people in the state.

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Gulfport, USO To Help Those Affected By La. Flooding

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

GULFPORT, Miss. (AP) — The city of Gulfport is partnering with the United Services Organization, Gulfport businesses, military and the fire department to send donations to the areas of Louisiana affected worst by flooding.

The Sun Herald reports (http://bit.ly/2c7GQY5) it's the second trip for the city in less than a month.

On Aug. 17, the city sent two truckloads of supplies immediately after the flood waters started to recede.

Gulfport Chief Administrative Officer John Kelly said Monday the National Guard Armory in Hammond, Louisiana, set up a store specifically for military families.

The USO is a nonprofit that operates two locations in Gulfport and annually provides programs and services to more than 60,000 service members and their families in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana.

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Information from: The Sun Herald, http://www.sunherald.com

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$250K Grant To Help With Wilkinson County Flood Recovery

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) – State and federal officials say a $250,000 grant will help people in southwestern Mississippi repair homes damaged by flooding in mid-August.

Three homes were destroyed, 23 had major damage and 58 others had minor damage in Wilkinson County. Most were in the town of Crosby.

The damage fell short of the threshold for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

U.S. Rep. Gregg Harper says in a news release Monday that the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is providing the grant to the new nonprofit Community Based Recovery Committee in Wilkinson County with money remaining from the Alternative Housing Pilot Program that FEMA awarded to Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina.

Wilkinson County borders Louisiana, and its floods were caused by the same storm system that deluged parts of that state.

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Cayce Officials To Rebuild Flood-damaged Landing

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

CAYCE, S.C. (AP) – Officials in Lexington County are preparing to rebuild a boat landing on the Congaree River that was destroyed in the flooding rains last October.

Officials in Cayce think it will cost about $180,000 to repair the landing, with most of the cost paid by the federal government, The State newspaper (http://bit.ly/2cR0R69) reported.

The 23-year-old landing was closed after its dock was damaged in floods that followed record rain last fall. It's unclear how long the project will take.

Fishing and floating trip guides are happy about the decision.

"It's way overdue," said Kevin Geddings, owner of Adventure Carolina in Cayce.

The most recent renovations to the landing were in 1993 by state natural resources officials to encourage outdoor recreation in the Midlands. It's the only landing on the riverfront in the city of nearly 13,000 residents.

One guide, Jason Bennett of Irmo, says the loss of the dock created congestion on the Richland County side of the river.

"That makes things a little more inconvenient," Bennett said.

The closing shortened float trips by nearly a mile and required longer treks to return boats and equipment to his shop, Geddings said.

"Not having it has been huge for us," he said.

The landing also benefits recreation on land, officials say. The parking lot is a gathering spot for bicyclists and hikers headed for nearby trails.

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Information from: The State, http://www.thestate.com

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Small Earthquake Widely Felt Across San Francisco Bay Area

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — A small earthquake rumbled beneath the San Francisco Bay area early Tuesday and was widely felt across the region.

The U.S. Geological Survey says the magnitude 3.5 temblor struck at 12:40 a.m. PDT and was centered just to the east of central Oakland.

Oakland police said they had no reports of problems associated with the quake, which was fairly shallow at around three miles in depth.

The USGS website recorded responses from people reporting they felt it in many Bay Area cities, including San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley.

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Little Change In Strength For Tropical Storm Ian

Associated Press, September 12, 2016

MIAMI (AP) — Tropical Storm Ian has seen little change in strength as it moves over the central Atlantic.

The storm's maximum sustained winds early Tuesday are near 45 mph (75 kph) with slight strengthening forecast over the next two days. Ian is centered about 980 miles (1,580 kilometers) east-southeast of Bermuda and is moving north-northwest near 9 mph (15 kph).

Meanwhile far out over the Pacific, Hurricane Orlene is expected to slow down. The Category 2 storm's maximum sustained winds are near 105 mph (165 kph). The U.S. National Hurricane Center says gradual weakening is expected during the next few days.

Orlene is centered about 635 miles (1,020 kilometers) west-southwest of the southern tip of Mexico's Baja California peninsula and is moving north near 5 mph (7 kph).

Neither storm currently poses a threat to land.

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Tuesday's Forecast: Rainy Southeast, Plains

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, September 12, 2016

The national weather forecast for Tuesday, September 13th calls for showers to hit from Chicago to Oklahoma City, along the Southeast and Gulf Coast and in the Rockies.

Showers and thunderstorms will make for a soggy day as a front stalls in the Plains while a tropical wave soaks Florida and the Southeast.

Central U.S.: Showers and thundershowers will drench the southern and central Plains as a front stalls across the region, contributing to the potential for heavy rainfall all the way from Texas to the Great Lakes.

Florida, Southeast: A tropical wave will cross Florida Tuesday, enhancing the chances of possibly heavy showers and thunderstorms.

West: The West Coast will be clear and dry. Rain and a few snow showers are possible in the Rockies.

Weather history for Sept. 13: In 2008, Hurricane Ike hit the Texas coast with 110 mph winds.

How To Prepare Your Home Before The Next Big Storm Hits

By Tom Hurd

Washington Post, September 12, 2016

We are just about at the halfway point of the hurricane season, which most forecasters have projected to be above average in intensity.

But aside from official start and end dates for a particular type of natural disaster, extreme weather is the new reality — and in all parts of the country, not just coastal regions. Now consider this frightening thought: It wasn't a "named" hurricane or tropical storm that resulted in an estimated 150,000 damaged properties in the Baton Rouge area and flooded nearly one-third of the state of Louisiana.

Prolonged rainfall was the culprit, and that ended up being the worst disaster in the United States since the devastation caused by Superstorm Sandy. The torrential downfall that very recently washed out a sizable portion of historic Ellicott City, Md., is another example of the uncompromising damage that storms not classified as hurricanes can do to communities.

Essentially, what used to be considered "100-year storms" are now happening approximately every five years. Another eye-opener is that only 65 percent of the U.S. population is covered by model building codes. And when disaster does strike, often times in the rush to rebuild, homes and buildings are not completed up to

local minimum building codes, and that in and of itself is a recipe for disaster.

The good news is that in recent years the design and construction industry has recognized that responding to these sets of natural challenges is a national imperative. In addition to advocating for effective land-use policies, modern building-code adoption and smarter infrastructure investment, we research materials and design techniques and construction procedures to make homes and buildings more resilient to these threats.

But what can you do as you consider the possibility of encountering a dangerous storm or disaster? Here are some tips to help prepare your home for the next one:

Document your home before disaster strikes: Take photos of the inside and outside of your property and share them with your insurance company to have in its files; list rare and special items separately. Put extremely valuable items in a fireproof and waterproof safe or box.

Familiarize yourself with your home's construction: Know the age of your home and what kind of framing it has. Know how recently the roof has been repaired or replaced. All this will help guide you on what design changes or updates should be made to reinforce your home.

Prioritize repair projects: Make easy and inexpensive fixes, and phase repairs, maintenance and retrofits so they are manageable. Use wind-resistant nailing patterns to secure roof sheathing. Consider what flying debris and storm water might do before reworking areas to minimize damage.

Communicate your building performance goals: Make your desire for storm-resistant and resilient design elements known to your architect or contractor from the outset of a project, and include site selection, program and building life cycle in your conversations. Make sure that you are comfortable with their expertise in this area before proceeding with work.

Designate a safe room in your home: This space can be used for certain hazards, including hurricanes, tornadoes and strong storms. Spaces that can be used for this purpose include a mud room, laundry room or even a powder room, and each can be strengthened. If you have a shelter in a low area, make sure you can get out in case of flooding. Consider multi-hazard possibilities, and ask your architect what you'd need to do to reinforce those spaces.

Upgrade your safety standards in your renovation plans: Building codes are a life safety standard that afford only the bare minimum for the protection of property. Hazardous conditions may not be up to date in local maps and regulations to reflect current realities and risk. Any reworked areas or additions can be built to higher-strength standards — often for just a little more money than your planned budget, giving you a better alternative in a storm.

If you are making any big-picture construction or renovation plans, the best advice I can offer is to work only with a licensed architect, engineer or contractor. These professionals should be well-versed in the best practices to prevent destruction with cost-effective mitigation features and advanced planning.

Hurricane Katrina winds caused $8 billion in damage, and stronger building codes would have reduced this by 80 percent. The expression that an ounce of preparation is worth a pound of cure is especially true when it comes to natural disasters. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, every dollar spent on disaster mitigation saves $4 in rebuilding costs.

Design and building material fortifications are your best line of defense to protect your home, but you would also be well served to have a conversation with your insurance carrier — particularly if you can participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. So far this year, thunderstorms and hailstorms have caused the greatest insured property losses — up to $7 billion in damages.

Finally, proper preparation may help change a disaster into just a short-term uncomfortable event. Now is a great time to see where your homeowner's insurance policy stands and to have your home evaluated with an overall risk assessment that an architect can provide, before the next time Mother Nature's unpredictable fury strikes.

Tom Hurd is the chair of the American Institute of Architects Disaster Assistance Committee.

PM Update: Beautiful This Evening, And Warming Up A Little Tuesday

By Ian Livingston

Washington Post, September 12, 2016

Today was classic September. The bluest skies, and low humidity, mixed with warm sunshine. I could go for this kind of weather every day. This bout is relatively short-lived as temperatures are on the way up tomorrow. Heat and humidity continue to build into Wednesday, but thankfully it won't last long. The remnants of summer are certainly on borrowed time.

Through Tonight: We should see a fairly quick fall in temperatures this evening, especially outside the city, thanks to low humidity. Through the night, dew

points rise toward and past 60, which means humidity becomes more noticeable and it helps slow those temperature falls later at night. Lows are mainly in a 60-68 degree range, coolest suburbs to downtown.

View the current weather conditions at The Washington Post.

Tomorrow (Tuesday): It's another day of abundant sunshine. Warmer than Monday, but not hot like last week. We'll save that for Wednesday. Highs are mostly in the mid-80s. It's still relatively comfortable, but warmer than it should be, and humidity is increasingly apparent. Winds are from the south around 5 to 10 mph.

See Jason Samenow's forecast through the weekend. And if you haven't already, join us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram. For related traffic news, check out Dr. Gridlock.

Pollen update: Mold spores, weed and grass pollens are MODERATE/HIGH. Tree pollen is LOW/MODERATE.

Want our 5 a.m. forecast delivered to your email in-box? Subscribe here.

Ian: For some of us (maybe only me), this has been a day we've been waiting on for years (literally, years). Tropical Storm Ian was named this morning. It's seemingly going to pose no real threat to anyone other than fish, and perhaps an errant ship. In fact, this might be about all you hear of Ian given it's not even currently anticipated to become a hurricane as it spins across the Atlantic. I'd be remiss not to at least mention it once here, though! Certainly no Meranti, which became a Category 5 in the Western Pacific today.

Until 2022 (when the name will be reused) …

August Was The Hottest Month Ever Recorded. Again.

By Dominique Mosbergen

Huffington Post, September 13, 2016

Surprise, surprise: Last month was the hottest August ever recorded, marking the 11th straight month that global heat records have been shattered, according to NASA data.

The agency broke the bad, though perhaps not entirely unexpected, news on Monday. August had a global average surface temperature of about 1.76 degrees Fahrenheit above average, NASA said. It also tied with July as the warmest month ever recorded since record-keeping began in 1880.

"We are well on our way to the warmest year recorded," the Union of Concerned Scientists wrote in an email to The Huffington Post this week.

If deemed the hottest year ever, 2016 will be the third year in a row to boast this unfortunate title.

But though every month — and each year — appears to bring the same news about "hottest" this and that, experts are warning against apathy and fatigue regarding record-breaking temperatures.

"While there may be a tendency to be complacent about the recurring record temperatures, with each month come more climate-related consequences that cannot be ignored," wrote UCS climate scientist Astrid Caldas in a blog post.

Climate change is not a future problem, but rather one that we are actively dealing with.

"We are feeling climate change impacts right here, right now," Caldas continued. "From wildfires and droughts to devastating floods, climate change fingerprint is all around us and does play a role in making events more extreme. An example are this summer's floods in Louisiana, caused by intense rains which were "at least 40 percent more likely to happen because of climate change," according to research.

Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, stressed this week that it's long-term trends, rather than monthly readings, that "are the most important for understanding the ongoing changes that are affecting our planet."

NASA data shows a clear upward trend in global temperatures since 1880. The average global temperature has risen about 1.4 degrees F since then.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

FEMA Remapping May Lead To Insurance Hikes

By Jake Abbott

Marysville (CA) Appeal-Democrat, September 12, 2016

Flood insurance is going to increase — probably by quite a bit for some, warn experts who are trying to do something about it.

With federal remapping of floodplains in the works for some counties, professionals working in the field met in Sacramento last week to discuss its effects on insurance rates and the agricultural industry.

Mike Inamine, executive director of the Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency, moderated a panel discussion at the Floodplain Management Association 2016 Conference. The discussion was revolved around the impact of FEMA's remapping — Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) — for areas of high-flood risk on insurance rates for structures and businesses operating in floodplains in the Central Valley.

FIRMs are used to administer the National Flood Insurance Program throughout counties.

"The NFIP will result in flood insurance rates going up dramatically, it's quite an increase in flood insurance premiums," Inamine said.

FEMA originally mapped all counties throughout the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s. In 2001, the agency began to update FIRMs to show if a region's levees met requirements for 100-year certification criteria. If an area cannot be certified, it is classified as a special flood hazard area and subject to development regulations.

Denise Carter, a Colusa County supervisor, was a panelist in the discussion. She said people with federally-backed mortgages living or operating in deep floodplains will be hit the hardest by the hike in insurance rates if an area is designated as high-risk. "As a task force, we worked on the possibility of having private insurance come in to have more affordable insurance options," Carter said.

She said while some residents living in Sutter County have already felt the effects of remapping, FEMA is going through the process in Colusa County.

The panel also discussed FEMA's building regulations for rural areas in a deep floodplain.

Inamine said some of the current regulations have an adverse impact on farmers and the agricultural industry.

"If you are in a floodplain, you are required to floodproof structures so water can pass through it," Inamine said. "There are many examples where a building has to have holes in it. That's fine except that some of those buildings hold food and crops."

In terms of floodplain management, farming is regarded as a wise use of a flood zone because it prevents hazardous development — housing or urban development — from occurring in deep floodplains behind levees.

Carter said panelists discussed the possibility of amending certain requirements for floodproofing that accommodate structures that support an agriculture industry.

Inamine said FEMA has shown interest in supporting rural area economies and that it wants to work with farmers on specific methods of improving regulations on agriculture structures while also mitigating costs.

Carter said the discussion was an opportunity for the task force to hear different perspectives on ways to address the issue.

"It provided the possibility to maybe tweak some things with FEMA's regulations," Carter said. "They have all these technical bulletins, which provide guidance on what you can do, and there is a definition of agriculture structures. The discussion was whether or not we should change that definition of what an agriculture structure is."

Inamine said the five panelists provided different perspectives on the complex issue. The other panelists were Gregor Blackburn, Ceil Strauss, Maria Lorenzo-Lee and James Gallagher.

"It highlighted the issue of how important this is moving forward in the Sacramento Valley," Inamine said. "It was essentially how do we do the right thing in a floodplain, in terms of insurance, and still keep it affordable."

Carter said a task force she works on is taking some of the topics discussed at the panel and writing up a report that will be sent to FEMA with recommendations on how to accommodate agriculture businesses looking to develop or build in deep floodplains.

"It's not going to be easy, but we are trying to find some little things we can do that will have a big impact on being able to continue farming in floodplains," Carter said.

FEMA Town Hall In Youngsville Set For Sept. 14

KATC-TV Lafayette (LA), September 12, 2016

The City of Youngsville will host a town hall/informational meeting on FEMA individual assistance Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2016, at 6 p.m. at Ernest Gallet Elementary School, 2901 E. Milton Ave.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide the needed assistance to residents and businesses that were affected by the August flood event. At this meeting there will be representatives from: FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA), National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), Small Business Administration (SBA), Governor's Office of Homeland Security (GOHSEP) and FEMA Mitigation.

At this meeting, residents will be able to get help with the following:

Sign up for FEMA assistance

Check on your FEMA claim

If denied, get assistance to find out why

Meet with the National Flood Insurance Program

Meet with the Small Business Administration and fill out application

Get information on how to mitigate future damage

Youngsville To Hold Town Hall Meeting, Providing Info On FEMA Assistance.

KLFY-TV Lafayette (LA), September 12, 2016

YOUNGSVILLE, La. (KLFY)— The City of Youngsville to hold town hall meeting to provide information on individual FEMA assistance.

According to a news release, the meeting will take place September 14 at 6 p.m. at the Ernest Gallet Elementary School cafeteria. The school is located at 2901 E. Milton Avenue, Youngsville.

Mayor Ken Ritter said the purpose of the meeting is to provide the needed assistance to residents and businesses that were affected by the flood event of August 12.

At the meeting there will be representatives from the FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance, the National Flood Insurance Program, Small Business Administration, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and FEMA Mitigation, according to officials.

The news release also stated that at the meeting, residents will be able to get help with the following:

Sign up for FEMA assistance

Check on your FEMA claim

If denied, get assistance to find out why

Meet with the National Flood Insurance Program

Meet with the Small Business Administration and fill out application

Get information on how to mitigate future damage

The Mayor said he requested this meeting to help residents to get the information they need to continue with their recovery. Everyone that had damage due to the flooding is encouraged to attend.

Duxbury: FEMA Floodplain Map Update

By David Skill

WATD-FM Marshfield (MA), September 12, 2016

Duxbury Town Manager Rene Read says Town Meeting is just a week away, and an article on the warrant about those FEMA floodplain maps needs to pass by a two-thirds majority.

"We've been working very diligently with our consultant, the Woods Hole Group. Leslie Fields will be attending our meeting a week from tonight, and she'll be providing a wealth of information to the voters so they can have a better understanding of what we need to do and why we need to do it," said Read.

But what if it is shot down by voters?

"Without the properly approved flood insurance maps, people will be in a serious financial predicament by not being able to get their mortgages secured," said Read.

We asked Read if the floodplain maps that were recently updated by FEMA are completely accurate, and if he thinks the warrant article will pass at Town Meeting.

"We had some dispute, not acrimonious, but we did have some dispute and we've questioned that with FEMA and we're working to figure out a method for making the correction, but what we'll be doing the following day is filing something called a letter of map amendment, which will allow us amend the map as adopted. So we have to have the maps in place knowing full well that they're not perfect, but knowing also that we're going to achieve perfection somewhere down the road," said Read.

Duxbury selectmen will also get a "litigation tracker" update from the law firm Anderson and Krieger at tonight's meeting.

MITIGATION

FEMA Helps Brandon, Ripton Pay For Irene Damage

Addison County (VT) Independent, September 12, 2016

BRANDON/RIPTON — The Federal Emergency Management Agency in August awarded the state of Vermont's Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security more than half a million dollars to pay the federal share for projects tied to Tropical Storm Irene, which hit Vermont five years ago.

Among the six towns that won awards through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program were Brandon and Ripton.

Brandon received $123,750 to supplement $1,196,533 awarded in July for Phase II of a downtown overflow relief culvert project.

Ripton received $14,848 for an emergency generator at their community shelter.

Other awards were:

$329,923 to Charleston for culvert and ditching improvements along Hudson Road; $79,460 to Richmond for a structural elevation; $11,668 to Marshfield for an emergency generator; and $96,750 to Enosburg for a culvert upgrade on the Tyler Branch.

"This was the latest, but will not be the last project to benefit from federal assistance tied to Tropical Storm Irene," a press release announcing the money said.

The federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, or HMGP, provides assistance to communities to fix areas of repetitive damage and make trouble spots safer. Making those areas more flood resistant through elevation of a building or road, larger culverts, or stronger riverbanks also helps save towns, the state, and

the federal government money in repair costs over the long run.

Of the $34.5 million available for HMGP after Irene, approximately $20 million was allocated for acquisitions — buy-outs of homes and businesses damaged by Irene that were built in floodplains and vulnerable to flooding again. Of 194 HMGP applications submitted to FEMA, 141 were for buy-outs. To date, 133 of them have been approved by FEMA, and more than 100 are completely "closed-out." In Northfield, for example, a neighborhood of homes that had been flooded and were vulnerable to future flooding have been removed, and the land is now a beautiful town park along Water Street.

Vermont's Congressional delegation was essential in advocating for the State with FEMA. The State successfully negotiated with FEMA for extra time, beyond the usual one-year window for submitting HMGP grants and the "routine" 12-month-extension, for a third year, allowing for applications to be submitted right up until the third anniversary of Irene in 2014.

There is still more than $8-million of HMGP funding from Irene available, and more than $8-million in applications pending, many of them still under environmental and historic preservation review. Applications still pending with FEMA include 7 buy-outs (2 in Ludlow and 5 in Chelsea), and 20 infrastructure projects. Permalink

Calallen ISD Hosts New Dome Grand Opening

By Beatriz Alvarado

Corpus Christi (TX) Caller-Times, September 12, 2016

Calallen ISD officials opened the district's estimated $4.8 million gymnasium and Federal Emergency Management Agency safety shelter Monday.

The 20,289-square-foot dome took about a year to complete and was built on a 56-acre lot along Wildcat Drive.

"Thanks to the vision of past and present school leaders, school board trustees and a dedicated Northwest community, Calallen ISD has expanded its facilities to embrace the ever-evolving rich history of the Calallen Wildcats," said Calallen ISD's Superintendent Artie Almendarez. "The official opening of this FEMA dome and the multi-purpose covered practice facility are first class venues that visibly display a long standing tradition of Wildcat pride."

Calallen and Tuloso-Midway independent school districts, along with Del Mar College and the Corpus Christi International Airport, teamed with city officials in 2012 to seek federal grant funds through the Texas Safe Shelter Initiative for the construction of disaster shelters.

The facilities will be used by first responders for emergency operations during a natural disaster, such as a hurricane.

For daily operations, the school's dome can be used as a gymnasium, auditorium, training facility or instructional space.

Clendenin Library Future, Bridge Repair Timeline Uncertain

By Ryan Quinn

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 12, 2016

The Kanawha County Public Library system's director said Monday he's expecting a report this week on the level of flood damage to the Clendenin branch, and he still doesn't know when the bridge to Crossings Mall — where the nearby Elk Valley branch is located — will be repaired.

Alan Engelbert said the system received in the last few days $120,000 of a possible $600,000 in flood insurance coverage money for the contents and building of the Clendenin branch, which got 9 feet of water in the late June flooding. The floods spared the Elk Valley branch but swept away the culvert bridge leading into the shopping center where it and several businesses are located.

On July 26, the library reopened a space it used to occupy at 3636 Pennsylvania Ave., in Big Chimney, to serve both the Clendenin and Elkview areas until the bridge is replaced. The Mobile Library, the 33-foot-long "bookmobile bus" where patrons can check out items, also is stopping in Clendenin.

Kanawha County Deputy Planning Director James Young previously told the Gazette-Mail that the bridge was expected to be constructed off site, starting in early- to mid-August and continuing for six to eight weeks.

Engelbert said a contractor and the insurance company are continuing to assess damage to the Clendenin building and its contents to determine how much flood insurance money the system is owed. The Federal Emergency Management Agency may pitch in funds for whatever the future of the Clendenin branch is, though Engelbert said he is first awaiting the report on how the branch's damages compare to its appraised value.

Such reports have been done on flooded Kanawha schools — one showed the damages to Clendenin Elementary, for instance, equaled about 97 percent of the circa-1930 school's $3.7 million appraised value.

Any time a building is more than 50 percent damaged in such a situation, it has to be brought into compliance with national flood insurance policy, meaning there could be requirements to elevate the flooded structure above the floodplain or other measures.

Under its Public Assistance Program, FEMA can fund 75 percent, and perhaps more, of the cost to fix damage to public facilities, including the cost to build new facilities and establish temporary facilities. Engelbert said the system already expects about $18,000 in reimbursement for the costs to both set up and vacate the temporary branch serving Clendenin and Elkview.

Also at Monday's library system board meeting, Engelbert said the system will add Hoopla to its digital offerings starting Oct. 10. He said patrons will be able to go online and, using their library card information, access up to 10 "units" — such as songs and entire albums, movies and episodes of TV series — per month.

He said patrons will only be able to use such units for a limited amount of time. He said the library system has put $25,000 toward paying the fees Hoopla charges for each unit checked out.

The board also deferred action on a policy change that Engelbert said would pay part-time workers seven and a half hours worth of pay for the four and a half hours worth of work they do on Sundays only in the main Charleston branch of the system.

Engelbert said the change would cost about $5,600 annually in extra pay and benefits for the, on average, six workers who work each Sunday. He said full-time workers have received the benefit of being paid for extra hours each Sunday they work since 1974.

But, after some board members Monday questioned why the system would take the step and a reporter noted the item listed on the meeting agenda to legally allow the board to take the action Monday vaguely only said "Policy #104 Hours of Work," the board deferred action in a voice vote. The only nay heard was from Cheryl Crigger Morgan, the board's former president.

Corps Defends Valley Park Levee Height, Says It's Not Overbuilt

By Bryce Gray

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, September 13, 2016

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is defending its construction of the Valley Park levee system, disputing a recent report suggesting that parts of the system exceed height limits by as much as 8 feet.

Critics say an improperly high levee system would have worsened recent flooding in neighboring communities along the Meramec River, such as Eureka, Fenton and Arnold.

But the corps says the system's construction was based on sound analysis.

"It's our belief that we do not have a levee that was built beyond the authorized level," said John Boeckmann, a hydraulic engineer with the corps' St. Louis District.

Gauging the proper height of the levee comes down to defining the elevation of the 100-year flood level for the Meramec. Generally speaking, levees can be 3 feet higher than the 100-year flood stage for a given location.

But the corps and the levee system's critics disagree over which flood-level estimate is relevant in the dispute.

Corps representatives said the agency has congressional approval to rely on internal data, rather than Federal Emergency Management Agency data to determine flood levels. FEMA flood-level data would have called for the levee to reach a maximum elevation of 435 feet above sea level, based on the 100-year flood level.

A number of experts were under the impression that the 435-foot maximum applied to the levee. Some suspected the structure exceeded that level when it was not topped by catastrophic flooding of the Meramec in late December 2015.

"They appear to use the FEMA data, in which case it's improperly high," said David Stokes, the executive director of Great Rivers Habitat Alliance, an organization focused on river management issues. "If they didn't, they need to explain."

Questions about the levee's height ultimately led Great Rivers Habitat Alliance to commission an investigation by an outside group. The resulting report from St. Peters-based engineering firm Pickett, Ray & Silver Inc. was released in August and identified points of the levee reaching as high as 443 feet above sea level.

Though he could not confirm their accuracy, Boeckmann said many of the levee elevations listed in the report are "in the range of what's expected to be out there," based on the corps' design specifications.Differing estimates

The Valley Park levee system was authorized in 1982 and completed in 2005. Engineers for the corps said that the agency's design process used newer, better data than that provided by FEMA, which releases updated flood level data about once a decade.

"There's nothing in our regulations that requires us to take existing FEMA profiles and use them," said Don Duncan, another corps hydraulic engineer. "In this case, we knew there were floods and other events that happened since those profiles were developed."

The corps indicated by email that "this design procedure was not unique to the Valley Park project," stating that the agency always reserves the right to use flood data at its discretion unless specifically told otherwise.

Besides the use of different flood level data, Boeckmann offered a couple additional reasons the levee is higher than many expected.

Boeckmann said the levee was built slightly higher than authorized to account for anticipated settling as gravity takes its toll. Settling can typically alter levee height by 1 to 3 feet, he said.

Boeckmann also said some of the levee heights cited in the recent investigation may have been distorted by unrelated construction projects. For instance, he said that after the levee was completed, a utility crossing was installed at the spot measuring 443 feet in elevation, creating "an isolated high point."

Despite the counterargument, not everyone is convinced that the corps had reason to deviate from using FEMA flood level data. Critics say that the corps has been inconsistent over time, using FEMA data in various reports and now indicating that separate, internal data guided the levee's design.

"They make up some other number on the basis of their own arguments when it's convenient — they've not been consistent," said Bob Criss, a professor in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Washington University, and one of the first to call the levee's height into question following the recent record-level flooding of the Meramec.Seeking clarity

The levee's design drawings have not been fully disclosed, as Freedom of Information requests filed by those concerned with its height have been denied for national security reasons. Although the drawings were withheld, Boeckmann said the flood data itself went through a public review process in the 1990s and that the levee project was approved by FEMA, St. Louis County, and several cities along the Meramec River.

The corps has offered to meet with a number of interested parties later this week to clarify the design process.

"The gist of (the meeting) is that the Army corps wants to explain whatever process it used in determining the appropriate height of the levee," said Bruce Morrison, general counsel for the Great Rivers Environmental Law Center, one of the organizations that has sought information on the levee.

But critics feel that a different set of flood level data may not fully explain the 8-foot height disparity in the levee's design — a dramatic difference they argue could be hard to justify.

"That number has not changed significantly," said Criss, referring to the 100-year flood level the levee is intended to guard against.

Those pressing the corps for details want to hear an explanation of why FEMA's definition of a 100-year flood was tossed aside.

"If the Army corps deviates, is its modeling defensible? Is it rational?" asks Morrison. "There's a lot of stuff out there to try to lasso."

He says it's entirely possible that the corps felt more conservative flood precautions were necessary. But transparency and consistency, he said, are vital.

"It presents a misleading picture to the public if the Army corps switches to a different standard time and again," said Morrison.

Or, he said, if the corps doesn't have confidence in existing flood data, it may be time for flood maps to be redrawn entirely.

Corps representatives declined to speculate on the extent to which the levee may have influenced nearby flooding in late 2015 and early 2016, saying that "pointing the finger to one cause" would require performing a detailed hydraulic study.

"We can't comment or speculate on specific effects of the levee on neighboring communities," said Boeckmann. "It was really just a historic flood event that reached levels that had not been recorded at Valley Park, for instance."

Combined 'demo & Rebuild' Will Be Mitigation Option In Flood Communities

By Shauna Johnson

West Virginia MetroNews, September 12, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — For the first time, a combination of both structure demolition and rebuilding will be an option for West Virginia residents washed out of their homes and businesses in the June 23 flood and seeking assistance from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to prevent future flooding through reconstruction steps.

What's called "demo and rebuild," in the view of Al Lisko, director of mitigation/recovery for the state

Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, is a way to keep flooded communities intact — a concern that's been raised many times in the months since the flood.

With the number of destroyed structures in the Flood Zone, the idea behind "demo and rebuild" is for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to fund demolition of a building.

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program would then step in with grant funding to build a new foundation and help place a modular home on that foundation in accordance with a community's floodplain ordinance,' according to Lisko.

"What it does is it puts the person into a safer situation, but it does not take it (the property) off the tax rolls. They would still live in the same area. They would still have community taxes and the community does not, in a sense, deteriorate its tax base," Lisko said.

It's only one option, he noted, "One of the things we don't know are how the people are going to feel about their options."

A series of public meetings on all the options, which also include stand-alone elevation of structures, relocation of structures to outside floodplains and full acquisition and demolition of properties, begins Tuesday night.

The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday night, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. at Clendenin City Hall in Kanawha County. The public meetings continue Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 6 p.m. at Elkview Middle School in Elkview and Thursday, Sept. 15 at 6 p.m. at Alderson City Hall.

Additional meeting times and locations are as follows:

Sept. 19
Roane County
Geary Elementary-Middle School, 9538 Clay Rd., Left Hand
6 p.m.
Sept. 27
Pocahontas County
Marlinton Town Hall, 709 2nd Ave
6 p.m.
Sept. 28
Richwood and Nicholas County
Alumni Hall, 103 East Main St., Richwood
6 p.m.
Oct. 3
Greenbrier County
Caldwell, White Sulphur Springs, Ronceverte
Location, Time TBD
Oct. 4
Greenbrier County
Charmco, Rupert, Rainelle
Location, Time TBD

Decisions on mitigation methods will be made at the local levels, with applications coming from incorporated areas or county levels for those in unincorporated locations using input from residents.

"The idea is that this is a program where each community has the opportunity to look at their options, to decide what they feel is best and to apply for the funding and then, hopefully, we'll have enough funding to cover everyone's desires and wishes," Lisko said.

"If not, then we have to do a prioritization process here at the state before submitting them to FEMA for final approval."

Lisko could only estimate the potential funding available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which is aimed at reducing future flooding, would amount to "several millions of dollars." The amount will be a percentage of total federal grants awarded for the June flood, and that number has not been finalized.

"They're going to have to look at their situation," Lisko said of the questions residents trying to rebuild will have to answer.

"For example, if you're a family and you were flooded and you're very frightened to live where you lived, would you accept a demolition and rebuild at the same location? Or would you simply say, 'No, I don't want to live there anymore?'"

FEMA Offers New Flood Relief Opportunities

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), September 13, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) – Homeowners who are rebuilding following the June flooding can meet with West Virginia and FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program advisers on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The meetings will focus on the HMGP process and the rebuilding efforts as well discussion of elevation and mitigation reconstruction.

Tips and information will be provided to help homeowners prevent future damage and disaster in the event of a flood.

On Tuesday, flood-affected homeowners in Clendenin can meet advisers at the Clendenin City Hall at 7:00 p.m.

Other flood victims in Kanawha County can meet Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. at Elkview Middle School.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

FLOODS

Gulfport, USO Team Up To Help Louisiana Flooding Victims

By Justin Vicory

Biloxi (MS) Sun Herald, September 12, 2016

If there's still a need, keep giving. That's the view of the city and the United Services Organization.

Monday, the city partnered with the USO, Gulfport businesses, military and the fire department to send donations to the areas of Louisiana affected worst by flooding.

"I found out there was still a need, and helping military families is what we're all about, so I contacted our national office and they approved us to do this," USO Director Felice Gillum said.

It's the second trip for the city in less than a month.

On Aug. 17, the city sent two truckloads of supplies immediately after the flood waters started to recede.

"We got a lot of help after Katrina," Gulfport Chief Administrative Officer John Kelly said. "And this is a military community. So, we all work together when we can."

Kelly said the National Guard Armory in Hammond set up a store specifically for military families. The supplies will be dropped off there. Military personnel and families from the surrounding area can come to shop.

Mississippi Power, Island View Casino, the National Guard, Keesler Air Force Base, Seabee Base in Gulfport, Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport donated Lowes, Home Depot and Wal-Mart gift cards, cleaning supplies, bedding and comforters, blankets and sheets, food, baby supplies, toiletries and bottled water.

Donations were taken to all five Gulfport fire stations and brought to the Central Station in downtown Gulfport for distribution.

John Fayard of John Fayard Moving donated his truck and an employee to help with the haul.

The USO is a nonprofit that operates two locations in Gulfport and annually provides programs and services to more than 60,000 service members and their families in Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana.

FEMA To Start Contacting Applicants By Text

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 12, 2016

BATON ROUGE – FEMA announces that flood victims who applied for federal help may soon get a text from officials to let them know of their application status.

FEMA says it is using texts to connect with applicants in an effort to enhance communications as it allows to communicate quickly and easily with applicants.

The agency says that applicants may still be contacted through email or phone if they chose one of those as a preferred communication method when they first applied.

Applicants may then check their application's status by going online to disasterassistance.gov or downloading and using the FEMA app and then logging into their account. They may also call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362.

With the change, FEMA reminds applicants to never provide personal information such as Social Security or bank accounts numbers to anyone. FEMA only requests this information when applicants first apply for federal disaster assistance. FEMA inspectors only require verification or identity.

FEMA Reminds Residents To Check With Officials Before Rebuilding

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 12, 2016

BATON ROUGE – The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and FEMA are encouraging residents to check with local officials before starting to rebuild following last month's flood.

As more financial assistance reaches flood victims, more people are beginning to repair the damages they sustained to their homes and businesses.

Officials want to remind residents of the following:

Work that may require permits often includes plumbing, electrical system, foundation and structural repairs.

Local officials may have building code requirements on how and where flood victims can renovate or rebuild. Officials ask flood victims to find out how repairs or reconstruction can meet current standards and compliance.

Flood victims can contact their parish emergency management office to learn more about elevation and

other ways to make their homes or businesses safer and stronger.

For contact information, visit www.gohsep.la.gov/ABOUT/PARISHPA

As Flood Victims Struggle With Emotional Toll, Doctors Say Help

By Sabrina Wilson

WVUE-TV New Orleans, September 12, 2016

NEW ORLEANS, LA (WVUE) –

In Tangipahoa Parish, there is rebuilding from the recent flooding underway. But amid the painstaking recovery, for many flood victims there are inner feelings to be dealt with.

"I have a lot of faith in God but even with my faith there's moments when it gets overwhelming you wonder how long is this going to take?" said flood victim Sonia Landry who moved to Robert after a catastrophic storm 11 years ago. "This is the second time it's happened for me because I was in St. Bernard Parish for Hurricane Katrina."

Arshile Glaze's trailer barely escaped the spring flooding, but his good fortune ran out in August.

"I know my wife gets depressed about it and upset about it," said Glaze, whose home is uninhabitable right now. "[We're] living with my stepdaughter in Covington. There's no way we can live in here."

Glaze tries to keep his wife's spirits from sinking too low.

"We find different things in the trailer that we had forgot we had and it makes her smile," he said.

On Capitol Hill, some local leaders from flood-stricken areas told members of Congress about the emotional toll resulting from the flood.

"We have suicides, we have mental breakdowns, we have families being torn apart because honestly they don't know how they're going to get back on their feet," said Mayor Jr. Shelton, of Central, Louisiana.

"The most common symptoms are depression, also anxiety and post-traumatic stress," said Dr. Howard Osofsky, chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at LSU Health New Orleans.

Mental health professionals from LSU Health New Orleans are involved in the effort to help flood victims, as well as state workers, cope with the aftermath of the flooding.

"We have worked with all of the partnering agencies and groups responding to the flooding disaster to develop the screening both for adults and for children to try and help identify and respond to people having the greatest need at this time," Osofsky said.

A home can provide a sense of security and familiarity that people rely on.

"There are many people who are suffering a great deal. They've lost their homes, they're rebuilding," Osofsky said.

Often, there are telltale signs of being overwhelmed.

"If people are having a more difficult time getting going in the morning, if they're not sleeping well, if they're drinking more, if they're more irritable, If one can see that they are exhibiting signs that they are stressed out, it's important to not only reach out to them and be supportive but to let them know that help is available," Osofsky said.

He said it's important to return to some semblance of normalcy as soon as possible, and he suggested that parents should speak to their children about the flooding.

"As much as possible, normalize what you're doing, the same type of routine. Parents have to be aware that their children need to be able to talk about it, and to know that this is a very unlikely event and that parents are keeping them secure and the community is keeping them secure," Osofsky said.

State leaders have said the majority of the flood victims did not have flood insurance. A lot of people said adding to their stress is the suspense of how much assistance they will qualify for under FEMA.

"It breaks your heart, makes you wonder what's going on, because when Katrina came, everybody was there, you know, jump in, give you a hand. This time it's like you're out here by yourself," Glaze said.

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Assessment Of Flood-ravaged Library Branch Continues In Clendenin

WSAZ-TV Huntington (WV), September 12, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) – Kanawha County Public Library leaders say 35 to 40 people per day are using the mobile library set-up in Clendenin, following the June 23 flooding.

That location, along with the Elkview location in the Elkview Crossings Plaza, are both still closed because of flood damage.

The Clendenin location has been cleaned out after its contents were destroyed.

They are currently assessing the condition of the branch location to determine whether or not it will reopen.

The Elkview location did not sustain damage. However, it is not accessible because the bridge that

leads to the Elkview Crossings plaza has not yet been rebuilt. Leaders say they've not received an update on the status of the bridge repair.

To date the Kanawha County Public Library has received $120,000 in flood insurance to cover lost content.

Leaders say they will continue to work with FEMA to try and get more money to cover losses and the cost of temporary library locations in Elkview and Clendenin.

Monday night, the members of the library board voted to spend a nearly $11,000 grant from the West Virginia Library Commission to pay for costs of the Elk Valley Express Library Branch.

In other Kanawha County Library news, staff members have conducted an active shooter training at all of its facilities.

There will be a fire drill on Tuesday.

There was also discussion about updating the lighting at the branch location in Dunbar. In addition, board members heard about the possibility of doing a solar energy project at the St. Albans location.

ZIKA VIRUS

Obama Meets With Congressional Leaders To Hash Out Fall Agenda

By Gregory Korte And Erin Kelly

USA Today, September 12, 2016

WASHINGTON — President Obama will huddle with congressional leaders from both parties at the White House Monday in an effort to sketch out a bipartisan agenda for what remains of the election-year session.

On Obama's agenda: A spending bill to avoid a government shutdown in three weeks, more funding to combat the outbreak of the Zika virus, a Pacific trade deal, criminal justice reform and the confirmation of Merrick Garland to serve on the Supreme Court.

"It's hard to rank them in priority order, because so many of them are important. And the failure of Congress to act on some of these priorities would have significant negative consequences for the American people," said White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest. "These are priorities, each of them, where Congress has not fulfilled their responsibility to the American people."

It's the first opportunity the president has had to meet with congressional leaders since they returned from their summer recess last week. Obama returned from a nine-day Asia trip last Friday.

Congress must act soon to pass a stopgap spending bill, called a continuing resolution, funding the government until an annual appropriations bill can be passed later this year. Congressional leaders are anxious to reach a deal to prevent a government shutdown just weeks before the Nov. 8 election.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Monday that he hoped that funding for Zika and the Department of Veterans Affairs could be rolled into that short-term package. "Members on both sides have been working on an agreement to responsibly fund the government. We've made a lot of progress," he said.

But for that to happen, Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid said, "Republicans need to get away from their vendetta on Planned Parenthood."

The nonprofit family planning and abortion provider have been a lightning rod in the Zika debate. The House-passed Zika bill provides funding to state and local health agencies, but omits any funding of Planned Parenthood. Democrats say the agency is a major provider of health services and should get a share of the $1.1 billion in proposed Zika funding.

"They need it more than ever more with this scourge that is sweeping our country — Zika," said Reid, a Nevada Democrat.

Obama has been calling on Congress since February to approve $1.9 billion to help eradicate the mosquitoes that spread the virus and to develop a vaccine, but the House and Senate have not been able to agree on a bill because of a threatened Democratic filibuster in the Senate over Planned Parenthood and other issues.

Also scheduled to attend the meeting in the Oval Office Monday are House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Obama is expected to talk to reporters after the meeting.

Obama Meets With Congressional Leaders Ahead Of Federal Funding Deadline

By Adam Edelman

New York Daily News, September 12, 2016

President Obama sat down Monday with congressional leaders to begin talks on a short-term spending bill that would avert a government shutdown on Oct. 1.

Lawmakers have returned to Washington for an abbreviated session in which they must pass a measure to keep the government funded.

More daunting, however, is the fate of a bill that

would provide money for the fight against the Zika virus.

And as recently as Monday afternoon, the talks seemed destined to go poorly.

Ahead of the closed-door meeting, the White House had choice words for Republican lawmakers.

"Unfortunately, they're stuck with Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan," White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said during his daily briefing, in a jab at Republican leadership

The talks comes as government scientists have stepped up their warnings about the spread of the Zika virus, which can cause devastating birth defects.

More than 670 pregnant women in the states and Washington, D.C., have the virus, leading to the birth of at least 17 babies with microcephaly so far.

Lawmakers left Washington seven weeks ago without resolving a dispute over money for Zika.

Obama asked Congress in February for $1.9 billion in emergency money, but legislation to partially pay for his proposal collapsed in July amid various fights, including over a Republican provision to deny money to Puerto Rican affiliates of Planned Parenthood.

With News Wire Services

Funding Planned Parenthood, Or Not, May Be Key To Keeping The Government Open

By Emmarie Huetteman

New York Times, September 12, 2016

WASHINGTON — Republican leaders looking to avoid a government shutdown one month before Election Day will have to jump a familiar hurdle: demands from some of their members to cut off funding for Planned Parenthood.

When Democrats balked once more last week at approving legislation to combat the Zika virus because the measure included limits on Planned Parenthood, some Republicans indicated a willingness to re-evaluate their position.

But the pressing question for Republicans who want to pass a stopgap spending bill to keep the government running after Sept. 30 is whether enough of their ranks are willing to leave Planned Parenthood out of the legislation.

After a meeting on Monday with congressional leaders at the White House, President Obama said he was hopeful of reaching a deal with Republicans to fund the government until after Election Day.

"Even though I know that we're in the midst of a political season and everybody is thinking about elections, there's still business to be done," Mr. Obama said.

Earlier, Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky and the majority leader, began procedural moves to pass a bill that would fund the government through Dec. 9 and include funds for Zika control and veterans programs.

Democrats have accused Republicans of inserting language targeting Planned Parenthood into the Zika funding legislation to bait them into blocking it. The measure would primarily withhold funding from two Planned Parenthood clinics in Puerto Rico that do not offer screening for the virus, but to Democrats, any limitation on Planned Parenthood sets a dangerous precedent that Republicans could exploit.

The measure is so vague that after multiple votes on the legislation, few from either party seem to clearly understand what the provision — which does not mention Planned Parenthood by name but places limitations almost exclusively on those two clinics — would do. Yet, in a demonstration of just how politicized Planned Parenthood has become, both sides have shown they are willing to wage war over it.

Efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, which performs abortions in addition to providing education, contraception and other forms of reproductive health care, have become such a contentious matter that there have been nine votes to cut off funding to the organization in the past two years alone, said Erica Sackin, a spokeswoman for the group.

After videos surfaced last year that critics said proved some Planned Parenthood clinics had been selling fetal tissue for a profit, a charge the organization denied, some outraged Republicans demanded the inclusion of a measure defunding it in last fall's stopgap spending measure. But Republican leaders redirected those calls into a separate measure, ultimately moving forward on the temporary spending bill.

This has been happening for years, said Senator Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington. She recounted receiving a call in 2010 from Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the Democratic leader, shortly after congressional leaders had come to a consensus on a deal, she said. A group of House Republicans wanted to include restrictions on Planned Parenthood. "Not on my watch," Ms. Murray recalled saying.

"That was my first realization that they were willing to use the funding of Planned Parenthood as a hostage in just about anything," she said.

In the Zika fight, limitations on Planned Parenthood offered Speaker Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin

what he needed: a way to pass the House version of the bill without Democrats. The bill passed during the late-night session gaveled in as Democrats staged their sit-in for gun restrictions in June, with the votes of some conservatives who are typically averse to increased spending.

In Florida, the only place so far in the continental United States where the disease is circulating, Zika has crept into its Senate race — which could help determine whether Republicans hold onto their majority — as Senator Marco Rubio is fending off attack ads over the proposed restrictions on Planned Parenthood.

Buried in the debate over the intersection between the Zika virus and Planned Parenthood is the murky reality of what the failed Zika bill, which could provide a framework for a temporary spending bill, would have done to the women's health organization.

The bill largely focused on funding for Profamilias, Planned Parenthood's partner in cash-strapped Puerto Rico. Because Puerto Rico has been the hardest hit by the virus, it would receive most of the money and thus be the most affected by the bill's restrictions.

Profamilias provides medical services almost entirely out of its two clinics in San Juan. They do not offer Zika testing, which tends to be done by more specialized facilities, said Marjorie Vázquez, a program director at Profamilias in San Juan, so much of their involvement in combating Zika centers on contraception distribution. Profamilias served about 7,000 patients in 2015, she said — not a particularly large number, given that about 390,000 people live in San Juan.

But because the vast majority of the clinic's clientele is poor and young, rerouting funding away from the group could have an outsize effect, some experts said.

Some House Republicans, particularly those from Florida, have at least hinted that they would be open to taking Planned Parenthood out of the ongoing Zika fight.

And Senator John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican, said on Thursday that he was optimistic they could move forward to pass Zika funding.

"We're just going to have to work out our differences on that," he told Morning Consult.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

CITIZEN CORPS

Florence County Hosting CERT Basic Training Course

Florence (SC) Morning News, September 12, 2016

FLORENCE, S.C. – Florence County Emergency Management will host its second Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) basic training course, starting Oct. 21.

The course is open to anyone older than 18 who wants to educate themselves about safety and protection during a man-made or natural disaster. The course is free to anyone interested, and no prior training is required before taking the course.

The course teaches Florence residents about disaster preparedness, search and rescue, medical response, utility controls and fire safety among others. The course will be instructed by members of Florence County Emergency Management, Florence County EMS, and the Howe Springs Fire Department.

According to Andrew Golden of Florence County Emergency Management, the course is a key component for those wishing to become an official CERT member in Florence County.

A CERT is a group of trained volunteers who come together during a disaster or crisis. The volunteers, according to Golden, will take care of their families and themselves while also helping neighbors, suppressing small fires, providing medical aid and conducting small search and rescue operations.

Florence County Emergency Management adopted the National CERT Program after recognizing a need for the Florence community to be better prepared in case of a disaster. The National CERT Program is provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Department of Homeland Security.

Those interested in attending the CERT basic training course can register at fcemd.org. Space for the class is limited.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Citizens As Rescuers In Building Collapses

By Eric Holdeman

Emergency Management Magazine, September 12, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has established, in cooperation with local jurisdictions, Urban Search and Rescue Teams

These teams are scattered around the United States as shown in the link above. These are the teams that can help in building collapse situations like the Oklahoma City bombing. They are highly trained with specialized equipment and teams to deal with searching for, finding and attempting the rescue of people trapped in the rubble of a building.

Last week, at an after action review meeting from the June 2016 Cascadia Rising Earthquake Exercise, these figures were shared. I think they come from the Los Angeles Fire Department. It shows what percentages of people trapped and rescued are done at which level:

Search and Rescue

5% entombed, heavy rescue capability

15% void space non-structural, medium rescue capability

30% non-structural entrapment, light rescue capability

50% injured but not trapped, spontaneous program

The above points to the fact that the clear majority of people being rescued are not the results of urban search and rescue teams. The people performing rescues are co-workers; neighbors; passers-by on the street. ... Few if any have any training at all or likely no equipment other than those tools immediately at hand.

Here in the Puget Sound region I recall that light urban search and rescue trainings were offered to companies so that their internal staff would have the ability to extricate people who were trapped within a building. Some buildings have equipped floors with some specialized equipment, like crowbars, hydraulic jacks, blocking material, gloves, etc.

A little bit of forethought could be invaluable in having the tools necessary to provide meaningful help. A few hours of training could be all the difference in keeping people safe and giving them the basic instruction needed to make them much more effective.

Our Views: Big First Step In Federal Aid

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 12, 2016

While he's not physically bringing a check back home, Gov. John Bel Edwards and the state's delegation in Congress have achieved a significantly higher level of federal support to cover the costs of flood damages to public roads and buildings.

In a letter to Edwards, who was in Washington for two days for meetings on Capitol Hill, President Barack Obama agreed to increase the federal government's share of the costs for "public assistance" projects from 75 percent to 90 percent. State and local government agencies cover the balance for these projects, which includes debris removal and emergency response expenses.

The balance is going to be substantial, but the increase in the percentage that the U.S. government will cover makes a big difference to the state and to local governments — parishes, cities, school boards.

The dimensions of the August flooding made it likely all along that the 90 percent threshold would be reached, but until authorized by the president it was nevertheless at the top of Edwards' wish-list. Costs for mobilizing the National Guard and other responses to flooding would be covered by the higher match, as those bills come in.

The U.S. government has responded to Louisiana's plight: Obama's letter noted that the administration already has spent more than $660 million to help the state respond to the floods, including $200 million in direct assistance to flood victims.

Still, the costs to state government — already strapped because of a financial hangover left over by former Gov. Bobby Jindal's administration — makes a higher federal match rate important to the governor, as well as local leaders who face their own financial challenges. Debris removal alone is a huge task.

The governor and a bipartisan group of state leaders were in Washington to lobby for aid beyond the match rate. That decision was like getting to first base in terms of dealing with the impact of the floods, but with the governor we feel more is needed: Edwards told the president earlier that the state's infrastructure and families had sustained more than $8.7 billion in flood damage.

The governor is pitching a $2 billion package of aid that would be beyond that provided to families and agencies by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal sources.

The legislative calendar in an election year is difficult but we applaud efforts by the state's leaders to unite on behalf of more assistance to the struggling communities hit by this major national disaster.

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(SECOND EDITION – 8:30 AM EDT)

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MAIN FEMA NEWS

NATIONAL NEWS

Tropical Storm Julia Brings Rain To Florida, Georgia

USA Today, September 14, 2016

JACKSONVILLE — Tropical Storm Julia was bringing heavy rain to north Florida and parts of Georgia on Wednesday.

The storm formed just west of Jacksonville around 10 p.m. Tuesday. The storm's formation was unusual in that the center of circulation appeared to be over land when it formed, near St. Augustine, Fla.

As of 5 a.m. Wednesday, the storm, which has maximum sustained winds of 40 mph, was located about 40 miles north of Jacksonville and 25 miles southwest of Brunswick, Ga. It is moving north at 7 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Julia is expected to drop 3 to 6 inches of rain near the Georgia and South Carolina coastlines through Friday, the hurricane center said. Isolated totals of 10 inches are possible, as is an isolated tornado across coastal Georgia and southern South Carolina, the hurricane center said.

Prior to becoming a tropical storm, Julia was a tropical wave which battered Florida's Space Coast on Tuesday, spawning a tornado and bursts of torrential downpours.

Derrick Weitlich, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla., said a tornado was confirmed by radar Tuesday afternoon in a rural area between Barefoot Bay and Interstate 95. Two spotters also confirmed the tornado.

No injuries were reported as a result of the tornado, but wet highway and roads contributed to numerous traffic incidents across Brevard County, officials said.

Julia's projected path takes it in a slow north-northwest direction over, with the system expected to weaken and eventually dissipate over south Georgia.

A tropical storm warning is in effect for Fernandina Beach, Fla., to Altamaha Sound, Ga.

Tropical Storm Julia is expected to weaken to a tropical depression Wednesday, the hurricane center said.

Wednesday Q + A With John Bel Edwards

By Daniel Newhauser

National Journal, September 14, 2016

Louisi-ana Gov. John Bel Ed-wards traveled to Wash-ing-ton last week to ask Con-gress and the White House for as-sist-ance fol-low-ing the dev-ast-at-ing flood-ing in his state. At the Cap-it-ol, Ed-wards spoke to Zach C. Co-hen about run-ning as a Demo-crat in the Re-pub-lic-an South, as well as his tu-mul-tu-ous first nine months in of-fice.

You're now the only Demo-crat-ic gov-ernor in the Deep South. Do you have any ad-vice for your party for how it can re-build in the re-gion?

Well, I am singly fo-cused on gov-ern-ing the state of Louisi-ana and try-ing very hard not to get en-tangled in polit-ics out-side of my state, wheth-er it's the pres-id-en-tial elec-tion or gov-ernors' elec-tions. But I will tell you just in short that I do be-lieve Demo-crats can win. I think I'm liv-ing proof of that. But you have to have good can-did-ates who are go-ing to work ex-tremely hard, and who rep-res-ent main-stream val-ues in the Deep South—Demo-crats that can win there, then else-where. But the only way you know you can't win is if you don't run.

Does that strategy work in re-pla-cing Dav-id Vit-ter in the Sen-ate?

I hap-pen to be-lieve there's a dif-fer-ence polit-ic-ally between state and loc-al elec-tions and elec-tions for fed-er-al of-fi-cials. And I think the party des-ig-na-tion in the past, at least his-tor-ic-ally, has been more of a de-term-in-ing factor in the out-come in the fed-er-al elec-tion for Con-gress or for Sen-ate. But we have some good Demo-crats run-ning, and one of them will be in the run-off, and we'll just see who. I mean, there's two dozen can-did-ates run-ning in Louisi-ana. It's kind of a wild scene.

One of the first chal-lenges you had to deal with when you came in-to of-fice was the budget ne-go-ti-ations to fix a massive de-fi-cit.

The largest de-fi-cit in our state's his-tory … $2 bil-lion. And so it was an ex-tremely dif-fi-cult prob-lem to deal with, but we had to do it to sta-bil-ize our state and pre-serve in-sti-tu-tions that af-ford op-por-tun-ity, like health care, like high-er edu-ca-tion. But we also have foster chil-dren that are in our cus-tody, and just a whole myri-ad of ser-vices that we provide the people de-pend upon. And ul-ti-mately we were able to work with the le-gis-lature and sta-bil-ize our state to a very large ex-tent and save $200 mil-lion al-most by ex-pand-ing Medi-caid. So we have 300,000 more work-ing poor today with health in-sur-ance than was the case just in June of this year.

Is there any stigma at-tached to Medi-caid ex-pan-sion, be-cause it's re-lated to the Af-ford-able Care Act?

There's some stigma by cer-tain people. That's cer-tainly not a prob-lem that I have. It isn't like by re-fus-ing to ex-pand Medi-caid we de-creased our tax bur-den. So as long we're pay-ing for the pro-gram I think we should get the be-ne-fits from it, es-pe-cially when it saves the state gen-er-al-fund dol-lars. We saved about 2 per-cent of our over-all de-fi-cit by ex-pand-ing the Medi-caid pro-gram. So provid-ing health in-sur-ance to work-ing poor people who to no fault of their own were just caught in a gap is the right thing to do for all reas-ons. And there are some people who were op-posed to it. But in truth, our le-gis-lature did not really stand up and fight against it be-cause I think at the end of the day, most of them were con-vinced as well it was the right thing to do, but they also knew it was sav-ings.

Did the state's fisc-al mis-man-age-ment be-fore you took of-fice make it harder to re-spond to the flood-ing now?

We have not made the de-cision to cur-tail our re-sponse be-cause of any fisc-al lim-it-a-tions. So that has not been a prob-lem at all.

What have Wash-ing-ton and Bat-on Rouge learned from hur-ricanes like Kat-rina? Have all the right tools been es-tab-lished?

You're nev-er go-ing to learn all the right les-sons be-cause every time you go through one of these you're go-ing to make mis-takes. And you're go-ing to real-ize that mis-takes might be policy-driv-en, they might be driv-en by per-son-nel, or they could be stat-utory lim-it-a-tions that only Con-gress can fix. And the truth is, there are go-ing to be prob-lems that arise from all of those. And so con-tinu-ally ana-lyz-ing the situ-ation and in-cor-por-at-ing the les-sons learned in-to fu-ture re-sponses is what's go-ing to be re-quired. And there are ob-vi-ously some things FEMA can do bet-ter, and we need to do that. But there's things that all of us could have done bet-ter in the re-sponse and now in the re-cov-ery as well.

Do you have con-fid-ence in Con-gress to be able to make the right changes to the Stafford Act in or-der to make some of those changes?

Well look, I wish that Con-gress, you know, moved a little faster, and was demon-strat-ing it's a little more cap-able of mak-ing changes than has been the case in the past. But I'm al-ways op-tim-ist-ic that people are go-ing to come to-geth-er and do the right thing when they see a need. And I think that need is evid-ent now.

"I Don't Know You, But I Love You": Woman Meets "Angel" Who Saved Her From Louisiana Floods

By Sarah Larimer

Washington Post, September 13, 2016

The red convertible was caught in the Louisiana floodwaters.

Trapped inside were Hailey Brouillette and her dog, Sassy.

Outside the vehicle, though, was David Phung. The 27-year-old was on a boat with others, desperately trying to help. There was an attempt to break a window. Someone asked around for a knife.

Finally, Phung splashed into the flood and pulled Brouillette from the car, a remarkable effort captured on video in August. He saved her dog, too, plunging down into the water and pulling the pup to safety.

The Associated Press reports that the 53-year-old Brouillette met on Monday with Phung, her rescuer. Brouillette called him her "angel" and "savior," according to the AP. She told him that she loved him.

"I know I don't know you, but I love you," Brouillette said during the reunion in Denham Springs, where she is staying on a temporary basis.

"It was nothing," replied Phung, according to the AP.

Really, though, last month's rescue effort in the south Louisiana floodwaters was pretty dramatic. Video from WAFB-TV, a CBS affiliate, shows murky waters around the red convertible, which is partly submerged. A boat approaches, carrying Phung and a couple of others. (The AP reported that they were Phung's relatives.)

"Oh my God, I'm drowning!" Brouillette can be heard saying, as the rescuers try to break a window and attempt to rip through the convertible's top.

Phung climbs on the car, jumps in the water and pulls Brouillette out, yanking her up as the convertible sinks down.

After she surfaces, though, Brouillette immediately cries out: "Get my dog!"

She repeats this, over and over, and the seconds tick by. Someone tosses a life jacket into the water. Brouillette tries to locate Sassy herself.

"Maybe she's gone," someone says as Phung ducks underwater.

"No, she better not be," Brouillette says.

That's when Phung reemerges, cradling Sassy.

"I got your dog," he says.

Phung told the AP that he didn't see the footage of the rescue until a couple of days later. He said he was "amazed" that he remained calm, adding: "I guess it was just the adrenaline took over."

"We saw Hailey going down the road and we actually tried to stop her, but I don't know if she heard us or not, or if she was trying to turn around," he said. "But by that time, the water — she had gotten into a deep part of the water. That's where you see the car started to sink. She was actually about to be in real trouble."

Brouillette said the water "twirled us around like it was nothing."

The AP reports:

Before getting caught in the floodwaters, Brouillette said, she had been released from a hospital that morning after being treated for a kidney ailment. She was on her way to a pharmacy to get prescriptions filled when the car she said she borrowed from a friend was overcome by the water.

"It still seems like a dream," she said.

She believes "divine intervention" also played a part in her survival.

"He saved my life," she said. "I don't even know if I'm worth saving. I guess God said, 'Yeah.' "

Floodwaters in Louisiana last month forced thousands into shelters and left more than a dozen dead. More than 70,000 people registered for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) called the historic flooding a "very serious event."

Monday's reunion happened after a volunteer met Brouillette, who lost her trailer, in a shelter. The volunteer had watched the video footage of Brouillette and Phung before she arrived in Louisiana, and spotted Brouillette a few days later.

Phung brought supplies to Monday's reunion. The haul included food for Sassy, the dog, according to the AP.

"It's just who we are in Louisiana. We help people in times of need," he told the news agency. "I was put in that place to help her out."

Read More:

This man bought 108 pounds of brisket to cook for the displaced Baton Rouge victims

Baton Rouge flood: "I feel so lucky but so guilty for being spared."

After deaths of Alton Sterling and police, then flooding, Baton Rouge begins recovery, together

Donald J. Trump Foundation Is Trump's Money, His Campaign Manager Says. No.

By David Fahrenthold

Washington Post, September 13, 2016

Donald Trump's campaign manager, Kellyanne Conway, was asked on CNN this morning to provide evidence to prove Trump's claim that he has given generously to charity.

She didn't.

In the process, Conway also seemed to be unaware of a key fact about Trump's personal charity, the Donald J. Trump Foundation.

Which is: The Trump Foundation's money doesn't actually come from Trump's own pocket.

"Donald Trump has been incredibly generous over the course of his life," Conway told CNN's Alisyn Camerota.

"With his own money?" Camerota asked.

"With his own money, and his foundation's money — which is his money," Conway replied.

From all available tax records, that is not true.

In fact, tax records show Trump has not given any money to his namesake foundation since 2008. Instead, Trump retooled his foundation to give away other people's money: Since 2008, Trump has taken in millions from donors and given it away under his foundation's name.

The Washington Post described the workings of the Trump Foundation in an article Sunday. Tax experts said they had rarely seen a charity like this, which defied the convention that wealthy people start private foundation to give their wealth away. Instead, the Trump Foundation allowed Trump to retain the appearance of generosity without giving away a dime of his own.

It's possible that Conway knows something that is not yet public, and has seen proof Trump has donated his own money to the Trump Foundation in 2015 or 2016. The foundation has not released information about those years, and its public tax filings only go up to 2014. The Post has asked repeatedly — including again Tuesday morning — for information about any such recent donations.

The Trump campaign has not responded to those questions.

And, on CNN, Conway did not offer any evidence of new donations. Instead, when Camerota challenged her — "No, the foundation's money [is] other people giving to the foundation" — Conway seemed to concede.

"Other people, but he — okay," she said. "But he's been incredibly generous."

Trump did recently give $25,000 to the Trump Foundation, but it wasn't a donation: It was a reimbursement. In 2013, the Trump Foundation made an improper $25,000 gift to a political group aligned with Florida Attorney General Pamela Bondi (R). IRS rules prohibit tax-exempt charities from making such gifts. After The Post reported on that gift, Trump reimbursed the foundation, saying that the money should have come out of his pocket in the first place. He also paid a $2,500 penalty tax.

Conway's appearance on CNN was one of several recent attempts by the Trump campaign — including Trump's running mate, Gov. Mike Pence (Ind.) — to rebut criticism of Trump's past charitable giving. But no one in the Trump campaign has provided any new details about what they believe Trump gave. Or any new proof of a gift from his own pocket.

The Post has made its own effort to verify that Trump did give away millions of his own money, as he has claimed. But after contacting 326 charities, that search has turned up little. Between 2008 and this May, The Post identified just one gift that seemed to be from Trump's own pocket. It was in 2009, for less than $10,000.

This year, after Trump came under media scrutiny, he has made at least two personal gifts to charity: Trump gave $1 million to a veterans group in May, making good on a promise he'd made during a televised fundraiser four months earlier. And Trump gave $100,000 to a Louisiana church to help recovery efforts after Trump toured flood-ravaged areas near Baton Rouge. With those two donations, it appeared that Trump had given more money to charity in four months — under heavy media scrutiny — than he had in the previous 10 years combined.

On Monday, Trump's spokeswoman, Hope Hicks, said that The Post's article on the Trump Foundation was "not at all accurate," but did not cite any specific inaccuracies. Hicks did not respond to follow-up questions asking for those specifics.

In a written statement, Hicks also noted that Trump did not take a salary for his charitable work: "Mr. Trump serves the Foundation without compensation."

In the most recent IRS filings, Trump said he worked a half-hour per week on the Trump Foundation's business. For the nine years before that, Trump had told the IRS he worked "zero hours" per week.

In Tuesday's interview on CNN, Camerota pressed Conway about Trump's income tax returns, which the nominee has declined to release. Since Trump claims that his tax returns are under audit, Camerota asked: Would Trump release a letter from the IRS, proving that was so?

"Are you calling him a liar?" Conway asked.

Overnight Energy: Trump To Visit Flint Water Plant Wednesday

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 13, 2016

TRUMP TO FLINT: Donald Trump is planning Wednesday to visit Flint, Mich., and its water plant, as the city struggles to recover from a devastating drinking water crisis.

Campaign officials told news outlets such as the Detroit News and AP about the planned trip, but did not go into many details about the Republican presidential candidate's schedule.

Trump has been working in recent weeks to reach out more to black communities, including a recent visit to Detroit and to a majority-black church there.

Democrats have been more vocal than Republicans about Flint, a majority-black city whose water has been tainted with lead since a Gov. Rick Snyder (R) appointee switched Flint's water source in April 2014.

Hillary Clinton visited the city twice during the primary season, and participated in a Democratic presidential primary debate there with Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.).

Trump told the Detroit News earlier this month that the Flint crisis "is a situation that would have never happened if I were president."

Read more here.

PIPELINE DEVELOPER WILL 'TRUST THE PROCESS': The company behind the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline project says it will "obey the rules and trust the process" as the Obama administration considers whether new assessments of the pipeline are necessary.

"I am confident that as long as the government ultimately decides the fate of the project based on science and engineering, the Dakota Access Pipeline will become operational, bringing a safer means of transportation to a much needed supply of oil to communities across the country," Energy Transfer Partners Chairman and CEO Kelcy Warren wrote in a memo to staff.

"So we will continue to obey the rules and trust the process."

The memo is a vote of confidence for the $3.8 billion project. It comes days after the Obama administration said it would halt construction on the 1,200-mile long pipeline while it considers whether new environmental tests for its route are necessary.

Warren's memo, sent Tuesday, reiterated the company's position that it did everything it could to consider objections from North Dakota tribes while routing the pipeline. He also dismissed concerns about the pipeline's threat to drinking water supplies, and noted a judge's Friday decision approving of federal permitting of the project.

Read more here.

The tribe responds: The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which is suing over the pipeline project, dismissed Warren's memo on Tuesday.

"It is unfortunate that the corporate world chooses to ignore the millions of people and hundreds of tribal nations who stand in opposition to the destruction of our lands, resources, waters and sacred sites," tribe chairman Dave Archambault II said.

"Energy Transfer Partners has proven time and time again that the bottom line for them is money. The bottom line for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is and will always be protecting our lands, people, water and sacred sites from the devastation of this pipeline. Our fight isn't over until there is permanent protection of our people and resources from the pipeline."

HOUSE GOP SOUNDS ALARM ON EPA REG: Republicans in two House committees pressed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Tuesday to justify a proposed regulation on hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) used in air conditioning and refrigeration.

The leaders of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's energy and power subcommittee and the House Small Business Committee warned in their letter that the April proposal is expensive and potentially illegal.

"We have serious concerns about this rule's impact on American businesses and consumers, and we also believe that it exceeds the agency's statutory authority by establishing a new and expansive global warming program never intended by Congress," they wrote to the EPA.

The EPA is aiming to phase down HFCs, a potent greenhouse gas, and to allow the use of replacement substances.

ON TAP WEDNESDAY I: The Hill hosts an event at the Newseum called "Preparing for the Next Disaster: A Policy Discussion on Community Resilience," featuring Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.), and Timothy W. Manning, Deputy Administrator for Protection and National Preparedness at FEMA. Topics of discussion include preparedness efforts to increase community resilience and the role of federal, state & local government in pre-disaster mitigation. RSVP and watch live here.

ON TAP WEDNESDAY II: The House Science Committee will hold a hearing on its subpoena power over state attorneys general investigating Exxon Mobil Corp.

The hearing is likely to solidify divisions between Republicans and Democrats over the subpoena process. Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas) says his committee has the power to subpoena Eric Schneiderman (N.Y.) and Maura Healey (Mass.), two Democrats investigating allegations that Exxon lied about the extent of its climate science research. Democrats reject Smith's contention and say state attorneys general shouldn't have the federal government interfering in their investigations.

It's one of the many subplots in the fight over Exxon's climate science, and it will take center stage on Wednesday.

Rest of Wednesday's agenda ...

A Senate Appropriations Committee panel will hold a hearing on nuclear energy. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz will testify.

A federal judge will hear from the Standing Rock Sioux, which is appealing a ruling allowing the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

AROUND THE WEB:

In opening statements Tuesday in the federal trial of the accused occupiers of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, attorneys presented contrasting views of the protest as an armed, military-style occupation and as a political protest, the Oregonian reports.

Reykjavik, Iceland's capital city, set a goal to be carbon-neutral by 2040, Voice of America reports.

Residents of Fresno, Calif., say a switch in water supplies has caused elevated lead levels in their drinking water, Reuters reports.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Check out Tuesday's stories...

-Utility reaches $4 million settlement in California gas leak

-Green Republican sees party 'evolving' on clean energy

-Trump plans to visit Flint

-Feds move to protect Joshua tree

-Chevy's electric car to have 238 mile range

-Trump: Climate change science still needs to be 'investigated'

-ND pipeline company will 'trust the process' after project halted

Please send tips and comments to Timothy Cama, tcama@thehill.com; and Devin Henry, dhenry@thehill.com. Follow us on Twitter: @Timothy_Cama, @dhenry, @thehill

After Floods Damaged Court, Greenbrier To Host Tennis Event

Associated Press, September 14, 2016

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.Va. (AP) – The Greenbrier is ready to host its annual tennis classic after floods badly damaged its stadium court in June.

The Beckley Register-Herald reports (http://bit.ly/2c8XIxs) that the fifth annual Greenbrier Champions Tennis Classic is taking place this Saturday and Sunday. It features Venus Williams, Madison Keys, John McEnroe and Pete Sampras.

The Greenbrier's 2,500-seat tennis stadium was damaged during the June floods, which killed 23 people statewide. The clay playing surface was ruined, and The Greenbrier replaced it with a hard court.

Terry Deremer, the resort's director of tennis, said flood waters were 20 feet high into the lower level seating the morning after the floods.

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Information from: The Register-Herald, http://www.register-herald.com

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Cooler Temperatures Help Reduce Idaho Wildfire Activity

Associated Press, September 13, 2016

LOWMAN, Idaho (AP) – This year's largest wildfire burning in the rugged wilderness in Idaho has been slowed by cooling temperatures, allowing firefighters to hold containment efforts.

The so-called Pioneer Fire has burned about 291 square miles since July 18 and was 56 percent contained by Tuesday. More than 1,100 firefighters are currently working to suppress the flames.

Forest officials say a dry cold front currently moving into central Idaho has increased the chance of precipitation. The boost in moisture is expected to reduce fire activity.

However, homes throughout Lowman are still being encouraged to be ready to evacuate in case conditions change.

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Climate Change “Significant And Direct” Threat To US Military: Reports

By Idrees Ali

Reuters, September 14, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

FEMA HOUSING

Struggle Remains To Find Housing For Displaced Flood Victims: “We Are Baton Rouge People. They Need To Keep Us Here”

By Terry Jones

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 13, 2016

When the American Red Cross announced it was closing the shelter at the Baton Rouge River Center on Thursday, Tameka Polk and the more than 400 displaced people taking refuge there panicked.

“We just asked, ‘Are y’all just going to put us out? We weren’t homeless before the flood,’ “ Polk said Tuesday afternoon as she tended to a stroller holding the 2-year-old son of a friend.

Their fears subsided when they learned Tuesday morning the shelter isn’t being shut down, per se; it’s being moved across town to the Stage 5 building at Celtic Studios on Airline Highway. And flood victims like Polk, who are still awaiting assistance to find temporary housing in the wake of last month’s devastating floods, will be bused to the new location.

“We were overjoyed we heard we were going back there,” Polk said.

As of midnight Monday, there were 630 displaced flood victims living in seven shelters across the state, according to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services. The River Center in downtown Baton Rouge is serving the largest population, with 411 displaced victims counted on Monday.

The state on Monday had reported there were only 204 people in the downtown shelter. But officials said Tuesday the figure was lower because it didn’t account for those individuals who had left the shelter during the day but returned at night.

Vicki Eichstaedt, a Red Cross spokesperson, said the disaster relief organization is closing the River Center shelter at the request of the city-parish, which is ready to put the facility back to its commercial use.

Baton Rouge Chief Administrative Officer William Daniel said they need the River Center by Thursday in order to prepare for several high-profile events in October, including Elton John’s nine-city concert tour on Oct. 5.

“We’ve already canceled all of the September events. When things were being negotiated with the state to use the facility … we asked if they could tell us what date they could get out the River Center so we’ll be able to do business,” he said. “They came back with that date.”

Because Patrick Mulhearn, Celtic’s executive director, was happy to provide a place for evacuees to live — at least until November, when production begins on an independent feature film — Red Cross now has a little more time to help flood victims figure out their next step.

But the process is not happening quick enough, Metro-Councilwoman Tara Wicker said Tuesday.

“A bulk of these individuals were in rental situations. As I understand it, there are no resources available for property owners renting their properties,” Wicker said. “We need assistance for them so we can put those rental properties back on the market.”

Red Cross has been meeting with its shelter residents to determine their needs and offer solutions, Eichstaedt said.

“FEMA is offering a number of solutions: temporary shelter assistance, which sometimes includes short hotel stays, and the ‘Shelter in Place’ option,” Eichstaedt said. “We’re trying to counsel everyone to make sure they get in touch with caseworkers and explore what options might be available to them.”

However, many flood victims still living in shelters aren’t qualifying for help from FEMA. And those that are say the options being offered aren’t viable solutions.

Polk’s friend, Marie Johnson, said the Federal Emergency Management Agency did offer financial help in booking her a temporary hotel stay in New Orleans for her and her two small children.

But, Johnson said, “I have an 8-year-old in school here. That doesn’t work for me. … They expect us to pull our kids out of school and start over.”

Johnson was living in a Baton Rouge rental property that flooded. So was Mary Berthelot, who said she also hit dead ends with FEMA. Berthelot was also rejected for the limited financial assistance Red Cross is providing for qualified victims.

“They say there are these available hotels in all Houma, LaPlace and wherever else. They’re trying to ship us off and forget about us,” Berthelot said. “We are Baton Rouge people. They need to keep us here.”

That’s easier said than done, said Terri Ricks, deputy secretary for the state's Department of Children and Family Services.

Ricks said it's nearly impossible to accommodate the specific needs of flood victims right now, given the limited availability in the region's housing market after the floods.

"At this stage, everything is happening with a multi-agency approach," she said. "Every parish sees their residents as their responsibility. They don't want them to go. In no way is anybody being forced to go any place they don't want to go."

Ricks said she expects local governments to become more actively involved over the next eight weeks in finding suitable housing for evacuees still depending on shelters. She stressed that keeping shelters open for extended periods of time is not healthy for the flood victims.

"A month ago we had about 11,000 displaced individuals; today it's 600," she said. "No one is going to put these people out on the streets. There will be in-state options for people."

African American Homeowners Struggle To Rebuild After Flood

By Susan Buchanan

Louisiana Weekly, September 13, 2016

Many rural and urban African American homeowners who were flooded in south-central Louisiana last month face a host of worries, especially if they're low-income or seniors. Some of them are dealing with yet another high-water event. Those who received letters from Federal Emergency Management Agency denying them aid have little money for repairs. Others are watching their physical health deteriorate. Homelessness is a risk for people who lost their dwellings. And down the road, some flooded residents could be priced out of housing by the kind of gentrification seen in New Orleans after Katrina.

In one of the worst cases, the African American subdivisions of Pecan Acres and Pleasantview outside of New Roads in Pointe Coupee Parish flooded again last month. They've been in a continuous struggle with water. The Pecan Acres subdivision has officially flooded 16 or 17 times since it was founded 45 years ago, former Pointe Coupee Parish Police Juror Albert Dewey Dukes said last week. He represented the community for two decades before retiring in December. "In August, most of the homes in Pecan Acres were damaged or destroyed as the Portage Canal overflowed again," he said.

Governor John Bel Edwards toured Pecan Acres on August 30 and learned of its problems for the first time then.

"Pecan Acres never should have been developed, at least not for homes," Dukes said. The area was a swamp and a former dumping spot. The community relies on a drainage pump, the canal and a levee to keep water out. "The authorities can't even get in to clean the canal, and it hasn't been dredged in years," he said. The parish police jury is working on a project now to improve drainage and raise the levee, however.

Water has receded in Pecan Acres since mid-August, and Americorps volunteers have helped clean out homes. "Most of the families are doing the rebuilding now themselves," Dukes said. "Many of them are getting FEMA letters denying them assistance. That's because their homes are in a flood zone, and they haven't had the money to pay for the flood insurance that's required."

Those who can rebuild are likely to stay, even with the constant threat of being inundated. "Most of them can't afford to move," Dukes said.

After flooding from Hurricane Gustav in 2008, Pecan Acres residents joined in a class action suit, claiming the parish was derelict in its drainage management. A drainage pump failed in Gustav's rainfall, causing the canal to overflow and flooding homes. In 2012, residents received part of a $2 million insurance settlement.

In July of this year, the parish police jury solicited bids for a Pecan Acres flood-control project, financed by a FEMA hazard mitigation grant to improve drainage and strengthen barriers. The parish hopes to raise the levee along Bayou Pointe and Portage Canal.

Educator Monica Fabre grew up in Pecan Acres after her parents bought a house there in 1971. "They had been sharecroppers until the last cotton gins closed here in 1967," she said. "Then they scrimped and saved, picking pecans to buy their dream house." The community's 16 or 17 floods over 45 years were the recorded ones, she said. In fact, Pecan Acres flooded many more times than that. "Families had cinder blocks or bricks so we could raise our furniture off the floor before it rained," she said. "We would wade off from home in the morning to get to school."

Floodwater from the Portage Canal contains residential and industrial waste water, Fabre said. "People have been dying from cancer and long-term illnesses here younger and at higher rates than they should have," she said. "My mother died at 56."

"The soil and water needs to be tested for toxins," Fabre said. "But the parish may be afraid of what it will find." The state's Department of Environmental Quality hasn't done any recent sampling in Pecan Acres, she said.

Fabre was pleased that Governor Edwards visited Pecan Acres last month. "He put us on his radar screen," she said. "The state should have had us there all along." After his visit, Edwards released a statement saying that his administration is now aware of the area and its residents, and will do all it can to address their needs.

Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General Russel Honore, who grew up in Pointe Coupee, met with Pecan Acres residents a number of times from late August to early September. He participated in a town hall meeting there last Thursday.

Fabre said residents of Pecan Acres and Pleasantview are the working poor and seniors on fixed incomes. "They can't afford flood insurance because that would mean not paying their electricity or other bills," she said. Since the August flood, many have received rejection letters from FEMA because of not having insurance. And for residents who do qualify for FEMA's up to $33,000 for home repairs, those payments are seldom the maximum amount and are only intended to cover basics, she said.

As for the availability of federal Small Business Administration loans to cover the bulk of a homeowner's repair work, "my guess is that, based on income, only three to five percent of families in Pecan Acres and Pleasantview would qualify," Fabre said.

Meanwhile, many of those residents are taking advantage of the state's Shelter at Home program, which is independent of FEMA. Shelter at Home provides up to $15,000 for repairs that can make a house safe while owners rebuild. "That gets your plumbing and lights running and a hot plate going," Fabre said.

Someday, resident buyouts could be an option for Pecan Acres and Pleasantview. "But it really isn't feasible for seniors in their eighties and nineties to move," Fabre said.

Fabre said members of her family in greater Baton Rouge, about 37 miles southeast of Pecan Acres, also flooded in August. "My cousins and other relatives in Baker, Zachary and North Baton Rouge all had water for the first time ever," she said. Baker is a small, mostly African-American city in East Baton Rouge Parish, and Zachary is a city—about half white and the rest Black, Asian and Hispanic—in East Baton Rouge. North Baton Rouge is a mostly Black neighborhood in the capital.

Fabre worries that urban areas like North Baton Rouge, which is blighted but has affordable housing, might become gentrified as the city recovers. "Eleven years after Katrina, some New Orleaneans living in Pointe Coupee are still trying to move home, but they can't afford Orleans now because of its gentrification," she said.

Isaiah Marshall, managing partner at consultants Sable International in Baton Rouge, has a number of concerns about African Americans who flooded in and near the capital."North Baton Rouge and Monticello were hit pretty hard," he said. Marshall is a former director of the now-dormant Baton Rouge Black Chamber of Commerce. Monticello is a mostly African American community in East Baton Rouge Parish.

"The water's gone, but some of the homes that flooded in these areas still aren't gutted," Marshall said. Flood victims with poor credit histories are frustrated as they search for loans and decent housing, he said. In African-American areas that were inundated, the need for mental health services is expected to grow. Nonprofits and Black-owned small businesses will struggle for assistance as they try to recover.

Following the flood, homelessness will be on the rise, Marshall predicted. He noted that the large shelter at Baton Rouge River Center is scheduled to close in mid-September. Early last Thursday, the shelter housed 419 evacuees, down from 11,000 in mid-August, the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services said.

Flood Victims Begin To Move Into FEMA Mobile Housing Units

By Robbie Reynold

WAFB-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 13, 2016

BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) –

On a mobile device? Click here to take a look at the mobile housing units.

The manufactured housing units for flood victims are slowly making their way to neighborhoods in south Louisiana.

FEMA said that 16 of the manufactured housing units (MHUs) are currently occupied. That is out of the more than 200 units that have been set up on different sites across the affected parishes. Officials said the remaining units either still need utilities or are in final preparations.

Tonia Kinchen said she is happy to have gotten her unit so early. She has been making the 30 minute drive to her son's home every day since she lost everything in the recent flooding.

She works on her house on Prescott Road and travels back to her son's house on Burbank Drive to sleep. However, that is about to change now that she has a MHU parked in her front yard.

Kinchen and her husband will be moving in within the next few days once it is fully operational.

"They have beds, they have sheets. They have blankets, dishes. The whole nine yards. So it's something to start you off with," Kinchen said.

However, Kinchen said it will still be difficult transition. She signed a year-long contract to use the trailer, but hopes to be back in her repaired home before then, and before it starts to take an emotional toll.

"The hardest part is just not being your home here. Home is home. No matter how you look at it," Kinchen said.

FEMA officials said they are processing applications for trailers as quickly as they can and distributing them from sites like the one on Blount Road. Kinchen said she didn't lose phone or internet service during the flooding, and that's why she got her unit earlier than other people.

"A lot of people didn't have access to a phone, didn't have access to internet, and FEMA said like I was on the top of the list," Kinchen said.

FEMA officials said more than 550 have been ordered for the flooding disaster, but the number will grow as they work with flood victims on their housing needs.

People can apply online at disasterassistance.gov or call 1-800-621-3362. Applicants must have more than $17,000 in property damage to be eligible.

FEMA said people can continue to register through October.

As of Tuesday, Sept. 13, officials reported that 58,800 people had registered with FEMA in East Baton Rouge Parish. Livingston Parish had 28,603 registered with the agency followed by Ascension Parish with 11,446 and Tangipahoa with 9,063.

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With Hundreds Still Homeless, FEMA Trailers Remain Unused

By Brett Buffington And Trey Couvillion

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 13, 2016

BATON ROUGE – FEMA is trying to come up with answers as to why an extensive number of modular homes set aside for flood victims have remained unused. Tonight, more than 100 modular units still sit empty since showing up to the drop site.

At a town hall meeting this evening in Watson, a spokesperson for FEMA said they are slowing transitioning to a recovery effort. The spokesperson also said they are working with local agencies to place the units in a safe location.

"We're slowly turning from response to recovery. This is going to be a long time effort," the spokesman said. "The thing with the manufactured house units, is that we have to work with the state and local officials that we put it in a safe place."

But News 2 was told similar information from a FEMA employee about a month ago. Willie Nunn, who is in charge of the units, said in August that they were looking to inspect the sites for the temporary homes back when they arrived.

"Yes, we're looking to make sure that the house is environmentally sound. We have to go out and inspect the site," Nunn said.

The inspection is supposed to include a check from FEMA to ensure the unit is not placed in a flood plain. But this unit on Fairlane Drive in Denham Springs, marked on FEMA's own map as a designated flood zone. And still a month later, FEMA is having a hard time explaining why these homes have not been put to use.

"It takes a while to install one at a location, we can't just make a home available in 24 hours," said the spokesman.

A month earlier though, Nunn said they were ready.

"We have them here, we have to folks here ready to take them out to the sites where we need to have them."

One thing that FEMA has had a consistent answer with is insisting the modular homes are a last resort for flood victims. FEMA has instructed families to find hotels. After calling 10 hotels in the Baton Rouge area, News 2 found none that could accommodate an extended stay. But tonight, FEMA's final answer as to why the tax payer funded homes still sit parked, is less than informing.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

Charleston County To Review Federal Preliminary Updated Flood Insurance Maps

Charleston (SC) Moultrie News, September 13, 2016

Charleston County's Building Inspection Services Department is receiving and will be reviewing the new preliminary flood maps provided by the Federal

Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Flood Insurance Rate Maps are being updated as part of a map modernization program conducted by FEMA.

The updated flood mapping will provide property owners with up-to-date flood hazard information and should prevent unnecessary insurance purchases.

FEMA will host public meetings to provide the public opportunities to review the maps and ask questions. The dates of those meetings have not yet been announced. The public will also have an opportunity to file objections to the mapping of their property. Details about the objection process will be released at the public meetings and on FEMA's website.

"The preliminary maps will start a year or more process to get to a final set of maps for our citizens. The maps will be technically reviewed and presented to the public sometime this fall, according to FEMA and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Following the public meetings, a 90-day period will allow anyone who has problems with the maps to file their concern with FEMA," said Charleston County Building Inspections Director Carl Simmons. "The current maps and regulations will remain official and used until the new maps are finalized and approved by local ordinances."

The projected effective date of the maps, following the County's review and comments as well as the public meetings and objection filings, is April of 2018, according to FEMA.

Citizens with properties within the jurisdiction of a municipality who have questions should contact that municipality's floodplain coordinator. Citizens with properties within unincorporated Charleston County who have questions, should call 843-202-6957. You can also reach the FEMA Map Information eXchange at 1-877-FEMA MAP (1-877-336-2627).

Citizens can later view the maps on the FEMA's Map Service Center here: https://msc.fema.gov/portal/

(Please note: FEMA has not yet posted the maps for Charleston County. Check the website for updated information.)

Goose Lake Residents Ask Grundy County To Get FEMA Flood Maps Updated

By Heidi Litchfield

Morris (IL) Herald-News, September 13, 2016

MORRIS – Nicole Blustein, a resident of Goose Lake, asked the Grundy County Board during its Tuesday meeting to update FEMA flood maps.

"We are joined tonight by many of our neighbors as this issue impacts approximately 40 properties and families in the county," she said during public comment. "For years, we have been incorrectly designated by FEMA as being in a high-risk flood zone due to our proximity to Claypool Drainage District."

She said the designation has cost some neighbors between $15,000 and $30,000 in flood insurance that they will never see a return on because they are not in a floodplain.

"This can have a severe negative impact on our property value as well," she said.

In 2014, the county, along with Claypool and Maine drainage districts and the municipalities of Diamond and Coal City, conducted a hydrologic study and found that property along White Tie Road, Tony Cove Lane and Rollin Lane in Goose Lake were not in a flood zone.

Blustein said that regardless of the study's findings, nothing will be changed until FEMA is updated.

The residents have met with the county's Land Use Committee and understand that the work required would cost the county money, but said the change would not only benefit the 40 homeowners but also help for economic development purposes to have accurate flood maps on file.

John Kerr, another Goose Lake resident, also asked the board to move forward.

County Board Chairman Chris Balkema said the first quote for the letter, which includes significant engineering work to complete, that the county received came in higher than expected at $35,000.

County Administrator Doug Pryor said the county has a request for bid posted on the county website for the work.

"We're trying to get it down to a realistic quote," Balkema said.

Denham Springs City Council Member Wants To Gauge Public Input On City's Future With NFIP

By John Dupont

Livingston Parish News (LA), September 13, 2016

DENHAM SPRINGS – A city council member will recommend the City of Denham Springs host a public hearing to gauge response on withdrawl from the National Flood Insurance Program.

Councilman Chris Davis is not seeking a kneejerk response to the proposal, but he believes FEMA and its subsidiary flood insurance program have not adequately served Denham Springs residents.

He will proposal at the City Council meeting tonight at 6.

"We're a month into this flood and there hasn't been a lot of discussion," he said.

Davis says nine of 10 residents have told him they do not want to elevate or raze their homes.

Davis believes the city could possibly emerge stronger without help from FEMA.

"This isn't a decision the five of us on the council can make," he said. "It's up to the residents, whose lives are being affected. They need to speak and they need to be heard."

He said he was pleased with efforts from the state's Congressional delegate, but that the city cannot brush off its problems to Capitol Hill.

Davis agrees with a suggestion from Congressmen Garret Graves and Cedric Richmond that more money for rebuilding would serve the city better than trailers.

He said a $50,000 damage stipend to residents would go much further than FEMA trailers.

The purchase, placement and removal of each trailer costs FEMA $100,000, Davis said.

"I think they should do that instead of having a program that wastes money," he said.

Davis said FEMA has "strong-armed" communities into participating in their program.

"I don't think our Congressional leaders that in mind when they passed the Stafford Act to respond to disaster in an appropriate way."

Even the loss of 1,000 homes would prove disastrous, Davis said.

FEMA cannot address the plight of Denham Springs as it did for New Orleans.

"For New Orleans to absorb a hit like Katrina was one thing, but to treat Denham Springs like New Orleans will be the death of Denham Springs," Davis said.

National Flood Insurance Program Deadline Extended In Louisiana

KATC-TV Lafayette (LA), September 13, 2016

FEMA has granted an extension for Louisiana National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policyholders affected by August's severe storms and flooding to file proof-of-loss claims.

You now have 120 days from the date of your loss to file a flood insurance claim if you're a Louisiana NFIP policyholder. The extension doubles the 60-day deadline NFIP usually requires for policyholders to submit a fully documented, signed and sworn proof-of-loss claim.

FEMA determined Louisiana policyholders need more time to file claims given the recent flooding's magnitude.

The proof-of-loss is included in the claims package that documents your flood losses. The claims package should include:

Photos or video of your flood damage.

A comprehensive and itemized list of what was damaged.

Receipts, if possible, for your damaged items along with any other supporting documents that show the value of what you lost.

Contact your insurance company as soon as possible to begin processing your claim.

FEMA has streamlined its process to better service flood insurance claims and answer questions. You may call 800-621-3362 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and select Option 2. If you use TTY, call 800-462-7585. If you use 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362.

Call-center staff are available to assist you with information regarding your policy, offer technical flood guidance to aid in recovery, and respond to general as well as complicated questions about the NFIP. FEMA can transfer you to your insurance carrier for additional assistance if you have questions specifically about your insurance claim.

FEMA Floodplain Findings

KIDY-TV San Angelo (TX), September 13, 2016

SAN ANGELO, TX – People living south of FM 2105 and north of Cauley Lane got some big news at today's commissioners court meeting.

After about a four-year process, this area is not longer declared a "floodplain."

FEMA approved a study by Chalk Mountain that showed the area was not a floodplain.

Homeowners were having to pay more for insurance because of the designation — now those rates should decrease.

There's also another step to help with those insurance costs.

"If they find that they're still in the floodplain, they can always petition their local land surveyor to create an elevation certificate, and that's going to clarify further whether or not they're in or out of the floodplain," Kenneth Dees, president of Chalk Mountain LLC, said.

To check the location of your home, call your country commissioner. They will have a map of the area.

(© 2016 KIDY)

MITIGATION

Officials Warn Of Long Haul With Hazard Mitigation Program

By Jake Jarvis

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 13, 2016

At the first of several meetings to introduce the federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to flood-affected communities, officials warned residents that seeing help from the program will take a while.

The grant program seeks to identify and implement measures a community can take to mitigate future disasters, which could mean buying out a homeowner and demolishing the home, elevating the home or rebuilding it to meet higher safety standards.

Speaking Tuesday evening in the gymnasium of the old Clendenin Middle School, Brian Penix, the state's hazard mitigation officer, couldn't tell a crowd of about 200 residents from Clendenin and the surrounding area how long it would take to see any of that grant money. When members of the crowd pressured him, he said it could take months, even years.

"To be honest with you, this is a very, very long process," Penix said. "We tell everyone, even when we were doing the old massive buyouts, we would tell them to go on about their lives as if they're not being helped."

That's in part because of how competitive the grant program it is. Penix said communities first have to submit a lengthy application to the state, highlighting the community's priorities for distributing grant money. The state, in turn, has to submit its own application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which oversees the grant program.

Having applied for aid or received aid through FEMA's Individuals and Households Program doesn't have anything to do with participating in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Even if someone was denied for the Individuals and Households Program, they still may participate in hazard mitigation if their community qualifies. Individuals may not apply for hazard mitigation on their own.

Once the community's application has been approved, officials will identify what part of the program homeowners qualify for, using the list of priorities the community laid out in its application.

The town of Clendenin could prioritize helping elderly homeowners first, or helping homeowners who live closest to the Elk River. Regardless of how the town decides to prioritize how the grant money is distributed, each town has to follow the same general guidelines.

The program only allows homes located in the floodway — the area directly adjacent to the river or stream that can reasonably expect to flood regularly — to be bought from the homeowner and torn down.

"If I would do that during this event, I would destroy whole communities," Penix said. "It isn't just a matter of buying the house to get you out of there, that house would be bought with deed restrictions preventing any further developments on that property. They can't develop it, they can't sell it, and they don't get taxes from it."

Kevin Sneed, the state's national flood insurance program coordinator, said homeowners can go to mapwv.gov/floods to see if their home falls in the floodplain or floodway. Once on the website, under the "expert" view, the floodplain is show with thin red cross hatching. Areas in the floodway are outlined with a bold red line.

The two other options, which FEMA officials said it and the state prefers, involves reconstructing the damaged home or elevating the home at no cost to the homeowner. If a structure has been substantially damaged, but a structural engineer doesn't think the home can be safely elevated without collapsing, the house will be entirely rebuilt.

Having a home elevated or rebuilt would require the homeowner to agree to purchase flood insurance for the rest of the home's life. This insurance would be significantly cheaper than the cost of flood insurance would have been normally since the home was just updated, according to Sneed.

At the Tuesday night meeting, residents worried that if the town of Clendenin applied for the grant, their homes would be on the hook to be demolished, whether the homeowner likes it or not.

Cristina Pop, a hazard mitigation specialist, tried to ease put those fears to rest. The program is entirely voluntary, she said, and up until the homeowner signs a contract agreeing to let go of their property and allow it to be demolished, they can back out at any time. Even if the town of Clendenin would qualify for the program, homeowners still wouldn't have to participate in it.

The next public meeting to discuss the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program will be held at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Elkview Middle School. Other meetings will be at Thursday at Alderson City Hall; Sept. 19 at Geary Elementary/Middle School; Sept. 27 at Marlinton Town Hall; and Sept. 28 at Alumni Hall in Richwood. All of those meetings start at 6 p.m.

First Public Meeting Held In Clendenin On Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant

West Virginia MetroNews, September 13, 2016

CLENDENIN, W.Va. — The first of several public meetings planned on FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program was held Tuesday night in Clendenin as the three-month mark since the June 23 flood approaches.

Residents came to the meeting with all sorts of different questions on their options under the program.

"My changes of rebuilding here are not good," said City Recorder David Ross. "There's heavy damage to my house and limited aid available."

State Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Jimmy Gianato said there are a number of factors that affect whether residents can rebuild.

"Where they are in the flood plain, can they comply with local flood plain ordinances," he said. "We want to try to maintain the community as a whole so we're working with the county. The county has to put together an application with the state for whatever they decide to do."

Gianato said the grant is very competitive, and not everyone could be considered.

"There's a limited amount of money available for this. All the applicants will go into a pool. This is a statewide grant; it's not just Kanawha or Greenbrier county. Mitigation is statewide so you're competing with applicants from all over the state."

For that reason, Lula Jack, who said her home had sustained minimal damage but her sister's house was destroyed, wasn't holding her breath for any aid.

"I don't feel like there's going to be any help through FEMA. It's just going to be certain ones. The way I understood it, they're not going to help everybody," Jack said.

Heather Gillenwater hadn't been in her home since the flood, and said she had gotten no clear answers since from any organization.

"We feel like we haven't gotten any answers, and that we've been passed around from one place to the next," she said. "We filled every form out that you can fill out and we still feel like we don't know anymore (than we did since) June 23."

Options under the program include stand-alone elevation of structures, relocation of structures to outside floodplains and full acquisition and demolition of properties.

The public meetings continue Wednesday at 6 p.m. at Elkview Middle School and Thursday at 6 p.m. at Alderson City Hall.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin estimated Tuesday that West Virginia had incurred roughly $300 million in flood damage, and would call lawmakers into special session next week.

Denham Springs Residents Voice Frustrations Over Regulations That Could Require Them To Elevate Their Homes

By Heidi Kinchen

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 13, 2016

DENHAM SPRINGS — Residents packed Old City Hall's second-floor courtroom, overflowed to the stairwell and down into the lobby Tuesday night to voice their frustrations to Denham Springs officials about the regulations that could require some of them to elevate their homes before receiving permits to repair or rebuild.

Building Official Rick Foster said the city had received 260 applications for permits so far, and only 10 homes had been declared "substantially damaged" — meaning, the cost of repairing the home will exceed 50 percent of its fair market value.

Related

Homes in flood hazard areas that have been substantially damaged and are below base flood elevation must be elevated before the homeowner can receive a permit for repairs, according to rules the city adopted in order to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Foster said in all 10 cases in which the city declared homes substantially damaged, the homeowners agreed with the determination.

Councilman Chris Davis said the calculation can be skewed significantly by general contractor estimates, which must include overhead expenses that homeowners would not incur when buying their own supplies and doing the work themselves.

He suggested the city Permits Department should be able to accept a homeowner's repair estimate instead.

A licensed contractor is one of five sources for a repair estimate that the city can accept under the NFIP, according to a city-distributed flier on the topic. A local building and permits department also can make a repair estimate "where the unmanageable number of permits must be processed in a major post-disaster situation," the flier states.

Foster said having his limited staff perform repair estimate calculations is not feasible.

"If you think it's hard to get a contractor out there right now, imagine how hard it's going to be for our permit office," Foster said.

Davis said many homeowners either do not participate in the NFIP or would agree to drop their coverage for a private policy if it meant they could avoid having to elevate their homes.

Foster said there are 1,500 active NFIP flood insurance policies in the city — policies that could be put at risk or see significant rate increases if residents disregard the regulations and opt out of the insurance program.

Mayor Gerard Landry said a private insurance company may quote a lower rate today, then drop the policy and decline to renew it in future years. Private companies are not required to offer flood insurance, he said.

Residents concerned about having to elevate their homes should contact their congressional delegation, City Attorney Stephanie Hulett said.

"It will literally take an act of Congress to waive that requirement" for substantially damaged homes, she said.

Landry has been pushing federal officials, including members of Congress, to work on doing just that, Hulett said.

Debra Hebert said three different inspectors from the Federal Emergency Management Agency had visited her home on Kline Street, just a few blocks from the Amite River. The home took on 8 feet of floodwater.

"One of them told me every single home on this street is going to have to be elevated," Hebert said.

Contractors' repair estimates for the home have varied widely, ranging from about $55,000 to $100,000, said Larry Chumney, Hebert's boyfriend.

"It's all over the map," Chumney said. "It's ridiculous."

Hulett stressed that residents should ask contractors for a "barebones" estimate.

"You don't want them to tell you how much it will cost to replace your marble counter tops and all the nice things you had in your home before the flood," Hulett said. "You want them to tell you how much it will cost to make the home livable. That's all."

City Gets $1.3M For Dove Creek

By John Purcell

Amsterdam (NY) Recorder, September 13, 2016

Amsterdam was recently awarded more than $1.3 million to replace damaged retaining walls along Dove Creek and further stabilize the waterway.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide $1,324,744 to the city of Amsterdam for the demolition and removal of damaged retaining walls along a portion of Dove Creek, along with cleaning out the riverbed. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds will also be used to install a new pre-cast stackable concrete retaining walls where sections are failing. Heavy stone fill will be placed along areas of erosion on the banks of Dove Creek to provide erosion protection.

Amsterdam Mayor Michael Villa said stabilization of Dove Creek is another step in the city's recovery process.

"We thank the Governor's Office for helping secure these additional funds as we look to provide protection against flooding, wind and power outages," Villa said in a statement. "The Dove Creek project is a critical component in this process."

Dove Creek runs through the center of the city, under Guy Park Avenue and West Main Street and into the Mohawk River. The creek was damaged during tropical storms Irene and Lee in 2011.

Montgomery County Executive Matthew Ossenfort said completing the stabilization of Dove Creek is a much needed resiliency project, which is "crucial to ensuring the safety of St. Mary's Hospital." He said services the hospital provides are even more critical during disasters.

Scott Bruce, chief operating officer of St. Mary's Healthcare, said severe flooding several years ago resulted in the hospital on Guy Park Avenue being evacuated, which raised awareness about the threat of flooding to patients and emergency services.

"As a community partner concerned about the improvement of our area's quality of life, and as a provider of critical health care and safety net services, we are pleased that this funding recognizes and responds to a serious community need," Bruce said in a statement. "The work that will be done with the Dove Creek stabilization project means that we are much less likely to have to face this type of community-wide crisis."

The tributary had been a growing problem for years with walls eroding, but the historic flooding exacerbated issues.

City Engineer Richard Miller had said erosion and crumbling retaining walls were consuming sections of property and the damage would cause further flooding and infrastructure problems if repairs were not completed.

Miller had said the problem starts with retention ponds and runoff from behind the shopping developments along the Route 30 corridor in the town of Amsterdam. Another issue he had identified was ownership and access to the creek, with the city only owning portions passing through roadways.

The stabilization project of Dove Creek begins near the intersection of West Main Street and Steadwell Avenue and extends approximately 1,300 feet to just north of the Steadwell Avenue near the entrance to St. Mary's Hospital.

Cuomo said the funds will "help harden critical infrastructure" in Amsterdam and ensure residents are protected from flooding following severe storms.

"As this region has experienced first-hand, extreme weather is the new normal and we must do everything we can to help communities become more resilient and prepared to whatever Mother Nature throws their way," Cuomo said in a news release.

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program allows New York state to establish priorities aimed at increasing resiliency, mitigating the risks of loss and damage associated with future disasters, and reducing hardship, according to the Governor's Office.

The Amsterdam Common Council accepted lead agency status for the State Environmental Quality Review of the Dove Creek reconstruction project in February. The city council also authorized John M. McDonald Engineering to provide assistance with a coordinated review of the project.

Previously, FEMA authorized $182,500 for phase 1 design and engineering for the project.

Eddy County, FEMA Talk Road Damages

By DeJanay Booth

Carlsbad (NM) Current-Argus, September 13, 2016

EDDY COUNTY — Eddy County Emergency Management met with representatives from the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and Federal Emergency Management Agency on Tuesday after the county filed for a disaster declaration.

"We put in a declaration for the local disaster (in the county) due to the damages starting Aug. 21. In our area, alone, we had significant damages," said emergency management director Jennifer Armendariz, who filed the declaration on Aug. 24.

Armendariz said Eddy County, FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security conducted a post disaster assessment meeting Tuesday morning. The two agencies will spend a few days assessing the damages and taking photos of the damaged roads and bridges to determine the cost of damages.

On Tuesday, the two agencies visited Dark Canyon, Long Horn and Dillahunty roads.

Armendariz said Dillahunty was still under repair from a flood in 2014. However, the heavy rainfall in August delayed the construction.

The Department of Homeland Security visited Eddy County Sept. 8 to talk about repairs and materials that might be needed moving forward.

Over the next few days, the two agencies will examine other roads and bridges, including Dogtown road.

Armendariz said the Eddy County worked with the Department of Homeland Security to submit a list of repairs and an estimate of the cost of damages. FEMA will evaluate those submission and create a worksheet of damages to compare. Any disagreements are arbitrated.

"(Compensation) all depends on FEMA and what's reimbursable," Armendariz said, mentioning the county's total expenditures are not guaranteed for reimbursement.

Armendariz said FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security visited the county in 2014 to inspect damage from flood waters. Compared to two years ago, she does not believe the cost of damages now will exceed the cost of damages from the flood in 2014.

However, the amount of time it takes to repair the current damages may take just as long.

"The event's over and it takes time to repair the roads," Armendariz said. "It's a long process."

Bryan City Council Looks At Solving Long Term Flooding Issues Around City

By Clay Falls

KBTX-TV Waco (TX), September 13, 2016

BRYAN – The Bryan City Council is looking at long term plans to fix flooding around the city.

Residents are frustrated with their homes being flooded out.

Debbie Hodges loves her house in the Willow Bend area of Bryan, except when her street gets too much rain.

"We've flooded three times in ten years that's quite a lot. That's enough to scare you to death," said Hodges.

She and multiple homes along Burton Creek have flooded in the past.

The last time was in May.

"Never worried about rain, never was scared of it but now every time it rains it's like it comes up this creek gets to a certain level there's no where for the water to go but into these houses and that's very dirty water it could give people very illnesses. There's a lot of things that go along with the flooding other than this flooding and then you've got mass mess to clean up," said Hodges.

Residents along Burton Creek tell us the city is long overdue fixing this problem. They'd like to see things like more clean outs of the creek as well as looking at engineering options.

"About annually every other year we had projects being funded and improvements being done. Some years are larger projects others smaller," said Paul Kaspar, Bryan City Engineer.

Tuesday afternoon the council got an update on mitigation plans. In the coming years the city hopes to spend $800,000 for concrete replacement of lower Burton Creek.

Debbie Hodges's neighbor Hannah Dodge says she hopes to take a buyout after her home was hit hard. The city will consider that for homes with flood insurance.

"We're continuing to work with FEMA on a buyout program so if you are in that consistently flood on a regular basis FEMA's got some programs so the city will continue to work with those and we're continuing to look at flood mitigation," said Mayor Jason Bienski.

"I would be appreciative of anything that they can do or figure out the engineers or whoever needs to do that," added Hodges.

The Bryan City Council did not take any action on the plan Tuesday.

Mayor Bienski tells us he is open to have more meetings and forums for residents to share their concerns.

City engineers tell us they have been doing maintenance on Burton Creek and clearing brush when they can, but say they have to be careful removing too much vegetation or it can create erosion problems.

DHS/FEMA GRANTS

County Receives $74,139 In Federal Emergency Food, Shelter Funds

Orangeburg (SC) Times And Democrat, September 14, 2016

Orangeburg County has been awarded federal funds under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program in the amount of $74,139.

The funds will be used to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in the county.

The selection was made by a National Board, which is chaired by U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency. The board consists for representatives of the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, USA National Council of Churches, The Jewish Federations of North America, The Salvation Army and United Way Worldwide.

Local Emergency Food and Shelter Boards are tasked with distributing funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country.

The Local Board for Orangeburg County determines how the funds awarded to the county are distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local agencies as well as any additional funds available under this phase of the program.

Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must 1) be private, voluntary non-profits with a 501©3 status, or units of government; 2) be eligible to receive federal funds; 3) have an accounting system; 4) practice nondiscrimination; 5) have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food or shelter programs; and 6) if they are a private, voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board.

Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

Orangeburg County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously to CASA Family Systems, The Salvation Army, Cooperative Church Ministries of Orangeburg, New Hope Ministries of Holly Hill and the Cooperative Ministry of North.

Public or private voluntary agencies that are interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds must contact Janie Anderson at 1823 Scott Lake Road, Summerville, SC 29148 or 843-708-3936.

The deadline for applications to be received is Sept. 23.

FIRE GRANTS

Myrtle Beach Fire Department Gets $1M FEMA Grant To Hire New Firefighters

Myrtle Beach (SC) Online, September 13, 2016

The Myrtle Beach Fire Department has been awarded a $1 million FEMA grant to add nine full-time firefighters to its staff.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency confirmed the department was awarded a grant of $1,053,522 through its Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program.

Additional firefighters will afford the department the opportunity to dispatch more people to bigger emergencies and provide extra assistance on EMS and ambulance calls, according to a post on the Myrtle Beach City Government Facebook page.

The SAFER grants program was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities, according to the FEMA website. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association.

The grant will fund the salaries of the nine firefighters for two years, after which the city will be responsible for the cost, according to the city's post.

FEMA Awards Myrtle Beach Fire Department $1 Million For SAFER Program

WMBF-TV Myrtle Beach (SC), September 13, 2016

MYRTLE BEACH, SC (WMBF) – FEMA awarded the Myrtle Beach Fire Department a grant of $1 million for Staffing for the Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program, according to Myrtle Beach's City Government Facebook post.

"The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association," the post states.

The department will be able to staff nine additional full-time firefighters with the grant.

The $1 million will also allow the department to dispatch more firefighters to emergencies and provide assistance on EMS and ambulance calls.

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Elkin Fire Awarded $485K Grant

Elkin (NC) Tribune, September 13, 2016

The recruitment efforts of Elkin Fire Department just received a $485,726 boost this week, thanks to a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant awarded to the department by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Capt. Theresa Knops with EFD made the announcement at Monday's Elkin Board of Commissioners meeting, and asked for the board's blessing to accept the grant and for other action related to the grant. For months, the commissioners and town officials have been wrestling with ways to tackle the town fire department's low volunteer numbers.

Notice of the grant acceptance came Aug. 26 to the fire department. The grant is for four years and requires no match in funds from the town, and there is no requirement to continue funding once the grant period has ended, Knops explained.

The grant period will be Nov. 20 of this year through Nov. 19, 2020, and it includes funding to hire a full-time employee with salary and benefits of $58,091 per year to coordinate the grant and recruitment efforts, as well as recruitment of an additional 20 volunteer firefighters with funding of $4,425 per firefighter per year, including funding for personal protective equipment such as helmets, coats, pants and boots, uniforms, physical exams and more.

Other funding in the grant will allow for implementation of a tuition and mileage reimbursement program for those personnel needing to travel to gain certification and education for the positions in the amount of $10,000 per year, as well as the development of an Explorer program in the final years of the grant period which would be designed to build interest among local youth for fire service, with funding for that program at $2,925 per Explorer for 10 youth and includes gear and uniforms.

The final funding amounts will be used to market the desire for new volunteers through social media advertising, website retargeting, radio advertising, television advertising, printed recruitment materials and improvements to the EFD website.

The department's original request in the grant application was for $570,566, but it was awarded at $485,726, Knops explained.

The commissioners unanimously approved acceptance of the FEMA SAFER grant Monday. In addition, the board unanimously approved adjusting the town budget to accept the funds and authorizing the development of the new full-time position to coordinate the grant and recruitment project.

"With such an extensive level of financial support from FEMA, we feel we can make great headway towards keeping our current firefighters invested in the fire department as well as growing our organization to meet current and future needs," said Chief Mike Morton. He recognized Knops and Assistant Chief Don Mitchell for their work in developing the grant proposal.

Nearly 70 percent of America's firefighters are volunteers, reported Knops in a press release Tuesday morning. Nationally, volunteers save communities an estimated $140.7 billion a year. Communities such as Elkin relay on volunteer firefighters as an effective and cost-efficient means of keeping their citizens and visitors safe, she continued. However, the number of volunteer firefighters has declined by over 18 percent nationwide in the past several decades while the number of incidents to which they respond has increased. At the same time, the average age of the volunteer fire service is increasing.

The SAFER program provides funding to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, front-line firefighters available in their communities, explained the press release. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the abilities of local fire departments to comply with staffing, response and operational standards so that communities are protected from fire and fire-related hazards.

"When emergencies happen, whether they are fires, accident, injuries, or illness, our most important factors in dealing with those emergencies are time and people," Morton said. "The likelihood that we can make a difference increases dramatically when we have enough trained people present to do all that needs to be done, and when we can complete those tasks in a quick and efficient manner."

In addition to the SAFER grant program, the Elkin Fire Department officials also asked the town board for permission to move forward with pursuing the addition of Elkin to Surry County's automatic aid agreement, which would allow Elkin to assist departments outside the town limits and those outside to assist Elkin automatically without having to verbally request assistance for reported structure fires or fire alarms.

A similar agreement was approved by the town board 10 months ago between Elkin and Arlington fire departments, and Morton reported during that time Arlington, which is located in Jonesville, has responded to assist Elkin in 37 incidents, while Elkin has assisted Arlington on eight occasions.

The Surry County agreement would automatically provide mutual aid in a number of layers, with the most immediate fire departments dispatched first, and others being called as the need expanded during an incident, Morton said.

The Elkin commissioners unanimously agreed to allow Elkin officials to further pursue being added to the county's automatic aid agreement, which will require formal acceptance by county and town officials before it is finalized.

Wendy Byerly Wood may be reached at 336-258-4035 or on Twitter @wendywoodeditor.

Members of the Elkin Fire Department, from right, Chief Mike Morton, Capt. Theresa Knops, Assistant Chief Don Mitchell and firefighter Stephen Kelly, are recognized by Mayor Lestine Hutchens as she reads a proclamation recognizing Oct. 6-15 as Fire Prevention Week during Monday night's Elkin Board of Commissioners meeting.

Meriden Awarded Grant To Purchase New Fire Engine

By Jordan Cuddemi

Valley News (VT), September 14, 2016

Meriden — The third time was the charm for Meriden Fire Capt. Jeff LeBlanc.

For the past three years, LeBlanc has applied to the Department of Homeland Security in hopes of landing a grant to replace the department's aging 1980s fire engine.

In 2014 and 2015, LeBlanc's attempts didn't bear fruit; the application he submitted in January of this year did.

The Meriden Volunteer Fire Department last month was granted $328,000 to purchase a new truck through a Federal Emergency Management Agency program that ensures departments are meeting "firefighting and emergency response needs," according to Homeland Security's website.

"It will increase our level of service to residents as well as allow us to provide better service to surrounding towns," LeBlanc said in a recent telephone interview.

The department's 1987 fire engine isn't up to new standards and has become a repair and maintenance problem, LeBlanc said. In addition, the truck is large and hard to maneuver on rural roads.

The new engine, which will have a smaller wheel base that will allow for easier maneuvering, will remedy those issues and more.

"It was getting to the point where the vehicle needed to be replaced," LeBlanc said.

With an annual operating budget of roughly $40,000, LeBlanc said, the department doesn't have much money left over at the end of each year to put into capital reserves for major purchases.

Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program aims to enhance the safety of the public and firefighters by providing grants for "critically needed resources to equip and train emergency personnel to recognized standards, enhance operations efficiencies, foster interoperability and support community resilience," according to the department's website.

Hundreds of other fire departments received assistance through the program, including 13 in New Hampshire.

Each department must provide a local match to the federal dollars. In Meriden's case, the department must provide 5 percent, or roughly $17,000, LeBlanc said.

The Meriden Fire Department has put together a committee to design a truck suitable for the department. The truck will be special ordered in segments, and LeBlanc said he hopes to have it in the firehouse by next summer.

“Building it takes some time,” he said.

The new truck will join Meriden’s fleet of a ladder truck, an engine and a utility vehicle.Jordan Cuddemi can be reached at jcuddemi@vnews.com or 603-727-3248.

Bucksport Fire Department Receives FEMA Grant For Smoke Detectors

By David Roza

Ellsworth (ME) American, September 13, 2016

BUCKSPORT — September has been a lucrative month for the Bucksport Fire Department.

Last week, the department was awarded one grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) worth $25,000, and another FEMA grant worth $240,595. That’s a huge sum for the department, which has an annual budget of about $366,000.

Though the smaller grant will pay for new pagers and equipment, the large grant won’t go toward shiny new trucks or turnout gear.

Instead it will pay for a much smaller tool that Fire Chief Craig Bowden thinks is indispensable toward keeping people safe from fire: the humble smoke detector.

“It can help warn people to get out when they need to,” said Bowden, who in 2012 responded to a house fire in Orrington that killed three children and their father. According to the state fire marshal, there were no working smoke detectors in the home.

“When injuries or death may have been preventable with working smoke detectors, it cuts pretty deeply to our people,” Bowden said. “You want to do something about it.”

Through an unofficial survey, the Bucksport Fire Department found that at least 40 percent of homes in Bucksport either didn’t have a smoke detector or didn’t have an operable one.

“The regular smoke detectors you can get for $10 to $15,” said Bowden, adding that batteries for those need to be replaced every six months. “Then for the cost of two batteries a year we’re not protecting our own families.”

If you can’t bring the people to the smoke detectors, bring the smoke detectors to the people. This is the third year in a row Bowden has applied for the FEMA grant, and each application takes over 100 hours of work.

“The guidelines for the grant application are over 100 pages long,” he said. “I probably spend 20 percent of my time doing grant research and grant writing.”

All that work makes a successful grant that much more rewarding, but the real work is yet to come. Now that the department has the money, it has to put out bids for buying 2,400 combination smoke and carbon monoxide detectors: one for every single- and two-family home in Bucksport and Verona Island. Department staff also plan on buying 4,800 smoke detectors to place in those homes’ sleeping areas.

“New regulations recommend one detector outside every sleeping area and one on every level of your home,” Bowden said. “I’ve got 10 smoke detectors in my house.”

Once the department staff buys the detectors, they will spend 10 months installing the 7,800 detectors and giving fire prevention lessons to the 2,400 homeowners in Bucksport and Verona Island.

“Starting in November, we will hit the pavement,” said Bowden, who plans on putting the word out for volunteers to help with the installation and education efforts as November draws closer. “It’s going to be a pretty ambitious goal to complete.”

If some homes already have working smoke detectors, Bowden said they can probably take a few more. The new detectors will last 10 years and they don’t even require a battery replacement every six months.

“We are certainly quite pleased to have been chosen for the award,” Bowden said. “We may never know how many lives this saves or injuries this prevents.”

Beaver Dam Fire Officials Seek Grant To Pay Firefighters At Turnbull Station

By Steve DeVane

Fayetteville (NC) Observer, September 13, 2016

The Beaver Dam Fire Department is seeking a federal grant to help it provide workers for the Turnbull Fire Station, a county official said Friday.

The Beaver Dam fire district board of directors, which oversees fire service in the area, agreed to build a fire station in Turnbull several years ago, after residents there saw their insurance rates increase. Some Turnbull residents became concerned because no firefighters are working at the station, while several paid employees work at the Beaver Dam station.

County officials say the Beaver Dam fire district is the county’s largest, but its least populous. The district encompasses Beaver Dam, Turnbull and two other communities in southeastern Cumberland County.

Cumberland County Emergency Services Director Randy Beeman released a statement Friday saying that he spoke with Beaver Dam Assistant Fire Chief Gary Brock about the situation.

Brock told Beeman that the Beaver Dam Fire Department "has made application and preparation" for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, according to the statement.

A FEMA spokeswoman said the agency has not received an application from Beaver Dam Fire Department for a 2015 SAFER grant, which had a March 26 deadline.

Brock did not return a phone message left at the fire station Friday seeking clarification. County officials released a one-sentence statement from Assistant County Manager Tracy Jackson in response to a question about the department's application.

"I received a fax from Gary Brock that indicated they had applied but missed the deadline for the 2015 process," Jackson said.

Applications for the next round of SAFER grants is expected to open this winter, the FEMA spokeswoman said.

The SAFER grant program was created to provide money directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations, according to FEMA's website. The funds are meant to help increase and maintain the number of "front line" firefighters in communities, it said.

The goal of the program is to help fire departments comply with standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association.

Brock said the fire department has no issues related to fire coverage in the area, according to Beeman's statement.

Part-time employees work at the Beaver Dam station from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, Brock told Beeman.

County officials told the fire district board last year that both stations should be staffed. Sally Shutt, a county spokeswoman, said Tuesday that county officials would prefer that the fire district board have already staffed the substation as previously discussed.

County Manager Amy Cannon said in a Sept. 25 letter to Mike Ake, president of the fire district board, that money from a special fire tax that goes to low-wealth districts should be used to improve response times for emergency calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. An audit of the Beaver Dam district showed that money was being used to pay two firefighters to work during evening hours and on weekends, she said.

"Effective immediately, Beaver Dam (Volunteer Fire Department) must discontinue paying firefighters after 5 p.m. on weeknights and weekends," Cannon's letter said.

Beaver Dam fire officials said earlier this year that they are using money from the district's general fund to pay firefighters who work in the evenings and on weekends.

$1.3M Grant To Bring More Firefighters To Rural Alachua County

WUFT-FM Gainesville (FL), September 14, 2016

Three rural Alachua County communities are set to have an increase in firefighters by the end of the year.

The increase from three firefighters a shift to four will give the responding stations the minimum number of firefighters required by law to immediately go into a burning building when no one's life is in danger. (There are no minimums for when a person is inside the burning building.)

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners approved the increase in August through a $1.3 million SAFER grant for Alachua County Fire Rescue. The full grant amount will go to hiring one extra firefighter per shift — 12 total — for the Archer, Hawthorne and Waldo communities.

"Lots of things will be done more quickly and efficiently because of the grant," Fire Chief of Alachua County William Northcutt said.

Hiring is ongoing, and the goal is to have the new firefighters start by Dec. 1. All grant money will go toward their salaries and benefits.

SAFER — or Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response — grants are provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They allow for local fire departments and volunteer institutions to increase or maintain the number of firefighters in their communities, according to the FEMA website.

Alachua County's new grant will last for two years and builds on the one approved in 2014 for the previous two years. Before 2014, certain Alachua County stations had only two firefighters on call.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has a policy known as the two-in/two-out rule, which says that firefighters cannot begin interior firefighting until four firefighters are present.

The Archer, Hawthorne and Waldo stations have only three firefighters per shift, meaning that if a fire occurs in their jurisdiction and there is no imminent threat to life, they have to wait for other stations to join them.

"The closest station to Waldo is Melrose, which means it could be a 10- to 12-minute response time," said Harold Theus, Alachua County's deputy fire chief.

A simulation provided to WUFT News by Waldo's fire station showed what the standard procedure is if only three firefighters are available on scene.

The three arrive with a fire engine and a separate tanker truck, which is the main water supply for fighting fires, according to Lt. Misty Woods of the Waldo station.

Woods said firefighters take a 360-degree walk of the area to determine the best spot to enter the building, and they then bring their equipment to that spot. If there is no imminent threat to life in the building, she said, firefighters must wait to enter until another unit arrives.

Theus described the entire situation as "organized chaos."

The difference between having three and four firefighters at a fire, Theus said, could be the difference between saving the building and having it crumble to the ground.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

County Looks To Post-Hermine Plan

By Sean Rossman

Tallahassee (FL) Democrat, September 13, 2016

The Leon County Commission adopted measures Tuesday aimed at helping the county through the aftermath of Hurricane Hermine.

The commission gave staff the authority to hold, in conjunction with the city of Tallahassee, a series of community listening sessions to allow residents to give feedback on the preparation and response to Hermine. The commission also approved hiring a consultant to help with FEMA assistance and extended the local state of emergency for a third week.

The county, the city and eligible nonprofits haven't yet applied for federal assistance. Together with the state, they need to pass a 2-part test in order to receive federal assistance. The $10.4 million in preliminary storm damage the city, county and nonprofits have assessed is more than enough to clear the local threshold set by the federal government. The state, which is still compiling its numbers, must exceed about $26.5 million in damage.

The commission opted not to hire a disaster planning professional to help evaluate the county's vulnerabilities, strengths and expectations. Commissioner Mary Ann Lindley asked for the decision to be delayed. Lindley later asked county staff to come up with an incentive program with the city to help people maintain dangerous trees on their property. Numerous limbs and trees fell during Hermine, knocking down power lines and leaving residents without electricity for days and in some cases up to a week.

CHSP

The county also gave final approval for its $1.2 million share of Community Human Service Partnership funds, which will go to various social service agencies next fiscal year.

The commission also voted to continue to collaborate on the CHSP funding process with the city and the United Way of the Big Bend through 2018. The United Way board of directors voted earlier this year to create its own process — separate from the city and county — by which it would review and allocate dollars. The city, the county and the United Way have for years worked together to fund CHSP, which awards local grants to local nonprofits and social service agencies.

Budget

The commission gave tentative approval of its 2016-17 budget and property tax rate with no public comment or discussion.

The $246 million budget including capital and operational spending and is 3.2 percent larger than the current year's spending plan. It includes performance raises of up to 5 percent for county employees, a sidewalk program, funding for festivals and events and economic development incentives.

The county voted to maintain the current year's property tax rate. Under state law, this is considered a tax increase because property values are expected to improve. To avoid the bump, commissioners would have to reduce the property tax rate a little more than 1 percent.

The county will vote on the final budget and property tax rate at their meeting on Tuesday.

Odds and ends

The county also made the following decisions on Tuesday:

Approved using $50,000 in leftover tourism dollars for a concert at Doak Campbell Stadium on Nov. 12 featuring Old Dominion, Tyler Farr and Bobby Bones and the Raging Idiots. The Seminole Boosters, which is hosting the concert, had originally considered Toby Keith, or some other big country act, to play that weekend, but a contract was never signed.

After hearing a status report on the county's Zika fighting measures, the commission scheduled a public hearing to consider an ordinance governing mosquito control.

The commission voted unanimously to rename the Fort Braden Branch Library after Commissioner Jane Sauls, who isn't seeking reelection this year after 20 years on the commission.

The Glenn J. Winuk Humanitarian Service Award was given to Sam Carter, the executive director of Carter's Corner — which provides services to at-risk youth and student athletes.

County Looks For FEMA Help Following Hermine

By Regan McCarthy

WFSU-FM Tallahassee (FL), September 13, 2016

Leon County Commissioners are hiring a consultant to help get funding following Hurricane Hermine. County Administrator Vince Long says filing requests with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, can be tricky.

"There have been major rule changes since Hurricane Sandy and we believe that expertise is needed. It's also a reimbursable expenditure," Long says.

Long says the county has exceeded the damage cost required to receive FEMA assistance. He expects Florida to meet the $26-million state threshold required to get assistance from the federal agency.

FLOODS

Local Governments Awaiting Bad News As Assessors In East Baton Rouge, Ascension And Livingston Determine How The Flood Affected Property Values

By Steve Hardy

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 13, 2016

While tax assessors scramble to figure out how much everyone's property is worth post-flood, small government agencies like suburban and rural fire districts are holding their breath that their budgets won't be gutted.

When the governor declared a flood disaster, the assessor in every affected parish got a letter from the Louisiana Tax Commission reminding them they have to reevaluate property in the flooded areas. The assessors' evaluations determine how much government agencies can expect in tax revenue.

However, the state doesn't lay out a specific procedure for the emergency reassessments. Instead of calculating how much a house is worth, assessors are now concerned with finding out how much value has been lost.

"There's no standard out there that determines … how much of a reduction is warranted," said East Baton Rouge Assessor Brian Wilson.

"This is unprecedented."

Neither he nor Ascension Assessor Mert Smiley have laid out a specific formula for determining taxpayers' new property values. Tuesday, Smiley said his staff has been surveying the damage, and he hopes to publish in a few days a provisional list of the addresses to be reassessed. The assessors said property owners need to keep an eye on the process in case their homes were damaged but not reassessed, or if the new property value gets calculated incorrectly.

In Livingston Parish, Assessor Jeff Taylor is preparing to base the updated assessment on the water height in each house. Buildings that received less than 15 inches will probably get a discount based on one rate, while people above that level will likely get a higher reduction rate since the water will have damaged their electrical system. People who saw more than 4 feet and have to replace additional drywall and cabinets will probably see the highest discount rate of all, Taylor said.

However, his office has not yet determined what those reductions will be. They will be based on the estimated damage price per square foot and multiplied to account for the size of a building, Taylor said.

How long will the reassessment last?

"It's gonna take the time that it takes," Taylor said.

"We're just now getting into data collection. … There's going to be a lot of overtime."

Livingston Parish leaders like fire chiefs are waiting to hear from Taylor to see how much tax revenue they stand to lose, but Taylor said he's still waiting on word from the Federal Emergency Management Agency so he can start assessing the damage.

"I'm extremely concerned," said Brian Drury, chief of the Springfield-area fire district and president of the Livingston Fire Chiefs' Association.

Many local government agencies are completely or mostly reliant on their property tax millages. While a parishwide agency like a sheriff's office or school system may see a drop in property values in some places but not others, in the smaller fire, drainage, school and other hyper-local districts in Livingston Parish, just about every taxpayer flooded.

"I'm trying to stop my spending as much as I can through the end of this year," Drury said.

They'll still perform essential functions, but that new turnout gear is going to have to wait, and anyone who gets trapped in a car after a crash is going to have to rely on 10-to-25 year-old extraction equipment that was scheduled to be replaced.

"That's not gonna happen this year," the chief said.

Like Taylor, the East Baton Rouge and Ascension assessors said they also need FEMA flood data to push on with the reassessments.

None of the three men ventured a guess when asked how much their tax bases may have fallen since the flood.

East Baton Rouge's information technology and mapping professionals late Tuesday released new data comparing the pre-flood tax rolls with their latest stats on properties that flooded.

The city-parish staff looked at assessed property values. The assessed value equals 10 percent of the market value of all land and residential buildings and 15 percent of the market value of commercial buildings.

Wilson has said the city-parish saw a $135 million increase in assessed value between the 2012 and 2016 assessments.

The total assessed value of all the inundated properties is estimated at $723 million.

They won't all be total losses, but some may lose half their property value, at least in the short-term, Wilson said. He and the other assessors said they will have to keep updating the rolls in the coming years as people rebuild and values begin to rise again.

Taylor remarked that this large-scale reassessment will also give his staff a chance to check on properties that may not have been updated in the tax rolls for years. Normal assessments rely on nearby property sales, and in a rural area where land doesn't change hands often, the tax roll can become out of date.

"We're fixing those things. … It is not fair for people that pay their fair share," Taylor said.

The new data from the city-parish is also neighborhood-specific, broken down by U.S. Census blocks. Those units vary in size and population from one to another so they can't be directly compared. However, the map shows some general trends. In nearly every flooded block, most of the property value comes from residences. Some public land flooded around the airport and LSU, and commercial property was prevalent in flood-damaged areas such as those around the Mall of Louisiana and Cortana Mall.

The Tenants Of One Baton Rouge Shopping Center Have Lost Their Leases After The Flood—and An Entire Neighborhood Is Losing The Local Businesses That Helped Create A Sense Of Community

By Stephanie Riegel

Baton Rouge (LA) Business Report, September 14, 2016

The Miller Village Shopping Center wasn't the kind of commercial hub that beckoned you from the street. A modest strip mall built in the early 1990s, it housed a bar, a nail salon, a Chinese restaurant, a GNC and a small dance studio. A Storage Center anchored one side of it, a Rite Aid the other.

If you don't live in the neighborhood and you happened to pass it while approaching the intersection of Old Hammond Highway and Millerville Road, you probably wouldn't have looked twice, unless you needed something at Rite Aid. It lacked the charm of the Antiques District in Denham Springs or the retro chic appeal of Government Street in Mid City. After more than 20 years in business, Hong Kong owners Sandy and Sau Yeung not only lost their business in the flood, but their home also took on seven feet of water. Photography by Allie Appel

But the small businesses that were located in Miller Village meant the world to people who call that part of Baton Rouge home. Until Target and Chili's opened down the street in the late 2000s, little else was around.

For more than 20 years, Hong Kong restaurant was the go-to place for Chinese food, and its bustling take-out business saved many working parents the trouble of cooking dinner on a busy weeknight. Exotica Nails was a popular salon, with cheap quality pedicures and killer foot massages. Big Heads was the neighborhood watering hole, where a clientele of mostly middle-aged guys hung out, drank beer and watched sports on big screen TVs.

Then there was Dance by Trudie, something of an institution in that part of town. Its proprietress, "Miss" Trudie Osterberger, began teaching little Baton Rouge girls to dance in 1967. She'd owned her own studio in Miller Village since 1992. In just a few months, she would have celebrated her 50th anniversary of teaching dance.

"I thought we'd make it to 50 years and then I'd step down and retire," Osterberger says. "We didn't make it."

When the waters began rising in the Capital Region during last month's historic flood, Dance by Trudie was inundated with more than three feet of water. So were the other tenants at Miller Village. Their businesses were ruined, and none of them will be coming back—at least not at Miller Village. A few days after the disaster, the shopping center's owner terminated their leases and began moving forward with plans to redevelop the property.

What will they do now? Where will they go?

"We don't know what we will do," says Vy Nguyen, who ran Exotica Nails, supporting her mother and four siblings with the revenues it generated. "How can we reopen somewhere else? We lost the business, we lost the house and we lost the cars, so there's no money now." Kim and Vy Nguyen aren't sure if they'll be able to reopen their family's nail salon after the flood forced them out of Miller Village. Photography by Allie Appel

The story of Miller Village is one that's playing out all over the greater Baton Rouge area, where an estimated 12,000 businesses—roughly 35% of all businesses in the Capital Region—were located in areas affected by flooding. The majority of them are small businesses, and many have been completely wiped out. Fewer than 20% had flood insurance and, like the Miller Village tenants, some are now finding out that on top of losing their livelihoods they'll have to rebuild somewhere else, if they're able to rebuild at all.

The situation is one of many keeping property and business owners up at night. They're calling their lawyers with questions about the legal, technical and financial issues related to the redevelopment of flooded commercial properties.

But important questions are also being raised about what these losses mean for the future of neighborhoods in the Capital Region. What happens when entire developments of small businesses disappear? What is the cost to the community when its mom-and-pop shops go under?

The answer can't be calculated on a spreadsheet because when a neighborhood loses its locally owned establishments it loses more than a convenient place to get a pedicure or a beer. It loses its sense of community, and the connective tissue that holds people together and binds them to the place they call home. SAVE THE LAST DANCE

Osterberger never thought her studio would flood. She rode out Hurricane Katrina there, as well as Gustav and Isaac. Not once in 24 years had the parking lot even taken on water.

"It wasn't until someone sent me a picture of Millerville late that Sunday night (Aug. 14) did I realize we were under water," she says. "It was so high, we couldn't even get here until (the following) Tuesday." "Miss" Trudie Osterberger would have celebrated 50 years of teaching dance in just a few months, but she has been forced to close her studio instead. Photography by Allie Appel

Osterberger is a petite woman with a sprightly demeanor. She talks fast and exudes energy. She wears her 65 years well, and counts among her former students three generations of Baton Rouge women.

She wasn't much older than some of her students when she landed her first gig teaching dance at a BREC park. Osterberger was only in high school at the time, and for the next 26 years she would teach dance in the BREC system, earning a degree in education from LSU, marrying and raising a family along the way.

In 1992, she decided to open her own studio and rented the space in Miller Village. In its heyday, Dance by Trudie enrolled more than 400 students a year, and every spring it put on a lavish recital at the River Center, one of those three-hour productions with sparkles and lipstick and proud parents snapping endless pictures of 4-year-olds in tap shoes.

"Oh, everybody wanted to come to see their baby up on stage," Osterberger recalls.

The little ones called her "Tutu" and made her pictures, which she proudly hung on her studio walls. They were among the mementos she lost in the flood.

"It was the things the children had given me over the years that meant the most to me," Osterberger says. "It was difficult to put those memories into the trash can. But there's no salvaging very much when there's a flood." THE TAKE OUT

The unprecedented rains that brought on the historic flood of 2016 began late Thursday, Aug. 11. Parts of the metro area began flooding the following morning. At Miller Village, the trouble started that Sunday, and by Monday the floodwaters remained more than three feet high.

By midweek the waters had receded. That's when the manager at Brookwood-Millerville LLC, which owns the shopping center, began notifying tenants their leases would not be renewed. They were told they had 48 hours to get everything out.

The calls came as a shock, though perhaps they shouldn't have: None of the tenants had a current lease with Brookwood-Millerville except Big Heads, and it was set to expire at the end of this month. All the others had been operating under a month-to-month arrangement—in some cases, for years.

Nguyen says she begged for more time. She was tied up at the Federal Emergency Management Agency office registering for disaster assistance when she got the phone call. Her family's home on O'Neal Lane had taken in nearly seven feet of water, and all three of their cars were destroyed. Given what she was already facing, she couldn't believe what the property manager told her.

"She told me the landlord was redeveloping the building so we could not have our space anymore," Nguyen recalls. "She told me, 'If you need to save anything come and get it because we have people coming in, so you need to get everything out.'"

Nguyen panicked. So did Sandy and Sau Yeung, who couldn't understand what was going on. Their restaurant, Hong Kong, had been located in Miller Village for more than 20 years. They'd never been late on their rent. The small operation supported their family, and everything they had was invested in it.

Sau Yeung told the property manger it would take time for him to clear out his space and figure out what to do with the restaurant equipment he hoped to salvage. Unlike the dance studio or the nail salon, he had a heavy commercial oven and refrigerator, and he needed a work crew to help him move them out. But before he could find one, he says, a remediation company hired by Brookwood-Millerville gutted his space and hauled his equipment to the debris heap.

"They just took everything out," says Sau Yeung, who emigrated to Baton Rouge with his wife from Hong Kong in 1994 and opened the restaurant two years later. "This is my whole life. Everything was paid for. They just trashed it. Threw it out." Spanky Torres, Patrick Fewell, Hunter Medlen and Stuart Dickey, from left, salvaged what they could from Big Heads, but the local watering hole was among the casualties of the flood and won't be returning to Miller Village. Photography by Allie Appel

Brookwood-Millerville is owned by Craig Smith, an attorney who declines to comment on the situation at the shopping center. But his attorney, Jeff Barbin, says Smith, too, is a victim of the flood.

Smith owns The Storage Center that anchors Miller Village, as well as two other Storage Center facilities in the area. All three flooded, and Barbin says Smith sustained losses of at least $2 million as a result.

Barbin says Brookwood was fair with the tenants. As for the Yeungs, he says Brookwood-Millerville initially agreed to give them more time to clear out their space, and then secured their permission to remove the equipment.

"The landlord spoke to the tenant on multiple occasions after the flood and asked the tenant to remove all of his equipment so that environmental remediation could begin," Barbin says. "The tenant removed some of his equipment and told the landlord's environmental remediation contractor that the rest could be disposed."

The Yeungs dispute that they gave the remediation company permission to dispose of their equipment. As for the other tenants, Barbin says they were given ample notice, and that the landlord was within his rights to terminate their leases and begin remediating the property.

"Each of the tenants was told that from a practical perspective it was necessary to remove any property which remained as soon as possible to prevent further damage to the center" from the spread of mold, Barbin says. "Each of the tenants was given opportunity to remove possessions that still had some value. Some of the property that was built into the premises became the property of the landlord. However, the landlord still allowed them to take what they wanted."

The Miller Village tenants don't exactly see it that way.

"In the end he didn't have to do it this way," says Stuart Dickey, manager of Big Heads. "He was going to win. Our lease was expired. The others leases already had expired. But there was no need to do it this way." RISING LEGAL QUESTIONS

There are two sides to every story. What's indisputable about this one is that without a lease in place, the tenants at Miller Village have no leverage or legal recourse. And even with a lease in place, it's not entirely clear the Yeungs or anyone else in the shopping center would have been protected.

Some, incidentally, say they had tried to secure new, long-term leases when their old ones expired but were put off by the Brookwood-Millerville property manager or told not to worry about it. Some say they didn't worry about it. Others did. For his part, Barbin says, "most of the tenants were happy with a month-to-month lease and the low rents they were paying."

Whatever the individual circumstances, the situation at Miller Village reflects the kind of nuanced legal questions that have arisen as the floodwaters have receded. Property attorney Charles Landry keeps a copy of the Louisiana Civil Code sitting on his desk these days, so peppered is he with questions about property rights and related disputes in the wake of flood.

"I'm getting hammered on these law school questions I never thought I'd have to deal with," he says.

On the subject of commercial leases, for instance, Landry says they all have different provisions, depending on who drafted them and the terms agreed upon. Some clearly favor the landlord over the tenant. Some even have a clause allowing a landlord to terminate a lease if the cost of repairing a damaged property is more than 50% of the pre-flood value of the property.

If that's the case, then "the landlord can say, 'You're out, you're done,' and not rebuild the building," Landry says. "So even with a lease, a tenant is not entirely protected."

Landry and others say this is just one of the many unfortunate realities business and property owners are waking up to as they turn their attention away from their gutted homes and back to their flooded businesses.

"Some of these folks who have been in business 20, 30, 50 years have worked on a handshake agreement with their landlords," says Dawn Starns, president of the Louisiana chapter of the National Federation of Independent Businesses. "They've counted on their lawyers or CPAs to keep up and they haven't understood it all, so there are a lot of challenges they are facing, especially if they have been in the same location for many years."

The Small Business Administration has set up disaster assistance centers throughout the area to help, offering advice and low-interest loans to home and business owners who need to rebuild. But the response from small businesses has been anemic so far. As of Sept. 8, just $5.4 million—or 7%—of the $214.7 million in loans approved by the SBA went to businesses.

Part of the problem may be that small business owners don't want to take on debt. Yeung, for instance, never borrowed to operate his restaurant. His equipment was paid for, a fact of which he was exceedingly proud. He didn't owe anyone any money.

Part of the problem is also the ambiguity surrounding the amount of money the SBA is willing to loan business that needs to relocate. The SBA disaster loan program will let businesses borrow up to $2 million, but it's vague about whether or not that much is available for business owners who need to move. What happens if they can't find a new space at a comparable price? How do they make the numbers work?

A spokesman for the SBA says the agency makes determinations on a case-by-case basis, and factors into its assessment whether the relocation is voluntary or involuntary. He encourages anyone with questions to meet with an SBA representative at one of the disaster assistance centers the agency has set up in the area.

Starns is giving her members the same advice, though she cannot promise any results.

"These businesses really need to go and sit down with someone and say, 'Here is my business, this is what I do, what are my options?'" she says. "That's what we're telling people to do at this point."

FRAYING THE COMMUNITY FABRIC

But there are larger issues than the details of property rights under the Civil Code or the technicalities of the SBA disaster loan program that the Miller Village story raises. Those issues have to do with the loss a neighborhood sustains when its locally owned businesses are washed away overnight.

Nearly 7,900 businesses in southeast Louisiana shut down in the 18 months following Katrina in 2005. Most of them never returned.

Granted, much of New Orleans in the years since has enjoyed an influx of new commerce and entrepreneurial enterprises, particularly in the neighborhoods that the legions of hip, young investors decided were worth bringing back.

But other neighborhoods never recovered, as much because of the loss of residents as the loss of locally owned businesses.

"When small businesses go under, the fabric of the community is what is lost because the services they provide are not just about the money but about support," says Elizabeth "Boo" Thomas, executive director of the Center for Planning Excellence. "When they go, that sense of belonging, that sense of community is gone."

Starns says NFIB is worried about the future of the area's small businesses, particularly in communities like Denham Springs, where an overwhelming majority of business owners were impacted by the flood. Many of them lost their homes and commercial establishments.

"They're the job creators and the taxpayers," Starns says. "They are the true fabric of the community."

At Miller Village, that fabric is unwoven. Big Heads' three owners say they're interested in reopening somewhere else, but with three flooded houses among them they really can't think about it at the moment.

Hong Kong and Exotica Nails have no idea what to do—or even where to begin.

Dance by Trudie is gone for good. Osterberger says she's too old to start over. It makes her sad, but at least in her case it's not really a financial hardship. She just wishes she could say the same for those who had been her neighbors in the shopping center for so many years.

"I'll be OK," she says. "Some of these other people—Hong Kong, the nail salon—they won't be." One of Denham Springs' beloved local businesses plans to make a comeback after the flood, but the challenges are daunting A local institution since 1953 is gone as a result of the flood, but its spirit lives on through a creative partnership with another well-known retailer

Tomblin To Call Flood Relief Session Next Week

By Phil Kabler

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 13, 2016

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin said Tuesday he plans to call a special session of the Legislature next week to address the state's share of funding for more than $300 million of recovery costs from the June 23 floods in central and southern West Virginia.

"We should have everything ready to go by tomorrow," Tomblin said of the session, which will coincide with regularly scheduled September legislative interim meetings.

Tomblin hopes the Federal Emergency Management Agency will increase its share of the flood recovery costs from 75 percent to 90 percent.

"We're going to continue to push [for] that," he said of seeking the higher share of federal funding. "It's not a guarantee."

That means the Legislature will need to authorize somewhere between $30 million and $75 million of state funding for flood recovery costs, which Tomblin said will likely come from a combination of unspent funds from the 2015-16 budget year and from appropriations from the state's Rainy Day emergency reserve funds.

"Thank goodness we have that," Tomblin said of the Rainy Day funds, a comment apparently intended for legislators who proposed severe raids on the emergency funds to balance the 2016-17 state budget.

During the extended special session on the budget, Tomblin vetoed a plan to raid more than $180 million of Rainy Day funds to close the state's financial shortfall, ultimately agreeing to a budget compromise that took about $70 million out of the reserve funds.

Tomblin said Tuesday afternoon he planned to contact legislative leaders Tuesday evening or today to finalize plans for the special session.

Lawmakers are scheduled to return to Charleston for interim meetings on Sunday, and the interim schedule has blocked out 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. time periods on Monday and Tuesday for the anticipated special session.

Tomblin had put off the special session until school systems in the 12 affected counties — Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Roane, Summers and Webster — could finalize cost estimates to repair or replace schools.

The cost of repairing damage to state highways from the June 23 flooding is also estimated to be in excess of $55 million.

Tomblin said he expects that the session, which he said will be limited to flood relief, can be completed in a day or two.

"I would anticipate it should be fairly simple," he said.

New Architectural Chapter Begins For University Of Iowa Campus

By Jeff Charis-Carlson

Iowa City (IA) Press-Citizen, September 13, 2016

Ten years ago must have seemed like an opportune time to release a guide to campus architecture at the University of Iowa.

The Old Capitol was set to reopen after five years of post-fire restoration, Kinnick Stadium was completing its renovation and expansion and UI's then newest building — the Steven Holl-designed Art Building West — was winning award after award for its innovation.

That's one of the reasons why UI Press and then UI President David Skorton encouraged the cooperation of Rod Lehnertz — then UI's director of planning, design and construction — and UI art professor John Beldon Scott to co-author "The University of Iowa Guide to Campus Architecture."

"We wanted to show how an institution like a state university can be an important patron of architecture that's significant and adds academic importance to the visual aspect of the campus," Scott said in a phone interview last week.

No one knew at the time that the Iowa River would swell two years later and the resulting flood would do nearly $800 million worth of damage to 20 major buildings on campus — some to the point that they never again opened their doors to the general public.

It took a full eight years — involving countless staff hours negotiating with state legislators, Iowa Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency — but UI officials declared earlier this summer that UI is fully recovered from the 2008 flood. The Property and Facilities Committee of the Iowa Board of Regents received its final regular update on UI flood recovery during its meeting last week in Iowa City.

The only deluge this year has been a flood of scheduled open houses and welcome ceremonies for the replacement facilities for Voxman Music Building, Clapp Recital Hall, Hancher Auditorium and the Visual Arts Building. Plans also are underway for similar ceremonies later this year to celebrate the opening of the Stead Family Children's Hospital.

"Those are enormous," Scott said, "and I imagine we're not going to have that many projects of that scale happening so quickly … over the next decade."

It's also hard to imagine, Scott added, any other campus in the country being able to boast a new art school building, performing arts center and music school college building — all designed by world-class architects — coming online at the same time.

"This, of course, is the silver lining in the cloud of the flood," he said. "Because now, after these eight years, the campus is rebounding with an enormous great leap forward."

Thus 2016 seems another opportune time for Scott, now director of UI's School of Art and Art History, and Lehnertz, now UI's senior vice president for finance and operations, to issue a second edition of their decade-old guide with complete information on what is now, and is no longer, visible on the campus skyline throughout the Iowa City and Coralville area.

"The change to this campus will be felt for generations to come," Lehnertz told the Press-Citizen back in 2013.

In addition to the flood-related construction, the past decade also has seen the opening of the Madison Street Services Building (2007), Hope Lodge (2007), the P. Sue Beckwith, M.D., Boathouse (2009), the BioVentures Center (2010), the State Hygienic Laboratory (2010), the Campus Recreation and Wellness Center (2010), the College of Public Health Building (2011), the Pappajohn Biomedical Discovery Building (2014) and the Mary Louise Petersen Residence Hall (2015).

The new guidebook also features descriptions of some buildings still projected or under construction, including the new Elizabeth Catlett Residence Hall (2017) and College of Pharmacy Building (2019).

In addition to the 2013 razing of the flood-damaged Hancher-Voxman-Clapp complex, several other major buildings have disappeared from campus over the past decade

The International Center, built in 1935 and expanded in 1959 as the Law Commons dormitory, no longer sits atop the prominent bluff where Highway 6 and the adjacent railroad turn away from the river. The building was razed in 2008, along with all other remnants of old UI College of Law, to make way for the College of Public Health Building in 2011. Five years later, the college has begun offering an undergraduate major in public health that eventually is expected to bring hundreds of additional students into the building each year.

Quadrangle Residence Hall, built in 1920, was being razed this summer to make way for a new building for the UI College of Pharmacy, which is projected to be completed in 2019. At that point, the college's 1961 building is scheduled to be razed as well. The loss of beds from Quadrangle will be more than made up for when the Catlett Residence Hall opens near the Iowa Memorial Union in 2017.

Oakdale Hall built in 1917 as a tuberculosis sanitarium, was razed in 2011 after the completion of a new state-of-the-art State Hygienic Laboratory. The Oakdale campus in Coralville came under UI's control in 1965, and Oakdale Hall served for three decades as the State Hygienic Laboratory.

Although the scope of changes on campus over the next decade may not be as transformational as the past decade, the UI campus will continue to be a dynamic place.

UI officials hope to have completed substantial construction on a new, $60 million UI Museum of Art building by 2019, the 50th anniversary of the museum on campus. The new facility, to be built adjacent to the UI Main Library, ideally would be far enough along by then to be able to display the most valuable work in UI's collection: Jackson Pollock's "Mural."

UI's former Art Museum Building was damaged in the 2008 flood, but not badly enough for FEMA to agree to cover relocation costs. UI's art collection was removed before the flood, but insurance restrictions and costs have kept the collection from being returned to the building. With the School of Music no longer needing the space as temporary facilities, the museum staff has reoccupied the office portion of the building, and UI officials have yet to announce a new purpose for the building.

It's unlikely that Seashore Hall will be extant by the time a third edition of the campus architectural guide is published. The Iowa Board of Regents has approved plans for UI to construct a new $33.5 million building to house its Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, which has been housed in Seashore Hall since 1930. Once that facility is completed, UI officials can move forward with plans to demolish the 117-year-old building that initially served as the university's main hospital.

Not all proposed university buildings, however, will make it from the designer's drawing board to brick-and-mortar reality.

Last summer, for example, UI officials received permission from the regents to move forward with plans for a new West Campus Residence Hall to serve the on-campus living needs of student-athletes and the general student population.

That proposed dorm is no longer considered "an active project," Lehnertz said last week.

Kingman County Declares State Of Local Disaster Emergency

KWCH-TV Wichita (KS), September 13, 2016

Monday, Kingman County Commissioners signed a State of Local Disaster Emergency due to flooding.

Signed at the commission meeting, the declaration states that flooding, from heavy rain on September 8, caused or threatened to cause "wide-spread or severe damage, injury or loss of life or property in disaster proportion."

According to the Kingman County Commission, Emergency Manager Fred Simon is working to collect damage estimates from townships. The commission added that most of the damage suffered by townships is to roads, culverts and bridges.

In order to be eligible for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the county must meet a public damage threshold of $27,974, according to the county commission. The threshold for the State of Kansas to receive a Presidential disaster declaration is $4,022,896.

This is the second disaster declaration in the past 5 weeks for Kingman County.

On August 8, the county made a disaster declaration, due to flooding. Commissioners said that damage from that event easily exceeded the threshold, topping $100,000. The state threshold was not met.

FEMA discounted claims by other counties, keeping the claim under the state's threshold, disqualifying an additional disaster declaration in May.

Confusion Over FEMA Funding Estimates In Kansas Counties

By Devon Fasbinder

KWCH-TV Wichita (KS), September 13, 2016

KANSAS (KWCH) There's some confusion among emergency managers in Kansas counties, the state and FEMA when it comes to how damage estimates are done after disasters.

Butler County Emergency Manager Tim Schmidt told FactFinder 12 he had heard of some changes from FEMA about how it does estimates for damage after disasters.

"It's harder and harder and harder to qualify for assistance that used to be fairly simple before," Schmidt said.

When counties have natural disasters, they have a certain threshold or dollar figure they have to meet in damages to request assistance. Every county has a different number determined by the population.

If a county needs more than it's threshold, it can go to the state to get more money, though emergency managers tell FactFinder 12 there isn't money from the state to give to local disasters.

The state can then request additional money for counties if it hits it's own threshold or dollar amount, which is $4.02 million. The governor makes the request to FEMA where it is either accepted or denied.

Sumner County Emergency Manager James Fair said it's very rare one county has enough money to meet the state's threshold. Usually, he said, several counties have to have requests to meet that dollar amount for the state to request federal dollars.

In speaking with FEMA, local emergency managers and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM), FactFinder 12 learned there is some confusion.

KDEM and the emergency managers said there have been changes to how FEMA does it's damage estimates meaning it's more difficult to get the grants from the agency. In May, the state requested FEMA dollars for a flood and was denied, though the state is appealing the decision.

But FEMA said that's not the case. The agency said there haven't been any changes as to how damage assessments are done. The only change, FEMA said, is who does the assessments.

Before this spring, FEMA said it partnered with the states and local crews to do damage assessments after the states request money. Now, FEMA said it's changed it's policy to give more responsibility to the local agencies since it says those are the people who know their own roads and what it would cost to fix them. But still, no changes to the actual process.

KDEM sent FactFinder 12 documents it said it received around May from FEMA detailing debris and road guidance. KDEM said these are the changes FEMA put into place.

FactFinder 12 sent those documents to FEMA. A spokesperson said she will check to make sure she didn't miss something, but again, said there haven't been any changes to the way damage assessments are done.

We'll update this story once we hear back from FEMA on the road and debris records. Regardless, it's been a confusing change or lack of changes for the parties involved.

FEMA Visiting Flood Damaged Northeastern Iowa

KCHA-AM Charles City (IA), September 13, 2016

Decorah, Iowa – Preliminary estimates of damages to public property in August 24th's flooding are high enough that, beginning Tuesday, four squads of officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) starting visiting Decorah and Northeast Iowa.

The FEMA inspectors are meeting with state and local officials in an attempt to verify the damage estimates. In Winneshiek County, it's estimated the flooding did $2.4 million in damage to public property. Adding in the figures from Allamakee, Bremer, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Mitchell counties produces a total between $4 million and $5 million of damages. In order for the area to be declared a federal disaster area–which would make federal recovery funds available–flooding damages will have to total $4.2 million.

The damage totals do not include damage to private property, which is not considered by FEMA in the possible disaster declaration. The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management agency says 165 private homes and buildings in Winneshiek County were affected by the flooding.

If the FEMA crews believe the August 24th flooding meets the criteria for federal disaster area designation, they will notify the Iowa Governor's Office, which will make the announcement.

WILDFIRES

SBA Offers Loan Assistance To Clayton Fire Survivors

By Elizabeth Larson

Lake County (CA) News, September 14, 2016

LOWER LAKE, Calif. – Thanks to a disaster declaration issued earlier this month, the United States Small Business Administration is making available to Clayton fire survivors – individuals, businesses and organizations – low-interest loans to help with the rebuilding process.

The agency's Disaster Loan Outreach Center is operating out of the first floor parlor at the Lower Lake Historic Schoolhouse Museum, 16435 Main St., from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays.

"We're offering the same thing we offered last year during the Valley fire," said SBA spokesman William Koontz.

Koontz visited Lower Lake on Monday, as he and SBA staff fanned out across the state, responding to incidents in Lake, Monterey, San Bernardino and San Luis Obispo counties, and a flood in Ohio.

Koontz said the SBA acted under its own authority to declare the Clayton fire disaster on Sept. 6 in response to a request it received on Sept. 1 from Mark Ghilarducci, director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, acting on behalf of Gov. Jerry Brown.

The disaster declaration makes SBA assistance available in Colusa, Glenn, Lake, Mendocino, Napa, Sonoma and Yolo counties, the agency reported.

The process this time around differed from that employed during the Valley fire in that last year the state asked both the SBA and and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to do a damage assessment. President Barack Obama subsequently declared a disaster, which authorized the agencies to offer assistance, Koontz said.

This time, with no presidential disaster proclamation expected, the state asked the SBA to respond and consider the disaster declaration, Koontz said.

Koontz said the SBA has a very simple criteria for making that declaration: If there are 25 homes or businesses damaged in one county, and they have at least 40 percent damage – which is considered major – it's an automatic approval.

The declaration activates the exact same SBA program as was in place during the Valley fire, said Koontz.

The difference is that last year fire survivors first had to apply to FEMA – which is not involved in the Clayton fire response – and then seek out additional help in the form of loans from SBA. If they didn't qualify, they would then be sent back to FEMA for consideration of a grant, Koontz explained.

What's also different for Clayton fire survivors is if they don't qualify for SBA assistance, they won't have FEMA to fall back on but will have to seek assistance from other agencies and organizations, he said.

SBA said businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations may borrow up to $2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets.

The agency said it also can lend additional funds to businesses and homeowners to help with the cost of improvements to protect, prevent or minimize the same type of disaster damage from occurring in the future.

Disaster loans up to $200,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to $40,000 to repair or replace damaged or destroyed personal property, the SBA said.

Koontz said the interest rates on the loans change from quarter to quarter.

Interest rates can be as low as 4 percent for businesses, 2.625 percent for private nonprofit organizations and 1.563 percent for homeowners and renters with terms up to 30 years. Koontz said that rate for homeowners is a little lower than it was for the Valley fire, and the lowest he's seen that rate go in some time.

Loan amounts and terms are set by SBA and are based on each applicant's financial condition. Koontz said every case is considered individually.

"We do our darnedest to try to get their loan through the system, but there will be some people who don't qualify," he said.

Koontz said it's free to apply, and no appointment is necessary.

He said the SBA has staff who are expert at helping disaster victims, and can quickly lead them through the application process. He said that process can be completed within 30 minutes. "It's very streamlined," he said, and not unlike getting a bank loan.

Disaster loan information and application forms also are available from SBA's Customer Service Center by calling 800-659-2955 or emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov . Individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may call 800-877-8339.

Applications can be downloaded at https://www.sba.gov/disaster . Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The deadline to apply is Nov. 7, and he encourages fire survivors to turn in applications, explaining they always can turn the loans down later if they don't need them. He pointed out that many people find out later that the recovery process costs more than expected.

"Our program can lend someone who has insurance for the gap that may occur," he said.

As of Monday, SBA had gotten 11 applications from business and homeowners impacted by the Clayton fire, he said.

Last year, for the Valley fire in Lake County and the Butte fire in Calaveras County, the SBA received a total of 897 applications – 719 for homeowners, 178 for businesses – and issued 287 loans, totaling $25,935,700. That number included 55 business loans totaling $4,499,500 and 232 loans for homeowners amounting to $21,436,200, according to a summary Koontz shared with Lake County News.

Koontz said the SBA does not have a deadline at this point for how long its Lower Lake center will stay open.

ZIKA VIRUS

Funding To Fight Zika Is Not A Done Deal, Senate Leaders Warn

By James Rosen

McClatchy, September 13, 2016

A bipartisan battalion of political leaders from South Florida, Tallahassee and beyond converged on Capitol Hill on Tuesday in an all-out blitz for Zika prevention and research funds.

Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of Orlando and a half-dozen House of Representatives members from across the Sunshine State appeared at a crowded news conference where they pleaded for Congress to approve $1.1 billion in Zika money after a seven-month impasse over partisan politics.

The full-court press came as Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, the top Senate Democrat, cast doubt on assertions that a deal had been reached.

"We're continuing on trying to reach an overall agreement," the Kentucky Republican leader said.

"We still don't have an offer in writing from Republicans," Reid said.

Rep. Curt Clawson, a Bonita Springs, Florida, Republican, became emotional as he criticized lawmakers for having failed to pass at least part of the $1.9 billion Zika package President Barack Obama sent Congress in February.

"I'm a conservative Republican," Clawson said. "I support my party. We can't spend $1 billion or $2 billion for babies? Where are our priorities? This is a big moment in the history of Florida."

Clawson added: "By God, if there's one moment that government ought to act and do something, this is the moment. I want to sleep at night knowing I've done everything possible."

In an impassioned speech on the Senate floor, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., cited Zika cases in Florida and Puerto Rico in calling for congressional action. He accused Republicans of trying "to cut corners on the funding, which will cost us money in the long term." But he also accused Democrats of "inventing excuses, just making it up, in order to oppose it and to do so for political reasons."

Rep. Frederica Wilson, a Miami Gardens Democrat who organized the briefing, said microcephaly, which causes abnormally small brains and heads in newborns, and other birth defects were dire effects of Zika that must be urgently addressed.

"We're talking about the brain of an unborn child," Wilson said. "Even scientists are saying they don't know what will happen to the adult brain. Can you really put a price tag on combating this?"

After arriving in Washington to meet with members of the Florida delegation, Gov. Rick Scott called for an end to the political posturing that has stalled Zika funding.

"I'm here because I think the time for politics is over," Scott told reporters. "We have nearly 800 cases of people who've been tested positive for Zika. We've got 86 pregnant women who've been tested positive for Zika. We have 64 non-travel-related cases in our state."

With the virus having hit Florida harder than any other state, Scott rejected Miami Herald reporting over the weekend that Florida health officials have undercounted the number of Zika cases and withheld information from the public.

Calling the reports "sort of laughable," Scott said: "We have been transparent. We have been timely. We have a good process to get information out. We have done whatever we can to make sure people understand what's going on. We have been working with county health departments and whoever's responsible for mosquito control to make sure that we follow CDC guidelines. So we have done a lot."

Scott, however, criticized the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, saying those agencies have been slow to respond to his requests for help fighting Zika.

"The CDC, the Obama administration, has not been a good partner," he said. "It's been almost a month. I've been asking for 10,000 Zika-prevention kits for pregnant women. They don't give them to me. Since June 1, I've asked for a plan to work with FEMA. They haven't given it to me."

The Senate approved a $1.1 billion Zika bill in May. That was less than Obama had requested, but more than the $622 million provided in a separate House measure.

Partisan politics intervened when the two chambers appointed a conference committee to produce unified legislation, and the funding languished over the summer.

Rep. Alan Grayson, an Orlando Democrat who lost his primary bid to run for the Senate, said the amount of money sought by Obama to fight Zika paled in comparison with defense spending.

"He's asking for $1.9 billion," Grayson said. "That's what we spend on the U.S. military every single day. At this particular point in time, Zika is a far bigger threat to Floridians than the Islamic State."

Despite the bipartisan push for Zika funding, Grayson took a shot at Scott's handling of the health crisis.

"We appreciate the governor being here, but the governor should reverse some of the damage he's already done – a 40 percent cut in mosquito control (funding) and zeroing out the budget for our own (state) research."

Scott Blasts Nelson, Obama For Not Doing More About Zika

Fort Myers (FL) News-Press, September 13, 2016

WASHINGTON – Florida Gov. Rick Scott lashed out at the Obama administration and Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson on Tuesday for not doing more to help the state combat Zika.

"The time for politics is over," the Republican governor told reporters on Capitol Hill, accusing Democrats of inaction on the growing crisis.

He said Nelson "turned his back on Florida citizens" by joining other Democrats last week in blocking a GOP Zika funding bill that included unrelated provisions they oppose.

Scott also took aim at administration officials, saying they didn't move quickly enough to meet the state's request for resources to battle Zika.

"The Obama administration has not been a good partner," he said. "It's been almost a month, I've been asking for 10,000 Zika prevention kits for pregnant women. They don't give it to me. Since June 1, I've asked for a plan to work with (the Federal Emergency Management Agency). Haven't given it to me. The White House has not been a good partner."

The White House responded that the department of Health and Human Services has provided Florida with more than $35 million that can be used for Zika-related activities. In August, Florida received materials for an additional 6,300 lab tests, in addition to the 2,000 already provided.

The Center for Disease Control also has provided on-site technical consultation to Florida's public health laboratories, enabling them to substantially increase testing capabilities, according to the White House.

Nelson, through a spokesman, scolded Scott.

"Just as we're about to reach a deal to pass a clean emergency Zika funding bill, the governor chooses to fly up here and stir things up politically," the senator said. "He should know better. This is a serious situation, not a time for partisan politics."

Scott was in Washington to pressure lawmakers to come together on a Zika funding bill. Federal health agencies say they're about to run out of money for vaccine development, mosquito control and Zika testing and preparation kits.

Obama first asked for $1.9 billion in February.

The governor met with Republican Sen. Marco Rubio Tuesday afternoon and was to meet with House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin later in the day. He's scheduled to meet with more lawmakers Wednesday.

His comments contrasted sharply with remarks from Democratic and Republican Florida lawmakers, including Nelson, who spoke of a bipartisan Zika effort during a news conference earlier Tuesday.

"We need a clean solution to a messy problem," said Rep. Curt Clawson, the Bonita Springs Republican who helped organize the news conference. "Florida's going to be the front lines of this battle. If we don't stop it in the beachhead in Florida, this is going to spread north and around our country."

The number of Zika cases in Florida is approaching 800, including 86 involving pregnant women.

Senate leaders from both parties reported some progress Tuesday on a $1.1 billion compromise. But the House, which passed a much smaller bill in May, would have to go along.

Attempts to pass Zika funding in the Republican-controlled Congress have been blocked by Democrats who object to hot-button policy riders, including barriers to contraception, the display of the Confederate flag at national cemeteries, and laxer environmental standards for pesticides.

Even if Congress passes a bill before they recess later this month, the delay has already taken a serious toll by most accounts.

It's possible the uncertainty in funding has slowed development of a vaccine that's at least 18 months away. And Florida has had to step in to pay for testing kits and mosquito spraying.

"We should have acted immediately," Rep. Alan Grayson, D-Orlando, said Tuesday at a news conference on Capitol Hill where bipartisan lawmakers from Florida gathered to push for Zika funding. "Now we have a second threat — the economic threat. The sense that people are not going to want to come to our beautiful state any longer if they fell it threatens their health."

In a Kaiser Family Foundation poll released last month, 48 percent of those surveyed said they wouldn't be comfortable traveling to places in the United States where people have been infected by Zika, such as parts of Florida.

– Ledyard King

Contact Ledyard King at lking@gannett.com; Twitter: @ledgeking

Gov. Rick Scott Heads To DC To Garner Support For More Funding To Fight Zika

By Lorena Inclan

WJAX-TV Jacksonville (FL), September 13, 2016

There are now nearly 800 Zika cases in Florida, including six new non-travel related cases in Miami-Dade County.

Duval, St. Johns, Clay and now Nassau County have reported travel-related cases, putting them on the list of counties that are under a Public Health Emergency declaration.

The virus is not only a concern for families but; it's also impacting Florida's tourism industry.

Gov. Rick Scott said in Jacksonville on Tuesday that the Zika crisis isn't unique to Florida but he feels like Florida is in the fight alone.

"I'll be going to DC and asking them to be a partner. The president and Congress have to show up," Scott said. "I have asked and requested the CDC ...

right now we need 10,000 more Zika-prevention kits for pregnant women."

Scott said Florida is already offering pregnant women free assessment testing at county health departments at the state's expense but he said the state needs more resources.

"I had the opportunity to put emergency funding that put $26.2 million up so far. We'll put more money up if we need to fight" the virus, Scott said.

Yulee resident Dorothy Shores was surprised to learn Nassau County reported a travel-related case.

"From what I see on TV, we need more help," Shores said.

Of the nearly 800 Zika cases in Florida, 70 were acquired in the state and 86 of them involve pregnant women.

"It's frustrating the federal government has not been a good partner," Scott said. "I've also asked FEMA for a plan to work with them when we had non-travel related cases. That's been since June 1 and I still haven't heard back."

Scott met with Speaker Paul Ryan, Sen. Marco Rubio and Rep. Ted Yoho on Tuesday.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is also sounding the alarm, saying that without more funding from Congress it'll have to slow down or stop efforts such as vaccine development and mosquito-control work.

Senators Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio have criticized Congress for playing politics with the public health crisis.

"Whether the federal government does their part or not, the state's going to do its part," Scott said.

Scott is expected to meet with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on Wednesday as well as members of the Florida delegation before returning to Florida.

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OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Disturbance Along Florida's Northeast Coast Given 40 Percent Chance Of Development

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 13, 2016

Gov. Rick Scott is urging Floridians to prepare as Tropical Storm Julia hits the state's eastern coast.

The system rapidly intensified Tuesday, going from no chance of developing into a tropical depression or storm over the next five days at 8 a.m. to being declared a tropical storm at 10:30 p.m., according to the National Hurricane Center.

"As we know in Florida, storms can quickly develop, bringing severe weather to our state in a moment's notice," Scott said in a news release. "Just as with Hurricane Hermine, I encourage Floridians to get prepared and visit FLGetAPlan.com."

The northeastern coast of Florida between Daytona Beach and the Florida-Georgia border will see heavy rain, thunderstorms, with tropical-storm force winds and rip currents through today, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Julia's sustained winds were about 40 mph, as off 11 p.m. The storm is expected to weaken to a depression by late today.

Isolated tornadoes are possible in Central Florida, said Jerry Combs, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne. A confirmed tornado touched down in southeastern Brevard County on Tuesday, he said.

The Orlando area has a 70 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms today.

"Expect a lot of good, beneficial rainfall," Combs said.

The National Hurricane Center expects heavy rainfall of 3 to 6 inches over the Interstate 95 corridor over the next several days.

Waterspouts are possible, and there also is the potential for heavy rain for portions of the Florida Panhandle. Strong, gusty winds and heavy rains are expected to move over Central and North Florida overnight.

Meanwhile, farther out in the Atlantic, Tropical Storm Ian was churning in its second day. Whereas Ian's maximum sustained winds on Monday were 40 mph, on Tuesday afternoon they were 45 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center.

The storm, which was about 800 miles southeast of Bermuda on Tuesday afternoon, posed no threat to land, the hurricane center said.

In the Pacific, Hurricane Orlene continues to weaken, with maximum sustained winds of 85 mph.

Torres Administration Comes Up With Joint Typhoon Plan

By Jon Perez

Saipan (MNP) Tribune, September 14, 2016

The administration of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has come up with a CNMI Catastrophic Typhoon Plan, a general public information and warning fact sheet that will be followed by agencies that are first responders and are involve in times of typhoons.

The primary purpose of the fact sheet, put together by the CNMI Joint Information Center, is to support a joint analysis of a Category 4 typhoon response for public information and warning. It describes in detail the impact of a catastrophic typhoon in the Commonwealth.

Last year, Saipan was not prepared to handle Typhoon Soudelor as it pummeled the island, with its tornado-like winds downing power poles and destroying houses.

The fact sheet also describes in detail how to deliver basic information and guidance to the public during times of disaster. For example, most government agencies do not have public information officers and they must have a back-up plan or train someone.

“Disaster public information requires special attention and coordination on the process of preparation and dissemination. Information that concerns an emergency situation affecting the general public must be accurate and timely,” said in the fact sheet.

Providing accurate, coordinated, timely, and accessible information to the public—including the media; newspaper, television, and radio—government officials, and the private sector is a requirement.

“Life-saving and life-sustaining information must be coordinated among local, territory, and federal stakeholders, and be accessible to individuals with disabilities, others with access, and functional needs; those from diverse religious, racial or ethnic.”

The governor’s press secretary’s office will be the lead agency that is responsible in providing the public the information and warning activities for the CNMI. The Department of Homeland Security and the local Federal Emergency Management Agency through the FEMA office of external affairs will be its counterpart.

The CNMI’s Homeland Security Emergency Management Emergency Operation Center will activate the public information plan with the staff of the Commonwealth’s PIO tasked to provide the Governor’s Office updates and other information.

The contents of the fact sheet were gathered from input from different agencies that became part of JIC last year. It is a joint catastrophic plan that would help prepare the CNMI in future disasters like typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruption, tsunami, and even civil unrest.

Government agencies need to know its basic responsibilities before, during, and after disasters like evacuation plan, responding to emergencies, and how to address the issue on hazardous materials or other wastes. Releasing accurate information before and after a disaster is important.

Federal Grant Will Fund Research To Better Respond To Drought (AUDIO)

By Brent Martin

Nebraska Radio Network, September 13, 2016

University of Nebraska researchers will use a nearly $300,000 federal grant to help policy makers better prepare to respond to drought.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration $284,588 grant will finance two years of research to create a web-based tool to help governments make drought-related decisions.

Senior Research Director Denise Bulling with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center says policymakers don’t always connect drought with emergency response.

“Hopefully, this will bridge that gap between what’s happening in water resource planning and what’s happening in traditional emergency response planning,” Bulling tells Nebraska Radio Network.

Bulling says researchers hope to bridge that gap between traditional emergency response planning and resource planning by using the Federal Emergency Management Agency planning process that incorporates realistic impacts of a long-term drought. The challenge, she says, is wading through all the data available and the numerous tools which have been developed to decide what is useful and what is not.

Climatologist Deborah Bathke at the National Drought Mitigation Center at UNL says researchers will explore a way to tie together the FEMA planning process with the drought risk management tools available at the center.

Two years of data drawn from the Platte River Basin will be used to create the model.

Bathke says those who would use it will be consulted.

“The exact form and what that tool looks like will depend on the feedback and the interactions that we have with stakeholders in the region and in response to what they’re needs are,” Bathke tells us.

Bathke says this web-based tool will not be something developed in a laboratory, but resources will be taken into the field, tested, and refined to be useful to policymakers.

The grant comes from the NOAA Sectoral Applications Research Program. Researchers hope to build a tool that can be used throughout the country to plan for and respond to water-related disasters.

The research team also includes Lisa Pytlik Zillig, senior research manager at the Public Policy Center; Crystal Stiles, applied climatologist and postdoctoral research associate at the High Plains Regional Climate Center.

AUDIO: Brent Martin reports [:50]

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

DAVE ROBINSON: September Is National Preparedness Month

By Dave Robinson

Harrison (AR) Daily Times, September 13, 2016

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (F.E.M.A.) National Preparedness month began on Sept. 1. Each week of the month carries its own theme. Topics like Preparing Family and Friends, Preparing Through Service, and finally, Individual Preparedness. The central theme is "Don't Wait. Communicate, Make Your Emergency Plan Today." Check www.ready.gov for an overview of all the opportunities to participate.

This current week (Sept. 11-17) puts the emphasis on involvement through community service and coordinating your plans with neighbors. Opportunities such as Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.), Citizen Corps or the Youth Preparedness Council offer plenty of outlets for contributions at the community level.The week of Sept. 18-24 emphasizes Individual Preparedness and offers a new app for your smartphone featuring weather alerts, disaster resources and safety reminders. The final week, Sept. 23-30 is billed as a Lead Up To A National Day Of Action. Participants are encouraged to organize a preparedness activity, register it on ready.gov/prepare and then share photos and stories of how your activities made a difference.

Also scheduled for Sept. 30 is National PreparAthon! Day. The goals of this and similar events are to increase the number of folks who are aware of what type of disasters can strike their local community, what to do to be safe and mitigate damage and how to increase their preparedness level so the effects of a disaster are minimized. Community resilience planning is also on the agenda. Opportunities to sign up for individuals and organizations are posted on the website as well. F.E.M.A. has come a long way since Hurricane Katrina and their website is an excellent resource for all types of disaster planning and information.

As usual send your questions and comments disasterprep.dave@gmail.com. Previous columns can be found on my blog at www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com.

Dave Robinson is the Postmaster in Bandon, Oregon, and the author of "Disaster Prep For The Rest Of Us," available on Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble and other online booksellers.

Local Mobile Apps Make Emergency Preparations Easier

Batavia (NY) Daily News, September 14, 2016

September is National Preparedness Month. In our area, we generally think of snow- and ice-related emergencies, however, it is also important to be ready for threats caused by flooding, high winds, earthquakes, fires, chemical spills and infectious diseases.

Thankfully, getting prepared for all types of emergencies is made easier with the assistance of mobile apps like Ready Genesee, Orleans Aware and FEMA. These apps are similar in nature in that all connect consumers to weather alerts, planning features and information on available shelters. Apps like these are user-friendly and give consumers the tools to take part in their own preparedness, which will positively impact the outcome of any emergency.

If you live, work, or visit Genesee or Orleans Counties, download the Ready Genesee and Orleans Aware apps, available on Apple and Android devices, as well as in English and Spanish, too.

"The Emergency Management Offices and Health Departments in both counties teamed up to have these apps made available in an effort to have a local focus," said Bill Schutt, deputy coordinator of Emergency Management Services. "County officials can use this app not only to get information to users before, during and after emergencies in a more direct and modern way, but also to share knowledge on a regular basis, too. Since Ready Genesee and Orleans Aware became available to download earlier this year, the counties have utilized the apps to notify users of road closers, a boil water notice, a gas leak, rabies clinics, as well as sharing of informational articles on the recent drought, Zika virus, Lyme Disease and lighting safety. If you don't travel to either county, the FEMA app is a good, reputable option, too, but it is important to note that users will not receive notifications or general information from their county officials.

Features of Ready Genesee and Orleans Aware:

- My Plan — By answering five simple questions, the app will create a customized emergency supply checklist and plan based on your family's needs, including pets and relatives with special needs.

- Alerts — Get information from the National Weather Service and local county officials. Local officials can instantly inform you of situations including, but not limited to, road closers, evacuation notices, boil water notices, gas leaks, an active shooter or missing persons.
- My Status — With the push of a button let friends and loved ones know "I'm Safe" or "I Need Help."
- EvacMap & Shelters — Find evacuation routes and shelters with on and offline mapping.
- Need to Know — E-books on various topics including Public Health Emergencies, Need to Know Preparedness for Pet Owners, Emerging Infectious Diseases, Floods and Fire Safety.

"The full potential of these new apps will be recognized more so as different emergencies arise, and I predict that utilization will increase, too," said Al Cheverie, public health emergency preparedness coordinator for Genesee and Orleans. "After downloading your app, please take the time to collect the emergency supplies for your home and car. Being ill-prepared for a situation where you are unable to leave your house or car can be dangerous if certain supplies such as necessary medications, blankets, food and water aren't on hand.

To download the apps, visit Ready Genesee or Orleans Aware: http://eocready.com/counties or FEMA: https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app.

For information about Health Department services contact:

- Genesee County Health Department: 344-2580 ext. 5555, www.co.genesee.ny.us/departments/health/index.html. Visit Facebook at Genesee County Health Department and Twitter at GeneseeCoHealthDept.
- Orleans County Health Department: 589-3278, www.orleansny.com/publichealth. Visit Facebook and Twitter: the user name for both is OrleansCoHealth.
- Wyoming County Health Department: 786-8890, www.wyomingco.net/health/main.html.

"Don't' Wait, Communicate" FEMA Says Make A Plan Now For An Emergency

By Alex George

WKBN-TV Youngstown (OH), September 13, 2016

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (WKBN) – September is National Preparedness month and the Federal Emergency Management Agency is encouraging families to make a plan and be informed in the event of an emergency.

"Don't Wait, Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today"- is the theme this year. Mahoning County EMA Director Dennis O'Hara said it's important to understand the types of emergencies that can impact anyone – flooding, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and power outages.

"You want to have supplies on hand for 72 hours. That's a gallon of water per person per day for three days and non-perishable food items such as granola bars and protein bars," O'Hara said.

O'Hara also recommends having blankets, a whistle and flashlight on hand.

It's also important to know the unique needs of your family members, including children, the elderly and pets when making an emergency supply kit, and make sure everyone knows how to send a text message.

"In a large-scale disaster, often times the first thing that fails would be the phones and they are jammed up because everyone is trying to make a phone call and you just can't get a signal," O'Hara said. "But often times a text message will go through, so just learn to text and say I'm okay, this is where I am."

O'Hara also suggests making an emergency plan and confirm that everyone knows how to get out of the house, where to meet, and any contact information for other family members and emergency services. Once a plan is set, practice it.

CITIZEN CORPS

Aspinwall Team To Help In Large-scale Emergencies

By Tawnya Panizzi

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, September 13, 2016

Aspinwall is recruiting for a new Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, that would aid first responders in a large-scale incident.

Examples include communicating with residents or conducting light search and rescue, said Andy Marsh, the borough's emergency management coordinator.

A lieutenant with the Aspinwall Volunteer Fire Department, Marsh is in his 36th year as an emergency service provider.

"I am trying to better prepare our community," Marsh said. "CERT is community-oriented and enables members to help rebuild and recover from incidents like a super storm, flash floods or major fires. It takes a community to rebound from a tragic and unfortunate incident."

CERT teams can help with evacuation and shelter operations, first aid, traffic control, damage assessments, debris removal and multi-municipal strategy.

Marsh already has trained about 10 volunteers, who underwent 24 total hours of class to learn skills in fire extinguishing, lifting and moving victims, CPR, disaster psychology and incident command systems.

Borough Manager Melissa Lang said Aspinwall always has been a town where neighbors help each other. The CERT team will be an advantage, because volunteers will have an established plan to augment professionals, she said.

"The CERT volunteers will add knowledge and resources to our community in order to better prepare and react to an emergency situation," she said.

CERT was introduced in California in the 1980s, Marsh said. Training is recognized by both the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

With their extensive training, CERT teams help a community prepare for incidents that can tax the efforts of firefighters, paramedics and police officers, Marsh said.

"For our purposes in Aspinwall, the intention is to help our first responders," he said.

The team also will be called on to assist with communication, when phone and power outages occur during a large-scale emergency.

Already, members of the team have had a taste of life as a responder. During a water main break this summer, Marsh and his team gathered at the VFD No. 2 firehouse at the top of Center Avenue to distribute water bottles.

Marsh said emergency response is determined by each local municipality. He expects to offer ongoing training for new members and continuing education for current members.

"It is my expectation that this team will grow," he said. For more information, email Marsh at aspinwall ema@gmail.com.

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NATIONAL NEWS

Surprise Tropical Storm Julia To Drench Coastal South Carolina

By Jason Samenow

Washington Post, September 14, 2016

Out of the blue, a tropical storm was named over northeast Florida on Tuesday night. Now it could unload flooding rains in coastal South Carolina as it stalls over the region.

The storm, named Julia by the National Hurricane Center, stunned meteorologists by forming over land — about five miles west of Jacksonville — rather than water.

"The center has not spent any time over water, and probably never will. This is extraordinary, and from what I can tell, unprecedented," says Brian McNoldy, Capital Weather Gang's tropical weather expert. "While there are dozens of examples of tropical cyclones forming inland near a coastline (Agnes in 1972 over the Yucatán Peninsula and Leslie in 2000 over northern Florida are two examples), they eventually tracked over water and strengthened."

Capital Weather Gang contributor Phil Klotzbach says Julia became the first tropical cyclone on record to form over land in Florida. He told USA Today that the last storm to develop over land anywhere in the United States was Tropical Storm Beryl, which formed over southeast Louisiana in 1988.

Because of weak steering currents, Julia is forecast to meander near the Georgia and South Carolina coastline for days. Weak, slow-moving tropical storms are notorious for producing torrential rainfall, and that is the primary concern with Julia.

The National Weather Service has placed the area from roughly Georgetown, S.C., to Savannah, Ga., including Charleston, in a moderate risk zone for excessive rainfall. Its discussion qualifies the rainfall risk some, noting the most intense thunderstorm activity so far has remained offshore but cautions that some heavier activity could still soak the coast:

> Thus far the deep and persistent convection has remained to the east and southeast of the circulation center … favoring the warm waters … and showing some reluctance to move onshore. Without any strengthening of the cyclone this may remain the case … with the heavy rainfall not quite wrapping around

the north or northwest side of the circulation. Still … the track of the system as a whole shows enough of a northward component to likely bring steady tropical rainfall and some embedded heavier elements onshore.

The National Hurricane Center's rainfall forecast calls for three to six inches of rain along the South Carolina coastline south of Georgetown, and two to four inches around Savannah. Isolated totals of 10 inches are possible, it says.

The areas expected to receive the heaviest rainfall have not received much rain in the past 30 days — only about half of what's normal — which will help slow the onset of flooding.

Any flooding in coastal South Carolina is unlikely to rival the historic event in early October when up to two feet of rain fell in central Charleston County, and Charleston had its wettest day on record.

Although Julia's formation over land is a meteorological oddity, it is not a requirement for the center of a tropical weather disturbance to be over water to develop into a storm. As long as its circulation is in contact with the ocean, it can tap moisture and organize.

Also, in some instances, storms have shown the ability to maintain their intensity or even strengthen passing over saturated or swampy land areas — which they can draw moisture from, sometimes referred to as the "brown ocean" phenomenon.

UPDATE 5-Storm Julia Threatens Flooding In Coastal South Carolina

Reuters, September 14, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

Julia Weakens To Tropical Depression Off US East Coast

By Bruce Smith

Associated Press, September 15, 2016

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Julia has weakened to a tropical depression off South Carolina after bringing steady rains, but not the torrential downpours and widespread flooding that had been feared, to the coast of the Southeast from Florida to the Carolinas.

The depression's maximum sustained winds early Thursday had decreased to near 35 mph (56 kph) with little change in strength forecast over the next two days. The National Weather Service forecast that most of the rain would now remain out at sea.

As of 5 a.m. EDT, Julia was centered about 60 miles (96 kilometers) south-southeast of Charleston. The storm was forecast to meander and then dissipate offshore in the next few days.

Flood watches were dropped for the South Carolina coast Thursday although forecasters issued a small craft advisory for waters near the shore and said there was a danger of rip currents along the coast through Thursday evening.

Street flooding that came about the time of high tide late Wednesday caused a handful of downtown streets in Charleston to be closed. All the streets had reopened by rush hour Thursday morning and the pavement on major arteries leading into town were dry.

Many areas along the South Carolina coast saw more than 2 inches of rain during the storm on Wednesday, but nowhere near the 6 to 8 inches that had earlier been forecast.

Forecasters had issued flood watches, concerned about additional rains coming less than two weeks after Tropical Storm Hermine sloshed across the state. That storm brought from 3 to 6 inches of rain but mainly in areas of the Midlands farther inland.

Meanwhile, a new tropical depression formed far out over the Atlantic and is moving west. The depression's maximum sustained winds are near 35 mph (56 kph) with little change in strength expected over the next two days. It's centered about 365 miles (587 kilometers) west-northwest of the Cabo Verde Islands.

Elsewhere, Tropical Storm Ian is moving north in the central Atlantic but is no threat to land.

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Julia, Off S.C. Coast, Weakens To Tropical Depression

USA Today, September 15, 2016

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Tropical Storm Julia has weakened to a tropical depression off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said Thursday morning.

The storm, located about 60 miles south-southeast of Charleston, S.C., has maximum sustained winds of 55 mph.

Julia is expected to linger off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina for the next few days, the hurricane center said.

The storm system continues to drop rain along the South Carolina coast.

According to the hurricane center, additional rainfall of less than an inch is expected across coastal parts of South Carolina and southeast North Carolina into Friday.

There are no watches or warnings associated with the system.

Minor storm damage from Julia was reported in several Florida coastal communities, including Mayport, Neptune Beach and St. Simons.

St. Simons Island set a record for rainfall Tuesday, recording 4.43 inches, easily surpassing the old record of 2.03 inches, according to the National Weather Service.

Meanwhile, the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla., confirmed an EF-0 tornado touched down in southern Brevard County, Fla., on Tuesday. It had an estimated peak wind of 75-85 mph. The tornado was on the ground for 3 miles.

No injuries were reported, but there was some damage.

Contributing: WTLV- and WJXX-TV, Jacksonville; Chris Bonanno, Florida Today. Follow Daniel Bonds on Twitter: @Daniel_Bonds

Louisiana, Florida Governors Take Different Approach On Aid

By Andrew Taylor

Associated Press, September 15, 2016

WASHINGTON — It's a tough time for a governor to come to Washington, hat in hand, to ask for billions of dollars for a hard-hit state, especially with Congress in the midst of election-season dysfunction and dominated by tightfisted tea party Republicans.

But Gov. John Bel Edwards is back for the second straight week, pleading for almost $3 billion to help Louisiana rebuild from last month's devastating floods, undeterred by warnings that he should keep expectations low. This is, after all, not the same Congress that voted for $60 billion in the span of a week after Hurricane Katrina slammed Louisiana in 2005.

"What I was told to expect was that there would be a tremendous difference in the way I'm perceived than what would have happened after Katrina because even disaster recovery funding seems to be caught up in partisan gridlock, whereas that was never the case before," Edwards said in an interview. "But that has not been my experience thus far."

Congress was generous in approving $95 billion to help Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas rebuild after Katrina. Funding to help the Northeast after Superstorm Sandy four years ago was a much more difficult lift, with the bulk of President Barack Obama's aid request opposed by House Republicans. More recently, GOP conservatives have been slow to embrace the need for $1 billion or so to battle the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

Edwards, a first-year Democrat, has teamed up with the Pelican State's GOP-dominated delegation behind a drive to add Louisiana flood aid to a short-term, government-wide spending bill that Congress needs to pass to avoid a government shutdown in a little more than two weeks. Louisiana is known for rough-and-tumble politics — Edwards handily beat GOP Sen. David Vitter in last year's gubernatorial race — but the rival sides are united now.

"We've all been working really well together to stay focused on helping people get back in their houses, and that's where our focus needs to be," said Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the No. 3 Republican in the House.

Edwards wasn't the only governor in Washington this week. Another visitor, GOP Gov. Rick Scott of Florida, met with top Republicans on Zika aid on Tuesday and Wednesday — and was spitting fire at Democrats for holding up a GOP-drafted measure to fight the virus, which can cause grave birth defects and is spreading in Florida. But Scott arrived just as the long-stalled Zika measure appears about to break free.

Scott said Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida had "turned his back on Floridians" by supporting a filibuster of the measure over a controversial provision targeting Planned Parenthood.

"This is about pregnant women and developing babies and he said, you know, that he was going to play politics instead," Scott said.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., who joined Scott at a meeting with Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., went out of his way Wednesday to praise Nelson for "his partnership and hard work" on Zika.

Edwards, meanwhile, met with House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., who was "noncommittal" as to whether Louisiana will get Obama's full $2.6 billion request to rebuild housing and infrastructure ruined by the floods. He's finding that the Capitol works at a much slower pace and is a stingier place than it was when Katrina smashed Louisiana a decade ago.

Edwards has a meeting with Obama on Friday after sitting down with two Cabinet members last week, including budget director Shaun Donovan, who submitted the administration's official request Tuesday evening.

"It's incumbent upon us to have good relationships and good communication regardless of party, but it's just easier when you are in the same party. And I think that has been helpful when I've been meeting with the president but also with his Cabinet secretaries," Edwards said. "But it's also obviously helpful to have folks from the Louisiana congressional delegation who can work the Republican side of the aisle."

Timing may also work in Edwards' favor. Part of the difficulty for the Zika request was that it traveled alone in the middle of the political season. It's now catching a ride on the stopgap spending bill, which is the sole must-do item before Congress adjourns for the elections. Flood aid may not be so lucky, though the Louisianans are pushing hard. Odds are good that flood aid could advance in a year-end spending bill.

"We're just pushing," said Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La.

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This story has been corrected to replace 'not' with 'now' in the second-to-last paragraph, so it reads, "It's now catching a ride on the stopgap spending bill ..."

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Louisiana Flooding Makes Case For Changes To Insurance Program

By Joe Coughlin

Roll Call, September 15, 2016

Last month's flooding in Louisiana has once again focused attention on shortcomings with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). As co-designer of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's mandatory purchase guidelines in the 1980s, I believe that recent events show beyond doubt that the program has significant problems and needs to be reformed.

For Congress, there is a bigger issue: Our nation's entire approach to natural disasters, both public and private, needs to be revisited.

There are two issues involved: Is it wise policy to place all natural hazard insurance risk coverage in a single "all hazards" policy? And second, should we require all property owners to purchase this?

Former Louisiana Sen. Mary L. Landrieu is among many who have recently suggested the need for insurance that covers flood, fire, tornadoes and earthquakes. What about wind, other than tornadoes? All forms of wind are already covered in homeowner policies and through wind pools in Eastern and Gulf Coast states. Fire is also already similarly covered in residential and commercial policies.

Mortgage lenders typically require both fire and wind coverage either through a standard homeowner policy for dwellings away from the immediate coasts, or a homeowner policy and a separate wind policy in such coastal areas.

Earthquake coverage is available in California. But it is run by the state and rarely purchased as the coverage amounts, terms and conditions are not attractive.

Mortgage lenders under NFIP jurisdiction are mandated to require flood insurance on mortgages for those structures located inside FEMA-identified Special Flood Hazard Areas. So an "all natural hazard" insurance approach would require owners of all mortgaged structures to buy such a policy regardless of location.

The end result would mean that mortgaged properties throughout the United States would be covered for all such risks. The impacted would likely approach the number currently covered by private sector policies covering fire and/or wind only — in the high tens of millions. That would also mean that the same number of structures would be covered by flood insurance, instead of the current 5 million to 6 million, and earthquake insurance, instead of the handful today.

The issues of a broad all natural hazard, single property insurance policy, together with a broad mandate of its purchase, have been raised in the past with discussions between private insurers and federal officials. Although those discussions were helpful, they were inconclusive.

A congressional proposal would likely result in opposition from the property insurance industry, as its members may not want to give up their wind and fire coverage. In recent years, however, there have been limited indications of a possible softening of positions on wind coverage in the Gulf coast and Southeast coastal areas.

Requiring such coverage on all mortgaged property would likely prove difficult because it would result in a significant expansion of the current flood insurance requirement. Opposition may arise from the mortgage, homebuilding and real estate industries out of concerns that it might cost buyers more and increase the overall costs of home ownership.

Yet such an approach could actually reduce the cost of such coverage because it would spread risk and the expanded protection for millions of structures. That could actually reduce the costs of disaster assistance.

Such coverage would require a legislative change to NFIP statutes. But it may now be time to revisit this approach and expand it.

Requiring an all natural hazard policy to be purchased by all mortgaged property would be a large improvement over the current situation. It should be fairly easy to administer and could use some of the same concepts used by the NFIP. The federal government would use the existing property insurance companies to sell and service the policies, and the current agency system to interface with insured property owners.

Cost- and risk-sharing details would have to be worked out between the government and insurers. But if the private insurers would change their views on all of this, I am convinced the details could be worked out.

Finally, any plausible proposal must address mitigation of risk. The natural hazard risk problem cannot be addressed by financial means alone. There must be a corresponding mitigation component. The NFIP employs this joint approach and without it, our flooding problem would be much worse.

Tough natural hazard mitigation requirements would also be a very political issue. To date, whenever the NFIP has proposed strengthening its standards, officials run into the usual opposition which has prevented implementation.

The most recent effort by FEMA to improve such standards for FEMA-funded projects is an encouraging start. Although supportive and optimistic of such attempts, I am guardedly so about a successful outcome, at least in the near future. At some point, all parties may finally bring something to that table, no matter how much they may be reluctant to do so.

Coughlin is a senior adviser at Dawson & Associates who helped design FEMA's Mandatory Purchase of Flood Insurance Guidelines.

Louisiana Republicans: This Isn't Like Sandy

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 15, 2016

Louisiana lawmakers are defending their 2013 votes against aid for Hurricane Sandy relief — even as they request billions of dollars to help their state recover from last month's floods.

GOP Sen. Bill Cassidy and Republican Reps. John Fleming and Steve Scalise — all of whom voted against the Sandy bill in 2013 — are now asking for more than $2 billion for flood aid for Baton Rouge and other cities in their state.

Fleming and Cassidy say they voted against the $50 billion Sandy bill -because it included $33 billion for programs unrelated to the storm damage. They say the Louisiana request has no such extraneous spending.

Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) formally asked Washington this week to provide up to $2.8 billion in emergency aid after the August floods, which destroyed more than 100,000 homes and killed 13.

The White House mostly supports the effort and formally submitted a request Tuesday for $2.6 billion in emergency spending for the state.

The proposal also has the approval of the congressional delegation, which wrote a letter to the president asking him to remember the state during spending battles between now and the end of the fiscal year, on Sept. 30.

The question now is whether Congress will do anything with the request and if members detect any hypocrisy in funding disaster relief for a state where most members have voted against it in the past.

"I guess there is a certain irony in it, or poetic justice or something, but no, it wouldn't stop me at all for voting for it," Rep. Pete King (R-N.Y.) said.

King aggressively criticized members for delaying votes on the Sandy aid package in 2013, and he said Wednesday that the fight for funds to assist his home state "caused me to change my feelings toward some people."

But aid for Louisiana, he said, "absolutely ... has to be done. No one can even think of voting against it for any political reason."

Fleming, Scalise and Cassidy, then a House member, all voted for a $17 billion lower chamber version of the Sandy bill, complaining that the Democrat-led Senate added unnecessary funding.

"All Louisiana's asking for is direct relief for damage," Fleming said of his state's aid request. "That's what I was willing to vote for in Sandy, and that's what I'm going to vote for on this. And that's all we're requesting. We're not asking for wasteful spending on projects unrelated to flooding."

Cassidy made a similar argument.

"I voted against that final package, you're right," he said. "But I voted for that $17 billion package that was truly recognized as Sandy aid."

The state's other representatives either voted for the Sandy bill or were not in Congress at the time.

Hurricane Sandy caused more than $70 billion of damage in New York and New Jersey, and the $51 billion aid package appropriated billions for community block grants, restoring utilities, rebuilding homes, repairing transit systems and coastal reconstruction.

Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), another outspoken critic of lawmakers who voted against the Sandy aid, said he warned his colleagues back then that they might someday need disaster aid themselves.

"I called out those early on to say that you have to think about that phrase, 'There but for the grace of God go I,' and you're going to need somebody some day," Menendez said. "I think they're going to have to come to some type of reckoning about why this is good in one case and not good in another."

Rep. Cedric Richmond, Louisiana's lone Democrat in Congress, said he doesn't think his party will be uneasy about backing the emergency funding for his state.

"While we did have three that did not vote for [Sandy aid], I came down to the floor and argued for it because it was important," he said. "I think that I have great goodwill among members of my side, so I think as long as we're pushing for a bill that is not insensitive to other needs of other communities, I think we're OK."

Fleming and Cassidy said that because their request is reasonable and doesn't contain unneeded funding, it should pass easily.

Sen. David Vitter (R-La.), who voted for the Sandy bill, told reporters that his colleagues' past votes shouldn't doom this aid package.

"I think when there is a disaster, Congress, administrations, whoever they are, come together and respond in a responsible way," he said shortly after the floods, according to the Greater Baton Rouge Business Report. "I was involved in the Sandy package and built good relationships based on that, so I don't foresee that difficulty."

King said each congressional fight over disaster aid should serve as a warning for all members.

"I would just hope that anyone would look at this and remember the next time there is a natural disaster somewhere to step up and do what has to be done," King said.

Overnight Energy: Trump Visits Flint | GOP Chairman Defends Subpoenas In Climate Probe

By Timothy Cama And Devin Henry

The Hill, September 14, 2016

SUBPOENA FIGHT LIGHTS UP HOUSE: Congress has a "constitutional obligation" to subpoena state attorneys general in its investigation into their climate change-related probes, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas) said on Wednesday.

Smith, chairman of the House Science Committee, said at a hearing that as head of the House's lead panel overseeing federal science programs, he is well within his rights and responsibilities.

"The committee has a constitutional obligation to conduct oversight any time the United States's scientific enterprise is potentially impacted," he said.

Smith, a climate change skeptic, wants to learn more about the investigations of two Democratic attorneys general into whether Exxon Mobil Corp. committed fraud by allegedly denying global warming publicly while knowing internally that emissions from fossil fuels warm the climate.

He subpoenaed the attorneys general over the summer, looking for documents related to their investigation. The two attorneys general have refused to comply, and Democrats have supported their opposition.

Smith convened his Wednesday hearing to assert that his panel has power over the state officials and can enforce his wide-ranging subpoenas demanding numerous documents related to their work.

Democrats, led by Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (Texas), shot back at Smith on Wednesday, saying his actions are little more than political stunts and comparing them to the House Un-American Activities Committee's hunt for communist sympathizers.

"In my own mind, I have to go back to the Red Scares of the '50s to recall a similar effort," Johnson said.

Read more here.

TRUMP TALKS FLINT: Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump toured a water treatment facility in Flint, Mich. on Wednesday, pledging to "fix the problem" plaguing the city's drinking water supply if he's elected in November.

"The damage can be corrected, and it can be corrected by people who know what they're doing," Trump said at an area church after touring the water facility.

"Unfortunately, the people that caused this tremendous problem had no clue. They had absolutely no clue."

Michigan officials have been roundly criticized for switching Flint's drinking water supply to a local river, which then corroded pipes and caused lead problems with the city's water.

The state eventually moved Flint's water supply back to a Detroit municipal source. But recovery efforts in the city are ongoing.

"It's amazing the damage that's been done," Trump said. "But we'll get it fixed, and it's going to get fixed quickly, if I'm elected. But it will be fixed quickly and effectively and Flint will come back. Most importantly, we'll bring jobs back to Flint."

Democrats dismissed Trump's visit to Flint.

"We all know why he's doing it: belated photo-op," Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) told reporters in Washington. "We're here solving the problem. The people of Flint don't need politics; they need solutions."

Flint Mayor Karen Weaver (D) also waved off Trump's visit and discouraged him from coming to the city.

"Flint is focused on fixing the problems caused by lead contamination of our drinking water, not photo ops," she said in a statement, adding that Flint "seeks real action and real help to recover from the lead crisis."

Read more here.

AGENCY OPPOSES NEW PIPELINE LAWSUIT, BACKS REVIEW: The Army Corps of Engineers opposes a tribe's court appeal to block construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline, but it supports an Obama administration review of the project.

The Army Corps told a federal court Wednesday that it shouldn't grant the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an injunction against a North Dakota stretch of the project, noting a lower court's Friday decision approving of the way the agency permitted the pipeline project.

Even so, the Corps wrote in a filing, the agency said it supports a temporary halt of construction on the route while federal officials consider whether there needs to be a more rigorous round of assessments on the 1,170-mile, $3.8 billion pipeline.

"While the Corps opposes the Tribe's current motion and believes that it should be denied, the Departments believe that the pipeline company should implement the relief that the Tribe is seeking voluntarily," the agency's lawyer wrote in its filing.

House Democrats asked President Obama to "maintain [the administration's] hold on further permitting" for the project until it can fully vet the tribe's concerns about the pipeline's impact on cultural and environmental areas in North Dakota.

"We stand with tribal leaders in asking you to uphold our federal trust responsibility and protect tribal interests in this and future permitting decisions by the [Army Corps]," said a letter to Obama, signed by 19 House Democrats and led by Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minn.).

Read more here.

TOMORROW IN THE HILL: The Louisiana congressional delegation wants Congress to spend billions of dollars to help assist recovery efforts following severe flooding there in August.

The only problem: many of the state's lawmakers voted against similar aid for Superstorm Sandy relief, raising questions about tensions between lawmakers seeking emergency funding for their constituents.

Tomorrow in The Hill, we preview the politics of the aid request, as Louisiana increasingly emerges as an issue on lawmakers' plates this month.

ON TAP THURSDAY I: The Senate could finish up work on its Water Resources Development Act, legislation to inject more than $9 billion into water infrastructure projects around the country. The bill also contains aid for Flint.

The Senate voted 94-3 to end debate on the bill Thursday, setting up a potential final passage vote on Thursday.

Check The Hill for more.

ON TAP THURSDAY II: President Obama will speak at the State Department's Our Ocean Conference.

Rest of Thursday's agenda ...

Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz will testify at a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing on energy security.

A House Science Committee panel will hold a hearing on Environmental Protection Agency methane regulations.

AROUND THE WEB:

A county sheriff testified in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge takeover trial, the Oregonian reports.

Americans are willing to pay more on their electric bills – but only a little more – to help fight climate change, the AP reports, citing a new poll.

The Wall Street Journal dives into oil giants' big bets on the future of natural gas.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Check out Wednesday's stories...

-Feds roll out conservation, energy plan for California Desert

-Feds argue against pipeline injunction, support new review

-Senate nears finish line on Flint aid bill

-Michigan senator: Trump's Flint visit is a 'belated photo-op'

-GOP rep: Flood insurance bill coming this month

-GOP chairman cites 'constitutional obligation' in climate subpoenas

-Obama requests $2.6B in aid for Louisiana floods

Please send tips and comments to Timothy Cama, tcama@thehill.com; and Devin Henry, dhenry@thehill.com. Follow us on Twitter: @Timothy_Cama, @dhenry, @thehill

Overnight Finance: Senators Struggle With Spending Bill | Obama Lifting Myanmar Sanctions | Dems Turn Up Heat On Wells Fargo | Panel Votes To Exempt Olympic Medals From Taxes

By Sylvan Lane

The Hill, September 14, 2016

House conservatives want first crack at funding bill: The conservative Republican Study Committee (RSC) will urge Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and his GOP leadership team to move a short-term government funding bill through the House before the Senate takes action on its own funding bill, RSC Chairman Bill Flores told The Hill on Wednesday.

In an interview, the Texas Republican said the 178-member caucus discussed a 10-week continuing resolution, or CR, at its weekly lunch meeting and came to the consensus that the House should vote first so the lower chamber doesn't get jammed with a Senate bill it doesn't want.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) have been negotiating a 10-week funding bill to keep the government's lights on past Sept. 30 but are at an impasse over a Planned Parenthood provision and other issues. The Hill's Scott Wong and Sarah Ferris tell us why: http://bit.ly/2cFRHba.

Reid: We've got some issues: Over in the upper chamber, Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid (Nev.) says there "are lots of problems" with a Republican proposal to fund the government beyond the end of the month, dampening hopes a deal might be reached this week.

Reid told reporters Wednesday that Republican and Democratic leaders are at loggerheads over the stopgap funding measure, which includes tens of millions of dollars to fight the Zika virus.

Republicans don't want any of the $80 million slated for Puerto Rico's Zika response to go to Planned Parenthood clinics.

"The CR is not done; it's a work in progress," Reid said, referring to the funding continuing resolution. "Zika funding is not done; it's a work in progress."

Asked whether the partisan dispute over granting Planned Parenthood access to federal funds remains a sticking point, Reid said, "Planned Parenthood is not gone." The Hill's Alexander Bolton takes us there: http://bit.ly/2cFRYur.

Lew meets with lawmakers on offshore tax rules: Treasury Secretary Jack Lew met with House Ways and Means Committee members Wednesday as the Obama administration works to finalize rules aimed at curbing offshore tax deals.

The rules, proposed in April, have drawn concerns from business groups and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. They would treat some inter-company debt as equity.

The rules were designed to take aim at a tax-avoidance strategy called "earnings stripping" that is used by companies that participate in "inversions" – transactions in which U.S. companies move their headquarters overseas to lower their taxes. However, stakeholders say the proposal is too broad and would hurt routine business transactions. The Hill's Naomi Jagoda tells us what happened inside the meeting: http://bit.ly/2cs9aSW.

Obama requests $2.6B in aid for Louisiana floods: The Obama administration is asking Congress for a $2.6 billion emergency appropriation to fund aid efforts following Louisiana's disastrous flooding last month.

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) said Tuesday the money would go to block grants that Louisiana could use for a wide variety of purposes, like emergency aid, small business loans, infrastructure and affordable housing.

The plea to congressional leaders and appropriators comes a day after Louisiana's eight-member congressional delegation asked President Obama to formulate an aid request so Congress could consider it for a stopgap funding measure that the Senate could consider as early as this week. The Hill's Timothy Cama breaks it down: http://bit.ly/2cxD7l.

US restores trade benefits to Myanmar: The United States will reinstate Myanmar's eligibility for benefits under the generalized system of preferences (GSP) program, which lowers tariffs on imports from poorer countries.

President Obama signed a proclamation on Wednesday allowing the Southeast Asian nation to participate in the program again starting in November after a 27-year-hiatus.

"While there is more work to be done, including to address concerns regarding human trafficking, Burma has made important progress in recent years with respect to worker rights," said U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman. The Hill's Vicki Needham tells us why it's important: http://bit.ly/2c9oYqR.

Obama lifting sanctions: The move came after President Obama earlier Wednesday said he intends to lift sanctions on Myanmar, rewarding the former military dictatorship for its move toward democracy.

The president made the announcement after meeting with the country's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, in the Oval Office.

Obama said he is "now prepared to lift sanctions that we have imposed," pointing to a "remarkable social and political transformation" in Myanmar.

"It is the right thing to do to ensure that the people of Burma see rewards for a new way of doing business," he said, sitting beside Suu Kyi. The military junta in Myanmar changed the country's name from Burma in 1989.

Asked by a reporter when sanctions will be lifted, Obama replied, "soon." The Hill's Jordan Fabian has more on the ramifications: http://bit.ly/2cW2ks4

Happy Wednesday and welcome to Overnight Finance, where we're wondering how it's only Wednesday. I'm Sylvan Lane, and here's your nightly guide to everything affecting your bills, bank account and bottom line.

Tonight's highlights include good news for Olympic medalists, more Congressional heat on Wells Fargo and a proposal from Hillary Clinton's potential Defense secretary.

See something I missed? Let me know at slane@thehill.com or tweet me @SylvanLane. And if you like your newsletter, you can subscribe to it here: http://bit.ly/1NxxW2N.

On tap tomorrow:

Senate Agriculture Committee: Hearing to examine the nominations of Christopher James Brummer, of the District of Columbia, and Brian D. Quintenz, of the District of Columbia, both to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, 10 a.m. http://bit.ly/2cIZ5Qk.

House panel votes to exempt Olympic medals from taxes: The House Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday approved a bill that would exempt many Olympic athletes' medals and prize money from taxes.

The measure was approved by voice vote and heads to the House floor. The vote comes one month after the Rio de Janeiro Olympics and during the Paralympic games.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) has said that the full chamber will consider the measure. The Senate passed a version of the legislation in July.

The bill would generally exempt from taxes the value of Olympic and Paralympic medals as well as prize money awarded to medalists by the U.S. Olympic Committee. The bill would apply to medals and prizes athletes received in 2016 and future years.

The Ways and Means Committee adopted an amendment from Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.) that would prevent the tax exemption from applying to athletes whose adjusted gross income was more than $1 million. Naomi Jagoda tells us more: http://bit.ly/2cWaros.

GOP rep: Flood insurance bill coming this month: Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Mo.) said on Wednesday that he plans to introduce a bill this month reforming a federal flood insurance program.

Luetkemeyer, chairman of the Financial Services subcommittee on insurance, said his bill – the product of almost a year of work – would expand private flood insurance coverage, change rates within the industry and reduce the National Flood Insurance Program's $23 billion debt.

"As taxpayers ... you're paying that $23 billion that's a shortfall right now, some way, some how, some point in time," Luetkemeyer said during an event sponsored by The Hill and Zurich North America.

"So, how do we structure the program in the future so that doesn't increase and be another burden on all of you to have to take care of down the road?"

The program is due for congressional reauthorization next year, creating an opportunity to make changes to the 50-year-old program. The Hill's Devin Henry walks us through: http://bit.ly/2cxDyMw.

GOP lawmaker: Obama must rally Dems on Pacific trade deal: The head of a House trade subcommittee said Wednesday that President Obama must rally members of his own party to pass an expansive Pacific trade agreement in Congress this year.

Rep. Dave Reichert (R-Wash.), chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade, said that passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement will need more than the 40 Democrats who may possibly support the expansive deal.

"There are some political realities here that we all know are creating this uphill battle for us," Reichert said during the Export-Import Council meeting at the White House, the final one of Obama's presidency.

All 28 Democrats who voted with Republicans more than a year ago to pass trade promotion authority, or fast-track, are on board with the TPP, Reichert said. Vicki Needham breaks it down: http://bit.ly/2c9pnt8.

Potential Clinton Defense secretary calls for lifting budget caps: A key Defense Department figure thought to be a candidate to be Hillary Clinton's secretary of Defense is calling for caps on the defense budget to be lifted early in the next administration.

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy on Wednesday said raising the caps is “a national security issue.”

“We have to get out from under [Budget Control Act] caps,” she added, speaking at an Institute for the Study of War conference in Washington.

The 2011 Budget Control Act enacted caps on the Pentagon’s budget that slashed its budget by $500 billion over 10 years, when lawmakers failed to reach a deal on how to close a $1 trillion budget deficit.

Those cuts were on top of an already-planned cut of $487 billion during that time. The Hill’s Kristina Wong has more: http://bit.ly/2c9oOQj.

GOP senator wants hearing on international tax issues: Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.) is asking the Senate Finance Committee to hold a hearing on international tax issues, such as the Treasury Department’s proposed rules aimed at curbing offshore tax deals and the European Union’s investigations of U.S. companies.

“I believe it is critical the Senate Finance Committee has the opportunity to discuss these issues and the ramifications of these issues in a hearing,” Heller, a member of the committee, said in a letter sent this week to Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

Treasury’s proposed rules and the EU’s ruling that Apple owes Ireland $14.5 billion in back taxes have drawn criticism from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. Naomi Jagoda has more: http://bit.ly/2cydqOr.

Lawmakers look to boost agricultural exports to Cuba: Lawmakers at a House Agriculture Committee hearing on Wednesday pushed to expand American agricultural trade with Cuba.

“I believe there lays an opportunity – albeit a rather narrow one – to make changes that will positively benefit both agricultural producers here at home while contributing to economic growth in Cuba,” said Chairman Michael Conaway (R-Texas) in his opening statement.

Conaway and Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) are co-sponsors of the Cuban Agricultural Exports Act, which would permit private financing for agricultural exports to Cuba.

Conaway said the Castro regime’s “heavy hand” still controlled Cuban agriculture but that their legislation could spur positive change.

Peterson also said more must be done to boost American agricultural exports to the island nation. The Hill’s Ellie Silverman has more: http://bit.ly/2cK1jQv.

Treasury floats gold jewelry ban for banks: The Department of the Treasury is proposing a ban on gold jewelry for banks.

Investing in gold jewelry and certain other precious metals does not fall within the “business of banking,” the Treasury Department said Wednesday in the Federal Register.

As such, the Treasury Department’s Office of the Comptroller of the Currency is looking to block national banks and federal savings associations from buying and selling metals that are “primarily suited for industrial or commercial use,” such as gold jewelry, copper cathodes, and aluminum T-bars. The Hill’s Tim Devaney tells us more: http://bit.ly/2cycIAN.

Cummings demands more details on Wells Fargo fraud scheme: A top House Democrat is calling on Wells Fargo & Co. to produce documents that would help determine whether the bank’s managers spurred employees to create fake accounts by using incentives and threats to meet sales goals.

Maryland Rep. Elijah Cummings, ranking member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, sent a letter on Tuesday to Wells CEO John Stumpf requesting information on how the company is holding employees and executives accountable for allegedly opening more than 2 million bank and credit card accounts without customers’ knowledge.

“Wells Fargo apparently just fired more than 5,000 employees, but it is unclear whether the executives who orchestrated this scheme will be held accountable,” Cummings said after meeting with Tim Sloan, Wells Fargo’s president and chief operating officer, in Washington.

Cummings gave Sloan the letter for Stumpf requesting documents about how its “managers used quotas, bonuses, threats and other punitive measures to perpetrate these abuses.”

Any managers who directed the abuses or enforced the quotas should be investigated and prosecuted, he said: http://bit.ly/2cWbV26.

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Write us with tips, suggestions and news: slane@thehill.com, vneedham@thehill.com; pschroeder@thehill.com, and njagoda@thehill.com. Follow us on Twitter: @SylvanLane, @VickofTheHill; @PeteSchroeder; and @NJagoda.

A Missouri Town Saved From Flood Faces Questions About Its Levee

By Kris Maher

Wall Street Journal, September 14, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

The School Doomed By Climate Change

By Mareesa Nicosia

The Atlantic, September 15, 2016

Newtok, AK.—In Dawn Wilson's classroom, fourth-graders are writing a story about what they would need to survive if their families were forced to quickly leave their homes and relocate down river. Astutely, her young students tick off the essentials: food, clothing, guns, and ammunition.

In this remote Yup'ik tribal community on Alaska's southwest shore, this sort of brainstorming is not an abstract academic exercise. It's a real-life lesson built around the environmental forces now threatening to upend the already-hardscrabble existence of some 400 people for whom hunting is essential to eating.More From The Seventy Four

The very school where Wilson's fourth-graders contemplate their survival supplies will soon be gone, submerged by a fast-rising river that's grown so wide you can't see the other side. Each year, the water slides closer, buoyed by wind and rain storms, record-high temperatures and melting permafrost.

Next year, estimates say, the river will flow past the shoreline houses and reach the school, which is the village's highest point, its community center, and its only source of running water. If the current rate of erosion remains constant, the school—the first in the country to shutter because of climate change—may not make it through 2018.

The current roster of high-school seniors will likely be the last graduating class of Newtok.

"We have to move … the water is eating the land," Wilson read, back in the classroom a few weeks ago, reciting to her students the narrative they had composed together during the first week of school.

* * *

If they don't already, Wilson's young pupils will soon know this lesson by heart: Their village is at the front lines of the global climate-change crisis that could ultimately devastate dozens of small indigenous communities scattered along Alaska's Bering Sea coast. They lie within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, a 19.5-million-acre expanse of wetlands and tundra between the Bering Strait and the Aleutian Islands.

The village of Newtok—a few dozen dilapidated buildings splayed on a treeless, marshy bend of the Ninglick River just before it opens into the ocean—is disappearing. More than 100 feet of its shoreline was ripped away in a single storm; most years average 72 feet. The layer of earth that forms the village's foundation and was once frozen solid is turning to mud.

The Ninglick River has swallowed at least 500 feet of Newtok's southern shoreline since 2005. Erosion claims an average 72 feet of earth each year. (Hanna Craig)

Just a few hundred feet from the encroaching river, Newtok's school sits perched on splintering wooden stilts, a T-shaped modular covered in peeling blue and white paint. Wilson, an elementary-reading specialist from Ohio, arrived here in early August, but her two-year contract could be cut short by the very manifestation of what she is teaching.

In mid-August, though, time feels abundant here. The days stretch on and on, the sun does not set until 11 p.m., and children play and ride their bikes on the rickety wooden boardwalks that serve as Newtok's streets late into the night.

But sooner rather than later, the belongings that Wilson's fourth-graders listed in their story must be packed up, along with their books, pencils and backpacks. And the residents of Newtok will leave their sinking village and abandon the land their ancestors have lived off of for generations, finally moving to sturdier ground—they hope—after years of anxious waiting, bureaucratic missteps and political infighting.

* * *

Newtok's school, also sometimes known as Ayaprun School, is part of the Lower Kuskokwim school district, which serves 4,100 students in 27 schools in a region about the size of West Virginia.

In Newtok, all but a few of the 132 students are Alaska Natives from poor homes. The 28 staff members are a mix of certified teachers from the Lower 48, like Wilson, who are recruited to work on short-term contracts, and local Alaska Natives, often uncertified, who typically work as classroom aides. Part of the draw for outsiders is that certified teacher salaries start at $52,000, quite a bit higher than the recent national average of $36,141.

While students and staff officially occupy the building from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., the doors don't lock most nights until 11 p.m. Any afternoon or evening, the sounds of students singing and drumming Yup'ik music fill the halls. Youth and adult teams play basketball, Newtok's favorite sport, every day in the gym, which doubles as cafeteria. It's also where students on the Native Youth Olympics team practice for the annual statewide competition. They perform a series of traditional endurance and agility feats, like the one-foot high kick, the wrist carry, and the seal hop, which originated with the daily activities of early Alaska Natives.

There are monthly movie nights and occasional extracurriculars, like when a village resident volunteered to teach students archery. This year, another resident offered guitar lessons, so the school purchased a few instruments.

The school is the only building in the village with its own generator, flush toilets, and showers (two for men, two for women). The homes here do not have indoor plumbing or running water, so young men are sent to haul five-gallon jugs of water from the school every day.

When there's a funeral, the gym is where residents gather to eat and mourn. And when other areas of the village flood—as they do almost every year now—the school, as Newtok's highest point, is where residents go to shelter.

"The school is like the qasgiq," said Principal Grant Kashatok, using the Yup'ik term. "It's the communal house from 100 years ago where people come together to become a community."

* * *

The first Newtok school was built in 1958 by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which was, at the time, building schools at many Alaska Native seasonal camps, an attempt to encourage the people to settle year-round and enroll their children in school.

For thousands of years, the camps were inhabited by semi-nomadic Yup'ik who lived off the land and followed their food sources from season to season—fishing, hunting moose and muskox in the winter, hunting seals, and foraging for berries and other plants in the summer."For a lot of them, having a high-school education is important, but it's not as important as, … 'Am I going to have food for my family?'"

As in many native communities, the village of Newtok developed around that first school. Since the 1960s and '70s, according to State Department records, the village has been a year-round residence, but the tradition of subsistence living persists.

"For a lot of teachers, it's hard to get past, 'My student's gonna be gone for a week, because they're gonna go moose-hunting,'" said Brandi Portie, a math teacher and Louisiana native who moved here with her husband 10 years ago. "It's hard to work around, but that's part of the culture, and so it's something you have to accept as a teacher."

This is a place where the daily tasks that ensure students' safety and survival often take precedence over getting to class.

"For a lot of them, having a high-school education is important, but it's not as important as, … 'Am I going to have food for my family? Do I need to miss class this morning to get some stove oil to heat the house? Do I need to go dump the honey bucket because the honey bucket's full?'" The buckets, filled with human waste, are emptied daily into the smaller Newtok River, to the east, where residents dock their boats. There's no other alternative, as the community dump site, along with the village's barge-landing dock, were swallowed by the Ninglick River years ago.

Educators aren't blind to the fact that in many ways, the lifestyle the community has chosen to maintain and protect comes with certain costs. About half of Newtok students graduate from high school in four years, compared to 71 percent statewide and 82 percent nationally. The majority of village students in all grades lag behind their peers in the district and around the state on Alaska's reading and math proficiency tests, school data shows. Ten percent or less of Newtok students were considered proficient in science as of 2015, according to state data.

Many students don't consider leaving the village for college, often because they're relied upon to help care for elderly relatives or siblings (most families have around seven children, Kashatok said). "Teachers don't come in here and think that they're gonna, like, save the world," said Wilson, the elementary-reading teacher, "because this is not our world to save. It belongs to the people of Newtok ... it's up to us to come here and become part of them. It's not up to us to come here and change them."

More than a third of Newtok residents live below the federal poverty line, according to 2010 census data—although the number is likely higher now, officials said. Newtok is legally a dry town, but alcoholism and drug abuse is widespread. School officials say it's not unusual for parents to leave their children to look after each other while they drink away their annual permanent fund dividend check—every Alaska resident received $2,072 in 2015—in Bethel or Anchorage.

Navigating the sometimes bleak realities of their students' lives, Portie and her colleagues can't help but feel weary some days. Yet in nearly a decade of teaching here, she has proudly watched her students inch forward academically.

All students study the Yup'ik language through the school's burgeoning dual-language program. Since the school expanded the program a few years ago, starting English lessons in kindergarten rather than third grade, students have made strides, Portie said.

They are better readers and sharper mathematicians, she said. They stay after school to attend her homework-help sessions, tempted by the knowledge that they'll get a free snack afterward. Kids often show up at teacher's doors at 11:30 p.m. just to talk. When a few visitors recently camped out in the school library, which serves as a makeshift hostel for journalists and state officials, a swarm of smiling and inquisitive elementary-school kids peppered them for information: name, age, place of origin.Past estimates ... have put the total cost of the move at $130 million.

"I don't want to see the kids fall any further behind," Portie said. "I would hate to see for it to go backwards and I feel like that's the way it would go if they plan a move without planning everything together."

It's unclear to what extent local, state, and federal leaders have considered the educational disruption that the village relocation will create for Newtok's 132 students, but what is apparent is the pending move's enormous difficulty. Kashatok, who has been principal for 12 years, has operated in perpetual wait-and-see mode; the relocation will mark the first of its kind in Alaska. He expects to meet with village-council members and state officials this fall to discuss the plans.

Soft-spoken and prone to wry humor, Kashatok is the self-described "gatekeeper" of the school. His roster of duties includes math teacher, sports coach, nurse, back-up cook, guidance counselor, data analyst, and social worker. He likes to hunt, fish, and play bingo in his free time, what little there is of it. His wife, Sarah, is the school librarian, and the youngest of their four children is in eighth grade. Two sons are already in college and their daughter graduated high school in June, with plans to go to the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

* * *

More than 180 Alaska Native villages have experienced gradually worsening erosion and flooding for decades, and Newtok continues to surface at the top of government warning lists. In 2003, it was named one of four villages in "imminent danger" in a U.S. General Accounting Office study; a follow-up report in 2009 reaffirmed that finding. In 2009, the Army Corps of Engineers labeled Newtok one of 26 "priority communities" that were so at risk of damage that they were recommended for "immediate and substantial intervention" by state, federal, or other agencies. Between 2005 and 2014, nearly 500 feet of land along the Ninglick riverbank eroded, according to data provided by the state Department of Natural Resources.

A few villages, including Shishmaref, located on a barrier island north of the Bering Strait, have begun to map out plans for a move. Statewide, Newtok is the furthest along in addressing the crisis, having actually started building anew over the last 10 years at the relocation site, a large island of rolling hills nine miles downriver.

The quiet northern tip of Nelson Island where Newtok plans to relocate is called Mertarvik, which in Yup'ik means "getting water from the spring." Mertarvik's grassy ridges rise 500 feet above sea level versus Newtok's 10, and it's an ideal location in other ways: It has plentiful well water, loads of blueberries, and nearby hunting grounds—muskox roam on the ocean-facing side.

Past estimates by the Army Corps of Engineers have put the total cost of the move at $130 million. The village has so far cobbled together funds piecemeal. Currently it has access to about $20 million from the state and the Bureau of Indian Affairs that's earmarked for "pioneer-level" infrastructure, said Sally Russell Cox, a state employee in the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development who has worked with the Newtok Planning Group for years. It can be used for relocating 12 homes, work on a quarry and a Dura-base road that leads to the quarry, finishing the emergency evacuation center, building a temporary landing strip for deliveries of construction supplies and emergencies, as well as water, sewer, and a landfill.

Most everyone agrees on what needs to be done, and done quickly, Russell Cox said. And yet the plans have sputtered along for decades, stymied in large part by a bitter power struggle between rival factions of local leaders. (Wavering state and federal support as administrations turn over hasn't helped either.) The former village council was led by Stanley Tom, the longtime relocation coordinator for the move. He and his council were ousted a few years ago after some residents accused him of embezzling funds for the project and alleged that local elections were rigged to keep the council in office for the duration of the relocation. As a result, several million dollars in government aid that had been scraped together was frozen, residents said.

The new council stepped in after the Bureau of Indian Affairs took the rare step of intervening in a local issue in 2013. While the two sides remain divided and barely communicate, village officials insist that the lingering dispute is not preventing progress.

This year, in fact, the Newtok project has finally picked up some momentum, officials said, and Romy Cadiente, the relocation coordinator, hopes the village can serve as a “template” for other communities that are or soon will face death by erosion in rural Alaska. “This thing is in full bloom,” said Cadiente, who works closely with the state and other agencies. “There’s a lot of people that are putting their blood, sweat, and tears into this.”

As of late August, the council was considering entering a FEMA buy-out program to demolish some of the most decrepit Newtok homes. Officials would seek grant funding for the remaining cost of building new, replacement ones in Mertarvik, Cadiente said. While each new home is estimated to cost up to $350,000, the appraised value of the existing ones is likely far less. No one can say for sure yet how they’ll make up the difference. Three houses already built in Mertarvik are seasonally occupied by pioneering Newtok elders with strong ties to the old council; three other houses stand vacant save for electric wires, new window screens stacked by piles of dead flies, and a dusty white porcelain toilet practically still in its packaging—signs of a project abandoned without explanation.

The rising river could reach the Newtok School as soon as 2017, by some government estimates. (Hanna Craig)

Workers with the Fairbanks-based nonprofit Cold Climate Housing Research Center and villagers spent the summer building a new self-sufficient, energy-efficient home on movable skids that will serve as a prototype for future construction.

For now, the relocation site is only accessible by boat, which drives up the cost of transporting construction materials. The five gallons of fuel required for a recent round trip between Newtok and Mertarvik to carry five people 18 miles by powerboat cost $34.

* * *

When he visited Alaska last September, President Barack Obama spoke at the high school in the village of Kotzebue, where he was greeted with nose-rubbing Eskimo kisses by the president of the regional school district; in the village of Dillingham, he joined students for a traditional Yup’ik dance.

He was there—the first sitting president to visit the U.S. Arctic—to call attention to the threat of global warming and announce that the Denali Commission would coordinate federal, state, and tribal resources used to address erosion, flooding, and climate change in Alaskan communities.

Tucked into the $20 million relocation aid Newtok has now is about $3 million from the Denali Commission for planning and design work, according to Russell Cox, the state staffer. But that’s not nearly enough—and it’s unclear how much, if any, would aid the school relocation.

The current Newtok school was built in 2000 using $14 million in insurance money after a fire burned down the old school, according to Kashatok, the principal. At the time, Newtok residents had already voted to relocate the village, so the new school was designed to be taken apart and reassembled at the new site.

In the 16 years since, however, the building has aged beyond its intended use, and local officials say it is unfit to be moved by barge to Mertarvik. Plan B, which is being hashed out this school year, is for the village to build new homes at Mertarvik, possibly relocate others, and move several families in next summer.

By next school year, 2017-18, a makeshift school could be up and running in a storage facility that is already built at the new site. Once 25 students have made the move, Newtok can apply through the state education department for an estimated $40 million in capital funding for construction of a new school, local officials said.

The timeline is clearly problematic, some teachers and parents have noted drily.

“You have to have so many kids to build a school, but how can the kids move there without a school?” said Kylie Riches, 24, a teacher from Fairbanks who moved to Newtok three years ago, right out of college.

It’s the Catch-22 that will likely consume officials’ workdays for months to come.

In an interview, Lower Kuskokwim school district Superintendent Dan Walker said getting through the transition will probably require using portable classrooms or relying on parents to homeschool their children. A few teachers will be assigned to the site to start. The district has a robust distance-learning program that students in Mertarvik could participate in once the new site has internet access, he said.

Meanwhile, the odds of squeezing out extra education funding from the state are slim, especially as several other schools in the Lower Kuskokwim district that need renovations and additions are competing for some of the same pot of money. The village of Napakiak, just downriver from the school-district headquarters in Bethel, is facing similar erosion and flooding problems, Walker said. It could one day be grappling with the same challenge of relocating residents and rebuilding a school.”We need to get heard out there [by people who can help] because this place is sinking.”

Some 470 miles north, Kivalina is another Alaska Native community of less than 1,000 people located on the tip of an island that is trying to relocate. Officials there asked the state for $64 million in capital funds to build a new school for 175 students. They were granted $43 million, said Tim Mearig, the facilities manager in the state education department.

Newtok and villages like it have no local tax base to support a municipal bond for a project, like most U.S. public-school districts in the United States do. The main state aid source that rural districts like the Lower Kuskokwim can access to build or fix schools is capped at $70 million for 2017, Mearig said, and the fund was cut this year by 25 percent. Once each school project is added to the department's priority list, it must be individually approved by the state Legislature.

Alaska's budget deficit has surpassed $3 billion, thanks mostly to the plummeting price of oil, the state's main source of revenue. That's expected to lead to state spending cuts in education and other areas over the next few years. In 2015, about 22 percent of all state spending went to education.

* * *

Back in Newtok, an environmental disaster is bearing down but life moves along for most at an unhurried pace. "Tomorrow morning but not today," one man quipped, laughing, when asked for his take on when the Mertarvik move will begin.

Then he squinted into the sun and suddenly turned solemn. "We need to get heard out there [by people who can help] because this place is sinking," he said. "I'm not sure how long we got, but it's not long."

The village's slow but certain deterioration is set against a deceptive tranquility. During a handful of sun-drenched days in August, geese honked overhead and the dogs that wander freely barked at a stranger passing by. Children whooped and adults moved over the bleached-out boardwalks that lead from the school through a maze of mud tracts and tall, soggy grass.

A splatter of one-story, weather-worn wooden homes and a few other buildings—two churches, two general stores, a health clinic, the post office, and the tribal council office—make up the whole of Newtok.

Occasionally, the whine of an engine broke the air as an all-terrain vehicle rumbled from one end of the village to the other. A few times a day, weather permitting, a prop plane bound from Bethel buzzed down on the airstrip, shuttling supplies and visitors in and out. The sense that Newtok is drifting and that its inhabitants feel powerless to right its course was palpable in many conversations with village residents.

Andy Patrick Sr., 69, a member of the old tribal council, said he led early efforts to research the move and obtain grants. He's still fuming over the loss of that money and the council's authority. It chafes him that the new relocation manager, Cadiente, hails not from Newtok, but from Hawaii. In separate interviews, both sides indicated their distrust of the other, and any early willingness to cooperate has long since disappeared. Patrick prefers that the village move forward with the relocation independently, without the help of bureaucrats who, he says, are full of empty promises.

"They died waiting for that dollar!" he bellowed, stabbing the air at a photo collage of smiling Newtok elders that hangs on the wall in his office. "Right now, I'm not fighting for my future 'cause I don't have that much time left," he added. "I'm fighting for the future of my grandkids. If we don't fix this problem, they won't have any future. They will have no voice."

Hints that this deep-rooted conflict still simmers beneath Newtok's polite, quiet exterior seem to surface everywhere. Walking north near the village water tank, Sophie Simon, a mother of six, was on her way to the school to find out about selling her handmade grass baskets. Embroidered with a colorful abstract design, they might go for $20 or $30 apiece. The week before, Simon said someone had set fire to the mechanic's shop, destroying several snowmobiles. Not too long before that, the post office was burglarized. State troopers swept into Newtok to investigate one day, and while someone eventually turned themselves in for the burglary, weeks later, nobody had been held responsible for the fire.

Some villagers think these incidents, what in most other communities would be felonies, may be Newtok's disaffected youth acting out. Simon looked pained when asked about the arson, and what could be done to improve life here. She said she lost her mother and her home in 2006 in an accidental fire started by her then-5-year-old son. When kids feel that no one is invested in their future or the community, they're going to spark trouble, she said, and things have steadily been getting worse.

Last year, a 17-year-old student tried to bring a rifle into the school, triggering a lockdown. Kashatok, the principal, said the teenager was drunk and had been targeting him. No one was harmed. Kashatok, who is aligned with the new council, said the incident was unrelated to the tribal dispute, though parents said children of former council members have been bullied in school.

Could the move to Mertarvik be a fresh start? Will it ever actually happen? Standing on the boardwalk, Simon cupped her basket in her hands and looked skyward. "I'm just a resident patiently waiting to move," she said. "Patience and prayer, that's (what) I go by."

* * *

Kashatok is one of only three Alaska Native principals of the 27 schools in the Lower Kuskokwim school district—a point of personal pride but also a symptom of what he views as a potential threat to the survival of the Yup'ik culture.

Grant Kashatok has been the Newtok School principal for 12 years. (Eric Keto)

If educators are not interested in or simply not fluent in the Yup'ik language and traditions, their students will lose touch with their heritage, he reasons. In Kashatok's school, the daily morning assembly is spoken in Yup'ik. Every object in each classroom, including the ceiling, is clearly labeled in both English and Yup'ik.

Kashatok, 52, was born in the nearby village of Kipnuk. Growing up in a culture that relates to the natural world on an intimate, often spiritual level—where village heroes are the young hunters who can fell the largest moose—Kashatok's preference for reading and studying language from an early age made him feel like a misfit, he said.

As a young educator, he grappled with a perceived conflict between his academic ambitions and the strong desire to uphold the Yup'ik way of life.

Eventually, he found that the two parts of his identity could exist in harmony—and he makes a point to convey this to his students with the hope that it will help them overcome any tendencies toward suicide or drugs, which have taken many young lives in Alaska Native villages. (Alaska has one of the highest suicide rates per capita in the country.) "As long as I remain true to being a Yup'ik man, then I will feel good about myself," he said. "If we show that to the other students, then we'll make some inroads (on those problems)."

Kashatok likes to brag that more than half of Newtok's sixth-graders are proficient in the Yup'ik language, even as they struggle with English.

Though there are no Advanced Placement classes and no test prep sessions for juniors and seniors eyeing college, several students each year travel to Bethel, the hub community about an hour east by plane, to live in dorms and take STEM classes in preparation for college. Last year, students raised $18,000 to send all seven seniors in the class of 2015 to Honolulu, an exotic destination for almost anyone, never mind these teens, some of whom had never left their village. "Since we've been having the kids travel more … [their] worldview has gradually changed so that they see themselves succeeding in college and getting professional careers going and so on, which is a good thing," Kashatok said. "[It's a] big change from how it was before."

Bosco Charles, who graduated in June, will be the third in his family to go to college, with plans to major in accounting at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. "I want to do a lot of things," he said, leaning his tall frame, clad in basketball jersey, against a locker. "I want to (come back) and be a Yup'ik teacher."

When the principal envisions the future of his school, at the top of his wishlist is a soundproof Yup'ik room for dancing and drumming. A spacious new gym and a separate cafeteria are a close second. And of course, the tight-knit sense of community that grounds the Newtok school—where teachers can tick off the names of the 10 children in one family, from youngest to oldest, without batting an eye—will be preserved.

Above all, the new school will be safely located on rocky volcanic soil in Mertarvik, far from the rising water that seeps further inland on Newtok's shore every day. And when he considers the futures of his students, Kashatok dreams of them returning home with engineering degrees, prepared to help rebuild their community in its new island berth.

"What I hope are … a lot of students saying 'I went to Newtok School' and that means something," he said. "(And that) even though there was poverty and no running water, shit on the ground … that they made it."

This story was produced in collaboration with The74Million.org.

Outdated FEMA Flood Maps Don't Account For Climate Change

NPR, September 15, 2016

The floods that hit Louisiana last month were caused by rainfall that was unlike anything seen there in centuries. Most of the southern part of the state was drenched with up to two or three inches in an hour. A total of 31 inches fell just northeast of Baton Rouge in about three days; 20 parishes were declared federal disaster areas.

Climate scientists and flood managers suspect there could more like that to come — in Louisiana and in other parts of the country.

There have always been extraordinary rainstorms — storms stronger than anyone can remember. But Nicholas Pinter, a geologist at the University of California, Davis, who researches floods, says we shouldn't write these off as once-in-a-lifetime freak events.

"[In] our experience," Pinter says, "these kind of — call them 'acts of God explanations' — are served up just a little too easily." Sure, he says, amazing rainstorms do happen. But lately, big floods seem to be following storms more often.

"Hundred-year floods — floods of a magnitude that usually occur only once a century — [and] other large [weather] events are occurring bigger and more frequently than the published probabilities predict," Pinter says.

And some of those floods look different.

For example, satellite photos show that about a third of the flooding in Louisiana last month was outside the local flood plain. The flood plain is the area that historically gets inundated by a once-a-century flood.

Pinter says floods that occur outside the historical flood plain appear to be happening more often — in Louisiana and elsewhere.

"Maybe we're seeing a different character of flood event beginning to appear," he says. "More like a climate-driven flash flood event that's affecting these big river systems, which might be a new and different phenomenon that we need to throw into the statistics. Maybe."

A heavy rain, for example, that flashes down onto urban areas and just overwhelms sewers and drains might be this sort of event, he says.

At this point, the evidence that the increasing floods is climate-related is still tentative, because you need a lot of storm data over many years to identify a trend. But Paul Osman, flood plain manager for the state of Illinois, is seeing changes too. Osman studies floods for the state and is charged with figuring out how to prepare for them. He calls these sudden floods that lie outside of flood zones "drainage events."

"We found that 90 percent of our damages in Illinois are not traditional overland flow damages (like a river overflowing its banks)," he says, "but rather heavy rainfall events that cause basements to back-fill with water."

Osman says a 2015 study by Illinois flood authorities found that between 2007 and 2014, almost all the flood damage in urban areas occurred outside the traditional flood plain.

This satellite map of Baton Rouge, La., shows the broad extent of the flooding that resulted from rainstorms in August 2016. The darker blue shows flood inundation on Aug. 14, compared to locations that more typically get flooded after a storm (shown in lighter blue). Mapped flood extent is likely an underestimate, due to cloud cover in the satellite imagery, the mappers say. The background image is from May 2016.

Osman says he suspects that's partly because the region is increasingly covered by concrete — shopping malls, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces that lead to flash-flood runoff. But he says he and other flood plain managers are noticing a shift in rainfall patterns, as well.

"There's no doubt," Osman says. "All the scientific evidence points at those rainfalls, [which] are changing. We're having a lot more of these intense, short-duration storms that happen in relatively small geographic areas" — such as the regions recently affected in Louisiana.

That's consistent with what climate scientists have been predicting. A warmer atmosphere holds more water vapor and can create bigger, more intense storms. And the federal government's latest National Climate Assessment notes that average precipitation is up overall in the U.S., and points to particularly intense rainfall events in the Midwest and East.

Osman says many drainage systems can't handle these intense storms. "Most of those storm sewer designs were built on historic records and historic rainfall events that are no longer the case," he says.

If historic rainfall data no longer hold true, that's a problem for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA draws up maps that show where flood plains are. People with federally backed mortgages in the highest risk areas have to get flood insurance. People outside those areas don't.

Kathy Schaefer is an engineer who spent 10 years drawing those maps at FEMA, and says those in use now don't take into account any rainfall changes that might have started to take place because of climate change.

"You had to ignore climate change [in drawing the maps]," she says. "All of the mapping had to be based on the existing conditions [at the time they were drawn, or many years earlier]." Those conditions were rainfall and flooding statistics from the past, she explains. Sometimes decades in the past.

Schaefer says local flood managers have begun to suspect that "existing conditions" are changing. But, until recently, anytime they came to Washington, D.C., looking for help to deal with those changes, they had to mince their words.

"They [couldn't] even use the words 'climate change,' " she says. "They call it a 'slow moving disaster,' which is sort of a code word for climate change."

Over the past couple of years, FEMA has begun to consider climate change in its flood analyses, Schaefer says. An executive order from the White House now requires it, and the agency is also proposing new operating procedures that require research into the effects of climate change on flooding.

But there's a time-lag problem: FEMA only updates its insurance flood maps every five years. Climate scientists fear that the weather may be changing faster than that.

Climate Change Poses "Significant Risk" To US Military, Report Says

Fox News, September 14, 2016

U.S. military officers and national security officials reportedly believe climate change pose a very real threat to U.S. military operations and could increase the danger of international conflict.

A Washington-based think tank, the Center for Climate and Security, said in a statement that climate change "presents a strategically-significant risk to U.S. national security, and inaction is not a viable option."

According to Reuters, the statement was endorsed by more than a dozen former senior military and national security officials. The group wants the next president to create a cabinet position to deal with climate change and its potential impacts on national security.

The Center for Climate and Security published a separate report, arguing that "extreme weather" poses a threat to coastal military bases.

"The complex relationship between sea level rise, storm surge and global readiness and responsiveness must be explored down to the operational level, across the Services and Joint forces, and up to a strategic level as well," according to the report.

Another report revealed earlier this year that faster sea level rises in the second half of the century could make tidal flooding a normal occurrence for some military installations.

Climate change hasn't been a major focal point of the 2016 campaign. Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has called global warming a concept "created by the and for the Chinese" to hurt the U.S.

Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton wants to have the U.S. use 50 percent cleaner energy by 2030 and promised heavy fracking regulations.

Click for more from Reuters.

Climate Change Is A Military Problem, Former US Officials Say

By Steven Porter

Christian Science Monitor, September 14, 2016

From time to time, tidal flooding soaks portions of the US Naval Academy grounds in Annapolis, Md., where service members have studied since its founding in 1845. As sea levels rise and extreme weather strikes more often due to climate change, however, flooding could affect the site so frequently that it becomes unusable by the end of the century.

That warning is among many outlined in a report unveiled Wednesday by The Center for Climate & Security, with endorsements from retired US military officers and former national security officials. The bipartisan group of supporters called upon the current and coming administrations to anticipate the global conflicts that climate change could cause, and to protect the more than 1,700 coastal sites maintained by the American military across the globe.

"There isn't a region in the world where rising seas don't affect our military readiness and operations, and complicate our ability to do our job," retired US Coast Guard Vice Adm. Rob Parker said in a statement released with the report.

Even certain current conflicts can be attributed, in part, to climate, as US Secretary of State John Kerry noted during a speech last fall at Old Dominion University.

"It's not a coincidence that immediately prior to the civil war in Syria, the country experienced its worst drought on record," Mr. Kerry said. "As many as 1.5 million people migrated from Syria's farms to its cities, intensifying the political unrest that was just beginning to roil and boil in the region."

Alongside the report on rising seas, the Washington-based think tank released a national security "briefing book" for the next president and a consensus statement on climate change signed by 25 former officials.

"These reports make it crystal clear. To national security and defense leaders, there's absolutely nothing political about climate change," the think tank's co-presidents, Francesco Femia and Caitlin Werrell, said in a written statement. "It's a security risk, it makes other security risks worse, and we need to do something big about it."

Since the reports drew such bipartisan support from so many former officials, they could increase future pressure on the White House to dedicate more resources to climate change, which has not been a top priority on the 2016 campaign trail.

Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton has advocated for clean energy and fracking regulation, while her Republican opponent Donald Trump has said global warming is a concept “created by the and for the Chinese” to hurt American business.

Recommendations in the reports include the creation of a cabinet-level official to focus on domestic climate change and related security issues.

The reports and their endorsements failed to impress James Lewis, a senior vice president and program director with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, who suggested the military has more pressing threats to address.

“We tend to militarize everything,” Dr. Lewis tells The Christian Science Monitor. While climate change is an indisputable fact and fixing it would be worthwhile, it’s not a Department of Defense mission, he adds.

“People have gotten used to tagging the word ‘security’ to any issue we have,” Mr. Lewis adds. “Trying to cram everything into the security framework means we end up being less effective in addressing things.”

But the officials who spoke in support of the reports contend they have no choice but to engage.

“Because we define our interests globally, we have to take these things into account,” retired US Army Gen. Charles Jacoby Jr. said during an interview with The Weather Channel. “Many conflicts throughout our history have been based on resource competition. Increasingly in the future we’ll be defining some of our national security interests in those resource contests.”

This report includes material from Reuters.

As Blazes Rage In California, State Firefighters Push For More Pay

By Jennifer Calfas

Wall Street Journal, September 15, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

Seneca Man Lost Home In Tornado; Finds New Friends

Associated Press, September 15, 2016

SENECA, Ill. (AP) — Two months ago, Rodney Seibert survived a tornado, which swept across North Central Illinois and La Salle County, but his rental home and the majority of his personal belongings, including his cargo van and work tools, did not.

On Aug. 24, Seibert explained it was through compassion of the local community he is succeeding in his recovery.

Interviewed in the wake of the storm, Seibert, a self-employed contractor, carpenter and cabinet maker, explained he considered himself and other storm-affected neighbors to be fortunate people, despite his personal loss.

No local persons were injured in the June 22 storm.

Standing in the rubble of the rural Seneca house where he had lived for almost 10 years, Seibert, who survived the tornado only by running to his home’s basement, told The Times, “Satan was outside my door that night. He was screaming. I thought he had come for me. I never heard anything like it.”

Wednesday, Seibert unpacked boxes in his new place.

“I am so grateful for the generosity of the community, of my friends — even strangers — who have given me furniture, a computer, tools, some money and other things to help give me a new start in a new place. I wouldn’t have known what to do, who to turn to. Without them, I’d probably be living in some campground someplace.”

Instead, just days ago, Seibert, moved into a new rental home in Marseilles and has remodeling work lined up to help him and his three employees in the near future.

Seibert said his new landlord also has arranged some work for his company, P.L.S. Remodeling, and his small crew, which should help them through the lean winter months.

“The shock of that night is still with me,” he admitted. “But thanks to many people, I’m on my own two feet again and working toward the future. And to know that people cared was just as important as the things people gave me. I knew people would probably help me, but I was surprised how many actually did. It has all been very nice.”

Seibert said he also appreciated the kindness and assistance of his former landlords, The Maierhofer family, of Seneca, as he picked up the broken pieces of his life. He had no renters insurance and only liability on his work van, which was a total loss after the storm.

“The entire Maierhofer family made sure I was taken care of and were very helpful after the tornado even though they had tremendous home and property damage of their own to deal with,” said Seibert. He also thanked friend and business client, Jennifer Bilyeu, who arranged a savings account MB Financial Bank in Seneca for donations and set up a GoFundMe page online at gofundme.com/senecatornado.

Seibert said he has used some of the money out of the bank and a few dollars from the internet site. As of Wednesday, the internet site still had $2,321 available to him.

He said it was difficult to drive past the now empty lot where his home and workshop once sat.

"The house, the big trees, the workshop are all gone, leveled and hauled away. It is hard to see that the place I lived at for so long is no longer there."

Asked what does he think he survived the tornado, he said, "God wanting me on a different path and, right now, every day, I am following his lead on that path. I have work every day on the job or here at the new house, and that's great because I need to keep my employees busy and my customers happy.

"It just wasn't my time yet. I know God stayed with me that night and, I guess, he is still looking over my shoulder. The storm changed my life and completely drained me, but, so far, it has been way better than I thought it would be. There are so many people to thank."

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Source: the (Ottawa) Times, http://bit.ly/2c6SfXz

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FEMA HOUSING

FEMA Mobile Homes Arriving

By Lauren Langlois

Hammond (LA) Daily Star, September 15, 2016

Tangipahoa Parish is starting to see mobile homes the federal government is providing for displaced residents, Parish President Robby Miller told the Amite Chamber of Commerce Wednesday.

Speaking at the chamber's luncheon, Miller said the parish is getting roughly 100 mobile homes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The mobile homes have started streaming in, and some will be going on people's properties as they work on repairing their homes.

The other FEMA mobile homes will be going into empty slots at existing trailer parks.

Built according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development standards, these mobile homes are supposed to be of better quality than the FEMA trailers provided after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Miller reflected on this year's two major floods and the recovery from the August flood that damaged several parishes across south Louisiana.

More than 9,000 homes in Tangipahoa Parish were flooded from August's storm, he said. Many of them also flooded in the March flood that caused water damage to about 5,200 homes.

FEMA has given out more than $27.1 million in aid to those who qualified so far, he said.

The recovery process has slowed now that the parish has gotten past the first few hectic weeks. Hotels and motels are seeing 75 percent occupancy rather than being 100 percent full as they were in the early days. However, for some the road to normalcy will take months, he said.

"We got a long way to go," he said. During the immediate aftermath of the flood, hundreds of motorists were trapped for many hours on Interstate 12 between Baton Rouge and Covington. Miller said it was a shocking scene.

"It was like a parking lot," he said.

The Louisiana National Guard dropped off supplies by helicopter to stranded people, and Miller told of going on one of those trips.

When he saw the mass of people below, he was unsure what to expect when he stepped out of the helicopter. But then he saw them form an orderly human chain to hand down supplies to the next person. It was a moment during the chaos that has stuck with him since it showed how caring and selfless people can be, he said.

"They were not worried about themselves," he said. "It proved to me that people are good."

Miller also touched on the state bridges that are still out because of flood damage. He said the bridge repairs should take months, as the damage was major.

In Tangipahoa Parish, state bridges that are unsafe to cross include Dunnington Bridge on Morris Road, an La. 22 bridge east of La. 445 going toward Bedico and an La. 1054 bridge on the north end, which has been out since the March flood. Miller said the Dunnington Bridge, which is about 340 feet long, may even need to be replaced.

Flood debris pickup also is continuing, he said. More than 28.39 cubic yards of flood debris has been picked up by trucks that have brought more than 709 loads to the parish landfill. Miller said space at the landfill has not been an issue.

"Shelter At Home" Program Sees Slow Start, But Pace Expected To Pick Up

By Elizabeth Crisp

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

Just four of the more than 18,000 households that have sought help from Louisiana's signature housing recovery program have had emergency repair work completed, following the catastrophic floods that swept across South Louisiana last month.

But leaders say that they expect the number to ramp up as the "Shelter At Home" program gets past the initial hurdles of its launch.

"It takes time to establish a program and get it moving," said Lael Holton, of AECOM, the company selected to administer the program. "Those homes are going to start moving forward very rapidly."

Holton said that at least 900 homes are currently in the process of repairs two weeks after the program formally launched. That number is expected to continue to increase, as more construction crews hit the ground.

"18,000 people are all seeking the same service at the same time," Holton said. "We're pushing it as fast as we absolutely can."

Shelter at Home was unveiled last month as a key component of the state's plan for addressing the needs of thousands of people left displaced by the August floods, while also easing the burden on an already squeezed housing market.

Gov. John Bel Edwards has on several occasions, including during a recent congressional hearing, touted the program as the preferred housing recovery method, as opposed to rental assistance and hotel stays, because it allows people to remain in their communities.

The idea is to get homes into a livable state, so people can live there while they make more permanent repairs.

On Wednesday, Edwards' spokesman, Richard Carbo, said that the governor is closely monitoring the Shelter at Home roll out and remains optimistic about it.

"I think over the next 24-to-48 hours, the numbers will spike dramatically," Carbo said. "We're doing everything we can to get people into their homes as quickly as possible. It's a process."

The state and federal partnership is a first for Louisiana, and leaders have touted it as an innovative solution for the complex housing needs that have arisen following the floods.

But Holton said that homeowners in the pipeline have already been expressing frustration over the pace of the roll out.

"Right now, we are continuing to let folks know that we are hearing their concerns," he said.

During a recent congressional hearing on the flood response, U.S. Rep. John Mica, R-Florida, said that he had also was aware of concerns over the Shelter at Home program's pace.

Mica, who chairs the House subcommittee that oversees FEMA and visited Baton Rouge following the flood, said that FEMA blamed the state for delays.

"The thing I heard was that it took a long time to get Shelter at Home in place," he said. "I'm saying, 'Why hasn't anything been done?' (FEMA) said the state had not approved a plan."

Officials estimate that as many as 160,000 homes have been affected by the flood. The central goal of Shelter At Home is to help people return to their communities and settle back into their lives as they continue the recovery process.

If a home can be back in a livable state with up to $15,000 in repairs, then the state will OK the work and a crew will be sent out to do the work.

The program only covers minor repair work: basic electrical and plumbing inspections; carpet and insulation removal; air conditioning and hot water heater repairs; and installing temporary bathroom fixtures, are among the types of tasks they will consider.

The program will also pay for mini-refrigerators or microwaves to be installed to serve as makeshift kitchen appliances.

Holton said that despite the initial backlog, he thinks that it's important to spread word about the program. Shelter at Home representatives will be setting up at disaster recovery centers in the coming days and work to promote the program throughout affected parishes.

"One of the things we need to focus on is getting the word out to folks," he said.

More Than 32K Homes Can Stay On The Ground After Metro Council Exempts Many From Elevation Requirement

By Steve Hardy

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

The Metro Council on Wednesday made perhaps the most sweeping change to its flood ordinance yet, meaning many people now won't have to worry about whether the government will make them elevate or demolish their homes.

According to the latest numbers from the city-parish, more than half the households that flooded — some 32,000 households — are in areas variously described as X zones, low-and moderate-risk zones and non-special hazard zones. The practical difference is that those people are not required by their mortgage companies to buy flood insurance, as the people in high-risk zones are.

Wednesday, the Metro Council voted to exempt existing buildings in low- and moderate-risk flood zones from elevation requirements.

"That's a big deal," said Mayor Pro Tem Chandler Loupe.

City staff said Wednesday they aren't sure how many of the more than 32,000 homes now relieved of elevation requirements would have actually reached the threshold that would have required they raise or wreck their homes.

Several other flood topics were brought before the Metro Council on Wednesday, including an update on local waterways and the start of talks about how many millions of dollars it's going to cost to pay for all the damaged public property.

There's also a chance the airport could serve as a future site for trailers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA has previously announced its preference for rental assistance and performing basic repairs so flood victims can shelter at home, but many politicians have said the trailers will be the only way forward for many residents, and not every lot has enough space to fit one.

The East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office submitted a $35,000 proposal to lease five acres at the airport to place trailers for deputies and their families, though the measure was pulled without discussion.

However, Aviation Director Anthony Marino said FEMA has expressed interest in renting about eight acres for 27 trailers, but no deal has been struck.

The Metro Council also introduced a measure to allocate $47 million to pay for flood-related expenses. The matter will go up for discussion and vote during the next meeting on Sept. 22. According to supporting documents, it will cost at least $31 million to pay for debris removal, $10 million for building and equipment repairs, $5 million for emergency protective measures and $899,000 for contractors to apply for flood-related grants and oversee the disbursement of federal funds.

The city-parish expects that all or nearly all the money will be reimbursed by the federal government's public assistance program. Recently, the White House upped the amount it will pay local governments' flood expenses from 75 percent to 90 percent. The city-parish intends to pay the rest with its budget stabilization fund, and the East Baton Rouge finance director has said the local government won't have to put off any capital projects to make up its share.

Besides the cost of debris removal, the city took damage to dozens of police vehicles, fire departments, libraries and other public property.

The council also signed off on the $899,000 deal with the grant contractors, which will apply for grants on behalf of the city and oversee the disbursement of federal money. Several asked questions about whether the bid was properly advertised and what it would pay for, but city-parish Chief Administrative Officer William Daniel said it was competitively bid and that the amount is the "not to exceed" amount based on the salaries at the company, CSRS Inc.

Public works staff also submitted a report on parish waterways. Fallen trees have worsened erosion around the Comite River, and water levels in the south of the parish near Bayou Manchac were still high.

Canals appear to be back to normal, but portions of Cypress Bayou and Redwood Creek still had some tree debris when workers performed their observations at various points in the past two weeks.

In their written report, staff recommended three methods to improve drainage. First, the parish could bring back the plan to bond out money to update 42 miles of channels, though a bond issue to support such a strategy has failed three times. The unfunded Comite River Diversion Canal would also help, though it will require federal support. Finally, the connections between subdivision and municipal channels need to be improved to increase capacity.

Public works staff shot aerial photographs of the damage they encountered and made a map for the council. Loupe asked that it be made public. The city-parish has been publishing its flood-related public maps at gis.brla.gov/.

While the big news out of Wednesday's meeting for many was the news that they definitely won't have to elevate their homes, there are a few caveats.

Buildings in high-risk zones — sometimes called A zones — that sustained 50 percent damage and are not currently at least one foot above the base flood elevation level will still have to be torn down or raised up.

"There's nothing we can do about A (zones,)" Daniel said.

High-risk zones must meet standards set forth by the federal government so residents of a parish or municipality may participate in the National Flood Insurance Plan.

For decades, the city-parish has enforced stricter building codes than the federal minimum to receive cheaper flood insurance rates. Earlier this month, the

Metro Council made other changes to try to reduce the number of people who will be forced to rebuild.

Previously, people had to raise or rebuild when their homes received 40 percent damage. The threshold was raised to 50 percent. Also, homes in high-risk flood zones only have to be a foot above the base flood elevation after the council exempted the recent flood from any elevation standards.

The city-parish has lost points toward its flood rating for changing its standards. However, Daniel said Wednesday that none of the changes so far has pushed the parish into a lower rating that will force people to pay higher premiums.

The newest rule does not affect new construction in low- and moderate-risk zones, which must still be built one foot above the street center line, manhole covers and record inundation excluding the recent event, explained engineer Shannon Dupont, the city-parish's floodplain manager.

Furthermore, property owners who have land in a high-risk zone, but their houses are in a low-risk zone and flooded, will not have to meet any type of elevation standard, said interim assistant chief administrative officer Carey Chauvin.

State Politicians Frustrated At FEMA's Slow Flood Response

By Brett Buffington

WBRZ-TV Baton Rouge (LA), September 14, 2016

BATON ROUGE – As state politicians countinue to fight for funding, many are saying they're dissatisfied with the time it's taking FEMA to get resources to families.

"This isn't the first time we've had a disaster," Congressman Garret Graves told News Two's Brett Buffington. "It's not the first disaster we've had in Louisiana. They need to have better systems in place to more efficiently get people answers."

Graves says he's frustrated because thousand of people have been asking questions, and they are going unanswered.

"The fact that they can come out in two weeks and blame this entire flood on climate change," Graves explained, "yet can't give us answers on if someone is eligible for financial assistance, can't cut them a check on flood insurance, and other things? Absolutely unacceptable.

Newly released numbers show a clear sign of shockingly slow federal response. FEMA's holding site in North Baton Rouge is storing 198 modular housing units, which started rolling in nearly 3 weeks ago. As of Wednesday, 893 applicants have been approved for the homes, but only 12 are being used.

"They're apparently spendin gup to $20 thousand per trailer just to ship it down from North Carolina," Graves said. "There are trailer dealers here in Louisiana, travel trailers and other trailers. There are more efficient ways to do this."

Graves also suggested any money wasted now would only hurt the Baton Rouge area in the future, saying "the cost of inaction is not free."

Graves, along with the Louisiana Delegation, is pressuring for policy that would put long-term federal funding in place to stop the worst flooding disaster in our nation's history from getting even worse.

"If congress does not step in," Graves said, "if the White House does not step in, you are going to see mas foreclosure and bankruptcies, mortgages backed by the federal government, Fannie May, Freddie Mack, FHA, VA, and others. This is going to be a federal liability one way or another."

Graves added mass bankrupcies would trickle down to falling property values. He says that could mean trouble for some of Baton Rouge's biggest assets, like education and law enforcement.

Gonzales City Council Amends Budget $450,000 For Flood-emergency Repairs To City Hall, Debris Collection

By Peter Pasqua

The Creole (LA), September 14, 2016

GONZALES – The Gonzales City Council approved an ordinance to amend the general fund budget by $450,000 for emergency repairs to City Hall and debris collection after floods inundated the structure and others in the city limits about a month ago.

City Clerk Clay Stafford said emergency protective measures will be sent to FEMA for disaster recovery during the previous meeting and had estimated costs for repairs to City Hall at $300,000 and debris cleanup to be $150,000.

The City Council held their meeting at the Ascension Parish Courthouse East Annex for the second meeting in a row during to flooding of City Hall and Stafford said then that initial estimates on repairs to the structure may be higher, while the collection of debris could be lower.

City engineer Jackie Baumann addressed residents' flood concerns at the beginning of the meeting. She said that a FEMA expert is coming on board and the goal is to help people. A rough estimate of 250 homes were flooded it was reported earlier.

Baumann said the city ordinance doesn't have an inundation clause regarding raising their homes and if a structure has flooded multiple times and you prove a loss has happened it will fit into a category that increases cost of compliance and could result in raising, relocated or demolishing.

"We are not going to force people to raise their homes because of this flood," Baumann said. "There are no places that the city knows are repetitive."

Baumann also said the city has a website to apply for a building renovations permit and it is being used as a tracking mechanism. She also said the clock is ticking encouraged folks to get their project worksheets in as quick as possible to be eligible for reimbursement repairs.

"The truth is we don't require an inspection," Baumann said. "We feel like we have a handle on the depths where it was over two feet."

Mayor Barney Arceneaux said having to deal with rules and regulations is so slow and wants the process accelerated.

"These folks are afraid to make a move," Arceneaux said.

The City Council also unanimously approved temporary housing options for flood victims allowed for up to 180 days as a starting point. Building official Jerry Self said the ordinance has been relaxed temporarily to assist with travel trailers as long as they are connected safely to electric and sewer.

Self also said the FEMA mobile homes are 16×40 and he is not sure if they will fit on some lots as residents repair their homes.

The council also accepted the minutes of its planning and zoning commission which included the denial of a request for a Sober Living Home for Women at 422 E. McArthur Street. There were many that spoke in favor and against the home which would house 10 women there during the Sept. 6 meeting.

Some stated these type of homes helped saved them, while others applauded the effort but said it is just too many people living in one home. The zoning commission voted unanimously to deny the request.

NFIP AND FLOOD MAPS

FEMA And City Officials To Hold Workshop On New Flood Insurance Maps For New Orleans

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 13, 2016

New Orleans officials and FEMA representatives will hold a workshop Thursday to discuss the new flood insurance rate maps for the city.

The new maps, which go into effect Sept. 30, shift 53 percent of properties in New Orleans from categories deemed to be at high risk of flooding to lower-risk zones. That typically means lower rates for flood insurance.

The new maps can be found at www.Maps.RiskMAP6.com.

The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. in the City Council chamber at City Hall, 1300 Perdido St.

Because seating is limited, those who plan to attend must register in advance at www.eventbrite.com/e/orleans-parish-flood-insurance-workshop-for-homeowners-tickets-27314906621.

FEMA Hosting Flood Insurance Workshop For Residents Thursday

By Kelsey Davis

WDSU-TV New Orleans, May 15, 2012

FEMA will host a flood insurance workshop for home owners on Thursday at City Hall.

FEMA's new flood insurance rate maps will go into effect on Sept. 30.

Major changes have been made to federal flood maps that could affect people's flood insurance rates, so officials are encouraging everyone to attend the workshop to get a better understanding of those changes and how or if they will impact their insurance rates.

Officials say because of significant improvements made to drainage and flood protection, more than 53 percent of properties in the city were removed from the special flood hazard areas.

Under the new FEMA flood insurance maps, approximately 85,000 policies will be affected. Officials say these policy holders will see significantly lower insurance rates.

Once City Council adopts the new flood maps, homeowners will be required to build homes higher. The new elevation requirements will be for new construction and major renovations that the city permitted after June 1, 2016.

The workshop is free but seating is limited, so residents and property owners planning to attend should register online in advance.

The workshop starts at 10 am inside City Council chambers.

Dozens In Denham Springs Issued Invalid Flood Repair Permits, Must Reapply

By Heidi Kinchen

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

As frustrated as many homeowners have become with post-flood rebuilding, some Denham Springs residents will have to go through the permitting process twice because the initial trip turned out to be handled by the wrong people.

Denham Springs Building Official Rick Foster said at least 30 homeowners in the city had received inspections and permits from the Livingston Parish permit office, rather than from city officials, within the past few weeks. Those permits were issued "in error, with no authority and are not valid," he said.

Any construction performed under the invalid permits may be in default under city regulations, Foster said, and those homeowners must seek a valid permit from the city's planning and development office. City officials will do everything they can to expedite those requests, he said.

DeeDee Delatte, the parish's assistant permit director, said the invalid permits were the result of the office's heavy workload after the flood and their use of out-of-town inspectors unfamiliar with the municipal boundaries.

Delatte said the parish permit staff has been swamped with applications, issuing 200-300 permits per day, working six or seven days each week since the office reopened Aug. 22.

"We have outside agencies helping us, people from Tennessee and from Baton Rouge, not from permit departments," Delatte said. "Some of them have been working our front desk on the weekends to give us time to catch up on entering our data, and some permits were issued in error by those outside entities."

Just how many invalid permits were issued and to whom is unclear. Foster asked the parish for a list of homeowners inside city limits who received parish permits, but Delatte said they cannot provide that list.

"We've been hand-writing everything and don't have a way to go back and search for those until they have all been entered in our system," she said.

The parish also cannot guarantee the errors won't recur, Delatte said.

The out-of-town inspectors discovered the problem when a Denham Springs resident told them they had no jurisdiction in an area where they were working this past week. After speaking with parish permit staff, the inspectors decided they would no longer conduct inspections at Denham Springs addresses, Delatte said.

"Is it going to happen again? Possibly," she said. "We're seeing so many applications, I just can't say that it absolutely won't happen again. But these were mistakes. We have so much of a workload here, I definitely don't need to be grabbing any from other places."

It's not clear how many of the thousands of parish permit applications have resulted in a "substantial damage" determination — meaning, the cost of repairing the home equals 50 percent or more of its pre-flood value.

Homes in special flood hazard areas that are built lower than the base flood elevation and determined to have been substantially damaged will have to be elevated, according to Federal Emergency Management Agency regulations the parish adopted in order to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Delatte said parish Building Official Chuck Vincent had found some homes to be substantially damaged, but she was unsure how many.

"I'm not quite sure on that total," Delatte said. "He (Vincent) is just running that part on his own. ... Most of them are houses on piers, not slab homes, where the foundation has been shifted and the subfloors are bad. I'm sure there's a whole lot more to come."

In Denham Springs, city inspectors have found 10 homes — among 260 for which repair permits were sought — to be substantially damaged, Foster told the City Council on Tuesday.

Delatte said residents in the unincorporated areas of the parish who believe their homes may have been substantially damaged should call the parish permit office for an inspection.

"We'll come out and look at it and make that determination based on appraised value," she said. "Then at that point, we'll determine if you have to elevate or if you can go in and repair it."

Delatte said what may appear to a homeowner to be substantial damage could wind up falling below the 50 percent threshold.

"If the foundation is there, the outer walls are still intact and the roof is good, there may still be a lot of work to be done but it might not necessarily meet the threshold," she said.

Foster said Denham Springs officials will look at two figures to determine whether homes inside city limits have been substantially damaged: the pre-flood market value and the estimated cost of repairs. FEMA provided a list of approved sources for those figures, which is available on the city's website at www.cityofdenhamsprings.com/docs/MarketValue.pdf.

Realtor: Homeowners Should Consider Flood Insurance Even If Not

By Candy Rodriguez

KPLC-TV Lake Charles (LA), September 14, 2016

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA (KPLC) –

Residents across South Louisiana never expected recent floods to have the damaging results they did – homeowners who never flooded before and didn't have flood insurance are having to deal with the impact left behind.

That's why realtor Brandon M. Duhon, with Keller Williams Realty, recommends people looking to buy a home reconsider buying flood insurance, even if the home is not in a flood zone.

"You and your family just have to decide – is it worth it to spend the extra money on insurance in case if it does happen,

" he said. "Because it's not a guarantee that it won't happen and with the things we have seen here in the last year, is it worth protecting our home."

The hundreds of dollars you spend yearly on flood insurance could save you thousands in the long run if something was to happen.

Zones: A, AE, A1-A30, AR, AH, AO are just some of the zones that require flood insurance. It is mandatory because "areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event," according to FEMA, as well as, Zone V which are coastal zones like Cameron Parish.

Zone X does not require flood insurance because the likelihood of flooding is 0.2-percent-annual-chance (or 500-year).

Click HERE for flood insurance rates.

Click HERE or visit www.fema.gov/flood-zones to take a closer look at the flood zone details.

If you would like to see a map to look at a certain area, click HERE or visit maps.lsuagcenter.com/floodmaps.

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FEMA Officials Discuss New SC Flood Map

WBTV-TV Charlotte (NC), September 14, 2016

AIKEN, SC (WFXG) –

New flood maps have been released for the upper and middle Savannah water sheds in South Carolina.

On Wednesday, FEMA officials hosted an open house in Aiken for residents to see if their properties fell in a flood-prone zone.

They were also able to get information and flood insurance and hear from local officials pertaining to ordinance requirements.

Officials explained why residents need to know what their area of town is labeled under the new maps.

"So, these tell you your level a risk--low, moderate or high risk of flooding. If you were to have a federally backed mortgage on a home that's located in that designated area, you would be mandated to purchase flood insurance," said Maria Cox Lamm, DNR state coordinator.

Officials will be in Edgefield on Thursday to share information on the flood maps:

Edgefield Emergency Management
304 Gray Street
Edgefield, SC 29824
4:00pm-7:00pm

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MITIGATION

Jefferson Anticipates $29.8M FEMA Grant Funding By January

By Wilborn Nobles

New Orleans Times-Picayune, September 14, 2016

In what officials call the largest federal share to a single jurisdiction in this year's funding cycle, Jefferson Parish will receive $29.9 million in FEMA funding for 115 elevation and 36 reconstruction projects.

In addition to working with FEMA, Michelle Gonzales, the parish director of Floodplain Management & Hazard Mitigation, said her office is working with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management to finalize the grant awards now.

She anticipated January to be the earliest date that FEMA will be award the funds as the federal government performs a environmental review. FEMA announced the opening of the grant period in early March 2016 and Gonzales said Jefferson mailed an application opening notice to just over 1,000 properties that were featured on FEMA's Severe Repetitive Loss Properties.

"The grant application was written with focus of properties that met FEMA's priorities," Gonzales said Wednesday (Sept. 14).

The application also focused on what the current flood risk is such as in a flood zone, how low is the structure below the Base Flood Elevation, and how frequently is the structure flooding, she said.

FEMA made $199 million available for Flood Mitigation Assistance Grants within a March 15 – June 15, 2016 application period. Officials said the projects selected had recognized FEMA's priority on projects that mitigate four National Flood Insurance Program insured properties.

The properties include structures having two or more NFIP building claim payments that cumulatively exceed the market value of the insured structure. FEMA also focused on structures that incurred NFIP claim payment on two occasions, in which 25 percent of the market value of the insured structure was exceeded at the time of the event.

FEMA also focused on structures having four or more separate NFIP claim payments with each exceeding $5,000 and the mitigation of the largest number of NFIP-insured properties.

FEMA Report Underscores DHS' Interagency Emergency Response Efforts

By Ramona Adams

ExecutiveGov, September 14, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has released the 2016 National Preparedness Report which highlights the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to prepare emergency first responders through interagency cooperation.

DHS said Monday that FEMA's report tracked progress from the last five years in prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery initiatives.

DHS and interagency partners continue to build on the capacity of National Network of Fusion Centers to facilitate intelligence collection and sharing between fusion center customers, the department noted.

The National Counterterrorism Center, DHS and FBI jointly sponsored counterterrorism awareness workshops to educate first responders across the U.S. on prevention and response strategies against terrorist attacks, DHS added.

DHS' counterterrorism efforts include the launch of web-based messaging materials for public awareness as well as the "If You See Something, Say Something" campaign which aims to provide information on indicators of potential terrorism and crime.

The department has also established the Regional Resiliency Assessment Program to help assess critical infrastructure systems and DHS seeks ways to apply the assessment process to issues such as climate change, cybersecurity and electromagnetic-pulse preparedness.

DHS worked to engage public and private sector partners in the 12th annual National Cyber Security Awareness Month in October 2015 which aimed to increase cyber threat resilience.

FIRE GRANTS

Hanover Fire-EMS Awarded $559,500 FEMA Grant To Train, Recruit Volunteers

By Debbie Truong

Richmond (VA) Times-Dispatch, September 14, 2016

The department that oversees Hanover County's firefighters and medics was awarded more than $550,000 in federal money for training and recruitment.

Hanover Fire-EMS was awarded a $559,500 SAFER grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to recruit, train and retain 48 volunteer firefighters over the next four years. The grant arrives less than a year after a dwindling number of volunteers forced a fire squad in Hanover to disband.

NEWS AROUND THE COUNTRY

HURRICANE RECOVERY

FEMA Officials Wrap Up Tour

By Mike Wright

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle, September 15, 2016

Round 2 of Hurricane Hermine storm surge damage inspection came and went Wednesday and, other than submitting some final paperwork, Citrus County's role in seeking a federal disaster declaration is complete.

Pinellas Beaches Show Effects From Hurricane Hermine

By Jennifer Rich

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 14, 2016

City crews in Pinellas County's beach communities have been cleaning up debris and filling in eroded sand that created 3- and 4-foot drops at beach accesses after Hurricane Hermine's strong winds and tides battered the shoreline.

The mid-county beach communities like Indian Rocks Beach and Redington Shores were hit the hardest, according to a survey by the University of South Florida's Coastal Research Laboratory.

Professor Ping Wang, director of the laboratory, said the storm surge and wave action along the county's shoreline were greater than those of Tropical

Storm Debby in 2012, the last significant storm to impact the area. However, neither lasted as long as during Debby.

Data collected one day after the storm and compared with data collected two weeks before show significant dune erosion and sand escarpments on beachfronts from Sand Key in the north to Mullet Key at Fort Desoto Park, Wang said.

"It passed the coast rather closely and generated very energetic conditions," he said.

Areas with wider beaches such as the north end of Sand Key near Clearwater Pass and Treasure Island's central beachfront survived the storm better than areas like Belleair Beach, Indian Rocks Beach and Redington Shores with thinner beachfronts.

The state granted an emergency permit to Indian Rocks Beach and other impacted communities to haul in additional replacement sand.

About 30 truckloads of sand purchased from a private company were dumped this week in Indian Rocks Beach to help alleviate the scouring that occurred at beach crossovers, City Manager Greg Mims said.

"We have 28 beach access points and a large number have a 3- to 4-foot drop," he said.

The city also lost beach signage, and recycling and garbage cans that were located along its 2½ miles of beachfront.

Mims estimates the emergency sand replacement and restoring other damage will cost the city around $30,000.

Though Treasure Island beaches might not look as severely damaged, Wang said that doesn't mean they weren't significantly impacted.

"It's probably because of their 2014 beach renourishment," he said. "But the beach is wider to start with so that doesn't mean they didn't lose a lot of sand."

Treasure Island City Manager Reid Silverboard said the hardest hit areas were to the north and south — Sunshine and Sunset beaches.

"It created an escarpment along a portion of the beach so that police and sanitation vehicles can no longer get to some areas," he said.

"We definitely have a flatter beach profile now. We are waiting to see how much beach returns and the impact of the winter storms," Silverboard said.

Both Mims and Silverboard are hoping a scheduled beach renourishment will be moved up after further details of the recent storm are analyzed.

"It does appear there was significant dune erosion," said John Bishop, Pinellas County coastal management coordinator, who has made frequent trips to survey the beaches since the storm.

The county is pushing the Army Corps of Engineers for an estimated $25 million for the renourishment of Sand Key and $12 million for Treasure Island in hopes of moving up the project to 2017, Bishop said.

"We have been trying to get the renourishment moved up for some time now so the storm has given us more impact," he said. "It all comes down to federal funding."

Wang and others are still working on a more detailed analysis and expect to have more details soon.

"We should have numbers on the amount of sand lost in a week or so," Wang said.

FLOODS

Louisiana Leaders Remain Optimistic About Federal Flood Aid Chances

By Elizabeth Crisp

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

Louisiana leaders say they remain optimistic that the state is close to securing federal relief package that will help provide funding for housing, infrastructure and community development programs following the catastrophic floods that left 13 people dead and thousands displaced last month.

Gov. John Bel Edwards spent Wednesday in Washington, D.C., lobbying for what he says is a more than $2 billion immediate need back home to help jump start the recovery process in flood-wracked communities.

Edwards spokesman Richard Carbo said that the governor on Wednesday night was waiting for legislation to be finalized, including an official dollar amount that the state could see, but the latest round of meetings, including with U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisconsin, were positive.

"As far as the delegation is concerned I think everyone is very committed to getting something as quickly as possible," Carbo said. "There are still hurdles to climb but we are working through them."

President Barack Obama's administration has requested $2.6 billion in flood relief for Louisiana that could be used for housing repair or replacement that won't be covered by insurance; additional individual assistance awards through FEMA; small business repair needs; infrastructure improvements and other programs to benefit flood victims, including affordable housing and community development projects.

"The administration urges the Congress to provide additional funding to address Louisiana's unmet housing and infrastructure needs as soon as possible," White House Budget Director Shaun Donovan wrote in the letter formally requesting aid for the state's recovery Tuesday.

Edwards this week announced a 21-member task force that will help lead the state's recovery, including coordinating resources for the rebuilding and redevelopment of flood-wracked areas to "maximize their impact, improve efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts." That group would likely help direct how the federal aid makes its way to communities.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-Baton Rouge, said he's confident that Louisiana will receive federal assistance.

"Everybody's on board and everybody's doing their part," he said. "I'm confident that we will have more relief. The question is whether it will happen in September or December."

The U.S. House and Senate are scheduled to recess by the end of the month and won't return until after the November elections.

The continuing resolution that would be a vehicle to carry the flood aid is needed to keep government funded past the end of the month.

"There is a chance, and we've been working with others to line things up, so at least a portion of it can come out now," Cassidy said. "Aid will be most impactful if it comes out earlier, and not later."

One of the concerns for Louisiana's leaders has been over whether other projects might also get tacked onto the continuing resolution, derailing the flood aid.

Cassidy said that's a concern for him as well, but he sees things generally tilting toward Louisiana's favor at this point.

"I'm the kind of guy that until it's signed into law, I'm going to keep working at it and working for it and not take anything for granted," he said. "We do receive positive feedback as we're working on this."

"We continue to have things lining up," he said.

Representatives from the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry were in Washington on Wednesday for an unrelated meeting with the state's congressional delegation. It's by coincidence that a major issue affecting Louisiana is also going on at the same time, LABI President Stephen Waguespack said.

But the business leaders quickly shifted into unofficial flood ambassador mode – spreading the word about just how badly aid is needed back home.

"They can't wait until December," Waguespack said. "For some of these areas, if there's not an immediate investment of some sort, you just won't have recovery there. We're trying to stay on that message."

Waguespack said that representatives from LABI had met with Edwards and Louisiana's delegation throughout the day. He said they had also been working to stress to lawmakers from other states.

"At this point, I think everyone understands that something has to be done," he said. "It sounds promising that they'll get something done."

Livingston School Board Approves Selection Of FEMA Consultant, School Restoration Company

By Heidi Kinchen

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

LIVINGSTON – The Livingston Parish School Board, meeting this past week for the first time since the flood, ratified Superintendent Rick Wentzel's declaration of a state of emergency for the school system and his selection of contractors for emergency recovery and water damage assessment and restoration services.

The School Board, during the Sept. 8 meeting, also ratified Wentzel's selection of David M. Shapiro Disaster Planning & Recovery Consultants as project manager to guide the school district through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's public assistance grants process.

The contract cost is capped at $3.85 million based on an initial estimate of $100 million in damage to school system facilities due to the flood. If actual damages exceed that amount, the cost could be renegotiated.

"Initially upon meeting with FEMA, they suggested we hire a project manager to handle this for us," Wentzel said, adding that Shapiro was selected from among 11 companies that sought the job.

Wentzel said he had met twice already with the consultant and representatives of FEMA and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, and he was impressed with the firm's work.

"I'm going to tell you, those guys know the ins and outs, and they have definitely got our backs," Wentzel said. "I appreciate them being a part of helping us get through this process, and I believe they're going to do everything they can to get us our due."

The contract with Shapiro, which Wentzel signed Aug. 29, is for a five-year term with the option of two one-year renewals.

Wentzel said Guarantee Restoration Services, of Baton Rouge, helped the district take action immediately after the flooding to save school buildings and point the school system toward recovery. The School Board unanimously supported his selection of that firm for emergency services.

The board also affirmed Wentzel's selection of United States Health and Environmental Liability Management, LLC, to be the district's environmental consultant.

U.S. Helm will perform water damage assessments on 19 School Board-owned properties, including 17 school campuses, the district's central office and an Albany property previously designated as a site for a possible new elementary school.

The contract also calls for the company to perform asbestos testing, lead-based paint testing and HVAC assessments for potential impact from moisture and mold as part of the restoration process at each site.

The work is projected to cost up to $524,400, according to the contract.

In a separate matter, the School Board approved Wentzel's selection of Gregory Hayden as principal of Juban Parc Junior High. Hayden, who has 23 years of experience in education, previously served as the school's assistant principal for four years and was instrumental in the school's flood response, Wentzel said.

"I called Greg Hayden on Aug. 16 and told him I needed him to be principal of Juban Parc Junior High because we were pulling (former principal) Jeff (Frizell) off of that because we needed Mr. Frizell up here to do some stuff for us," Wentzel said. "Mr. Hayden didn't bat an eye. He said, 'Yes sir, you don't worry about Juban Parc Junior High.' And I want you to know I have not worried about Juban Parc Junior High because Greg Hayden has handled that, has done an excellent job thus far, and I just really want to put an exclamation mark on my recommendation of him as principal."

Lafayette School Board Agrees To Move Ahead On Performing Arts Facility At Comeaux High

By Lanie Lee Cook

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

A project to build a multi-million-dollar performing arts facility at Comeaux High School is moving forward after the Lafayette Parish School Board voted Wednesday to allocate initial funds toward its design and to advertise for bids.

Although the board deferred the finance committee's recommendation to designate $6 million in bond money for the project, it instead authorized $500,000 to secure an architect who will begin design plans and then provide a cost estimate.

"I think we might be better served if we get into a habit of developing more accurate estimates," said board member Erick Knezek, who suggested deferring the bond designation, pointing out that projects often need more money than what's allocated.

The board voted earlier this year to transfer the performing arts program from the overcrowded Lafayette High School to Comeaux, which will lose about 900 students next year once the new Southside High School opens in Youngsville. But Comeaux does not have an adequate performing arts facilities.

The board's finance committee last week recommended allocating the $6 million, about a million lower than initially recommended by the administration.

The performing arts program, like other specialized Schools of Choice programs within the district, allows students to attend schools outside their attendance zones for the training. Students in the program study dance, theater arts or music, including guitar, piano, stringed orchestra, choral or instrumental music.

Board member Justin Centanni, who serves on the board's finance committee, said the committee explored options for reducing the project's cost, including reusing existing space — an effort that will be included in the project.

In another matter Wednesday, the board allocated another $500,000 toward flood-damage repairs, putting the system's out-of-pocket costs so far at $1 million, which covers the insurance deductible.

About three-fourths of that money should be reimbursed by FEMA, Superintendent Don Aguillard has said.

Fourteen schools received flood damage, although Westside Elementary School in Scott bore the brunt, taking in 1.5 feet of water. Estimates for repairing that school, which will include construction to bring the facility up to modern coding requirements, have topped $5 million.

The expenses come at a tight budget time for the school system, which budgeted for decreased sales tax collections this year amid the local economic downturn and cut positions throughout the district.

But the school system may receive up to $6 million in new revenue this year because of increased property values in Lafayette Parish, prompting the board to vote last week to maintain its property-tax rates at 33.56 mills. The move means those whose property values increased will pay more in property taxes than last year.

Georgia Pacific Donates $50,000 To Louisiana Flood Relief, Matches Employee Contributions

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

Georgia-Pacific has contributed $50,000 to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation Flood Relief Fund for southeast Louisiana flood recovery efforts.

The company also will match up to $50,000 in contributions from its employees to the Georgia-Pacific Employees Assistance Fund that's held and managed by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, an August news release said.

Contributions to the fund from employees of Georgia-Pacific or any other Koch company, as well as Georgia-Pacific's match, will go directly to help affected employees in the area.

Hundreds of employees from the company's Port Hudson operations in Zachary have been impacted — some of whom have lost everything, the release said. In addition, Georgia-Pacific has aided employees there with additional emergency supplies.

"We are deeply saddened by the devastation to the region and particularly the impact to our Georgia-Pacific families and the Port Hudson mill community," said Jim Hannan, CEO and president. "Our thoughts and prayers are with southeast Louisiana as they continue rebuilding the community after this terrible loss. This contribution is targeted to the region where our employees live and work."

Additionally, Convoy of Hope, the company's ongoing partner for distributing Georgia-Pacific products in disaster areas, has delivered numerous truckloads of bath tissue and paper towels into the area. Convoy of Hope also has been working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in expanding distribution to other areas for several weeks.

Louisiana is home to more than 1,000 Georgia-Pacific employees and another 800 employees of other Koch Industries' companies. Georgia-Pacific's Port Hudson operations are in East Baton Rouge, one of the parishes declared a state of emergency by FEMA.

According to the release, the Port Hudson mill in Zachary did not sustain damage and remains operational.

Haunting Photo Puts Baton Rouge Flood, Post-flood Struggles Into Perspective For One Dad

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

Trey Peters watched as daughter Ashlyn, 9, stood and silently stared at the piles of debris.

He quickly grabbed his phone and took a picture. By the time he lowered the phone, the girl and the moment were gone.

What remained was a haunting photo of a little girl in a white dress, dwarfed by mounds of carpet, cabinets and drywall scraps removed from flooded homes on one Baton Rouge street.

Peters is a teacher – 6th-grade world history at Southeast Middle School – but he hasn't taught in more than a month. Like so many in south Louisiana, he and his family are in work mode, recovering from the roughly three feet of water that inundated their home on Woodlore Drive, forcing family members to rely on the Cajun Navy to escape the flood.

On the day the picture was taken, last Sunday, Ashlyn was visiting the house for only the second time since the water came.

"What caught me off guard was that she didn't say anything," Peters said. "She just stood there and stared for roughly a minute... It was a very surreal moment, and I am still wondering what she was thinking.

Ashlyn is a straight-A student in 4th grade at St. Jean Vianney and a "very critical/analytical thinker," her dad said.

"But because I'm taking this so seriously, she probably was wondering what was for dinner," he joked.

The family is now living with relatives in Shenandoah.

"With the help of many friends, donations, FEMA, Shelter At Home Program, and the grace of God, we are trying to rebuild," Peters said.

And there's the picture – Ashlyn looking into what Peters calls "the abyss."

"That picture really put things into perspective for me," he said.

Gonzales To Move Forward With Repairing City Hall

By Ellyn Couvillion

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

GONZALES — Gonzales will be moving ahead on repairs to the flooded city hall on Irma Boulevard after the City Council this week approved increasing the city's emergencies and contingencies budget from $15,000 to a whopping $465,000.

The additional funds come from the general fund balance and will also be going toward the cost of picking up debris at flooded homes and businesses.

"The city crew has made multiple passes" through the city, picking up debris, City Engineer Jackie Baumann said at Monday's City Council meeting, which was held at the parish courthouse in Gonzales.

Baumann said 318 loads have been picked up since Aug. 22, amounting to 815 tons of debris.

That figure represents about 80 percent of the debris brought out to curbs after the flooding, she said. The remainder of the debris should be picked up within the next week, she said.

"The public works department has done a great job," said Councilman Kirk Boudreaux. "I really appreciate the work they've done."

The city will also be temporarily relaxing its regulations regarding placing travel trailers in the yards of homes, as residents continue the recovery and rebuilding process. City officials previously reported that 120 homes flooded.

The council approved a motion to allow travel trailers to be placed at residences for 180 days.

"We're going to be as compassionate as we can," said Jerry Self, building official for Gonzales.

"We certainly want to work with residents as much as we can," Mayor Barney Arceneaux agreed.

City officials met last week with representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and provided the agency an early list of projects — including the repair of city hall and the Gonzales Civic Center, roadwork, sewer projects and work at two playgrounds that flooded — the city expects will be required for recovery. The list will be refined in the coming weeks, officials said.

The city will also be hiring a consultant to oversee the recovery.

Last month's massive flooding highlighted the predicament of residents on Silverleaf Street, a one-street subdivision in Gonzales that floods regularly in run-of-the-mill thunderstorms.

At Monday's meeting, Shana Ryland and Dana Richardardson, both of whom live on Silverleaf, told the council about their efforts to gather information from FEMA on recovery, particularly in light of the repetitive flooding to their homes.

"We flooded three times in four years," Ryland said of her family's home.

Another street in the city, Sybil Street in the Park Vista subdivision, is also known to have repetitive flooding.

Baumann told Ryland and Richardson that the city will help them work with FEMA.

"When we have a consultant on board, it is definitely one of our goals. It is a priority," she said.

FEMA Warns Of Inspector Fraud

KLFY-TV Lafayette (LA), September 14, 2016

LAFAYETTE, La. (KLFY)—FEMA is warning flood survivors to beware of inspector fraud.

According to the government, FEMA will not ask you for financial or payment information up front.

FEMA inspectors also will not ask you for your FEMA registration number or social security number.

A news release states that flood victims should beware of any inspector that seeks payment from you, especially if they promise disaster grants in return.

To ensure that you do not become a victim of inspector fraud, ask to see the inspector's ID prior to the inspection.

If you suspect inspector fraud, call your local law enforcement immediately and then the FEMA Disaster Fraud hotline at 866-720-5721.

FEMA Reinterment Assistance

KATC-TV Lafayette (LA), September 14, 2016

FEMA disaster assistance may be available for reinterment efforts in Louisiana cemeteries, where floodwaters have dislodged or destroyed caskets, vaults, and mausoleums.

FEMA disaster assistance for reinterment of exposed human remains or dislodged burial vessels is available to individual survivors and cemeteries on a case-by-case basis. Factors that affect eligibility for assistance include where the cemeteries are located, who has legal responsibility for them, and who has legal ownership of them.

Information regarding reinterment assistance is available at the FEMA helpline,800-621-3362. Help is available in most languages from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week, until further notice.

Tomblin Requests Additional Flood-related Federal Funds, Anticipates Special Session

By Wendy Holdren

Beckley (WV) Register-Herald, September 15, 2016

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin anticipates a special legislative session next week to address the state's portion of costs related to the devastating June 23 floods.

In a letter submitted Wednesday to President Obama, Tomblin requested $310 million in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds. This request is in addition to funds already requested from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Tomblin noted in the letter that more than 20 percent of the state's 55 counties were affected by the floods. He said 23 people lost their lives; more than 5,000 homes and businesses were damaged; 35 schools were damaged, six likely beyond repair; and hundreds of miles of state and local roads were damaged.

While he thanked Obama for his support and assistance, he said, "(T)he path to successful and sustainable long-term recovery in an area of West Virginia that had already been struggling through economic upheaval will require even further support."

The towns and communities once reliant on coal now have "no capacity to build back on their own," Tomblin wrote.

He requested $310 million for "investments in housing, economic development and public resilient infrastructure."

In the letter, he said he will ask the Legislature to allocate $75 million for the state's 25 percent match of FEMA assistance.

Jessica Tice, communications director for the Governor's Office, said traditionally FEMA covers 75 percent of disaster-related costs and the state covers 25 percent. However, Tomblin has requested the White House consider approving a 90/10 cost share.

FEMA has responded that if West Virginia meets a threshold of $253 million in damages, the state will qualify for the 90/10 cost share.

Tice said public school damages have been estimated at $130 million, which could put the state over the threshold. FEMA monies would be used for immediate costs, whereas requested money from CDBG-DR would aid long-term recovery efforts, such as community rebuilding.

More information will be available soon, possibly today, about the special session, Tice said. Other media outlets have reported lawmakers are scheduled to return Sunday to Charleston for interim meetings, and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday and Tuesday has been reserved for the anticipated special session.

Sens. Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito, along with Representatives David McKinley, Alex Mooney and Evan Jenkins, sent a letter Wednesday to the president to express their full support for Tomblin's new request for additional funding.

In their letter of support they said, "Unfortunately, much like Louisiana, the vast majority of the flooded homes and businesses (nearly 90 percent) did not carry flood insurance at the time of the disaster, and, according to FEMA estimates, the average grant award for each eligible West Virginian will be less than $9,000. The challenge we face is clear – without additional assistance, these individuals and the communities in which they live simply cannot afford to rebuild."

Tomblin Seeks Millions More In Federal Flood Relief

West Virginia MetroNews, September 14, 2016

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin has sought an additional $310 million in flood relief for West Virginia through a disaster relief funding package that could be considered by Congress.

The amount Tomblin is requesting would be beyond what West Virginia already has requested from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"(This is) to basically go back in and help some of these small communities for the things that were not covered. Being able to get people up out of the flood plane and so forth and businesses as well as individuals," Tomblin told reporters Wednesday at the state Capitol.

Another letter supporting Tomblin's request was sent by U.S. Senators Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito, as well as Congressmen David McKinley, Alex Mooney and Evan Jenkins.

"I think it's going to be a bipartisan support. Hopefully, it'll bring some more money into West Virginia to help those that were affected in such a negative way by the flood," Tomblin said.

"We have plenty of needs," he said, referring to West Virginia's damaged roads, river banks and schools.

Tomblin's request, addressed to President Obama, notes that many of the West Virginia communities hit hardest by the flooding were already struggling economically.

"The recovery plan for West Virginia represents an atypical strategy," Tomblin wrote. "It recognizes not only the unique challenges associated with rebuilding in an area that has limited develop-able land in a rural and mountainous region of Appalachia, but it also acknowledges that dramatically depressed conditions require us to reposition and reinvent these communities in a way that will make them sustainable for our citizens and give them hope of economic diversification and recovery."

The letter by West Virginia's congressional delegation noted, "This was one of the deadliest disasters our country has experienced this year, and we owe it to the memory of those that we lost to do everything in our power to ensure a tragedy like this never happens here again."

Louisiana leaders have requested $2.8 billion in federal relief for that state, which was hit by its own devastating floods this summer.

A disaster relief package could be part of a government-wide temporary funding bill that would avert a government shutdown Oct. 1.

Any flood relief component could be considered after this year's general election.

Gov. Tomblin Asks White House For $310 Million In WV Flood Aid

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), September 14, 2016

The rebuilding of flood damaged communities like Clendenin is a work in progress. All over town the signs of the June floods are still unmistakable, just as they are elsewhere in West Virginia. Today Governor Tomblin wrote to the White House, requesting $310 million more federal dollars to help rebuild the state.

"We feel very confident about it. Our whole delegation. Our two Senators and three Congress members are all in support of it and I think it's going to be a bipartisan support and so hopefully it will bring some more money into West Virginia," said Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, (D) West Virginia.

In addition to disaster repair, the Governor wants money for economic development, for communities destroyed by the downturn in the coal industry, even before the floods hit. Meanwhile in Clendenin, where two new schools must be built, Megan Hall was wondering about her 14 year old son's education.

"What are they going to do? Are they still bringing the portables? If they are going to make the kids go year round, after summer break hits again?" said Megan Hall, a Clendenin resident.

Statewide, the bill for school construction and repairs is $130 million dollars. Add another $60 million for road repairs; and 120 million for other expenses. The need for more federal aid is clear.

"What we need to press for is this 90 percent reimbursement figure. And that will help us in terms of rebuilding the schools; the roads; homes; all kinds of things," said Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, (R) West Virginia.

The aid request to the White House, is in addition to what FEMA has already provided West Virginia.

"Nearly every community has specific needs. For example, Clendenin needs $400 thousand dollars to repair the flood-damaged town hall and community center," said Mark Curtis, 13 News Chief Political Reporter.

W.Va. State Leaders Petition Obama For Flood Relief

By Glynis Board

West Virginia Public Broadcasting, September 14, 2016

In a rare unified effort, Senators Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito joined with Representatives David McKinley, Alex Mooney, Evan Jenkins, and Governor Tomblin today to petition president Obama on behalf of flood victims in the state.

23 are dead and eight counties are still under a state of emergency after flooding this June. The delegation pointed out in a letter that 5,000 homes and businesses were damaged, and 90 percent carried no flood insurance.

Dear Mr. President: The hardworking men and women of West Virginia have pulled together to help each other rebuild from the devastating one-in-a-thousand-year floods that inundated their communities earlier this year and led to a major disaster declaration on June 25, 2016 (DR-4273). While we are humbled by the heroic actions of our first responders and the thousands of individual citizens who helped friends, neighbors and complete strangers escape rising flood waters, we now find ourselves unable to help many of these same individuals begin down their own road to recovery, and we urge you to include West Virginia in any Presidential supplemental appropriations request that your Administration may submit to Congress. In West Virginia, more than two months after the deadly June floods that killed 23 people, eight counties remain under a state of emergency. More than 5,000 homes and businesses were damaged during the disaster and over 70% of all applicants incurred at least some FEMA-verified loss. Unfortunately, much like Louisiana, the vast majority of the flooded homes and businesses (nearly 90%) did not carry flood insurance at the time of the disaster, and, according to FEMA estimates, the average grant award for each eligible West Virginian will be less than $9,000. The challenge we face is clear – without additional assistance, these individuals and the communities in which they live simply cannot afford to rebuild. We strongly support West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin's request for $310 million in disaster funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-DR) program to address the critical unmet needs of our constituents. The additional CDBG-DR funding requested by the Governor would help homeowners rebuild safer and stronger. It would give our small businesses an opportunity to reinvest in the communities on which they depend. It would give these communities the resources they need to reduce their exposure to flood threats and promote sustainable development for decades to come. It would be a shame to miss this opportunity. While the scope and scale of this disaster may seem relatively small to some, we cannot forget the 23 men, women and children whom we lost during these floods. This was one of the deadliest disasters our country has experienced this year, and we owe it to the memory of those that we lost to do everything in our power to ensure a tragedy like this never happens here again. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin's separate letter to the president asked for 310 million dollars in disaster funding through the Community Development Block Grant program. In his request, Tomblin also pointed out that, "Most of the areas devastated by floods were towns and communities that had been reliant on coal. The industry's downturn has left most of the with no capacity to build back on their own."

FEMA estimates the average grant award for each eligible West Virginian will be less than 9 thousand dollars. Tomblin announced Tuesday total damages in the state topped $300 million.

FEMA Green-lights Portable Classroom Installation At 2 Kanawha County Schools

West Virginia MetroNews, September 14, 2016

CLENDENIN, W.Va. — After a longer wait than expected, FEMA approved the installation of portable classrooms for two flood-damaged schools in Kanawha County Wednesday.

The Kanawha County Board of Education is expected to officially approve the plan at its Thursday evening meeting. The portables will accommodate Herbert Hoover High at Elkview Middle School and Clendenin Elementary students at Bridge Elementary until new schools are built.

One change made is that portables at Elkview Middle won't be on the football field, but in the parking lot instead.

"I think there was some concern with the football field being in a flood zone. As far as exactly where they'll be on the parking lot I'm not sure," said Kanawha BOE member Ric Cavender.

Cavender said that it was a long process to get the plan approved but FEMA, but the board had no choice but to play by their rules.

"If we're planning on using their funding to execute this project, we have to make sure we're following their guidelines," he explained. "Part of their guidelines throughout this process was that we had to explore a lot of different options for placement of the portables. Our goal and intention was always to make sure they would go where we said they were going to go to make sure students stay together."

Herbert Hoover Principal Mike Kelley wasn't concerned about the change in location, as long as his students would all be in the same spot.

"The main thing that was really important to our kids and our parents was that we keep our kids together here in our community," said Kelley. "I think it's going to be fine. The initial plan was for it to be on the football field but there was some additional costs with raising the portables up out of the flood plain."

Kelley said Hoover students would still use the Elkview Middle cafeteria and gymnasium, and that he saw a silver lining in the very unusual, inconvenient year.

"I really feel like this is good preparation for college, because it's very similar to a college schedule where you go to classes every other day (for about four hours) as opposed to seven or eight," he said. "You have to take more responsibility for your own learning by studying and doing work outside of the classroom."

The Kanawha BOE was expected to approve a plan for the portables at a meeting last month, but it was put on hold indefinitely. The exact cost and number of portables at each school was not announced Wednesday.

The board meets at 6 p.m. Thursday evening.

FEMA Approves Portables For Flooded Kanawha County Schools

WOWK-TV Charleston (WV), September 14, 2016

FEMA has approved the Kanawha County Schools site plans for putting portables at Elkview Middle School at Bridge Elementary School.

The portables at Elkview will be used for temporary classrooms for Herbert Hoover High School and portables at Bridge Elementary will be used for temporary classrooms for Bridge and Clendenin Elementary Schools.

The next step for KCS is putting together additional information and going out for bids.

We will continue to update this story as more information becomes available.

S.C. Emergency Officials, Military Review Flood Response, Plan For Next Disaster

Columbia (SC) State, September 14, 2016

For two years, South Carolina's emergency responders and its federal military installations worked to coordinate their responses in the event of a disaster.

Last year, that disaster came, in the form of an historic flood that swamped the Midlands.

Now with the one-year anniversary of the flood coming up, federal, state and local representatives sat down again Wednesday in West Columbia to discuss their response and plan for South Carolina's next major disaster – with Tropical Storm Julia threatening to dump even more water onto the state.

"To make it more realistic, we've cooked up a tropical storm," joked Kim Stenson, director of the S.C. Emergency Management Division, in opening the third annual seminar on the mutual support of local government and military installations at the emergency management headquarters.

Both civilians and soldiers credit the ongoing meetings with improving the state's response to last year's flooding crisis.

"We were so well-prepared because of the relationships we've built," said Maj. Gen. Gregory Batts, South Carolina's assistant adjutant general. "Everybody understood the system."

Batts said the seminar should be a "springboard for later success."

The point man for all sides is Army Col. Bill Connor, the Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer for South Carolina under the FEMA regional office in Atlanta.

"I took over just before the flood, so I kind of had to drink from a fire hose," said Connor, a Reserve officer who practices law in South Carolina in civilian life.

"We were watching Hurricane Joaquin, so a hurricane was what we were planning for," he said. "We didn't think it would just dump that much water on us."

Military forces on the ground in South Carolina were fast to respond to requests for help after flooding hit the state in October, including boats deployed from Fort Jackson at the request of Columbia's police chief.

That request is key, Connor said, because the Posse Comitatus Act prohibits military personnel from operating directly on American soil in the absence of an emergency situation. They must receive a request for help from a civil authority – a governor, mayor or some other civilian – and then work under the local civilian agencies leading the response.

"Troops cannot perform any law enforcement functions, period," Connor said. "We're here strictly in a support role."

After 72 hours, the request has to be reviewed to ensure the emergency situation still exists.

For someone outside the military, knowing the process can be helpful in a pinch. Beth Fletcher, direct services manager for the S.C. Red Cross, said the previous meetings were invaluable in getting that information out.

"Just being able to coordinate, how to access different things, how long it's going to take," Fletcher said. "It definitely helps."

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS

State Officials Visit To Assess Storm Damages

Bemidji (MN) Pioneer, September 14, 2016

BEMIDJI – Minnesota Department of Public Safety staff planned to be in Beltrami County on Wednesday and Clearwater County on Thursday, to meet with local officials and possibly survey damage from late July windstorms.

The assessment crews are part of the Homeland Security and Emergency Management division of the public safety department.

Local emergency managers reported the following estimates from their initial assessments right after the July 19-21 storms, which included heavy winds, hail and lightning strikes. Damages included thousands of fallen trees, downed power lines and roofs blown off of buildings on private property. That debris resulted in blocked roads and widespread power outages.

$289,761 in Beltrami County including the Leech Lake Reservation.

$289,137 in Clearwater County including the White Earth Reservation.

The damages do not meet federal requirements for FEMA's Public Assistance Program, but they could qualify for reimbursement through the Minnesota State Disaster Assistance Program, a release said.

ZIKA VIRUS

The Importance Of Planned Parenthood In The Zika Epidemic

By Amy Faith Ho

The Hill, September 14, 2016

While Congress hasn't been able to pass funding for fighting zika virus for over six months since President Obama's request for emergency supplementation, the Planned Parenthood controversy isn't a trivial one.

Specifically, Democrats have been holding out on passing the likely $1.1 billion (down from the $1.9 billion President Obama originally requested in February of this year) due to hidden provisions from Republicans to divert some of those funds from Planned Parenthood.

This is not just political theater, but a medical one, one that reinvigorates debate about women's health. Zika virus is a mosquito-born disease that thus far has its primary effects on the unborn children of infected pregnant women. One in five zika-infected patients are asymptomatic themselves, but the virus is also sexually transmitted. In a fairly grotesque mechanism, zika virus causes microcephaly in unborn fetuses. The skull of a fetus develops prior to the brain, and as the brain grows, it "fills out" the skull and helps it hold its shape. In zika, as the virus attacks the nervous system, the brain never grows to its appropriate capacity, and the skull collapses around it, forming the misshapen and small character of microcephaly that is sometimes not survivable after birth.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and National Institutes of Health are fundamentally out of money, even after diverting funds from many other areas — HIV prevention, malaria, tuberculosis, diabetes, cancer — just to get initial action started while Congress took their seven-week recess. These efforts have focused on mosquito prevention and spraying, education, research, testing and vaccination. The importance of Planned Parenthood, however is fundamental as an immediate response to zika-infections in pregnant women. It offers important roles on safe sex education, birth control, and yes, termination of pregnancies.

This is not a new thought, but a politically charged one so close to an election. Defunding Planned Parenthood in the face of zika is like defunding firefighters in the face of a forest fire. All the other efforts of government agencies are focused on prevention. Planned Parenthood offers an essential right to choose for women. Admittedly this choice is an unpopular one that could be spun by pundits as eugenics, but it is a personal one that mothers should have as to the life they would like their unborn child to have. There are very real considerations as to the capabilities and resources mothers will be able to offer for caring for a special-needs child.

Abortion aside, Planned Parenthood offers a highly effective way of limiting spread of zika without spraying chemicals into the air: condoms and birth control. While hundreds continue to protest as spraying of mosquitoes commences despite CDC assurance that it is safe for humans, even the Pope has already stated condoms are acceptable in the face of zika virus.

Congress needs to put aside political theater and realize that while vaccines, testing and diagnostics will be limited by the natural speed and expense of scientific research, the magic bullet is already here: Planned Parenthood. Fight fire with firefighters, not Smokey the Bear. Fund Planned Parenthood.

Amy Faith Ho, MD is an emergency physician, published writer and national speaker on issues pertaining to healthcare, with work featured in Forbes, Chicago Tribune, NPR, KevinMD, and TEDx. Amyfaithho.com

The views expressed by contributors are their own and not the views of The Hill.

Memo To Congress: Confederate Flags Won't Cure Zika

Washington Post, September 14, 2016

BACK AT the start of this year, Republican leaders were full of promises that Congress could overcome inaction and partisan stalemate. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (Ky.) said, "Some thought the Senate could never be cured of its dysfunction and its gridlock. . . . We believed the Senate could be restored to a place of high purpose again." House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (Wis.) declared, "We need to raise our gaze." Well, gentlemen, it is now September, a dangerous virus has hit U.S. shores, and all Congress has contributed so far is bickering. Definitely time to raise your gaze — and do something constructive.

The Zika virus, transmitted by mosquitoes and by sex, has no effective cure or vaccine. To date, some 1,080 pregnant women in the United States and its territories, chiefly Puerto Rico, have been infected; the total number of infections is more than 18,000. For now, most cases involve travelers who brought the virus from abroad. Usually, infection causes a minor illness, but pregnant women are vulnerable because the virus can cause severe fetal birth defects. Florida has already identified two areas of Miami-Dade County where mosquitoes are spreading Zika; local governments are attempting to fight mosquitoes by spraying, but it appears that Zika will not disappear soon.

President Obama requested nearly $1.9 billion in emergency funds in February but ran into partisan delays and sniping. Republicans dithered, then approved a far smaller amount, attaching provisions they knew would be objectionable to Democrats, such as effectively denying money to Planned Parenthood clinics and rescinding some funding for Obamacare. Another amendment would allow Confederate battle flags to fly in military cemeteries. These add-ons have nothing to do with fighting Zika but triggered vigorous objections from Democrats. When Congress returned from summer recess, a $1.1 billion Zika bill again stalled in the Senate. Now it seems the best hope for action is a Zika measure attached to a stopgap spending bill that could be voted on before the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30.

The president said Monday after meeting bipartisan congressional leaders that he is optimistic there will be some action. We hope he is right, because so far Congress has done little to justify optimism on this score. In the absence of approval for emergency funding, the administration earlier reprogrammed $589 million from other sources — chiefly Ebola-fighting money — to cope with the immediate cost of combating Zika. In recent days, the nation's top public-health officials have warned that the money is running out. Moreover, this is no way to run a railroad. Vaccine development is a long-term project requiring difficult clinical trials, and to starve it for funds now will postpone the day when an effective vaccine will be ready.

This is a political season, and after Congress goes home again in a few weeks, voters will be asked to render a verdict on its performance. So far, the record is abysmal. Let's hope members raise their gaze before heading for the exits.

Editorial: Congress Should Approve Zika Funding

Tampa Bay (FL) Times, September 14, 2016

A tentative deal that finally would provide federal funding to fight the Zika virus offers a glimmer of hope — and sanity — that leaders in Washington will put words into action to combat this spreading public health threat. Congressional leaders are expected to include money for Zika in a broad spending bill that could be considered by the Senate as early as today. That approach has bipartisan support from Florida's congressional delegation and approval is of paramount importance for Florida, where Zika has infected nearly 800 residents and continues to spread.

Zika, which is primarily transmitted by mosquitoes, can cause microcephaly and other grave birth defects in babies born to infected mothers. As the virus appeared across Central and South America earlier this year, President Barack Obama requested $1.9 billion to contain the outbreak. The request should have been easy to pass, but Congress never misses a chance to inject partisanship into governing. House Republicans attached provisions to the funding bill that were deal breakers for Democrats — namely cutting off money to Planned Parenthood. Both of Florida's senators, Democrat Bill Nelson and Republican Marco Rubio, have rightly supported efforts to pass a clean bill that gets the money flowing.

The deal now on the table includes $1.1 billion for Zika in a short-term spending bill that keeps the federal government running into December. It's considered "must-pass" legislation, because without it federal agencies would have to shut down. Congress won't let that happen so close to the election. Voters should remember that this 11th-hour effort did not materialize because leaders in Washington decided to do the right thing and address this crisis. They just want to get out of Washington and back on the campaign trail.

In addition to money, the Zika fight needs more transparency. While Gov. Rick Scott has made himself plenty visible — joining local government roundtables, urging Floridians to use insect repellent and lobbying in Washington — the state Department of Health has been opaque about the real numbers behind cases of locally transmitted Zika. The Miami Herald reported that state health officials stopped providing detailed information on local Zika transmissions, such as the number of people tested in each county and the results. They underreported Florida's total of locally transmitted Zika infections by excluding out-of-state residents from the count, and they won't say how many local cases involve pregnant women. The one non-travel-related case of Zika in Tampa Bay affected a Pinellas resident who is a firefighter for Tampa Fire Rescue, but state Surgeon General Celeste Philip would not specify where in the county that patient lives until health officials confirmed whether the virus was spreading locally. That was more than two weeks ago, and there has been no update. Floridians need timely, complete information about this health threat.

Scott traveled to Washington this week to lobby for money, acting above the fray a la former Gov. Jeb Bush in a hurricane and preaching that "the time for politics is over." Then he singled out Nelson for voting against earlier Zika bills that cut money to Planned Parenthood. The governor's self-serving tour isn't helping Floridians, and his shot at the Democrat he may run against in 2018 was unnecessary. He should come home and get back to handing out bug spray.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Thomas Frieden warned last week that the United States is "about to see a bunch of kids born with microcephaly." Days later, Congress failed for the third time in three months to commit emergency funding. The deal in the works now will not make up for months of lawmakers' willful inaction, but it will provide the crucial ingredient for fighting Zika: money. Lawmakers must get it done.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

N. Hempstead Offers Disaster Preparations In Many Languages

Newsday (NY), September 15, 2016

Korean and Vietnamese translations of disaster preparation advisories will be distributed in North Hempstead in an effort to reach more residents in an area with rapidly changing demographics.

Officials from North Hempstead and Adelphi University have partnered to distribute the materials that have been published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and include the essentials for an emergency supply kit, including medication, flashlights and water. Officials said the documents will be made available to nail salons around the town — businesses often operated by Asian residents.

A public service announcement on the town's website urging residents to pack emergency kits will soon have Vietnamese and Korean subtitles. An Adelphi University grant was used to fund the video, which was previously released last year with Mandarin and Spanish subtitles. See alsoSearch N. Hempstead salaries

The town is looking to accommodate a growing number of Asian and Hispanic residents. Officials, wary of hurricane season, said they do not want any residents to be excluded from receiving the preparation materials.

North Hempstead Supervisor Judi Bosworth said the recent threat of Tropical Storm Hermine, which did not make landfall on Long Island but caused strong winds, waves and some coastal flooding, inspired the multilingual outreach. "We narrowly missed Hermine," Bosworth said. "We missed so many of the people who don't speak English or can't read English."

The town's video features a family's efforts to prepare for a storm. A sequence offers a comical, but serious look at what could happen if storm survivors were without water or other necessities.

In North Hempstead, about 15.3 percent of the town's population — nearly 35,000 residents — is Asian, according to 2015 U.S. Census figures. In 2000, the town was home to 20,000 Asians, making up more than 9 percent of its residents, according to U.S. Census data.

The town's Hispanic population was nearly 31,000 in 2015, about 13.5 percent of North Hempstead's population. The town had 22,000 Hispanic residents in 2000, or about 9.8 percent of its residents, according to census figures.

North Hempstead also has worked to reach more of its residents through its informational signs. Pictorial signs were added near fishing line receptacles, instructing residents to dispose of material that can harm coastal life.

Meghan McPherson, assistant director for the Center for Health Innovation at Adelphi University, said the effort allows non-English speakers to "have this information correctly translated to them to be prepared, so when they hear a storm is coming, they know what to do, and they're clear on what to do, and they can tell their families, and they're less vulnerable."

The public service announcement can be viewed online at northhempsteadny.gov/ready.

Bosworth said she is considering adding subtitles in additional languages, including Farsi and Haitian Creole.

"We're in a multicultural society. We need reach out to as many people" as possible, Bosworth said.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

Disaster Prep Dave

Mena (AR) Star, September 14, 2016

September is National Preparedness Month! According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (F.E.M.A.) National Preparedness month began on September 1. Each week of the month carries its own theme. Topics like, "Preparing Family and Friends, Preparing Through Service, and finally Individual Preparedness. The central theme: "Don't Wait. Communicate, Make Your Emergency Plan Today." Check www.ready.gov for an overview of all the opportunities to participate.

This current week (September 11-17) puts the emphasis on involvement through community service and coordinating your plans with neighbors. Opportunities such as Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.), Citizen Corps or the Youth Preparedness Council offer plenty of outlets for contributions at the community level. The week of

September 18-24 emphasizes Individual Preparedness and offers a new app for your smartphone featuring weather alerts, disaster resources and safety reminders. The final week, September 23-30 is billed as a Lead Up To A National Day Of Action.

Participants are encouraged to organize a preparedness activity, register it on ready.gov/prepare and then share photos and stories of how your activities made a difference. Also scheduled for September 30 is National PreparAthon! Day. The goals of this and similar events are to increase the number of folks who are aware of what type of disasters can strike their local community, what to do to be safe and mitigate damage and how to increase their preparedness level so the effects of a disaster are minimized. Community resilience planning is also on the agenda.

Opportunities to sign up for individuals and organizations are posted on the website as well. F.E.M.A. has come a long way since Hurricane Katrina and their website is an excellent resource for all types of disaster planning and information. As usual send your questions and comments disasterprep.dave@gmail.com. Previous columns can be found on my blog at www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com. Dave Robinson is the Postmaster in Bandon, Oregon, and the author of "Disaster Prep For The Rest Of Us," available on Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble and other online booksellers.

FEMA CORPS

St. John's United Methodist Aids Flood Relief Responders

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, September 14, 2016

St. John's United Methodist Church continues to host Team Rubicon, a disaster response veterans service organization and FEMA Corps.

On Sept. 2, 10 young adults arrived from IsraAID, an organization headquartered in Israel committed to provide lifesaving disaster relief and long-term support all over the world.

St. John's provides cots in the Family Life Center, has two mobile shower trailers and is fixing a hot breakfast Monday through Friday for all of the teams. Twice a week, they feed the teams a hot supper.

POLITICAL COMMENTARY, COLUMNS AND EDITORIALS

Gazette Editorial: A Culture Gap Between WV And FEMA?

Charleston (WV) Gazette-Mail, September 15, 2016

West Virginia is deeply grateful to the federal government for life-supporting aid that bolstered state residents after the savage June floods. But occasionally, it seems rules, however necessary, can rule out help.

For example, West Virginia Public Broadcasting reported the plight of Tammy Rhodes's family in Clay County. Their home was destroyed by cascading water, forcing them to live temporarily in a camper.

They applied three times for aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but were rejected three times. The wife explained:

"They said, because my mom and dad had given us this part of the property to live on, and because a title had never been switched or a deed had never been put into our name, that they considered us renters."

Of course, many rural families recognize this arrangement. A younger family builds or owns a home on the property of parents. Parents naturally share with children, without going to the courthouse. It's a shame the FEMA rules, which must draw a line somewhere, of course, do not reflect this cultural norm.

It's also a cautionary tale for West Virginia families.

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 21 Aug 2016 22:14:17 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FEMA-State PIO Coordination Call

Stacie—

I realize after I got home on Friday that I never closed the loop with you about an agenda. See draft agenda below. Also, I forwarded you an invite reminder that can be forwarded to state PIOs, after you make any changes to the agenda.

I never did hear back from PIOs, so the state reports are suggestions that may help facilitate the call, but we probably don't want to include this information in the agenda that we distribute.

Tony, Joe and Cecily have confirmed. I think Micki will join but not sure about Kelly and Ryan. I'll check in with Kelly when I'm in Wyoming and will encourage her to call in. I will try to call from Wyoming, too.

Thanks,
Jerry

FEMA—State Public Information Officer Conference Call
Wednesday, August 24, 2016, 10:00-11:00 a.m. MOUNTAIN

Call-in: (b)(6), Pin: (b)(6) #

10:00 a.m. Welcome – Stacie Greff

State reports:

Colorado—Micki finishing Naval Post Graduate School. Project relates to media access.

Montana—Baker disaster. Wildfires.

North Dakota—DES role in pipeline protest.

South Dakota—OEM involvement in Sturgis rally.

Utah—September PIO conference in St. George.

Wyoming—Wildfires. Lusk one year later.
Region VIII reports:

- Region VIII IMAT in Louisiana. Daniel Green is the new IMAT EA Advisor.
- September is Preparedness Month. Be sure to let us know if states have plans. We want to support state efforts.
- NEMA-FEMA meeting in Chicago.
- OST wrap.
- Upcoming Tribal consultation.
- Status of ARA/RA position.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 21:22:03 +0000
To:
(b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@nd.gov';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@utah.gov';(b)(6)@wyo.gov';R8 External Affairs
Subject: FEMA-State PIO Coordination Call

Good afternoon. Please join us for the State PIO—FEMA Region VIII coordination call. Call-in information and a tentative agenda follows as we listed some potential topics of conversation as a starting point. We look forward to hearing from you!

Wednesday, August 24
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. MOUNTAIN
Dial-in: (b)(6) Pin (b)(6)

Agenda
10:00 a.m. Welcome – Stacie Greff

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Montana—Baker disaster. Wildfires.

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Utah—September PIO conference in St. George.

Wyoming—Wildfires. Lusk one year later.

Region VIII reports:

- Region VIII IMAT to Louisiana. Daniel Green is the new IMAT EA Advisor, deployed to Livingston Parish.
- September is Preparedness Month. Be sure to let us know if states have plans. We want to support your efforts.
- NEMA-FEMA meeting in Chicago.
- OST wrap.
- Upcoming Tribal consultation.
- Status of ARA/RA position.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 19:47:03 +0000
To: Andersen, Chris
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Chris - wanted you to be aware of the inquiry I just received from an individual regarding an article she saw on Facebook. I have not seen the article she is referencing.

Jerry is forwarding the information to HQ EA for awareness as well.

Thanks

Megan

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

There was recently an article posted on Facebook from anarchic news that gave this information about a shoot on sight order given in North Dakota.

Here is a summary and direct quote from the article accusing Homeland Security of giving the order:

At the end of the article in question from the Anarchicnews site, there is an unattributed quote forming the last paragraph that does say "Now though homeland security has taken over, legally, and the situation and the level of threat has been bumped up. This means they consider this a terrorist action and have the authority to shot on sight." The first paragraph and headline attribute the order to North Dakota and the governor. I think this particular Snopes article debunking that the governor issued any such order is a good think and valid.
I have searched diligently and not found any reference anywhere else to Homeland Security issuing such an order.

While Snopes debunked the article as it pertained to the Governor, they did not address the Homeland Security reference. This is now under discussion among members of my tribe and people are very disturbed about it.

Please clarify what Homeland Security;s role is regarding DAPL Pipeline and whether a shoot on sight order was issued. What is Homeland Security's policy on shooting perceived protestors. Is the DAPL protest classified as a terrorist action?

Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 19:40:03 +0000
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

For awareness.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

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Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 18:15:03 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

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Here is a summary and direct quote from the article accusing Homeland Security of giving the order:

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Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 15:51:59 -0400
To: Lemaitre, Rafael
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

FYSA. See last two paragraph. Although the HS reference may refer to ND DES, it is worth noting that it could apply to DHS. ND DES director was quoted earlier in response to limiting relief measures to protesters who are participating in an "illegal activity. "

Article is far outside mainstream but apparently has the tribe's interest.
First mention of possible HS involvement.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 1:40:03 PM
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

For awareness.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

There was recently an article posted on Facebook from anarchic news that gave this information about a shoot on sight order given in North Dakota.

Here is a summary and direct quote from the article accusing Homeland Security of giving the order:

At the end of the article in question from the Anarchicnews site, there is an unattributed quote forming the last paragraph that does say "Now though homeland security has taken over, legally, and the situation and the level of threat has been bumped up. This means they consider this a terrorist action and have the authority to shot on sight." The first paragraph and headline attribute the order to North Dakota and the governor. I think this particular Snopes article debunking that the governor issued any such order is a good think and valid.

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Please clarify what Homeland Security;s role is regarding DAPL Pipeline and whether a shoot on sight order was issued. What is Homeland Security's policy on shooting perceived protestors. Is the DAPL protest classified as a terrorist action?

Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 19:42:42 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: a few things

My email and his response.

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 2:27 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Valteau, Margeau <margeau.valteau@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: a few things

Later this month.

Yes. We can send the documents out for the RTL's to see.

Ok.

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 4:18 PM
To: Booth, Milo; Valteau, Margeau
Subject: a few things

Hi Milo and Margeau –

I wanted to touch base on three things….

1) Are we still looking at tomorrow as the start for consultation for the Tribal Policy? And will we get to see the changes before it goes out?
2) There are significant protests going on just north of the Standing Rock Reservation (southwestern SD) regarding the XL Pipeline. Media is anticipating large busloads of people from other reservations arriving today. We are tracking from here. We haven't gotten any questions on it, but depending on how long it goes on, it could impact some of our travel plans and the availability of tribal EMs and Council as well as their interest in FEMA. The protests have all been peaceful and are expected to stay that way.

Hope you are both doing well!

Megan

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:51:35 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Archambault's opinion piece

5

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 3:02 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Archambault's opinion piece

It was in the clips, but I wanted to make sure you saw it.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri

River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 17:36:40 +0000
To: Appenrodt, Kathleen
Subject: FW: Clip: ND tribal

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2016 11:31 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hunter, Cynthia (Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov) <Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Panel votes to borrow $6M for costs associated with pipeline protests, blasts feds inaction

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 12:18 p.m.

NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
HONOR THE EARTH....

Demonstrators against the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan, N.D., gather in opposition early this month. File photo.

BISMARCK — The state Emergency Commission voted Wednesday, Sept. 21, to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to support law enforcement efforts

related to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, but not before members blasted the lack of federal support to deal with protesters camped out on federal land.

"I know we have to do it, but it's not right, and the lack of federal involvement is disgusting," said House Majority Leader Al Carlson, R-Fargo. "And we need to protect our North Dakota people, but this is just plain wrong that they're ignoring this issue."

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, said the state has spent $1.88 million on protest-related costs so far, the bulk of it personnel costs for assistance from the National Guard and law enforcement agencies from across the state. Morton County estimated last week it had spent about $400,000 on top of that.

The $6 million line of credit from the Bank of North Dakota will fund future efforts as authorized by Gov. Jack Dalrymple's emergency declaration Aug. 19. The Legislature will have to make a deficiency appropriation from the state's general fund to pay back the bank after lawmakers convene in regular session in January, Budget Director Pam Sharp said.

Authorities have responded to multiple protests at pipeline construction sites and in Bismarck-Mandan since protests began to ramp up in mid-August. They've also created a traffic checkpoint and increased patrols in Morton County, which they say are necessary for the safety of local residents, farmers and ranchers and the thousands of protesters camped out on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Last Friday, the Corps of Engineers issued a special use permit for protesters to use Corps land south of the Cannonball River but not the land north of the river where the majority of them are camping, because that land is subject to an existing grazing lease.

Carlson said it bothers him that it's "a federal problem that they've ignored" and the Legislature will have to cover the costs at a time of budget shortfalls. Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, agreed.

"The taxpayers shouldn't have to be paying for this," he said.

Dalrymple said he's been in contact with the White House, U.S. Department of Justice, Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior and the state's congressional delegation but is still waiting to hear if they're going to help financially or with in-kind services.

"The problem that we have, of course, is that these public safety needs are imminent every day," Dalrymple said. "We really have no choice but to protect the public with law enforcement. Recovering funds from the federal government is definitely a top priority, but it undoubtedly will take some time."

The commission's other members are Secretary of State Al Jaeger, Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, Sen. Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, and Sen. Ray Holmberg, R-Grand Forks.

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:52:58 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

9

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 6:15 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Thanks for sending these

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 9:39:10 AM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 18:50:17 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: DRAFT ND LNO Report
Attachments: ND LNO Report Standing Rock Protests.pptx

Please do not share. You are seeing a draft. Response has the lead and I provided significant input. It is currently in review in response.

From: Jones, Susan K
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 12:28 PM
To: Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: DRAFT ND LNO Report

Susan K. Jones
FEMA Region VIII
Response Division
Denver, CO
O: 303.235.4605
C: 303.263.5415

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:50:51 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA clips for Thursday, 8-25-16
Attachments: R8-Clips 08-25-16.docx

3 (includes a comment in the analysis)

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 11:00 AM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov' (b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov>; Wernisch, Phil <Phil.Wernisch@fema.dhs.gov>; Coley, Robert <Robert.Coley@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Bonza, Dale <Dale.Bonza@fema.dhs.gov>; Ruiz, Benigno <benigno.ruiz@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; Sheppard, Helen <Helen.Sheppard@fema.dhs.gov>; Jackson jr, Jesse <Jesse.JacksonJr@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; Lyman, AJ <aaron.lyman@fema.dhs.gov>; Green, Daniel <daniel.green3@fema.dhs.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephens, Holly <Holly.Stephens@fema.dhs.gov>; Castel, Joseph-Richard <Joseph-Richard.Castel@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA clips for Thursday, 8-25-16

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.

- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe's stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. ("Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent.") Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

WYOMING:

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve
(Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here's a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California's central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire's Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

___

IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

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MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana's largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire's perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

___

UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

"The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations," Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

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WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe’s cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company’s assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline’s economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government’s environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest “unlawful,” and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It’s a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation’s lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it’s gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America’s prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn’t consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

“The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites,” Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. “The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline.”

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

“The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux,” said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company’s attorney, William Leone, told the court, “This is not a cowboy process.”

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday's hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday's hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

"We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters," she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group’s arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

“Our message remains the same,” he said. “We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public.”

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

“A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

"Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court," Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe's historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

"It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them," Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary
The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News
Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary

A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.

Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency’s operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.

Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.

“Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah,” said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job.”

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016

SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):

11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are "not good in the near future" because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.
- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe's stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. ("Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent.") Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve (Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here’s a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California’s central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire’s Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

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IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

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MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana's largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire's perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

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UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

"The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations," Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

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WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe’s cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company’s assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small

construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see

that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn’t consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

“The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites,” Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. “The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline.”

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

“The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux,” said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company’s attorney, William Leone, told the court, “This is not a cowboy process.”

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday’s hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can’t begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn’t immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday’s hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

“We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters,” she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group’s arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

“Our message remains the same,” he said. “We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public.”

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

“A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million,” the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

“Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court,” Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe’s historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

“It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them,” Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary
The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary

A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.

Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency's operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.

Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.

"Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah," said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job."

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016
SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):
11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are “not good in the near future” because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 11:15:29 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department,

Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>;
(b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us'
(b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>;
(b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov> (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>;
(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' <(b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J
<Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov'
(b)(6) @hhs.gov> (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>;
(b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason
<Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel
<Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform’s glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

“It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on,” said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

“The fact is we don’t have any idea how many cases there were,” said Maierovitch, meaning it’s possible Brazil’s birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don’t have symptoms and don’t realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress’s failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

“We’ll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months,” he said. “That’s the only way we’ll know whether we’ve dodged a bullet.”

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 15:54:35 +0000
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us>;(b)(6)@state.co.us>; (b)(6)@state.co.us' (b)(6)@state.co.us>;(b)(6)@mail.mil' (b)(6)@mail.mil>;(b)(6)@mail.mil' (b)(6)@mail.mil>; (b)(6)@nd.gov' (b)(6)@nd.gov>; (b)(6)@state.sd.us' (b)(6)@state.sd.us>; (b)(6)@state.sd.us' (b)(6)@state.sd.us>; (b)(6)@utah.gov' (b)(6)@utah.gov>;(b)(6)@wyo.gov' (b)(6)@wyo.gov>(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@usace.army.mil' (b)(6)@usace.army.mil>; (b)(6)@usace.army.mil' (b)(6)@usace.army.mil>;(b)(6)@state.mn.us' (b)(6)@state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>;(b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@sba.gov' (b)(6)@sba.gov>;(b)(6)@sba.gov' (b)(6)@sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@fs.fed.us' (b)(6)@fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper

reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more

than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that

it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline. The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 17:09:48 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Cc: Red Feather, Glenda
Subject: FW: Include this as well?

Oops, we just found one more for today.

Phil Wernisch
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From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: Wednesday, August 17, 2016 3:05 PM
To: Wernisch, Phil <Phil.Wernisch@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Include this as well?

Tribal officials arrested at pipeline protest

Resistance builds against startup of Dakota Access Pipeline
By Talli Nauman Aug. 17,2016
Native Sun News Health & Environment Editor

Doctor Sarah Jumping Eagle was one of several pipeline resisters arrested Aug. 12 with Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chair David Archambault II and tribal council member Dana Wasinzi in an action to prevent construction of the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline. COURTESY/Shauna M. Long CANNON BALL, N. D. — After Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chair David Archambault II, tribal council member Dana Wasinzi and several other Dakota Access Pipeline resisters got arrested during a direct action to impede the construction startup on the project here, they set Aug. 20 for another action: A Missouri River water crossing to raise support for the cause.

The actions are among a number leading up to an Aug. 24 hearing on the tribe's lawsuit to prevent the construction and to strike down the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' permits for the private frack oil line to cross 1851 and 1868 Ft. Laramie Treaty territory.

"ALL BOATS ON DECK!!!!" says the announcement of the coming action. "The Camp of the Sacred Stones calls ALL canoeists, kayaktivists, paddlers, and water warriors to bring their boats and courage and join us on the Missouri River on Saturday, Aug. 20," it says. "Please stand with us on the front lines! This pipeline threatens the longest river on Turtle Island and the drinking water of many millions of people."

The physical base for the actions, which have attracted hundreds of supporters and celebrity backers, such as Shailene Woodley, from throughout the Oceti Sakowin and the world, is the Camp of the Sacred Stones, a tipi encampment for prayer gatherings erected with crowdfunding near the place where the pipeline would cross the Oahe Reservoir on the Missouri River.

"The threats this pipeline poses to the environment, public health, and tribal and human rights are strikingly similar to those posed by the Keystone XL," organizers said on Aug. 7, as youth relay runners finished a nearly 2,000-mile journey from here to the White House to raise awareness about DAPL.

The Administration denied a permit to TransCanada Corp. for the Keystone XL tar-sands crude pipeline through Lakota Territory earlier this year, after indigenous and land-based people, as well as climate justice activists, rallied for months against it.

The Dakota Access (or Bakken) Pipeline project is similar in size to the failed Keystone XL project.

Since April 1, campers have been marshaling to defend against the Dakota Access Pipeline, or DAPL, which would carry frack oil from the Bakken Formation centered at the Mandan Hidatsa & Arikara Nation on the Ft. Berthold Indian Reservation, through North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa to Illinois.

There it would meet a nearly finished line called the Energy Transfer Crude Oil Pipeline that would run to the Texas refineries and export facilities on the Gulf of Mexico.

On Aug. 12 pipeline resisters were met by state highway patrol, city police and sheriff's officers in a scuffle that led to several arrests and was defused when the official in charge of the armed patrol decided to retire it to avoid escalation of tension, according to eyewitnesses. Archambault was released on bond.

Houston-based Energy Transfer Partners and Phillips 66 recently gained the permits to begin building the proposed 1,172-mile DAPL across the Great Plains, the Missouri River, tributaries and wetlands in its watershed.

Then in a significant turn of events on Aug. 2, the Canadian company Enbridge Inc. announced that it is going in on the project instead of pursuing its Sandpiper and its Line 3 Replacement projects to move tar-sands crude to refineries and export facilities.

That means the line could carry, not only light crude from the Bakken, but also heavy tar-sands crude from Alberta Province in Canada, the home of Enbridge.

Enbridge is responsible for the 6-year-old Kalamazoo River tar-sands crude oil pipeline spill in Michigan, which is the worst inland oil spill in U.S. history and remains to be cleaned up to EPA's satisfaction.

A partner in the Enbridge Sandpiper and Line 3 Replacement projects, Marathon Petroleum Corp. is also joining in the Dakota Access Pipeline investment, after the former projects met with strident and sustained grassroots resistance.

Cheyenne River Sioux tribal member and pipeline resister Joye Braun of Indigenous Environmental Network said she is "thrilled Enbridge is pulling away from Sandpiper at the moment. Not so happy that the company is putting its resources into Dakota Access."

Indigenous and conservation groups sued the U.S. State Department in 2014 for allowing Enbridge to build a tar-sands crude line across the U.S. border from Canada without an environmental review. The plaintiffs were White Earth Nation, Honor the Earth, Indigenous Environmental Network, Minnesota Conservation Foundation, MN350, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, and National Wildlife Federation.

Enbridge "fails to see the death warrant of fossil fuels or that for-profit companies have no right to trample on treaty territory or ignore tribal nations who repeatedly say 'no' to them," Braun said.

Since Standing Rock's lawsuit, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe announced that it is filing a legal complaint against the Army Corps of Engineers for the DAPL permits, too. Tribal Chair Harold Frazier visited the spirit camp in a show of support. The Yankton Sioux Tribal Council passed a resolution to file suit as well.

An Aug. 11, Crow Creek Sioux tribal resolution offers the tribe's "full support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline." It also calls on the U.S. Interior Department to exercise its trust responsibility to ensure the federal government blocks the permitting.

Crow Creek Tribal Chair Brandon J. Sazue Sr. traveled to Standing Rock to express his tribe's position: "We will stand with you my relatives. Whether we are Native, White, African American, etc., our water is our most precious resource, along with our children. We must all stand together in this most urgent of times. This is not about race, but about the human race! What we do today will make a difference tomorrow! If there was ever a time to stand united, that time is now!"

On Aug. 12, Rosebud Sioux Tribal President William Kimble sent a letter extending support for Standing Rock's position, agreeing to "stand in strong opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline."

The letter states: “The pipeline could potentially damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious and cultural significance as it crosses ancestral lands of the Great Sioux Nation,” making it an “atrocious act.”

According to the Lakota Law Project Report, from 2006 to 2014, North Dakota’s oil industry caused 8,690 reported incidents of oil and brine spills. “The completion of Dakota Access will surely increase this number to record-high levels,” it said.

“We keep praying for the water and land,” said Ladonna Brave Bull Allard, landowner and director of the spirit camp. “We are searching for every avenue through prayer to defeat this Black Snake. Please remember water is life.”

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:51:12 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Judge postpones pipeline decision

4

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 3:23 PM
To: R8 External Affairs <R8PublicAffairs@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Judge postpones pipeline decision

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction

- JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune
Jessica Holdman
- 1 hr ago

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

"A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

“Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court,” Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe’s historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

“It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them,” Tsosie said.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:52:16 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: LaDuke editorial re pipeline

7

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 10:56 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: LaDuke editorial re pipeline

From Ecowatch.com… not included in the clips, but I thought worth having. Winona LaDuke ran for vice-president on a ticket with Ralph Nader long ago…

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

The Dakota Access Pipeline: What Would Sitting Bull Do?
By Winona LaDuke
It's 2016 and the weight of American corporate interests has come to the Missouri River, the Mother River. This time, instead of the Seventh Cavalry or the Indian police dispatched to assassinate Sitting Bull, it is Enbridge and Dakota Access Pipeline.
In mid-August, Standing Rock Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was arrested by state police, along with 27 others, for opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline. In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple called for more police support.
Every major pipeline project in North America must cross indigenous lands, Indian Country. That is a problem.
The road west of Fargo is rarely taken. In fact, most Americans just fly over North Dakota, never seeing it.
Let me take you there.
My head clears as I drive. My destination is the homeland of the Hunkpapa Oceti, Standing Rock Reservation. It is early evening, the moon full. If you close your eyes, you can remember the 50 million buffalo—the single largest migratory herd in the world. The pounding of their hooves would vibrate the Earth, make the grass grow.
There were once 250 species of grass. Today the buffalo are gone, replaced by 28 million cattle, which require grain, water and hay. Many of the fields are now in a single GMO crop, full of so many pesticides that the monarch butterflies are dying off. But in my memory, the old world remains.

If you drive long enough, you come to the Missouri River.

Called Mnisose, a great swirling river, by the Lakota, she is a force to be reckoned with. She is breathtaking. "The Missouri River has a fixed place in the history and mythology" of the Lakota and other Indigenous nations of the Northern Plains, author Dakota Goodhouse would explain. In the time before Sitting Bull, the Missouri River was the epicenter of northern agriculture, the river bed so fertile. The territory was known as the fertile crescent of North America. That was then, before the treaties that reduced the Lakota land base. But the Missouri remained in the treaty—the last treaty of 1868 used the Missouri as a boundary.

Then came the theft of land by the U.S. government and the taking of the Black Hills in 1877, in part as retaliation against Sitting Bull's victory at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. In a time prior to Black Lives Matter or Native Lives Matter, great leaders like Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were assassinated at the hands of police.

One truth: The Lakota people have survived much.

Forced into the reservation life, the Lakota attempted to stabilize their society, until the dams came. The 1944 Pick Sloan project flooded out the Missouri River tribes, taking the best bottom lands from the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, the Lakota and Dakota. More than 200,000 acres on the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations in South Dakota were flooded by the Oahe Dam itself, forcing not only relocation, but a loss of the Lakota world. The Garrison, Oahe and Fort Randall dams created a reservoir that eliminated 90 percent of timber and 75 percent of wildlife on the reservations.

That is how a people are made poor.

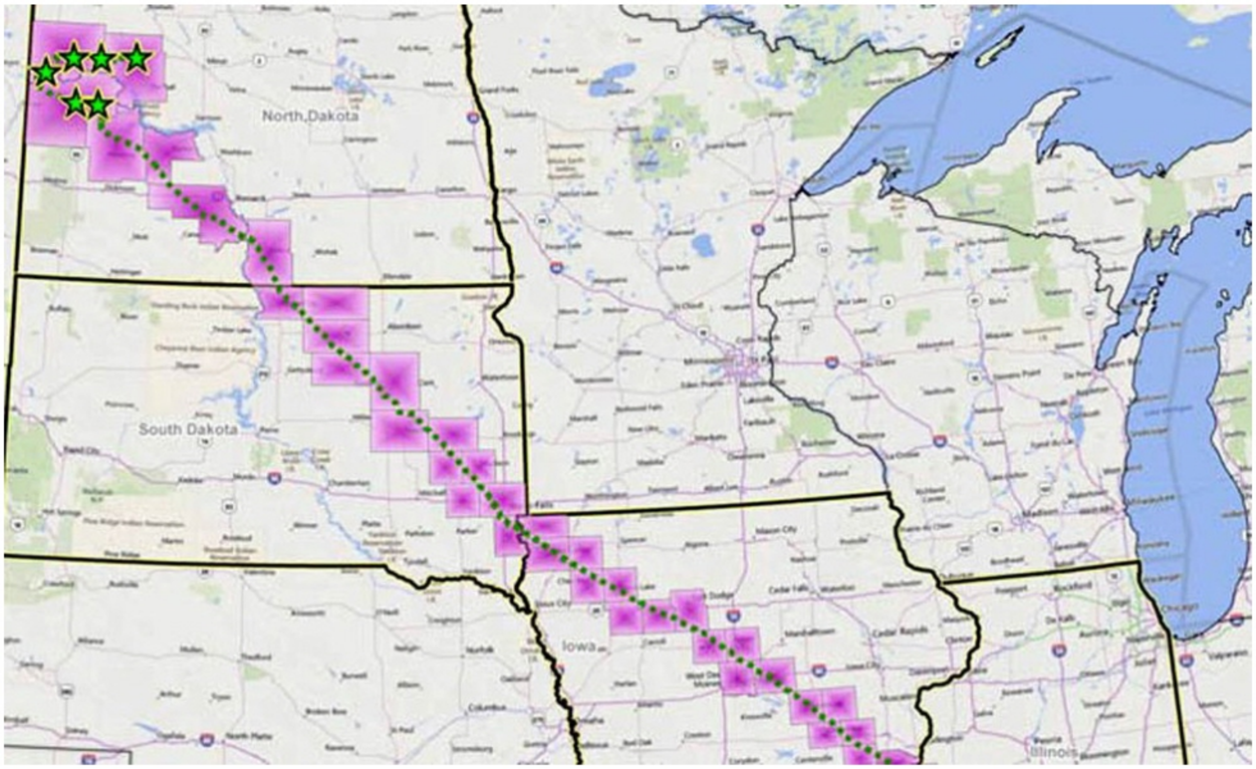
Today, well over two thirds of the population of Standing Rock is below the poverty level—and the land and Mother River are what remains, a constant, for the people. That is what is threatened today.

Enbridge and partners are preparing to drill through the riverbed. The pipeline has been permitted in sections from the west and from the east. The northern portion was moved away from the water supply of Bismarck, into the watershed of Standing Rock. That was unfortunate for the Lakota.

Despite Lakota legal and regulatory objections, the Dakota Access Pipeline construction began in May 2016. If finished it will snake through North and South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois, where it will link to a 774-mile pipeline to Nederland, Texas.

More than 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil will pass through the pipeline daily, along with 245,100 metric tons of carbon daily—enough carbon to combust the planet to oblivion.

The pipeline would span 200 water crossings and in North Dakota alone would pass through 33 historical and archeological sites. Enbridge just bought the Dakota Access pipeline, noting that the proposed Sandpiper route—Minnesota's 640,000 barrel per day Bakken line—is now three years behind schedule.



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The route of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

In late July, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe represented by Earthjustice, filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Standing Rock claims the project violates federal and treaty law. Standing Rock also filed an intervention at the United Nations, in coordination with the International Indian Treaty Council. As Chairman Archambault explained in a New York Times story:

> "The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.
>
> "The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites.
>
> "Without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes."

In Iowa where work on the pipeline is underway, three fires erupted causing heavy damage to equipment and an estimated $1 million in damages. Investigators suspect arson, according to Jasper County Sheriff John Halferty. In October 2015, three Iowa farmers sued Dakota Access LLC and the Iowa Utilities Board in an attempt to prevent the use of eminent domain on their properties to construct the pipeline.

The health of the Missouri River has been taken for granted.

Dammed in the Pick Sloan Dam projects, each project increases contamination and reduces her health. Today, the Missouri is the seventh most polluted river in the country. Agricultural run-off and now fracking have contaminated the river. My sister fished a gar out of the river, a giant prehistoric fish, only to find it covered with tumors.

Here's just one case: In a January 2015 spill, saltwater contamination from a massive pipeline spill reached the Missouri River. In the baffling way of state and federal agencies, North Dakota's Health Director David Glatt did not expect harm to wildlife or drinking water supplies because the water was diluted. The saying is: "The solution to pollution is dilution." That is convenient, but not true.

Blacktail Creek and the Little Muddy River were contaminated after nearly 3 million gallons of saltwater with elevated levels of chloride contamination. All was diluted. But then there was that gar fish with the tumors.

There are pipelines everywhere and fewer than 150 Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) pipeline inspectors in the whole country.

And now comes the risk from oil.

The pipeline companies generally discuss a 99 percent safety record, but studies have found that to be grossly inaccurate. A former Scientific American Editor, Trudy Bell, reports that PHMSA data from 2001 to 2011 suggest the average pipeline "has a 57% probability of experiencing a major leak, with consequences over the $l million range in a ten year period."

Not good odds.

At Standing Rock, as the number of protesters grew from 200 to 2000, state law enforcement decided to put up a safety checkpoint and rerouted traffic on Highway 1806 from Bismarck to Standing Rock, hoping to dissuade people from coming and put the squeeze on Standing Rock's Prairie Knights Casino, which is served by that road.

We just drove around; the scenic route is beautiful. And as supporters surge in numbers, the casino hotel and restaurants are full.

While North Dakota seeks to punish the Lakota, Chairman Archambault expresses concerns for everyone:

From the New York Times: "I am here to advise anyone that will listen that the Dakota Access Pipeline project is harmful. It will not be just harmful to my people but its intent and construction will harm the water in the Missouri River, which is one of the cleanest and safest river tributaries left in the Unit States. To poison the water is to poison the substance of life. Everything that moves must have water. How can we talk about and knowingly poison water?"

In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Dalrymple announced a state of emergency, making additional state resources available "to manage public safety risks associated with the ongoing protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline." He may have exceeded his scope of authority and violated civil and human rights to water.

Chairman Archambault's interpretation: "Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the

Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests."

There are a lot of people at Standing Rock today who remember their history and the long standoff at Wounded Knee in 1973. In fact, some of those in Standing Rock today were there in 1973 at Wounded Knee, a similar battle for dignity and the future of a nation.

I am not sure how badly North Dakota wants this pipeline. If there is to be a battle over the pipeline, it will be here. For a people with nothing else but a land and a river, I would not bet against them.

The great Lakota leader Mathew King once said, "The only thing sadder than an Indian who is not free, is an Indian who does not remember what it is to be free."

The Standing Rock protest camp represents that struggle for freedom and the future of a people. All of us. If I ask the question "What would Sitting Bull do?"—the answer is pretty clear. He would remind me what he said 150 years ago: "Let us put our minds together to see what kind of future we can make for our children."

The time for that is now.

This article was originally published by LA Progressive and reposted with permission from our media associate YES! Magazine.

From: Hunter, Cynthia
Sent: 14 Nov 2016 17:27:03 -0500
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Mints!

From: (b)(6) [mailto:(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2016 8:34 AM
To: Hunter, Cynthia <Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Mints!

Oh, he will!

From: Hunter, Cynthia [mailto:Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2016 8:45 AM
To: (b)(6)@nd.gov>
Subject: RE: Mints!

You're welcome. No worries. Next trip! Hope (b)(6) enjoys them J

From: (b)(6) [mailto (b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 31, 2016 7:40 AM
To: Hunter, Cynthia <Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Mints!

Thanks so much! Sorry I couldn't meet with you guys. I'm really swamped with protest stuff. They just won't go away. I think we need a snowstorm! I hope all is well with you!

(b)(6)
Public Information Officer
ND Department of Emergency Services
Office(b)(6)
Cell:
(b)(6)@nd.gov <mailto:(b)(6)@nd.gov>

Follow us on Facebook - www.facebook.com/NDDES

Follow us on Twitter - www.twitter.com/NDDES <http://www.twitter.com/NDDES>

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:49:50 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: more stories on tribal pipeline protest

#1

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:20 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: more stories on tribal pipeline protest

Wanted to be sure you guys saw what Brian got in the ND clips this a.m.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down. When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast. Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: ND Dakota Access Pipeline Update

Judge Rules That Construction Can Proceed On Dakota Access Pipeline but three federal agenices have

---

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2016 2:55 PM
To: Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline Update

Hi Lee and Megan,

I'm not sure if you are already aware or not, but I just saw this in the news.

Please see link:

http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/09/493280504/judge-rules-that-construction-can-proceed-on-dakota-access-pipeline

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

"Teamwork makes the DREAM work."

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:51:54 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: pipeline clips du jour

6

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Friday, August 26, 2016 12:26 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: pipeline clips du jour

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who's Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment.

The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota's governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country's pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

For breaking news and in-depth reporting, follow @NYTNational on Twitter.

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

-

Lauren Donovan

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

“They can’t build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe,” Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company’s decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any “Jane and John Doe” from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe's request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

"Everybody thought they had it (easement)," said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. "This is really important information."

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

"We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There's nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court's injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday's news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

"The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she'll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people," Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

"It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making," Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

"When this is done, if it's ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It's a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

"It's been a long time since we all camped together," said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. "It feels natural."

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

"We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties," said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman's executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. "That's essential."

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered
Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:
A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.

MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

✖ mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 11:38:46 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Pipeline hearing postponed

Judge postpones oil pipeline hearing

Posted: Mon 5:30 PM, Aug 22, 2016 |
Updated: Mon 6:13 PM, Aug 22, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) – A federal judge has postponed a hearing on whether a preliminary injunction should be issued to prevent protesters in North Dakota from interfering with construction of an oil pipeline.

U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland moved the hearing scheduled on Thursday to Sept. 8. The judge also extended a restraining order against the protesters until the hearing.

The judge says in his order filed Monday that the two sides are ``strongly encouraged to meet and confer in good faith'' to try and resolve the dispute out of court.

More than two dozen protesters have been arrested in the last month for interfering with the construction of the $3.8 billion Dakota Access Pipeline meant to carry North Dakota crude to Illinois.

Developers have agreed to halt construction until court matters are resolved

Phil Wernisch

FEMA External Affairs
DR-4237-OST
202-826-3160

From: Red Feather, Glenda
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 9:32 AM
To: Wernisch, Phil <Phil.Wernisch@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Pipeline hearing postponed

http://www.kotatv.com/content/news/Judge-postpones-oil-pipeline-hearing-390965532.html

Glenda Red Feather
FEMA-4237-DR-OST
Emergency Liasion
605-440-0993
Glenda.redfeather@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 16:13:01 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Short update on OST

KX has been facebook live at the news conferences. Maybe they will be out at the protest on the capital ground tomorrow.

https://www.facebook.com/kxnews/

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2016 1:53 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Short update on OST

This weekend could likely be a very continuous weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock area.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this is always happened before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline and the protest.
- **The Governor of ND has activated (although no a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling.**
- There are ongoing reports of violence on both sides,
- The chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:48:49 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

And then I forgot to you on the CC line.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:48 PM
To: Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Lee -

I meant to send this to you as well and forgot to put you on the CC line. I apologize and won't forget next time.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:20 PM
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)' <(b)(6)@hhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

Per our conversation, I wanted to let you know that I sent the below email to the FEMA National Tribal Advisor and Rocky Jones with IHS - this is nothing official and just from our media monitoring.

Thanks

Megan

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6)@ihs.gov' <(b)(6)@ihs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);
- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long

time.

- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.
- September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck, ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this year's Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Thanks

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6) @ihs.gov' <(b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:19:38 +0000
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)'
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

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- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

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If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Thanks

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>(b)(6) @ihs.gov' <(b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 12:23:11 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Depalo, Lee;Moore, Jkevin;Fisher, Dennis;Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Maria
Subject: FW: Standing Rock pipeline protests
Importance: High

Hi Nancy,

Here are the answers from Sean Johnson regarding the questions you had after this morning's stand up meeting:

- Has the National Guard been asked to assist with this incident?

The National Guard is not deployed in support of response operations

- What is NDDES activation level in regards to the Standing Rock protests?

We remain at Daily Ops – Level IV.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

"Teamwork makes the DREAM work."

From: (b)(6) [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 10:03 AM
To: Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock pipeline protests

Answers below….

(b)(6)
Plans Officer
ND Department of Emergency Services
Division of Homeland Security

Work: (b)(6)
Direct:
Cell (b)(6)

"Ordo ab chao"
(Out of chaos, comes order)

"Incrementalism is the death of innovation " - Nicholas Negroponte

---

From: Hudson, Lamont [mailto:Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 10:54 AM
To: (b)(6) @nd.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock pipeline protests

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks again for the solid information in short order.

I had a few questions asked about the Standing Rock pipeline protests:

- Has the National Guard been asked to assist with this incident?

The National Guard is not deployed in support of response operations

- What is NDDES activation level in regards to the Standing Rock protests?

We remain at Daily Ops – Level IV.

Thank you very much in advance for helping me fill in the blanks.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

“Teamwork makes the DREAM work.”

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 18:53:16 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Subject: FW: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe pipeline protest
Attachments: ND LNO Report Standing Rock Event.pptx
Importance: High

FYI

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 12:52 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>; Deal, Timothy <Timothy.Deal@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Moore, Jkevin <Jkevin.Moore@fema.dhs.gov>; Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>; Jones, Susan K <Susan.Jones2@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Maria <maria.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>; Rozelle, Jesse <Jesse.Rozelle@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe pipeline protest
Importance: High

Hi Nancy,

As discussed earlier, attached for your review is a collaborative effort on the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) report summarizing details of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe protests against the potential pipeline near Cannonball, North Dakota.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

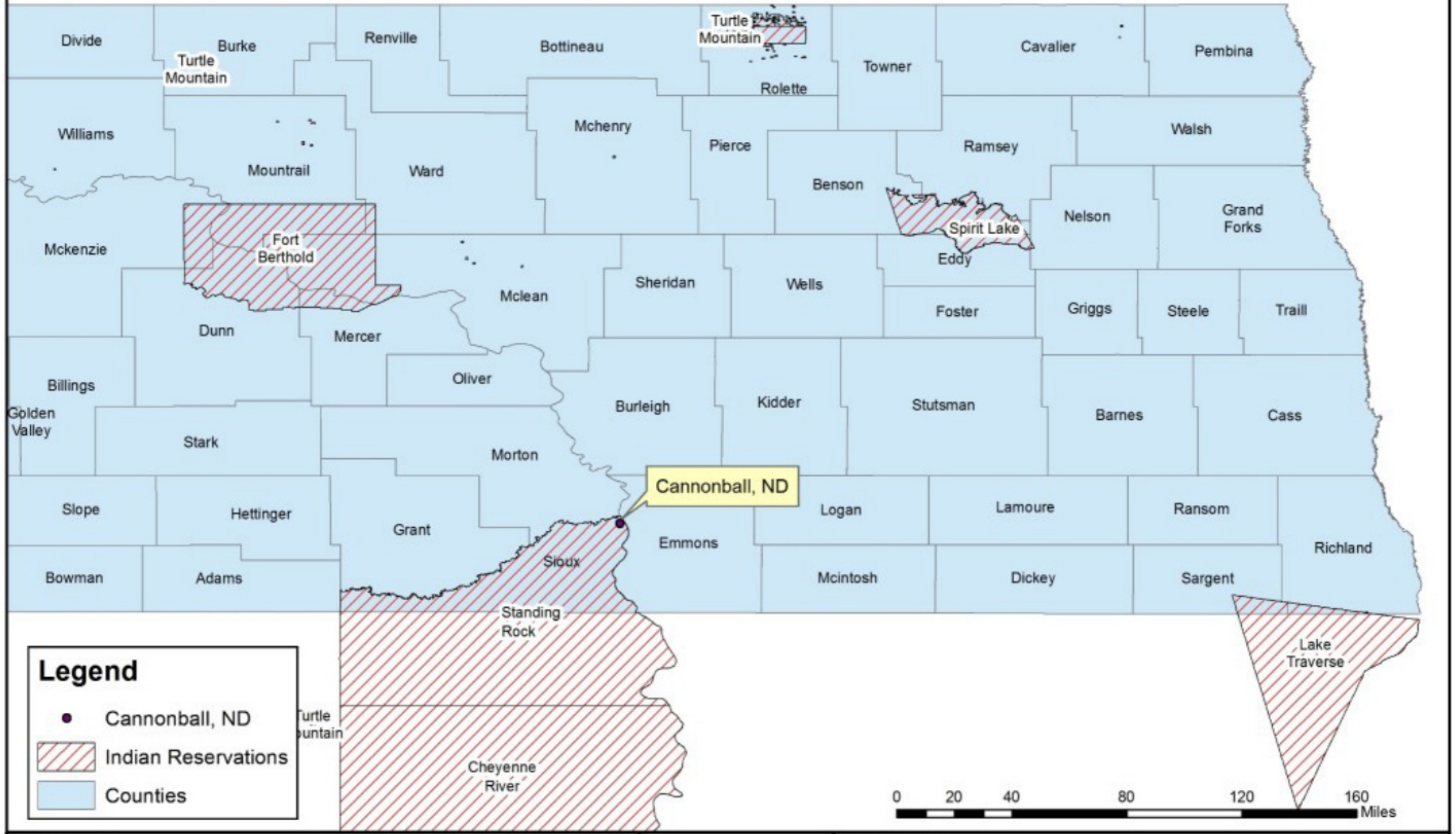
“Teamwork makes the DREAM work.”

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

State of North Dakota

3. Incident Period:
August 16, 2016


Divide
Burke
Turtle Mountain
Renville
Bottineau
Turtle Mountain
Rolette
Towner
Cavalier
Pembina
Williams
Mountrail
Ward
Mchenry
Pierce
Benson
Ramsey
Walsh
Nelson
Grand Forks
Spirit Lake
Eddy
Mckenzie
Fort Berthold
Mclean
Sheridan
Wells
Foster
Griggs
Steele
Traill
Dunn
Mercer
Oliver
Billings
Golden Valley
Burleigh
Kidder
Stutsman
Barnes
Cass
Stark
Morton
Cannonball, ND
Slope
Hettinger
Grant
Sioux
Emmons
Logan
Lamoure
Ransom
Richland
Bowman
Adams
Mcintosh
Dickey
Sargent
Standing Rock
Lake Traverse
Turtle Mountain
Cheyenne River
Legend
● Cannonball, ND
▨ Indian Reservations
■ Counties
0 20 40 80 120 160 Miles

4. Source(s):
FEMA

5. Prepared by:
Region VIII GIS

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:48:17 +0000
To: Depalo, Lee
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Lee -

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:20 PM
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)' <(b)(6)@hhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
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Megan

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@ihs.gov' <(b)(6)@ihs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.

- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
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If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Thanks

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6) @ihs.gov' <(b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 15:52:41 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: Violence at pipeline protest

8

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51 PM
To: R8 External Affairs <R8PublicAffairs@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:19:43 -0400
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)'
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

Per our conversation, I wanted to let you know that I sent the below email to the FEMA National Tribal Advisor and Rocky Jones with IHS - this is nothing official and just from our media monitoring.

Thanks

Megan

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Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:48:51 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

And then I forgot to you on the CC line.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:48 PM
To: Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Lee -

I meant to send this to you as well and forgot to put you on the CC line. I apologize and won't forget next time.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:20 PM
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

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Regards,

Milo

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 09:42:05 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors;Andersen, Chris
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Info: New York Times Story on protests

Fysa

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 06:37 AM
To: Greff, Stacie; Hvinden, Brian; Welch, Randy
Subject: New York Times Story on protests

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/us/occupying-the-prairie-tensions-rise-as-tribes-move-to-block-a-pipeline.html?_r=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 11:17:56 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: INFO: Standing Rock Protests - New York Times

Missed cc'ing you

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 9:16 AM
To: Tennyson, Stephanie <stephanie.tennyson@fema.dhs.gov>; Lemaitre, Rafael <rafael.lemaitre@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: INFO: Standing Rock Protests - New York Times

FYSA only.

Note: Our ARA has provided some BLUFs to Beth Z for awareness on the topic.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 8:38 AM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Nadeau, Robert <Robert.Nadeau@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock Protests - New York Times

Hi Milo–

We continue to media monitor the protests at Standing Rock (we are only watching for situational awareness, no activity). The New Your Time picked up the story late yesterday and I wanted you to be aware since I know you have gotten some questions.

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/us/occupying-the-prairie-tensions-rise-as-tribes-move-to-block-a-pipeline.html?_r=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Thanks

Megan

From: Wilz, Greg M.
Sent: 13 Oct 2016 12:33:28 +0000
To: Dragani, Nancy;Cameron, Guy;tina titze;Hamlet, Kris;Bruno, Delilah;Gally, Marilyn;Greff, Stacie
Cc: Kevin Klein
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Region 8 Directors,

I am hoping this all work. Below is a link to a state of North Dakota secure file transfer site. The file is about 190 meg so it was too large to send regular email. It is a briefing that will help explain what is going on in North Dakota. We are providing it all states that have inquired about what is the risk of sending LEO to North Dakota based on our EMAC.

The complete situation here on the ground is very complex almost unbelievable unless you have been here since the beginning. What has started as peaceful protest by concerned citizens and Tribal members has grown to situation that is at times out of control with recent actions bordering on terrorism with state, national , and international implications.

I look forward to talking to you all this morning. If the file transfer works and you get a chance to look at it before the conference call that would be great.

Greg

You can download the file using the following link:
https://apps.nd.gov/itd/filetransfer/downloadByInvitation.htm?id=1-cc8f91f7036cb333c3fdef74e22b47ff.

****
For security reasons, please do not forward this email to other persons. Doing so may allow unauthorized persons the ability to download the file as well.
****

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 17:22:50 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Judge postpones pipeline decision

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction

- JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune
  Jessica Holdman
- 1 hr ago

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

"A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.
Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

"Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court," Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe's historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

"It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them," Tsosie said.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

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Sent: 24 Aug 2016 17:22:50 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
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Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 12:55:34 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol;DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: LaDuke editorial re pipeline

From Ecowatch.com… not included in the clips, but I thought worth having. Winona LaDuke ran for vice-president on a ticket with Ralph Nader long ago…

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

The Dakota Access Pipeline: What Would Sitting Bull Do?

By Winona LaDuke

It's 2016 and the weight of American corporate interests has come to the Missouri River, the Mother River. This time, instead of the Seventh Cavalry or the Indian police dispatched to assassinate Sitting Bull, it is Enbridge and Dakota Access Pipeline.

In mid-August, Standing Rock Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was arrested by state police, along with 27 others, for opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline. In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple called for more police support.

Every major pipeline project in North America must cross indigenous lands, Indian Country. That is a problem.

The road west of Fargo is rarely taken. In fact, most Americans just fly over North Dakota, never seeing it.

Let me take you there.

My head clears as I drive. My destination is the homeland of the Hunkpapa Oceti, Standing Rock Reservation. It is early evening, the moon full. If you close your eyes, you can remember the 50 million buffalo—the single largest migratory herd in the world. The pounding of their hooves would vibrate the Earth, make the grass grow.

There were once 250 species of grass. Today the buffalo are gone, replaced by 28 million cattle, which require grain, water and hay. Many of the fields are now in a single GMO crop, full of so many pesticides that the monarch butterflies are dying off. But in my memory, the old world remains.

If you drive long enough, you come to the Missouri River.

Called Mnisose, a great swirling river, by the Lakota, she is a force to be reckoned with. She is breathtaking. "The Missouri River has a fixed place in the history and mythology" of the Lakota and other Indigenous nations of the Northern Plains, author Dakota Goodhouse would explain.

In the time before Sitting Bull, the Missouri River was the epicenter of northern agriculture, the river bed so fertile. The territory was known as the fertile crescent of North America. That was then, before the treaties that reduced the Lakota land base. But the Missouri remained in the treaty—the last treaty of 1868 used the Missouri as a boundary.

Then came the theft of land by the U.S. government and the taking of the Black Hills in 1877, in part as retaliation against Sitting Bull's victory at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. In a time prior to Black Lives Matter or Native Lives Matter, great leaders like Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were assassinated at the hands of police.

One truth: The Lakota people have survived much.

Forced into the reservation life, the Lakota attempted to stabilize their society, until the dams came. The 1944 Pick Sloan project flooded out the Missouri River tribes, taking the best bottom lands from the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, the Lakota and Dakota. More than 200,000 acres on the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations in South Dakota were flooded by the Oahe Dam itself, forcing not only relocation, but a loss of the Lakota world. The Garrison, Oahe and Fort Randall dams created a reservoir that eliminated 90 percent of timber and 75 percent of wildlife on the reservations.

That is how a people are made poor.

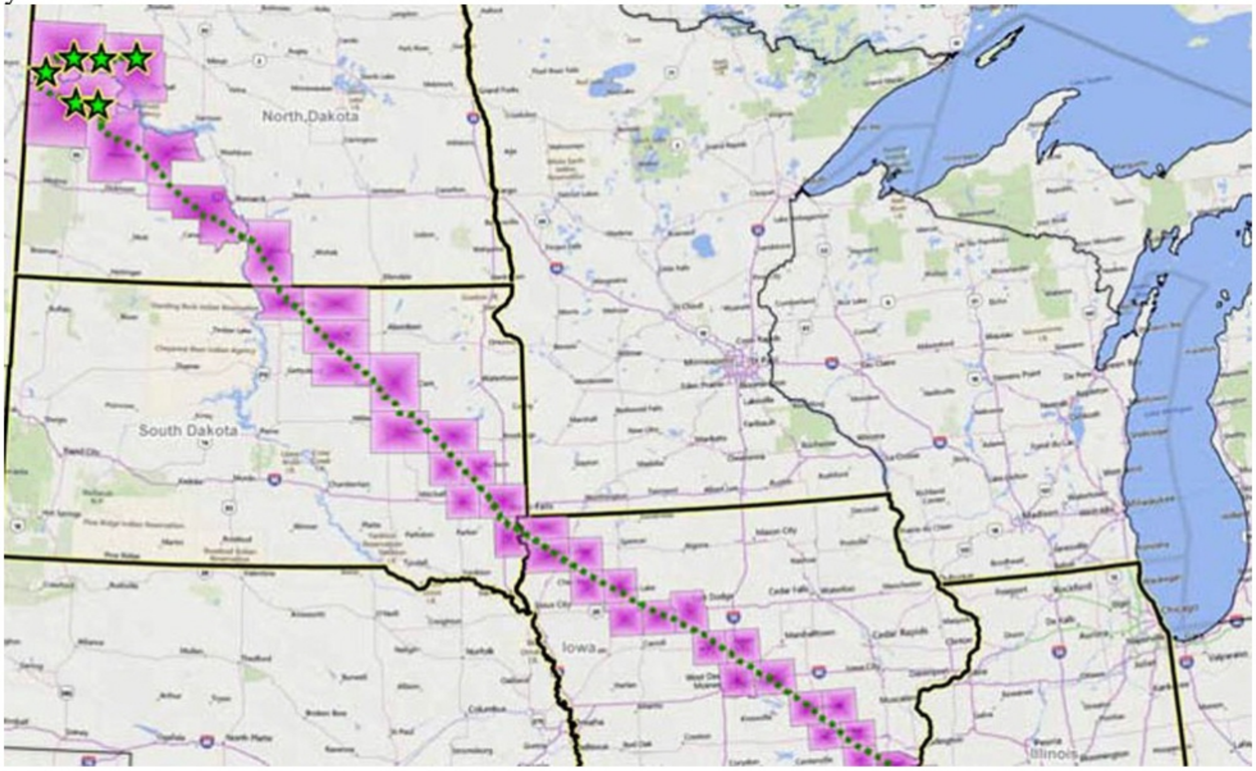
Today, well over two thirds of the population of Standing Rock is below the poverty level—and the land and Mother River are what remains, a constant, for the people. That is what is threatened today.

Enbridge and partners are preparing to drill through the riverbed. The pipeline has been permitted in sections from the west and from the east. The northern portion was moved away from the water supply of Bismarck, into the watershed of Standing Rock. That was unfortunate for the Lakota.

Despite Lakota legal and regulatory objections, the Dakota Access Pipeline construction began in May 2016. If finished it will snake through North and South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois, where it will link to a 774-mile pipeline to Nederland, Texas.

More than 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil will pass through the pipeline daily, along with 245,100 metric tons of carbon daily—enough carbon to combust the planet to oblivion.

The pipeline would span 200 water crossings and in North Dakota alone would pass through 33 historical and archeological sites. Enbridge just bought the Dakota Access pipeline, noting that the proposed Sandpiper route—Minnesota's 640,000 barrel per day Bakken line—is now three years behind schedule.



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The route of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

In late July, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe represented by Earthjustice, filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Standing Rock claims the project violates federal and treaty law. Standing Rock also filed an intervention at the United Nations, in coordination with the International Indian Treaty Council.

As Chairman Archambault explained in a New York Times story:

> "The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.
>
> "The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small construction sites.
>
> "Without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes."

In Iowa where work on the pipeline is underway, three fires erupted causing heavy damage to equipment and an estimated $1 million in damages. Investigators suspect arson, according to Jasper County Sheriff John Halferty. In October 2015, three Iowa farmers sued Dakota Access LLC and the Iowa Utilities Board in an attempt to prevent the use of eminent domain on their properties to construct the pipeline.

The health of the Missouri River has been taken for granted.

Dammed in the Pick Sloan Dam projects, each project increases contamination and reduces her health. Today, the Missouri is the seventh most polluted river in the country. Agricultural run-off and now fracking have contaminated the river. My sister fished a gar out of the river, a giant prehistoric fish, only to find it covered with tumors.

Here's just one case: In a January 2015 spill, saltwater contamination from a massive pipeline spill reached the Missouri River. In the baffling way of state and federal agencies, North Dakota's Health Director David Glatt did not expect harm to wildlife or drinking water supplies because the water was diluted. The saying is: "The solution to pollution is dilution." That is convenient, but not true.

Blacktail Creek and the Little Muddy River were contaminated after nearly 3 million gallons of saltwater with elevated levels of chloride contamination. All was diluted. But then there was that gar fish with the tumors.

There are pipelines everywhere and fewer than 150 Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) pipeline inspectors in the whole country.

And now comes the risk from oil.

The pipeline companies generally discuss a 99 percent safety record, but studies have found that to be grossly inaccurate. A former Scientific American Editor, Trudy Bell, reports that PHMSA data from 2001 to 2011 suggest the average pipeline "has a 57% probability of experiencing a major leak, with consequences over the $l million range in a ten year period."

Not good odds.

At Standing Rock, as the number of protesters grew from 200 to 2000, state law enforcement decided to put up a safety checkpoint and rerouted traffic on Highway 1806 from Bismarck to Standing Rock, hoping to dissuade people from coming and put the squeeze on Standing Rock's Prairie Knights Casino, which is served by that road.

We just drove around; the scenic route is beautiful. And as supporters surge in numbers, the casino hotel and restaurants are full.

While North Dakota seeks to punish the Lakota, Chairman Archambault expresses concerns for everyone:

From the New York Times: "I am here to advise anyone that will listen that the Dakota Access Pipeline project is harmful. It will not be just harmful to my people but its intent and construction will harm the water in the Missouri River, which is one of the cleanest and safest river tributaries left in the Unit States. To poison the water is to poison the substance of life. Everything that moves must have water. How can we talk about and knowingly poison water?"

In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Dalrymple announced a state of emergency, making additional state resources available "to manage public safety risks associated with the ongoing protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline." He may have exceeded his scope of authority and violated civil and human rights to water.

Chairman Archambault's interpretation: "Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests."

There are a lot of people at Standing Rock today who remember their history and the long standoff at Wounded Knee in 1973. In fact, some of those in Standing Rock today were there in 1973 at Wounded Knee, a similar battle for dignity and the future of a nation.

I am not sure how badly North Dakota wants this pipeline. If there is to be a battle over the pipeline, it will be here. For a people with nothing else but a land and a river, I would not bet against them.

The great Lakota leader Mathew King once said, "The only thing sadder than an Indian who is not free, is an Indian who does not remember what it is to be free."

The Standing Rock protest camp represents that struggle for freedom and the future of a people. All of us. If I ask the question "What would Sitting Bull do?"—the answer is pretty clear. He would remind me what he said 150 years ago: "Let us put our minds together to see what kind of future we can make for our children."

The time for that is now.

This article was originally published by LA Progressive and reposted with permission from our media associate YES! Magazine.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Sep 2016 16:18:25 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Megan's week

Megan's Week

Activates:

- Acting for Stacie though Friday.
- Working on Insider.
- Updating performance plan.
- Working with OST and damages from September 23.
- Getting next year's tribal training straightened out as much as possible.
- Follow-up with SBA regarding the National Preparedness Month story.
- Meetings, meetings and meetings.
- Other items as needed.

Issues:

- Watching Pipeline protests and tracking the discussions with Tribes and senior level officials about meaningful consultation. Including discussions this week with the White House.
- Tracking Utah issues with storm damages.
- Strom at OST and potential for an IA PDA and eventually request.
- Tight timeline on the R8 Insider.

Schedule:

- In all week.

Subject: Megan's Week

Activities:

- Work with EMI, Carol and Ricky on scheduling tribal courses for 2017
- Acting for Stacie (Tuesday-Friday) - several meetings
- R8 Insider
- Support Cynthia with final tribal travel figures
- OST possible request for assistance (IA)
- Watch Utah

Hot items:

- Dakota Access Pipeline
- OST Report of Damages

Schedule

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Sep 2016 12:18:29 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Megan's week

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To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Hunter, Cynthia;Hvinden, Brian
Subject: More ND tribal

State pulls relief resources from swelling Dakota Access Pipeline protest camp

- Mike Nowatzki Forum News Service
- Updated Aug 22, 2016

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"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

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"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

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The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

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"Our water is sacred," she said. "I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too."

Forum News Service reporter Amy Dalrymple contributed to this story.

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Sent: 9 Sep 2016 11:06:02 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Carol;Stephenson, James R
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Dragani, Nancy
Subject: More ND Tribal

Two articles from today's Denver Post. AP story gives a quick rundown in Q&A format. Denver Post article talks about yesterday's demonstration in Denver.

Q & A: The 4-state, $3.8 billion Dakota Access oil pipeline

Share this

Robyn Beck, AFP/Getty Images
Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and their supporters gather in a circle in the center of camp to hear speakers and singers, at a protest encampment near Cannon Ball, North Dakota where members of the tribe and their supporters have gathered to voice their opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), September 3, 2016.

By The Associated Press
PUBLISHED: September 9, 2016 at 12:33 am | UPDATED: September 9, 2016 at 12:34 am

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BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A federal judge has said he'll rule by Friday on the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's lawsuit that challenges federal permits for the four-state, $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline.

The lawsuit alleges that the pipeline, which would be placed less than a mile upstream of the reservation, could impact drinking water for more than 8,000 tribal members and millions who rely on it downstream. There also have been skirmishes between protesters and private security guards on private land, where the tribe says construction has disturbed ancient sacred sites.

North Dakota's governor said Thursday that a handful of National Guard members will help provide security at traffic checkpoints near the protest site, and another 100 will be on standby.

Some things to know about the pipeline and the tribe's ongoing protest:

WHAT IS THE DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE?

Owned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile project would carry nearly a half-million barrels of crude oil daily from North Dakota's oil fields through South Dakota and Iowa to an existing pipeline in Patoka, Illinois, where shippers can access Midwest and Gulf Coast markets.

WHAT IS THE LAWSUIT TARGETING?

The tribe sued federal regulators for approving the oil pipeline, challenging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' decision to grant permits at more than 200 water crossings. Filed on behalf of the tribe by environmental group Earthjustice, the suit says the project violates several federal laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act, and will disturb sacred sites outside of the 2.3-million acre reservation.

A separate lawsuit filed Thursday by a South Dakota tribe also challenges the decisions to grant the permits.

IS THE PIPELINE SAFE?

ETP says the pipeline includes safeguards such as leak detection equipment, and workers monitoring the pipeline remotely in Texas could close block valves on it within three minutes if a breach is detected.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PROTEST?

Since April, a nonviolent tribal protest by mostly members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe has been set up at a “spirit camp” at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers in the path of the pipeline.

It’s grown considerably, as they’ve been joined by other American Indians and non-Native Americans from across the country, including “Divergent” actress Shailene Woodley.

But the protest has become heated, with nearly 40 arrested, including Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II. None of the arrests stemmed from Saturday’s confrontation between protesters and construction workers.

Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein and running mate Ajamu Baraka camped with protesters Monday, and her campaign spokeswoman said Stein spray-painted construction equipment Tuesday. Stein and Baraka have been charged with misdemeanor counts of criminal trespass and criminal mischief.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple on Thursday activated the North Dakota National Guard ahead of U.S. District Judge James Boasberg’s impending federal ruling. A handful of soldiers will help provide security at traffic checkpoints near the protest site, and another 100 Guard members will be on standby if needed to respond to any incidents.

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- September 8, 2016 North Dakota oil pipeline protest finds support in Denver, hundreds gather at State Capitol
- September 6, 2016 Judge orders work to stop on part of controversial North Dakota pipeline
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- September 6, 2016 North Dakota oil pipeline protest turns violent
- August 14, 2016 In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens

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WHAT ABOUT CULTURAL SITES?

Last weekend, tribal officials said crews bulldozed several sites of “significant cultural and historic value” on private land, which Energy Transfer Partners denies. It led to Saturday’s clash between protesters and private security guards hired by the pipeline company. Law enforcement officials said four security guards and two guard dogs received medical treatment, while a tribal spokesman countered that six people were bitten by guard dogs and at least 30 people were pepper-sprayed.

On Tuesday, Boasberg partially granted the tribe’s request to temporarily stop work near Lake Oahe to prevent the destruction of more sacred sites, but not on the private land that sparked the protest.

North Dakota chief archaeologist Paul Picha plans to inspect the area, likely next week.

ARE THERE PROTESTS ELSEWHERE?

Yes, but nothing like in North Dakota. Construction equipment at several sites in Iowa was set on fire earlier in August, causing more than $1 million in damage.

___

WHY IS THE PIPELINE BEING BUILT?

Announced in 2014, supporters said the pipeline would create more markets and reduce truck and oil train traffic — the latter of which has been a growing concern after a spate of fiery derailments of trains carrying North Dakota crude.

North Dakota oil pipeline protest finds support in Denver, hundreds gather at State Capitol

Denver Post, Sept. 9, 2016

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NO-DAPL
DAKOTA
ACCESS
PIPELINE

David Zalubowski, The Associated Press
A line of protesters against the construction of the Dakota Access oil pipeline on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota head to a unity rally on the west steps of the State Capitol late Thursday, Sept. 8, 2016, in Denver. Several hundred marchers walked from the four directions to the Capitol to take part in the rally against the oil pipeline.

By Kieran Nicholson | knicholson@denverpost.com
September 8, 2016 at 9:09 pm

Hundreds gathered at the State Capitol in Denver on Thursday night to protest the Dakota Access oil pipeline, calling for construction of the controversial project to come to a halt.

Protesters in Denver, a great many of them Native Americans, stand in solidarity with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe which is trying to stop the pipeline in North Dakota. Native Americans from across the United States have gathered at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, in the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, to make a stand against the $3.8 billion pipeline.

State Rep. Joe Salazar, D-Thornton, was among the speakers who addressed the crowd on the west steps of the State Capitol.

Salazar rallied the crowd, questioning the safety of oil pipelines and fracking among other means of extracting and transporting fossil fuels. Touching on a recent Colorado Oil and Gas Association statement on oil pipeline safety, Salazar described it as "being full of lies."

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Citing an oil spill in the Yellowstone River, a pipeline explosion in New Mexico and recent earthquakes in Oklahoma, which some say are caused by fracking, Salazar asked: "What is the definition of safe?"

The crowd roared in support and approval of the question.

Native Americans in ceremonial dress danced to drums leading protesters from the Denver City and County Building along Colfax Avenue across Civic Center to the Capitol.

Some protesters carried signs, "Save our Water" and many chanted, "you can't drink oil, water is life," as they marched.

The marchers descended on the Capitol from all four directions and on the west steps they numbered about 500. Marchers from the west wore black; from the north, red; the east, yellow; and the south, white. Sage was burned, a song and speech was given in Native American tongue.

At one point some in the crowd chanted: "We stand with Standing Rock."

"Look at you, every face of our nation is represented here," Salazar told the crowd, which included families and children.

Salazar told the crowd that he works in the Capitol, in the "halls of power." But it's "nothing quite as powerful as what we see here."

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“My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it’s life-threatening or not,” he said. “This is our land, our people.”

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming’s Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children’s safety at the campsite. But she added, “I believe there’s strength in prayer,” and said it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Our water is sacred,” she said. “I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too.”

Forum News Service reporter Amy Dalrymple contributed to this story.

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:20:11 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: more stories on tribal pipeline protest

Wanted to be sure you guys saw what Brian got in the ND clips this a.m.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast. Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: 1 Nov 2016 08:56:55 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Morning

Megan,

Not sure if you have noticed it yet or not, but Scott Logan posted yesterday about being at Standing Rock Sioux tribe for the next week. Not sure how this could affect us, but after being the face of FEMA for so long I'm sure the name will come up. Just thought I would let you know.

Thanks,

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: 23 Sep 2016 11:19:47 -0400
To: Hunter, Cynthia;Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND & SD Clips
Attachments: ND Clips.docx

Not sure if you really want to use these attached articles, but is the only thing I could find for ND & SD within the past 24 hours that was disaster related (one is DAPL related).

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[The Costs of Climate Inaction: How Extreme Weather Burdens U.S. Taxpayers]

[Dem candidates' solution to DAPL: Build a refinery, reroute pipeline]

The Costs of Climate Inaction How Extreme Weather Burdens U.S. Taxpayers (American Progress)

One of the most visible and immediate ways climate change has affected—and will continue to affect—Americans is through extreme weather exacerbated by rising global temperatures. Between 2005 and 2015, the annual average temperature in the United States exceeded the 20th-century average every year, with increases ranging from 0.15 degrees Celsius to 1.81 degrees Celsius above normal. Moreover, the federal government's most recent National Climate Assessment concludes that as temperatures continue to rise, extreme weather events and wildfires will increase in frequency and intensity. Climate change will worsen heat waves, winter storms, and hurricanes. It will exacerbate extremes in precipitation, leading to more severe droughts and wildfires in some areas and heavier rainfall and flooding in others. And when the damage is done, taxpayers will be left to pick up the bill.

Extreme weather events and wildfires not only pose real threats to human health and safety—they put taxpayers at risk as well. Between 2005 and 2015, 93 natural disasters in the United States caused more than $1 billion in damage each, amounting to $586 billion in total losses. This damage can profoundly affect state and local economies. Even after a storm passes or a wildfire is extinguished, displaced people and shuttered businesses impose ongoing financial burdens on communities. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, found that New Orleans lost 95,000 jobs and an estimated $2.9 billion in wages during the first 10 months after Hurricane Katrina.

When extreme weather strikes and state and local governments are overwhelmed, the federal government must often intervene. In the worst cases, the president can declare an emergency or a major disaster, which releases federal funds for the damaged areas. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, provides financial assistance to local, tribal, and state governments, as well as individual households, after the president declares an emergency or major disaster.

The Center for American Progress examined FEMA data on weather- and wildfire-related disaster declarations between 2005 and 2015 to identify trends in FEMA disaster spending, which is funded by U.S. taxpayers. CAP found that:

- Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA issued more than $67 billion in grants to assist communities and individuals devastated by extreme weather and wildfires. Overall, FEMA spent about $200 per U.S. resident for disaster assistance during that time period.
- FEMA provided the most disaster assistance to Louisiana and New York, which, combined, received more than half of the agency's total assistance over the 10-year period due to damage caused by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy, respectively. Texas, Mississippi, and New Jersey rank third through fifth for FEMA disaster spending between 2005 and 2015.
- The states that received the most FEMA disaster assistance spending per capita were Louisiana ($4,345), Mississippi ($1,607), North Dakota ($843), and New York ($807). In North Dakota, unprecedented flooding events in 2009 and storms in 2011 caused substantial damage, driving up per-person costs among a smaller state population.

These findings likely underestimate the true federal cost—and thus the cost to taxpayers—of extreme weather. FEMA provides assistance in response to the worst natural disasters—those that triggered emergency and major disaster declarations. As a result, the findings do not include the costs of smaller but still destructive storms, costs borne by private insurers, and other government spending, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's disaster assistance program.

As the climate warms, these types of extreme weather and wildfire events could impose an even greater burden on American communities and taxpayers. In order to prepare for this reality, communities must invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and integrate climate considerations into their development plans.

Findings: FEMA is spending billions on natural disasters

Between 2005 and 2015, the president issued 832 separate emergency or disaster declarations for which FEMA provided either public assistance—defined as funding for state, tribal, and local governments—or individual assistance in the form of grants typically made to homeowners and renters whose home damage was not covered by homeowners insurance. (see text box)

Types of FEMA disaster assistance

In fiscal year 2015, Congress allocated $2.9 billion to FEMA federal assistance programs. The assistance FEMA provides in the wake of a presidentially declared emergency or major disaster typically takes one of two forms:

- Public assistance grants fund disaster recovery projects through state, tribal, and local governments and designated nonprofits. The recipients generally spend this money on debris removal, the repair and restoration of damaged public facilities, and other emergency measures.
- The Individuals and Households Program provides smaller grants to homeowners to repair property damage not otherwise covered through insurance. These grants can also cover temporary housing when an extreme weather event or other disaster displaces people.

In addition to these assistance programs, FEMA provides hazard mitigation assistance to prevent or mitigate long-term risks associated with natural disasters. FEMA also offers fire management assistance to state, local, and tribal governments for the “mitigation, management, and control” of certain fires in forests or grasslands. This issue brief only focuses on the public and individual/household assistance programs that are available after a disaster declaration.

Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA spent $67.7 billion on household and public assistance in response to presidentially declared emergencies and major disasters. Of this amount, $14.36 billion was spent on individual and household assistance, and public assistance outlays to state, tribal, and local governments made up the rest—$53.31 billion.

During this 10-year period, there were extreme weather and wildfire events in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories and throughout all seasons. Severe storms were the most frequent cause of disaster declarations, with 470 distinct declarations across the examined time period. Although less common than severe storms, hurricanes caused the most damage. Between 2005 and 2015, FEMA spent $49.5 billion on public and individual assistance to help communities recover from hurricanes. FEMA spent $12.7 billion for assistance related to severe storms over the same 10-year period. (see Table 1)

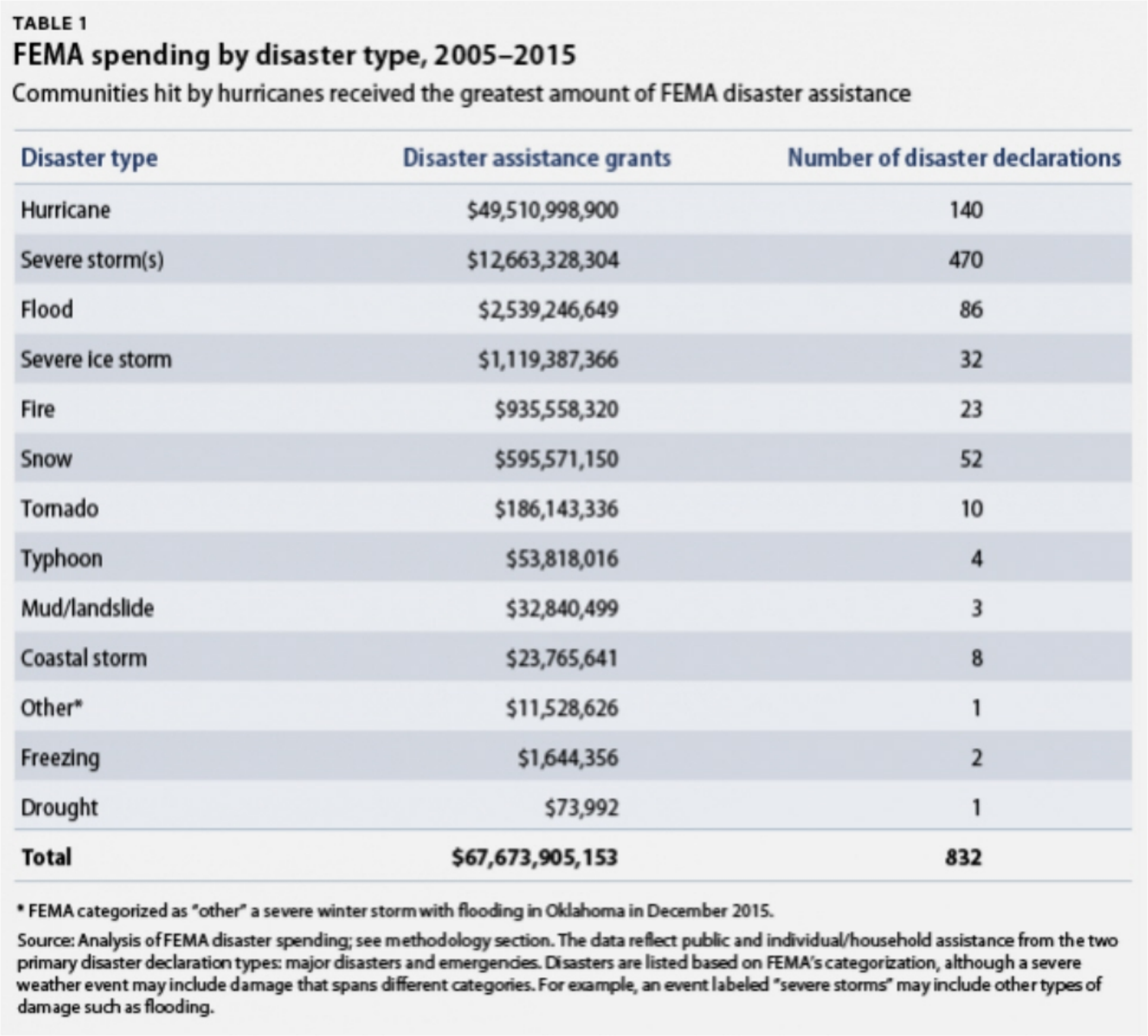


TABLE 1

FEMA spending by disaster type, 2005–2015

Communities hit by hurricanes received the greatest amount of FEMA disaster assistance

Disaster type	Disaster assistance grants	Number of disaster declarations
Hurricane	$49,510,998,900	140
Severe storm(s)	$12,663,328,304	470
Flood	$2,539,246,649	86
Severe ice storm	$1,119,387,366	32
Fire	$935,558,320	23
Snow	$595,571,150	52
Tornado	$186,143,336	10
Typhoon	$53,818,016	4
Mud/landslide	$32,840,499	3
Coastal storm	$23,765,641	8
Other*	$11,528,626	1
Freezing	$1,644,356	2
Drought	$73,992	1
Total	**$67,673,905,153**	**832**

* FEMA categorized as "other" a severe winter storm with flooding in Oklahoma in December 2015.

Source: Analysis of FEMA disaster spending; see methodology section. The data reflect public and individual/household assistance from the two primary disaster declaration types: major disasters and emergencies. Disasters are listed based on FEMA's categorization, although a severe weather event may include damage that spans different categories. For example, an event labeled "severe storms" may include other types of damage such as flooding.

Hurricanes accounted for eight of the top-10 costliest disaster declarations between 2005 and 2010, including hurricanes Katrina, Sandy, Ike, Wilma, Rita, Gustav, Irene, and Isaac. (see Table 2)

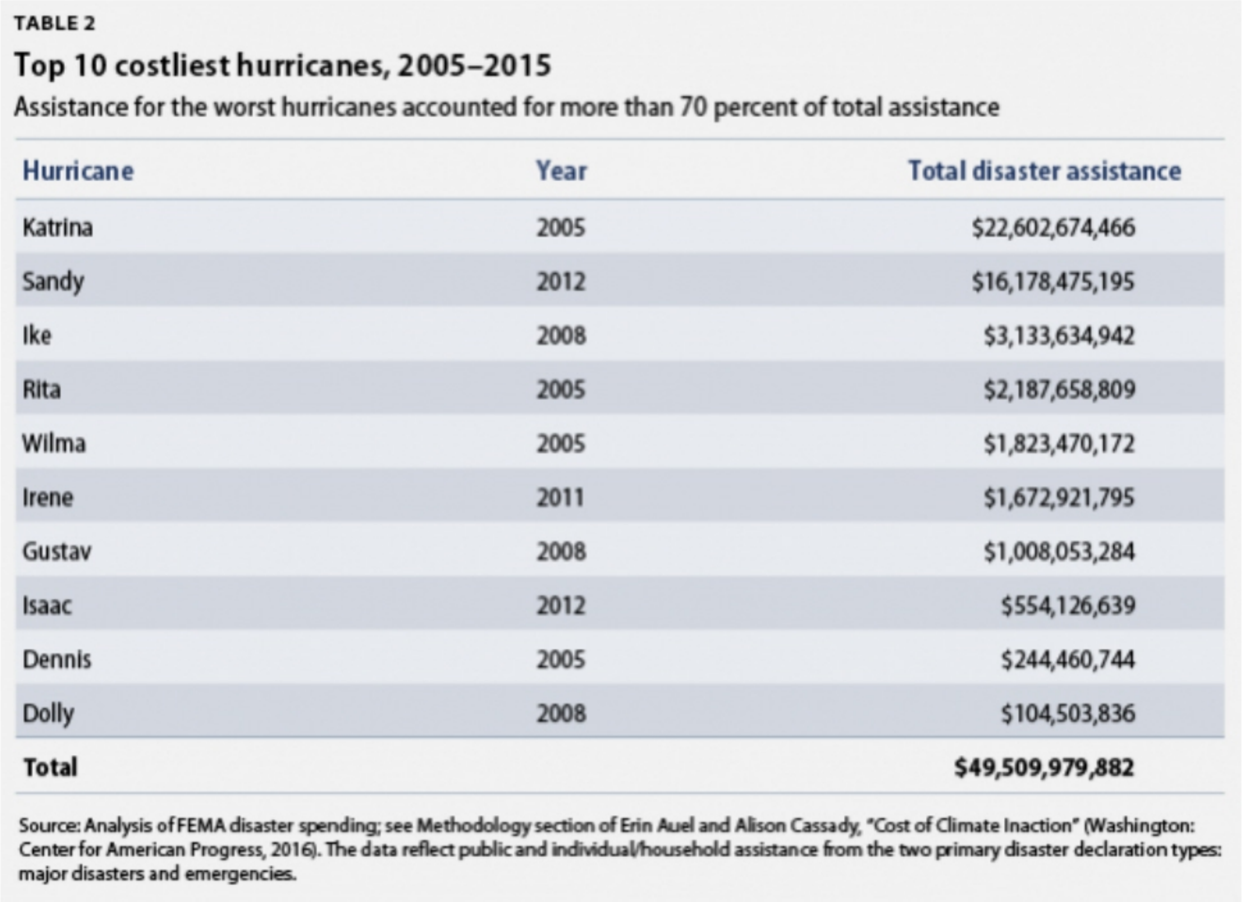


TABLE 2

Top 10 costliest hurricanes, 2005–2015

Assistance for the worst hurricanes accounted for more than 70 percent of total assistance

Hurricane	Year	Total disaster assistance
Katrina	2005	$22,602,674,466
Sandy	2012	$16,178,475,195
Ike	2008	$3,133,634,942
Rita	2005	$2,187,658,809
Wilma	2005	$1,823,470,172
Irene	2011	$1,672,921,795
Gustav	2008	$1,008,053,284
Isaac	2012	$554,126,639
Dennis	2005	$244,460,744
Dolly	2008	$104,503,836
Total		**$49,509,979,882**

Source: Analysis of FEMA disaster spending; see Methodology section of Erin Auel and Alison Cassady, "Cost of Climate Inaction" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2016). The data reflect public and individual/household assistance from the two primary disaster declaration types: major disasters and emergencies.

Accordingly, although the total assistance by state varied widely, FEMA directed significant disaster spending to states that experienced historic hurricane damage during the period examined. These states include Louisiana and Mississippi, where Hurricane Katrina hit hardest in 2005, and New York and New Jersey, where Hurricane Sandy landed in 2012. (see Table 3) Nationwide, FEMA spent more than $22 billion in assistance responding to Hurricane Katrina, including allocations for states that provided assistance related to evacuations. The agency provided nearly $16 billion in household and public assistance grants in response to Hurricane Sandy.

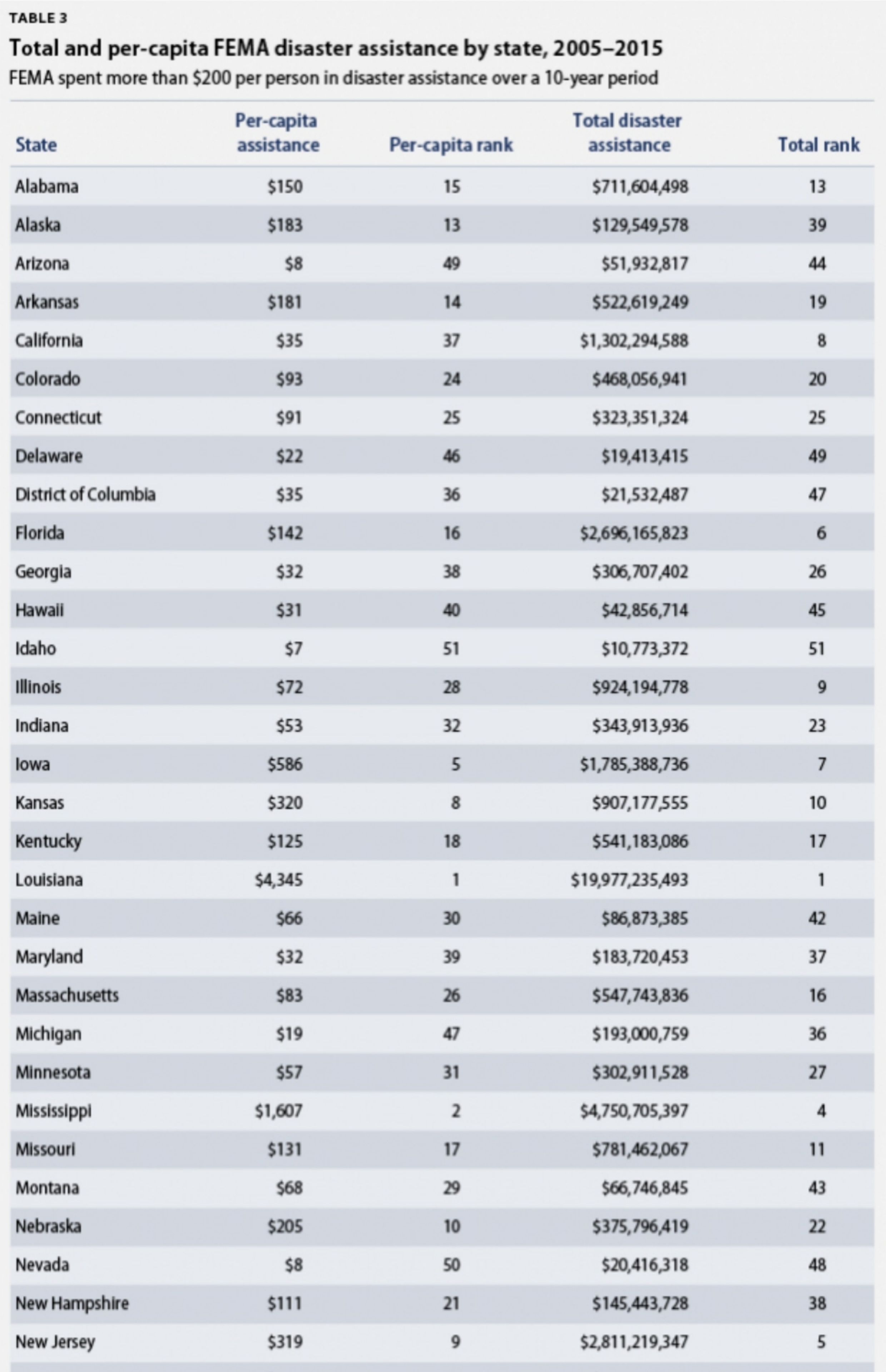


TABLE 3

Total and per-capita FEMA disaster assistance by state, 2005–2015

FEMA spent more than $200 per person in disaster assistance over a 10-year period

State	Per-capita assistance	Per-capita rank	Total disaster assistance	Total rank
Alabama	$150	15	$711,604,498	13
Alaska	$183	13	$129,549,578	39
Arizona	$8	49	$51,932,817	44
Arkansas	$181	14	$522,619,249	19
California	$35	37	$1,302,294,588	8
Colorado	$93	24	$468,056,941	20
Connecticut	$91	25	$323,351,324	25
Delaware	$22	46	$19,413,415	49
District of Columbia	$35	36	$21,532,487	47
Florida	$142	16	$2,696,165,823	6
Georgia	$32	38	$306,707,402	26
Hawaii	$31	40	$42,856,714	45
Idaho	$7	51	$10,773,372	51
Illinois	$72	28	$924,194,778	9
Indiana	$53	32	$343,913,936	23
Iowa	$586	5	$1,785,388,736	7
Kansas	$320	8	$907,177,555	10
Kentucky	$125	18	$541,183,086	17
Louisiana	$4,345	1	$19,977,235,493	1
Maine	$66	30	$86,873,385	42
Maryland	$32	39	$183,720,453	37
Massachusetts	$83	26	$547,743,836	16
Michigan	$19	47	$193,000,759	36
Minnesota	$57	31	$302,911,528	27
Mississippi	$1,607	2	$4,750,705,397	4
Missouri	$131	17	$781,462,067	11
Montana	$68	29	$66,746,845	43
Nebraska	$205	10	$375,796,419	22
Nevada	$8	50	$20,416,318	48
New Hampshire	$111	21	$145,443,728	38
New Jersey	$319	9	$2,811,219,347	5

Nonhurricane events can cause significant and costly damage as well. In August 2016, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, experienced historic flooding from torrential rainfall. As of August 23, 2016, the floods had killed 13 people, and more than 100,000 people had applied for federal assistance. Preliminary analysis from Climate Central and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, found that increased temperatures due to climate change increased the likelihood of intense downpours in Louisiana by 40 percent. Floods are among the most costly extreme weather events that can hit an area, as they can destroy large areas of property and can take a long time to recede. Between 2005 and 2015, flooding caused eight of the 10 costliest nonhurricane disaster declarations and occurred across several different regions. (see Table 4)

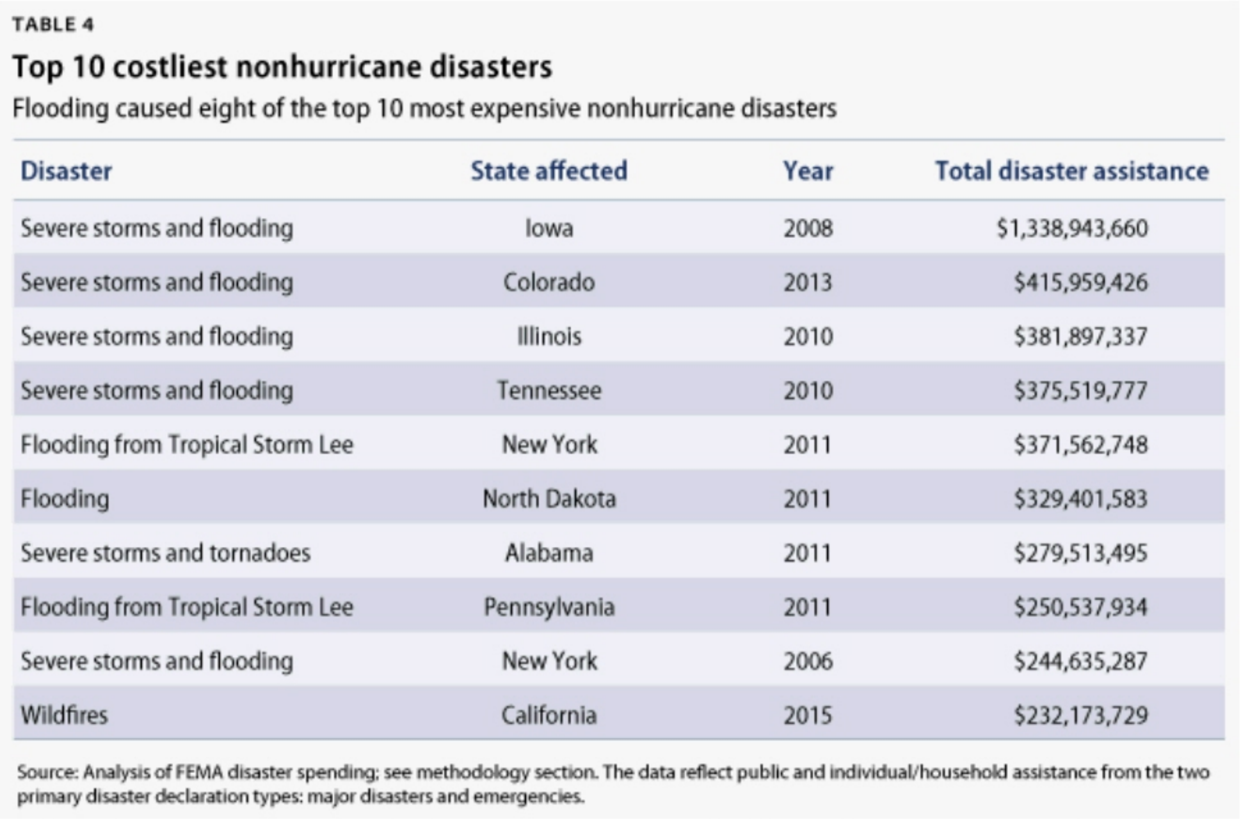


TABLE 4

Top 10 costliest nonhurricane disasters

Flooding caused eight of the top 10 most expensive nonhurricane disasters

Disaster	State affected	Year	Total disaster assistance
Severe storms and flooding	Iowa	2008	$1,338,943,660
Severe storms and flooding	Colorado	2013	$415,959,426
Severe storms and flooding	Illinois	2010	$381,897,337
Severe storms and flooding	Tennessee	2010	$375,519,777
Flooding from Tropical Storm Lee	New York	2011	$371,562,748
Flooding	North Dakota	2011	$329,401,583
Severe storms and tornadoes	Alabama	2011	$279,513,495
Flooding from Tropical Storm Lee	Pennsylvania	2011	$250,537,934
Severe storms and flooding	New York	2006	$244,635,287
Wildfires	California	2015	$232,173,729

Source: Analysis of FEMA disaster spending; see methodology section. The data reflect public and individual/household assistance from the two primary disaster declaration types: major disasters and emergencies.

Looking at the per-capita costs of extreme weather reveals that these disasters have a profound impact on individuals and communities. Louisiana received $4,345 per person in FEMA disaster spending between 2005 and 2015, the most of any state. Mississippi received the second-highest amount per capita—more than $1,600. Overall, FEMA spent about $200 per U.S. resident for disaster assistance between 2005 and 2015. (see Table 3)

Damage is not just limited to coastal areas. States in the central United States with relatively small populations have been hit hard by extreme weather and subsequently received significant assistance from FEMA. North Dakota, for example, ranks third for per-capita FEMA assistance over the analyzed decade due largely to eight distinct flooding events. Iowa ranks fifth for per-capita FEMA spending and seventh for total spending because of severe storms that caused major statewide flooding in 2008. Of the 10 states with the highest per-capita spending, half are located in the central United States. (see Table 3)

Conclusion

Extreme weather is already costing taxpayers and the federal government valuable public dollars and resources. Americans have recognized these costs; in a 2015 *New York Times* survey, 83 percent of respondents said that unmitigated climate change poses “a very or somewhat serious problem in the future.”

Because of the damage already caused to the climate, communities in the United States and around the globe will experience more frequent and intense extreme weather events, even if world leaders take immediate action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Faced with this reality, FEMA has proposed a rule that would establish a deductible for disaster assistance in order to encourage states to make investments in resilience measures before disasters occur. This rule could incentivize states to invest in climate-smart infrastructure to minimize the financial and human toll of extreme weather.

The FEMA proposal is one among many efforts to push communities to better prepare for storms, floods, and other natural disasters—an effort made even more urgent because of climate change—rather than focusing only on responding to a disaster’s aftermath. Resilience, however, is only one prong in a coordinated response to climate change. The world must also focus on mitigating the worst impacts of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning the global economy to cleaner, low-carbon forms of energy.

Methodology

CAP examined FEMA data on presidential declarations of major disasters and emergencies between 2005 and 2015. The data reflect the two primary disaster declaration types: major disaster and emergency. CAP analyzed FEMA data on public and individual/household assistance spending in response to these declarations. The data were last updated on July 12, 2016.

For the per-capita analysis in Table 3, CAP used population data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. To calculate the per-capita costs by state, CAP averaged the state population totals from 2005, 2010, and 2015. The national per-capita figure in Table 3 reflects FEMA disaster assistance to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories.

CAP developed a methodology for excluding and including disasters to ensure the analysis only includes declarations that reflect the types of events that could become more common with unmitigated climate change.

We included public and individual assistance payments made in response to major disaster declarations and emergency declarations for the following types of incidents: coastal storms, drought, flooding, freezing, hurricanes, mudslides from flooding, severe ice storms, severe storms, snow, tornadoes, typhoons, and wildfires. We excluded public and individual assistance payments made for the following types of incidents that occurred between 2005 and 2015: water main breaks, terrorism, explosions, earthquakes, chemical spills, tsunamis, the 2009 presidential inauguration, bridge collapses, and volcanoes.

Dem candidates' solution to DAPL: Build a refinery, reroute pipeline (WDAY6)

By Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 6:20 a.m.

BISMARCK — North Dakota Democrats running for congressional, statewide and legislative office proposed Thursday a state-owned oil refinery and rerouting the Dakota Access Pipeline as potential solutions to the ongoing dispute over the four-state oil pipeline.

Chase Iron Eyes, a Standing Rock Sioux Tribe member and Fort Yates attorney challenging incumbent Republican Rep. Kevin Cramer for North Dakota's lone U.S. House seat, joined other candidates in calling for better communication between state government, protesters and pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners of Dallas.

"We feel that we can reach a peaceable resolution but that all sides need to be talking to each other," Iron Eyes said during a press conference at a Bismarck hotel. "The eyes of the world are on North Dakota right now."

Iron Eyes, District 30 House candidate Tom Asbridge of Bismarck and District 34 Senate candidate David Gipp of Mandan, a Standing Rock Sioux member and former president of United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, suggested the state-owned Bank of North Dakota partner with private investors to build a major oil refinery to create jobs and reduce export of crude oil.

"I'm not saying we could eliminate all of the pipeline issue, but we could vastly reduce it," Gipp said, though Iron Eyes later acknowledged the state would have to export refined product and "we're not going to ever get away from the pipeline issue."

Asbridge said if the Dakota Access Pipeline must be built, it should run north of Bismarck — an alternative route the company considered early on but eliminated in favor of the current route that crosses the Missouri River less than a mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

Iron Eyes said they're not anti-oil, but the state needs leadership to incentivize and facilitate such action. "Because no matter what we say, there are 4,000 people that are willing to engage in civil disobedience to protect their interests," he said, referring to the self-described "water protectors" encamped just north of the reservation.

North Dakota Republican Party Chairman Kelly Armstrong, a state senator from Dickinson, said he's comfortable that Dakota Access chose the route and "went through the proper process." As for the refinery idea, he noted the Tesoro refinery that opened near Dickinson in May 2015 was the country's first new refinery since the 1970s.

"Even if that idea had any merit, you are more than likely a decade out from that even being a possibility," he said. "It's not as simple as saying build a refinery here and then we won't have to move as much oil. ... Right now we need serious solutions and not overly simplistic ones."

Also speaking at Thursday's press conference were state insurance commissioner candidate Ruth Buffalo of Mandaree, a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation; Public Service Commission candidate Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun, a Standing Rock member from Bismarck; and District 28 Senate candidate Dustin Peyer of Driscoll.

The Standing Rock tribe claims in its lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that the agency violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other laws in issuing permits for the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline, which will stretch from the Bakken oilfields to Patoka, Ill., and is more than 60 percent completed.

Construction within 20 miles of Lake Oahe is on hold as the Corps and courts consider the tribe's claims that it wasn't properly consulted and that the project should have undergone more extensive review.

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 9 Sep 2016 19:36:45 -0400
To: Depalo, Lee;Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline news

Hi Lee and Megan,

Please follow this link for another update:

http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/09/the-obama-administration-temporarily-blocks-the-dakota-access-pipeline/499454/

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 9 Sep 2016 16:55:22 -0400
To: Depalo, Lee;Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline Update

Hi Lee and Megan,

I'm not sure if you are already aware or not, but I just saw this in the news.

Please see link:

http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/09/493280504/judge-rules-that-construction-can-proceed-on-dakota-access-pipeline

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

"Teamwork makes the DREAM work."

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 13 Sep 2016 22:06:34 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: ND GOV. Press Release on Pipeline Protest

Wanted to make sure you saw this. Especially since I just got the ask from IHS.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Zent, Jeffrey L.
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2016 10:45:27 PM
Subject: DALRYMPLE PRESSES WHITE HOUSE, FEDERAL AGENICES TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SAFETY EFFORTS

State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor
Jack Dalrymple
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 13, 2016

Contact: Jeff Zent or Jody Link
701.328.2200

DALRYMPLE PRESSES WHITE HOUSE, FEDERAL AGENICES TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SAFETY EFFORTS

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Jack Dalrymple today called on the White House and federal agencies to provide federal assistance in maintaining peace and public safety for the duration of protest activities involving the Dakota Access Pipeline.

“The federal government’s announcement on Friday regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline has extended indefinitely the period of time necessary to bring the issue to a resolution,” Gov. Dalrymple said. “With a decision on the pipeline delayed indefinitely, the federal government shares in the responsibility of ensuring that peace and order are maintained.”

Dalrymple spoke today with White House officials and has also been in contact with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Interior and the Department of Justice to press for federal assistance, both personnel and financial support. Dalrymple called for federal officials to provide assistance for as long as resources are needed to maintain public safety.

“I’m going to hold the federal government to its word, when the Corps and the departments of Interior and Justice delayed a decision on the pipeline’s construction, and offered to deploy resources to North Dakota to help “defuse tensions, support peaceful protest, and maintain public safety,”’ Dalrymple said.

Dalrymple said he has also spoken with the state’s Congressional Delegation, requesting their assistance in securing federal support. That support is needed in the form of financial assistance and in law enforcement personnel.

To date, the state Highway Patrol has incurred more than $700,000 in expenses associated with pipeline protest activities. Morton County officials have reported incurring costs of about $100,000 a week for a total of approximately $400,000.

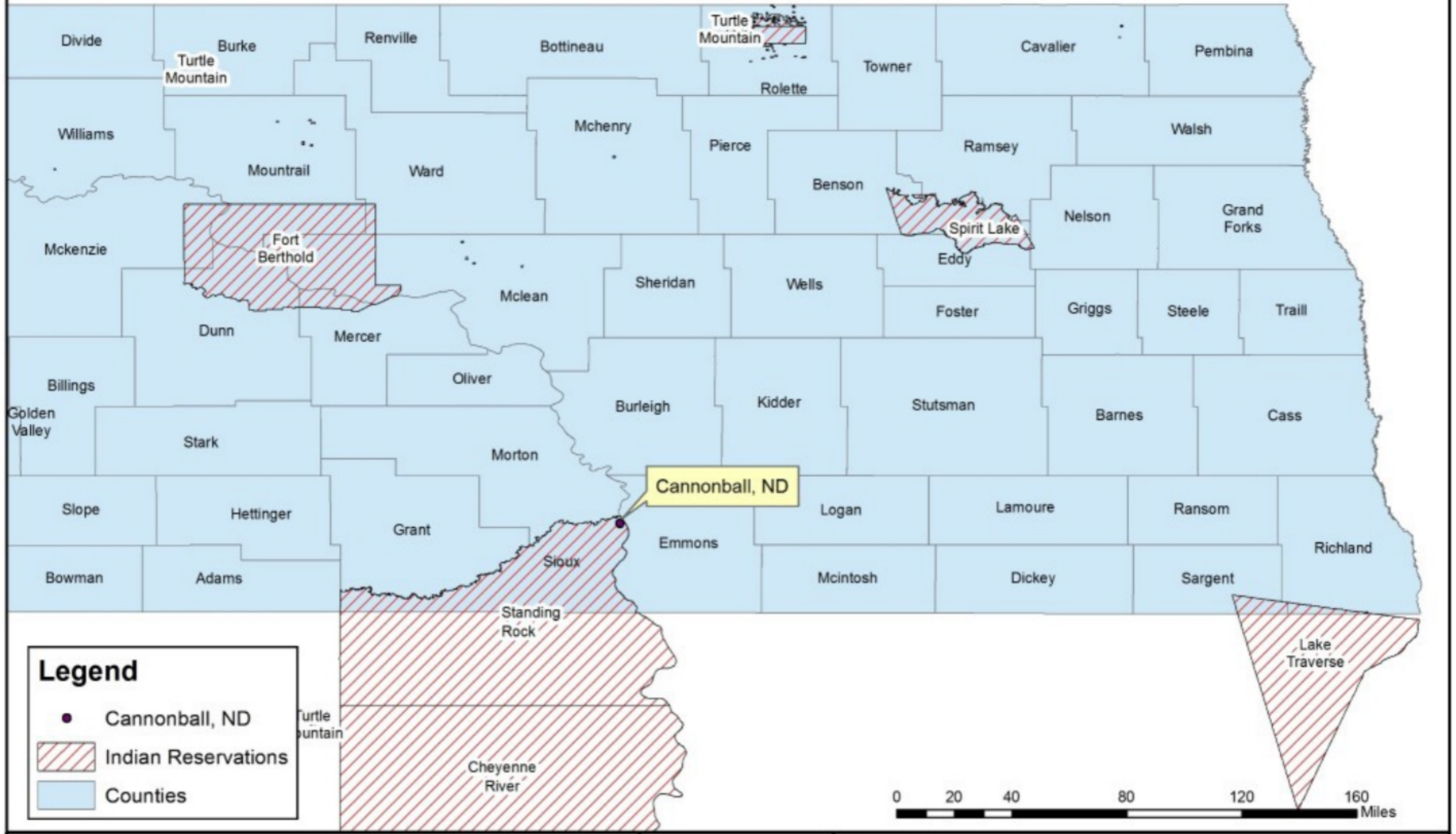
Morton County Sheriff’s deputies and state troopers today reported arresting 22 people at a pipeline construction site near Glen Ullin. Additionally, the North Dakota Department of Transportation and Highway Patrol today again closed ND Highway 1806 to southbound traffic about six miles south of Mandan. The highway was closed due to a large number of pedestrians and vehicles along the roadway.

State of North DakotaLNO and Regional Tribal Report #1As of 16 August 2016/1200 MDT)

Situation: On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census). Threats/Impacts/CIKR/Key Resources: Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site.As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol.Tribal concerns include contamination of local water not only for health and environmental reasons but because water is considered sacred to the Native Americans.The Tribe is also concerned about other cultural implications of this pipeline.The pipeline could have ecological threats and impacts.The pipeline will be located under the Missouri River.State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.There are no road closures in effect at this time. State & Federal Posture/Actions: State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations. Communication with State/Tribal/Local officials: No contact has been made with the Tribe regarding this issue.The Acting Regional Administrator has been in contact with the Director of North Dakota Department of Emergency Services for situational awareness only. Shortfalls or limiting factors, currently or anticipated, including any support requirements from FEMA HQs: None at this time, State and Local authorities are actively monitoring the event. LNO Summary: FEMA LNO and FEMA Region VIII Tribal Liaison are monitoring the situation.Source of Information: North Dakota Department of Emergency Services and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Facebook.

State of North Dakota

3. Incident Period:
August 16, 2016


Divide
Burke
Turtle Mountain
Renville
Bottineau
Turtle Mountain
Rolette
Towner
Cavalier
Pembina
Williams
Mountrail
Ward
Mchenry
Pierce
Benson
Ramsey
Walsh
Nelson
Grand Forks
Spirit Lake
Eddy
Fort Berthold
Mckenzie
Mclean
Sheridan
Wells
Foster
Griggs
Steele
Traill
Dunn
Mercer
Oliver
Billings
Golden Valley
Burleigh
Kidder
Stutsman
Barnes
Cass
Stark
Morton
Cannonball, ND
Slope
Hettinger
Grant
Logan
Lamoure
Ransom
Richland
Emmons
Sioux
Bowman
Adams
Mcintosh
Dickey
Sargent
Standing Rock
Lake Traverse
Turtle Mountain
Cheyenne River
Legend
● Cannonball, ND
▨ Indian Reservations
Counties
0
20
40
80
120
160
Miles

4. Source(s):
FEMA

5. Prepared by:
Region VIII GIS

Dakota Access Pipeline

Protest

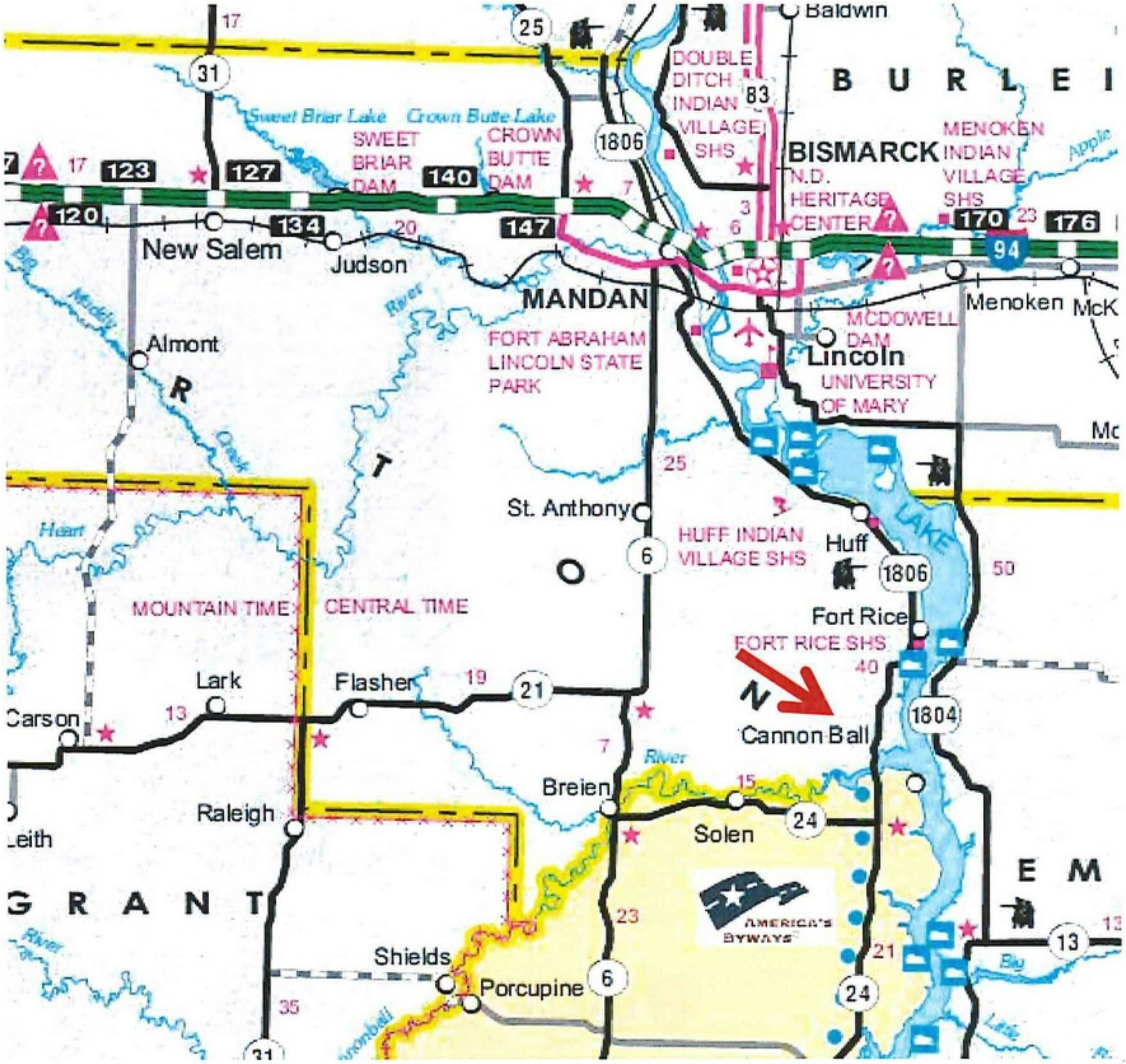
SHERIFF
MORTON COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

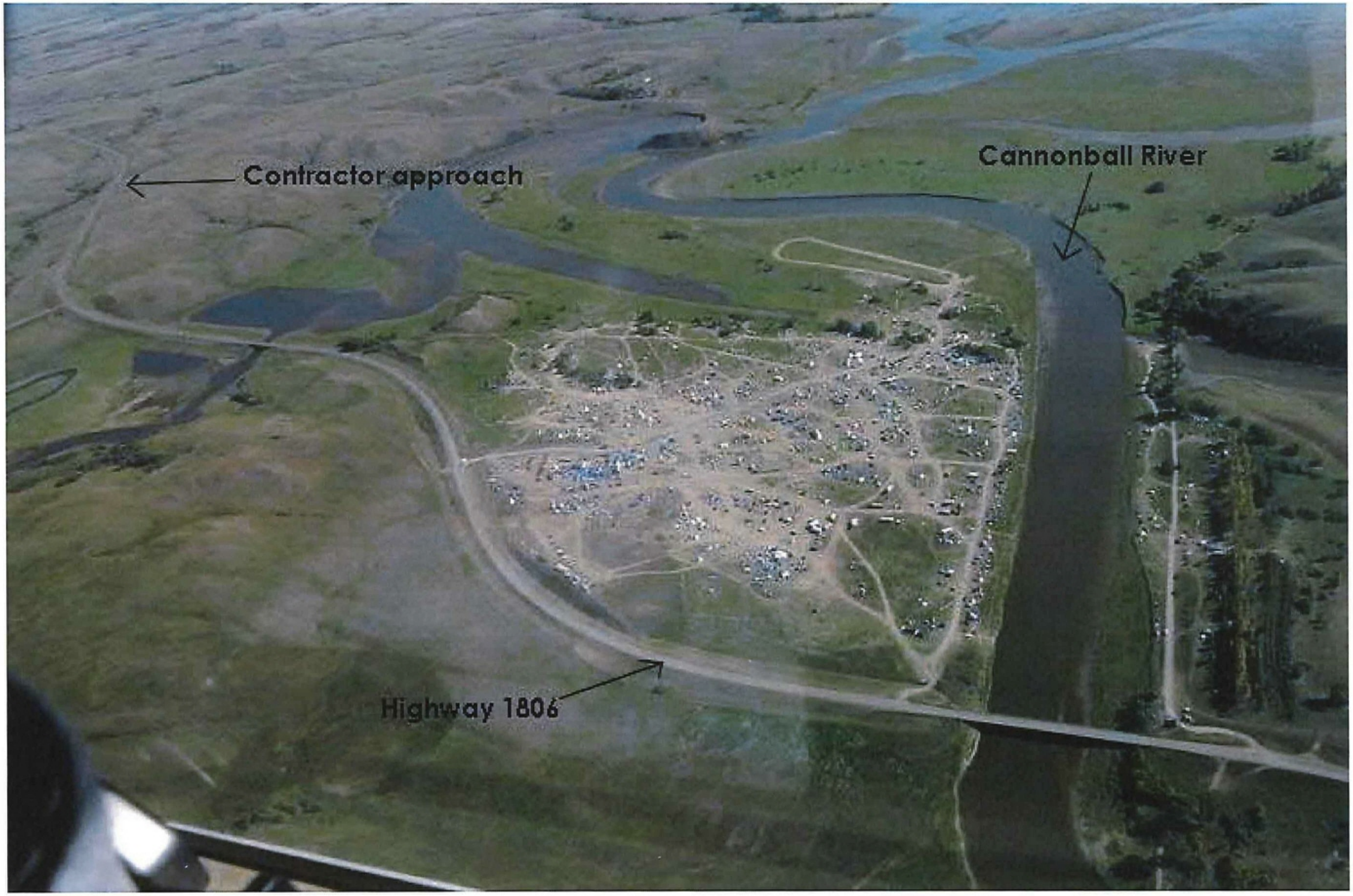
August 10-October 12, 2016

Location

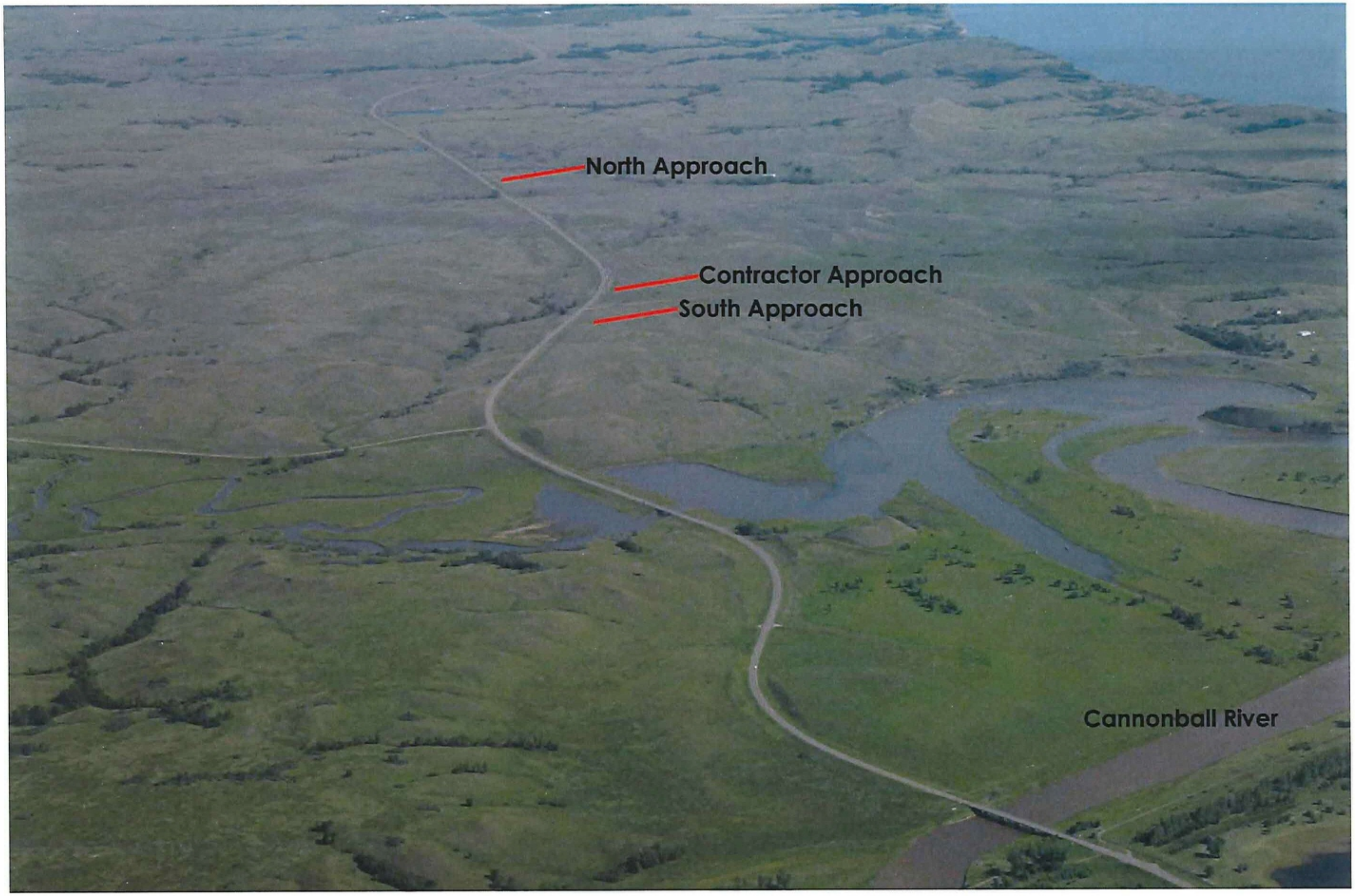
- Extreme SE corner of Morton County
- East side of N.D. Hwy 1806 at approx. mile marker 37
- Approx. 32 miles south of Mandan

- The Spirit Camp is located on the Standing Rock Reservation.
- The Seven Council's Fire Camp is located on Army Corps of Engineers land north of the Cannonball River.


Baldwin
B U R L E I
DOUBLE DITCH INDIAN VILLAGE SHS
BISMARCK
N.D. HERITAGE CENTER
MENOKEN INDIAN VILLAGE SHS
Sweet Briar Lake
Crown Butte Lake
SWEET BRIAR DAM
CROWN BUTTE DAM
New Salem
Judson
MANDAN
FORT ABRAHAM LINCOLN STATE PARK
MCDOWELL DAM
Lincoln
UNIVERSITY OF MARY
Menoken
Almont
St. Anthony
HUFF INDIAN VILLAGE SHS
Huff
LAKE
Fort Rice
FORT RICE SHS
MOUNTAIN TIME
CENTRAL TIME
Lark
Flasher
Carson
Cannon Ball
Breien
Solen
Raleigh
Leith
G R A N T
E M
Shields
Porcupine
AMERICA'S BYWAYS
1806
1804
94
83
31
25
21
24
6
13


Contractor approach
Cannonball River
Highway 1806

Cannonball River is the dividing line between Sioux County (Standing Rock Reservation) and Morton County


North Approach
Contractor Approach
South Approach
Cannonball River

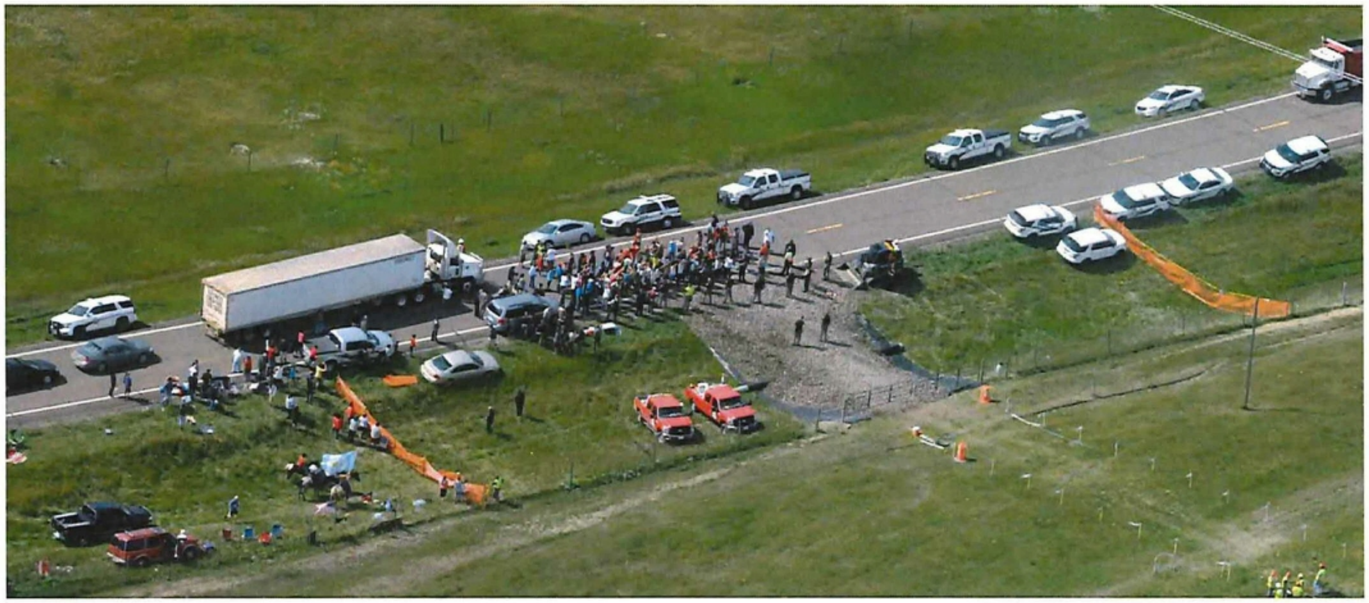
August 7-13

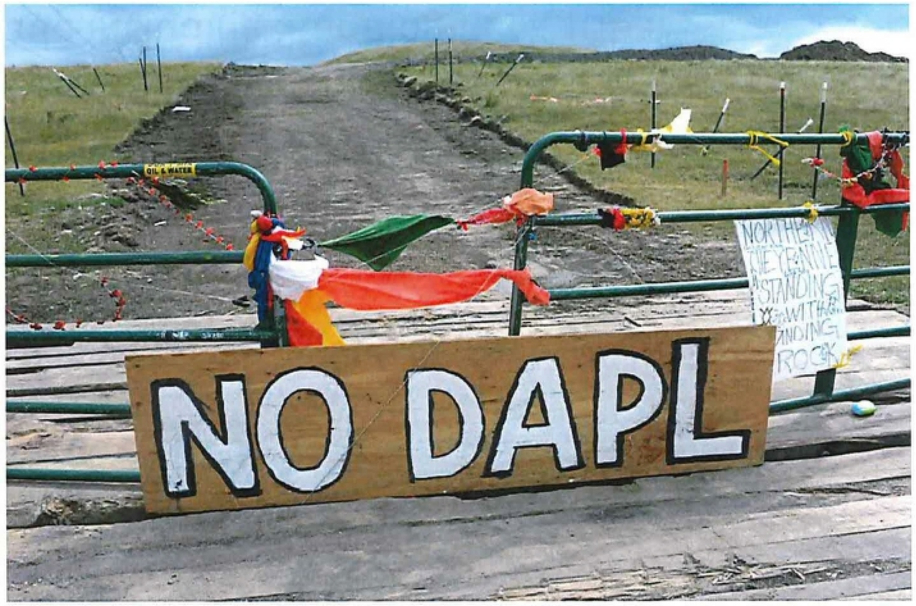
August 10: Protesters started to gather and blocked access to the north and south approaches

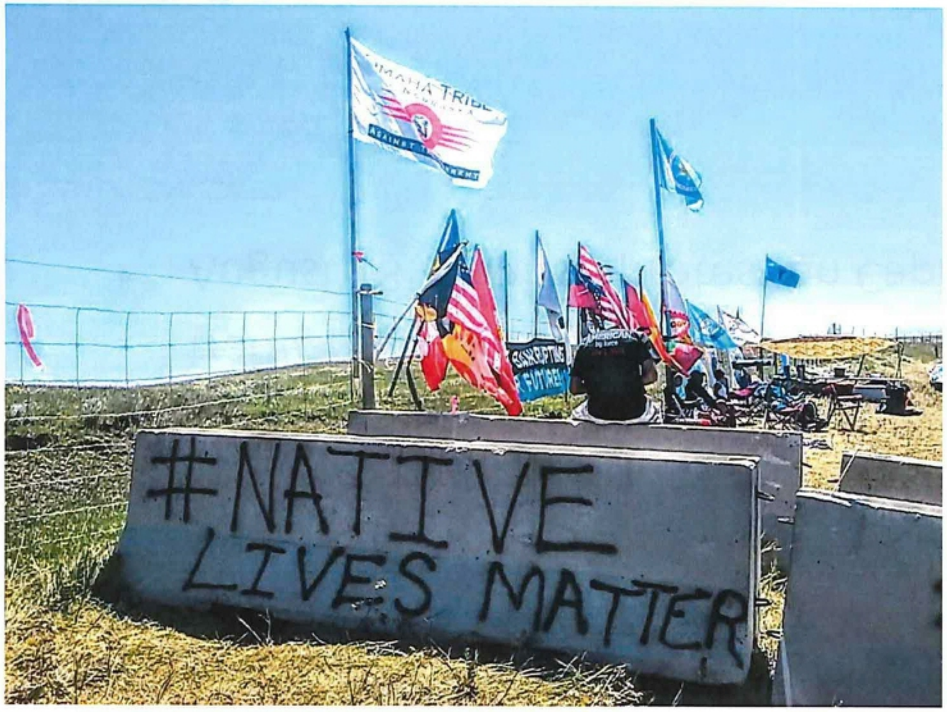
August 11: Protesters blocked roadway and hampered construction activities. LE assisted with establishment of contractor approach. 13 arrests made

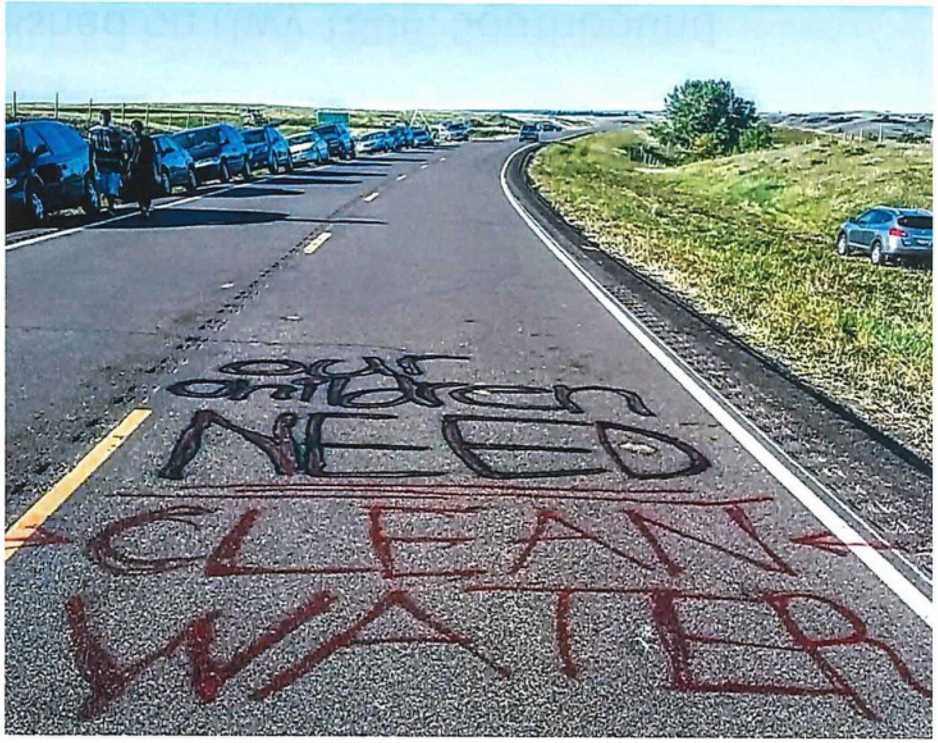
August 12: Protesters entered private property and blocked construction site. LE cleared the contractor approach. 6 arrests made including Standing Rock Tribal Chairman and a tribal council member

August 13: Construction halted. Protesters marched on Highway 1806 and blocked the bridge over Cannonball River.




NORTHERN CHEYENNE STANDING WITH
NDING ROCK
NO DAPL

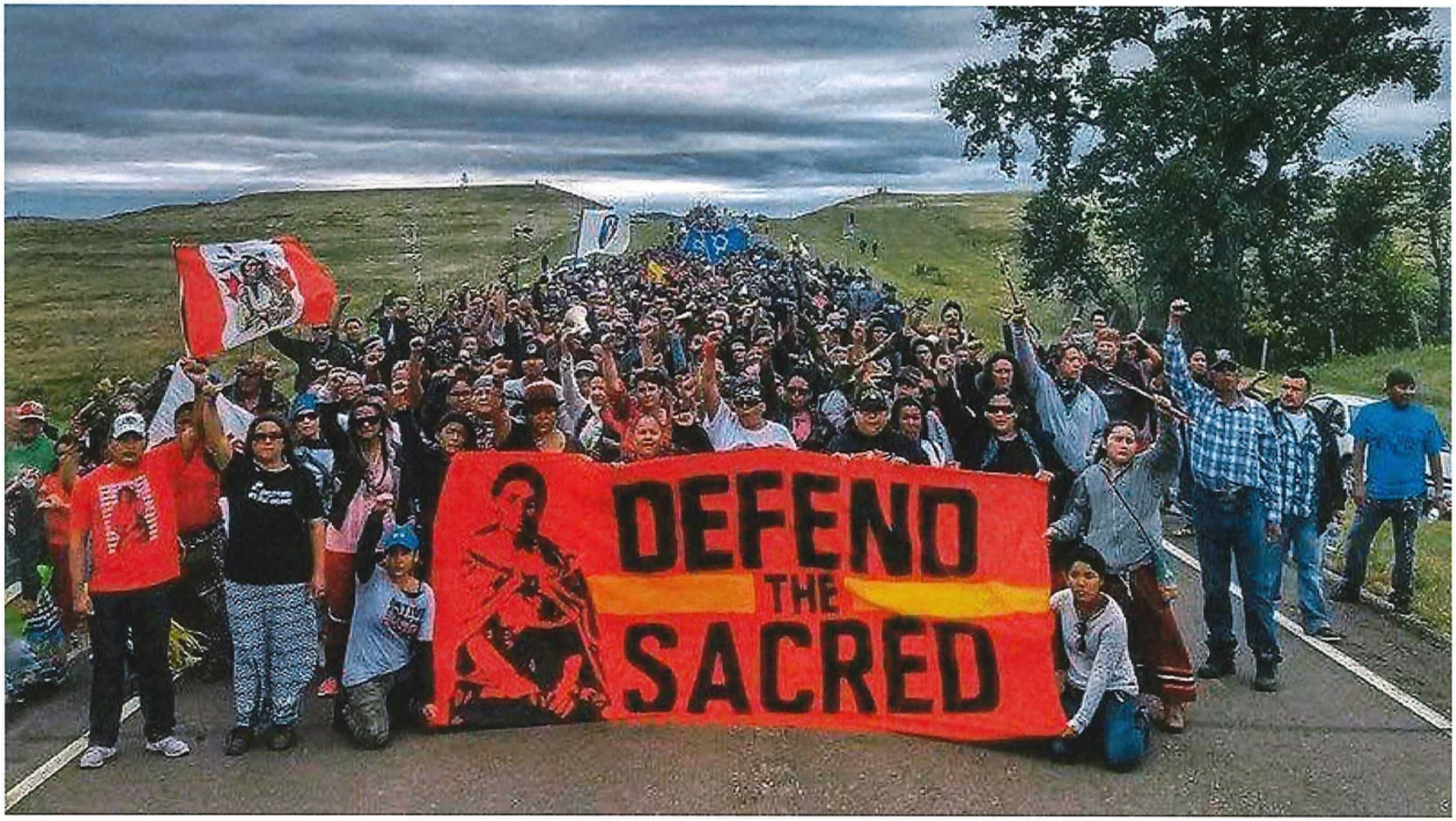

OMAHA TRIBE
#NATIVE
LIVES MATTER


our children
NEED
CLEAN
WATER

August 14-20

- August 15: Protesters on horseback pushed LE barricade line back. Approx. 50 protesters entered private property. Reports of vandalism included cutting a hole in a fence, breaking windows, and assaulting a private DAPL security worker. All construction ceased. 10 arrests.
  - Emergency Declaration occurred on behalf of Morton County.
- August 16: More vandalism reports. 150-200 protesters reported at Spirit Camp.
- August 17: Traffic Control Point established on Hwy 1806. Southbound traffic rerouted (unless local).
- August 18: Planned protest on Capitol Grounds with no incident.

45

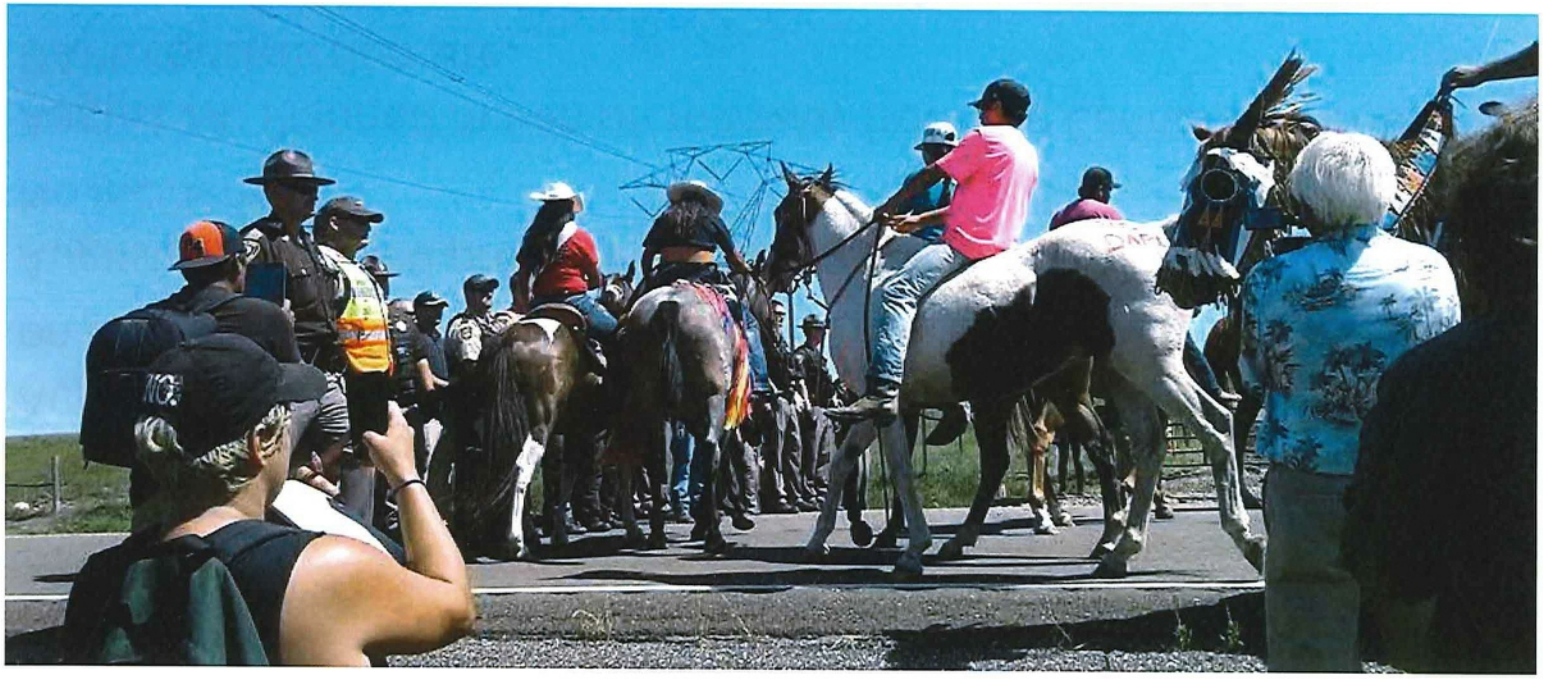

DEFEND
THE
SACRED

YOUR

UNICORNRIOT.NINJA

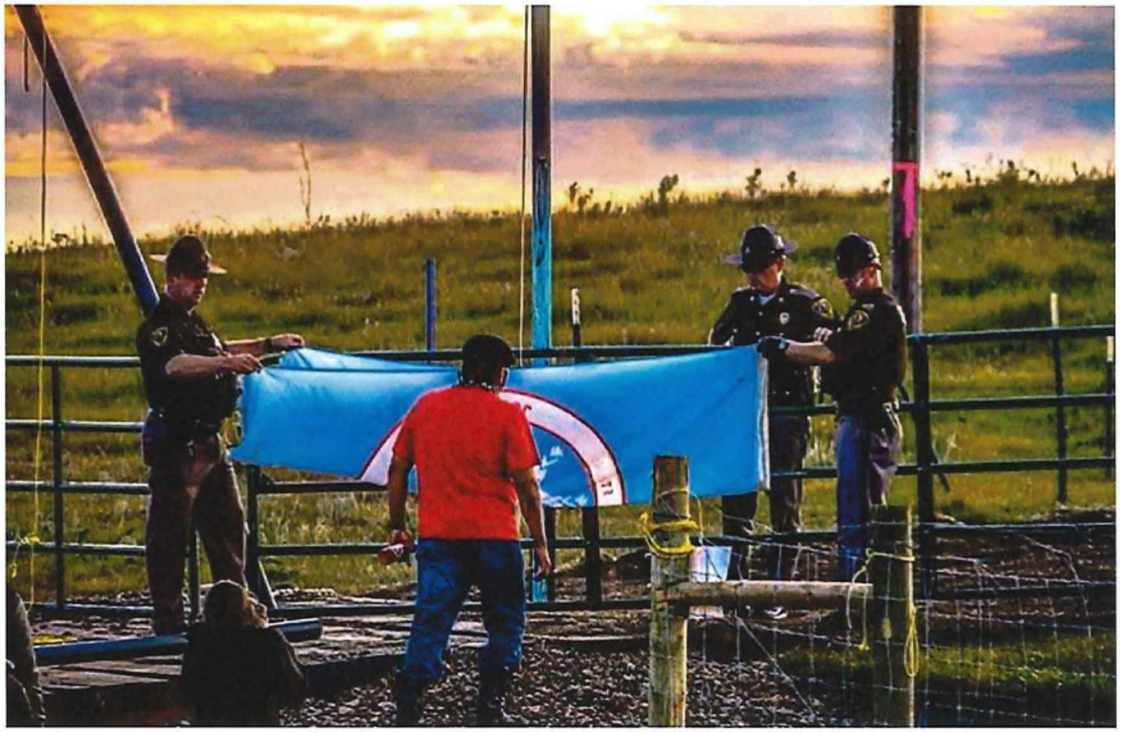
WE ARE THE
FUTURE
NO DAPL

NO DAPL
NO DAPL
#NATIVE LIVES MATTER
#FTP
Children Don't Drink Oil
Respect Our T
NO DAPL
MNI WICONI

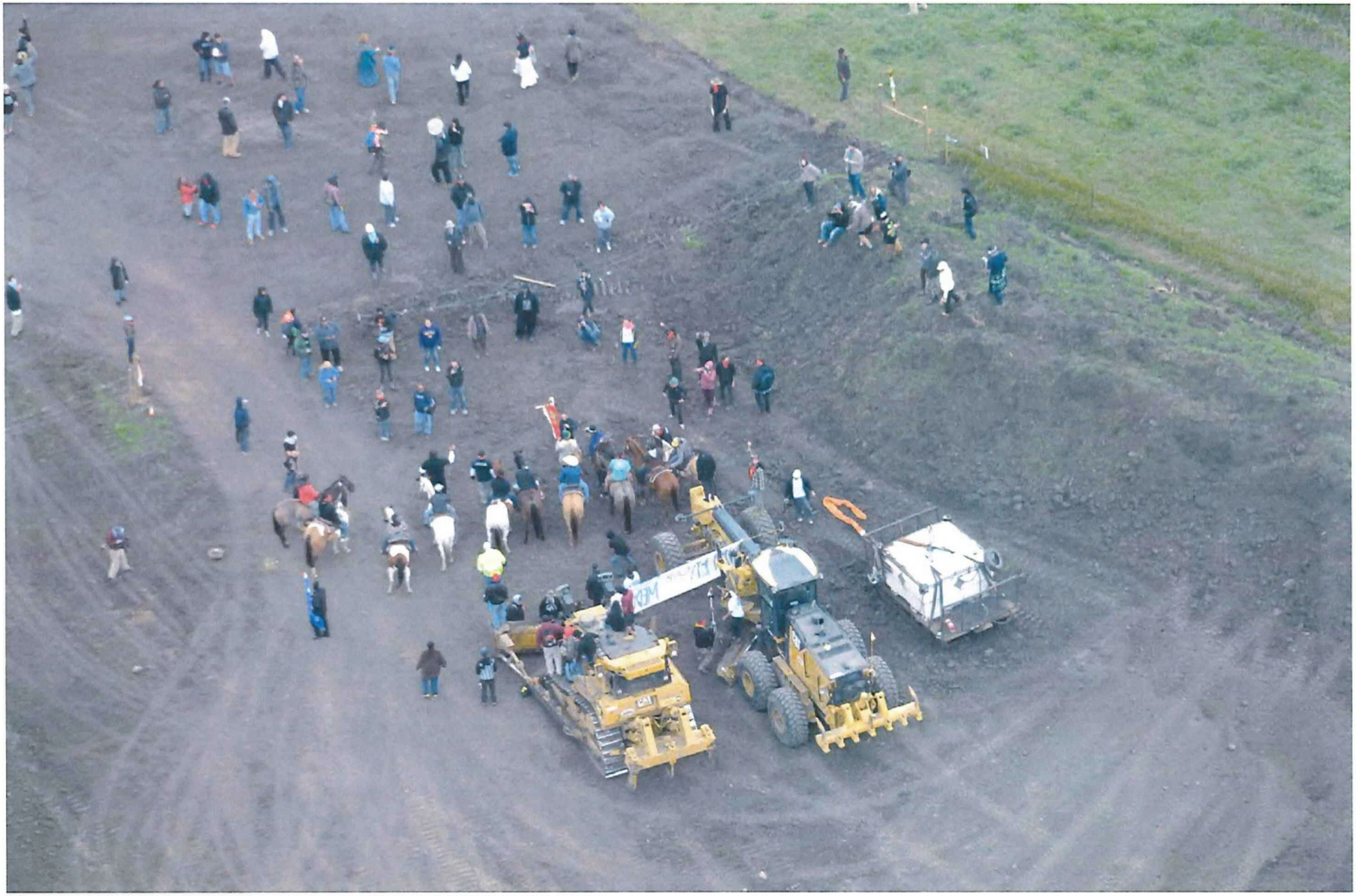


August 21-27

- August 21: Laser strike reported from NDHP pilot. Also said laser was used on 8/17.
- August 23: Planned protester march across Memorial Bridge in Bismarck. No incident.
- August 24: Planned march on roadway from the Cannonball Bridge to DAPL construction site.

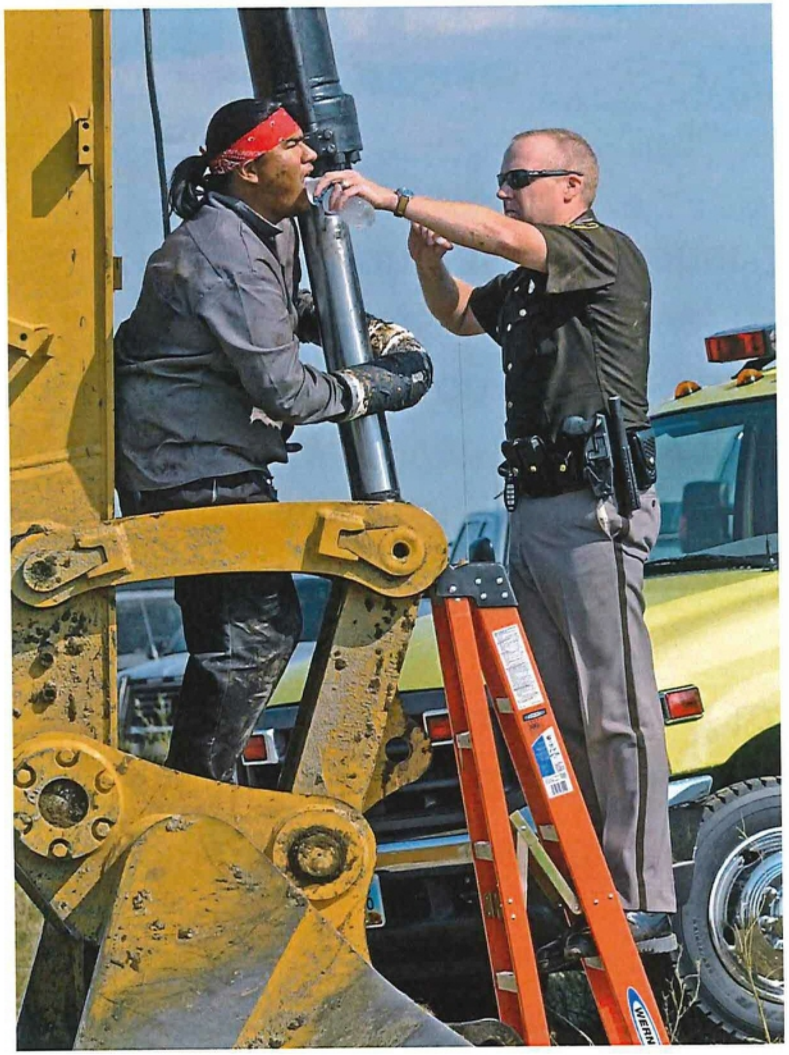


STATE TROOPER
NORTH DAKOTA
HIGHWAY PATROL
1935
SHERIFF

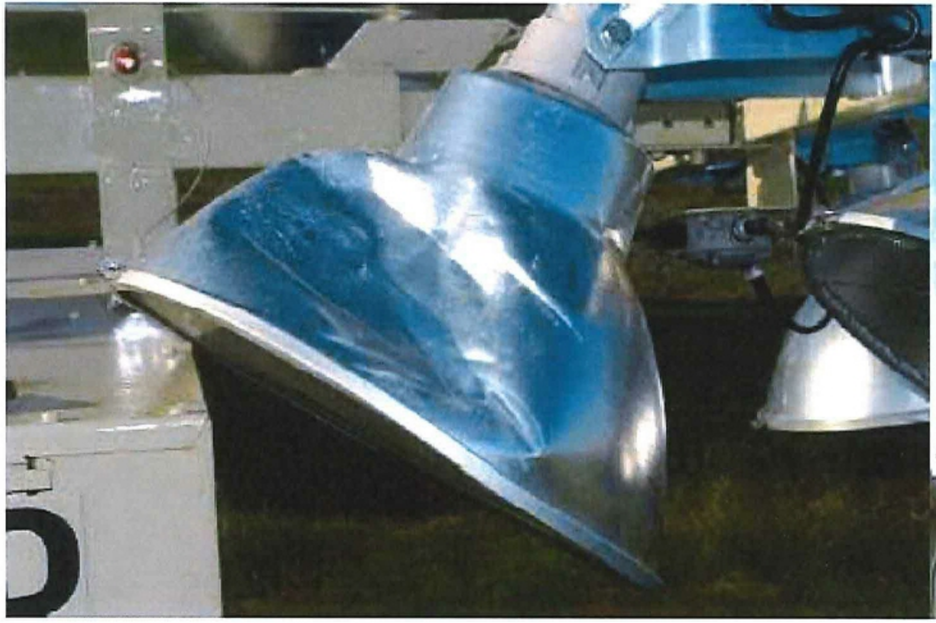


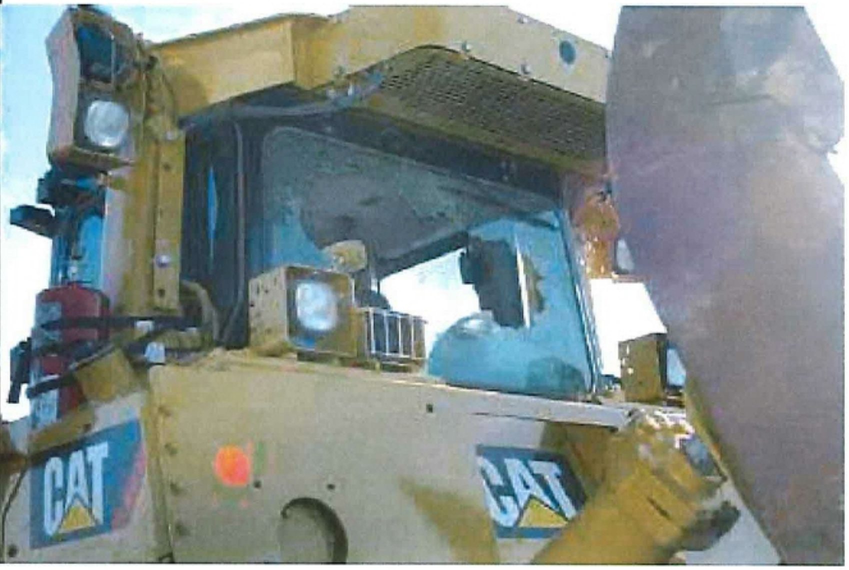
August 28 – September 3

- August 28: Protest at DAPL attorney's office in Bismarck. No incident.
- August 31: Protesters put signs on and vandalized DAPL equipment. A protester attached himself to DAPL equipment and had to be removed. 8 arrests.
- September 3: 300 protesters trespassed on private property. They cut a fence and brought 20-30 horses and possibly vehicles onto the private property. Private security met the protesters and they had K-9s and used pepper spray on the trespassers. Conflict ensued. LE arrived and were able to get trespassers to leave. No arrests. This incident is still under investigation. (as of October 12)


WERN

TINA
RIFF
POLICE

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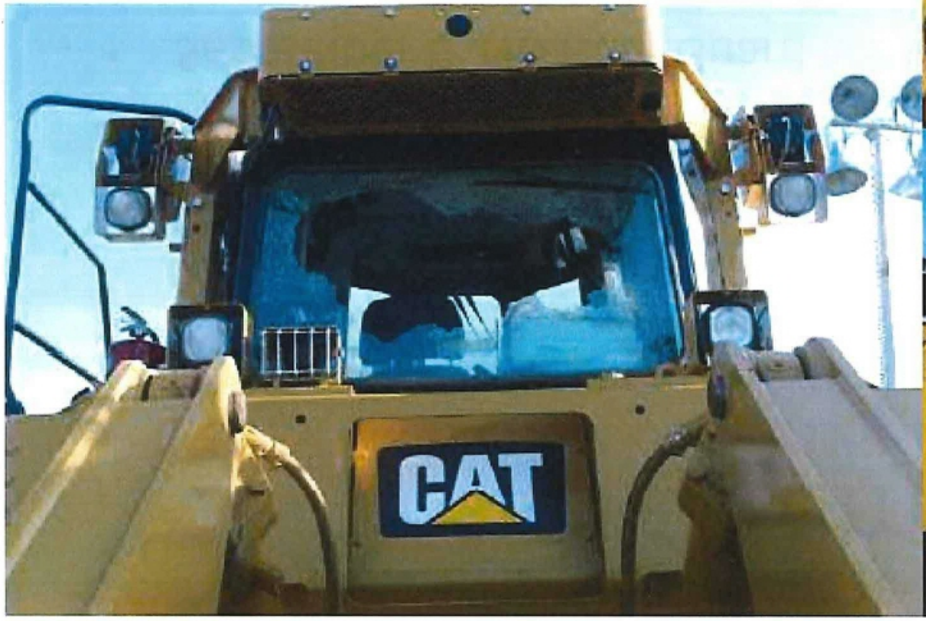
CAT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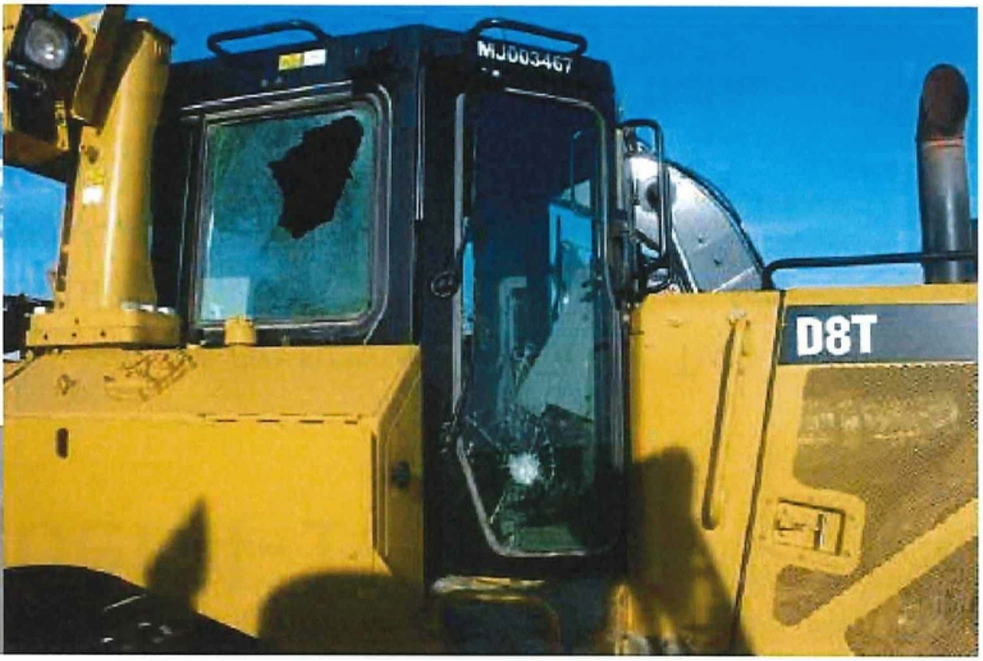
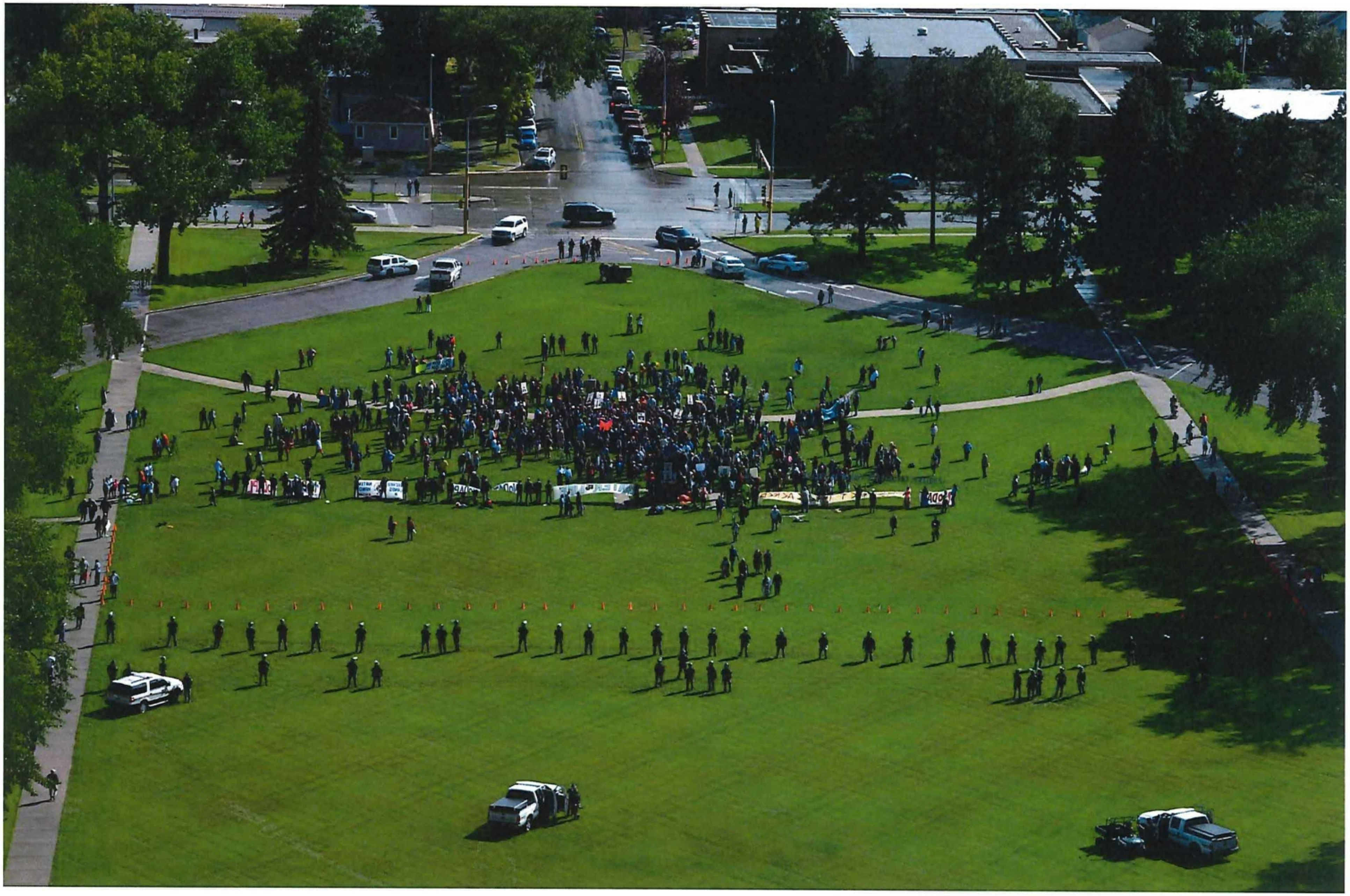

MJ003467
D8T

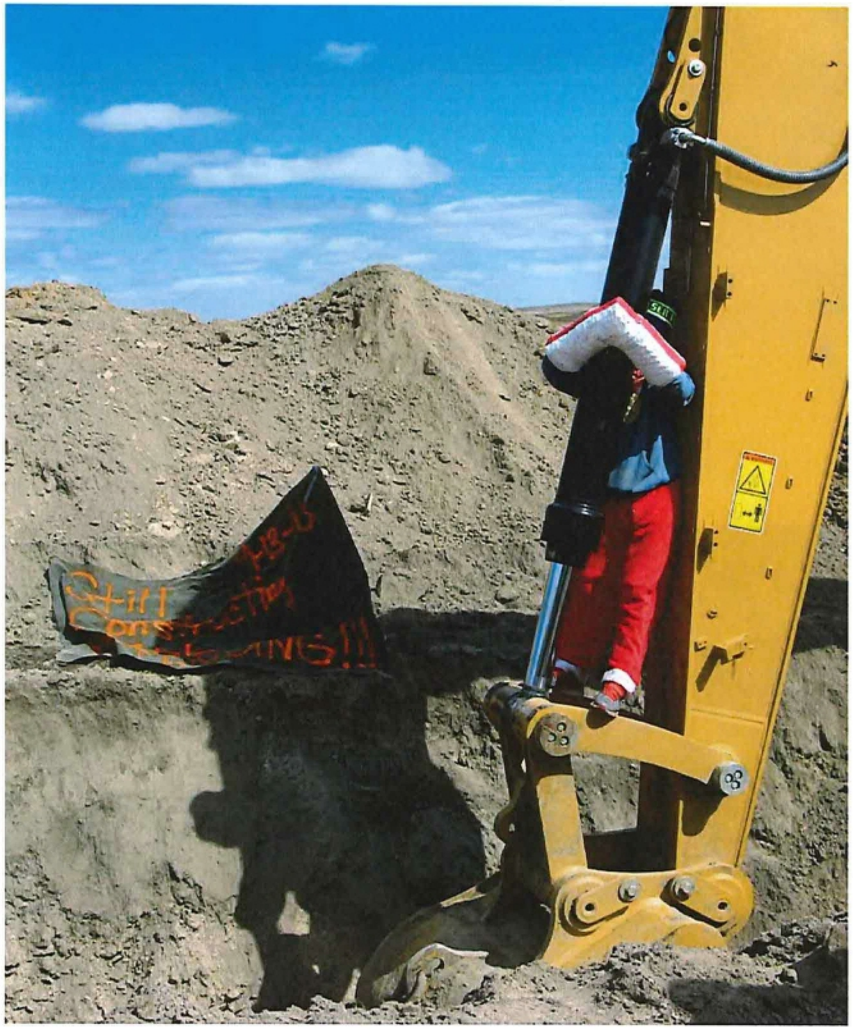
September 4-10

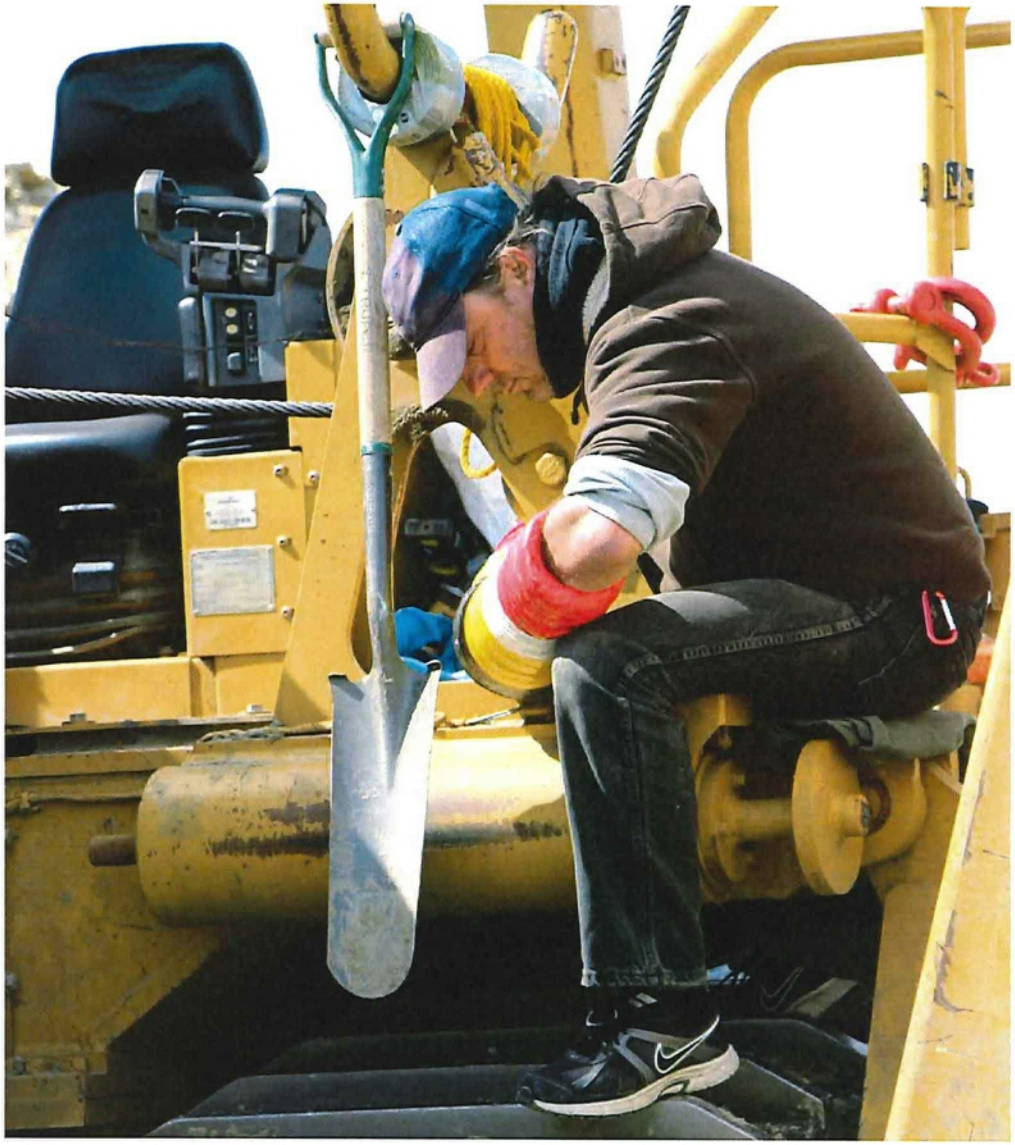
- September 6: 150-200 protesters trespassed on private property. Two protesters attached themselves to equipment. Protesters, including Jill Stein, spray painted DAPL equipment. A small fire reported on entrance road to DAPL construction site.
- September 8: ND Natl. Guard MP Units assisting with staffing of traffic control point.
- September 9: Planned protest on Capitol Grounds. No incidents.



September 11-17

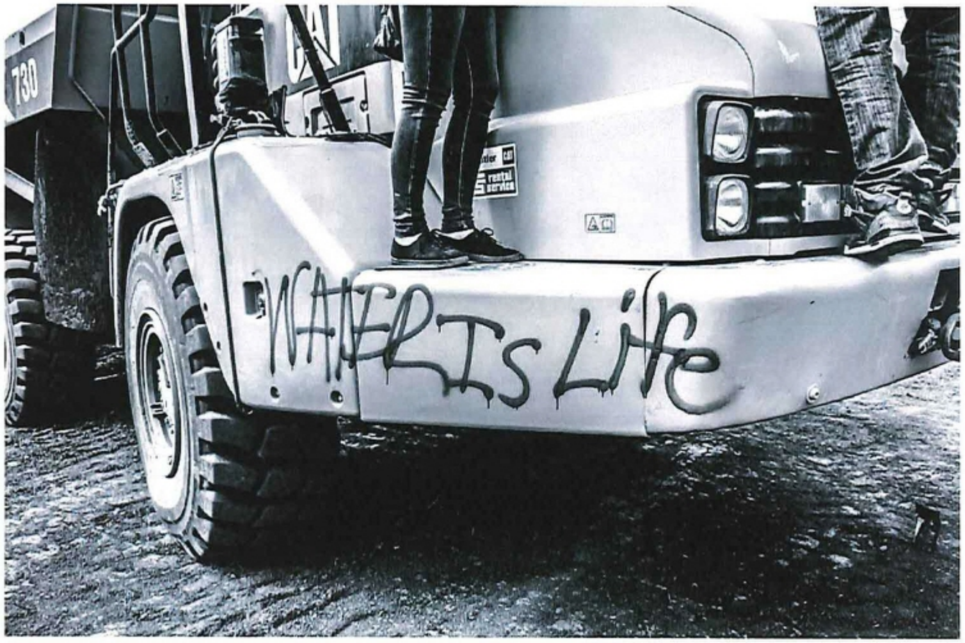
- September 12: Construction halted on pipeline 20 miles east of Hwy. 1806
- September 13: 2 protesters attached themselves to construction equipment near New Salem. 22 arrests for illegal protest activity
- September 14: 3 protesters attached themselves to construction equipment near New Salem. 8 arrests for illegal protest activity
- September 16: 200 protesters assembled on Memorial Bridge on Bismarck side and conducted a march. No incidents


18-15
Still
Construction
ING!!!



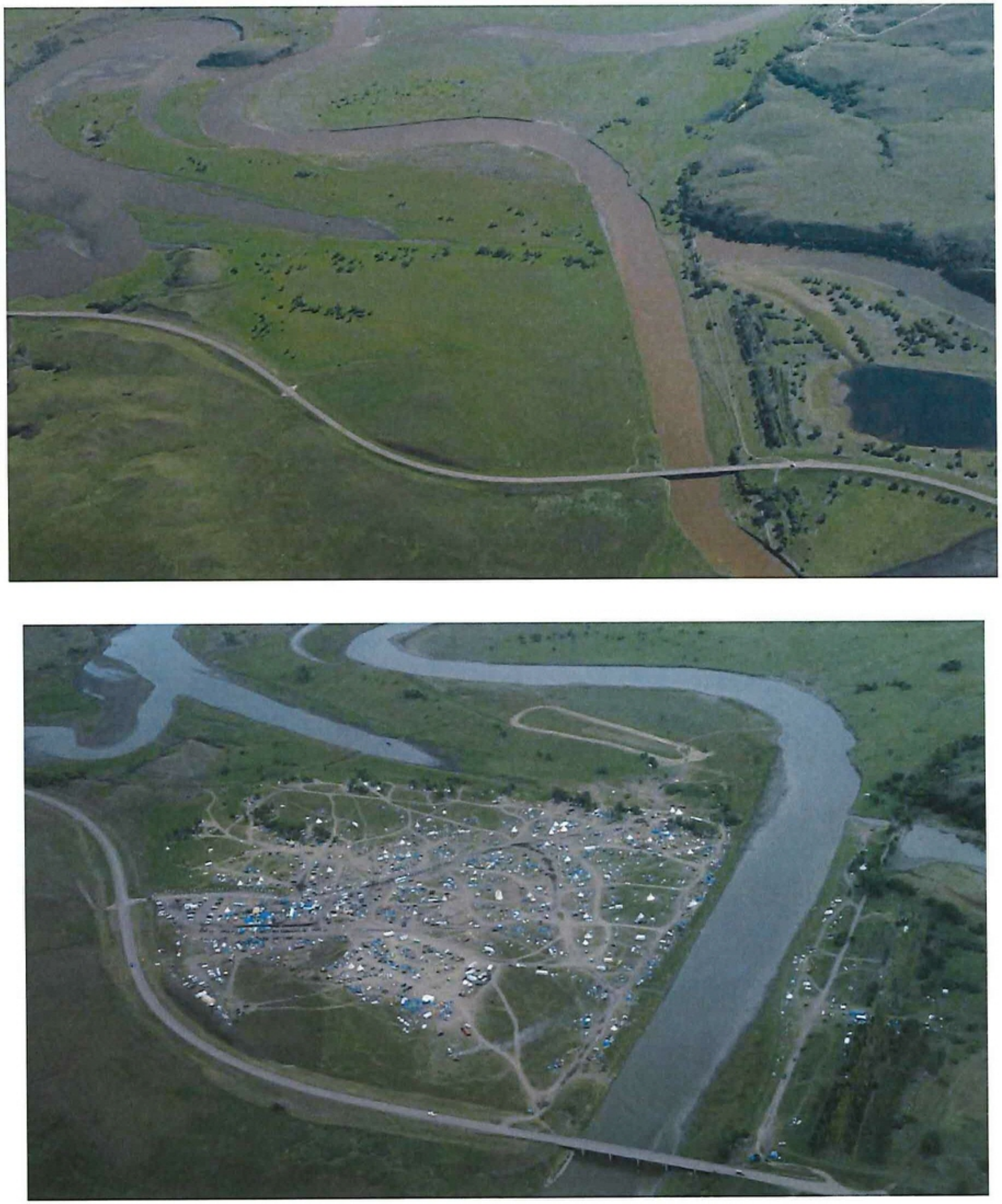
i approve this message
LOVE WATER NOT OIL
CAT
RENTALS

Protect OUR Water
CAT


730
CAT
WATER IS Life

September 18-24

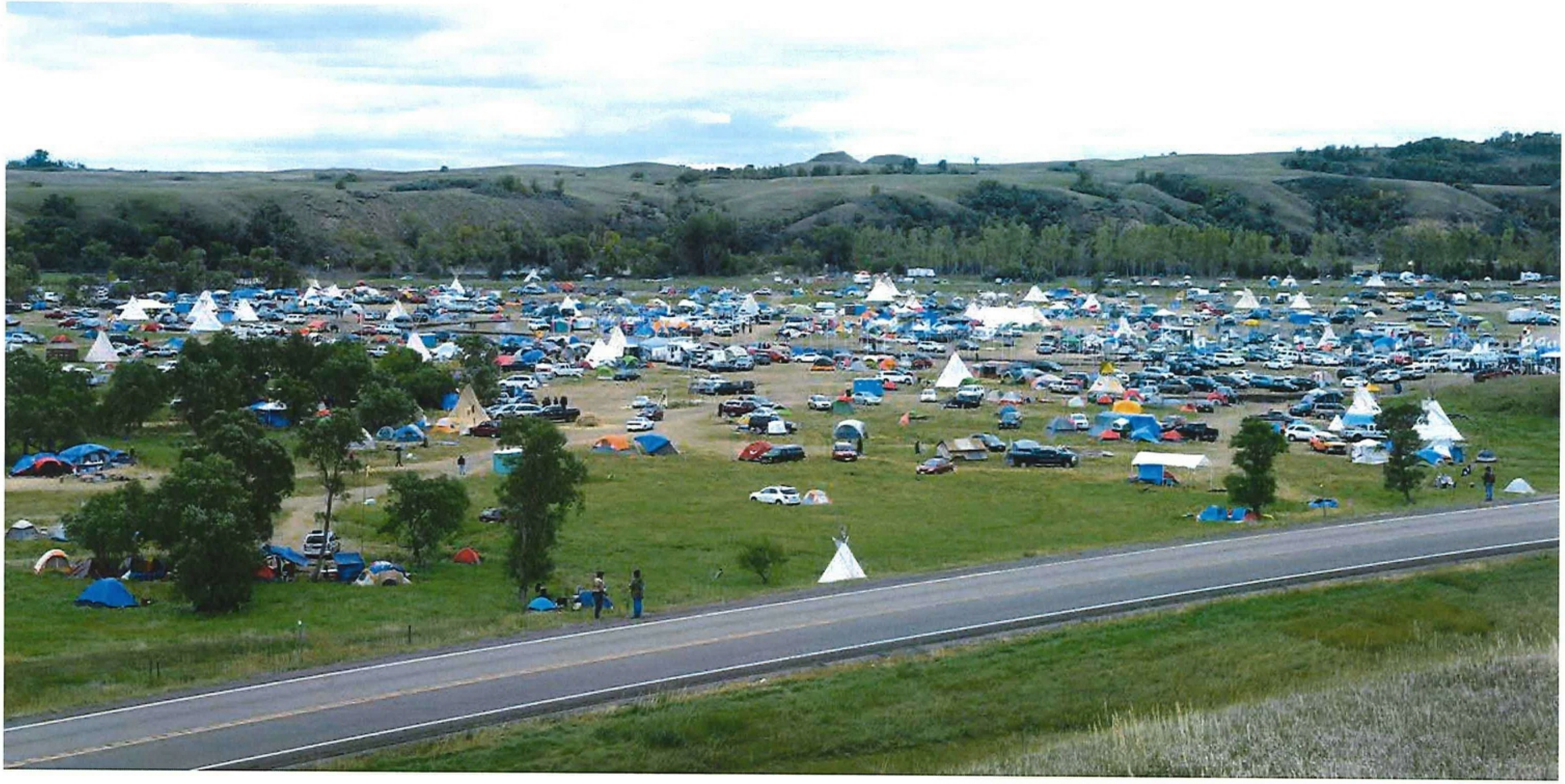
- September 18: 1 protester arrested for criminal trespass
- September 20: Large protest in Mandan in front of LEC and city hall. Many attempts to verbally antagonize law enforcement. No arrests



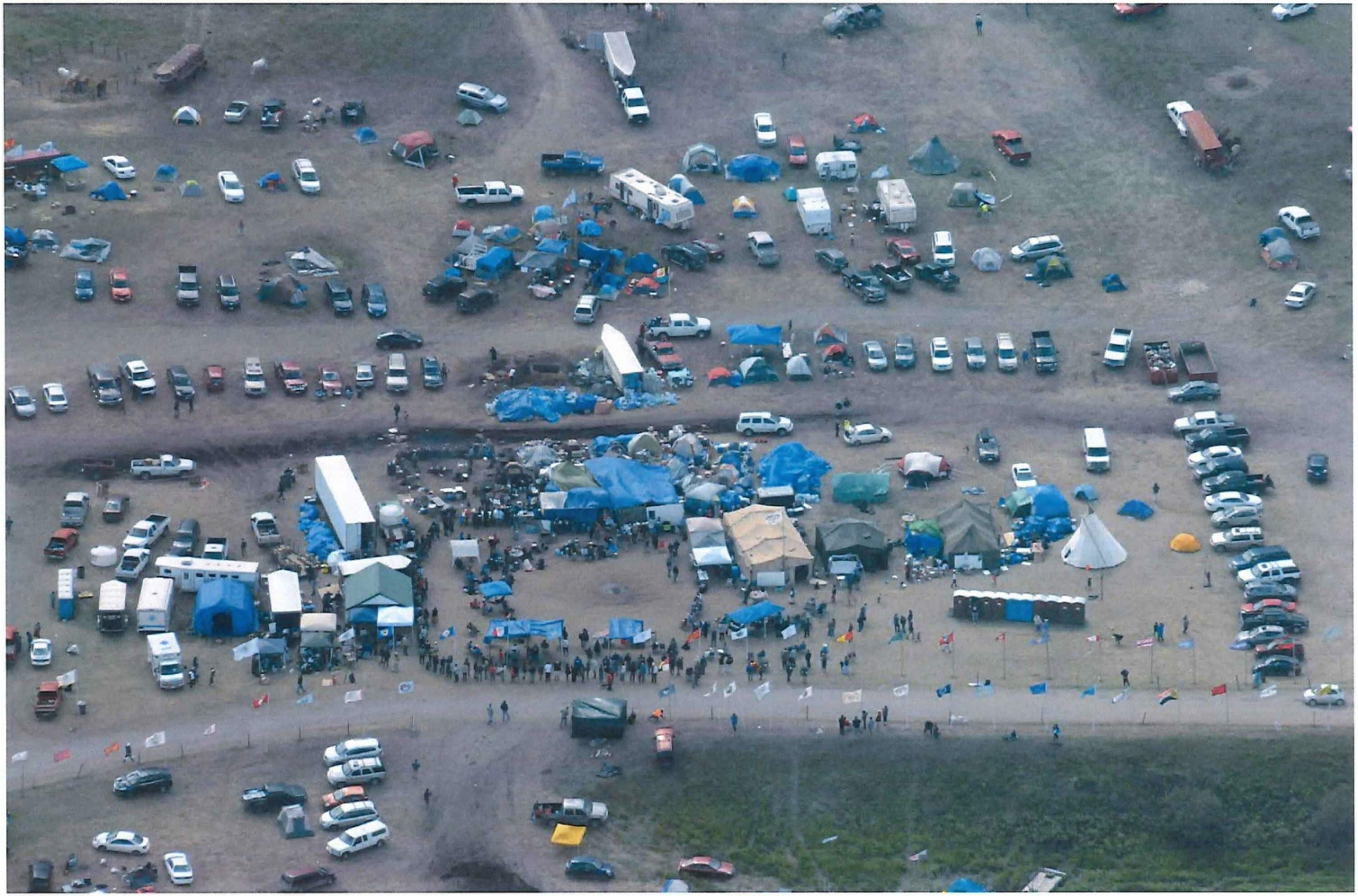
Seven Council's Fire Camp before and during the protest.

September 25-Oct. 1

- September 25: Large convoy of 60 vehicles and 3 buses left camp and stopped construction at a site west of St. Anthony. 3 security guards on scene were assaulted. Security reported the brandishing of a handgun and knife. Construction equipment was vandalized. Protesters traveled to another site and vandalized equipment
- September 27: Large convoy of vehicles attempting to stop construction near St. Anthony area. 5 arrests for blocking roadway were made. 3 DAPL signs on site were shot at.
- September 28: Large amount of protesters on foot and horseback at construction site. 21 arrests made. Protesters claim LE was using mustard gas as a result of sighting a spray plane doing routine agriculture spraying.



Camp pictured on September 9.

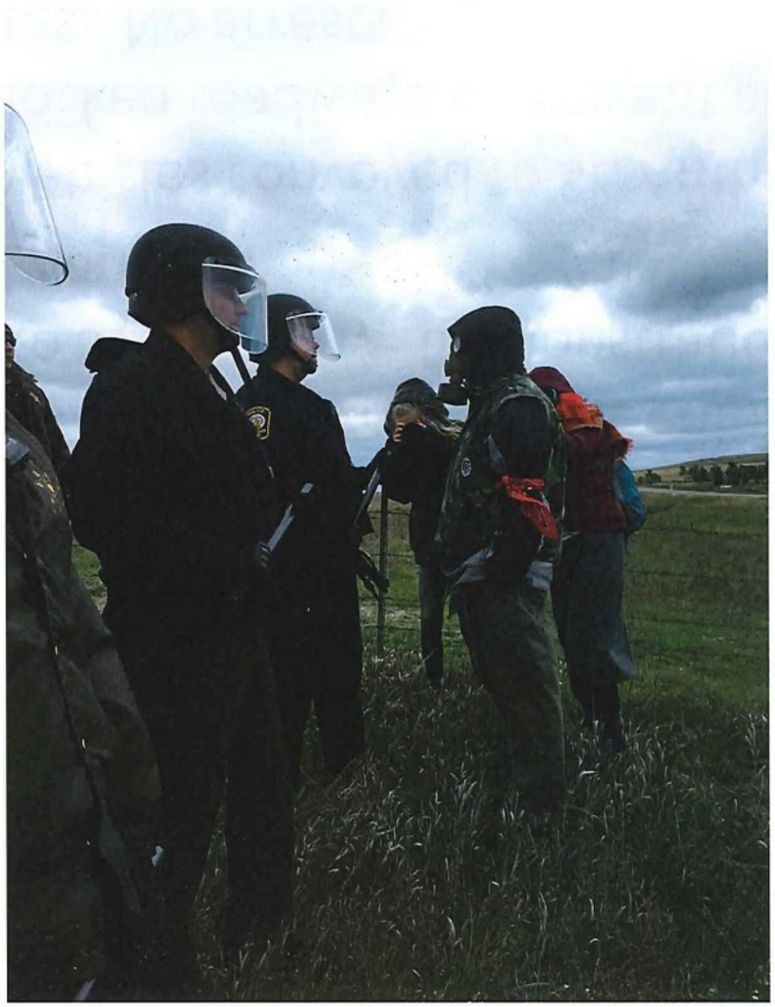


Camp pictured on September 9.

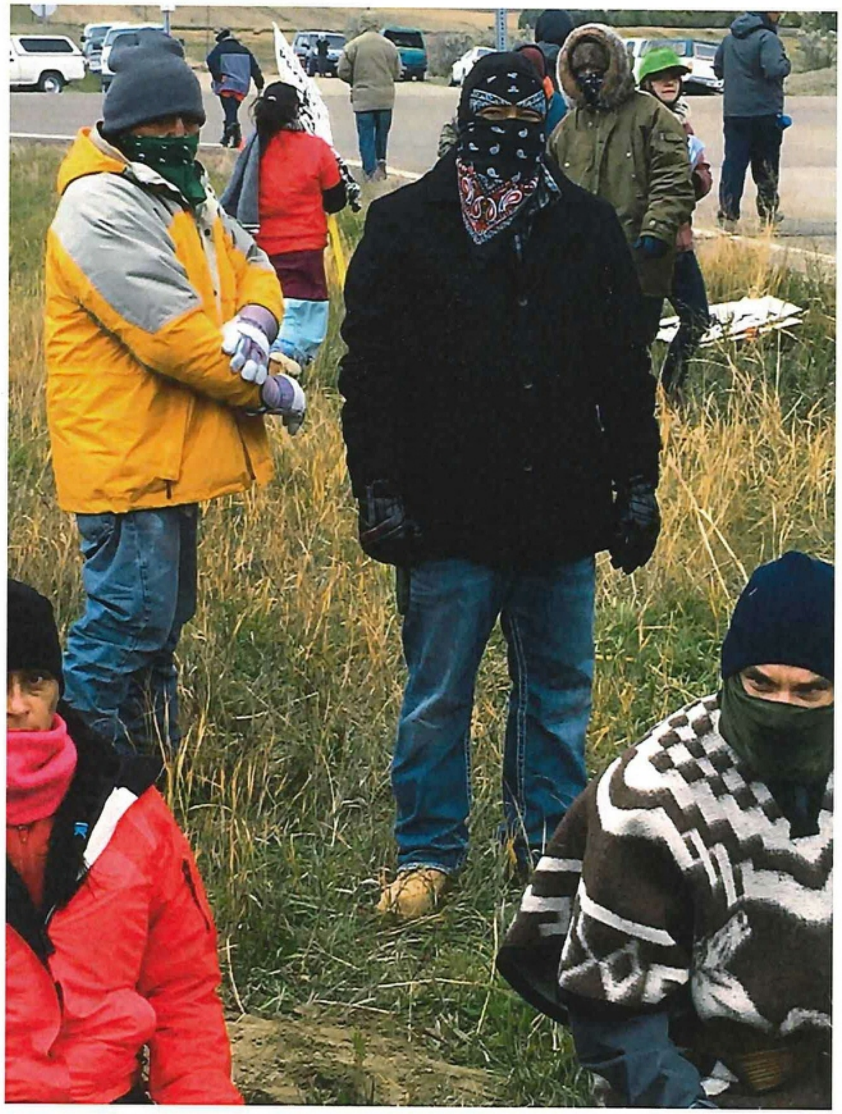
October 2-8

- October 3: Large convoy of vehicles (110) traveled to the St. Anthony area and drove around. No incidents
- October 5: Convoy of 75 vehicles and 2 buses left camp and traveled on Hwy. 6 to St. Anthony. Law enforcement blocked the roadway into St. Anthony. Demonstration ensued at the intersection. No arrests.
- October 6: 60 vehicles convoyed to St. Anthony area. Law enforcement blocked roadways to prevent access to construction sites. No arrests.
- October 8: Drone seized from Myron Dewey

October 5th Protest



October 5th Protest



October 6th Convoy

POLICE
POLICE
SHERIFF

October 6th Convoy

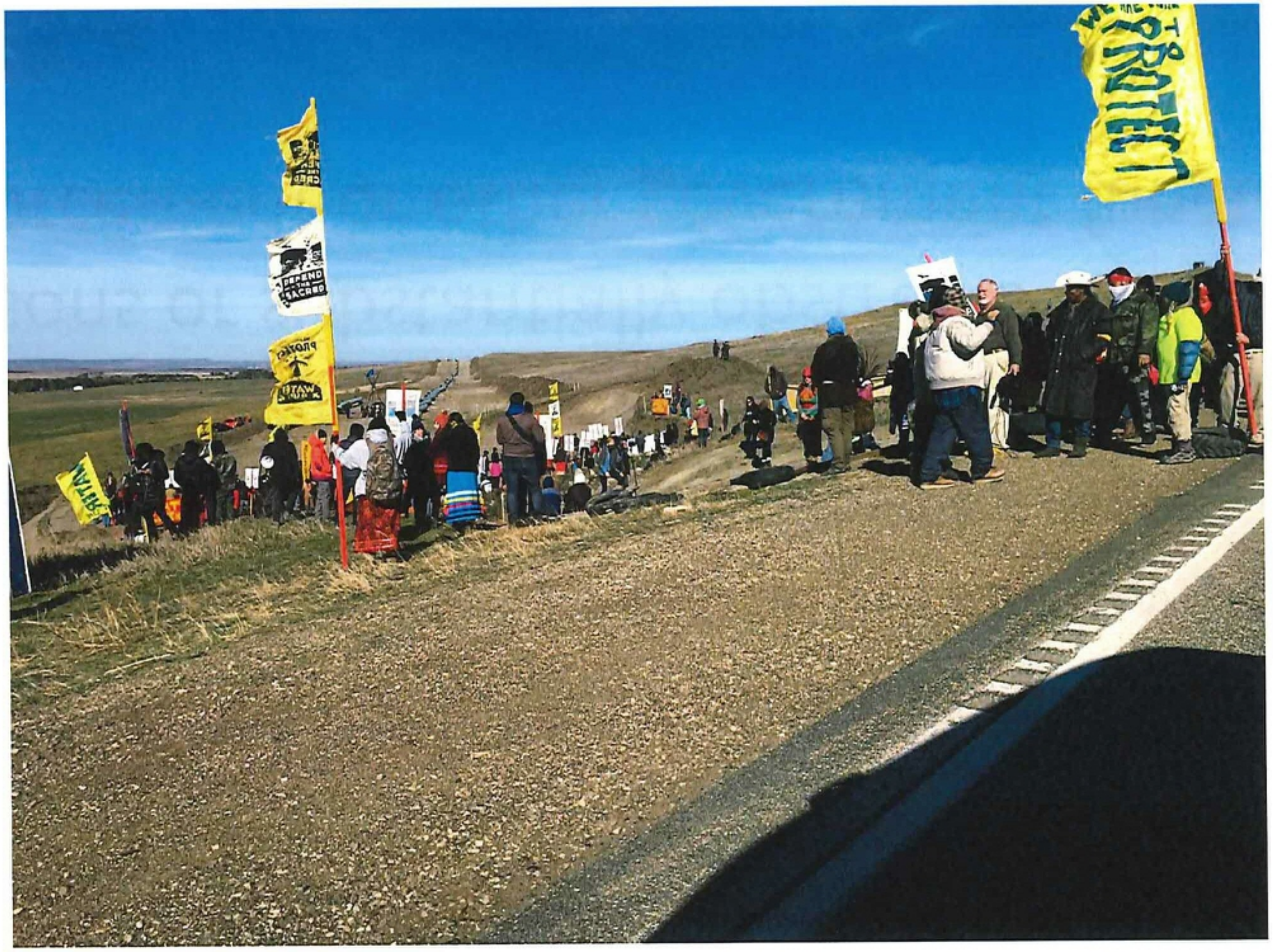
October 9-15

- October 10: 2 protesters locked down to DAPL equipment. 3 arrests made. 100 vehicle convoy staged protest on another DAPL site, resulting in 24 arrests (including actress Shailene Woodley). Local media on scene were harassed and threatened by protesters.
- October 11: Small scale protest in front of Morton LEC. No incidents.

NDCC 12.1-25-01

- "Riot" means a public disturbance involving an assemblage of five or more persons which by tumultuous and violent conduct creates grave danger of damage or injury to property or persons or substantially obstructs law enforcement or other government function.

October 10th Protest


PROTECT
DEFEND THE SACRED
PROTECT

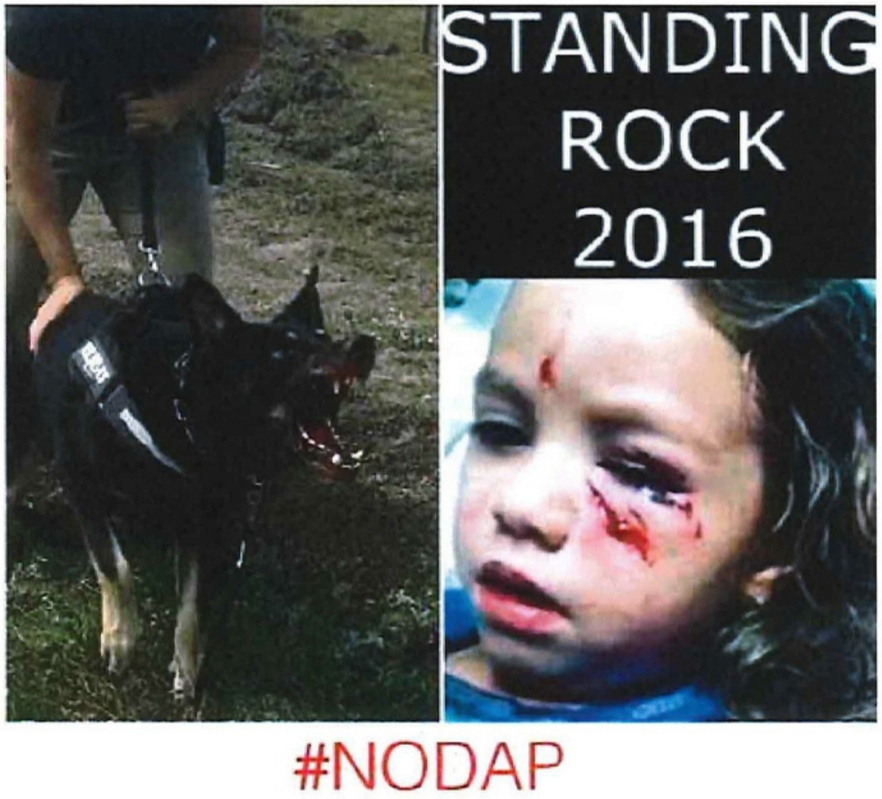
Press Conference addressing October 10th protest activities

1872
MORTON COUNTY
NORTH DAKOTA
1881

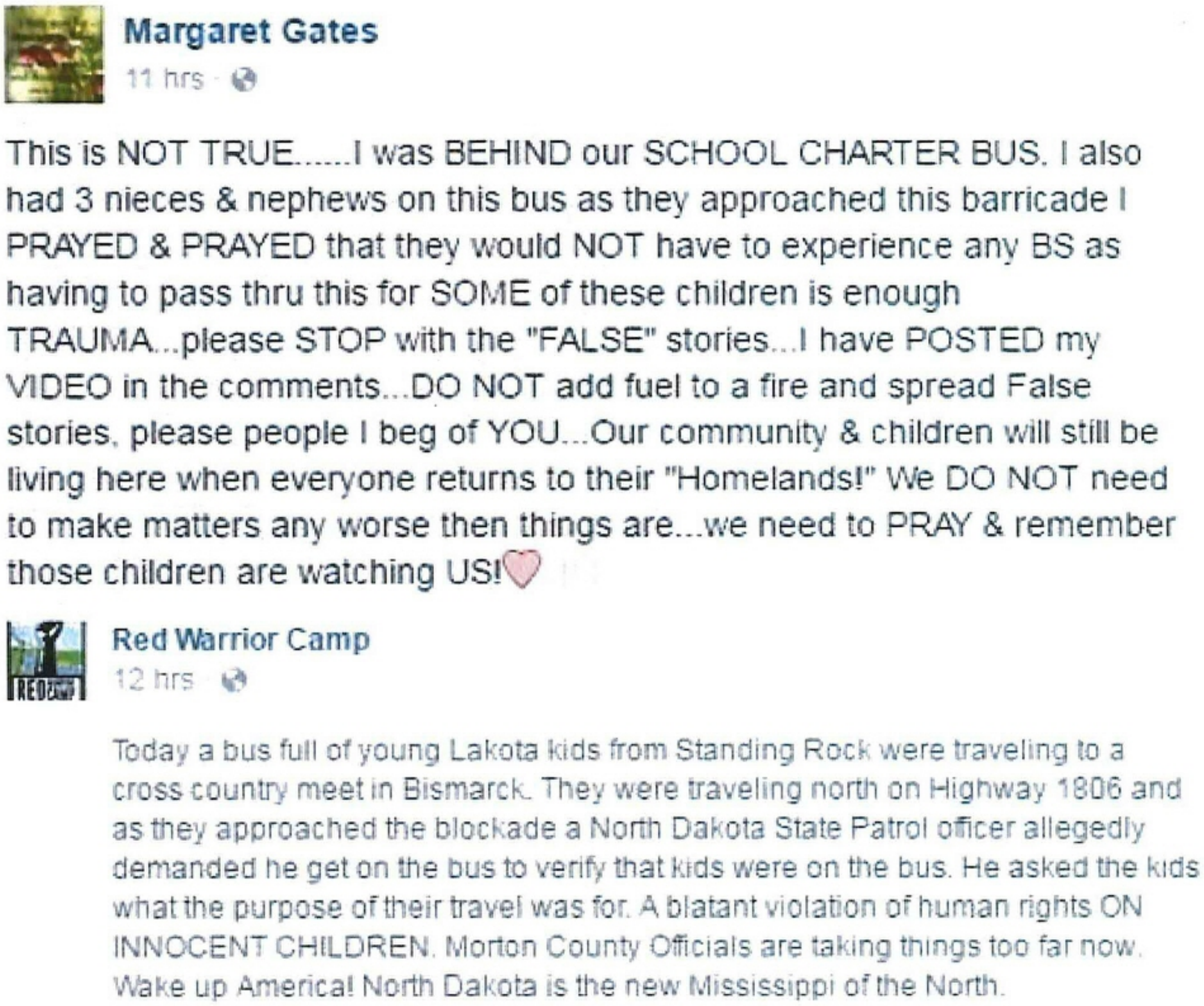
KFYR Story addressing October 10th protest activities

Social Media

- LE, DAPL workers, and their families have been threatened on social media.
- Misinformation has also spread.



Misinformation:
The dog on the left was photoshopped to appear aggressive. The injured girl is an old photo from 2012.

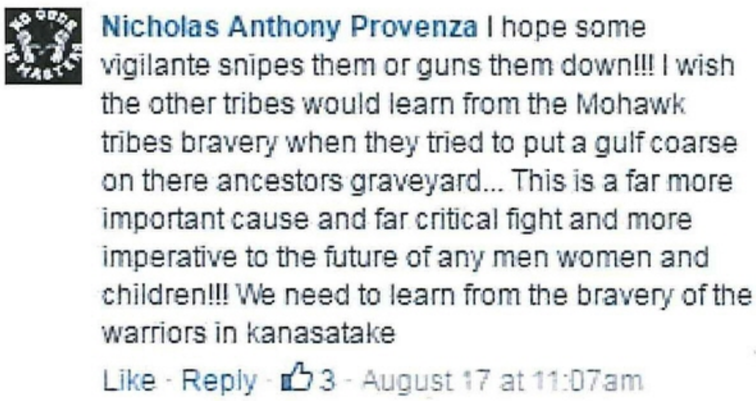


Margaret Gates
11 hrs ·

This is NOT TRUE......I was BEHIND our SCHOOL CHARTER BUS. I also had 3 nieces & nephews on this bus as they approached this barricade I PRAYED & PRAYED that they would NOT have to experience any BS as having to pass thru this for SOME of these children is enough TRAUMA...please STOP with the "FALSE" stories...I have POSTED my VIDEO in the comments...DO NOT add fuel to a fire and spread False stories, please people I beg of YOU...Our community & children will still be living here when everyone returns to their "Homelands!" We DO NOT need to make matters any worse then things are...we need to PRAY & remember those children are watching US!♡

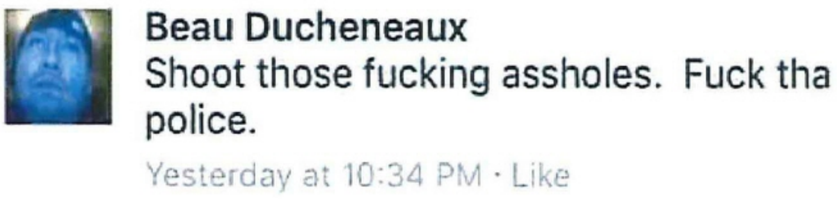
Red Warrior Camp
12 hrs ·

Today a bus full of young Lakota kids from Standing Rock were traveling to a cross country meet in Bismarck. They were traveling north on Highway 1806 and as they approached the blockade a North Dakota State Patrol officer allegedly demanded he get on the bus to verify that kids were on the bus. He asked the kids what the purpose of their travel was for. A blatant violation of human rights ON INNOCENT CHILDREN. Morton County Officials are taking things too far now. Wake up America! North Dakota is the new Mississippi of the North.



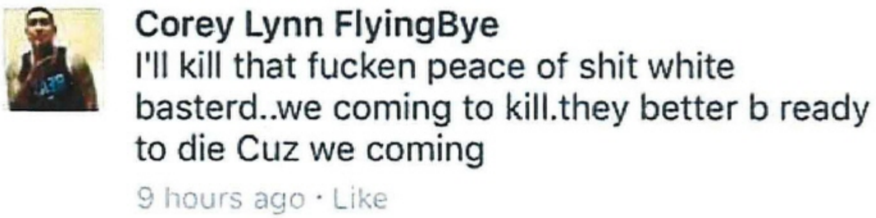
Nicholas Anthony Provenza I hope some vigilante snipes them or guns them down!!! I wish the other tribes would learn from the Mohawk tribes bravery when they tried to put a gulf coarse on there ancestors graveyard... This is a far more important cause and far critical fight and more imperative to the future of any men women and children!!! We need to learn from the bravery of the warriors in kanasatake

Like · Reply · 👍 3 · August 17 at 11:07am



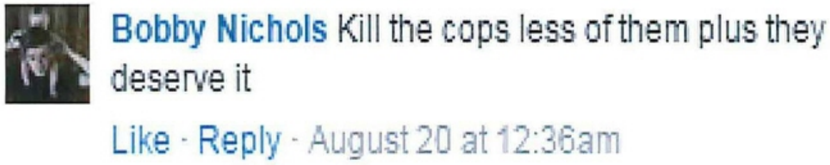
Beau Ducheneaux
Shoot those fucking assholes. Fuck tha police.

Yesterday at 10:34 PM · Like



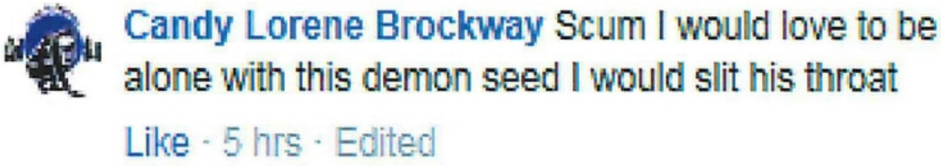
Corey Lynn FlyingBye
I'll kill that fucken peace of shit white basterd..we coming to kill.they better b ready to die Cuz we coming

9 hours ago · Like



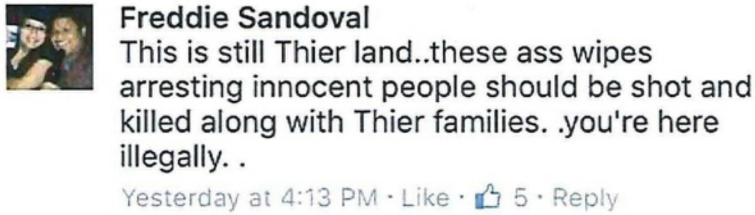
Bobby Nichols Kill the cops less of them plus they deserve it

Like · Reply · August 20 at 12:36am



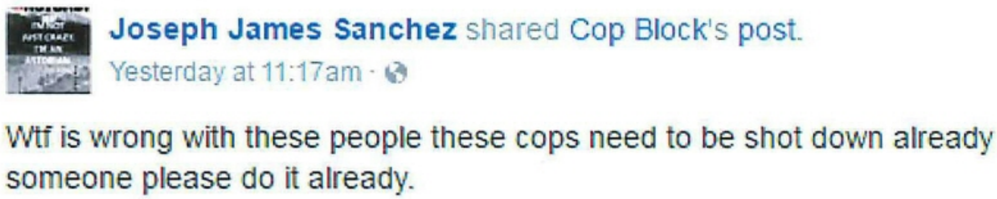
Candy Lorene Brockway Scum I would love to be alone with this demon seed I would slit his throat

Like · 5 hrs · Edited



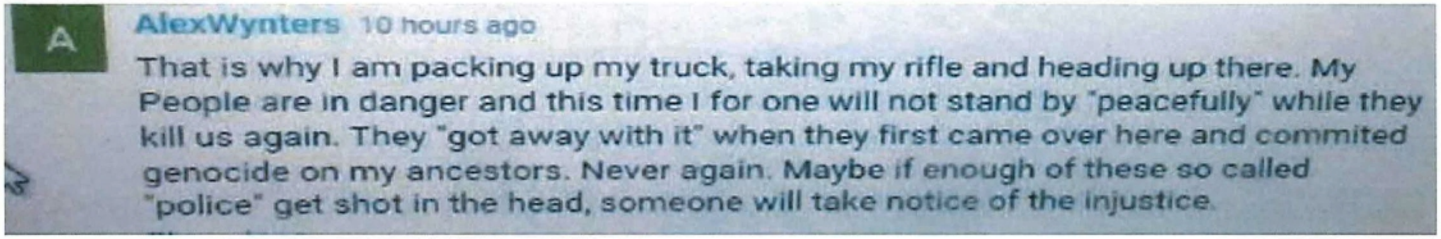
Freddie Sandoval
This is still Thier land..these ass wipes arresting innocent people should be shot and killed along with Thier families. .you're here illegally. .

Yesterday at 4:13 PM · Like · 👍 5 · Reply



Joseph James Sanchez shared Cop Block's post.
Yesterday at 11:17am · 🌐

Wtf is wrong with these people these cops need to be shot down already someone please do it already.



AlexWynters 10 hours ago

That is why I am packing up my truck, taking my rifle and heading up there. My People are in danger and this time I for one will not stand by "peacefully" while they kill us again. They "got away with it" when they first came over here and commited genocide on my ancestors. Never again. Maybe if enough of these so called "police" get shot in the head, someone will take notice of the injustice.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 2 Sep 2016 10:15:30 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: ND tribal

The second pipeline dispute…

Tribal consent at heart of court arguments over pipelines below lake

- Mike Nowatzki Forum News Service
- 13 hrs ago

A federal judge will issue what could be a precedent-setting decision after hearing arguments Thursday on whether a Texas company needed consent from Native American tribes to drill two pipelines through tribally owned minerals under North Dakota's largest body of water.

After nearly five hours of testimony and legal arguments in U.S. District Court in Bismarck, Judge Daniel Hovland took the matter under advisement, allowing drilling under Lake Sakakawea to continue until he issues his ruling while also lamenting the lack of legal opinions offered by attorneys and previous case law on the issue.

"It sounds like I'm going to be left to interpret this with no guidance from anybody," Hovland said.

Paradigm Energy Partners LLC has already completed a $125 million oil pipeline under the lake and is boring the hole for a companion $16.6 million natural gas pipeline over the objections of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation, also known as the Three Affiliated Tribes.

The tribes issued a cease and desist order Aug. 8 ordering Paradigm to stop all construction immediately under the lake. They said the company hadn't provided assurance that the oil pipeline, which stretches nearly 9,000 feet at least 100 feet below the lakebed on the Fort Berthold Reservation, posed no threat to their water resources.

Paradigm responded by suing MHA Chairman Mark Fox and Tribal Police Chief Nelson Hart on Aug. 19, arguing they had no authority to halt construction. Four days later, Hovland granted a temporary restraining order preventing the tribe from stopping construction, allowing boring for the gas pipeline to resume.

Thursday's daylong hearing on Paradigm's request for an injunction against the tribe ended without a firm timeline for Hovland's ruling, but the judge noted that the restraining order expires on Monday or Tuesday, and he can extend it for 14 days for "good cause."

"Certainly, in my view, good cause exists because I've got a multitude of issues to sort through," he said.

Attorneys for both sides argued about whether Paradigm needed the tribes' consent to install the two pipelines, which will be owned by Sacagawea Pipeline Co., a joint venture between Paradigm, Phillips 66 and Greywolf Midstream LLC. Greywolf, which holds a 12 percent interest in the oil pipeline, is a subsidiary of MHA-owned Missouri River Resources, giving the tribe a stake in the project.

Paradigm CEO Troy Andrews testified that Fox had been outspoken that the tribe should get more value out of the oil pipeline. But Andrews said he didn't recall Fox or other tribal officials raising the issue of consent until a tribal council meeting June 9, less than a week after boring started on the oil pipeline.

"I definitely thought they were very supportive and on board with the project, for sure," he said.

Fox countered that he informed Paradigm about the consent requirement as early as August 2014 during a Missouri River Resources board meeting, and also brought it up “numerous times” in casual and formal conversations.

“That was always understood,” Fox said.

Tribal officials said Paradigm offered up to $2 million during a June 9 council meeting to resolve the right-of-way and other issues related to the pipelines.

“And I believe they said they had a check there,” Tribal Attorney Caleb Dog Eagle recalled.

Andrews said that while the company never believed it needed the tribes’ legal consent, “I wanted to get a deal done.”

When Paradigm came back a week later with the same request, tribal officials said they felt the company hadn’t fulfilled the council’s request that it reach out to the tribes’ more than 15,000 members to gauge support for the pipelines.

Attorneys for Paradigm argued that the company already had the authority to drill under the lake through its easement from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“The key here is that these are valid authorizations,” attorney Andrew Emrich said.

But lawyers for the tribes said the Fort Berthold Reservation Mineral Restoration Act of 1984 restored the mineral rights under the lake to the tribe, and Paradigm has no right to invade them without consent.

“They tried to get our consent, they didn’t get it, and they bored anyway,” said attorney John Fredericks III. “So as far as we’re concerned, they’re trespassers.”

Paradigm Chief Operating Officer Criss Doss said the work stoppage in August cost the company $750,000, and it stands to lose $12.6 million -- and potentially go under -- if it’s unable to finish the gas pipeline by its Nov. 1 deadline to remove equipment from a landowner’s property on the east side of the lake.

“We can’t afford any delays at all,” he said.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration continues to investigate claims made by workers that the pipeline was not properly inspected before it was installed under Lake Sakakawea. Doss said 109 welds were recoated because they weren’t done right the first time.

“There were not defects in the coating when it was stuck under the lake,” he said.

Attending the hearing in support of the MHA Nation was Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II, whose tribe is awaiting a judge’s decision by Sept. 9 on its request for an injunction to halt construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline across the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock reservation.

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 9 Sep 2016 10:34:07 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: ND tribal

North Dakota National Guard to provide backup to law enforcement

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN and BLAIR EMERSON Bismarck Tribune
- 21 hrs ago
-

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple listens to a question during a press conference in Mandan on Thursday.

The North Dakota National Guard will be activated to assist local law enforcement responding to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests south of Mandan, according to an announcement on Thursday by Gov. Jack Dalrymple.

Dalrymple said the decision was made "out of an abundance of caution" in order to free up law enforcement to patrol Morton County and the Bismarck-Mandan area.

Several armed guardsmen will be posted at a checkpoint along Highway 1806 south of Mandan, which has been reopened. They will provide information about road hazards to drivers passing through.

About 100 guardsmen from the 191st Military Police Company also will be on standby alert, said Maj. Gen. Al Dohrmann. This unit, which is based in Bismarck, Mayville and Fargo, has some law enforcement experience.

Meanwhile, as the annual powwow takes place in Bismarck and a federal court decision is expected today on the tribe's request for an injunction to stop construction on the pipeline, additional law enforcement officers will patrol the area this weekend.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said he wanted to be able to respond more quickly to situations that arise at the protest camps and for residents nearby. Deputies will not be stationed at the camps.

Thirty-seven people have been arrested in connection with the protests for trespassing on private property, refusing to stay in boundaries set by police and chaining themselves to construction equipment.

With the resources he had available Saturday, when a clash broke out between protesters and private pipeline security, Kirchmeier said he did not have the manpower needed to go in and make arrests.

"We want people to have a safe weekend," he said.

In a statement, Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault II asked protesters to remain peaceful following the judge's decision Friday.

"Any act of violence hurts our cause and is not welcome here," he said. "Even if the outcome of the court's ruling is not in our favor, we will continue to explore every lawful option and fight against the construction of the pipeline."

Dohrmann said he is in discussions with tribal leaders to find a peaceful resolution to the protests. He said he believes there is a group of "agitators" at the site, some of whom have been asked to leave.

Highway 1806 was closed Aug. 17 by Highway Patrol and the Department of Transportation for safety concerns. Tribal members and civil rights groups called for its reopening, citing economic impacts on the tribe and hindrance to First Amendment rights.

"We want to make sure that everybody that is going down on Highway 1806 can get where they're going with families," said Kirchmeier, explaining the reason for reopening the road. "We have had many conversations with tribal leaders trying to keep the roadway open."

The parks in the area will remain closed.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Mike Gerhardt said measures have been taken to make Highway 1806 safer for drivers. The speed limit around the protest sites has been reduced to 25 mph, new signs have been posted and troopers will be patrolling the area.

Dalrymple said anyone who has cost the government money during the pipeline protest may be asked for reimbursement, including the pipeline company.

Since a state — not federal — emergency declaration has been issued, federal funds are not available, Dalrymple said.

Dallas Goldtooth, a protest organizer with the Indigenous Environmental Network, said Dalrymple is sending a disturbing message by bringing in the National Guard.

“I think it’s deeply concerning to see this escalation from the governor of North Dakota," he said.

Goldtooth applauded the removal of the Highway 1806 barricade, a move he called "two weeks overdue."

Still, he said he's not sure what will happen after the federal judge issues his ruling.

“There’s a general anxiety or uncertainty about (Friday)," he said.

The North Dakota National Guard was last deployed at airports after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In 1969, it was called to respond to the Zip to Zap rioting.

Reach Caroline Grueskin at 701-250-8225 or at

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 25 Oct 2016 10:34:49 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: ND tribal

Morton County wants tribal chairman to intervene as frontline camp grows

By mnowa adalr on Oct 24, 2016 at 6:57 p.m.

FORT RICE, N.D. — With help arriving from other states, authorities say they hope to use communication to come to a peaceful resolution after a frontline "no surrender" camp was established to block construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Morton County Commission Chairman Cody Schulz called on Standing Rock Tribe Chairman David Archambault II to condemn the illegal actions of the protesters, which led to 127 arrests over the weekend in an increasingly tense situation.

The U.S Department of Justice said Monday, Oct. 24, said it is closely monitoring the situation and has offered technical assistance and community policing resources, said Wyn Hornbuckle, the department's deputy director of public affairs.

The department reiterated its call for Dakota Access to voluntarily stop construction within 20 miles of Lake Oahe until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authorizes construction on Corps land, Hornbuckle said.

Law enforcement from South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Indiana and Nebraska are now providing additional manpower as protesters have established a roadblock and a new camp on private property east of HIghway 1806 that was growing in size Monday.

"We have made 1806 our no-surrender line," said Joye Braun, a protest organizer with the Indigenous Environmental Network.

During a press conference Monday, Schulz called on Archambault to "show leadership and exert his authority" to encourage the protest camp to move to reservation land the tribal council designated last week.

Schulz said local and state officials recognize that the "dangerous actions and illegal activity" are not being perpetrated by tribal members. Schulz said the county is trying to respect the rights of the protesters, but also needs to protect the rights of local residents.

"It's disrupting the lives and injuring the economic well-being of everyone that lives in the area," Schulz said.

Archambault said in a statement late Sunday the tribe does not condone reports of illegal actions, but tribal leaders believe the militarization of local law enforcement and the enlistment of multiple agencies is "needlessly escalating violence and unlawful arrests."

He called on the Department of Justice to intervene and impose an injunction to all developments at the pipeline site to keep all citizens safe.

"The DOJ should be enlisted and expected to investigate the overwhelming reports and videos demonstrating clear strong-arm tactics, abuses and unlawful arrests by law enforcement," Archambault said.

Authorities arrested 126 people Saturday on charges including reckless endangerment, criminal trespass, engaging in a riot, assault on a peace officer and resisting arrest, bringing the total number of arrests to 269 since Aug. 10.

"The acts over the weekend were intentionally planned in an effort to incite fear and were anything but peaceful," said Capt. Bryan Niewind of the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Officers used pepper spray to protect themselves and control protesters who were trespassing on private property, the Morton County Sheriff's Department said, though protesters pointed to video they said showed the use of pepper spray was unwarranted.

Two officers suffered minor injuries while responding over the weekend and a third was spit on while trying to free a protester who was attached to a vehicle, Niewind said.

One person was arrested Sunday as protesters erected teepees and tents as a "frontline camp" directly in the path of the oil pipeline on the historic Cannonball Ranch, which Dakota Access LLC recently purchased from local rancher David Meyer.

About 15 teepees, several campers, more than 50 tents and several military tents have been set up at the frontline camp, which is across from where Dakota Access security guards armed with dogs and pepper spray clashed with protesters on Sept. 3.

A statement from groups involved in the protest explained that the self-described "water protectors" took back unceded territory affirmed in the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty between the federal government and Plains tribes, including the Lakota and Dakota.

"We will be occupying this land and staying here until this pipeline is permanently stopped," said Mekasi Camp-Horinek, a coordinator of the Oceti Sakowin Camp, the main protest camp about two miles south of the frontline camp.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said, "Individuals trespassing on private property can't claim eminent domain to justify their criminal actions."

When asked about the possibility of law enforcement coming in to remove people, Braun reiterated that they are unarmed and said they're protecting burial sites that are "in imminent danger."

"We're not moving. That's up to them to decide," Braun said.

In the ditch along the highway, protesters were stacking large logs and laying them to form an entrance to the camp.

Frank Archambault, a cousin of the tribal chairman, said the timbers may be used to form some sort of blockade to keep Dakota Access construction from crossing the highway.

About 1 mile south of Fort Rice, law enforcement and the North Dakota National Guard set up a staging area and checkpoint, where they were restricting traffic Monday to local residents.

On Monday, protesters reestablished the roadblock put up Sunday on Highway 1806, north of the camp.

"Even though DAPL bought that from the Meyer family, to us it's an illegal sale because it is unceded territory," said Red Warrior Camp spokesman Cody Hall.

If needed, protesters can move the roadblock to allow first responders through, Hall said.

Highway 1806 will be closed "indefinitely" due to unsafe and illegal protest activities, Niewind said.

On Sunday, a helicopter pilot and a law enforcement officer on board to monitor the protest "were in fear for the lives" Sunday when a drone repeatedly buzzed the helicopter, coming within 30 to 50 feet of the helicopter, Niewind said.

Officers used less than lethal ammunition to shoot at the drone away from the direction of any people, Niewind said.

The shooting at the drone, plus the large law enforcement presence, made protesters fear for their lives, Braun said.

Braun said she is hopeful the federal government will step in and stop construction.

"If the federal government isn't going to protect 18 million people's lives, then we as water protectors and water defenders will do everything we can peacefully to protect people's lives," Braun said.

Hall said more people were continuing to arrive to support the protest.

"They're all bypassing the big camp and going to the front line camp," Hall said.

Around mid-afternoon, there was a call throughout the camp to move north to fortify the roadblock because they said there were law enforcement and military forces coming to surround them, which turned out to be a false alarm.

Kristina Young Bear, 48, Tama, Iowa, showed up Sunday night after tracking the situation on social media. She and her sister, Mary Young Bear, 56, were recruited for cooking duty at the new camp and were preparing bison, boiled potatoes, vegetables and fry bread over a wood fire on Monday.

"Just disgusting what the law's trying to do, using their pepper spray," said Kristina, a member of Meskwaki in Iowa.

Mary said she'd visited the Red Warrior Camp before on a previous trip and said she's "just going where they ask me to go. The people that make these decisions, I assume they know what they're doing. I'm just a visitor, I'm here for support."

Among the 126 arrested Saturday was Sara Lafleur-Vetter, a journalist working on an independent documentary production who was charged with misdemeanor criminal trespassing and engaging in a riot.

Meanwhile, Dakota Access LLC, a subsidiary of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, said in a letter to the North Dakota attorney general's office Monday that it purchased the ranch land in and around the pipeline route in southern Morton County last month "to enhance the safety of its workers" and "to better manage ingress and egress to the right of way."

The company had to explain how its purchase of more than 7,000 acres—including most of the Cannonball Ranch—complied with the state's anti-corporate farming law, which prohibits non-family corporations from owning farm and ranch land, with some exceptions, including for industrial purposes.

"After construction of the pipeline is complete, DAPL will transfer ownership of the property or use the property for some other use in compliance" with state law, Bismarck attorney Lawrence Bender wrote for the company.

Archambault said the militarization of local law enforcement and enlistment of multiple law enforcement agencies from neighboring states is "needlessly escalating violence and unlawful arrests against peaceful protesters at Standing Rock.

"We do not condone reports of illegal actions, but believe the majority of peaceful protesters are reacting to strong-arm tactics and abuses by law enforcement," he said.

Protesters set up a roadblock on Highway 1806 at about 2 p.m. Sunday afternoon, stringing barbed wire and positioning vehicles across the highway and fortifying it with hay bales, rocks, tree stumps, logs and vehicles, the sheriff's department said. They later removed the roadblock after speaking with law enforcement officials who warned them about the liability they could face if something happened at the camp and emergency vehicles couldn't get through.

Opponents of the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline also set up roadblocks on Highway 1806 south of the main camp and on County Road 134, an access road to the pipeline construction sites. They said the frontline camp is on the final 3 miles of the pipeline route before it connects with the drill pad that will take the pipeline under Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River. Construction was about 2 miles west of the frontline camp as of Sunday, they said.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently withholding the lake crossing easement for Dakota Access. In a Sept. 9 statement with the DOJ and Department of Interior, the Corps said it needed to determine whether it should reconsider its previous decisions about the lake crossing under the National Environmental Policy Act or other laws.

U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., said last week he doesn't expect a decision on the easement until after the Nov. 8 election.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is suing the Corps over permits issued for the four-state pipeline, which would carry 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day. Tribal members fear the pipeline would leak and contaminate their water supply, and they say construction will desecrate sacred sites on their ancestral lands

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 4 Nov 2016 10:34:48 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND tribal

$4 million to be requested for response to pipeline protests

- NICK SMITH Bismarck Tribune
  ○
- Oct 31, 2016
- TOM STROMME, TRIBUNE

Law enforcement arrest people protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline on a newly constructed roadway near Fort Rice in Morton County in August. The rock bed road connects to Highway 1806 and will allow construction vehicles to access ranch land for building the pipeline. For video and a photo gallery, go to bismarcktribune.com.

The North Dakota Department of Emergency Services will be requesting an additional $4 million to cover the costs associated with the response of law enforcement to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests in Morton County.

Members of the North Dakota Emergency Commission are expected to green-light the request at a 2 p.m. meeting in the governor's conference room today.

Most of the original $6 million line of credit approved in September has been used as the protest movement near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's reservation boundary over the four-state pipeline project and subsequent response has continued to ramp up.

Lawmakers on the emergency commission said last week they have no choice but to approve funding for law enforcement to maintain order and keep the public safe. They also expressed hope the state's congressional delegation can get at least partial reimbursement in federal dollars.

Last week marked an escalation in tensions between protesters and police as an hours-long sweep to clear a camp set up on private land recently purchased by Dakota Access LLC was conducted. There were 142 arrests made as protesters were backed off the property.

The North Dakota portion of the 1,172-mile, $3.8 billion project is nearly complete. A permit is still needed to bore under the Missouri River, which is planned to occur less than a mile from the reservation boundary. Opponents of the project are concerned over future pipeline leaks if the pipeline is completed.

(Reach Nick Smith at 701-250-8255 or 701-223-8482 or at nick.smith@bismarcktribune.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 2 Sep 2016 14:15:29 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: ND tribal

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Tribal consent at heart of court arguments over pipelines below lake

- Mike Nowatzki Forum News Service
- 13 hrs ago

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 12:37:12 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie;Hvinden, Brian;Welch, Randy
Subject: New York Times Story on protests

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/us/occupying-the-prairie-tensions-rise-as-tribes-move-to-block-a-pipeline.html?_r=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 12:06:32 -0400
To: Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan
Subject: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark—

Heads up. See highlighted news story below. Sherriff has deployed four deputies to ND to help with public safety issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protest.
As HQ email indicates, FEMA is not paying for this EMAC request.

Wyoming is also sending six deputies to support through an EMAC request. There was a news story in today's clips, but did not mention that FEMA was paying for the deployment.

Thanks,
Jerry

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J

Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)
Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline. The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>; (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform’s glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: (b)(6)@utah.gov
Sent: 8 Nov 2016 21:15:48 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: North Dakota EMAC request 2016

DATE: November 8, 2016 2:14:26 PM MST

Dear PIOs,

The Division of Emergency Management has received the following request from North Dakota via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (a system of state-to-state mutual aid). The request is for one PIO to support North Dakota for two weeks during the pipeline protests going on there.

If you are interested in supporting North Dakota, please let me know and I'll get you in touch with our EMAC coordinator.

Please read the following resource request. Here's the short version; the entire request follows:

Deployment period: 11/13-28/16
Description:

> One PIO to act in a support capacity to lead PIO for an ongoing protest incident in ND. 2 week deployment (14 days with 2 days for travel) for a total of 16 days Equipment needed: Laptop computer Assisting lead PIO with media calls, crafting fact sheets, timelines, media alerts, and news releases. Hours are Typically 8:00 am-5:00 pm.
>
> Safety: No safety or health concerns identified; Cold weather gear required.
>
> Working conditions: Field impacted area; Normal - infrastructure & support services operational; Mobile laptop and media phone will be issued.

Resource Request #1102-RR-5386

Contact Name: (b)(6)

Contact Email: (b)(6)@nd.gov

Contact Phone: (b)(6)

Update:

Broadcasted To: All

Total Recipients: 377

Event Name:	Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) Protest October 2016		
State Mission TN #:	16-073-227	EM Software TN #:	16-073-227
Requesting Agency:	State of North Dakota	EMAC TN #:	1102-RR-5386

Requesting State REQ-A Contact:

First Name:	(b)(6)	Last Name:	(b)(6)
Phone 1:	(b)(6)	Phone 2:	(b)(6)
Email 1:	(b)(6)@nd.gov	Email 2:	nddes@nd.gov

Mission Type/Source: State Type / Status:

Mission Description: Public Information Offcier

Resource Description: One PIO to act in a support capacity to lead PIO for an ongoing protest incident in ND. 2 week deployment (14 days with 2 days for travel) for a total of 16 days Equipment needed: Laptop computer Assisting lead PIO with media calls, crafting fact sheets, timelines, media alerts, and news releases. Hours are Typically 8:00 am-5:00 pm or as needed to respond to protest activities.

NIMS Type:

Requested: 1 # Type: Personnel

Deployment Dates (including travel days):

Mobilization: Demobilization:

Deployment Date: 2016-11-13 Demobilization Date: 2016-11-28

Duty Length: 16

Deployment Details:

Work Location/Facilities: State EOC

Location/Facility Name: North Dakota State Emergency Operations Center
Address 1: 35 Fraine Barracks Lane
Address 2:
City: Bismarck
Zip Code: 58504
Working Conditions: Normal - Infrastructure & Support services operational
Working Conditions Comments:
Living Conditions: Normal - All amenities available
Living Conditions Comments: Cold weather gear
Logistics Comments: Laptop Media cell phone will be issued

Identify Health & Safety Concerns (All selected Apply):

X	No Safety or Health Concerns have been identified
	Immunizations or Vaccinations are suggested to deploy
	Environmental Hazards Exist
	Personal Protection Equipment Needed

Safety Concerns/Remarks:

Requesting State Resource Coordination Contact:

First Name:	(b)(6)	Last Name:	(b)(6)
Title:	Logistics	Agency:	State of North Dakota
Phone 1:	(b)(6)	Mobile:	(b)(6)
Email 1:	(b)(6)@nd.gov	Email 2:	nddes@nd.gov

Staging Area and Point of Contact:

POC First Name:	(b)(6)	Last Name:	(b)(6)
Phone 1:	(b)(6)	Phone 2:	(b)(6)

Location/Facility Name: North Dakota State Emergency Operations Center
Address 1: 35 Fraine Barracks Lane
Address 2:
City: Bismarck
Zip Code: 58504

(b)(6), PIO
Utah Division of Emergency Management

(b)(6)
(b)(6)**@utah.gov**
Twitter: @(b)(6)

Utah Department of Public Safety
Utah Emergency Management

Visit this link to unsubscribe

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 11:46:39 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Notes from congressional call

- Pretty quiet in HQ congressional
- BCEM is November 15-17
- Employees encouraged to vote, perhaps early because of potential of a no-notice event. (Employees can take three hours on election day if needed to make sure they can vote.)
- I reported on the pipeline protest, the letter going out today to seven mayors and the county commissioner (plus congressionals), and a new one received via HQ from Bennet/Polis re Highlands Ditch.
- R5 RA announced his resignation. First political to leave? … Wisconsin got declared, but the state postponed discussion of JFO/DRCs because it is now hunting season. … Request from Minnesota for IA and PA
- R4 has transitioned Hurricane Matthew calls to weekly instead of daily.
- Flood map update is a couple days late this month.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 16:15:22 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: notes from the 9 am

- IMAT is deploying to LA today to be in place tonight (Conner will be staying and Daniel will be going once he finishes his week at EMI).
- State of ND requested a COW (for support with broadband capability) to put down by the protests that are occurring near the Standing Rock Reservation. We are connecting the State with the Region's contact.
- We have a Red Flag warning in Utah today.
- Rain, Rain and more Rain in LA today and over the next few days.
- MERS will be deploying to Wisconsin, however, they don't have a date yet.
- The new DCO will be starting tomorrow and will start to make the rounds to meet with Divisions. He will be in the Springs the rest of the week for NORTHCOM events.
- Nancy will be here tomorrow and there out the rest of the week.
- Theresa will be teleworking tomorrow morning and then leave in the afternoon (tomorrow is her birthday).
- The cell towner at Rocky Boys is now up and functional. They now have good Verizon service on the reservation.
- Recovery hopes to transition Baker back to the Region by the end of the week (8 PWs).
- Mike O. is back in the office.
- The Region is still looking for a CFC Coordinator.

EA reported:

- Stacie is on leave today.
- Three calls today (pre met for Senate Indian Affairs Committee, call with Senate Indian Affairs Committee and Baker Briefing). Program will be participating in all three calls.
- Protests near Standing Rock Reservation over the oil pipeline have garnered national attention. Representatives from tribes across the region and country will be arriving today. It could impact some of our travel and outreach – we won't be a focus. Tim and Bunk asked that I contact Chris Anderson, even though the protests have been peaceful, for situational awareness.
- Anticipate HQ will open consultation this week for the Tribal Policy, Region VIII will be changing how we engage for this consultation.
- Thanked everyone for support for Sally Clark visit support.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 12:15:24 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: notes from the 9 am

- IMAT is deploying to LA today to be in place tonight (Conner will be staying and Daniel will be going once he finishes his week at EMI).
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- Thanked everyone for support for Sally Clark visit support.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 18 Oct 2016 11:49:08 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Notes on CAD call

Hot Issues:

- Matthew, plus other events.

Briefings:

- None scheduled. Congress returns Tuesday after election.

`

Regional Reports

4: Lot of Matthew decs and requests… Attendance was very low on Georgia cong teleconference, only one or two districts affected, so resorting to individual contacts with those offices now.
5: Dan says quiet now, but one pending dec request for Wisconsin and likely MN will ask for IA and PA. Dan will go staff one of those, since apparently everyone else in country is deployed somewhere.
6: Mapping issue in New Mexico, may be corrected OK… Singapore delegation coming through Louisiana to check recovery (from Katrina? State Dept reached out; need to loop in FEMA intern'l affairs)… congressional complaints about housing in B Rouge, still hot…
8: Noted our recent FMAG, that we are watching the ND pipeline situation, and, as R1 had noted, that the teleregistration intake training for the SWAT was helpful and interesting.
10: Collective sigh of relief storm system that came through not as bad as anticipated…

Strat Comm: agreed the customer intake training for SWAT team was interesting and helpful… **Great Shakeout on 10/20!!** … Tribal policy renewal out for public comment till 10/28… IAEM just finished, no senior VTC today because leaders still out. BCEM Nov. 15-17. …

OCC: Working on draft legislative proposal to give reservists employment protection for when deployed. Request from Dep. Administrator. May circulate among different offices next week. Will go through OMB if to ever go to congress. Will take a while, though Dep. Admin. wants it done pretty quickly, during this administration.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 16:50:47 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: omg

http://www.myndnow.com/news/bismarck-news/trump-holds-stock-in-dakota-access-pipeline

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 18:26:24 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: PIO Call (10-11) tomorrow in SW Conference Room

Agenda
10:00 a.m. Welcome – Stacie Greff

State reports: **(((SUGGESTED TOPICS)))**

Colorado—Micki finishing Naval Post Graduate School. Project relates to media access.

Montana—Baker disaster. Wildfires.

North Dakota—DES role in pipeline protest.

South Dakota—OEM involvement in Sturgis rally.

Utah—September PIO conference in St. George.

Wyoming—Wildfires. Lusk one year later.

Region VIII reports:

- Status of ARA/RA position. STACIE
- Region VIII IMAT to Louisiana. Daniel Green is the new IMAT EA Advisor, deployed to Livingston Parish. STACIE
- NEMA-FEMA meeting in Chicago. STACIE
- September is Preparedness Month. Be sure to let us know if states have plans. We want to support your efforts. **(((JERRY PLAN TO BRIEF THIS IF YOU ARE ON)))**
- OST wrap. **(((BRIAN or RICKY)))**
- Upcoming Tribal consultation. **(((RICKY or STACIE)))**

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 26 Aug 2016 14:26:19 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Subject: pipeline clips du jour

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who’s Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline’s charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment. The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota's governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country's pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

For breaking news and in-depth reporting, follow @NYTNational on Twitter.

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune
-

Lauren Donovan

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

“They can’t build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe,” Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company’s decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any “Jane and John Doe” from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe’s request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

“Everybody thought they had it (easement),” said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. “This is really important information.”

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

“We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There’s nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court’s injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday’s news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

“The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she’ll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people,” Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

“It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making,” Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

“When this is done, if it’s ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered
Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:

A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.
MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

⊗ mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

From: Senator Steve Daines
Sent: 29 Jun 2016 20:43:30 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Pipeline potential

If you are having trouble viewing this message or would like to share it on a social network, you can view the message online <http://daines.enews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1> .
<http://view.icv01.net/view.gif?gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1>

Steve Daines, United States Senator for Montana
<http://daines.enews.senate.gov/mail/util.cfm?mailaction=clickthru&gpiv=2100136292.154278.270&gen=1&mailing_linkid=1762>

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June 29, 201

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Sent: 27 Oct 2016 16:21:06 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Pipeline update

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New roadblock emerges on Highway 1806 as confrontation between protesters, law enforcement looms

By Amy Dalrymple and Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 10:22 a.m.

› ‹

Dawn breaks over the Oceti Sakowin Camp Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor1 / 2

A roadblock manned by North Dakota National Guard troops blocks North Dakota Hwy. 1806 before sunrise Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor2 / 2

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Protesters will be encouraged to return to the southern camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.

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Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
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Sent: 27 Oct 2016 14:09:54 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: Greff, Stacie
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- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

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“The North Dakota tribes and tribal members from around the nation are attempting to protect both the environment and sites which have ceremonial, religious and cultural significance to the tribes,” Goggles said.

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"North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded," Mead said.

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"It kind of sheds light on really who's running the show here," Baldes said. "The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets."

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

"The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue," he said.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including

emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

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Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

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emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 18:09:46 +0000
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Pipeline update

Pipeline update:

Yesterday was a big day, Jessy Jackson arrived on site and talks between the protestors and law enforcement broke down.

- There was an article today from the Associated Press Regarding WY sending law enforcement to North Dakota: http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming-sends-troopers-to-north-dakota-pipeline-protest/article_2972e493-0b71-5cab-9c7d-3c27fb67542e.html (full article pasted below). Pre the article both tribes in WY are opposed to sending the law enforced support.
- There was a media report yesterday that Indiana is sending law enforcement to support ND. The article references FEMA paying for the support. We have reached out to Region IV for awareness and to let them know that FEMA is not paying for any law enforcement. The article is likely referencing EMAC. http://www.theindychannel.com/news/call-6-investigators/call-6-dozens-of-indiana-officers-deployed-to-north-dakota-pipeline-dispute-but-whos-paying (full article below).
- I am hearing a lot about treaty rights on social media, this morning on NPR the Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux talked about this land belonging to the tribes based on treaties (NPR and other media sources).
- A new encampment (the 1851 Treaty Camp) has been set up directly on the pipeline path, which is private property (KILI Radio).
- On Wed. Jessy Jackson arrived on site to speak out about the many human and civil rights violations being perpetrated by local police (Indian Country Today).
- Actor Mark Ruffalo was at Standing Rock yesterday showing his support and Leonardo DiCaprio announced today he is on his way (Indian Country Today).
- Everyone is still calling for peaceful protests (multiple media outlets).
- It is being reported there have been between 260 and 300 arrests since the protests began with most of them happening last Saturday and pepper spray being used by law enforcement (multiple media sources).
- FAA has issued temporary flight restrictions over the protest camps. Only response aircraft in support of law enforcement activity are authorized in the airspace (Bismarck Tribune).
- Negotiations broke down between protestors and law enforcement yesterday (Bismarck Tribune).
- This inforum link is to a video that shows clear frustration by law enforcement and that they do not want a confrontation. http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction (InForum)

This is a particularly good story about law enforcement and what happened yesterday.

http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4146041-new-roadblock-emerges-highway-1806-confrontation-between-protesters-law

New roadblock emerges on Highway 1806 as confrontation between protesters, law enforcement looms

By Amy Dalrymple and Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 10:22 a.m.

Dawn breaks over the Oceti Sakowin Camp Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor1 / 2

ⓘ A roadblock manned by North Dakota National Guard troops blocks North Dakota Hwy. 1806 before sunrise Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor2 / 2

MORTON COUNTY, N.D. — One day after negotiations between Dakota Access Pipeline protesters and law enforcement broke down, the mood was tense but quiet Thursday, Oct. 27, as the sun rose above the resistance camps.

Above, in restricted airspace, a North Dakota Highway Patrol aircraft circled.

Cecily Fong, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Emergency Services, said medical staffing is in place should any injuries occur at the protest sites.

She said law enforcement will likely issue a warning to protesters congregating at a camp along State Highway 1806, where pipeline opponents have set up teepees and staged hay bales, logs and barbed wire to block the road, if necessary.

However, Fong said she didn't know the timing of any law enforcement action planned, and officers want protesters to leave the northern camp, which is on private property recently purchased by the pipeline's developer, Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

Protesters will be encouraged to return to the southern camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.

By Thursday morning, protesters set up an additional "halfway" roadblock on Highway 1806 — between their main barricade and the frontline camp where they've promised to hold their ground.

At the halfway roadblock, pipeline opponents staged tires, plywood, sheet metal and logs — all ready to move onto the highway should law enforcement approach. The additional roadblock provides more time for those at the main camp to leave or join the protesters at the frontline camp.

Sam Wounded Knee, from Crow Creek Nation in South Dakota, spent the night at the "halfway" roadblock.

He said a plane flew overhead through the night, and it appeared two people were in the surrounding hills to the west and using flashlights to signal back and forth with the plane.

Asked if he expects violence in a confrontation, “from the police, yeah, definitely,” he said.

“All we’re trying to do is protect our people,” Wounded Knee said, adding that women and children were asked to leave the frontline camp Wednesday night. About 200 people are at the frontline camp.

With the new roadblock established by protesters, Highway 1806 has numerous staging areas, camps and road blocks stretched out over several miles, starting with an equipment staging area set up by law enforcement about a mile south of Fort Rice.

Traveling south on 1806, in succession, there is a law enforcement barricade, followed by the protesters’ main barricade, halfway roadblock, frontline camp and main camp.

On Wednesday, negotiations between pipeline opponents and law enforcement officials broke down, setting up a possible clash as hundreds of protesters vowed to hold their ground at a the frontline camp directly in the path of the four-state oil pipeline.

A contingent of law enforcement and National Guard officials met with camp representatives on Highway 1806.

Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney of Fargo, who is helping Morton County coordinate the law enforcement response, made one last plea for protesters to remove their roadblock on 1806 and abandon the roughly 200-person “frontline” camp, where teepees and tents continued to pop up on land where the pipeline is planned

“We’re here telling you this is private property and you have to leave,” Laney told camp coordinator Mekasi Camp-Horinek on Wednesday. “We don’t want a confrontation. Please stand your people down and go back to the main camp.”

Mekasi pointed at the road – “our no surrender line,” he said – and then back at the frontline camp standing in the way of the four-state, $3.8 billion oil pipeline – their “no retreat” line.

“That’s your final word?” Laney asked.

“That’s my final word,” Camp-Horinek said, walking away.

“Good day, gentleman,” Laney said, turning toward the staging area about five miles away near Fort Rice, where a mass of law enforcement and military forces has gathered.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said authorities will continue to do everything they can to resolve the situation peacefully, but he said discussions with camp leaders Wednesday reached an “impasse.”

Kirchmeier emphasized that “the last thing we want to do is do it forcefully.”

“If we have the chance for open dialog, that’s what we want to continue,” he said.

Pipeline opponents say they’ve reclaimed land under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, noting the Sioux never ceded that territory.

But Kirchmeier said Morton County authorities have to enforce existing laws and treaty issues would need to be resolved by the federal government. He added that currently the protesters are infringing on other residents’ rights by blocking the highway.

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

- AP

Protesters set up tepees and tents Monday in southern North Dakota on property owned by the pipeline company.

CHEYENNE — Wyoming has sent six highway patrol troopers to North Dakota to help authorities deal with Indian protesters demonstrating against the construction of an oil pipeline, prompting objections Tuesday from some Wyoming Indian leaders.

Sending the troopers merely extends emergency help to another state and does not signal that Wyoming has taken a position on the pipeline controversy, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said.

But Dean Goggles, chairman of Northern Arapaho Business Council, called on Mead to recall the troopers immediately.

“The North Dakota tribes and tribal members from around the nation are attempting to protect both the environment and sites which have ceremonial, religious and cultural significance to the tribes,” Goggles said.

More than 100 protesters were arrested last weekend in Morton County, North Dakota, in the faceoff between protesters and Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, developer of the four-state Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The $3.8 billion pipeline, most of which has been completed, crosses through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois. Opponents worry about potential effects on drinking water on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s reservation as well as harm to cultural sites.

Col. Kebin Haller of the Wyoming Highway Patrol said six troopers were sent to North Dakota on Saturday and are expected to remain there until Nov. 8.

The troopers volunteered after the governor of North Dakota declared an emergency and asked other states for law enforcement assistance, Haller said.

The six are members of the patrol's Special Services Squad who have additional training and equipment to address large crowds and civil unrest, he said. North Dakota will pay their salaries and the costs they incur while at the protest.

Mead said the decision to send Wyoming troopers happened because "a neighbor state asked for help and Wyoming answered the call."

"North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded," Mead said.

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in Wyoming have expressed formal support for the protesters.

Jason Baldes, a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and staff member at the Wind River Native Advocacy Center, accused Wyoming officials of supporting the pipeline by sending law enforcement officers to face off against protesters.

"It kind of sheds light on really who's running the show here," Baldes said. "The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets."

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

"The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue," he said.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 13:46:32 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: PROTECTOR CAMPS REMAIN PEACEFUL

The new issue of the Lakota Country Times just came out with a number of stories regarding the pipeline protest in North Dakota. Glenda will put them together for you shortly.

2016-08-25 / Front Page
Print

PROTECTOR CAMPS REMAIN PEACEFUL

By Brandon Ecoffey
Times Editor

EVERYONE
WElCOME
Sacred Stone
Camp!

Water protectors remain peaceful despite efforts to cast them in a different level light. PINE RIDGE—Despite efforts by the local North Dakota media and county officials water protectors and Standing Rock Sioux Tribal officials say that the message emanating through the camps is one of peaceful resistance.

Nearly 3,000 water protectors gathered peacefully this past weekend in Cannonball, ND., to speak out against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline that is set to be built near the Standing Rock Reservation and could possibly threaten drinking water for tribal citizens. The gathering has been peaceful as organizers have directed those in attendance to not engage in violent acts.

“There are no weapons within the camp,” said Cody Hall, who is the media spokesperson for the Red Warrior Camp. “We have security in the camp at all hours and when people arrive they are asked what they have in the car. Our security walks the camps at all hours to make sure nothing like that is happening,” said Hall.

Hall says that all entering the camp are made aware that weapons and alcohol are not allowed.

Additionally, LaDonna Allard, Director of the Camp of the Sacred Stone, addressed these same issues in a press release on Tuesday after the Governor of North Dakota declared a state of emergency.

"The gathering here remains 100% peaceful and ceremonial, as it has from day one. We are standing together in prayer. No firearms or weapons are allowed. Why is a gathering of Indians so inherently threatening and frightening to some people," asked Allard.

Governor Dalrymple declared a State of Emergency last Friday to allow for additional state resources to be directed to the gatherings as he mentioned that he believed "outside agitators" were responsible for committing crime within the camps. The reports have remain unsubstantiated and irresponsible comments from local law enforcement about the possibility of the presence of pipe bombs have contributed to a false narrative about the activities of protectors.

A report from the Bismark Tribune on Tuesday, however, revealed a conflict of interest for Dalrymple as they reported that he owns stock in ExxonMobile. A spokesman for the governor told the Tribune that, "He is not going to discuss the details of his personal finances."

Early efforts by the local media and the representatives from Morton County Law Enforcement to sensationalize "reports" of weapons including pipe bombs have been quickly dismissed by those present within the camps and several journalists including LCT's Karin Eagle who spent time embedded in both camps over the weekend.

Sources inside of the office of Standing Rock Sioux President Dave Archambault Jr., have told LCT that from the start of the protest the goal of the administration is to keep the protests peaceful and prayerful. The nonviolent direct action taken by organizers of the camps has been partly credited with the overwhelming show of support from both tribalnations and non-Native allies who flocked to the camps in the thousands this past weekend.

"The growing support from tribal-nations and others for this movement has partly been brought about by the people's willingness to remain unarmed and nonviolent." **(Contact Brandon Ecoffey at editor@lakotacountrytimes.com)**

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From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 7 Sep 2016 17:43:03 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Protest Update

This just got posted.
http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4110236-law-enforcement-beefing-presence-ahead-dakota-access-ruling-friday

Law enforcement beefing up presence ahead of Dakota Access ruling Friday

By Forum News Service Today at 4:25 p.m.

The Dakota Access Pipeline, pictured under construction on Friday, July 29, 2016, in northwest North Dakota, is expected to be complete by the end of 2016. Forum News Service file photo by Eric Hylden

BISMARCK—Authorities are beefing up their presence in the Bismarck-Mandan area in anticipation of a court decision expected Friday on the heavily protested Dakota Access Pipeline, a spokesman for North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple said Wednesday, Sept. 7.

Spokesman Jeff Zent said plans are under way for additional law enforcement officers in the Bismarck-Mandan area and enhanced patrols in Morton County, where hundreds of protesters are camped out near a pipeline construction site along Highway 1806 about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Zent said he didn't have any information on whether the North Dakota National Guard would be on standby, but said, "The governor has always said the National Guard is an option."

Thirty-seven people have been arrested on charges including preventing arrest, disorderly conduct and criminal trespass in connection with protests at pipeline construction sites in Morton County that began in mid-August.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg in Washington, D.C., has said he will rule on or before Friday on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction to halt construction of the pipeline, which will cross the Missouri River less than a mile north of the Standing Rock reservation. The tribe fears the pipeline will leak and contaminate its water supply and sacred sites, and its lawsuit claims the corps failed to consider the historical and cultural significance of that area.

A permitted protest is scheduled from 3 to 6 p.m. Friday on the south end of the state Capitol mall in Bismarck to coincide with the ruling. A Facebook page for the "Peace Rally Against the Pipeline" showed more than 350 people planning to attend and 1,200 interested.

Zent said the governor's office, state Highway Patrol and Morton County Sheriff's Department will continue to monitor the situation and re-evaluate the need for law enforcement to ensure public safety. A roadblock restricting southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to local traffic only remains in place.

Protesters have said they expect the ruling to be appealed regardless of which way it goes, and that they plan to continue protesting until the four-state pipeline project is rerouted or scrapped. The 1,172-mile,

$3.8 billion pipeline will initially carry 450,000 barrels of oil per day from the Bakken oil fields to Patoka, Ill., with a capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

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Region VIII Clips

Monday, August 15, 2016

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You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

STORIES

COLORADO:

Black Forest fire recovery leaders think about next time

By: Ellie Mulder Colorado Springs Gazette
August 13, 2016 Updated: August 13, 2016 at 9:32 pm

About 480 were destroyed, but at this point, "it's slowed down a lot. I don't think we're going to see more than what we have now," said Kenneth Clark, forest director for Black Forest Together.

The nonprofit organization, which has been a resource for those recovering after the fire, is looking to the future.

"It doesn't make any sense to clean up the black sticks if you're not trying to prevent another (fire)," Clark said. "The disaster showed us what's going to happen - it gives you a preview of what can happen at any time."

And Eddie Bracken, co-founder of Black Forest Together, said, "It's not a question of if, but when the next fire will come."

Near the organization's booth at the Black Forest Festival Saturday, Bracken and Clark discussed the progress that's been made since the fire and what more there is to be done.

Until 2016, all of the organization's work projects were completed for free, Clark said. Now, volunteers continue to complete mitigation and cleanup work for a small fee.

Education efforts occur in part to demonstrate the importance of continued mitigation and maintenance, Clark said. There is also a sense that after three years, people in the Colorado Springs area have begun to forget about the Black Forest fire.

"What we need people to understand is that there's still a lot of work to be done, and people in Colorado Springs specifically have become somewhat complacent with, 'The fire happened, it's over, it's fine,'" Clark said. "We get hundreds, if not thousands of volunteers from all over the country, but we're not getting them from home, and we need volunteers here to help us with the projects."

But the work continues. In 2014, the organization gave away about 10,000 seedlings for reforestation efforts, followed by between 6,000 and 7,000 in both 2015 and 2016, Bracken said.

And in 2014 and 2015, the organization completed over 180 work projects, including cleaning up burned land, reforestation, erosion control and green forest mitigation.

"There's a responsibility that you have to the forest to keep it mitigated, to your own home and to other people's homes that are adjacent," Bracken said.

For more information about Black Forest Together, visit blackforesttogether.org.

MONTANA:

New book recounts 1959 Yellowstone-area earthquake

CLAIR JOHNSON For the Star-Tribune

A powerful earthquake that struck the Hebgen Lake area near Yellowstone National Park in 1959 also left a powerful mark on a 7-year-old boy who was asleep in his Idaho Falls home.

Historian and author Larry E. Morris said he didn’t wake up. “My mom certainly did. I think a jar fell and broke,” he said.

The 7.5 magnitude earthquake killed 28 people, including an Idaho Falls family of five who was believed to have been entombed by a massive, quake-triggered landslide that buried a campground and plugged the Madison River about 9½ miles downstream from the Hebgen Lake Dam.

The slide took less than a minute and brought down more than 80 million tons of rock into the river, forming what became Earthquake Lake. At the time, the earthquake was the second-strongest in the lower 48 states in the 20th century, said the Forest Service, which operates the Earthquake Lake Visitor Center.

“It made quite an impression on me from the start,” Morris said.

Morris, who lives in Salt Lake City, is the author of a book released in July and titled, “The 1959 Yellowstone Earthquake,” published by Arcadia Publishing and The History Press.

The book tells the story of the earthquake with a focus on the victims and survivors and those who responded to the emergency.

The book also features a foreword by Lee Whittlesey, Yellowstone National Park historian.

Morris said his parents took him and his siblings to the memorial site on top of the landslide in the early 1960s, before the visitors center was built, heard a Forest Service ranger talk about the earthquake and toured the area.

“All those dead trees and Earthquake Lake. And one cabin tilted squeewampus. But that plaque with the names on it and how the folks were buried there made a powerful impression on me,” Morris said.

Morris has been captivated by the story ever since and has taken his own family to the site.

“It was a natural subject for a book. I find the story so compelling,” Morris said.

Morris initially began research for a book in 1990 but became sidetracked by other projects and put the earthquake story aside. But, he said, he always knew he’d return to it. A few years ago, Morris resumed his research and finished his book.

“I was really thinking of the human interest, both survivors and first responders. It’s just one incredible story after another. It’s amazing,” he said.

One of the first responders was Montana Highway Patrol Trooper Glen Stevens, who was dispatched from his Whitehall home to warn residents in the Madison River Valley of flooding should the Hebgen Dam fail. In the hours after the 11:37 p.m. earthquake, there were conflicting reports about whether the dam had held.

“I had a nice phone interview with him. He seemed to remember it quite well,” Morris said. Stevens, now deceased, a deputy sheriff and two others drove up the valley, working their way toward the dam.

“They were one of the first people to reach Cliff Lake,” where a boulder dislodged and killed Edgar H. Stryker and his wife, Ethel M. Stryker, who were camping with Edgar’s three young sons, Morris said. The boys, who were in a separate tent nearby, were unhurt.

After helping at Cliff Lake, Stevens and his companions drove on toward the Madison River where they encountered the massive landslide. There they helped Irene Bennett and her son, Phil Bennett, who had camped with their family on the downstream side of the slide. Irene’s husband, Purley, and their three other children died in the quake.

Morris also interviewed Carole Painter, who was 16 at the time and the daughter of Myrtle L. Painter, who later died of injuries in a Bozeman hospital.

And Morris interviewed Billings, Montana, resident Mildred “Tootie” Greene, a nurse who was camped with her family upstream of the slide. The Greene family survived uninjured, and Greene spent the night and next day aiding others, including Myrtle Painter.

Morris said he spent an afternoon about a year ago with Greene at her Billings home. “She was fantastic and sharp as a tack. She’s one of the great heroes. She really stayed cool. I think she probably saved some lives,” Morris said.

“She had a healthy attitude toward the tragedy,” Morris said. Greene has been “extremely cooperative with anyone who ever asked” about the experience, he said.

Another nurse, Frances Donegan of Ohio, was camped with her husband, Fred, and their children near the dam, Morris said. His book recounts how Donegan rushed to help others who had gathered at what became known as Refuge Point.

Fred Donegan also helped rescue Grover and Lillian Mault, an elderly couple who had clung to a tree for hours as water rose around them.

“They deserve a lot of credit,” Morris said. The Donegans went back to Ohio and “didn’t make a lot of noise themselves. They really did a great job and deserve to be remembered,” he said.

Morris’ book features more than 100 photographs from national government archives, from survivors who contributed family photos and Morris’ own photographs. The front and back cover photographs, he said, came from the Gallatin History Museum in Bozeman, Montana.

Morris started his research at the museum. “They were really great in helping me,” he said.

Morris also credits Joanne Girvin, a Forest Service employee at the Earthquake Lake Visitor Center, with keeping the story alive.

The Forest Service opened the center on top of the slide in 1967. More than 50,000 visitors stop annually at the site, the agency said.

Morris dedicated the book to the memory of Ernest Bruffey, the 29th victim of the earthquake. Morris said Bruffey, a Havre resident, had told others of his plan to hike Granite Peak in the Beartooth Mountains between Aug. 16 and 19. Bruffey was never heard from again.

Strong shocks were recorded in the area after the initial quake and there were slides on Granite Peak, Morris said. Searchers never found Bruffey's body and his name was never included on official victim lists, he said. But evidence suggests Bruffey was a victim of the earthquake and deserves to be remembered, he said.

Morris will speak at the Montana Book Festival in Missoula, from Sept. 20 to 25.

His interest in the region extends beyond the 1959 earthquake. He authored, "The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers after the Expedition," and co-authored, "The Mystery of John Colter: The Man Who Discovered Yellowstone."

Morris is an independent writer and historian and has a master's degree in American literature and a bachelor's degree in philosophy, both from Brigham Young University.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Richland County water board appeals ND approval of diversion dam permit

By Tu-Uyen Tran on Aug 14, 2016 at 8:33 p.m.

FARGO — A month after the state of North Dakota gave a permit to the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority for a dam south of the metro, opponents of the $2.2 billion project have appealed in a lawsuit.

It's the third lawsuit filed by diversion opponents, all three of which are still up in the air.

In a brief filed in state district court Aug. 3, the Richland County Water Resource District accused the State Engineer's Office of infringing on the district's right to regulate flood-control projects within the county and failing to give proper notification.

The dam would temporarily submerge farmland, mostly in Cass and Clay counties, when the Red River floods. But it could also flood 10,400 acres, or 16 square miles, of farmland in Richland County.

The state said in a brief filed Thursday, Aug. 11, that the water district needs to first seek a hearing with an administrative law judge, who presides over a separate court system, and asked the state district judge to dismiss the case for now.

Richland County and its neighbor in Minnesota, Wilkin County, are involved in the other two lawsuits as a joint power authority. The counties sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Diversion Authority in 2013 and was eventually able to convince the judge to require an environmental review from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The DNR has completed the mostly favorable review, but the Richland-Wilkin group appealed in a lawsuit, saying the review isn't good enough.

The state of Minnesota is still reviewing the permit application for the diversion dam.

The North Dakota permit signed by State Engineer Garland Erbele July 8 listed the dam and its various components but allowed immediate construction only of an inlet structure that controls how much water from the dam enters the diversion channel. The dam is meant to reduce the Red River's flows into the diversion channel, which would route floodwater away from the metro area through a massive ditch to its west.

Each of the other components, such as the dam itself, also called an embankment, and inlets on several Red River tributaries, will require separate approval by the State Engineer.

Crucially for the Richland County water board, the only local water district the North Dakota permit mentioned the Diversion Authority must work with is the Southeast Cass County Water Resource District. That district is effectively a part of the Diversion Authority through its membership in Cass County Joint Water Resource District, a voting member on the authority board.

While some water will be stored in Richland County, the dam structures regulated by the State Engineer are all in Cass County. The Richland County district argues it must also be consulted because of the water stored within its jurisdiction.

The permit also mentioned another point of contention for diversion foes. The State Engineer had required that the Diversion Authority show it had the ability to acquire all land needed for the project, including in Richland County. Authority attorneys argued state courts have set precedent that allow entities like the Cass County Joint Water Resource District to exercise eminent domain outside their jurisdiction. The Cass County district is the Diversion Authority member charged with buying land for the project.

The Richland County water district argued that such a simple assertion was insufficient.

In a memo accompanying the permit, the State Engineer noted that the Attorney General's Office has said the state won't take a position on the legal validity of the assertion. Nevertheless, the State Engineer agreed the authority did have a "realistic plan for the procurement of the necessary property rights."

The state district court has not set a hearing date yet. In the meantime, the state has filed for a hearing in front of an administrative law judge.

In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- Updated Aug 13, 2016

NEAR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX RESERVATION, N.D. (AP) — Opponents of a $3.8 billion Midwest oil pipeline are vowing to keep up the pressure after this week's arrests at a construction zone in North Dakota.

The Standing Rock Sioux had quietly opposed the Dakota Access pipeline for months at a "spirit camp" near their reservation, which straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Protesters' resistance heated up this week as at least 18 people were arrested, and a Hollywood actress joined their gathering.

Tribal members say the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and could affect drinking water on the reservation and for people downstream.

The four-state pipeline's path in North Dakota would cross beneath the Little Missouri River once and the Missouri River twice. The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Disaster Declaration Sends Repairs, New Homes To Pine Ridge Reservation

Associated Press, August 14, 2016

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency says roughly 200 manufactured homes have been turned over to tribal residents a year after a federal disaster declaration for the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

FEMA initiated a permanent housing construction program to address the extreme housing need on the reservation after the severe weather disaster. Officials identified over 300 households eligible for repairs or for replacement with a new manufactured home.

The agency says 196 new manufactured homes have been turned over to residents. Eighty five homes had been repaired as of Aug. 2, while a remaining 23 homes are expected to be fixed by early September.

President Barack Obama signed the disaster declaration in August 2015.

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UTAH:

WYOMING:

Little Growth On Wyoming Wildfires

Associated Press, August 12, 2016

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) – Yellowstone National Park firefighters have contained a wildfire burning between Old Faithful and West Thumb and hope to have it controlled by Saturday.

The fire began Wednesday and firefighters immediately attacked it. They have kept it to less than an acre in size.

Better weather conditions have helped firefighters keep several new Wyoming wildfires largely in check Thursday and Friday.

A fire burning in the Shoshone National Forest east of Yellowstone and northwest of Cody grew slightly Thursday. The fire has burned about 2 square miles and is threatening about 95 structures.

Progress was expected Friday on another new fire burning about 20 miles southwest of Meeteetse.

Firefighters Thursday evening attacked a new fire that started in the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway between Yellowstone and Grand Teton parks.

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Tuesday, August 16, 2016

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COLORADO:

Wildfire Near Agate In Eastern Colorado Scorches 2,000 Acres

By Kieran Nicholson

Denver Post, August 15, 2016

A wildfire in northeastern Colorado has burned about 2,000 acres, according to firefighters.

The Basin fire is burning about four miles east of Agate in a wide ravine, said Kara Gerczynski, an Elizabeth Fire Protection District spokeswoman.

There were no reports of injuries or structures lost to the fire, Gerczynski said.

About 30 firefighters and 25 trucks were working the fire, which was first reported at about 6:30 p.m. Monday.

"It's a little hard for the crews to get down into the ravine," Gerczynski said.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

MONTANA:

Bullock announces funding to rebuild community

AUGUST 12, 2016 IN NEWS ·

Governor Steve Bullock today announced that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding has been made available to the State of Montana to support recovery efforts of Fallon County in the aftermath of a severe tornado on June 11, 2016.

“The community of Baker can now get back on their feet and rebuild to become stronger and create more opportunities for future economic growth and job creation,” said Governor Bullock.

On June 11, the Governor executed the State Emergency Management Plan with the activation of the State Emergency Coordination Center to a level three. A state disaster declaration was declared on July 18, 2016, with an effective date of June 9, 2016, for Fallon County.

A Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) was requested on July 1, 2016, and conducted from July 13 to July 14, 2016. The costs of responding to the storm exceeded the capability of the State of Montana.

On July 20, Governor Bullock requested FEMA evaluate the devastating effects of the tornado and affirm the area as a major disaster eligible for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. Federal funding is now available on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe tornado and the deposit of small and large debris into Lake Baker.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Cass County, Fargo voters will vote on diversion sales tax extensions

By Tu-Uyen Tran on Aug 15, 2016 at 8:47 p.m.

FARGO — City and county leaders have agreed to separate ballot measures extending their three sales taxes for decades to help pay for the $2.2 billion Fargo-Moorhead flood diversion.

"That will be the biggest amount of money that we'll ever vote on in the history of our lives," said Fargo City Commissioner Dave Piepkorn after joining his colleagues in a unanimous vote to put the measure on the Nov. 8 ballot.

The Cass County Commission also voted unanimously to do the same.

Together, the three sales taxes will pay for about half the project, which will protect Fargo-Moorhead from flooding on the Red River. The state and federal government has pledged enough funds for the remaining half.

The decision by the city and county commission didn't come easily though everyone agreed a sales tax extension was needed. Deliberating separately, they both agonized over language that was as restrictive as possible to win over skeptical voters.

Though both ballot measures will extend three half-cent sales taxes as late as Dec. 31, 2084, city and county leaders added language that implores their successors to pay off all debts as early as tax revenues allow. That is, they want to prevent future city and county leaders from making minimal payments and allowing surplus revenue to accrue.

County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling said the county paid off the jail debt early and taxpayers would want to see the same with the diversion.

Making millions

One of the reasons city and county leaders wanted these restrictions is the continuing growth of sales tax revenues, which will far exceed the annual debt payments required. By 2084, for example, the city and county are expected to collect more than $275 million a year while payments would be less than $50 million. This assumes revenue will grow 3 percent, a conservative rate compared to the actual rate of about 4 percent.

But investors don't like to buy government bonds based on money governments think they'll have but on what they have now. 2084 is how long it'll take for the city and county to pay off the debt if revenue doesn't grow at all.

Tom Rousakis, an executive with Ernst & Young who worked on the diversion financing plan, told county commissioners that it's entirely possible they'll pay off the debt by 2059 or 2061.

Cass County voters will be asked to extend the half-cent sales tax dedicated to flood control, which expires in 2031. The money is used to match city diversion funding with whatever's left — about 9 percent of the total — used for flood control elsewhere in the county, according to commissioners.

City voters will be asked to extend two half-cent sales taxes. One is dedicated to flood control and expires in 2029. Another is dedicated to both flood control and infrastructure, and expires in 2032.

City Commissioner Tony Gehrig won praise from his colleagues for proposing to have the second tax dedicated only to flood control, a move meant to assure voters the commission wouldn't try to take advantage of the revenue to pay for streets and sewers.

North Bismarck homeowners see property slipping away

- LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

Aug 14, 2016

Water from an Aug. 10 downpour caused Hay Creek to overflow and flood Pebble Creek Golf Course and a walking trail.

Homeowners along Arizona Drive are questioning the long-term safety of their houses as some backyards dropped as much as seven feet in June.

"It keeps dropping every time there is a rain," said Jim Hopfauf, one of the homeowners affected by the collapsing hill where houses are perched in north Bismarck.

Residents are pointing the blame at overland flooding of Hay Creek below their properties.

The outcome of a Braun Intertec study on the slope above Pebble Creek Golf Course will be presented at 5:15 p.m. Thursday at the Bismarck Park Board meeting at the City/County Building.

Hopfauf and homeowner David Wolf, who cringe when it rains as heavily as it did Tuesday and Wednesday nights, said they have sought help from every local government entity, including the Burleigh County Water Resource District, the Bismarck Engineering Department, city utility services and the Bismarck Park District and consulted with the state. The entities and the homeowners shared in the cost of the study.

Since Hopfauf's home was built in 2004, about one-third of the backyard has sunk with the hill along with a tree line and a walking path — all of which are tumbling into Hay Creek, he said.

The walking path has been blocked off by the Bismarck Park District because it is no longer safe. It is not caused by excess stormwater flowing down his property but by overland flooding feeding Hay Creek from the north of the city, Hopfauf said.

More development has created more pavement and fewer fields to absorb the water before it feeds Hay Creek, according to Hopfauf.

Wolf has experienced the same in the past decade.

"Nobody has come up with a plan, and nobody is spending any money on it," he said. "As homeowners, we can't do anything until the hill is stable."

The problem became serious in October 2013. Noting the park district had installed riprap on the slope, Hopfauf, Wolf and a neighbor invested $20,000 in more riprap. That, too, is failing three years later, Hopfauf said.

Hopfauf suggests that some of the Hay Creek water could be diverted from winding below the hill and further eroding it.

Michael Gunsch, advisory engineer for the Burleigh County Water Resource District, will present the findings of the study at the meeting.

"There are two parts: There is the erosion of the banks near Hay Creek and the falling slopes the landowners are dealing with. They are totally different issues," he said.

The study suggests the rip-rap landscaping the owners placed to secure their land, is actually weighing it down, said Randy Bina, executive director of the Bismarck Parks and Recreation Department.

"The sloping by the residents' homes — that slope failure — is different than what might be happening below by Hay Creek," he said.

Bina said the walking trail, built in 2000, has dropped.

"We are closing that segment of the walking path for the time-being. The two property owners will be removing the rock. After the rock is removed, we'll have to make a determination on that section of trail," he said.

"It appears significant materials were added to the upper slope during the earlier slope repair," said Dave Mayer, operations director for the park district. "They had a direct negative effect with further degraded sloping."

He said water at Pebble Creek Golf Course quickly subsides.

"It's uncommon to close the golf course, but there are days when we do not allow golf carts because the course is wet," Mayer said.

The homeowners said they have been asked to removed the rock because of the study findings. Wolf and Hopfauf said they want to donate it for any future rip-rapping work further below the slope, if it helps.

For the bank stabilization near Hay Creek, the study suggests the city and park district cooperatively seek funding for a $295,000 bank stabilization project, consisting of rock and fabric, from the state Water Commission.

The study recommends a couple of alternatives for the homeowners, Bina said.

"The first is to remove the rock and some is with reshaping the slope. The next is hiring a consultant," he said.

Dakota Access pipeline owners sue North Dakota protesters

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Developers of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline sued in federal court Monday to stop protesters near an American Indian reservation in North Dakota from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

Dakota Access LLC filed a lawsuit against Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II and other protesters, seeking restraining orders and unspecified monetary damages.

The protesters "have created and will continue to create a risk of bodily injury and harm to Dakota Access employees and contractors, as well as to law enforcement personnel and other individuals at the construction site," the company wrote in court papers.

Archambault was among several protesters charged last week with disorderly conduct or criminal trespass at the construction site near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline, which will take crude oil from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota to Illinois and cross the Missouri River just upstream of the reservation. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Dakota Access said in court papers that threats have been made to workers, and rocks and bottles have been thrown, and that Archambault excused tribal employees from work last week to protest the pipeline's construction.

Archambault told reporters Monday that he was arrested for "doing what everybody else was doing: demonstrating." He said he expected more arrests and acts of civil disobedience to continue, calling the pipeline "a black poisonous snake" that "is made from nothing but greed."

Workers accompanied by armed private security guards started construction on the project near the reservation last week.

Several sheriff's deputies and about 30 North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers were on site Monday, and the highway patrol asked motorists to avoid a state highway near the reservation because of the protests.

Texas-based Dakota Access claims the protesters are causing the company "to lose goodwill among its customers" because of delays and are "diminishing" its "opportunity to complete construction of the pipeline's water crossing before its permits expire."

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Great Plains Fire reports several fires over weekend

August 14, 2016

Gary Matthews

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire dispatch reported several wildfires over the weekend.

On Saturday, the Brady Creek Fire burned had burned over 50 acres northwest of Kadoka. Fire crews had the blaze 75-percent contained Sunday afternoon. The fire was sparked by lightning.

The Mathews County Asist Fire burned approximately 35 acres southwest of Fort Pierre on Saturday. Lightning also sparked that fire.

Two small fires were reported in northeast Wyoming as well.

On Sunday, a grass fire was reported near New Underwood Road, north of I-90. It's believed lightning sparked the fire. There was not an estimate on its size as of Sunday evening.

La Nina to replace El Nino

August 15, 2016
By Jack Taylor

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (KELO AM) - Warming of the Pacific, or El Nino, is coming to an end and the long range prediction calls for La Nina to develop.

Acting South Dakota State Climatologist Laura Edwards says La Nina may have an impact in the fall and winter season.

Edwards says the likelihood of La Nina did go down a little bit from the prediction's center which indicates to her that it won't ben especially strong event.

She says La Nina means the Pacific will cool below normal adding that the northern plains may not take the brunt of the change.

She say the impacts in the northern plains may not be as strong as what we saw with El Nino last year.

In most La Nina years, Edwards says, our winters are colder.

But she says it doesn't have an impact on snowfall much. She says La Nina usually brings cooler than average temperatures.

Edwards says the extended forecast calls for cooler temperatures and above normal precipitation this fall.

South Dakota responds to Louisiana flooding

August 15, 2016
By Mark Russo

SIOUX FALLS, SD (KELO-AM) The Red Cross of Eastern South Dakota is sending a larger than usual contingent of volunteers to the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana.

"This is an unusually large disaster that is in need of a large response" says Executive Director Jennifer Ross.

She's sending at least seven volunteers. Two to five volunteers is a more typical response. Ross says that for Red Cross chapters in South and North Dakota combined a total of 15 volunteers are heading to the disaster. The Red Cross is also sending four emergency response vehicles.

"They're going to help assist with the relief, which means working in shelters, providing food and care and casework to the individuals who are affected by this flooding," says Ross.

At least seven people have died and some 20,000 have been rescued from the flooding.

UTAH:

WYOMING:

Progress made on Wyoming wildfires, several new blazes pop up over weekend

- Updated 12 hrs ago
- CHEYENNE — Firefighters have been making progress on battling wildfires in northwest Wyoming.

The Hunter Peak Fire in the Shoshone National Forest northwest of Cody has increased in size to about 3 square miles, but most of that was because of firefighters conducting burnouts to help contain it.

The fire is about 5 percent contained.

Firefighters have gained about 15 percent containment on another fire that is burning about 20 miles southwest of Meeteetse. The Twin Lakes Fire was reported Friday evening and is about 1,000 acres. Firefighters also are making use of burnouts to help contain it.

In Yellowstone National Park, a new fire that started Saturday on the north side the park of is being monitored along with two other remote fires. A fire between Old Faithful and West Thumb was extinguished over the weekend.

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Intensity of 48-hour rainstorm caught Louisiana flat-footed

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, MELINDA DESLATTE and REBECCA SANTANA The Associated Press
First Published Aug 15 2016 05:06PM • Last Updated Aug 15 2016 08:42 pm

Baton Rouge, La. • An act of God is how some are describing it, a catastrophic 48-hour torrent of rain that sent thousands of people in Louisiana scrambling for safety and left many wondering how a region accustomed to hurricanes could get caught off guard so badly.

At least six people have been killed and more than 20,000 have had to be rescued since Friday in some of the worst flooding the state has ever seen.

As of Monday, the rain had mostly stopped, but rivers and creeks in many areas were still dangerously bloated and new places were getting hit by flooding. More than 11,000 people were staying in shelters; a movie studio and a civic center, which usually hosts concerts and ballets, were pressed into service.

"It was an absolute act of God. We're talking about places that have literally never flooded before," said Anthony "Ace" Cox, who started a Facebook group to help collect information about where people were stranded. He was in Baton Rouge to help his parents and grandparents, who were flooded out.

"Everybody got caught off guard," he said.

Forecasters said one reason was the sheer, almost off-the-charts intensity of the storm and the difficulty of predicting how bad it would be.

Meteorologist Ken Graham of the National Weather Service's office in Slidell said forecasters alerted people days in advance of the storms. The forecasts Thursday were for 8 inches of rain, with higher totals expected in some areas. But Graham emphasized that forecasting exactly how much rain is going to fall and where is nearly impossible. "It's one thing to say we're getting set up for a lot of rain. It's another thing to say where is this going to be," he said.

Some areas, such as the town of Zachary, received more than 2 feet of rain in a 48-hour period that ended Saturday morning. Another hard-hit area, Livingston, got nearly 22 inches during the same stretch.

Graham said the odds of that much rain were 1 in 500 in some places and 1 in 1,000 in others.

Unlike during a hurricane when shelters are established well in advance by parish governments and the Red Cross when the threat becomes obvious, shelters for those driven from their homes by the flooding were set up more haphazardly by parish officials.

As the scope of the disaster became clear, churches, schools and other places opened their doors to take in evacuees. Shelters filled up so fast that some people had to sleep on the floor Saturday night because not enough cots had arrived. And some shelters had to shut down when they, too, started to take on water.

Marc and Crystal Matherne and their three children loaded up their cars with their three dogs and drove out of their flooded Baton Rouge neighborhood Sunday before the water got too deep to pass.

"I want to blame somebody because of all the hurt that's going on, but I don't know if anybody knew" how bad the flooding would be, Crystal Matherne said. "It just seemed like a normal event for us, but it wasn't."

Volunteers have also been going out in boats — locally referred to as the "Cajun Navy" — to rescue people, supplementing the efforts of National Guardsmen, state officials and Coast Guardsmen in high-water vehicles, boats and helicopters.

Jared Serigne of St. Bernard Parish said he helped organize volunteer efforts involving roughly 70 experienced boaters who helped hundreds of people from flooded communities. He criticized government officials for closing roads, a move that prevented boats from reaching launch areas.

"You've got all of these people who hunt and fish who have more experience than the average first responder," he said.

But going out on the water carries dangers, too.

Lt. Davis Madere of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, who spent days rescuing people and their animals, said the floodwaters are a potential minefield of submerged vehicles, fences and mailboxes that can trip up boats.

Above the water, he said, snakes trying to escape the deluge have been spotted in trees, and rescuers must be careful of power lines that are close overhead because the water is so high.

National Guard Col. Ed Bush said parish officials want the volunteer rescuers to coordinate more with the authorities overseeing the rescue effort.

"What they're trying to do is prevent overzealous people from getting stuck themselves. We've had a couple of examples of that," Bush said.

By The Numbers: A Look At Flooding That Ravaged Louisiana

Associated Press, August 16, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — A look at the deadly flooding that has ravaged Louisiana:

— 7: The number of storm-related deaths since rain began falling Friday.

— More than 20,000: The number of people who have had to be rescued from their homes as floodwaters rose.

— More than 11,000: The number of people staying in shelters.

— More than 2,000: The number of evacuees staying at a large film studio complex that has been turned into a makeshift shelter.

— More than 500: The number of pets rescued.

— 48 hours: The amount of time a torrent of rain fell across parts of south Louisiana.

— More than 2 feet: The amount of rain that fell in two days in the town of Zachary, Louisiana.

— 8 inches: The amount of rain initially forecast on Thursday, with some higher totals possible in some areas.

— 12 percent: The portion of homes in hard-hit Baton Rouge covered by flood insurance; in Lafayette, which has also been hammered, the number is 14 percent.

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Region VIII Clips

Thursday, September 15, 2016

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Fight For Zika Money Hampered By Partisan Squabbles USA Today

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COLORADO:

U.S. deploys robots to destroy chemical weapons buried under Colorado prairie

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By Bruce Finley | bfinley@denverpost.com
PUBLISHED: September 14, 2016 at 11:56 pm | UPDATED: September 15, 2016 at 11:01 am

PUEBLO – Destroying the nation's stash of World War II-era chemical weapons is nasty work, and after decades of delays, the Army is using robots to start the job inside a $4.5 billion plant on the Colorado prairie.

A newly trained human workforce of 1,400 controls the robotic machinery — one canary-yellow, long-armed device is dubbed Inga, another Igor — beginning a mission of emptying 780,000 wine-bottle-shaped projectiles inside sealed chambers behind 24-inch-thick blast walls. The process minimizes human contact with deadly chemicals known as mustard agent, which was used to deny enemies access to land by attacking their eyes, skin and lungs.

"I like the work. This stuff has been sitting around 40, 50 years. It's about time we got to destroying it," said Jose Rosario, 33, an Army war veteran who in Iraq found a stash of Saddam Hussein's weapons.

Joe Amon, The Denver Post
Instrumentation technician Philip Kell washes down his partner Eric Irvinin wash down area at the Pueblo Chemical agent Pilot plant training area on Sept. 14, 2016 in Pueblo.

"These robots were built for precision, all computer programmed. I don't have any worries that the machines will make mistakes," Rosario said during training.

The destruction, ordered by Congress in 1986, entered a pilot testing phase last week that, as of Wednesday, has dismantled 80 projectiles at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, located on windswept prairie where tumbleweeds roll and antelope nibble dry grass.

Full-bore destruction of mustard agent cannot begin until state officials issue a permit, expected in January, project manager Rick Holmes said. And the job will be done by July 2020, Holmes said.

“We’re going to make the world cleaner by having this stuff go away, and go away the right way,” he said.

A 1997 international treaty ordered eradication of chemical weapons, outlawed since 1925, and the United States as an original signatory is obligated to comply. Foreign observers are posted at this plant to verify destruction of the weapons. In recent years, concerns about the delay intensified amid cybersecurity threats and evidence that Islamic State and Syrian forces have used chemical weapons.

In 2002, the Department of Defense hired the Bechtel corporation to run and close the nation’s chemical weapons stockpile here, which represents about 8 percent of the nation’s chemical weapons (another 2 percent are sitting in Kentucky). About 90 percent were burned.

Pentagon officials initially planned to install an incinerator in Pueblo. But Congress intervened in 1996, responding to public concerns about safety, ordering a program to demonstrate at least two alternative systems, other than incineration, for destroying chemical weapons.

Project leaders settled on the current low-temperature, low-pressure system that neutralizes the chemicals and then unleashes bacteria – from sludge imported from Pueblo’s wastewater treatment plant – to eat the weapons out of existence.

No liquid waste will remain at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, and a “salt cake” sludge from filters will be hauled to a hazardous waste landfill. Emissions are filtered from a black stack above the facility.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment hazardous materials and waste management officials have inspected the facility to ensure safety. The pilot testing is being done under a research, development and demonstration permit, CDPHE spokeswoman Jeannine Natterman said.

The CDPHE “does not believe the Pueblo Chemical Agent Disposal Plant will have a significant impact on air quality,” Natterman said in an e-mailed response to The Denver Post.

The plant “is considered only a minor source by the air pollution control division,” she said. State inspectors also are “overseeing the collection of air samples from plant emission sources during pilot-testing of the facility.”

Today, an estimated 2,611 tons of the mustard chemical agent is stored in projectiles and mortar cartridges buried in igloos at the 35-square-mile Pueblo Chemical Depot.

In 1952, the Army began storing mustard agent hauled here from a manufacturing plant called the Rocky Mountain Arsenal northeast of Denver. A staff of about 250 guards and maintains the weapons. Guards have detected and dealt with at least 90 leaks over 35 years.

Five of the 12-foot-tall yellow robots, run by workers at keyboards, open the projectiles packed with liquid mustard agent, which freezes at 56 degrees. The robots unscrew and remove caps on each projectile, drain the liquid into titanium containers. Robots later inject 190-degree water and sodium hydroxide. Then the bacteria from sludge is used to eat broken-down chemicals.

The project brings total employment at the Army's depot to nearly 2,000, ranking it among the largest employers on Colorado's economically lagging southern Front Range. New jobs pay $40,000 to $70,000 a year, plus health benefits.

"It means a lot," said Kurtis Wolf, 35, a union worker at the Russian-owned Evraz steel factory until that operation recently ran into trouble.

Wolf said his wife a couple months later lost her job at a dental office, jeopardizing the situation for their three children.

"Now I have a job, stable income," he said. "We'll be able to keep paying for our house, for the vehicles. … Lord willing, I hope to be one of the guys who helps close this place down."

Biggest projects still ahead after Colorado's 2013 floods

http://www.9news.com/news/biggest-projects-still-ahead-after-colorados-2013-floods/318085066

Three years have passed since it happened – since the peak of a week of weather that Coloradans had never seen in their lives.
The scale of the disaster defied description. Rivers were overrun, cities flooded.
The floods of September 2013 still don't have a name.

Photos: 2013 floods

It's been three years since the water came and left.
Since the news crews came and left.
Since the attention came and left.
Here's what we've largely missed in 2016…
This summer has been the busiest period for permanently rebuilding roads and bridges, since the floods of 2013. The single largest reconstruction project is just getting started. Most of the federal aid is still unspent.

The permanent reconstruction of Highway 36 from Lyons to Estes Park was completed this year. The permanent fix for Highway 34 from Loveland to Estes is underway, and won't be complete until 2018 or 2019.

We're finishing the summer of construction - the busiest time since the floods - as highways, roads, bridges, river banks and multi-family housing units were put in place.

You have to remember that federal grant money didn't arrive until 2014.

$350 million is promised.

$80 million of it was spent through the first half of this year.

Spending is about to ramp up. Another $40 million will be spent by year's end.

And while we talk numbers, and remember the number of lives impacted, we pause to remember the 10 lives lost in the floods three years ago this week.

Wildfire Near Kremmling Estimated At Roughly 9 Acres, 35 Percent Contained

By Jesse Paul

Denver Post, September 14, 2016

A wildfire sparked near Kremmling on Tuesday and which has prompted the evacuation of roughly a dozen homes was estimated at about nine acres on Wednesday and 35 percent contained.

A mass of resources have been called to battle the fire, including local, state and federal firefighting crews.

Lt. Dan Mayer of the Grand County Sheriff's Office says a smoke report was called in to authorities about 12:20 p.m. on Tuesday. When the chief of the Kremmling Fire Protection District went to investigate, he found that a person was burning a slash pile that had gotten out of control.

The fire is off Grand County Road 14, about five miles from Kremmling. The blaze is burning in heavy timber on county land.

Mandatory evacuations are in effect within a mile of the blaze and residents within three miles of the burn are on pre-evacuation notice.

MONTANA:

NORTH DAKOTA:

Emergency officials seek up to $6 million to offset costs during pipeline protests

Issues Associated Press · Bismarck, N.D. · Sep 15, 2016

North Dakota emergency services officials are asking for up to $6 million from the state-owned bank to offset costs associated with help provided to law enforcement during protests against the Dakota Access pipeline.

The Bismarck Tribune reports the state Department of Emergency Services would set up a loan with the Bank of North Dakota and repay it with interest.

Emergency Services Department spokeswoman Cecily Fong says the state had never responded to large protests.

- FAQ: The Dakota Access pipeline and protest

Gov. Jack Dalrymple has also asked for federal help. The newspaper reports his office says the state has spent $1.8 million so far policing the protests.

A federal judge declined to block the four-state pipeline Friday, but federal agencies stopped work near Lake Oahe. Federal agencies also asked pipeline operator Energy Transfer Partners to voluntarily stop work on a 40-mile stretch.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

AARP pushed emergency preparation KSFY-TV, Sioux Falls

SOUTH DAKOTA - September is National Preparedness Month and AARP is working with FEMA to share resources to help you.

The agencies are urging people to have an emergency kit and a plan in place for a wide-array of possible situations

To help you prepare, AARP South Dakota will host a call-in show on their website on Thursday with experts who can answer questions about your specific plan.

You can find a link to the website on the right-hand side of this story.

UTAH:

WYOMING:

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Fight For Zika Money Hampered By Partisan Squabbles

By Ledyard King

USA Today, September 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – Turns out Zika is as much a political quagmire as it is a health crisis.

Finger-pointing and partisan backbiting abound on Capitol Hill, despite pleas from both sides of the aisle to take the politics out of efforts to combat the disease that has infected 805 Floridians and tarnished the state’s reputation as a tourist mecca.

Just this week alone:

– Democratic congressman Alan Grayson took GOP Gov. Rick Scott to task for once proposing massive cuts in the state's mosquito control budget.

– Scott blasted the Obama administration for failing to give the state enough help to fight Zika, then accused Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of abandoning his constituents in voting against a controversial Zika bill last week.

– The pro-choice group NARAL lashed Republican Sen. Marco Rubio for missing a bipartisan news conference on Zika to meet with GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump's running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence. The organization is running online ads to highlight the criticism.

Floridians see the partisan squabbles holding up action on Zika as "one more example of a broken Washington," said Susan MacManus, a political science professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa. But she's not surprised at the stalemate or the bickering.

"This issue is arising in the middle of a very contentious, competitive election," she said. "And each party wants to take credit for the good and dis their opponent with the bad. That's what we've seen happening on the Zika issue."

Congressional leaders have reported some progress in reaching a $1.1 billion deal to fund anti-Zika efforts, including vaccine development, insect spraying and distribution of testing kits. If a compromise is reached, it's likely to be attached to a broad spending bill lawmakers will be asked to vote on at the end of the month.

Earlier Zika legislation in the Republican-controlled Congress was blocked by Democrats who objected to unrelated provisions, including barriers to contraception, the display of the Confederate flag at national cemeteries and laxer environmental standards for pesticides. The deal being discussed would not include those.

Rubio and the Democrat running against him this year, Rep. Patrick Murphy, have spent weeks blaming each other for not doing enough to end the stalemate.

They both initially backed Obama's request in February for $1.9 billion, though Rubio also has supported GOP measures that would have provided less money and included provisions Murphy and others found objectionable.

On Wednesday, NARAL pounced on Rubio's absence from the bipartisan press conference the day before, saying he was "putting his own political needs ahead of the needs of women and families in Florida."

Rubio spokesman Olivia Perez-Cubas responded that Murphy "is the only candidate to have voted against every measure to fund Zika – once again putting himself and his political aspirations before Floridians."

Rubio spent part of Tuesday and Wednesday meeting with Scott, who admonished the Obama administration for ignoring Florida.

"Since June 1, I've asked for a plan to work with (the Federal Emergency Management Agency). Haven't given it to me," the governor told reporters. "The White House has not been a good partner."

Administration officials pushed back against Scott's allegations, detailing efforts they've made to help the state:

– A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention team was recently dispatched to Florida to monitor Zika efforts.

– The Health and Human Services Department has provided more than $35 million that can be used for Zika-related activities. In August, Florida received materials for an additional 6,300 lab tests in addition to the 2,000 already provided. CDC also provided on-site technical consultation to Florida's public health laboratories, enabling them to substantially increase testing capacity.

– FEMA officials have been in contact with the state to discuss the role the agency can play, though the White House said FEMA assistance may not be the best option for a mosquito-borne disease like Zika.

"This is why the president put forward a supplemental request in February, to ensure that states like Florida would have the resources they need to effectively response to Zika," the White House spokesman said.

Grayson, the Democratic congressman from Orlando, said Scott should look in the mirror if there are fingers to be pointed.

Under the governor's watch, state aid to mosquito control programs around Florida in 2011 was sliced 40% — from $2.16 million to $1.29 million — and he vetoed a $500,000 grant that would have kept a state mosquito lab open in Panama City.

"If the governor would revisit those decisions, that would be a good start in itself," Grayson said.

Nelson was miffed that Scott singled him out for joining other Democrats in blocking the Zika bill.

"He should know better," said Nelson. "This is a serious situation, not a time for partisan politics."

Whom do voters blame? MacManus said the accusations have come in such rapid-fire, head-spinning fashion it's hard to decide who's the real culprit.

"There's enough blame to go around for all officials in the minds of Floridians," she said. "What they want is action, and there just doesn't appear to be any out of Washington. That's what they really find fault with."

Rubio tried to strike a bipartisan tone Wednesday afternoon as he spoke on the Senate floor. He defended Nelson as an important ally in the push for Zika funding, then implored his colleagues to rally around a compromise.

"We fight about so many things around here," Rubio said. "We have so many issues we could have a debate over. So let's have debates about those issues. But isn't there at least, when it comes to public health and safety, something we can say on this issue that we're not going to play politics?"

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, October 11, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* Two Colorado groups won grants to work on emergency preparedness and underground mine safety… A nonprofit group is asking for donations to help rebuild Haiti after Hurricane Matthew… A donation center has been set up to help victims of the Beulah Hill Fire…. Estes Park will have a public meeting October 26 to discuss floodplain issues… A follow-up article on the federal investigation in Lyons says the FBI is not pursuing a case, and that HUD is focused on contracts between Lyons and a company called Front Range Land Solutions and its owner, former Lyons planner Rosi Dennett.
- *Montana:* A TV station did a story on a Red Cross volunteer heading to help with Hurricane Matthew.
- *North Dakota:* An ag journal reports on a new disaster application that can help small businesses. It uses information from ready.gov and makes it a fill-in-the-blank app for smartphones and tablets… The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reports on the split between Fargo/Moorhead and the state of Minnesota over the proposed diversion project. The article details the reasons for Minnesota's opposition and notes potential problems in getting congressional approval to go ahead with the project…. Two articles report on the pipeline protest: the courts have denied an emergency injunction to prevent construction, but three federal agencies continue reviewing the issues raised by the protestors and have asked the company to voluntarily suspend construction pending that review. Another article reports on the protests: actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other protestors were arrested Monday, the highest one-day total so far, bringing the total number arrested to 123. The protestors have since been released.
- *South Dakota:* A part of a continuing series looking back at the 2011 flood reports on how the Fort Randall Dam held up.
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FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

STORIES

COLORADO:

Mine rescue training, emergency preparedness grants awarded (KOAA TV 5)

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) - Six groups will share $1 million in grants to develop training for emergency preparedness and accident prevention in underground mines.

The U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration announced the Brookwood-Sago grants last week.

Receiving grants are the University of Arizona, the Colorado School of Mines, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Rend Lake College in Ina, Illinois, the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, and West Virginia University.

WVU says in a news release that the university will use a grant of nearly $172,000 to integrate fire brigades and mine rescue teams in an emergency involving fire and trapped miners.

The grant program is named in remembrance of 25 men who died in mining explosions in Alabama in 2001 and at the Sago Mine in West Virginia in 2006.

Colorado group helping Haiti rebuild after hurricane (FOX 31 Denver)

LOUISVILLE, Colo. – A Colorado nonprofit dedicated to rebuilding rural Haiti is asking for some emergency donations following Hurricane Matthew.

The Colorado Haiti Project has been doing work in Petit-Trou-de-Nippes for almost 30 years. The group focuses on long term rebuilding projects like education, agriculture, livelihood and clean water.

CHP has one dedicated project manager living in Haiti full-time. The Louisville based organization sends several groups throughout the year to do aid work.

They built a school that serves nearly 400 Haitian children. The school suffered major damage in the storm.

“When you look inside any room everything is just thrown all over the place,” explained CHP’s Teresa Henry. “Now they have no books and everything in the classrooms is gone.”

Her co-worker who is in Haiti right now says about half of the community's homes are gone. She also says almost all of the crops have been leveled and most of the livestock has perished.

"They don't have bank accounts. In Haiti, you consider your bank your goats and cows. That is your income," Henry said. "All their crops have been lost. All of it. They have nothing for their livelihood."

She worries if they can't help Haitians rebuild fast enough, the region will eventually starve.

"We're concerned about making sure they eat enough through the winter so getting the crops back in the ground is huge," she said.

CHP is doing several emergency fundraisers to help their Haitian community rebuild and replant. You can visit their website to donate and find more information about local fundraising opportunities.

The money will go directly to the small rural communities where Coloradan are helping rebuild by hand. Their project manager in Haiti will return to Colorado later this week and CHP will decide within the next two weeks a rebuild plan-of-action for the next 12 months.

The group believes donating to them is a good way for Coloradans to see exactly where their money is going and how it is being used.

"You can be like one degree away from where you make your donation," Henry said

Donation center set up for Beulah Hill Fire victims (Pueblo Chieftain)

October 11, 2016

A donation center for victims of the Beulah Hill Fire opened Sunday morning and plenty of donors had already walked through the doors and dropped items off by Monday afternoon.

Beulah Hill Fire at 95 percent containment; blaze expected to be fully contained by Sunday Free pain/injury screening for firefighters

Kathy Hayden of the Adventist Community Services Disaster Response Team said that by 2:30 p.m. Monday there had already been about 30 community members who had stopped by the donation center to bring items of need.

The donation center, located at the Colorado Building on the Colorado State Fairgrounds, was filled with clothing, kitchenware, blankets, sleeping bags, food, water, cleaning and laundry supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, assorted toiletries, tools, shoes and some toys.

A woman was seen Monday afternoon getting out of her car and bringing numerous bags of items to the donation center for victims of last week's Beulah Hill Fire, which burned 5,232 acres of land, destroyed eight homes and forced the entire Beulah Valley to be evacuated until some residents began returning on Wednesday and Thursday, and the rest on Friday.

Volunteers strolled the inside of the Colorado Building, sorting out donated items and organizing racks and shelves.

"It's wonderful to see so many people helping out and taking care of each other," Hayden said.

Beulah residents have been stopping by the donation center since Sunday morning to pick up needed items and can continue to do so.

"They've been really good about it," Hayden said. "They're just taking what they need."

The donation center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Sunday.

Hayden said the most needed items right now are children's clothing, food and tools.

"A lot of people lost tools," said Robyn Knappe, a voluntary agency liaison for the Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management.

Hayden, who thanked firefighters and emergency crews for their tireless work in battling the blaze, said she's happy the disaster response team can play a role in helping families who lost so much in the wildfire.

"At least maybe we can do something to help put their lives back together," she said.

ryans@chieftain.com

Public encouraged to review new Estes Valley hydrology data Oct. 26 (Estes Park Trail Gazette)

Study contributes to a safer, more resilient community

Town of Estes Park - For the Trail Gazette

POSTED: 10/11/2016 09:38:17 AM MDT

The Town of Estes Park and its consultant, Wright Water Engineers, will present the results of a scientific hydrology study of the Big Thompson River, Black Canyon Creek, Dry Gulch and Fall River on Wednesday, Oct. 26, at 8 a.m. in the Town Board Room of Town Hall, 170 MacGregor Ave. Other topics discussed will be a preliminary map of new floodplain boundaries in the downtown area and how this study impacts floodplain management. The completion of the study is a milestone in the process of ensuring a safer, more resilient Estes Park community. Study results will be available for review at www.estes.org/floodmitigation by Oct. 21.

Educational resources on the hydrology study and other flood mitigation efforts are also posted to this site as they become available.

The Oct. 26 meeting is targeted to both a general interest audience and particularly those concerned with development and flood mitigation opportunities, as the hydrology data is part of the floodplain permitting process. Wright Water Engineers will present the results and be available to answer both general and technical questions. Staff from the Colorado Water Conservation Board will discuss preliminary floodplain maps and staff from the Colorado Resiliency and Recovery Office will be in attendance to answer questions. This meeting will be streamed live on local cable channel 12 and via www.estes.org/videos. It will also be recorded for viewing later via www.estes.org/videos. The Town Board will review the information during a study session the evening of Oct. 25.

The 2013 flood was a stark reminder of flood risk, and the Town is taking action to better understand the hazards Estes Park's residents face. The hydrology study results will serve as the basis of flood mitigation projects and a key part of future flood mitigation decisions. In addition, the new information may help the Town receive grants. It will also provide data for new floodplain maps, which will go into effect in the coming years.

The Town will also host a workshop for realtors, lenders and insurance agents on flood insurance topics presented by FEMA staff Oct. 24, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Estes Park Museum, 200 4th St.

For more information on flood mitigation efforts, please visitwww.estes.org/floodmitigation or contact Floodplain Manager and Planner Tina Kurtz at 970-577-3732 or tkurtz@estes.org.

Lyons residents: 'We're just starting to get it together' (Boulder Daily Camera)

Federal scrutiny stirs concern in town that has struggled

By Amelia Arvesen
Staff Writer

The town of Lyons has submitted to more than one waiting game.

People there have been waiting to rebuild their town and now they're waiting on a federal investigation into the flood-recovery process.

"I'm frustrated because I'd like to know what's going on instead of waiting," longtime resident Craig Ferguson said. "There's been a lot of waiting for three years."

As Lyons entered its fourth year of reconstruction following the devastating September 2013 flood, the FBI and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development stopped by to seize documents and computers to probe the handling of federal flood-recovery funding.

Communities savaged by the rushing waters have been receiving fund allocations, totaling millions of dollars from several federal sources, such as HUD and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Late Friday, Mayor Connie Sullivan released a statement on behalf of the town's Board of Trustees, stating that the FBI had concluded its portion of the investigation and would not be proceeding with a case.

Also posted to the town's website was a copy of a subpoena from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, stating that a focus of its investigation was documents relating to negotiations and grant services contracts between Lyons and Longmont-based Front Range Land Solutions.

The subpoena also seeks all "invoices, bills, receipts, and other documents" reflecting charges or payments with respect to that company and its owner, Rosi Dennett.

Dennett, who could not be reached for comment Friday night, identifies herself on her Linkedin page as having served as Town Planner for Lyons from April 2004 to December 2008.

Ferguson, Planet Bluegrass president, said before the flood the town could only fathom a budget of $1 million per year, and suddenly they were expected to keep track of exponentially more in the midst of disaster.

"To take care of that is a completely different job," Ferguson said. "Mistakes might have been made. Personally, I guess, I'm kind of hoping that things can be corrected quickly and it's not personal."

Apparently as a precaution into the investigation's integrity, both the town administrator and clerk were placed on temporary leave and replaced in the interim. Sullivan has said the move should not be construed as a suspicion of wrongdoing by those employees.

Ferguson said he knows most town officials well after living in Lyons 25 years and he said he has a hard time believing there was any foul play.

A hope 'someone is held accountable'

On Friday, LaVern Johnson sat under a shade of an awning behind her house, where she hosted a yard sale benefitting the Lyons Historical Society.

"Why Lyons?" Johnson asked.

She said many people are upset, saddened and disappointed by the mayor's brief and formal announcement Wednesday night at Town Hall that provided little information.

"I would say they could've made mistakes somewhere," Johnson said. "I don't think they did anything that is illegal as to taking money and those kinds of things. I don't know what they're after. I don't know how they could abscond with any money."

A man who did not provide his name and who lives in Lyons' Confluence neighborhood — an area that was hit hard by the flood — said nobody would be interested in what he has to say on the issue.

"I hope someone is held accountable," he said.

At The Stone Cup in downtown Lyons, employee and resident of 12 years Robin Young said she has worked eight hours five days in a row and that the topic has come up. She said the town chatter is that people are frustrated with the lack of information, but also understand that town officials can't say too much yet.

"There's great, great people here and it's been a long three years," Young said. "But I believe, from what I've heard, people are taking a wait-and-see approach and are just anxious."

Ferguson said while the investigation is somewhat a blemish on trust, he is confident the mayor and town board were doing their best and he would be surprised if it involved criminal behavior.

"We just don't need that right now," he said. "We're just starting to get it together."

Johnson said she trusts the town officials. She is confident they've done everything they can in light of the devastation the community has been through.

"With things like this going on, I don't think we can ever recover," Johnson said. "How can you recover when somebody is going to accuse you? I think it's sad."

Johnson said she is also surprised by how much the town has accomplished, such as designing Bohn Park. She said as the town works on the budget, it's not taking on new project proposals, and sticking to the 2016 budget when planning for next year.

A punch in the gut

The continuous beeping of construction vehicles working on streets nearby echoed through the neighborhoods. Sections of streets were peeled back, revealing the dirt below.

Jenny Voss, out walking her dog near the former Foothills Mobile Home Park, said she did not know more than what has already been revealed.

Carrie Davis-Gonzales, who lost her mobile home near the creek, was watching broadcast news reports about the hurricane in Florida Friday afternoon. She moved three years ago to the only remaining home in the park.

In response to the recent investigation of Lyons, she said she is more unquestioning than maybe she should be. She said as a result of trying to rebuild a mobile home park, she has researched and discovered similar federal investigations into devastated towns — from the benign to the extreme.

"From the outside, I can't really say what's going on in there but it could be so tiny because they are extremely meticulous," she said.

It would be difficult to screw up, she said, and wrongdoing would be even harder.

"It's not back in the day where they'd come in with money bags — this is all done electronically," Davis-Gonzales said, sitting on her front porch with a view of the abandoned mobile homes.

State Rep. Jonathan Singer, the Longmont Democrat whose House District 11 includes Lyons, said over the phone it's just another punch in residents' gut — another reminder that they haven't bounced back 100 percent from where they were more than three years ago.

"People are sort of worn down and worn out," Singer said. "They haven't given up but it's really hard to hear from another person, 'Well I know you don't want to hear this but we need to follow this new process.' Obviously that's going to wear anyone out."

He said some people still haven't been able to return home, and some people may never get to.

And while, Davis-Gonzales has been living in the only home left on the mobile home property, she is living each day thinking the next could be her last in Lyons, since the park owner recently opted for the buyout. Her home for the last three years will eventually be leveled.

Singer said he hopes whatever is under review is as simple as a paperwork error.

"If it is something else, I hope we find out very quickly and then we can move on and we can move forward," he said.

Ferguson said it's been easy for a lot of people to be angry at the slow progress, but he knows realistically the process is complicated.

"I'm sure once they know, they'll want to inform us," he said. "I think when someone comes into your place with a subpoena you need to take three or four days to figure out what it means. I know I would."

Staff writer Charlie Brennan contributed to this report

MONTANA:

Montana Red Cross volunteer helping in wake of Hurricane Matthew (KTVQ-Billings)

Posted: Oct 08, 2016 11:08 AM MST Updated: Oct 08, 2016 11:14 AM MST
By MTN News

KALISPELL - While millions try to escape Hurricane Matthew, Red Cross volunteers are racing into the storm to help with relief efforts, including Joe Kingan with the Flathead County chapter of the American Red Cross.

Kingan had nothing but a cell phone and a bag of survival gear as he waited at Glacier International Airport for his flight.

"Got my headlamp got flashlights, that kind of stuff."

He's been deployed to Hurricane Matthew by the **American Red Cross**, but for the husband and father, perhaps what's most important is his endurance in facing the unknown.

"They want me to go and help, and they're concerned about the safety aspects as well as I am," Kingan said.

The National Weather Service has warned that some places hit by Hurricane Matthew could be uninhabitable for "weeks or months." Kingan will be teaming up with two to four other volunteers to assess the damage.

"We would be recording it and putting it into a database file that actually gets shared with FEMA, other government agencies, Salvation Army, and that data will be used to evaluate future assistant needs," he said.

Kingan said that one tool in particular will play a key role in staying safe as he heads into the danger zone: his smartphone.

"They keep us updated on a regular basis on what's going on in the immediate area where we're located. For example, a while ago I got a text message coming in that alerted us to a tornado warning out in one of the counties in Florida right now with one of the rain bands coming off the hurricane."

Although he leaves a wife and a son behind, he is carrying them with him in spirit.

"We will endure," Kingan concluded. "We like helping other people, so it will be well worth our trip down."

If you would like to join the cause, you can donate blood, text "RedCross to 90-999" to make an automatic $10-dollar or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

NORTH DAKOTA:

New disaster app can help small businesses prepare for the worst (High Plains Journal)

The sprinklers go off by mistake in your office building. A strong wind blows the roof off your lab. You lose all of your computer files in a major crash.

If you own or manage a small business, a disaster like any one of these could put a major dent in your work and your bottom line.

A new phone app won’t fix such problems, but could help a business start operating again more quickly and easily.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app is available free for iOS and Android tablets and smartphones. It was developed by the North Dakota State University Extension Service and Myriad Mobile, Fargo, N.D.

“We used FEMA’s ready.gov information for businesses and the Extension Disaster Education Network’s Ready Business training program to integrate with the functionality of the tablet and smartphone,” said Bob Bertsch, the NDSU web technology specialist who led work on the app’s content. “Yes, there are online templates for business disaster plans, but this app provides portability and functionality.”

The Extension Disaster Education Network is a collaboration of land grant universities focused on reducing the effect of disasters through education. Kansas State University is a part of EDEN and shares preparedness tips on its Prepare Kansas blog.

“There are two things that I have heard small-business owners say repeatedly: The first is they never have enough time. And the second is, ‘Where did I file that?’” said Glenn Muske, NDSU Extension rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app takes on both of those, Muske said, by letting you fill out important disaster plan information, along with supporting photos right from your smartphone or tablet – which you always have with you.

“Of course, you should save the information in the cloud, too, in case your phone or tablet is lost,” he added.

The app lets you enter information for your business, including basic and contact information, emergency planning, evacuation, insurance information and more.

Plans should be reviewed annually, Muske said, so the app uses your phone’s alerts to remind you to review the information at a designated time in the future.

The content can be downloaded as a csv file. The app also encourages you to upload the content to a cloud service such as Dropbox, iCloud, Drop or a similar service for backup.

“Planning is never high on anyone’s list,” Muske said. “But think how easy the process is when the structure is there and you just need to fill in the blanks. That’s exactly what this Small Business Disaster Plan app provides. And because September is National Preparedness Month, it’s a great time to get your business prepared for disasters.”

Development of the Small Business Disaster Plan app for tablets and smartphones was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Minnesota, North Dakota at a standoff over $2 billion Red River project (Star Tribune)

By Josephine Marcotty and Jennifer Brooks Staff writers

A long-simmering fight between Minnesota and North Dakota has broken wide open now that Gov. Mark Dayton has drawn a line down the middle of the Red River by refusing to allow a massive flood diversion project to go forward on his side of the border.

Residents and local leaders in Fargo are outraged at what they say is his administration's cavalier advice to keep sandbagging in the face of ever higher threats of flooding. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and even the mayor of the Minnesota city Moorhead came out swinging last week, vowing to press ahead with the $2.1 billion project.

While proponents say they want to keep talking with Minnesota, the depth of the disagreement about the value and safety of the diversion project is so profound that, other than a legal battle, there is no apparent resolution in sight.

"If there is a confrontation, there will be a confrontation," said Darrell Vanyo, executive director of the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority. He said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has all the authority it needs to build a high-hazard dam and flood thousands of acres of mostly farmland on the Minnesota side of the river in order to protect the Fargo-Moorhead urban areas.

But attorneys for residents who have been fighting the project in federal court say that decision would have to be made in Washington, D.C. And riding roughshod over Minnesota, they say, would require strong congressional support.

"The Army Corps, thankfully, is not the king of the United States," said Jerry Von Korff, the attorney representing upstream communities that would be flooded if the project went forward as planned.

And so far, while Congress has approved the project, it's only provided $5 million of the $450 million in federal funds that are part of the deal.

"Just the fact that you've got a lawsuit going on is going to make it difficult to get federal money," said U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district is bordered by the Red River. "It's hard enough to get things funded without having controversy."

But project supporters didn't seem to heed clear warnings, going back more than a year, that Minnesota was unlikely to grant them the permit they need.

A year ago, Peterson met with diversion officials.

"I asked them, 'What is your Plan B if Minnesota denies the permit?' ”he said.”And they said, 'There is no Plan B.' "

51 floods in 113 years

There is widespread agreement that Fargo needs protection from floods — the question is how.

The Red has flooded 51 of the past 113 years, causing millions of dollars in damage to homes and businesses around Fargo and the region. Across the river, Moorhead sits 4 feet higher and is protected by $130 million worth of walls, dikes and levees that Minnesota has put in place over the years.

After the most recent flood, in 2009, local North Dakota governments asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to come up with a long-term plan. And it came up with a big one.

The Corps would carve a 36-mile ditch around Fargo and build flood control dams across the Wild Rice and Red rivers. In the event of a flood, water from the Red and its five tributaries would be diverted away from Fargo — the region's bustling economic hub — and into miles of North Dakota and Minnesota farmland and prairie.

North Dakota would pay $1.2 billion of the cost and Minnesota would pay $100 million.

If the project goes ahead, a net increase of 2,000 acres in Minnesota would be at risk of flooding. But across the river, many more thousands of acres would be left high and dry and ripe for construction of homes, schools and businesses.

A crucial piece: Construction of what Minnesota officials describe as a "high-hazard" dam across the Red — the kind that would cause catastrophic damage if it fails.

Minnesota officials have been critical of the project for years. They even joined a federal lawsuit to stop preliminary work from going forward while they completed their own environmental review, which was finished last spring.

Then last week Tom Landwehr, commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, announced that the state would not grant a permit for the dam on Minnesota's side of the project. It didn't meet Minnesota's environmental laws or standards, he said. Instead, Minnesota suggested that current and planned flood mitigation projects around Fargo, in combination with emergency measures like sandbagging and evacuation, were more likely to be in the public interest.

'Shifts the burden'

Vanyo said the Diversion Authority and the Army Corps will keep talking with Minnesota officials to try and resolve differences. But the document Landwehr provided to support the DNR's decision suggests they may be insurmountable.

More than half the area that would be protected by the dam and diversion channel is now flood plain that would be open to development in the future, the document says. But dams "can, and do, fail," the DNR said. "Allowing development in vulnerable areas would increase the consequences of a dam failure. ..."

The DNR said the corps has underestimated the number of potential deaths if the dam were to fail and exaggerated the time Fargo would have to evacuate in such an event.

Peterson pointed out that Minnesota hasn't approved a new high-hazard dam in decades. "It's one thing when you've got a flood and it comes up slowly and you can deal with it," he said. "But it's another if you're behind a 20- or 30-foot-high dam and it breaks and water rushes through."

The DNR also noted that the Diversion Authority would be financially liable for a dam failure but questioned whether the quasi-governmental organization has sufficient financial wherewithal to pay.

In addition, the DNR argues that the Army Corps overestimated the financial benefits to the community by at least $41 million. The claimed benefits are "misleading" because they include flood control projects that would occur with or without the diversion project and improperly include temporary economic impacts of constructing the project itself.

In short, the DNR said, "The proposed Project … simply shifts the burden of flooding from one sparsely developed rural area to another."

Melissa Samet, an attorney with the National Wildlife Federation familiar with the Army Corps, said Congress has expressly discouraged projects that alter the natural processes of rivers, result in the unwise use of flood plains, or encourage development into undeveloped areas.

"And this project absolutely does that," she said.

The DNR argues that the vast majority of Fargo's developed area is already protected by existing or planned flood projects and that remaining areas can be protected in an emergency the way Fargo has always done it — with evacuations and sandbagging.

But that's cold comfort to the people of Fargo, who look at every spring thaw with trepidation, said local officials. They say thousands of Fargo's buildings are at risk if rising flood projections come true and relying on a strategy of business as usual is dangerous.

"Are we going to flood this spring?" Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney said, describing residents' mind-set in a radio interview this week. "We think people are tired of sandbagging."

Work to resume on Dakota Access Pipeline near Lake Oahe

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 9:34 a.m.

BISMARCK – The company building the Dakota Access Pipeline said Tuesday, Oct. 11, it looks forward to a "prompt resumption" of construction near Lake Oahe and hopes the federal government will assist local law enforcement officials dealing with protests of the pipeline.

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners released a statement saying it is pleased with a federal appeals court decision Sunday denying the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction to stop construction of the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline that will carry 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day from North Dakota to Illinois.

The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., also lifted a temporary suspension of construction activities within 20 miles east and west of Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River.

"In light of Sunday's court decision, Dakota Access looks forward to a prompt resumption of construction activities east and west of Lake Oahe on private land. We reiterate our commitment to protect cultural resources, the environment and public safety," the company said.

Company spokeswoman Vicki Granado declined to specify when the company will resume construction in the 20-mile area, which includes the area along Highway 1806 where protest activities to block pipeline construction began Aug. 10. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 American Indians and other pipeline opponents are encamped along the highway and have drawn international support.

The proposed construction area also includes a stretch west of Highway 1806 that was bulldozed on Sept. 3, the day after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed court documents identifying that part of the route as containing burial grounds and other sacred sites. Angry protesters clashed with the pipeline's private security that day, with both sides claiming injuries, and a joint law enforcement task force is investigating the incident.

Last week, state archeologists concluded that no sacred sites were destroyed, but the tribe disputes that conclusion because its historic preservation officer wasn't allowed to participate in the survey. The tribe's ongoing lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contends the agency didn't properly consult the tribe before granting permits for the project.

Energy Transfer Partners said the decisions by two separate federal courts show otherwise.

"The Army Corps and Dakota Access carefully considered the views of all potentially affected tribes that chose to participate in the consultative process prescribed by Congress, and fully complied with both the letter and the spirit of the National Historic Preservation Act," the company said. "Their careful and sensitive work has been reviewed and approved by highly qualified private and state-employed archeologists."

The pipeline was 87 percent completed in North Dakota at the end of September and is largely completed in South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois.

"We continue to believe that the Army Corps will soon issue the easement for approximately 1,100 feet necessary for the crossing beneath the Missouri River – the sole remaining authorization necessary for completion of the project," the company said.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it won't authorize pipeline construction on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The three agencies asked that the company voluntarily pause construction within 20 miles of the lake.

The company on Tuesday urged that any protests "be undertaken in a peaceful and law abiding manner." Authorities arrested 27 protesters at two construction sites Monday, including actress Shailene Woodley, bringing the total number of arrests to 123.

"All construction efforts will be undertaken in close coordination with state and local law enforcement officials, and we are hopeful their law enforcement efforts will be supplemented by those of the federal government," the company said.

State officials and lawmakers have decried the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the Corps is withholding the lake-crossing easement and allowing protesters to camp on Corps-owned land. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs, and Monday's response involved deputies from Wisconsin – the first time out-of-state officers have been used.

Actress Woodley released from jail after arrest at Dakota Access protests

By Mike Nowatzki on Oct 10, 2016 at 9:59 p.m.

ST. ANTHONY, N.D. – Authorities arrested Hollywood actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other protesters at two Dakota Access construction sites in Morton County on Monday, Oct. 10, as pipeline opponents vowed to keep disrupting the project after an appeals court ruling Sunday that allows work to resume on a 20-mile stretch west of Lake Oahe.

Despite the court's ruling, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Monday it won't authorize construction of the $3.8 billion pipeline on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The Corps also repeated its request that Dakota Access LLC voluntarily pause all construction activity within 20 miles east or west of the lake. A company spokeswoman did not return a message seeking comment.

Monday marked the most arrests in one day since protests of the four-state, 1,172-mile pipeline began two months ago just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, where tribal members fear the pipeline will leak and contaminate their water supply and destroy sacred sites on ancestral lands.

Authorities were notified about 7:15 a.m. Monday that two protesters had attached themselves to construction equipment about 2 miles southwest of St. Anthony, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. Both were arrested for felony reckless endangerment, and a third person filming the event also was arrested, he said.

A few miles south along Highway 6, about 200 protesters converged on the west side of the road where the pipeline is strung but not yet buried, including Woodley, who live-streamed video of the protest on Facebook. The star of the "Divergent" film series was arrested at 12:05 p.m. on suspicion of criminal trespass and engaging in a riot, the same basis for most of the 27 arrests, said Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney, operations chief.

Woodley was released on $500 bond about 3:30 p.m. Her next court appearance will be Oct. 24.

Protesters erected an uncovered teepee in the pipeline corridor, and more than a dozen people who locked arms inside it were arrested. The 27 arrests brings the total to 123 so far. More than 100 law enforcement officers, many of them wearing riot gear, responded to the scene, directing protesters back across the fence line and forming a human barricade to keep them off the construction site. Protesters formed their own line less than 10 feet away, holding signs, pounding drums and yelling refrains such as "Respect our land, respect our water, honor our

treaties.” “They plan to continue building, and we plan to continue to disrupt,” a protester declared through a bullhorn. No physical violence was reported. But Laney disputed claims that it was a peaceful protest, noting protesters used threatening speech, refused to leave when asked and, at one point, surrounded a deputy who was arresting a protester, forcing another deputy to break up the circle. “This was not a protest,” he said. “This was a riot.” Watch the video below to see Woodley's arrest. Fast-forward to the last five minutes of the video to see the arrest.

Robby Romero, an Apache from Taos, N.M., criticized what he described as the militarized police response, complete with an armored Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle parked at the top of the hill on Highway 6 overlooking the protest. “This is a crazy response to a peaceful resistance to something that is so dangerous to all life,” he said, adding, “We will win this fight, peacefully. We come with prayer and feathers. They come with weapons of destruction.” Both protests took place outside the 20-mile zones east and west of the Missouri River at Lake Oahe where a federal appeals court had ordered Dakota Access LLC to pause construction while the court decided on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s request for an emergency injunction. The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., issued a ruling Sunday rejecting the tribe’s request and dissolving the 20-mile, no-work zone.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it hopes to conclude its review soon. The agencies said they “continue to respect the right to peaceful protest and expect people to obey the law.” “We also look forward to a serious discussion during a series of consultations, starting with a listening session in Phoenix on Tuesday, on whether there should be nationwide reform on the Tribal consultation process for these types of infrastructure projects,” they said.

Officers from Wisconsin assisted in Monday’s response. Schools in nearby St. Anthony and Flasher went on lockdown. Laney said the 200 to 300 protesters who took part are a “distinct” group within the 2,500 to 3,000 mostly peaceful people camping along Highway 1806 about 25 miles away near the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers. He said protesters’ message has been heard “loud and clear” over the last 62 days, but added “the courts have ruled” and the company has a legal right to do construction. “If their determination is that they’re going to … do everything they can to stop this work, I guess we’re going to be here for a while,” he said.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Fort Randall Dam Passed Test Posed By Historic 2011 Flood (Yankton Daily)

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net | 0 comments

EDITORS’ NOTE: The following is part of a series of periodic articles on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 Missouri River flood, its aftermath and a look at the present and future.

For Tom Curran, the 2011 Missouri River flooding at Pickstown forced him to take unprecedented action.

The Fort Randall Dam project manager opened up all the flood tunnels to handle the torrent of water.

“We had releases of 156,000 cubic feet per second (cfs),” he said. “It was the first time in the history of the dam that we fully opened all four flood tunnels.”

The 2011 releases – which amounted to one million gallons per second – more than doubled the old record of 67,000 cfs during 1997 flooding.

When it came to moving the flood water, the first preference was to run the flow through the Fort Randall power plant to gain hydropower, Curran said. The eight turbines produce a combined 320 megawatts of power.

Fort Randall produces enough power for a city of 250,000 people, according to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates.

“We continued to run our hydropower (during the flood),” Curran said. “We put out about 40,000 cfs through the power plant. The powerhouse was generating full capacity for those three months.”

Besides hydropower, the alternatives were running the water through the flood tunnels, spillway or a combination of both.

Fort Randall, completed in 1956, stands slightly more than two miles wide, at 10,700 feet, and 165 feet tall with a 140-foot water fall. Lake Francis Case runs for 107 miles behind the dam and backs up to the Big Bend Dam.

Fort Randall forms part of the Missouri River system of dams, Curran said. As such, the six dams need to remain in coordination for moving the flood water.

“The dams work together as a whole. They balance what each reservoir can hold and the flow each one can put through the power plant,” he said.

“Each one is a little bit unique, but they operate as a system. When the upper reservoirs are near their capacity, the rest of the water has to be moved downstream through all the dams.”

LIFE CHANGES

The flood affected all facets of life up and down the river, Curran said.

The Corps provided technical assistance to the Yankton Sioux Tribe amidst its flooding concerns, he said. Charles Mix County and the tribe had sustained $1 million in damages during previous flash flooding, and tribal members were displaced from their homes.

Most tribal members lived in homes on bluffs or other sites protected from the Missouri River flooding in 2011, Curran said. However, the Corps did warn tribal members about the dangers of bank erosion caused by the flooding, he said.

Downstream, the flooding inundated farmland, primarily in Charles Mix and Bon Homme counties on the South Dakota side of the river. On the Nebraska side, the river flooded housing developments such as Lazy River Acres.

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) closed stretches of Highway 12 east and west of Niobrara, Nebraska, throughout the summer. As a result, traffic was diverted and commuters and first responders were forced to find alternative routes.

The flooding didn't shut down Niobrara State Park, Niobrara, Chief Standing Bear Memorial Bridge or the Ohiya Casino. However, a number of travelers avoided the area because they encountered accessibility problems or mistakenly thought those sites were closed.

As a result, the economy – tourism, retail businesses, restaurants and bars – took a major hit.

While traditional tourism may have suffered in some areas, Fort Randall Dam saw an influx of a different type of visitor, Curran said.

"We had people from all over the country who wanted to see what the water looked like (when it was) that high and when it was released," he said. "Our people (with the Corps) were visiting with people every day (about the flood). We had longer hours every day just because people were coming through, looking and asking questions. We also had questions about the reservoirs and parks."

In addition, the Corps worked with conservation agencies on issues dealing with wildlife, Curran said. The Corps also monitored the changing course of the Missouri River and the increased sedimentation caused by the flooding, he said.

Lake Francis Case and Lewis and Clark Lake remained open for recreation, Curran said. However, flooding affected area campgrounds, boat ramps and other sites.

"As a reservoir, we had record pool levels in 2011. We were pretty much a half-foot from being totally full," he said. "A lot of recreational facilities were flooded at that level, and a lot of the recreation areas were closed."

The Missouri River and Lake Francis Case saw a great deal of pent-up demand the following year, Curran said. The boating and fishing numbers soared after the flooding.

"It was really busy in 2012," he said. "Things really picked up and rebounded that year."

LESSONS LEARNED

In 2012, the Corps embarked on a number of projects as part of regular maintenance and from the flooding. The inspections looked at the gates, cables, spillway and embankment.

Curran, who has worked at Fort Randall since 1999, said he has always remained confident about the stability of the dam and reservoir. His confidence was reinforced during and after an unprecedented event such as the 2011 flooding, he said.

Fort Randall handled the stress despite months of intense flood pressure on the dam, he said.

"That was kind of the test. The dam held up great. We did really well with no operation problems," he said. "Afterwards, we had a really thorough survey of everything, and it was just the normal wear-and-tear items. We worked after the flood to see if everything was in good shape and if we're ready to go should this (flood) ever happen again."

In that respect, the flood showed the dam's capability, Curran said.

"It was interesting to see what would happen during a high-water event," he said. "The flood pushed everything to its limits, but there really wasn't anything that stuck out as a problem or issue."

Col. John Henderson, the Omaha District commander for the Corps of Engineers, visited Fort Randall Dam earlier this year.

Henderson reflected on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 flood and emphasized the importance of two-way communication between the Corps and stakeholders, according to a Corps publication.

"I think the timing of this trip is appropriate since we are only five years removed from the single most significant hydrological event to occur in this basin in the last 100-plus years," he said.

"One of the key lessons learned following that event was the need for an ongoing commitment to open and frank dialogue throughout the basin. This inspection trip is an example of our efforts to maintain that dialogue."

Curran still sees and hears about the flood's impact from those most affected by it.

"I think there are some people who were intimately involved with the high water and flooding who haven't forgotten about it," he said. "But there are other areas where things are improving. People are doing some of the things they had always planned to do, and it looks nice."

Echoing Henderson's sentiment, Curran said the flood showed the importance of communicating with all people up and down the river.

"As far as what was learned, I would say communication and getting the word out, again and again, to let people know what to expect," he said.

"We're working to provide people with a better understanding of how the dams and reservoir system work. We want them to have an understanding if anything like this (flooding) should ever happen again."

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STORIES

COLORADO:

Study: Human-caused warming burns more Western forests – Colorado Springs Gazette

By: KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press

Updated: October 11, 2016 at 4:47 pm

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A new study of Western forest fires confirms what is already apparent — wildfire seasons are getting longer and more destructive.

But researchers with the University of Idaho and Columbia University also say humans are to blame.

The study made public Monday says human-caused global warming contributed an additional 16,000 square miles of burned forests from 1984 to 2015.

Researchers say the 16,000 square miles represent half of the forest areas that burned over the last three decades.

"We're no longer waiting for human-caused climate change to leave its fingerprint on wildfire across the western U.S.," John Abatzoglou, the study's lead author and an associate professor of geography at the University of Idaho, said in a statement. "It's already here."

The authors of the study, published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, say it's the first to try to quantify how much human-caused climate change has increased wildfires in Western forests. Some other factors that had to be considered as contributing to the increase, the report said, included a legacy of fire suppression in the West, natural climate variability, and human settlement.

The study found that longer and hotter dry spells are causing Western forests to dry out and become more susceptible to wildfires.

Specifically, researchers said, spring and summer temperatures have warmed by 2 to 2.5 degrees since 1950. Researchers said that warming accounts for 55 percent of what they call "fuel aridity" from 1979 to 2015. The study attributed the other 45 percent to natural climate variations.

The study found that since 2000 there's been a 75 percent increase in forested lands with elevated aridity and nine more days each year with dry forests especially susceptible to wildfires.

"Anthropogenic climate change has emerged as a driver of increased forest fire activity," the report says.

Park Williams of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and a co-author of the study, said the report provides a better understanding of the effects human-caused global warming has on Western forests.

"This knowledge will allow us to make more educated fire and land management decisions," he said.

One of those decision-makers is Idaho Forester David Groeschl, who said the report could offer some help in the future.

"We know that our fire season is getting longer," Groeschl said. "We know that we're seeing more and longer fires, and we know that we have increasing fuels out there as well."

The fuel aridity was particularly bad in Idaho in 2015 when an extended heat and drought left northern Idaho forests parched and in the worst condition since 1926, officials said.

That summer and fall, 600 square miles of U.S. Forest Service land burned. Idaho's bill for fighting wildfires soared to $60 million with some 100 square miles, about three quarters of it forests, burning on state, private and federal lands that are in forest protective districts designated as the state's responsibility.

Idaho has taken a number of steps aimed at the wildfire risk, including increasing the pay of in-demand, experienced firefighters who were leaving to take similar jobs with more money at other agencies. Idaho also recently formed a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to take on landscape-scale projects by using the state's land management expertise that includes selling timber on federal land. The state's first auction of federal timber took place last month.

How successful the partnership will take years to determine.

The study released Monday concluded that the trend of increased forest aridity resulting in large wildfires is likely to continue for decades while there are enough trees to fuel the flames.

MONTANA:

Protesters cause temporary shut-down of pipeline in northcentral Montana- KBZK TV Bozeman

Posted: Oct 12, 2016 8:28 AM MDT

GREAT FALLS -

The battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota came to Montana on Tuesday.

Protesters forced the temporary shutdown of five pipelines carrying oil from Canadian tar sands, including one at Coal Banks Landing south of Big Sandy in Chouteau County.

Spectra Energy confirmed to MTN News that trespassers tampered with a valve on its express pipeline on Tuesday, and that as a precaution it was shut off.

The environmental group Climate Direct Action said Tuesday that it had also successfully shut down express pipelines at locations in Washington, North Dakota, and Minnesota.

The group says it was attempting to shut the pipelines down over concerns about global warming, and in solidarity with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Spectra Energy says it worked with law enforcement officers in its response to the tampering incident in Chouteau County, and that their primary concern was safety of the community and environment.

The website Unicorn Riot posted the following information on Tuesday:

> *Early this morning, five water protectors successfully shut down five pipelines across the northern United States that were delivering tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada. The action was in support of the call for International Days of Prayer and Action for Standing Rock.*
>
> *The individuals used manual safety valves and bolt cutters to access and shut down the flow of tar sands oil into the US. They are "calling on President Obama to use emergency powers to keep the pipelines closed and mobilize for the extraordinary shift away from fossil fuels now required to avert catastrophe."*
>
> *The actions were undertaken by Emily Johnson, 50, and Michael Foster, 52, of Seattle, WA, Annette Klapstein, 64, of Bainbridge Island, WA, Ken Ward, 59, of Corbett, OR, and Leonard Higgins, 64, of Eugene, OR.*

There is no word yet on whether any of the protesters might face charges.

Spectra released the following statement: "Spectra Energy has responded to a situation during which trespassers broke into a locked facility and tampered with a valve on its Express Pipeline Tuesday morning in Montana. We coordinated with law enforcement in this response. Our first concern is for the safety of the community and the environment, and tampering with this important U.S. energy infrastructure will not be tolerated. This pipeline provides a vital source of affordable, reliable energy to fuel the everyday lives of Americans. As a cautionary measure, we temporarily shut down this section of the Express Pipeline."

Butte firefighters teach students about fire safety- KTFM TV News Kalispell

Posted: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 8:46 PM

BUTTE -

Butte firefighters said fire education starts here, in the classroom. After the kids saw firefighters put on their gear and learn about stop drop and roll. Firemen Pat Doherty then spoke about the most common house fires

"Most structure fires in the United States are from cooking materials. It's always best to stay in the vicinity and keep an eye on it," said Pat Doherty, Butte Fire Department.

During the predicted cold snap, families will be turning up the heat. However, Doherty explains to kids to watch out for the dangers that can sometimes come from using space heaters.

Doherty also adds it's never smart to leave them unattended.

"Space heaters are dangerous. In the case of people forgetting to unplug them or they keep them too close to stuff that's going to catch on fire," said Doherty.

NORTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Airport Disaster Exercise Set for Thursday – DRGnews.com

October 12, 2016 (Dakota Radio Group)
By: Press Release

PIERRE, SD- You can expect lights, sirens and a whole lot of activity at the airport later this week.

Thursday evening, from 5:30 – 7:30, the Pierre Regional Airport and Hughes County will conduct a full scale disaster exercise. The mock disaster scenario includes a hazardous materials response on a simulated aircraft. The exercise is required by the Federal Aviation Administration and designed to provide first responders and airport personnel with disaster response experience.

"This is really practice for all the responders," said Mike Isaacs, Pierre Regional Airport Manager. "We do everything we can to avoid aircraft accidents, but we want to be prepared in the event there's one we can't avoid."

Isaacs went on to say that the exercise requires all the activity that a real disaster would require. Those involved in the exercise will be assigned a variety of responsibilities that include everything from information gathering and dissemination to coordination of involved entities to response management to logistics and cost tracking.

"An Emergency Operations Center and Unified Command Post will be set up at the airport for this exercise," said Isaacs. "They will serve as the hubs of all disaster response and recovery efforts.

Approximately 50 people will be involved in the exercise including volunteers, city and county officials, and first responders.

The Federal Aviation Administration requires airports with commercial air service to conduct a full-scale disaster exercise every three years. Additionally, the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management requires counties to conduct a variety of exercises throughout the year.

The Thursday night exercise fulfills requirements for both Hughes County and Pierre Regional Airport.

National Fire Prevention Week (Hot Springs Star)

By John D. Taylor

A closer look at Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department history

HOT SPRINGS – The advent of National Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 9 -15 this year, is a good time to look at the important role firefighters play in the community, and to consider what everyone can do to prevent fires.

Fire Prevention Week

Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, that tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,400 structures.

The fire began on October 8, but did most of its damage on October 9, 1871 – why Fire Prevention Week is held on Oct. 9 annually.

Popular legend holds that while Mrs. Catherine O'Leary was milking a cow, it kicked over a lamp, ignited her barn, then lit the whole city of Chicago on fire. However, recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has debunked this fairy tale – while retaining some elements of truth in the story.

The fire did, indeed, originate near the barn where Mrs. O'Leary kept her five milk cows. But there is no proof that her cow sparked the blaze. O'Leary's testimony says she and her cows were asleep, not milking, when the fire broke out.

Who started it then? Some blame some neighborhood boys who were near the barn sneaking cigarettes, some say a O'Leary's neighbor started the fire, another theory is that a meteorite shower that fell during Oct. 8 all over Michigan and Wisconsin may have started the fire.

Also, while the Chicago Fire is one of the most well known, it wasn't the biggest fire in American history. That notoriety belongs to the Peshtigo Fire, which also occurred on October 8, 1871, in northeast Wisconsin. It burned 16 whole towns, killed more than 1,100 people, and scorched 1.2 million acres. It began when several railroad workers, clearing land for tracks, unintentionally lit a brush fire. Before long, the fast-moving flames were whipping through the area "like a tornado," survivors said. Peshtigo, Wisconsin got the worst of it, within an hour, the entire town was destroyed.

These fires changed the way firefighters and public officials thought about fire safety. And on the 40th anniversary the fires the Fire Marshals Association of North America decided to mark the anniversary in a way to keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed. According to the National Archives and Records Administration’s Library Information Center, it is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

Hot Springs VFD

On July 2, The Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) celebrated its 125th anniversary.

The fire company was formed, according to a VFD history by William T. Richer – VFD member Jenni Sotherland shared this with the Star – in January of 1890, when a group of Hot Springs citizens gathered at the Minnekahta Hotel to organize themselves into the VFD. At this meeting, John Gillespie was elected chief; H. C. Venette, first assistant chief; John Mueller, second assistant chief; Kenneth Harris, secretary and Wally Root, treasurer.

In those days, there was no citywide water system, so the only equipment the VFD needed was a large number of leather water buckets. To fight fires, the men formed two lines –Richer calls them “strings” – going to and from the fire and a water source. Usually, Fall River, water holes or cisterns were the water sources. One line of men passed buckets of water from the river to the fire, the other line returned the empty buckets.

In July, when the modern VFD was whooping it up with a masquerade ball at American Legion Post 71 they may not have been thinking about these roots, but they are where the VFD originated.

Early days

Later in 1890, the city began to pipe water into the business district, so it purchased its first fire-fighting equipment: two, high wheeled hose carts, and one hook and ladder wagon. The hose carts were drawn by men, the wagon pulled by a team of horses.

Throughout those early days the city’s firefighting ability grew. In 1893, the city bought another high-wheeled hose cart, placed iton College Hill (where the high school is today).

One interesting story from those days is connected to John Mueller, father of the Mueller Center founder. In 1896, when Mueller was the VFD’s first assistant fire chief, he bought a white horse, named “Old Granger” from Bill Perry.

Mueller used Old Granger to ride to and from fires, and pull the No. 1 hose cart to fire scenes.

For many years Mueller kept his stable much the same as the city’s fire equipment stables, with the bridle bit in Old Granger’s mouth, so the horse was ready to go. When an alarm sounded, Old Granger would leave his stall, make a run for the buggy shafts, where the No. 1 hose cart could be hooked up to him with one snap of the harness, and “away he would go,” says Richer.

Sometimes, Mueller was able to catch a ride on the horse, other times, Old Granger was the first responder to a fire.

Richer says, “The call of the fire alarm was greater to this noble horse than was the call of the feed box.” Mueller used Old Granger in this fashion for a quarter century, until 1915, when the horse was “pensioned.” The horse was so stiff and lame then he could hardly walk the streets, according to Richer. “But if an alarm came in, one would think he was a mighty young horse. He was able to forget his stiffness and lameness to answer the call.”

Richer says in 1916, when Old Granger was “pensioned” and put out to pasture near town, the horse heard an alarm call and in a few moments showed up in town to answer the call.

Granger answered his last fire call in 1917.

Also during these early days, the VFD sponsored three-day 4th of July celebrations, free to the public. Special trains brought large crowds of people into Hot Springs from surrounding areas and the entertainment included greased pig-catching and greased pole-climbing contests, rodeo-style bucking horses, baseball games, swimming contests, foot races, human wheelbarrow races, tug-of-wars, band concerts and reading the Declaration of Independence.

In 1899, the VFD fire hall became a dual-purpose building, hosting Hot Springs’ first opera hall as well as the fire hall. What happened was that the fire department remodeled their building, adding a small stage to the east end of the room, a set of bleachers in the west, and covering the remaining floor space with folding chairs advertising Happy Bill cigars. Two small dressing rooms were also built outside the building. The Fireman’s Opera House was in operation until about 1909, when the skating rink and theater opened. The opera house never made much money, but it gave city residents a place for entertainment.

Up until the end of World War I (1918), the fire fighting equipment of the city included three hose carts and one hook and ladder wagon or truck. The hose carts were housed in various parts of town: One in the lower end, one on College Hill, one on Minnekahta Ave. The hook and ladder wagon was kept at city hall. Fire alarms were anything that made noise -- train whistles, church bells and “men hollering at the top of their voices,” notes Richer.

There were no telephones in those days, so when fires occurred at night, VFD members “would generally exhaust themselves in running from their homes to the scene of the fire.”

Often, by the time the hose carts got to the scene, the fire was out of control, and the VFD’s efforts focused on keeping the fire from spreading to adjoining properties. “It was quite generally considered those days that if a property caught fires during the night time, there would be nothing left in the morning, except the lot. One example of this is how an April 1891 fire wiped out a whole city block of business buildings in “lower” town, the damage estimated at $35,000 – big money in those days.

Other big blazes of that era the 1891 blaze that took the Minnekahta Hotel, the 1892 blaze that took out several buildings where the Post Office now stands, an 1895 fire that destroyed the Jay

Crane store building, a 1903 fire that took a block of business houses what was People's National Bank and the Riverside Apartments, a 1907 fire that took the Catholican Hotel and bath house and the Siloam bath house, 1910's Gibson Hotel fire and 1915's Gillespie Hotel fire. In 1924, the High School building burned to the ground.

Motorization

In 1918, a movement was started to motorize the VFD. City businessmen, citizens and the fire company made donations of $1,875 which bought a combination Ford chemical and hose truck. This was put into service in June of 1919, when Dave Batchelor was foreman of the fire company. Batchelor's house burned down, a $3,000 loss, in 1908.

An REO Speedwagon Fire Truck equipped with a pump was purchased in 1924, after the high school fire, to increase water pressure, and town founding father F.O. Butler offered the fire company his Pierce-Arrow touring car, which was reworked into a hook and ladder truck. This unit remained in operation until 1938, when it was replaced by a new, Ford V-8 truck.

In 1934, the REO Speedwagon was converted into a smoke extractor, a move made possible by the ingenuity of Vic Englebert, H.C. "Swede" Nelms, and Fire Chief L. J. Bingham. These men added a 25-horsepower Waukesha motor to a large suction fan, salvaged from the State Soldier's Home. This rig was given credit for saving more property than any other equipment in the department, drawing smoke and gas from burning buildings at a rate of 6,500 cubic feet per minute, which made it possible for firefighters to get into burning buildings and extinguish fires.

Growth

Throughout the 1930s the VFDs gear grew, as Hot Springs grew, with horses and carts being replaced by larger and more powerful motorized equipment. In 1936, this enabled Hot Springs to get a 10 percent cut in insurance rates because of the efficiency of the fire department.

By the 1940s, there were 561 people in the VFD, with 65 active members and six living in Fire Hall, on call to fight fires. Engines and other gear were purchased by the city or the VFD via proceeds for insurance money or annual dances. But in 1942, city agreed to begin paying the VFD $200 per month to, with the understanding that the VFD would pay for all equipment, pay their own insurance, water, lights, telephone, gas, oil, fire station upkeep and other incidental expenses.

"Without a doubt the Hot Springs Fire Department is one of the very best strictly volunteer fire departments in the state…the department has brought home the South Dakota State Championship trophy a total of 11 times.

During the late 1940s, the fire chief was conducting "fire drills at both schoolhouses several times each year. These drills are not at regular intervals, but just whenever he takes the notion, giving no notice to teachers, janitors or pupils at the building." A general inspection of "every business house within the city" was also held annually, which revealed any fire hazards.

In 1948, after Frank Fetzner, Deputy State Fire Marshall, saw the VFD in action for the first time, he said the VFD handled themselves like a experts and that the city should feel mighty proud that they have such a group of fire-fighters.

After flood of 1948, a VFD American LaFrance pumper was used to pump out Evans Plunge. This took days. Also, extension ladder truck saved a “kid” marooned on the cliffs at Hot Brook, with two fireman saving the goat.

Also, 800 questionnaires and inspection blanks were sent home with school kids, asking that they report any fire hazards in their homes. Returning this would get the kids a ride on the fire truck. More than 700 of these came back, the kids ratting out their parents bad habits, even in the homes of firemen.

Emergency ambulance was first put into service in November of 1949.

The 1950s

These were high times for the VFD – in more ways that one, according to new VFD scribe Howard McBride. In 1950, Chief Vic Englebert resigned, saying “he had gone on a bender, got himself in jail and fined. Was called on the carpet by his boss and was given an enforced vacation for two weeks from his job.”

That same year the city floated a $15,000 bond issue for new fire station, and it carried 1,098 to 487 votes. The VFD bought three lots (where the Valley Hotel burned in 1946) for $3,500 in the city’s name. Many private citizens gave donations to this, including one widow who gave $100, quite a bit of money then.

In February of 1950, at the annual Fireman’s Masquerade Ball, someone set fire to Wally King’s masquerade suit, which produced 2nd degree burns on his legs, hips, chest and chin, and 3rd degree burns on both hands. King was in hospital for several months, and the masquerade ball ended – until this year.

In 1951, street names in the city were changed, and a new map was prepared showing the new names and locations. Firemen instructed to study this and become familiar with it.

William Watson, of Wind Cave National Park, came to a VFD meeting in April to compliment the VFD on their cooperation. Watson said the park and the state Game, Fish & Parks department couldn’t see eye-to-eye on their cooperative agreement, and he thought VFD should take care of Southern Hills fires. “If the rest of Hot Springs had the getup and go of the fire department, the town would be a hell of a lot better off,” Watson quipped, noting he wouldn’t be at Wind Cave much longer due to a transfer to Hot Springs, Arkansas.

In 1953 a fire at the Minnekahta Building, took the lives of a woman and her two daughters, although the father and his two sons escaped harm. The building was falling into itself when VFD arrived.

The last years of the 1950s brought a new aerial ladder, an Oelrichs chicken hatchery fire that cooked 3,700 of the birds, and a January fire in 20-below temperatures that the fire chief said was the first time he'd see the smoke extractor tube freeze.

1960s and 70s

After the 1961 flood, the VFD was called on to pump basements, but lacked the equipment to do so. It was also called to Angostura Dam for rescue work. In 1963 a new addition was put on the station. School building inspections revealed a few hazards, which were eliminated.

And the 1979's Evans Hotel Fire proved to be a seminal event for the city.

Modern VFD

Most recently, the VFD has had some major fires to contend with.

It fought 2007's Alabaugh Fire, which burned 10,324 acres, destroyed 33 homes, killed one resident, and forced two firefighters to take refuge in a fire shelter. Hot Springs' Mary Goulet lived in one of those homes and wrote a book about the fire, "Cascade of Flames."

In 2015, the Bitter Creek fire started south of Hot Springs, off Highway 71 at the intersection of Maitland and Ash Creek Roads. It burned about 87 acres, and firefighters from Cascade, Hot Springs, and South Dakota State stopped the spread.

And just after their 125th anniversary, in mid-July of this year, the Indian Canyon fire, which began after four days of temperatures topping 90 degrees and a lightning strike touched off a blaze about five miles southeast of Edgemont, scorching 14,133 acres

Today, the VFD has 65 active volunteers led by Chief Jim Stevens, 1st assistant Chief Bob Evans, 2nd assistant chief Wendell Hertel, and Secretary Treasurer Gerald Hanson.

Argyle VFD looking for help

The Argyle Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD) located between Pringle and Hot Springs, SD is seeking new members. Applicants should be over 18 years of age, in good physical health, have a clean driving record, and be able to pass a Law Enforcement Background check. Firefighters will respond to structural and wildland fires as well as assist with search and rescue operations, motor vehicle accidents and other emergencies in our coverage area. First Responders will assist and respond to medical emergencies and assist patients until ambulances arrive on scene. Prior experience is not necessary but certainly welcome. This is a volunteer non-paid position.

The Department provides Fire and EMS response to a 144 square mile area of southwestern Custer County and provides Mutual Aid to Pringle, Minakata, Custer, Hot Springs, Wind Cave, Custer State Park, and other nearby agencies in Custer and Fall River Counties.

Meeting are held at the fire station on the first and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7 p.m.

For more information, call (605) 673-5823; e-mail ArgyleVFD.SD@gmail.com, or check the Argyle Volunteer Fire Department Facebook page.

UTAH:
No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

USDA designates Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area (Northern Wyoming Daily)

CASPER — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area due to a recent drought.

“Our hearts go out to those Wyoming farmers and ranchers affected by recent natural disasters,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “President Obama and I are committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a bright spot in our nation’s economy by sustaining the successes of America’s farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through these difficult times. We’re also telling Wyoming producers that USDA stands with you and your communities when severe weather and natural disasters threaten to disrupt your livelihood.”

Farmers and ranchers in Big Horn, Fremont, Hot Springs, Teton and Washakie counties in Wyoming also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

Farmers and ranchers in Carbon, Gallatin and Park counties in Montana also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Oct. 5, 2016, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program;Livestock Indemnity Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; and the Tree Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online athttp://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

Region VIII Clips

Friday, October 14, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* A researcher from Colorado State University tested cheaper air sampling devices at a controlled burn in Colorado this summer.
- *Montana:* No FEMA-related stories
- *North Dakota:* A flood protection plan for Fox Island in Bismarck has taken a step forward… Senator Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic Senators have asked President Obama to halt construction of the Dakota Access pipeline being protested in North Dakota…. A lengthy piece covers how much time the Cass County sheriff is spending at the protest. … A councilwoman from Madison, Wisconsin, who was arrested Monday describes the protest very differently than the sheriff's office.
- *South Dakota:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Utah:* A Washington, D.C., publication cites criticism by Utah and Wyoming congressional members of the Department of Justice's decision not to prosecute an employee involved in last year's Gold King Mine disaster.
- *Wyoming:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Other FEMA-related stories:* Storms with hurricane-level winds are expected to hit Washington and Oregon over the next few days.

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GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Don’t go chasing wildfires – unless you’re Scott Kelleher

13Oct, 2016 by Anne Ju Manning – Source/Colorado State University

Most people drive *away* from fires burning in the mountains. Scott Kelleher drives straight at them – well, near them, anyway. And it's not for thrill seeking.

For two weeks in September, Kelleher drove the perimeter of a 6,000-acre prescribed burn in southern Colorado to set up 13 outdoor air samplers on steel stakes.

Kelleher's system is suited for monitoring smoke emissions for both controlled burns and wildfires. Field-testing the sensors during an actual, unplanned wildfire would prove challenging. So, Kelleher received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to tag along on a planned, prescribed burn, which are common in the Rocky Mountains and other densely forested areas.

"The long-term goals of this project are very motivating," Kelleher said. "It's applying science and technology in an affordable new way to make the lives of those responsible for monitoring smoke much easier, with the main thought of protecting public health in mind."

Field testing

Kelleher's first field-testing campaign took place in a swath of land between Pagosa Springs and Bayfield, Colorado, near Pargin Mountain. Working closely with his contacts at the forest service, Kelleher set up each of his monitoring checkpoints in strategic proximity to the forest service's monitoring zones.

The sensors Kelleher is testing are based off the principle of an Ultrasonic Personal Aerosol Sampler (UPAS) designed in the lab of his advisor, John Volckens, who is a professor in mechanical engineering and member of the CSU Partnership for Air Quality, Climate, and Health. The UPAS features an ultrasonic pump that draws in air, a sampling filter, rechargeable batteries, and an air flow rate sensor.

Kelleher's master's project involves adapting the UPAS for conditions suitable for prolonged outdoor monitoring. His new version, for which he is quick to point out he received many hours of help from other Volckens lab members, includes a hardened enclosure for weatherproofing; a solar cell for charging an extended-life battery; and a real-time, optical particle sensor that tracks the flow of particles 2.5 microns in diameter and smaller. "PM 2.5" is a standard measure for describing air pollution particles small enough to penetrate human lungs and cause health problems. The optical sampler contained in the device gives live updates.

The sensor also has a gravimetric analysis device that collects particles onto a filter. The filter is later weighed and analyzed for particulate matter concentrations. The entire device can be controlled remotely by smart phone.

The total cost of one of Kelleher's sensors is estimated at about $500, compared with particulate matter monitors used today that cost $10,000 to $20,000. The standard sensors usually require line power, and are large – about the size of a microwave oven.

Kelleher's unusual road trip involved seven rounds of 24-hour sampling. This involved traveling a route of 90 miles, changing out filters on each device and extracting information. In all, he was out in the fire for 14 days.

Automation in rural environments

A graduate of Montana Tech who grew up on a beef cattle, wheat and barley farm near the Canadian border, Kelleher is motivated by his work to bring the power of automation and monitoring to rural environments. Recognizing his penchant for engineering cost-effective solutions, and armed with his CSU master's degree in a couple of years, Kelleher hopes he can make a difference by bringing simple automation technologies to farmers or small businesses. The remainder of Kelleher's thesis will involve organizing and analyzing the data he collected at Pargin Moutain as well as follow-up prescribed burn experiments as needed. He will present his recent findings at the Second International Smoke Symposium (ISS2) in Long Beach, California next month.

"It was very cool to observe such a large-scale event and learn about the processes and effort that go into it," he said. "Hopefully, one day, my technology will enable anyone worried about air pollution to conduct monitoring right in their backyard."

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Fox Island residents approve flood protection plan (Bismarck Tribune)

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 18 hrs ago

A $3.92 million Fox Island flood protection project has been approved 72-18 by property owners, who will pay part of its cost via a special assessment district, the Burleigh County Water Resource District Board announced Wednesday.

The project will involve raising a section of road and adding a levee to safeguard against a 20-foot flood. The Legislature has committed $2.8 million toward its completion, and the Burleigh County Commission has approved funding of $920,000 in yearly installments. Fox Island property owners will pay the balance.

The project was driven by the 2011 Missouri River flooding.

The raising of the road would start at the pump at Tavis Road and move west along Farwest Drive and Gallatin Loop, according to Michael Gunsch of Houston Engineering, consulting engineer for the water resource district. The levee would extend west from Gallatin Loop to the Missouri River bank, then run north to the Whispering Bay accessory channel, he said.

Gunsch said about 80 percent of the 91 property owners who voted favored the project. One submitted a blank ballot.

With the residents' approval on record, the board is moving forward with the project and paying a design fee of $325,000 to Houston Engineering.

Completion is planned during the 2018 construction season, but authorization must first be granted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the North Dakota State Engineer's Office.

Earlier precautions were taken when the county partnered with Bismarck in creating the Tavis Road floodgate after the 2011 flood and Bismarck raised Mills Avenue, according to Larson.

A Dec. 14 hearing has tentatively been set to allow those within the special assessment district to protest.

Sixteen residents in the far western Gallatin Loop area signed a petition saying the construction of the levee would damage their yards, said Greg Larson, a member of the water resource district board.

"We 16 receive none of the flood benefit, but receive 100 percent of the street and yard destruction," he read from the statement.

The homeowners signing the petition also asked that a different street be raised near their properties.

Board members agreed they did not want to change the protection plan or do more study at increased cost to those being assessed.

Each property owner in the assessment district can expect to pay an average of $3,790 toward the construction project, Gunsch said. In addition, he said, some of them will pay $943 each toward the system's operation and maintenance.

Sen. Bernie Sanders asking President Obama to halt North Dakota pipeline for full review (KFOR TV, Oklahoma City, and AP)

Posted 7:17 am, October 14, 2016, by KFOR-TV & K. Querry and AP Wire

BISMARCK, N.D. – Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic senators are asking President Barack Obama to halt construction of the four-state Dakota Access pipeline until a full environmental review can be completed.

In a statement, the senators said Thursday the request is due to a federal appeals court denying the Standing Rock Sioux's motion for a temporary work stoppage in southern North Dakota

within 20 miles of Lake Oahe. The feds stopped construction on land bordering and under the lake in order to review the permitting process.

An environmental review would likely delay the pipeline, which Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners hopes to complete by the end of the year.

White House spokesman Patrick Rodenbush declined to comment.

The other senators are Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Dianne Feinstein of California, Ben Cardin of Maryland and Ed Markey of Massachusetts.

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

However, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe says the pipeline would come within a half-mile of their reservation and could disturb or destroy sacred historical sites.

Also, tribal leaders are concerned about the consequences the pipeline would have on their water supply.

North Dakota sheriff out of town almost constantly as pipeline protest drags on (Fargo Forum News Service, WDAZ TV)

- By TU-UYEN TRAN Forum News Service
- 18 hrs ago

FARGO — In mid-August, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney headed for southeastern Morton County, the scene of protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and, except for a few breaks, he's been there ever since. Serving as the elected sheriff of what's by far the state's largest county while consumed by policing the ongoing tribal protests of the oil pipeline has been a daily act of priority-balancing, Laney said.

"I'm very blessed to have a command team that I believe is second to none," Laney said. "They can hold the fort with most things, but there are certainly things that need my attention."

Laney, who is halfway through a third term after first taking office in January 2007, said he feels it's important for him to do everything he can to help Morton County in its time of need because Cass County got help during the flood fights of 2009, 2010 and 2011. In the worst of those floods, in 2009, hundreds of law enforcement officers from around the state and country came to Cass County for more than 40 days, he said.

"The fact that we've had to go out of state to bring in assistance," he said, "how do we in-state not help first?"

Hundreds of law enforcement officials from all over the state and other parts of the country have been helping police the protests at the request of Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, whose force is stretched thin. Laney has been the operations chief for the law enforcement presence to the protests.

Last week, a representative from the Western States Sheriffs' Association and the National Sheriffs' Association said members of both groups have pledged to help Morton County. Laney is a board member for the national group.

Cass County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling agreed with Laney's sentiment that pitching in is worth the heavy strain on the sheriff's time.

"When we've had floods, for example, we've relied on many many outside agencies to help us with all of our sandbagging and dike patrols and search and rescue and so on and so forth," she said. "The counties don't live in a bubble. We have to help each other and we're glad to be able to do that."

Scherling said she knows Laney is in "constant communication" with his subordinates in Fargo. Laney said he's been able to take care of business back in Cass County by phone, by email or with scanned documents.

Cass County Chief Deputy Col. Rick Majerus is in charge while Laney is out. The sheriff said he does come back to Cass County when he's absolutely needed.

Marty Johnson, Scherling's opponent in November's County Commission election, didn't return a phone message Wednesday.

The pipeline construction site targeted by protesters is near the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Protesters, many of whom are American Indians, say construction of the $3.8 billion oil pipeline would desecrate burial grounds and other sites sacred to Indians. They also say a rupture would threaten water quality in the Missouri River, which the pipeline must go under as it continues on its way to Illinois.

Laney estimated that there have been 7,000 to 8,000 protesters, though more recently the numbers have dropped to 2,500 to 3,000 who are in it for the long haul. The majority are peaceful but 300 to 400 are "extremely confrontational," he said, accusing them of trying to disrupt construction and intimidating farm workers. As of Tuesday, Oct. 11, the protests had led to 123 arrests.

State officials and lawmakers have criticized the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers surprisingly withdrew its required approval of the pipeline's Missouri River crossing for further review -- an announcement made Sept. 9, just minutes after a federal court ruling in support of the pipeline's construction.

The number of law enforcement officials on the scene has fluctuated based on the need, though Laney said he couldn't say how many because of security concerns. Several of his deputies have rotated in and out of Morton County over the last few months, he said, but it's hard for him to stay away because he's one of three top commanders on the scene.

Cass County taxpayers won't bear the cost of deploying the deputies and Laney to the protest, and patrols in Cass County and jail security haven't been affected, a department spokesman previously told The Forum. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs.

Laney said the days are long there, leaving only enough time to outside of work for him to grab a bite and sleep. Deputies who volunteer to rotate in all work seven days a week with no time off until they rotate out again, he said.

"I'm not going to lie, we're all tired," he said, but law enforcement officers expect that they may have to make sacrifices.

Asked how long he thinks he'll be needed in Morton County, Laney said that depends on the protesters.

The company building the pipeline, which was 87 percent complete in North Dakota as of the end of September, said Tuesday that it intends to resume construction promptly after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's

request to stop work on the pipeline in places where it believes the project will desecrate sacred land was denied Sunday.

Protesters have also said they don't plan to leave anytime soon.

"This currently is a situation that there's no way one agency alone could handle this," Laney said.

Madison City Council member arrested in North Dakota pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune, Wisconsin State Journal)

- Dean Mosiman, Wisconsin State Journal
- Oct 12, 2016

Madison Ald. Rebecca Kemble was arrested and jailed on Monday while acting as a legal observer of the continuing protests over a controversial oil pipeline in North Dakota that a Native American tribe says threatens tribal land.

Kemble's version of events contrasts sharply with statements by law enforcement, who characterized the event as a riot.

Kemble was among more than two dozen people arrested on Monday at two protests, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. She faces tentative charges of misdemeanor criminal trespassing, destruction of evidence, resisting arrest and engaging in riot.

She was taken to Morton County jail and released after posting a $1,250 bond Tuesday morning, Keller said.
Actress Shailene Woodley, who starred in the "Divergent" movie series and most recently in Oliver Stone's film "Snowden," was also among those arrested.

Kemble said Tuesday afternoon that she was wearing a hat that identified her as a legal observer and was videotaping a peaceful prayer ceremony when police arrived and began making arrests. She said she intends to fight the charges.

"I wasn't protesting. It wasn't a protest," she said. "I was legal-observing. I was targeted by law enforcement for my camera."

Kemble, 18th District, traveled with her husband over the weekend to Morton County to present the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe with a parchment copy of a recent City Council resolution expressing solidarity with those protesting the pipeline.

The tribe wants construction halted due to concerns of potential contamination of its water supply and says the pipeline will encroach on tribal burial sites and other cultural artifacts.

On Monday morning, Kemble said she went with others to attend a ceremony that started at an encampment on the reservation. The ceremony, she said, moved to the pipeline site near St. Anthony and featured prayer, drumming and dancing by tribes from Argentina and the Arctic Circle.

She said most people were beginning to leave after the event, except for about 16 people sitting under a tepee, when at least 40 police officers arrived.

A commanding officer, Kemble said, told the protesters they faced arrest if an officer touched them. She said most people backed up but police pursued. She said the commanding officer ran at her, grabbed her while she was holding her camera, put her hands behind her back, bound her with a zip tie, and took her camera as evidence, with police taking her and those arrested to jail. A Morton County's Sheriff's Department press release on Monday afternoon describes a different scene.

On Monday morning, authorities got a call that two protesters had locked themselves to equipment on private property near St. Anthony and were arrested and charged with a felony and misdemeanors, the release said. Another arrest was made and the group disbanded.

About two hours later, authorities were alerted to a convoy of about 100 vehicles assembling near the pipeline site, the release said. Law enforcement closed a road and told the protesters to disband. The crowd refused and 24 more people were arrested, it said.

In the statement, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney said, "While some would like to say this was a protest, this was not a protest — this was a riot."

Kemble rejected the description. "What alternate universe was the sheriff in that day?" she said. "It was so peaceful. The whole day was steeped in prayer and ceremony.

"The police are fear-mongering."

Kemble said she'll present the parchment to tribal leaders Wednesday morning.

Last weekend, the Dane County Sheriff's Office sent 10 deputies from its special events team to the site of the protests, part of a state contingent of 40 members of law enforcement that have gone to provide assistance to the area.

Construction resumed Tuesday on the $3.8 billion, 1,200-mile pipeline on private land about 20 miles from the so-called Red Warrior Camp where thousands of protesters have gathered, The Associated Press reported.

Dean Mosiman covers Madison city government for the Wisconsin State Journal.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

Republican lawmakers are demanding the Department of Justice explain why criminal charges have not been leveled against an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employee allegedly responsible for a massive mine spill in Colorado.

“By not taking up the case, the Department of Justice looks like it is going easy on its colleagues in EPA,” three lawmakers with the House Natural Resources Committee wrote Wednesday in a letter to Attorney General Loretta Lynch.

Republican Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah joined fellow GOP colleagues Chairman Jason Chaffetz, also from Utah, and oversight subcommittee chairwoman Cynthia Lummis, who represents Wyoming, to send out the letter Wednesday afternoon.

“Its lack of action on these charges give the appearance of hypocrisy,” the lawmakers claim, “and seem to indicate that there is one set of rules for private citizens and another for the federal government.”

The Colorado mine spill resulted in three million gallons of dangerous mine waste being dumped into Colorado’s Animus River, turning it yellow and poisoning the drinking water for thousands of residents across three states and the Navajo Nation. The spill also dumped more than 880,000 pounds of toxic elements — like lead and arsenic — into the water.

The EPA had tried to keep the identity of the person responsible for the spill under wraps until June, when The Daily Caller News Foundation reported that EPA worker Hays Griswold was in charge at the Gold King Mine during the spill.

Someone removed Griswold’s name from an “independent” review of the disaster, according to documents obtained by TheDCNF in June.

An EPA inspector announced Wednesday Bishop’s committee wrote the letter that it found evidence an unnamed employee violated the Clean Water Act. The Department of Justice will not pursue the case, a spokesman told reporters, and is instead referring the case to the EPA’s leaders.

The lawmakers added that the “EPA disaster deserves the same level of accountability to which private citizens are held.”

EPA’s failure to hold its employees accountable for last year’s leak has become a standard operating procedure.

Senior EPA officials in 2015, for instance, largely ignored complaints by 16 women, mostly employees, accusing one agency official of sexual harassment. The employee got promoted despite the complaints.

Bishop’s committee held a hearing in May showing that the EPA paid a registered sex offender to retire rather than terminating his employment.

The child molester was a registered sex offender and was fired in 2014 for violating his probation – but the EPA, as its custom, reinstated him under the Merit Systems Protection Board reinstated him. The employee was eventually paid $55,000 to resign in 2015.

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

By Max Blau

CNN, October 13, 2016

Brace yourself, Pacific Northwest. What's left of a typhoon, which has made its way across the ocean, is expected to pummel parts of Oregon and Washington over the next several days.

The National Weather Service has said a pair of strong storms are set to hit the West Coast on Thursday and Saturday.

CNN meteorologist Dave Hennen said parts of Washington and Oregon could see gusts of up to 80 mph near coastal ranges Thursday. According to the weather service, rivers are expected to rise, with flooding remaining most likely in the Olympic Peninsula.

"Areas of ponding on roadways will slow Thursday commutes," the weather service said. "Small creeks and streams will rise and flood as well."

After a brief lull, the fierce winds could whip again through the Northwest at up to 100 mph. Hennen, who described this storm as a "monster," said it has the potential to match the pressure levels of a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. The weather service has cautioned residents to watch out for tree damage due to the high winds.

"Many of the wind-related deaths in western Washington occur when trees topple onto people in cars," it said.

Though it's still too early to tell, the weather service said the Saturday storm could also lead to widespread wind damage, power outages and coastal erosion.

"(There's a chance for) a worst-case scenario leading to a historical and destructive windstorm for the area," it said.

According to Hennen, a third storm may pass through the Pacific Northwest next week.

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform’s glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the

road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff’s deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff’s Department, Marion County Sheriff’s Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff’s Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. “The federal government pays for it through FEMA,” said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

“Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request,” said Erickson. “They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request.”

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 5 Apr 2016 15:24:14 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Cc:
(b)(6) @state.co.us';(b)(6) @mail.mil';(b)(6) @state.sd.us';(b)(6) (b @utah.gov'(b)(6) @wyo.gov'(b)(6) @nd.gov'(b)(6) @state.sd.us';(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov'(b)(6) @usace.army.mil';(b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov';Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6) @usace.army.mil';(b)(6) @state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) @hhs.gov';(b)(6) (b)(6 @sba.gov'(b)(6) @sba.gov';Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6) @mail.mil'(b)(6) @mail.mil';Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6) @state.co.us';(b)(6) @state.co.us'
Subject: R8 news clips for April 5
Attachments: @

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, April 5, 2016

WYOMING

- Wyoming's watershed increase after last week's storm – Casper Star Tribune
- New guide shows Wyoming wildfire patterns, includes safety for prescribed burns – High Plains/Midwest AG Journal

MONTANA

- Billings 9-year-old dies after being diagnosed with swine flu
- Bozeman Redraws Flood Maps, Could Cost Property Owners

NORTH DAKOTA

No clips

SOUTH DAKOTA

- Fire crews reach 30-percent containment on Cold Fire - KBHB Radio Sturgis

- Fire burns 1,300 acres near Pringle - Rapid City Journal

- Keystone pipeline shut down after oil surfaces near Freeman - Mitchell Daily Republic

- Sediment Options Weighed At Meeting - Yankton Press & Dakotan

COLORADO

- No clips

UTAH

- No clips

Other FEMA-related stories:

- As The Climate Changes, Risks To Hu

Region VIII Clips
Monday, August 22, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state received an FMAG reimbursement of more than $1 million… An HMGP grant is helping with reconstruction of the Manitou Incline… Fires in the state are now more under control.
- **Montana:** The *Fallon County Times* did another story on recent visits by DES and FEMA officials related to the Baker tornado recovery… The Copper King Fire almost doubled in size Sunday, with red flag conditions expected today.
- **North Dakota:** Three stories focus on the growing protest, led by Native American tribes, against construction of an oil pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation. Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security division of the North Dakota DES, estimates state law enforcement, health and transportation costs related to the protest may approach $1 million over the next few weeks. Approximately 1500-2000 protestors are at the site… An attempt to use eminent domain to take some land for the proposed Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Project was stalled by a judge who said it had not been properly done.
- **South Dakota:** KELO TV did a story on the flood in Sioux Falls one year ago and the community's response to it, and another story on the Atlas winter storm three years ago that killed many cattle in western South Dakota, and how that area has responded… The TV story on Sioux Falls mentioned local buyouts to prevent flooding issues, and an *Argus Leader* story focused just on the local buyout program in an area with poor drainage.
- **Utah:** Brothers in Pleasant Grove who were born and raised in Louisiana are doing a fundraiser and donations drive for flood survivors in their home state… Southern Utah University will be offering an online master's program in cybersecurity through a partnership with a Vietnamese telecommunications company.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The *Baton Rouge Advocate* says FEMA is improved, but additional federal aid may be needed… Several stories reported on FEMA suspending $30 million in payments to Mississippi for problems with its program retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina; this story from the *Jackson Clarion Ledger* specifies the procedures and employee in question… *The New York Times* reported on a survey of public attitudes by Johns Hopkins University on what criteria should be used to determine who lives or who gets priority for emergency care when medical staff and equipment are overwhelmed in a catastrophic incident.

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FEMA awards Colorado $1 million wildfire grant (Loveland Reporter-Herald)

Manitou Incline Closed for Construction (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

Beaver Creek fire evacuation order lifted; two Colorado wildfires 100 percent contained (Denver Post)

MONTANA:

FEMA and Montana Disaster Emergency Services Visit Baker (Fallon County Times)

Officials estimate the Copper King Fire doubled in size Sunday afternoon (NBC TV, Helena)

NORTH DAKOTA:

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests (Bismarck Tribune)

Protesters settle into camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

Water district's eminent domain attempt for F-M diversion stalls, but case not dismissed (Fargo Forum)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

UTAH:

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

STORIES

COLORADO

FEMA awards Colorado $1 million wildfire grant (Loveland Reporter-Herald)

By Dana Rieck

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer
Posted: 08/20/2016 05:25:56 PM MDT

Republican Sen. Cory Gardner's office announced this week that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is awarding $1,194,483.86 to the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Matthew Branch, the Northeast Regional Fire Management officer for the Colorado Department of Public Safety Division of Fire Prevention and Control, said the money is a reimbursement for costs associated with past fires.

It is called a fire management assistance grant, which is something states apply for after responding to large fires.

"Most of these costs are borne by the local fire department and the county," he wrote in an email. "These entities bill the state and we reimburse them out of the state budget. Several years later we get the money back from the federal government."

Once approved, according to Branch, the grants can pay for 75 percent of the costs associated with fighting those fires.

"I welcome more than $1 million from FEMA to assist with wildfire response efforts in Colorado," said Gardner in the news release. "I'm confident the state of Colorado will maximize the federal grant to both preempt and mitigate the destruction caused by wildfires. I'll continue to advocate at the federal level to ensure Colorado receives the resources it needs to keep our communities safe."

Dana Rieck: 970-635-3630, rieckd@reporter-herald.com or twitter.com/DanaRieckRH

Manitou Incline Closed for Construction (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

8/22/16

COLORADO SPRINGS - The Manitou Incline is now closed as the cities of Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs start phase 2 of improvements to the popular trail.

Construction is expected to last around 4 months with the main goals of: improving safety, enhancing the hiking experience, improving the long-term sustainability of the trail and increasing accessibility.

They will also clean up debris along the trail and add new drainage structures to protect the trail from eroding away.

Colorado Springs is responsible for the general oversight of the trail, and the improvements are being funded by a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant and Trail, Open Space and Parks Funding.

Beaver Creek fire evacuation order lifted; two Colorado wildfires 100 percent contained (Denver Post)

By Ellis Arnold | earnold@denverpost.com

August 21, 2016 at 4:36 pm

An evacuation order was lifted in the Beaver Creek fire area near Walden and the Wyoming state line yesterday, said John Abernathy, spokesman for the Denver Fire Department.

Some evacuees from 50 total residences have begun to return to their homes, Abernathy said, but low relative humidity and winds up to 25 mph are expected to create critical burn conditions Monday and Tuesday. The fire, which is 53 percent contained, started June 19. Total containment is expected Oct. 21.

Heavy beetle-killed timber in the area has been fueling the fire, which has required continued ground and air efforts. Recent cool, moist weather aided the fight, but warming is expected until Wednesday. Season-ending wet weather is likely the only factor that will put out the fire, Abernathy said.

The fire has burned 36,961 acres, and the cause of the fire is still under investigation. A total of 17 structures, including one residence, have been lost, Abernathy said.

The lightning-caused Spring Creek 2 fire south of Parachute burned 621 acres but was 100 percent contained as of Friday, according to federal agencies. There have been no injuries attributed to the fire, which started Aug. 12, and no primary residences were lost despite the fire moving within a few feet of several homes. Four buildings, three vehicles and three trailers were damaged or destroyed, and evacuation orders covering about 20 homes were lifted Aug. 14.

The Hayden Pass fire southeast of Salida was 60 percent contained as of Aug. 4, according to federal agencies, with recent monsoonal weather dropping moisture in the area. The 16,754-acre lightning-caused fire started July 8, and it may present a runoff issue because of the rain. All evacuations ended as of July 21 after people were ordered to clear out of 140 residences in the area. The fire is expected to be contained Oct. 1.

Fire crews contained the Blair fire 100 percent as of Aug. 1, said David Boyd, spokesman for the federal Bureau of Land Management. Lightning started the fire near Colorado 64 between Rangely and Meeker; about 1,140 acres have burned since June 29.

Crews focused on keeping the fire from moving north and east, where a power-line corridor, oil and gas pipeline and the highway would have been vulnerable. There were no injuries or evacuations, Boyd said, as the fire was in a remote area.

MONTANA

FEMA and Montana Disaster Emergency Services Visit Baker

(Fallon County Times)

SEVERE SUMMER WEATHER

Laurie Hassell and Kent Atwood display a weather map tracking severe weather storms throughout Montana.

Laurie Hassell, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), External Affairs Specialist; Kent Atwood, CFM, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services, Hazard Mitigation Officer and Tim Tennis, Recovery Bureau Chief, Montana Disaster & Emergency Services were in Baker on August 9.

By Sherry Vogel

They were conducting a briefing to Fallon County and City of Baker applicants as they proceed to set-up documentation to receive federal funding after Baker was designated to receive a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

Atwood explained how the entire process works. Tennis expounded on how to apply for the funds. They both covered the scope of work for the Project Worksheet (PW) using the actual tornado documentation including cleanup and debris removal reports.

The preliminary final damage assessment is at $1.5 million. This amount surpasses the $1.4 million required for a Presidential Disaster Declaration. This final figure of the disaster damage could actually be more in the final analysis.

Whereas Hassell was in Baker to represent the Response and Recovery standpoint. Atwood was focused on the mitigation perspective of the disaster. **Mitigation meaning to identify and reduce the severity of the next natural disaster.

Officials estimate the Copper King Fire doubled in size Sunday afternoon (NBC TV, Helena)

By: KECI Staff
Updated: Aug 21, 2016 08:07 PM MDT

MISSOULA, Mont. - The Copper King Fire burning near Montana Highway 200 and Thompson River Road in Sanders County is now estimated to have burned over 6,000 acres. The fire had burned just over 3,400 acres as of Sunday morning.

Fire officials tell NBC Montana that the fire expanded to the northeast, chewing through around 3,000 acres. The explosive growth meant a cloud of thick smoke spread as far north as Creston and parts of the Swan Valley as of 8 p.m. on Sunday. The new growth is away from structures immediately threatened by the fire.

Officials with the Lolo National Forest say there is poor road access and firefighters and public safety remains the top priority. Fire crews are busy on the south and west sides of the fire near Highway 200 and Thompson River Road where structures are threatened.

The 297 people working to contain the fire will continue to focus on structure protection and keeping Highway 200 open to traffic. A Red Flag Warning is in effect for the fire on Monday afternoon, meaning more explosive growth is possible due to dry and windy weather.

NORTH DAKOTA

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days' efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It's been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Water district's eminent domain attempt for F-M diversion stalls, but case not dismissed

By Helmut Schmidt on Aug 19, 2016 at 2:52 p.m.

FARGO — An East Central District judge has ruled that the Cass County Joint Water Resource District, which is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement for 80 acres of farmland for the Fargo-Moorhead diversion, has not followed the proper procedures for eminent domain proceedings, court documents show.

At the same time, Judge John Irby denied a motion by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to dismiss the water district's attempt to use eminent domain for the Horace-area land, documents show.

According to court records:

The water resource district is trying to get a permanent right-of-way easement on 79.34 acres owned by Donald Cossette and the Angela R. Cossette Revocable Living Trust to build a F-M diversion inlet.

The district extended a final offer of $476,040 for the land on May 18, 2016. That offer was rejected.

Irby ruled the water resource district failed to file a needed petition in the case, provide appropriate public notice and a hearing, allow interested parties to answer the petition, and have the court hear the case, allow the petition to be amended as needed and issue its findings and assess costs.

Irby said the district was also walking a line between taking right-of-way sufficient for its purposes while avoiding a purchase of the land, or fee simple, which is not eligible for "quick take" eminent domain.

Irby ruled that the district will have to amend its eminent domain complaint.

Cossette's attorney, Jonathan Garaas of the Garaas Law Firm in Fargo, said Friday, Aug. 19, that he does not comment on cases still being litigated.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The Flood: One Year Later (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Don Jorgensen
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 19, 2016

Sioux Falls, SD

One year ago, Sioux Falls was inundated by major flooding.

The hardest hit area was in the southwest part of the city where seven inches of rain fell in one hour. It was a night many of us won't soon forget.

The night was August 27th. The skies opened up over Sioux Falls and dumped more rain than the city had seen in recent memory.

Streets flooded quickly. Vehicles stalled out and many businesses flooded out, including the Signature Salon.

When we last met the owner, Jeff From, he was busy cleaning up what mother nature destroyed in minutes.

Today, From is back in business....

"It's hard to believe it's been a year," From said.

....but not without a lot of hard work along the way.

"It was a good eight months of solid; morning, noon and night trying to get things in place," From said.

The downpour and flooding that followed, caught many off guard.

The city had spent millions of dollars upgrading the drainage systems, but in some parts of town, seven inches of rain in a short amount of time was too much for it to handle.

"It was a large event", Public Works director Mark Cotter said.

Cotter says the drainage system worked as well as it could, but following the event, he knew more could be done.

"Probably the first thing and most important thing we did was take a rate case to the city council and they did support us to continually raise rates through 2019," Cotter said.

Cotter says those rate increases will help pay for more improvements; plus conduct more drainage studies.

"So when neighbors call and say 'this just doesn't drain right,' we set aside more dollars now to go out and do an updated hydro study, so we can understand what's happening and ultimately look at some alternatives to improve it," Cotter said.

Plus, the city began taking a closer look at drainage easements around town. It identified a few

where the homeowners, over the years, had made improvements to those easements with landscaping, trees and bushes.

But in reality, those beautification improvements, became obstructions and didn't allow water to flow freely to designated detention ponds.

So, this past year, the city worked with the homeowners to remove those obstructions and regraded the land. That way during a heavy rain storm like last year, the water will go where it's supposed to go.

But in one area of town, around 35th and Duluth which always seems to have water problems during torrential rains, drainage improvements are hard to come by.

So, instead of investing millions of dollars in trying to upgrade the infrastructure, the city bought a number of the homes and is now in the process of tearing them down.

It's going to reclaim the land and turn it into green space with detention ponds.

And finally, the city implemented new building codes, so homeowners shouldn't have to worry about flooding if they live near one of those drainage easements.

Cotter shows us why using this handsketched diagram.

"If this is a drainage way in the backyard, we used to recommend that the water surface, we used to recommend that the lowest floor of the house be two feet above that water surface elevation, now we don't recommend, it's a standard," Cotter said.

Don: Builders know this now? That it's a standard,
Mark: Yes.
Don: They can't wiggle their way around it.
Mark: That's right,"

From has made his own improvements to his salon that he hopes will protect it if the city ever gets hit with another 100 year flood.

Using concrete, he added more height around his window wells and built up around his stairwell leading to his basement, where most of the water came in last year.

"Hopefully if that were to ever happen again, it wouldn't be able to," From said.

Only time will tell, but for now he's just glad to be back in business.

"I try not to even remember and think about it anymore, people ask me about it today and it's like something you want to forget," From said.

From's damages totaled in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. He says very little of that was

covered by flood insurance. He hasn't decided yet if he's going to sue the city to try recover some of his money.

Ranch Life Celebrated In Union Center Gathering Three Years After Storm (KELO TV, Sioux Falls)

Kevin Woster
KELOLAND, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

The Rancher Round-up in Union Center, S.D., is an annual celebration of ranch life. But it's also a testament to survival in a beautiful-but-harsh landscape.

Professional survival skills were tested in unprecedented ways almost three years ago when western South Dakota was hit by an early October blizzard that killed tens of thousands of cattle and other livestock.

Republican state Sen. Gary Cammack of Union Center, who also ranches and owns a ranch-supply store, had to bury more than 100 cattle in a hastily dug pit in his pasture after the storm. Other ranchers lost several times that many cattle.

"If there's anything akin to a gut punch for the whole cattle industry, that was it," Cammack says. "It was just an amazing hit. When the storm broke, within 35 miles there were 20,000 dead cattle. It was just beyond imagination."

Help came from the government, private relief funds, cattle donations from other ranchers and from higher market prices for remaining cattle.

“The generosity of cattlemen from all over the U.S. and neighboring states was overwhelming,” Cammack said. “The stories that will never be told of generosity cattleman to cattleman, just overwhelming.”

A South Dakota Rancher Relief Fund raised and distributed millions of dollars and avoided the kind of questions or controversy that sometimes can plague such efforts.

“That should be a blueprint for fundraising and helping in natural disasters,” Cammack said. “I never heard one bad thing about that. It was just run very smoothly, very fair, the way they put that thing together, and the generosity was overwhelming.”

With a perfect joining of forces and sources of assistance, the recovery came much faster than Cammack expected.

"With the generosity of the markets and some help from the federal government, I'd say, really, within about 24 months, most folks had enough of a boost that they were back and economically viable,” he said.

So the heavy rains in Union Center Friday didn't dampen enthusiasm for the annual rancher rodeo and fair at Cammack's store. They just made it all more complicated. But it was a tiny challenge compared to the big ones faced in ranch country.

Besides, they needed the moisture. They usually do.

Silvia Christen, executive director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, was at the celebration at Cammack's. She said she continues to be amazed at the recovery effort and how ranchers responded after the big blizzard.

"Grit is really the word that describes most of it," she said. "These ranch families at so at the mercy of the weather, and so at the mercy of the elements. And when you have a loss like we did with Winter Storm Atlas, many of them had a 50-percent loss overnight.

"And their faith and their commitment and their dedication and their trust that they can rebuild and then just get to work, that was a lot of it," she said.

Almost three years after Winter Storm Atlas devastated the livestock industry here, the Ranch Round-UP celebrates the land, its people and the spirit of survival.

"There was so much great help that came in in the form of money and prayers and all that," Christen said. "But at the end of the day it came down to these families getting out and getting to work and putting it back together."

Cammack says he has mixed feelings now when he looks at the hilltop in his pasture where more than 100 cattle are buried.

"You can't help but have some memories when you drive past that point," he said. "But having said that, that nob we excavated and buried all those cattle on is recovered and starting to get the native grass back on there. And today when you and I went out there, there's cattle that came right up and they're grazing right on there -- the living standing above the dead. So the country can be cruel, but it heals faster than you think."

So do the ranchers.

Home demolition aimed at keeping neighborhood dry (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Joe Sneve
Argus Leader, Sioux Falls
August 20, 2016

City Hall hopes tearing down a group of flood-prone homes in central Sioux Falls will help other houses in the neighborhood stay dry the next time the city gets dumped on with torrential rains.

It's not uncommon for homes in the area around Augustana University to have their basements flooded when Sioux Falls gets rain events. That's despite thousands being spent in recent years to divert the run off into newly constructed holding ponds and other infrastructure upgrades.

So about five years ago, Sioux Falls Public Works set its sights on creating more green space along Covell Avenue between 28th and 33rd Streets. But that meant existing homes would need to come out.

“Based on how steep this particular watershed was, there wasn’t an alternative that was a better fit than just to go in and start asking for voluntary buy outs. … But they just weren’t ready.” said Mark Cotter, director of Public Works.

But after last August’s torrential rains, the phone started ringing and Public Works has since acquired nine properties along Covell Avenue, which were demolished last week.

Cotter said once razed, the foundations will be filled in with sand to allow for a more permeable and absorbent surface.

“Over time as we capture more homes that are willing to sell voluntarily, if it makes sense we’ll develop a detention pond so we can hold and slowly release (the storm drainage).”

Only time will tell if the program will be enough to dry up the neighborhood. Cotter said engineers will continue to buy more homes if necessary. For now, about 14 other homes on the west side of Covell Avenue have been targeted, with 10 homeowners entertaining the idea of selling.

They can’t all be bought at once, though, due to budgetary restriction. Andy Berg, storm water manager in Public Work’s environmental division, said about $1.2 million has been spent so far acquiring the nine homes that were demolished last week.

Because Public Works doesn’t specifically budget for the project – it’s difficult to know how many homeowners will be willing to sell in the following year when the City Council passes its budget – Berg couldn’t say how many more homes will come out next year. Instead, Public Works diverts savings from other expenses that come in under expected costs toward the program.

“We’ve identified three that we’re going to have the appraisal process done on. So if we have the dollars … we can do a closing on those.”

UTAH

Utah brothers born, raised in Louisiana work with businesses to help flood victims (KUTV, Salt Lake City)

by Heidi Hatch |

Friday, August 19th 2016

(KUTV) Today the Red Cross announces -the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana is the worst natural disaster to strike the United States since Hurricane Sandy.

Pleasant Grove’s Ben Moak grew up in the Louisiana neighborhoods hit hardest. He moved to Utah 20 years ago with his large family, he set down roots and now owns Firebird Pizza and Pasta on Main Street in the small town.

“I have a friend that posted on Facebook saying only thing he has is his job, his family, and his truck -- and eight feet of water in his house. He lost everything.”

The flooding of hurricane Katrina was hard to watch, and now this time, the flooding hits close to home again and that's why he "wanted to do something 1500 miles away --to help our friends and family out."

Some of the worst hit neighborhoods are streets he and his siblings know well.

"We grew up in Louisiana, ,Walker Denham Springs is where we were born and raised."

The southern influence of his youth is evident in his kitchen, with a row of hot sauces and southern spices available to add kick to his Italian eatery.

He will start fundraising Tuesday night with a spaghetti dinner from 6 to 9 p.m. It will be $10 for a large plate of spaghetti , soda and breadsticks. "One hundred percent of the proceeds go to the people down there," he said.

Just across the parking lot from Firebirds is Chubby's Cafe, owned by Moak's brother who will be cooking up a little southern hospitality with a catfish fry next Saturday. The fry money will also go straight to the victims in Louisiana.

Jessica Erin is helping organize the event with the southern brothers and three other area restaurants including Cravings Cupcakes and Cravings Bistro.

"We got this huge trailer donated by Andrews Transportation and we are going to try and fill this baby up."

All of the restaurants involved are accepting monetary donations, food, clothing, diapers --you name it -- for the flood victims. Donations will be accepted during business hours through Saturday Aug. 27 at 9 p.m.

"We are excited to get this thing filled up and take it down to Louisiana."

All the business involved are just off Main Street in Pleasant Grove near the North Shore Shaved Ice shack, also giving a portion of their proceeds from Friday night to the cause. Lorri Jonas who worked at Chubby's and now owns the ice shack said, "I want to help because my heart is full."

Moak looks forward to community participation saying "the more the merrier, if you have to wait -wait, but the more the merrier."

Southern Utah University extends cybersecurity degree to Vietnam (St. George News)

August 20, 2016

CEDAR CITY — Southern Utah University classes will soon be taught in Vietnam through an international partnership with FPT Corporation, the largest Vietnamese telecommunication company.

The university will make its Master of Science in cybersecurity and information assurance available to students attending FPT University and its online counterpart, Funix University.

FPT Corporation is to southeast Asia what Verizon Communications Inc. is to the United States.

With many smaller entities comprising the company, FPT University has shown a pioneering spirit and a proactive approach to online student education and an increased international presence.

“This partnership extends the reach of SUU and the CSIS Department into Vietnam,” said Dr. Robert Robertson, department chair and associate professor. “It will bring individuals into the program whose perspectives will enhance and benefit fellow students at an international level.”

As the first online educational opportunity offered in Vietnam, FPT University and Southern Utah University are promoting the process of international cooperation in education.

In May, FPT University leaders and dignitaries from Southern Utah University, including President Scott L. Wyatt, signed the agreement to help increase professional training opportunities available to FPT students. At the end of June, university representatives Dr. Rob Robertson, Dr. Roger LaMarca, director of online admissions, and Dr. Stephen Allen traveled to Vietnam to train FPT University on the structure and implementation of the master’s degree program.

An attractive facet of the program is the online component, allowing students to attend school while still living, learning and working in their country.

“Students will receive the same experience and personalized instruction as a traditional SUU classroom while preparing themselves for the rapidly growing field of cybersecurity,” LaMarca said.

Cybersecurity professionals who battle cyberattacks that bleed companies and governments dry are in high demand. It costs an average $11.6 million per cybercrime incident, according to Info Security. Keeping these facts in mind, it’s no surprise that 42 percent of organizations are actively seeking information technology positions in information security, more than any other job, according to a LinkedIn Talent Search.

“They will receive a wide variety of instruction and coursework from this program,” LaMarca said, “including cybersecurity and IT policy; information, vulnerability and threat assessment; physical, personnel and operational security; and contingency, redundancy, emergency and disaster planning.”

Online Vietnamese students will have access to all the resources and materials available to students in a traditional learning environment. Throughout the program, which will begin this fall, these students will have access to a library, tutor and lecturer. They will be educated by leading experts in the cybersecurity industry and will also have opportunities to study alongside American students at Southern Utah University.

FPT Corporation is a multinational information technology company based in Vietnam, branching out to 19 different countries. Smaller entities of the corporation include software outsourcing, telecommunication, property management, education and financial services.

The Vietnam National Technology Research Institute founded the Food Processing Technology Company – the original full name of FPT – in 1988. In 1990 the company switched its core business to information technology and changed the unabbreviated name to Corporation for Financing and Promoting Technology.

The cybersecurity program has been tailored to achieve the highest efficiency and educational quality available online. This new partnership will help further available education in Vietnam and will increase Southern Utah University's international presence.

With a comprehensive international environment and a wealth of knowledge taught by high profile cybersecurity professionals, including NUIX's Chris Pogue, Southern Utah University is helping to advance all of its students in this fast-growing career field. The university works hard to make it possible for nontraditional students and working professionals to earn a master's degree.

Those who are interested in this program can contact Southern Utah University's online admissions team at 435-865-8665 or onlineadmissions@suu.edu.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Our Views: Not Our First Recovery Rodeo (Baton Rouge Advocate)

Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate, August 21, 2016

In Louisiana, the emotional and physical impact of what may be a 1,000-year flood event is still being absorbed.

What our leaders cannot afford to do, though, is to let the future take care of itself.

As Gov. John Bel Edwards said Tuesday, the rescue and comfort of the displaced is the first priority. "Saving life is the most important priority we have," Edwards said Tuesday. "We will dedicate every resource to that effort until it is no longer needed."

But he also said he would take the opportunity to talk long-term recovery with Craig Fugate, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

That's smart.

FEMA is under different and we believe much improved management since the hapless Michael Brown at the time of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The high-profile impact of Hurricane Sandy in the northeast in 2012 also refocused attention on the Stafford Act, the federal law governing disaster aid.

Louisiana is better placed than in earlier disasters, but that doesn't mean it's easy sailing.

U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, of Baton Rouge — whose district was the hardest-hit — was busy visiting shelters and seeing his constituents. But he said in a telephone interview Tuesday that Congress needs to assess whether existing law is enough to deal with an event of this magnitude.

Graves said he's already talking with U.S. House members of both parties about federal recovery assistance. "We're not going to get there without national attention," Graves said, in an echo of Fugate's comments that the American people generally have probably been more focused on the Olympics and the national election than the Louisiana flood.

Fugate said that FEMA would respond unhesitatingly whether the national media spotlight comes or goes.

That's encouraging, but we know from the struggles of a decade ago that bureaucratic tangles and the dueling political parties on Capitol Hill can get in the way of help that Louisiana needs.

The spirit of unity and generosity, including from people and institutions across Louisiana and the nation, remains critical in this time of trouble. Job one of the recovery, as Edwards emphasized, is for the affected households to register with disasterassistance.gov. Quantifying the damage is important to achieve appropriate federal response.

But leaders are right to worry about the future, and plan for it.

FEMA Halts $30M To State (Jackson, MS, Clarion Ledger)

By Therese Apel And Geoff Pender

Jackson (MS) Clarion Ledger, August 19, 2016

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has halted $29.9 million in reimbursements to the state of Mississippi for retrofitting homes after Hurricane Katrina, saying the state has failed to provide documentation, overspent and appears to have had lax oversight over the program.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of the Inspector General released a report that states that the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency has not been able to provide documentation for around $30.5 million that was paid to contractors to retrofit 985 homes on the coast. The original program was approved to retrofit 2,000 homes for $29.9 million.

The OIG has recommended, and FEMA agreed, that the federal government "deobligate" the money until Mississippi can reconcile what it claims it spent. If Mississippi can't convince the feds its spending was proper, the state could be on the hook for all or part of the spending.

MEMA Director Lee Smithson released a statement Thursday after 6 p.m. stressing that he was not over the agency when the mismanagement occurred.

"We are confident that most of the money will be deemed eligible by FEMA and the remaining funds will be recovered by the state," he said.

Gov. Phil Bryant in a statement Thursday night said he agrees with Smithson the spending "will be eligible for reimbursement" and "the state will aggressively seek to recover the remainder of the funds."

"I appreciate director Smithson taking swift action upon discovering the issues outlined in the report," Bryant said. "It is important to note that the employees repsonsible for the retrofit program for the period OIG examined are no longer at MEMA.

The OIG report says that although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight of the program as early as December 2014, it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

Smithson said the money that was actually put toward the construction should end up being reimbursed by FEMA, and that the state will get the rest of the money out of ARA, the primary contractor on the jobs.

State guidelines and general accounting practices require that more than one person have oversight of similar programs. The state Department of Financial Administration gave oversight to one employee, who came with the program to MEMA when the program was moved over in 2012.

Then-MEMA Director Robert Latham said he was not comfortable with the program having no oversight.

"When the Coastal Retrofit program came to MEMA and I found out there wasn't any oversight, I said, "I want Horne involved in this, get them to start looking at all the invoices and processing it, and they were doing it as a courtesy because it wasn't in their contract. They agreed to start looking at it."

The report states that the employee who had oversight of the program, Deb Biggers, would not turn over some of the invoices to Horne CPA or to investigators.

Smithson said since he took office, Biggers has been terminated and he has hosted conference calls with Horne accountants and the Office of the Inspector General every week in order to keep them up to date with the progress of the audit.

"I don't want to speculate whether there was any graft or corruption on the part of Ms. Biggers or anyone else at MEMA," Smithson said, adding, "Deb Biggers should hace known that the payments that were made to ARA were improper. She modified the scope of work with the original contract with FEMA without getting FEMA permission and allowed ARA to inflate their program costs."

Latham said when he raised questions about the payments and the program, he was assured by his staff that everything was on the up-and-up.

"I'm concerned that if this is in fact true and it shakes out like it sounds, obviously I've got staff that let me down. When I consistently asked questions about these different things I was assured that FEMA was involved and that we were paying in accordance with a contract," he said.

Latham's Chief of Staff was Bill Brown, who he said he went to with any questions about the program.

"When issues would come up I'd get Bill to handle it, and if I thought I wasn't getting answers, I'd bring in Deb" and an employee who handled mitigation, Latham said.

OIG findings:

Some key findings of the OIG audit of Mississippi's spending on the Katrina retrofit program:

Mississippi allowed one employee complete authority over the program, which goes against basic accounting and oversight principles including Mississippi's own agency accounting rules.

The program was approved at $29.9 million to help retrofit an estimated 2,000 homes. The state claims to have spent $31.5 million on 945 homes.

The state has not provided documentation for $30.5 million it says it paid to contractors.

Although Mississippi became aware of improper oversight as early as December 2014, OIG says it did not take any action to address the problem until February of this year.

While working for state DFA and MEMA, the employee in charge approved $31.5 million in payments, more than the amount of the grant, and did not allow a hired accounting firm to reconcile more than $30 million in invoices. "However, no one above the employee's authority questioned the situation," the report says.

Retrofitting 2,000 homes was estimated to cost $14,944 each, but Mississippi spent $33,308 on average, and MEMA "did not provide any substantial evidence to justify the increase in costs.

The employee over the program, the OIG said, would not allow federal or Mississippi officials access to more than $30 million worth of contractors' invoices. This led OIG to question MEMA, whose new director contacted the state attorney general's office.

MEMA contends it has completed work on 945 homes for $31.5 million, but has to date provided invoices for only 12 homes, at $958,000. DFA records as of May only show $20.4 million being spent on the program.

Of the $958,000 in invoices provided so far, only $640,000 represented actual work on homes, with $318,000 in temporary employee salaries and administrative costs.

Whose Lives Should Be Saved? To Help Shape Policy, Researchers In Maryland Ask The Public (NY Times)

By Sheri Fink

New York Times, August 21, 2016

BALTIMORE — In a church basement in a poor East Baltimore neighborhood, a Johns Hopkins doctor enlisted residents to help answer one of the most fraught questions in public health: When a surge

of patients — from a disaster, disease outbreak or terrorist attack — overwhelms hospitals, how should you ration care? Whose lives should be saved first?

For the past several years, Dr. Lee Daugherty Biddison, a critical care physician at Johns Hopkins, and colleagues have led an unusual public debate around Maryland, from Zion Baptist Church in East Baltimore to a wellness center in wealthy Howard County to a hospital on the rural Eastern Shore. Preparing to make recommendations for state officials that could serve as a national model, the researchers heard hundreds of citizens discuss whether a doctor could remove one patient from lifesaving equipment, like a ventilator, to make way for another who might have a better chance of recovering, or take age into consideration in setting priorities.

At that first public forum in 2012 in East Baltimore, Cierra Brown, a former Johns Hopkins Hospital custodian, said she favored a random approach like a lottery. “I don’t think any of us should choose whether a person should live or die,” she said.

Alex Brecht, a youth program developer sitting across from her, said he thought children should be favored over adults. “Just looking at them, seeing their smiles, they have so much potential,” he said.

“Who’s going to raise them?” asked Tiffany Jackson, another participant.

The effort is among the first times, Dr. Daugherty Biddison said, that a state has gathered informed public opinion on these questions before devising policy on them. “I don’t want to be in a position of making these decisions without knowing what you think,” she told the residents. “We as providers,” she said, “don’t want to make those decisions in isolation.”

Rationing already occurs in delivering medical care in the United States, though some practices are little acknowledged. Committees struggle regularly over policies for allocating scarce organs for transplant.

During widespread drug shortages in recent years, doctors have sometimes chosen among cancer patients for proven chemotherapy regimens and among surgical patients for the most effective anesthetics. And doctors sometimes have to choose among patients who need treatment in intensive care units, which are often filled to capacity.

In emergencies, the choices can have immediate life-or-death consequences. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, doctors made ad hoc decisions about which groups of patients to evacuate from hospitals when floodwaters rose, the power failed and heat climbed. At one medical center, many of the sickest, chosen to go last, died. During the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009, thousands of young people developed severe respiratory distress. For some of the most critical cases, doctors tried treatment on heart-lung bypass machines. Rationing took place because the costly and resource-intensive therapy, which doctors were not sure would help, was available in only about 120 hospitals.

Similar scenarios have developed in other countries, wealthy and poor. After the 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Japan, some patients at nearby hospitals, including babies, were selected for flights to safety, while others languished for days as medical supplies dwindled. At one hospital, dozens of older patients were apparently abandoned, according to a report in The Lancet, and many died.

And during the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, when doctors and nurses could spend only so many minutes inside hot biohazard suits, they struggled with impossible choices over which patients to give care.

Dr. Daugherty Biddison, a vice chairwoman in the department of medicine at Johns Hopkins, said she had first encountered scarce medical resources while doing missionary work overseas. She realized that even Johns Hopkins Hospital, a 1,145-bed facility anchoring the $7.7 billion Johns Hopkins Medicine enterprise, would fail to meet demand in a severe pandemic. When asked to help draw up a plan, she said, she felt uncomfortable with health professionals’ making life-or-death judgments without knowing the values of the broader public.

At least 18 states from New York to California, and numerous hospitals, including the 152 medical centers operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, have already developed protocols. Some efforts,

including Maryland's, have received funding from a federal program supporting hospital preparedness. But relatively few people know about the plans for allocating scarce resources, and fewer still have been consulted.

Some of these guidelines are nuanced and flexible to context. But others call for doctors to categorically refuse hospital admittance to older adults and those with certain existing medical conditions, such as kidney failure or advanced cancer, in a severe pandemic.

In Maryland, participants in the forums, designed with the help of Carnegie Mellon University's program for deliberative democracy, tended to favor saving the most lives or years of life by prioritizing people who were expected to survive their current illness or live the longest after being treated. However, many also said that a lottery or first-come-first-served approach would be appropriate for patients who had roughly equal chances of benefiting.

"If you have one ventilator and five people who are good candidates, there's going to have to be a random sort of chance aspect to it," said Dr. Eric Toner, a senior associate at the UPMC Center for Health Security and one of the project's leaders.

Unexpected questions emerged in the discussions: Should an undocumented immigrant be eligible to get a ventilator? What about a drug or alcohol abuser, or a prisoner? After being told by a facilitator that discrimination would not be allowed, one participant asked whether using age, one of the principles under discussion, would not also be a form of discrimination.

Taking ventilators from patients who did not appear to be improving was "the single most contentious issue," Dr. Toner said. Maryland's attorney general released an opinion in December that lifesaving medical technology, including ventilators, could be removed from patients during a catastrophic emergency and reassigned to others who could potentially benefit more from them. Dr. Toner said it would be hard for any system to work without reallocation.

But at the forums, many expressed reservations. One woman said that she had been in a coma, on a ventilator, and that her family had been encouraged to turn it off and let her die. "Health care providers are not God," another said. "I've seen it firsthand where they thought one thing and the outcome was different."

To avoid rationing, a woman proposed a "Susan G. Komen for disaster preparedness," a reference to the ubiquitous fund-raising movement for a breast cancer cure. Some said they would voluntarily refuse a ventilator to save the lives of other people, such as children or family members. A man questioned whether doctors would even have the time in an emergency to engage in formal rationing. Some with lower incomes said that health care rationing was already occurring based on the ability to pay.

Translating all these ideas into recommendations for the state, most likely in mid-2017, will be challenging. The organizers said that despite the complexity, they were now in a better position to provide the guidelines.

"We have a much fuller appreciation of what the community wants," said Howard Gwon, the director of the office of emergency management at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Charles Blattberg, a professor of political philosophy at the University of Montreal, said he worried that the effort could result in overly precise guidelines.

"The kind of judgment that's required to arrive at a good decision in these situations needs to be extremely sensitive to the context," he said. "It's not about just abandoning one lone doctor to their own devices to make it up on the spot, but we can't go the other extreme in thinking we have the solution to the puzzle already; just follow these instructions. That works for technical problems. These are moral, political problems."

Ruth Faden, the founder of Johns Hopkins's Berman Institute of Bioethics, which participated in the project, said she saw value in the exercise far beyond a pandemic.

"It's a novel and important attempt," she said, "to turn extremely complicated core ethical considerations into something people can make sense of and struggle with in ordinary language."

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 23, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** The state is proceeding with a proposal to buy out landslide properties in Colorado Springs as quickly as possible, Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Marilyn Gally told the Colorado Springs city council Monday. The city has proposed a resolution asking FEMA to "move as quickly as possible."… The Beaver Creek Fire that started in June is believed to have been human-caused… A July hailstorm in Colorado Springs is the sixth-most costly disaster in state history, according to the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association.
- **Montana:** Several stories report about fires in the state. One near Kalispell led to evacuations, one in Yellowstone has made national news, and the Copper King Fire remains dangerous.
- **North Dakota:** Stories appear to reflect more tension at the site of the pipeline protest: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz withdrew trailers and water tanks that had been supplied by the state after reports of criminal activity, including lasers being directed at pilots observing the protest; Governor Dalyrmple said numerous criminal acts had occurred and asked the Army Corps of Engineers to step in (as the protest is on its land, protesting its permit); and tribal officials acknowledged the campers had split into two factions, one pacifist and one that feels "something should be done."… Also: Three Affiliated Tribes approved a letter of support for the protest. About 60 tribes are believed to be represented at the campsite. A federal judge is to rule on a request for an injunction Wednesday. The Morton County sheriff estimates overtime costs for law enforcement may be $100,000 per week. Protesters plan a march at 2 p.m. today and to attend a Morton County Commissioners meeting at 5:30; two actresses will lead a protest outside the federal district court in Washington, D.C., today as well. Former *Grand Forks Herald* editor Mike Jacobs weighs in with an opinion piece on the protest … Xcel Energy is testing large drones that could be used to help identify power problems after a storm…
- **South Dakota:** The state has its first Zika case, a woman who had travelled to the Caribbean. (She is not pregnant.)
- **Utah:** Two new wildfires have broken out. Red flag warnings are out for the northern part of the state, and storms are expected in the south.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: The Louisiana flooding, wildfires and the Zika virus continue to dominate national disaster news. No clips are included today.

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None today

STORIES

COLORADO

On Unsolid Ground: State hustling to help Colorado Springs landslide victims (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Billie Stanton Anleu
August 22, 2016• Updated: August 22, 2016 at 6:23 pm

Colorado government is moving as quickly as it can to help Colorado Springs landslide victims, state Emergency Management Director Marilyn Galley assured the City Council during its work session Monday.

But Galley said her agency is completing buyouts of Boulder County homes from the 2013 floods, an indication of the two to three years needed to close out relief efforts after disasters.

"It is a tedious process," Galley said.

The state has submitted Colorado Springs' application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, she said.

Mayor John Suthers and Councilman Keith King are sponsoring a resolution urging FEMA to "proceed as quickly as possible" in moving forward on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application. The resolution promises the council, mayor and city staff members' "full and timely attention" in cooperating with FEMA and the state Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

The costs from the 2015 landslides are high, noted city Grants Manager Jen Vance.

When 27 homes were bought out in 2000 after landslides in Holland Park and on Regency Drive, the total project cost was $6.5 million.

But the 26 homes to be bought out because of last year's landslides have a projected cost of $16.2 million, because the cost of housing has increased, several of the houses are in Broadmoor neighborhoods and $1.9 million alone is attributed to a landslide lot owned by Judy Myklak in the Broadmoor Resort Community.

Meanwhile, Councilmen Don Knight and Tom Strand plan another workshop Monday with developers, builders, geologists and geotechnical engineers, among others, to resolve lingering questions on their proposed rewrite of the city's geological hazards ordinance.

Knight had noted holes in that safety net and wants more due diligence before homes are erected in landslide zones.

Planning and Development Director Peter Wysocki said questions to be resolved are:

- Who proposes and signs off on the geological hazard study?

- Is 14 days enough time for the Colorado Geological Survey to respond on how its recommendations have been implemented in development plans?

- Who verifies that those recommendations are addressed?

The original 1996 geohazards ordinance called for either a geologist or geotechnical engineer to write the studies, Knight noted, but both specialists are needed.

"The biggest issue," he said, "is who certifies that the house was built as designed. There's no guarantee your house isn't going to fall down into a landslide. All we're trying to do is make sure the house is built as designed."

Officials say Beaver Creek fire was caused by humans as crews continue to battle blaze (Denver Post)

The Denver Post

By Jesse Paul | jpaul@denverpost.com
August 23, 2016 at 9:03 am

WALDEN — Officials believe the Beaver Creek fire burning in northwest Colorado since June was caused by humans.

In an incident update Monday, commanders made the announcement, which they have been suggesting since the fire started on June 19. The U.S. Forest Service's law enforcement division is investigating.

The fire, which has scorched more than 37,000 acres in Colorado and Wyoming, is listed as 53 percent contained. Nearly 250 firefighters were assigned to the firefight about 25 miles north of Walden as of Tuesday morning.

"Cooler weather later in the week is predicted to be even more favorable to suppression and containment efforts," officials said in a Tuesday news release.

Total containment is expected Oct. 21. The fire has destroyed one cabin and a handful of outbuildings.

July hail storm in Colorado Springs sixth-most damaging in state history (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman

August 22, 2016 Updated: Today at 6:12 am The July 28 hailstorm that smashed Colorado Springs was the sixth-most damaging event in Colorado history, triggering $352.8 million in claims for damage to homes and vehicles, an insurance industry trade group said Monday.

Described as an "absolute hail bomb" by Brian Bledsoe, chief meteorologist with Gazette news partner KKTV, the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association said the storm featuring up to tennis ball-sized hail resulted in 84,500 auto and homeowner insurance claims filed so far. That includes 51,300 auto insurance claims adding up to more than $164.6 million and 33,200 property insurance claims at more than $188.2 million.

"The difference between this storm and many of the other large storms that have hit Colorado is you typically see one storm travel across the state or along the Front Range causing damage over a wide area," said Carole Walker, the association's executive director. "This storm was concentrated in the Colorado Springs area and the size of the hail resulted in a very high percentage of claims that were total losses."

Renee Larson, a semi-retired homeowner near the Colorado Springs Airport, said the storm did about $60,000 damage to her family's three vehicles as well as the roof, six windows, skylights,

chimney, siding, fence and shed on or near their home. The vehicles were total losses and she hopes repairs to her home will soon be approved by her mortgage company.

"Hopefully, they will get it done before the snow flies," Larson said. "You want to scream and throw your hands up, but it is Mother Nature, just like the floods in Louisiana. We are fortunate it is going as smoothly as it is. At least we are in the process of our claim. Some people I know might have to wait months to see an adjuster."

The estimated damage amount is preliminary and doesn't include any damage to commercial property such as vehicles of dealer lots or office buildings and hotels, or public property, including at least $500,000 in damage at the Colorado Springs Airport and about 40 Colorado Springs police cars as well as damages at Peterson Air Force Base. The total cost of the storm likely will increase as repairs are completed to roofs, siding and windows damaged by the storm that could take months to complete, Walker said.

"This is yet another reminder from Mother Nature of why Colorado is now ranked second in the nation for hail insurance claims," Walker said. "The size and amount of hail that battered Colorado Springs is, unfortunately, part of a pattern of catastrophic events the state has been experiencing during the past several years, so we need to be financially prepared for the unexpected."

The monetary damage of the storm ranks behind three hail storms, the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest fires, the association reported. The storms ahead of it are:

- A July 20, 2009, Denver area hail storm that caused $767.6 million in damages;

- A July 11, 1990, hail storm that caused $625 million in damages statewide;

- The June 2012 Waldo Canyon fire, which resulted in $453.7 million in claims;

- The June 2013 Black Forest fire, which resulted in $420.5 million in claims;

- A series of storms from June 6-15, 2009, in the Denver area with tornado and hail damage totaling $353.3 million.

When adjusted for inflation, the storm ranks as the eighth-worst in the state's history.

Colorado ranked behind Texas in hail claims from 2013-15 with 182,591 claims, according to a National Insurance Crime Bureau report in May. Nationwide, there were 5,412 major hail storms last year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Severe Storms database.

Claims related to wind and hail damage accounted for nearly 40 percent of all insured losses during the past five years, averaging about $15 billion annually, the association said. The July 28 storm was the first catastrophic loss of the year in Colorado, which the association defines as insured damage of $25 million or more (flood damage is not included because it isn't covered by most homeowner's insurance policies).

Many of the state's top insurers, including USAA and State Farm, opened mobile locations along Powers Boulevard and elsewhere in eastern Colorado Springs to handle the large number of vehicle claims. Some body shops reported backlogs of work through December and the wait for getting roof or siding work could be even longer.

MONTANA

Evacuations ordered after Montana fire doubles in size (Associated Press)

KALISPELL — Authorities say homes in a rural area east of Thompson Falls have been evacuated after a wildfire in northwestern Montana doubled in size in one day.

Fire officials say extreme fire behavior is also expected for the Copper King Fire on Monday, with wind gusts of up to 40 mph forecast to blow across the dry, hot terrain.

The Sanders County Sheriff's Office issued evacuation orders early Monday along Little Thompson River Road. Some 20 homes and structures are threatened, and other residents have been put on notice that the evacuation area may spread.

A shelter has been set up at Thompson Falls High School.

Some 317 firefighters are responding to the blaze, which grew 4 ½ square miles Sunday to nearly 11 square miles as of Monday morning.

Wildfire smoke streaming across Montana (KXLH – Great Falls)

By: Julianne Dellorso and David Sherman - MTN News

GREAT FALLS - Many people have noticed a lot of smoke in areas of western, central, and northern Montana.
We have received reports of heavy smoke from residents in and around Helena, Shelby, Heart Butte, and even the Sluice Boxes area of the Little Belt Mountains.

Toole County Sheriff Donna Whitt says from what she’s heard, it is smoke from the fires in Western Montana and Idaho.

She says there are no fires or incidents involving smoke in Toole County reported to her office.

The East Glacier Volunteer Fire Department posted the following message on Facebook on Monday morning: "Very windy, smokey day in East Glacier Park. Conditions are ripe for wildfire - a red flag day. Be careful with cigarettes and avoid any outdoor burning or anything that might spark a fire, like driving your car in high, dry grass or using a chainsaw."

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality reports that wildfire smoke in the area is likely due to several large fires to the west:

- The Pioneer Fire near Boise, Idaho, is 87,818 acres and 50% contained with active fire behavior.
- The Copper King Fire in northwest Montana is 3,900 acres and 30% contained with active fire behavior. Satellite imagery indicates a plume coming off the fire this afternoon and heading to the northeast.
- The Buck Creek Fire in central Washington is 1,083 acres and 0% contained with active fire behavior and contributing to the light smoke over Montana.

West Yellowstone residents voice concerns over Tatanka Complex (KTVM – NBC Bozeman)

By: Judith Retana

Posted: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

Updated: Aug 22, 2016 10:59 PM MDT

BOZEMAN, Mont. - The half dozen fires burning in Yellowstone National Park are now called the Tatanka Complex.

Fire officials in West Yellowstone held a community meeting Monday night where residents voiced their concerns about the fire. As black smoke continues to rise from the fires, many residents are worried.

"Oh, I'm saying my prayers like crazy," said Duck Creek resident Jim Criner. He was one of more than 200 residents at a community meeting to learn more about the fire.

Officials presented maps showing people where the fire perimeter was and the direction it's heading.

Strong winds and dry weather have a Montana senator and firefighters on alert.

"We want to make sure we have all the resources to ensure the community stays safe, the road stays open and we can protect these very important assets here around West Yellowstone," said Sen. Steve Daines (R-Montana).

Officials handed out fact sheets and maps to help residents understand more about the fires. They even handed out fire action plans to help them plan for an emergency.

Sasha Jevtich is a seasonal resident who works closely with the fire community. He and others looked at maps of the fire after the meeting.

"We took a ride into the park just to check things out for ourselves. You know, as you look at the maps, it is kind of scary. It does looks like it's rather close to town," he said. As scary as it can look, he said having the fire eat away at what is fueling it now, is good for the future.

Even so, the fire still makes residents like Criner nervous. He was around for the 1988 fires and saw how close those got to his neighborhood.

"The area between where the fire is and where we are in Duck Creek, is nothing but high grass and willows. The fire would move across the area really fast if it reached us," he said.

Although many in West Yellowstone are used to Montana's fire season, seeing dark plumes just a few miles away is always a concern.

Residents who wish to receive emergency notifications about the fire or any other event in the area, can sign up at ready.gallatin.com.

NORTH DAKOTA

As pipeline protest grows, state pulls water tanks (Fargo Forum)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 22, 2016 at 8:24 p.m.

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. – North Dakota's homeland security director ordered the removal of state-owned trailers and water tanks from the Dakota Access Pipeline protest campsite Monday, citing mounting reports of unlawful activity -- the latest involving lasers -- and the risk of damage.

"Based on the scenario down there, we don't believe that equipment is secure," Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz said.

As tribal members from across the nation streamed into the campsite, swelling its population to between 2,000 and 4,000 people depending on estimates, the loss of their main drinking water supply came as a blow and sent local officials scrambling to find an alternative water source.

"I feel like I just got shot down," said Johnelle Leingang, executive secretary to Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairman Dave Archambault II and the tribe's emergency response coordinator. "It's very hurtful."

A black heavy-duty pickup backed up to the water tanks and pulled them away just before noon as the beating sun drove temperatures into the 80s.

Two air-conditioned trailers and a command center vehicle – delivered with the water tanks a week ago by the North Dakota Department of Health at the tribe's request – also were hauled away from the campsite, which overlooks the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers just south of where the oil pipeline would cross the Missouri.

"People are getting overheated now already," Leingang said shortly before 4 p.m., as the temperature hovered around 90.

Governor seeks fed help

Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who issued an emergency declaration Friday to make additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the protest, called Monday for federal officials to help manage the situation.

In an interview with conservative talk show host Scott Hennen, Dalrymple noted the campsite sits on land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose approval of the pipeline's river crossings led to the tribe filing a federal lawsuit to stop it. A judge will consider the tribe's request for a temporary injunction during a hearing Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Dalrymple spokesman Jeff Zent said the governor spoke Monday morning with Jo-Ellen Darcy, who supervises the Corps of Engineers as the assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, discussing the fact the campsite is on corps land and that protesters don't have a permit.

While Zent said the governor requested no specific action by the corps, Dalrymple told Hennen, "I think they have to step up and take some responsibility, as well."

Corps spokeswoman Eileen Williamson said the agency is just monitoring the situation and has no action planned.

"At this point, there is not a permit, but it is my understanding they are requesting a permit," which will undergo a review for issues such as environmental impact, health and safety, she said.

The corps may ticket unauthorized campers but has no authority to remove them, leaving that to law enforcement, Williamson said.

"We want to make sure that things are handled peaceably," she said.

With work temporarily halted on the pipeline, only a handful of protesters stood along Highway 1806 by the construction site Monday morning, with the rest down at the campsite.

The Morton County Sheriff's Office estimated 2,000 to 2,500 protesters, while one campsite leader, Phyllis Young, pegged the gathering at closer to 4,000.

Standing Rock spokesman Steven Sitting Bear said it had grown to 2,500 to 3,000, with many coming and going as they worked around their work and school schedules.

"I've been getting notifications from tribes all over the country that have caravans in route, so it's continuing to grow," he said.

Laser incidents investigated

Authorities had arrested 29 protesters – including the tribal chairman – in the last two weeks for alleged disorderly conduct or trespassing, but things were comparatively quiet over the weekend and no additional arrests were reported as of mid-afternoon Monday, officials said.

However, authorities announced they are investigating two incidents of laser strikes aimed at aircraft being used to observe the protest site.

A pilot reported a laser beam hitting him in the eye around 5:15 a.m. last Wednesday, causing him to be blinded temporarily, according to the Morton County Sheriff's Department.

A second incident occurred about 12:45 a.m. Sunday. In that case, the pilot said he was able to look away in time to avoid the laser, authorities said.

Aiming a laser pointer at an aircraft is a federal violation. Reports have been forwarded to the North Dakota Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Some at the protest complained last week that aircraft were being used to disrupt cell phone communications.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the planes are being used for public safety observation and not being used to disrupt any services.

A traffic control point remained in place on State Highway 1806 south of Mandan.

Zent said the governor has no plans to mobilize the North Dakota National Guard.

"He'd like to keep this in the law enforcement arena," he said.

Factions develop

Dalrymple said that while the majority of protesters were peaceful, there's an element of "outside agitators" responsible for vandalism, trespassing on private property and blocking the highway – "hundreds of criminal acts."

Threats also have been made against law enforcement on social media, Kirchmeier noted.

Leingang dismissed claims of unlawful activity at the campsite as rumor and said "nothing bad is happening here."

Still, protesters acknowledged the camp has split into two factions.

"You have the pacifists and then you have the people who feel something should be done, and they're camped across the river from each other," said Jesse Stevens, 32, a member of Wisconsin's Menominee and Oneida tribes.

Stevens and two other men from Keshena, Wis., left Friday evening and arrived Sunday night, delayed by a broken water pump on his GMC Jimmy. While they set up camp on the "peaceful" side, Stevens said he felt like he should be across the river.

"My point in coming out here was some kind of action, regardless of whether it's life-threatening or not," he said. "This is our land, our people."

Dionne Addison, 40, a Northern Arapaho Tribe member who caravanned with family from Wyoming's Wind River Reservation, said she was a little concerned about her children's safety at the campsite. But she added, "I believe there's strength in prayer," and said it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

“Our water is sacred,” she said. “I want to make a difference, and I want them to know they can make a difference, too.”

Three Affiliated Tribes joins support for pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe got support from oil-rich Fort Berthold Indian Reservation Monday as it awaits a potential bench ruling on an injunction stopping Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the reservation.

Three Affiliated Tribes’ chairman Mark Fox issued a formal letter of support for Standing Rock’s opposition.

“We…share the firm belief that Dakota Access should find an alternative means and method of transporting oil to market that has less potential for negative impact to Standing Rock and the lands we have historically shared with a fellow nation, friends and relatives,” Fox said.

Fox was not available for questions after issuing the letter on behalf of himself and the tribal council. He said Three Affiliated will continue to provide logistical support and supplies to the protest effort.

Meanwhile, Jan Hasselman, an attorney with EarthJustice who filed the suit on behalf of the tribe, said the federal judge hearing arguments Wednesday for the possible injunction told parties during a status conference that he will try to rule immediately after the hearing, settling in the near term whether pipeline construction will continue at a location just north of the tribe’s reservation boundary.

The location, where the 500,000-barrel Bakken crude line will be drilled under the Missouri River-Lake Oahe near the tribe’s water intake, is under protest by Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and other tribes. After 28 arrests and daily police and protest encounters, the company stopped work there last week pending the hearing.

The tribe wants the court to stop pipeline construction while it determines whether the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers violated the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws when it issued water-crossing easements for the pipeline in late July.

It’s estimated some 60 tribes are represented at the protest and tribal leaders say it’s the largest gathering of Native Americans in modern times.

Protest law enforcement costs estimated at $100,000 weekly (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

The Morton County sheriff estimates about $100,000 per week will be spent on overtime costs for law enforcement staffing the Dakota Access Pipeline protest north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the cost per week is based on the current staffing from his department, other aiding county sheriff departments and the North Dakota Highway Patrol.

Law enforcement is manning a concrete barrier on Highway 1806, some 25 miles away from the protest site, to prevent direct traffic flow. Only local traffic is allowed through the barricade and license numbers are taken of anyone wanting to leave the area.

Responders have come from nine county sheriffs departments, two city police departments, 12 state agencies, one EMS and five federal agencies, according to a statement from Kirchmeier.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration Friday to open the door to pay for state agency reimbursements.

The Morton County Commission ratified a declaration Monday allowing the county to use its own emergency funding to pay for overtime for deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting at the site.

Law enforcement estimates between 500 and 800 protesters were on site Monday morning, compared to estimates of 1,500 to 2,000 last Thursday and Friday.

"It is hard for our people to gauge. This is really just an estimate. We have officers not only at the traffic control point but others that are in the area of the camp site monitoring activity. These numbers are their best assessment," Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff's Department, said in an email.

Protest organizers say there are between 3,000 and 4,000 people on site.

ND pipeline protesters to march across Bismarck bridge; actress to lead ‘solidarity’ rally in D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Forum News Service Today at 10:58 a.m.

BISMARCK – Opponents of a major oil pipeline that would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation plan to march Tuesday, Aug. 23, across a bridge over the river between Bismarck and Mandan in solidarity with protesters camped out at the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site near Cannon Ball.

The Standing Rock Water Protectors and allies will march peacefully across the Veterans Memorial Bridge at 2 p.m. and will later attend the Morton County Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. in Mandan to provide public comment on the county’s emergency declaration, a news release stated.

Meanwhile, film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside U.S. District Court

in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with a hearing on the tribe's request for an injunction to halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. Actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the Washington rally, a news release stated.

The tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline, which will be the largest oil pipeline from western North Dakota's Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day from Stanley to Patoka, Ill. Standing Rock members oppose the Missouri River crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

An estimated 2,000 or more protesters are camped out south of the construction site along Highway 1806 about 45 miles southeast of Mandan. Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped work at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct, but pipeline construction continues elsewhere along the four-state route.

MIKE JACOBS: Pipeline protest shows new dimension in North Dakota politics (Grand Forks Herald)

By Mike Jacobs Today at 6:00 a.m.

North Dakota still responds to an Indian scare. That's one thing we can say about last week's news.

On Friday, Gov. Jack Dalrymple declared a civil emergency in response to a protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline. The pipeline would cross the Missouri River less than a mile from the boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux nation.

Protests last week brought more than 1,000 people. Arrests were made.

Emergency declarations aren't all that uncommon in North Dakota, but almost all of them address natural disasters. North Dakota knows natural disaster. Hardly a year goes by without natural disaster. This place is flood prone, snow blasted and wind battered.

Civil disturbance is another thing.

The last civil emergency that comes to mind occurred in 1970, when Gov. William Guy sent the National Guard to an anti-war protest at the ABM missile site near Nekoma, N.D. A year before that, Guy called out the Guard when a bunch of college students descended on Zap, N.D., with the express purpose of getting drunk and having a good time. Some damage was done.

Dalrymple didn't send the Guard to the mouth of the Cannonball River. His emergency declaration is just in case local law enforcement needs help, he said.

Besides pointing out that this step is extremely rare, we can say some other things about it.

One is that Native opposition to pipeline projects is becoming a pattern. The Enbridge Company's Sandpiper line is stalled due to opposition from Minnesota's White Earth Band of

Ojibway. Their spokeswoman is Winona LaDuke, who was Ralph Nader's running mate in 1996 and 2000 when he was the Green Party candidate for president.

The partnership between Native people and environmentalists is part of the pattern. We saw this in opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline, and it's evident at the mouth of the Cannonball. The protest there has drawn movie stars as well as environmental activists.

That pretty much makes it the current front line in the war on fossil fuels.

It's easy to suggest (as some bloggers have done) that the tribe is being used.

There are two problems with this. For one thing, it's condescending. For another, it overlooks the growing activism of North Dakota's Native people.

This activism is especially evident at Standing Rock.

Opposition from the elected Tribal Council at Standing Rock doomed UND's nickname and logo. The NCAA said using "Fighting Sioux" would be OK if both of the state's Sioux communities said so. Standing Rock refused.

Another thing to say is that David Archambault, Standing Rock's tribal chair, has warrior blood in his veins. He's been on the front lines at the protest. On the pipeline issue, he's led the tribe to federal court and to the United Nations.

This is no surprise. At the opening of the 2015 legislative session, Archambault delivered the "State of the Relationship" message, a cry from the heart in which he spoke truth to power about Native issues and state jurisdiction.

Then there's the political context.

North Dakota's November ballot has three Native candidates: Chase Iron Eyes for Congress, Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun for Public Service Commission and Ruth Buffalo for insurance commissioner. All are Democrats, and none has much of a chance.

But each of them stepped up to fill slots on a major party ticket.

This has two important implications. First, as major party candidates, they will have media access. Second, they've established that the Democratic Party in the state can't just count on Native voters; it must also promote Native candidates to the white population.

It's also the essence of political organizing, as Mark Trahant pointed out in his blog, at trahantreports.com. Trahant is the nation's best known native journalist, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting and a member of the faculty at UND's Program in Communication.

None of this goes to the question of pipeline safety, much less to the future of fossil fuel development.

On these issues, everybody ought to be heard.

So there is one more thing, at least, to say about last week's developments.

Brian Kalk, one of three members of the Public Service Commission that approved a permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline, dismissed the protest. He told the Bismarck Tribune, "These groups didn't come to our hearings."

Well...

They could have been asked.

That's what "public service" means.

Disclaimers: Enbridge has right-of way on property that my partner Suezette and I own in Mountrail County, N.D. I was at Nekoma with the protesters. I was not at the so-called "Zip to Zap."

North Dakota Tests Drones To Be Used For Disaster Response (AP)

HILLSBORO, N.D. (AP) — A 20-foot-long drone that was brought to North Dakota to test precision agriculture methods is now part of a trial run to see if can help crews restore power to areas hit by natural disasters.

The Israeli-manufactured Elbit Systems Hermes 450 aircraft can cover 40,000 acres in an hour and fly up to 17 hours before refueling. Officials involved in the Xcel Energy test program say the larger drone's ability to cover more ground, collect more data and fly at night is expected to help the company move crews, materials and equipment quickly and safely.

"When you have a storm, when you have fires, getting crews on the ground to identify damage is flat-out dangerous," Raanan Horowitz, president and CEO of Elbit Systems of America, said Monday when the drone was shown off to public officials at an airport in Hillsboro, about 35 miles north of Fargo.

One of the tests involves a mock disaster using power poles placed in ditches in and around the nearby city of Mayville. Preliminary reports show that the drone is effective in quickly locating the downed poles both day and night, Xcel Energy Vice President Laura McCarten said.

"Apparently those wood poles stay warmer than the surroundings, so the infrared technology is able to spot them at night," she said.

Xcel Energy is headquartered in Minneapolis and serves customers in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Colorado, Michigan, Texas and New Mexico.

There are still key issues to be ironed out before the drones can be used on a widespread commercial basis, including Federal Aviation Administration approval to operate beyond line of sight, or without the use of a chase plane keeping tabs on the planes. North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said he hopes North Dakota will be flying drones without chase planes by the end of the year.

"You're covering such big distances. You're losing the utility of the unmanned aircraft if you have to have a chase plane," Hoeven said.

Minnesota Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district borders North Dakota, said the FFA "didn't do too bad of a job" on regulations for small drones, but he expects a much stiffer challenge on rules for larger aircraft.

"The FAA is very slow moving bureaucracy, to say the least," Peterson said.

If larger unmanned aircraft are approved for beyond-line-of-sight operations, Horowitz said the quadcopters and drones that weigh less than 55 pounds would still be used in a complementary role.

"The bottom line is, when you look at the size and the areas that you are trying to cover, when you look at the resolution, when you look at using sensors that can yield data that is actually usable, this is the way to go," Horowitz said of the Hermes drone.

Elbit Systems and Xcel Energy have combined to contribute about $500,000 into flying the Hermes drone. McCarten said the agriculture test program that began in May provided a "ready-made platform" for the Xcel study.

North Dakota State University researcher John Nowatzki said the agriculture test has yielded impressive results on the drone's ability to capture images. Nowatzki has displayed pictures of a shelter belt taken from 4,000, 6,000 and 8,000 feet, with no discernable difference to the human eye.

"The key message here, maybe, is that we get high resolutions at all levels," he said.

Sarah Lovas, an area farmer and crop consultant, said some of her cohorts still want to find out how they can manage the data in an affordable way, but most have embraced the technology.

"There's just no such thing as a dumb farmer anymore," she said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota reports first Zika virus infection (Rapid City Journal)

Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 22, 2016

South Dakota has reported its first Zika virus infection, according to state health officials.

The infected person is a woman who traveled to a country in the Caribbean where Zika virus is transmitted. She later developed symptoms, the Department of Health said today in a press release. The infection was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"This is a good reminder for anyone who travels to Zika-affected areas that it's important to protect themselves from mosquito bites," Dr. Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department, said in the release.

Kightlinger said state officials are not disclosing where the woman infected is from in South Dakota, but did note that she is in her 30s and is not pregnant.

Zika is a tropical mosquito-borne infection. The virus is not known to be carried by the mosquitoes found in South Dakota.

Officials say there are no vaccines or treatment for the virus. To avoid infection, travelers to Zika-affected areas, particularly pregnant women, should follow strict mosquito control precautions — wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, use an EPA-registered insect repellent and ensure that windows and doors have intact screens.

According to the Department of Health, the infection is mild for most healthy adults. About one in five people who are infected will become ill.

The release says symptoms typically occur two to seven days after a bite and include fever, muscle or eye pain and a rash. Pregnant women who are infected run the added risk of having babies with the birth defect microcephaly. Microcephaly means the babies have heads smaller than expected and often have smaller brains that might not have developed properly, the department said.

UTAH

Crews battling new wildfires in northern, central Utah (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published 1 hour ago • Updated 1 hour ago

Two new wildfires had ground crews scrambling in Sevier and Cache counties on Tuesday, as fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft swarmed the flames from above.

The Sand Ledges Fire, first spotted on Saturday just west of Richfield along Highway 24, had blackened 3,022 acres and was 27 percent contained as of Tuesday, said Fire Information Officer Shayne Ward.

Believed human-caused, the blaze was consuming dry grass and sage brush, including valued sage grouse habitat, but no structures were threatened and no evacuations had been ordered.

In all, 70 firefighters were working to hem in the Sand Ledges Fire. It was a slow, often frustrating task with gusty winds periodically fanning the flames through the tinder-dry vegetation, Ward said.

Still, crews hoped to have the blaze 100 percent contained sometime Saturday.

What sparked the Peterson Hollow Fire Sunday afternoon was still under investigation, but it had scorched 150 acres on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest's Logan Ranger District as of

Tuesday. Fire Information Officer MaryEllen Fitzgerald said it was 5 percent contained, with no estimated time for when crews will completely contain it.

The fire is 23 miles northeast of Logan and just north of the Beaver Mountain Ski Area.

"[The resort] is currently not imminently endangered, but is the most important focus at this time. Structure protection is in place and being ramped up as a precaution," Fitzgerald stated.

The Peterson Hollow Fire is one of five active blazes on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest; the other four are being allowed to burn as beneficial to clearing away accumulated undergrowth and dead timber.

About 160 firefighters were battling the blaze, aided by a fleet of air tankers and helicopters. Hot, dry and occasionally windy weather continue to challenge efforts to hem in the flames.

Utah forecast: Midweek weather brings high fire danger north, storms in the south (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune

If Goldilocks grew up to be a meteorologist, she might say of the midweek forecast for the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys, "Ahhh, just right."

If the fabled cabin burglar walked into the forests of the northern Wasatch Front, however, she might toss her porridge and run: from the mountains above Logan stretching south through Salt Lake City and Provo to Nephi, the National Weather Service declared a Red Flag Warning for wildfire danger from noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday.

Potentially too hot, indeed, thanks to low humidity, rain-starved rangelands and forests, and gusty winds.

Southern Utah? Goldilocks might prefer the company of three offended bears, after all. The region expects a cycle of thunderstorms the next several days — and humid, hot weather. High temperatures were forecast to be in the low- to mid-90s Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

No, it will be the balmy weather due in the Salt Lake and Tooele valleys that is best for that post-porridge nap. Sunny to partly cloudy skies will reign through the midweek, with highs ranging from the mid- to upper-80s Tuesday through Thursday, and overnight temperatures in the upper-50s to low-60s making for sweet dreams.

WYOMING

No FEMA-related stories

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, August 24, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A rechanneling project through the Garden of the Gods is expected to remove 100 properties from the floodplain… The Colorado Springs Independent interviewed the three colleges in the area about their plans for dealing with disasters, including an active shooter…. Bridges on a county road near the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar were taken out by flooding… The *Denver Post* explains why Colorado mosquitos are not likely to carry the Zika virus.
- **Montana:** An extraordinary outbreak of a parasite killing whitefish caused the state to shut down 180 miles of the Yellowstone River to all recreational uses.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest, including one in the *NY Times*: Homeland Security Division Director Greg Wilz explains the decision to withdraw state-owned resources was because the situation is not an emergency, the protestors are not on state-owned land, plus reports of criminal activity. Water has been supplied by the tribe's road department. Protestors marched over a bridge peacefully and staying on walkways. About 30 people attended a meeting of the Mandan county commissioners; all those who spoke opposed the pipeline, and many spoke against the traffic barrier set up by law enforcement, saying it hurts local businesses and farmers, is humiliating, and prevents people from seeing the protest. Commissioners said the decision was by law enforcement and is not theirs to overturn. The tribe says a leak at the pipeline could contaminate its water supply and sacred sites. The company says construction has only stopped at this one mile of the 1,172 mile pipeline, which would be the largest source for moving Bakken crude oil. Four unions wrote to Governor Dalrymple asking that he make it safe for construction workers to do their jobs. A federal judge is expected to rule today on a request for an injunction to halt the project. Tribal leaders say they will remain peaceful, but will blockade if the ruling goes against them. So far, there have been 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct.
- **South Dakota:** A $1 million FEMA SAFER g rant will pay for nine new firefighters in Rapid City for two years… A new wildfire broke out near Angostura Reservoir.
- **Utah:** An attempt to upgrade the Tibble Fork Dam has resulted in lake sediments being released over the weekend that have contaminated the American Fork River, apparently with toxic mine waste. Environmentalists fear an ecological disaster. The presence of toxic sediments had led to an earlier decision to upgrade the dam rather than dredge the lake – but draining the lake to work on the dam appears to have done the damage.
- **Wyoming:** Several fires were burning in the area of Yellowstone National Park, though all roads within the park remained open. One fire south of the park blocked access to that entrance. The fires were caused naturally and were not being actively suppressed.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: *USA Today* reports on possible hurricanes developing in the Atlantic. … *Inside Radio* says the Louisiana floods show the need to activate FM radio chips in cellphones, which do not work when cell towers are down.

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STORIES

COLORADO

Flood project through Garden of the Gods will reroute Colorado Springs floodplain (The Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Matt Steiner

Two years after city officials teamed with residents of a West Side Colorado Springs neighborhood to plan flood mitigation and reconstruction of Camp Creek, a project to remove more than 100 properties from the floodplain is about to begin.

On Monday, crews could begin the first phase of the more than $30 million project rebuilding about 5,100 feet of channel through Garden of the Gods Park and the Rock Ledge Ranch.

The work could be potentially lifesaving for residents of the Pleasant Valley neighborhood when heavy rains pound the Waldo Canyon fire burn area in the mountains to the west.

"As a community, we can't let our guard down," said Colorado Springs Emergency Manager Bret Waters. "Even though we're seeing some growth, it doesn't mean the risk will go away."

The Camp Creek mitigation project discussed in the spring of 2014 attracted more than 100 residents who helped choose project priorities. The result was a total rebuild of the deteriorating concrete channel through Pleasant Valley, meaning the creek along 31st Street will be refurbished with grass, shrubs, rocks and a relocated bike path.

But first, the work upstream must be done.

"Reducing the flows (through Garden of the Gods) will allow us to build the rest of the project," said project engineer Mike Chaves.

Construction crews will first install a series of rock steps in the creek, reshape banks and plant vegetation near the channel through the ranch and the park. The cross vanes, Chaves said, are intended to slow water and debris. Erosion has been accelerating each year because of floodwaters pouring off the Waldo Canyon burn scar.

The channel stabilization will cost $1.1 million, said city spokeswoman Kim Melchor. Almost $800,000 of that comes from a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant with the rest of the money coming from the city.

That work will likely be followed by construction of a large sediment detention pond at the north end of the park in early 2017, Chaves said.

That phase will cost almost $8 million, Melchor said. It will include a large berm stretching from 30th Street to the hills in the park that can dam floodwaters.

When the entire project is complete, more than 200 Pleasant Valley residents will no longer be in the floodplain.

"The whole intent is to protect the park, protect Rock Ledge Ranch and the downstream communities," Melchor said.

Colleges and universities put emphasis on planning for disasters, including active shooters: Planning for the worst (Colorado Springs Independent)

By J. Adrian Stanley @JAdrianStanley1

On April 16, 2007, Seung-Hui Cho, a senior at Virginia Tech, killed 32 people and wounded another 17 in two separate shootings.

Until June of this year, when Omar Mateen killed 49 people and wounded 53 others in Orlando's Pulse nightclub, the Virginia Tech shooting was the deadliest by a single perpetrator in U.S. history.

Virginia Tech held sway over the country, leading to widespread grief and fear, changing gun laws, prompting deeper discussions on mental illness and leading many colleges and universities to take a second look at their emergency plans.

Back in 2007, institutions of higher education tended to have procedures for protecting their campus communities from natural disasters like fires, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes, and often some man-made accidents as well, like chemical spills. But most had dedicated less — or no — energy to drafting plans to deal with an active shooter rampaging through the campus.

That changed after Virginia Tech. Just as "duck and cover" was a part of common school instruction during the Cold War, in today's age of mass shootings, students now learn to "run, hide, fight."

What Cho did was an eyeopener for school leaders. The gunman, who had known mental health issues, fatally shot two students in a residence hall, walked away, changed his clothes, and ran errands, then calmly entered an academic hall. At some point, he chained shut the exits.

Police were dealing with the first shooting while Cho entered Norris Hall. The university, suspecting the first shooting was of a personal nature, hadn't instructed students, faculty and staff to prepare for an active shooter. In fact, students in Norris reported being simply curious when Cho peeked his head inside their classroom doors before beginning his massacre.

Once the shooting was underway, Cho's victims were largely at a loss to stop his killing spree. Some died trying to hold classroom doors closed, including Professor Liviu Librescu, an Israeli Holocaust survivor, whose body was riddled with bullets as he held his classroom door shut, allowing his students to climb out windows. All but one of the students in Room 204 survived due to his heroism.

Nevertheless, 30 people died in Norris Hall. Cho shot himself before police located him.

"A lot of the [college and university] emergency plans really stepped up after 9/11," UCCS Police Lt. Marc Pino says. "Using common terminology, working on regional resources, things like that — that sort of were identified as issues after 9/11 for responding to emergencies — I would say around that time is when we really stepped things up."

But asked when UCCS began preparing for an active-shooter scenario, Pino says, "Virginia Tech would be when we really started doing emphasis on active shooter, and also our campus developed a student response team as a response.

"Numerous people at Virginia Tech had dealings with the shooter, and no one was really talking together to find out that some larger issues were going on. So, the [UCCS] student response team was [formed] — very shortly after Virginia Tech — [and it] comprises the dean of students office, the chief of police and the head of the counseling center. We sort of field reports from faculty, staff, students, anybody that has a concern about a student. We can sort of reach them before it gets to a critical level."

The *Independent* spoke to representatives at UCCS, Colorado College and Pikes Peak Community College about their emergency plans. While plans and strategies differ, each campus has a plan, along with one or more employees in charge of preparing for emergencies.

Of the three schools, Colorado College, which has about 2,000 students, is the only one without its own police force. John Lauer, co-chair of CC's emergency preparedness group and the college's associate vice president for student life, explains that the school does have a single Colorado Springs police officer assigned to the campus, as well as a campus safety department.

The safety officers — who carry no weapons — walk the campus and look for anything unusual. If a situation warrants it, they call police, with whom the college works closely. Campus safety officers can also take anonymous tips.

The campus does have an emergency plan, last updated in 2012, and a director of campus safety and emergency preparedness — Maggie Santos, a former Colorado Springs Police lieutenant. The plan will be updated soon.

"We're always focused on continuous improvement," Lauer says.

But, he adds, the college stresses that every person has to take responsibility for knowing how to respond, saying, "We're as prepared as every individual is prepared."

CC performs regular fire drills and has started doing active-shooter trainings with resident advisors, as well as sessions open to anyone, or upon request. Lauer says it's important not to drill too often because it can desensitize people in a real emergency.

The campus does contract with a company that sends emergency texts, emails and phone calls when needed to students, staff and faculty, as well as anyone else who wants to be notified.

While not every classroom has a locking door, placards by doors give instructions on what to do in an emergency — such as barricade the door for an active shooter or go to the nearest marked shelter in case of tornado.

CC has cameras throughout campus and a loudspeaker on Palmer Hall. Lauer says the campus is considering replacing that speaker, as well as placing speakers on campus security cars for use in an emergency. Staff in residence halls also have megaphones.

Jim Barrentine is chief of police at PPCC, where he says he was hired five years ago to develop an emergency preparedness plan.

That plan is now the template for the state's community colleges.

At first, Barrentine says most folks at PPCC didn't know how to perform basic safety tasks, like using a fire extinguisher or helping a person in a wheelchair down stairs. He's focused on giving trainings and providing instructional videos for different emergency skills. The school also does lockdown drills for an active-shooter situation, as well as special training, and four or five tabletop exercises meant to mimic a real emergency.

Interestingly, of the three schools, PPCC is the only one with locks on all classroom doors. The college encourages locking those doors during class hours.

With three campuses and 20,000 students, PPCC faces unique challenges. The 18-person police department is distributed among the campuses, where they patrol during business hours.

Barrentine has set up a system so that the campus community will be notified of an emergency immediately through texts, emails, landlines and a speaker system throughout the campus. Barrentine wants to add light boards for the deaf and buzzers for the blind, to ensure they are notified, and he's working on implementing a buddy system to ensure people with disabilities are cared for in an emergency.

He also has hotlines for anonymous tips.

Barrentine says the statewide system of community colleges is working to improve emergency preparedness. But he says PPCC is lucky because unlike many other schools, police are on the scene here.

"In an active shooter [situation]," he says, "security's going to run like everyone else."

Back in 2012, UCCS' emergency plans were tested. The Waldo Canyon Fire was raging nearby, and the campus suddenly became an unofficial evacuation site.

"We had the Air Force Academy cadets here in 2012, we also housed several hundred evacuees in our campus residence halls," UCCS spokesperson Tom Hutton says. "And then in 2013 [during the Black Forest Fire], we were an official Red Cross evacuation site and I think we had half a dozen people here, so we had more when we were an unofficial evacuation site."

Since UCCS is located on a wildland-urban interface, it not only has the normal risks of a university with around 11,300 students, but it also must be prepared for wildfire. Because of that, the university has done mitigation along its borders and, in summer months, UCCS police carry fire extinguishers with water in them, better for fighting wildfires. They also patrol the campus borders on off-road motorcycles.

Like the others, UCCS has an emergency notification system that hooks up to cell phones and landlines in classrooms. The university does not have a loudspeaker system or locks on every door, but emergency instructions near doors show how to barricade a door in emergencies and find marked tornado shelters. UCCS conducts general evacuation drills.

The UCCS police department, which has 21 officers and patrols the campus 24/7, has an intergovernmental agreement with Colorado Springs police to help each other in emergencies with set enforcement boundaries. Many will remember that UCCS Officer Garrett Swasey was killed last November when he responded to a mass shooting at Planned Parenthood. Just as he responded, CSPD would provide backup to UCCS officers in case of an active shooter on campus.

UCCS police do take tips (though anonymous tips must be made online) and say students are vigilant about filing reports of anything suspicious. Police Lt. Pino says he'll often get several calls within a few minutes about an unattended backpack, for instance. That's important, because it means students spot unusual circumstances and take them seriously.

"The reason why we have a very safe campus," he says, "is because we get those reports."

UCCS has emergency phones throughout campus, and police offer free escorts — no questions asked — to anyone requesting them. UCCS staff say they plan for any emergencies, and the university has an emergency manager and several offices that deal with emergency planning, including conducting regular tabletop exercises.

"I think we have a culture of working together as a university," Dean of Students Steve Linhart says, "whatever the situation."

County Road 40 bridges washed out by flash floods (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

Updated: Aug 23, 2016 10:00 PM MDT
FREMONT COUNTY - County Road 40 is closed after flash flooding in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar, according to Fremont County Sheriff's Office.

The dam on County Road 40 is holding, but Butter Creek and Little Cottonwood Creek are flowing heavy with debris. All homes are intact and all residents in the area are safe.

A reverse 911 notification was sent to residents in the area of the Hayden Pass Fire burn scar for a flash flood warning Tuesday evening. The warning was in effect until 9:45 p.m.

Bridges on County Road 40 were washed out by flood water. Fremont Search and Rescue and Fremont Incident Management Team responded as a precaution.

Why Colorado's Mosquitoes Are Not Likely To Spread Zika (Denver Post)

By John Ingold

Denver Post, August 23, 2016

It was an experiment that was part "Outbreak" and part "Trading Places," but researchers at Colorado State University hoped it might answer one of the more pressing public health questions facing the state: Could the Zika virus spread here?

The conventional wisdom was that it couldn't, at least not widely, because the disease's primary vector — a ninja of a mosquito called Aedes aegypti — had no established population in the state. But no one had proved that conventional wisdom true. What if it was wrong? What if the local mosquitoes — particularly those in the Culex genus that already carry the West Nile virus — were also able to transmit Zika?

The mosquito experts at CSU's Arthropod-borne and Infectious Diseases Laboratory decided to put the conventional wisdom to the test. In their lab, they infected Culex mosquitoes with Zika. And then, for a week as the virus incubated inside their study subjects, they held their breath.

Finally, the results:

"We could not get that virus to replicate in the mosquito," CSU professor Brian Foy said of the experiment, the topic of a soon-to-be-published article.

Whew.

When it comes to being disease-carrying menaces, not all mosquitoes are created equal, and that explains why Zika is a public health crisis in Miami and a relative public health trifle in Milliken. There are 54 species of mosquitoes commonly found in Colorado, but none of them are known to be able to transmit Zika — even if they can, like the Culex mosquitoes, transmit other diseases.

"It's still kind of a mystery," Foy said. "There's a very fine-tuning match of virus and mosquito."

The reason is that a mosquito's transmission of a disease is not as simple as taking infected blood in from one person and then backwashing it into another. Instead, the virus must be capable of reproducing inside the mosquito and then making its way into the mosquito's saliva — the real source of contamination since mosquitoes digest the blood they consume as food.

"When a mosquito bites a person, it spits into the bite," Foy said.

With the local-born bugs apparently incapable of carrying Zika, then, the only chance of a mosquito-spread outbreak in Colorado comes from a moonshot: the one-in-a-billion possibility that a Zika-capable mosquito that hitchhiked to the state from elsewhere bites into a Zika-infected person who picked up the virus out of state.

So far, only 21 people in Colorado have tested positive for Zika, and all of them contracted the virus somewhere else.

The only instance of a wayward Aedes aegypti being found in the state came in 2010, in Pueblo County. Another species of mosquito possibly capable of transmitting Zika, Aedes albopictus, has been found sporadically in Weld County, most recently in 2011 and most likely was brought to the state in waste tires disposed of here. But those species are just summer tourists; they can't survive the winter.

"Remember we're in Colorado; we're not in the tropics," said Michael "Doc" Weissmann, the chief entomologist at Colorado Mosquito Control, which does monitoring and eradication for local governments.

Weissmann said none of his company's traps have snagged worrisome Aedes mosquitoes this year.

"It's just the same old, same old," he said.

Eric Aakko of the Weld County Health Department said the county's surveillance efforts have found higher-than-normal levels of West Nile-carrying mosquitoes but no Zika concerns.

That leaves only one other prominent way that the virus can spread within Colorado, and it's one Foy knows a little too well. While conducting research in the African nation of Senegal, Foy contracted Zika in 2008. He then came home and accidentally gave it to his wife, which led to a research article hypothesizing — correctly, it turns out — that Zika can spread through sex.

The experience, though, didn't change his mind about the dangers of Zika in Colorado.

"The risk of all of a sudden having a massive outbreak in Denver is, I would say, infinitesimally small," he said. "From mosquitoes, I can't see it happening."

MONTANA

Yellowstone fish-killing parasite is so prolific it's 'shocking' fish to death (Missoulian)

By BRETT FRENCH Billings Gazette

PARADISE VALLEY — A previously unidentified strain of parasite has grown so prolific in the Yellowstone River that it is overwhelming whitefish, killing thousands and prompting the state last week to close more than 180 miles of the river to all recreation.

"The sheer parasite loading itself is almost shocking the fish, that that's what's killing them," said Eileen Ryce, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks' hatchery section chief, during a Tuesday press conference along the banks of the Yellowstone River south of Livingston.

Scientists like Ryce believe that the parasite bloom may be so large and unprecedented in part because the Yellowstone River is experiencing near-record low flows and high water temperatures.

"We could see varying responses (of the parasite) depending on which river it gets into," said Travis Horton, Region 3 fisheries manager in Bozeman.

The nearby Madison River, where flows are dam controlled, may be more resilient to the parasite since the water's temperature is cooler, coming from the bottom of Hebgen Lake, and the flows can be maintained at a steadier rate. Likewise, outbreaks of similar parasites in Idaho that killed

whitefish in 2011 and 2012 may have been more limited because some of the streams are dam controlled, Horton said.

The FWP officials spoke to a crowd of about 50 people — anglers, local lawmakers, the media and business owners — at a fishing access site where the stench of dead whitefish rotting on the riverbank wafted through the air.

Media, business owners, anglers and others gather for a press conference on the banks of the Yellowstone River. CASEY PAGE, Gazette Staff

Acknowledging the effect of the river's closure to anglers, floaters and on all of the many businesses that service such recreationists, Gov. Steve Bullock said "the impact goes far beyond the water's edge." Yet he said "science needs to guide this."

"We need to make sure we are not only protecting this watershed and this water but indeed our entire state," he said, noting that the outdoor recreation industry creates about 64,000 jobs and $6 billion in consumer spending annually in Montana.

When Rep. Alan Redfield, R-Livingston, asked why certain portions of the river couldn't be open to fishing to ease some of the impact on local businesses, Horton said FWP hopes to contain the parasite outbreak to the Yellowstone and make its duration short-lived.

"We want to try to minimize this," Horton said. "We don't want to make this situation worse by rushing ahead."

Horton added that when the Yellowstone River's peak water temperatures drop below 55 degrees and stay there, FWP would consider lifting the river closure.

"We're not looking at it being a permanent closure," said Jeff Hagener, FWP director.

He noted the rule to enforce the closure is a temporary emergency closure good for 120 days. After that time the department is forced to re-examine the issue to decide whether the closure should be extended.

The fish kill has been documented by FWP crews from the Yellowstone National Park boundary about 100 miles downstream to just west of the town of Big Timber, Horton said. Other public reports of dead whitefish and suckers downstream from Big Timber to Laurel have not been confirmed by FWP.

The microscopic parasite that infects the fish needs two hosts to complete its life cycle, Ryce explained. It starts in a Bryozoan, a moss animal similar to a freshwater sponge. The Bryozoan releases the parasite that fish absorb through their gills. Similar parasites have caused internal bleeding and kidney failure in whitefish in other outbreaks, such as the ones in Idaho.

But the Yellowstone outbreak is different, Ryce said. There are so many spores being found inside the fish that the scientists are calling it a naive reaction.

"What we mean by that is that the immune response that the fish are expressing would suggest that they have not been exposed to this parasite previously," she said. "That has concerned us since it would suggest it's a new infection. At least we haven't seen anything on this scale previously."

"The other thing that's concerning is from the histology results there were high numbers of parasites seen in multiple tissues. That suggests to us that the infective load that's currently out in the river is very high. Why that's a concern is that the sheer volume of parasites that's out there makes it very easy for the parasite to be spread to other waters."

That's the reason FWP took the unusual step to close down much of the upper river to recreation, Horton said, calling it a "very dramatic step that we took." It's also why the agency is stressing that the best way to fight the spread of the parasite, along with other aquatic invasive species, is to clean, drain and dry all boats and fishing equipment.

FWP crews will continue to search for dead and dying fish in the Yellowstone River and its tributaries like the Stillwater and Boulder rivers to try to determine the extent of the outbreak.

"I hope we can continue to work together, recognizing that the long-term objective is to protect this valley and the river," Gov. Bullock said.

Yet Ryce noted that FWP staff doesn't expect the parasite to disappear, even with colder water temperatures and higher river flows. However, if the fish are given time to adapt they may build up some immunity to the parasite and recover.

NORTH DAKOTA

Occupying the Prairie: Tensions Rise as Tribes Move to Block a Pipeline (NY Times)

By JACK HEALY

August 23, 2016

NEAR CANNON BALL, N.D. — Horseback riders, their faces streaked in yellow and black paint, led the procession out of their tepee-dotted camp. Two hundred people followed, making their daily walk a mile up a rural highway to a patch of prairie grass and excavated dirt that has become a new kind of battlefield, between a pipeline and American Indians who say it will threaten water supplies and sacred lands.

The Texas-based company building the Dakota Access pipeline, Energy Transfer Partners, calls the project a major step toward the United States' weaning itself off foreign oil. The company says the nearly 1,170-mile buried pipeline will infuse millions of dollars into local economies and is safer than trucks and train cars that can topple and spill and crash and burn.

But the people who stood at the gates of a construction site where crews had been building an access road toward the pipeline viewed the project as a wounding intrusion onto lands where generations of their ancestors hunted bison, gathered water and were born and buried, long before treaties and fences stamped a different order onto the Plains.

People have been gathering since April, but as hundreds more poured in over the past two weeks, confrontations began rising among protesters, sheriff's officers and construction workers with the pipeline company. Local officials are struggling to handle hundreds of demonstrators filling the roads to protest and camp out in once-empty grassland about an hour south of Bismarck, the state capital.

More than 20 people have been arrested on charges including disorderly conduct and trespassing onto the construction site. The pipeline company says it was forced to shut down construction this month after protesters threatened its workers and threw bottles and rocks at contractors' vehicles.

Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier of Morton County, who has led the law enforcement response, said at a news conference that he had received reports of weapons and gunshots around the demonstration, and that protesters were getting ready to throw pipe bombs at a line of officers standing between a rally and the construction site.

Leaders from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline's path, say the protests are peaceful. Weapons, drugs and alcohol are prohibited from the protest

camp. Children march in the daily demonstrations. The leaders believed the reports of pipe bombs were a misinterpretation of their calls for demonstrators to get out their wooden chanupa pipes — which have deep spiritual importance — and pass them through the crowd.

The conflict may reach a crucial moment on Wednesday in a federal court hearing. The tribe has sued to block the pipeline and plans to ask a judge in Washington to effectively halt construction.

The pipeline runs overwhelmingly along private land, but where it crosses bodies of water, federal rules come into play and federal approvals are required.

The tribe says the pipeline's route under the Missouri River near here could threaten its water supplies if the pipeline leaks or breaks, and it says the United States Army Corps of Engineers failed to do proper cultural and historical reviews before granting federal approvals for the pipeline.

"This is our homeland," said Phyllis Young, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux. "We are Dakota. Dakota means friend or ally. Dakota Access has taken our name."

In legal filings, the corps rejects those claims. It says it consulted extensively with tribes, including the Standing Rock Sioux, and it says that tribe has failed to describe specific cultural sites that would be damaged by the pipeline. Energy Transfer Partners says it has the necessary state and federal permits and hopes to finish construction by the end of the year. The pipeline's route starts in the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota and ends in Illinois.

With the fate of the land here and this $3.7 billion project in the air, people here have decided to take action. They are occupying the prairie.

Echoing protests against the now-scuttled Keystone XL pipeline, environmental activists and other tribes from the Dakotas, the rest of the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest have been arriving to camp in the open fields and protest near the parcel where the pipeline company has secured an agreement with the landowner to build.

The protesters sleep in tents and tepees, cook food in open-air kitchens and share stories and strategies around evening campfires. There is even a day care. At morning meetings, speakers warn parents to keep their children away from the Missouri River at sunset, and remind one another they are camped out in prayer.

"It's a major movement in Indian country," said CJ Clifford, a member of the Oglala Lakota, who drove up from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He saw the protests as part of a historical continuum reaching to Little Bighorn. This battle, he said, was being waged peacefully.

For many, the effort was about reclaiming a stake in ancestral lands that had been whittled down since the 1800s, treaty by broken treaty.

“Lands were constantly getting reduced, shaken up,” said Dave Archambault II, the tribal chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux. “I could give you a list of every wrongdoing this government did to our people. All of that is frustration pent up, and it’s being recognized.”

He added, “It’s a tipping point for our nations.”

This month, a line of sheriff’s officers retreated in the face of riders on horseback circling and yipping through the grass. (Tribal members said that the display was a Lakota gesture of introduction, and that they have no quarrel with law enforcement.)

There have been no moves so far to disband the camp or keep people from demonstrating. But Sheriff Kirchmeier told reporters that the demonstration had become an “unlawful protest,” and Gov. Jack Dalrymple, citing “public safety risks,” declared a state of emergency on Friday.

Local law enforcement officers set up a barricade on the main road leading to the pipeline site, and officials here in Morton County called a special meeting on Monday to talk about the traffic and how to handle a hundreds-strong protest that could linger for weeks or months.

At the sprawling campsite down the road from the protest site, there had been portable toilets, 500-gallon tanks of drinking water and an air-conditioned trailer with medical supplies provided by the state. But late Monday night, people at the camp said the medical trailer and water tanks had been removed, leaving them to scramble for a new water source for hundreds of people.

After a prayer ceremony at the construction site one recent afternoon, a few young men on horseback opened the gate and rode onto the land. A few days earlier they might have been arrested and accused of trespassing, but that day there were no officers to stop them.

The pipeline company said that it temporarily stopped work here this month while “law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests,” but that construction was continuing elsewhere.

Energy Transfer Partners has sued Mr. Archambault and six other people over the protests. In a federal lawsuit filed last week, the company accused them and other protesters of blocking access to the construction site, threatening workers and trespassing onto private land.

Jon Eagle Sr., the historic preservation officer for the Standing Rock Sioux, watched from the side of the road as the young men rode into the grassy field, toward a construction floodlight and heaps of excavated dirt. He did not want the pipeline to breach this land. But he did not seem to approve of this either.

“They need to stay out,” he said. “They don’t know where the burials are. They don’t know where the sacred sites are. I’m trying my best to keep the peace.”

Emergency services recalled from Dakota Access Pipeline protest site (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Max Grossfeld |

Posted: Tue 4:19 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 6:24 PM, Aug 23, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D. - Demonstrators protesting construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline had been using state resources at their camp until Monday, when the Department of Emergency Services decided to recall them.

Those resources included a mobile command trailer, a medical aid trailer and a water trailer.

A DES official says Tribal Emergency Management requested the resources, which were supposed to be used on tribal land. He says the services brought the trailers back when he heard the trailers were located on land owned by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Reports of unlawful behavior, he says, also influenced his decision.

"This isn't a flood, a fire, an icestorm. This is an event that originally needed some support for the responders dealing with it and at this stage in the game, the event's not an emergency," says Greg Wilz, Homeland Security Division director.

Wilz says all the equipment is back in Bismarck and ready to use in case of emergency.

People concerned with Highway 1806 barricade ask Morton County Commissioners for answers (KFYR TV, Bismarck)

By Megan Hahn |

Posted: Tue 9:43 PM, Aug 23, 2016 |

Updated: Wed 8:07 AM, Aug 24, 2016

MANDAN, N.D. - The Morton County Board of Commissioners heard public testimony regarding the Dakota Access Pipeline for nearly in an hour at Tuesday's meeting.

All those who chose to speak during the hearing were in opposition of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

County Commissioners say the purpose of the meeting was to give people the chance to weigh-in on the matter in a peaceful manner.

About a dozen people addressed Morton County Commissioners in front of a packed room Tuesday. The recurring frustration for many: removal of barriers along Highway 1806, which restrict access to areas south of Mandan including Cannon Ball and Fort Yates.

"I didn't appreciate it when they put up that block. I have granddaughters and daughters that work at Fort Yates and live in Bismarck. It's humiliating and intimidating when the cops come

up to your car and look in your car like we are doing something wrong," said a speaker who addressed the Commission.

"I am embarrassed for the law enforcement officers that I meet on the road, blocking people from seeing this protest," said a woman who addressed the Morton County Commission.

Highway 1806 was blocked up last Tuesday past the veteran's cemetery because of public safety concerns, according to the Morton County Sheriff's department. Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier didn't speak at Tuesday's meeting.

While many spoke out against the traffic interception point, the Board of Commissioners deferred all questions regarding the barricade to law enforcement. The County Commission says they do not have the authority to remove the barricade.

"We thought it was very important to allow these individuals who are protesting to have a voice in a public forum. I think that's very important. As it relates to the traffic control point itself, that is a question that I'll have to refer back to county sheriff, our incident commander Kyle Kirchmeier," said Chairman Cody Schulz, Morton County Board of Commissioners.

Many of those present say they want answers from government officials.

"I don't want any part of it. I don't think that's right. And it's not fair. And that blockade, that should not be there. That's all I have to say," said another speaker.

The Board of Commissioners says they're working toward creating an open and peaceful dialogue with protesters.

Those who spoke against the blockade say not only does it affect commuters driving to work, but it's reduced business for local shops and reduced access to recreation areas.

Both the North Dakota Highway Patrol and North Dakota Department of Transportation have the authority under North Dakota Century Code to close a highway. This decision to temporarily close Highway 1806 was made by DOT and HP August 17.

Pipeline foes take fight to Bismarck, Washington D.C. (Forum News Service)

By Mike Nowatzki on Aug 23, 2016 at 6:38 p.m.

BISMARCK – Waving the flags of their tribes and singing the songs of their ancestors, more than 200 protesters marched across a Missouri River bridge in Bismarck Tuesday ahead of a federal court hearing that will determine the fate of the Dakota Access oil pipeline’s route in North Dakota.

“This water belongs to all of us,” Vic Camp, a 41-year-old from South Dakota’s Pine Ridge Reservation, said as he rallied the crowd before the march. “We all know that tomorrow in Washington they’re going to make a decision that affects every single one of us.”

The march across the 2,370-foot-long Veterans Memorial Bridge aimed to show solidarity with the 2,000-some protesters encamped about 50 miles south on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, near the pipeline construction site along State Highway 1806 north of Cannon Ball.

Indeed, many marchers were from the campsite, including 25-year-old Kin-sin-ta Joseph and her 16-year-old sister Kis-dya:n-te' Joseph, who got help from a portable PA system so their river song would carry over the wind and traffic noise. The members of northern California's Hoopa Valley Tribe said their chairman urged members to assist Standing Rock, and about 25 made the trip.

While they've taken part in protests before, joining a blockade against logging companies just a few months ago, the older sister said it's never been this big, with so many tribes involved.

"This is really spectacular," she said. "We've been waiting for this kind of gathering."

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, represented by the environmental law group Earthjustice, sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers last month over permits issued for the nearly $3.8 billion pipeline. It would cross the Missouri River a half-mile north of the reservation and be the largest oil pipeline from the Bakken oil fields, moving 450,000 barrels per day to Patoka, Ill.

Standing Rock members oppose the river crossing, fearing a pipeline leak would contaminate their water supply and other sacred sites.

Dakota Access LLC temporarily stopped construction at the site last week as protests ramped up, leading to 29 arrests for trespassing or disorderly conduct. But the protest hasn't impacted pipeline construction elsewhere along the four-state route, including in North Dakota, company spokeswoman Lisa Dillinger said via email.

"We have temporarily deferred grading activities across a short section of the right-of-way (less than 1 mile) while law enforcement works to contain the unlawful protests in light of the fact that we have the necessary permits and approvals to work at this site," she said.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., will consider Wednesday the tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively halt construction of the 1,172-mile pipeline. A lawyer for the tribe said the judge has indicated he will rule from the bench or shortly after the hearing.

Film actress Shailene Woodley, who has been involved with the months-long pipeline protest, will headline a solidarity rally at 1 p.m. Wednesday outside the courthouse in Washington, and actress Susan Sarandon also will speak at the rally, according to a statement.

Protesters on Tuesday blocked traffic only briefly while crossing the street to get to the bridge's pedestrian walkway, and law enforcement reported no problems with the march. Dozens of passing drivers honked their horns in solidarity, though one yelled an expletive aimed at Native Americans.

Camp said protesters will refrain from violence if the judge's ruling doesn't go their way.

“The only way violence will happen is if the cops provoke it and they attack us,” he told Forum News Service, adding, “We have our women and we have our children. We have grandparents here.”

When asked what will happen if the judge denies the injunction and Dakota Access tries to resume construction, Camp said, “Then we’ll start blockading.”

“We’ll do what we can with our bodies to keep the machines from coming in,” he said.

Four labor unions sent Gov. Jack Dalrymple a letter strongly encouraging him to use the power of his office to keep workers safe and ensure protesters are “following the letter of the law.”

The general presidents of the Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA), International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and United Association (UA), said the actions of protesters endanger not only themselves but construction workers and equipment, as well as local law enforcement who’ve bolstered their local presence.

They said the pipeline has created about 4,000 construction jobs in North Dakota along 346 miles of pipeline.

“While they may have a right to protest, we also have a right to do our jobs in a safe environment,” they said.

Protesters, insisting their actions are peaceful, appealed to the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and churches to send observers to the site. They also continued to rail against what they contend is an unnecessarily heavy law enforcement presence, including a checkpoint about six miles south of Mandan that restricts southbound traffic on Highway 1806 to emergency response vehicles and local traffic such as farmers, ranchers and homeowners.

Standing Rock Protestors Find New Resources After State Withdraws Support (KXMB TV, Bismarck)

Published 08/23 2016 04:04PM

Updated 08/23 2016 07:03PM

Protestors of the Dakota Access Pipeline are finding ways to sustain their effort after state officials pulled relief resources from their camp near Cannonball.

Ben Smith has the story.

For nearly a week.

Several state-owned trailers provided water, shelter, and a place to help those sick or hurt.

Monday morning, news came that these resources would soon be gone.

"It was shocking, it was shocking. I didn't expect that,"

"It's a little different now because everything is going to be outdoors where we had the convenience of having everything indoors in case of the rain, weather wind. Resources got taken away from us quick but we got them back," says Joenelle Leingang

As fast as they disappeared, new support came in.

Standing Rock Paramedics erected a tent in which to treat people.

The tribes road department also pitched in, delivering a giant tank of water.

"They keep this full to fill our buffalo tanks with water. We have two, three more possibly coming in from the Cheyenne River who had donated theirs so water supply is going to be back on track again," says Leingang

(Ben Smith, KX News) Not all state-resources have gone. There is one ambulance that is still here, to provide a backup for standing rock paramedics,

"They left the ambulance as an extra resource for us. Because like I said, we still provide services to all the reservation so of course our number of ambulances is limited," says DeAnn Werre, Standing Rock Paramedic

She says it's not your typical day as a Standing Rock paramedic.

"We've been able to bring in extra staff to be able to provide services,"

"We've pulled together and got our resources together and are able to provide the same services for people,"

It seems to be the theme of the effort, pulling together under one cause.

It's very overwhelming, it's great, phone calls, where can I bring it to...

I just would like the public to see for themselves. There is nothing negative going on here at all,

She says for now, this area near the Cannonball river has become a second home.

Protesters attend Morton County Commission meeting (Bismarck Tribune)

CAROLINE GRUESKIN and LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

15 hrs ago

The Dakota Access Pipeline protests returned to the Bismarck-Mandan area Tuesday, as protesters walked across the Memorial Bridge and testified before the Morton County Commission.

Several speakers asked the commissioners to remove a roadblock that prevents drivers from traveling south on Highway 1806 from Mandan to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, though

commission chairman Cody Schulz said after the meeting the commission does not have authority to remove the block.

Speakers told the commissioners and the approximately 30 people who attended the meeting that the block impedes travel, punishes the tribe's economy and can be humiliating to cross.

The highway has been blocked since Aug. 17, when Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the protest had become unlawful and the road unsafe, points the protesters have contested throughout the week.

Marilyn Kary, who works in Fort Yates, said the roadblock makes it difficult for teachers on the reservation who commute.

Chase Iron Eyes, the Democratic candidate for North Dakota's lone U.S. House seat, said the roadblock was intended to punish the tribe and has disadvantaged businesses in the region.

He said Native Americans and white North Dakotans tend to live in separate worlds.

"Interactions should be encouraged," he said, suggesting the block did the opposite by preventing commerce.

Cody Hall of Eagle Butte, S.D., spokesman for the Red Warrior Camp, said the blockade simply sets the wrong tone.

"It felt like what black people felt in the South," he told commissioners, adding that he was questioned at the blockade, while a white friend was not.

Clyde Bellecourt, co-founder of the American Indian Movement, asked members of the Morton County Commission to consider what future generations would think if the water were contaminated.

"I'm 80 years old. I've lived my life. I don't want my grandchildren to ever question," he said. "Grandpa, why didn't you say nothing?"

He encouraged the commissioners to visit the protest camps.

"You have nothing to be afraid of," he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, about 200 protesters took their cause to the Memorial Bridge, staging a peaceful march from Bismarck to Mandan.

Banners, bright regalia and flags of many Native American nations were presented as smart phones and a drone documented the latest chapter in the protest.

At the staging area, multiple speakers encouraged songs and prayers from participants. Drums pounded in support of discontinuing pipeline construction.

Many protesters held up bottled water mixed with oil to represent the contamination they believe the pipeline would cause to their drinking water, reminding everyone present the water had to be safe for future generations.

Shouts of "save our water" could be heard by protesters as they ascended the bridge.

There was little presence of law enforcement for most of the demonstration except for when North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and local police briefly blocked traffic as marchers crossed to Front Avenue to reach the pedestrian portion of the bridge. The protesters kept to the walkway and held up their signs as motorists honked their horns.

Those gathered Tuesday insisted their message has been a peaceful one.

"I am here because of the water, because of the grandchildren," said Nora Old Man, who held up a water bottle and sang with her grandsons.

Sunny Red Bear, of Eagle Butte, S.D., said she was participating in the march for her 7-year-old son who joined her Tuesday.

"This is about our future. This is about thinking generationally. This is about everyone it affects, community after community. They are choosing oil, wealth and money over our future. I want to protect that the best I can and to show my son to stand up for what's right."

SOUTH DAKOTA

Rapid City may add 15 more firefighters, 9 paid by FEMA grant, six by city (Rapid City Journal)

Mike Anderson Journal staff
Rapid City Journal
Aug. 24, 2016

Rapid City will soon hire 15 new firefighters, thanks in large part to a $1 million federal grant awarded to the city fire department last week.

The new hires will fill a staffing shortage that Fire Chief Mike Maltaverne has urged the city council to address since 2014.

The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant, or SAFER, administered through the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, will pay the salaries and benefits of nine new firefighters for the next two years. The other six out of 15 new positions will be paid for out of the city's budget.

"In 2014, we started to identify that, with the way our demands for service were increasing, our resources were starting to spread thin," Maltaverne said on Tuesday. "Our firefighters were going on more and more calls and the staff increases weren't keeping up with the demand for our services."

In a memo to Mayor Steve Allender earlier this year, Maltaverne said that in 1995, the city's fire department had 81 operational firefighters with an annual call volume of 3,600, or 44 calls per

firefighter. Rapid City has grown significantly in population and geographical area since the 90s, and with that growth has come more fires.

The department's annual call volumes have grown an average of 7.6 percent since then, Maltaverne said, putting last year's total call volume for the department at 17,012 for its 117 firefighters, or about 145 calls per firefighter.

Maltaverne knew it would require some extra funding to get 15 new firefighters on board to fill the service gap and ease the pressure on existing personnel. So he asked the Rapid City Council to pay for six employees if he could find a grant to pay for nine more.

"We thought that would be more realistic, that the city would be able to fund that," Maltaverne said.

The City Council has already agreed to fund three positions, and the mayor has included another three in next year's proposed budget which will be the subject of a public discussion at 6:30 p.m. today in the city council chamber.

"We clearly articulated the need for additional staffing and our elected officials along with FEMA responded, and for that we are grateful," Maltaverne said.

Though the SAFER grant will only pay the other nine new firefighters through two years of service, Maltaverne is confident that will be plenty of time for the council to figure out how to keep funding those positions indefinitely.

"What would be the point of hiring firefighters for two years and then having the city lay them off?" Maltaverne said. "That doesn't solve the long-term problem."

The grant calls for the new hires to be made within 180 days, a deadline Maltaverne has no worries about meeting. This spring, the Rapid City Fire Department went through a hiring process and compiled a selection of suitable candidates.

"We reviewed that and we feel there are a sufficient number of qualified candidates to fill those positions," he said. "We've got a really good deep list of potential employees."

Maltaverne hopes to have all 15 slots filled by Jan. 1, 2017, which is when the SAFER grant funds will be awarded to the city.

Applying for the grant was a comprehensive and competitive process, Maltaverne said, adding that he sees FEMA's decision to award the funds as a form of validation.

"Getting this grant clearly confirms that the need was there," he said.

New fire burning near Angostura Reservoir (KBHB radio)

Gary Matthews

KBHB Radio
August 23, 2016

HOT SPRINGS, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire Dispatch says federal, state and volunteer fire crews are battling a wildfire in the southern black hills.

The Maitland CA fire is located approximately 6.5 miles southwest of Angostura Reservoir.

Dispatch says the fire had reached 34.5 acres as of Tuesday afternoon.

They list the fire as human caused.

There is no word on any structures being threatened.

UTAH

American Fork fish could contain toxic mine waste (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 23 2016 05:30PM • Updated 57 minutes ago

Some of the sediments that have turned American Fork River's normally clear waters into a black soup could be loaded with arsenic, lead and other toxic metals associated with historical mining operations at the scenic canyon's headwaters.

Officials from several local, federal and state agencies gathered at Tibble Fork Dam on Tuesday to figure out what to do about the sediment releases, which commenced sometime after the 10-acre lake began draining Saturday as part of $7.3 million project to upgrade the aging earthen structure.

The incident shocked conservationists who fear an ecological catastrophe is unfolding in one of Utah's most popular natural areas, located in the Wasatch Mountains just outside Provo.

"I think it's a $20 million cleanup and it will take years," said Mark Allen, founder of the group Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District sponsored the project with federal matching dollars in an effort to make the dam seismically safe and extend its life for another 50 years. The lake bed is coated with 5 to 10 feet of fine-grained black sediments that have accumulated behind the dam and impaired its ability to store water, though the lake has remained a popular, well-stocked trout fishery.

A sediment release "was not unexpected, given this was a rehabilitation project," said the district's lawyer, John Jacobs. "There may have been a bit more than was anticipated. This is a 60-year-old dam, and it has a lot of sediments behind it."

During the review process, federal officials had considered dredging the lake bed as a way to restore the dam's usefulness, but testing indicated that levels of arsenic and lead exceeded safety

standards and made these sediments too dangerous to move, according to the environmental assessment conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The metals contaminating Tibble Fork originated in Live Yankee, Globe and other abandoned gold and silver mines that perforate the head of American Fork Canyon's northern branch, according to Allen. He says the state is doing too little to hold landowners accountable for these environmental "time bombs." Many of these old mines are located on land now owned by Snowbird Ski Resort in and around its Mineral Basin.

The cost of extracting and disposing of the material accumulated in the Tibble Fork lake bed would be $8.4 million, so the option was abandoned in favor of raising the dam by 9 feet. The environmental assessment insisted the contractor use "best management practices" to ensure the toxic sediments were not pushed downstream.

The measures are detailed in a construction permit issued this year by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which would not immediately provide a copy of the permit. It did send personnel to the dam Tuesday to determine whether the project was in compliance with the permit.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also sent emergency-response personnel to the site.

"It was so damning that they didn't want to touch the sediment," Allen said. "Your project is only as good as your most stupid backhoe operator. It said it was too toxic to remove it, but now it's in the river. How are you going to clean up 10 miles of trout streams?"

The water district hired Provo-based RB&G Engineering to design the project and Whitaker Construction, of Brigham City, to build it. RB&G's project leader, Brad Price, did not immediately return a phone message seeking comment.

Allen and members of Trout Unlimited spent Monday in the canyon, photographing the sludge pouring down the river channel, which smelled of gunpowder and rotting fish.

"In the main canyon, the water looks like Mississippi mud," said Grant Bench, an officer with a Utah County Trout Unlimited chapter. "I don't know how a cold-water fish is supposed to survive in that."

But federal and state officials were not ready to declare a disaster Tuesday.

"We are taking samples above [the dam] and below to establish baseline and impact below in the water column," said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

Division of Wildlife Resources aquatics biologist Mike Slater zapped the creek in various places with electroshock equipment Tuesday in search of breathing fish.

WYOMING

Wildfires close Yellowstone's south entrance, burn near west entrance (Billings Gazette)

By JORDON NIEDERMEIER jniedermeier@billingsgazette.com

All roads were open in Yellowstone National Park Tuesday despite several fires growing in the area including a blaze blocking access to the Park’s south entrance.

The West Entrance remained open. But, the Maple fire has burned more than 27,000 acres about five miles northeast of West Yellowstone and reached within a tenth-mile of the roadway to the west entrance. The fire grew more than 4,600 acres on Monday and is mostly growing on the north side of the burn area. It is not expected to cross the road to the west entrance. If fire activity or smoke increases, pilot cars will be used to guide cars through the area, said a National Park Service news release.

The release said fire activity closed a stretch of U.S. Highway 89 in Grand Teton National Park between Leeks Marina and north to Flaggs Ranch. The closure affects travelers planning to use Yellowstone National Park’s south entrance. The road closure is expected to stay in effect until Wednesday. Lizard Creek Campground has also been evacuated.

About 100 people are monitoring the Maple fire. Resources including firefighting aircraft and engines are in the area. However, the fire is not being actively suppressed as it was determined to be caused by a lightning strike and wildfires are an integral part of the Yellowstone ecosystem, said Barbara Dougan, NPS fire information officer.

Dougan said firefighters will work to keep the blaze north of the roadway and east of the Madison River, away from the town of West Yellowstone.

“At this time the fire is doing very well on that side and doing the job of reducing downed debris that’s on the ground,” she said.

Dougan said officials are still working to determine the cause of the nearby 190 acre Boundary fire but it is believed to have been caused by human activity. Firefighters worked to suppress that wildfire and it was about 85 percent contained as of Tuesday morning.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Tropical System Eyes Florida, Southeast US, May Develop Into Hurricane (USA Today)

By Doyle Rice

USA Today, August 23, 2016

What’s now just a disorganized mass of thunderstorms 1,600 miles from Miami could develop into the first hurricane to hit Florida in nearly 11 years late this weekend, forecasters warn.

There's a 60% chance the storm system, known for now only as "99L," could develop into a tropical depression in the Atlantic Ocean later this week. If it swirls into a tropical storm, it will be named Hermine (Her-MEEN).

The system then could rapidly intensify into a large, potentially dangerous major hurricane that would target the Southeast U.S. coast Sunday or Monday, Weather Underground meteorologist Jeff Masters said.

However, as meteorologist John Morales of NBC-6 in Miami notes, "tropical weather forecasting is a very inexact science."

Overall, 6- or 7-day forecasts of tropical cyclone location and intensity are "generally not very good," according to Penn State University meteorologist Jon Nese.

But whether or not the system becomes a tropical storm or hurricane, gusty winds, heavy rains, and possible flash floods and mudslides could occur over the islands of the northeastern Caribbean Sea and the Bahamas, the National Hurricane Center said.

By Sunday, the system could bring deteriorating weather and sea conditions to the east coast of Florida, AccuWeather said.

Most of the computer models meteorologists use to forecast tropical weather show the system hitting the Southeast U.S. between Florida and South Carolina sometime Sunday or later, Masters said.

One computer model, the European, shows the storm crossing Florida and emerging as a major hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico by next week, according to WeatherBell meteorologist Ryan Maue. But the American model, the GFS, does not show that movement.

The most recent hurricane to strike Florida was Wilma in October 2005, AccuWeather said.

A separate system, Tropical Storm Gaston, is projected continue spinning in the central Atlantic. It could become a hurricane later this week, weather officials say. That storm however, is expected to remain over the open Atlantic, though it could stir up strong surf along the eastern shores of Florida, said Scott Spratt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Fla.

Louisiana Flooding Revives FM Chip Argument (Inside Radio)

Inside Radio, August 24, 2016

Each natural disaster presents its own challenges, and the floods that have inundated portions of Southern Louisiana are presenting wireless companies and federal regulators with a now-familiar picture. FM radio stepped in to fill a void left by cellphones rendered useless during an emergency.

"I just cannot thank you guys enough for getting the message out," Denham Springs, LA mayor Gerard Landry said in an appearance on Guaranty Broadcasting's "Talk 107.3" WBRP, Baton Rouge. "I haven't seen a newspaper or watched TV for eight or nine days but everybody has a radio—thank goodness for that," he added.

His comments illustrate the emergency role radio plays during natural disasters, one that broadcasters have repeatedly used as an incentive to wireless companies reluctant to activate FM chips already installed in most cellphones. It's been a tough sell.

"We had stations on the air 24/7 giving out information—this has been horrific and I guess people who are not living here don't understand," Louisiana Association of Broadcasters president Polly Prince Johnson said. "Some of these places didn't have electricity and if the FM chip was on their phones they could have been listening to our local broadcasters who were giving lifesaving information."

Helping to strengthen radio's case was the fact that AT&T suffered a massive outage across the region, leaving a large number of residents and the Louisiana State Police with phones that didn't work. Guaranty Media's Baton Rouge market manager Gordy Rush says when flooding closed a 55-mile stretch of Interstate 12 it left thousands of people stranded on the highway for more than 28 hours with radio as

a lifeline after his stations jerry-rigged a connection to the state police to relay critical information to drivers stuck miles from any exit ramp. “This all played out on the radio,” Rush said.

Johnson says it wasn’t just stuck motorists who were impacted by the cellular outage. It was also families trying to reconnect. “People couldn’t make phone calls for three or four days and then it was sporadic at best—so loved ones were calling the radio stations trying to get the information out,” he explained.

While the wireless industry points out that the new Emergency Alert System sends alerts to cellphones on a localized basis, last week in Louisiana it seems the messages were having the opposite effect as intended. With frequent alerts around the clock, many people whose phones did work became annoyed and switched them off to preserve battery life. “It was a nuisance,” Rush said.

More than a dozen people lost their lives during the Louisiana flooding and while industry lobbyists are likely to tread carefully so as not to appear to be capitalizing on Louisiana’s suffering, those high stakes are what many broadcasters say proves the need for radio on smartphones. “If the FM chip was turned on, people are able to tell them that the water is rising and they should get their stuff and get out,” Johnson said. “It’s in times of disaster when it is so important and it can save lives.”

Added Rush, “This is a matter of life or death.”

After briefly flirting with the idea of lobbying for a federally imposed chip mandate in 2010, the National Association of Broadcasters quickly backed away from the idea. For the past six years, the NAB has instead pushed the telecom industry to activate FM chips on its own. In the ensuing period, Sprint embraced the NextRadio app—which activates the FM chip—three years ago, and by the end of this year, AT&T and T-Mobile will follow Sprint’s lead. The exception is any customer that uses an iPhone since Apple doesn’t include FM radio technology inside its handsets.

“NAB continues to support voluntary activation of FM chips by the carriers,” spokesman Dennis Wharton said. “This is a no-brainer from a public safety perspective, as FEMA’s [administrator] Craig Fugate has noted. We hope all the carriers—along with Apple—will look at the Baton Rouge tragedy as an opportunity to do the right thing and voluntarily light up the chips.”

Back in Louisiana, more than 100,000 households remain without power, but some things are beginning to return to normal. Rush is back at his desk after he jumped from market manager to air personality, spending 32 hours on the air from Friday until Tuesday as some staffers were coping with flooded homes.

Guaranty Media began simulcasting “Talk 107” WBRP on its 100,000-watt classic rock sister “Eagle 98.1” WDGL throughout the storm while country “100.7 The Tiger” WTGE relayed WAFB-TV with station cut-ins. Rush says for a time it looked as though WBRP may have been under threat as its transmitter building was six inches from taking on water after drainage canals backed up and overflowed into its industrial part tower site. Fortunately, the water eventually receded.

Rush, who made it through Hurricane Katrina a decade ago, says the two disasters have left him with an unmistakable conclusion. “Twice now, cellular phones have not been dependable; they’ve failed,” he said, adding, “Radio is a lifeline through this stuff.”

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, August 25, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** Construction will begin on a million-dollar bridge over a spillway at Button Rock Preserve. The previous bridge was destroyed in the 2013 floods, and it will be paid for by FEMA, state and local money.
- **Montana:** *The Billings Gazette* carried a summary of the 35 large wildfires burning in the West at present… About 40 people turned out for a protest in solidarity with the Indians protesting an oil pipeline project in North Dakota.
- **North Dakota:** More stories report on the pipeline protest: Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II has an opinion piece in the *NY Times* explaining the tribe's stand: BBC News carried a piece on the protest; *The Hill*, the D.C. political paper and web site, carried a piece on the lawsuit seeking to stop the project. ("Dakota Access can't begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn't immediately urgent.") Amnesty International will come to observe the protest, citing concerns about law enforcement withdrawing water supplies for the protestors. *The Bismarck Tribune* also carried a piece on the court action in Washington, where the judge said he would rule by September 9.
- **South Dakota:** No FEMA-related stories.
- **Utah:** Utah gave a $1 million grant to its Department of Environmental Quality to study a pervasive algae bloom that has raised public health concerns in the state… A new state director for the BLM has been appointed. He faces a number of challenges in the state, which are highlighted below. … An AP fire roundup noted a Utah fire near the Beaver Mountain ski resort has crossed into Idaho.
- **Wyoming:** Four wildfires are burning within Yellowstone National Park, and a fire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park has caused a one-hour detour through Idaho to access Yellowstone, though all roads within Yellowstone remain open. Both parks are hosting events this week to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: None today

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Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

None today

STORIES

COLORADO

Construction to start on spillway bridge at Longmont's Button Rock Preserve

(Longmont Times-Call)

By Karen Antonacci
Staff Writer

Posted: 08/24/2016 06:24:00 PM MDT

Crews with Lawrence Construction will start work on a new bridge spanning the spillway at Button Rock Preserve in September, according to a city news release.

There used to be a way across the spillway, but it was destroyed in the September 2013 flood.

The new bridge will cost $1,081,000 and is being paid for from Federal Emergency Management Agency, city and state money, Longmont Spokeswoman Jennifer Loper said.

FEMA will reimburse the city for 75 percent of the cost, while Longmont and Colorado will each cover 12.5 percent of the $1,081,000, Loper said.

Lawrence Construction, based in Littleton, also built the Martin Street bridge, Loper said.

Water enters the spillway from Ralph Price Reservoir in order to keep water from overflowing Button Rock Dam.

Construction on the spillway bridge is scheduled to start Sept. 7 and last until May.

"An area west of Longmont Dam Road to the top of the spillway will be closed throughout the work period," Longmont engineer Jason Elkins said in the news release.

Hiking trails within the preserve will remain open throughout construction, but hikers will be rerouted to access the popular North Shore Trail that takes people around the reservoir.

"We will lower the water level at the reservoir to create an access point to North Shore Trail at the top of the spillway," Elkins said in the news release.

Button Rock Preserve is a 3,000-acre property that Longmont owns west of Lyons. The preserve is a protected watershed that provides the majority of the drinking water for Longmont and Lyons.

Many hiking trails and infrastructure at the preserve were wiped out in the flood. The preserve reopened to the public in June 2015.

Karen Antonacci: 303-684-5226, antonaccik@times-call.com or twitter.com/ktonacci

MONTANA

Crews battling 35 large, uncontained wildfires in the West (Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

Updated 4 hrs ago

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Thirty-five large, uncontained wildfires were burning in the West, and firefighters were making initial attacks on another 112 new blazes to prevent them from spreading.

Firefighters in the region mostly faced windy, dry conditions that have fanned flames that destroyed buildings and forced evacuations in California, Washington, Idaho and elsewhere.

Late last week, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, upped what it calls the National Preparedness Level to 4, one shy of the highest level, as competition for limited firefighting resources increased.

Here’s a look at the major wildfires in the West:

CALIFORNIA

Authorities say a wildfire that destroyed 45 homes on California’s central coast was not intentionally set but they were still trying to determine the cause.

Cal Fire says arson has been ruled out in the 10-day blaze that has charred 64 square miles of dry brush and timber.

The fire was 39 percent surrounded and at least 2,400 people were under evacuation orders in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. Additional warnings for people to be ready to flee were issued Wednesday and one arm of Lake Nacimiento was closed to boaters.

Cal Fire’s Rich Eagan says flames were more than two miles from Hearst Castle, which remains closed but was no longer at immediate risk.

A fire burning for a month north of Big Sur grew again to 135 square miles. Hundreds of homes remain threatened by the fire in rugged wilderness coast along Highway 1. The blaze was sparked by an illegal campfire. It is 60 percent contained.

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IDAHO

A fast-moving rangeland wildfire in eastern Idaho expanded to nearly 70 square miles Wednesday, forcing evacuations, threatening a windfarm and burning habitat needed by sage grouse, a federally protected bird.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office says evacuations are in place, with up to 70 buildings along U.S. Highway 26 threatened.

Officials say the human-caused fire reported Sunday about 7 miles east of Idaho Falls is making wind-driven runs to the north and east.

Officials say high winds are again predicted Wednesday along with low humidity.

In central Idaho, a 160-square-mile wildfire in a remote, mountainous area continues to defy containment and burn through timbered slopes that are difficult for firefighters to reach.

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MONTANA

Cooler weather has slowed Montana's largest wildfire, though 45 homes are still evacuated and 130 more are on alert.

The fire northeast of Thompson Falls had burned 33 square miles as of Wednesday morning.

Fire officials say crews have made progress in securing fire lines and protecting structures. The weather was cooperating again Wednesday with lighter winds and higher relative humidity forecast.

Minimal fire activity is also being reported from a fire burning west of Lakeside.

About 75 homes and other structures are within a half-mile of the fire's perimeter. No evacuations have been ordered.

—–

UTAH

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

Connect with the Chronicle on Facebook for the latest news, links and more.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WASHINGTON

Favorable weather conditions helped crews make progress Wednesday against a series of wildfires in Eastern Washington that have burned at least 18 homes this week.

A fire burning on the Spokane Indian Reservation was 30 percent contained. That fire covered more than 27 square miles and had destroyed at least 13 homes on the reservation, said Jamie Sijohn, a spokeswoman for the tribe.

"The devastating fire jumped the Spokane River from Lincoln County onto the Spokane reservation in three separate locations," Sijohn said.

It roared toward the town of Wellpinit, forcing the evacuation of the entire town on Sunday. But that order has since been lifted, Sijohn said.

Meanwhile, a fire near the town of Davenport in Lincoln County covered 6.5 square miles, and was 20 percent contained.

Another fire south of Spokane, in the Valleyford area, was 50 percent contained. It had burned more than 10 square miles and destroyed at least five homes, officials said. Mandatory evacuations ended on that fire on Tuesday night.

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WYOMING

Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season were facing an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hope cooler weather slows the flames over the next couple of days.

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

NORTH DAKOTA

Taking a Stand at Standing Rock (New York Times)

By DAVID ARCHAMBAULT II
AUG. 24, 2016

Near Cannon Ball, N.D. — It is a spectacular sight: thousands of Indians camped on the banks of the Cannonball River, on the edge of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Our elders of the Seven Council Fires, as the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation, is known, sit in deliberation and prayer, awaiting a federal court decision on whether construction of a $3.7 billion oil pipeline from the Bakken region to Southern Illinois will be halted.

The Sioux tribes have come together to oppose this project, which was approved by the State of North Dakota and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The nearly 1,200-mile pipeline, owned by a Texas oil company named Energy Transfer Partners, would snake across our treaty lands and through our ancestral burial grounds. Just a half-mile from our reservation boundary, the proposed route crosses the Missouri River, which provides drinking water for millions of Americans and irrigation water for thousands of acres of farming and ranching lands.

Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014. Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe’s cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company’s assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

The Dakota Access pipeline was fast-tracked from Day 1 using the Nationwide Permit No. 12 process, which grants exemption from environmental reviews required by the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act by treating the pipeline as a series of small

construction sites. And unlike the better-known Keystone XL project, which was finally canceled by the Obama administration last year, the Dakota Access project does not cross an international border — the condition that mandated the more rigorous federal assessment of the Keystone pipeline's economic justification and environmental impacts.

The Dakota Access route is only a few miles shorter than what was proposed for the Keystone project, yet the government's environmental assessment addressed only the portion of the pipeline route that traverses federal land. Domestic projects of this magnitude should clearly be evaluated in their totality — but without closer scrutiny, the proposal breezed through the four state processes.

Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests. In recent weeks, the state has militarized my reservation, with road blocks and license-plate checks, low-flying aircraft and racial profiling of Indians. The local sheriff and the pipeline company have both called our protest "unlawful," and Gov. Dalrymple has declared a state of emergency.

It's a familiar story in Indian Country. This is the third time that the Sioux Nation's lands and resources have been taken without regard for tribal interests. The Sioux peoples signed treaties in 1851 and 1868. The government broke them before the ink was dry.

When the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Missouri River in 1958, it took our riverfront forests, fruit orchards and most fertile farmland to create Lake Oahe. Now the Corps is taking our clean water and sacred places by approving this river crossing. Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity.

Protecting water and our sacred places has always been at the center of our cause. The Indian encampment on the Cannonball grows daily, with nearly 90 tribes now represented. Many of us have been here before, facing the destruction of homelands and waters, as time and time again tribes were ignored when we opposed projects like the Dakota Access pipeline.

Our hand continues to be open to cooperation, and our cause is just. This fight is not just for the interests of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, but also for those of our neighbors on the Missouri River: The ranchers and farmers and small towns who depend on the river have shown overwhelming support for our protest.

As American citizens, we all have a responsibility to speak for a vision of the future that is safe and productive for our grandchildren. We are a peaceful people and our tribal council is committed to nonviolence; it is our constitutional right to express our views and take this stand at the Cannonball camp. Yet the lieutenant governor of North Dakota, Drew Wrigley, has threatened to use his power to end this historic, peaceful gathering.

We are also a resilient people who have survived unspeakable hardships in the past, so we know what is at stake now. As our songs and prayers echo across the prairie, we need the public to see

that in standing up for our rights, we do so on behalf of the millions of Americans who will be affected by this pipeline.

As one of our greatest leaders, Chief Sitting Bull of the Hunkpapa Lakota, once said: “Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” That appeal is as relevant today as it was more than a century ago.

David Archambault II is the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

Protests over huge N Dakota oil pipeline (BBC)

24 August 2016

More than 100 protesters have gathered in Washington DC to express their fears about a huge oil pipeline which will cross four states in the western US.

The $3.7bn (£2.8bn) Dakota Access pipeline has prompted huge protests, notably in North Dakota where Native Americans have halted its construction.

It will run 1,168 miles through Iowa, Illinois, and North and South Dakotas.

US District Judge James Boasberg said on Wednesday he will make a decision on the issue by 9 September.

Outside the court in the US capital, environmental activists made their feelings clear.

They believe the transporting of up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil a day will imperil local waterways.

The company behind the pipeline, Energy Transport Partners, has said the project will boost local economies and is much safer than transporting oil by rail or road. But protesters disagree.

Activists Desiree Fairooz and Lenny Bianchi were among the demonstrators outside the court, where a federal judge was set to consider the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's request for an injunction that would effectively block the pipeline's construction.

"We're concerned about the Native Americans and the threat to their water supply but we're also concerned about the fossil fuel issue," said Mr Bianchi, a Blue Mountain, Virginia native.

"We don't feel that we should be building pipelines, we feel that the money should instead be spent on alternative sources of energy."

Protesters gather outside the US District Court while awaiting a judge's decision on whether to issue an injunction against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Dozens of protesters convened outside the US District Court, with environmental activists and members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe uniting behind one message - water is life.

The crowd was studded with signs bearing the words "native lives matter", "water is life" and "be on the right side of history, no DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]."

Valentine Little Shield, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota, took a bus to Washington to show her support for the Standing Rock Nation Tribe.

Ms Little Shield describes the contested pipeline as personal. Her grandchildren use the waters where the pipeline poses a threat to swim, fish and bathe their horses.

"I'm here because of my grandkids and what they're going to go through," she said. "They can't drink the oil, they can't take a bath in the oil."

Generations of native Americans, both young and old, took turns sharing personal accounts of why halting the pipeline was important to them as crowd broke into battle cries and pounded tribal drums.

"We're not here to protest, we're here to protect," said Lance Frazier, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

But for many, the pipeline symbolises a deeper issue among Native Americans.

Denise Desiderio, the policy director for the National Congress of American Indians, called the unilateral support of tribes across the country a "historic" moment.

"We need to make sure our tribal voice is heard and when we raise our voice, we need to make sure it transcends this issue," she said, noting the important symbolism of land to the Native American community.

"We have had enough lands taken away, we can't let what we have left be destroyed."

Hundreds of people have been occupying one of the construction sites in North Dakota, where tensions have been running high between demonstrators, police and builders.

Judge hears tribe's argument against ND pipeline (The Hill)

By Devin Henry - 08/24/16 04:13 PM EDT

Opponents of a major North Dakota pipeline project brought their case to federal court Wednesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe told a federal district judge that the government didn’t consult the tribe before approving a route for the pipeline of energy company Dakota Access, which is to run close to sacred and environmental sites in North Dakota.

They worry a breach in the pipeline will imperil the Missouri River, which runs near the project.

The tribe last month sued the Army Corps of Engineers, which approved the pipeline route. On Wednesday, lawyers for the tribe asked District Judge James Boasberg to block construction on the project until the tribe can conduct more assessments of its route.

“The law gives the tribes the opportunity to go out and evaluate the impact on important sites,” Jan Hasselmen, the Earthjustice lawyer representing the tribes, said. “The tribe and other tribes are concerned about impacts all along the length of the pipeline.”

Federal attorneys dismissed the complaint, saying they offered the Standing Rock Sioux the chance to assess the pipeline with them and that the tribe declined, while other tribes in the region took them up on the offer.

“The Corps followed procedure in this case when it actively worked to engage with the plaintiffs, the Standing Rock Sioux,” said federal lawyer Matthew Marinelli.

Dakota Access said it has taken steps to avoid damaging culturally important areas in the region. The company’s attorney, William Leone, told the court, “This is not a cowboy process.”

Early construction on the pipeline route is mostly complete in North Dakota, and the focal point of Wednesday’s hearing was on its route under the Lake Oahe segment of the Missouri River.

Dakota Access can’t begin clearing space for the pipeline there until after an easement is cleared by federal regulators and is submitted to Congress, so issuing an injunction against the construction isn’t immediately urgent. Boasberg said he will try to decide the case within two weeks.

The 1,170-mile, $3.7 billion Dakota Access project would carry 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois. Tribal groups have waged legal battles against the pipeline for months, and the project has drawn protests from tribes in North Dakota and anti-pipeline activists around the country.

Wednesday’s hearing was preceded by a rally outside the federal district court building in Washington, D.C., with tribal representatives and allies slamming federal energy policies that they say minimize tribal input. The protest drew celebrity activists like actresses Susan Sarandon and Shailene Woodley.

In North Dakota, protests against Dakota Access have landed up to 20 people in jail. Construction on the pipeline has stopped, and a federal judge in North Dakota has issued a restraining order against protesters at the site.

He will hear arguments on issuing an injunction against the protests in early September.

Amnesty International to observe pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune)

JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune

Amnesty International has sent a delegation of human rights observers to monitor the law enforcement response to the camp protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline under the Missouri River.

Thousands of people, including members of at least 60 Native American tribes, have camped out south of Mandan near the construction site of the pipeline -- which, if completed, will take Bakken oil to Illinois.

Tarah Demant, a spokeswoman for the delegation, said the international human rights organization has been concerned about reports that the state of North Dakota took away water resources that had been provided to protesters.

“We are concerned about the health and safety of protesters,” she said.

State-owned trailers and water tanks were removed earlier this week from the protest camp after reports of unlawful activity stoked fears among state officials that equipment would not be secure.

Amnesty International sent identical letters to North Dakota Highway Patrol Col. Michael Gerhart and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier to remind them of how officials are called upon to act during protests according to international human rights standards and the U.S. Constitution.

The letters discuss use of force, decisions to break up protests and how those decisions should be communicated, the use of detention and other issues.

Demant said Amnesty International only recently began sending observers to protests within the United States to ensure that law enforcement officials were protecting the right to peaceful protest, though the organization has a long history of such observations internationally. It has not previously visited North Dakota for that purpose.

The delegation arrived in Bismarck midafternoon Wednesday and had not yet traveled to the protest camp.

“Our hope is that we won’t have anything to report,” Demant said.

North Dakota Highway Patrol Lt. Tom Iverson and Donnell Preskey, a spokeswoman for the Morton County Sheriff’s Department, said they were not aware of any communications between local enforcement and Amnesty International. The group’s arrival will not change anything about how the patrol approaches the protest, Iverson said.

“Our message remains the same,” he said. “We need to keep everybody safe and promote safety for everybody involved — protesters, workers, law enforcement and the motoring public.”

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction (Bismarck Tribune)

JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

“A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million,” the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.

Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

“Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court,” Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe’s historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

“It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them,” Tsosie said.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH

$1 million hardship grant awarded for Utah Lake study (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 3:50 p.m. MDT

Algae is seen floating near the shoreline at Utah Lake State Park in Provo on Friday, July 15, 2016. Public health officials decided to close the lake due to the large bloom. It was reopened on July 28, 2016. *Spenser Heaps, Deseret News*

Summary
The Water Quality Board awarded $1 million in a hardship grant to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality to continue its nutrient pollution probe of Utah Lake. This summer's pervasive algal bloom has created widespread public health worries.

SALT LAKE CITY —The second phase of a Utah Lake nutrient study to probe the algal bloom problem will begin thanks to a $1 million hardship grant awarded Wednesday to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

Members of the Utah Water Quality Board voted to approve the emergency grant in light of the extensive and pervasive spread of cyanobacteria at Utah's third largest lake — a problem that began early in the season and has been unprecedented in its scope.

“It’s time for us to take a hard look at the impacts of nutrients on Utah Lake,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. “This study will provide us with the data and tools we need to evaluate the complex chemical and biological factors at play in the lake and make decisions that improve and protect this valuable resource.”

The funding continues a two-phase, four-year water quality study that will evaluate water quality data and look at the nutrient loads — or the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the lake — that is the cause of the harmful algal bloom.

Additional goals include developing tools for effective decision-making and involving partners and interested groups in stewardship of the lake's health.

Utah Lake was closed to public access for two weeks in mid-July because of an algal bloom that covered most of its surface. Lincoln Beach has been posted off-limits since the outbreak. The cyanobacteria can produce toxins that can be deadly to domestic animals and cause severe symptoms in people.

The bloom eventually spread to the Jordan River, and subsequent blooms have been reported at Payson Lake and Scofield Reservoir.

Multiple southern Salt Lake County communities suspended delivery of secondary water over fear the contamination would pose a health risk to people or make irrigated crops and gardens unsafe for consumption. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has since received lab results that showed no toxins in the produce that may have come in contact with the water.

This week, the Utah County Health Department upgraded two of its advisories based on new test results, elevating the public health warnings at the Saratoga Springs Marina and at Sandy Beach.

Conditions this summer have been ideal for the formation of the blooms. Utah Lake is 4 feet lower than what is typical, and the combination of heat and sunlight helps to foster the growth of algae.

In 2014, the Utah Water Quality Board approved a rule regulating the amount of phosphorus that wastewater treatment plants can discharge into water, including at Utah Lake. The rule, which does not take effect until 2020, requires technology upgrades at the plants to reduce the nutrient's presence in treated effluent.

“The challenges facing Utah Lake affect all of us,” Baker said. "We believe a collaborative, informed and science-based approach is our best hope for finding solutions that meet the needs of the lake, its users and the aquatic life that depend on a healthy lake for their survival.”

BLM gets new Utah director, and land challenges await (Deseret News)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, Aug. 24 2016 4:00 p.m. MDT

Summary

A 37-year veteran of the Bureau of Land Management has been selected to lead state operations in Utah, a position that has been without a permanent head for a year. Edwin Roberson was director of the BLM's National Operations Center.

SALT LAKE CITY — The Bureau of Land Management announced Wednesday that an agency veteran will lead Utah operations, filling the shoes of Juan Palma, who left more than a year ago.

Edwin L. Roberson, a 37-year career leader with the BLM, comes to the Utah post after serving as director of the BLM National Operations Center in Denver, where he oversaw the agency's operational and technical support for information technology, finance and human resources.

Roberson also served in top leadership roles in New Mexico and held senior level positions in Washington, D.C., including a seven-year tenure as the BLM's assistant director for renewable resources and planning, a position that oversees a number of BLM resource programs.

"Ed is a good listener, a proven coalition-builder and a natural leader. We are fortunate to have his experience and expertise in Utah," said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "Ed has guided some of the agency's most important work during his career, and his experience working with local communities makes him the perfect fit for this job."

Roberson will lead an agency at the forefront of the public lands controversy in Utah, where frustrated rural leaders have challenged BLM road closures by participating in ATV rides that left them with federal criminal convictions.

In Salt Lake City, the Utah BLM offices became the first in the country to postpone an oil and gas lease sale because of a protest planned by the Keep It in the Ground Movement.

Law enforcement contracts between the BLM and local sheriff offices have also been a source of rural strife, with multiple county commissioners traveling to Washington, D.C., to demand personnel changes due to accusations of a "rogue" agent who has soured relations.

Ranchers have also sued the U.S. Department of Interior over what they say is mismanagement of the wild horse and burro populations that have degraded rangeland conditions and threatened their livelihood.

On the flip side, the BLM has been a tempest for wild horse enthusiasts who say the agency favors grazers over native horse populations and institutes "cruel" roundups that injure or kill the horses.

Utah, too, is among several states in the West that are suing over BLM management plans on the imperiled sage grouse. States say cornerstones of their own sage grouse conservation plans were ignored in federal plans they assert are too restrictive and not based on science.

As head of the often embattled agency, Roberson will lead a team that administers 23 million acres of public lands and 32 million acres of minerals and energy resources in Utah.

Roberson, who begins his new job Oct. 3, has bachelor's and master's degrees in urban planning from Auburn University in Alabama.

The Latest: Fire Near Utah Ski Resort Crosses Idaho Border (AP)

Associated Press, August 24, 2016
SAN SIMEON, Calif. — The Latest on wildfires burning in the West (all times local):
11:50 a.m.

Firefighters in northern Utah are working to contain a growing wildfire near a ski resort that's now crossed the border into southern Idaho.

Fire spokeswoman Sierra Hellstrom said Wednesday that wind and high temperatures Tuesday afternoon had pushed the fire to 1.4 square miles.

It's burning about 23 miles northwest of Logan, and about one-fourth of a mile from the Beaver Mountain Ski Resort, which was on pre-evacuation notice this week.

Hellstrom says no buildings are imminently threatened at the resort.

WYOMING

Yellowstone tourists face detour for fire but landmarks open (Associated Press)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Some tourists heading to Yellowstone National Park during the busy summer season faced an hourlong detour Wednesday as a wildfire in neighboring Grand Teton National Park kept a highway closed.

Major tourist areas in both parks are open as the National Park Service holds events to celebrate its 100th anniversary this week. A route leading into Yellowstone's South Entrance was shut down, so visitors coming from the south through Wyoming had to take a detour into Idaho.

But firefighters hoped cooler weather would help slow the flames over the next couple of days.

"Yellowstone National Park is open for business," fire spokesman Bill Swartley said.

U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell is set to visit Yellowstone on Thursday, and no changes have been made to her plans because of the fire, Swartley said.

The fire in Grand Teton has burned about 11 square miles since lightning sparked it last month, forcing the evacuation of about 50 people from a lodge and cabin operation and several campgrounds. Thirty horses also have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, four fires were burning inside Yellowstone, but all major visitor areas and roads were open.

The largest blaze spans about 42 square miles between the community of West Yellowstone, Montana, and Madison Junction, an area in the park with a campground, visitor facilities and staff housing. Lightning ignited it Aug. 8.

Swartley said the fires were mostly being allowed to burn because they were not threatening major tourist areas.

"These fires are being managed as basically a good fire for the ecology and then, of course, if there's anything getting close to cultural resources or public resources, structures, the fire is being engaged," he said.

A 10-mile stretch of U.S. 89/191/287 has been closed since Monday after flames leaped across it and were burning near the highway. The prospects for reopening the route are “not good in the near future” because the fire was close to the highway, fire spokeswoman Karen Miranda said.

Travelers coming from the south via the Jackson Hole area can still access Yellowstone through Idaho and the West Entrance. The detour adds a little over an hour to the drive to Old Faithful.

The fire is burning on both sides of the northern portion of Jackson Lake, but no buildings have been lost. More than 100 firefighters, supported by helicopters, are battling the flames.

Cooler temperatures and higher humidity were expected over the next couple of days and should help firefighters, Miranda said.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

None today

Region VIII Clips

Friday, August 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A "National Cybersecurity Center" in Colorado Springs will hire a CEO next month and host a national conference in November.
- **Montana:** Nine counties are in severe drought status.
- **North Dakota:** More pipeline protest stories: the NY Times details who wants what; the Bismarck Tribune reports the builders do not yet have a written easement from the Corps, though they do have permission to get the easement; the Tribune also reports on camp life among the protesters; National Public Radio did an overview piece. Snopes.com refuted social media reports that the state had cut off water to the protesters.
- **South Dakota:** The Sioux Falls Argus Leader looks back at the flood a year ago.
- **Utah:** Toxic sediments continue to flow into the American Fork River. It is hoped that by today a diversion will have been built around the lake to allow water to continue to flow down the river without continuing contamination. Health officials have not yet finished analyzing the water or issued guidelines as to how to respond.
- **Wyoming:** Maps show where the Yellowstone Park fires stood earlier this week…. *The Billings Gazette* reports that both fire and ice hampered the park yesterday.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: An environmental column in Politico.com today includes several items of interest: environmentalists trying to recreate the coalition that stopped the Keystone pipeline to fight the Dakota Access pipeline; a comment by a judge in the pipeline case that may show he leans toward an injunction; affordable flood insurance becoming an issue in the Louisiana Senate race; a GAO study that supports FEMA's position saying community-based flood insurance won't work; an old Florida dike that may be vulnerable to the approaching storm… Yahoo news reports on competing hurricane forecasts.

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North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who’s Fighting and Why (NY Times)

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

UTAH:

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

WYOMING:

Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State’s Favor (Yahoo News)

STORIES

COLORADO

Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs to hire CEO and host national conference (Colorado Springs Gazette)

By: Wayne Heilman

The National Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs plans to hire a CEO next month and will host officials from across the country at a three-day conference in November at The Broadmoor.

A four-person search committee from among the center's 12 directors will conduct interviews and make a recommendation to the board, which plans to select the CEO by mid- to late September, said Eric Hopfenbeck, the center's deputy executive director. Hopfenbeck was speaking at a panel discussion Wednesday about the facility held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel. The board began the nationwide search process in early July with help from Heidrick & Struggles International Inc., a Chicago-based executive search firm. The company helped create a job description and determine pay and other details about the position.

"The budget, staff and management structure (of the center) will be determined after the CEO is hired," Hopfenbeck said. "We are still in the development stage, so we are collecting contact information from consultants, partners and subject-matter experts who want to support the NCC."

The center's three-person staff is headed by retired Army Lt. Gen. Ed Anderson, who serves as interim executive director and also is executive director of strategic, military, science, space and security initiatives for University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak.

The panel discussion was part of a two-day cybersecurity training and technology forum hosted by the Colorado Springs chapter of the Information Systems Security Association that also included a keynote address by Mark Weatherford, a NCC board member who also is a former deputy undersecretary for cybersecurity of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The newly hired CEO will have a major role in organizing a three-day National Cybersecurity Institute the center will host Nov. 13-15 at The Broadmoor for invited guests that include governors and attorneys general of all 50 states plus an undisclosed number of mayors and county commissioners, Hopfenbeck said. The event will bring real-time information on the latest cyber trends, security, best practices and education resources to the elected officials to help them better protect government computer systems, networks and critical public assets.

The conference will be the center's public launch. A Rapid Response Center to help small- to mid-sized businesses, nonprofits and government agencies combat and recover from cyber attacks, and a Cyber Research, Education and Training Center that will conduct research on cybersecurity threats and develop a cybersecurity workforce through education programs at UCCS and other schools around the state and nation, are expected to begin operations by next summer. UCCS is meeting with other colleges and universities to develop a cybersecurity curriculum, Hopfenbeck said.

The center also will work with the Western Cyber Exchange and Air Force CyberWorx. The exchange is a 5-year-old group started to strengthen local cybersecurity measures, attract more workers to the industry and share information about cyber attacks and how to prevent and defend against them. The exchange also operates the nation's only Information Sharing and Analysis Organization focused on the private sector. CyberWorx, formerly the Air Force Cyber Innovation Center, does research and testing of cyber security issues and technology at the Air Force Academy.

The center has received three proposals from contractors for renovations to a former TRW manufacturing plant at 3650 N. Nevada Ave. Renovations will be funded by nearly $8 million included in legislation signed into law by Gov. John Hickenlooper in May. A contractor is expected to be selected by mid-September. The building is owned by UCCS and will become the center's permanent home when renovations are complete. The center is operating from temporary offices at 1867 Austin Bluffs Parkway, Suite 200, across from the east end of the UCCS campus.

MONTANA

Lewis and Clark among 9 Montana counties in severe drought, 11 more under alert (Helena Independent Record)

TOM KUGLIN Independent Record

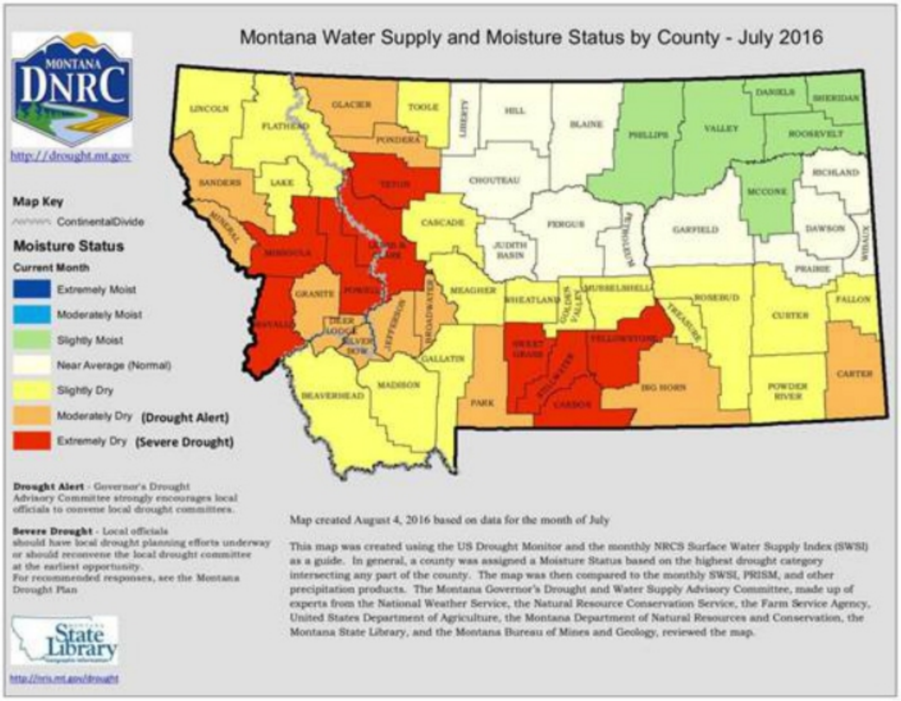
State officials say Lewis and Clark County is among nine in Montana that reached “severe drought” status Thursday, while another 11 counties have hit “drought alert.”

Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney is chairman of the Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee. He says the region has had two years of low snowpack, early runoff and little moisture under the soil.

The alert and severe designation are intended “to give high visibility to the continuing impacts of drought in affected areas, to prompt communication among stakeholders, and to direct state agencies to take the steps identified in the Montana Drought Response Plan to mitigate the impacts of drought,” Cooney wrote in a letter to county commissioners.

The counties in severe drought are Lewis and Clark, Powell, Teton, Missoula, Sweet Grass, Stillwater, Carbon and Yellowstone.

The seven counties put on alert status Thursday are Broadwater, Jefferson, Silver Bow, Granite, Mineral, Park and Big Horn. Glacier, Pondera, Carter and Sanders counties were previously on drought alert.



Montana Water Supply and Moisture Status by County - July 2016

MONTANA
DNRC
http://drought.mt.gov
Map Key
ContinentalDivide
Moisture Status
Current Month
Extremely Moist
Moderately Moist
Slightly Moist
Near Average (Normal)
Slightly Dry
Moderately Dry (Drought Alert)
Extremely Dry (Severe Drought)
LINCOLN
FLATHEAD
GLACIER
TOOLE
LIBERTY
HILL
BLAINE
PHILLIPS
VALLEY
DANIELS
SHERIDAN
ROOSEVELT
PONDERA
SANDERS
LAKE
TETON
CHOUTEAU
RICHLAND
MCCONE
MINERAL
MISSOULA
LEWIS & CLARK
CASCADE
JUDITH BASIN
FERGUS
PETROLEUM
GARFIELD
DAWSON
WIBAUX
PRAIRIE
GRANITE
POWELL
MEAGHER
WHEATLAND
GOLDEN VALLEY
MUSSELSHELL
ROSEBUD
CUSTER
FALLON
RAVALLI
DEER LODGE
SILVER BOW
JEFFERSON
BROADWATER
SWEET GRASS
STILLWATER
YELLOWSTONE
TREASURE
GALLATIN
BEAVERHEAD
MADISON
PARK
CARBON
BIG HORN
POWDER RIVER
CARTER
State Library
http://nris.mt.gov/drought

Drought Alert - Governor's Drought Advisory Committee strongly encourages local officials to convene local drought committees.

Severe Drought - Local officials should have local drought planning efforts underway or should reconvene the local drought committee at the earliest opportunity.
For recommended responses, see the Montana Drought Plan

Map created August 4, 2016 based on data for the month of July

This map was created using the US Drought Monitor and the monthly NRCS Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) as a guide. In general, a county was assigned a Moisture Status based on the highest drought category intersecting any part of the county. The map was then compared to the monthly SWSI, PRISM, and other precipitation products. The Montana Governor's Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee, made up of experts from the National Weather Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency, United States Department of Agriculture, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, the Montana State Library, and the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, reviewed the map.

DNRC

Neither the alert nor the severe designations carry any official status with respect to state or federal disaster assistance programs.

The severe designation prompts county commissioners and disaster and emergency services coordinators to document any economic, health and safety emergencies that warrant either state or federal dollars, according to DNRC drought coordinator Ada Montague.

The alert status prompts local officials to document crop or livestock loss or impacts that could then trigger federal disaster assistance, she added.

“At the local level, certain watersheds have voluntarily developed local drought response plans, namely the Blackfoot, the Big Hole and the Jefferson,” Montague wrote in an email. “This is where water right holders have worked together to determine proper triggers and response mechanisms for individual water bodies.”

Montana’s drought plan was written in 1995 and the state is currently in the process of updating it, she said.

Lewis and Clark County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Paul Spengler says the driest portions of the county are in the north and along the Rocky Mountain Front. The Helena Valley is also seeing about a 2-inch shortfall on precipitation this year, he said.

The drought does affect irrigators that tap creeks or streams and dry-land farmers, but those on the Helena Valley Irrigation District drawing from the Missouri River are not limited, said Jim Foster with the district.

Irrigators depending on the Sun River, suffering from particularly low snow pack, have seen their water usage cut early this year.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Oil Pipeline Battle: Who’s Fighting and Why (NY Times)

By JACK HEALYAUG. 26, 2016

A protester rode a horse through the construction site for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in south central North Dakota. Credit Daniella Zalcman for The New York Times

This week, an impassioned fight over a 1,170-mile oil pipeline moved from the prairies of North Dakota to a federal courtroom in Washington. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose reservation lies just south of the pipeline’s charted path across ranches and under the Missouri River, has asked a judge to halt construction. The American Indian tribe argues that a leak or spill could be ruinous.

It may take until Sept. 9 for a federal judge to decide whether to allow the Dakota Access pipeline to move ahead, or grant an injunction that would press the pause button on construction.

Here is a look at how the battle over the pipeline has become an environmental and cultural flash point, stirring passion across the Plains and drawing hundreds of protesters to camp out in rural North Dakota.

What Is Happening in North Dakota?

American Indians have been gathering since April outside Cannon Ball, a town in south central North Dakota near the South Dakota border, to protest the Dakota Access pipeline as construction commences. Starting with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the protest has since grown to several hundred people — estimates vary — most of them from tribes across the country.

The protesters have encamped in a field belonging to the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Each day, they march a mile up a highway to a construction site where preparatory work is being done for the pipeline. While the protesters say they are peaceful, there have been reports of heated confrontations with law enforcement officers and construction workers, and 20 people have been arrested. Construction on a road to the pipeline has stopped for the moment. The pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, has sued several protesters, claiming they have threatened and intimidated contractors and were blocking work at the site.

What Does Each Side Want?

The Dakota Access pipeline is a $3.7 billion project that would carry 470,000 barrels of oil a day from the oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois, where it would be linked with other pipelines. Energy Transfer says the pipeline will pump millions of dollars into local economies and create 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs — though far fewer permanent jobs to maintain and monitor the pipeline.

Members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe see the pipeline as a major environmental and cultural threat. They say its route traverses ancestral lands — which are not part of the reservation — where their forebears hunted, fished and were buried. They say historical and cultural reviews of the land where the pipeline will be buried were inadequate. They also worry about catastrophic environmental damage if the pipeline were to break near where it crosses under the Missouri River.

What About Protests in North Dakota?

For the moment, the mood there is calm, but anxious. North Dakota’s governor has declared a state of emergency there, and law enforcement has barricaded the main highway leading to the protest site and the campers.

Hundreds of people are camped out about a mile down the road from the construction site. They say they are there to pray and protest peacefully, but some people are worried that the situation could turn volatile if work resumes at the site or the government tries to disband the camp.

Are Others Fighting the Pipeline?

Yes. State and federal agencies have approved the pipeline, and some farmers and ranchers have welcomed the thousands of dollars in payments that came with signing agreements to allow it to across their land. But others oppose the pipeline.

In Iowa, one of the four states that the pipeline would traverse, some farmers have gone to court to keep it off their land. They say that Iowa regulators were wrong to grant the pipeline company the power of eminent domain to force its way through their farms. Most landowners in the 346-mile path of the pipeline through Iowa, however, have signed easements allowing it to be built across their land.

American Indians vs. Dakota Pipeline

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and others are protesting the Dakota Access pipeline, which they say threatens water supplies and sacred lands.

How Many Pipelines Cross the United States?

The United States has a web of 2.5 million miles of pipelines that carry products like oil and natural gas, pumping them to processing and treatment plants, power plants, homes and businesses. Most of the lines are buried, but some run above ground.

While a natural gas line to a newly built subdivision is not likely to generate national controversy, proposed major pipelines like the Keystone XL, the Dakota Access or the Sandpiper in northern Minnesota have generated huge opposition from environmental groups and people living in their paths.

How Safe Are Pipelines?

Energy companies and their federal overseer, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, promote the safety record of pipelines. Pipeline companies say it is far safer to move oil and natural gas in an underground pipe than in rail cars or trucks, which can crash and create huge fires.

But pipeline spills and ruptures occur regularly, sometimes in small leaks and sometimes in catastrophic gushers. In 2013, a Tesoro Logistics pipeline in North Dakota broke open and spilled 865,000 gallons of oil onto a farm. In 2010, an Enbridge Energy pipeline dumped more than 843,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, resulting in a cleanup that lasted years and cost more than a billion dollars, according to Inside Climate News.

In a 2012 examination of pipeline safety, ProPublica reported that more than half of the country's pipelines were at least 50 years old. Critics cited aging pipelines and scant federal oversight as factors that put public health and the environment at risk.

For breaking news and in-depth reporting, follow @NYTNational on Twitter.

Corps says pipeline still needs water-crossing easement (Bismarck Tribune)

- LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune
-

Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II, center, is surrounded by family and friends following his address to the council fire gathering at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment Thursday after returning from a federal court room in Washington, D.C.

MORTON COUNTY — While hundreds are settling in for the long haul at an encampment to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Thursday that the pipeline developer, Energy Transfer Partners, does not yet have a written easement to build the pipeline on corps property.

Corps spokesman Larry Janis said the easement is still under review, though the agency did issue Section 408 permission in late July that allows the easement to be written.

"They can't build the project by accessing corps property from west to east across Lake Oahe," Janis said of any current construction.

That could partly explain the company's decision Aug. 18 to voluntarily stop construction at its work site just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation near the Missouri River-Lake Oahe, where an active protest led to 28 arrests. The company has since received a federal court restraining order to prevent all arrestees — including tribal chairman Dave Archambault — and any "Jane and John Doe" from being at the work site and places such violations in federal, not district court.

The stopped work also stopped active protest, and protesters have since held prayer circles and other gatherings in the camp area about 1 mile south.

The realization that the company still does not have an actual easement surfaced Wednesday in a federal district court in Washington, D.C., where the Sioux tribe's request for an injunction to stop the pipeline pending its suit against the corps was heard. The court judge said he wants more time to study whether the corps failed to follow the National Historic Preservation Act and other federal laws in its environmental review of the project. The judge said he will rule on the injunction Sept. 9.

"Everybody thought they had it (easement)," said attorney Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network. "This is really important information."

Raffensperger is among four attorneys volunteering legal services to the tribe and the individuals who were or may be arrested.

They addressed several hundred circled around the council fire mid-day Thursday; a cool, breezy day that called for blankets and jackets. They said legal issues may get worse for the state of North Dakota and other agencies.

Amnesty International observers were in the camp Thursday and an observer from the United Nations is scheduled to be in camp Tuesday, said Phyllis Young, the Standing Rock camp coordinator.

Young said the tribe is alleging racial discrimination for acts including a police barricade on Highway 1806 near Mandan that detours anyone going home to the reservation, but gives access to everyone else north of the reservation, and airplane surveillance.

"We are exploring the defense of that roadblock. There's nothing to warrant that kind of lockdown," said Angela Bibens, an attorney.

The roadblock is manned 24 hours a day by North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers and other cooperating agencies. Bibens urged anyone with an outstanding warrant or unpaid child support to refrain from getting arrested to prevent their personal problems from getting worse. She said only people with a clean record should consider themselves arrest-able.

Meanwhile, camp managers met Thursday to discuss logistics now that it appears the camp, with anywhere from 500 to 2,000 people in tents and tepees, will stay active until the court's injunction decision Sept. 9.

Johnelle Leingang, an emergency manager, said a noticeable number of people left the camp after Wednesday's news that the injunction decision would be delayed.

"The majority are coming back, and the head cook said she'll provide the same amount of food for 2,500 people," Leingang said.

The camp is actually three camps: the main Seven Council camp on the north side of the Cannonball River, the Rosebud camp across the river and the original Sacred Stone Spirit camp further southeast.

Even as a small group from the Arizona Navajo Nation that brought meat and produce to the campers earlier this week packed up to go home Thursday, a group of eight Native Descendants from California rode in on motorcycles to stay through the weekend.

"It was a beautiful drive. We had the heart and the spirit to get here and, if we could stay longer, we would. This is history in the making," Anthony Cuevas, said.

Chairman Archambault, who this week had an opinion piece on the protest published in the New York Times, spoke at the council fire after returning from the D.C. court hearing.

He expressed gratitude for the support from tribal nations around the country and for the peaceful prayerful nature of the camp.

“When this is done, if it’s ever done, they will remember the people who live on reservations. What I see today is unbelievable. The prayers are never-ending," said Archambault, adding that the protest has caught the attention of the nation.

Reach Lauren Donovan at 701-220-5511 or lauren@westriv.com.

Protesters adjust to camp life (Bismarck Tribune)

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere on the afternoon of Aug. 18 at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Aug. 17, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Wednesday, when a hearing was held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Aug. 19 no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Aug. 18, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast.

Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

Native Americans Protest New Oil Pipeline In North Dakota (NPR)

August 25, 20164:26 PM ET
Heard on All Things Considered

Amy Sisk

Native Americans and environmentalists are protesting a pipeline slated to carry a half a million barrels of crude daily from North Dakota to Illinois. But the oil industry says the pipeline is safe.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:

A fight over the route of a new pipeline is gaining momentum while it plays out in court. Hundreds of Native Americans from tribes across the United States are protesting in North Dakota. They're setting up camp at the site where the pipeline is slated to cross under the Missouri River. Reporter Amy Sisk of the public radio collaboration Inside Energy says the group is finding an eager ally in environmental groups.

AMY SISK, BYLINE: In what's usually an empty field, there are cars, trucks, teepees and tents surrounding me in a site near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in south central North Dakota. Those protesting here don't want the Dakota Access pipeline built. That pipeline is permitted to cross federal land under the Missouri river a mile north of the reservation border.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: But the tribe is essentially saying not in our backyard.

UNIDENTIFIED CROWD: (Chanting) Keep it in the soil.

SISK: Alice Brownotter is just 12 years old. Today she's leading a crowd of hundreds of protesters.

ALICE BROWNOTTER: When it goes through - or if - and when it breaks, it will affect everyone.

SISK: Like others here, Brownotter worries that if the pipeline leaks, it will affect the drinking water on her reservation. The pipeline is approved to stretch from the Bakken oil fields of western North Dakota to Illinois. Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is building it and says it could carry more than half of North Dakota's daily crude production.

Kari Cutting is with the North Dakota Petroleum Council. She says state-of-the-art equipment will monitor this pipeline, which is a big part of the nation's energy strategy to deliver cheap oil.

KARI CUTTING: This is a product that they desire, they want. They have the markets. They have the people. And we're trying to get it there.

SISK: Safety experts say pipelines are a considerably better way to transport oil. Last year alone, there were more than a half dozen major oil train accidents. But still, it's pipelines that remain the focus of opposition by environmental groups.

Jason Kowalski's with the group 350.org and says environmental groups like his oppose pipelines with the hope of keeping oil in the ground. Despite their efforts, drilling continues, and the oil is transported in other ways. But the groups did successfully block the Keystone XL pipeline slated to bring tar sands crude from Canada to U.S. refineries. The Obama administration rejected it last year.

JASON KOWALSKI: People took a warm-up lap with Keystone. We all focused on one pipeline for a few years.

SISK: This pipeline is their latest target. It's here in this remote part of North Dakota where hundreds of people are now camped out in the grassy prairie close to the construction. That site is near but not on the reservation. Further north in Bismarck, trains carrying oil safely cross Missouri River bridges every day. Jon Eagle Sr. is Standing Rock's historic preservation officer. Today he's rallying the protesters with his microphone.

JON EAGLE SR: For two years, we've been holding them off, waiting for you to come. Hey, well, now you're here with us.

(SOUNDBITE OF ULULATION)

SISK: The protests forced a halt in construction last week. The Standing Rock tribe requested a preliminary injunction, arguing that the U.S. Army Corps which approved the pipeline in July failed to adequately consider its impact on sacred sites. A U.S. district court judge heard arguments yesterday and is expected to rule in two weeks.

Meanwhile, North Dakota's governor has declared an emergency in this area, and more than two dozen protesters have been arrested. But protest organizers say they're not going anywhere and are committed to protesting this pipeline peacefully. For NPR News, I'm Amy Sisk.

MCEVERS: Inside Energy is a public radio collaboration focused on America's energy issues.

Dakota Banning (snopes.com)

Social media rumors inaccurately reported water was cut off to Native Americans protesting against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Updated: Aug 25, 2016

CLAIM: The state cut off water access to Native Americans protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

⊗ mostly false

WHAT'S TRUE: The state supplied two supplemental water tanks as part of ongoing support for tribal protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, but those tanks were removed after they were determined to be at a secondary site outside the state's jurisdiction.

WHAT'S FALSE: Neither the state of North Dakota nor the federal Department of Homeland Security cut off the water supply to protesters, and the state provided aid and support to Native American protesters situated on a legal encampment.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Looking back: Flash flood soaked area one year ago (Sioux Falls Argus Leader)

Michael Klinski
Arugs Leader- Sioux Falls
Aug. 26, 2016

More than half a foot of rain fell on parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, sending flash floods ripping across roadways and pouring into basements. No one was hurt, but the waist-deep waters stranded scores of motorists and left hundreds mopping up wet basements.

Rainfall: More than half a foot of rain fell in parts of Sioux Falls Thursday evening, but the downpours were extremely localized. The National Weather Service recorded 2.61 inches at the airport, while Hartford had less than a quarter inch.

Vehicles: Scores of drivers were retrieving water-logged vehicles Friday morning. The phones were ringing off the hook at local towing companies. AAA reported 138 tows between 9 p.m. and 10 a.m.

Buildings: Home and business owners were mopping up after the storm. Hardware stores saw a run on sump pump and ShopVacs. HyVee on South Louise Avenue had two inches of water throughout the store.

No injuries reported. Sioux Falls Fire Rescue said Thursday night that it had no reports of injuries from the storm.

11:06 a.m. via reporter Mark Walker: A spokeswoman for the Empire Mall says rumors about a partial roof collapse are false. All but three stores were open for business. Yonkers was expected to reopen by 11:30 a.m.

11:04 a.m. via reporter Jill Callison: People with peaked roofs generally will come through a rainstorm like Thursday’s with good shape, although the torrents of water may saturate the ground and flood the basement.

Homes and business with flat roofs, however, may experience damage since the water had no place to go, said Laura Woods of Woods Roofing of Canton.

“With flat roofs, it just fills up and can’t get off fast enough,” she said.

However, her company had received few phone calls as of Friday morning. In large part, in a catastrophic situation, it takes a few days before a situation is assessed thoroughly, Woods said.

UTAH

Utah officials still scrambling to stop flow of toxic silt down American Fork (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BRIAN MAFFLY | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 25 2016 07:30PM • Updated 13 minutes ago

Although "best management practices" were to be used to keep Tibble Fork Reservoir's sediments out of the American Fork River, the Utah water district that is rehabilitating the dam drained the reservoir last weekend in a manner that allowed the river to incise a deep channel through 12 feet of potentially toxic muck and push the filth down one of Utah's favorite trout streams. While the water has since cleared somewhat, the sediment releases have continued virtually unabated because water officials cannot shut off releases without dewatering the river.

The North Utah County Water Conservancy District's contractor is now digging a channel and laying pipe to divert the river's flow around 10-acre lake bed, contaminated from a legacy of gold and silver mining in the canyon's headwaters.

"They are working around the clock to do it. We said it would be within four days, and we will beat that schedule," said Brad Price of Provo-based RB&G Engineering, which designed the dam-rehab project. The river's flow should be moving around the lake by the pipe sometime Friday, he said, putting an end to the release of pollution that has been killing fish and fouling the popular canyon outside Provo for nearly a week.

Meanwhile, test results from water samples taken Monday and Tuesday had trickled back, but officials were still analyzing them late Thursday. The Utah Division of Water Quality planned to post the results once analysis was complete. Officials also are awaiting results from sediment and fish samples.

These results are crucial for advising northern Utah County water users how to respond to the crisis. The American Fork River feeds farms and secondary water systems in Highland and surrounding communities where residents were unsure whether they should keep the water off their lawns and gardens. There was enough uncertainty Wednesday that the U.S. Forest Service advised canyon visitors to stay out of the river as a matter of "common sense."

"I chased some kids out of the river [Wednesday] on my way home from work," said Jim Ireland, superintendent of Timpanogos Cave National Monument, which covers about a mile of stream in the lower reaches of the canyon. Monument personnel took water samples Monday that came back showing elevated levels of several metals, according to Ireland.

"We are concerned," he said. "We have a mission to preserve the resources of the monument and this is obviously an impact."

As of Thursday, however, the Utah County Health Department had refrained from advising residents against using the water for irrigating their yards.

Jonny Torrence, an angler who lives in American Fork, is believed to be the first to notice the fouled water when he entered the canyon Sunday evening to take his 3-year-old daughter fishing.

He had fished the canyon three days earlier and pulled 20 brown trout from the river's clear waters. But on Sunday, something was clearly wrong.

"I walked to the river and saw that it was absolutely brown," said Torrence, who snapped photos and alerted a local Trout Unlimited chapter that night. "I walked upriver and saw dead fish everywhere. It was flowing like pudding, it was so thick. By the time I got back to the road, it had gone down 3 or 4 inches because you could see the [deposited sediment] up on the banks that you couldn't see before.

"I was shocked. That's where my dad taught me to fly fish," he continued. "I would have thought it would be managed closer and they would take extreme precautions to prevent something like this."

Officials from the water district and the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which helped fund the dam project, say precautions were taken and that it was expected that the reservoir draw-down would release some sediment.

However, the environmental assessment on the project indicated that no sediments should have escaped down the river. This is because levels of toxic heavy metals, such as arsenic and lead, are so elevated in the lake bed that the material could not be used as fill on the dam, whose crest will be raised 15 feet.

"The top layer of soil containing heavy metals would be tested, and any locations that exceed screening levels would not be disturbed," states the document, which the NRCS prepared. "These contaminated soils are not expected to be transported downstream and would therefore not affect the surrounding environment. Proper use of BMPs" — best management practices — "and timing of construction would almost eliminate contaminated soils from moving downstream during earth-disturbing activities."

Critics believe the heavy sediment releases would have been avoidable had the reservoir draw-down been better managed. Water flows into the reservoir at a rate of 12 cubic feet per second (cfs) from American Fork River and another 4 cfs from a side stream called Deer Creek, just a few hundred feet upstream of the dam. The plan was to release water at 40 cfs.

The actual rate of release remains a matter of dispute. But whatever the rate, it was apparently too fast, according to Brian Wimmer, president of the Trout Unlimited chapter that has been monitoring the spill and its aftermath.

A properly controlled release would have slowed the water flowing across the sediment bed once the reservoir emptied.

WYOMING

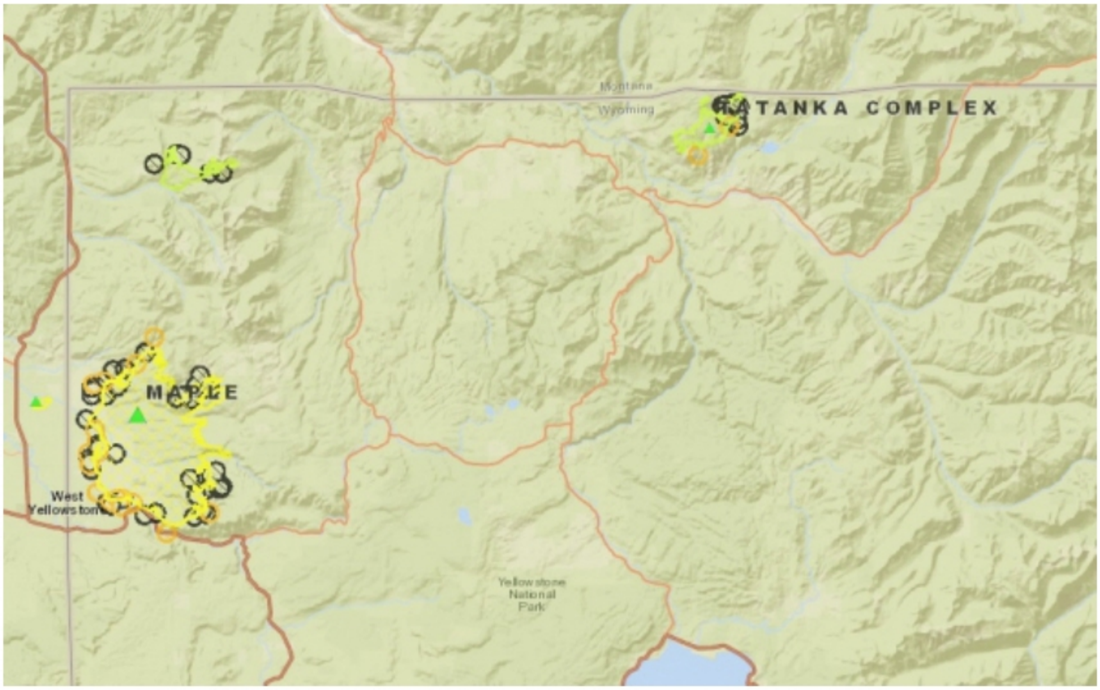
Yellowstone Park Fires [MAPS] Latest Updates on Maple, Buffalo and Fawn Fires in Wyoming, Montana Border (Latin Post)

By **Glenn Minnis** (**staff@latinpost.com**)

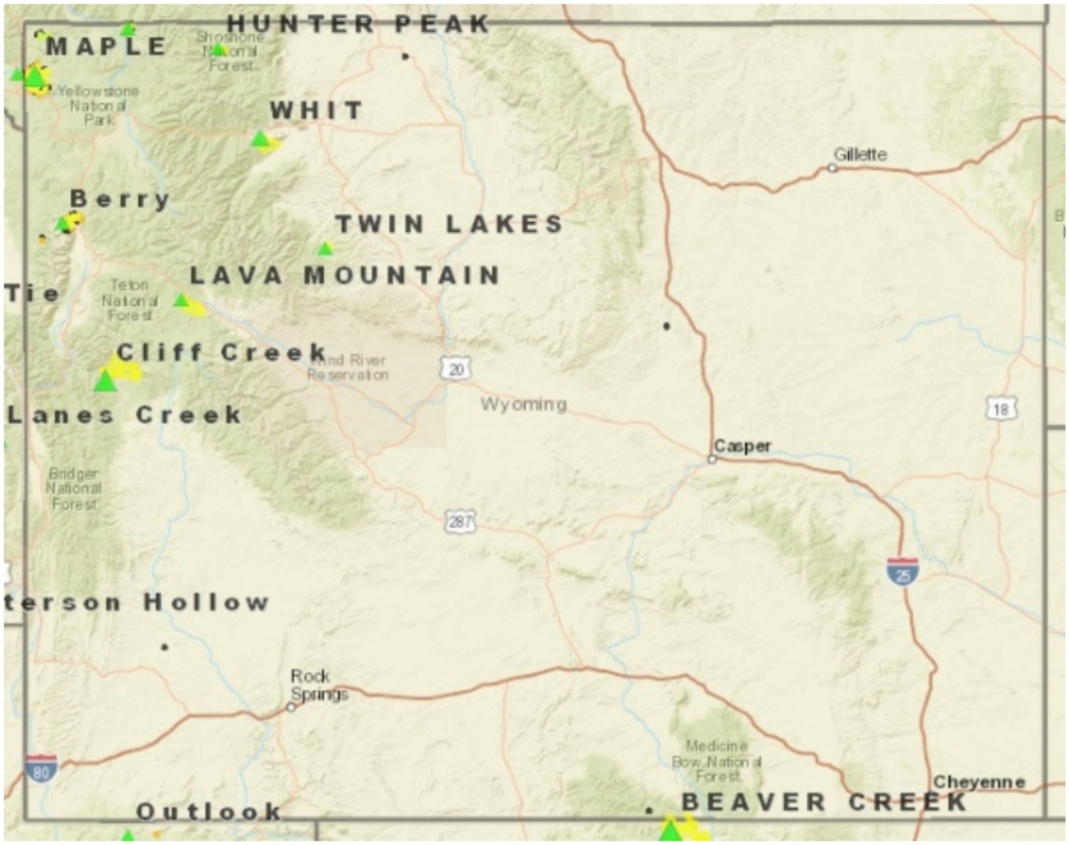
First Posted: Aug 25, 2016 06:45 AM EDT

The largest of four wildfires now simultaneously burning in Yellowstone Park (Maple, Buffalo, Fawn, Boundary fires) has Wyoming fire officials scrambling in a desperate effort to keep it from spreading to areas housing some of the park's tourist attractions.

As of Monday, all of the park's main tourist facilities remained open, even though the **Maple fire** (the biggest blaze among the four fires) is reported to have grown by nearly 10 square miles in a span of a few hours, prompting authorities to order more firefighters to the area. As authorities keep a vigilant eye on the nearby Madison Junction area of the park reserved for hiking, fishing and other activities, firemen are now working around the clock to contain the blaze. A 10-mile stretch of road leading to Yellowstone's South entrance has already been shuttered.



(Photo : Geomac.gov)


HUNTER PEAK
MAPLE
Shoshone National Forest
Yellowstone National Park
WHIT
Gillette
Berry
TWIN LAKES
LAVA MOUNTAIN
Tie
Teton National Forest
Cliff Creek
Wind River Reservation
20
Wyoming
18
Lanes Creek
Casper
Bridger National Forest
287
25
terson Hollow
Rock Springs
80
Medicine Bow National Forest
Cheyenne
Outlook
BEAVER CREEK

(Photo : Maple fire and Buffalo fire in Yellowstone National Park - Aug 2016)

Conditions Hampering Firefighters

Thus far, warm and windy weather has hampered efforts to contain the flames, which have charred approximately 35 square miles of primarily remote forest land. The proximity of the fire is reported to be between West Yellowstone, Montana, a town of about 1,300 situated just outside the park's western boundaries, and Madison Junction, a recreational area that sits within the park's confines.

Containment Essential

"As it's pushing off to the north and east, there's not a lot of values at risk as far as infrastructure goes," said Mike Johnson, a spokesman with the National Park Service. "We're going to keep the fire to the north of the West Entrance Road, and we have plans in place that if the fire were to move to the west toward West Yellowstone."

Madison Junction is also home to a campground, some visitor facilities and staff housing. It's described as where West Entrance Road intersects with the park's Grand Loop Road, linking such major tourist attractions as Old Faithful and Yellowstone Lake.

Johnson added firefighters are also busy battling the three smaller fires that have swept across the area.

As of early in the week, the Maple fire remained confined to about three miles away from Madison Junction and about four miles from the West Yellowstone Entrance station. On Sunday, the blaze spread several thousand more acres to now consume roughly 27,000 acres in total.

Meanwhile, authorities are now monitoring the two-week old, lightening caused Fawn fire by both ground and air with the acerage of the blaze currentlyb at around 1,800 acres.

The Buffalo fire in Tatanka Complex about 3 miles northeast of Tower Junction has simmered a bit and is now being managed via monitoring and so-called point-protection strategies.

Fire and ice hinder travel into Yellowstone National Park (Billings Gazette)

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK — Both fire and ice briefly hindered travel into Yellowstone National Park on the National Park Service's centennial anniversary.

Authorities closed a portion of the Beartooth Highway Wednesday night due to snow and ice from a summer snowstorm. Crews cleared the roadway and reopened it Thursday morning.

The popular two-lane mountain highway runs from Red Lodge, Montana, over the Beartooth Pass to Yellowstone's Northeast Entrance.

At the other end of the park, a wildfire has closed a portion of the road leading to Yellowstone's South Entrance since Monday.

Visitors heading to Thursday's celebration and concert in Yellowstone from the south face an hour-long detour into Idaho.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Greens try to reassemble anti-pipe dream team (Politico.com)

By Eric Wolff

08/25/16 10:00 AM EDT

With help from Bob King and Zachary Warmbrodt

LET THEIR POWERS COMBINE TO STOP PIPELINE: Environmentalists are trying to reassemble the dream team that blocked the Keystone XL pipeline, only this time to prevent construction of the Dakota Access pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois, which is nearly as long. As Pro's Elana Schor reports, most greens have been devoting their energy to the presidential election, leaving smaller groups, and in this case the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to wage battles to stop infrastructure alone. "What should have happened after Keystone got rejected was a huge influx of resources to local and state groups fighting pipelines," said Bold Alliance founder Jane Kleeb, a leader of the movement against the Canada-to-U.S. pipeline who is now leading a four-state push against eminent domain for fossil-fuel projects. "That didn't happen." A Wednesday protest in D.C. featured the Sierra Club and 350.org as well as Hollywood actresses/activists Susan Sarandon, Shailene Woodley, and Riley Keough.

Freudian slip from judge? The Sioux have challenged the line, and in a hearing in federal court on Wednesday, the judge on the case may have signaled his openness to putting a temporary hold on the project. He laid out the schedule for "when I issue my injunction." Supporters of the Sioux, who feel developers did not consult them sufficiently on the project, believe the remark could signal the judge's sympathy for their views.

Follow the money: For anyone interested in seeing all the players involved in funding Dakota Access, the Bakken Pipeline Resistance Coalition has created an interactive, visual display of the different investors in the project.

…

FLOOD INSURANCE POLITICS IN LOUISIANA SENATE RACE: With the residents of Baton Rouge desperately trying to recover from flood waters, flood insurance has become a major feature of the state's senate race to replace retiring Sen. David Vitter. Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon endorsed Republican Rep. Charles Boustany for Senate, arguing that he is "the only candidate I trust to fight for affordable flood insurance." Congress faces a September 2017 deadline to reauthorize the government-run National Flood Insurance Program. "I look forward to working with Commissioner Donelon to write common-sense flood insurance policy as Louisiana's next United States Senator when Congress begins work on reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program in 2017," Boustany said in a statement.

…

NO ONE WANTS COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD INSURANCE: The Government Accountability Office on Wednesday backed FEMA's conclusion that community-based flood insurance isn't workable. As Finance Pro's Victoria Guida reports, FEMA was considering the option, under which communities could band together to buy flood insurance plans, but an analysis it released in March found the challenges too great to overcome. Now the GAO is supporting FEMA's conclusion. "The challenges outlined in the study outweigh any potential benefit when considered against limited community interest," GAO wrote. The National Flood insurance Program faces numerous challenges, not least its $23 billion in debt.

DECREPIT FLORIDA DIKE VULNERABLE TO LOOMING STORM: A potential tropical storm or hurricane developing in the Caribbean may be headed for Florida in the coming days, based on last night's outlooks from the National Hurricane Center — posing exactly the scenario the Army Corps of Engineers has feared as it struggles with excessively high water levels in Lake Okeechobee. Earlier this summer, the agency reduced flows from the large inland lake amid pressure from residents and GOP Gov. Rick Scott to stem the flow of nutrient-choked runoff that fed toxic algae along the Treasure Coast. But that means lake levels remain higher than usual going into the busiest part of hurricane season — increasing the pressure on the leaky, decades-old dike that protects the lives of tens of thousands of residents.

Even a weak storm could cause big problems if it dumps tons of rain. As of Wednesday, lake levels were at 14.67 feet above sea level, while 17.5 feet is the level at which the corps believes the dike becomes unstable. The lake is the site of one of the deadliest disasters in U.S. history, a 1928 hurricane that killed more than 2,500 people.

Too little, too late: Today the corps will announce its management plans for the week ahead, but by the time you can see a storm coming it's too late to do much. "We just can't release water that fast," said John Campbell with the corps' Jacksonville district. In fact, a few days out the corps has to stop making releases from the lake so they don't flood communities downstream when the storm comes.

Florida Hurricane Forecast Remains Uncertain, But Trends In State's Favor (Yahoo News)

By Andrew Freedman

Yahoo! News, August 25, 2016

For days, a war has been raging between two of the premiere computer models used to help predict the weather. On the one side, there's the National Weather Service's Global Forecast System, or GFS, which has maintained that a tropical wave moving across Puerto Rico and Hispaniola will not intensify into a hurricane and strike Florida this weekend.

But other models have consistently outshone the GFS in both routine and high impact, high risk forecast situations.

On the other side of the battle is the European, or Euro model, which is run by the European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasting in England.

The Euro, which gained notoriety by catching on to Hurricane Sandy's unprecedented and catastrophic left hook into New Jersey a week in advance, has rattled Florida with its depiction of an intense tropical storm or hurricane hitting the southern part of the state this weekend.

Run after run, the Euro had stuck to its guns for the past three days, insisting that the area of inclement weather designated as "Invest 99L" would soon become Hurricane Hermine, potentially going on to menace Gulf Coastal states as a major hurricane of Category 3 intensity or greater.

The battlefield may have just changed significantly, though. It's unclear if a peace treaty has been signed, or if this is just a temporary lull in the fighting, but the afternoon run of the Euro model trended toward the GFS solution of a weaker storm.

In other words, it is no longer showing an intense storm hitting Florida on Sunday, and then intensifying over the unusually warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

This news is being met with cautious relief on social media. For example, Miami NBC-TV meteorologist John Morales welcomed the new computer model trend.

Weather Channel meteorologist Justin Abraham comically celebrated what he sees as a potential GFS victory over the top-seeded European model.

However, Floridians shouldn't let down their guard yet, since the swirling cloud mass located north of Haiti could still persevere despite two main challenges.

Invest 99L has been contending with layers of dry air that have stifled the development of thunderstorms near the center of the storm. Such thunderstorms are needed in order for the weather system to form a closed area of low pressure at the surface and intensify.

The wind shear is forecast to diminish starting in about 24 to 36 hours, at which point it's possible both the Euro and GFS will be wrong, and the storm will intensify rapidly.

"Although upper-level winds are not conducive for significant development during the next day or so, they could become a little more favorable over the weekend or early next week when the wave is expected to approach southern Florida or the southeastern Gulf of Mexico," the National Hurricane Center said in a 2 p.m. ET statement on the weather system.

The Hurricane Center lowered Invest 99L's chances of developing into a tropical depression, tropical storm or hurricane to 70 percent through 5 days, down from 80 percent earlier in the day.

For now, Invest 99L looks like a poor excuse for a tropical weather system that is inspiring trepidation in a coastal state like Florida. Its center is exposed and comprised only of low-level clouds, and the largest thunderstorms are displaced several hundred miles away from the center.

In short, it looks like garbage, from a tropical meteorology perspective.

Whether it turns into something more impressive remains to be seen, but for now, it’s encouraging that the great model war of August 2016 may be coming to an end.

Region VIII Clips
Tuesday, August 30, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A hailstorm and flash flood in Colorado Springs made the CBS national news. Some drivers needed rescuing; up to two feet of hail was reported…. The *Colorado Springs Gazette* carried an AP story in which a Florida congressman said FEMA's response in Louisiana, with only one mobile home set up so far, was "pitiful."
- **Montana:** The south entrance to Yellowstone has been reopened after being closed because of wildfire… Two stories report on the economic impact of the fish kill in the Yellowstone River. Governor Bullock declared an emergency, making state unemployment and retraining aid available. Some businesses hope for SBA loans to help them survive the lost tourism…. A roundup of wildfires indicates general stabilization.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from the Christian Science Monitor and one from The Guardian. The Guardian story cites protesters saying their effort might fulfill old Indian prophecies. … United Blood Services will test the blood of only donors who might be at risk for the Zika virus. The FDA had recommended testing all donors, but the disease is rare in North Dakota. … An attorney argues in favor of a proposed safety rule that would require more than one person be aboard some freight trains.
- **South Dakota:** No stories today.
- **Utah:** *The Salt lake Tribune* reports on the status of four major wildfires in the state… The *St. George Spectrum* reports that two Michigan firefighters were killed Saturday in Minnesota on their way to fight the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when their truck left the road. The driver has been charged with criminal vehicular homicide; he allegedly fell asleep while driving, and had used marijuana earlier that day.
- **Wyoming:** *The Teton Valley News* reports on the status of the Berry Fire and, in a separate article, notes another fire and recent earthquake and urges preparedness.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, reported on existing drugs that might help fight the Zika virus.

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United Blood Services testing some blood for Zika (Bismarck Tribune)

Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No stories today.

UTAH:

Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

WYOMING:

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

STORIES

COLORADO

CBS: Colorado Springs Flooding. The CBS Evening News (8/29, story 5, 0:15, O'Donnell, 11.17M) reported, "Heavy rain and hail caused flash flooding today in Colorado Springs. Streets became rushing rivers. It came on so quickly, drivers got stuck. Their cars had to be pulled out of the flood waters."

Wild weather causes flooding, hail on Colorado Springs streets (KKTV news, Colorado Springs)

Posted: Mon 5:38 PM, Aug 29, 2016 |

Updated: Tue 5:46 AM, Aug 30, 2016

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (KKTV) Wild weather roared through Colorado Springs Monday afternoon, quickly causing streets to flood and keeping emergency personnel busy.

Several drivers were caught in the rapidly rising water. Just east of downtown on Pikes Peak Avenue, four people inside one car, including a toddler, had to be rescued after the vehicle got stuck in fast-moving water.

"I saw that it only came up to the middle of the hubcap there, so probably up to my knees," said Sgt. Erick Frederic with the Colorado Springs Police Department, who pulled the victims from the car.

No one was hurt in the incident, but were all left pretty shaken up.

"That's always a scary thing because if there becomes more water then the car could be pushed over," Frederic said. "So it's a matter of yes, stay in there until the car stops moving, but you don't want to get stuck in a moving car either."

Plenty of others were left stranded after water came rushing down streets.

“It’s kind of scary, cause you don’t know what might happen," said Susan Kellman.

Near Bijou and Logan, a snowplow that was trying to move nearly 2 feet of hail off the street ended up having to be towed.

Zach Smith faced another obstacle. His car was picked up by moving water and floated down the street.

"I was at work and my neighbor gave me a call and said, 'Hey, your car’s in the middle of the road; you should probably come move it,'" he told 11 News.

When Smith got home, he found the car sitting sideways, literally in the middle of the street.

“It’s pretty crazy. I’ve seen some pretty heavy rains, but not one to float a parked car like that.”

Another problem spot was off Platte Avenue near Tia Juana. A car got stuck near Fargo's Pizza after water quickly overtook the roadway.

Other areas of Platte, just east of Union, were underwater after storm drains got clogged by the amount of water running down the street.

"It's mayhem. You never know what you're going to get in Colorado. First we have hail, then we get some flooding," said Phillip Groskinsky.

HOMES DAMAGED BY FLOODING

Homeowners near Platte and Wahsatch in Colorado Springs say a dog was killed when fast-moving water got into their garage.

The Pikes Peak Red Cross went to more than 60 homes on Monday. Although not all were damaged, some were left unlivable.

Tim and Debbie Hertzog had their fence destroyed by rushing water, their backyard deck lifted up, and thousands of dollars worth of damage to the inside their home.

Debbie said she came home in the middle of the storm and got trapped in her garage.

"I just saw sheets of rain coming down, so I rushed home. ... As soon as I pulled into the garage, the river coming down the alley came into the garage with me," Debbie recalled. "I couldn't open the door without it coming in. So I called 911...they told me to stay sheltered in place in my car, unless [the water] came in the car.

"It did come to about a quarter of an inch, to the bottom of my car, while I was sitting in there. And I was probably in there an hour and a half, or maybe close to that, and I had no idea what was going on with my house. ... I couldn't get out either door without an onslaught of water. There was so much water."

Tim described the outside as chaos.

"She called me, so I came home and I was trying to get her out of the garage, but the water was almost 18 inches over the garage door, couldn't get the garage door open, so we just had to wait for the waters to subside.

"We weren't sure how bad it was going to get; if it was going to get worse."

Near Palmer Park and Union, one family said they worry about flooding -- like what happened Monday -- any time it rains.

"It's not something to mess with," said Jessica Staten. "If you can't see the road, don't go through it, plain and simple."

Staten snapped video of a car and truck stuck in high water at Mount Vernon Street and Tweed Street. Firefighters were eventually able to help both out.

"This intersection is prone to getting flooded pretty bad," Staten said. "It was already up to the wall of my neighbor, the wall where his fencing is, so there's no way you would have been able to clear it with a car. The minute he [one of the drivers] hit the dip, he was gone. He was done."

It was a similar scene near Fountain and Circle. Kellman saw others get trapped trying to plow through standing water. She decided not to chance it.

"It's scary because you don't know what might happen. I mean, there's lots of accidents, too," Kellman said.

"I just pulled over and waited for it to stop."

FEMA criticized as slow on disaster housing aid in Louisiana (Colorado Spring Gazette)

By: MELINDA DESLATTE, Associated Press •
August 29, 2016• Updated: August 29, 2016 at 12:43 pm

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The first out-of-state congressman to survey Louisiana's damage from catastrophic flooding Monday blasted the Federal Emergency Management Agency response as "pitiful."

U.S. Rep. John Mica, a Florida Republican who chairs a subcommittee with jurisdiction over FEMA, toured the destruction with U.S. Rep. Garret Graves, a Republican who represents much of the most heavily damaged region.

Mica said housing aid for the tens of thousands of people displaced by floodwaters two weeks ago has been sluggish and FEMA has been too slow to set up mobile homes that give people somewhere to stay while they repair their houses.

He said FEMA needs more "flexibility" in its programs to make them more adaptable to individual disasters.

"This is one of the biggest displacements of people I've ever seen in the country, and the response is pitiful from the federal level," Mica said.

Only one manufactured housing unit has been set up so far. FEMA regional director Gerard Stolar said the agency is working to speed aid to people displaced by the flooding.

"We're working very closely with the state. We're well aware of the devastation that's out there, that this is an historic event," Stolar said.

He said that FEMA's priority is to get people back into their homes and that 50 to 60 additional manufactured housing units are ready to be set up for homeowners after inspections of their property are complete.

"I'm very confident we're going to be able to ramp up the capacity for this in the very near future," Stolar said.

More than 100,000 homes are estimated to be damaged from flooding described as the worst disaster since Superstorm Sandy, after a storm that started Aug. 12 dumped as much as 2 feet of rain in some areas over two days.

More than 1,400 people remained in shelters Monday.

Entire communities were ravaged by floodwaters, and residents and volunteers have spent the last two weeks ripping out flooring, damaged furniture and drywall to ready homes for repairs. But many people didn't have flood insurance, leaving them dependent on savings and FEMA for rebuilding assistance.

Federal officials say more than $277 million in recovery grants have been approved for households so far and 22 assistance centers are open across the damaged parishes. FEMA said it has more than 1,100 housing inspectors on the ground.

Gov. John Bel Edwards has praised the federal response.

Graves, however, said FEMA needs to quicken the pace of its inspections and grant approval. He also worried about the size of grants. While the cap on assistance to households is $33,000, Graves said the largest grant received is around $8,000 so far.

"People are sitting there, looking at their home and business situation. They've got to make decisions," Graves said.

Edwards' administration opened registration Monday for a new, FEMA-funded "shelter at home" program aimed at providing grants of up to $15,000 to help people make modest repairs that can get them quickly and safely back into their houses while they start work on the larger renovations.

Graves said that program was a "fantastic" concept.

Both congressmen said some of the flexibility they'd like to see in FEMA programs could require congressional action. Edwards was meeting with Louisiana's congressional delegation Monday to discuss a flood relief package.

MONTANA

Yellowstone's south entrance reopens Tuesday morning (Billings Gazette)

The south entrance to Yellowstone National Park reopened at about 7 a.m. Tuesday after a wildfire cut off access for several days, said Larry Helmerick, National Park Service public information officer.

The more than 13,000 acre Berry fire shutdown a stretch of Highway 89/191/287 between Jackson Hole and the south entrance of Yellowstone. Pullouts near the burn area will remain closed, said a National Park Service news release.

The Berry fire cutoff access to the south entrance on Aug. 23 but no roadways inside Yellowstone National Park were affected.

Governor declares state of emergency for Yellowstone River fish kill
(Bozeman Daily Chronicle)

By Michael Wright Chronicle Staff Writer

LIVINGSTON —Montana's governor on Monday signed an executive order declaring the fish kill on the Yellowstone River earlier this month an emergency, a move that makes available millions of dollars for unemployment benefits and other labor programs.

The order frees up $15.4 million in emergency funds for workers and businesses affected by the river's closure, accessible to them mostly through unemployment insurance, retraining programs and planning grants.

Patricia Dowd, a natural resource policy adviser for the governor, announced the order at a meeting here on Monday, where officials from the Montana Department of Labor and Industry tried to offer people guidance on how they could get help in this time where businesses built on the tourism economy are taking a major hit.

"The Yellowstone River is a key contributor to Montana's tourism and outdoor recreation economy," Dowd said.

Earlier this month, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks closed 183 miles of the Yellowstone River and hundreds more miles of its tributaries to all public use in response to the deaths of thousands of whitefish in the river. Dead fish were found as far upstream as Corwin Springs and as far downstream as Springdale. Mostly whitefish have been found dead, and FWP estimates the total death toll to be in the tens of thousands.

Tissue samples showed the culprit to be a parasite that causes proliferative kidney disease, which can decimate trout and whitefish populations. An FWP press release sent Monday said whitefish have tested positive for the parasite as far downstream as Laurel and that the parasite had been confirmed in two brown trout taken from Nelson's Spring Creek.

The river and tributaries were closed as a way to reduce stress on the fish so they might be able to fight off infection. It also was meant to prevent the spread of the parasite to other watersheds in Montana. But the move has significant economic consequences for people who depend on the tourism dollars that the river brings in — like fishing guides, raft companies and hotels and restaurants.

The governor's emergency declaration allows the state to dip into a $16 million fund to offer assistance to people out of work or who have lost money because of the river closure. About $600,000 from that fund has already been spent in response to a heavy winter storm along Montana's Hi-Line and a tornado in eastern Montana.

How much is spent from the fund depends on how many people are able to access the money, which may be tricky. Unemployment insurance, for example, might not be available to fishing guides who work as independent contractors.

For workers to be eligible, they have to work in a job where their employer pays payroll taxes — which might not be the case for all independent guides. But if they work seasonally at another job that does pay those taxes throughout the year and quit to guide in the summer, they may qualify for some benefits.

Paul Martin, who works in unemployment insurance claims processing for the Montana Department of Labor, said people won't know if they qualify unless they apply because each individual case is so different.

"It's like snowflakes," Martin said.

Some at the meeting on Monday said they weren't interested in being retrained, and others said they would probably try for a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration — which is federal money, not state — to keep their doors open into the next year.

"I think I'm looking at a small business loan," said Jim Kahl, the co-owner of River Source Rafting Company north of Gardiner.

Kahl said the last few weeks have been "pretty dismal," and that the final weeks of the season are crucial for his company. A loan would be the way to make sure they are around for next season.

Tina Marshall, the ranch manager at 7 Point Ranch in Emigrant, said she hopes the emergency declaration would help them file a successful loss-of-income claim with their insurance company. The ranch hosts events and offers lodging to travelers, and Marshall said they had lost $43,000 in cancellations since the closure.

"It adds up fast," Marshall said.

She said an initial attempt at filing a claim was rejected, but that the emergency declaration might help with that. Recovering that income would help her keep her staff intact.

"I don't want to lay anybody off," she said.

When the river or its tributaries will reopen is unknown. FWP closed the river using an emergency 120-day closure, but that could be extended if river conditions don't improve or if fish don't stop dying. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission would have to approve any extension and solicit public comment.

FWP crews are still regularly surveying the river and the tributaries. The press release from the agency on Monday said that they were starting to find fewer dead fish on the banks of the river.

Yellowstone River's closure worries outdoors industry (AP)

Matthew Brown, Associated Press

Updated 7:01 pm, Monday, August 29, 2016

LIVINGSTON, Mont. (AP) — Tens of thousands of dead fish have closed Montana's Yellowstone River and stirred new worries Monday about lasting impacts to the region's lucrative outdoors industry.

Gov. Steve Bullock declared an "invasive species emergency" over an aquatic parasite blamed for the dying fish. A 183-mile stretch of the Yellowstone and all waterways that drain into it have been closed since Aug. 19 to prevent the deadly parasite from spreading. The unprecedented move came after thousands of dead mountain whitefish started washing up on the river's banks downstream from Yellowstone National Park.

Smaller numbers of other fish species have been killed. That's offered hope that the parasite will spare the trout populations that made the Yellowstone a destination for fly fishers from around the world.

But uncertainty over how long the closure will remain in force — and whether the parasite will crop up again in future years — has unsettled those whose livelihoods depend on the river.

Fishing guide Chase Chapman of Livingston said he's losing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of business as customers cancel previously booked trips. The losses are likely to grow as the closure continues, he said. Yet Chapman is not interested in training for another occupation and foremost wants to know when the river will re-open.

"I don't think anyone wants re-training," Chapman said Monday, during a workshop in Livingston for affected workers that was hosted by the state Department of Labor and Industry. "We all have established businesses. We're not going anywhere.... Now what do we do?"

Monday's emergency proclamation from Bullock will allow Montana to spend up to $15.4 million on worker retention grants and other programs meant to blunt the economic harm of the closure, state officials said.

The number of people and businesses that lost work over the closure has not been tallied, said Scott Eychner, workforce services administrator of the state labor agency. Eychner said officials did not want to wait until that information was tallied before holding Monday's workshop, so that assistance could be given to those who need it as quickly as possible.

Repairing the river's reputation is another matter.

Paul Weamer, who manages a fly fishing shop in the Paradise Valley north of Livingston, said he has no doubt the Yellowstone and its fishery will recover. But Weamer said news reports of the fish kill have left a negative impression among outsiders that will be hard to overcome even when the Yellowstone reopens and fishing resumes.

"You hear dead fish and that freaks people out and I understand that. But I really think our fishery will be good next year," Weamer said.

State officials on Monday said infected fish have been discovered in Laurel, more than a hundred miles downstream from the epicenter of the fish kill. A small number of whitefish that were collected near Laurel have tested positive for exposure to the parasite, officials said.

Whitefish exposed to the parasite also were collected near Columbus, Big Timber and at the mouth of the Boulder River, but officials said all the downstream fish were still alive and appeared healthy.

The rate of fish dying appears to have eased in recent days, said Sam Sheppard, regional supervisor for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Sheppard added that it was too soon to say if the decrease in deaths would prove lasting.

Officials have warned outbreaks of the parasite are possible in future years now that it's been established in the Yellowstone.

Montana Wildfire Roundup For August 29, 2016 (Montana Public Radio)

By MTPR News •

The latest on wildfires around western Montana.

Last Update 5:35 p.m. 08/29/16

The Clear Creek Fire popped up early Saturday morning on tribal land 3 miles northwest of Perma on the Flathead Reservation.

It’s just over 1,200 acres, and zero percent contained, says Tribal Fire Prevention Specialist C.T. Camel.

"Last couple days just been burnout operations, trying to get a hold of it. Because it’s gonna get really warm these next couple days.”

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes’ Division of Fire is fighting the blaze.

It’s cause is still under investigation.

Update: 10:38 a.m., 08/29/16

The Copper King Fire, under the command of Greg Poncin's Type I Incident Management Team, has reached 24,017 acres and remains 15 percent contained.

A community meeting will be held on Monday, August 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sanders County Fairground Pavilion (30 River Road, Plains, MT). Fire and local officials will provide an update on current and project fire activity.

There are 780 personnel working the fire, located eight miles outside of Thompson Falls and one mile north of Highway 200. The Copper King Fire has cost an estimated $15 million so far.

Yesterday aerial resources conducted burnout operations on the northern perimeter while hotshot crews built hand lines around the active southeast edge.

Helicopters dropped 258,000 gallons of water while small planes spread 36,500 gallons of retardant.

Today's weather is expected to bring in a high pressure front, with low humidity and high temperatures. This could result in increased fire activity, though winds are not predicted to be a problem.

Over the next 24-48 hours, officials say the construction of indirect lines and firing operations are crucial. Scoping for additional contingent lines will continue for the benefit of communities to the east.

In Yellowstone National Park, the Berry Fire continues to keep the south entrance to the park closed.

The Maple Fire in Yellowstone National Park, located about four miles north of West Yellowstone, has reached 31,405 acres. All of Gneiss Trail remains closed, including the Cougar Creek cabin.

The Maple Fire has yet to reach the Madison River or Madison Junction, and has not yet required burn out operations near Highway 191. A Red Flag weather warning is in effect throughout today.

Diane Hutton's Wildland Fire Management Team has assumed command of the Maple Fire and is stationed in West Yellowstone.

There will be a Maple Fire community meeting Monday, August 29 at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of Latter Day Saints, 245 Faithful St., West Yellowstone, MT.

The Bierney Creek Fire west of Lakeside is transitioning from a Type 3 team to a smaller Type 4 team as containment operations continue to be successful. The fire is 90 percent contained.

The 60 acre fire, discovered on August 22, has been declared 'human caused' by fire officials.

The Roaring Lion Fire located five miles southwest of Hamilton remains at 8,533 acres and 70 percent contained. Firefighters continue to put out hotspots, evaluate containment lines, protect structures, and monitor for erosion possibilities where they have built defensive lines.

Helicopters and fixed wing aircraft continue to drop water and retardant when necessary. Area closures remain in effect.

NORTH DAKOTA

Oil pipeline protests in North Dakota draw Native Americans, celebrities
(Christian Science Monitor)

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's protests against a four-state oil pipeline have drawn members of other tribes, as well as a few Hollywood stars.

By Jason Thomson, Staff August 29, 2016

Oil pipelines are no strangers to controversy, often courting a wide range of opposing opinions: Witness the years of debate that plagued the Keystone XL project between the United States and Canada, eventually blocked by US President Obama in November 2015.

The latest project to attract the ire of protesters, a 1,100-mile pipeline already under construction, is set to pass through four US states – Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Its aim is to transport Bakken shale from North Dakota directly to US Gulf Coast refineries, the first pipeline to do so.

The core group of opposition is the native American Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which says the pipeline could disturb sacred sites, as well as contaminate water for millions of people. They have been joined by activists from dozens of different tribes, and the protest, which began in April, now boasts upward of 1,000 indigenous participants.

"The things that have happened to tribal nations across this nation have been unjust and unfair, and this has come to a point where we can no longer pay the costs for this nation's well-being," Dave Archambault, chair of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, told Democracy Now last week. "All too often we share similar concerns, similar wrongdoings to us, so we are uniting, and we're standing up, and we're saying, 'No more.' "

The protests have temporarily shut down construction, and about 30 people have been arrested in recent weeks. The group behind the pipeline, Dakota Access, filed a restraining order against Mr. Archambault and other protesters earlier this month in federal court; the tribe subsequently sought a preliminary injunction to halt construction.

As legal proceedings unfolded over the $3.7 billion project last week in the US District Court for the District of Columbia, about 100 members of the native American group protested outside. They were joined by actors Susan Sarandon, Riley Keough, and Shailene Woodley.

"I'm here as a mother and a grandmother," said Ms. Sarandon, an Oscar-winning actress known for social and political activism, "to thank the people of the Standing Rock community for bringing our attention to this horrible thing that is happening to their land, which in turn will endanger all of us... because all of our waters are connected."

As part of their legal case, the protesters say the US Army Corps of Engineers violated historic preservation and environmental laws by giving the pipeline their approval. Supporters counter that the project would, in fact, provide safer and cheaper passage for the Bakken shale, when compared with road or rail transport.

District Court Judge James Boasberg is expected to announce his decision on the preliminary injunction requested by the tribe no later than Sept. 9.

'We're not going home': inside the North Dakota oil pipeline protest (The Guardian, US edition)

Nicky Woolf in Cannon Ball, North Dakota

Monday 29 August 2016 16.16 EDT
Last modified on Tuesday 30 August 2016 10.53 EDT

The Cannonball river flows into the mighty Missouri about 50 miles due south of Bismarck, North Dakota.

At its confluence, a protest encampment – really a series of camps, on both sides of the Cannonball, strewn with kitchens and canteens, portable toilets, stabling for horses, sweat lodges and tall teepees, and stands selling indigenous art – has sprung up.

The inhabitants are there to block the planned $3.7bn Dakota Access Pipeline, which would transport fracked crude from the Bakken oil field in North Dakota to a refinery near Chicago.

Many at the encampment speak of two prophecies, dating back to the 1890s. A leader called Black Elk foretold that in seven generations, the Native American nations will unite to save the Earth; another legend predicted that a zuzeca snake – a black snake – would threaten the world. For many of the protesters here, the pipeline is that black snake. They are the seventh generation: their moment of destiny has come.

The pipeline's planned route takes it close to the northern boundary of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and the town of Cannon Ball within it, which means it would cross the Missouri immediately upstream, endangering, protesters say, the reservation's drinking water and threatening sacred sites. At Standing Rock, they have put their bodies between the water and the oil.

A few days earlier, on 24 August, a federal judge in Washington DC delayed a ruling over whether indigenous rights were violated by the approval of the project. Tribal members say they were not sufficiently consulted about the route and are suing for an injunction.

The population of the camp ebbs and flows. Many have given up jobs and brought their families here, and a core of between 500 and 1,000 people live here semi-permanently. Some, such as Wiyaca Eagleman, a member of the Sicangu Lakota from Rosebud, South Dakota, have been here since the beginning of April. He plans to be here, he said, "as long as it takes".

Hundreds more join when they can, swelling the camp's numbers on weekends. Others come when they get time and bring what supplies they can.

It is an unprecedented gathering. Members of more than 90 Native American nations and tribes have a presence here, according to Eagleman, who has become a sort of unofficial spokesman for the protest camp. Up the road, where the building site was besieged, the flags of many of those nations now fly together. The unity on display here is a dream come true for Eagleman. "There has been no moment like this in history," he said.

On Saturday, a delegation from the Crow nation arrived from Montana, bearing offerings of firewood and 700lb of buffalo meat. That's truly historic: the Crow and the Lakota have been enemies for more than a century. They were at war once; the Crow acted as scouts for Gen George Custer. Buffalo meat has powerful symbolic value: a gesture of solidarity and friendship from longtime former foes.

Dennis Banks, a member of the Chippewa nation of Minnesota and one of the founders of the civil rights group the American Indian Movement in the 1960s, who met the Crow delegation, recounted the meeting. "The main speaker said, 'I know you think of Crow as working with the enemy – but we too struggled for water rights, treaty rights'," Banks said.

Omaka Nawicakinciji of the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota participates with his mother Heather Mendoza during a rally on the Dakota Access Pipeline. Photograph: Alex Wong/Getty Images

Then he paused. "The Missouri river starts up there," he added, to indicate that the Crow and the Lakota share more, now, than just food and firewood. The river connects them, too.

Ladonna Allard is a member of the Dakota Sioux. The first protest camp, named Sacred Stone for the perfectly round stones that were formed by a whirlpool where the two rivers met, was erected in April on Allard's land. The whirlpool is gone now, its eddies quieted by a dam built by the army corps of engineers in 1948, which also flooded the lush forest that abutted Allard's birthplace.

"This is sacred land," Allard told the Guardian, speaking by a campfire on which burritos cooked in aluminum foil. Children and dogs played; a brilliant sunset had just turned to dusk. "This is not about trying to be a protester," she said. "I am a mother. My son is buried at the top of that hill. I can't let them build a pipeline by my son's grave."

Looking across the Missouri from the camp, you can see the route of the pipeline on the east bank. Diggers and bulldozers began digging out the turf on the west bank, a mile north of the camp, churning the green prairie to brown clod, in August – accompanied by armed security guards.

They were ordered to stop when protesters, some on horseback, broke on to the site and surrounded the machines on 10 August. Eighteen were arrested, including Standing Rock tribal chairman David Archambault II.

Madonna Antoine Eagle Hawk, a member of the Sicango Rosebud Sioux, arrived last Friday and quickly assumed the role of head chef of the Rosebud camp. The children, she said, call her "Unci", the Lakota word for grandmother. "I'm proud to be here," she said. "It's a powerful feeling."

"Right now, all these different tribes – this will never happen again in our lifetime," she said. "If we don't make a stand, who else will?"

Richard Leading Fighter Jr – another member of the Rosebud tribe, a biology student and a distance runner – joined Eagle Hawk in the kitchen tent. He has assumed the role of lifeguard in the camp, keeping an eye on the children who frolic and splash in the Cannonball. He's been here two weeks now and is preparing to return to university, but like many in the camp, is planning on coming back when he can.

"This feeling is history, right here," he said. He hunkered down on his shins to grab a handful of soil, grey from the ash of the cooking fire. "We're doing something that will be in stories told for our grandchildren," he said, as the earth streamed through his fingers.

"I know we can defeat this," he said. "I'm hoping the world is with us."

United Blood Services testing some blood for Zika (Bismarck Tribune)

- JENNY SCHLECHT Bismarck Tribune
- Aug 29, 2016

United Blood Services is testing the blood of all donors at risk of having contracted the Zika virus.

Zika is spread mostly by infected Aedes species mosquitoes, which are not found in North Dakota. While most people get mild symptoms from the virus, it can be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her fetus and can cause birth defects, including microcephaly and other brain abnormalities. There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika.

The Food and Drug Administration last week recommended testing all donated blood nationwide for Zika. The agency previously had recommended deferring anyone at risk of having contracted the virus.

Marni Wild, district director of manufacturing and laboratory services at United Blood Services, said the FDA only is recommending — not requiring — all blood to be tested. UBS, which handles blood donations in North Dakota, has been testing the blood of donors at risk of having contracted the virus since before the FDA made the recommendation as a precautionary measure, she said.

Michelle Feist, epidemiology and surveillance program manager at the North Dakota Department of Health, said active transmission of Zika is not happening in North Dakota, because the types of mosquitos that carry the virus are not found in the state.

However, people can contract the virus if they travel to a place with Zika or if they have sex with someone who has Zika. Wild said UBS asks questions during its pre-donation screening to see if donors are at risk of having Zika; if so, their blood automatically is screened before being used.

Wild did not know how much each Zika test costs UBS, but she said there is a financial hit on the organization each time a new test is added. She asked that anyone healthy and eligible to donate blood do so to help those who may need it.

While people in North Dakota are not at high risk to contract Zika, Feist said it is important for pregnant women or for couples who are planning to become pregnant to talk to their doctor about risk if they plan to travel. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintain a list of places where Zika transmission is occurring, which should be consulted before travel, Feist said.

Opposition to Federal Rule on Two-Person Train Crews Places Profits Above Lives (The Legal Examiner)

Posted by Randy Appleton

August 30, 2016 4:27 AM

Automation and budget-cutting have led many freight and passenger railroads across the United States to cut crew sizes. As a logical result of such staff reductions, many of the largest trains moving along the nation's rails have only a single engineer in the locomotive—even those transporting oil and toxic chemicals. As recently as 20 years ago, a standard long-distance train crew consisted of an engineer, a fireman, a conductor and two

Regulators and rail worker unions have raised alarms about train crew reductions for many years. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) responded in 2015 by drafting a rule mandating minimum crew sizes of two people for Class I railroads, a group that includes Amtrak, BNSF, CSX and Norfolk Southern. The rule was published for comment this past winter, and the FRA held a hearing on its provision in July 2016.

FRA experts and representatives of rail employees, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, argued for larger train crews. They cited incidents like a conductor taking over for an incapacitated engineer aboard an out of control engine in North Dakota. The conductor's actions prevented a major derailment and likely explosion.

Arguing against the two-crew person minimum, rail companies said, against actual evidence, that "no evidence" existed to prove that adding crew to one-person trains could prevent accidents, injuries, deaths and property damage. The corporations also claimed that putting more than one person on a train would impose unsupportable costs on their operations.

FRA analysts countered the cost complaint by noting that putting one more person in a locomotive would require a maximum expenditure of $27.7 million over 10 years. That is far below the estimated value of the workers' lives expected to be saved and a tiny fraction of revenues for companies that regularly report annual earnings of several billion.

Having represented railroad employees injured in crashes and derailments for three decades, I know that placing more than one person in a locomotive adds an invaluable safety factor. Even with the (too slow) deployment of braking technology like positive train control, the role of a trained human in preventing tragedies cannot be overemphasized. Should an equipment failure occur or should an engineer suffer an unexpected injury or illness, having a conductor or other crew member present can make the difference between a disaster and a near-miss.

SOUTH DAKOTA

No stories today.

UTAH

Crews hemming in Box Canyon Fire, other blazes being monitored (Salt Lake Tribune)

By BOB MIMS | The Salt Lake Tribune
First Published Aug 29 2016 01:21PM • Last Updated Aug 29 2016 10:30 pm

Aided by fire retardant- and water-laden aircraft, about 50 firefighters worked Monday to keep the 4,000-acre Box Canyon Fire from spreading outside its remote, steep and rugged perimeter in Summit County.

The human-caused, four-week-old blaze continued to consume conifer, aspen and fallen dead timber about 12 miles east of Oakley, and it began Monday at 20 percent containment. Crews were focused on preventing any further spread downslope into Smith and Morehouse Canyon, or toward the Ledgefork Campground, Fire Incident Commander Nick Hillman reported.

No structures were threatened and no injuries had been reported, but the campground, the Smith and Morehouse Reservoir boat ramp and the Mud Lake Flats area, along with some trails in those districts, were closed for public safety reasons.

The Peterson Hollow Fire, now mostly burning toward the Idaho side of the state line, had topped 1,200 acres and was 22 percent contained as of Monday, said Fire Information Officer Sierra Hellstrom.

In all, 311 firefighters battled that blaze of undetermined origin. Crews were concentrating on keeping the flames within the unpopulated and rough terrain where it began Aug. 21, burning mostly timber and grass about 6 miles northwest of Garden City, Utah.

"Despite some tree torching, the Peterson Hollow Fire [has] made no significant runs," Hellstrom reported.

Meanwhile, central Utah's Briggs Fire was being monitored by about 10 firefighters, but otherwise being allowed to burn in the Beaver District of the Fishlake National Forest. In spots, back fires were set to deprive the blaze of uncontrolled fuels.

"Over the last 14 days a lot of progress has been made in firing operations, improving contingency lines and protecting values at risk," said Fire Information Officer Daniel Claessen, adding that it likely will take the onset of winter and snowfall to finally snuff the last of the flames.

The lightning-sparked fire had burned 3,418 acres along the south fork of North Creek since it was first reported on Aug. 9, about 10 miles northeast of Beaver.

Several other, smaller wildfires also were being allowed to burn throughout the state where potential for structural damage was nil, and the benefits to the health of forest lands involved were deemed positive in the long term.

Wildfire crew members killed in crash on way to fight Utah fire (St George News)

Written by Kimberly Scott

ST. GEORGE — A group of firefighters from Michigan on their way to the Box Canyon wildfire in Utah were involved in a crash on Interstate 35W in Anoka County, Minnesota, which left two firefighters dead and multiple others seriously injured.

The driver of the truck was subsequently charged with two counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

At approximately 3 p.m. Saturday, a truck carrying nine members of a wildland firefighting crew left the roadway for an unknown reason, struck the median cable barriers and rolled, according to a statement issued by Minnesota State Patrol.

The wildland fire crew was from the Beartown Firefighters, which is based in Baraga on Michigan's Upper Peninsula and is managed by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

State Patrol officials identified the driver of the truck as 28-year-old Michael Johnson.

Eight of the passengers were identified as 23-year-old James Shelifoe; 25-year-old Alan Swartz; 26-year-old Dave Varline; 33-year-old Ross Jaukkuri; 34-year-old Gavin Loonsfoot and Joseph Jossens, all of Michigan; 29-year-old Shashaywin Sandman, of Minnesota; and 26-year-old Tyler Tolonen, of Wisconsin.

Shelifoe and Swartz were pronounced dead at the scene, according to the State Patrol.

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community released a statement about the crash on its Facebook page Saturday night: "Our hearts are broken and our prayers are with the family members and those injured."

In a separate statement Sunday, the tribal government said that the injured firefighters were expected to recover, but released no details about their conditions.

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred

Eleven other firefighters were also en route to the Box Canyon Fire in Utah when the fatal crash occurred, according to the statement. The wildland fire crews were reportedly traveling in a convoy of three but became separated from the truck that crashed.

"Those firefighters are understandably shaken and are getting much-needed support from local agencies," the statement said.

Officials investigating the crash said Johnson showed "signs of impairment and combative behavior" when officers arrived at the scene of the crash, according to charges filed Monday in Anoka County District Court documents and obtained by ABC News.

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel

Johnson later told investigators he believed he had fallen asleep at the wheel and that he hadn't slept more than 45 minutes in more than 24 hours, according to a criminal complaint.

Johnson also allegedly admitted to using marijuana early Saturday and to using cocaine two days earlier. Toxicology results are pending.

As a result of the crash and subsequent investigation, Johnson was arrested and charged with two felony counts of criminal vehicular homicide.

The Box Canyon Fire in Summit County east of Park City had consumed 4,000 acres as of Monday.

Unstable weather systems brought heavy winds into the area, increasing the fire's activity, according to a press release from U.S. Forest Service.

Officials said Sunday that the Utah National Guard had been activated to assist in battling the wildfire.

Utah Guard's 97th Aviation Troop Command and 2nd Battalion 211th Aviation responded to the Box Canyon Fire with two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, according to a press release from the Utah National Guard.

The human-caused fire is reportedly 20 percent contained.

Persons arrested or charged are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law or as otherwise decided by a trier-of-fact.

WYOMING

Grand Teton National Park - Berry Fire Update - Aug. 29 (Teton Valley News)

Since its discovery, Grand Teton National Park has been actively managing the Berry Fire for ecological benefits. The fire originated in the northern portion of the park, near Berry and Owl Creeks on the west side of Jackson Lake. Extreme fire behavior as a result of high winds and low relative humidity on Monday, August 22 pushed the fire across Jackson Lake and into the Teton Wilderness on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. A Type 2 Great Basin Incident Management Team took command of the fire on August 24th.

Closures:

At this time, fire managers anticipate being able to reopen Highway 89/191/287 tomorrow, Tuesday, August 30. This is subject to change dependent on weather and fire conditions. Until then the highway does remain closed for safety between the South Gate of Yellowstone National Park and Leeks Marina.

While Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and Bridger Teton National Forest all have area closures in effect, both National Parks are open to visitors. This includes Leeks Marina and most visitor destinations and services. Travel times to Yellowstone may be increased depending on planned routes. Check before you go. And please drive carefully, with lights on, due to both visibility concerns from smoke and increased vehicle numbers.

Current Situation:

The Berry Fire was much more active yesterday. Most of the growth occurred on the northeast corner of the fire - in the Teton Wilderness - and the southwest portion of the fire - along Jackson Lake. Firefighters

have completed preparatory actions around Flagg Ranch, as well as on historic cabins and lookouts to minimize impacts from the fire, in the event the fire should reach those locations.

Today's weather will again be warmer and drier with atmospheric instability, which can contribute to rapid fire growth. Temperatures will rise into the mid-80s, and the relative humidity may drop into single digits. Light winds will prevail over the fire area. Despite the shorter days, thermal belts are allowing the fire to burn actively throughout the night.

Western Wyoming is experiencing historical lows for fuel moistures. Currently, no significant moisture is in the extended forecast. The conditions are similar to 2012, when fires burned actively well into September. The Berry Fire will continue to burn in the coming weeks, accomplishing the goal of rejuvenating the ecosystem through the natural process of wildland fire.

Firefighters expect to finish their work along Highway 89/191/287 today. Unless fire behavior or weather conditions change today, the road will reopen to the general public tomorrow.

For more information:

Follow Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton National Forest on social media: @GrandTetonNPS and @BridgerTetonNF on both Facebook and Twitter. Information on other fires in western Wyoming is available at www.TetonFires.com. And information on fires burning in eastern Idaho can be found at www.IdahoFireInfo.com, or by filtering Idaho incidents on InciWeb.

One Day In August (Teton Valley News)

Bruce Mason -- Teton Valley Weather

August 27, 2016. The Tie Canyon fire had been slow the last couple of days, but the wind was forecast to gust up from the west in the afternoon. As that afternoon wind increased, near Hoback in Wyoming there was an earthquake. True story with a happy ending. Our amazing firefighters from Great Basin Team 5 had put down barriers which successfully held the fire from progressing toward Victor. In addition, the earthquake was magnitude 4.8, a light quake. It was felt throughout Teton Valley but no damage was reported. It was a good day.

Saturday is also a good reason to stop and think what might have happened. Not to scare, but because playing the “what if” game in your mind can make you more ready to take action should a number of things go bad at once. When situations turn really dicey, it's usually not just one thing that's gone wrong, but a combination. What if Saturday had gone differently?

Suppose that the wind had picked up more than forecast and pushed the fire toward Victor. And suppose that at the same time, the earthquake had been much stronger and much closer to Teton Valley. Well planned and prepared evacuations would have begun just as the earthquake damaged the roads and bridges making evacuations as planned impossible. Families would be separated. Shelters would have been set up by the Red Cross in Driggs and Alta for the Victor evacuees, but how could they get there with, say, Yellow Bridge gone or Highway 33 buckled and impassable? Are alternate routes available? Do the drivers on the roads in front of you know them? Do you know them? Can those routes handle the traffic? Were they damaged, too? And

what about the fire; is it going to stop at the predesignated evacuation zone or go beyond, further clogging the blocked roads with frightened residents?

This past week was a great drill if it prompted us to make individual and family disaster plans. Where will your family meet up? Do you each have a go bag, jump bag, or 72 hour kit packed with the essentials you'll need away from home a while? Have you thought about what you would grab if you could only take an armload of items with you from your home? Can you easily get from point A to point B by more than one route? Does each family member know how to contact the one person, preferably outside of the valley, who will be your central information point?

Did you know that detailed suggestions for this kind of plan have been made by Teton County Emergency Management? It has been tailored to Teton Valley and the kinds of disasters we are most likely to face here. Part one of this guide can be found at:

These guides are meticulously detailed and will take more than a quick glance by everyone in the family for them to be effective. Make the time now, because as the guide says, when disaster strikes, the time to prepare has passed.

And one more thing this week showed, the value of the CodeRED emergency alert system. Should an emergency occur near you, with CodeRED you will be notified by phone, and if you choose, on your smart phone using the app. If you have a land line phone in Teton Valley, you are already enrolled and will get a call should something important come up. If you have a cell phone, you will have to go on line and register with CodeRED to receive notifications on it. You can do that at:

Either way, you will receive word of impending situations faster by phone than if you have to wait for an officer to knock on your door.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

Drugs Used To Fight Hepatitis, Worm Infections Might Stop Zika (NBC News)

By Maggie Fox

NBC News, August 29, 2016

A drug already on the market to treat worm infections and another being tested against liver diseases may also help treat Zika virus infections, researchers reported Monday.

The findings are a rare bit of good news about Zika, which has caused epidemics across Latin America and the Caribbean, and smaller outbreaks in Florida, the Pacific and southeast Asia.

Zika has caused smaller epidemics of birth defects, notably brain damage that can cause miscarriages or profound developmental injuries in babies. It can also cause a paralyzing condition called Guillain-Barré syndrome.

It’s spread by mosquitoes and by sex. As of now, there is no vaccine or treatment.

The team at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Johns Hopkins University and Florida State University looked first in a library of existing drug compounds for products that might act to stop Zika from killing brain cells and perhaps stop it from replicating itself.

“It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug.”

"It takes years, if not decades, to develop a new drug," says Hongjun Song of Johns Hopkins, who worked on the project. "In this sort of global health emergency, we don't have that kind of time."

But libraries of existing compounds let researchers use a computer to look for drugs that work in specific ways.

"So instead of using new drugs, we chose to screen existing drugs," said Dr. Guo-li Ming, a neurology professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "In this way, we hope to create a therapy much more quickly."

They were delighted to find a drug already on the market and considered safe to use in pregnant women. "Niclosamide is an FDA-approved drug (trade name Niclocide) that has been used in humans to treat worm infections for nearly 50 years, and it is well tolerated," the team wrote in their report, published in the journal Nature Medicine.

"It is known to inhibit several viruses in culture systems, including the Japanese encephalitis flavivirus."

Japanese encephalitis is a relative of Zika and also carried by mosquitoes.

Tests on human brain stem cells in lab dishes showed it could interfere with Zika's replication in those cells. "Niclosamide is a category B drug, which indicates that no risk to fetuses has been found in animal studies. It has low toxicity in mammals," they added. "Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

Another drug, called emricasan, helped prevent Zika from killing those cells.

"Emricasan is currently being evaluated in phase 2 clinical trials for the reduction of hepatic injury and liver fibrosis caused by chronic hepatitis C infection," the team wrote.

"Emricasan was well tolerated in human trials, and there were no significant adverse events."

A third compound called PHA-690509 also helped stop Zika replicating and from killing nerve cells, they said.

While the drugs work well in lab dishes full of cells, "we don't know if they can work in humans in the same way," Song said.

Niclosamide works in the gut, but it's not clear if it's possible to get it into the brain, Song said.

The researchers think the drugs might work best as a cocktail, attacking the virus from several fronts — in much the same way as drug cocktails fight the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS.

"To address these questions, additional studies need to be done in animal models as well as humans to demonstrate their ability to treat Zika infection," Ming said in a statement. "So we could still be years away from finding a treatment that works."

The White House has asked for $1.9 billion in federal funding to help pay for studies like these and to keep them going after Zika is no longer making headlines. But Congress could not agree on a funding plan and took a seven-week break without appropriating any cash.

The NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies have taken money from other programs to pay for urgent Zika research.

At the beginning of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, researchers complained that they'd been working on drugs and vaccines for years but that inconsistent funding and a lack of interest from Congress and from drug companies made it impossible to make better progress. More than 11,000 people died in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea before the Ebola epidemic wound down last year.

Region VIII Clips
Wednesday, August 31, 2016

ANALYSIS

- **Colorado:** A story follows through on the damage from the recent hailstorm in Colorado Springs. Hail was as deep as three feet in some basements.
- **Montana:** A Bismarck reprint of a Billings Gazette article repeats the call for separate disaster funding for fighting wildfires… A TV story reports on attempts to help economically, including SBA loans, after the closure of the Yellowstone River…. Wildfires remained relatively stable.
- **North Dakota:** Pipeline protest stories include one from an environmental web site that cites objections to the pipeline from three federal agencies similar to what the tribe is protesting. Also, an Omaha TV station gives an overview of the situation. … Three tornadoes hit eastern North Dakota over the weekend.
- **South Dakota:** Lawrence County officials approved further investigation into whether to do a program to prevent damage from a previous wildfire. They expressed hesitation because of a previous experience with a cost-share with FEMA… A Yankton resident died from West Nile virus.
- **Utah:** State water officials are insisting on a plan to analyze the damage and what to do about the toxic sediment in the American Fork River. The memory of the Gold King Mine spill is a warning of further potential hazards.
- **Wyoming:** The southern entrance to Yellowstone National Park is open again.
- **Other FEMA-related stories**: NBC News, along with other outlets, gives an overview of the stormy weather currently threatening parts of the U.S. … The CDC says sit will run out of money to fight the Zika virus in September.

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Cloud cover keeps Copper King, Roaring Lion fires quiet (Missoulian)

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Dakota Pipeline Was Approved by Army Corps Over Objections of Three Federal Agencies (Inside Climate News)

5 things to know about the Dakota Access Pipeline (KETV, Omaha)

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

County To Explore Grant Possibilities For Areas Affected By Crow Peak Fire (Black Hills Pioneer)

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Next step for American Fork River: Measure the risks with an eye toward spring (KSL TV, Salt Lake City)

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Route To Yellowstone Reopens, But Fire Danger Remains High (Wyoming Public Radio)

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

NBC: Severe Weather.

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

STORIES

COLORADO

Homeowners looking at major losses after hail and flooding in Colorado Springs (KOAA TV, Colorado Springs)

By Bill Folsom

The people living in areas of Colorado Springs inundated by hail and water on Monday, spent Tuesday cleaning up and assessing damage. “Literally found ourselves homeless overnight,” said John Martin who lived in one of the damaged homes on Logan Avenue. Multiple residents on the street are facing so much damage their homes will be unlivable for some time.

Many homes end up with hail and water in their homes. The basements of several homes filled with hail as deep as three feet. Other rooms show water makes several feet up walls. Where water subsided it left behind a coating of mud.

Erma Medina rents out a home on Logan Avenue. It is one of the homes with hail filling the basement.

There has been flooding in the area before, but never like this. She carried FEMA flood insurance until about a year ago when she says several city storm water drains outside her property were upgraded. With this disaster she see the problem as hail, but she says her insurance company says it is flooding. Sitting on a retaining wall outside the house Medina points to the remaining kneed deep hail, "Look at that hail. You can see the hail in the basement. The windows were broken by hail and they say it was flood. I don't believe it was a flood, no. She will dispute the claim, but says insurance or no insurance help she will find a way to repair the damage.

MONTANA

Western fires take big toll on programs (Billings Gazette, reprinted in Bismarck Tribune)

The late August sun is a smoky red ball, reminding Montanans of the fires that have destroyed homes and curtailed business in the West this summer. It's so dry in parts of Montana, Wyoming, California and other Western states that big fires are likely to burn until autumn snow falls. If lightning storms and wind persist, the fires will be bigger and more numerous.

The destruction is costly, and so is the firefighting. One year ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported on the rising cost of fire operations and how it affected the Forest Service's other work. The numbers indicate that the Forest Service ought to be called the "fire service" because that's how the agency spent most of its budget. The USDA summed up the problem of "the depletion of non-fire programs to pay for the ever-increasing costs of fire." This has resulted in:

- Less money for restoration work that would help prevent catastrophic fires.

- Less protection of watersheds and cultural resources.

- Reduced upkeep of programs and infrastructure that support thousands of recreation jobs and billions of dollars economic growth in rural communities.

- Reduced support for the range of multiple uses, benefits and ecosystem services.

- Less research and technical assistance.

Firefighting staff has increased from 5,700 in 1998 to more than 12,000 in 2015. Meanwhile, the non-firefighting forest workers have been reduced by 39 percent — from 18,000 employees in 1998 to fewer than 11,000 last year.

Every non-firefighting program has been slashed. Forest road-building has been reduced 46 percent. Deferred maintenance funding was cut 95 percent despite a backlog of more than $5.1 billion in dam repairs, roads, sewer and water system improvements.

Lack of funding for everything but fires has prevented the agency from doing things that would save money in the long term. Energy efficiency projects have been deferred. Funding hasn't been available for partnership programs that generate private matching funds.

The report concluded with the solution that Congress has been delaying for years: Change the way we pay for wildfire fighting. Treat wildfires as the natural disasters they are.

In June, Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., spoke on behalf of draft legislation called the Wildfire Budgeting, Response and Forest Management Act. The first thing it would do, according to a Daines news release, is "end the unsustainable practice of fire borrowing by enabling a transfer of limited funds to the Forest Service and the Department of Interior through a budget cap adjustment when all appropriated suppressions funding (100 percent of the 10-year average) has been exhausted."

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., reaffirmed his support for the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. Both he and Daines are co-sponsors of the act, which would "pay for catastrophic wildfires through separate

emergency funding, allowing the Forest Service to devote more resources to proactive forest management like trail maintenance and timber harvest."

If S.235, which both of our U.S. senators are co-sponsoring, had been enacted and funded last year, the Forest Service would have $1.4 billion more to fight wildfires this year. But it didn't pass, so the Forest Service will again have to rob all its other operations to pay for the fiery disasters this year.

Montana's senators are in a good position to promote this bipartisan solution. Among many proposals for forest management involving timber harvest, recreation and conservation, nothing else is going to work well if the budget continues to be diverted to wildfire.

Lawmakers must stop the "fire borrowing" before another wildfire season begins. We call on Daines and Tester to work together to unite other Western senators and pass wildfire disaster legislation this year.
— *Billings (Mont) Gazette*

Efforts underway to help while portion of Yellowstone River is closed for businesses (KRTV, Great Falls)

By Morgan McKay - MTN News

LIVINGSTON - Governor Steve Bullock scheduled a Rapid Response Training meeting Monday for those affected by the closure of the Yellowstone River.

Many people like Chase Chapman have been left wondering how they will get through a Montana winter, since the closure of the Yellowstone has forced them to close their business.

"I don't need retraining, I'm very good at what I do," said Chapman, who is a fly fishing guide and teacher in Livingston. "When all these Congressman want to go catch a big fish, I go through Yellowstone Angler and we catch some big fish."

"So I came to this meeting today with some hope of maybe there's some grants available for a small business person, because if they opened up the river again tomorrow, I've now sold all my inventory," said Beth O'Neill, owner of SUP Montana.

Earlier today, Governor Bullock signed an executive order proclaiming an invasive species emergency to exist in the State of Montana. This order allows for different organizations to offer relief.

"We heard your concerns and taking a multi agency approach to addressing the immediate needs of workers who rely on the Yellowstone River for their livelihoods," said Bullock.

Local and Park County government officials attended the meeting as well as representatives from agencies such as the Montana Chamber of Commerce and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

"We do everything from helping folks file their unemployment claims to assisting them to potentially go into training folks who may have been impacted by this or a similar event," said Zack Medina, with Job Services.

“This isn't a handout, this isn't an entitlement program,” said Paul Martin, Bureau Chief of Unemployment Insurance. “It's a week to week eligibility program, it's funded by employers through payroll taxes.”

While unemployment insurance was one favorable option, other resources available were loans or a different temporary job placement.

“The last thing you want to do is get into debt, but there are economic injury loans, we can go up to two million (dollars),” said John Donovan, Small Business Administration.

Those businesses affected by the closure of the Yellowstone are encouraged to contact the Institute for Tourism and Recreation at the University of Montana, to help aid them in studying the full economic impact of the closure.

“Montanans I think, what makes us special, is to live here you have to learn to do several things,” said Chapman.

According to latest information released by FWP today, out of 30 trout tested in the upper Yellowstone, only two brown trout tested positive for the parasitic infection.

Officials say there is only evidence of the parasite, but not the disease. FWP also is saying there have been no trout mortalities documented from the disease.

Cloud cover keeps Copper King, Roaring Lion fires quiet (Missoulian)

- KIM BRIGGEMAN kbriggeman@missoulian.com

THOMPSON FALLS – Tuesday turned out to be a good day to fight fires in western Montana, though crews were keeping a lookout for a cool front blowing in from Oregon.

“There’s been a cloud cover over the fire this afternoon that’s kind of kept it subdued during the day,” spokesman Mike Cole said from the Copper King fire east of Thompson Falls.

A red flag warning issued for the afternoon and evening suggested dry thunderstorms might mix with temperatures in the 90s and relative humidity in the low to mid-teens and cause problems at both the Copper King and the Roaring Lion southwest of Hamilton, which turns a month old on Wednesday.

“I’m not sure if they’re actually going to produce over our area,” Lisa Keibler, public information officer at the Roaring Lion, said at 5:30 p.m. “We’ve got a lot of cloud cover and maybe some smoke from Idaho, but right now it’s pretty calm out actually.”

Neither fire is close to being out. An infrared flight in the middle of the night Monday raised the acreage of the Copper King to just under 26,000, up 1,000 acres from an estimate the evening before. It’s Montana’s largest active fire in 2016.

“Our biggest concern and kind of the linchpin of this thing is Munson Creek,” Cole said. “If we can keep this fire out of Munson Creek, that’s going to allow us to get a handle on this. But the weather has to cooperate and we have a lot of ground to cover and a lot of steep ground to try to get buttoned up.”

Munson Creek runs in a southerly direction to Highway 200 and the Clark Fork River 11 miles east of Thompson Falls and 13 miles west of Plains. Cole said crews were out until 2 a.m. Tuesday to complete a burnout operation on the north side of the fire.

During the day helicopters and an occasional fixed-wing aircraft were dropping water and retardant at the top of Munson Creek trying to keep the fire out of the deep canyon to prevent a possible run up the east side.

“We’ve been doing some structure protection work around the residences on Buffalo Bill Road,” Cole said. “If the fire did come down Munson Creek, those would be the first residences threatened, so we want to get ahead of the game.”

Some 220,000 gallons of water and 22,000 gallons of retardant were dropped on the fire Monday, when the fire west of Munson Creek burned back into the main fire toward the Big Hole Lookout. That resulted in a large column that was visible from Plains.

Tuesday’s red flag concern was rooted in an unstable air mass rated 6 on the Haines Index. The Haines Index has been used since 1988 to indicate the potential for wildfire growth. The index can range between 2 and 6, with a 6 being the driest and most unstable conditions in the lower atmosphere.

A total of 840 people are working the Copper King, which has cost an estimated $16.5 million to quell since it broke out on July 31.

Closures and evacuations remain in place. Forty-five homes have been evacuated and another 130 are on pre-evacuation notice. Log hauling is being permitted through the closure area from 4 to 6 a.m. daily.

Air quality in the Thompson Falls area climbed once again into the "very unhealthy" range Tuesday morning, spiking midway toward the top category of "hazardous" at 10 a.m. before dropping two levels to “unhealthy for sensitive groups” by 5 p.m.

"Very unhealthy" air means active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease, such as asthma, should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone else, especially children, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.

Roughly 80 percent of hunting district 122 near Thompson Falls was closed indefinitely on Monday by the U.S. Forest Service.

Estimated containment date for the Copper King fire remains the end of October.

In Hamilton at the Roaring Lion fire, air quality remained good all day. Fifty-four people are on the fire, which was caused by unknown sources on July 31. Most of Tuesday’s action consisted of monitoring and checking the 8,533-acre fire with aerial resources to keep it within Ward Bowl, north of Camas Creek and south of Sawtooth Creek. Patrols were active on the ground to suppress spot fires over the fire line.

The Roaring Lion is expected to be contained by the end of September.

NORTH DAKOTA

Dakota Pipeline Was Approved by Army Corps Over Objections of Three Federal Agencies (Inside Climate News)

Sioux tribe's concerns were echoed in official reports by the EPA and two other agencies, but Army Corps of Engineers brushed them aside.

By Phil McKenna

Aug 30, 2016

BISMARCK, N.D.—Senior officials at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and two other federal agencies raised serious environmental and safety objections to the North Dakota section of the controversial Dakota Access oil pipeline, the same objections being voiced in a large protest by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe that has so far succeeded in halting construction.

But those concerns were dismissed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which relied on an environmental assessment prepared by the pipeline's developer, Dakota Access LLC, when it approved the project in July, according to public documents.

The 1,134-mile pipeline would carry approximately 500,000 barrels of crude per day from North Dakota to Illinois along a route that did not originally pass near the Standing Rock reservation, the documents show. After the company rerouted the pipeline to cross the Missouri River just a half-mile upstream of the reservation, the tribe complained that the Army Corps did not consider threats to its water supply and cultural heritage.

The EPA, the Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation echoed those concerns in public comments on the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment. Citing risks to water supplies, inadequate emergency preparedness, potential impacts to the Standing Rock reservation and insufficient environmental justice analysis, the agencies urged the Army Corps to issue a revised draft of their environmental assessment.

"Crossings of the Missouri River have the potential to affect the primary source of drinking water for much of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Tribal nations," Philip Strobel, National Environmental Policy Act regional compliance director for the EPA, wrote in a March 11 letter to the Army Corps.

The current route of the pipeline is 10 miles upstream of Fort Yates, the tribal headquarters of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and the county seat. The Standing Rock Sioux rely on the Missouri River for drinking water, irrigation, and fish.

The EPA shared its concerns and recommended that the Army Corps undertake a new draft environmental assessment and release it for public comment. In that process, the EPA asked the Army Corps to consider "other available routes or crossing locations that would have reduced potential to water resources, especially drinking water supplies," and to carry out a "more thorough" analysis of environmental justice concerns. The other agencies also asked for further assessments and consultation with the tribes.

The Army Corps instead published its final environmental assessment four months later, which constituted final approval of the project. In it, the Corps acknowledged the agencies' comments, but said "the anticipated environmental, economic, cultural, and social effects" of the project are "not injurious to the public interest."

The Army Corps, which has jurisdiction over domestic pipelines that cross major waterways, declined a request for comment, citing ongoing litigation. Energy Transfer, owner of Dakota Access LLC, did not respond to a request for comment. The company has previously said "we are constructing this pipeline in accordance with applicable laws, and the local, state and federal permits and approvals we have received."

Tribe Takes their Complaints Public

The tribe's growing protest has gathered in a camp near Cannon Ball, N.D., and has drawn support from Native Americans from around the country as well as environmental activists. An estimated 1,200 people are camping there and Sioux leaders say 90 tribes are represented among the protesters.

The protest blocked construction equipment two weeks ago and Energy Transfer halted construction on the section of pipeline closest to the Standing Rock reservation. A federal judge said last week he will rule by September 9 on whether to grant the Standing Rock Sioux a temporary injunction. That would bar construction on sections of the pipeline where the ground hasn't yet been disturbed until a suit calling for the Army Corps to redo its permitting process can be heard.

Demographics of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation
The Standing Rock reservation spans 3,600 square miles across North and South Dakota, where 41 percent of its 8,217 residents live below the poverty level, more than triple the national average, according to a 2012 economic development report prepared for the tribe. Nearly a quarter of its population is unemployed.

In its comments calling for a re-do, the EPA said the environmental justice analysis in the Army Corps' draft environmental assessment used county-by-county or state-by-state data when the preferred level of analysis is "census block groups or census tracts."

"A screening level analysis for EJ [environmental justice] indicates there are several census block groups with substantial minority and/or low income demographics that could be potentially impacted by the project," the EPA wrote. "In addition to analyzing potential EJ impacts, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (February 16, 1994) also requires public outreach to potentially affected EJ communities."

In its final environmental assessment, the Army Corps said its analysis "contains an Environmental Justice analysis that conforms with recognized practice."

The agency also said the pipeline does not cross tribal land. "In fact, tribal land was specifically avoided as a routing mitigation measure," it said. "The Project does not anticipate any impact to water supplies along its route, and to the extent a response action is required, federal regulation will be complied with."

Route Became a Moving Target

The original route for the proposed pipeline crossed the Missouri River further north, 10 miles upstream of Bismarck, the state capital. North Dakota Public Service Commission documents show the route upstream of Bismarck in a May 29, 2014 map by Energy Transfer.

The company later rejected this route, citing a number of factors, including more road and wetland crossings, a longer pipeline, and higher costs. Also listed as a concern was the close proximity to wellheads providing Bismarck's drinking water supply.

"They moved it down to Standing Rock, which is a very remote area, but people live at Standing Rock too. There is an environmental justice component here," said Jan Hasselman, an attorney with environmental advocacy organization EarthJustice, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of the Standing Rock Tribe against the Army Corps of Engineers.

In its public comments, the Department of the Interior, the government agency responsible for the administration and management of Native American lands, called for the Army Corps to conduct an

Environmental Impact Statement, a more comprehensive analysis of the potential impact of the proposed pipeline.

"We believe the Corps did not adequately justify or otherwise support its conclusion that there would be no significant impacts upon the surrounding environment and community," Lawrence Roberts, acting assistant secretary of Indian affairs at the Depart of the Interior, wrote in a letter to the Army Corps in March.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), a federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of the nation's historic resources, also expressed concern over the Army Corps' assessment.

Federal law requires federal agencies to take into account the effect a proposed project will have on historic property. The Army Corps' assessment, however lacked adequate consultation with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and focused on a limited number of water crossings rather than on the pipeline's entire expanse, according to letters ACHP officials wrote to the Army Corps.

"Based on the inadequacies of the tribal consultation and the limited scope for identification of historic properties that may be affected, the ACHP questions the sufficiency of the Corps' identification effort, its determinations of eligibility, and assessments of effect," Reid Nelson, director of the office of federal agency programs for ACHP, wrote in a May 19 letter to the Army Corps.

In its final assessment, the Corps stated there is "no new significant information on environmental effects" as a result of comments from the EPA and others. "As such, neither a supplemental or revised EA [Environmental Assessment] for further public review nor additional NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] compliance actions was required."

"We're talking about a broad overarching and fundamental failure which is the decision to look very narrowly at environmental impacts at a few specific locations rather than the pipeline as a whole," Hasselman said of the Army Corps' assessment.

Having their concerns dismissed by the Corps, the tribe turned next to the courts. Their lawsuit calls for a halt to construction and full consideration of the pipeline's impact on tribal lands and water.

To obtain a preliminary or "emergency" injunction, however, attorneys representing the Standing Rock tribe will have to demonstrate imminent harm to historic sites if construction proceeds.

"To the extent that people are concerned about harm from oil spills, that is still a ways off," Hasselman said. "We can't really seek emergency relief on that front. That is something that we will be seeking in the course of the lawsuit."

5 things to know about the Dakota Access Pipeline (KETV, Omaha)

Native American tribe sued the federal government over project

UPDATED 7:33 AM CDT Aug 31, 2016

(CNN) —In what looks to be a possible sequel to the Keystone XL Pipeline dispute, another fight has begun over a proposed US oil route.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has sued the federal government, saying the Native American tribe was not properly consulted over the project to construct a 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline that extends over four states.

While proponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline tout its economic boost, opponents question its environmental impact.

The US Army Corps of Engineers approved the project, granting final permits in July, to the dismay of environmentalists and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

1. What is the pipeline project?

The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would transport crude oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa and into Illinois. The pipeline is also known as the Bakken Oil Pipeline, named for the oil-rich area in North Dakota. An estimated 7.4 billion barrels of undiscovered oil is believed to be in the US portion of the Bakken Formation, according to the US Geological Survey.

The underground pipeline would transport 470,000 barrels of crude oil a day, which would be sent to markets and refineries in the Midwest, East Coast and Gulf Coast regions, according to Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co.

2. Why is the pipeline being constructed?

The project developer, Dakota Access, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Crude Oil, says the pipeline would help the United States become less dependent on importing energy from unstable regions of the world. It says a pipeline is the safest, most cost-effective and environmentally responsible way to move crude oil, removing dependency on rails and trucks.

It also estimates the pipeline would bring an estimated $156 million in sales and income taxes to state and local governments as well as add 8,000 to 12,000 construction jobs.

The proposal comes as a glut of cheap oil has devastated North Dakota's economy. The state had enjoyed a major boom, but after hitting highs in 2014, it suffered a major economic downturn.

The project developers say the $3.7 billion project will "bring significant economic benefits to the region that it transverses."

3. Who is protesting?

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a complaint in federal court alleging that "the construction and operation of the pipeline ... threatens the Tribe's environmental and economic well-being, and would damage and destroy sites of great historic, religious, and cultural significance to the Tribe."

There are also concerns that digging the pipeline under the Missouri River would affect the tribe's drinking water supply. The tribe, represented by Earthjustice, a nonprofit environmental law firm, has asked for an injunction.

Based in Fort Yates, North Dakota, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is a federally recognized Indian tribe, a successor to the Great Sioux Nation. Other Native American tribes and nations have joined its efforts.

"We have laws that require federal agencies to consider environmental risks and protection of Indian historic and sacred sites," Dave Archambault II, the elected chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, said in a statement.

"But the Army Corps has ignored all those laws and fast-tracked this massive project just to meet the pipeline's aggressive construction schedule."

Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota disputes the tribe's chief complaint that the Army Corps did not properly consult it.

"If there is some way for the corps to work to meet the concerns of the tribe, they should certainly do that. But (there) has been a consultation process. If the tribe doesn't feel that that has been sufficient, again, they can protest as long as they do it peacefully and safely, but ultimately their recourse is to the courts," the Republican senator told CNN affiliate KFYR-TV in Bismarck, North Dakota.

About 30 environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and Greenpeace, signed a letter to President Barack Obama, slamming the Dakota Access Pipeline as "yet another example of an oil pipeline project being permitted without public engagement or sufficient environmental review."

They appealed to him to reject the project -- as he did with the Keystone XL pipeline.

Protests have been held in North Dakota and Washington.

Construction equipment involved in the pipeline project in Iowa was set ablaze in suspected arson fires, reports say.

4. Who's on which side?

Bernie Sanders spoke out against the pipeline in November 2015, but Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton has not addressed the issue. CNN reached out to the Clinton campaign for comment on the issue and has not yet received a response.

"If candidate Clinton does nothing to address this issue yet continues into November promising Native Americans that she is our champion, then her words will be nothing but false promises -- just more bombast, more white lies to Indians," Simon Moya-Smith, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation and culture editor at Indian Country Today, wrote recently in a CNN op-ed.

Celebrities such as Shailene Woodley, Susan Sarandon and Rosario Dawson have spoken out against the pipeline.

Leonardo DiCaprio tweeted that he was "inspired by the Standing Rock Sioux's efforts to halt the Dakota Access Pipeline."

5. What's next?

The tribe's actions may be the start of a lengthy, legal fight over the Dakota Access Pipeline. Meanwhile, construction work on the pipeline is ongoing.

US District Judge James Boasberg said he wants to absorb both sides of the argument before issuing a ruling, which is expected by September 9, KFYR reported.

Officials Rate 3 Weekend Tornadoes In Eastern North Dakota (AP)

Associated Press, August 30, 2016

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) – A weekend tornado that caused damage in the Hillsboro area had wind speeds up to 140 mph, according to the National Weather Service.

The agency rated the Saturday evening tornado in Traill County an EF-3 on the enhanced Fujita scale. An EF2 or higher rating is considered significant.

The tornado was as wide as three football fields are long and was on the ground for 8 minutes, according to a weather service report. It smashed bins at Rahr Malting Co.'s Taft grain elevator complex and spilled tons of barley onto the ground, destroyed a garage and uprooted trees on one area farmstead. It heavily damaged a home and a metal building at another farmstead.

No one was hurt. The town of 1,600 people was lucky that the tornado missed the heart of the community, said Connor Ulness with the storm damage restoration company Aspen Exteriors.

"The tornado came in just north of the center of town," he told WDAY-TV.

Severe storms in eastern North Dakota on Saturday spawned two weaker tornadoes in neighboring Grand Forks County, according to the weather service. One with wind speeds estimated at 70 mph and rated an EF-0 touched down in an open field near Arvilla. An EF-1 tornado with wind speeds up to 110 mph uprooted trees and demolished a barn in the Pleasant View Township area.

No injuries were reported in either of those tornadoes.

SOUTH DAKOTA

County To Explore Grant Possibilities For Areas Affected By Crow Peak Fire (Black Hills Pioneer)

By Jaci Conrad

Black Hills Pioneer

August 30,2016

DEADWOOD — Disaster prevention due to devastation caused by the Crow Peak Fire is the impetus behind the Lawrence County Commission's recent decision to give the go-ahead to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide an initial assessment of the area.

"We might discover something very important that needs to be done," said Commission Chair Daryl Johnson.

The Emergency Watershed Protection program of the conservation service is designed to help prevent damage to life or property after a natural disasters, like the Crow Peak Fire. A cost-share program, the protection program pays 75 percent of the costs to install practices such as replacing culverts identified in the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) report completed after the fire. If it decides the assessment is worthy of pursuing, the county, upon entering a sponsorship of the emergency grant program, would be responsible for 25 percent of the costs.

Because the county would be responsible for the operation and maintenance of any culverts installed, for the life of the culvert, commissioners were hesitant to commit to the program, asking first for an initial assessment to be brought back and reviewed before a formal commitment is made.

"You understand, our apprehension comes from the fact that we still maintain snow-removal on two bridges because we were a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) sponsor of them at one time," Johnson said.

With a 60-day deadline following the fire, which was put out on July 4, an application letter must be submitted to the conservation service by Friday, starting the information gathering process, beginning with a damage survey report. This report will identify what problems are present, how to fix any concerns, and the cost of repairing the concerns. The application letter does not commit Lawrence County to a contract.

District Conservationist Justin Boerboom addressed the commission, explaining that the NRCS is federal agency with USDA funding and takes measures to help prevent catastrophe after a natural disaster through the Emergency Watershed Program.

"We need a local sponsor to apply for assistance," Boerboom said. "We've proposed the project. The next step is to go out and evaluate what the issues are, what to address, the costs, and come back with a proposal."

NRCS State Engineer Jay Cobb said that once they evaluate, the next determination is if they can mitigate issues to gain benefits greater than the actual cost of construction.

Threats that the protection program addresses are termed watershed impairments and include, for example: debris-clogged stream channels, undermined and unstable streambanks, jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures, wind-borne debris removal, and damaged upland sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor, such as the county, if they decide to move forward with the program.

Boerboom also presented the critical values table from the BAER report, listing all the concerns on private land. Listed as a very high risk to human life and safety is the Crow Creek Road and the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout, and damage. The BAER team identified Crow Creek as an drainage of Crow Peak that would see an increase of about 50 percent over normal flows since the vegetation on the western slopes were burned.

Listed as a high threat to human life and safety are homes along Crow Creek Road; specifically, two cabins and the threat of flash flooding and debris flows.

Listed as a very high threat to property are: two road crossings with 18-inch culverts on Crow Creek Road; Crumm Driveway Crossing's 24-inch culvert; and Nicholas Cabin driveway, which

crossing 24-inch culvert. The threat here is flash flooding with debris flows, debris blockage, possible failure of crossing structures, and road washout/damage.

Listed as a high threat to property are private road crossings along Higgins Gulch Road in the floodplain, with the threat of flash flooding with debris flows, road washout/damage; and culverts under driveways alongside Higgins Gulch Road.

The BAER team determined the Higgins Gulch drainage would see increased flows of about 10 percent following the fire.

There are other threats that have been identified and listed in the intermediate to low threat categories.

Yankton Co. Resident Dies From West Nile Virus (KDLT News, Pierre)

Aug 29, 2016

KDLT News- Pierre, S.D.

The South Dakota Department of Health today reported a Yankton Co. resident died of West Nile virus associated causes. It is the state's first WNV related death this season. The individual was in the 80 to 89 age group.

To date this season, South Dakota has reported 74 cases of human WNV; 12 percent have had the most serious neruoinvasive disease while 88 percent have had WNV fever. Twenty-five percent of cases have been hospitalized. There has also been a WNV-positive horse in Butte County.

"This unfortunate death is a reminder for us all that while the Zika virus is grabbing headlines, West Nile is the mosquito-borne virus of concern here in South Dakota," said Lon Kightlinger, state epidemiologist for the department. "We strongly encourage people to protect themselves and their families by using repellent and avoiding the outdoors when mosquitoes are most active."

Kightlinger said South Dakotans can reduce their risk with the following precautions:

- Apply mosquito repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535) to clothes and exposed skin. Limit exposure by wearing pants and long sleeves in the evening.

- Limit time outdoors from dusk to midnight when Culex mosquitoes, the primary carrier of WNV in South Dakota, are most active.

- Get rid of standing water that gives mosquitoes a place to breed. Regularly change water in bird baths, outside pet dishes, and drain water from flower pots and garden containers.

- Support local mosquito control efforts.

UTAH

Next step for American Fork River: Measure the risks with an eye toward spring (KSL TV, Salt Lake City)

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue | Posted Aug 30th, 2016 @ 7:02pm

SALT LAKE CITY — State water quality officials will insist on an action plan to prevent further contamination of the American Fork River from lead-laden sediment that killed thousands of fish in a two-mile stretch.

That plan will be put together by the North Utah Water Conservancy District with an eye toward preventing sediment from being stirred up by rain or spring runoff, said Walt Baker, director of the Utah Division of Water Quality.

He said the division also expects to get an estimate from project engineers on the amount of sediment that washed into the river as a result of the Tibble Fork Dam's $7.3 million rehabilitation and expansion project.

"We have moved sediment from point A to point B over a six-mile expanse," Baker said. "There needs to be an assessment of how bad it is and what steps need to be taken to remediate it."

It's the latest plan following completion by project engineers of a diversion channel that placed a 200-foot pipeline to reroute flows into the nearly empty Tibble Fork basin to prevent another sediment flush while work continues on the dam.

Baker said a lot of factors will come into play to mitigate the impacts of the sludge, especially given that high flows from spring runoff.

"Mother Nature is going to come with spring runoff regardless of any planning we do," he said. "We need to know what needs to be done."

Dave Brown, the Utah state conservationist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, said an aerial drone flew over the site Monday to quantify the amount of material that washed into the river.

"There is a very clear mini-canyon that is exposed now," he said. "The engineer indicated they could use survey technology to calculate how much sediment was deposited."

Dam project

The NRCS is the federal agency on the Tibble Fork rehabilitation project, which rose as a priority after a 2004 assessment found that 1960s-era dam did not meet safety standards. Work began in June, with the NRCS advising downstream users that as the reservoir began draining around Aug. 19, people could expect to see elevated levels of sediment in the river.

Brown said continuing inflows into the basin released larger amounts of sediment than anticipated. The result was a two-mile section of the river just below the dam that lost all its fish populations due to suffocation.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources said historically, there are about 1,000 to 2,000 fish per mile in that section of the river.

While water samples taken by the state show metal concentrations within screening values for health, recreation and aquatic life downstream, the sediment showed high levels of lead that likely resulted from legacy mining operations in the Wasatch Mountains.

Several hundred abandoned mines dot the mountains, some experiencing acid mine drainage and an unknown number are within proximity of perennial stream flows.

Baker said his division has worked in partnership with the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, to craft a blueprint of where there may be water quality risks — a concern accentuated with the disastrous Gold King Mine spill of 2015.

In that incident, EPA-led contractors bungled efforts to open a mine portal and sent a 3-million gallon torrent of mustard-colored mine waste into the Animas River above Silverton, Colo. The breach contaminated water in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the Navajo Nation in an environmental catastrophe critics say was avoidable.

Baker said the Gold King mine disaster underscores the need for Utah officials to get a handle on potential problems, sooner rather than later.

"It ought to be enough of a concern that we do some investigation," he said. "My greatest concern is if there needs to be an action plan and if these are time bombs waiting to go off."

Abandoned mines

While state officials over abandoned mine reclamation have mapped the hundreds of mines and their owners — if available — with work done in the 1990s, Baker said it is not clear how many of them pose risks to waterways.

"If, in fact, they do have flows and there are responsible parties, we can issue a permit and get an idea of the water quality of the mines' drainage," he said. "We will be way ahead to know if we have a problem or not."

The mining division closes up abandoned mines if there is a public safety risk, and Baker's division can enforce the Clean Water Act if water is at risk, but there is no state regulatory oversight absent those factors.

"We really don't know the extent," said Steve Fluke, administrator over the state's abandoned mine reclamation program. "We are trying to figure out how many are discharging and may be an environmental issue in light of Gold King."

While there is funding in place to deal with the cleanup of abandoned coal mines, no funding exists for other mines.

"There is no such law for cleaning up hard rock mine sites," Fluke said.

Mark Allen of Protect and Preserve American Fork Canyon sees the potential for another Gold King Mine spill in the Wasatch Mountains because he said no one is properly addressing the risks.

"The Wasatch Mountains have a bunch of ticking time bombs and no one wants to talk about them," he said.

Allen said the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should step in and declare the Tibble Fork sediment release into American Fork River a Superfund site.

EPA had a response team in Utah County last week, but the federal agency has not disclosed what its employees determined about the Tibble Fork Dam release.

"We will continue to coordinate with Utah and federal agencies to evaluate data, information, and potential next steps related to the sediment release," said EPA spokesman Rich Mylott.

"We’re certainly aware of concerns related to historic mining and metals impacts in the American Fork watershed and have worked with state and local partners on previous assessment and cleanup projects in the basin."

Allen is leading a tour to legacy mine sites mid-month that Baker and Fluke said they plan to attend.

"I have been barking pretty loud," he said. "We're taking everybody up there who has some stewardship and asking them to figure out what to do."

Baker and several members of his staff are touring the New Yankee Mine on Snowbird property Wednesday to assess any downstream impacts.

The division is also looking at the resort's expansion into Mary Ellen Gulch, an approval granted earlier this year that requires water quality monitoring for two years before any construction on ski lifts or other facilities begins.

WYOMING

Route To Yellowstone Reopens, But Fire Danger Remains High (Wyoming Public Radio)

By CAROLINE BALLARD • 16 HOURS AGO

Northwest Wyoming continues to struggle with high fire danger as eleven wild fires currently burn in that part of the state.

Bill Swartley, a public information officer for the Yellowstone fire team, said Phase 2 fire restrictions will likely go into effect in Yellowstone National Park on Wednesday. That means any kind of open flame may be banned in the park.

Swartley said preventing any human caused fires is their top priority.

“These fires are lightning caused and for that reason are being managed for ecological benefits to the park,” said Swartley. “However, human caused fires are a total different type of ignition.” With temperatures reaching into the 80s and low relative humidity, weather conditions are prime for even more fire growth.

Some progress has been made, though. Highway 191/89/287 between Leek’s Marina and Yellowstone’s South Entrance was closed because of the Berry Fire but has now reopened. Highway pull outs along that stretch remain closed.

Swartley said there may be areas of light haze or smoke in the park that could make it hard to see.

“We’re just recommending people adjust their speed and turn on their headlights, increase their visibility as they pass through those areas of smoke,” said Swartley.

He added that people with respiratory sensitivity may want to check air quality at airnow.gov before heading into the park.

OTHER FEMA NEWS

NBC: Severe Weather. NBC Nightly News (8/30, lead story, 2:30, Guthrie, 16.61M) reported, “Make no mistake, we are in the fall throes of hurricane season now. And if you’re a storm watcher at the weather service looking at the US map tonight, there’s a lot to keep your eye on. Three big storms threatening the US coastline at this hour. Parts of Florida just placed under a hurricane watch, bracing for up to 10 inches of rain. A tropical storm warning for sections of North Carolina. And Hawaii gearing up for a possible one-two punch. The Big Island facing a hurricane warning at this hour. Gabe Gutierrez starts us off tonight in North Carolina storm zone.” NBC (**Gutierrez**) added, “Tonight, the view from the International Space Station is stunning: massive hurricanes swirling across the globe. Hurricane Madeleine in the Pacific, threatening Hawaii. It’s followed by Hurricane Lester. Churning in the Atlantic, Hurricane Gaston, not expected to affect the US but now the Carolina and Florida coasts are bracing for separate tropical systems.” **Unidentified speaker**: “The storm is an uncertainty, but we are preparing for it.” **Gutierrez**: “In Florida, tropical depression number nine is forecast to turn towards the Gulf Coast, bringing heavy rain and even isolated tornadoes over the next few days.” **Rick Scott**, Florida Governor: “Everybody has to be careful. We don’t want anybody to be injured. We don’t want any loss of life.” **Gutierrez**: “Another system, tropical depression number eight, is grazing North Carolina’s Outer Banks, where a tropical storm warning is in effect. The concern here, rip currents – fast-moving water that moves away from shore. Swimmers are pulled out to sea and panic while trying to swim against current, back to the beach.” **Drew Pearson**, NC Emergency Management: “Rip currents are dangerous. They’ve taken three lives here in the Outer Banks Just this past summer. There’s a high threat of them right now.” **Gutierrez**: “Young Payton Waller got caught up in one but managed to escape.” **Payton Waller**, swimmer: “It’s really rough and all these waves just crashing.” **Gutierrez**: “Other tourists on this tail end of summer are taking the offshore storm in stride.” **Unidentified speaker**: “I mean, one to three inches. Back home, this is what you call a thunderstorm.” **Gutierrez**: “Though neither of the storms closest to the eastern US are expected to strengthen into major hurricanes, it has suddenly become a busy season in the tropics.” **Rick Knabb**, National Hurricane Center: “Don’t focus so much on the strength or the category, because the water hazards might end up being the most dangerous.” **Gutierrez**: “As Florida prepares for flooding, here in North Carolina’s Outer Banks, things may seem calm. But, there is rough surf and dangerous rip currents up and down the eastern seaboard as far north as New England, possibly extending into the holiday weekend.”

CDC Will Run Out Of Money To Fight Zika In US Next Month (Washington Post)

By Lena Sun

Washington Post, August 30, 2016

The federal agency leading the public health response to the Zika virus in the United States will run out of funding to combat the mosquito-borne virus by late September, its director said Monday.

“The cupboard is bare,” said Tom Frieden, who heads the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Basically, we’re out of money, and we need Congress to act to allow us to respond effectively.”

Of the $222 million that the CDC was allocated for domestic Zika response this year, about $200 million has been committed, Frieden said during a media roundtable in Washington. “The rest will be gone by the end of September.”

The timing further raises the threat for high-risk states along the Gulf Coast, particularly if Congress again fails to act on the Obama administration’s emergency funding request when lawmakers return to Washington next month.

“We’re in peak mosquito season” – which typically lasts through the end of October in the United States – and if transmission starts occurring more broadly, CDC “might not have the resources” to respond and send teams to support local and state officials, Frieden said.

The CDC has already issued unprecedented travel advisories for two areas in Florida where mosquitoes are actively spreading the virus: a one-square-mile section of Miami’s Wynwood neighborhood and a 1.5-square-mile zone in Miami Beach. Pregnant women are urged to stay out of both areas because of the danger Zika poses to a fetus.

Negotiations in Congress over a $1.9 billion Zika spending package fell apart in late June. Federal health officials have shifted money from elsewhere in the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the domestic response. That includes $38 million from fighting Ebola, $44 million from general public health emergency funds and, most recently, $81 million from programs at the National Institutes of Health and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

The money has gone to help states track the virus, provide assistance about birth defects caused by Zika and increase mosquito-control efforts. Within CDC itself, officials also have pulled resources from programs on immunization, disease infection and HIV outreach, including prevention treatment for people at risk of getting HIV, Frieden said.

Researchers continue to detail ever-graver consequences for babies born to mothers infected with Zika. A report from Brazil, published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine, described a newborn in Sao Paolo who had Zika virus in his blood for more than two months. While the baby had no obvious illness or visible birth defects at birth or when doctors examined him at about eight weeks, by six months he had developed severe Zika-related brain damage.

The first trimester of pregnancy is thought to be when Zika infection poses the greatest risk. In this case, however, the baby’s mother was infected late in her second trimester.

At the same time, the virus continues to spread to the rest of the world. The latest outbreak is in Singapore, a Southeast Asia travel hub, which typically has 500 full-time inspectors working to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes can breed. The fact that Zika is spreading there, with at least 56 cases now confirmed, shows how “it’s going to be really tough” for other places to control, he said.

During the coming weeks in the United States, Frieden expects there will be more cases of infants born with Zika-related neurological problems. As of mid-August, 17 babies infected in utero had been diagnosed with microcephaly, a condition defined by an abnormally small head and often serious brain damage.

In hard-hit Puerto Rico, the CDC estimates that 6,000 to 10,000 pregnant women will become infected during this mosquito season and that at least 100 to 270 infants will be born with microcephaly.

Without additional funding, Frieden said, the CDC won’t be able to undertake key projects to better understand and control the virus, including Zika’s longterm impact on infants and diagnostics to identify if a person has been previously infected.

In Puerto Rico, the agency also won’t be able to help the island establish its own vector control program. Without one, the island has not been able to conduct effective surveillance, mosquito control or public engagement, even though Puerto Rico is experiencing a Zika epidemic and has had a history of other vector-borne diseases.

Frieden said the few additional cases that have surfaced in other parts of South Florida are considered single cases that don’t represent a greater spread of the virus.

The travel advisories will be lifted after 45 days with no new cases from local transmission – the equivalent of three mosquito incubation periods. The Wynwood area is about halfway through that period, he said, but Miami Beach is still experiencing new cases.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 18:10:40 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

There was recently an article posted on Facebook from anarchic news that gave this information about a shoot on sight order given in North Dakota.

Here is a summary and direct quote from the article accusing Homeland Security of giving the order:

At the end of the article in question from the Anarchicnews site, there is an unattributed quote forming the last paragraph that does say "Now though homeland security has taken over, legally, and the situation and the level of threat has been bumped up. This means they consider this a terrorist action and have the authority to shot on sight." The first paragraph and headline attribute the order to North Dakota and the governor. I think this particular Snopes article debunking that the governor issued any such order is a good think and valid.
I have searched diligently and not found any reference anywhere else to Homeland Security issuing such an order.

While Snopes debunked the article as it pertained to the Governor, they did not address the Homeland Security reference. This is now under discussion among members of my tribe and people are very disturbed about it.

Please clarify what Homeland Security;s role is regarding DAPL Pipeline and whether a shoot on sight order was issued. What is Homeland Security's policy on shooting perceived protestors. Is the DAPL protest classified as a terrorist action?

Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 30 Aug 2016 18:53:35 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

After reading more closely, it is an inquiry about Homeland Security's role with the protest and a potential shoot on site order.

I googled (b)(6) and found her on Facebook. She is retired, didn't say what she retired from.

I tried to get to the website she mentions below but it is an unsafe site per my iPhone (and I am respecting that since we just heard about cyber security).

If the question is about DHS, and it appeared in a news outlet, plus the national attention the protests have gotten, we may want to might to defer to HQ on.

The most current update:
Lots of national news coverage
Seems to be a significant tension between the tribe and the State.
The Tribe has Declared a State of Emergency to address the impacts from the pipeline.
ND ACLU has asked the State to to protect first amendment rights.
The protestors have set up a school for the kids at the camp.
There are still conflicting reports of violence vs. peaceful protests.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 7:10:40 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

There was recently an article posted on Facebook from anarchic news that gave this information about a shoot on sight order given in North Dakota.

Here is a summary and direct quote from the article accusing Homeland Security of giving the order:

At the end of the article in question from the Anarchicnews site, there is an unattributed quote forming the last paragraph that does say "Now though homeland security has taken over, legally, and the situation and the level of threat has been bumped up. This means they consider this a terrorist action and have the authority to shot on sight." The first paragraph and headline attribute the order to North Dakota and the governor. I think this particular Snopes article debunking that the governor issued any such order is a good think and valid.

I have searched diligently and not found any reference anywhere else to Homeland Security issuing such an order.

While Snopes debunked the article as it pertained to the Governor, they did not address the Homeland Security reference. This is now under discussion among members of my tribe and people are very disturbed about it.

Please clarify what Homeland Security;s role is regarding DAPL Pipeline and whether a shoot on sight order was issued. What is Homeland Security's policy on shooting perceived protestors. Is the DAPL protest classified as a terrorist action?

Thank you.

(b)(6)
Southfield, MI
(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 16:43:48 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: 915 notes

Hi Stacie -

Just for awareness would any PFTs on our team be considered essential?

This class has already been amazing.

M

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2016 5:00:58 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: 915 notes

Darrin Ricketts will be heading to R5 toward end of Oct. Same job. Closer to family
FCO/FDRC meeting next week for those not deployed
Planning in case… Essential personnel list to be reviewed by DDs today. Note: Except CR to go through currently.
Interest from Sen. Hoeven in exploring federal funds (all agencies) for ND to support needed OT on law enforcement related to pipeline
ARA returns late tonight.

Reminder: I leave at about 4:15 today.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 20:27:47 +0000
To: Booth, Milo;Valteau, Margeau
Subject: RE: a few things

Thank you!!!!

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 2:27 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Valteau, Margeau <margeau.valteau@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: a few things

Later this month.

Yes. We can send the documents out for the RTL's to see.

Ok.

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 4:18 PM
To: Booth, Milo; Valteau, Margeau
Subject: a few things

Hi Milo and Margeau –

I wanted to touch base on three things….

1) Are we still looking at tomorrow as the start for consultation for the Tribal Policy? And will we get to see the changes before it goes out?
2) There are significant protests going on just north of the Standing Rock Reservation (southwestern SD) regarding the XL Pipeline. Media is anticipating large busloads of people from other reservations arriving today. We are tracking from here. We haven't gotten any questions on it, but depending on how long it goes on, it could impact some of our travel plans and the availability of tribal EMs and Council as well as their interest in FEMA. The protests have all been peaceful and are expected to stay that way.

Hope you are both doing well!

Megan

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 16:27:20 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Valteau, Margeau
Subject: RE: a few things

Later this month.

Yes. We can send the documents out for the RTL's to see.

Ok.

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2016 4:18 PM
To: Booth, Milo; Valteau, Margeau
Subject: a few things

Hi Milo and Margeau –

I wanted to touch base on three things….

1) Are we still looking at tomorrow as the start for consultation for the Tribal Policy? And will we get to see the changes before it goes out?
2) There are significant protests going on just north of the Standing Rock Reservation (southwestern SD) regarding the XL Pipeline. Media is anticipating large busloads of people from other reservations arriving today. We are tracking from here. We haven't gotten any questions on it, but depending on how long it goes on, it could impact some of our travel plans and the availability of tribal EMs and Council as well as their interest in FEMA. The protests have all been peaceful and are expected to stay that way.

Hope you are both doing well!

Megan

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 13:08:46 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I'm good with the Powwow bullet.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:07 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Brian, if you could look at the last bullet that I added.

Stacie – I could add that there are no current or anticipated requests for HHS/Federal ESF8 assistance – per Ron's report.

Other than that I would be ready to send to Milo and Rocky and then send to Ron for awareness.

I am going to engage in OST shortly and would like to get this out the door before that happens.

Thanks

Megan

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:39 AM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

This looks good to me, with the addition of the Powwow bullet that is with Brian for proof reading.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:29 AM

To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

How is this?

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).

- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA Region VIII External Affairs
303 235-4712 (office)
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Zimmerman, Elizabeth
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 17:46:44 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: RE: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Thank you

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 5:41:02 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth; Gruber, Corey; Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont; R8 Division Directors; Floyd, Megan; Fisher, Dennis
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV – Daily Operations, the situation is significant enough for the State EM director and the Adjutant General to cancel their planned participation in the TAG/NORTHCOM seminar August 17-18.

I have spoken with Greg Wilz and we are monitoring the situation. I do not anticipate any role for FEMA; this BLUF is for situational awareness only.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991

Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: Zimmerman, Elizabeth
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:43:43 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Coen Jr, Michael;Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan;Deal, Timothy
Subject: RE: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Thank you

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:39:01 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth; Coen Jr, Michael; Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan; Deal, Timothy
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but current estimates range from 1500-2000 protesters. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday Aug. 19, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement. North Dakota Highway 1806, which runs adjacent to the protest, is closed to through traffic, with detours established. Work at the site is currently halted as legal proceedings initiated by both the Standing Rock and the Dakota Access owners now work their way through the legal system.

On Sept. 9-11 the Annual United Tribes International Powwow is scheduled in Bismarck, approximately 60 miles from the protest site. The powwow normally sees about 5000 visitors, but there is speculation that that number could swell significantly in light of the protest, which is being supported by other tribes around the country.

I still do not anticipate any formal role for FEMA, but Region VIII will continue to monitor the situation via traditional and social media, and continue ongoing communication with the state.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office – 303-235-4840
Cell – 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 14:39:40 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Clip: More ND tribal

Construction stops, traffic restricted due to Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune
- 16 hrs ago
-

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier says all work on the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan has been stopped indefinitely.

Construction is being stopped on the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannonball Ranch and law enforcement is routing traffic away from the protest area as safety concerns mount.

“As of this moment, the Dakota Access Pipeline Project is being discontinued for the time being,” Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said Wednesday. “No work is going to be done there for an undetermined amount of time."

Kirchmeier said the protest has become unlawful as a result of criminal activity. He said his officers have been threatened and heard gunshots. The agency has gotten reports of pipe bombs, assaults on private security personnel, fireworks and vandalism.

In the interest of public safety, North Dakota Department of Transportation and Highway Patrol has established a traffic control point on Highway 1806 south of the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery. Only emergency vehicles and local traffic will be allowed through. Other vehicles will be detoured to Highway 6.

Kirchmeier said officers will safeguard workers and equipment as they leave the area. It is not clear whether the equipment will be removed.

Currently, there are no officers on the protest site. They are stationed at the highway barrier.

Kirchmeier said the state national guard has not been asked to intervene.

The sheriff's department will not be providing supplies such as Dumpsters and water to the protesters.

"I don't know if we need to provide them supplies when it has turned into an unlawful protest," Kirchmeier said. "We are just going to make sure that it remains safe."

The plan resulted from discussions with Energy Transfer Partners, the governor's office and tribal leadership, according to Kirchmeier.

About 1,500 to 2,000 people are camping in the area south of Mandan, Kirchmeier said. Twenty-eight people have been arrested in the past week.

Officers from around the state, including Mercer County, Cass County and Mandan, as well as Game and Fish, Highway Patrol and parole and probation, have assisted in policing the area.

During the closure, the Fort Rice boat ramp and campground, Eckroth Bottoms fishing area, Little Heart boat ramp, Little Heart Rifle Range and Graner Park will be closed to the public.

Reach Caroline Grueskin at 701-250-8225 or at caroline.grueskin@bismarcktribune.com

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Regulators sound off on pipeline protests

- NICK SMITH Bismarck Tribune
  Nick Smith
  ○

North Dakota regulators on Wednesday defended their permit approval for the Dakota Access Pipeline, saying they hope tensions between protesters and law enforcement at a site near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation will cool off in the days ahead.

“I really regret that there’s this much conflict,” said Julie Fedorchak, chairwoman of the North Dakota Public Service Commission. “They have a right to disagree. They don’t have the right to threaten. They don’t have the right to obstruct.”

Hundreds of activists, as well as protesters from various tribes, have descended on the site in Morton County. Construction workers had begun ground work near where a section of the pipeline is intended to go. It will be bored under the Missouri River less than a mile from the tribe’s reservation boundary.

Since last week, at least 28 arrests have been made during the protests for disorderly conduct and criminal trespass.

Work has ceased indefinitely as of Wednesday.

Protesters' concerns include potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture, as well as the disturbance of cultural sites along the route.

After a rumor of human remains being found at the construction site spread, State Historical Society of North Dakota officials inspected the site on Friday but found no evidence of any cultural site or remains.

The Standing Rock tribe has filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the permits issued for the project.

Dakota Access LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, countered on Monday by filing a lawsuit against Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault II and several others, citing threats to the safety of construction workers and law enforcement. Archambault was arrested Friday.

Archambault told reporters on Monday he was simply doing what others were doing during the protest when arrested. Several arrests were made when protesters pushed back against a police line when an attempt was made to block workers from leaving the site.

“The Dakota Access Pipeline project is harmful. It will not just be harmful to my people, but its intent and construction will harm the water of the Missouri River,” Archambault said Monday when urging others to join them.

Fedorchak said the 1,172-mile, 30-inch-wide pipeline project was reviewed over a 13-month period, with hearings in Mandan, Killdeer and Williston last year.

“This was very carefully reviewed by the PSC,” Fedorchak said.

Dakota Access began work on the nearly $3.8 billion project this spring following permit approval by the PSC and regulators in other states along the route. The pipeline is to begin in western North Dakota near Stanley and end near Patoka, Ill. It would transport as many as 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude when finished, with a future capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

“They have a right to build this project,” said Fedorchak, adding that the company went through the proper permitting process and was granted approval.

Commissioner Brian Kalk agreed.

“These groups didn’t come to our hearings,” said Kalk, expressing disappointment that tribal leaders didn't appear at that time to voice their concerns.

Commissioner Randy Christmann said a large portion of North Dakota oil is transported by rail, and accidents can result from that mode of transport as well.

(Reach Nick Smith at 701-250-8255 or 701-223-8482 or at nick.smith@bismarcktribune.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 8:34 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Sioux tribe leader wants political help to halt oil pipeline

- By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press
- Updated 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A tribal leader Wednesday said he contacted the White House and met with North Dakota's senators in an effort to halt construction of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline that crosses the Missouri River near an American Indian reservation in southern North Dakota.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II, in a teleconference with reporters, stressed that the he and the tribe are working to ensure peace among those protesting the Dakota Access pipeline.

"There is no place for threats, violence or criminal activity," Archambault said.

North Dakota transportation officials, meanwhile, closed a several-mile stretch of Highway 1806 on Wednesday because of the protest along the road.

The 1,172-mile pipeline planned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is passing through the Dakotas and Iowa on its way to Illinois. Construction crews with armed private security guards arrived last week just north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where native Americans have been staging a protest for months at a "spirit camp."

Archambault and more than two dozen others have been arrested in the past week for interfering with construction of the project.

On Monday, developers of the project sued in federal court to stop protesters — including Archambault — from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Hovland granted the developer's motion for a temporary restraining order Tuesday.

Archambault said he met Wednesday with North Dakota Sens. John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp to "express concerns" about the pipeline.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Archambault told reporters he also has urged President Barack Obama to step in. The president and First Lady Michelle Obama traveled to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2014 to get a firsthand look at the impoverished living conditions on the reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Archambault said he asked nothing of the president then but is doing so now.

"I believe both he and Michelle Obama were touched," Archambault said. "So now if there's any way he can intervene and move this pipeline off our treaty lands, I'm asking him."

The White House did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 15:56:27 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

WOW!

IT is hard for me to believe the Chairman would have said what he did about violence. On the other hand, things are escalating. I had heard they were slowing down. Of course my sources are social media where tribal members are still talking about peaceful protests and prayer.

If they are looking to move FBI agents into the area, that will change everything, a lot like the National Guard would have changed things. The Powwow is coming up, they do have reason to be concerned.

My email differs from the information in this email. I do not want to contradict a federal partner, however, I will say the FBI is known for not being tribal friendly in Sioux country.

Also – as a side note they are not referring to the tribe or the Chairman. They are the Standing Rock Sioux, which is part of the grater Sioux Nation.

This is tricky. It also occurred to me if IHS is asking us for information we probably need to let Ron P. over at HHS know since he is my POC or HHS which over sees IHS.

I also looked up the person Milo referenced as looking for the information. Her name is Mary Smith and she is the Principal Deputy Director if Indian Health Services.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:59 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

I haven't read this yet, just passing for visibility, not use. I'll look at your IHS note. On NICCL, and heading to 915

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:25 AM
To: R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Page 4355

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 18:29:29 +0000
To: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Subject: RE: (b)(6)

Thanks!

I was on the call as well and we are going to have Ricky reach out to Elliott.

From: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 12:23 PM
To: Roscoe, Scott <scott.roscoe@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: (b)(6)

Hello-

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Am not sure who else was able to make the call so wanted to share the information for follow-up with him.

Thanks!

Courtnee-Evan Spino
PA Tribal Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
267-319-6335

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 18:30:11 +0000
To: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Subject: RE: (b)(6)

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 20:30:13 +0000
To: Stephenson, James R
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

Thank you!

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 2:28 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

Oh totally, I was just letting you know where we were on everything. I'll give him a call.

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 2:25 PM
To: Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

Understand. Could you reach out to him just to follow-up and make sure we know exactly what he is looking for?

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 1:38 PM
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As to the Regional EM call that we have been doing prior to OST deployment I was planning on doing one next month, but now with Matthew here and me potentially going to have to leave, I figured I would wait a couple weeks to before continuing with the planning.

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I am going to assume we talked to him at some point on this issue. He will likely be calling or emailing Milo at HQ.

He also asked about doing a National Tribal Emergency Association. Milo told him to look at what tribal associations are doing. ITEMA was used as an example, intertribal recovery foundation, National Congress of American Indians. He may be open to pushing something in our region.

Ricky, do you want to reach out to (b)(6) on this one?

M.

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 16:27:58 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

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From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: 6 Oct 2016 15:38:10 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: (b)(6) comments on Webinar

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M.

From: Spino, Courtnee-Evan
Sent: 7 Oct 2016 09:46:47 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE:(b)(6)

Not that I've been told… however I was deployed to Iowa or Missouri last night (I declined). What about you?

I'd really like the opportunity to work some more Tribal decs/subgrantees even if they are out of R8.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 12:30 PM
To: Spino, Courtnee-Evan <Courtnee-Evan.Spino@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE:(b)(6)

Does it look like you might be heading out the door for Matthew?

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Courtnee-Evan Spino
PA Tribal Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
267-319-6335

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 11:53:26 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM

To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>;
(b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
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(b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>;
'(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J
<Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov'
(b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>;
(b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason
<Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel
<Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.

- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

CONTENTS

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 15:27:17 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>;(b)(6) @state.co.us>;
(b)(6) @state.co.us' <(b)(6) @state.co.us>;(b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>;(b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>;(b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>;(b)(6) @state.sd.us'
(b)(6) @state.sd.us>;(b)(6) @state.sd.us' <(b)(6) @state.sd.us>;

(b)(6) @utah.gov' <(b)(6) @utah.gov>(b)(6) @wyo.gov' <(b)(6) @wyo.gov>;
(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' <(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J
<Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6) @hhs.gov' <(b)(6) @hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @hhs.gov' <(b)(6) @hhs.gov>;(b)(6) @hhs.gov'
(b)(6) @hhs.gov>;(b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>;
(b)(6) @sba.gov' <(b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason
<Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel
<Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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NORTH DAKOTA

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WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

“It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on,” said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

“The fact is we don’t have any idea how many cases there were,” said Maierovitch, meaning it’s possible Brazil’s birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 15:54:42 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

On it

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

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Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us>;(b)(6)@state.co.us>; (b)(6)@state.co.us'(b)(6)@state.co.us>(b)(6)@mail.mil' (b)(6)@mail.mil>;(b)(6)@mail.mil' (b)(6)@mail.mil>; (b)(6)@nd.gov>(b)(6)@state.sd.us' (b)(6)@state.sd.us>; (b)(6)@state.sd.us' (b)(6)@state.sd.us>; (b)(6)@utah.gov' (b)(6)@utah.gov>; (b)(6)@wyo.gov' (b)(6)@wyo.gov>; (b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov>(b)(6)@usace.army.mil' (b)(6)@usace.army.mil>;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil' (b)(6)@usace.army.mil>;(b)(6)@state.mn.us' (b)(6)@state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>;(b)(6)@sba.gov' (b)(6)@sba.gov>(b)(6)@sba.gov' (b)(6)@sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@fs.fed.us'(b)(6)@fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper

reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more

than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that

it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline. The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, “we are not seeing a big increase.”

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika’s potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 14:26:02 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Let me know what you think. This is essentially media monitoring, and HIS could pick that up, they also have people on the ground who should be able to provide them with some visibility. A bit concerning they are coming to us.

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA would engage in, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. The only direct contact we have had with the State has been a call from the State's director of Homeland Security, letting our Acting Regional Administrator know he would not be attending a conference because of the protest. All of our awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the XL Pipeline, this the Keystone Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the intel could be incorrect. We have not reached out to the tribe or had additional conversations with the State, as this is not a FEMA related issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 – Desk
(303) 945-6367 – Cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:48 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I"ll take a quick look at it. And will let nancy know in am.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Hi Stacie -

Got a call from Milo this evening. Apparently, high level people at IHS are looking for Intel on standing rock protests. We have a reputation for knowing what is generally going on so they called Milo. Milo asked me to respond to the email below with what I may be hearing. I told him I would but I would site my sources and make sure that it is clear we have not been in contact with the tribe and this is not our issue.

Milo is concerned if we don't address it at this level, Fugate might get asked and it come down to Nancy.

I plan on writing my response first thing. I'll send it to you for review, unless you just want to be copied. I am going to try and get it out as early as possible.

Once that is out I'll write the tribal policy summary.

Thanks
M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 3:22:09 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; (b)(6)@ihs.gov'
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the
Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 16:31:13 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Inquiry from IHS in DC
Attachments: HHS Region 8 - New Event (ND - Dakota Access Pipeline Construction Protest)

Thanks Megan … this is what I sent out last Thursday. As you can see, copied your leadership on it.

Ron

Ron Pinheiro
CAPT, US Public Health Service
ASPR Regional Administrator
HHS Region 8
(b)(6) o / (b)(6) c

From: Floyd, Megan [mailto:Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 10:20 AM
To: Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)
Subject: Inquiry from IHS in DC

Good Morning Ron –

Hope this email finds you well.

I wanted you to be aware of a request I received from FEMA HQ last night. Mary Smith though Rocky Jones contacts our DC office, who then called me looking for information regarding the protests at Standing Rock. As my local contact for HHS and IHS, I wanted you to be aware. I am currently drafting my response and will make sure you get a copy.

FEMA is not involved in anyway. We have been monitoring via media and Facebook.

If you have any questions, let me know.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 – Desk
(303) 945-6367 – Cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 19:41:23 +0000
To: HHS(b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM);(b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM);(b)(6) (b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM);(b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM);Don Boyce;Dragani, Nancy;Depalo, Lee;(b)(6) USARMY NORAD-USNC SPC STF (US)(b)(6) USN NORAD-USNC SPC STF (US);'Shaw, Zane A.';Deal, Timothy;Gibbons, John (OS/ASPR/OEM)(b)(6);Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM);(b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM)(b)(6) (b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM) (CTR);(b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM);(b)(6) (IHS/ABR/OEH);(b)(6) (b)(6) (ACL/ORO/Region VIII);(b)(6) (CMS/CFMFFSO)(b)(6) (HHS/OGC)(b)(6) (OS/IEA)(b)(6) (HRSA)(b)(6) (CMS/CFMFFSO);(b)(6) (ACF)(b)(6) (b)(6) (HHS/OASH)(b)(6) (OIG/OAS);(b)(6) (FDA/ORA)(b)(6) (HHS/OMHA)(b)(6) (HHS/OCR)(b)(6) (SAMHSA/OPPI)(b)(6) (HRSA)(b)(6) (CMS/CQISCO)(b)(6) (HRSA)(b)(6) (FDA/ORA)(b)(6) (b)(6) (FDA/ORA)(b)(6) (FDA/ORA)(b)(6) IHS/BIL)(b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM)(b)(6) (CMS/CFMFFSO)(b)(6) (HRSA);Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM);(b)(6) (HRSA)(b)(6) (OS/ASPR/OEM)(b)(6) (CMS/CQISCO)
Subject: HHS Region 8 - New Event (ND - Dakota Access Pipeline Construction Protest)

North Dakota - Protesting Event (Monitoring)
Dakota Access Pipeline Construction
18 Aug 2016

BLUF: There are no current or anticipated requests for HHS/Federal ESF8 assistance

Current Situation: Region 8 RECs just received notification from the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDOH) that on August 16th, their Department Operations Centers (DOC) was activated (limited status) to monitor the escalating event of on-site protesting of the Dakota Access Pipeline construction (light, sweet crude oil), and to support the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Incident Command (IC). Subsequently, the state Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated yesterday (limited status) by the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services (NDDES).

The construction site is on public land and the project is being managed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Even though the land is approximately four miles from the Standing Rock Reservation, tribal members claim that the land is rightfully theirs, a sacred burial ground, and close to their reservations water intake.

Protestors numbers are currently estimated at about 1,000 individuals. There is a nationwide call for additional Sioux tribe members and environmental activists to travel to North Dakota (ND) to support their efforts. In general, the protests have been peaceful to date, but there are reports of certain environmental activists calling for violent action.

NDDOH has supplied the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe IC with a command vehicle and trailer, a first aid station, an ambulance, and (2) 400 gallon water tanks. They will continue to monitor the event and provide support as needed.

Current/Future Actions: Region 8 RECs will continue to monitor and report on any significant events or developments.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Ron

Ron Pinheiro
CAPT, US Public Health Service
ASPR Regional Administrator
HHS Region 8
1961 Stout St, Rm 08-148
Denver, CO 80294
(b)(6) o / (b)(6) c

HHS Secretary's Operation Center (SOC)
(b)(6) / *hhs.soc@hhs.gov*

From: Garcia, Carol
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 09:10:52 -0400
To: Welch, Randy;R8 External Affairs
Subject: RE: Judge postpones pipeline decision

At noon when I was out for my walk, I assisted a young lady dressed in her dancing outfit (leather, beads and feathers, moccasins) - she was hot. She needed directions to the US District Court where she and several tribal members were demonstrating against this very decision.

Wish I had walked over there to check it out.

Carol A. García
DHS - FEMA *(rotational assignment)*
National Response Coordination Center
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC
Cell: (720) 415-4816

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 5:23 PM
To: R8 External Affairs <R8PublicAffairs@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Judge postpones pipeline decision

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction

- JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune
  Jessica Holdman
- 1 hr ago

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

"A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.
Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

"Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court," Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe's historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

"It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them," Tsosie said.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Hunter, Cynthia
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 10:26:00 -0400
To: Garcia, Carol;Welch, Randy;R8 External Affairs
Subject: RE: Judge postpones pipeline decision

From Billings too…

Crowd turns out in Billings for North Dakota pipeline protest (Billings Gazette)

By MIKE KORDENBROCK mkordenbrock@billingsgazette.com

Dozens of people in Billings turned out Wednesday to protest the construction of a $3.8 billion pipeline beginning in North Dakota, standing in solidarity with the hundreds who have been protesting the pipeline with the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

At its height, around 40 people stood on the sidewalk near the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn holding signs encouraging supporters to honk and chanting, "Water is sacred, water is life." That was double the people event organizer Bailey Brown had expected.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is proposed to transport Bakken crude to Illinois, passing under the Missouri River.

The importance of clean water and clean air were on the mind of Tajin Perez, a Billings resident who helped Brown with the event.

"Clean air and clean water should be a right to everybody, not just those who can afford it," Perez said. "That's why people are here. They've been drawn out to the same call to stand up for what's right, for what's fair for everyone, especially those who have been disadvantaged for so long in regards to contemporary issues between the U.S. government and the Native peoples of this country."

Gerald Sherman and his wife, Jael Kampfe, made the drive from Bearcreek with four coolers of meat for Brown to deliver along with other supplies to protesters when she heads to North Dakota on Friday in a rented van.

“I’m not against oil, but I’m against a pipeline crossing the river,” said Sherman, a banking industry retiree and Oglala Sioux tribal member. “These pipelines have a history of breaking. It happened in the Yellowstone.”

When he and his wife heard about the protest in Billings, they posted their plans to attend on Facebook, and three families from Red Lodge responded by donating meat for them to take.

Sherman and Kampfe joined Lucky’s Market, Natural Grocers and others who have provided camping supplies and food for Brown to transport.

“I’m really impressed,” Brown said of the turnout. “Especially the people honking.”

Collette Montclair, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who has lived in Billings for two years, said she’s proud of the efforts of her family and friends who have been protesting in North Dakota and that she is sad that she can’t join them. Work has interfered with her plans to return home, Montclair said, and she expected she wouldn't make the journey until October.

Like Brown, she also noted how honking car horns raised her spirit.

“I love all the support, everybody going by honking their horns,” she said.

Joining Monclair was her 4-year-old daughter, Ayasha.

“We want her to be a part of everything,” Montclair said of her daughter, who was seated on the sidewalk with a sign.

As challenges to the pipeline and its protesters continue to play out, it’s unclear what Montclair will tell her daughter when she grows older, but she offered some thoughts about what she hopes she can say.

“That everybody stood up for what’s right, stood up for what’s ours, and that we were all a part of it.”

From: Garcia, Carol
Sent: Thursday, August 25, 2016 7:11 AM
To: Welch, Randy <Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov>; R8 External Affairs <R8PublicAffairs@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Judge postpones pipeline decision

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Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 17 Oct 2016 15:49:19 +0000
To: Vasco, MaryBeth
Subject: RE: Monday's Working Group Meeting

We sure can.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Vasco, MaryBeth
Sent: Monday, October 17, 2016 2:59:07 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Monday's Working Group Meeting

Would it be appropriate to discuss the pipeline issues in ND?

Mary Beth Vasco, JD, MEP
Tech Hazards Specialist
FEMA Region VIII
303-235-4902 (desk)
303-243-4965 (cell)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Friday, October 14, 2016 12:51 PM
To: Bello, Charles <Charles.Bello@fema.dhs.gov>; Americanos, Christopher <Christopher.Americanos@fema.dhs.gov>; Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>; Valora, Emily <Emily.Valora@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>; Gelston, Timothy <Timothy.Gelston@fema.dhs.gov>; Betz, George <George.Betz@fema.dhs.gov>; Dick, Jennifer <Jennifer.Dick@fema.dhs.gov>; Liska, Robert <Robert.Liska@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Hillenburg, Mike <Mike.Hillenburg@fema.dhs.gov>; Gray, Patricia <Patricia.Gray@fema.dhs.gov>; Bakersky, Pete <Pete.Bakersky@fema.dhs.gov>; Rivera, Luisa <Luisa.Rivera@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6) DCE Army)' <(b)(6) @mail.mil>; Roscoe, Scott <scott.roscoe@fema.dhs.gov>; Spino, Courtnee-Evan <Courtnee-Evan.Spino@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Valora, Emily <Emily.Valora@fema.dhs.gov>; Vasco, MaryBeth <MaryBeth.Vasco@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Monday's Working Group Meeting

Hi All!

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- Opening, Introductions Etc.
- Announcements and updates
- Brain Storming regarding the 2017 Tribal Gathering

If there are any other major items we need to talk about, please let me know and I can add to the agenda.

Thanks

Megan

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 Desk
(303) 945-6367 Cell
megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Vasco, MaryBeth
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From: Vasco, MaryBeth
Sent: 17 Oct 2016 12:08:38 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Monday's Working Group Meeting

great

Mary Beth Vasco, JD, MEP
Tech Hazards Specialist
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303-243-4965 (cell)

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(303) 945-6367 Cell
megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 17:22:21 +0000
To: Welch, Randy;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: more stories on tribal pipeline protest

Thanks Brian.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 11:20 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: more stories on tribal pipeline protest

Wanted to be sure you guys saw what Brian got in the ND clips this a.m.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

Morton County declares emergency with pipeline protest

LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 12 hrs ago

With the protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline swelling to 2,000 people near Cannon Ball, Morton County officials may seek to access emergency funds to pay overtime to their deputies and other law enforcement agencies assisting Morton County in keeping the protest boundaries safe.

Protesters oppose the pipeline beneath the Missouri River because they fear it could contaminate their water supplies.

A special Morton County meeting will be held 4 p.m. Monday to address the emergency declaration, signed by Cody Schulz, chairman of the board, last week.

"This is to maintain public safety and to make sure the legal rights of everyone is enforced," Schulz said Sunday. "This has required a great deal of law enforcement manpower and time."

Schulz signed the declaration Aug. 15 and state law requires the remainder of the county board ratify the declaration within seven days to keep it binding.

County Commissioner Bruce Strinden said Sunday the declaration will allow the county to use its own emergency funds to pay deputies and other law enforcement for overtime tied to the protest.

"Without an emergency declaration, we cannot access those fund," said Strinden, who estimated the county may have banked about $125,000 in emergency funds. "We're getting help from neighboring counties and cities' law enforcement through mutual aid agreements, and appreciate it, but that help doesn't come free. We have to compensate them for food, lodging and of course pay. We're only a week into this."

Protesters said they are keeping the demonstration peaceful. Yet, the protest has challenged the county's enforcement capacity.

"This is a very large protest -- 2,000. So a protest of that size is of a concern to us," Strinden said. "People have a right to protest. The law enforcement will support legal activity in a protest unless it goes the other way."

"Right now, our primary goal is keeping everyone safe," he added, speaking of the need to close Highway 1806 during the protest. "There were vehicles parking on both sides of 1806. We don't want anyone injured or accidents."

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed a declaration of emergency Friday. Strinden believes the state will pay for a large portion of North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers enforcing the highway because it lies in their jurisdiction, he said the county at this point will have to reimburse other law agencies for their assistance.

"At this point, we aren't seeking additional funds from the state," Schulz said. "The governor's declaration allows us to request extra resources, manpower or equipment from the state."

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Protesters settle into camp life

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Aug 19, 2016

CANNON BALL — An upside down flag hangs in the center of a new community larger than most small towns in North Dakota. It’s a protest camp near the Cannonball River at the border of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

The flag is a symbol of distress, that the area had been taken over by an enemy. But the atmosphere Thursday afternoon at the Seven Councils or Overflow Camp, where hundreds are staying in Morton County, hardly feels urgent. Rather, it's joyful and cooperative.

The setup is an extension of the Camp of Sacred Stones, located on the reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where people have been protesting an oil pipeline since April. During the past week, the once-small effort has grown to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people.

On Wednesday, after days of protests, work at the Dakota Access Pipeline site just north of the camp was put on hold until Aug. 24, when a hearing will be held on the tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers over its approval of the pipeline crossing under the Missouri River.

Most people at the camp, who rallied at the work site, insisted the demonstrations were peaceful, but law enforcement has said officers received information about weapons. The Morton County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Friday no weapons were seen.

Many at the camp saw the previous days’ efforts as a small victory. Often repeated was a gladness that the tribes were working together.

“It’s been a long time since we all camped together,” said 18-year-old Jasmine LeBeau of Eagle Butte, of the several tribes gathered there. “It feels natural.”

LeBeau traveled back and forth by bus from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota three days in a row with her family. On Thursday, they said the travel was enough and decided to put down camp.

She asked how she could help and was directed to prepare giant pots of soup. She cooked over an open fire near a tent where women molded dough into fry bread. A few feet away, a dozen kids shucked corn hauled in on a pickup bed.

She was preparing food for the thousands who have come from across the country — the unfamiliar license plates give them away — to show their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in its protest of the pipeline.

The group at the camp is predominantly native, but many white people are there, too. There are kids, adults and grandparents.

Many are camped in tents and teepees set up between awkwardly parked school buses, which bring people in each day from nearby reservations.

Some people show up with food, water, tents. Others bring just enough gas for the drive down.

When people started to flood in over the weekend — many found out about the event through social media or were asked by their tribal chairman to join — and numbers exceeded 500, Standing Rock leaders started planning to provide for the big group.

“We knew immediately that we needed Porta Potties,” said Johnelle Leingang, the tribal chairman’s executive secretary and member of the emergency management task force. “That’s essential.”

The task force coordinates with the state for water tanks, Dumpsters, a medical trailer and a wash station. They have volunteer nursing assistant and emergency medical technicians. Leingang said they arranged for a helicopter pad for emergencies, as ambulances cannot access the site.

"The Lakota people, it is in their nature to mobilize," said Harold Tiger, the emergency manager at the Cheyenne River reservation, who calls himself the EMS Warrior and was assisting in Cannon Ball. "Everyone takes on their responsibilities."

The biggest issue so far has been heat exhaustion, Leingang said. People of all ages are walking a mile and a half to the protest site, where hundreds have stood in recent days demanding workers to stop building an oil pipeline under the Missouri River, in temperatures that exceeded 80 degrees.

There is no real plan for extreme weather, except to keep everyone updated on the forecast. Protesters said they were washing up in a nearby creek or heading over to Prairie Knights casino and Cannon Ball, as there are no showers onsite.

People said most supplies have been donated. There is a tent up front, where people drop off food and water, trash bags and supplements for babies and diabetics. A rumor is going around about two deli trucks coming in from California. No one seems to remember to give feminine hygiene products, a family working in the donation tent contended.

Cashiers at nearby stores said business has been steady as people from around the county pick up supplies and items to donate. Water, ice, sandwich meats and tobacco have gone fast from the Family Dollar and White Buffalo Supervalu in Fort Yates.

Joye Braun, one of the organizers, described the Camp of Sacred Stones similarly to the overflow camp, though the focus is on prayer. She denied a Tribune reporter and photographer access to that camp.

Security also seemed tighter at the entrance to the Camp of Sacred Stones. People coming in were asked if they had alcohol or guns and if they were a "Fed."

Mark Tilsen, a former teacher on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, said he chose to stay at the second camp, not the original spirit camp, because space is limited there and he wants to turn his attention toward action instead of prayer.

"For Oglala, we've been praying all summer, and we're done with it," Tilsen said. "We're here to stop the pipeline."

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: 9 Sep 2016 21:49:35 -0400
To: Hudson, Lamont;Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: ND Dakota Access Pipeline news

Wow. Thanks

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2016 5:36:45 PM
To: Depalo, Lee; Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline news

Hi Lee and Megan,

Please follow this link for another update:

http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/09/the-obama-administration-temporarily-blocks-the-dakota-access-pipeline/499454/

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: 9 Sep 2016 17:00:49 -0400
To: Hudson, Lamont;Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: ND Dakota Access Pipeline Update

Thanks Lamont

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region VIII
Cell: 720-456-9616
Desk: 303-235-4990

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2016 2:55:22 PM
To: Depalo, Lee; Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline Update

Hi Lee and Megan,

I'm not sure if you are already aware or not, but I just saw this in the news.

Please see link:

http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/09/09/493280504/judge-rules-that-construction-can-proceed-on-dakota-access-pipeline

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

“Teamwork makes the DREAM work.”

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 09:00:55 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Re: New York Times Story on protests

Cc me please when you send it to milo and Bob. I will push to Stephanie and Rafael for awareness then too

---

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 06:37 AM
To: Greff, Stacie; Hvinden, Brian; Welch, Randy
Subject: New York Times Story on protests

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/us/occupying-the-prairie-tensions-rise-as-tribes-move-to-block-a-pipeline.html?_r=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Peterson, Mark J
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 13:18:12 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie;DeFelice, Jerome
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Roger that. Thanks!

Mark Peterson
FEMA
External Affairs
312-259-0102

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 6:14:14 PM
To: DeFelice, Jerome; Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark. Please do not for add this email. I asked them to let you know of article but traffic was not to be shared. Appreciate you pulling just clip out of needed not conversation either HQ and me. Thx. Stacie

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 5:06:32 PM
To: Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark—

Heads up. See highlighted news story below. Sherriff has deployed four deputies to ND to help with public safety issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protest.
As HQ email indicates, FEMA is not paying for this EMAC request.

Wyoming is also sending six deputies to support through an EMAC request. There was a news story in today's clips, but did not mention that FEMA was paying for the deployment.

Thanks,

Jerry

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &

Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016
INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

“Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request,” said Erickson. “They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request.”

Indiana is acting as a “team player,” as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

“We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc,” said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' <(b)(6) @wyo.gov>; (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' <(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @fs.fed.us (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law

enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.

- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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MONTANA:

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NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

“The fact is we don’t have any idea how many cases there were,” said Maierovitch, meaning it’s possible Brazil’s birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don’t have symptoms and don’t realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress’s failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

“We’ll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months,” he said. “That’s the only way we’ll know whether we’ve dodged a bullet.”

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 17:16:16 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Sorry – I should have pulled it out before I sent to Jerry.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 11:14 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark. Please do not for add this email. I asked them to let you know of article but traffic was not to be shared. Appreciate you pulling just clip out of needed not conversation either HQ and me. Thx. Stacie

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 5:06:32 PM
To: Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark—

Heads up. See highlighted news story below. Sherriff has deployed four deputies to ND to help with public safety issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protest.
As HQ email indicates, FEMA is not paying for this EMAC request.

Wyoming is also sending six deputies to support through an EMAC request. There was a news story in today's clips, but did not mention that FEMA was paying for the deployment.

Thanks,
Jerry

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian

Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us>; (b)(6)@state.co.us>; (b)(6)@state.co.us' (b)(6)@state.co.us>; (b)(6)@mail.mil' (b)(6)@mail.mil>; (b)(6)@mail.mil' (b)(6)@mail.mil>; (b)(6)@nd.gov' (b)(6)@nd.gov>; (b)(6)@state.sd.us' (b)(6)@state.sd.us>; (b)(6)@state.sd.us' (b)(6)@state.sd.us>; (b)(6)@utah.gov' (b)(6)@utah.gov>; (b)(6)@wyo.gov' (b)(6)@wyo.gov>; (b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@usace.army.mil' (b)(6)@usace.army.mil>; (b)(6)@usace.army.mil' (b)(6)@usace.army.mil>; (b)(6)@state.mn.us' (b)(6)@state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@sba.gov' (b)(6)@sba.gov>; (b)(6)@sba.gov' (b)(6)@sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@fs.fed.us' (b)(6)@fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

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Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 13:14:14 -0400
To: DeFelice, Jerome;Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark. Please do not for add this email. I asked them to let you know of article but traffic was not to be shared. Appreciate you pulling just clip out of needed not conversation either HQ and me. Thx. Stacie

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 5:06:32 PM
To: Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark—

Heads up. See highlighted news story below. Sherriff has deployed four deputies to ND to help with public safety issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protest.
As HQ email indicates, FEMA is not paying for this EMAC request.

Wyoming is also sending six deputies to support through an EMAC request. There was a news story in today's clips, but did not mention that FEMA was paying for the deployment.

Thanks,
Jerry

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>

Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>;
(b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us'
(b)(6) @state.sd.us> (b)(6) @state.sd.us' <(b)(6) @state.sd.us>;
(b)(6) @utah.gov' <(b)(6) @utah.gov> (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>;
(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' <(b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J
<Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @hhs.gov' <(b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov'
(b)(6) @hhs.gov> (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>;
(b)(6) @sba.gov' <(b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason
<Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @fs.fed.us (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel
<Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department,

Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

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Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 13:29:37 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Yes you should have. Lesson for future.

Jerry should know better too.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 6:16:25 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Sorry – I should have pulled it out before I sent to Jerry.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 11:14 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark. Please do not for add this email. I asked them to let you know of article but traffic was not to be shared. Appreciate you pulling just clip out of needed not conversation either HQ and me. Thx. Stacie

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 5:06:32 PM
To: Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark—

Heads up. See highlighted news story below. Sherriff has deployed four deputies to ND to help with public safety issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protest.
As HQ email indicates, FEMA is not paying for this EMAC request.

Wyoming is also sending six deputies to support through an EMAC request. There was a news story in today's clips, but did not mention that FEMA was paying for the deployment.

Thanks,
Jerry

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016
INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.
The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.
Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

“Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request,” said Erickson. “They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request.”

Indiana is acting as a “team player,” as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

“We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc,” said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>;
(b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us'
<(b)(6) @state.sd.us> (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>;
(b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' <(b)(6) @wyo.gov>;
(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J
<Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.g(b)(6) nheiro@hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov'
(b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>;
(b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason
<Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel
<Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

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MONTANA:

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NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and

consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including

nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 20:52:57 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: omg

Wow

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 9:50:47 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: omg

http://www.myndnow.com/news/bismarck-news/trump-holds-stock-in-dakota-access-pipeline

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 17:04:44 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: omg

Yep. It's unbelievable. Oh and yet another slap in the face with the Secretary's Award. Funny how people define team. ☹ I am happy for George, though.

Brian Hvinden
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Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
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Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 4:53 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: omg

Wow

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 9:50:47 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: omg

http://www.myndnow.com/news/bismarck-news/trump-holds-stock-in-dakota-access-pipeline

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
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701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 13:26:50 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Pipeline update

Please add in bullet about eMac misinfo from Indianapolis media with us connecting with R5 for awareness. And link to wyo press today about eMac.

Once done. Just send to Nancy Tim and me.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 5:21:12 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Pipeline update

Pipeline update:

Yesterday was a big day, Jessy Jackson arrived on site and talked between the protestors and law enforcement broke down.

- I am hearing a lot about treaty rights, this morning on NPR the Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux talked about this land belonging to the tribes based on treaties (NPR and other media sources).
- A new encampment (the 1851 Treaty Camp) has been set up directly on the pipeline path, which is private property (KILI Radio).
- On Wed. Jessy Jackson arrived on site to speak out about the many human and civil rights violations being perpetrated by local police (Indian Country Today).
- Actor Mark Ruffalo was at Standing Rock yesterday showing his support and Leonardo DiCaprio announced today he is on his way (Indian Country Today).
- Everyone is still calling for peaceful protests (multiple media outlets).
- It is being reported there have been between 260 and 300 arrests since the protests began with most of them happening last Saturday and pepper spray being used by law enforcement (multiple media sources).
- FAA has issued temporary flight restrictions over the protest camps. Only response aircraft in support of law enforcement activity are authorized in the airspace (Bismarck Tribune).
- Negotiations broke down between protestors and law enforcement yesterday (Bismarck Tribune).
- This inforum link is to a video that shows clear frustration by law enforcement and that they do not want a confrontation. http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction (InForum)

This is a particularly good story about law enforcement and what happened yesterday.

http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4146041-new-roadblock-emerges-highway-1806-confrontation-between-protesters-law

New roadblock emerges on Highway 1806 as confrontation between protesters, law enforcement looms

By Amy Dalrymple and Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 10:22 a.m.

› ‹

ⓘ Dawn breaks over the Oceti Sakowin Camp Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor1 / 2

A roadblock manned by North Dakota National Guard troops blocks North Dakota Hwy. 1806 before sunrise Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor2 / 2

MORTON COUNTY, N.D. — One day after negotiations between Dakota Access Pipeline protesters and law enforcement broke down, the mood was tense but quiet Thursday, Oct. 27, as the sun rose above the resistance camps.

Above, in restricted airspace, a North Dakota Highway Patrol aircraft circled.

Cecily Fong, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Emergency Services, said medical staffing is in place should any injuries occur at the protest sites.

She said law enforcement will likely issue a warning to protesters congregating at a camp along State Highway 1806, where pipeline opponents have set up teepees and staged hay bales, logs and barbed wire to block the road, if necessary.

However, Fong said she didn't know the timing of any law enforcement action planned, and officers want protesters to leave the northern camp, which is on private property recently purchased by the pipeline's developer, Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners. Protesters will be encouraged to return to the southern camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.

By Thursday morning, protesters set up an additional "halfway" roadblock on Highway 1806 — between their main barricade and the frontline camp where they've promised to hold their ground.

At the halfway roadblock, pipeline opponents staged tires, plywood, sheet metal and logs — all ready to move onto the highway should law enforcement approach. The additional roadblock provides more time for those at the main camp to leave or join the protesters at the frontline camp.

Sam Wounded Knee, from Crow Creek Nation in South Dakota, spent the night at the "halfway" roadblock.

He said a plane flew overhead through the night, and it appeared two people were in the surrounding hills to the west and using flashlights to signal back and forth with the plane.

Asked if he expects violence in a confrontation, "from the police, yeah, definitely," he said.

"All we're trying to do is protect our people," Wounded Knee said, adding that women and children were asked to leave the frontline camp Wednesday night. About 200 people are at the frontline camp.

With the new roadblock established by protesters, Highway 1806 has numerous staging areas, camps and road blocks stretched out over several miles, starting with an equipment staging area set up by law enforcement about a mile south of Fort Rice.

Traveling south on 1806, in succession, there is a law enforcement barricade, followed by the protesters' main barricade, halfway roadblock, frontline camp and main camp.

On Wednesday, negotiations between pipeline opponents and law enforcement officials broke down, setting up a possible clash as hundreds of protesters vowed to hold their ground at a the frontline camp directly in the path of the four-state oil pipeline.

A contingent of law enforcement and National Guard officials met with camp representatives on Highway 1806.

Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney of Fargo, who is helping Morton County coordinate the law enforcement response, made one last plea for protesters to remove their roadblock on 1806 and abandon the roughly 200-person "frontline" camp, where teepees and tents continued to pop up on land where the pipeline is planned

"We're here telling you this is private property and you have to leave," Laney told camp coordinator Mekasi Camp-Horinek on Wednesday. "We don't want a confrontation. Please stand your people down and go back to the main camp."

Mekasi pointed at the road – "our no surrender line," he said – and then back at the frontline camp standing in the way of the four-state, $3.8 billion oil pipeline – their "no retreat" line.

"That's your final word?" Laney asked.

"That's my final word," Camp-Horinek said, walking away.

"Good day, gentleman," Laney said, turning toward the staging area about five miles away near Fort Rice, where a mass of law enforcement and military forces has gathered.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said authorities will continue to do everything they can to resolve the situation peacefully, but he said discussions with camp leaders Wednesday reached an "impasse."

Kirchmeier emphasized that "the last thing we want to do is do it forcefully."

"If we have the chance for open dialog, that's what we want to continue," he said.

Pipeline opponents say they've reclaimed land under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, noting the Sioux never ceded that territory.

But Kirchmeier said Morton County authorities have to enforce existing laws and treaty issues would need to be resolved by the federal government. He added that currently the protesters are infringing on other residents' rights by blocking the highway.

Megan Floyd

FEMA Region VIII
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From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 15:59:20 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Short update on OST

Made a couple of small edits and one addition. Take a look.

This weekend could likely be a very contentious weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock areas.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this always happens before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline and the protest.
- **The Governor of ND has activated (although not a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling. Guard members will assist in providing security at traffic checkpoints on the state highway leading to the protest site, which is being reopened to traffic this afternoon.**
- There are ongoing reports of violence from both sides.
- The chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 16:00:50 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: some clips

Thanks again Megan!

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

"Teamwork makes the DREAM work."

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, September 08, 2016 1:48 PM
To: Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: some clips

Gov. Dalrymple calls on ND National Guard to assist with Dakota Access Pipeline protest security

http://www.kfyrtv.com/content/news/Gov-Dalrymple-calls-on-ND-National-Guard-to-assist-with-Dakota-Access-Pipeline-protest-security-392768331.html

BISMARCK, N.D.- Gov. Jack Dalrymple announced Thursday that the Morton County Sheriff's Department will receive help from the North Dakota National Guard as well as sheriff's officers throughout the state to help deal with the ongoing protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann says this is not a full mobilization.

He says the National Guard personnel will serve in administrative, assistant role, deferring to the sheriff's department. He also says guardsmen will be stationed at traffic check points and will likely be armed the same as highway patrol.

National guardsmen are coming from Bismarck, Mayville and Fargo. They have law enforcement background but are not peace officers.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeir says his office has received reports of people intimidating residents in a variety of ways including playing "chicken" with drivers on County roads which has lead to increased patrols.

Standing Rock Chairman David Archambault II also released the following statement Thursday calling for peace in anticipation of the Sept. 9 court ruling:

Thousands of people, from members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, tribes across the nation and First Nations in Canada, to non-Native supporters in the United States and around the world, have stood in solidarity against the harm and destruction caused by the Dakota Access Pipeline.

We have stood side by side in peaceful prayer.

The pipeline threatens our sacred lands and the health of 17 million people who rely upon the Missouri River for water. There is a lot at stake with the court decision tomorrow. We call upon all water protectors to greet any decision with peace and order. Even if the outcome of the court's ruling is not in our favor, we will continue to explore every lawful option and fight against the construction of the pipeline.

Any act of violence hurts our cause and is not welcome here. We invite all supporters to join us in prayer that, ultimately, the right decision—the moral decision—is made to protect our people, our sacred places, our land and our resources.

The ruling will decide whether construction can continue on the Dakota Access Pipeline.

North Dakota governor asks for National Guard assistance in pipeline protest

By Forum News Service Today at 12:52 p.m. http://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/4110814-north-dakota-governor-asks-national-guard-assistance-pipeline-protest

ⓘ Tom Stromme/Bismarck Tribune

MANDAN, N.D. -- Gov. Jack Dalrymple said he has asked the North Dakota National Guard for support in responding to law enforcement efforts at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest site south of Mandan.

The announcement came during a news conference Thursday, Sept. 8.

“Because of the increased and prolonged need for law enforcement resources, I have asked General (Al) Dohrman to make available some North Dakota National Guard personnel to support law enforcement and augment their public safety efforts,” Dalrymple said.

- Complete archive of Dakota Access Pipeline coverage

The governor said National Guard members will serve in administrative capacities and help provide security at traffic points.

“I have also placed additional Guardsmen on standby alert in the event they are needed to assist with response efforts,” Dalrymple said.

The move comes in advance of an expected ruling by Friday on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s request for an emergency injunction to halt construction of the pipeline, which will cross the Missouri River less than a mile north of the Standing Rock reservation. The tribe fears the pipeline will leak and contaminate its water supply and sacred sites, and its lawsuit claims the corps failed to consider the historical and cultural significance of that area.

- Wetterling case gives another MN family hope son will be found

Previously, Jeff Zent, a spokesman for Dalrymple, said plans were under way for additional law enforcement officers in the Bismarck-Mandan area and enhanced patrols in Morton County, where hundreds of protesters are camped out near a pipeline construction site along Highway 1806 about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Thirty-seven people have been arrested on charges including preventing arrest, disorderly conduct and criminal trespass in connection with protests at pipeline construction sites in Morton County that began in mid-August.

From: Jones, Harold E (IHS/NAS/TRAN)
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 23:10:42 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Booth, Milo
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Thank you!

V/R
Rocky

From: Floyd, Megan [Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 5:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo; Jones, Harold E (IHS/NAS/TRAN)
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);
* Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
* The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
* The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
* As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
* This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
* The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):
* There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
* The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
* The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
* The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
* The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
* The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
* The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
* The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
* Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
* The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.
* September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck,

ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this year's Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Thanks

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>(b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:50:09 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Thanks Megan

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region VIII
Cell: 720-456-9616
Desk: 303-235-4990

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:48:19 PM
To: Depalo, Lee
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Lee -

I meant to send this to you as well and forgot to put you on the CC line. I apologize and won't forget next time.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:20 PM
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

Per our conversation, I wanted to let you know that I sent the below email to the FEMA National Tribal Advisor and Rocky Jones with IHS - this is nothing official and just from our media monitoring.

Thanks

Megan

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>(b)(6) @ihs.gov'(b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>

Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

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Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);
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- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):
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- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
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- September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck, ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this year's Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.

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Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

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Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>(b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:45:31 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Will do thank you

-----Original Message-----
From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:45 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

You should send to Lee as he is the poc for Ron. Better to come from you as a "oops" I forgot to cc you then me forwarding it to him

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To: Floyd, Megan
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Regards,

Milo

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 12:23:52 -0400
To: Hudson, Lamont
Cc: Depalo, Lee;Moore, Jkevin;Fisher, Dennis;Floyd, Megan;Garcia, Maria
Subject: RE: Standing Rock pipeline protests

Thanks. Nancy

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 10:23 AM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>; Moore, Jkevin <Jkevin.Moore@fema.dhs.gov>; Fisher, Dennis <Dennis.Fisher@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Maria <maria.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock pipeline protests
Importance: High

Hi Nancy,

Here are the answers from Sean Johnson regarding the questions you had after this morning's stand up meeting:

- Has the National Guard been asked to assist with this incident?

The National Guard is not deployed in support of response operations

- What is NDDES activation level in regards to the Standing Rock protests?

We remain at Daily Ops – Level IV.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

"Teamwork makes the DREAM work."

From: Johnson, Sean M. [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 10:03 AM

To: Hudson, Lamont <Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock pipeline protests

Answers below….

(b)(6)
Plans Officer
ND Department of Emergency Services
Division of Homeland Security

Work: (b)(6)
Direct:
Cell: (b)(6)

"Ordo ab chao"
(Out of chaos, comes order)

"Incrementalism is the death of innovation " - Nicholas Negroponte

---

From: Hudson, Lamont [mailto:Lamont.Hudson@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 10:54 AM
To: (b)(6) @nd.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock pipeline protests

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks again for the solid information in short order.

I had a few questions asked about the Standing Rock pipeline protests:

- Has the National Guard been asked to assist with this incident?

The National Guard is not deployed in support of response operations

- What is NDDES activation level in regards to the Standing Rock protests?

We remain at Daily Ops – Level IV.

Thank you very much in advance for helping me fill in the blanks.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

“Teamwork makes the DREAM work.”

From: Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)
Sent: 23 Aug 2016 01:57:21 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Re: Standing Rock

Thanks!

____

From: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:19:43 PM
To: Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

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Milo

From: Stephenson, James R
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 15:11:27 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: The OST paper

Just for your information…not a single person showed up for the working group meeting.

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 7:34 AM
To: Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: The OST paper

Also, some exciting news! Today is a working group meeting. You may want to let people know we are working on trying to secure the funding for a big meeting next year. The RA is supportive of the idea, but the cost is significant.

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You can ask the questions – has anyone considered how their program will be impacted if we have more tribal declarations as we move forward with the changes to the Stafford Act. It would impact more than just PA. If not, people should think about it at we can talk again at another meeting.

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Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 7:09 AM
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Subject: RE: The OST paper

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FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison

303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Friday, August 19, 2016 1:20 PM
To: Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: The OST paper

Hi Ricky –

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I did find something you might want to change.

Not sure who, if anyone has acted as a third party editor, but you should at least be looking at usage of commas – there aren't many. Capitalization of Tribal and Nations.

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Thanks Megan for sharing your edits, though it may actually be too late, because Gary sent the paper to Nancy over the weekend. I will see if I can make some edits to the paper before it goes to a larger crowd.

James "Ricky" Stephenson
FEMA Region VIII
External Affairs Tribal Liaison
303-235-4304 Office
303-358-6785 Cell

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Friday, August 19, 2016 1:20 PM
To: Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: The OST paper

Hi Ricky –

I know it took me forever, but I just read the paper you and Gary wrote. It is great and spot on!

I did find something you might want to change.

Not sure who, if anyone has acted as a third party editor, but you should at least be looking at usage of commas – there aren't many. Capitalization of Tribal and Nations.

Nice job. Hope I am not getting this to you to late.

M.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 19:06:08 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

Nice.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 1:01 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

It's interesting. Still don't have a JFO yet, so everything is very disjointed. Hope things tighten up next week. People of pretty good. I'm the liaison manager. Here are our reports from the last couple of days.

Brian Hvinden
FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 2:55 PM
To: Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

How are things going?

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:49 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Things heating on pipeline protest

http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

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DR-4285-NC
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Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 19:03:37 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie;Hvinden, Brian;DeFelice, Jerome;Stephenson, James R
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Program Liaision Manager
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701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 15:01:06 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest
Attachments: 102516 Liaison Reports.pdf, 102416 Liaison Reports.pdf

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Brian Hvinden
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Program Liaision Manager
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Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

Daily Liaison Report
10/25/16

Liaison: Delia Husband
Liaison to: PA/Ops

Meetings/Events: None

Issues and trends:

- Nothing significant to report

Inquiries:

Inquiry: 10/25 PA Inquiry – Congressional Affairs

Can you provide some insight on when the state is planning to announce PA applicant briefings? Our congressional affairs team is looking for a schedule or at the very least some insight as to when the briefings will take place/and or be announced.

Response:

The Applicant briefs are conducted by the State and FEMA supports this effort. (b)(6) (b)(6) from NCEM is working on setting these up. He is working with the County Emergency Managers to build a schedule over the next few weeks.

Inquiry: 10/25 External Affairs – Planning & Products

Request for background information on Private Nonprofit (PNP) eligibility requirements

Response:

Through the Public Assistance program, private nonprofit (PNP) organizations may potentially be eligible to receive assistance. An eligible PNP that supplies critical services may apply directly to FEMA for funding of emergency and permanent work. These critical services include:

- Power: Facilities for generation, transmission, and distribution of electric power.
- Water: Facilities for the treatment, transmission and distribution of water by a water company supplying municipal water. In addition, water provided by an irrigation company for potable, fire protection, or electricity-generation purposes.
- Sewer and Wastewater: Facilities for collection, transmission, and treatment of wastewater.
- Communication: Facilities for transmission, switching, and distribution of telecommunications traffic.
- Emergency Medical Care: Facilities that provide direct patient care to include hospitals, clinics, outpatient services and nursing homes.
- Fire Protection/Emergency: Fire and rescue companies including buildings and vehicles essential to providing emergency services, and ambulance companies.
- Educational: Primary, secondary and higher education schools/institutes that provide education as determined under Commonwealth law.

Eligible PNP facilities that do not provide critical services are: custodial care, museums, zoos, community centers, libraries, homeless shelters, senior citizen centers, rehabilitation facilities, shelter workshops, and facilities providing health and safety services.

As such, these non-critical PNP facilities must first apply for a loan through the Small Business Administration for permanent work. If they are declined a loan or if the loan does not cover all eligible damages, they may apply to FEMA for consideration of public assistance funding after the applicant presents the official SBA denial letter to FEMA.

The distinction between critical and non-critical PNP's only applies to permanent work. Private nonprofit facilities that do not provide critical services still apply directly to FEMA for emergency work assistance.

A faith based organization set up as a non-profit that provides community services may be eligible for federal loans and/or grants to restore their facilities and equipment. To be eligible, churches must be open to the public and provide services such as: education; custodial and day care (including before/after-school and special-needs centers); residential facilities for the battered and disabled; assisted living and defined low-income housing; alcohol and drug treatment and rehabilitation; performing and community arts centers; food programs; homeless shelters; senior citizen and community centers or other community services.

[PNP facilities that provide both eligible and ineligible services are considered mixed-use facilities. Eligibility of mixed-use PNP facilities is dependent on the primary use of the facility, which is determined by the amount of physical space dedicated to eligible and ineligible services. “Primary use” is the use for which more than 50 percent of the physical space in the facility is dedicated. FEMA evaluates the entire structure when determining primary use; it does not separately address individual areas, such as floors, basements, or wings. Common space, such as bathrooms, hallways, lobbies, closets, stairways, and elevators, is not included when calculating mixed-use space.

If FEMA determines that 50 percent or more of physical space is dedicated to ineligible services, the entire facility is ineligible. If the facility is eligible, FEMA prorates funding based on the percentage of physical space dedicated to eligible services. The Applicant is responsible for the balance of costs to restore the facility and must restore the entire facility to receive funding for repairs to the eligible-use portions of the facility.]

Inquiry: 10/25 Congressional Inquiry

Sen. Tillis office inquired about funding for mosquito spraying, particularly in Lenoir County. Requested language/guidance on this action and if it can be funded under Category B.

Response:

Awaiting response from PA.

Inquiry: 10/21 Congressional Inquiry – AECA

Can you assist Congressional with getting SMEs for the Congressional update calls next week? The calls will be at 2:00 PM on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and we’re looking for program subject-matter experts to do brief (no more than five minutes) program overviews/education. Each call will last approx. 30-45 minutes max.

Response:

Awaiting response from PA.

Daily Liaison Report
10/21/2016

Liaison: Brian Hvinden
Liaison to: IA/Housing

Meetings/Events: 2:00 MHU Meeting with Industry Association

Issues and trends:

- Four additional counties added for assistance, bring total number of IA counties to 35.
- LER program extended to provide eligibility for up to 6 months. The program allows applicants to use IHP funds to pay for temporary loading at hotels. However these funds count against an applicant's assistance cap.
- FEMA and the state are working with the North Carolina Manufactured Housing industry to help identify potential solutions in providing housing to address needs
- With visit numbers dwindling, Disaster Recovery Centers in Nash and Wilson Counties scheduled to close Thursday evening.
- Tarrboro DRC staff identified local official providing some potentially conflicting information to residents, IGA following up to address concern.

Inquiries:

Inquiry: Congressional – What assistance is available for a person residing in a manufactured home owned by his parents that sustained damaged in the flood?

Response: Need more information, but such applicants may be able to receive assistance because they possess 'lifetime occupancy status. Will be getting a briefing from program tomorrow and additional information we will be provided in tomorrow's liaison report.

Had multiple Congressional IA casework inquiries not shared for PII reasons.

Tomorrow's schedule:

Briefing on "Lifetime Occupancy Status" – 10:00 am, IOF

Daily Liaison Report
10/25/16

Liaison: Lauren Washington
Liaison to: Mitigation/NFIP/EHP

Meetings/Events: Roy Wright, Deputy Associate Administrator for Mitigation, will be visiting the NFIP Flood Response Office (FRO) and will be participating in a ride-along and re-inspection visit.

Issues and trends:

- High water marks (HWM) continue to be conducted in the affected counties.
- Mitigation had a meeting today with the state to discuss implementation of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and expedited buyouts.
- EHP continues to assist IA and PA with PDAs.

Inquiries:
No inquiries at this time.

DSA Liaison Report
10/25/16

Liaison: Delores Campbell
Liaison to: DSA

Meetings/Events: None

Issues and trends:

- See Trends below reported by the DSA team

Inquiries:

- Nothing to report today

According to the DSA Field Operations for October 25, there are 19 crews conducting door-to-door outreach in 19 counties.

According to DSA Daily Summary Report, dated October 24, 2016:

- **Trending:**

  Survivors confused about appeal process, explained process and referred to Disaster Recovery Center #10 to update and fax paperwork (Cumberland County)

BLADEN COUNTY
Elizabeth Town

- **Trending/Rumors:**

  Survivors report that they are ineligible for FEMA assistance due to insufficient damages, DSA provided appeal process information

COLUMBUS COUNTY
Fair Bluff

- **Trend/Rumors**

  Survivors state they are unwilling to take temporary shelter too far from their damaged homes, due to fear of vandalism

Whiteville

- **Trends**

  Lack of hotels for TSA lodging

SAMPSON COUNTY
Autryville & Roseboro

- **Trends**

  Survivors reported no damage to residences, but had food loss due to electrical outage (5 days); referred to the local food bank and Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (DSNAP)

Daily Liaison Report
10/24/16

Liaison: Delia Husband
Liaison to: PA/DSA/Ops

Meetings/Events: None

Issues and trends:

- Nothing significant to report

Inquiries:

Inquiry: 10/24 LEP Inquiry – EA-LEP/ACN specialist

Does anyone on the DSA teams have the capability to review a translated document in Vietnamese?

Response:

DSA teams currently do not have a Vietnamese speaker.

Inquiry: 10/24 Congressional Inquiry – Rep. Tillis

Congressional inquiry received from Sen. Tillis office asking if there is any disaster assistance for public university research facilities. Specifically for North Carolina A &T, North Carolina State University and North Carolina Department of Agriculture research facilities that sustained damage.

Response:

Public universities are normally eligible applicants, as long as the facilities are in a designated county.

The appropriate staff representative should reach out to State emergency management officials for more information. [Attached fact sheet to enhance understanding of the program and eligibility.]

Inquiry: 10/21 Private Sector Inquiry

Private Sector specialist requests a PA SME to support outreach to Shaw University to speak about programmatic capabilities and PA programs that Shaw may be eligible for.

Response:

The PA program is implemented by the Recovery section of NCEMA. PA is supports sending a representative to conduct a briefing, but the request should go through the state. They should have the chance to brief their applicants/community and have the chance to defer to FEMA if they can’t meet the requirement.

Daily Liaison Report
10/21/2016

Liaison: Brian Hvinden
Liaison to: IA/Housing

Meetings/Events: 3:00 Housing Strategy Meeting

Issues and trends:

- Continued interest in DRC openings and locations
- Direct Housing Assistance Teams (DHAT) are surveying in 17 counties to determine needs beyond traditional financial assistance. If surveys in additional counties are needed, that request will come from the state.
- DSNAP program is approved when entire county meets eligibility requirements. There may be individual communities that meet requirements, but if the entire county does not, the community will not be eligible.
- Governor McCrory announced that FEMA and the state are looking at manufactured housing to address housing needs.

Inquiries:

Inquiry: JIC Inquiry: Social media reporting alternate hours for Bertie County DRC. What are correct hours?

Response:
All DRCs are working on the standard schedule of 9 to 7 Monday thru Friday and Noon to 5 Sundays.

Inquiry: JIC/EAO Inquiry: Need talking points on what is being done re: manufactured homes

Response:

- FEMA has a number of methods to assist survivors with housing. Residents have received funding assistance to make repairs to their homes or to find alternate rental housing while their damaged home is being worked on.
- FEMA has personnel working to identify rental resources throughout the impacted areas and continually provides referrals to individuals who cannot yet return to their homes.
- When other options have been exhausted FEMA can utilize manufactured housing to provide temporary housing for displaced residents.
- While the primary goal is to help survivors move back into their repaired homes or into existing rental resources, FEMA and the state are determining the scope of housing need and if a manufactured housing program will be needed.
- To support those planning efforts FEMA and the state are engaging the manufactured home industry in North Carolina to see how they might be able to support efforts to house residents impacted by Hurricane Matthew.

Inquiry: Congressional Inquiry: A citizen is interesting in applying for DSNAP, but his local office is closed due to the flooding. When can he sign up.

Response:
A full list of DSNAP signup location is available at http://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2016/10/21/usda-approves-emergency-food-benefits-for-matthew-victims/

Also had multiple Congressional IA casework inquiries not shared for PII reasons.

Tomorrow's schedule:

Manufactured housing meeting, 2:00 EOC

Daily Liaison Report
10/24/16

Liaison: Lauren Washington
Liaison to: Mitigation/NFIP/EHP

Meetings/Events: None

Issues and trends:

EHP continues to support PA in conducting PDA

All numbers reported below are estimated from claims polling data and are not verified.

State	Total No. of Claims	No. of Claims Closed with Payment	No. of CWOPs	Total No. of Closed Claims	% Closed	Advanced/Partial Payments	Amounts Paid on Closed Claims	Total Amounts Paid on All Claims	Average Closed Claim with Payment
North Carolina	4,935	45	82	127	2.57%	$5,142,265.00	$734,444.95	$5,817,709.95	$16,321.00

The following attachment is a copy of the NFIP staffing for the DRCs. There are not enough NFIP specialist to staff all of the DRCs. Once more staff becomes available all DRCs will be staffed with a specialist. DRCs 11 and 12 will not have NFIP specialist present.

Insurance 102216
4285 NC DRC Staff .xl

Inquiries:

No inquiries

DSA Liaison Report
10/24/16

Liaison: Delores Campbell
Liaison to: DSA

Meetings/Events: None

Issues and trends:

- Nothing to report

Inquiries:

- EA Congressional Affairs managers wanted to confirm whether DSA teams are going door-to-door

Response:

- Confirmed through the “DSA Field Operations for Monday 10/24,” 19 crews are conducting door-to-door outreach in 25 counties.

Other:
As of this morning, Per Alex Yesnik, no Vietnamese language person. DSA team is still searching.

Hand carried and waited for DSA branch directors review and approval of News Release.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 14:56:35 -0400
To: Hvinden, Brian;Floyd, Megan;DeFelice, Jerome;Stephenson, James R
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

Jesse Jackson?!? I saw the picture and thought it looked like him, but thought I must be mistaken.

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Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:49 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
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http://www.grandforksherald.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction

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FEMA External Affairs
Program Liaision Manager
DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 18:55:11 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

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Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:49 PM
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Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 16:11:54 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Things heating on pipeline protest

Often I just send if I feel relevant, but let me know if there are any specific articles you think I should share if I don't please.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 1:04 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Hvinden, Brian <Brian.Hvinden@fema.dhs.gov>; DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>
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DR-4285-NC
701 681-1454 (cell)
Brian.hvinden@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 10 Sep 2016 10:05:00 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Update: ND Dakota Access Pipeline news

Thx. Passed to Nancy and Tim

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Saturday, September 10, 2016 3:35:48 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Update: ND Dakota Access Pipeline news

Obama blocks pipeline construction after Judge rules in favor of Dakota Pipeline .

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: Saturday, September 10, 2016 12:36:45 AM
To: Depalo, Lee; Floyd, Megan
Subject: ND Dakota Access Pipeline news

Hi Lee and Megan,

Please follow this link for another update:

http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/09/the-obama-administration-temporarily-blocks-the-dakota-access-pipeline/499454/

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 4 Sep 2016 19:24:46 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Update: pipeline situation

I got another request last night from Milo on behalf of IHS requesting any updates we have.

There is nothing to share outside of what the media is saying. Social media has blown up. There are so many different versions and accounts about the protests, it would take a full time person to track it all.

At some point soon I need to call up to Standing Rock. The tribe needs to make a few decisions about EMI training before the end of the month. I am thinking I'll call before the 9th.

I'll send Milo and IHS some clips and let them know that is all we have. No direct information. I'll copy you on the email.

M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 5:03:42 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy; Depalo, Lee; Floyd, Megan
Subject: Update: pipeline situation

Update on situation far below, then a blog post. It is worth noting that Cody Schultz is a Morton County Commissioner, but he works for ND DES

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 4:39:10 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: 4 Sep 2016 15:44:32 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: Update: pipeline situation

I'm driving most of rest of today and tomorrow morning. Give me a call and I'll give more detail

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 1:24:46 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Update: pipeline situation

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Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 10:36:32 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Re: Update on standing rock and the 9 am

Got it. And yes, I will cover 915. Come too if you think you should based on interest yesterday

---

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 06:57 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Update on standing rock and the 9 am

Tim wanted an update on standing rock at yesterday 9 am. I kept is short. I am assuming you will calling in and I do not need to attend? If anyone asks today I think the highlights are below and even then this is a lot.

Very different reports from the tribal side and local law enforcement sides.

Tribal Sources:
The tribe issued another statement last night calling for calling for peaceful protest and for people (anyone who cares about water) to exercise their first amendment right.

There is a sense from protestors that they are being misrepresented as violent.

There is also a social media effort to get more nation media coverage.

Local law enforcement press conference:
The primary route from Mandan to the reservation has been blocked off just south of Mandan and only local residents will be allowed south. They can not control people coming in from the south because that route is coming off the reservation.

He also talked about how there have been threats of violence and threats with pipe bombs and weapons.

Describes it as an unlawful protest.

He also reported pipeline construction has stopped for now because of safety. Governor's office has been talking to tribal leaders to keep things peaceful.

The County is estimating 1,500 to 2,000 protestors.

Local law enforcement and highway patrol are on site. National Guard has NOT been activated and has not been requested by local law enforcement.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 14:55:16 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Update on standing rock and the 9 am

I'll step in, I find those meetings very interesting, and then if it comes up I'll be there.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 8:37 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: Update on standing rock and the 9 am

Got it. And yes, I will cover 915. Come too if you think you should based on interest yesterday

---

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 06:57 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Update on standing rock and the 9 am

Tim wanted an update on standing rock at yesterday 9 am. I kept is short. I am assuming you will calling in and I do not need to attend? If anyone asks today I think the highlights are below and even then this is a lot.

Very different reports from the tribal side and local law enforcement sides.

Tribal Sources:
The tribe issued another statement last night calling for calling for peaceful protest and for people (anyone who cares about water) to exercise their first amendment right.

There is a sense from protestors that they are being misrepresented as violent.

There is also a social media effort to get more nation media coverage.

Local law enforcement press conference:
The primary route from Mandan to the reservation has been blocked off just south of Mandan and only local residents will be allowed south. They can not control people coming in from the south because that route is coming off the reservation.

He also talked about how there have been threats of violence and threats with pipe bombs and weapons.

Describes it as an unlawful protest.

He also reported pipeline construction has stopped for now because of safety. Governor's office has been talking to tribal leaders to keep things peaceful.

The County is estimating 1,500 to 2,000 protestors.

Local law enforcement and highway patrol are on site. National Guard has NOT been activated and has not been requested by local law enforcement.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 10:39:41 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan;Stephenson, James R;Garcia, Carol
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Clip: More ND tribal

Construction stops, traffic restricted due to Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune
- 16 hrs ago
-

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier says all work on the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan has been stopped indefinitely.

Construction is being stopped on the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannonball Ranch and law enforcement is routing traffic away from the protest area as safety concerns mount.

“As of this moment, the Dakota Access Pipeline Project is being discontinued for the time being,” Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said Wednesday. “No work is going to be done there for an undetermined amount of time."

Kirchmeier said the protest has become unlawful as a result of criminal activity. He said his officers have been threatened and heard gunshots. The agency has gotten reports of pipe bombs, assaults on private security personnel, fireworks and vandalism.

In the interest of public safety, North Dakota Department of Transportation and Highway Patrol has established a traffic control point on Highway 1806 south of the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery. Only emergency vehicles and local traffic will be allowed through. Other vehicles will be detoured to Highway 6.

Kirchmeier said officers will safeguard workers and equipment as they leave the area. It is not clear whether the equipment will be removed.

Currently, there are no officers on the protest site. They are stationed at the highway barrier.

Kirchmeier said the state national guard has not been asked to intervene.

The sheriff's department will not be providing supplies such as Dumpsters and water to the protesters.

"I don't know if we need to provide them supplies when it has turned into an unlawful protest," Kirchmeier said. "We are just going to make sure that it remains safe."

The plan resulted from discussions with Energy Transfer Partners, the governor's office and tribal leadership, according to Kirchmeier.

About 1,500 to 2,000 people are camping in the area south of Mandan, Kirchmeier said. Twenty-eight people have been arrested in the past week.

Officers from around the state, including Mercer County, Cass County and Mandan, as well as Game and Fish, Highway Patrol and parole and probation, have assisted in policing the area.

During the closure, the Fort Rice boat ramp and campground, Eckroth Bottoms fishing area, Little Heart boat ramp, Little Heart Rifle Range and Graner Park will be closed to the public.

Reach Caroline Grueskin at 701-250-8225 or at caroline.grueskin@bismarcktribune.com

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Regulators sound off on pipeline protests

- NICK SMITH Bismarck Tribune
  Nick Smith
  -

North Dakota regulators on Wednesday defended their permit approval for the Dakota Access Pipeline, saying they hope tensions between protesters and law enforcement at a site near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation will cool off in the days ahead.

“I really regret that there’s this much conflict,” said Julie Fedorchak, chairwoman of the North Dakota Public Service Commission. “They have a right to disagree. They don’t have the right to threaten. They don’t have the right to obstruct.”

Hundreds of activists, as well as protesters from various tribes, have descended on the site in Morton County. Construction workers had begun ground work near where a section of the pipeline is intended to go. It will be bored under the Missouri River less than a mile from the tribe’s reservation boundary.

Since last week, at least 28 arrests have been made during the protests for disorderly conduct and criminal trespass.

Work has ceased indefinitely as of Wednesday.

Protesters' concerns include potential contamination of the Missouri River if the pipeline were to rupture, as well as the disturbance of cultural sites along the route.

After a rumor of human remains being found at the construction site spread, State Historical Society of North Dakota officials inspected the site on Friday but found no evidence of any cultural site or remains.

The Standing Rock tribe has filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the permits issued for the project.

Dakota Access LLC, a partner of Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, countered on Monday by filing a lawsuit against Standing Rock Sioux Chairman Dave Archambault II and several others, citing threats to the safety of construction workers and law enforcement. Archambault was arrested Friday.

Archambault told reporters on Monday he was simply doing what others were doing during the protest when arrested. Several arrests were made when protesters pushed back against a police line when an attempt was made to block workers from leaving the site.

“The Dakota Access Pipeline project is harmful. It will not just be harmful to my people, but its intent and construction will harm the water of the Missouri River,” Archambault said Monday when urging others to join them.

Fedorchak said the 1,172-mile, 30-inch-wide pipeline project was reviewed over a 13-month period, with hearings in Mandan, Killdeer and Williston last year.

“This was very carefully reviewed by the PSC,” Fedorchak said.

Dakota Access began work on the nearly $3.8 billion project this spring following permit approval by the PSC and regulators in other states along the route. The pipeline is to begin in western North Dakota near Stanley and end near Patoka, Ill. It would transport as many as 450,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude when finished, with a future capacity of 570,000 barrels per day.

“They have a right to build this project,” said Fedorchak, adding that the company went through the proper permitting process and was granted approval.

Commissioner Brian Kalk agreed.

“These groups didn’t come to our hearings,” said Kalk, expressing disappointment that tribal leaders didn't appear at that time to voice their concerns.

Commissioner Randy Christmann said a large portion of North Dakota oil is transported by rail, and accidents can result from that mode of transport as well.

(Reach Nick Smith at 701-250-8255 or 701-223-8482 or at nick.smith@bismarcktribune.com.)

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 8:34 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Sioux tribe leader wants political help to halt oil pipeline

- By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press
- Updated 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A tribal leader Wednesday said he contacted the White House and met with North Dakota's senators in an effort to halt construction of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline that crosses the Missouri River near an American Indian reservation in southern North Dakota.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II, in a teleconference with reporters, stressed that the he and the tribe are working to ensure peace among those protesting the Dakota Access pipeline.

"There is no place for threats, violence or criminal activity," Archambault said.

North Dakota transportation officials, meanwhile, closed a several-mile stretch of Highway 1806 on Wednesday because of the protest along the road.

The 1,172-mile pipeline planned by Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is passing through the Dakotas and Iowa on its way to Illinois. Construction crews with armed private security guards arrived last week just north of the Standing Rock Sioux reservation at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers, where native Americans have been staging a protest for months at a "spirit camp."

Archambault and more than two dozen others have been arrested in the past week for interfering with construction of the project.

On Monday, developers of the project sued in federal court to stop protesters — including Archambault — from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

U.S. District Court Judge Daniel Hovland granted the developer's motion for a temporary restraining order Tuesday.

Archambault said he met Wednesday with North Dakota Sens. John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp to "express concerns" about the pipeline.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Archambault told reporters he also has urged President Barack Obama to step in. The president and First Lady Michelle Obama traveled to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in 2014 to get a firsthand look at the impoverished living conditions on the reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Archambault said he asked nothing of the president then but is doing so now.

"I believe both he and Michelle Obama were touched," Archambault said. "So now if there's any way he can intervene and move this pipeline off our treaty lands, I'm asking him."

The White House did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 11:56:30 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

WOW!

IT is hard for me to believe the Chairman would have said what he did about violence. On the other hand, things are escalating. I had heard they were slowing down. Of course my sources are social media where tribal members are still talking about peaceful protests and prayer.

If they are looking to move FBI agents into the area, that will change everything, a lot like the National Guard would have changed things. The Powwow is coming up, they do have reason to be concerned.

My email differs from the information in this email. I do not want to contradict a federal partner, however, I will say the FBI is known for not being tribal friendly in Sioux country.

Also – as a side note they are not referring to the tribe or the Chairman. They are the Standing Rock Sioux, which is part of the grater Sioux Nation.

This is tricky. It also occurred to me if IHS is asking us for information we probably need to let Ron P. over at HHS know since he is my POC or HHS which over sees IHS.

I also looked up the person Milo referenced as looking for the information. Her name is Mary Smith and she is the Principal Deputy Director if Indian Health Services.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:59 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

I haven't read this yet, just passing for visibility, not use. I'll look at your IHS note. On NICCL, and heading to 915

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:25 AM
To: R8 Division Directors <R8DivisionDirectors@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Page 4567

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 11:54:47 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

On it

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>;(b)(6) @state.co.us>;
(b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>;(b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>;
(b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>;
(b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>;(b)(6) @utah.gov'
(b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' (b)(6) @wyo.gov>(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov'
(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil'
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;(b)(6) @usace.army.mil'
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>;
Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov'
(b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>;(b)(6) @sba.gov'
(b)(6) @sba.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason
<Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper

reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

MONTANA:

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NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more

than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that

it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

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Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

“It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on,” said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

“The fact is we don’t have any idea how many cases there were,” said Maierovitch, meaning it’s possible Brazil’s birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don’t have symptoms and don’t realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress’s failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

“We’ll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months,” he said. “That’s the only way we’ll know whether we’ve dodged a bullet.”

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 23:07:15 +0000
To: DeFelice, Jerome
Subject: RE: FEMA-State PIO Coordination Call

Sorry – just seeing this now. Happened to see the invite on my calendar, and saw your note on it. ND and SD are the two who have accepted so far. I did include the options for states but prefaced it as 'suggestions'

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:14 PM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA-State PIO Coordination Call

Stacie—

I realize after I got home on Friday that I never closed the loop with you about an agenda. See draft agenda below. Also, I forwarded you an invite reminder that can be forwarded to state PIOs, after you make any changes to the agenda.

I never did hear back from PIOs, so the state reports are suggestions that may help facilitate the call, but we probably don't want to include this information in the agenda that we distribute.

Tony, Joe and Cecily have confirmed. I think Micki will join but not sure about Kelly and Ryan. I'll check in with Kelly when I'm in Wyoming and will encourage her to call in. I will try to call from Wyoming, too.

Thanks,
Jerry

FEMA—State Public Information Officer Conference Call
Wednesday, August 24, 2016, 10:00-11:00 a.m. MOUNTAIN

Call-in: (b)(6) Pin: (b)(6)#

10:00 a.m. Welcome – Stacie Greff

State reports:

Colorado—Micki finishing Naval Post Graduate School. Project relates to media access.

Montana—Baker disaster. Wildfires.

North Dakota—DES role in pipeline protest.

South Dakota—OEM involvement in Sturgis rally.

Utah—September PIO conference in St. George.

Wyoming—Wildfires. Lusk one year later.

Region VIII reports:

- Region VIII IMAT in Louisiana. Daniel Green is the new IMAT EA Advisor.
- September is Preparedness Month. Be sure to let us know if states have plans. We want to support state efforts.
- NEMA-FEMA meeting in Chicago.
- OST wrap.
- Upcoming Tribal consultation.
- Status of ARA/RA position.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 16:01:43 +0000
To: (b)(6)@wyo.gov'
Subject: Re: FEMA-State PIO Coordination Call

No worries. Understand.

Hope you and Jerry have a good meeting on Friday.

And...hope you are doing well.

From (b)(6) [mailto(b)(6)@wyo.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 09:51 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Re: FEMA-State PIO Coordination Call

Hi Stacie,

I will be unable to make it to the call today. I just had a priority document come across my desk.

(b)(6)

(b)(6)
Public Information Officer
Wyoming Office of Homeland Security
http://hls.wyo.gov
www.facebook.com/wyohs
www.twitter.com/wyohs
Desk #(b)(6)
Cell #

On Mon, Aug 22, 2016 at 3:22 PM, Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov> wrote:

> Good afternoon. Please join us for the State PIO—FEMA Region VIII coordination call. Call-in information and a tentative agenda follows as we listed some potential topics of conversation as a starting point. We look forward to hearing from you!
>
> Wednesday, August 24
> 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. MOUNTAIN
> Dial-in:(b)(6) Pin(b)(6) #
>
> **Agenda**
> 10:00 a.m. Welcome – Stacie Greff
>
> State reports:

Colorado—Micki finishing Naval Post Graduate School. Project relates to media access.

Montana—Baker disaster. Wildfires.

North Dakota—DES role in pipeline protest.

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Region VIII reports:

- Region VIII IMAT to Louisiana. Daniel Green is the new IMAT EA Advisor, deployed to Livingston Parish.
- September is Preparedness Month. Be sure to let us know if states have plans. We want to support your efforts.
- NEMA-FEMA meeting in Chicago.
- OST wrap.
- Upcoming Tribal consultation.
- Status of ARA/RA position.

E-Mail to and from me, in connection with the transaction
of public business, is subject to the Wyoming Public Records
Act and may be disclosed to third parties.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 10:26:06 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Let me know what you think. This is essentially media monitoring, and HIS could pick that up, they also have people on the ground who should be able to provide them with some visibility. A bit concerning they are coming to us.

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA would engage in, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. The only direct contact we have had with the State has been a call from the State's director of Homeland Security, letting our Acting Regional Administrator know he would not be attending a conference because of the protest. All of our awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);

- Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
- The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
- The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
- As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
- This is not the XL Pipeline, this the Keystone Pipeline.
- The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):

- There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
- The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
- The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
- The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
- The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
- The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
- The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
- The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
- Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
- The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the intel could be incorrect. We have not reached out to the tribe or had additional conversations with the State, as this is not a FEMA related issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 – Desk
(303) 945-6367 – Cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 6:48 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Re: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

I"ll take a quick look at it. And will let nancy know in am.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 09:44 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: HQ IHS inquiry re: Standing Rock

Hi Stacie -

Got a call from Milo this evening. Apparently, high level people at IHS are looking for Intel on standing rock protests. We have a reputation for knowing what is generally going on so they called Milo. Milo asked me to respond to the email below with what I may be hearing. I told him I would but I would site my sources and make sure that it is clear we have not been in contact with the tribe and this is not our issue.

Milo is concerned if we don't address it at this level, Fugate might get asked and it come down to Nancy.

I plan on writing my response first thing. I'll send it to you for review, unless you just want to be copied. I am going to try and get it out as early as possible.

Once that is out I'll write the tribal policy summary.

Thanks
M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 3:22:09 AM
To: Floyd, Megan; (b)(6)@ihs.gov'
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the
Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Garcia, Carol
Sent: 25 Aug 2016 09:10:52 -0400
To: Welch, Randy;R8 External Affairs
Subject: RE: Judge postpones pipeline decision

At noon when I was out for my walk, I assisted a young lady dressed in her dancing outfit (leather, beads and feathers, moccasins) - she was hot. She needed directions to the US District Court where she and several tribal members were demonstrating against this very decision.

Wish I had walked over there to check it out.

Carol A. García
DHS - FEMA *(rotational assignment)*
National Response Coordination Center
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC
Cell: (720) 415-4816

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 5:23 PM
To: R8 External Affairs <R8PublicAffairs@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Judge postpones pipeline decision

Federal judge to rule Sept. 9 on Dakota Access injunction

- JESSICA HOLDMAN Bismarck Tribune
  Jessica Holdman
- 1 hr ago

A federal judge will rule on the injunction filed by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to stop construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline by Sept. 9, according to attorneys representing the tribe.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg decided Wednesday in Washington, D.C., to take a couple weeks before issuing his ruling whether or not to halt the pipeline's construction while a suit filed by the tribe against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alleging violation of the National Historic Preservation Act during its permitting process of the pipeline goes through the court system.

Stephanie Tsosie of Earthjustice, co-council for the case, said Boasberg stated he wanted more time to look at the issues.

In the meantime, Dakota Access Pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners discontinued work at the site of tribal protests of the project in advance of this week's hearing, however, pipeline construction is continued at other locations in North Dakota along with South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois and is still expected to be completed by the end of the year.

According to court documents filed by Dakota Access Pipeline Aug. 18 the project is about 45 percent complete.

"A temporary injunction would have devastating short and long term impacts to the DAPL project. Construction of the entire project would cease and the project itself would be jeopardized. Hundreds of deviations from the construction schedule would occur costing as much as $540,000 per occurrence. The aggregate direct impact of these changes would exceed $100 million," the company argued.

In its arguments, Tsosie said Earthjustice focused on the fact that the tribe wants to be better consulted before a portion of the 1,168-mile crude oil pipeline is drilled beneath the Missouri River north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. The tribe has expressed concerns that, should the pipeline leak, the tribal water supply would be affected.
Eileen Williamson, a spokeswoman for the corps, said the corps does not make comments on ongoing litigation per agency policy. In court documents the agency countered it had hundreds of communications with the tribe.

"Rather than constructively participating in the process that has been going on for the last three years, Plaintiff has waited until this critical juncture to invoke the jurisdiction of the Court," Dakota Access argued in court documents.

Tsosie said Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was on hand for the Wednesday court hearing, as well as several members of the tribal council, the tribe's historic preservation officer and many general tribal members.

"It highlighted how important this is to the tribe; this is not a small issue to them," Tsosie said.

Randy Welch
FEMA Region 8 External Affairs
303-235-4619

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 17:29:37 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Yes you should have. Lesson for future.

Jerry should know better too.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 6:16:25 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Sorry – I should have pulled it out before I sent to Jerry.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 11:14 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark. Please do not for add this email. I asked them to let you know of article but traffic was not to be shared. Appreciate you pulling just clip out of needed not conversation either HQ and me. Thx. Stacie

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 5:06:32 PM
To: Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark—

Heads up. See highlighted news story below. Sherriff has deployed four deputies to ND to help with public safety issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protest.
As HQ email indicates, FEMA is not paying for this EMAC request.

Wyoming is also sending six deputies to support through an EMAC request. There was a news story in today's clips, but did not mention that FEMA was paying for the deployment.

Thanks,
Jerry

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff’s deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff’s Department, Marion County Sheriff’s Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

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Indiana is acting as a “team player,” as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us' (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil' (b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @nd.gov' (b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us' (b)(6) @state.sd.us>; (b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' <(b)(6) @wyo.gov>; (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' <(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' <(b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @usace.army.mil' <(b)(6) @usace.army.mil>; (b)(6) @state.mn.us' <(b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' <(b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' (b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' <(b)(6) @sba.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' (b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

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NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and

consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including

nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:45:33 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Will do thank you

-----Original Message-----
From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:45 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

You should send to Lee as he is the poc for Ron. Better to come from you as a "oops" I forgot to cc you then me forwarding it to him

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:20 PM
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

Per our conversation, I wanted to let you know that I sent the below email to the FEMA National Tribal Advisor and Rocky Jones with IHS - this is nothing official and just from our media monitoring.

Thanks

Megan

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6)@ihs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);
? Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
? The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
? The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
? As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.

? This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
? The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):
? There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
? The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
? The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
? The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
? The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
? The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
? The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
? The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
? Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
? The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.
? September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck, ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this year?s Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Thanks

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>(b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:09:22 -0400
To: Booth, Milo;(b)(6)@ihs.gov'
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);
? Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
? The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
? The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
? As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
? This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
? The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):
? There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.
? The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
? The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
? The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
? The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
? The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
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If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Jones, Harold E (IHS/NAS/TRAN)
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 23:10:42 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan;Booth, Milo
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Thank you!

V/R
Rocky

From: Floyd, Megan [Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov]
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 5:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo; Jones, Harold E (IHS/NAS/TRAN)
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

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* This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
* The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):
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* The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
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To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

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If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 4 Sep 2016 15:24:46 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Cc: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: RE: Update: pipeline situation

I got another request last night from Milo on behalf of IHS requesting any updates we have.

There is nothing to share outside of what the media is saying. Social media has blown up. There are so many different versions and accounts about the protests, it would take a full time person to track it all.

At some point soon I need to call up to Standing Rock. The tribe needs to make a few decisions about EMI training before the end of the month. I am thinking I'll call before the 9th.

I'll send Milo and IHS some clips and let them know that is all we have. No direct information. I'll copy you on the email.

M.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 5:03:42 PM
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy; Depalo, Lee; Floyd, Megan
Subject: Update: pipeline situation

Update on situation far below, then a blog post. It is worth noting that Cody Schultz is a Morton County Commissioner, but he works for ND DES

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2016 4:39:10 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Cody Schultz column on pipeline situation

Situation seems to be ramping up prior to court decision

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/dakota-access-pipeline-protesters/

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Hvinden, Brian
Sent: Saturday, September 03, 2016 10:51:29 PM
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Violence at pipeline protest

https://www.sayanythingblog.com/entry/sheriff-says-dakota-access-pipeline-protesters-ambushed-assaulted-private-security-workers/

Brian Hvinden
Region VIII External Affairs
Office 303 235 4712
Cell 701 681 1454

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Wernisch, Phil
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 17:08:16 -0400
To: Floyd, Megan
Cc: Red Feather, Glenda
Subject: Recent news on Dakota Access Pipeline protests

I asked Glenda to keep an eye out on any new news stories about the Dakota Access Pipeline protests. Here is what she found today.

If you would like we can continue to forward you pertinent stories as long as this remains a potential issue.

Phil Wernisch
FEMA External Affairs
DR-4237-OST
202-826-3160

Recent News on Dakota Access Pipeline

Work stops at Dakota Access Pipeline site

LAUREN DONOVAN Bismarck Tribune

DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE – Work stopped Tuesday and possibly Wednesday at the site where hundreds of Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and supporters are protesting construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline near the reservation boundary.

The work stoppage gave law enforcement, tribal and state officials some time out to plan how to manage the protest, with numbers swelling by the hour with busloads of Sioux and others arriving to join the anti-pipeline movement and arrests occurring almost daily.

Workers were instructed to leave their equipment late Monday after youthful protesters walked onto the work site and surrounded the machinery. Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said the mix of people around the machinery caused him to stop work until an improved plan for safety could be developed.

Kirchmeier said he didn't know whether work would resume Wednesday (today), because some options were still in flux Tuesday evening. One option was the private landowner allowing his fence to be moved back into his property to give protesters more room to assemble off the highway.

Kirchmeier met with Standing Rock Sioux officials in the morning and with state officials at the governor's office Tuesday afternoon, before returning to the department headquarters to brief patrol on how and when work will continue.

"Basically, what we talked about at the meeting was how to de-escalate tensions between the pipeline workers and the protesters, and us, I guess. One option is to give them more land and more comfort, room for tents, water, a dumpster, that kind of thing," the sheriff said. Ideally, there would be ample room to move the hundreds of cars, pickups and enforcement vehicles off the roadway, too, he said.

Some 28 people have been arrested since last week, including tribal chairman Dave Archambault, and charged with disorderly conduct for trying to block access to the work site.

The tribal members are protesting the pipeline's crossing of the Missouri River near the reservation boundary for fear it will rupture and contaminate their water, water downstream and disrupt sacred historic sites.

The sheriff said a federal court judge, at the request of Dakota Access Pipeline, signed a restraining order against anyone arrested being at the pipeline location.

"We are pleased that the judge granted our request for a temporary restraining order, which will allow us to more safely carry out our construction activities at the site. We will continue to put the safety of our workers and those who live in the area as our top priority as we continue construction in all four states of this important energy infrastructure project," Granado Communications Group, a PR firm for Energy Transfer Partners, said in a statement.

In a situation of historical irony, after the work shutdown, law enforcement pulled back from the protest site on Highway 1806 to a communication command center set up at Fort Lincoln State Park. The park preserves the fort from which the cavalry and Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer left to never return after a fatal battle against the Sioux. A replica of Custer's captured flag was flying among others representing some of the 25 to 30 estimated tribes that have arrived to support Standing Rock since the protest started last week.

Another reason to pull back toward Mandan was to get into range of reliable cell phone service. Many at the protest scene believe cell towers are being purposely jammed to prevent communication, but North Dakota Highway Patrol Cap. Eric Pederson said that there is no truth to the rumor.

With the growing numbers of protesters -- now at least 500-600 -- a second protest camp was established late Monday night on low land just south of the Cannonball River and tents, buses and teepees were scattered around a central kitchen and check-in tent. An original spirit camp was set up months ago in protest.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Chairman Harold Frazier arrived with several busloads of his tribal members Tuesday afternoon and said it's the biggest such gathering of Native tribes he can recall, with representatives from tribes coast-to-coast and Canada.

"Things are going well, with the construction stopped. I think it should stay stopped and let the courts settle it," Frazier said. "I believe we will stop it."

Frazier said he and Archambault were cooperating to ensure there is adequate food and shelter for everyone arriving to support Standing Rock.

Dakota Access did not return calls and emails seeking comment on the work stoppage.

Back at the protest site closest to where the pipeline is being staged up for boring under the Missouri River, the scene was relatively quiet and peaceful throughout the day.

One of the Sioux' most holy men, Arvol Looking Horse, the 19th successive keeper of the sacred White Buffalo Calf pipe, led hundreds in prayer at the gated entrance to the pipeline route.

The prayers, burning sage and sounds of drumming were intended to restore a protest based on prayer and peaceful objection, amidst worries that not everyone can be controlled in such a large, fast-moving situation and as arrests continued to mount. Men, women and children sang the old language and turned as one to the four corners of the universe. Cameras were forbidden during the ceremony.

Tribal member and former councilman Tim Mentz said the prayers were at the request of Archambault. “The chairman asked to go back to prayer, to ask for peace and safety and that we can accomplish what we are here to do,” Mentz said. “It’s for one thing; the safety of everyone. We’re all praying for the same thing.”

After the prayers, the access gates were propped open and the protesters walked the construction route on private land down to the Missouri River below, a hot walk in nearly 85-degree temperatures. Many walked, some rode horse and others rode in the back of pickup trucks, intent of making contact with the water a half-mile away.

Dakota Access Pipeline Standoff: Mni Wiconi, Water is Life

Indian Country Today

Valerie Taliman, West Coast Editor

8/15/16

Police line up before protesters near the construction site of the Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The controversial Dakota Access Pipeline project is back in the news. Over the weekend, tribal activists faced off against lines of police in Hunkpapa Territory near Cannon Ball as construction crews prepared to break ground for the new pipeline, while Standing Rock Sioux governmental officials resolved to broaden their legal battle to stop the project.

On July 26, 2016 the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe was stunned to learn that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had given its approval for the pipeline to run within a half-mile of the reservation without proper consultation or consent. Also, the new 1,172 mile Dakota Access Pipeline will cross Lake Oahe (formed by Oahe Dam on the Missouri) and the Missouri River as well, and disturb burial grounds and sacred sites on the tribe's ancestral Treaty lands, according to SRST officials.

Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners will build, own and operate the proposed $3.78 billion Dakota Access Pipeline and plans to transport up to 570,000 barrels of crude oil fracked from the Bakken oil fields across four states to a market hub in Illinois. The pipeline—already facing widespread opposition by a coalition of farmers, ranchers and environmental groups—will cross 209 rivers, creeks and tributaries, according to Dakota Access, LLC.

Standing Rock Sioux leaders say the pipeline will threaten the Missouri River, the tribe's main source of drinking and irrigation water, and forever destroy burial grounds and sacred sites.

"We don't want this black snake within our Treaty boundaries," said Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II. "We need to stop this pipeline that threatens our water. We have said repeatedly we don't want it here. We want the Army Corps to honor the same rights and protections that were afforded to others, rights we were never afforded when it comes to our territories. We demand the pipeline be stopped and kept off our Treaty boundaries."

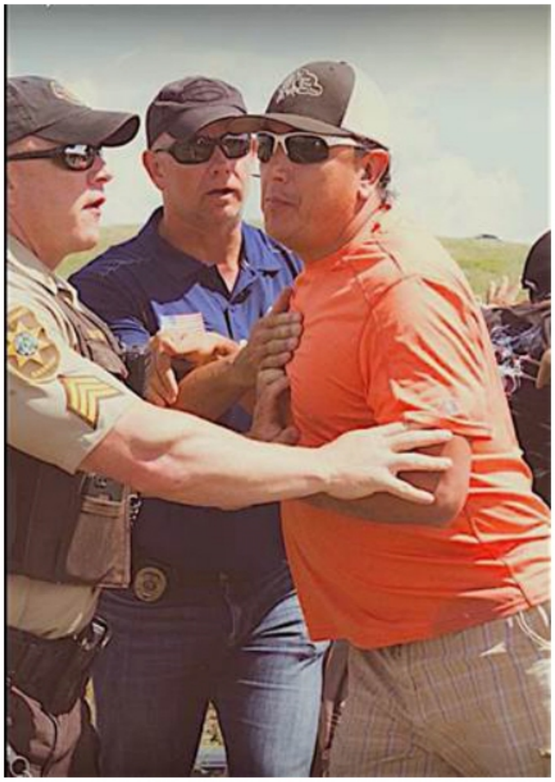
Standing Rock Sioux Chairman David Archambault II (Photo: Courtesy Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)

On July 27, SRST filed litigation in federal court in the District of Columbia to challenge the actions of the Corps regarding the Dakota Access pipeline. The suit seeks to enforce the tribal nation's federally protected rights and interests. The nation is seeking a preliminary injunction to undo the Corps' approval of the pipeline at a hearing on August 24. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and several other native nations have asked to join the lawsuit.

On August 8, Dakota Access called the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to give 48-hour notice that construction would begin on August 10 for an access corridor and staging area where pipes and other equipment will be stored for construction.

As news of the planned construction spread via social media among tribal citizens and activists, a grass-roots gathering assembled at what is now being referred to as the Sacred Stone Camp where people are holding the line to stop construction. After Dakota Access workers began clearing an area for preliminary pipeline work, several hundred protestors gradually assembled at the site, prompting law enforcement to intervene and arrest more than a dozen people. Among those were Chairman Archambault (in orange shirt in below video) and SRST Councilman Dana Yellow Fat, who quickly posted bond and were released.

“We have a voice, and we are here using it collectively in a respectful and peaceful manner,” Archambault said. “The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is doing everything it can legally, through advocacy and by speaking directly to the powers that be who could have helped us before construction began. This has happened over and over, and we will not continue to be completely ignored and let the Army Corps of Engineers ride roughshod over our rights.”



Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II (in orange shirt) was one of more than a dozen people arrested while protesting near the Dakota Access Pipeline construction site. (Photo: Courtesy Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)

Archambault said the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples requires free, prior and informed consent for development impacting Indian land, territories and waters.

“We have a serious obligation, a core responsibility to our people and to our children, to protect our source of water,” he said. “Our people will receive no benefits from this pipeline, yet we are paying the ultimate price for it with our water. We will not stop asking the federal government and Army Corps to end their attacks on our water and our people.”

The proposed construction route is within a half-mile of the tribe's reservation border, sparking concerns for protection of cultural resources that remain with the land. Hunkpapa religious and cultural sites are situated along the route of the pipeline, including burial sites of ancestors.

"The land between the Cannonball River and the Heart River is sacred," said Jon Eagle Sr., STST's Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. "It's a historic place of commerce where enemy tribes camped peacefully within sight of each other because of the reverence they had for this place. In the area are sacred stones where our ancestors went to pray for good direction, strength and protection for the coming year. Those stones are still there, and our people still go there today."

Eagle worries that the pipeline will harm many tribal nations along the Missouri.

"Wherever the buffalo roamed our ancestors left evidence of their existence and connection to everything in creation," he said. "The aboriginal lands of the Oceti Sakonwin extend as far west as Wyoming and Montana, as far north as Canada, as far east as the Great Lakes, and as far south as Kansas. Construction along this corridor will disturb burial places and cultural sites."

According to the recently filed "motion for preliminary injunction" by the SRST, Dakota Access initially considered two possible routes: a northern route near Bismarck, and a southern route taking the pipeline to the border of the Standing Rock reservation. Federal law requires the Army Corps to review and deny or grant the company's permit applications to construct the pipeline. The southern route takes the pipeline across the Missouri River and Lake Oahe, implicating lands and water under federal jurisdiction.

In the initial environmental assessment, the maps utilized by Dakota Access and the Army Corps did not indicate that SRST's lands were close to the proposed Lake Oahe crossing. The company selected this route because the northern route "would be near and could jeopardize the drinking water of the residents in the city of Bismarck." The Army Corps of Engineers has not issued a public response to the newly filed litigation or protest. In a statement that appeared in a May 4 story in the *DesMoines Register*, Col. John Henderson, commander of the Corps' Omaha District said, "The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is not an opponent or a proponent of the project. Our job is to consider impacts to the public and the environment as well as all applicable laws, regulations and policies associated yet with this permission and permit review process."

An Energy Transfer spokesperson told ICTMN, "It is important to note that Dakota Access does not cross any reservation land and is compliant with all regulations regarding tribal coordination and cultural resources. We have communicated with the various tribes that have an interest in the DAPL project as we recognize the traditional range of the Native Americans and their sensitivity to historic ranges for cultural properties. We are confident the USACE has adequately addressed the portion of the project subject to their review and where a NEPA analysis is required. They are the experts in this area, and we believe they have done an excellent job addressing any comments received to date."

Tribal leaders and environmental activists say the company's draft environmental assessment of December 9, 2015 did not mention that the route they chose brings the pipeline near the drinking water of tribal citizens. In fact, it omitted the existence of the tribe on all maps and analysis, in violation of environmental justice policies.

While federal law requires meaningful consultation with affected Indian nations, SRST governmental officials allege that didn’t happen despite numerous requests by the nation. Since they first heard of the proposed project in 2014, SRST leaders have voiced strong opposition to company, state and federal officials, and to Congress.

They met with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of the Interior, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to discuss the harm imposed by the pipeline. All three agencies subsequently wrote letters to the Army Corps expressing environmental and cultural resource concerns related to the pipeline.

Archambault said they’ve been working on many levels for more than seven months to stop construction. But the tribe and the three federal agencies were apparently ignored by the Army Corps, which moved ahead with permits for the pipeline.

In addition, Standing Rock youth ages 6–25 from the reservation vowed to run to Washington, D.C. to deliver a petition with 160,000 signatures on change.org opposing the pipeline to the President of the United States. After running for 2,200 miles, they were able to meet with Army Corps officials and hold rallies along the way; they returned home on August 10.

Standing Rock leadership has also put out the call to Indian country to stand in support of protecting their water, land and people. Dozens of Indian nations have already written letters and resolutions to support the Lakota people.

As for the growing number of people at the grassroots rally, Archambault publicly asked that everyone be peaceful and respectful of one another in the coming days.

“We want peaceful demonstrations and I need everyone to understand that what we are doing, in the manner we are doing it, is working,” he said. “By being peaceful and avoiding violence we are getting the attention needed to stop the pipeline.

The emphasis was on peace as a Lakota man smudged police officers at the scene of an ongoing protest at the construction site of the Dakota Access oil pipeline in North Dakota. (Photo: Courtesy Standing Rock Sioux Tribe)

“We’re getting the message out that all the wrongdoing that’s been done to Indian people will no longer be tolerated,” he said. “But we’re going about it in a peaceful and respectful manner. If we turn to violence, all that will be for nothing. I’m hoping and praying that through prayer and peace, for once the government will listen to us.”

Archambault also honored the Lakota youth who want to make a better future in his message.

“Our youth carry powerful messages when they speak, and we respect our youth and listen to them,” he said. “We honor and support the youth, runners, elders, campers, and supporters, and we are thankful for all the important efforts they’re making to protect our water.”

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 13 Oct 2016 12:35:52 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6)
(b)(@nd.gov';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@state.sd.us(b)(6)@utah.gov';(b)(6)@
wyo.gov';(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';(b)(6)@usace.
army.mil';(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark
J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@sb
a.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel
Subject: Region 8 clips for Thursday
Attachments: R8 Clips 10-13-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, October 13, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* Lyons Mayor Connie Sullivan said that HUD and the FBI have both said town employees did not profit from or misuse flood recovery funds. However, the Town Board of Trustees did cancel its contract with Front Range Land Solutions, which was handling state and federal buyout grants for Lyons, including FEMA HMGP funds. The town council has also launched an internal investigation of its flood recovery contracting, and two town employees remain suspended. Sullivan said an earlier audit by DHS was not a cause of the HUD/FBI investigation. … The U.S. Attorney will not prosecute an EPA employee involved in last year's Gold King Mine disaster, but will instead leave any administrative action up to the EPA. House Republicans demanded an explanation from the Justice Department… A bomb was left outside the police department in Nederland. The FBI is investigating… Weld County Commissioners are being questioned over an emergency management training exercise held in Breckenridge. The training was similar to one the county had through FEMA in 2012, which they said helped their response to the 2013 flood. …
- *Montana:* October 19 will be Shakeout Day in Montana, and 98,000 people have already registered for the event. Helena will have a meeting the same day to discuss its predisaster mitigation plan, which helps keep it eligible for potential FEMA funding in case of a disaster… A strong storm is expected late Thursday through Friday… The USDA has declared 11 Montana counties a drought disaster area… The Red Cross is offering free smoke alarms in Great Falls as part of Fire Prevention Week and its national campaign to reduce fire deaths.
- *North Dakota:* The state received a grant from the Department of Transportation to help train personnel to respond to emergency situations involving hazardous materials.
- *South Dakota:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Utah:* A TV station reports on the Red Cross campaign to reduce fire deaths, and on what is needed in a 72-hour kit for disasters.

- *Wyoming:* Park County will get funds from the NRCS to rehabilitate burned areas, and it will also get an unspecified $40,000 Homeland Security grant… Park County and eight contiguous Wyoming and Montana counties have been designated by the USDA as drought disaster areas.
- *Other FEMA-related stories:* A weather forecaster explains why hurricane warnings cannot be manipulated… A *Government Executive* story details the 10,000 federal employees sent to work on Hurricane Matthew by agency… Two Zika stories: NBC News reports on innovate ways to combat the virus, from drones dropping sterile mosquitos in remote areas to mosquito repellant-infused sandals. Researchers report that Zika also poses a threat after birth, including to adults.

CONTENTS

COLORADO:

Lyons Mayor: FBI, HUD Find Town Didn't Misuse Flood-recovery Funds (Boulder Daily Camera)

FEDS will not prosecute EPA official linked to Gold King Mine disaster (The Denver Post)
FBI probes motive after bomb left at Colorado police station (The Denver Post)
Weld County officials drawing criticism for emergency management training in Breckenridge (Complete Colorado)

MONTANA:

Oct. 19 events focus on natural disasters and how to survive them- Helena Independent Record

Storm system could bring potential for rockslides- KECI TV Missoula

USDA AG disaster declared in county- Chouteau Acantha News

Free smoke alarms for fire prevention month in Great Falls- Great Falls Tribune

NORTH DAKOTA

ND receives federal hazardous materials safety funds (The Bakken)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

How is the Red Cross Working to Reduce House Fire Deaths?

72 Hour Kits: What You Really Need- Good 4 Utah.com

WYOMING:

Funds to be used for burned-out areas from summer fires – Cody Enterprise

USDA designates Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area –Northern Wyoming Daily News

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Weather Forecasters Can't Manipulate Hurricane Warnings — Here's Why (Houston Chronicle)

Federal Agencies Deploy Thousands Of Feds For Hurricane Matthew Response (Government Executive)

Feds To Fund Plans To Take On Zika Virus With Drones (NBC News)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Lyons Mayor: FBI, HUD Find Town Didn't Misuse Flood-recovery Funds (Boulder Daily Camera)

By Amelia Arvesen

Boulder (CO) Daily Camera, October 12, 2016

Lyons Mayor Connie Sullivan issued a statement Wednesday afternoon that the FBI and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development found that town staff did not personally benefit from the procurement of contracting with Front Range Land Solutions and funds were not misused.

However, the board agreed in a resolution Monday to terminate all contracts with the company owned by Rosi Dennett, who coordinated state-funded and federal-funded buyout services for Lyons residents starting in October 2014, following a devastating flood one year earlier.

"We didn't cancel it because we thought she did anything wrong," Sullivan said. "We thought she did a nice job and we think the town benefitted from her work."

The statement from Sullivan, on behalf of the Town Board of Trustees, said that HUD does not intend to gather additional information from Lyons, and all original documents taken during last week's probe were returned.

She said the HUD investigation is not complete, because there might be additional administrative work required to close the file.

HUD Office of Inspector General spokesman Darryl Madden, based in Washington, D.C., previously said the office's role is to ensure grants given to communities after disasters are being used appropriately, but beyond that he could not comment on the mayor's most recent statement.

"We're not confirming or denying that an investigation even exists," he said in response to the statement released Wednesday.

Documents specified in the subpoena made public by the town on Friday include "All documents pertaining to negotiations between Front Range Land Solutions and the Town of Lyons."

It also sought all "emails, letters and other correspondence and memoranda" concerning representatives of Front Range Land Solutions, as well as invoices, bills, receipts and other documents reflecting "charges or payment with respect to Front Range Land Solutions and/or Rosi Dennett."

Sullivan also said the few remaining buyouts the town is still trying to close are now being handled by Christy Crosser, a grant coordinator with the town.

She said the board was not able to temporarily suspend Dennett's services, so their choice was to terminate or continue.

"It was really just a procedural thing; we just didn't want to have any work being done," Sullivan said. " ... The contract did not have a clause for suspending."

Dennett has not answered or returned multiple calls and emails since Friday, when the mayor first released the subpoena served by federal authorities naming her company.

The Times-Call submitted a Colorado Open Records Act request Monday, asking for copies of previous and current contracts the Town of Lyons has with Front Range Land Solutions and/or Dennett, as well as any emails with people associated with that company and/or the company owner.

Sullivan said in Friday's statement that the FBI was not proceeding with a federal case.

She said in her Wednesday statement that the board plans to start an "internal review of the circumstances that prompted the external investigation" and "intends to complete this review as quickly and as efficiently as possible."

"The internal review will focus on the documentation processes and related circumstances surrounding contract procurement so that any needed corrective actions can be identified and implemented by the Board," she said in the statement.

Town Administrator Victoria Simonsen and Town Clerk Debra Anthony remain on leave until the board's process is complete.

Additional documents sought by the federal subpoena included all of Lyons' documents relating to the procurement processes and correspondence concerning the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program and the Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program.

The subpoena also asked for all documents relating to the award of federal recovery grants to Front Range Land Solutions.

Sullivan said Dennett's contract to date has totaled about $350,000. She said she did not have figures on hand for how much Federal Emergency Management Agency and Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds Dennett handled.

Additionally, Sullivan said a report issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General in April was not causal to the investigation, and the investigation did not involve how grant funds for large flood-recovery projects were procured or managed.

Amelia Arvesen: 303-684-5212, arvesena@times-call.com or twitter.com/ameliaarvesen

FEDS will not prosecute EPA official linked to Gold King Mine disaster (The Denver Post)

The U.S. Attorney in Denver will not prosecute an Environmental Protection Agency employee involved in the Gold King Mine disaster, leaving it to the agency to determine administrative action against the employee.

A decision made Oct. 6 was based on information submitted by the EPA's Office of Inspector General to federal prosecutors after a year-long internal probe.

Instead of a criminal prosecution, the EPA's internal investigators "will submit a report of an investigation to the agency that details the findings of our investigation," OIG spokesman Jeff Lagda said in response to queries.

"The agency, not the OIG, will then determine what administrative action they may take against the employee based on that report," Lagda said. "The EPA will have to report to the OIG what administrative action the EPA will undertake."

The EPA's quasi-independent OIG launched an investigation into the Gold King disaster more than a year ago. Federal officials later, driven by members of Congress, began a criminal probe.

The Aug. 5, 2015, blowout at the Gold King Mine above Silverton in southwestern Colorado — accidentally triggered by an EPA-run teamled by on-scene coordinator Hays Griswold — fouled waterways in three states and on American Indian lands. An estimated 3 million gallons of acid mine drainage containing heavy metals including arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury spilled into Animas River headwaters and turned the Animas mustard-yellow.

The OIG is part of the EPA and investigates agency activities.

The OIG investigators "presented facts to the U.S. Attorney's Office" in Denver "about whether an EPA employee may have violated" the Clean Water Act and the statute prohibiting false statements, according to a statement Lagda issued Wednesday afternoon.

Acting U.S. Attorney Bob Troyer could not be reached, and spokesman Jeff Dorschner declined to comment.

"It has been a long-standing policy that the U.S. Attorney's Office does not discuss declinations," Dorschner said.

EPA investigators now will return to completing work requested by Congress related to the Gold King Mine spill, Lagda said.

Sens. John McCain of Arizona and John Barrasso of Wyoming, members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, in May sent a letter to Attorney General Loretta Lynch urging a criminal probe.

Other federal agencies also have reviewed EPA conduct linked to the Gold King Mine. An Interior Department report issued last fall deemed the Gold King disaster preventable, the result of errors over many years in handling toxic discharges from inactive mines.

House Republicans on Wednesday bristled and demanded a briefing before Oct. 26 by the Justice Department explaining the decision not to prosecute.

“By not taking up the case, the Department of Justice looks like it is going easy on its colleagues in EPA,” said a letter from members of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Justice officials’ actions “give the appearance of hypocrisy, and seem to indicate that there is one set of rules for private citizens and another for the federal government,” the letter said. “The EPA disaster deserves the same level of accountability to which private citizens are held.”

FBI probes motive after bomb left at Colorado police station (The Denver Post)

NEDERLAND — The FBI is trying to determine why someone left an explosive device in a backpack in front of the police department of a small Colorado mountain town, prompting evacuations in the community’s main retail area.

A Nederland police detective found the bag outside the building when he began his shift Tuesday morning and brought it inside because he thought it was lost property. He opened it and found “suspicious articles” that were later determined to be an improvised explosive device, police Marshal Paul Carrill said.

The FBI, which had assumed control of the investigation by Wednesday afternoon, said the device was active but failed to detonate. Two robots searched the backpack, and multiple pieces were removed from the device and sent to a forensics lab.

“It’s difficult to interpret why someone would do this,” said Carrill, who declined to disclose if police have identified the backpack’s owner. “It is my hope and intent, for the health and safety of the community to get to the bottom of why.”

The police department is in the town’s main retail center, which includes a grocery store and multiple shops.

Carrill urged the public to come forward with information because “the individual or individuals who may have assembled this could be a risk to their neighbors.”

Nederland is about 15 miles southwest of Boulder.

Weld County officials drawing criticism for emergency management training in Breckenridge (Complete Colorado)

October 12, 2016 5:04 PM· **By Sherrie Peif**

Editors Note: This is the third story in a series of stories about the board of Weld County Commissioners and issues brought to the Weld County Council for reasons to audit the board's performance. The previous two look at the commissioner's decision to form a charter review committee and the criticisms leveled at the commissioners by residents. Next up, Complete Colorado will look at spending by the commissioners on conferences, meals and travel and potential improprieties.

GREELEY – Many praised the board of Weld County Commissioners both during and after the 2013 flood because their actions saved time, money, and in some cases, headaches for Weld residents.

However, how much the county should pay to train its employees for just such an event recently came under fire. Also who could help pay the bill was questioned. So, rather than accept direct donations from corporate partners, the county directed those entities to donate to the United Way, who would then turn around and cut a check to the county.

At several recent meetings of both the board of Weld County Commissioners and the Weld County Council, residents have said a recent training trip to Breckenridge was too much and accused the commissioners of using United Way to launder donations from organizations that depend on the commissioners for decisions on land use in the county.

Commissioners say the county's response in 2013 was the result of ongoing training, including a 2012 trip to Emmetsburg, Md. for specialized training provided and paid for by FEMA.

Commissioners were so pleased by the hands-on experiences employees got that they decided to replicate it on their own this year when a subsequent grant application was unsuccessful.

In August, 41 county employees and 20 other emergency responders from other organizations spent four days in Breckenridge training for an emergency.

However, some – including one of the commissioners – said the training could have taken place for much less than the $45,000 the Breckenridge location cost.

"We budgeted this for $15,000," said Commissioner Sean Conway at a July 18 regular board meeting. "The taxpayers paid a lot of money for (Weld's Emergency Operations Center) for when a disaster's going to happen."

According to the Office of Emergency Management's (OEM) website, the final ticket price was $41,455.

Through a Colorado Open Records Act request, Complete Colorado also found another nearly $4,000 in expenses for employee transportation and meals, making the grand total more than $45,000. Some employees on the attendance list had not yet submitted expense reports at the time of the request.

The reason given for going to Breckenridge was to keep people from straying too far from the event.

"One of the biggest concerns I have about doing this training and investing in it is people coming and going and saying, 'well I have this other meeting scheduled,'" Commissioner Julie Cozad said at that July meeting. "It just takes away from the overall training. I think it's really important that the people that do go, are there, and they're focused, and they're working on the training together for the full entire time."

Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer told the Greeley Tribune something similar.

"If it's too close, people will just pop out for some reason or another," the Tribune article reported. "Maybe they'd go home for lunch or go run an errand. They can't leave meetings for their own offices when they're more than two hours away from them."

However, both Kirkmeyer and Commissioner Steve Moreno left the conference early.

Moreno left to attend a national clerk and recorder's conference in Philadelphia.

When questioned if it was appropriate to leave the training for the clerk's conference considering he is no longer the clerk and recorder in Weld County, Moreno said the Election Center board believes his perspective as a commissioner is a valuable resource.

"I was first asked to serve on the Board of Directors for the Election Center in 2012 when I was still Weld County Clerk & Recorder," Moreno said. "I was going to resign when I was elected Weld County Commissioner, but the Chairman and members of the Board asked if I would consider continuing my service in my capacity as a county commissioner on their board. … They felt my insight to the board from the position of commissioner, who oversees county budgets including elections, could be beneficial to the group."

Moreno is also currently hearing criticism that he supports changing the clerk and recorder position from an elected one to an appointed one, so that he can get his old job back.

Moreno was term limited from the position in 2014. Moreno has denied that and said publicly he will not support that change.

Kirkmeyer left to attend an award's banquet in Fort Collins. She said she believed it was important to represent Weld County on the North I-25 Coalition, which was receiving the award.

"I think it is appropriate for an elected official to represent the organizations to which they belong, especially when being recognized for their positive work on a project crucial not only to Weld County but the Northern Colorado region as well," Kirkmeyer said.

She also said she believed her prior experience in emergency management helped during her missing time.

"I not only attended the FEMA training with the county in 2012, but I also had direct experience with disasters and disaster recovery during my role as acting director of the Office of Emergency Management at (Department of Local Affairs)," Kirkmeyer said. "My role in the training was not so much as that of student new to the world of EOCs and disasters but as a contributing mentor and facilitator for the training and the exercise."

She pointed out that she didn't miss any of the actual training exercises and was briefed on what she did miss over lunch.

Commissioner Conway, who attended the same awards ceremony in Fort Collins, did not attend the Breckenridge training out of principal, he said.

"I did not attend the exercise because I felt the exercise should have been conducted in the Weld County EOC, which we constructed at great taxpayer expense in 2011," Conway said. "The 2016 Budget allocated $15,000 to do an exercise. The decision to move the exercise from Weld County to Breckenridge resort resulted in tens of thousands dollars of additional taxpayer expense, which I believed was unnecessary. The four days of the exercise, I remained in Weld County to hold down the fort at the commissioner's office while my four fellow commissioners were at the exercise."

Corporate donations processed through United Way

The debate over where and how much, is just one concern for residents who have spoken repeatedly against it. Who paid for the training and how has also been a matter of concern.
"I would also raise the question in terms of some of the sponsorships I've seen," Conway said at that July meeting. "I think we need to be very careful in terms of what financial sponsorships we have in regards to this and in regards to conflict of interest."
Conway was referring to what the county has said was $11,500 in sponsorships for the event that came from companies such as Xcel Energy, BASE Tactical, Waste Management, PDC Energy, TetraTech, Martin Marietta and Felsburg Holt & Ullevig, all companies that at some point have come before the board for quasi-judicial hearings on land use and other issues and are likely to again. Those hearings require commissioners to be judge-like in their fact findings.
Somewhere between the July meeting and the training, Weld County Attorney Bruce Barker weighed in on the matter because in a letter also obtained through open records, OEM Director Roy Rudisill asked those partners to reissue their donations to the United Way instead of the county.

MONTANA:

Oct. 19 events focus on natural disasters and how to survive them- Helena Independent Record

AL KNAUBER Independent Record October 12, 2016

Wednesday's meeting to talk about what can be done to reduce the effect of disasters couldn't be timelier.

The Oct. 19 event at 3 p.m. in the lower level of the Law Enforcement Center is part of the five-year update of the county's pre-disaster mitigation plan.

It comes on the same day as the 10:19 a.m. statewide earthquake drill.

Those who attend the pre-disaster mitigation plan meeting are invited to bring local knowledge and ideas on how to mitigate the effects of hazards.

"The (pre-disaster mitigation) plan will reexamine the wide range of hazards that affect Lewis and Clark County, recent hazard events, the probability of future occurrences, and the vulnerabilities of structures and the population. From that risk assessment, a plan of action to mitigate these hazards will be developed and/or updated," Daphne Digrindakis, senior project manager with Tetra Tech Inc., which has been hired by the county to assist in updating the plan, wrote in an email.

The update is also required for the county to apply to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for funds to offset the damage from disasters.

FEMA funding was used by the county this year to help lease the Helena Trap Club gravel pit for use in a flood emergency to divert some of the water there temporarily.

Wildfire and flooding will be discussed and how the impact of these events can be reduced, according to a news release.

Earthquakes, another of the natural disasters that has happened in Lewis and Clark County and Helena, will also be a topic for discussion.

The Oct. 18, 1935, earthquake damaged much of Helena and was the worst of a seven-month series of quakes that lasted from October 1935 into April 1936, said Paul Spengler, the county's disaster and emergency services response coordinator.

The statewide annual earthquake drill, Spengler said, will last a few minutes.

Last year more than 160,000 participated in The Great Montana Shakeout, according to the program's website, where people can register to be included in this year's event.

As of Wednesday more than 98,000 people were registered, the website noted.

Those who participate in the drill will seek shelter inside their buildings as they would while waiting for the ground to cease shaking from an actual earthquake, Spengler said.

After that wait, when there is less danger of building facades collapsing into streets, people will exit their buildings and assemble in pre-determined locations to be tallied, Spengler explained.

This tally would allow people to know if anyone was trapped inside a building by an earthquake.

The Shakeout, he added, is a way to keep the memory alive and prepare for the day when another earthquake occurs.

While clearing brush and trees from around homes is one of the pre-disaster mitigation steps that can be taken for those who live in areas that could be burned by wildfire, removing heavy items from high shelving in homes is also a means to reduce the potential threat to life from earthquakes, Spengler noted

Storm system could bring potential for rockslides- KECI TV Missoula

By: Barrett Tryon
Updated: Oct 13, 2016 07:24 AM MDT
MISSOULA, Mont. - Weather could have a big impact on your travel plans late Thursday through Friday in northwest Montana.

The Severe Weather Alert team is tracking a strong storm that just moved through the Seattle area — and is headed our way.

With the risk of severe weather, rockslides could be a problem in places like Lookout Pass, where Interstate 90 crosses the state line into Idaho.

Drivers should also be prepared for possible ponding on roadways and the potential for hydroplaning.

USDA AG disaster declared in county- Chouteau Acantha News

By Nancy Thornton Acantha reporter -15 hrs ago

The U.S. Department of Agriculture on Oct. 5 designated Teton County and 10 other counties in Montana as primary natural disaster designations because of a recent drought. Those counties are Big Horn, Carbon, Flathead, Granite, Lewis and Clark, Missoula, Park, Powell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Teton counties.

Farmers and ranchers in 20 other counties in Montana also qualified for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous. Those counties include Cascade, Chouteau, Glacier and Pondera counties, among others.

All qualified farm operators in the designated areas are now eligible for low interest emergency loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses.

FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity, a USDA press release said.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program, Livestock Forage Disaster Program, Livestock Indemnity Program, Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program and the Tree Assistance Program.

Interested farmers may contact the local USDA Service Center in Choteau for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

Free smoke alarms for fire prevention month in Great Falls-Great Falls Tribune

Jenn Rowell, jrowell@greatfallstribune.com 5:49 p.m. MDT October 11, 2016

This week is National Fire Prevention Week and free smoke alarms are available to Great Falls residents through the Montana Red Cross later this month.

On Oct. 21, volunteers through the Red Cross, Great Falls Fire/Rescue, Malmstrom Air Force Base, PayneWest Insurance and Cascade County United Way will be installing free smoke alarms in homes without them and teaching about home fire safety.

Great Falls residents can sign up to have up to three free smoke alarms installed by calling the Red Cross at 800-272-6668 before Oct. 21.

The event is part of an ongoing nationwide Red Cross campaign to reduce death and injuries from home fires by as much as 25 percent in five years.

"While we were able to install over 270 alarms in Great Falls last year, we know there are homes that still need them," said Diane Wright, executive director of Montana Red Cross.

Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

In addition to installing the smoke alarms, volunteers will also share information about fire safety, including how to draft a fire escape plan, Wright said. The visits take about 20 minutes and the Great Falls event will install at least 100 free smoke alarms, Wright said.

To learn more about fire safety, visit redcross.org/homefires.

NORTH DAKOTA:

ND receives federal hazardous materials safety funds (The Bakken)

By Patrick C. Miller | October 12, 2016

The U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) announced that North Dakota will receive $194,331 in funds to aid personnel responding to hazardous material-related emergencies.

PHMSA is issuing $20.4 million in Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) grants to states, territories and Native American tribes to enhance their ability to respond to hazardous materials transportation incidents.

Texas and California will get $1.5 million each. The states receiving a half million dollars or more are Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. No tribes in the Dakotas received funding.

“The department’s partnership with our states, territories and tribes is an integral component of our strong national safety program,” said Anthony Foxx, U.S. transportation secretary. “These grants are important tools for communities to plan and stay prepared for transportation incidents involving hazardous materials, including those involving high-hazard flammable trains.”

The HMEP grant program is part of DOT’s comprehensive approach to improving the safe transportation of crude oil and other hazardous material across the country. PHMSA’s HMEP grants program allows recipients to design and implement planning and training programs according to their specific needs.

“Our nation’s emergency responders have an immensely challenging job, and this grant funding supports their efforts to protect our communities,” said Marie Therese Dominguez, PHMSA administrator. “PHMSA has taken a comprehensive approach to enhance the safe transportation of energy products that includes prevention, mitigation, and emergency preparedness and response. These grants are another critical element of our focus to improve safety.”

For the current grant cycle, HMEP applicants are encouraged to allocate funding for:

- Developing or revising emergency plans and training activities to account for bulk transportation of energy product by rail and over the road;

- Conducting commodity flow studies to determine the frequency and quantity of hazardous materials shipments being transported through local communities; and

- Training emergency responders to respond appropriately to incidents involving hazardous materials.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

How is the Red Cross Working to Reduce House Fire Deaths? Good 4 Utah.com KYVX- TV

Updated 10/12 2016 10:02PM

The Red Cross has committed to an ongoing nationwide campaign to reduce the number of home fire deaths and injuries by 25 percent over the next few years.

As part of Fire Prevention Week, Rich Woodruff from the Utah Red Cross explains why it is so important to have working smoke detectors in your home.

According to the Red Cross, the biggest disaster threat in the United States isn't floods, hurricanes or tornadoes; it's fire. The American Red Cross responds to nearly 70,000 disasters year- one every eight minutes and most are house fires.

Home fires can happen quickly, devastating lives and property. But unlike other disasters, most home fires can be prevented.

For more information about fire safety and how you can help support the Red Cross visit www.redcross.org.

72 Hour Kits: What You Really Need- Good 4 Utah.com

By MICHELLE MONEY | mmoney@good4utah.com
Updated 10/12 2016 11:01AM

Have you ever wondered what you really need in a 72 hour kit? Debbie Kent from Store This Not That has done all the research and work for you.

72 hour kits are geared to help you survive for 3 days after something BIG has happened: earthquake, flooding, hurricane, tornado, EMP, etc. In other words, a disaster where the power is

out, your house is likely unsafe (or you would be staying there) or you are at work and need to get home and you are on the move taking your kit with you, hopefully in a car, in worst case scenarios on foot.

Maybe you only have to travel a mile or two to get somewhere safe or maybe you have to travel a long distance, either way the hope is your kit can carry you through until you arrive safely. These kinds of survival bags usually contain the bare bones of survival, keeping them somewhat small and lightweight and relying heavily on the skills of the person carrying them. Their contents include items for: first aid, fire starting, simple tools and shelter, food and food procurement, water and filtering, light, personal items and safety.

Visit StoreThisNotThat.com for more resources.

WYOMING:

Funds to be used for burned-out areas from summer fires – Cody Enterprise

By SCOTT KOLB Updated 17 hrs ago

On Oct. 6 the Park County Commissioners voted to approve county sponsorship of a Natural Resources Conservation Service program which provides federal funds for the rehabilitation of land that burned in this summer's wildfires.

The funds would be disbursed under the Emergency Watershed Protection Program from the Conservation Service. This money is usually used for flood control, which could be a problem if the burned-out areas from this summer's fires aren't re-seeded.

"We request Federal assistance ... to restore damages to private lands in Park County sustained by wildfires during the months of August and September," stated the letter signed by the commissioners. "We understand, as sponsors of this program that our responsibilities will include, where applicable, acquiring land rights and any permits needed to construct; and, if required, to operate and maintain the proposed measures."

Commissioner Joe Tilden abstained from the vote due to a potential conflict of interest as he is listed as an employee of the Big Hat Ranch, one of the landowners likely to receive assistance.

"This is the first time this program has been used for wildfires," commissioner Lee Livingston reminded the board. He then suggested entire watershed areas be brought in under the program. The re-seeding will be done not only to prevent erosion, but to prevent invasive cheatgrass from taking over the scorched land.

The letter, approved and signed by the commissioners, will move the process forward. Landowners affected by the fires will be contacted by the county to get into the program.

In other business, bids were taken for the county to purchase two new motor graders. The purchases fall under a buyback program from John Deere in which the company purchases the old graders for essentially the price the county paid for the equipment two years ago.

“With the budget being tight, we really scaled back on what we did with equipment,” said Brian Edwards, an engineer for Park County.

The bid went to Honnen Equipment of Mills. With the trade-in value, it will cost the County $43,776 to buy two new graders as well as pay for warranties.

There was $50,000 in the budget to cover the expense, so the purchase came under the projected cost. The vote was unanimous to approve this purchase. The County will stay in the two-year buyback plan and can opt for as long as five years.

Commissioners Bucky Hall and Joe Tilden gave a report on their recent trips to the Wyoming Association of County Officers and Wyoming County Commissioners Association meetings.

In their meeting with the other county commissioners from around the state, Hall and Tilden sat in on discussions about pressing business like insurance costs.

“If all the counties banded together, we would save a lot of money on worker’s compensation going through the WCCA,” Hall said. “This is worth looking into.”

Talks were also held about the role of special districts within a county. This also brought up the contentious subject of mill levies for these special districts, which the commissioners are asked to rubber stamp even if they oppose or would like to modify the measures.

A court case in Johnson County is pending on this issue. The case involves the Johnson County commission, which refused to approve some levies for special districts. That decision not to approve the special district mill levies has been challenged in court.

Tilden had some good news to report. It appears the governor is trying to free up money for the struggling counties to use in meeting their yearly budgets.

“The governor said he will ask for interim funding for the counties,” Tilden said. “He said we have a rainy day fund and it’s pouring on the counties.”

Not only did they discuss business at these meetings, but there was also some quality entertainment. Tilden told the board that they had a good magician at the conference and he put on a fine show.

In other business at the meeting:

•A boundary line adjustment for Ben Johnson was approved in rural Park County.

•Approval was given to allow the board chairman to sign for a Homeland Security grant of $40,000.

•Reviewed and signed three Department of Revenue Notice of Valuation Changes. These dealt with two tax rebates for Marathon Oil and Vanguard Operating, LLC.

•Approved changes to the flood plain permit for the Brown Thomas Meadow bank stabilization project.

• Request approved to hire a new part-time janitor at the courthouse. Failure to approve this request would’ve resulted in future overtime for a salaried employee.

- TANF grant recipients were approved for seven different groups. Big Brothers and Sisters of NW Wyoming, Boys and Girls Club of Park Co., Crisis Intervention Services, Children's Resource Center, NW College, NW Wyoming Family Planning and Yellowstone Country Assistance Network.

USDA designates Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area –Northern Wyoming Daily News

October 11, 2016

CASPER — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area due to a recent drought.

"Our hearts go out to those Wyoming farmers and ranchers affected by recent natural disasters," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "President Obama and I are committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a bright spot in our nation's economy by sustaining the successes of America's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through these difficult times. We're also telling Wyoming producers that USDA stands with you and your communities when severe weather and natural disasters threaten to disrupt your livelihood."

Farmers and ranchers in Big Horn, Fremont, Hot Springs, Teton and Washakie counties in Wyoming also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

Farmers and ranchers in Carbon, Gallatin and Park counties in Montana also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Oct. 5, 2016, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program; Livestock Indemnity Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; and the Tree Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online athttp://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

FSA news releases are available on FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov via the "Newsroom" link.

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Weather Forecasters Can't Manipulate Hurricane Warnings — Here's Why (Houston Chronicle)

Houston Chronicle, October 12, 2016

Many mini-dramas develop during major disasters like Hurricane Matthew, which has left a trail of devastation in the Caribbean and the southeastern United States. One such drama occurred outside of the storm zone: Conservative news blogger Matt Drudge accused the federal government last week of hyping the threat to the U.S. coast, purportedly to play up possible links between extreme weather and climate change.

The Twitter universe rightfully jumped on this claim, calling it extremely irresponsible. Some critics invited Drudge to stand on the central Florida coast and witness the passage of Matthew so he could personally verify its strength.

But here is a larger, key point: It would be virtually impossible for our government, or any weather service, to intentionally overhype or downplay the real risks of a major hurricane as it approaches the United States.

I have been involved with operational weather forecasting for nearly 40 years. From 2005 through 2009 I was responsible for typhoon forecasts that the Defense Department's Joint Typhoon Warning Center, or JTWC, issued for the western Pacific and Indian oceans. After retiring from the Navy, I served as chief operating officer for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In this position I was responsible for the National Weather Service and its components, including the National Hurricane Center, or NHC.

During my career I have seen the internet and social media transform weather forecasting in general, and hurricane forecasting in particular, from a skill that was seen and practiced by a small community of specialists into one of the most transparent technical endeavors we do on a routine basis. Every forecaster I have ever worked with – military or civilian – wants to get predictions right. And even if they wanted to shade the forecast one way or another to support some agenda, it would be impossible to do it in today's networked world.

In the pre-internet era, hurricane forecasting was more of an art than a science. Modern weather forecasting developed in the 1960s with the advent of radar, computers and satellites. Well into the 1980s, forecasters were still working out how best to integrate satellite data into computer-based forecasts, and both satellite measurements and computing power were crude by today's standards.

Observations and computer prediction models traveled on government-only, proprietary circuits, with only limited access by private forecasters or academia. Government forecasters would share storm track and intensity forecasts with the public, along with short written discussions (TRANSMITTED IN ALL CAPS), but little else. The actual processes for deriving forecasts were closely held, available only to members of a very select and specialized guild. Private-sector forecasting of hurricanes was in its infancy, hampered by a lack of real-time information.

Starting in the 1990s personal computers, dial-up access and then the internet fundamentally changed the way weather information could be accessed and distributed. Today global weather models from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting are available to anyone with an internet connection. When the NHC directs U.S. Air Force Reserve personnel or NOAA "Hurricane Hunters" to fly a hurricane reconnaissance mission, the data they collect are posted virtually in real time. Satellite images from the JTWC or NHC forecast are available online free of charge.

For hurricanes, the federal government produces one official forecast from either the NHC for the eastern Pacific and Atlantic oceans or the JTWC for the western Pacific and Indian oceans. This forecast draws on computer-based weather forecast models, an assessment of the storm's real-time characteristics, and the knowledge of a highly trained typhoon duty officer or hurricane specialist. It would be obvious instantaneously if the forecast deviated substantially from observed conditions or from a blend of the computerized forecast guidance without providing some meteorological or physical explanation.

This level of transparency is fairly new. As recently as the early 2000s, there were significant and sometimes emotional debates within the weather forecasting community over how much computer modeling data and information from weather observations should be publicly available in real time. Some forecasters worried (and still do now) that users could misinterpret individual pieces of data or second-guess official forecasts. Over time, however, consensus has grown in favor of making all the data available to anyone interested, so that everyone can see how forecasts are put together.

Now that so much weather data is publicly available, the explosion of social media guarantees that thousands of observers are looking over forecasters' shoulders. And forecasts get a lot of attention, especially when they involve extreme events.

Hundreds of people with varying credentials comment on every tropical storm, hurricane or cluster of thunderstorms. Popular sites like Weather Underground and Windyty further attest to broad public interest in all things meteorological.

If the NHC or JTWC appeared to be disregarding either observations or reliable forecast models without explanation, weather enthusiasts would quickly point this out on social media, and major news media would pick up the story. We don't see this in headlines because it doesn't happen.

With a few days of hindsight, it's clear that the NHC was eye-wateringly accurate in its forecasts of where Matthew would be two days in advance, and pretty good at forecasting the storm's position, three, four, and even five days in advance. NHC initially forecast that the storm would remain east of the U.S. coast in the Bahamas. Gradually the storm track "walked" westwards as the computer forecast guidance trended in that direction. Matthew also traveled close to the coast farther north than initially forecast, producing extreme rainfall in North Carolina (which can be physically linked to a warming climate). This aspect was predicted with impressive precision up to five days in advance.

Weather forecasters understand that they walk on a knife's edge between overwarning on the one hand – which can produce false alarms and complacency – and underwarning on the other, potentially trapping people in life-threatening situations. The NHC, backed by a national and international network of observers, scientists and computer models, did an amazing job on a very dangerous storm. There always are lessons to be learned, but the bottom line is that we owe them thanks and Mr. Drudge owes them an apology.

– David Titley, Pennsylvania State University

This article was originally published on The Conversation. Read the original article.

Federal Agencies Deploy Thousands Of Feds For Hurricane Matthew Response (Government Executive)

By Eric Katz

Government Executive, October 12, 2016

Federal agencies have deployed more than 10,000 employees, including nearly 3,000 civilians, to five states and three countries to assist local communities as they recover from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Matthew.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is spearheading the efforts, establishing survivor assistance, incident management, and search and rescue teams throughout the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida in response to disaster declarations issued by President Obama. FEMA has deployed 1,500 employees in an effort to distribute 6.9 million meals, 4.3 million liters of water, 89,000 blankets and 522 generators to affected regions.

Hundreds of thousands remain without power in North Carolina, where flooding has worsened in recent days. More than 1,000 deaths are attributed to the storm, mostly in Haiti but including at least 38 in the United States. More than a dozen federal agencies and components have joined the response efforts, deploying approximately 11,000 personnel, according to their estimates. Here is a look at what each agency is doing:

Defense Department

The National Guard initially deployed 8,000 guardsmen to prepare for the storm and help in the aftermath, though that number dipped to 6,000 on Wednesday. The citizen soldiers have rescued people and animals, cleared debris and helped combat flooding. More guardsmen were activated as flooding in North Carolina worsened.

The U.S. Northern Command has staffed seven Incident Support Bases in affected states and assisted in deploying resources. The Army Corps of Engineers has sent 100 employees to the hurricane zone to assist with power restoration, coastal damage assessments, emergency operation center activations and dam inspections.

Health and Human Services Department

The U.S. Public Health Service's National Disaster Medical System and HHS' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response has deployed 570 personnel to assist in medical emergency efforts, with an additional 350 individuals on alert for possible activation. HHS sent a 46-member Disaster Medical Assistance Team to Brevard County, Florida, to assist a hospital in handling the surge in the demand for emergency services.

Interior Department

The National Park Service deployed more than 130 personnel for Matthew response to "coordinate and oversee the assessment and recovery" of affected parks. Ten park units remain closed due to the storm as NPS continues to monitor the damage.

The U.S. Geological Survey organized the largest deployment in its history, posting 393 sensors in 290 locations. Now, 40 crews are collecting them and additional crews are measuring flooding and repairing gauges. USGS is posting all of the data it collects on its website. The Fish and Wildlife Service said 19 wildlife refuges and two fish hatcheries "remain closed until it is safe for staff to return."

Justice Department

Justice has deployed 77 law enforcement personnel to affected states, where a spokesman said they have conducted search and rescue missions along the coasts of North and South Carolina. They remain in the region awaiting additional missions, the spokesman said, and 50 more law enforcement officers and medics are on stand-by for deployment if necessary.

U.S. Agency for International Development

USAID initially deployed Disaster Assistance Response Teams to Jamaica, Haiti and the Bahamas in anticipation of the storm, though the teams have since focused their efforts in just the latter two countries. More than 60 employees are currently deployed, according to a spokesman. USAID initially made $400,000 in aid available to the affected countries, and plans to make more available shortly. It has also sent hygiene kits, plastic sheeting, kitchen sets, blankets, collapsible water containers and water storage units to the region.

"USAID is working with the government of Haiti and local non-governmental organizations to continually assess the damage and ensure life-saving emergency relief reaches people in need, especially in the hard-hit regions along the country's southwest peninsula," said Gayle Smith, the agency's administrator. She added the efforts were expected to benefit 100,000 people.

Transportation Department

The Federal Highway Administration deployed “about a dozen” employees for storm response, including through making damage assessments of roads and bridges. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association is issuing necessary emergency waivers and permits, while the Federal Aviation Administration has issued emergency flight restrictions.

Energy Department

Energy has deployed nearly a dozen employees to FEMA’s National Response Coordination Center and other regional centers, a spokeswoman said. Energy officials have worked with industry to assist it in restoring power, including by holding daily calls both before and after the storm.

Homeland Security Department

In addition to FEMA’s efforts, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has made relief available to those whose “application, petition or immigration status” has been affected by the storm. The Coast Guard has assisted in search and rescue missions and ensured safe commercial vessel navigation. It is also providing disaster relief in Haiti.

Small Business Administration

SBA has made low-interest disaster loans available in North Carolina, and deployed staff to conduct “preliminary damage assessments” in affected regions.

Corporation for National and Community Service

CNCS deployed more than 500 AmeriCorps members to assist with various FEMA, state, local and volunteer organizations’ efforts.

Feds To Fund Plans To Take On Zika Virus With Drones (NBC News)

By Maggie Fox

NBC News, October 12, 2016

Two groups that want to deploy drones to fight Zika won support from the federal government Wednesday.

They funding will go to helping them develop drones that could drop off Zika-fighting mosquitoes or ferry lab samples from remote regions.

They join a batch of inventive solutions for fighting Zika and other mosquito-borne diseases being funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Delaware-based WeRobotics will use seed money from USAID to develop drones that can carry sterile mosquitoes into hard-to-reach zones. Flooding mosquito populations with sterile insects can greatly reduce populations as lovesick bugs waste time and energy mating with barren sweethearts.

“Usually, when you think about fighting Zika you think of trucks driving up and down and fogging streets,” said Wendy Taylor, who directs USAID’s Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact.

But there are plenty of places with packed humanity vulnerable to the Zika-carrying Aedes mosquitoes that are also hard to reach. “Mosquitoes are pretty small and they are pretty light so you can pack a lot of punch in these small devices.”

“Think about Rio — think about the favelas,” Taylor said, describing the haphazard neighborhoods that define parts of Brazil’s coastal metropolis.

“It might be easier to use a UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) instead of driving up and down small, winding streets with a truck.”

The idea is to pack the drones with sterile mosquitoes and drop them into mosquito hot zones. Or they could deliver a load to hard-to-reach zones that cannot quite be reached by trucks, larger aircraft or people on foot.

“Those little spots can turn into hot spots that spread,” Taylor said.

USAID is using $30 million borrowed from Ebola-fighting efforts to pay for its “Grand Challenge” grants.

The Obama administration pulled the Ebola cash when Congress failed to provide a requested $1.9 billion in new funding earlier this year. Part of the money got approved when Congress passed a temporary budget at the end of last month but it won’t go to pay back any Ebola funds.

Taylor said all of the projects being funded can fight not only Zika, but a range of mosquito-borne diseases including malaria and yellow fever, as well as dengue fever and chikungunya.

“Mosquitoes are pretty small and they are pretty light so you can pack a lot of punch in these small devices,” Taylor said. “That drone can then go back and reload.”

Delaware-based WeRobotics will work with United Nations agencies to deliver the sterile mosquitoes. Michigan-based Vayu is working on drones that can deliver medical supplies or ferry lab samples to and from remote regions.

Other projects getting USAID funding include a group making sandals impregnated with mosquito repellent that protect vulnerable feet and ankles for months; groups working to infect mosquitoes with bacteria called Wolbachia that make them sterile; and a team at Johns Hopkins University making natural insecticides out of soil bacteria.

Taylor said the agency got overwhelming response when it sent out a call for new ideas.

“In two months, we ended up getting 900 ideas,” she said.

A group called BluSense is working to develop a one-drop blood test that can show on the spot if someone’s infected with Zika, or with one of its close relatives such as dengue or chikungunya.

It’s tricky to test someone for Zika infection and people who think they may be infected say they sometimes have to wait weeks for results. Having a quick test that can be used in the field would greatly improve efforts to study and fight Zika.

Zika has spread across much of Latin America and the Caribbean, and it’s caused outbreaks in south Florida.

The Florida department of health reports more than 1,000 cases of Zika. Most have been carried in by travelers but 172 people have been infected in Florida, presumably by Aedes mosquitoes that live there. Travelers infected with Zika can infect other people sexually and if they are bitten by Aedes mosquitoes when they get back home, those mosquitoes can infect more people.

Zika Research Could Show Disease Impact On Children Beyond Infancy (McClatchy)

By Jessica Campisi

McClatchy, October 12, 2016

Research has shown that toddlers and adults – as well as fetuses and infants – could face developmental effects after contracting Zika, and scientists are trying to find out why.

After months of controversy among lawmakers, Congress passed a bill late last month to fund Zika relief efforts, and the virus has continued to spread in countries including the U.S. and Brazil, which is gearing up for its next mosquito season.

Meanwhile, scientists are investigating the dangers of Zika outside the womb.

This summer, the New England Journal of Medicine published a report highlighting a child in Sao Paulo, Brazil, who was infected with Zika for at least 67 days after he was born, allowing scientists to take a closer look at the virus and its impacts on both fetuses and young children.

“It’s well known that there are certain viruses that cause problems in the fetal brain,” said Dr. Deborah Levine, a radiology professor at Harvard Medical School. “But the brain continues to develop after birth, and we don’t know the other (impacts) yet.”

Levine helped write a separate study that showed that babies with Zika can face severe brain damages "that basically mean no normal outcome," even after they've been born and continue to grow, she said. Even if symptoms are not apparent at first, children are at risk of permanent physical, mental and cognitive effects.

Brain development occurs until a child is about 3 years old, according to the Urban Child Institute. And while a fetus is prone to more serious harm from Zika, it is unknown whether similar developmental problems could also occur in a child bitten by a virus-carrying mosquito, Levine said.

During a pregnancy in which Zika is present, Levine said, most of the fetuses observed showed "unusual" instances of calcium buildup and a loss of white matter in the brain, disrupting development. After this fluid builds up, it decompresses, typically leading to brain folding and an abnormally small head.

As a result, babies infected with Zika could face several developmental issues aside from microcephaly – a typical indicator of the virus – such as potential blindness, deafness and an inability to move normally, Levine said.

"You need the brain for just about everything," Levine said. "There's a huge amount of concern for how babies develop and what they'll be able to do."

And a study published Aug. 18 that was conducted in part by the La Jolla Institute of Allergy and Immunology revealed it's not just kids who could be at risk, after results found Zika affected the brains of adult mice.

"It shifted the focus from fetuses to adults, and also children whose brains are still developing," said Sujan Shresta, a professor at the La Jolla Institute of Allergy and Immunology who's a co-author of the study. "We're trying to suggest that this is one more aspect and that we should pay attention to children and adults, too."

Specifically, she said, the implications Zika has for toddlers and children are "more devastating," as it affects their memories and ability to learn. In adults, Zika may cause depression or Alzheimer's disease, according to the study.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report published Sept. 30 found that Zika is typically mild when contracted by children. But, the report warned, doctors should watch for more serious complications.

At the state and local levels, the response to Zika has been centered on identifying and monitoring cases brought in to the U.S. by travelers, running lab tests, getting rid of infected mosquitoes and educating the public, Scott Briscoe, senior communications director for the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, wrote in an email. There is no vaccine yet, but the National Institutes of Health has entered the first phase of clinical trials for an investigational vaccine.

"We're putting a lot of effort into decreasing the mosquito population," Levine said. "We have enough information, but do we have enough money? . . . I would love it if there was more" to address these issues.

In Florida – which had 812 cases of Zika as of last week, according to the CDC – the Department of Health is conducting active investigations, door-to-door outreach and targeted testing, according to its website. Also aiding in the effort are researchers at University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, who are trying to find a vaccine and control the budding mosquito population.

In its last week in session in September, Congress voted to support a bill appropriating $1.1 billion in funding to address Zika in the United States. Lawmakers had spent months wrestling over the details of the bill, such as provisions that would have kept Puerto Rico Planned Parenthood clinics from getting federal money. Republicans agreed to provide the money without this additional measure.

Florida, New York and Puerto Rico will receive a large portion of these funds, which will aim at protecting more people, but especially pregnant women and children, against the virus.

Shresta said the next step for researchers was to vary the ages and genders of mice used for testing, as well as to use different strains of mice to represent diversity, and to infect them with different strains of Zika to observe the various responses. They're also investigating the possibility of other bodily fluids besides blood and semen being infectious, she added.

"We just find out more and more terrible and interesting aspects of this virus," Shresta said. "The more we look at this virus, the more we're puzzled."

Using insect repellent is recommended for adults to prevent contraction of Zika, but it shouldn't be used on babies younger than 2 months, according to the CDC. Parents should spray insect repellent onto their hands and then apply it to their children, and babies should instead be dressed in clothing that covers their arms and legs.

While Zika has existed around the world for decades and is not a new infection, Levine said, there remains "a lot of hype and worry," and scientists will continue to investigate the disease and its impacts.

"We're going to continue to follow" this, Levine said. "This is the beginning of a very severe and sad epidemic."

Region VIII Clips
Thursday, October 13, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* Lyons Mayor Connie Sullivan said that HUD and the FBI have both said town employees did not profit from or misuse flood recovery funds. However, the Town Board of Trustees did cancel its contract with Front Range Land Solutions, which was handling state and federal buyout grants for Lyons, including FEMA HMGP funds. The town council has also launched an internal investigation of its flood recovery contracting, and two town employees remain suspended. Sullivan said an earlier audit by DHS was not a cause of the HUD/FBI investigation. … The U.S. Attorney will not prosecute an EPA employee involved in last year's Gold King Mine disaster, but will instead leave any administrative action up to the EPA. House Republicans demanded an explanation from the Justice Department… A bomb was left outside the police department in Nederland. The FBI is investigating… Weld County Commissioners are being questioned over an emergency management training exercise held in Breckenridge. The training was similar to one the county had through FEMA in 2012, which they said helped their response to the 2013 flood. …
- *Montana:* October 19 will be Shakeout Day in Montana, and 98,000 people have already registered for the event. Helena will have a meeting the same day to discuss its predisaster mitigation plan, which helps keep it eligible for potential FEMA funding in case of a disaster… A strong storm is expected late Thursday through Friday… The USDA has declared 11 Montana counties a drought disaster area… The Red Cross is offering free smoke alarms in Great Falls as part of Fire Prevention Week and its national campaign to reduce fire deaths.
- *North Dakota:* The state received a grant from the Department of Transportation to help train personnel to respond to emergency situations involving hazardous materials.
- *South Dakota:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Utah:* A TV station reports on the Red Cross campaign to reduce fire deaths, and on what is needed in a 72-hour kit for disasters.
- *Wyoming:* Park County will get funds from the NRCS to rehabilitate burned areas, and it will also get an unspecified $40,000 Homeland Security grant… Park County and eight contiguous Wyoming and Montana counties have been designated by the USDA as drought disaster areas.
- *Other FEMA-related stories:* A weather forecaster explains why hurricane warnings cannot be manipulated… A *Government Executive* story details the 10,000 federal employees sent to work on Hurricane Matthew by agency… Two Zika stories: NBC News reports on innovate ways to combat the virus, from drones dropping sterile mosquitos in remote areas to mosquito repellant-infused sandals. Researchers report that Zika also poses a threat after birth, including to adults.

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USDA designates Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area –Northern Wyoming Daily News

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Weather Forecasters Can't Manipulate Hurricane Warnings — Here's Why (Houston Chronicle)

Federal Agencies Deploy Thousands Of Feds For Hurricane Matthew Response (Government Executive)

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STORIES

COLORADO:

Lyons Mayor: FBI, HUD Find Town Didn't Misuse Flood-recovery Funds (Boulder Daily Camera)

By Amelia Arvesen

Boulder (CO) Daily Camera, October 12, 2016

Lyons Mayor Connie Sullivan issued a statement Wednesday afternoon that the FBI and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development found that town staff did not personally benefit from the procurement of contracting with Front Range Land Solutions and funds were not misused.

However, the board agreed in a resolution Monday to terminate all contracts with the company owned by Rosi Dennett, who coordinated state-funded and federal-funded buyout services for Lyons residents starting in October 2014, following a devastating flood one year earlier.

"We didn't cancel it because we thought she did anything wrong," Sullivan said. "We thought she did a nice job and we think the town benefitted from her work."

The statement from Sullivan, on behalf of the Town Board of Trustees, said that HUD does not intend to gather additional information from Lyons, and all original documents taken during last week's probe were returned.

She said the HUD investigation is not complete, because there might be additional administrative work required to close the file.

HUD Office of Inspector General spokesman Darryl Madden, based in Washington, D.C., previously said the office's role is to ensure grants given to communities after disasters are being used appropriately, but beyond that he could not comment on the mayor's most recent statement.

"We're not confirming or denying that an investigation even exists," he said in response to the statement released Wednesday.

Documents specified in the subpoena made public by the town on Friday include "All documents pertaining to negotiations between Front Range Land Solutions and the Town of Lyons."

It also sought all "emails, letters and other correspondence and memoranda" concerning representatives of Front Range Land Solutions, as well as invoices, bills, receipts and other documents reflecting "charges or payment with respect to Front Range Land Solutions and/or Rosi Dennett."

Sullivan also said the few remaining buyouts the town is still trying to close are now being handled by Christy Crosser, a grant coordinator with the town.

She said the board was not able to temporarily suspend Dennett's services, so their choice was to terminate or continue.

"It was really just a procedural thing; we just didn't want to have any work being done," Sullivan said. " ... The contract did not have a clause for suspending."

Dennett has not answered or returned multiple calls and emails since Friday, when the mayor first released the subpoena served by federal authorities naming her company.

The Times-Call submitted a Colorado Open Records Act request Monday, asking for copies of previous and current contracts the Town of Lyons has with Front Range Land Solutions and/or Dennett, as well as any emails with people associated with that company and/or the company owner.

Sullivan said in Friday's statement that the FBI was not proceeding with a federal case.

She said in her Wednesday statement that the board plans to start an "internal review of the circumstances that prompted the external investigation" and "intends to complete this review as quickly and as efficiently as possible."

"The internal review will focus on the documentation processes and related circumstances surrounding contract procurement so that any needed corrective actions can be identified and implemented by the Board," she said in the statement.

Town Administrator Victoria Simonsen and Town Clerk Debra Anthony remain on leave until the board's process is complete.

Additional documents sought by the federal subpoena included all of Lyons' documents relating to the procurement processes and correspondence concerning the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program and the Hazardous Mitigation Grant Program.

The subpoena also asked for all documents relating to the award of federal recovery grants to Front Range Land Solutions.

Sullivan said Dennett's contract to date has totaled about $350,000. She said she did not have figures on hand for how much Federal Emergency Management Agency and Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds Dennett handled.

Additionally, Sullivan said a report issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General in April was not causal to the investigation, and the investigation did not involve how grant funds for large flood-recovery projects were procured or managed.

Amelia Arvesen: 303-684-5212, arvesena@times-call.com or twitter.com/ameliaarvesen

FEDS will not prosecute EPA official linked to Gold King Mine disaster (The Denver Post)

The U.S. Attorney in Denver will not prosecute an Environmental Protection Agency employee involved in the Gold King Mine disaster, leaving it to the agency to determine administrative action against the employee.

A decision made Oct. 6 was based on information submitted by the EPA's Office of Inspector General to federal prosecutors after a year-long internal probe.

Instead of a criminal prosecution, the EPA's internal investigators "will submit a report of an investigation to the agency that details the findings of our investigation," OIG spokesman Jeff Lagda said in response to queries.

"The agency, not the OIG, will then determine what administrative action they may take against the employee based on that report," Lagda said. "The EPA will have to report to the OIG what administrative action the EPA will undertake."

The EPA's quasi-independent OIG launched an investigation into the Gold King disaster more than a year ago. Federal officials later, driven by members of Congress, began a criminal probe.

The Aug. 5, 2015, blowout at the Gold King Mine above Silverton in southwestern Colorado — accidentally triggered by an EPA-run team led by on-scene coordinator Hays Griswold — fouled waterways in three states and on American Indian lands. An estimated 3 million gallons of acid mine drainage containing heavy metals including arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury spilled into Animas River headwaters and turned the Animas mustard-yellow.

The OIG is part of the EPA and investigates agency activities.

The OIG investigators "presented facts to the U.S. Attorney's Office" in Denver "about whether an EPA employee may have violated" the Clean Water Act and the statute prohibiting false statements, according to a statement Lagda issued Wednesday afternoon.

Acting U.S. Attorney Bob Troyer could not be reached, and spokesman Jeff Dorschner declined to comment.

"It has been a long-standing policy that the U.S. Attorney's Office does not discuss declinations," Dorschner said.

EPA investigators now will return to completing work requested by Congress related to the Gold King Mine spill, Lagda said.

Sens. John McCain of Arizona and John Barrasso of Wyoming, members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, in May sent a letter to Attorney General Loretta Lynch urging a criminal probe.

Other federal agencies also have reviewed EPA conduct linked to the Gold King Mine. An Interior Department report issued last fall deemed the Gold King disaster preventable, the result of errors over many years in handling toxic discharges from inactive mines.

House Republicans on Wednesday bristled and demanded a briefing before Oct. 26 by the Justice Department explaining the decision not to prosecute.

“By not taking up the case, the Department of Justice looks like it is going easy on its colleagues in EPA,” said a letter from members of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Justice officials’ actions “give the appearance of hypocrisy, and seem to indicate that there is one set of rules for private citizens and another for the federal government,” the letter said. “The EPA disaster deserves the same level of accountability to which private citizens are held.”

FBI probes motive after bomb left at Colorado police station (The Denver Post)

NEDERLAND — The FBI is trying to determine why someone left an explosive device in a backpack in front of the police department of a small Colorado mountain town, prompting evacuations in the community’s main retail area.

A Nederland police detective found the bag outside the building when he began his shift Tuesday morning and brought it inside because he thought it was lost property. He opened it and found “suspicious articles” that were later determined to be an improvised explosive device, police Marshal Paul Carrill said.

The FBI, which had assumed control of the investigation by Wednesday afternoon, said the device was active but failed to detonate. Two robots searched the backpack, and multiple pieces were removed from the device and sent to a forensics lab.

“It’s difficult to interpret why someone would do this,” said Carrill, who declined to disclose if police have identified the backpack’s owner. “It is my hope and intent, for the health and safety of the community to get to the bottom of why.”

The police department is in the town’s main retail center, which includes a grocery store and multiple shops.

Carrill urged the public to come forward with information because “the individual or individuals who may have assembled this could be a risk to their neighbors.”

Nederland is about 15 miles southwest of Boulder.

Weld County officials drawing criticism for emergency management training in Breckenridge (Complete Colorado)

October 12, 2016 5:04 PM· **By Sherrie Peif**

Editors Note: This is the third story in a series of stories about the board of Weld County Commissioners and issues brought to the Weld County Council for reasons to audit the board's performance. The previous two look at the commissioner's decision to form a charter review committee and the criticisms leveled at the commissioners by residents. Next up, Complete Colorado will look at spending by the commissioners on conferences, meals and travel and potential improprieties.

GREELEY – Many praised the board of Weld County Commissioners both during and after the 2013 flood because their actions saved time, money, and in some cases, headaches for Weld residents.

However, how much the county should pay to train its employees for just such an event recently came under fire. Also who could help pay the bill was questioned. So, rather than accept direct donations from corporate partners, the county directed those entities to donate to the United Way, who would then turn around and cut a check to the county.

At several recent meetings of both the board of Weld County Commissioners and the Weld County Council, residents have said a recent training trip to Breckenridge was too much and accused the commissioners of using United Way to launder donations from organizations that depend on the commissioners for decisions on land use in the county.

Commissioners say the county's response in 2013 was the result of ongoing training, including a 2012 trip to Emmetsburg, Md. for specialized training provided and paid for by FEMA.

Commissioners were so pleased by the hands-on experiences employees got that they decided to replicate it on their own this year when a subsequent grant application was unsuccessful.

In August, 41 county employees and 20 other emergency responders from other organizations spent four days in Breckenridge training for an emergency.

However, some – including one of the commissioners – said the training could have taken place for much less than the $45,000 the Breckenridge location cost.

"We budgeted this for $15,000," said Commissioner Sean Conway at a July 18 regular board meeting. "The taxpayers paid a lot of money for (Weld's Emergency Operations Center) for when a disaster's going to happen."

According to the Office of Emergency Management's (OEM) website, the final ticket price was $41,455.

Through a Colorado Open Records Act request, Complete Colorado also found another nearly $4,000 in expenses for employee transportation and meals, making the grand total more than $45,000. Some employees on the attendance list had not yet submitted expense reports at the time of the request.

The reason given for going to Breckenridge was to keep people from straying too far from the event.

“One of the biggest concerns I have about doing this training and investing in it is people coming and going and saying, ‘well I have this other meeting scheduled,’” Commissioner Julie Cozad said at that July meeting. “It just takes away from the overall training. I think it’s really important that the people that do go, are there, and they’re focused, and they’re working on the training together for the full entire time.”

Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer told the Greeley Tribune something similar.

“If it’s too close, people will just pop out for some reason or another,” the Tribune article reported. “Maybe they’d go home for lunch or go run an errand. They can’t leave meetings for their own offices when they’re more than two hours away from them.”

However, both Kirkmeyer and Commissioner Steve Moreno left the conference early.

Moreno left to attend a national clerk and recorder’s conference in Philadelphia.

When questioned if it was appropriate to leave the training for the clerk’s conference considering he is no longer the clerk and recorder in Weld County, Moreno said the Election Center board believes his perspective as a commissioner is a valuable resource.

“I was first asked to serve on the Board of Directors for the Election Center in 2012 when I was still Weld County Clerk & Recorder,” Moreno said. “I was going to resign when I was elected Weld County Commissioner, but the Chairman and members of the Board asked if I would consider continuing my service in my capacity as a county commissioner on their board. … They felt my insight to the board from the position of commissioner, who oversees county budgets including elections, could be beneficial to the group.”

Moreno is also currently hearing criticism that he supports changing the clerk and recorder position from an elected one to an appointed one, so that he can get his old job back.

Moreno was term limited from the position in 2014. Moreno has denied that and said publicly he will not support that change.

Kirkmeyer left to attend an award’s banquet in Fort Collins. She said she believed it was important to represent Weld County on the North I-25 Coalition, which was receiving the award.

“I think it is appropriate for an elected official to represent the organizations to which they belong, especially when being recognized for their positive work on a project crucial not only to Weld County but the Northern Colorado region as well,” Kirkmeyer said.

She also said she believed her prior experience in emergency management helped during her missing time.

“I not only attended the FEMA training with the county in 2012, but I also had direct experience with disasters and disaster recovery during my role as acting director of the Office of Emergency Management at (Department of Local Affairs),” Kirkmeyer said. “My role in the training was not so much as that of student new to the world of EOCs and disasters but as a contributing mentor and facilitator for the training and the exercise.”

She pointed out that she didn’t miss any of the actual training exercises and was briefed on what she did miss over lunch.

Commissioner Conway, who attended the same awards ceremony in Fort Collins, did not attend the Breckenridge training out of principal, he said.

“I did not attend the exercise because I felt the exercise should have been conducted in the Weld County EOC, which we constructed at great taxpayer expense in 2011,” Conway said. “The 2016 Budget allocated $15,000 to do an exercise. The decision to move the exercise from Weld County to Breckenridge resort resulted in tens of thousands dollars of additional taxpayer expense, which I believed was unnecessary. The four days of the exercise, I remained in Weld County to hold down the fort at the commissioner’s office while my four fellow commissioners were at the exercise.”

Corporate donations processed through United Way

The debate over where and how much, is just one concern for residents who have spoken repeatedly against it. Who paid for the training and how has also been a matter of concern.

“I would also raise the question in terms of some of the sponsorships I’ve seen,” Conway said at that July meeting. “I think we need to be very careful in terms of what financial sponsorships we have in regards to this and in regards to conflict of interest.”

Conway was referring to what the county has said was $11,500 in sponsorships for the event that came from companies such as Xcel Energy, BASE Tactical, Waste Management, PDC Energy, TetraTech, Martin Marietta and Felsburg Holt & Ullevig, all companies that at some point have come before the board for quasi-judicial hearings on land use and other issues and are likely to again. Those hearings require commissioners to be judge-like in their fact findings.

Somewhere between the July meeting and the training, Weld County Attorney Bruce Barker weighed in on the matter because in a letter also obtained through open records, OEM Director Roy Rudisill asked those partners to reissue their donations to the United Way instead of the county.

MONTANA:

Oct. 19 events focus on natural disasters and how to survive them- Helena Independent Record

AL KNAUBER Independent Record October 12, 2016

Wednesday’s meeting to talk about what can be done to reduce the effect of disasters couldn’t be timelier.

The Oct. 19 event at 3 p.m. in the lower level of the Law Enforcement Center is part of the five-year update of the county’s pre-disaster mitigation plan.

It comes on the same day as the 10:19 a.m. statewide earthquake drill.

Those who attend the pre-disaster mitigation plan meeting are invited to bring local knowledge and ideas on how to mitigate the effects of hazards.

“The (pre-disaster mitigation) plan will reexamine the wide range of hazards that affect Lewis and Clark County, recent hazard events, the probability of future occurrences, and the vulnerabilities of structures and the population. From that risk assessment, a plan of action to mitigate these hazards will be developed and/or updated,” Daphne Digrindakis, senior project manager with Tetra Tech Inc., which has been hired by the county to assist in updating the plan, wrote in an email.

The update is also required for the county to apply to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for funds to offset the damage from disasters.

FEMA funding was used by the county this year to help lease the Helena Trap Club gravel pit for use in a flood emergency to divert some of the water there temporarily.

Wildfire and flooding will be discussed and how the impact of these events can be reduced, according to a news release.

Earthquakes, another of the natural disasters that has happened in Lewis and Clark County and Helena, will also be a topic for discussion.

The Oct. 18, 1935, earthquake damaged much of Helena and was the worst of a seven-month series of quakes that lasted from October 1935 into April 1936, said Paul Spengler, the county’s disaster and emergency services response coordinator.

The statewide annual earthquake drill, Spengler said, will last a few minutes.

Last year more than 160,000 participated in The Great Montana Shakeout, according to the program’s website, where people can register to be included in this year’s event.

As of Wednesday more than 98,000 people were registered, the website noted.

Those who participate in the drill will seek shelter inside their buildings as they would while waiting for the ground to cease shaking from an actual earthquake, Spengler said.

After that wait, when there is less danger of building facades collapsing into streets, people will exit their buildings and assemble in pre-determined locations to be tallied, Spengler explained.

This tally would allow people to know if anyone was trapped inside a building by an earthquake.

The Shakeout, he added, is a way to keep the memory alive and prepare for the day when another earthquake occurs.

While clearing brush and trees from around homes is one of the pre-disaster mitigation steps that can be taken for those who live in areas that could be burned by wildfire, removing heavy items from high shelving in homes is also a means to reduce the potential threat to life from earthquakes, Spengler noted

Storm system could bring potential for rockslides- KECI TV Missoula

By: Barrett Tryon
Updated: Oct 13, 2016 07:24 AM MDT
MISSOULA, Mont. - Weather could have a big impact on your travel plans late Thursday through Friday in northwest Montana.

The Severe Weather Alert team is tracking a strong storm that just moved through the Seattle area — and is headed our way.

With the risk of severe weather, rockslides could be a problem in places like Lookout Pass, where Interstate 90 crosses the state line into Idaho.

Drivers should also be prepared for possible ponding on roadways and the potential for hydroplaning.

USDA AG disaster declared in county- Chouteau Acantha News

By Nancy Thornton Acantha reporter -15 hrs ago

The U.S. Department of Agriculture on Oct. 5 designated Teton County and 10 other counties in Montana as primary natural disaster designations because of a recent drought. Those counties are Big Horn, Carbon, Flathead, Granite, Lewis and Clark, Missoula, Park, Powell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Teton counties.

Farmers and ranchers in 20 other counties in Montana also qualified for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous. Those counties include Cascade, Chouteau, Glacier and Pondera counties, among others.

All qualified farm operators in the designated areas are now eligible for low interest emergency loans from USDA’s Farm Service Agency provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses.

FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity, a USDA press release said.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program, Livestock Forage Disaster Program, Livestock Indemnity Program, Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program and the Tree Assistance Program.

Interested farmers may contact the local USDA Service Center in Choteau for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

Free smoke alarms for fire prevention month in Great Falls- Great Falls Tribune

Jenn Rowell, jrowell@greatfallstribune.com 5:49 p.m. MDT October 11, 2016

This week is National Fire Prevention Week and free smoke alarms are available to Great Falls residents through the Montana Red Cross later this month.

On Oct. 21, volunteers through the Red Cross, Great Falls Fire/Rescue, Malmstrom Air Force Base, PayneWest Insurance and Cascade County United Way will be installing free smoke alarms in homes without them and teaching about home fire safety.

Great Falls residents can sign up to have up to three free smoke alarms installed by calling the Red Cross at 800-272-6668 before Oct. 21.

The event is part of an ongoing nationwide Red Cross campaign to reduce death and injuries from home fires by as much as 25 percent in five years.

“While we were able to install over 270 alarms in Great Falls last year, we know there are homes that still need them,” said Diane Wright, executive director of Montana Red Cross.

Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

In addition to installing the smoke alarms, volunteers will also share information about fire safety, including how to draft a fire escape plan, Wright said. The visits take about 20 minutes and the Great Falls event will install at least 100 free smoke alarms, Wright said.

To learn more about fire safety, visit redcross.org/homefires.

NORTH DAKOTA:

ND receives federal hazardous materials safety funds (The Bakken)

By Patrick C. Miller | October 12, 2016

The U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) announced that North Dakota will receive $194,331 in funds to aid personnel responding to hazardous material-related emergencies.

PHMSA is issuing $20.4 million in Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) grants to states, territories and Native American tribes to enhance their ability to respond to hazardous materials transportation incidents.

Texas and California will get $1.5 million each. The states receiving a half million dollars or more are Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. No tribes in the Dakotas received funding.

“The department’s partnership with our states, territories and tribes is an integral component of our strong national safety program,” said Anthony Foxx, U.S. transportation secretary. “These grants are important tools for communities to plan and stay prepared for transportation incidents involving hazardous materials, including those involving high-hazard flammable trains.”

The HMEP grant program is part of DOT’s comprehensive approach to improving the safe transportation of crude oil and other hazardous material across the country. PHMSA’s HMEP grants program allows recipients to design and implement planning and training programs according to their specific needs.

“Our nation’s emergency responders have an immensely challenging job, and this grant funding supports their efforts to protect our communities,” said Marie Therese Dominguez, PHMSA administrator. “PHMSA has taken a comprehensive approach to enhance the safe transportation of energy products that includes prevention, mitigation, and emergency preparedness and response. These grants are another critical element of our focus to improve safety.”

For the current grant cycle, HMEP applicants are encouraged to allocate funding for:

- Developing or revising emergency plans and training activities to account for bulk transportation of energy product by rail and over the road;

- Conducting commodity flow studies to determine the frequency and quantity of hazardous materials shipments being transported through local communities; and

- Training emergency responders to respond appropriately to incidents involving hazardous materials.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

How is the Red Cross Working to Reduce House Fire Deaths? Good 4 Utah.com KYVX- TV

Updated 10/12 2016 10:02PM

The Red Cross has committed to an ongoing nationwide campaign to reduce the number of home fire deaths and injuries by 25 percent over the next few years.

As part of Fire Prevention Week, Rich Woodruff from the Utah Red Cross explains why it is so important to have working smoke detectors in your home.

According to the Red Cross, the biggest disaster threat in the United States isn't floods, hurricanes or tornadoes; it's fire. The American Red Cross responds to nearly 70,000 disasters year- one every eight minutes and most are house fires.

Home fires can happen quickly, devastating lives and property. But unlike other disasters, most home fires can be prevented.

For more information about fire safety and how you can help support the Red Cross visit www.redcross.org.

72 Hour Kits: What You Really Need- Good 4 Utah.com

By MICHELLE MONEY | mmoney@good4utah.com
Updated 10/12 2016 11:01AM

Have you ever wondered what you really need in a 72 hour kit? Debbie Kent from Store This Not That has done all the research and work for you.

72 hour kits are geared to help you survive for 3 days after something BIG has happened: earthquake, flooding, hurricane, tornado, EMP, etc. In other words, a disaster where the power is out, your house is likely unsafe (or you would be staying there) or you are at work and need to get home and you are on the move taking your kit with you, hopefully in a car, in worst case scenarios on foot.

Maybe you only have to travel a mile or two to get somewhere safe or maybe you have to travel a long distance, either way the hope is your kit can carry you through until you arrive safely. These kinds of survival bags usually contain the bare bones of survival, keeping them somewhat small and lightweight and relying heavily on the skills of the person carrying them. Their contents include items for: first aid, fire starting, simple tools and shelter, food and food procurement, water and filtering, light, personal items and safety.

Visit StoreThisNotThat.com for more resources.

WYOMING:

Funds to be used for burned-out areas from summer fires – Cody Enterprise

By SCOTT KOLB Updated 17 hrs ago

On Oct. 6 the Park County Commissioners voted to approve county sponsorship of a Natural Resources Conservation Service program which provides federal funds for the rehabilitation of land that burned in this summer's wildfires.

The funds would be disbursed under the Emergency Watershed Protection Program from the Conservation Service. This money is usually used for flood control, which could be a problem if the burned-out areas from this summer's fires aren't re-seeded.

"We request Federal assistance ... to restore damages to private lands in Park County sustained by wildfires during the months of August and September," stated the letter signed by the commissioners. "We understand, as sponsors of this program that our responsibilities will include, where applicable, acquiring land rights and any permits needed to construct; and, if required, to operate and maintain the proposed measures."

Commissioner Joe Tilden abstained from the vote due to a potential conflict of interest as he is listed as an employee of the Big Hat Ranch, one of the landowners likely to receive assistance.

"This is the first time this program has been used for wildfires," commissioner Lee Livingston reminded the board. He then suggested entire watershed areas be brought in under the program. The re-seeding will be done not only to prevent erosion, but to prevent invasive cheatgrass from taking over the scorched land.

The letter, approved and signed by the commissioners, will move the process forward. Landowners affected by the fires will be contacted by the county to get into the program.

In other business, bids were taken for the county to purchase two new motor graders. The purchases fall under a buyback program from John Deere in which the company purchases the old graders for essentially the price the county paid for the equipment two years ago.

"With the budget being tight, we really scaled back on what we did with equipment," said Brian Edwards, an engineer for Park County.

The bid went to Honnen Equipment of Mills. With the trade-in value, it will cost the County $43,776 to buy two new graders as well as pay for warranties.

There was $50,000 in the budget to cover the expense, so the purchase came under the projected cost. The vote was unanimous to approve this purchase. The County will stay in the two-year buyback plan and can opt for as long as five years.

Commissioners Bucky Hall and Joe Tilden gave a report on their recent trips to the Wyoming Association of County Officers and Wyoming County Commissioners Association meetings.

In their meeting with the other county commissioners from around the state, Hall and Tilden sat in on discussions about pressing business like insurance costs.

“If all the counties banded together, we would save a lot of money on worker’s compensation going through the WCCA,” Hall said. “This is worth looking into.”

Talks were also held about the role of special districts within a county. This also brought up the contentious subject of mill levies for these special districts, which the commissioners are asked to rubber stamp even if they oppose or would like to modify the measures.

A court case in Johnson County is pending on this issue. The case involves the Johnson County commission, which refused to approve some levies for special districts. That decision not to approve the special district mill levies has been challenged in court.

Tilden had some good news to report. It appears the governor is trying to free up money for the struggling counties to use in meeting their yearly budgets.

“The governor said he will ask for interim funding for the counties,” Tilden said. “He said we have a rainy day fund and it’s pouring on the counties.”

Not only did they discuss business at these meetings, but there was also some quality entertainment. Tilden told the board that they had a good magician at the conference and he put on a fine show.

In other business at the meeting:

•A boundary line adjustment for Ben Johnson was approved in rural Park County.

•Approval was given to allow the board chairman to sign for a Homeland Security grant of $40,000.

•Reviewed and signed three Department of Revenue Notice of Valuation Changes. These dealt with two tax rebates for Marathon Oil and Vanguard Operating, LLC.

•Approved changes to the flood plain permit for the Brown Thomas Meadow bank stabilization project.

• Request approved to hire a new part-time janitor at the courthouse. Failure to approve this request would’ve resulted in future overtime for a salaried employee.

• TANF grant recipients were approved for seven different groups. Big Brothers and Sisters of NW Wyoming, Boys and Girls Club of Park Co., Crisis Intervention Services, Children’s Resource Center, NW College, NW Wyoming Family Planning and Yellowstone Country Assistance Network.

USDA designates Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area –Northern Wyoming Daily News

October 11, 2016

CASPER — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area due to a recent drought.

"Our hearts go out to those Wyoming farmers and ranchers affected by recent natural disasters," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "President Obama and I are committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a bright spot in our nation's economy by sustaining the successes of America's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through these difficult times. We're also telling Wyoming producers that USDA stands with you and your communities when severe weather and natural disasters threaten to disrupt your livelihood."

Farmers and ranchers in Big Horn, Fremont, Hot Springs, Teton and Washakie counties in Wyoming also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

Farmers and ranchers in Carbon, Gallatin and Park counties in Montana also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Oct. 5, 2016, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program; Livestock Indemnity Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; and the Tree Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online athttp://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

FSA news releases are available on FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov via the "Newsroom" link.

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Weather Forecasters Can't Manipulate Hurricane Warnings — Here's Why (Houston Chronicle)

Houston Chronicle, October 12, 2016

Many mini-dramas develop during major disasters like Hurricane Matthew, which has left a trail of devastation in the Caribbean and the southeastern United States. One such drama occurred outside of the storm zone: Conservative news blogger Matt Drudge accused the federal government last week of hyping the threat to the U.S. coast, purportedly to play up possible links between extreme weather and climate change.

The Twitter universe rightfully jumped on this claim, calling it extremely irresponsible. Some critics invited Drudge to stand on the central Florida coast and witness the passage of Matthew so he could personally verify its strength.

But here is a larger, key point: It would be virtually impossible for our government, or any weather service, to intentionally overhype or downplay the real risks of a major hurricane as it approaches the United States.

I have been involved with operational weather forecasting for nearly 40 years. From 2005 through 2009 I was responsible for typhoon forecasts that the Defense Department's Joint Typhoon Warning Center, or JTWC, issued for the western Pacific and Indian oceans. After retiring from the Navy, I served as chief operating officer for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In this position I was responsible for the National Weather Service and its components, including the National Hurricane Center, or NHC.

During my career I have seen the internet and social media transform weather forecasting in general, and hurricane forecasting in particular, from a skill that was seen and practiced by a small community of specialists into one of the most transparent technical endeavors we do on a routine basis. Every forecaster I have ever worked with – military or civilian – wants to get predictions right. And even if they wanted to shade the forecast one way or another to support some agenda, it would be impossible to do it in today's networked world.

In the pre-internet era, hurricane forecasting was more of an art than a science. Modern weather forecasting developed in the 1960s with the advent of radar, computers and satellites. Well into the 1980s, forecasters were still working out how best to integrate satellite data into computer-based forecasts, and both satellite measurements and computing power were crude by today's standards.

Observations and computer prediction models traveled on government-only, proprietary circuits, with only limited access by private forecasters or academia. Government forecasters would share storm track and intensity forecasts with the public, along with short written discussions (TRANSMITTED IN ALL CAPS), but little else. The actual processes for deriving forecasts were closely held, available only to members of a very select and specialized guild. Private-sector forecasting of hurricanes was in its infancy, hampered by a lack of real-time information.

Starting in the 1990s personal computers, dial-up access and then the internet fundamentally changed the way weather information could be accessed and distributed. Today global weather models from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting are available to anyone with an internet connection. When the NHC directs U.S. Air Force Reserve personnel or NOAA "Hurricane Hunters" to fly a hurricane reconnaissance mission, the data they collect are posted virtually in real time. Satellite images from the JTWC or NHC forecast are available online free of charge.

For hurricanes, the federal government produces one official forecast from either the NHC for the eastern Pacific and Atlantic oceans or the JTWC for the western Pacific and Indian oceans. This forecast draws on computer-based weather forecast models, an assessment of the storm's real-time characteristics, and the knowledge of a highly trained typhoon duty officer or hurricane specialist. It would be obvious instantaneously if the forecast deviated substantially from observed conditions or from a blend of the computerized forecast guidance without providing some meteorological or physical explanation.

This level of transparency is fairly new. As recently as the early 2000s, there were significant and sometimes emotional debates within the weather forecasting community over how much computer modeling data and information from weather observations should be publicly available in real time. Some forecasters worried (and still do now) that users could misinterpret individual pieces of data or second-guess official forecasts. Over time, however, consensus has grown in favor of making all the data available to anyone interested, so that everyone can see how forecasts are put together.

Now that so much weather data is publicly available, the explosion of social media guarantees that thousands of observers are looking over forecasters' shoulders. And forecasts get a lot of attention, especially when they involve extreme events.

Hundreds of people with varying credentials comment on every tropical storm, hurricane or cluster of thunderstorms. Popular sites like Weather Underground and Windyty further attest to broad public interest in all things meteorological.

If the NHC or JTWC appeared to be disregarding either observations or reliable forecast models without explanation, weather enthusiasts would quickly point this out on social media, and major news media would pick up the story. We don't see this in headlines because it doesn't happen.

With a few days of hindsight, it's clear that the NHC was eye-wateringly accurate in its forecasts of where Matthew would be two days in advance, and pretty good at forecasting the storm's position, three, four, and even five days in advance. NHC initially forecast that the storm would remain east of the U.S. coast in the Bahamas. Gradually the storm track "walked" westwards as the computer forecast guidance trended in that direction. Matthew also traveled close to the coast farther north than initially forecast, producing extreme rainfall in North Carolina (which can be physically linked to a warming climate). This aspect was predicted with impressive precision up to five days in advance.

Weather forecasters understand that they walk on a knife's edge between overwarning on the one hand – which can produce false alarms and complacency – and underwarning on the other, potentially trapping people in life-threatening situations. The NHC, backed by a national and international network of observers, scientists and computer models, did an amazing job on a very dangerous storm. There always are lessons to be learned, but the bottom line is that we owe them thanks and Mr. Drudge owes them an apology.

– David Titley, Pennsylvania State University

This article was originally published on The Conversation. Read the original article.

Federal Agencies Deploy Thousands Of Feds For Hurricane Matthew Response

(Government Executive)

By Eric Katz

Government Executive, October 12, 2016

Federal agencies have deployed more than 10,000 employees, including nearly 3,000 civilians, to five states and three countries to assist local communities as they recover from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Matthew.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is spearheading the efforts, establishing survivor assistance, incident management, and search and rescue teams throughout the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida in response to disaster declarations issued by President Obama. FEMA has deployed 1,500 employees in an effort to distribute 6.9 million meals, 4.3 million liters of water, 89,000 blankets and 522 generators to affected regions.

Hundreds of thousands remain without power in North Carolina, where flooding has worsened in recent days. More than 1,000 deaths are attributed to the storm, mostly in Haiti but including at least 38 in the United States. More than a dozen federal agencies and components have joined the response efforts, deploying approximately 11,000 personnel, according to their estimates. Here is a look at what each agency is doing:

Defense Department

The National Guard initially deployed 8,000 guardsmen to prepare for the storm and help in the aftermath, though that number dipped to 6,000 on Wednesday. The citizen soldiers have rescued people and animals, cleared debris and helped combat flooding. More guardsmen were activated as flooding in North Carolina worsened.

The U.S. Northern Command has staffed seven Incident Support Bases in affected states and assisted in deploying resources. The Army Corps of Engineers has sent 100 employees to the hurricane zone to assist with power restoration, coastal damage assessments, emergency operation center activations and dam inspections.

Health and Human Services Department

The U.S. Public Health Service's National Disaster Medical System and HHS' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response has deployed 570 personnel to assist in medical emergency efforts, with an additional 350 individuals on alert for possible activation. HHS sent a 46-member Disaster Medical Assistance Team to Brevard County, Florida, to assist a hospital in handling the surge in the demand for emergency services.

Interior Department

The National Park Service deployed more than 130 personnel for Matthew response to "coordinate and oversee the assessment and recovery" of affected parks. Ten park units remain closed due to the storm as NPS continues to monitor the damage.

The U.S. Geological Survey organized the largest deployment in its history, posting 393 sensors in 290 locations. Now, 40 crews are collecting them and additional crews are measuring flooding and repairing gauges. USGS is posting all of the data it collects on its website. The Fish and Wildlife Service said 19 wildlife refuges and two fish hatcheries "remain closed until it is safe for staff to return."

Justice Department

Justice has deployed 77 law enforcement personnel to affected states, where a spokesman said they have conducted search and rescue missions along the coasts of North and South Carolina. They remain in the region awaiting additional missions, the spokesman said, and 50 more law enforcement officers and medics are on stand-by for deployment if necessary.

U.S. Agency for International Development

USAID initially deployed Disaster Assistance Response Teams to Jamaica, Haiti and the Bahamas in anticipation of the storm, though the teams have since focused their efforts in just the latter two countries. More than 60 employees are currently deployed, according to a spokesman. USAID initially made $400,000 in aid available to the affected countries, and plans to make more available shortly. It has also sent hygiene kits, plastic sheeting, kitchen sets, blankets, collapsible water containers and water storage units to the region.

"USAID is working with the government of Haiti and local non-governmental organizations to continually assess the damage and ensure life-saving emergency relief reaches people in need, especially in the hard-hit regions along the country's southwest peninsula," said Gayle Smith, the agency's administrator. She added the efforts were expected to benefit 100,000 people.

Transportation Department

The Federal Highway Administration deployed "about a dozen" employees for storm response, including through making damage assessments of roads and bridges. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association is issuing necessary emergency waivers and permits, while the Federal Aviation Administration has issued emergency flight restrictions.

Energy Department

Energy has deployed nearly a dozen employees to FEMA's National Response Coordination Center and other regional centers, a spokeswoman said. Energy officials have worked with industry to assist it in restoring power, including by holding daily calls both before and after the storm.

Homeland Security Department

In addition to FEMA's efforts, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has made relief available to those whose "application, petition or immigration status" has been affected by the storm. The Coast Guard has assisted in search and rescue missions and ensured safe commercial vessel navigation. It is also providing disaster relief in Haiti.

Small Business Administration

SBA has made low-interest disaster loans available in North Carolina, and deployed staff to conduct "preliminary damage assessments" in affected regions.

Corporation for National and Community Service

CNCS deployed more than 500 AmeriCorps members to assist with various FEMA, state, local and volunteer organizations' efforts.

Feds To Fund Plans To Take On Zika Virus With Drones (NBC News)

By Maggie Fox

NBC News, October 12, 2016

Two groups that want to deploy drones to fight Zika won support from the federal government Wednesday.

They funding will go to helping them develop drones that could drop off Zika-fighting mosquitoes or ferry lab samples from remote regions.

They join a batch of inventive solutions for fighting Zika and other mosquito-borne diseases being funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Delaware-based WeRobotics will use seed money from USAID to develop drones that can carry sterile mosquitoes into hard-to-reach zones. Flooding mosquito populations with sterile insects can greatly reduce populations as lovesick bugs waste time and energy mating with barren sweethearts.

"Usually, when you think about fighting Zika you think of trucks driving up and down and fogging streets," said Wendy Taylor, who directs USAID's Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact.

But there are plenty of places with packed humanity vulnerable to the Zika-carrying Aedes mosquitoes that are also hard to reach. "Mosquitoes are pretty small and they are pretty light so you can pack a lot of punch in these small devices."

"Think about Rio — think about the favelas," Taylor said, describing the haphazard neighborhoods that define parts of Brazil's coastal metropolis.

"It might be easier to use a UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) instead of driving up and down small, winding streets with a truck."

The idea is to pack the drones with sterile mosquitoes and drop them into mosquito hot zones. Or they could deliver a load to hard-to-reach zones that cannot quite be reached by trucks, larger aircraft or people on foot.

"Those little spots can turn into hot spots that spread," Taylor said.

USAID is using $30 million borrowed from Ebola-fighting efforts to pay for its "Grand Challenge" grants.

The Obama administration pulled the Ebola cash when Congress failed to provide a requested $1.9 billion in new funding earlier this year. Part of the money got approved when Congress passed a temporary budget at the end of last month but it won't go to pay back any Ebola funds.

Taylor said all of the projects being funded can fight not only Zika, but a range of mosquito-borne diseases including malaria and yellow fever, as well as dengue fever and chikungunya.

"Mosquitoes are pretty small and they are pretty light so you can pack a lot of punch in these small devices," Taylor said. "That drone can then go back and reload."

Delaware-based WeRobotics will work with United Nations agencies to deliver the sterile mosquitoes. Michigan-based Vayu is working on drones that can deliver medical supplies or ferry lab samples to and from remote regions.

Other projects getting USAID funding include a group making sandals impregnated with mosquito repellent that protect vulnerable feet and ankles for months; groups working to infect mosquitoes with bacteria called Wolbachia that make them sterile; and a team at Johns Hopkins University making natural insecticides out of soil bacteria.

Taylor said the agency got overwhelming response when it sent out a call for new ideas.

"In two months, we ended up getting 900 ideas," she said.

A group called BluSense is working to develop a one-drop blood test that can show on the spot if someone's infected with Zika, or with one of its close relatives such as dengue or chikungunya.

It's tricky to test someone for Zika infection and people who think they may be infected say they sometimes have to wait weeks for results. Having a quick test that can be used in the field would greatly improve efforts to study and fight Zika.

Zika has spread across much of Latin America and the Caribbean, and it's caused outbreaks in south Florida.

The Florida department of health reports more than 1,000 cases of Zika. Most have been carried in by travelers but 172 people have been infected in Florida, presumably by Aedes mosquitoes that live there. Travelers infected with Zika can infect other people sexually and if they are bitten by Aedes mosquitoes when they get back home, those mosquitoes can infect more people.

Zika Research Could Show Disease Impact On Children Beyond Infancy (McClatchy)

By Jessica Campisi

McClatchy, October 12, 2016

Research has shown that toddlers and adults – as well as fetuses and infants – could face developmental effects after contracting Zika, and scientists are trying to find out why.

After months of controversy among lawmakers, Congress passed a bill late last month to fund Zika relief efforts, and the virus has continued to spread in countries including the U.S. and Brazil, which is gearing up for its next mosquito season.

Meanwhile, scientists are investigating the dangers of Zika outside the womb.

This summer, the New England Journal of Medicine published a report highlighting a child in Sao Paulo, Brazil, who was infected with Zika for at least 67 days after he was born, allowing scientists to take a closer look at the virus and its impacts on both fetuses and young children.

"It's well known that there are certain viruses that cause problems in the fetal brain," said Dr. Deborah Levine, a radiology professor at Harvard Medical School. "But the brain continues to develop after birth, and we don't know the other (impacts) yet."

Levine helped write a separate study that showed that babies with Zika can face severe brain damages "that basically mean no normal outcome," even after they've been born and continue to grow, she said. Even if symptoms are not apparent at first, children are at risk of permanent physical, mental and cognitive effects.

Brain development occurs until a child is about 3 years old, according to the Urban Child Institute. And while a fetus is prone to more serious harm from Zika, it is unknown whether similar developmental problems could also occur in a child bitten by a virus-carrying mosquito, Levine said.

During a pregnancy in which Zika is present, Levine said, most of the fetuses observed showed "unusual" instances of calcium buildup and a loss of white matter in the brain, disrupting development.

After this fluid builds up, it decompresses, typically leading to brain folding and an abnormally small head.

As a result, babies infected with Zika could face several developmental issues aside from microcephaly – a typical indicator of the virus – such as potential blindness, deafness and an inability to move normally, Levine said.

"You need the brain for just about everything," Levine said. "There's a huge amount of concern for how babies develop and what they'll be able to do."

And a study published Aug. 18 that was conducted in part by the La Jolla Institute of Allergy and Immunology revealed it's not just kids who could be at risk, after results found Zika affected the brains of adult mice.

"It shifted the focus from fetuses to adults, and also children whose brains are still developing," said Sujan Shresta, a professor at the La Jolla Institute of Allergy and Immunology who's a co-author of the study. "We're trying to suggest that this is one more aspect and that we should pay attention to children and adults, too."

Specifically, she said, the implications Zika has for toddlers and children are "more devastating," as it affects their memories and ability to learn. In adults, Zika may cause depression or Alzheimer's disease, according to the study.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report published Sept. 30 found that Zika is typically mild when contracted by children. But, the report warned, doctors should watch for more serious complications.

At the state and local levels, the response to Zika has been centered on identifying and monitoring cases brought in to the U.S. by travelers, running lab tests, getting rid of infected mosquitoes and educating the public, Scott Briscoe, senior communications director for the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, wrote in an email. There is no vaccine yet, but the National Institutes of Health has entered the first phase of clinical trials for an investigational vaccine.

"We're putting a lot of effort into decreasing the mosquito population," Levine said. "We have enough information, but do we have enough money? . . . I would love it if there was more" to address these issues.

In Florida – which had 812 cases of Zika as of last week, according to the CDC – the Department of Health is conducting active investigations, door-to-door outreach and targeted testing, according to its website. Also aiding in the effort are researchers at University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, who are trying to find a vaccine and control the budding mosquito population.

In its last week in session in September, Congress voted to support a bill appropriating $1.1 billion in funding to address Zika in the United States. Lawmakers had spent months wrestling over the details of the bill, such as provisions that would have kept Puerto Rico Planned Parenthood clinics from getting federal money. Republicans agreed to provide the money without this additional measure.

Florida, New York and Puerto Rico will receive a large portion of these funds, which will aim at protecting more people, but especially pregnant women and children, against the virus.

Shresta said the next step for researchers was to vary the ages and genders of mice used for testing, as well as to use different strains of mice to represent diversity, and to infect them with different strains of Zika to observe the various responses. They're also investigating the possibility of other bodily fluids besides blood and semen being infectious, she added.

"We just find out more and more terrible and interesting aspects of this virus," Shresta said. "The more we look at this virus, the more we're puzzled."

Using insect repellent is recommended for adults to prevent contraction of Zika, but it shouldn't be used on babies younger than 2 months, according to the CDC. Parents should spray insect repellent onto their hands and then apply it to their children, and babies should instead be dressed in clothing that covers their arms and legs.

While Zika has existed around the world for decades and is not a new infection, Levine said, there remains “a lot of hype and worry,” and scientists will continue to investigate the disease and its impacts.

“We’re going to continue to follow” this, Levine said. “This is the beginning of a very severe and sad epidemic.”

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 29 Apr 2016 15:51:21 +0000
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us;(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@utah.gov;(b)(6)@wyo.gov;(b)(6)@nd.gov;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov;Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@mail.mil;Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us;(b)(6)@state.co.us;Wetherington, Jeffrey
Subject: Region VIII News Clips, Friday, April 29
Attachments: @

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Sydney Herald

Ex-Montana Sen. Conrad Burns dies; influenced energy policy AP/ Denver Post and other outlets in the region.

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A link to city of Grand Forks Facebook video of Mayor Brown thanking Ed Conley for his contributions to the city's 1997 flood recovery and wishing him a happy retirement:
https://www.facebook.com/CityofGrandForks/videos/10153433243542441/

Defending Richland-Wilkin Counties

Wahpeton Daily News letter to the editor

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Low potential for major wildfires in western South Dakota <http://www.ksfy.com/

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 11:34:59 -0400
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@utah.gov(b)(6)@wyo.g (b)(6)@nd.gov;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov;Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@sba.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil;Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel
Subject: Region VIII News Clips, Monday, August 15
Attachments: R8 Clips 08-15-16.docx

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By: Ellie Mulder Colorado Springs Gazette
August 13, 2016 Updated: August 13, 2016 at 9:32 pm
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"It doesn't make any sense to clean up the black sticks if you're not trying to prevent another (fire)," Clark said. "The disaster showed us what's going to happen - it gives you a preview of what can happen at any time."

And Eddie Bracken, co-founder of Black Forest Together, said, "It's not a question of if, but when the next fire will come."

Near the organization's booth at the Black Forest Festival Saturday, Bracken and Clark discussed the progress that's been made since the fire and what more there is to be done.

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Education efforts occur in part to demonstrate the importance of continued mitigation and maintenance, Clark said. There is also a sense that after three years, people in the Colorado Springs area have begun to forget about the Black Forest fire.

"What we need people to understand is that there's still a lot of work to be done, and people in Colorado Springs specifically have become somewhat complacent with, 'The fire happened, it's over, it's fine,'" Clark said. "We get hundreds, if not thousands of volunteers from all over the country, but we're not getting them from home, and we need volunteers here to help us with the projects."

But the work continues. In 2014, the organization gave away about 10,000 seedlings for reforestation efforts, followed by between 6,000 and 7,000 in both 2015 and 2016, Bracken said.

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MONTANA:

New book recounts 1959 Yellowstone-area earthquake

CLAIR JOHNSON For the Star-Tribune

A powerful earthquake that struck the Hebgen Lake area near Yellowstone National Park in 1959 also left a powerful mark on a 7-year-old boy who was asleep in his Idaho Falls home.

Historian and author Larry E. Morris said he didn’t wake up. “My mom certainly did. I think a jar fell and broke,” he said.

The 7.5 magnitude earthquake killed 28 people, including an Idaho Falls family of five who was believed to have been entombed by a massive, quake-triggered landslide that buried a campground and plugged the Madison River about 9½ miles downstream from the Hebgen Lake Dam.

The slide took less than a minute and brought down more than 80 million tons of rock into the river, forming what became Earthquake Lake. At the time, the earthquake was the second-strongest in the lower 48 states in the 20th century, said the Forest Service, which operates the Earthquake Lake Visitor Center.

“It made quite an impression on me from the start,” Morris said.

Morris, who lives in Salt Lake City, is the author of a book released in July and titled, “The 1959 Yellowstone Earthquake,” published by Arcadia Publishing and The History Press.

The book tells the story of the earthquake with a focus on the victims and survivors and those who responded to the emergency.

The book also features a foreword by Lee Whittlesey, Yellowstone National Park historian.

Morris said his parents took him and his siblings to the memorial site on top of the landslide in the early 1960s, before the visitors center was built, heard a Forest Service ranger talk about the earthquake and toured the area.

"All those dead trees and Earthquake Lake. And one cabin tilted squeewampus. But that plaque with the names on it and how the folks were buried there made a powerful impression on me," Morris said.

Morris has been captivated by the story ever since and has taken his own family to the site.

"It was a natural subject for a book. I find the story so compelling," Morris said.

Morris initially began research for a book in 1990 but became sidetracked by other projects and put the earthquake story aside. But, he said, he always knew he'd return to it. A few years ago, Morris resumed his research and finished his book.

"I was really thinking of the human interest, both survivors and first responders. It's just one incredible story after another. It's amazing," he said.

One of the first responders was Montana Highway Patrol Trooper Glen Stevens, who was dispatched from his Whitehall home to warn residents in the Madison River Valley of flooding should the Hebgen Dam fail. In the hours after the 11:37 p.m. earthquake, there were conflicting reports about whether the dam had held.

"I had a nice phone interview with him. He seemed to remember it quite well," Morris said. Stevens, now deceased, a deputy sheriff and two others drove up the valley, working their way toward the dam.

"They were one of the first people to reach Cliff Lake," where a boulder dislodged and killed Edgar H. Stryker and his wife, Ethel M. Stryker, who were camping with Edgar's three young sons, Morris said. The boys, who were in a separate tent nearby, were unhurt.

After helping at Cliff Lake, Stevens and his companions drove on toward the Madison River where they encountered the massive landslide. There they helped Irene Bennett and her son, Phil Bennett, who had camped with their family on the downstream side of the slide. Irene's husband, Purley, and their three other children died in the quake.

Morris also interviewed Carole Painter, who was 16 at the time and the daughter of Myrtle L. Painter, who later died of injuries in a Bozeman hospital.

And Morris interviewed Billings, Montana, resident Mildred "Tootie" Greene, a nurse who was camped with her family upstream of the slide. The Greene family survived uninjured, and Greene spent the night and next day aiding others, including Myrtle Painter.

Morris said he spent an afternoon about a year ago with Greene at her Billings home. "She was fantastic and sharp as a tack. She's one of the great heroes. She really stayed cool. I think she probably saved some lives," Morris said.

"She had a healthy attitude toward the tragedy," Morris said. Greene has been "extremely cooperative with anyone who ever asked" about the experience, he said.

Another nurse, Frances Donegan of Ohio, was camped with her husband, Fred, and their children near the dam, Morris said. His book recounts how Donegan rushed to help others who had gathered at what became known as Refuge Point.

Fred Donegan also helped rescue Grover and Lillian Mault, an elderly couple who had clung to a tree for hours as water rose around them.

"They deserve a lot of credit," Morris said. The Donegans went back to Ohio and "didn't make a lot of noise themselves. They really did a great job and deserve to be remembered," he said.

Morris' book features more than 100 photographs from national government archives, from survivors who contributed family photos and Morris' own photographs. The front and back cover photographs, he said, came from the Gallatin History Museum in Bozeman, Montana.

Morris started his research at the museum. “They were really great in helping me,” he said.

Morris also credits Joanne Girvin, a Forest Service employee at the Earthquake Lake Visitor Center, with keeping the story alive.

The Forest Service opened the center on top of the slide in 1967. More than 50,000 visitors stop annually at the site, the agency said.

Morris dedicated the book to the memory of Ernest Bruffey, the 29th victim of the earthquake. Morris said Bruffey, a Havre resident, had told others of his plan to hike Granite Peak in the Beartooth Mountains between Aug. 16 and 19. Bruffey was never heard from again.

Strong shocks were recorded in the area after the initial quake and there were slides on Granite Peak, Morris said. Searchers never found Bruffey’s body and his name was never included on official victim lists, he said. But evidence suggests Bruffey was a victim of the earthquake and deserves to be remembered, he said.

Morris will speak at the Montana Book Festival in Missoula, from Sept. 20 to 25.

His interest in the region extends beyond the 1959 earthquake. He authored, “The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers after the Expedition,” and co-authored, “The Mystery of John Colter: The Man Who Discovered Yellowstone.”

Morris is an independent writer and historian and has a master’s degree in American literature and a bachelor’s degree in philosophy, both from Brigham Young University.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Richland County water board appeals ND approval of diversion dam permit

By Tu-Uyen Tran on Aug 14, 2016 at 8:33 p.m.

FARGO — A month after the state of North Dakota gave a permit to the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority for a dam south of the metro, opponents of the $2.2 billion project have appealed in a lawsuit.

It's the third lawsuit filed by diversion opponents, all three of which are still up in the air.

In a brief filed in state district court Aug. 3, the Richland County Water Resource District accused the State Engineer's Office of infringing on the district's right to regulate flood-control projects within the county and failing to give proper notification.

The dam would temporarily submerge farmland, mostly in Cass and Clay counties, when the Red River floods. But it could also flood 10,400 acres, or 16 square miles, of farmland in Richland County.

The state said in a brief filed Thursday, Aug. 11, that the water district needs to first seek a hearing with an administrative law judge, who presides over a separate court system, and asked the state district judge to dismiss the case for now.

Richland County and its neighbor in Minnesota, Wilkin County, are involved in the other two lawsuits as a joint power authority. The counties sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Diversion Authority in 2013 and was eventually able to convince the judge to require an environmental review from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The DNR has completed the mostly favorable review, but the Richland-Wilkin group appealed in a lawsuit, saying the review isn't good enough.

The state of Minnesota is still reviewing the permit application for the diversion dam.

The North Dakota permit signed by State Engineer Garland Erbele July 8 listed the dam and its various components but allowed immediate construction only of an inlet structure that controls how much water from the dam enters the diversion channel. The dam is meant to reduce the Red River's flows into the diversion channel, which would route floodwater away from the metro area through a massive ditch to its west.

Each of the other components, such as the dam itself, also called an embankment, and inlets on several Red River tributaries, will require separate approval by the State Engineer.

Crucially for the Richland County water board, the only local water district the North Dakota permit mentioned the Diversion Authority must work with is the Southeast Cass County Water Resource District. That district is effectively a part of the Diversion Authority through its membership in Cass County Joint Water Resource District, a voting member on the authority board.

While some water will be stored in Richland County, the dam structures regulated by the State Engineer are all in Cass County. The Richland County district argues it must also be consulted because of the water stored within its jurisdiction.

The permit also mentioned another point of contention for diversion foes. The State Engineer had required that the Diversion Authority show it had the ability to acquire all land needed for the project, including in Richland County. Authority attorneys argued state courts have set precedent that allow entities like the Cass County Joint Water Resource District to exercise eminent domain outside their jurisdiction. The Cass County district is the Diversion Authority member charged with buying land for the project.

The Richland County water district argued that such a simple assertion was insufficient.

In a memo accompanying the permit, the State Engineer noted that the Attorney General's Office has said the state won't take a position on the legal validity of the assertion.

Nevertheless, the State Engineer agreed the authority did have a "realistic plan for the procurement of the necessary property rights."

The state district court has not set a hearing date yet. In the meantime, the state has filed for a hearing in front of an administrative law judge.

In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- Updated Aug 13, 2016

NEAR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX RESERVATION, N.D. (AP) — Opponents of a $3.8 billion Midwest oil pipeline are vowing to keep up the pressure after this week's arrests at a construction zone in North Dakota.

The Standing Rock Sioux had quietly opposed the Dakota Access pipeline for months at a "spirit camp" near their reservation, which straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Protesters' resistance heated up this week as at least 18 people were arrested, and a Hollywood actress joined their gathering.

Tribal members say the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and could affect drinking water on the reservation and for people downstream.

The four-state pipeline's path in North Dakota would cross beneath the Little Missouri River once and the Missouri River twice. The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Disaster Declaration Sends Repairs, New Homes To Pine Ridge Reservation

Associated Press, August 14, 2016

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency says roughly 200 manufactured homes have been turned over to tribal residents a year after a federal disaster declaration for the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

FEMA initiated a permanent housing construction program to address the extreme housing need on the reservation after the severe weather disaster. Officials identified over 300 households eligible for repairs or for replacement with a new manufactured home.

The agency says 196 new manufactured homes have been turned over to residents. Eighty five homes had been repaired as of Aug. 2, while a remaining 23 homes are expected to be fixed by early September.

President Barack Obama signed the disaster declaration in August 2015.

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UTAH:

WYOMING:

Little Growth On Wyoming Wildfires

Associated Press, August 12, 2016

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) – Yellowstone National Park firefighters have contained a wildfire burning between Old Faithful and West Thumb and hope to have it controlled by Saturday.

The fire began Wednesday and firefighters immediately attacked it. They have kept it to less than an acre in size.

Better weather conditions have helped firefighters keep several new Wyoming wildfires largely in check Thursday and Friday.

A fire burning in the Shoshone National Forest east of Yellowstone and northwest of Cody grew slightly Thursday. The fire has burned about 2 square miles and is threatening about 95 structures.

Progress was expected Friday on another new fire burning about 20 miles southwest of Meeteetse.

Firefighters Thursday evening attacked a new fire that started in the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway between Yellowstone and Grand Teton parks.

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“I was really thinking of the human interest, both survivors and first responders. It’s just one incredible story after another. It’s amazing,” he said.

One of the first responders was Montana Highway Patrol Trooper Glen Stevens, who was dispatched from his Whitehall home to warn residents in the Madison River Valley of flooding should the Hebgen Dam fail. In the hours after the 11:37 p.m. earthquake, there were conflicting reports about whether the dam had held.

“I had a nice phone interview with him. He seemed to remember it quite well,” Morris said. Stevens, now deceased, a deputy sheriff and two others drove up the valley, working their way toward the dam.

“They were one of the first people to reach Cliff Lake,” where a boulder dislodged and killed Edgar H. Stryker and his wife, Ethel M. Stryker, who were camping with Edgar’s three young sons, Morris said. The boys, who were in a separate tent nearby, were unhurt.

After helping at Cliff Lake, Stevens and his companions drove on toward the Madison River where they encountered the massive landslide. There they helped Irene Bennett and her son, Phil Bennett, who had camped with their family on the downstream side of the slide. Irene’s husband, Purley, and their three other children died in the quake.

Morris also interviewed Carole Painter, who was 16 at the time and the daughter of Myrtle L. Painter, who later died of injuries in a Bozeman hospital.

And Morris interviewed Billings, Montana, resident Mildred “Tootie” Greene, a nurse who was camped with her family upstream of the slide. The Greene family survived uninjured, and Greene spent the night and next day aiding others, including Myrtle Painter.

Morris said he spent an afternoon about a year ago with Greene at her Billings home. “She was fantastic and sharp as a tack. She’s one of the great heroes. She really stayed cool. I think she probably saved some lives,” Morris said.

“She had a healthy attitude toward the tragedy,” Morris said. Greene has been “extremely cooperative with anyone who ever asked” about the experience, he said.

Another nurse, Frances Donegan of Ohio, was camped with her husband, Fred, and their children near the dam, Morris said. His book recounts how Donegan rushed to help others who had gathered at what became known as Refuge Point.

Fred Donegan also helped rescue Grover and Lillian Mault, an elderly couple who had clung to a tree for hours as water rose around them.

“They deserve a lot of credit,” Morris said. The Donegans went back to Ohio and “didn’t make a lot of noise themselves. They really did a great job and deserve to be remembered,” he said.

Morris’ book features more than 100 photographs from national government archives, from survivors who contributed family photos and Morris’ own photographs. The front and back cover photographs, he said, came from the Gallatin History Museum in Bozeman, Montana.

Morris started his research at the museum. “They were really great in helping me,” he said.

Morris also credits Joanne Girvin, a Forest Service employee at the Earthquake Lake Visitor Center, with keeping the story alive.

The Forest Service opened the center on top of the slide in 1967. More than 50,000 visitors stop annually at the site, the agency said.

Morris dedicated the book to the memory of Ernest Bruffey, the 29th victim of the earthquake. Morris said Bruffey, a Havre resident, had told others of his plan to hike Granite Peak in the Beartooth Mountains between Aug. 16 and 19. Bruffey was never heard from again.

Strong shocks were recorded in the area after the initial quake and there were slides on Granite Peak, Morris said. Searchers never found Bruffey's body and his name was never included on official victim lists, he said. But evidence suggests Bruffey was a victim of the earthquake and deserves to be remembered, he said.

Morris will speak at the Montana Book Festival in Missoula, from Sept. 20 to 25.

His interest in the region extends beyond the 1959 earthquake. He authored, "The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers after the Expedition," and co-authored, "The Mystery of John Colter: The Man Who Discovered Yellowstone."

Morris is an independent writer and historian and has a master's degree in American literature and a bachelor's degree in philosophy, both from Brigham Young University.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Richland County water board appeals ND approval of diversion dam permit

By Tu-Uyen Tran on Aug 14, 2016 at 8:33 p.m.

FARGO — A month after the state of North Dakota gave a permit to the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority for a dam south of the metro, opponents of the $2.2 billion project have appealed in a lawsuit.

It's the third lawsuit filed by diversion opponents, all three of which are still up in the air.

In a brief filed in state district court Aug. 3, the Richland County Water Resource District accused the State Engineer's Office of infringing on the district's right to regulate flood-control projects within the county and failing to give proper notification.

The dam would temporarily submerge farmland, mostly in Cass and Clay counties, when the Red River floods. But it could also flood 10,400 acres, or 16 square miles, of farmland in Richland County.

The state said in a brief filed Thursday, Aug. 11, that the water district needs to first seek a hearing with an administrative law judge, who presides over a separate court system, and asked the state district judge to dismiss the case for now.

Richland County and its neighbor in Minnesota, Wilkin County, are involved in the other two lawsuits as a joint power authority. The counties sued the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Diversion Authority in 2013 and was eventually able to convince the judge to require an environmental review from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The DNR has completed the mostly favorable review, but the Richland-Wilkin group appealed in a lawsuit, saying the review isn't good enough.

The state of Minnesota is still reviewing the permit application for the diversion dam.

The North Dakota permit signed by State Engineer Garland Erbele July 8 listed the dam and its various components but allowed immediate construction only of an inlet structure that controls how much water from the dam enters the diversion channel. The dam is meant to reduce the Red River's flows into the diversion channel, which would route floodwater away from the metro area through a massive ditch to its west.

Each of the other components, such as the dam itself, also called an embankment, and inlets on several Red River tributaries, will require separate approval by the State Engineer.

Crucially for the Richland County water board, the only local water district the North Dakota permit mentioned the Diversion Authority must work with is the Southeast Cass County Water Resource District. That district is effectively a part of the Diversion Authority through its membership in Cass County Joint Water Resource District, a voting member on the authority board.

While some water will be stored in Richland County, the dam structures regulated by the State Engineer are all in Cass County. The Richland County district argues it must also be consulted because of the water stored within its jurisdiction.

The permit also mentioned another point of contention for diversion foes. The State Engineer had required that the Diversion Authority show it had the ability to acquire all land needed for the project, including in Richland County. Authority attorneys argued state courts have set precedent that allow entities like the Cass County Joint Water Resource District to exercise eminent domain outside their jurisdiction. The Cass County district is the Diversion Authority member charged with buying land for the project.

The Richland County water district argued that such a simple assertion was insufficient.

In a memo accompanying the permit, the State Engineer noted that the Attorney General's Office has said the state won't take a position on the legal validity of the assertion. Nevertheless, the State Engineer agreed the authority did have a "realistic plan for the procurement of the necessary property rights."

The state district court has not set a hearing date yet. In the meantime, the state has filed for a hearing in front of an administrative law judge.

In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- Updated Aug 13, 2016

NEAR THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX RESERVATION, N.D. (AP) — Opponents of a $3.8 billion Midwest oil pipeline are vowing to keep up the pressure after this week's arrests at a construction zone in North Dakota.

The Standing Rock Sioux had quietly opposed the Dakota Access pipeline for months at a "spirit camp" near their reservation, which straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

Protesters' resistance heated up this week as at least 18 people were arrested, and a Hollywood actress joined their gathering.

Tribal members say the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and could affect drinking water on the reservation and for people downstream.

The four-state pipeline's path in North Dakota would cross beneath the Little Missouri River once and the Missouri River twice. The company said the pipeline would include safeguards such as leak detection equipment.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Disaster Declaration Sends Repairs, New Homes To Pine Ridge Reservation

Associated Press, August 14, 2016

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) – The Federal Emergency Management Agency says roughly 200 manufactured homes have been turned over to tribal residents a year after a federal disaster declaration for the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

FEMA initiated a permanent housing construction program to address the extreme housing need on the reservation after the severe weather disaster. Officials identified over 300 households eligible for repairs or for replacement with a new manufactured home.

The agency says 196 new manufactured homes have been turned over to residents. Eighty five homes had been repaired as of Aug. 2, while a remaining 23 homes are expected to be fixed by early September.

President Barack Obama signed the disaster declaration in August 2015.

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UTAH:

WYOMING:

Little Growth On Wyoming Wildfires

Associated Press, August 12, 2016

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) – Yellowstone National Park firefighters have contained a wildfire burning between Old Faithful and West Thumb and hope to have it controlled by Saturday.

The fire began Wednesday and firefighters immediately attacked it. They have kept it to less than an acre in size.

Better weather conditions have helped firefighters keep several new Wyoming wildfires largely in check Thursday and Friday.

A fire burning in the Shoshone National Forest east of Yellowstone and northwest of Cody grew slightly Thursday. The fire has burned about 2 square miles and is threatening about 95 structures.

Progress was expected Friday on another new fire burning about 20 miles southwest of Meeteetse.

Firefighters Thursday evening attacked a new fire that started in the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway between Yellowstone and Grand Teton parks.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 11:07:28 -0400
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)
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(b)(6) @hhs.gov;(b)(6) @hhs.gov(b)(6) @hhs.gov;(b)(6) @sba.gov;(b)(6) @sba.gov;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew(b)(6) @fs.fed.us;Alexander, Daniel
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Region VIII Clips

Monday, October 24, 2016

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Washington State's Plan For Megaquake "Grossly Inadequate," Review Finds Seattle Times

STORIES

COLORADO:

Minor charged with arson in Beaver Creek Fire

Jason Pohl , jasonpohl@coloradoan.com 6:07 p.m. MDT October 21, 2016

A juvenile has been formally charged with arson in connection with thesprawling Beaver Creek Fire that was first detected in June and continues to smolder four months later in Jackson County, near Walden.

The Eighth Judicial District Attorney's Office, which spans Larimer and Jackson counties, filed the charges Oct. 4. Prosecutors refused on Friday to release further information about the case, including details that might indicate how the fire started or what the suspect's role was.

They also declined to explain the nearly three-week gap between formally filing the charges and making the announcement through a news release.

FIRE: Prescribed burns planned for Soapstone Prairie

U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement had indicated throughout summer that the fire was human-caused, and an incident update in August confirmed the findings. Further details have not yet been made available, and investigators are continuing to conduct follow-up interviews and finalize reports, the district attorney's office said.

The Beaver Creek Fire was first detected June 19 north of Walden and had burned 38,380 acres as of Friday afternoon. One cabin was destroyed, along with 16 other outbuildings. No homes were destroyed, and no injuries were reported.

The fire charred the most acreage this year among all of Colorado's wildfires. Friday marked the day crews had hoped to completely contain the fire, but officials have said it might continue to smolder in some areas until snow falls.

Reporter Jason Pohl covers breaking news for the Coloradoan. Follow him on Twitter: @pohl_jason.

Out of the flood, tiny house hotel sprouts up in Lyons

WeeCasa is an inn, but also lets people try tiny-house living before they buy

A Lyons mobile home park that washed out in the 2013 floods is gaining new life, one 135- to 238-square-foot structure at a time.

Nestled near a crook of St. Vrain Creek, the 10-acre property — just steps from downtown Lyons — is home to 17 tiny houses and counting, all of them on wheels, licensed as recreational vehicles and able to be pulled away in 30 minutes or less.

It’s one part hotel and one part showroom for Colorado’s burgeoning tiny house industry.

“We couldn’t put mobile homes back here,” said “Wee-EO” Kenyon Waugh, a Lyons resident who joined forces with the property owners to open WeeCasa in 2015. “Reading through the things that you can do in a flood plain, in (Federal Emergency Management Agency) regulations, it actually says an RV park is a good thing to have.”

Guests can spend a night or two in one of WeeCasa’s tiny houses, whether they’re there to try before they buy or to just check off a bucket-list item. The tiny house hotel also offers regularly scheduled tours for anyone interested in checking out their units, most of which were built by Colorado-based manufacturers.

The decision to operate both as a hotel and de facto tiny house showroom, Waugh said, was a matter of economics, as well as wanting to help support the larger tiny-living movement.

“It’s such a new industry,” he said. “The more people know about tiny houses, the more people will want to say, ‘I’ve stayed in a tiny house.’ ”

And people are staying. In its short life, WeeCasa has been featured multiple times on HGTV, and earlier this year, Outside magazine named WeeCasa one of its 28 best trips of 2016 anywhere in the world.

“We held the first jamboree two years ago, and we thought we’d have 4,000-5,000 people attend. We had 40,000,” said Whalen, who also works for EcoCabins, a founding sponsor of the jamboree. “The movement has national support that is larger and more public than anybody ever imagined.”

With its creative, outdoors-oriented population and supportive state government, Colorado is also home to a growing number of tiny house manufacturers, she said. Among them is arguably the biggest name in tiny houses, Tumbleweed Tiny House Co., which has its production factory in Colorado Springs.

“It’s come from something that was completely underground to something that’s extremely public,” Whalen said. “It’s large enough that it can actually support many different types of professionals in something that’s really become an industry.”

At WeeCasa, five more tiny houses — already on order — are set to be delivered this spring. That will bring Colorado’s first tiny house hotel up to 22 units. There were 10 when it opened in May 2015.

Clustered in two rows, the tiny houses share their riverfront property with River Bend, a wedding venue operated by the property’s owners, Betsy Burton and Mike Whipp. Burton and Whipp also own the Lyons Farmette, on the east side of town.

The weddings bring a good business, but 60 percent of guests are people who just want to stay in a tiny house, Waugh said.

Overnight guests generally fall into two categories: people who have heard about tiny houses or seen them on TV and want the experience of staying in one; and those who are considering making the switch to tiny living full-time and who want to do a test drive before they invest in their own small home.

“Especially when we first opened, we had a lot of people who were thinking about doing it,” Waugh said. “They bring things as though they were going to live in them. One woman brought a cat bed — she wasn’t allowed to have the cat here, but she wanted to see where it would fit and how it would be.”

Guests have even specifically requested a unit with an oven, because they wanted to see what it would be like to make a quiche in a tiny kitchen. (Some WeeCasa units have fully equipped kitchens, while others have more spartan setups, including mini-fridges and single-burner cook tops.)

For many prospective tiny house owners, being able to climb around inside a unit — or even stay overnight — is an important part of the decisionmaking process, said Daniel Patterson, supervisor at Durango-based Rocky Mountain Tiny Houses.

“People are a little skeptical. They think they’re cute, but is it really going to work for them?” Patterson said. “You can’t get a feel for a space from just looking at it. It’s an aesthetics judgment that comes to you when you actually get in the space — oh, you can stand up and stretch out and not touch both walls.”

Rocky Mountain Tiny Houses has one unit at WeeCasa: The 135-square-foot unit, which is the tiniest of the hotel’s homes, is owned by a woman who splits her time between Colorado and Alaska and lets WeeCasa rent out her home for the part of the year she’s not living in it.

Founder Greg Parham said he would “certainly be interested” in showcasing more of his houses that way, but for now, the small company doesn’t have the capital to build a bunch of showroom models.

“The benefit to me is that people get to see our work and our design and our craftsmanship,” Parham said. “Most people have done their homework. We’re one of the few builders that can build to the custom level they’re looking for.”

Right now, WeeCasa owns about half of its units. The rest either are leased from their owners or are showroom models from builders, Waugh said. Eleven are from Sprout Tiny Homes in La Junta, including two that were custom-built specifically with hotel guests in mind.

One change that was made to all of the units: Any composting toilets have been replaced with dual flush toilets connected to city water and sewer.

“A lot of people ask about compost toilets,” Waugh said. “Ninety-five percent of the world does not want to use a compost toilet and 99.99 percent don’t want want to use somebody else’s compost toilet.”

For his part, Waugh was first drawn to the idea of tiny living after he and his wife thru-hiked the 2,190-mile Appalachian Trail as ultra-light backpackers.

“I just started being fascinated with the idea,” he said. “Living in a tiny house is basically permanently living as a backpacker. Everything has to have three uses or it shouldn’t be in the house.”

Waugh bought his first tiny house on Craigslist and probably put 1,000 miles on his car looking at different styles and models. He still lives in a full-size house — he and his wife have two young kids — but he hasn't ruled it out of his future.

"I tell my kids that when they have a house, I'm going to put one in the backyard, in each of theirs," Waugh said. "They can rent it out except for the eight weeks I get. I don't want to stay in your house — I see how you keep your rooms now. Mom and I will be in the back."

MONTANA:

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood diversion project aims to remove entire city of Grafton from flood plain

By Angeline McCall on Oct 22, 2016 at 12:09 a.m.

GRAFTON, ND (WDAZ-TV) - An effort to keep one city safer has leaders scrambling to find $14 million.

Chris West, Grafton mayor: "It's a daunting experience. It's hard on everybody."

Grafton's mayor talks of the city's struggle with flooding. Just two years ago, three floods hit Grafton during the spring snowmelt.

Grafton has secured $32 million in funding for a flood diversion program, but that's not enough. The project costs $50 million, so the city needs to come up with $15 million more. They have only $1 million in the bag.

Mary Dusek, Grafton resident: "I think it's an important thing to do. I think it will help our town, it will help the people living here. It will benefit most everyone."

The other $14 million will come from taxpayers, but most in town say they're okay with that.

Time is running out to come up with the funds. Construction for the project will start next summer, so the city is hoping to get a loan in the meantime.

Mayor West: "The three branches of the river come in, and it's allowed to take the water through the north end of the community."

The 13-mile levy system around the entire city is going to start on the outskirts of Grafton at 6th and 17th.

While taxpayers will fund part of the project it will actually help their pocketbooks by keeping flood insurance costs down, which can climb as high as $4,000 per year for Grafton residents.

Jo Ditz, Grafton resident: "Every year the insurance goes up and up for flood insurance. And the house we live in has never had a flood. And yet we have to pay flood insurance."

Richard Tarrell, Grafton resident: "If we get the flood insurance, it will help immensely for us to compete for the people. We need people moving to town."

And the hope is that the project will completely take Grafton off of the 100-year flood plain.

Mayor West: "We know that what we're doing for our community will be provided for many years and some great protection."

SOUTH DAKOTA:

UTAH:

WYOMING:

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

After Sandy, Overpromising And Underdelivering

New York Times, October 21, 2016

The fourth anniversary of Hurricane Sandy will come and go next week, but thousands of storm-struck New York City homeowners will still be waiting for their houses to be rebuilt under the city's misbegotten Build It Back program.

The program is $500 million over budget and on track to blow its end-of-2016 completion deadline. Under the program, begun by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the city was to repair or rebuild homes or to reimburse homeowners for repairs they completed themselves.

Of the 5,565 single-family homes in the city-managed construction pipeline, only 44 percent have been completed so far, and Mayor Bill de Blasio says that figure will reach 75 percent by the end of the year. Build It Back was originally budgeted to use $1.7 billion in federal housing funds, but now the de Blasio administration says it needs an additional $500 million in city funds to finish the job.

"My team and I take personal responsibility," Mr. de Blasio said in a letter accompanying an October report laying out the bad news. The administration hasn't set any new final deadlines, given some uncertainty in coming months over when rebuilding will start; the city is allowing homeowners to delay construction so that they can stay in their homes over the holidays.

It's clear from the anger that administration officials faced at a City Council hearing on Thursday that Mr. de Blasio is paying the price for the managerial blunder of overpromising and underdelivering. Councilman Mark Treyger, chairman of the Recovery and Resiliency Committee, called it an "outrage" that the budget had somehow climbed by half a billion dollars, even though the total number of participants — about 8,500 — was far lower than the 22,000 who filed applications when the program began.

Build It Back started slowly. When Mr. de Blasio took office in 2014, no homes were under construction, and no checks had been written. Mr. de Blasio set himself up for a stumble with his now-unrealistic 2016 deadline, as construction costs climbed and the job of rebuilding homes in the Sandy zone proved extremely difficult. Bringing decades-old bungalows up to stringent building codes, with insulation and sprinklers, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems — and then lifting them 10 to 12 feet on stilts in the sand — was no simple task.

In fairness to the mayor, storm rebuilding is always messed up, from Louisiana to Mississippi to South Carolina to the Jersey Shore, and the federal government and the states are rife with storm-recovery programs bogged down by complexity, bureaucratic inertia, homeowner resistance and nonparticipation, and construction and engineering challenges. And while the Staten Island borough president, James Oddo, vented about the many Sandy recovery foul-ups in a recent Twitter barrage and on Facebook, he also said Mr. de Blasio had been right to set a hard deadline for Build It Back, even if he blew it, because without one, the program wouldn't have gotten as far as it has.

Mr. de Blasio clearly needs more time, a chance to deliver on his promises. But there should also be, as Mr. Oddo has urged, an independent post-mortem investigation of this and other Sandy failures, looking into why its initial cost estimates were so far off and what the city plans to do to avoid problems the next time.

One likely answer is going to be very hard for homeowners to accept: In a rapidly changing climate, their windblown condos and bungalows are in harm's way, and what government really should be rebuilding is storm-absorbing wetlands and parks.

Everybody wants to live on the beach. But when the storms blow and the waters rise, overmatched bureaucrats and frustrated homeowners will end up caught in the undertow, for years to come. In this sense, the very words "Build It Back" miss the point — unless by "back" you mean back, way back, from the water's edge.

Washington State's Plan For Megaquake "Grossly Inadequate," Review Finds

By Sandi Doughton And Daniel Gilbert

Seattle Times, October 22, 2016

The largest disaster drill ever conducted in the Pacific Northwest found that, despite decades of warnings, the region remains dangerously unprepared to deal with a Cascadia megaquake and tsunami.

During the four-day "Cascadia Rising" exercise in June, 23,000 participants grappled with a hypothetical catastrophe that knocked out power, roads and communications and left communities battered, isolated — and with no hope of quick relief.

Washington state officials called their own response plans "grossly inadequate," according to a draft report and records reviewed by The Seattle Times. The report warns that "the state is at risk of a humanitarian disaster within 10 days" of the quake.

The government's ability to provide aid in the immediate aftermath of a catastrophic earthquake is so limited that Washington state's Emergency Management Division will now ask residents to stock enough resources to survive on their own for up to two weeks, instead of the three days it advised in the past.

The report also warned that Washington's own laws could actually prevent officials from marshaling medical resources to treat the legions of injured people.

The blunt assessment comes from a late-stage draft of Washington state's post-mortem on the exercise, which followed two years of planning and included officials from three states, the U.S. government and British Columbia. Washington's emergency-management division plans to brief the governor on the findings in January.

"We know this is an issue that will require strong coordination at every level of government," said Tara Lee, a spokeswoman for Gov. Jay Inslee.

Beyond the immediate aftermath of the disaster, the report says Washington lacks any long-term strategy to help the region's economy, cities and businesses recover from what would be one of the worst natural disasters the United States has ever faced.

"Everything we depend on to live our 21st-century lives is going to be significantly degraded or eradicated," said Washington Emergency Management Director Robert Ezelle. "The needs are going to be immediate, they are going to be urgent and they are going to be overwhelming."

The "Cascadia Rising" scenario, developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), estimates that a magnitude 9 quake and tsunami could kill 14,000 people and injure more than 30,000 in Washington and Oregon alone. More than 7,000 highway bridges and 16,000 miles of roadway are expected to suffer moderate to severe damage, including all routes to the Pacific Coast and Washington's major east-west corridors.

The severity of the destruction was not news to emergency managers, Ezelle said. But the drill succeeded in exposing gaps and weaknesses in plans that had never been tested on such a massive scale.

"It gave us perspective that we did not have," Ezelle said.

State, local and federal agencies are now finalizing their own "after-action" reports that will identify what worked, what failed and how to apply the lessons learned.

A lack of resources is a recurring theme in those post-mortems. FEMA's report noted that emergency management operations across the Northwest suffer from staffing and budget shortages. In many jurisdictions, a single person is responsible for emergency planning.

"If this event happens, the first question everybody is going to ask is: 'How come you weren't ready?'" said Chuck Wallace, the manager and only full-time employee of Grays Harbor County's emergency department. "Right now, we're working with pennies."

The state already has a plan to improve its resilience. Published in 2012, it calls for a series of steps to strengthen vulnerable buildings, ensure the safety of schools and harden critical infrastructure.

However, as the "Cascadia Rising" report notes, the recommendations haven't been implemented.

"Washington is not currently a resilient state," the report says.

The challenges posed by the simulated disaster were obvious from the first day. When Ezelle attempted to contact Gov. Inslee's office, his satellite phone didn't work and he had to get a second one to make the call.

Several participants had trouble getting satellite phones to operate as they attempted to simulate operations without regular phone or internet service. Ham radio operators helped fill the gap, along with military-communications units deployed by the National Guard.

One of the state's top priorities is to develop a robust emergency-communications system, though Ezelle said he's not sure what form it would take.

"We've got to be able to talk and we've got to be able to share data," he said.

The breakdown in communications illustrated a problem with current plans that require state and federal responders to wait for local communities to request assistance. That works well in smaller-scale emergencies, like floods and fires, but in the chaos and blackouts that follow a Cascadia megaquake and tsunami, those pleas may not get through, Ezelle said.

During the drill, Seattle emergency managers got little or no response to their requests for assistance, including for urban search-and-rescue teams, according to the city's analysis of the exercise.

A better approach is for the state to anticipate what communities will need and be prepared to push out supplies and personnel as soon as possible, Ezelle said.

The Washington National Guard is already working with local jurisdictions to anticipate their needs and let them know what types of resources are available, said Lt. Col. Clayton Braun, deputy joint operations officer at the Washington Military Department.

During the drill, participants simulated situations ranging from a sinkhole opening up in downtown Seattle, to coordinating rescues from collapsed buildings and allocating scarce fuel supplies.

Though the scenarios were hypothetical, tempers sometimes flared for real.

One of the biggest sources of tension noted in the report was over how quickly damaged roads and bridges could be reopened. There aren't enough helicopters in the region to supply all the communities that will need help, Ezelle said, so damaged roadways will need to be cleared as soon as possible.

"If you cannot get the transportation infrastructure up and running, you're not going to have a response," he said.

On one occasion, emergency managers told Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) officials that it was "unacceptable" to take three days to clear a massive landslide from Interstate 90, according to records reviewed by The Times.

Transportation officials were frustrated when emergency officials were slow to identify priority routes for clearance. The result was an atmosphere one evaluator described as "poisonous."

Washington Military Department spokeswoman Karina Shagren said the friction "highlights the stressful environment — which can exist in both real-world and exercise scenarios."

WSDOT is working on a plan to address gaps identified in the exercise and to better manage expectations of how long it will take to repair damage, WSDOT spokeswoman Barbara LaBoe said.

The exercise also showed that the state's traditional approach of relying on the Red Cross won't be adequate to handle the nearly 3 million people who could need food, water and shelter.

Hospitals will be overwhelmed with casualties, yet Washington's governor lacks the authority to grant some types of medical waivers, such as allowing doctors and nurses from other states and countries to help.

Lee, the governor's spokeswoman, said the issue "is one of many that we are looking into following the exercise."

With no expectation of more funding in the near term, several emergency-management departments around the state hope to recruit and train more volunteers.

Seattle Emergency Management Director Barb Graff recently assigned one staff person to coordinate a corps of volunteers to assist with search and rescue, help run emergency shelters and perform other tasks.

The state Emergency Management Division is requesting $750,000 a year for a public-education campaign urging citizens to beef up their emergency kits for up to two weeks.

Clallam County emergency coordinator Penny Linterman goes even further. On the Olympic Peninsula, where communities are likely to be cut off due to road and bridge damage, she recommends people keep enough supplies on hand for three weeks to a month.

"What you have on hand when this occurs is how you're going to survive," she said.

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Monday, October 24, 2016

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COLORADO:

Minor charged with arson in Beaver Creek Fire

Jason Pohl , jasonpohl@coloradoan.com 6:07 p.m. MDT October 21, 2016

A juvenile has been formally charged with arson in connection with the sprawling Beaver Creek Fire that was first detected in June and continues to smolder four months later in Jackson County, near Walden.

The Eighth Judicial District Attorney's Office, which spans Larimer and Jackson counties, filed the charges Oct. 4. Prosecutors refused on Friday to release further information about the case, including details that might indicate how the fire started or what the suspect's role was. They also declined to explain the nearly three-week gap between formally filing the charges and making the announcement through a news release.

FIRE: Prescribed burns planned for Soapstone Prairie

U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement had indicated throughout summer that the fire was human-caused, and an incident update in August confirmed the findings. Further details have not yet been made available, and investigators are continuing to conduct follow-up interviews and finalize reports, the district attorney's office said.

The Beaver Creek Fire was first detected June 19 north of Walden and had burned 38,380 acres as of Friday afternoon. One cabin was destroyed, along with 16 other outbuildings. No homes were destroyed, and no injuries were reported.

The fire charred the most acreage this year among all of Colorado's wildfires. Friday marked the day crews had hoped to completely contain the fire, but officials have said it might continue to smolder in some areas until snow falls.

Reporter Jason Pohl covers breaking news for the Coloradoan. Follow him on Twitter: @pohl_jason.

Out of the flood, tiny house hotel sprouts up in Lyons

WeeCasa is an inn, but also lets people try tiny-house living before they buy

A Lyons mobile home park that washed out in the 2013 floods is gaining new life, one 135- to 238-square-foot structure at a time.

Nestled near a crook of St. Vrain Creek, the 10-acre property — just steps from downtown Lyons — is home to 17 tiny houses and counting, all of them on wheels, licensed as recreational vehicles and able to be pulled away in 30 minutes or less.

It's one part hotel and one part showroom for Colorado's burgeoning tiny house industry.

"We couldn't put mobile homes back here," said "Wee-EO" Kenyon Waugh, a Lyons resident who joined forces with the property owners to open WeeCasa in 2015. "Reading through the things that you can do in a flood plain, in (Federal Emergency Management Agency) regulations, it actually says an RV park is a good thing to have."

Guests can spend a night or two in one of WeeCasa's tiny houses, whether they're there to try before they buy or to just check off a bucket-list item. The tiny house hotel also offers regularly scheduled tours for anyone interested in checking out their units, most of which were built by Colorado-based manufacturers.

The decision to operate both as a hotel and de facto tiny house showroom, Waugh said, was a matter of economics, as well as wanting to help support the larger tiny-living movement.

"It's such a new industry," he said. "The more people know about tiny houses, the more people will want to say, 'I've stayed in a tiny house.' "

And people are staying. In its short life, WeeCasa has been featured multiple times on HGTV, and earlier this year, Outside magazine named WeeCasa one of its 28 best trips of 2016 anywhere in the world.

"We held the first jamboree two years ago, and we thought we'd have 4,000-5,000 people attend. We had 40,000," said Whalen, who also works for EcoCabins, a founding sponsor of the jamboree. "The movement has national support that is larger and more public than anybody ever imagined."

With its creative, outdoors-oriented population and supportive state government, Colorado is also home to a growing number of tiny house manufacturers, she said. Among them is arguably the biggest name in tiny houses, Tumbleweed Tiny House Co., which has its production factory in Colorado Springs.

"It's come from something that was completely underground to something that's extremely public," Whalen said. "It's large enough that it can actually support many different types of professionals in something that's really become an industry."

At WeeCasa, five more tiny houses — already on order — are set to be delivered this spring. That will bring Colorado's first tiny house hotel up to 22 units. There were 10 when it opened in May 2015.

Clustered in two rows, the tiny houses share their riverfront property with River Bend, a wedding venue operated by the property's owners, Betsy Burton and Mike Whipp. Burton and Whipp also own the Lyons Farmette, on the east side of town.

The weddings bring a good business, but 60 percent of guests are people who just want to stay in a tiny house, Waugh said.

Overnight guests generally fall into two categories: people who have heard about tiny houses or seen them on TV and want the experience of staying in one; and those who are considering making the switch to tiny living full-time and who want to do a test drive before they invest in their own small home.

"Especially when we first opened, we had a lot of people who were thinking about doing it," Waugh said. "They bring things as though they were going to live in them. One woman brought a cat bed — she wasn't allowed to have the cat here, but she wanted to see where it would fit and how it would be."

Guests have even specifically requested a unit with an oven, because they wanted to see what it would be like to make a quiche in a tiny kitchen. (Some WeeCasa units have fully equipped kitchens, while others have more spartan setups, including mini-fridges and single-burner cook tops.)

For many prospective tiny house owners, being able to climb around inside a unit — or even stay overnight — is an important part of the decisionmaking process, said Daniel Patterson, supervisor at Durango-based Rocky Mountain Tiny Houses.

"People are a little skeptical. They think they're cute, but is it really going to work for them?" Patterson said. "You can't get a feel for a space from just looking at it. It's an aesthetics judgment that comes to you when you actually get in the space — oh, you can stand up and stretch out and not touch both walls."

Rocky Mountain Tiny Houses has one unit at WeeCasa: The 135-square-foot unit, which is the tiniest of the hotel's homes, is owned by a woman who splits her time between Colorado and Alaska and lets WeeCasa rent out her home for the part of the year she's not living in it.

Founder Greg Parham said he would "certainly be interested" in showcasing more of his houses that way, but for now, the small company doesn't have the capital to build a bunch of showroom models.

“The benefit to me is that people get to see our work and our design and our craftsmanship,” Parham said. “Most people have done their homework. We’re one of the few builders that can build to the custom level they’re looking for.”

Right now, WeeCasa owns about half of its units. The rest either are leased from their owners or are showroom models from builders, Waugh said. Eleven are from Sprout Tiny Homes in La Junta, including two that were custom-built specifically with hotel guests in mind.

One change that was made to all of the units: Any composting toilets have been replaced with dual flush toilets connected to city water and sewer.

“A lot of people ask about compost toilets,” Waugh said. “Ninety-five percent of the world does not want to use a compost toilet and 99.99 percent don’t want want to use somebody else’s compost toilet.”

For his part, Waugh was first drawn to the idea of tiny living after he and his wife thru-hiked the 2,190-mile Appalachian Trail as ultra-light backpackers.

“I just started being fascinated with the idea,” he said. “Living in a tiny house is basically permanently living as a backpacker. Everything has to have three uses or it shouldn’t be in the house.”

Waugh bought his first tiny house on Craigslist and probably put 1,000 miles on his car looking at different styles and models. He still lives in a full-size house — he and his wife have two young kids — but he hasn’t ruled it out of his future.

“I tell my kids that when they have a house, I’m going to put one in the backyard, in each of theirs,” Waugh said. “They can rent it out except for the eight weeks I get. I don’t want to stay in your house — I see how you keep your rooms now. Mom and I will be in the back.”

MONTANA:

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood diversion project aims to remove entire city of Grafton from flood plain

By Angeline McCall on Oct 22, 2016 at 12:09 a.m.

GRAFTON, ND (WDAZ-TV) - An effort to keep one city safer has leaders scrambling to find $14 million.

Chris West, Grafton mayor: “It's a daunting experience. It's hard on everybody.”

Grafton’s mayor talks of the city's struggle with flooding. Just two years ago, three floods hit Grafton during the spring snowmelt.

Grafton has secured $32 million in funding for a flood diversion program, but that's not enough. The project costs $50 million, so the city needs to come up with $15 million more. They have only $1 million in the bag.

Mary Dusek, Grafton resident: “I think it's an important thing to do. I think it will help our town, it will help the people living here. It will benefit most everyone.”

The other $14 million will come from taxpayers, but most in town say they're okay with that. Time is running out to come up with the funds. Construction for the project will start next summer, so the city is hoping to get a loan in the meantime.

Mayor West: “The three branches of the river come in, and it’s allowed to take the water through the north end of the community.”

The 13-mile levy system around the entire city is going to start on the outskirts of Grafton at 6th and 17th.

While taxpayers will fund part of the project it will actually help their pocketbooks by keeping flood insurance costs down, which can climb as high as $4,000 per year for Grafton residents.

Jo Ditz, Grafton resident: “Every year the insurance goes up and up for flood insurance. And the house we live in has never had a flood. And yet we have to pay flood insurance.”

Richard Tarrell, Grafton resident: “If we get the flood insurance, it will help immensely for us to compete for the people. We need people moving to town.”

And the hope is that the project will completely take Grafton off of the 100-year flood plain.

Mayor West: “We know that what we're doing for our community will be provided for many years and some great protection.”

SOUTH DAKOTA:

UTAH:

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

After Sandy, Overpromising And Underdelivering

New York Times, October 21, 2016

The fourth anniversary of Hurricane Sandy will come and go next week, but thousands of storm-struck New York City homeowners will still be waiting for their houses to be rebuilt under the city's misbegotten Build It Back program.

The program is $500 million over budget and on track to blow its end-of-2016 completion deadline. Under the program, begun by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the city was to repair or rebuild homes or to reimburse homeowners for repairs they completed themselves.

Of the 5,565 single-family homes in the city-managed construction pipeline, only 44 percent have been completed so far, and Mayor Bill de Blasio says that figure will reach 75 percent by the end of the year. Build It Back was originally budgeted to use $1.7 billion in federal housing funds, but now the de Blasio administration says it needs an additional $500 million in city funds to finish the job.

"My team and I take personal responsibility," Mr. de Blasio said in a letter accompanying an October report laying out the bad news. The administration hasn't set any new final deadlines, given some uncertainty in coming months over when rebuilding will start; the city is allowing homeowners to delay construction so that they can stay in their homes over the holidays.

It's clear from the anger that administration officials faced at a City Council hearing on Thursday that Mr. de Blasio is paying the price for the managerial blunder of overpromising and underdelivering. Councilman Mark Treyger, chairman of the Recovery and Resiliency Committee, called it an "outrage" that the budget had somehow climbed by half a billion dollars, even though the total number of participants — about 8,500 — was far lower than the 22,000 who filed applications when the program began.

Build It Back started slowly. When Mr. de Blasio took office in 2014, no homes were under construction, and no checks had been written. Mr. de Blasio set himself up for a stumble with his now-unrealistic 2016 deadline, as construction costs climbed and the job of rebuilding homes in the Sandy zone proved extremely difficult. Bringing decades-old bungalows up to stringent building codes, with insulation and sprinklers, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems — and then lifting them 10 to 12 feet on stilts in the sand — was no simple task.

In fairness to the mayor, storm rebuilding is always messed up, from Louisiana to Mississippi to South Carolina to the Jersey Shore, and the federal government and the states are rife with storm-recovery programs bogged down by complexity, bureaucratic inertia, homeowner resistance and nonparticipation, and construction and engineering challenges. And while the Staten Island borough president, James Oddo, vented about the many Sandy recovery foul-ups in a recent Twitter barrage and on Facebook, he also said Mr. de Blasio had been right to set a hard deadline for Build It Back, even if he blew it, because without one, the program wouldn't have gotten as far as it has.

Mr. de Blasio clearly needs more time, a chance to deliver on his promises. But there should also be, as Mr. Oddo has urged, an independent post-mortem investigation of this and other Sandy failures, looking into why its initial cost estimates were so far off and what the city plans to do to avoid problems the next time.

One likely answer is going to be very hard for homeowners to accept: In a rapidly changing climate, their windblown condos and bungalows are in harm's way, and what government really should be rebuilding is storm-absorbing wetlands and parks.

Everybody wants to live on the beach. But when the storms blow and the waters rise, overmatched bureaucrats and frustrated homeowners will end up caught in the undertow, for years to come. In this sense, the very words “Build It Back” miss the point — unless by “back” you mean back, way back, from the water’s edge.

Washington State’s Plan For Megaquake “Grossly Inadequate,” Review Finds

By Sandi Doughton And Daniel Gilbert

Seattle Times, October 22, 2016

The largest disaster drill ever conducted in the Pacific Northwest found that, despite decades of warnings, the region remains dangerously unprepared to deal with a Cascadia megaquake and tsunami.

During the four-day “Cascadia Rising” exercise in June, 23,000 participants grappled with a hypothetical catastrophe that knocked out power, roads and communications and left communities battered, isolated — and with no hope of quick relief.

Washington state officials called their own response plans “grossly inadequate,” according to a draft report and records reviewed by The Seattle Times. The report warns that “the state is at risk of a humanitarian disaster within 10 days” of the quake.

The government’s ability to provide aid in the immediate aftermath of a catastrophic earthquake is so limited that Washington state’s Emergency Management Division will now ask residents to stock enough resources to survive on their own for up to two weeks, instead of the three days it advised in the past.

The report also warned that Washington’s own laws could actually prevent officials from marshaling medical resources to treat the legions of injured people.

The blunt assessment comes from a late-stage draft of Washington state’s post-mortem on the exercise, which followed two years of planning and included officials from three states, the U.S. government and British Columbia. Washington’s emergency-management division plans to brief the governor on the findings in January.

“We know this is an issue that will require strong coordination at every level of government,” said Tara Lee, a spokeswoman for Gov. Jay Inslee.

Beyond the immediate aftermath of the disaster, the report says Washington lacks any long-term strategy to help the region’s economy, cities and businesses recover from what would be one of the worst natural disasters the United States has ever faced.

“Everything we depend on to live our 21st-century lives is going to be significantly degraded or eradicated,” said Washington Emergency Management Director Robert Ezelle. “The needs are going to be immediate, they are going to be urgent and they are going to be overwhelming.”

The “Cascadia Rising” scenario, developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), estimates that a magnitude 9 quake and tsunami could kill 14,000 people and injure more than 30,000 in Washington and Oregon alone. More than 7,000 highway bridges and 16,000 miles of roadway are expected to suffer moderate to severe damage, including all routes to the Pacific Coast and Washington’s major east-west corridors.

The severity of the destruction was not news to emergency managers, Ezelle said. But the drill succeeded in exposing gaps and weaknesses in plans that had never been tested on such a massive scale.

“It gave us perspective that we did not have,” Ezelle said.

State, local and federal agencies are now finalizing their own “after-action” reports that will identify what worked, what failed and how to apply the lessons learned.

A lack of resources is a recurring theme in those post-mortems. FEMA’s report noted that emergency management operations across the Northwest suffer from staffing and budget shortages. In many jurisdictions, a single person is responsible for emergency planning.

"If this event happens, the first question everybody is going to ask is: 'How come you weren't ready?'" said Chuck Wallace, the manager and only full-time employee of Grays Harbor County's emergency department. "Right now, we're working with pennies."

The state already has a plan to improve its resilience. Published in 2012, it calls for a series of steps to strengthen vulnerable buildings, ensure the safety of schools and harden critical infrastructure.

However, as the "Cascadia Rising" report notes, the recommendations haven't been implemented.

"Washington is not currently a resilient state," the report says.

The challenges posed by the simulated disaster were obvious from the first day. When Ezelle attempted to contact Gov. Inslee's office, his satellite phone didn't work and he had to get a second one to make the call.

Several participants had trouble getting satellite phones to operate as they attempted to simulate operations without regular phone or internet service. Ham radio operators helped fill the gap, along with military-communications units deployed by the National Guard.

One of the state's top priorities is to develop a robust emergency-communications system, though Ezelle said he's not sure what form it would take.

"We've got to be able to talk and we've got to be able to share data," he said.

The breakdown in communications illustrated a problem with current plans that require state and federal responders to wait for local communities to request assistance. That works well in smaller-scale emergencies, like floods and fires, but in the chaos and blackouts that follow a Cascadia megaquake and tsunami, those pleas may not get through, Ezelle said.

During the drill, Seattle emergency managers got little or no response to their requests for assistance, including for urban search-and-rescue teams, according to the city's analysis of the exercise.

A better approach is for the state to anticipate what communities will need and be prepared to push out supplies and personnel as soon as possible, Ezelle said.

The Washington National Guard is already working with local jurisdictions to anticipate their needs and let them know what types of resources are available, said Lt. Col. Clayton Braun, deputy joint operations officer at the Washington Military Department.

During the drill, participants simulated situations ranging from a sinkhole opening up in downtown Seattle, to coordinating rescues from collapsed buildings and allocating scarce fuel supplies.

Though the scenarios were hypothetical, tempers sometimes flared for real.

One of the biggest sources of tension noted in the report was over how quickly damaged roads and bridges could be reopened. There aren't enough helicopters in the region to supply all the communities that will need help, Ezelle said, so damaged roadways will need to be cleared as soon as possible.

"If you cannot get the transportation infrastructure up and running, you're not going to have a response," he said.

On one occasion, emergency managers told Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) officials that it was "unacceptable" to take three days to clear a massive landslide from Interstate 90, according to records reviewed by The Times.

Transportation officials were frustrated when emergency officials were slow to identify priority routes for clearance. The result was an atmosphere one evaluator described as "poisonous."

Washington Military Department spokeswoman Karina Shagren said the friction "highlights the stressful environment — which can exist in both real-world and exercise scenarios."

WSDOT is working on a plan to address gaps identified in the exercise and to better manage expectations of how long it will take to repair damage, WSDOT spokeswoman Barbara LaBoe said.

The exercise also showed that the state's traditional approach of relying on the Red Cross won't be adequate to handle the nearly 3 million people who could need food, water and shelter.

Hospitals will be overwhelmed with casualties, yet Washington's governor lacks the authority to grant some types of medical waivers, such as allowing doctors and nurses from other states and countries to help.

Lee, the governor's spokeswoman, said the issue "is one of many that we are looking into following the exercise."

With no expectation of more funding in the near term, several emergency-management departments around the state hope to recruit and train more volunteers.

Seattle Emergency Management Director Barb Graff recently assigned one staff person to coordinate a corps of volunteers to assist with search and rescue, help run emergency shelters and perform other tasks.

The state Emergency Management Division is requesting $750,000 a year for a public-education campaign urging citizens to beef up their emergency kits for up to two weeks.

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"What you have on hand when this occurs is how you're going to survive," she said.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 26 Sep 2016 10:28:08 -0400
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @state.co.us;(b)(6) @mail.mil;(b)(6) @mail.mil;(b)(6) @nd.gov;(b)(6) @state.sd.us;(b)(6) @state.sd.us;(b)(6) @utah.gov;(b)(6) @wyo.gov;(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov;(b)(6) @usace.army.mil;(b)(6) @usace.army.mil;(b)(
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Region VIII Clips

Monday, September 26, 2016

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Children From Central America Flood U.S. Border--Again USA Today

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COLORADO:

Solar Science, Education

By Billie Stanton Anleu

Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette, September 24, 2016

A new scientific endeavor in Colorado Springs could help safeguard the nation's electric grid, satellites, aircraft, spacecraft and radio transmissions and save hundreds of billions of dollars.

The first step is a biggie at 14,115 feet. It requires putting an observatory atop Pikes Peak – perhaps the only high-altitude site in the world with year-round access, a continual power source and hundreds of thousands of visitors a year.

The mountaintop observatory has been a two-decade quest by Dimitri Klebe, founder of the Pikes Peak Observatory and space content specialist for the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

But he and Robert Sallee, board chairman of the National Space Science & Technology Institute, remain undeterred.

"We understand that the process may take (another) three or more years, but we are willing to stay the course," Sallee said last week.

The proposal has been lauded as a way to lure more people to the city's most famous icon, to spur more science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, to enlighten and entertain visitors and to complement the impending new Summit House.

But it could do so much more.

Scientists will be able to test instruments and learn how the sun affects the Earth.

When a big storm on the sun sends magnetized clouds through the atmosphere to Earth, for example, currents shoot through the ground and endanger everything from electrical grids to oil pipelines, said NSSTI board member Mark Miesch, a scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research High Altitude Observatory (HAO).

The potential effect is billions of dollars in losses. But hundreds of billions would be lost if a large solar storm hit, Miesch said.

Compare that with the $108 billion tab for Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster in the U.S.

That's why space weather – the HAO's focus – is so important to the $1 billion-a-year satellite industry, utilities, airlines and others.

It's so important that the federal government has created a National Space Weather Strategy and Action Plan.

And in June, U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., introduced the Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act to the Senate to better predict and mitigate the effects of space weather. Co-sponsors are U.S. Sens. Cory Gardner, R-Colo. Gary Peters, D-Mich., and Cory Booker, D-N.J.

Forecasts are critical. A solar flare can disrupt radio transmissions, which are very important to the military.

Flight attendants traveling between London and Colorado can build up significant amounts of radiation, but planes can dodge a solar storm by changing routes or flying lower.

"But you don't want to do that unless you're sure. It costs a lot of money," Miesch said. "In order to improve forecasts, you need to increase understanding."

And that's a primary aim of the observatory, which would start with an 18-foot-diameter dome that can withstand 200 mph winds. It will be equipped with a viewing deck, a main 1-meter PlaneWave telescope for various kinds of research and a Lunt 6-inch H-Alpha Solar Telescope geared for sun studies. The entire installation would cover only 900 square feet.

Small telescopes, particularly with the sensors used today, collect more light than the older, bigger telescopes did, so they're more efficient for their size, Klebe said.

They also fill a niche for research needing a big view of the sky, such as finding planets around other stars. That can't be done through bigger telescopes, which only observe a smaller slice of sky, he said.

The 1-meter telescope will be the largest in Colorado, and it will be used by Colorado College, the Air Force Academy, the University of Denver and the University of Colorado at Boulder, among other educational and scientific institutions. It will be the biggest telescope in the Air Force Academy's international Falcon Telescope Network.

The solar telescope will be equipped with a camera, with images displayed in the Summit House, the city or on the Internet. And both scopes can be operated remotely.

Another instrument, an All Sky Visual and Infrared Analyzer, will record atmospheric conditions and phenomena, providing a 180-degree hemispheric perspective. A modified version of the instrument will identify smoke and ash particles in the atmosphere to help the Forest Service with swift response to wildfires.

The push will be to increase understanding not only among scientists, but also among students – including undergraduates from tribal colleges.

"We appreciate that Pikes Peak is a sacred space for Native Americans (including the Utes) and would not build anything there without their blessing," Miesch said. "We want them to be a partner in this. We want to inspire individuals of all backgrounds to pursue science and technology careers."

Construction of the observatory first requires obtaining a permit from the U.S. Forest Service. The observatory team will request a 15-year permit. An environmental impact statement also is needed, and the scientists would like to establish a private-government partnership to accomplish the EIS.

In 2019, the new Summit House is to be erected and the Army's High Altitude Research Laboratory on the peak will be moved. The following summer, the original research lab will be demolished, the site prepared and the observatory installed, if all goes according to plan.

Use of that site for the observatory reduces impacts on the fragile permafrost and is scientifically advantageous in relation to prevailing winds.

The Pikes Peak Observatory is expected to greatly enhance the new Summit House's destination value.

But tourism wasn't the motive for Klebe, who incorporated the observatory as a nonprofit in 1997 with a group of astronomers, astronauts, engineers and educators.

As a researcher at the University of Denver, whose telescope on Mount Evans closes in winter, he saw Pikes Peak as the ideal site for infrared astronomy and education.

In addition to the observatory, the group plans to deploy mobile science labs to remote schools to advance science and technology education.

Its mission, in addition to advancing scientific research, is “to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the universe through education at all levels, media presentations, environmental studies, historical preservation, cultural exhibits and the expansion of tourism to benefit the community.”

MONTANA:

NORTH DAKOTA:

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Storm damages 18 Oglala-area homes

Associated press 7:57 a.m. CDT September 26, 2016

OGLALA — A severe storm with strong winds damaged 18 homes in the Oglala area over the weekend.

The American Red Cross says most of the homes suffered minor damage to roofs, windows and siding, but four homes were deemed too damaged to be occupied. Those families are getting help with lodging.

Red Cross regional director Richard Smith says the agency is continuing to monitor the situation with Oglala Sioux emergency management officials.

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Children From Central America Flood U.S. Border--Again

By Alan Gomez

USA Today, September 23, 2016

The number of Central American children fleeing to United States is booming once again, as security and economic troubles continue to grip El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

The rush of minors across the southwest border became a political firestorm in the summer of 2014, prompting the Obama administration to enact emergency measures to stem the flow and drawing intense scrutiny from critics of the president's immigration policies.

Last year, the efforts seemed to work as the number of unaccompanied minors from those three countries entering the U.S. dropped from nearly 70,000 in 2014 to 39,970.

Now the exodus to the USA is back on the rise. In the first 11 months of the 2016 fiscal year, which ends in September, 54,052 children made the journey.

There are many reasons for the surge:

--In El Salvador, people are fleeing a staggering level of violence that has made the country the murder capital of the world. It recorded a homicide rate of 104 people per 100,000 in 2015, the highest for any country in nearly 20 years, according to data from the World Bank.

--In Honduras, violence has come down in recent years, with a 15% drop in homicides in 2015, meaning many people leaving there are seeking better economic opportunities in the United States.

--In Guatemala, pockets of intense violence are driving some to the U.S. But Guatemalan officials said at the United Nations this week that their migrants are leaving mostly for economic reasons and should not be considered refugees.

And in all three, U.S. politics are at play. Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has made a crackdown on illegal immigration a central tenet of his campaign, vowing to build a giant wall along the southwest border and deport millions of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, a group that advocates against illegal immigration, said the prospect of a Trump presidency is a terrifying one for would-be immigrants, and is spurring the current rush of minors.

Krikorian said the Obama administration's "policy of deterrence" — warning Central Americans that they will be deported if they make the voyage — has fallen flat.

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The countries are making some progress in addressing their problems. In Honduras, the government created a commission to review all 14,000 members of the national police force, which has long been plagued by corruption. In the past few months, the commission has interviewed nearly 300 high-ranking police officers and dismissed 110 of them, according to a report from the Wilson Center, a Washington-based think tank.

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President Obama requested $1 billion to help the so-called Northern Triangle countries improve their economies, security institutions and immigration enforcement capabilities. Congress approved $750 million in December, but most of that money hasn't arrived.

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Children From Central America Flood U.S. Border--Again **USA Today**

STORIES

COLORADO:

Solar Science, Education

By Billie Stanton Anleu

Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette, September 24, 2016

A new scientific endeavor in Colorado Springs could help safeguard the nation's electric grid, satellites, aircraft, spacecraft and radio transmissions and save hundreds of billions of dollars.

The first step is a biggie at 14,115 feet. It requires putting an observatory atop Pikes Peak – perhaps the only high-altitude site in the world with year-round access, a continual power source and hundreds of thousands of visitors a year.

The mountaintop observatory has been a two-decade quest by Dimitri Klebe, founder of the Pikes Peak Observatory and space content specialist for the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

But he and Robert Sallee, board chairman of the National Space Science & Technology Institute, remain undeterred.

"We understand that the process may take (another) three or more years, but we are willing to stay the course," Sallee said last week.

The proposal has been lauded as a way to lure more people to the city's most famous icon, to spur more science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, to enlighten and entertain visitors and to complement the impending new Summit House.

But it could do so much more.

Scientists will be able to test instruments and learn how the sun affects the Earth.

When a big storm on the sun sends magnetized clouds through the atmosphere to Earth, for example, currents shoot through the ground and endanger everything from electrical grids to oil pipelines, said NSSTI board member Mark Miesch, a scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research High Altitude Observatory (HAO).

The potential effect is billions of dollars in losses. But hundreds of billions would be lost if a large solar storm hit, Miesch said.

Compare that with the $108 billion tab for Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster in the U.S.

That's why space weather – the HAO's focus – is so important to the $1 billion-a-year satellite industry, utilities, airlines and others.

It's so important that the federal government has created a National Space Weather Strategy and Action Plan.

And in June, U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., introduced the Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act to the Senate to better predict and mitigate the effects of space weather. Co-sponsors are U.S. Sens. Cory Gardner, R-Colo. Gary Peters, D-Mich., and Cory Booker, D-N.J.

Forecasts are critical. A solar flare can disrupt radio transmissions, which are very important to the military.

Flight attendants traveling between London and Colorado can build up significant amounts of radiation, but planes can dodge a solar storm by changing routes or flying lower.

"But you don't want to do that unless you're sure. It costs a lot of money," Miesch said. "In order to improve forecasts, you need to increase understanding."

And that's a primary aim of the observatory, which would start with an 18-foot-diameter dome that can withstand 200 mph winds. It will be equipped with a viewing deck, a main 1-meter PlaneWave telescope for various kinds of research and a Lunt 6-inch H-Alpha Solar Telescope geared for sun studies. The entire installation would cover only 900 square feet.

Small telescopes, particularly with the sensors used today, collect more light than the older, bigger telescopes did, so they're more efficient for their size, Klebe said.

They also fill a niche for research needing a big view of the sky, such as finding planets around other stars. That can't be done through bigger telescopes, which only observe a smaller slice of sky, he said.

The 1-meter telescope will be the largest in Colorado, and it will be used by Colorado College, the Air Force Academy, the University of Denver and the University of Colorado at Boulder, among other educational and scientific institutions. It will be the biggest telescope in the Air Force Academy's international Falcon Telescope Network.

The solar telescope will be equipped with a camera, with images displayed in the Summit House, the city or on the Internet. And both scopes can be operated remotely.

Another instrument, an All Sky Visual and Infrared Analyzer, will record atmospheric conditions and phenomena, providing a 180-degree hemispheric perspective. A modified version of the instrument will identify smoke and ash particles in the atmosphere to help the Forest Service with swift response to wildfires.

The push will be to increase understanding not only among scientists, but also among students – including undergraduates from tribal colleges.

"We appreciate that Pikes Peak is a sacred space for Native Americans (including the Utes) and would not build anything there without their blessing," Miesch said. "We want them to be a partner in this. We want to inspire individuals of all backgrounds to pursue science and technology careers."

Construction of the observatory first requires obtaining a permit from the U.S. Forest Service. The observatory team will request a 15-year permit. An environmental impact statement also is needed, and the scientists would like to establish a private-government partnership to accomplish the EIS.

In 2019, the new Summit House is to be erected and the Army's High Altitude Research Laboratory on the peak will be moved. The following summer, the original research lab will be demolished, the site prepared and the observatory installed, if all goes according to plan.

Use of that site for the observatory reduces impacts on the fragile permafrost and is scientifically advantageous in relation to prevailing winds.

The Pikes Peak Observatory is expected to greatly enhance the new Summit House's destination value.

But tourism wasn't the motive for Klebe, who incorporated the observatory as a nonprofit in 1997 with a group of astronomers, astronauts, engineers and educators.

As a researcher at the University of Denver, whose telescope on Mount Evans closes in winter, he saw Pikes Peak as the ideal site for infrared astronomy and education.

In addition to the observatory, the group plans to deploy mobile science labs to remote schools to advance science and technology education.

Its mission, in addition to advancing scientific research, is "to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the universe through education at all levels, media presentations, environmental studies, historical preservation, cultural exhibits and the expansion of tourism to benefit the community."

MONTANA:

NORTH DAKOTA:

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Storm damages 18 Oglala-area homes

Associated press 7:57 a.m. CDT September 26, 2016

OGLALA — A severe storm with strong winds damaged 18 homes in the Oglala area over the weekend.

The American Red Cross says most of the homes suffered minor damage to roofs, windows and siding, but four homes were deemed too damaged to be occupied. Those families are getting help with lodging.

Red Cross regional director Richard Smith says the agency is continuing to monitor the situation with Oglala Sioux emergency management officials.

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UTAH:

WYOMING:

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Children From Central America Flood U.S. Border--Again

By Alan Gomez

USA Today, September 23, 2016

The number of Central American children fleeing to United States is booming once again, as security and economic troubles continue to grip El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

The rush of minors across the southwest border became a political firestorm in the summer of 2014, prompting the Obama administration to enact emergency measures to stem the flow and drawing intense scrutiny from critics of the president's immigration policies.

Last year, the efforts seemed to work as the number of unaccompanied minors from those three countries entering the U.S. dropped from nearly 70,000 in 2014 to 39,970.

Now the exodus to the USA is back on the rise. In the first 11 months of the 2016 fiscal year, which ends in September, 54,052 children made the journey.

There are many reasons for the surge:

--In El Salvador, people are fleeing a staggering level of violence that has made the country the murder capital of the world. It recorded a homicide rate of 104 people per 100,000 in 2015, the highest for any country in nearly 20 years, according to data from the World Bank.

--In Honduras, violence has come down in recent years, with a 15% drop in homicides in 2015, meaning many people leaving there are seeking better economic opportunities in the United States.

--In Guatemala, pockets of intense violence are driving some to the U.S. But Guatemalan officials said at the United Nations this week that their migrants are leaving mostly for economic reasons and should not be considered refugees.

And in all three, U.S. politics are at play. Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has made a crackdown on illegal immigration a central tenet of his campaign, vowing to build a giant wall along the southwest border and deport millions of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, a group that advocates against illegal immigration, said the prospect of a Trump presidency is a terrifying one for would-be immigrants, and is spurring the current rush of minors.

Krikorian said the Obama administration's "policy of deterrence" — warning Central Americans that they will be deported if they make the voyage — has fallen flat.

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President Obama requested $1 billion to help the so-called Northern Triangle countries improve their economies, security institutions and immigration enforcement capabilities. Congress approved $750 million in December, but most of that money hasn't arrived.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 15 Sep 2016 14:12:18 -0400
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.co.us;(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@nd.gov;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@utah.gov(b)(6)@wyo.gov;(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)
(b)(6)@state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@sba.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us;Alexander, Daniel
Subject: Region VIII News Clips, September 15
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Fight For Zika Money Hampered By Partisan Squabbles USA Today

STORIES

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By Bruce Finley | bfinley@denverpost.com
PUBLISHED: September 14, 2016 at 11:56 pm | UPDATED: September 15, 2016 at 11:01 am

Nine Things to Know About Chemical Weapons
The Pueblo Chemical Depot is set to begin destroying the United States' largest remaining stockpile of chemical weapons this week in southern Colorado. Here are a few things to know about these chemical weapons and how we got here: April 22 marks the 100th anniversary of the first use of chemical weapons in modern warfare at Ypres in Belgium. From World War I to 1968, the United States produced nearly 40,000 tons of chemical weapons. These weapons were either nerve agents or blister agents. Mustard agent is a blister agent, which can cause redness and itching of the skin, irritation in the eyes, scarring and increased risk for lung and respiratory cancer. The Pueblo Chemical Depot in southern Colorado will destroy 2,600 tons of aging mustard agent beginning in March. The depot has about 780,000 shells containing mustard agent.
Inform

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PUEBLO – Destroying the nation's stash of World War II-era chemical weapons is nasty work, and after decades of delays, the Army is using robots to start the job inside a $4.5 billion plant on the Colorado prairie.

A newly trained human workforce of 1,400 controls the robotic machinery — one canary-yellow, long-armed device is dubbed Inga, another Igor — beginning a mission of emptying 780,000 wine-bottle-shaped projectiles inside sealed chambers behind 24-inch-thick blast walls.

The process minimizes human contact with deadly chemicals known as mustard agent, which was used to deny enemies access to land by attacking their eyes, skin and lungs.

"I like the work. This stuff has been sitting around 40, 50 years. It's about time we got to destroying it," said Jose Rosario, 33, an Army war veteran who in Iraq found a stash of Saddam Hussein's weapons.

Joe Amon, The Denver Post

Instrumentation technician Philip Kell washes down his partner Eric Irvinin wash down area at the Pueblo Chemical agent Pilot plant training area on Sept. 14, 2016 in Pueblo.

"These robots were built for precision, all computer programmed. I don't have any worries that the machines will make mistakes," Rosario said during training.

The destruction, ordered by Congress in 1986, entered a pilot testing phase last week that, as of Wednesday, has dismantled 80 projectiles at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, located on windswept prairie where tumbleweeds roll and antelope nibble dry grass.

Full-bore destruction of mustard agent cannot begin until state officials issue a permit, expected in January, project manager Rick Holmes said. And the job will be done by July 2020, Holmes said.

"We're going to make the world cleaner by having this stuff go away, and go away the right way," he said.

A 1997 international treaty ordered eradication of chemical weapons, outlawed since 1925, and the United States as an original signatory is obligated to comply. Foreign observers are posted at this plant to verify destruction of the weapons. In recent years, concerns about the delay intensified amid cybersecurity threats and evidence that Islamic State and Syrian forces have used chemical weapons.

In 2002, the Department of Defense hired the Bechtel corporation to run and close the nation's chemical weapons stockpile here, which represents about 8 percent of the nation's chemical weapons (another 2 percent are sitting in Kentucky). About 90 percent were burned.

Pentagon officials initially planned to install an incinerator in Pueblo. But Congress intervened in 1996, responding to public concerns about safety, ordering a program to demonstrate at least two alternative systems, other than incineration, for destroying chemical weapons.

Project leaders settled on the current low-temperature, low-pressure system that neutralizes the chemicals and then unleashes bacteria – from sludge imported from Pueblo's wastewater treatment plant – to eat the weapons out of existence.

No liquid waste will remain at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, and a "salt cake" sludge from filters will be hauled to a hazardous waste landfill. Emissions are filtered from a black stack above the facility.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment hazardous materials and waste management officials have inspected the facility to ensure safety. The pilot testing is being done under a research, development and demonstration permit, CDPHE spokeswoman Jeannine Natterman said.

The CDPHE "does not believe the Pueblo Chemical Agent Disposal Plant will have a significant impact on air quality," Natterman said in an e-mailed response to The Denver Post.

The plant "is considered only a minor source by the air pollution control division," she said. State inspectors also are "overseeing the collection of air samples from plant emission sources during pilot-testing of the facility."

Today, an estimated 2,611 tons of the mustard chemical agent is stored in projectiles and mortar cartridges buried in igloos at the 35-square-mile Pueblo Chemical Depot.

In 1952, the Army began storing mustard agent hauled here from a manufacturing plant called the Rocky Mountain Arsenal northeast of Denver. A staff of about 250 guards and maintains the weapons. Guards have detected and dealt with at least 90 leaks over 35 years.

Five of the 12-foot-tall yellow robots, run by workers at keyboards, open the projectiles packed with liquid mustard agent, which freezes at 56 degrees. The robots unscrew and remove caps on each projectile, drain the liquid into titanium containers. Robots later inject 190-degree water and sodium hydroxide. Then the bacteria from sludge is used to eat broken-down chemicals.

The project brings total employment at the Army's depot to nearly 2,000, ranking it among the largest employers on Colorado's economically lagging southern Front Range. New jobs pay $40,000 to $70,000 a year, plus health benefits.

"It means a lot," said Kurtis Wolf, 35, a union worker at the Russian-owned Evraz steel factory until that operation recently ran into trouble.

Wolf said his wife a couple months later lost her job at a dental office, jeopardizing the situation for their three children.

"Now I have a job, stable income," he said. "We'll be able to keep paying for our house, for the vehicles. … Lord willing, I hope to be one of the guys who helps close this place down."

Biggest projects still ahead after Colorado's 2013 floods

http://www.9news.com/news/biggest-projects-still-ahead-after-colorados-2013-floods/318085066

Three years have passed since it happened – since the peak of a week of weather that Coloradans had never seen in their lives.

The scale of the disaster defied description. Rivers were overrun, cities flooded.

The floods of September 2013 still don't have a name.

Photos: 2013 floods

It's been three years since the water came and left.

Since the news crews came and left.

Since the attention came and left.

Here's what we've largely missed in 2016…

This summer has been the busiest period for permanently rebuilding roads and bridges, since the floods of 2013. The single largest reconstruction project is just getting started. Most of the federal aid is still unspent.

The permanent reconstruction of Highway 36 from Lyons to Estes Park was completed this year. The permanent fix for Highway 34 from Loveland to Estes is underway, and won't be complete until 2018 or 2019.

We're finishing the summer of construction - the busiest time since the floods - as highways, roads, bridges, river banks and multi-family housing units were put in place.

You have to remember that federal grant money didn't arrive until 2014.

$350 million is promised.

$80 million of it was spent through the first half of this year.

Spending is about to ramp up. Another $40 million will be spent by year's end.

And while we talk numbers, and remember the number of lives impacted, we pause to remember the 10 lives lost in the floods three years ago this week.

Wildfire Near Kremmling Estimated At Roughly 9 Acres, 35 Percent Contained

By Jesse Paul

Denver Post, September 14, 2016

A wildfire sparked near Kremmling on Tuesday and which has prompted the evacuation of roughly a dozen homes was estimated at about nine acres on Wednesday and 35 percent contained.

A mass of resources have been called to battle the fire, including local, state and federal firefighting crews.

Lt. Dan Mayer of the Grand County Sheriff's Office says a smoke report was called in to authorities about 12:20 p.m. on Tuesday. When the chief of the Kremmling Fire Protection District went to investigate, he found that a person was burning a slash pile that had gotten out of control.

The fire is off Grand County Road 14, about five miles from Kremmling. The blaze is burning in heavy timber on county land.

Mandatory evacuations are in effect within a mile of the blaze and residents within three miles of the burn are on pre-evacuation notice.

MONTANA:

NORTH DAKOTA:

Emergency officials seek up to $6 million to offset costs during pipeline protests

Issues Associated Press · Bismarck, N.D. · Sep 15, 2016

North Dakota emergency services officials are asking for up to $6 million from the state-owned bank to offset costs associated with help provided to law enforcement during protests against the Dakota Access pipeline.

The Bismarck Tribune reports the state Department of Emergency Services would set up a loan with the Bank of North Dakota and repay it with interest.

Emergency Services Department spokeswoman Cecily Fong says the state had never responded to large protests.

- FAQ: The Dakota Access pipeline and protest

Gov. Jack Dalrymple has also asked for federal help. The newspaper reports his office says the state has spent $1.8 million so far policing the protests.

A federal judge declined to block the four-state pipeline Friday, but federal agencies stopped work near Lake Oahe. Federal agencies also asked pipeline operator Energy Transfer Partners to voluntarily stop work on a 40-mile stretch.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

AARP pushed emergency preparation KSFY-TV, Sioux Falls

SOUTH DAKOTA - September is National Preparedness Month and AARP is working with FEMA to share resources to help you.

The agencies are urging people to have an emergency kit and a plan in place for a wide-array of possible situations

To help you prepare, AARP South Dakota will host a call-in show on their website on Thursday with experts who can answer questions about your specific plan.

You can find a link to the website on the right-hand side of this story.

UTAH:

WYOMING:

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Fight For Zika Money Hampered By Partisan Squabbles

By Ledyard King

USA Today, September 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – Turns out Zika is as much a political quagmire as it is a health crisis.

Finger-pointing and partisan backbiting abound on Capitol Hill, despite pleas from both sides of the aisle to take the politics out of efforts to combat the disease that has infected 805 Floridians and tarnished the state’s reputation as a tourist mecca.

Just this week alone:

– Democratic congressman Alan Grayson took GOP Gov. Rick Scott to task for once proposing massive cuts in the state's mosquito control budget.

– Scott blasted the Obama administration for failing to give the state enough help to fight Zika, then accused Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of abandoning his constituents in voting against a controversial Zika bill last week.

– The pro-choice group NARAL lashed Republican Sen. Marco Rubio for missing a bipartisan news conference on Zika to meet with GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump's running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence. The organization is running online ads to highlight the criticism.

Floridians see the partisan squabbles holding up action on Zika as "one more example of a broken Washington," said Susan MacManus, a political science professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa. But she's not surprised at the stalemate or the bickering.

"This issue is arising in the middle of a very contentious, competitive election," she said. "And each party wants to take credit for the good and dis their opponent with the bad. That's what we've seen happening on the Zika issue."

Congressional leaders have reported some progress in reaching a $1.1 billion deal to fund anti-Zika efforts, including vaccine development, insect spraying and distribution of testing kits. If a compromise is reached, it's likely to be attached to a broad spending bill lawmakers will be asked to vote on at the end of the month.

Earlier Zika legislation in the Republican-controlled Congress was blocked by Democrats who objected to unrelated provisions, including barriers to contraception, the display of the Confederate flag at national cemeteries and laxer environmental standards for pesticides. The deal being discussed would not include those.

Rubio and the Democrat running against him this year, Rep. Patrick Murphy, have spent weeks blaming each other for not doing enough to end the stalemate.

They both initially backed Obama's request in February for $1.9 billion, though Rubio also has supported GOP measures that would have provided less money and included provisions Murphy and others found objectionable.

On Wednesday, NARAL pounced on Rubio's absence from the bipartisan press conference the day before, saying he was "putting his own political needs ahead of the needs of women and families in Florida."

Rubio spokesman Olivia Perez-Cubas responded that Murphy "is the only candidate to have voted against every measure to fund Zika – once again putting himself and his political aspirations before Floridians."

Rubio spent part of Tuesday and Wednesday meeting with Scott, who admonished the Obama administration for ignoring Florida.

"Since June 1, I've asked for a plan to work with (the Federal Emergency Management Agency). Haven't given it to me," the governor told reporters. "The White House has not been a good partner."

Administration officials pushed back against Scott's allegations, detailing efforts they've made to help the state:

– A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention team was recently dispatched to Florida to monitor Zika efforts.

– The Health and Human Services Department has provided more than $35 million that can be used for Zika-related activities. In August, Florida received materials for an additional 6,300 lab tests in addition to the 2,000 already provided. CDC also provided on-site technical consultation to Florida's public health laboratories, enabling them to substantially increase testing capacity.

– FEMA officials have been in contact with the state to discuss the role the agency can play, though the White House said FEMA assistance may not be the best option for a mosquito-borne disease like Zika.

"This is why the president put forward a supplemental request in February, to ensure that states like Florida would have the resources they need to effectively response to Zika," the White House spokesman said.

Grayson, the Democratic congressman from Orlando, said Scott should look in the mirror if there are fingers to be pointed.

Under the governor's watch, state aid to mosquito control programs around Florida in 2011 was sliced 40% — from $2.16 million to $1.29 million — and he vetoed a $500,000 grant that would have kept a state mosquito lab open in Panama City.

"If the governor would revisit those decisions, that would be a good start in itself," Grayson said.

Nelson was miffed that Scott singled him out for joining other Democrats in blocking the Zika bill.

"He should know better," said Nelson. "This is a serious situation, not a time for partisan politics."

Whom do voters blame? MacManus said the accusations have come in such rapid-fire, head-spinning fashion it's hard to decide who's the real culprit.

"There's enough blame to go around for all officials in the minds of Floridians," she said. "What they want is action, and there just doesn't appear to be any out of Washington. That's what they really find fault with."

Rubio tried to strike a bipartisan tone Wednesday afternoon as he spoke on the Senate floor. He defended Nelson as an important ally in the push for Zika funding, then implored his colleagues to rally around a compromise.

"We fight about so many things around here," Rubio said. "We have so many issues we could have a debate over. So let's have debates about those issues. But isn't there at least, when it comes to public health and safety, something we can say on this issue that we're not going to play politics?"

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“We’re going to make the world cleaner by having this stuff go away, and go away the right way,” he said.

A 1997 international treaty ordered eradication of chemical weapons, outlawed since 1925, and the United States as an original signatory is obligated to comply. Foreign observers are posted at this plant to verify destruction of the weapons. In recent years, concerns about the delay intensified amid cybersecurity threats and evidence that Islamic State and Syrian forces have used chemical weapons.

In 2002, the Department of Defense hired the Bechtel corporation to run and close the nation’s chemical weapons stockpile here, which represents about 8 percent of the nation’s chemical weapons (another 2 percent are sitting in Kentucky). About 90 percent were burned.

Pentagon officials initially planned to install an incinerator in Pueblo. But Congress intervened in 1996, responding to public concerns about safety, ordering a program to demonstrate at least two alternative systems, other than incineration, for destroying chemical weapons.

Project leaders settled on the current low-temperature, low-pressure system that neutralizes the chemicals and then unleashes bacteria – from sludge imported from Pueblo’s wastewater treatment plant – to eat the weapons out of existence.

No liquid waste will remain at the Pueblo Chemical Depot, and a “salt cake” sludge from filters will be hauled to a hazardous waste landfill. Emissions are filtered from a black stack above the facility.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment hazardous materials and waste management officials have inspected the facility to ensure safety. The pilot testing is being done under a research, development and demonstration permit, CDPHE spokeswoman Jeannine Natterman said.

The CDPHE “does not believe the Pueblo Chemical Agent Disposal Plant will have a significant impact on air quality,” Natterman said in an e-mailed response to The Denver Post.

The plant “is considered only a minor source by the air pollution control division,” she said. State inspectors also are “overseeing the collection of air samples from plant emission sources during pilot-testing of the facility.”

Today, an estimated 2,611 tons of the mustard chemical agent is stored in projectiles and mortar cartridges buried in igloos at the 35-square-mile Pueblo Chemical Depot.

In 1952, the Army began storing mustard agent hauled here from a manufacturing plant called the Rocky Mountain Arsenal northeast of Denver. A staff of about 250 guards and maintains the weapons. Guards have detected and dealt with at least 90 leaks over 35 years.

Five of the 12-foot-tall yellow robots, run by workers at keyboards, open the projectiles packed with liquid mustard agent, which freezes at 56 degrees. The robots unscrew and remove caps on each projectile, drain the liquid into titanium containers. Robots later inject 190-degree water and sodium hydroxide. Then the bacteria from sludge is used to eat broken-down chemicals.

The project brings total employment at the Army's depot to nearly 2,000, ranking it among the largest employers on Colorado's economically lagging southern Front Range. New jobs pay $40,000 to $70,000 a year, plus health benefits.

"It means a lot," said Kurtis Wolf, 35, a union worker at the Russian-owned Evraz steel factory until that operation recently ran into trouble.

Wolf said his wife a couple months later lost her job at a dental office, jeopardizing the situation for their three children.

"Now I have a job, stable income," he said. "We'll be able to keep paying for our house, for the vehicles. … Lord willing, I hope to be one of the guys who helps close this place down."

Biggest projects still ahead after Colorado's 2013 floods

http://www.9news.com/news/biggest-projects-still-ahead-after-colorados-2013-floods/318085066

Three years have passed since it happened – since the peak of a week of weather that Coloradans had never seen in their lives.
The scale of the disaster defied description. Rivers were overrun, cities flooded.
The floods of September 2013 still don't have a name.

Photos: 2013 floods

It's been three years since the water came and left.
Since the news crews came and left.
Since the attention came and left.
Here's what we've largely missed in 2016…
This summer has been the busiest period for permanently rebuilding roads and bridges, since the floods of 2013. The single largest reconstruction project is just getting started. Most of the federal aid is still unspent.

The permanent reconstruction of Highway 36 from Lyons to Estes Park was completed this year.
The permanent fix for Highway 34 from Loveland to Estes is underway, and won't be complete until 2018 or 2019.
We're finishing the summer of construction - the busiest time since the floods - as highways, roads, bridges, river banks and multi-family housing units were put in place.
You have to remember that federal grant money didn't arrive until 2014.
$350 million is promised.
$80 million of it was spent through the first half of this year.
Spending is about to ramp up. Another $40 million will be spent by year's end.
And while we talk numbers, and remember the number of lives impacted, we pause to remember the 10 lives lost in the floods three years ago this week.

Wildfire Near Kremmling Estimated At Roughly 9 Acres, 35 Percent Contained

By Jesse Paul

Denver Post, September 14, 2016

A wildfire sparked near Kremmling on Tuesday and which has prompted the evacuation of roughly a dozen homes was estimated at about nine acres on Wednesday and 35 percent contained.

A mass of resources have been called to battle the fire, including local, state and federal firefighting crews.

Lt. Dan Mayer of the Grand County Sheriff's Office says a smoke report was called in to authorities about 12:20 p.m. on Tuesday. When the chief of the Kremmling Fire Protection District went to investigate, he found that a person was burning a slash pile that had gotten out of control.

The fire is off Grand County Road 14, about five miles from Kremmling. The blaze is burning in heavy timber on county land.

Mandatory evacuations are in effect within a mile of the blaze and residents within three miles of the burn are on pre-evacuation notice.

MONTANA:

NORTH DAKOTA:

Emergency officials seek up to $6 million to offset costs during pipeline protests

Issues Associated Press · Bismarck, N.D. · Sep 15, 2016

North Dakota emergency services officials are asking for up to $6 million from the state-owned bank to offset costs associated with help provided to law enforcement during protests against the Dakota Access pipeline.

The Bismarck Tribune reports the state Department of Emergency Services would set up a loan with the Bank of North Dakota and repay it with interest.

Emergency Services Department spokeswoman Cecily Fong says the state had never responded to large protests.

- FAQ: The Dakota Access pipeline and protest

Gov. Jack Dalrymple has also asked for federal help. The newspaper reports his office says the state has spent $1.8 million so far policing the protests.

A federal judge declined to block the four-state pipeline Friday, but federal agencies stopped work near Lake Oahe. Federal agencies also asked pipeline operator Energy Transfer Partners to voluntarily stop work on a 40-mile stretch.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

AARP pushed emergency preparation KSFY-TV, Sioux Falls

SOUTH DAKOTA - September is National Preparedness Month and AARP is working with FEMA to share resources to help you.

The agencies are urging people to have an emergency kit and a plan in place for a wide-array of possible situations

To help you prepare, AARP South Dakota will host a call-in show on their website on Thursday with experts who can answer questions about your specific plan.

You can find a link to the website on the right-hand side of this story.

UTAH:

WYOMING:

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Fight For Zika Money Hampered By Partisan Squabbles

By Ledyard King

USA Today, September 14, 2016

WASHINGTON – Turns out Zika is as much a political quagmire as it is a health crisis.

Finger-pointing and partisan backbiting abound on Capitol Hill, despite pleas from both sides of the aisle to take the politics out of efforts to combat the disease that has infected 805 Floridians and tarnished the state's reputation as a tourist mecca.

Just this week alone:

– Democratic congressman Alan Grayson took GOP Gov. Rick Scott to task for once proposing massive cuts in the state's mosquito control budget.

– Scott blasted the Obama administration for failing to give the state enough help to fight Zika, then accused Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of abandoning his constituents in voting against a controversial Zika bill last week.

– The pro-choice group NARAL lashed Republican Sen. Marco Rubio for missing a bipartisan news conference on Zika to meet with GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump's running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence. The organization is running online ads to highlight the criticism.

Floridians see the partisan squabbles holding up action on Zika as "one more example of a broken Washington," said Susan MacManus, a political science professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa. But she's not surprised at the stalemate or the bickering.

"This issue is arising in the middle of a very contentious, competitive election," she said. "And each party wants to take credit for the good and dis their opponent with the bad. That's what we've seen happening on the Zika issue."

Congressional leaders have reported some progress in reaching a $1.1 billion deal to fund anti-Zika efforts, including vaccine development, insect spraying and distribution of testing kits. If a compromise is reached, it's likely to be attached to a broad spending bill lawmakers will be asked to vote on at the end of the month.

Earlier Zika legislation in the Republican-controlled Congress was blocked by Democrats who objected to unrelated provisions, including barriers to contraception, the display of the Confederate flag at national cemeteries and laxer environmental standards for pesticides. The deal being discussed would not include those.

Rubio and the Democrat running against him this year, Rep. Patrick Murphy, have spent weeks blaming each other for not doing enough to end the stalemate.

They both initially backed Obama's request in February for $1.9 billion, though Rubio also has supported GOP measures that would have provided less money and included provisions Murphy and others found objectionable.

On Wednesday, NARAL pounced on Rubio's absence from the bipartisan press conference the day before, saying he was "putting his own political needs ahead of the needs of women and families in Florida."

Rubio spokesman Olivia Perez-Cubas responded that Murphy "is the only candidate to have voted against every measure to fund Zika – once again putting himself and his political aspirations before Floridians."

Rubio spent part of Tuesday and Wednesday meeting with Scott, who admonished the Obama administration for ignoring Florida.

"Since June 1, I've asked for a plan to work with (the Federal Emergency Management Agency). Haven't given it to me," the governor told reporters. "The White House has not been a good partner."

Administration officials pushed back against Scott's allegations, detailing efforts they've made to help the state:

– A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention team was recently dispatched to Florida to monitor Zika efforts.

– The Health and Human Services Department has provided more than $35 million that can be used for Zika-related activities. In August, Florida received materials for an additional 6,300 lab tests in addition to the 2,000 already provided. CDC also provided on-site technical consultation to Florida's public health laboratories, enabling them to substantially increase testing capacity.

– FEMA officials have been in contact with the state to discuss the role the agency can play, though the White House said FEMA assistance may not be the best option for a mosquito-borne disease like Zika.

“This is why the president put forward a supplemental request in February, to ensure that states like Florida would have the resources they need to effectively response to Zika,” the White House spokesman said.

Grayson, the Democratic congressman from Orlando, said Scott should look in the mirror if there are fingers to be pointed.

Under the governor’s watch, state aid to mosquito control programs around Florida in 2011 was sliced 40% — from $2.16 million to $1.29 million — and he vetoed a $500,000 grant that would have kept a state mosquito lab open in Panama City.

“If the governor would revisit those decisions, that would be a good start in itself,” Grayson said.

Nelson was miffed that Scott singled him out for joining other Democrats in blocking the Zika bill.

“He should know better,” said Nelson. “This is a serious situation, not a time for partisan politics.”

Whom do voters blame? MacManus said the accusations have come in such rapid-fire, head-spinning fashion it’s hard to decide who’s the real culprit.

“There’s enough blame to go around for all officials in the minds of Floridians,” she said. “What they want is action, and there just doesn’t appear to be any out of Washington. That’s what they really find fault with.”

Rubio tried to strike a bipartisan tone Wednesday afternoon as he spoke on the Senate floor. He defended Nelson as an important ally in the push for Zika funding, then implored his colleagues to rally around a compromise.

“We fight about so many things around here,” Rubio said. “We have so many issues we could have a debate over. So let’s have debates about those issues. But isn’t there at least, when it comes to public health and safety, something we can say on this issue that we’re not going to play politics?”

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 11:10:35 -0400
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.co.us;christopher.c(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@nd.gov;(b)(6)@state.sd.us(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@utah.gov(b)(6)@wyo.gov;(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b
(b)(6)@state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@sba.gov(b)(6)@sba.gov;Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew(b)(6)@fs.fed.us;Alexander, Daniel
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Region VIII Clips

Thursday, October 27, 2016

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Hurricane Intensity Is Not Exaggerated To Scare People, And Here's How We Know **Washington Post.** Guest commentary by CSU professor who is considered an expert hurricane predictive science.

FEMA's Flood Insurance Program Is at the Center of the Climate Change Storm **Congressional Quarterly Roll Call**

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KTVH-TV Helena (MT), October 27, 2016

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The two new fire engines were delivered on Tuesday. Sen. Jon Tester and Rep. Ryan Zinke both got a look at the vehicles while visiting Fire Station #1.

The new pumpers will replace Helena's current engines, one from 1995 and one from 2005. All together, they cost just under $1 million. Helena Fire Chief Mark Emert says support from Zinke, Tester and Sen. Steve Daines was key to securing a FEMA grant to help pay for the equipment.

"The fire department's great, the firemen themselves dedicated," said Zinke after his tour. "But it's great to see them have the right equipment, the right training, the right mission focus to get the job done, and I think Helena ought to be proud of this department."

Emert says the new engines could be operational by the middle of November.

The 1995 engine will become a backup for the department, while the 2005 vehicle will be sold.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Moorhead mayor says Dayton wants to continue talks despite opposing F-M diversion

By Tu-Uyen Tran on Oct 26, 2016 at 6:16 p.m.

MOORHEAD — When Mayor Del Rae Williams met with Gov. Mark Dayton in St. Paul Tuesday Oct. 25, she said she walked him through several maps showing the effect of a 100-year flood on the city.

One shows how the city would look with sandbagging in place and one shows how it would look if the sandbags are breached.

It's not just along the Red River, but also inland, she said. Concordia College and Minnesota State University Moorhead would be affected, as would the area between them where she happens to live, she said.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has denied a permit application for a dam that's part of the Fargo-Moorhead flood diversion and Williams' task, as a member of the Diversion Authority, was to help avoid a deadlock. With her were City Engineer Bob Zimmerman, Rep. Ben Lien, DFL-Moorhead, Sen. Kent Eken, DFL-Twin Valley, and lobbyists for the Diversion Authority.

Dayton was joined by his staff and DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr.

"It was worthwhile to go down, but it's clear we still have some work to do," Williams said Wednesday Oct. 26.

The governor's spokesman said in a statement that the governor had a "very cordial and constructive meeting" with Lien, Eken, city leaders and the DNR. He said Dayton thanked the two lawmakers for "their leadership in starting this constructive conversation."

The Diversion Authority has until Wednesday, Nov. 2, to decide whether to appeal the DNR's decision.

Moorhead City Attorney John Shockley, who's also an attorney for the Diversion Authority, said his understanding is the decision was on the "permitability" of the dam — meaning can it actually get a permit — rather than the permit itself since no dam design has been submitted.

Focus on Minnesota

The DNR announced on Oct. 3 that it would deny the permit in part because it believes new dikes and emergency measures, such as sandbagging, are good enough, to the dismay of many local officials who have experienced desperate flood fights in the recent past. In a statement released the same day, Dayton said he supports the decision because the dam would flood a larger area in Minnesota than in North Dakota, but protect a smaller area.

For Williams, that small area includes 820 Moorhead homes, which she said might not seem like much compared to the thousands of homes at risk in Fargo, but "820 homes is a considerable amount of homes really."

"It's important to talk in terms of how it affects Minnesota land because that's his purview," she said.

Williams also suggested the DNR and Diversion Authority staff create a working group that would meet monthly to clarify their differences. She said she hopes they'll find a way to "tweak" the project in a way that would satisfy the DNR.

"We could tell that we had different viewpoints on certain things that weren't going to be resolved in this short little meeting," she said. "But the governor was very much up for continuing conversation about it, continuing to talk."

She said she didn't get an immediate response to her work-group proposal, but expected the DNR would need time to decide.

Council divided

Moorhead city leaders back some form of permanent flood protection, but support for the diversion project is mixed. The City Council on Monday, Oct. 24, voted 8-0 to approve a resolution in support of "permanent flood protection" by working with the Diversion Authority and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It also said that "emergency measures, including sandbagging, are an insufficient means to continue fighting spring and summer flood events and are not a workable solution for residents in the long term."

But other than the name of the Diversion Authority, it didn't mention support for the diversion.

Council member Heidi Durand said she and council members Mari Daley and Chuck Hendrickson asked that references to the diversion be replaced with "permanent flood protection" because they supported the latter but not the former. She has long opposed the diversion because it shifts the impact from the city to property owners who wouldn't now get flooded.

However, the only project the corps and the Diversion Authority is committed to is the diversion and several other commissioners expressed strong support for the project during discussion of the resolution on Oct. 11.

Council member Brenda Elmer said it's "outrageous" to expect Moorhead to rely on emergency measures. She also reminded colleagues that even if there isn't a flood anytime soon, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has said it will change the flood plain map to reflect new risks and many residents will have to pay much higher rates for flood insurance.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Hurricane Intensity Is Not Exaggerated To Scare People, And Here's How We Know

By Phil Klotzbach

Washington Post, October 26, 2016

Hurricane Matthew brushed the East Coast as a Category 4 in early October. It scoured the Florida coast with a storm surge that washed out roads and flooded homes and businesses. It dumped over a foot of rain on the Carolinas and triggered deadly flooding. And before all of this, Matthew devastated Haiti and killed at least 600 people — it's possible we'll never know the final death toll.

But the hurricane's deadly encounter with Haiti and multibillion-dollar brush with the East Coast wasn't bad enough for some people — mainly, Matt Drudge, a political commentator and news aggregator, who tweeted skepticism about Matthew's actual intensity as it barreled toward Florida. Perhaps, he suggested, the National Hurricane Center was overhyping the storm's maximum winds.

Drudge deletes his tweets regularly, so here's a screenshot from the morning of Oct. 7:

"The deplorables are starting to wonder if govt has been lying to them about Hurricane Matthew intensity to make exaggerated point on climate," Drudge mused. ("The deplorables" refers to supporters of Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.)

Then this (image saved by the BBC):

Drudge argued the point based on data from Caribbean weather stations and buoys that were not reporting winds as strong as what the National Hurricane Center used in its advisories. But the National Hurricane Center uses a lot of different methods to determine a hurricane's actual peak intensity, and there are some serious issues with relying simply on weather stations and buoys.

The National Hurricane Center — or NHC — uses a variety of satellite-based tools to estimate a hurricane's winds when the storm is far from land, and as the storm moves closer to land, additional devices are employed.

Hurricane Hunter aircraft are dispatched to investigate the storm in more detail. These planes measure winds both at flight-level, which is approximately 10,000 feet, as well as at the surface through the use of a device called a stepped-frequency microwave radiometer which measures radiation transmitted from the ocean surface back up to the airplane. When high winds churn up the ocean surface, the amount of microwave radiation measured is diffused compared with the amount of radiation measured when the ocean surface is calm.

NHC also utilizes devices called "dropwindsondes" that are dropped from the aircraft at about 10,000 feet and measure temperature, humidity, pressure and wind speed as they descend to the surface. When a storm nears shore, radars can also be utilized to estimate wind velocity.

All of these different measurement devices, combined with surface observations from ships and buoys, are combined to assess a storm's intensity.

There are several reasons buoys are likely to underestimate a hurricane's wind.

First, buoys utilize an eight-minute average maximum wind, and NHC uses one-minute average wind. The shorter the wind averaging time, the stronger the reported winds will be. The adjustment factor would be approximately 0.90, which means if a buoy measures 80-mph eight-minute average winds, the one-minute average wind would be about 89 mph.

A more significant bias in the buoy data is the insanely severe ocean conditions that it's reporting from. Waves in a major hurricane can be as high as 50 feet, and consequently, a buoy experiences very large crests and troughs as the hurricane passes over. When a buoy is on the crest of a wave, it is exposed to the full force of the surface winds, but when it is in the trough of a wave, it is going to be sheltered from the strongest winds. These weaker winds measured in the trough of a wave get averaged into the eight-minute averaging period measured by the buoy, which therefore gives the buoy's estimated wind speed in a hurricane a low bias.

Surface stations also have significant measurement challenges in hurricanes.

Often during strong wind speeds, the anemometers break. Storm surge can also wash away weather stations before the strongest winds come ashore.

Importantly, a hurricane's wind field is a wide swath, and the strongest winds may only be found in a small region of the hurricane. The number of surface stations in any area struck by a hurricane is likely not dense enough to accurately measure the strongest winds. For example, one 2014 study found that on average, "a single perfect anemometer experiencing a direct hit by the right side of the eyewall will underestimate the actual peak intensity by 10-20% percent. Even an unusually large number of anemometers (e.g., 3-5) experiencing direct hits by the storm together will underestimate the peak wind speeds by 5%-10%."

The number of surface weather stations reporting hurricane-force winds, even in notoriously strong United States landfalling hurricanes are surprisingly small. For example, in NHC's post-storm report on Hurricane Katrina (2005), a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Wind Scale, only five surface weather stations reported sustained hurricane-force winds, with the strongest sustained hurricane-force winds reported being 86 mph. Many of the surface stations reporting the strongest winds were also flagged by NHC as being incomplete, indicating failure of the station before the strongest winds likely occurred. For reference, NHC estimated Katrina's Louisiana landfall to have had maximum winds of 125 mph and its Mississippi landfall to have had maximum winds of 120 mph.

The peak winds in a hurricane are confined to a small region of the storm called the eyewall, which is the ring of thunderstorms that surround the eye. Beyond the eyewall, the wind speed drops off relatively quickly.

In the case of Hurricane Matthew, while the southeast United States suffered significant flooding damage due to both storm surge and heavy rain, the east coast of Florida dodged a huge bullet. Had Matthew tracked 50 miles farther to the west, the eyewall of the storm would have come ashore, causing much more extensive flooding as well as significant wind damage.

In any case, Matthew's strongest winds would likely not have been measured by a weather station. The National Hurricane Center provides the best analysis that science can offer.

FEMA's Flood Insurance Program Is at the Center of the Climate Change Storm

With the authorization of the program set to expire on Sept. 30, 2017, flood insurance could become a hot-button legislative issue next year.

Jeremy Dillon, CQ-Roll Call | October 18, 2016

Flood damage in Minot, N.D., in July 2011. (FEMA Photo by David Valdez)

(TNS) — As the federal government continues its disaster relief efforts after Hurricane Matthew and catastrophic flooding in Louisiana and other states, lawmakers and the Obama administration are considering how to limit the government's liability for increasingly severe natural disasters — and the solutions could include designating more places as flood-prone and encouraging residents to move out of harm's way.

At issue: The effects of climate change — more frequent flooding from torrential rains, hurricanes and other phenomena — are straining the federal flood insurance program, exposing U.S. taxpayers to a potentially growing price tag of flood relief payouts.

In the past five years, the National Flood Insurance Program, operated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), has taken in between $3.2 billion and $3.5 billion in premiums from its policyholders, and in most years that's more than enough to cover claims. In fiscal 2014, for example, it paid out about $372 million for claims, and its 2015 payout was approximately $839 million.

The problem arises in years with particularly powerful storms. In fiscal 2013, the agency paid out $8.2 billion mostly for damage resulting from Superstorm Sandy — well above the approximate $3.5 billion the NFIP acquired by premiums that year and enough to swamp the years in which premiums exceeded claims.

“The issues associated with adapting to climate change and making our country more resilient keep getting louder and louder,” said Brian Deese, a White House senior adviser on climate, during an event at Columbia University last week. “We know that the frequency and severity of natural disasters like hurricanes and droughts are increasing rapidly, and we need to deal with their impacts even if we succeed on the mitigation front.”

The flood insurance program is at the center of the climate change storm. And with the authorization of the program set to expire on Sept. 30, 2017, flood insurance could become a hot-button legislative issue next year.

“We are going to need to fully embed climate resilience in the way our federal agencies operate. We need to move away from this idea that you pay for rebuilding after the disaster strikes and move toward awarding resiliency efforts before the storm gets there,” Deese said. “We are going to need to have very tough conversations about things like the federal Flood Insurance Program and start to recognize what major insurance companies are recognizing, which is the 100-year flood standard is less useful when 100-year floods are occurring every five years.”

While Deese didn't say so directly, those tough choices could include some politically risky measures, such as redrawing the boundaries of flood zones, which could require more property owners to purchase flood insurance in order to qualify for mortgages.

Deese added that the federal government needs to look at “practices that expose the federal budget sheet and taxpayers to big, lingering liabilities.”

In a 2015 report, the Government Accountability Office came to the same conclusion: Losses generated by the program, as well as the potential for future losses, “have created substantial financial exposure for the federal government.” The flood program has been on GAO’s High Risk List since 2006, and the program owes $23 billion to the U.S. Treasury, according to a June report.

In a separate GAO report, issued in March, the agency said FEMA must do a better job of collecting information that would ensure that flood insurance premiums align with changes in flood risk — especially as those risks grow in areas where they historically occurred less frequently.

Region VIII Clips

Thursday, October 27, 2016

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Moorhead City Attorney John Shockley, who's also an attorney for the Diversion Authority, said his understanding is the decision was on the "permitability" of the dam — meaning can it actually get a permit — rather than the permit itself since no dam design has been submitted.

Focus on Minnesota

The DNR announced on Oct. 3 that it would deny the permit in part because it believes new dikes and emergency measures, such as sandbagging, are good enough, to the dismay of many local officials who have experienced desperate flood fights in the recent past. In a statement released the same day, Dayton said he supports the decision because the dam would flood a larger area in Minnesota than in North Dakota, but protect a smaller area.

For Williams, that small area includes 820 Moorhead homes, which she said might not seem like much compared to the thousands of homes at risk in Fargo, but "820 homes is a considerable amount of homes really."

"It's important to talk in terms of how it affects Minnesota land because that's his purview," she said.

Williams also suggested the DNR and Diversion Authority staff create a working group that would meet monthly to clarify their differences. She said she hopes they'll find a way to "tweak" the project in a way that would satisfy the DNR.

"We could tell that we had different viewpoints on certain things that weren't going to be resolved in this short little meeting," she said. "But the governor was very much up for continuing conversation about it, continuing to talk."

She said she didn't get an immediate response to her work-group proposal, but expected the DNR would need time to decide.

Council divided

Moorhead city leaders back some form of permanent flood protection, but support for the diversion project is mixed. The City Council on Monday, Oct. 24, voted 8-0 to approve a resolution in support of "permanent flood protection" by working with the Diversion Authority and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It also said that "emergency measures, including sandbagging, are an insufficient means to continue fighting spring and summer flood events and are not a workable solution for residents in the long term."

But other than the name of the Diversion Authority, it didn't mention support for the diversion.

Council member Heidi Durand said she and council members Mari Daley and Chuck Hendrickson asked that references to the diversion be replaced with "permanent flood protection" because they supported the latter but not the former. She has long opposed the diversion because it shifts the impact from the city to property owners who wouldn't now get flooded.

However, the only project the corps and the Diversion Authority is committed to is the diversion and several other commissioners expressed strong support for the project during discussion of the resolution on Oct. 11.

Council member Brenda Elmer said it's "outrageous" to expect Moorhead to rely on emergency measures. She also reminded colleagues that even if there isn't a flood anytime soon, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has said it will change the flood plain map to reflect new risks and many residents will have to pay much higher rates for flood insurance.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

UTAH:

WYOMING:

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Hurricane Intensity Is Not Exaggerated To Scare People, And Here's How We Know

By Phil Klotzbach

Washington Post, October 26, 2016

Hurricane Matthew brushed the East Coast as a Category 4 in early October. It scoured the Florida coast with a storm surge that washed out roads and flooded homes and businesses. It dumped over a foot of rain on the Carolinas and triggered deadly flooding. And before all of this, Matthew devastated Haiti and killed at least 600 people — it's possible we'll never know the final death toll.

But the hurricane's deadly encounter with Haiti and multibillion-dollar brush with the East Coast wasn't bad enough for some people — mainly, Matt Drudge, a political commentator and news aggregator, who tweeted skepticism about Matthew's actual intensity as it barreled toward Florida. Perhaps, he suggested, the National Hurricane Center was overhyping the storm's maximum winds.

Drudge deletes his tweets regularly, so here's a screenshot from the morning of Oct. 7:

"The deplorables are starting to wonder if govt has been lying to them about Hurricane Matthew intensity to make exaggerated point on climate," Drudge mused. ("The deplorables" refers to supporters of Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.)

Then this (image saved by the BBC):

Drudge argued the point based on data from Caribbean weather stations and buoys that were not reporting winds as strong as what the National Hurricane Center used in its advisories. But the National Hurricane Center uses a lot of different methods to determine a hurricane's actual peak intensity, and there are some serious issues with relying simply on weather stations and buoys.

The National Hurricane Center — or NHC — uses a variety of satellite-based tools to estimate a hurricane's winds when the storm is far from land, and as the storm moves closer to land, additional devices are employed.

Hurricane Hunter aircraft are dispatched to investigate the storm in more detail. These planes measure winds both at flight-level, which is approximately 10,000 feet, as well as at the surface through the use of a device called a stepped-frequency microwave radiometer which measures radiation transmitted from the ocean surface back up to the airplane. When high winds churn up the ocean surface, the amount of microwave radiation measured is diffused compared with the amount of radiation measured when the ocean surface is calm.

NHC also utilizes devices called "dropwindsondes" that are dropped from the aircraft at about 10,000 feet and measure temperature, humidity, pressure and wind speed as they descend to the surface. When a storm nears shore, radars can also be utilized to estimate wind velocity.

All of these different measurement devices, combined with surface observations from ships and buoys, are combined to assess a storm's intensity.

There are several reasons buoys are likely to underestimate a hurricane's wind.

First, buoys utilize an eight-minute average maximum wind, and NHC uses one-minute average wind. The shorter the wind averaging time, the stronger the reported winds will be. The adjustment factor would be approximately 0.90, which means if a buoy measures 80-mph eight-minute average winds, the one-minute average wind would be about 89 mph.

A more significant bias in the buoy data is the insanely severe ocean conditions that it's reporting from. Waves in a major hurricane can be as high as 50 feet, and consequently, a buoy experiences very large crests and troughs as the hurricane passes over. When a buoy is on the crest of a wave, it is exposed to the full force of the surface winds, but when it is in the trough of a wave, it is going to be sheltered from the strongest winds. These weaker winds measured in the trough of a wave get averaged into the eight-minute averaging period measured by the buoy, which therefore gives the buoy's estimated wind speed in a hurricane a low bias.

Surface stations also have significant measurement challenges in hurricanes.

Often during strong wind speeds, the anemometers break. Storm surge can also wash away weather stations before the strongest winds come ashore.

Importantly, a hurricane's wind field is a wide swath, and the strongest winds may only be found in a small region of the hurricane. The number of surface stations in any area struck by a hurricane is likely not dense enough to accurately measure the strongest winds. For example, one 2014 study found that on average, "a single perfect anemometer experiencing a direct hit by the right side of the eyewall will underestimate the actual peak intensity by 10-20% percent. Even an unusually large number of anemometers (e.g., 3-5) experiencing direct hits by the storm together will underestimate the peak wind speeds by 5%-10%."

The number of surface weather stations reporting hurricane-force winds, even in notoriously strong United States landfalling hurricanes are surprisingly small. For example, in NHC's post-storm report on Hurricane Katrina (2005), a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Wind Scale, only five surface weather stations reported sustained hurricane-force winds, with the strongest sustained hurricane-force winds reported being 86 mph. Many of the surface stations reporting the strongest winds were also flagged by NHC as being incomplete, indicating failure of the station before the strongest winds likely occurred. For reference, NHC estimated Katrina's Louisiana landfall to have had maximum winds of 125 mph and its Mississippi landfall to have had maximum winds of 120 mph.

The peak winds in a hurricane are confined to a small region of the storm called the eyewall, which is the ring of thunderstorms that surround the eye. Beyond the eyewall, the wind speed drops off relatively quickly.

In the case of Hurricane Matthew, while the southeast United States suffered significant flooding damage due to both storm surge and heavy rain, the east coast of Florida dodged a huge bullet. Had Matthew tracked 50 miles farther to the west, the eyewall of the storm would have come ashore, causing much more extensive flooding as well as significant wind damage.

In any case, Matthew's strongest winds would likely not have been measured by a weather station. The National Hurricane Center provides the best analysis that science can offer.

FEMA's Flood Insurance Program Is at the Center of the Climate Change Storm

With the authorization of the program set to expire on Sept. 30, 2017, flood insurance could become a hot-button legislative issue next year.

Jeremy Dillon, CQ-Roll Call | October 18, 2016

Flood damage in Minot, N.D., in July 2011. (FEMA Photo by David Valdez)

(TNS) — As the federal government continues its disaster relief efforts after Hurricane Matthew and catastrophic flooding in Louisiana and other states, lawmakers and the Obama administration are considering how to limit the government's liability for increasingly severe natural disasters — and the solutions could include designating more places as flood-prone and encouraging residents to move out of harm's way.

At issue: The effects of climate change — more frequent flooding from torrential rains, hurricanes and other phenomena — are straining the federal flood insurance program, exposing U.S. taxpayers to a potentially growing price tag of flood relief payouts.

In the past five years, the National Flood Insurance Program, operated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), has taken in between \$3.2 billion and \$3.5 billion in premiums from its policyholders, and in most years that's more than enough to cover claims. In fiscal 2014, for example, it paid out about \$372 million for claims, and its 2015 payout was approximately \$839 million.

The problem arises in years with particularly powerful storms. In fiscal 2013, the agency paid out \$8.2 billion mostly for damage resulting from Superstorm Sandy — well above the approximate \$3.5 billion the NFIP acquired by premiums that year and enough to swamp the years in which premiums exceeded claims.

"The issues associated with adapting to climate change and making our country more resilient keep getting louder and louder," said Brian Deese, a White House senior adviser on climate, during an event at Columbia University last week. "We know that the frequency and severity of natural disasters like hurricanes and droughts are increasing rapidly, and we need to deal with their impacts even if we succeed on the mitigation front."

The flood insurance program is at the center of the climate change storm. And with the authorization of the program set to expire on Sept. 30, 2017, flood insurance could become a hot-button legislative issue next year.

"We are going to need to fully embed climate resilience in the way our federal agencies operate. We need to move away from this idea that you pay for rebuilding after the disaster strikes and move toward awarding resiliency efforts before the storm gets there," Deese said. "We are going to need to have very tough conversations about things like the federal Flood Insurance Program and start to recognize what major insurance companies are recognizing, which is the 100-year flood standard is less useful when 100-year floods are occurring every five years."

While Deese didn't say so directly, those tough choices could include some politically risky measures, such as redrawing the boundaries of flood zones, which could require more property owners to purchase flood insurance in order to qualify for mortgages.

Deese added that the federal government needs to look at "practices that expose the federal budget sheet and taxpayers to big, lingering liabilities."

In a 2015 report, the Government Accountability Office came to the same conclusion: Losses generated by the program, as well as the potential for future losses, “have created substantial financial exposure for the federal government.” The flood program has been on GAO’s High Risk List since 2006, and the program owes $23 billion to the U.S. Treasury, according to a June report.

In a separate GAO report, issued in March, the agency said FEMA must do a better job of collecting information that would ensure that flood insurance premiums align with changes in flood risk — especially as those risks grow in areas where they historically occurred less frequently.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 11:10:12 -0400
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6)@mail.mil(b)(6)@state.sd.us(b)(6)@utah.gov(b)(6)@wyo.gov(b)(6)@nd.gov;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov;Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov(b)(6)s@sba.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, (b)(6)@mail.mil;Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel
Subject: Region VIII News Clips, Tuesday, August 16
Attachments: R8 Clips 08-16-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, August 16, 2016

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COLORADO:

Wildfire Near Agate In Eastern Colorado Scorches 2,000 Acres

By Kieran Nicholson

Denver Post, August 15, 2016

A wildfire in northeastern Colorado has burned about 2,000 acres, according to firefighters.

The Basin fire is burning about four miles east of Agate in a wide ravine, said Kara Gerczynski, an Elizabeth Fire Protection District spokeswoman.

There were no reports of injuries or structures lost to the fire, Gerczynski said.

About 30 firefighters and 25 trucks were working the fire, which was first reported at about 6:30 p.m. Monday.

"It's a little hard for the crews to get down into the ravine," Gerczynski said.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

MONTANA:

Bullock announces funding to rebuild community

AUGUST 12, 2016 BY M. CASTLEBERRY IN NEWS · 0 COMMENT

Governor Steve Bullock today announced that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding has been made available to the State of Montana to support recovery efforts of Fallon County in the aftermath of a severe tornado on June 11, 2016.

"The community of Baker can now get back on their feet and rebuild to become stronger and create more opportunities for future economic growth and job creation," said Governor Bullock.

On June 11, the Governor executed the State Emergency Management Plan with the activation of the State Emergency Coordination Center to a level three. A state disaster declaration was declared on July 18, 2016, with an effective date of June 9, 2016, for Fallon County.

A Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) was requested on July 1, 2016, and conducted from July 13 to July 14, 2016. The costs of responding to the storm exceeded the capability of the State of Montana.

On July 20, Governor Bullock requested FEMA evaluate the devastating effects of the tornado and affirm the area as a major disaster eligible for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. Federal funding is now available on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe tornado and the deposit of small and large debris into Lake Baker.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Cass County, Fargo voters will vote on diversion sales tax extensions

By Tu-Uyen Tran on Aug 15, 2016 at 8:47 p.m.

FARGO — City and county leaders have agreed to separate ballot measures extending their three sales taxes for decades to help pay for the $2.2 billion Fargo-Moorhead flood diversion.

"That will be the biggest amount of money that we'll ever vote on in the history of our lives," said Fargo City Commissioner Dave Piepkorn after joining his colleagues in a unanimous vote to put the measure on the Nov. 8 ballot.

The Cass County Commission also voted unanimously to do the same.

Together, the three sales taxes will pay for about half the project, which will protect Fargo-Moorhead from flooding on the Red River. The state and federal government has pledged enough funds for the remaining half.

The decision by the city and county commission didn't come easily though everyone agreed a sales tax extension was needed. Deliberating separately, they both agonized over language that was as restrictive as possible to win over skeptical voters.

Though both ballot measures will extend three half-cent sales taxes as late as Dec. 31, 2084, city and county leaders added language that implores their successors to pay off all debts as early as tax revenues allow. That is, they want to prevent future city and county leaders from making minimal payments and allowing surplus revenue to accrue.

County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling said the county paid off the jail debt early and taxpayers would want to see the same with the diversion.

Making millions

One of the reasons city and county leaders wanted these restrictions is the continuing growth of sales tax revenues, which will far exceed the annual debt payments required. By 2084, for example, the city and county are expected to collect more than $275 million a year while payments would be less than $50 million. This assumes revenue will grow 3 percent, a conservative rate compared to the actual rate of about 4 percent.

But investors don't like to buy government bonds based on money governments think they'll have but on what they have now. 2084 is how long it'll take for the city and county to pay off the debt if revenue doesn't grow at all.

Tom Rousakis, an executive with Ernst & Young who worked on the diversion financing plan, told county commissioners that it's entirely possible they'll pay off the debt by 2059 or 2061.

Cass County voters will be asked to extend the half-cent sales tax dedicated to flood control, which expires in 2031. The money is used to match city diversion funding with whatever's left — about 9 percent of the total — used for flood control elsewhere in the county, according to commissioners.

City voters will be asked to extend two half-cent sales taxes. One is dedicated to flood control and expires in 2029. Another is dedicated to both flood control and infrastructure, and expires in 2032.

City Commissioner Tony Gehrig won praise from his colleagues for proposing to have the second tax dedicated only to flood control, a move meant to assure voters the commission wouldn't try to take advantage of the revenue to pay for streets and sewers.

North Bismarck homeowners see property slipping away

- LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

LeAnn Eckroth

Aug 14, 2016

Water from an Aug. 10 downpour caused Hay Creek to overflow and flood Pebble Creek Golf Course and a walking trail.

Homeowners along Arizona Drive are questioning the long-term safety of their houses as some backyards dropped as much as seven feet in June.

"It keeps dropping every time there is a rain," said Jim Hopfauf, one of the homeowners affected by the collapsing hill where houses are perched in north Bismarck.

Residents are pointing the blame at overland flooding of Hay Creek below their properties.

The outcome of a Braun Intertec study on the slope above Pebble Creek Golf Course will be presented at 5:15 p.m. Thursday at the Bismarck Park Board meeting at the City/County Building.

Hopfauf and homeowner David Wolf, who cringe when it rains as heavily as it did Tuesday and Wednesday nights, said they have sought help from every local government entity, including the Burleigh County Water Resource District, the Bismarck Engineering Department, city utility services and the Bismarck Park District and consulted with the state. The entities and the homeowners shared in the cost of the study.

Since Hopfauf's home was built in 2004, about one-third of the backyard has sunk with the hill along with a tree line and a walking path — all of which are tumbling into Hay Creek, he said.

The walking path has been blocked off by the Bismarck Park District because it is no longer safe. It is not caused by excess stormwater flowing down his property but by overland flooding feeding Hay Creek from the north of the city, Hopfauf said.

More development has created more pavement and fewer fields to absorb the water before it feeds Hay Creek, according to Hopfauf.

Wolf has experienced the same in the past decade.

"Nobody has come up with a plan, and nobody is spending any money on it," he said. "As homeowners, we can't do anything until the hill is stable."

The problem became serious in October 2013. Noting the park district had installed riprap on the slope, Hopfauf, Wolf and a neighbor invested $20,000 in more riprap. That, too, is failing three years later, Hopfauf said.

Hopfauf suggests that some of the Hay Creek water could be diverted from winding below the hill and further eroding it.

Michael Gunsch, advisory engineer for the Burleigh County Water Resource District, will present the findings of the study at the meeting.

"There are two parts: There is the erosion of the banks near Hay Creek and the falling slopes the landowners are dealing with. They are totally different issues," he said.

The study suggests the rip-rap landscaping the owners placed to secure their land, is actually weighing it down, said Randy Bina, executive director of the Bismarck Parks and Recreation Department.

"The sloping by the residents' homes — that slope failure — is different than what might be happening below by Hay Creek," he said.

Bina said the walking trail, built in 2000, has dropped.

"We are closing that segment of the walking path for the time-being. The two property owners will be removing the rock. After the rock is removed, we'll have to make a determination on that section of trail," he said.

"It appears significant materials were added to the upper slope during the earlier slope repair," said Dave Mayer, operations director for the park district. "They had a direct negative effect with further degraded sloping."

He said water at Pebble Creek Golf Course quickly subsides.

"It's uncommon to close the golf course, but there are days when we do not allow golf carts because the course is wet," Mayer said.

The homeowners said they have been asked to removed the rock because of the study findings. Wolf and Hopfauf said they want to donate it for any future rip-rapping work further below the slope, if it helps.

For the bank stabilization near Hay Creek, the study suggests the city and park district cooperatively seek funding for a $295,000 bank stabilization project, consisting of rock and fabric, from the state Water Commission.

The study recommends a couple of alternatives for the homeowners, Bina said.

"The first is to remove the rock and some is with reshaping the slope. The next is hiring a consultant," he said.

Dakota Access pipeline owners sue North Dakota protesters

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Developers of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline sued in federal court Monday to stop protesters near an American Indian reservation in North Dakota from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

Dakota Access LLC filed a lawsuit against Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II and other protesters, seeking restraining orders and unspecified monetary damages.

The protesters "have created and will continue to create a risk of bodily injury and harm to Dakota Access employees and contractors, as well as to law enforcement personnel and other individuals at the construction site," the company wrote in court papers.

Archambault was among several protesters charged last week with disorderly conduct or criminal trespass at the construction site near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline, which will take crude oil from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota to Illinois and cross the Missouri River just upstream of the reservation. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Dakota Access said in court papers that threats have been made to workers, and rocks and bottles have been thrown, and that Archambault excused tribal employees from work last week to protest the pipeline's construction.

Archambault told reporters Monday that he was arrested for "doing what everybody else was doing: demonstrating." He said he expected more arrests and acts of civil disobedience to continue, calling the pipeline "a black poisonous snake" that "is made from nothing but greed."

Workers accompanied by armed private security guards started construction on the project near the reservation last week.

Several sheriff's deputies and about 30 North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers were on site Monday, and the highway patrol asked motorists to avoid a state highway near the reservation because of the protests.

Texas-based Dakota Access claims the protesters are causing the company "to lose goodwill among its customers" because of delays and are "diminishing" its "opportunity to complete construction of the pipeline's water crossing before its permits expire."

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Great Plains Fire reports several fires over weekend

August 14, 2016

Gary Matthews

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire dispatch reported several wildfires over the weekend.

On Saturday, the Brady Creek Fire burned had burned over 50 acres northwest of Kadoka. Fire crews had the blaze 75-percent contained Sunday afternoon. The fire was sparked by lightning.

The Mathews County Asist Fire burned approximately 35 acres southwest of Fort Pierre on Saturday. Lightning also sparked that fire.

Two small fires were reported in northeast Wyoming as well.

On Sunday, a grass fire was reported near New Underwood Road, north of I-90. It's believed lightning sparked the fire. There was not an estimate on its size as of Sunday evening.

La Nina to replace El Nino

August 15, 2016
By Jack Taylor

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (KELO AM) - Warming of the Pacific, or El Nino, is coming to an end and the long range prediction calls for La Nina to develop.

Acting South Dakota State Climatologist Laura Edwards says La Nina may have an impact in the fall and winter season.

Edwards says the likelihood of La Nina did go down a little bit from the prediction's center which indicates to her that it won't ben especially strong event.

She says La Nina means the Pacific will cool below normal adding that the northern plains may not take the brunt of the change.

She say the impacts in the northern plains may not be as strong as what we saw with El Nino last year.

In most La Nina years, Edwards says, our winters are colder.

But she says it doesn't have an impact on snowfall much. She says La Nina usually brings cooler than average temperatures.

Edwards says the extended forecast calls for cooler temperatures and above normal precipitation this fall.

South Dakota responds to Louisiana flooding

August 15, 2016
By Mark Russo

SIOUX FALLS, SD (KELO-AM) The Red Cross of Eastern South Dakota is sending a larger than usual contingent of volunteers to the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana.

"This is an unusually large disaster that is in need of a large response" says Executive Director Jennifer Ross.

She's sending at least seven volunteers. Two to five volunteers is a more typical response. Ross says that for Red Cross chapters in South and North Dakota combined a total of 15 volunteers are heading to the disaster. The Red Cross is also sending four emergency response vehicles.

"They're going to help assist with the relief, which means working in shelters, providing food and care and casework to the individuals who are affected by this flooding," says Ross.

At least seven people have died and some 20,000 have been rescued from the flooding.

UTAH:

WYOMING:

Progress made on Wyoming wildfires, several new blazes pop up over weekend

- Updated 12 hrs ago
- CHEYENNE — Firefighters have been making progress on battling wildfires in northwest Wyoming.
  The Hunter Peak Fire in the Shoshone National Forest northwest of Cody has increased in size to about 3 square miles, but most of that was because of firefighters conducting burnouts to help contain it.

The fire is about 5 percent contained.

Firefighters have gained about 15 percent containment on another fire that is burning about 20 miles southwest of Meeteetse. The Twin Lakes Fire was reported Friday evening and is about 1,000 acres. Firefighters also are making use of burnouts to help contain it.

In Yellowstone National Park, a new fire that started Saturday on the north side the park of is being monitored along with two other remote fires. A fire between Old Faithful and West Thumb was extinguished over the weekend.

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Intensity of 48-hour rainstorm caught Louisiana flat-footed

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, MELINDA DESLATTE and REBECCA SANTANA The Associated Press
First Published Aug 15 2016 05:06PM • Last Updated Aug 15 2016 08:42 pm

Baton Rouge, La. • An act of God is how some are describing it, a catastrophic 48-hour torrent of rain that sent thousands of people in Louisiana scrambling for safety and left many wondering how a region accustomed to hurricanes could get caught off guard so badly.

At least six people have been killed and more than 20,000 have had to be rescued since Friday in some of the worst flooding the state has ever seen.

As of Monday, the rain had mostly stopped, but rivers and creeks in many areas were still dangerously bloated and new places were getting hit by flooding. More than 11,000 people were staying in shelters; a movie studio and a civic center, which usually hosts concerts and ballets, were pressed into service.

"It was an absolute act of God. We're talking about places that have literally never flooded before," said Anthony "Ace" Cox, who started a Facebook group to help collect information about where people were stranded. He was in Baton Rouge to help his parents and grandparents, who were flooded out.

"Everybody got caught off guard," he said.

Forecasters said one reason was the sheer, almost off-the-charts intensity of the storm and the difficulty of predicting how bad it would be.

Meteorologist Ken Graham of the National Weather Service's office in Slidell said forecasters alerted people days in advance of the storms. The forecasts Thursday were for 8 inches of rain, with higher totals expected in some areas. But Graham emphasized that forecasting exactly how much rain is going to fall and where is nearly impossible. "It's one thing to say we're getting set up for a lot of rain. It's another thing to say where is this going to be," he said.

Some areas, such as the town of Zachary, received more than 2 feet of rain in a 48-hour period that ended Saturday morning. Another hard-hit area, Livingston, got nearly 22 inches during the same stretch.

Graham said the odds of that much rain were 1 in 500 in some places and 1 in 1,000 in others.

Unlike during a hurricane when shelters are established well in advance by parish governments and the Red Cross when the threat becomes obvious, shelters for those driven from their homes by the flooding were set up more haphazardly by parish officials.

As the scope of the disaster became clear, churches, schools and other places opened their doors to take in evacuees. Shelters filled up so fast that some people had to sleep on the floor

Saturday night because not enough cots had arrived. And some shelters had to shut down when they, too, started to take on water.

Marc and Crystal Matherne and their three children loaded up their cars with their three dogs and drove out of their flooded Baton Rouge neighborhood Sunday before the water got too deep to pass.

"I want to blame somebody because of all the hurt that's going on, but I don't know if anybody knew" how bad the flooding would be, Crystal Matherne said. "It just seemed like a normal event for us, but it wasn't."

Volunteers have also been going out in boats — locally referred to as the "Cajun Navy" — to rescue people, supplementing the efforts of National Guardsmen, state officials and Coast Guardsmen in high-water vehicles, boats and helicopters.

Jared Serigne of St. Bernard Parish said he helped organize volunteer efforts involving roughly 70 experienced boaters who helped hundreds of people from flooded communities. He criticized government officials for closing roads, a move that prevented boats from reaching launch areas.

"You've got all of these people who hunt and fish who have more experience than the average first responder," he said.

But going out on the water carries dangers, too.

Lt. Davis Madere of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, who spent days rescuing people and their animals, said the floodwaters are a potential minefield of submerged vehicles, fences and mailboxes that can trip up boats.

Above the water, he said, snakes trying to escape the deluge have been spotted in trees, and rescuers must be careful of power lines that are close overhead because the water is so high.

National Guard Col. Ed Bush said parish officials want the volunteer rescuers to coordinate more with the authorities overseeing the rescue effort.

"What they're trying to do is prevent overzealous people from getting stuck themselves. We've had a couple of examples of that," Bush said.

By The Numbers: A Look At Flooding That Ravaged Louisiana

Associated Press, August 16, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — A look at the deadly flooding that has ravaged Louisiana:

— 7: The number of storm-related deaths since rain began falling Friday.

— More than 20,000: The number of people who have had to be rescued from their homes as floodwaters rose.

— More than 11,000: The number of people staying in shelters.

— More than 2,000: The number of evacuees staying at a large film studio complex that has been turned into a makeshift shelter.

— More than 500: The number of pets rescued.

— 48 hours: The amount of time a torrent of rain fell across parts of south Louisiana.

— More than 2 feet: The amount of rain that fell in two days in the town of Zachary, Louisiana.

— 8 inches: The amount of rain initially forecast on Thursday, with some higher totals possible in some areas.

— 12 percent: The portion of homes in hard-hit Baton Rouge covered by flood insurance; in Lafayette, which has also been hammered, the number is 14 percent.

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Tuesday, August 16, 2016

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Intensity of 48-hour rainstorm caught Louisiana flat-footed Associated Press

By The Numbers: A Look At Flooding That Ravaged Louisiana

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COLORADO:

Wildfire Near Agate In Eastern Colorado Scorches 2,000 Acres

By Kieran Nicholson

Denver Post, August 15, 2016

A wildfire in northeastern Colorado has burned about 2,000 acres, according to firefighters.

The Basin fire is burning about four miles east of Agate in a wide ravine, said Kara Gerczynski, an Elizabeth Fire Protection District spokeswoman.

There were no reports of injuries or structures lost to the fire, Gerczynski said.

About 30 firefighters and 25 trucks were working the fire, which was first reported at about 6:30 p.m. Monday.

“It’s a little hard for the crews to get down into the ravine,” Gerczynski said.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

MONTANA:

Bullock announces funding to rebuild community

AUGUST 12, 2016 IN NEWS ·

Governor Steve Bullock today announced that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding has been made available to the State of Montana to support recovery efforts of Fallon County in the aftermath of a severe tornado on June 11, 2016.

“The community of Baker can now get back on their feet and rebuild to become stronger and create more opportunities for future economic growth and job creation,” said Governor Bullock.

On June 11, the Governor executed the State Emergency Management Plan with the activation of the State Emergency Coordination Center to a level three. A state disaster declaration was declared on July 18, 2016, with an effective date of June 9, 2016, for Fallon County.

A Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) was requested on July 1, 2016, and conducted from July 13 to July 14, 2016. The costs of responding to the storm exceeded the capability of the State of Montana.

On July 20, Governor Bullock requested FEMA evaluate the devastating effects of the tornado and affirm the area as a major disaster eligible for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. Federal funding is now available on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the severe tornado and the deposit of small and large debris into Lake Baker.

NORTH DAKOTA:

Cass County, Fargo voters will vote on diversion sales tax extensions

By Tu-Uyen Tran on Aug 15, 2016 at 8:47 p.m.

FARGO — City and county leaders have agreed to separate ballot measures extending their three sales taxes for decades to help pay for the $2.2 billion Fargo-Moorhead flood diversion.

"That will be the biggest amount of money that we'll ever vote on in the history of our lives," said Fargo City Commissioner Dave Piepkorn after joining his colleagues in a unanimous vote to put the measure on the Nov. 8 ballot.

The Cass County Commission also voted unanimously to do the same.

Together, the three sales taxes will pay for about half the project, which will protect Fargo-Moorhead from flooding on the Red River. The state and federal government has pledged enough funds for the remaining half.

The decision by the city and county commission didn't come easily though everyone agreed a sales tax extension was needed. Deliberating separately, they both agonized over language that was as restrictive as possible to win over skeptical voters.

Though both ballot measures will extend three half-cent sales taxes as late as Dec. 31, 2084, city and county leaders added language that implores their successors to pay off all debts as early as tax revenues allow. That is, they want to prevent future city and county leaders from making minimal payments and allowing surplus revenue to accrue.

County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling said the county paid off the jail debt early and taxpayers would want to see the same with the diversion.

Making millions

One of the reasons city and county leaders wanted these restrictions is the continuing growth of sales tax revenues, which will far exceed the annual debt payments required. By 2084, for example, the city and county are expected to collect more than $275 million a year while payments would be less than $50 million. This assumes revenue will grow 3 percent, a conservative rate compared to the actual rate of about 4 percent.

But investors don't like to buy government bonds based on money governments think they'll have but on what they have now. 2084 is how long it'll take for the city and county to pay off the debt if revenue doesn't grow at all.

Tom Rousakis, an executive with Ernst & Young who worked on the diversion financing plan, told county commissioners that it's entirely possible they'll pay off the debt by 2059 or 2061.

Cass County voters will be asked to extend the half-cent sales tax dedicated to flood control, which expires in 2031. The money is used to match city diversion funding with whatever's left — about 9 percent of the total — used for flood control elsewhere in the county, according to commissioners.

City voters will be asked to extend two half-cent sales taxes. One is dedicated to flood control and expires in 2029. Another is dedicated to both flood control and infrastructure, and expires in 2032.

City Commissioner Tony Gehrig won praise from his colleagues for proposing to have the second tax dedicated only to flood control, a move meant to assure voters the commission wouldn't try to take advantage of the revenue to pay for streets and sewers.

North Bismarck homeowners see property slipping away

- LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune

Aug 14, 2016

Water from an Aug. 10 downpour caused Hay Creek to overflow and flood Pebble Creek Golf Course and a walking trail.

Homeowners along Arizona Drive are questioning the long-term safety of their houses as some backyards dropped as much as seven feet in June.

"It keeps dropping every time there is a rain," said Jim Hopfauf, one of the homeowners affected by the collapsing hill where houses are perched in north Bismarck.

Residents are pointing the blame at overland flooding of Hay Creek below their properties.

The outcome of a Braun Intertec study on the slope above Pebble Creek Golf Course will be presented at 5:15 p.m. Thursday at the Bismarck Park Board meeting at the City/County Building.

Hopfauf and homeowner David Wolf, who cringe when it rains as heavily as it did Tuesday and Wednesday nights, said they have sought help from every local government entity, including the Burleigh County Water Resource District, the Bismarck Engineering Department, city utility services and the Bismarck Park District and consulted with the state. The entities and the homeowners shared in the cost of the study.

Since Hopfauf's home was built in 2004, about one-third of the backyard has sunk with the hill along with a tree line and a walking path — all of which are tumbling into Hay Creek, he said.

The walking path has been blocked off by the Bismarck Park District because it is no longer safe. It is not caused by excess stormwater flowing down his property but by overland flooding feeding Hay Creek from the north of the city, Hopfauf said.

More development has created more pavement and fewer fields to absorb the water before it feeds Hay Creek, according to Hopfauf.

Wolf has experienced the same in the past decade.

"Nobody has come up with a plan, and nobody is spending any money on it," he said. "As homeowners, we can't do anything until the hill is stable."

The problem became serious in October 2013. Noting the park district had installed riprap on the slope, Hopfauf, Wolf and a neighbor invested $20,000 in more riprap. That, too, is failing three years later, Hopfauf said.

Hopfauf suggests that some of the Hay Creek water could be diverted from winding below the hill and further eroding it.

Michael Gunsch, advisory engineer for the Burleigh County Water Resource District, will present the findings of the study at the meeting.

"There are two parts: There is the erosion of the banks near Hay Creek and the falling slopes the landowners are dealing with. They are totally different issues," he said.

The study suggests the rip-rap landscaping the owners placed to secure their land, is actually weighing it down, said Randy Bina, executive director of the Bismarck Parks and Recreation Department.

"The sloping by the residents' homes — that slope failure — is different than what might be happening below by Hay Creek," he said.

Bina said the walking trail, built in 2000, has dropped.

"We are closing that segment of the walking path for the time-being. The two property owners will be removing the rock. After the rock is removed, we'll have to make a determination on that section of trail," he said.

"It appears significant materials were added to the upper slope during the earlier slope repair," said Dave Mayer, operations director for the park district. "They had a direct negative effect with further degraded sloping."

He said water at Pebble Creek Golf Course quickly subsides.

"It's uncommon to close the golf course, but there are days when we do not allow golf carts because the course is wet," Mayer said.

The homeowners said they have been asked to removed the rock because of the study findings. Wolf and Hopfauf said they want to donate it for any future rip-rapping work further below the slope, if it helps.

For the bank stabilization near Hay Creek, the study suggests the city and park district cooperatively seek funding for a $295,000 bank stabilization project, consisting of rock and fabric, from the state Water Commission.

The study recommends a couple of alternatives for the homeowners, Bina said.

"The first is to remove the rock and some is with reshaping the slope. The next is hiring a consultant," he said.

Dakota Access pipeline owners sue North Dakota protesters

- By JAMES MacPHERSON
- 17 hrs ago

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Developers of a $3.8 billion, four-state oil pipeline sued in federal court Monday to stop protesters near an American Indian reservation in North Dakota from interfering with the project, alleging the safety of workers and law enforcement is at risk.

Dakota Access LLC filed a lawsuit against Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman David Archambault II and other protesters, seeking restraining orders and unspecified monetary damages.

The protesters "have created and will continue to create a risk of bodily injury and harm to Dakota Access employees and contractors, as well as to law enforcement personnel and other individuals at the construction site," the company wrote in court papers.

Archambault was among several protesters charged last week with disorderly conduct or criminal trespass at the construction site near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

The tribe sued federal regulators late last month for approving the pipeline, which will take crude oil from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota to Illinois and cross the Missouri River just upstream of the reservation. The tribe argues the pipeline would disturb sacred sites and affect drinking water for the thousands of residents on the reservation and the millions who rely on it downstream.

Dakota Access said in court papers that threats have been made to workers, and rocks and bottles have been thrown, and that Archambault excused tribal employees from work last week to protest the pipeline's construction.

Archambault told reporters Monday that he was arrested for "doing what everybody else was doing: demonstrating." He said he expected more arrests and acts of civil disobedience to continue, calling the pipeline "a black poisonous snake" that "is made from nothing but greed."

Workers accompanied by armed private security guards started construction on the project near the reservation last week.

Several sheriff's deputies and about 30 North Dakota Highway Patrol troopers were on site Monday, and the highway patrol asked motorists to avoid a state highway near the reservation because of the protests.

Texas-based Dakota Access claims the protesters are causing the company "to lose goodwill among its customers" because of delays and are "diminishing" its "opportunity to complete construction of the pipeline's water crossing before its permits expire."

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Great Plains Fire reports several fires over weekend

August 14, 2016

Gary Matthews

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The Great Plains Fire dispatch reported several wildfires over the weekend.

On Saturday, the Brady Creek Fire burned had burned over 50 acres northwest of Kadoka. Fire crews had the blaze 75-percent contained Sunday afternoon. The fire was sparked by lightning.

The Mathews County Asist Fire burned approximately 35 acres southwest of Fort Pierre on Saturday. Lightning also sparked that fire.

Two small fires were reported in northeast Wyoming as well.

On Sunday, a grass fire was reported near New Underwood Road, north of I-90. It's believed lightning sparked the fire. There was not an estimate on its size as of Sunday evening.

La Nina to replace El Nino

August 15, 2016
By Jack Taylor

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (KELO AM) - Warming of the Pacific, or El Nino, is coming to an end and the long range prediction calls for La Nina to develop.

Acting South Dakota State Climatologist Laura Edwards says La Nina may have an impact in the fall and winter season.

Edwards says the likelihood of La Nina did go down a little bit from the prediction's center which indicates to her that it won't ben especially strong event.

She says La Nina means the Pacific will cool below normal adding that the northern plains may not take the brunt of the change.

She say the impacts in the northern plains may not be as strong as what we saw with El Nino last year.

In most La Nina years, Edwards says, our winters are colder.

But she says it doesn't have an impact on snowfall much. She says La Nina usually brings cooler than average temperatures.

Edwards says the extended forecast calls for cooler temperatures and above normal precipitation this fall.

South Dakota responds to Louisiana flooding

August 15, 2016
By Mark Russo

SIOUX FALLS, SD (KELO-AM) The Red Cross of Eastern South Dakota is sending a larger than usual contingent of volunteers to the catastrophic flooding in Louisiana.

"This is an unusually large disaster that is in need of a large response" says Executive Director Jennifer Ross.

She's sending at least seven volunteers. Two to five volunteers is a more typical response. Ross says that for Red Cross chapters in South and North Dakota combined a total of 15 volunteers are heading to the disaster. The Red Cross is also sending four emergency response vehicles.

"They're going to help assist with the relief, which means working in shelters, providing food and care and casework to the individuals who are affected by this flooding," says Ross.

At least seven people have died and some 20,000 have been rescued from the flooding.

UTAH:

WYOMING:

Progress made on Wyoming wildfires, several new blazes pop up over weekend

- Updated 12 hrs ago
- CHEYENNE — Firefighters have been making progress on battling wildfires in northwest Wyoming.

The Hunter Peak Fire in the Shoshone National Forest northwest of Cody has increased in size to about 3 square miles, but most of that was because of firefighters conducting burnouts to help contain it.

The fire is about 5 percent contained.

Firefighters have gained about 15 percent containment on another fire that is burning about 20 miles southwest of Meeteetse. The Twin Lakes Fire was reported Friday evening and is about 1,000 acres. Firefighters also are making use of burnouts to help contain it.

In Yellowstone National Park, a new fire that started Saturday on the north side the park of is being monitored along with two other remote fires. A fire between Old Faithful and West Thumb was extinguished over the weekend.

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Intensity of 48-hour rainstorm caught Louisiana flat-footed

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, MELINDA DESLATTE and REBECCA SANTANA The Associated Press
First Published Aug 15 2016 05:06PM • Last Updated Aug 15 2016 08:42 pm

Baton Rouge, La. • An act of God is how some are describing it, a catastrophic 48-hour torrent of rain that sent thousands of people in Louisiana scrambling for safety and left many wondering how a region accustomed to hurricanes could get caught off guard so badly.

At least six people have been killed and more than 20,000 have had to be rescued since Friday in some of the worst flooding the state has ever seen.

As of Monday, the rain had mostly stopped, but rivers and creeks in many areas were still dangerously bloated and new places were getting hit by flooding. More than 11,000 people were staying in shelters; a movie studio and a civic center, which usually hosts concerts and ballets, were pressed into service.

"It was an absolute act of God. We're talking about places that have literally never flooded before," said Anthony "Ace" Cox, who started a Facebook group to help collect information about where people were stranded. He was in Baton Rouge to help his parents and grandparents, who were flooded out.

"Everybody got caught off guard," he said.

Forecasters said one reason was the sheer, almost off-the-charts intensity of the storm and the difficulty of predicting how bad it would be.

Meteorologist Ken Graham of the National Weather Service's office in Slidell said forecasters alerted people days in advance of the storms. The forecasts Thursday were for 8 inches of rain, with higher totals expected in some areas. But Graham emphasized that forecasting exactly how much rain is going to fall and where is nearly impossible. "It's one thing to say we're getting set up for a lot of rain. It's another thing to say where is this going to be," he said.

Some areas, such as the town of Zachary, received more than 2 feet of rain in a 48-hour period that ended Saturday morning. Another hard-hit area, Livingston, got nearly 22 inches during the same stretch.

Graham said the odds of that much rain were 1 in 500 in some places and 1 in 1,000 in others.

Unlike during a hurricane when shelters are established well in advance by parish governments and the Red Cross when the threat becomes obvious, shelters for those driven from their homes by the flooding were set up more haphazardly by parish officials.

As the scope of the disaster became clear, churches, schools and other places opened their doors to take in evacuees. Shelters filled up so fast that some people had to sleep on the floor Saturday night because not enough cots had arrived. And some shelters had to shut down when they, too, started to take on water.

Marc and Crystal Matherne and their three children loaded up their cars with their three dogs and drove out of their flooded Baton Rouge neighborhood Sunday before the water got too deep to pass.

"I want to blame somebody because of all the hurt that's going on, but I don't know if anybody knew" how bad the flooding would be, Crystal Matherne said. "It just seemed like a normal event for us, but it wasn't."

Volunteers have also been going out in boats — locally referred to as the "Cajun Navy" — to rescue people, supplementing the efforts of National Guardsmen, state officials and Coast Guardsmen in high-water vehicles, boats and helicopters.

Jared Serigne of St. Bernard Parish said he helped organize volunteer efforts involving roughly 70 experienced boaters who helped hundreds of people from flooded communities. He criticized government officials for closing roads, a move that prevented boats from reaching launch areas.

"You've got all of these people who hunt and fish who have more experience than the average first responder," he said.

But going out on the water carries dangers, too.

Lt. Davis Madere of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, who spent days rescuing people and their animals, said the floodwaters are a potential minefield of submerged vehicles, fences and mailboxes that can trip up boats.

Above the water, he said, snakes trying to escape the deluge have been spotted in trees, and rescuers must be careful of power lines that are close overhead because the water is so high.

National Guard Col. Ed Bush said parish officials want the volunteer rescuers to coordinate more with the authorities overseeing the rescue effort.

"What they're trying to do is prevent overzealous people from getting stuck themselves. We've had a couple of examples of that," Bush said.

By The Numbers: A Look At Flooding That Ravaged Louisiana

Associated Press, August 16, 2016

BATON ROUGE, La. — A look at the deadly flooding that has ravaged Louisiana:

— 7: The number of storm-related deaths since rain began falling Friday.

— More than 20,000: The number of people who have had to be rescued from their homes as floodwaters rose.

— More than 11,000: The number of people staying in shelters.

— More than 2,000: The number of evacuees staying at a large film studio complex that has been turned into a makeshift shelter.

— More than 500: The number of pets rescued.

— 48 hours: The amount of time a torrent of rain fell across parts of south Louisiana.

— More than 2 feet: The amount of rain that fell in two days in the town of Zachary, Louisiana.

— 8 inches: The amount of rain initially forecast on Thursday, with some higher totals possible in some areas.

— 12 percent: The portion of homes in hard-hit Baton Rouge covered by flood insurance; in Lafayette, which has also been hammered, the number is 14 percent.

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 3 May 2016 16:02:20 +0000
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc:
(b)(6)@state.co.us(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@state.sd.us(b)(6)@utah.gov;(b)(6)@wyo.gov;(b)(6)@nd.gov;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov;Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@mail.mil;Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us;(b)(6)@state.co.us;Wetherington, Jeffrey
Subject: Region VIII News Clips, Tuesday, May 3
Attachments: @

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Spill contamination lingering years later, study says Bismarck Tribune

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Past fireworks contaminated water at Mount Rushmore <http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/updated-past-fireworks-contaminated-water-at-mount-rushmore/article_bf0a070c-6ec6-558e-af5a-230fec07be5d.html>

UTAH:

Utah governor inspects wind damage, thanks cleanup crews Salt Lake Tribune

A wet spring spells a normal wildfire season for Utah, so far Salt Lake Tribune

WYOMING:

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

STORIES

COLORADO:

The

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 20 Apr 2016 14:34:32 +0000
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us;(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@utah.gov;(b)(6)@wyo.gov;(b)(6)@nd.gov(b)(6)@state.sd.us;(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov;Wernisch, Phil;Coley, Robert(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;Bonza, Dale;Ruiz, Benigno;(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@mail.mil;Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr, Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us;(b)(6)@state.co.us;Wetherington, Jeffrey
Subject: Region VIII News Clips, Wednesday, April 20
Attachments: @

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Annual Bug Battle Begins Over High Profile Trees <http://origin-www.keloland.com/news/article/news/annual-bug-battle-begins-over-high-profile-trees> KELO-TV, Sioux Falls

Cleanup continues at Keystone spill site, more contaminated soil found

<http://www.argusleader.com/story/news/2016/04/19/cleanup-continues-keystone-spill-site-more-contaminated-soil-found/83248948/>   Sioux Falls Argus Leader

UTAH:

New report reveals 'disconcerting' earthquake risk along Wasatch Front KSL Radio, Salt Lake

Major earthquake 'imminent,' could result in thousands of deaths KUTV-Salt Lake City

Study shows big earthquake could hit Utah in the next 50 years Fox 13 TV, Salt Lake City

New Report Forecasts the High Likelihood of Damaging Earthquakes During the Lifetime of Many Utah Residents (press release—USGS/UT DNR)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 19:53:01 +0000
To: Hvinden, Brian
Subject: Short update on OST

This weekend could likely be a very continuous weekend up in the Bismarck, Mandan and Standing Rock area.

- Tomorrow Federal court is expected to make a decision about whether to block construction of the pipeline. The Tribe has challenged the USACE decision to grant the permit to the pipeline company.
- This weekend in the United Tribes Technical Collage International Powwow in Bismarck. This is typically a huge event. Many of the tribes who have written support for or are part of the protest at Standing Rock are on the board of directors. This year's theme is *Empowerment Though Unity*.
- Yesterday and today the Tribal Leaders Summit is taking place, this is always happened before the Powwow. There has been a lot of discussion at the meeting about the Pipeline and the protest.
- **The Governor of ND has activated (although no a full mobilization) the National Guard as backup for law enforcement in anticipation of the ruling.**
- There are ongoing reports of violence on both sides,
- The chairman has issued a statement calling for peace.

(Sources: media and social media)

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 8 Sep 2016 19:47:42 +0000
To: Hudson, Lamont
Subject: some clips

Gov. Dalrymple calls on ND National Guard to assist with Dakota Access Pipeline protest security

http://www.kfyrtv.com/content/news/Gov-Dalrymple-calls-on-ND-National-Guard-to-assist-with-Dakota-Access-Pipeline-protest-security-392768331.html

BISMARCK, N.D.- Gov. Jack Dalrymple announced Thursday that the Morton County Sheriff's Department will receive help from the North Dakota National Guard as well as sheriff's officers throughout the state to help deal with the ongoing protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann says this is not a full mobilization.

He says the National Guard personnel will serve in administrative, assistant role, deferring to the sheriff's department. He also says guardsmen will be stationed at traffic check points and will likely be armed the same as highway patrol.

National guardsmen are coming from Bismarck, Mayville and Fargo. They have law enforcement background but are not peace officers.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeir says his office has received reports of people intimidating residents in a variety of ways including playing "chicken" with drivers on County roads which has lead to increased patrols.

Standing Rock Chairman David Archambault II also released the following statement Thursday calling for peace in anticipation of the Sept. 9 court ruling:

Thousands of people, from members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, tribes across the nation and First Nations in Canada, to non-Native supporters in the United States and around the world, have stood in solidarity against the harm and destruction caused by the Dakota Access Pipeline.

We have stood side by side in peaceful prayer.

The pipeline threatens our sacred lands and the health of 17 million people who rely upon the Missouri River for water. There is a lot at stake with the court decision tomorrow. We call upon all water protectors to greet any decision with peace and order. Even if the outcome of the court's ruling is not in our favor, we will continue to explore every lawful option and fight against the construction of the pipeline.

Any act of violence hurts our cause and is not welcome here. We invite all supporters to join us in prayer that, ultimately, the right decision—the moral decision—is made to protect our people, our sacred places, our land and our resources.

The ruling will decide whether construction can continue on the Dakota Access Pipeline.

North Dakota governor asks for National Guard assistance in pipeline protest

By Forum News Service Today at 12:52 p.m. http://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/4110814-north-dakota-governor-asks-national-guard-assistance-pipeline-protest

Tom Stromme/Bismarck Tribune

MANDAN, N.D. -- Gov. Jack Dalrymple said he has asked the North Dakota National Guard for support in responding to law enforcement efforts at the Dakota Access Pipeline protest site south of Mandan.

The announcement came during a news conference Thursday, Sept. 8.

“Because of the increased and prolonged need for law enforcement resources, I have asked General (Al) Dohrman to make available some North Dakota National Guard personnel to support law enforcement and augment their public safety efforts,” Dalrymple said.

- Complete archive of Dakota Access Pipeline coverage

The governor said National Guard members will serve in administrative capacities and help provide security at traffic points.

“I have also placed additional Guardsmen on standby alert in the event they are needed to assist with response efforts,” Dalrymple said.

The move comes in advance of an expected ruling by Friday on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s request for an emergency injunction to halt construction of the pipeline, which will cross the Missouri River less than a mile north of the Standing Rock reservation. The tribe fears the pipeline will leak and contaminate its water supply and sacred sites, and its lawsuit claims the corps failed to consider the historical and cultural significance of that area.

- Wetterling case gives another MN family hope son will be found

Previously, Jeff Zent, a spokesman for Dalrymple, said plans were under way for additional law enforcement officers in the Bismarck-Mandan area and enhanced patrols in Morton County, where hundreds of protesters are camped out near a pipeline construction site along Highway 1806 about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Thirty-seven people have been arrested on charges including preventing arrest, disorderly conduct and criminal trespass in connection with protests at pipeline construction sites in Morton County that began in mid-August.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 20 Sep 2016 17:39:09 -0400
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Stacie - my week, Sept 19-23

Activities:

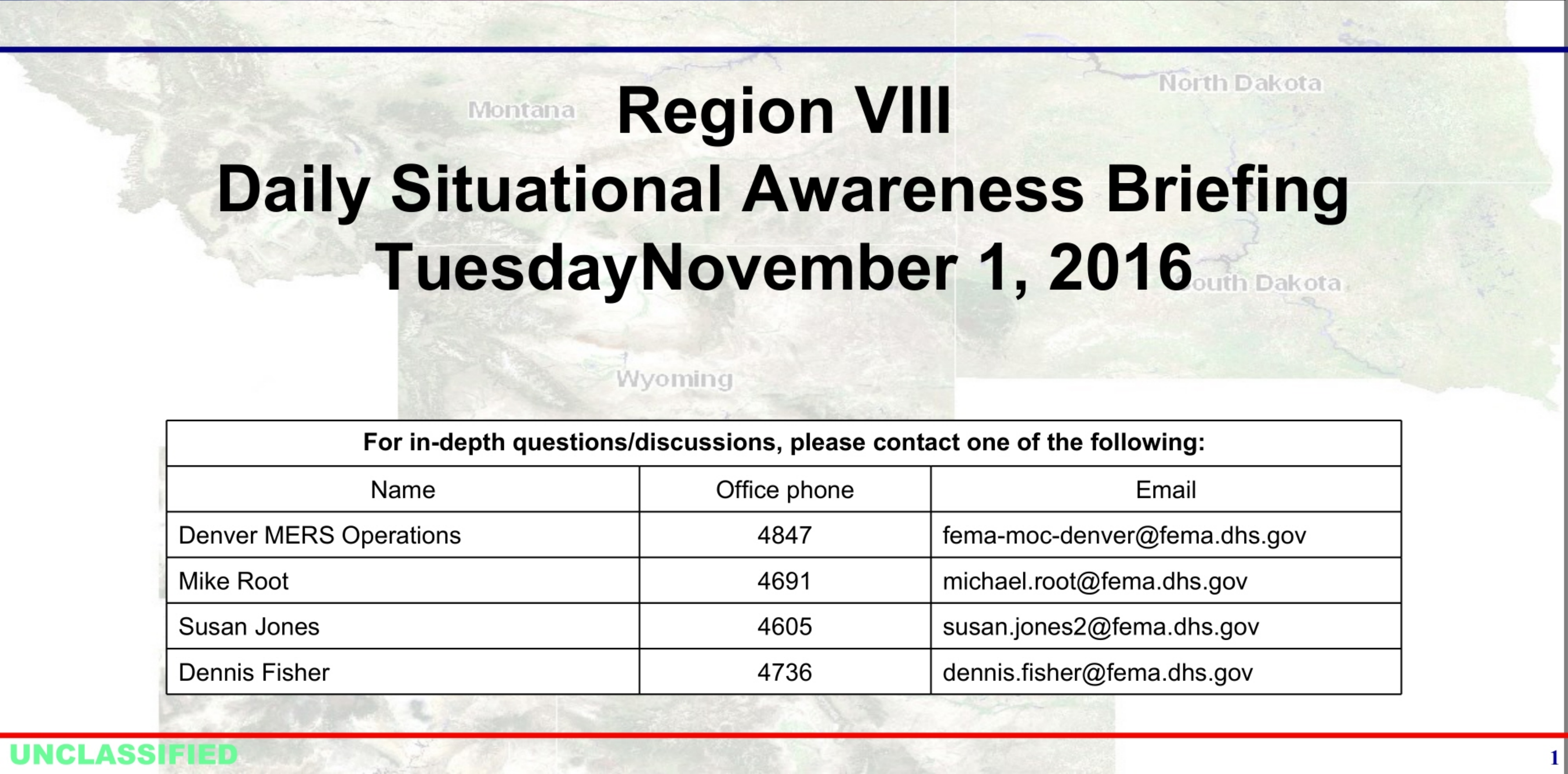
- Support to ARA/NORTHCOMM in development of a Senior Leader's Strategic Guide, communication sections.
- Pipeline Issue. Support HQ relating to congressional interest in getting funds for the State for law enforcement. *Expect more work on this. Was HOT.
- Regional pre-planning for 2017 priorities planning
- Work with Ali T. on EA director agenda for meeting next week.
- Performance plan updates.
- Dig out on a host of outstanding issues that I haven't had capacity to address.
- Meetings, meetings, meetings.

Issues:

- Ensure FY16 budget completion at high percent, Sept 30.
- Running out of time for any Performance Plan changes.
- Feedback to R8 leadership/HQ as appropriate, ongoing protests at Standing Rock.
- Continue to monitor, hurricane season.

Schedule:

- Mon, Tues and Thurs in office
- Wed in region, but leave in for 1.5 hours early.
- Friday teleworking. Leave 830-930 a.m.



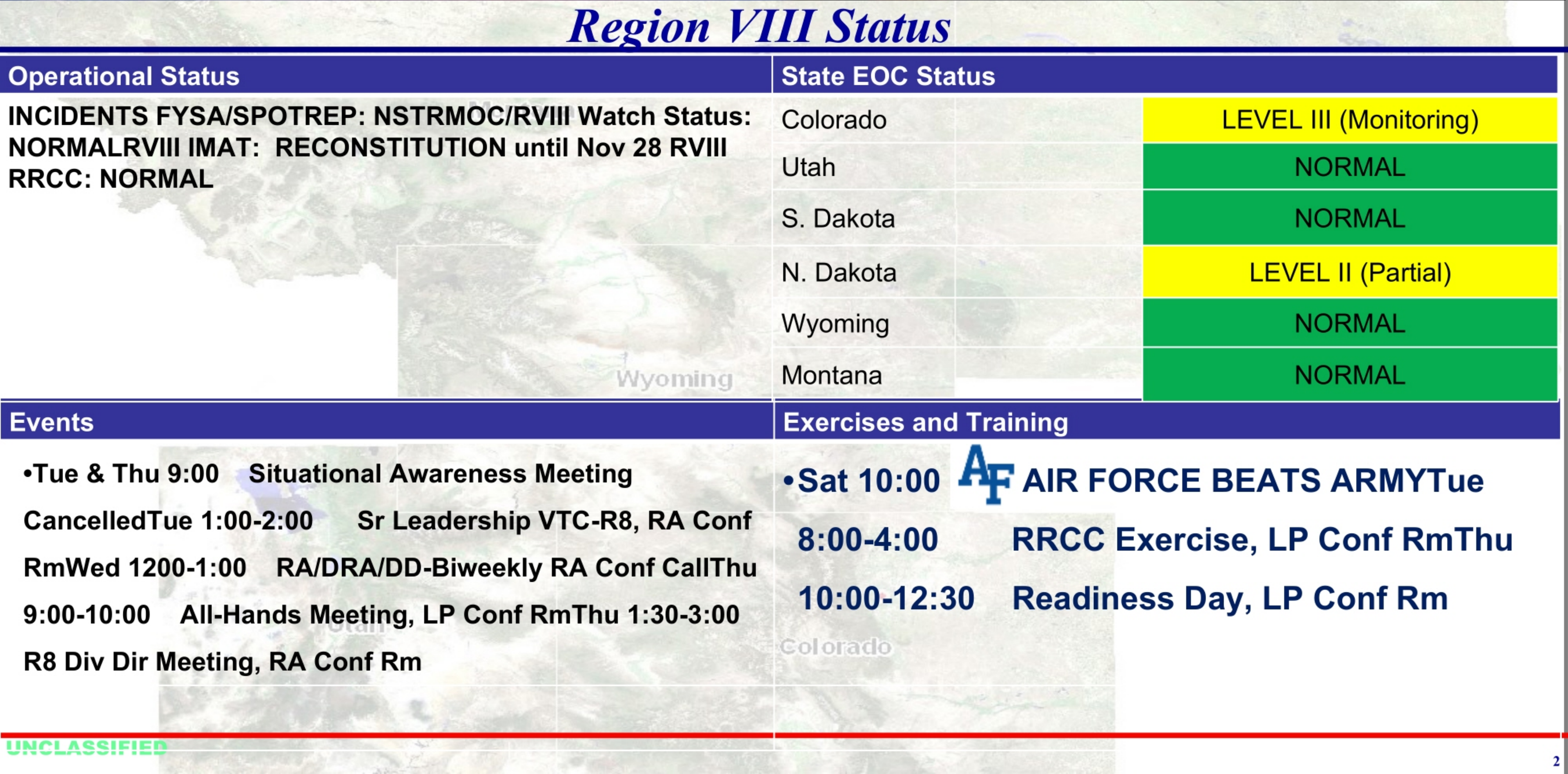
Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
TuesdayNovember 1, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:

Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

FEMA Region VIII
Serving CO, MT, ND, SD, UT and WY

Region VIII Status



Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: NSTRMOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: RECONSTITUTION until Nov 28 RVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	🟨 LEVEL III (Monitoring)
Utah	🟩 NORMAL
S. Dakota	🟩 NORMAL
N. Dakota	🟨 LEVEL II (Partial)
Wyoming	🟩 NORMAL
Montana	🟩 NORMAL

Events

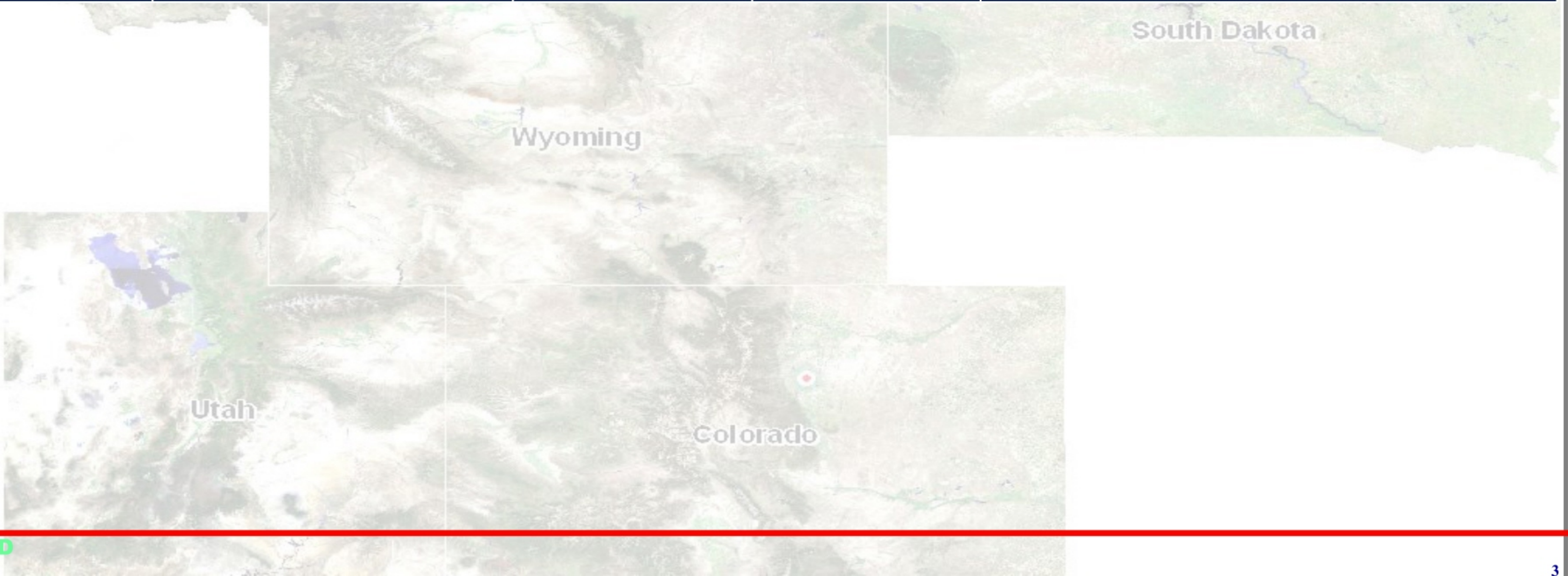
•Tue & Thu 9:00 Situational Awareness Meeting CancelledTue 1:00-2:00 Sr Leadership VTC-R8, RA Conf RmWed 1200-1:00 RA/DRA/DD-Biweekly RA Conf CallThu 9:00-10:00 All-Hands Meeting, LP Conf RmThu 1:30-3:00 R8 Div Dir Meeting, RA Conf Rm

Exercises and Training

•Sat 10:00 AIR FORCE BEATS ARMYTue 8:00-4:00 RRCC Exercise, LP Conf RmThu 10:00-12:30 Readiness Day, LP Conf Rm

Region Active Fires

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 01 Nov 2016)				
Junkins FireFM-5175-CO	Custer & Pueblo Counties	18,403	95% (+10)	Est. containment: Nov 15, 2016Source: Inciweb


South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

FEMA Region VIII
Serving CO, MT, ND, SD, UT and WY

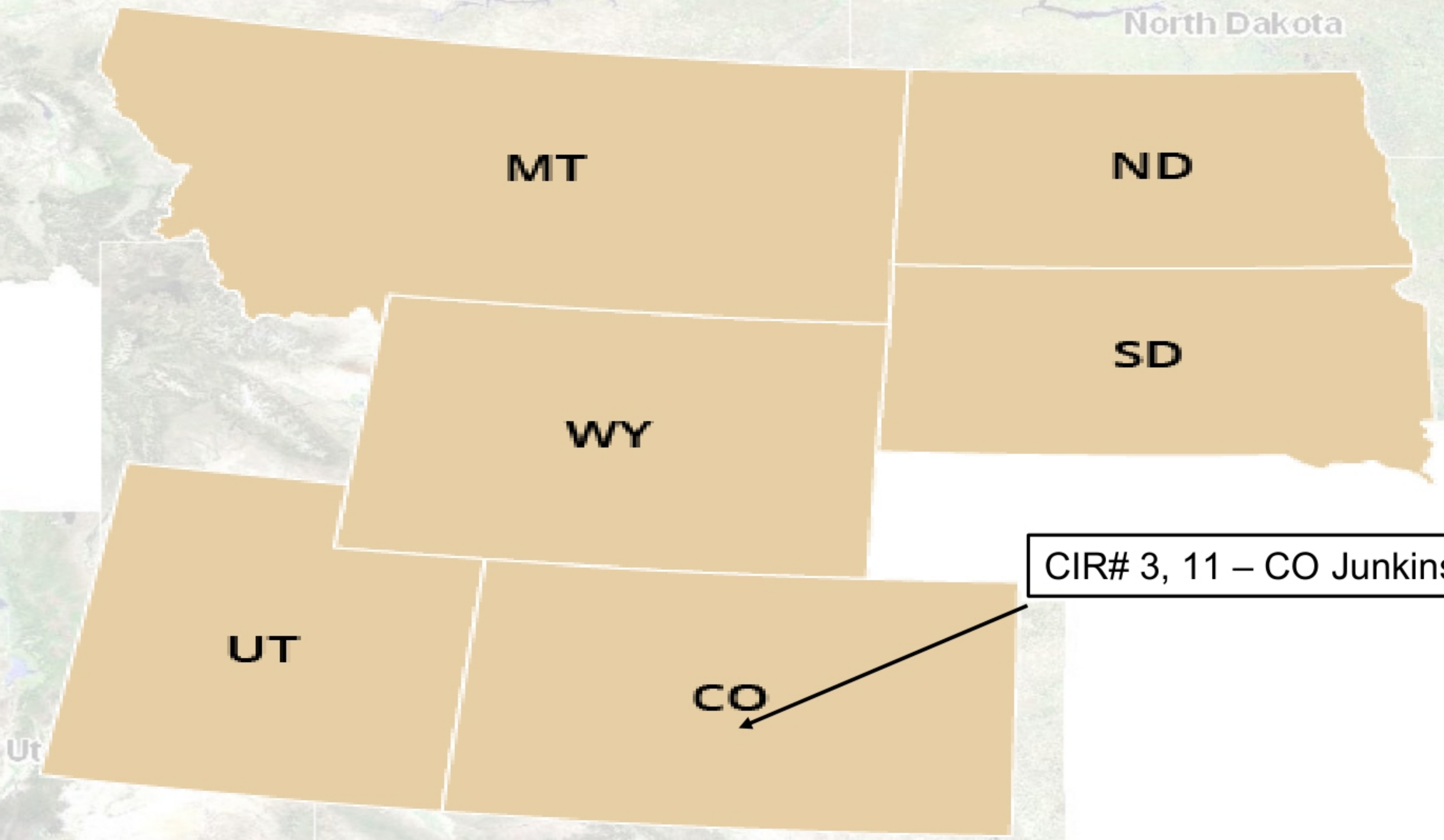
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

No Activity   Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less)   Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as "Major" by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟥	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟩	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟥	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state's population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

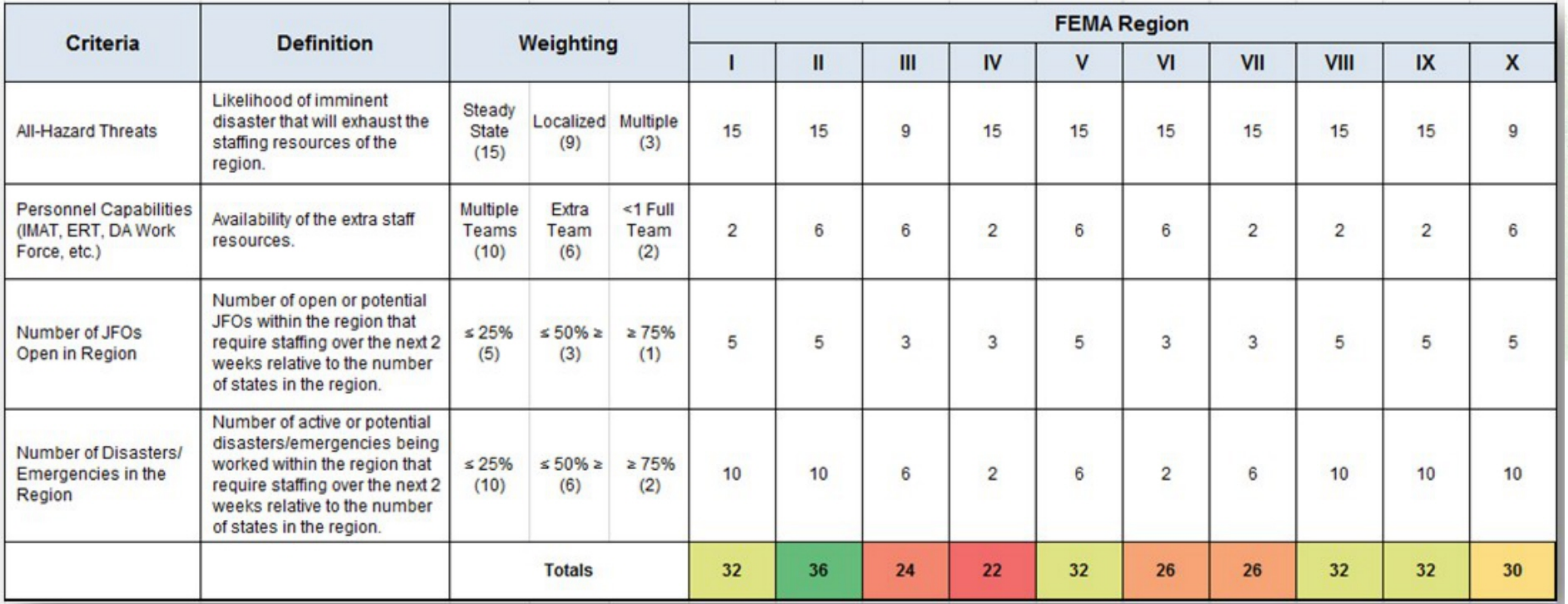
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3		🟥
CIR 4		
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11		🟥
CIR 12		
CIR 13		
CIR 14		
CIR 15		
CIR 16		
CIR 17		
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 11 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 31 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	15	9	15	15	15	15	15	15	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	6	6	2	2	2	6
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	3	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	6	2	6	10	10	10
		Totals			32	36	24	22	32	26	26	32	32	30

Regions II, V, VIII & IX

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations		
Level	**Reason for Activation**	**Activated Times**

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations		
State	**Activation**	**Event/Incident**
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level III Monitoring (0800-1700)	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations		
State	**Activation (Event)**	**Supporting**

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status

FCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)

RCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

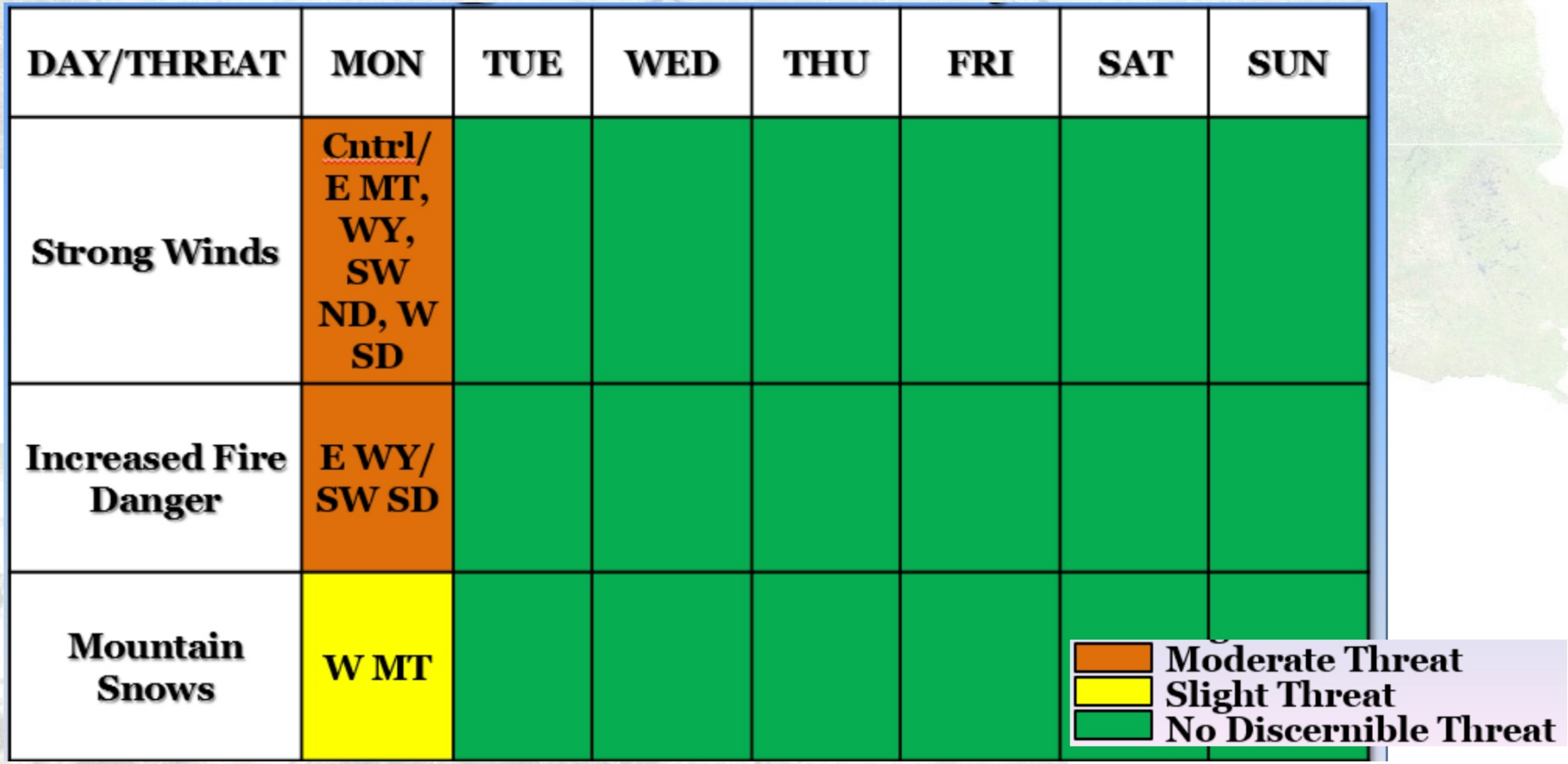
Today-Wednesday

- Strong Gusty Winds across portions of central and eastern MT, most of WY, southwest ND and western SD Monday resulting in difficult driving conditions.
- Increased fire danger in eastern Wyoming as well as southwestern South Dakota Monday.
- Mountain Snows in the Rockies of far western MT.

Thursday-Sunday

- No Significant Impacts expected across Region FEMA VIII

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)



DAY/THREAT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Strong Winds	🟧 Cntrl/ E MT, WY, SW ND, W SD	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Increased Fire Danger	🟧 E WY/ SW SD	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snows	🟨 W MT	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

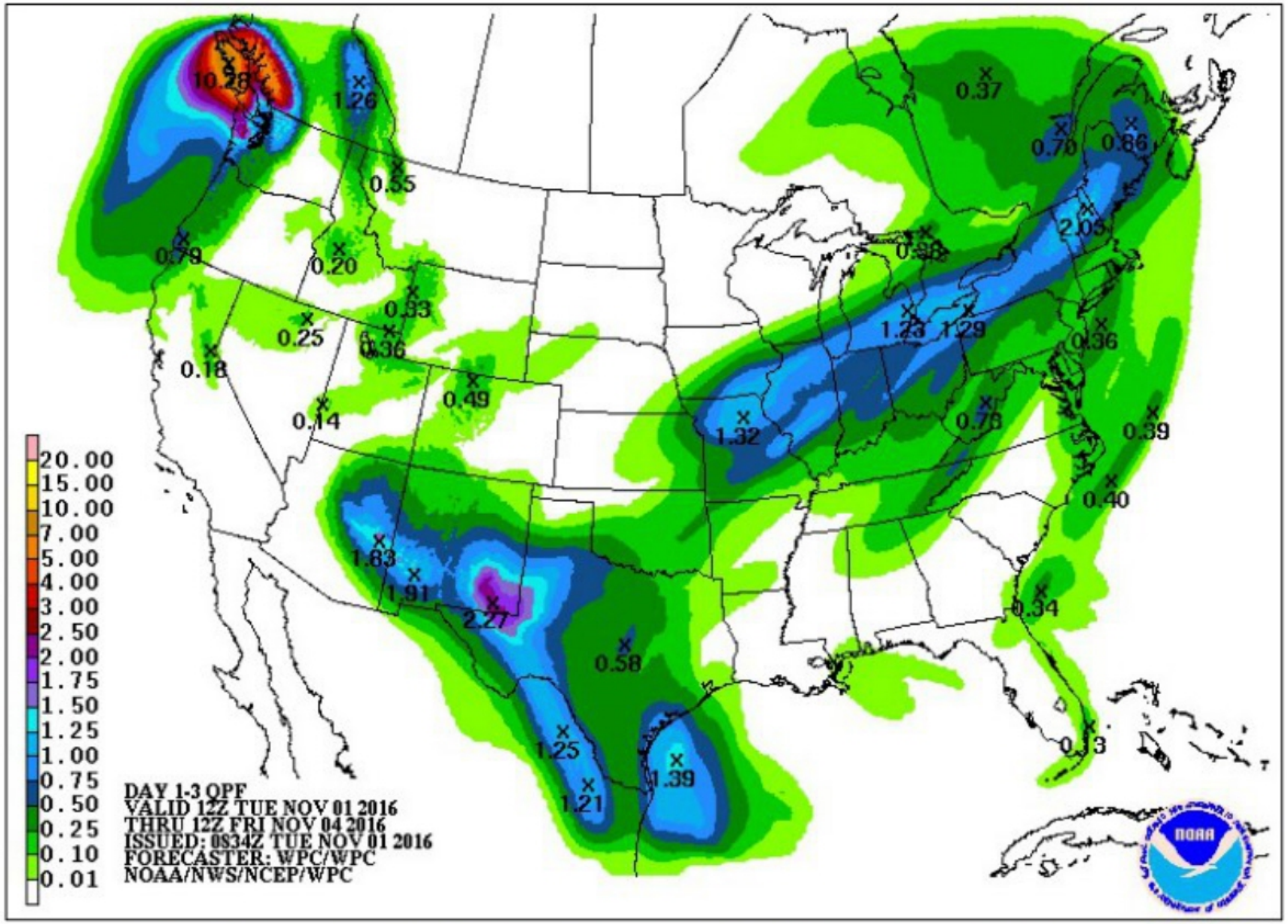
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

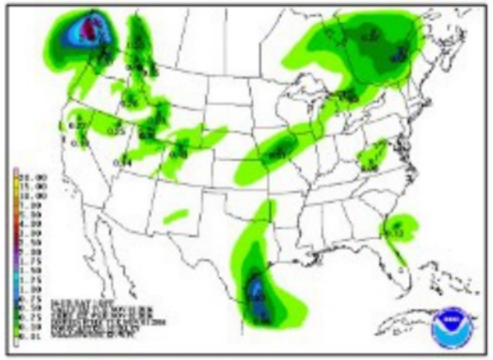
Regional Weather Hazards

CO/UT/WY/MT/ND/SD: NSTR

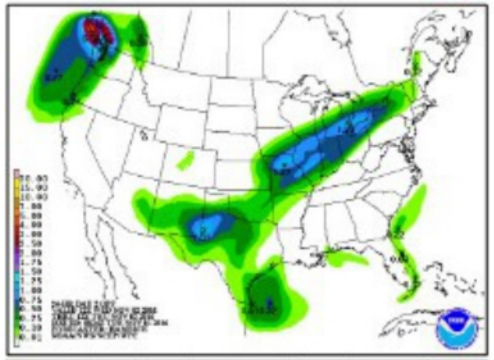
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
IDAHO
WYOMING
NEBRASKA
UTAH
COLORADO
KANSAS
UNITED STATES
Helena
Billings
Bismarck
Fargo
Pierre
Sioux Falls
Boise
Idaho Falls
Cheyenne
Salt Lake City
Denver
Lincoln
Topeka
Wichita
Missouri
Lake Sakakawea
Lake Oahe
Snake
Great Salt Lake
Colorado
Rio Grande
Arkansas
SAND HILLS
BASIN

Precipitation Outlook

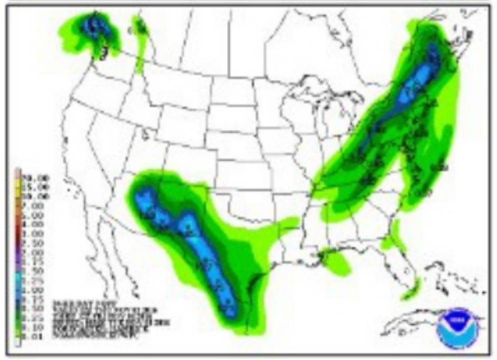

10.28
1.26
0.55
0.79
0.20
0.33
0.25
0.36
0.18
0.14
0.49
0.37
0.70
0.86
2.05
0.98
1.23
1.29
0.36
1.32
0.76
0.39
0.40
0.34
0.13
1.63
1.91
2.27
0.58
1.25
1.21
1.39
20.00
15.00
10.00
7.00
5.00
4.00
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.75
1.50
1.25
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.10
0.01
DAY 1-3 QPF
VALID 12Z TUE NOV 01 2016
THRU 12Z FRI NOV 04 2016
ISSUED: 0834Z TUE NOV 01 2016
FORECASTER: WPC/WPC
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WPC
NOAA



Day 1

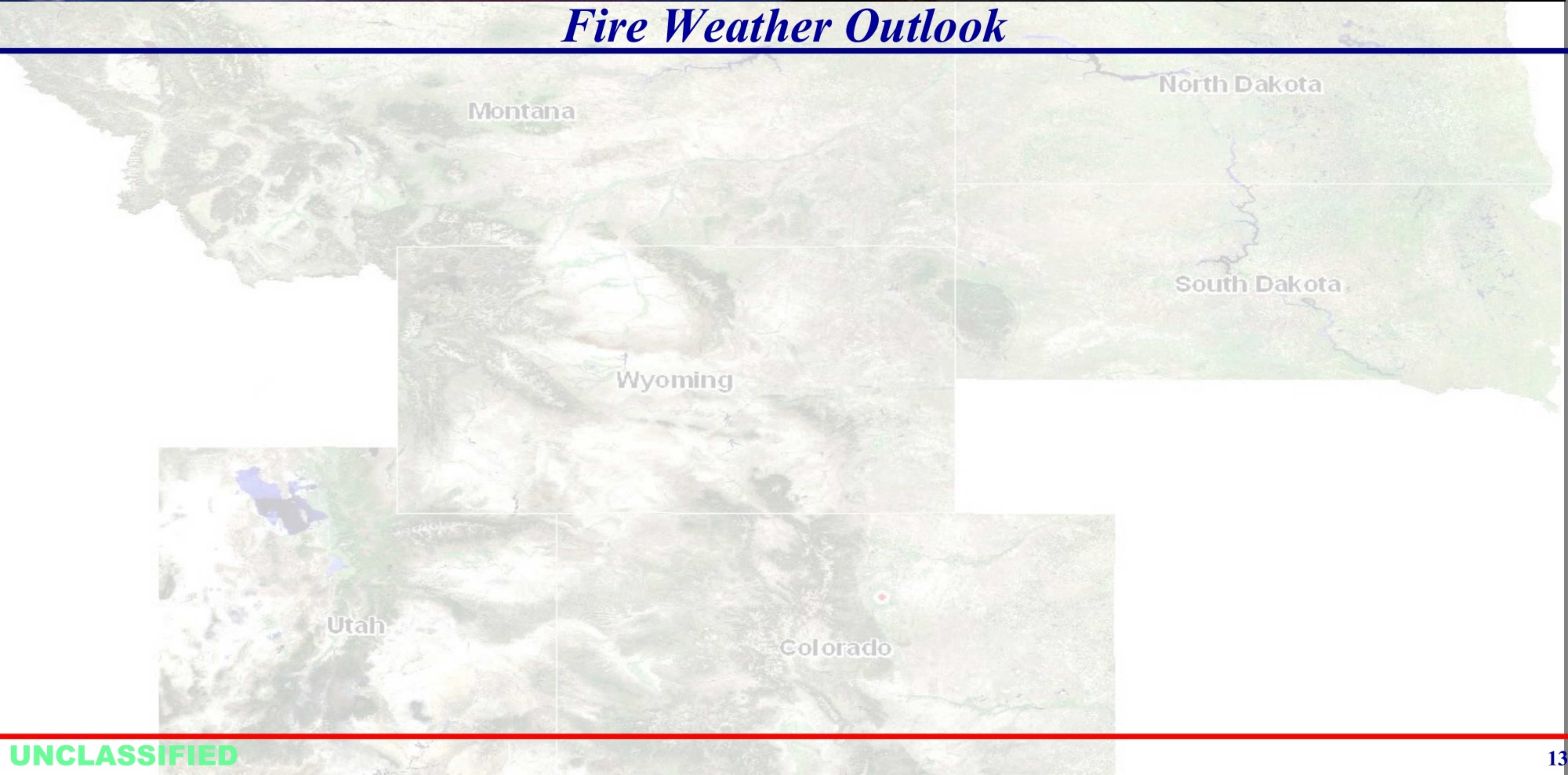


Day 2



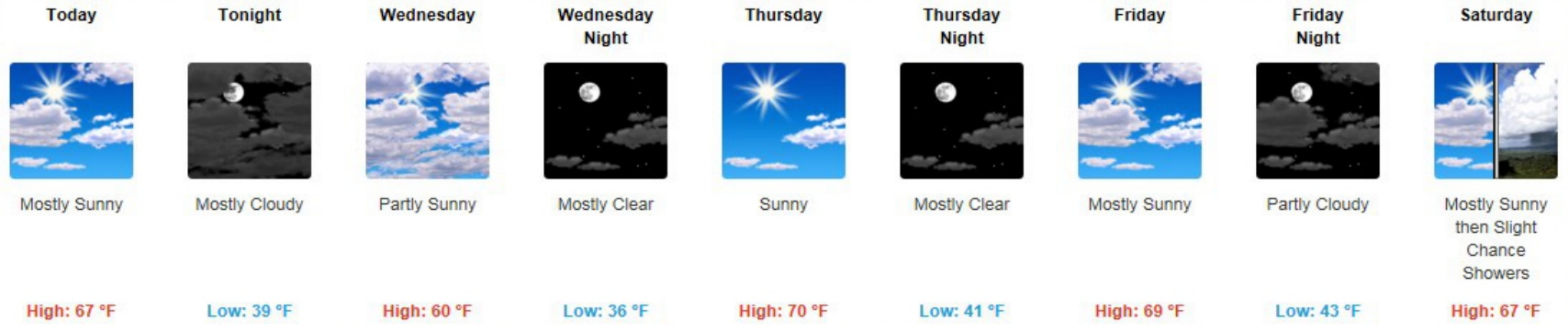
Day 3

Fire Weather Outlook


North Dakota
Montana
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

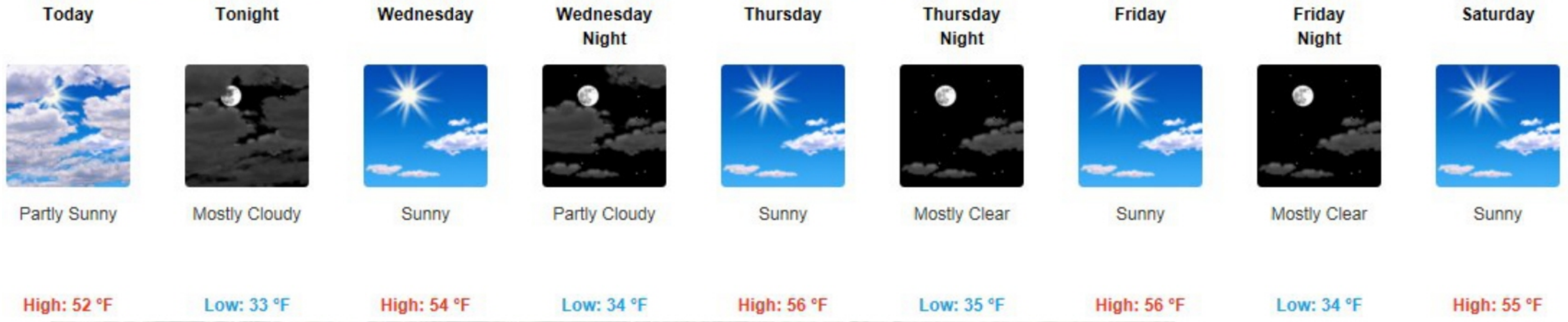
State Weather Forecast

Denver, CO



Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers
High: 67 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 67 °F

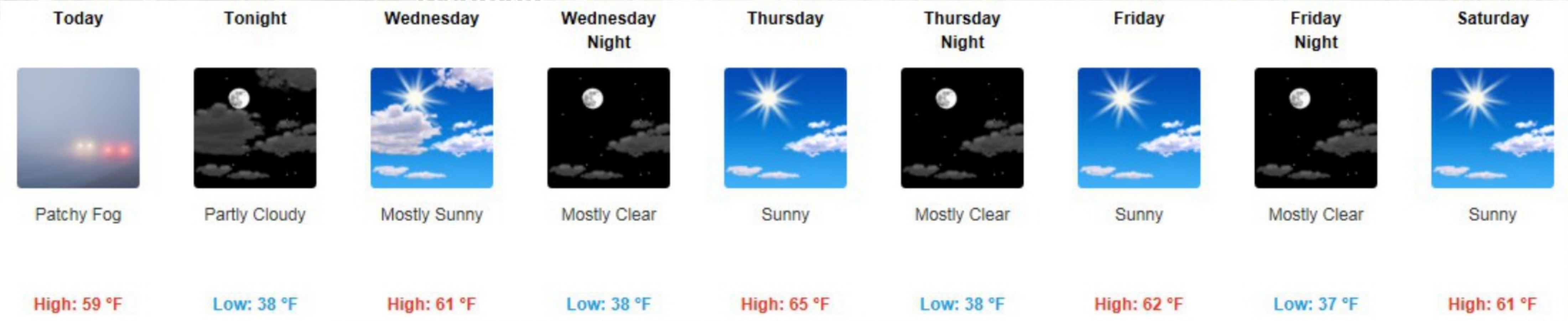
Helena, MT



Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 52 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 55 °F

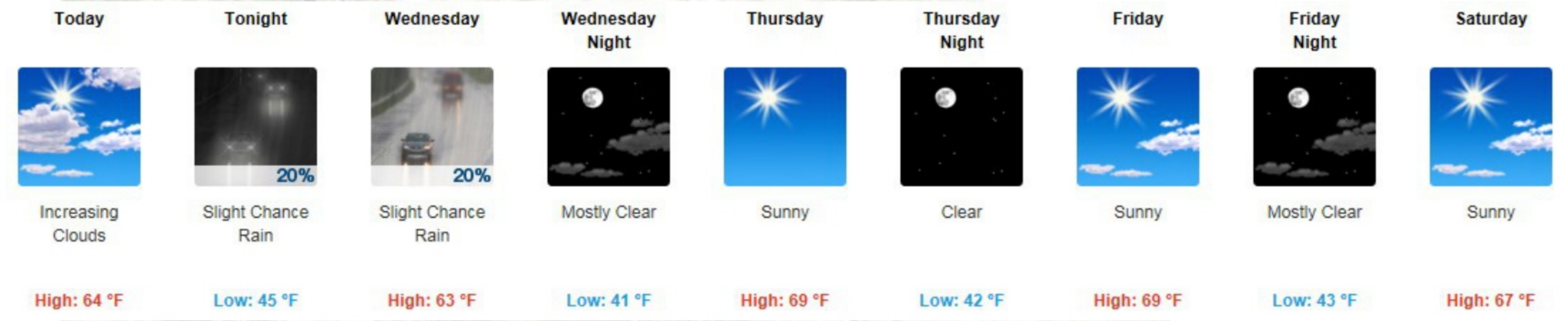
State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND



Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
Patchy Fog	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 59 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 62 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 61 °F

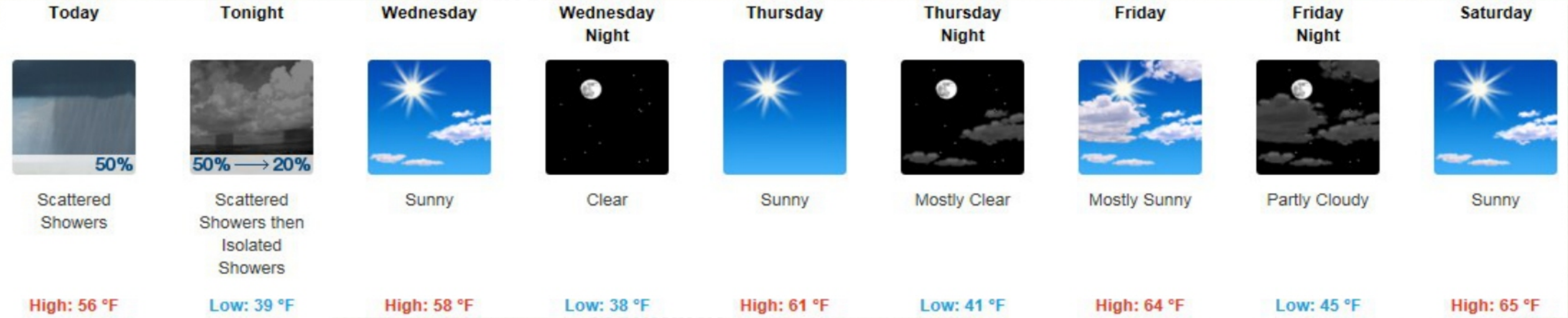
Pierre, SD



Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
	20%	20%						
Increasing Clouds	Slight Chance Rain	Slight Chance Rain	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 64 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 63 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 67 °F

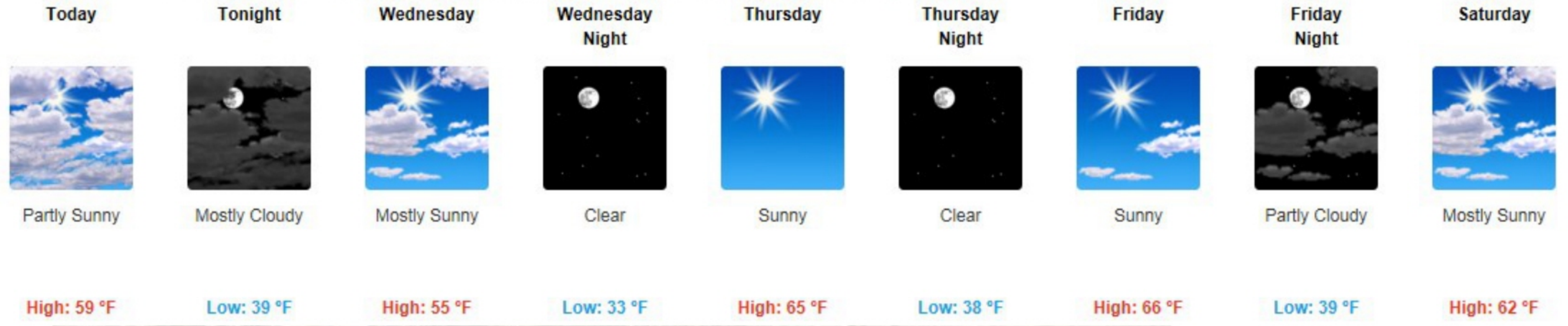
State Weather Forecast - Cont

Salt Lake City, UT



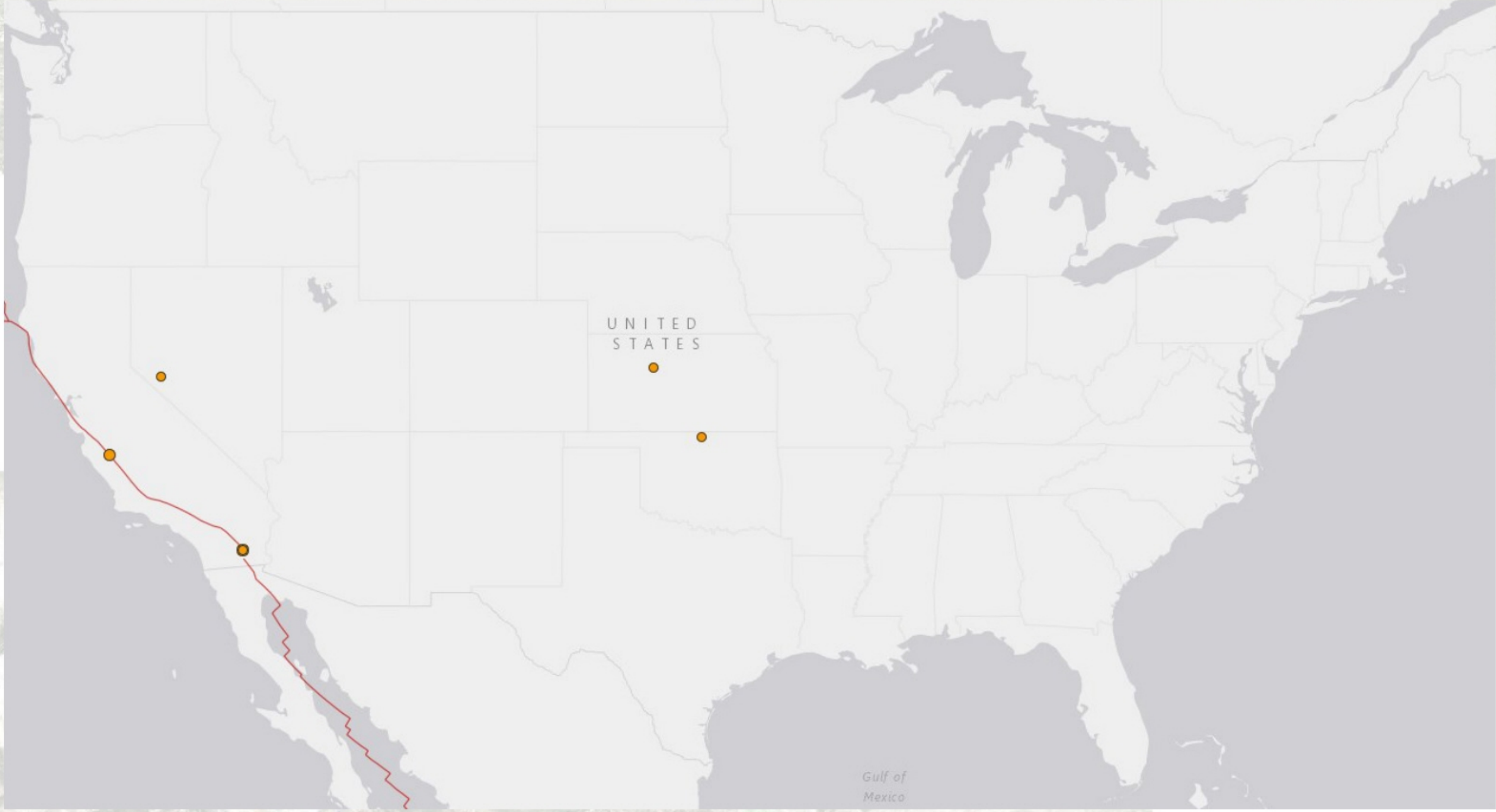
Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
50%	50% → 20%							
Scattered Showers	Scattered Showers then Isolated Showers	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 56 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 64 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 65 °F

Cheyenne, WY

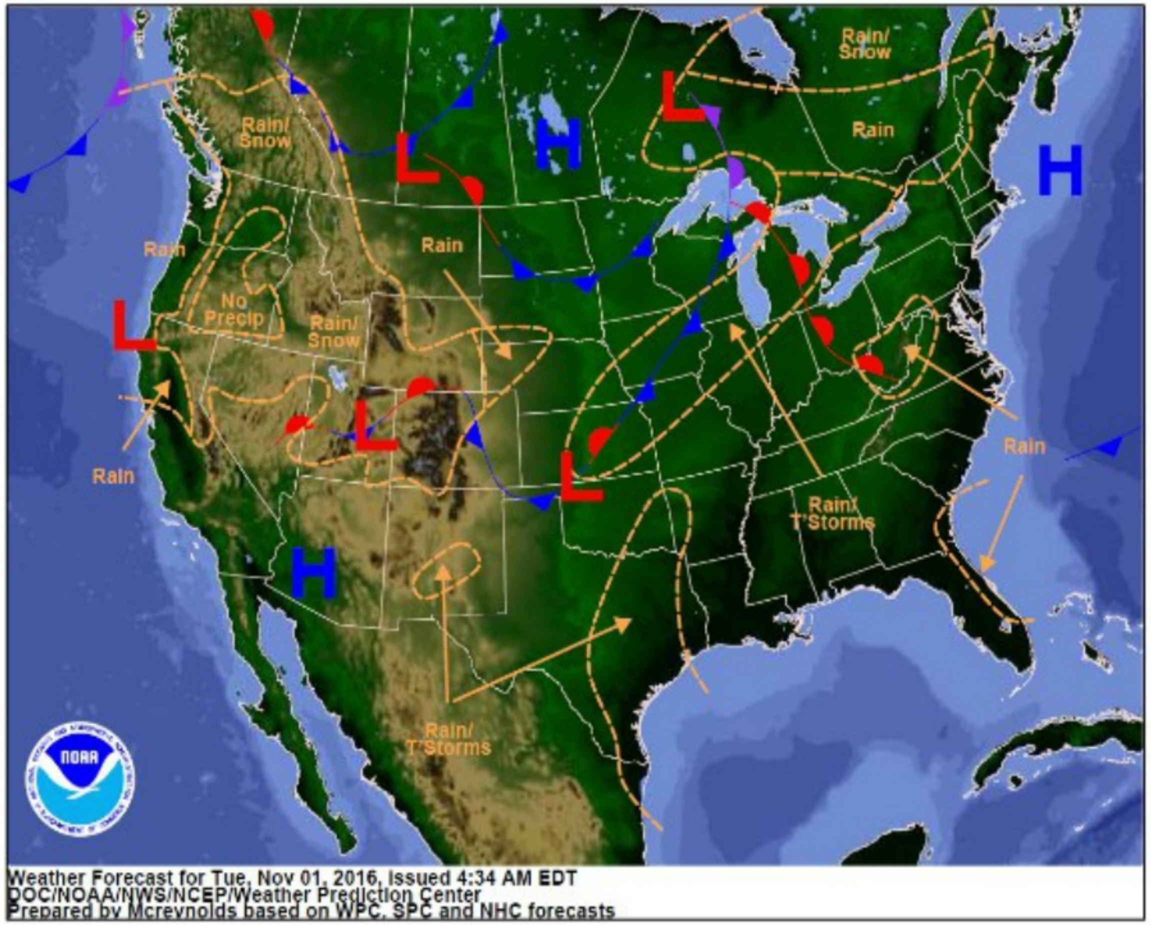


Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 59 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 62 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity

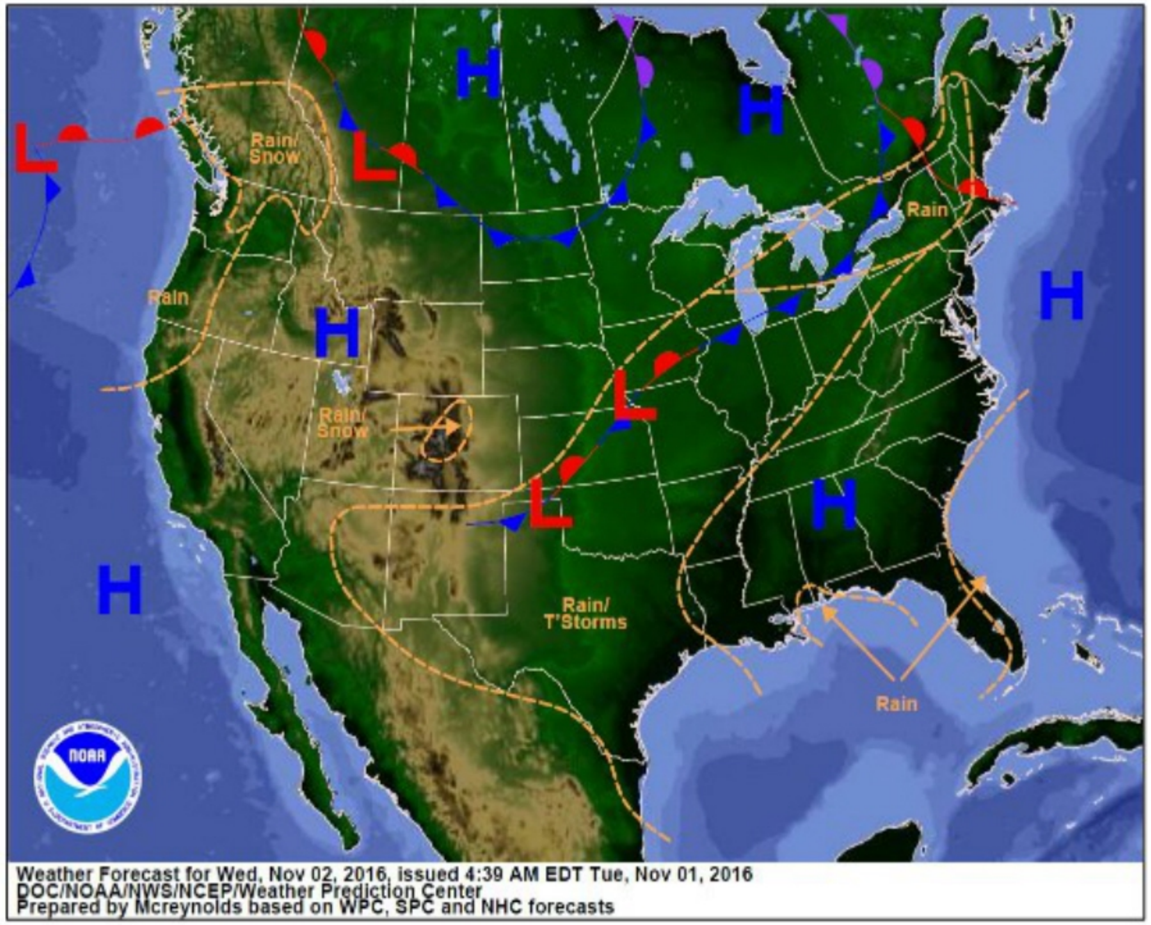

UNITED STATES
Gulf of Mexico

Today's National Weather Forecast


Rain/Snow
Rain
Rain/Snow
Rain
Rain
No Precip
Rain/Snow
Rain
Rain
Rain/T'Storms
Rain/T'Storms
NOAA

Weather Forecast for Tue, Nov 01, 2016, issued 4:34 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Today


Rain/Snow
Rain
Rain
Rain/Snow
Rain/T'Storms
Rain
NOAA

Weather Forecast for Wed, Nov 02, 2016, issued 4:39 AM EDT Tue, Nov 01, 2016
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Tomorrow

Atlantic Tropical Assessment

Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances

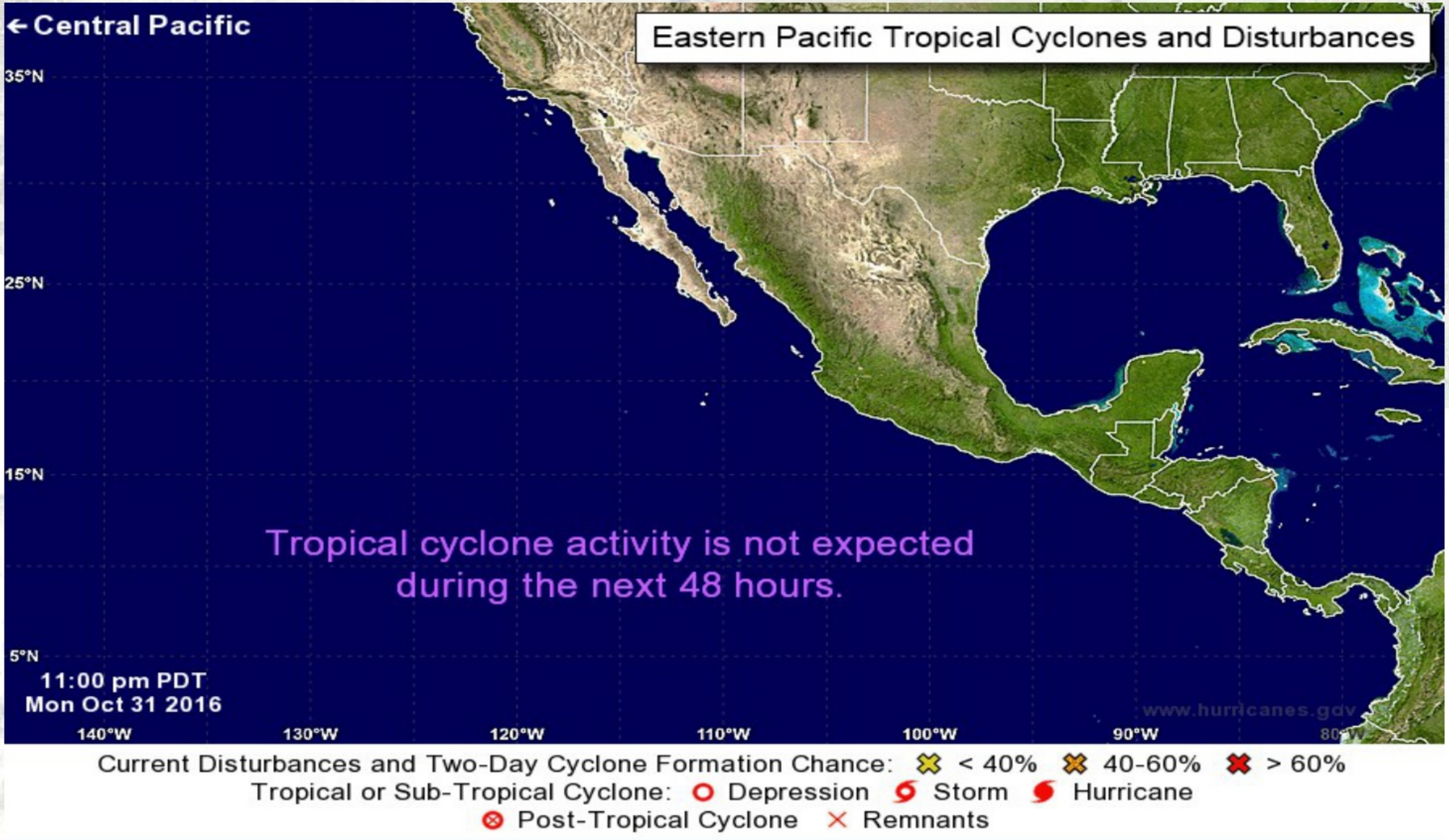
Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours.

2:00 am EDT
Tue Nov 1 2016

Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression 🌀 Storm 🌀 Hurricane
⊗ Post-Tropical Cyclone × Remnants

www.hurricanes.gov
45°N
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment



Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances

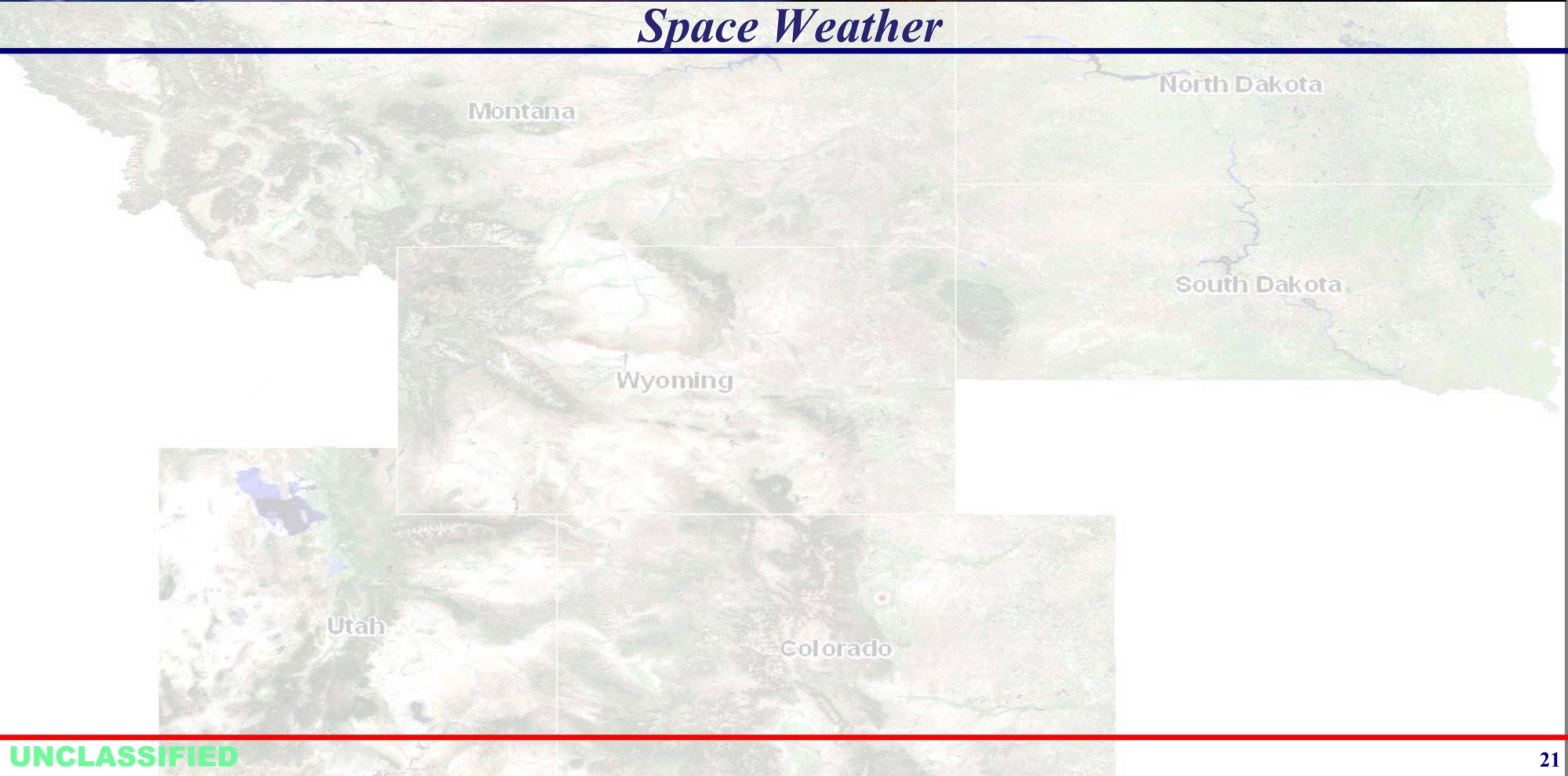
Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours.

11:00 pm PDT
Mon Oct 31 2016

Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression Storm Hurricane
⊗ Post-Tropical Cyclone × Remnants

← Central Pacific
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
www.hurricanes.gov

Space Weather


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
3	Date Requested	1	1
Spokane Tribe – DR Cayuse Mountain Wildfire	October 18, 2016		Denied October 31, 2016
MN – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 19, 2016		
IA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016	Declared October 31, 2016	
VA – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 21, 2016		
DE – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 27, 2016		

IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 31, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Kevin Moore (UFN)	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Amber Wells	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

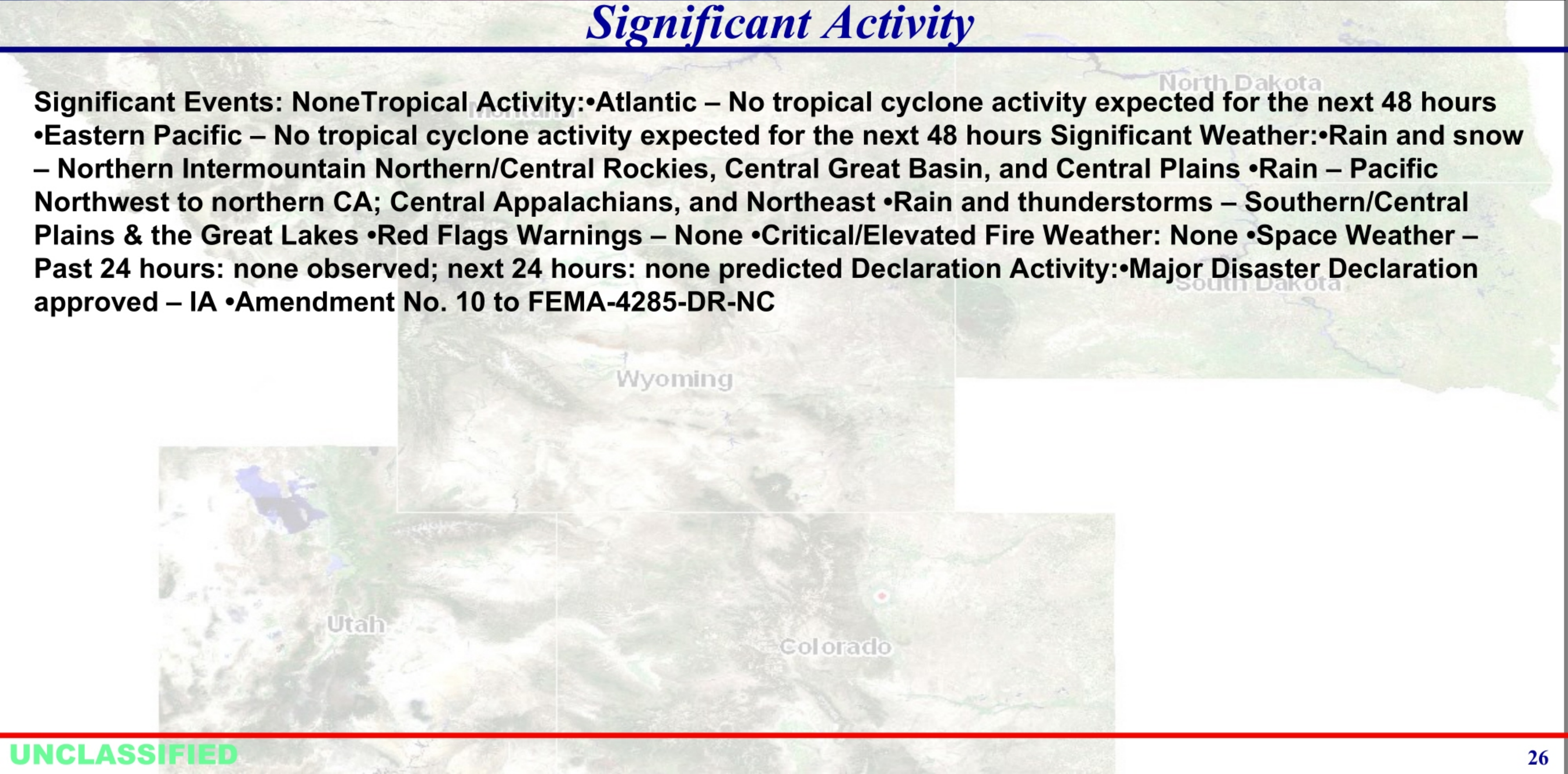
November RRCC Standup Roster (Blue Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Dennis Fisher
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	Kevin Moore
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Stephanie Poore
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 18, 2016 / 1240)*

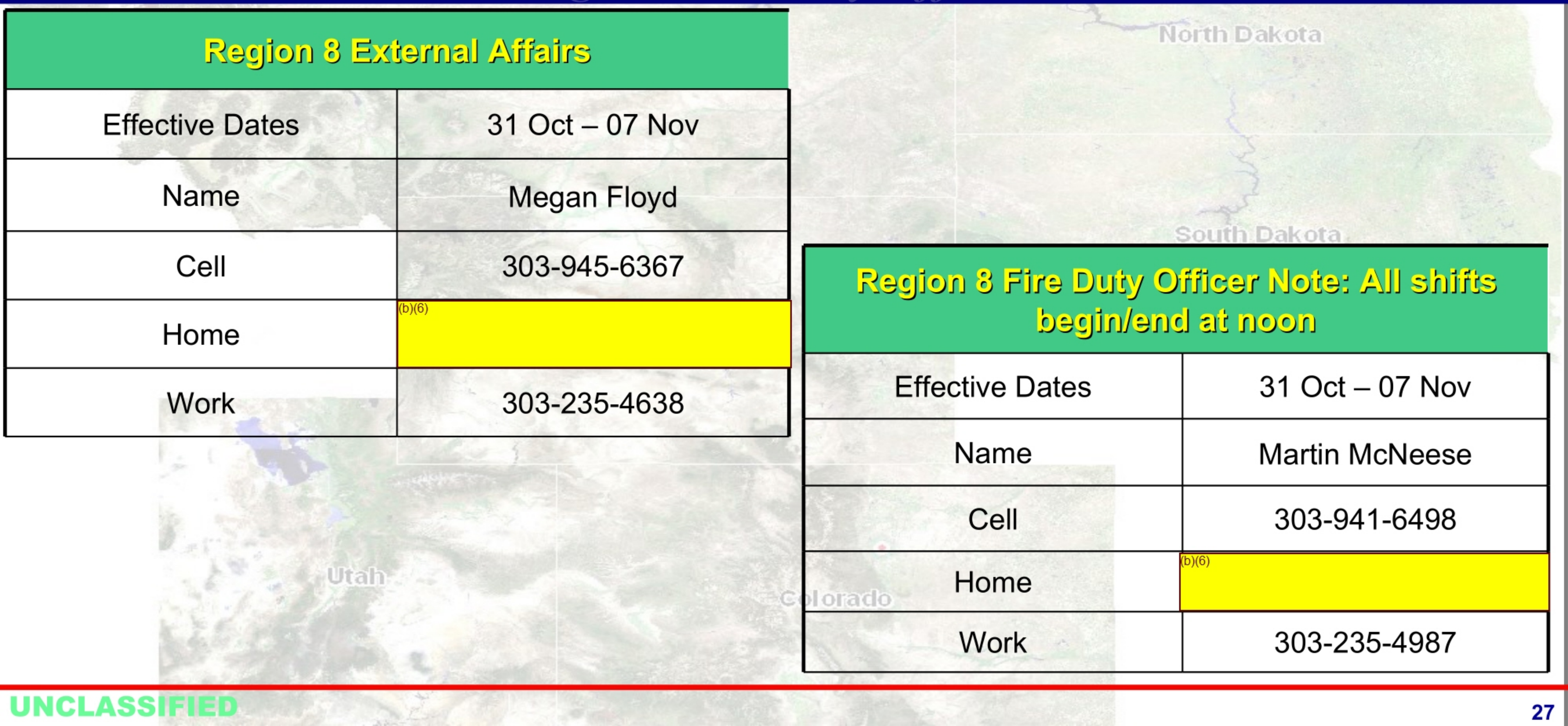
State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	Michael Pendergrass	303-746-3640	303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	David Watkins	720-683-2565	303-235-4359
WY	Carita Ricley (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton (Deployed)	720-315-6931303-495-0051	303-235-4322303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity



Significant Events: NoneTropical Activity:•Atlantic – No tropical cyclone activity expected for the next 48 hours •Eastern Pacific – No tropical cyclone activity expected for the next 48 hours Significant Weather:•Rain and snow – Northern Intermountain Northern/Central Rockies, Central Great Basin, and Central Plains •Rain – Pacific Northwest to northern CA; Central Appalachians, and Northeast •Rain and thunderstorms – Southern/Central Plains & the Great Lakes •Red Flags Warnings – None •Critical/Elevated Fire Weather: None •Space Weather – Past 24 hours: none observed; next 24 hours: none predicted Declaration Activity:•Major Disaster Declaration approved – IA •Amendment No. 10 to FEMA-4285-DR-NC

Region VIII Duty Officers


North Dakota
South Dakota
Utah
Colorado

Region 8 External Affairs

Effective Dates	31 Oct – 07 Nov
Name	Megan Floyd
Cell	303-945-6367
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4638

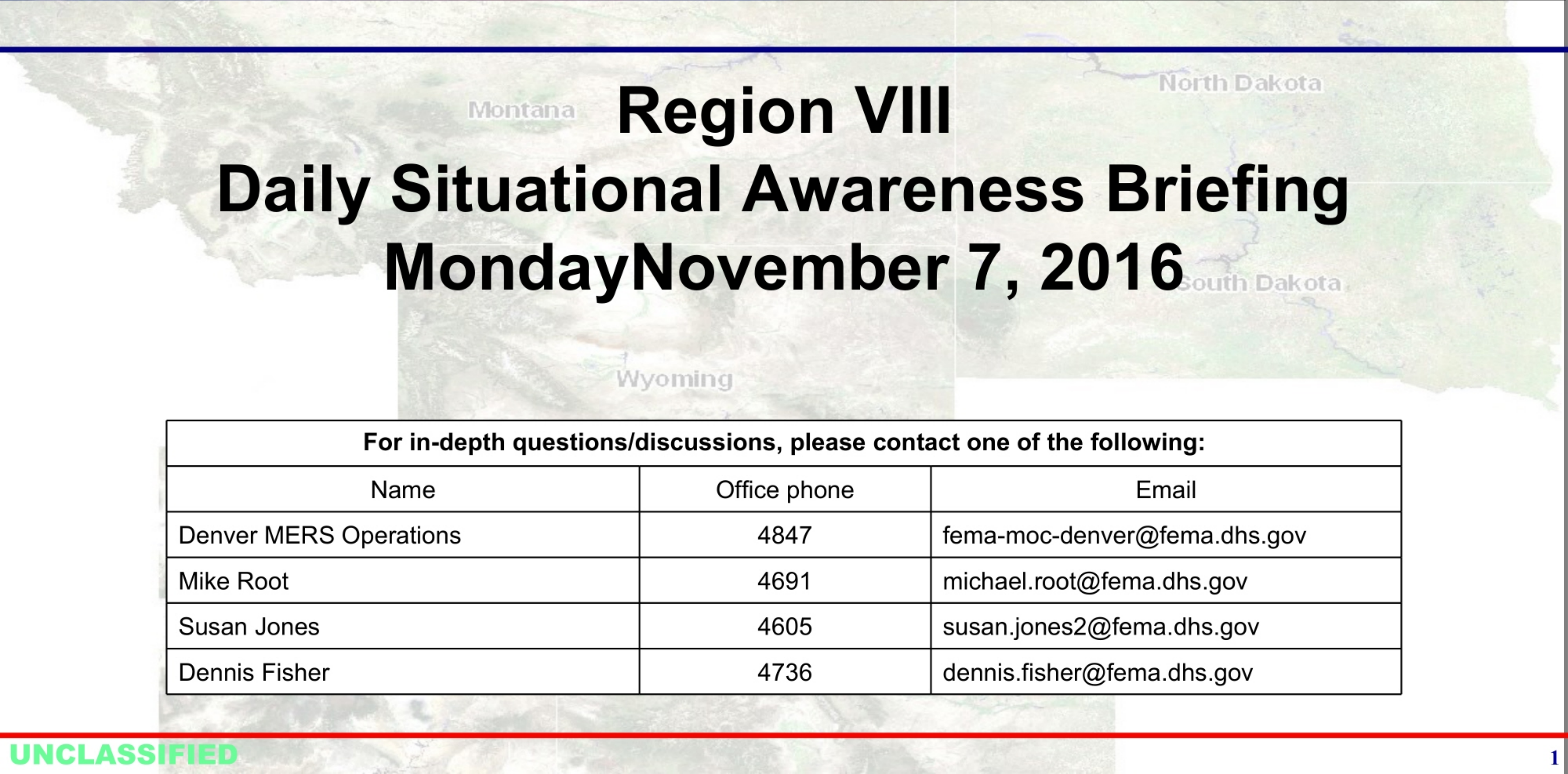
Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon

Effective Dates	31 Oct – 07 Nov
Name	Martin McNeese
Cell	303-941-6498
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4987

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
MondayNovember 7, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: NSTRMOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: RECONSITUTION until Nov 28 RVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	🟩 NORMAL
Utah	🟩 NORMAL
S. Dakota	🟩 NORMAL
N. Dakota	🟨 LEVEL II (Partial)
Wyoming	🟩 NORMAL
Montana	🟩 NORMAL

Events

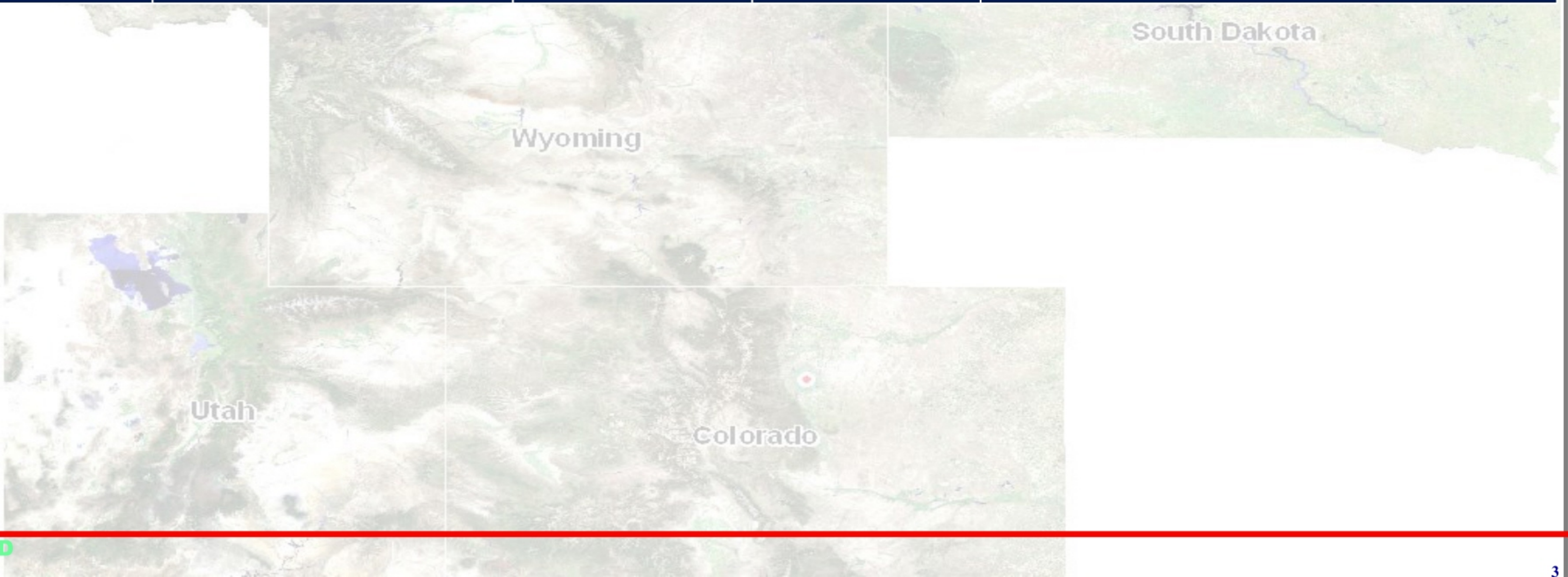
•Mon and Tues; FM&I \RA Branch Coordination Meeting, SW Conf RmTue & Thu 9:00 Situational Awareness Meeting CancelledTue 1:00-2:00 Sr Leadership VTC-R8, RA Conf RmThu 1:30-3:00 R8 Div Dir Meeting, RA Conf Rm

Exercises and Training

- Mon - Fri PA Site Inspector Course; LP Conf Rm

Region Active Fires

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 04 Nov 2016)				


South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

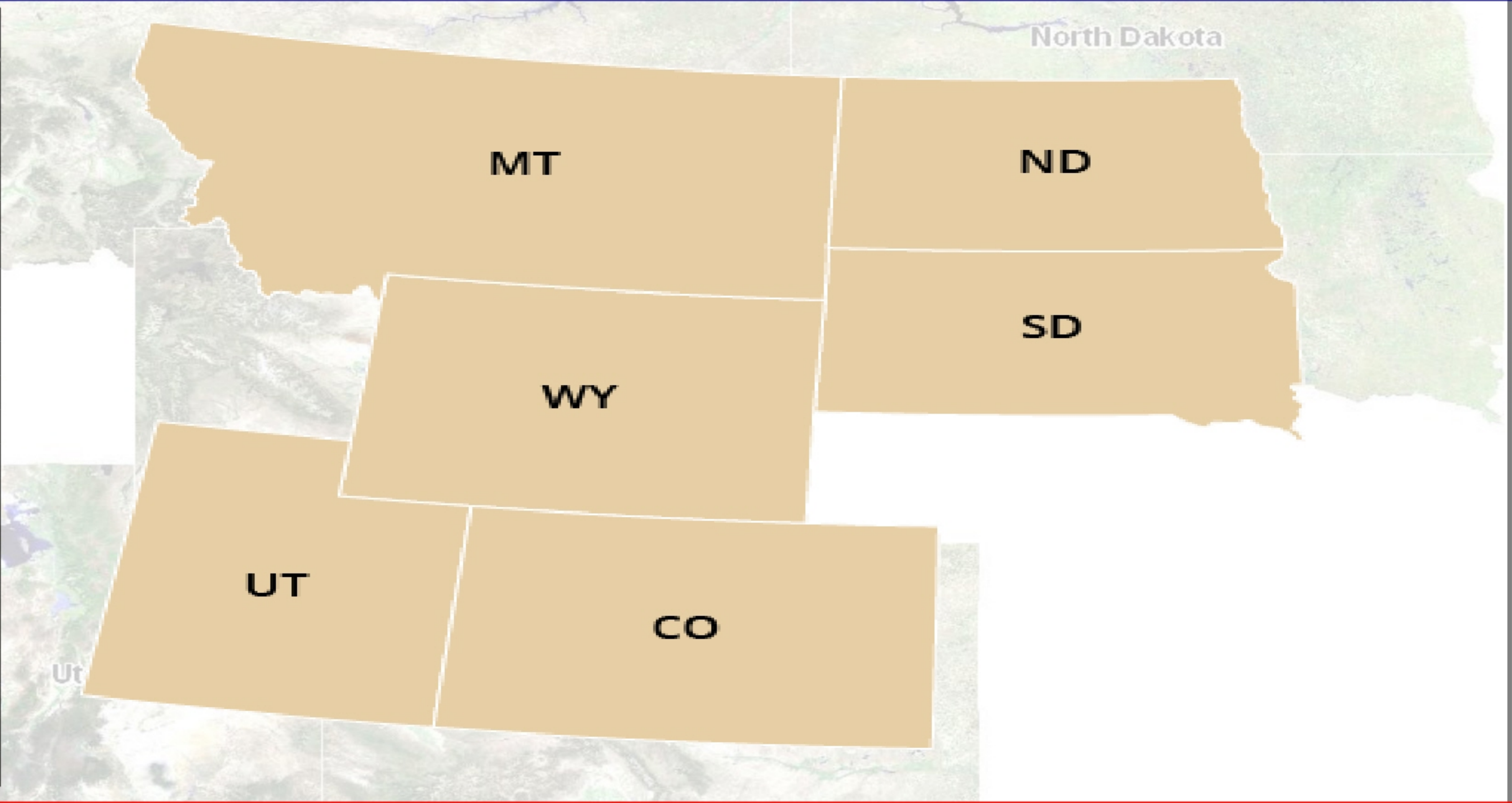
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

No Activity Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) Longer duration or major affects

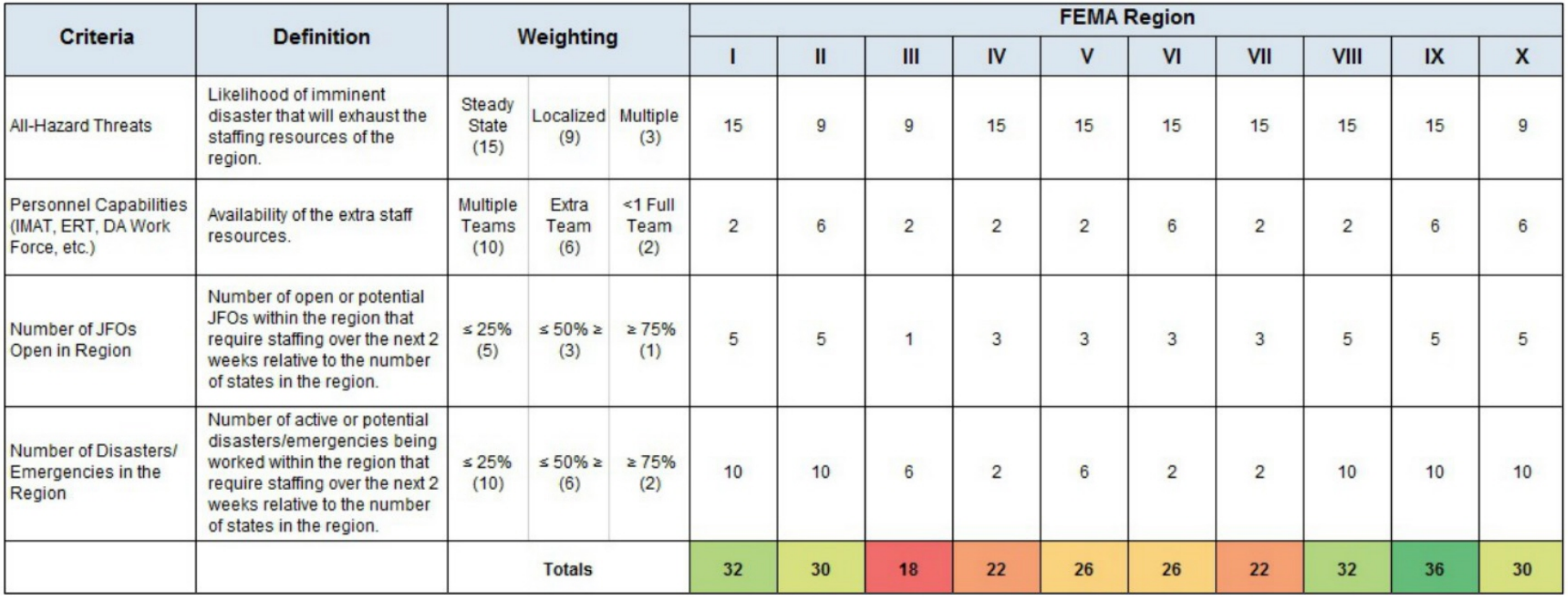
CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as "Major" by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟩	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟩	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟩	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state's population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3		
CIR 4		
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11		
CIR 12		
CIR 13		
CIR 14		
CIR 15		
CIR 16		
CIR 17		
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		


North Dakota
MT
ND
SD
WY
UT
CO
Ut

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 7 Nov 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	9	9	15	15	15	15	15	15	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	2	2	2	6	2	2	6	6
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	1	3	3	3	3	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	6	2	2	10	10	10
		Totals			32	30	18	22	26	26	22	32	36	30

Regions IX, I & VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations		
Level	**Reason for Activation**	**Activated Times**

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations		
State	**Activation**	**Event/Incident**
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations		
State	**Activation (Event)**	**Supporting**

R8 Current Status (Continued)

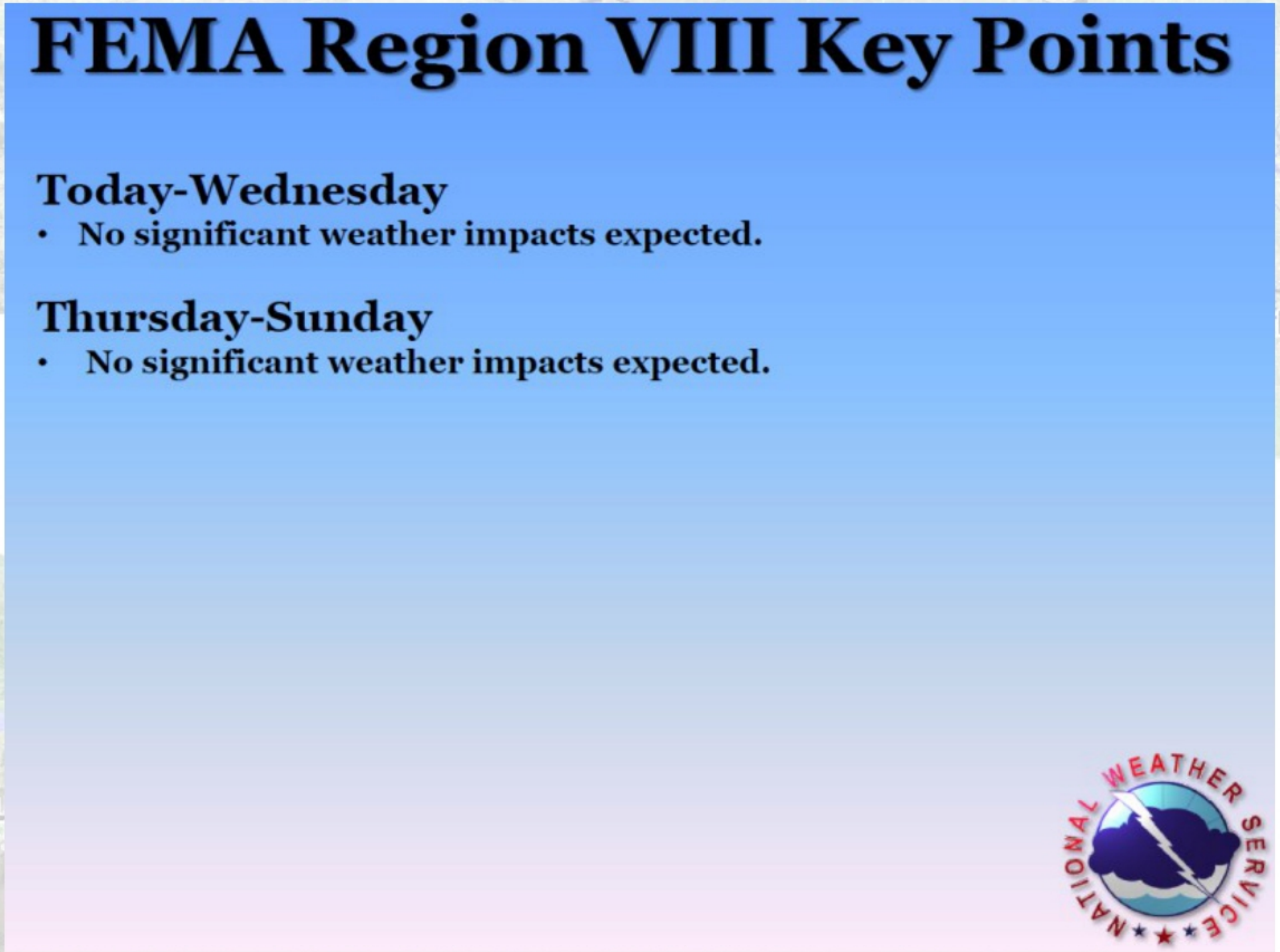
FEMA R8 FCO Status

FCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)

RCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook



FEMA Region VIII Key Points

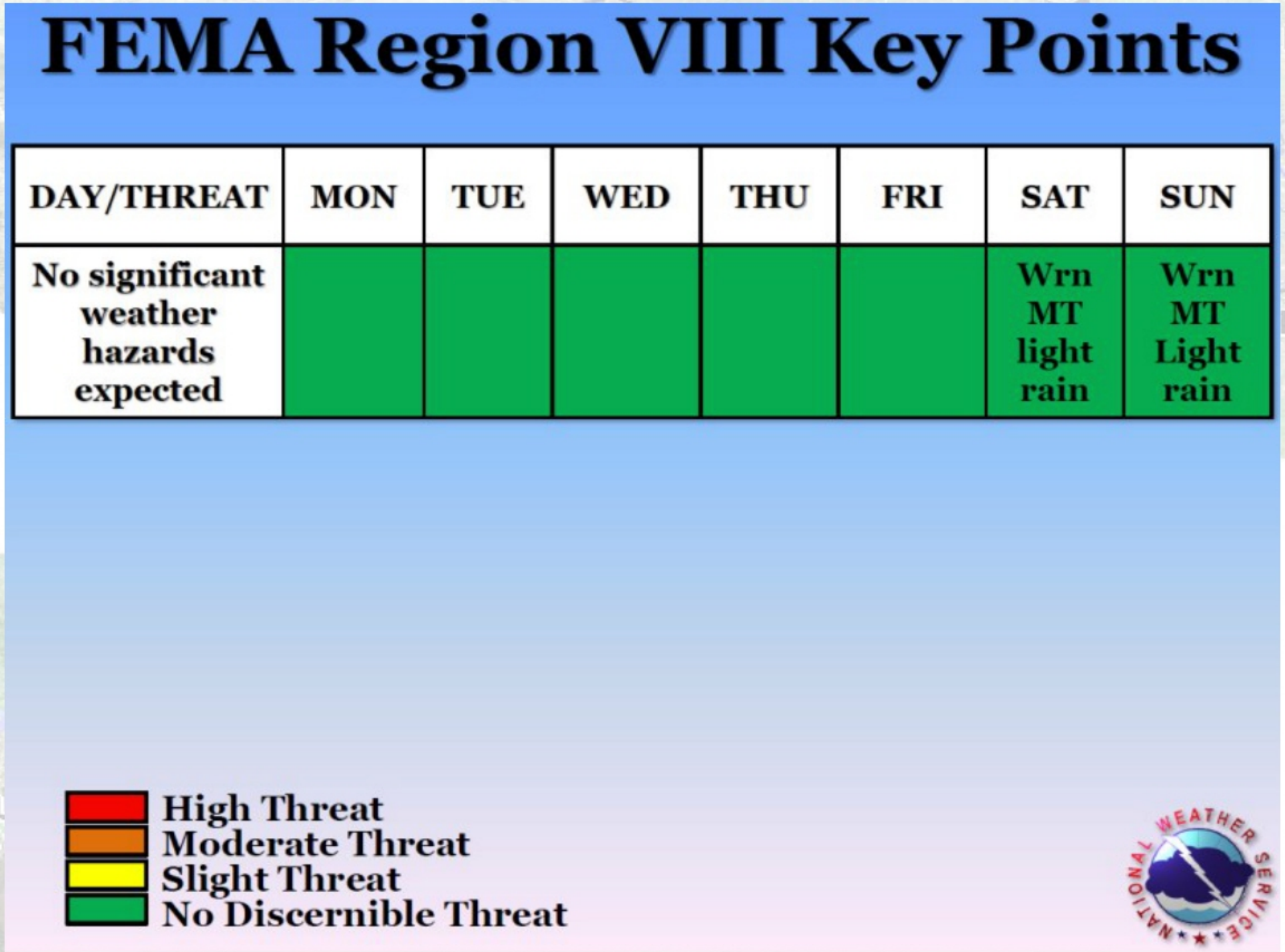
Today-Wednesday

- No significant weather impacts expected.

Thursday-Sunday

- No significant weather impacts expected.

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)



FEMA Region VIII Key Points

DAY/THREAT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
No significant weather hazards expected	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	Wrn MT light rain	Wrn MT Light rain

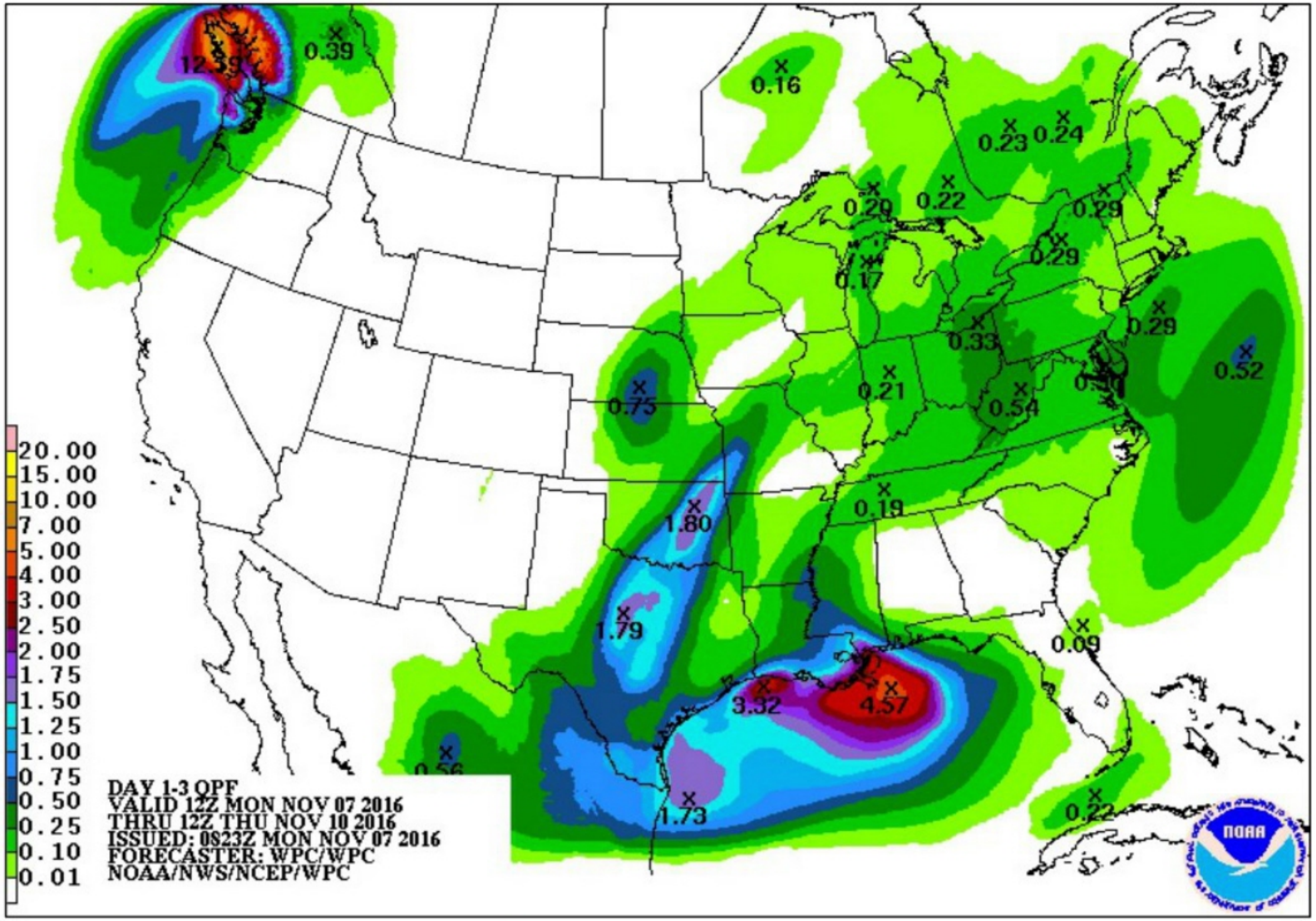
🟥 High Threat
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

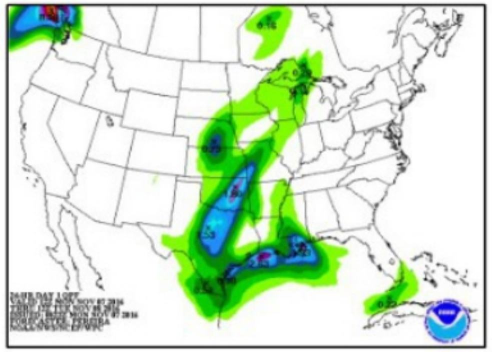
Regional Weather Hazards

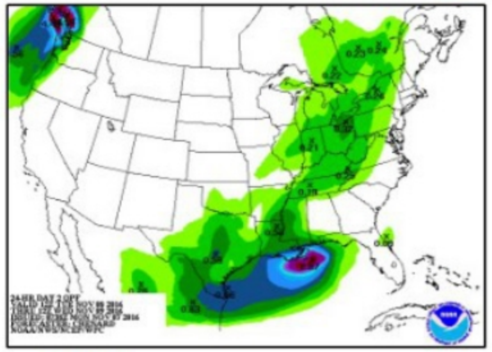
CO/MT/ND/SD/UT/WY: NSTR

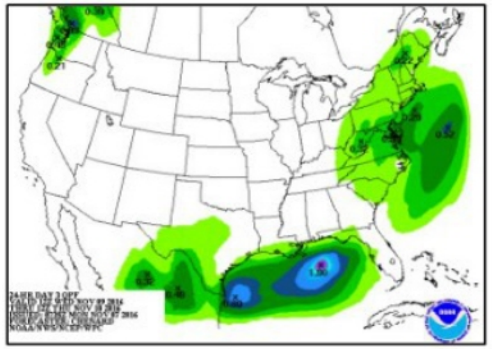
MONTANA
Helena
Billings
Missouri
Lake Sakakawea
NORTH DAKOTA
Bismarck
Lake Oahe
Pierre
SOUTH DAKOTA
IDAHO
Boise
Idaho Falls
Snake
WYOMING
SAND HILLS
NEBRASKA
Cheyenne
Lincoln
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
UTAH
BASIN
Denver
Colorado
COLORADO
UNITED STATES
KANSAS
Arkansas
Rio Grande
Wichita

Precipitation Outlook

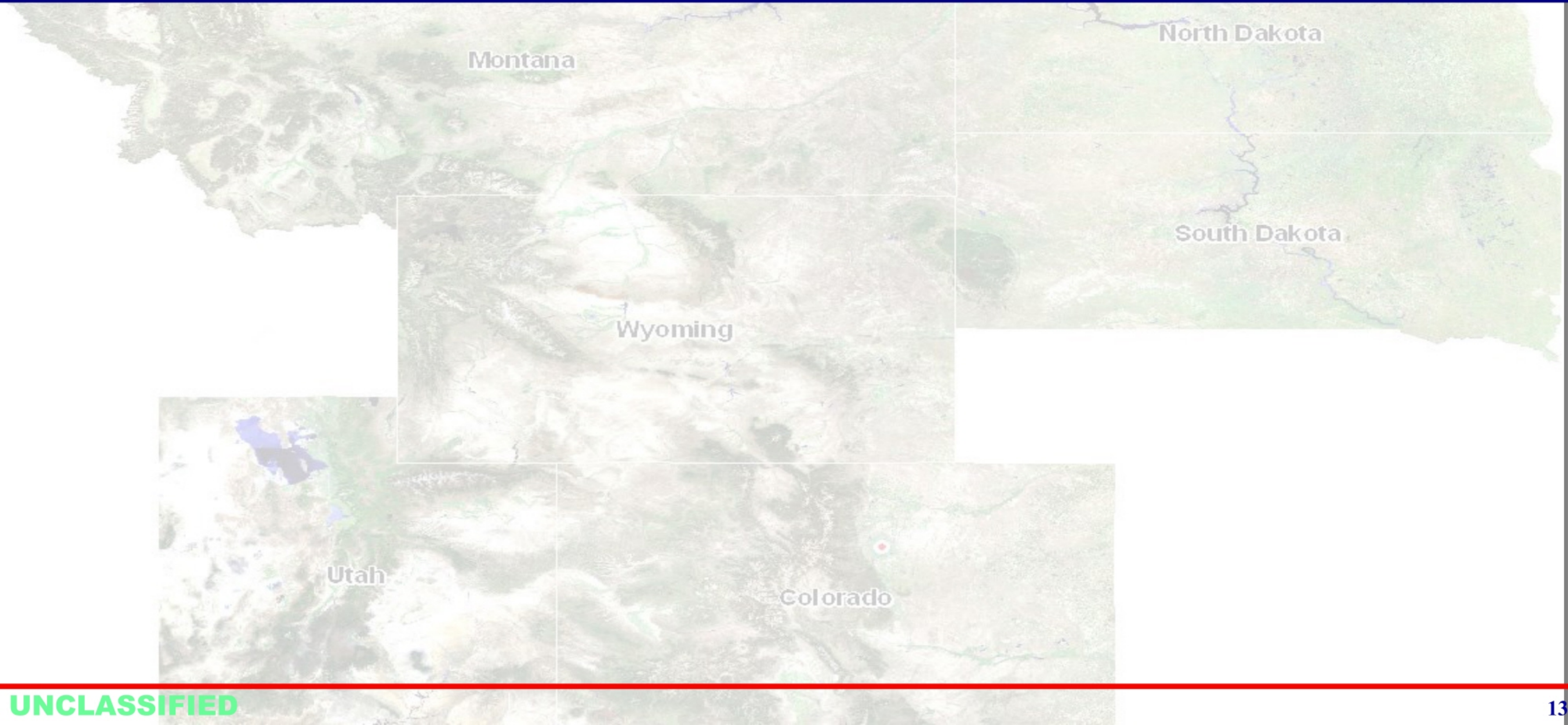

20.00
15.00
10.00
7.00
5.00
4.00
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.75
1.50
1.25
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.10
0.01
12.39
0.39
0.16
0.23
0.24
0.20
0.22
0.29
0.17
0.29
0.33
0.29
0.52
0.21
0.54
0.75
0.19
1.80
1.79
0.09
3.32
4.57
0.56
1.73
0.22
DAY 1-3 QPF
VALID 12Z MON NOV 07 2016
THRU 12Z THU NOV 10 2016
ISSUED: 0823Z MON NOV 07 2016
FORECASTER: WPC/WPC
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WPC
NOAA


Day 1


Day 2


Day 3

Hazardous Weather Outlook


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

State Weather Forecast

Denver, CO

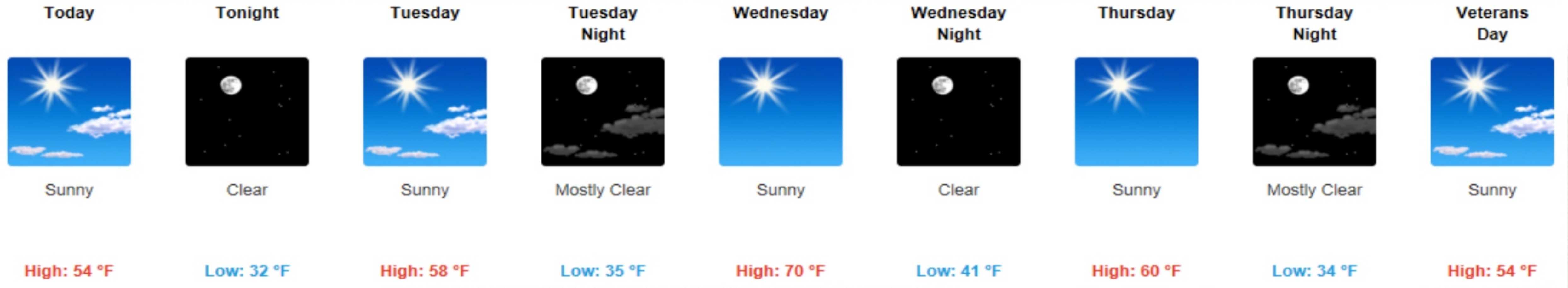
Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Veterans Day
Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 63 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 73 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 67 °F

Helena, MT

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Veterans Day
Increasing Clouds	Decreasing Clouds	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 55 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 59 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 62 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 57 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 57 °F

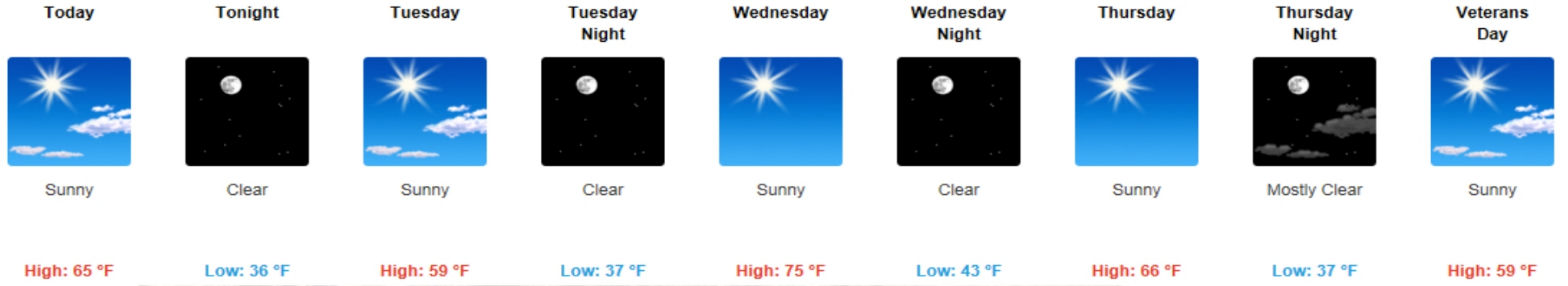
State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Veterans Day
Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 54 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 54 °F

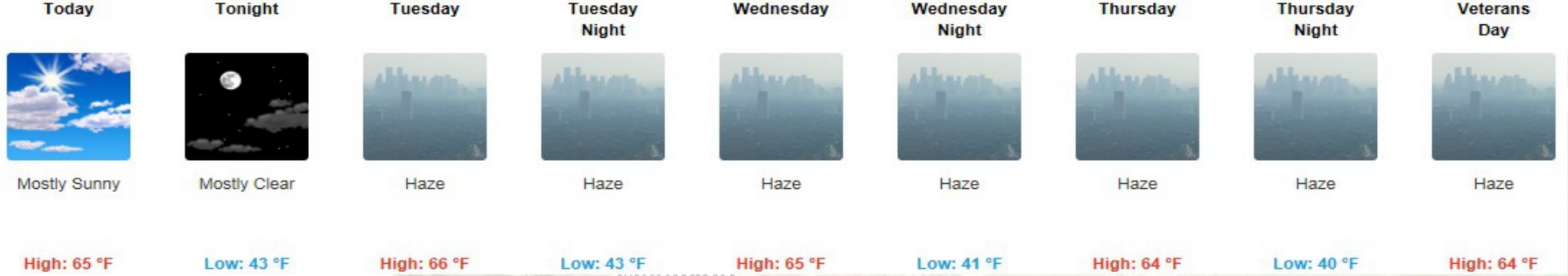
Pierre, SD



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Veterans Day
Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 65 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 59 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 75 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 59 °F

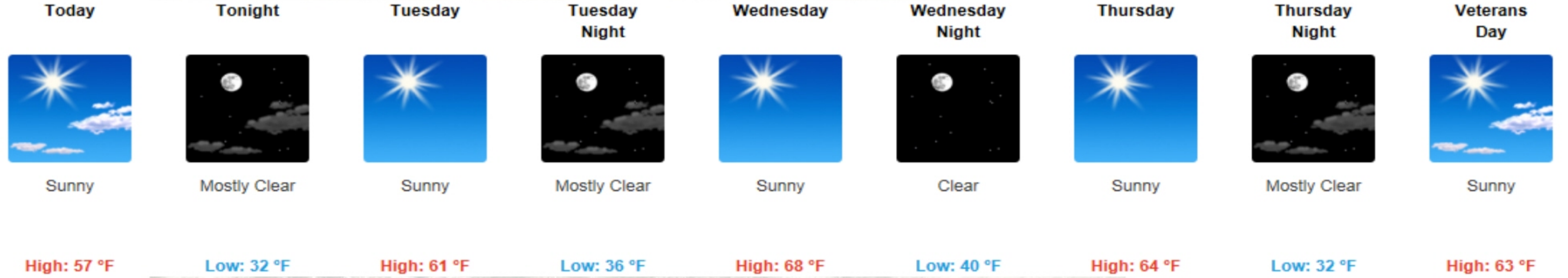
State Weather Forecast - Cont

Salt Lake City, UT



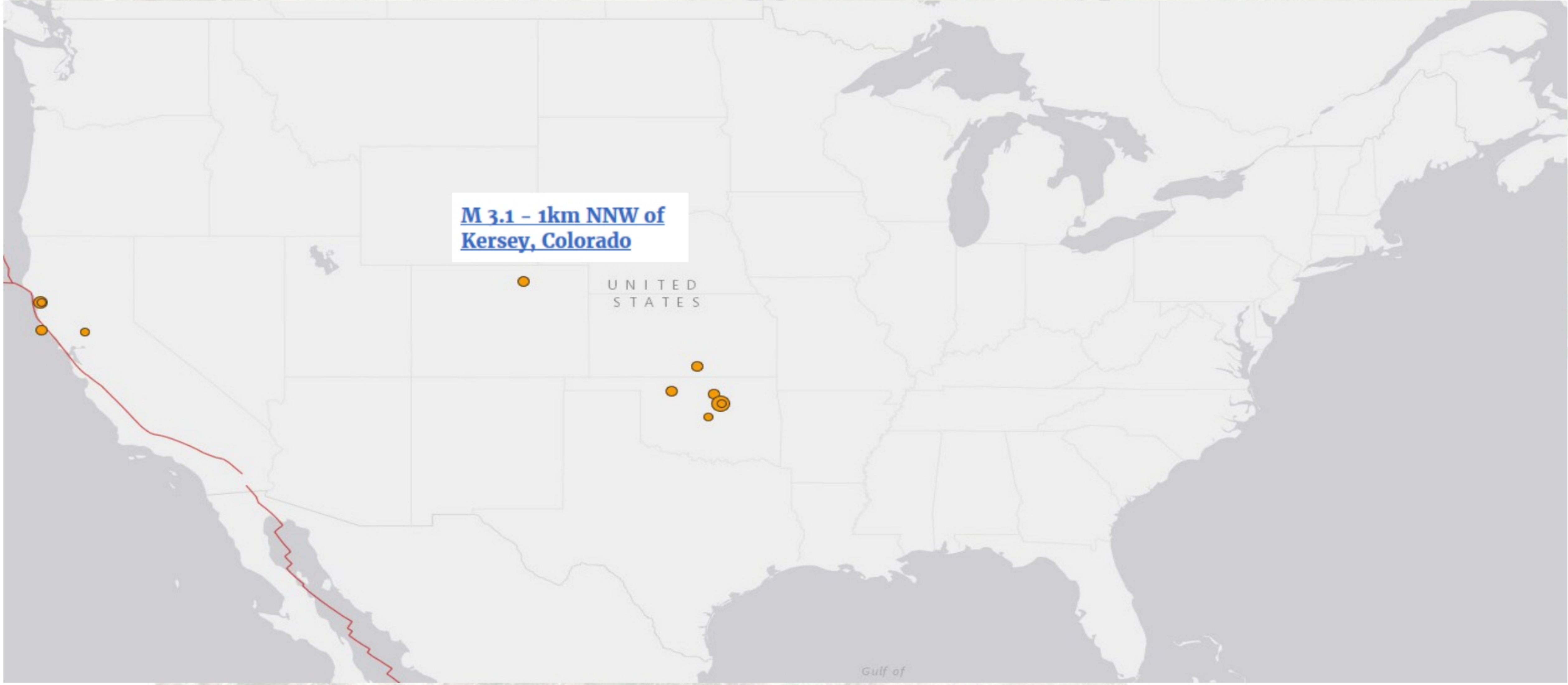
Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Veterans Day
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Haze	Haze	Haze	Haze	Haze	Haze	Haze
High: 65 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 64 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 64 °F

Cheyenne, WY



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Veterans Day
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 57 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 64 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 63 °F

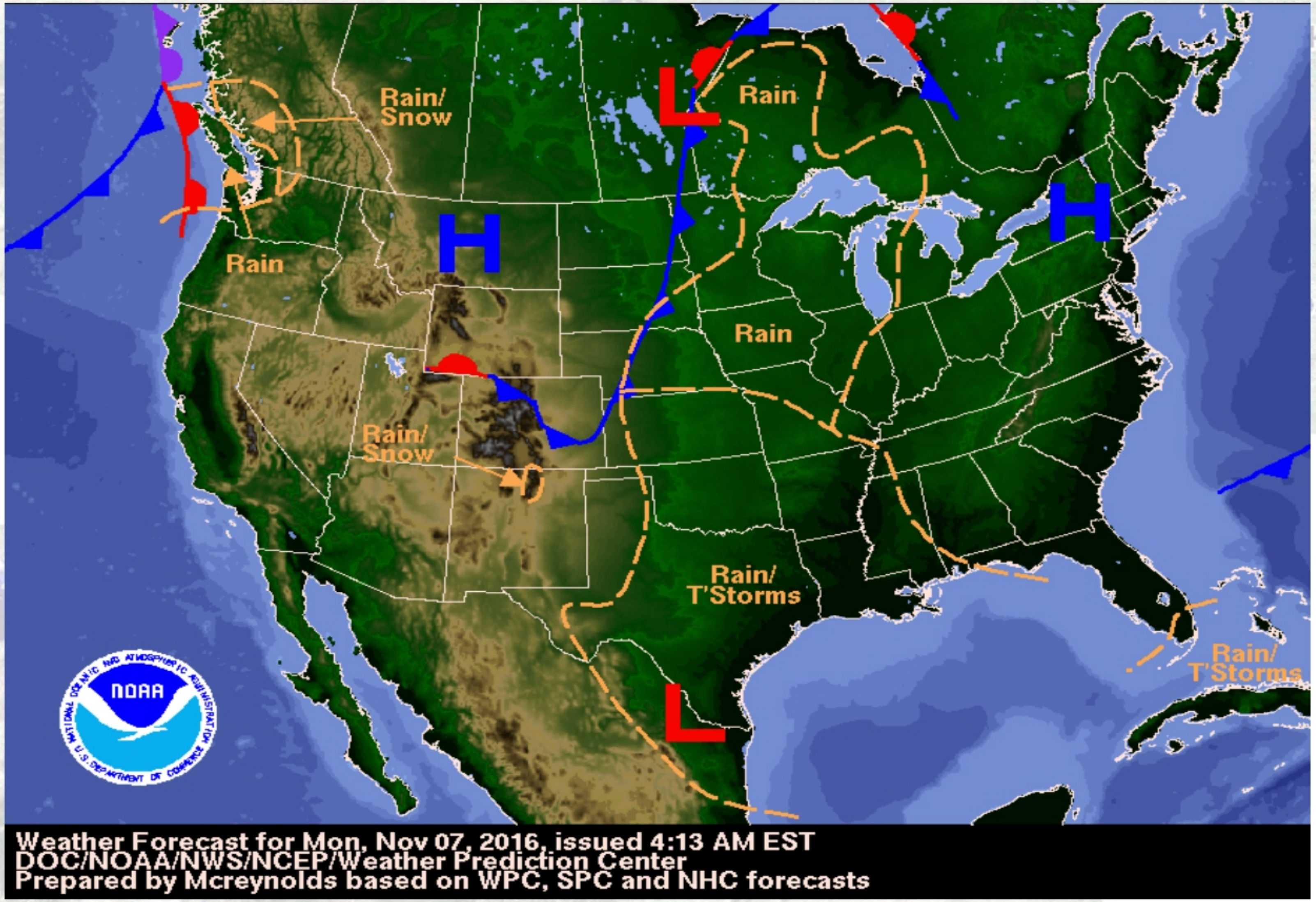
Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity



M 3.1 – 1km NNW of Kersey, Colorado

UNITED STATES
Gulf of

Today's National Weather Forecast


Rain/
Snow
Rain
H
L
Rain
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Rain
Rain/
Snow
Rain/
T'Storms
Rain/
T'Storms
L
NOAA

Weather Forecast for Mon, Nov 07, 2016, issued 4:13 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Atlantic Tropical Assessment

Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances

Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours.

7:00 am EST
Mon Nov 7 2016

Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression 🌀 Storm 🌀 Hurricane
⊗ Post-Tropical Cyclone ✕ Remnants

www.hurricanes.gov
45°N
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment

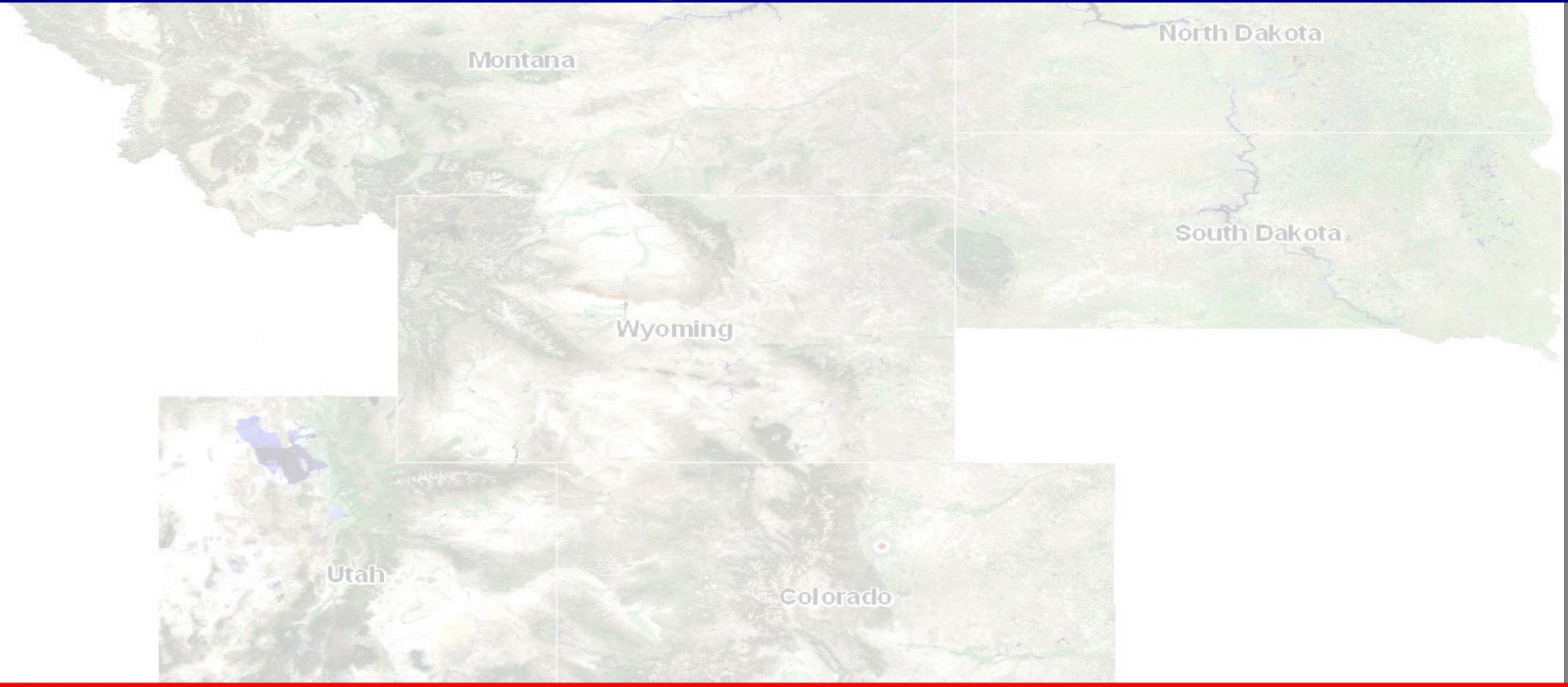
← Central Pacific
Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
www.hurricanes.gov

Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours.

4:00 am PST
Mon Nov 7 2016

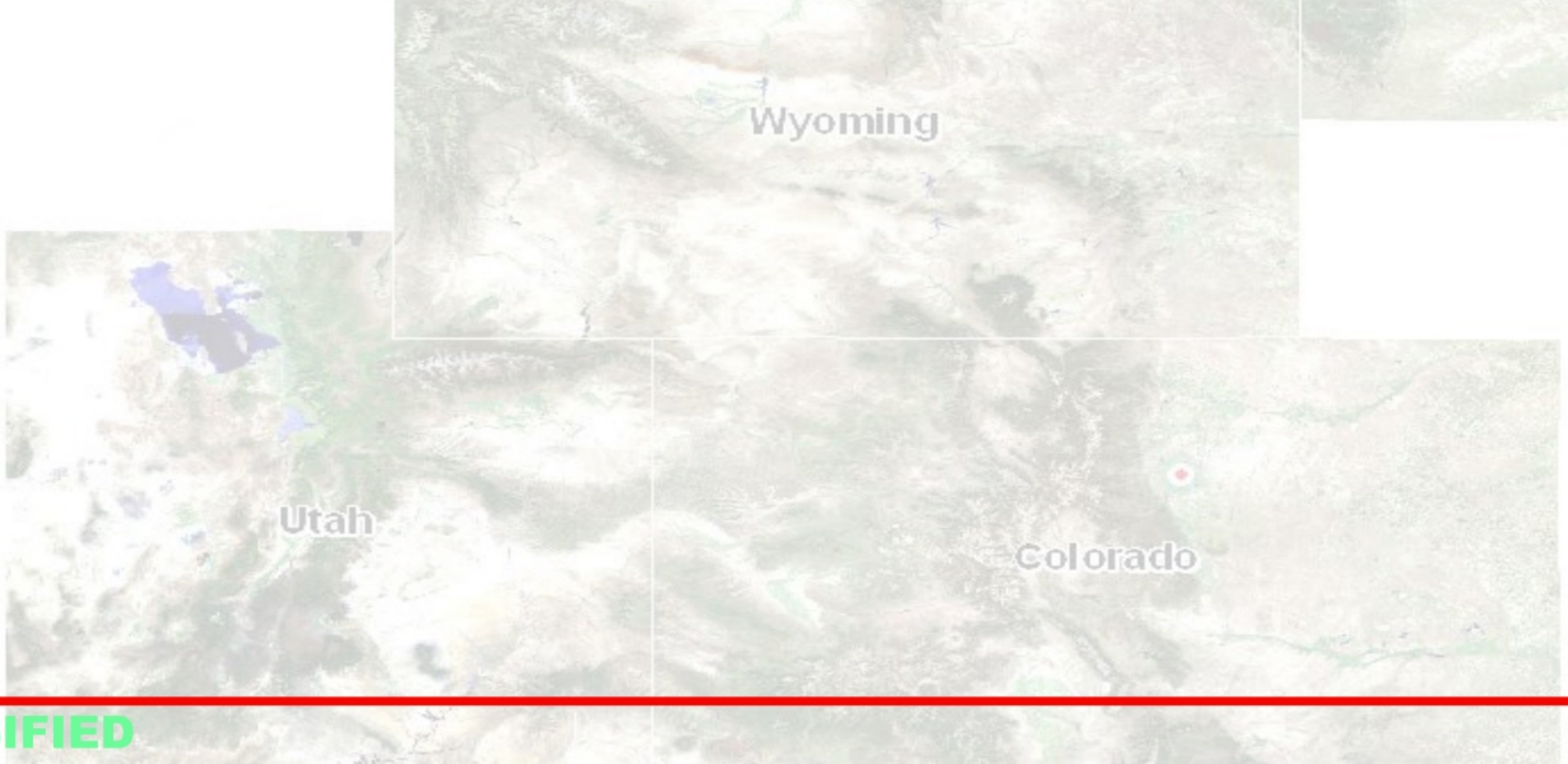
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression 🌀 Storm 🌀 Hurricane
⊗ Post-Tropical Cyclone × Remnants

Space Weather


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
1	**Date Requested**	**0**	**0**
DE – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 27, 2016		



IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Nov 3, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Kevin Moore (UFN)	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Amber Wells	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

November RRCC Standup Roster (Blue Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	**Name**
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Dennis Fisher
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	Kevin Moore
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Stephanie Poore
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 18, 2016 / 1240)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	Michael Pendergrass	303-746-3640	303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	David Watkins	720-683-2565	303-235-4359
WY	Carita Ricley (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton (Deployed)	720-315-6931303-495-0051	303-235-4322303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity

Significant Events: None

Tropical Activity:

- Atlantic – Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours
- Eastern Pacific – Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours
- Central Pacific – No tropical cyclones expected through Tuesday evening
- Western Pacific – No activity threatening U.S. interests

Significant Weather:

- Rain and thunderstorms – Southern/Central Plains to Lower/Middle Mississippi valleys
- Rain – Pacific Northwest; Central Plains to Middle/Upper Mississippi valleys and Great Lakes
- Red Flags Warnings – None
- Critical/Elevated Fire Weather – None
- Space Weather – Past 24 hours: none observed; next 24 hours: none predicted

Earthquake Activity:

- Magnitude 5.0 – Cushing, OK

Declaration Activity:

- Amendment No. 7 to FEMA-4283-DR-FL

Region VIII Duty Officers

Region 8 External Affairs	
Effective Dates	31 Oct – 07 Nov
Name	Megan Floyd
Cell	303-945-6367
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4638

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon	
Effective Dates	31 Oct – 07 Nov
Name	Martin McNeese
Cell	303-941-6498
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4987

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY

Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
MondayNovember 14, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: NSTRMOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: RECONSITUTION until Nov 28 RVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	NORMAL
Utah	NORMAL
S. Dakota	NORMAL
N. Dakota	LEVEL II (Partial)
Wyoming	NORMAL
Montana	NORMAL

Events

- Tue 1:00-2:00 Sr Leadership VTC, RA Conf RmWed 12:00-1:00 RA/DRA/DDs-Bi-Weekly RA Conf Call, RA Conf RmThu 1:30-3:00 Division Directors Meeting, RA Conf RmMon-Wed ARA Leave, Columbus, OH - Deal Acting

Exercises and Training

- **Mon-Fri (All day) L-141 Course, Yellowstone Conf RmMon-Fri (All day) PA Site Inspector Course, LP Conf Rm**

FEMA Region VIII
Serving CO, MT, ND, SD, UT and WY

FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

No Activity Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as "Major" by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
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FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

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CIR 2		
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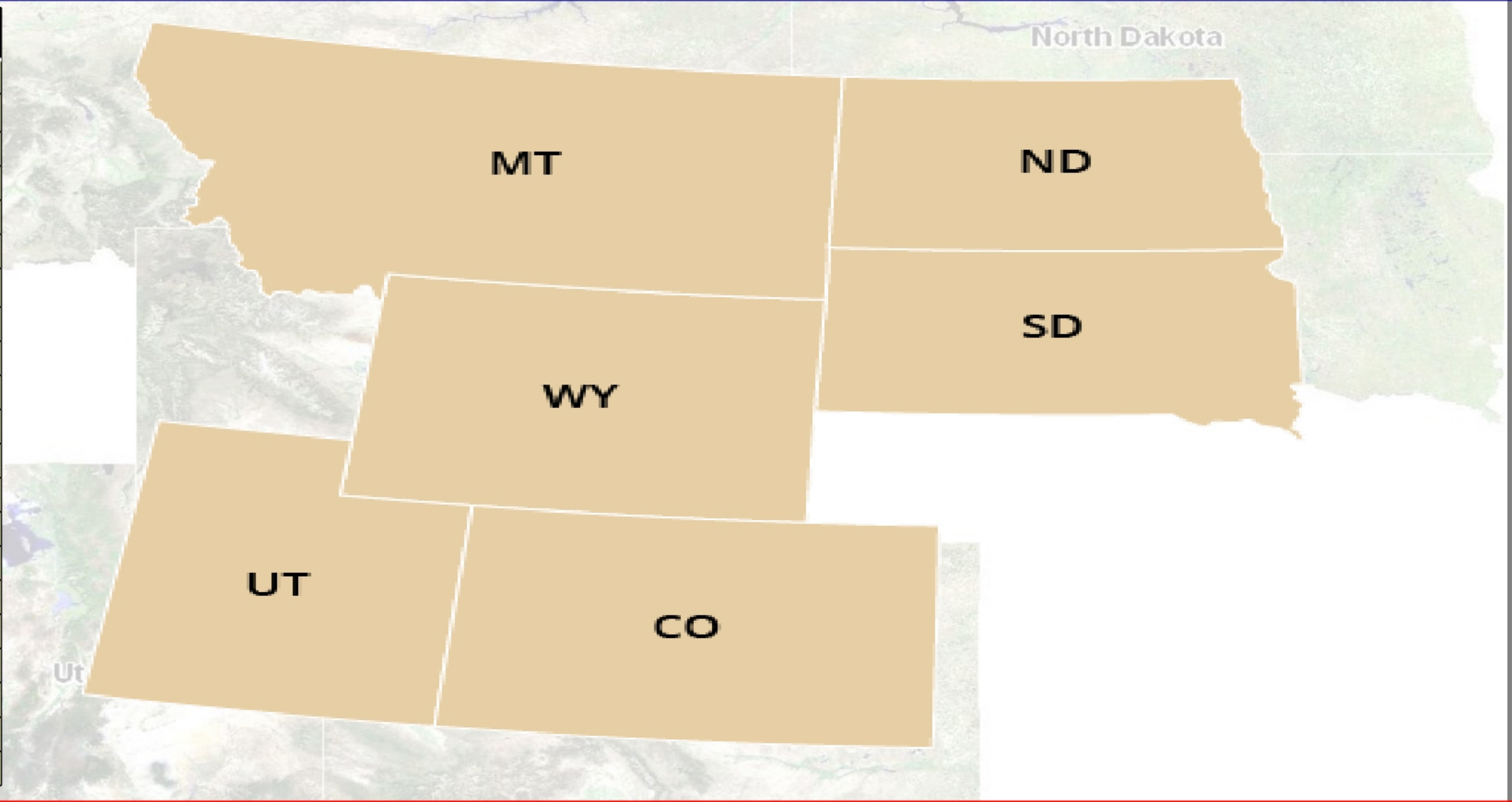
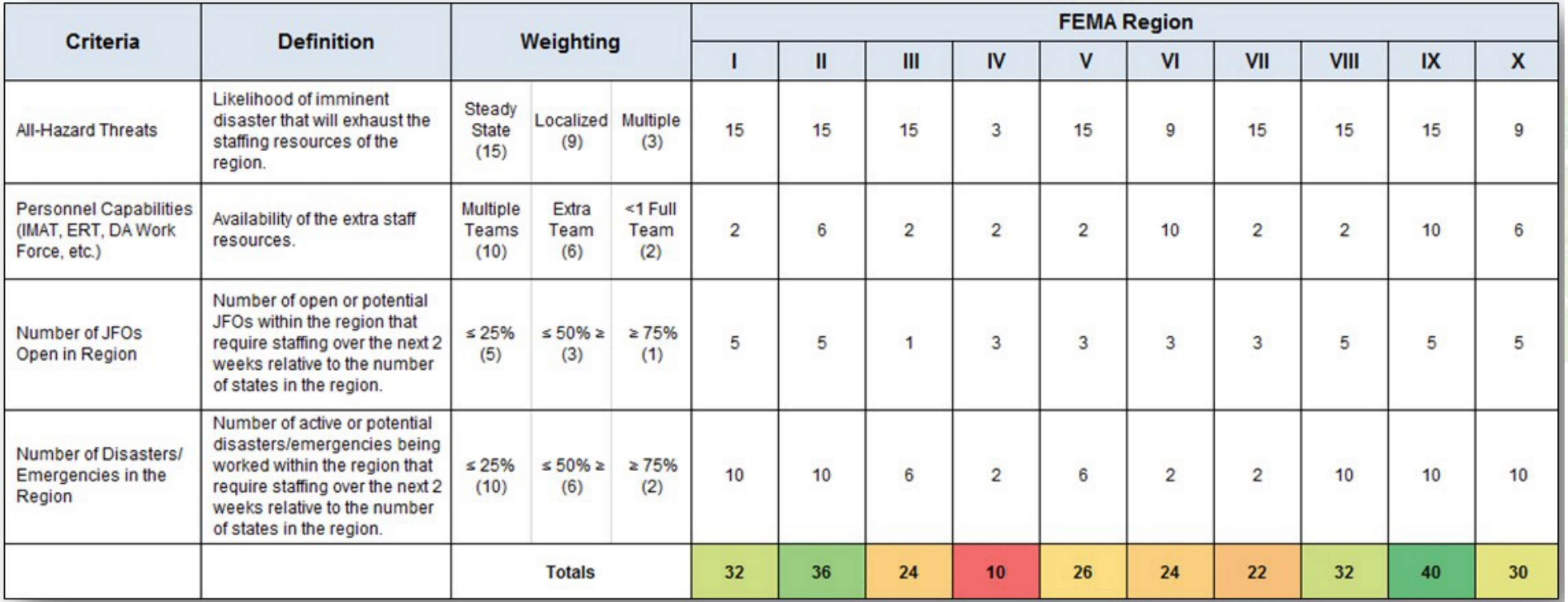
CIR 17		
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		


North Dakota
MT
ND
SD
WY
UT
CO
Ut

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 14 Nov 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	15	15	3	15	9	15	15	15	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	2	2	2	10	2	2	10	6
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	1	3	3	3	3	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	6	2	2	10	10	10
		Totals			32	36	24	10	26	24	22	32	40	30

Regions IX & II

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations		
Level	**Reason for Activation**	**Activated Times**

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations		
State	**Activation**	**Event/Incident**
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations		
State	**Activation (Event)**	**Supporting**

R8 Current Status (Continued)

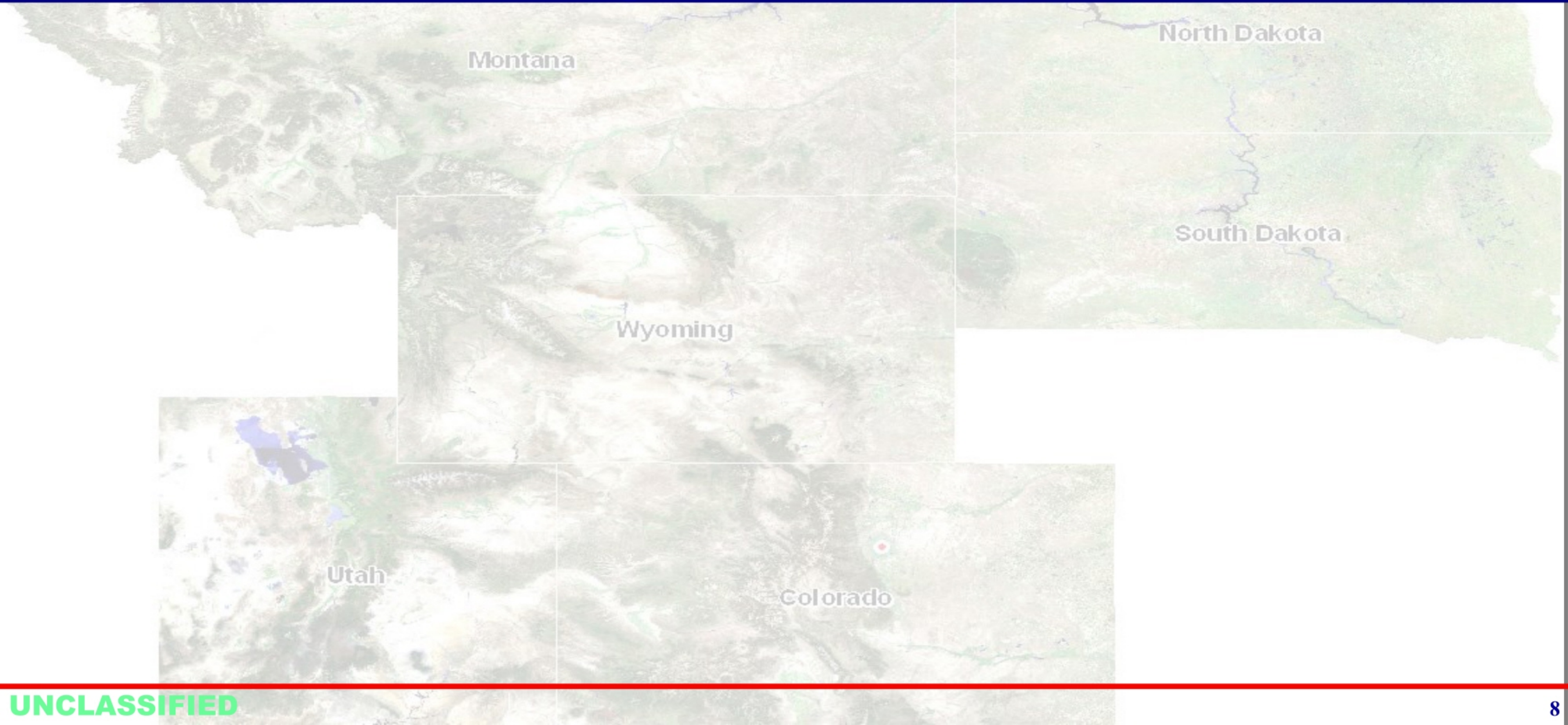
FEMA R8 FCO Status

FCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number

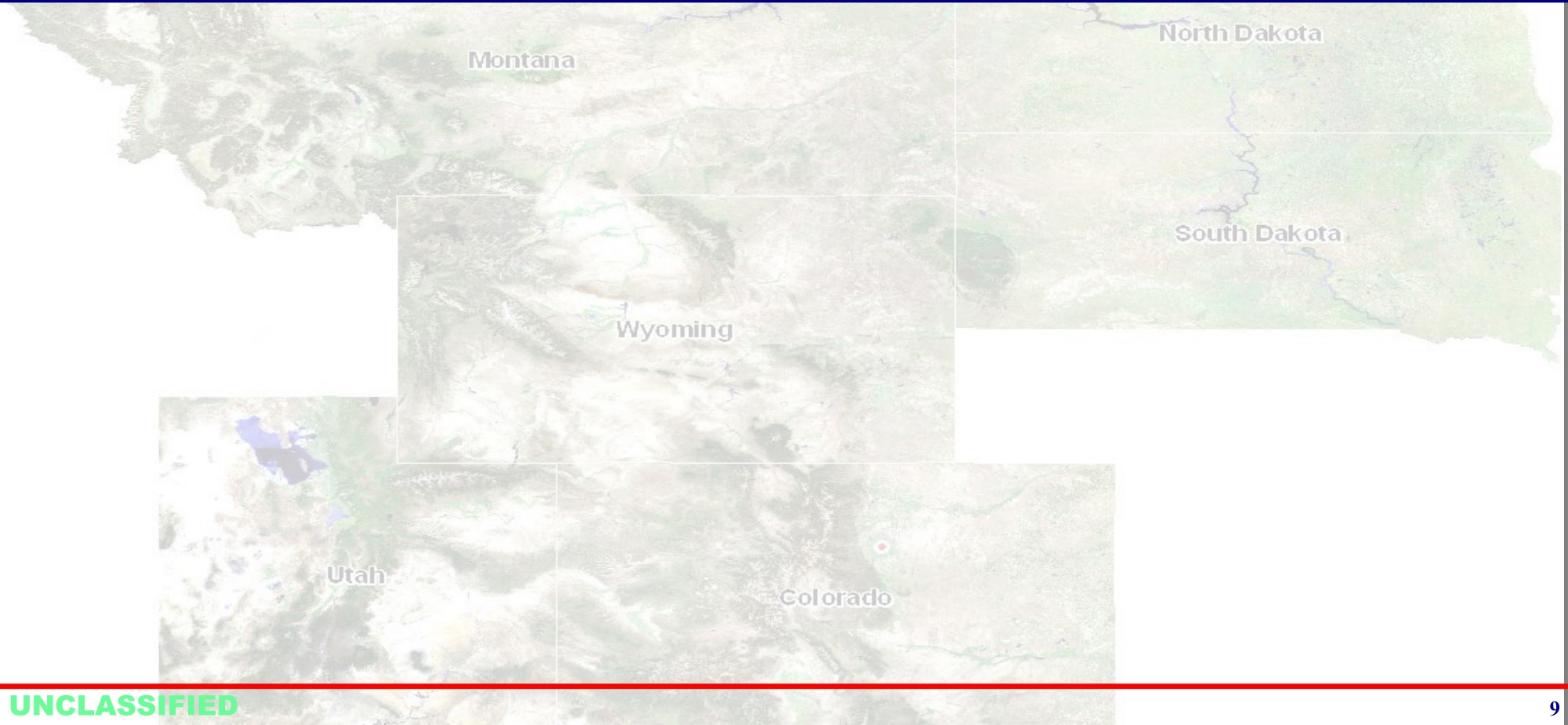
FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)

RCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

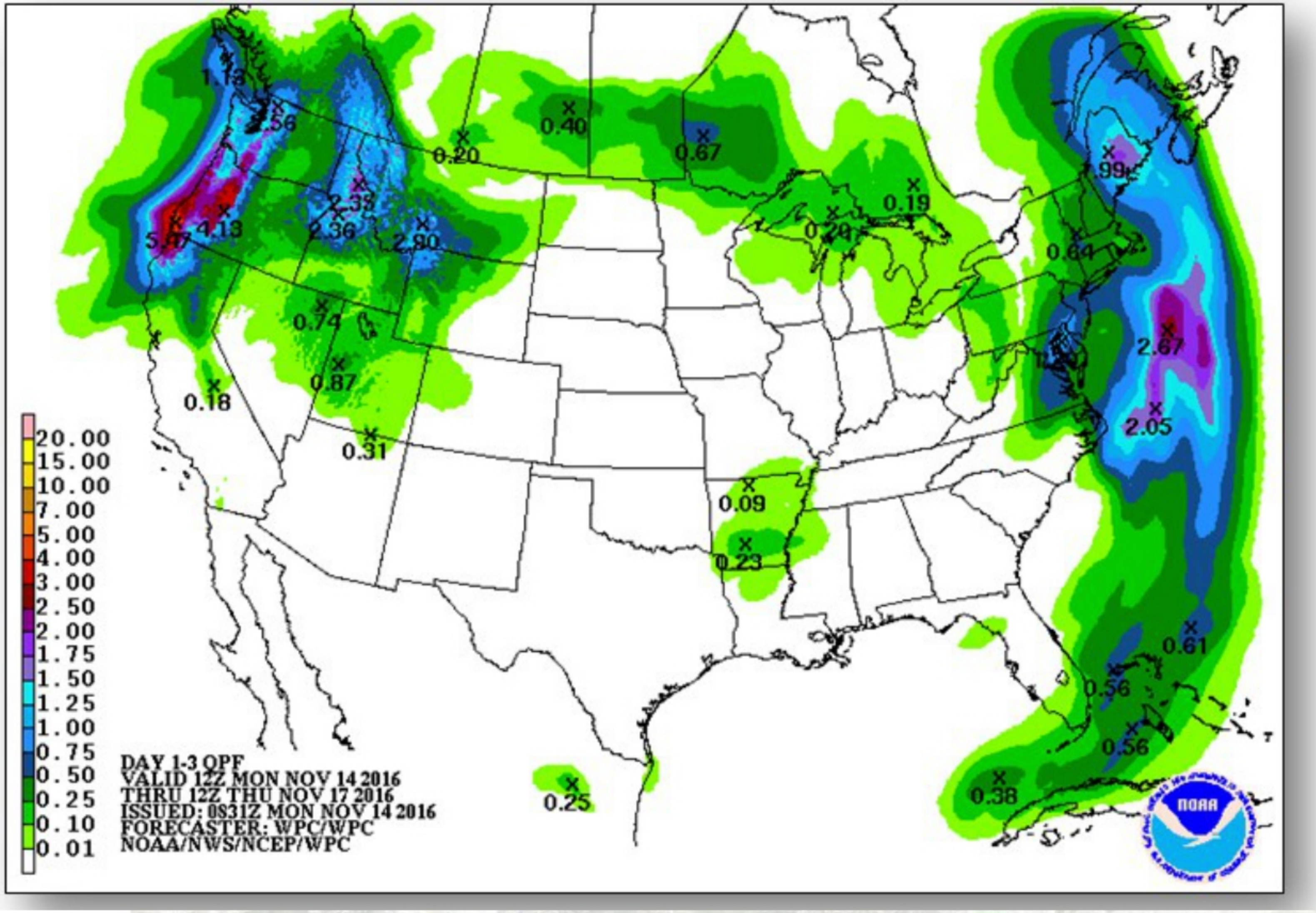
NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

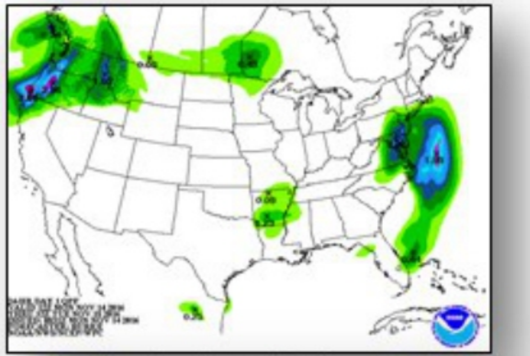
NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

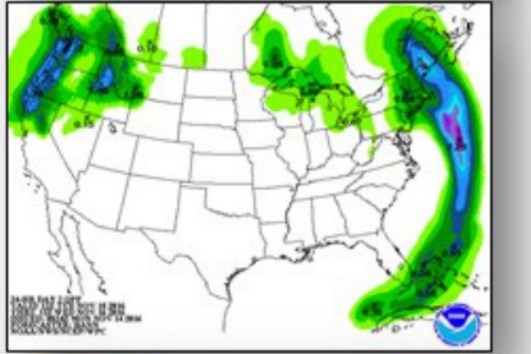

North Dakota
Montana
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

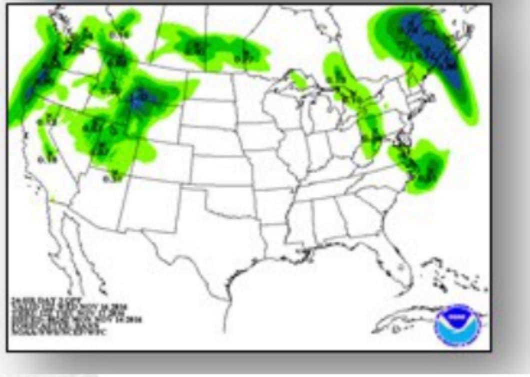
Precipitation Outlook


1.13
2.56
5.07
4.13
2.38
2.36
2.80
0.20
0.40
0.67
0.19
0.20
1.99
0.64
2.67
2.05
0.74
0.87
0.18
0.31
0.09
0.23
0.61
0.56
0.56
0.38
0.25
20.00
15.00
10.00
7.00
5.00
4.00
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.75
1.50
1.25
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.10
0.01

DAY 1-3 QPF
VALID 12Z MON NOV 14 2016
THRU 12Z THU NOV 17 2016
ISSUED: 0831Z MON NOV 14 2016
FORECASTER: WPC/WPC
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WPC

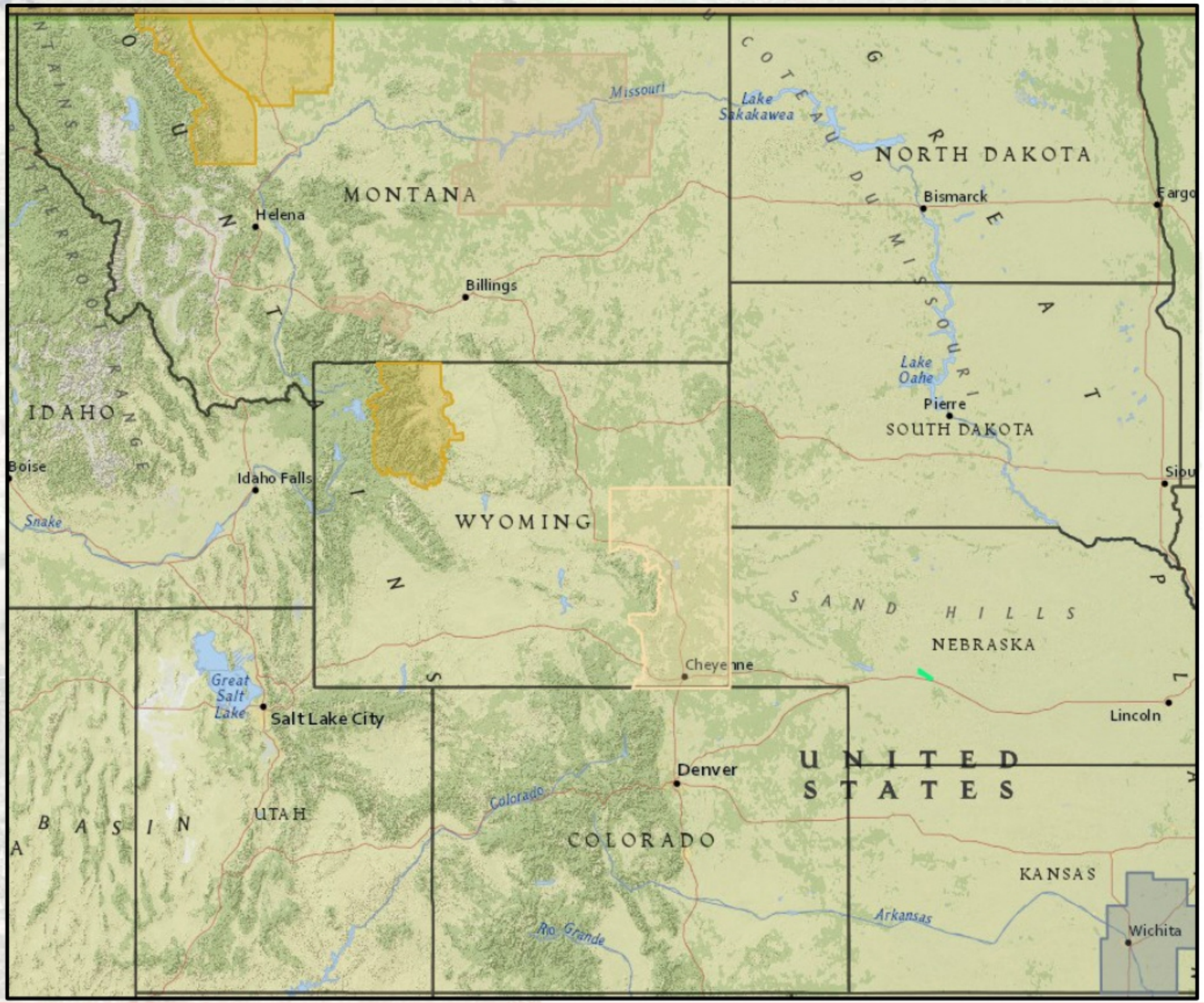

Day 1


Day 2


Day 3

Regional Weather Hazards

MT: High Wing Warning in effect until 8pm tonight for part of northern Rocky Mountain Front range and portion of north centralWind Advisory until 9 pm for area around Livingston and I80WY: High Wing Warning until 5 pm for Cody Foothills and adjacent Absaroka Mountains in northwest


MONTANA
Helena
Billings
Missouri
Lake Sakakawea
NORTH DAKOTA
Bismarck
Fargo
Lake Oahe
Pierre
SOUTH DAKOTA
IDAHO
Boise
Idaho Falls
Snake
WYOMING
Cheyenne
SAND HILLS
NEBRASKA
Lincoln
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
UTAH
BASIN
Denver
COLORADO
Colorado
Rio Grande
UNITED STATES
KANSAS
Arkansas
Wichita

State Weather Forecast

Denver, CO

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						30%		
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Chance Rain and Breezy	Blustery. Chance Rain/Snow then Slight Chance Snow	Mostly Sunny and Breezy
High: 71 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 78 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 47 °F

Helena, MT

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
20%	20%	30%	40%	40%	50%	50%		
Slight Chance Showers then Mostly Cloudy and Breezy	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Chance Rain/Snow	Chance Snow Showers	Chance Snow Showers	Chance Snow Showers	Mostly Cloudy
High: 59 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 46 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 39 °F	Low: 24 °F	High: 36 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND

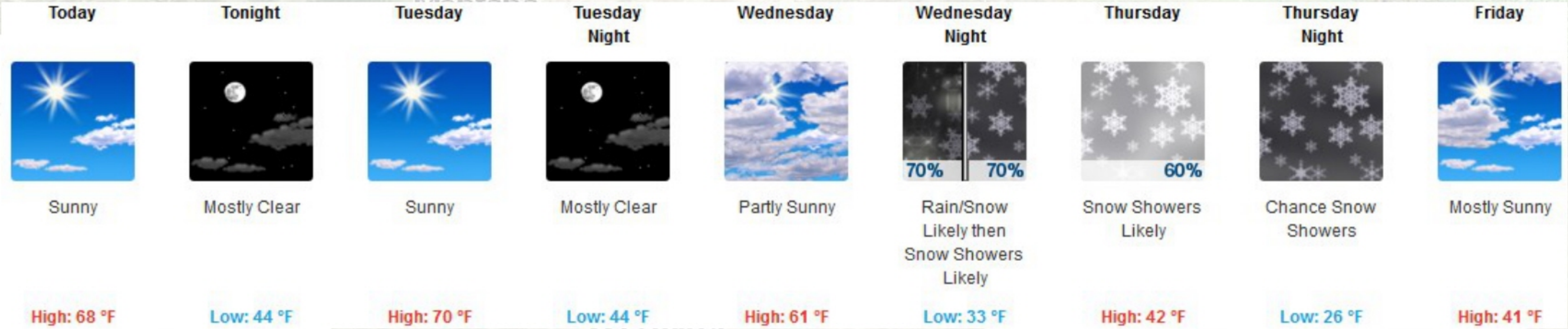
Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						40% 50%	60% 60%	50%
Patchy Fog then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Chance Rain/Snow then Chance Rain	Rain/Snow Likely then Snow Likely	Heavy Snow and Breezy
High: 60 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 57 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 40 °F	Low: 28 °F	High: 34 °F

Pierre, SD

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						40%	60% 60%	60% 50%
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Rain	Rain/Snow Likely then Snow Likely	Breezy. Snow Likely then Chance Rain/Snow
High: 66 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 67 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 48 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 36 °F

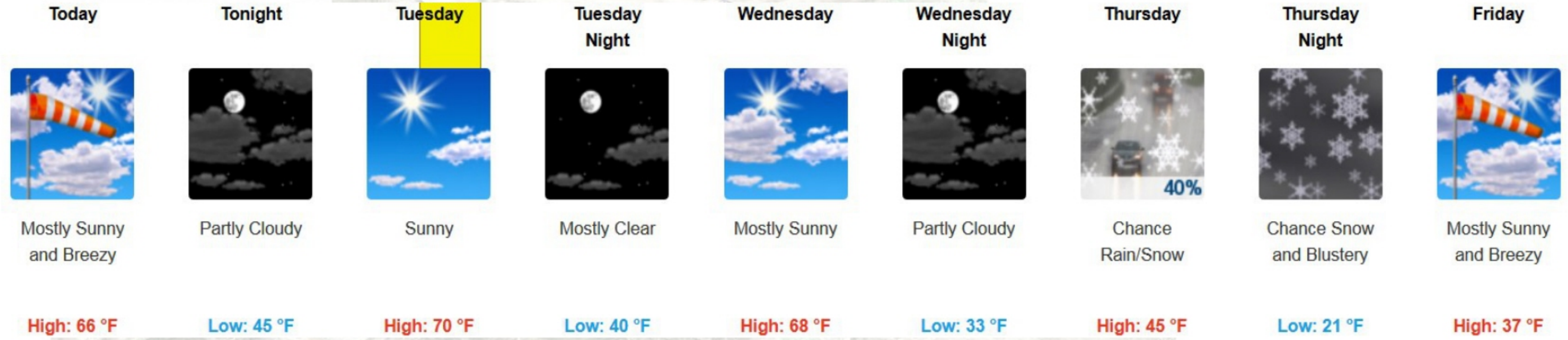
State Weather Forecast - Cont

Salt Lake City, UT



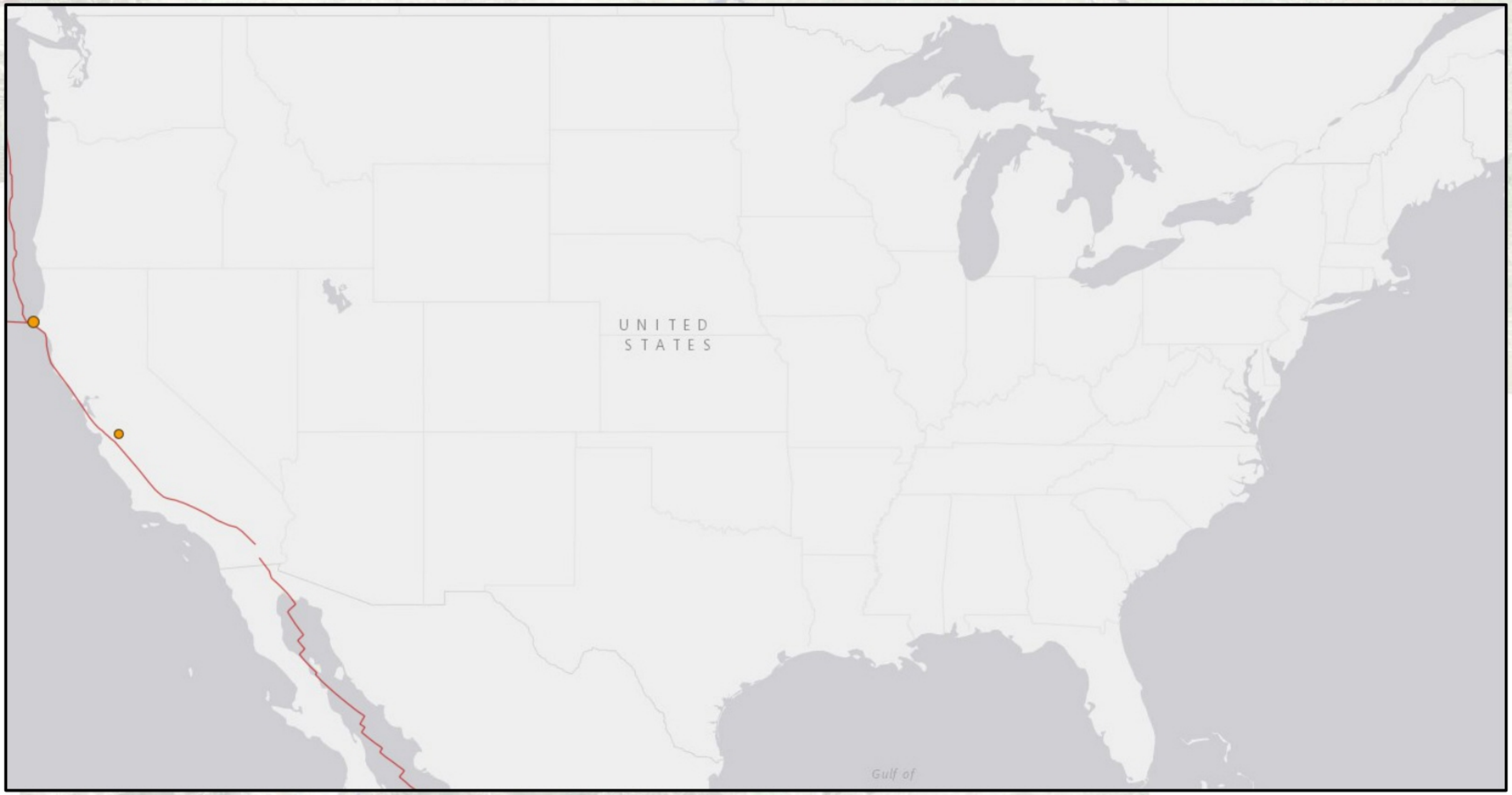
Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
					70% 70%	60%		
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Partly Sunny	Rain/Snow Likely then Snow Showers Likely	Snow Showers Likely	Chance Snow Showers	Mostly Sunny
High: 68 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 42 °F	Low: 26 °F	High: 41 °F

Cheyenne, WY

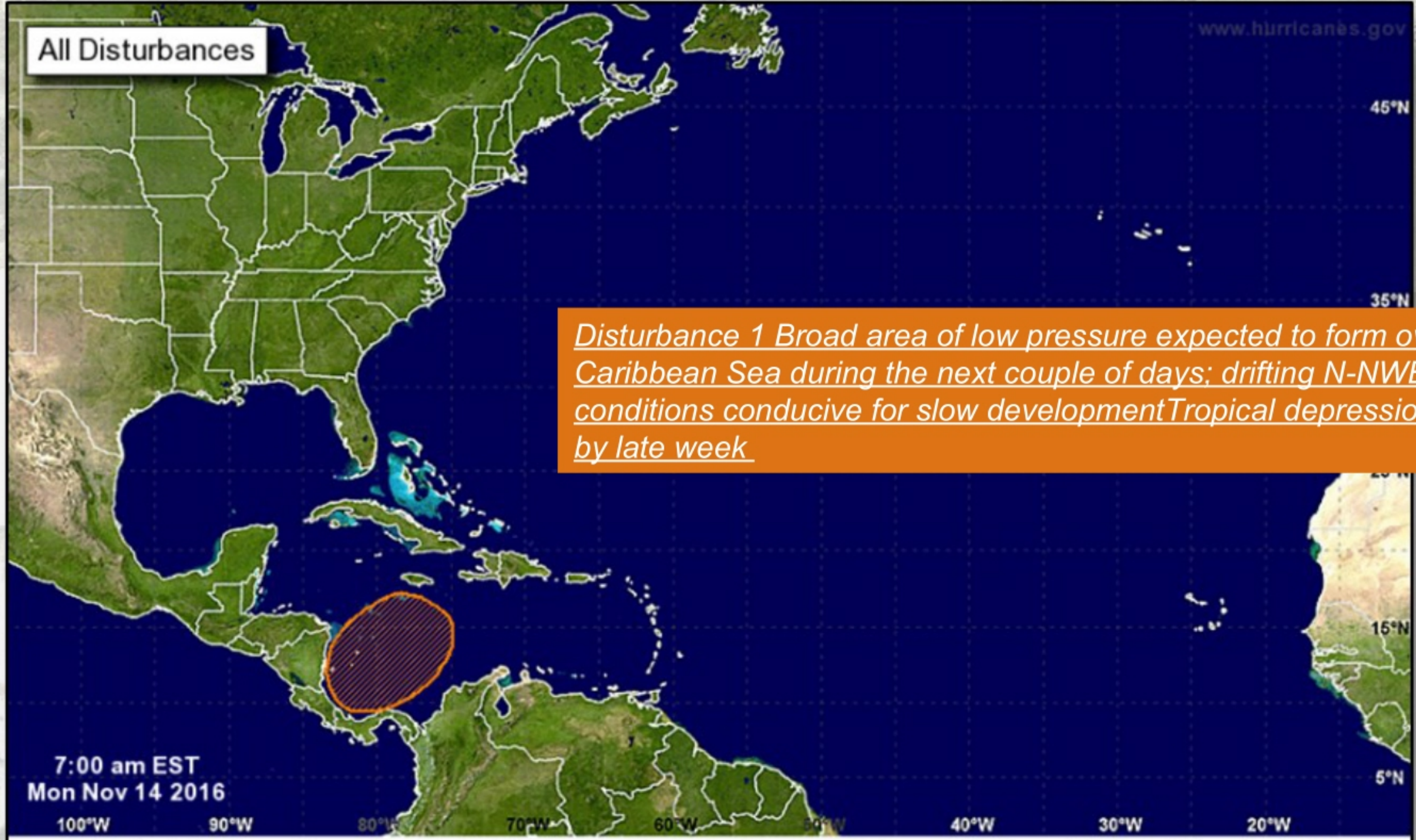


Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						40%		
Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Chance Rain/Snow	Chance Snow and Blustery	Mostly Sunny and Breezy
High: 66 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 45 °F	Low: 21 °F	High: 37 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity


UNITED STATES
Gulf of

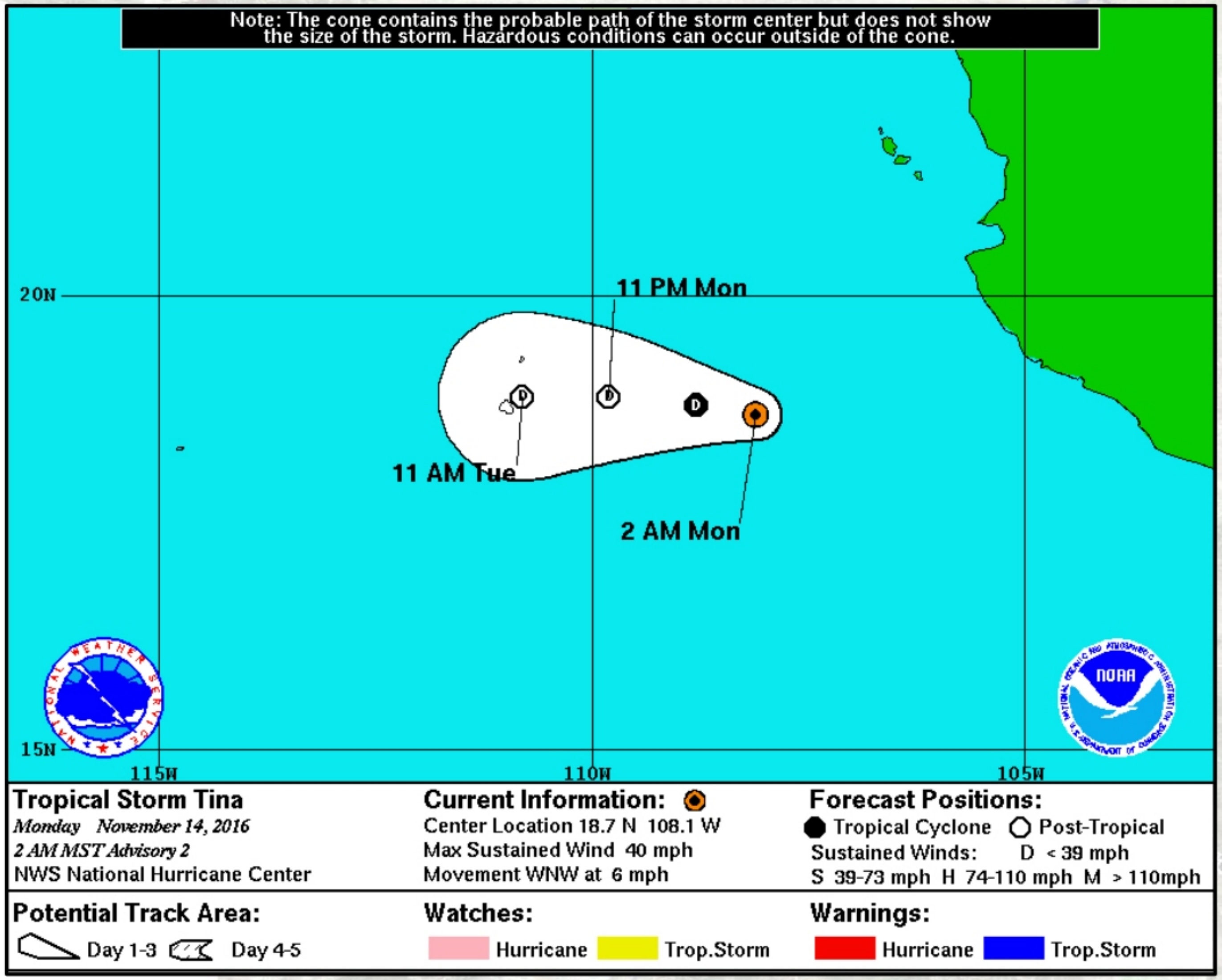
Atlantic Tropical Assessment


All Disturbances
www.hurricanes.gov
45°N
35°N
15°N
5°N
7:00 am EST
Mon Nov 14 2016
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W

Tropical Cyclone Formation Potential for the Five-Day Period Ending at 7:00 am EST Sat Nov 19 2016
Chance of Cyclone Formation in Five Days: 🟨 Low < 40% 🟧 Medium 40-60% 🟥 High > 60%

Disturbance 1 Broad area of low pressure expected to form over the SW Caribbean Sea during the next couple of days; drifting N-NWEnvironmental conditions conducive for slow developmentTropical depression could form by late week

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment


Note: The cone contains the probable path of the storm center but does not show the size of the storm. Hazardous conditions can occur outside of the cone.
20N
15N
115W
110W
105W
11 PM Mon
11 AM Tue
2 AM Mon
D
Tropical Storm Tina
Monday November 14, 2016
2 AM MST Advisory 2
NWS National Hurricane Center
Current Information:
Center Location 18.7 N 108.1 W
Max Sustained Wind 40 mph
Movement WNW at 6 mph
Forecast Positions:
● Tropical Cyclone ○ Post-Tropical
Sustained Winds: D < 39 mph
S 39-73 mph H 74-110 mph M > 110mph
Potential Track Area:
Day 1-3
Day 4-5
Watches:
Hurricane
Trop.Storm
Warnings:
Hurricane
Trop.Storm

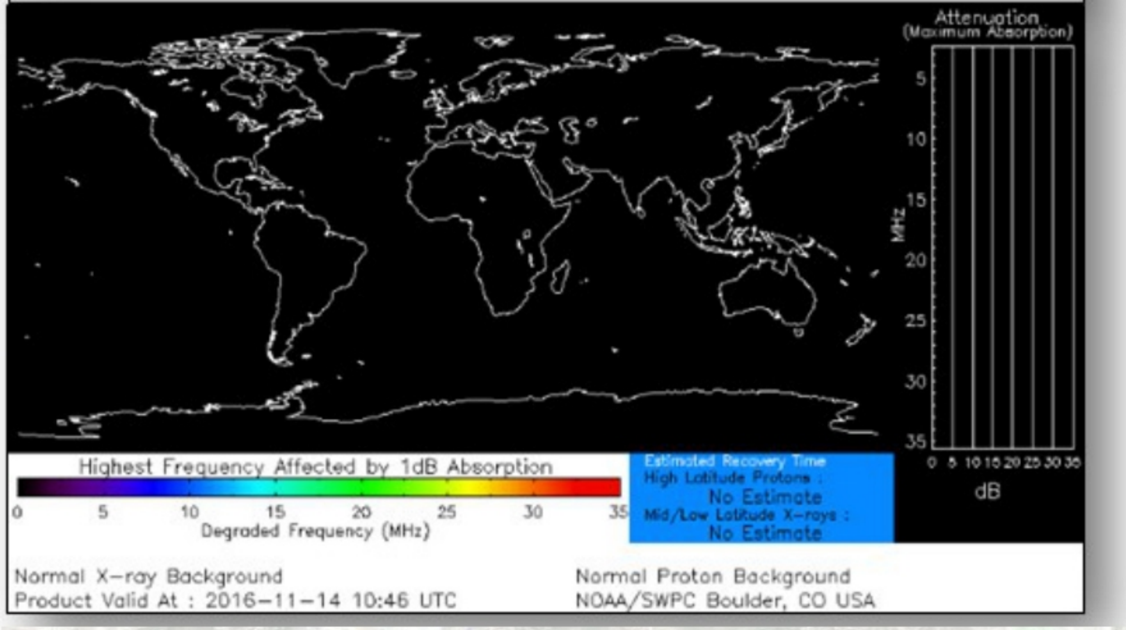
Tropical Storm Tina Located 250 miles W of Manzanillo, MexicoMoving WNW at 6 mph; maximum sustained winds 40 mphExpected to become a remnant low tonight or TuesdayTropical storm-force winds extend outward up to 105 milesNo coastal watches or warnings in effect

Space Weather

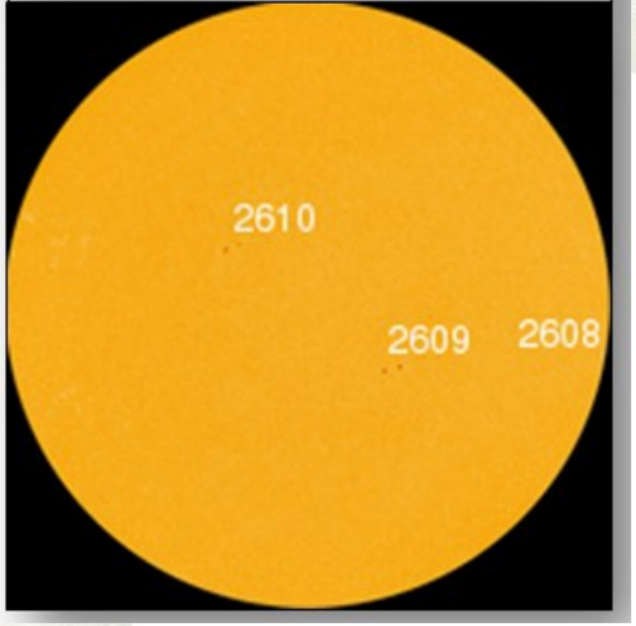
	Space Weather Activity	Geomagnetic Storms	Solar Radiation	Radio Blackouts
Past 24 Hours	None	None	None	None
Next 24 Hours	None	None	None	None

For further information on NOAA Space Weather Scales refer to *http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/noaa-scales-explanation*

HF Communication Impact


Attenuation
(Maximum Absorption)
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
MHz
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
dB
Highest Frequency Affected by 1dB Absorption
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
Degraded Frequency (MHz)
Estimated Recovery Time
High Latitude Protons :
No Estimate
Mid/Low Latitude X-rays :
No Estimate
Normal X-ray Background
Product Valid At : 2016-11-14 10:46 UTC
Normal Proton Background
NOAA/SWPC Boulder, CO USA

Sunspot Activity


2610
2609
2608

IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Nov 14, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Kevin Moore (UFN)	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Amber Wells	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	Scott Panzer	303-235-4865
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Wally Raub	202-374-4584
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

November RRCC Standup Roster (Blue Team on call) (Updated: Nov 14,

Position	**Name**
Director of Response	Brad Hufford
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Tom Carroll
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Dennis Fisher
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	Kevin Moore
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Stephanie Poore
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 18, 2016 / 1240)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	Michael Pendergrass	303-746-3640	303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	David Watkins	720-683-2565	303-235-4359
WY	Carita Ricley (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton (Deployed)	720-315-6931303-495-0051	303-235-4322303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Earthquake – New Zealand

Situation

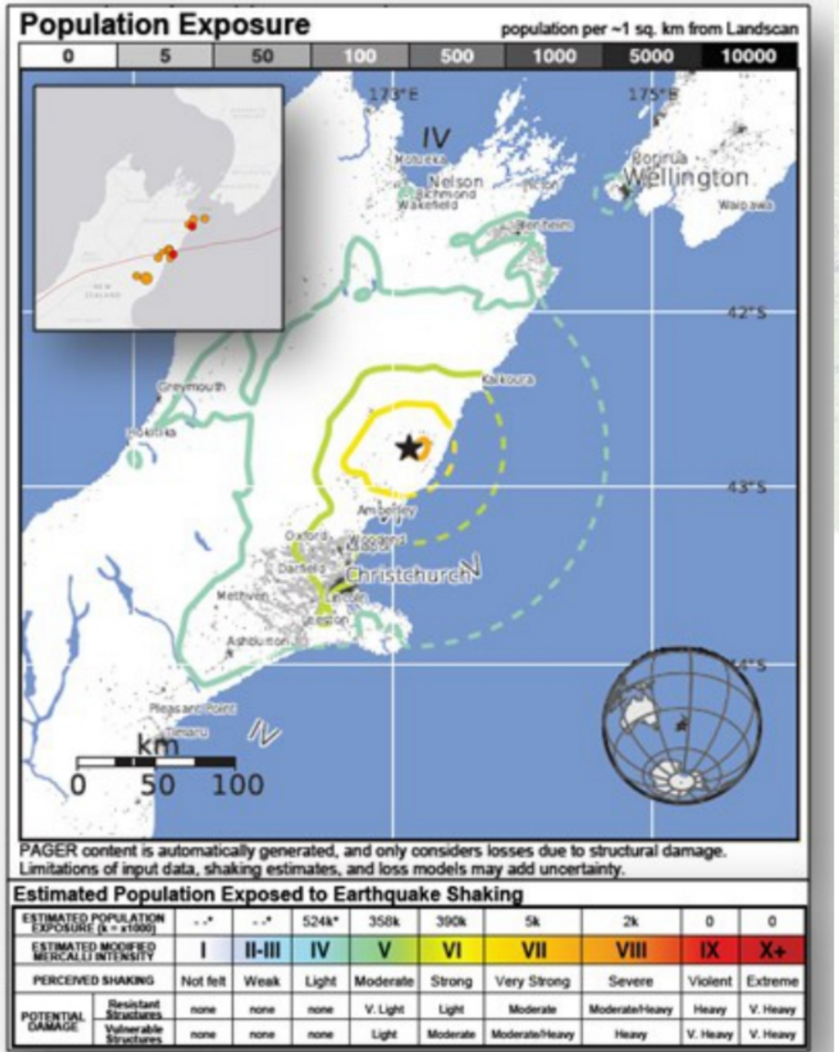
- M7.8; Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI): VII - 6:02 a.m. EST, Nov 13 (1:02 a.m. NZST, Nov 14); approximately 58 miles North of Christchurch
- Multiple aftershocks occurred
- Population of approximately 390,000 were exposed to strong shaking; 5,000 to very strong shaking
- Orange PAGER for economic losses, significant damage likely
- Green PAGER for shaking related fatalities; low likelihood of casualties
- LOCAL Tsunami threat issued for east coast of NZ; Tsunami wave struck Kaikoura with wave heights of 5-8ft
- No tsunami threat for U.S. Territories

Impacts

- Evacuated residents near coast allowed to return to their homes
- Two fatalities/multiple injuries reported by media
- Damaged buildings & structures reported from Christchurch to Kaikoura
- Widespread power outages reported

Response

- NZ Civil Defense Authority continues to issue updates and warnings
- Local States of Emergency issued
- FEMA Region IX remains at Normal Operations; RWC continues to monitor
- Government of New Zealand has not requested International Assistance; no US Disaster Declaration expected *(USAID)*



Population Exposure

population per ~1 sq. km from Landscan

0	5	50	100	500	1000	5000	10000

173°E
175°E
IV
Motueka
Nelson
Richmond
Wakefield
Porirua
Wellington
Blenheim
42°S
Greymouth
Kaikoura
Hokitika
43°S
Amberley
Oxford
Christchurch
Darfield
Methven
Lincoln
Leeston
Ashburton
44°S
Pleasant Point
Timaru
IV
km
0
50
100

PAGER content is automatically generated, and only considers losses due to structural damage. Limitations of input data, shaking estimates, and loss models may add uncertainty.

Estimated Population Exposed to Earthquake Shaking

ESTIMATED POPULATION EXPOSURE (k = x1000)		--*	--*	524k*	358k	390k	5k	2k	0	0
ESTIMATED MODIFIED MERCALLI INTENSITY		I	II-III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X+
PERCEIVED SHAKING		Not felt	Weak	Light	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong	Severe	Violent	Extreme
POTENTIAL DAMAGE	Resistant Structures	none	none	none	V. Light	Light	Moderate	Moderate/Heavy	Heavy	V. Heavy
	Vulnerable Structures	none	none	none	Light	Moderate	Moderate/Heavy	Heavy	V. Heavy	V. Heavy

Significant Activity – Nov 13-14

FEMA

Significant Events:
- M7.8 – New Zealand
- Wildfires North Carolina, South Carolina & Tennessee

Tropical Activity:
- Atlantic – Tropical cyclone activity is not expected during the next 48 hours; Disturbance (5-Day outlook)
- Eastern Pacific – Disturbance 1- Low (0%)
- Central Pacific – No tropical cyclones expected through Monday evening
- Western Pacific – No activity affecting U.S. territories

Significant Weather:
- Red Flags Warnings/Critical Fire Weather areas – None
- Space Weather – Past 24 hours: no space weather storms observed; next 24 hours: no space weather storms predicted

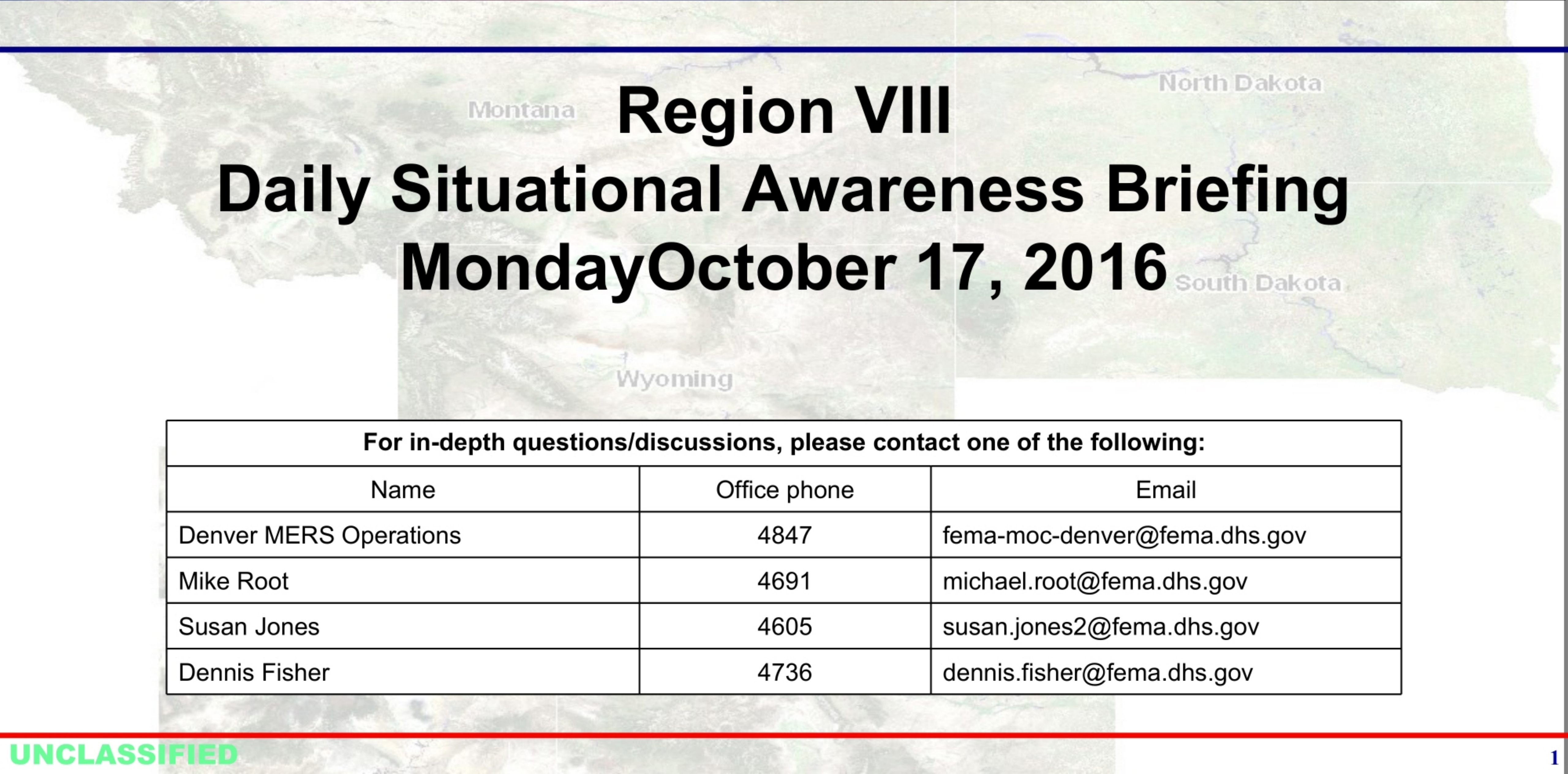
Declaration Activity: FMAG approved for Pinnacle Mountain Fire, Pickens County, SC

Region VIII Duty Officer

Region 8 External Affairs	
Effective Dates	07 – 13 Nov
Name	Cynthia Hunter
Cell	406-210-7725
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4639
Joint Information Center (JIC) Duty Hours	303-235-4908

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
MondayOctober 17, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: FYSA SD-Cottonwood FireFYSA CO-Custer County Wildfire MOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: Deployed ISO DR-4277-LARVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	LEVEL III (MONITORING)
Utah	NORMAL
S. Dakota	NORMAL
N. Dakota	LEVEL II (PARTIAL)
Wyoming	NORMAL
Montana	LEVEL III (MONITORING)

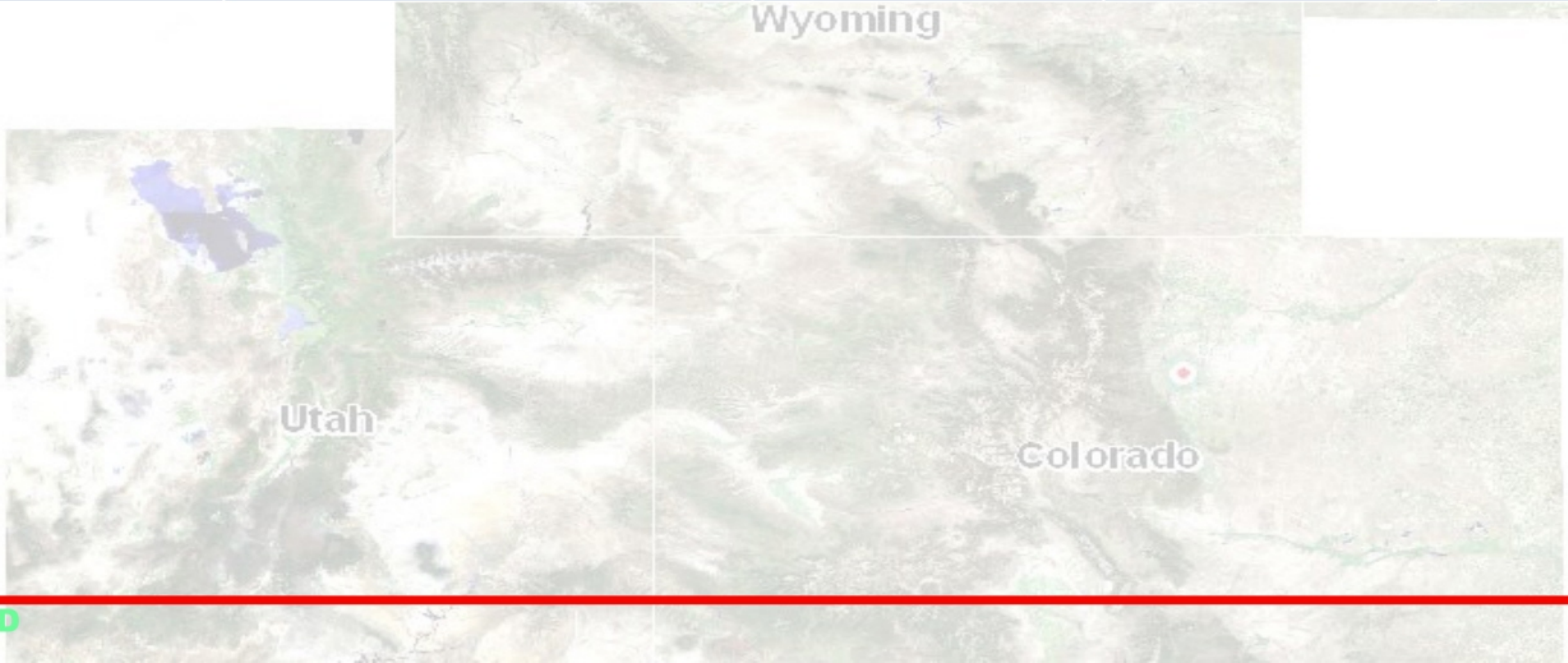
Events

- Tue 1:00-2:00 Sr Leadership VTC-Region 8, RA Conf RmThu 1:30-3:00 R8 Division Directors Meeting, RA Conf Rm

Exercises and Training

Region Active Fires updated as of 0815, 17 Oct 2016

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 17 Oct 2016)				
Cottonwood Fire	Cottonwood, South Dakota	5,000 - 6,000 acres	0%	Source: kotatv.com
Junkins Fire	Custer County	100	0%	Evacuations underwaySource: Local media reports/WebEOC



FEMA Region VIII
Serving CO, MT, ND, SD, UT and WY

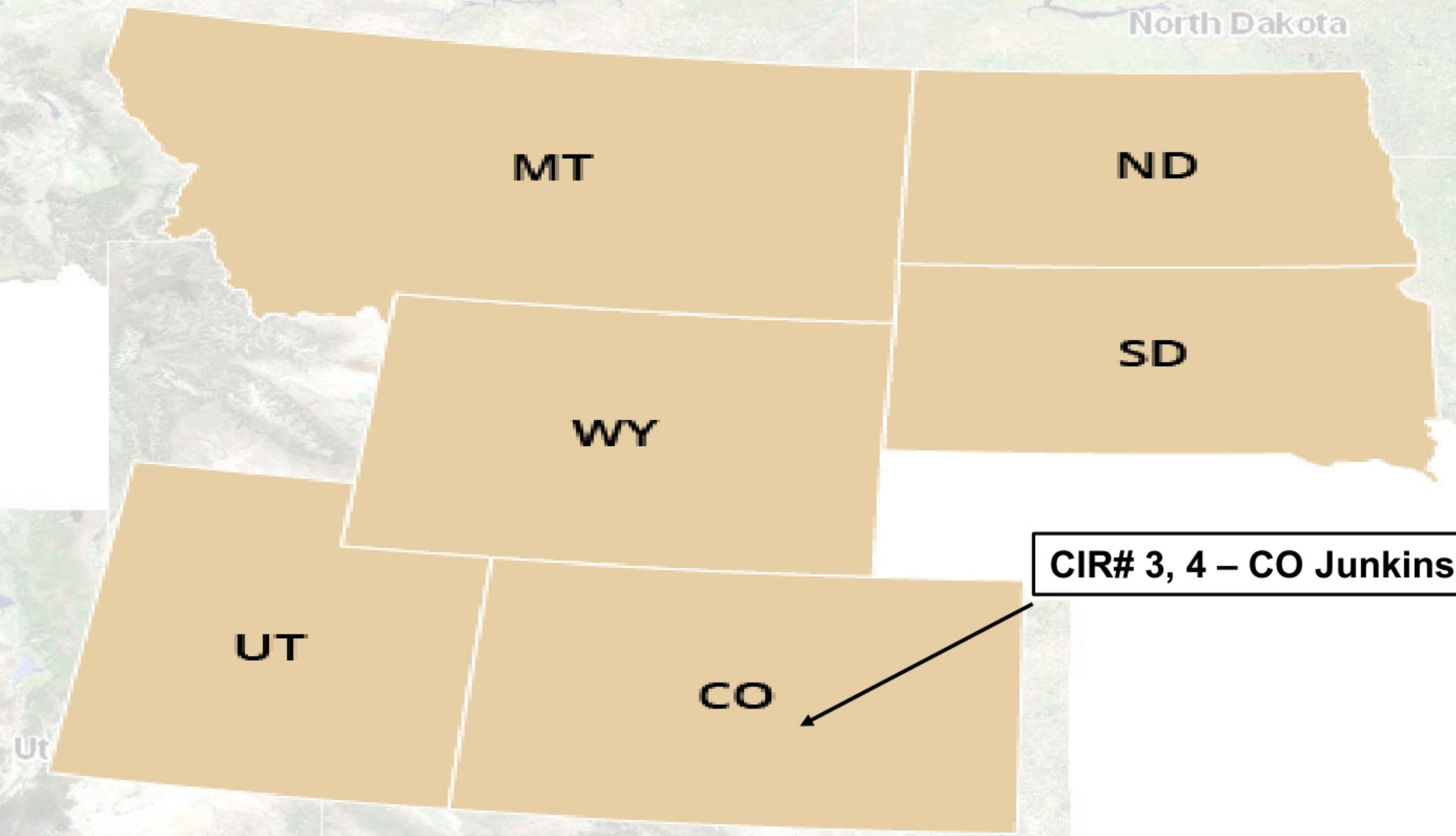
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

🟩 No Activity 🟨 Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) 🟥 Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as “Major” by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟨	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟨	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟩	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state’s population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

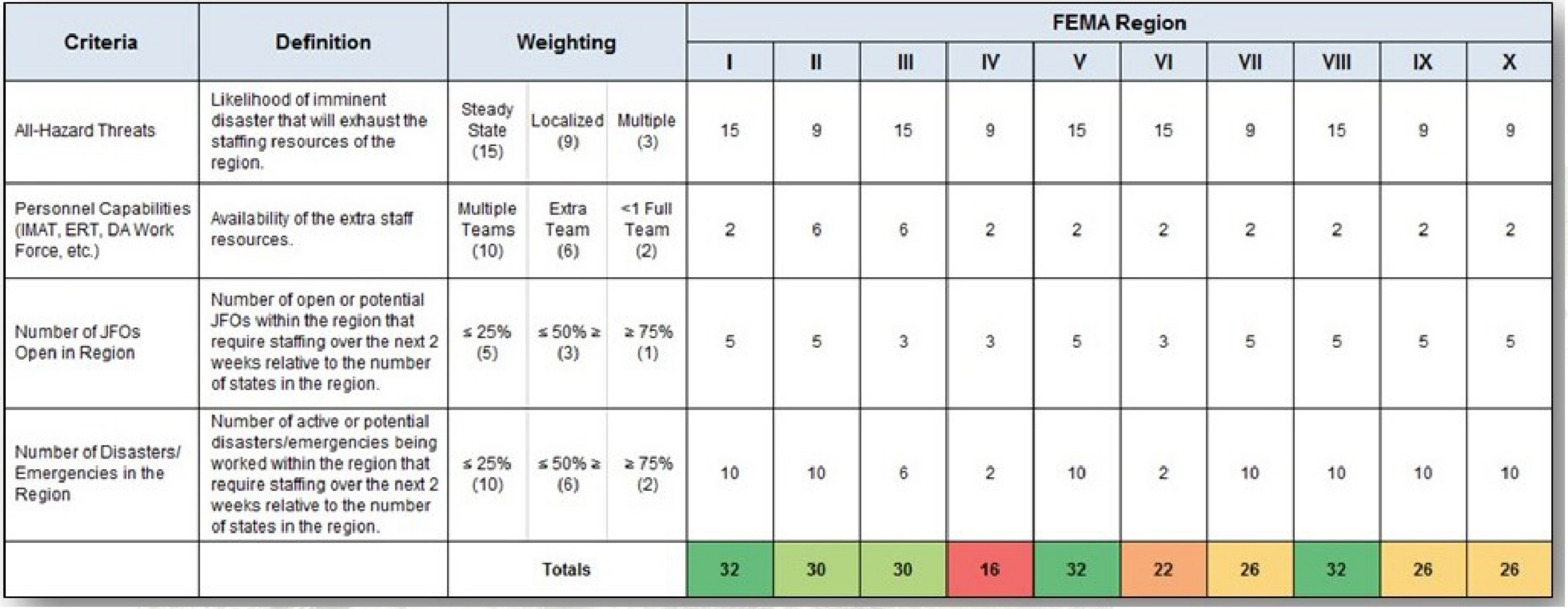
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3	🟥	
CIR 4	🟥	
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11		
CIR 12		
CIR 13		
CIR 14		
CIR 15		
CIR 16		
CIR 17		
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 4 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 17 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	9	15	9	15	15	9	15	9	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	10	2	10	10	10	10
		Totals			32	30	30	16	32	22	26	32	26	26

Backup Regions I, V, VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations

Level	Reason for Activation	Activated Times

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations

State	Activation	Event/Incident
MT	Level III Monitoring	Flooding
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level III Monitoring	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations

State	Activation (Event)	Supporting
LA	Flooding	DR-4277-LA

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status		
FCO	**Deployed Location**	**Declaration Number**

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)		
RCO	**Deployed Location**	**Declaration Number**
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

R8 PDA Summary

State	Event	Type	Counties / TribesRequested	Completed	(Estimated) Start / End Date

Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

Today-Wednesday

- **Critical fire weather conditions will continue across eastern CO through this evening. Ongoing fires will have the potential to continue to grow quickly**
- **A marginal risk for severe thunderstorms exists across E SD this afternoon. Primary threats will be gusty winds and large hail**
- **Strong winds will continue across southern portions of WY which could result in impacts to transportation along Interstates 25 and 80**
- **Periods of valley rain and mountain snow will continue through mid-week across portions of the Intermountain West and Northern Rockies**
  - **Impacts to travel across mountain passes are possible but should lessen after tomorrow**

Thursday-Sunday

- **A ridge of high pressure is expected to build across the area late in the week and into the weekend keeping the threat for widespread impactful weather low**

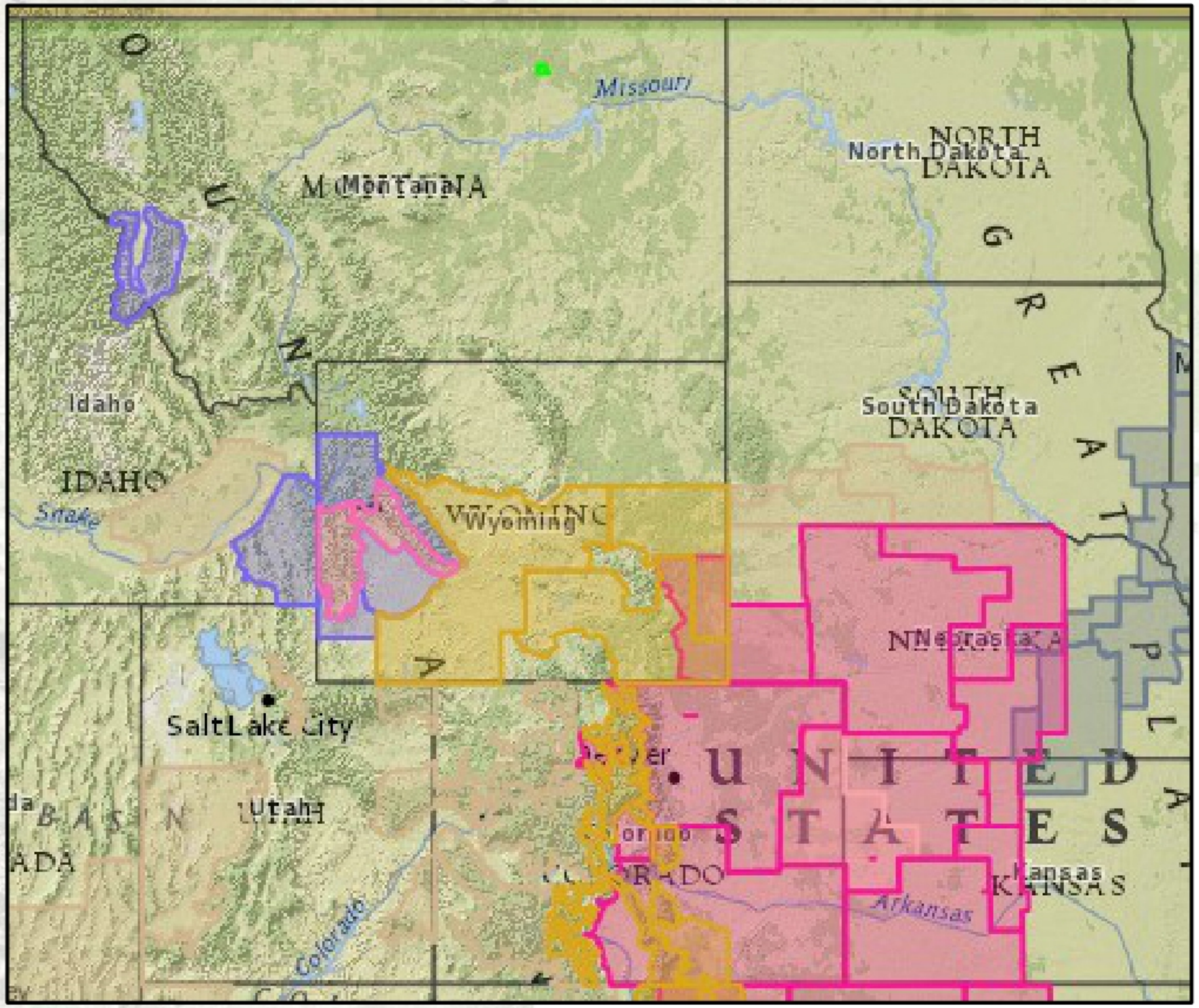
NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

DAY/THREAT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Critical Fire Weather	🟧 E CO	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snow/ Valley Rain	🟨 SW MT/ W WY	🟨 SW MT/ W WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Isolated Severe Thunderstorms	🟨 E SD	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Strong Winds	🟨 S WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

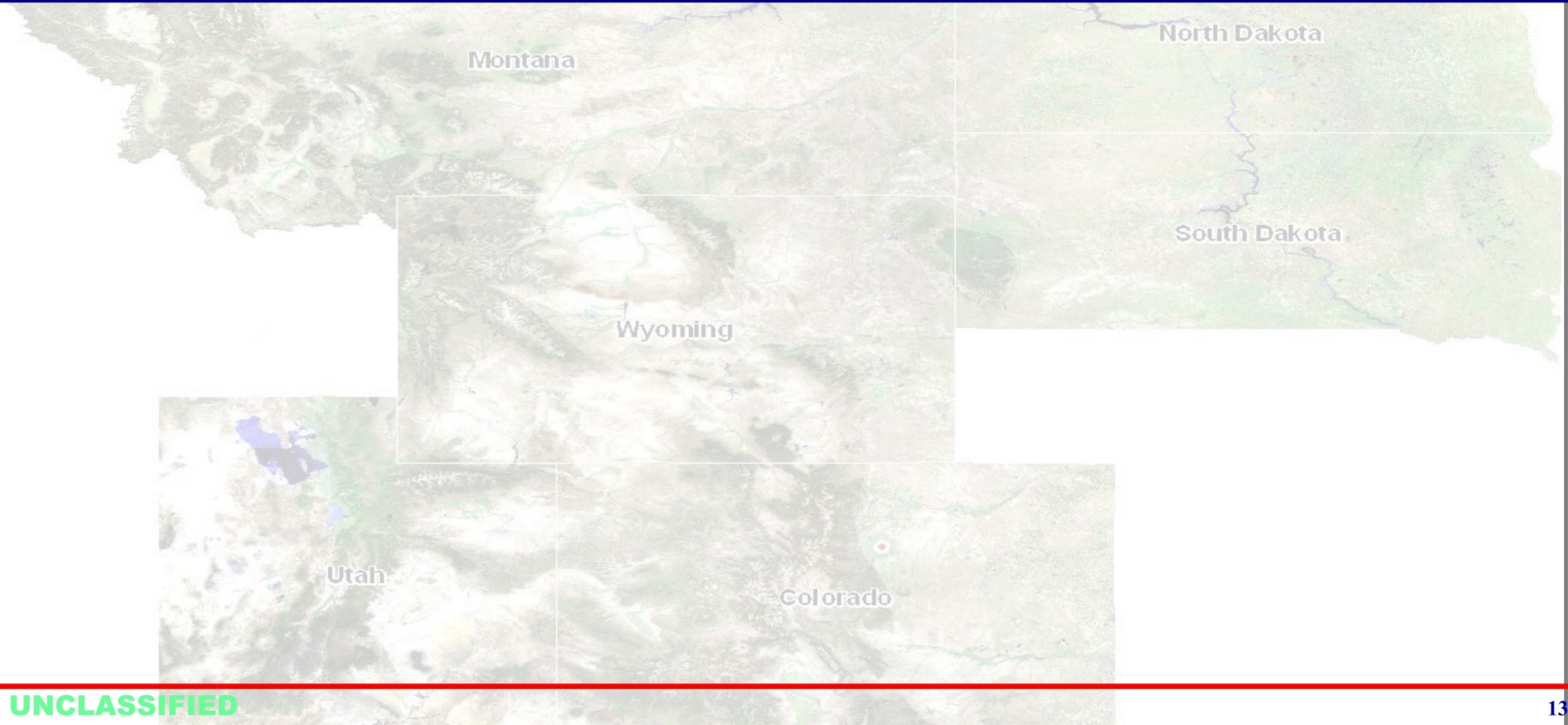
🟥 High Threat
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

Regional Weather Hazards

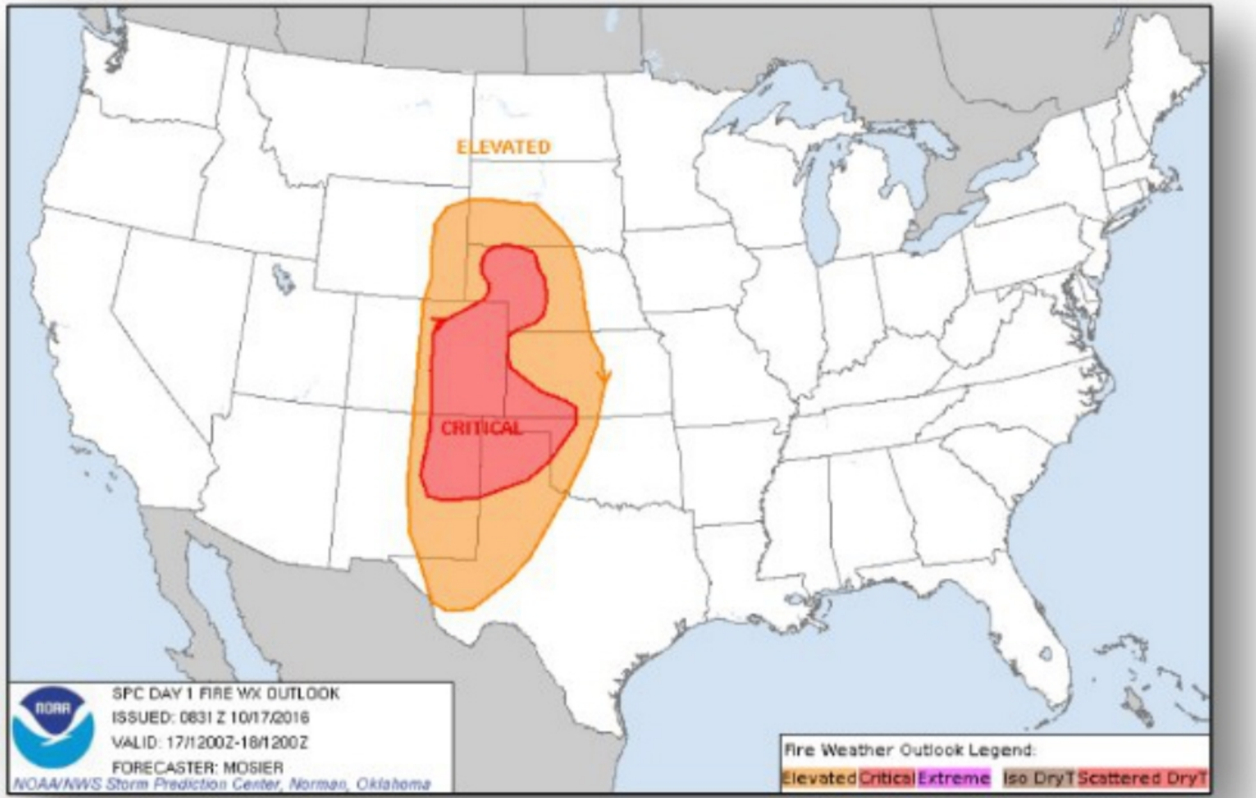
CO: High Wind Warning until noon for central valley and mountain areasRed Flag Warning until 9 PM for all of eastern plainsMT: Winter Weather Advisory until noon for part of southwestSD: Wind Advisory from 11 AM to 6 PM for portion of southwestWY:Winter Storm Warning until 6 PM across west; significant snowfall expected 9-16 inchesHigh Wind Warning until 6 PM across portions of central and south central areasWinter Weather Advisory until 6 pm across western areas


Missouri
MONTANA
Montana
NORTH DAKOTA
North Dakota
SOUTH DAKOTA
South Dakota
Idaho
IDAHO
Snake
WYOMING
Wyoming
NEBRASKA
Nebraska
Salt Lake City
Utah
UTAH
Denver
Colorado
COLORADO
KANSAS
Kansas
Arkansas
Colorado
UNITED STATES
GREAT PLAINS
BASIN
NEVADA

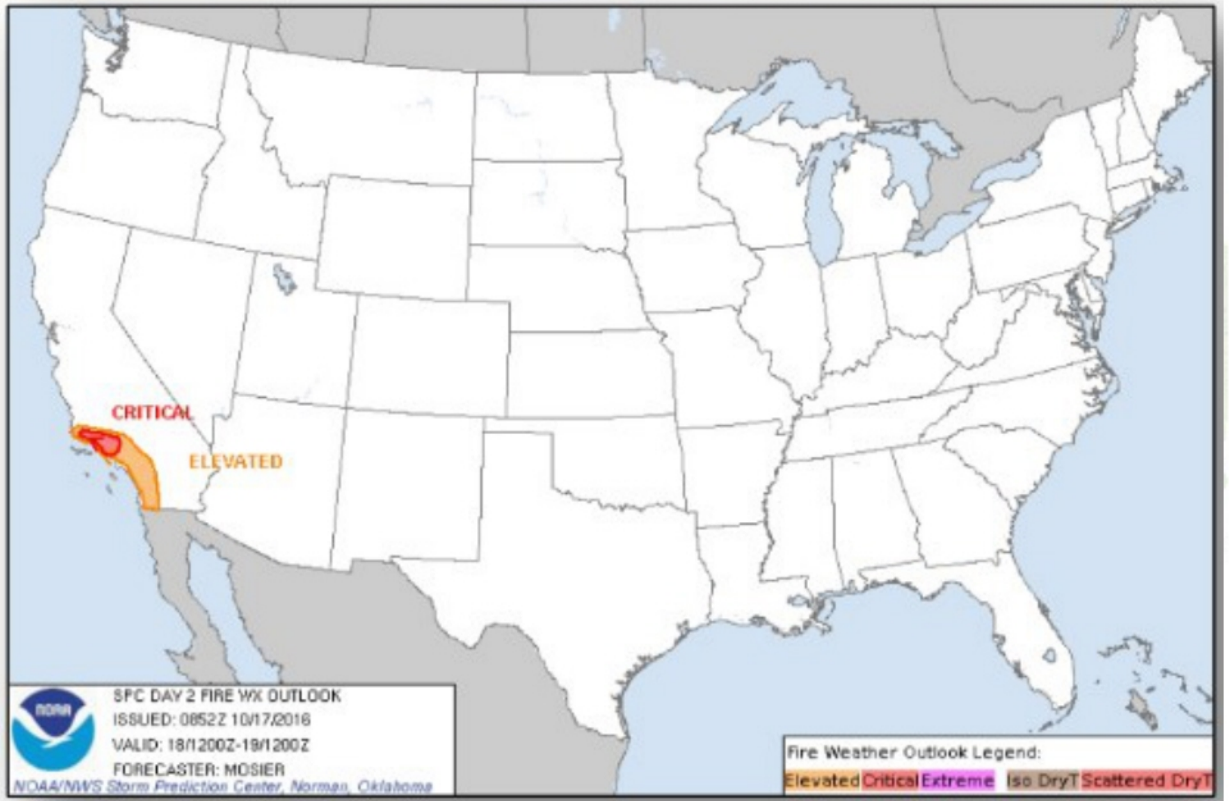
Precipitation Outlook


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

Fire Weather Outlook


ELEVATED
CRITICAL
NOAA
SPC DAY 1 FIRE WX OUTLOOK
ISSUED: 0831 Z 10/17/2016
VALID: 17/1200Z-18/1200Z
FORECASTER: MOSIER
NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center, Norman, Oklahoma
Fire Weather Outlook Legend:
Elevated Critical Extreme Iso DryT Scattered DryT

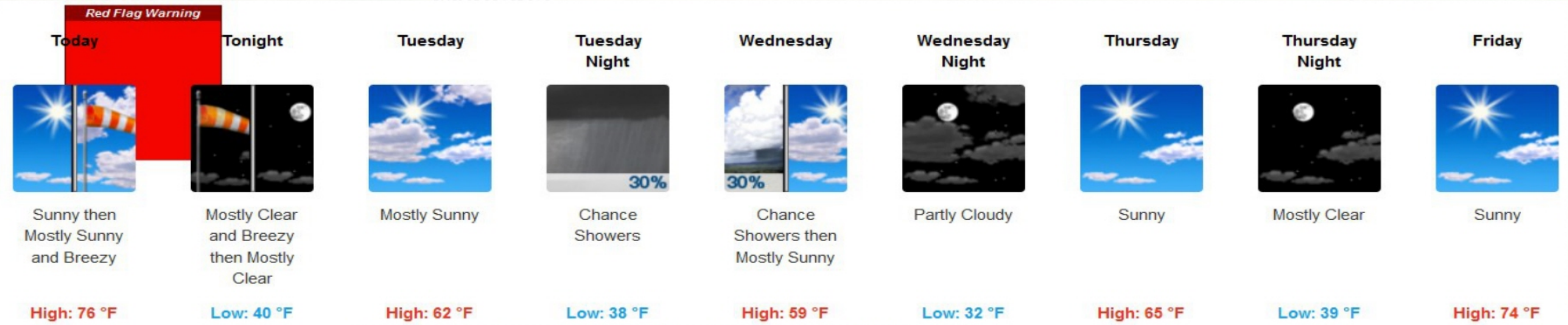
Day 1


CRITICAL
ELEVATED
NOAA
SPC DAY 2 FIRE WX OUTLOOK
ISSUED: 0852Z 10/17/2016
VALID: 18/1200Z-19/1200Z
FORECASTER: MOSIER
NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center, Norman, Oklahoma
Fire Weather Outlook Legend:
Elevated Critical Extreme Iso DryT Scattered DryT

Day 2

State Weather Forecast

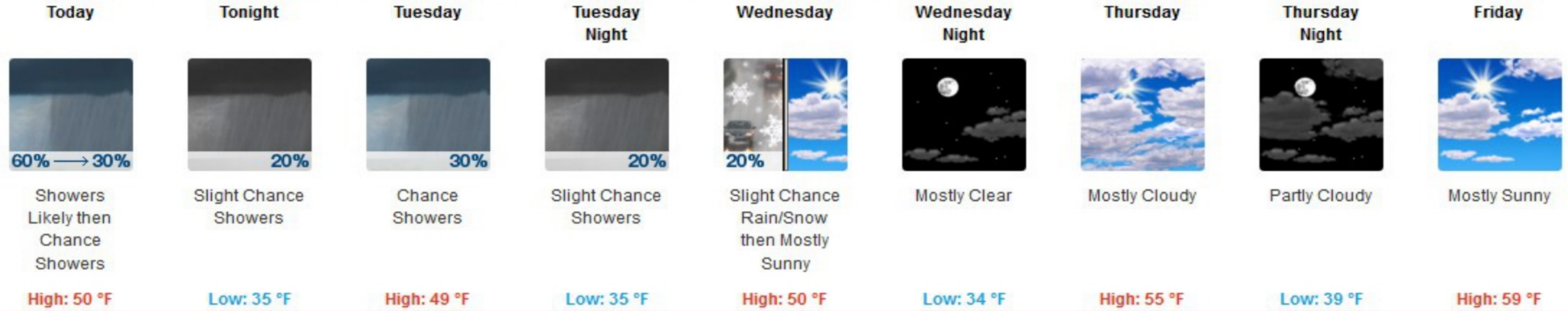
Denver, CO



Red Flag Warning

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
			30%	30%				
Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Chance Showers	Chance Showers then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 76 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 62 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 59 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 74 °F

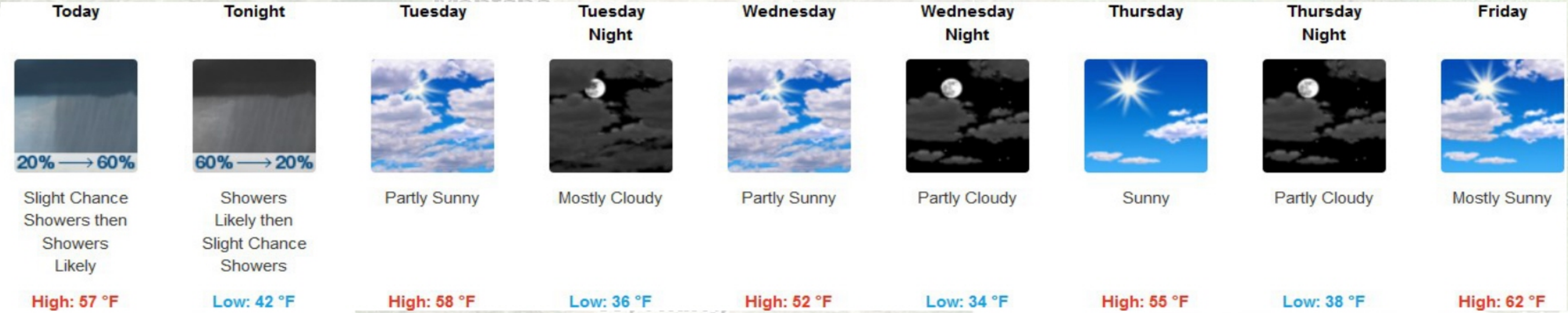
Helena, MT



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
60% → 30%	20%	30%	20%	20%				
Showers Likely then Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Rain/Snow then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 50 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 49 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 50 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 59 °F

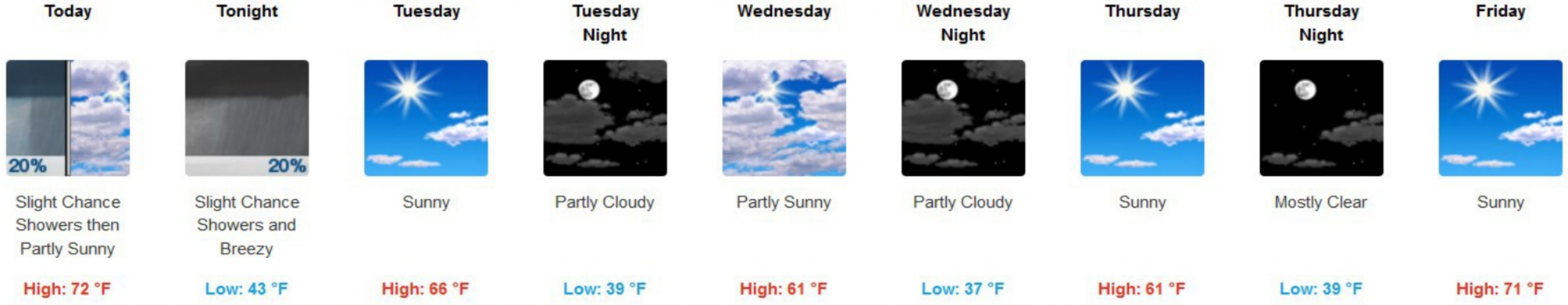
State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
20% ⟶ 60%	60% ⟶ 20%							
Slight Chance Showers then Showers Likely	Showers Likely then Slight Chance Showers	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 57 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 52 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 62 °F

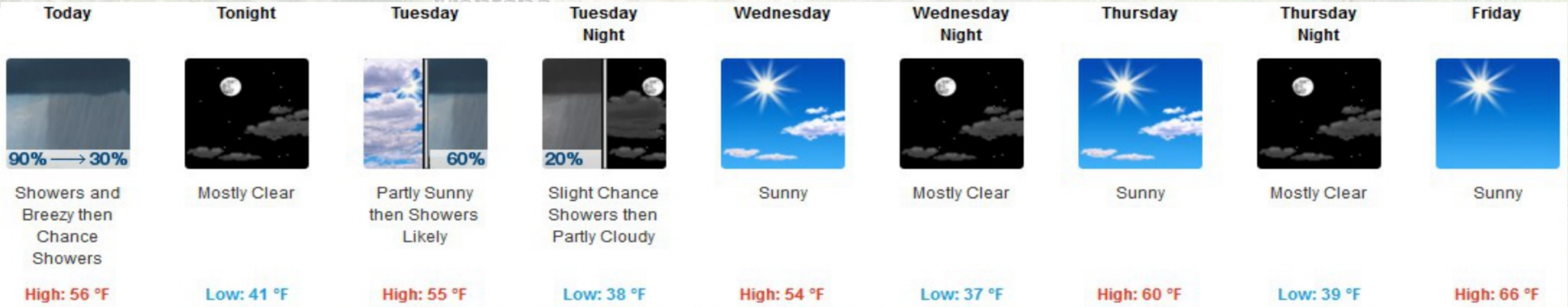
Pierre, SD



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
20%	20%							
Slight Chance Showers then Partly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers and Breezy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 72 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 71 °F

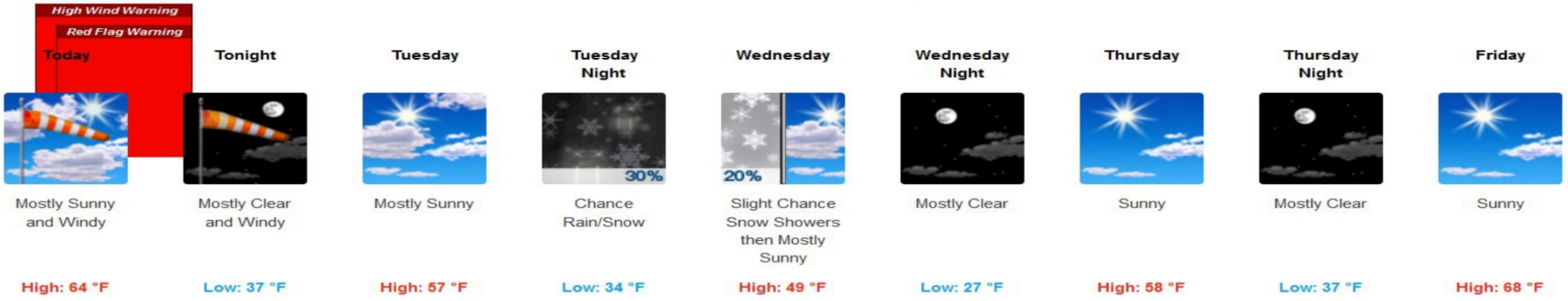
State Weather Forecast - Cont

Salt Lake City, UT



Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
90% → 30%		60%	20%					
Showers and Breezy then Chance Showers	Mostly Clear	Partly Sunny then Showers Likely	Slight Chance Showers then Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 56 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 66 °F

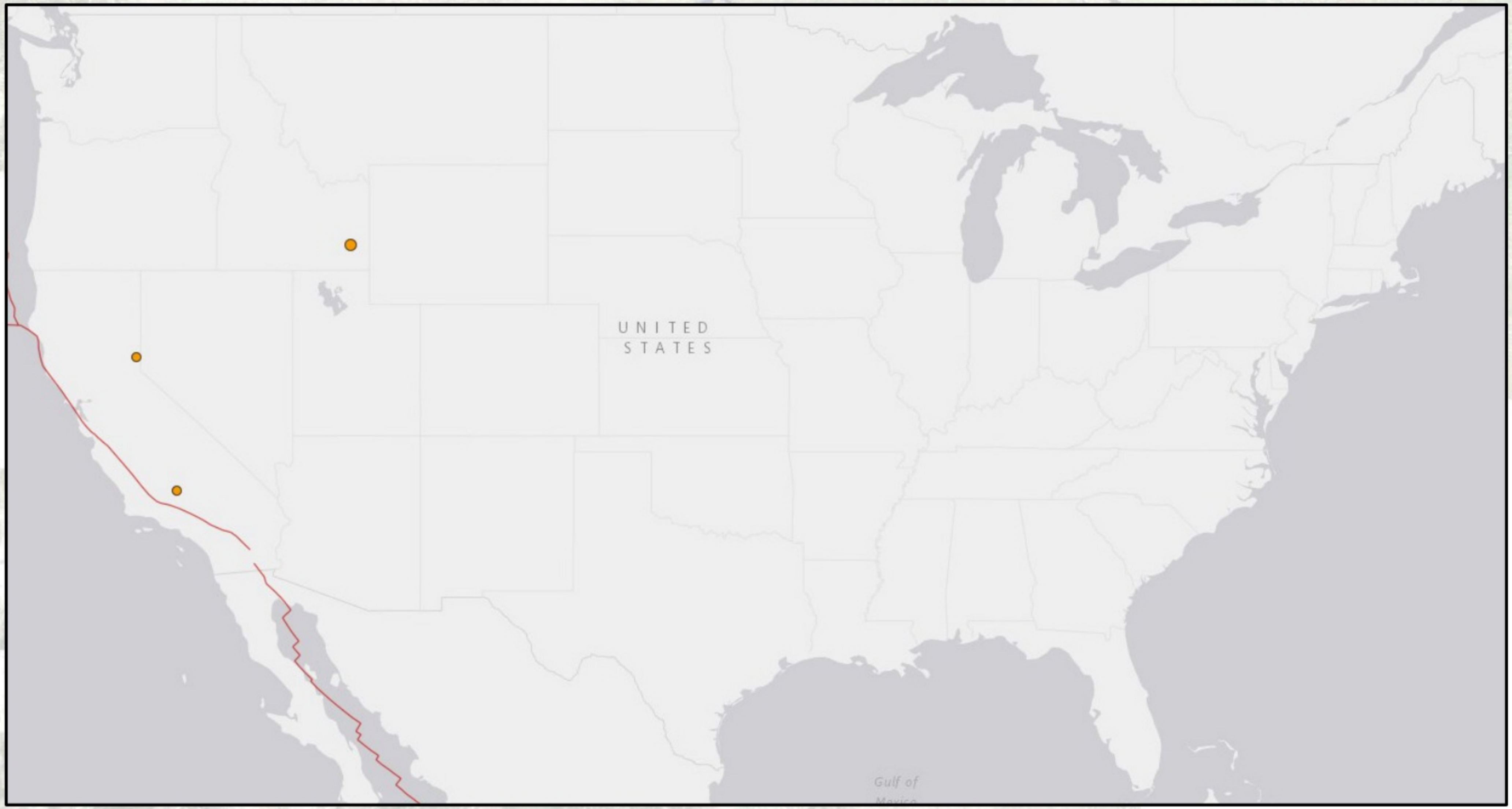
Cheyenne, WY



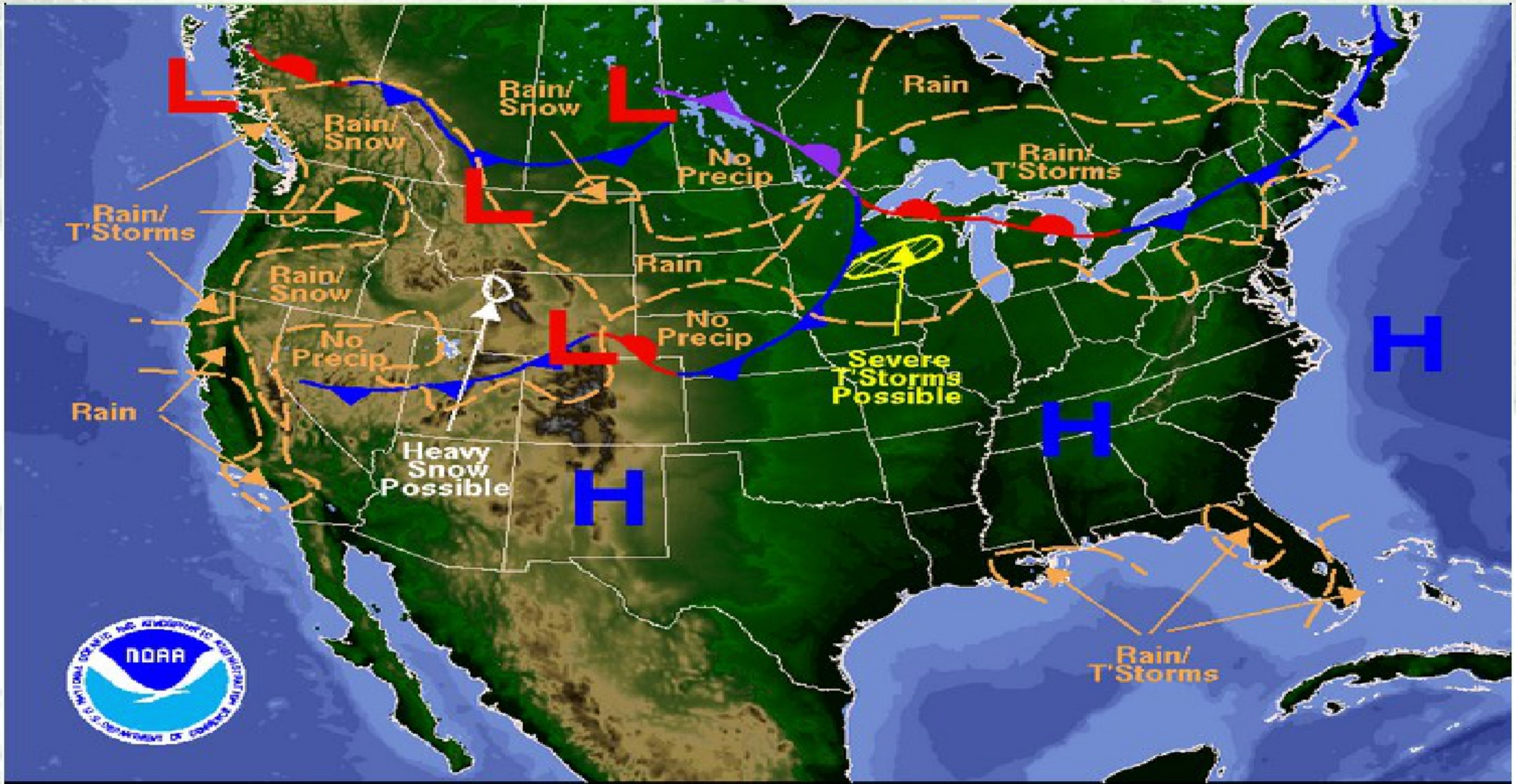
High Wind Warning
Red Flag Warning

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
			30%	20%				
Mostly Sunny and Windy	Mostly Clear and Windy	Mostly Sunny	Chance Rain/Snow	Slight Chance Snow Showers then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 64 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 57 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 49 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 68 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity

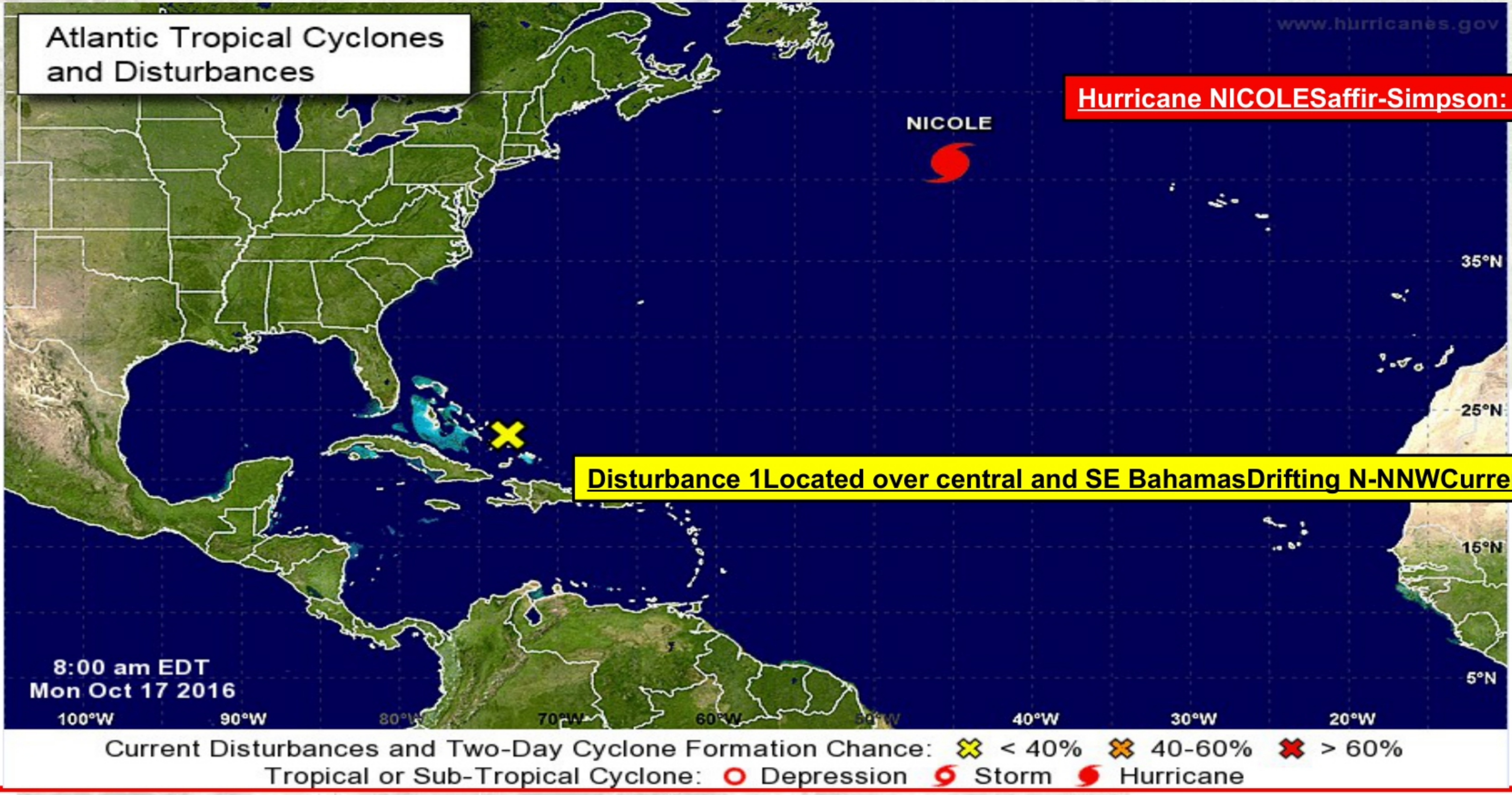

UNITED STATES
Gulf of Mexico

Today's National Weather Forecast


L
Rain/
Snow
Rain/
Snow
L
Rain
L
No
Precip
Rain/
T'Storms
Rain/
T'Storms
Rain
Rain/
Snow
No
Precip
L
No
Precip
Severe
T'Storms
Possible
H
Rain
Heavy
Snow
Possible
H
H
Rain/
T'Storms
NOAA

Weather Forecast for Mon. Oct 17, 2016, issued 4:17 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

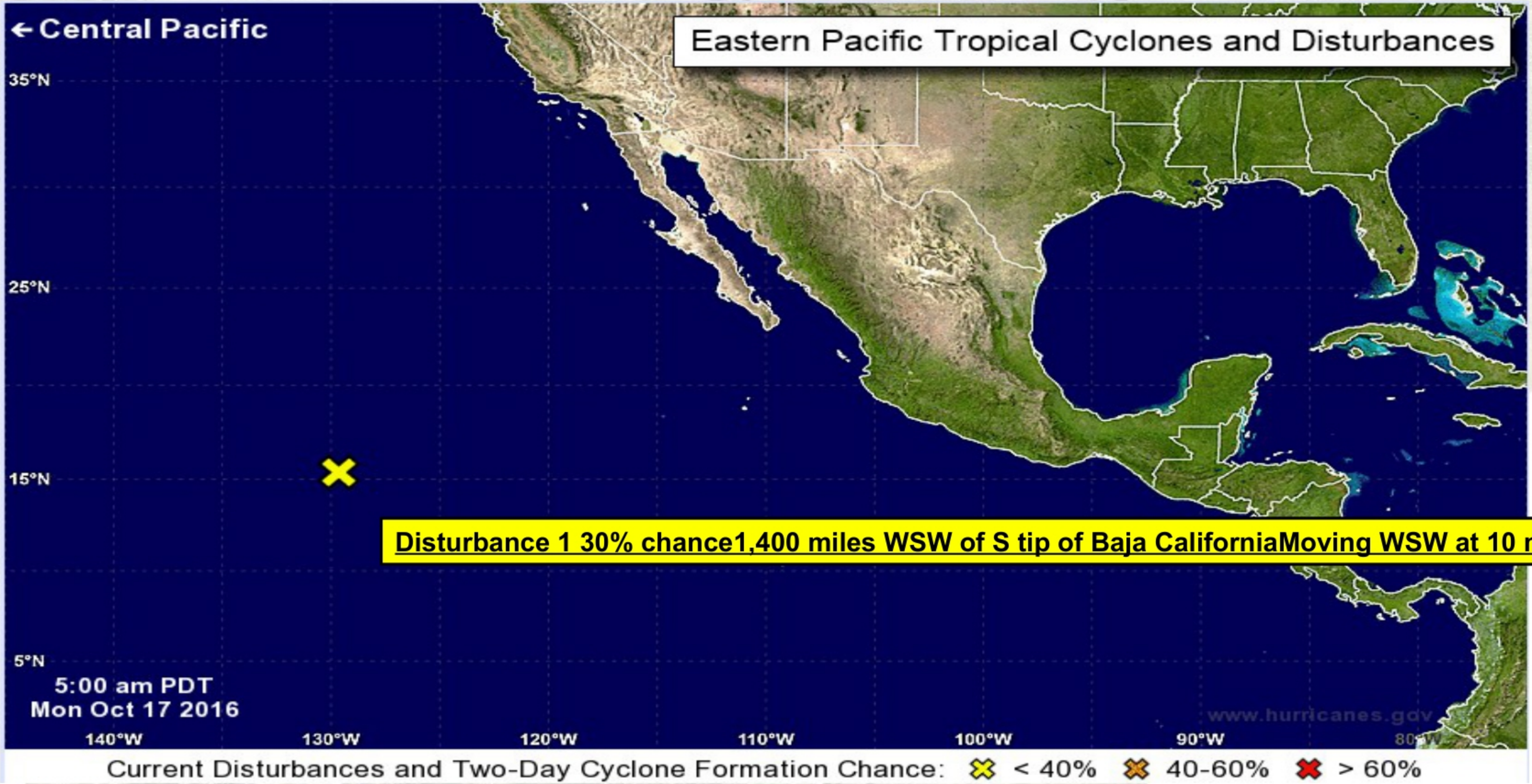
Atlantic Tropical Assessment


Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
www.hurricanes.gov
NICOLE
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
8:00 am EDT
Mon Oct 17 2016
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✕ < 40% ✕ 40-60% ✕ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression Storm Hurricane

Hurricane NICOLESaffir-Simpson: Category 1

Disturbance 1Located over central and SE BahamasDrifting N-NNWCurrently unfavor

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment

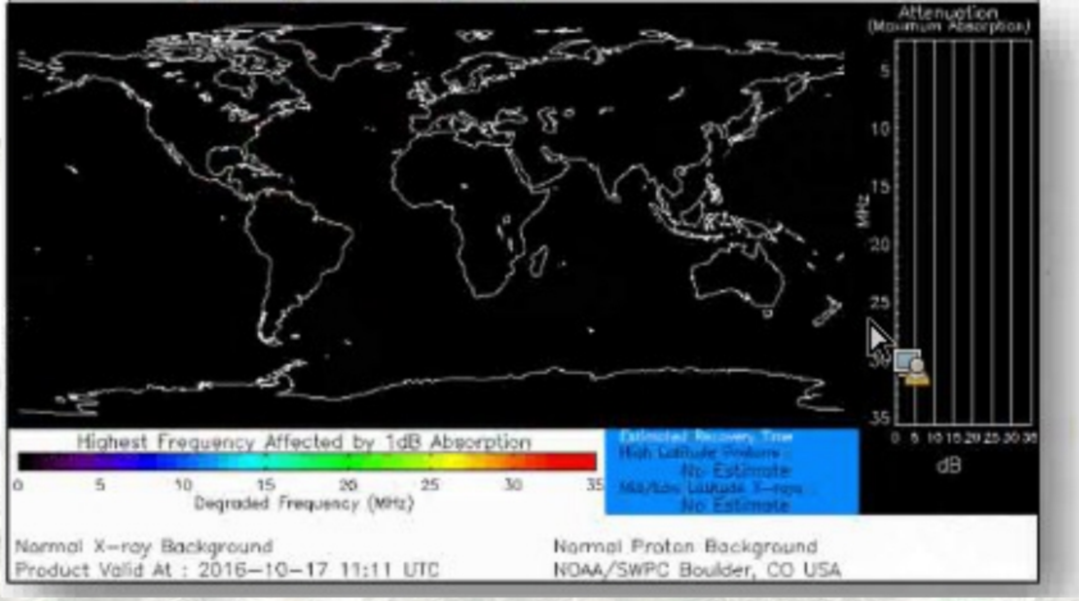

← Central Pacific
Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
5:00 am PDT
Mon Oct 17 2016
www.hurricanes.gov
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%

Disturbance 1 30% chance1,400 miles WSW of S tip of Baja CaliforniaMoving WSW at 10 mphSome s

Space Weather

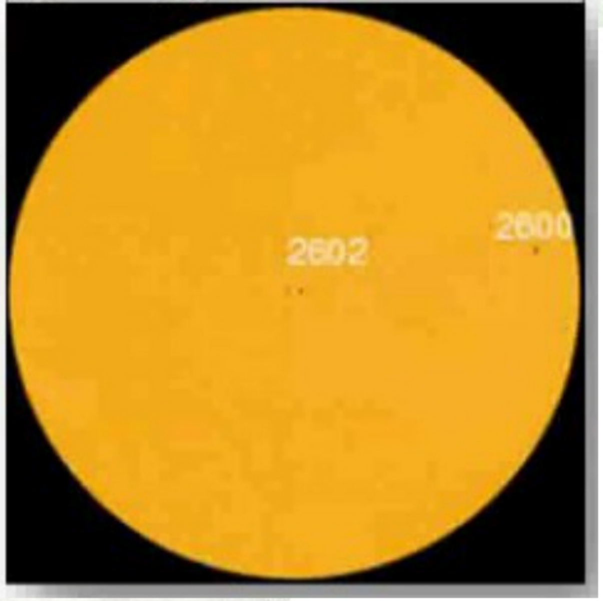
	Space Weather Activity	Geomagnetic Storms	Solar Radiation	Radio Blackouts
Past 24 Hours	Minor	G1	None	None
Next 24 Hours	Moderate	G2	None	None
For further information on NOAA Space Weather Scales refer to http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/noaa-scales-explanation				

HF Communication Impact


Attenuation
(Maximum Absorption)
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
MHz
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
dB
Highest Frequency Affected by 1dB Absorption
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
Degraded Frequency (MHz)
No Estimate
No Estimate

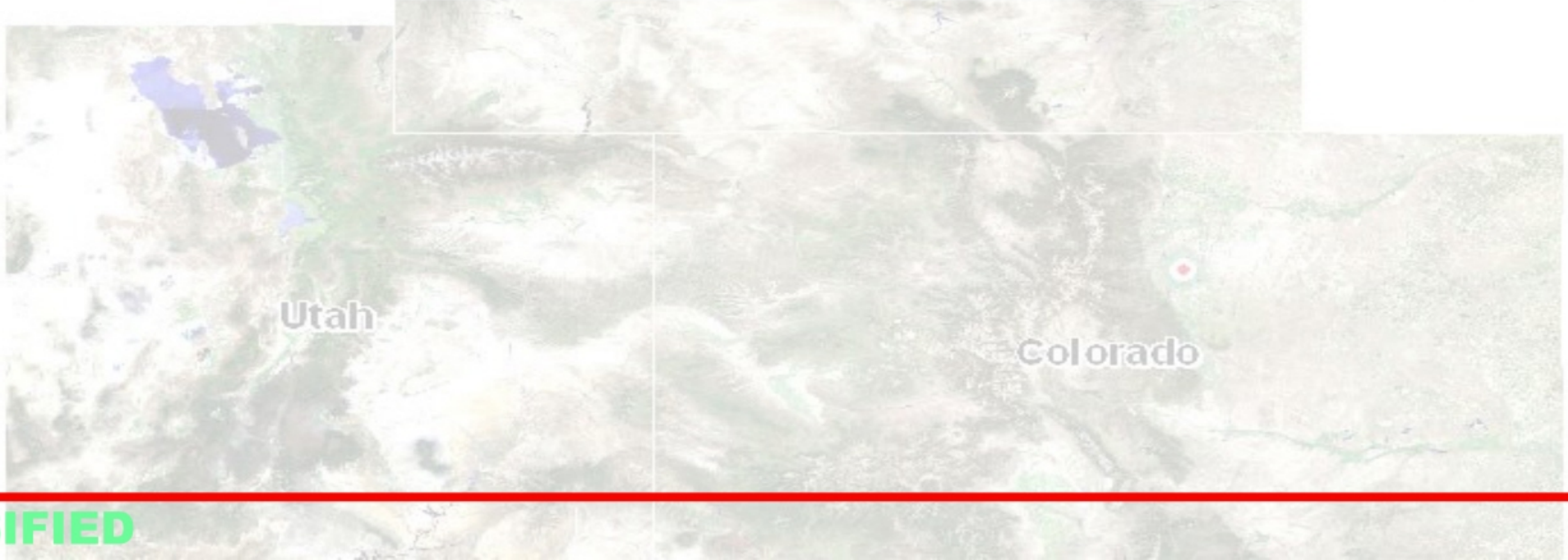
Normal X-ray Background
Product Valid At : 2016-10-17 11:11 UTC
Normal Proton Background
NOAA/SWPC Boulder, CO USA

Sunspot Activity



National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
2	**Date Requested**	**0**	**0**
KS – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 10, 2016		
WI – DR Severe Storms, Flooding and Mudslides	October 11, 2016		



IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 03, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Darrin Ricketts	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Tracy McCauley (Until 30 Oct)	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

Stand-by Team Roster *(Updated: Oct 6, 2016 / 1000)*

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Kevin Moore	303-941-2113
Operations Sec Chief	AJ Lyman	303-350-0412
Infrastructure Branch Director	Leigh-Andrea Phillips	720-398-7531
Ind Asst Branch Director	Brannen Ulrick	303-681-4988
Planning Section Chief	Mike Pendergrass	303-746-3640
Situation Unit Lead	Susan Jones	303-263-5415
Resource Unit Lead	Bob Schroder	303-453-9482
Logistics Section Chief	Lamont Hudson	303-842-4682
Service Branch Director	Josh Turner	720-415-6353
Support Branch Director	Cedric Corney	303-515-1928
External Affairs Officer	Brian Hvinden	303-681-1454
Finance/Admin	Bonnie Garfias	303-884-7049

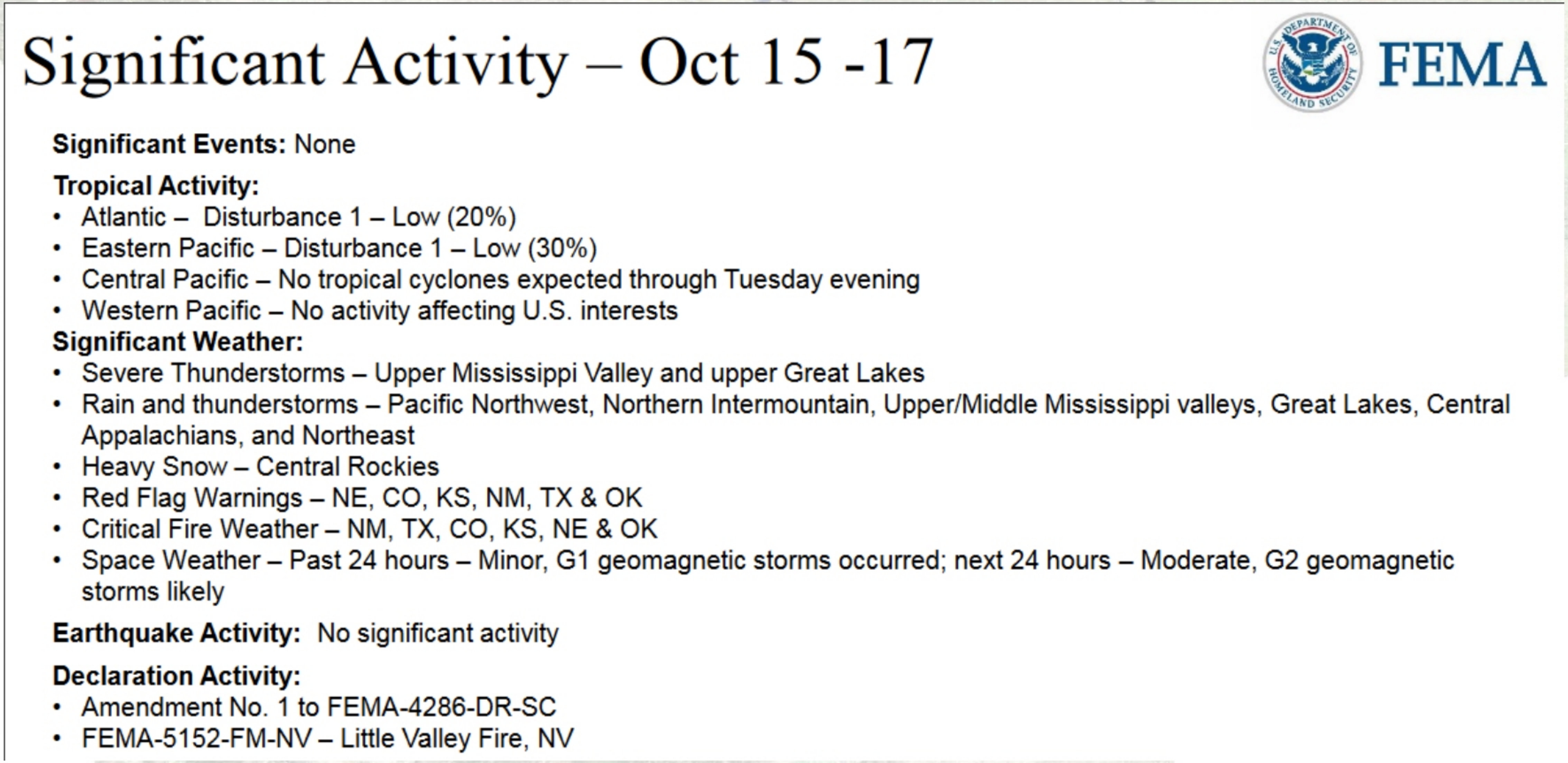
October RRCC Standup Roster (Orange Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Kevin Moore
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	AJ Lyman
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Mike Ordonez
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 13, 2016 / 0600)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	John Holub (14 Oct – 17 Oct)Michael Pendergrass	720-315-0651303-746-3640	303-235-4864303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	David Watkins	720-683-2565	303-235-4359
WY	AJ Lyman (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton	303-350-0412303-495-0051	303-235-4319303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity



Significant Activity – Oct 15 -17

FEMA

Significant Events: None

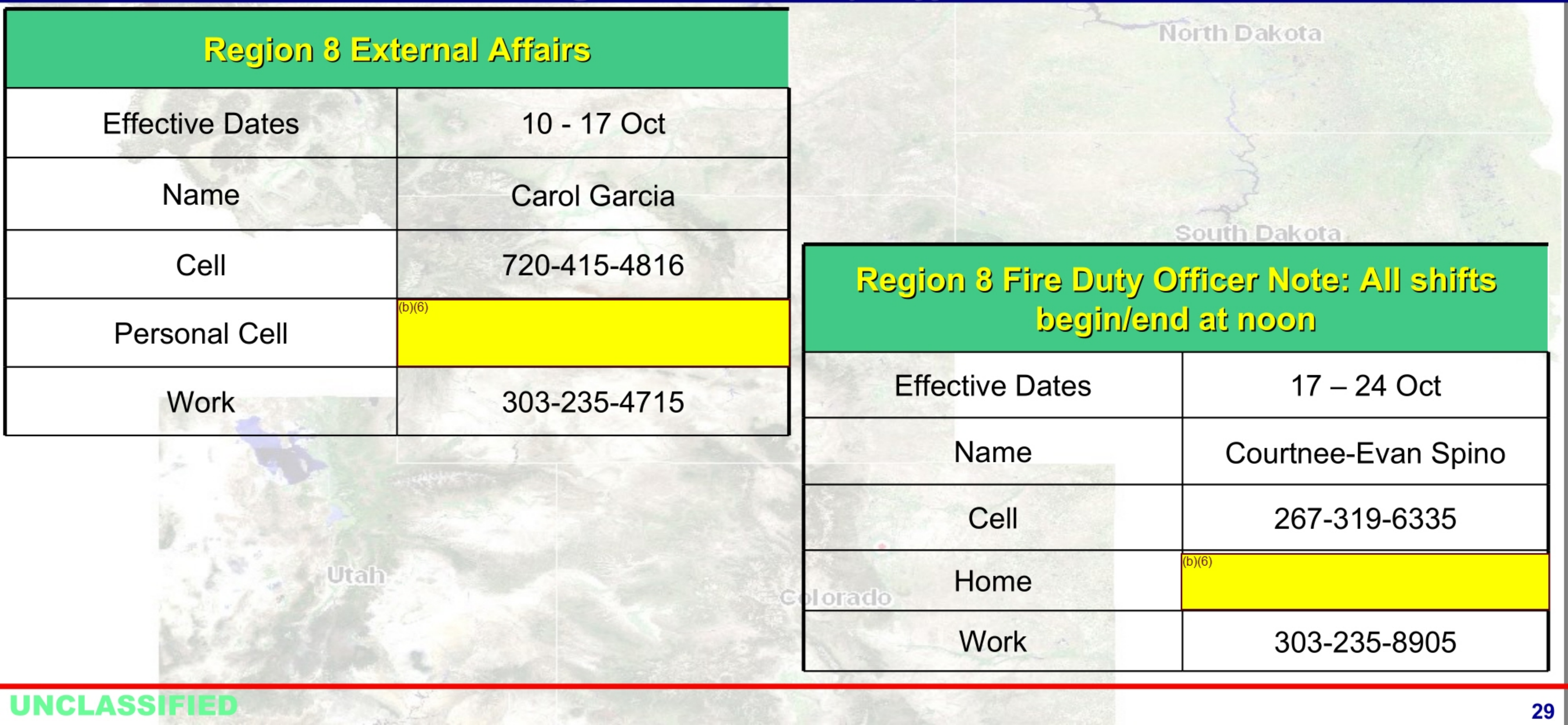
Tropical Activity:
- Atlantic – Disturbance 1 – Low (20%)
- Eastern Pacific – Disturbance 1 – Low (30%)
- Central Pacific – No tropical cyclones expected through Tuesday evening
- Western Pacific – No activity affecting U.S. interests

Significant Weather:
- Severe Thunderstorms – Upper Mississippi Valley and upper Great Lakes
- Rain and thunderstorms – Pacific Northwest, Northern Intermountain, Upper/Middle Mississippi valleys, Great Lakes, Central Appalachians, and Northeast
- Heavy Snow – Central Rockies
- Red Flag Warnings – NE, CO, KS, NM, TX & OK
- Critical Fire Weather – NM, TX, CO, KS, NE & OK
- Space Weather – Past 24 hours – Minor, G1 geomagnetic storms occurred; next 24 hours – Moderate, G2 geomagnetic storms likely

Earthquake Activity: No significant activity

Declaration Activity:
- Amendment No. 1 to FEMA-4286-DR-SC
- FEMA-5152-FM-NV – Little Valley Fire, NV

Region VIII Duty Officers



Region 8 External Affairs

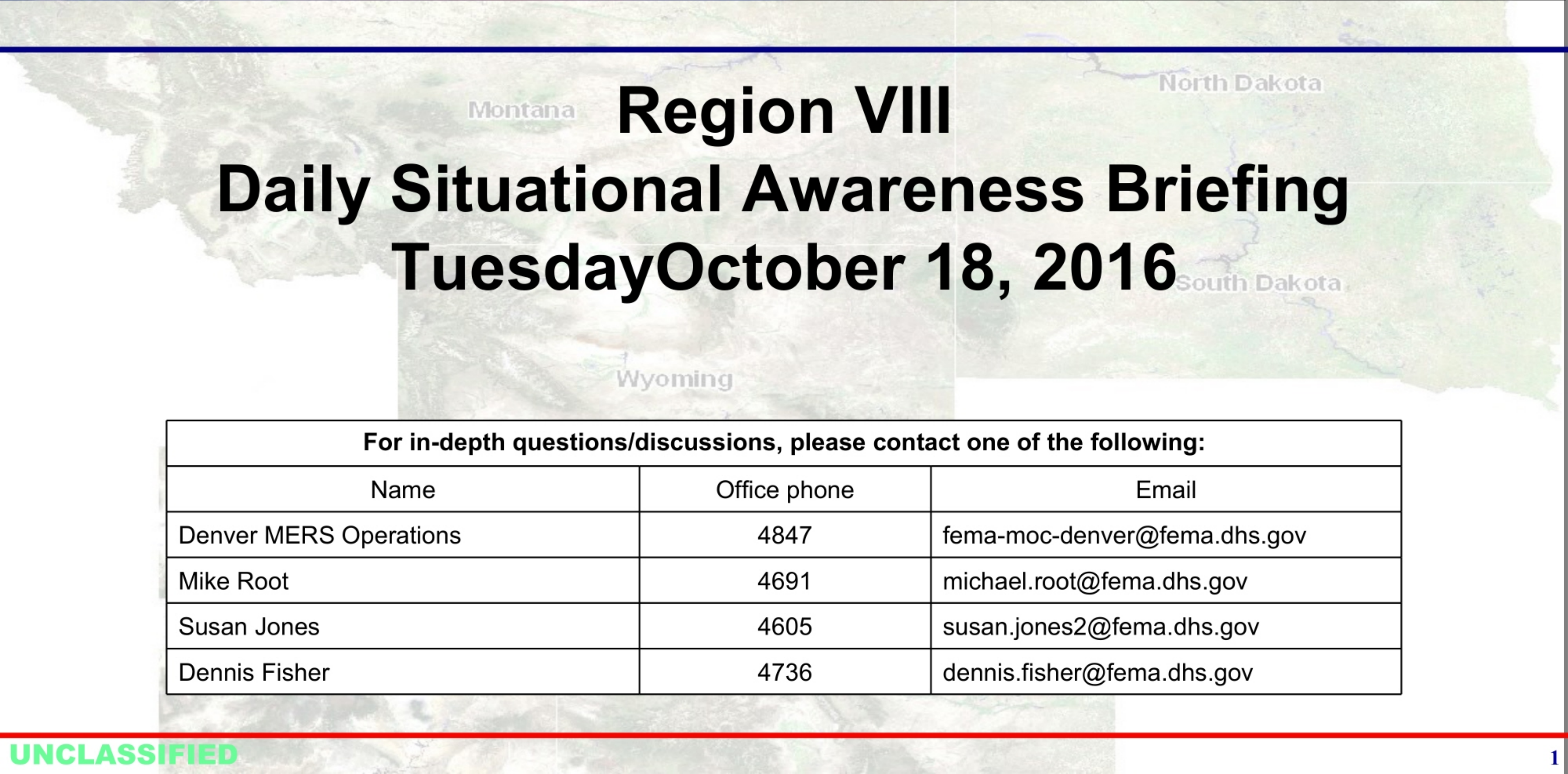
Effective Dates	10 - 17 Oct
Name	Carol Garcia
Cell	720-415-4816
Personal Cell	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4715

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon

Effective Dates	17 – 24 Oct
Name	Courtnee-Evan Spino
Cell	267-319-6335
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-8905

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
TuesdayOctober 18, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: SPOTREP CO-Junkins Fire, FMAG Approval (Init & Update)FYSA-Rampart Fire, El Paso County, CO – 100% containedFYSA-Iron County, UT Wildfire – 3 res. evac/no new infoFYSA-Cotton Wood Fire, Cottonwood, SD 75% containment MOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: Deployed ISO DR-4277-LARVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	LEVEL II (MONITORING)
Utah	NORMAL
S. Dakota	NORMAL
N. Dakota	LEVEL II (PARTIAL)
Wyoming	NORMAL
Montana	NORMAL

Events

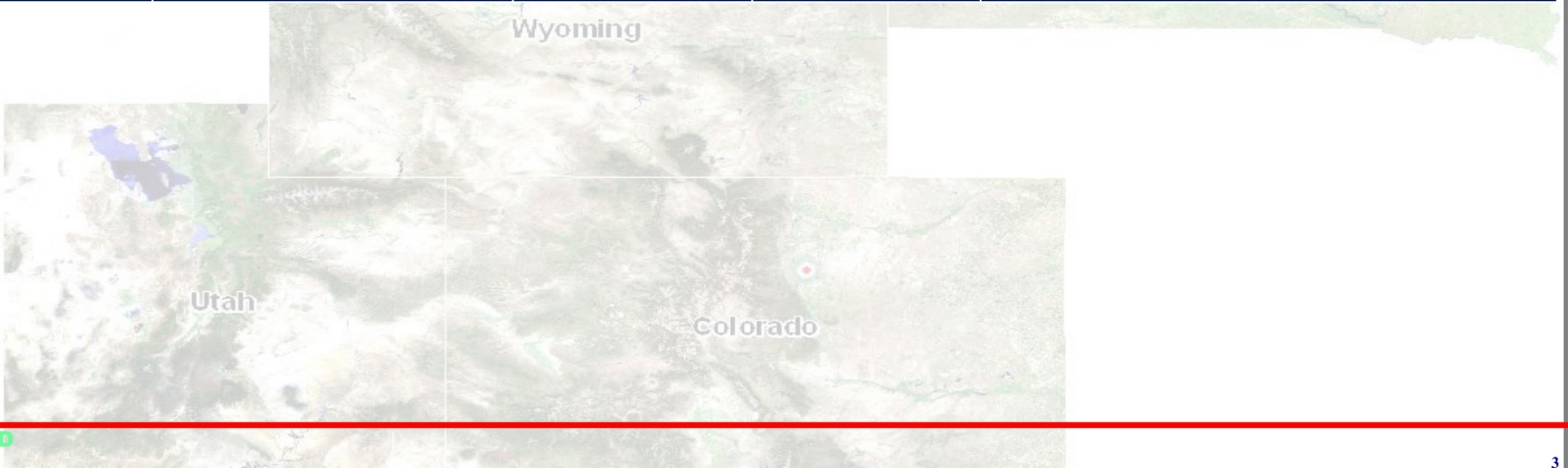
- **Tue 1:00-2:00 SR. Leadership VTC-Region 8, RA Conf RmThu 1:30-3:00 R8 Division Directors Meeting, RA Conf Rm**

Exercises and Training

- **Tue - COOP Incident Action Checklist Drill**

Region Active Fires updated as of 0815, 17 Oct 2016

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 17 Oct 2016)				
Cottonwood Fire	Cottonwood, South Dakota	31,000acres	75%	Source: kotatv.com
Junkins FireFMAG Approved	Custer County	15,751	0%	Evacuations underwaySource: Local media reports/WebEOC



FEMA Region VIII
Serving CO, MT, ND, SD, UT and WY

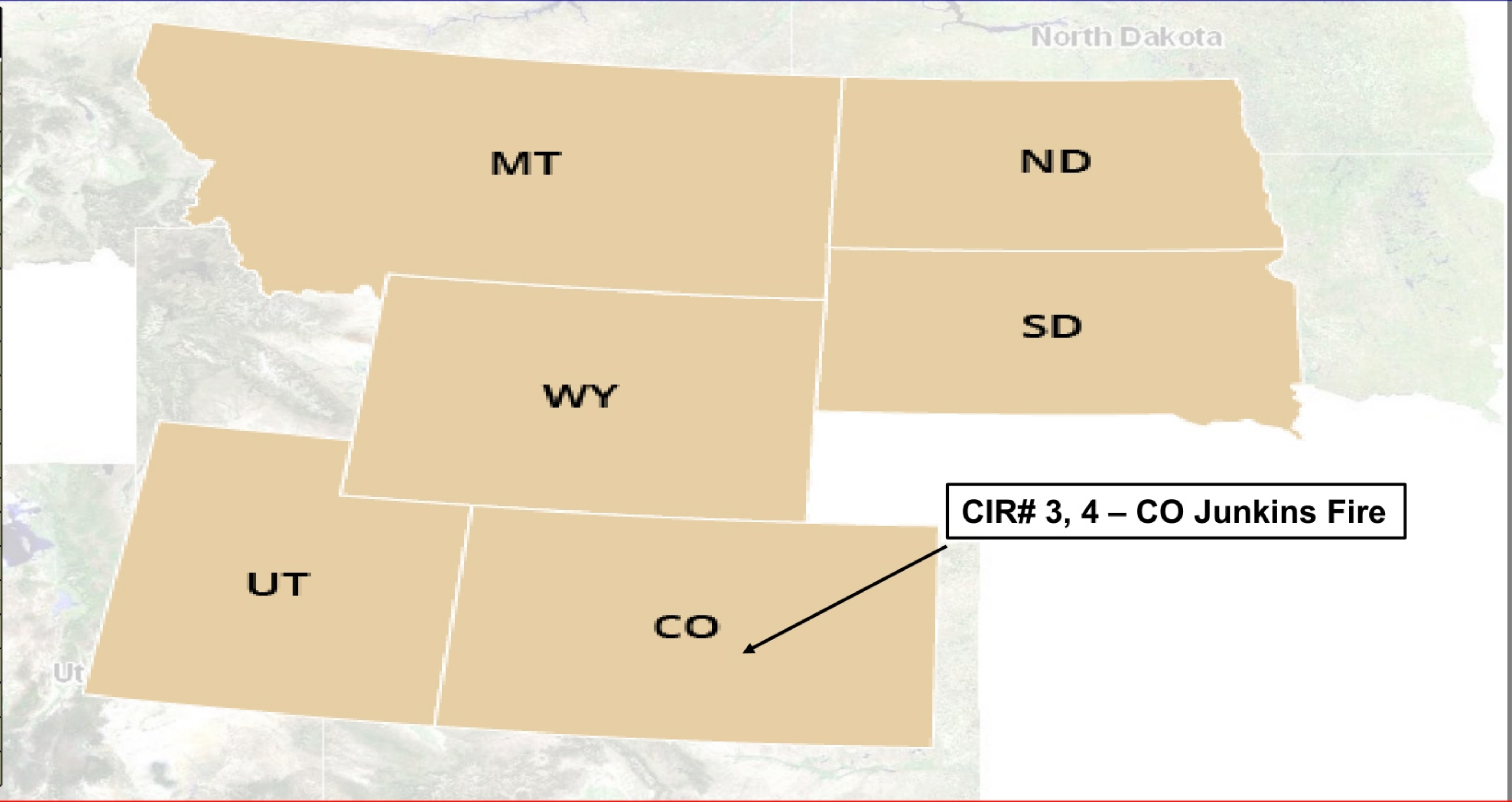
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

🟩 No Activity 🟨 Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) 🟥 Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as “Major” by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟥	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟥	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟥	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state’s population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

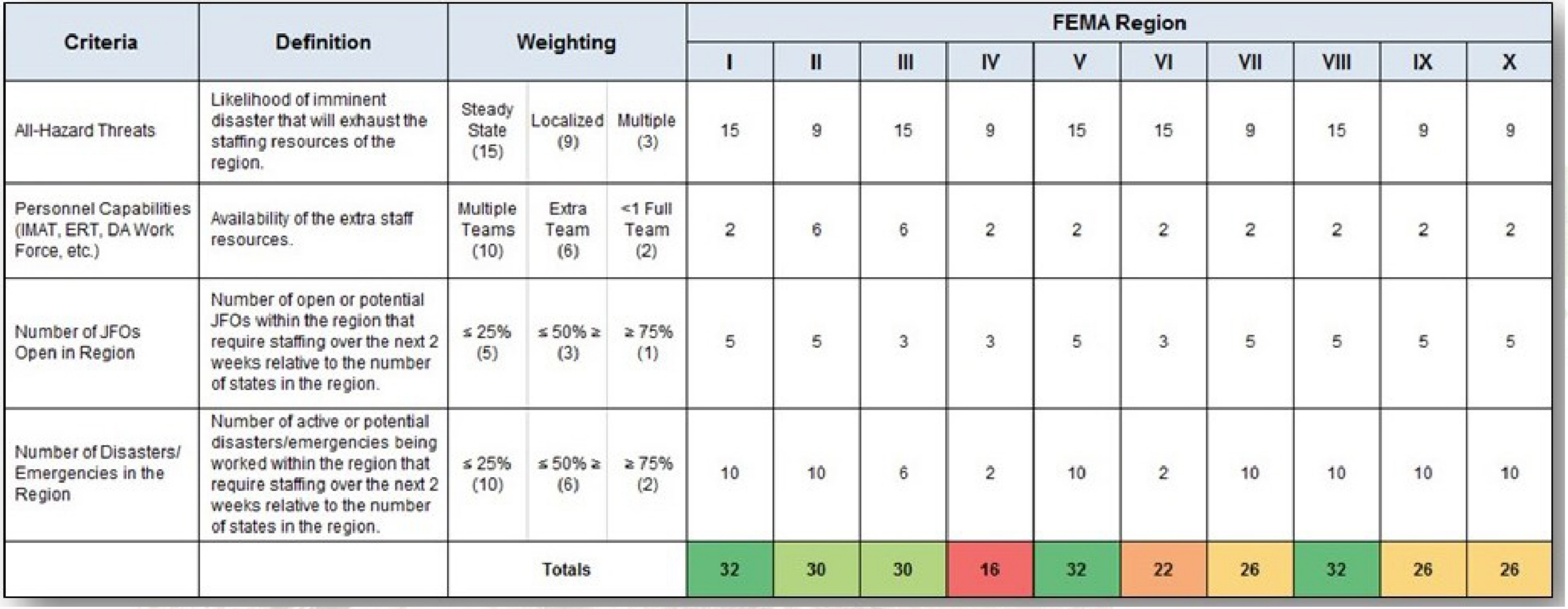
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3	🟥	
CIR 4	🟥	
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11	🟥	
CIR 12		
CIR 13		
CIR 14		
CIR 15		
CIR 16		
CIR 17		
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 4 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 17 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	9	15	9	15	15	9	15	9	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	10	2	10	10	10	10
		Totals			**32**	**30**	**30**	**16**	**32**	**22**	**26**	**32**	**26**	**26**

Backup Regions I, V, VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations

Level	Reason for Activation	Activated Times

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations

State	Activation	Event/Incident
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level II Monitoring (0600-2000)	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations

State	Activation (Event)	Supporting
LA	Flooding	DR-4277-LA

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status

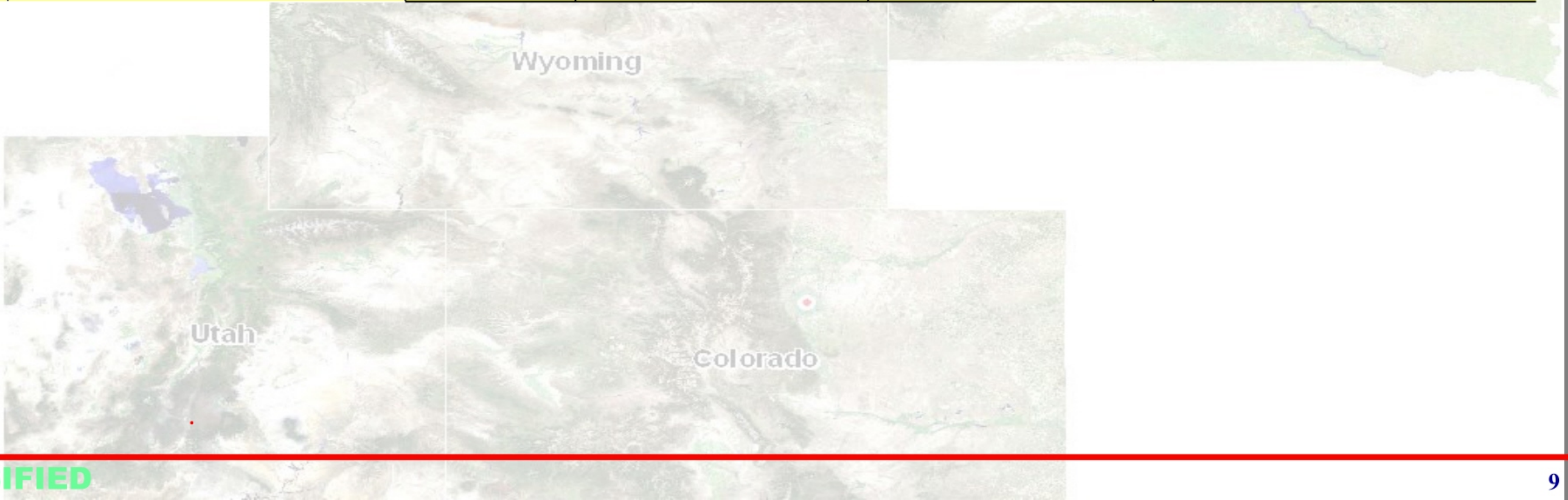
FCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)

RCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

R8 PDA Summary

State	Event	Type	Counties / TribesRequested	Completed	(Estimated) Start / End Date


Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

Today-Wednesday

- Critical fire weather conditions will continue across eastern CO through this evening. Ongoing fires will have the potential to continue to grow quickly
- A marginal risk for severe thunderstorms exists across E SD this afternoon. Primary threats will be gusty winds and large hail
- Strong winds will continue across southern portions of WY which could result in impacts to transportation along Interstates 25 and 80
- Periods of valley rain and mountain snow will continue through mid-week across portions of the Intermountain West and Northern Rockies
  - Impacts to travel across mountain passes are possible but should lessen after tomorrow

Thursday-Sunday

- A ridge of high pressure is expected to build across the area late in the week and into the weekend keeping the threat for widespread impactful weather low

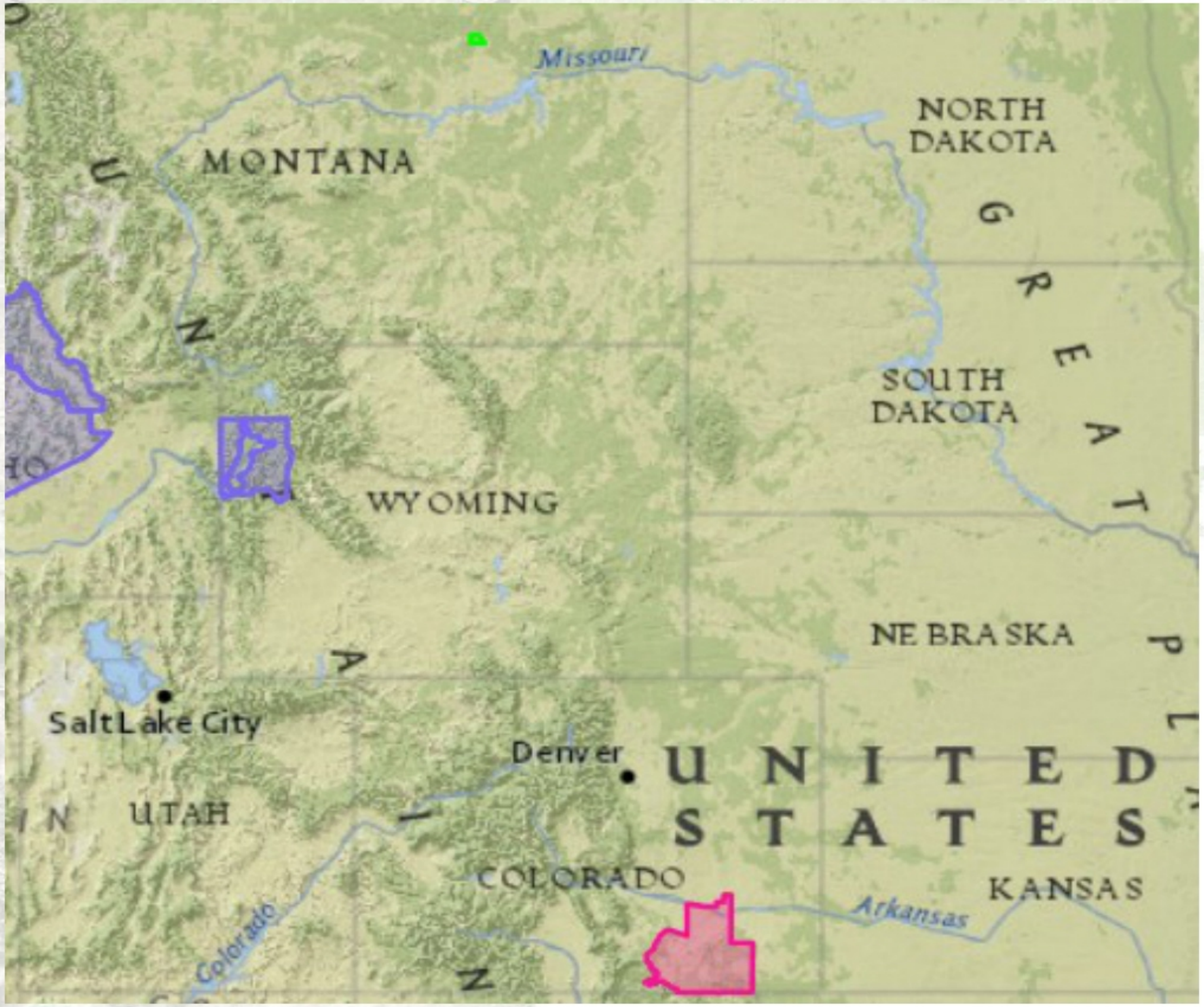
NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

DAY/THREAT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Critical Fire Weather	E CO	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snow/ Valley Rain	SW MT/ W WY	SW MT/ W WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Isolated Severe Thunderstorms	E SD	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Strong Winds	S WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

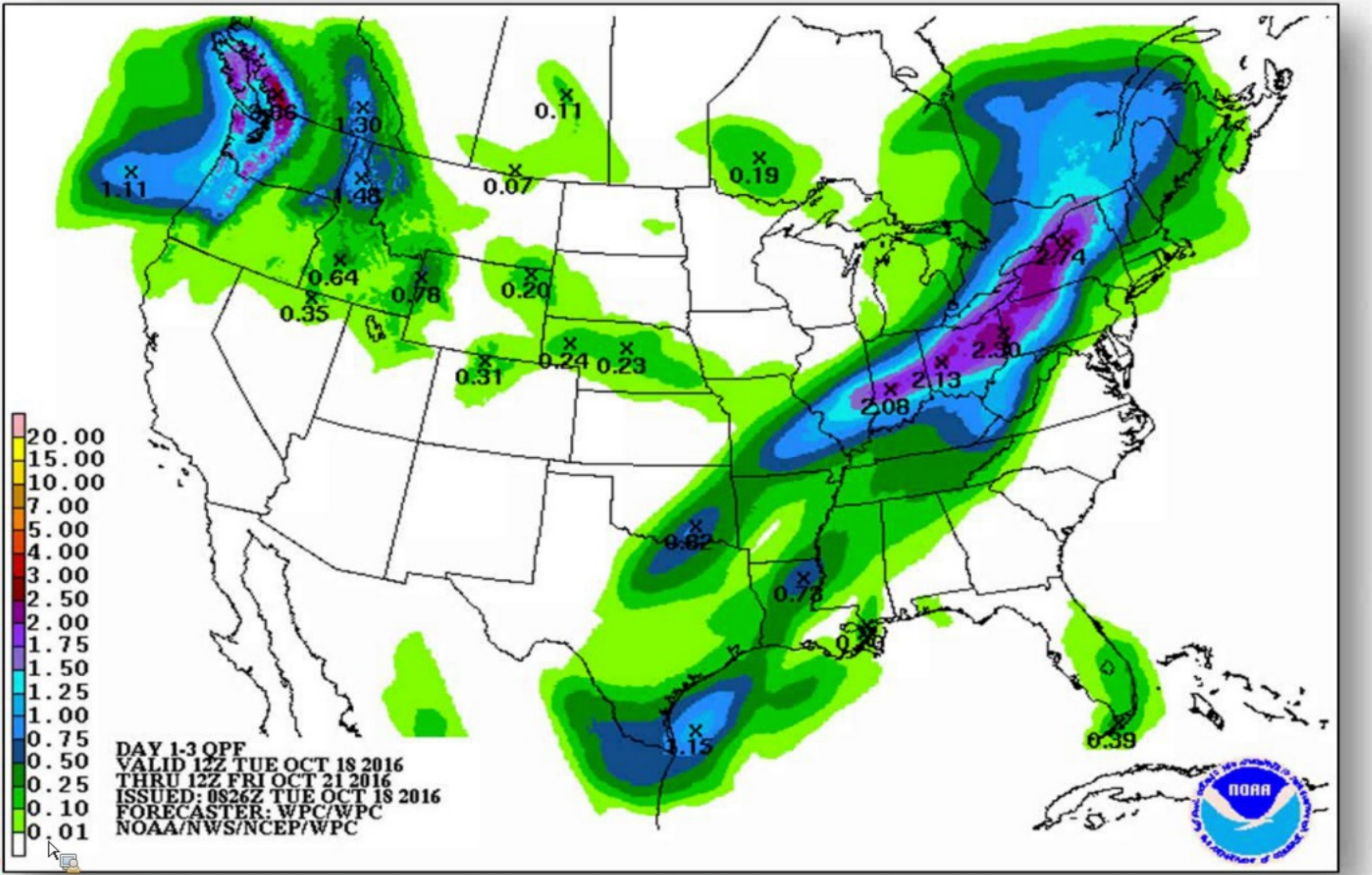
🟥 High Threat
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

Regional Weather Hazards

CO: A red flag warning until 9 PM this evening for all of south eastern COWY:A winter weather advisory is in effect until Wed morning for west central WY. Snowfall amounts of 4-8 inches is expected with this system


Missouri
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
WYOMING
NEBRASKA
Salt Lake City
Denver
UTAH
COLORADO
KANSAS
Arkansas
Colorado
UNITED STATES
GREAT PL

Precipitation Outlook


1.11
2.86
1.30
1.48
0.11
0.07
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0.78
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0.31
0.24
0.23
2.74
2.30
2.13
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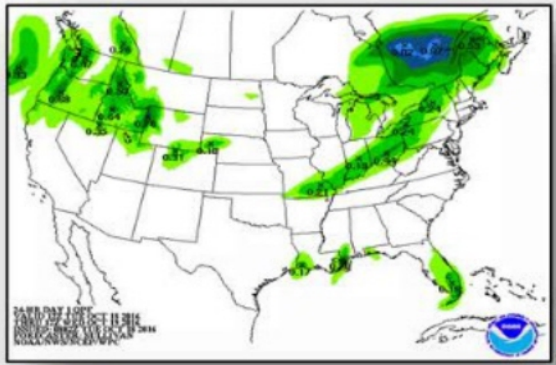
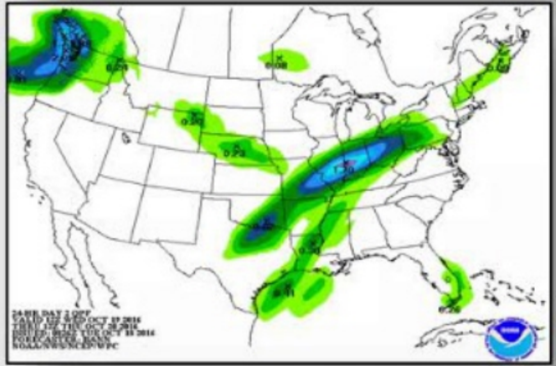
0.01
NOAA

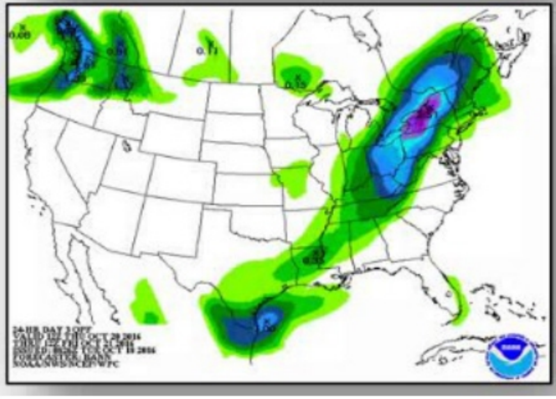
DAY 1-3 QPF
VALID 12Z TUE OCT 18 2016
THRU 12Z FRI OCT 21 2016
ISSUED: 0826Z TUE OCT 18 2016
FORECASTER: WPC/WPC
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WPC



Day 1

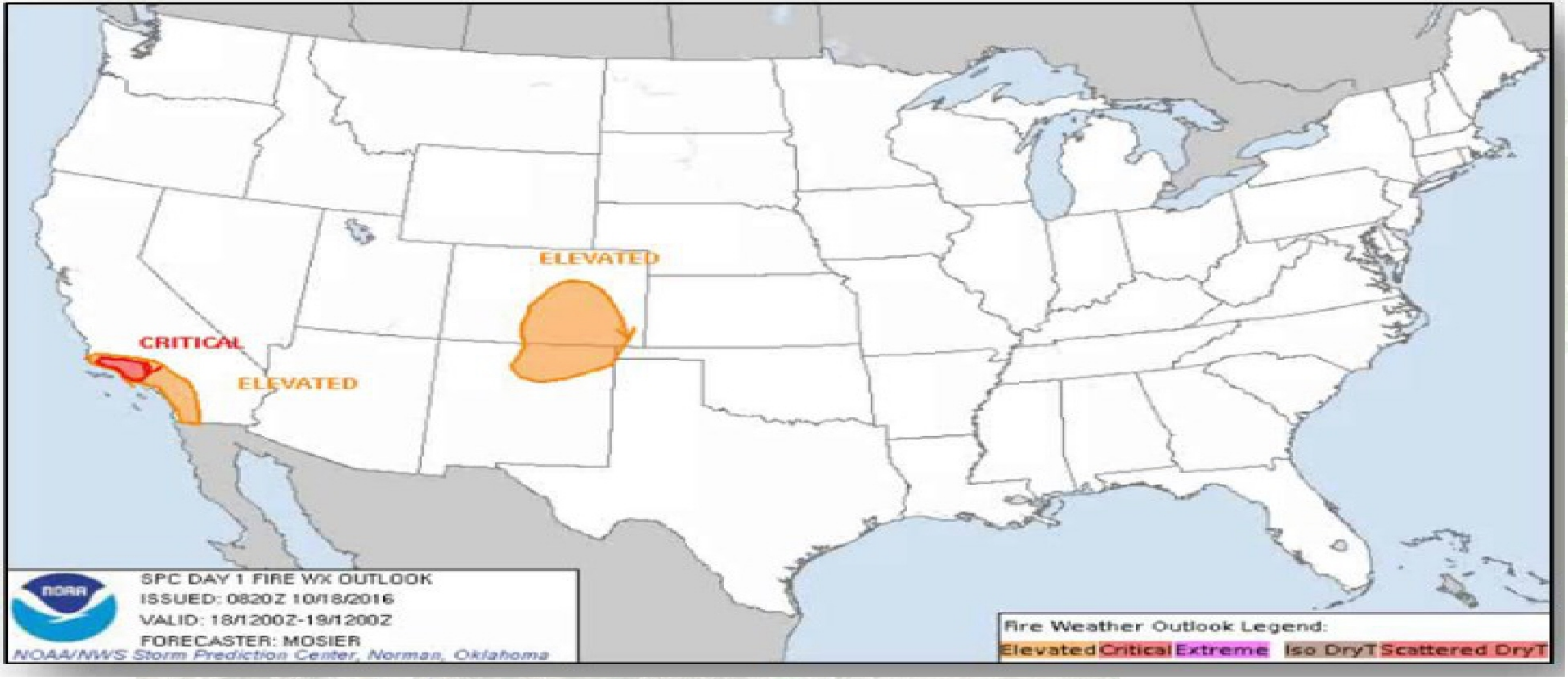


Day 2



Day 3

Fire Weather Outlook



SPC DAY 1 FIRE WX OUTLOOK
ISSUED: 0820Z 10/18/2016
VALID: 18/1200Z-19/1200Z
FORECASTER: MOSIER
NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center, Norman, Oklahoma

Fire Weather Outlook Legend:
Elevated Critical Extreme Iso DryT Scattered DryT

State Weather Forecast

Denver, CO

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
	20%							
Mostly Sunny	Slight Chance Showers	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 64 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 63 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 77 °F

Helena, MT

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
30%	20%	20%		20%	30%			
Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers then Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Showers
High: 51 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 49 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 53 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 58 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 50 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 61 °F

Pierre, SD

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 66 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 69 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont

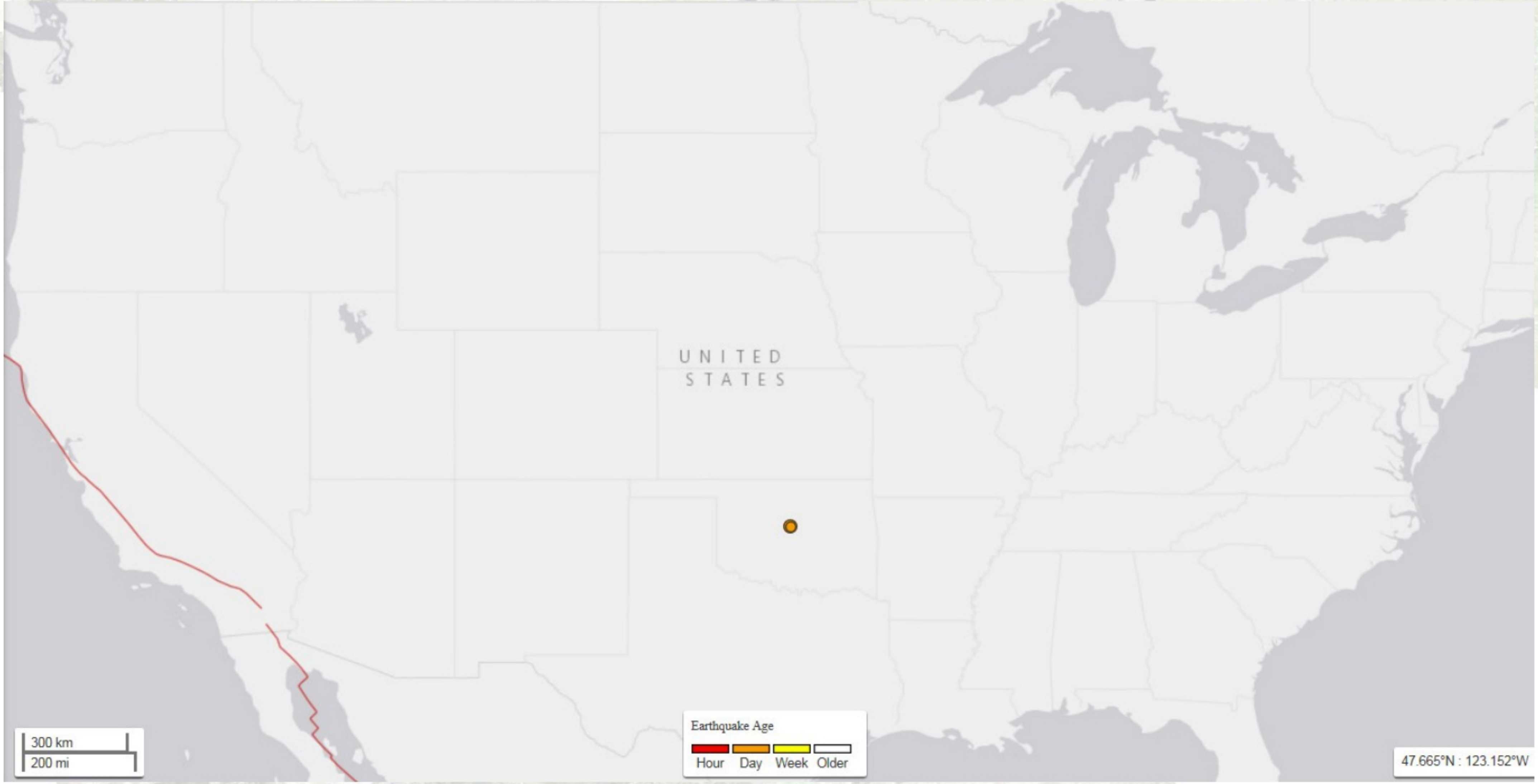
Salt Lake City, UT

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
60%	20%							
Partly Sunny then Showers Likely	Slight Chance Showers then Mostly Cloudy	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny
High: 57 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 71 °F

Cheyenne, WY

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
	60% → 20%							
Mostly Sunny	Rain/Snow Likely then Isolated Rain/Snow	Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny then Sunny and Breezy
High: 57 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 50 °F	Low: 28 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 70 °F

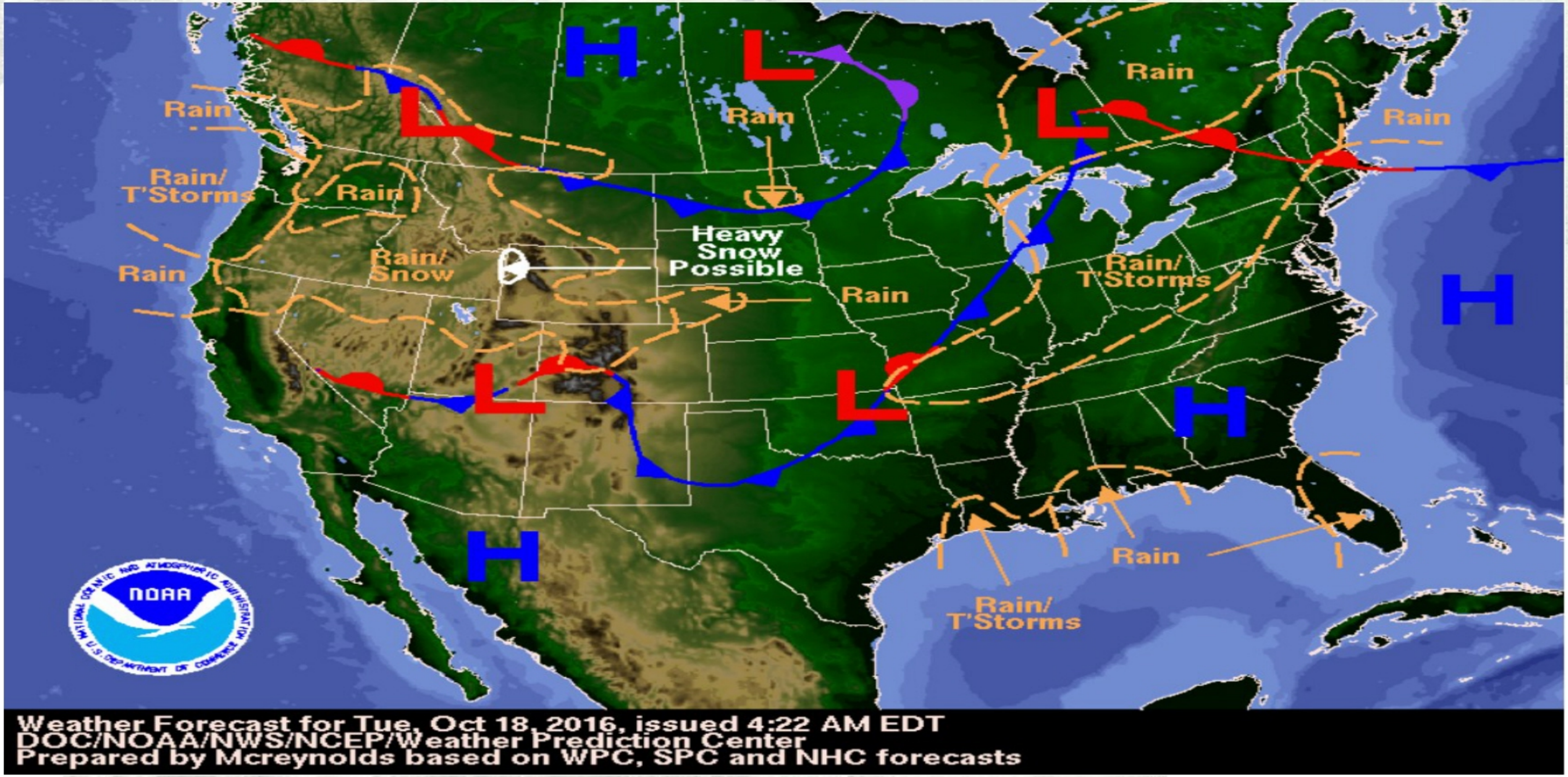
Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity


UNITED STATES
300 km
200 mi
47.665°N : 123.152°W

Earthquake Age

🟥	🟧	🟨	⬜
Hour	Day	Week	Older

Today's National Weather Forecast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T'Storms
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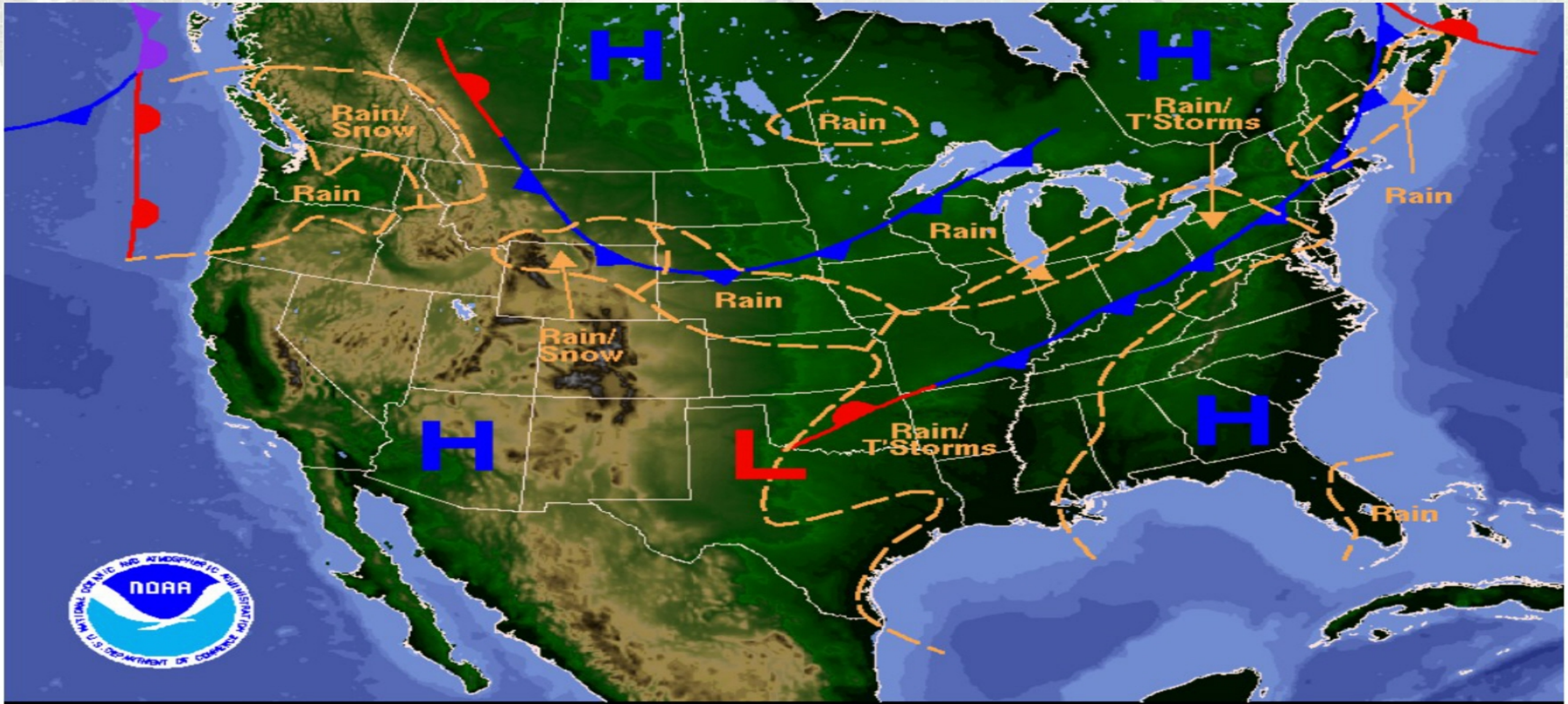
NOAA

Weather Forecast for Tue, Oct 18, 2016, issued 4:22 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Tomorrow's National Weather Forecast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T'Storms
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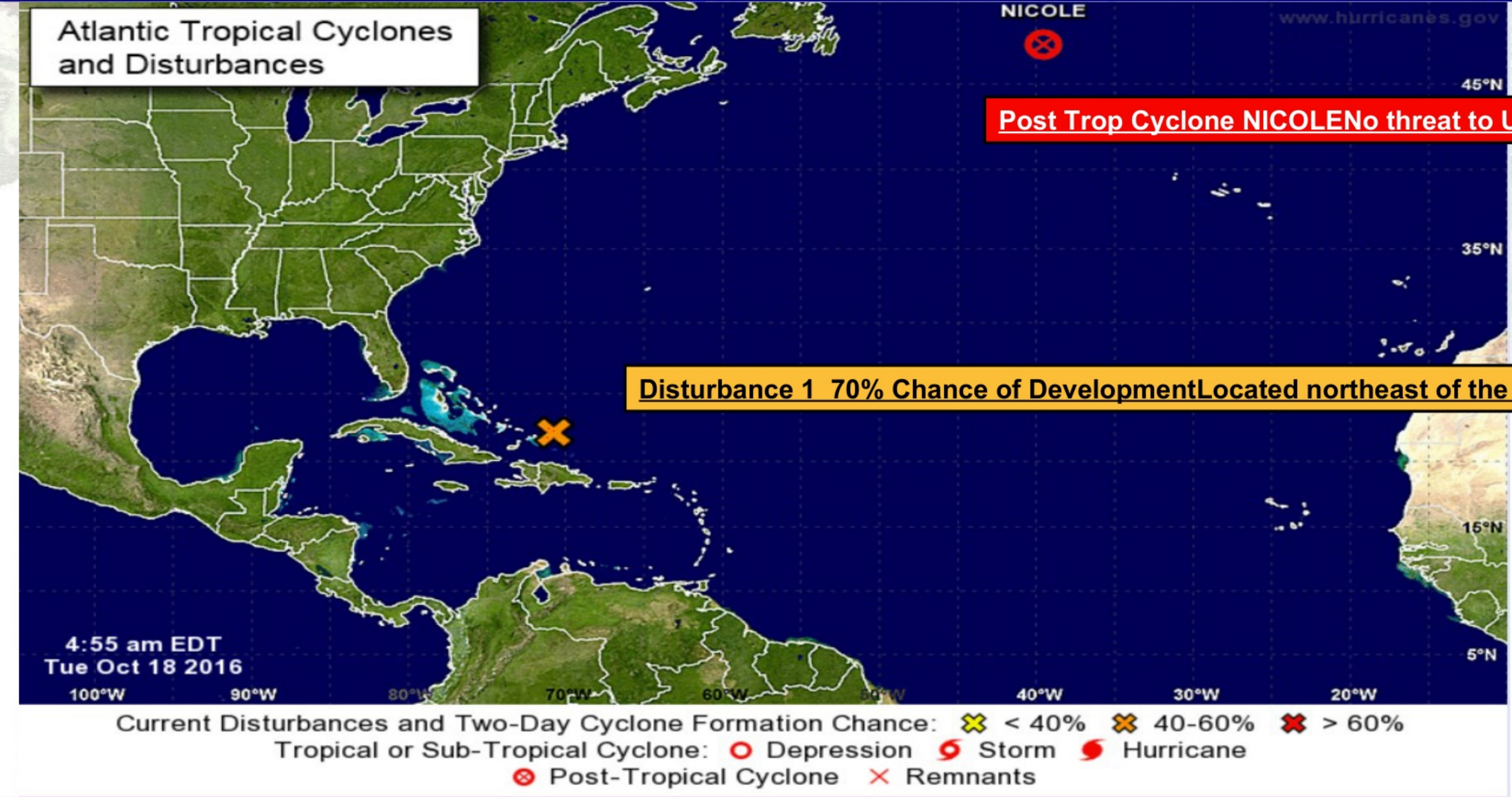
NOAA
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Weather Forecast for Wed, Oct 19, 2016, issued 4:37 AM EDT Tue, Oct 18, 2016
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

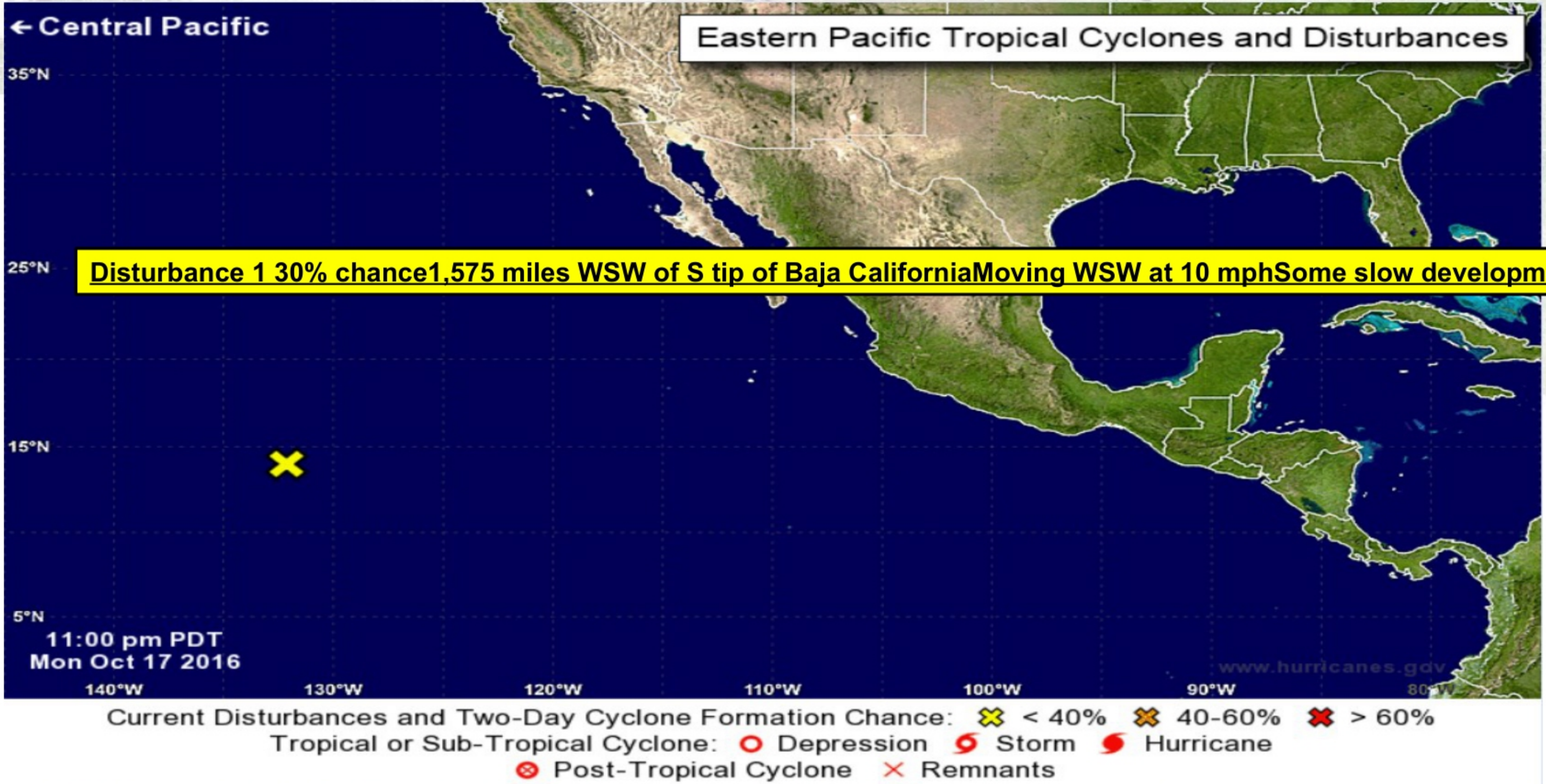
Atlantic Tropical Assessment


Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
NICOLE
www.hurricanes.gov
45°N
35°N
15°N
5°N
4:55 am EDT
Tue Oct 18 2016
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: < 40% 40-60% > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: Depression Storm Hurricane
Post-Tropical Cyclone Remnants

Post Trop Cyclone NICOLENo threat to U.S. interests

Disturbance 1 70% Chance of DevelopmentLocated northeast of the Turks and C

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment



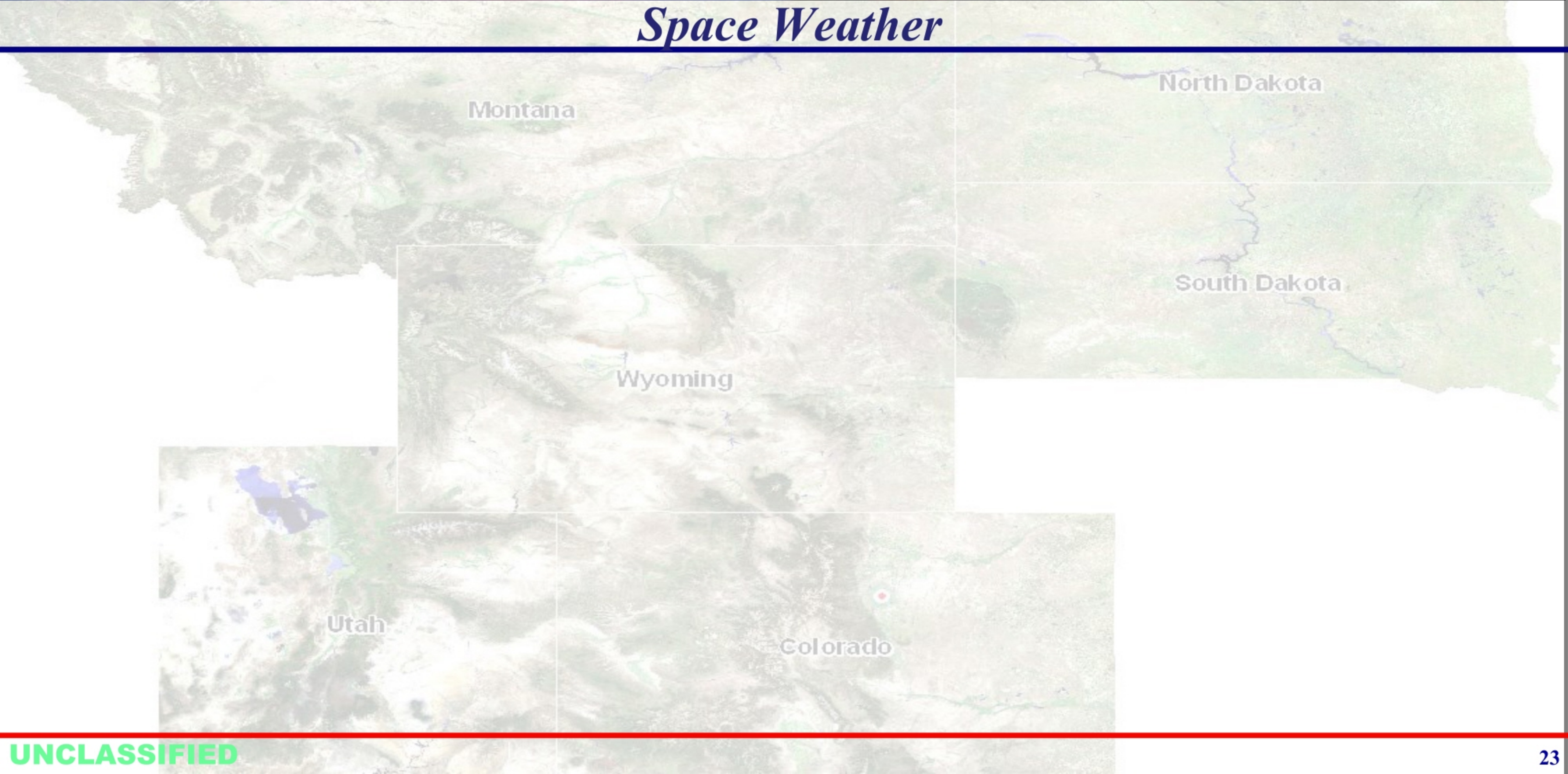
Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances

11:00 pm PDT
Mon Oct 17 2016

← Central Pacific
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
www.hurricanes.gov
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression Storm Hurricane
⊗ Post-Tropical Cyclone × Remnants

Disturbance 1 30% chance1,575 miles WSW of S tip of Baja CaliforniaMoving WSW at 10 mphSome slow development possible

Space Weather


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
3	Date Requested	0	0
KS – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 10, 2016		
WI – DR Severe Storms, Flooding and Mudslides	October 11, 2016		
Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians – DR (Appeal) Appealing Individual Assistance for the Tribe	October 17, 2016		

IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 03, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Darrin Ricketts	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Tracy McCauley (Until 30 Oct)	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

Stand-by Team Roster *(Updated: Oct 6, 2016 / 1000)*

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Kevin Moore	303-941-2113
Operations Sec Chief	AJ Lyman	303-350-0412
Infrastructure Branch Director	Leigh-Andrea Phillips	720-398-7531
Ind Asst Branch Director	Brannen Ulrick	303-681-4988
Planning Section Chief	Mike Pendergrass	303-746-3640
Situation Unit Lead	Susan Jones	303-263-5415
Resource Unit Lead	Bob Schroder	303-453-9482
Logistics Section Chief	Lamont Hudson	303-842-4682
Service Branch Director	Josh Turner	720-415-6353
Support Branch Director	Cedric Corney	303-515-1928
External Affairs Officer	Brian Hvinden	303-681-1454
Finance/Admin	Bonnie Garfias	303-884-7049

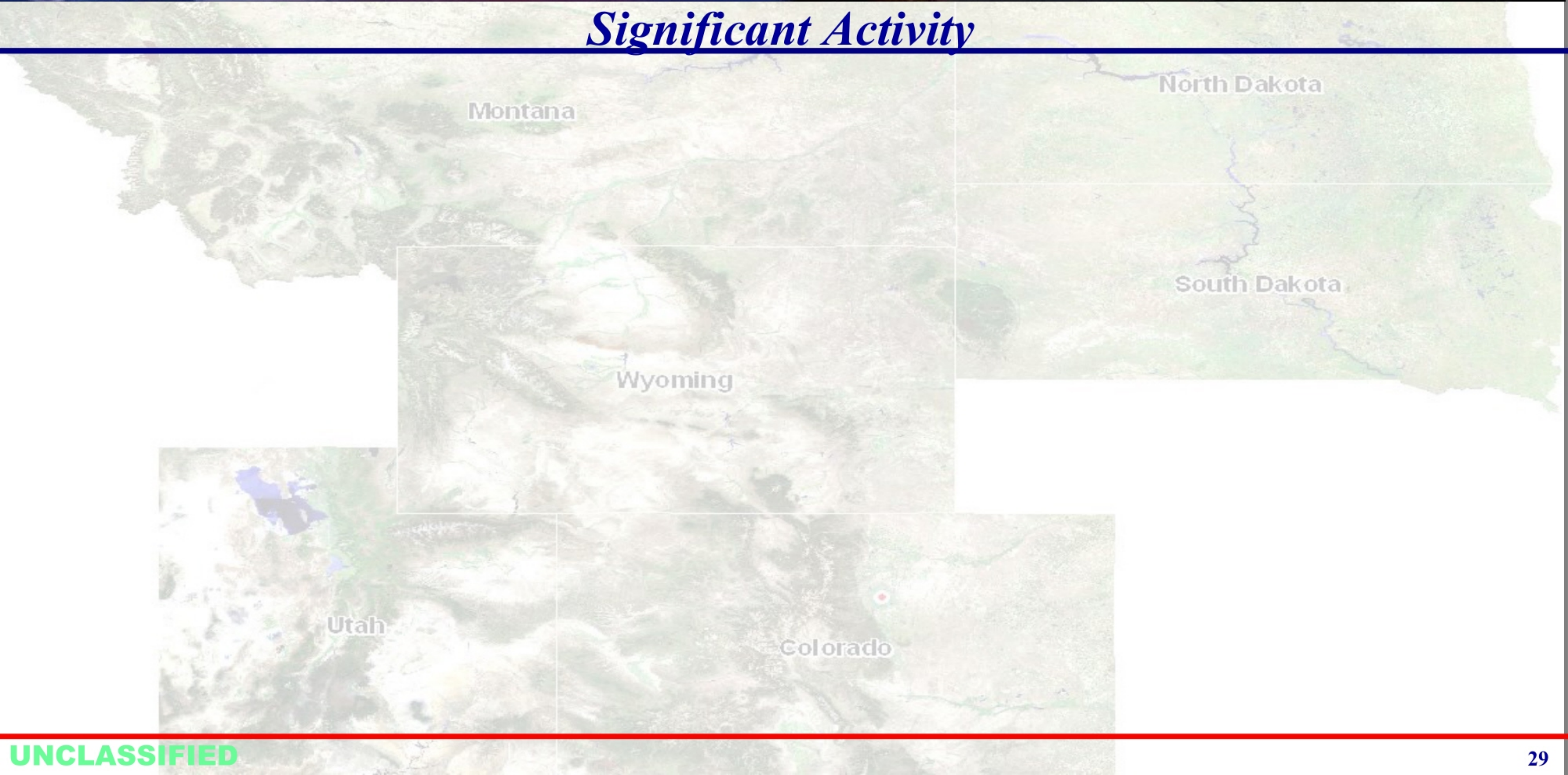
October RRCC Standup Roster (Orange Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Kevin Moore
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	AJ Lyman
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Mike Ordonez
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

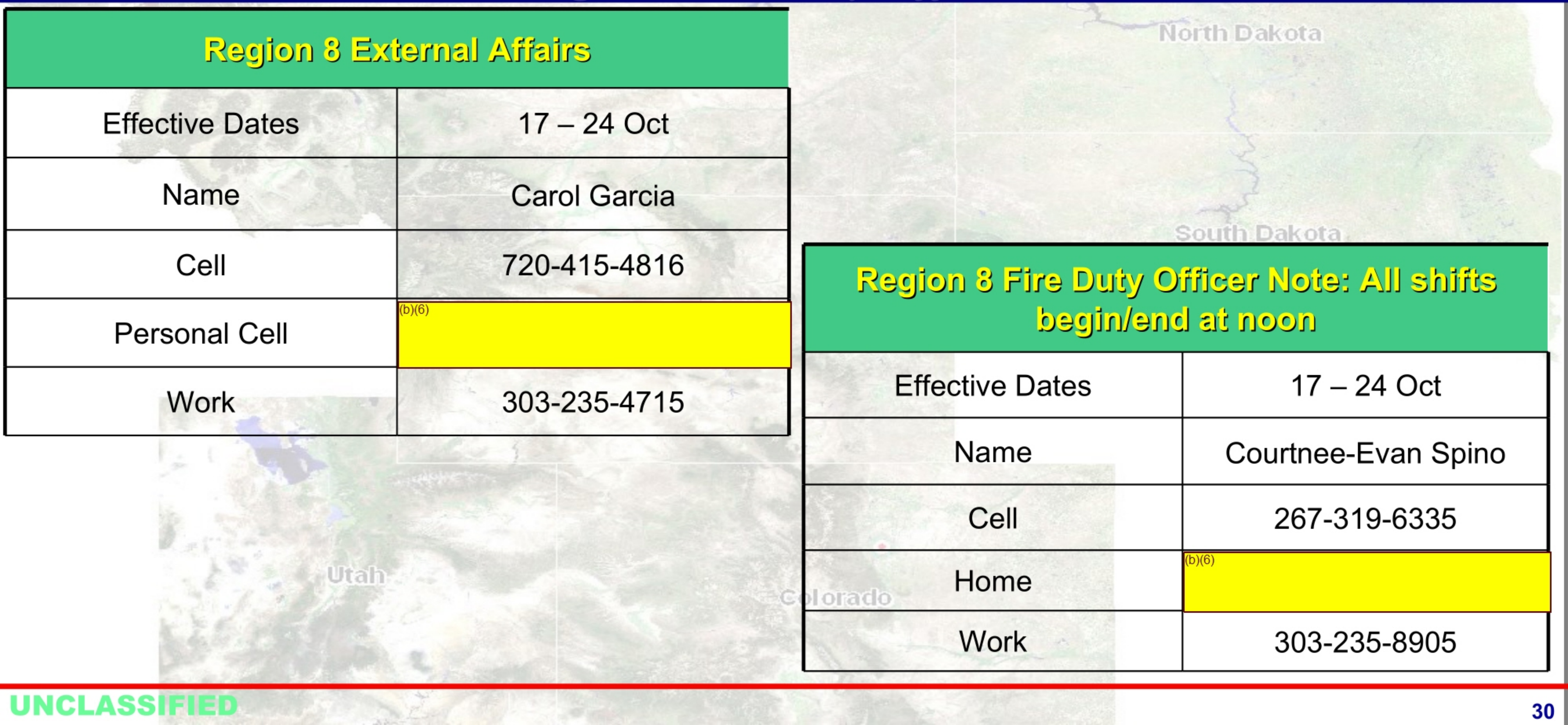
Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 13, 2016 / 0600)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	Michael Pendergrass	303-746-3640	303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	David Watkins	720-683-2565	303-235-4359
WY	AJ Lyman (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton	303-350-0412303-495-0051	303-235-4319303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity


North Dakota
Montana
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

Region VIII Duty Officers



Region 8 External Affairs

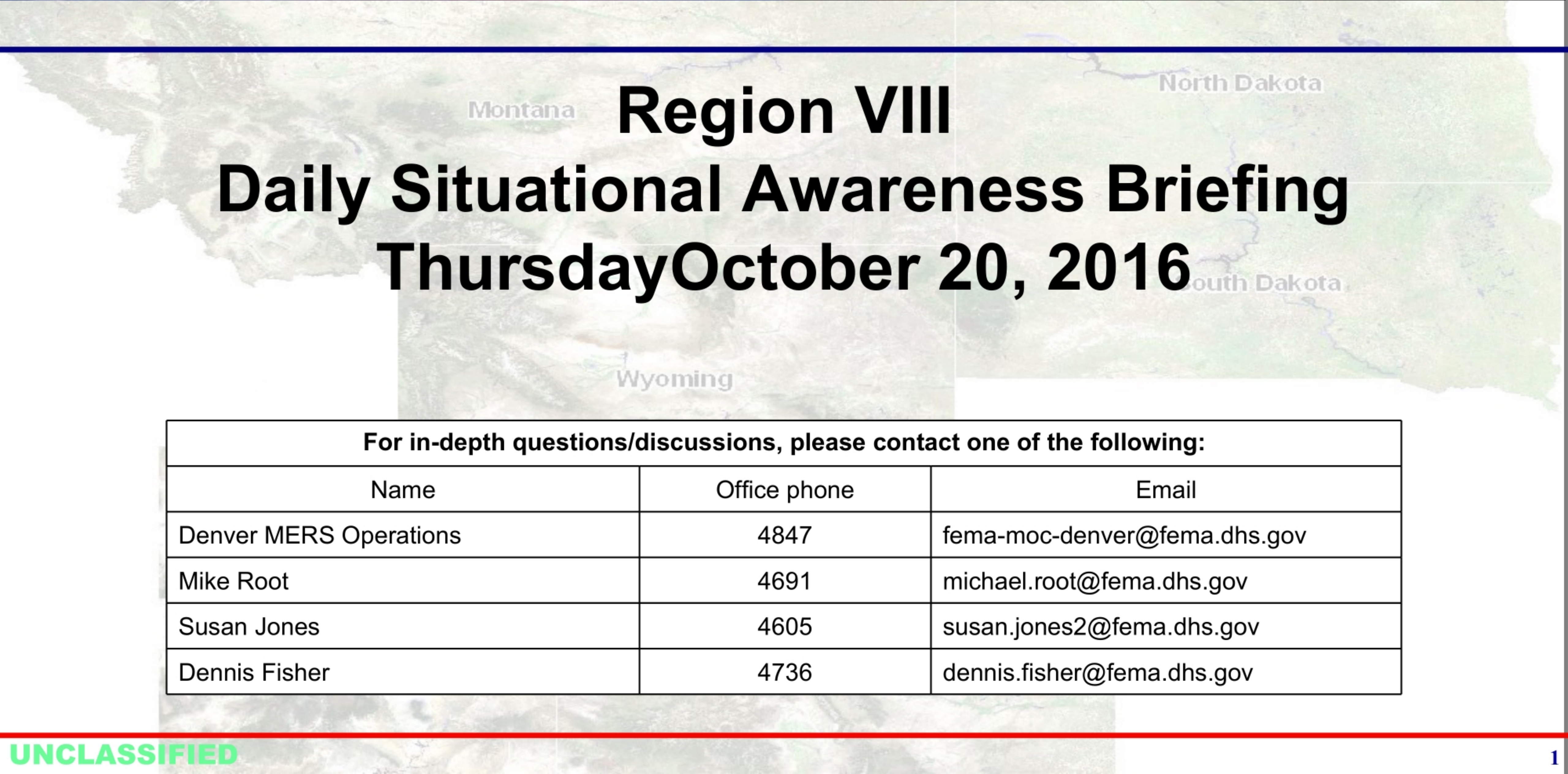
Effective Dates	17 – 24 Oct
Name	Carol Garcia
Cell	720-415-4816
Personal Cell	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4715

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon

Effective Dates	17 – 24 Oct
Name	Courtnee-Evan Spino
Cell	267-319-6335
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-8905

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY



Region VIII
Daily Situational Awareness Briefing
ThursdayOctober 20, 2016

For in-depth questions/discussions, please contact one of the following:		
Name	Office phone	Email
Denver MERS Operations	4847	fema-moc-denver@fema.dhs.gov
Mike Root	4691	michael.root@fema.dhs.gov
Susan Jones	4605	susan.jones2@fema.dhs.gov
Dennis Fisher	4736	dennis.fisher@fema.dhs.gov

Region VIII Status

Operational Status

INCIDENTS FYSA/SPOTREP: None MOC/RVIII Watch Status: NORMALRVIII IMAT: Deployed ISO DR-4277-LARVIII RRCC: NORMAL

State EOC Status

Colorado	🟨 LEVEL II (MONITORING)
Utah	🟩 NORMAL
S. Dakota	🟩 NORMAL
N. Dakota	🟨 LEVEL II (PARTIAL)
Wyoming	🟩 NORMAL
Montana	🟩 NORMAL

Events

- **Thu 1:30-3:00 R8 Division Directors Meeting, RA Conf**

RmFri 1:30-3:30 CFEB, Bldg 25

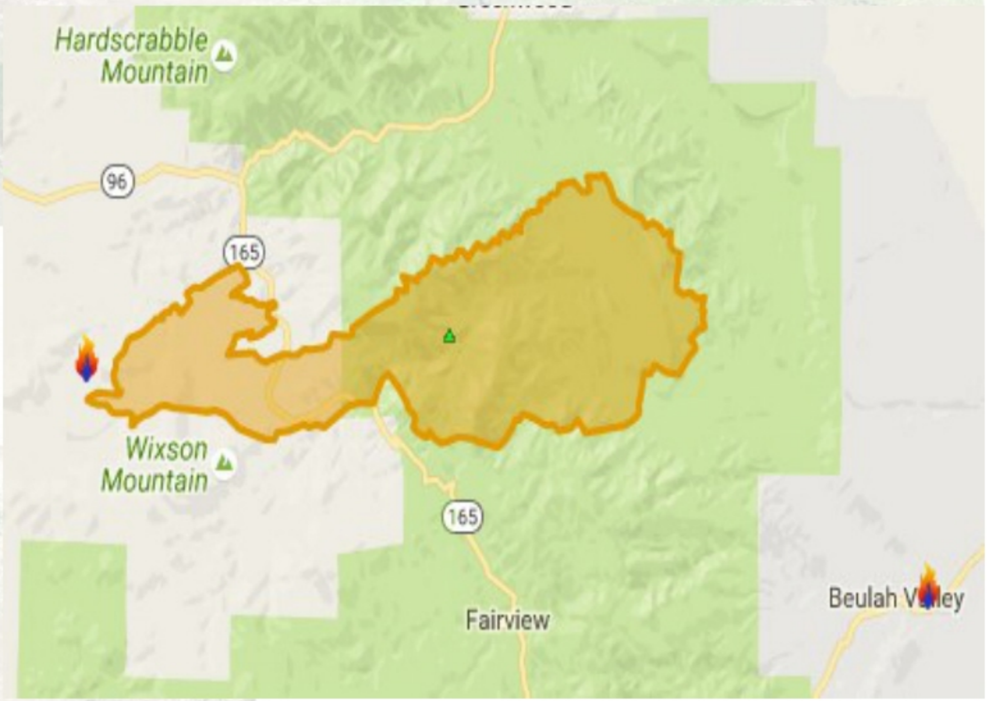
Exercises and Training

- **NSTR**

Junkins Fire, CO

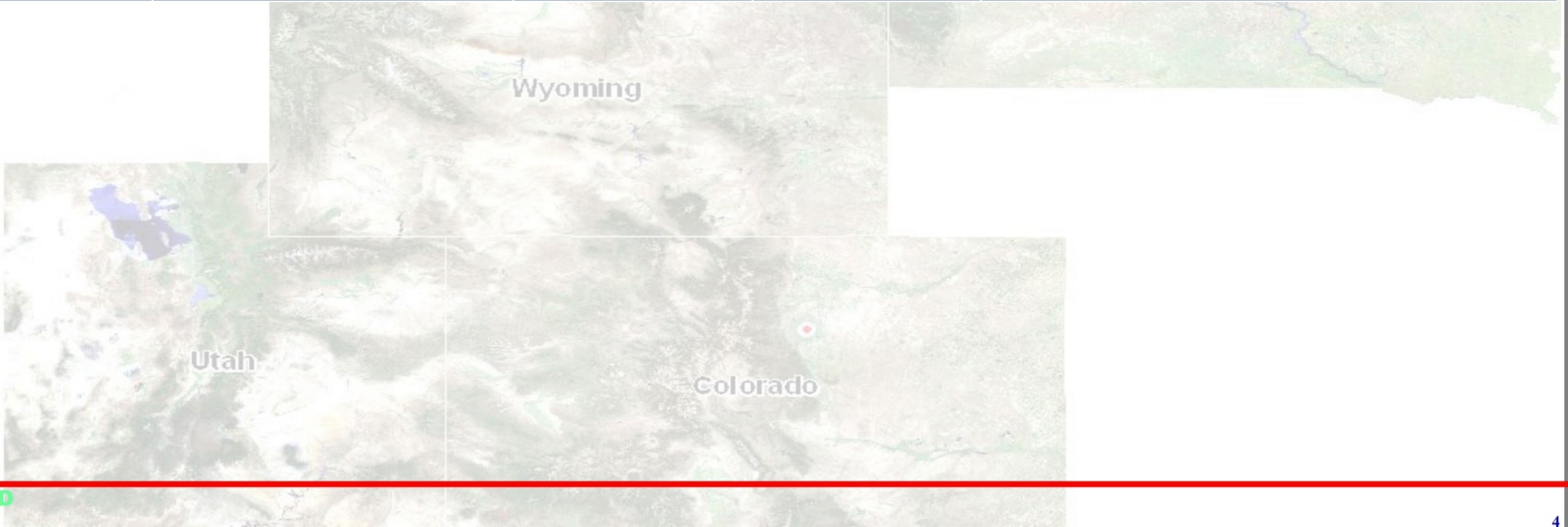
Acres Burned	% Contained	Estimated Containment	FMAG StatusApproval Date	Structures Lost / Threatened	Fatalities / Injuries
16,832 (+493)	**3%**	**TBD**	FEMA-5175-FM-CO17 Oct 2016	11 / 257	0 / 0

- **Location: 11 miles east of Westcliff, CO in Custer and Pueblo countiesResources: Type 1 IMT; 262 firefighters, 7 hand crews, 15 engines, 4 water tenders, 4 single engine air tankers, 4 heavy air tankers, 5 helicopters, 1 air attack.Evacuations: Approximately 175 homes in Custer County, 82 homes in Pueblo County. Eagle Springs Ranch subdivision Custer County (70 homes) and Beulah (approximately 990 homes) are on pre-evacuation status. City Road 390 north to Fremont County Line.Closures: Hwy 96 from McKenzie Junction to County Road 390, Hwy 165 & 96 (McKenzie Junction) to Hwy 78, county roads 358, 386, 387, 388, 389, and Hwy 165 from McKenzie Junction to Hwy 78.Weather: Sunny, with a high near 51. West wind around 5 mph becoming south southwest in the afternoon. .**



Region Active Fires updated as of 0415, 20 Oct 2016

INCIDENT	LOCATION	SIZE	CONTAINMENT	REMARKS
(ORANGE items are updates as of 20 Oct 2016)				
Junkins FireFEMA-5175-FM-COFMAG Approved10/17/2016	Custer & Pueblo Counties	16,832 (+493)	3%	Type I IMTSource: Local media reports/WebEOC



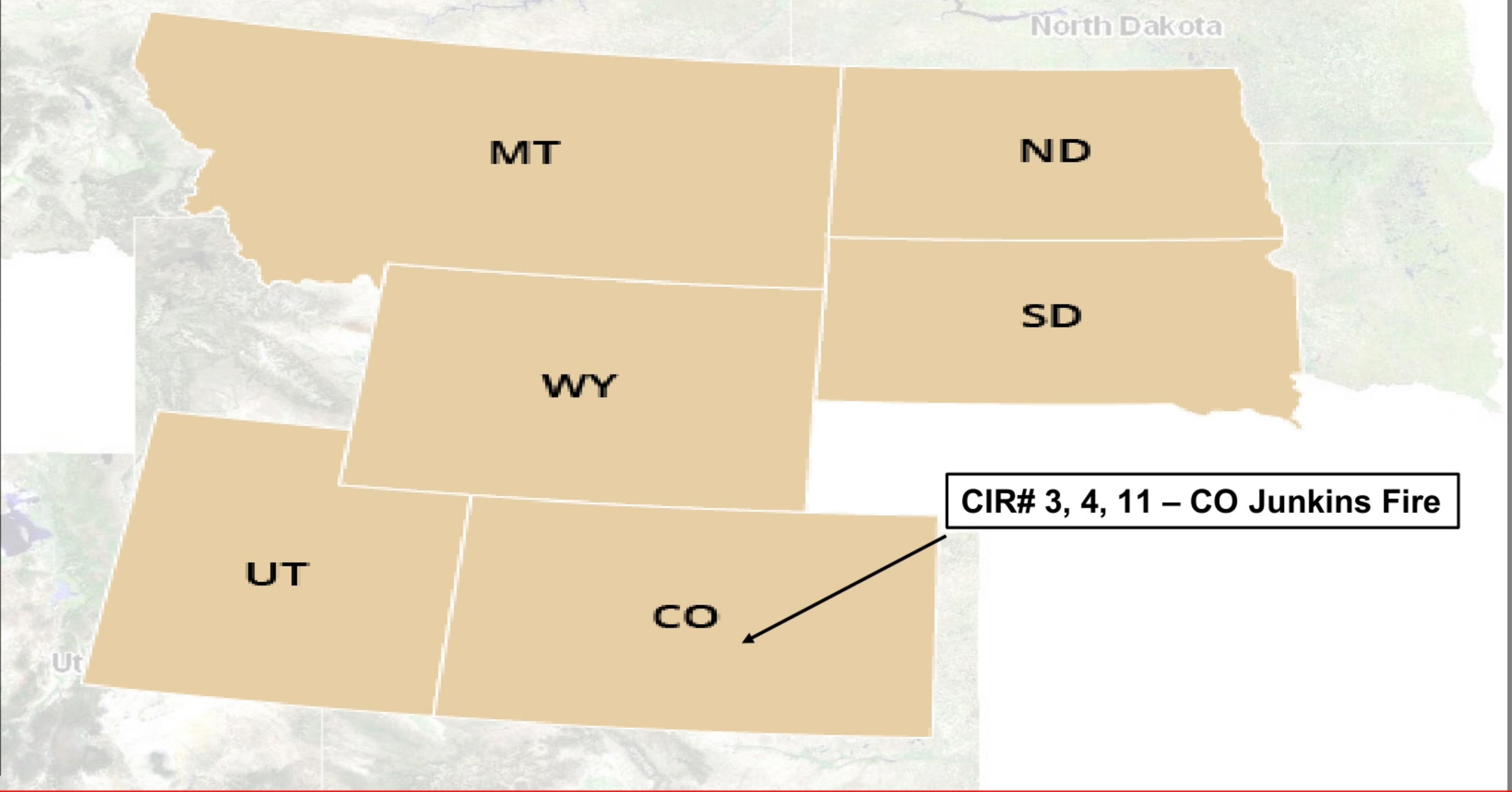
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

No Activity / Short duration or minor affects(24 hours or less) / Longer duration or major affects

CIR #			CIR #			CIR #		
1	🟩	Events that close, restrict or create substantial impacts to Major Transportation Routes /Airports/hubs/ infrastructure - within the Region that will last longer than four (4) hours.	8	🟩	If the NWC / NRCC change their activation level or a National IMAT is deployed.	15	🟩	Any spill of designated as "Major" by the EPA in Region VIII or adjacent Regions.
2	🟩	Any declaration of emergency by the President, a Region VIII State Governor, Tribal Chairperson, or County Government.	9	🟩	HAZMAT event in Region VIII, or Nationally with effects on Region VIII states or personnel (requiring HAZMAT Team deployment or citizen evacuation).	16	🟩	NWS issues warnings for tornados, red flags, severe weather events, or other events affecting Region VIII States or Tribal Nations.
3	🟥	Changes in Emergency Operations Status EOC activation level at the State or County level.	10	🟩	Activation of the NTSB within the Region, or ELT activation with SAR implications.	17	🟩	Notification of a Nuclear transportation that has, or may become, problematic.
4	🟥	Voluntary or Mandatory Evacuation Orders or Shelter in Place orders.	11	🟥	Forest and rural area fires that an FMAG has been requested or is anticipated. Urban or urban interface fires that require evacuations, access closure or business closures.	18	🟩	Mass Casualty incidents within the Region.
5	🟩	Major utility outages within the Region affecting rural population, cities, or 10% of a state's population.	12	🟩	Local, State, Tribal, or Federal implement COOP, or COG activities.	19	🟩	Biological events, (e.g. West Nile, Avian, or other communicable disease) affecting Region VIII or adjacent States or Tribal Nations.
6	🟩	Events triggering the evacuation of patients or transition to generator power at Hospitals.	13	🟩	Major school closures that are not related to snow events.	20	🟩	Any report of a suspected or actual Terrorism-related events, threats, or activity within Region VIII, or with National implications.
7	🟩	Spot Reports on events that could impact FEMA Region VIII.	14	🟩	Any earthquake in Region VIII or adjacent Regions that or adjacent Regions that cause reported residential or infrastructure damage – or adversely affect citizens.	21	🟩	Any active shooter, bomber, or hostage scenario with regard to school, major sports, theater, or other public venue events.

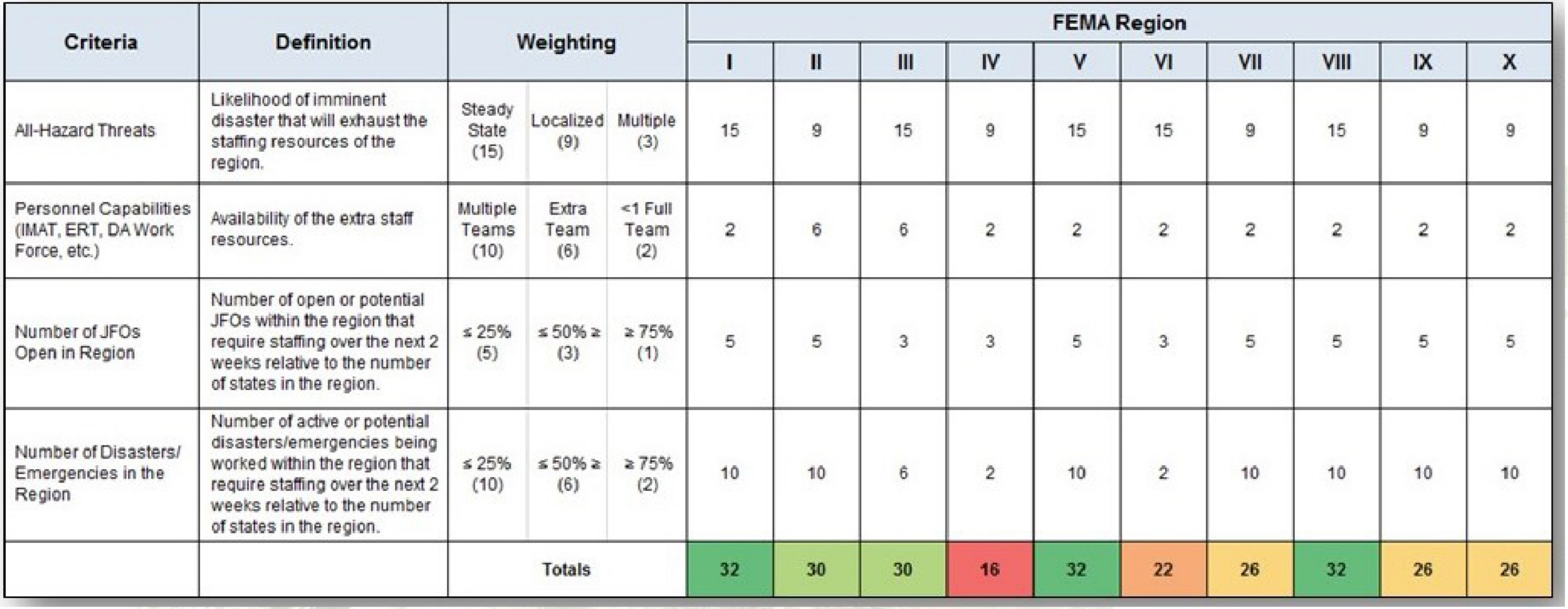
FEMA Region VIII Critical Information Requirement

CIR	12 Hours	24 Hours
CIR 1		
CIR 2		
CIR 3	🟥	
CIR 4	🟥	
CIR 5		
CIR 6		
CIR 7		
CIR 8		
CIR 9		
CIR 10		
CIR 11	🟥	
CIR 12		
CIR 13		
CIR 14		
CIR 15		
CIR 16		
CIR 17		
CIR 18		
CIR 19		
CIR 20		
CIR 21		



CIR# 3, 4, 11 – CO Junkins Fire

Regional Backup Comparison as of: 17 Oct 16



Criteria	Definition	Weighting			FEMA Region									
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
All-Hazard Threats	Likelihood of imminent disaster that will exhaust the staffing resources of the region.	Steady State (15)	Localized (9)	Multiple (3)	15	9	15	9	15	15	9	15	9	9
Personnel Capabilities (IMAT, ERT, DA Work Force, etc.)	Availability of the extra staff resources.	Multiple Teams (10)	Extra Team (6)	<1 Full Team (2)	2	6	6	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Number of JFOs Open in Region	Number of open or potential JFOs within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (5)	≤ 50% ≥ (3)	≥ 75% (1)	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	5	5	5
Number of Disasters/ Emergencies in the Region	Number of active or potential disasters/emergencies being worked within the region that require staffing over the next 2 weeks relative to the number of states in the region.	≤ 25% (10)	≤ 50% ≥ (6)	≥ 75% (2)	10	10	6	2	10	2	10	10	10	10
		Totals			32	30	30	16	32	22	26	32	26	26

Backup Regions I, V, VIII

R8 Current Status

FEMA R8 RRCC Activations		
Level	**Reason for Activation**	**Activated Times**

FEMA R8 State EOC Responses / Activations		
State	**Activation**	**Event/Incident**
ND	Level II Partial	Pipeline Protest
CO	Level II Monitoring (0600-2000)	Junkins Fire, Custer County

FEMA R8 IMAT Activations		
State	**Activation (Event)**	**Supporting**
LA	Flooding	DR-4277-LA

R8 Current Status (Continued)

FEMA R8 FCO Status

FCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number

FEMA R8 Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC)

RCO	Deployed Location	Declaration Number
Thomas J. McCool	Washington D.C.	

R8 PDA Summary

State	Event	Type	Counties / TribesRequested	Completed	(Estimated) Start / End Date

Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook

Today-Wednesday

- Critical fire weather conditions will continue across eastern CO through this evening. Ongoing fires will have the potential to continue to grow quickly
- A marginal risk for severe thunderstorms exists across E SD this afternoon. Primary threats will be gusty winds and large hail
- Strong winds will continue across southern portions of WY which could result in impacts to transportation along Interstates 25 and 80
- Periods of valley rain and mountain snow will continue through mid-week across portions of the Intermountain West and Northern Rockies
    - Impacts to travel across mountain passes are possible but should lessen after tomorrow

Thursday-Sunday

- A ridge of high pressure is expected to build across the area late in the week and into the weekend keeping the threat for widespread impactful weather low

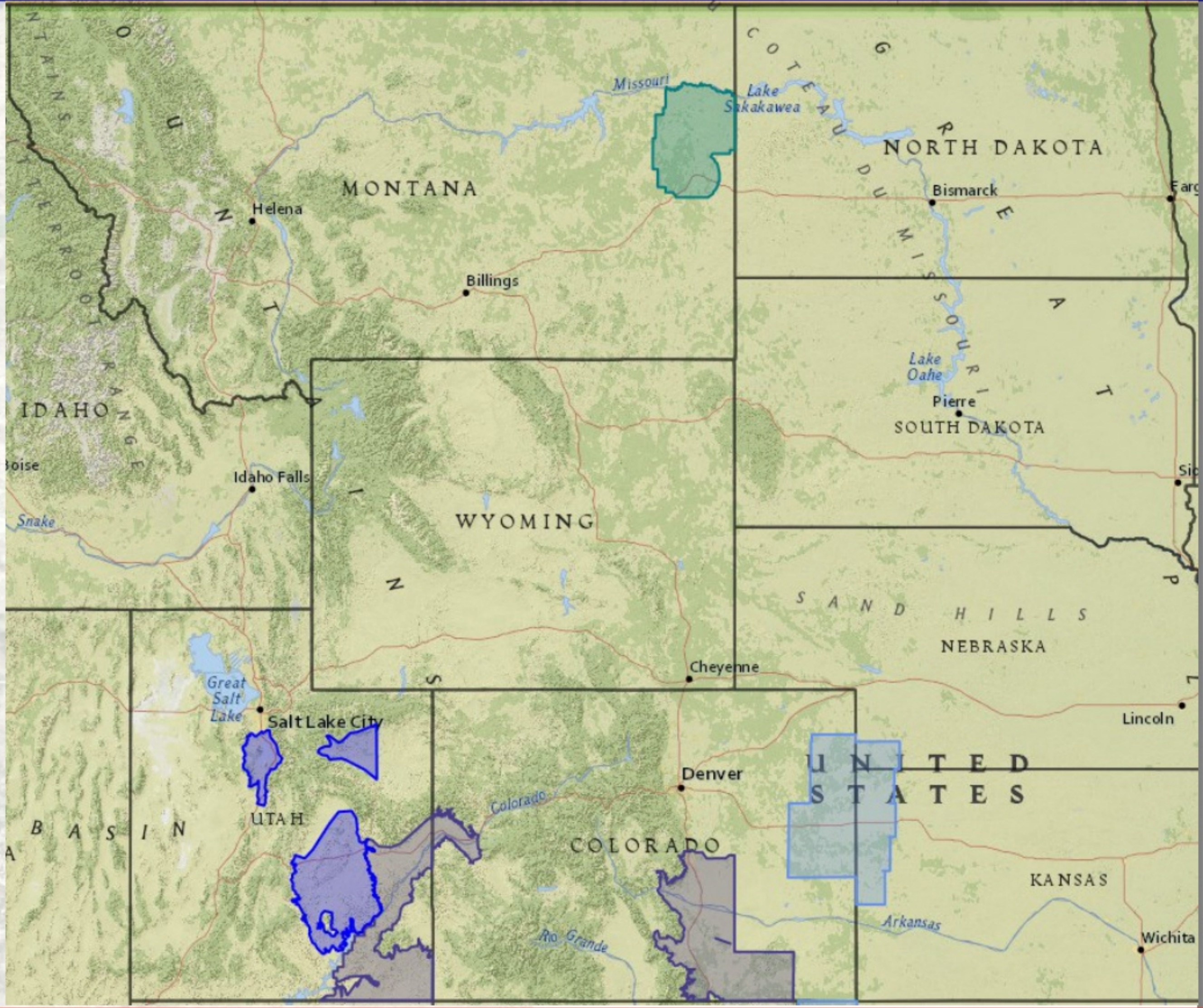
NOAA Region VIII Weekly Outlook (Cont.)

DAY/THREAT	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Critical Fire Weather	🟧 E CO	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Mountain Snow/ Valley Rain	🟨 SW MT/ W WY	🟨 SW MT/ W WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Isolated Severe Thunderstorms	🟨 E SD	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩
Strong Winds	🟨 S WY	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩

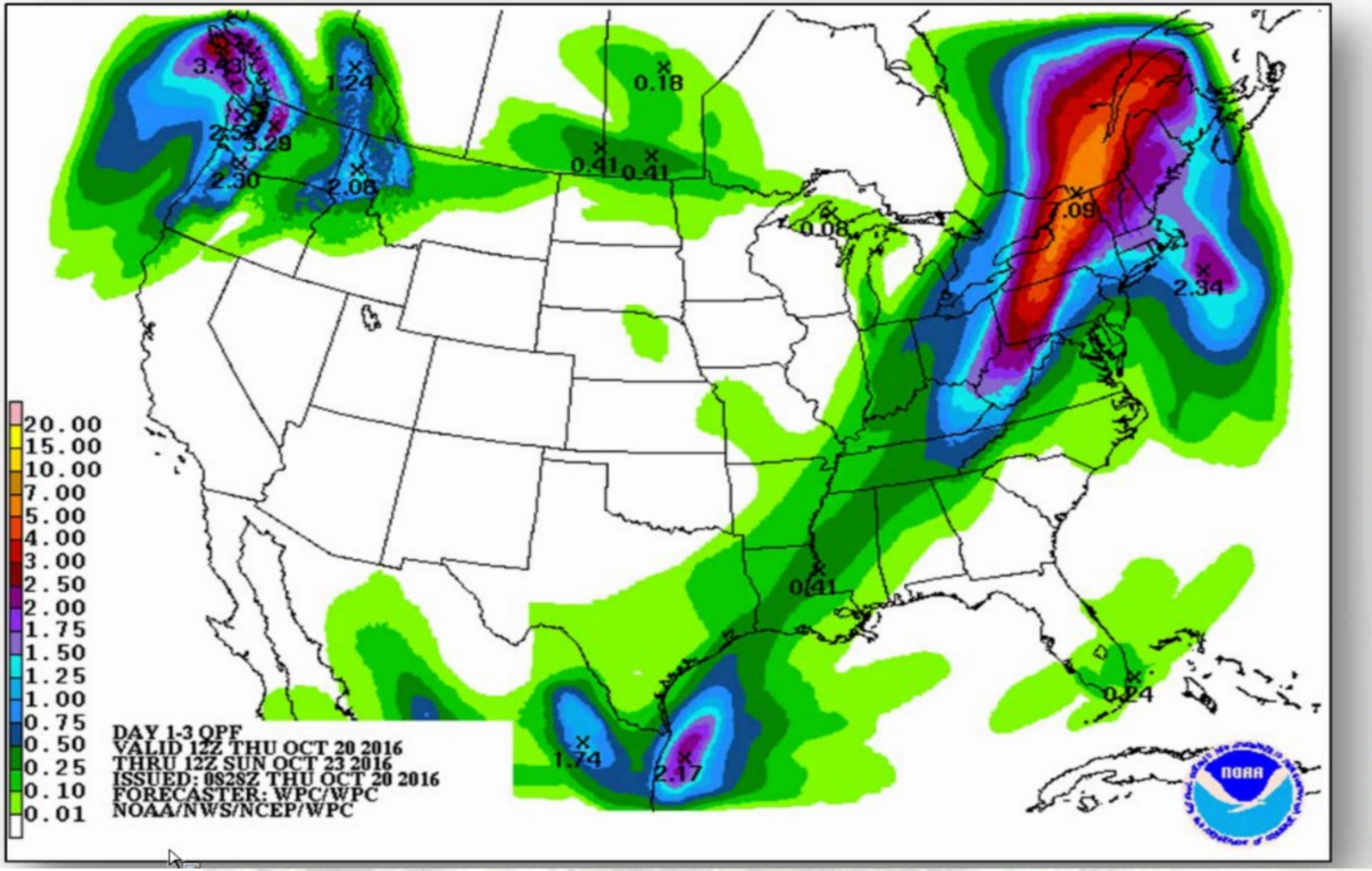
🟥 High Threat
🟧 Moderate Threat
🟨 Slight Threat
🟩 No Discernible Threat

Regional Weather Hazards

CO/WY/MT/UT/ND/SD: NSTR


Missouri
Lake Sakakawea
NORTH DAKOTA
Bismarck
MONTANA
Helena
Billings
IDAHO
Boise
Idaho Falls
Snake
WYOMING
Lake Oahe
Pierre
SOUTH DAKOTA
SAND HILLS
NEBRASKA
Cheyenne
Lincoln
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
UTAH
BASIN
Denver
Colorado
COLORADO
Rio Grande
UNITED STATES
KANSAS
Arkansas
Wichita

Precipitation Outlook


3.43
1.24
0.18
2.54
3.29
2.30
2.08
0.41
0.41
0.08
.09
2.34
0.41
0.24
1.74
2.17
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7.00
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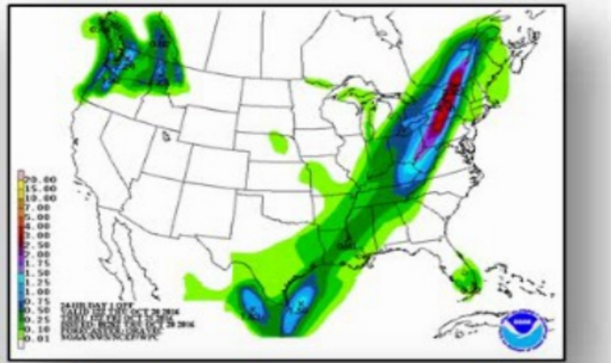
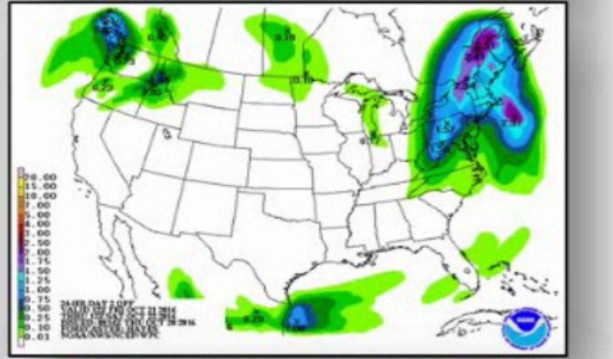
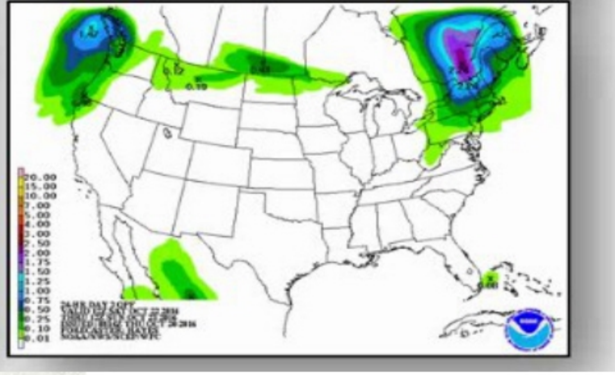
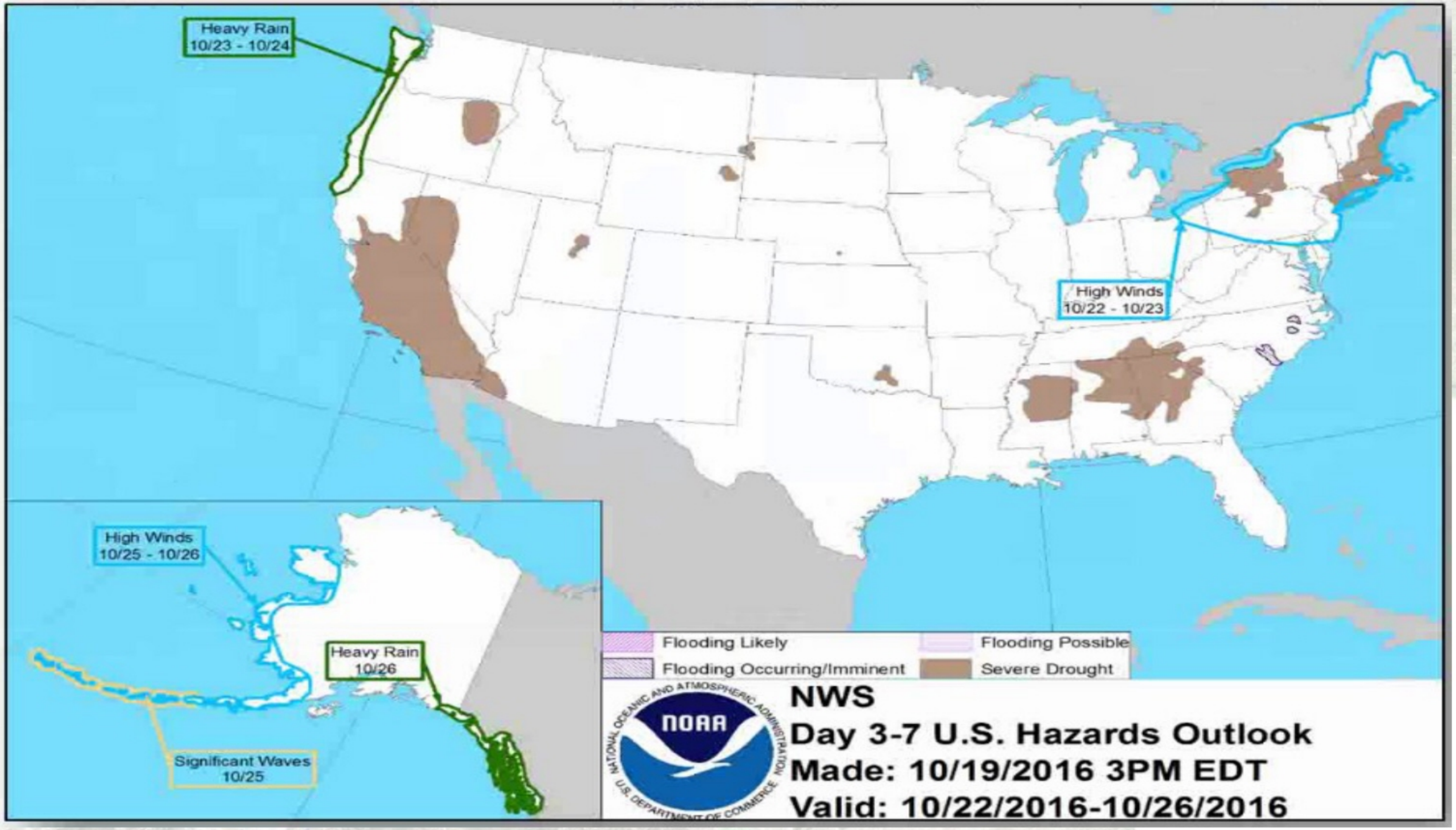
4.00
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.75
1.50
1.25
1.00
0.75
0.50
0.25
0.10
0.01
DAY 1-3 QPF
VALID 12Z THU OCT 20 2016
THRU 12Z SUN OCT 23 2016
ISSUED: 0828Z THU OCT 20 2016
FORECASTER: WPC/WPC
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/WPC
NOAA


Day 1


Day 2

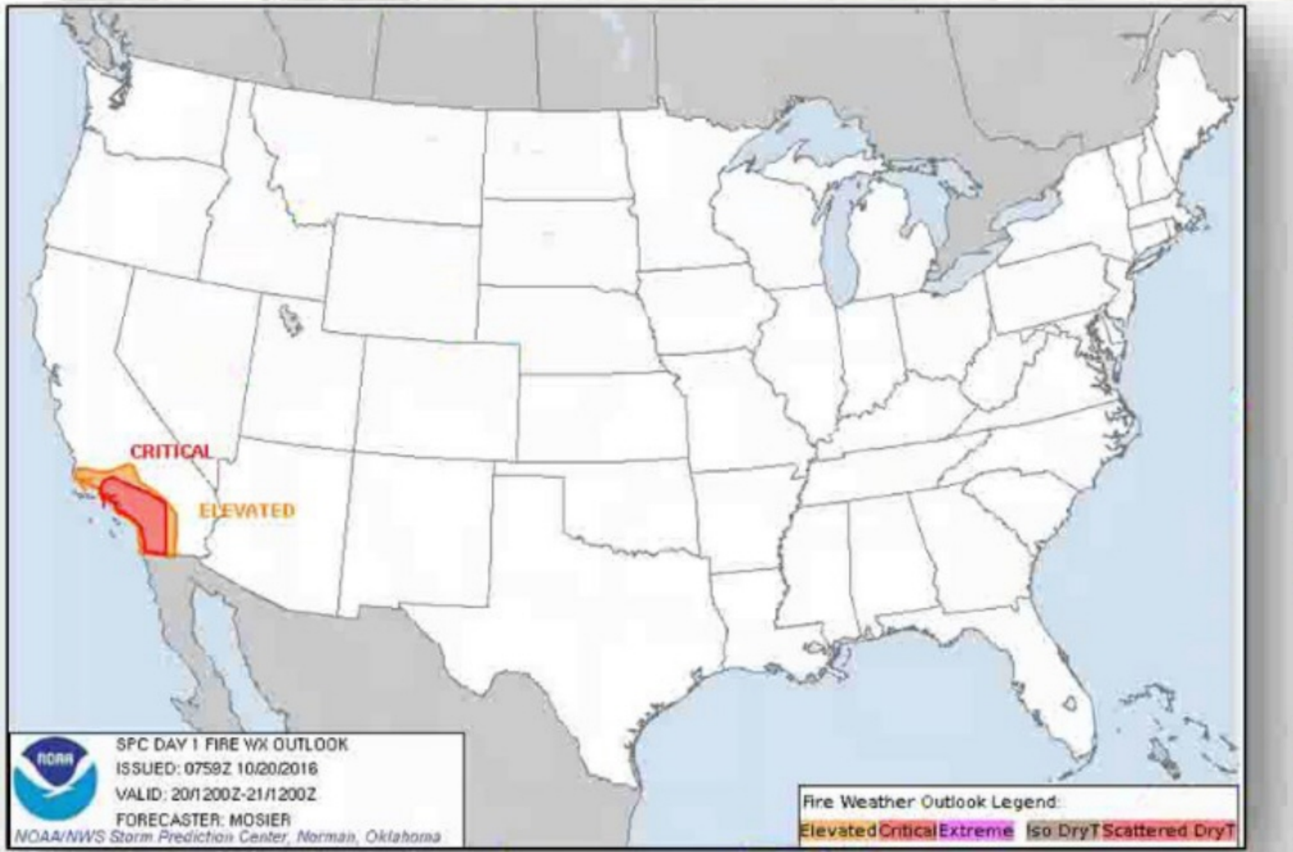

Day 3

Hazardous Weather Outlook

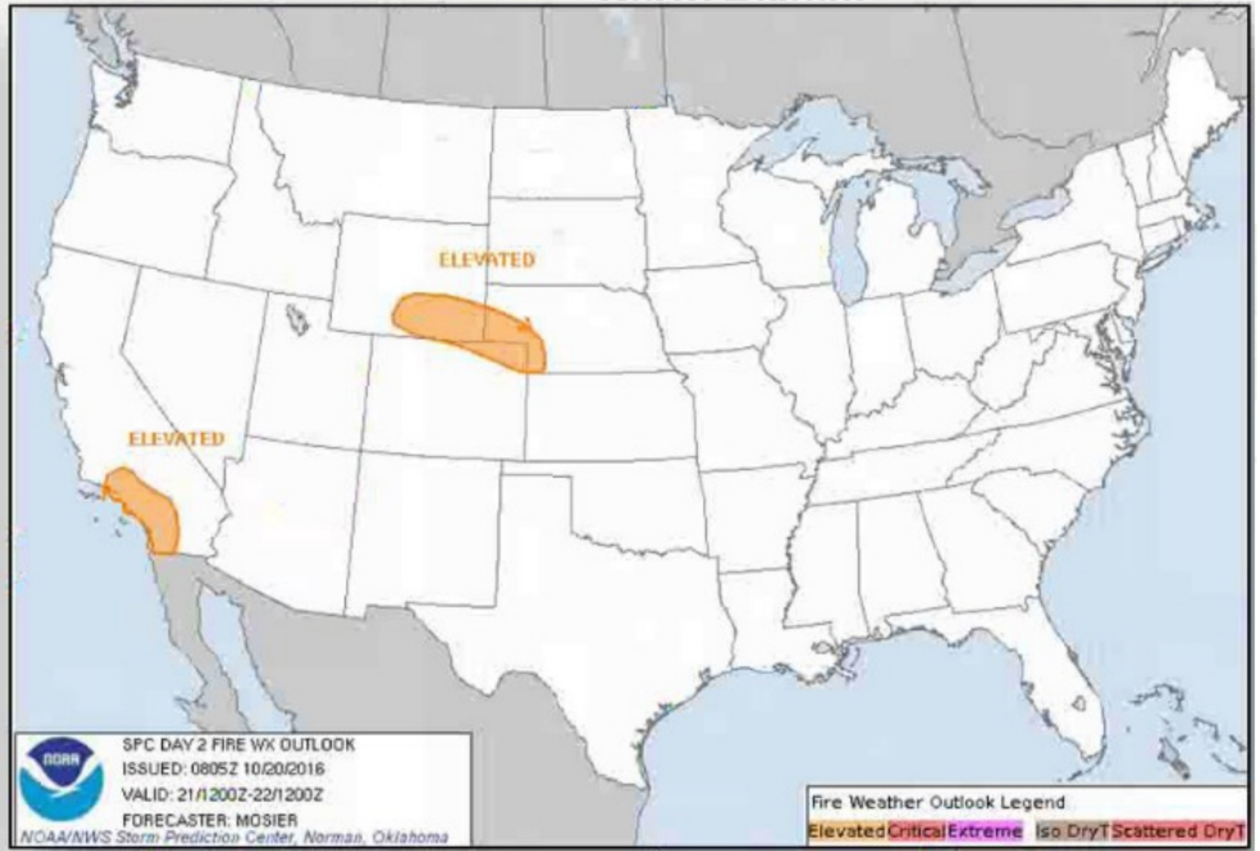

Heavy Rain
10/23 - 10/24
High Winds
10/22 - 10/23
High Winds
10/25 - 10/26
Heavy Rain
10/26
Significant Waves
10/25
Flooding Likely
Flooding Possible
Flooding Occurring/Imminent
Severe Drought
NOAA

NWS
Day 3-7 U.S. Hazards Outlook
Made: 10/19/2016 3PM EDT
Valid: 10/22/2016-10/26/2016

Fire Weather Outlook


CRITICAL
ELEVATED
NOAA
SPC DAY 1 FIRE WX OUTLOOK
ISSUED: 0759Z 10/20/2016
VALID: 20/1200Z-21/1200Z
FORECASTER: MOSIER
NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center, Norman, Oklahoma
Fire Weather Outlook Legend:
Elevated Critical Extreme Iso DryT Scattered DryT

Day 1


ELEVATED
ELEVATED
NOAA
SPC DAY 2 FIRE WX OUTLOOK
ISSUED: 0805Z 10/20/2016
VALID: 21/1200Z-22/1200Z
FORECASTER: MOSIER
NOAA/NWS Storm Prediction Center, Norman, Oklahoma
Fire Weather Outlook Legend
Elevated Critical Extreme Iso DryT Scattered DryT

Day 2

State Weather Forecast

Denver, CO

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear
High: 64 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 74 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 80 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 45 °F

Helena, MT

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
20%	20%		20%	20%				
Partly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers then Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Showers
High: 58 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 59 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 58 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 56 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont.

Bismarck, ND

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 50 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 64 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 63 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 57 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 58 °F

Pierre, SD

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 59 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 67 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 72 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 68 °F

State Weather Forecast - Cont

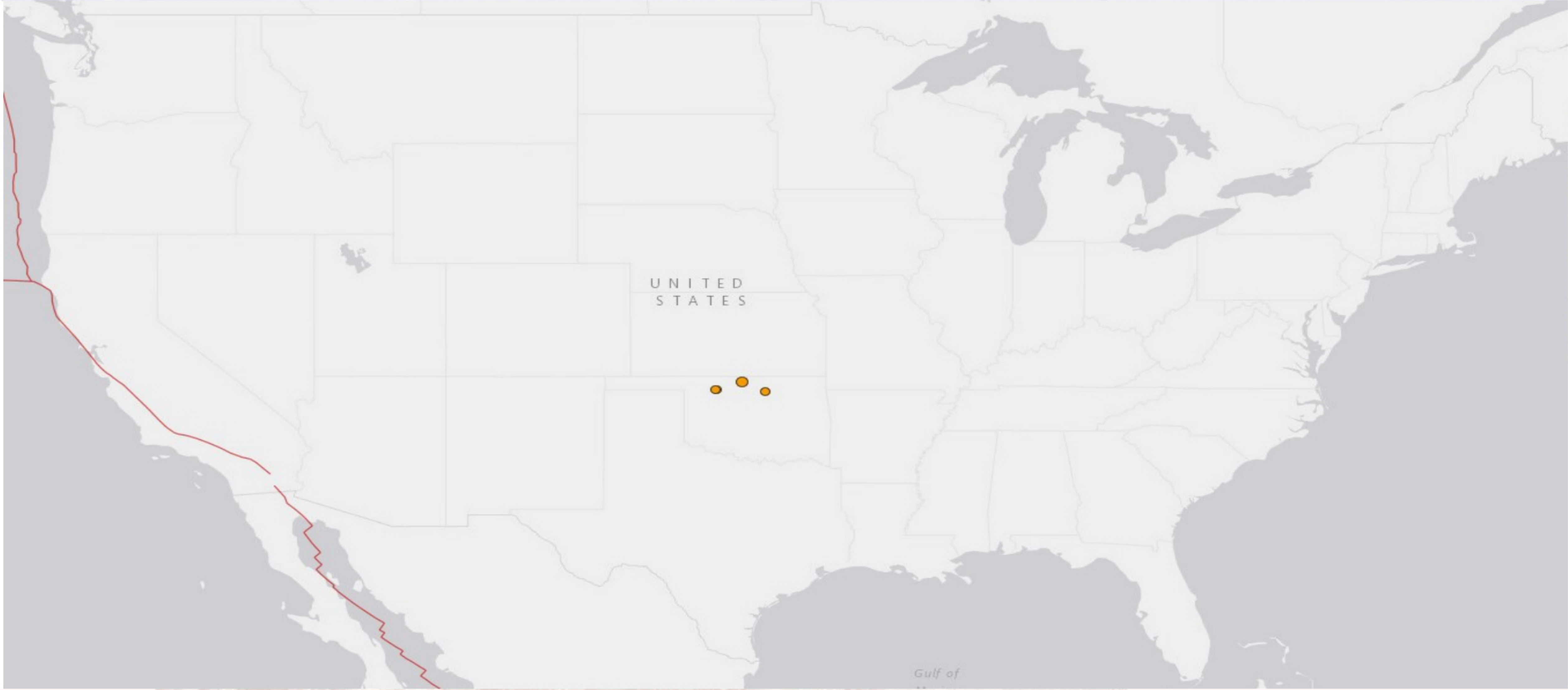
Salt Lake City, UT

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Showers
High: 61 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 71 °F	Low: 51 °F	High: 74 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 68 °F

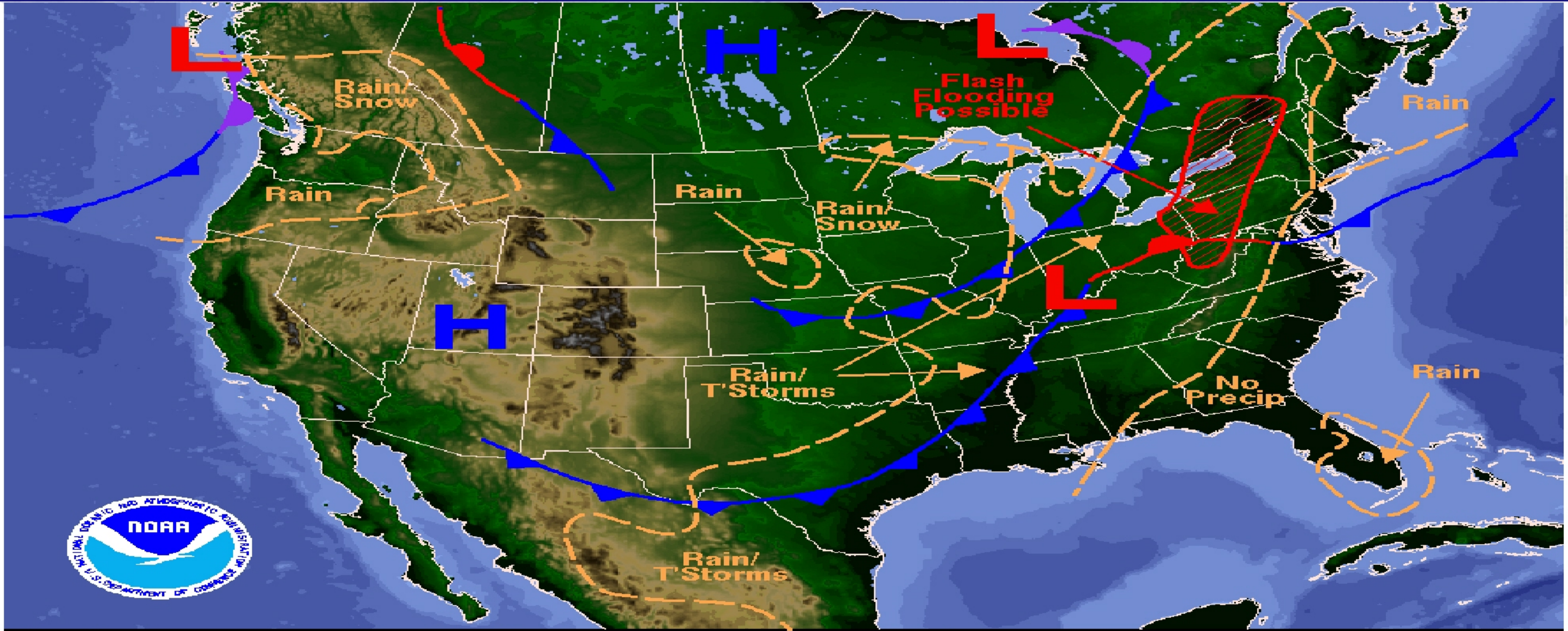
Cheyenne, WY

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Partly Sunny
High: 55 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 73 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 68 °F

Magnitude 2.5+ Earthquake Activity


UNITED STATES
Gulf of

Today's National Weather Forecast


L
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Flooding
Possible
Rain
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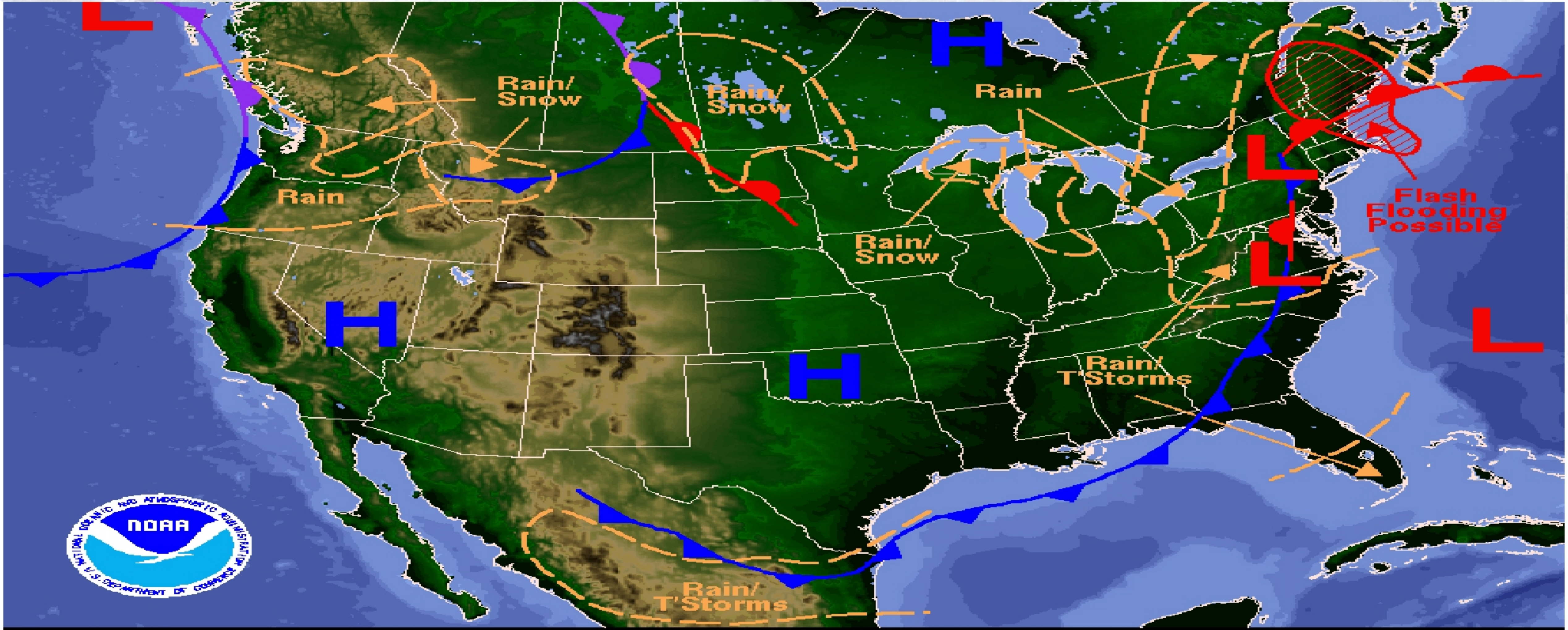
T'Storms
No
Precip
Rain
Rain/
T'Storms

Weather Forecast for Thu, Oct 20, 2016, issued 4:44 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Tomorrow's National Weather Forecast


L
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Rain/
Snow
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Snow
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Snow
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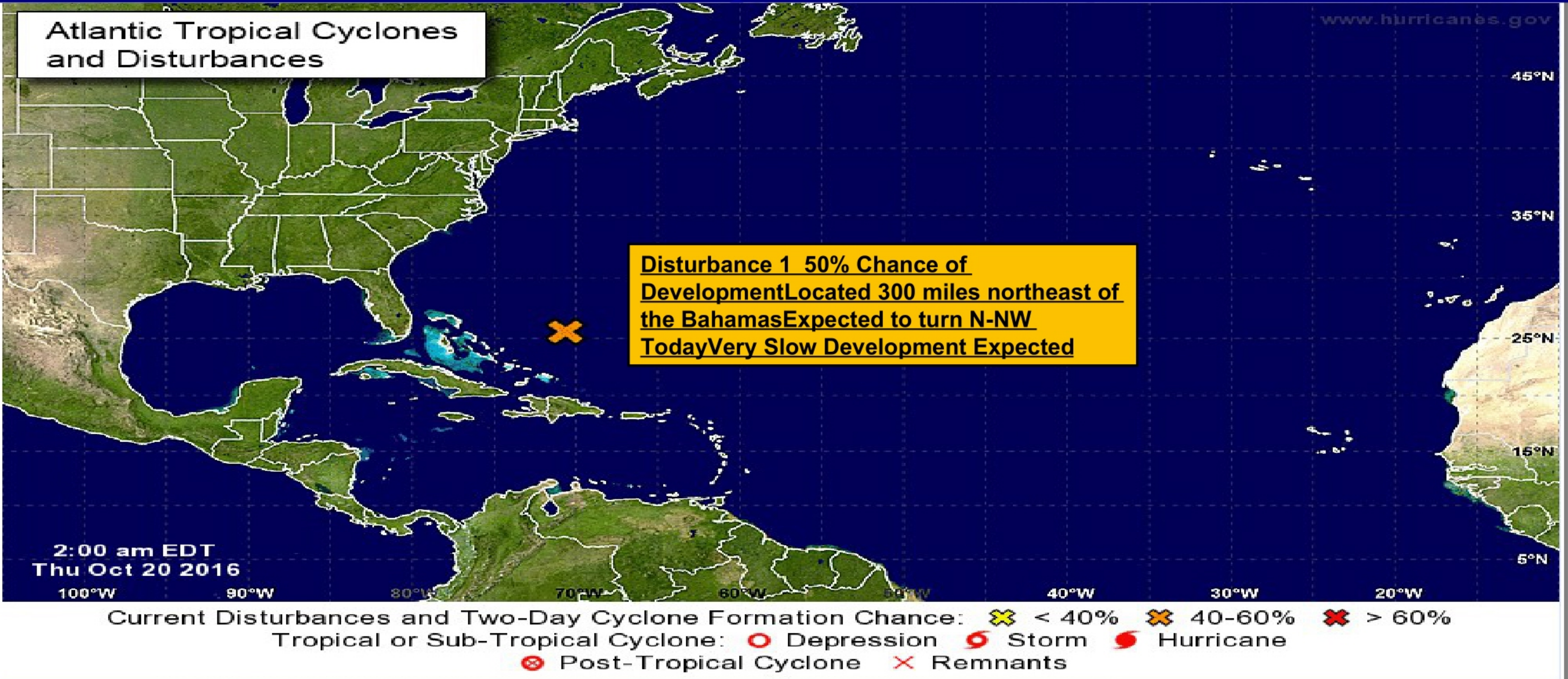
Flash
Flooding
Possible
Rain/
T'Storms
Rain/
T'Storms
NOAA

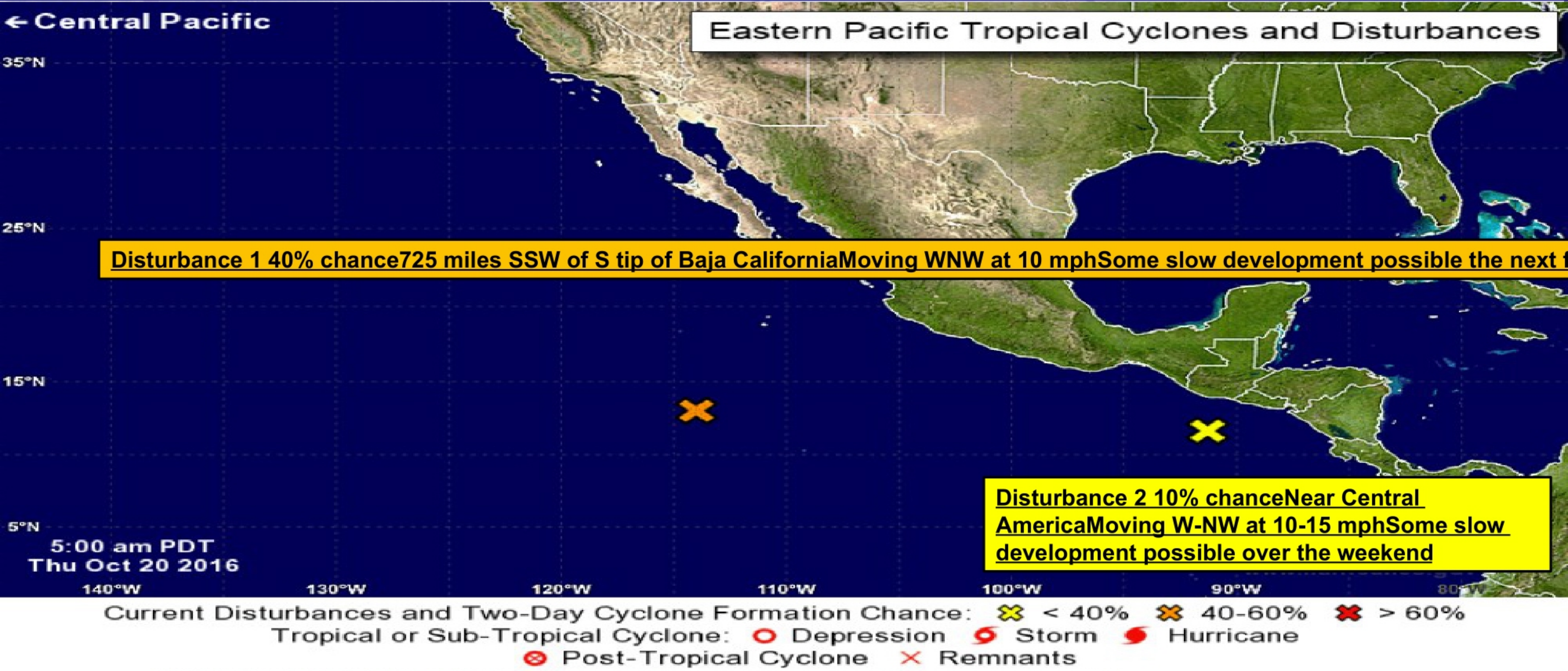
Weather Forecast for Fri, Oct 21, 2016, issued 5:04 AM EDT Wed, Oct 19, 2016
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Atlantic Tropical Assessment


Atlantic Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
www.hurricanes.gov
45°N
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
100°W
90°W
80°W
70°W
60°W
50°W
40°W
30°W
20°W
2:00 am EDT
Thu Oct 20 2016
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: < 40% 40-60% > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: Depression Storm Hurricane
Post-Tropical Cyclone Remnants

Disturbance 1 50% Chance of DevelopmentLocated 300 miles northeast of the BahamasExpected to turn N-NW TodayVery Slow Development Expected

Eastern Pacific Tropical Assessment

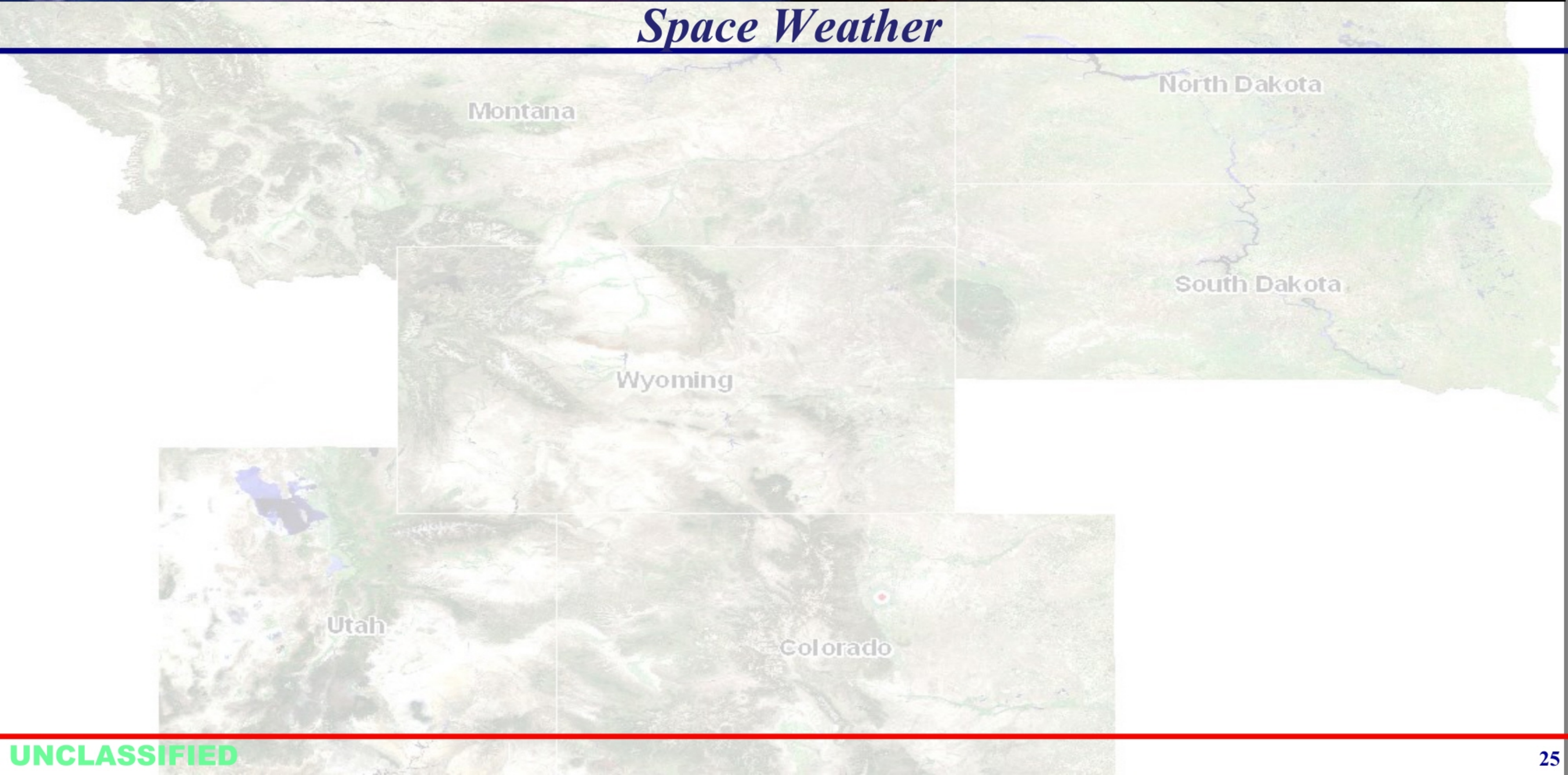

← Central Pacific
Eastern Pacific Tropical Cyclones and Disturbances
35°N
25°N
15°N
5°N
140°W
130°W
120°W
110°W
100°W
90°W
80°W
Current Disturbances and Two-Day Cyclone Formation Chance: ✖ < 40% ✖ 40-60% ✖ > 60%
Tropical or Sub-Tropical Cyclone: ○ Depression Storm Hurricane
⊗ Post-Tropical Cyclone × Remnants

5:00 am PDT
Thu Oct 20 2016

Disturbance 1 40% chance725 miles SSW of S tip of Baja CaliforniaMoving WNW at 10 mphSome slow development possible the next f

Disturbance 2 10% chanceNear Central AmericaMoving W-NW at 10-15 mphSome slow development possible over the weekend

Space Weather


Montana
North Dakota
South Dakota
Wyoming
Utah
Colorado

National Disaster Requests & Declarations

Declaration Requests in Process		Requests APPROVED (since last report)	Requests DENIED (since last report)
4	Date Requested	0	0
KS – DR Severe Storms and Flooding	October 10, 2016		
WI – DR Severe Storms, Flooding, and Mudslides	October 11, 2016		
Bad River Band Tribe – DR (Appeal) Severe Storms and Flooding	October 15, 2016		
Spokane Tribe – DR Cayuse Mountain Wildfire	October 18, 2016		

IMAT-12 Team Roster (Updated: Oct 03, 2016 /

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Nathan Knapp	303-315-3910
Operations Sec Chief	Darrin Ricketts	720-315-1679
Infrastructure Branch Dir	Derek Richardson	303-319-0964
Individual Asst Branch Dir	Tracy McCauley (Until 30 Oct)	720-315-4656
Planning Section Chief	Margaret Messer	720-315-0689
Situation Unit Lead	John Holub (Until 14 Nov)	720-315-0651
Resource Unit Lead	Carita Ricley	720-315-6931
Logistics Section Chief	Vince Johnson	303-681-5137
Support Branch Director	Paul Moreno	720-315-5647
Service Branch Director	Brian Landrum (Until 14 Nov)	720-626-3259
External Affairs Officer	Daniel Green	303-324-6952
Finance Admin Section Chief	Conor McClintock	720-315-4686

Stand-by Team Roster *(Updated: Oct 18, 2016 / 1216)*

Position	Name	Contact Number
Team Lead	Kevin Moore	303-941-2113
Operations Sec Chief	AJ Lyman	303-350-0412
Infrastructure Branch Director	Leigh-Andrea Phillips	720-398-7531
Ind Asst Branch Director	Brannen Ulrick	303-681-4988
Planning Section Chief	Mike Pendergrass	303-746-3640
Situation Unit Lead	Susan Jones	303-263-5415
Resource Unit Lead	Bob Schroder	303-453-9482
Logistics Section Chief	Lamont Hudson	303-842-4682
Service Branch Director	Josh Turner	720-415-6353
Support Branch Director	Cedric Corney	303-515-1928
External Affairs Officer	**Jerry DeFelice**	**720-456-9616**
Finance/Admin	Bonnie Garfias	303-884-7049

October RRCC Standup Roster (Orange Team on call) (Updated: October

Position	Name
Director of Response	Lee dePalo
Chief of the RRCS	Tim Deal
Deputy Chief of the RRCS	Brad Hufford
Night Shift Chief of the RRCS	Kevin Moore
External Affairs Officer/Advisor	TBD
Resource Support Section Chief	AJ Lyman
Resource Cap. Branch Director	Adam Espinosa
Situation Section Chief	Mike Ordonez
Planning Support Section Chief	Jeff Gafkjen
Staff Support Section Chief	Mark Tijerina

Region 8 State Liaisons *(Updated: Oct 18, 2016 / 1240)*

State	Name	Cell	Work
CO	Susan Jones(deployed to CO SEOC as LNO)	303-263-5415	303-235-4605
MT	Michael Pendergrass	303-746-3640	303-235-4951
ND	Adam Espinosa (12 Oct – TBD)Lamont Hudson (Deployed)	720-415-4808303-842-4682	303-235-4658303-235-4851
SD	Adam Espinosa	720-415-4808	303-235-4658
UT	David Watkins	720-683-2565	303-235-4359
WY	Carita Ricley (Sep 06 – TBD)James Brazelton	720-315-6931303-495-0051	303-235-4322303-235-4720
Tribal	Megan Floyd	303-945-6367	303-235-4638

Significant Activity

Significant Events: None

Tropical Activity:

- Atlantic – Disturbance 1 (Invest 99L) – Medium (50%)
- Eastern Pacific – Disturbance 1 (Invest 90E) – Medium (40%); Disturbance 2 – Low (10%)
- Central Pacific – Disturbance 1 (Invest 99E) – Low (0%)
- Western Pacific – No activity affecting U.S. interests

Significant Weather:

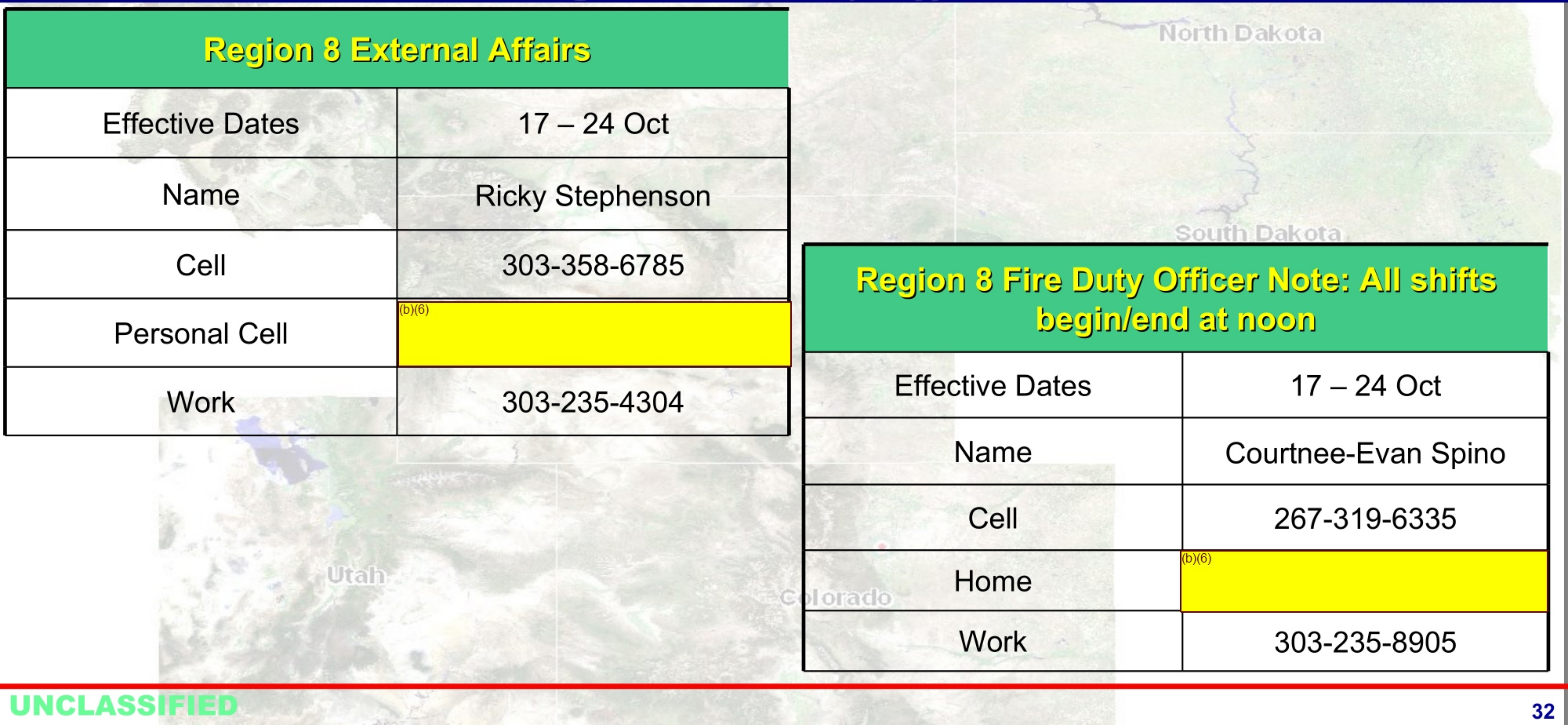
- Flash flooding possible – Central Appalachians and Great Lakes
- Rain and thunderstorms – Southern Plains to Great Lakes and Northeast
- Rain and snow – Northern Intermountain/Rockies; Upper Mississippi Valley
- Rain – Pacific Northwest to Northern Intermountain; Central Plains; southern Florida; Northeast
- Red Flag Warnings – CA, NV & AZ
- Critical/Elevated Fire Weather areas – southern CA
- Space Weather – Past 24 hours – none; next 24 hours – none

Earthquake Activity: No significant activity

Declaration Activity:

- Major Disaster Declaration Request – Spokane Tribe of Indians
- Amendment No. 2 to FEMA-4283-DR-FL
- Amendment No. 7 to FEMA-4285-DR-NC
- Amendment No. 4 to FEMA-4286-DR-SC

Region VIII Duty Officers



Region 8 External Affairs	
Effective Dates	17 – 24 Oct
Name	Ricky Stephenson
Cell	303-358-6785
Personal Cell	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-4304

Region 8 Fire Duty Officer Note: All shifts begin/end at noon	
Effective Dates	17 – 24 Oct
Name	Courtnee-Evan Spino
Cell	267-319-6335
Home	(b)(6)
Work	303-235-8905

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FEMA

Region VIIITHIS BRIEFING IS PREPARED BY

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 20 Aug 2016 21:11:54 +0000
To: Lemaitre, Rafael
Cc: DeFelice, Jerome;Floyd, Megan;Booth, Milo;Nadeau, Robert
Subject: Standing Rock - protests

Megan has been in contact with Milo about the protest just off the Standing Rock Reservation (ND/SD) relating to the pipeline. This is not our issue but we have been closely monitoring it.
CNN picked it up last night so just providing visibility. Thanks. Stacie

---

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Saturday, August 20, 2016 09:34 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Standing Rock Update

Last night CNN picked up the Standing Rock protests. They printed and editorial written by the editor of Indian Country Today. The article talks about Hillary Clinton needing to do something since she has said she is committed to Native American Indian issues. Thought I would let you know since they are a national news outlet. http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/19/opinions/clinton-dakota-access-pipeline-pipeline-moya-smith/

There are also more protestors arriving today so they are growing to larger then 2,000 – reports yesterday were not correct about the camp starting to disperse – Source: Facebook

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 20 Aug 2016 17:11:54 -0400
To: Lemaitre, Rafael
Cc: DeFelice, Jerome;Floyd, Megan;Booth, Milo;Nadeau, Robert
Subject: Standing Rock - protests

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 11:45:57 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Standing Rock - Quick update

Tim asked for an update in the 9 am. This is essentially what I told everyone, but I didn't go into the same detail.

Based on media reports (Bismarck Tribune, Native News Online):

- Work on the pipeline stopped yesterday due to safety concerns.
- Last night a Federal judge ordered the protestors to not interfere with protests based on a lawsuit that was filed by Dakota Access which alleges that protestors were putting construction workers safety in danger. The judge ruled in favor of the company because "lawful assembly is the hallmark of democracy, but threats of violence aren't acceptable"
- The tribe is working with country and state officials to ensure the safety of everyone per the Country Sheriff "what we talked about at the meeting was how to de-escalate tensions between the pipeline workers and the protesters, and us, I guess. One option is to give them more land and more comfort, room for tents, water, a dumpster, that kind of thing," the sheriff said. Ideally, there would be ample room to move the hundreds of cars, pickups and enforcement vehicles off the roadway, too, he said."
- More protesters are expected to arrive today – the group yesterday was estimated at 500-600 people.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 17 Aug 2016 19:22:09 +0000
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy
Subject: Standing Rock - Quick update

Nancy -- visibility

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Wednesday, August 17, 2016 09:45 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Standing Rock - Quick update

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- Work on the pipeline stopped yesterday due to safety concerns.
- Last night a Federal judge ordered the protestors to not interfere with protests based on a lawsuit that was filed by Dakota Access which alleges that protestors were putting construction workers safety in danger. The judge ruled in favor of the company because "lawful assembly is the hallmark of democracy, but threats of violence aren't acceptable"
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Sent: 17 Aug 2016 15:45:56 +0000
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- Work on the pipeline stopped yesterday due to safety concerns.
- Last night a Federal judge ordered the protestors to not interfere with protests based on a lawsuit that was filed by Dakota Access which alleges that protestors were putting construction workers safety in danger. The judge ruled in favor of the company because "lawful assembly is the hallmark of democracy, but threats of violence aren't acceptable"
- The tribe is working with country and state officials to ensure the safety of everyone per the Country Sheriff "what we talked about at the meeting was how to de-escalate tensions between the pipeline workers and the protesters, and us, I guess. One option is to give them more land and more comfort, room for tents, water, a dumpster, that kind of thing," the sheriff said. Ideally, there would be ample room to move the hundreds of cars, pickups and enforcement vehicles off the roadway, too, he said."
- More protesters are expected to arrive today – the group yesterday was estimated at 500-600 people.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 14:37:52 +0000
To: Booth, Milo
Cc: Nadeau, Robert;Greff, Stacie
Subject: Standing Rock Protests - New York Times

Hi Milo–

We continue to media monitor the protests at Standing Rock (we are only watching for situational awareness, no activity). The New Your Time picked up the story late yesterday and I wanted you to be aware since I know you have gotten some questions.

http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/24/us/occupying-the-prairie-tensions-rise-as-tribes-move-to-block-a-pipeline.html?_r=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Thanks

Megan

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 22:39:01 +0000
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Coen Jr, Michael;Gruber, Corey
Cc: Greff, Stacie;Floyd, Megan;Deal, Timothy
Subject: BLUF - Tribal protests in North Dakota

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

This BLUF is for situational awareness only.

The sustained protest of Dakota Access pipeline supported by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has now entered a third week, with conflicting reports on size, but current estimates range from 1500-2000 protesters. The protest site is located 1 mile off the reservation in neighboring Morton County, North Dakota. On Friday Aug. 19, North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple signed an emergency declaration, and Morton County has issued a local emergency declaration, which is expected to be extended. The state emergency declaration is primarily focused on law enforcement and traffic regulation and does not include activation of the National Guard.

Coverage of the protest also varies widely depending on the position of the covering media. After the initial arrests last week, more recent reports indicate there has been generally peaceful situation between protesters and law enforcement.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 24 Oct 2016 15:44:26 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Awareness.

Police use pepper spray while arresting 83 at Dakota Access Pipeline protest

- Mike Anderson Journal staff
    -
- Updated Oct 23, 2016

Editor's note: As part of the Journal's ongoing coverage of the massive Dakota Access Pipeline protest in North Dakota, staff writer Mike Anderson has been camping in a tent near the protest site. He filed this dispatch from the scene on Saturday.

CANNON BALL, N.D. | A peaceful protest against the Dakota Access Pipeline ended in the arrests of 83 people in North Dakota on Saturday morning amid a chaotic scene in which police in riot gear used pepper spray to break up and subdue a group of 200 to 300 protesters.

It is the highest number of people arrested in a single day in North Dakota during the last several months of protest actions against the oil pipeline, bringing the total number of arrests up to 222.

Though the protesters behaved non-violently and cooperated with the police, North Dakota law enforcement officials described Saturday's events as a riot. Police have offered conflicting reports alleging that one protester either verbally threatened an officer, or tried to physically grab away a can of pepper spray, resulting in the protester and the officer both being pepper sprayed in the face.

Most, if not all, of those arrested after the 5-hour ordeal on Saturday will be charged with criminal trespass, a misdemeanor, according to Morton County Sheriff spokesperson Rob Keller. Other charges included assault on a peace officer, reckless endangerment, engaging in a riot, resisting arrest, and fleeing an officer on foot.

"It's an unlawful activity," Keller said during phone interview on Saturday afternoon. "The bottom line is it's on private property. It's posted, 'No Criminal Trespass'. It's like you're invading someone's home. Consequently, there were arrests that were made."

The arrests occurred as the protesters were marching through wide-open prairie lands along the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline west of Highway 1806 outside Cannon Ball, N.D. They hoped to get to four fellow protesters who had locked themselves to a piece of construction equipment in the early morning hours at sites where the pipeline, which is planned to be buried beneath the Missouri River, is now under construction.

A police statement said the four were arrested after they were found, "attached to the vehicle; two attached to the outside of the vehicle, one attached to the steering wheel and another whose body was outside the vehicle with his arm fed through a hole in the door and his hand was in a bucket of hardened concrete."

The call to action went through the main resistance camp around 5:20 a.m. while it was still dark and freezing cold. A man walked through the camp speaking through a megaphone.

"Wake up relatives," he said. "Wake up water protectors. Wake up land defenders. Time to wake up. Time to send our boys to the universe. Time to send our boys to the rising sun."

A convoy of vehicles formed in the camp, a prayer was held, and the assembled were instructed to behave peacefully and respectfully if they encountered police.

“I know it’s hard on the front line,” the prayer leader said in the dark. “But do not cuss, do not holler. If you see someone getting out of hand, tell them to calm down.”

Then the convoy moved out. Parking their vehicles along the highway, the protesters began hiking into the field as the sun rose a little before 8 a.m. Their path took them along a craggy dirt road near the route of the Dakota Access Pipeline on land that tribal members of the Hunkpapa Sioux of Standing Rock said is filled with sacred burial sites.

Some of the protesters remained behind as several hundred others carrying signs and banners began marching into the field, singing, praying, and burning bundles of ceremonial sage as they went.

They walked two to three miles inward when they encountered a line of more than 50 officers from multiple law enforcement agencies. Most of the officers wore riot gear, most held wooden truncheons, and some had shotguns, canisters of pepper spray, and tear gas grenade launchers in their hands. Two armored personnel carriers arrived later while a helicopter circled low overhead.

The protesters and police lines met in the middle of an open field. The protesters remained calm, playing drums and offering prayers in English and Lakota to the officers, who remained stone-faced and uncommunicative.

When the police line began to advance on the protesters, the leaders of the group instructed everyone to fall back and cooperate with the police. They were dispersing when an officer spoke over a loud-speaker from the turret of an armored vehicle.

His only words — and the only words police spoke to the protesters all morning — were, “You’re all under arrest for trespassing.”

The police continued to advance on the fleeing protesters, snatching some of the stragglers, throwing them behind their lines, and pepper-spraying several others in the face as they trod silently forward.

The police eventually surrounded the group, repeating that every one of the 200 to 300 people present would be placed under arrest. The protesters linked arms and tied bandanas to their faces as the officers pressed in, splitting the group and pressing many to the ground. Most, if not all of the men and women taken into custody, did not resist arrest.

A small group managed to retreat over the hill, a few pouring water into the eyes of friends who had been stung by pepper spray and guiding them by hand up the dirt road as they made their way back to camp.

“It was all peaceful. And then the cops showed up," said Harmony Restoule, a young Ojibwe woman from Northern Ontario, Canada. “It was really scary when the police kicked into action.”

Restoule went to the demonstration with her cousin Paige, both of whom participated in mass protests during the Idle No More movement, a grassroots campaign organized in 2012 by the indigenous peoples of Canada against perceived legislative violations of their treaty rights.

“The Canadian police never showed up in riot gear,” Paige Restoule said.

A young man from California who identified himself only as Ahkua said his friend was among the people arrested, and that the police took him after he knelt to the ground to help someone else up.

“There were a few officers who were excessively aggressive and got the others riled up,” he said. “Most cops are pretty chill.”

Saturday’s protest was one of several high profile demonstrations in the Cannon Ball area against the Dakota Access Pipeline in recent months. Police arrested celebrity Shailene Woodley along with more than 20 others on Oct. 10 along the route of the pipeline near St. Anthony, N.D. Police referred to the event as a riot and charged many people with either inciting or engaging in a riot. At the time, it was the highest total number of arrests made in a single day.

The protesters, who now number in the thousands at a main camp near Cannon Ball, want to stop the ongoing construction of the pipeline that will transport oil from the Bakken and Three Forks formations of North Dakota, through South Dakota and Iowa, into southern Illinois. The pipeline would carry 450,000 barrels per day initially and could reach 570,000 barrels a day. The total length of the pipeline across the four states would be 1,134 miles, with 271 miles in South Dakota. The company's estimated cost for the South Dakota segment is $820 million.

On Sept. 3, police and private security forces used pepper spray and dogs to drive protesters away from construction equipment.

"Today's situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks, that this protest is not peaceful or lawful," Kirchmeier said in a press-release about Saturday's events. "This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities. I have repeatedly stressed that it is our job to provide safety and security for all involved in the situation at hand. This is not about the pipeline. This is not about the protesters. This is about the rule of law."

The protesters may have been peacefully dispersing on Saturday morning, Keller said, but that doesn't change the fact that they broke the law.

"That's the whole purpose of having a police line, to protect the (pipeline) property and their right to commerce," Keller said. "We are protecting the protesters too, and the ranchers as well."

When asked if she felt protected by the police, Harmony Restoule said, "No."

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: 15 Sep 2016 12:41:57 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy
Cc: Deal, Timothy;Hudson, Lamont
Subject: FW: ND Protests

Nancy…follow-up from ESF-13 on our conversation this morning.

Lee

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

FEMA

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From: Depalo, Lee
To: R8 Division Directors
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest
Date: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:25:01 AM

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
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FEMA

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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 14:09:54 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Pipeline update

Pipeline update:

Yesterday was a big day, Jessy Jackson arrived on site and talks between the protestors and law enforcement broke down.

- There was an article today from the Associated Press Regarding WY sending law enforcement to North Dakota: http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming-sends-troopers-to-north-dakota-pipeline-protest/article_2972e493-0b71-5cab-9c7d-3c27fb67542e.html (full article pasted below). Pre the article both tribes in WY are opposed to sending the law enforced support.
- There was a media report yesterday that Indiana is sending law enforcement to support ND. The article references FEMA paying for the support. We have reached out to Region IV for awareness and to let them know that FEMA is not paying for any law enforcement. The article is likely referencing EMAC. http://www.theindychannel.com/news/call-6-investigators/call-6-dozens-of-indiana-officers-deployed-to-north-dakota-pipeline-dispute-but-whos-paying (full article below).
- I am hearing a lot about treaty rights on social media, this morning on NPR the Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux talked about this land belonging to the tribes based on treaties (NPR and other media sources).
- A new encampment (the 1851 Treaty Camp) has been set up directly on the pipeline path, which is private property (KILI Radio).
- On Wed. Jessy Jackson arrived on site to speak out about the many human and civil rights violations being perpetrated by local police (Indian Country Today).
- Actor Mark Ruffalo was at Standing Rock yesterday showing his support and Leonardo DiCaprio announced today he is on his way (Indian Country Today).
- Everyone is still calling for peaceful protests (multiple media outlets).
- It is being reported there have been between 260 and 300 arrests since the protests began with most of them happening last Saturday and pepper spray being used by law enforcement (multiple media sources).
- FAA has issued temporary flight restrictions over the protest camps. Only response aircraft in support of law enforcement activity are authorized in the airspace (Bismarck Tribune).
- Negotiations broke down between protestors and law enforcement yesterday (Bismarck Tribune).
- This inforum link is to a video that shows clear frustration by law enforcement and that they do not want a confrontation. http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction (InForum)

This is a particularly good story about law enforcement and what happened yesterday.

http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4146041-new-roadblock-emerges-highway-1806-confrontation-between-protesters-law

New roadblock emerges on Highway 1806 as confrontation between protesters, law enforcement looms

By Amy Dalrymple and Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 10:22 a.m.

Dawn breaks over the Oceti Sakowin Camp Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor1 / 2

A roadblock manned by North Dakota National Guard troops blocks North Dakota Hwy. 1806 before sunrise Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor2 / 2

MORTON COUNTY, N.D. — One day after negotiations between Dakota Access Pipeline protesters and law enforcement broke down, the mood was tense but quiet Thursday, Oct. 27, as the sun rose above the resistance camps.

Above, in restricted airspace, a North Dakota Highway Patrol aircraft circled.

Cecily Fong, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Emergency Services, said medical staffing is in place should any injuries occur at the protest sites.

She said law enforcement will likely issue a warning to protesters congregating at a camp along State Highway 1806, where pipeline opponents have set up teepees and staged hay bales, logs and barbed wire to block the road, if necessary.

However, Fong said she didn't know the timing of any law enforcement action planned, and officers want protesters to leave the northern camp, which is on private property recently purchased by the pipeline's developer, Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

Protesters will be encouraged to return to the southern camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.

By Thursday morning, protesters set up an additional "halfway" roadblock on Highway 1806 — between their main barricade and the frontline camp where they've promised to hold their ground.

At the halfway roadblock, pipeline opponents staged tires, plywood, sheet metal and logs — all ready to move onto the highway should law enforcement approach. The additional roadblock provides more time for those at the main camp to leave or join the protesters at the frontline camp.

Sam Wounded Knee, from Crow Creek Nation in South Dakota, spent the night at the "halfway" roadblock.

He said a plane flew overhead through the night, and it appeared two people were in the surrounding hills to the west and using flashlights to signal back and forth with the plane.

Asked if he expects violence in a confrontation, “from the police, yeah, definitely,” he said.

“All we’re trying to do is protect our people,” Wounded Knee said, adding that women and children were asked to leave the frontline camp Wednesday night. About 200 people are at the frontline camp.

With the new roadblock established by protesters, Highway 1806 has numerous staging areas, camps and road blocks stretched out over several miles, starting with an equipment staging area set up by law enforcement about a mile south of Fort Rice.

Traveling south on 1806, in succession, there is a law enforcement barricade, followed by the protesters’ main barricade, halfway roadblock, frontline camp and main camp.

On Wednesday, negotiations between pipeline opponents and law enforcement officials broke down, setting up a possible clash as hundreds of protesters vowed to hold their ground at a the frontline camp directly in the path of the four-state oil pipeline.

A contingent of law enforcement and National Guard officials met with camp representatives on Highway 1806.

Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney of Fargo, who is helping Morton County coordinate the law enforcement response, made one last plea for protesters to remove their roadblock on 1806 and abandon the roughly 200-person “frontline” camp, where teepees and tents continued to pop up on land where the pipeline is planned

“We’re here telling you this is private property and you have to leave,” Laney told camp coordinator Mekasi Camp-Horinek on Wednesday. “We don’t want a confrontation. Please stand your people down and go back to the main camp.”

Mekasi pointed at the road – “our no surrender line,” he said – and then back at the frontline camp standing in the way of the four-state, $3.8 billion oil pipeline – their “no retreat” line.

“That’s your final word?” Laney asked.

“That’s my final word,” Camp-Horinek said, walking away.

“Good day, gentleman,” Laney said, turning toward the staging area about five miles away near Fort Rice, where a mass of law enforcement and military forces has gathered.

Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said authorities will continue to do everything they can to resolve the situation peacefully, but he said discussions with camp leaders Wednesday reached an “impasse.”

Kirchmeier emphasized that “the last thing we want to do is do it forcefully.”

“If we have the chance for open dialog, that’s what we want to continue,” he said.

Pipeline opponents say they’ve reclaimed land under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, noting the Sioux never ceded that territory.

But Kirchmeier said Morton County authorities have to enforce existing laws and treaty issues would need to be resolved by the federal government. He added that currently the protesters are infringing on other residents’ rights by blocking the highway.

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

- AP

Protesters set up tepees and tents Monday in southern North Dakota on property owned by the pipeline company.

CHEYENNE — Wyoming has sent six highway patrol troopers to North Dakota to help authorities deal with Indian protesters demonstrating against the construction of an oil pipeline, prompting objections Tuesday from some Wyoming Indian leaders.

Sending the troopers merely extends emergency help to another state and does not signal that Wyoming has taken a position on the pipeline controversy, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said.

But Dean Goggles, chairman of Northern Arapaho Business Council, called on Mead to recall the troopers immediately.

“The North Dakota tribes and tribal members from around the nation are attempting to protect both the environment and sites which have ceremonial, religious and cultural significance to the tribes,” Goggles said.

More than 100 protesters were arrested last weekend in Morton County, North Dakota, in the faceoff between protesters and Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, developer of the four-state Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The $3.8 billion pipeline, most of which has been completed, crosses through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois. Opponents worry about potential effects on drinking water on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s reservation as well as harm to cultural sites.

Col. Kebin Haller of the Wyoming Highway Patrol said six troopers were sent to North Dakota on Saturday and are expected to remain there until Nov. 8.

The troopers volunteered after the governor of North Dakota declared an emergency and asked other states for law enforcement assistance, Haller said.

The six are members of the patrol's Special Services Squad who have additional training and equipment to address large crowds and civil unrest, he said. North Dakota will pay their salaries and the costs they incur while at the protest.

Mead said the decision to send Wyoming troopers happened because "a neighbor state asked for help and Wyoming answered the call."

"North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded," Mead said.

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in Wyoming have expressed formal support for the protesters.

Jason Baldes, a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and staff member at the Wind River Native Advocacy Center, accused Wyoming officials of supporting the pipeline by sending law enforcement officers to face off against protesters.

"It kind of sheds light on really who's running the show here," Baldes said. "The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets."

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

"The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue," he said.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including

emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

Megan Floyd
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megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Dragani, Nancy
To: Wilz, Greg M.
Cc: Hufford, Bradford; Deal, Timothy; (b)(6) @usdoj.gov
Subject: RE: ESF13 info and contact info
Date: Thursday, September 15, 2016 4:20:00 PM

Greg

Understand about SHSP/LETPP. I asked Brad to check with his peers to see if other states' had reprogrammed grants to cover these types of events. Unfortunately, it sounds like even if reprogramming is possible, the pool of available funds will limit this option.

I was pleased to see the potential options regarding JAG grants and/or emergency JAG grants. I hope that proves a solution, even if a partial one.

We'll keep looking around here but to date, no other feasible solutions are coming to the fore.

Take care and stay in touch,

Regards, Nancy

From: Wilz, Greg M. [mailto (b)(6) @nd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 15, 2016 12:46 PM
To: (b)(6) @usdoj.gov; Gerhart, Col. M (b)(6) @nd.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @usdoj.gov; Depalo, Lee <lee.depalo@fema.dhs.gov>; Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: ESF13 info and contact info

Thanks Alan for the info. As far as the SHGP grants are concerned, we are a marty minimum state so we don't receive much. Unless there is chance of new or additional/supplemental funding we would be robbing Peter to pay Paul and both are already on the front line of response. Reprograming does not get us much relief.

Greg

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From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 21:41:02 +0000
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV â€" Daily Operations

NORTH DAKOTA'S
FY 2016 EMPG WORK PLAN

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

Overview of Risk Profile

North Dakota continues to be impacted by natural and technological hazards with flooding, fire, severe storms (winter and summer), droughts, cyber-security and hazardous materials as the most repetitive types of incidents. In addition North Dakota's agricultural industry represents a potential terrorist target as does its porous international border (Canada) and two military bases. Even though the oil industry has slowed down over the last several months, the impact on resources, infrastructure and the environment remains a concern. The impact of an emergency, disaster or catastrophe will vary significantly by hazard and has the potential to produce substantial consequences to critical human needs and public infrastructure.

Areas of Need

N.D. Division of Homeland Security Operations and Planning staff completed After Action Reviews and developed Improvement Plans (AAR/IPs) following various drill/tabletops, functional, and full scale exercises. Internal staff also completed analyses of plans and training program and completed the THIRA and the State Preparedness Report (SPR). This provided the foundation for recommended SEOP modifications, additional training needs, as well as equipment needs. In addition, major areas of improvement identified by EMAP Standards as follow:

EMF 4.1: Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Consequence Analysis

- Conduct required annual review and revision of the State's Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA).
- Provide continued training and technical assistance to local/tribal jurisdictions for development and updates of Local/Tribal THIRA's.
- Provide training and technical assistance to whole community partners regarding THIRA.

EMF 4.2: Hazard Mitigation

- Enhance state, local and Tribal Mitigation Plans
    - Continue to identify trends in planning deficiencies found in local, tribal and state multi-hazard mitigation plans (MHMPs) to include risk vulnerability assessments, and mitigation strategy development.
    - Develop and implement strategy for addressing deficiencies.
    - Encourage incorporation of THIRA components/data into local, Tribal and state MHMPs.
    - Develop state level guidance designed to emphasize the importance of building code analysis.
    - Develop state level guidance to encourage involvement of historical and cultural organizations into plan development.
- Disaster Recovery Planning
    - Complete development of the state level Recovery Plan.
    - Evaluate content with stakeholders and revise accordingly.
    - Identify and develop key supporting documents to include appendices, a Master Contact List and a Recovery Resource Guide.
    - Ensure alignment of the Recovery Plan and supporting documents with the State Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), key elements of the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards.
    - Develop guidance and provide technical assistance for local-tribal recovery plan development.

EMF 4.4: Operational Planning and Procedures

- Ongoing EAS and IPAWS implementation.
  - Ongoing implementation of the state's IPAWS software/equipment and modification of existing plans and procedures.
  - Review and approve applications for IPAWS Alerting Authority authorization.
  - Conduct IPAWS outreach, training and exercising for applicable stakeholders.
  - Evaluate and coordinate implementation at the local level, as necessary.
  - Assist during implementation and training as necessary for GIS related tasks.
  - Conduct continual GIS data management and contact database maintenance for State and Local county stakeholders using these systems.
- State Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) Mobilization Guide
  - Review and revise existing plans and procedures based on training/exercise improvement plans.
  - Ongoing coordination with IMAT's to evaluate and address operational, planning and resource-related gaps/shortfalls.
- Hazardous Materials
  - Ongoing outreach and coordination with appropriate stakeholders to evaluate existing roles/responsibilities and notification processes to improve. communication and coordination.
  - Coordinate continual CBRNE hazardous material spill mapping to aid in SERC planning efforts.
- State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP)
  - Ongoing review and revision of SEOP annexes, appendices and supporting documents to more fully reflect THIRA, Core Capabilities, CPG 101 and revisions to the Response Mission Area Operations Plan (formerly the Base Plan).
  - Conduct outreach and engage the whole community.
  - Review and revise existing plans to address movement of large populations in state and out of state.
- Critical Infrastructure/Key Resources
  - Ongoing development of pre-decisional databases, based on key critical infrastructure (i.e. water, energy, food, etc.), to aid in critical decision making and prioritizing for preparedness, planning and response activities.
  - Conduct a CIKR conference/workshop for key critical infrastructure partners and stakeholders.
- Provide ongoing GIS support & products for planning purposes to agency sections and products they support.
  - SLIC
  - Operations and Planning
  - Training and Exercise
  - Recovery
  - MHMP / Critical Infrastructure

EMF 4.5: Incident Management

- Continue implementation and enhancements and modifications to WebEOC.
- Provide ongoing administration of WebEOC.
- Conduct refresher training and technical assistance, to include Resource Management and Mapper, to new and existing WebEOC users.
- Continue leveraging WebEOC during exercises and real-world events.
- Develop WebEOC during exercises and real-world events.
- Develop WebEOC training materials for WebEOC 8.0.
- Identify and secure necessary equipment/resources to ensure back up capability and resiliency for WebEOC and other critical systems.
- Provide GIS functional updates related to the WebEOC & Web Mapper as needed on a daily basis or during times of activation.

EMF 4.6: Resource Management, Mutual Aid and Logistics

- Procure and implement an agency inventory management system.
  - Develop, review and revise operational checklists and SOP's.
  - Incorporate systems into existing warehouse management activities and SEOC operations.
  - Identify, evaluate and implement, where appropriate, additional uses.
  - Provide ongoing training regarding administration and use of the system.
- Continued enhancements and modifications to WebEOC Resource Management.
  - Provide ongoing administration of WebEOC Resource Management.
  - Maintain and update private, voluntary, local/Tribal, state and federal agency resource lists.
  - Provide training and technical assistance to new and existing WebEOC users.
  - Ensure resources are typed in accordance with NIMS.
- Sustainment and enhancement of existing NDDES resources and warehouse space.
  - Acquire additional resources/equipment, if necessary, as resource gaps/shortfalls are identified.
  - Ongoing development/revision of equipment-related operational checklists, SOPs, user agreements, maintenance schedules and training materials.
  - Perform regular maintenance and make necessary repairs to ensure readiness of equipment/resource for deployment.
- Ongoing coordination with signatory states/provinces to implement Northern Emergency Management Assistance Compact (NEMAC).
  - Develop, review and modify plans/procedures for deployment of resources to another state/province.
  - Identify and address issues/concerns impacting/hindering the ability to deploy resources.
  - Participate in training and exercise activities.
- Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).
  - Review and modify plans/procedures for deployment of resources.
  - Identify and address issues/concerns impacting/hindering ability to deploy resources.
  - Participate in training and exercise activities.

EMF 4.7: Communications and Warning

- Ongoing development and revision plans and procedures outlining use of the system in relationship to the Special Needs Voluntary Registry, State Radio counties and internal NDDES notification.
- Provide ongoing training regarding administration and activation of the system(s) during exercises.
- Continue to evaluate additional potential applications of the system(s).
- Continued GIS administration of the agencies ENS systems and their users, GIS related data and monthly maintenance of each notifications systems contact records.

EMF 4.8: Facilities

- Ongoing identification and implementation of necessary modifications and enhancements to the designated Alternate Emergency Operations Center and Communications Center to ensure continuity of operations in the event the existing facility becomes inoperable.
- Development and modification of plans and procedures.
- Identify and acquire additional resources/equipment/supplies/services necessary to establish and maintain an alternate EOC and Communications Center.

EMF #4.9: Training

- Conduct HazMat Operations Course.
- Conduct Planning Section Chief Course.

- Conduct Unified Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Courses (L212, L213 & L214).
- Conduct Radiological/Nuclear Awareness Courses.
- Conduct CERT training courses.
- Conduct IEMC course.
- Conduct Safety Officer Course.
- Conduct Cost Benefit Analysis Entry Level Course.
- Conduct Grant Writing Course.
- Conduct Understanding the Role of your Non-Governmental Partners course.
- Conduct AHIMT Position Specific Training Logistics Section Chief Course.
- Conduct Cyber Security courses.
- Conduct Compliance to Records Management Policies course.
- Local emergency managers and their staff to complete the 4 required NIMS and 7 required Professional Development courses listed in the FY 2016 EMPG guidance.
- Completed assessment of local emergency management staff that need to complete the required courses.
- Conduct annual Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (TEPW).
- Update Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan (TEP).
- Track and review County Multi-Year Training Plans.
- Certify ICS trainers (100, 200, 300, and 400).
- Conduct WebEOC training as needed.
- Increase position-specific IMAT training.
- Host Introduction to Emergency Services workshops for new emergency managers as well as existing emergency managers who need a refresher.
- Conduct Group Facilitation Course.
- Conduct Joint NDDES/NDEMA Workshops.
- Host Basic PIO Course.
- Host Emergency Planning Courses.
- Risk Assessment/Management and THIRA training.
- HAZMAT Conference.
- Provide training on Joint Information Center Planning.
- Wide Area Search and Rescue
- Additional courses may be identified throughout the year.
- Administer the North Dakota CERT Program.

EMF #4.10: Exercises, Evaluations, and Corrective Actions

- Conduct 22 exercises and seven full scale exercises.
  - Two Workshops
  - Seven Drills
  - Two Tabletops
  - Four Functional
- Complete After-Action Review and Improvement Plan (AAR/Plan) for each exercise.
- Conduct, as requested, drills on command post functions emphasizing unified command and ICS structures.
- Conduct IMAT exercises to keep ND IMAT teams trained.

EMF #4.11: Crisis Communications, Public Education and Information

- Educate public on systems used to gather and disseminate information to the public and first responders in order to increase public confidence and increase public willingness to comply during an actual incident.
- Evaluate PIO WebEOC boards and provide suggested revisions to the WebEOC Administrator.
- Develop and implement communications protocols integrating both the virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) and face-to-face meetings.

- Develop a protocol for and implement a WebEOC draft news release "holding pen" for review and authorization of release of information.
- Develop communications coordination procedures and protocols that combine the convenience of virtual JIC operations with the effectiveness of face-to-face communications among multiple agency PIOs responding to emergencies or disasters.
- Develop a PIO email distribution list in coordination with ITD.

Baseline Inventory

As stipulated by this grant, state level planning efforts employ the National Preparedness System to build, sustain, and deliver core capabilities to achieve the Goal of a secure and resilient Nation. Funding priorities address the gaps identified through the annual update of the THIRA and SPR. The state also takes into account the National Incident Management System (NIMS) requirements, Core Capabilities as defined in the National Preparedness Goal and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards, as appropriate.

The State Emergency Operations Plan tasks 50 state agencies to support local and tribal governments during emergencies or disasters. The Base Plan is supported by an Essential Services document listing critical services to be maintained during disaster; State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) Guide; incident annexes; and capabilities annexes. Lead agencies are those with oversight for an annex; support agencies are responsible for tasks within an annex. The SEOP includes a crosswalk with the National Response Framework and its Emergency Support Functions.

Over the past year the following goals and objectives were accomplished:

DISASTER RECOVERY SECTION

EMF: 4.2: Hazard Mitigation

- Began training and developing user interface for the NDDES Grant Management Software (GMS).
- Finished inputting past disaster data into the GMS for all open projects in DR-1981, and all projects, whether opened or closed, from DR-4118 forward.
- Received notification from FEMA that eight (8) of our FY 2015 Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Applications were selected for further review and approval. Seven (7) of the selected applications were for Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Updates, which was the 1st priority for PDM funding, and one (1) was for State Management Expenses. Total approved dollar amount totals $227,596.
- Submitted the closeout packages for the remaining DR-1829 projects by the approved deadline of 11-15-2015.
- Completed updated Corrective Actions Plans for the Cities of Drayton and Grafton to address non-compliance with 44 CFR Part 80.19.
- Identified planning deficiencies and provided guidance to strengthen vulnerability assessments and mitigation strategies for Planning Teams developing/updating the following plans:
    - Bottineau County – submitted for federal review following revisions.
    - Griggs County – submitted for federal review following revisions.
    - McLean County – submitted for federal review following revisions.
    - Mercer County -- returned to emergency manager for revision.
    - Mountrail County -- submitted for federal review following revisions.
    - Stutsman County -- submitted for federal review following revisions.
- Continued efforts to encourage Planning Teams to involve historical and cultural organizations and to evaluate building codes as part of the State Review comments.
- Met with South Central Planning Council staff to discuss HMA and mitigation plans.

- Provided an overview of the hazard mitigation planning processes to the southwest Emergency Managers.
- Received approvable pending adoption status from FEMA for the following MHMPs:
    - Mountrail County
    - Pembina County
    - Stutsman County
- Finalized final approval for:
    - Barnes County
    - Ransom County
    - Foster County
    - Towner County
- Plans receiving approval by FEMA include:
    - Emmons County
    - Grand Forks County
- Plans receiving Approvable pending adoption:
    - McKenzie County
    - Sargent County
- Staff participated in a City of Bismarck aircraft accident mitigation planning meeting with the emergency manager and airport officials.
- Staff participated on a national panel to review the State of Oregon Enhanced MHMP.
- Planners conducted a presentation during the Griggs County Hazard Mitigation/LEPC meeting on March 5.
- Planners are working with local and tribal mitigation planners to develop plans with thorough vulnerability analyses and viable mitigation strategies, and ensuring compliance with other federal requirements.
- During the reporting period, the Mitigation team completed the following activities outlined in the FY 2015 EMPG Work Plan with reference to the State of North Dakota Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan with Enhancements.
    - Developed and enacted a strategy for “Year in Review” and maintenance of the 2014 FEMA approved plan. Mitigators coordinated with agencies assigned responsibility for mitigation actions to obtain updates on activities during 2015. Staff received several suggestions to further refine the wording of actions based upon actual implementation. Information will be used in the development of a final mitigation action crosswalk.
    - Evaluated and incorporated plan review recommendations as part of continued plan updates. Staff conducted an analysis of recommendations provided by FEMA upon approval on the plan and began enactment of recommendations to include such issues as:
        - Reflecting mitigation priorities in the draft state Recovery Mission Area Operations Plan, resulting in a branch of the Recovery State Multi-Agency Coordination Center that focuses specifically on mitigation.
        - Collaborated with the State Water Commission to support the agency’s delivery of the Risk MAP program.
        - Received and evaluated feedback from local/tribal planners regarding trends in risk assessments and strategies, as well as how well the 2014 State MHMP worked as a resource for them.
        - Initiated discussion with the National Weather Service regarding the future probability and magnitude of hazards that may be affected by climate change. The NWS has agreed to join the plan Steering Committee to ensure the next MHMP reflects climate change analysis.
- Established the groundwork for incorporation of Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) into the plan update. Mitigators have been actively participating in the state THIRA process and plan to use the State THIRA data as part of ongoing updates to the 2014 MHMP.

- Coordinated with State MHMP partner agencies to obtain status reports on mitigation actions listed in the State of North Dakota MHMP for inclusion in the 2015 Year-in-Review.
- Participate in a regional conference call regarding recent changes to the state mitigation planning requirements.
- The Mitigation team completed the following activities to enhance Local and Tribal Mitigation Plans:
  - Identified trends in planning deficiencies found in local, tribal and state multi-hazard mitigation plans (MHMP). Deficiencies identified included inadequate vulnerability analyses for each community and strategies that lacked depth and did not relate to vulnerability analyses.
  - Developed a strategy for addressing deficiencies by providing guidance on conducting vulnerability analyses and how these analyses can be leveraged to refine mitigation strategies to more closely align to community needs. Strategy enactment encompassed site visits, co-hosting a G-318 Planning Course with FEMA and written feedback/guidance to emergency managers.
  - Evaluated and identified opportunities for incorporation of THIRA components/data into local and tribal MHMPs by coordinating with directly with emergency managers to review results of THIRAs and then working with them to include the data in hazard identification and risk assessment processes used by planning teams. As the reporting period progressed, plans submitted to the state during the reporting period reflected inclusion of THIRA data.
  - Initiated development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan toolbox that included guidance for hiring contractors and for plan development. Goals are to continue this effort as time allows. Additionally staff distributed and discussed with emergency managers the contents of the *Local Plan Review Guide*, the *Tribal Plan Review Guide* and the *Local Mitigation Planning Handbook*.

Disaster Recovery

- Completed drafts and prepared the following recovery planning documents:
  - Recovery Mission Area Operations Plan (MAOP)
  - Natural and Cultural Resources Branch Annex
  - Health and Social Services Branch Annex
  - Critical Infrastructure Branch Annex
  - Housing Branch Annex
  - Economic Recovery Branch Annex
- Hazard Mitigation Branch Annex Developed strategy for initial review of recovery documents.
- Prepared and distributed the following plans to four groups: 1) NDDES staff, 2) emergency managers, 3) FEMA staff and 4) State Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC).
- Evaluated suggested edits from the review teams.
- Initiated development of a State MACC contact list.
- Initiated development of a Recovery Resource List
- Developed and conducted a presentation – "Transition to Recovery" – for the EOC Management Class on November 19, 2015.
- Developed and received approval for the strategy for the L205 Local Recovery: Recovery from Disaster: the Local Government Role course, which will be held March 21-23, 2016.
- Completed webinar and test for the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP).
- During the reporting period, the Disaster Recovery Section re-evaluated the direction of recovery planning, as outlined in the EMPG Work Plan, and shifted focus to development of a state Recovery Mission Area Operations Plan, Annexes and Resource Guide. Based on these modifications, the State Recovery Planning staff completed the following activities related to Long-Term Disaster Recovery Capabilities Planning:

  - In keeping with the Work Plan, a team of 10 emergency managers are evaluating content and providing feedback on their recommendations for criteria that would assist with local/tribal recovery planning.
  - To ensure local/tribal plans align with the state disaster recovery plan, the state Recovery Mission Area Operations Plan established a recommended Local/Tribal Recovery Team framework that aligns with the State Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC) used to coordinate state operations. The plan also discusses integration with federal partners. The State MACC includes representation of multiple state agencies and non-governmental organizations representing voluntary agencies and private sector groups.
  - State recovery team also ensured that the State Recovery Mission Area Operations Plan reflected key NDRF capabilities by incorporating Community Planning and Capacity Building as a standard for all branches (RSFs). The Recovery team identified and developed annexes for the following branches based upon capabilities: Natural and Cultural Resources; Health and Social Services; Housing; Economic Recovery; Critical Infrastructure and Mitigation. These annexes provide guidance on how to assist local/tribal communities through recovery by outlining essential tasks and emphasizing resiliency.

Operations and Planning Section

EMF 4.1: Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Consequence Analysis

- Conducted engagement seminars with Whole Community partners on 12/01-03/2015 in support of State THIRA revision efforts.
- State THIRA submitted on 12/31/2015.
- Assisted local and tribal partners with completion of their THIRA Step 2 analysis, and provided feedback products for follow up and to support future Step 3 and 4 efforts.
- Provided one on one training and technical assistance to Whole Community partners on THIRA.

EMF 4.4: Operational Planning

- Continued development and update of the State Alert and Warning Plan based on recommendations by the State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC).
- Documented and distributed updated EAS monitoring assignments to the ND Broadcasters Association (NDBA) for further distribution and to the Regional Emergency Communications Committee (RECC) Chairpersons.
- Prepared and distributed 2016 EAS Required Monthly Test (RMT) schedule for Commercial Broadcasters, Local Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and State Radio.
- Provided guidance to Foster County Emergency Manager for IPAWS Alert Authorization application.
- Participated in FEMA IPAWS webinar focused on best practices for Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) alert distribution.
- Conducted Public Information and Warning course instruction as part of the November Emergency Management Seminar.
- Reviewed FEMA IPAW proposal addressing suggested changes to IPAWS alerting capabilities.
- Finalized AARs for the Valley City and Hazen IMAT exercises on July 22 and August 19, 2015.
- Conducted an IMAT notification drill utilizing the Everbridge system on December 9, 2015. The purpose of the drill was to test the conference bridge capability within the system.

- Staff met November 9, 2015, with personnel from ND Forest Service and ND National Guard to develop a training plan to build a ground fire suppression capability within the NDNG utilizing NDDES's slide in units and NDNG HUMVEES. The NDFS will conduct an information briefing for the NDNG on January 10, 2016. Red Card training is targeted for late February/early March and Engine Ops training in March, 2016.
- The NDNG will outfit one HUMVEE with a slide in unit prior to the January 10, 2016, information briefing.
- Staff met with ND Department of Health, Environmental Division, staff to review notification protocols/processes and develop a plan/mechanism to capture follow up information/updates for hazardous materials incidents. WebEOC training for key staff was conducted in October.
- Staff reviewed and made enhancements to the state's Tier II reporting process/database and disseminated information regarding updates/changes to company personnel.
- Staff modified Tier II reporting instructions and posted to the agency website.
- Under the new SEOP construct, there will no longer be a Base Plan but instead MAOPs covering Prevention/Protection, Response, and Recovery; with the State Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan fulfilling the role of the Mitigation MAOP.
- Development of the Response Mission Area Operations Plan (MAOP) and Recovery MAOP continued during the quarter. THIRA findings and the principles of the NPG are being integrated into the SEOP.
- State AMBER Alert Plan
    - The State AMBER Alert plan was activated October 24, 2015 upon request from the Fargo Police Department. The abduction was by a non-custodial parent and resulted in the safe recovery of the child. An after-action meeting was conducted on October 29, 2015 with all participating agencies, with recommended improvements added to the plan.
- Whole Community outreach occurred during the quarter, focused on determination of resource requirements to meet SEOP goals and objectives.

EMF 4.5: Incident Management

- Staff met to develop an implementation plan for WebEOC 8.0.
- In preparation of WebEOC 8.0 implementation, staff conducted a thorough review of existing users, positions and boards and identified those that are no longer applicable and necessary modifications.
- Provided WebEOC training for the following:
    - New State Radio staff
    - New NDDES Southwest Regional Coordinator
    - New Rolette County Emergency Manager
    - New Cass County Emergency Manager
    - ND Department of Health, Environmental Division, staff
- Staff met to develop a training plan for WebEOC 8.0 implementation.
- Participated in Intermedix webinars regarding new features and enhancements to building boards and navigating new and improved features within WebEOC.
- Utilized WebEOC for Foster County's Full Scale Exercise on November 13, 2015.
- Utilized WebEOC for a Tesoro Refinery exercise on November 18, 2015.
- Utilized WebEOC for the Gridex III exercise November 18-19, 2015.

EMF 4.6: Resource Management, Mutual Aid and Logistics

- Held a conference call to help explain new updates to the inventory management system.
- Discussed the continued used of the current inventory management system versus research a new system.
- Did initial research on other vendors that have inventory/maintenance management systems.
- Developed a Manual Transfer Switch SOP for building 35.

- Developed a SOP for the agencies handheld radios.
- Continued enhancement to the Command Trailer SOP.
- Continued development on the Antenna Trailer SOP.
- Staff provide maintenance to the agencies sandbag machines and pumps in preparation for 2016 spring flooding.
- Staff rotated the command trailers located in Bismarck, Fargo, and Grand Forks.
- Staff provided maintenance to the three 53' semi-trailers located in Wahpeton, Grand Forks, and Devils Lake.
- Staff reorganized and cleaned the cold storage warehouse.
- Regional coordinators continue to work with local jurisdictional response agencies to put mutual aid agreements in place. A deterrent has been FEMA regulations that allow mutual aid to be put in place up to 30 days after an event.
- Staff conducted a comparison of the EMAC Req-A and the NEMAC Req-A and identified necessary modifications; awaiting NEMAC Committee approval before implementing changes.
- Staff updated the NEMAC 24/7 contact information and distributed to member States and Provinces.
- Responsibility of updating/maintaining the NEMAC Operations Manual and Associated Appendices was rotated to Manitoba during this quarter. Staff will continue to provide input along with other members.
- Staff participated in a NEMAC Conference Call November 24, 2015.
- One staff member participated in the Understanding EMAC Course at EMI November 9-12, 2015.
- Staff facilitated the deployment of two staff through EMAC; one PA Specialist to Colorado and one PIO to South Carolina.

EMF 4.7: Communications and Warning

- Staff participated in Bank 5 radio communication training.
- EVERBRIDGE
    - Provided ND National Guard staff an overview of the Everbridge system and discussed potential use of system to notify NDNG staff. NDNG contact information was uploaded into the system and testing will occur next quarter.
- State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC)
    - Completed documentation of SECC By-Laws directing member tasks and responsibilities as SECC Regional Chairpersons. Distributed By-Laws to SECC members.
    - Facilitated initial Northeast Regional Emergency Communications Committee (RECC) meeting in Grand Forks to familiarize Commercial Broadcaster and Emergency Management participants with IPAWS requirements and State Alert and Warning Plan development.
    - Facilitated initial Southeast RECC meeting in Fargo to familiarize Commercial Broadcaster and Emergency Management participants with IPAWS requirements and State Alert and Warning Plan development.
    - Facilitated initial Southwest RECC meeting in Bismarck to familiarize Commercial Broadcaster and Emergency Management participants with IPAWS requirements and State Alert and Warning Plan development.
    - Continued development and update of the State Alert and Warning Plan based on recommendations of the SECC members.
- Participated in meeting with NDDES Leadership to determine the future of state alert and warning systems and potential vendor options to be used by the state and offered to local jurisdictions.
- Determined, scheduled and reviewed Everbridge alert, warning and notification system demo with NDDES Leadership.

EMF 4.8: Facilities

- Develop applicable checklist and SOPs.
- Identify and implement necessary modifications and enhancements to designated Alternate Emergency Operations Center to ensure continuity of operations in the event the existing SEOC facility becomes inoperable.
- Staff continues to work on installation of network switching equipment, telephones, Wi-Fi and fiber for connection to the state network at the Alternate EOC location.
- Staff met to determine Alternate EOC layout, staffing and equipment/supply requirements.

Training and Exercise Section

EMF 4.0: Training

- 100% of State staff have completed the four NIMS and the seven required Professional Development courses listed in the FY2016 EMPG FOA.

- As a whole, local emergency managers on the job more than 1 year have completed **95%** of required courses. **81%** of local emergency managers on the job more than 1 year have completed all required courses. Our new guideline for completion of the multi-year training and exercise plans requires local emergency managers to address how they will accomplish this goal. In addition, quarterly reports are sent to each county regarding their status on the EMPG requirements. We **currently** have **10** individuals that have been with the program for less than 1 year and are not included in the above percentages as we allow 1 year to meet the training requirements. **The turnover of staff has had an impact on the percentages as those that have left the program were some of the Emergency Managers that had completed all required courses. State employees (39) have completed 100 % of the required courses.**

- WebEOC training occurred on January 26, 2016 at the NDDES Mini Conference and January 27 and February 24 for the IMAT teams.

- We currently have 29 IMAT members that have attended position specific training. Four of those individuals have trained for two positions. We have also had 2 of our Team Leaders attend train the trainer courses and are beginning to schedule some of the position specific classes using our ND trainers. Planning Section Chief Class is scheduled for May 2016. No regional classes have been awarded to ND.

- Conducted annual Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (TEPW) on February 4, 2016 with 11 state agency representatives participating.

- Based on the outcome of the annual Training and Exercise Plan Workshop, our multi-year Training and Exercise Plan is being reviewed and revised.

- 2014-2017 Training and exercise plans have been approved for 54 jurisdictions (100%).

- In addition, North Dakota conducted, hosted, or participated in the following training:

NDDES Grant Writing Workshop	1/14/2015	Bismarck
L HSEEP	1/21/2015	Bismarck
ICS 300	1/21/2015	Jamestown
PER 320 Personal Protective Measures for Biological Events	1/27/2015	Bismarck

PER 320, Personal Protective Measures for Biological Events, 2nd Session	1/28/2015	Bismarck
ICS 400	2/5/2015	Jamestown
ICS 300-400	2/17/2015	Dickinson
G 271 Hazardous Weather-Floods (and Tornados)	2/25/2015	Bismarck
G0290 Basic Public Information Officer	3/17/2015	Bismarck
Joint Information Center/Joint Information Systems	3/19/2015	Bismarck
ICS 300	3/23/2015	Grand Forks
ICS 300-400	3/23/2015	Grand Forks
ICS 400	3/25/2015	Grand Forks
ICS 300-400	3/31/2015	Bismarck
ICS 300-400	4/7/2015	Minot
G191 Incident Command System/Emergency Operations Center Interface Workshop--New Rockford	4/29/2015	New Rockford
Introduction to ND Dept of Emergency Services	6/9/2015	Bismarck
ICS 300	7/9/2015	Minot
G191 Emergency Operations Center/Incident Command System Interface - Grand Forks	7/23/2015	Grand Forks
Homemade Explosives: Awareness, Recognition and Response	7/29/2015	Bismarck
G489 Management of Spontaneous Volunteers in Disaster	8/5/2015	Bismarck
AWR 232 Mass Fatalities Planning and Response for Rural Communities	8/31/2015	Bismarck
NDDES/NDEMA Conference	8/31-9/3/2015	Bismarck
G 290 Basic Public Information Officer--Jamestown	9/15/2015	Jamestown
TEEX MGT 439 Pediatric Disaster Response and Emergency preparedness Course	9/22/2015	Bismarck
ND Search and Rescue Conference	10/9/2015	Jamestown
Center for Domestic Preparedness Hazardous Materials Emergency Response	10/24/2015	Stanley
Center for Domestic Preparedness Hazardous Materials Emergency Response - Hands On	10/25/2015	Stanley
AWR-140 Radiological/Nuclear Awareness	10/27/2015	Minot
ICS 300	11/2/2015	Fargo
ICS 400	11/4/2015	Fargo
G0775 EOC Operations & Management	11/18/2015	Bismarck
Bank 5 Training Dickinson	12/8/2015	Dickinson
Bank 5 Training Williston	12/9/2015	Williston
Bank 5 Training Jamestown	12/16/2015	Jamestown
ICS 300-400	1/4/2016	Bowman
Bank 5 Bismarck	1/19/2016	Bismarck
Bank 5 Devils Lake	1/21/2016	Devils Lake

Procurement and Contracting, FEMA Public Assistance Grant Program, and FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance	1/25/2016	Bismarck
NDDES Mini Conference	1/25/2016	Bismarck
Group Facilitation	2/24/2016	Bismarck
Grant Writing Workshop	3/1/2016	Bismarck
MGT 418 Readiness: Training Identification Preparedness Planning	3/9/2016	Bismarck

- Conduct WebEOC training
    - WebEOC training was included in the 2016 Emergency Management Mini-Conference held January 25-26, 2016.

EMF 4.10: Exercises, Evaluations and Corrective Actions
NDDES conducted, participated, or evaluated the following exercise activities:

County	Exercise Name	Type	Date
Richland	EAS Test	Drill	4/26/2015
Bowman	Tornado - Bowman County Courthouse	Drill	4/29/2015
Logan	Tornado	Drill	4/29/2015
Pierce	Severe Summer Weather	Drill	4/29/2015
Sheridan	Severe Summer Weather Warning	Drill	4/29/2015
Walsh	Severe Summer Weather Warning	Drill	4/29/2015
Eddy	Motor Vehicle Accident	Full Scale	8/17/2015
Stark	CHI St. Joseph's Move	Full Scale	12/8/2014
Burke	Water Pipeline Break	Full Scale	3/14/2015
Divide	Water Pipeline Break	Full Scale	3/14/2015
LaMoure	North Sargent School Shooting	Full Scale	4/8/2015
McHenry	North Sargent School Shooting	Full Scale	4/8/2015
Ransom	North Sargent School Shooting	Full Scale	4/8/2015
Richland	North Sargent School Shooting	Full Scale	4/8/2015
Sargent	North Sargent School Shooting	Full Scale	4/8/2015
Eddy	Juvenile Accident	Full Scale	4/12/2015
Pembina	Wild fires	Full Scale	4/15/2015
McIntosh	McIntosh County Tornado	Full Scale	4/26/2015
Morton	Tornado Warning Test	Full Scale	4/29/2015
Stutsman	Teen CERT	Full Scale	5/7/2015
Cass	Cheney Middle School Evacuation/Reunification	Full Scale	5/14/2015
Burke	Alliance Pipeline	Full Scale	5/20/2015
Cass	Hector International Airport FAA	Full Scale	2-Jun-15
Burleigh	BBPH Medical Shelter	Full Scale	6/18/2015
Mountrail	Hunt Oil	Full Scale	7/9/2015
Cavalier	Pembina Gorge SAR	Full Scale	7/13/2015
Pembina	Pembina Gorge SAR	Full Scale	7/13/2015
Ramsey	Pembina Gorge SAR	Full Scale	7/13/2015
Barnes	Ready, Set, Go	Full Scale	7/22/2015
Cavalier	Ready, Set, Go	Full Scale	7/22/2015

Stutsman	Ready, Set, Go	Full Scale	7/22/2015
Cass	City of Fargo Active Shooter	Full Scale	8/7/2015
Adams	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Billings	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Bowman	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Burleigh	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Dunn	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Emmons	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Golden Valley	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Grant	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Hettinger	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
McIntosh	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Mercer	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Morton	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Oliver	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Slope	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Stark	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
3 Affiliated Tribes	SAR	Full Scale	8/8/2015
Walsh	Search & Rescue	Full Scale	8/12/2015
Bottineau	Dakota College Shooting	Full Scale	8/18/2015
McKenzie	Dakota College Shooting	Full Scale	8/18/2015
McLean	Dakota College Shooting	Full Scale	8/18/2015
Renville	Dakota College Shooting	Full Scale	8/18/2015
Barnes	Hazardous Materials	Full Scale	8/19/2015
LaMoure	Hazardous Materials	Full Scale	8/19/2015
Ransom	Hazardous Materials	Full Scale	8/19/2015
Richland	Hazardous Materials	Full Scale	8/19/2015
Sargent	Hazardous Materials	Full Scale	8/19/2015
Steele	Hazardous Materials	Full Scale	8/19/2015
Stutsman	Hazardous Materials	Full Scale	8/19/2015
Wells	Hazardous Materials	Full Scale	9/10/2015
Stutsman	S.E. Region Hazardous Materials Response	Full Scale	9/15/2015
Burleigh	Bismarck Airport	Full Scale	9/15/2015
Bowman	Ready, Set, Go	Full Scale	9/19/2015
McLean	Ready, Set, Go	Full Scale	9/19/2015
Mercer	Ready, Set, Go	Full Scale	9/19/2015
Morton	Ready, Set, Go	Full Scale	9/19/2015
Oliver	Ready, Set, Go	Full Scale	9/19/2015
Mercer	Beulah Crude Oil	Full Scale	9/30/2015
Oliver	Beulah Crude Oil	Full Scale	9/30/2015
Morton	Cannonball Fire	Full Scale	10/11/2015
Sioux	Cannonball Fire	Full Scale	10/11/2015
Standing Rock Sioux	Cannonball Fire	Full Scale	10/11/2015
Adams	Four Seasons POD	Full Scale	10/14/2015
Bowman	Four Seasons POD	Full Scale	10/14/2015
Dunn	Four Seasons POD	Full Scale	10/14/2015

Grant	Four Seasons POD	Full Scale	10/14/2015
Hettinger	Four Seasons POD	Full Scale	10/14/2015
Slope	Four Seasons POD	Full Scale	10/14/2015
Bowman	Badlands SAR	Full Scale	10/15/2015
Dunn	Badlands SAR	Full Scale	10/15/2015
Grant	Badlands SAR	Full Scale	10/15/2015
Sioux	Wakpala-Smee School Active Shooter	Full Scale	10/15/2015
Slope	Badlands SAR	Full Scale	10/15/2015
Standing Rock Sioux	Wakpala-Smee School Active Shooter	Full Scale	10/15/2015
McHenry	Rugby Chemical Spill & Evacuation	Full Scale	10/28/2015
McKenzie	Watford City POD	Full Scale	11/5/2015
Burke	Tanker/car Accident	Full Scale	11/14/2015
Cavalier	Anhydrous Ammonia Spill	Full Scale	11/16/2015
Dickey	Anhydrous Ammonia Spill	Full Scale	11/16/2015
Eddy	Anhydrous Ammonia Spill	Full Scale	11/16/2015
Foster	Anhydrous Ammonia Spill	Full Scale	11/16/2015
Nelson	Anhydrous Ammonia Spill	Full Scale	11/16/2015
Towner	Anhydrous Ammonia Spill	Full Scale	11/16/2015
Williams	Anhydrous Ammonia Spill	Full Scale	11/16/2015
Stark	Armory POD	Full Scale	11/20/2015
Richland	High School Active Shooter	Full Scale	12/16/2015
Burke	Bowbells School Lock Down	Full Scale	1/27/2016
Adams	Armory POD	Full Scale	10/30-31/15
Billings	Armory POD	Full Scale	10/30-31/15
Bowman	Armory POD	Full Scale	10/30-31/15
Dunn	Armory POD	Full Scale	10/30-31/15
Golden Valley	Armory POD	Full Scale	10/30-31/15
Grant	Armory POD	Full Scale	10/30-31/15
Hettinger	Armory POD	Full Scale	10/30-31/15
Slope	Armory POD	Full Scale	10/30-31/15
Stark	Armory POD	Full Scale	10/30-31/15
McHenry	Hazardous Materials	Functional	3/11/2015
Cavalier	Hazardous Materials/Sim City	Functional	3/16/2015
Nelson	Hazardous Materials/Sim City	Functional	3/16/2015
Walsh	Hazardous Materials/Sim City	Functional	3/16/2015
Wells	Hazardous Materials/Sim City	Functional	3/16/2015
McLean	Auntie EM	Functional	3/25/2015
Morton	Auntie EM	Functional	3/25/2015
Mercer	Beulah Hazardous Materials	Functional	4/29/2015
Oliver	Beulah Hazardous Materials	Functional	4/29/2015
Stutsman	Severe Summer Weather Warnex	Functional	4/29/2015
Sioux	Hazardous Materials	Functional	8/11/2015
Standing Rock Sioux	Hazardous Materials	Functional	8/11/2015
Wells	Hospital Disaster Response	Functional	8/19/2015

Nelson	Tolna Dam	Real Event	3/13/2015
Sioux	South Cannonball Fire	Real Event	3/30/2015
Standing Rock Sioux	South Cannonball Fire	Real Event	3/30/2015
Benson	Heimdal Train Derailment	Real Event	5/6/2015
Wells	Heimdal Train Derailment	Real Event	5/6/2015
LaMoure	Wildfires	Real Event	10/11/2015
Burke	Winter Weather Awareness	Seminar	10/27/2015
Wells	Railroad Sim City	Table Top	1/5/2015
Burleigh	Pipeline	Table Top	1/8/2015
Emmons	Pipeline	Table Top	1/8/2015
Kidder	Pipeline	Table Top	1/8/2015
Billings	Pipeline	Table Top	1/15/2015
Dunn	Pipeline	Table Top	1/15/2015
Golden Valley	Pipeline	Table Top	1/15/2015
Nelson	Pipeline Safety & Emergency Response	Table Top	1/29/2015
Ramsey	Pipeline Safety & Emergency Response	Table Top	1/29/2015
Towner	Pipeline Safety & Emergency Response	Table Top	1/29/2015
LaMoure	Search & Rescue	Table Top	2/8/2015
Dunn	Pipeline	Table Top	2/25/2015
Grand Forks	Hazardous Materials	Table Top	3/17/2015
Ramsey	COOPEX 2015	Table Top	3/19/2015
McLean	Beulah Hazardous Materials	Table Top	3/26/2015
Mercer	Beulah Hazardous Materials	Table Top	3/26/2015
Cass	FAA Airport	Table Top	5/29/2015
Adams	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
Burleigh	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
Dunn	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
Emmons	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
Golden Valley	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
Grant	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
Hettinger	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
Morton	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
Sioux	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
Stark	SAR	Table Top	6/17/2015
McLean	Chemical Truck Accident	Table Top	8/6/2015
Mountrail	Chemical Truck Accident	Table Top	8/6/2015
Ward	Chemical Truck Accident	Table Top	8/6/2015
Williams	Chemical Truck Accident	Table Top	8/6/2015
Bottineau	Train Derailment Accident	Table Top	8/21/2015
Ward	Train Derailment Accident	Table Top	8/21/2015
Williams	Train Derailment Accident	Table Top	8/21/2015
Sioux	COOP	Table Top	8/31/2015
Standing Rock Sioux	COOP	Table Top	8/31/2015

Mountrail	White Earth Dam	Table Top	9/23/2015
Burleigh	WARN	Table Top	9/24/2015
Morton	WARN	Table Top	9/24/2015
McKenzie	MHA Emergency Response/Recovery for Water Sector	Table Top	10/22/2015
Mountrail	MHA Emergency Response/Recovery for Water Sector	Table Top	10/22/2015
3 Affiliated Tribes	MHA Emergency Response/Recovery for Water Sector	Table Top	10/22/2015
Grand Forks	Chemical Response	Table Top	10/22/2015
McHenry	Rugby Evacuation	Table Top	10/26/2015
Cass	Blizzard with Propane shortage	Table Top	10/30/2015
Grand Forks	Blizzard with Propane shortage	Table Top	10/30/2015
Nelson	Blizzard with Propane shortage	Table Top	10/30/2015
Sheridan	Blizzard with Propane shortage	Table Top	10/30/2015
Stutsman	Blizzard with Propane shortage	Table Top	10/30/2015
Towner	Blizzard with Propane shortage	Table Top	10/30/2015
Pierce	Granville Propane Leak	Table Top	12/8/2015
Golden Valley	Pipeline Rupture	Table Top	1/20/2016
Oliver	Hazardous Materials	Table Top	2/1/2016
Foster	Bank 5	Workshop	3/11/2015
Eddy	G191 ICS/EOC Interface	Workshop	4/29/2015
Nelson	G191 ICS/EOC Interface	Workshop	4/29/2015
Ramsey	G191 ICS/EOC Interface	Workshop	4/29/2015
McIntosh	Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan	Workshop	6/10/2015
Richland	THIRA	Workshop	6/11/2015
Emmons	THIRA Step 2	Workshop	10/29/2015
McIntosh	LEPC	Workshop	11/19/2015

- Complete After Action Review and Improvement Plan (AAR/Plan) for each exercise
    - The AARs/IPs for exercises are completed and submitted through the HSEEP system as required.
- Conducted, as requested, drills on command post functions emphasizing unified command and ICS structures.
    - As needs were identified and requests received, the Training and Exercise Program assisted with development and delivery of exercises as appropriate.
- Conduct IMAT workshops to keep ND IMAT teams trained.
- Quarterly IMAT training and exercise events are scheduled on a recurring schedule.

EMF 4.11: Crisis Communications, Public Education and Information

- Educate public on systems used to gather and disseminate information to the public as wells first responders in order to increase public confidence and increase public willingness to comply during and actual incident.
- North Dakota provided for the following public education and information:
    - Severe Winter Weather Awareness Week with Governor's Proclamation
    - Severe Summer Weather Awareness Week with Governor's Proclamation
    - Association of Counties Convention

  - League of Cities Convention
  - Flood Preparedness Campaign
  - Summer Fire Safety Awareness Campaign
  - September 2014 – National Preparedness Month Campaign
  - Governors Severe Summer Weather Awareness Week Proclamation (April 28, 2014)
  - Summer Fire Safety Reminder (June 27, 2014)
  - September 2014 – National Preparedness Month Campaign
  - Use of Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, You Tube) in Public Awareness Campaigns.
  - Resolve to Be Ready Campaign (Every January)
- Developed and implement communications protocols integrating both the virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) and face-to-face meetings.
- Developed a protocol for and implement a WebEOC draft news release "holding pen" for review and authorization of release of information.
- Developed communications coordination procedures and protocols that combine the convenience of virtual JIC operations with the effectiveness of face-to-face. communications among multiple agency PIOs responding to emergencies or disasters.
- Developed a PIO email distribution list.

FY 2016 Emergency Management Priorities and Planning Focus

North Dakota's emergency management priorities over the next 12 to 24 months include the following specific planning, training, exercise, and equipment activities in addition to normal day-to-day workload. The State priorities are supported by the Department of Emergency Services Advisory Committee (DESAC) made up of 11 members from state, local/tribal, and non-governmental agencies statewide. The State's 3-year training and exercise plan (TEP) identifies the core capabilities that will be enhanced or sustained by the training and exercises identified in 4.9 and 4.10 below.

PLANNING FOCUS – State:

EMF #4.1: Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Consequence Analysis

- Conduct required annual review and revision of the State's Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA).
- Provide continued training and technical assistance to Local/Tribal jurisdictions for development and updates of Local/Tribal THIRA's.
- Provide training and technical assistance to whole community partners regarding THIRA.

EMF 4.2: Hazard Mitigation

- Continue to identify trends in planning deficiencies found in Local, Tribal and State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans (MHMPs) to include risk vulnerability assessments and mitigation strategy development.
- Develop and implement a strategy for addressing deficiencies.
- Encourage incorporation of THIRA components/data into Local, Tribal and State MHMPs.
- Develop state level guidance designed to emphasize the importance of building code analysis.
- Develop state level guidance to encourage involvement of historical and cultural organizations into plan development.

Disaster Recovery Planning

- Complete development of the state level Recovery Plan.
- Evaluate content with stakeholders and revise accordingly.
- Identify and develop key supporting documents to include appendices, a Master Contact List and a Recovery Resource Guide.
- Ensure alignment of the Recovery Plan and supporting documents with the State Threat and hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), key elements of the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards.
- Develop guidance and provide technical assistance for local-tribal recovery plan development.

EMF 4.4 Operational Planning and Procedures

- Ongoing EAS and IPAWS implementation
    - Ongoing implementation of the state's IPAWS software/equipment and modification of existing plans and procedures.
    - Review and approve applications for IPAWS Alerting Authority authorization.
    - Conduct IPAWS outreach, training and exercising for applicable stakeholders.
    - Evaluate and coordinate implementation at the local level, as necessary.
    - Assist during implementation and training as necessary for GIS related tasks.
    - Conduct continual GIS data management and contact database maintenance for State and Local county stakeholders using these systems.
- State Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) Mobilization Guide
    - Review and revise existing plans and procedures based on training/exercise improvement plans.
    - Ongoing coordination with IMAT's to evaluate and address operational, planning and resource-related gaps/shortfalls.
- Hazardous Materials
    - Ongoing outreach and coordination with appropriate stakeholders to evaluate existing roles/responsibilities and notification processes to improve communication and coordination.
    - Coordinate continual CBRNE hazardous material spill mapping to aid SERC planning efforts.
- State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP)
    - Ongoing review and revision of SEOP annexes, appendices and supporting documents to more fully reflect THIRA, Core Capabilities, CPG 101 and revisions to the Response Mission Area Operations Plan (formerly the Base Plan).
    - Conduct outreach and engage the whole community.
    - Review and revise existing plans to address movement of large populations in state and out of state.
- Critical Infrastructure/Key Resources (CIKR)
    - Ongoing development of pre-decisional databases, based on key critical infrastructure (i.e. water, energy, food, etc.), to aid in critical decision making and prioritizing for preparedness, planning and response activities.
    - Conduct a CIKR conference/workshop for key critical infrastructure partners and stakeholders.
- Provide ongoing GIS support & products for planning purposes to agency sections and products they support.
    - SLIC
    - Operations and Planning
    - Training and Exercise
    - Recovery
    - MHMP / Critical Infrastructure

EMF 4.5: Incident Management

- Continue implementation and enhancements and modifications to WebEOC.
- Provide ongoing administration of WebEOC.
- Conduct refresher training and technical assistance, to include Resource Management and Mapper, to new and existing WebEOC users.
- Continue leveraging WebEOC during exercises and real-world events.
- Develop WebEOC training materials for WebEOC 8.0.
- Identify and secure necessary equipment/resourses to ensure back up capability and resiliency for WebEOC and other critical systems.
- Provide GIS functional updates related to the WebEOC & Web Mapper as needed on a daily basis or during times of activation.

EMF 4.6: Resource Management, Mutual Aid and Logistics

- Procure and implement an agency inventory management system.
  - Develop, review and revise operational checklists and SOP's
  - Incorporate systems into existing warehouse management activities and SEOC operations.
  - Identify, evaluate and implement, where appropriate, additional uses.
- Continued enhancements and modifications to WebEOC Resource Management.
  - Provide ongoing administration of WebEOC Resource Management.
  - Maintain and update private, voluntary, local/tribal, state and federal agency resource lists.
  - Provide training and technical assistance to new and existing WebEOC users.
  - Ensure resources are typed in accordance with NIMS.
- Sustainment and enhancement of existing NDDES resources and warehouse space.
  - Acquire additional resources/equipment, if necessary, as resource gaps/shortfalls are identified.
  - Ongoing development/revision of equipment-related operational checklists, SOPs, user agreements, maintenance schedules and training materials.
  - Perform regular maintenance and make necessary repairs to ensure readiness of equipment/resource for deployment.
- Ongoing coordination with signatory states/provinces to implement Northern Emergency Management Assistance Compact (NEMAC).
  - Develop, review and modify plans/procedures for deployment of resources to another state/province.
  - Identify and address issues/concerns impacting/hindering ability to deploy resources.
  - Participate in training and exercise activities
- Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)
  - Review and modify plans/procedures for deployment of resources.
  - Identify and address issues/concerns impacting/hindering ability to deploy resources.
  - Participate in training and exercise activities.

EMF 4.7: Communications and Warning

- Ongoing implementation and administration of the agencies emergency notification systems.
  - Ongoing development and revision plans and procedures outline use of the system in relationship to the Special Needs Voluntary Registry, State Radio counties and internal NDDES notification.
  - Provide ongoing training regarding administration and activation of the system(s) during exercises.
  - Continue to evaluate additional potential applications of the system(s).

  - Continued GIS administration of the agencies ENS systems and their users, GIS related data and monthly maintenance of each individual notification system's contact records.

EMF 4.8: Facilities

- Ongoing identification and implementation of necessary modifications and enhancements to the designated Alternate Emergency Operations Center and Communications Center to ensure continuity of operations in the event the existing facility becomes inoperable.
- Development and modification of plans and procedures.
- Identify and acquire additional resources/equipment/supplies/services necessary to establish and maintain an alternate EOC and Communications Center.

EMF 4.11: Crisis Communications, Public Education and Information

- Educate public on systems used to gather and disseminate information to the public as wells as first responders in order to increase public confidence and increase public willingness to comply during an actual incident.
- Develop and implement communications protocols integrating both the virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) and face-to-face meetings.
- Develop a protocol for and implement a WebEOC draft news release "holding pen" for review and authorization of release of information.
- Develop communications coordination procedures and protocols that combine the convenience of virtual JIC operations with the effectiveness of face-to-face communications among multiple agency PIO's responding to emergencies or disasters.
- Develop a PIO email distribution list in coordination with ITD.

TRAINING PRIORITIES – State

EMF 4.6: Resource Management, Mutual Aid and Logistics

- Train local officials on the requirements necessary to request state and federal assistance.
- Educate vendors on the process for deployment of and payment of resources.
- Conduct WebEOC training as needed or requested.
- Purchase citizen corps program training materials and kits.
- Research and Purchase IPAWS software and equipment.

EMF 4.9 Training

- Local emergency managers and their staff to complete the 4 required NIMS and 7 required Professional Development courses listed in the FY 2016 EMPG guidance.
- Complete assessment of local emergency management EMPG funded staff that need to complete the 11 required independent study courses.
- Conduct annual Training and Exercise Plan Workshop (TEPW).
- Update State Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan (TEP).
- Track and review County Multi-Year Training Plans.
- Conduct HazMat Operations course.
- Conduct Planning Section Chief Course.
- Conduct Unified Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Courses (L212, L213 & L214).
- Conduct Radiological/Nuclear Awareness Courses.
- Conduct CERT training courses.
- Conduct IEMC course.
- Conduct Safety Officer Course.
- Conduct Cost Benefit Analysis Entry Level Course.
- Conduct Grant Writing Course.
- Conduct Understanding the Role of your Non-Governmental Partners course.
- Conduct AHIMT Position Specific Training Logistics Section Chief Course.

- Conduct Cyber Security courses.
- Conduct Compliance to Records Management Policies course.
- Certify ICS trainers (100, 200, 300, and 400).
- Conduct WebEOC training as needed.
- Increase position-specific IMAT training.
- Host Introduction to Emergency Services workshops for new emergency managers as well as existing emergency managers who need a refresher.
- Conduct Group Facilitation Course.
- Conduct Joint NDDES/NDEMA Workshops.
- Host Basic PIO Course.
- Host Emergency Planning Courses.
- Risk Assessment/Management and THIRA training.
- HAZMAT Conference.
- Provide training on Joint Information Center Planning.
- Wide Area Search and Rescue
- Additional courses will be determined at the TEPW and as identified throughout the year.
- Administer the North Dakota CERT Program.

EXERCISE PRIORITIES – State

EMF 4.10: Exercises, Evaluations, and Corrective Actions

- Conduct 22 exercises and seven full scale exercises.
    - Two Workshops
    - Seven Drills
    - Two Tabletops
    - Four Functional
- Complete After-Action Review and Improvement Plan (AAR/Plan) for each exercise.
- Conduct, as requested, drills on command post functions emphasizing unified command and ICS structures.
- Conduct IMAT workshops to keep ND IMAT teams trained.
- Upon request of locals conduct drills on command post functions emphasizing unified command and ICS structures.

EQUIPMENT PRIORITIES – State

- **EMF 4.4: Operational Planning and Procedures**
    - Procure additional firewall/cyber-security equipment.
- **EMF 4.6: Resource Management, Mutual Aid and Logistics**
    - Procure a new Logistics Inventory Management System.
    - Procure an additional enclosed trailer to store and transport response equipment.

PLANNING FOCUS – Local/Tribal

- The majority of county and tribal planning focus is on updating Local Emergency Operations Plans and Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans as well as conducting public awareness campaigns.

TRAINING PRIORITIES – Local/Tribal

- Local emergency managers and their staff to complete the 4 required NIMS and 7 required Professional Development courses listed in the FY 2016 EMPG guidance.
- Conduct local or attend regional Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan Workshops (TEPW).
- Update local Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plans (TEPs).
- Attended NDDES and NDEMA annual workshops – September 10-16, 2017.
- Emphasis will continue on ICS 300-400 training.
- Train Teen CERT members.

- Purchase CERT equipment.

EXERCISE PRIORITIES – Local/Tribal

- Conduct and/or participate in 2 exercises and one full-scale exercise and complete the required AAR/IPs.

EQUIPMENT PRIORITIES – Local/Tribal

- Local/tribal equipment priorities have not yet been identified.

NORTH DAKOTA'S
FY 2016 EMPG WORK PLAN

FY 2015 Personnel Data Table Template

Personnel Metrics	Data
EMPG Program funds (Federal and match) allocated towards State emergency management personnel	2,737,000
EMPG Program funds (Federal and match) allocated towards Non-State emergency management personnel (Local, Tribal, Territories)	2,960,586
Total Number of state emergency management full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel (including those supported and not supported by the EMPG Program)	43
Number of State emergency management full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel supported (fully or partially) by EMPG Program	36
Total Number of state, local, Tribal or territory (SLTT) emergency management personnel supported (fully or partially) by the EMPG Program	105

FY 2016 Training Data Table Template

(October 1, 2015 to Present)

Name of Training	EMPG Required? (Y/N)	Number of Personnel Trained	Total # of SLTT EMPG Funded Personnel	Total # of SLTT EMPG Funded Personnel that completed the Course	Training Identified in TEP (Y/N)
IS-100 Introduction to Incident Command	Y	208		2	N
IS-200 ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents	Y	164		2	N
IS-700 National Incident Management System, An Introduction	Y	140		2	N
IS-800 National Response Framework, an Introduction	Y	0		3	N
IS-120.a - An Introduction to Exercises	Y	12		5	N
IS-230.d - Fundamentals of Emergency Management	Y	10		5	N
IS-235.b - Emergency Planning	Y	13		3	N
IS-240.b - Leadership & Influence	Y	12		4	N
IS-241.b - Decision Making and Problem Solving	Y	11		415	N
IS-242.b - Effective Communication	Y	9		3	N
IS-244.b - Developing and Managing Volunteers	Y	5		3	N
ND Search and Rescue Conference	N	100		23	N
Center for Domestic Preparedness Hazardous Materials Emergency Response	N	18		5	N
Center for Domestic Preparedness Hazardous Materials Emergency Response - Hands On	N	16		5	N
AWR-140 Radiological/Nuclear Awareness	N	21		2	Y
G0775 EOC Operations & Management	N	18		5	Y
Bank 5 Training Dickinson	N	23		4	Y
Bank 5 Training Williston	N	14		1	Y

Bank 5 Training Jamestown	N	11		1	Y
Bank 5 Bismarck	N	20		6	Y
Bank 5 Devils Lake	N	27		2	Y
Procurement and Contracting, FEMA Public Assistance Grant Program, and FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance	N	38		0	N
NDDES Mini Conference	N	54		49	N
Group Facilitation	N	13		6	Y
Grant Writing Workshop	N	15		8	Y
MGT 418 Readiness: Training Identification Preparedness Planning	N	18		9	Y
L205 Recovery from Disaster: The Local Government Role	N				Y

FY 2016 Exercise Data Table Template

(October 1, 2015 to Present)

Name/Description of Exercise	Date Exercise Scheduled/ Completed	Type of Exercise	Total # of SLTT EMPG Funded Personnel	Number of SLTT EMPG Program Funded Personnel Participating in Exercise
You've Got Mail	12/8/2015	Drill		7
BisMan Chamber of Commerce Operation Binary BLEVE	11/18/2015	Tabletop		4
SEOC Relocation	1/7/2016	Full Scale		25
Fire Drill	1/29/2016	Drill		26
IMAT WebEOC: East	1/27/2016	Drill		10
TEPW	2/4/2016	Workshop		12
IMAT WebEOC	1/27/2016	Drill		10
IMAT WebEOC	2/24/2016	Drill		7

FY 2016 Grant Activities Outline Template

EMF#: 4.1: Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Consequence Analysis

Name of Planned Project: Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA)

Project Objective:

- Conduct required annual review and revision of the State's THIRA
- Provide continued training and technical assistance to local/tribal jurisdictions for development and update of Local/Tribal THIRAs
- Provide training and technical assistance to whole community partners regarding THIRA as necessary

Core Capabilities Addressed: Threat and Hazard Identification, Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment, Planning

Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation: Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Guide (Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 201)

Challenges/Risks: Local and State agency participation, competing and shifting priorities, emergency response to events and limited personnel may delay the project

1st Quarter Activity (10/1/15-12/31/15)	**Planned Activities:** **N/A**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
2nd Quarter Activity (1/1/16-3/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** **N/A**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
3rd Quarter Activity (4/1/16-6/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** **N/A**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
4th Quarter Activity (7/1/16-9/30/16)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	State THIRA revision	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Integrate State THIRA results into preparedness activities	Execute, Control	
	Provide THIRA technical assistance	Execute, Control	
	Development of Local/Tribal Step 3 and 4 THIRA strategy and guidance/training	Plan, Execute, Control	
5th Quarter Activity (10/1/16-12/31/16)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Integrate State THIRA results into preparedness activities	Execute, Control	THIRA Submission
	Provide THIRA technical assistance	Execute, Control	
	Incorporate Local/Tribal THIRA results into State THIRA	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Finalize and submit State THIRA	Plan, Execute, Control	
6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
		Plan, Execute, Control	

EMF#: 4.1: Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Consequence Analysis

	Integrate State THIRA results into preparedness activities	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Provide THIRA technical assistance		
7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	State THIRA revision	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Integrate State THIRA results into preparedness activities	Execute, Control	
	Provide THIRA technical assistance	Execute, Control	
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	State THIRA revision	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Integrate State THIRA results into preparedness activities	Execute, Control	
	Provide THIRA technical assistance	Execute, Control	

EMF#: 4.2: Hazard Mitigation: Planning
Name of Planned Project: Enhanced state, local and tribal mitigation plans
Project Objective:

- Continue to identify trends in planning deficiencies found in local, tribal and state multi-hazard mitigation plans (MHMPs) to include risk vulnerability assessments and mitigation strategy development.
- Develop and implement a strategy for addressing deficiencies.
- Encourage incorporation of THIRA components/data into local, tribal and state MHMPs.
- Provide state level guidance designed to emphasize the importance of building code and zoning ordinance analyses.
- Provide state level guidance to encourage involvement of historical and cultural organizations into plan development.

Core Capabilities Addressed: Community Resilience; Long-Term Vulnerability Reduction; Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment; Threat and Hazard Identification

Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation: Development of state- and federally-approved multi-hazard mitigation plans.

Challenges/Risks: Limited staff resources; disaster work taking precedence

1st Quarter Activity (10/1/15-12/31/15)	**Planned Activities:** Develop and implement a long-range strategy for inclusion of THIRA data and new hazard information into the State MHMP Provide guidance for improved local and tribal vulnerability and risk assessments Provide guidance for inclusion of cultural and historical organizations during mitigation plan development Provide guidance for building code and zoning ordinance analyses Review local and tribal MHMPs; provide feedback to ensure compliance with federal regulations	**Step:** Plan, Execute	**Milestones:**
2nd Quarter Activity (1/1/16-3/31/16)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:** Execute. Control	**Milestones:**

	Review local and tribal MHMPs; provide feedback to ensure compliance with federal regulations		
3rd Quarter Activity (4/1/16-6/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** Initiate analysis of implementation of state-level mitigation actions during 2015 Review local and tribal MHMPs; provide feedback to ensure compliance with federal regulations Initiate revisions, if required, to ensure the State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan complies with EMAP standards	**Step:** Plan, Execute	**Milestones:**
4th Quarter Activity (7/1/16-9/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** Complete analysis of implementation of state-level mitigation actions during 2015 Complete revisions, if required, to ensure the State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan complies with EMAP standards Review local and tribal MHMPs; provide feedback to ensure compliance with federal regulations	**Step:** Execute, Control	**Milestones:**
5th Quarter Activity (10/1/16-12/31//16)	**Planned Activities:** Review local and tribal MHMPs; provide feedback to ensure compliance with federal regulations	**Step:** Control	**Milestones:**
6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/2017)	**Planned Activities:** Review local and tribal MHMPs; provide feedback to ensure compliance with federal regulations	**Step:** Control	**Milestones:**

7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	**Planned Activities:** Review local and tribal MHMPs; provide feedback to ensure compliance with federal regulations	**Step:** Control	**Milestones:**
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	**Planned Activities:** Review local and tribal MHMPs; provide feedback to ensure compliance with federal regulations	**Step:** Control	**Milestones:**

EMF#: 4.2: Disaster Recovery Planning
Name of Planned Project: Disaster Recovery Planning

Project Objective:

- Complete the development of the state level Recovery Plan.
- Evaluate the content with stakeholders and revise accordingly.
- Identify and develop key supporting documents to include appendices, a Master Contact List and a Recovery Resource Guide.
- Ensure alignment of the Recovery Plan and supporting documents with the State Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), key elements of the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards.
- Develop guidance and provide technical assistance for local-tribal recovery plan development.

Core Capabilities Addressed: Planning, Public Information and Warning, Operational Coordination, Infrastructure Systems; Economic Recovery, Health and Social Services, Housing, Natural and Cultural Resources, Community Resilience; Long-Term Vulnerability Reduction; Risk and Disaster Resilience Assessment; Threat and Hazard Identification
Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation: Development of a state-approved Recovery Plan
Challenges/Risks: Limited staff resources; disaster work taking precedence

1st Quarter Activity (10/1/15-12/31/15)	**Planned Activities:** Develop drafts of the Recovery Plan and six supporting appendices Align the Recovery Plan and supporting appendices with the State THIRA and key elements of the NDRF Initiate development of the Master Contact List Initiate development of the Recovery Resource Guide Disseminate drafts of the recovery plan and supporting appendices for review to the following groups of reviewers: FEMA, NDDES, emergency managers and state agencies	**Step:** Plan, Execute	**Milestones:**

	Evaluate and incorporate feedback from stakeholders		
2nd Quarter Activity (1/1/16-3/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** Prepare the recovery plan, appendices, Master Contact List and Recovery Resource Guide for review by NDDES leadership Revise the recovery plan and all supporting documents based on feedback Coordinate delivery of the_L205 Recovery from Disaster: The Local Government Role	**Step:** Plan, Execute	**Milestones:**
3rd Quarter Activity (4/1/16-6/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** Ensure the recovery plan and all supporting documents comply with EMAP standards Initiate plan review with stakeholders; revise the recovery plan documents based upon feedback	**Step:** Plan, Execute	**Milestones:**
4th Quarter Activity (7/1/16-9/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** Continue plan orientation with stakeholders; revise the recovery plan documents based upon feedback Complete revisions, if required, to ensure recovery plan and supporting documents comply with EMAP standards	**Step:** Plan, Execute	**Milestones:**
5th Quarter Activity (10/1/16-12/31//16)	**Planned Activities:** Continue plan review with stakeholders; revise the recovery plan	**Step:** Plan, Execute	**Milestones:**

	documents based upon feedback Establish recovery planning guidance for local-tribal governments Provide technical assistance to local and tribal emergency managers with recovery plan development		
6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/2017)	**Planned Activities:** Continue plan review with stakeholders; revise the recovery plan documents based upon feedback Coordinate with stakeholders to update the Master Contact List Develop a recovery Response Alert Notification (RAN), as required Provide technical assistance to local and tribal emergency managers with recovery plan development	**Step:** Plan, Execute	**Milestones:**
7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	**Planned Activities:** Continue plan review with stakeholders; revise the recovery plan documents based upon feedback Provide technical assistance to local and tribal emergency managers with recovery plan development	**Step:** Control	**Milestones:**
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	**Planned Activities:** Conduct plan review with stakeholders; revise recovery plan documents based upon feedback	**Step:** Control	**Milestones:**

Provide technical assistance to local and tribal emergency managers with recovery plan development

EMF#: 4.4: Operational Planning and Procedures

Name of Planned Project: State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) Revisions/Enhancements

Project Objective:

- 4.4.1 Ongoing EAS and IPAWS Implementation
  - A. Ongoing implementation of the state's IPAWS software/equipment and modification of existing plans and procedures
  - B. Review and approve applications for IPAWS Alerting Authority authorization
  - C. Conduct IPAWS outreach, training and exercising for applicable stakeholders
  - D. Evaluate and coordinate implementation at the local level, as necessary
  - E. Assist during implementation and training as necessary for GIS related tasks.
  - F. Conduct continual GIS data management and contact database maintenance for State and local county stakeholders using these systems.
- 4.4.2 State Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) Mobilization Guide
  - A. Review and revise existing plans and procedures based on training/exercise improvement plans
  - B. Ongoing coordination with IMATs to evaluate and address operational, planning and resource-related gaps/shortfalls
- 4.4.3 Hazardous Materials
  - A. Ongoing outreach and coordination with appropriate stakeholders to evaluate existing roles/responsibilities, resources/capabilities and notification processes to improve communication, coordination and response.
  - B. Coordinate continual CBRNE hazardous material spill mapping to aid in SERC planning efforts.
- 4.4.4 SEOP
  - A. Ongoing review and revision of SEOP annexes, appendices and supporting documents to more fully reflect THIRA, Core Capabilities, CPG 101 and revisions to the Response Mission Area Operations Plan (formerly the Base Plan)
  - B. Conduct outreach and engage the whole community
  - C. Review and revise existing plans to address movement of large populations in state and out of state.
- 4.4.5 Critical Infrastructure/Key Resources
  - A. Ongoing development of pre-decisional databases, based on key critical infrastructure (i.e. water, energy, food, etc), to aid in critical decision making and prioritizing for preparedness, planning and response activities.
  - B. Conduct a CIKR conference/workshop for key critical infrastructure partners and stakeholders.
- 4.4.6 Provide ongoing GIS support and products for planning purposes to agency sections and products they support.
  - SLIC
  - Operations and Planning
  - Training and Exercise
  - Recovery
  - MHMP/Critical Infrastructure

Core Capabilities Addressed: Public Information and Warning, Operational Coordination, Public and Private Resources and Services, Environmental Response/Health and Safety, Planning

Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation: Completion of updates, test effectiveness through application during an incident.

Challenges/Risks: State agency participation, competing and shifting priorities, emergency response to events and limited personnel may delay the project

1st Quarter Activity (10/1/15-12/31/15)	**Planned Activities:** N/A	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
2nd Quarter Activity (1/1/16-3/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** N/A	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
3rd Quarter Activity (4/1/16-6/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** N/A	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
4th Quarter Activity (7/1/16-9/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** 4.4.1	**Step:** Execute, Control	**Milestones:**

EMF#: 4.4: Operational Planning and Procedures

	4.4.2 4.4.3 4.4.4 4.4.5 4.4.6	Execute, Control Execute, Control ALL Initiate, Plan Execute, Control	Conduct training on Response MAOP Continued implementation of EAS/IPAWS Products developed/ updated as required
5th Quarter Activity (10/1/16-12/31/16)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	4.4.1 4.4.2 4.4.3 4.4.4 4.4.5	Execute, Control Execute, Control Execute, Control ALL Initiate, Plan	State Agencies with significant roles in Response MAOP oriented to the plan Continued implementation of EAS/IPAWS Products developed/ updated as required
6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	4.4.1 4.4.2 4.4.3 4.4.4 4.4.5	Execute, Control Execute, Control Execute, Control ALL Plan, Execute	Continued implementation of EAS/IPAWS Products developed/ updated as required
7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	4.4.1 4.4.2 4.4.3 4.4.4 4.4.5	Execute, Control Execute, Control Execute, Control ALL Execute, Control	Continued implementation of EAS/IPAWS Products developed/ updated as required
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	4.4.1 4.4.2 4.4.3 4.4.4 4.4.5	Execute, Control Execute, Control Execute, Control ALL Execute, Control, Close Out	Continued implementation of EAS/IPAWS Products developed/ updated as required

EMF#: 4.5: Incident Management

Name of Planned Project: Continued WebEOC Implementation/Enhancements, Administration and Training

Project Objective:

- Continue implementation and enhancements and modifications to WebEOC.
- Provide ongoing administration of WebEOC.
- Conduct refresher training and technical assistance, to include Resource Management and Mapper, to new and existing WebEOC users.
- Continue leveraging WebEOC during exercises and real-world events.
- Develop WebEOC training materials for WebEOC 8.0.
- Identify and secure necessary equipment/resources to ensure back up capability and resiliency for WebEOC and other critical systems.
- Provide GIS functional updates related to WebEOC & Web Mapper as needed on daily basis or during times of activation.

Core Capabilities Addressed: Operational Coordination, Situational Assessment, Information and Intelligence

Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation: Test effectiveness through application during an incident

Challenges/Risks: Competing and shifting priorities, emergency response to events and limited personnel may delay the project

1st Quarter Activity (10/1/15-12/31/15)	**Planned Activities:** N/A	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
2nd Quarter Activity (1/1/16-3/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** N/A	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
3rd Quarter Activity (4/1/16-6/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** N/A	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
4th Quarter Activity (7/1/16-9/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** Conduct WebEOC training as requested and incorporate into exercises and real-world events	**Step:** Execute, Control	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing administration of WebEOC and troubleshooting	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Implement applicable enhancements and modifications as identified	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Initiate development of training materials for WebEOC 8.0	Initiate, Plan, Execute	
	Research back up capability options for WebEOC	Initiate, Plan	
	GIS Updates	Execute, Control	
5th Quarter Activity (10/1/16-12/31/16)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:** Execute, Control	**Milestones:**

EMF#: 4.5: Incident Management

	Conduct WebEOC training as requested and incorporate into exercises and real-world events	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Ongoing administration of WebEOC and troubleshooting	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Implement applicable enhancements and modifications as identified		
	Finalize training materials for WebEOC 8.0	Execute, Control, Close Out	
	Research and implementation of WebEOC back up capability	Plan, Execute, Control	
	GIS Updates	Execute, Control	
6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Conduct WebEOC training as requested and incorporate into exercises and real-world events	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing administration of WebEOC and troubleshooting	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Implement applicable enhancements and modifications as identified	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Implementation of WebEOC back up capability	Execute, Control	
	GIS Updates	Execute, Control	
7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Conduct WebEOC training as requested and incorporate into exercises and real-world events	Execute, Control	

EMF#: 4.5: Incident Management

	Ongoing administration of WebEOC and troubleshooting	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Implement applicable enhancements and modifications as identified	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Ongoing implementation of WebEOC back up capability	Execute, Control, Close Out	
	GIS Updates	Execute, Control	
	Planned Activities:	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Conduct WebEOC training as requested and incorporate into exercises and real-world events	Execute, Control	
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	Ongoing administration of WebEOC and troubleshooting	Plan, Execute, Control	
	Implement applicable enhancements and modifications as identified	Plan, Execute, Control	
	GIS Updates	Execute, Control	

EMF#: 4.6: Resource Management, Mutual Aid and Logistics

Name of Planned Project:

- Procure and implement agency inventory management system
- Ongoing development of equipment/resource-related documents
- Sustainment and enhancement of existing cache of resources/equipment.
- Ongoing EMAC and Northern Emergency Assistance Compact (NEMAC) coordination

Project Objective:

- 4.6.1 Procure and implement agency inventory management system
  - A. Develop, review and revise operational checklists and SOPs
  - B. Incorporate systems into existing warehouse management activities and SEOC operations
  - C. Identify, evaluate and implement, where appropriate, additional uses
  - D. Provide ongoing training regarding administration and use of the system
- 4.6.2 Continued enhancements and modifications to WebEOC Resource Management
  - A. Provide ongoing administration of WebEOC Resource Management
  - B. Maintain and update private, voluntary, local/tribal, state and federal agency resources lists
  - C. Provide training and technical assistance to new and existing WebEOC users
  - D. Ensure resources are typed in accordance with NIMS
- 4.6.3 Sustainment and enhancement of existing NDDES resources and warehouse space
  - A. Acquire additional resources/equipment, if necessary, as resource gaps/shortfalls are identified
  - B. Ongoing development/revision of equipment-related operational checklists, SOPs, user agreements, maintenance schedules and training materials
  - C. Perform regular maintenance and make necessary repairs to ensure readiness of equipment/resources for deployment
- 4.6.4 Ongoing coordination with signatory states/provinces to implement NEMAC
  - A. Develop, review and modify plans/procedures for deployment of resources to another state/province
  - B. Identify and address issues/concerns impacting/hindering ability to deploy resources
  - C. Participate in training and exercise activities
- 4.6.5 Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)
  - A. Review and modify plans/procedures for deployment of resources
  - B. Identify and address issues/concerns impacting/hindering ability to deploy resources
  - C. Participate in training and exercise activities

Core Capabilities Addressed: Public and Private Resources and Services, Operational Coordination, Planning, Access Control and Identify Verification, Planning

Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation: Completion of updates, test effectiveness through application during an incident

Challenges/Risks: Local and State agency participation, competing and shifting priorities, emergency response to events and limited personnel may delay the project

1st Quarter Activity **(10/1/15-12/31/15)**	**Planned Activities:** **N/A**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
2nd Quarter Activity **(1/1/16-3/31/16)**	**Planned Activities:** **N/A**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
3rd Quarter Activity **(4/1/16-6/30/16)**	**Planned Activities:** **N/A**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
4th Quarter Activity **(7/1/16-9/30/16)**	**Planned Activities:** 4.6.1 4.6.2 4.6.3 4.6.4 4.6.5	**Step:** Initiate, Plan, Execute Execute, Control Execute, Control Execute, Control Execute, Control	**Milestones:**
5th Quarter Activity **(10/1/16-12/31/16)**	**Planned Activities:** 4.6.1	**Step:** Plan, Execute	**Milestones:**

	4.6.2	Execute, Control	
	4.6.3	Execute, Control	
	4.6.4	Execute, Control	
	4.6.5	Execute, Control	

6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	4.6.1	Execute	
	4.6.2	Execute, Control	
	4.6.3	Execute, Control	
	4.6.4	Execute, Control	
	4.6.5	Execute, Control	

	Planned Activities:	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	4.6.1	Execute, Control	
	4.6.2	Execute, Control	
	4.6.3	Execute, Control	
	4.6.4	Execute, Control	
	4.6.5	Execute, Control	

	Planned Activities:	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	4.6.1	Execute, Control	
	4.6.2	Execute, Control	
	4.6.3	Execute, Control	
	4.6.4	Execute, Control	
	4.6.5	Execute, Control	

EMF#: 4.7: Communications and Warning

Name of Planned Project: Ongoing implementation and administration of the agencies emergency notification systems

Project Objective:

- Ongoing development and revision plans and procedures outlining use of the system in relationship to the Special Needs Voluntary Registry, State Radio counties and internal NDDES notification
- Provide ongoing training regarding administration and activation of the systems
- Incorporate, where appropriate, activation of the system(s) during exercises
- Continue to evaluate additional potential applications of the system(s)

Core Capabilities Addressed: Public Information and Warning, Operational Coordination

Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation: Test effectiveness through application during an incident

Challenges/Risks: Competing and shifting priorities, emergency response to events and limited personnel may delay the project

1st Quarter Activity (10/1/15-12/31/15)	**Planned Activities:** N/A	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
2nd Quarter Activity (1/1/16-3/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** N/A	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
3rd Quarter Activity (4/1/16-6/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** N/A	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
4th Quarter Activity (7/1/16-9/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** Ongoing administration activities of the system(s)	**Step:** Execute, Control	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing development/revision of operational checklists and SOPs	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing training for NDDES staff and others, as needed	Execute, Control	
	Incorporate, where appropriate, activation of system(s) during exercises	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing evaluation of potential applications of system(s)	Execute, Control	
5th Quarter Activity (10/1/16-12/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** Ongoing administration activities of the system(s)	**Step:** Execute, Control	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing development/revision of operational checklists and SOPs	Execute, Control	
		Execute, Control	

	Ongoing training for NDDES staff and others, as needed	Execute, Control	
	Incorporate, where appropriate, activation of system(s) during exercises	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing evaluation of potential applications of system(s)		
6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing administration activities of the system(s)	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing development/revision of operational checklists and SOPs	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing training for NDDES staff and others, as needed	Execute, Control	
	Incorporate, where appropriate, activation of system(s) during exercises	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing evaluation of potential applications of system(s)	Execute, Control	
7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing administration activities of the system(s)	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing development/revision of operational checklists and SOPs	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing training for NDDES staff and others, as needed	Execute, Control	
	Incorporate, where appropriate, activation of system(s) during exercises	Execute, Control	
		Execute, Control	

	Ongoing evaluation of potential applications of system(s)		
	Planned Activities:	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing administration activities of the system(s)	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing development/revision of operational checklists and SOPs	Execute, Control	
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	Ongoing training for NDDES staff and others, as needed	Execute, Control	
	Incorporate, where appropriate, activation of system(s) during exercises	Execute, Control	
	Ongoing evaluation of potential applications of system(s)	Execute, Control	

EMF#: 4.8: Facilities

Name of Planned Project: Alternate State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and Communications Center

Project Objective:

- Ongoing identification and implementation of necessary modifications and enhancements to the designated Alternate EOC and Communications Center to ensure continuity of operations in the event the existing facility becomes inoperable
- Development and modification of plans and procedures
- Identify and acquire additional resources/equipment/supplies/services necessary to establish and maintain an Alternate EOC and Communications Center

Core Capabilities Addressed: Public and Private Resources and Services, Operational Coordination, Planning

Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation: Test effectiveness through application during an incident

Challenges/Risks: Competing and shifting priorities, emergency response to events and limited personnel may delay the project

1st Quarter Activity (10/1/15-12/31/15)	**Planned Activities:** **N/A**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
2nd Quarter Activity (1/1/16-3/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** **N/A**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
3rd Quarter Activity (4/1/16-6/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** **N/A**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
4th Quarter Activity (7/1/16-9/30/16)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing identification and implementation of necessary modifications	Execute, Control	
	Identify and acquire additional resources/equipment/supplies/services, as needed	Execute, Control	
5th Quarter Activity (10/1/16-12/31/16)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing identification and implementation of necessary modifications	Execute, Control	
	Identify and acquire additional resources/equipment/supplies/services, as needed	Execute, Control	
	Review and revise Alternate EOC Plan to reflect State Radio operations	Plan, Execute	
6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing identification and implementation of necessary modifications	Execute, Control	
	Identify and acquire additional resources/equipment/supplies/services, as needed	Execute, Control	
	Exercise the Alternate EOC Plan	Execute, Control	
7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:** Execute, Control	**Milestones:**

	Ongoing identification and implementation of necessary modifications		
	Identify and acquire additional resources/equipment/supplies/services, as needed	Execute, Control	
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	**Planned Activities:**	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
	Ongoing identification and implementation of necessary modifications	Execute, Control	
	Identify and acquire additional resources/equipment/supplies/services, as needed	Execute, Control	

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EMF#: 4.9: Training			
Name of Planned Project:			
Project Objective:			
Core Capabilities Addressed:			
Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation:			
Challenges/Risks:			
1st Quarter Activity (10/1/15-12/31/15)	**Planned Activities:** *(See data tables above for completed activities)*	**Step:**	**Milestones:** Complete
2nd Quarter Activity (1/1/16-3/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** *(See data tables for completed activities) MGT 418 Readiness: Training Identification Preparedness Planning; CERT Training; L205 Recovery Planning for Local Governments; L205 Train the Trainer*	**Step:** Identify Need Schedule Open Registration Arrange Logistics Prepare to teach Deliver	**Milestones:** Scheduled and receiving registrations
3rd Quarter Activity (4/1/16-6/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** PER 212 HazMat Operations; L963 Planning Section Chief; G235 Emergency Planning; National Training and Exercise Symposium; FEMA L212 Unified Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Application Development; Intro to NDDES; AWR-140 Radiological/Nuclear Awareness; PER 240 Rad/Nuc Responder Operations	**Step:** Identify Need Schedule Open Registration Arrange Logistics Prepare to teach Deliver	**Milestones:** PER 212, L963, G235, L212, AWR 140, PER240, Intro to DES scheduled and receiving registrations;
4th Quarter Activity (7/1/16-9/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** CERT Train the Trainer; CERT Program Manager; PER 212 HazMat Operations; G 290 Basic Public Information Officer; G 291 Joint Information Center/Joint Information System; Functional Needs and Access in Mass Care; Laws and Regulations related to Access; PER-304 Social Media for Natural Disaster Response and Recovery; Local Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC); NDDES/NDEMA Annual Conference	**Step:** Identify Need Schedule Open Registration Arrange Logistics Prepare to teach Deliver	**Milestones:**
5th Quarter Activity (10/1/16-12/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** PER 213 Wide Area Search and Rescue; HazMat Conference; L 954 Safety Officer; MGT 346 EOC Operations and Planning	**Step:** Identify Need Schedule Open Registration Arrange Logistics Prepare to teach Deliver	**Milestones:**
6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/17)	**Planned Activities:** L 276 Cost Benefit Analysis: Entry Level; AWR 213 Critical Infrastructure Security and	**Step:** Identify Need Schedule Open Registration	**Milestones:**

	Resilience; Grant Writing Workshop; Understanding the Role of your Non-Governmental Partners; Group Facilitation; L 326 Public Assistance Preliminary Damage Assessment;	Arrange Logistics Prepare to teach Deliver	
7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	**Planned Activities:** AHIMT Position Specific Training Logistics Section Chief; AWR 135 Promoting Community Cyber Security; AWR 136 Essentials of Community Cyber Security; L 061 Supply Chain Intelligence Level 1; L 213 Unified Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance Application and Evaluation; Intro to NDDES; Compliance to Records Management Policies	**Step:** Identify Need Schedule Open Registration Arrange Logistics Prepare to teach Deliver	**Milestones:**
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	**Planned Activities:** L 214 Unified Hazard Mitigation Grant Project Implementation and Closeout; G 290 Basic Public Information Officer; G 291 Joint Information Center/Joint Information System; NDDES/NDEMA Annual Conference;	**Step:** Identify Need Schedule Open Registration Arrange Logistics Prepare to teach Deliver	**Milestones:**

EMF#: 4.10: Exercises, Evaluations and Corrective Actions			
Name of Planned Project:			
Project Objective:			
Core Capabilities Addressed:			
Performance Measures and Basis of Evaluation:			
Challenges/Risks:			
1st Quarter Activity (10/1/15-12/31/15)	**Planned Activities:** (See data tables above for completed activies)	**Step:**	**Milestones:**
2nd Quarter Activity (1/1/16-3/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** Participate in Devils Breath Exercise with NDNG; Flood VTTx	**Step:** Support NG Planning; Schedule Plan Prepare documents Conduct AAR Improvement Plan Corrections	**Milestones:** Scheduled and receiving registrations
3rd Quarter Activity (4/1/16-6/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** Full Scale SNS Exercise with Dept of Health; WARNEX and Tornado Drill; Amber Alert Full Scale	**Step:** Schedule Plan Prepare documents Conduct AAR Improvement Plan Corrections	**Milestones:** SNS Mid-term planning meeting complete;
4th Quarter Activity (7/1/16-9/30/16)	**Planned Activities:** IMAT Full Scale Deployment Exercise; Local Integrated Emergency Management Course Functional Exercise;	**Step:** Schedule Plan Prepare documents Conduct AAR/Improvement Plan Corrections	**Milestones:** Initial Planning Meeting Mid-term Planning Meeting Documents Complete AAR/IP Approved
5th Quarter Activity (10/1/16-12/31/16)	**Planned Activities:** Operation Binder Clip for Local Jurisdictions;	**Step:** Schedule Plan Prepare documents Conduct AAR/Improvement Plan Corrections	**Milestones:** Initial Planning Meeting Mid-term Planning Meeting Documents Complete AAR/IP Approved
6th Quarter Activity (1/1/17-3/31/17)	**Planned Activities:** TEPW; IMAT Functional Exercise;	**Step:** Schedule Plan Prepare documents Conduct AAR/Improvement Plan Corrections	**Milestones:** Initial Planning Meeting Mid-term Planning Meeting Documents Complete AAR/IP Approved
7th Quarter Activity (4/1/17-6/30/17)	**Planned Activities:** Amber Alert Full Scale Exercise; WARNEX and Tornado Drill; Participate with NDNG in Devils Breath Functional/Full Scale Exercise	**Step:** Schedule Plan Prepare documents Conduct AAR/Improvement Plan Corrections	**Milestones:** Initial Planning Meeting Mid-term Planning Meeting Documents Complete AAR/IP Approved
8th Quarter Activity (7/1/17-9/30/17)	**Planned Activities:** IMAT Full Scale Deployment Exercise; Recovery from Binder Clip Table Top Exercise	**Step:** Schedule Plan Prepare documents Conduct AAR/Improvement Plan Corrections	**Milestones:** Initial Planning Meeting Mid-term Planning Meeting Documents Complete AAR/IP Approved

From: Torres, Mariano
Sent: 24 May 2016 16:12:24 +0000
To: R8 All Hands
Cc:
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Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Tuesday 5-24-16
Attachments: @

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 11 Oct 2016 14:00:15 -0400
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Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Tuesday
Attachments: R8 Clips 10-11-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Tuesday, October 11, 2016

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- *Colorado:* Two Colorado groups won grants to work on emergency preparedness and underground mine safety… A nonprofit group is asking for donations to help rebuild Haiti after Hurricane Matthew… A donation center has been set up to help victims of the Beulah Hill Fire…. Estes Park will have a public meeting October 26 to discuss floodplain issues… A follow-up article on the federal investigation in Lyons says the FBI is not pursuing a case, and that HUD is focused on contracts between Lyons and a company called Front Range Land Solutions and its owner, former Lyons planner Rosi Dennett.
- *Montana:* A TV station did a story on a Red Cross volunteer heading to help with Hurricane Matthew.
- *North Dakota:* An ag journal reports on a new disaster application that can help small businesses. It uses information from ready.gov and makes it a fill-in-the-blank app for smartphones and tablets… The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reports on the split between Fargo/Moorhead and the state of Minnesota over the proposed diversion project. The article details the reasons for Minnesota's opposition and notes potential problems in getting congressional approval to go ahead with the project…. Two articles report on the pipeline protest: the courts have denied an emergency injunction to prevent construction, but three federal agencies continue reviewing the issues raised by the protestors and have asked the company to voluntarily suspend construction pending that review. Another article reports on the protests: actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other protestors were arrested Monday, the highest one-day total so far, bringing the total number arrested to 123. The protestors have since been released.
- *South Dakota:* A part of a continuing series looking back at the 2011 flood reports on how the Fort Randall Dam held up.
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You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

STORIES

COLORADO:

Mine rescue training, emergency preparedness grants awarded (KOAA TV 5)

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) - Six groups will share $1 million in grants to develop training for emergency preparedness and accident prevention in underground mines.

The U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration announced the Brookwood-Sago grants last week.

Receiving grants are the University of Arizona, the Colorado School of Mines, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Rend Lake College in Ina, Illinois, the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, and West Virginia University.

WVU says in a news release that the university will use a grant of nearly $172,000 to integrate fire brigades and mine rescue teams in an emergency involving fire and trapped miners.

The grant program is named in remembrance of 25 men who died in mining explosions in Alabama in 2001 and at the Sago Mine in West Virginia in 2006.

Colorado group helping Haiti rebuild after hurricane (FOX 31 Denver)

LOUISVILLE, Colo. – A Colorado nonprofit dedicated to rebuilding rural Haiti is asking for some emergency donations following Hurricane Matthew.

The Colorado Haiti Project has been doing work in Petit-Trou-de-Nippes for almost 30 years. The group focuses on long term rebuilding projects like education, agriculture, livelihood and clean water.

CHP has one dedicated project manager living in Haiti full-time. The Louisville based organization sends several groups throughout the year to do aid work.

They built a school that serves nearly 400 Haitian children. The school suffered major damage in the storm.

“When you look inside any room everything is just thrown all over the place,” explained CHP’s Teresa Henry. “Now they have no books and everything in the classrooms is gone.”

Her co-worker who is in Haiti right now says about half of the community’s homes are gone. She also says almost all of the crops have been leveled and most of the livestock has perished.

“They don’t have bank accounts. In Haiti, you consider your bank your goats and cows. That is your income,” Henry said. “All their crops have been lost. All of it. They have nothing for their livelihood.”

She worries if they can’t help Haitians rebuild fast enough, the region will eventually starve.

“We’re concerned about making sure they eat enough through the winter so getting the crops back in the ground is huge,” she said.

CHP is doing several emergency fundraisers to help their Haitian community rebuild and replant. You can visit their website to donate and find more information about local fundraising opportunities.

The money will go directly to the small rural communities where Coloradan are helping rebuild by hand. Their project manager in Haiti will return to Colorado later this week and CHP will decide within the next two weeks a rebuild plan-of-action for the next 12 months.

The group believes donating to them is a good way for Coloradans to see exactly where their money is going and how it is being used.

“You can be like one degree away from where you make your donation,” Henry said

Donation center set up for Beulah Hill Fire victims (Pueblo Chieftain)

October 11, 2016

A donation center for victims of the Beulah Hill Fire opened Sunday morning and plenty of donors had already walked through the doors and dropped items off by Monday afternoon.

Beulah Hill Fire at 95 percent containment; blaze expected to be fully contained by Sunday Free pain/injury screening for firefighters

Kathy Hayden of the Adventist Community Services Disaster Response Team said that by 2:30 p.m. Monday there had already been about 30 community members who had stopped by the donation center to bring items of need.

The donation center, located at the Colorado Building on the Colorado State Fairgrounds, was filled with clothing, kitchenware, blankets, sleeping bags, food, water, cleaning and laundry supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, assorted toiletries, tools, shoes and some toys.

A woman was seen Monday afternoon getting out of her car and bringing numerous bags of items to the donation center for victims of last week's Beulah Hill Fire, which burned 5,232 acres of land, destroyed eight homes and forced the entire Beulah Valley to be evacuated until some residents began returning on Wednesday and Thursday, and the rest on Friday.

Volunteers strolled the inside of the Colorado Building, sorting out donated items and organizing racks and shelves.

"It's wonderful to see so many people helping out and taking care of each other," Hayden said.

Beulah residents have been stopping by the donation center since Sunday morning to pick up needed items and can continue to do so.

"They've been really good about it," Hayden said. "They're just taking what they need."

The donation center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Sunday.

Hayden said the most needed items right now are children's clothing, food and tools.

"A lot of people lost tools," said Robyn Knappe, a voluntary agency liaison for the Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management.

Hayden, who thanked firefighters and emergency crews for their tireless work in battling the blaze, said she's happy the disaster response team can play a role in helping families who lost so much in the wildfire.

"At least maybe we can do something to help put their lives back together," she said.

ryans@chieftain.com

Public encouraged to review new Estes Valley hydrology data Oct. 26 (Estes Park Trail Gazette)

Study contributes to a safer, more resilient community

Town of Estes Park - For the Trail Gazette

POSTED: 10/11/2016 09:38:17 AM MDT

The Town of Estes Park and its consultant, Wright Water Engineers, will present the results of a scientific hydrology study of the Big Thompson River, Black Canyon Creek, Dry Gulch and Fall River on Wednesday, Oct. 26, at 8 a.m. in the Town Board Room of Town Hall, 170 MacGregor Ave. Other topics discussed will be a preliminary map of new floodplain boundaries in the downtown area and how this study impacts floodplain management. The completion of the study is a milestone in the process of ensuring a safer, more resilient Estes Park community. Study results will be available for review at www.estes.org/floodmitigation by Oct. 21.

Educational resources on the hydrology study and other flood mitigation efforts are also posted to this site as they become available.

The Oct. 26 meeting is targeted to both a general interest audience and particularly those concerned with development and flood mitigation opportunities, as the hydrology data is part of the floodplain permitting process. Wright Water Engineers will present the results and be available to answer both general and technical questions. Staff from the Colorado Water Conservation Board will discuss preliminary floodplain maps and staff from the Colorado Resiliency and Recovery Office will be in attendance to answer questions. This meeting will be streamed live on local cable channel 12 and via www.estes.org/videos. It will also be recorded for viewing later via www.estes.org/videos. The Town Board will review the information during a study session the evening of Oct. 25.

The 2013 flood was a stark reminder of flood risk, and the Town is taking action to better understand the hazards Estes Park's residents face. The hydrology study results will serve as the basis of flood mitigation projects and a key part of future flood mitigation decisions. In addition, the new information may help the Town receive grants. It will also provide data for new floodplain maps, which will go into effect in the coming years.

The Town will also host a workshop for realtors, lenders and insurance agents on flood insurance topics presented by FEMA staff Oct. 24, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Estes Park Museum, 200 4th St.

For more information on flood mitigation efforts, please visitwww.estes.org/floodmitigation or contact Floodplain Manager and Planner Tina Kurtz at 970-577-3732 or tkurtz@estes.org.

Lyons residents: 'We're just starting to get it together' (Boulder Daily Camera)

Federal scrutiny stirs concern in town that has struggled

By Amelia Arvesen
Staff Writer

The town of Lyons has submitted to more than one waiting game.

People there have been waiting to rebuild their town and now they're waiting on a federal investigation into the flood-recovery process.

"I'm frustrated because I'd like to know what's going on instead of waiting," longtime resident Craig Ferguson said. "There's been a lot of waiting for three years."

As Lyons entered its fourth year of reconstruction following the devastating September 2013 flood, the FBI and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development stopped by to seize documents and computers to probe the handling of federal flood-recovery funding.

Communities savaged by the rushing waters have been receiving fund allocations, totaling millions of dollars from several federal sources, such as HUD and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Late Friday, Mayor Connie Sullivan released a statement on behalf of the town's Board of Trustees, stating that the FBI had concluded its portion of the investigation and would not be proceeding with a case.

Also posted to the town's website was a copy of a subpoena from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, stating that a focus of its investigation was documents relating to negotiations and grant services contracts between Lyons and Longmont-based Front Range Land Solutions.

The subpoena also seeks all "invoices, bills, receipts, and other documents" reflecting charges or payments with respect to that company and its owner, Rosi Dennett.

Dennett, who could not be reached for comment Friday night, identifies herself on her Linkedin page as having served as Town Planner for Lyons from April 2004 to December 2008.

Ferguson, Planet Bluegrass president, said before the flood the town could only fathom a budget of $1 million per year, and suddenly they were expected to keep track of exponentially more in the midst of disaster.

"To take care of that is a completely different job," Ferguson said. "Mistakes might have been made. Personally, I guess, I'm kind of hoping that things can be corrected quickly and it's not personal."

Apparently as a precaution into the investigation's integrity, both the town administrator and clerk were placed on temporary leave and replaced in the interim. Sullivan has said the move should not be construed as a suspicion of wrongdoing by those employees.

Ferguson said he knows most town officials well after living in Lyons 25 years and he said he has a hard time believing there was any foul play.

A hope 'someone is held accountable'

On Friday, LaVern Johnson sat under a shade of an awning behind her house, where she hosted a yard sale benefitting the Lyons Historical Society.

"Why Lyons?" Johnson asked.

She said many people are upset, saddened and disappointed by the mayor's brief and formal announcement Wednesday night at Town Hall that provided little information.

"I would say they could've made mistakes somewhere," Johnson said. "I don't think they did anything that is illegal as to taking money and those kinds of things. I don't know what they're after. I don't know how they could abscond with any money."

A man who did not provide his name and who lives in Lyons' Confluence neighborhood — an area that was hit hard by the flood — said nobody would be interested in what he has to say on the issue.

"I hope someone is held accountable," he said.

At The Stone Cup in downtown Lyons, employee and resident of 12 years Robin Young said she has worked eight hours five days in a row and that the topic has come up. She said the town chatter is that people are frustrated with the lack of information, but also understand that town officials can't say too much yet.

"There's great, great people here and it's been a long three years," Young said. "But I believe, from what I've heard, people are taking a wait-and-see approach and are just anxious."

Ferguson said while the investigation is somewhat a blemish on trust, he is confident the mayor and town board were doing their best and he would be surprised if it involved criminal behavior.

"We just don't need that right now," he said. "We're just starting to get it together."

Johnson said she trusts the town officials. She is confident they've done everything they can in light of the devastation the community has been through.

"With things like this going on, I don't think we can ever recover," Johnson said. "How can you recover when somebody is going to accuse you? I think it's sad."

Johnson said she is also surprised by how much the town has accomplished, such as designing Bohn Park. She said as the town works on the budget, it's not taking on new project proposals, and sticking to the 2016 budget when planning for next year.

A punch in the gut

The continuous beeping of construction vehicles working on streets nearby echoed through the neighborhoods. Sections of streets were peeled back, revealing the dirt below.

Jenny Voss, out walking her dog near the former Foothills Mobile Home Park, said she did not know more than what has already been revealed.

Carrie Davis-Gonzales, who lost her mobile home near the creek, was watching broadcast news reports about the hurricane in Florida Friday afternoon. She moved three years ago to the only remaining home in the park.

In response to the recent investigation of Lyons, she said she is more unquestioning than maybe she should be. She said as a result of trying to rebuild a mobile home park, she has researched and discovered similar federal investigations into devastated towns — from the benign to the extreme.

"From the outside, I can't really say what's going on in there but it could be so tiny because they are extremely meticulous," she said.

It would be difficult to screw up, she said, and wrongdoing would be even harder.

"It's not back in the day where they'd come in with money bags — this is all done electronically," Davis-Gonzales said, sitting on her front porch with a view of the abandoned mobile homes.

State Rep. Jonathan Singer, the Longmont Democrat whose House District 11 includes Lyons, said over the phone it's just another punch in residents' gut — another reminder that they haven't bounced back 100 percent from where they were more than three years ago.

"People are sort of worn down and worn out," Singer said. "They haven't given up but it's really hard to hear from another person, 'Well I know you don't want to hear this but we need to follow this new process.' Obviously that's going to wear anyone out."

He said some people still haven't been able to return home, and some people may never get to.

And while, Davis-Gonzales has been living in the only home left on the mobile home property, she is living each day thinking the next could be her last in Lyons, since the park owner recently opted for the buyout. Her home for the last three years will eventually be leveled.

Singer said he hopes whatever is under review is as simple as a paperwork error.

"If it is something else, I hope we find out very quickly and then we can move on and we can move forward," he said.

Ferguson said it's been easy for a lot of people to be angry at the slow progress, but he knows realistically the process is complicated.

"I'm sure once they know, they'll want to inform us," he said. "I think when someone comes into your place with a subpoena you need to take three or four days to figure out what it means. I know I would."

Staff writer Charlie Brennan contributed to this report

MONTANA:

Montana Red Cross volunteer helping in wake of Hurricane Matthew (KTVQ-Billings)

Posted: Oct 08, 2016 11:08 AM MST Updated: Oct 08, 2016 11:14 AM MST

By MTN News

KALISPELL - While millions try to escape Hurricane Matthew, Red Cross volunteers are racing into the storm to help with relief efforts, including Joe Kingan with the Flathead County chapter of the American Red Cross.

Kingan had nothing but a cell phone and a bag of survival gear as he waited at Glacier International Airport for his flight.

"Got my headlamp got flashlights, that kind of stuff."

He's been deployed to Hurricane Matthew by the **American Red Cross**, but for the husband and father, perhaps what's most important is his endurance in facing the unknown.

"They want me to go and help, and they're concerned about the safety aspects as well as I am," Kingan said.

The National Weather Service has warned that some places hit by Hurricane Matthew could be uninhabitable for "weeks or months." Kingan will be teaming up with two to four other volunteers to assess the damage.

"We would be recording it and putting it into a database file that actually gets shared with FEMA, other government agencies, Salvation Army, and that data will be used to evaluate future assistant needs," he said.

Kingan said that one tool in particular will play a key role in staying safe as he heads into the danger zone: his smartphone.

"They keep us updated on a regular basis on what's going on in the immediate area where we're located. For example, a while ago I got a text message coming in that alerted us to a tornado warning out in one of the counties in Florida right now with one of the rain bands coming off the hurricane."

Although he leaves a wife and a son behind, he is carrying them with him in spirit.

"We will endure," Kingan concluded. "We like helping other people, so it will be well worth our trip down."

If you would like to join the cause, you can donate blood, text "RedCross to 90-999" to make an automatic $10-dollar or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

NORTH DAKOTA:

New disaster app can help small businesses prepare for the worst (High Plains Journal)

The sprinklers go off by mistake in your office building. A strong wind blows the roof off your lab. You lose all of your computer files in a major crash.

If you own or manage a small business, a disaster like any one of these could put a major dent in your work and your bottom line.

A new phone app won't fix such problems, but could help a business start operating again more quickly and easily.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app is available free for iOS and Android tablets and smartphones. It was developed by the North Dakota State University Extension Service and Myriad Mobile, Fargo, N.D.

"We used FEMA's ready.gov information for businesses and the Extension Disaster Education Network's Ready Business training program to integrate with the functionality of the tablet and smartphone," said Bob Bertsch, the NDSU web technology specialist who led work on the app's content. "Yes, there are online templates for business disaster plans, but this app provides portability and functionality."

The Extension Disaster Education Network is a collaboration of land grant universities focused on reducing the effect of disasters through education. Kansas State University is a part of EDEN and shares preparedness tips on its Prepare Kansas blog.

"There are two things that I have heard small-business owners say repeatedly: The first is they never have enough time. And the second is, 'Where did I file that?'" said Glenn Muske, NDSU Extension rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app takes on both of those, Muske said, by letting you fill out important disaster plan information, along with supporting photos right from your smartphone or tablet – which you always have with you.

"Of course, you should save the information in the cloud, too, in case your phone or tablet is lost," he added.

The app lets you enter information for your business, including basic and contact information, emergency planning, evacuation, insurance information and more.

Plans should be reviewed annually, Muske said, so the app uses your phone's alerts to remind you to review the information at a designated time in the future.

The content can be downloaded as a csv file. The app also encourages you to upload the content to a cloud service such as Dropbox, iCloud, Drop or a similar service for backup.

"Planning is never high on anyone's list," Muske said. "But think how easy the process is when the structure is there and you just need to fill in the blanks. That's exactly what this Small Business Disaster Plan app provides. And because September is National Preparedness Month, it's a great time to get your business prepared for disasters."

Development of the Small Business Disaster Plan app for tablets and smartphones was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Minnesota, North Dakota at a standoff over $2 billion Red River project (Star Tribune)

By Josephine Marcotty and Jennifer Brooks Staff writers

A long-simmering fight between Minnesota and North Dakota has broken wide open now that Gov. Mark Dayton has drawn a line down the middle of the Red River by refusing to allow a massive flood diversion project to go forward on his side of the border.

Residents and local leaders in Fargo are outraged at what they say is his administration's cavalier advice to keep sandbagging in the face of ever higher threats of flooding. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and even the mayor of the Minnesota city Moorhead came out swinging last week, vowing to press ahead with the $2.1 billion project.

While proponents say they want to keep talking with Minnesota, the depth of the disagreement about the value and safety of the diversion project is so profound that, other than a legal battle, there is no apparent resolution in sight.

"If there is a confrontation, there will be a confrontation," said Darrell Vanyo, executive director of the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority. He said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has all the authority it needs to build a high-hazard dam and flood thousands of acres of mostly farmland on the Minnesota side of the river in order to protect the Fargo-Moorhead urban areas.

But attorneys for residents who have been fighting the project in federal court say that decision would have to be made in Washington, D.C. And riding roughshod over Minnesota, they say, would require strong congressional support.

"The Army Corps, thankfully, is not the king of the United States," said Jerry Von Korff, the attorney representing upstream communities that would be flooded if the project went forward as planned.

And so far, while Congress has approved the project, it's only provided $5 million of the $450 million in federal funds that are part of the deal.

"Just the fact that you've got a lawsuit going on is going to make it difficult to get federal money," said U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district is bordered by the Red River. "It's hard enough to get things funded without having controversy."

But project supporters didn't seem to heed clear warnings, going back more than a year, that Minnesota was unlikely to grant them the permit they need.

A year ago, Peterson met with diversion officials.

"I asked them, 'What is your Plan B if Minnesota denies the permit?' ”he said.”And they said, 'There is no Plan B.' "

51 floods in 113 years

There is widespread agreement that Fargo needs protection from floods — the question is how.

The Red has flooded 51 of the past 113 years, causing millions of dollars in damage to homes and businesses around Fargo and the region. Across the river, Moorhead sits 4 feet higher and is protected by $130 million worth of walls, dikes and levees that Minnesota has put in place over the years.

After the most recent flood, in 2009, local North Dakota governments asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to come up with a long-term plan. And it came up with a big one.

The Corps would carve a 36-mile ditch around Fargo and build flood control dams across the Wild Rice and Red rivers. In the event of a flood, water from the Red and its five tributaries would be diverted away from Fargo — the region's bustling economic hub — and into miles of North Dakota and Minnesota farmland and prairie.

North Dakota would pay $1.2 billion of the cost and Minnesota would pay $100 million.

If the project goes ahead, a net increase of 2,000 acres in Minnesota would be at risk of flooding. But across the river, many more thousands of acres would be left high and dry and ripe for construction of homes, schools and businesses.

A crucial piece: Construction of what Minnesota officials describe as a "high-hazard" dam across the Red — the kind that would cause catastrophic damage if it fails.

Minnesota officials have been critical of the project for years. They even joined a federal lawsuit to stop preliminary work from going forward while they completed their own environmental review, which was finished last spring.

Then last week Tom Landwehr, commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, announced that the state would not grant a permit for the dam on Minnesota's side of the project. It didn't meet Minnesota's environmental laws or standards, he said. Instead, Minnesota suggested that current and planned flood mitigation projects around Fargo, in combination with emergency measures like sandbagging and evacuation, were more likely to be in the public interest.

'Shifts the burden'

Vanyo said the Diversion Authority and the Army Corps will keep talking with Minnesota officials to try and resolve differences. But the document Landwehr provided to support the DNR's decision suggests they may be insurmountable.

More than half the area that would be protected by the dam and diversion channel is now flood plain that would be open to development in the future, the document says. But dams "can, and do, fail," the DNR said. "Allowing development in vulnerable areas would increase the consequences of a dam failure. ..."

The DNR said the corps has underestimated the number of potential deaths if the dam were to fail and exaggerated the time Fargo would have to evacuate in such an event.

Peterson pointed out that Minnesota hasn't approved a new high-hazard dam in decades. "It's one thing when you've got a flood and it comes up slowly and you can deal with it," he said. "But it's another if you're behind a 20- or 30-foot-high dam and it breaks and water rushes through."

The DNR also noted that the Diversion Authority would be financially liable for a dam failure but questioned whether the quasi-governmental organization has sufficient financial wherewithal to pay.

In addition, the DNR argues that the Army Corps overestimated the financial benefits to the community by at least $41 million. The claimed benefits are "misleading" because they include flood control projects that would occur with or without the diversion project and improperly include temporary economic impacts of constructing the project itself.

In short, the DNR said, "The proposed Project … simply shifts the burden of flooding from one sparsely developed rural area to another."

Melissa Samet, an attorney with the National Wildlife Federation familiar with the Army Corps, said Congress has expressly discouraged projects that alter the natural processes of rivers, result in the unwise use of flood plains, or encourage development into undeveloped areas.

"And this project absolutely does that," she said.

The DNR argues that the vast majority of Fargo's developed area is already protected by existing or planned flood projects and that remaining areas can be protected in an emergency the way Fargo has always done it — with evacuations and sandbagging.

But that's cold comfort to the people of Fargo, who look at every spring thaw with trepidation, said local officials. They say thousands of Fargo's buildings are at risk if rising flood projections come true and relying on a strategy of business as usual is dangerous.

"Are we going to flood this spring?" Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney said, describing residents' mind-set in a radio interview this week. "We think people are tired of sandbagging."

Work to resume on Dakota Access Pipeline near Lake Oahe

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 9:34 a.m.

BISMARCK – The company building the Dakota Access Pipeline said Tuesday, Oct. 11, it looks forward to a “prompt resumption” of construction near Lake Oahe and hopes the federal government will assist local law enforcement officials dealing with protests of the pipeline.

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners released a statement saying it is pleased with a federal appeals court decision Sunday denying the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s request for an emergency injunction to stop construction of the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline that will carry 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day from North Dakota to Illinois.

The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., also lifted a temporary suspension of construction activities within 20 miles east and west of Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River.

“In light of Sunday’s court decision, Dakota Access looks forward to a prompt resumption of construction activities east and west of Lake Oahe on private land. We reiterate our commitment to protect cultural resources, the environment and public safety,” the company said.

Company spokeswoman Vicki Granado declined to specify when the company will resume construction in the 20-mile area, which includes the area along Highway 1806 where protest activities to block pipeline construction began Aug. 10. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 American Indians and other pipeline opponents are encamped along the highway and have drawn international support.

The proposed construction area also includes a stretch west of Highway 1806 that was bulldozed on Sept. 3, the day after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed court documents identifying that part of the route as containing burial grounds and other sacred sites. Angry protesters clashed with the pipeline’s private security that day, with both sides claiming injuries, and a joint law enforcement task force is investigating the incident.

Last week, state archeologists concluded that no sacred sites were destroyed, but the tribe disputes that conclusion because its historic preservation officer wasn’t allowed to participate in the survey. The tribe’s ongoing lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contends the agency didn’t properly consult the tribe before granting permits for the project.

Energy Transfer Partners said the decisions by two separate federal courts show otherwise.

“The Army Corps and Dakota Access carefully considered the views of all potentially affected tribes that chose to participate in the consultative process prescribed by Congress, and fully complied with both the letter and the spirit of the National Historic Preservation Act,” the company said. “Their careful and sensitive work has been reviewed and approved by highly qualified private and state-employed archeologists.”

The pipeline was 87 percent completed in North Dakota at the end of September and is largely completed in South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois.

“We continue to believe that the Army Corps will soon issue the easement for approximately 1,100 feet necessary for the crossing beneath the Missouri River – the sole remaining authorization necessary for completion of the project,” the company said.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it won’t authorize pipeline construction on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The three agencies asked that the company voluntarily pause construction within 20 miles of the lake.

The company on Tuesday urged that any protests “be undertaken in a peaceful and law abiding manner.” Authorities arrested 27 protesters at two construction sites Monday, including actress Shailene Woodley, bringing the total number of arrests to 123.

“All construction efforts will be undertaken in close coordination with state and local law enforcement officials, and we are hopeful their law enforcement efforts will be supplemented by those of the federal government,” the company said.

State officials and lawmakers have decried the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the Corps is withholding the lake-crossing easement and allowing protesters to camp on Corps-owned land. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs, and Monday’s response involved deputies from Wisconsin – the first time out-of-state officers have been used.

Actress Woodley released from jail after arrest at Dakota Access protests

By Mike Nowatzki on Oct 10, 2016 at 9:59 p.m.

ST. ANTHONY, N.D. – Authorities arrested Hollywood actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other protesters at two Dakota Access construction sites in Morton County on Monday, Oct. 10, as pipeline opponents vowed to keep disrupting the project after an appeals court ruling Sunday that allows work to resume on a 20-mile stretch west of Lake Oahe.

Despite the court’s ruling, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Monday it won’t authorize construction of the $3.8 billion pipeline on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The Corps also repeated its request that Dakota Access LLC voluntarily pause all construction activity within 20 miles east or west of the lake. A company spokeswoman did not return a message seeking comment.

Monday marked the most arrests in one day since protests of the four-state, 1,172-mile pipeline began two months ago just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, where tribal members fear the pipeline will leak and contaminate their water supply and destroy sacred sites on ancestral lands.

Authorities were notified about 7:15 a.m. Monday that two protesters had attached themselves to construction equipment about 2 miles southwest of St. Anthony, Morton County Sheriff’s

Department spokesman Rob Keller said. Both were arrested for felony reckless endangerment, and a third person filming the event also was arrested, he said.

A few miles south along Highway 6, about 200 protesters converged on the west side of the road where the pipeline is strung but not yet buried, including Woodley, who live-streamed video of the protest on Facebook. The star of the "Divergent" film series was arrested at 12:05 p.m. on suspicion of criminal trespass and engaging in a riot, the same basis for most of the 27 arrests, said Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney, operations chief.

Woodley was released on $500 bond about 3:30 p.m. Her next court appearance will be Oct. 24.

Protesters erected an uncovered teepee in the pipeline corridor, and more than a dozen people who locked arms inside it were arrested. The 27 arrests brings the total to 123 so far. More than 100 law enforcement officers, many of them wearing riot gear, responded to the scene, directing protesters back across the fence line and forming a human barricade to keep them off the construction site. Protesters formed their own line less than 10 feet away, holding signs, pounding drums and yelling refrains such as "Respect our land, respect our water, honor our treaties." "They plan to continue building, and we plan to continue to disrupt," a protester declared through a bullhorn. No physical violence was reported. But Laney disputed claims that it was a peaceful protest, noting protesters used threatening speech, refused to leave when asked and, at one point, surrounded a deputy who was arresting a protester, forcing another deputy to break up the circle. "This was not a protest," he said. "This was a riot." Watch the video below to see Woodley's arrest. Fast-forward to the last five minutes of the video to see the arrest.

Robby Romero, an Apache from Taos, N.M., criticized what he described as the militarized police response, complete with an armored Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle parked at the top of the hill on Highway 6 overlooking the protest. "This is a crazy response to a peaceful resistance to something that is so dangerous to all life," he said, adding, "We will win this fight, peacefully. We come with prayer and feathers. They come with weapons of destruction." Both protests took place outside the 20-mile zones east and west of the Missouri River at Lake Oahe where a federal appeals court had ordered Dakota Access LLC to pause construction while the court decided on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction. The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., issued a ruling Sunday rejecting the tribe's request and dissolving the 20-mile, no-work zone.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it hopes to conclude its review soon. The agencies said they "continue to respect the right to peaceful protest and expect people to obey the law." "We also look forward to a serious discussion during a series of consultations, starting with a listening session in Phoenix on Tuesday, on whether there should be nationwide reform on the Tribal consultation process for these types of infrastructure projects," they said.

Officers from Wisconsin assisted in Monday's response. Schools in nearby St. Anthony and Flasher went on lockdown. Laney said the 200 to 300 protesters who took part are a "distinct" group within the 2,500 to 3,000 mostly peaceful people camping along Highway 1806 about 25 miles away near the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers. He said protesters' message has been heard “loud and clear” over the last 62 days, but added “the courts have ruled” and the company has a legal right to do construction. “If their determination is that they’re going to … do everything they can to stop this work, I guess we’re going to be here for a while,” he said.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Fort Randall Dam Passed Test Posed By Historic 2011 Flood (Yankton Daily)

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net | 0 comments

EDITORS’ NOTE: The following is part of a series of periodic articles on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 Missouri River flood, its aftermath and a look at the present and future.

For Tom Curran, the 2011 Missouri River flooding at Pickstown forced him to take unprecedented action.

The Fort Randall Dam project manager opened up all the flood tunnels to handle the torrent of water.

“We had releases of 156,000 cubic feet per second (cfs),” he said. “It was the first time in the history of the dam that we fully opened all four flood tunnels.”

The 2011 releases – which amounted to one million gallons per second – more than doubled the old record of 67,000 cfs during 1997 flooding.

When it came to moving the flood water, the first preference was to run the flow through the Fort Randall power plant to gain hydropower, Curran said. The eight turbines produce a combined 320 megawatts of power.

Fort Randall produces enough power for a city of 250,000 people, according to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates.

“We continued to run our hydropower (during the flood),” Curran said. “We put out about 40,000 cfs through the power plant. The powerhouse was generating full capacity for those three months.”

Besides hydropower, the alternatives were running the water through the flood tunnels, spillway or a combination of both.

Fort Randall, completed in 1956, stands slightly more than two miles wide, at 10,700 feet, and 165 feet tall with a 140-foot water fall. Lake Francis Case runs for 107 miles behind the dam and backs up to the Big Bend Dam.

Fort Randall forms part of the Missouri River system of dams, Curran said. As such, the six dams need to remain in coordination for moving the flood water.

“The dams work together as a whole. They balance what each reservoir can hold and the flow each one can put through the power plant,” he said.

“Each one is a little bit unique, but they operate as a system. When the upper reservoirs are near their capacity, the rest of the water has to be moved downstream through all the dams.”

LIFE CHANGES

The flood affected all facets of life up and down the river, Curran said.

The Corps provided technical assistance to the Yankton Sioux Tribe amidst its flooding concerns, he said. Charles Mix County and the tribe had sustained $1 million in damages during previous flash flooding, and tribal members were displaced from their homes.

Most tribal members lived in homes on bluffs or other sites protected from the Missouri River flooding in 2011, Curran said. However, the Corps did warn tribal members about the dangers of bank erosion caused by the flooding, he said.

Downstream, the flooding inundated farmland, primarily in Charles Mix and Bon Homme counties on the South Dakota side of the river. On the Nebraska side, the river flooded housing developments such as Lazy River Acres.

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) closed stretches of Highway 12 east and west of Niobrara, Nebraska, throughout the summer. As a result, traffic was diverted and commuters and first responders were forced to find alternative routes.

The flooding didn’t shut down Niobrara State Park, Niobrara, Chief Standing Bear Memorial Bridge or the Ohiya Casino. However, a number of travelers avoided the area because they encountered accessibility problems or mistakenly thought those sites were closed.

As a result, the economy – tourism, retail businesses, restaurants and bars – took a major hit.

While traditional tourism may have suffered in some areas, Fort Randall Dam saw an influx of a different type of visitor, Curran said.

“We had people from all over the country who wanted to see what the water looked like (when it was) that high and when it was released,” he said. “Our people (with the Corps) were visiting with people every day (about the flood). We had longer hours every day just because people were coming through, looking and asking questions. We also had questions about the reservoirs and parks.”

In addition, the Corps worked with conservation agencies on issues dealing with wildlife, Curran said. The Corps also monitored the changing course of the Missouri River and the increased sedimentation caused by the flooding, he said.

Lake Francis Case and Lewis and Clark Lake remained open for recreation, Curran said. However, flooding affected area campgrounds, boat ramps and other sites.

“As a reservoir, we had record pool levels in 2011. We were pretty much a half-foot from being totally full,” he said. “A lot of recreational facilities were flooded at that level, and a lot of the recreation areas were closed.”

The Missouri River and Lake Francis Case saw a great deal of pent-up demand the following year, Curran said. The boating and fishing numbers soared after the flooding.

“It was really busy in 2012,” he said. “Things really picked up and rebounded that year.”

LESSONS LEARNED

In 2012, the Corps embarked on a number of projects as part of regular maintenance and from the flooding. The inspections looked at the gates, cables, spillway and embankment.

Curran, who has worked at Fort Randall since 1999, said he has always remained confident about the stability of the dam and reservoir. His confidence was reinforced during and after an unprecedented event such as the 2011 flooding, he said.

Fort Randall handled the stress despite months of intense flood pressure on the dam, he said.

“That was kind of the test. The dam held up great. We did really well with no operation problems,” he said. “Afterwards, we had a really thorough survey of everything, and it was just the normal wear-and-tear items. We worked after the flood to see if everything was in good shape and if we’re ready to go should this (flood) ever happen again.”

In that respect, the flood showed the dam’s capability, Curran said.

“It was interesting to see what would happen during a high-water event,” he said. “The flood pushed everything to its limits, but there really wasn’t anything that stuck out as a problem or issue.”

Col. John Henderson, the Omaha District commander for the Corps of Engineers, visited Fort Randall Dam earlier this year.

Henderson reflected on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 flood and emphasized the importance of two-way communication between the Corps and stakeholders, according to a Corps publication.

“I think the timing of this trip is appropriate since we are only five years removed from the single most significant hydrological event to occur in this basin in the last 100-plus years,” he said.

“One of the key lessons learned following that event was the need for an ongoing commitment to open and frank dialogue throughout the basin. This inspection trip is an example of our efforts to maintain that dialogue.”

Curran still sees and hears about the flood’s impact from those most affected by it.

“I think there are some people who were intimately involved with the high water and flooding who haven’t forgotten about it,” he said. “But there are other areas where things are improving. People are doing some of the things they had always planned to do, and it looks nice.”

Echoing Henderson’s sentiment, Curran said the flood showed the importance of communicating with all people up and down the river.

“As far as what was learned, I would say communication and getting the word out, again and again, to let people know what to expect,” he said.

“We’re working to provide people with a better understanding of how the dams and reservoir system work. We want them to have an understanding if anything like this (flooding) should ever happen again.”

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Region VIII Clips
Tuesday, October 11, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* Two Colorado groups won grants to work on emergency preparedness and underground mine safety… A nonprofit group is asking for donations to help rebuild Haiti after Hurricane Matthew… A donation center has been set up to help victims of the Beulah Hill Fire…. Estes Park will have a public meeting October 26 to discuss floodplain issues… A follow-up article on the federal investigation in Lyons says the FBI is not pursuing a case, and that HUD is focused on contracts between Lyons and a company called Front Range Land Solutions and its owner, former Lyons planner Rosi Dennett.
- *Montana:* A TV station did a story on a Red Cross volunteer heading to help with Hurricane Matthew.
- *North Dakota:* An ag journal reports on a new disaster application that can help small businesses. It uses information from ready.gov and makes it a fill-in-the-blank app for smartphones and tablets… The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reports on the split between Fargo/Moorhead and the state of Minnesota over the proposed diversion project. The article details the reasons for Minnesota's opposition and notes potential problems in getting congressional approval to go ahead with the project…. Two articles report on the pipeline protest: the courts have denied an emergency injunction to prevent construction, but three federal agencies continue reviewing the issues raised by the protestors and have asked the company to voluntarily suspend construction pending that review. Another article reports on the protests: actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other protestors were arrested Monday, the highest one-day total so far, bringing the total number arrested to 123. The protestors have since been released.
- *South Dakota:* A part of a continuing series looking back at the 2011 flood reports on how the Fort Randall Dam held up.
- *Utah:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Wyoming:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Other FEMA-related stories:*

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

STORIES

COLORADO:

Mine rescue training, emergency preparedness grants awarded (KOAA TV 5)

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) - Six groups will share $1 million in grants to develop training for emergency preparedness and accident prevention in underground mines.

The U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration announced the Brookwood-Sago grants last week.

Receiving grants are the University of Arizona, the Colorado School of Mines, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Rend Lake College in Ina, Illinois, the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, and West Virginia University.

WVU says in a news release that the university will use a grant of nearly $172,000 to integrate fire brigades and mine rescue teams in an emergency involving fire and trapped miners.

The grant program is named in remembrance of 25 men who died in mining explosions in Alabama in 2001 and at the Sago Mine in West Virginia in 2006.

Colorado group helping Haiti rebuild after hurricane (FOX 31 Denver)

LOUISVILLE, Colo. – A Colorado nonprofit dedicated to rebuilding rural Haiti is asking for some emergency donations following Hurricane Matthew.

The Colorado Haiti Project has been doing work in Petit-Trou-de-Nippes for almost 30 years. The group focuses on long term rebuilding projects like education, agriculture, livelihood and clean water.

CHP has one dedicated project manager living in Haiti full-time. The Louisville based organization sends several groups throughout the year to do aid work.

They built a school that serves nearly 400 Haitian children. The school suffered major damage in the storm.

“When you look inside any room everything is just thrown all over the place,” explained CHP’s Teresa Henry. “Now they have no books and everything in the classrooms is gone.”

Her co-worker who is in Haiti right now says about half of the community's homes are gone. She also says almost all of the crops have been leveled and most of the livestock has perished.

"They don't have bank accounts. In Haiti, you consider your bank your goats and cows. That is your income," Henry said. "All their crops have been lost. All of it. They have nothing for their livelihood."

She worries if they can't help Haitians rebuild fast enough, the region will eventually starve.

"We're concerned about making sure they eat enough through the winter so getting the crops back in the ground is huge," she said.

CHP is doing several emergency fundraisers to help their Haitian community rebuild and replant. You can visit their website to donate and find more information about local fundraising opportunities.

The money will go directly to the small rural communities where Coloradan are helping rebuild by hand. Their project manager in Haiti will return to Colorado later this week and CHP will decide within the next two weeks a rebuild plan-of-action for the next 12 months.

The group believes donating to them is a good way for Coloradans to see exactly where their money is going and how it is being used.

"You can be like one degree away from where you make your donation," Henry said

Donation center set up for Beulah Hill Fire victims (Pueblo Chieftain)

October 11, 2016

A donation center for victims of the Beulah Hill Fire opened Sunday morning and plenty of donors had already walked through the doors and dropped items off by Monday afternoon.

Beulah Hill Fire at 95 percent containment; blaze expected to be fully contained by Sunday Free pain/injury screening for firefighters

Kathy Hayden of the Adventist Community Services Disaster Response Team said that by 2:30 p.m. Monday there had already been about 30 community members who had stopped by the donation center to bring items of need.

The donation center, located at the Colorado Building on the Colorado State Fairgrounds, was filled with clothing, kitchenware, blankets, sleeping bags, food, water, cleaning and laundry supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, assorted toiletries, tools, shoes and some toys.

A woman was seen Monday afternoon getting out of her car and bringing numerous bags of items to the donation center for victims of last week's Beulah Hill Fire, which burned 5,232 acres of land, destroyed eight homes and forced the entire Beulah Valley to be evacuated until some residents began returning on Wednesday and Thursday, and the rest on Friday.

Volunteers strolled the inside of the Colorado Building, sorting out donated items and organizing racks and shelves.

"It's wonderful to see so many people helping out and taking care of each other," Hayden said.

Beulah residents have been stopping by the donation center since Sunday morning to pick up needed items and can continue to do so.

"They've been really good about it," Hayden said. "They're just taking what they need."

The donation center is open daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Sunday.

Hayden said the most needed items right now are children's clothing, food and tools.

"A lot of people lost tools," said Robyn Knappe, a voluntary agency liaison for the Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management.

Hayden, who thanked firefighters and emergency crews for their tireless work in battling the blaze, said she's happy the disaster response team can play a role in helping families who lost so much in the wildfire.

"At least maybe we can do something to help put their lives back together," she said.

ryans@chieftain.com

Public encouraged to review new Estes Valley hydrology data Oct. 26 (Estes Park Trail Gazette)

Study contributes to a safer, more resilient community

Town of Estes Park - For the Trail Gazette

POSTED: 10/11/2016 09:38:17 AM MDT

The Town of Estes Park and its consultant, Wright Water Engineers, will present the results of a scientific hydrology study of the Big Thompson River, Black Canyon Creek, Dry Gulch and Fall River on Wednesday, Oct. 26, at 8 a.m. in the Town Board Room of Town Hall, 170 MacGregor Ave. Other topics discussed will be a preliminary map of new floodplain boundaries in the downtown area and how this study impacts floodplain management. The completion of the study is a milestone in the process of ensuring a safer, more resilient Estes Park community. Study results will be available for review at www.estes.org/floodmitigation by Oct. 21.

Educational resources on the hydrology study and other flood mitigation efforts are also posted to this site as they become available.

The Oct. 26 meeting is targeted to both a general interest audience and particularly those concerned with development and flood mitigation opportunities, as the hydrology data is part of the floodplain permitting process. Wright Water Engineers will present the results and be available to answer both general and technical questions. Staff from the Colorado Water Conservation Board will discuss preliminary floodplain maps and staff from the Colorado Resiliency and Recovery Office will be in attendance to answer questions. This meeting will be streamed live on local cable channel 12 and via www.estes.org/videos. It will also be recorded for viewing later via www.estes.org/videos. The Town Board will review the information during a study session the evening of Oct. 25.

The 2013 flood was a stark reminder of flood risk, and the Town is taking action to better understand the hazards Estes Park's residents face. The hydrology study results will serve as the basis of flood mitigation projects and a key part of future flood mitigation decisions. In addition, the new information may help the Town receive grants. It will also provide data for new floodplain maps, which will go into effect in the coming years.

The Town will also host a workshop for realtors, lenders and insurance agents on flood insurance topics presented by FEMA staff Oct. 24, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Estes Park Museum, 200 4th St.

For more information on flood mitigation efforts, please visitwww.estes.org/floodmitigation or contact Floodplain Manager and Planner Tina Kurtz at 970-577-3732 or tkurtz@estes.org.

Lyons residents: 'We're just starting to get it together' (Boulder Daily Camera)

Federal scrutiny stirs concern in town that has struggled

By Amelia Arvesen
Staff Writer

The town of Lyons has submitted to more than one waiting game.

People there have been waiting to rebuild their town and now they're waiting on a federal investigation into the flood-recovery process.

"I'm frustrated because I'd like to know what's going on instead of waiting," longtime resident Craig Ferguson said. "There's been a lot of waiting for three years."

As Lyons entered its fourth year of reconstruction following the devastating September 2013 flood, the FBI and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development stopped by to seize documents and computers to probe the handling of federal flood-recovery funding.

Communities savaged by the rushing waters have been receiving fund allocations, totaling millions of dollars from several federal sources, such as HUD and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Late Friday, Mayor Connie Sullivan released a statement on behalf of the town's Board of Trustees, stating that the FBI had concluded its portion of the investigation and would not be proceeding with a case.

Also posted to the town's website was a copy of a subpoena from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, stating that a focus of its investigation was documents relating to negotiations and grant services contracts between Lyons and Longmont-based Front Range Land Solutions.

The subpoena also seeks all "invoices, bills, receipts, and other documents" reflecting charges or payments with respect to that company and its owner, Rosi Dennett.

Dennett, who could not be reached for comment Friday night, identifies herself on her Linkedin page as having served as Town Planner for Lyons from April 2004 to December 2008.

Ferguson, Planet Bluegrass president, said before the flood the town could only fathom a budget of $1 million per year, and suddenly they were expected to keep track of exponentially more in the midst of disaster.

"To take care of that is a completely different job," Ferguson said. "Mistakes might have been made. Personally, I guess, I'm kind of hoping that things can be corrected quickly and it's not personal."

Apparently as a precaution into the investigation's integrity, both the town administrator and clerk were placed on temporary leave and replaced in the interim. Sullivan has said the move should not be construed as a suspicion of wrongdoing by those employees.

Ferguson said he knows most town officials well after living in Lyons 25 years and he said he has a hard time believing there was any foul play.

A hope 'someone is held accountable'

On Friday, LaVern Johnson sat under a shade of an awning behind her house, where she hosted a yard sale benefitting the Lyons Historical Society.

"Why Lyons?" Johnson asked.

She said many people are upset, saddened and disappointed by the mayor's brief and formal announcement Wednesday night at Town Hall that provided little information.

"I would say they could've made mistakes somewhere," Johnson said. "I don't think they did anything that is illegal as to taking money and those kinds of things. I don't know what they're after. I don't know how they could abscond with any money."

A man who did not provide his name and who lives in Lyons' Confluence neighborhood — an area that was hit hard by the flood — said nobody would be interested in what he has to say on the issue.

"I hope someone is held accountable," he said.

At The Stone Cup in downtown Lyons, employee and resident of 12 years Robin Young said she has worked eight hours five days in a row and that the topic has come up. She said the town chatter is that people are frustrated with the lack of information, but also understand that town officials can't say too much yet.

"There's great, great people here and it's been a long three years," Young said. "But I believe, from what I've heard, people are taking a wait-and-see approach and are just anxious."

Ferguson said while the investigation is somewhat a blemish on trust, he is confident the mayor and town board were doing their best and he would be surprised if it involved criminal behavior.

"We just don't need that right now," he said. "We're just starting to get it together."

Johnson said she trusts the town officials. She is confident they've done everything they can in light of the devastation the community has been through.

"With things like this going on, I don't think we can ever recover," Johnson said. "How can you recover when somebody is going to accuse you? I think it's sad."

Johnson said she is also surprised by how much the town has accomplished, such as designing Bohn Park. She said as the town works on the budget, it's not taking on new project proposals, and sticking to the 2016 budget when planning for next year.

A punch in the gut

The continuous beeping of construction vehicles working on streets nearby echoed through the neighborhoods. Sections of streets were peeled back, revealing the dirt below.

Jenny Voss, out walking her dog near the former Foothills Mobile Home Park, said she did not know more than what has already been revealed.

Carrie Davis-Gonzales, who lost her mobile home near the creek, was watching broadcast news reports about the hurricane in Florida Friday afternoon. She moved three years ago to the only remaining home in the park.

In response to the recent investigation of Lyons, she said she is more unquestioning than maybe she should be. She said as a result of trying to rebuild a mobile home park, she has researched and discovered similar federal investigations into devastated towns — from the benign to the extreme.

"From the outside, I can't really say what's going on in there but it could be so tiny because they are extremely meticulous," she said.

It would be difficult to screw up, she said, and wrongdoing would be even harder.

"It's not back in the day where they'd come in with money bags — this is all done electronically," Davis-Gonzales said, sitting on her front porch with a view of the abandoned mobile homes.

State Rep. Jonathan Singer, the Longmont Democrat whose House District 11 includes Lyons, said over the phone it's just another punch in residents' gut — another reminder that they haven't bounced back 100 percent from where they were more than three years ago.

"People are sort of worn down and worn out," Singer said. "They haven't given up but it's really hard to hear from another person, 'Well I know you don't want to hear this but we need to follow this new process.' Obviously that's going to wear anyone out."

He said some people still haven't been able to return home, and some people may never get to.

And while, Davis-Gonzales has been living in the only home left on the mobile home property, she is living each day thinking the next could be her last in Lyons, since the park owner recently opted for the buyout. Her home for the last three years will eventually be leveled.

Singer said he hopes whatever is under review is as simple as a paperwork error.

"If it is something else, I hope we find out very quickly and then we can move on and we can move forward," he said.

Ferguson said it's been easy for a lot of people to be angry at the slow progress, but he knows realistically the process is complicated.

"I'm sure once they know, they'll want to inform us," he said. "I think when someone comes into your place with a subpoena you need to take three or four days to figure out what it means. I know I would."

Staff writer Charlie Brennan contributed to this report

MONTANA:

Montana Red Cross volunteer helping in wake of Hurricane Matthew (KTVQ-Billings)

Posted: Oct 08, 2016 11:08 AM MST Updated: Oct 08, 2016 11:14 AM MST
By MTN News

KALISPELL - While millions try to escape Hurricane Matthew, Red Cross volunteers are racing into the storm to help with relief efforts, including Joe Kingan with the Flathead County chapter of the American Red Cross.

Kingan had nothing but a cell phone and a bag of survival gear as he waited at Glacier International Airport for his flight.

"Got my headlamp got flashlights, that kind of stuff."

He's been deployed to Hurricane Matthew by the **American Red Cross**, but for the husband and father, perhaps what's most important is his endurance in facing the unknown.

"They want me to go and help, and they're concerned about the safety aspects as well as I am," Kingan said.

The National Weather Service has warned that some places hit by Hurricane Matthew could be uninhabitable for "weeks or months." Kingan will be teaming up with two to four other volunteers to assess the damage.

"We would be recording it and putting it into a database file that actually gets shared with FEMA, other government agencies, Salvation Army, and that data will be used to evaluate future assistant needs," he said.

Kingan said that one tool in particular will play a key role in staying safe as he heads into the danger zone: his smartphone.

"They keep us updated on a regular basis on what's going on in the immediate area where we're located. For example, a while ago I got a text message coming in that alerted us to a tornado warning out in one of the counties in Florida right now with one of the rain bands coming off the hurricane."

Although he leaves a wife and a son behind, he is carrying them with him in spirit.

"We will endure," Kingan concluded. "We like helping other people, so it will be well worth our trip down."

If you would like to join the cause, you can donate blood, text "RedCross to 90-999" to make an automatic $10-dollar or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

NORTH DAKOTA:

New disaster app can help small businesses prepare for the worst (High Plains Journal)

The sprinklers go off by mistake in your office building. A strong wind blows the roof off your lab. You lose all of your computer files in a major crash.

If you own or manage a small business, a disaster like any one of these could put a major dent in your work and your bottom line.

A new phone app won’t fix such problems, but could help a business start operating again more quickly and easily.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app is available free for iOS and Android tablets and smartphones. It was developed by the North Dakota State University Extension Service and Myriad Mobile, Fargo, N.D.

“We used FEMA’s ready.gov information for businesses and the Extension Disaster Education Network’s Ready Business training program to integrate with the functionality of the tablet and smartphone,” said Bob Bertsch, the NDSU web technology specialist who led work on the app’s content. “Yes, there are online templates for business disaster plans, but this app provides portability and functionality.”

The Extension Disaster Education Network is a collaboration of land grant universities focused on reducing the effect of disasters through education. Kansas State University is a part of EDEN and shares preparedness tips on its Prepare Kansas blog.

“There are two things that I have heard small-business owners say repeatedly: The first is they never have enough time. And the second is, ‘Where did I file that?’” said Glenn Muske, NDSU Extension rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist.

The Small Business Disaster Plan app takes on both of those, Muske said, by letting you fill out important disaster plan information, along with supporting photos right from your smartphone or tablet – which you always have with you.

“Of course, you should save the information in the cloud, too, in case your phone or tablet is lost,” he added.

The app lets you enter information for your business, including basic and contact information, emergency planning, evacuation, insurance information and more.

Plans should be reviewed annually, Muske said, so the app uses your phone’s alerts to remind you to review the information at a designated time in the future.

The content can be downloaded as a csv file. The app also encourages you to upload the content to a cloud service such as Dropbox, iCloud, Drop or a similar service for backup.

“Planning is never high on anyone’s list,” Muske said. “But think how easy the process is when the structure is there and you just need to fill in the blanks. That’s exactly what this Small Business Disaster Plan app provides. And because September is National Preparedness Month, it’s a great time to get your business prepared for disasters.”

Development of the Small Business Disaster Plan app for tablets and smartphones was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Minnesota, North Dakota at a standoff over $2 billion Red River project (Star Tribune)

By Josephine Marcotty and Jennifer Brooks Staff writers

A long-simmering fight between Minnesota and North Dakota has broken wide open now that Gov. Mark Dayton has drawn a line down the middle of the Red River by refusing to allow a massive flood diversion project to go forward on his side of the border.

Residents and local leaders in Fargo are outraged at what they say is his administration's cavalier advice to keep sandbagging in the face of ever higher threats of flooding. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and even the mayor of the Minnesota city Moorhead came out swinging last week, vowing to press ahead with the $2.1 billion project.

While proponents say they want to keep talking with Minnesota, the depth of the disagreement about the value and safety of the diversion project is so profound that, other than a legal battle, there is no apparent resolution in sight.

"If there is a confrontation, there will be a confrontation," said Darrell Vanyo, executive director of the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Authority. He said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has all the authority it needs to build a high-hazard dam and flood thousands of acres of mostly farmland on the Minnesota side of the river in order to protect the Fargo-Moorhead urban areas.

But attorneys for residents who have been fighting the project in federal court say that decision would have to be made in Washington, D.C. And riding roughshod over Minnesota, they say, would require strong congressional support.

"The Army Corps, thankfully, is not the king of the United States," said Jerry Von Korff, the attorney representing upstream communities that would be flooded if the project went forward as planned.

And so far, while Congress has approved the project, it's only provided $5 million of the $450 million in federal funds that are part of the deal.

"Just the fact that you've got a lawsuit going on is going to make it difficult to get federal money," said U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson, whose district is bordered by the Red River. "It's hard enough to get things funded without having controversy."

But project supporters didn't seem to heed clear warnings, going back more than a year, that Minnesota was unlikely to grant them the permit they need.

A year ago, Peterson met with diversion officials.

"I asked them, 'What is your Plan B if Minnesota denies the permit?' ”he said.”And they said, 'There is no Plan B.' "

51 floods in 113 years

There is widespread agreement that Fargo needs protection from floods — the question is how.

The Red has flooded 51 of the past 113 years, causing millions of dollars in damage to homes and businesses around Fargo and the region. Across the river, Moorhead sits 4 feet higher and is protected by $130 million worth of walls, dikes and levees that Minnesota has put in place over the years.

After the most recent flood, in 2009, local North Dakota governments asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to come up with a long-term plan. And it came up with a big one.

The Corps would carve a 36-mile ditch around Fargo and build flood control dams across the Wild Rice and Red rivers. In the event of a flood, water from the Red and its five tributaries would be diverted away from Fargo — the region's bustling economic hub — and into miles of North Dakota and Minnesota farmland and prairie.

North Dakota would pay $1.2 billion of the cost and Minnesota would pay $100 million.

If the project goes ahead, a net increase of 2,000 acres in Minnesota would be at risk of flooding. But across the river, many more thousands of acres would be left high and dry and ripe for construction of homes, schools and businesses.

A crucial piece: Construction of what Minnesota officials describe as a "high-hazard" dam across the Red — the kind that would cause catastrophic damage if it fails.

Minnesota officials have been critical of the project for years. They even joined a federal lawsuit to stop preliminary work from going forward while they completed their own environmental review, which was finished last spring.

Then last week Tom Landwehr, commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, announced that the state would not grant a permit for the dam on Minnesota's side of the project. It didn't meet Minnesota's environmental laws or standards, he said. Instead, Minnesota suggested that current and planned flood mitigation projects around Fargo, in combination with emergency measures like sandbagging and evacuation, were more likely to be in the public interest.

'Shifts the burden'

Vanyo said the Diversion Authority and the Army Corps will keep talking with Minnesota officials to try and resolve differences. But the document Landwehr provided to support the DNR's decision suggests they may be insurmountable.

More than half the area that would be protected by the dam and diversion channel is now flood plain that would be open to development in the future, the document says. But dams "can, and do, fail," the DNR said. "Allowing development in vulnerable areas would increase the consequences of a dam failure. ..."

The DNR said the corps has underestimated the number of potential deaths if the dam were to fail and exaggerated the time Fargo would have to evacuate in such an event.

Peterson pointed out that Minnesota hasn't approved a new high-hazard dam in decades. "It's one thing when you've got a flood and it comes up slowly and you can deal with it," he said. "But it's another if you're behind a 20- or 30-foot-high dam and it breaks and water rushes through."

The DNR also noted that the Diversion Authority would be financially liable for a dam failure but questioned whether the quasi-governmental organization has sufficient financial wherewithal to pay.

In addition, the DNR argues that the Army Corps overestimated the financial benefits to the community by at least $41 million. The claimed benefits are "misleading" because they include flood control projects that would occur with or without the diversion project and improperly include temporary economic impacts of constructing the project itself.

In short, the DNR said, "The proposed Project … simply shifts the burden of flooding from one sparsely developed rural area to another."

Melissa Samet, an attorney with the National Wildlife Federation familiar with the Army Corps, said Congress has expressly discouraged projects that alter the natural processes of rivers, result in the unwise use of flood plains, or encourage development into undeveloped areas.

"And this project absolutely does that," she said.

The DNR argues that the vast majority of Fargo's developed area is already protected by existing or planned flood projects and that remaining areas can be protected in an emergency the way Fargo has always done it — with evacuations and sandbagging.

But that's cold comfort to the people of Fargo, who look at every spring thaw with trepidation, said local officials. They say thousands of Fargo's buildings are at risk if rising flood projections come true and relying on a strategy of business as usual is dangerous.

"Are we going to flood this spring?" Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney said, describing residents' mind-set in a radio interview this week. "We think people are tired of sandbagging."

Work to resume on Dakota Access Pipeline near Lake Oahe

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 9:34 a.m.

BISMARCK – The company building the Dakota Access Pipeline said Tuesday, Oct. 11, it looks forward to a "prompt resumption" of construction near Lake Oahe and hopes the federal government will assist local law enforcement officials dealing with protests of the pipeline.

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners released a statement saying it is pleased with a federal appeals court decision Sunday denying the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction to stop construction of the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline that will carry 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day from North Dakota to Illinois.

The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., also lifted a temporary suspension of construction activities within 20 miles east and west of Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River.

"In light of Sunday's court decision, Dakota Access looks forward to a prompt resumption of construction activities east and west of Lake Oahe on private land. We reiterate our commitment to protect cultural resources, the environment and public safety," the company said.

Company spokeswoman Vicki Granado declined to specify when the company will resume construction in the 20-mile area, which includes the area along Highway 1806 where protest activities to block pipeline construction began Aug. 10. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 American Indians and other pipeline opponents are encamped along the highway and have drawn international support.

The proposed construction area also includes a stretch west of Highway 1806 that was bulldozed on Sept. 3, the day after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed court documents identifying that part of the route as containing burial grounds and other sacred sites. Angry protesters clashed with the pipeline's private security that day, with both sides claiming injuries, and a joint law enforcement task force is investigating the incident.

Last week, state archeologists concluded that no sacred sites were destroyed, but the tribe disputes that conclusion because its historic preservation officer wasn't allowed to participate in the survey. The tribe's ongoing lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contends the agency didn't properly consult the tribe before granting permits for the project.

Energy Transfer Partners said the decisions by two separate federal courts show otherwise.

"The Army Corps and Dakota Access carefully considered the views of all potentially affected tribes that chose to participate in the consultative process prescribed by Congress, and fully complied with both the letter and the spirit of the National Historic Preservation Act," the company said. "Their careful and sensitive work has been reviewed and approved by highly qualified private and state-employed archeologists."

The pipeline was 87 percent completed in North Dakota at the end of September and is largely completed in South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois.

"We continue to believe that the Army Corps will soon issue the easement for approximately 1,100 feet necessary for the crossing beneath the Missouri River – the sole remaining authorization necessary for completion of the project," the company said.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it won't authorize pipeline construction on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The three agencies asked that the company voluntarily pause construction within 20 miles of the lake.

The company on Tuesday urged that any protests "be undertaken in a peaceful and law abiding manner." Authorities arrested 27 protesters at two construction sites Monday, including actress Shailene Woodley, bringing the total number of arrests to 123.

"All construction efforts will be undertaken in close coordination with state and local law enforcement officials, and we are hopeful their law enforcement efforts will be supplemented by those of the federal government," the company said.

State officials and lawmakers have decried the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the Corps is withholding the lake-crossing easement and allowing protesters to camp on Corps-owned land. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs, and Monday's response involved deputies from Wisconsin – the first time out-of-state officers have been used.

Actress Woodley released from jail after arrest at Dakota Access protests

By Mike Nowatzki on Oct 10, 2016 at 9:59 p.m.

ST. ANTHONY, N.D. – Authorities arrested Hollywood actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other protesters at two Dakota Access construction sites in Morton County on Monday, Oct. 10, as pipeline opponents vowed to keep disrupting the project after an appeals court ruling Sunday that allows work to resume on a 20-mile stretch west of Lake Oahe.

Despite the court's ruling, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Monday it won't authorize construction of the $3.8 billion pipeline on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The Corps also repeated its request that Dakota Access LLC voluntarily pause all construction activity within 20 miles east or west of the lake. A company spokeswoman did not return a message seeking comment.

Monday marked the most arrests in one day since protests of the four-state, 1,172-mile pipeline began two months ago just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, where tribal members fear the pipeline will leak and contaminate their water supply and destroy sacred sites on ancestral lands.

Authorities were notified about 7:15 a.m. Monday that two protesters had attached themselves to construction equipment about 2 miles southwest of St. Anthony, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. Both were arrested for felony reckless endangerment, and a third person filming the event also was arrested, he said.

A few miles south along Highway 6, about 200 protesters converged on the west side of the road where the pipeline is strung but not yet buried, including Woodley, who live-streamed video of the protest on Facebook. The star of the "Divergent" film series was arrested at 12:05 p.m. on suspicion of criminal trespass and engaging in a riot, the same basis for most of the 27 arrests, said Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney, operations chief.

Woodley was released on $500 bond about 3:30 p.m. Her next court appearance will be Oct. 24.

Protesters erected an uncovered teepee in the pipeline corridor, and more than a dozen people who locked arms inside it were arrested. The 27 arrests brings the total to 123 so far. More than 100 law enforcement officers, many of them wearing riot gear, responded to the scene, directing protesters back across the fence line and forming a human barricade to keep them off the construction site. Protesters formed their own line less than 10 feet away, holding signs, pounding drums and yelling refrains such as "Respect our land, respect our water, honor our

treaties." "They plan to continue building, and we plan to continue to disrupt," a protester declared through a bullhorn. No physical violence was reported. But Laney disputed claims that it was a peaceful protest, noting protesters used threatening speech, refused to leave when asked and, at one point, surrounded a deputy who was arresting a protester, forcing another deputy to break up the circle. "This was not a protest," he said. "This was a riot." Watch the video below to see Woodley's arrest. Fast-forward to the last five minutes of the video to see the arrest.

Robby Romero, an Apache from Taos, N.M., criticized what he described as the militarized police response, complete with an armored Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle parked at the top of the hill on Highway 6 overlooking the protest. "This is a crazy response to a peaceful resistance to something that is so dangerous to all life," he said, adding, "We will win this fight, peacefully. We come with prayer and feathers. They come with weapons of destruction." Both protests took place outside the 20-mile zones east and west of the Missouri River at Lake Oahe where a federal appeals court had ordered Dakota Access LLC to pause construction while the court decided on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction. The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., issued a ruling Sunday rejecting the tribe's request and dissolving the 20-mile, no-work zone.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it hopes to conclude its review soon. The agencies said they "continue to respect the right to peaceful protest and expect people to obey the law." "We also look forward to a serious discussion during a series of consultations, starting with a listening session in Phoenix on Tuesday, on whether there should be nationwide reform on the Tribal consultation process for these types of infrastructure projects," they said.

Officers from Wisconsin assisted in Monday's response. Schools in nearby St. Anthony and Flasher went on lockdown. Laney said the 200 to 300 protesters who took part are a "distinct" group within the 2,500 to 3,000 mostly peaceful people camping along Highway 1806 about 25 miles away near the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers. He said protesters' message has been heard "loud and clear" over the last 62 days, but added "the courts have ruled" and the company has a legal right to do construction. "If their determination is that they're going to … do everything they can to stop this work, I guess we're going to be here for a while," he said.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Fort Randall Dam Passed Test Posed By Historic 2011 Flood (Yankton Daily)

BY RANDY DOCKENDORF randy.dockendorf@yankton.net | 0 comments

EDITORS' NOTE: The following is part of a series of periodic articles on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 Missouri River flood, its aftermath and a look at the present and future.

For Tom Curran, the 2011 Missouri River flooding at Pickstown forced him to take unprecedented action.

The Fort Randall Dam project manager opened up all the flood tunnels to handle the torrent of water.

“We had releases of 156,000 cubic feet per second (cfs),” he said. “It was the first time in the history of the dam that we fully opened all four flood tunnels.”

The 2011 releases – which amounted to one million gallons per second – more than doubled the old record of 67,000 cfs during 1997 flooding.

When it came to moving the flood water, the first preference was to run the flow through the Fort Randall power plant to gain hydropower, Curran said. The eight turbines produce a combined 320 megawatts of power.

Fort Randall produces enough power for a city of 250,000 people, according to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates.

“We continued to run our hydropower (during the flood),” Curran said. “We put out about 40,000 cfs through the power plant. The powerhouse was generating full capacity for those three months.”

Besides hydropower, the alternatives were running the water through the flood tunnels, spillway or a combination of both.

Fort Randall, completed in 1956, stands slightly more than two miles wide, at 10,700 feet, and 165 feet tall with a 140-foot water fall. Lake Francis Case runs for 107 miles behind the dam and backs up to the Big Bend Dam.

Fort Randall forms part of the Missouri River system of dams, Curran said. As such, the six dams need to remain in coordination for moving the flood water.

“The dams work together as a whole. They balance what each reservoir can hold and the flow each one can put through the power plant,” he said.

“Each one is a little bit unique, but they operate as a system. When the upper reservoirs are near their capacity, the rest of the water has to be moved downstream through all the dams.”

LIFE CHANGES

The flood affected all facets of life up and down the river, Curran said.

The Corps provided technical assistance to the Yankton Sioux Tribe amidst its flooding concerns, he said. Charles Mix County and the tribe had sustained $1 million in damages during previous flash flooding, and tribal members were displaced from their homes.

Most tribal members lived in homes on bluffs or other sites protected from the Missouri River flooding in 2011, Curran said. However, the Corps did warn tribal members about the dangers of bank erosion caused by the flooding, he said.

Downstream, the flooding inundated farmland, primarily in Charles Mix and Bon Homme counties on the South Dakota side of the river. On the Nebraska side, the river flooded housing developments such as Lazy River Acres.

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) closed stretches of Highway 12 east and west of Niobrara, Nebraska, throughout the summer. As a result, traffic was diverted and commuters and first responders were forced to find alternative routes.

The flooding didn't shut down Niobrara State Park, Niobrara, Chief Standing Bear Memorial Bridge or the Ohiya Casino. However, a number of travelers avoided the area because they encountered accessibility problems or mistakenly thought those sites were closed.

As a result, the economy – tourism, retail businesses, restaurants and bars – took a major hit.

While traditional tourism may have suffered in some areas, Fort Randall Dam saw an influx of a different type of visitor, Curran said.

"We had people from all over the country who wanted to see what the water looked like (when it was) that high and when it was released," he said. "Our people (with the Corps) were visiting with people every day (about the flood). We had longer hours every day just because people were coming through, looking and asking questions. We also had questions about the reservoirs and parks."

In addition, the Corps worked with conservation agencies on issues dealing with wildlife, Curran said. The Corps also monitored the changing course of the Missouri River and the increased sedimentation caused by the flooding, he said.

Lake Francis Case and Lewis and Clark Lake remained open for recreation, Curran said. However, flooding affected area campgrounds, boat ramps and other sites.

"As a reservoir, we had record pool levels in 2011. We were pretty much a half-foot from being totally full," he said. "A lot of recreational facilities were flooded at that level, and a lot of the recreation areas were closed."

The Missouri River and Lake Francis Case saw a great deal of pent-up demand the following year, Curran said. The boating and fishing numbers soared after the flooding.

"It was really busy in 2012," he said. "Things really picked up and rebounded that year."

LESSONS LEARNED

In 2012, the Corps embarked on a number of projects as part of regular maintenance and from the flooding. The inspections looked at the gates, cables, spillway and embankment.

Curran, who has worked at Fort Randall since 1999, said he has always remained confident about the stability of the dam and reservoir. His confidence was reinforced during and after an unprecedented event such as the 2011 flooding, he said.

Fort Randall handled the stress despite months of intense flood pressure on the dam, he said.

“That was kind of the test. The dam held up great. We did really well with no operation problems,” he said. “Afterwards, we had a really thorough survey of everything, and it was just the normal wear-and-tear items. We worked after the flood to see if everything was in good shape and if we’re ready to go should this (flood) ever happen again.”

In that respect, the flood showed the dam’s capability, Curran said.

“It was interesting to see what would happen during a high-water event,” he said. “The flood pushed everything to its limits, but there really wasn’t anything that stuck out as a problem or issue.”

Col. John Henderson, the Omaha District commander for the Corps of Engineers, visited Fort Randall Dam earlier this year.

Henderson reflected on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 flood and emphasized the importance of two-way communication between the Corps and stakeholders, according to a Corps publication.

“I think the timing of this trip is appropriate since we are only five years removed from the single most significant hydrological event to occur in this basin in the last 100-plus years,” he said.

“One of the key lessons learned following that event was the need for an ongoing commitment to open and frank dialogue throughout the basin. This inspection trip is an example of our efforts to maintain that dialogue.”

Curran still sees and hears about the flood’s impact from those most affected by it.

“I think there are some people who were intimately involved with the high water and flooding who haven’t forgotten about it,” he said. “But there are other areas where things are improving. People are doing some of the things they had always planned to do, and it looks nice.”

Echoing Henderson’s sentiment, Curran said the flood showed the importance of communicating with all people up and down the river.

“As far as what was learned, I would say communication and getting the word out, again and again, to let people know what to expect,” he said.

“We’re working to provide people with a better understanding of how the dams and reservoir system work. We want them to have an understanding if anything like this (flooding) should ever happen again.”

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 26 Oct 2016 12:00:13 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.co.us';(b)(6)@mail.mil'(b)(6)@mail.mil';(b)(6
(b)(6@nd.gov';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@state.sd.us';(b)(6)@utah.gov';(b)(6)@wyo.gov'(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov';(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';'(b)(6)@usace.army.mil';'(b)(6)@state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;'(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov';(b)(6)@hhs.gov'(b)(6)@sba.gov';(b)(6)@sba.gov';Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6)@fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26
Attachments: R8 Clips 10-26-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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COLORADO:

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Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

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The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

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Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline. The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

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Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, “we are not seeing a big increase.”

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika’s potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

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Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the

road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client’s satisfaction.

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Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 14:24:59 +0000
To: R8 Division Directors
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director

FEMA Region 8

Cell: 720-456-9616

Regional Office: 303-235-4990

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Page 5103

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 19 Aug 2016 17:57:27 +0000
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: R8 Division Directors;Andersen, Chris;Floyd, Megan
Subject: INFO: Standing Rock up-date

Given the information below, we won’t report regularly, we will let you know if something pops.

Sources: media and Facebook:

People are now protesting in Bismarck as well as down by the construction site. They have a permit to be there until 4:00. Sounds like about 60 people. Police are on the Capitol steps watching.

The governor released his statement yesterday afternoon. No new info., but first time his office has said anything in the topic. It was focused on the road closure of highway 1806.

The Chairman at Standing Rock had a press conference among for the road to be reopened and reiterated that it is a peaceful protest.

The Chairman also said they would like an injunction on construction until the issue can move though the courts.

The Chairman notes that the tribe was not consulted with on this project.

Dakota Access said they had meetings and none from any tribes showed up.

The big protest seems to be slowing down and tribal members asked law e

From: Espinosa, Adam
Sent: 14 Nov 2016 14:36:33 -0500
To: R8 FEMA SA Team
Cc: Layman, Cheryl
Subject: ND/SD LNO Update

Tomorrow 11/15/2016 is National Day of action with over three hundred protests planned for the Dakota Pipeline.
The protests are asking for a disruption in business as usual in the following locations.

- Army Corps of Engineers offices
- Supporting banks and financial institutions
- Federal Buildings
- US Embassy's
- Various stakeholder locations in ND/SD.

Sources via twitter

#NoDAPL
#StandWithStandingRock
Actionnetwork.org/event-campaign (for localized potential disruptions)

Adam Espinosa
FEMA Region VIII Mission Assignments
Phone: (303) 235-4658 BB: (720) 415-4808
Email: Adam.Espinosa@fema.dhs.gov

FEMA

From: Zimmerman, Elizabeth
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 21:46:44 +0000
To: Dragani, Nancy;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: RE: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Thank you

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2016 5:41:02 PM
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth; Gruber, Corey; Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont; R8 Division Directors; Floyd, Megan; Fisher, Dennis
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the cons

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 15 Aug 2016 15:34:59 +0000
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@mail.mil;(b)(6)@state.sd.us(b)(6)@utah.gov;(b)(6)
@wyo.gov;(b)(6)@nd.gov;(b)(6)@state.sd.us(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov;(b)(6)
(b)(6)@usace.army.mil(b)(6)@aphis.usda.gov;Wernisch, Phil;Coley,
Robert;(b)(6)@usace.army.mil;(b)(6)@state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark
J;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6);@hhs.gov;(b)(6)@hhs.gov;(b)(6)
@sba.gov;(b)(6)@sba.gov;Bonza, Dale;Ruiz,
Benigno(b)(6)@mail.mil;Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr,
Jesse;(b)(6)@state.co.us;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel
Subject: Region VIII News Clips, Monday, August 15
Attachments: @

Region VIII Clips

Monday, August 15, 2016

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New book recounts 1959 Yellowstone-area earthquake

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Richland County water board appeals ND approval of diversion dam permit Fargo Forum

In North Dakota, people vs. oil pipeline protest strengthens Associated Press

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Disaster Declaration Sends Repairs, New Homes To Pine Ridge Reservation
Associated Press

UTAH:

WYOMING:

Little Growth On Wyoming Wildfires Casper Star Tribune

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

STORIES

COLORADO:

Black Forest fire recovery leaders think about next time

By: Ellie Mulder <http://gazette.com/author/Ellie+Mulder>   Co

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 15:10:12 +0000
To: R8 ALL PFTs-CORES
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @mail.mil;(b)(6) @state.sd.us;(b)(6) @utah.gov;Kelly.ruiz
@wyo.gov;(b)(6) @nd.gov;(b)(6) @state.sd.us;(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov(b)(6)
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil;(b)(6) @aphis.usda.gov;Wernisch, Phil;Coley,
Robert;(b)(6) @usace.army.mil;(b)(6) @state.mn.us;Peterson, Mark
J;(b)(6) @hhs.gov;(b)(6) @hhs.gov(b)(6) @hhs.gov;(b)(6)
@sba.gov(b)(6) @sba.gov;Bonza, Dale;Ruiz,
Benigno(b)(6) @mail.mil;Sheppard, Helen;Jackson jr,
Jesse;(b)(6) @state.co.us;Lyman, AJ;Green, Daniel
Subject: Region VIII News Clips, Tuesday, August 16
Attachments: @

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Bullock announces funding to rebuild community Fallon Times (Aug 12)

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Cass County, Fargo voters will vote on diversion sales tax extensions Fargo Forum

North Bismarck homeowners see property slipping away Bismarck Tribune

Dakota Access pipeline owners sue North Dakota protesters Associated Press

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Great Plains Fire reports several fires over weekend <http://www.kbhbradio.com/news/great-plains-fire-reports-several-fires-over-weekend/article_c8a82cd2-6295-11e6-96b2-0387c3fce62c.html>   Rapid City Journal

La Nina to replace El Nino <http://kelo.com/news/articles/2016/aug/15/la-nina-to-replace-el-nino/>   KELO-TV, Sioux Falls

South Dakota responds to Louisiana flooding KELO_AM, Sioux Falls

UTAH:

WYOMING:

P

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 10 Oct 2016 09:39:22 -0400
To: R8 Division Directors
Cc: Welch, Randy
Subject: Review: IAEM Briefing Memo

The info is still accurate as far as I am concerned. Please let me know if you feel differently. Thanks. Stacie

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Ferreira, Frank
Sent: Sunday, October 09, 2016 11:05:13 PM
To: Welch, Randy
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: IAEM Briefing Memo

Hey there. Is the information below still current for inclusion in the leadership briefing memo? Would you like to update it? Please advise no later than **noon, Tue., Oct. 11**. Thanks!

REGION VIII

Colorado

- Mitigation recently determined that two Boulder County properties were ineligible for buy-out based upon FEMA's policy on the "*Limits on Subsurface Uses*" associated with hydraulic fracturing and horizontal directional drilling. The properties were deemed ineligible because under Colorado law they would remain subject to potential forced pooling and subsurface activity following acquisition. Throughout Colorado and many other states, mineral rights are often owned separately from surface rights. A further complication is that many states, including Colorado and all Region VIII states, have statutory or forced pooling laws, allowing subsurface activity without owner consent. The Region anticipates an appeal from Boulder County and continues to engage HQ FIMA on the implications of the policy, not only to Colorado and Region VIII, but other states as well.
- Landslides present acute and/or long-term threats to some 20 - 80 homes in Colorado Springs. There appeared to be money available from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for earlier disasters as well as perhaps other federal funds to cope with the short-term threat, though the process was seen as slow and the problem could worsen. FEMA's current policy on the "*Limits of Subsurface Uses*" and its application may also affect eligibility for these landslide acquisitions.

Oglala Sioux (DR – 4237)

This event was the first direct Individual Assistance (IA) declaration to an Indian Tribe. To address the severe housing challenges faced by the tribe, the Permanent Housing Construction Program was implemented for the first time within the Lower 48 United States. A total of 196 damaged residences were replaced with manufactured homes by September 1 and 107 homes were repaired by FEMA contractors by September 12, 2016.

Non-Stafford Act Issues

Several non-FEMA issues are of particular concern now to Region VIII state emergency managers.

- In North Dakota, protests by the Standing Rock Sioux and perhaps 90 other tribes against an oil pipeline currently under construction have gained national and international attention.
- In Montana, parasites have killed a large number of fish, prompting the shutdown of 180 miles of the Yellowstone River and causing economic distress to the tourism industry there.
- In Utah, two of this desert region’s water sources have come under threat, one from an extraordinary algae bloom and another from an accidental spread of toxic mine waste from a reservoir.

Frank Ferreira
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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 20 Aug 2016 21:08:21 +0000
To: R8 Division Directors;Andersen, Chris
Cc: Floyd, Megan
Subject: Standing Rock Update

Fysa.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Saturday, August 20, 2016 09:34 AM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Standing Rock Update

Last night CNN picked up the Standing Rock protests. They printed and editorial written by the editor of Indian Country Today. The article talks about Hillary Clinton needing to do something since she has said she is committed to Native American Indian issues. Thought I would let you know since they are a national news outlet. http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/19/opinions/clinton-dakota-access-pipeline-pipeline-moya-smith/

There are also more protestors arriving today so they are growing to larger then 2,000 – reports yesterday were not correct about the camp starting to disperse – Source: Facebook

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 18 Aug 2016 20:41:01 +0000
To: R8 Division Directors
Subject: Update: Tribal / Pipeline

As mentioned during 915:

Very different reports from the tribal side and local law enforcement sides.

Tribal Sources:
The tribe issued another statement last night calling for calling for peaceful protest and for people (anyone who cares about water) to exercise their first amendment right.

There is a sense from protestors that they are being misrepresented as violent.

There is also a social media effort to get more nation media coverage.

Local law enforcement press conference:
The primary route from Mandan to the reservation has been blocked off just south of Mandan and only local residents will be allowed south. They can not control people coming in from the south because that route is coming off the reservation.

He also talked about how there have been threats of violence and threats with pipe bombs and weapons.

Describes it as an unlawful protest.

He also reported pipeline construction has stopped for now because of safety. Governor's office has be

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 11 Oct 2016 14:25:06 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan
Subject: CLIPS: Dakota Access Pipeline

Just wanted to highlight these two articles that were in today's clips. Milo Booth from HQ also called earlier today just to confirm he had current information as it was expected to be raised today at the Conference of American Indians. There are some listening sessions tonight.

Work to resume on Dakota Access Pipeline near Lake Oahe

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 9:34 a.m.

BISMARCK – The company building the Dakota Access Pipeline said Tuesday, Oct. 11, it looks forward to a "prompt resumption" of construction near Lake Oahe and hopes the federal government will assist local law enforcement officials dealing with protests of the pipeline.

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners released a statement saying it is pleased with a federal appeals court decision Sunday denying the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an emergency injunction to stop construction of the $3.8 billion, 1,172-mile pipeline that will carry 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day from North Dakota to Illinois.

The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., also lifted a temporary suspension of construction activities within 20 miles east and west of Lake Oahe, a dammed section of the Missouri River.

"In light of Sunday's court decision, Dakota Access looks forward to a prompt resumption of construction activities east and west of Lake Oahe on private land. We reiterate our commitment to protect cultural resources, the environment and public safety," the company said.

Company spokeswoman Vicki Granado declined to specify when the company will resume construction in the 20-mile area, which includes the area along Highway 1806 where protest activities to block pipeline construction began Aug. 10. An estimated 2,500 to 3,000 American Indians and other pipeline opponents are encamped along the highway and have drawn international support.

The proposed construction area also includes a stretch west of Highway 1806 that was bulldozed on Sept. 3, the day after the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed court documents identifying that part of the route as containing burial grounds and other sacred sites. Angry protesters clashed with the pipeline's private security that day, with both sides claiming injuries, and a joint law enforcement task force is investigating the incident.

Last week, state archeologists concluded that no sacred sites were destroyed, but the tribe disputes that conclusion because its historic preservation officer wasn't allowed to participate in the survey. The tribe's ongoing lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers contends the agency didn't properly consult the tribe before granting permits for the project.

Energy Transfer Partners said the decisions by two separate federal courts show otherwise.

"The Army Corps and Dakota Access carefully considered the views of all potentially affected tribes that chose to participate in the consultative process prescribed by Congress, and fully complied with both the letter and the spirit of the National Historic Preservation Act," the company said. "Their careful and sensitive work has been reviewed and approved by highly qualified private and state-employed archeologists."

The pipeline was 87 percent completed in North Dakota at the end of September and is largely completed in South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois.

"We continue to believe that the Army Corps will soon issue the easement for approximately 1,100 feet necessary for the crossing beneath the Missouri River – the sole remaining authorization necessary for completion of the project," the company said.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it won't authorize pipeline construction on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The three agencies asked that the company voluntarily pause construction within 20 miles of the lake.

The company on Tuesday urged that any protests "be undertaken in a peaceful and law abiding manner." Authorities arrested 27 protesters at two construction sites Monday, including actress Shailene Woodley, bringing the total number of arrests to 123.

"All construction efforts will be undertaken in close coordination with state and local law enforcement officials, and we are hopeful their law enforcement efforts will be supplemented by those of the federal government," the company said.

State officials and lawmakers have decried the lack of financial and law enforcement support from the federal government, given that the Corps is withholding the lake-crossing easement and allowing protesters to camp on Corps-owned land. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs, and Monday's response involved deputies from Wisconsin – the first time out-of-state officers have been used.

Actress Woodley released from jail after arrest at Dakota Access protests

By Mike Nowatzki on Oct 10, 2016 at 9:59 p.m.

ST. ANTHONY, N.D. – Authorities arrested Hollywood actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other protesters at two Dakota Access construction sites in Morton County on Monday, Oct. 10, as pipeline opponents vowed to keep disrupting the project after an appeals court ruling Sunday that allows work to resume on a 20-mile stretch west of Lake Oahe.

Despite the court's ruling, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Monday it won't authorize construction of the $3.8 billion pipeline on Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until it finishes reviewing issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The Corps also repeated its request that Dakota Access LLC voluntarily pause all construction activity within 20 miles east or west of the lake. A company spokeswoman did not return a message seeking comment.

Monday marked the most arrests in one day since protests of the four-state, 1,172-mile pipeline began two months ago just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, where tribal members fear the pipeline will leak and contaminate their water supply and destroy sacred sites on ancestral lands.

Authorities were notified about 7:15 a.m. Monday that two protesters had attached themselves to construction equipment about 2 miles southwest of St. Anthony, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. Both were arrested for felony reckless endangerment, and a third person filming the event also was arrested, he said.

A few miles south along Highway 6, about 200 protesters converged on the west side of the road where the pipeline is strung but not yet buried, including Woodley, who live-streamed video of the protest on Facebook. The star of the "Divergent" film series was arrested at 12:05 p.m. on suspicion of criminal trespass and engaging in a riot, the same basis for most of the 27 arrests, said Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney, operations chief.

Woodley was released on $500 bond about 3:30 p.m. Her next court appearance will be Oct. 24.

Protesters erected an uncovered teepee in the pipeline corridor, and more than a dozen people who locked arms inside it were arrested. The 27 arrests brings the total to 123 so far. More than 100 law enforcement officers, many of them wearing riot gear, responded to the scene, directing protesters back across the fence line and forming a human barricade to keep them off the construction site. Protesters formed their own line less than 10 feet away, holding signs, pounding drums and yelling refrains such as "Respect our land, respect our water, honor our treaties." "They plan to continue building, and we plan to continue to disrupt," a protester declared through a bullhorn. No physical violence was reported. But Laney disputed claims that it was a peaceful protest, noting protesters used threatening speech, refused to leave when asked and, at one point, surrounded a deputy who was arresting a protester, forcing another deputy to break up the circle. "This was not a protest," he said. "This was a riot." Watch the video below to see Woodley's arrest. Fast-forward to the last five minutes of the video to see the arrest.

Robby Romero, an Apache from Taos, N.M., criticized what he described as the militarized police response, complete with an armored Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle parked at the top of the hill on Highway 6 overlooking the protest. “This is a crazy response to a peaceful resistance to something that is so dangerous to all life,” he said, adding, “We will win this fight, peacefully. We come with prayer and feathers. They come with weapons of destruction.” Both protests took place outside the 20-mile zones east and west of the Missouri River at Lake Oahe where a federal appeals court had ordered Dakota Access LLC to pause construction while the court decided on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s request for an emergency injunction. The three-judge panel in Washington, D.C., issued a ruling Sunday rejecting the tribe’s request and dissolving the 20-mile, no-work zone.

In a joint statement Monday with the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Interior Department, the Corps said it hopes to conclude its review soon. The agencies said they “continue to respect the right to peaceful protest and expect people to obey the law.” “We also look forward to a serious discussion during a series of consultations, starting with a listening session in Phoenix on Tuesday, on whether there should be nationwide reform on the Tribal consultation process for these types of infrastructure projects,” they said.

Officers from Wisconsin assisted in Monday’s response. Schools in nearby St. Anthony and Flasher went on lockdown. Laney said the 200 to 300 protesters who took part are a “distinct” group within the 2,500 to 3,000 mostly peaceful people camping along Highway 1806 about 25 miles away near the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball rivers. He said protesters’ message has been heard “loud and clear” over the last 62 days, but added “the courts have ruled” and the company has a legal right to do construction. “If their determination is that they’re going to … do everything they can to stop this work, I guess we’re going to be here for a while,” he said.

From: Garcia, Carol
Sent: 12 Oct 2016 12:06:03 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
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STORIES

COLORADO:

Study: Human-caused warming burns more Western forests – Colorado Springs Gazette

By: KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press
Updated: October 11, 2016 at 4:47 pm

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A new study of Western forest fires confirms what is already apparent — wildfire seasons are getting longer and more destructive.

But researchers with the University of Idaho and Columbia University also say humans are to blame.

The study made public Monday says human-caused global warming contributed an additional 16,000 square miles of burned forests from 1984 to 2015.

Researchers say the 16,000 square miles represent half of the forest areas that burned over the last three decades.

"We're no longer waiting for human-caused climate change to leave its fingerprint on wildfire across the western U.S.," John Abatzoglou, the study's lead author and an associate professor of geography at the University of Idaho, said in a statement. "It's already here."

The authors of the study, published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, say it's the first to try to quantify how much human-caused climate change has increased wildfires in Western forests. Some other factors that had to be considered as contributing to the increase, the report said, included a legacy of fire suppression in the West, natural climate variability, and human settlement.

The study found that longer and hotter dry spells are causing Western forests to dry out and become more susceptible to wildfires.

Specifically, researchers said, spring and summer temperatures have warmed by 2 to 2.5 degrees since 1950. Researchers said that warming accounts for 55 percent of what they call "fuel aridity" from 1979 to 2015. The study attributed the other 45 percent to natural climate variations.

The study found that since 2000 there's been a 75 percent increase in forested lands with elevated aridity and nine more days each year with dry forests especially susceptible to wildfires.

"Anthropogenic climate change has emerged as a driver of increased forest fire activity," the report says.

Park Williams of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and a co-author of the study, said the report provides a better understanding of the effects human-caused global warming has on Western forests.

"This knowledge will allow us to make more educated fire and land management decisions," he said.

One of those decision-makers is Idaho Forester David Groeschl, who said the report could offer some help in the future.

"We know that our fire season is getting longer," Groeschl said. "We know that we're seeing more and longer fires, and we know that we have increasing fuels out there as well."

The fuel aridity was particularly bad in Idaho in 2015 when an extended heat and drought left northern Idaho forests parched and in the worst condition since 1926, officials said.

That summer and fall, 600 square miles of U.S. Forest Service land burned. Idaho's bill for fighting wildfires soared to $60 million with some 100 square miles, about three quarters of it forests, burning on state, private and federal lands that are in forest protective districts designated as the state's responsibility.

Idaho has taken a number of steps aimed at the wildfire risk, including increasing the pay of in-demand, experienced firefighters who were leaving to take similar jobs with more money at other agencies. Idaho also recently formed a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to take on landscape-scale projects by using the state's land management expertise that includes selling timber on federal land. The state's first auction of federal timber took place last month.

How successful the partnership will take years to determine.

The study released Monday concluded that the trend of increased forest aridity resulting in large wildfires is likely to continue for decades while there are enough trees to fuel the flames.

MONTANA:

Protesters cause temporary shut-down of pipeline in northcentral Montana- KBZK TV Bozeman

Posted: Oct 12, 2016 8:28 AM MDT

GREAT FALLS -
The battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota came to Montana on Tuesday.

Protesters forced the temporary shutdown of five pipelines carrying oil from Canadian tar sands, including one at Coal Banks Landing south of Big Sandy in Chouteau County.

Spectra Energy confirmed to MTN News that trespassers tampered with a valve on its express pipeline on Tuesday, and that as a precaution it was shut off.

The environmental group Climate Direct Action said Tuesday that it had also successfully shut down express pipelines at locations in Washington, North Dakota, and Minnesota.

The group says it was attempting to shut the pipelines down over concerns about global warming, and in solidarity with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Spectra Energy says it worked with law enforcement officers in its response to the tampering incident in Chouteau County, and that their primary concern was safety of the community and environment.

The website Unicorn Riot posted the following information on Tuesday:

> *Early this morning, five water protectors successfully shut down five pipelines across the northern United States that were delivering tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada. The action was in support of the call for International Days of Prayer and Action for Standing Rock.*
>
> *The individuals used manual safety valves and bolt cutters to access and shut down the flow of tar sands oil into the US. They are "calling on President Obama to use emergency powers to keep the pipelines closed and mobilize for the extraordinary shift away from fossil fuels now required to avert catastrophe."*
>
> *The actions were undertaken by Emily Johnson, 50, and Michael Foster, 52, of Seattle, WA, Annette Klapstein, 64, of Bainbridge Island, WA, Ken Ward, 59, of Corbett, OR, and Leonard Higgins, 64, of Eugene, OR.*

There is no word yet on whether any of the protesters might face charges.

Spectra released the following statement: "Spectra Energy has responded to a situation during which trespassers broke into a locked facility and tampered with a valve on its Express Pipeline Tuesday morning in Montana. We coordinated with law enforcement in this response. Our first concern is for the safety of the community and the environment, and tampering with this important U.S. energy infrastructure will not be tolerated. This pipeline provides a vital source of affordable, reliable energy to fuel the everyday lives of Americans. As a cautionary measure, we temporarily shut down this section of the Express Pipeline."

Butte firefighters teach students about fire safety- KTFM TV News Kalispell

Posted: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 8:46 PM

BUTTE -
Butte firefighters said fire education starts here, in the classroom. After the kids saw firefighters put on their gear and learn about stop drop and roll. Firemen Pat Doherty then spoke about the most common house fires

"Most structure fires in the United States are from cooking materials. It's always best to stay in the vicinity and keep an eye on it," said Pat Doherty, Butte Fire Department.

During the predicted cold snap, families will be turning up the heat. However, Doherty explains to kids to watch out for the dangers that can sometimes come from using space heaters.

Doherty also adds it's never smart to leave them unattended.

"Space heaters are dangerous. In the case of people forgetting to unplug them or they keep them too close to stuff that's going to catch on fire," said Doherty.

NORTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Airport Disaster Exercise Set for Thursday – DRGnews.com

October 12, 2016 (Dakota Radio Group)
By: Press Release

PIERRE, SD- You can expect lights, sirens and a whole lot of activity at the airport later this week.

Thursday evening, from 5:30 – 7:30, the Pierre Regional Airport and Hughes County will conduct a full scale disaster exercise. The mock disaster scenario includes a hazardous materials response on a simulated aircraft. The exercise is required by the Federal Aviation Administration and designed to provide first responders and airport personnel with disaster response experience.

“This is really practice for all the responders,” said Mike Isaacs, Pierre Regional Airport Manager. “We do everything we can to avoid aircraft accidents, but we want to be prepared in the event there’s one we can’t avoid.”

Isaacs went on to say that the exercise requires all the activity that a real disaster would require. Those involved in the exercise will be assigned a variety of responsibilities that include everything from information gathering and dissemination to coordination of involved entities to response management to logistics and cost tracking.

“An Emergency Operations Center and Unified Command Post will be set up at the airport for this exercise,” said Isaacs. “They will serve as the hubs of all disaster response and recovery efforts.

Approximately 50 people will be involved in the exercise including volunteers, city and county officials, and first responders.

The Federal Aviation Administration requires airports with commercial air service to conduct a full-scale disaster exercise every three years. Additionally, the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management requires counties to conduct a variety of exercises throughout the year. The Thursday night exercise fulfills requirements for both Hughes County and Pierre Regional Airport.

National Fire Prevention Week (Hot Springs Star)

By John D. Taylor

A closer look at Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department history

HOT SPRINGS – The advent of National Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 9 -15 this year, is a good time to look at the important role firefighters play in the community, and to consider what everyone can do to prevent fires.

Fire Prevention Week

Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, that tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,400 structures.

The fire began on October 8, but did most of its damage on October 9, 1871 – why Fire Prevention Week is held on Oct. 9 annually.

Popular legend holds that while Mrs. Catherine O'Leary was milking a cow, it kicked over a lamp, ignited her barn, then lit the whole city of Chicago on fire. However, recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has debunked this fairy tale – while retaining some elements of truth in the story.

The fire did, indeed, originate near the barn where Mrs. O'Leary kept her five milk cows. But there is no proof that her cow sparked the blaze. O'Leary's testimony says she and her cows were asleep, not milking, when the fire broke out.

Who started it then? Some blame some neighborhood boys who were near the barn sneaking cigarettes, some say a O'Leary's neighbor started the fire, another theory is that a meteorite shower that fell during Oct. 8 all over Michigan and Wisconsin may have started the fire.

Also, while the Chicago Fire is one of the most well known, it wasn't the biggest fire in American history. That notoriety belongs to the Peshtigo Fire, which also occurred on October 8, 1871, in northeast Wisconsin. It burned 16 whole towns, killed more than 1,100 people, and scorched 1.2 million acres. It began when several railroad workers, clearing land for tracks, unintentionally lit a brush fire. Before long, the fast-moving flames were whipping through the area “like a tornado,” survivors said. Peshtigo, Wisconsin got the worst of it, within an hour, the entire town was destroyed.

These fires changed the way firefighters and public officials thought about fire safety. And on the 40th anniversary the fires the Fire Marshals Association of North America decided to mark the anniversary in a way to keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed. According to the National Archives and Records Administration’s Library Information Center, it is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

Hot Springs VFD

On July 2, The Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) celebrated its 125th anniversary.

The fire company was formed, according to a VFD history by William T. Richer – VFD member Jenni Sotherland shared this with the Star – in January of 1890, when a group of Hot Springs citizens gathered at the Minnekahta Hotel to organize themselves into the VFD. At this meeting, John Gillespie was elected chief; H. C. Venette, first assistant chief; John Mueller, second assistant chief; Kenneth Harris, secretary and Wally Root, treasurer.

In those days, there was no citywide water system, so the only equipment the VFD needed was a large number of leather water buckets. To fight fires, the men formed two lines –Richer calls them “strings” – going to and from the fire and a water source. Usually, Fall River, water holes or cisterns were the water sources. One line of men passed buckets of water from the river to the fire, the other line returned the empty buckets.

In July, when the modern VFD was whooping it up with a masquerade ball at American Legion Post 71 they may not have been thinking about these roots, but they are where the VFD originated.

Early days

Later in 1890, the city began to pipe water into the business district, so it purchased its first fire-fighting equipment: two, high wheeled hose carts, and one hook and ladder wagon. The hose carts were drawn by men, the wagon pulled by a team of horses.

Throughout those early days the city’s firefighting ability grew. In 1893, the city bought another high-wheeled hose cart, placed iton College Hill (where the high school is today).

One interesting story from those days is connected to John Mueller, father of the Mueller Center founder. In 1896, when Mueller was the VFD’s first assistant fire chief, he bought a white horse, named “Old Granger” from Bill Perry.

Mueller used Old Granger to ride to and from fires, and pull the No. 1 hose cart to fire scenes.

For many years Mueller kept his stable much the same as the city's fire equipment stables, with the bridle bit in Old Granger's mouth, so the horse was ready to go. When an alarm sounded, Old Granger would leave his stall, make a run for the buggy shafts, where the No. 1 hose cart could be hooked up to him with one snap of the harness, and "away he would go," says Richer.

Sometimes, Mueller was able to catch a ride on the horse, other times, Old Granger was the first responder to a fire.

Richer says, "The call of the fire alarm was greater to this noble horse than was the call of the feed box." Mueller used Old Granger in this fashion for a quarter century, until 1915, when the horse was "pensioned." The horse was so stiff and lame then he could hardly walk the streets, according to Richer. "But if an alarm came in, one would think he was a mighty young horse. He was able to forget his stiffness and lameness to answer the call."

Richer says in 1916, when Old Granger was "pensioned" and put out to pasture near town, the horse heard an alarm call and in a few moments showed up in town to answer the call.

Granger answered his last fire call in 1917.

Also during these early days, the VFD sponsored three-day 4th of July celebrations, free to the public. Special trains brought large crowds of people into Hot Springs from surrounding areas and the entertainment included greased pig-catching and greased pole-climbing contests, rodeo-style bucking horses, baseball games, swimming contests, foot races, human wheelbarrow races, tug-of-wars, band concerts and reading the Declaration of Independence.

In 1899, the VFD fire hall became a dual-purpose building, hosting Hot Springs' first opera hall as well as the fire hall. What happened was that the fire department remodeled their building, adding a small stage to the east end of the room, a set of bleachers in the west, and covering the remaining floor space with folding chairs advertising Happy Bill cigars. Two small dressing rooms were also built outside the building. The Fireman's Opera House was in operation until about 1909, when the skating rink and theater opened. The opera house never made much money, but it gave city residents a place for entertainment.

Up until the end of World War I (1918), the fire fighting equipment of the city included three hose carts and one hook and ladder wagon or truck. The hose carts were housed in various parts of town: One in the lower end, one on College Hill, one on Minnekahta Ave. The hook and ladder wagon was kept at city hall. Fire alarms were anything that made noise -- train whistles, church bells and "men hollering at the top of their voices," notes Richer.

There were no telephones in those days, so when fires occurred at night, VFD members "would generally exhaust themselves in running from their homes to the scene of the fire."

Often, by the time the hose carts got to the scene, the fire was out of control, and the VFD's efforts focused on keeping the fire from spreading to adjoining properties. "It was quite generally considered those days that if a property caught fires during the night time, there would be nothing left in the morning, except the lot. One example of this is how an April 1891 fire wiped out a whole city block of business buildings in “lower” town, the damage estimated at $35,000 – big money in those days.

Other big blazes of that era the 1891 blaze that took the Minnekahta Hotel, the 1892 blaze that took out several buildings where the Post Office now stands, an 1895 fire that destroyed the Jay Crane store building, a 1903 fire that took a block of business houses what was People’s National Bank and the Riverside Apartments, a 1907 fire that took the Catholican Hotel and bath house and the Siloam bath house, 1910’s Gibson Hotel fire and 1915’s Gillespie Hotel fire. In 1924, the High School building burned to the ground.

Motorization

In 1918, a movement was started to motorize the VFD. City businessmen, citizens and the fire company made donations of $1,875 which bought a combination Ford chemical and hose truck. This was put into service in June of 1919, when Dave Batchelor was foreman of the fire company. Batchelor’s house burned down, a $3,000 loss, in 1908.

An REO Speedwagon Fire Truck equipped with a pump was purchased in 1924, after the high school fire, to increase water pressure, and town founding father F.O. Butler offered the fire company his Pierce-Arrow touring car, which was reworked into a hook and ladder truck. This unit remained in operation until 1938, when it was replaced by a new, Ford V-8 truck.

In 1934, the REO Speedwagon was converted into a smoke extractor, a move made possible by the ingenuity of Vic Englebert, H.C. “Swede” Nelms, and Fire Chief L. J. Bingham. These men added a 25-horsepower Waukesha motor to a large suction fan, salvaged from the State Soldier’s Home. This rig was given credit for saving more property than any other equipment in the department, drawing smoke and gas from burning buildings at a rate of 6,500 cubic feet per minute, which made it possible for firefighters to get into burning buildings and extinguish fires.

Growth

Throughout the 1930s the VFDs gear grew, as Hot Springs grew, with horses and carts being replaced by larger and more powerful motorized equipment. In 1936, this enabled Hot Springs to get a 10 percent cut in insurance rates because of the efficiency of the fire department.

By the 1940s, there were 561 people in the VFD, with 65 active members and six living in Fire Hall, on call to fight fires. Engines and other gear were purchased by the city or the VFD via proceeds for insurance money or annual dances. But in 1942, city agreed to begin paying the VFD $200 per month to, with the understanding that the VFD would pay for all equipment, pay their own insurance, water, lights, telephone, gas, oil, fire station upkeep and other incidental expenses.

“Without a doubt the Hot Springs Fire Department is one of the very best strictly volunteer fire departments in the state…the department has brought home the South Dakota State Championship trophy a total of 11 times.

During the late 1940s, the fire chief was conducting "fire drills at both schoolhouses several times each year. These drills are not at regular intervals, but just whenever he takes the notion, giving no notice to teachers, janitors or pupils at the building." A general inspection of "every business house within the city" was also held annually, which revealed any fire hazards.

In 1948, after Frank Fetzner, Deputy State Fire Marshall, saw the VFD in action for the first time, he said the VFD handled themselves like a experts and that the city should feel mighty proud that they have such a group of fire-fighters.

After flood of 1948, a VFD American LaFrance pumper was used to pump out Evans Plunge. This took days. Also, extension ladder truck saved a "kid" marooned on the cliffs at Hot Brook, with two fireman saving the goat.

Also, 800 questionnaires and inspection blanks were sent home with school kids, asking that they report any fire hazards in their homes. Returning this would get the kids a ride on the fire truck. More than 700 of these came back, the kids ratting out their parents bad habits, even in the homes of firemen.

Emergency ambulance was first put into service in November of 1949.

The 1950s

These were high times for the VFD – in more ways that one, according to new VFD scribe Howard McBride. In 1950, Chief Vic Englebert resigned, saying "he had gone on a bender, got himself in jail and fined. Was called on the carpet by his boss and was given an enforced vacation for two weeks from his job."

That same year the city floated a $15,000 bond issue for new fire station, and it carried 1,098 to 487 votes. The VFD bought three lots (where the Valley Hotel burned in 1946) for $3,500 in the city's name. Many private citizens gave donations to this, including one widow who gave $100, quite a bit of money then.

In February of 1950, at the annual Fireman's Masquerade Ball, someone set fire to Wally King's masquerade suit, which produced 2nd degree burns on his legs, hips, chest and chin, and 3rd degree burns on both hands. King was in hospital for several months, and the masquerade ball ended – until this year.

In 1951, street names in the city were changed, and a new map was prepared showing the new names and locations. Firemen instructed to study this and become familiar with it.

William Watson, of Wind Cave National Park, came to a VFD meeting in April to compliment the VFD on their cooperation. Watson said the park and the state Game, Fish & Parks department couldn't see eye-to-eye on their cooperative agreement, and he thought VFD should take care of Southern Hills fires. "If the rest of Hot Springs had the getup and go of the fire department, the town would be a hell of a lot better off," Watson quipped, noting he wouldn't be at Wind Cave much longer due to a transfer to Hot Springs, Arkansas.

In 1953 a fire at the Minnekahta Building, took the lives of a woman and her two daughters, although the father and his two sons escaped harm. The building was falling into itself when VFD arrived.

The last years of the 1950s brought a new aerial ladder, an Oelrichs chicken hatchery fire that cooked 3,700 of the birds, and a January fire in 20-below temperatures that the fire chief said was the first time he'd see the smoke extractor tube freeze.

1960s and 70s

After the 1961 flood, the VFD was called on to pump basements, but lacked the equipment to do so. It was also called to Angostura Dam for rescue work. In 1963 a new addition was put on the station. School building inspections revealed a few hazards, which were eliminated.

And the 1979's Evans Hotel Fire proved to be a seminal event for the city.

Modern VFD

Most recently, the VFD has had some major fires to contend with.

It fought 2007's Alabaugh Fire, which burned 10,324 acres, destroyed 33 homes, killed one resident, and forced two firefighters to take refuge in a fire shelter. Hot Springs' Mary Goulet lived in one of those homes and wrote a book about the fire, "Cascade of Flames."

In 2015, the Bitter Creek fire started south of Hot Springs, off Highway 71 at the intersection of Maitland and Ash Creek Roads. It burned about 87 acres, and firefighters from Cascade, Hot Springs, and South Dakota State stopped the spread.

And just after their 125th anniversary, in mid-July of this year, the Indian Canyon fire, which began after four days of temperatures topping 90 degrees and a lightning strike touched off a blaze about five miles southeast of Edgemont, scorching 14,133 acres

Today, the VFD has 65 active volunteers led by Chief Jim Stevens, 1st assistant Chief Bob Evans, 2nd assistant chief Wendell Hertel, and Secretary Treasurer Gerald Hanson.

Argyle VFD looking for help

The Argyle Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD) located between Pringle and Hot Springs, SD is seeking new members. Applicants should be over 18 years of age, in good physical health, have a clean driving record, and be able to pass a Law Enforcement Background check. Firefighters will respond to structural and wildland fires as well as assist with search and rescue operations, motor vehicle accidents and other emergencies in our coverage area. First Responders will assist and respond to medical emergencies and assist patients until ambulances arrive on scene. Prior experience is not necessary but certainly welcome. This is a volunteer non-paid position.

The Department provides Fire and EMS response to a 144 square mile area of southwestern Custer County and provides Mutual Aid to Pringle, Minakata, Custer, Hot Springs, Wind Cave, Custer State Park, and other nearby agencies in Custer and Fall River Counties.

Meeting are held at the fire station on the first and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7 p.m.

For more information, call (605) 673-5823; e-mail ArgyleVFD.SD@gmail.com, or check the Argyle Volunteer Fire Department Facebook page.

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

USDA designates Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area (Northern Wyoming Daily)

CASPER — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area due to a recent drought.

“Our hearts go out to those Wyoming farmers and ranchers affected by recent natural disasters,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “President Obama and I are committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a bright spot in our nation’s economy by sustaining the successes of America’s farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through these difficult times. We’re also telling Wyoming producers that USDA stands with you and your communities when severe weather and natural disasters threaten to disrupt your livelihood.”

Farmers and ranchers in Big Horn, Fremont, Hot Springs, Teton and Washakie counties in Wyoming also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

Farmers and ranchers in Carbon, Gallatin and Park counties in Montana also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Oct. 5, 2016, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program;Livestock Indemnity Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; and the Tree Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online athttp://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

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Region VIII Clips

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STORIES

COLORADO:

Study: Human-caused warming burns more Western forests – Colorado Springs Gazette

By: KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press

Updated: October 11, 2016 at 4:47 pm

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A new study of Western forest fires confirms what is already apparent — wildfire seasons are getting longer and more destructive.

But researchers with the University of Idaho and Columbia University also say humans are to blame.

The study made public Monday says human-caused global warming contributed an additional 16,000 square miles of burned forests from 1984 to 2015.

Researchers say the 16,000 square miles represent half of the forest areas that burned over the last three decades.

"We're no longer waiting for human-caused climate change to leave its fingerprint on wildfire across the western U.S.," John Abatzoglou, the study's lead author and an associate professor of geography at the University of Idaho, said in a statement. "It's already here."

The authors of the study, published online in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, say it's the first to try to quantify how much human-caused climate change has increased wildfires in Western forests. Some other factors that had to be considered as contributing to the increase, the report said, included a legacy of fire suppression in the West, natural climate variability, and human settlement.

The study found that longer and hotter dry spells are causing Western forests to dry out and become more susceptible to wildfires.

Specifically, researchers said, spring and summer temperatures have warmed by 2 to 2.5 degrees since 1950. Researchers said that warming accounts for 55 percent of what they call "fuel aridity" from 1979 to 2015. The study attributed the other 45 percent to natural climate variations.

The study found that since 2000 there's been a 75 percent increase in forested lands with elevated aridity and nine more days each year with dry forests especially susceptible to wildfires.

"Anthropogenic climate change has emerged as a driver of increased forest fire activity," the report says.

Park Williams of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and a co-author of the study, said the report provides a better understanding of the effects human-caused global warming has on Western forests.

"This knowledge will allow us to make more educated fire and land management decisions," he said.

One of those decision-makers is Idaho Forester David Groeschl, who said the report could offer some help in the future.

"We know that our fire season is getting longer," Groeschl said. "We know that we're seeing more and longer fires, and we know that we have increasing fuels out there as well."

The fuel aridity was particularly bad in Idaho in 2015 when an extended heat and drought left northern Idaho forests parched and in the worst condition since 1926, officials said.

That summer and fall, 600 square miles of U.S. Forest Service land burned. Idaho's bill for fighting wildfires soared to $60 million with some 100 square miles, about three quarters of it forests, burning on state, private and federal lands that are in forest protective districts designated as the state's responsibility.

Idaho has taken a number of steps aimed at the wildfire risk, including increasing the pay of in-demand, experienced firefighters who were leaving to take similar jobs with more money at other agencies. Idaho also recently formed a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to take on landscape-scale projects by using the state's land management expertise that includes selling timber on federal land. The state's first auction of federal timber took place last month.

How successful the partnership will take years to determine.

The study released Monday concluded that the trend of increased forest aridity resulting in large wildfires is likely to continue for decades while there are enough trees to fuel the flames.

MONTANA:

Protesters cause temporary shut-down of pipeline in northcentral Montana- KBZK TV Bozeman

Posted: Oct 12, 2016 8:28 AM MDT

GREAT FALLS -

The battle over the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota came to Montana on Tuesday.

Protesters forced the temporary shutdown of five pipelines carrying oil from Canadian tar sands, including one at Coal Banks Landing south of Big Sandy in Chouteau County.

Spectra Energy confirmed to MTN News that trespassers tampered with a valve on its express pipeline on Tuesday, and that as a precaution it was shut off.

The environmental group Climate Direct Action said Tuesday that it had also successfully shut down express pipelines at locations in Washington, North Dakota, and Minnesota.

The group says it was attempting to shut the pipelines down over concerns about global warming, and in solidarity with members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Spectra Energy says it worked with law enforcement officers in its response to the tampering incident in Chouteau County, and that their primary concern was safety of the community and environment.

The website Unicorn Riot posted the following information on Tuesday:

> *Early this morning, five water protectors successfully shut down five pipelines across the northern United States that were delivering tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada. The action was in support of the call for International Days of Prayer and Action for Standing Rock.*
>
> *The individuals used manual safety valves and bolt cutters to access and shut down the flow of tar sands oil into the US. They are "calling on President Obama to use emergency powers to keep the pipelines closed and mobilize for the extraordinary shift away from fossil fuels now required to avert catastrophe."*
>
> *The actions were undertaken by Emily Johnson, 50, and Michael Foster, 52, of Seattle, WA, Annette Klapstein, 64, of Bainbridge Island, WA, Ken Ward, 59, of Corbett, OR, and Leonard Higgins, 64, of Eugene, OR.*

There is no word yet on whether any of the protesters might face charges.

Spectra released the following statement: "Spectra Energy has responded to a situation during which trespassers broke into a locked facility and tampered with a valve on its Express Pipeline Tuesday morning in Montana. We coordinated with law enforcement in this response. Our first concern is for the safety of the community and the environment, and tampering with this important U.S. energy infrastructure will not be tolerated. This pipeline provides a vital source of affordable, reliable energy to fuel the everyday lives of Americans. As a cautionary measure, we temporarily shut down this section of the Express Pipeline."

Butte firefighters teach students about fire safety- KTFM TV News Kalispell

Posted: Tuesday, October 11, 2016 8:46 PM

BUTTE -

Butte firefighters said fire education starts here, in the classroom. After the kids saw firefighters put on their gear and learn about stop drop and roll. Firemen Pat Doherty then spoke about the most common house fires

"Most structure fires in the United States are from cooking materials. It's always best to stay in the vicinity and keep an eye on it," said Pat Doherty, Butte Fire Department.

During the predicted cold snap, families will be turning up the heat. However, Doherty explains to kids to watch out for the dangers that can sometimes come from using space heaters.

Doherty also adds it's never smart to leave them unattended.

"Space heaters are dangerous. In the case of people forgetting to unplug them or they keep them too close to stuff that's going to catch on fire," said Doherty.

NORTH DAKOTA:
No FEMA-related stories

SOUTH DAKOTA:

Airport Disaster Exercise Set for Thursday – DRGnews.com
October 12, 2016 (Dakota Radio Group)
By: Press Release

PIERRE, SD- You can expect lights, sirens and a whole lot of activity at the airport later this week.

Thursday evening, from 5:30 – 7:30, the Pierre Regional Airport and Hughes County will conduct a full scale disaster exercise. The mock disaster scenario includes a hazardous materials response on a simulated aircraft. The exercise is required by the Federal Aviation Administration and designed to provide first responders and airport personnel with disaster response experience.

“This is really practice for all the responders,” said Mike Isaacs, Pierre Regional Airport Manager. “We do everything we can to avoid aircraft accidents, but we want to be prepared in the event there’s one we can’t avoid.”

Isaacs went on to say that the exercise requires all the activity that a real disaster would require. Those involved in the exercise will be assigned a variety of responsibilities that include everything from information gathering and dissemination to coordination of involved entities to response management to logistics and cost tracking.

“An Emergency Operations Center and Unified Command Post will be set up at the airport for this exercise,” said Isaacs. “They will serve as the hubs of all disaster response and recovery efforts.

Approximately 50 people will be involved in the exercise including volunteers, city and county officials, and first responders.

The Federal Aviation Administration requires airports with commercial air service to conduct a full-scale disaster exercise every three years. Additionally, the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management requires counties to conduct a variety of exercises throughout the year.

The Thursday night exercise fulfills requirements for both Hughes County and Pierre Regional Airport.

National Fire Prevention Week (Hot Springs Star)

By John D. Taylor

A closer look at Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department history

HOT SPRINGS – The advent of National Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 9 -15 this year, is a good time to look at the important role firefighters play in the community, and to consider what everyone can do to prevent fires.

Fire Prevention Week

Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, that tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,400 structures.

The fire began on October 8, but did most of its damage on October 9, 1871 – why Fire Prevention Week is held on Oct. 9 annually.

Popular legend holds that while Mrs. Catherine O’Leary was milking a cow, it kicked over a lamp, ignited her barn, then lit the whole city of Chicago on fire. However, recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has debunked this fairy tale – while retaining some elements of truth in the story.

The fire did, indeed, originate near the barn where Mrs. O’Leary kept her five milk cows. But there is no proof that her cow sparked the blaze. O’Leary’s testimony says she and her cows were asleep, not milking, when the fire broke out.

Who started it then? Some blame some neighborhood boys who were near the barn sneaking cigarettes, some say a O’Leary’s neighbor started the fire, another theory is that a meteorite shower that fell during Oct. 8 all over Michigan and Wisconsin may have started the fire.

Also, while the Chicago Fire is one of the most well known, it wasn’t the biggest fire in American history. That notoriety belongs to the Peshtigo Fire, which also occurred on October 8, 1871, in northeast Wisconsin. It burned 16 whole towns, killed more than 1,100 people, and scorched 1.2 million acres. It began when several railroad workers, clearing land for tracks, unintentionally lit a brush fire. Before long, the fast-moving flames were whipping through the area “like a tornado,” survivors said. Peshtigo, Wisconsin got the worst of it, within an hour, the entire town was destroyed.

These fires changed the way firefighters and public officials thought about fire safety. And on the 40th anniversary the fires the Fire Marshals Association of North America decided to mark the anniversary in a way to keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed. According to the National Archives and Records Administration's Library Information Center, it is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

Hot Springs VFD

On July 2, The Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) celebrated its 125th anniversary.

The fire company was formed, according to a VFD history by William T. Richer – VFD member Jenni Sotherland shared this with the Star – in January of 1890, when a group of Hot Springs citizens gathered at the Minnekahta Hotel to organize themselves into the VFD. At this meeting, John Gillespie was elected chief; H. C. Venette, first assistant chief; John Mueller, second assistant chief; Kenneth Harris, secretary and Wally Root, treasurer.

In those days, there was no citywide water system, so the only equipment the VFD needed was a large number of leather water buckets. To fight fires, the men formed two lines –Richer calls them "strings" – going to and from the fire and a water source. Usually, Fall River, water holes or cisterns were the water sources. One line of men passed buckets of water from the river to the fire, the other line returned the empty buckets.

In July, when the modern VFD was whooping it up with a masquerade ball at American Legion Post 71 they may not have been thinking about these roots, but they are where the VFD originated.

Early days

Later in 1890, the city began to pipe water into the business district, so it purchased its first fire-fighting equipment: two, high wheeled hose carts, and one hook and ladder wagon. The hose carts were drawn by men, the wagon pulled by a team of horses.

Throughout those early days the city's firefighting ability grew. In 1893, the city bought another high-wheeled hose cart, placed iton College Hill (where the high school is today).

One interesting story from those days is connected to John Mueller, father of the Mueller Center founder. In 1896, when Mueller was the VFD's first assistant fire chief, he bought a white horse, named "Old Granger" from Bill Perry.

Mueller used Old Granger to ride to and from fires, and pull the No. 1 hose cart to fire scenes.

For many years Mueller kept his stable much the same as the city's fire equipment stables, with the bridle bit in Old Granger's mouth, so the horse was ready to go. When an alarm sounded, Old Granger would leave his stall, make a run for the buggy shafts, where the No. 1 hose cart could be hooked up to him with one snap of the harness, and "away he would go," says Richer.

Sometimes, Mueller was able to catch a ride on the horse, other times, Old Granger was the first responder to a fire.

Richer says, “The call of the fire alarm was greater to this noble horse than was the call of the feed box.” Mueller used Old Granger in this fashion for a quarter century, until 1915, when the horse was “pensioned.” The horse was so stiff and lame then he could hardly walk the streets, according to Richer. “But if an alarm came in, one would think he was a mighty young horse. He was able to forget his stiffness and lameness to answer the call.”

Richer says in 1916, when Old Granger was “pensioned” and put out to pasture near town, the horse heard an alarm call and in a few moments showed up in town to answer the call.

Granger answered his last fire call in 1917.

Also during these early days, the VFD sponsored three-day 4th of July celebrations, free to the public. Special trains brought large crowds of people into Hot Springs from surrounding areas and the entertainment included greased pig-catching and greased pole-climbing contests, rodeo-style bucking horses, baseball games, swimming contests, foot races, human wheelbarrow races, tug-of-wars, band concerts and reading the Declaration of Independence.

In 1899, the VFD fire hall became a dual-purpose building, hosting Hot Springs’ first opera hall as well as the fire hall. What happened was that the fire department remodeled their building, adding a small stage to the east end of the room, a set of bleachers in the west, and covering the remaining floor space with folding chairs advertising Happy Bill cigars. Two small dressing rooms were also built outside the building. The Fireman’s Opera House was in operation until about 1909, when the skating rink and theater opened. The opera house never made much money, but it gave city residents a place for entertainment.

Up until the end of World War I (1918), the fire fighting equipment of the city included three hose carts and one hook and ladder wagon or truck. The hose carts were housed in various parts of town: One in the lower end, one on College Hill, one on Minnekahta Ave. The hook and ladder wagon was kept at city hall. Fire alarms were anything that made noise -- train whistles, church bells and “men hollering at the top of their voices,” notes Richer.

There were no telephones in those days, so when fires occurred at night, VFD members “would generally exhaust themselves in running from their homes to the scene of the fire.”

Often, by the time the hose carts got to the scene, the fire was out of control, and the VFD’s efforts focused on keeping the fire from spreading to adjoining properties. “It was quite generally considered those days that if a property caught fires during the night time, there would be nothing left in the morning, except the lot. One example of this is how an April 1891 fire wiped out a whole city block of business buildings in “lower” town, the damage estimated at $35,000 – big money in those days.

Other big blazes of that era the 1891 blaze that took the Minnekahta Hotel, the 1892 blaze that took out several buildings where the Post Office now stands, an 1895 fire that destroyed the Jay

Crane store building, a 1903 fire that took a block of business houses what was People's National Bank and the Riverside Apartments, a 1907 fire that took the Catholican Hotel and bath house and the Siloam bath house, 1910's Gibson Hotel fire and 1915's Gillespie Hotel fire. In 1924, the High School building burned to the ground.

Motorization

In 1918, a movement was started to motorize the VFD. City businessmen, citizens and the fire company made donations of $1,875 which bought a combination Ford chemical and hose truck. This was put into service in June of 1919, when Dave Batchelor was foreman of the fire company. Batchelor's house burned down, a $3,000 loss, in 1908.

An REO Speedwagon Fire Truck equipped with a pump was purchased in 1924, after the high school fire, to increase water pressure, and town founding father F.O. Butler offered the fire company his Pierce-Arrow touring car, which was reworked into a hook and ladder truck. This unit remained in operation until 1938, when it was replaced by a new, Ford V-8 truck.

In 1934, the REO Speedwagon was converted into a smoke extractor, a move made possible by the ingenuity of Vic Englebert, H.C. "Swede" Nelms, and Fire Chief L. J. Bingham. These men added a 25-horsepower Waukesha motor to a large suction fan, salvaged from the State Soldier's Home. This rig was given credit for saving more property than any other equipment in the department, drawing smoke and gas from burning buildings at a rate of 6,500 cubic feet per minute, which made it possible for firefighters to get into burning buildings and extinguish fires.

Growth

Throughout the 1930s the VFDs gear grew, as Hot Springs grew, with horses and carts being replaced by larger and more powerful motorized equipment. In 1936, this enabled Hot Springs to get a 10 percent cut in insurance rates because of the efficiency of the fire department.

By the 1940s, there were 561 people in the VFD, with 65 active members and six living in Fire Hall, on call to fight fires. Engines and other gear were purchased by the city or the VFD via proceeds for insurance money or annual dances. But in 1942, city agreed to begin paying the VFD $200 per month to, with the understanding that the VFD would pay for all equipment, pay their own insurance, water, lights, telephone, gas, oil, fire station upkeep and other incidental expenses.

"Without a doubt the Hot Springs Fire Department is one of the very best strictly volunteer fire departments in the state…the department has brought home the South Dakota State Championship trophy a total of 11 times.

During the late 1940s, the fire chief was conducting "fire drills at both schoolhouses several times each year. These drills are not at regular intervals, but just whenever he takes the notion, giving no notice to teachers, janitors or pupils at the building." A general inspection of "every business house within the city" was also held annually, which revealed any fire hazards.

In 1948, after Frank Fetzner, Deputy State Fire Marshall, saw the VFD in action for the first time, he said the VFD handled themselves like a experts and that the city should feel mighty proud that they have such a group of fire-fighters.

After flood of 1948, a VFD American LaFrance pumper was used to pump out Evans Plunge. This took days. Also, extension ladder truck saved a "kid" marooned on the cliffs at Hot Brook, with two fireman saving the goat.

Also, 800 questionnaires and inspection blanks were sent home with school kids, asking that they report any fire hazards in their homes. Returning this would get the kids a ride on the fire truck. More than 700 of these came back, the kids ratting out their parents bad habits, even in the homes of firemen.

Emergency ambulance was first put into service in November of 1949.

The 1950s

These were high times for the VFD – in more ways that one, according to new VFD scribe Howard McBride. In 1950, Chief Vic Englebert resigned, saying "he had gone on a bender, got himself in jail and fined. Was called on the carpet by his boss and was given an enforced vacation for two weeks from his job."

That same year the city floated a $15,000 bond issue for new fire station, and it carried 1,098 to 487 votes. The VFD bought three lots (where the Valley Hotel burned in 1946) for $3,500 in the city's name. Many private citizens gave donations to this, including one widow who gave $100, quite a bit of money then.

In February of 1950, at the annual Fireman's Masquerade Ball, someone set fire to Wally King's masquerade suit, which produced 2nd degree burns on his legs, hips, chest and chin, and 3rd degree burns on both hands. King was in hospital for several months, and the masquerade ball ended – until this year.

In 1951, street names in the city were changed, and a new map was prepared showing the new names and locations. Firemen instructed to study this and become familiar with it.

William Watson, of Wind Cave National Park, came to a VFD meeting in April to compliment the VFD on their cooperation. Watson said the park and the state Game, Fish & Parks department couldn't see eye-to-eye on their cooperative agreement, and he thought VFD should take care of Southern Hills fires. "If the rest of Hot Springs had the getup and go of the fire department, the town would be a hell of a lot better off," Watson quipped, noting he wouldn't be at Wind Cave much longer due to a transfer to Hot Springs, Arkansas.

In 1953 a fire at the Minnekahta Building, took the lives of a woman and her two daughters, although the father and his two sons escaped harm. The building was falling into itself when VFD arrived.

The last years of the 1950s brought a new aerial ladder, an Oelrichs chicken hatchery fire that cooked 3,700 of the birds, and a January fire in 20-below temperatures that the fire chief said was the first time he'd see the smoke extractor tube freeze.

1960s and 70s

After the 1961 flood, the VFD was called on to pump basements, but lacked the equipment to do so. It was also called to Angostura Dam for rescue work. In 1963 a new addition was put on the station. School building inspections revealed a few hazards, which were eliminated.

And the 1979's Evans Hotel Fire proved to be a seminal event for the city.

Modern VFD

Most recently, the VFD has had some major fires to contend with.

It fought 2007's Alabaugh Fire, which burned 10,324 acres, destroyed 33 homes, killed one resident, and forced two firefighters to take refuge in a fire shelter. Hot Springs' Mary Goulet lived in one of those homes and wrote a book about the fire, "Cascade of Flames."

In 2015, the Bitter Creek fire started south of Hot Springs, off Highway 71 at the intersection of Maitland and Ash Creek Roads. It burned about 87 acres, and firefighters from Cascade, Hot Springs, and South Dakota State stopped the spread.

And just after their 125th anniversary, in mid-July of this year, the Indian Canyon fire, which began after four days of temperatures topping 90 degrees and a lightning strike touched off a blaze about five miles southeast of Edgemont, scorching 14,133 acres

Today, the VFD has 65 active volunteers led by Chief Jim Stevens, 1st assistant Chief Bob Evans, 2nd assistant chief Wendell Hertel, and Secretary Treasurer Gerald Hanson.

Argyle VFD looking for help

The Argyle Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD) located between Pringle and Hot Springs, SD is seeking new members. Applicants should be over 18 years of age, in good physical health, have a clean driving record, and be able to pass a Law Enforcement Background check. Firefighters will respond to structural and wildland fires as well as assist with search and rescue operations, motor vehicle accidents and other emergencies in our coverage area. First Responders will assist and respond to medical emergencies and assist patients until ambulances arrive on scene. Prior experience is not necessary but certainly welcome. This is a volunteer non-paid position.

The Department provides Fire and EMS response to a 144 square mile area of southwestern Custer County and provides Mutual Aid to Pringle, Minakata, Custer, Hot Springs, Wind Cave, Custer State Park, and other nearby agencies in Custer and Fall River Counties.

Meeting are held at the fire station on the first and fourth Thursdays of each month at 7 p.m.

For more information, call (605) 673-5823; e-mail ArgyleVFD.SD@gmail.com, or check the Argyle Volunteer Fire Department Facebook page.

UTAH:
No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:
USDA designates Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area (Northern Wyoming Daily)

CASPER — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated Park County in Wyoming as a primary natural disaster area due to a recent drought.

“Our hearts go out to those Wyoming farmers and ranchers affected by recent natural disasters,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “President Obama and I are committed to ensuring that agriculture remains a bright spot in our nation’s economy by sustaining the successes of America’s farmers, ranchers, and rural communities through these difficult times. We’re also telling Wyoming producers that USDA stands with you and your communities when severe weather and natural disasters threaten to disrupt your livelihood.”

Farmers and ranchers in Big Horn, Fremont, Hot Springs, Teton and Washakie counties in Wyoming also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

Farmers and ranchers in Carbon, Gallatin and Park counties in Montana also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas on Oct. 5, 2016, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

Other FSA programs that can provide assistance, but do not require a disaster declaration, include the Emergency Conservation Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program;Livestock Indemnity Program; Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; and the Tree Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online athttp://disaster.fsa.usda.gov.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 14 Oct 2016 12:04:31 -0400
To: R8 All Hands
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @state.co.us';(b)(6) @mail.mil';(b)(6) @mail.mil';(b)(6 (b)(@nd.gov';(b)(6) @state.sd.us'(b)(6) @state.sd.us'(b)(6) @utah.gov';(b)(6) @wyo.gov';(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov'(b)(6) @usace.army.mil';'(b)(6) @usace.army.mil';'(b)(6) @state.mn.us';Peterson, Mark J;'(b)(6) @hhs.gov'(b)(6) @hhs.gov'(b)(6) @hhs.gov'(b)(6) @sba.gov';(b)(6) @sba.gov';Nelson, Jason;Blaylock, Andrew;(b)(6) @fs.fed.us';Alexander, Daniel
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Friday
Attachments: R8 Clips 10-14-16.docx

Region VIII Clips

Friday, October 14, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* A researcher from Colorado State University tested cheaper air sampling devices at a controlled burn in Colorado this summer.
- *Montana:* No FEMA-related stories
- *North Dakota:* A flood protection plan for Fox Island in Bismarck has taken a step forward… Senator Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic Senators have asked President Obama to halt construction of the Dakota Access pipeline being protested in North Dakota…. A lengthy piece covers how much time the Cass County sheriff is spending at the protest. … A councilwoman from Madison, Wisconsin, who was arrested Monday describes the protest very differently than the sheriff's office.
- *South Dakota:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Utah:* A Washington, D.C., publication cites criticism by Utah and Wyoming congressional members of the Department of Justice's decision not to prosecute an employee involved in last year's Gold King Mine disaster.
- *Wyoming:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Other FEMA-related stories:* Storms with hurricane-level winds are expected to hit Washington and Oregon over the next few days.

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Don't go chasing wildfires – unless you're Scott Kelleher- Source/Colorado State University

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NORTH DAKOTA

Fox Island residents approve flood protection plan (Bismarck Tribune)

Sen. Bernie Sanders asking President Obama to halt North Dakota pipeline for full review (KFOR TV, Oklahoma City, and AP)

North Dakota sheriff out of town almost constantly as pipeline protest drags on (Fargo Forum News Service, WDAZ TV)

Madison City Council member arrested in North Dakota pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune, Wisconsin State Journal)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES
You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Don’t go chasing wildfires – unless you’re Scott Kelleher

13Oct, 2016 by Anne Ju Manning – Source/Colorado State University

Most people drive *away* from fires burning in the mountains. Scott Kelleher drives straight at them – well, near them, anyway. And it’s not for thrill seeking.

For two weeks in September, Kelleher drove the perimeter of a 6,000-acre prescribed burn in southern Colorado to set up 13 outdoor air samplers on steel stakes.

Kelleher’s system is suited for monitoring smoke emissions for both controlled burns and wildfires. Field-testing the sensors during an actual, unplanned wildfire would prove challenging. So, Kelleher received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to tag along on a planned, prescribed burn, which are common in the Rocky Mountains and other densely forested areas.

“The long-term goals of this project are very motivating,” Kelleher said. “It’s applying science and technology in an affordable new way to make the lives of those responsible for monitoring smoke much easier, with the main thought of protecting public health in mind.”

Field testing

Kelleher’s first field-testing campaign took place in a swath of land between Pagosa Springs and Bayfield, Colorado, near Pargin Mountain. Working closely with his contacts at the forest service, Kelleher set up each of his monitoring checkpoints in strategic proximity to the forest service’s monitoring zones.

The sensors Kelleher is testing are based off the principle of an Ultrasonic Personal Aerosol Sampler (UPAS) designed in the lab of his advisor, John Volckens, who is a professor in mechanical engineering and member of the CSU Partnership for Air Quality, Climate, and Health. The UPAS features an ultrasonic pump that draws in air, a sampling filter, rechargeable batteries, and an air flow rate sensor.

Kelleher’s master’s project involves adapting the UPAS for conditions suitable for prolonged outdoor monitoring. His new version, for which he is quick to point out he received many hours of help from other Volckens lab members, includes a hardened enclosure for weatherproofing; a solar cell for charging an extended-life battery; and a real-time, optical particle sensor that tracks the flow of particles 2.5 microns in diameter and smaller. “PM 2.5” is a standard measure for describing air pollution particles small enough to penetrate human lungs and cause health problems. The optical sampler contained in the device gives live updates.

The sensor also has a gravimetric analysis device that collects particles onto a filter. The filter is later weighed and analyzed for particulate matter concentrations. The entire device can be controlled remotely by smart phone.

The total cost of one of Kelleher's sensors is estimated at about $500, compared with particulate matter monitors used today that cost $10,000 to $20,000. The standard sensors usually require line power, and are large – about the size of a microwave oven.

Kelleher's unusual road trip involved seven rounds of 24-hour sampling. This involved traveling a route of 90 miles, changing out filters on each device and extracting information. In all, he was out in the fire for 14 days.

Automation in rural environments

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LEANN ECKROTH Bismarck Tribune 18 hrs ago

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County Commission has approved funding of $920,000 in yearly installments. Fox Island property owners will pay the balance.

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Gunsch said about 80 percent of the 91 property owners who voted favored the project. One submitted a blank ballot.

With the residents' approval on record, the board is moving forward with the project and paying a design fee of $325,000 to Houston Engineering.

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Earlier precautions were taken when the county partnered with Bismarck in creating the Tavis Road floodgate after the 2011 flood and Bismarck raised Mills Avenue, according to Larson.

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Sen. Bernie Sanders asking President Obama to halt North Dakota pipeline for full review (KFOR TV, Oklahoma City, and AP)

Posted 7:17 am, October 14, 2016, by KFOR-TV & K. Querry and AP Wire

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- By TU-UYEN TRAN Forum News Service
- 18 hrs ago

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Hundreds of law enforcement officials from all over the state and other parts of the country have been helping police the protests at the request of Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, whose force is stretched thin. Laney has been the operations chief for the law enforcement presence to the protests.

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Cass County Commission Chairwoman Mary Scherling agreed with Laney’s sentiment that pitching in is worth the heavy strain on the sheriff’s time.

“When we’ve had floods, for example, we've relied on many many outside agencies to help us with all of our sandbagging and dike patrols and search and rescue and so on and so forth,” she said. “The counties don't live in a bubble. We have to help each other and we’re glad to be able to do that.”

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Cass County Chief Deputy Col. Rick Majerus is in charge while Laney is out. The sheriff said he does come back to Cass County when he’s absolutely needed.

Marty Johnson, Scherling’s opponent in November’s County Commission election, didn’t return a phone message Wednesday.

The pipeline construction site targeted by protesters is near the Missouri River just north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Protesters, many of whom are American Indians, say construction of the $3.8 billion oil pipeline would desecrate burial grounds and other sites sacred to Indians. They also say a rupture would threaten water quality in the Missouri River, which the pipeline must go under as it continues on its way to Illinois.

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Cass County taxpayers won’t bear the cost of deploying the deputies and Laney to the protest, and patrols in Cass County and jail security haven’t been affected, a department spokesman previously told The Forum. The state Emergency Commission voted last month to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to cover overtime and other protest-related costs.

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Madison City Council member arrested in North Dakota pipeline protest (Bismarck Tribune, Wisconsin State Journal)

- Dean Mosiman, Wisconsin State Journal
- Oct 12, 2016

Madison Ald. Rebecca Kemble was arrested and jailed on Monday while acting as a legal observer of the continuing protests over a controversial oil pipeline in North Dakota that a Native American tribe says threatens tribal land.

Kemble's version of events contrasts sharply with statements by law enforcement, who characterized the event as a riot.

Kemble was among more than two dozen people arrested on Monday at two protests, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. She faces tentative charges of misdemeanor criminal trespassing, destruction of evidence, resisting arrest and engaging in riot.

She was taken to Morton County jail and released after posting a $1,250 bond Tuesday morning, Keller said.
Actress Shailene Woodley, who starred in the "Divergent" movie series and most recently in Oliver Stone's film "Snowden," was also among those arrested.

Kemble said Tuesday afternoon that she was wearing a hat that identified her as a legal observer and was videotaping a peaceful prayer ceremony when police arrived and began making arrests. She said she intends to fight the charges.

"I wasn't protesting. It wasn't a protest," she said. "I was legal-observing. I was targeted by law enforcement for my camera."

Kemble, 18th District, traveled with her husband over the weekend to Morton County to present the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe with a parchment copy of a recent City Council resolution expressing solidarity with those protesting the pipeline.

The tribe wants construction halted due to concerns of potential contamination of its water supply and says the pipeline will encroach on tribal burial sites and other cultural artifacts.

On Monday morning, Kemble said she went with others to attend a ceremony that started at an encampment on the reservation. The ceremony, she said, moved to the pipeline site near St. Anthony and featured prayer, drumming and dancing by tribes from Argentina and the Arctic Circle.

She said most people were beginning to leave after the event, except for about 16 people sitting under a tepee, when at least 40 police officers arrived.

A commanding officer, Kemble said, told the protesters they faced arrest if an officer touched them. She said most people backed up but police pursued. She said the commanding officer ran at her, grabbed her while she was holding her camera, put her hands behind her back, bound her with a zip tie, and took her camera as evidence, with police taking her and those arrested to jail. A Morton County's Sheriff's Department press release on Monday afternoon describes a different scene.

On Monday morning, authorities got a call that two protesters had locked themselves to equipment on private property near St. Anthony and were arrested and charged with a felony and misdemeanors, the release said. Another arrest was made and the group disbanded.

About two hours later, authorities were alerted to a convoy of about 100 vehicles assembling near the pipeline site, the release said. Law enforcement closed a road and told the protesters to disband. The crowd refused and 24 more people were arrested, it said.

In the statement, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney said, "While some would like to say this was a protest, this was not a protest — this was a riot."

Kemble rejected the description. "What alternate universe was the sheriff in that day?" she said. "It was so peaceful. The whole day was steeped in prayer and ceremony.

"The police are fear-mongering."

Kemble said she'll present the parchment to tribal leaders Wednesday morning.

Last weekend, the Dane County Sheriff's Office sent 10 deputies from its special events team to the site of the protests, part of a state contingent of 40 members of law enforcement that have gone to provide assistance to the area.

Construction resumed Tuesday on the $3.8 billion, 1,200-mile pipeline on private land about 20 miles from the so-called Red Warrior Camp where thousands of protesters have gathered, The Associated Press reported.

Dean Mosiman covers Madison city government for the Wisconsin State Journal.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

Republican lawmakers are demanding the Department of Justice explain why criminal charges have not been leveled against an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employee allegedly responsible for a massive mine spill in Colorado.

"By not taking up the case, the Department of Justice looks like it is going easy on its colleagues in EPA," three lawmakers with the House Natural Resources Committee wrote Wednesday in a letter to Attorney General Loretta Lynch.

Republican Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah joined fellow GOP colleagues Chairman Jason Chaffetz, also from Utah, and oversight subcommittee chairwoman Cynthia Lummis, who represents Wyoming, to send out the letter Wednesday afternoon.

"Its lack of action on these charges give the appearance of hypocrisy," the lawmakers claim, "and seem to indicate that there is one set of rules for private citizens and another for the federal government."

The Colorado mine spill resulted in three million gallons of dangerous mine waste being dumped into Colorado's Animus River, turning it yellow and poisoning the drinking water for thousands of residents across three states and the Navajo Nation. The spill also dumped more than 880,000 pounds of toxic elements — like lead and arsenic — into the water.

The EPA had tried to keep the identity of the person responsible for the spill under wraps until June, when The Daily Caller News Foundation reported that EPA worker Hays Griswold was in charge at the Gold King Mine during the spill.

Someone removed Griswold's name from an "independent" review of the disaster, according to documents obtained by TheDCNF in June.

An EPA inspector announced Wednesday Bishop's committee wrote the letter that it found evidence an unnamed employee violated the Clean Water Act. The Department of Justice will not pursue the case, a spokesman told reporters, and is instead referring the case to the EPA's leaders.

The lawmakers added that the "EPA disaster deserves the same level of accountability to which private citizens are held."

EPA's failure to hold its employees accountable for last year's leak has become a standard operating procedure.

Senior EPA officials in 2015, for instance, largely ignored complaints by 16 women, mostly employees, accusing one agency official of sexual harassment. The employee got promoted despite the complaints.

Bishop's committee held a hearing in May showing that the EPA paid a registered sex offender to retire rather than terminating his employment.

The child molester was a registered sex offender and was fired in 2014 for violating his probation – but the EPA, as its custom, reinstated him under the Merit Systems Protection Board reinstated him. The employee was eventually paid $55,000 to resign in 2015.

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

By Max Blau

CNN, October 13, 2016

Brace yourself, Pacific Northwest. What's left of a typhoon, which has made its way across the ocean, is expected to pummel parts of Oregon and Washington over the next several days.

The National Weather Service has said a pair of strong storms are set to hit the West Coast on Thursday and Saturday.

CNN meteorologist Dave Hennen said parts of Washington and Oregon could see gusts of up to 80 mph near coastal ranges Thursday. According to the weather service, rivers are expected to rise, with flooding remaining most likely in the Olympic Peninsula.

"Areas of ponding on roadways will slow Thursday commutes," the weather service said. "Small creeks and streams will rise and flood as well."

After a brief lull, the fierce winds could whip again through the Northwest at up to 100 mph. Hennen, who described this storm as a "monster," said it has the potential to match the pressure levels of a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. The weather service has cautioned residents to watch out for tree damage due to the high winds.

"Many of the wind-related deaths in western Washington occur when trees topple onto people in cars," it said.

Though it's still too early to tell, the weather service said the Saturday storm could also lead to widespread wind damage, power outages and coastal erosion.

"(There's a chance for) a worst-case scenario leading to a historical and destructive windstorm for the area," it said.

According to Hennen, a third storm may pass through the Pacific Northwest next week.

Region VIII Clips

Friday, October 14, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado:* A researcher from Colorado State University tested cheaper air sampling devices at a controlled burn in Colorado this summer.
- *Montana:* No FEMA-related stories
- *North Dakota:* A flood protection plan for Fox Island in Bismarck has taken a step forward… Senator Bernie Sanders and four other Democratic Senators have asked President Obama to halt construction of the Dakota Access pipeline being protested in North Dakota…. A lengthy piece covers how much time the Cass County sheriff is spending at the protest. … A councilwoman from Madison, Wisconsin, who was arrested Monday describes the protest very differently than the sheriff's office.
- *South Dakota:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Utah:* A Washington, D.C., publication cites criticism by Utah and Wyoming congressional members of the Department of Justice's decision not to prosecute an employee involved in last year's Gold King Mine disaster.
- *Wyoming:* No FEMA-related stories
- *Other FEMA-related stories:* Storms with hurricane-level winds are expected to hit Washington and Oregon over the next few days.

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You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

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STORIES

COLORADO:

Don’t go chasing wildfires – unless you’re Scott Kelleher

13Oct, 2016 by Anne Ju Manning – Source/Colorado State University

Most people drive *away* from fires burning in the mountains. Scott Kelleher drives straight at them – well, near them, anyway. And it's not for thrill seeking.

For two weeks in September, Kelleher drove the perimeter of a 6,000-acre prescribed burn in southern Colorado to set up 13 outdoor air samplers on steel stakes.

Kelleher's system is suited for monitoring smoke emissions for both controlled burns and wildfires. Field-testing the sensors during an actual, unplanned wildfire would prove challenging. So, Kelleher received permission from the U.S. Forest Service to tag along on a planned, prescribed burn, which are common in the Rocky Mountains and other densely forested areas.

"The long-term goals of this project are very motivating," Kelleher said. "It's applying science and technology in an affordable new way to make the lives of those responsible for monitoring smoke much easier, with the main thought of protecting public health in mind."

Field testing

Kelleher's first field-testing campaign took place in a swath of land between Pagosa Springs and Bayfield, Colorado, near Pargin Mountain. Working closely with his contacts at the forest service, Kelleher set up each of his monitoring checkpoints in strategic proximity to the forest service's monitoring zones.

The sensors Kelleher is testing are based off the principle of an Ultrasonic Personal Aerosol Sampler (UPAS) designed in the lab of his advisor, John Volckens, who is a professor in mechanical engineering and member of the CSU Partnership for Air Quality, Climate, and Health. The UPAS features an ultrasonic pump that draws in air, a sampling filter, rechargeable batteries, and an air flow rate sensor.

Kelleher's master's project involves adapting the UPAS for conditions suitable for prolonged outdoor monitoring. His new version, for which he is quick to point out he received many hours of help from other Volckens lab members, includes a hardened enclosure for weatherproofing; a solar cell for charging an extended-life battery; and a real-time, optical particle sensor that tracks the flow of particles 2.5 microns in diameter and smaller. "PM 2.5" is a standard measure for describing air pollution particles small enough to penetrate human lungs and cause health problems. The optical sampler contained in the device gives live updates.

The sensor also has a gravimetric analysis device that collects particles onto a filter. The filter is later weighed and analyzed for particulate matter concentrations. The entire device can be controlled remotely by smart phone.

The total cost of one of Kelleher's sensors is estimated at about $500, compared with particulate matter monitors used today that cost $10,000 to $20,000. The standard sensors usually require line power, and are large – about the size of a microwave oven.

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Madison Ald. Rebecca Kemble was arrested and jailed on Monday while acting as a legal observer of the continuing protests over a controversial oil pipeline in North Dakota that a Native American tribe says threatens tribal land.

Kemble's version of events contrasts sharply with statements by law enforcement, who characterized the event as a riot.

Kemble was among more than two dozen people arrested on Monday at two protests, Morton County Sheriff's Department spokesman Rob Keller said. She faces tentative charges of misdemeanor criminal trespassing, destruction of evidence, resisting arrest and engaging in riot.

She was taken to Morton County jail and released after posting a $1,250 bond Tuesday morning, Keller said.
Actress Shailene Woodley, who starred in the "Divergent" movie series and most recently in Oliver Stone's film "Snowden," was also among those arrested.

Kemble said Tuesday afternoon that she was wearing a hat that identified her as a legal observer and was videotaping a peaceful prayer ceremony when police arrived and began making arrests. She said she intends to fight the charges.

"I wasn't protesting. It wasn't a protest," she said. "I was legal-observing. I was targeted by law enforcement for my camera."

Kemble, 18th District, traveled with her husband over the weekend to Morton County to present the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe with a parchment copy of a recent City Council resolution expressing solidarity with those protesting the pipeline.

The tribe wants construction halted due to concerns of potential contamination of its water supply and says the pipeline will encroach on tribal burial sites and other cultural artifacts.

On Monday morning, Kemble said she went with others to attend a ceremony that started at an encampment on the reservation. The ceremony, she said, moved to the pipeline site near St. Anthony and featured prayer, drumming and dancing by tribes from Argentina and the Arctic Circle.

She said most people were beginning to leave after the event, except for about 16 people sitting under a tepee, when at least 40 police officers arrived.

A commanding officer, Kemble said, told the protesters they faced arrest if an officer touched them. She said most people backed up but police pursued. She said the commanding officer ran at her, grabbed her while she was holding her camera, put her hands behind her back, bound her with a zip tie, and took her camera as evidence, with police taking her and those arrested to jail. A Morton County's Sheriff's Department press release on Monday afternoon describes a different scene.

On Monday morning, authorities got a call that two protesters had locked themselves to equipment on private property near St. Anthony and were arrested and charged with a felony and misdemeanors, the release said. Another arrest was made and the group disbanded.

About two hours later, authorities were alerted to a convoy of about 100 vehicles assembling near the pipeline site, the release said. Law enforcement closed a road and told the protesters to disband. The crowd refused and 24 more people were arrested, it said.

In the statement, Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney said, "While some would like to say this was a protest, this was not a protest — this was a riot."

Kemble rejected the description. "What alternate universe was the sheriff in that day?" she said. "It was so peaceful. The whole day was steeped in prayer and ceremony.

"The police are fear-mongering."

Kemble said she'll present the parchment to tribal leaders Wednesday morning.

Last weekend, the Dane County Sheriff's Office sent 10 deputies from its special events team to the site of the protests, part of a state contingent of 40 members of law enforcement that have gone to provide assistance to the area.

Construction resumed Tuesday on the $3.8 billion, 1,200-mile pipeline on private land about 20 miles from the so-called Red Warrior Camp where thousands of protesters have gathered, The Associated Press reported.

Dean Mosiman covers Madison city government for the Wisconsin State Journal.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

GOP Demands Punishment From AG Lynch Over Gold King Mine Disasters – The Daily Caller News Foundation (Washington DC pub)

Republican lawmakers are demanding the Department of Justice explain why criminal charges have not been leveled against an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employee allegedly responsible for a massive mine spill in Colorado.

“By not taking up the case, the Department of Justice looks like it is going easy on its colleagues in EPA,” three lawmakers with the House Natural Resources Committee wrote Wednesday in a letter to Attorney General Loretta Lynch.

Republican Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah joined fellow GOP colleagues Chairman Jason Chaffetz, also from Utah, and oversight subcommittee chairwoman Cynthia Lummis, who represents Wyoming, to send out the letter Wednesday afternoon.

“Its lack of action on these charges give the appearance of hypocrisy,” the lawmakers claim, “and seem to indicate that there is one set of rules for private citizens and another for the federal government.”

The Colorado mine spill resulted in three million gallons of dangerous mine waste being dumped into Colorado’s Animus River, turning it yellow and poisoning the drinking water for thousands of residents across three states and the Navajo Nation. The spill also dumped more than 880,000 pounds of toxic elements — like lead and arsenic — into the water.

The EPA had tried to keep the identity of the person responsible for the spill under wraps until June, when The Daily Caller News Foundation reported that EPA worker Hays Griswold was in charge at the Gold King Mine during the spill.

Someone removed Griswold’s name from an “independent” review of the disaster, according to documents obtained by TheDCNF in June.

An EPA inspector announced Wednesday Bishop’s committee wrote the letter that it found evidence an unnamed employee violated the Clean Water Act. The Department of Justice will not pursue the case, a spokesman told reporters, and is instead referring the case to the EPA’s leaders.

The lawmakers added that the “EPA disaster deserves the same level of accountability to which private citizens are held.”

EPA’s failure to hold its employees accountable for last year’s leak has become a standard operating procedure.

Senior EPA officials in 2015, for instance, largely ignored complaints by 16 women, mostly employees, accusing one agency official of sexual harassment. The employee got promoted despite the complaints.

Bishop’s committee held a hearing in May showing that the EPA paid a registered sex offender to retire rather than terminating his employment.

The child molester was a registered sex offender and was fired in 2014 for violating his probation – but the EPA, as its custom, reinstated him under the Merit Systems Protection Board reinstated him. The employee was eventually paid $55,000 to resign in 2015.

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Hurricane-level Winds Possible In Pacific Northwest (CNN)

By Max Blau

CNN, October 13, 2016

Brace yourself, Pacific Northwest. What's left of a typhoon, which has made its way across the ocean, is expected to pummel parts of Oregon and Washington over the next several days.

The National Weather Service has said a pair of strong storms are set to hit the West Coast on Thursday and Saturday.

CNN meteorologist Dave Hennen said parts of Washington and Oregon could see gusts of up to 80 mph near coastal ranges Thursday. According to the weather service, rivers are expected to rise, with flooding remaining most likely in the Olympic Peninsula.

"Areas of ponding on roadways will slow Thursday commutes," the weather service said. "Small creeks and streams will rise and flood as well."

After a brief lull, the fierce winds could whip again through the Northwest at up to 100 mph. Hennen, who described this storm as a "monster," said it has the potential to match the pressure levels of a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. The weather service has cautioned residents to watch out for tree damage due to the high winds.

"Many of the wind-related deaths in western Washington occur when trees topple onto people in cars," it said.

Though it's still too early to tell, the weather service said the Saturday storm could also lead to widespread wind damage, power outages and coastal erosion.

"(There's a chance for) a worst-case scenario leading to a historical and destructive windstorm for the area," it said.

According to Hennen, a third storm may pass through the Pacific Northwest next week.

From: Balint, Thomas
Sent: 23 Sep 2016 18:17:03 +0000
To: Dick, Jennifer;Hoburg, Leigh
Cc: Brummett, David
Subject: FW: ND

More FYI

Thomas Balint Jr.

Associate Chief Counsel for Protection and National Preparedness

Federal Emergency Management Agency

C Street – 8 NE

K Street - 9103N

Mobile: 202-674-8458

Thomas.Balint@fema.dhs.gov <mailto:Thomas.Balint@fema.dhs.gov>

<https://www.facebook.com/FEMA> <https://twitter.com/fema> <https://www.youtube.com/user/FEMA> <https://www.linkedin.com/company/fema> <http://instagram.com/fema>

From: Sevier, Adrian
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2016 12:38 PM
To: Balint, Thomas <Thomas.Balint@fema.dhs.gov>; Brummett, David <David.Brummett@fema.dhs.gov>; Martinet, Mary E <Mary.Martinet@fema.dhs.gov>; Doolin, Joel <joel.doolin@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: ND

FYI

Sent with Good (www.good.com)

____

From: Sevier, Adrian
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2016 12:36:56 PM
To: Kamoie, Brian; Batkin, Joshua; Davis, Aaron J
Subject: ND

Just FYI, as we waited for a meeting with S1

From: Dick, Jennifer
Sent: 20 Sep 2016 16:31:30 +0000
To: Pierson, Brock;Allen, Jotham;Martinet, Mary E;Parker, Robert
Cc: Lawin, Thomas;Adamcik, Carol Ann
Subject: RE: ND Pipeline

Thanks, Jotham. Our Regional ESF 13 liaison reported out this morning that the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services (NDDES) and State Police are in touch with DOJ on grants and/or the reprogramming of current law enforcement grants to help cover the security expenses associated with the protest. No indication so far from NDDES that they will seek a Stafford Act emergency declaration. I will let you know if we hear anything different.

Jennifer Dick

Regional Counsel

FEMA Region VIII

(303) 235-4903 (office)

(303) 563-9230 (blackberry)

This email and any attachments were prepared by the DHS/FEMA Office of Chief Counsel and are covered by federal and state law governing electronic communications. It may contain confidential, pre-decisional, and/or sensitive attorney client privileged, attorney work-product and/or US Government information, and is not intended for release, review, retransmission, dissemination, or use by anyone other than the intend

From: Allen, Jotham
Sent: 20 Sep 2016 15:53:51 +0000
To: Martinet, Mary E;Pierson, Brock;Parker, Robert;Dick, Jennifer
Cc: Lawin, Thomas
Subject: SD Pipeline

FYSA – I've gotten two questions in the last two days about the possibility emergency declaration to support state and local law enforcement responding to the protests over the Dakota pipeline. Yesterday from Roger Jones in R8 (who is in DC for a few weeks) and today from OCFO-ExCo. I advised both that a declaration is unlikely for this type of event and pointed to MD's request for the Baltimore civil unrest as recent precedent.

http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-pipeline-nativeamericans-reroute-idUSKCN11P09K

From: Taylor, James
To: Carlson-Sherbo, Diana
Cc: Fuqua, Charisse; Holmes, Lanney
Subject: RE: Action required - Response by noon, Tues, Nov 1st please --> FW: Tasking/General 2017-FEFO-00172
Date: Friday, October 28, 2016 12:47:33 PM

Hi Diana,

We have looked and this is all I can tell you:

1. FEMA Region VIII Regional Training Manager (RTM) has no records of any training delivered to North Dakota by the FEMA Region VIII National Preparedness Division between October 28, 2014 and October 28, 2016.
2. FEMA Region VIII RTM has no records of any training conducted for the state of North Dakota by any other division within FEMA Region VIII, between October 28, 2014 and October 28, 2016.
3. FEMA Region VIII RTM does not keep records of trainings conducted in the field during disasters at Joint Field Offices (JFO's) by Disaster Field Training Officers (DFTOs) as these are sent in by the Training Unit Lead at disasters directly to the DFTO Office at HQ. For classes taught at JFOs, a request will have to be sent to the DFTO Cadre at FEMA HQ.
4. FEMA Region VIII RTM does not keep records of any training given to North Dakota through the Emergency Management Institute (EMI), or the National Fire Academy (NFA). This process is handled by the State Training Officer (an employee of the State of North Dakota) and the staff at EMI/NFA in Emmitsburg, Maryland.
5. FEMA Region VIII RTM does not keep records of any training given to North Dakota through the Centers for Domestic Preparedness (CDP). This process is handled by the State Training Officer and the staff at CDP located in Anniston, Alabama.
6. FEMA Region VIII RTM does not have any records, for any time frame, for any class labeled *"Field Force Extrication Tactics"(https://cdp.dhs.gov/find-training/law-enforcement/course/PER-202).*

If you want to take this email as my response, let me know. If I need to retype this into some other type of response, let me know that as well.

James F. Taylor
Regional Training Manager
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 8
Denver Federal Center
Building 710
National Preparedness Division
P.O. Box 25267
Denver, CO 80225-0267
james.taylor@fema.dhs.gov
Desk: 303.235.4995

Cell: 303.807.6127

From: Carlson-Sherbo, Diana
Sent: Friday, October 28, 2016 12:32 PM
To: Taylor, James <James.Taylor@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Action required - Response by noon, Tues, Nov 1st please --> FW: Tasking/General 2017-FEFO-00172

Hello JT –
Let's start with this:
If you already have a listing of courses (course name, date, location), whatever format it's in will be fine.
We are not required to devise new report formats for a FOIA response.
If you don't have an existing list, a simple list (sample shown below) will do.

Course name	Date(s)	Location
Government Ethics	Jan 10, 2016	Bismarck, ND
DHS Travel Card Training	Feb 20, 2016	Minot, ND
Introduction to Equal Rights	March 15, 2016	Fargo, ND
Etc.		

I want to talk to Chris Americanos again about how much detail we should provide (I am concerned that a list of instructors' names, and participants' names and grades may be Privacy Act information…)

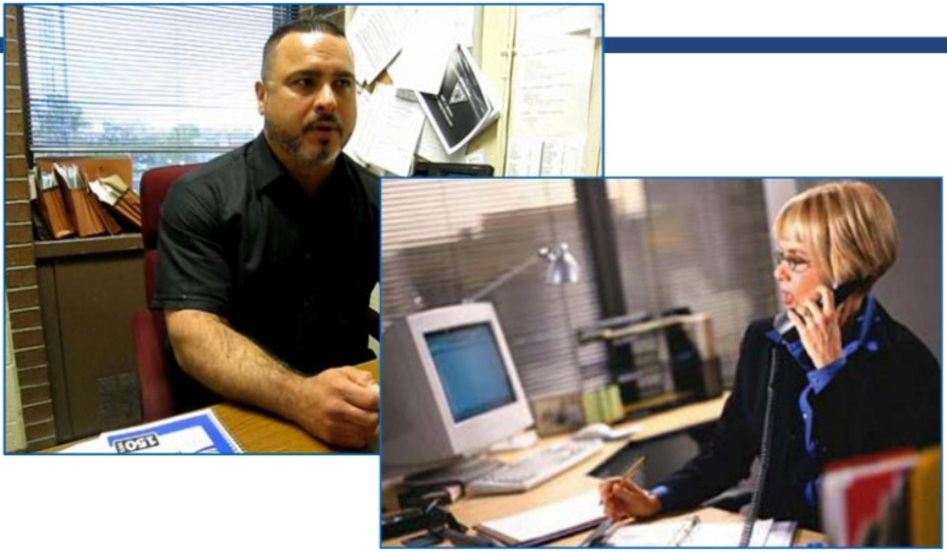
--- Diana

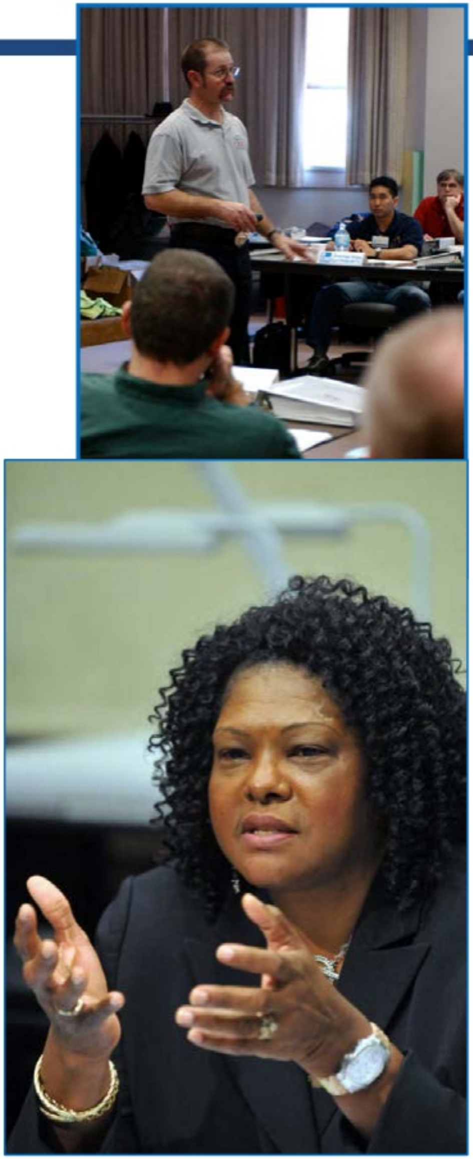
Unit 3:
Leading and Managing Recovery

Objectives

After completing this unit, you will be able to…

- Explain the importance of proper documentation
- Describe the function of an Unmet Needs Committee
- Identify sources of financial assistance available to the community
- Describe the actions a community leader can take to lead the community through recovery
- Describe the role of the Recovery Leader
- Applying learning points to solve problems faced by a Recovery Task Force.





What is the difference between Leadership and Management?

Managing the Details

- Cost recovery
- Creative financing
- Documentation
- Project management
- Legal issues
- Staffing Issues
- Assistance to disaster victims

Cost Recovery

The federal portion of disaster assistance is to help communities recover to safe, secure and sanitary conditions – NOT to make the community whole again.

Federal Programs

Federal Disaster Assistance Response and Recovery Programs: Brief Summaries

(Congressional Research Service: July 9, 2015)

Creative Financing

- Restructure local budget
- Insurance
- Financing
- General obligation bonds
- Revenue bonds
- Diverse partnerships

Assistance to Disaster Survivors

While it is not generally the role of local government to provide direct assistance to individuals and families, it may be important to help organize these services in a way that enhances access to members of the community.

RMY
AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB
PET DISASTER RELIEF

Assistance to Disaster Survivors

Unmet Needs Committee is a unique organization that many communities have adopted as part of their recovery planning. The Committee acts as a safety net by providing creative ways to provide help when traditional assistance programs fall short.

Documentation

Documentation of activities and costs is an essential part of disaster recovery.

Documentation

- Does your jurisdiction have documentation procedures in place?
- Are there procurement procedures in place?
- Are there policies in place for disaster pay rates, overtime, benefits?
- Have you documented force account labor rates?
- Are there specific disaster recovery documentation requirements in your State?
- Who will be responsible for developing these policies and procedures?

Legal Issues

Ensure that all legal documents and policies are reviewed by legal staff.

What are some of the kinds of documents that should be reviewed?

Staffing Considerations

Local governments will need adequate numbers of trained staff to manage the workload of recovery efforts.

FEMA

Staffing Considerations

- How many staff will be needed?
- Can existing staff be temporarily reassigned?
- What training will be required?
- Where will the additional staff work?
- What expertise is needed?
- Where can additional staff be obtained?
- Are existing staff members also disaster victims?
- How will the stress of the recovery be managed?

FEMA

Leading the Recovery

To successfully lead the recovery and establish a vision for the future, a leader must have a solid understanding of the whole community.

ASH GROVE CEMENT

Activity 3.1: Who Will Lead?

Purpose: Consider attributes of a recovery leader.

Instructions:

1. Review list of attributes.
2. Recommend any additional attributes you believe are critical to the success of a recovery leader.
3. Identify candidates within your jurisdiction that meet or exceed the attributes.

10 minutes

Leading the Recovery

- Vision for recovery
- Visible
- Proactive
- Set the tone for cooperation
- Involve community partners
- Gain support for recovery initiatives
- Lobby for support
- Host VIP's president, partners, potential benefactors

FEMA

Leading the Recovery

Establish a vision for recovery.

Leading the Recovery

Leaders must set the tone for cooperation.

Video: Selling Waterbury

May 2, 2012 -- Wilmington, Vermont
FEMA

Leading the Recovery

Involve community partners in recovery planning and programs.

Boy Scouts of America
EXIT

Inter-jurisdictional Relationships

A leader will need to establish trust and cooperation with outside agencies and other jurisdictions to help aid the recovery effort.

- **Mutual aid**
- **Mutual interests**
- **Cross-jurisdiction damage**
- **Common issues: City-County-State**

Recovery Manager

The roles of the Recovery Manager are:

- To coordinate the recovery program with leadership.
- To oversee a broad range of projects and programs.
- To manage the details
- To ensure that management staff are working together to reach the established goals and community vision for recovery.

Recovery Task Force

One way leaders and managers can help establish a broad vision and incorporate community goals into the recovery strategy is to establish a Recovery Task Force.

FEMA

Activity 3.2

Recovery Task Force Challenges

In your table group, review your assigned Recovery Task Force topic, and answer each of the questions provided. Prepare responses on easel to share with class.

45 minutes

FEMA

Unit Summary

In this unit you have learned about:

- The importance of proper documentation
- The function of an Unmet Needs Committee
- Sources of financial assistance available to the community
- The actions a community leader can take to lead the community through recovery
- The role of the Recovery Leader
- Applying learning points to solve problems faced by a Recovery Task Force

Unit 5

Local Capabilities and Challenges

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the roles of local agencies for functions including housing, public works, building inspection, planning, and community development.
- Identify the six community planning tools that can assist in disaster recovery?
- Describe the challenges and opportunities related to short and long term housing issues.

Planning and Community Development

The Role of Community Planning

- Analyze existing community development problems and issues.
- Identify options and solutions.
- Develop a vision for the community's future.

FEMA

Six Planning Tools

- General Plan and Elements
- Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Regulations
- Capital Improvements Programming
- Transfer of Development Rights
- Mapping

FEMA

General Plan and Elements

The Land Use or General Plan and Elements sets goals for these uses:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Safety
- Public Utilities
- Open Space

Zoning Ordinance

A zoning ordinance identifies allowable land uses within the community.

Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision is the process by which land is divided into smaller parcels.

Capital Improvements Programming

Capital improvements can help direct future growth or rebuilding.

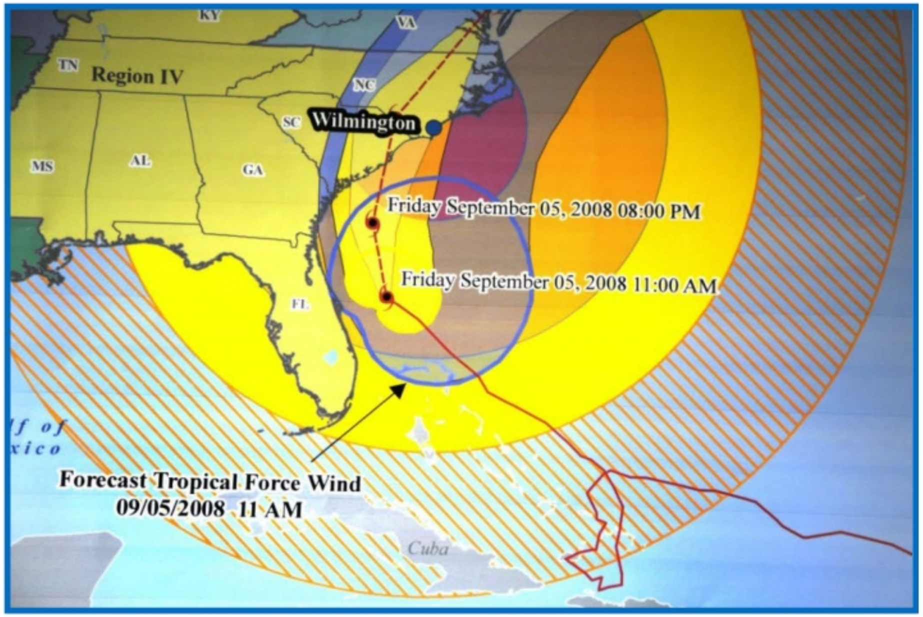
CITY OF BAY ST LOUIS CENTRAL FIRE HOUSE

Transfer of Development Rights

Transfer of Development rights may provide options during disaster recovery.

Mapping

The Planning Department's Geographic Information System (GIS) and mapping resources are valuable tools for recovery planning.


KY
VA
TN
Region IV
NC
SC
Wilmington
MS
AL
GA
FL
Gulf of Mexico
Cuba

Friday September 05, 2008 08:00 PM

Friday September 05, 2008 11:00 AM

Forecast Tropical Force Wind
09/05/2008 11 AM

Housing

Issues and Challenges

Why does a community with significant housing damage need to be concerned about temporary housing, and replacement housing for its citizens?

FEMA

Short- and Long-Term Options

- Temporary housing
- Replacement housing

Temporary Housing

People whose homes are not habitable, safe, sanitary, or secure will need temporary housing.

FEMA

Temporary Housing Resources (1 of 2)

When there is NOT a Presidential Disaster Declaration, contact:

- **Your State's multi-family housing association.**
- **Local nonprofit housing providers and developers.**
- **State Housing Finance Agency (HFA) or Economic Development Agency (EDA).**
- **The American Red Cross.**
- **Your Unmet Needs Committee.**

Temporary Housing Resources (2 of 2)

When a Presidential Disaster Declaration is made, FEMA will activate the National Disaster Housing Strategy, which includes:

- **Providing repair and replacement assistance.**
- **Cataloging vacant rental units.**

APARTMENTS
FOR RENT

- **Providing manufactured and alternative interim housing (as a last resort).**

Short- and Long-Term Temporary Housing

- **Short-Term**
  - **Onsite travel trailers (manufactured) units**
  - **Alternative housing (tents)**
- **Long-Term**
  - **Mobile homes**

New Site Development Considerations

- Size of the development: determine whether there should be multiple sites.
- Proximity to: transportation, shopping, churches, jobs, schools, etc.
- Large developments may need play areas, gathering places, onsite services (VOAD, Recovery Center).
- Site approval and preparation may be a lengthy process.

Replacement Housing

Avoid the rush to replace lost housing.

FEMA

Improvements

- **Disaster recovery can be an opportunity.**
- **Recovery funds can be used to improve the community rather than put it back the way it was.**

Community Revitalization

The goal of housing recovery is two-fold:

- Help survivors repair or replace housing.
- Revitalize the community's housing stock and tax base.

Potential Resources

SBA
U.S. Small Business Administration
DISASTER ASSISTANCE
Long-term Low-interest Loans
Homeowners & Ren
nesses of All Si
0-659-2
www.sba

Potential housing recovery resources include:

- **Financial options**
- **Housing recovery assistance**

Financial Options

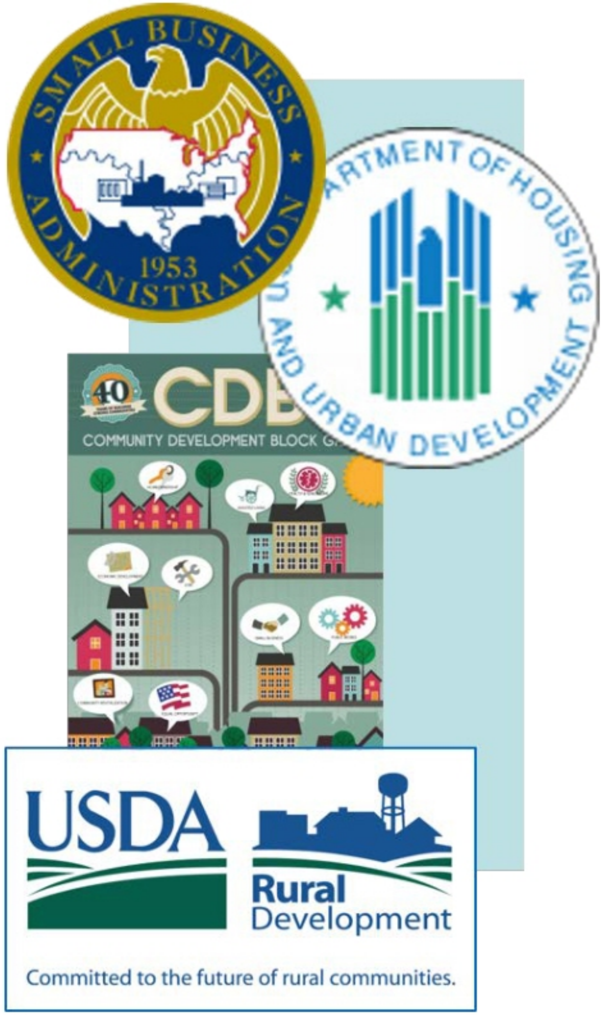
Financial resources available to repair and replace housing:

- Insurance
- Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance Loans
- State and/or Federal Disaster Assistance
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Resources and Services

SBA
DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Non-FEMA Government Assistance

- SBA
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) housing programs


SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
1953
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
40
CDB
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK G
USDA
Rural Development
Committed to the future of rural communities.

Public Funds

In long-term housing recovery, the role of public funds is to fill gaps, to return survivors to pre-disaster housing conditions, and to address health and safety deficiencies.

Other Resources

Nonprofit housing providers assist with:

- Housing counseling
- Volunteer coordination
- Job site supervision and guidance

- New home and home rehabilitation construction management
- Financial aid

Providers Identified

Identifying local nonprofit housing providers:

- **Community Action Agencies/Programs (CAP)**
- **Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS)**

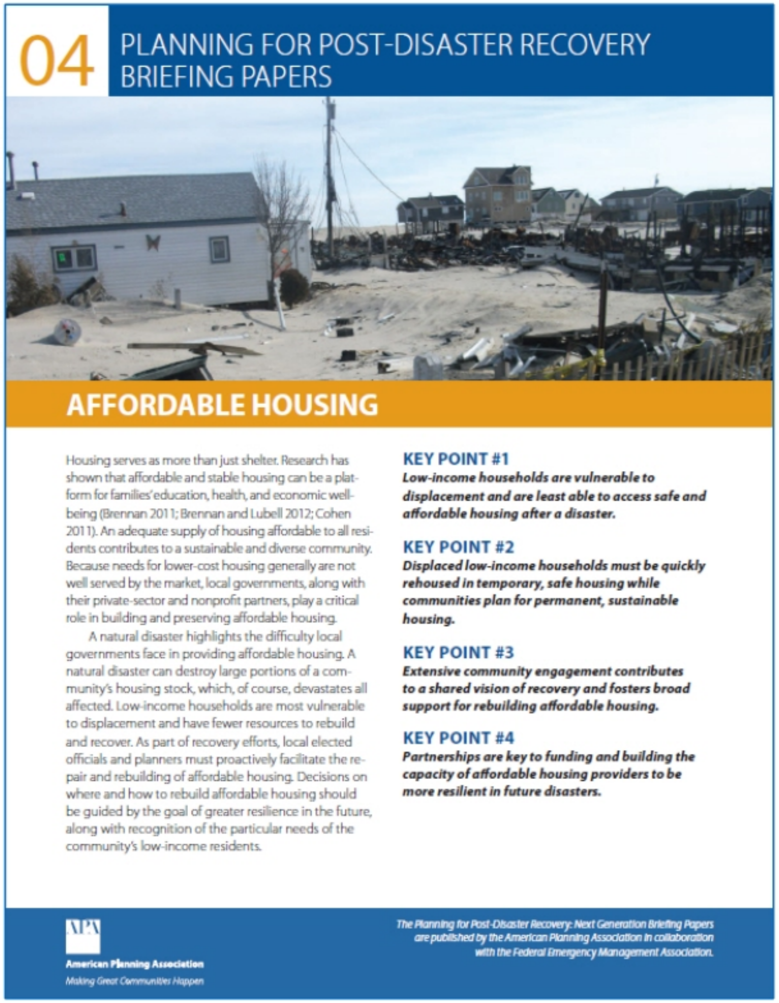
- **Community Development Organizations**
- **Community-Based Organizations (CBO)**

FEMA

Activity 5.1: Case Study - APA Briefing - Housing

Purpose: Examine issues relating to affordable housing during recovery.

Instructions: Individually read the 5 page briefing, discuss as a class.



04 PLANNING FOR POST-DISASTER RECOVERY BRIEFING PAPERS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing serves as more than just shelter. Research has shown that affordable and stable housing can be a platform for families' education, health, and economic well-being (Brennan 2011; Brennan and Lubell 2012; Cohen 2011). An adequate supply of housing affordable to all residents contributes to a sustainable and diverse community. Because needs for lower-cost housing generally are not well served by the market, local governments, along with their private-sector and nonprofit partners, play a critical role in building and preserving affordable housing.

A natural disaster highlights the difficulty local governments face in providing affordable housing. A natural disaster can destroy large portions of a community's housing stock, which, of course, devastates all affected. Low-income households are most vulnerable to displacement and have fewer resources to rebuild and recover. As part of recovery efforts, local elected officials and planners must proactively facilitate the repair and rebuilding of affordable housing. Decisions on where and how to rebuild affordable housing should be guided by the goal of greater resilience in the future, along with recognition of the particular needs of the community's low-income residents.

KEY POINT #1

Low-income households are vulnerable to displacement and are least able to access safe and affordable housing after a disaster.

KEY POINT #2

Displaced low-income households must be quickly rehoused in temporary, safe housing while communities plan for permanent, sustainable housing.

KEY POINT #3

Extensive community engagement contributes to a shared vision of recovery and fosters broad support for rebuilding affordable housing.

KEY POINT #4

Partnerships are key to funding and building the capacity of affordable housing providers to be more resilient in future disasters.

American Planning Association
Making Great Communities Happen

The Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery: Next Generation Briefing Papers are published by the American Planning Association in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Association.

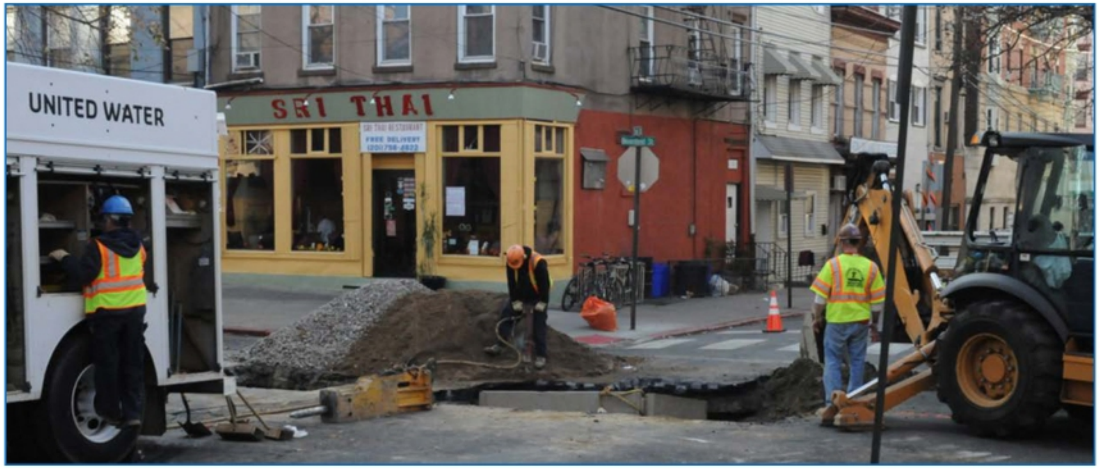
FEMA

Public Works

FEMA

Critical Issues for Public Works

- Transportation systems and facilities
- Drainage and flood control systems
- Water and sewer utility systems
- Solid waste – collection/continuity
- Solid waste – debris removal/disposal
- Recovery and mitigation support services



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Four General Areas of Activity

- Transportation and Lifelines
- Utilities
- Debris Management
- Support Activities

Transportation Systems

- Roads
- Bridges
- Traffic Control

ROAD CLOSED
ROAD CLOSED
WAFFLE HOUSE

Other Transportation Systems

- Transportation facilities
    - Airports
    - Seaports
    - Rail systems
    - Mass transit systems
    - Tunnels

Lifelines

UTILITY
WORK
AHEAD

- Electrical power
- Telecommunication
- Cable
- Internet
- Natural Gas

Important Issues to Consider

- Primary re-start locations
  - Prioritize for community needs
  - Coordinate the work and priorities
- Publicize the plan
  - Communicate with stakeholders
  - Establish clear expectations

FEMA

Drainage & Flood Control Systems

- Identify critical areas in your community.
- Determine what areas and structures are most vulnerable.
- Prioritize cleaning and repair based on risk assessment.
- Identify process for damage assessment of these systems and structures.
- If multiple jurisdictions, who will coordinate?

FEMA

Sanitary Sewer Systems

- Ownership and control
- Status of key components
- Isolation points
- Availability of spare parts and equipment

Potable Water Systems

- Ownership and control
- Status of key components isolation points
- Availability of spare parts and equipment

WATER
OK
SLOW
Ford

Solid Waste – Collection/Continuity

- Who will carry out normal collection operations?
- Are there drawbacks to one contractor doing both routine and debris operations?
- Will the traditional disposal sites change their billing or operational policies and procedures?
- Will commercial collection needs increase during the recovery period due to increased business and restocking?

Solid Waste – Debris Removal/Disposal

- Determine community's role.
- Determine Temporary Debris Storage and Reduction sites (TDSR) and permit requirements.
- Publicize plans and requirements.
- Understand Federal requirements for reimbursement of debris-related costs.

FEMA

Debris Management

- Once debris is moved to TDSR, reduction is an efficient method to reduce material disposal costs.
  - Recycle: metal, glass, plastics, paper, white goods
  - For other combustibles:
    - Air curtain burner
    - Grinders/chippers
    - Composting
  - Authority to demolish structures.

FEMA

Hazardous Material Collection

- How will hazardous materials be collected?
- Determine protocols for collection (OSHA/EPA).
- How and to whom will spills or leaks be communicated?
- Communicate the need to separate from other debris.
- Determine final disposal plan.

FEMA

Technical Support – Recovery

Provide support to other recovery team members for:

- **Damage assessment.**
- **Engineering, fleet, facilities, and resources.**
- **Liaison with utilities and agencies.**

New York State
OEM
DHSES

Technical Support – Mitigation

- Determine how mitigation can be incorporated into recovery.
- Evaluate/identify areas of future risk.
- Identify mitigation techniques.
- Determine financing options.

Continuity

In most cases, there are services that must be provided despite the recovery process.

- Identify areas and services that have priority.
- Determine how to staff both recovery and continuity operations.
- Plan how and when to transition forces from one to the other.

Transition

Determining when to transition from recovery to normal operations is often difficult.

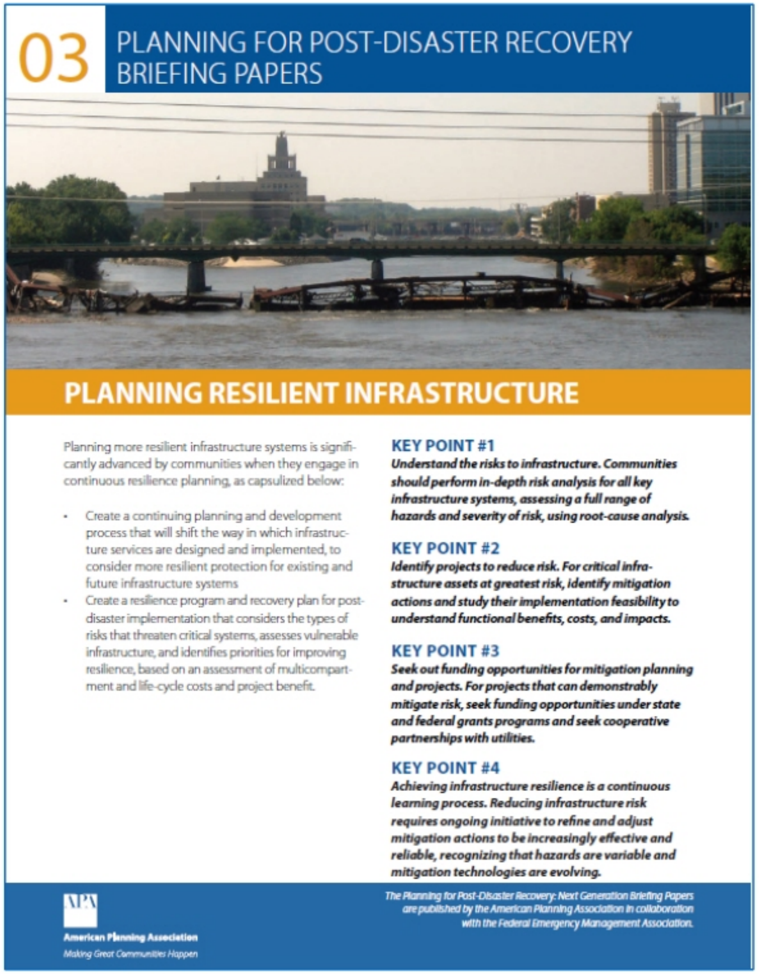
- Who determines when this transition will take place?
- How will employees be transitioned?
- What operations will be transitioned first?
- Are there new priorities or policies?
- How will these new policies be communicated?

FEMA

Activity 5.2: Case Study - APA Briefing - Infrastructure

Purpose: Examine issues relating to infrastructure during recovery.

Instructions: Individually read the 5 page briefing, discuss as a class.



03 PLANNING FOR POST-DISASTER RECOVERY BRIEFING PAPERS

PLANNING RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Planning more resilient infrastructure systems is significantly advanced by communities when they engage in continuous resilience planning, as capsulized below:

- Create a continuing planning and development process that will shift the way in which infrastructure services are designed and implemented, to consider more resilient protection for existing and future infrastructure systems
- Create a resilience program and recovery plan for post-disaster implementation that considers the types of risks that threaten critical systems, assesses vulnerable infrastructure, and identifies priorities for improving resilience, based on an assessment of multicompartment and life-cycle costs and project benefit.

KEY POINT #1

Understand the risks to infrastructure. Communities should perform in-depth risk analysis for all key infrastructure systems, assessing a full range of hazards and severity of risk, using root-cause analysis.

KEY POINT #2

Identify projects to reduce risk. For critical infrastructure assets at greatest risk, identify mitigation actions and study their implementation feasibility to understand functional benefits, costs, and impacts.

KEY POINT #3

Seek out funding opportunities for mitigation planning and projects. For projects that can demonstrably mitigate risk, seek funding opportunities under state and federal grants programs and seek cooperative partnerships with utilities.

KEY POINT #4

Achieving infrastructure resilience is a continuous learning process. Reducing infrastructure risk requires ongoing initiative to refine and adjust mitigation actions to be increasingly effective and reliable, recognizing that hazards are variable and mitigation technologies are evolving.

American Planning Association
Making Great Communities Happen

The Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery: Next Generation Briefing Papers are published by the American Planning Association in collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Association.

FEMA

Building Inspection

Building Inspection

Building inspection services may be needed for:

- Damage Assessment
- Re-Entry and Access Policies
- Temporary Protection vs. Reconstruction
- Contractor Licensing and Approvals
- Code Issues
- Mitigation Activities
- Demolition of Structures
- Building-Related Debris Management

FEMA

Damage Assessment

- Establishes a picture of scope and impact.
- Supports application for declaration and funding.
- Requires trained staff and a damage assessment procedure.
- Requires cooperation with other agencies and private sector.
- Makes use of technology where possible.

Trained Staff

- Reporting methods and structure
- Procedures and report format
- Uniform marking code
- Lines of responsibility and communication

Rapid Damage Assessment

- Conducted immediately post event.
- Provides general information to officials… How big how bad?
- Provides rough estimates and limits of damage.
- Can be accomplished through either single resources, task force, or strike team concepts.

FEMA

Detailed Damage Assessment

- May overlap in timeline with rapid damage assessment.
- Provides more extensive information.
- Inspections involve more physical presence.
- Costs are based upon more detailed estimates than rapid damage assessment.
- Helps determine actual losses
- Assists with mitigation and recovery planning.

FEMA

Re-Entry and Access Policy

- Critical part of emergency planning.
- Potential conflict between officials, citizens, and businesses.
- Necessary for public safety and security.
- Should establish who, when, where, and how long.
- Access routes and perimeter security.
- Planning can avoid conflicts between debris/public recovery and private recovery.

FEMA

Temporary Repairs vs. Reconstruction

- Does temporary work require permits?
- What is the threshold between temporary and permanent repairs?
- How will requests for exemption of code and ordinance requirements be managed?

FEMA

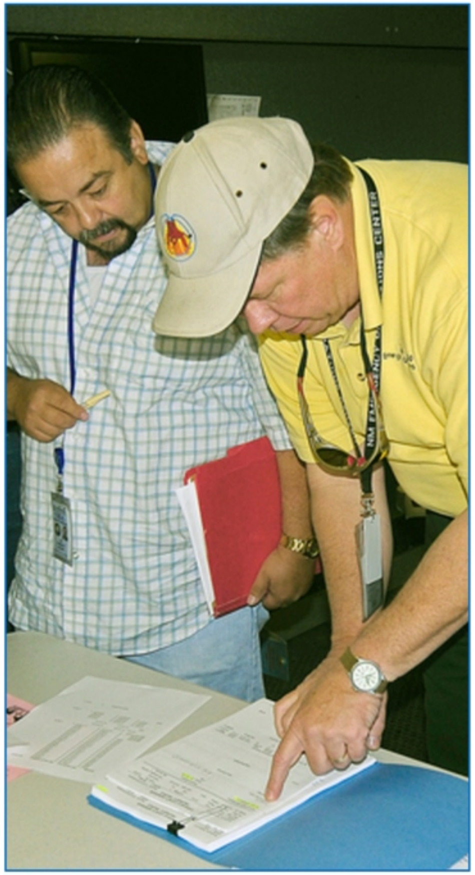
Contractor Licensing and Approvals

- Plan for the inevitable influx of contractors.
- Licensing vs. approved lists.
- Publicizing your process and protections to the public.

FEMA

Code Adequacies

The best time to review codes for currency and adequacy is BEFORE the disaster.



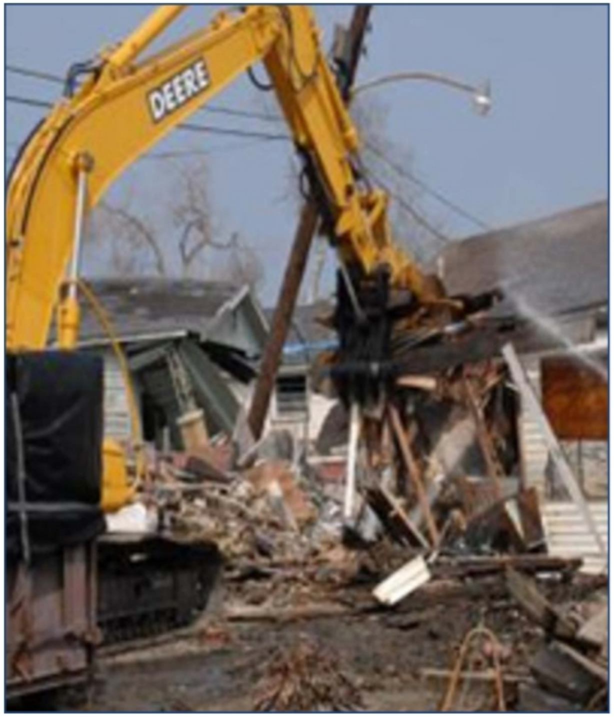
Mitigation Activities

- Information from assessments can be key component of mitigation reviews.
- Public support is often higher after an event.
- Coordination with community planning department.

FEMA

Demolition of Private & Public Properties

- Always a contentious issue.
- Authority to approve demolitions.
- Criteria to be applied:
    - Extent of damage ($ vs. %)
    - Public safety vs. community safety
    - Proper notification of property owners



FEMA

Unit Summary

Are you now able to:

- Explain the roles of local agencies for functions including housing, public works, building inspection, planning, and community development.
- Identify the six community planning tools that can assist in disaster recovery?
- Describe the challenges and opportunities related to short and long term housing issues.

Unit 6

Joplin, Missouri Case Study

Unit Objectives

Given case study information on disaster recovery in Joplin, Missouri, you will be able to:

- Identify capabilities and challenges related to implementation of disaster recovery planning efforts.
- Identify community engagement opportunities during disaster recovery.
- Identify considerations for improving your community's pre-disaster recovery capacity.

Activity 6.1: Case Study: Joplin

1 hour 30 minutes

Table Groups

Topics: Finances, Housing, COAD, CART, and Catalytic Recovery Efforts

Report Out: 3-5 minutes

FEMA

Unit Summary

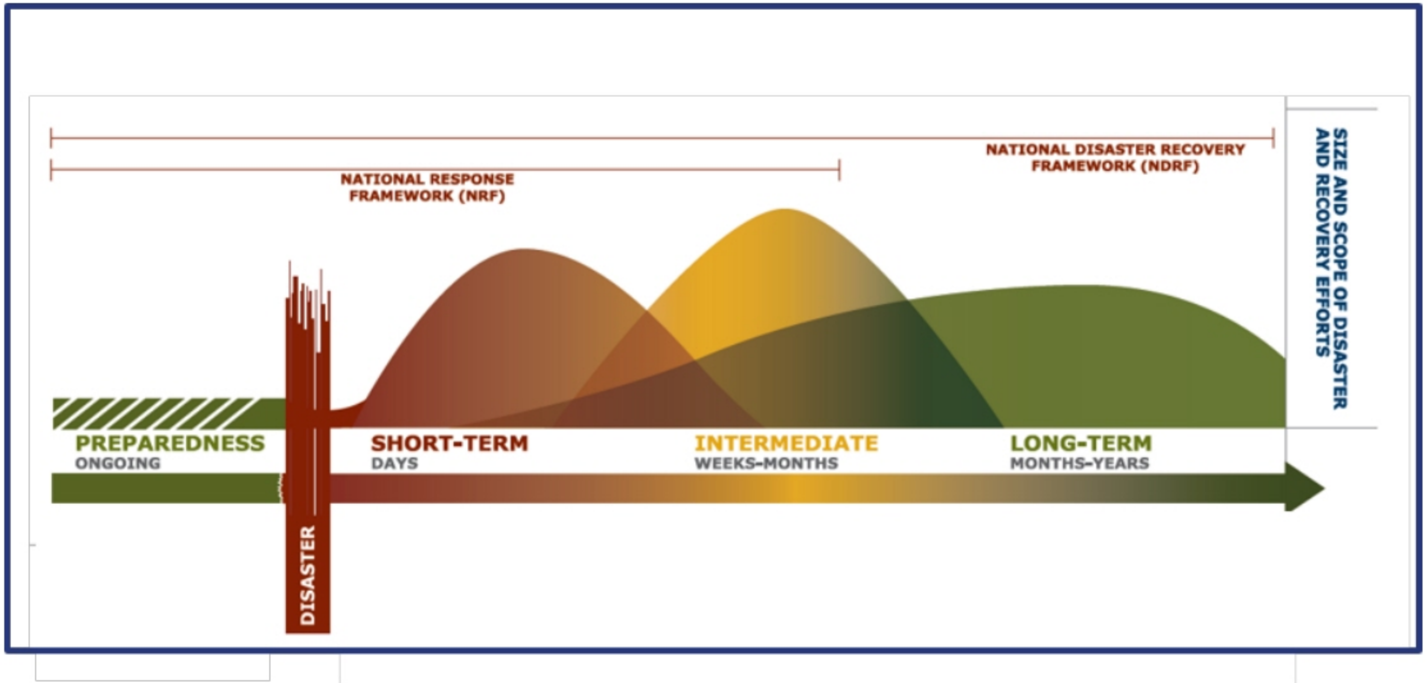
Are you now able to:

- **Identify capabilities and challenges related to implementation of disaster recovery planning efforts.**
- **Identify community engagement opportunities during disaster recovery.**
- **Identify considerations for improving your community's pre-disaster recovery capacity.**

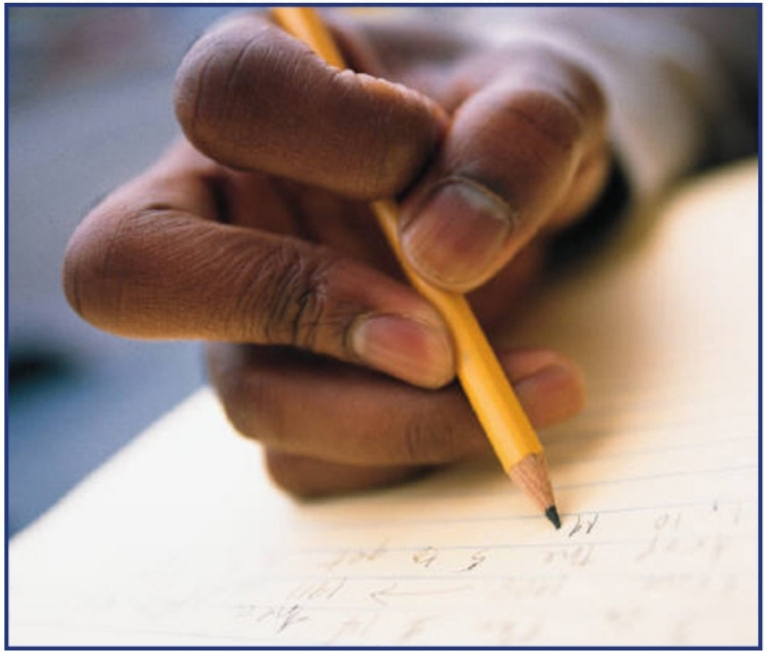
Unit 7

Course Conclusion

Course Summary and Final Comments


NATIONAL DISASTER RECOVERY FRAMEWORK (NDRF)
NATIONAL RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (NRF)
SIZE AND SCOPE OF DISASTER AND RECOVERY EFFORTS
DISASTER
PREPAREDNESS
ONGOING
SHORT-TERM
DAYS
INTERMEDIATE
WEEKS-MONTHS
LONG-TERM
MONTHS-YEARS

Course Examination



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Final Course Evaluation

Please complete the final evaluation form for this course.

Give us your suggestions for improvement, and help us refine this material for the students who will take this program after you.

FEMA

Conclusion

L205

Recovery from Disaster: The Local Government Role

FEMA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FEMA

Disaster Survivor Assistance Mission Education Overview

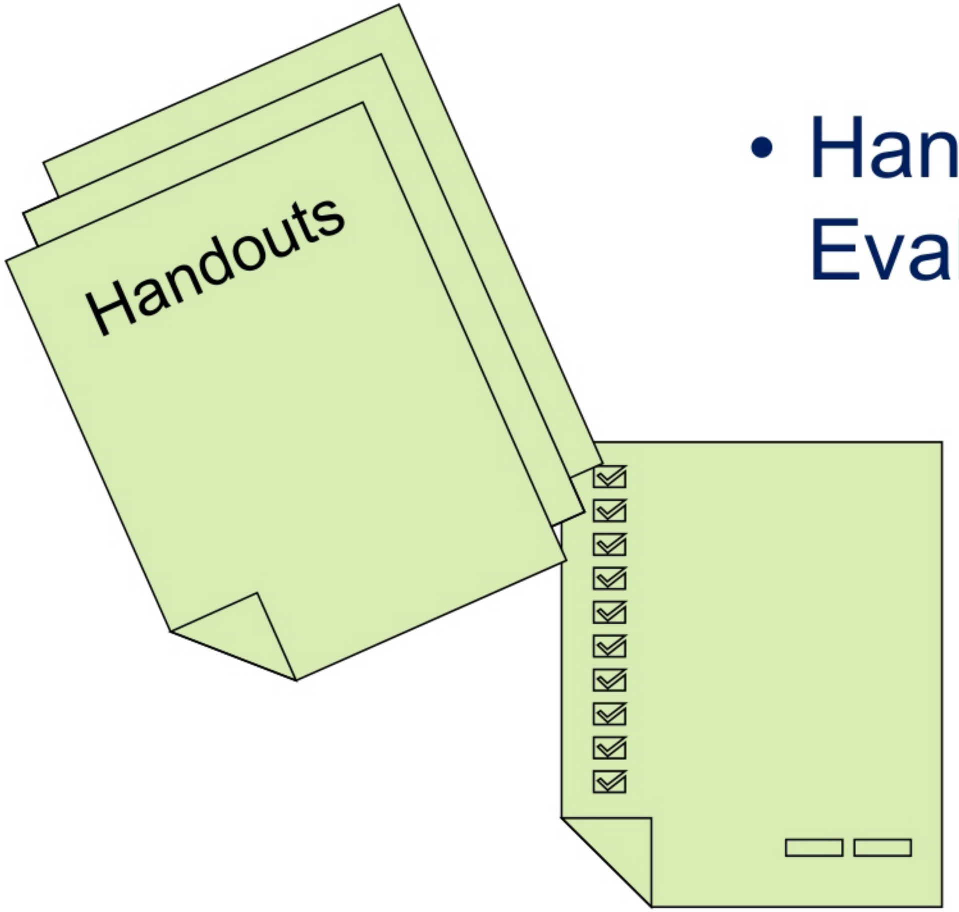
January 2014

Administrative

Sign/Initial the Course Roster DailyCall ADD to Check In (As needed)Emergency ExitsRestroomsCell Phones/BB/ComputersBreaksClassroom BehaviorPromptnessRespectful

Course Materials and Evaluation

- HandoutsSlidesCourse Evaluation



Introductions

- What is your name?How long have you worked for FEMA?What area do you work in?Have you had experience working with Community Relations?What have you heard about DSA?

Purpose, DSA Mission and Essential Functions

DSA Mission Education Overview Purpose

Provide an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of HQ and the Region when DSA is activated;Facilitate program buy-in and understanding at the senior leadership level;Provide an overview of the tools and resources used by DSA Teams in the field; andProvide an opportunity for facilitated discussions and feedback.

Improving the Survivor Experience

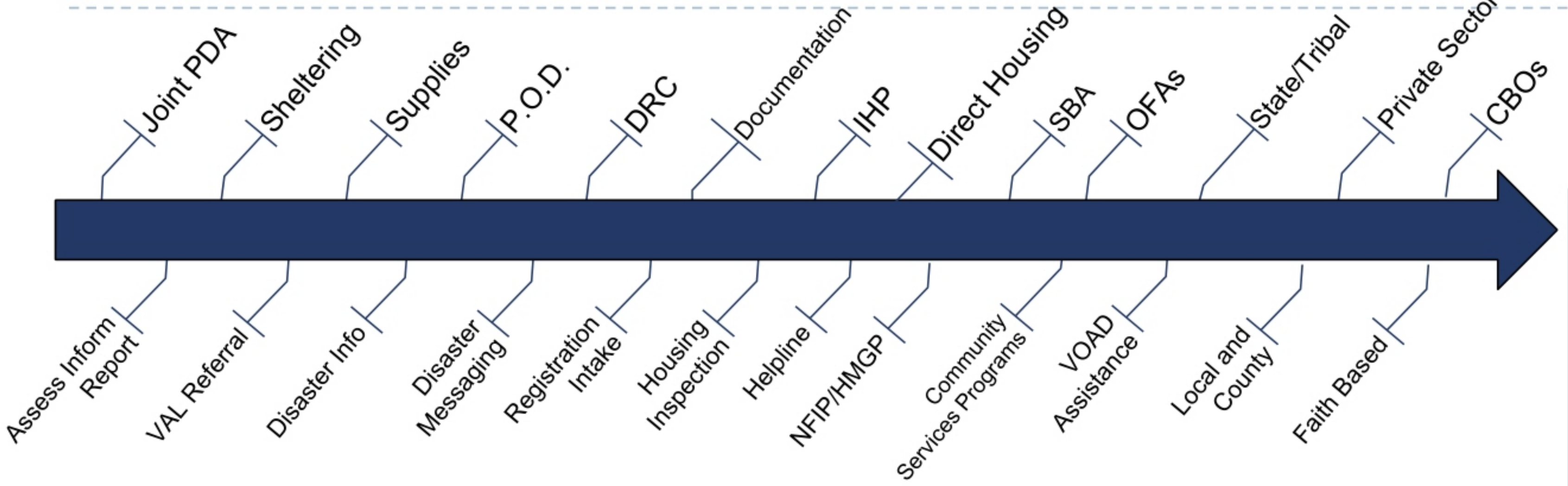
What were some of the roles and functions of the CR cadre?What tools do you wish you had while functioning as CR?

DSA Video

Click on the short video in the folder where training material is on the desktop:

Recovery Continuum

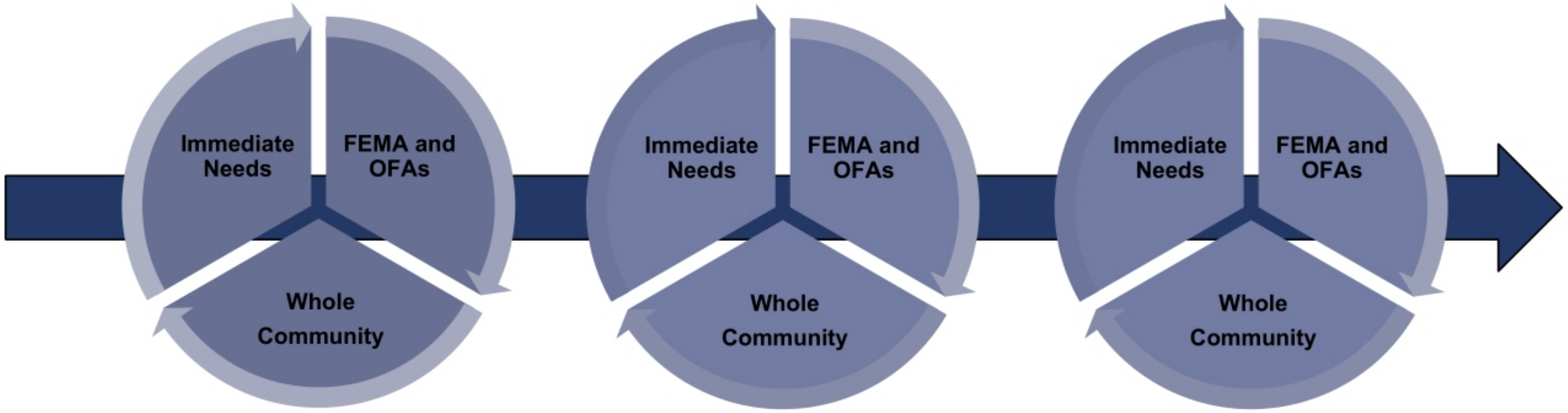
Current Process



Joint PDA
Sheltering
Supplies
P.O.D.
DRC
Documentation
IHP
Direct Housing
SBA
OFAs
State/Tribal
Private Sector
CBOs

Assess Inform Report
VAL Referral
Disaster Info
Disaster Messaging
Registration Intake
Housing Inspection
Helpline
NFIP/HMGP
Community Services Programs
VOAD Assistance
Local and County
Faith Based

Survivor-Centric Needs Resolution



Immediate Needs
FEMA and OFAs
Whole Community

Immediate Needs
FEMA and OFAs
Whole Community

Immediate Needs
FEMA and OFAs
Whole Community

Survivor and Community Self-Sustainability

Disaster Survivor Assistance2013 Milestones

		DSA Field Deployments
January	Based on lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy, and a desire to be more survivor-centric, FEMA Leadership decides to transfer Community Relations (CR) to the Recovery Directorate	
February	Established Disaster Survivor Initiative	
April	Transferred 741 CR Reservists from Office of External Affairs to Recovery (effective April 8)Changed the cadre name from "Community Relations" to "Disaster Survivor Assistance" (DSA)Delivered DSA Specialist Pilot Training	**4/19/2013:** EM-3363– West, Texas Explosion
May	Launched DSA Webpage Developed and tested the Survivor Mobile Application Reporting Tool (SMART) Delivered DSA Specialist Pilot Training	**5/10/2013:** DR-4116– Illinois Flooding **5/20/2013:** DR-4117– Oklahoma Tornado
June	Developed SMART Dashboard Delivered 2 DSA Specialist Courses and Train-the Trainer	**6/25/2013:** DR-2013– Alaska Ice Flow
July	Delivered Train-the-Trainer Course and 2 DSA Specialist Courses Hosted DSA Working Session to gather FEMA Leaders' feedback	
August	Delivered 3 DSA Specialist Courses and Train-the Trainer	
September	Delivered 8 DSA Specialist Training Courses	**9/14/2013:** DR-4145– Colorado Flooding
November	Hired 8 DSA IM COREs to support Regional implementation of DSA program	**11/26/2013:** DR-4157– Illinois Tornado
December	DSA Policy published Issued DSA Addendums and Revised Position Task Books Completed DSA Overview Video	

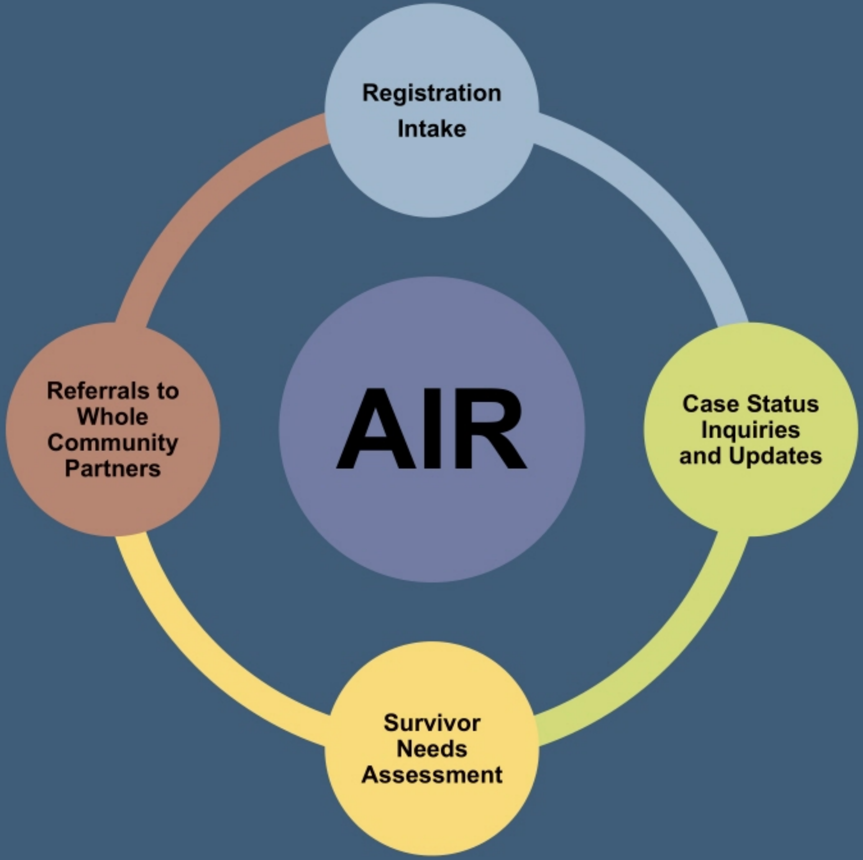
DSA Mission

Build and sustain an expeditionary cadre that can address disaster survivor's immediate needs by:Establishing a timely presence;Providing in-person, tailored information and services;Providing referrals to whole community partners as needed;Collecting targeted information to support decision-making; andIdentifying public information needs so critical messaging can be developed and disseminated.

Value-Added of DSA

- A new capability that builds on already existing resources within FEMA.Meant to complement the already existing operational structure in the field.Another options for survivors – Tele-registration, Web/Mobile Registration, Visiting DRCsProvides real-time situational awareness of unmet needs, infrastructure issues, etc.Additional surge staff to support states and local communities as neededAnother tool in the toolbox

Five Essential Functions of Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams



AIR

Registration Intake

Case Status Inquiries and Updates

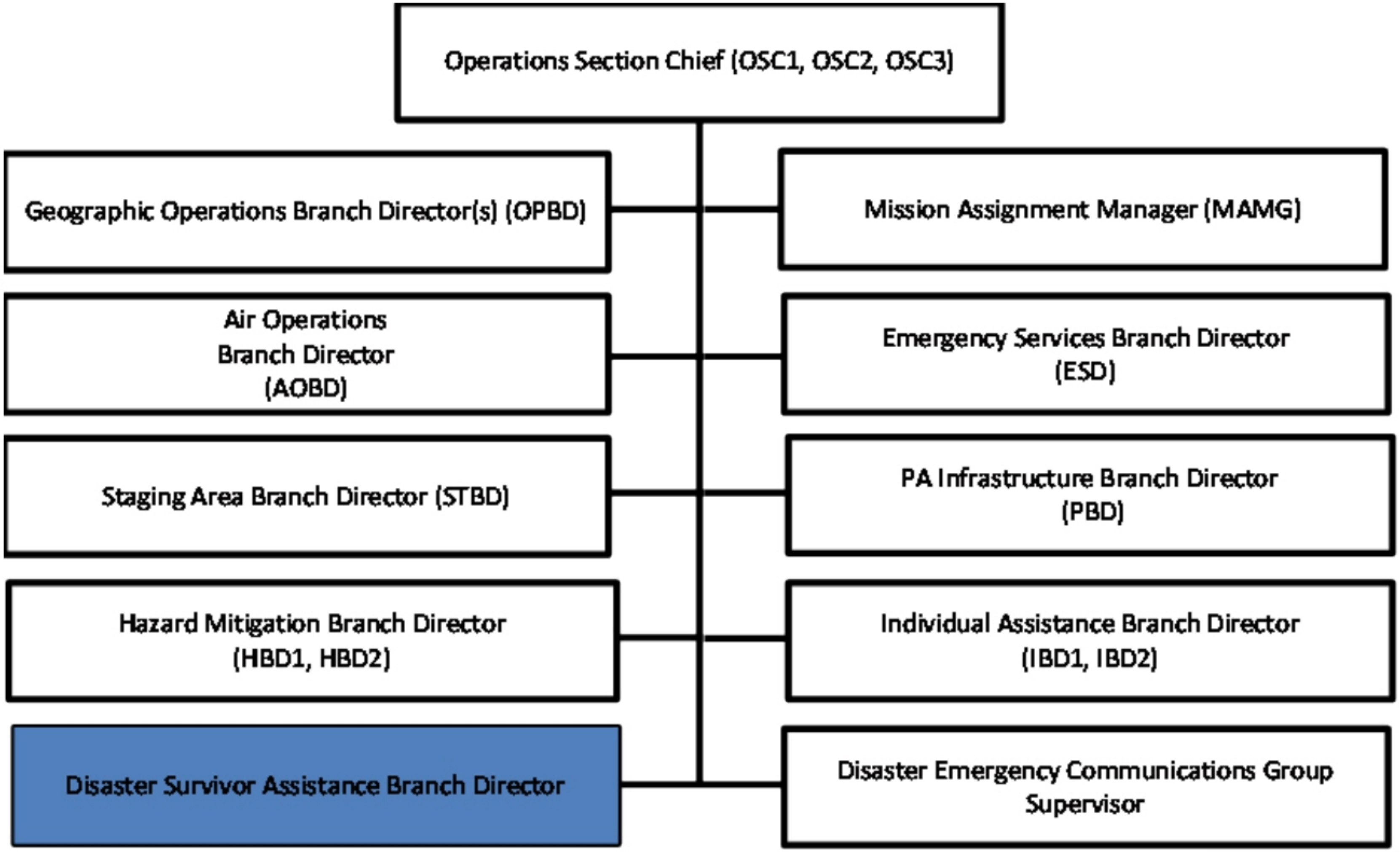
Survivor Needs Assessment

Referrals to Whole Community Partners

Organizational Structure

- Where does DSA fit within the organizational structure?

JFO Organization Chart



Operations Section Chief (OSC1, OSC2, OSC3)

Geographic Operations Branch Director(s) (OPBD)

Air Operations Branch Director (AOBD)

Staging Area Branch Director (STBD)

Hazard Mitigation Branch Director (HBD1, HBD2)

Disaster Survivor Assistance Branch Director

Mission Assignment Manager (MAMG)

Emergency Services Branch Director (ESD)

PA Infrastructure Branch Director (PBD)

Individual Assistance Branch Director (IBD1, IBD2)

Disaster Emergency Communications Group Supervisor

DSA Organizational Chart

DSA Organizational Chart - Geographic

Deployment/Employment

Deployment Lifecycle

DSA's initial mission will last at least through the IA registration period

Deployment Criteria

What things are considered when determining the need for activation of DSA…

Deployment Metrics

What are the expectations for DSA deployment?

Deployment/Employment

- How does operations prioritize where DSA Crews are deployed?

Disaster Survivor Assistance Essential Functions

Neighborhoods	
Local Government	
Community Groups	YMCA Mary Stuart Rogers Family Center
Private Sector	
Town Hall Meetings	
Mobile Disaster Recovery Center	
Disaster Recovery Center	H ADA COUNTY RE DEPAR MENT STATION NO 1 4711 FEMA-STATE DISASTER RECOVERY CENTER

1. Assess, Inform, Report (AIR)On-Site Registration IntakeCase Status Inquiries and UpdatesPre- or Post- Registration Survivor Needs AssessmentReferral Whole Community Partners

Reporting Protocol

SMART - Survivor Mobile Application Reporting-Tool

DSA Crews Complete the following Reports, as needed

- AIR Checklist
- Pre- or Post-Registration Survivor Needs Assessment
- Spot Report
- Daily Summary

Reporting and the Unified Coordination Staff

Survivor Outreach (In Person) Phased Approach

Day of Declaration: Presence (Assess, Inform, Report (AIR)) if a notice event.

D +1&2: Presence (AIR Mission) + Registration Intake (RI) at congregate locations (targeted)

D + 3: RI + AIR + Expanded Whole Community Services

Resources: DSA, IA, NPSC, EA, ODIC, MIT, MERS, LOG, OPS, State/Local/Tribal, OFAsMission:- Planning for Targeted Outreach (e.g. language needs, elderly, etc.)- State/Tribe Priorities- Reference data: * PDA/GIS data * NPSC Forecasting Data * Historical Disaster Data

Resources: DSA, IA and OperationsMission:- Socialization of DSA mission with State/Tribal/Local officials - Community Priorities- Identification of disproportionately impacted populations (e.g. LEP, elderly, low-income, disabled, etc.)- Identification of congregate locations

Resources: DSA Equipment: Tablets & DSA Vehicle Kits Locations: Congregate locations (e.g. Shelters, PODs, Stores)Mission: AIR and RI

Resources: DSA Equipment: Tablets & DSA Vehicle Kits Locations: Neighborhoods, Congregate LocationsMission:- AIR- Registration Intake- Case Status Inquiries and Updates- Survivor Needs Assessment- Referral to Whole Community Partners

Resources: IA, MERS, LOG, DEC, NFIP, MIT, OFA, State, Local, Tribal(DSA can augment if needed)Equipment: Tablet, Laptops, Scanners, Printers, Fax Machines, Telephones Logistics: Building, Tables, Chairs, Extension Cords, Power Strips, Office Supplies Communications: RV with satellite setup or Full Communications Package Locations: Fixed Sites agreed to by State/Locals/FEMAEstablished: 72 hours after location is identified

2013 DSA Field Deployments

State	DSA Staff Deployed (Peak/Current)	Cumulative Web Registrations	Cumulative Case Status Updates	Cumulative Whole Community Referrals
Texas (EM-3363)	18	149	64	9
Illinois (DR-4116)	178	1,815	511	142
Oklahoma (DR-4117)	135	1,731	850	2,019
Alaska (DR-4121)	11	137 (Web & Phone)	20	50
Colorado (DR-4145)	275	2,048	355	2,767
Illinois (DR-4157)*	51 (34)	305	42	461
Total	**668**	**6,185**	**1,842**	**5,448**

* As of 12/31/13

DSA Qualifications

- Because of new mission and expanded functions, anyone deployed for DSA must complete the 5-day DSA Specialist course prior to disaster deployment.DSA Addendum/new DSA PTBs Evaluation by CA, CO or RPMSpecialty Deployment (exception to qualification requirement)

Goals for 2014

- Socialization of DSA to Regions, NPSC's, and other whole community stakeholdersFinalize DSA Staffing Implementation Plan Complete DSA Field Guide Ongoing Qualification of DSA Reservists Development and Delivery of DSA Branch Director and Crew Lead CoursesIdentify FTEs for DSA Incident Management positionsHire additional DSA IM CORE's and conduct DSA IM CORE Working SessionDeployment of DSA Readiness Kits to the Regions

DSA Steady State Roles/Responsibilities

DSA HQ/Regional Planning & Implementation

- Define FEMA HQ and Regional framework for activation of Disaster Survivor Assistance.Provide further clarification of DSA mission, roles and responsibilities. Facilitate integration with Regional planning and operations.

Steady State Roles and Responsibilities - ROC

HQ Recovery Operations and Readiness Coordination (HQ ROC): Provides oversight and management of DSA program.Provides a point of reference for DSA related questions.Provides materials/support to region for socialization within states.Drafts and updates DSA Doctrine and PolicyDevelops and delivers DSA training.Manages DSA Cadre (DSA Reservist Program Manager is included in HQ ROC)

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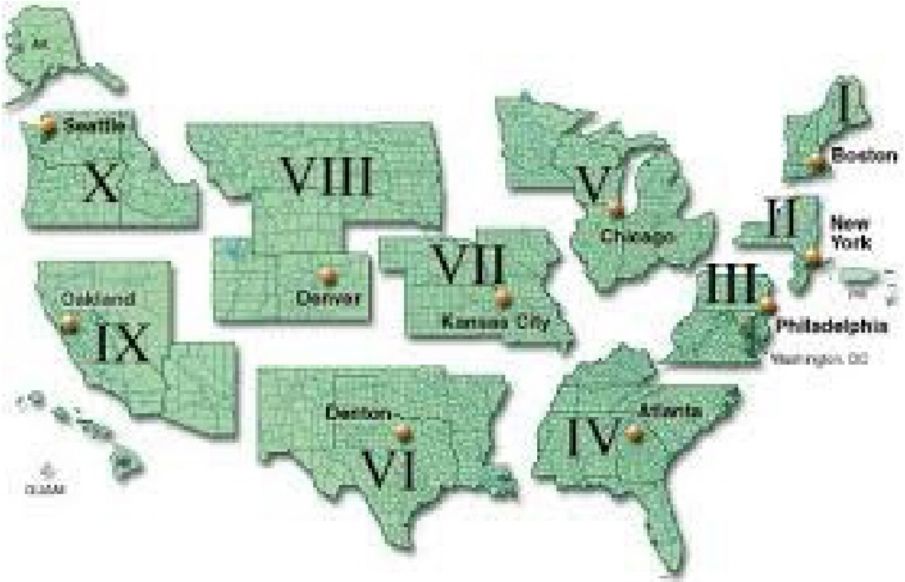
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Steady State Roles and Responsibilities – Regional Recovery Directors

Regional Recovery Directors:Responsible for administration of all regional recovery programs, to include DSA.Responsible for socializing the DSA program with State and Locals, Tribal and Whole Community Partners by the end of FY14.


AK
Seattle
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VIII
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Boston
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New York
Chicago
VII
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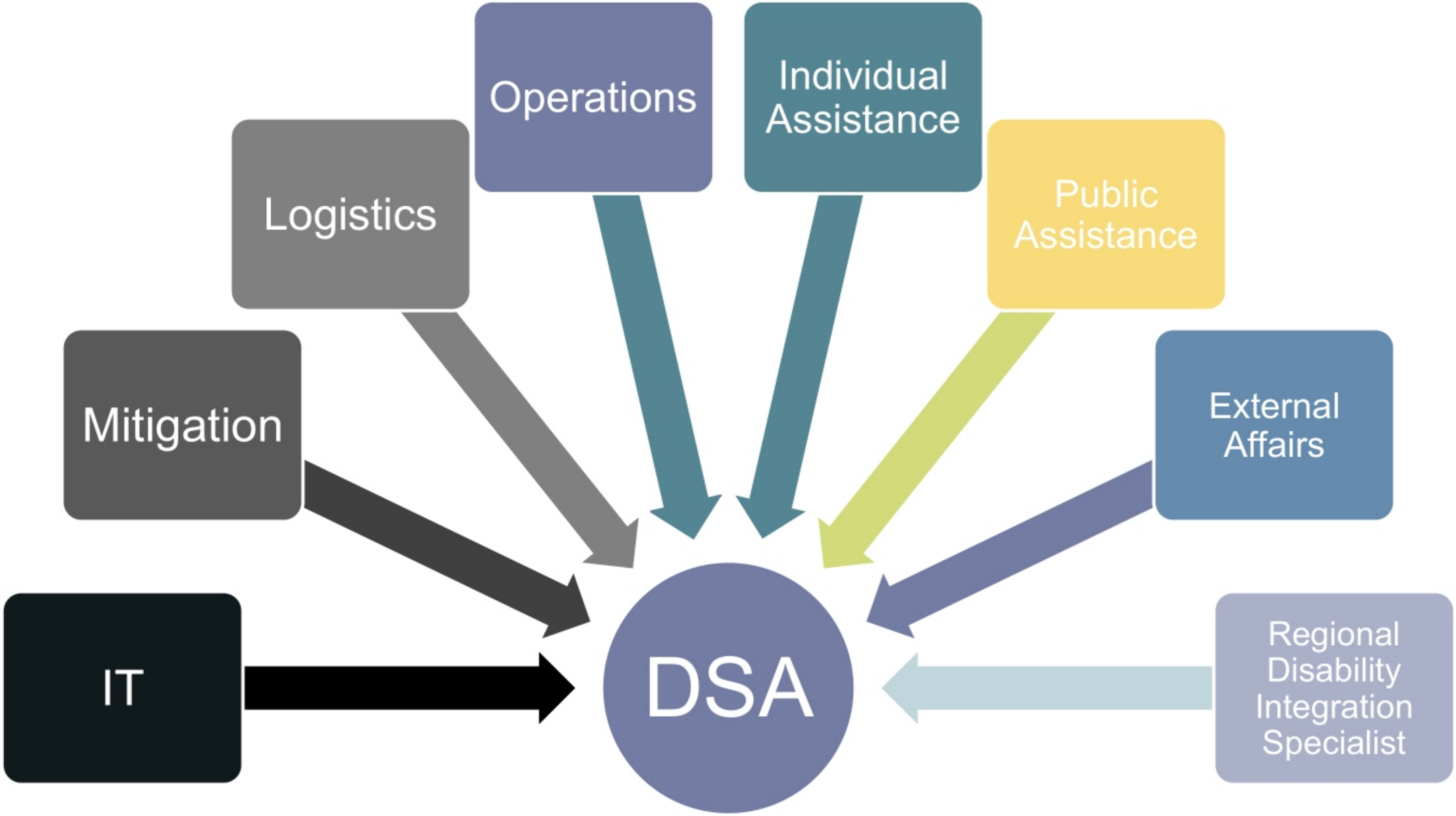
Denver
Oakland
Kansas City
Philadelphia
IX
Washington, DC
Denton
Atlanta
IV
VI
GUAM

Steady State Roles and Responsibilities – DSA Regional Representative

- Socializing DSA concept within the Region.Coordinating with IA/PA/NDRF/EA regarding DSA program. Developing DSA Regional implementation plans and procedures.Supporting pre-planning with other Federal Agencies, State/Local/Tribal/Territorial officials and Whole Community Partners.Socializing the DSA program with State and Locals, Tribal and Whole Community Partners by the end of FY14.
- Building partnerships with internal program offices and Tribal/State/Local partners.Understanding policies and procedures in order to communicate recommended DSA courses of action.Serving on Regional IMAT and working with Tribe/State to identify the initial requirements of the DSA mission.Participating in all Regional IMAT trainings and exercises.Reporting to Regional Division Director for program coordination.

Steady State Coordination



Operations

Individual Assistance

Logistics

Public Assistance

Mitigation

External Affairs

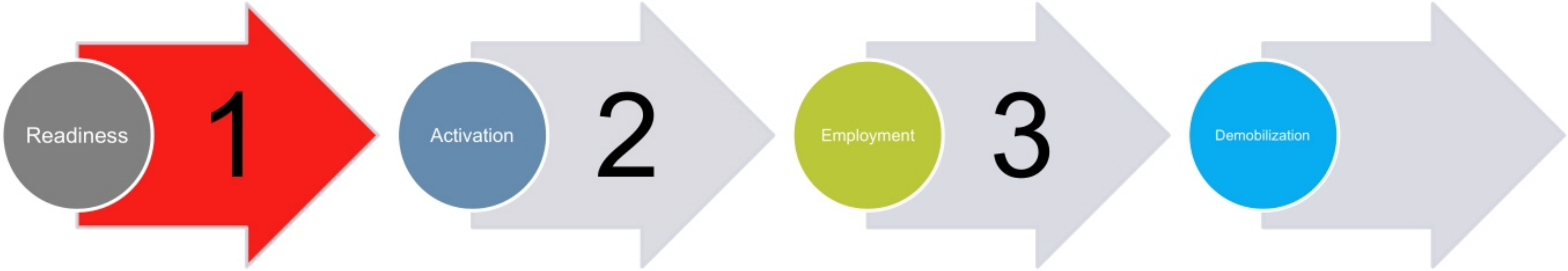
IT

DSA

Regional Disability Integration Specialist

Roles and Responsibilities for Pre-planning and Mobilization

DSA Readiness and Implementation



Readiness

1

Activation

2

Employment

3

Demobilization

Pre-planning and Mobilization Roles and Responsibilities

- **Regional Administrators: In anticipation of or following a declaration, the Regional Administrator, Regional Recovery Director, designated IOF/JFO Operations Section Chief, and DSA Branch Director, in coordination with the FCO, will direct the activation of DSA assets to support operational needs.Recovery Division Directors: Recovery Division directors will work with the DSA Branch Director to activate DSA cadre assets and to determine resource needs for the disaster.DSA Regional Representative: Transitions to DSA Branch Director and is responsible for managing geographic or functional branches and the oversight of the DSA mission in the IOF or JFOHQ ROC: Mobilizes and deploys the DSA cadre in coordination with the Region, State and Incident Workforce Management Division. Also responsible for providing equipment for deployment teams.**

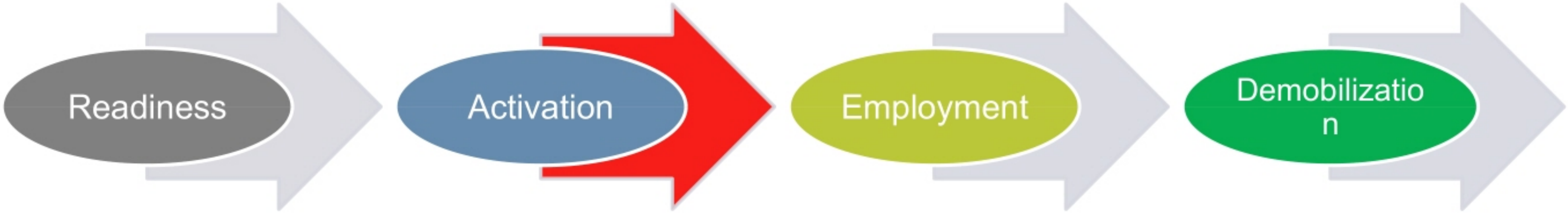
DSA Deployment - Criteria for Consideration

- Anticipated IA Declaration
- Preliminary Damage Assessment information
- Percentage of disproportionately impacted communities
- Demographic Data
- Geographic Data

DSA Deployment - Criteria for Consideration

- Power Outages/Restoration
- Road Closures
- Critical Infrastructure damage
- Number of Shelters open
- Evacuations

DSA Readiness and Implementation



Readiness

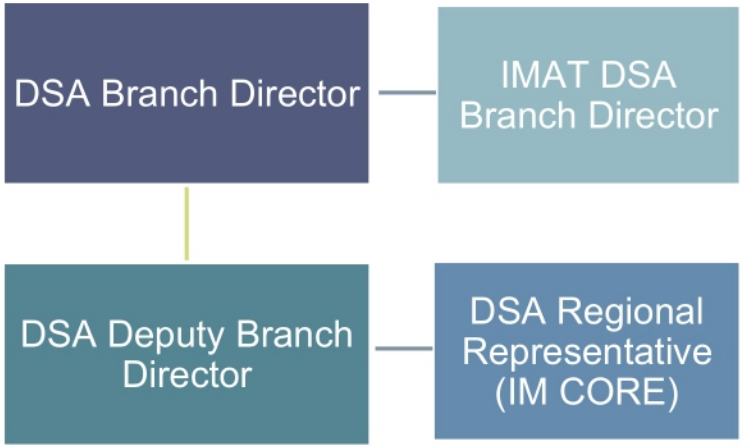
Activation

Employment

Demobilizatio
n

National IMAT vs. DSA Regional Representative

If National IMAT is deployed…



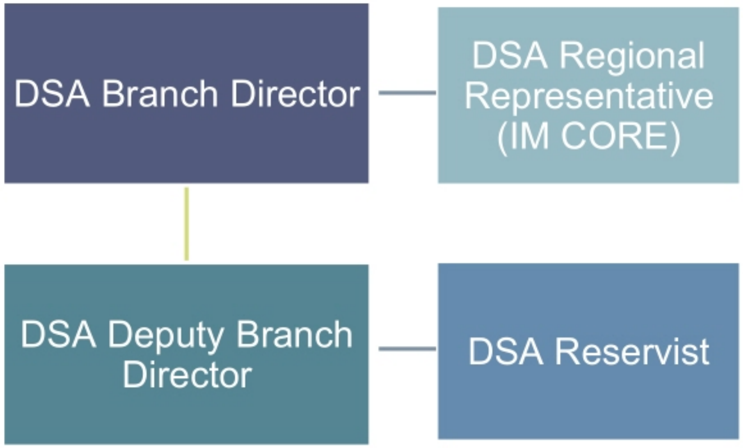
DSA Branch Director

IMAT DSA Branch Director

DSA Deputy Branch Director

DSA Regional Representative (IM CORE)

If National IMAT is not deployed…



DSA Branch Director

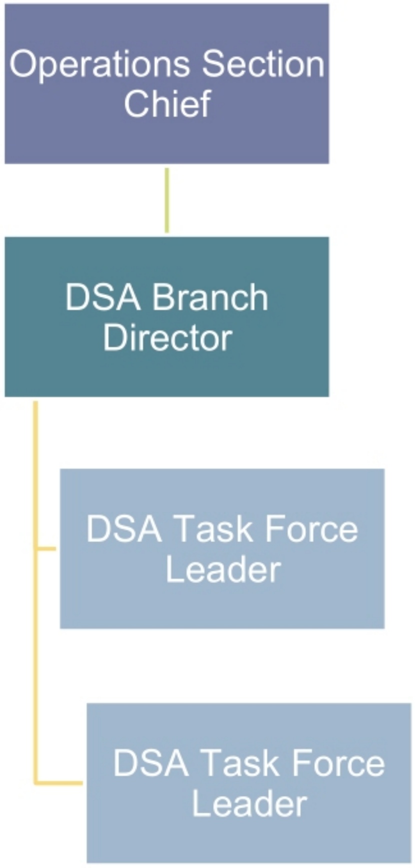
DSA Regional Representative (IM CORE)

DSA Deputy Branch Director

DSA Reservist

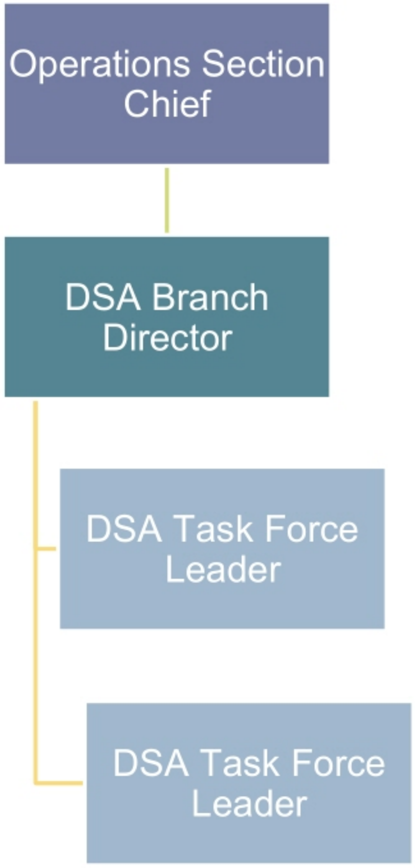
*** Branch Director position may be filled at the discretion of HQ ROC in some instances.

Role of the DSA Branch Director


Operations Section Chief
DSA Branch Director
DSA Task Force Leader
DSA Task Force Leader

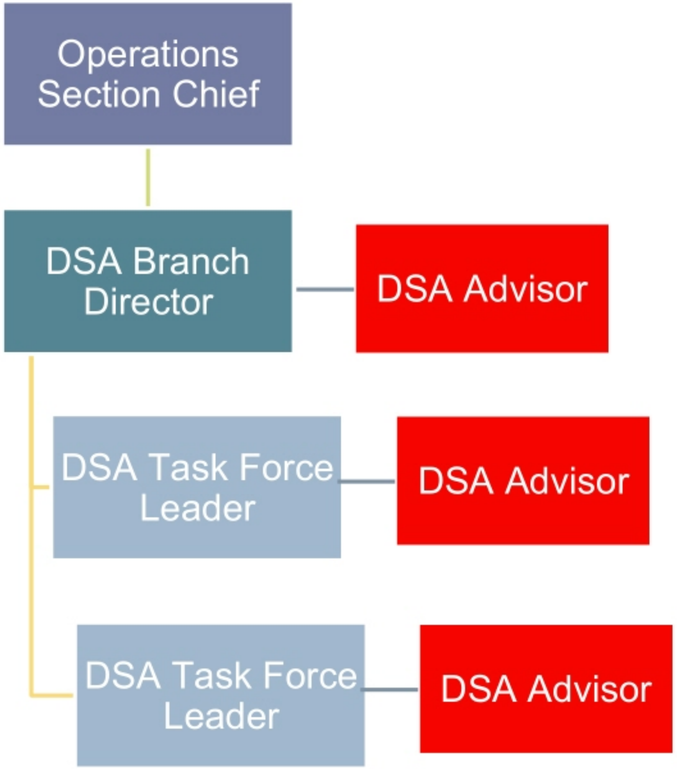
The DSA Branch Director will:Participate in Situational Briefing from RA, FCO, SCO or OSCDeploy with Regional / National IMAT team to Interim Operating Facility (IOF) or State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) if requestedContact State/Tribal counterpart / POC to identify additional requirements of the DSA mission for the impacted communities and update the initial execution planWork with HR – IWMD Representative and FEMA HQ ROC to issue deployment orders for DSA Staff: PFTs, COREs, FEMA Corps and Reservists; and identify which NPSC Liaison will be assigned.Work with HQ ROC to request and approve NEMIS rights (NACS) for newly hired staff or surge staff DSA members who will perform applicant inquiries and updates

Role of the DSA Branch Director (Cont.)


Operations Section Chief
DSA Branch Director
DSA Task Force Leader
DSA Task Force Leader

The DSA Branch Director will:Work with Accountable Property Officer (APO) and IT to obtain equipment and IT support in preparation for DSA staff arrival. (see also Tablet deployment procedure)Identify potential logistical requirements (equipment and furniture) for all DSA staff in Joint Field Office (JFO) and field staff and provide to Logistics POCCoordinate with Disaster Logistics for shipment of go-kits for DSA, which includes …Coordinate with other areas, such as Ops, IA, PA, MT, LOG, EA, DIS…etc.Provide DSA input to the OSC, as requested, for initial Federal/State (F/S) meeting and agenda and Unified Command Group Meetings (UCG)

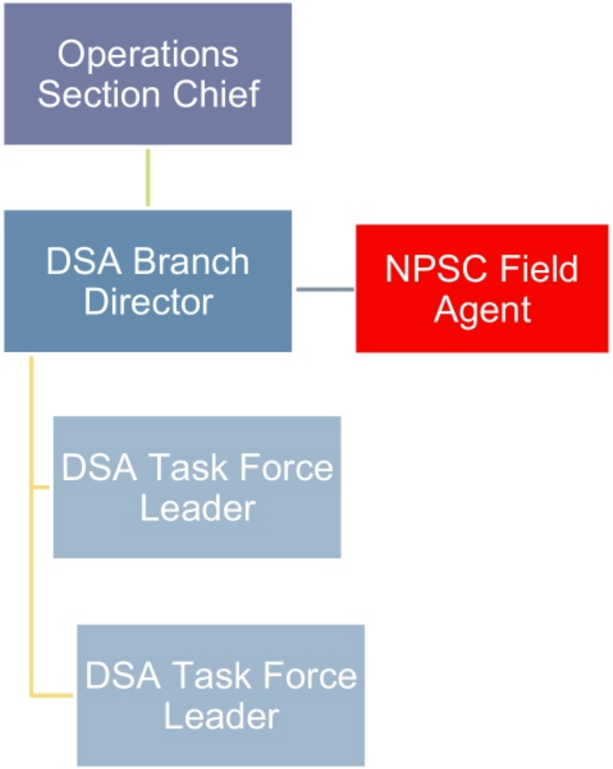
Role of the DSA Advisor


Operations Section Chief
DSA Branch Director
DSA Advisor
DSA Task Force Leader
DSA Advisor
DSA Task Force Leader
DSA Advisor

Because of the importance and variance of services DSA Crews provide to Survivors and leadership during disaster operations, DSA Advisors are needed to ensure that the mission is being executed in a proper and consistent manner.***DSA Advisors are a temporary resource; as staff becomes fully qualified in their positions, we will discontinue their use.***

Role of the NPSC Field Agent

The role of the NPSC Field Agent is to hasten the process of getting assistance to the survivor by assisting in answering NEMIS system questions that are generated by the DSA staff. This position will be located within the lowest level of the geographical field structure, e.g., Branch or Division. This position reports directly to the DSA Branch Director.


Operations Section Chief

DSA Branch Director

NPSC Field Agent

DSA Task Force Leader

DSA Task Force Leader

Deployment Metrics

Within 24 hours of IA Declaration

In coordination with Operations, the DSA Branch Director will identify the initial requirements for the DSA Mission and develop an Initial Execution Plan in conjunction with Tribe/State

Within 48 hours of IA Declaration

Deployment orders are issued to deploy DSA Crews to the affected Tribe/State

Within 4 hours of arrival

DSA Crews report to the Branch Director and are engaged supporting field operations

Mobilization (DSA Pre-Employment Center)

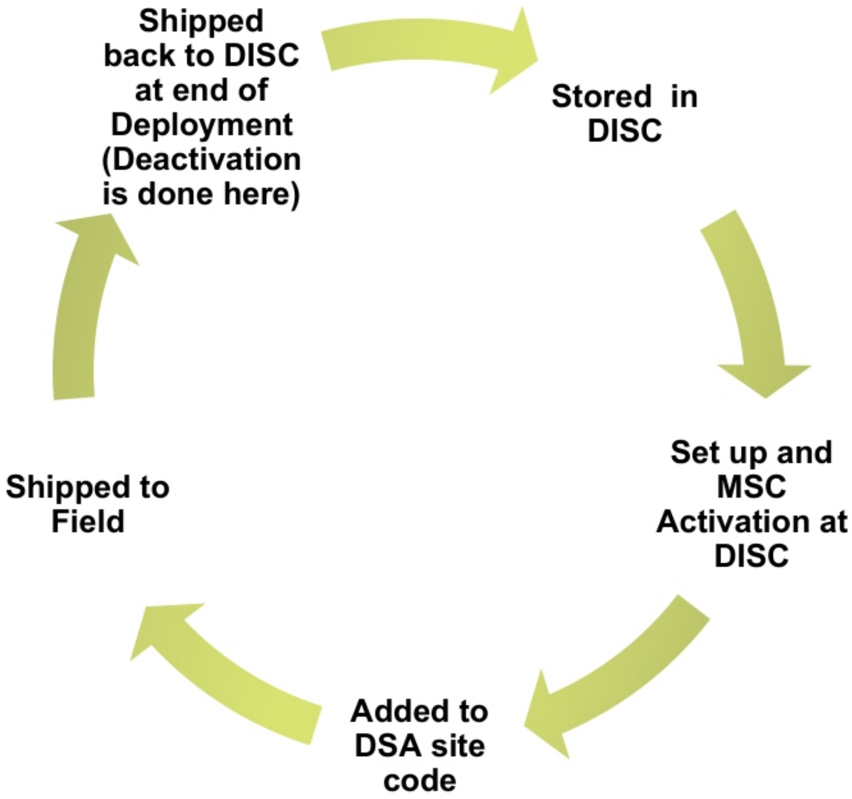
- DSA Specific Check-In and Check UpIssue Crew Assignment, Verify Contact Information, and Verify EquipmentRefresher and New Concept TrainingDSA, SMART, NEMIS, ICS, and SITREPInformation Technology (Need IT Cadre Support)Password Issues, e.g., resetsNetwork Access rightsEquipment (Need Regional APO Support)New Issue and ReplacementVehicle Kits

Equipment and Supplies

- Based on situation, e.g., cold weather, there may be a need to make a local request for equipment and/or supplies, An Accountable Property Officer (APO) and a Custodial Officer (CO) is needed to assist with issuing equipment.If property is “Accountable,” then the APO will have to record the property in the agency’s accountable property system and issue hand receipt to staffIf property is not “Accountable,” then the CO will take possession of property and issue manual hand receipts when necessary.

Equipment Deployment Model – Future Plans

- Agile and scalable approach to operations



Shipped back to DISC at end of Deployment (Deactivation is done here)

Stored in DISC

Set up and MSC Activation at DISC

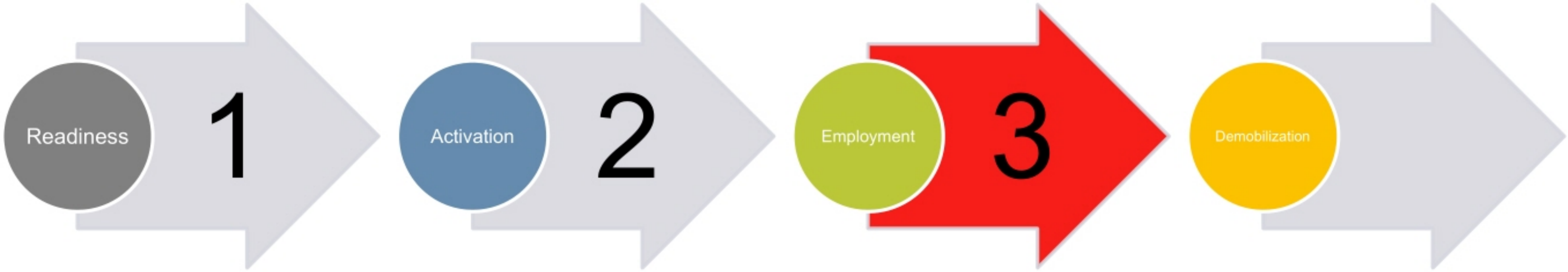
Added to DSA site code

Shipped to Field

Technology Requirements

- The Disaster Survivor Assistance cadre is designed to function in a 100% mobile environment and the concept of operations requires field teams to provide services directly to disaster survivors on site and in person. The benefits of implementing these operational requirements allow for a more agile mobile workforce that leverages technology to support survivors who need the most help.

DSA Readiness and Implementation



Readiness 1

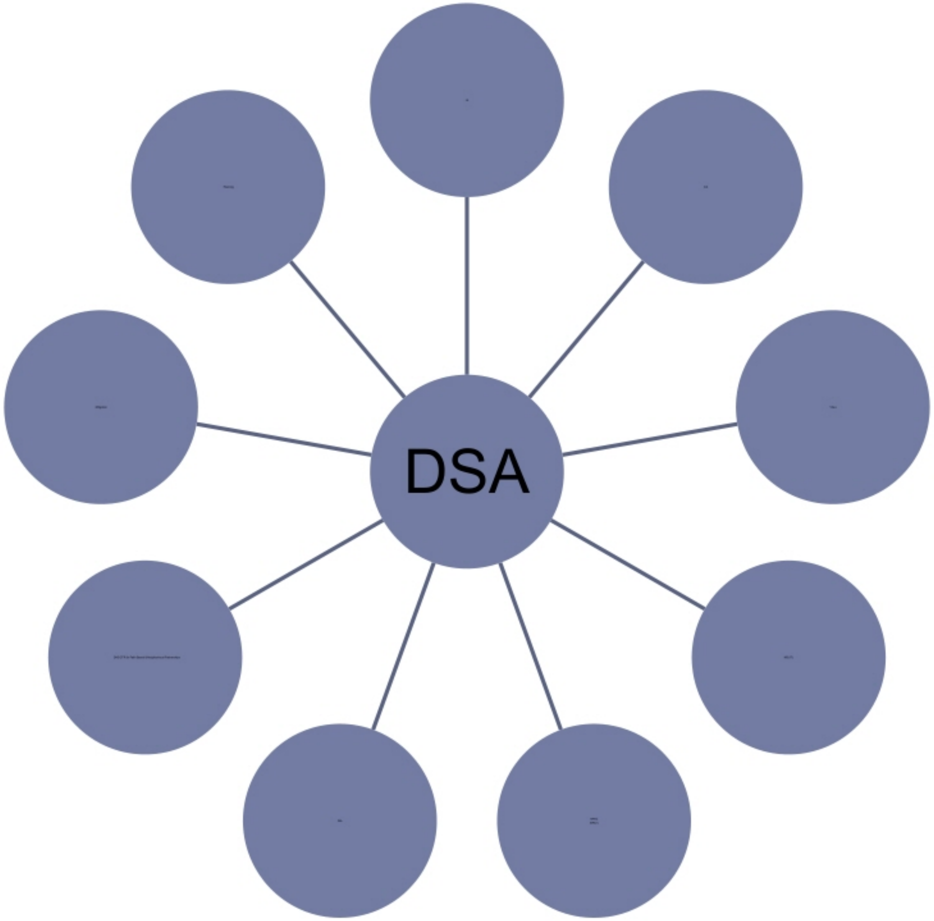
Activation 2

Employment 3

Demobilization

Internal JFO Coordination

- DSA will provide situational awareness to JFO entities that will assist with the delivery of survivor-centric services to impacted communities. Key partners include:PlanningIndividual AssistancePublic Assistance MitigationVoluntary Agency LiaisonsDisability Integration AdvisorsDHS Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships



Stakeholder Outreach Coordination Strategies

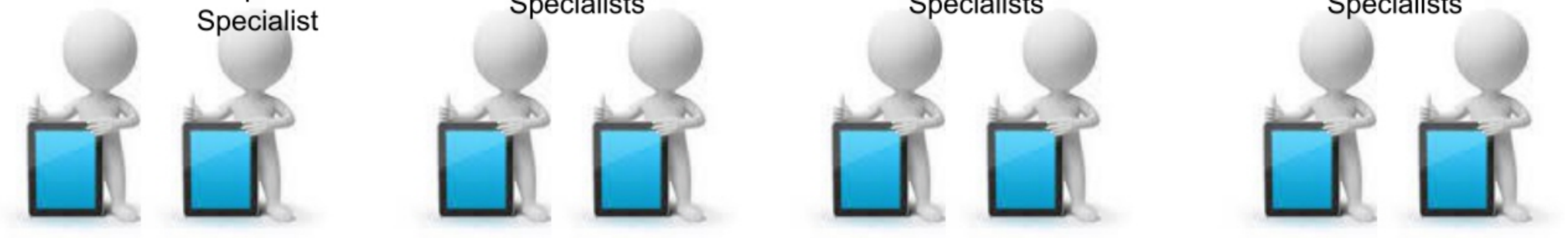
- Integrated DSA/EA coordination strategies include:Product Approval: Disaster-specific products will be approved by ESF-15 Planning and Products.Speakers Bureau: DSA will provide support at Town Halls and other events where survivors are in attendance.LEP/ACN Outreach: Limited English Proficiency (LEP)/Access and Functional Needs (AFN) is supported through Planning and Products. As DSA Crews identify needs, they will work with their EA liaison to ensure LEP/AFN teams are aware of needs and take appropriate action.

DSA Outreach Products

- DSA members working in impacted communities will distribute pre-approved collateral materials to include:Business CardsFlyersBrochuresFact SheetsDoor HangersDisaster Assistance Publications

Crew/Task Force Composition

- ☐ Typical DSA Crew Composition (includes Reservists, FTEs, FEMA Corps, and Surge)



DSA Crew Lead

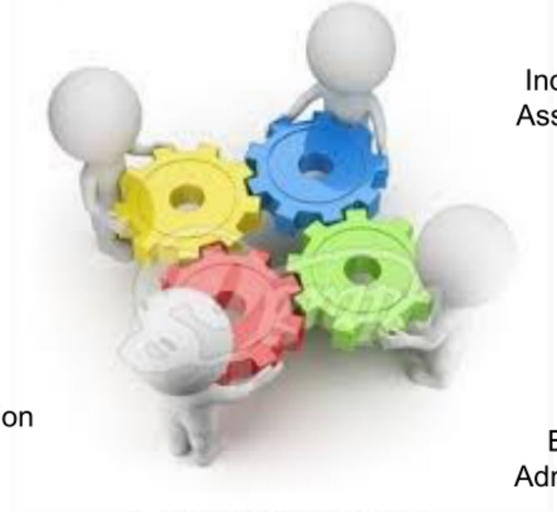
DSA Reports Specialist

DSA Specialists

DSA Specialists

DSA Specialists

- ☐ Task Force Composition *Options*



Disaster Survivor Assistance

NPSC Field Agents

DHS Surge

Mitigation

Individual Assistance

Disability Integration

External Affairs

Small Business Administration

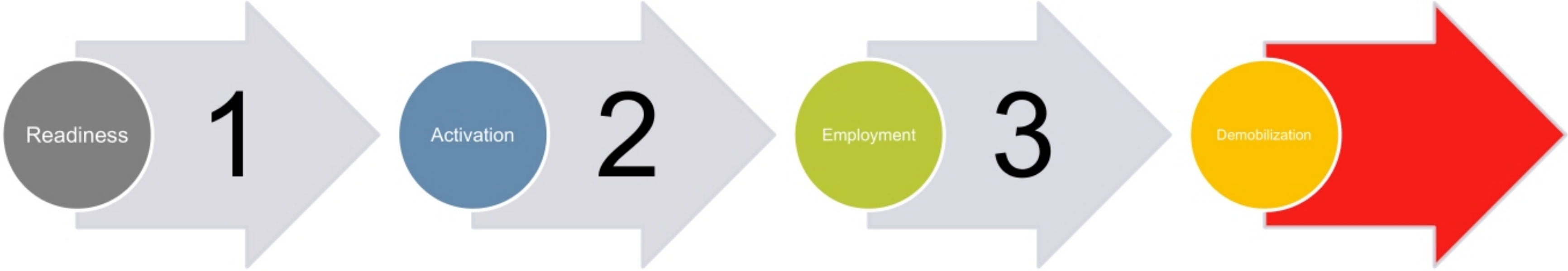
gg63874357 www.gograph.com

Specialty Roles

Disaster Survivor Assistance Specialist (Primary Role)	Specialty Assignment (Secondary Role)
👤	**Shelter Operations**
👤	**Voluntary Agency**
👤	**Bereavement**
👤	**Disability Integration**
👤	**Law Enforcement**
👤	**Faith Based**
👤	**Reports Specialist**
👤	**Staffing Specialist**

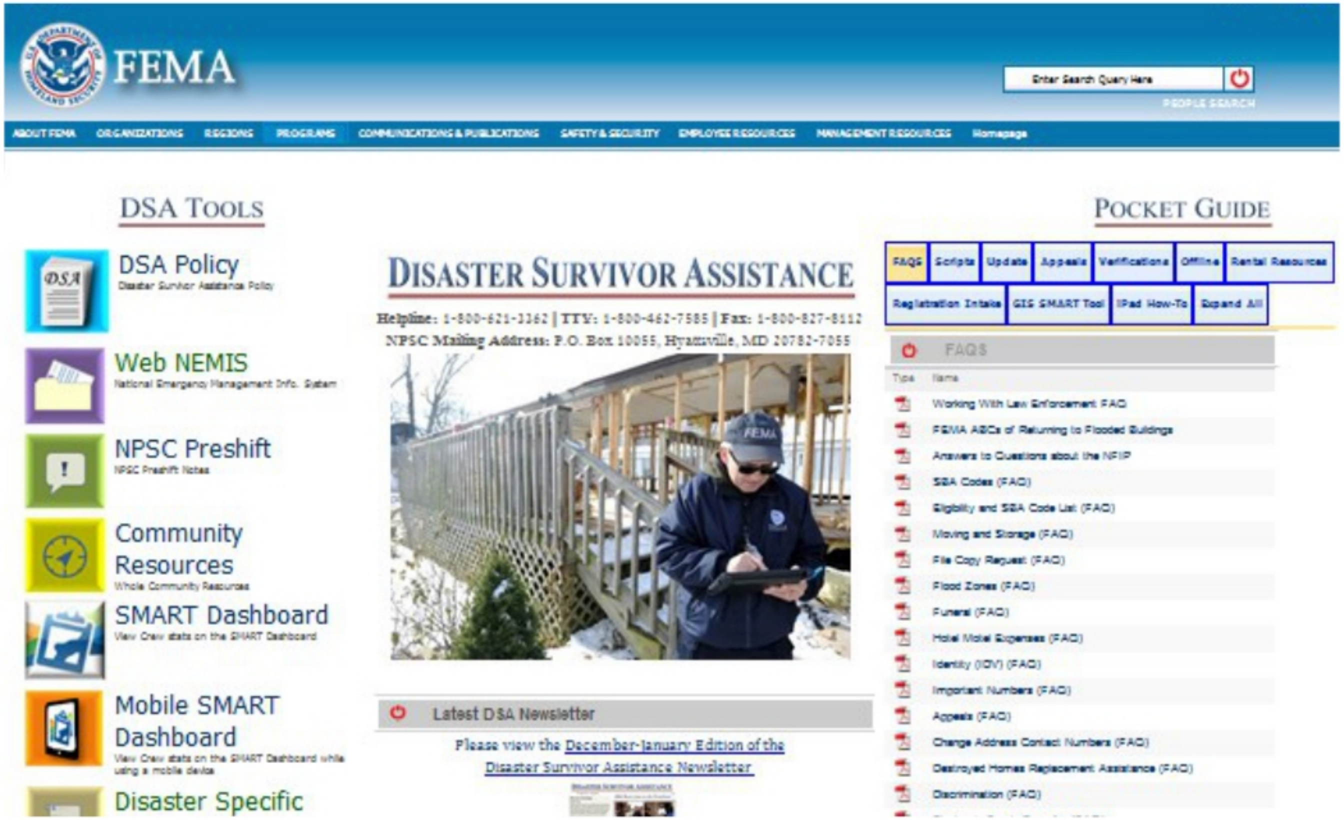
- *In the future DSA team members may be deployed to events based on their specialty role.Most specialty roles are ancillary and will require engaging with subject matter experts within FEMA.DSA Team members will support specialty roles as needed. Not all DSA Team members will have a specialty role.*

DSA Readiness and Implementation


Readiness
1
Activation
2
Employment
3
Demobilization

DSA Tools and Resources

DSA Webpage


FEMA
Enter Search Query Here
PEOPLE SEARCH
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PROGRAMS
COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS
SAFETY & SECURITY
EMPLOYEE RESOURCES
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FEMA

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Disaster Survivor Assistance Policy

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National Emergency Management Info. System

NPSC Preshift
NPSC Preshift Notes

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Whole Community Resources

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Disaster Specific

DISASTER SURVIVOR ASSISTANCE

Helpline: 1-800-621-3362 | **TTY:** 1-800-462-7585 | **Fax:** 1-800-827-8112
NPSC Mailing Address: P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-7055

Latest DSA Newsletter

Please view the December-January Edition of the Disaster Survivor Assistance Newsletter

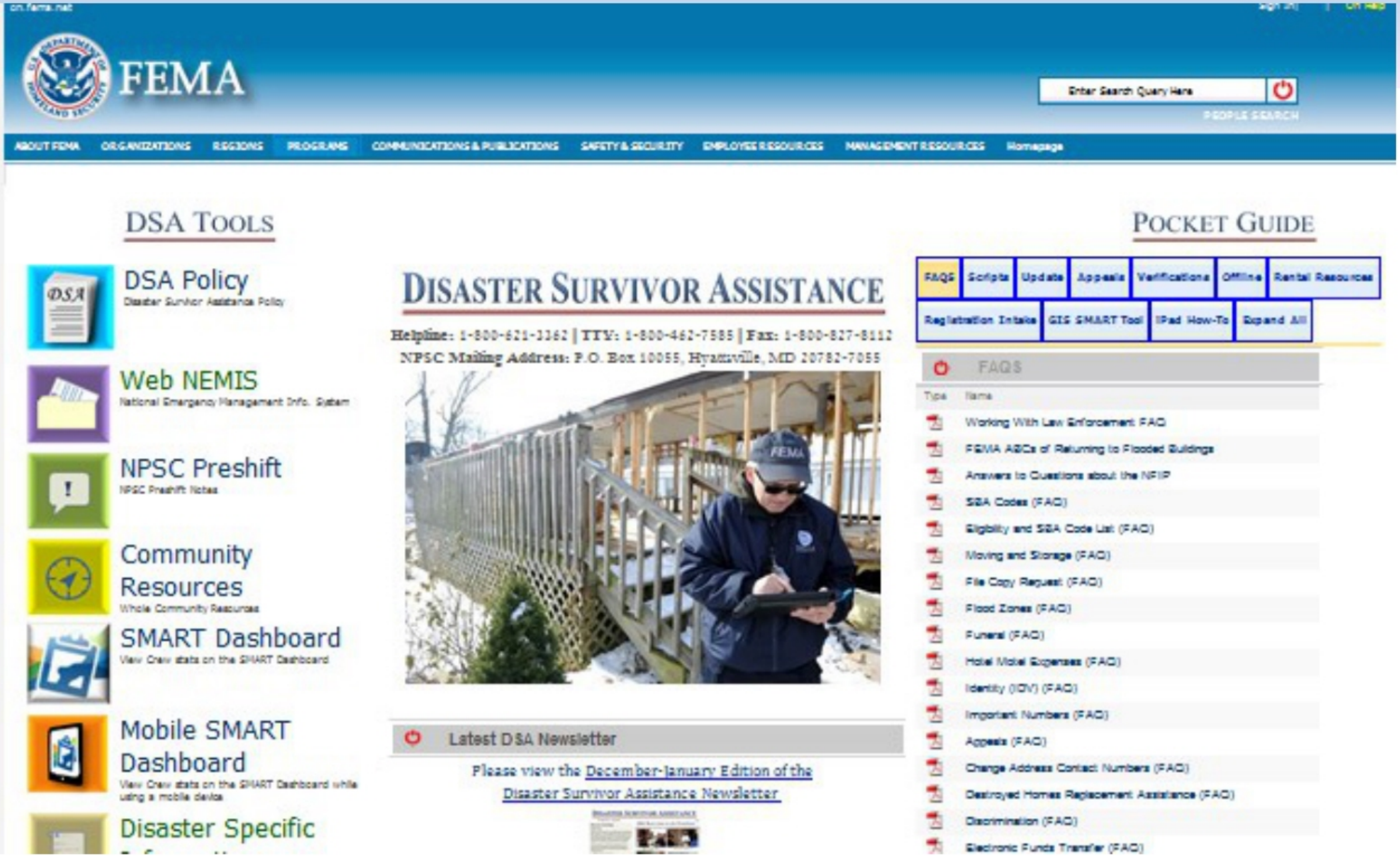
POCKET GUIDE

FAQS

Type	Name
	Working With Law Enforcement FAQ
	FEMA ABCs of Returning to Flooded Buildings
	Answers to Questions about the NFIP
	SBA Codes (FAQ)
	Eligibility and SBA Code List (FAQ)
	Moving and Storage (FAQ)
	File Copy Request (FAQ)
	Flood Zones (FAQ)
	Funeral (FAQ)
	Hotel Motel Expenses (FAQ)
	Identity (IDV) (FAQ)
	Important Numbers (FAQ)
	Appeals (FAQ)
	Change Address Contact Numbers (FAQ)
	Destroyed Homes Replacement Assistance (FAQ)
	Discrimination (FAQ)

http://on.fema.net/programs/orr_programs/recovery_programs/Pages/DSA.aspx

Finding the DSA Webpage


on.fema.net
FEMA
Enter Search Query Here
PEOPLE SEARCH
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ORGANIZATIONS
REGIONS
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COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS
SAFETY & SECURITY
EMPLOYEE RESOURCES
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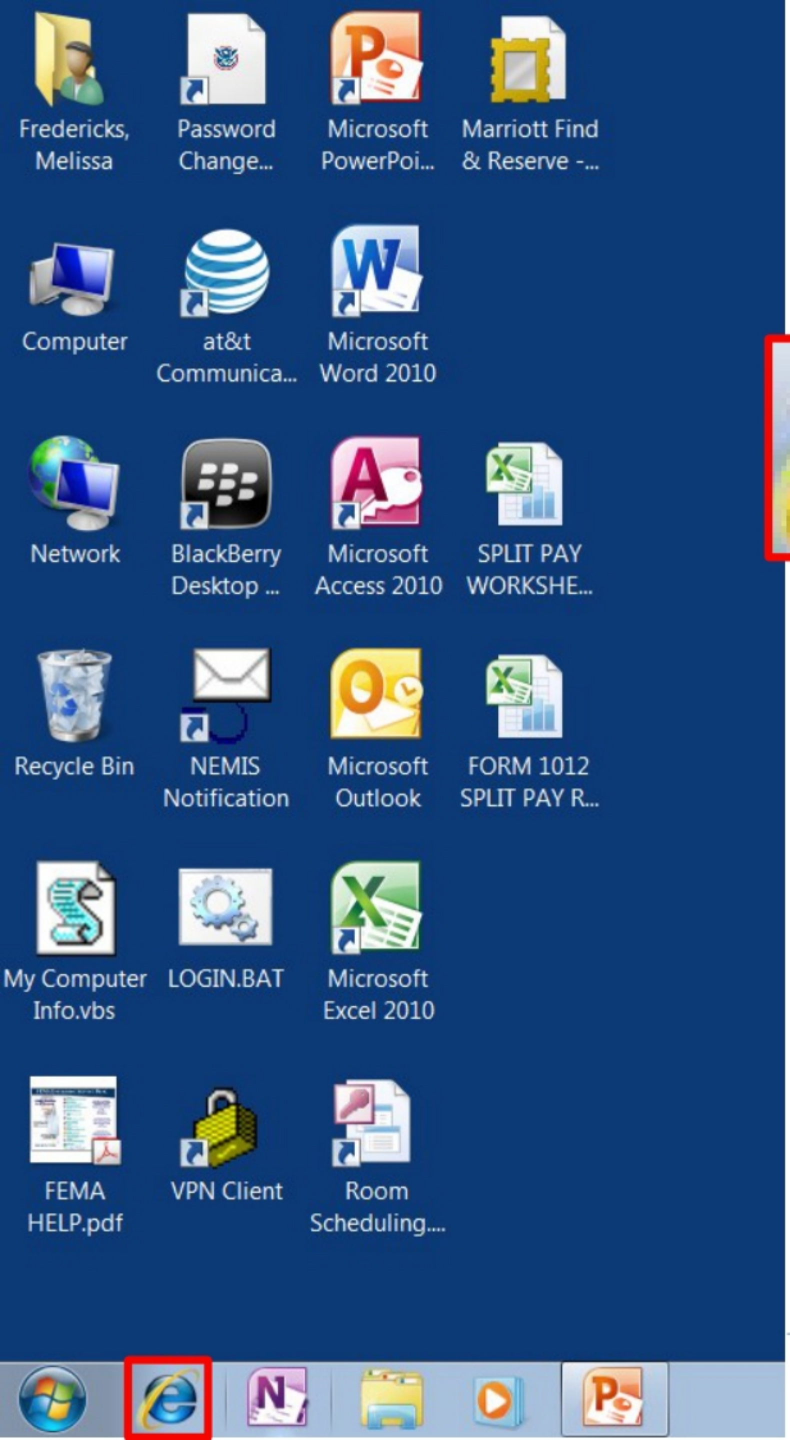
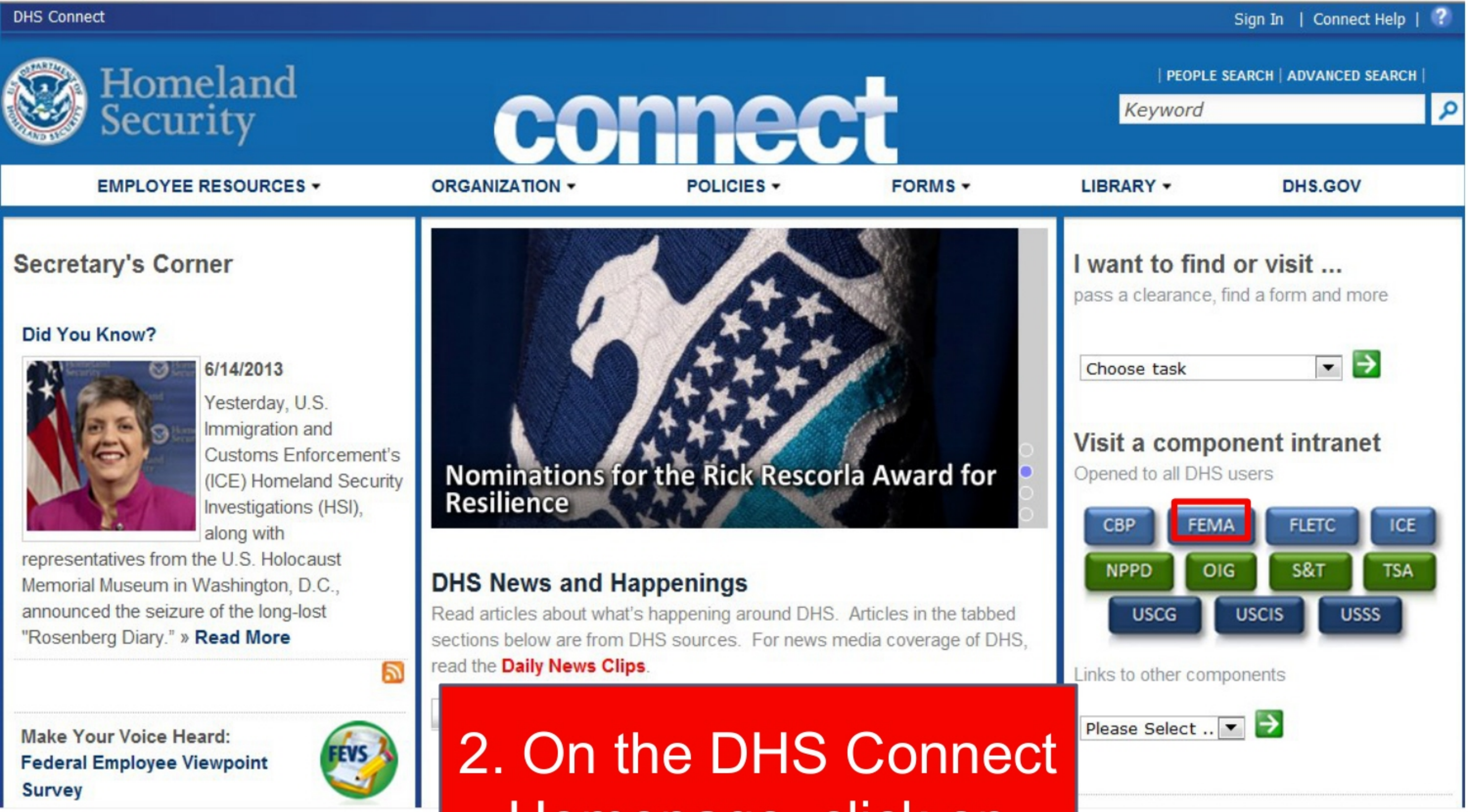

Fredericks, Melissa
Password Change...
Microsoft PowerPoi...
Marriott Find & Reserve -...
Computer
at&t Communica...
Microsoft Word 2010
Network
BlackBerry Desktop ...
Microsoft Access 2010
SPLIT PAY WORKSHE...
Recycle Bin
NEMIS Notification
Microsoft Outlook
FORM 1012 SPLIT PAY R...
My Computer Info.vbs
LOGIN.BAT
Microsoft Excel 2010
FEMA HELP.pdf
VPN Client
Room Scheduling....

1. On the Desktop, click the Internet Explorer icon



DHS Connect

Sign In | Connect Help | ?

Homeland Security

connect

| PEOPLE SEARCH | ADVANCED SEARCH |

Keyword

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES ▾ ORGANIZATION ▾ POLICIES ▾ FORMS ▾ LIBRARY ▾ DHS.GOV

Secretary's Corner

Did You Know?

6/14/2013

Yesterday, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), along with representatives from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., announced the seizure of the long-lost "Rosenberg Diary." » **Read More**

Make Your Voice Heard:
Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

Nominations for the Rick Rescorla Award for Resilience

DHS News and Happenings

Read articles about what's happening around DHS. Articles in the tabbed sections below are from DHS sources. For news media coverage of DHS, read the **Daily News Clips**.

I want to find or visit ...

pass a clearance, find a form and more

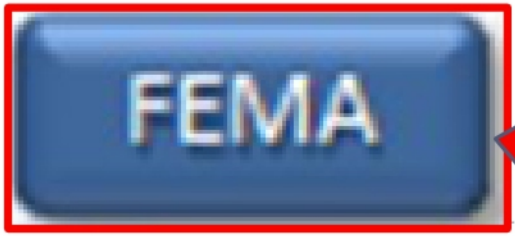
Choose task ▾

Visit a component intranet

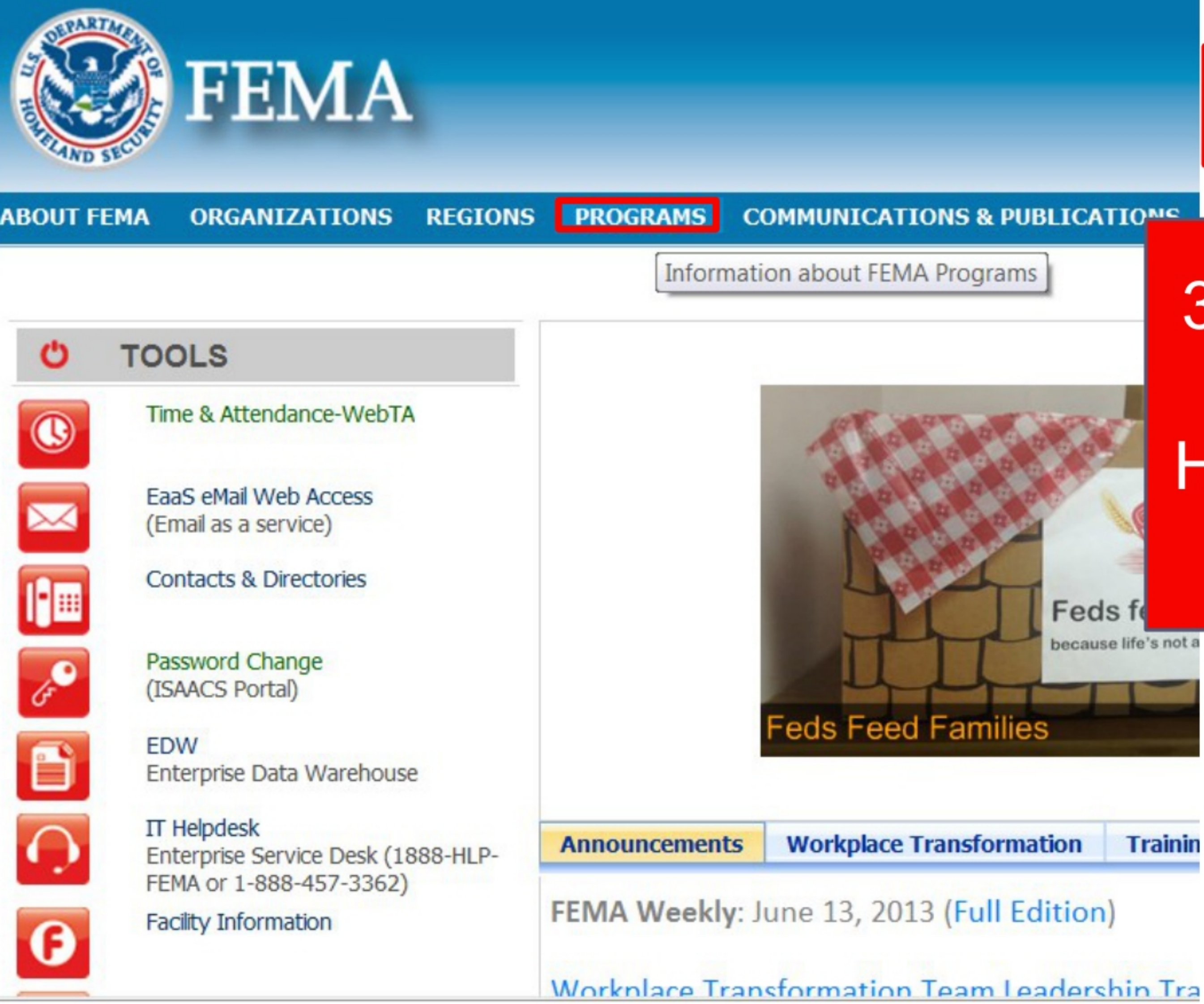
Opened to all DHS users

Links to other components

Please Select .. ▾



2. On the DHS Connect Homepage, click on FEMA under the “Visit a component intranet section”


FEMA
ABOUT FEMA
ORGANIZATIONS
REGIONS
PROGRAMS
COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS
Information about FEMA Programs
TOOLS
Feds Feed Families
Announcements
Workplace Transformation
Trainin

Time & Attendance-WebTA

EaaS eMail Web Access
(Email as a service)

Contacts & Directories

Password Change
(ISAACS Portal)

EDW
Enterprise Data Warehouse

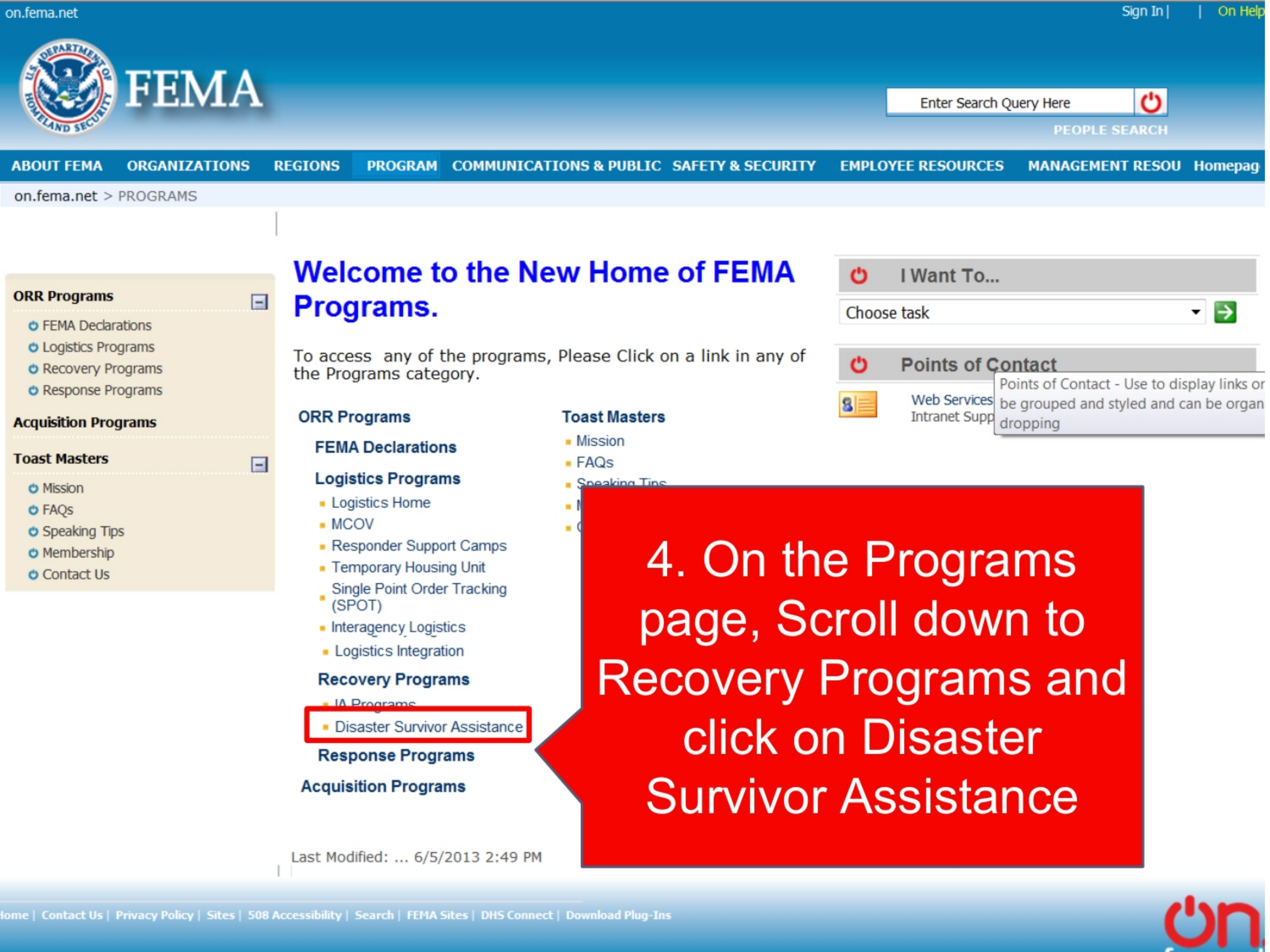
IT Helpdesk
Enterprise Service Desk (1888-HLP-FEMA or 1-888-457-3362)

Facility Information

FEMA Weekly: June 13, 2013 (Full Edition)

PROGRAMS

3. On the FEMA intranet Homepage, click on Programs.


on.fema.net
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On Help
FEMA
Enter Search Query Here
PEOPLE SEARCH
ABOUT FEMA
ORGANIZATIONS
REGIONS
PROGRAM
COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC
SAFETY & SECURITY
EMPLOYEE RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT RESOU
Homepag
on.fema.net > PROGRAMS
ORR Programs
FEMA Declarations
Logistics Programs
Recovery Programs
Response Programs
Acquisition Programs
Toast Masters
Mission
FAQs
Speaking Tips
Membership
Contact Us
I Want To...
Choose task
Points of Contact
Web Services
Intranet Supp
Home | Contact Us | Privacy Policy | Sites | 508 Accessibility | Search | FEMA Sites | DHS Connect | Download Plug-Ins

Welcome to the New Home of FEMA Programs.

To access any of the programs, Please Click on a link in any of the Programs category.

ORR Programs

FEMA Declarations

Logistics Programs

- Logistics Home
- MCOV
- Responder Support Camps
- Temporary Housing Unit
- Single Point Order Tracking (SPOT)
- Interagency Logistics
- Logistics Integration

Recovery Programs

- IA Programs
- Disaster Survivor Assistance

Response Programs

Acquisition Programs

Toast Masters

- Mission
- FAQs
- Speaking Tips

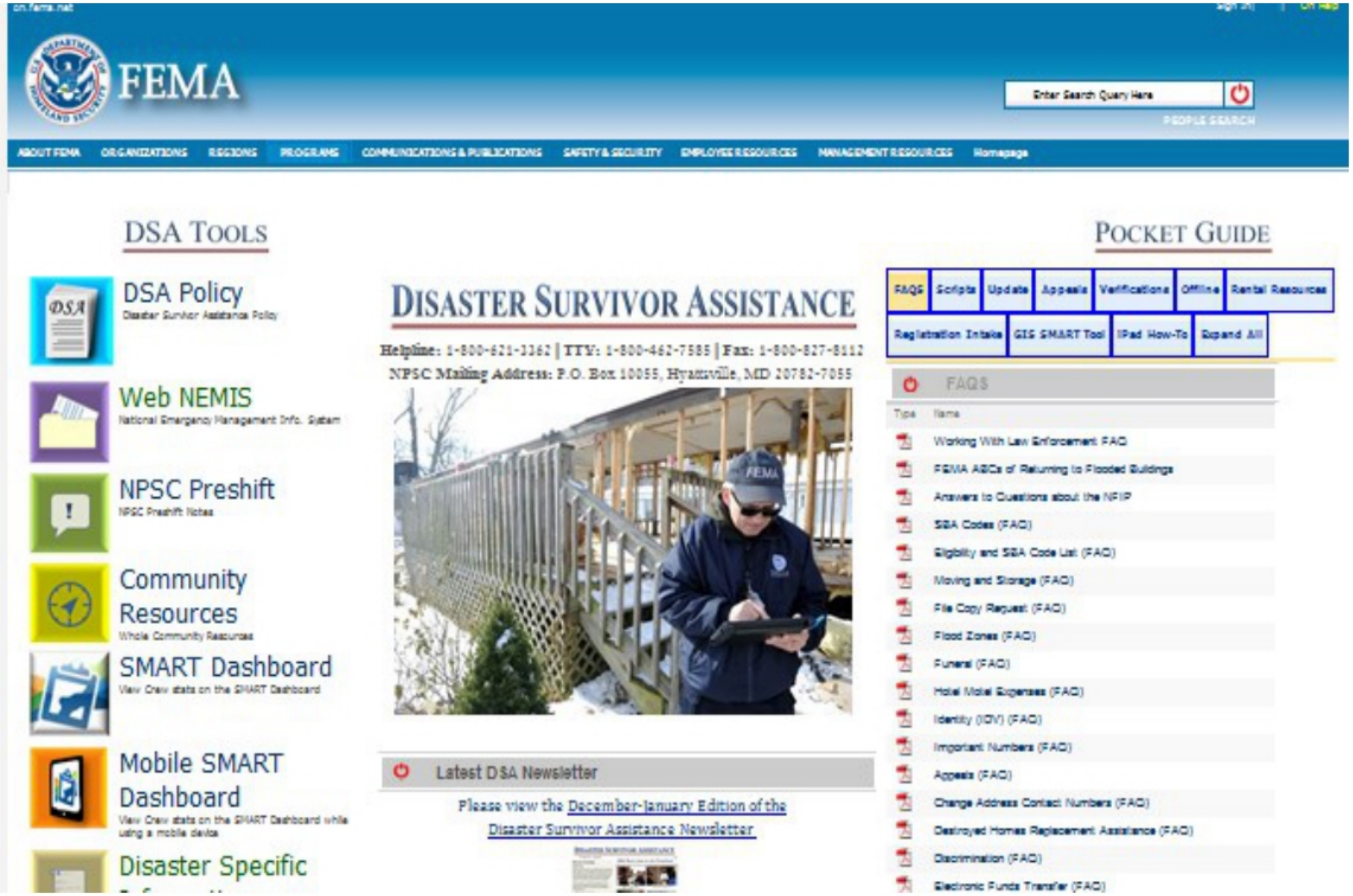
Points of Contact - Use to display links or be grouped and styled and can be organ dropping

Last Modified: ... 6/5/2013 2:49 PM

4. On the Programs page, Scroll down to Recovery Programs and click on Disaster Survivor Assistance

DSA Web Resources

http://on.fema.net/programs/orr_programs/recovery_programs/Pages/DSA.aspx



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SAFETY & SECURITY
EMPLOYEE RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT RESOURCES
Homepage

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Latest DSA Newsletter

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POCKET GUIDE

FAQS
Scripts
Update
Appeals
Verifications
Offline
Rental Resources
Registration Intake
GIS SMART Tool
IPad How-To
Expand All

FAQS

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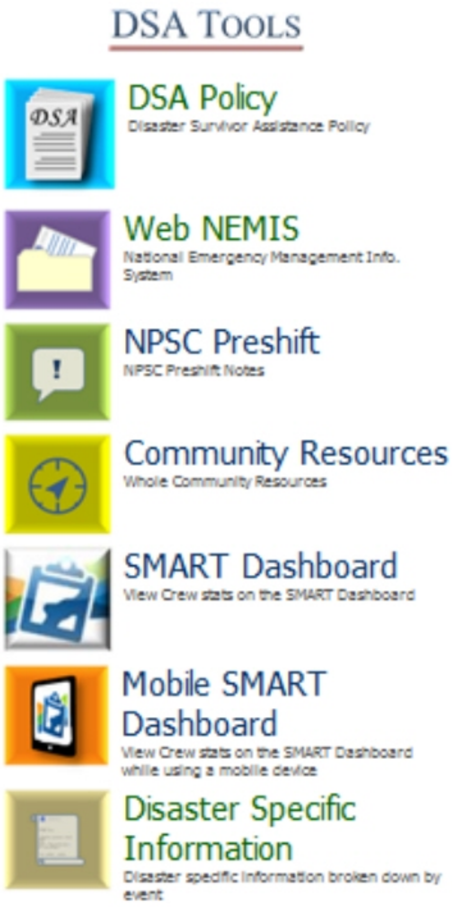
DSA Policy



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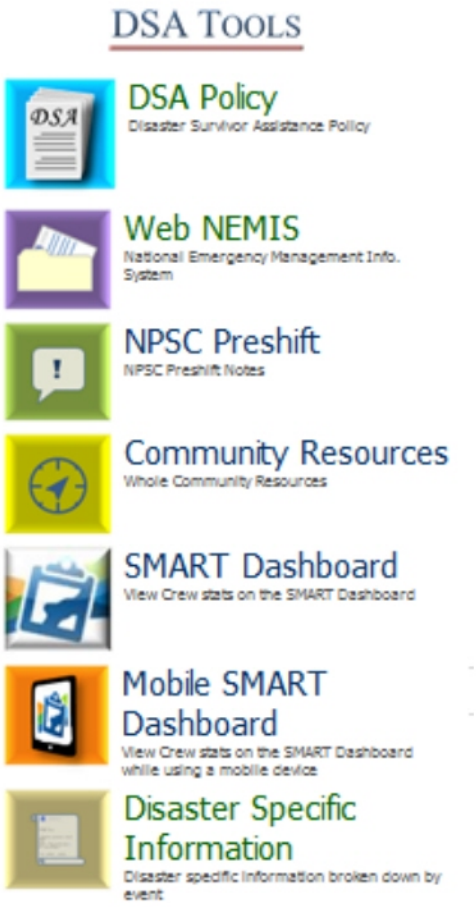
Disaster Specific Information
Disaster specific information broken down by event

- ☐ DSA Policy provides an overview of the Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) program for FEMA employees and other whole community partners, and outlines the operational framework for DSA Crews. It outlines the DSA mission, essential functions, organization structure, and deployment and employment criteria, describes reporting protocols and communications support needed, and defines roles and responsibilities of FEMA Headquarters and Regional staff supporting the DSA program.

Web NEMIS



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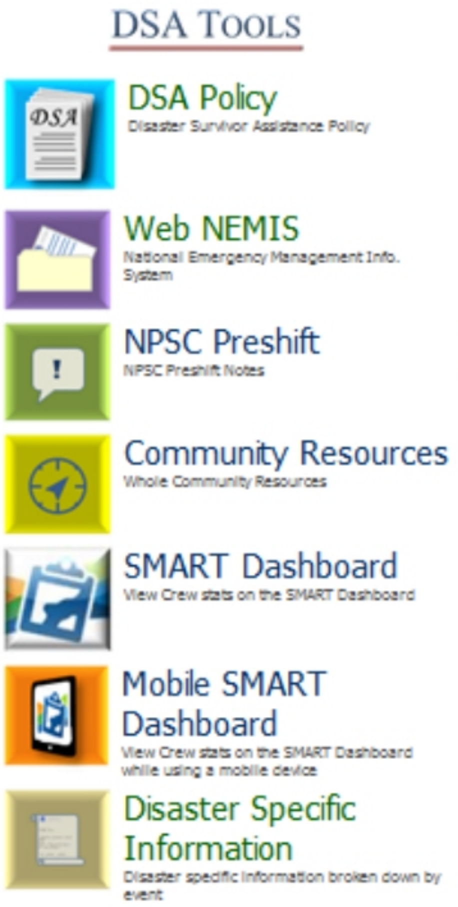
Disaster specific information broken down by event

National Emergency Management Information System System used to register disaster survivors for FEMA Assistance.Access to web NEMIS to relate information and status and where updates can be made.

NPSC Preshift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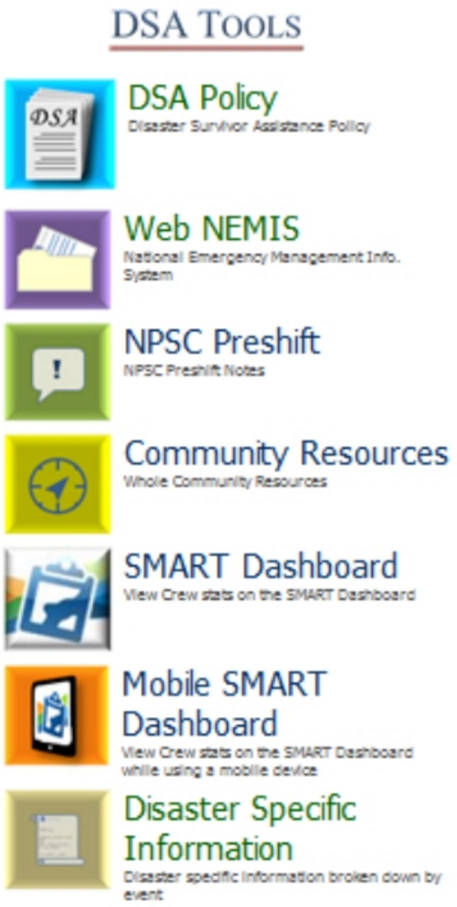
Disaster specific information broken down by event

Provides DSA team members with daily morning briefs and updates that will assist when registering survivors. Disaster Specific information is also listed here.

Community Resources



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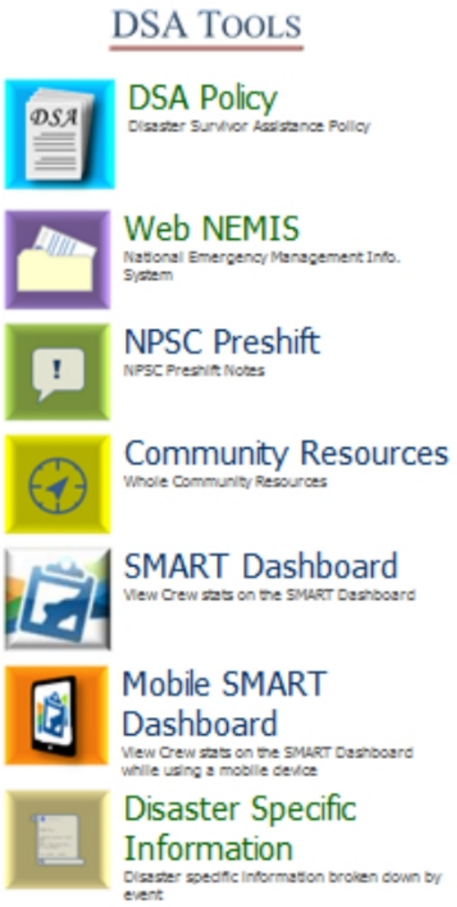
Disaster Specific Information
Disaster specific information broken down by event

Whole Community Resources includes disaster specific information for: ReferralsOrganizational ChartIncident Action PlanDaily Summary ReportSituational AwarenessNews ReleasesOFAsFact Sheets and FAQsCommunity ResourcesTalking PointsVoluntary Agencies ResourcesMaps

SMART Dashboard



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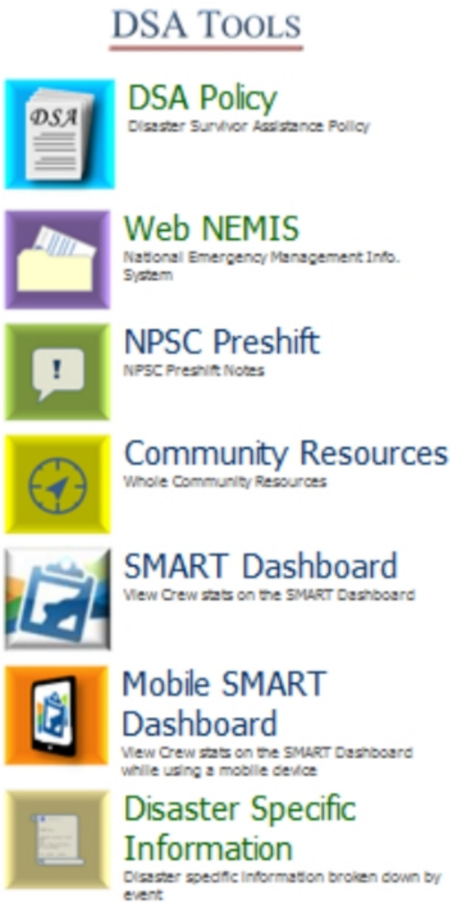
Disaster Specific Information
Disaster specific information broken down by event

SMART Dashboard gives users the flexibility to view multiple events as well as real-time status of team and analytical charting that shows trends in the progress of neighborhood canvasing and number of people registered, etc.

Mobile SMART Dashboard



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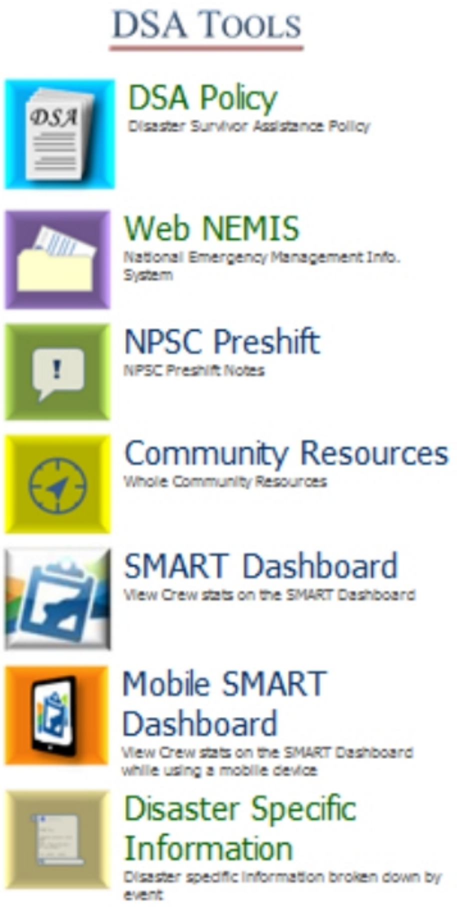
Disaster Specific Information



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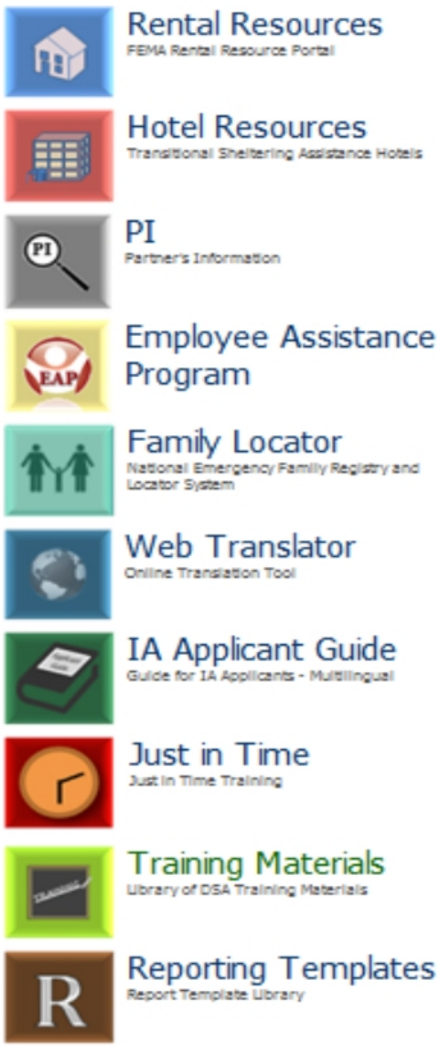
Disaster specific information broken down by event

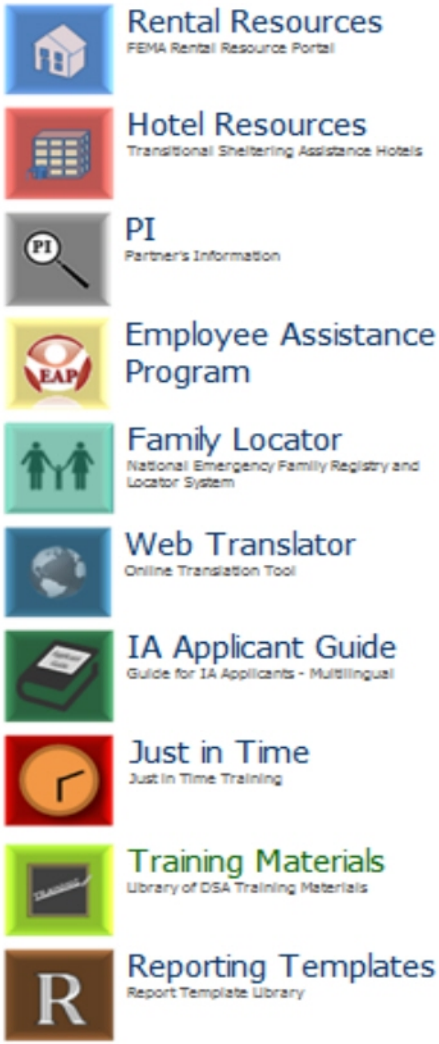
Disaster Specific Information is a resource for providing Whole Community Partner referrals to survivors through: Disaster Referral Information LinkProvides “situational awareness” specific to each disaster such as: Declaration DateIncident Period and TypeApplication PeriodOther Needs Assistance(ONA) PricingEtc...

Rental Resources


Rental Resources
FEMA Rental Resource Portal
Hotel Resources
Transitional Sheltering Assistance Hotels
PI
PI
Partner's Information
EAP
Employee Assistance Program
Family Locator
National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System
Web Translator
Online Translation Tool
IA Applicant Guide
Guide for IA Applicants - Multilingual
Just in Time
Just in Time Training
Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials
R
Reporting Templates
Report Template Library

Helps individuals and families, who have been displaced by a disaster, find a place to live. The portal consolidates rental resources identified and provided by federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Veterans Administration (VA), private organizations, and the public, to help individuals and families find available rentals in their area.

Hotel Resources



Rental Resources
FEMA Rental Resource Portal

Hotel Resources
Transitional Sheltering Assistance Hotels

PI
Partner's Information

Employee Assistance Program

Family Locator
National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System

Web Translator
Online Translation Tool

IA Applicant Guide
Guide for IA Applicants - Multilingual

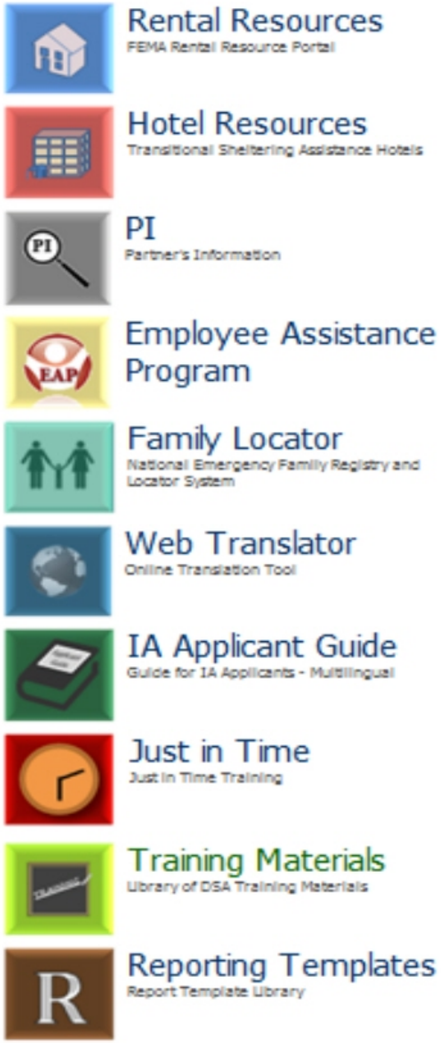
Just in Time
Just in Time Training

Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials

Reporting Templates
Report Template Library

Provides information on local hotel resources participating in the Transitional Sheltering program (TSA) in the state.

PI (Partners Information)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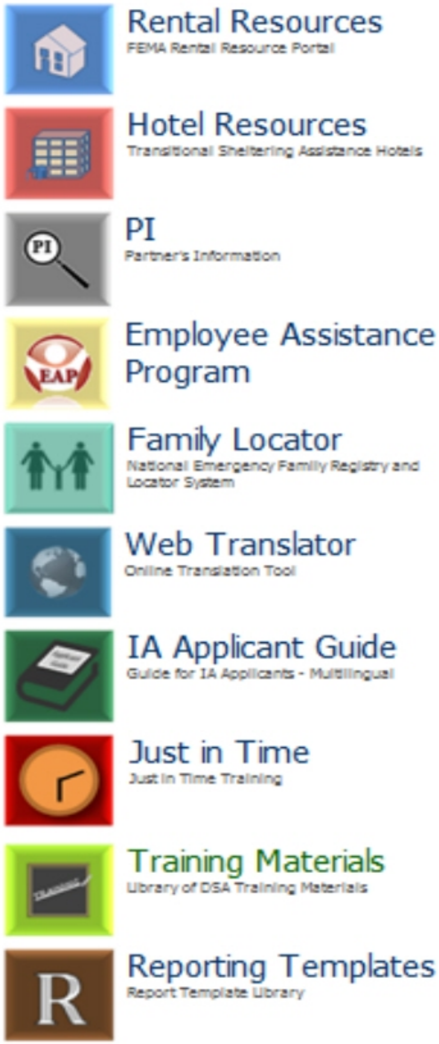
IA Applicant Guide
Guide for IA Applicants - Multilingual
Just in Time
Just in Time Training
Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials
Reporting Templates
Report Template Library
R

Provides information on FEMA partners that survivors may need to contact for assistance. Partners include:Crisis Counseling ProgramDisaster Partners Information and Resources (DPIR)FEMA Disaster Assistance Applicant ServicesHazard MitigationNational Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)U. S. Small Business Administration (Home and Business)U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)U.S. Department of Veterans (VA)U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA)U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)Internal Revenue Service(IRS)

Employee Assistance Program



Rental Resources
FEMA Rental Resource Portal

Hotel Resources
Transitional Sheltering Assistance Hotels

PI
Partner's Information

Employee Assistance Program

Family Locator
National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System

Web Translator
Online Translation Tool

IA Applicant Guide
Guide for IA Applicants - Multilingual

Just in Time
Just in Time Training

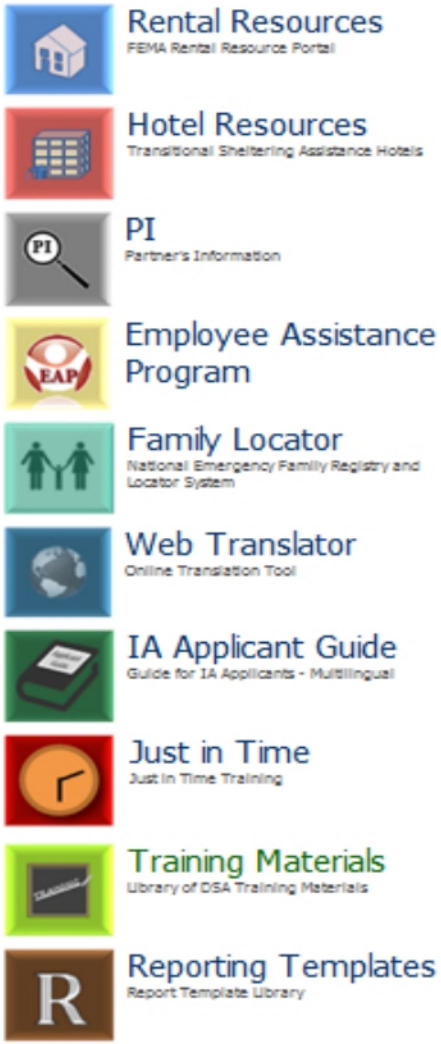
Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials

Reporting Templates
Report Template Library

- ☐ Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) provide services designed to help employees, managers, and organizations meet life challenges and remain healthy, engaged, and productive.

  EAP can provide short-term counseling and referral for issues that are having an impact on your ability to work. The EAP will either address your concerns during counseling sessions, or they will refer you on to appropriate community resources, counselors, and other supports. Issues addressed by an EAP include: Life changes – divorce, new job, new baby, aging parents, grief and loss, retirement Life challenges – drug and alcohol abuse, depression, eating disorders, mental illness Job stress and burnout Coping with difficult situations or difficult people

Family Locator



Rental Resources
FEMA Rental Resource Portal

Hotel Resources
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Web Translator
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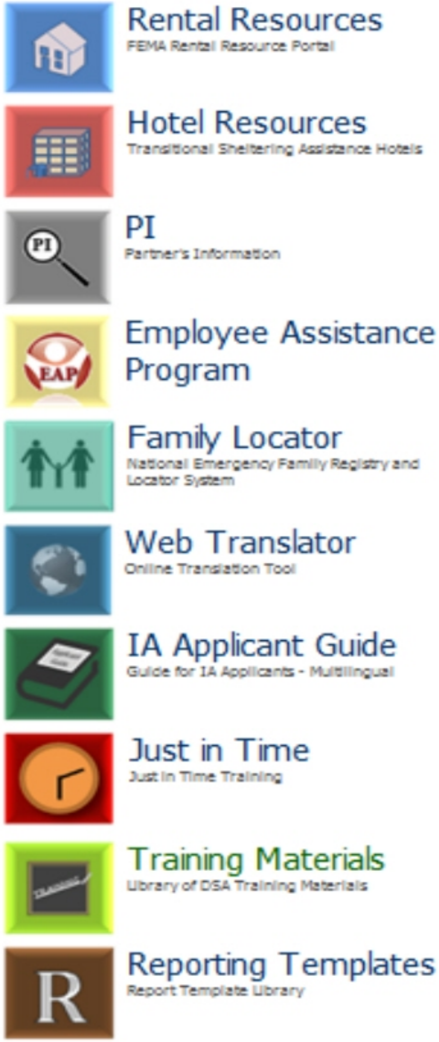
Just in Time Training

Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials

Reporting Templates
Report Template Library

National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRLS)Assists survivors in locating their displaced family members

Web Translator



Rental Resources
FEMA Rental Resource Portal

Hotel Resources
Transitional Sheltering Assistance Hotels

PI
Partner's Information

Employee Assistance Program

Family Locator
National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System

Web Translator
Online Translation Tool

IA Applicant Guide
Guide for IA Applicants - Multilingual

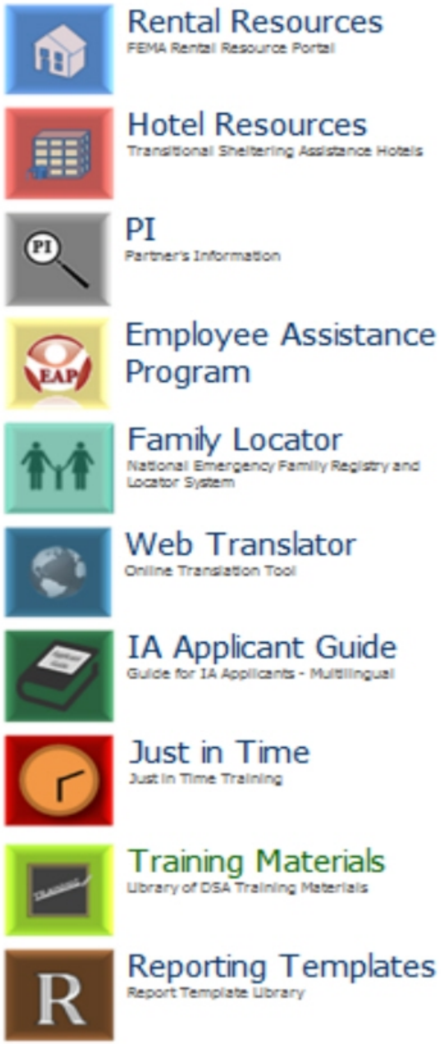
Just in Time
Just in Time Training

Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials

Reporting Templates
Report Template Library

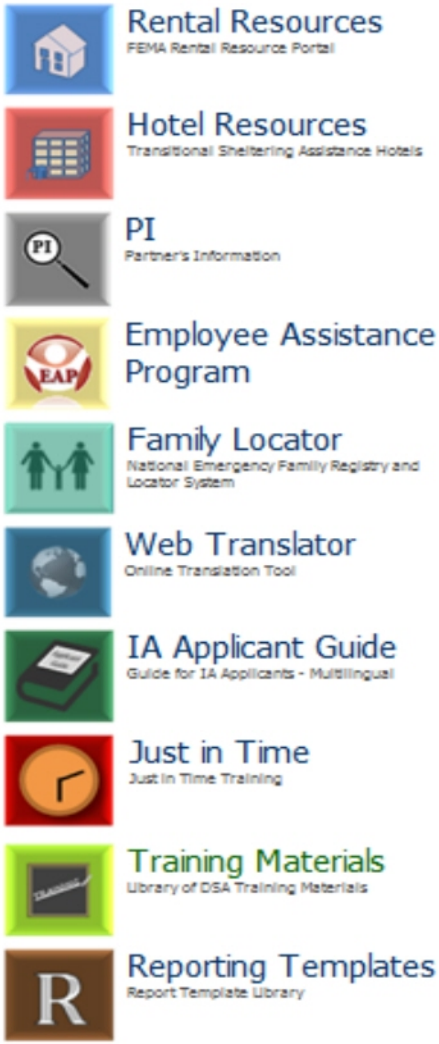
Provides a link to Translator Application that allows the DSA Team members to communicate with survivors that speak other languages.

IA Applicant Guide


Rental Resources
FEMA Rental Resource Portal
Hotel Resources
Transitional Sheltering Assistance Hotels
PI
Partner's Information
Employee Assistance Program
EAP
Family Locator
National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System
Web Translator
Online Translation Tool
IA Applicant Guide
Guide for IA Applicants - Multilingual
Just in Time
Just in Time Training
Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials
Reporting Templates
R
Report Template Library

Contains “Help After a Disaster, Applicant’s Guide to the Individuals & Households Program In multiple languages.

Just in Time


Rental Resources
FEMA Rental Resource Portal
Hotel Resources
Transitional Sheltering Assistance Hotels
PI
Partner's Information
Employee Assistance Program
EAP
Family Locator
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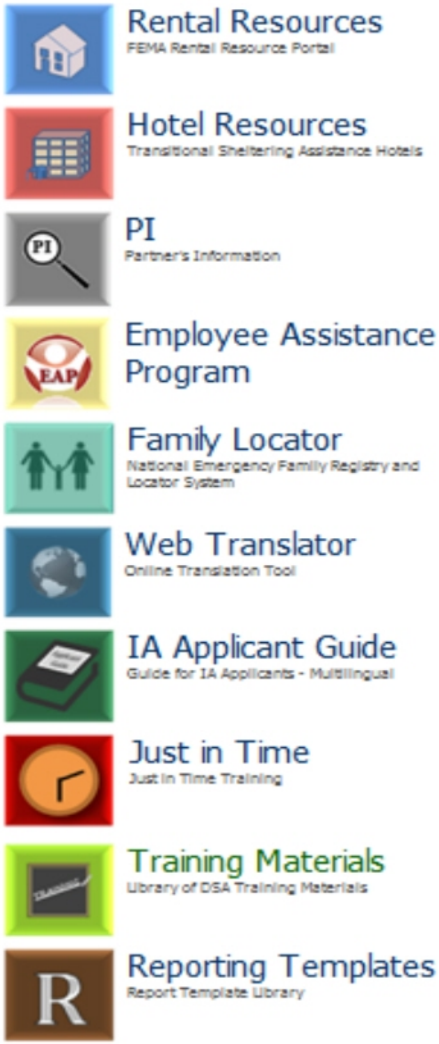
Web Translator
Online Translation Tool
IA Applicant Guide
Guide for IA Applicants - Multilingual
Just in Time
Just in Time Training
Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials
Reporting Templates
Report Template Library
R

The most current version of DSA “Just in Time” training materials will be stored here.

Training Materials


Rental Resources
FEMA Rental Resource Portal
Hotel Resources
Transitional Sheltering Assistance Hotels
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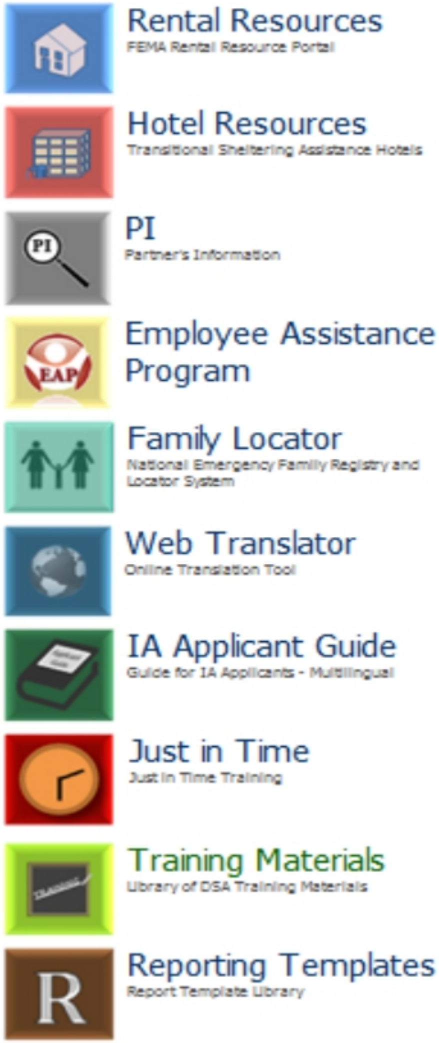
Just in Time
Just in Time Training
Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials
Reporting Templates
Report Template Library

The most current version of DSA training materials will be stored here.

Reporting Templates



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FEMA Rental Resource Portal

Hotel Resources
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Partner's Information

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Web Translator
Online Translation Tool

IA Applicant Guide
Guide for IA Applicants - Multilingual

Just in Time
Just in Time Training

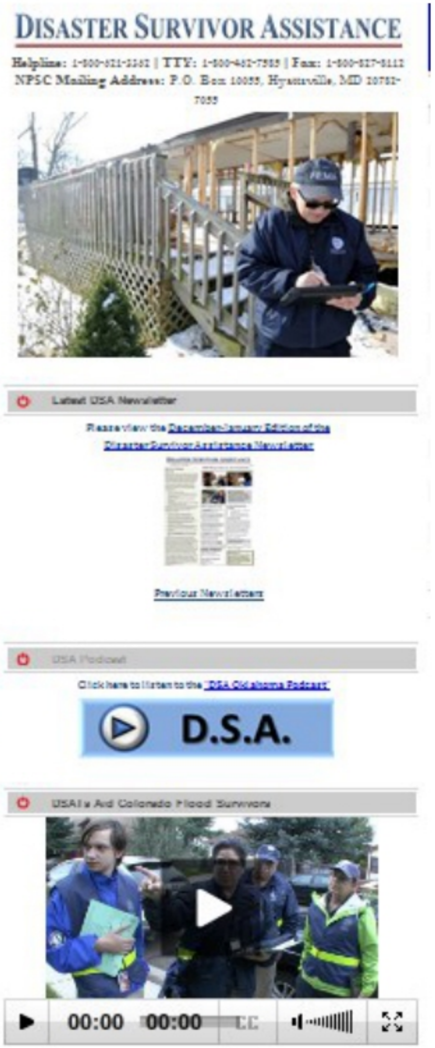
Training Materials
Library of DSA Training Materials

Reporting Templates
Report Template Library

Contains templates for Reports supporting Disaster Survivor Assistance operations

DSA Web Resources

Helpline Numbers:1-800-621:3362 TTY:1-800-462-7585 Fax:1-800-827-8112NPSC Mailing Address: P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-7055



DISASTER SURVIVOR ASSISTANCE

Helpline: 1-800-621-3362 | TTY: 1-800-462-7585 | Fax: 1-800-827-8112
NPSC Mailing Address: P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-7055

Latest DSA Newsletter

Please view the December-January Edition of the Disaster Survivor Assistance Newsletter

Previous Newsletters

DSA Podcast

Click here to listen to the "DSA Oklahoma Podcast"

DSATs Aid Colorado Flood Survivors

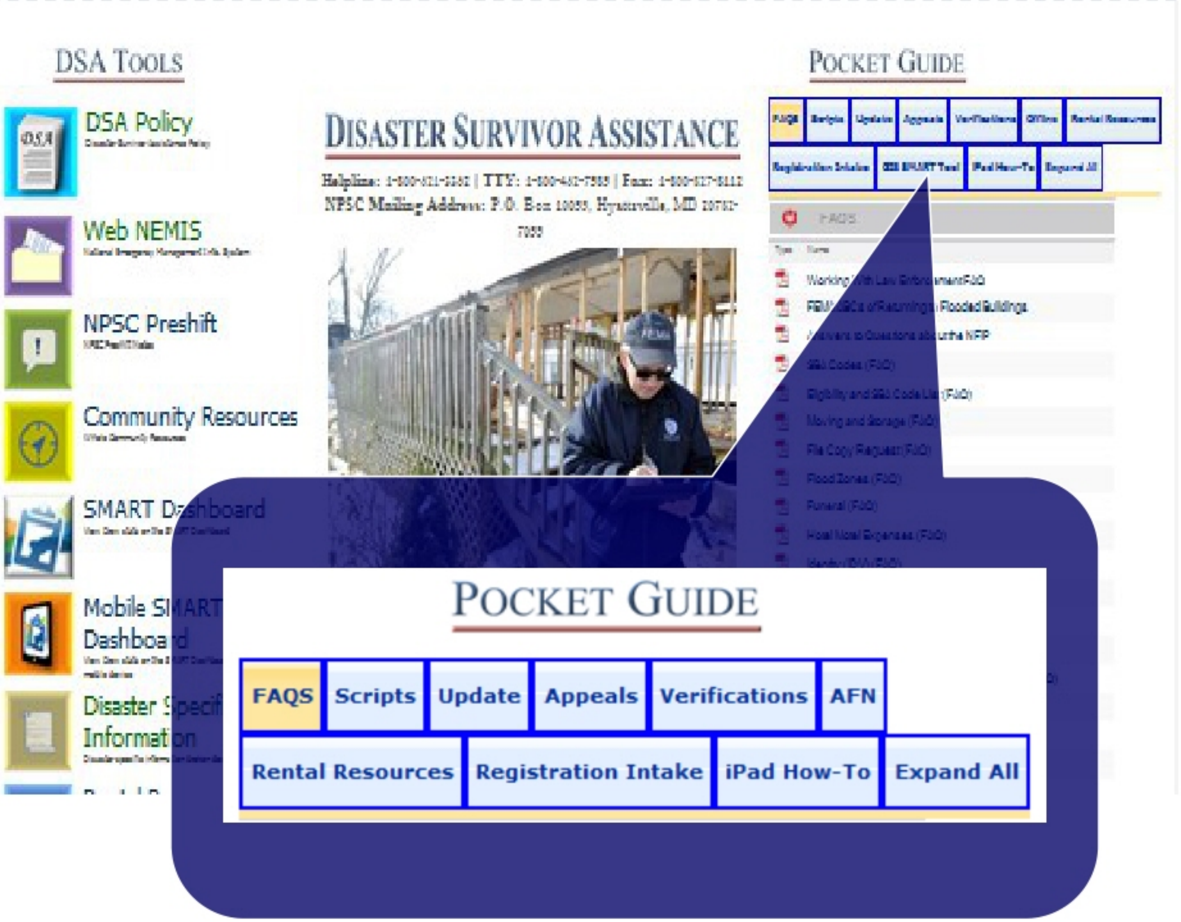
Latest DSA Newsletter

DSA Podcast

DSAT Aid to Survivors

DSA Web Resources

The Top Right Side of the Web Page provides guides that will assist DSA Team members when interacting with survivors. Guides are categorized as follows:Survivor FAQsScriptsUpdateAppealsVerificationsOffline Rental ResourcesRegistration IntakeGIS SMART TooliPad How-toExpand All


DSA Tools
DSA Policy
Web NEMIS
NPSC Preshift
Community Resources
SMART Dashboard
Mobile SMART Dashboard
Disaster Specific Information
Disaster Survivor Assistance
Pocket Guide
FAQS
Scripts
Update
Appeals
Verifications
AFN
Rental Resources
Registration Intake
iPad How-To
Expand All

SMART

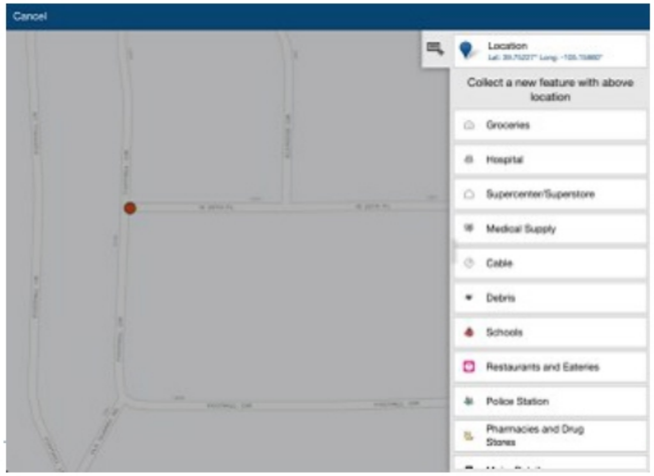
SMART

- Survivor Mobile Application Reporting Tool

Operational Priorities

How does DSA leverage and integrate already existing information to help us identify and target disproportionately impacted communities?

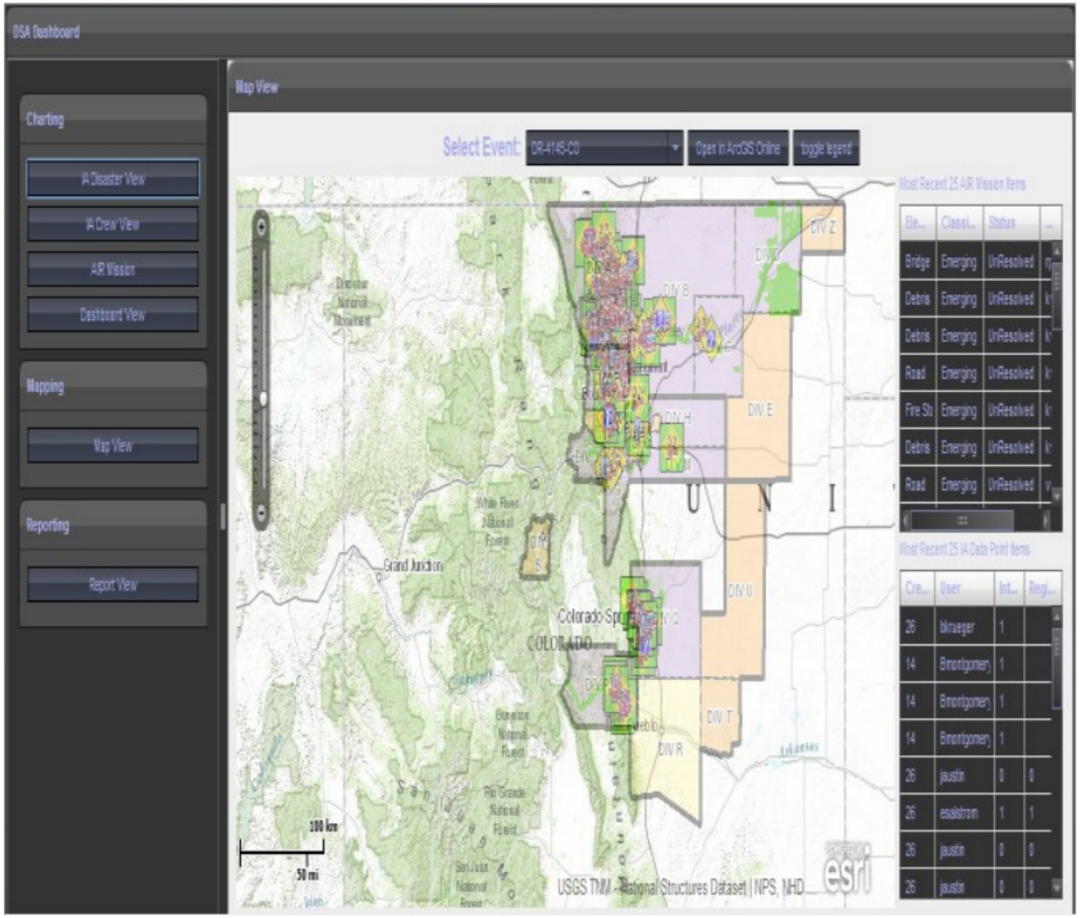
S.M.A.R.T.



Cancel
Location

Collect a new feature with above location

- Groceries
- Hospital
- Supercenter/Superstore
- Medical Supply
- Cable
- Debris
- Schools
- Restaurants and Eateries
- Police Station
- Pharmacies and Drug Stores



OSA Dashboard
Charting
IA Disaster View
IA Crew View
AIR Mission
Dashboard View
Mapping
Map View
Reporting
Report View
Map View
Open in ArcGIS Online
toggle legend
DIV Z
DIV B
DIV H
DIV E
DIV U
DIV C
DIV T
DIV R
Grand Junction
Colorado Springs
COLORADO
Pueblo
100 km
50 mi
USGS TNM - National Structures Dataset | NPS, NHD
esri

Select Event: DR-4145-CO

Most Recent 25 AIR Mission Items

Ele...	Classi...	Status
Bridge	Emerging	UnResolved
Debris	Emerging	UnResolved
Debris	Emerging	UnResolved
Road	Emerging	UnResolved
Fire Sta	Emerging	UnResolved
Debris	Emerging	UnResolved
Road	Emerging	UnResolved

Most Recent 25 IA Data Point Items

Cre...	User	Int...	Regi...
26	bkrueger	1	
14	Bmontgomery	1	
14	Bmontgomery	1	
14	Bmontgomery	1	
26	jaustin	0	0
26	esalstrom	1	1
26	jaustin	0	0
26	jaustin	0	0

Operational Tools

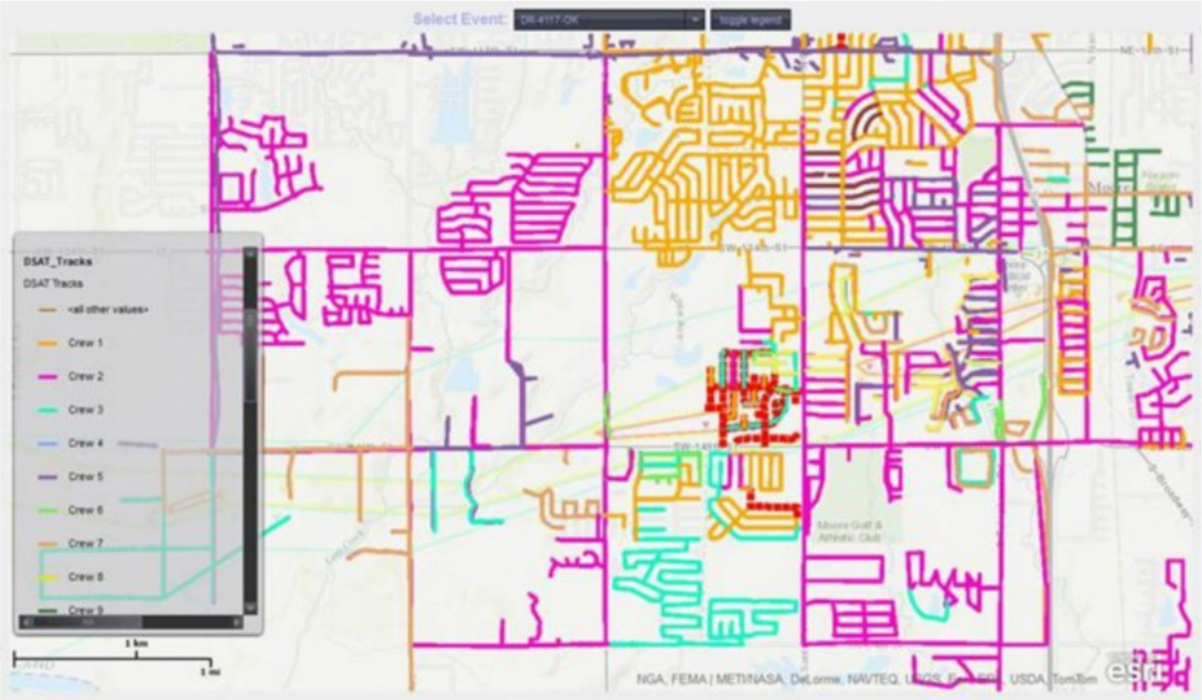
Much like the NPSC’s, IA, and PA, during disaster operations, DSA is asked to measure our impact on the mission, make staffing decisions, and develop planning assumptions.

Situational Awareness

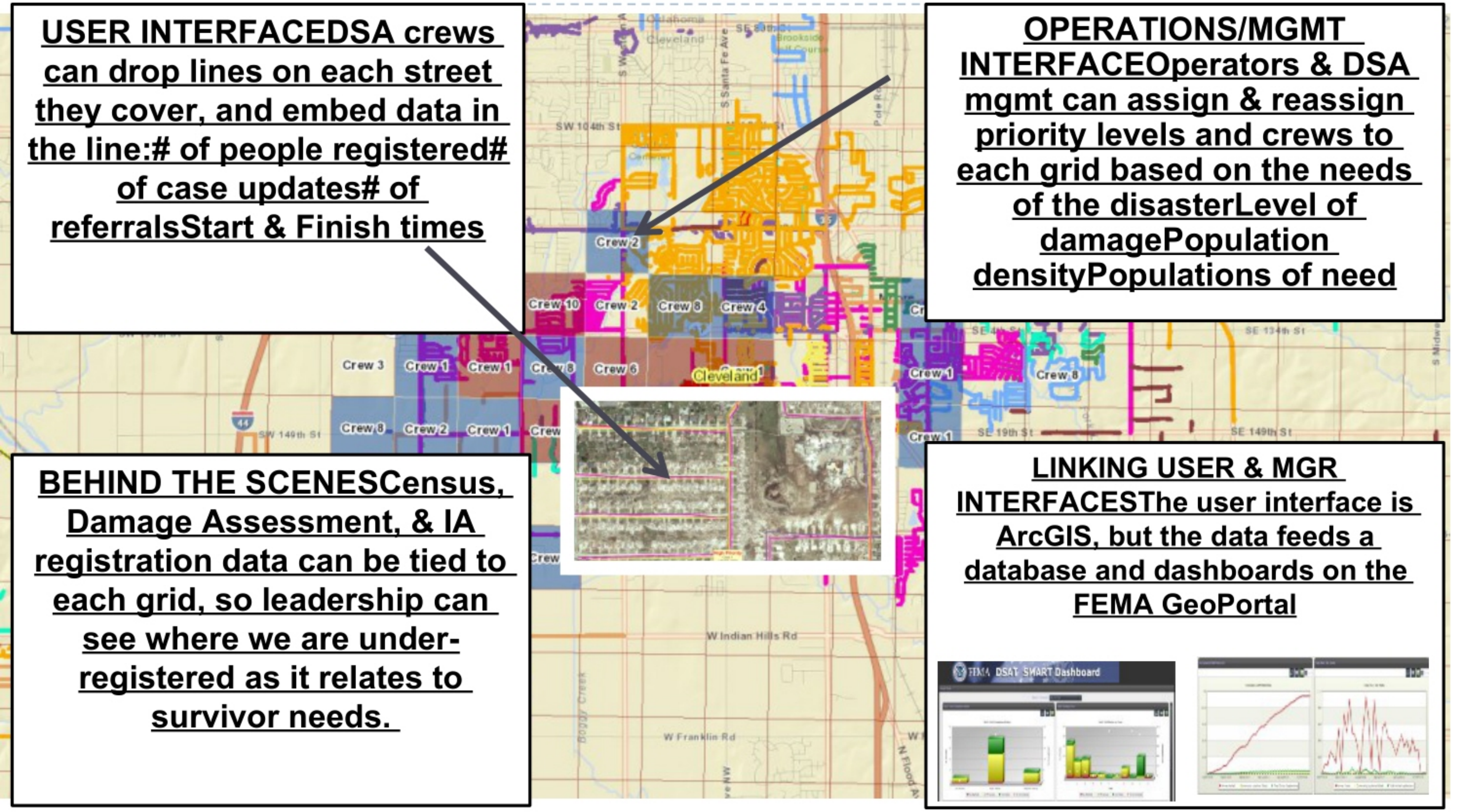
Through SMART, we can have staff not just provide information about infrastructure damage, but a visibility on location, severity, and impact to the community.

Accountability/Coverage

SMART allows Management constant visualization of crews.


Select Event:
DR-4117-OK
toggle legend
DSAT_Tracks
DSAT Tracks
<all other values>
Crew 1
Crew 2
Crew 3
Crew 4
Crew 5
Crew 6
Crew 7
Crew 8
Crew 9
1 km
1 mi
Moore Golf & Athletic Club
NGA, FEMA | METI/NASA, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, USGS, Esri, USDA, TomTom
esri

Survivor Mobile Application Reporting Tool (SMART)


Oklahoma
Cleveland
SE 89th St
Brookside Golf Course
S Western Ave
S Santa Fe Ave
SW 104th St
Crew 2
Crew 10
Crew 2
Crew 8
Crew 4
Crew 3
Crew 1
Crew 1
Crew 8
Crew 6
Cleveland
Crew 1
Crew 8
SE 4th St
SE 134th St
Crew 8
Crew 2
Crew 1
Crew
SW 149th St
SE 19th St
SE 149th St
Crew 1
Crew
W Indian Hills Rd
W Franklin Rd
N Flood Ave
FEMA DSAT SMART Dashboard

USER INTERFACEDSA crews can drop lines on each street they cover, and embed data in the line:# of people registered# of case updates# of referralsStart & Finish times

OPERATIONS/MGMT INTERFACEOperators & DSA mgmt can assign & reassign priority levels and crews to each grid based on the needs of the disasterLevel of damagePopulation densityPopulations of need

BEHIND THE SCENESCensus, Damage Assessment, & IA registration data can be tied to each grid, so leadership can see where we are under-registered as it relates to survivor needs.

LINKING USER & MGR INTERFACESThe user interface is ArcGIS, but the data feeds a database and dashboards on the FEMA GeoPortal

Ease of use

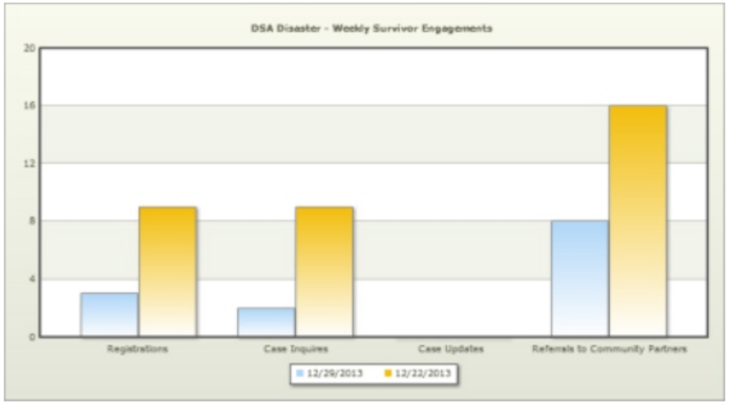
SMART was developed with the user in mind:The focus was on developing a smooth interface and user process;Leveraging a standard GIS platform which is familiar to all JFO level GIS staffEnsuring limited training time away from operational priorities

Data Sharing

- Currently SMART pulls data for an event according to the US National Grid Has ability to bring in damage assessment data, post event imagery and other mission critical dataHas capabilities to share this data across other ESFs as well as with local GIS staffSMART Dashboard and Web Map can be shared with Whole Community PartnersDSA has been careful to ensure that we are NOT collecting PII Data as SMART can be made available as a public facing page.

Reporting

- Dashboard allows the ability to run a report for all of the AIR Essential Elements of InformationCharts can be downloaded as visuals or as pure data charts.



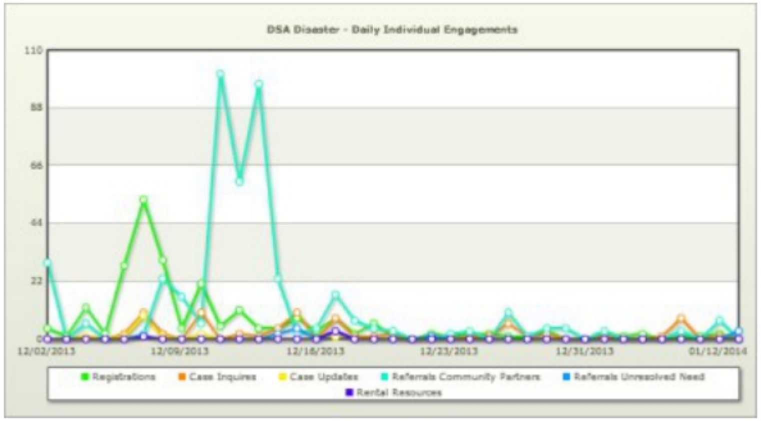
Label	12/29/2013	12/22/2013
Registrations	3	9
Case Inquires	2	9
Case Updates	0	0
Referrals to Community Partners	8	16

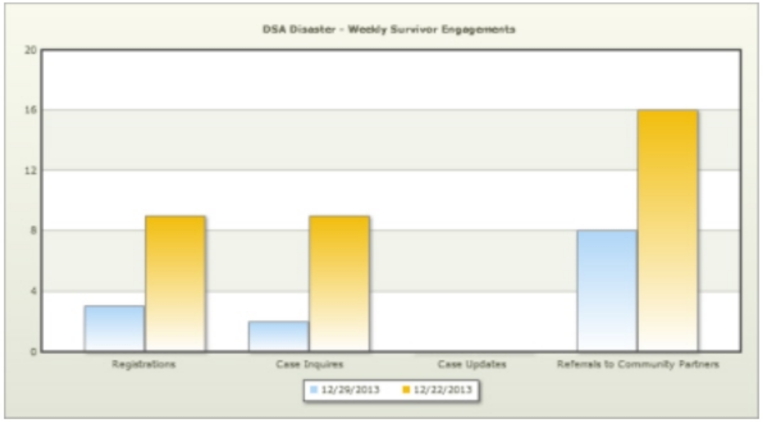
Supporting Operations

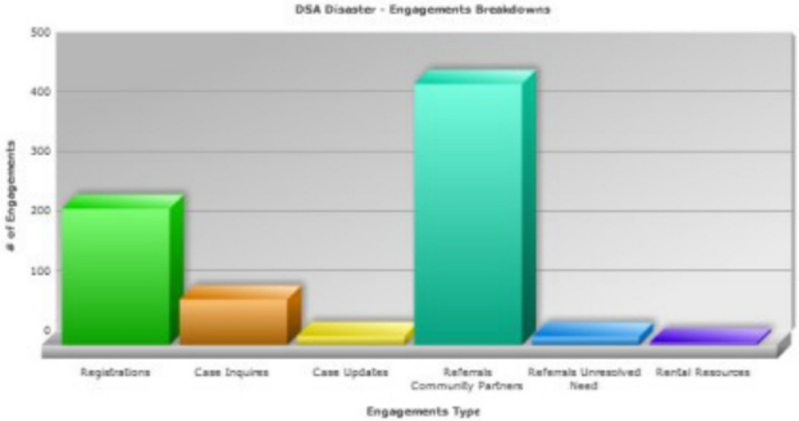
- SMART Tool can assist disaster operations with: Properly prioritize work area according to supporting dataExample: USNG automatically has population data and housing numbers according to grids

Analytics

The SMART Dashboard allows management the ability to view real time performance of crews with IA Data Points and AIR EEIs.







SMART Dashboard

Please go to the FEMA Geoportal:http://fema.maps.arcgis.com

DSA Mission Education Recap

DSA MissionDSA Essential FunctionsDSA Milestones, Accomplishments, and GoalsDSA Organizational StructureDSA Crew CompositionDSA Specialty RolesDSA Deployment/EmploymentLifecycleCriteriaMetricsPhased Approach to ActivationSMART/ReportingRoles and responsibilities of HQ and the RegionSteady StateDisaster ActivationIT Support/Communications RequirementsCadre Management and QualificationStakeholder Outreach StrategiesDSA Tools and Resources

Points of Contact

- Heather SmithDirector, Recovery Operations and Readiness Coordination202-380-2339 cellNicole Dyson   Readiness Section Chief, ROC   202-646-3555Kendrick Faison   SMART Developer/GIS Lead 202-304-7272

Questions?

Unit 1:

Introduction to Recovery Concepts

FEMA

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, you will be able to:

- **Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of the National Disaster Recovery Framework**
- **Describe how your roles and responsibilities change as the disaster transitions from response to recovery.**
- **Define key recovery terms and concepts including the definition of disaster, Whole Community and Community Resilience**
- **Describe the difference between pre and post disaster recovery plans.**

Activity 1.1 - Your Role in Recovery

Purpose: To identify changing roles and responsibilities as the community moves from response to recovery.

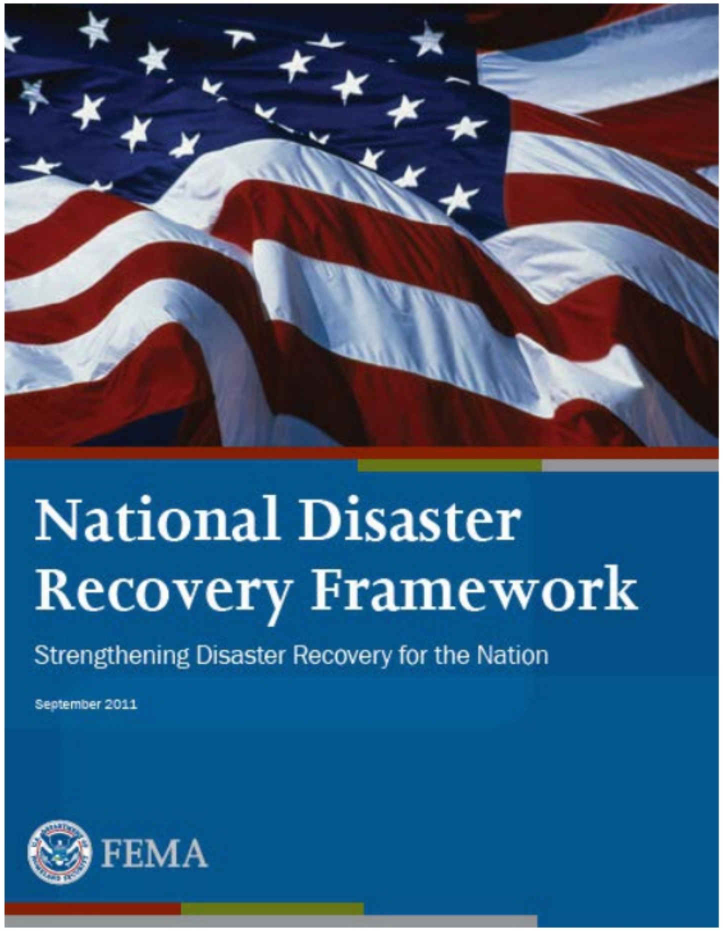
Instructions: Working individually, view the “Your Role in Recovery” video and complete the following:

- Describe how your professional roles and responsibilities would change from your day-to-day operational duties to your likely roles and responsibilities during recovery from the disaster scene in the “Your Role in Recovery” video.
- Be prepared to provide a 1 minute summary to the class.

Activity Video: Your Role in Recovery

National Disaster Recovery Framework

Provides guidance on how all levels of government will work together following a disaster.



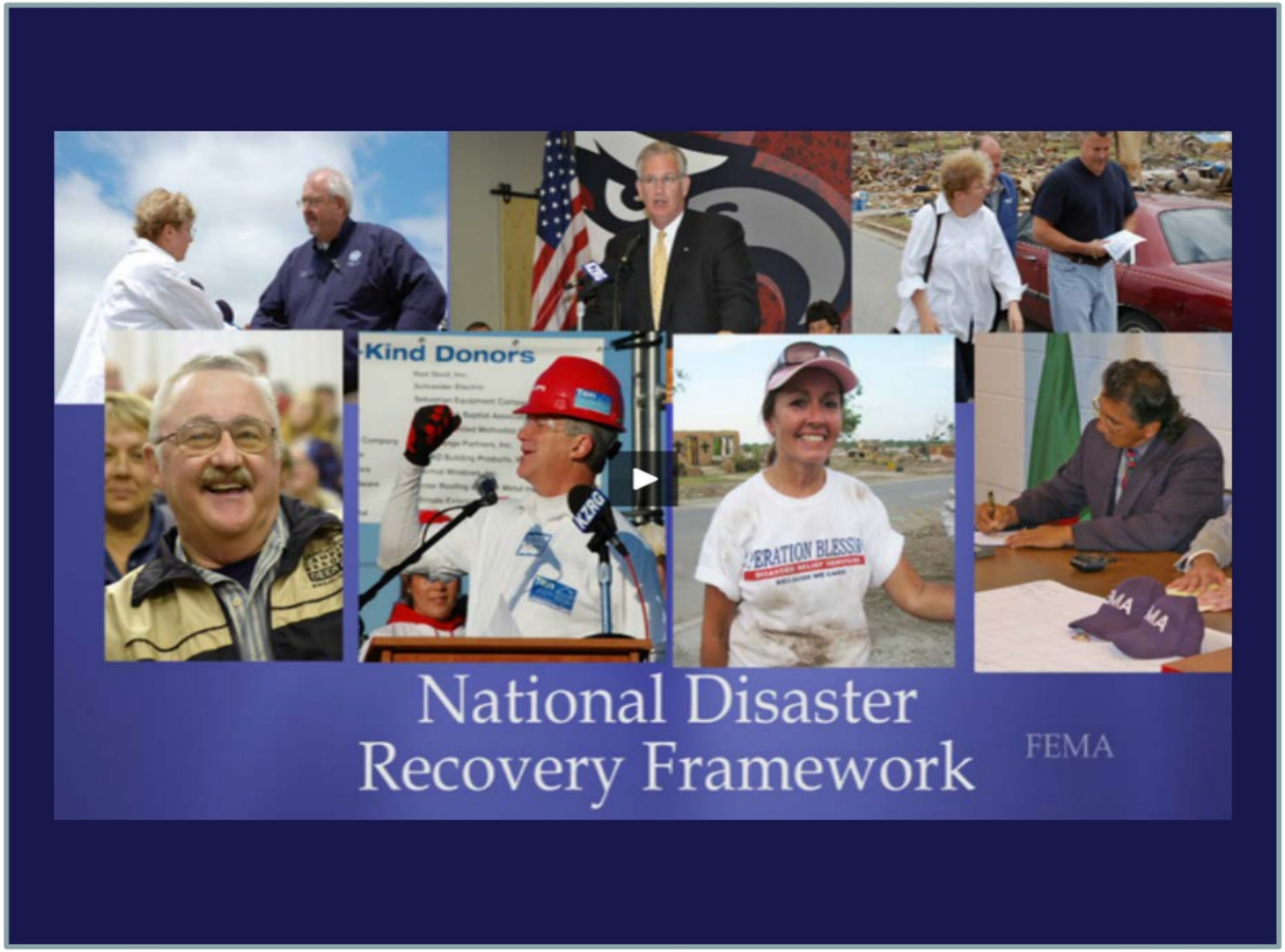
National Disaster Recovery Framework

Strengthening Disaster Recovery for the Nation

September 2011

FEMA

Video: Introducing NDRF


Kind Donors
OPERATION BLESSING
National Disaster Recovery Framework
FEMA

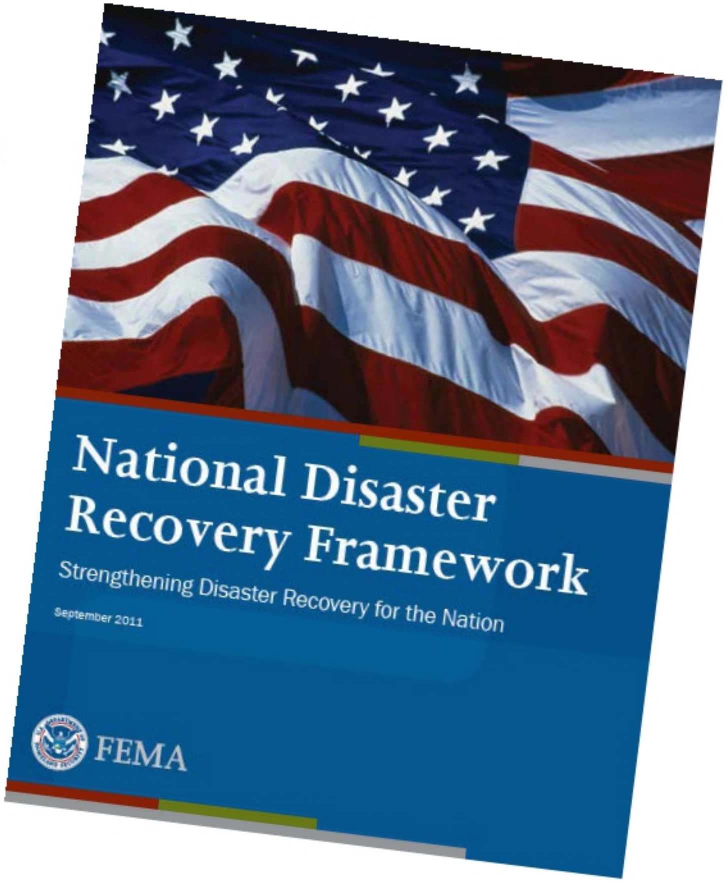
http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/videos/79189

Source: FEMA Region VII

National Disaster Recovery Framework

Framework defines:

- Recovery principles
- Roles and responsibilities
- Coordinating structure
- Planning guidance
- Overall process for sustainability



National Disaster Recovery Framework

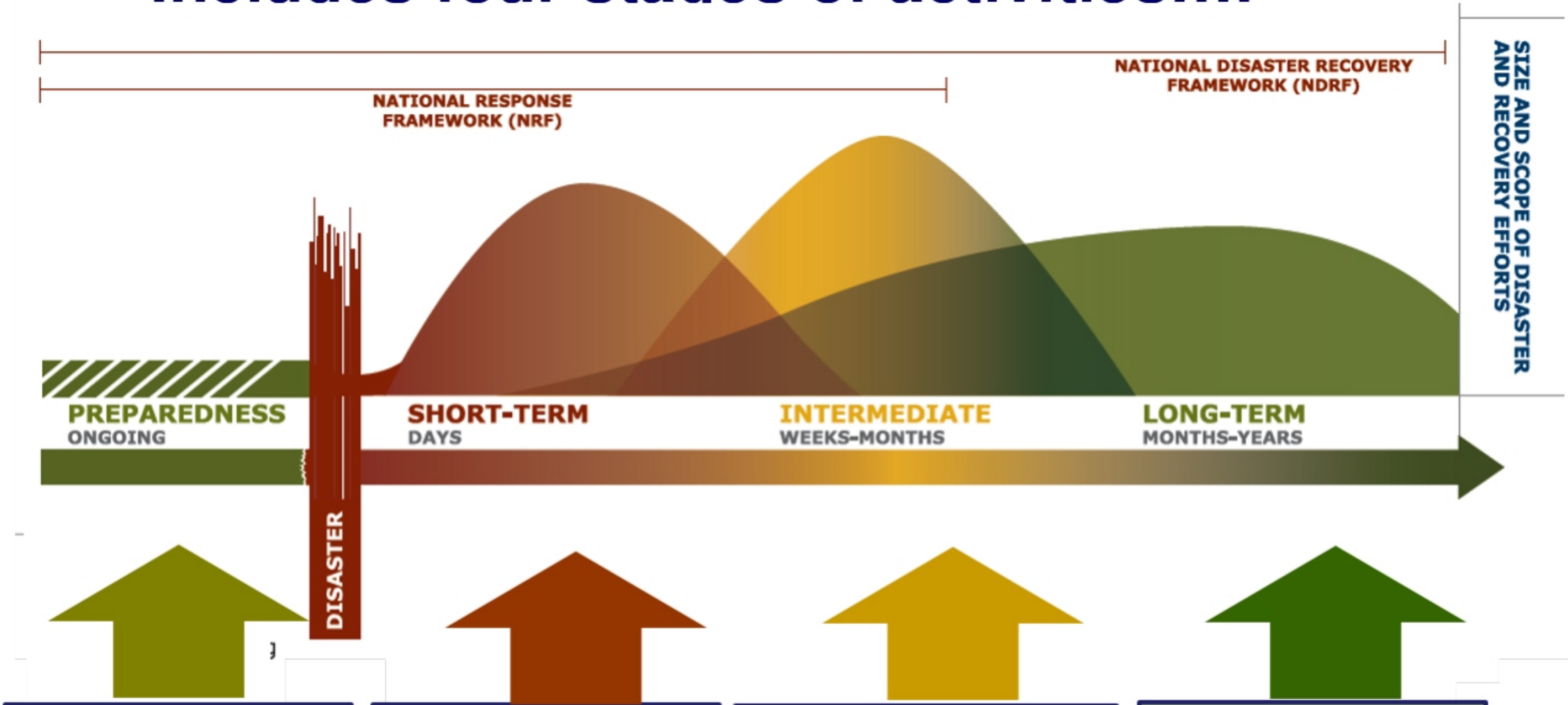
Strengthening Disaster Recovery for the Nation

September 2011

FEMA

NDRF Recovery Continuum

Includes four stages of activities….


NATIONAL RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (NRF)
NATIONAL DISASTER RECOVERY FRAMEWORK (NDRF)
SIZE AND SCOPE OF DISASTER AND RECOVERY EFFORTS
DISASTER
PREPAREDNESS
ONGOING
SHORT-TERM
DAYS
INTERMEDIATE
WEEKS-MONTHS
LONG-TERM
MONTHS-YEARS

Pre-Disaster Preparedness

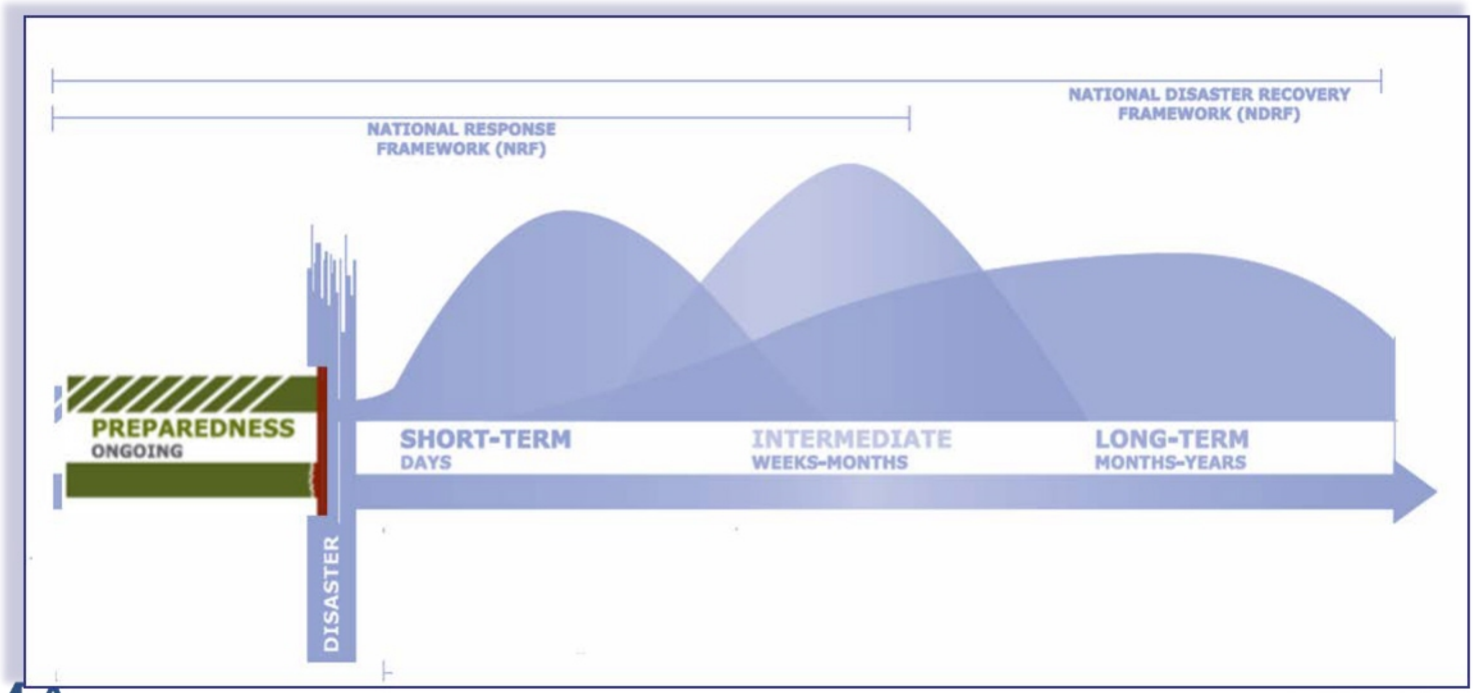
Post-Disaster Short-Term
(days to weeks)

Post-Disaster Intermediate-Term
(weeks to months)

Post-Disaster Long-Term
(months to years)

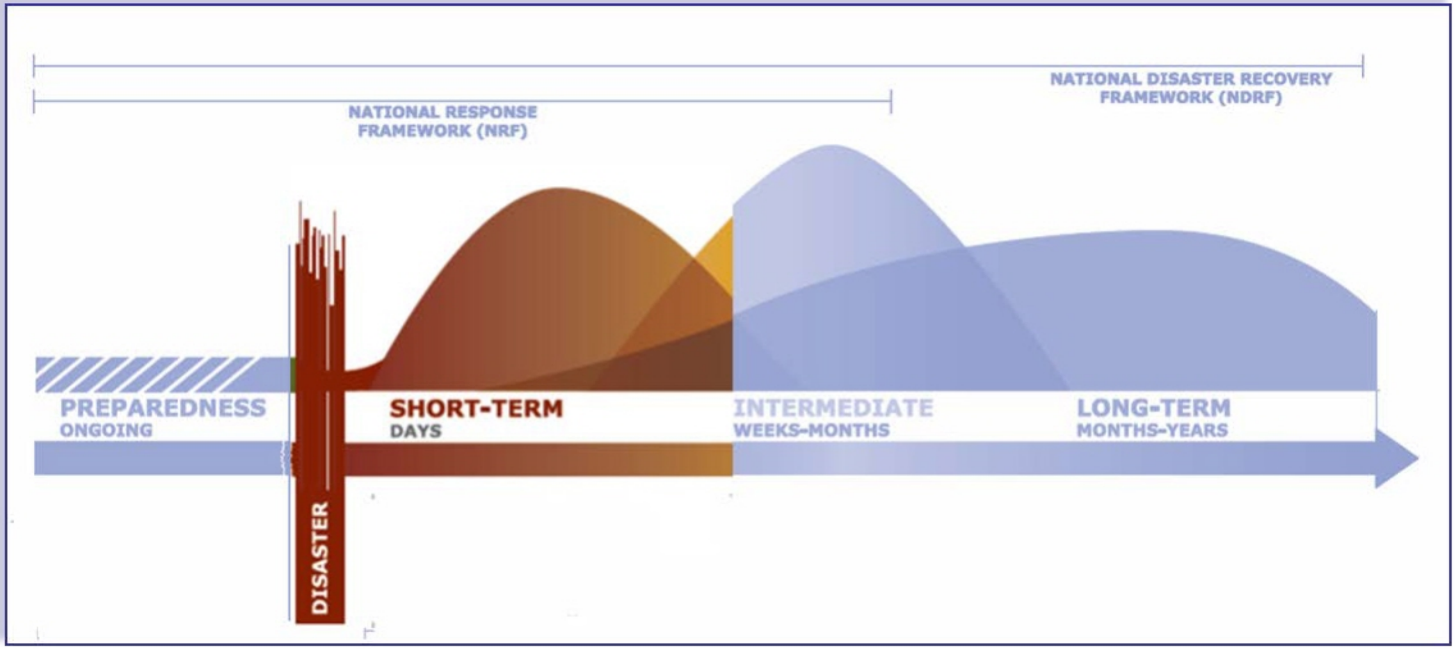
Pre-Disaster Preparedness

- Pre-disaster recovery planning
- Mitigation planning and implementation


NATIONAL RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (NRF)
NATIONAL DISASTER RECOVERY FRAMEWORK (NDRF)
PREPAREDNESS
ONGOING
DISASTER
SHORT-TERM
DAYS
INTERMEDIATE
WEEKS-MONTHS
LONG-TERM
MONTHS-YEARS

Post-Disaster Short-Term (Days-Weeks)

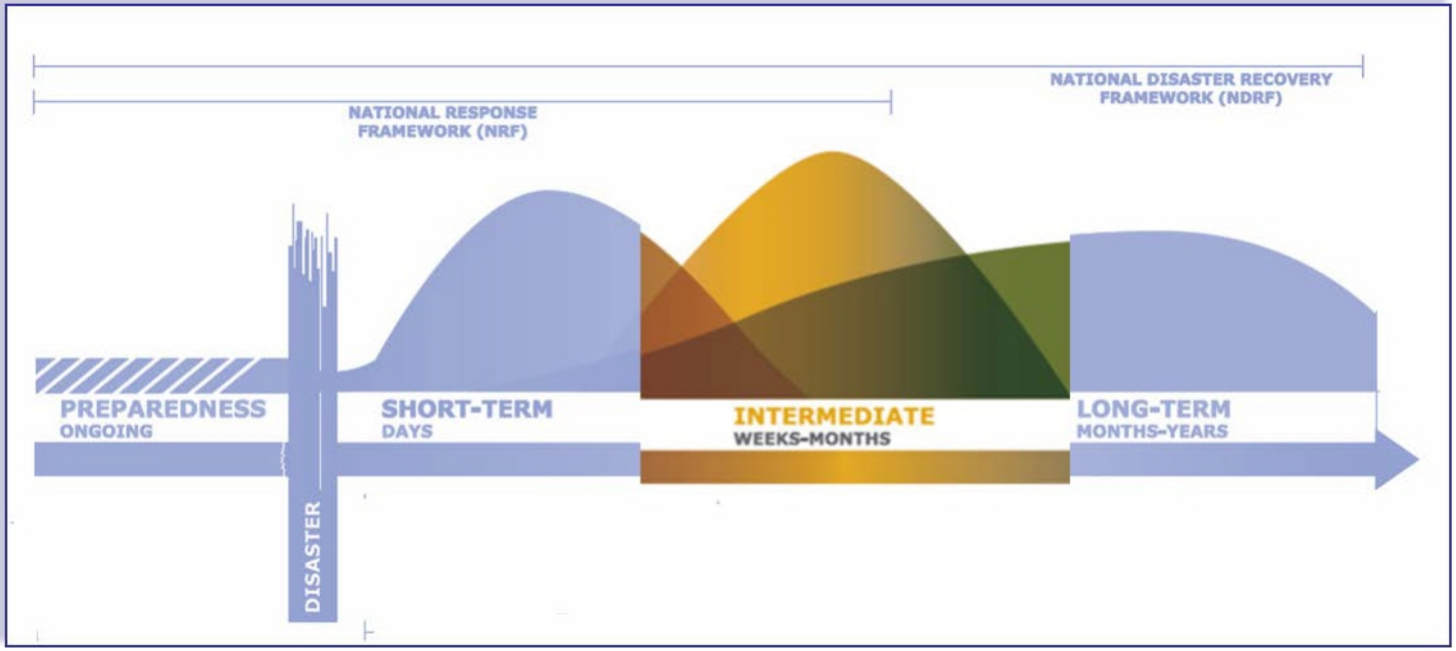
- **Mass Care/ Sheltering**
- **Debris Clearance**


NATIONAL DISASTER RECOVERY FRAMEWORK (NDRF)
NATIONAL RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (NRF)
PREPAREDNESS
ONGOING
DISASTER
SHORT-TERM
DAYS
INTERMEDIATE
WEEKS-MONTHS
LONG-TERM
MONTHS-YEARS

FEMA

Post-Disaster Intermediate-Term (Weeks-Months)

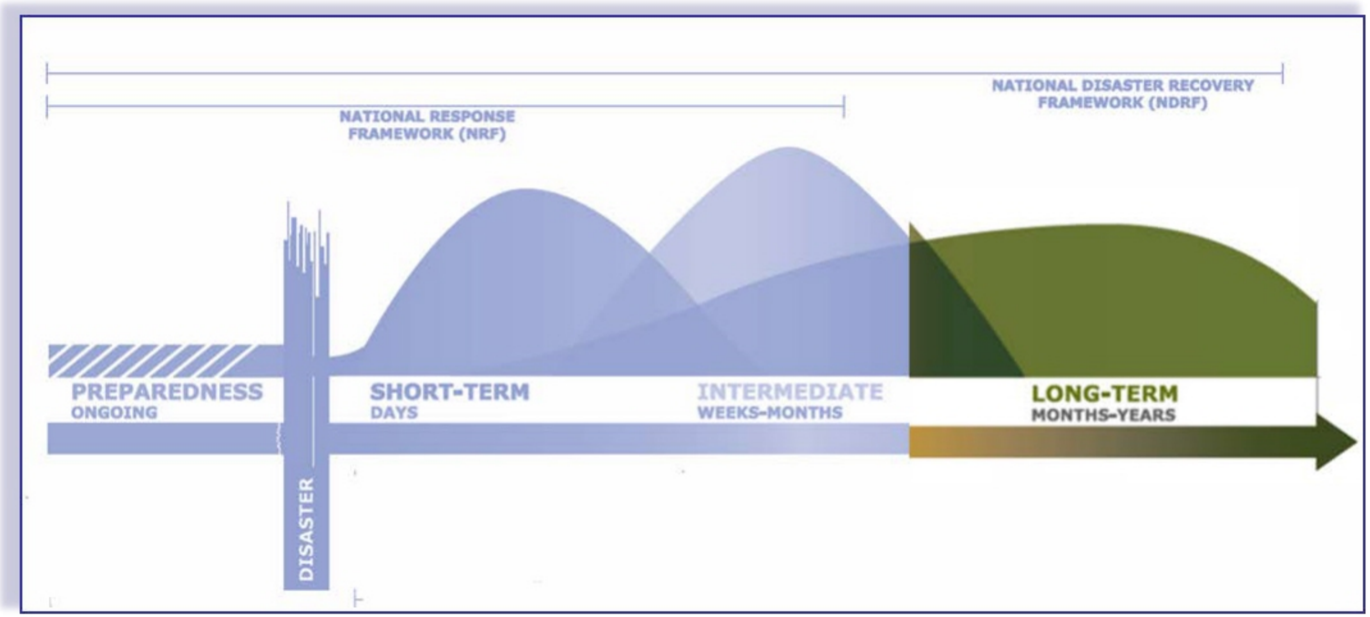
- **Interim Housing**
- **Infrastructure Repair**


NATIONAL RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (NRF)
NATIONAL DISASTER RECOVERY FRAMEWORK (NDRF)
PREPAREDNESS
ONGOING
DISASTER
SHORT-TERM
DAYS
INTERMEDIATE
WEEKS-MONTHS
LONG-TERM
MONTHS-YEARS

FEMA

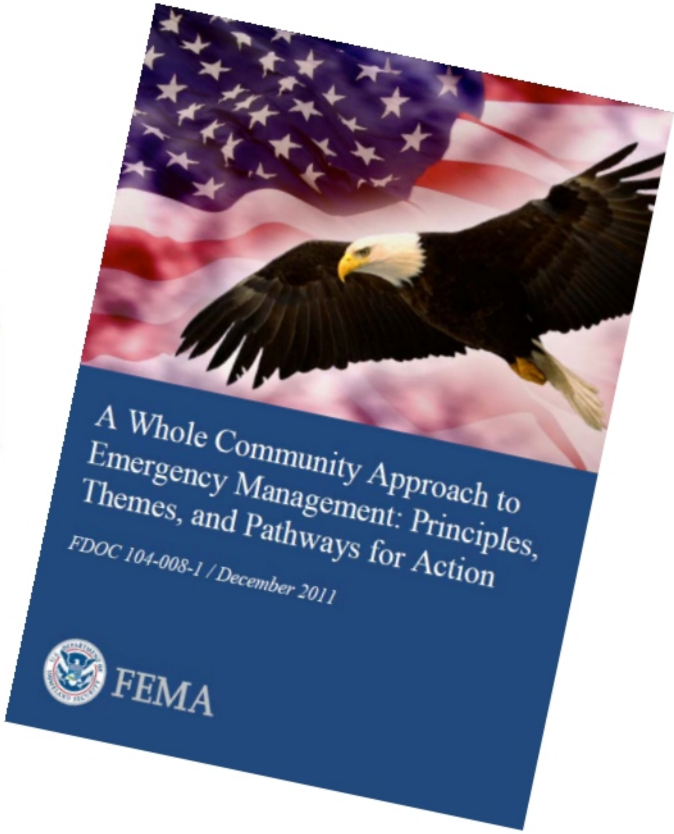
Post-Disaster Long-Term (Months-Years)

- Permanent Housing
- Infrastructure Rebuilding


NATIONAL RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (NRF)
NATIONAL DISASTER RECOVERY FRAMEWORK (NDRF)
PREPAREDNESS
ONGOING
DISASTER
SHORT-TERM
DAYS
INTERMEDIATE
WEEKS-MONTHS
LONG-TERM
MONTHS-YEARS

Whole Community Approach

WHOLE
COMMUNITY

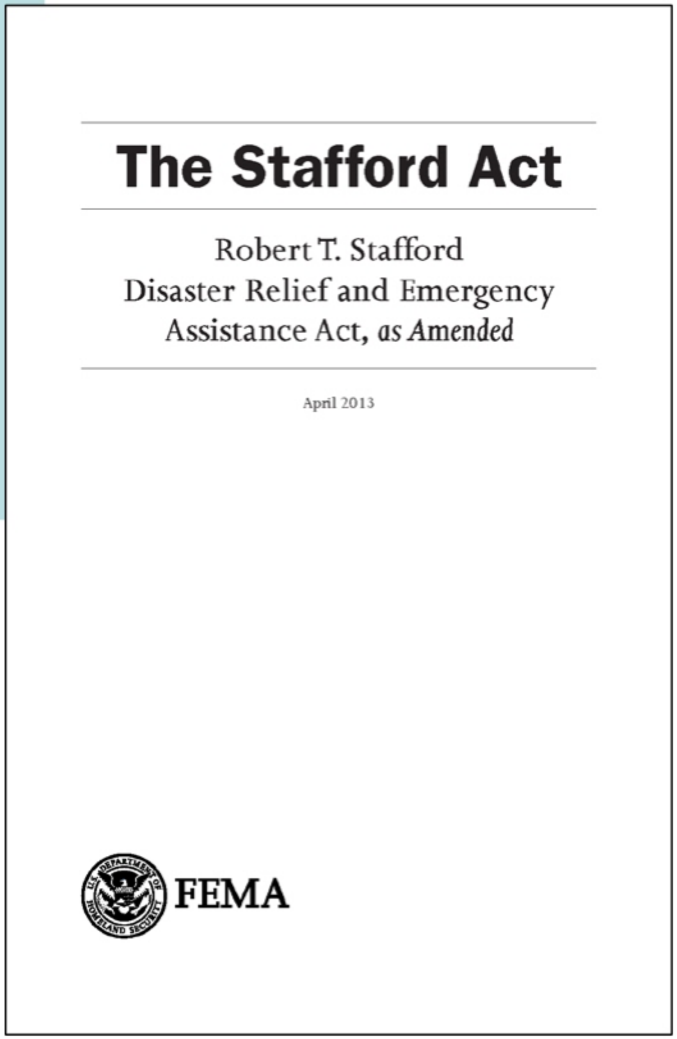

A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes, and Pathways for Action

FDOC 104-008-1 / December 2011

FEMA

Federal Legislation

Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act



The Stafford Act

Robert T. Stafford
Disaster Relief and Emergency
Assistance Act, *as Amended*

April 2013

FEMA

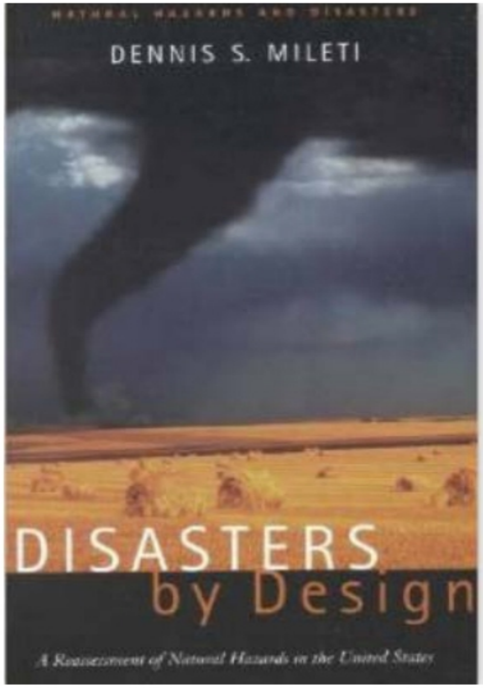
Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013

January 2013 - Congress passed the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act authorizing several significant changes to the way FEMA delivers disaster assistance.

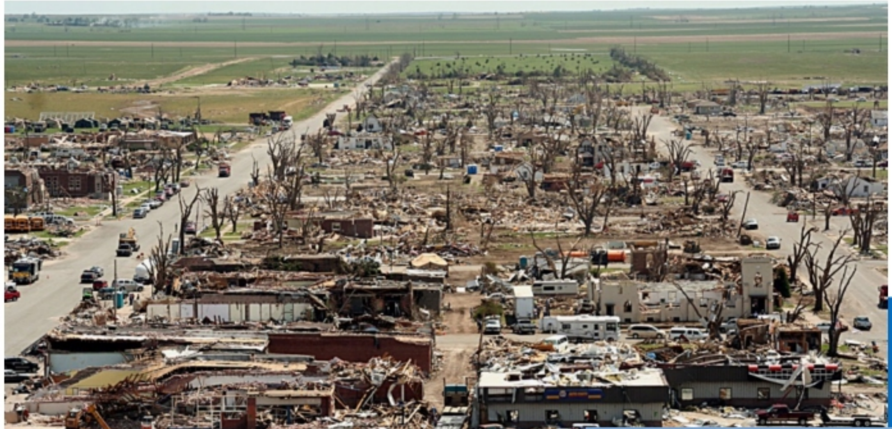
Recovery: Not Just Building Back

Historically, disaster recovery was defined as efforts to put the physical community back together again

Contemporary perspective is that disaster recovery is a “social process” encompassing decision making about restoration and reconstruction activities.

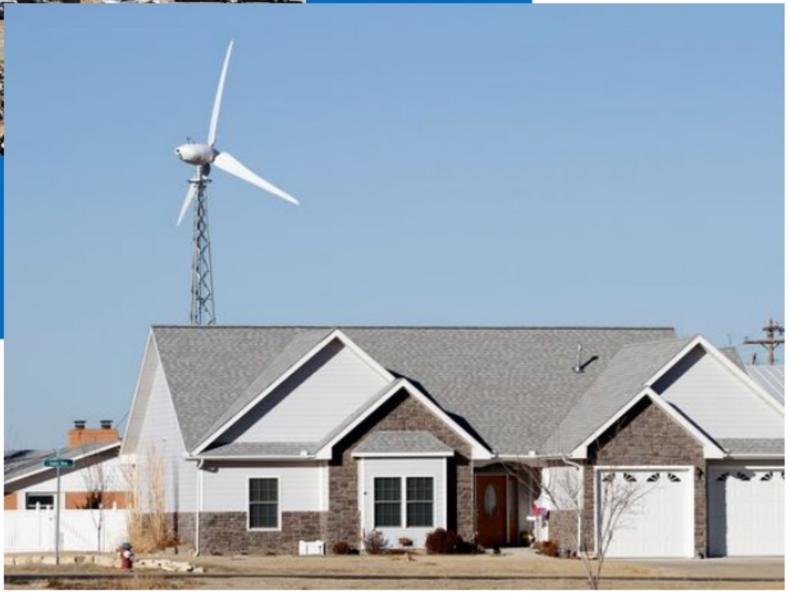

NATURAL HAZARDS AND DISASTERS
DENNIS S. MILETI
DISASTERS by Design
A Reassessment of Natural Hazards in the United States

Disaster Resilience Defined



Greensburg, Kansas

May 2007



Greensburg, Kansas Today

Disaster Resilience: Greensburg Kansas

VIDEO

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9x9IHAr7TeQ

FEMA

Disaster Resilience Defined

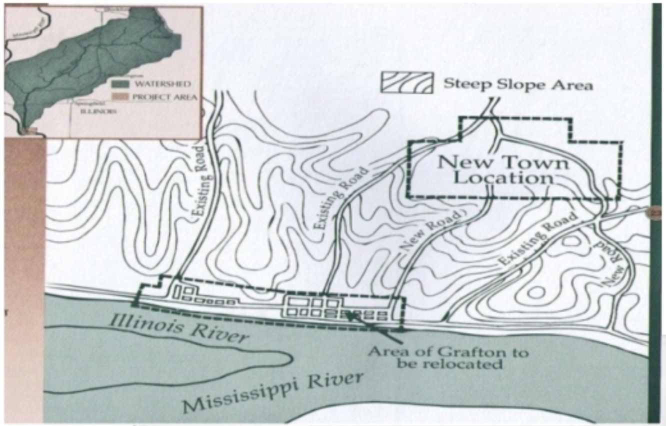
Local resiliency with regard to disaster means that a locale is able to withstand an extreme natural event without suffering devastating losses, damage, diminished productivity, or quality of life and without a large amount of assistance from outside the community.

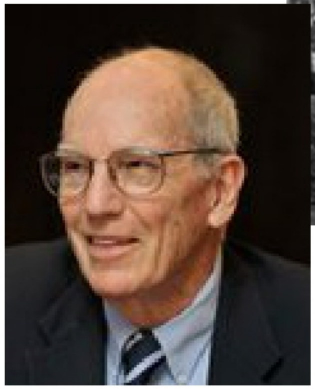
Dr. Dennis Mileti

FEMA

Characteristics of Resilience

What are the characteristics of resilient communities?


WATERSHED
PROJECT AREA
ILLINOIS
Steep Slope Area
New Town Location
Existing Road
Existing Road
New Road
Existing Road
New Road
Illinois River
Area of Grafton to be relocated
Mississippi River



Dr. David Godschalk

Characteristics of Resilience

Redundant

Diverse

Efficient

Autonomous

Strong

Interdependent

Adaptable

Collaborative

Building Resiliency into Recovery

Sharing a focus -

***Mitigation and Recovery*:**

- **Economic**
- **Housing**
- **Natural and cultural resources**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Health and social services**
- **Government sectors**

Edmond
Oklahoma City
Okmulgee
Henryetta
Moore
Shawnee
Seminole
Norman
Clinton
Elk City
Sayre
Reno
River
Altus
Lawton
Duncan
Arbuckle
Sulphur
Coalgate
OKSTRONG
OKSTRONG.OK.GOV

Types of Recovery Plans

The American Planning Association identifies three types of recovery plans.

- **Operational (limited pre-disaster)**
- **Policy (pre-disaster)**
- **Recovery (post-disaster)**

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Policy (pre-disaster)

- Structure for managing recovery
- General policies and guidelines
- Hazard mitigation
- Adjustments in land-use policy and priorities
- Policies for funding of recovery activities.
- Identify recovery resources

Focus on issues that communities will face regardless of the specific pattern of destruction a disaster may cause.

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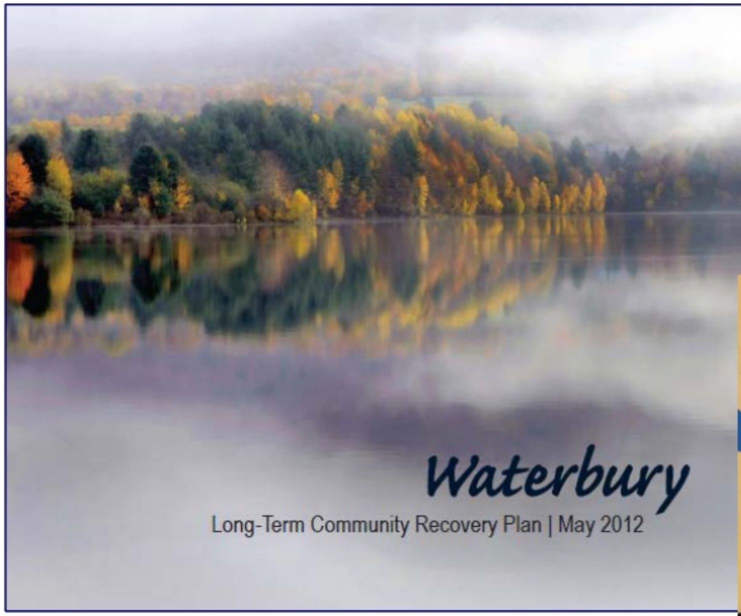
Recovery (post-disaster)

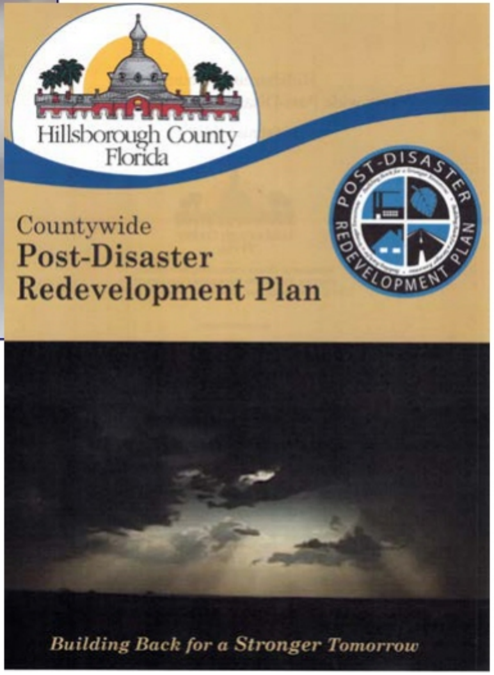
- Developed after disaster has occurred to deal directly with the known consequences.
- The distinguishing feature of post-disaster plans is not only the timing of their preparation, but their orientation toward physical planning and urban design.

Activity 1.2: review of Pre-and Post-Disaster Recovery Plans



Waterbury

Long-Term Community Recovery Plan | May 2012



Hillsborough County
Florida

Countywide
Post-Disaster
Redevelopment Plan

POST-DISASTER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Building Back for a Stronger Tomorrow

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Activity 1.2 - Review of Pre-and Post-Disaster Recovery Plans

- **Purpose: Assess the differences between pre and post-disaster recovery Plans and identify the benefits of each.**
- **Instructions:**
  Table groups have 2 plans, a pre-disaster and post-disaster. You will have 30 minutes to compare and contrast the two plans. Select a spokesperson to provide 5 minute summation to the class.

Unit Summary

In this unit you have learned about:

- The National Disaster Recovery Framework
- Key recovery planning terminology and concepts including Whole Community and Community Resilience
- The differences between pre- and post-disaster recovery plans.

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Unit 2:

Recovery Pre-disaster Planning Guidance for Local Governments

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, you will be able to:

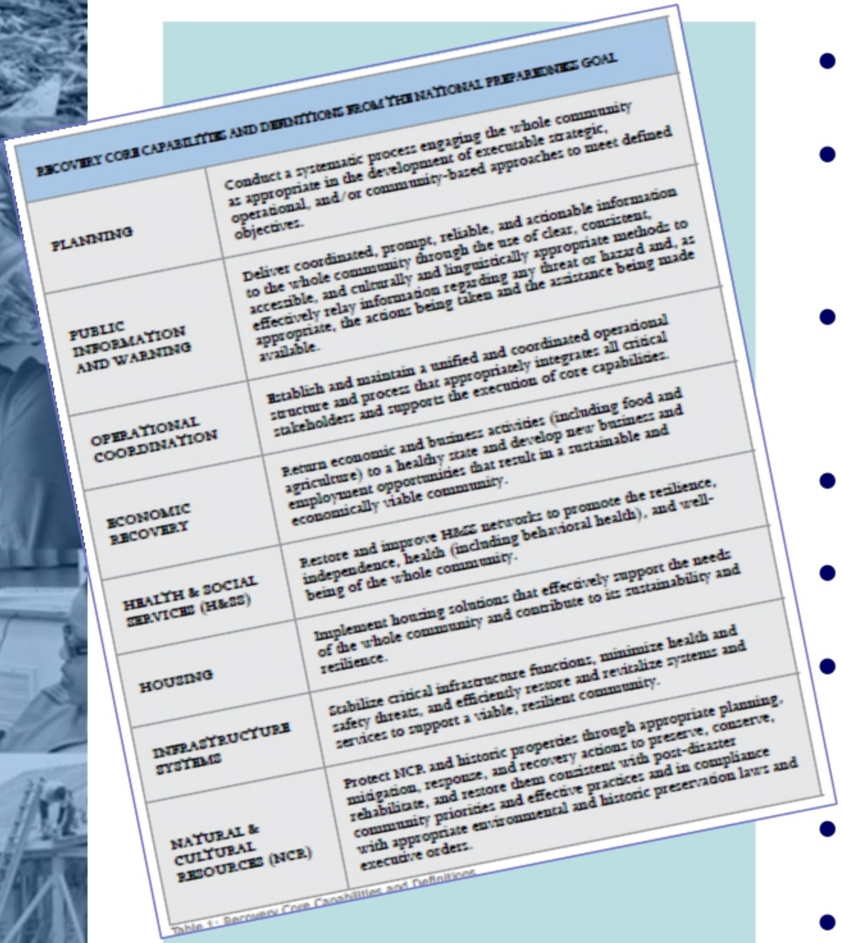
- **Define the nine key activities of pre-disaster recovery plan development.**
- **Describe the nine key steps of developing a recovery plan using established pre-disaster recovery planning guidance.**
- **Analyze a pre-disaster recovery plan using the guidance documents provided.**

RPPG-L

Recovery Pre-Disaster Planning Guidance for Local Governments (RPPG-L)

- **Guidance to local governments and community leaders on the pre-disaster recovery planning process**

Recovery Core Capabilities



RECOVERY CORE CAPABILITIES AND DEFINITIONS FROM THE NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS GOAL	
PLANNING	Conduct a systematic process engaging the whole community as appropriate in the development of executable strategic, operational, and/or community-based approaches to meet defined objectives.
PUBLIC INFORMATION AND WARNING	Deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the whole community through the use of clear, consistent, accessible, and culturally and linguistically appropriate methods to effectively relay information regarding any threat or hazard and, as appropriate, the actions being taken and the assistance being made available.
OPERATIONAL COORDINATION	Establish and maintain a unified and coordinated operational structure and process that appropriately integrates all critical stakeholders and supports the execution of core capabilities.
ECONOMIC RECOVERY	Return economic and business activities (including food and agriculture) to a healthy state and develop new business and employment opportunities that result in a sustainable and economically viable community.
HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES (H&SS)	Restore and improve H&SS networks to promote the resilience, independence, health (including behavioral health), and well-being of the whole community.
HOUSING	Implement housing solutions that effectively support the needs of the whole community and contribute to its sustainability and resilience.
INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEMS	Stabilize critical infrastructure functions, minimize health and safety threats, and efficiently restore and revitalize systems and services to support a viable, resilient community.
NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES (NCR)	Protect NCR and historic properties through appropriate planning, mitigation, response, and recovery actions to preserve, conserve, rehabilitate, and restore them consistent with post-disaster community priorities and effective practices and in compliance with appropriate environmental and historic preservation laws and executive orders.

Table 1: Recovery Core Capabilities and Definitions

- Planning
- Operational Coordination
- Public Information and Warning
- Infrastructure Systems
- Economic Recovery
- Health and Social Services
- Housing
- Natural and Cultural Resources

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Factors for a Successful Recovery

1. Effective Decision-making and Coordination
2. Integration of Community Recovery Planning Processes
3. Well-managed Recovery
4. Proactive Community Engagement, Public Participation, and Public Awareness
5. Well-administrated Financial Acquisition
6. Organizational Flexibility
7. Resilient Rebuilding

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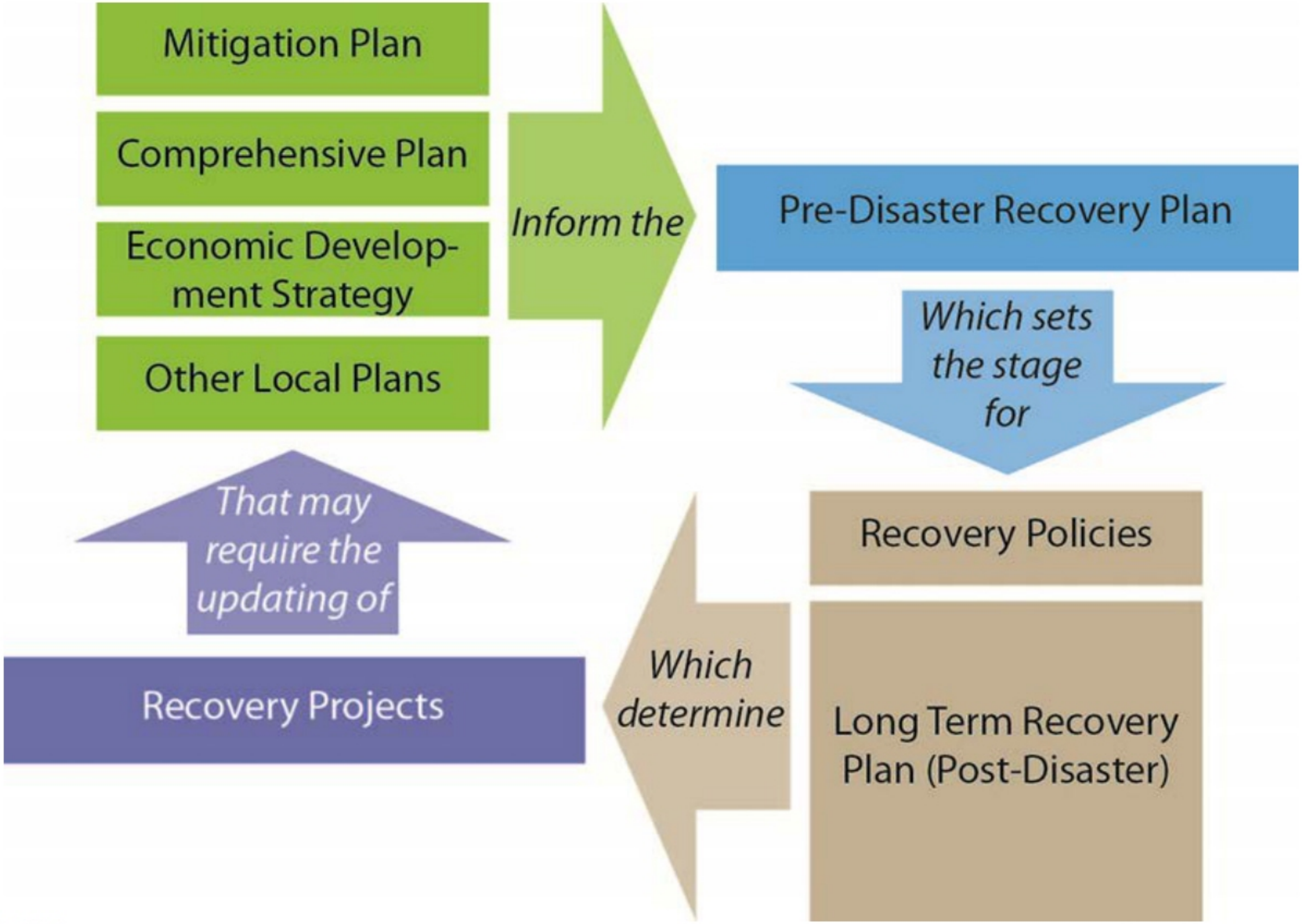
Relationship Between Plans



Mitigation Plan

Comprehensive Plan

Economic Development Strategy

Other Local Plans

Inform the

Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan

Which sets the stage for

Recovery Policies

Long Term Recovery Plan (Post-Disaster)

Which determine

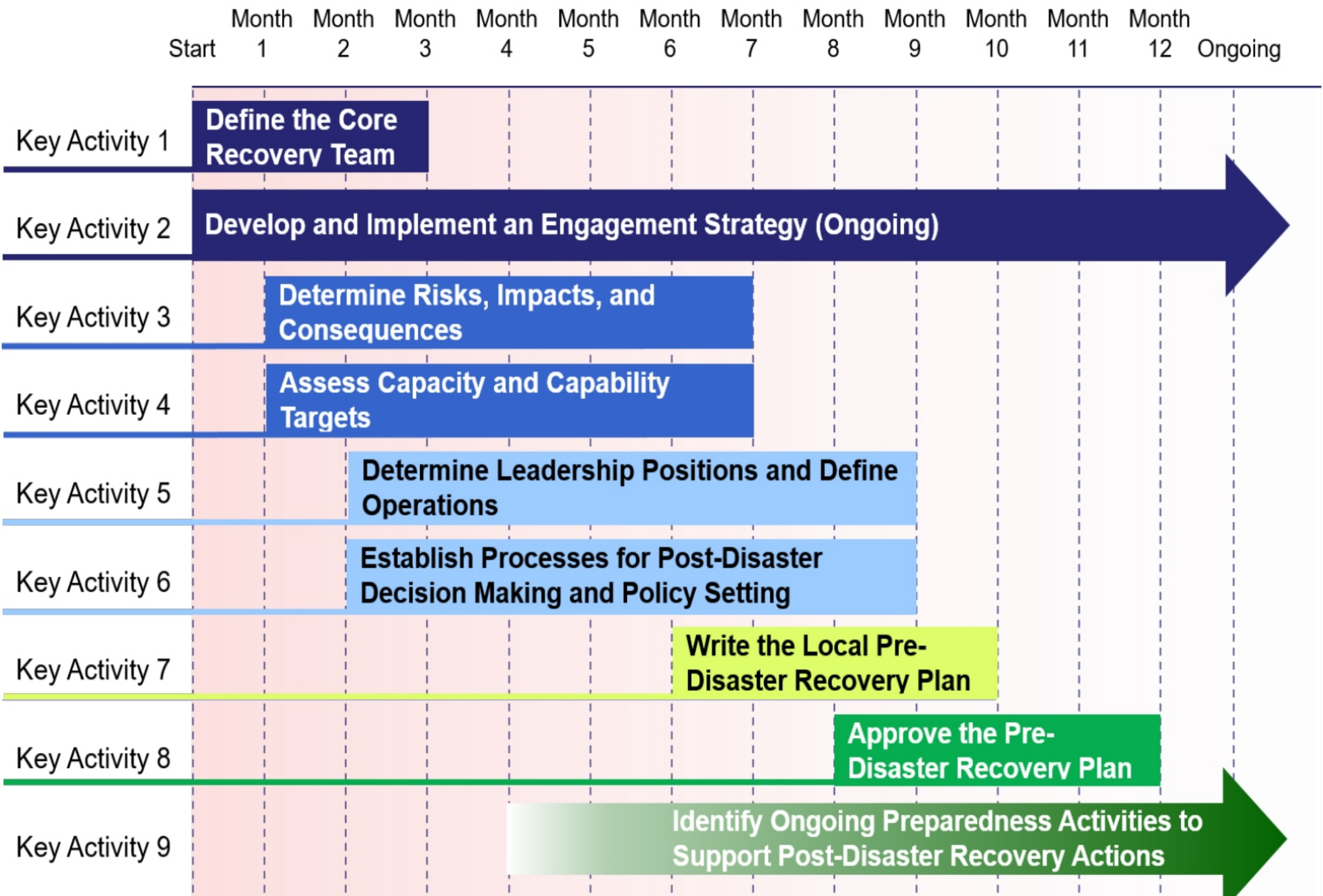
Recovery Projects

That may require the updating of

Key Activities

1. Define the Core Recovery Planning Team, Scope of Planning Activities, and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy
2. Develop and Implement a Stakeholder and Partner Engagement Strategy
3. Determine the Community’s Risks, Impacts, and Consequences
4. Assess Community’s Capacity and Identify Capability Targets
5. Determine Leadership Positions and Define Operations Necessary for Post-Disaster Recovery Planning and Management Efforts
6. Establish a Processes for Post-Disaster Decision Making and Policy Setting
7. Write the Local Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan
8. Approve the Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan and Associated Regulations
9. Identify Ongoing Preparedness Activities to Support Post-Disaster Recovery Actions

Planning Timeline



Start Month 1 Month 2 Month 3 Month 4 Month 5 Month 6 Month 7 Month 8 Month 9 Month 10 Month 11 Month 12 Ongoing

Key Activity 1	Define the Core Recovery Team
Key Activity 2	Develop and Implement an Engagement Strategy (Ongoing)
Key Activity 3	Determine Risks, Impacts, and Consequences
Key Activity 4	Assess Capacity and Capability Targets
Key Activity 5	Determine Leadership Positions and Define Operations
Key Activity 6	Establish Processes for Post-Disaster Decision Making and Policy Setting
Key Activity 7	Write the Local Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan
Key Activity 8	Approve the Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan
Key Activity 9	Identify Ongoing Preparedness Activities to Support Post-Disaster Recovery Actions

Key Activity One: Team, Partners, Scope

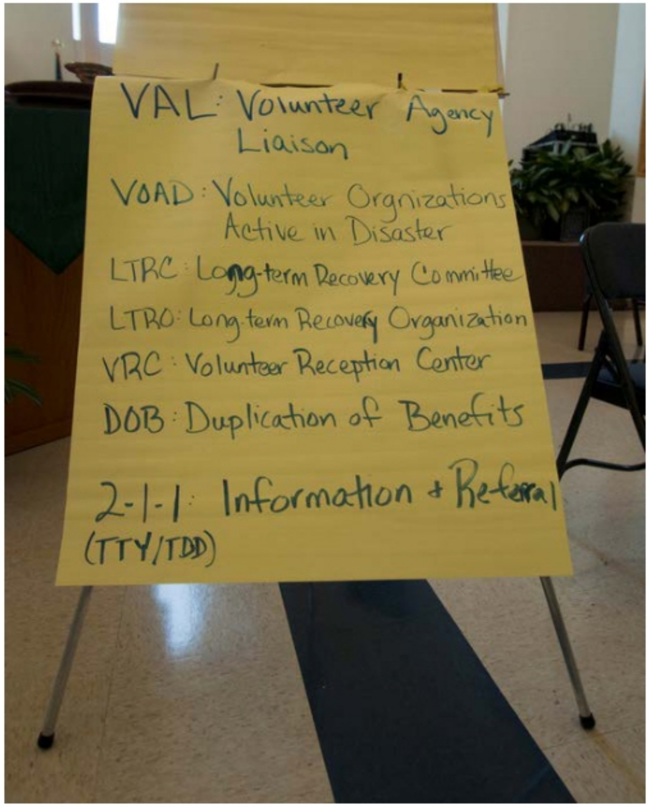
Timeline: 0-3 Months

1. Identify Core Recovery Planning Team Representatives
2. Identify Planning Partners
3. Determine Scope of Recovery Planning Activities

Key Activity Two: Stakeholder and Partner Engagement Strategy

Timeline: Ongoing

1. Scope of Engagements
2. Partner with NGOs
3. Role of Governmental Agencies
4. External Partnerships



VAL: Volunteer Agency Liaison

VOAD: Volunteer Orgnizations Active in Disaster

LTRC: Long-term Recovery Committee

LTRO: Long-term Recovery Organization

VRC: Volunteer Reception Center

DOB: Duplication of Benefits

2-1-1: Information + Referral (TTY/TDD)

Key Activity Three:
Risks, Impacts, and Consequences

Timeline: 1-6 Months

1. Identify Hazards
2. Assess Risks, Vulnerability, and Exposure

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Key Activity Four: Capacity Strengths and Weaknesses

Timeline: 1-6 Months

- Planning and Regulatory
- Organizational and Staffing
- Financial
- Communication and Outreach

CIVIC GROUPS
CORE STAKEHOLDER GROUP
COMMITTEES
PEER GROUPS

Key Activity Five: Leadership

Timeline: 3-9 Months

1. **Leadership Position**
2. **Organizational Structure**
3. **Sector-Specific Coordinators**

Lyman & Home
LaZot Camera and Repair

FEMA

Key Activity Six: Decision Making

Timeline: 3-9 Months

1. Goals
2. Priorities
3. Policies

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Key Activity Seven: Writing the Plan

Timeline:

6-10 Months

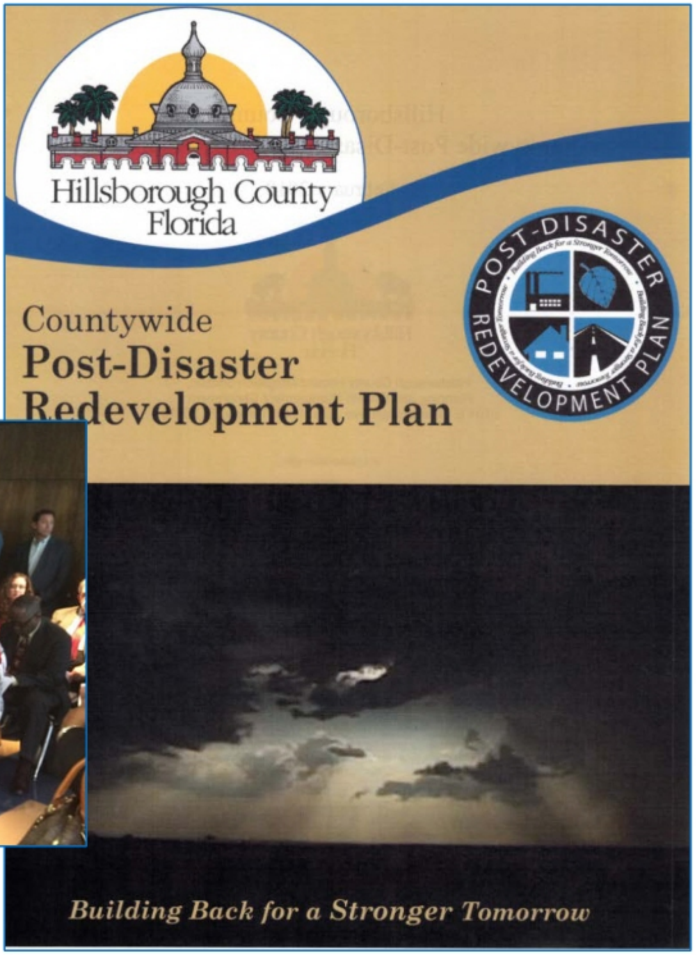
Refer to Appendix E: Pre-Disaster Recovery Plan Components

Section 1	Recovery Plan Introduction	Purpose of the Plan Community Capacity Risks & Vulnerabilities Recovery Goals & Policies
Section 2	Recovery Leadership	Core Community Leadership & Their Roles + Responsibilities Other Local Leadership & Their Roles + Responsibilities Authorities
Section 3	Recovery Operations	Partners Activation of Personnel Communication Guidelines Notification & Engagement of Partners Org Charts & Timelines
Section 4	Recovery Implementation	Priorities & Policy Alternatives Funding Strategies The Post-Disaster Planning Process & Community Engagement Strategies may be Addressed by Sectors as Determined by the Community

Key Activity Eight: Approval Process

Timeline: 8-12 Months

1. **Community Input**
2. **Public Hearing**



Hillsborough County
Florida

Countywide
Post-Disaster
Redevelopment Plan

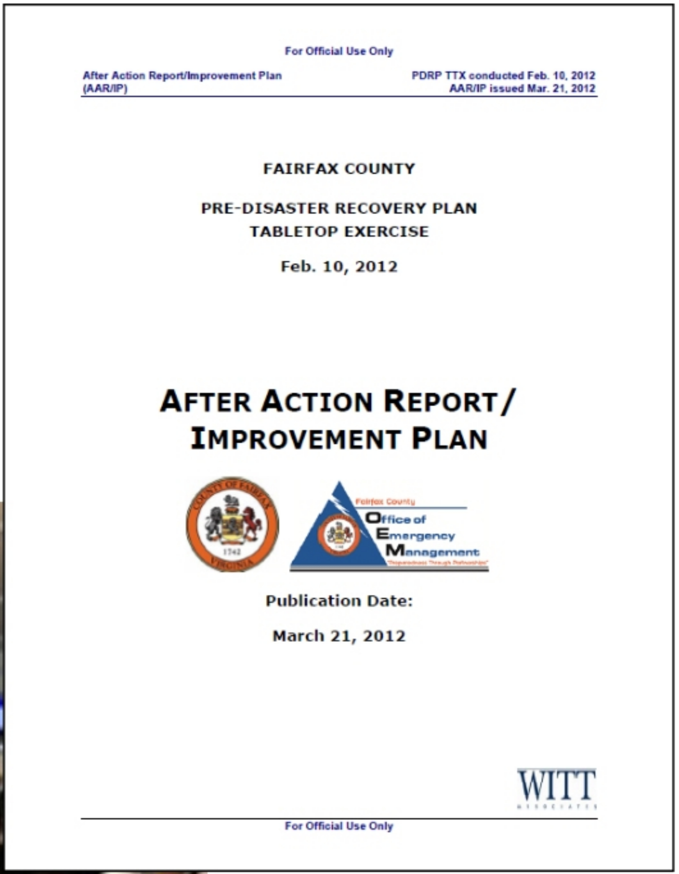
POST-DISASTER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
Building Back for a Stronger Tomorrow

Building Back for a Stronger Tomorrow

Key Activity Nine: Plan Maintenance

Timeline: Ongoing

1. Trainings
2. Exercises
3. Plan Updates



For Official Use Only

After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)

PDRP TTX conducted Feb. 10, 2012
AAR/IP issued Mar. 21, 2012

FAIRFAX COUNTY

PRE-DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN
TABLETOP EXERCISE

Feb. 10, 2012

AFTER ACTION REPORT/
IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Fairfax County
Office of
Emergency
Management

Publication Date:

March 21, 2012

WITT

For Official Use Only

Activity 2.1 – Pre Disaster Recovery Plan Evaluation

Instructions:

- **You may select to review Beaufort, SC. Hillsborough FL. OR your own community plan in groups of 3-4**
- **Identify elements that are good and elements that need improvement.**
- **Be prepared to present your recommendations to the class in a 5-7 minute presentation.**
- **90 minutes for group work.**

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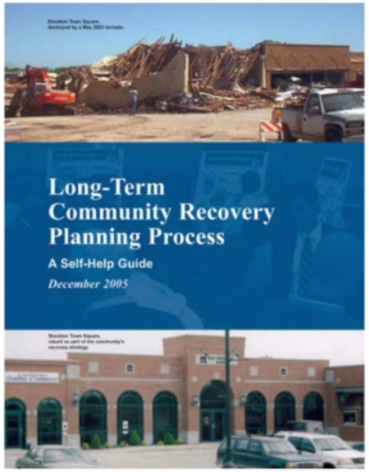
Other Resources for Pre- and Post-Disaster Recovery Planning

Updates "post-disaster" planning guidance in Long-Term Community Recovery Planning Process

Effective Coordination of Recovery Resources for State, Tribal, Territoria and Local Incidents



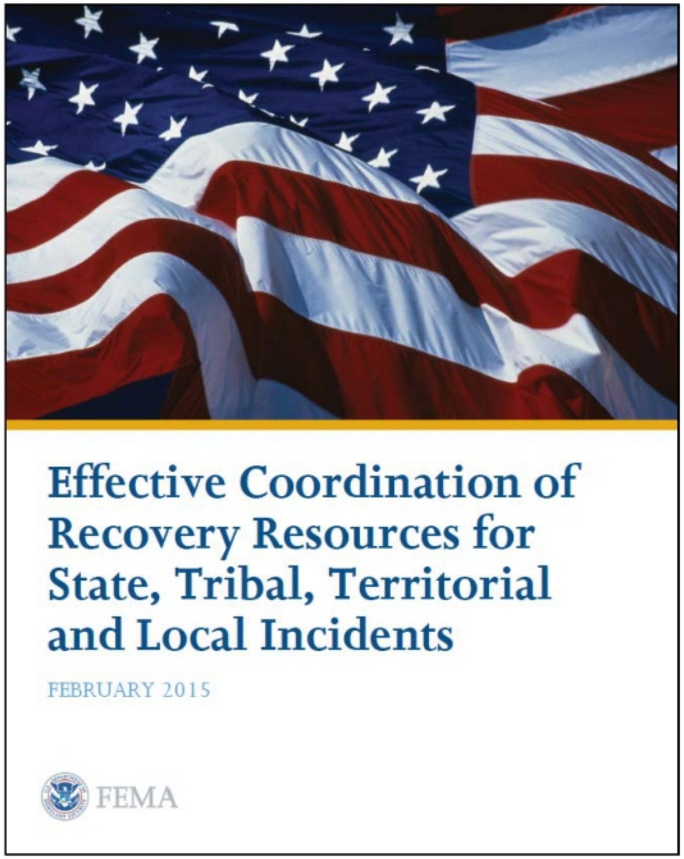
Long-Term Community Recovery Planning Process

A Self-Help Guide

December 2005

2005

2015



Effective Coordination of Recovery Resources for State, Tribal, Territorial and Local Incidents

FEBRUARY 2015

FEMA

Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery:
Next Generation

PAS REPORT 576

PLANNING FOR POST-DISASTER RECOVERY: NEXT GENERATION

APA

Model Pre-Event Recovery Ordinance

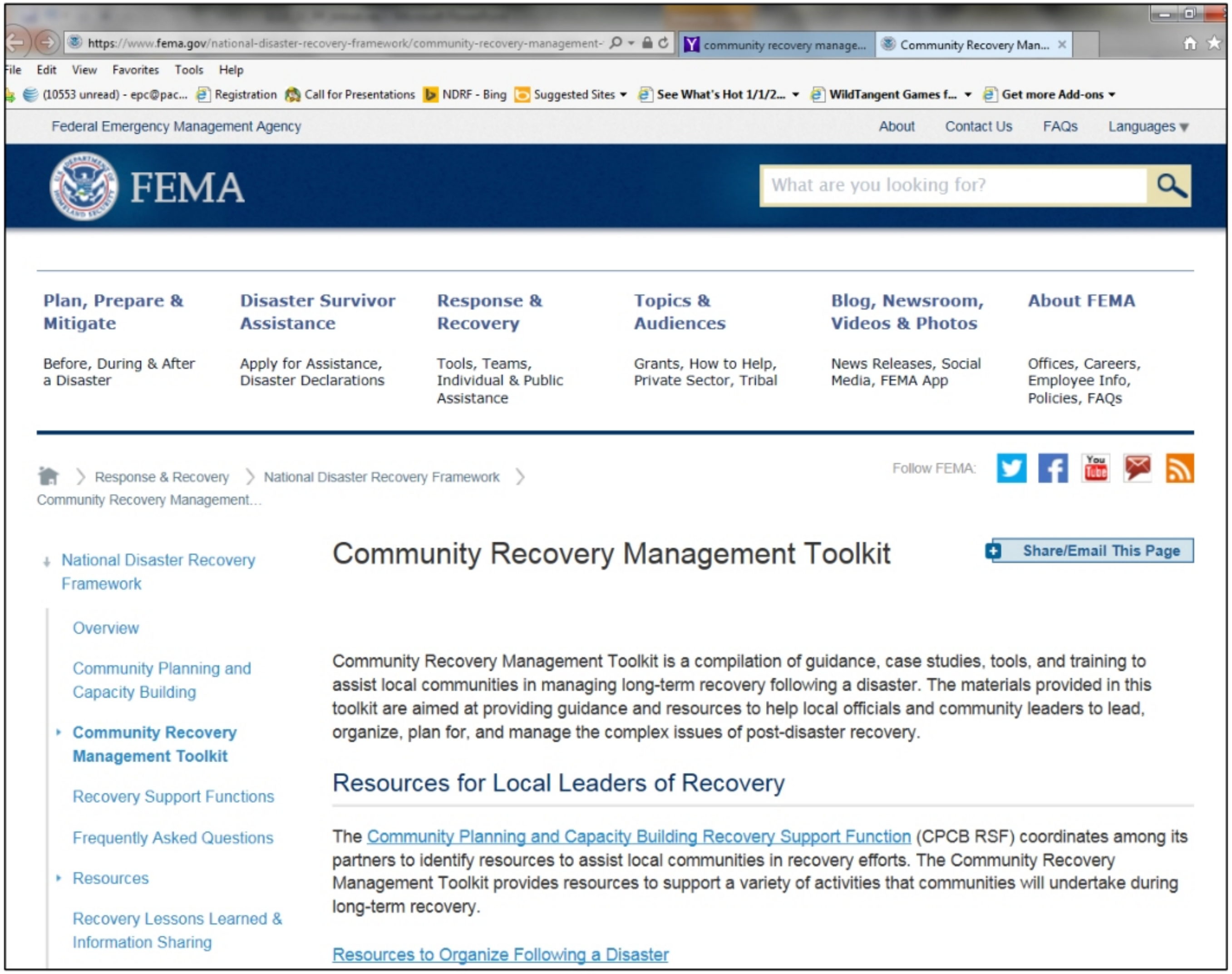
Model Ordinance, *page 177 of APA Next Generation*

- **Authority**
- **Structure and Organization**
- **Safety and Betterment**
- **Buys Time**

PAS REPORT 576

PLANNING FOR POST-DISASTER RECOVERY: NEXT GENERATION

Community Recovery Management Toolkit


https://www.fema.gov/national-disaster-recovery-framework/community-recovery-management-
community recovery manage...
Community Recovery Man...
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
(10553 unread) - epc@pac...
Registration
Call for Presentations
NDRF - Bing
Suggested Sites
See What's Hot 1/1/2...
WildTangent Games f...
Get more Add-ons
Federal Emergency Management Agency
About
Contact Us
FAQs
Languages
FEMA
What are you looking for?
Follow FEMA:
Share/Email This Page

Plan, Prepare & Mitigate
Before, During & After a Disaster

Disaster Survivor Assistance
Apply for Assistance, Disaster Declarations

Response & Recovery
Tools, Teams, Individual & Public Assistance

Topics & Audiences
Grants, How to Help, Private Sector, Tribal

Blog, Newsroom, Videos & Photos
News Releases, Social Media, FEMA App

About FEMA
Offices, Careers, Employee Info, Policies, FAQs

Response & Recovery › National Disaster Recovery Framework › Community Recovery Management...

- National Disaster Recovery Framework
  - Overview
  - Community Planning and Capacity Building
  - **Community Recovery Management Toolkit**
  - Recovery Support Functions
  - Frequently Asked Questions
  - Resources
  - Recovery Lessons Learned & Information Sharing

Community Recovery Management Toolkit

Community Recovery Management Toolkit is a compilation of guidance, case studies, tools, and training to assist local communities in managing long-term recovery following a disaster. The materials provided in this toolkit are aimed at providing guidance and resources to help local officials and community leaders to lead, organize, plan for, and manage the complex issues of post-disaster recovery.

Resources for Local Leaders of Recovery

The Community Planning and Capacity Building Recovery Support Function (CPCB RSF) coordinates among its partners to identify resources to assist local communities in recovery efforts. The Community Recovery Management Toolkit provides resources to support a variety of activities that communities will undertake during long-term recovery.

Resources to Organize Following a Disaster

FEMA

State Recovery Planning

State of Florida, Post-Disaster Redevelopment Planning – A Guide for Florida Communities

POST-DISASTER REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING

A Guide for Florida Communities

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS | FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

"Rebuilding a community after a major or catastrophic disaster is a huge undertaking. The most effective way to accomplish holistic post-disaster redevelopment is to be prepared before a disaster strikes."

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Unit Summary

In this unit, you have learned how to:

- Define the nine key activities of pre-disaster recovery plan development.
- Describe the nine key steps of developing a recovery plan using established pre-disaster recovery planning guidance.
- Analyze a pre-disaster recovery plan using the guidance documents provided.

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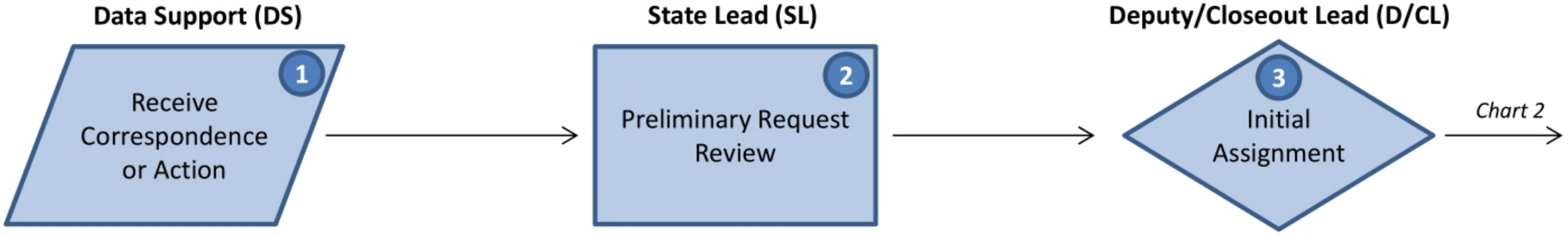
Region VIII Public Assistance Closeout Process: Large Project Closeout (LPC)



Data Support (DS)

① Receive Correspondence or Action

1. Add date received and Log # to C&A Log
2. Add to Tracker
3. Send receipt to State POCs
4. Determine type of action:
    a. Large Project Closeout
    b. Amendment
    c. Alternate project
    d. Improved project
    e. Time extension
    f. Appeal (see Appeal Process)
    g. Other
5. Send email to State Lead, with hard copy of coversheet
6. *Note: will be incorporated in the future.* Verify Administrative Record / Summary of Documents (SOD) is included.

State Lead (SL)

② Preliminary Request Review

1. Familiarize with action
2. Identify Issues
3. Add note to Tracker

Deputy/Closeout Lead (D/CL)

③ Initial Assignment

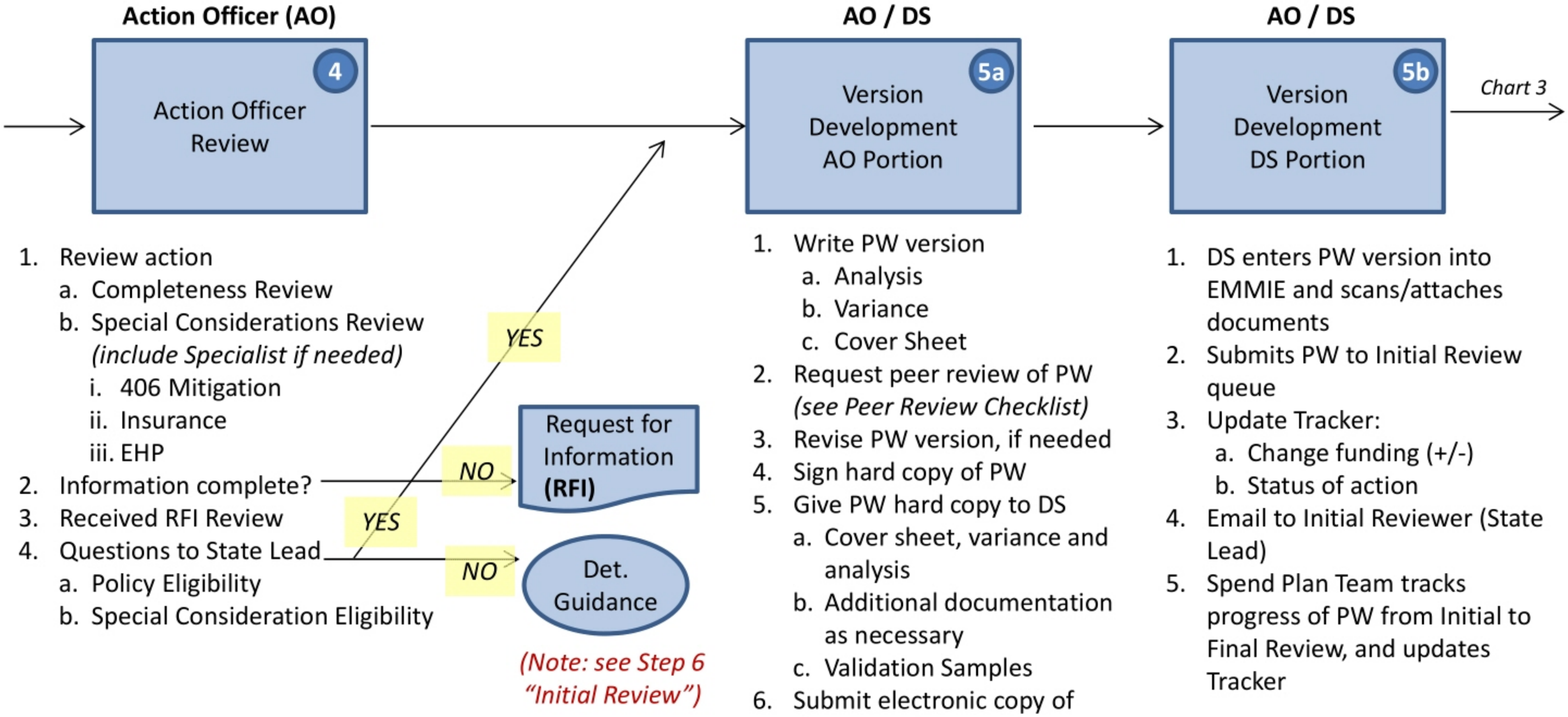
Chart 2

1. Review Tracker
2. Assign to AO by specialty
3. Assign to AO by availability
4. D/CL sends email to AO & SL
5. D/CL updates Tracker
6. Data Support updates C&A Log

Acronyms

AO	Action Officer
BC	Branch Chief
C&A	Correspondence and Action
CL	Closeout Lead
D/CL	Deputy Closeout Lead
DRM	Disaster Recovery Manager
DL	Data Lead
DS	Data Support
GL	Grants Lead
GS	Grants Specialist
LPC	Large Project Closeout
POC	Point Of Contact
RAA	Request for Allocation Advice
REC	Record of Environmental Consideration
RFI	Request For Information
SL	State Lead
SOW	Scope of Work
TSR	Time Sensitive Request

Region VIII Public Assistance Closeout Process: Large Project Closeout (LPC)



Action Officer (AO)

4 Action Officer Review

1. Review action
   a. Completeness Review
   b. Special Considerations Review *(include Specialist if needed)*
      i. 406 Mitigation
      ii. Insurance
      iii. EHP
2. Information complete?
3. Received RFI Review
4. Questions to State Lead
   a. Policy Eligibility
   b. Special Consideration Eligibility

YES

NO

Request for Information **(RFI)**

YES

NO

Det. Guidance

(Note: see Step 6 "Initial Review")

AO / DS

5a Version Development AO Portion

1. Write PW version
   a. Analysis
   b. Variance
   c. Cover Sheet
2. Request peer review of PW *(see Peer Review Checklist)*
3. Revise PW version, if needed
4. Sign hard copy of PW
5. Give PW hard copy to DS
   a. Cover sheet, variance and analysis
   b. Additional documentation as necessary
   c. Validation Samples
6. Submit electronic copy of the cover sheet to Closeout drive
7. If needed AO writes determination memo and forwards it to SL

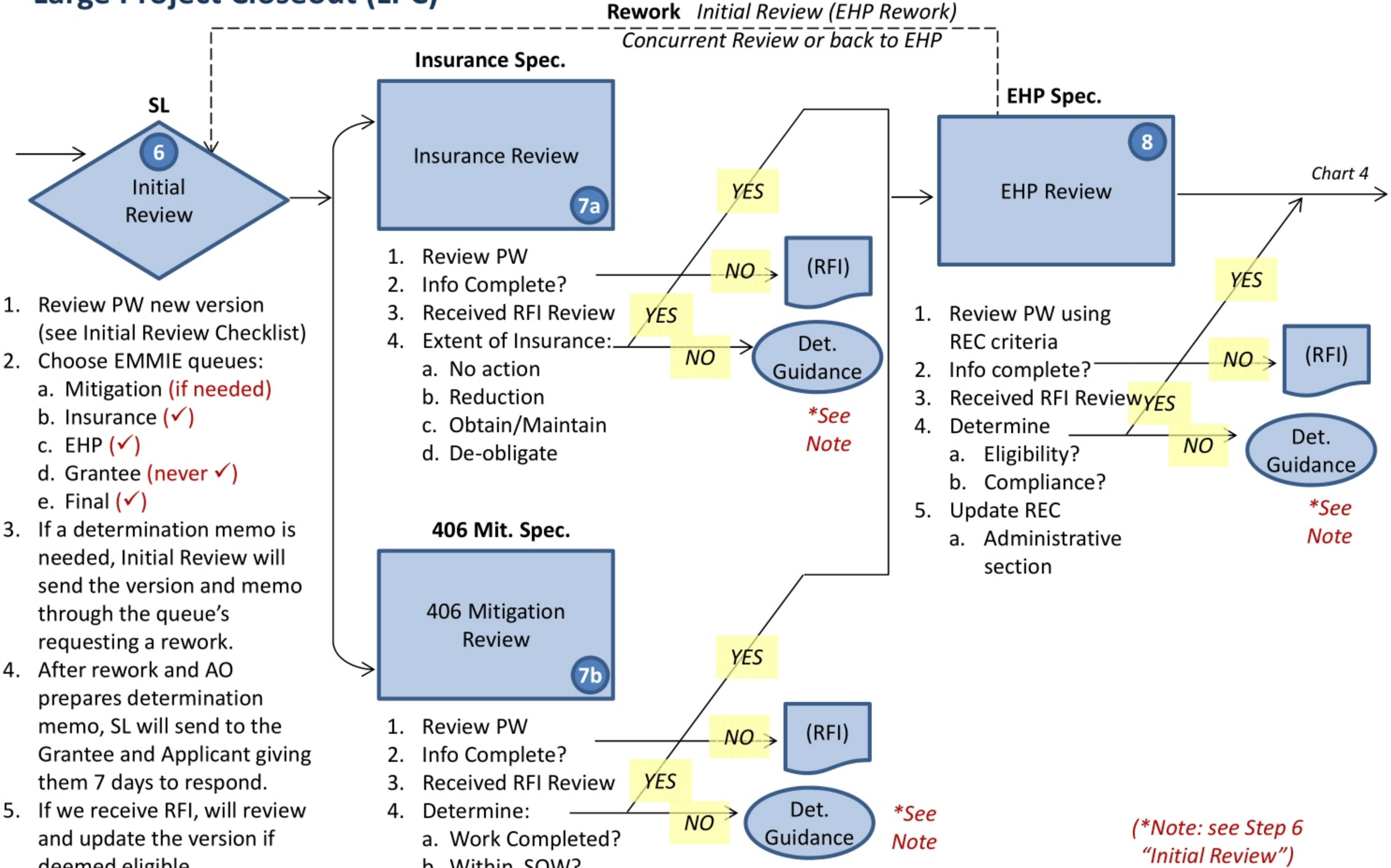
AO / DS

5b Version Development DS Portion

Chart 3

1. DS enters PW version into EMMIE and scans/attaches documents
2. Submits PW to Initial Review queue
3. Update Tracker:
   a. Change funding (+/-)
   b. Status of action
4. Email to Initial Reviewer (State Lead)
5. Spend Plan Team tracks progress of PW from Initial to Final Review, and updates Tracker

Region VIII Public Assistance Closeout Process: Large Project Closeout (LPC)


Rework *Initial Review (EHP Rework)*
Concurrent Review or back to EHP
SL
6
Initial Review
Insurance Spec.
Insurance Review
7a
406 Mit. Spec.
406 Mitigation Review
7b
EHP Spec.
8
EHP Review
Chart 4
YES
NO
(RFI)
YES
NO
Det. Guidance
**See Note*
YES
NO
(RFI)
YES
NO
Det. Guidance
**See Note*
YES
NO
(RFI)
YES
NO
Det. Guidance
**See Note*

1. Review PW new version (see Initial Review Checklist)
2. Choose EMMIE queues:
    a. Mitigation (if needed)
    b. Insurance (✓)
    c. EHP (✓)
    d. Grantee (never ✓)
    e. Final (✓)
3. If a determination memo is needed, Initial Review will send the version and memo through the queue's requesting a rework.
4. After rework and AO prepares determination memo, SL will send to the Grantee and Applicant giving them 7 days to respond.
5. If we receive RFI, will review and update the version if deemed eligible.
6. If nothing received move forward with determination.

Insurance Review:

1. Review PW
2. Info Complete?
3. Received RFI Review
4. Extent of Insurance:
    a. No action
    b. Reduction
    c. Obtain/Maintain
    d. De-obligate

406 Mitigation Review:

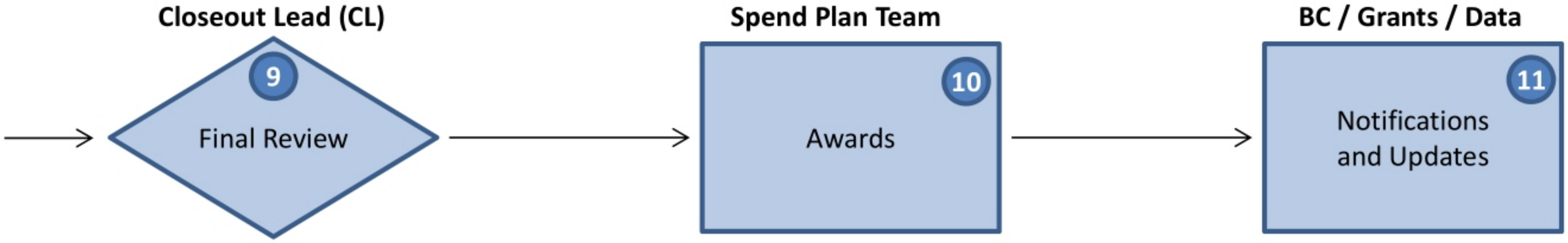
1. Review PW
2. Info Complete?
3. Received RFI Review
4. Determine:
    a. Work Completed?
    b. Within SOW?
    c. Cost effective?

EHP Review:

1. Review PW using REC criteria
2. Info complete?
3. Received RFI Review
4. Determine
    a. Eligibility?
    b. Compliance?
5. Update REC
    a. Administrative section

*(*Note: see Step 6 "Initial Review")*

Region VIII Public Assistance Closeout Process: Large Project Closeout (LPC)



1. Review PW, incl. previous versions
    a. Completeness
    b. Queues for current version
2. Questions to AO, if needed
3. Approve in EMMIE:
    - Same $ amount = Notification
    - Increase $ amount = Obligation
    - Decrease $ amount = Deobligation

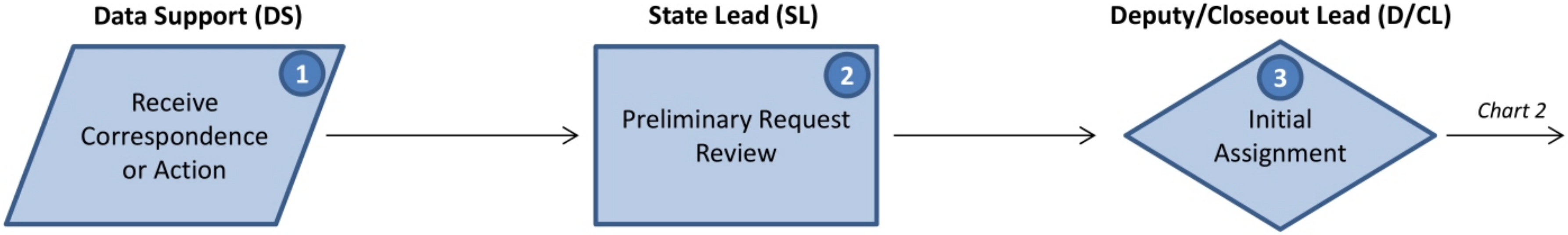
1. Review Tracker to identify PWs * *(*Spend Plan Declarations Only)*
2. Create Bundle (EMMIE)
3. Submit RAA (NEMIS)
4. Email Finance/Comptroller/DRM

1. BC obligates or deobligates funds for PW
    a. Notifies Data Lead and Grants Lead
2. Data Lead notifies Grantee of Award / Notification
    a. Grantee notifies Applicant, per State SOP
3. Data Lead notifies Data Support
4. Grants Spec. updates Spend Plan
5. Data Support prints and files official record
6. Data Support updates Tracker
7. Data Support updates C&A Log

Spend Plan Team:
D/CL
Grants Lead
Grants Spec.
Data Lead

* Spend Plan Team meets last week of month to review projects and determine monthly projections. Projections submitted to headquarters. First week of the month, projects are processed per projections.

Region VIII Public Assistance Closeout Process: Time Sensitive Request (TSR)


Data Support (DS)
1
Receive Correspondence or Action
State Lead (SL)
2
Preliminary Request Review
Deputy/Closeout Lead (D/CL)
3
Initial Assignment
Chart 2

Data Support (DS)

1. Add date received and Log # to C&A Log
2. Add to Tracker
3. Send receipt to State POCs
4. Determine type of action:
   a. Large Project Closeout
   b. Amendment
   c. Alternate project
   d. Improved project
   e. Time extension
   f. Appeal (see Appeal Process)
   g. Other
5. Send email to State Lead, with hard copy of coversheet
6. *Note: will be incorporated in the future.* Verify Administrative Record / Summary of Documents (SOD) is included.

State Lead (SL)

1. Familiarize with action
2. Identify Issues
3. Add note to Tracker

Deputy/Closeout Lead (D/CL)

1. Review Tracker
2. Assign to AO by specialty
3. Assign to AO by availability
4. D/CL sends email to AO & SL
5. D/CL updates Tracker
6. Data Support updates C&A Log

Acronyms

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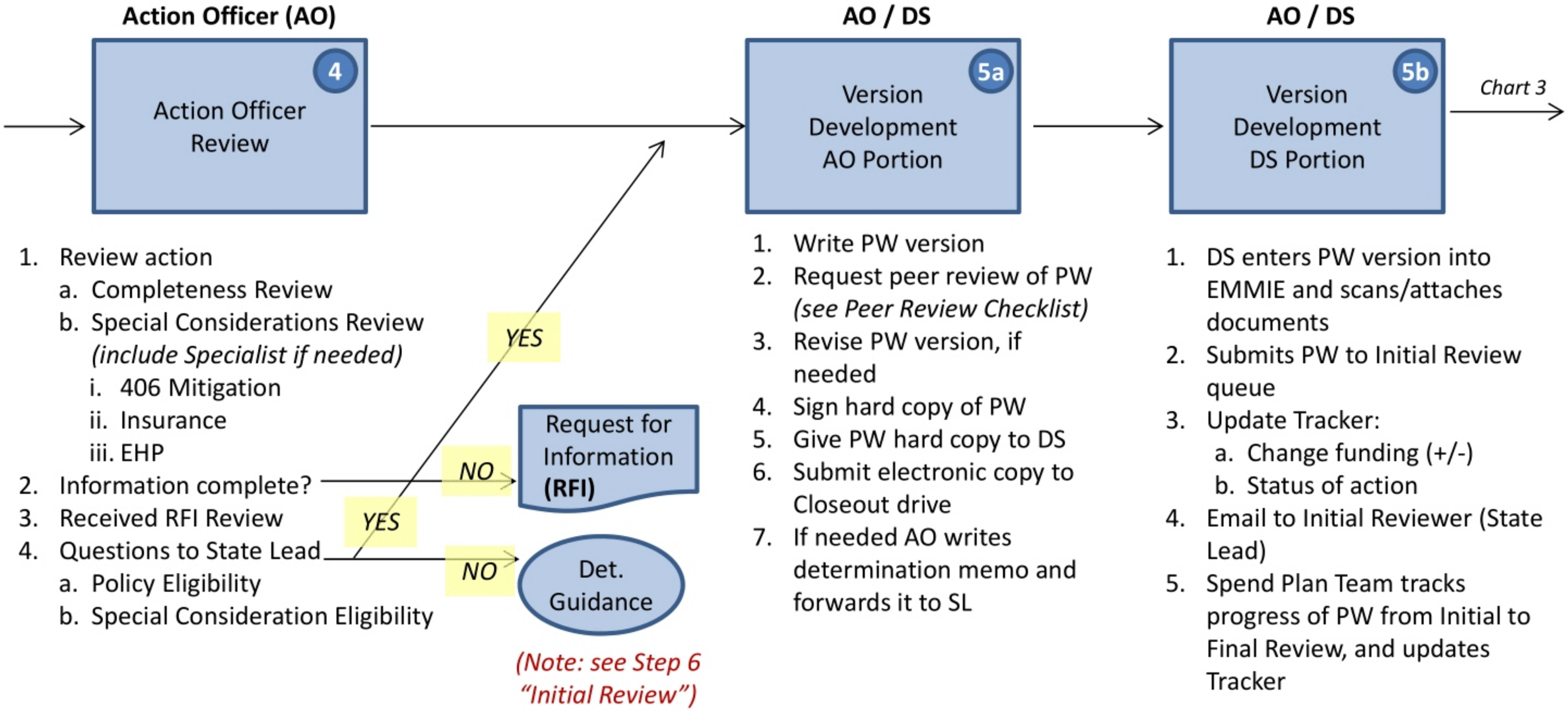
LPC	Large Project Closeout
POC	Point Of Contact
RAA	Request for Allocation Advice
REC	Record of Environmental Consideration
RFI	Request For Information
SL	State Lead
SOW	Scope of Work
TSR	Time Sensitive Request

Region VIII Public Assistance Closeout Process:
Time Sensitive Request (TSR)



Action Officer (AO)

4 Action Officer Review

1. Review action
   a. Completeness Review
   b. Special Considerations Review *(include Specialist if needed)*
      i. 406 Mitigation
      ii. Insurance
      iii. EHP
2. Information complete?
3. Received RFI Review
4. Questions to State Lead
   a. Policy Eligibility
   b. Special Consideration Eligibility

Request for Information **(RFI)**

Det. Guidance

(Note: see Step 6 "Initial Review")

AO / DS

5a Version Development AO Portion

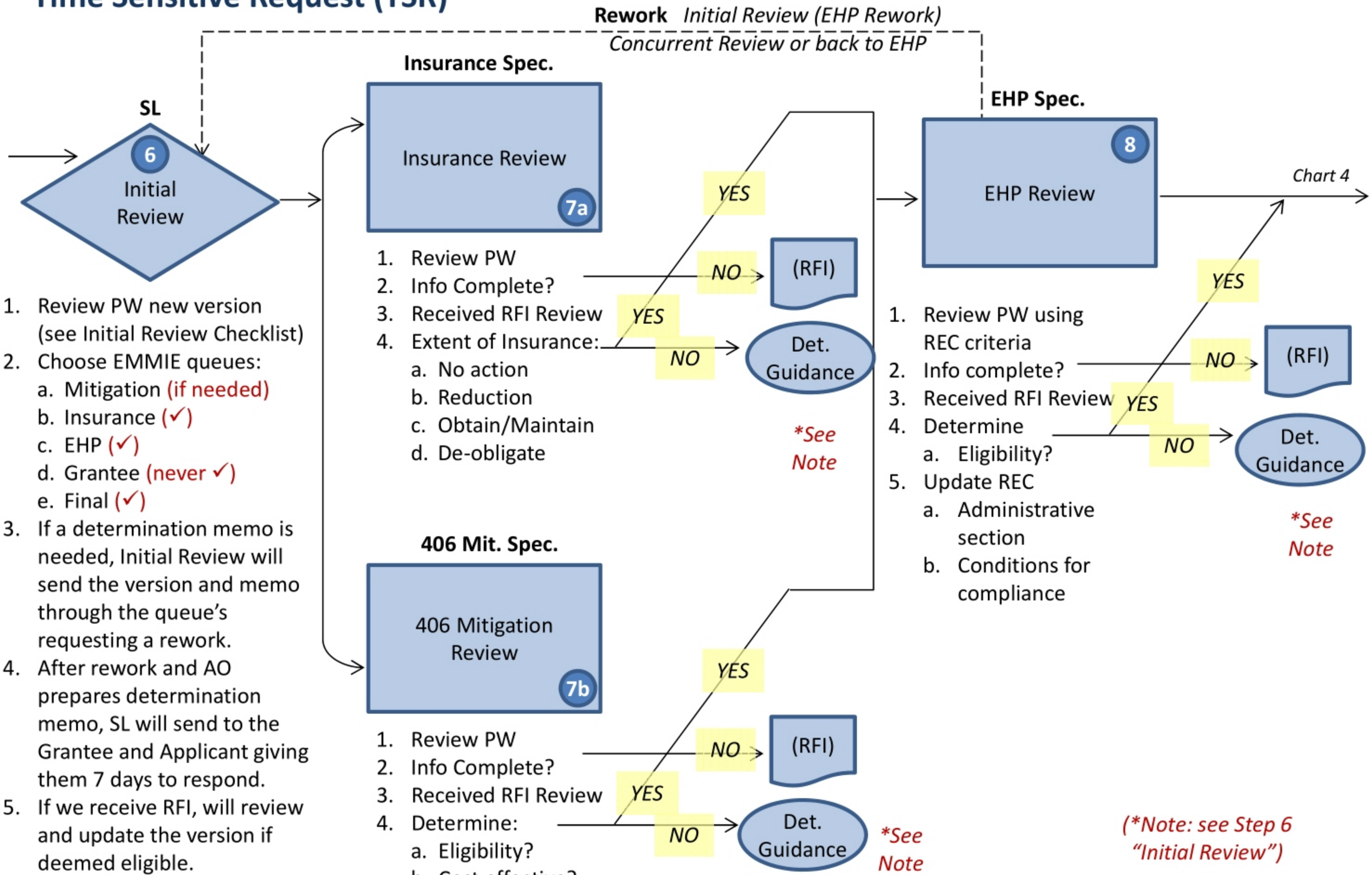
1. Write PW version
2. Request peer review of PW *(see Peer Review Checklist)*
3. Revise PW version, if needed
4. Sign hard copy of PW
5. Give PW hard copy to DS
6. Submit electronic copy to Closeout drive
7. If needed AO writes determination memo and forwards it to SL

AO / DS

5b Version Development DS Portion

1. DS enters PW version into EMMIE and scans/attaches documents
2. Submits PW to Initial Review queue
3. Update Tracker:
   a. Change funding (+/-)
   b. Status of action
4. Email to Initial Reviewer (State Lead)
5. Spend Plan Team tracks progress of PW from Initial to Final Review, and updates Tracker

Region VIII Public Assistance Closeout Process:
Time Sensitive Request (TSR)


Rework *Initial Review (EHP Rework)*
Concurrent Review or back to EHP
SL
6
Initial Review
Insurance Spec.
Insurance Review
7a
406 Mit. Spec.
406 Mitigation Review
7b
EHP Spec.
8
EHP Review
Chart 4
YES
NO
(RFI)
YES
NO
Det. Guidance
YES
NO
(RFI)
YES
NO
Det. Guidance
YES
NO
(RFI)
YES
NO
Det. Guidance

SL

1. Review PW new version (see Initial Review Checklist)
2. Choose EMMIE queues:
    a. Mitigation (if needed)
    b. Insurance (✓)
    c. EHP (✓)
    d. Grantee (never ✓)
    e. Final (✓)
3. If a determination memo is needed, Initial Review will send the version and memo through the queue's requesting a rework.
4. After rework and AO prepares determination memo, SL will send to the Grantee and Applicant giving them 7 days to respond.
5. If we receive RFI, will review and update the version if deemed eligible.
6. If nothing received move forward with determination.

Insurance Spec.

1. Review PW
2. Info Complete?
3. Received RFI Review
4. Extent of Insurance:
    a. No action
    b. Reduction
    c. Obtain/Maintain
    d. De-obligate

**See Note*

406 Mit. Spec.

1. Review PW
2. Info Complete?
3. Received RFI Review
4. Determine:
    a. Eligibility?
    b. Cost effective?

**See Note*

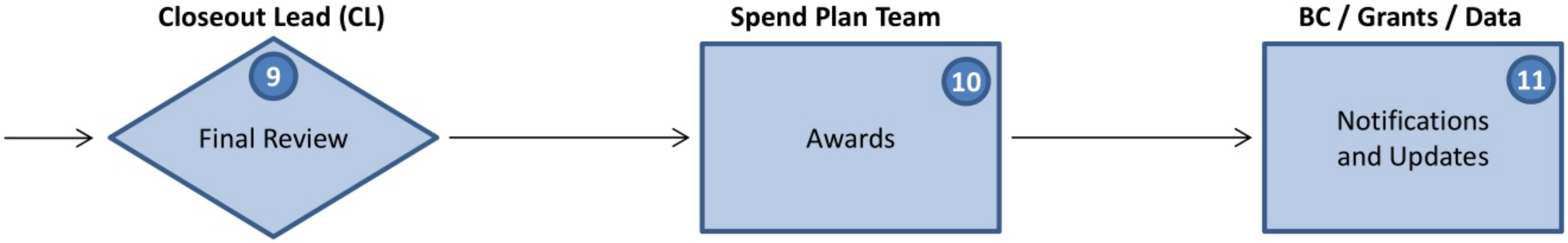
EHP Spec.

1. Review PW using REC criteria
2. Info complete?
3. Received RFI Review
4. Determine
    a. Eligibility?
5. Update REC
    a. Administrative section
    b. Conditions for compliance

**See Note*

*(*Note: see Step 6 "Initial Review")*

Region VIII Public Assistance Closeout Process: Time Sensitive Request (TSR)



Closeout Lead (CL)

9 Final Review

Spend Plan Team

10 Awards

BC / Grants / Data

11 Notifications and Updates

1. Review PW, incl. previous versions
    a. Completeness
    b. Queues for current version
2. Questions to AO, if needed
3. Approve in EMMIE:
    - Same $ amount = Notification
    - Increase $ amount = Obligation
    - Decrease $ amount = Deobligation

1. Review Tracker to identify PWs * *(*Spend Plan Declarations Only)*
2. Create Bundle (EMMIE)
3. Submit RAA (NEMIS)
4. Email Finance/Comptroller/DRM

1. BC obligates or deobligates funds for PW
    a. Notifies Data Lead and Grants Lead
2. Data Lead notifies Grantee of Award / Notification
    a. Grantee notifies Applicant, per State SOP
3. Data Lead notifies Data Support
4. Grants Spec. updates Spend Plan
5. Data Support prints and files official record
6. Data Support updates Tracker
7. Data Support updates C&A Log

Spend Plan Team:
D/CL
Grants Lead
Grants Spec.
Data Lead

* Spend Plan Team meets last week of month to review projects and determine monthly projections. Projections submitted to headquarters. First week of the month, projects are processed per projections.

Procurements under FEMA Awards

Requirements for Recipients and Subrecipients When Procuring Services and Supplies with Funding under Stafford Act Grant Programs

FEMA Procurement Disaster Assistance Team (PDAT)
April 2016

FEMA

FEMA Procurement Disaster Assistance Team (PDAT)

- PDAT was stood up by the FEMA Office of Chief Counsel in April, 2014 to assist and train FEMA personnel and applicants on the procurement rules that applicants must follow when contracting for work using federal disaster grant funds under the Public Assistance (PA) program.
- A large part of PDAT's mission is giving these presentations to applicants and FEMA personnel. We don't expect you to be experts after this presentation but at least you will get an idea of the basic concepts and issues. We will also provide a copy of the slides after the presentation.

FEMA Procurement Disaster Assistance Team (PDAT)

- We also assist applicants through FEMA PA personnel. We get issues and questions through them and then answer through them as we are not an applicant's legal advisor. We've advised PA Personnel who are assisting applicants on dozens of contract issues already.
- We sometimes deploy to a JFO to provide support to applicants through their PAC or other FEMA representative.
- Please go to:

https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/96773

FEMA

Why We are All Here

- DHS OIG audits of FEMA disaster grants in Fiscal Year 2014
  - Resulted in 32 recommendations related to recipient (grantee) and subrecipient (subgrantee) failures to adhere to the federal procurement standards
  - OIG recommended up to $61,654,399 in disallowed costs
- Common findings:
  - Noncompetitive contracting practices
  - Failure to include required contract provisions
  - Failure to employ required procedures to ensure small/minority/women-owned firms are used
  - Cost-plus-percentage-of-cost contracting
- Noncompliance with the federal procurement requirements may comprise a material failure to comply with the terms of the disaster grant award and violate the FEMA-State Agreement

Purpose and Scope

- This presentation provides an overview of the procurement standards imposed by federal regulations on recipients and subrecipients when procuring services and property with funding from any of the Stafford Act grant programs
- The focus of this presentation is the new procurement standards under the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* ("*Uniform Rules*"), which are codified at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 through 200.326, which supersedes the procurement regulations formerly found at 44 C.F.R. pt. 13 (State, Local, and Tribal Governments), and 2 C.F.R. pt. 215 (Private Nonprofit Organizations)
- This presentation does not address other requirements imposed by federal law, executive orders, and other regulations on non-Federal entity procurements

Rules of the Road

- Please ask questions as they arise during the presentation—there is no need to wait until the end to ask them
- This presentation (including the slides and any oral information conveyed) provides general information about the procurement requirements applicable to Stafford Act grants and is not intended to be, nor should it be considered as legal advice
  - For example, some slides may omit or only summarize certain requirements set forth in the regulations
  - You should not act or rely on information contained in our presentation (written or oral) without seeking the advice of your own attorney

Agenda

- Background
- Terminology and Key Players
- Procurement Standards for States
- Procurement Standards for Other Non-Federal Entities
- Differences between the New and Old Procurement Standards

FEMA

Stafford Act Grant Programs

- The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act ("Stafford Act") authorizes federal financial assistance for states, local and Indian tribal governments, and certain private nonprofit organizations to respond to and recover from emergencies and major disasters
- FEMA administers this financial assistance through various Stafford Act grant programs
- One such grant program is the Public Assistance Grant Program, which provides financial assistance for debris removal and emergency protective measures (known as "emergency work") and permanent restoration of damaged facilities (known as "permanent work")

Uniform Rules Applicability

- DHS adopted the Uniform Rules on December 19, 2014, in an Interim Rule (79 Fed. Reg. 75871)
  - The Uniform Rules apply to all new grant awards under emergencies and major disasters declared on or after December 26, 2014 (79 Fed. Reg. at 75872 and § 200.110)
- The Uniform Rules, where applicable, supersede the procurement standards formerly found at 44 C.F.R. § 13.36 (applicable to states, local, and Indian tribal governments) and 2 C.F.R. pt. 215 (applicable to institutions of higher education, hospitals, and private nonprofit organizations)
- But there is a "grace period" for procurement standards

“Grace Period” for Procurement

- The Uniform Rules at 2 C.F.R. § 200.110 provide that:

  Federal awarding agencies must implement the policies and procedures applicable to Federal awards by promulgating a regulation to be effective by December 26, 2014 unless different provisions are required by statute or approved by OMB. **For the procurement standards in §§ 200.317–200.326, non-Federal entities may continue to comply with the procurement standards in previous OMB guidance (superseded by this part as described in § 200.104) for two additional fiscal years after this part goes into effect**. If a non-Federal entity chooses to use the previous procurement standards during the grace period before adopting the procurement standards in this part, the non-Federal entity must document this decision in its internal procurement policies.

FEMA

Contracting in Assistance Projects

- A non-Federal entity will often use contractors to help them carry out their Stafford Act awards or subawards
  - A non-Federal entity may receive a Public Assistance award to restore a damaged building, and will then award a contract to a construction company to do the work
  - The contract is a commercial transaction between the non-Federal entity and its contractor, and FEMA has no privity of contract with the contractor
- Although the federal government is not a party to the contract, the non-Federal entity must comply with the conditions attached to a grant in awarding federally-assisted contracts
  - A non-Federal entity must comply with the procurement requirements imposed by federal law, executive orders, and federal regulations
  - These will control over non-Federal authorities (such as local procurement standards) to the extent they conflict with federal requirements

Contracting

- The Uniform Rules set forth various procurements standards at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317 through 326
- Before the Uniform Rules:
  - State, local, and Indian tribal government procurement standards were set forth at 44 C.F.R. § 13.36
  - Institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit organization procurement standards were set forth at 2 C.F.R. §§ 215.40 through 48
  - The procurement standards were similar, but not identical, for different organizations under the old regime
- The purpose of the procurement standards is not just to obtain the cheapest price for the particular service or good, but also includes the furtherance of other objectives

FEMA

DHS OIG Audit Results – 2014

- DHS OIG audits of FEMA disaster grants in Fiscal Year 2014
  - Resulted in 32 recommendations related to recipient (grantee) and subrecipient (subgrantee) failures to adhere to the federal procurement standards
  - OIG recommended up to $61,654,399 in disallowed costs
- Common findings:
  - Noncompetitive contracting practices
  - Failure to include required contract provisions
  - Failure to employ required procedures to ensure small/minority/women-owned firms are used
  - Cost-plus-percentage-of-cost contracting
- Noncompliance with the federal procurement requirements may comprise a material failure to comply with the terms of the disaster grant award and violate the FEMA-State Agreement

FEMA

Consequences of Noncompliance

- FEMA may take any number of enforcement remedies in the case of a noncompliant procurement under a Stafford Act grant (2 C.F.R. § 200.338)
  - (a) Temporarily withhold cash payments pending correction of the deficiency by the non-Federal entity or more severe enforcement action by the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity
  - (b) Disallow (that is, deny both use of funds and any applicable matching credit for) all or part of the cost of the activity or action not in compliance
  - (c) Wholly or partly suspend or terminate the Federal award
  - (d) Initiate suspension or debarment proceedings (or in the case of a pass-through entity, recommend such a proceeding be initiated by a Federal awarding agency
  - (e) Withhold further awards for the program
  - (f) Take other remedies that may be legally available

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FEMA

Terminology

- "***Non-Federal entity***" means a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a Federal award as a recipient or subrecipient (2 C.F.R. § 200.69)
- "***Federal award***" means, among other things, the Federal financial assistance that a non-Federal entity receives directly from a Federal awarding agency or indirectly through a pass-through entity (2 C.F.R. § 200.38); it also means the instrument setting forth the terms and conditions
- "***Recipient***" means a non-Federal entity that receives a Federal award directly from a Federal awarding agency to carry out an activity under a Federal program (2 C.F.R. § 200.86)

FEMA

Terminology

- "***Pass-through entity***" means a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal program (2 C.F.R. § 200.74)
- "***Subaward***" means an award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal award received by the pass-through entity; it does not include payments to a contractor (2 C.F.R. § 200.92)
- "***Subrecipient***" means a non-Federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal program: but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program (2 C.F.R. § 200.93)

FEMA

The Key Players – Recipient

- The recipient is the Federal award administrator for all funds provided under the Public Assistance Program and responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable federal laws, regulations, executive orders, FEMA policies, the FEMA-State Agreement, and other terms and conditions
- The recipient must comply with the applicable procurement standards for all recipient procurements
- The recipient, as a pass-through entity, is responsible for:
  - Processing subawards to subrecipients
  - Adhering to the federal procurement standards for recipient procurements, which is 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 for a state
  - Ensuring subrecipient awareness of, and compliance with Federal procurement standards for subrecipient procurements
  - Ensuring compliance with the FEMA-State Agreement

The Key Players – Subrecipient

- The subrecipient means the non-Federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a Federal program, and which is accountable to the recipient or pass-through entity for the use of the funds provided (2 C.F.R. § 200.93). Includes:
  - Local and Tribal Indian Governments; and
  - IHE, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations
- The subrecipient must adhere to the federal procurement standards, which are found at 2 C.F.R. § § 200.318-326.
- Formerly used the term “subgrantee.”
- Indian Tribal governments follow the procedures at 2 C.F.R. § § 200.318-326, irrespective of whether they are a recipient or subrecipient.

FEMA

The Key Players – FEMA and OIG

- FEMA is the federal awarding agency
  - Has an affirmative duty to manage and administer the Federal award in a manner to ensure that Federal funding is expended for authorized purposes and in accordance with all federal laws, regulations, and executive orders and the terms of the grant award
  - Educate and inform grantees about various grant requirements
  - Recovers funding for improper expenditures under a grant
- DHS Office of Inspector General ("OIG")
  - Conducts independent audits, investigations, and inspections of the programs and operations of DHS and makes recommendations
  - The DHS OIG has broad authority to audit FEMA programs and activities

Agenda

- Background
- Terminology and Key Players
- Procurement Standards for States
- Procurement Standards for Other Non-Federal Entities
- Differences between the New and Old Procurement Standards

FEMA

Summary of Procurement Standards

State	**Other Non-Federal Entities (local governments, tribal governments, IHE, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations)**
2 C.F.R. § 200.317	2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318 through 326
Synopsis: Must follow same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-Federal funds, comply with 200.322 (procurement of recovered materials), and ensure that every purchase order or other contract includes any clauses required by 200.326 (contract provisions)	Synopsis: Must follow its own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable state, local, and tribal laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318 through 326
Note: The recipient and subrecipient must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and executive orders	

FEMA

Procurement Standard for States

- The regulation at 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 sets forth the procurement standard applicable to a state:
  - Must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-Federal funds
  - Will comply with 2 C.F.R. § 200.322 (Procurement of Recovered Materials)
  - Must ensure that every purchase order or other contract includes any clauses required by 2 C.F.R. § 200.326 (Contract Provisions)
- The Uniform Rules do not define an Indian tribe as a state, such that an Indian tribe must follow the procurement standards at 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318-326 irrespective of whether it is a recipient or subrecipient

Hypothetical

The federal procurement standard at 2 C.F.R. § 200.320(b) allows small purchase procedures for the acquisition of supplies or services below the simplified acquisition threshold (which is currently $150,000). The State of X has a threshold of $175,000 in its own version of small purchase procedures, and uses its own threshold and small purchase procedures to procure $170,000 in supplies.

Is there an issue with the State's procurement?

Agenda

- Background
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FEMA

Summary of Procurement Standards

State	**Other Non-Federal Entities (local governments, tribal governments, IHE, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations)**
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Synopsis: Must follow same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-Federal funds, comply with 200.322 (procurement of recovered materials), and ensure that every purchase order or other contract includes any clauses required by 200.326 (contract provisions)	Synopsis: Must follow their own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable state, local, and tribal laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318 through 326
Note: The recipient and subrecipient must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and executive orders	

FEMA

Other Non-Federal Entities

- All other non-Federal entities, to include Indian tribes (whether a recipient or subrecipient), follow their own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable state, local, and tribal laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318 through 326
- A non-Federal entity’s procurement may meet the requirements of applicable state, local, and tribal procurement laws and regulations, but not meet the Federal procurement standards set forth in 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318 through 326—such a procurement would not be compliant with the Uniform Rules
- This means that institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other private nonprofit organizations now follow the same procurement standards as local and tribal governments

Hypothetical

The federal procurement standard at 2 C.F.R. § 200.320(b) allows small purchase procedures for the acquisition of supplies or services below the simplified acquisition threshold (which is currently $150,000). The State of X has a threshold of $175,000 in its own version of small purchase procedures. The City of Y uses the State's threshold and uses small purchase procedures to procure $170,000 in supplies.

Is there an issue with the City's procurement?

Overview of Standards

- The procurement standards can be broken down into the following categories:
  - General procurement standards (2 C.F.R. § 200.318)
  - Competition (2 C.F.R. § 200.319)
  - Methods of procurement (2 C.F.R. § 200.320)
  - Contracting with small and minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms (2 C.F.R. § 200.321)
  - Procurement of recovered materials (2 C.F.R. § 200.322)
  - Contract cost and price (2 C.F.R. § 200.323)
  - Awarding agency and pass-through entity review (2 C.F.R. § 200.324)
  - Bonding requirements (2 C.F.R. § 200.325)
  - Contract provisions (2 C.F.R. § 200.326 and Appendix II)

General Procurement Standards

- The regulation at 2 C.F.R. § 200.318 identifies eleven general procurement standards, some of which are mandatory and others encouraged
- Contractor Oversight – A non-Federal entity must maintain oversight to ensure that contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase orders (2 C.F.R. § 200.318(b))
- Necessity – A non-Federal entity must have procedures that avoid acquisition of unnecessary or duplicative supplies or services, and consideration should be given to breaking out procurements to obtain a more economical purchase (2 C.F.R. § 200.318(d))

General Procurement Standards

- Standards of Conduct: Must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the performance of employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts (2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c))
  - These standards must provide for disciplinary actions
  - Must cover "organizational conflicts of interest" if the non-Federal entity has a non-governmental parent, subsidiary, or affiliate (new)
- Conflict of Interest – No employee, officer, or agent must participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a Federal award if he or she has a real ***or*** apparent conflict of interest
- Gifts – The officers, employees, and agents of the non-Federal entity must neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything else of monetary value from contractors/subcontractors

FEMA

Hypothetical

A local government is procuring construction services for the repair of its town hall damaged in a major disaster. Using procurement through sealed bids, the local government receives twelve bids. The head of the contracting board, who makes the final award decision, is the brother of the President of the company that submitted the lowest bid.

Should the head of the contracting board participate in the award decision?

General Procurement Standards

- Awards to Responsible Contractors: A non-Federal entity must award contracts only to ***responsible*** contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement, and will give consideration to such matters as: (2 C.F.R. § 200.318(h))
  - Contractor integrity
  - Compliance with public policy
  - Record of past performance
  - Financial and technical resources
- Records: A non-Federal entity must maintain records sufficient to detail the history of the procurement, which must include, but are not limited to, rationale for the method of procurement; selection of contract type; contractor selection; and the basis for the contract price (2 C.F.R. § 200.318(i))

General Procurement Standards

- Time and Materials Contract (2 C.F.R. § 200.318(j))
  - A non-Federal entity may use time and materials (T&M) contracts only after a determination that no other contract is suitable and the contract includes a ceiling price that the contractor exceeds at its own risk
  - A time and materials type contract means a contract whose cost to a non-Federal entity is the sum of: (1) the actual cost of materials; and (2) direct labor hours charged at fixed hourly rates that reflect wages, general and administrative expenses, and profit
- Settlement of Issues – A non-Federal entity alone must be responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgment, for the settlement of all contractual issues (2 C.F.R. § 200.318(k)) (change)
- The Uniform Rules also "encourages" various standards (use of federal excess property, intergovernmental agreements, and value engineering) (2 C.F.R. § 200.318(e), (f), and (g))

Competition

- A non-Federal entity must conduct procurement transactions in a manner providing “full and open competition” consistent with the standards of 2 C.F.R. § 200.319
- Contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from participating for such procurements (new)
- A non-Federal entity must conduct procurements in a manner that ***prohibits*** the use of statutorily or administratively imposed state, local, or tribal geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals, except where federal law expressly mandates or encourages geographic preference
- A non-Federal entity may use pre-qualified lists of persons, firms, or products, subject to certain conditions

Competition

- The regulation identifies seven situations considered to be restrictive of competition (2 C.F.R. § 200.319(a)(1)-(7))
  - Noncompetitive pricing practices
  - Noncompetitive contracts to consultants on retainer
  - Organizational conflicts of interest
- A non-Federal entity must have written procedures for procurement transactions, which must ensure the solicitations provide for at least the following (2 C.F.R. § 200.319(c))
  - Incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material product, or service procured
  - Identify all requirements which the offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals

Hypothetical

Pre-Qualified Lists – City, after publicly advertising a request for qualifications, pre-qualifies three debris removal contractors for potential use during a future event. Later that same year, a category 5 hurricane impacts the State of Z, causing widespread damage and debris. Knowing debris removal will continue for approximately six months, the City uses the procurement by sealed bids method among the three contractors to meet the debris removal requirement. Contractor, who is not among the list of three, contacts the City during the solicitation period and wants to submit a request for qualifications and subsequent bid. The City denies this request during the solicitation period.

Does such a denial comport with 2 C.F.R. § 200.319(d)?

Procurement Methods

- Micro-Purchase Procedures (2 C.F.R. § 200.320(a)) (new)
  - The acquisition of supplies or services, the aggregate dollar amount of which does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold - $ 3500
  - To the extent practicable, must distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers
  - May be awarded without soliciting competitive quotations if the non-Federal entity considers the price to be reasonable
- Small Purchase Procedures (2 C.F.R. § 200.320(b))
  - Are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods for securing services, supplies, or other property that does not cost more than the simplified acquisition threshold - $ 150,000
  - Price or rate quotations are to be obtained from an “adequate number” of qualified sources

Procurement Methods

- Sealed Bidding (2 C.F.R. § 200.320(c))
  - Bids are publicly solicited and a firm fixed price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the "responsible" bidder whose bid, conforming with all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids (IFB), is the lowest in price
  - Bids must be solicited from an "adequate number of known suppliers," providing them sufficient response time before date for the opening of bids
  - Local and tribal governments must publicly advertise the invitation for bids (change)
  - All bids will be opened at the time and place prescribed in the invitation for bids, and for local and tribal governments, the bids must be opened publicly (change)
  - This method is "preferred" for construction when sealed bidding is "feasible," which is when certain conditions are present
  - Other procedural requirements at 2 C.F.R. § 200.320(c)(2)

Procurement Methods

- Competitive Proposals (2 C.F.R. § 200.320(d))
  - Competitive proposals are generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids
  - The appropriate method when more than one source is expected to submit an offer and either a fixed-price or cost-reimbursement type contract is awarded
  - Requests for proposals **must be publicized** and identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance
  - Proposals must be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources
  - Must have written method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selection of the contractor
  - Awards will be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with **price** and other factors considered

Procurement Methods

- Noncompetitive Proposals (2 C.F.R. § 200.320(f)) (change)
  - Procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source and may be used only when one or more of the following circumstances apply
  - **One Source**: The item is available only from a single source
  - **Exigency/Emergency**: An exigency or emergency will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation
  - **Awarding Agency Approval**: The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to a written request from the non-Federal entity
  - **Inadequate Competition**: After the solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate
- The award of a contract no longer has to be "infeasible" under one of the competitive methods of procurement (which was another condition precedent under 44 C.F.R. § 13.36(d)(4))

FEMA

Procurement Methods – Case Study

- Severe storms, flooding, and landslides impact the State of Z during the period February 20 through April 2. The impacts of the storm necessitated road repairs.
- City X Agency invited four specific contractors—with whom they were familiar—to bid on the roadwork repairs, and awarded a contract for $4.2 million to the lowest bidder among the four
- City X issued a notice to proceed with the work on January 8 (nine months after the disaster), and the contractor completed the project in December
- City X asserts that the City Procurement Manager approved the contract under emergency procurement procedures

Procurement Methods – Case Study

- OIG recommended a disallowance of the contract costs of $4.2 million based, in part, on the following findings:
  - The applicant circumvented full and open competition by inviting only the four contractors to bid on roadwork repairs
  - The work commenced nine months after the declaration, and the work itself was more long term in nature and not emergency-oriented
- OIG stated that it did not believe it was prudent to waive federal procurement standards unless lives and property are at risk
  - The goals of proper contracting relate to more than just reasonable costs
  - Once the roads are clear, power is restored, and the danger is over, cities, counties, and other entities should follow federal regulations or risk losing federal funding

Socioeconomic Contracting

- A non-Federal entity must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible (2 C.F.R. § 200.321)
- The affirmative steps must include at least the following:
  - Placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists
  - Assuring that small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever they are potential sources
  - Dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, into smaller tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises
  - Establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises

FEMA

Socioeconomic Contracting

- The affirmative steps must include at least the following (cont.):
  - Using the services and assistance, as appropriate, of such organizations as the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce
  - Requiring the prime contractor, if subcontracts are to be let, to take the five previous, affirmative steps
- Failure to comply with the former, equivalent procurement standard has been a very common finding in Office of Inspector General audits

FEMA

Socioeconomic – Case Study

- A severe winter storm impacts the State of Z and coats power lines and trees with ice, and the added weight of the ice damages or destroys roughly 8000 utility poles through the Utility Cooperative's service area. This caused power outages to approximately 25,000 of the Cooperative's customers.
- After the Cooperative restored power to its customers, it used full and open competition in awarding $5.6 million in contracts for longer term work.
- However, the Cooperative did not take the required steps to assure that it used small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises when possible, and did not include federally required provisions in its contracts

Socioeconomic – Case Study

- OIG recommended a disallowance of $5.6 million in contract costs based, in part, on the Cooperative's failure to take specific steps to ensure the use of small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises whenever possible
- The Cooperative stated that it was unaware of this requirement and that all businesses had an opportunity to bid, and that it was concerned about contract cost and contractor experience rather than a contractor's business affiliation

Cost and Price

- A non-Federal entity must perform a price or cost analysis in connection with every procurement action above the simplified acquisition threshold, including contract modifications (2 C.F.R. § 200.323) (change)
- The method and degree of analysis is dependent on the facts and circumstances surrounding the particular procurement but, as a starting point, the non-Federal entity must make independent estimates before receiving bids or proposals (change)
- A non-Federal entity ***shall*** negotiate profit as a separate element of the price for each contract in which there is no price competition and in all cases where cost analysis is performed

Hypothetical

The City conducts a procurement through competitive proposals for consulting services, resulting in a cost reimbursement contract with anticipated costs of $100,000 at the time of the contract. The City has made an independent estimate of the contract cost during acquisition planning of $110,000.

Is the City required to conduct a price or cost analysis?

Cost Plus Percentage of Cost

- A non-Federal entity must not use a cost-plus-percentage-of-cost or cost-plus-percentage-of-construction-cost method of contracting (2 C.F.R. § 200.323(d))
- Criteria evidencing this type of contract
  - Payment is on a predetermined percentage rate
  - The predetermined percentage rate is applied to actual performance costs
  - The contractor's entitlement is uncertain at the time of contracting
  - The contractor's entitlement increases commensurately with increased performance costs
- Rationale: There is no incentive to control costs, and the contractor has a financial interest in *increasing* the cost of performance

Case Study

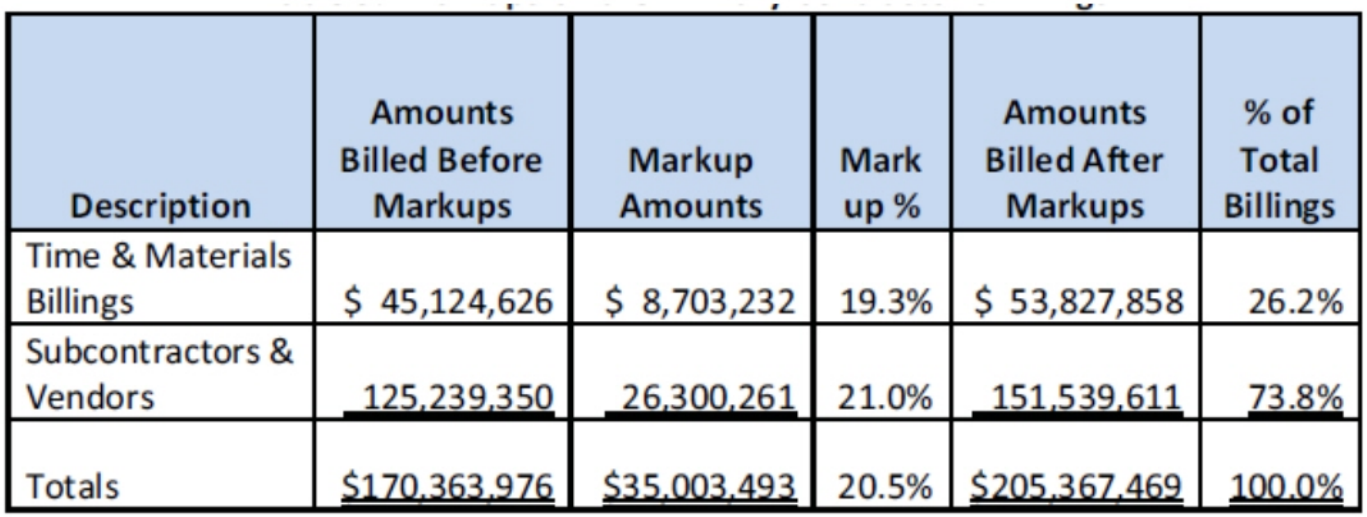
- Hurricane Katie impacts the State of Z in August 2005 and causes significant damage to School District facilities
- The School District noncompetitively awards a prime contractor a cost-plus-percentage-of-cost contract for work totaling $17.3 million for 13 projects
  - Contract largely included work necessary to open schools for the 2005-2006 school year (mold remediation; replacement of canopies; exterior windows, doors, and frames; repairs to roofing and flooring; and other various repair items)
  - Under the contract, the primary contractor added markups of 10 percent each for overhead and profit on time-and-materials billings for its own employees and on pass-through costs of its subcontractors
  - School District does not conduct price or cost analysis

Case Study – OIG 14-44-D (2014)

- The OIG stated that the “emergency” requirement to get schools opened as quickly as possible after the disaster justified the use of a noncompetitive contract
- Because the contract work expedited the opening of the schools, OIG did not question the entire contract amount, but did recommend disallowing $2.9 million because:
  - Federal regulations prohibit a cost-plus-percentage-of-cost contract
  - FEMA has no assurance that the District paid a fair and reasonable price for the contract work.
- There were other problems with the contract, such as:
  - Applicant did not solicit competitive bids for A/E services for long term repair work for 16 projects
  - Applicant did not take affirmative steps to ensure the use of minority firms, women’s business enterprises, and labor surplus firms when possible

Cost and Price – Case Study

- Hurricane Kathleen impacts the State of Z and causes significant damage to University in August
- As part of the restoration of the facility, University awards a $205 million contract to its primary contractor using a noncompetitive, prohibited cost-plus-percentage-of-cost contract; work mainly performed from September to June



Description	Amounts Billed Before Markups	Markup Amounts	Mark up %	Amounts Billed After Markups	% of Total Billings
Time & Materials Billings	$ 45,124,626	$ 8,703,232	19.3%	$ 53,827,858	26.2%
Subcontractors & Vendors	125,239,350	26,300,261	21.0%	151,539,611	73.8%
Totals	$170,363,976	$35,003,493	20.5%	$205,367,469	100.0%

Cost and Price – Case Study

- OIG recommended, in part, the disallowance of $35 million as excessive and prohibited mark-up costs
  - Federal regulations prohibit cost-plus-percentage-of-cost because they provide no incentive for contractors to control costs—the more contractors charge, the more profit they make
  - Normally, the OIG would recommend total disallowance of the entire $205.4 million; however, it did not in this case because exigent circumstances existed at the time of the award
- University did not perform a cost or price analysis, did not take sufficient steps to ensure the use of small businesses, minority firms, and women's business enterprises, and did not include required contract provisions

Pre-Procurement Document Review

- Review of Specifications: A non-Federal entity must make available the technical specifications for a proposed procurement upon request by FEMA or the pass-through entity where FEMA or the pass-through entity believes such review is necessary to ensure that the item or service specified is the one being proposed for acquisition (2 C.F.R. § 200.324(a))
- Pre-Procurement Review of Other Procurement Documents
  - A non-Federal entity must make available upon request for FEMA or pass-through entity **pre-procurement review** of other procurement documents (such as requests for proposals, invitations for bid, independent cost estimates) in certain circumstances (2 C.F.R. § 200.324(b))
  - A non-Federal entity is exempt from the pre-procurement review if FEMA or the pass-through entity determines that its procurement systems comply with the standards under 2 C.F.R. pt. 200

Bonding Requirements

- A non-Federal entity must follow its own bonding requirements for construction or facility improvement projects beneath the simplified acquisition threshold (2 C.F.R. § 200.325)
- A non-Federal entity must meet certain bonding requirements for construction or facility improvement projects above the simplified acquisition threshold (2 C.F.R. § 200.325(a)-(c))
  - A non-Federal entity may use its own bonding policy and requirements provided that FEMA or the pass-through entity has made a determination that the Federal interest is adequately protected
  - If no such determination has been made, the bonding requirements are:

    A bid guarantee from each bidder equivalent to 5% of the bid price

    A performance and payment bond on the part of the contractor for 100% of the contract price

Hypothetical

City conducts a procurement through sealed bidding for debris removal services, awarding the contract on a unit price basis with estimated total costs of $400,000. Neither FEMA nor the State has certified the bonding policy and requirements of the City.

Is the procurement subject to the bonding requirements of 2 C.F.R. § 200.325?

Required Contract Provisions

- A non-Federal entity’s contracts are required to contain certain provisions – some are based on sound contracting practices and others are required by federal law, executive order, and regulations (2 C.F.R. § 200.326)
- These required provisions are provided in Appendix II to Part 200—Contract Provisions for Non-Federal Contracts Under Federal Awards

Procurement of Recovered Materials

- A non-Federal entity that is a **state agency or agency of a political subdivision of a state and its contractors** must comply with section 6002 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conversation and Recovery Act (2 C.F.R. § 200.322)
- The requirements of Section 6002 include:
    - Procuring only items designated in guidelines of the EPA at 40 C.F.R. pt. 247 that contain the highest percentage of recovered materials practicable, consistent with maintaining a satisfactory level of competition, where the purchase price of the item exceeds $10,000 or the value of the quantity acquired during the preceding fiscal year exceeded $10,000
    - Procuring solid waste management services in a manner that maximizes energy and resource recovery
    - Establishing an affirmative procurement program for procurement of recovered materials identified in the EPA guidelines

Suspension and Debarment

- Non-federal entities and contractors are subject to the non-procurement debarment and suspension regulations implementing Executive Orders 12549 and 12689, 2 C.F.R. pt. 180 (2 C.F.R. § 200.212)
- Non-Federal entities must not make any award or permit any award at any tier to parties listed on the governmentwide exclusions in the System for Award Management ("SAM"), which can be found at www.sam.gov.
- The rules for assistance exclusion are also governed by DHS implementing regulations at 2 C.F.R. pt. 3000

Agenda

- Background
- Terminology and Key Players
- Procurement Standards for States
- Procurement Standards for Other Non-Federal Entities
- Differences between the New and Old Procurement Standards

States

- The former standard at 44 C.F.R. § 13.36(a) is substantively the same as 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 – a state must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its nonfederal funds
- There is a slight difference in the case of contract clauses
  - The previous standard required that the “state will ensure that every purchase order or other contract includes any clauses required by Federal statutes and executive orders and their implementing regulations
  - The new regulation is more prescriptive, making the state include the clauses required by 2 C.F.R. § 200.326
- The new standard also makes clear a state needs to comply with 2 C.F.R. § 200.322 (procurement of recovered materials)

IHEs, Hospitals, and Other PNPs

- The former procurement standards applicable to institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other nonprofit organizations were set forth at 2 C.F.R. §§ 215.40 through 48
- These former procurement standards were similar, but not the same, as the new standards
  - The new procurement standards devote great attention to the methods of procurement that must be followed
  - Geographic preferences are expressly prohibited
  - There are different affirmative steps related to small and minority businesses, women’s business enterprises, and labor area surplus firms
  - Written standards of conduct must include provisions for organizational conflict of interest in the case of parents, subsidiaries, and affiliates
  - There are some additional documentation requirements concerning the choice of the method of procurement and contract type
  - Conditions precedent for time and materials contracts

FEMA

Government Entities (not States)

- There are some important distinctions between the former standards at 44 C.F.R. § 13.36 and the new standards
- The methods of procurement have changed
  - There is now a micro-purchase method of procurement
  - Clarifies that the small purchase procedures apply to simplified acquisitions of $150,000
  - Removal of the “infeasibility” condition precedent for a procurement through noncompetitive proposals
  - Requirement for sealed bids to be advertised and opened publicly is limited to local and tribal governments
- The regulation expressly prohibits contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or proposals from competing for such requirements

Government Entities (not States)

- The cost or price analysis regulation has changed
  - Cost or price analysis only required for procurements exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold (used to be required for all procurements)
  - No longer a requirement to conduct a cost analysis when adequate price competition is lacking; and for sole source procurements, including contract modifications or change orders
  - All non-Federal entities required to perform independent estimate
- There is new content required in a non-Federal entity's written standards of conduct for organizational conflicts of interest arising due to related organizations
- Removal of content requiring non-Federal entities to have protest procedures to handle and resolve disputes related to procurements and also content explaining when the Federal awarding agency will review protests

Questions?

- Additional Resources can be found at the following link:

  https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/96773

FEMA

Homeland
Security

ND Closeout Training

March, 2015

Public Assistance Program Management and Grant Closeout

Standard Operating Procedure
SOP 9570.14
September 2013

Recovery Directorate Manual

Public Assistance Program Appeals Procedures
(Version 3)
Approved Date: 4/7/2014

Public Assistance Program Management and Grant Closeout

Sub-section

Public Assistance Mission Statement

"The mission of the Public Assistance (PA) Program is to assist communities in recovering from the devastating effects of disasters by providing technical assistance and financial grants in an efficient, effective, consistent, and customer-friendly manner. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will accomplish the mission by having experienced, trained, knowledgeable, and friendly staff; well-documented, easy-to-understand, and accessible policies and procedures; timely and transparent decision-making; and a strong partnership with the States. FEMA will continuously seek and identify opportunities to improve program delivery."

PA Process Consists of Two Distinct Phases

1) The Grant Development Phase
2) The Program Management and Grant Closeout Phase

Each phase has distinct objectives that represent progress toward the desired goal:

> *“To provide effective assistance and excellent customer service necessary to assist Subgrantees in recovering from a declared event while ensuring responsible stewardship of public funds.”*

Phase 1 – Grant Development

Phase 1) - The Grant Development: Tasks & Transition

- Receive RPAs
- Conduct Kickoff Meetings
- Prepare PWs
- Enter PWs into EMMIE, obligating funds
- Complete Exit Briefings
- Complete 100 percent grant development
- Transition from Grant Development phase to Program Management and Closeout phase *(see next slide)*

Transition – Phase 1 to Phase 2

- Transition from Phase 1 - Grant Development to Phase 2 - Program Management and Closeout
  - FEMA may close the JFO when PA Program staff obligates 90 to 95 percent of eligible projects or completes 100 percent of field work.
  - When the JFO closes, FEMA transfers grant administration responsibilities to staff at a processing center or FEMA Regional office until 95 to 100 percent of the eligible projects have been obligated (see PA Operations Manual).
  - The timeframe for this phase varies by disaster events, but typically lasts two to six months for small and medium disaster events and one year or longer for large disaster events

Phase 2 - The Program Management and Grant Closeout: Milestones

- Ongoing Subtasks for each Quarter for the Grantee
  - Review Large Project Quarterly Progress Reports and establish performance measures. Use this report as a tracking mechanism to track progress of large projects and to identify projects that are ready for closeout.
  - Coordinate Final Inspections and complete Final Inspection Reports for all Large Projects listed as 100% complete.
  - Track progress of small projects and close out Subgrantees that have all projects at 100% completion and that do not have large projects or pending issues.
  - Close subgrantees that have all projects at 100% completion and all large projects are 100% complete and closed out.

Milestones *(Continued)*

- 0 - 6 Months – Close Subgrantee (s) with $0.00 Funding or all work 100% complete on all projects.
- 6 - 12 Months – Close Subgrantee(s) with only100% complete Emergency Work projects and are without Grantee Time Extensions.
- 12 - 18 Months – Close Subgrantee(s) with all 100% Permanent and Emergency work projects without FEMA or Grantee Time Extensions.
- 18 - 48 Months – Close Subgrantee(s) with 100% Permanent Work Projects without Grantee Time Extensions.
- 48 + Months – Close Subgrantee(s) with 100% Permanent Work projects without FEMA approved Time Extensions.
- Another Way to Understand Time Extensions (TE):

Category	Regulatory Deadline	Grantee Time Extension Authority	Total Time Allowed (with Grantee Time Extension)
Categories A and B	6 Months	6 Months	12 Months
Categories C–G	18 Months	30 Months	48 Months

- Grantees can request a FEMA time extension on behalf of an applicant to extend the period of performance beyond the grantee's authority. FEMA may or may not approve the extension request depending on the justification provided by the grantee/subgrantee

Milestones *(Continued)*

- Period of Performance
  - For the overall program this is the period of time (four years from date of disaster) during which the Grantee is expected to complete all physical work and obligate program funds.
  - Although such a timeframe is established up front, this does not mean that the Grantee cannot close the grant early.
  - If projects have been completed, then the program should be requesting grant closeout sooner.
  - Time extensions to the POP may delay the closing of the PA Grant.

- The Program Management and Grant Closeout
  - Begins for small applicants and their projects as the Grant Development phase starts to end.
  - It involves monitoring work completion, reconciling final costs, closing out projects, and closing out the disaster grant.
  - This phase may last between three and five years for small and medium disaster events and six years or longer for large disaster events.

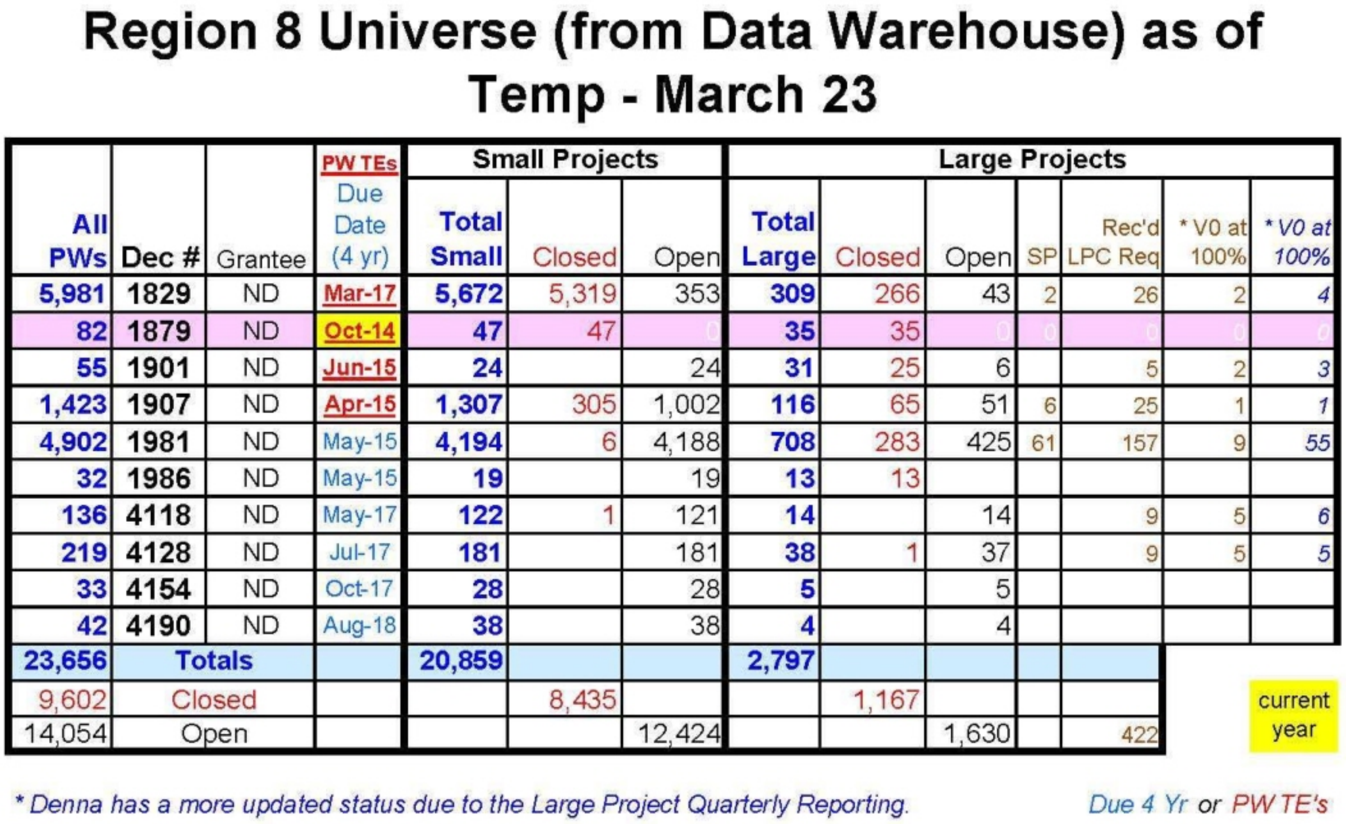
Summary of the Two Phases

- Each phase of the PA process involves unique objectives and tasks that require significant staff resources and an expert level of program knowledge to successfully meet the stated goal.
- The PA process must adhere to all relevant Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and policies, while providing eligible PA funding in a timely and effective manner.
- Both phases are time-sensitive and critical to disaster recovery.
- Grantees and Subgrantees expect and should receive exemplary customer service from FEMA during both phases of the PA process.

Region VIII Closeout Center Priority Philosophy

Sub-section

Work Load



Region 8 Universe (from Data Warehouse) as of Temp - March 23

			PW TEs	Small Projects			Large Projects						
All PWs	**Dec #**	Grantee	Due Date (4 yr)	**Total Small**	Closed	Open	**Total Large**	Closed	Open	SP	Rec'd LPC Req	* V0 at 100%	** V0 at 100%*
5,981	**1829**	ND	**Mar-17**	**5,672**	5,319	353	**309**	266	43	2	26	2	*4*
82	**1879**	ND	**Oct-14**	**47**	47	0	**35**	35	0	0	0	0	*0*
55	**1901**	ND	**Jun-15**	**24**		24	**31**	25	6		5	2	*3*
1,423	**1907**	ND	**Apr-15**	**1,307**	305	1,002	**116**	65	51	6	25	1	*1*
4,902	**1981**	ND	May-15	**4,194**	6	4,188	**708**	283	425	61	157	9	*55*
32	**1986**	ND	May-15	**19**		19	**13**	13					
136	**4118**	ND	May-17	**122**	1	121	**14**		14		9	5	*6*
219	**4128**	ND	Jul-17	**181**		181	**38**	1	37		9	5	*5*
33	**4154**	ND	Oct-17	**28**		28	**5**		5				
42	**4190**	ND	Aug-18	**38**		38	**4**		4				
23,656	**Totals**			**20,859**			**2,797**						
9,602	Closed				8,435			1,167					
14,054	Open					12,424			1,630		422		

current year

** Denna has a more updated status due to the Large Project Quarterly Reporting.*

Due 4 Yr or *PW TE's*

1st Priority – Time Sensitive Requests (TSR)

- Time sensitive request are considered any change to a PW that are ***required*** to be approved by FEMA according to the Stafford Act, the 44 CFR or Public Assistance Policy.
- The Closeout Center's prioritization includes, but is not limited to the following:
  - Alternate Projects
  - Amendments – Change in Scope of Work, Cost, Grade Raise, etc.
  - Appeals
  - Improved Projects (include Transfer of Functions (TOF))
  - Time Extensions

2rd Priority – Headquarters / Policy / Period of Performance Goals

The philosophy is finish disasters with Headquarters Goals:

- Emergency Declared Disasters need to be finish with 2 years
- Major Declared Disasters need to be finished within 4 years

Sequence of Priority

- Category A/B 100% complete
- Other Category A/B
- Category C-G 100% complete
    - Submit LPC within 90 days of project completion
- Close Applicants as projects are closed

3nd Priority – Oldest received Large Project Closeouts (LPC's)

The philosophy is "first in/first out", as of December 31, 2014:

- The oldest received LPC, not being worked on yet, is 22 months ago.
- The Closeout Center is putting together a plan to bring the priority down to 6 months.

Large Project Closeout Analysis

- Final Reconciliation Report
- Final Inspection Report
- Summary of Documentation
- Explanation of Under-runs or Over-runs
- Supporting documentation

LPC Analysis

FINAL APPROVAL OF LARGE PROJECT COSTS FOR SUBGRANT:

PA-08-(State)-(Disaster #) – PW ?????
GRANTEE: (State of or Tribe)
SUBGRANTEE: (Applicant)
COUNTY: (County)
DECLARATION DATE: (Month, Day, Year)

INCIDENT PERIOD: (Date to Date)
PA ID (FIPS #): (???-?????-??)
Reviewed by: (your name)
Date: (Month, Day, Year)

(Include this paragraph)

“A review of the accounting of costs and written analysis submitted by the GAR for this large project has been completed. The costs and work for which final payment approval was requested are considered eligible and in conformance with the approved project application, supplements, related correspondence and the FEMA/State Agreement, except for adjustments resulting from our review, which are explained below.”

COMMENTS AND ADJUSTMENTS

BACKGROUND:

1) Use the paragraph below in this Section:
- "A request for large project closeout was received from the GAR (or TAR), by letter dated (month/date/year) recommending an eligible amount of $xxx.xx. The request contains the Subgrantee's closeout request letter dated (month/date/year)."

  Note: Make sure there is a copy of the Applicant's request for Closeout included in the Grantee's request packet

2) Use the paragraph below in this Section [required by CFR 206.205(b)]:
- "The GAR (or TAR) letter states that work was completed according to the scope of work in the project worksheet. The GAR (or TAR) certified that reported costs were incurred in the performance of eligible work, the approved work was completed, the project was completed in compliance with the provisions of the FEMA/State (of Tribe) Agreement and payments for the project made in accordance with 44CFR Part 13.21."

  Note: If such statements are not included, have a discussion with the State Lead and contact the GAR (or TAR) to get these affirmations added to their request for closeout.

3) This paragraph should include a summary (or recap) of the Damage Description (DD).
- Can be based on the original PW language (don't perpetuate a bad DD);
- Add information to describe any DD changes and/or to summarize all versions;
- PW preparation date, percent complete when written

SCOPE:

Review the following:

- Review the original PW's Scope of Work (SOW);
- If there is a Version;
  - Check if there was "addition" to the SOW, or
  - If there was an "change" to the SOW, or
  - If there was an "exchange" of the SOW;
    - Versioned to be Improved or Alternate Project;
  - Confirm the work was completed;
- If there was a Hazard Mitigation Proposal (HMP) (see HMP for more direction);
  - Check if there was an " add-on" to the SOW, and/or
  - If there was an "upgrade" to the SOW, or
  - If there was an "exchange" of the SOW;
  - Confirm the HMP work was completed;
- Review the GAR's (or TAR's) summary of the SOW;
- Compare the Authorized SOW with the GAR's (or TAR's) summary of the SOW;
  - Make sure there is justification for variances from the SOW

This Section should include the following:

- Write a summary (or recap) of the Authorized Scope of Work;
  - If applicable, include the "addition" and/or the "change" or the "exchange" associated with the Version/s;
  - If applicable, include HMP SOW;
    - State the HMP added " add-on" work (see HMP Section details), and/or
    - State the HMP "upgraded" the work (see HMP Section for details), or
    - State the HMP "exchanged" the pre-disaster conditions with the HMP SOW;
      - Summaries the pre-disaster conditions SOW;
      - Use the HMP SOW as the Authorized SOW;
- Include a statement to the effect that the Authorized SOW was followed;
  - Usually restoring to pre-disaster design, condition and function, or;
  - Instead an exchange for HMP or least cost alternative;
- If the Authorized SOW was NOT followed, include a statement and explain variations;

Note: Be aware of possible upgrades during construction (usually included in the costs) because it is typically not eligible.

COMPLETION TIME:

Review the following:

- What Category and type of work;
    - Emergency Work (Cat A or B) have 6-months;
        - Over 6-months to 12-months need a Grantee approved Time Extension;
        - Over 12-months need a FEMA approved TE;
    - Permanent Work (Cat C thru G), they have 18-months;
        - Over 18-months to 48-months need a Grantee approved TE;
        - Over 48-months need a FEMA approved TE;
- Check the declaration date and completion due date;
- Check the incident period date;
    - Emergency work that is dated prior to the declaration date work may be eligible IF it is within the incident period, and/or
    - Prior to the incident period if it is reasonable and justified;
- If required, check for an approved TE Letter;
    - See if it is in the GAR's (or TAR's) summary;
    - See if it is on the Summary of Documentation;
    - See if it is in EMMIE under the PW and/or the RPA;

Note: If FEMA received a copy of the Grantee TE approval, the period of performance date will be reflected on the PW and a copy of the letter should be attached either to the PW or the RPA.

This Section should include the following:

- State the Category and type of work of the PW;
- State the declaration date and the last date the Category was due to be completed;
- State the date the SOW was completed;
- State that a TE is not needed, or
- If needed, state the TE and the date the SOW was due to be completed;

Note: Time Extensions are required to be on file. See grants section if the TE is missing before contacting the Grantee.

LPC Analysis

FORCE ACCOUNT LABOR: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- Labor Policy;
    - Emergency Work (Cat A or B);
        - Only Overtime is eligible;
            - Exception for Temporary Employees;
        - PAAP Debris allows for Straight Time if applicant elected to participate;
    - Permanent Work (Cat C thru G);
        - Regular and Overtime is eligible
- Hourly Rate and Fringe Benefit Breakdown;
    - Straight time and overtime fringe benefits will be different
        - Full time, part time, and temporary employees may have different benefits
- Labor Summary Sheets;
- Time Cards;

This Section should include the following:

- Verify the accuracy [call out validation %, (minimum 20%, more if needed)];
- Call out Labor Policy Title;
- If applicable, statement of ineligibility (CFR, policy references);
- Explanation of underruns/overruns;
- Final statement;
    - Based on review;
    - Deemed reasonable;
    - Recommend $???? be eligible for reimbursement;

Note: If validation is less than 100%, copies of the review's list and/or notes on Summary sheets must be scanned and attached to LPC package.

LPC Analysis

FORCE ACCOUNT EQUIPMENT: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- Equipment Summary Sheets;
- Time Cards;
  - For operator validation;
- Equipment Rates;
  - FEMA rates, or;
  - Determine reasonableness of cost;
- Mileage, if applicable;

This Section should include the following:

- Verify the accuracy [call out validation %, (minimum 20%, more if needed)];
- If applicable, statement of ineligibility (CFR, policy references);
- Explanation of underruns/overruns;
- Final statement;
  - Based on review;
  - Deemed reasonable;
  - Recommend $???? be eligible for reimbursement;

FORCE ACCOUNT MATERIALS: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- Invoices / Receipts;
- Proof of Payment;
  - Materials from stock or purchased new
- Material Summary Sheets (helpful, but not required);
- Reasonableness of Cost;
  - Did the GAR (or TAR) validate the cost?
  - If so, how was it validated?
- Load Tickets (for debris removal or material hauled);

This Section should include the following:

- Verify the accuracy [call out validation %, (minimum 20%, more if needed)];
- If applicable, statement of ineligibility (CFR, policy references);
- Explanation of underruns/overruns;
- Statement of reasonableness and/or justification of material not included in the Authorized SOW;
- Final statement;
  - Based on review;
  - Deemed reasonable;
  - Recommend $???? be eligible for reimbursement;

Note: If validation is less than 100%, copies of the review's list and/or notes on Summary sheets must be scanned and attached to LPC package.

Note: Material Summary Sheets may be used to compare with the Eligible Scope, for general conformity.

LPC Analysis

RENTAL EQUIPMENT: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- Invoices / Receipts;
- Proof of Payment
- Rental Equipment Summary Sheets (helpful, but not required);
  - May be certified by the applicant;
- Rental Agreement:
  - Need an agreement for each piece of equipment;
  - Match agreement with invoice;
  - If there was repairs to the equipment, who is responsible?
- Reasonableness of Cost;

This Section should include the following:

- Verify the accuracy (call out 100% validation);
- If applicable, statement of ineligibility (CFR, policy references);
- Explanation of underruns/overruns;
- Statement of reasonableness and/or justification of rental equipment not included in the Authorized SOW;
- Final statement;
  - Based on review;
  - Deemed reasonable;
  - Recommend $???? be eligible for reimbursement;

Note: If validation is less than 100%, copies of the review's list and/or notes on Summary sheets must be scanned and attached to LPC package.

LPC Analysis

CONTRACT COSTS: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- Procurement Policy;
- Procurement Process;
  - Bid Notification;
  - Bid Tabulation;
  - Bid Notice of Award;
  - If not a bid process;
    - State how the non-bid process is justified in the Procurement Policy;
    - Determine Reasonableness of Cost;
- Contract / Agreement;
  - Defines Scope of Work;
- Invoices;
- Proof of Payment
- Miscellaneous Food, Lodging & Per Diem;
  - Review Contract / Agreement;
  - Alcoholic Beverages are NOT eligible;
  - Reasonableness of Costs;

This Section should include the following:

- Verify the accuracy (call out 100% validation);
- If applicable, call out copies of Change Orders and explanation/justification;
- If applicable, statement of ineligibility (CFR, policy references);
- Explanation of underruns/overruns;
- Statement of reasonableness and/or justification not included in the Authorized SOW;
- Final statement;
  - Based on review;
  - Deemed reasonable;
  - Recommend $???? be eligible for reimbursement;

LPC Analysis

DESIGN AND ENGINEERING/ CONSTRUCTION MANAGMENT: (if not applicable, state N/A)

Review the following:

- Procurement Policy;
- Contract / Agreement;
  - Defines Scope of Work (make sure it covers the DD);
- Procurement Process;
  - Copy of Request for Proposals (RFP);
  - List of companies submitted proposals;
  - Applicant Selection Process;
  - If not a bid process;
    - State how the non-bid process is justified in the Procurement Policy;
  - Determine Reasonableness of Cost (PA Policy, page 59-60 – Curve A or B)
- Detailed Invoices;
  - Names / Titles
  - Hourly Billing Rates
  - Work accomplished
- Proof of Payment
- Miscellaneous Food, Lodging & Per Diem;
  - Review Contract / Agreement;
  - Alcoholic Beverages are NOT eligible;
  - Reasonableness of Costs;

This Section should include the following:

- Verify the accuracy (call out 100% validation);
- If applicable, call out copies of Change Orders and explanation/justification;
- If applicable, statement of ineligibility (CFR, policy references);
- Explanation of underruns/overruns;
- Statement of reasonableness and/or justification not included in the Authorized SOW;
- Final statement;
  - Based on review;
  - Deemed reasonable;
  - Recommend $???? be eligible for reimbursement;

Note: Curves cover basic engineering such as design, bid process, administering the contract, some inspection. Special engineering such as laboratory soil/concrete/materials testing is beyond the curve values. Land surveys are typically in addition to the curve values, too.

MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- Mutual Aid Agreement/Policy;
  - Briefly defined: Agreement between jurisdictions or agencies to provide services across boundaries in the event of an emergency or major declaration;
  - Review pre-event mutual aid policy, which will define the following;
    - Requesting entity (agency or jurisdiction requesting mutual aid assistance from a providing entity;
    - Providing entity (agency/jurisdiction that provides the assistance to requesting entity);
    - Terms of reimbursement (normally the requesting entity claims the eligible costs through FEMA based on a claim provided by Provider to the Requestor who agrees to disburse funds back to the Provider);
    - If no agreement, post event agreement may be OK, if put down in writing within 30 days of the Applicant Briefing;
  - Review the agreement;
    - Periods of unpaid assistance;
    - Eligible work/eligible costs;
    - Reasonableness;
    - Not dependent upon federal assistance;
- Invoices;
- Miscellaneous Food, Lodging & Per Diem;
  - Review Contract / Agreement;
  - Alcoholic Beverages are NOT eligible;
  - Reasonableness of Costs;
- FEMA Policy 9523.6;

This Section should include the following:

- Verify the accuracy (call out 100% validation);
- If applicable, statement of ineligibility (CFR, policy references);
- Statement of reasonableness and/or justification not included in the Authorized SOW;
- Final statement;
  - Based on review;
  - Deemed reasonable;
  - Recommend $xxx.xx be eligible for reimbursement;

LPC Analysis

SALVAGE: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the Following:

- Equipment purchases greater than $5000? (it may be necessary for the Grantee or Subgrantee to purchase supplies or equipment to respond to a DR.
- If FMV (aggregate) exceeds $5000, FEMA must be compensated when no longer needed.
- FMV values determined by selling in competitive market or research advertised prices for similar items on the used market.
- FMV determined by FEMA (can be based on research provided by Grantee or Subgrantee)
- Can be deducted on original PW (if known) or through LPC process
- Examples: equipment, materials (sandbags, electrical conductor, timber debris, mulch, scrap metal, transformers, etc.
- May have charts to show conversion for electrical conductor or backup supporting salvage calculation.
- FEMA policy 9515.12

This section should include:

- Calculations for determining market value, (or reference to);
- Statement of reasonableness and/or justification not included in the Authorized SOW;
- If applicable, statement of ineligibility (CFR, policy references);
- Final Statement
  - Based on Review
  - Deemed reasonable
  - Recommend $???? Be eligible for reimbursement

DIRECT ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS (DAC): (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- Force Account DAC;
  - Make sure it's properly documented and directly chargeable;
  - Make sure the labor is consistent with the Labor Policy (have a copy);
  - Hourly Rate and fringe Benefit Breakdown;
  - DAC Summary Sheets detailed with;
    - Names and titles;
    - Dates and detailed descriptions of work;
  - Timesheet support (time cards, etc.);
- Contract DAC;
  - Contract / Agreement;
    - Defines Scope of Work (make sure it covers the DD);
  - Procurement methodology;
  - Properly documented and directly chargeable;
  - Reasonableness considerations:
    - Method of contracting;
    - Skill level of persons performing the tasks;
    - Skill level appropriate to task;
    - Amount of time spent;
    - Detailed description of action in detail;
    - FEMA determines reasonableness;
- FEMA Policy 9525.9 and Zimmerman memo;

This Section should include the following:

- Verify the accuracy (call out 100 % validation);
- If FA, call out Labor Policy Title;
- If applicable, statement of ineligibility (CFR, policy references);
- Final statement;
  - Based on review;
  - Deemed reasonable;
  - Recommend $???? be eligible for reimbursement;

LPC Analysis

HAZARD MITIGATION: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- If there was a Hazard Mitigation Proposal (HMP);
  - Check if there was an " add-on" to the SOW, and/or
  - If there was an "upgrade" to the SOW, or
  - If there was an "exchange" of the SOW;
  - Confirm the HMP work was completed;
- Review Authorized HMP SOW cost effectiveness justification (RP9526.1);
  - 15% Rule, or;
  - 100% Rule (Appendix A), or;
  - Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA);
- If able, separate the HMP actual costs from the total actual costs;

Note: Consult a specialist with questions and/or concerns – Don't make assumptions.

This Section should include the following:

- State the HMP added;
  - "add-on" work, and/or;
  - "upgraded" the work, or;
  - "exchanged" the pre-disaster conditions with the HMP SOW;
    - If so, state the explanation is in the Scope of Work Section;
- State if the HMP is still cost effective per policy;
  - Compare the estimated HMP cost with the actual HMP cost;
  - Compare the estimated pre-disaster conditions cost (faceplate) with the actual pre-disaster conditions cost;
  - Compare against the estimated HMP justification ;
    - Calculate (actual HMP cost /actual pre-disaster cost = %)
    - See if it matches the estimated cost justification;
      - ➢ 15% Rule, or;
      - ➢ 100% Rule, or;
      - ➢ BCA;

LPC Analysis

INSURANCE: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- Review EMMIE and Insurance associated with the PW;
  - Identify if there was Anticipated Insurance Proceeds (Cost Code 5900 or 5905), if so, confirm additional insurance documents needed for Closeout:
    - Proof of Loss (POL)
    - Adjuster's Estimate
    - Spread Sheet as needed for multiple locations/claims
    - Claim Summary
    - Check Stub
  - Identify if there was an insurance requirement to "obtain & maintain" insurance, under "Insurance Information" drop-down, and if so confirm additional insurance documents needed for Closeout:
    - Schedule of Values (SOV)/Schedule of Locations (SOL);
    - Declaration Page ("Dec" Page);
    - Policy;
      - Coverage;
      - Endorsements;
      - Exclusions;
      - Amendments;
    - *Note: There should be a DEC page showing coverage within 1-2 weeks of construction ("obtaining"), and a more recent DEC page for present coverage ("maintaining").*

Note: Consult a specialist with questions and/or concerns – Don't make assumptions.

This Section should include the following;

- If there is Insurance related to the PW, state "See Insurance Information in EMMIE for specific information";
- If not, state N/A;

LPC Analysis

ENVIRONMENTAL: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following:

- Review the comments and conditions on the Recommendations of Environmental Considerations (REC) find in under “ATTACHMENTS” not “Comments and Attachments”;
- If there are multiple REC’s, review all of them to make sure the latest (by date) REC contains all the required conditions;
- Review the NEPA Determination comments for background information;
- Review the Conditions to find which permits and consultations under NEPA, Environmental Law and Executive Order are required for compliance;

Note: Consult a specialist with questions and/or concerns – Don’t make assumptions.

This Section should list the EL/EO’s required for compliance in under the conditions in the REC; (see examples below)

- Clean Water Act (CWA) –
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) [under the State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO)] –
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) -

LPC Analysis

PROOF OF PAYMENT (POP):

This Section should include the following:

- The % number of the eligible costs were supported by;
    - Cancelled check copies, or;
    - Invoices stamped “Paid”, or;
    - Other justified sources;
- State the supported POP (see above);
- The % number of the supported POP were verified;

APPEAL/DETERMINATION MEMO: (if not applicable, state N/A)
Review the following to see if there as a prior Appeal or Determination Memo;

- Check in EMMIE;
  - The PW;
    - In the "ATTACHMENTS" for letters and emails;
    - In the Scope of Work (SOW);
  - The RPA;
- Check in the request documentation;
- Check to see if there is "new information" being presented that may change the past Appeal and/or Determination Memo's;

Note: Prior to the required Determination Memo process, some determinations were added in the SOW. Be aware of determination language in the SOW notes and versions.

This Section should include the following:

- If there was a prior determination, recap what has been appealed or previously found ineligible.
  - If there is "new information" that MAY change the past determination, get with the State Lead for direction;
  - Call out were the "new information" can be found;
    - If they are listed on the Summary of Documentation (SOD) call out the location;
    - May add copies of those specific "new information" documents with the Analysis review documents;
- If not, state N/A;

LPC Analysis

TABLE OF VALUES: (funding below is an example)

Description (as needed)	GAR (or TAR) Recommends	FEMA Eligible	FEMA Adjustment
FA Labor	$ 90,022.02	$ 89,543.10	($ 478.92)
FA Equipment	$ 549,228.30	$ 549,228.30	$ 0.00
Materials	$ 108,974.03	$ 104,821.52	($4,152.51)
Contracts	$ 3,562.50	$ 3,562.50	$ 0.00
Rented Equipment	$ 20,208.16	$ 20,208.16	$ 0.00
	$ 771,995.01	$ 767,363.58	($ 4,631.43)

TOTAL ELIGIBLE COST: **$ 767,363.58**

Note: This is a required statement (use FEMA Eligible in the table of values above).

PW ENTRIES: Listed in this order:

9083 Deduct Previously Obligated Project Costs ($__________) *(from the Variance)*
9081 Project Costs Recommended by GAR (or TAR) $__________ *(from above)*
9082 FEMA Adjustment (either + or –) $__________ *(from above)*
This version value $__________

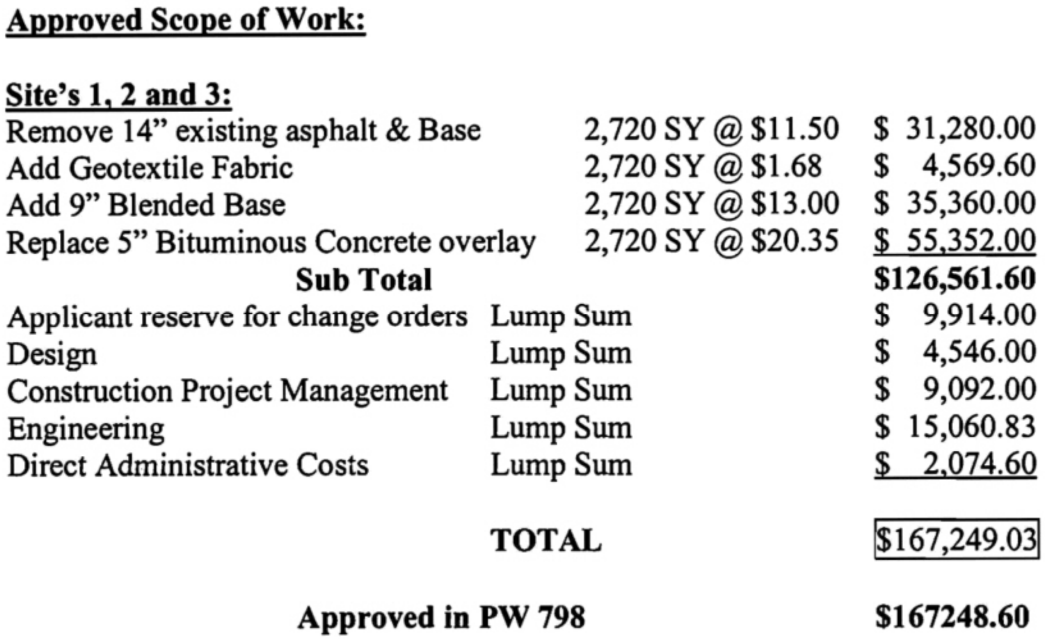
Determination Memo

- Used when taking a negative action against grantee or sub-grantee request
- Memo is used as way to document decision using policy and regulations
- Only after conversations with Grantee and Sub-grantee have been exhausted
- Another tool to make sure decisions are being communicated to applicants

Variances in SOW

- Defined in SOP 10.2.3
  - FEMA/Grantee ensures compliance with the SOW
  - Review work done to determine eligibility
    - Must be documented in detail
  - Examples

PW Scope of Work – Example 1

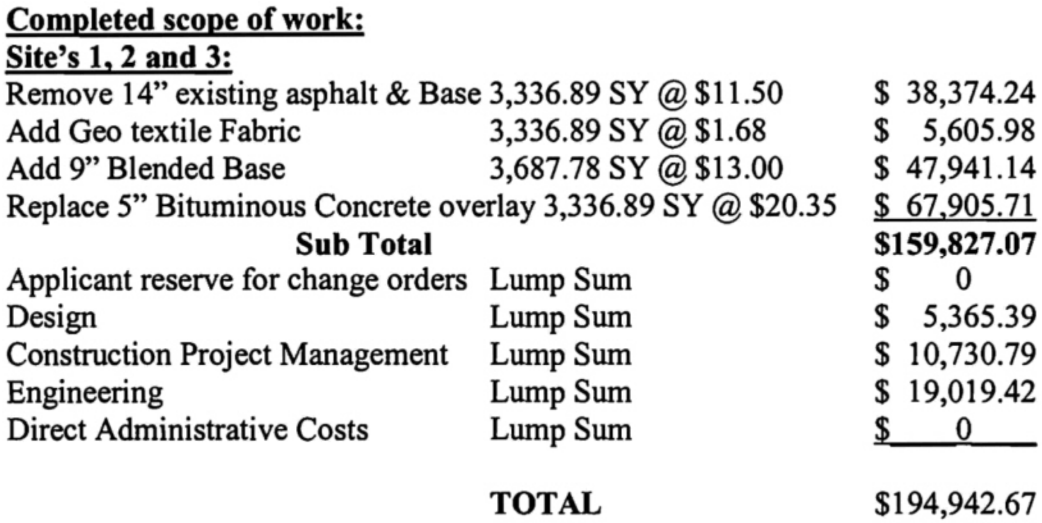


Approved Scope of Work:

Site's 1, 2 and 3:

Remove 14" existing asphalt & Base	2,720 SY @ $11.50	$ 31,280.00
Add Geotextile Fabric	2,720 SY @ $1.68	$ 4,569.60
Add 9" Blended Base	2,720 SY @ $13.00	$ 35,360.00
Replace 5" Bituminous Concrete overlay	2,720 SY @ $20.35	$ 55,352.00
Sub Total		**$126,561.60**
Applicant reserve for change orders	Lump Sum	$ 9,914.00
Design	Lump Sum	$ 4,546.00
Construction Project Management	Lump Sum	$ 9,092.00
Engineering	Lump Sum	$ 15,060.83
Direct Administrative Costs	Lump Sum	$ 2,074.60
	TOTAL	$167,249.03
Approved in PW 798		**$167248.60**

Completed Scope of Work – E1



Completed scope of work:

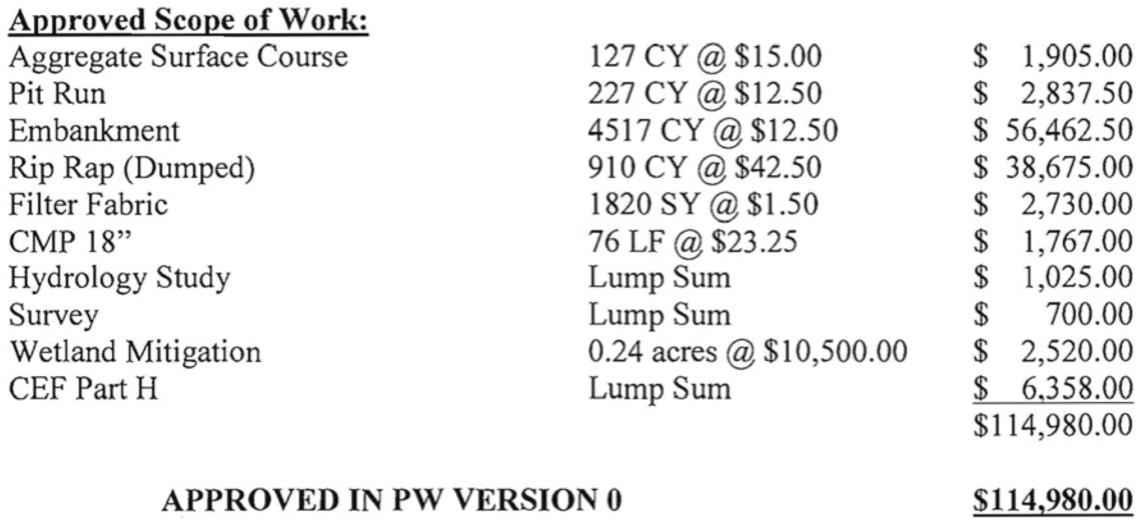
Site’s 1, 2 and 3:

Remove 14” existing asphalt & Base	3,336.89 SY @ $11.50	$ 38,374.24
Add Geo textile Fabric	3,336.89 SY @ $1.68	$ 5,605.98
Add 9” Blended Base	3,687.78 SY @ $13.00	$ 47,941.14
Replace 5” Bituminous Concrete overlay	3,336.89 SY @ $20.35	$ 67,905.71
Sub Total		**$159,827.07**
Applicant reserve for change orders	Lump Sum	$ 0
Design	Lump Sum	$ 5,365.39
Construction Project Management	Lump Sum	$ 10,730.79
Engineering	Lump Sum	$ 19,019.42
Direct Administrative Costs	Lump Sum	$ 0
	TOTAL	$194,942.67

Example 1 Discussion

- What is the eligible SOW?
- Did the applicant follow the SOW?
- Why would the over-run be eligible?
- What are ways to improve this description of the SOW?

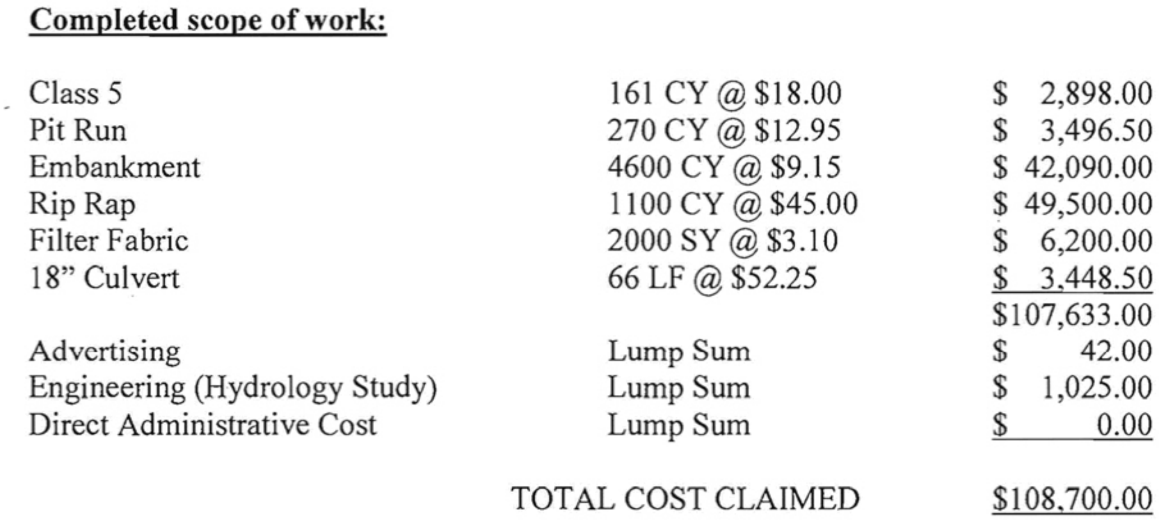
PW Scope of Work – Example 2



Approved Scope of Work:

Aggregate Surface Course	127 CY @ $15.00	$ 1,905.00
Pit Run	227 CY @ $12.50	$ 2,837.50
Embankment	4517 CY @ $12.50	$ 56,462.50
Rip Rap (Dumped)	910 CY @ $42.50	$ 38,675.00
Filter Fabric	1820 SY @ $1.50	$ 2,730.00
CMP 18"	76 LF @ $23.25	$ 1,767.00
Hydrology Study	Lump Sum	$ 1,025.00
Survey	Lump Sum	$ 700.00
Wetland Mitigation	0.24 acres @ $10,500.00	$ 2,520.00
CEF Part H	Lump Sum	$ 6,358.00
		$114,980.00
APPROVED IN PW VERSION 0		**$114,980.00**

Completed Scope of Work – E2



Completed scope of work:

Class 5	161 CY @ $18.00	$ 2,898.00
Pit Run	270 CY @ $12.95	$ 3,496.50
Embankment	4600 CY @ $9.15	$ 42,090.00
Rip Rap	1100 CY @ $45.00	$ 49,500.00
Filter Fabric	2000 SY @ $3.10	$ 6,200.00
18" Culvert	66 LF @ $52.25	$ 3,448.50
		$107,633.00
Advertising	Lump Sum	$ 42.00
Engineering (Hydrology Study)	Lump Sum	$ 1,025.00
Direct Administrative Cost	Lump Sum	$ 0.00
	TOTAL COST CLAIMED	$108,700.00

Example 2 Discussion

- What is the eligible SOW?
- Did the applicant follow the SOW?
- Why would the over-run be eligible?

What is justifiable??

- Were there other undocumented damages?
- Was there a general construction practice used?
- Change Orders?
  - Essential for changes to contracts
- Is it reasonable?

Procurement

- Procurement applies no matter the Category of Work
- 44 CFR Part 13
- 2 CFR Part 225 (OMB A-87)
- State Procurement Codes
- Local Procurement Policies
- Super Circular
    - Only for DR's after Dec 2014

44 CFR Part 13

- Exigent circumstances do apply
  - Only during the "Emergency Period"
- Small Purchase Threshold
  - $100,000 prior to October 2010
  - $150,000 post October 2010
- Reasonable Cost

State Laws

- All applicants must be in compliance with State Regulations and laws
- Once the emergency period is done all efforts to comply must be made

Local Procurement

- If policy is in place must follow
- Should be documented and policy on file
    - Attached to RPA in EMMIE

Documents to Ensure Procurement

- Informal Procurement
  - Who, when, what was response
- Formal Procurement
  - Bid Package and Advertisement
  - Bid Tabulations
- If claiming exigent circumstance
  - What was the exigent circumstance and what measures did you take to attempt procurement?

What is a Reasonable Cost

- Would you pay an engineer $300/hr. to make copies and file paperwork?
- Determined by what a prudent person would pay for the services in a similar circumstance
  - Other properly procured prices for similar work
- MUST be established when outside the Federal Small Purchase Threshold

Document, Document, Document

If it isn’t documented it didn’t happen

Direct Admin Cost

- Must be well documented
    - All standards held for FA Labor/Equipment
- If using contracted DAC must be properly procured and reasonable
    - Tasks completed must be well documented
    - Case Study – Iowa DAC Second Appeal
- Must Follow Stafford Act Section 324, 44 CFR Part 207, and DAP 9525.9

Improved Projects

- Funding capped at cost to repair/replace damaged facility or actual cost of completing the improvement, whichever is less
  - 44 CFR 206.203(d)(1)
- Improved facility must have same function and at least same capacity as that of the pre-disaster facility/work within incident period/ legal responsibility
- Additional costs to comply with codes/standards, environmental laws, and engineering are not eligible.
- HMP costs for the original facility may be eligible.
  - DAP 9526.1

Improved Project Requests that include a Transfer of Function Request

- A transfer of function is a form of improved project under which the applicant opts to abandon a site and use the funds to meet other needs relative to the function of the abandoned site.
- Only those critical routes that provide primary (sole access) to occupied residences are recommended for repairs and potential Transfers of function
- An Evaluation of alternative routes process is required under 44 CFR Part 9, the eight step process, EO 11988 and EO 11990 and also contains a provision for "no action".
- Exact locations of all proposed "source" sites to be abandoned and "target" sites to receive funding must be identified for EHP reviews and permitting
- All inundated site project decisions require review under the FEMA 8 Step Planning process for Floodplain/Wetland Management. Review steps 5 and 6 require a determination that impacts are minimized and the project must be practical.
- Cost reasonableness and number of residents benefiting from the repair must be considered when determining the best option for a damaged site. Additionally, future vulnerability and potential for costly repairs of the inundated site must be considered.

Alternate Project Requests

- Detailed SOW of what applicant wants to do
  - Cite if within DAP 9525.13
    - If the original damaged facility is not being repaired, replaced, or sold the damaged facility must be rendered safe.
- Location work will be completed
  - Important for EHP review and floodplain management (9 Step Process)
- Applicant's cost estimate to perform the Alternate Project SOW
- Show calculation of reduction of cost on federal share
  - 10% for public facilities
  - 25% for private non-profit facilities
  - No reduction if a Fixed Cost Estimate under PA Alternate Procedures (PAAP)
- Citation that the project is capped at the federal share or actual costs, whichever, is less.
  - "Federal funding for alternate projects will be limited to 90%/75% of the Federal share of the Federal estimate of the cost estimate, or the actual cost of the project; whichever is less."
- Mitigation is not eligible under an Alternate Project
  - PAAP is an exception and it is transferable on a case-by-case basis.
    - Must go to HQ.
- Insurance commitments may still apply
  - Consult Insurance specialist if there will be an "obtain and maintain" commitment for alternate project.

Environmental Historical Preservation

Sub-section

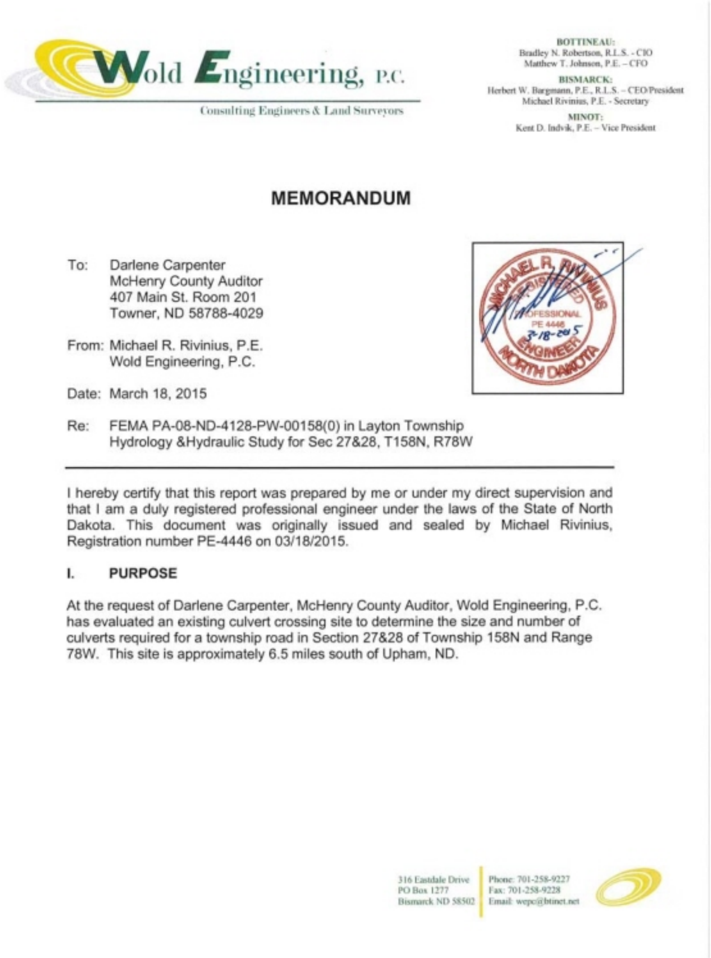
H&H Study

- Is a standalone document prepared and signed by an Engineer licensed in the State of North Dakota and qualified to perform such work.
- Should include:
    - Pre-disaster site conditions
    - Identify exact location
    - Description of methodology
    - Explanation of the storm frequency used
    - Discussion of other site conditions; i.e. counter sink
    - Summary statement that includes PE signature/stamp

H&H Continued

- FEMA funding is conditional on the evaluation of the H&H and the stated upstream/downstream impacts
- Document must include the engineer firm's letterhead, PE signature/stamp
- Should include calculations and references used to perform analysis

Good H&H Example



Wold Engineering, P.C.
Consulting Engineers & Land Surveyors

BOTTINEAU:
Bradley N. Robertson, R.L.S. - CIO
Matthew T. Johnson, P.E. – CFO

BISMARCK:
Herbert W. Bargmann, P.E., R.L.S. – CEO/President
Michael Rivinius, P.E. - Secretary

MINOT:
Kent D. Indvik, P.E. – Vice President

MEMORANDUM

To: Darlene Carpenter
McHenry County Auditor
407 Main St. Room 201
Towner, ND 58788-4029

From: Michael R. Rivinius, P.E.
Wold Engineering, P.C.

Date: March 18, 2015

Re: FEMA PA-08-ND-4128-PW-00158(0) in Layton Township
Hydrology &Hydraulic Study for Sec 27&28, T158N, R78W

MICHAEL R. RIVINIUS
PE 4446
3-18-2015

I hereby certify that this report was prepared by me or under my direct supervision and that I am a duly registered professional engineer under the laws of the State of North Dakota. This document was originally issued and sealed by Michael Rivinius, Registration number PE-4446 on 03/18/2015.

I. PURPOSE

At the request of Darlene Carpenter, McHenry County Auditor, Wold Engineering, P.C. has evaluated an existing culvert crossing site to determine the size and number of culverts required for a township road in Section 27&28 of Township 158N and Range 78W. This site is approximately 6.5 miles south of Upham, ND.

316 Eastdale Drive
PO Box 1277
Bismarck ND 58502

Phone: 701-258-9227
Fax: 701-258-9228
Email: wepc@btinet.net

Good H&H Example Cont.

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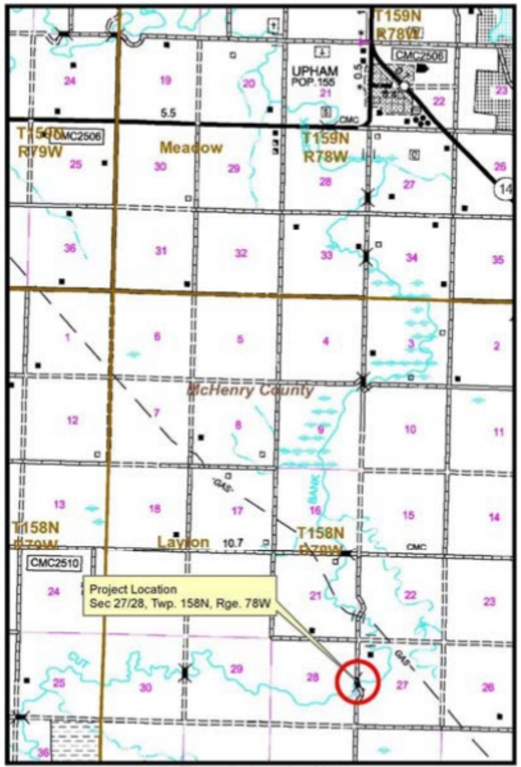
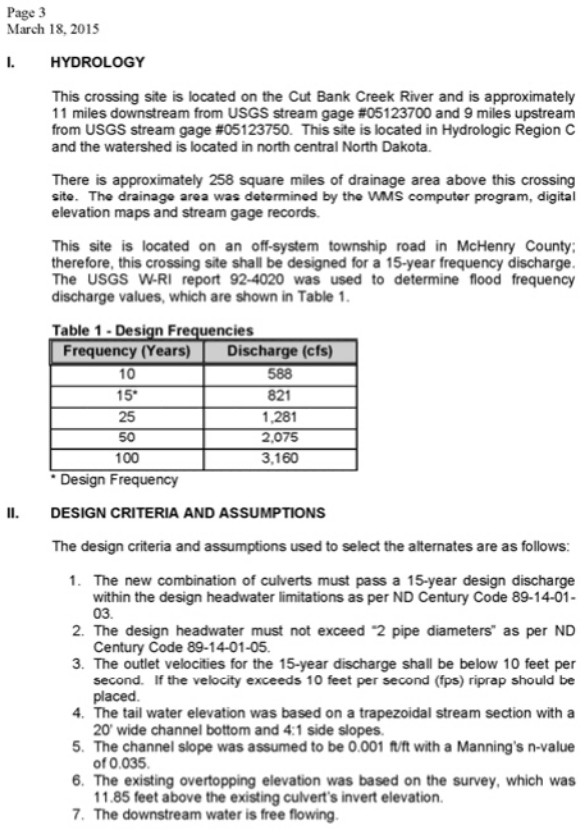

T159N
R78W
CMC2506
UPHAM
POP. 155
5.5
T159N
R79W
Meadow
T159N
R78W
McHenry County
T158N
R79W
CMC2510
Layton
10.7
T158N
R78W
GAS
14

Project Location
Sec 27/28, Twp. 158N, Rge. 78W

Figure 1 - Location Map

Good H&H Example Cont.



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I. HYDROLOGY

This crossing site is located on the Cut Bank Creek River and is approximately 11 miles downstream from USGS stream gage #05123700 and 9 miles upstream from USGS stream gage #05123750. This site is located in Hydrologic Region C and the watershed is located in north central North Dakota.

There is approximately 258 square miles of drainage area above this crossing site. The drainage area was determined by the WMS computer program, digital elevation maps and stream gage records.

This site is located on an off-system township road in McHenry County; therefore, this crossing site shall be designed for a 15-year frequency discharge. The USGS W-RI report 92-4020 was used to determine flood frequency discharge values, which are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Design Frequencies

Frequency (Years)	Discharge (cfs)
10	588
15*	821
25	1,281
50	2,075
100	3,160

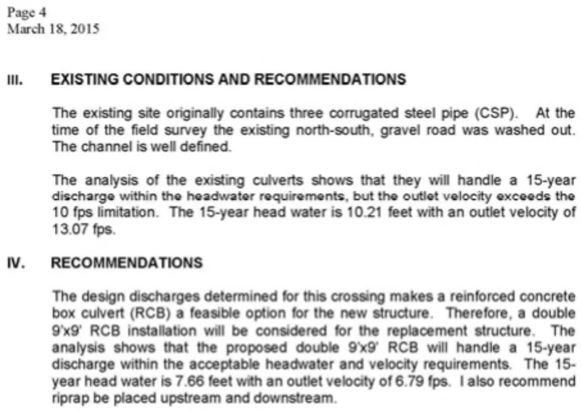
* Design Frequency

II. DESIGN CRITERIA AND ASSUMPTIONS

The design criteria and assumptions used to select the alternates are as follows:

1. The new combination of culverts must pass a 15-year design discharge within the design headwater limitations as per ND Century Code 89-14-01-03.
2. The design headwater must not exceed “2 pipe diameters” as per ND Century Code 89-14-01-05.
3. The outlet velocities for the 15-year discharge shall be below 10 feet per second. If the velocity exceeds 10 feet per second (fps) riprap should be placed.
4. The tail water elevation was based on a trapezoidal stream section with a 20’ wide channel bottom and 4:1 side slopes.
5. The channel slope was assumed to be 0.001 ft/ft with a Manning’s n-value of 0.035.
6. The existing overtopping elevation was based on the survey, which was 11.85 feet above the existing culvert’s invert elevation.
7. The downstream water is free flowing.

Good H&H Example Cont.



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March 18, 2015

III. EXISTING CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

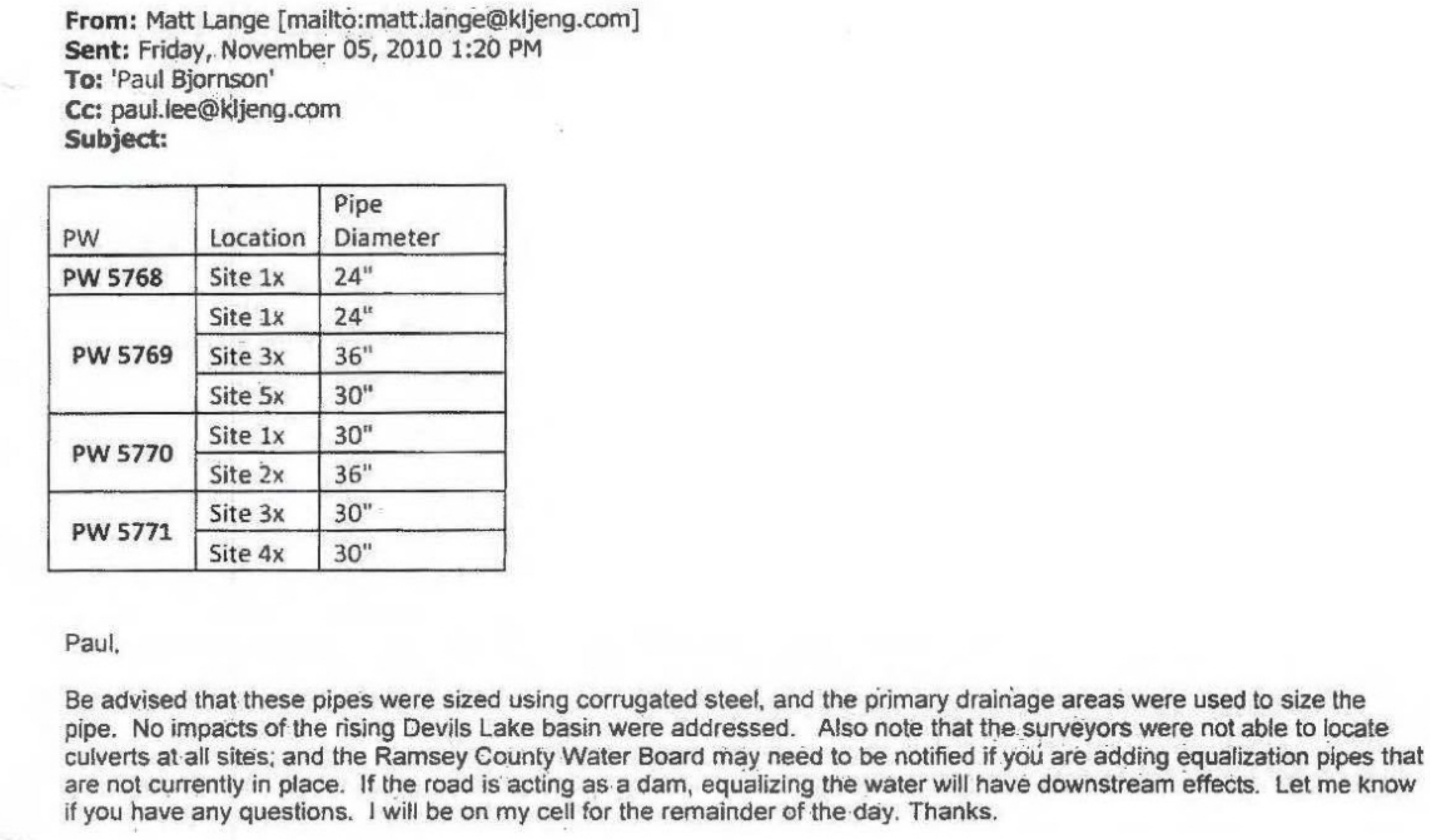
The existing site originally contains three corrugated steel pipe (CSP). At the time of the field survey the existing north-south, gravel road was washed out. The channel is well defined.

The analysis of the existing culverts shows that they will handle a 15-year discharge within the headwater requirements, but the outlet velocity exceeds the 10 fps limitation. The 15-year head water is 10.21 feet with an outlet velocity of 13.07 fps.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The design discharges determined for this crossing makes a reinforced concrete box culvert (RCB) a feasible option for the new structure. Therefore, a double 9'x9' RCB installation will be considered for the replacement structure. The analysis shows that the proposed double 9'x9' RCB will handle a 15-year discharge within the acceptable headwater and velocity requirements. The 15-year head water is 7.66 feet with an outlet velocity of 6.79 fps. I also recommend riprap be placed upstream and downstream.

Bad H&H



From: Matt Lange [mailto:matt.lange@kljeng.com]
Sent: Friday, November 05, 2010 1:20 PM
To: 'Paul Bjornson'
Cc: paul.lee@kljeng.com
Subject:

PW	Location	Pipe Diameter
PW 5768	Site 1x	24"
PW 5769	Site 1x	24"
	Site 3x	36"
	Site 5x	30"
PW 5770	Site 1x	30"
	Site 2x	36"
PW 5771	Site 3x	30"
	Site 4x	30"

Paul,

Be advised that these pipes were sized using corrugated steel, and the primary drainage areas were used to size the pipe. No impacts of the rising Devils Lake basin were addressed. Also note that the surveyors were not able to locate culverts at all sites; and the Ramsey County Water Board may need to be notified if you are adding equalization pipes that are not currently in place. If the road is acting as a dam, equalizing the water will have downstream effects. Let me know if you have any questions. I will be on my cell for the remainder of the day. Thanks.

Record of Environmental Consideration Tabletop

FEMA Region VIII 2015 406 Mitigation Briefing

3/4/2015

FEMA

DR ND

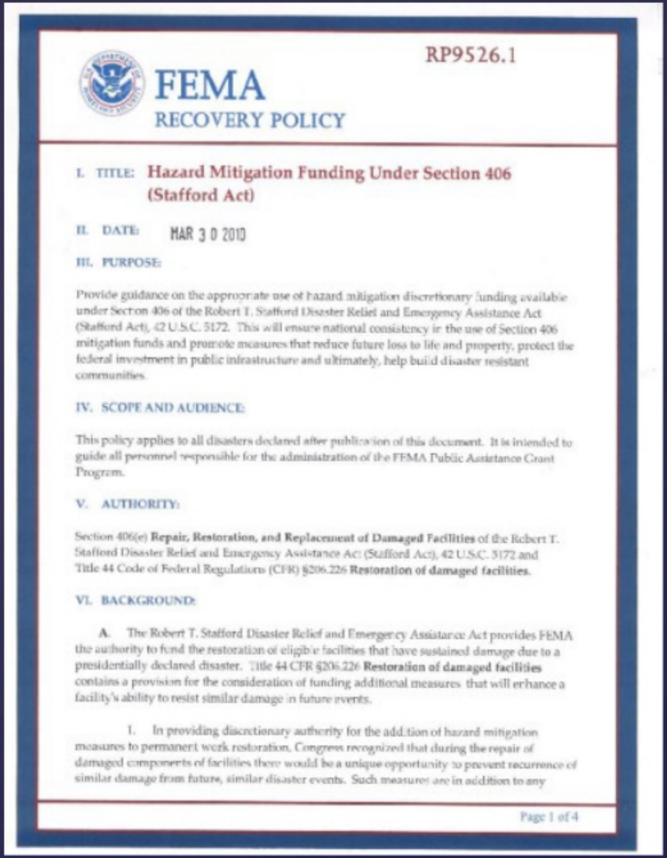
Topics of Relevance

- 406 Mitigation Guiding Policy and Program Overview.Using RP 9526. 1 to Determine Eligibility & Cost Effectiveness.Common misconceptions interpreting RP 9526.1.Writing Hazard Mitigation Proposals (HMPs).Lessons learned from DR 4190 ND.FEMA Policy & Program updates related to 406 Mitigation.ND Special Considerations with respect to 406 Mitigation

FEMA

406 Mitigation Guiding Document

Recovery Policy 9526.1 is the primary guidance document used by 406 Mitigation field personnel, outlining appropriate use of hazard mitigation discretionary funding available under Section 406 of the Stafford Act.Do an internet search for FEMA Recovery Policy 9526.1.



RP9526.1

FEMA
RECOVERY POLICY

I. TITLE: **Hazard Mitigation Funding Under Section 406 (Stafford Act)**

II. DATE: MAR 3 0 2010

III. PURPOSE:

Provide guidance on the appropriate use of hazard mitigation discretionary funding available under Section 406 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), 42 U.S.C. 5172. This will ensure national consistency in the use of Section 406 mitigation funds and promote measures that reduce future loss to life and property, protect the federal investment in public infrastructure and ultimately, help build disaster resistant communities.

IV. SCOPE AND AUDIENCE:

This policy applies to all disasters declared after publication of this document. It is intended to guide all personnel responsible for the administration of the FEMA Public Assistance Grant Program.

V. AUTHORITY:

Section 406(e) **Repair, Restoration, and Replacement of Damaged Facilities** of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), 42 U.S.C. 5172 and Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §206.226 **Restoration of damaged facilities.**

VI. BACKGROUND:

A. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act provides FEMA the authority to fund the restoration of eligible facilities that have sustained damage due to a presidentially declared disaster. Title 44 CFR §206.226 **Restoration of damaged facilities** contains a provision for the consideration of funding additional measures that will enhance a facility's ability to resist similar damage in future events.

1. In providing discretionary authority for the addition of hazard mitigation measures to permanent work restoration, Congress recognized that during the repair of damaged components of facilities there would be a unique opportunity to prevent recurrence of similar damage from future, similar disaster events. Such measures are in addition to any

Page 1 of 4

How FEMA determines Eligible, Cost Effective 406 Mitigation Funding

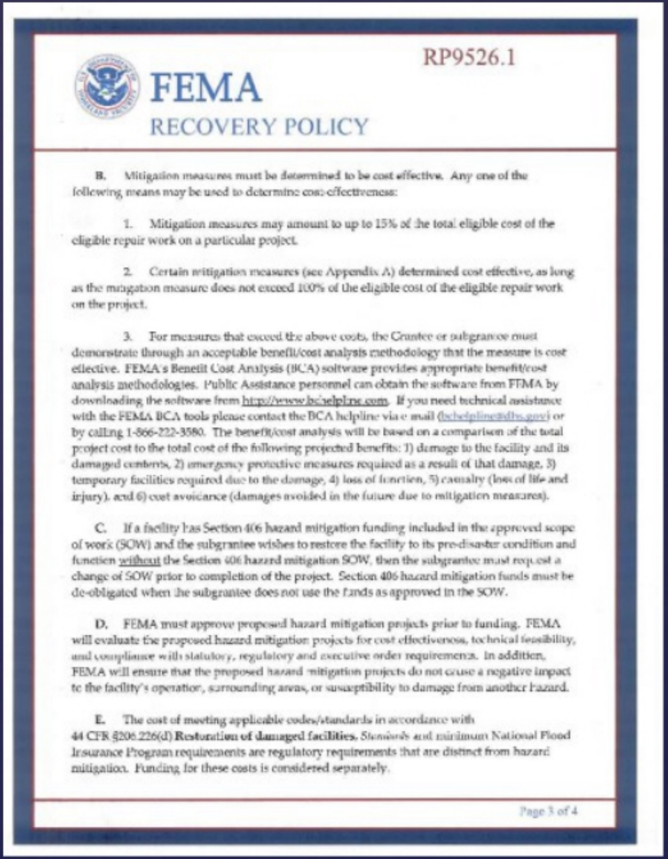
The available funding for 406 Mitigation is based on a couple of factors:The estimated cost of repair of the damaged element being mitigated.The type of mitigation being proposed (i.e. does it fall within Appendix A).Can we truly know if our 406 Mitigation proposal is cost effective until the estimated cost of repairs is completed in the Project Worksheet site sheet?

It is the responsibility of the PA Project Specialist and HM 406 Specialist (if deployed) to brief the applicant on the PA 406 Mitigation program, help identify mitigation opportunities, offer suggestions as necessary, and assist the applicant in formulating a proposal that is eligible, cost effective and technically feasible per FEMA Recovery Policy 9526.1. If there are no opportunities or none that are cost effective, it is the PA Project Specialist's responsibility to provide a written justification in the PW why there is no mitigation.

There are three ways to determine Cost Effectiveness

Based on criteria outlined in 9526.1, VII. B:

a) Mitigation measures may amount up to 15% of the total eligible cost of the eligible repair work (by site).Certain mitigation measures have been pre-determined to be cost effective, as long as the mitigation measure does not exceed 100% of the eligible cost of the eligible repair (by site). See Appendix A.A Benefit Cost Analysis may be performed for mitigation proposals that fall outside the predetermined cost effective measures.



RP9526.1

FEMA
RECOVERY POLICY

B. Mitigation measures must be determined to be cost effective. Any one of the following means may be used to determine cost-effectiveness:

1. Mitigation measures may amount to up to 15% of the total eligible cost of the eligible repair work on a particular project.

2. Certain mitigation measures (see Appendix A) determined cost effective, as long as the mitigation measure does not exceed 100% of the eligible cost of the eligible repair work on the project.

3. For measures that exceed the above costs, the Grantee or subgrantee must demonstrate through an acceptable benefit/cost analysis methodology that the measure is cost effective. FEMA's Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) software provides appropriate benefit/cost analysis methodologies. Public Assistance personnel can obtain the software from FEMA by downloading the software from http://www.bcahelpline.com. If you need technical assistance with the FEMA BCA tools please contact the BCA helpline via e mail (bcahelpline@dhs.gov) or by calling 1-866-222-3580. The benefit/cost analysis will be based on a comparison of the total project cost to the total cost of the following projected benefits: 1) damage to the facility and its damaged contents, 2) emergency protective measures required as a result of that damage, 3) temporary facilities required due to the damage, 4) loss of function, 5) casualty (loss of life and injury), and 6) cost avoidance (damages avoided in the future due to mitigation measures).

C. If a facility has Section 406 hazard mitigation funding included in the approved scope of work (SOW) and the subgrantee wishes to restore the facility to its pre-disaster condition and function without the Section 406 hazard mitigation SOW, then the subgrantee must request a change of SOW prior to completion of the project. Section 406 hazard mitigation funds must be de-obligated when the subgrantee does not use the funds as approved in the SOW.

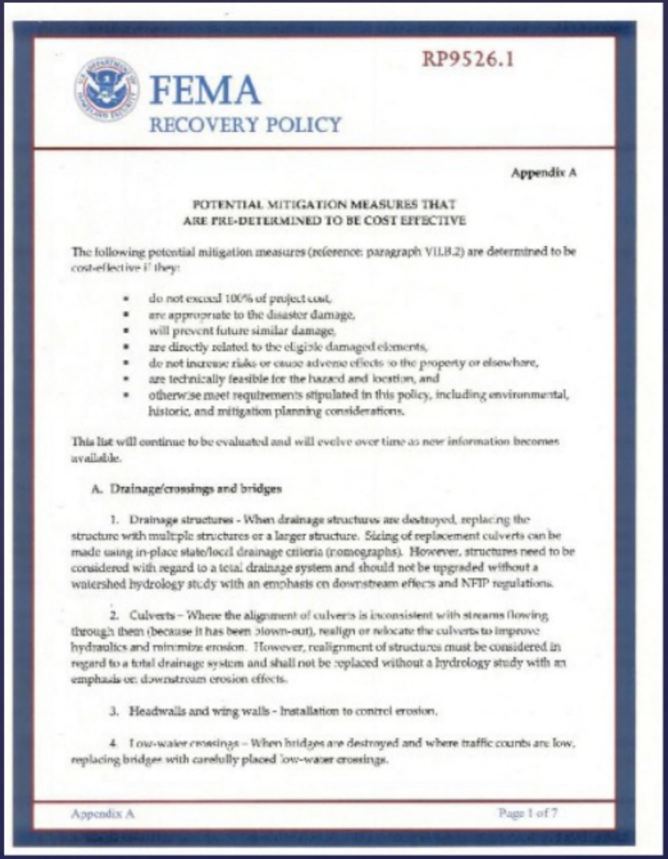
D. FEMA must approve proposed hazard mitigation projects prior to funding. FEMA will evaluate the proposed hazard mitigation projects for cost effectiveness, technical feasibility, and compliance with statutory, regulatory and executive order requirements. In addition, FEMA will ensure that the proposed hazard mitigation projects do not cause a negative impact to the facility's operation, surrounding areas, or susceptibility to damage from another hazard.

E. The cost of meeting applicable codes/standards in accordance with 44 CFR §206.226(d) **Restoration of damaged facilities.** Standards and minimum National Flood Insurance Program requirements are regulatory requirements that are distinct from hazard mitigation. Funding for these costs is considered separately.

Page 3 of 4

RP 9526.1, Appendix A:

Appendix A of 9526.1 includes criteria and seven pages of mitigation treatments that have been pre-determined to be cost effective up to 100% of the repair costs of the damaged element. It is organized by facility type.Be sure to base the 100% on the actual damage being mitigated at the facility you are treating, not the overall costs included in the Project Worksheet.



RP9526.1

FEMA
RECOVERY POLICY

Appendix A

POTENTIAL MITIGATION MEASURES THAT
ARE PRE-DETERMINED TO BE COST EFFECTIVE

The following potential mitigation measures (reference: paragraph VII.B.2) are determined to be cost-effective if they:

- do not exceed 100% of project cost,
- are appropriate to the disaster damage,
- will prevent future similar damage,
- are directly related to the eligible damaged elements,
- do not increase risks or cause adverse effects to the property or elsewhere,
- are technically feasible for the hazard and location, and
- otherwise meet requirements stipulated in this policy, including environmental, historic, and mitigation planning considerations.

This list will continue to be evaluated and will evolve over time as new information becomes available.

A. Drainage/crossings and bridges

1. Drainage structures - When drainage structures are destroyed, replacing the structure with multiple structures or a larger structure. Sizing of replacement culverts can be made using in-place state/local drainage criteria (nomographs). However, structures need to be considered with regard to a total drainage system and should not be upgraded without a watershed hydrology study with an emphasis on downstream effects and NFIP regulations.

2. Culverts – Where the alignment of culverts is inconsistent with streams flowing through them (because it has been blown-out), realign or relocate the culverts to improve hydraulics and minimize erosion. However, realignment of structures must be considered in regard to a total drainage system and shall not be replaced without a hydrology study with an emphasis on downstream erosion effects.

3. Headwalls and wing walls - Installation to control erosion.

4. Low-water crossings – When bridges are destroyed and where traffic counts are low, replacing bridges with carefully placed low-water crossings.

Appendix A Page 1 of 7

How FEMA determines Eligible, Cost Effective 406 Mitigation Funding

Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA):

When the applicant is proposing a mitigation treatment where the cost is more than 15% of the damaged element (and it's not listed in Appendix A), OR it is listed in Appendix A but the cost is over 100% of the repair, FEMA can perform a Benefit Cost Analysis to determine if the proposal is cost effective.Separate training is REQUIRED on the use of FEMA BCA software 5.0.For ND disasters, Region will provide supplemental support for development of BCAs.Items that can be included in the BCA:Category A & B costs from current and past events related to the facility being mitigated.Users of the facility where the loss of function impacts them (e.g. roads: traffic counts, treatment plants/utilities: customers).Historic damages at the site that will be mitigated and can be documented.

Calculating Cost Effectiveness:

Damage: A 24″ culvert and roadway were washed out during the event due to undersized culvert. Estimate to repair the road: $7,000. Estimate for 24″ Culvert installed: $2,500.Hazard Mitigation Proposal (HMP): Install 36″ and rip rap wing walls in place of the 24″ culvert to mitigate damage to the washed out roadway. Estimate of cost: $1,500 for rip rap + $4,000 for 36″ culvert. Minus cost of the 24″ for $ 2,500 = net cost of proposal: $3,000.Is it in Appendix A? Yes. So if technically feasible, it is potentially eligible up to 100% of the damage being mitigated.What is the damage being mitigated? $7,000 + $2,500 = $9,500.HMP: $3,000 (numerator) / $9,500 (denominator) = 31.6% of the repair cost.

FEMA

Common misconceptions interpreting 9526.1

- All 406 Hazard Mitigation proposals are eligible up to 100% of the damaged element.No: Only those items listed on 9526.1, Appendix A have been predetermined to be cost effective up to 100% of the cost of repair.All Mitigation in an Engineered project is eligible for 406 FundingNo: Only damaged elements are eligible for 406 Mitigation funding which can be determined to be cost effective.Codes & Standards (see 44 CFR, 206.226 (d))Improved Project (see page 4, H. of 9526.1)The cost basis for eligible 406 funding is based on the overall Project Worksheet $ amount.No: The cost basis for eligible funding is based on the estimate of repairs for the site/element being mitigated, not the PW. A PW may have up to 50 sites.

Common misconceptions interpreting 9526.1 (continued)

- 406 Mitigation proposals must be an integral part of the damaged element.No: In some instances, an eligible mitigation measure may not be part of the damaged facility. FEMA will consider these exceptions on a case by case basis.406 Mitigation funds may not be applied to an Improved Project.No: Funds recommended for mitigation measures may be approved for an improved project if the original facility and its function will be restored and the mitigation work is still needed, is technically feasible, and will be performed as part of the overall project.Any proposal less than 15% of the damages is eligible 406 Mitigation.No: The mitigation proposal must directly reduce the potential of future, similar disaster damages to the eligible facility. The Hazard Mitigation Proposal (HMP) has several elements that need to be articulated in writing, including why/how it will work.

Common misconceptions interpreting 9526.1 (continued)

- If the mitigation was installed prior to FEMA site visit, it is ineligible.No: If the repair is eligible for FEMA reimbursement under Work Completed and the mitigation is eligible and cost effective per RP 9526.1, the mitigation work is potentially eligible for reimbursement. An HMP for that work should be written that outlines eligibility and cost effectiveness.A Reinforced Concrete Pipe (RCP) is the hydraulic equivalent of a same size Corrugated Metal Pipe (CMP).No. Installing a same size CMP in place of a RCP can significantly reduce hydraulic capacity. If the State DOT cannot provide a hydraulic equivalent table when switching from RCP to CMP, an H&H should be performed to insure adequate capacity.

Common misconceptions interpreting 9526.1 (continued)

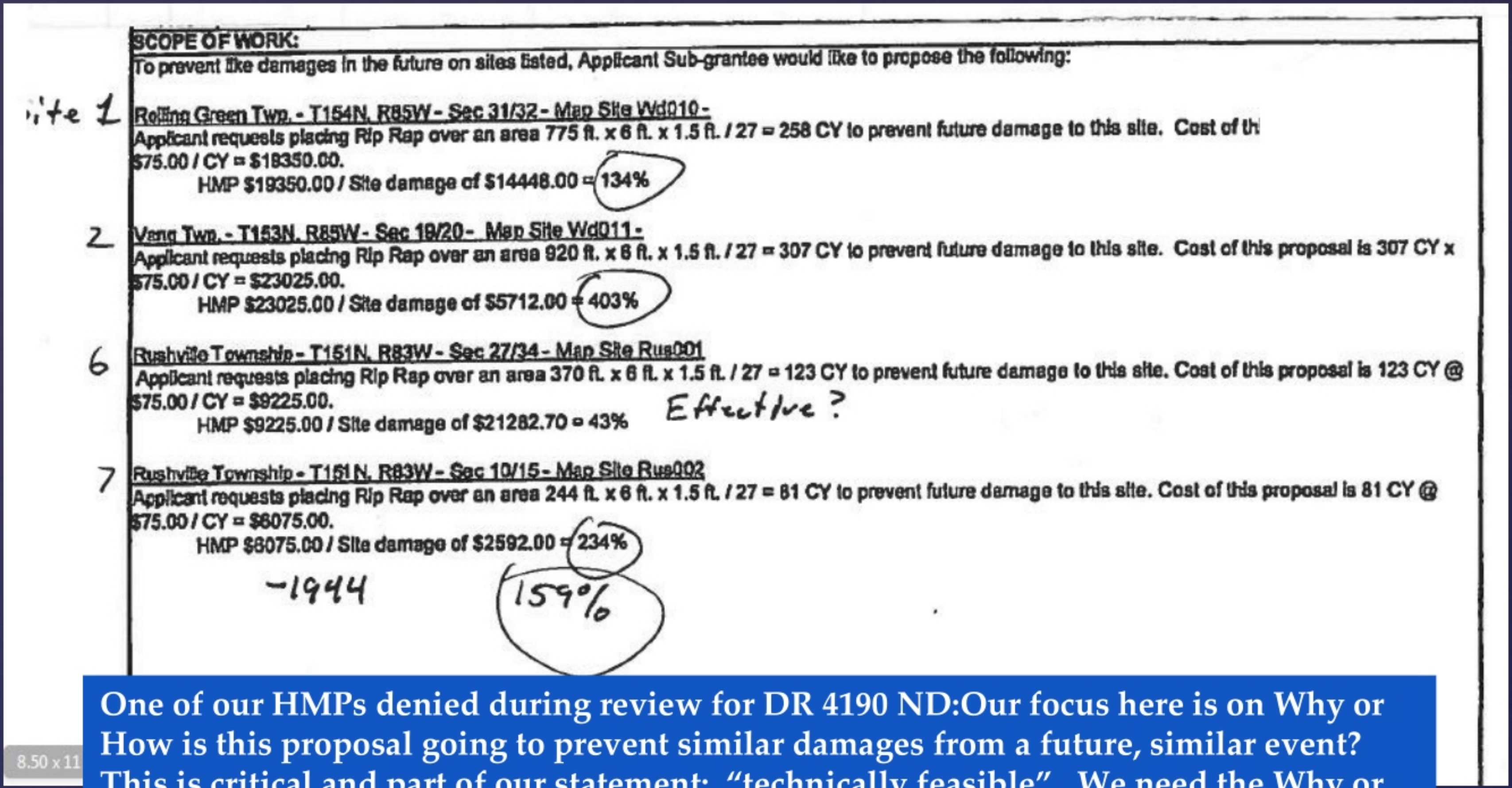
- If the permanent work is complete, add on 406 mitigation is not eligible.No: There are two types of eligible, “add on” 406 Mitigation. If the proposed 406 Mitigation will not impact the previously complete permanent work (i.e. don’t have to tear something out that was paid for on the PW), is cost effective and technically feasible, it is eligible. If the previously complete permanent work was completed during emergency response, and could be considered Emergency Protective measures, 406 Mitigation may be eligible at the site. The 406 Mitigation should be cost effective and technically feasible. These types of sites will be considered on a case by case basis. Additional write ups to separate the emergency work from permanent repairs may be necessary.

Writing Hazard Mitigation Proposals (HMPs)

There are a minimum of five parts to the Hazard Mitigation Proposal. If there are special considerations such as upsizing a culvert or a proposal that needs to be designed by a licensed engineer, additional language is required:Brief description (1-2 sentences) of the damage and the cause.Detailed description of the proposed scope of work.Brief description of WHY (or HOW) the proposed mitigation will reduce similar damages during future, similar events.Cost estimate and ratio calculation (HMP/'cost to restore to predisaster').9526.1 policy reference as to why the project is eligible (a 'cut & paste' template with boilerplate language is available to all staff).Insert Special Considerations comments, as necessary.

FEMA

Lessons Learned from DR 4190 ND



SCOPE OF WORK:

To prevent like damages in the future on sites listed, Applicant Sub-grantee would like to propose the following:

ite 1 Rolling Green Twp. - T154N, R85W - Sec 31/32 - Map Site Wd010 -
Applicant requests placing Rip Rap over an area 775 ft. x 6 ft. x 1.5 ft. / 27 = 258 CY to prevent future damage to this site. Cost of th
$75.00 / CY = $19350.00.
HMP $19350.00 / Site damage of $14448.00 = 134%

2 Veng Twp. - T153N, R85W - Sec 19/20 - Map Site Wd011 -
Applicant requests placing Rip Rap over an area 920 ft. x 6 ft. x 1.5 ft. / 27 = 307 CY to prevent future damage to this site. Cost of this proposal is 307 CY x
$75.00 / CY = $23025.00.
HMP $23025.00 / Site damage of $5712.00 = 403%

6 Rushville Township - T151N, R83W - Sec 27/34 - Map Site Rus001
Applicant requests placing Rip Rap over an area 370 ft. x 6 ft. x 1.5 ft. / 27 = 123 CY to prevent future damage to this site. Cost of this proposal is 123 CY @
$75.00 / CY = $9225.00.
HMP $9225.00 / Site damage of $21282.70 = 43% Effective?

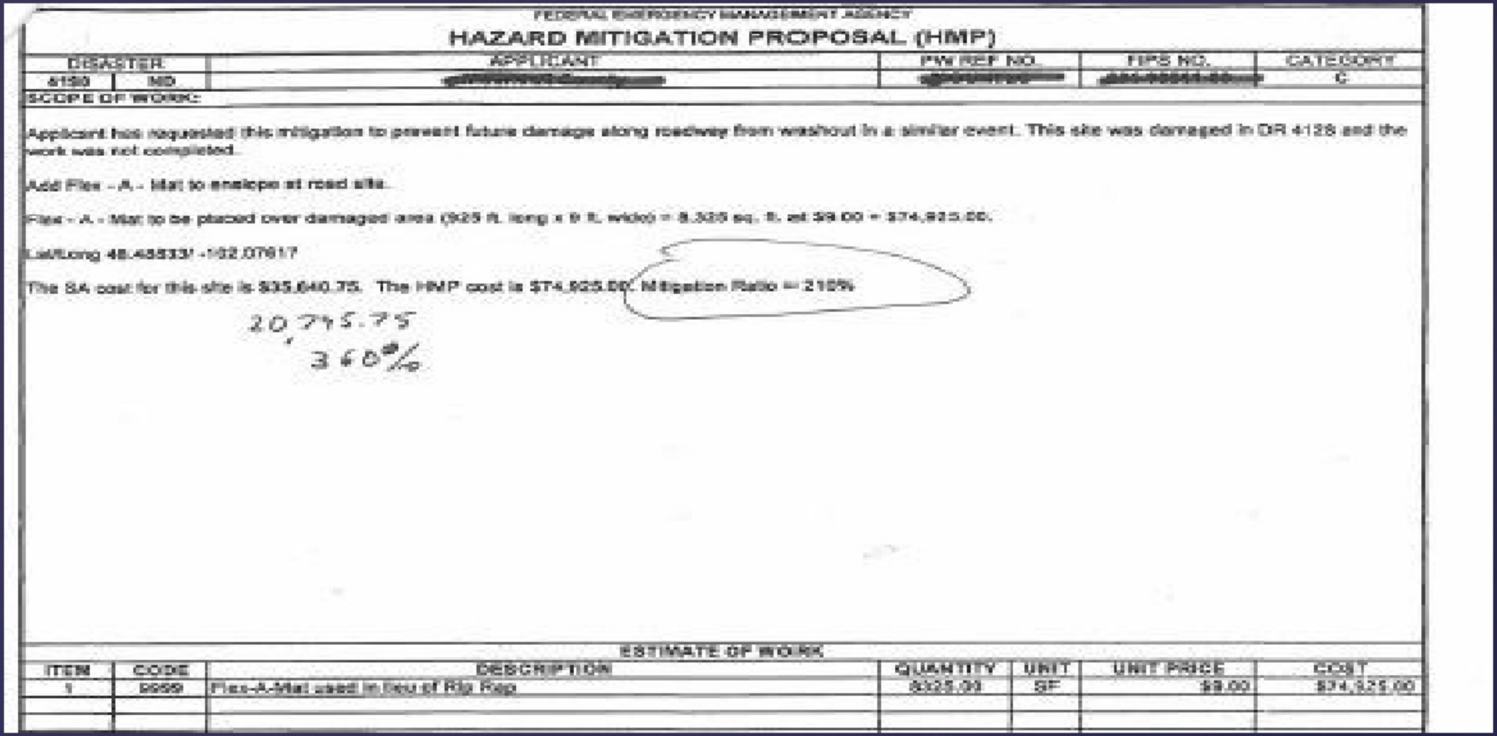
7 Rushville Township - T151N, R83W - Sec 10/15 - Map Site Rus002
Applicant requests placing Rip Rap over an area 244 ft. x 6 ft. x 1.5 ft. / 27 = 81 CY to prevent future damage to this site. Cost of this proposal is 81 CY @
$75.00 / CY = $6075.00.
HMP $6075.00 / Site damage of $2592.00 = 234%

-1944

159%

One of our HMPs denied during review for DR 4190 ND:Our focus here is on Why or How is this proposal going to prevent similar damages from a future, similar event? This is critical and part of our statement: "technically feasible". We need the Why or How statement.

Lessons Learned from DR 4190 ND



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

HAZARD MITIGATION PROPOSAL (HMP)

DISASTER		APPLICANT	PW REF NO.	FIPS NO.	CATEGORY
4190	ND	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	C

SCOPE OF WORK:

Applicant has requested this mitigation to prevent future damage along roadway from washout in a similar event. This site was damaged in DR 4128 and the work was not completed.

Add Flex - A - Mat to enslope at road site.

Flex - A - Mat to be placed over damaged area (925 ft. long x 9 ft. wide) = 8,325 sq. ft. at $9.00 = $74,925.00.

Lat/Long 48.48833/ -102.07617

The SA cost for this site is $35,640.75. The HMP cost is $74,925.00. Mitigation Ratio = 210%

20,745.75
360%

ESTIMATE OF WORK

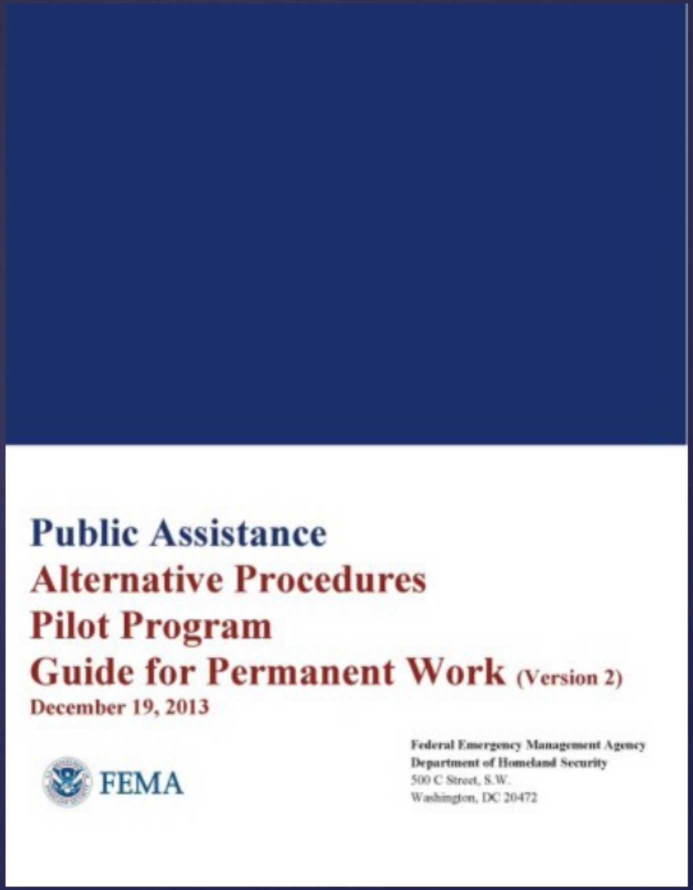
ITEM	CODE	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	COST
1	9999	Flex-A-Mat used in lieu of Rip Rap	8325.00	SF	$9.00	$74,925.00

Another HMPs denied during review for DR 4190 ND:The PW identified that a BCA was needed. The Project Specialist can start to collect critical BCA inputs at the time of project formulation to assist the applicant in getting a successful BCA.

FEMA

FEMA Policy/Program Updates: Sandy Act

NOTE: Version 2 (December 19, 2013).Mitigation (page 16) …In an effort to promote greater flexibility in the use of funds after accepting a fixed grant and allow more resilient mitigation with the alternative procedures authorized under Section 428, FEMA may allow the retention of 406 mitigation funds in the aforementioned circumstances on a case-by-case basis where prevention of future similar damage is proven to be of greater or equal benefit than that which would have been achieved with the approved mitigation scope of work in the agreed upon fixed subgrant(s).



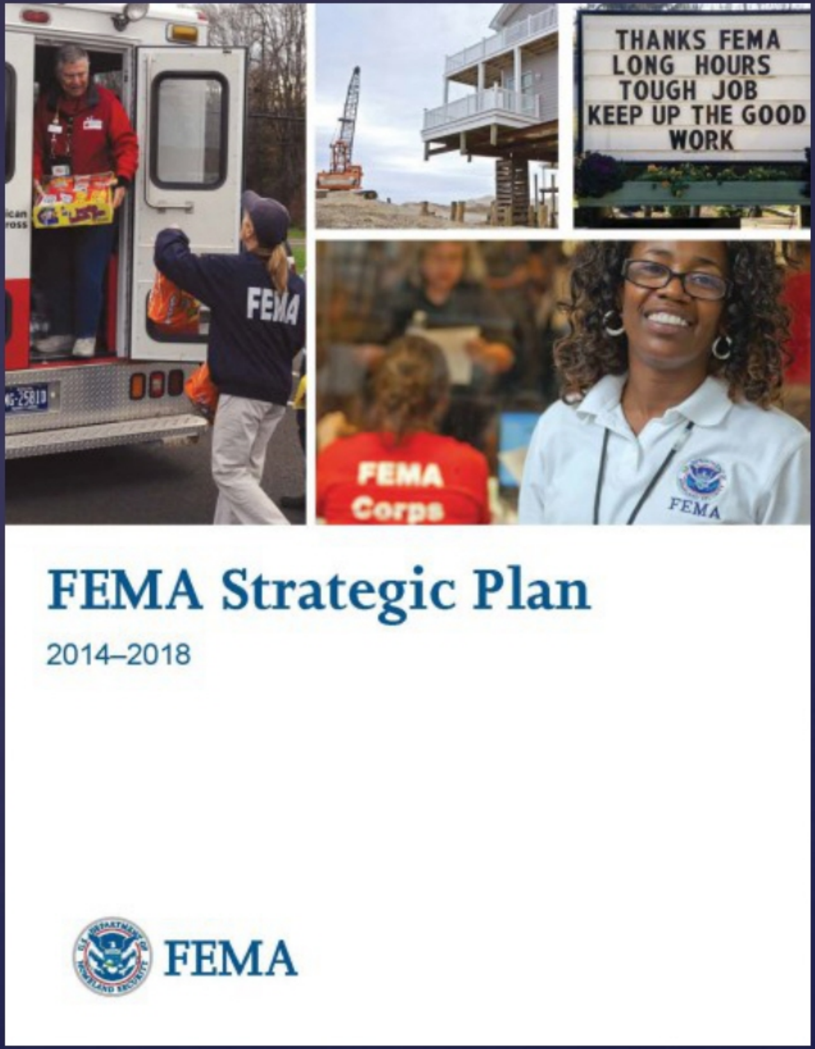
Public Assistance
Alternative Procedures
Pilot Program
Guide for Permanent Work (Version 2)
December 19, 2013

FEMA

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20472

FEMA Policy/Program Updates: FEMA Strategic Plan

(pp. 32-33): Although FEMA has a number of pre- and postdisaster programs that support and encourage resilient building practices, the Agency will pursue improvements to increase the effectiveness of these programs in incentivizing risk reduction. For example, FEMA will better synchronize hazard mitigation opportunities authorized under Sections 404 and 406 of the Stafford Act to increase accessibility and improve the outcomes of these programs.Strategy 4.2.1: Align the 404 and 406 mitigation programs to assist communities in managing current and future risk.

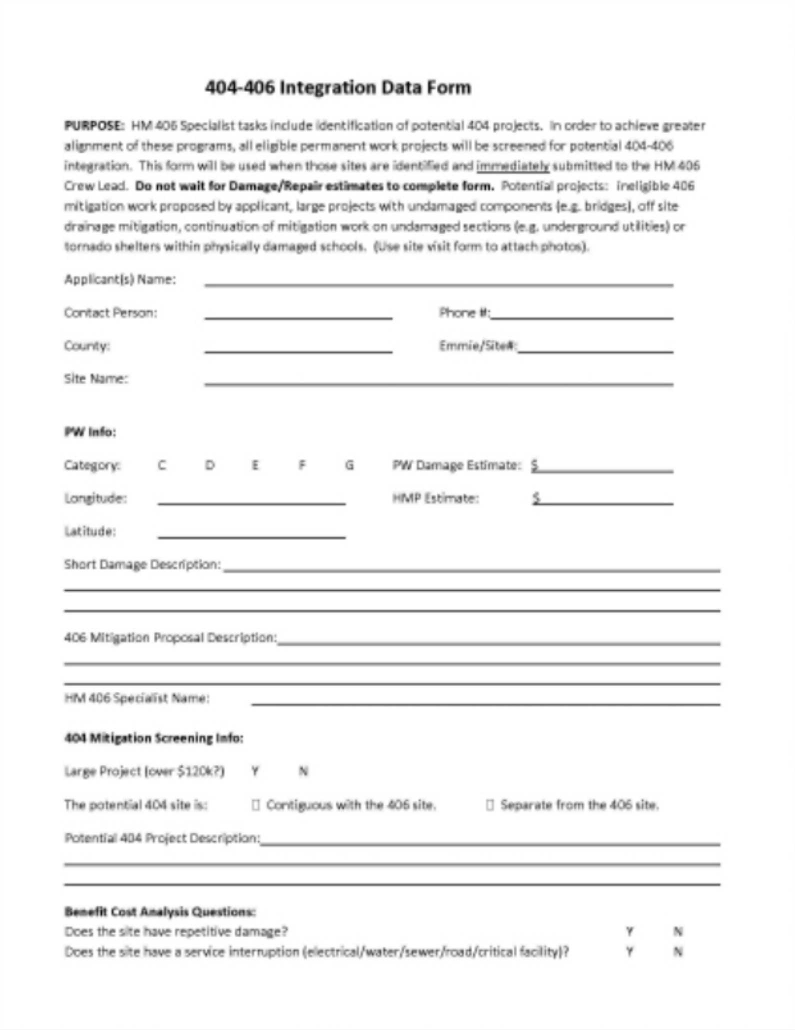

FEMA Strategic Plan

2014–2018

FEMA

FEMA Policy/Program Updates: FEMA Strategic Plan

CRITICAL PATH FOR 404-406 ALIGNMENT:To be completed by Field Staff: PA Project Specialists/HM 406 Specialists:Identification (404-406 Integration Data Form filled out). See attached form. To be completed by FEMA Regional or DR Staff:2) Evaluation.Collaboration: FEMA HMGP Specialist/Engineers, State Review Team & Local Officials.Development: 404 project proposal development, 406 synchronization and EHP consultation.Approval, execution and closeout.Identification: If there are no HM 406 Specialists in attendance at kickoff meetings/site visits, it is the PA Project Specialist's responsibility to identify 404-406 alignment potential and filling out data form.



404-406 Integration Data Form

PURPOSE: HM 406 Specialist tasks include identification of potential 404 projects. In order to achieve greater alignment of these programs, all eligible permanent work projects will be screened for potential 404-406 integration. This form will be used when those sites are identified and immediately submitted to the HM 406 Crew Lead. **Do not wait for Damage/Repair estimates to complete form.** Potential projects: ineligible 406 mitigation work proposed by applicant, large projects with undamaged components (e.g. bridges), off site drainage mitigation, continuation of mitigation work on undamaged sections (e.g. underground utilities) or tornado shelters within physically damaged schools. (Use site visit form to attach photos).

Applicant(s) Name: ____________________

Contact Person: ____________________ Phone #: ____________________

County: ____________________ Emmie/Site#: ____________________

Site Name: ____________________

PW Info:

Category: C D E F G PW Damage Estimate: $____________

Longitude: ____________________ HMP Estimate: $____________

Latitude: ____________________

Short Damage Description: ____________________

406 Mitigation Proposal Description: ____________________

HM 406 Specialist Name: ____________________

404 Mitigation Screening Info:

Large Project (over $120k?) Y N

The potential 404 site is: ☐ Contiguous with the 406 site. ☐ Separate from the 406 site.

Potential 404 Project Description: ____________________

Benefit Cost Analysis Questions:

Does the site have repetitive damage? Y N

Does the site have a service interruption (electrical/water/sewer/road/critical facility)? Y N

Special Considerations: Culvert Replacement/Upsize

Percent Change in culvert discharge when switching from a Reinforced Concrete Culvert (RCP) to a Corrugated Metal Pipe (CMP)of the same diameter (Assumptions: HW + $S_O L$ = 4′, Pipe Length(L) = 50′, culvert in outlet control):

Diameter	**RCP Flow Q RCP**	**CMP Flow Q CMP**	**Ratio Q CMP/Q RCP**	**Flow Change**
12 IN	7 CFS	4.3 CFS	4.3/7 = 0.61	- 39%
15	11	6.8	6.8/11 = 0.62	- 38%
18	16.4	10.0	10/16.4 = 0.61	- 39%
21	22.2	14.4	14.4/22.2 = 0.65	- 35%

(Courtesy Paul Mitchell, FEMA Reservist, 6/27/2013)

FEMA

Summary

- Recovery Policy 9526.1 is the primary guiding document for determining eligibility and cost effectiveness. A scope of damage and the estimated repair (BY SITE) are needed to develop a 406 Mitigation proposal and the cost basis for determining the cost effectiveness of Hazard Mitigation Proposals (HMPs).The written Hazard Mitigation Proposal should include several items, including WHAT caused the damage and WHY the mitigation proposal will work.All Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Staff should be aware of new Policies (PA Alternate Procedures) and Strategic Plans (Alignment of 406-404 programs to minimize future risk) and what they entail in order to adequately deliver program benefits.For flood events, Staff should be mindful of negative impacts of replacing reinforced concrete pipe with same size corrugated metal pipe (Get an H&H Study).

Discussion?

FEMA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

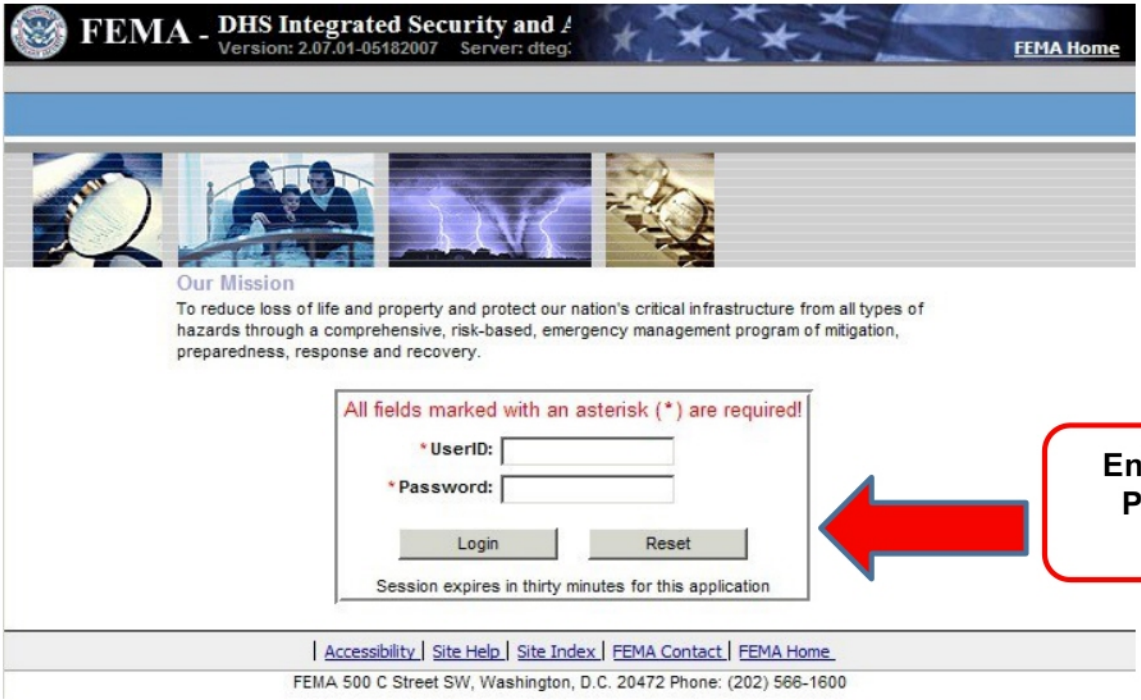
FEMA

Region VIIIEMMIEDirect Input

EMMIE Direct Entry

Objectives: At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:Log-in to the EMMIE PA internal systemUnderstand the Home page and navigate the basic screensCreate a Project in EMMIEReferences: Additional documentation which has been prepared by the developers is available:Internal SystemEMMIE User Manual – FEMA Program OfficeEMMIE User Manual – Standard Features

EMMIE Sign-In Screen


FEMA - DHS Integrated Security and A
Version: 2.07.01-05182007 Server: dteg
FEMA Home

Our Mission

To reduce loss of life and property and protect our nation's critical infrastructure from all types of hazards through a comprehensive, risk-based, emergency management program of mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required!

*UserID:
*Password:
Login
Reset

Session expires in thirty minutes for this application

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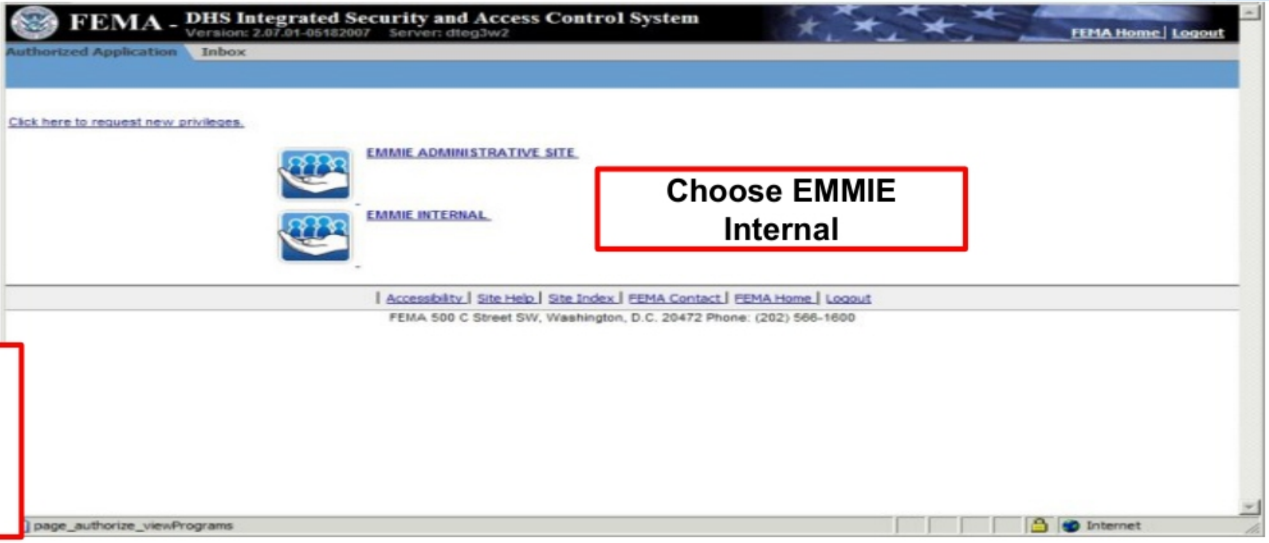
FEMA 500 C Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20472 Phone: (202) 566-1600

Enter User ID and Password case sensitive

Authorized Applications for User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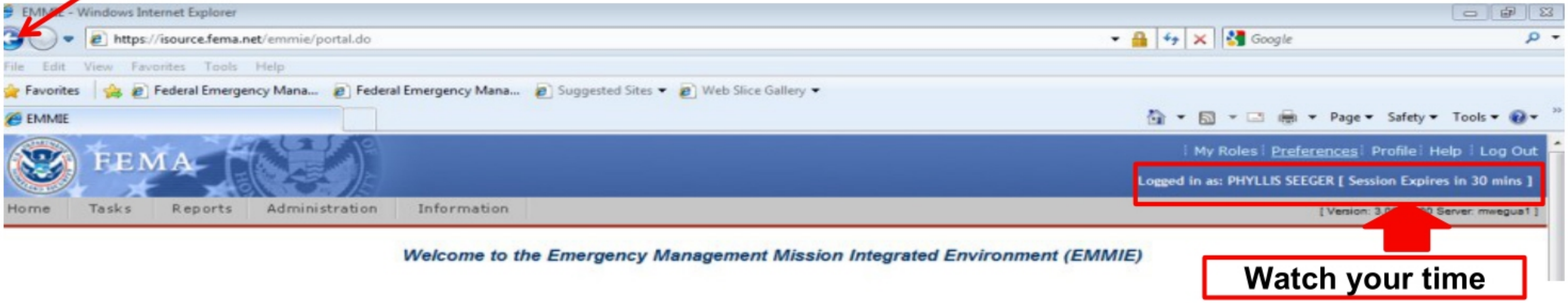
Internet

FEMA 500 C Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20472 Phone: (202) 566-1600

Choose EMMIE Internal

NEVER use the back arrow in EMMIE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Safety
Tools
FEMA
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Home
Tasks
Reports
Administration
Information

Logged in as: PHYLLIS SEEGER [Session Expires in 30 mins]

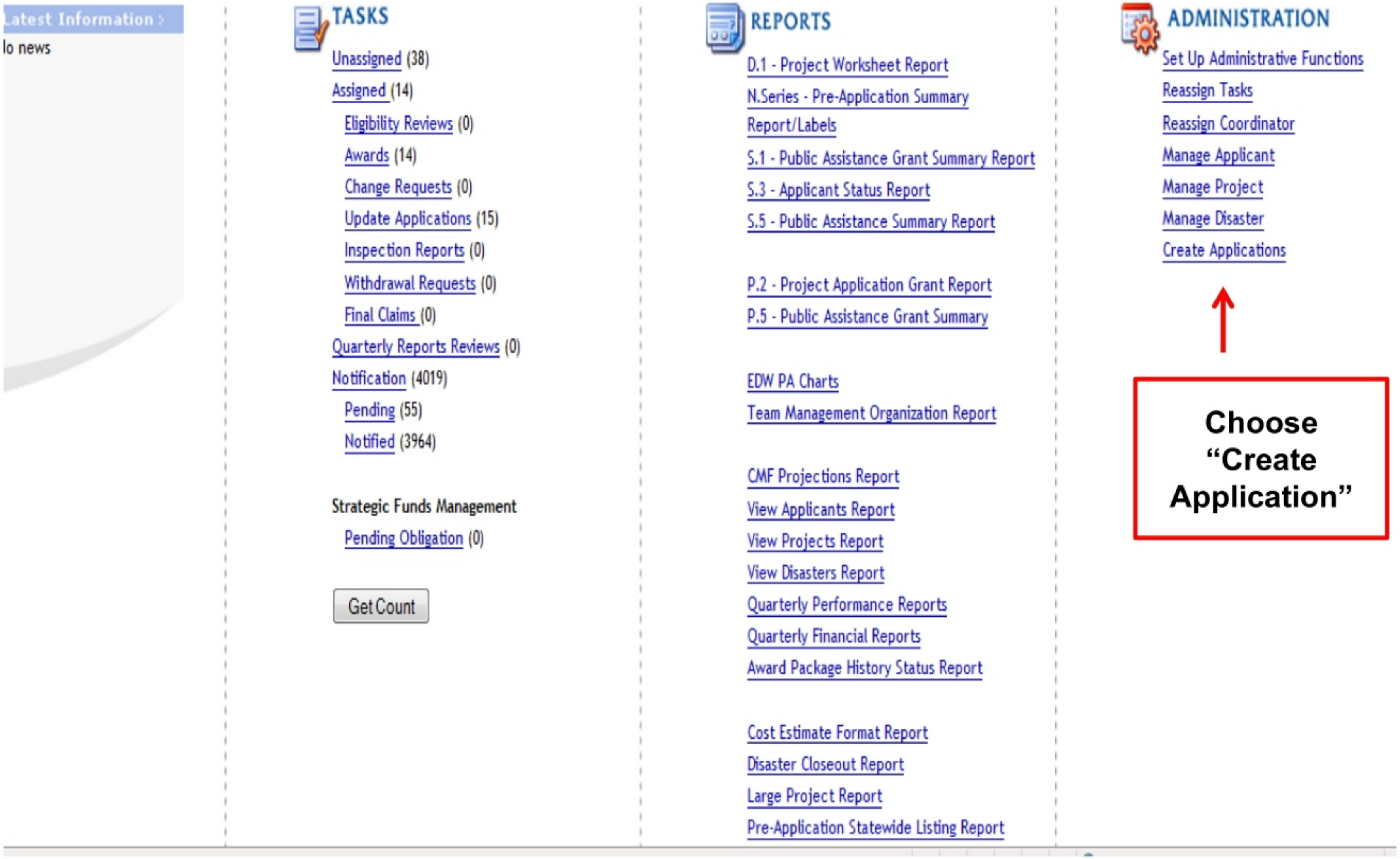
[Version: 3.0 0 Server: mwegua1]

Welcome to the Emergency Management Mission Integrated Environment (EMMIE)

Watch your time

- **Be sure to save "SAVE" all the time, you have 30 active minutes in EMMIE at a timeYou can use th**

EMMIE Home Page



Latest Information ›

lo news

TASKS

- Unassigned (38)
- Assigned (14)
  - Eligibility Reviews (0)
  - Awards (14)
  - Change Requests (0)
  - Update Applications (15)
  - Inspection Reports (0)
  - Withdrawal Requests (0)
  - Final Claims (0)
- Quarterly Reports Reviews (0)
- Notification (4019)
  - Pending (55)
  - Notified (3964)

Strategic Funds Management

- Pending Obligation (0)

REPORTS

- D.1 - Project Worksheet Report
- N.Series - Pre-Application Summary Report/Labels
- S.1 - Public Assistance Grant Summary Report
- S.3 - Applicant Status Report
- S.5 - Public Assistance Summary Report

- P.2 - Project Application Grant Report
- P.5 - Public Assistance Grant Summary

- EDW PA Charts
- Team Management Organization Report

- CMF Projections Report
- View Applicants Report
- View Projects Report
- View Disasters Report
- Quarterly Performance Reports
- Quarterly Financial Reports
- Award Package History Status Report

- Cost Estimate Format Report
- Disaster Closeout Report
- Large Project Report
- Pre-Application Statewide Listing Report

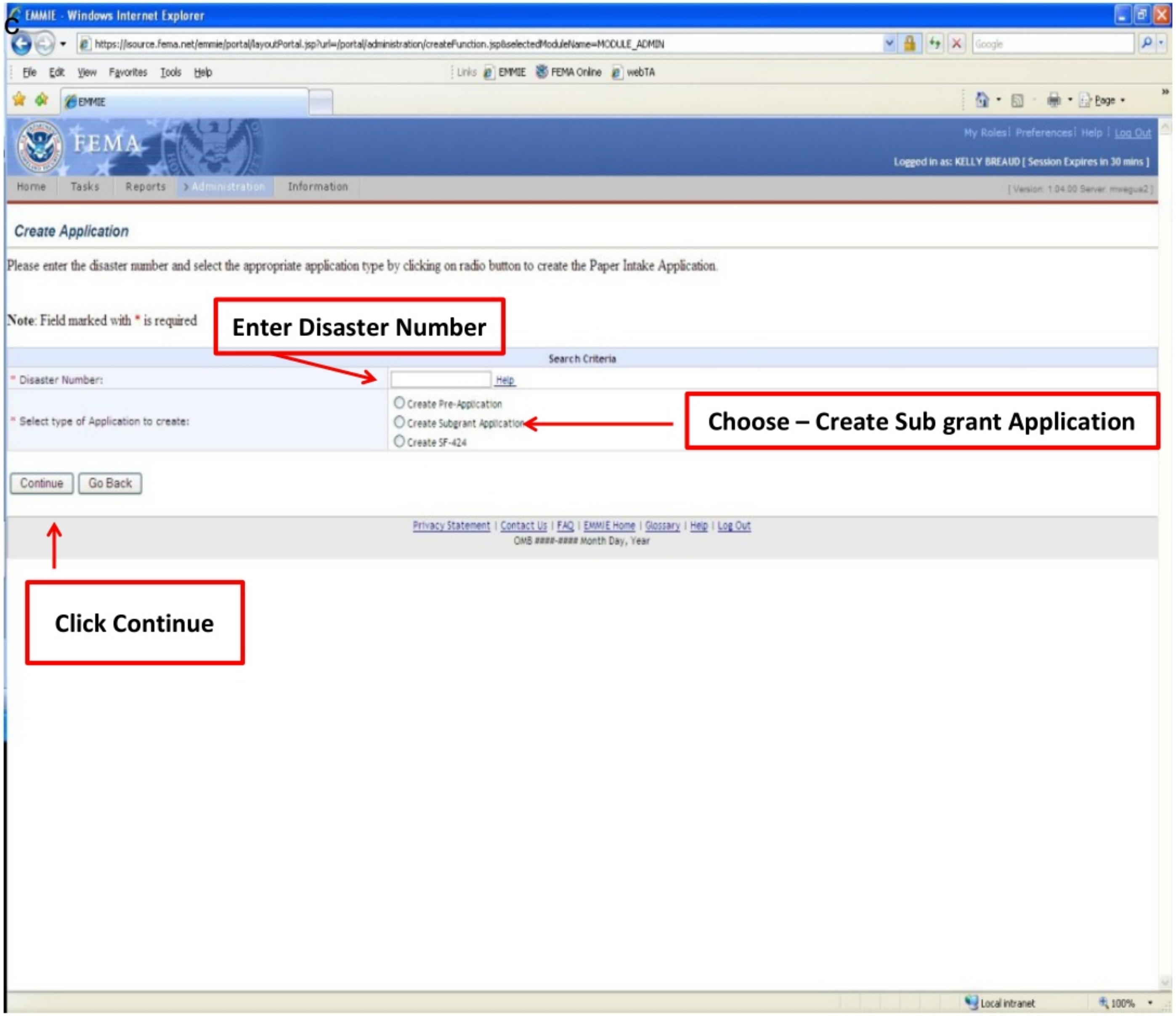
ADMINISTRATION

- Set Up Administrative Functions
- Reassign Tasks
- Reassign Coordinator
- Manage Applicant
- Manage Project
- Manage Disaster
- Create Applications

Choose “Create Application”

Under “Administration” choose “Create Application

Create Sub grant Application


EMMIE - Windows Internet Explorer
https://isource.fema.net/emmie/portal/layoutPortal.jsp?url=/portal/administration/createFunction.jsp&selectedModuleName=MODULE_ADMIN
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Links EMMIE FEMA Online webTA
EMMIE
Page
FEMA
My Roles | Preferences | Help | Log Out
Home
Tasks
Reports
> Administration
Information
[Version: 1.04.00 Server: mwegua2]
Privacy Statement | Contact Us | FAQ | EMMIE Home | Glossary | Help | Log Out
OMB ####-#### Month Day, Year
Local intranet
100%

Logged in as: KELLY BREAUD [Session Expires in 30 mins]

Create Application

Please enter the disaster number and select the appropriate application type by clicking on radio button to create the Paper Intake Application.

Note: Field marked with * is required

Search Criteria

* Disaster Number: Help

* Select type of Application to create:
○ Create Pre-Application
○ Create Subgrant Application
○ Create SF-424

Continue Go Back

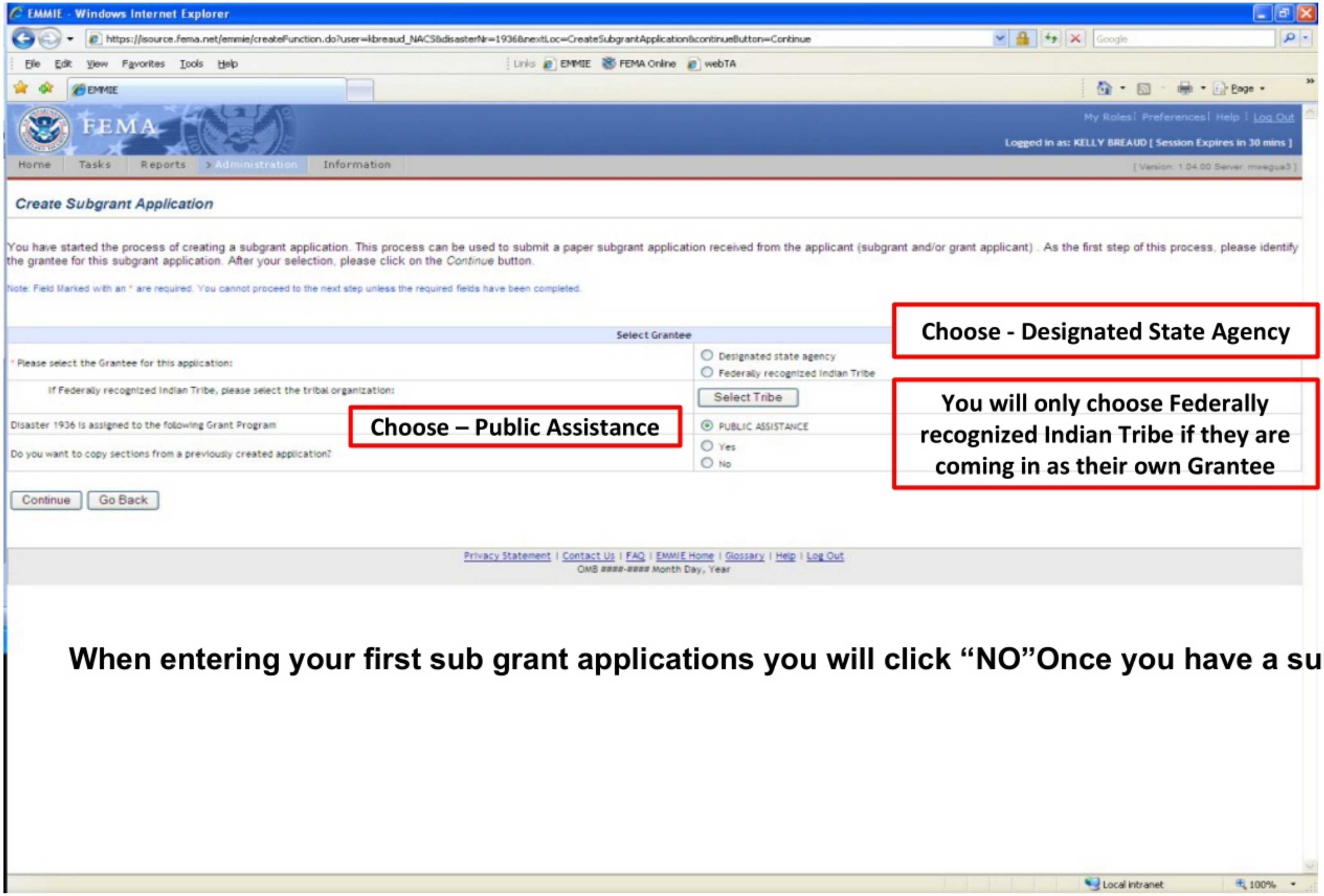
Enter Disaster Number

Choose – Create Sub grant Application

Click Continue

EMMIE Direct Entry

Create Sub grant Application


EMMIE - Windows Internet Explorer
https://isource.fema.net/emmie/createFunction.do?user=kbreaud_NACS&disasterNr=1936&nextLoc=CreateSubgrantApplication&continueButton=Continue
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Links EMMIE FEMA Online webTA
EMMIE
Page
FEMA
My Roles | Preferences | Help | Log Out
Logged in as: KELLY BREAUD [Session Expires in 30 mins]
Home Tasks Reports > Administration Information
[Version: 1.04.00 Server: mwegua3]

Create Subgrant Application

You have started the process of creating a subgrant application. This process can be used to submit a paper subgrant application received from the applicant (subgrant and/or grant applicant) . As the first step of this process, please identify the grantee for this subgrant application. After your selection, please click on the *Continue* button.

Note: Field Marked with an * are required. You cannot proceed to the next step unless the required fields have been completed.

Select Grantee

* Please select the Grantee for this application:	○ Designated state agency ○ Federally recognized Indian Tribe
If Federally recognized Indian Tribe, please select the tribal organization:	Select Tribe
Disaster 1936 is assigned to the following Grant Program	● PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
Do you want to copy sections from a previously created application?	○ Yes ○ No

Continue
Go Back
Privacy Statement | Contact Us | FAQ | EMMIE Home | Glossary | Help | Log Out
OMB ####-#### Month Day, Year
Local intranet
100%

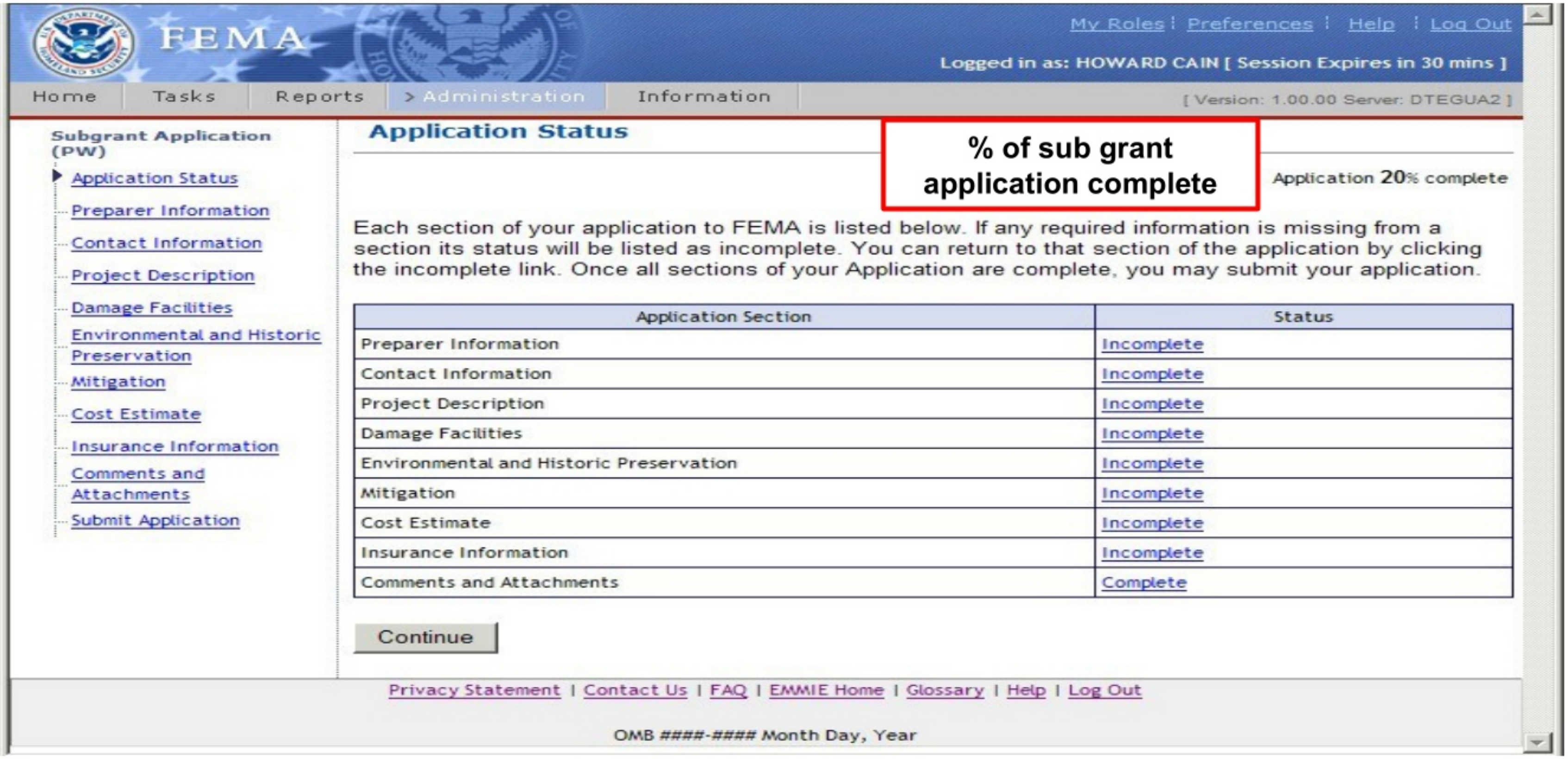
Choose - Designated State Agency

You will only choose Federally recognized Indian Tribe if they are coming in as their own Grantee

Choose – Public Assistance

When entering your first sub grant applications you will click "NO"Once you have a sub grant a

Application Status


FEMA
My Roles
Preferences
Help
Log Out
Home
Tasks
Reports
> Administration
Information
Subgrant Application (PW)
Application Status
Preparer Information
Contact Information
Project Description
Damage Facilities
Environmental and Historic Preservation
Mitigation
Cost Estimate
Insurance Information
Comments and Attachments
Submit Application
Continue
Privacy Statement | Contact Us | FAQ | EMMIE Home | Glossary | Help | Log Out

Logged in as: HOWARD CAIN [Session Expires in 30 mins]

[Version: 1.00.00 Server: DTEGUA2]

Application Status

% of sub grant application complete

Application 20% complete

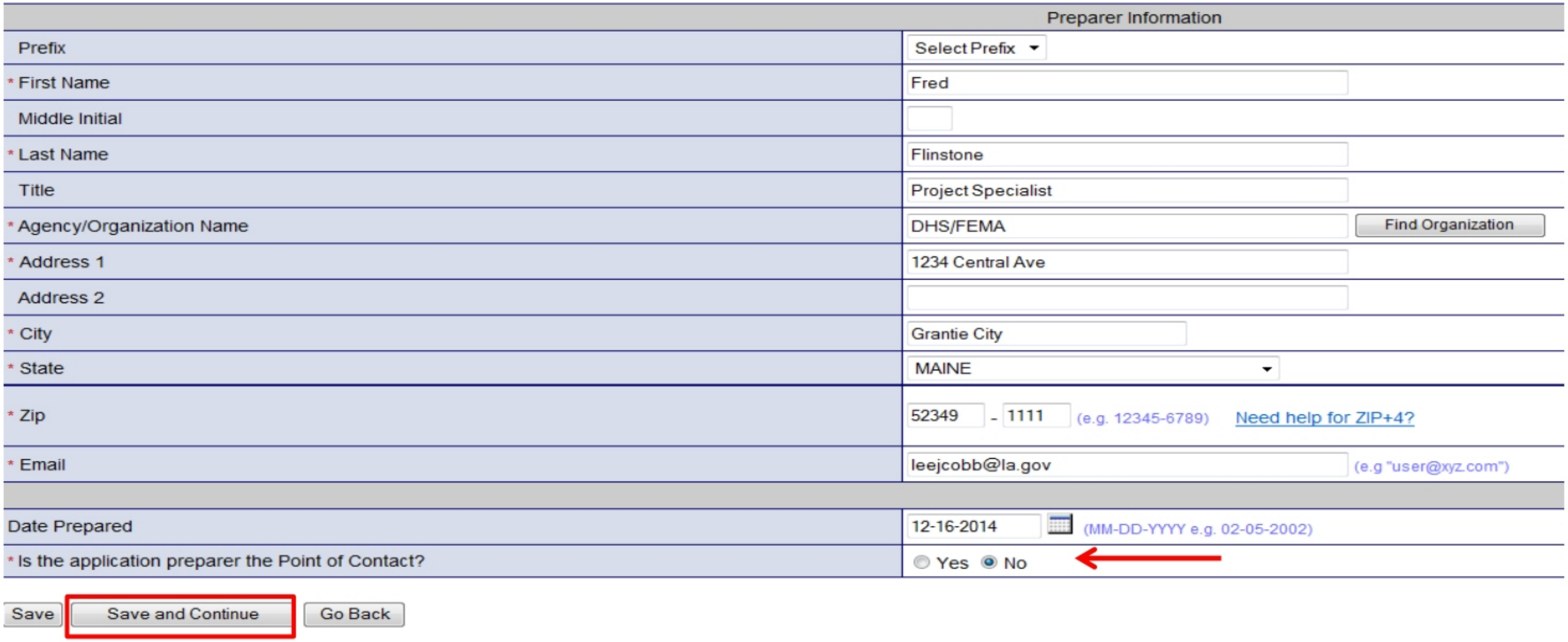
Each section of your application to FEMA is listed below. If any required information is missing from a section its status will be listed as incomplete. You can return to that section of the application by clicking the incomplete link. Once all sections of your Application are complete, you may submit your application.

Application Section	Status
Preparer Information	Incomplete
Contact Information	Incomplete
Project Description	Incomplete
Damage Facilities	Incomplete
Environmental and Historic Preservation	Incomplete
Mitigation	Incomplete
Cost Estimate	Incomplete
Insurance Information	Incomplete
Comments and Attachments	Complete

OMB ####-#### Month Day, Year

The Applicant Status Screen is the default screenUser may go to a specific application section by using the navigational bar or status link.The top and bottom link on the navigational bar (Applicant Status and Submit Application) both show the Complete/Incomplete status of each sectionAs data is entered and saved, the percent complete will update. An application may not be submitted until application is 100% complete.When the user clicks the "Continue" button, the next section in order will appear. In this case, user will be taken to "Preparer Information" screen.

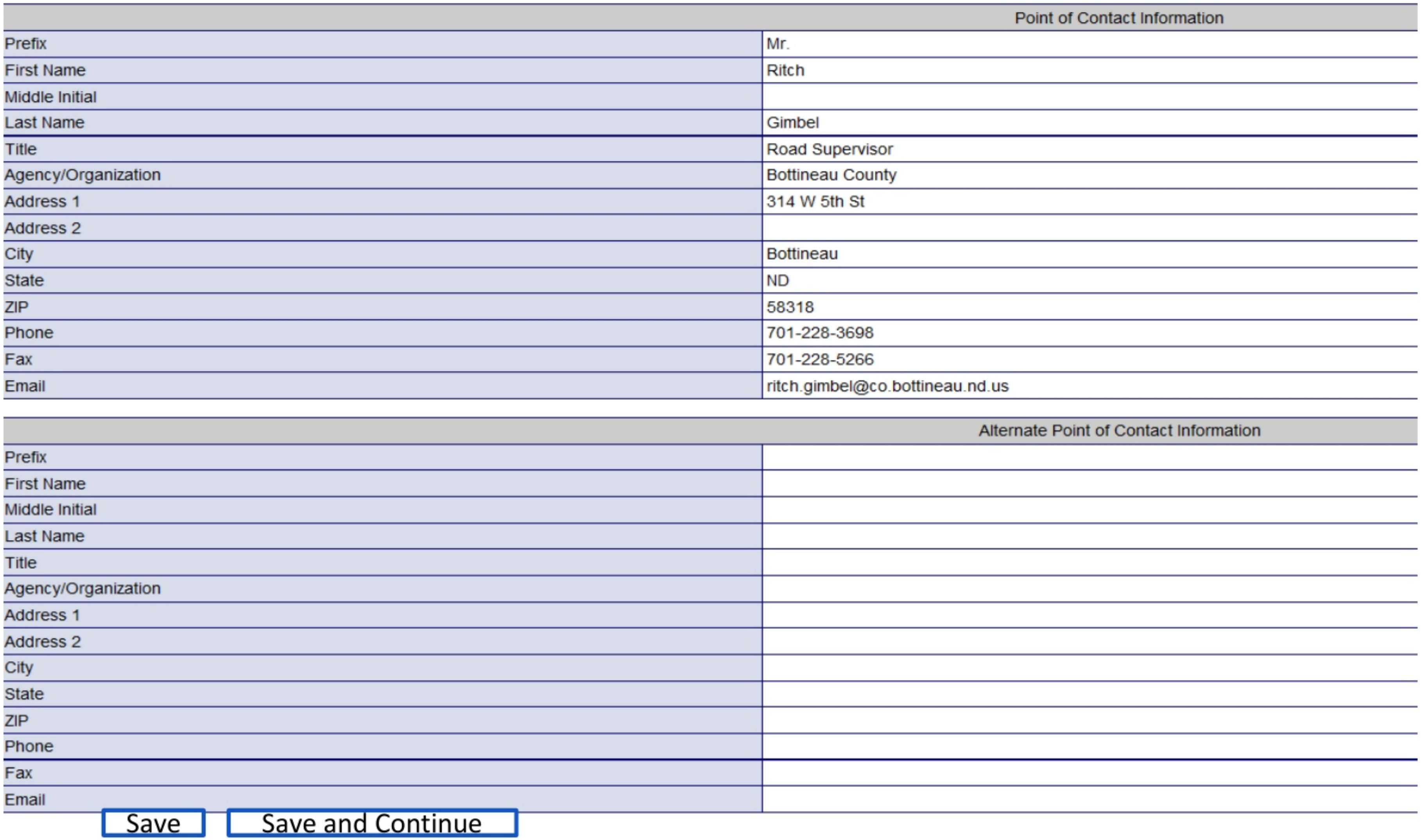
Preparer Information



	Preparer Information
Prefix	Select Prefix
* First Name	Fred
Middle Initial	
* Last Name	Flinstone
Title	Project Specialist
* Agency/Organization Name	DHS/FEMA
* Address 1	1234 Central Ave
Address 2	
* City	Grantie City
* State	MAINE
* Zip	52349 - 1111 (e.g. 12345-6789) Need help for ZIP+4?
* Email	leejcobb@la.gov (e.g "user@xyz.com")
Date Prepared	12-16-2014 (MM-DD-YYYY e.g. 02-05-2002)
* Is the application preparer the Point of Contact?	○ Yes ● No

- **Preparer - Will be you – Your name will be in all Cap's – please change to cap and lower caseTitle - Project SpecialistAgency / Organization – DHS/FEMA (Do NOT Click "Find Organization")The rest of the information below will be provided to youAddress will be where the state office is locatedCity and Sate will be where the state office locatedDate Prepared – Date the PW was preparedEmail – Whomever is the person designated to receive the emailsIs the Preparer the Point of Contact? - "NO""Save and Continue"**

Contact Information

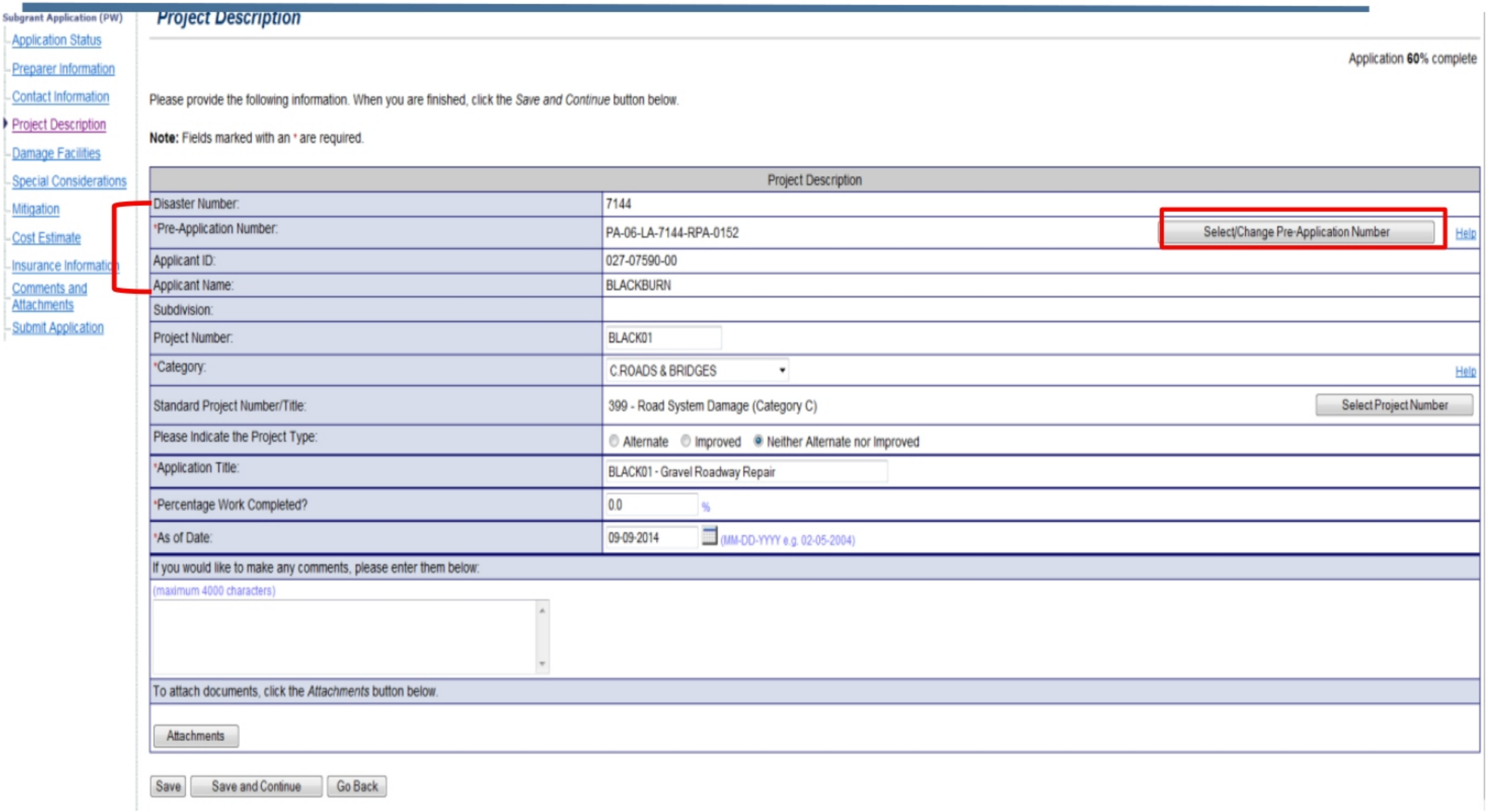


	Point of Contact Information
Prefix	Mr.
First Name	Ritch
Middle Initial	
Last Name	Gimbel
Title	Road Supervisor
Agency/Organization	Bottineau County
Address 1	314 W 5th St
Address 2	
City	Bottineau
State	ND
ZIP	58318
Phone	701-228-3698
Fax	701-228-5266
Email	ritch.gimbel@co.bottineau.nd.us

	Alternate Point of Contact Information
Prefix	
First Name	
Middle Initial	
Last Name	
Title	
Agency/Organization	
Address 1	
Address 2	
City	
State	
ZIP	
Phone	
Fax	
Email	

- **All information for this screen comes directly from the RPA – If there is alternate contact information on the RPA please enter it.Click “Save and Continue”**

Project Description


Subgrant Application (PW)
Application Status
Preparer Information
Contact Information
Project Description
Damage Facilities
Special Considerations
Mitigation
Cost Estimate
Insurance Informatio
Comments and Attachments
Submit Application
Select/Change Pre-Application Number
Help
Select Project Number
Help
Attachments
Save
Save and Continue
Go Back

Project Description

Application **60%** complete

Please provide the following information. When you are finished, click the *Save and Continue* button below.

Note: Fields marked with an * are required.

Project Description	
Disaster Number:	7144
*Pre-Application Number:	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0152
Applicant ID:	027-07590-00
Applicant Name:	BLACKBURN
Subdivision:	
Project Number:	BLACK01
*Category:	C.ROADS & BRIDGES
Standard Project Number/Title:	399 - Road System Damage (Category C)
Please Indicate the Project Type:	○ Alternate ○ Improved ● Neither Alternate nor Improved
*Application Title:	BLACK01 - Gravel Roadway Repair
*Percentage Work Completed?	0.0 %
*As of Date:	09-09-2014 (MM-DD-YYYY e.g. 02-05-2004)

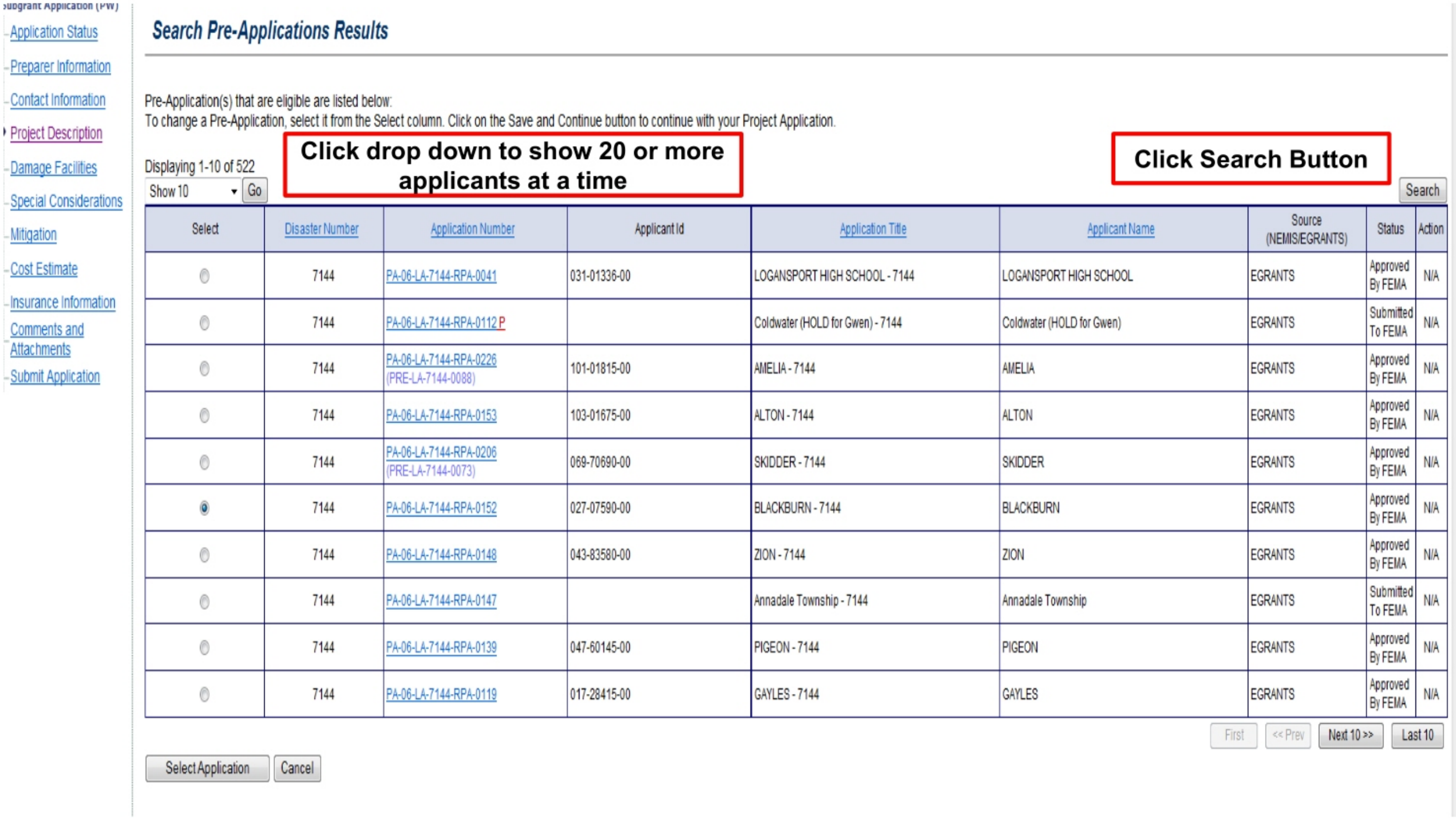
If you would like to make any comments, please enter them below:

(maximum 4000 characters)

To attach documents, click the *Attachments* button below.

- **Disaster Number – Pre-Application Number – Applicant ID - Applicant Name – all come from clicking the box “Select / Change Pre-Application Number” (See next page – A1)**

Project Description – Continued – A1



ubgrant Application (PW)
Application Status
Preparer Information
Contact Information
Project Description
Damage Facilities
Special Considerations
Mitigation
Cost Estimate
Insurance Information
Comments and Attachments
Submit Application

Search Pre-Applications Results

Pre-Application(s) that are eligible are listed below:
To change a Pre-Application, select it from the Select column. Click on the Save and Continue button to continue with your Project Application.

Click drop down to show 20 or more applicants at a time

Click Search Button

Displaying 1-10 of 522

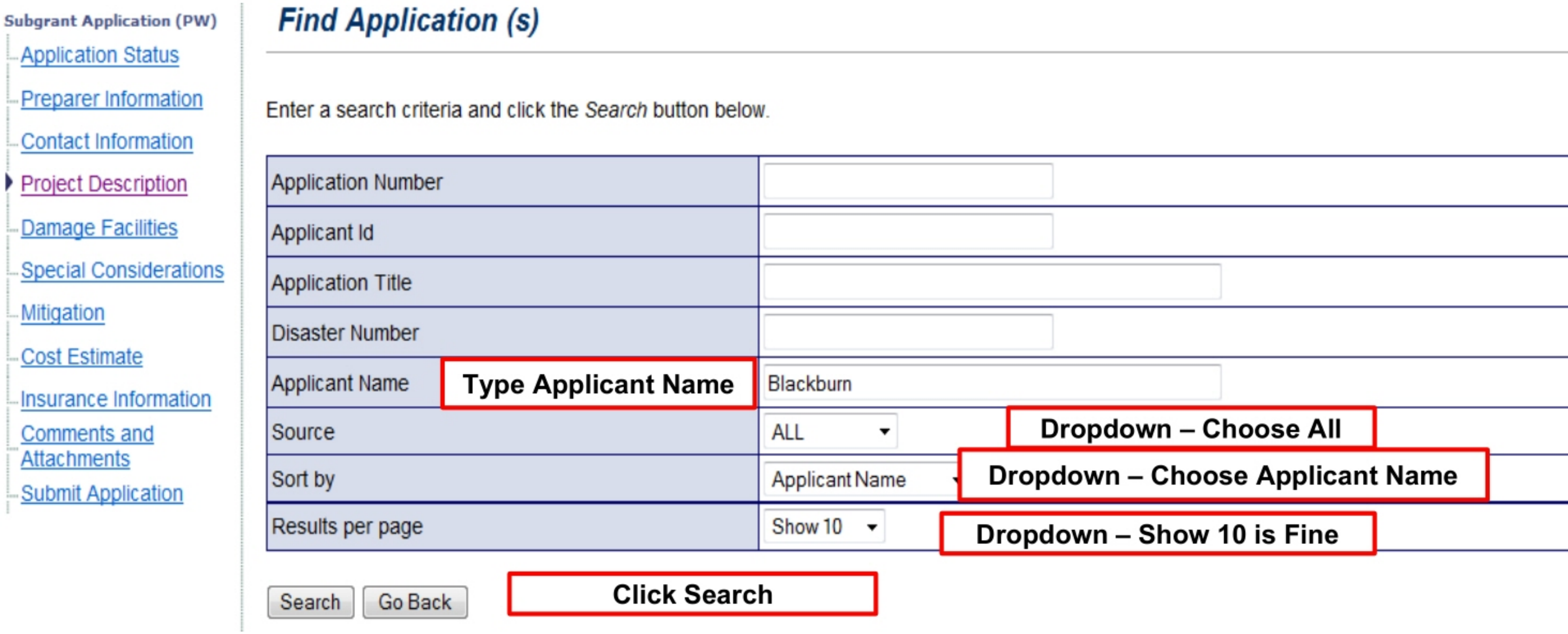
Show 10
Go
Search

Select	Disaster Number	Application Number	Applicant Id	Application Title	Applicant Name	Source (NEMIS/EGRANTS)	Status	Action
○	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0041	031-01336-00	LOGANSPORT HIGH SCHOOL - 7144	LOGANSPORT HIGH SCHOOL	EGRANTS	Approved By FEMA	N/A
○	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0112 P		Coldwater (HOLD for Gwen) - 7144	Coldwater (HOLD for Gwen)	EGRANTS	Submitted To FEMA	N/A
○	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0226 (PRE-LA-7144-0088)	101-01815-00	AMELIA - 7144	AMELIA	EGRANTS	Approved By FEMA	N/A
○	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0153	103-01675-00	ALTON - 7144	ALTON	EGRANTS	Approved By FEMA	N/A
○	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0206 (PRE-LA-7144-0073)	069-70690-00	SKIDDER - 7144	SKIDDER	EGRANTS	Approved By FEMA	N/A
●	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0152	027-07590-00	BLACKBURN - 7144	BLACKBURN	EGRANTS	Approved By FEMA	N/A
○	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0148	043-83580-00	ZION - 7144	ZION	EGRANTS	Approved By FEMA	N/A
○	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0147		Annadale Township - 7144	Annadale Township	EGRANTS	Submitted To FEMA	N/A
○	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0139	047-60145-00	PIGEON - 7144	PIGEON	EGRANTS	Approved By FEMA	N/A
○	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0119	017-28415-00	GAYLES - 7144	GAYLES	EGRANTS	Approved By FEMA	N/A

First
<< Prev
Next 10 >>
Last 10
Select Application
Cancel

- **Put curser over circle and click to select – Go to bottom of screen and click “Select ApplicantIf**

Project Description – Continued – A1



Subgrant Application (PW)
Application Status
Preparer Information
Contact Information
Project Description
Damage Facilities
Special Considerations
Mitigation
Cost Estimate
Insurance Information
Comments and Attachments
Submit Application

Find Application (s)

Enter a search criteria and click the *Search* button below.

Application Number	
Applicant Id	
Application Title	
Disaster Number	
Applicant Name	Blackburn
Source	ALL
Sort by	Applicant Name
Results per page	Show 10

Search
Go Back

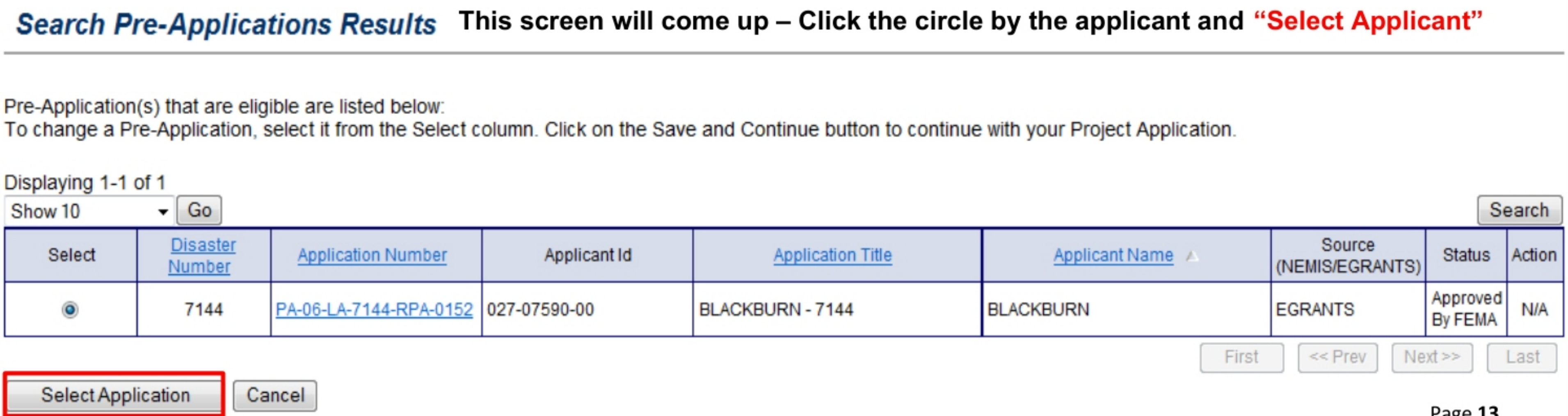
Type Applicant Name

Dropdown – Choose All

Dropdown – Choose Applicant Name

Dropdown – Show 10 is Fine

Click Search



Search Pre-Applications Results

This screen will come up – Click the circle by the applicant and "Select Applicant"

Pre-Application(s) that are eligible are listed below:
To change a Pre-Application, select it from the Select column. Click on the Save and Continue button to continue with your Project Application.

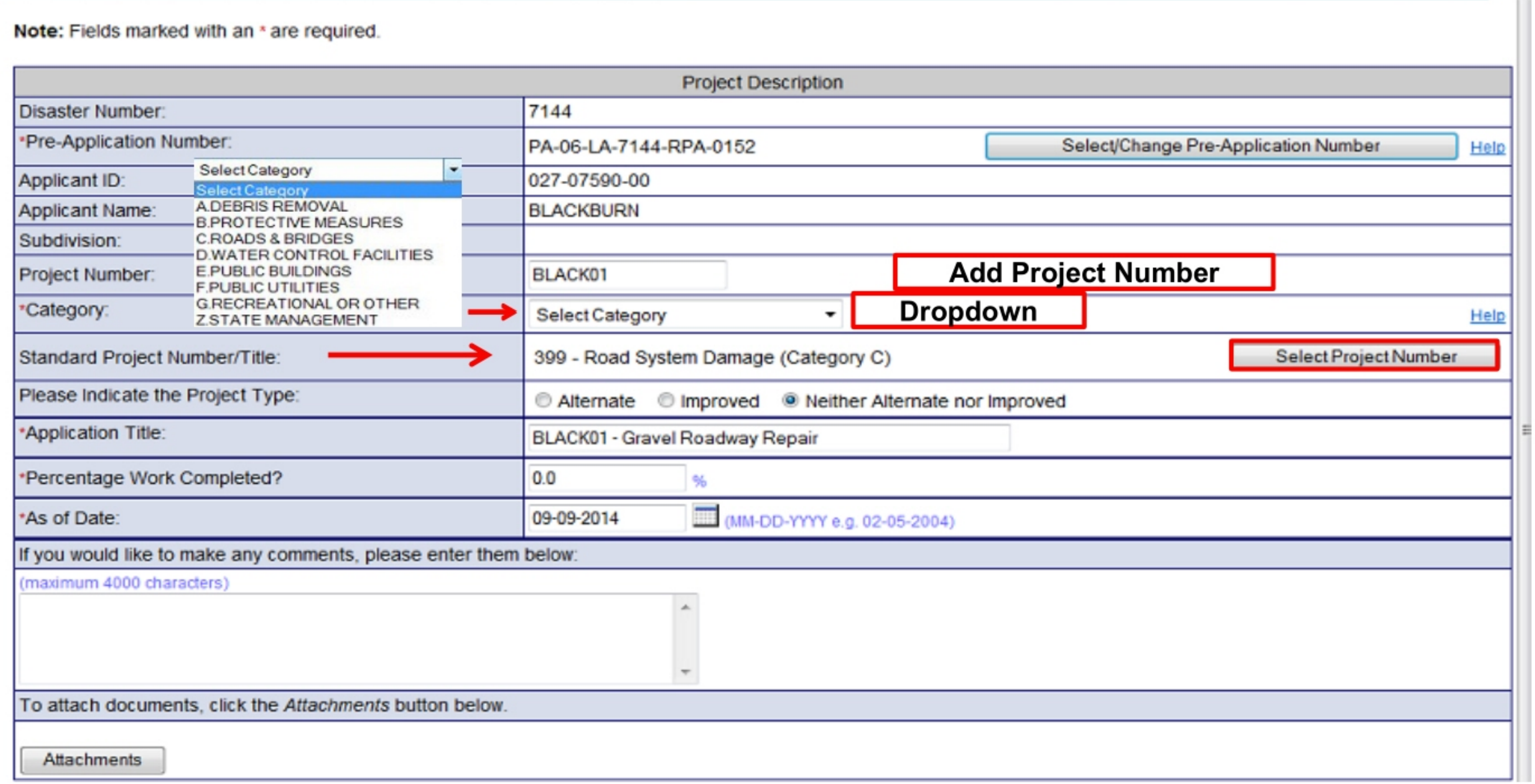
Displaying 1-1 of 1

Show 10
Go
Search

Select	Disaster Number	Application Number	Applicant Id	Application Title	Applicant Name	Source (NEMIS/EGRANTS)	Status	Action
●	7144	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0152	027-07590-00	BLACKBURN - 7144	BLACKBURN	EGRANTS	Approved By FEMA	N/A

First
<< Prev
Next >>
Last
Select Application
Cancel

Project Description – Continued – A2



Note: Fields marked with an * are required.

Project Description	
Disaster Number:	7144
*Pre-Application Number:	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0152 [Select/Change Pre-Application Number] Help
Applicant ID:	027-07590-00
Applicant Name:	BLACKBURN
Subdivision:	
Project Number:	BLACK01
*Category:	Select Category ▾ Help
Standard Project Number/Title:	399 - Road System Damage (Category C) [Select Project Number]
Please Indicate the Project Type:	○ Alternate ○ Improved ● Neither Alternate nor Improved
*Application Title:	BLACK01 - Gravel Roadway Repair
*Percentage Work Completed?	0.0 %
*As of Date:	09-09-2014 (MM-DD-YYYY e.g. 02-05-2004)

Select Category ▾
- Select Category
- A.DEBRIS REMOVAL
- B.PROTECTIVE MEASURES
- C.ROADS & BRIDGES
- D.WATER CONTROL FACILITIES
- E.PUBLIC BUILDINGS
- F.PUBLIC UTILITIES
- G.RECREATIONAL OR OTHER
- Z.STATE MANAGEMENT

If you would like to make any comments, please enter them below:

(maximum 4000 characters)

To attach documents, click the *Attachments* button below.

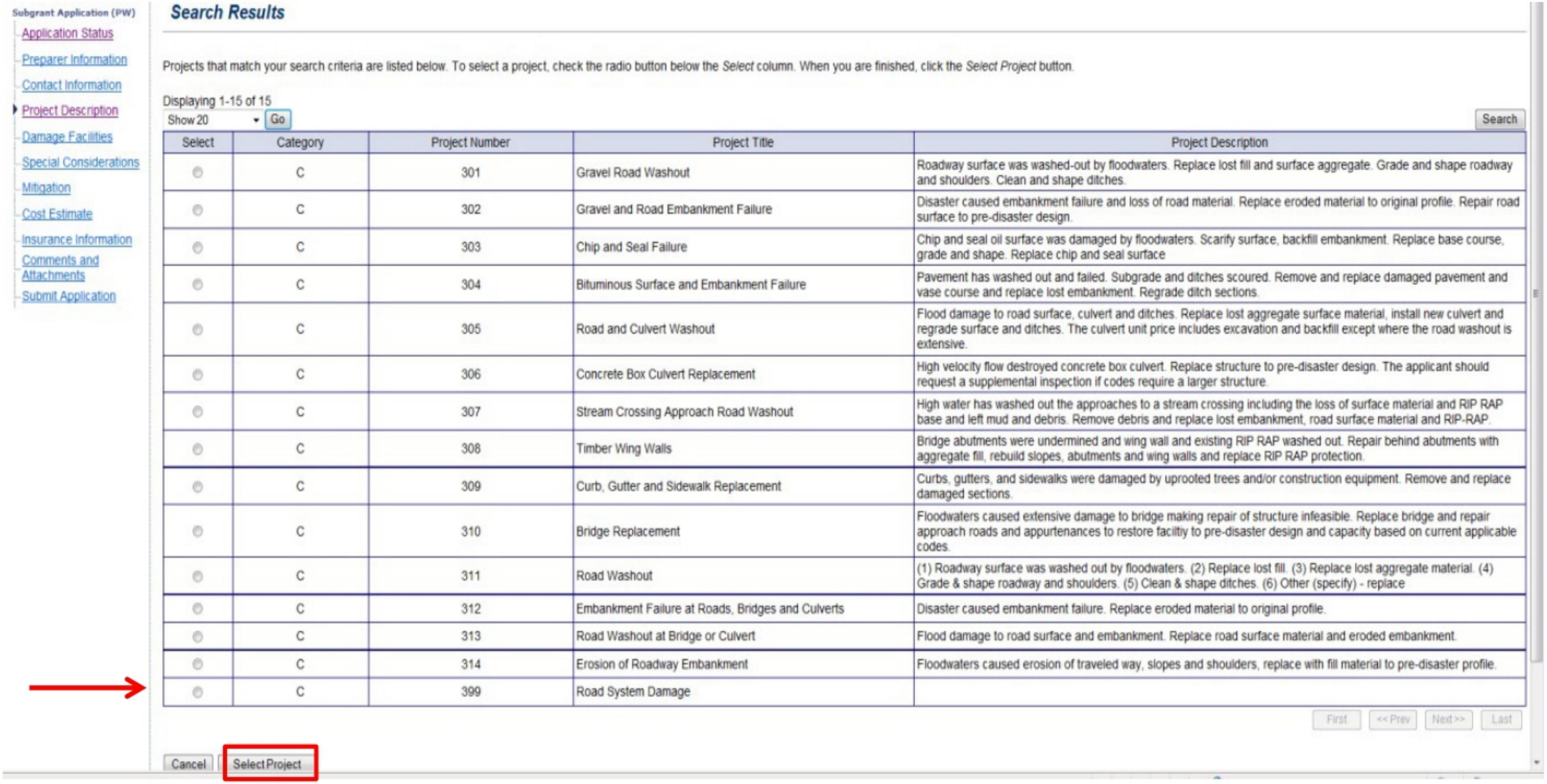
[Attachments]

Add Project Number

Dropdown

- **Project Number – See Disaster Guidance for naming conventionCategory – Drop down – (Choose A, B, C, D, E, F or G)Standard Project Number / Title – Click “Select Project Number”For all Categories - A-199, B-299, C-399, D-499, E-599, F-699, G799 – (See Continuation A2)**

Project Description – Continued – A2



Search Results

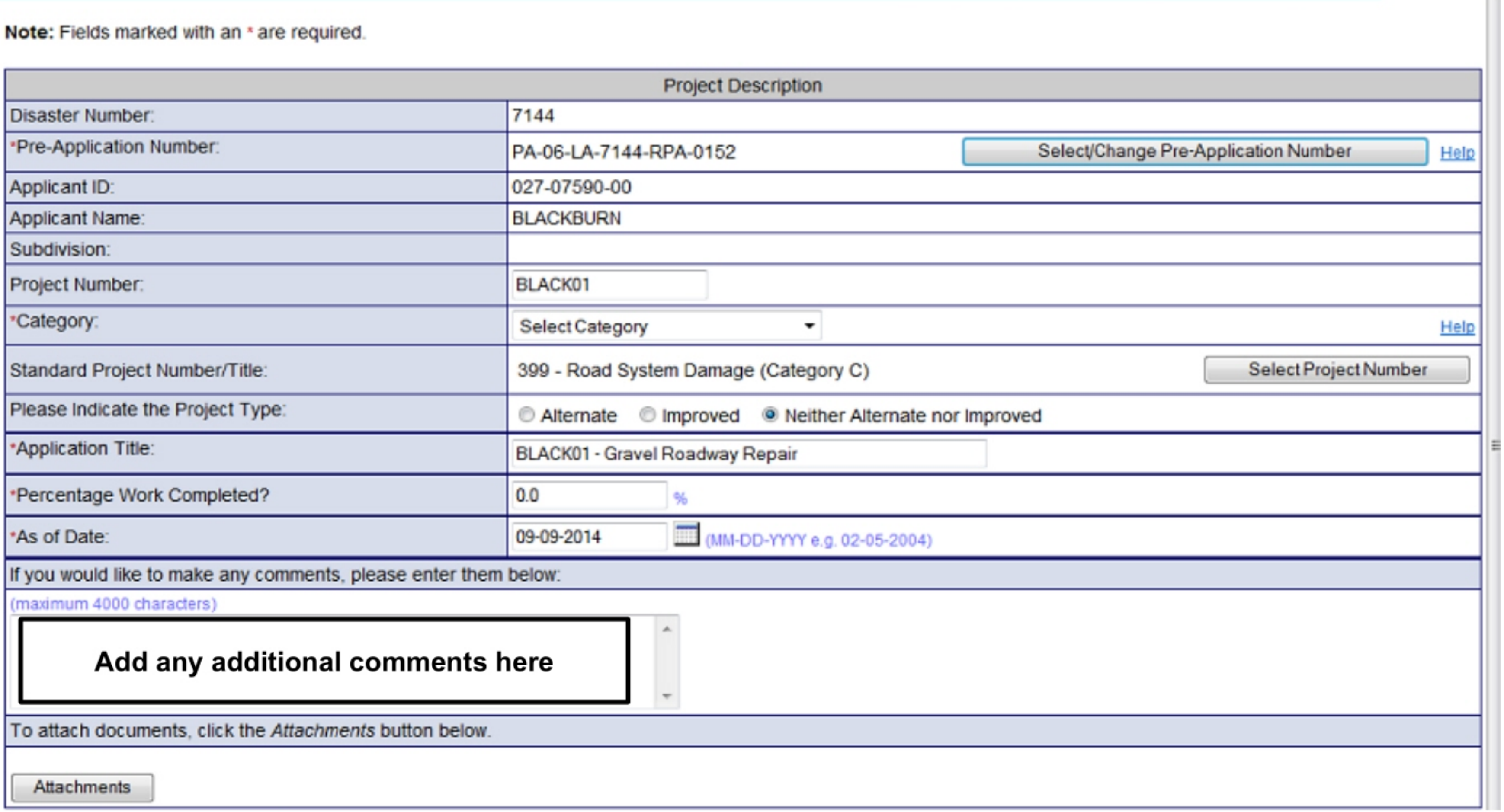
Projects that match your search criteria are listed below. To select a project, check the radio button below the *Select* column. When you are finished, click the *Select Project* button.

Displaying 1-15 of 15

Select	Category	Project Number	Project Title	Project Description
○	C	301	Gravel Road Washout	Roadway surface was washed-out by floodwaters. Replace lost fill and surface aggregate. Grade and shape roadway and shoulders. Clean and shape ditches.
○	C	302	Gravel and Road Embankment Failure	Disaster caused embankment failure and loss of road material. Replace eroded material to original profile. Repair road surface to pre-disaster design.
○	C	303	Chip and Seal Failure	Chip and seal oil surface was damaged by floodwaters. Scarify surface, backfill embankment. Replace base course, grade and shape. Replace chip and seal surface
○	C	304	Bituminous Surface and Embankment Failure	Pavement has washed out and failed. Subgrade and ditches scoured. Remove and replace damaged pavement and vase course and replace lost embankment. Regrade ditch sections.
○	C	305	Road and Culvert Washout	Flood damage to road surface, culvert and ditches. Replace lost aggregate surface material, install new culvert and regrade surface and ditches. The culvert unit price includes excavation and backfill except where the road washout is extensive.
○	C	306	Concrete Box Culvert Replacement	High velocity flow destroyed concrete box culvert. Replace structure to pre-disaster design. The applicant should request a supplemental inspection if codes require a larger structure.
○	C	307	Stream Crossing Approach Road Washout	High water has washed out the approaches to a stream crossing including the loss of surface material and RIP RAP base and left mud and debris. Remove debris and replace lost embankment, road surface material and RIP-RAP.
○	C	308	Timber Wing Walls	Bridge abutments were undermined and wing wall and existing RIP RAP washed out. Repair behind abutments with aggregate fill, rebuild slopes, abutments and wing walls and replace RIP RAP protection.
○	C	309	Curb, Gutter and Sidewalk Replacement	Curbs, gutters, and sidewalks were damaged by uprooted trees and/or construction equipment. Remove and replace damaged sections.
○	C	310	Bridge Replacement	Floodwaters caused extensive damage to bridge making repair of structure infeasible. Replace bridge and repair approach roads and appurtenances to restore facilty to pre-disaster design and capacity based on current applicable codes.
○	C	311	Road Washout	(1) Roadway surface was washed out by floodwaters. (2) Replace lost fill. (3) Replace lost aggregate material. (4) Grade & shape roadway and shoulders. (5) Clean & shape ditches. (6) Other (specify) - replace
○	C	312	Embankment Failure at Roads, Bridges and Culverts	Disaster caused embankment failure. Replace eroded material to original profile.
○	C	313	Road Washout at Bridge or Culvert	Flood damage to road surface and embankment. Replace road surface material and eroded embankment.
○	C	314	Erosion of Roadway Embankment	Floodwaters caused erosion of traveled way, slopes and shoulders, replace with fill material to pre-disaster profile.
○	C	399	Road System Damage	

Click 399 – Road System DamageClick “Select Project”

Project Description - Continued



Note: Fields marked with an * are required.

Project Description	
Disaster Number:	7144
*Pre-Application Number:	PA-06-LA-7144-RPA-0152
Applicant ID:	027-07590-00
Applicant Name:	BLACKBURN
Subdivision:	
Project Number:	BLACK01
*Category:	Select Category
Standard Project Number/Title:	399 - Road System Damage (Category C)
Please Indicate the Project Type:	○ Alternate ○ Improved ● Neither Alternate nor Improved
*Application Title:	BLACK01 - Gravel Roadway Repair
*Percentage Work Completed?	0.0 %
*As of Date:	09-09-2014 (MM-DD-YYYY e.g. 02-05-2004)

If you would like to make any comments, please enter them below:

(maximum 4000 characters)

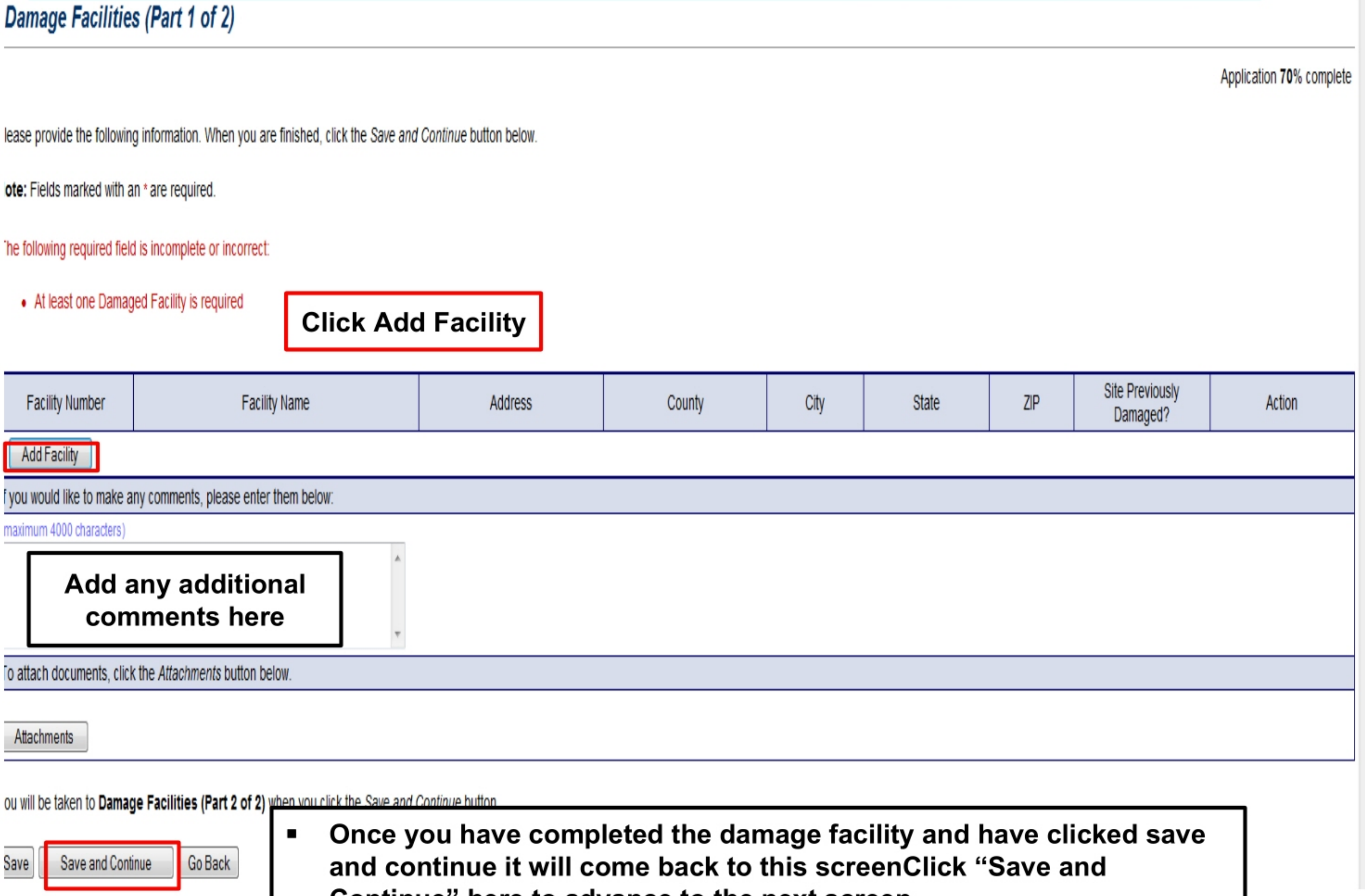
Add any additional comments here

To attach documents, click the *Attachments* button below.

Save and Continue

- **“Please Indicate the Project Type” – Always choose Neither Alternate nor Improved“Applicant Titl**

Damage Facility



Damage Facilities (Part 1 of 2)

Application **70%** complete

lease provide the following information. When you are finished, click the *Save and Continue* button below.

ote: Fields marked with an * are required.

'he following required field is incomplete or incorrect:

- At least one Damaged Facility is required

Click Add Facility

Facility Number	Facility Name	Address	County	City	State	ZIP	Site Previously Damaged?	Action
Add Facility								

f you would like to make any comments, please enter them below:

maximum 4000 characters)

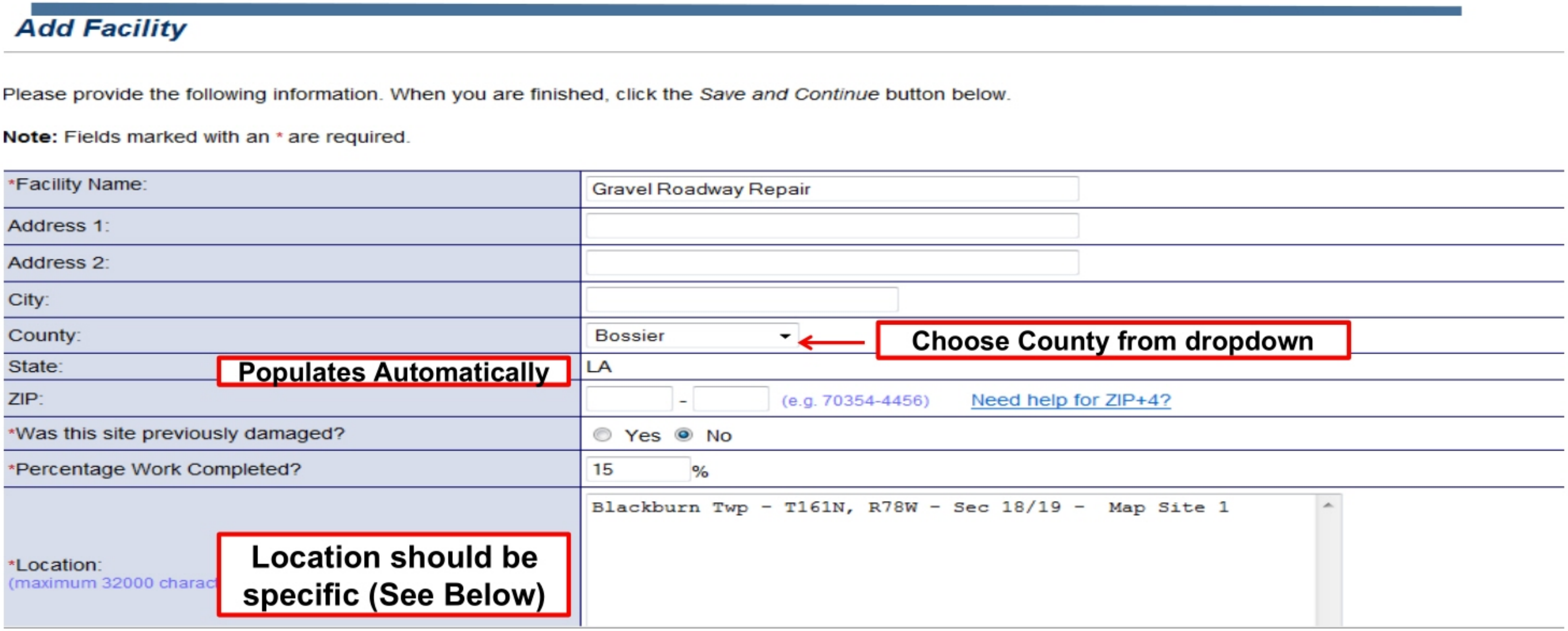
Add any additional comments here

'o attach documents, click the *Attachments* button below.

ou will be taken to **Damage Facilities (Part 2 of 2)** when you click the *Save and Continue* button.

- Once you have completed the damage facility and have clicked save and continue it will come back to this screenClick “Save and Continue” here to advance to the next screen

Damage Facility - Continued



Add Facility

Please provide the following information. When you are finished, click the *Save and Continue* button below.

Note: Fields marked with an * are required.

*Facility Name:	Gravel Roadway Repair
Address 1:	
Address 2:	
City:	
County:	Bossier
State:	LA
ZIP:	- (e.g. 70354-4456) Need help for ZIP+4?
*Was this site previously damaged?	○ Yes ● No
*Percentage Work Completed?	15 %
*Location: (maximum 32000 charact	Blackburn Twp - T161N, R78W - Sec 18/19 - Map Site 1

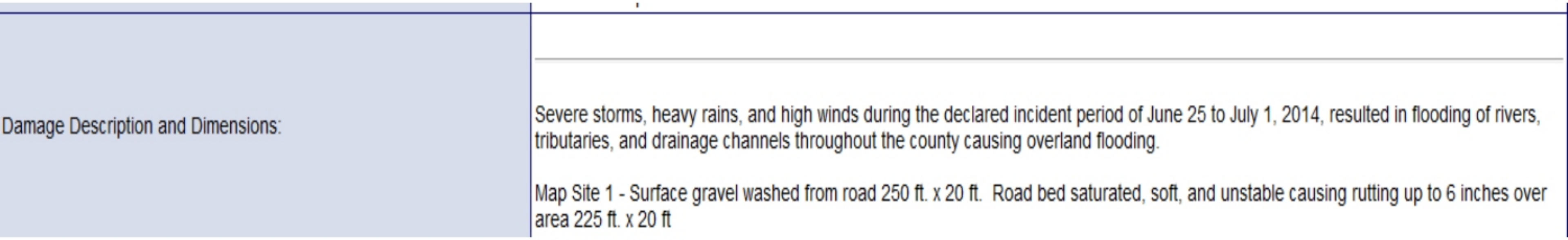
Choose County from dropdown

Populates Automatically

Location should be specific (See Below)

Single Site:Street Address: 21 Main St, Charleston, NM 87654Intersection: 0.5 miles west of the intersection of Bird Blvd. and Stout Dr.Sector: Northwest Sector bounded by Canal St., Main St., and NW 34 Blvd.Sector: Blackburn Twp – T161N, R78W – Sec 18/19 – Map Site 1Multiple Sites:most prominent location, disaster guidance‘County-Wide’, ‘City-Wide’, ’Jurisdiction-Wide’:least preferred terminology and should be used with discretionPreferred method is to use applicant address (see Latitude-Longitude Slide)

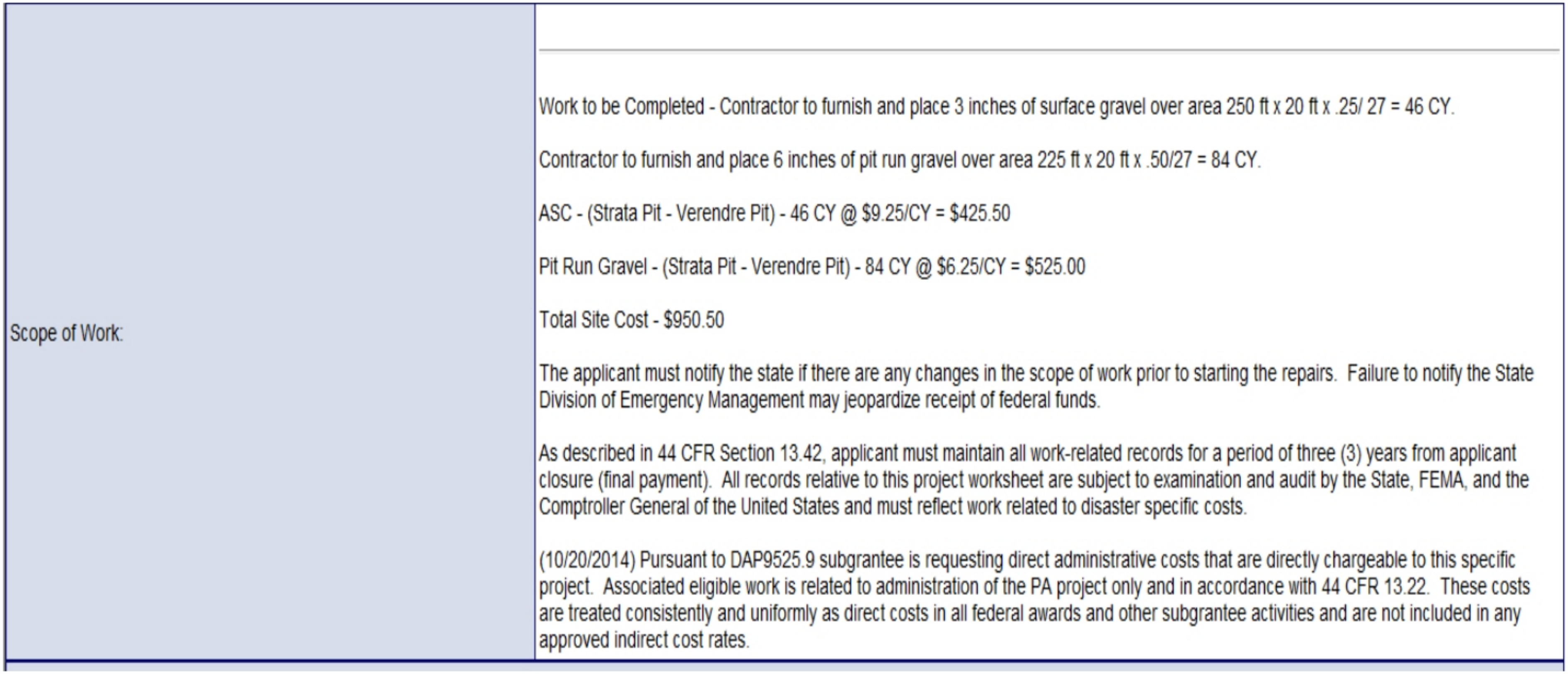
Damage Facility – Continued - DDD



Damage Description and Dimensions:	Severe storms, heavy rains, and high winds during the declared incident period of June 25 to July 1, 2014, resulted in flooding of rivers, tributaries, and drainage channels throughout the county causing overland flooding. Map Site 1 - Surface gravel washed from road 250 ft. x 20 ft. Road bed saturated, soft, and unstable causing rutting up to 6 inches over area 225 ft. x 20 ft

Detailed description of damage to facility. Include information on cause of damage. Detailed information on damag

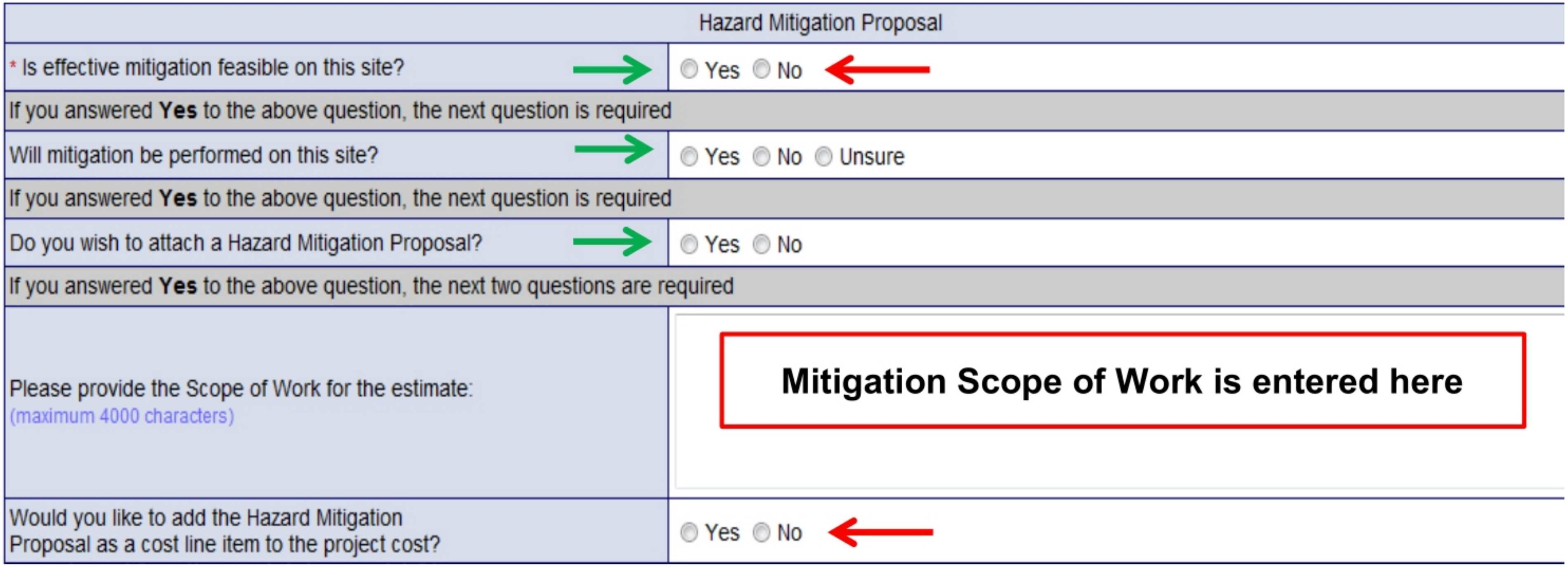
Damage Facility – Continued - Scope of Work



Scope of Work:	Work to be Completed - Contractor to furnish and place 3 inches of surface gravel over area 250 ft x 20 ft x .25/ 27 = 46 CY. Contractor to furnish and place 6 inches of pit run gravel over area 225 ft x 20 ft x .50/27 = 84 CY. ASC - (Strata Pit - Verendre Pit) - 46 CY @ $9.25/CY = $425.50 Pit Run Gravel - (Strata Pit - Verendre Pit) - 84 CY @ $6.25/CY = $525.00 Total Site Cost - $950.50 The applicant must notify the state if there are any changes in the scope of work prior to starting the repairs. Failure to notify the State Division of Emergency Management may jeopardize receipt of federal funds. As described in 44 CFR Section 13.42, applicant must maintain all work-related records for a period of three (3) years from applicant closure (final payment). All records relative to this project worksheet are subject to examination and audit by the State, FEMA, and the Comptroller General of the United States and must reflect work related to disaster specific costs. (10/20/2014) Pursuant to DAP9525.9 subgrantee is requesting direct administrative costs that are directly chargeable to this specific project. Associated eligible work is related to administration of the PA project only and in accordance with 44 CFR 13.22. These costs are treated consistently and uniformly as direct costs in all federal awards and other subgrantee activities and are not included in any approved indirect cost rates.

- **Detail Work Completed and Work to be Completed separately. Detailed information on work effort, who has or will perform work,Type of repair, quantities of materials, types of materials, (When using inches spell out inches do not use inEffort required to reduce or eliminate threatStandard Comments will be provided**

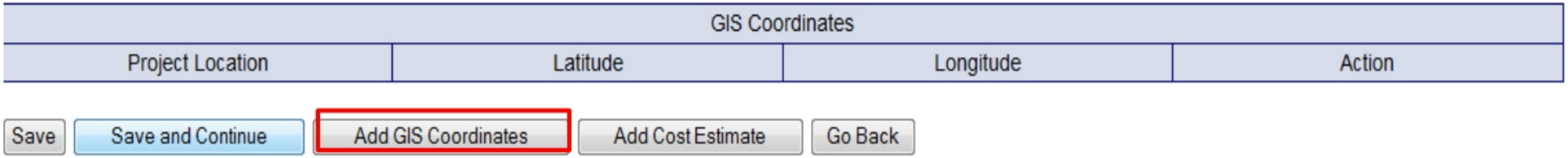
Damage Facility – Continued - Mitigation



Hazard Mitigation Proposal	
* Is effective mitigation feasible on this site?	○ Yes ○ No
If you answered **Yes** to the above question, the next question is required	
Will mitigation be performed on this site?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure
If you answered **Yes** to the above question, the next question is required	
Do you wish to attach a Hazard Mitigation Proposal?	○ Yes ○ No
If you answered **Yes** to the above question, the next two questions are required	
Please provide the Scope of Work for the estimate: (maximum 4000 characters)	**Mitigation Scope of Work is entered here**
Would you like to add the Hazard Mitigation Proposal as a cost line item to the project cost?	○ Yes ○ No

- **If you do NOT have mitigation click "No" in the first box only – you do NOT have to fill in any of the rest of the boxes If you DO have mitigation – Click "YES" for the first 3 boxes – add your Scope of Work and click "No" for the last box – the mitigation reviewer will click yes when he reviews the PW.Costs for mitigation for a single damage facility will be added at the Cost SectionCosts for multiple damage facilities will be entered at the individual damage facility level**

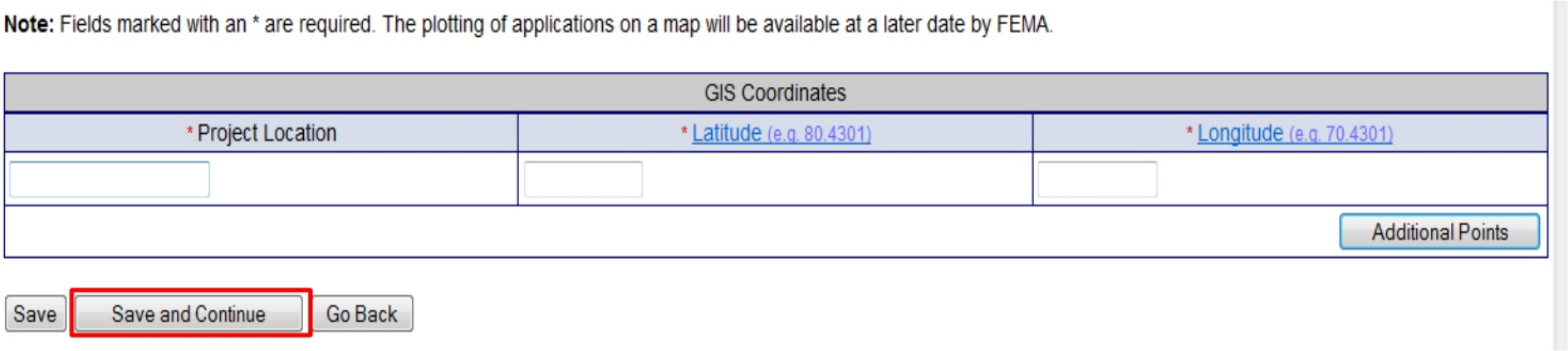
Damage Facility – Continued - GIS



GIS Coordinates			
Project Location	Latitude	Longitude	Action

Save
Save and Continue
Add GIS Coordinates
Add Cost Estimate
Go Back

Click Add GIS Coordinates – Type in the same information that you entered in the location – also type in the Latitude and Longitude "Save and Continue"

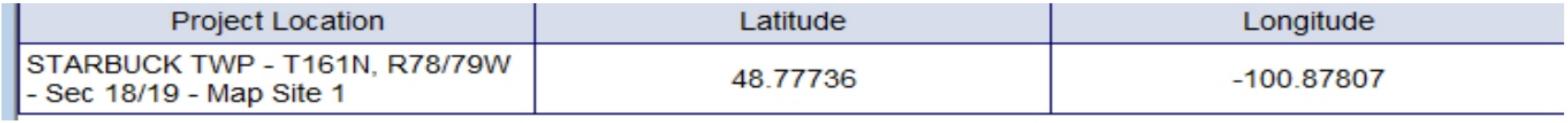


Note: Fields marked with an * are required. The plotting of applications on a map will be available at a later date by FEMA.

GIS Coordinates		
* Project Location	* Latitude (e.g. 80.4301)	* Longitude (e.g. 70.4301)

Additional Points
Save
Save and Continue
Go Back

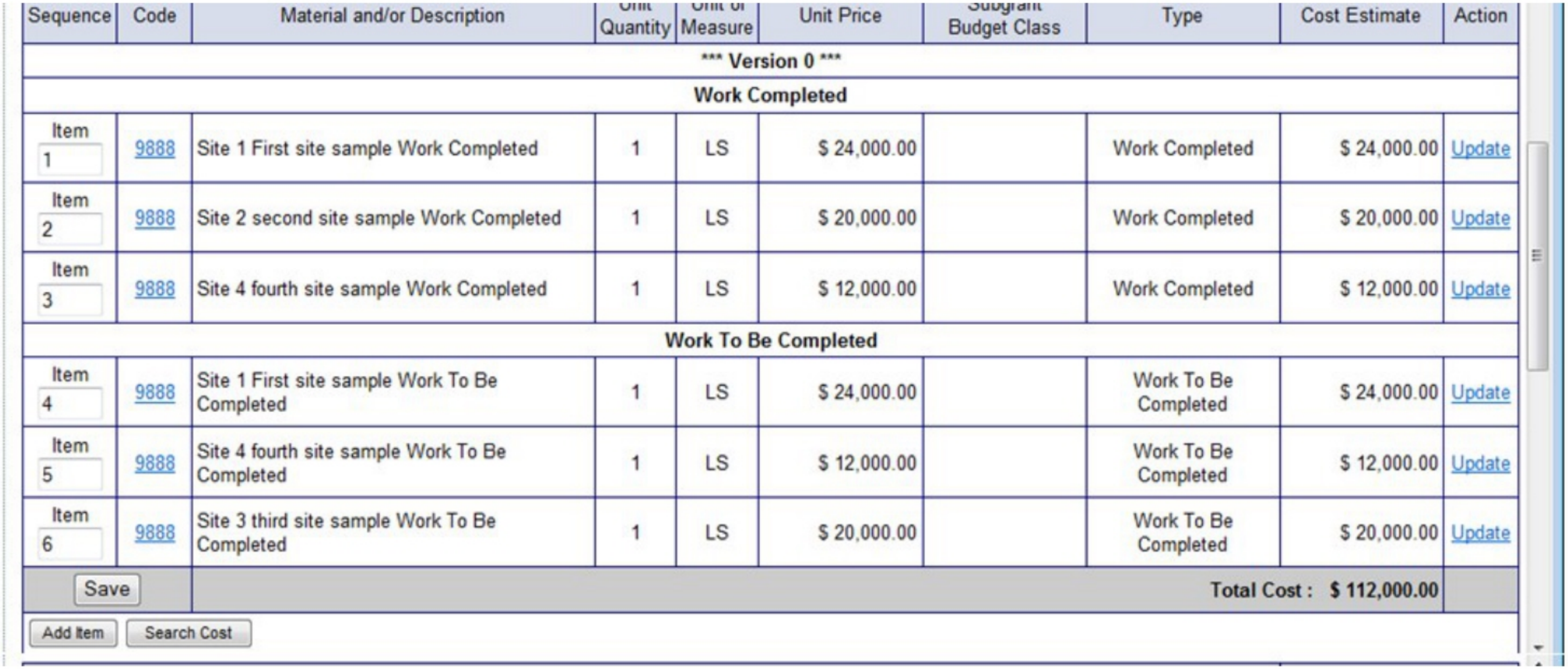
It will look like this when complete



Project Location	Latitude	Longitude
STARBUCK TWP - T161N, R78/79W - Sec 18/19 - Map Site 1	48.77736	-100.87807

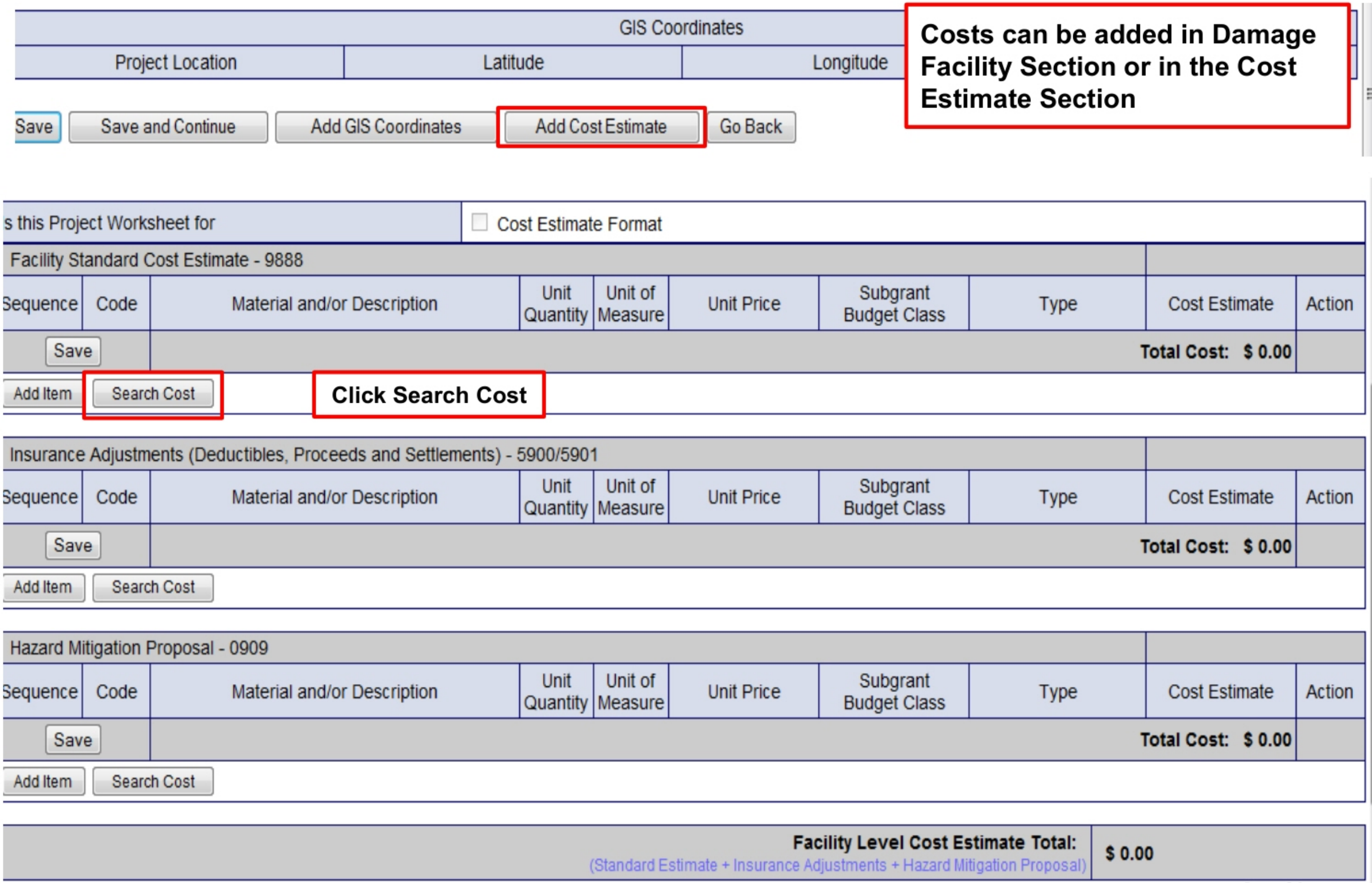
Damage Facility – Project Costs

There are 2 ways project costs can be added in EMMIE: Procedures are the Same for BothAt the Individual Damage Facility – this one will be used when you have multiple damage facilitiesOn the Cost Estimate Section – When you only have 1 damage facilityIt also works well when you have mitigation on multiple sites as the mitigation costs are then added at the site level rather than as a wholeWhen you have multiple sites and add the cost per site, the total costs will roll up to the Cost Estimate Section as a 9888 number (See Below)



Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
*** Version 0 ***									
Work Completed									
Item 1	9888	Site 1 First site sample Work Completed	1	LS	$ 24,000.00		Work Completed	$ 24,000.00	Update
Item 2	9888	Site 2 second site sample Work Completed	1	LS	$ 20,000.00		Work Completed	$ 20,000.00	Update
Item 3	9888	Site 4 fourth site sample Work Completed	1	LS	$ 12,000.00		Work Completed	$ 12,000.00	Update
Work To Be Completed									
Item 4	9888	Site 1 First site sample Work To Be Completed	1	LS	$ 24,000.00		Work To Be Completed	$ 24,000.00	Update
Item 5	9888	Site 4 fourth site sample Work To Be Completed	1	LS	$ 12,000.00		Work To Be Completed	$ 12,000.00	Update
Item 6	9888	Site 3 third site sample Work To Be Completed	1	LS	$ 20,000.00		Work To Be Completed	$ 20,000.00	Update
Save							Total Cost :	$ 112,000.00	

Damage Facility – Continued – Project Costs


Save
Save and Continue
Add GIS Coordinates
Add Cost Estimate
Go Back
Save
Add Item
Search Cost
Save
Add Item
Search Cost
Save
Add Item
Search Cost

Costs can be added in Damage Facility Section or in the Cost Estimate Section

GIS Coordinates		
Project Location	Latitude	Longitude

s this Project Worksheet for	☐ Cost Estimate Format

Facility Standard Cost Estimate - 9888

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
								Total Cost: $ 0.00	

Click Search Cost

Insurance Adjustments (Deductibles, Proceeds and Settlements) - 5900/5901

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
								Total Cost: $ 0.00	

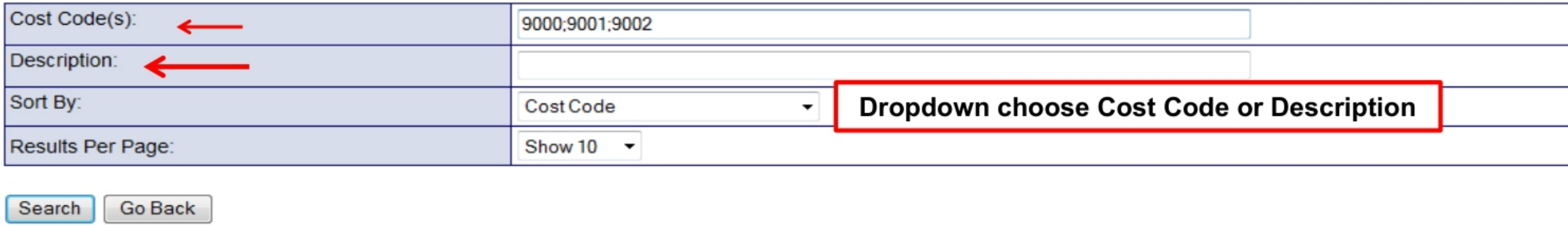
Hazard Mitigation Proposal - 0909

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
								Total Cost: $ 0.00	

Facility Level Cost Estimate Total: (Standard Estimate + Insurance Adjustments + Hazard Mitigation Proposal)	**$ 0.00**

Damage Facility – Continued – Project Costs

When you click "Search Cost" Enter the cost code you want / or description – Click "Search" By using a s

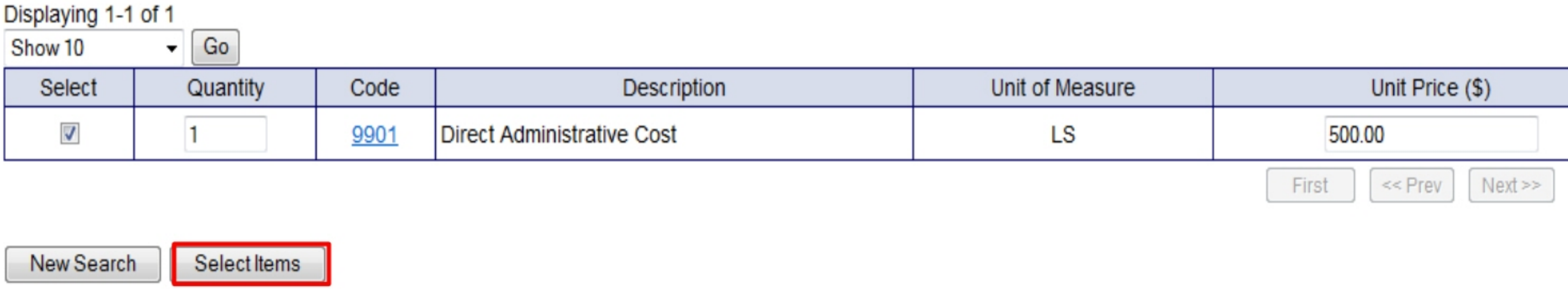


Cost Code(s):	9000;9001;9002
Description:	
Sort By:	Cost Code
Results Per Page:	Show 10

Search
Go Back

Dropdown choose Cost Code or Description

When this screen comes up Click "Select" on the left – Type in "Quantity" and "Unit Price"Click "Select It



Displaying 1-1 of 1

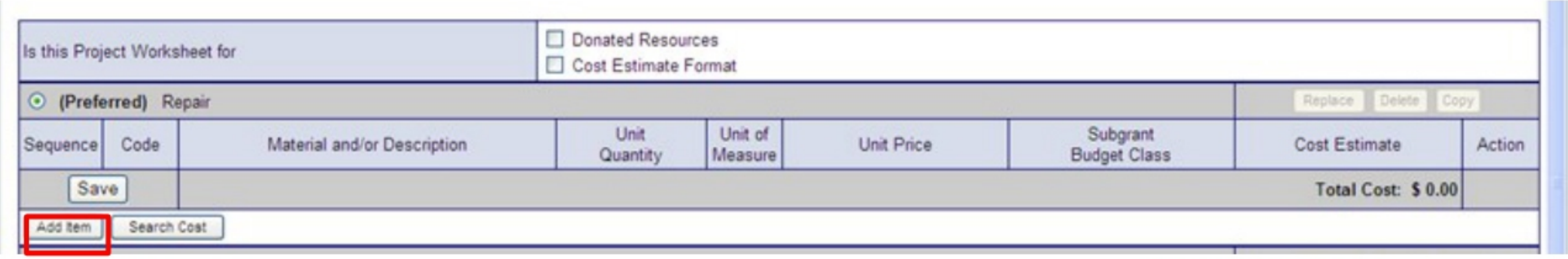
Show 10

Select	Quantity	Code	Description	Unit of Measure	Unit Price ($)
☑	1	9901	Direct Administrative Cost	LS	500.00

Go
First
<< Prev
Next >>
New Search
Select Items

Damage Facility – Continued – Project Costs

- **If you cannot find the cost code or you need or want to add more to the description This is a “9999” Cos**



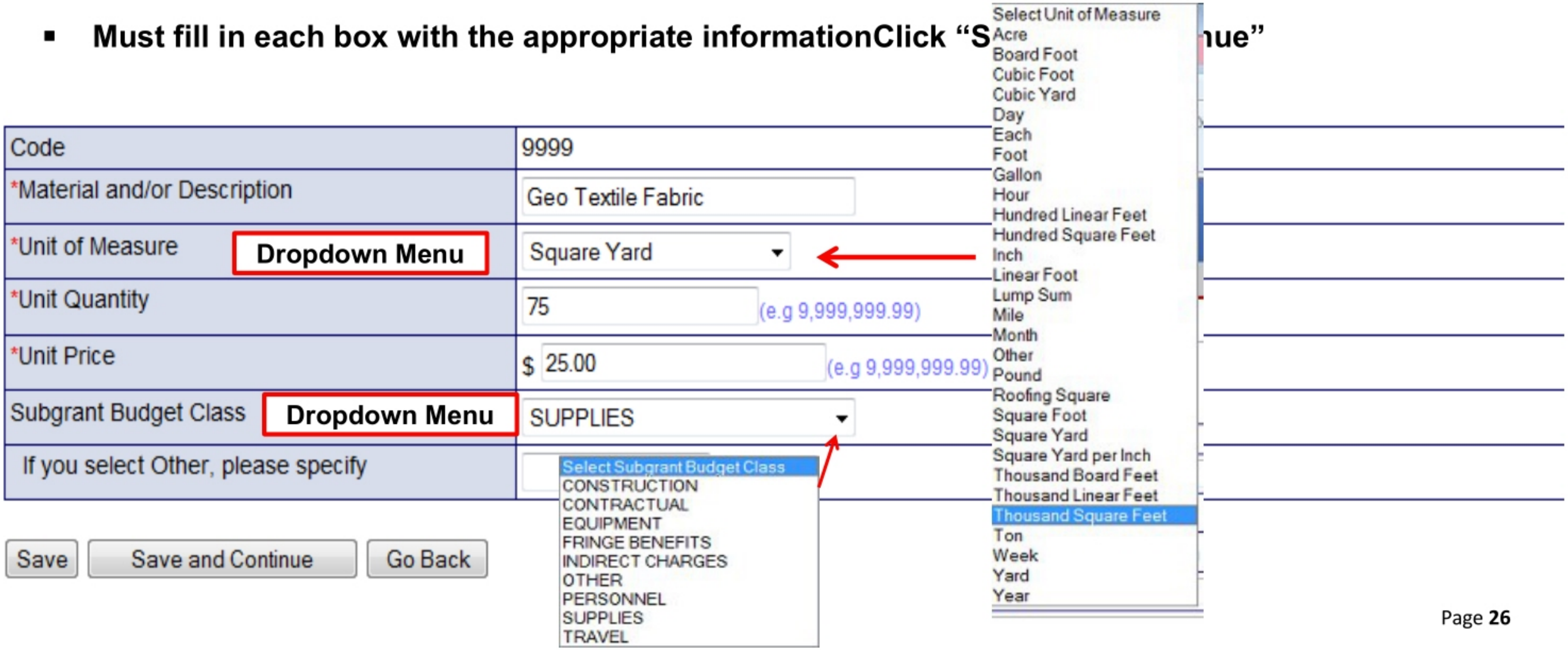
Is this Project Worksheet for ☐ Donated Resources ☐ Cost Estimate Format

● (Preferred) Repair

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Cost Estimate	Action
							Total Cost: $ 0.00	

Replace
Delete
Copy
Save
Add Item
Search Cost

- **Must fill in each box with the appropriate informationClick “S** **ue”**



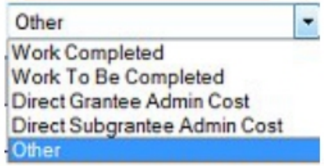
Code	9999
*Material and/or Description	Geo Textile Fabric
*Unit of Measure	Square Yard
*Unit Quantity	75 (e.g 9,999,999.99)
*Unit Price	$ 25.00 (e.g 9,999,999.99)
Subgrant Budget Class	SUPPLIES
If you select Other, please specify	

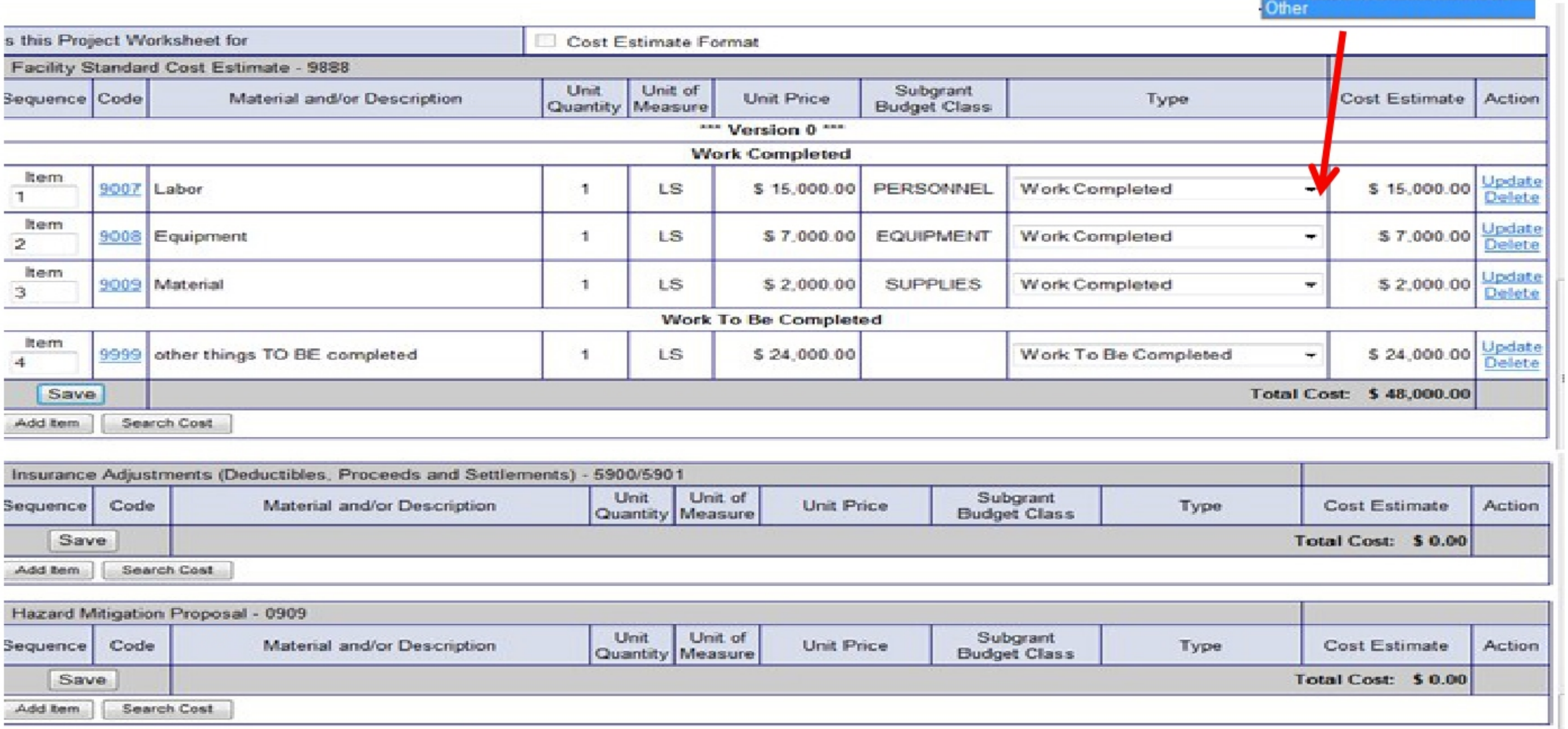
Dropdown Menu
Dropdown Menu
Save
Save and Continue
Go Back
Select Unit of Measure
Acre
Board Foot
Cubic Foot
Cubic Yard
Day
Each
Foot
Gallon
Hour
Hundred Linear Feet
Hundred Square Feet
Inch
Linear Foot
Lump Sum
Mile
Month
Other
Pound
Roofing Square
Square Foot
Square Yard
Square Yard per Inch
Thousand Board Feet
Thousand Linear Feet
Thousand Square Feet
Ton
Week
Yard
Year
Select Subgrant Budget Class
CONSTRUCTION
CONTRACTUAL
EQUIPMENT
FRINGE BENEFITS
INDIRECT CHARGES
OTHER
PERSONNEL
SUPPLIES
TRAVEL

Damage Facility – Continued – Project Costs

- **Once all individual costs have been entered click the dropdownWork Completed – Comes firstWork to be Completed – NextDirect Administrative Costs - Choose - Direct Subgrantee Admin Costs**

Dropdown


Other
Work Completed
Work To Be Completed
Direct Grantee Admin Cost
Direct Subgrantee Admin Cost
Other



s this Project Worksheet for | ☐ Cost Estimate Format

Facility Standard Cost Estimate - 9888

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
*** Version 0 ***									
Work Completed									
Item 1	9007	Labor	1	LS	$ 15,000.00	PERSONNEL	Work Completed	$ 15,000.00	Update Delete
Item 2	9008	Equipment	1	LS	$ 7,000.00	EQUIPMENT	Work Completed	$ 7,000.00	Update Delete
Item 3	9009	Material	1	LS	$ 2,000.00	SUPPLIES	Work Completed	$ 2,000.00	Update Delete
Work To Be Completed									
Item 4	9999	other things TO BE completed	1	LS	$ 24,000.00		Work To Be Completed	$ 24,000.00	Update Delete
Save							Total Cost:	$ 48,000.00	

Add Item
Search Cost

Insurance Adjustments (Deductibles, Proceeds and Settlements) - 5900/5901

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
Save							Total Cost:	$ 0.00	

Add Item
Search Cost

Hazard Mitigation Proposal - 0909

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
Save							Total Cost:	$ 0.00	

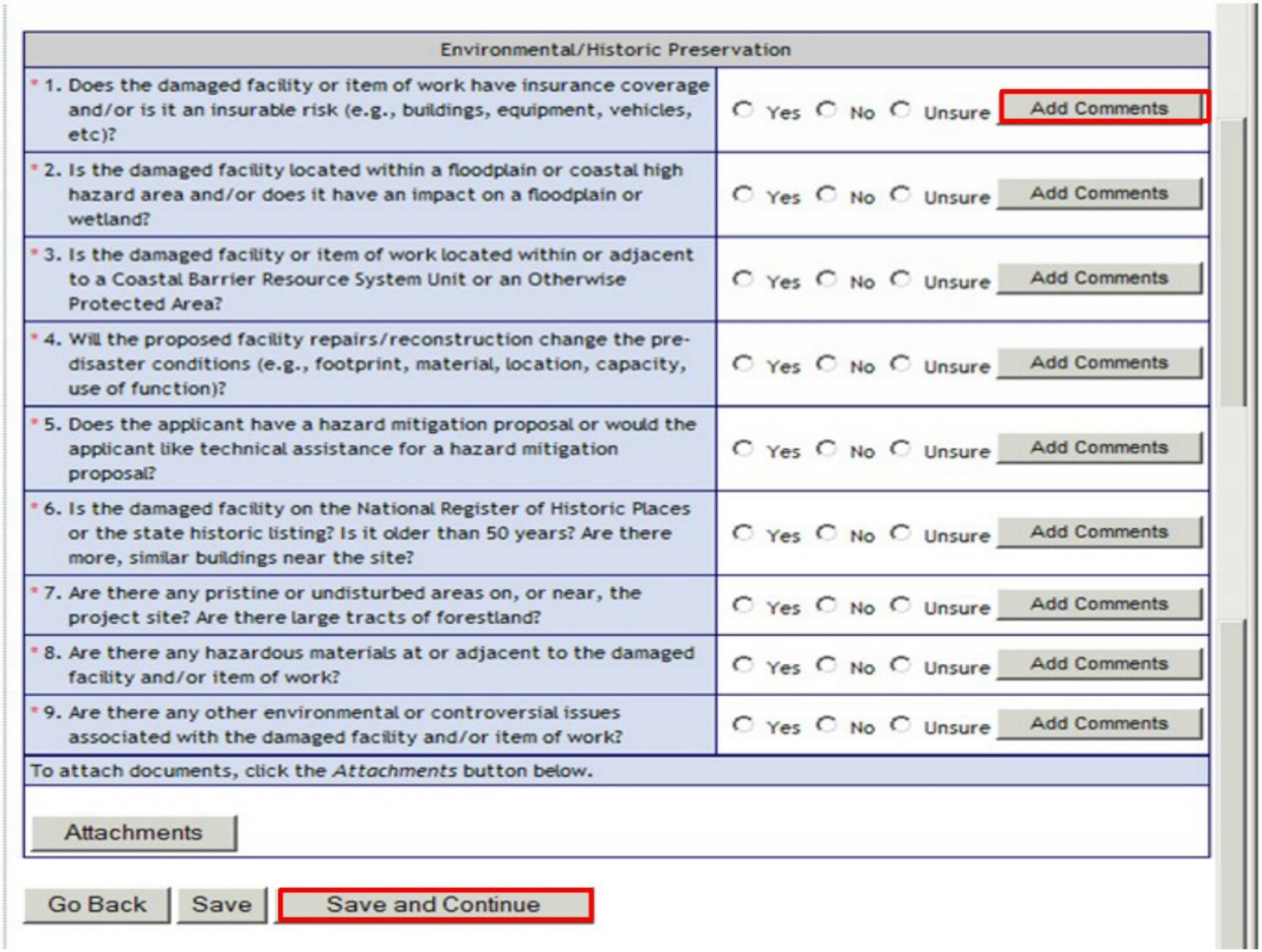
Add Item
Search Cost

Save
Save and Continue

Be sure to click “Save and Continue” when done

Special Consideration

- **Click “Yes” “No” or “Unsure” for each question – If choosing “Yes or “Unsure” – you Must add a commentWhen adding comments click “Add Comments” and type in your comments Click “Save and Continue”Any attachments can be added here or in the Comments and Attachments Section**

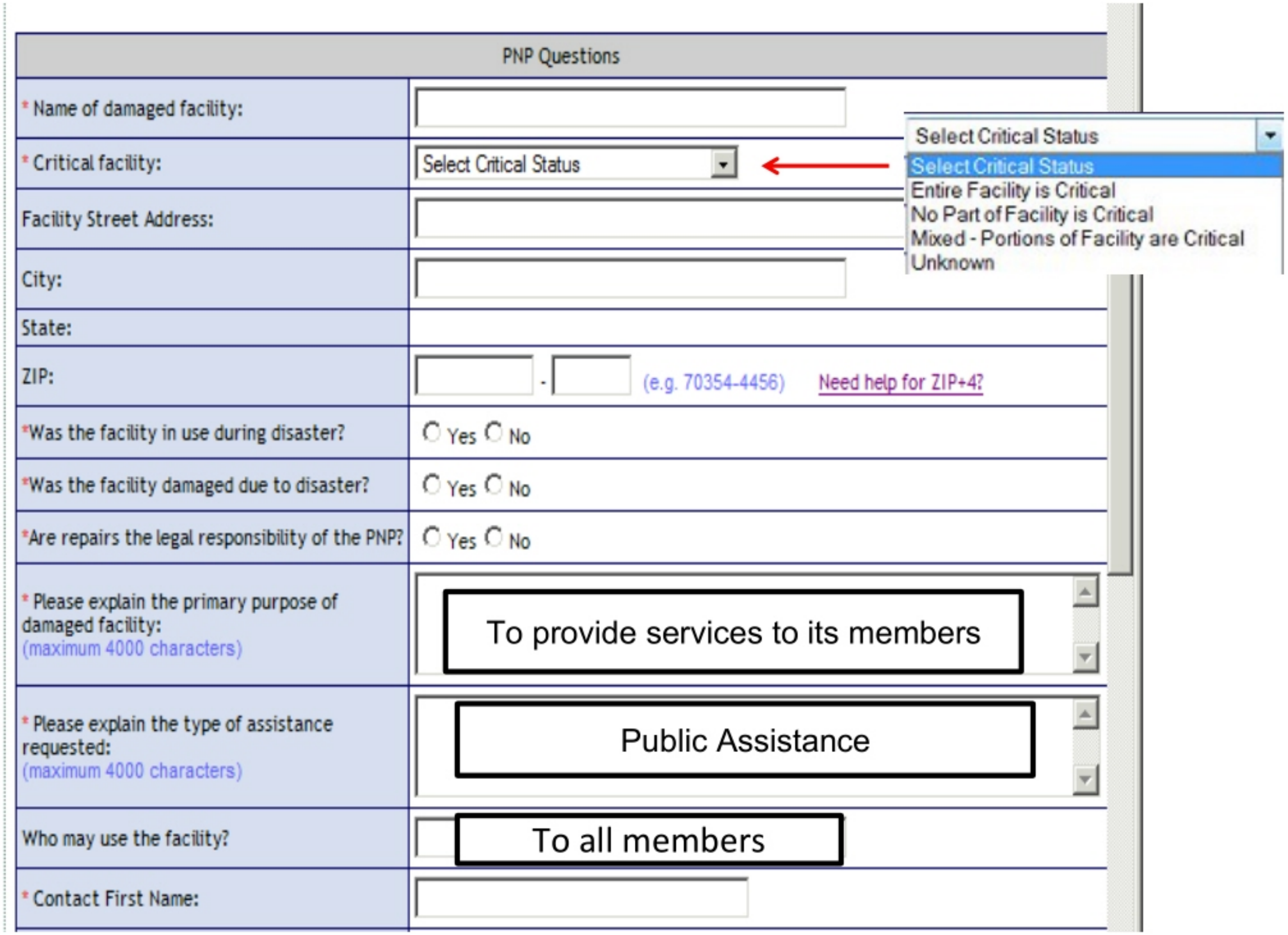


Environmental/Historic Preservation	
* 1. Does the damaged facility or item of work have insurance coverage and/or is it an insurable risk (e.g., buildings, equipment, vehicles, etc)?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure Add Comments
* 2. Is the damaged facility located within a floodplain or coastal high hazard area and/or does it have an impact on a floodplain or wetland?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure Add Comments
* 3. Is the damaged facility or item of work located within or adjacent to a Coastal Barrier Resource System Unit or an Otherwise Protected Area?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure Add Comments
* 4. Will the proposed facility repairs/reconstruction change the pre-disaster conditions (e.g., footprint, material, location, capacity, use of function)?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure Add Comments
* 5. Does the applicant have a hazard mitigation proposal or would the applicant like technical assistance for a hazard mitigation proposal?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure Add Comments
* 6. Is the damaged facility on the National Register of Historic Places or the state historic listing? Is it older than 50 years? Are there more, similar buildings near the site?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure Add Comments
* 7. Are there any pristine or undisturbed areas on, or near, the project site? Are there large tracts of forestland?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure Add Comments
* 8. Are there any hazardous materials at or adjacent to the damaged facility and/or item of work?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure Add Comments
* 9. Are there any other environmental or controversial issues associated with the damaged facility and/or item of work?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Unsure Add Comments

To attach documents, click the *Attachments* button below.

Damage Facility Part 2 – PNP Section 1

- **To fill out this section you will use the PNP questionnaire that you received from the applicant, Dep**

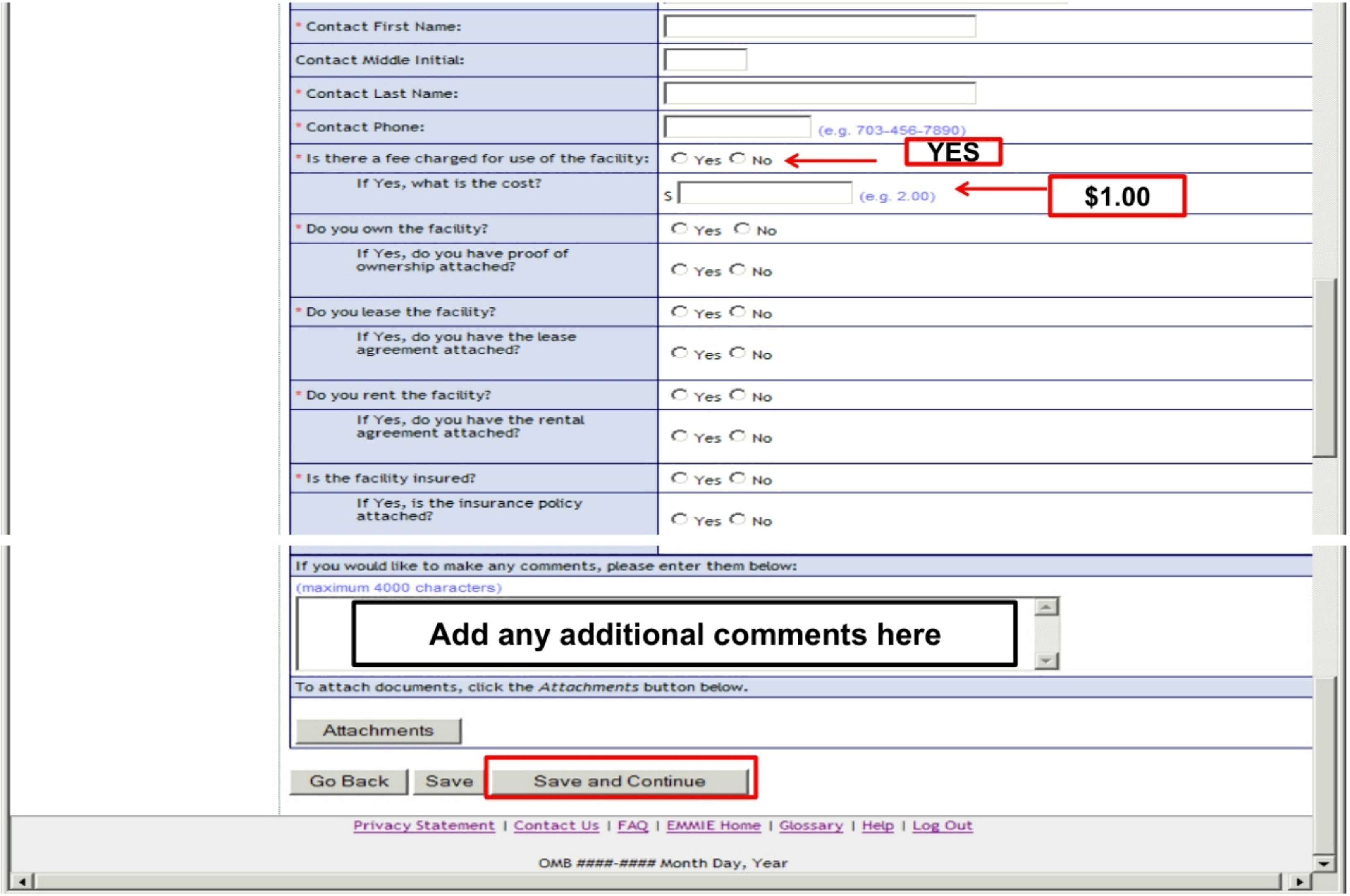


PNP Questions

* Name of damaged facility:	
* Critical facility:	Select Critical Status
Facility Street Address:	
City:	
State:	
ZIP:	- (e.g. 70354-4456) Need help for ZIP+4?
*Was the facility in use during disaster?	○ Yes ○ No
*Was the facility damaged due to disaster?	○ Yes ○ No
*Are repairs the legal responsibility of the PNP?	○ Yes ○ No
* Please explain the primary purpose of damaged facility: (maximum 4000 characters)	To provide services to its members
* Please explain the type of assistance requested: (maximum 4000 characters)	Public Assistance
Who may use the facility?	To all members
* Contact First Name:	

Select Critical Status
- Select Critical Status
- Entire Facility is Critical
- No Part of Facility is Critical
- Mixed - Portions of Facility are Critical
- Unknown

Damage Facility Part 2 – PNP Section 2



* Contact First Name:	
Contact Middle Initial:	
* Contact Last Name:	
* Contact Phone:	(e.g. 703-456-7890)
* Is there a fee charged for use of the facility:	○ Yes ○ No
If Yes, what is the cost?	$ (e.g. 2.00)
* Do you own the facility?	○ Yes ○ No
If Yes, do you have proof of ownership attached?	○ Yes ○ No
* Do you lease the facility?	○ Yes ○ No
If Yes, do you have the lease agreement attached?	○ Yes ○ No
* Do you rent the facility?	○ Yes ○ No
If Yes, do you have the rental agreement attached?	○ Yes ○ No
* Is the facility insured?	○ Yes ○ No
If Yes, is the insurance policy attached?	○ Yes ○ No

YES

$1.00

If you would like to make any comments, please enter them below:

(maximum 4000 characters)

Add any additional comments here

To attach documents, click the *Attachments* button below.

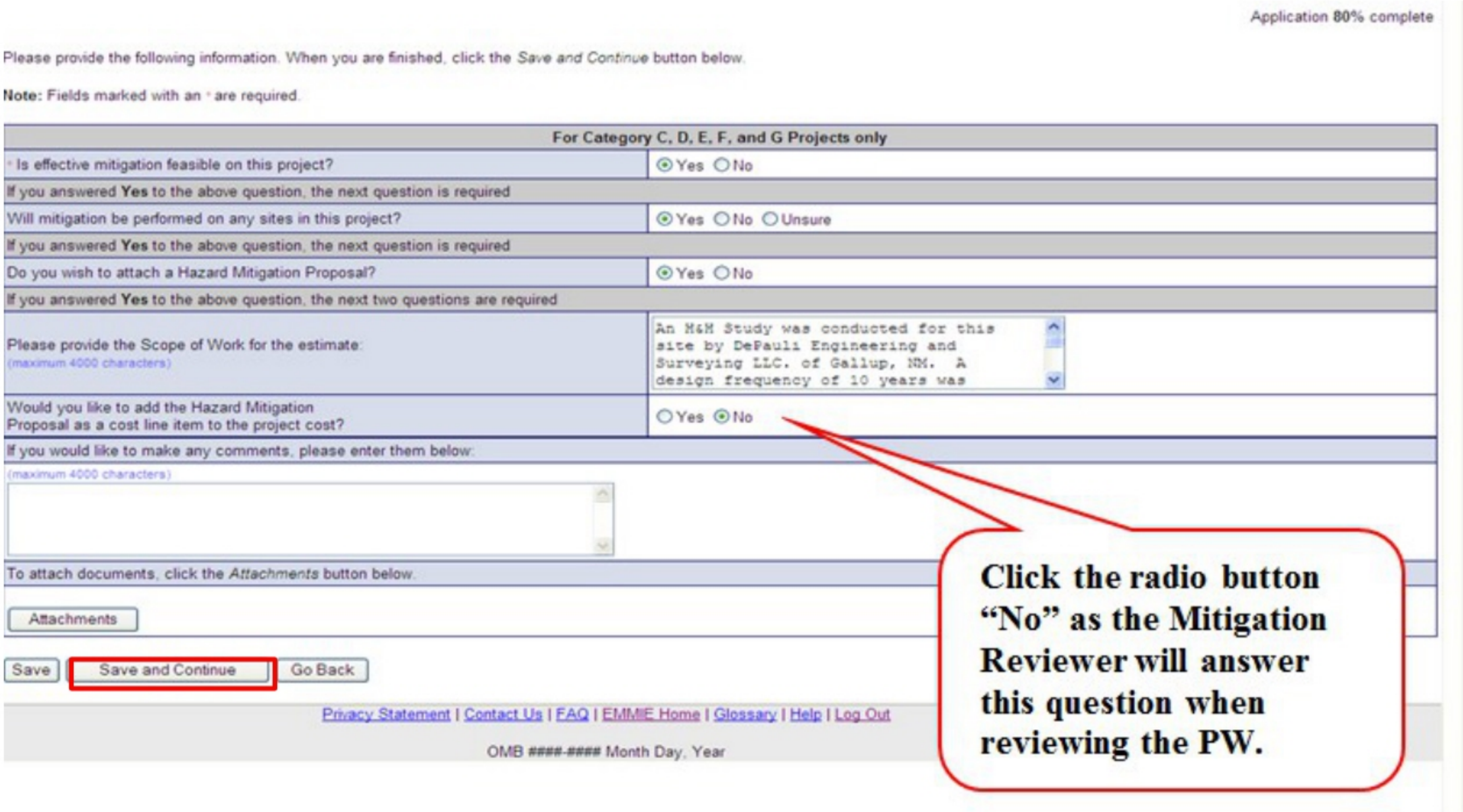
OMB ####-#### Month Day, Year

Attachments
Go Back
Save
Save and Continue
Privacy Statement | Contact Us | FAQ | EMMIE Home | Glossary | Help | Log Out

- Enter all information then click “Save and Continue”The PNP Questionnaire is attached to the

Mitigation

If you have 1 damage facility the mitigation will be added here – if you have multiple sites the mitigatio



Application 80% complete

Please provide the following information. When you are finished, click the *Save and Continue* button below.

Note: Fields marked with an * are required.

For Category C, D, E, F, and G Projects only	
* Is effective mitigation feasible on this project?	● Yes ○ No
If you answered **Yes** to the above question, the next question is required	
Will mitigation be performed on any sites in this project?	● Yes ○ No ○ Unsure
If you answered **Yes** to the above question, the next question is required	
Do you wish to attach a Hazard Mitigation Proposal?	● Yes ○ No
If you answered **Yes** to the above question, the next two questions are required	
Please provide the Scope of Work for the estimate: (maximum 4000 characters)	An H&M Study was conducted for this site by DePauli Engineering and Surveying LLC. of Gallup, NM. A design frequency of 10 years was
Would you like to add the Hazard Mitigation Proposal as a cost line item to the project cost?	○ Yes ● No
If you would like to make any comments, please enter them below: (maximum 4000 characters)	
To attach documents, click the *Attachments* button below.	

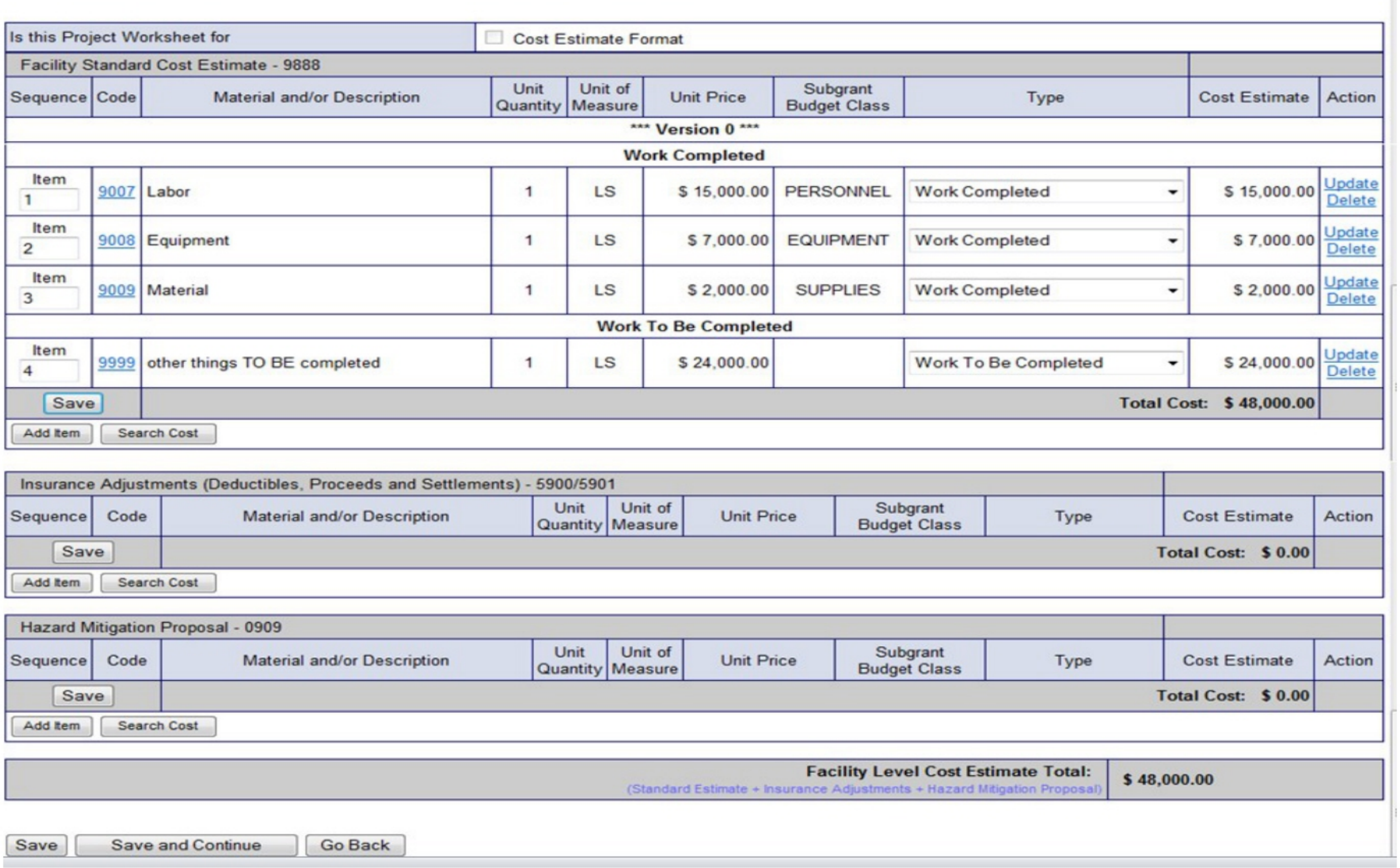
Attachments
Save
Save and Continue
Go Back
Privacy Statement | Contact Us | FAQ | EMMIE Home | Glossary | Help | Log Out
OMB ####-#### Month Day, Year

Click the radio button "No" as the Mitigation Reviewer will answer this question when reviewing the PW.

- **If there is no mitigation then answer "No" to the first question only.If there is mitigatio**

Cost Estimate Section

As stated under Damage Facility – costs may be entered at the Damage Facility Section or here at the Cost Estimate Section – depending on if you have 1 site or multiple sites.



Is this Project Worksheet for	☐ Cost Estimate Format

Facility Standard Cost Estimate - 9888

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
*** Version 0 ***									
Work Completed									
Item 1	9007	Labor	1	LS	$ 15,000.00	PERSONNEL	Work Completed	$ 15,000.00	Update Delete
Item 2	9008	Equipment	1	LS	$ 7,000.00	EQUIPMENT	Work Completed	$ 7,000.00	Update Delete
Item 3	9009	Material	1	LS	$ 2,000.00	SUPPLIES	Work Completed	$ 2,000.00	Update Delete
Work To Be Completed									
Item 4	9999	other things TO BE completed	1	LS	$ 24,000.00		Work To Be Completed	$ 24,000.00	Update Delete
Save							Total Cost:	$ 48,000.00	

Add Item | Search Cost

Insurance Adjustments (Deductibles, Proceeds and Settlements) - 5900/5901

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
Save							Total Cost:	$ 0.00	

Add Item | Search Cost

Hazard Mitigation Proposal - 0909

Sequence	Code	Material and/or Description	Unit Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Price	Subgrant Budget Class	Type	Cost Estimate	Action
Save							Total Cost:	$ 0.00	

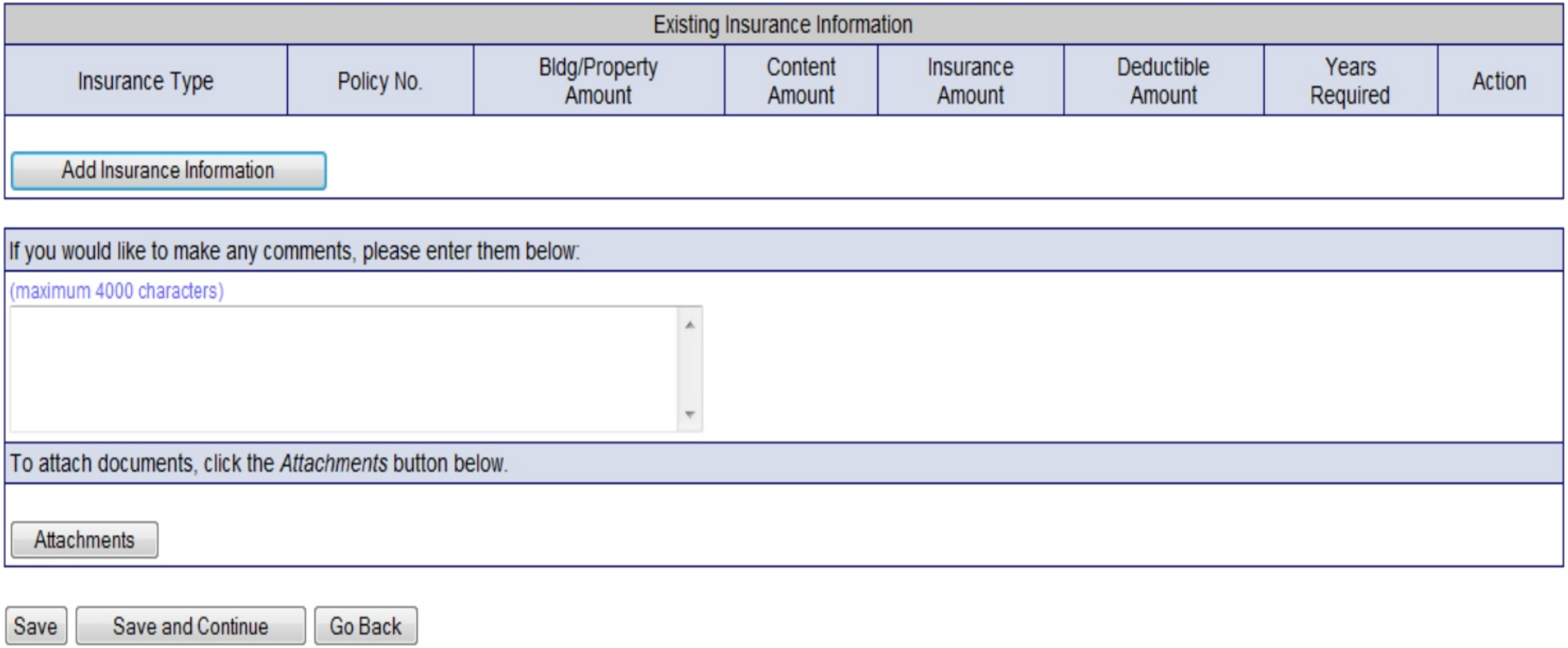
Add Item | Search Cost

Facility Level Cost Estimate Total: $ 48,000.00
(Standard Estimate + Insurance Adjustments + Hazard Mitigation Proposal)

Save | Save and Continue | Go Back

Insurance Information

This section is for the Insurance Reviewer – Do NOT add anything to this screenIf we have



Existing Insurance Information

Insurance Type	Policy No.	Bldg/Property Amount	Content Amount	Insurance Amount	Deductible Amount	Years Required	Action

If you would like to make any comments, please enter them below:

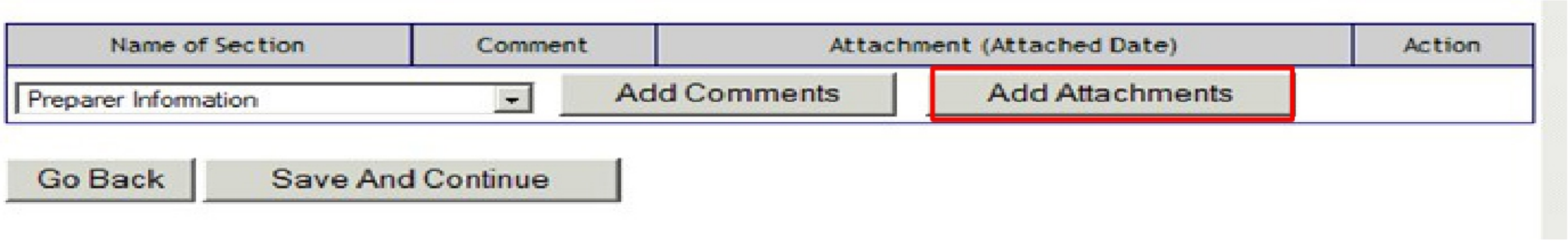
(maximum 4000 characters)

To attach documents, click the *Attachments* button below.

Add Insurance Information
Attachments
Save
Save and Continue
Go Back

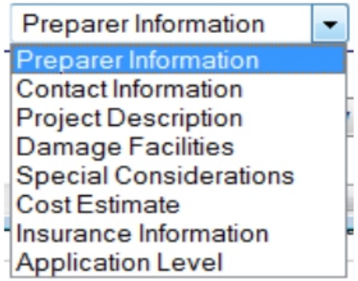
Comments and Attachments

This Section is where all documentation pertaining to a PW are attachedClick the dropdow


Name of Section
Comment
Attachment (Attached Date)
Action
Preparer Information
Add Comments
Add Attachments
Go Back
Save And Continue

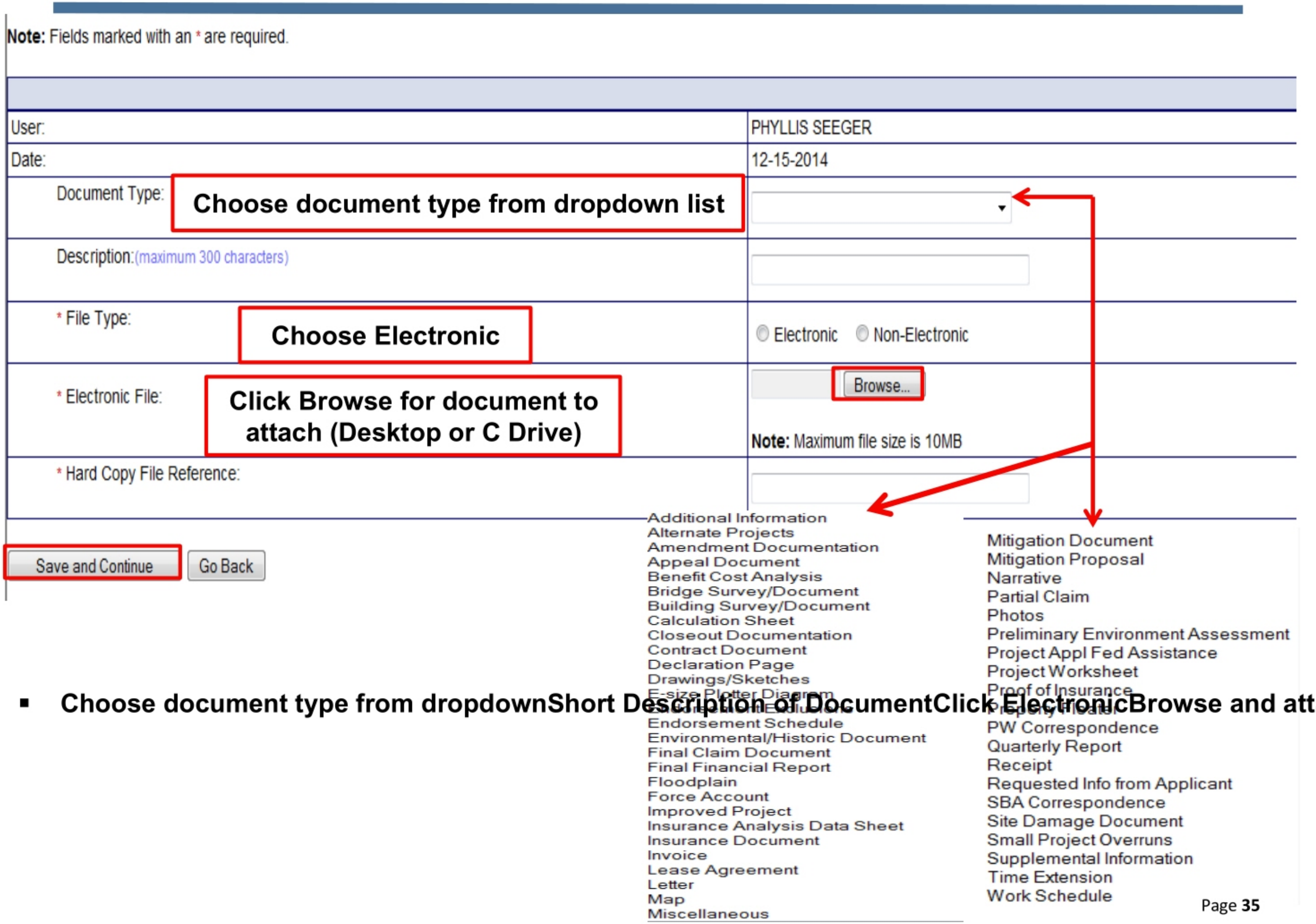
- **Click documentation destination from the dropdownClick “A**

Dropdown Menu


Preparer Information
Preparer Information
Contact Information
Project Description
Damage Facilities
Special Considerations
Cost Estimate
Insurance Information
Application Level

90-91Mitigation

Comments and Attachments - Continued



Note: Fields marked with an * are required.

User:	PHYLLIS SEEGER
Date:	12-15-2014
Document Type:	▾
Description: (maximum 300 characters)	
* File Type:	○ Electronic ○ Non-Electronic
* Electronic File:	Browse... **Note:** Maximum file size is 10MB
* Hard Copy File Reference:	

Save and Continue | Go Back

Choose document type from dropdown list

Choose Electronic

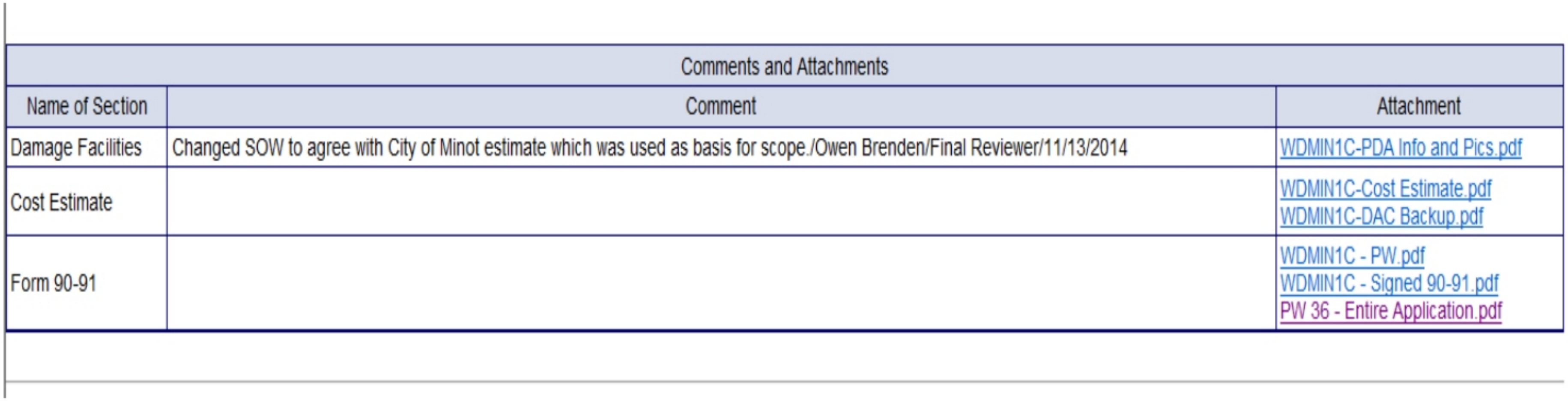
Click Browse for document to attach (Desktop or C Drive)

- Additional Information
- Alternate Projects
- Amendment Documentation
- Appeal Document
- Benefit Cost Analysis
- Bridge Survey/Document
- Building Survey/Document
- Calculation Sheet
- Closeout Documentation
- Contract Document
- Declaration Page
- Drawings/Sketches
- E-size Plotter Diagram
- Endorsement Evaluations
- Endorsement Schedule
- Environmental/Historic Document
- Final Claim Document
- Final Financial Report
- Floodplain
- Force Account
- Improved Project
- Insurance Analysis Data Sheet
- Insurance Document
- Invoice
- Lease Agreement
- Letter
- Map
- Miscellaneous
- Mitigation Document
- Mitigation Proposal
- Narrative
- Partial Claim
- Photos
- Preliminary Environment Assessment
- Project Appl Fed Assistance
- Project Worksheet
- Proof of Insurance
- Property Floater
- PW Correspondence
- Quarterly Report
- Receipt
- Requested Info from Applicant
- SBA Correspondence
- Site Damage Document
- Small Project Overruns
- Supplemental Information
- Time Extension
- Work Schedule

- **Choose document type from dropdownShort Description of DocumentClick ElectronicBrowse and atta**

Comments and Attachments - Continued

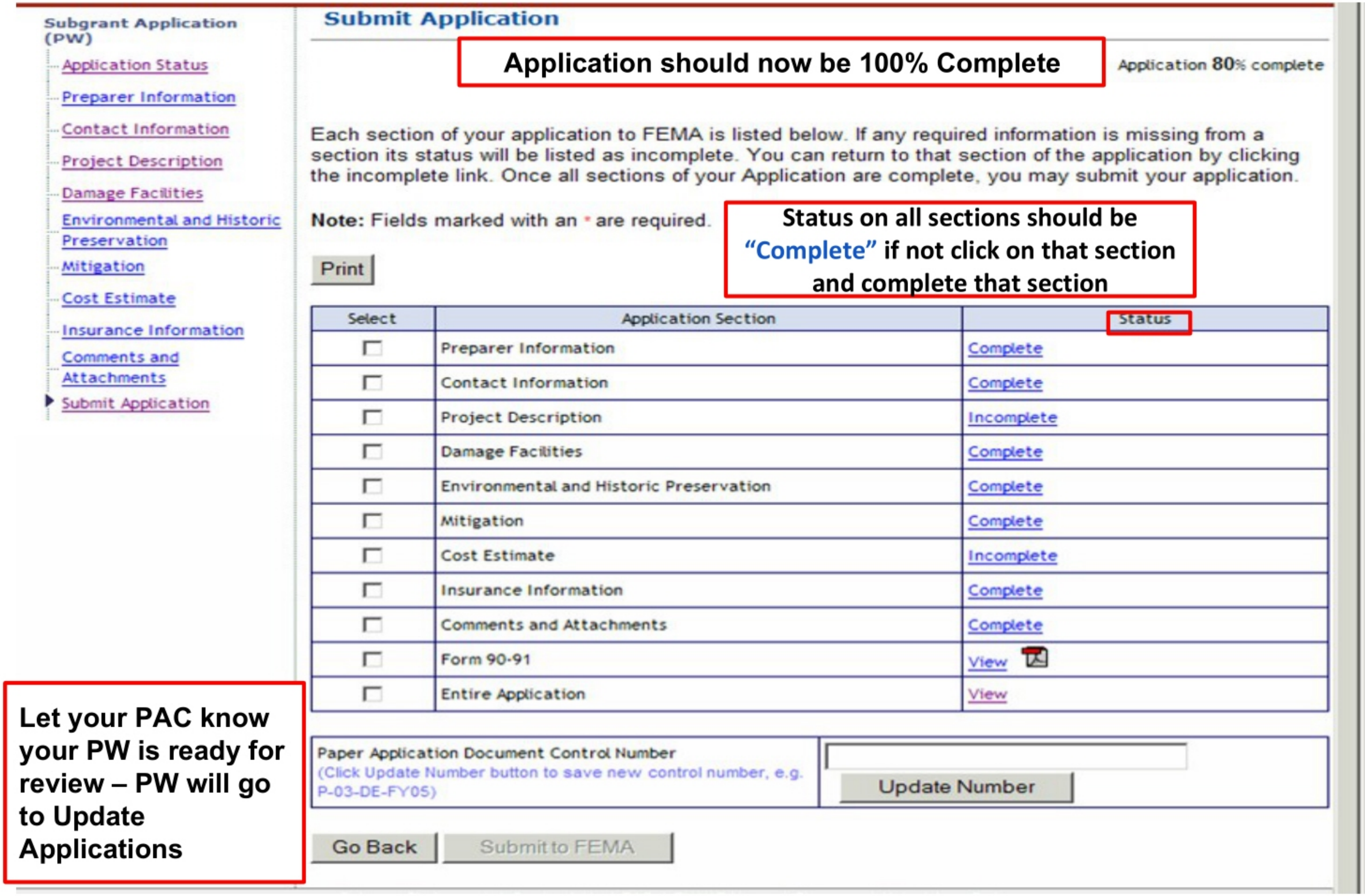
- **This is what the screen will look like once all documents are attachedOpen each document to make sure all documents have been attachedBe sure to refer to any Disaster Guidance as to the naming of the files that you will be attaching in EMMIE**



Comments and Attachments

Name of Section	Comment	Attachment
Damage Facilities	Changed SOW to agree with City of Minot estimate which was used as basis for scope./Owen Brenden/Final Reviewer/11/13/2014	WDMIN1C-PDA Info and Pics.pdf
Cost Estimate		WDMIN1C-Cost Estimate.pdf WDMIN1C-DAC Backup.pdf
Form 90-91		WDMIN1C - PW.pdf WDMIN1C - Signed 90-91.pdf PW 36 - Entire Application.pdf

Submit Application – Not Complete



Subgrant Application (PW)
Application Status
Preparer Information
Contact Information
Project Description
Damage Facilities
Environmental and Historic Preservation
Mitigation
Cost Estimate
Insurance Information
Comments and Attachments
Submit Application

Submit Application

Application 80% complete

Each section of your application to FEMA is listed below. If any required information is missing from a section its status will be listed as incomplete. You can return to that section of the application by clicking the incomplete link. Once all sections of your Application are complete, you may submit your application.

Note: Fields marked with an * are required.

Select	Application Section	Status
☐	Preparer Information	Complete
☐	Contact Information	Complete
☐	Project Description	Incomplete
☐	Damage Facilities	Complete
☐	Environmental and Historic Preservation	Complete
☐	Mitigation	Complete
☐	Cost Estimate	Incomplete
☐	Insurance Information	Complete
☐	Comments and Attachments	Complete
☐	Form 90-91	View
☐	Entire Application	View

Paper Application Document Control Number
(Click Update Number button to save new control number, e.g. P-03-DE-FY05)

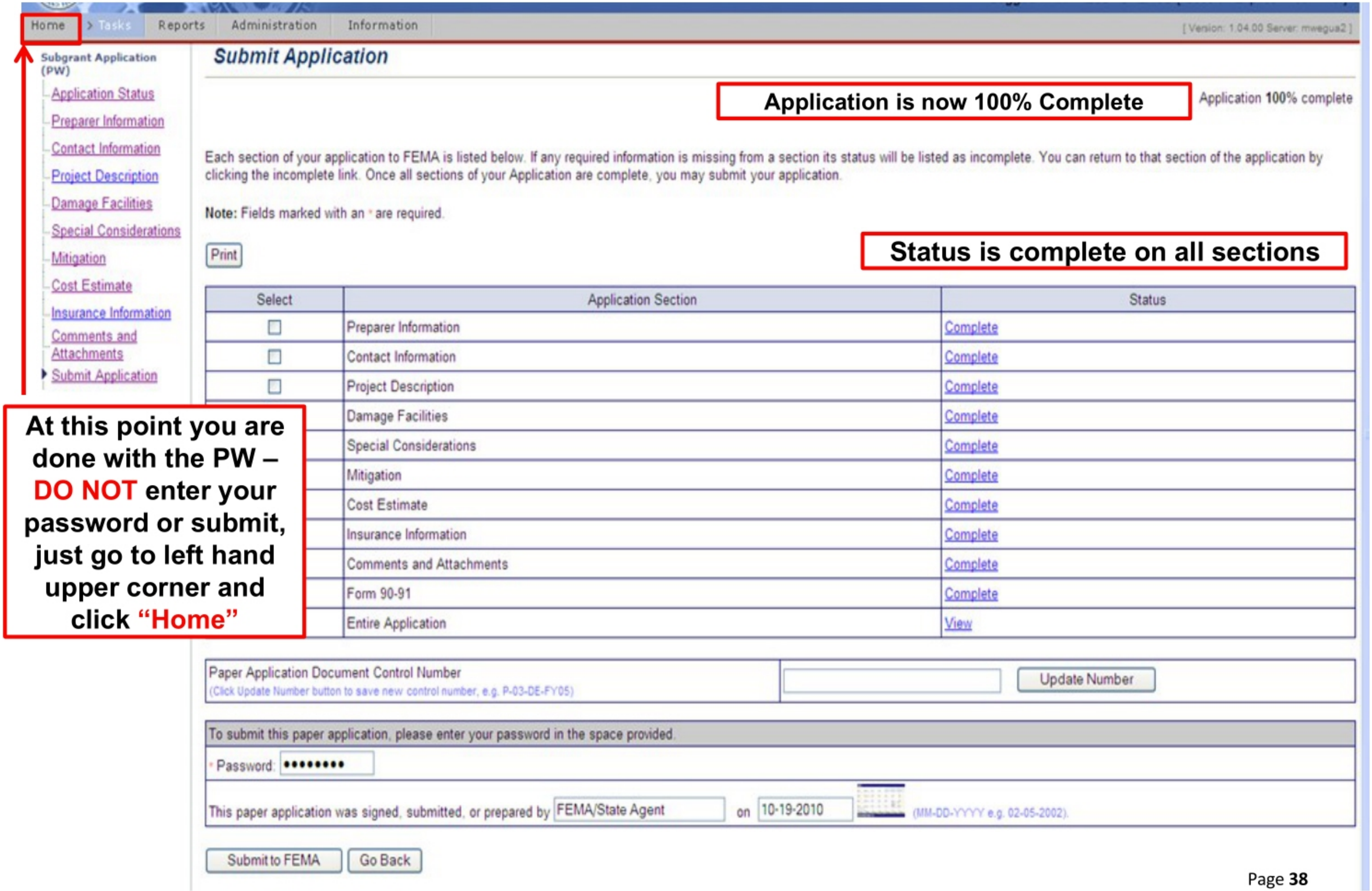
Update Number
Go Back
Submit to FEMA

Application should now be 100% Complete

Status on all sections should be "Complete" if not click on that section and complete that section

Let your PAC know your PW is ready for review – PW will go to Update Applications

Submit Application – Complete


Home
> Tasks
Reports
Administration
Information
[Version: 1.04.00 Server: mwegua2]
Subgrant Application (PW)
Application Status
Preparer Information
Contact Information
Project Description
Damage Facilities
Special Considerations
Mitigation
Cost Estimate
Insurance Information
Comments and Attachments
Submit Application
Print
Update Number
Submit to FEMA
Go Back

Submit Application

Application is now 100% Complete

Application **100%** complete

Each section of your application to FEMA is listed below. If any required information is missing from a section its status will be listed as incomplete. You can return to that section of the application by clicking the incomplete link. Once all sections of your Application are complete, you may submit your application.

Note: Fields marked with an * are required.

Status is complete on all sections

Select	Application Section	Status
☐	Preparer Information	Complete
☐	Contact Information	Complete
☐	Project Description	Complete
	Damage Facilities	Complete
	Special Considerations	Complete
	Mitigation	Complete
	Cost Estimate	Complete
	Insurance Information	Complete
	Comments and Attachments	Complete
	Form 90-91	Complete
	Entire Application	View

Paper Application Document Control Number
(Click Update Number button to save new control number, e.g. P-03-DE-FY05)

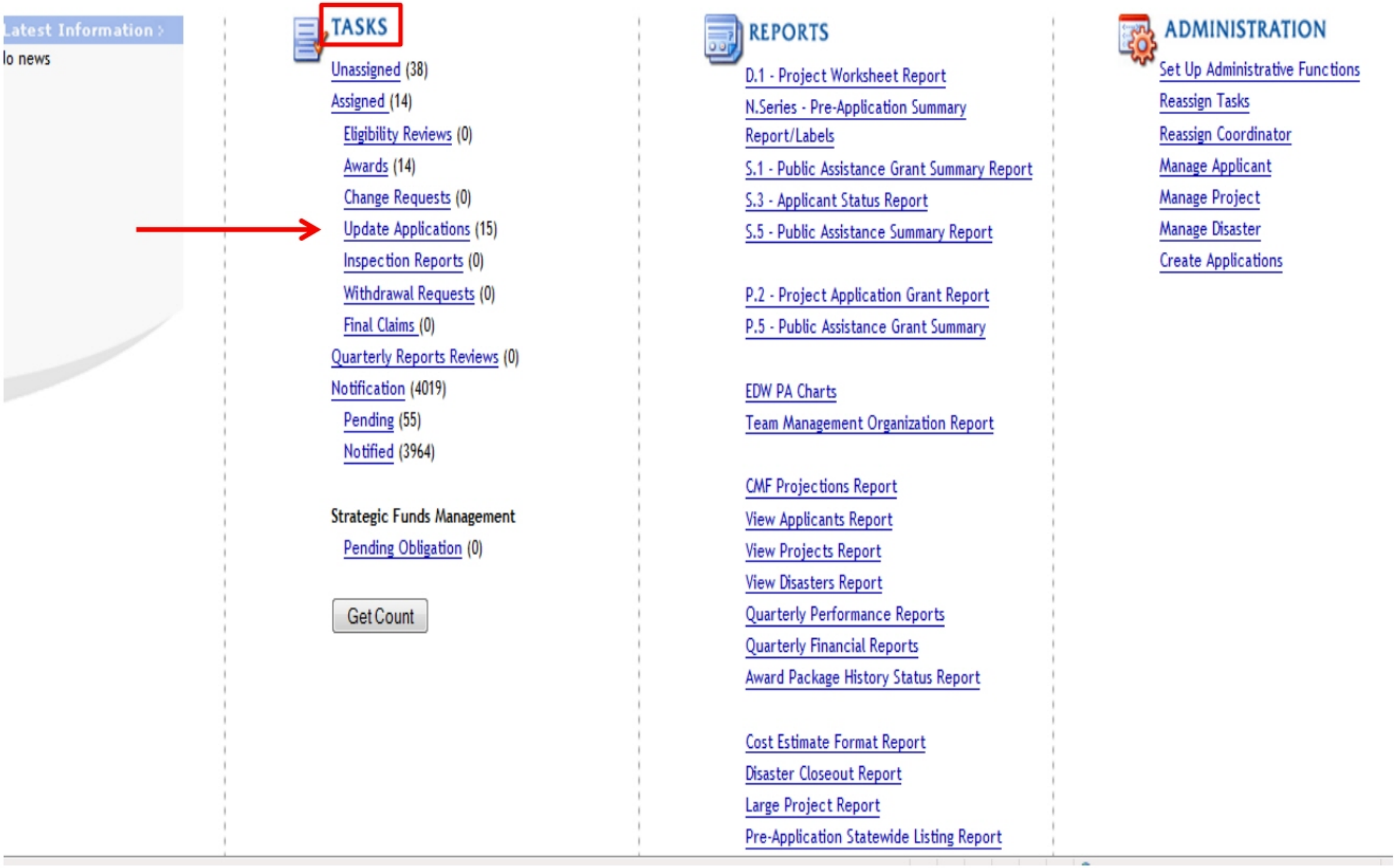
To submit this paper application, please enter your password in the space provided.

* Password: •••••••••

This paper application was signed, submitted, or prepared by FEMA/State Agent on 10-19-2010 (MM-DD-YYYY e.g. 02-05-2002).

At this point you are done with the PW – DO NOT enter your password or submit, just go to left hand upper corner and click "Home"

EMMIE – Home Screen



atest Information ›

lo news

TASKS

- Unassigned (38)
- Assigned (14)
  - Eligibility Reviews (0)
  - Awards (14)
  - Change Requests (0)
  - Update Applications (15)
  - Inspection Reports (0)
  - Withdrawal Requests (0)
  - Final Claims (0)
- Quarterly Reports Reviews (0)
- Notification (4019)
  - Pending (55)
  - Notified (3964)

Strategic Funds Management

- Pending Obligation (0)

Get Count

REPORTS

- D.1 - Project Worksheet Report
- N.Series - Pre-Application Summary Report/Labels
- S.1 - Public Assistance Grant Summary Report
- S.3 - Applicant Status Report
- S.5 - Public Assistance Summary Report

- P.2 - Project Application Grant Report
- P.5 - Public Assistance Grant Summary

- EDW PA Charts
- Team Management Organization Report

- CMF Projections Report
- View Applicants Report
- View Projects Report
- View Disasters Report
- Quarterly Performance Reports
- Quarterly Financial Reports
- Award Package History Status Report

- Cost Estimate Format Report
- Disaster Closeout Report
- Large Project Report
- Pre-Application Statewide Listing Report

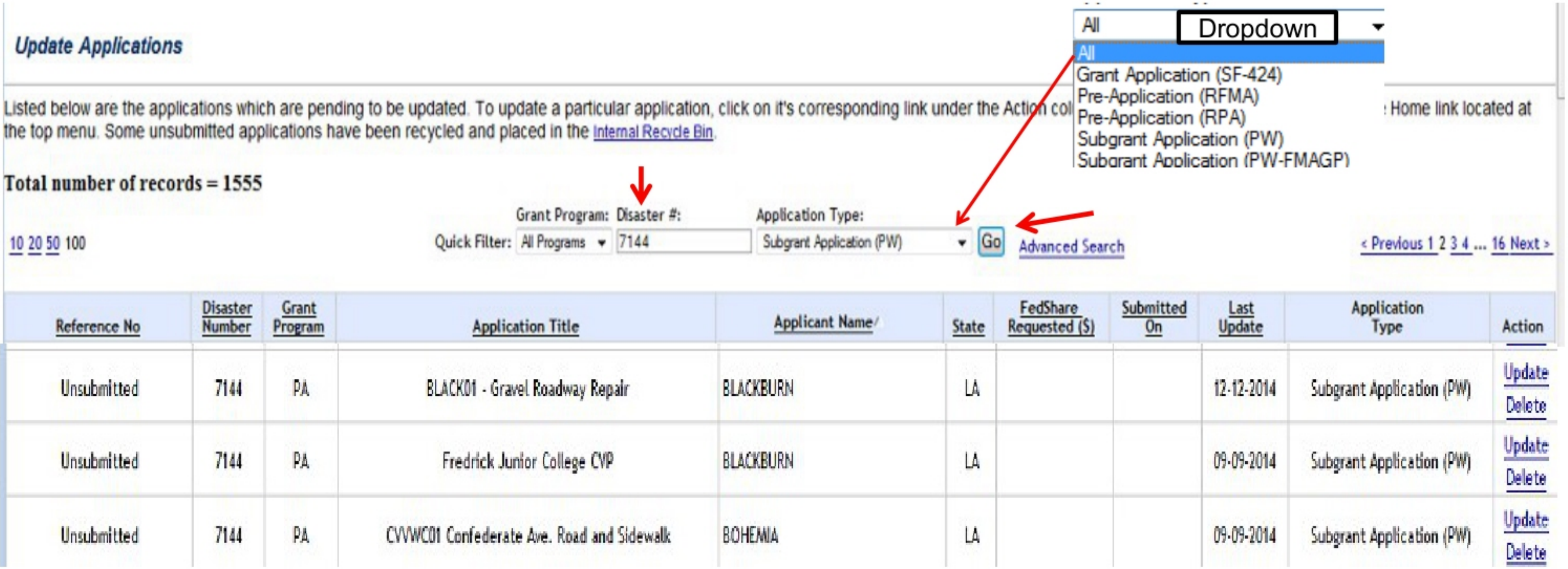
ADMINISTRATION

- Set Up Administrative Functions
- Reassign Tasks
- Reassign Coordinator
- Manage Applicant
- Manage Project
- Manage Disaster
- Create Applications

- If you have to make corrections to your PW – Start back at the “Home Screen”Under “Tasks” – Choose “Update Applications”

Update Applications - Continued

- **To find your project , type in the “Disaster #” and at the dropdown choose “Subgrant Application (PW)”Click “Go”**


Dropdown
All
Grant Application (SF-424)
Pre-Application (RFMA)
Pre-Application (RPA)
Subgrant Application (PW)
Subgrant Application (PW-FMAGP)
Go
Advanced Search
10 20 50 100
< Previous 1 2 3 4 ... 16 Next >

Update Applications

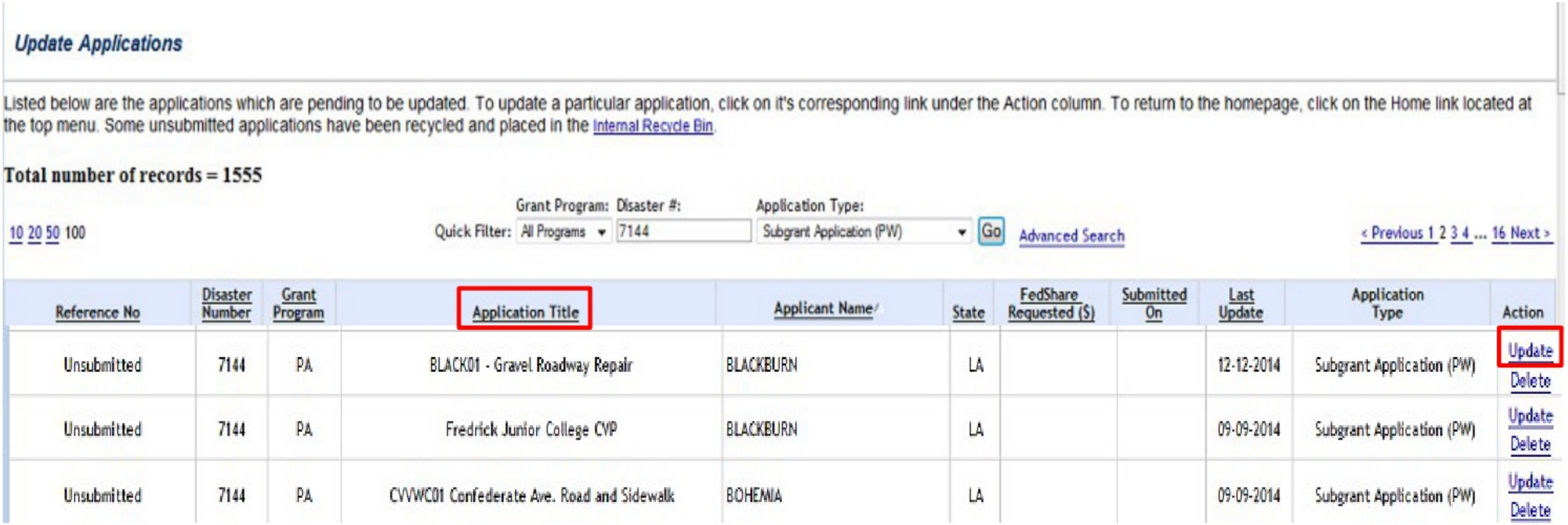
Listed below are the applications which are pending to be updated. To update a particular application, click on it's corresponding link under the Action col Home link located at the top menu. Some unsubmitted applications have been recycled and placed in the Internal Recycle Bin.

Total number of records = 1555

Quick Filter: Grant Program: All Programs Disaster #: 7144 Application Type: Subgrant Application (PW)

Reference No	Disaster Number	Grant Program	Application Title	Applicant Name	State	FedShare Requested ($)	Submitted On	Last Update	Application Type	Action
Unsubmitted	7144	PA	BLACK01 - Gravel Roadway Repair	BLACKBURN	LA			12-12-2014	Subgrant Application (PW)	Update Delete
Unsubmitted	7144	PA	Fredrick Junior College CVP	BLACKBURN	LA			09-09-2014	Subgrant Application (PW)	Update Delete
Unsubmitted	7144	PA	CVWC01 Confederate Ave. Road and Sidewalk	BOHEMIA	LA			09-09-2014	Subgrant Application (PW)	Update Delete

Update Applications - Continued



Update Applications

Listed below are the applications which are pending to be updated. To update a particular application, click on it's corresponding link under the Action column. To return to the homepage, click on the Home link located at the top menu. Some unsubmitted applications have been recycled and placed in the Internal Recycle Bin.

Total number of records = 1555

Quick Filter: Grant Program: All Programs Disaster #: 7144 Application Type: Subgrant Application (PW)

Reference No	Disaster Number	Grant Program	Application Title	Applicant Name	State	FedShare Requested ($)	Submitted On	Last Update	Application Type	Action
Unsubmitted	7144	PA	BLACK01 - Gravel Roadway Repair	BLACKBURN	LA			12-12-2014	Subgrant Application (PW)	Update Delete
Unsubmitted	7144	PA	Fredrick Junior College CVP	BLACKBURN	LA			09-09-2014	Subgrant Application (PW)	Update Delete
Unsubmitted	7144	PA	CVWC01 Confederate Ave. Road and Sidewalk	BOHEMIA	LA			09-09-2014	Subgrant Application (PW)	Update Delete

- **All projects in update applications will appear on the screen – Click "Application Title" – which will sort all projects alphabetically You can do a sort on any on the titles on the "Blue" titles lineLocate your project and go to the far right and click "Update" your PW will then appear on the screen, you can then do any updating that needs to be done**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FEMA

Region VIIIPreliminary Damage Assessment

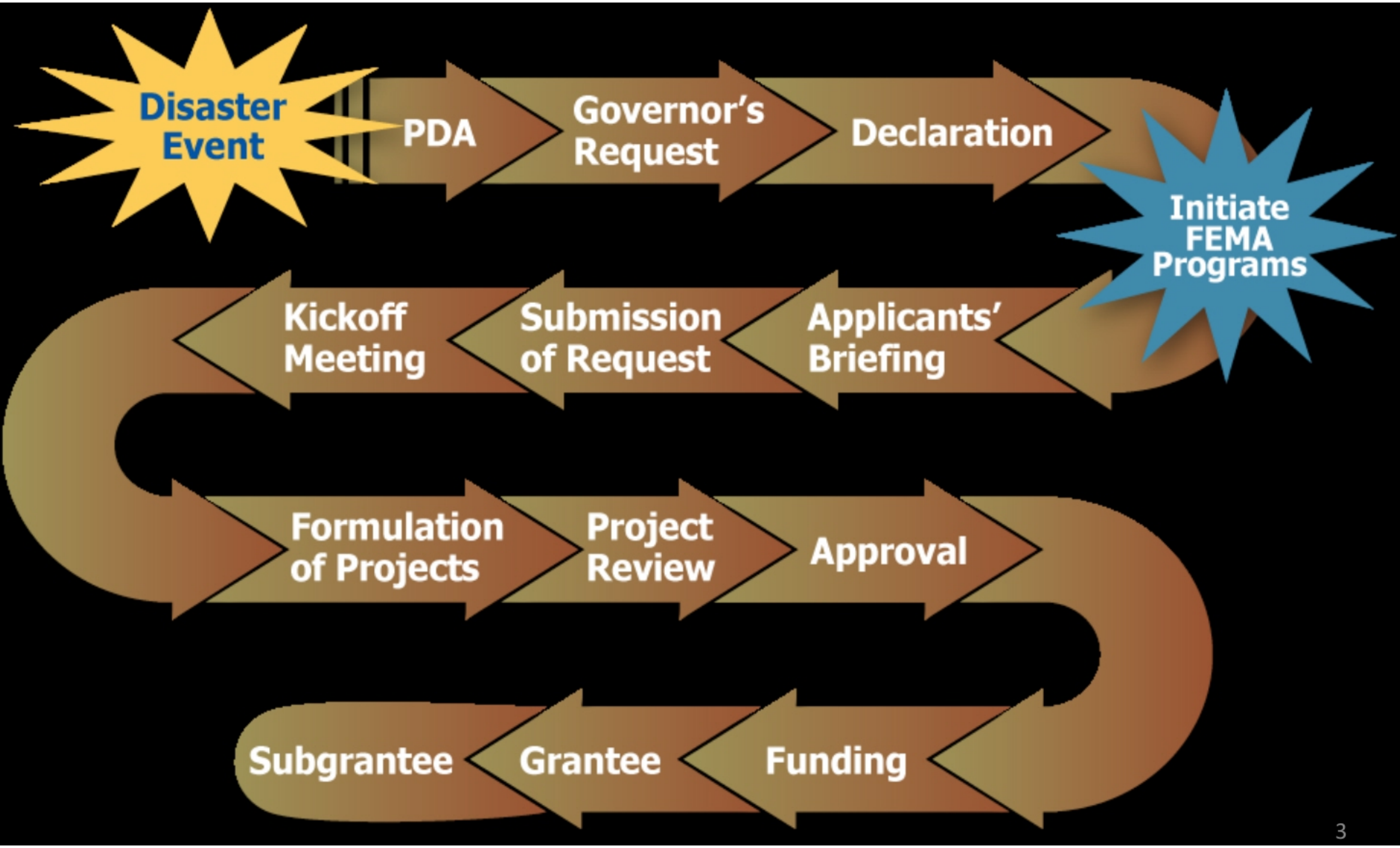
Purpose

Task:Understand the purpose of and how to effectively participate in a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA).

Objective:Understand basic principles of the required forms to be completed while participating in the PDA.

Standard:Demonstrate ability to effectively assess and report damage during the PDA.

The Public Assistance Process



Disaster Event

PDA

Governor's Request

Declaration

Initiate FEMA Programs

Applicants' Briefing

Submission of Request

Kickoff Meeting

Formulation of Projects

Project Review

Approval

Funding

Grantee

Subgrantee

PDA - Purpose & Importance

- Identify the magnitude and severity of damageDetermine impact of eventIdentify immediate needs Identify Special Considerations Identify staffing and technical resources

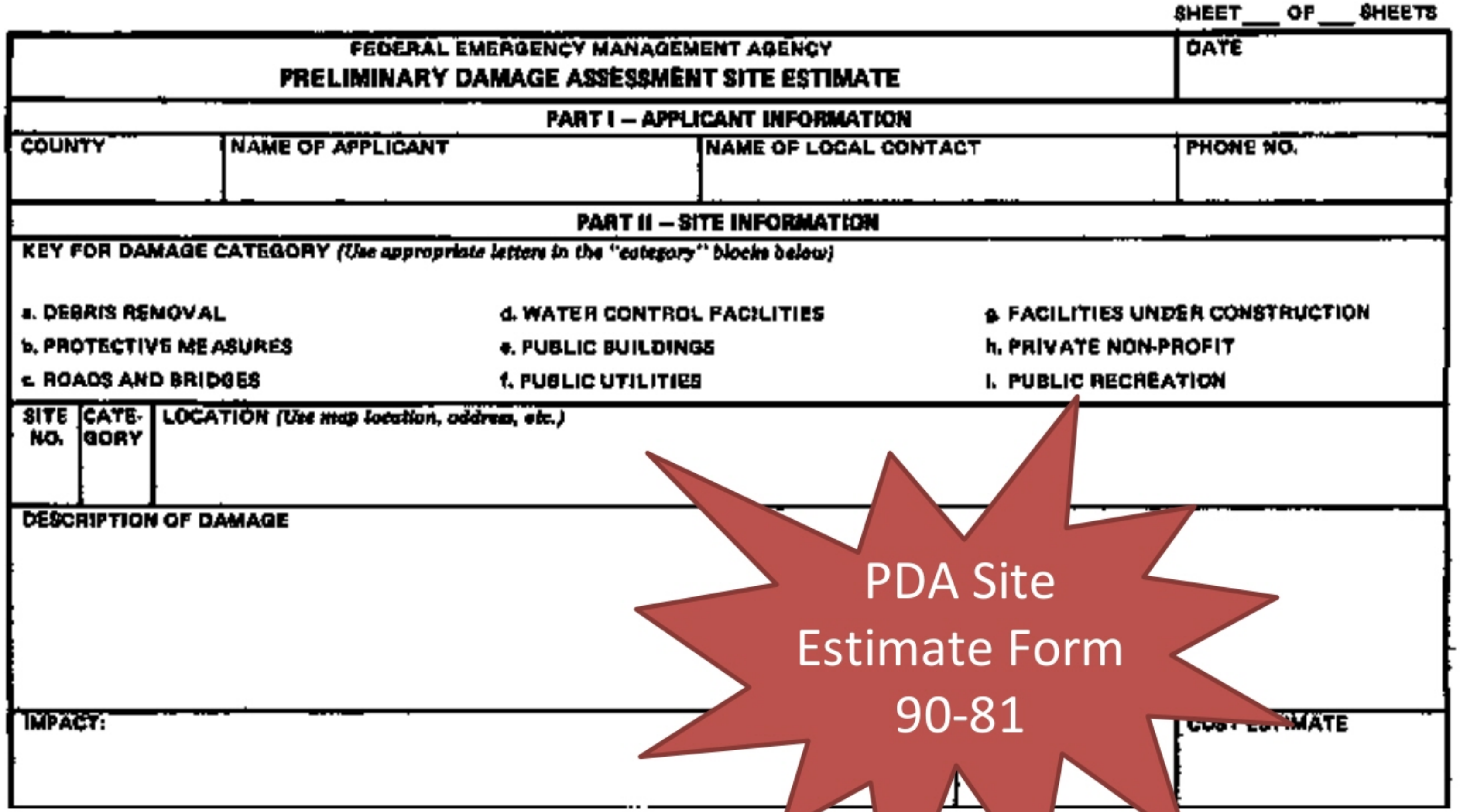
How To Prepare

- Attend PDA BriefingEnsure all supplies are collected for field work (i.e. maps, camera, GPS, PDA forms and worksheets, cost codes, etc.)Coordination Call is the initial assessment of Applicant’s needs and gathering of general PDA information

Coordination Call

- Contact your assigned applicant(s) to coordinate site visitsEnsure all sites to be inspected are related to the most recent eventBegin collecting general information:PopulationCritical FacilitiesSpecial ConsiderationsLocal ImpactsNote: General information listed will be gathered continually throughout the PDA process

Form 90-81: PDA Site Estimate



SHEET___ OF___ SHEETS

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY **PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SITE ESTIMATE**	DATE

PART I – APPLICANT INFORMATION

COUNTY	NAME OF APPLICANT	NAME OF LOCAL CONTACT	PHONE NO.

PART II – SITE INFORMATION

KEY FOR DAMAGE CATEGORY *(Use appropriate letters in the "category" blocks below)*

a. DEBRIS REMOVAL
b. PROTECTIVE MEASURES
c. ROADS AND BRIDGES
d. WATER CONTROL FACILITIES
e. PUBLIC BUILDINGS
f. PUBLIC UTILITIES
g. FACILITIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION
h. PRIVATE NON-PROFIT
i. PUBLIC RECREATION

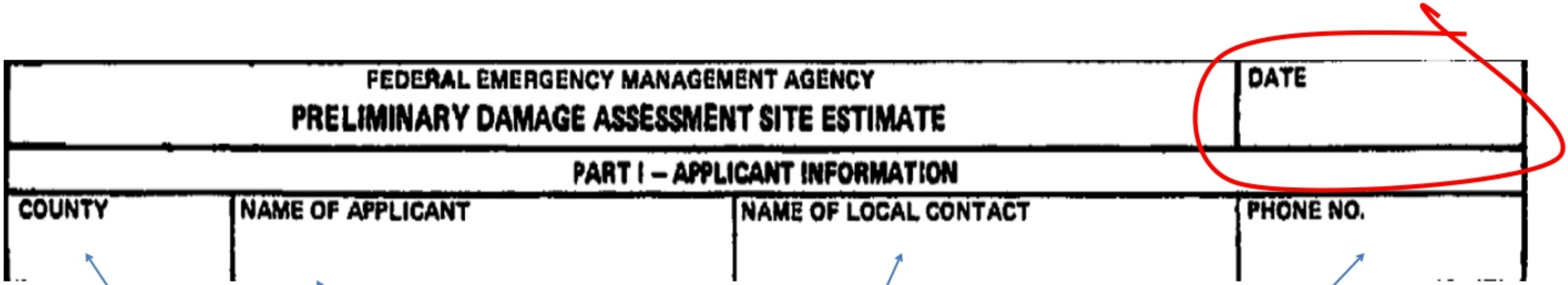
SITE NO.	CATE-GORY	LOCATION *(Use map location, address, etc.)*

DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE

IMPACT:	COST ESTIMATE

PDA Site
Estimate Form
90-81

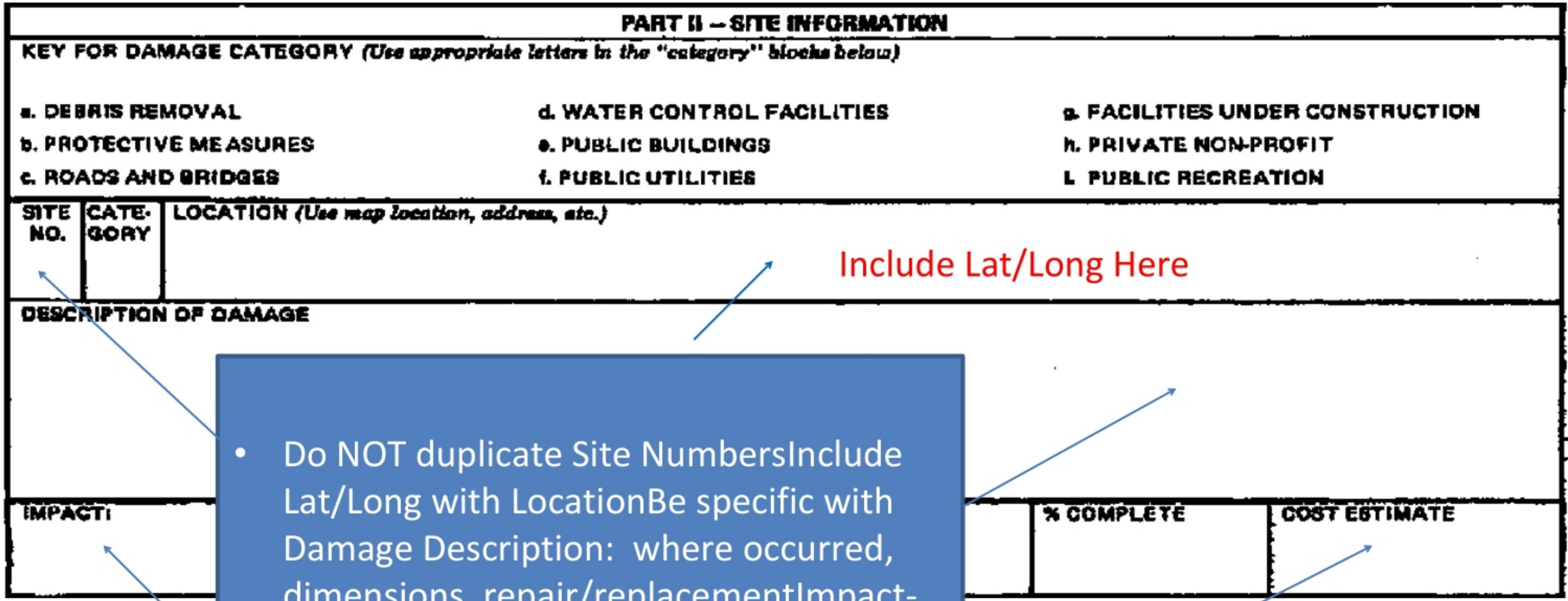
PDA Site Estimate Form: Part 1



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SITE ESTIMATE			DATE
PART I – APPLICANT INFORMATION			
COUNTY	NAME OF APPLICANT	NAME OF LOCAL CONTACT	PHONE NO.

Document General Information

PDA Site Estimate Form: Part 2



PART II – SITE INFORMATION

KEY FOR DAMAGE CATEGORY *(Use appropriate letters in the "category" blocks below)*

a. DEBRIS REMOVAL
b. PROTECTIVE MEASURES
c. ROADS AND BRIDGES
d. WATER CONTROL FACILITIES
e. PUBLIC BUILDINGS
f. PUBLIC UTILITIES
g. FACILITIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION
h. PRIVATE NON-PROFIT
i. PUBLIC RECREATION

SITE NO.
CATEGORY
LOCATION *(Use map location, address, etc.)*

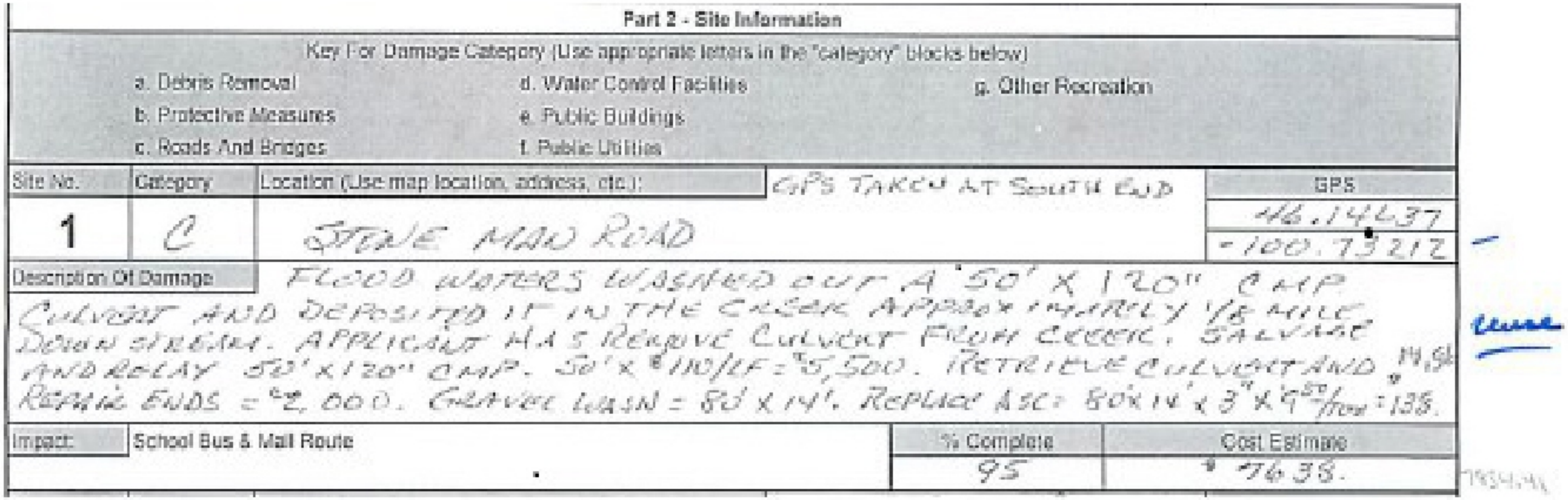
DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE

IMPACT:
% COMPLETE
COST ESTIMATE

Include Lat/Long Here

- Do NOT duplicate Site NumbersInclude Lat/Long with LocationBe specific with Damage Description: where occurred, dimensions, repair/replacementImpact- what do the damages mean to community now and over long term?Cost Estimate – should only be for damage from this occurrence

PDA Site Estimate Form: Damage Description Good Example



Part 2 - Site Information

Key For Damage Category (Use appropriate letters in the "category" blocks below)

a. Debris Removal	d. Water Control Facilities	g. Other Recreation
b. Protective Measures	e. Public Buildings	
c. Roads And Bridges	f. Public Utilities	

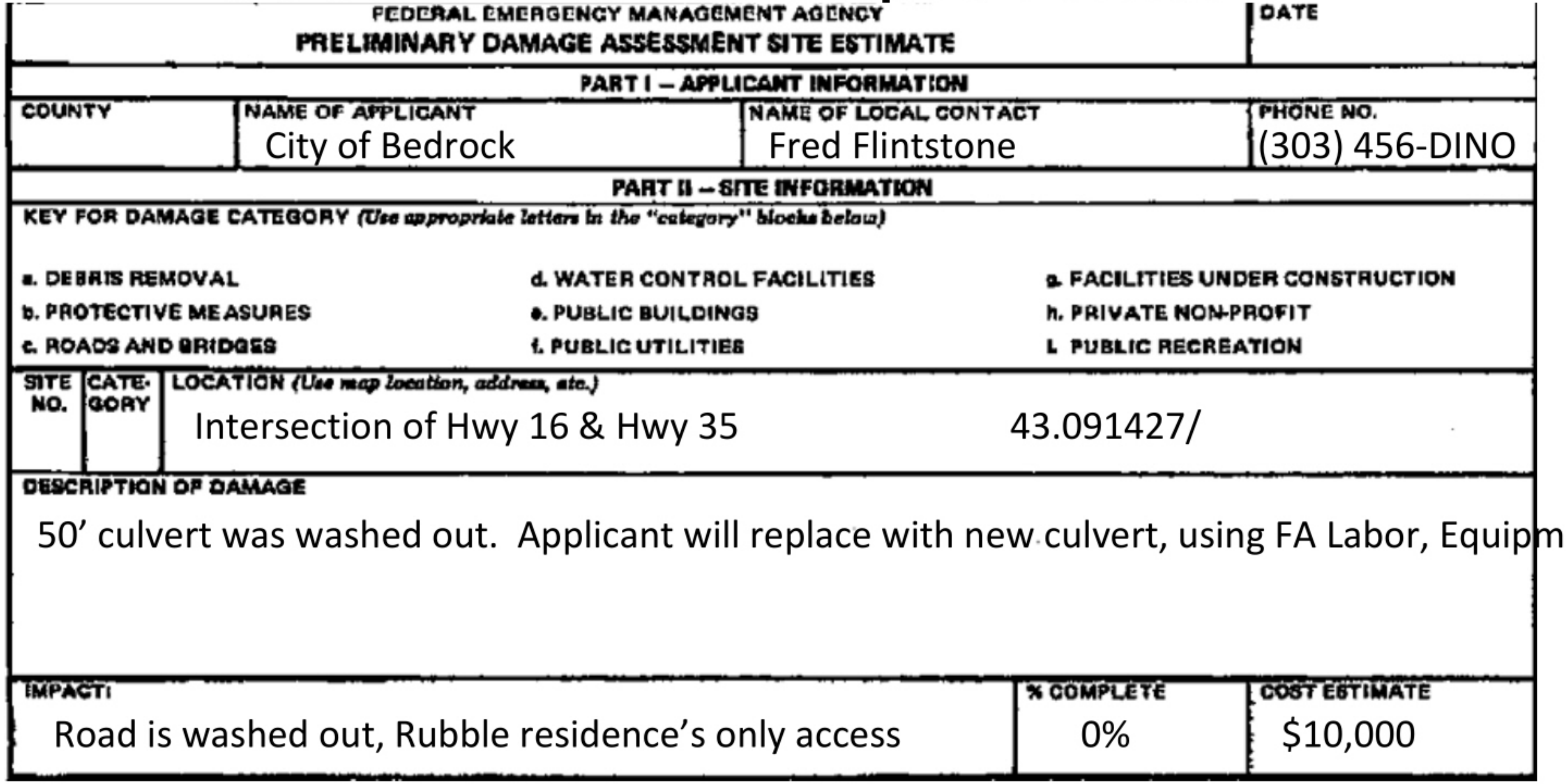
Site No.	Category	Location (Use map location, address, etc.): GPS TAKEN AT SOUTH END	GPS
1	C	STONE MAN ROAD	46.14637 -100.73212

Description Of Damage: FLOOD WATERS WASHED OUT A 50' X 120" CMP CULVERT AND DEPOSITED IT IN THE CREEK APPROXIMATELY 1/8 MILE DOWN STREAM. APPLICANT HAS REMOVE CULVERT FROM CREEK. SALVAGE AND RELAY 50'X120" CMP. 50' X $110/LF = $5,500. RETRIEVE CULVERT AND REPAIR ENDS = $2,000. GRAVEL WASH = 80' X 14'. REPLACE ASC = 80' X 14' X 3" X $9.50/TON = $138.

Impact:	% Complete	Cost Estimate
School Bus & Mail Route	95	$ 7638.

Damage Description: "Flood waters washed out a 50' x 120" CMP culvert and deposited it in the creek approximately 1/8 mile downstream. Applicant has retrieved culvert from creek. Salvage and relay 50' x 120" CMP. 50' x $110/LF = $5,500. Retrieve culvert and repair ends = $2,000. Gravel wash = 80' x 14'. Replace ASC = 80' x 3" x $9.50/TN = $138.DISCUSSION POINT: What is good about this example? (be ready to share out one idea)

PDA Site Estimate Form: Part 2
Good or Needs Improvement?



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SITE ESTIMATE

DATE

PART I – APPLICANT INFORMATION

COUNTY	NAME OF APPLICANT	NAME OF LOCAL CONTACT	PHONE NO.
	City of Bedrock	Fred Flintstone	(303) 456-DINO

PART II – SITE INFORMATION

KEY FOR DAMAGE CATEGORY *(Use appropriate letters in the "category" blocks below)*

a. DEBRIS REMOVAL
b. PROTECTIVE MEASURES
c. ROADS AND BRIDGES
d. WATER CONTROL FACILITIES
e. PUBLIC BUILDINGS
f. PUBLIC UTILITIES
g. FACILITIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION
h. PRIVATE NON-PROFIT
i. PUBLIC RECREATION

SITE NO.	CATEGORY	LOCATION *(Use map location, address, etc.)*
		Intersection of Hwy 16 & Hwy 35 43.091427/

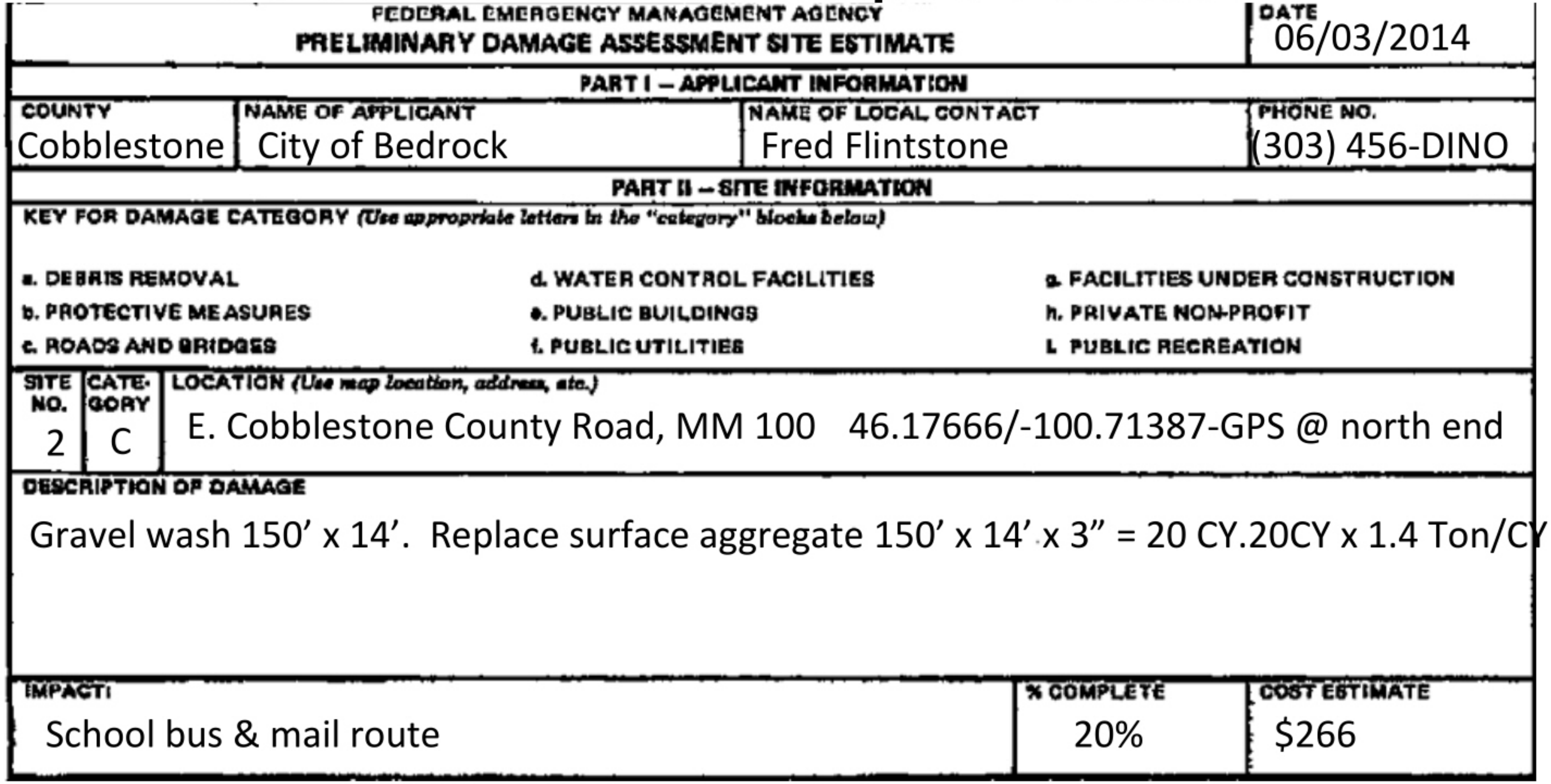
DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE

50' culvert was washed out. Applicant will replace with new culvert, using FA Labor, Equipme

IMPACT:	% COMPLETE	COST ESTIMATE
Road is washed out, Rubble residence's only access	0%	$10,000

Discuss in groups whether or not this Site Estimate is properly filled out? What would you change, if anything? Be ready to share out in 5 minutes.

PDA Site Estimate Form: Part 2
Good or Needs Improvement?



FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SITE ESTIMATE

DATE 06/03/2014

PART I – APPLICANT INFORMATION

COUNTY	NAME OF APPLICANT	NAME OF LOCAL CONTACT	PHONE NO.
Cobblestone	City of Bedrock	Fred Flintstone	(303) 456-DINO

PART II – SITE INFORMATION

KEY FOR DAMAGE CATEGORY *(Use appropriate letters in the "category" blocks below)*

- a. DEBRIS REMOVAL
- b. PROTECTIVE MEASURES
- c. ROADS AND BRIDGES
- d. WATER CONTROL FACILITIES
- e. PUBLIC BUILDINGS
- f. PUBLIC UTILITIES
- g. FACILITIES UNDER CONSTRUCTION
- h. PRIVATE NON-PROFIT
- i. PUBLIC RECREATION

SITE NO.	CATEGORY	LOCATION *(Use map location, address, etc.)*
2	C	E. Cobblestone County Road, MM 100 46.17666/-100.71387-GPS @ north end

DESCRIPTION OF DAMAGE

Gravel wash 150’ x 14’. Replace surface aggregate 150’ x 14’ x 3” = 20 CY.20CY x 1.4 Ton/CY @

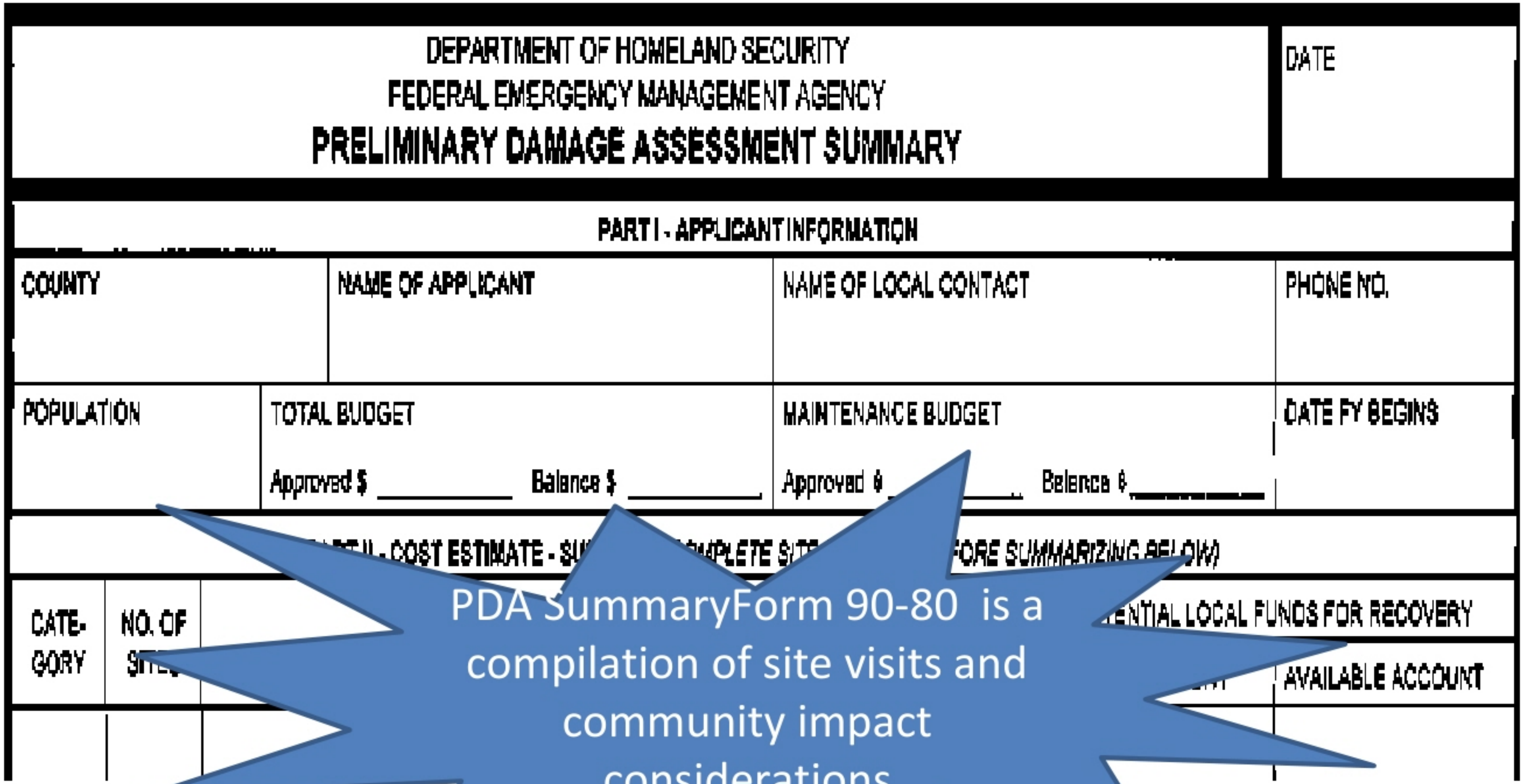
IMPACT:	% COMPLETE	COST ESTIMATE
School bus & mail route	20%	$266

Discuss in groups whether or not this Site Estimate is properly completed? Be ready to share out in 5 minutes.

Things to Remember About PDA Site Visits

- Be as specific as possible with Damage Description. Include dimensions and as much detail as possible.Take good pictures – they will be needed later on.Ensure you are only writing damage that occurred in the most recent event (rule out prior event damage).Remember Special ConsiderationsMitigation Opportunity?Insurance?EHP Issues? (Floodplain, Wetlands, Historical)

Form 90-80: PDA Summary



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

DATE

PART I - APPLICANT INFORMATION

COUNTY	NAME OF APPLICANT	NAME OF LOCAL CONTACT	PHONE NO.
POPULATION	TOTAL BUDGET Approved $ ________ Balance $ ________	MAINTENANCE BUDGET Approved $ ________ Balance $ ________	DATE FY BEGINS

RT II - COST ESTIMATE - SU … MPLETE SIT … FORE SUMMARIZING BELOW)

CATE-GORY

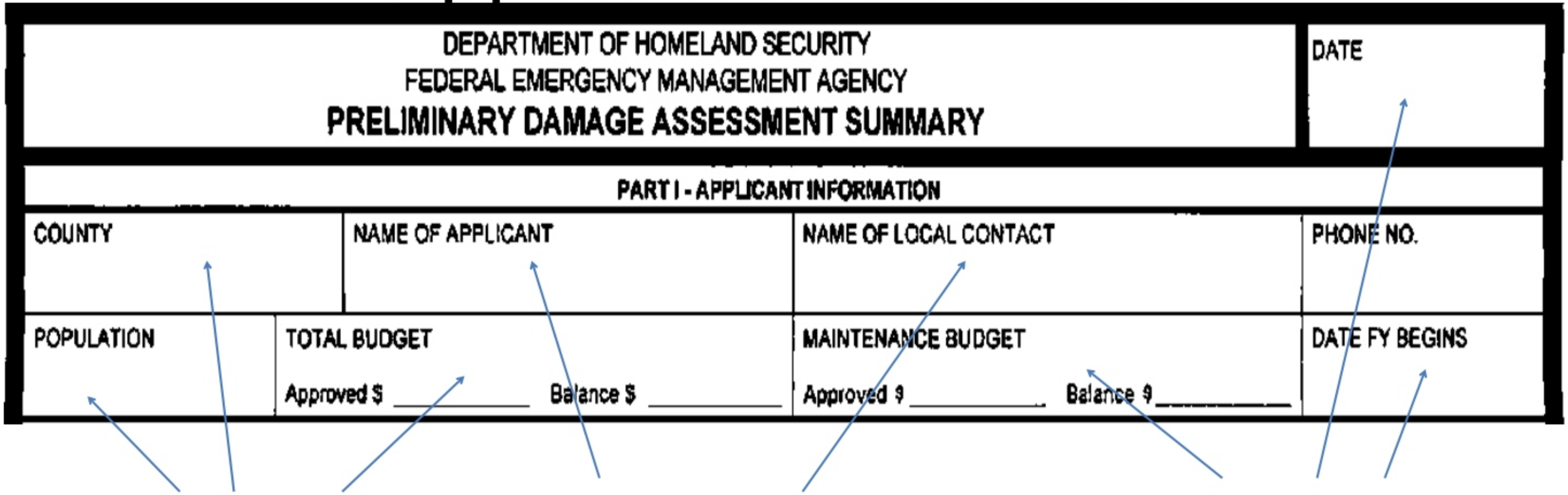
NO. OF SITE

ENTIAL LOCAL FUNDS FOR RECOVERY

AVAILABLE ACCOUNT

PDA SummaryForm 90-80 is a compilation of site visits and community impact considerations

PDA Summary – Part 1: Applicant Information



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

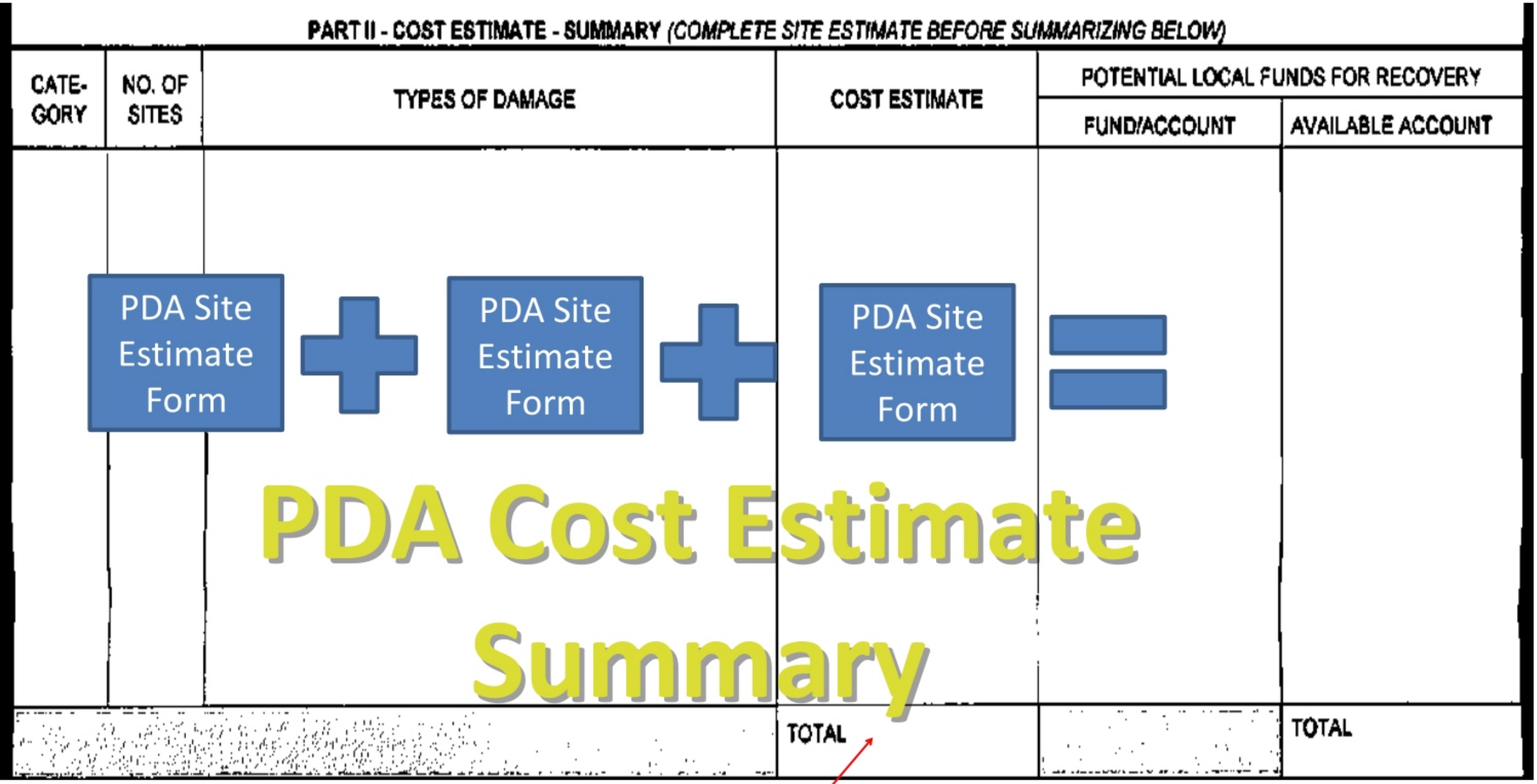
DATE

PART I - APPLICANT INFORMATION

COUNTY	NAME OF APPLICANT	NAME OF LOCAL CONTACT	PHONE NO.
POPULATION	TOTAL BUDGET Approved $ ____________ Balance $ ____________	MAINTENANCE BUDGET Approved $ ____________ Balance $ ____________	DATE FY BEGINS

Document General Information:-Complete PDA Summary after site visits are complete-Part 1 is basic information that Applicant should be able to provide

PDA Summary – Part 2: Cost Estimate



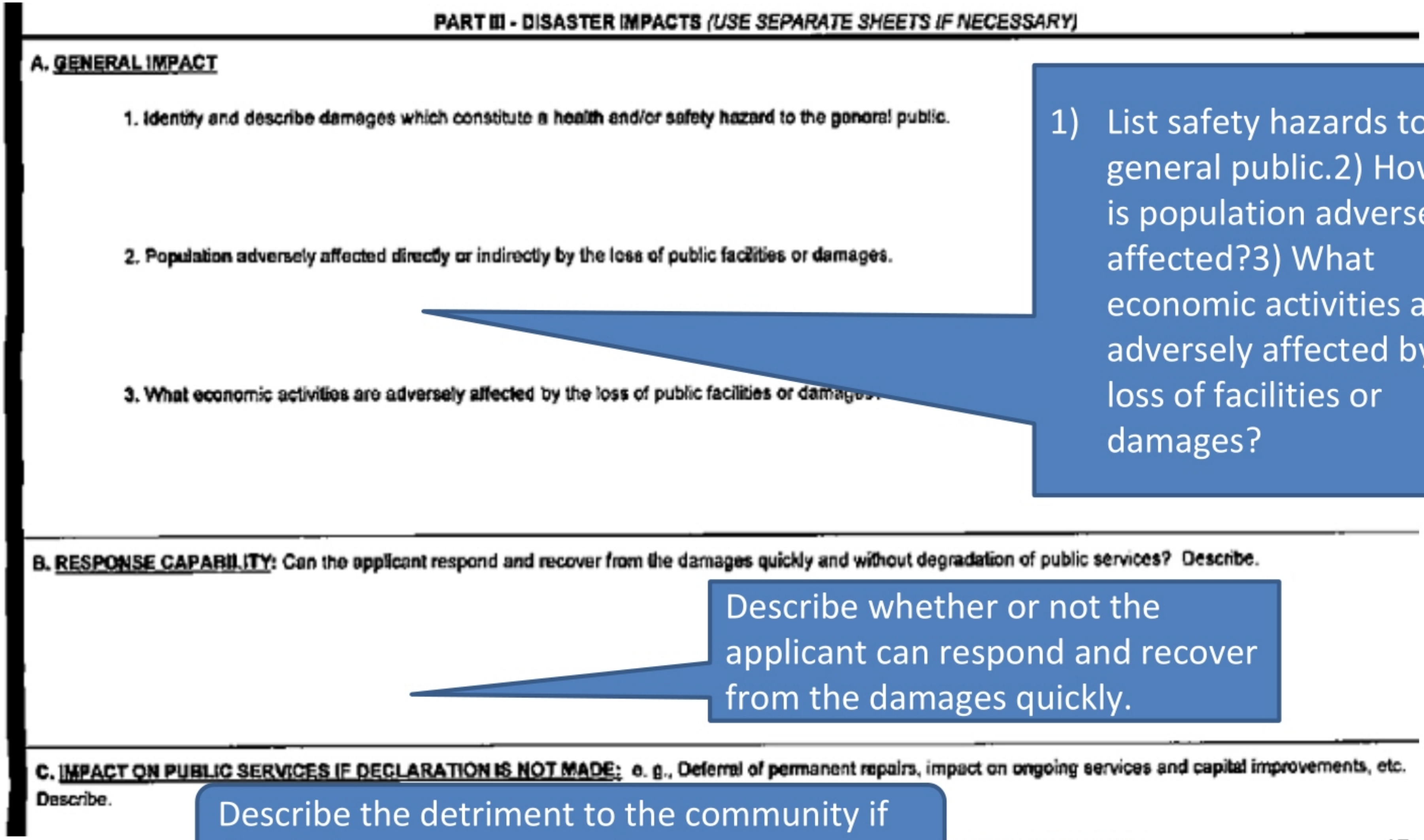
PART II - COST ESTIMATE - SUMMARY *(COMPLETE SITE ESTIMATE BEFORE SUMMARIZING BELOW)*

CATE-GORY	NO. OF SITES	TYPES OF DAMAGE	COST ESTIMATE	POTENTIAL LOCAL FUNDS FOR RECOVERY	
				FUND/ACCOUNT	AVAILABLE ACCOUNT
			TOTAL		TOTAL

PDA Site Estimate Form + PDA Site Estimate Form + PDA Site Estimate Form = PDA Cost Estimate Summary

Total for the Applicant for THIS event

PDA Summary – Part 3: Disaster Impacts



PART III - DISASTER IMPACTS *(USE SEPARATE SHEETS IF NECESSARY)*

A. GENERAL IMPACT

1. Identify and describe damages which constitute a health and/or safety hazard to the general public.

2. Population adversely affected directly or indirectly by the loss of public facilities or damages.

3. What economic activities are adversely affected by the loss of public facilities or damag

1) List safety hazards to general public.2) How is population adversely affected?3) What economic activities are adversely affected by loss of facilities or damages?

B. RESPONSE CAPABILITY: Can the applicant respond and recover from the damages quickly and without degradation of public services? Describe.

Describe whether or not the applicant can respond and recover from the damages quickly.

C. IMPACT ON PUBLIC SERVICES IF DECLARATION IS NOT MADE: e. g., Deferral of permanent repairs, impact on ongoing services and capital improvements, etc. Describe.

Describe the detriment to the community if the declaration is not made.

How Do I Know When I Am Finished?

1) You have entirely completed all forms requested.You have submitted your forms and supporting documentation to the PA PDA Coordinator.You have checked to see if anyone on the team needs help finishing their site visits or paperwork.You have received approval from the PA PDA Coordinator to check out.You have r

   your equipment.

What Questions Do You Have?

QUESTIONS
ANSWERS

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 16 Aug 2016 21:41:02 +0000
To: Zimmerman, Elizabeth;Gruber, Corey;Coen Jr, Michael
Cc: Hudson, Lamont;R8 Division Directors;Floyd, Megan;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: BLUF - Standing Rock Sioux Tribal protests

Dear Ms. Zimmerman, Mr. Coen and Mr. Gruber

On August 10, 2016, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (Hunkpapa Oyate), environmental groups, and other supporters (including other tribal governments) began a protest to halt construction of a pipeline being built by Dakota Access. This is taking place one mile outside of the Standing Rock Reservation near the town of Cannonball, ND (pop. 875, 2010 census located on the Reservation) in Sioux County (pop. 4,153, 2010 census).

Several tribal citizens have been arrested including the Tribal Chairman for disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing for blocking access to the construction site. As of August 12, 2016, thirty-four officers are on scene including county and ND State Highway Patrol. State communications requested an increase in cellular coverage for the area. Disaster Emergency Communications connected State communications to AT&T and Verizon.

Although the State EOC is in Level IV â€" Daily Operations

From: Espinosa, Adam
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 15:08:35 -0400
To: R8 Response Division
Cc: FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Subject: Dakota Access Pipeline News for North Dakota

CNN Twitter link that shows authorities are starting to remove protestors out of North Dakota.

- Over 127 arrests
- EMAC Support from Nebraska.
- Army Corps of Engineers mention.

http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/27/us/dakota-access-pipeline-protests/index.html

Adam Espinosa
FEMA Region VIII Mission Assignments
Phone: (303) 235-4658 BB: (720) 415-4808
Email: Adam.Espinosa@fema.dhs.gov

FEMA

From: Espinosa, Adam
Sent: 31 Oct 2016 13:45:05 -0400
To: Depalo, Lee
Cc: Watkins, David;Moore, Jkevin;Gray, Patricia;Hudson, Lamont;FEMA-MOC-DENVER
Subject: Dakota Pipeline Protests in Utah

Additional twitter feeds show they have several arrests in Utah at the Wells Fargo building.

http://fox13now.com/2016/10/31/dakota-access-pipeline-demonstrators-enter-wells-fargo-center-in-salt-lake-city/

http://www.good4utah.com/news/local-news/dakota-pipeline-protests-moves-to-downtown-salt-lake-city

Adam Espinosa
FEMA Region VIII Mission Assignments
Phone: (303) 235-4658 BB: (720) 415-4808
Email: Adam.Espinosa@fema.dhs.gov

From: Depalo, Lee
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 14:24:57 +0000
To: R8 Division Directors
Subject: FW: Dakota Access Pipeline Protest

FYSA

Lee dePalo

Response Division Director
FEMA Region 8
Cell: 720-456-9616
Regional Office: 303-235-4990

Referred to Another Agency/Component

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

Page 5645

Withheld pursuant to exemption

Referred to Another Agency/Component

of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 22 Aug 2016 18:48:19 -0400
To: Depalo, Lee
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Lee -

I meant to send this to you as well and forgot to put you on the CC line. I apologize and won't forget next time.

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:20 PM
To: 'Pinheiro, Ronald (OS/ASPR/OEM)'(b)(6)@hhs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Standing Rock

Hi Ron -

Per our conversation, I wanted to let you know that I sent the below email to the FEMA National Tribal Advisor and Rocky Jones with IHS - this is nothing official and just from our media monitoring.

Thanks

Megan

-----Original Message-----
From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 4:09 PM
To: Booth, Milo <milo.booth@fema.dhs.gov>;(b)(6)@ihs.gov' <(b)(6)@ihs.gov>
Cc: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Standing Rock

Hi Milo and Rocky -

FEMA Region VIII has been monitoring the situation at Standing Rock. Although there are no issues with the protest the FEMA is tied to, we have been monitoring for situational awareness. We have been in contact with the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services. Situational awareness has come from main-stream media, native-media and Facebook.

Some Background (Sources: Media and Facebook);
â€¢ Dakota Access is building a pipeline that will go under the Missouri River near its confluence with the Cannon Ball River. Dakota Access recently go the approved permits from USACE to move forward with construction.
â€¢ The concern is that the pipeline will contaminate water.
â€¢ The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, along with others, have been in opposition to the project for a long time.
â€¢ As construction started the Spirit Camp started to grow into the protest and current estimates are at about 2,000 people and growing, with support from around the country and Canada.
â€¢ This is not the Keystone XL Pipeline, this the Bakken Pipeline.
â€¢ The protest is about a mile north of the Reservation boundaries in Morton County, North Dakota.

What we are aware of (Sources: Media and Facebook):
â€¢ There seems to be differing perspectives between local and State law enforcement and the tribal protestors regarding what is going on at the protest site.

â€¢ The Tribal Chairman has called for peaceful protest and prayer.
â€¢ The State has reported threats from protestors and Dakota Access stopped construction for now based on safety concerns.
â€¢ The State director of Homeland Security is quoted in the Bismarck Tribune that the State has been providing portable water trailers to the protestors.
â€¢ The Tribe did put out a notice for donations.
â€¢ The Governor has issued a State of Emergency of the south western part of the State to allow State Agencies to tap into additional state funding to support things like law enforcement. .
â€¢ The Governor has NOT activated the National Guard (there have been lots of rumors on this topic).
â€¢ The Tribe gets daily letters of support from other tribes across the United States in support of the protests.
â€¢ Dakota Access has filed suit against the protestors for preventing them from working.
â€¢ The Tribe has asked Federal courts for a preliminary injunction halting work as the sure USACE regarding permits they issues to Dakota Access.
â€¢ September 9-11, the annual International United Tribes Powwow is scheduled to occur in Bismarck, ND, which normally draws approximately 5,000 persons. Due to the protest they expect it could draw up to 15,000. The theme of this yearâ€™s Powwow is Empowerment Though Unity.

Hope this helps, I would again reiterate that all of this information came from media and Facebook, so some of the info could be incorrect. But again, at this time, this is not a FEMA issue.

If there is anything else you need from me, please let me know.

Thanks

Megan Floyd
FEMA Region VIII
(303) 235-4638 - desk
(303) 945-6367 - cell
Megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Booth, Milo
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2016 8:22 PM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov> (b)(6) @ihs.gov' (b)(6) @ihs.gov>
Subject: Standing Rock

Megan,

Rocky Jones Emergency Management/Physical Security Specialist from the Indian Health Service has asked if we have heard anything regarding the protests at. Standing Rock.

If you have can you share with him?

Regards,

Milo

From: Hudson, Lamont
Sent: 24 Aug 2016 12:00:19 -0400
To: Depalo, Lee
Cc: Gray, Patricia;Moore, Jkevin;Garcia, Maria;Fisher, Dennis
Subject: ND pipeline protest update

Hi All,

I just wanted to make sure you're aware of this:

Governor issues emergency declaration in response to pipeline protests

CAROLINE GRUESKIN Bismarck Tribune

Updated Aug 19, 2016

North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple issued an emergency declaration for southwest and south central North Dakota in response to protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline near Cannon Ball.

The declaration starts a process by which state agencies can get additional funding, said Greg Wilz, director of the Homeland Security Division of the state Department of Emergency Services.

Dalrymple said in the declaration that the state is committed to protecting the right to lawful protests, but recent events have created a "significant public safety concern."

The protests have grown substantially over the past week as about 1,500 people have gathered to demonstrate against the pipeline being drilled under the Missouri River. Large campsites have been established for the protesters. Twenty-nine people have been arrested during the demonstrations.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department has been the central law enforcement agency involved in monitoring the protests, but several state agencies have gotten involved.

North Dakota Highway Patrol has sent officers to the protest site, Wilz said. The health department has provided portable water trailers and a medical trailer at the protest camp. The transportation department has assisted with the road detour on Highway 1806 and put up barriers and signage.

Wilz said he will be looking at funding requests from the agencies, make an estimate and ask the emergency commission for an appropriation. The commission can authorize emergency services to get a loan from the Bank of North Dakota.

He estimated the additional resources could cost from $750,000 to $1 million, if the protests continue for the next few weeks.

The declaration also means an emergency operations center will be set up in the emergency services building, so that the agencies can coordinate their resources, Wilz said.

The money does not funnel directly into the local agencies, such as the Morton County Sheriff's Department. Rather, it reimburses the state agencies that provide personnel and material resources to local authorities.

Morton County declared its own state of emergency on Monday, for the purpose of tapping into its emergency fund and creating public awareness, said Cody Schulz, chairman of the county commission.

Schulz said the biggest expense for the county has been law enforcement, including overtime for the sheriff's deputies and assistance from other agencies, including the Mandan Police and the Cass and Mercer County Sheriffs.

The governor's emergency order does not include activation of the National Guard.

Respectfully,

Lamont Hudson

DHS/FEMA Region VIII - Logistics
Ordering Unit Lead
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. #20
Office: 303-235-4851
Cell: 303-842-4682
Fax: 303-233-2504

“Teamwork makes the DREAM work.”

From: Dragani, Nancy
Sent: 13 Oct 2016 17:04:58 +0000
To: Graff, Shawn
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Shawn

I'm sharing with you a power point provided by ND Emergency Management Director, Greg Wilz. He asked me to facilitate a conference call with the other R8 state directors to discuss potential EMAC requests. In preparation for the meeting, he provided this update; it is a large file and took approximately 10 minutes to download. You may already know much or all of this but I thought it was a nice rollup.

He has asked to keep distribution to FOUO.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator
Office ? 303-235-4840
Cell ? 202-702-1991
Denver Federal Center, Building 710
Lakewood, CO 80225

-----Original Message-----
From: Wilz, Greg M. [mailto(b)(6)@nd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 6:33 AM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>; Cameron, Guy <(b)(6)@wyo.gov>; tina titze (b)(6)@state.sd.us>(b)(6)@utah.gov>; Bruno, Delilah (b)(6)@mt.gov>(b)(6) (b)(6)@state.co.us>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us>
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Region 8 Directors,

I am hoping this all work. Below is a link to a state of North Dakota secure file transfer site. The file is about 190 meg so it was too large to send regular email. It is a briefing that will help explain what is going on in North Dakota. We are providing it all states that have inquired about what is the risk of sending LEO to North Dakota based on our EMAC.

The complete situation here on the ground is very complex almost unbelievable unless you have been here since the beginning. What has started as peaceful protest by concerned citizens and Tribal members has grown to situation that is at times out of control with recent actions bordering on terrorism with state, national , and international implications.

I look forward to talking to you all this morning. If the file transfer works and you get a chance to look at it before the conference call that would be great.

Greg

You can download the file using the following link:

https://apps.nd.gov/itd/filetransfer/downloadByInvitation.htm?id=1-cc8f91f7036cb333c3fdef74e22b47ff.

****
For security reasons, please do not forward this email to other persons. Doing so may allow unauthorized persons the ability to download the file as well.
****

From: Dragani, Nancy
To: Graff, Shawn
Cc: Appenrodt, Kathleen; Deal, Timothy
Subject: RE: Invitation to Download a File
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2016 8:50:37 AM

Shawn

Thanks for sending us the analysis of long-term impacts to disruption of pipelines. We'll reach out if there are any additional questions or concerns.

Regards, Nancy

-----Original Message-----
From: Graff, Shawn
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2016 8:16 AM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Appenrodt, Kathleen <kathleen.appenrodt@fema.dhs.gov>; Graff, Shawn (b)(6) @hq.dhs.gov>; Deal, Timothy <Timothy.Deal@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: Invitation to Download a File

Good Morning Nancy,
In response to a Request for Information (RFI) from the NPPD Chief of Staff asking about potential impacts and private sector coordination related to the recent pipeline incidents, our Office of Cyber and Infrastructure Analysis provided the response below. That has been combined with a brief summary of some of the outreach our Protective Security Advisors in the area have done. I am in DC this week, but both Scott Behunin and I are available via email and phone should you or your team need anything from us.

Thank you,
Shawn

Subject: RFI - Potential Long-Term Impacts to Disruption of Pipelines

The Office of Cyber and Infrastructure Analysis (OCIA) assesses that there will be minimal short-term and no long-term damages and/or impacts to the Oil and Natural Gas Subsector stemming from the recent incidents in which activists closed a mainline valve on the Express Pipeline in Eagle Butte, MT and other valves on pipelines which belong to Enbridge in Minnesota and Trans-Canada in North Dakota. SCADA systems belonging to these pipelines notify operators about interruptions which results in a timely dispatch of crews to restore the flow thus mitigating any significant delay in the delivery of product. Further security personnel will likely be dispatched to the site to further deter any more actions by the part of activists. All of the targeted pipelines are fully operational.

DOT regulations require operators to have protection in place to prevent tampering with chain link fences and locks. DOT PHMSA is drafting a Safety Advisory Bulletin to publish for pipeline operators.

An RFI was produced by OCIA and pushed out to the North Dakota State and Local Intelligence Center by the ND PSA. The PSA has been in contact with utility companies (Montana Dakota Utilities; MinnKota; and Otter Tail) to help maintain their awareness of the ongoing situation. Contact information has been gathered for all the major energy stakeholders in the state for communications purposes.

-----Original Message-----
From: Dragani, Nancy

Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 11:05 AM
To: Graff, Shawn <(b)(6) @hq.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Shawn

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He has asked to keep distribution to FOUO.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards, Nancy

Nancy J. Dragani
FEMA Region VIII Acting Regional Administrator Office – 303-235-4840 Cell – 202-702-1991 Denver Federal Center, Building 710 Lakewood, CO 80225

-----Original Message-----
From: Wilz, Greg M. [mailto(b)(6) @nd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 6:33 AM
To: Dragani, Nancy <nancy.dragani@fema.dhs.gov>; Cameron, Guy (b)(6) @wyo.gov>; tina titze (b)(6) @state.sd.us>;(b)(6) @utah.gov>; Bruno, Delilah (b)(6) @mt.gov>;(b)(6) (b)(6) @state.co.us>; Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc:(b)(6) @state.co.us>
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

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I look forward to talking to you all this morning. If the file transfer works and you get a chance to look at it before the conference call that would be great.

Greg

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For security reasons, please do not forward this email to other persons. Doing so may allow unauthorized persons the ability to download the file as well.

From: Wilz, Greg M.
Sent: 13 Oct 2016 12:33:28 +0000
To: Dragani, Nancy;Cameron, Guy;tina titze(b)(6);Bruno, Delilah;(b)(6)Greff, Stacie
Cc: Kevin Klein
Subject: FW: Invitation to Download a File

Region 8 Directors,

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of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

From: (b)(6)@utah.gov
Sent: 8 Nov 2016 21:15:48 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: North Dakota EMAC request 2016

DATE: November 8, 2016 2:14:26 PM MST

Dear PIOs,

The Division of Emergency Management has received the following request from North Dakota via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (a system of state-to-state mutual aid). The request is for one PIO to support North Dakota for two weeks during the pipeline protests going on there.

If you are interested in supporting North Dakota, please let me know and I'll get you in touch with our EMAC coordinator.

Please read the following resource request. Here's the short version; the entire request follows:

Deployment period: 11/13-28/16
Description:

> One PIO to act in a support capacity to lead PIO for an ongoing protest incident in ND. 2 week deployment (14 days with 2 days for travel) for a total of 16 days Equipment needed: Laptop computer Assisting lead PIO with media calls, crafting fact sheets, timelines, media alerts, and news releases. Hours are Typically 8:00 am-5:00 pm.
>
> Safety: No safety or health concerns identified; Cold weather gear required.
>
> Working conditions: Field impacted area; Normal - infrastructure & support services operational; Mobile laptop and media phone will be issued.

Resource Request #1102-RR-5386

Contact Name: (b)(6)

Contact Email: (b)(6)@nd.gov

Contact Phone: (b)(6)

Update:

Broadcasted To: All

Total Recipients: 377

Event Name:	Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) Protest October 2016		
State Mission TN #:	16-073-227	EM Software TN #:	16-073-227
Requesting Agency:	State of North Dakota	EMAC TN #:	1102-RR-5386

Requesting State REQ-A Contact:

First Name:	(b)(6)	Last Name:	(b)(6)
Phone 1:	(b)(6)	Phone 2:	(b)(6)
Email 1:	(b)(6)@nd.gov	Email 2:	nddes@nd.gov

Mission Type/Source: State Type / Status:

Mission Description: Public Information Offcier

Resource Description: One PIO to act in a support capacity to lead PIO for an ongoing protest incident in ND. 2 week deployment (14 days with 2 days for travel) for a total of 16 days Equipment needed: Laptop computer Assisting lead PIO with media calls, crafting fact sheets, timelines, media alerts, and news releases. Hours are Typically 8:00 am-5:00 pm or as needed to respond to protest activities.

NIMS Type:

Requested: 1 # Type: Personnel

Deployment Dates (including travel days):

Mobilization: Demobilization:

Deployment Date: 2016-11-13 Demobilization Date: 2016-11-28

Duty Length: 16

Deployment Details:

Work Location/Facilities: State EOC

Location/Facility Name: North Dakota State Emergency Operations Center
Address 1: 35 Fraine Barracks Lane
Address 2:
City: Bismarck
Zip Code: 58504
Working Conditions: Normal - Infrastructure & Support services operational
Working Conditions Comments:
Living Conditions: Normal - All amenities available
Living Conditions Comments: Cold weather gear
Logistics Comments: Laptop Media cell phone will be issued

Identify Health & Safety Concerns (All selected Apply):

X	No Safety or Health Concerns have been identified
	Immunizations or Vaccinations are suggested to deploy
	Environmental Hazards Exist
	Personal Protection Equipment Needed

Safety Concerns/Remarks:

Requesting State Resource Coordination Contact:

First Name:	(b)(6)	Last Name:	(b)(6)
Title:	Logistics	Agency:	State of North Dakota
Phone 1:	(b)(6)	Mobile:	(b)(6)
Email 1:	(b)(6)@nd.gov	Email 2:	nddes@nd.gov

Staging Area and Point of Contact:

POC First Name:	(b)(6)	Last Name:	(b)(6)
Phone 1:	(b)(6)	Phone 2:	(b)(6)

Location/Facility Name: North Dakota State Emergency Operations Center
Address 1: 35 Fraine Barracks Lane
Address 2:
City: Bismarck
Zip Code: 58504

(b)(6) **PIO**
Utah Division of Emergency Management

(b)(6)
(b)(6)**@utah.gov**
Twitter: @(b)(6)

Utah Department of Public Safety
Utah Emergency Management

Visit this link to unsubscribe

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 14:09:54 -0400
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Pipeline update

Pipeline update:

Yesterday was a big day, Jessy Jackson arrived on site and talks between the protestors and law enforcement broke down.

- There was an article today from the Associated Press Regarding WY sending law enforcement to North Dakota: http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming-sends-troopers-to-north-dakota-pipeline-protest/article_2972e493-0b71-5cab-9c7d-3c27fb67542e.html (full article pasted below). Pre the article both tribes in WY are opposed to sending the law enforced support.
- There was a media report yesterday that Indiana is sending law enforcement to support ND. The article references FEMA paying for the support. We have reached out to Region IV for awareness and to let them know that FEMA is not paying for any law enforcement. The article is likely referencing EMAC. http://www.theindychannel.com/news/call-6-investigators/call-6-dozens-of-indiana-officers-deployed-to-north-dakota-pipeline-dispute-but-whos-paying (full article below).
- I am hearing a lot about treaty rights on social media, this morning on NPR the Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux talked about this land belonging to the tribes based on treaties (NPR and other media sources).
- A new encampment (the 1851 Treaty Camp) has been set up directly on the pipeline path, which is private property (KILI Radio).
- On Wed. Jessy Jackson arrived on site to speak out about the many human and civil rights violations being perpetrated by local police (Indian Country Today).
- Actor Mark Ruffalo was at Standing Rock yesterday showing his support and Leonardo DiCaprio announced today he is on his way (Indian Country Today).
- Everyone is still calling for peaceful protests (multiple media outlets).
- It is being reported there have been between 260 and 300 arrests since the protests began with most of them happening last Saturday and pepper spray being used by law enforcement (multiple media sources).
- FAA has issued temporary flight restrictions over the protest camps. Only response aircraft in support of law enforcement activity are authorized in the airspace (Bismarck Tribune).
- Negotiations broke down between protestors and law enforcement yesterday (Bismarck Tribune).
- This inforum link is to a video that shows clear frustration by law enforcement and that they do not want a confrontation. http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction (InForum)

This is a particularly good story about law enforcement and what happened yesterday.

http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4146041-new-roadblock-emerges-highway-1806-confrontation-between-protesters-law

New roadblock emerges on Highway 1806 as confrontation between protesters, law enforcement looms

By Amy Dalrymple and Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 10:22 a.m.

Dawn breaks over the Oceti Sakowin Camp Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor1 / 2

A roadblock manned by North Dakota National Guard troops blocks North Dakota Hwy. 1806 before sunrise Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor2 / 2

MORTON COUNTY, N.D. — One day after negotiations between Dakota Access Pipeline protesters and law enforcement broke down, the mood was tense but quiet Thursday, Oct. 27, as the sun rose above the resistance camps.

Above, in restricted airspace, a North Dakota Highway Patrol aircraft circled.

Cecily Fong, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Emergency Services, said medical staffing is in place should any injuries occur at the protest sites.

She said law enforcement will likely issue a warning to protesters congregating at a camp along State Highway 1806, where pipeline opponents have set up teepees and staged hay bales, logs and barbed wire to block the road, if necessary.

However, Fong said she didn't know the timing of any law enforcement action planned, and officers want protesters to leave the northern camp, which is on private property recently purchased by the pipeline's developer, Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

Protesters will be encouraged to return to the southern camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.

By Thursday morning, protesters set up an additional "halfway" roadblock on Highway 1806 — between their main barricade and the frontline camp where they've promised to hold their ground.

At the halfway roadblock, pipeline opponents staged tires, plywood, sheet metal and logs — all ready to move onto the highway should law enforcement approach. The additional roadblock provides more time for those at the main camp to leave or join the protesters at the frontline camp.

Sam Wounded Knee, from Crow Creek Nation in South Dakota, spent the night at the "halfway" roadblock.

He said a plane flew overhead through the night, and it appeared two people were in the surrounding hills to the west and using flashlights to signal back and forth with the plane.

Asked if he expects violence in a confrontation, “from the police, yeah, definitely,” he said.

“All we’re trying to do is protect our people,” Wounded Knee said, adding that women and children were asked to leave the frontline camp Wednesday night. About 200 people are at the frontline camp.

With the new roadblock established by protesters, Highway 1806 has numerous staging areas, camps and road blocks stretched out over several miles, starting with an equipment staging area set up by law enforcement about a mile south of Fort Rice.

Traveling south on 1806, in succession, there is a law enforcement barricade, followed by the protesters’ main barricade, halfway roadblock, frontline camp and main camp.

On Wednesday, negotiations between pipeline opponents and law enforcement officials broke down, setting up a possible clash as hundreds of protesters vowed to hold their ground at a the frontline camp directly in the path of the four-state oil pipeline.

A contingent of law enforcement and National Guard officials met with camp representatives on Highway 1806.

Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney of Fargo, who is helping Morton County coordinate the law enforcement response, made one last plea for protesters to remove their roadblock on 1806 and abandon the roughly 200-person “frontline” camp, where teepees and tents continued to pop up on land where the pipeline is planned

“We’re here telling you this is private property and you have to leave,” Laney told camp coordinator Mekasi Camp-Horinek on Wednesday. “We don’t want a confrontation. Please stand your people down and go back to the main camp.”

Mekasi pointed at the road – “our no surrender line,” he said – and then back at the frontline camp standing in the way of the four-state, $3.8 billion oil pipeline – their “no retreat” line.

“That’s your final word?” Laney asked.

“That’s my final word,” Camp-Horinek said, walking away.

“Good day, gentleman,” Laney said, turning toward the staging area about five miles away near Fort Rice, where a mass of law enforcement and military forces has gathered.

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Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

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- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

- AP

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"North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded," Mead said.

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in Wyoming have expressed formal support for the protesters.

Jason Baldes, a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and staff member at the Wind River Native Advocacy Center, accused Wyoming officials of supporting the pipeline by sending law enforcement officers to face off against protesters.

"It kind of sheds light on really who's running the show here," Baldes said. "The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets."

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

"The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue," he said.

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Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

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emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

Megan Floyd
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(303) 235-4638 Desk
(303) 945-6367 Cell
megan.floyd@fema.dhs.gov

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 18:09:46 +0000
To: Dragani, Nancy;Deal, Timothy
Cc: Greff, Stacie
Subject: Pipeline update

Pipeline update:

Yesterday was a big day, Jessy Jackson arrived on site and talks between the protestors and law enforcement broke down.

- There was an article today from the Associated Press Regarding WY sending law enforcement to North Dakota: http://trib.com/news/state-and-regional/wyoming-sends-troopers-to-north-dakota-pipeline-protest/article_2972e493-0b71-5cab-9c7d-3c27fb67542e.html (full article pasted below). Pre the article both tribes in WY are opposed to sending the law enforced support.
- There was a media report yesterday that Indiana is sending law enforcement to support ND. The article references FEMA paying for the support. We have reached out to Region IV for awareness and to let them know that FEMA is not paying for any law enforcement. The article is likely referencing EMAC. http://www.theindychannel.com/news/call-6-investigators/call-6-dozens-of-indiana-officers-deployed-to-north-dakota-pipeline-dispute-but-whos-paying (full article below).
- I am hearing a lot about treaty rights on social media, this morning on NPR the Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux talked about this land belonging to the tribes based on treaties (NPR and other media sources).
- A new encampment (the 1851 Treaty Camp) has been set up directly on the pipeline path, which is private property (KILI Radio).
- On Wed. Jessy Jackson arrived on site to speak out about the many human and civil rights violations being perpetrated by local police (Indian Country Today).
- Actor Mark Ruffalo was at Standing Rock yesterday showing his support and Leonardo DiCaprio announced today he is on his way (Indian Country Today).
- Everyone is still calling for peaceful protests (multiple media outlets).
- It is being reported there have been between 260 and 300 arrests since the protests began with most of them happening last Saturday and pepper spray being used by law enforcement (multiple media sources).
- FAA has issued temporary flight restrictions over the protest camps. Only response aircraft in support of law enforcement activity are authorized in the airspace (Bismarck Tribune).
- Negotiations broke down between protestors and law enforcement yesterday (Bismarck Tribune).
- This inforum link is to a video that shows clear frustration by law enforcement and that they do not want a confrontation. http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4145254-jesse-jackson-joins-pipeline-protest-effort-faa-issues-no-fly-restriction (InForum)

This is a particularly good story about law enforcement and what happened yesterday.

http://www.inforum.com/news/government/4146041-new-roadblock-emerges-highway-1806-confrontation-between-protesters-law

New roadblock emerges on Highway 1806 as confrontation between protesters, law enforcement looms

By Amy Dalrymple and Mike Nowatzki / Forum News Service Today at 10:22 a.m.

› ‹

Dawn breaks over the Oceti Sakowin Camp Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor1 / 2

A roadblock manned by North Dakota National Guard troops blocks North Dakota Hwy. 1806 before sunrise Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016, north of Cannon Ball. Michael Vosburg / Forum Photo Editor2 / 2

MORTON COUNTY, N.D. — One day after negotiations between Dakota Access Pipeline protesters and law enforcement broke down, the mood was tense but quiet Thursday, Oct. 27, as the sun rose above the resistance camps.

Above, in restricted airspace, a North Dakota Highway Patrol aircraft circled.

Cecily Fong, spokeswoman for the state's Department of Emergency Services, said medical staffing is in place should any injuries occur at the protest sites.

She said law enforcement will likely issue a warning to protesters congregating at a camp along State Highway 1806, where pipeline opponents have set up teepees and staged hay bales, logs and barbed wire to block the road, if necessary.

However, Fong said she didn't know the timing of any law enforcement action planned, and officers want protesters to leave the northern camp, which is on private property recently purchased by the pipeline's developer, Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners.

Protesters will be encouraged to return to the southern camp on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land.

By Thursday morning, protesters set up an additional "halfway" roadblock on Highway 1806 — between their main barricade and the frontline camp where they've promised to hold their ground.

At the halfway roadblock, pipeline opponents staged tires, plywood, sheet metal and logs — all ready to move onto the highway should law enforcement approach. The additional roadblock provides more time for those at the main camp to leave or join the protesters at the frontline camp.

Sam Wounded Knee, from Crow Creek Nation in South Dakota, spent the night at the "halfway" roadblock.

He said a plane flew overhead through the night, and it appeared two people were in the surrounding hills to the west and using flashlights to signal back and forth with the plane.

Asked if he expects violence in a confrontation, “from the police, yeah, definitely,” he said.

“All we’re trying to do is protect our people,” Wounded Knee said, adding that women and children were asked to leave the frontline camp Wednesday night. About 200 people are at the frontline camp.

With the new roadblock established by protesters, Highway 1806 has numerous staging areas, camps and road blocks stretched out over several miles, starting with an equipment staging area set up by law enforcement about a mile south of Fort Rice.

Traveling south on 1806, in succession, there is a law enforcement barricade, followed by the protesters’ main barricade, halfway roadblock, frontline camp and main camp.

On Wednesday, negotiations between pipeline opponents and law enforcement officials broke down, setting up a possible clash as hundreds of protesters vowed to hold their ground at a the frontline camp directly in the path of the four-state oil pipeline.

A contingent of law enforcement and National Guard officials met with camp representatives on Highway 1806.

Cass County Sheriff Paul Laney of Fargo, who is helping Morton County coordinate the law enforcement response, made one last plea for protesters to remove their roadblock on 1806 and abandon the roughly 200-person “frontline” camp, where teepees and tents continued to pop up on land where the pipeline is planned

“We’re here telling you this is private property and you have to leave,” Laney told camp coordinator Mekasi Camp-Horinek on Wednesday. “We don’t want a confrontation. Please stand your people down and go back to the main camp.”

Mekasi pointed at the road – “our no surrender line,” he said – and then back at the frontline camp standing in the way of the four-state, $3.8 billion oil pipeline – their “no retreat” line.

“That’s your final word?” Laney asked.

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Megan Floyd
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From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 11:54:47 -0400
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

On it

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us>;(b)(6)@state.co.us>;
(b)(6)@state.co.us' <(b)(6)@state.co.us>; (b)(6)@mail.mil'
(b)(6)@mail.mil>; (b)(6)@mail.mil' (b)(6)@mail.mil>;
(b)(6)@nd.gov' (b)(6)@nd.gov>; (b)(6)@state.sd.us(b)(6)@state.sd.us>;
(b)(6)@state.sd.us' <(b)(6)@state.sd.us>; (b)(6)@utah.gov'
(b)(6)@utah.gov>; (b)(6)@wyo.gov' <(b)(6)@wyo.gov>; (b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov'
(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@usace.army.mil'
(b)(6)@usace.army.mil>; '(b)(6)@usace.army.mil'
<(b)(6)@usace.army.mil>;(b)(6)@state.mn.us' (b)(6)@state.mn.us>;
Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov'
<(b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>;
(b)(6)@hhs.gov' <(b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@sba.gov'
(b)(6)@sba.gov>;(b)(6)@sba.gov' <(b)(6)@sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason
<Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>;
(b)(6)@fs.fed.us' (b)(6)@fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper

reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more

than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that

it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff’s deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline. The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff’s Department, Marion County Sheriff’s Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, “we are not seeing a big increase.”

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika’s potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 17:16:16 +0000
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Sorry – I should have pulled it out before I sent to Jerry.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 11:14 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark. Please do not for add this email. I asked them to let you know of article but traffic was not to be shared. Appreciate you pulling just clip out of needed not conversation either HQ and me. Thx. Stacie

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 5:06:32 PM
To: Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark—

Heads up. See highlighted news story below. Sherriff has deployed four deputies to ND to help with public safety issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protest.
As HQ email indicates, FEMA is not paying for this EMAC request.

Wyoming is also sending six deputies to support through an EMAC request. There was a news story in today's clips, but did not mention that FEMA was paying for the deployment.

Thanks,
Jerry

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian

Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

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Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.co.us>; (b)(6)@state.co.us>; (b)(6)@state.co.us' <(b)(6)@state.co.us>; (b)(6)@mail.mil' (b)(6)@mail.mil>; (b)(6)@mail.mil' <(b)(6)@mail.mil>; (b)(6)@nd.gov' (b)(6)@nd.gov>;(b)(6)@state.sd.us' <(b)(6)@state.sd.us>; (b)(6)@state.sd.us' <(b)(6)@state.sd.us>; (b)(6)@utah.gov' (b)(6)@utah.gov>; (b)(6)@wyo.gov' (b)(6)@wyo.gov>;(b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6)@acf.hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@usace.army.mil' (b)(6)@usace.army.mil>; (b)(6)@usace.army.mil' (b)(6)@usace.army.mil>; (b)(6)@state.mn.us' (b)(6)@state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>(b)(6)@hhs.gov' (b)(6)@hhs.gov>; (b)(6)@hhs.gov' <(b)(6)@hhs.gov>;(b)(6)@sba.gov' (b)(6)@sba.gov>; (b)(6)@sba.gov' <(b)(6)@sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason <Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6)@fs.fed.us' (b)(6)@fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel <Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES

You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client's satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline. The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

"Our focus on Zika has changed," said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up "almost every day" in Recife's maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a "causal agent" for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

"Now we've settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don't know who pulled the trigger," said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil's last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

"Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role," he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

"We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don't know who it is," Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies' brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother's first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

"If you don't know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks," Espinal said. "So maybe the fact that we don't have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs" and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador's government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

“It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on,” said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

“The fact is we don’t have any idea how many cases there were,” said Maierovitch, meaning it’s possible Brazil’s birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don’t have symptoms and don’t realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress’s failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

“We’ll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months,” he said. “That’s the only way we’ll know whether we’ve dodged a bullet.”

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

“It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so,” said Pallone. “FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies.”

Earlier this year, Frontline’s documentary, “The Business of Disaster,” examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 17:29:37 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Yes you should have. Lesson for future.

Jerry should know better too.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 6:16:25 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Sorry – I should have pulled it out before I sent to Jerry.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 11:14 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>; Peterson, Mark J <Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark. Please do not for add this email. I asked them to let you know of article but traffic was not to be shared. Appreciate you pulling just clip out of needed not conversation either HQ and me. Thx. Stacie

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 5:06:32 PM
To: Peterson, Mark J
Cc: Greff, Stacie; Floyd, Megan
Subject: News story from Indianapolis outlet

Mark—

Heads up. See highlighted news story below. Sherriff has deployed four deputies to ND to help with public safety issues surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline protest.
As HQ email indicates, FEMA is not paying for this EMAC request.

Wyoming is also sending six deputies to support through an EMAC request. There was a news story in today's clips, but did not mention that FEMA was paying for the deployment.

Thanks,
Jerry

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:55 AM
To: DeFelice, Jerome <Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Hey JD – what are your thoughts on this one?

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 9:53 AM
To: Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Rapid response to paper. Let it die? Talk to Jerry. Let me know thoughts. My inclination. Ignore unless it pops again. Indianapolis.

Do suggest calling R5 and just letting them know no FEMA funds. State of ND is doing eMac thru their funds not FEMA

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Floyd, Megan
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:27:17 PM
To: Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I am usually really good about reading the clips, but I missed this one. Sorry.

I have heard nothing else on my end about it, nothing on social media yesterday. Everything I am seeing is talking about things really starting to escalate between protesters and police. I was going to send you an update this morning.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 4:15:29 PM
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Awareness only. No action. Had you seen the below article. I hadn't. Any thoughts?

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2016 2:12:05 AM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

I have no idea where that idea came from, but I'm assuming someone from ND indicated as much to the police dept in Indiana loaning the officers.

--
Aaron J. Davis
Director, Congressional Affairs
Office of External Affairs
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
direct: (202) 212-1890
mobile: (202) 738-7632
e-mail: aaron.davis@fema.dhs.gov

From: Cavanaugh, Brian
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 7:31:56 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: RE: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Aaron,

I have not heard from Matt on this matter in 2 or so. Would you have time to sync up on this tomorrow morning. I am interested in understanding what exactly we are paying for and from what source.

Thanks,
Brian

Brian J. Cavanaugh
Deputy Director of External Coordination &
Senior Appropriations Liaison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
(202) 445-5455

From: Davis, Aaron J
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:59:18 PM
To: Cavanaugh, Brian
Cc: Nelson, Jason; Greff, Stacie
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Cav-

Wanted to touch base regarding the clip highlighted below from R8 indicating that FEMA was paying for Indiana police officers to travel to ND to cover security tied to the ongoing Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Last I heard, there was no change in Agency position and the State had not requested to re-program any existing unspent HSGP dollars for these efforts.

Have you heard any more from Cowles & co. on this?

-Aaron

From: Nelson, Jason
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Davis, Aaron J; Trytten, Dana; Blaylock, Andrew
Subject: FW: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

FYSA.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney
6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016
INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

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John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

“Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request,” said Erickson. “They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request.”

Indiana is acting as a “team player,” as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

“We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc,” said Erickson.

From: Welch, Randy
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:00 PM
To: R8 All Hands <R8AllHands@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @state.co.us>;
(b)(6) @state.co.us' <(b)(6) @state.co.us>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>; (b)(6) @mail.mil'
(b)(6) @mail.mil>; '(b)(6) @nd.gov' <(b)(6) @nd.gov>; (b)(6) @state.sd.us'
(b)(6) @state.sd.us> (b)(6) @state.sd.us' <(b)(6) @state.sd.us>;
(b)(6) @utah.gov' (b)(6) @utah.gov>; (b)(6) @wyo.gov' <(b)(6) @wyo.gov>;
(b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov' (b)(6) @acf.hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' (b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @usace.army.mil' <(b)(6) @usace.army.mil>;
(b)(6) @state.mn.us' (b)(6) @state.mn.us>; Peterson, Mark J
<Mark.Peterson2@fema.dhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov' <(b)(6) @hhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @hhs.gov' <(b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @hhs.gov'
(b)(6) @hhs.gov>; (b)(6) @sba.gov' <(b)(6) @sba.gov>;
(b)(6) @sba.gov' <(b)(6) @sba.gov>; Nelson, Jason
<Jason.Nelson2@fema.dhs.gov>; Blaylock, Andrew <andrew.blaylock@fema.dhs.gov>;
(b)(6) @fs.fed.us' (b)(6) @fs.fed.us>; Alexander, Daniel
<Daniel.Alexander@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: FEMA Region 8 clips for Wednesday 10-26

Region VIII Clips

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

ANALYSIS

- *Colorado*: The Junkins Fire is now 60 percent contained… A pipeline project stemming from the 2013 floods won a technical award; FEMA, the Corps of Engineers and other agencies are noted for their work on the project.
- *Montana*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *North Dakota*: The Corps of Engineers is holding flood risk meetings this week in the Souris River Basin… An Indianapolis TV station reports that local law enforcement officers headed to the North Dakota pipeline protest will be paid for by FEMA.
- *South Dakota*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Utah*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Wyoming*: No FEMA-related stories.
- *Other FEMA-related stories*: The *Washington Post* has a story on why residents do not evacuate before a hurricane, suggesting officials should emphasize flooding and storm surge more than wind speed, and it has another story about the surprisingly few numbers of birth defects that have resulted so far from the Zika virus… A New Jersey paper reports on a congressional bill to limit the profits insurance companies make from NFIP to 10 percent.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

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No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

SOUTH DAKOTA:

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You can also read today's briefing, including searchable archive of past editions, at http://www.BulletinNews.com/fema.

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

STORIES

COLORADO:

Crews Extend Lines At Colorado Fire; Containment 60 Percent (AP)

Associated Press, October 25, 2016

WESTCLIFFE, Colo. (AP) – Ground crews and heavy equipment are extending protective lines around a southern Colorado wildfire, and containment has reached 60 percent.

Fire managers say crews will keep building lines Tuesday at the Junkins fire, which has destroyed nine homes since it started on Oct. 17.

The burned area remained at 28 square miles late Monday. Full containment is expected on Nov. 15.

The fire started 11 miles east of Westcliffe when high winds blew a metal outbuilding into a utility pole and knocked down a power line.

Some residents remain evacuated from their homes.

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Project of The Year 2016 Rehabilitation Runner Up: Eldorado Springs Canyon Pressure Pipe Rehabilitation (Trenchless Technology)

By Trenchless Technology Staff on October 24, 2016 Features, Pipe Relining, Project of the Year, Rehabilitation

The project was precipitated by extreme flooding in Colorado in September 2013. FEMA was quick to act as many foothill communities and towns had suffered catastrophic loss, with property damages of more than $1 billion. Part of the rebuilding effort included repairs to water systems and sustainability improvements.

The South Boulder Creek Division project for the City of Lafayette entailed updates to various water structures destroyed during the flood, including roughly 1,200 lf of 12-in. pressure pipe rehabilitation. Extensive evaluation of the pipeline completed after flooding had shown that the 40-plus-year-old pipe was pitted with pinholes and would require repair or replacement.

General contractor EZ Excavation performed a variety of work along the pipeline, including the rebuilding of outlet works and modifying the sand structure in Eldorado Canyon State Park. The work by EZ provided rare access to the normally inaccessible line, presenting an opportunity for trenchless rehabilitation. Insituform’s glass-reinforced InsituMain CIPP product was selected to rehabilitate the water line.

The steel raw water line, pressure-rated at 45 psi, runs parallel between South Boulder Creek and the side of a mountain. An elevated road, South Boulder Creek and adjacent walking trails at the foot of the slope are located inside the park near the project location. The existing water line runs under the trail at the far side of the canyon. Access is difficult because there is an approximate 30-ft vertical drop between the road and the pipe.

Installation was scheduled for December as the creek flow was low and could be diverted and contained within a 24-in. casing pipe. Additionally, most of the equipment had to be craned over the river from the road using heavy equipment. The Insituform crew working on the installation had a jobsite roughly the size of a standard hiking trail.

The project was divided into two roughly 600-ft shots. The first installation started upstream at a sand trap structure being rehabilitated by EZ. The access to the first shot required a temporary ramp to be built from the park access road down to South Boulder Creek. An intermediate pit was dug for the second CIPP installation. Inversion of the second shot was completed quickly due to the 75-ft slope, but careful attention had to be given as there were a number of 11 degree bends down the line. The CIPP portion of the project was completed in three days to the client’s satisfaction.

The flood of September 2013 came with a fury throughout the State of Colorado, causing $1 billion in property destruction and the loss of eight lives. In the aftermath, sustainability and rebuilding of potable water structures were of utmost importance. The structures in the river water source were washed out and barely intact after the flood. Merrick designed the outlet works and sand structure modification project, awarded to EZ Excavation. EZ then contracted with Insituform to rehabilitate the raw water line which takes water from the structures down into town as a part of the municipal raw water system.

More than a year was spent planning and strategizing with not only FEMA, but also the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Corps of Engineers, Division of Parks and Wildlife, City of Louisville, Farmers Reservoir Irrigation Company, Denver Water and Eldorado Springs Water. While the project was awarded in March 2014, construction did not start until the second half of 2015 to meet the state's request to have all four construction projects completed concurrently.

The steel water line was hand laid against the rocky walls of the canyon opposite the roadway in areas that were washed out. More than 40 years in age with a portion that had a 75-ft fall down the canyon, the project required Insituform to install a reinforced CIPP liner solution for pressure pipe and potable water pipe. This liner, the next generation of Insituform's glass-reinforced InsituMain product, is unique in that it uses a new specialized glass material from Owens Corning. Patents are pending on the specialized design.

Prior to construction, preparatory work performed by EZ included cutting a temporary roadway into the river for access to the structures and then carting equipment over to each structure via an excavator. Insituform also strung out hoses across the river using cabling systems.

Weather was also a challenge. When it finally came time for installation of the pressure CIPP in late December 2015, a massive snow storm brought snow and 10 degree temperatures throughout the canyon. The installation went on as planned, with the two shots installed over a three-day period.

The combination of difficult project location, working with multiple government entities, contractors and engineers during the planning process, inclement weather and the use of a next generation pressure pipe solution all contributed to making the Eldorado Springs pressure pipe project award-worthy.

MONTANA:

No FEMA-related stories

NORTH DAKOTA:

Flood risk meetings set in 3 Souris River Basin cities (AP)

- Updated Oct 24, 2016

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Meetings are being held this week to give the public an opportunity to comment on flood risk management alternatives for the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Souris River Joint Water Resource Board scheduled meetings Monday in Mohall, Tuesday in Velva and Wednesday in Minot.

The corps says the study is a separate but parallel effort to a flood protection project. The corps earlier this year began what is expected to be a three-year study of permanent flood protection for the basin, an effort that could cost $1 billion.

A June 2011 flood caused by heavy spring snowmelt and rains damaged or destroyed thousands of homes and other structures in Minot and caused an estimated $1 million in damage in the region.

CALL 6: Dozens of Indiana officers deployed to North Dakota pipeline dispute, but who's paying? (RTV, Indianapolis)

Kara Kenney

6:00 PM, Oct 24, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS -- Dozens of Indiana police officers and sheriff's deputies have been deployed to North Dakota, where thousands of people are protesting the building of a 1,200-mile pipeline.

The team from Indiana includes 37 officers from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, Brookville Police Department, Griffith Police Department, Hammond Police Department, Michigan City Police Department, Munster Police Department and Schererville Police Department.

Four Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies left on October 23 and return on November 7, according to MCSO spokesperson Katie Carlson. "The federal government pays for it through FEMA," said Carlson.

More than 80 people protesting the Dakota Access pipeline were arrested Saturday during a demonstration where about 300 people gathered at a construction site in North Dakota and prompted law enforcement officers to use pepper spray.

John Erickson, spokesperson for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, also said there is no cost for Indiana taxpayer.

"Professionals of all types can be deployed to other states through what is called an EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact) request," said Erickson. "They are only deployed when another state provides a request. When other states need assistance, we in Indiana evaluate and send help if possible, based on if we have the resources that fit the request."

Indiana is acting as a "team player," as it helps North Dakota with security during the pipeline dispute.

"We do this because we may one day need help from another state. In the recent past, Indiana has sent a variety of public safety professionals at the request of other states, including emergency medical personnel, planners, public information officers, emergency management leadership, safety officers, liaison officers, etc," said Erickson.

SOUTH DAKOTA:

No FEMA-related stories

UTAH:

No FEMA-related stories

WYOMING:

No FEMA-related stories

FEMA-RELATED STORIES:

Why We Should Not Demonize Residents Who Refuse To Evacuate During Hurricanes (Washington Post)

By Jacob Deflitch

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

Predictions for Hurricane Matthew were reasonably good. Meteorologists, emergency managers and elected leaders effectively made the case that it was a dangerous storm. Evacuation orders were issued. Yet, some were ignored. And, where they were followed, some may have backfired.

Meteorologists and public officials sometimes seem shocked when residents are reluctant to evacuate. Sometimes we criticize those who refuse to leave. But it would be more constructive to better understand them.

The reasons for staying home are complex. They are frequently not due to ignorance or complacency, but a result of the enormous disruption and even hardship that vacating one's home presents. In other cases, they reflect a failure of meteorologists to characterize the range of dangerous hazards a hurricane poses, in addition to solely wind, which residents may not adequately appreciate.

It would serve meteorologists and other storm communicators well to try to see the situation through the public's eyes, recognizing that the public cannot be lumped into one, single group. Residents of coastal communities impacted by Hurricane Matthew are composed of different age, ethnic and income groups. Each has its own, unique story; and each group makes evacuation decisions challenging for different reasons.

It would also help meteorologists to identify the misconceptions that different audiences have about storms to sharpen future communication efforts.

To demonstrate the complexity and diversity of evacuation decisions, I made the drive from Stillwater, Okla., to coastal areas in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina to speak with residents.

I spoke with local residents in two separate situations: (1) locals who rode the storm out on Tybee Island, Ga., and (2) evacuees who were stuck in a traffic jam on U.S. Route 278 in South Carolina returning home after the storm.

In both situations, circumstances emerged that show why evacuation decisions are complicated.

Riding the storm out on a Georgia island

After reading a story that a number of residents of Tybee Island stayed behind, despite personalized calls from the mayor, I made the drive south onto the Island.

I spoke with five residents who rejected evacuation orders and stayed at their residences during the storm.

"We knew if we got off the island, we would have a hard time getting back on," said Karen Kelly, a Tybee Island resident.

Kelly said she was motivated to stay to help neighbors. She readied for the storm beforehand, bracing for power outages. She filled bathtubs with water and prepared food.

Kelly said she would probably make the same decision again. "If it's a [Category] 4 or 5, I am most likely to leave. If it's a 3 or less, I am most likely staying," she said.

Two other residents I spoke to chose not to evacuate based on the predicted storm intensity. Calvin Ratterree, a bar owner on Tybee, said he would most likely not evacuate for a Category 1 or 2 storm. Barney Burke, another resident, said he would leave only if peak winds were forecast to exceed 120 mph.

Only one of the residents I spoke to declined to leave because of a lack of confidence in the forecast. "When they first told us about the storm, we didn't think it was actually going to come up here," said resident William Mackey.

Gridlock returning home after the storm in South Carolina

A number of residents who followed evacuation orders regretted it, in hindsight.

On Sunday, Oct.10, after Matthew had passed, hundreds of residents from Beaufort County, S.C., found themselves stuck on U.S. Route 278, unable to return to their homes. Frustration reached a climax. Those I spoke with admitted that they may not evacuate the next time.

Their reasoning was not due to a poor forecast of Matthew, but instead, the evacuation process, specifically the return home. Multiple residents realized that their neighbors who never left home rode out the storm unscathed.

The residents who evacuated were envious of their neighbors, who did not have to deal with the hassle of the evacuation process, including the congestion on the return home.

Some residents mentioned that evacuation was financially taxing. Evacuation requires, at a very minimum, housing for multiple nights, dining and transportation to and from their destination. The cost to evacuate is considerable, and some simply are challenged to afford it.

Conclusions

Meteorologists are often too eager to label those who do not evacuate as complacent. Yet, these decisions are often shaped by burdensome past evacuation processes. Those who choose not to evacuate often have understandable reasons for remaining behind.

This is not to say that reasons for not evacuating are the most prudent or safe, but we need to try to understand how the public makes these decisions and try to make the evacuation process less onerous.

Through my discussions with residents, a trend in the responses became evident: A majority of the residents who stayed behind made their decision based on the hurricane category. That is, they put misplaced trust in the Saffir-Simpson scale, which rates a hurricane based on wind speed.

By focusing on the Saffir-Simpson scale, residents discounted the risks posed by flooding rain and storm surge, which the scale does not address. Meteorologists and emergency managers should be aware of the public's overreliance on hurricane category and

consider deemphasizing it. Instead, they should stress the dangers from the full range of hurricane hazards in making the case for evacuation.

Most importantly, meteorologists and those who work with them must look at evacuation through the eyes and experiences of coastal residents rather than through their own.

The author, Jacob DeFitch, is a graduate student at Oklahoma State University focusing on social science issues in meteorology. He is one of the founders of SunsetWx, which provides sunset forecasts, and previously worked at AccuWeather.

Scientists Are Bewildered By Zika's Path Across Latin America (Washington Post)

By Dom Phillips And Nick Miroff

Washington Post, October 25, 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — Nearly nine months after Zika was declared a global health emergency, the virus has infected at least 650,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean, including tens of thousands of expectant mothers.

But to the great bewilderment of scientists, the epidemic has not produced the wave of fetal deformities so widely feared when the images of misshapen infants first emerged from Brazil.

Instead, Zika has left a puzzling and distinctly uneven pattern of damage across the Americas. According to the latest U.N. figures, of the 2,175 babies born in the past year with undersize heads or other congenital neurological damage linked to Zika, more than 75 percent have been clustered in a single region: northeastern Brazil.

The pattern is so confounding that health officials and scientists have turned their attention back to northeastern Brazil to understand why Zika's toll has been so much heavier there. They suspect other, underlying causes may be to blame, such as the presence of another mosquito-borne virus like chikungunya or dengue. Or that environmental, genetic or immunological factors combined with Zika to put mothers in the area at greater risk.

"We don't believe that Zika is the only cause," Fatima Marinho, director of the non-communicable disease department at Brazil's Ministry of Health, said in an interview.

Brazilian officials were bracing for a flood of fetal deformities as Zika spread this year to other regions of the country, Marinho said. However, "we are not seeing a big increase."

Researchers and health officials remain cautious about the lower-than-expected numbers. The latest studies have found more evidence than ever that the virus can inflict severe damage on the developing infant brain, some of which may not be evident until later in childhood.

But researchers so far have learned a lot more about Zika's potential to do harm than its likelihood of doing so.

Scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are closely watching Puerto Rico, which has reported more than 26,800 cases of Zika. More than 7,000 pregnant women could be infected by the end of the year, according to the CDC.

But although the outbreak has spread this year to more than 50 nations and territories across the Western Hemisphere, U.N. data shows just 142 cases of congenital birth defects linked to Zika so far outside Brazil.

In Colombia, a country praised for some of the most rigorous standards for detecting and monitoring Zika, the government has tallied more than 104,000 Zika cases, including

nearly 20,000 pregnant women. It has the second-highest number of Zika infections in the world after Brazil.

But so far, Colombia has had just 46 babies born with congenital nervous system damage linked to Zika. And the number of new Zika cases in Colombia has fallen so sharply that the government in July declared the epidemic over, saying the virus will remain a threat but no longer spread rampantly.

Colombia is investigating 332 more cases of birth defects for a possible Zika link, but health officials there had been prepared for many more.

“Our focus on Zika has changed,” said Ernesto Marques, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh who is working on a project to develop a vaccine for the virus.

Marques is from Recife, the city in northern Brazil hardest-hit by the Zika outbreak, and he was part of the team that first identified the virus as a possible culprit when deformed infants began showing up “almost every day” in Recife’s maternity wards at this time last year.

At the time, Marques said scientists were focused on identifying Zika as a “causal agent” for the sudden increase in birth defects, especially microcephaly, in which babies are born with undersize heads and often calcified brain tissue.

“Now we’ve settled on Zika as the smoking gun, but we don’t know who pulled the trigger,” said Marques, speaking from Recife, where he is working with government researchers.

One of the leading theories, said Marques, is that northeastern Brazil’s last dengue outbreak was in 2003 — relatively long ago — so perhaps mothers in the area had relatively fewer antibodies to cope with Zika, which is spread by the same mosquito.

“Sexual habits and hygiene may also play a role,” he said, explaining that researchers are looking at whether sexual transmission can infect the uterus and placenta with the virus, potentially exposing the fetus to elevated risk.

“We suspect the villain has an accomplice, but we don’t know who it is,” Marques said.

Many question marks

Researchers caution that it will take years to fully identify the dangers Zika poses to babies’ brains, and microcephaly is just one threat from the virus. A Zika infection poses the greatest danger toward the end of the mother’s first trimester of pregnancy, and its harmful effects on fetal development may not be apparent at birth or manifest themselves until later in childhood.

Marcos Espinal, the director of communicable diseases and health analysis at the Pan American Health Organization, said U.N. health officials were right to put the world on high alert earlier this year because so little was known about Zika.

“If you don’t know about something, you better take preventative measures to minimize the risks,” Espinal said. “So maybe the fact that we don’t have a lot of microcephaly means that we were doing our jobs” and helped women avoid infection.

At the peak of Zika alarm earlier this year, several Latin American countries urged women to delay pregnancy. El Salvador’s government recommended waiting two years. The widespread anxieties produced by the outbreak may have led to an increase in abortions in Latin America, a region where the procedure is widely banned. Anecdotal evidence suggests more women have been quietly terminating pregnancies over worries that their babies might be deformed.

This may also help explain the relatively low number of babies born with Zika-related birth defects outside northeast Brazil.

"It is very difficult to work out truly what is going on," said Oliver Brady, an epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who has been working with the Brazilian government on Zika.

Until last year, Brazil reported about 150 cases annually of microcephaly, a condition that can also be caused by diseases like herpes and syphilis. Claudio Maierovitch, a former senior Brazilian health official responsible for monitoring Zika when the epidemic started, said the figure was probably an undercount, and around 500 cases of microcephaly a year pre-Zika would be a more accurate number.

When the microcephaly outbreak was first identified in Brazil, spooked health officials erred in the other direction and overdiagnosed the condition. Eventually, nearly 5,000 newborns that had been diagnosed with possible microcephaly turned out to be fine, according to Marinho, the Brazilian health official.

But that still leaves at least 2,000 instances of Zika-related birth defects in the country, with an additional 3,000 cases under investigation.

A big problem in determining whether Brazil has a higher rate of Zika-related birth defects is that no one is sure how many people caught the virus in 2015, when it was little known and widely confused with dengue.

"The fact is we don't have any idea how many cases there were," said Maierovitch, meaning it's possible Brazil's birth-defect totals could simply be a reflection of a Zika outbreak that was far more pervasive than anywhere else.

An eye on U.S. territory

Puerto Rico is the next laboratory for understanding Zika. CDC researchers are watching for Zika-related birth defects on the island, but the mainland United States appears to have averted a major outbreak so far.

The vast majority of cases the CDC has counted were attributed to infections acquired abroad or through sexual transmission, though mosquitoes have spread the virus in a few neighborhoods in and around Miami. Experts have warned, however, that local mosquito-driven outbreaks may be occurring in other parts of the country, particularly in states along the Gulf of Mexico. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus don't have symptoms and don't realize they have Zika.

Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, said Congress's failure to approve Zika funding this year means there was no effective way to accurately count how many people were infected.

"We'll have to hold our breath to see what happens in labor and delivery suites in a few months," he said. "That's the only way we'll know whether we've dodged a bullet."

Legislation To Cap Flood Insurance Profits Unveiled (Greater Media Newspapers, New Jersey)

By Bruce Moran

Greater Media Newspapers (NJ), October 25, 2016

The Flood Insurance Reimbursement Standards Transparency (FIRST) Cap Profits Act was unveiled by Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. (D-Monmouth, Middlesex) during a press conference that was held in Highlands on Oct. 19.

That legislation would require increased oversight and transparency of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and cap the profits of private companies providing flood insurance at 10 percent.

A 2009 Government Accountability Office report found that profits for flood insurers averaged 16.5 percent, while a more recent study found profits closer to 30 percent. In the wake of superstorm Sandy and other recent disasters, FEMA and NFIP have faced accusations of incompetence and fraud, which has led to thousands of New Jersey families being overcharged or without the payments they rightly deserve.

"It is shameful that private insurance companies have profited from Sandy while failing to meet their basic obligations under the NFIP. It is inexcusable that FEMA has failed to provide proper oversight of those entities — especially when Congress has already empowered and required the agency to do so," said Pallone. "FEMA has a responsibility to ensure that policyholders are treated fairly and charged a fair market price for the service they purchase, and my bill will take an important step in that direction. I will also be using the reauthorization of the NFIP next year as an opportunity to push for more accountability from FEMA and insurance companies."

Earlier this year, Frontline's documentary, "The Business of Disaster," examined issues with flood insurance after superstorm Sandy. Frontline did its own analysis and concluded that private insurers made more than $400 million in profits from FEMA in the year that superstorm Sandy devastated the Atlantic coast — the highest profit in the four-year period from 2011 to 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, industry-wide profits averaged $325 million a year — nearly 30 percent of the revenues the companies receive from FEMA. At the same time, many of those insurers were underpaying or outright denying legitimate flood insurance claims.

The FIRST Cap Profits Act would rectify this problem by forcing FEMA to review the finances of these companies, something it was required to do by the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Act of 2012. Additionally, by capping profits at 10 percent, the legislation would ensure that taxpayer dollars are going towards policyholders, while leaving room for these companies to make a profit for administering a program they bear no risk in.

Pallone has been a leader in demanding transparency and swift action on behalf of those who have suffered from inefficiencies and documented, widespread fraud perpetrated by private insurance companies in the aftermath of superstorm Sandy. This year he pushed FEMA to complete delayed claims in the review process from Sandy. FEMA has now completed 99 percent of the claims, which have so far resulted in $111 million more in payments coming to policyholders.

From: Greff, Stacie
Sent: 12 Oct 2016 22:27:31 +0000
To: Floyd, Megan
Cc: Stephenson, James R
Subject: State directors - access pipeline

Greg Wilz asked Nancy for help setting up a call with the other state directors to discuss potential eMac tied to the pipeline issue. I suggested I send out the note versus her to lower it a bit. Wanted you to have awareness. Tomorrow am.

Sent from my iFEMA mobile device.

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 27 Oct 2016 14:16:50 +0000
To: R8 External Affairs
Subject: Clip: ND Tribal

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

Wyoming sends troopers to North Dakota pipeline protest

- BEN NEARY Associated Press
- Updated 11 hrs ago

- AP

Protesters set up tepees and tents Monday in southern North Dakota on property owned by the pipeline company.

CHEYENNE — Wyoming has sent six highway patrol troopers to North Dakota to help authorities deal with Indian protesters demonstrating against the construction of an oil pipeline, prompting objections Tuesday from some Wyoming Indian leaders.

Sending the troopers merely extends emergency help to another state and does not signal that Wyoming has taken a position on the pipeline controversy, Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead said.

But Dean Goggles, chairman of Northern Arapaho Business Council, called on Mead to recall the troopers immediately.

“The North Dakota tribes and tribal members from around the nation are attempting to protect both the environment and sites which have ceremonial, religious and cultural significance to the tribes,” Goggles said.

More than 100 protesters were arrested last weekend in Morton County, North Dakota, in the faceoff between protesters and Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, developer of the four-state Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The $3.8 billion pipeline, most of which has been completed, crosses through North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois. Opponents worry about potential effects on drinking water on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe’s reservation as well as harm to cultural sites.

Col. Kebin Haller of the Wyoming Highway Patrol said six troopers were sent to North Dakota on Saturday and are expected to remain there until Nov. 8.

The troopers volunteered after the governor of North Dakota declared an emergency and asked other states for law enforcement assistance, Haller said.

The six are members of the patrol’s Special Services Squad who have additional training and equipment to address large crowds and civil unrest, he said. North Dakota will pay their salaries and the costs they incur while at the protest.

Mead said the decision to send Wyoming troopers happened because “a neighbor state asked for help and Wyoming answered the call.”

“North Dakota asked for help from all 50 states, so Wyoming and other states responded,” Mead said.

The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes in Wyoming have expressed formal support for the protesters.

Jason Baldes, a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and staff member at the Wind River Native Advocacy Center, accused Wyoming officials of supporting the pipeline by sending law enforcement officers to face off against protesters.

“It kind of sheds light on really who’s running the show here,” Baldes said. “The oil and gas industry really has the final say, and has the politicians and our elected leaders in their pockets.”

Mead denied that the decision to send troopers was political.

“The Dakota Access pipeline has no impact on Wyoming, and we have not taken a stance on this issue,” he said.

Jerry DeFelice
External Affairs
FEMA Region VIII, Denver
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303-941-5088 cell
Jerome.DeFelice@fema.dhs.gov

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From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: 21 Sep 2016 17:36:40 +0000
To: Appenrodt, Kathleen
Subject: FW: Clip: ND tribal

From: DeFelice, Jerome
Sent: Wednesday, September 21, 2016 11:31 AM
To: Greff, Stacie <Stacie.Greff@fema.dhs.gov>; Floyd, Megan <Megan.Floyd@fema.dhs.gov>
Cc: Hunter, Cynthia (Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov) <Cynthia.Hunter@fema.dhs.gov>; Stephenson, James R <James.Stephenson@fema.dhs.gov>; Garcia, Carol <carol.garcia@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: Clip: ND tribal

Panel votes to borrow $6M for costs associated with pipeline protests, blasts feds inaction

By Mike Nowatzki Today at 12:18 p.m.

NO DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE
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HONOR THE EARTH....
UTION

Demonstrators against the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan, N.D., gather in opposition early this month. File photo.

BISMARCK — The state Emergency Commission voted Wednesday, Sept. 21, to borrow up to $6 million from the state-owned Bank of North Dakota to support law enforcement efforts

related to the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, but not before members blasted the lack of federal support to deal with protesters camped out on federal land.

"I know we have to do it, but it's not right, and the lack of federal involvement is disgusting," said House Majority Leader Al Carlson, R-Fargo. "And we need to protect our North Dakota people, but this is just plain wrong that they're ignoring this issue."

Maj. Gen. Alan Dohrmann, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, said the state has spent $1.88 million on protest-related costs so far, the bulk of it personnel costs for assistance from the National Guard and law enforcement agencies from across the state. Morton County estimated last week it had spent about $400,000 on top of that.

The $6 million line of credit from the Bank of North Dakota will fund future efforts as authorized by Gov. Jack Dalrymple's emergency declaration Aug. 19. The Legislature will have to make a deficiency appropriation from the state's general fund to pay back the bank after lawmakers convene in regular session in January, Budget Director Pam Sharp said.

Authorities have responded to multiple protests at pipeline construction sites and in Bismarck-Mandan since protests began to ramp up in mid-August. They've also created a traffic checkpoint and increased patrols in Morton County, which they say are necessary for the safety of local residents, farmers and ranchers and the thousands of protesters camped out on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land about 35 miles south of Mandan.

Last Friday, the Corps of Engineers issued a special use permit for protesters to use Corps land south of the Cannonball River but not the land north of the river where the majority of them are camping, because that land is subject to an existing grazing lease.

Carlson said it bothers him that it's "a federal problem that they've ignored" and the Legislature will have to cover the costs at a time of budget shortfalls. Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, agreed.

"The taxpayers shouldn't have to be paying for this," he said.

Dalrymple said he's been in contact with the White House, U.S. Department of Justice, Corps of Engineers, Department of Interior and the state's congressional delegation but is still waiting to hear if they're going to help financially or with in-kind services.

"The problem that we have, of course, is that these public safety needs are imminent every day," Dalrymple said. "We really have no choice but to protect the public with law enforcement. Recovering funds from the federal government is definitely a top priority, but it undoubtedly will take some time."

The commission's other members are Secretary of State Al Jaeger, Rep. Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood, Sen. Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, and Sen. Ray Holmberg, R-Grand Forks.

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From: Welch, Randy
Sent: 8 Nov 2016 16:36:31 -0500
To: Floyd, Megan
Subject: FW: North Dakota EMAC request 2016

Just got this…

From: (b)(6) @utah.gov [mailto:(b)(6) @utah.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 08, 2016 2:16 PM
To: Welch, Randy <Randy.Welch@fema.dhs.gov>
Subject: North Dakota EMAC request 2016

DATE: November 8, 2016 2:14:26 PM MST

Dear PIOs,

The Division of Emergency Management has received the following request from North Dakota via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (a system of state-to-state mutual aid). The request is for one PIO to support North Dakota for two weeks during the pipeline protests going on there.

If you are interested in supporting North Dakota, please let me know and I'll get you in touch with our EMAC coordinator.

Please read the following resource request. Here's the short version; the entire request follows:

Deployment period: 11/13-28/16
Description:

> One PIO to act in a support capacity to lead PIO for an ongoing protest incident in ND. 2 week deployment (14 days with 2 days for travel) for a total of 16 days Equipment needed: Laptop computer Assisting lead PIO with media calls, crafting fact sheets,

timelines, media alerts, and news releases. Hours are Typically 8:00 am-5:00 pm.

Safety: No safety or health concerns identified; Cold weather gear required.

Working conditions: Field impacted area; Normal - infrastructure & support services operational; Mobile laptop and media phone will be issued.

Resource Request #1102-RR-5386

Contact Name: (b)(6)

Contact Email: (b)(6)@nd.gov

Contact Phone: (b)(6)

Update:

Broadcasted To: All

Total Recipients: 377

Event Name:	Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) Protest October 2016		
State Mission TN #:	16-073-227	EM Software TN #:	16-073-227
Requesting Agency:	State of North Dakota	EMAC TN #:	1102-RR-5386

Requesting State REQ-A Contact:

First Name:	(b)(6)	Last Name:	(b)(6)
Phone 1:	(b)(6)	Phone 2:	(b)(6)
Email 1:	(b)(6)@nd.gov	Email 2:	nddes@nd.gov

Mission Type/Source: State Type / Status:

Mission Description: Public Information Offcier

Resource Description: One PIO to act in a support capacity to lead PIO for an ongoing protest incident in ND. 2 week deployment (14 days with 2 days for travel) for a total of 16 days Equipment needed: Laptop computer Assisting lead PIO with media calls, crafting fact sheets, timelines, media alerts, and news releases. Hours are Typically 8:00 am-5:00 pm or as needed to respond to protest activities.

NIMS Type:

Requested: 1 # Type: Personnel

Deployment Dates (including travel days):

Mobilization: Demobilization:

Deployment Date: 2016-11-13 Demobilization Date: 2016-11-28

Duty Length: 16

Deployment Details:

Work Location/Facilities: State EOC
Location/Facility Name: North Dakota State Emergency Operations Center
Address 1: 35 Fraine Barracks Lane
Address 2:
City: Bismarck
Zip Code: 58504

Working Conditions: Normal - Infrastructure & Support services operational
Working Conditions Comments:
Living Conditions: Normal - All amenities available
Living Conditions Comments: Cold weather gear
Logistics Comments: Laptop Media cell phone will be issued

Identify Health & Safety Concerns (All selected Apply):

X No Safety or Health Concerns have been identified
Immunizations or Vaccinations are suggested to deploy
Environmental Hazards Exist
Personal Protection Equipment Needed

Safety Concerns/Remarks:

Requesting State Resource Coordination Contact:

First Name: (b)(6) Last Name: (b)(6)
Title: Logistics Agency: State of North Dakota
Phone 1: (b)(6) Mobile: (b)(6)
Email 1: (b)(6)@nd.gov Email 2: nddes@nd.gov

Staging Area and Point of Contact:

POC First Name: (b)(6) Last Name: (b)(6)
Phone 1: (b)(6) Phone 2: (b)(6)
Location/Facility Name: North Dakota State Emergency Operations Center
Address 1: 35 Fraine Barracks Lane
Address 2:
City: Bismarck
Zip Code: 58504

(b)(6) PIO
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Utah Department of Public Safety
Utah Emergency Management

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